FROM THE EDITOR

The enthusiasm which has gripped the Rusyn community in Europe and America in the past four years since the revolution of 1989 continues to be refueled at every turn with new developments both in the community itself and in the scholarly world which studies and monitors the group’s life. The recently established Carpatho-Rusyn Society based in Pittsburgh, for instance, is thriving under the leadership of active and energetic Rusyn Americans in western Pennsylvania. In September 1994, the society sponsored a Rusyn Day Picnic in Monroeville, Pennsylvania, attended by nearly 200 members.

The society has also developed a comprehensive display of Rusyn culture, including costumes, embroidery, woodwork, and religious items. Representatives of the society have already presented the display at events such as the 50th anniversary convention of the American Carpatho-Russian Youth of the American Carpatho-Russian Orthodox Greek Catholic Church in Pittsburgh on Labor Day weekend, as well as at the October convention of the Orthodox Society of America, successor to two Rusyn-American fraternal organizations (UROBA and Liberty) in Westlake, Ohio. The Carpatho-Rusyn Society’s publication, The New Rusyn Times, reports on cultural events, and offers the commentaries of visitors to the homeland, as well as brief reviews of books on Rusyns and recordings of Rusyn religious and secular music by performers in America and Europe. Among other activities, the society is presently planning a Rusyn Heritage Tour to the homeland to be led by members John Righetti and Jerry Jumba in the summer of 1995. The Carpatho-Rusyn Society can be reached at 125 Westland Drive, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania 15217 (tel. 412-682-2869).

At the same time, many Americans of Rusyn background are sitting back to enjoy reading Paul Robert Magocsi’s Our People, which appeared in late 1994 in a revised and significantly enlarged edition with an additional fifteen fascinating historical photographs—totaling well over 100 photographs, maps, and charts. The book contains a new chapter on Carpatho-Rusyns in Canada and a greatly expanded “Root Seekers Guide to the Homeland” that offers the most complete list to be found anywhere of Carpatho-Rusyn inhabited towns and villages in central Europe. The guide provides the name of the town or village, the pre-World War I county or Austrian Galician district, the present administrative subdivision, and the present country. Also useful to root seekers is the fact that the names are given in their present-day official form, as well as in a number of other variants which are historically relevant—Hungarian, Polish, Romanian, Rusyn, Serbo-Croatian, Slovak, and Ukrainian. Finally, the Carpatho-Rusyn Research Center itself has just produced an updated listing of publications on Rusyns, including Our People, available for purchase.

The larger scholarly community has also been active in its exploration of Carpatho-Rusyn topics (see the RECENT EVENTS section of this issue). At the 26th National Convention of the American Association for the Advancement of Slavic Studies in Philadelphia in November 1994, two presentations concerning Rusyns were given. Professor Elaine Rusinko of the University of Maryland discussed Rusyn literature from the point of view of post-colonial literary theory, and talked about how the literature of Carpatho-Rusyns presents a unique and intriguing case to scholars in several respects. Later, as a participant in a panel on Orthodoxy in Eastern Europe. I spoke about the Orthodox Church in Slovakia, whose members are nearly all Carpatho-Rusyns. At next year’s AAASS national convention scheduled for Washington, D.C., on October 26-29, 1995, an entire panel will be devoted to Carpatho-Rusyns. Papers on three major aspects of the Rusyn revival—politics, literature, and language—will be presented by established scholars in the Slavic academic world. As at the Philadelphia convention, the Carpatho-Rusyn Research Center will again have its own booth at the book exhibit.

Meanwhile, on January 27, 1995, in Bratislava, the capital of Slovakia, a celebratory event took place, announcing the long awaited codification of the Carpatho-Rusyn standard literary language as spoken in the Prešov Region. This will have tremendous implications for the future of Carpatho-Rusyns both in the homeland and abroad. From its very beginnings, the Rusyn movement has called for the creation of a standard language to be used in its nationality building, in its schools, in the media, and also to be represented by a university department. And from the beginning of the recent national revival, scholars, writers, and poets have been occupied with the precise definition of the standard language.

Rusyns in Czechoslovakia were long blocked from having radio and television programs, university courses, and elementary school classes in the Rusyn language because the prevailing powers refused to approve use of an uncodified language. Now, with a codified form of Rusyn formally recognized, all arguments for not using Rusyn, whether by secular or religious institutions, fall by the wayside. It is true that up to now people did write and publish in Rusyn, but editorial boards were faced daily with questions of proper linguistic forms and usage. With the standard form of Rusyn defined and detailed in grammars, dictionaries, and orthographic guides, such questions have now been resolved.

The appearance of a Rusyn standard language is truly a success story resulting from political changes in East Central Europe following the revolution of 1989. That the language has been defined and its existence formally proclaimed demonstrates concretely that the drive and concern for human rights on the European continent is at last being meaningfully applied to Central Europe. The creation and announcement of the Rusyn standard language is likewise a successful and positive result of the Slovak government’s policy on national minorities, which ought to inspire Rusyns in other countries where the political situation is not as favorable toward them as in Slovakia, for instance, in Ukraine’s Transcarpathia.

For our sisters and brothers in the homeland, the possession of a standard literary language for use throughout the society will add immeasurable depth and dimension to Rusyn consciousness. For us, Rusyn Americans and students of Slavic history, culture, and language, the creation of the standard Rusyn language should permit the production of reliable tools for learning the language—grammar texts, tapes, CDs. The possession of a codified and recognized literary language places all of us, so to speak, officially on the linguistic map. We extend our sincere congratulations to all who worked so diligently to achieve this goal.
IVAN JU. PĚŠČÁK (1904-1972)

December 20, 1994 marked the ninetieth anniversary of the birth of Dr. Ivan Pěščák—teacher, editor, lawyer, and prominent civic and political activist of the Carpatho-Rusyn people. Pěščák was born into an impoverished peasant family in the Prešov Region village of Vel’ky Lipník. He attended a Rusyn elementary school in Prešov and later the Russian-language high school in Mukacevo, and took his law degree at Charles University in Prague.

