FROM THE EDITOR

Given the recent positive, even euphoric, atmosphere in the Rusyn community and the series of extraordinary achievements toward the cultural development and international recognition of Rusyns which have taken place, one might be tempted to sit back and relax. And why not? Three World Congresses of Rusyns have met and the fourth is planned. A Prešov Region variant of the Rusyn language has been codified and this codification has been internationally acknowledged. A Rusyn newspaper and magazine produced by the Rusyn Renaissance Society for the Rusyn community in the Rusyn language have been published for the past few years. And a significant set of written works, including linguistic texts, a children’s primer and reader, and volumes of both prose and poetry, among others, have been published, describing and employing the Rusyn language. The energy and effort which have gone into this work in such a short period of time are awesome. And the Slovak government has helped fund some of these activities, thus returning to Rusyns what is due to them within their rights as tax-paying citizens belonging to a national minority in Slovakia.

So why should we not just take a short break? Because as so many times in the past, the Rusyns’ yearning to express themselves as a distinct people and to nurture their culture is again being threatened, and this time in the very country which appeared until this year to be the most supportive of its Rusyn community. As surprising as it may seem now in the context of what aspires to be the new democratic Slovakia, Rusyns are again being told that their status as an internationally recognized minority is no status at all. How is this being done?

For one thing, as AN INQUIRY in this issue of the Carpatho-Rusyn American explains, the Slovak government has taken a major step backward with regard to its treatment of the Rusyns as a national minority. With hindsight we can see that it was only the beginning of this process when the new government headed by Prime Minister Vladimír Mečiar refused both to acknowledge the announcement of the codification of the Rusyn language back in January 1995 and to contribute financially to the international scholarly symposium on the Rusyn language which took place in conjunction with the celebration. Indeed, unlike the government, the Slovak people themselves represented by their cultural organization, the Matica Slovenská, and the Slovak scholarly world represented by the Slovak Academy of Sciences did, in fact, acknowledge this event and praised the Rusyns for their achievement.

Further, in May 1995, five months into the fiscal year, the Slovak government suddenly announced that it was cutting drastically the funding it had promised for the publishing of books and periodicals, and for support of cultural activities of the Rusyn Renaissance Society. Despite the government’s promises and even preparations for a limited Rusyn-language radio program from studios in Prešov, no further steps toward the realization of this goal have been implemented. If these were the only problems, then perhaps the Slovak government’s own difficult financial situation might seem to explain—although not justify—its pulling away of support for Slovakia’s Rusyn minority. Unfortunately, the story does not end here. There is more, and this more is what ought to disturb us.

The Slovak government has, in fact, begun to employ precisely those heavy-handed tactics in its treatment of Rusyns which were so characteristic of the previous communist regime. The new Rusyn-language texts, among them the orthographic dictionary, the dictionary of linguistic terms, and the children’s books (see the C-RA, Vol. XVIII, No. 1, Spring 1995)—all of these part of the shining achievement of the Rusyn people in the past two years—have actually been locked away in a warehouse. They are now inaccessible not only to those who might want to purchase them, but also to anyone who wishes to review them in scholarly journals. Several of our readers have expressed an interest in acquiring these books and will be dismayed by this news. In addition, a beautifully printed book, The Rusyns in Slovakia: An Historical Survey (1994), by Paul R. Magocsi, published by the Rusyn Renaissance Society in Prešov in a bilingual edition (Rusyn and Slovak), was also confiscated from the publisher and is no longer available for purchase.

The implications of these actions and the attitude of the present Slovak government run deeper still. The financial support provided by the government to its national minorities is an obligation. This is because the Rusyns (like some other minorities in Slovakia) are not recent arrivals. They are a people indigenous to the country, who have lived side by side with Slovaks for centuries, who have contributed their sweat and blood, their time and taxes, their body and mind toward the building of the nation. To provide financial aid for the development of their culture is one of the basic responsibilities of the government. Aid for Rusyn culture is not a “handout” to a poor cousin. Culture itself is not a frill in society, it is its lifeblood. The strangulation of a cultural process, the silencing of scholars accomplished by shutting off the sources for their life and work, the silencing of the voice—are these activities appropriate in a democratic society?

Most sinister of all is perhaps a proposal presented at a May 1995 meeting of Slovakia’s Council for National Minorities suggesting that the council review the question of the codification of the Rusyn language and once again study the “Rusyn problem” in order to “resolve” it. What Rusyn problem?

This last issue and all of the actions described here raise serious questions about the real intentions of prime minister Mečiar’s government. Even though Slovakia is experiencing an economic crunch, it is not clear to us that solely a financial problem has motivated the government to undertake its actions toward the Rusyns. Holding cultural activists hostage figuratively, and confiscating and holding books hostage literally—these are not the result of financial difficulties.

The text of the INQUIRY, co-signed by an impressive number of Rusyn-American organizations who stand solidly behind the Rusyns’ struggle, has been sent to five ministers of the Slovak government, to the chairman and two vice-chairmen of the Slovak parliament, to a dozen Slovak newspapers in Bratislava, as well as to the Slovak Embassy in Washington, D. C. Read the INQUIRY and lend your voice by writing to one or more of the addresses provided at the end of the text. Obviously, this is no time to take a break from vigilance.
VIKTOR P. HLADYK (1873-1947)

Viktor Hladyk was a Lemko activist notable for his remarkable half century of dedicated work on behalf of the Rusyn community in North America. Hladyk was born in 1873 into an impoverished peasant family in the Lemko village of Kukikowa, in present-day southeastern Poland. He attended elementary school in his native village and high school in the near-by town of Jaslo. Because his parents were unable to provide him with money to further his education, the twenty-year-old Hladyk was forced to emigrate to the United States.

At first, Hladyk found work as a miner in eastern Pennsylvania. From the very outset, he became active within the Rusyn community and, following the example of many other Russophile-oriented Lemkos in America, he left the Greek Catholic church and became Orthodox. By the beginning of the twentieth century, Hladyk was working as a typesetter for the newspaper Svit. He was not satisfied, however, with the politics of Svit’s editors, and that led him to publish a new Rusyn newspaper, Pravda, whose first issue appeared in New York City on March 24, 1902. A year after its establishment, Pravda was adopted by the Russian Brotherhood Organization which continues to publish the newspaper to this day.

