FROM THE EDITOR

With this issue, we complete our fifteenth year of publishing the Carpatho-Rusyn American. How far we have come since 1978 when our focus was almost entirely, although not exclusively, the Carpatho-Rusyn community in America. I still recall my first interview with Bishop Nicholas Smisko, who was then pastor of St. Nicholas Carpatho-Russian Orthodox Church in New York City. I remember well how he welcomed me and encouraged our endeavors with the newsletter. I recall compiling the recipe for our Easter bread (pascha) hoping it would be useful since our first issue was to appear in the spring. Then I sat down to write the first editorial which turned out to be a description of my grandmother's journey from the homeland to the United States. I longed to ply her with questions, to relish all the details of her life in Ruská Vol’a and of her struggles, joys, and hopes in immigration. After all these years which have also included several trips to Ruská Vol’a, I still long to sit at her feet, but even in 1978 that opportunity had already passed three decades before.

What motivated us fifteen years ago to undertake publication of the C-RA? Nostalgia? Some ancient Slavic loyalty to ancestors? A sense of awe at our grandparent's uprooting from a rural setting and their readjustment to a very different and mainly urban and English-speaking world? Probably all of these, but in addition surely a curiosity about the homeland today—about the cultural life and voice of our people. And what we have seen, especially since 1989, has been far beyond whatever we might have imagined those fifteen years ago. We hope that we have done justice to the exciting present without having lost touch with that meaningful past which still lives in our blood.

During this past year we have run articles on several contemporary items. We chose to put in print the voices of the leaders of the recently-formed Rusyn organizations throughout East Central Europe. Thus, we published articles on the Society of Subcarpathian Rusyns in Užhorod, Ukraine by its chairman, Ivan Turjanyca; a commentary by literary historian Vasyl' Choma on the journal Rusyn, published by the Rusyn Renaissance Society in Slovakia; an analysis of the Lemko Rusyns of Poland as the “Kurds” of Central Europe by Petro Trochanovskij of the Society of Lemkos; and an editorial on the work of Gábor Hattinger and the Organization of Rusyns in Hungary. We also ran two articles offering the impressions of Americans travelling to the homeland.

The C-RA has become a medium for the communication of news regarding Carpatho-Rusyns in America and in the homeland. It provides readers with extensive and in-depth information on various Rusyn organizations and activities, Rusyn culture, and Rusyn political and social concerns not available in any other publication. This is one of the ways in which the C-RA is truly unique. But the C-RA is also special in the sense that it is not simply a resource for the communication of news regarding Rusyns. The reports about visits to the homeland are emblematic of another unique function: the C-RA is an expression of our own identity.

It is true that a journey to the homeland places us in lively and vigorous contemporary settings with bright, ambitious people living their lives, making their mark, and changing their world. But it is just as true that for us a journey back to the homeland is still a kind of pilgrimage, a return to the land of our ancestors, including a visit to the old family home, to the church, to the cemetery, embracing people with whom we share a history and blood ties. This is the spirit which made the C-RA special when it appeared fifteen years ago and it is the same spirit with which it will continue its work in the future.
The nineteenth century is generally considered the age of nationalism. This was a time, most especially in Europe, when numerous peoples—whether or not they had their own states—formed national communities whose members were gradually taught to be aware of their common history, language, and ethnographic characteristics. Once peoples acquired a sense of common identity, their leaders usually attempted through political (and sometimes military) means to obtain autonomy and even independent statehood for the territory considered to comprise the national homeland.

In effect, not only were states or political societies “invented,” they often emerged from conflict and were maintained by a combination of physical force and a carefully nurtured myth of national identity. This process of nation-building began for some peoples even before the nineteenth century. For instance, Britain came into being as an “invented community” in the eighteenth century following the union in 1707, when England and Wales united with Scotland.

Stateless peoples also began the process of nation-building in the eighteenth century, and this included the Carpatho-Rusyns living in the heart of the European continent. The early stages of nation-building among stateless peoples usually focused on what might be called heritage-gathering, that is, a period when a small group of leaders were engaged in writing histories, preparing grammars and dictionaries, publishing poetry and prose in the “new” literary language, and describing the folk customs that were distinctive for a given people. History writing was particularly important, because a properly crafted historical text could teach readers that a given stateless people may have had a glorious past, even independence, and that therefore such a people would be deserving of no less in the future.

It is interesting to observe that some of the earliest “national” histories were motivated by rather limited interests, in particular a need to prove that a people or perhaps an institution should be given certain rights because they had been guaranteed such rights at some point in the past. It became, therefore, the task of the historian to justify present-day legal needs by uncovering “proofs” from the past. This was precisely how Carpatho-Rusyn historiography (history writing) began, and the person responsible was the monk, Ioannikij Bazylovyc.

Ioannikij Bazylovyc was born in 1742 into a peasant family living in the Carpatho-Rusyn inhabited village of Hlištia (former Už county in the Hungarian Kingdom) in what is today eastern Slovakia. Despite the poverty of his parents, they managed to send the young Ioannikij to study for the priesthood in nearby Užhorod and Košice. He entered the Greek Catholic Basilian Order and the Monastery of St. Nicholas on Monk’s Hill (Cernéa Hora), near Mukačevo. In 1779, he was as appointed head (protothumaten) of the monastery, a position he held for the next 38 years until his death.