As a member of the Union of Rusyn Teachers in Slovakia, Pěščák was intensely concerned with the problem of Rusyn schools in eastern Slovakia. Together with the president of the union, Ivan Gender, he organized and edited the newspaper, Russkaja škola (Rusyn School). In this newspaper, as well as in his writings addressed to government officials, political parties, and political movements, he managed to raise the quality of Rusyn schools and culture.

Pěščák was editor and contributor to the newspapers Russkoe slovo (The Rusyn Word) and Russkij vestnik (The Rusyn Messenger), for which he founded the supplement, Sotackij russkij vestnik (The Sotak Rusyn Messenger). He was also the founder and publisher of the newspaper, Prjaševskaja Rus’ (Prešov Region Rus’). In March 1945, Pěščák helped create Prjaševs'čina (The Prešov Region), the official publication of the Ukrainian National Council of the Prešov Region. Apparent in his writings was his courage in defending the interests and rights of Rusyns living primarily in eastern Slovakia, and he was often involved in polemics regarding these issues.

Pěščák gave priority to the question of youth, their upbringing in the spirit of patriotism, their education, and the strengthening of their moral character. He co-founded the Ob’edinenie russkoj molodezi Slovakii (Society of Rusyn Youth of Slovakia), which became very successful under his leadership. His erudition, resourcefulness, and political acumen became particularly apparent in this context. One result of his initiatives and organizational work was the establishment in the mid-1930s of a Greek Catholic Rusyn high school in Prešov, a project supported also by Greek Catholic Bishop Pavel Gojdyc.

Pěščák worked for the “broadest autonomy for Subcarpathian Rus’,” which was guaranteed by the Treaty of St. Germain on September 10, 1919, and strengthened by the first constitution of the Czechoslovak Republic adopted in 1920. Pěščák saw autonomy as the first stage toward the eventual complete political, economic, social, and national development of the Carpatho-Rusyn people. As a deputy of the Czechoslovak National Parliament in 1937-1939, Pěščák focused on several issues: the right of national self-determination, defence of human rights, the problem of denationalization, the government’s reneging on publicly made promises, unemployment, and the on-going poverty of Rusyn peasants. Pěščák supported the anti-fascist and democratic national and social orientations in Rusyn political life.

When Slovakia had practically achieved autonomy and Hungary continued to threaten annexation of neighboring Subcarpathian Rus’, all the members of the Rusyn Bloc, including Pěščák, signed a “Declaration” on September 21, 1938 in Prague that demanded for Rusyns the realization of “our right of self-determination and our right to govern ourselves.” This was the first step toward autonomy for Subcarpathian Rus’. At a meeting of pro-Russian and pro-Ukrainian representatives of the Carpatho-Rusyn people held at the governor’s house in Uzhhorod on October 8, 1938, the first autonomous government of Subcarpathian Rus’ headed by Avedik Brodij was formed. Pěščák entered the government as state secretary responsible for the justice department and later the finance department as well. This first autonomous government lasted only three weeks, after which the Czechoslovak central authorities appointed the pro-Ukrainian Averbystyn Vološyn as prime minister.

With the change of government in Subcarpathian Rus’, Pěščák left his post and returned to eastern Slovakia. There he put all his energies into preparations for the elections to the Slovak parliament. After the formation of an independent German-oriented Slovak state in March 1939, Pěščák was considered a potential danger to Slovakia because of his courageous participation in the parliament, press, and in pre-election activities. He was arrested, severely beaten, and sent to a detention center. After his release he was taken from Prešov to Medzilaborce where he remained under close police supervision.

In spite of on-going persecution, Pěščák took an active part in the underground anti-fascist movement during World War II. After the liberation of eastern Slovakia, he helped revitalize the activity of the Rusyn National Council of the Prešov Region, which was soon replaced by the Ukrainian National Council. Thanks in part to his efforts, cultural institutions such as the Ukrainian National Theater in Prešov (now the Duchnový Theater) and the Dukla’s Folk Ensemble were founded.

Unfortunately, in 1949 the Communist government of Czechoslovakia accused Pěščák and his family of being bourgeois nationalists. As a result, by the early 1950s he was forbidden to practice law, was removed from his home in Sabinov, and was forced to support himself as a manual laborer. Within a few years after retirement, Pěščák died on December 7, 1972, after a long and difficult illness.

Janko Pěščák
Prague, Czech Republic
The recent national revival among Carpatho-Rusyns in Europe is closely connected with the revolutionary year 1989. Ever since that time, the Rusyn Renaissance Society/Ruthenian Revival (Rusyns'ka Obroda) has been in the forefront of the Rusyn national revival wherever it has been unfolding in Europe. Although based in Prešov and responsible primarily for developments among Carpatho-Rusyns in Slovakia, the Rusyn Renaissance Society has at the same time become the most active of all cultural organizations among the six European countries where Rusyns live.

One reason for the success of the Rusyn Renaissance Society has to do with the generous financial support it receives from the government of Slovakia as part of its policy of assisting in the preservation of minority cultures living within its borders. A second and even more important reason for the organization’s success is the commitment and dedication of a small group of leaders who are trying their best to reverse the tide of national assimilation and to create a sense of pride in the present and future generations of Rusyns, particularly in Slovakia, but also in neighboring countries—Ukraine, Poland, Hungary.

The Rusyn Renaissance Society came into being in the wake of Czechoslovakia’s Velvet Revolution that began on November 17, 1989. Already in January 1990, an extraordinary meeting of the Cultural Union of Ukrainian Workers (KSUT) was held in Prešov to discuss the future of the Carpatho-Rusyn people of Slovakia following the fall of the Communists from power. During Communist rule, Carpatho-Rusyns were officially designated as Ukrainians. The name Rusyn as well as any sense that Rusyns might form a distinct nationality was banned. Those who gathered at the January 1990 meeting in Prešov all agreed that the old Communist-sounding name of their cultural organization had to be changed, but they disagreed as to what the new name—and therefore national orientation—should be. Some wanted the name Ukrainian and the Ukrainian orientation to be continued as during the Communist era; others—mostly among the younger generation—wanted the name Rusyn and a Rusyn cultural orientation.