While editor-in-chief of Pravda, Hladyk honed his skills as a journalist and took part in the Congress of Slavic Journalists held in 1903 in St. Louis. A decade later he had moved to Canada and in 1913 founded in Winnipeg, Manitoba another newspaper, Russkij narod, serving as its editor until 1918. It was also in Winnipeg where Hladyk established the Orthodox-oriented newspaper, Kanadiejskaja pravoslavnaja Rus (1914). As a long-time supporter of the church, he visited numerous Rusyn settlements throughout North America and helped to establish new Orthodox parishes.

The end of the World War I brought Rusyns in Europe an opportunity to decide their political future. Already in 1917 Hladyk was among the organizers of the Congress of Russian People in Winnipeg, which appointed him a member of the Carpatho-Rusyn delegation to the Paris Peace Conference. He was also chosen (along with three others) to represent in Paris the New York City-based League for the Liberation of Carpatho-Russia. Both the Winnipeg-based Congress and New York-based League consisted primarily of Russophiles from former Austrian Galicia who acted separately from Rusyn immigrants south of the Carpathians. In Paris, Hladyk spoke before the Peace Conference commission for Eastern Galicia, where he discussed the religious situation in the European homeland.

From Paris, Hladyk went to the Lemko Region, where he met with leading Lemko political activists, including the Kačmarčyks (see the two previous issues of Carpatho-Russian American). He also travelled twice to Warsaw, in order to make sure that Lemkos would not be drafted into Polish army and that food and clothes from abroad would reach Lemko villages. During a special meeting of Lemko political leaders held on March 20, 1920 in the village of Florynka, he strongly advised that a Lemko Political Committee be organized to represent the Rusyn population north of the Carpathians in its dealings with the Polish government. Shortly after that, the Polish secret police arrested Hladyk. Due to the fact that he held American citizenship, he was released but forced to leave Poland. He then travelled to Geneva, where at the first session of the League of Nations he, together with another Galician Russophile, Dmitrij Markov, presented a statement describing Polish brutalities in Eastern Galicia and the Lemko Region. A similar document was sent to the Paris Peace Conference.

Although the Lemko efforts to obtain independence did not succeed, Hladyk continued to work for his people. Upon returning to the United States, he once again edited Pravda (1921-1923), and founded another newspaper called Lemkovshchina. Viewed as his mouthpiece, Lemkovshchina called for the creation of Lemko Committees throughout America, a movement that eventually led to the establishment of the Lemko Association in 1929. For a number of years, however, Hladyk did not participate in the activity of the Lemko Association because of its leftist orientation. Instead, during the 1930s, he and his long-time friend, the popular Lemko activist Stefan Skymba, organized the Carpatho-Russian National Committee, which published the newspaper Karpato-russkoe slovo. In contrast to the leftist Lemko Association, the Carpatho-Russian Committee emphasized Christian values and recognized the leading role of the Orthodox church in the community.

World War II brought new challenges. Hladyk had always believed that the Germans were the greatest enemy of all Slavic peoples. Consequently, when the Nazis turned against the Soviet Union, he began to support the pro-Soviet Lemko Association and the atheistic Soviet Union. He even went so far as to argue that the Lemko Region (together with all of Carpathian Rus’) should become a part of the Soviet Union. This goal was publicly announced during the All-National Russian Carpatho-Russian Liberation Congress, held in Philadelphia in 1944.

In the last year of his life, at age 73, Hladyk became a founding member and director of the Lemko Relief Committee, but he died just a few weeks before it became obvious that the new organization would not be able to help Lemkos in Europe. Fortunately, he did not live long enough to witness the 1947 destruction of Lemko villages north of the Carpathians, and he was spared news of the suffering imposed on the region and people to whom he had devoted his entire life.

Bogdan Horbal
New York, New York
AN INQUIRY
To the Present Government of Slovakia
Concerning National Discrimination
Against Rusyns

The Carpatho-Rusyn community in the United States numbers nearly three-quarters of a million people, many of whom for over a century have remained concerned about the fate of their brethren in the European homeland.

Following the Revolution of 1989 and the fall of Communist totalitarian rule, the successive governments of former Czechoslovakia, federal Slovakia, and the independent republic of Slovakia (at least until late 1994) attempted to correct the errors of the past. With regard to its national minorities, Slovakia adopted and implemented the principles of human rights that form the basis of other democratic states in Europe.

As a result, the Rusyns—who during the previous four decades of Communist rule were forbidden their own national identity—were once again recognized by the new government of Slovakia. The 1991 census recorded Rusyns as a distinct national minority, and since that time the various governments of Slovakia have provided funding for Rusyn cultural, civic, publishing, and scholarly activity.

This has included support for the professional Aleksander Duchnový Theater and for the Rusyn Renaissance Society (Rusyn'ska Obroda) with its weekly newspaper (Narodny novynky), bi-monthly journal (Rusyn), publishing house, and Institute of Rusyn Language and Culture. Through their activity, these organizations have encouraged Rusyns to identify with their national and cultural heritage. The basic goals of these activities are to codify the Rusyn language, to use the language on local radio programs, and to have it taught a few hours weekly in those schools where it is requested by parents and teachers.

In order to train teachers, the Institute of Rusyn Language and Culture would be transformed into a Department (Katedra) of Rusyn Language and Culture at the Faculty of Education of Pavol Šafárik University in Prešov. After 1989, the various governments of Slovakia assisted all these cultural and scholarly activities and promised that a radio program, university department, and instruction in schools could begin as soon as the Rusyn language was codified.

Unfortunately, the present government headed by Vladimír Mečiar seems to have reversed the policies of its predecessors.

1. On January 27, 1995, the codification of the Rusyn language was formally announced during a ceremony in Bratislava where several new language textbooks and dictionaries, recently prepared and reviewed by recognized linguists in Slovakia, were presented. Despite the favorable reactions expressed by representatives of the Matica Slovenská and Slovak Academy of Sciences, the government of Prime Minister Mečiar declined to acknowledge the announcement of the codification and it refused to fund the international scholarly symposium on the Rusyn language that took place as part of the ceremony in January.