The Monastery of St. Nicholas near Mukačevo was at the time the most important religious and cultural center for Rusyns living south of the Carpathians, but in 1785 its prestige and legal status were challenged. A book appeared in that year claiming that the founding charter of the monastery dating back to 1360 was a forgery. Bazylovyc felt obliged to prove the authenticity of the charter, supposedly drawn up by Prince Fedir Koriatovyc in 1360. In response to this "legal" challenge, he began to write a three-volume work in Latin that eventually appeared in six parts between 1799 and 1805 under the title, A Short Description of the Donation of Fedir Koriatovyc, Prince of Mukačevo, for the Ruthenian Religious Order of St. Basil the Great on Monk’s Hill in Mukačevo in the Year 1360.

In the end, Basylovyc’s work turned out to be much more than a treatise on the Koriatovyc donation. It became what could be called the first national history of the Carpatho-Rusyns, covering the period from earliest times to the last decade of the eighteenth century. In the tradition of other contemporary and later national ideologists, Bazylovyc constructed a historical framework—some would say he created "an imagined political community"—that allowed readers to conclude that Rusyns were a people with their own distinct past and potential future. His framework was based on five premises: (1) that Rusyns were the indigenous population in the Carpathians, that is, they inhabited the region before the coming of the Magyars in 896; (2) that in the early medieval period they had an independent state called the Marchia Ruthenorum (the Rus’ Land), ruled by Rusyn princes as well as by Emerich, the son of Hungary’s first king, St. Stephen; (3) that Rusyns were converted to Christianity in the wake of the Cyril-Methodian mission of 863; (4) that Rusyns subsequently fought against the Hungarians for independence; and (5) that the last independent Rusyn ruler was Prince Fedir Koriatovyc, who arrived in Mukačevo with 40,000 new Rusyn settlers from beyond the Carpathians and who founded the St. Nicholas Monastery on Monk’s Hill in 1360.

Bazylovyc’s historical framework was to influence several generations of Rusyn historians. While it is true that some of his conclusions were later challenged by more comprehensive research, nonetheless his views have continued to this day to determine the popular understanding of early Rusyn history. It is, therefore, quite appropriate that already at the end of the nineteenth century, one Rusyn writer, aware that the profession of history writing began in ancient Greece, dubbed Ioannikij Bazylovyc “the Herodotus of Carpatho-Rusyn historiography.”
On November 6-7, 1992, a select group of scholars, writers, and journalists from nine countries met in Bardejovské Kúpele in northeastern Slovakia at a working seminar to coordinate current efforts to create a standard Rusyn literary language. The seminar, or First Congress of the Rusyn Language as it was popularly described, was organized by the Rusyn Renaissance Society (Rusyn’ska Obroda) in Prešov, Slovakia, in cooperation with the Carpatho-Rusyn Research Center in the United States. Support for participants also came from the Swedish Academy in Stockholm; the Liga Rumantscha (Romansch League) in Chur, Switzerland; and the Academy for Dialectal Languages in Monaco.

Since World War II and the imposition of Soviet-dominated Communist rule throughout East Central Europe, the Rusyn language was banned in all countries where Rusyns live except in Yugoslavia. In the Soviet Ukraine, Czechoslovakia, and Poland, Rusyns were administratively declared to be Ukrainians and all publications and education intended for them had to be carried out in Ukrainian. Any efforts to have some form of Rusyn used in publications, schools, or public life were condemned as “counter-revolutionary.” Following the great political changes throughout East Central Europe in 1989, it was again possible to use Rusyn. Several books have been published in Rusyn and new Rusyn-language newspapers and journals were founded in Poland (Besida), Slovakia (Rusyn, Narodný noviny), and Ukraine (Oťčyj chram, Podkarpats’ka Rus’, Respublika). Since 1990, there is also a professional Rusyn-language theater and radio and television broadcasts in Slovakia, and there are eight schools in Poland where the Lemko variant of Rusyn is taught.

All these efforts at using some form of the Rusyn language in public life have until now been carried out in the absence of any single literary norm. There have, however, already been efforts to formulate such norms. In 1991, Professor Jurij Pan’ko of Šafárik University in Prešov published for discussion a set of rules (Normy rusynskoho pravopisu), while in 1992 a language teacher in Poland, Myroslava Chomjak, in consultation with Dr. Henryk Fontański of the University of Silesia, produced working editions (sondažove vydania) of a Lemko grammar for children (Lemkivska gramatyka dítě dití) and a standard grammar for literary usage (Gramatyka lemkivskoho jazyka). Most recently, at the seminar in Bardejovské Kúpele, a grammar for the Rusyn language from Ukraine’s Subcarpathian region was presented by Ivan Kerča and Vasył’ Sočka-Boržavyn (Rusyn’skyj jazyk: očer komplexnoji praktyčnoi gramatyky). It is the existence of all these concrete efforts that prompted the seminar’s program chairman, Professor Paul Robert Magocsi (University of Toronto), to state in his opening remarks that “the practical needs of Rusyn-language publishing and the first steps toward coordination of work on codification are what have made this language congress, or working seminar, most timely.”

The seminar was organized in two parts. The first part was open to all participants and addressed general theoretical and practical issues. Professor Joshua Fishman (Yeshiva University and Stanford University), the world renowned sociolinguist, discussed the phenomenon of “first” language congresses that took place between 1849 and 1984 among eighteen nationalities in Europe, Africa, Asia, and the Americas. Fishman stressed that the criterion of success of a first congress was due less to what actually took place at the congress itself than to what permanent commissions or other bodies continued to work in subsequent years. Professor Sven Gustavsson (Uppsala University, Sweden) surveyed the creation of literary languages among all the Slavic peoples. He pointed out that the Rusyn language in the Vojvodina (Bačka) of former Yugoslavia, which is used by only 25,000 people, is a full-fledged literary language and that, by implication, Rusyns in the Carpathian homeland could develop their own literary language as well.