When agreement over the name and orientation proved impossible to reach, several pro-Rusyn activists set up in March 1990 in the town of Medzilaborce the Rusyn Renaissance Society. Its founders were Dr. Michal Bycko, Stepan Bunganyć, Father František Krajinjak, and Mychal Turok-Heteš. Meanwhile, the pro-Ukrainian activists in Prešov changed the name of the old Cultural Union of Ukrainian Workers to the Union of Rusyn-Ukrainians of Czechoslovakia. That renamed organization also continued to receive the same generous state funding that during nearly four decades the Czechoslovak government had provided the pro-Communist Cultural Union of Ukrainian Workers (KSUT). As for the newly-founded Rusyn Renaissance Society, it did not yet receive any state funding. Nevertheless, with the help of the town of Medzilaborce, the society’s leaders managed to publish in the spring of 1990 the first issue of a public affairs and Christian magazine called Rusyn. This was the first time since World War II that a Rusyn-language publication appeared in Slovakia.

Within a few months, it became clear that a Rusyn cultural organization in Slovakia could not survive if it were based only in one part of Rusyn-inhabited territory and if it did not receive government funding. Thus, in November 1990, the Rusyn Renaissance Society decided to become an organization representing Rusyn throughout Slovakia. In that regard, it transferred its headquarters to Prešov and elected Vasyl’ Turok as its new chairman. At the time, Turok was a dramatist with the recently renamed Aleksander Duchnovy theater (formerly Ukrainian National Theater). In Prešov, which to this day has provided space for the central offices of the Rusyn Renaissance Society.

The goals of the Rusyn Renaissance Society have remained the same since its establishment in 1990. Among those goals is the standardization of a Rusyn literary language, which should be used in schools, publications, the theater, on radio, and in other public activities that are representative of the Carpatho-Rusyn people in Slovakia. Rusyn should also be used in Eastern Christian (Greek Catholic and Orthodox) church services, a long-time goal of one of the founding members of the organization, Father František Krajinjak.

Under Turok’s direction, the Rusyn Renaissance Society did manage to receive an annual budgetary grant from the Slovak Ministry of Culture beginning in 1991.

In order to carry out its cultural goals, the Rusyn Renaissance Society has continued publication of the magazine Rusyn (six times per year); has issued nearly twenty books on Rusyn folklore, history, language, and literature; and, since August 1991, has published a weekly newspaper, Narodny novyny, under the editorship of Aleksander Zozuljak who is simultaneously responsible for the organization’s entire publication program. The society has also sponsored several folk festivals, art exhibits, cultural evenings, and specifically for young people an annual Rusyn Rock Music Festival which is now in its second year. The Rusyn Renaissance Society has also worked closely with the Aleksander Duchnovy theater and the Puls Rusyn National Folk Ensemble, both of which perform at all major functions that the society sponsors whether in Slovakia or abroad.

The international impact of the Rusyn Renaissance Society has been particularly important in bringing together Carpatho-Rusyns from all countries where they live in Europe (Ukraine, Slovakia, Poland, Hungary, Czech Republic, Yugoslavia) and North America (United States and Canada). In March 1991, the society hosted in Medzilaborce the first World Congress of Rusyns. This, indeed, was the first time Carpatho-Rusyns from all countries met to discuss the problems they face in trying to preserve their culture and language for future generations. The society has also joined with other national minorities on the European continent, and in November 1993 it became one of the founding members of the Maison de Pays, an international organization based in Cannes, France that is concerned with the fate of minority cultures.

As part of its broader cultural mandate, the Rusyn Renaissance Society has sponsored several international scholarly conferences. Two of these, held in May 1992 and October 1994, dealt with historical, cultural, and religious problems in the past and present. Of especially practical significance was a working seminar on the codification of the Rusyn language, popularly known as the first Rusyn Language Congress, held in Brdejevské Kupele in November 1992. In the presence of several distinguished sociolinguists from abroad, writers from all countries where Rusyns live agreed on several theoretical and practical issues regarding codification (see the Carpatho-Rusyn American, Vol. XV, No. 4, Winter 1992, pp. 4-5).

One suggestion made at the language congress was to
create a permanent scholarly institution to coordinate efforts at language codification. Two months later, in January 1993, the Rusyn Renaissance Society established in Prešov an Institute of Rusyn Language and Culture, eventually headed by Dr. Vasyl' Jabur. In its less than two years of existence, the institute has published a Rusyn language primer and reader for elementary schools, a terminological dictionary, and an orthographic rule book. With the assistance of Slovakia's Ministry of Education, the Institute of Rusyn Language and Culture is expected to be transformed in January 1995 into a university department (katedra) at the Pedagogical Faculty of Šafárik University in Prešov. That same month, the efforts of the Rusyn Renaissance Society and the Institute of Rusyn Language and Culture culminated with the formal announcement of the creation of Rusyn literary standard in the presence of governmental officials, academics, and international guests who met in Bratislava, Slovakia to mark this historic occasion.

Executive Board

Milan Andraš was born in 1953 in Reněšov, a Carpatho-Rusyn village in the Prešov Region. He is a professor of architectural engineering at the Slovak Technical University in Bratislava, where he has taught since 1978. He received his doctorate in 1968, and since the Revolution of 1989 has been active in organizing Rusyns who live far from their native villages in the capital of Slovakia. He founded the Dobrians'kyj Student Society for university students of Rusyn background in Bratislava as well as the Bratislava branch of the Rusyn Renaissance Society. He serves as resident liaison for the society with various Slovak government ministries, and he writes frequently on Rusyn themes for the Slovak press.

