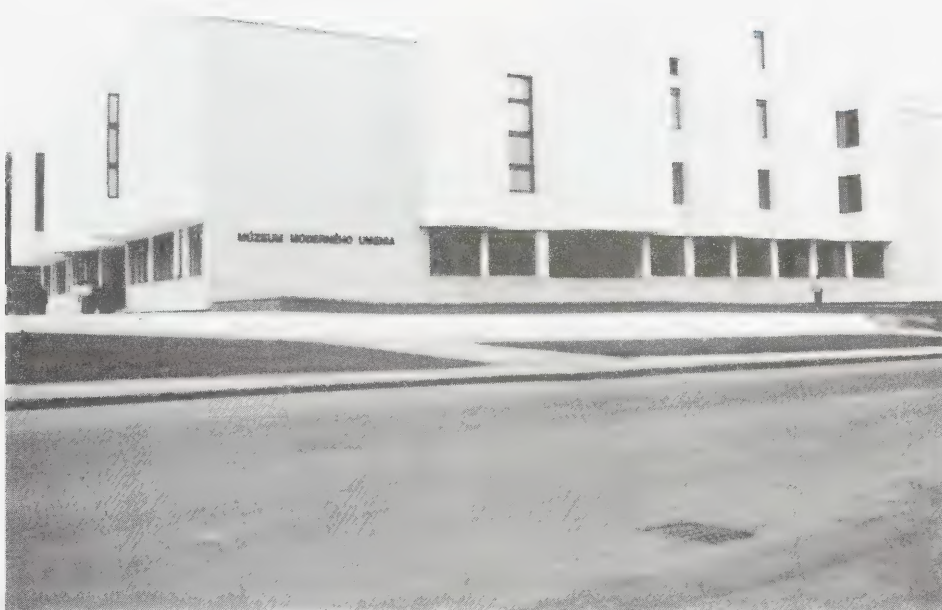


CARPATHO-RUSYN AMERICAN[®]

A Forum on Carpatho-Rusyn Ethnic Heritage



FROM THE EDITOR

Revolutionary changes since 1989 have opened new relationships with the east European homeland. These relationships have taken several forms. Rusyn Americans continue to visit relatives in the homeland, but in the past two years visits of relatives to the United States and Canada have become easier to arrange and have increased in number. Economic assistance is now being offered to the fledgling market economies of East Central Europe, and eastern European economists are receiving instruction in the workings of the market economy at educational institutions in the west.

Rusyns in the homeland are studying English in increasing numbers, and most importantly, they are now freer than anytime in recent years to learn about their own culture. Political and ideological constraints had made this difficult and even impossible at times in the past. Without these constraints, Rusyns have the opportunity to accomplish a great deal in terms of piecing together their history and revitalizing their language and literature. The new atmosphere of peace, however, does not mean that all is quiet on the Rusyn front. In fact, excitement continues to build as Rusyns and others gather together and speak out on issues of identity, culture, language, relationships with close neighbors, and the future (see *C-RA*, Vol. XIV, No. 2, 1991, p. 4, as well as the article by L. Haraksim in this issue).

In an attempt to study their history, Rusyns in the homeland have found themselves confronted with a challenging situation: very few existing historical and cultural materials are untainted by past ideologies. In this regard, the Carpatho-Rusyn Research Center is providing an important service. Rusyns in the homeland have turned to the C-RRC for books and materials which are historically sound and cover past history and events in an open, scholarly, and accurate fashion. We have gotten requests from libraries and newly-formed cultural centers, as well as from individuals.

One example of such a request for materials came from Aleksander Franko in Medzilaborce, Czechoslovakia. Franko is a Rusyn who worked in the Czechoslovak diplomatic service in Indonesia for several years where he learned English. Upon his return to Czechoslovakia, he settled again in Medzilaborce and is presently teaching English. He is active in the Andy Warhol Society and served as the chairman of the First World Congress of Rusyns this year (see the *C-RA*, Vol. XIV, No. 2, 1991, p. 7). This spring Franko received several issues of the *Carpatho-Rusyn American* from the C-RRC, and responded with the following letter:

Thank you very much for the packet full of *Carpatho-Rusyn American* newsletters! I was delighted to see all the issues. It was just at the beginning of a weekend and I spent two whole days reading them. I found many names in the articles which were familiar to me. What I especially appreciate is that all the texts are in English. The newsletters help me in two ways. My students can be introduced to the most important Rusyns of the past (in some cases, not such a distant past)—and will have an opportunity for the first time in their lives to see important persons in Rusyn history all together. And at the same time, my students can read all of this in English!

I am presently thinking about organizing a small ex-

hibit of the materials you sent to me, but this will require some preparation. It would be geared for our students. This is the first year that English is being taught at my school, and our children between the ages of 10 and 14 are not yet able to comprehend very much in the language. I'm certain that the value of the exhibit will depend partly on my preparation of the display. Other schools in Medzilaborce will no doubt be interested in such a display as well. I shall inform you of our progress.

We now have a Dramatic Arts Festival in Medzilaborce. It will include about ten performances of our Rusyn theater groups, and I shall write about it more next time. Meanwhile, I wish you all the best.

For the C-RRC, such a response is gratifying. We have provided materials to Rusyns in the homeland on a limited basis even in the past, but now more channels are open and more requests continue to be received. Unfortunately, the C-RRC with its limited resources cannot satisfy all the requests. We call on Americans of Rusyn background to aid in this endeavor. The best way to help is to send contributions to the C-RRC specifically designated for books to be sent to Rusyns in the homeland. The time has come to demonstrate to our brothers and sisters who are rising up to renew and preserve their Rusyn identity that we care about them.

OUR FRONT COVER

The Cultural Center (Kultúrny Dom), in Medzilaborce, Czechoslovakia, completed in 1991—site of the First World Congress of Rusyns in March and since June the home of the Museum of Modern Art and Andy Warhol Society. Photo: Antonín Žižka.

A Forum on Carpatho-Rusyn Heritage

THE CARPATHO-RUSYN AMERICAN

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General inquiries concerning the Carpatho-Rusyn Research Center, and all communications concerning this publication, should be directed to:

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IVAN RAKOVSKYJ (1815-1885)

The nineteenth century was known as the era of nationalism when many peoples in Europe gradually became aware of their national identities. Among those who entered the path of self-discovery were the Carpatho-Rusyns. Under the leadership of the writer Aleksander Duchnovyč and the politician Adol'f Dobrjans'kyj, the Rusyns experienced a national revival during the second half of the nineteenth century. Among the activists who followed the lead of Duchnovyč and Dobrjans'kyj was Ivan Rakovskij.