The two other presentations in the first part of the seminar addressed practical issues surrounding codification and education for smaller peoples in western Europe: the Romansch of Switzerland and the Monégasques of Monaco. Professor Georges Darms (University of Fribourg, Switzerland) described how the 50,000 Romansch have had five literary variants (each with its own grammars and dictionaries) taught in schools during the twentieth century and that in the past two decades a new koine called Rumantsch grischun has been created as a single literary standard for all the Romansch. Professor Elaine Mollo (University of Nice) revealed how, given ideal conditions, a distinct literary language can be created for a people who inhabit a territory as small as the independent principality of Monaco (25,000 inhabitants). A Monégasque literary language came into being only fifteen years ago and is now taught to all students of Monaco regardless of their national background (only 20 percent of Monaco’s inhabitants are Monégasques).

The second part of the Rusyn language seminar took the form of five working groups divided according to the regions where Rusyns live: Subcarpathia (Ukraine), Prešov Region (Slovakia), Lemko Region (Poland), northeastern Hungary, and Vojvodina (Yugoslavia). Each working group discussed the problems of creating a literary standard for their respective regions. The Hungarian section decided to adopt the Rusyn standard to be used in Slovakia’s Prešov Region. In the case of the Vojvodina, where a standard already exists, the discussion focused on problems of assimilation and also how the Vojvodinian Rusyns might eventually adopt a koine that might be developed for all Rusyns.

Each section was headed by a scholar and included several local writers. Among those present were: for Subcarpathia—Professor Ivan Pop (Institute for Carpathian Studies, University of Užhorod), chairman, Volodymyr Fedynyshyn; Iván Petrovčič, and Vasyľ’ Šočka; for the Prešov Region—Professor Michael Zarechnak (Georgetown University, Washington, D.C.), chairman, Stefan Bunganě, Reverend František Krajiñák, Dr. Jurij Pan’ko, Vasyľ’ Petrovaj, Aleksander Zozuljak; for the Lemko Region—Professor Wiesław Witkowski (Jagiellonian University), chairman, Miroslava Chomjak, Olena Duc-Fajer, Dr. Henryk Fontański, and Petro Trochanowski; for Hungary—Professor István Udvari (Chair of Ukrainian and Rusyn Philology, Nyíregyháza Pedagogical Institute), chairman, Gabor Hattinger, Laszló Popovics; and for the Vojvodina—Professor Sven Gustavsson (Uppsala University), chairman, Helena Medješ, Ljubomir Medješi, Irina Papuga, and Djura Papharhaji.
On the second and final day of the seminar, each of the sections reported on the results of their deliberations. Following an open discussion among all members, two groups were formed. A working commission on terminology and orthography met to discuss basic guidelines to be followed by all Rusyn language variants. The chairman of each section (Professors Pop, Zarechnak, Witkowski, Udvari, Gustavsson) gathered separately and were joined by Professor Paul Robert Magocsi, Vasyl' Turok (chairman, Rusyn Renaissance Society), and Ljubomir Medješi (chairman, Ruska Marka Society) to draw up the seminar’s final resolutions. The resolutions were presented to all participants by Professor Ivan Pop and included the following twelve points:

(1) Participants in the seminar concluded that the Rusyn language should be codified on the basis of the spoken vernacular in each of the regions where Rusyns live (Subcarpathia, Lemko Region, Prešov Region, Vojvodina).

(2) In order to achieve this goal the participants considered of greatest importance: a. to create dictionaries of specific and general content; and b. to publish Rusyn grammars on the basis of the selected linguistic data.

(3) It is of great necessity to prepare a historical grammar of the Rusyn language.

(4) The literary language in each region should be formed on the basis of the dominant dialect.

(5) Literary works should be developed that make use of the new lexical and grammatical norms.

(6) The new linguistic norms should be introduced into the school system and public life.

(7) A theoretic and practical language institute should be created.

(8) In the process of codification there should be close cooperation with Slavic scholarly institutes in all countries.

(9) The graphic system (alphabet) for the Rusyn language is Cyrillic.

(10) Each region should prepare a bibliography of current works in Rusyn.

(11) A coordinating commission for the Rusyn language created at the seminar will continue to meet periodically.

(12) The participants of the seminar expressed the conviction that the codification of a Rusyn literary language will be a long process whose success will be determined by usage in daily life.

The seminar or First Congress of the Rusyn Language was covered widely by local and national television, radio, and the print media in Czechoslovakia and Yugoslavia (Vojvodina). The participants were also guests at a performance of a Rusyn play by the professional Aleksander Duchnový Theaters in Prešov and by the Duklja Folk Ensemble (PULS) in Prešov. The coordinating commission for the Rusyn language, headed by Dr. Jurij Pan'ko, scheduled its first meeting in Prešov, Slovakia to be held two weeks after the close of the seminar.

THE BEGINNING AND END OF THE UKRAINIAN LANGUAGE

On May 5-6, 1992, a conference devoted to the subject, “The Ukrainian Language in Transcarpathia in the Past and Present,” was held in Užhorod under the sponsorship of Užhorod State University, the Prosvita Society, and the Transcarpathian National Council of People’s Deputies. As the conference title suggests, the 80 participants, whether local pro-Ukrainian scholars or others from abroad, most especially from the Prešov Region in neighboring Czechoslovakia, virtually all agreed that the Ukrainian language is the most suitable and natural linguistic form for the local population.

The only exception to this viewpoint was taken by Volodymyr Fedynysynec’, himself a noted local Ukrainian-language poet and essayist. In a lecture entitled, “A Prognosis and Hypothesis Regarding the Functioning of the Ukrainian Language in the Year 2000 on the Historical Land of Subcarpathian Rus’,” Fedynysynec’ began by declaring that “the Ukrainian language is not the native language of Carpatho-Rusyns.” He also argued that Carpatho-Rusyn should not be classified as an East Slavic language, but rather as just another of the thirteen Slavic languages, although one that is based directly on prehistoric common Slavic roots.