Ivan Banduryč was born in 1934 in Strihovce, Humenné county. After graduating from the Russian gymnasium (high school) in Humenné, he attended the Technical University in Bratislava, where he received a Ph.D. in the history of art and specialized in problems of cultural organizations. Since 1954, he has lived in Bardejov, where for over thirty years he worked in the field of cultural conservation, including two decades as director of the Bardejov Regional Office for Architectural Conservation. During his years in that office, the old city center of Bardejov was restored and in 1986 was awarded a European Gold Medal for its achievements in restoration. Since 1990, Dr. Banduryč has been an outspoken promoter of Carpatho-Rusyn culture and is the head of the Bardejov branch of the Rusyn Renaissance Society.

Fedor Barna was born in 1933 in Nižná Polianka, near Bardejov. In 1947, his family was among those who were encouraged by the authorities to emigrate to the Volhynia region of northwestern Soviet Ukraine. He graduated from Leningrad University with a degree in journalism, worked for a while as a journalist in Russia, then as a researcher at the regional museum in Volhynia's central city of Rivne. In the mid-1960s, he was allowed to return to Slovakia where he served on the editorial board of the Ukrainian-language newspaper Nove žytja until 1991. Since 1992, he has headed the Prešov branch of the Rusyn Renaissance Society, among whose activities has been the sponsorship of an international historical conference on Rusyns in October 1994.

Pavel Bircak was born in 1933 in Drienica, a Carpatho-Rusyn village in Prešov county. After graduating from the Russian gymnasium (high school) in Prešov in 1953, he attended the Slovak Technical University in Prešov, from where he received a degree in chemical engineering in 1958. He worked for nearly three decades as an engineer at the East Slovak Steel Works outside Košice. He is active in the Aleksander Duchnovyc Society in Prešov and heads the Košice branch of the Rusyn Renaissance Society.

Štefan Bunganyc, born in Prešov in 1914, is the senior activist among Carpatho-Rusyns in Slovakia. He graduated from the Faculty of Science of Charles University in Prague in 1938, then worked in the Slovak Ministry of Finance during World War II. A teacher by profession, he served as director of the Russian gymnasium in Humenné (1945-1953) and the secondary school in Medzilaborce (1953-1960), before returning to teaching full time several Rusyn village schools until his retirement in 1976.

Bunganyc has always been an outspoken advocate of Rusyns. On the eve of the Communist takeover in 1948, he proposed that the government create a Rusyn autonomous district and adopt for official use there a distinct Rusyn literary language. Two decades later, during the Prague Spring of 1968, he called for a revival of the Rusyn national orientation and the creation of a Rusyn National Council, demands which were made impossible after the Soviet-led invasion of the country in August of that year. Following the November 1989 Velvet Revolution, Bunganyc proposed the creation of the Rusyn Renaissance Society in Medzilaborce, of which he was a founding member in March
Marijan Charitun was born in 1963 in Snina. Since his graduation from high school he has worked for the Humenné county government. He has been a member of the Rusyn Renaissance Society since its establishment in March 1990, and since 1993 has been head of its branch in Humenné.

Jan Kalynjak was born in 1947, just after his parents had emigrated from the Prešov Region to Volynia in the Soviet Ukraine. In the early 1960s, his family returned to Slovakia and Kalynjak attended Comenius University in Bratislava, specializing in ethnography. Recently, he has been working as cultural officer for the county government in Svidnik, where in 1992 he established and heads the Svidnik branch of the Rusyn Renaissance Society. Since 1993, he also serves as vice-chairman of the society. Kalynjak has been particularly active in working with young people, and under his direction the Svidnik branch of the Rusyn Renaissance Society has sponsored annual Rusyn rock music festivals in 1993 and 1994.

Ljubomir Latta was born in 1960 in Snina. He graduated from the Teacher's College of Šafárik University in Prešov in the mid-1980's. After graduation he worked for the city government in Snina as vice-director of the office for cultural affairs and head of the office for artistic activity and adult education. Since 1993, he works for the Slovak Customs Department and has been stationed in Rusyn border villages. He is head of the Snina branch of the Rusyn Renaissance Society, which under his direction has been particularly active in sponsoring exhibitions of contemporary Rusyn artists.

Nykolaj Ljaš was born in 1933 in Bajerovce, a Carpatho-Rusyn village in Prešov county. In 1950, he completed his secondary schooling in Sabinov, then studied acting at the State Conservatory in Bratislava, completing its program in 1954. He joined the Ukrainian National Theater in Prešov, where he performed for nearly four decades. Ljaš became best known in the Prešov Region as the voice of the godfather (kum) on the popular satirical program, Besídí kumiv (Talks Between the Godparents), on Slovakia's Ukrainian-language radio broadcasts. His appearances as a godfather date back to the 1960s, and throughout the entire show he has always spoken exclusively in Rusyn.

Ljaš has never shied away from controversy. During the Prague Spring of 1968, he was an outspoken advocate for the renewal of a Rusyn nationality. He took up that cause publicly once again after the Velvet Revolution of 1989. In 1990, he was elected deputy to the Prešov city council, and for the next four years he defended Rusyn interests. Since early 1994, he has worked as public relations manager in the editorial offices of Narodný noviny. In December 1994, he was elected chairman of the Rusyn Renaissance Society.

Jaroslav Sisak was born in 1939 in Pichné, a Carpatho-Rusyn village in Humenné county. After completing in 1953 his secondary schooling in Snina and Michalovce, he attended the Pedagogical School in Prešov. Upon graduation in 1957, he began his career as an actor at the Ukrainian National Theater in Prešov. In 1966, he was sent by the Czechoslovak government to the Institute of Theatrical Studies in Kiev. Upon completing his advanced studies in 1971, Sisak returned to the Ukrainian National Theater in Prešov as a stage director.