Rakovskij was born in 1815 in the Carpatho-Rusyn village of Stavne (Už county), in what was then the Hungarian Kingdom and today the Transcarpathian oblast (Subcarpathian Rus') of the Ukraine. His father was a village notary who provided the young Ivan with an elementary education at home before sending the nine-year-old off to *gymnasium* (high school) in Uzhorod and later Košice. Ivan continued his studies at the Uzhorod Theological Seminary where he studied under the "national awakener of the Carpatho-Rusyn people," Aleksander Duchnovyč. Among the most important influences Duchnovyč passed on was a belief in the strength of tsarist Russia and Russian culture, which seemed so promising to representatives of a people like the Carpatho-Rusyns, who at the time were a small and weak Slavic minority living in the increasingly Magyarized environment of the Hungarian Kingdom.

After ordination in 1839 as a Greek Catholic clergyman, Rakovskij served for a short while as a parish priest, but then in 1844 he was transferred to Uzhorod where he became a professor and vice-rector of the theological seminary. His career as a teacher was to end in 1850, when he moved to the imperial capital of Vienna, having accepted the post of official translator for laws and other codes that needed to be rendered into the languages of all the peoples of Austria-Hungary. Rakovskij was responsible for the Carpatho-Rusyns, but first a concrete question had to be answered: what was the most appropriate literary language that should be used in publications intended for Rusyns? While in Vienna, Rakovskij befriended Vasilij Vojtkovskij, a Russian church historian living in the Austrian capital, who helped convince the Carpatho-Rusyn priest that literary Russian would be the best language to choose.

Thus, Rakovskij scorned his native Rusyn speech and issued the government's bulletin of laws for the Hungarian Kingdom, *Zemskij pravitel'stvennyj vjestnik dlja koroľevstva Ouhorščiny* (Buda, 1850-58), in Russian. After the Austrian Imperial government decided to suspend publication of its law bulletin for Rusyns, Rakovskij returned to his native Subcarpathian Rus', where he became a priest in the village of Iza near Chust.

It was at this stage of his career that Rakovskij became directly involved in Subcarpathian cultural life. In 1866, he served as acting chairman of the newly-founded Rusyn cultural organization in Uzhorod, the Society of St. Basil the Great. That society published several textbooks for schools,



including three by Rakovskij himself. The two on arithmetic (1869) and geography (1870) were written in Russian, the third was a grammar of Russian written in Hungarian (1867). Rakovskij had become fully enamored with Russia and even wanted to move there. Although such a move never took place, he did attend the Russian Ethnographic Congress held in Moscow in 1867.

For Rakovskij as for many of his contemporaries, tsarist Russia seemed to be the only hope for a downtrodden Slavic nationality like the Rusyns. Of course, these Russophile Rusyns identified with a Russia they had never seen and with a Russian language they knew poorly or hardly at all. Nearly another century was to pass before Carpatho-Rusyns finally came to know Russians first hand. This happened only after their Subcarpathian homeland was annexed to the Soviet Union in 1945. Today we know the fruits of that experience. After four decades, there are few, if any, young people who look to Russia or anywhere else in the East for salvation. Instead, the inhabitants of Subcarpathian Rus' are more and more dependent on the uniqueness of their own Rusyn culture with its deep roots in the heart of East Central Europe to sustain their spiritual and national needs.

Philip Michaels

Dr. L'udovít Haraksim is a member of the Historical Institute of the Slovak Academy of Sciences in Bratislava. A specialist in nationality problems, he was an advisor to the reformist government of Alexander Dubček during the Prague Spring of 1968. After the Soviet and Warsaw Pact invasion of Czechoslovakia in August 1968, he was fired from the academy. For nearly two decades he worked in politically "less sensitive" jobs, for many years in the Slovak Museum and then as vice-chairman of the Matica Slovenska. After Czechoslovakia's "Velvet Revolution" of November 1989 deposed the Communist regime, Haraksim was reinstated in the Academy. During the past two years, he has again become a respected commentator on the nationality problem in Czechoslovakia and has served as a government advisor on Slovakia's national minorities. The following is the text of a report he was asked to prepare in early 1991 for the Slovak government.—Editor

At the outset of my presentation, I should state that once again in Eastern Slovakia one hears talk of Rusyns but not of Ukrainians, even though in our country a Rusyn nationality was liquidated and in its stead a Ukrainian nationality was decreed to exist. A constitutional law of 1968 concerning nationalities introduced the term "Ukrainians (Rusyns)" to designate this ethnic group or nationality. The law put the term Rusyns in parentheses, thereby indicating that anyone who called himself Rusyn was registered as a Ukrainian, whether he wanted this or not. This was fully supported in practice. Neither the term Rusyn nor the hybrid "Ukrainian-Rusyn" were recorded in passports, only the term Ukrainian.

From the beginning of the 1950s, when the decision was made to liquidate the Rusyn nationality, any and all measures were undertaken to inculcate the Rusyns in Czechoslovakia with Ukrainian consciousness so that they should become nationally-conscious Ukrainians. The process of transforming Rusyns into Ukrainians became known as Ukrainianization. Political and state organs fully supported the process, as did cultural institutions and the Orthodox Church which took the place of the suppressed Greek Catholic Church in 1950. Despite Ukrainianization, a significant segment of the Rusyn population preserved its original Rusyn consciousness and remained Rusyn. It is true, however, that Ukrainianization was not completely unsuccessful. A smaller segment of Rusyns, largely from the ranks of the intelligentsia which had been educated in Ukrainian schools both in Czechoslovakia and in the Soviet Ukraine, adopted a Ukrainian consciousness and consciously sought to become members of the Ukrainian nationality.

The fact that the years of Ukrainianization neither suppressed Rusyn consciousness nor changed Rusyns into Ukrainians became evident for the first time during the memorable year 1968. At that time, the segment of Rusyns who had preserved their Rusyn consciousness publicly rejected Ukrainianization and demanded recognition of their authentic Rusyn nationality. The influence of the Rusyn movement was reflected also in the constitutional law of 1968 on nationalities which resolved—if this can be called a resolution at all—the dilemma of the national identity, that is, whether Rusyns are Ukrainians or Rusyns. The law designated them as "Ukrainians (Rusyns)." During the years of [Communist President Gustav] Husák's consolidation of power, the

Rusyn movement was considered heresy, but nothing changed in the text of the law. In practice, Rusyns were registered as Ukrainians even when they personally disagreed with this. The revival or the recognition once again of a Rusyn nationality was not desirable, especially with respect to our neighbor to the east, the Soviet Union. The existence of Rusyns in eastern Slovakia, after all, might provoke an unwanted reaction on the part of the indigenous inhabitants of the former Subcarpathian Rus', and this had to be avoided at all costs.