The presentation by Fedynysynec’ was not appreciated by the pro-Ukrainian audience, which became particularly concerned with his conclusion: “It seems that in the year 1918 the Ukrainian language for the first time appeared in Subcarpathian Rus’ in a form that could be considered the beginning of its subsequent evolution. I believe that by the time of its infamous centenary, which will soon take place in the year 2018, the Ukrainian language in Subcarpathian Rus’ will take on the form of a passive language having left the sphere of relatively active usage. Subsequently, the stage of active forgetting will begin, much as it already has begun in the Prešov Region and in Poland [the Lemko Region]. . . . This is not the fault of the beautiful Ukrainian language, but rather just another aspect of its tragic history, in this case the fault of the Communist regime.

“Thus, within the course of one century [1918-2018], this language will have been introduced and removed. In essence, one century has or will become the beginning and end of the Ukrainian language in historical Subcarpathian Rus’.”

Cited from the full text of the Fedynysynec’ lecture in Podkarpats’ka Rus’ (Užhorod), May 15, 1992, pp. 3-4.
A SHORT CHRONOLOGY OF SUBCARPATHIAN RUS’

The following historical chronology was prepared by the coordinating committee of the Society of Subcarpathian Rusyns in Uzhhorod, Ukraine.—Editor

—Subcarpathian Rusyns are the original, autochthonous inhabitants of today’s Transcarpathia, and they are recognized by ethnographic institutes throughout the world.

—In the eighth and ninth centuries, Subcarpathian Rus’ first belonged to the Bulgarian Empire and later became part of the Greater Moravian Empire. In 896, nomadic tribes of Magyars appeared on the territory of Subcarpathian Rus’.

—When Austria-Hungary emerged, Subcarpathian Rus’ was joined to it. With the fall of Austria-Hungary in 1918, Rusyns, together with Slovaks, Czechs, Croats, Slovenes, and other Slavic peoples, received the right to self-determination.

—In 1919, according to the Treaty of Trianon, the territory inhabited by the Subcarpathian Rusyns became part of Czechoslovakia with the rights of an autonomous entity and was named Subcarpathian Rus’.

—On November 22, 1938, according to constitutional law, Subcarpathian Rus’ received the status of an autonomous republic within the Czechoslovak Federative Republic of Czechs, Slovaks, and Rusyns.

—In March 1939, Subcarpathian Rus’ was occupied by Hungary which was an ally of Germany. According to an agreement between the Soviet Union and Czechoslovakia, from 1941 until 1944 the inhabitants of Subcarpathian Rus’ were recognized as citizens of Czechoslovakia whose borders were not subject to revision.

—On November 26, 1944, during the struggle to liberate Subcarpathian Rus’, Subcarpathian Communist deserters from the Czechoslovak corps of General Ludvik Svoboda carried out a military coup on orders from Moscow and announced the transformation of Subcarpathian Rus’ from a republic within Czechoslovakia to the republic of Transcarpathian Ukraine.

—On June 29, 1945, the government of Czechoslovakia on orders of Stalin signed an agreement concerning the annexation of the republic of Subcarpathian Rus’ to the republic of Soviet Ukraine as of January 1, 1946. This agreement was a crude violation of the will of the people for self-determination and represented a revision of the borders previously fixed by the Treaty of Potsdam.

—On January 22, 1946, in violation of the Constitution of the Soviet Union and the Ukrainian SSR, Moscow created the Transcarpathian oblast on the territory of the Republic of Transcarpathia, juridically preserving the status of the Republic of Transcarpathian Ukraine which today’s Ukraine does not recognize.

—In 1946-1947, Moscow dictated that all Rusyns of Subcarpathian Rus’ (Transcarpathian Ukraine) were to be registered as Ukrainians, and that Rusyn schools were to be transformed into Ukrainian schools. Ukraine prevented the return of Rusyn nationality and schools to the Rusyns. On the territory of Czechoslovakia, Hungary, Yugoslavia, Canada, and the United States, the Rusyn people are recognized and there are schools and institutes which teach using the Rusyn language. In Ukraine this is forbidden.

—In October 1991, a session of the Transcarpathian National Council of People’s Deputies (Narodna Rada) adopted a resolution calling for a regional referendum on returning to the Transcarpathian oblast the status of an autonomous republic within Ukraine.

—In November 1991, at an extraordinary session of the National Council of People’s Deputies who were acting under pressure from the Ukrainian head of parliament, Leonid Kravčuk, the formulation of the text on the printed ballot for the referendum was changed. Instead of a referendum concerning the return to the Transcarpathian oblast of the status of an autonomous republic within Ukraine, the ballot now inquired about a change to the status of “special self-governing territory.” Nevertheless, 78 percent of the participants in the referendum on December 1, 1991, voted for autonomy.

—On March 6, 1992, a session of the Transcarpathian National Council of People’s Deputies issued an appeal to President Kravčuk calling for the elimination of discrimination against Rusyns and an immediate study of the results of the December referendum.

Ivan Turjanycja, Chairman
Society of Subcarpathian Rusyns

REQUEST FOR PENPALS

The following letter was received by the Carpatho-Rusyn American from Mychajlo Meheš, Principal of the Taras Ševčenko Secondary School No. 1 in Užhorod, Ukraine.—Editor

To our fellow Carpatho-Rusyns in the United States:

The teachers and pupils of secondary school No. 1 in Užhorod, Subcarpathian Rus’, send their warmest greetings and wishes for all the best in our cause of revitalizing Rusyn national traditions and renewing our mutual contacts. We are grateful for your sincere desire to help us, and would like you to know about our life in this unique and picturesque region of East Central Europe.