In 1982, Sisak was appointed director of the Ukrainian National Theater, which includes both the dramatic company and the Dukl'a Folk Ensemble (PULS). Under his direction, the theater began to perform a few plays in Rusyn as early as 1986. Then, after the fall of Communist rule, the theater was renamed the Aleksander Duchnový Theater, and since 1991 its repertoire is mainly in Rusyn. Sisak has assured that the Duchnový Theater and PULS perform at all major Rusyn functions, including the first two world congresses. For the first time, the theater has performed in the Rusyn language in festivals abroad, including England, Wales, and Sweden.

Vasyl' Turok was born in 1940 in Habura, a Carpatho-Rusyn village near Medzilaborce in Humenné county. While his father was working in Bratislava, Turok completed high school in Slovakia's capital, then attended the Philosophical Faculty of Comenius University, graduating in 1963. From 1964 to 1985, he taught Slovak at the Ukrainian gymnasiu in Prešov, and for over a decade during those years taught Russian as well at the Orthodox Seminary. Since 1985, he has been a dramatist at the Ukrainian National Theater, and was among those who actively urged that institution be renamed the Aleksander Duchnový Theater in later 1991. He was also responsible for the introduction of plays performed in Rusyn. Since the Velvet Revolution of November 1989, Turok has been the leading figure in the Rusyn national revival in Slovakia. In November 1990, he became chairman of the Rusyn Renaissance Society; in March 1992, he was instrumental in convening the World Congress of Rusyns, for which he was elected chairman of the interregional committee. From that time until leaving the chairmanship of the society in December 1994, Turok has represented Rusyns on various advisory boards of the Slovak government that deal with national minority issues.

Anna Kuzmjakavá was born in 1949 in Straňany (formerly Folvark), a Carpatho-Rusyn village in Stará Lúbovňa county. After completing high school in Stará Lúbovňa in 1968, she attended the Pedagogical Faculty of Šafárik University in Prešov, graduating in 1978. For the next decade she worked as an editor on
Marija Paraska Mal'covs'ka was born in 1951 in Ruský Potok, a Carpatho-Rusyn village in Humenné county. She completed high school in Prešov in 1970, then attended the Philosophical Faculty of Šafárik University. She received a Ph.D. in 1975, with a specialty in Ukrainian-language teaching methodology. For the next three years, Dr. Mal'covs'ka worked as a researcher at the Institute of Literature at the Slovak Academy of Sciences in Bratislava. Returning to Prešov in 1978, she worked as an editor for the Ukrainian magazine Duklja. Since 1991, she has been on the editorial board of Narodný novýný and the magazine Rusyn. Dr. Mal’covs’ka is an accomplished writer and has published two collections of short stories in Ukrainian, Jul’ cyna tajna (1988) and Potocyna (1991), both of which are filled with themes that express the joys and sufferings of Rusyn life. Her most recent collection of short stories, Manna i oskamyna (1994), are entirely in Rusyn.

Anna Pliskova was born in 1964 in Snina. After graduating from high school in her native town in 1982, she enrolled in the Philosophical Faculty of Šafárik University in Prešov. In 1987, she was awarded a Ph.D., with a specialty in the Ukrainian and Slovak languages. In 1989, Dr. Pliskova began working on the editorial staff of the Ukrainian-language newspaper Nove žyt'ja, where she promoted a Rusyn orientation. Since the establishment in August 1991 of Slovakia’s Rusyn-language newspaper, Narodný novýný, Dr. Pliskova has been its associate editor. She contributes actively to the language codification work of the Institute of Rusyn Language and Culture.

Aleksander Zozuljak was born in 1953 in Prešov, the son of the well-known post-World War II Ukrainian writer, Vasyl’ Zozuljak. After completing Prešov’s Ukrainian-language gymnasium (high school) in 1972. he attended the Pedagogical Faculty of Šafárik University, graduating in 1976 with a specialization in Ukrainian language, Ukrainian literature, and in fine arts. Zozuljak is an accomplished expressionist painter, whose works have been exhibited in several local shows throughout Slovakia.

Beginning in 1987, he served on the editorial board of the Ukrainian-language newspaper, Nove žyt'ja. Following the November 1989 revolution, Zozuljak began immediately to take an active role in civic affairs as head of the Initiative Group of Rusyn-Ukrainians, which worked to change the exclusively Ukrainian orientation that had dominated Rusyn life since World War II. At the same time, he became editor-in-chief of Nove žyt'ja, and in early 1990 he introduced the Holos Rusyniv (Voice of the Rusyns) section written entirely in Rusyn. His pro-Rusyn policies alienated him from the paper’s new publisher, the Union of Rusyn-Ukrainians of Czecho-Slovakia, and in 1991 he was asked to establish a Rusyn-language publishing program for the Rusyn Renaissance Society. Since that time Zozuljak has served as editor-in-chief of Narodný novýný, the magazine Rusyn, and the society’s book publishing division. He is also a member of the executive board of the Rusyn Renaissance Society.

In January 1994, Professor Jabur became director of the Institute of Rusyn Language and Culture in Prešov. Before the end of that year, he published a Rule-Book of the Rusyn Language, a 42,000 word Orthographic Dictionary, and has overseen the publication of Rusyn-language textbooks for elementary schools. Professor Jabur is also a member of the executive board of the Rusyn Renaissance Society.

Jurij Pan’ko was born in 1933 in Humenský Rokytov, a Carpatho-Rusyn village in Humenné county. After completing studies in 1953 at the Russian gymnasium in Prešov, he attended Šafárik University in Prešov, specializing in the Russian and Ukrainian languages. Following graduation in 1957, he worked as a gymnasium teacher in Stará Lúbovňa and Prešov, and from 1962 to the present has taught Russian at Šafárik University. In 1970, he received a Ph.D. from the University of Brno, his “second” doctorate from that university in 1991, and three years later was promoted to the rank of associate professor (docent) by Comenius University in Bratislava.