With the demise of totalitarianism in Czechoslovakia, the question of who are our Rusyns—Ukrainians or Rusyns—has again been raised. Rusyns of the Rusyn orientation are once more demanding recognition of a specifically Rusyn nationality and restitution of their status in eastern Slovakia as it was before Ukrainianization. Against them stands that segment of Rusyns who consider themselves Ukrainians. In the confrontation between these two groups of Rusyns, the problem lies specifically in the determination of a definition once again of the national identity of Rusyns, that is, in a resolution of the question whether Rusyns are Ukrainians or Rusyns.

In the present phase of the argument, this dilemma has been resolved by the use of the hyphenated term "Rusyn-Ukrainian" to designate the national identity of the Rusyn population. In contrast to the law of 1968 which called the Rusyns "Ukrainians (Rusyns)," the term Rusyn now occupies the first position and is connected by a hyphen to the term Ukrainian, thus once again producing a hybrid nationality. This type of designation was demanded by the Union of Rusyn-Ukrainians in Czechoslovakia (SRUC). It is clear that such a designation is not a resolution and that the argument about the national identity of Rusyns will continue. For us the result of this confrontation is important, that is, whether the Rusyns in Czechoslovakia will be designated as Rusyns and will consider themselves a distinct Rusyn ethnic or national group which is solidly grounded on the soil of the Slovak Republic, or whether they will consider themselves a Ukrainian national minority. It is also interesting to note that in the former Subcarpathian Rus' [Soviet Transcarpathia] a similar argument is going on at the present time, and among the indigenous Rusyn population of that area a strong Rusyn current has emerged that calls for separation from Ukrainians and the Ukraine.

The origins and nature of Ukrainianization among Rusyns in Czechoslovakia

It is clear that the basic problem of Rusyn national life at present is the question of national identity about which arguments continue. Thus, it is essential to explore the question why the obviously larger segment of Rusyns is demanding recognition of a Rusyn nationality and the elimination of Ukrainianization, as well as the institutions which depended on it, after almost forty years of resolute Ukrainianization. In order for this question to be understood, several points should be examined: what really was Ukrainianization; on what basis did it emerge; and so on. All of this must be explored because without an understanding of these elements, it is impossible to grasp the Rusyn revival and today's form of the Rusyn question.

The beginnings of the Ukrainianization of Rusyns in eastern Slovakia is customarily connected with the decision of the presidium of the UV KSS [Central Committee of the Communist Party of Slovakia] concerning the establishment

of Ukrainian schools and the introduction of Ukrainian as the standard language in schools from June 1952. This approach, however, is not accurate. Ukrainian institutions and establishments, that is, those which in their name would suggest that they were Ukrainian, in fact arose in eastern Slovakia just after World War II, several years before the Ukrainianization decrees.

Among these institutions were the Ukrainian National Council of the Prešov Region (March 1, 1945); the Ukrainian National Theater (March 2, 1946); and Ukrainian-language radio station (November 3, 1945). These institutions were supposed to serve the needs of the Rusyn community in eastern Slovakia. I deliberately emphasize the term Rusyn, because shortly after the war and in the years after it, only a negligible number of Rusyns identified with the Ukrainian nationality. An absolute majority of Rusyns declared themselves of Rusyn or Russian nationality, and they did not differentiate between the terms "Rusyn" (*rusínska*) and "Russian" (*ruská*). This is because the adjectival form for both the words, Rusyn and Rus' in the Rusyn language is "*rus'kyj*" (not *rusyns'kyj*) which led to the merging and identification of the concepts of Rusyn and Rus'. Under these circumstances, it would have been logical if the above-mentioned institutions and establishments for Rusyns—the national council, national theater, and radio station—were called Russian [*ruskyj*] or Rusyn [*rusínskyj*], especially since a Rusynized version of Russian, and not Ukrainian, was the dominant language used by them. Nonetheless, the institutions were called Ukrainian. This shows that Ukrainianizing tendencies appeared already immediately after the end of World War II, even though at the time there did not exist appropriate conditions to implement Ukrainianization.

The situation was even more paradoxical because the institutions which indicated in their titles that they were Ukrainian neither presented themselves outwardly as Ukrainian nor did they exhibit in practice any Ukrainian character. It is well known, for example, that the Ukrainian National Council of the Prešov Region functioned using a Rusynized Russian and that its publications intended for Rusyns were produced in the same language. It should be mentioned that not every local Rusyn institution passed itself off as Ukrainian. Elementary and intermediate schools—high schools, teachers' colleges, and junior high schools—called themselves Russian and instruction took place in the elementary schools in Rusyn and in the intermediate schools in literary Russian. This network of Rusyn schools (and here is a further paradox) was run until 1949 by the Department for Ukrainian Schools in the then Commissariat of Schools and Culture, in which, despite its title, a Rusynized Russian rather than Ukrainian predominated.

To put the finishing touches on these schizophrenic conditions, it must be remembered that the periodicals intended for our Rusyns in Czechoslovakia after 1945 were published in a linguistic combination of Rusynized Russian—which completely dominated in them—and in Rusyn vernacular. Not a single magazine for Rusyns was produced in Ukrainian. From all of this it can be seen that Rusyns in Czechoslovakia after the war did not accept Ukrainian as their written language nor did they orient themselves toward the Ukraine in terms of nationality, that is, as Ukrainians, although institutions which were called Ukrainian were organized for them. This situation was in agreement with their traditions.

It must also be noted that among our Rusyn populace in

the Prešov Region—in contrast to Subcarpathian Rus'—Ukrainian traditions did not put down roots even in the interwar republic. As an illustration of this fact it is sufficient to mention that among more than ten periodicals which were published for Rusyns in eastern Slovakia, not one appeared in literary Ukrainian (in dialect, yes!) and that the Prosvita Society, a Ukrainian-oriented cultural-educational establishment, operated in eastern Slovakia only in one place, Prešov, a town which was not Rusyn even though a number of Rusyns resided there.