The pupils of school No. 1 are eager to correspond with American young people of junior and senior high school age. If you would like a Rusyn penpal, please send your name, age, and address to:

Mychajlo Meheš, principal
T.G. Ševčenko Secondary School No. 1
Leningradska Embankment 4
294000 Užhorod
UKRAINE
TRANSCARPATHIA ILLEGALLY ANNEXED TO THE
SOVIET UNION

Since its establishment in February 1991, the Society of Subcarpathian Rusyns (Obščestvo Podkarpatských Rusynov) has argued that the Soviet annexation of Transcarpathia (Subcarpathian Rus') in June 1945 was illegal and, therefore, the region’s autonomous status should be restored (see the “Declaration of the Carpatho-Rusyns,” Carpatho-Rusyn American, Vol. XIV, No. 1, Spring, 1991, pp. 4-5). Local Ukrainophiles and other critics of the Society of Subcarpathian Rusyns dismissed their demands, arguing that they were based on supposedly incorrect historical assumptions.

The June 5, 1992 issue of the newspaper, Podkarpats'ka Rus', reproduced an article by Dr. Ivan Pop, the Distinguished historian, editor of the Moscow scholarly journal Sovetskoje slavjanovedenie, and director of the recently-founded Institute of Carpathian Studies at the University of Užhorod. Writing about the events at the end of World War II, Dr. Pop described what took place at the so-called “congress” of people's deputies that was hastily convened in Mukačevo on November 1, 1944:

"Everything that took place there contravened international law, including the violation of the sovereignty of an allied state [Czechoslovakia] and of all agreements with that country, as well as the organization of a separatist movement, that is an unsuccessful movement subsequently described everywhere as 're-unification'. Transcarpathia, however, was never a part of Ukraine, nor of Russia, nor even of Kievan Rus' . . . .

"The final act of this scenario was decided quickly and under pressure by the Soviet Union in violation of the constitutional norms of Czechoslovakia and of international law. The treaty between the Soviet Union and Czechoslovakia signed in Moscow on June 29, 1945 concerning the transfer of Transcarpathia to the Soviet Union was ratified on November 22, 1945 by a provisional—I stress provisional—Czechoslovak National Assembly which did not have full authority to act."

OUR CONDOLENCES

On March 26, 1992, the Carpatho-Rusyn artist and writer, Julijan Kolesar, died of acute leukemia at his home in Montréal, Quebec. He was aged 65. Kolesar was a native of the Rusyn-inhabited town of Djurdevo in the Vojvodina of former Yugoslavia. He left his homeland in 1958, and after living in western Europe and the United States he emigrated to Canada in 1973, remaining in Montréal until his death. (For further details, see his biography and photograph in the Carpatho-Rusyn American, Vol. X, No. 1, 1987, p.3).

Kolesar was a remarkably prolific painter who combined traditional Vojvodinian Rusyn motifs with styles that ranged from naturalism to fauvism, expressionism, and cubism. His writings included collections of poetry, but his true avocation was to document the history, language, traditions, and folklore of his Vojvodinian Rusyn people. Under the imprint of his self-styled Julijan Kolesarov Rusnak Institute of America, he published literally thousands of pages of bound, off-set typescripts, almost all profusely illustrated and comprising 77 titles that included several etymological dictionaries of the Vojvodinian Rusyn language, two journals, and several multivolume works, including A Dictionary of Rusyn Art in the Carpathian Homeland and Pannonia (Leksikon russkoho chudožestva na Hornjici i Panoniji, 1983-85), 24 volumes, and an Encyclopedia of Rusyn Culture (Enciklopedija ross-nok, 1988-92), 24 volumes—only completed through the third letter of the Rusyn alphabet.

Whereas his paintings were known through exhibits, his enormous scholarly output remains inaccessible except in a few research libraries in North America. He is survived by his first wife, Veruna née Gnip of Novi Sad, Yugoslavia, their two daughters Vera Ivanović of Novi Sad and Ana Kolesar (herself a painter now living in Toronto, Ontario); and by his second wife Natalija née Mandzuk and their two daughters Slavka and Lubka Kolesar, all living in Canada. Vična jemu pamjat'!

WITH APPRECIATION

The Carpatho-Rusyn Research Center extends its appreciation to the following individuals for their generous donations during the course of 1992. The funds are being used to help support publication of the Carpatho-Rusyn American.

Andrew G. Fabula (La Jolla, California)—$100.00
William H. Harrick (Atlanta, Georgia)—$100.00
Robert Kraynak (Seven Hills, Ohio)—$190.00

Donations to the Carpatho-Rusyn Research Center (a nonprofit cultural organization registered in the State of New York) are tax deductible.
Dear Bishop Losten:

We read with interest reports about the Synod (council) of bishops of the Ukrainian Catholic Church which took place in L'viv between May 16 and 31, 1991. Because it was described as the first full synod of the hierarchy from the homeland and the diaspora, we assume you were present as well.

The pro-Ukrainian press in Transcarpathia provided coverage of the synod and featured an analytical report signed by the Commission for Relations and Information about Carpatho-Ukrainians (KoZI) headed by Professor Vasyl Markus in Chicago (Karpats'ka Ukrajina, July 9, 1992, pp. 2-3.) Of great concern in their report was the fact that the ordinary of the eparchy of Mukačevo, Bishop Ivan Semedij, and his auxiliary Josyf Holovač were not present at the L'viv Synod. Not surprisingly they were criticized in the press reports, along with the Greek Catholic bishops of Hajdúdorog, Prešov, and Archbishop Dolinay of Pittsburgh, for fostering “separatism” within the Ukrainian Catholic Church.