In January 1992, Dr. Pan’ko became the first head of the newly-established Institute of Rusyn Language and Culture. In cooperation with Rusyn scholars and writers in neighboring countries, he published a Terminological Dictionary of the Rusyn Language (1994). Together with Professor Vasyl’ Jabur, Dr. Pan’ko is engaged at the Rusyn language institute in overseeing publications in the newly-standardized Prešov Region variant of the Rusyn language.
The following is a report by the Very Reverend Daniel D. Ressetar of Christ the Saviour Orthodox Church (Orthodox Church in America) in Harrisburg, Pennsylvania, on the canonization of the Reverend Maksym Sandovyč, a Lemko-Rusyn Orthodox priest martyred by the Austrians on September 6, 1914, for refusing to denounce his affiliation with the Orthodox faith. For information about his life, see the Carpatho-Rusyn American, Vol. XVI, Winter 1993. —Editor.

The ceremonies for the canonization of priest-martyr Maksym Sandovyč began quietly on Friday morning, September 9, 1994, when a hierarchical Divine Liturgy was celebrated by Bishop Adam of Sanok in the old wooden Orthodox church in Zdynia, Poland. This is the village, formerly under Austro-Hungarian rule, where Father Maksym lived with his wife and baby son and ministered to his Lemko-Rusyn people. Across the paved rural road at the cemetery where the martyr's remains lie, a requiem service was held later that day, and here the faithful began gathering in preparation for the journey to Gorlice where the canonization was to take place.

On the warm and sunny autumn morning of Saturday, September 10, a final requiem service was celebrated (requiems are not served in the Orthodox Church for saints after their canonization). On Saturday afternoon in the village of Gorlice, thirty-five priests surrounded by hundreds of faithful gathered in the courtyard of the Gorlice Region Court House, the site of Father Maksym's execution which took place eighty years ago. A choir from Kiev, Ukraine, led the responses and a bronze plaque marking the tragic event, recently placed on the courthouse wall, was blessed in the presence of an icon of the martyr.

To be participating in this service on the very spot of the saint's martyrdom was an extraordinarily moving experience for me, not only as an Orthodox priest, but also as Father Maksym's great nephew. I imagined that I could hear the shots of the firing squad and the last brutal shot fired at close range that was meant to ensure the prisoner's death. I could hear echoes of his wife's and parents' cries when they, also imprisoned here, realized that he had been executed.

Following the service, a procession of clergy and faithful carrying the martyr's icon—one of three already painted—made its way to Gorlice's recently erected Holy Trinity Orthodox Church. Present in the procession were the martyr's grandson, granddaughter, and great granddaughter. The crowd, now over 500 people, sang church hymns and religious folk hymns until they reached the church where the icon was placed, and a vigil service and matins were celebrated.

Ordinarily, the saint's relics would have been exhumed and transferred in the procession from Zdynia to the church in Gorlice, but the Orthodox bishops decided to delay the transfer, fearing that it would provoke the area's Roman Catholics who reluctantly tolerate the Orthodox presence. They plan to allow the transfer and deposition of the relics in the church later.

The Holy Trinity Orthodox Church in Gorlice is a small, Byzantine-style structure crowned with one large central cupola and four small cupolas all topped by three-barred Orthodox crosses. It was consecrated on September 8, 1991, and is located about 350 feet from the main street, part of the highway that enters the town of Gorlice from the west. Behind it is a recently built parish hall, an education building with an auditorium-banquet room, and a new parsonage for the priest, the Reverend Bazyli Galczyk. The construction of all these buildings was made possible with funds from American Orthodox faithful.

On the cool and clear Sunday morning of September 11, the procession made its way to the church led by the faithful bearing the cross, Gospels, and icon banners, and singing hymns. At the church entrance, the faithful joined some forty clergy who greeted Metropolitan Vasily of Warsaw and All Poland. He was accompanied by Archbishop Nicholas of Prešov, Slovakia; Archbishop Sava of Bialystok; Archbishop Herman of Philadelphia and Eastern Pennsylvania (Orthodox Church in America); Bishop Nicholas of the American Carpatho-Russian Orthodox Greek Catholic Church; Bishop Adam of Przemysł; and Bishop Abel of Lublin. At this main service of the canonization ceremonies, over 1000 worshipers (including 125 Orthodox faithful from America) filled the church and mostly stood outside. The liturgy lasted for several hours, and the responses were led by a diocesan choir.

After the major sermon was presented and before the Eucharist was administered, the official proclamation—signed by all the hierarchs and priests in the altar—was read to the people. It declared that the glorification of Father Maksym places him "in the ranks of the saints" of the Orthodox Church. The clergy with the seven hierarchs gathered

An icon of St. Maksym Sandovyč portrayed in front of Holy Trinity Orthodox Church in Gorlice, Poland, where his relics will eventually be preserved. His stole and cuffs are colored red to denote that he is a martyr.
The Reverend Daniel D. Ressetar distributes icon cards to the faithful alongside Bishop Adam of Przemysł after the canonization service.

in the center of the church surrounded by the faithful and sang the martyr’s troparion, kontakion, and the magnification—all special hymns written in the new saint’s honor.

A verse sung repeatedly by all, “O Priest-Martyr Maksym, pray unto God for us,’” sealed, as it were, the canonization. After the service, the faithful following the hierarchs and clergy processed outside and around the church. Readings from the Gospels were intoned, and again the troparion, kontakion, and magnification hymns were sung along with the special verse of intercession. In front of the church the pro­todeacon sang out the phrase, “God grant you many years,” more than six times and the faithful joined in with the choir loudly and joyfully.

After a final homily and benediction by Metropolitan Vasily, Bishop Adam held the cross for veneration while I distributed icon prints of the new saint. The crowd rushed to the steps and reached out with eager hands to obtain their icons. An hour later in the parish hall a dinner was served by local faithful to the many visitors from elsewhere in Europe and abroad. Speeches were made and an impressive pageant was presented by some twenty school students. Offered entirely in Lemko-Rusyn, the presentation depicted the struggle of the Lemko-Rusyn people in poetry and song from the end of the nineteenth century to the years after the martyrdom of the new saint. The program included a concert of liturgical numbers sung by the diocesan choir.