The war years did not change this situation, and the position of Rusyns in the Prešov Region toward Ukrainian and the Ukrainian orientation remained the same as before. This position can explain why post-war attempts at Ukrainianization failed in eastern Slovakia, although immediately after the war Ukrainian institutions and establishments were set up for them. The answer can be formulated in this way: the Ukrainian tendencies, namely the Ukrainian national orientation, could not be implemented here because it did not spring organically from any national needs of the Rusyn community in Slovakia. Such was the situation until 1952, when the above-mentioned resolution of the Central Committee of the Communist party of Slovakia began consciously to impose from above a strictly controlled program of Ukrainianization.

From what has been said thus far, it may seem as though Ukrainianization had no realistic basis. This, however, is not true. There can be no doubt about the fact that Rusyns are an East Slavic group, more specifically part of that larger ethnic group to which the Ukrainians also belong, and that the Rusyn language is a dialect of Ukrainian. Insofar as Ukrainianization stemmed from these two attributes of the Rusyns (origin and language), it was justified. But these attributes were not sufficient for the preservation or the creation of a national unity. Even more important was another factor: common history. The Rusyns, including those in Subcarpathian Rus' or Transcarpathia, lived in connection with the Hungarian state and were separated from the rest of the Ukraine, and thus their past is different from that of the Ukrainians. In other words, Rusyns do not have a common history with Ukrainians, nor common traditions which could bind them. Without a common history and common traditions, it is impossible to develop a feeling of cohesiveness, and without this feeling it is impossible to create a common national consciousness.

Rusyns preserved a consciousness of belonging to the realm of East Slavdom, a consciousness aided to a certain extent by their Greek-Slavonic faith—Orthodox and later Greek Catholic—but historically they developed differently than their nearest East Slavic neighbors beyond the Carpathians. Their development did not take them in the direction of unity with the other Ukrainians, but rather to a distinct national individuality. This fact was undervalued or ignored by political and state organs in the rush toward Ukrainianization.

The Communist movement from 1924 considered Rusyns part and parcel of the Ukrainian people. This was decided at the fifth congress of the Communist International. Later, after 1945, Czechoslovakia's Communists had to take into account the development of conditions and Ukrainianization occurring in neighboring Subcarpathian Rus', which as a part of the Ukraine—Transcarpathian Ukraine—had been joined to the Soviet Ukraine. Inasmuch as Rusyns in Slovakia and the indigenous population of Subcarpathian

Rus' comprise one branch of the East Slavs, it was not possible for our Rusyns in Slovakia to remain as Rusyns while the larger part of the same branch was designated as Ukrainians. Therefore, it was decided, whether in Prague or in Bratislava, that Rusyns in Slovakia would also be designated as Ukrainians and that their development would follow in the same direction. This began after 1952.

The failure of Ukrainianization

Ukrainianization was a political phenomenon and did not emerge organically from the needs of the Rusyn community. Thus, it is natural that when the state's totalitarian power weakened in 1968 and then fell in 1989, among the Rusyn community voices were raised demanding recognition of a Rusyn nationality and its official acceptance. What is particularly surprising is that such voices should also be raised in Subcarpathian Rus' after forty years of Ukrainianization and Sovietization calling for separation from the Ukrainians and the Ukraine. In connection with this strong separatist tendency in the Soviet Ukraine and in Czechoslovakia, it would appear that the annexation of Subcarpathian Rus', that is Transcarpathia, to the Soviet Ukraine, actually interrupted the natural process of the formation of a fourth distinct East Slavic nationality—the Rusyn nationality. If it had not been for that union and the subsequent Ukrainianization of Rusyns, this process of nationality formation would in all probability be completed today. At present this process has started up again, and how it will be completed remains to be seen.

In connection with Ukrainianization, even Slovaks have been reproached, especially with regard to one aspect which appeared to favor them. It is certainly true that those Rusyns who did not want to identify themselves as Ukrainians, chose instead Slovak nationality and sent their children to Slovak schools—which led to their denationalization as Rusyns. One must bear in mind, however, that the notion of the Ukrainianization of Rusyns did not spring from Slovak heads and was not dictated by Slovaks, nor by Czechoslovak interests and needs.

It is worth mentioning another similar action, that is, the reestablishment of the Orthodox Church in eastern Slovakia which went on along with Ukrainianization from 1950. This action affected not only Rusyns but also Slovak Greek Catholics who locally are conventionally referred to as "Rusnaks." The Greek Catholic denomination in eastern Slovakia was traditionally considered to be the "Rusyn faith," and for that reason all Greek Catholics, including Slovaks, were by virtue of their faith "Rusnaks."

The reestablishment of the Orthodox Church unarguably helped some "Rusnaks" become aware of their own national allegiance and separate themselves from other members of the "Rusyn faith" who were in fact Rusyns, but it is not accurate to portray this act as a Rusyn loss for the benefit of Slovaks. Neither is it possible to deny that Ukrainianization and the reestablishment of the Orthodox Church contributed to the fact that more than one Rusyn, who did not want to be Ukrainian, accepted Slovak nationality; and if he were a believer but did not want to be Orthodox he became *de facto* Roman Catholic. This also helped to deplete the Rusyn community. But Rusyns did not flock in this direction in great masses, nor from any Slovak initiative. And what is especially important is that this was not part of any concept of national politics on the part of the state. On the contrary, Ukrainianization was supposed to make of Rusyns conscious

Ukrainians—and the reestablishment of the Orthodox Church was to bind them with Ukrainians and to the Ukraine also on a spiritual plane. Both of these actions were carried out under the supervision and guidance of Vasyl Bil'ak, the first secretary of the Slovak Communist Party for the Prešov district.

The most zealous activists of Bil'ak's plans were people from his own circle who were close to him and, as it is well known, who were of Rusyn origin. This is important because the systematic decrease in the number of Rusyns or Ukrainians is attributed by Rusyns to the Slovaks, although the Slovaks were precisely the people most uninterested in it. Now and then these complaints were formulated in such a way that they justifiably caused offense among Slovaks. Indeed, a statement that Slovaks were committing genocide against Rusyns, made in a television broadcast on the nationality question (January 3, 1990) could not help but offend.