2. Despite numerous promises and preparations, the government-sponsored radio station has still not begun a Rusyn program from its Prešov-based studios. The Prešov studio has programs for the Ukrainian, Roma (Gypsy), and German minorities, but not for Rusyns. In this regard it is interesting to note that in the 1991 census, nearly 50,000 persons reported their mother tongue as Rusyn but only 10,000 as Ukrainian.

3. At the second meeting of Slovakia's Council for National Minorities held on May 11, 1995, government officials announced that for its periodicals, book-publishing program, and cultural activity the Rusyn Renaissance Society would receive only half the financial subsidy it received during the previous (1994) fiscal year. This was a reversal of an earlier statement by the government that funding would remain the same as in 1994. Moreover, this drastic change of policy was announced without warning and five months after the present fiscal year had already begun. The result is that the plan and quality of Rusyn-language books for 1995 will be impossible to fulfill, and that after July or August the Rusyn-language newspaper (Narodny novynky) and magazine (Rusyn) will have to cease publication!

4. To date, the Slovak government has authorized no funding at all for the other cultural and scholarly activity of the Rusyn Renaissance Society, which effectively will have to end any further work on behalf of Rusyn culture and scholarship.

5. The government has forbidden that the Institute of Rusyn Language and Culture continue to function as part of the Rusyn Renaissance Society. Aside from the negative effect on Rusyn scholarship in Slovakia, even scholars abroad from organizations like the United States-based IREX are unable to visit and consult with a Rusyn scholarly institution in Slovakia that formally is not allowed to exist.

6. At the same time, the Ministry of Education has not issued a formal acknowledgement regarding the codification of the Rusyn language. This means that the Faculty of Education at Šafárik University is unable to establish the proposed Department of Rusyn Language and Culture (for which the previous Slovak government provided organizational funding in 1994), and that the promised introduction of Rusyn language instruction (requested already by ten village elementary schools) will not begin in September 1995.

7. The present Ministry of Education has forbidden that the five new Rusyn-language textbooks (Pravyla, Ortografiaľnyj slovnyk, Slovnik lingvistycznych terminiv, Bukvar', Čitanka) and a history of Rusyns in Slovakia published in 1994 be sold or in any way distributed. While readers in Slovakia as well as scholars abroad have shown great interest in the newly-codified Rusyn language, the Ministry of Education has “quarantined” the books by keeping them under lock-and-key in a warehouse. Not even professional scholarly journals are permitted to obtain review copies from the publisher, the Rusyn Renaissance Society.

8. Finally, at the May 11 governmental meeting, it was proposed that the “Council of National Minorities take under consideration the question of codification of the Rusyn language and recommend to the prime minister that a commission of experts be established to resolve the Rusyn problem.” This is exactly the approach of the old Communist government. In 1952, the Communists decreed that
Rusyns were Ukrainians, and then the government banned the Rusyn nationality and language. Such an administrative approach toward self-identity and language by government-appointed experts is in violation of Slovakia’s present constitution, which states (paragraph 12, section 3): “Each person has the right to decide freely his/her own nationality. Any kind of influence regarding that decision as well as all forms of pressure toward denationalization are strictly forbidden.” Quite simply, there is no “Rusyn problem” that needs to be “resolved,” whether by governmental “experts” or by anyone else. Rusyns know who they are—a distinct nationality who already have their own codified language. As loyal citizens of Slovakia, with no state elsewhere to help them, Rusyns are deserving of adequate financial support for the maintenance of their distinct culture.

In consideration of the above, Carpatho-Rusyns in the United States respectfully request from the present government of Slovakia an explanation regarding what otherwise seems to be a policy of discrimination against its Rusyn minority. Nearly six years have gone by since the Revolution of 1989 and the rebirth of democracy in Slovakia. Where are Rusyn schools? Where is the promised Rusyn radio studio? Where is the expected university Department of Rusyn Language and Culture? Why has the codified Rusyn language—formulated on the basis of living spoken dialects by trained linguists in Slovakia—not been formally recognized by the Slovak government? Why has funding for Rusyn cultural activity been severely reduced and Rusyn-language textbooks forbidden distribution?

We are hopeful that it will not be necessary to raise the question of discrimination against Rusyns with the European Parliament and other international and human rights organizations concerned with the status of national minorities. This is because we are confident that the present government of Slovakia, mindful of the age-old close relations between Rusyns and Slovaks, will act to correct the above problems and that it will continue once again the positive policies enacted by Slovak governments after 1989 toward the full national emancipation of Rusyns. We look forward to your response.

Carpatho-Russian American Center
Yonkers, New York

Carpatho-Rusyn Research Center
Orwell, Vermont

Carpatho-Rusyn Society
Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania

Lemko Association of the US and Canada
Yonkers, New York

Orthodox Society of America
Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania

Rusin Association
Minneapolis, Minnesota

United Societies
McKeensport, Pennsylvania

August 1, 1995

WHAT CAN I DO TO HELP?

Many of our readers have asked how they can obtain the new Rusyn-language school texts, rulebook, and dictionaries whose distribution is being hampered by the Slovak Ministry of Education. Write the minister directly:

PhDr. Eva Slávkovská, ministerka
Ministerstvo školstva SR
Hlboká 2
813 30 Bratislava
SLOVAKIA

Those of you who are concerned about no funding for the Rusyn Renaissance Society and the possible end to the newspaper Narodný noviny and magazine Rusyn, send your letters to the Slovak minister of culture:

MUDr. Ivan Hudec, minister
Ministerstvo kultúry SR
Dobrovičova 12
813 31 Bratislava
SLOVAKIA

And for those who wonder why the Rusyns still have no radio program of their own and are surprised that basic democratic principles are being violated, write to the chairman of the Slovak parliament:

Ivan Gašparovič, predseda
Kancelária Národnej rady SR
Mudroňova 1
812 80 Bratislava
SLOVAKIA

It would be advisable to send a copy or copies of whichever letter(s) you write to the Carpatho-Rusyn Research Center (our address on the outside cover) and to Slovakia’s Ambassador to the United States:

Dr. Branislav Lichardus
Embassy of the Slovak Republic
2201 Wisconsin Avenue NW, Suite 250
Washington, D.C. 20007

WELCOME FINANCIAL RESPONSE

Americans of Carpatho-Rusyn background have already begun to respond to the difficulties in Slovakia. The Carpatho-Rusyn Society based in Pittsburgh has donated $1,000 and the Rusin Association based in Minneapolis $500 to the publishing branch of the Rusyn Renaissance Society (Rusyn’ska obroda) in Prešov, Slovakia.