To support such an argument the following dubious logic was and still is being employed. Despite the well-known fact that since its establishment in 1771, the Eparchy of Mukačevo was never part of L'viv Archeparchy or the Kiev-Halyč Patriarchate, Ukrainian press reports have argued that since the late eighteenth century some Mukačevo hierarchs, like Bishop Andrej Bačyn's'kyj, hoped to unite ecclesiastically with their brethren in Galicia, while others in the period before World War II participated at certain synods with their Ukrainian Greek Catholic brethren in Galicia.

Such “acts” supposedly justify calling the present-day hierarchs (Bishops Semedij and Holovač) “separatists” simply because they wish to maintain the historic status quo of the Eparchy of Mukačevo as a jurisdictionally-distinct church community (ecclesia sui juris) directly under the Pope. (See the letter of Bishops Semedij and Holovač to the Pope, dated January 15, 1991, in the C-RA, Vol. IV, No. 2, p. 9.) This distinct status is, by the way, roughly the same held by all Byzantine Greek Catholic jurisdictions that derive ultimately from the Mukačevo see; namely Prešov, Hajdúdorog, and the Pittsburgh Metropolitane (together with the Passaic, Parma, and Van Nuys eparchies).

Even more ominous, however, is the public accusation in the KoZI report that the actions of Bishops Semedij and Holovač are “already a matter of state politics,” and that these issues should be resolved “by a decision of the state even if the Ukrainian democratic state does not interfere in church affairs.” Why should the state do this? Because “if someone encourages the interests of foreign powers and acts against Ukraine, then that person must be held accountable before the law.” These words speak for themselves and hark back to the time when under Soviet rule the Greek Catholic Church suffered terribly, a time we all thought was over.

To be sure, neither you nor the Synod wrote these words. But have they been repudiated? The same KoZI report did state, moreover, that the Ukrainian Greek Catholic synod issued a letter signed by 28 hierarchs which "unanimously requested that the Pope agree to recognize individual parishes [in the Eparchy of Mukačevo] that wish to belong to one Greek Catholic Church headed by its First Hierarch (the Galician Metropolitan) and the Synod of the whole 'particular' Greek Catholic Church," or who wish to form a separate eparchy “with its own law.” The Carpatho-Rusyn Research Center already has in its possession a copy of a form letter (protocol) prepared in advance, which is to be used by individual parishes in Transcarpathia who wish to join with the Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church based in L'viv. What the synod's letter calls for is a situation similar to one in which certain Eastern-rite jurisdictions in the United States would be granted permission to annex parishes from neighboring eparchies with whom they are otherwise in communion.

Can all this be true? And if it is true, then who are the separatists? Who is promoting internal divisions within the church in Ukraine? Finally, in the words of one parishioner from Transcarpathia, since there is one God, what does it matter to which jurisdiction one belongs—especially when it is a question of jurisdictions all of which are under the authority of the Pope!

Again, our readers look forward to your response.

Paul Robert Magocsi, President
Carpatho-Rusyn Research Center
August 25, 1991

HISTORY OF THE RUSYN CHURCH PUBLISHED

The East European Monograph Series of Columbia University Press in New York has just released the Reverend Athanasius B. Pekar’s History of the Church in Carpathian Rus’. The 350-page monograph, which appears in the Carpatho-Rusyn Research Center’s Classics of Carpatho-Rusyn Scholarship Series, is the most comprehensive history of the Rusyn church in Europe and America to appear in any language. Ten chapters trace church developments from earliest times to the present, including the creation of the Greek Catholic Church, the Orthodox movement, the destruction of the Greek Catholic Church under the Soviets, and its renewal during the last decade. Also included are short biographies of all bishops in Europe and America, three maps, a bibliography, and index. The book begins with a biography of the Reverend Pekar and a list of his 300 previously-published works on Rusyns compiled by Edward Kasinec and Richard Renoff.

The History of the Church in Carpathian Rus’ by Athanasius B. Pekar is available for $24.75 (US currency) from the Carpatho-Rusyn Research Center, 355 Delano Place, Fairview, NJ 07022.
CARPATHO-RUSYNs: ORTHODOXY AND GREEK CATHOLICISM

For the past three centuries there has existed a lengthy controversy concerning Orthodoxy and Greek Catholicism within the Carpatho-Rusyn community. The fact is that neither side is blameless. Both denominations are guilty of misunderstandings and misdeeds. What is most tragic is that this denominational separation in the Carpatho-Rusyn community has been exploited by many. Whether it was the nobility in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, Austro-Hungarian officials in the centuries following, Nazis during the 1940s, or Communists of the last forty years, the denominational division among Carpatho-Rusyns has been utilized by others.

Even a brief historical survey of the Rusyn people shows that most often others have used us as pawns in order to obtain their own geopolitical objectives. The ruling class of the early sixteenth century persecuted us in order to manage better their properties and to maintain a stable future for themselves. The Austro-Hungarian Empire tried to make us into a people we never were in order to control and expand their empire. The Nazis used us in order to extend and perpetuate their Third Reich. Most recently the Communists were the most successful in pitting the Orthodox against the Greek Catholics and vice versa in order to control, maintain, and perpetuate Communism. In very few instances throughout the last centuries were we as a people able or allowed to decide our own future. In almost every instance the future of the Carpatho-Rusyn people was determined by the geopolitical machinations and objectives of other empires, countries, and nations, some of which themselves no longer exist.