The people lingered for a long time and seemed unwilling to let this unforgettable day come to a close. Some even returned to the church to pray and once again to venerate the icon of St. Maksym. I recalled that through the years the veneration of Father Maksym had remained strong in spite of two world wars and the persecution endured by his people. His sacrifice united many Orthodox believers in Poland and abroad regardless of their national backgrounds. Only now with the collapse of the Communist regime could the Orthodox Church in Poland openly celebrate Father Maksym’s sainthood and perform an official canonization. I am truly grateful to have been able to participate in this unique event.

The Reverend Daniel D. Ressetar
Harrisburg, Pennsylvania

OUR FRONT COVER

Scene from the Carpatho-Rusyn Bethlehem Play, performed by students at St. Nicholas Byzantine Catholic School in McKeesport, Pennsylvania, under the direction of Jerry Jumba, Christmas 1990. “Young Guba” on right, played by Amy Uhal, insists that “Old Guba,” played by Donna Kostrubanic, make a journey to Bethlehem to see the Christ Child. Photo: Kisas Productions.
Užhorod, Ukraine. On November 26, 1994, in conjunction with the 50th anniversary of the unification of Subcarpathian Rus’ (Transcarpathia) with the Soviet Ukraine, and in response to the demands of several deputies in the Transcarpathian parliament (Naroda Rada) led by Stepan Kalabiška and Jevhen Župan (both from Mukachevo), the parliament’s executive committee headed by its chairman Serhij Ustyč issued the following statement: “With regard to the specific question related to the implementation of self-rule for all regions [of Ukraine], including Transcarpathia, first it is necessary to assure the appropriate socioeconomic and political conditions.” (Novyny Zakarpattya, November 26, 1994)

Nearly seventy-five years earlier, the influential Czech publicist Karel Kadlec, writing on December 2, 1920 in the Prague daily Národní listy, stated: “Many years must pass before Subcarpathian Rus’ would be somewhat economically and culturally improved so as to receive autonomy.”

Clearly, it seems little has changed between 1920 and today. In May 1919, Czechoslovakia accepted the voluntary union of the Subcarpathian Rusyns with the understanding they would be granted autonomy, a right subsequently enshrined in the Paris Peace Conference and Czechoslovak constitution. The Czechoslovak government never fulfilled its promises.

On December 1, 1991, citizens of Ukraine were given the right to vote in a referendum regarding their independence. In that same internationally recognized referendum, the inhabitants of Transcarpathia voted overwhelmingly—78 percent—that their region should receive self-governing status (autonomy). Yet three years have passed and the Ukrainian government and Ukrainian parliament in Kiev have still refused to act on the matter. The leading elements in the Transcarpathian parliament now seem to be following the lead of Kiev, arguing the time is not yet ripe for autonomy.

But when, if ever, will the “appropriate socioeconomic and political conditions” exist? And who is to decide when the “appropriate” level is reached? The Ukrainian government or its parliament in Kiev? The Ukraine’s state administration in Transcarpathia? Or will Ukraine simply do what the Czechoslovak government did in the interwar years—find any and every excuse to deny what the voice of the people has itself called for in a free and democratic referendum held on December 1, 1991? On that day, Transcarpathians voted overwhelmingly for autonomy. It is time Ukraine lives up to its responsibilities.

RECENT EVENTS

Yonkers, New York. On September 18, 1994, the Carpatho-Russian American Center sponsored at Lemko Hall the first of several planned events to enhance their cultural activity on behalf of Lemko Rusyns in America. This first event featured a lecture by Professor Paul Robert Magocsi, University of Toronto, on the topic, “Who Are the Lemkos?” Over 200 people attended the lecture which dealt with several issues of great concern to the audience: the origin of the name Lemko; the Russophile and Rusynophile movements; Lemkos in the United States; the Vistula Operation; and the current situation in the European homeland. A videotape of the lecture is available for $15.00 from: Carpatho-Russian American Center, 556 Yonkers Ave., Yonkers, NY 10704.

Užhorod, Ukraine. In September 1994, Karpats’kyj Kraj Publishers in Užhorod published a Ukrainian translation of The Shaping of a National Identity: Subcarpathian Rus’, 1848-1948 by Professor Paul Robert Magocsi, originally published in 1978 by Harvard University Press. The Ukrainian edition, with a preface by the director of the Institute of Carpathian Studies at Užhorod State University, Professor Ivan Pop, was made possible by grants from Archbishop Stephen Kocisko of Pittsburgh; the Byzantine Ruthenian Catholic Eparchy of Passaic; the Carpatho-Rusyn Research Center; the Chair of Ukrainian Studies at the University of Toronto; and the Ukrainian Research Institute at Harvard University.

The Aleksander Duchnovyc Society (Obščestvo Aleksandra Duchnovycja) in Transcarpathia held on October 14, 1994 a book launch in Mukachevo in the presence of Professor Magocsi, the director of Karpats’kyj Kraj Publishers, Vasyl’ Kuchta, and over 75 guests. Following the book launch, the Carpatho-Rusyn Research Center arranged for the distribution gratis of 650 copies of the book: to Orthodox Bishop Jefemij Šutak (150) and Greek Catholic Bishop Ivan Semedi (100) for all priests in their respective eparchies; to the Institute of Carpathian Studies (100) at Užhorod State University; to the Aleksander Duchnovyc Society (100); and to the Institute for Learning and Education (200) for distribution to all high-school libraries throughout Transcarpathia.