This will make it possible to publish six issues (about $250 each) of the Rusyn-language bi-weekly newspaper, Narodný noviny. As you can see, $250 goes a relatively long way.

The funds that each of the Rusyn-American organizations donated came from numerous individuals like yourself. Send whatever amount, large or small, that you can afford to either of those two organizations or to the Carpatho-Rusyn Research Center, earmarked for Rusyns in Slovakia.
ARE RUSYNS READY TO ENTER THE NEW WORLD?

The following text was delivered at the Third World Congress of Rusyns, held in Ruski Kerestur, Yugoslavia, May 26-27, 1995, by Paul Robert Magocsi, president of the Carpatho-Rusyn Research Center and delegate from the United States to the World Congress.—Editor

More than five full years have passed since the Revolution of 1989 and the fall of totalitarian regimes in East Central Europe. This period of time, while short as a historical epoch, is nonetheless long enough for us to make a reasonable assessment about how far the Rusyn movement has come, where it is now, and where it should be headed in the future.

There is no doubt that these past five years have brought about a veritable revolution in Rusyn life. This is because, with the exception of immigrant communities in the United States and here in Yugoslavia, Rusyns in the eyes of the rest of the world simply did not exist before 1989. Happily, those days are over.

Since 1989, at least one new Rusyn organization has been established in every country where Rusyns live—Poland, Ukraine, Slovakia, Czech Republic, Yugoslavia, Hungary, and the United States. In each of these countries, Rusyns have founded newspapers and journals either in their own variant of Rusyn or in the dominant language of the country in which they live. New Rusyn literary works, plays, dictionaries, grammars, and schoolbooks have appeared. More than one conference attracting distinguished international as well as local scholars has been organized to address cultural and historical developments from a Rusyn perspective. Among the most outstanding of these cultural achievements was the recent announcement in Bratislava of the codification of the Rusyn language in Slovakia. All of these and many other successes have been the result of the hard work and self-sacrifice on the part of extremely dedicated individuals, many of whom are in this audience today. It is to each of you that the rest of us bow our heads in gratitude.

Such achievements in the realm of culture during the past five years have been facilitated because of the understanding of the governments and people in the various states where Rusyns live, whether Yugoslavia, the Czech Republic, Poland, Hungary, and most especially Slovakia. Those same cultural achievements have helped to convince various states and their fellow citizens that Rusyns are indeed a distinct people, who are due all rights as a national minority and who are not simply a branch of some other people. In that regard, Yugoslavia had long ago recognized Rusyns as an official nationality; the United States began in 1990 to classify Carpatho-Rusyns in its national census as a distinct people; and the same occurred in 1991 in former Czechoslovakia, a principle maintained by that country's two successor states: Slovakia and the Czech Republic. In practice, the governments of Poland and Hungary also assume that Rusyns or Lemko-Rusyns comprise a distinct national minority, although such recognition still needs to be inscribed in law.

The point is that if we look back at the past five years, there seems to be a direct correlation between a commitment to undertake cultural activity and the improved status of individual Rusyn communities. Let's put it another way. With the exception of Yugoslavia's small community, back in 1989 most Rusyns wherever they lived had little sense of who they were and hardly any hope that they had a future as a distinct national community. Then, with the end of Communist totalitarian rule, the question arose of how to change the status of Rusyns. Should the goal be to obtain some sort of political self-rule and autonomy? Or, should there first be a period of cultural work in order to provide individuals, in particular young people, with knowledge about their Rusyn language, history, culture, and heritage in general? It seems clear now, after five years, that those Rusyn communities who followed a course devoted to cultural work have achieved much, while those who have tried the political route have achieved little or nothing.

This does not mean, however, that cultural activists need not enter the political world from time to time. This is inevitable for any group that does not have and is not likely to have a state of its own. Politicking on behalf of cultural goals is not the same, however, as trying to create governmental structures and self-governing administrations, as if somehow miraculously this would resolve the basic problem—that most people of Rusyn background, wherever they live, still care little if anything about their Rusyn heritage.

The World Congress of Rusyns was founded back in 1991 with express cultural goals in mind. Therefore, it is most appropriate that at this Third World Congress we not only consider what has been achieved so far, but whether the techniques used up until now are appropriate or even adequate for future work. I must suggest that if things have been difficult during the past five years, they will be as difficult if not more so during the next five years—but perhaps for different reasons.

Unlike back in 1989, the problem is no longer a lack of cadres. Our communities, in whichever country they are located, have already and are still uncovering talented people from all walks of life and of all ages who are able to do something positive for Rusyn culture and identity. While there may not be a problem with cadres, there is a problem with money!

Culture, after all, whether in the form of schools, theaters, books, newspapers, radio broadcasts, festivals, etc., costs money. Finding money at the same time that one is creating cultural works is difficult—but not impossible. Put another way, in the past five years Rusyn leaders have been talented enough to write and publish books and newspapers, and even to find funds to make such publications possible. Now they have to figure out how to increase subscriptions and to sell what is often piled high in warehouses. Better still, books or other cultural phenomena should be sold before they are even produced.

Four years ago, in the wake of the Revolution of 1989, I wrote an essay entitled, "The End of the Nation-State," which was published widely in Germany, Slovakia, Hungary, and Romania as well as North America. A lot of people really did not like when I, speaking about former Communist societies, said that: "As in the West, intellectual like all other activity has to justify itself by the degree to which it is largely, if not completely, economically self-sufficient." It makes no difference whether I, as a creative member of the intelligentsia, like such a view—and I do not. It is, however,
the way most bureaucrats think. And today in East Central Europe, like in most other places in the world, it is not Communism or any other ideology which is the enemy. Today's enemy are the narrow-minded bureaucrats who run all our governments and who feel that balancing budgets is more important than encouraging a society to develop its spiritual and cultural values.