The Carpatho-Rusyn people have always been devout believers. This fact has been used and exploited by the many people who see us a means to their ends; whereas we have always seen it as our sole end. Unfortunately, even now, with Communism’s demise in East Central Europe, the Carpatho-Rusyn community still faces a painful struggle because of its religious divergence. What is interesting is that both sides accuse the other of allowing external interference: Greek Catholics accuse the Orthodox of outside Russian interference; the Orthodox accuse the Greek Catholics of outside Vatican interference. And there is some degree of truth in both accusations.

But pointing a finger is not the solution. Taking responsibility for ourselves as a distinct people is. And this involves respect for the decisions our Carpatho-Rusyn brothers and sisters make for themselves. While we do not have to agree with their decisions, to force one to change, to violently attack and criticize, to use political or economic subterfuge only continues to weaken us as a distinct and unique people.

What is needed from both Carpatho-Rusyn Orthodox and Carpatho-Rusyn Greek Catholics is a respect for each other and the reestablishment of the trust that certainly once existed between us, a trust that has been eroded by the infiltration of rumors from outside. We have for centuries turned to foreigners to help solve our differences and we see where they have led us. Instead of looking for foreigners who know neither our people nor our culture, we must look now to ourselves. We must further our efforts to take responsibility for ourselves and our future. This does not mean that we should isolate ourselves from the world, but rather that we should start speaking for ourselves and for our own unique needs. This process has already begun.

As a Carpatho-Rusyn American Orthodox Christian priest, what gives me the greatest sense of joy with regard to my Rusyn Greek Catholic brothers and sisters is that which should unite us most closely: our faith in Jesus Christ. Unfortunately, it is about this point, our understanding of Jesus Christ and His Church, that I also feel a sense of tragedy. For it is here that, despite our common ethnic heritage, we as Carpatho-Rusyns are most poignantly separated. Our theological differences cannot be overlooked, taken lightly, or considered insignificant.

A remarkable opportunity in history has arisen for us to work together for a peaceful and equitable coexistence as Carpatho-Rusyn Greek Catholics and Carpatho-Rusyn Orthodox, but only if we toil to do so on our own without outside interference. We must strive toward this goal before the present opportunity disappears behind new gathering clouds of geopolitical ambitions.

The period of religious inquisitions is over. The era of religious propaganda and half truths is now on the wane. The only weapon that we Christians have at hand, which has always been ours is the simple power of persuasion. The time for polemics and rhetoric has passed and we now must act upon our faith by living our life in Christ.

Neither the Orthodox nor the Greek Catholics have the luxury of living in obscurity anymore. The world is growing smaller everyday. What is said and done in Eastern Europe no longer is limited to the audience of a single village but is seen by the entire world. Only one thing can win out over all and that is the common love that we have for each other: a love founded not only upon our common ethnic heritage and our common humanity, but above all else a love that is based upon our love for Jesus Christ. Despite all that we as a people have gone through, our love for Jesus Christ and His Church above all else has remained the cornerstone and foundation of the Carpatho-Rusyn people.

The Reverend Luke Mihaly
Holy Trinity Church
Danbury, Connecticut
Johnstown, Pennsylvania. From September 4 to 6, 1992, Johnstown’s historic Cambria City neighborhood, which a century earlier was home to thousands of immigrants, most of them from Eastern Europe, played host to the 54th National Folk Festival. The traveling festival, in its final year of a three-year run in Johnstown, offered over seventy food booths, four performance stages, demonstrations of traditional crafts, and tours of Cambria City’s ten ethnic churches. For the second consecutive year, the event included a comprehensive Carpatho-Rusyn cultural and educational display, which was sponsored by St. Mary’s Byzantine Catholic Church. The exhibit featured folk costumes from across Carpathian Rus’, ručnykj (embroidered ritual cloths), video presentations about Rusyns, books, ceramics, wood carvings, icons, pysankty, and a map of the Carpatho-Rusyn homeland. The display was organized and staffed by Dave Felix of Johnstown and Keith Koshute of Windber, Pennsylvania. In addition, St. Mary’s Church prepared and sold traditional Rusyn food items.

Also participating in the festival was SS. Peter and Paul Orthodox Greek Catholic Church of Windber. Women of the parish demonstrated the art of embroidering Easter basket covers and displayed several examples of their work. The church also operated a food booth.

A partial view of the Carpatho-Rusyn display at the 54th National Folk Festival in Johnstown, Pennsylvania.

Bardejovské Kúpele, Czecho-Slovakia. On November 6-7, 1992, a seminar on the codification of the Rusyn language was held in the resort town of Bardejovské Kúpele in north-eastern Slovakia. Sponsored by the Rusyn Renaissance Society (Rusyn’ska Obroda) of Czechoslovakia and the Carpatho-Rusyn Research Center, the seminar attracted nearly eighty scholars, writers, and journalists from all countries where Rusyns live: Ukraine, Czechoslovakia, Poland, Hungary, and former Yugoslavia, as well as linguists from the United States, Sweden, Switzerland, and Monaco. The seminar, or “language congress,” marked the first time ever a coordinated effort was made to create a literary standard for the Rusyn language. A resolution was adopted containing the principles and aims of the language builders, and a standing coordinating commission was created to continue the process of codification. For further details, see the article, Scholarly Seminar on the Codification of the Rusyn Language, in this issue.

Kiev, Ukraine. On November 11-13, 1992, Professor Paul Robert Magocsi was the guest of the Institute for Nationality Relations and Politics of the Ukrainian Academy of Sciences where he delivered three lectures on the Rusyn question and the general status of national minorities in post-1989 East Central Europe. In recent years, Ukrainian public and scholarly circles have been highly critical of the Rusyn national revival within its borders (Transcarpathia) and in neighboring states, fearing that it may be a threat to the unity of the Ukrainian people and to the recently-created independent Ukrainian state.