The decline in the number of Rusyns in eastern Slovakia is, along with the question of Rusyn national identity, another problem. What has caused and is causing this decline? A sociological research project was undertaken in May 1990 in order to determine the reasons for the decline in the national consciousness of the "Rusyn-Ukrainians" (this is the term the researchers used for Rusyns) in Czechoslovakia during the past forty years. The researchers found that the major reason was the movement of the Rusyn rural population to cities (urbanization), the administrative transition to a Ukrainian orientation (Ukrainianization), the destruction of the Greek Catholic Church, and the destruction of a number of Ukrainian schools.

It is unclear why a departure to cities should manifest itself in a decline of national consciousness and why the decline in the number of Ukrainian schools should be presented as a result of the decline of "Rusyn-Ukrainian" national consciousness. After all, an interest in instruction given in Ukrainian fell from the moment that Ukrainian began being used as the language of instruction in Rusyn schools. Otherwise, it is true that the number of schools offering instruction in Ukrainian decreased not only because of lack of interest in Ukrainian instruction, but also because in Rusyn villages, as well as throughout Slovakia, primary schools were liquidated. Besides these reasons for the decline in "Rusyn-Ukrainian" national consciousness, the researchers added the annexation of Transcarpathian Ukraine to the Soviet Ukraine and prejudices with regard to "Rusyn-Ukrainians" who lived in Slovakia. It was largely the Rusyn respondents in this research project who harbored this feeling.

It appears that the reasons which according to sociologists contributed to the decline in Rusyn national consciousness are actually reasons for the decrease in the number of Rusyns. Yet one additional reason should be added: fear on the part of Rusyns that because they were considered Ukrainians they would perhaps be sent off to the Ukraine. After the war, some Rusyns did go to the Ukraine voluntarily, but it must be said that this development did not turn out successfully. In the 1960s, the majority of these settlers made their way back to Slovakia and told about what they had experienced in their new chosen land. This could not help but have an effect on the people's consciousness and, in the end, on the number of persons calling themselves Rusyn.

It is noteworthy that the respondents in this research project did not cite as a decisive reason for the decline in Rusyn

national consciousness any national oppression, even though opinions about it were found. This means that the decline in the total number of Rusyns cannot be connected with their national oppression. And neither is any kind of discrimination toward Rusyns in social life cited as a reason for the decline. It is known that Rusyns occupied significant posts in the Communist Party and state apparatus, in the army, security, diplomatic service, in higher education as instructors and professors, and finally as researchers in scholarly institutions. The number of these Rusyns is extraordinarily high, several times the percentage of the Rusyn population in Czechoslovakia. In spite of these obvious realities, some people still speak and even write about discrimination and oppression of Rusyns in Czechoslovakia.

Conclusion

From the several aspects of the Rusyn problem after the fall of the totalitarian system in Czechoslovakia outlined here, it is clear that the major problem for Rusyns at the present time is the resolution of their national identity. Ukrainianization did not resolve this problem and played only a negative role in the life of Rusyns—something, in fact, admitted even by those Rusyns who identify as Ukrainians. The majority of Rusyns have rejected Ukrainianization and are working diligently to reverse this process which had been so actively encouraged by the official policies of the totalitarian regime. One expression of de-Ukrainianization has been the change of the name of the Ukrainian National Theater to the Aleksander Duchnovyč Theater, after the famous Rusyn national awakener who rejected Ukrainian tendencies and assimilation on the level of a written form of Rusyn dialect. Clearly this de-Ukrainianization will continue in other spheres of Rusyn national life. Opinions have already been expressed that Ukrainian schools should be changed to Rusyn schools with instruction in Rusyn—not in the Rusynized Russian from before 1952, but in Rusyn. Rusyns see in

the introduction of Rusyn into national life and in the revival of the Rusyn nationality the only possibility of halting assimilation, and their own chance to maintain themselves as a nationality.

Many believe that the revival of a Rusyn nationality can return to the Rusyns those who have become Slovak because they did not want to be Ukrainians. In any case, Rusyns must solve the problem of self-identification themselves without intervention from the outside and without manipulation of their nationality in the manner carried out by the former totalitarian regime. The renewed democratic conditions should help Rusyns in their endeavors.

Ties between Slovaks and Rusyns in the years of the totalitarian regime were not without tensions. These tensions, however, did not have any definite antagonistic character, although there were complaints on the part of Slovaks against Rusyns—largely concerning Rusyn functionaries—that they outvoted and thus suppressed Slovaks. Such examples occurred, even if they were not always nationally motivated. People, however, are inclined to see some nationalistic motivation in every conflict that occurs between a functionary and a person from a national minority. It seems that this area of friction will vanish with the removal of representatives of the old structures, who clearly tended to give preference to their “own kind.” There are no language barriers between Slovaks and Rusyns which could be an obstacle to mutual relations, and a common historical past also binds them together. In this sense, the conditions for the normal coexistence of Slovaks and Rusyns are in reality rather good.

L’udovít Haraksim
Bratislava, Czechoslovakia
(Translated by Patricia A. Krafcik)

REVOLUTION OF 1989 UPDATE

Budapest, Hungary. On May 9-11, 1991, the Federal Union of European Nationalities, which is based in Denmark, held its 19th annual congress in Budapest. Representatives of national minorities throughout Europe with guests from the Middle East gathered to discuss the status of their peoples within the countries in which they live. Official statements from each group were given in their respective native languages with simultaneous translations into English, French, German, Italian, Spanish, Hungarian, and Russian.

For the first time Carpatho-Rusyns were represented at the European Nationalities Congress, and among the delegates listed on the program were: Ivan Bicko and Vasyľ Turok of the Rusyn Renaissance Society in Czechoslovakia, and Jurij Dumnyč and Aleksander Onisko of the Society of Carpatho-Rusyns in Soviet Transcarpathia. Dr. Paul R. Magocsi, president of the Carpatho-Rusyn Research Center, was present as an observer.

Dr. Bicko delivered the official statement on behalf of the

Carpatho-Rusyns. Also, Petro Trochanovskij of the Society of Lemkos in Poland submitted the text of a lecture prepared specially for the congress: “The Kurds of Central Europe.” This moving statement on the present status of Carpatho-Rusyns will appear in a future issue of the *Carpatho-Rusyn American*.