It is into this new cost-conscious world—one that is as unfriendly as the former Communist one—that Rusyns now find themselves. Among the most recent victims are our Rusyn brethren in Slovakia, who for at least a few years had been able to take advantage of the relatively unrestricted budgets allotted to the Rusyn Renaissance Society simply because that organization represented a national minority. Slovakia was after all—as late as 1994—still following policies based on the now bankrupt Leninist theory on the protection of national minorities. This is no longer the case, however, so that in Slovakia as already in Poland, national minorities as such will get no special consideration in the state budget. Rather, they will have to compete with a whole host of other cultural, scientific, and civic organizations for an ever dwindling amount of grant money. In some ways, this is still better than the situation in the United States, where Carpatho-Rusyns have never received one cent from government resources. For instance, the only money the Carpatho-Rusyn Research Center has is earned from the sale of the books it sells. Moreover, its editors, writers, and administrators work for free.

I am not suggesting that Rusyn communities living as indigenous peoples on their own lands in Europe should be expected to accept the same fate that has befallen their brethren in North America. What I am suggesting is that budgetary allotments from state governments are likely to decrease in the future, and that existing organizations must devise new and better ways to sell what they produce. I hate to sound crude, but in this new world, the salesperson will be as important as the writer, actor, or scholar. And for those who are more inclined to political activity, forget about trying to create new governments or autonomous states and instead engage in activity that might seem to have less grandiose but practical results. For instance, one could organize what are called elsewhere tax revolts. This means that while remaining fully loyal citizens of the countries in which you live, you should demand that your taxes be returned for cultural activity in direct proportion to the size of the Rusyn community that you represent.

There is one last matter that seems always to haunt Rusyns. Here I am speaking of Ukrainians, or more properly fellow Rusyns who have become Ukrainians. I have argued all along that Rusyns should never waste their time engaging in polemics or responding to what are almost always ridiculous and demagogic attacks on individual Rusyns and their good works. If Ukrainians and their polemics have any value it is this. They are the best free advertisement Rusyns have. You know all those attacks most of our newspapers are fond of reprinting and worrying about. Their only use is in sensation-like advertising to promote sales of those Rusyn books still sitting on warehouse shelves. In other words, the demagogic attacks should be turned around to our own advantage. If xxx and xxx is said about a book, then potential readers will certainly want to buy the publication and see what the controversy is all about. The point is that empty pro-Ukrainian rhetoric should never again be responded to in the Rusyn press. It should only be used for our own purposes, in this case to help advertise the Rusyn movement and sell its publications.

Some of you may have already dismissed entirely what I have just said. As for those of you who decided to listen, please accept these suggestions as a challenge for the kinds of changes that are needed if the Rusyn movement is to achieve what we all want—that our people of whatever age will be able to contribute to our rich culture because they really feel committed when they say—“I was, am, and will remain a Rusyn.”

OUR FRONT COVER

A pause during the cutting and carting of wood for the winter season in a Carpatho-Rusyn village in northeastern Slovakia. (Photo: Jozef Piroh)
THE CARPATHO-RUSYNS (part 2)

This is the second part of a general introductory article on all aspects of Carpatho-Rusyn life which we began in the last issue of the Carpatho-Rusyn American (Vol XVIII, No. 2, Summer 1995) Considering the enormous changes that have taken place in the European homeland during the past few years, we feel it appropriate to provide our readers with new and updated information.—Editor

Language, Identity, and Culture

Carpatho-Rusyns belong to the Slavic branch of Indo-European peoples. Their dialects are classified as East Slavic and are closely related to Ukrainian. Because they live in a borderland region, Carpatho-Rusyn dialects are heavily influenced by Polish, Slovak, and Hungarian vocabulary. These influences from both the east and west, together with numerous terms from the Church Slavonic liturgical language and dialectal words unique to Carpatho-Rusyns, are what distinguish their spoken language from other East Slavic languages like Ukrainian.

In contrast to their West Slavic (Polish and Slovak), Magyar, and Romanian neighbors, Carpatho-Rusyns use the Cyrillic alphabet. Their national name, Rusyn (also spelled Rusin), connects them to the east, since Rus' was the name of the inhabitants and territory of a large medieval state centered in Kiev. The many names by which Carpatho-Rusyns have called themselves or were called by others—Carpatho-Russian, Carpatho-Ukrainian, Rusnak, Ruthene, Ruthenian, Uhro-Rusyn—all relate to their traditional association with the East Slavic world of the Rus'.

Despite the seeming confusion about names, the most appropriate designation is Carpatho-Rusyn, or simply Rusyn. This is the name the nineteenth-century national awakener Aleksander Duchnovyc used in poetic lines in what became the national credo—"I was, am, and will remain a Rusyn"—and it is the name he used in the first line of the national anthem—"Subcarpathian Rusyns, Arise from Your Deep Slumber." Carpatho-Rusyn and Rusyn are also the names used by most of the new cultural organizations and publications established in the European homeland since the Revolution of 1989. In Poland, Carpatho-Rusyns call themselves Lemkos. This is a new name. Before the twentieth century Lemkos, too, called themselves Rusyns or Rusnaks. Aware of their origins, recent publications and organizations in Poland often use the term Lemko Rusyn to describe their people.

When, in the seventeenth century, Carpatho-Rusyns began to publish books, they were written either in the vernacular Rusyn speech or in Church Slavonic, a liturgical language (functionally similar to Latin) used by East Slavs and South Slavs who were of an Eastern Christian religious orientation. In the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, Carpatho-Rusyn writers continued to use Rusyn vernacular and also began to use Russian and Ukrainian for their literary language. The so-called "language question" was always closely related to the problem of national identity.

Ever since the nineteenth century, Carpatho-Rusyn leaders have argued about their national identity. Some have felt that Rusyns are a branch of the Russians, others a branch of the Ukrainians, still others that they form a distinct central

European Carpatho-Rusyn nationality. Each orientation has used language, whether Russian, Ukrainian, or Carpatho-Rusyn, as a means to identify themselves. Today there are only two national orientations—the Rusyn and Ukrainian. The Ukrainian orientation argues that Rusyns are a branch of Ukrainians and that a distinct Carpatho-Rusyn nationality cannot and should not exist.

Since the Revolution of 1989, there has been a Carpatho-Rusyn national revival in all countries where they live, and efforts have been undertaken, especially in Slovakia and Poland, to create a standard Carpatho-Rusyn literary language for use in schools and publications. Rusyns in Yugoslavia's Vojvodina have had a literary language that has been used uninterruptedly in publications and schools ever since the first decades of the twentieth century.