The audience of Ukrainian specialists in Kiev heard from Professor Magocsi about aspects of the Rusyn movement that they had not known before, and they agreed that in the restructuring of a democratic Ukrainian state all citizens, including Rusyns, should have the right to identify themselves as they wish. In the words of Professor Ivan Kuras, director of the Institute for Nationality Relations and advisor to Ukrainian president, Leonid Kravčuk, his center will continue in the future to analyze the Rusyn question and take into consideration both the pro-Rusyn and pro-Ukrainian aspects of the problem.

Prešov, Czecho-Slovakia. On November 27-28, 1992, members of the Rusyn Terminological and Orthographic Commission met according to plans set out three weeks earlier at the Scholarly Seminar for the Codification of the Rusyn Language. This second meeting of the commission was hosted by its chairman, Dr. Jurij Pan’ko of Šafárik University in Prešov, and included Myroslava Chomjak and Petro Trochanovskij from the Lemko Region of Poland; Ivan Kerča and Vasyl’ Šočka from Subcarpathian Rus’ in Ukraine; and Stefan Bunganyc and Aleksander Zozuljak from the Prešov Region in Slovakia. Also present were the Rusyn-language editors from Prešov, Anna Pliškova and Anna Kuzmjakova.

During its two days of discussions, the commission approved Rusyn terms for morphology and, in part, for syntax. They plan to complete work on terms for syntax and move on to phonetics during their next meeting on January 21-22, 1993. Their goal is to create a common orthography and grammatical terminology for all Rusyn language grammars and textbooks wherever they are published.

OUR FRONT COVER

The recent religious revival in Subcarpathian Rus’, (Ukraine’s Transcarpathia) has affected individuals of all ages. A young girl prays at the Greek Catholic pilgrimage (ot-pust) in Boronjava-Sokernycja, August 2, 1992. Photo: Kisan Productions.
Prešov, Czecho-Slovakia. In June 1992, the Greek Catholic eparchy of Prešov revived the religious magazine Blahovisnik, which is intended for the Carpatho-Rusyn faithful living in the Prešov Region of northeastern Slovakia. The publication had appeared sporadically since 1968, when the Greek Catholic Church was restored. Now edited by the Reverend Dr. Marian Potaš, the revived Blahovisnik is entirely in Ukrainian (using both the Latin and Cyrillic alphabets). In a letter of well wishes to the new editor, the Carpatho-Rusyn Research Center suggested that the "popularity of Blahovisnik would increase among Rusyns if it were in their own language." In urging the editor to consider publishing in Rusyn, the C-RRC mentioned how the local Rusyn language now has a written "codified form, which for church-related material is best translated by the [Medzilaborce parish priest], Father František Krajňák."

Interested readers can obtain the publication by writing to Dr. o. Marían Potaš, OSBM, Redakcija Blahovisnika, ul. Vajanského 31, 08 001 Prešov, Czecho-Slovakia.

Užhorod, Ukraine. On June 19, 1992, the newspaper Podkarpats'ka Rus' informed the public of Transcarpathia of what Ukraine's President Leonid Kravčuk said just ten days before the December 1, 1991 referendum of Ukrainian Podkarpats'ka Rus' in Kiev could prepare the details of a law so that Transcarpathian Regional Parliament (Narodna Rada), then can independence and his own election as president of the newly-formed state "[that is, the Czech Republic]."

"We are convinced that the fate of Transcarpathia has once and for all been decided within the bounds of a democratic, independent, and united Ukraine."

"We condemn the recent manifestation of political Rusynism inspired by enemies of Ukraine and by elements within the old Bolshevik and imperialist governmental structures, that are supported by revisionist circles among the former rulers in Transcarpathia. Within this conjectural constellation local ambitious individuals along with remnants of reactionary Russophiles and Magyarones are carrying out activity that reaches extreme Ukranophobia."

Bratislava, Czecho-Slovakia. On November 27, 1992, the daily newspaper Pravda reported on the visit of Slovakia's Minister of Foreign Affairs, Milan Kňažko, to Kiev, the capital of Ukraine. The Ukrainian government has often raised the question of "Ukrainians" in Slovakia. Minister Kňažko reported: "We discussed the problem of the Rusyn and Ukrainian minorities. Our view is that individuals should decide themselves to which nationality they wish to belong."

As for statements by some Czech politicians in Prague that have dealt with Rusyns and that demand the "return" of Subcarpathian Rus' (Ukrainian Transcarpathia) to Czecho-Slovakia, Minister Kňažko dismissed these by stating that "the Slovak government considers them to be views of another state [that is, the Czech Republic]."

On November 28, the chairman of the Rusyn Renaissance Society (Rusyn'ska Obroda), Vasyl' Turok, issued a communiqué which in part read: "The Rusyn Renaissance Society welcomes the results of the meetings that Slovakia's Minister of Foreign Affairs Milan Kňažko had with his counterparts in Kiev. . . . We agree completely that the people themselves must decide to which nationality they wish to belong."

"The Rusyn Renaissance Society," continued the communiqué, "supports completely the constitution of the Slovak Republic. . . . Together with the Slovak people, we Rusyns wish to build our common republic without making any political demands."

INDEX TO THE CARPATHO-RUSYN AMERICAN

An index to the Carpatho-Rusyn American during its first eleven years of existence, 1978 through 1988, is now available. Prepared by University of Dayton Professor Raymond M. Herbenick, the 24-page index includes over 1000 entries listing feature articles, their authors, letters to the editor, events, photographs, and maps.

The large format and easy-to-read text is available for $10.00 (US) from: Carpatho-Rusyn Research Center, 355 Delano Place, Fairview, NJ 07022.