Baredejšovské Kúpele, Slovakia. On October 15-16, 1994, the Prešov branch of the Rusyn Renaissance Society (Rusyn’ska Obroda) in cooperation with the Carpatho-Rusyn Research Center in the United States held an international scholarly conference entitled, “Rusyns in the Period of the Slavic National Revivals.” Among the speakers were distinguished academicians and university professors from several countries, including: Thomas Bird (Queens College, City University of New York); L’udovít Harakšim (Slovak Academy of Sciences, Bratislava); Ivan Pop (Institute of Carpathian Studies, Užhorod); Miron Sisak (Slovak Academy of Sciences, Bratislava); Iván Pop (Institute of Carpathian Studies, Užhorod); István Udvari (Bessényei Pedagogical Institute, Nyíregyháza); and Ferdinand Ulíčný (Slovak Academy, Prešov). The basic topics addressed were the place of Rusyns in the Slavic world, the Rusyn national revival in the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, the concept Rus’ in the Carpathians; and the position of Rusyns between the Catholic and Orthodox cultural spheres.

The conference was conducted by Professor Paul Robert Magocsi (University of Toronto), and aside from the formal presentations there was active participation by several other scholars, including: Father Imrich Belejkané (Orthodox Theological Seminary, Prešov); Alexander Duleba, (Slovak Institute for International Studies, Bratislava); Marian Gajdos (Slovak Academy of Sciences Institute for Social Studies, Košice); Vasyľ Jabur (Institute of Rusyn Language and Culture, Prešov); Vasyľ Keremcan (Užhorod State University); Stanislav Konečný (Slovak Academy of Sciences Institute for Social Studies, Košice); Andrij Kovač.
Westlake, Ohio. On October 21-24, 1994, the Orthodox Society of America, headed by President George G. Lichvarik, held its annual convention. The fraternal organization hosted members of the Carpatho-Rusyn Society of Western Pennsylvania who presented a display of Rusyn artifacts, music, and ethnocultural material, and provided information to Rusyn Americans seeking their roots in the homeland.

Uniontown, Pennsylvania. On Sunday, October 30, 1994, the annual Carpatho-Rusyn Celebration was held at St. John’s Byzantine Catholic Church School hall. The event featured talks by John Righetti on “Who Are the Rusyns?” and by the Reverend Ivan Mina on “Current Events in Carpathian Rus,” and a dance workshop taught by Jerry Jumba and Beth Kovaly. The Slavjane Folk Art Ensemble of McKees Rocks, Pennsylvania, performed under the direction of John Poloka, and folk artist Bonnie Balas offered pysanky and decorative folk woodburning demonstrations. A large cultural display was featured by the Carpatho-Rusyn Society of Western Pennsylvania.

McKees Rocks, Pennsylvania. On Sunday, November 13, 1994, the Carpatho-Rusyn Society of Western Pennsylvania shared two cherished folk traditions with parishioners and visitors at Holy Ghost Byzantine Catholic School: the Christmas Eve Holy Supper and the Bethlehem Play. Talks on Carpatho-Rusyn history and culture were offered by John Righetti and Jerry Jumba, and the traditional Holy Supper was served.

Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. On November 17-20, 1994, the 26th National Convention of the American Association for the Advancement of Slavic Studies took place in Philadelphia. At this largest gathering of Slavic specialists in the United States there were two presentations devoted to Carpatho-Rusyns. In a session entitled “A Re-Vision of Central European Literatures,” Professor Elaine Rusinko of the University of Maryland spoke about “A Forgotten Literature: The Case of Subcarpathian Rus,” in which she examined Rusyn literature in light of the contemporary theory of post-colonial literatures. The discussant in that session, Professor Halina Stephan of the University of Florida, expressed the awe that she and other Slavic specialists are experiencing as they witness before their eyes the creation, or re-creation, of a newly-recognized Slavic nationality, the Carpatho-Rusyns. In another session that dealt with Orthodoxy in Eastern Europe, Professor Patricia Ann Krafcik of the Evergreen State College in Olympia, Washington, provided a concise historical survey of the Orthodox Church in Slovakia, whose membership is virtually all Carpatho-Rusyn.

Aside from scholarly presentations, the Carpatho-Rusyn Research Center had its own booth at the book exhibit, headed by Barbara Kopitan Corbie, at which the over 2,000 participants were able to view the wide variety of recent publications in English about Carpatho-Rusyns.

Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. On December 10, 1994, through the offices of the Pittsburgh International Folk Theater and the Pittsburgh Folk Festival, Inc., the Carpatho-Rusyn Society sponsored a Rusyn Christmas Choir of 31 singers who performed at the Wintergarden Stage of the Pittsburgh Plate and Glass building in downtown Pittsburgh. They sang carols within a presentation of the Christmas story. The choir was directed by Jerry Jumba.

Tarentum, Pennsylvania. On January 14, 1995, the Russian Institute of the University of Indiana, Pennsylvania, in conjunction with Indiana and Greensburg area high schools sponsored a traditional Carpatho-Rusyn Christmas Eve Holy Supper and lecture at SS. Peter and Paul Byzantine Catholic Church. The event featured lectures by the Reverend John Koza and Jerry Jumba on Carpatho-Rusyn Christmas customs and the traditional Bethlehem Play.

RUSYNS IN CHINA

For several years, Dr. Johanna E. Katchen, an American of Carpatho-Rusyn background, has been teaching English in Taiwan, Republic of China. Recently, she sent a donation of $100 which was added to our Yugoslav Rusyn Youth Fund. In her covering letter, Dr. Katchen wrote the following:

I find it amusing that although I teach English and linguistics to Chinese students majoring in English, less than 100 years ago my ancestors were poor peasants who didn’t know a word of English (Stefan Kačin, my grandfather, came from Ruska Poruba in what is now East Slovakia). After the fall of communism in Central Europe, many visiting professors and researchers from Slavic countries come to Taiwan’s universities. Here at Tsing Hua University we’ve already had a few from East Slovakia and two of Rusnak background. The world is indeed becoming smaller and smaller. Thus even in Taiwan a few of us sometimes get together and sing “Ja Rusyn byl.”