Carpatho-Rusyns have a distinct literary tradition that dates back to the seventeenth century. Regardless of what language writers may have used—Rusyn, Church Slavonic, Russian, Ukrainian—their literary works have embodied the essence of Rusyn life and the mentality of its people. Among the most dominant themes have been a love for what is considered the pristine beauty of the Carpathian mountains and a characterization of Carpatho-Rusyns as a God-fearing and stoical people, seemingly destined to be controlled by natural forces and foreign governments over which the individual has little power or influence. Each Carpatho-Rusyn region has had its own literary founding father: Aleksander Duchnovyc (1803-1865) and Aleksander Pavlovyc (1819-1900) for the Prešov Region and Subcarpathian Rus'; Volodymyr Chyljak (1843-1893) for the Lemko Region; and Gabor Kostelnik (1886-1948) for the Vojvodina.
Today there are Rusyn-language newspapers, journals, and books in virtually every European country where Carpatho-Rusyns live. The works of playwrights are performed by the professional Aleksander Duchnovyc Theater in Prešov, Slovakia; the semi-professional Djadja Theater in Ruski Kerestur and Novi Sad, Yugoslavia; and the amateur theater of the Lemko Association in Legnica, Poland. The best known current Rusyn-language writers are: in Ukraine—Volodymyr Fedynyšyn, Dmytro Kešelj, Ivan Petrovčij, and Vasyl' Petrov; in Slovakia—Anna Halgašova, Mykolaj Ksenjak, Marija Mal'covska, and Štefan Suchý; in Poland—Olena Duc'-Fajfer, Volodymyr Graban, Stefania Trochanowska, and Petro Trochanovskij; in Yugoslavia—Natalija Dudas, Irina Hardi-Kovačević, and Djura Papharhaji; and in Hungary—Gabriel Hattinger-Klebaško.

Aside from various forms of folk culture, such as embroidery, painted Easter eggs, and folk music and dance performed by professional ensembles in Prešov and Užhorod and by numerous amateur ensembles, Carpatho-Rusyns are most noted for an outstanding form of native architecture in the form of wooden churches perched on the top of hills, most of which were built in the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. During the first half of the twentieth century, Carpatho-Rusyns also created a unique school of painters, the so-called “Subcarpathian Barbizon,” of whom the leading figures were Josyf Boksaj, Adal'bert Erdeli, Fedir Manajlo, and Ernest Kondratovyc. About the same time, Rusyn life in the Lemko Region was captured on canvas by the world renowned naïve artist, Nykyfor Drovnyj. In more recent times, painters like Anton Kaššaj, Andrij Kocka and Volodymyr Mykyta, and the sculptors Mychajlo Kocka and Volodymyr Mykyta, and the sculptors Mychajlo Kocka, Mykolaj Ksenjak, Marija Mal'covska, and Stefan Stefanija Trochanovska, and Petro Trochanovskij; in Yugoslavia—Natalija Dudas, Irina Hardi-Kovačević, and Djura Papharhaji; and in Hungary—Gabriel Hattinger-Klebaško.

Several museums exist with permanent exhibits of Carpatho-Rusyn folk art, icons, and painting. The most important and wide-ranging collections are in Svidnik and Užhorod, with more specialized museums in Bardejov (icons), Medzilaborce (modern art), Nowy Sącz (icons), and Zydronowa (on Lemkos). Open-air ethnographic museums (skanzeny) with traditional Carpatho-Rusyn domestic architecture are found in Svidnik and Užhorod. Others in Bardejov, Humenné, and Sanok also include examples of Carpatho-Rusyn material culture. Numerous scholars are engaged in studying the history, language, literature, ethnography, art, and music of Carpatho-Rusyns. Many are connected with scholarly institutions, such as the Institute of Carpathian Studies at Užhorod State University (Ukraine), the Institute of Rusyn Language and Culture (Slovakia), the Department of Ukrainian and Rusyn Philology at the Bessenyei Pedagogical Institute (Hungary), the Department of Rusyn Language and Literature at the University of Novi Sad (Yugoslavia), the Society for Rusyn Language and Literature (Yugoslavia), and the Carpatho-Rusyn Research Center (United States). There are as well several scholars abroad who specialize in Carpatho-Rusyn themes, including Aleksander Dulicenko (Estonia), Sven Gustavsson (Sweden), Paul Robert Magocsi (Canada), and Ivan Pop (Czech Republic). Paul Robert Magocsi

Toronto, Ontario

SINCE THE REVOLUTION OF 1989

Gorlice, Poland. In March 1995, the Rus'ka Bursa in Gorlice was “returned” to the Lemko-Rusyn community. The timing of the decision was probably influenced by the fact that a hospital facility using the property relocated to larger accommodations. At the present time, “ownership” is confined to the right to use the building and property without having to pay taxes, while actual legal title still resides with government authorities.

Already before World War I, pro-Rusyn (Rusynophile) and pro-Russian (Russophile) cultural organizations built and maintained boarding schools (called Rus’ka Bursa) to help Rusyn school children attending school away from their home villages keep in touch with their Rusyn culture and co-ethnics. Aside from the Gorlice boarding school, others were at one time maintained in Sanok and Nowy Sącz.

After the resettlement of the Lemkos in 1947, ownership of these properties passed to the Polish authorities. In 1991, Lemko-Rusyn organizations in Poland calling themselves “Friends of the Rus’ka Bursa,” petitioned for return of the Rus’ka Bursa properties. Represented in the ranks of the Friends are the Lemko Association (Stovaryšňa Lemkiv), the Lemkovyna Song and Dance Ensemble, and the Hospodar Rusyn Democratic Circle of Lemkos in Poland.

The return of the Gorlice Rus’ka Bursa fulfills the need of the Lemko-Rusyn community for a permanent home at which to host cultural and educational functions. At present, the Lemkovyna Song and Dance Ensemble uses a room on the second floor of the three-storey property for rehearsals. Each of the Lemko-Rusyn organizations also maintains an office. Pavlo Stefanovskij of the Hospodar Rusyn Democratic Circle plans to use a room across from his office to set up a permanent Lemko ethnographic exhibit, based initially on his own extensive private library and collection of folk costumes, icons, and cultural artifacts.