Užhorod, Soviet Ukraine. On April 13, 1991, the Cyril and Methodius Society of the Orthodox Faithful in the Carpathian Land (Tovarystvo Pravoslavnykh Karpats’koho Kraju imeni Kyryla i Mefodija) was established in Užhorod. Among its primary goals are to “revive the cultural, historical, and humanistic traditions of Rusyn-Ukrainians”; to strengthen cooperation between all nationalities and religious confessions; and to improve the social, ecological, and spiritual status of Transcarpathia’s population. The new Orthodox cultural organization is headed by Archpriest Vasyľ Jarema and includes both clergy and lay people. Its national orientation is pro-Ukrainian, and among its goals is “to fulfill the age-long desire of Rusyns for spiritual renewal and national development within a united Ukraine.” *Jeparchial’nyj visnyk*, no. 4 (April, 1991), p. 1.

RECENT EVENTS

State College, Pennsylvania. On April 5-7, 1991, Carpatho-Rusyns were well represented at the Thirteenth Annual Penn State Slavic Folk Festival. The university's Byzantine Catholic Student Ministry organized a Carpatho-Rusyn ethnic and educational display under the leadership of senior Richard Custer. The exhibit included a map of the Subcarpathian region, handouts about Rusyns, a traditional Easter basket, Carpatho-Rusyn artifacts, videos pertaining to Rusyns, and photographs of Rusyn churches in Pennsylvania. Books from the Carpatho-Rusyn Research Center were displayed and offered for sale. The display was staffed by Richard Custer, Nick Sowko, Dave Felix, and Keith Koshute. Display items came from the personal collections of the staffers, as well as from Jerry Jumba. The festival also featured a performance by Slavjane, the Carpatho-Rusyn folk ensemble from McKees Rocks, Pennsylvania. The Fourteenth Annual Penn State Folk Festival is scheduled for March 27-29, 1992.

London, England. On May 13, 1991, Dr. Paul R. Magocsi delivered a lecture at the University of London's School of Slavonic and East European Studies (SSEES) entitled "The Ruthenian Question." The lecture was part of a year-long SSEES History Department Seminar on National Minorities in Eastern Europe since 1945. Dr. Magocsi discussed the theoretical question of whether or not Rusyns can and do form a distinct nationality, and then he reviewed the recent national revival in each of the countries of Europe where Rusyns live.

Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. On May 24-26, 1991, the 35th annual Pittsburgh Folk Festival, sponsored by Robert Morris College, took place at the David Lawrence Convention Center. The Carpatho-Rusyn community from the Greater Pittsburgh area was represented by the Slavjane Folk Ensemble of McKees Rocks, Pennsylvania, who, under the direction of Jack Poloka, performed traditional Carpatho-Rusyn songs and dances. The ensemble also sponsored a folk art display and a food booth. This year's festival theme—"celebration"—was exemplified at the Carpatho-Rusyn exhibit with a collection of items focusing on Rusyn religious and secular events. The exhibit contained authentic embroidered ritual cloths (*ručniki*), wood carvings, and other artifacts from various regions of Carpathian Rus' on loan from the private collections of Pauline (Maksim) Florina of Bensenville, Illinois; Mr. and Mrs. Michael Ozimok of Seward, Pennsylvania; and Mary (Popelich)

Oldham of Windber, Pennsylvania. The display booth was coordinated by Cathy Silvestri of Monroeville, Pennsylvania, and was organized and staffed by Richard Custer (Palmyra, Pennsylvania) and Dave Felix (Johnstown, Pennsylvania). Keith Koshute (Windber, Pennsylvania) conducted *pysanky* demonstrations on the final day of the festival. Books from the Carpatho-Rusyn Research Center, as well as religious items, were available for sale.

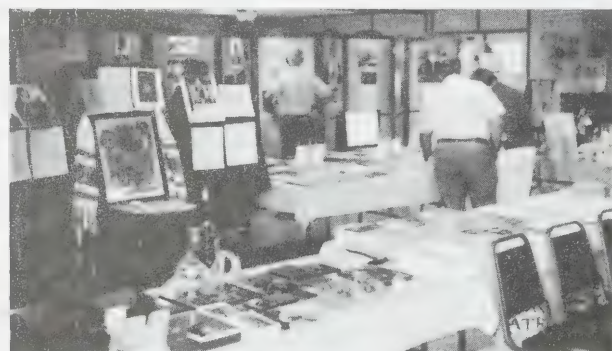
Medzilaborce, Czechoslovakia. On June 30, 1991, the Museum of Modern Art was opened in Medzilaborce. This is the first museum of contemporary art in Czechoslovakia. It is the brainchild of Dr. Michal Bycko, who for the past several years has been attempting to create a museum (see the *C-RA*, Vol. XII, No. 3, 1989) based around the work of the world-famous Pop artist Andy Warhol, whose parents came from the nearby Carpatho-Rusyn village of Miková.

For the opening, the museum featured the works of Andy Warhol, his older brother Paul Warhola (who since the death of his brother has become an artist in his own right); the Italian practitioner of Mail Art, Cuglielma Cavellini; and the Czech Pop artist, Michal Cihlár. Several hundred people attended the gala inauguration which coincided with the 29th annual festival of Rusyn culture and sports in Medzilaborce. The inaugural included short talks by Ladislav Snopko, Minister of Culture of the Slovak Republic; Paul Warhola; and Dr. Paul R. Magocsi, president of the Carpatho-Rusyn Research Center.

Mahanoy City, Pennsylvania. On July 12-14, 1991, the Byzantine Catholic Church of Saint Mary's Holy Protection held its annual Slavic Festival. For this, the parish's centennial year, the festival featured as a special attraction a large Carpatho-Rusyn cultural display. The display was organized and constructed by Richard Custer of Palmyra, Pennsylvania. Included in the display were a showing of Carpatho-Rusyn videos (folksong and dance, Lemko wedding, Bethlehem Play); a replica of a Carpatho-Rusyn cottage dining room at Pascha; folk artifacts and costumes from Carpathian Rus', icons of the Virgin Mary considered miraculous among Carpatho-Rusyns; a photographic history of Rusyn cultural and religious life from the homeland and in immigration in the anthracite region of Pennsylvania; information on the current Rusyn revival in the homeland; and historical and liturgical items from St. Mary's parish, where the Reverend Emilij Kubek was pastor for many years. Publications of the Carpatho-Rusyn Research Center were available for purchase, and brochures about Carpatho-Rusyn culture and copies of the *Carpatho-Rusyn American* were distributed.



Carpatho-Rusyn display booth at the 1991 Pittsburgh Folk Festival.



Carpatho-Rusyn historical and cultural display at Mahanoy City, Pennsylvania.