Two obstacles prevent the Lemko-Rusyn community from proceeding more quickly to revitalize the property: (1) the absence of funds to pay the salary of a much needed full-time property manager to oversee the entire facility (as with so much else in Lemko community life, the Bursa will need to rely on part-time, unpaid volunteers); and (2) the three-storey building itself is in need of physical repairs.

Those readers interested in corresponding with the Friends of the Rus’ka Bursa, or in donating to the Friends’ Building Renovation Fund, may write to:

Stowarzyszenie “Ruska Bursa”
ul. Sienkiewicza 28, skr. poczt. 4
38-300 Gorlice
POLAND

Kiev, Ukraine. On April 16, 1995, a network television station in Ukraine broadcast for the first time a program in which representatives of the Rusyn national revival in Transcarpathia were the featured speakers. The independent Ukrainian television station, Our Language, aired a program entitled, “Rusynism—A Fact of Ukrainian Life,” in which the Užhorod writer Volodymyr Fedynyšyn spoke of the recent codification of the Rusyn literary language in neighboring Slovakia, and Professor Ivan Turjanyecz, chairman of the Society of Carpatho-Rusyns, outlined the demands
for Rusyn autonomy in Transcarpathia. This program was in stark contrast to the frequent attacks against the Rusyn movement expressed on Ukrainian television by writers and scholars like Ivan Dráč and Oleksa Myšanyé and by visiting Ukrainian émigrés from the United States like Taras Huncak and Vasyl Markus. As recently as March 16, 1995, Ukrainian State Television’s evening news program had condemned “Rusyn separatism” as a danger to Ukraine’s statehood.

**Užhorod, Ukraine.** On June 28, 1995, in conjunction with the 50th anniversary of the signing of the treaty by which Czechoslovakia formally ceded Subcarpathian Rus’ to the Soviet Union at the close of World War II, major celebrations were held in Užhorod, the administrative center of the Transcarpathian oblast of Ukraine. The present-day Ukrainian authorities went out of their way to underline the historic significance of what happened half a century ago. Festivities began with a visit to Transcarpathia by the president of Ukraine, Leonid Kucma. In a major speech to the oblast’s path to re-unification with Mother-Ukraine was complex and difficult,” the region’s sung and un-sung heroes “had more than anyone realized that the Carpathian Mountains cannot be an internal border between Ukraine and its own land and people [in Transcarpathia]. The mountains will never become a border!”

The chairman of the Transcarpathian Parliament, Serhii Ustyč, reiterated the views of President Kucma and went on to criticize the phenomenon of “political Rusynism” and the idea of “autonomy for Subcarpathian Rus’” as little more than the work of a small group of overly-ambitious and misguided activists both within Ukraine and abroad. Ustyč stressed that such political activity posed no threat to the territorial integrity of Ukraine. Like President Kucma, the parliamentary chairman also stressed how on December 1, 1991, over 91 percent of Transcarpathia’s populace voted yes in the referendum on Ukraine’s independence. Neither mentioned, however, how in that very same referendum 78 percent of the populace voted yes for autonomy, which has still not been granted to the region.

In conjunction with the 50th anniversary of the “reunion of Transcarpathia with Ukraine,” a scholarly conference also took place, at which most speakers hailed the historic event, spoke of loyalty to Ukraine, and condemned “Rusyn separatism.”

**Munich, Germany.** On July 3, 1995, a new Society of Rusyns in Germany has come into being. This is the first time a Rusyn society has been established in a western European country. The new group is made up primarily of recent Rusyn immigrants from the Vojvodina in Yugoslavia. Headed by the physician, Silvestor Kuchar, the organization will bring together Rusyns living in Germany and foster understanding among Germans of Rusyn culture. Its first event, planned for October 27-29, will celebrate the 250th anniversary of the settlement of Rusyns in the Vojvodina.

**Michalow, Poland.** During the first weekend in August, the 15th annual Lemko (Rusyn) Vatra took place in the resettlement village of Michałów, in the region of Silesia in southwestern Poland. This smaller, more authentically Lemko Vatra is not to be confused with the larger Lemko Vatra in the Carpathian homeland, in Ždymia. The Ždymia Vatra has now become a largely Ukrainian and “other-Slavic” cultural event, with Lemko culture almost wholly absent from the program.

As in past years, this year’s Vatra in Silesia drew approximately 5,000 people. Festivities began Friday night with the ceremonial lighting of the traditional campfire (vatra), followed by the commemoration of the 100th anniversary of the birth of Nikifor Drobnjak, internationally renowned Lemko naïve artist. Saturday’s festivities included folk-singing and poetry recital contests for children, as well as performances by Carpatho-Rusyn folk ensembles from the Vojvodina region of Yugoslavia, and from Hungary, Ukraine, and Poland. Traditional Lemko foods were available, as were numerous publications of the Rusyn-oriented Lemko Association (Stovaryšýnja Lemkiv), which sponsors the event.

**Prešov, Slovakia.** On September 6, 1995, Slovakia’s Prime Minister Vladimír Mečiár met with the Greek Catholic Bishop of Prešov, Ioann Hirka, and the Orthodox Bishop of Prešov, Nikolaj Kocvar, to sign an agreement regarding church property. As a result of the agreement, the government will provide 12.2 million crowns ($407,000) to the Greek Catholic Church and 8.8 million crowns ($293,000) to the Orthodox Church in 1995. It was also agreed that the Orthodox Church will surrender 14 parish houses and 3 churches, for which it will receive as compensation 500,000 crowns ($16,700) for each parish house and 1.2 million crowns ($40,000) for each church. The Slovak government hopes that this agreement will help to end the long-standing dispute between the two churches regarding property confiscated illegally from the Greek Catholic Church by the Communist government in 1950 and given to the Orthodox Church for its use.