FIRST WORLD CONGRESS OF RUSYNS

The First World Congress of Rusyns that took place in Medzilaborce, Czechoslovakia on March 23-24, 1991 (for details, see the *C-RA*, Vol. XIV, No. 2, 1990, pp. 7-9) has elicited extensive attention in the press throughout East Central Europe and the Soviet Union. The wire services in the Soviet Union (TASS), Czechoslovakia (ČTK), and Poland (PAP) each carried reports on the congress. There have also been several extensive analytical articles by Julijan Kamenjicki in *Ruske slovo* (Novi Sad, Yugoslavia), March 29, 1991; Jurij Valujev in *Visti z Ukrajiny* (Kiev, Ukraine), nos. 16 and 17, April 1991; Vadym Dvynyč in *Slovo* (Kiev), May 1991; Mykola Mušynka in *Novyny Zakarpattja* (Užhorod), May 21, 1991; Volodymyr Fedynyšynec' in *Molod' Zakarpattja* (Užhorod), May 25, 1991; and Peter Juščák in *Literárny týždenník* (Bratislava, Czechoslovakia), June 21, 1991. Finally the congress has been the subject of interviews with two of its leading participants: Dr. Paul R. Magocsi in *Smena na nedel'u* (Bratislava), March 29, 1991 and Ljubomir Medješi in *Slovo* (Kiev), May 1991. Here follows the official statement issued by the congress.

Proclamation of the World Congress of Rusyns

We, the representatives of the Rusyns who live in the Czech and Slovak Federal Republic, the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, the Polish Republic, the Carpatho-Rusyn region of the Soviet Union, and the Rusyns who reside in the United States and Canada, have met at the First World Congress of Rusyns in Medzilaborce, Czechoslovakia.

Freedom and democracy have become the basis of the

political and social life of Eastern Europe and have provided an opportunity for self-determination and a worthy life for our people who live in the East Carpathian region and in other countries of the world.

We Rusyns have always supported the cultural heritage of our ancestors. We admire the inspiration and enlightenment found in the works of our national poets, Aleksander Duchnovyč and Aleksander Pavlovyč, as well as other leaders who have striven to preserve our ethnic distinctiveness and identity.

The nationality policy of the totalitarian regimes in eastern Europe after World War II has caused tragic consequences for the destiny of the Rusyn people. We witnessed the forcible attempt to liquidate the Rusyn language, the cultural and religious traditions of our ancestors, and to falsify our history.

We appreciate and respect the attempts of the Ukrainian people to build democracy and to pursue a free and unfettered development. However, we declare that the Rusyns are not a part of the Ukrainian people but rather an independent and distinct people.

We are thankful to the authorities of the Czech and Slovak Federal Republic and the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia for their help in promoting the free development of our people. We appeal to the authorities of the Soviet Union and the Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic to respect the national rights of Rusyns living in Subcarpathian Rus' [Soviet Transcarpathia]. The Rusyn people will stand tall and decide independently their own place within the family of free nations in the international community.

Medzilaborce, Czechoslovakia
March 24, 1991

Dr. Ivan Bicko (far left), a member of the Advisory Council to the Slovak Republic for National Minorities, seated at the presidium of the First World Congress of Rusyns with the delegation chairpersons: Dr. Vasyl' Turok, Rusyn

Renaissance Society; Dr. Paul R. Magocsi, Carpatho-Rusyn Research Center; Vasyl' Sočka, Society of Carpatho-Rusyns; Andrej Kopča, Society of Lemkos; Ljubomir Medješi, Ruska Matka. Photo: Oleksander Zozuljak.



THE RELIGIOUS CONTROVERSY IN THE PREŠOV REGION: THE GREEK CATHOLIC PERSPECTIVE

With the new-found freedom in Czechoslovakia following the revolution of November 1989, relations between the Greek Catholic and Orthodox Churches in the Rusyn-inhabited Prešov Region of Czechoslovakia have become strained. Here follows a recent public statement by Bishop Ján Hirka of the Greek Catholic Eparchy of Prešov that appeared earlier this year in the Slovak press in Bratislava.—Editor

Recently, I have increasingly met with expressions of interest in my position concerning the present condition of relations between the Greek Catholic and Orthodox Churches. Our mass media also have often been concerned with church-related problems; however, the media are usually content with a superficial look at individual events and thus serve only to confuse the issues further.

Various conflicting pieces of news can create a false impression that the Churches are concerned with nothing more than property, in the interest of which they are ready to ignore even the mandates of the Bible and to suppress each other. Information presented in such a fashion usually arouses offended feelings, grief, and disillusionment in many people, believers and non-believers. Still others ask sarcastically what kind of Churches are these which “don’t know how to come to an agreement.”

Where are the roots of the present problems?

Until 1950, the Orthodox Church had no more than 20 churches in Slovakia and a proportionate number of parishioners. The Greek Catholic Church had 434 churches, 72 chapels, 239 rectories, and approximately 300,000 parishioners. At that time there was absolutely no dissension between us. The problems began during the time of the Communist takeover when the state ruled by the Communist party misled several representatives of the Orthodox Church in order to pull the Greek Catholic Church away from Rome and to destroy it. As far as the state was concerned, the Greek Catholic Church ceased to exist. Its parishioners were to be automatically considered as Orthodox and in 1952 all its possessions were given over illegally and unconstitutionally to the Orthodox Church.

Totalitarian power committed a grievous wrong. It misled the representatives of one Christian denomination in order to liquidate another denomination, and by this it inflicted damage beyond measure upon both. It sowed the seeds of dissension between them—seeds which are growing like wild weeds, damaging our relations and distorting the joyful news of the Scriptures which both Churches are called to announce to the world.

Nor did the year 1968 change the situation. In that year, the Greek Catholic Church was again allowed to function, but justice was not restored. At that time we had a state which itself took control of our churches from us. It is

deplorable that the state usually assumes some expedient posture and avoids any resolution of this urgent problem, limiting itself to “fatherly” admonitions, so that we among ourselves must somehow resolve the issues. As a result of this, a nervousness and tension which plays right into the hands of certain powers in the state has arisen among believers.

There is no question that we must demand back our churches. Justice requires this, and it is not something which is in any way at odds with love, but rather is its bearer. And we can demand them back only from those who took the churches from us, namely, the state. In this demand, however, the state is forcing us to negotiate with the Orthodox Church. In addition, the state is obviously ignorant of the fact that it has adopted the rules of the game forced upon it by the Stalinist regime of which the goal was to compromise and finally to liquidate both Churches.