**RECENT EVENTS**

**Prešov, Slovakia.** On July 2, 1995 more than 200,000 people attended a Greek Catholic Divine Liturgy led by Bishop Ioann Hirka of Prešov and Pope John Paul II during the latter’s five-day official visit to Slovakia. Present were President Michal Kovac and Prime Minister Vladimír Mečiár of Slovakia as well as the Greek Catholic bishops Ioann Semedi of Užhorod and Slavomir Miklovs of Klrižcvi in Croatia. Of particular interest were the words of the Pope addressed to the faithful at the end of the liturgy. “I wish to greet especially all Rusyns who are present,” said the Pope. “Dear Brothers and Sisters! Thank you for your participation. May God grant you peace and a happy Christian life for your people and your families.” Later the Pope spoke of the beautiful music of the Slovaks and Rusyns. Once again, when referring to the East Slavic inhabitants of northeastern Slovakia, the Pope did not use the term Ukrainian or Rusyn-Ukrainian, but the correct name Rusyn.
Komlóskia, Hungary. On July 22-23, 1995, the third cultural festival of Rusyns in Hungary took place. Located in the northeastern part of the country, Komlóskia is the last of several villages in Hungary where the majority of the inhabitants still speaks Rusyn. The festival was organized by the Organization of Rusyns in Hungary (based in Budapest) and included folk ensembles from Múcsony, another village in Hungary where a Rusyn revival is taking place; the PULS Rusyn Folk Ensemble and Aleksander Duchnović Theater from Prešov, Slovakia; and Rusyn performers from Poland and Ukraine. The festival was also an occasion for the Executive Council of the World Congress of Rusyns to meet.


Warsaw, Poland. On August 6-11, 1995, the Fifth World Congress for Central and East European Studies took place at Warsaw University, Warsaw, Poland. The congress, which takes place every five years in a different host country, attracted over a thousand scholars from as far away as Japan, Argentina, and South Africa to take part in a wide variety of panels and seminars presenting the latest research in the field of Slavic studies. Among the congress offerings were three panels devoted to Carpatho-Rusyns.

The first panel session, “The Ukrainian Idea in the Lemko Region in the 20th Century,” focused on several aspects of the Ukrainian orientation in the Lemko region, as well as on its manifestations in the region’s art and literature. Bernadetta Wojtowicz (Ludwig-Maximilian University, Munich, Germany) spoke on the religious aspect; Oleksandr Zajcev (University of Lviv, Ukraine) on the political aspect; Agnieszka Korniejenko (Jagiellonian University, Cracow, Poland) on literature; and Andrzej Tłuczyn (UAS, Lviv, Ukraine) on art. Bohdan Osadcuk-Korab (University of Berlin, Germany) chaired the panel, and Jacek Bruski (Jagiellonian University) was the discussant.

The second panel was chaired by Carpatho-Rusyn American professor Paul J. Best (Southern Connecticut State University, New Haven, Conn.). Jaroslaw Moklak (Jagiellonian University) spoke on “Polish and Ukrainian Scholars Concerning the Ukrainian Movement Among Carpathian East Slavs”; Paul J. Best discussed “Polish, Slovak, and Rusyn Scholars Concerning the Rusyn Movement Among Carpathian East Slavs”; and Susyn Mihalasky (University of Toronto) reported the results of her 1991 survey of Lemkos in “Ethnonational Orientation Among Lemkos in Contemporary Poland.”

The third panel session, “Literature and Ethnic Group Formation: the Literary Life of the Carpatho-Rusyns from the Second Half of the 19th Century to the Present Day,” chaired by Paul R. Magocsi (University of Toronto), examined the idea that processes of group identity formation reveal themselves through an ethnic group’s literature. The panel’s participants examined Carpatho-Rusyn literature from the different regions in which Rusyns live. Featured speakers included Elaine Rusinko (University of Maryland) who spoke on Transcarpathia; Luba Babotová (University of Prešov) on the Prešov Region; Olena Duc’-Najfer (Jagiellonian University) on the Lemko Region; and Irina Hardi-Kovachevich (University of Novi Sad) on the Voivodina.

Washington, D.C. On October 28, 1995, the annual meeting of the Board of Advisors to the Carpatho-Rusyn Research Center was held in the nation’s capital. Following reports on general finances, sales of books, new publication projects, and the Carpatho-Rusyn American, discussion focused on assistance to the homeland. Of particular concern was the Slovak government’s recent restrictions on Rusyn-language publication and cultural activity.

Three new members were chosen to serve a three-year term on the Board of Advisors: Alexander Herenchak, president of the Lemko Association (Yonkers, New York), Susyn Mihalasky (Clifton, New Jersey), and Professor Michael Zarechnak (Washington, D.C.), as well as Jack Figel (Fairfax, Virginia) who as publisher of the Carpatho-Rusyn American is an ex officio board member. Other current members include: Barbara Kopitan Corbiey (Orwell, Vermont), Lawrence Goga (Plymouth, Minnesota), Jerry Jumba (McKees Rocks, Pennsylvania), Edward Kasianec (Forest Hills, New York), Patricia A. Krafick (Olympia, Washington), Paul R. Magocsi (Toronto, Ontario), Orestes Mihale (Armork, New York), Patricia Onufrauk (McLean, Virginia), Richard Renoff (Garden City, New York), and John Righetti (Mars, Pennsylvania).

Washington, D.C. On October 29, 1995, a special panel was held, entitled “A New Slavic Nationality,” at the 27th annual convention of the American Association for the Advancement of Slavic Studies. With over 2,500 attendees, this was the largest gathering of American specialists on east-central Europe and the former Soviet Union. The panel, which brought to the scholarly world information about the recent revival of Rusyns in Europe, was chaired by Professor Patricia A. Krafick of The Evergreen State College in Washington state. Featured speakers included Professor Paul Robert Magocsi (University of Toronto) on politics, Professor Robert A. Rothstein (University of Massachusetts) on language, Professor Elaine Rusinko (University of Maryland) on literature, followed by two discussants, Professor Thomas E. Bird (Queens College, New York) and Professor Alexander J. Motyl (Columbia University). All speakers began from the premise that Carpatho-Rusyns exist as a distinct nationality regardless what governments or other peoples may have thought in the past or still think in the present. We hope to publish parts or all of the papers and commentaries in future issues of the Carpatho-Rusyn American.

At another panel dealing with Eastern Christianity, Professor Krafick spoke on the Orthodox Church in former Czechoslovakia, giving particular emphasis to the Carpatho-Rusyn eparchies in Slovakia. The Carpatho-Rusyn Research Center also had a booth, run by Jack Figel, displaying its many publications as part of the book exhibit that ran throughout the four-day convention.