As a result of this, we are left to exhaust ourselves in immediately unresolvable disagreements with the representatives of a Church [Orthodox] which the Communist system injured perhaps even more than us because in the eyes of the public it is often connected with the former regime.

I would like to point further to a legal measure taken on May 29, 1990, by the presidium of the Slovak National Council, which stipulates that property which before April 28, 1950, belonged to the Greek Catholic Church should be returned. However, it limits further property rights. The measure also states that if the Churches do not come to an agreement about a manner of the use of church buildings, then an authorized representative of the administration of the Slovak Republic will step in to make the decisions. It is clear that an authorized representative of the government, even with the best intentions, is not competent to make decisions about the property of others.

In view of the fact that the Orthodox Church is the closest to us among all the Christian denominations, we are not at all indifferent to its fate, nor to the fact that its reputation damaged by the state diminishes the reliability of its proclamation of the Gospels. First of all, the state which placed the Orthodox Church in such an unenviable situation must help her. I am convinced that neither we, nor the faithful of other churches, can shut ourselves off to help provided for the construction of sacred objects. In certain justified instances we are willing to offer the use of our church buildings, but from our own conviction and not by virtue of a decision made by the state.

To me, as a bishop of the Greek Catholic Church, it is clear that that which binds us together far surpasses any divisions between us. Therefore, I ask for a recovery of our reciprocal connections, so banefully acknowledged by totalitarian power, which ought to be established on the basis of simple respect between our Churches and ought to grow into a vital and fruitful dialogue. Finally, together with the other churches we ought to become a convincing witness of our mutual respect and love.

Bishop Ján Hirka
Eparchy of Prešov

THE RELIGIOUS CONTROVERSY IN THE PREŠOV REGION: THE ORTHODOX PERSPECTIVE

In reaction to law no. 211, passed May 29, 1990 by the presidium of the Slovak National Council, the Orthodox Church feels it has been unjustly treated on the issue of church property. The following is a declaration with a counterproposal for a new law (not included here) sent to the Slovak government by the two Orthodox bishops for eparchies in Eastern Slovakia.—Editor

The so-called Prešov Church Council (Sobor) of 1950 led to the abolition of the Greek Catholic Church in Czechoslovakia. By a state decision, all fixed assets of the Greek Catholic Church became property of the Orthodox Church. In addition, the majority of Greek Catholic faithful were transferred to the Orthodox Church. The Orthodox Church looked after the former property of the Greek Catholic Church and made improvements in it over the years. The construction of new buildings for the use of the Orthodox Church was permitted by the state only in exceptional cases. The refusal to allow the construction of new buildings was justified on the part of the state by the fact that the Orthodox Church had gained several buildings from the Greek Catholic Church and, therefore, had no need for any new structures.

After 1968, when the Greek Catholic Church was again permitted to function, both denominations used the buildings together without any serious problems. Some former Greek Catholic faithful returned to the Greek Catholic Church and some remained in the Orthodox Church. A legal measure taken by the presidium of the Slovak National Council (no.211/90) concerning property relations between the Churches ordered that former Greek Catholic property should be transferred back to the Greek Catholic Church, without regard, however, to the new reality that a number of Greek Catholic faithful were now in the Orthodox Church.

At the same time, when he made his decisions called for in law no. 211, the government's appointed deputy did not take into consideration the number of faithful in the various parishes of the Greek Catholic and Orthodox churches. Nor did he fulfil the requirement outlined in paragraph 2, section 2 of the above-mentioned legal measure, according to which "the functioning of both churches must be guaranteed." While he secured the transfer of property rights over the real estate in question to the Greek Catholic Church, he did not guarantee the possibility that the Orthodox Church could share the use of the buildings.

In view of the growing tension among the faithful of both denominations and the obvious unbalance of conditions for the functioning of the churches to the detriment of the Orthodox Church, it is now necessary to amend the property rights regulations regarding the real estate of both denominations and to expand the possibility for shared use of the buildings. The church property in eastern Slovakia, which before 1950 was in the hands of both denominations and which was transferred to the Orthodox Church on the basis of a decree of the former state bureau for church affairs in Prague, must be divided on the basis of a legal norm which observes the rights of both proprietorial subjects [both

denominations] according to the legal and actual situation in individual parishes and regions.

In deciding individual cases, the number of Greek Catholic or Orthodox faithful in parishes and in church lists where the real estate is located must be examined first and then the church doors must be opened for services for the Orthodox faithful in forty parishes where a unilateral decision was made about the transfer of property to the Greek Catholic Church without any agreement about the relationship of the users of the property. This has led to a gross violation of the paragraph 2, section 2 of law no. 211 of the Slovak National Council in which the government's deputy has reached decisions according to his own discretion and has placed restrictions on the Orthodox Church's ability to appeal those decisions.

In the process of reaching agreements about the property relations between the Greek Catholic and Orthodox Churches, we must take into account also historical realities and legal precedent before 1950 and after 1968, in order to assure that the legal status of ownership corresponds accurately with the real status. We must avoid correcting one injustice by perpetrating another as was done in the past by the totalitarian system in our country.

As restitution, it is necessary to return property to its original owners or their descendants. If we take into consideration only the year 1950, the original owners were divided between the Orthodox and Greek Catholics in 1968, to both of whom ownership rights over church property was given. Thus, at present there are thus two legal proprietorial subjects who have equal legal rights to the division of the real estate. It is not possible to dispossess the Orthodox Church as an inheritor and lawful successor of the legal right to co-ownership of a portion of shared and assessed real estate.

The legal norm for any laws issued by the presidium of the Slovak National Council concerning the regulation of property relations between the Greek Catholic and Orthodox faithful must, in the end, emphasize the principles of democracy in today's society and must respect the rights of citizens for religious freedom as expressed in a recently-adopted document on human rights. In over ninety church parishes where there is a two-thirds' majority of Orthodox faithful, but who have been completely stripped of church property, we have seen a gross violation of those general and internationally recognized democratic rights, as well as discrimination against Orthodox communities who have an over 1000-year-old history.

By means of the legal actions which are proposed in this declaration, it should be possible finally to determine not only the legal property rights of both the Greek Catholic and Orthodox Churches after the approval of the proposed legal decree by the presidium of the Slovak National Council, but most importantly to establish ties between the churches which, after twenty years of coexistence in peace and brotherhood, are at the present fratricidal in nature.

Bishop Jan Golonič
Eparchy of Michalovce

Archbishop Nikolaj Kocvar
Eparchy of Prešov



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