

CARPATHO-RUSYN AMERICAN

A Newsletter on Carpatho-Rusyn Ethnic Heritage



FROM THE EDITOR

Like many second and third generation Slavic Americans, I always longed to visit the old country and had a suspicion that someday I would retrace my grandparents' steps back to it. I felt a kind of nostalgia for something there which I had never experienced, and perhaps also a curiosity to test the reminiscences and memories of others against reality. The stories of my grandparents' villages and their amazing episodes of emigration were swatches of marvelously embroidered cloth. Faded photographs of hearty, stern-faced, known and unknown relatives, and packets of letters in tattered airmail jackets addressed in rounded, hesitant orthography—these were wonderful bits and pieces of colored yarn, flowing ribbons. Surely all this was the stuff of homey legend! And out of it was woven quite early a luxuriant fabric in which I could wrap myself and dream for hours.

At last I returned. I first went to Czechoslovakia in the summer of 1981 to study Slovak because I needed the language for my research. Naturally, I intended to head east to find both my Slovak and Rusyn relatives, to locate birthplaces and graveyards, to gaze at the hills my ancestors knew. My intentions were fulfilled. In fact, I made my second trip this past summer to continue my language study and to visit relatives again. Well, I have not discarded my cloak of fantasy — I guess I never will — but I made discoveries which brought me quite solidly down to earth and which surprised and delighted me.

Eastern Slovakia, home for thousands of Slovaks, Rusyns, Hungarians, and Gypsies, is absolutely lovely country. The rolling green hills and valleys and the lusty forested mountains are a stunning feast for the eyes. The city of Košice in southeast Slovakia is set in a gentler nature than the towns and villages to the north and northeast, and it was there that I had my first encounter with my father's family. How remarkable to meet people thousands of miles across the sea who share your own features! I couldn't stop thinking this as I studied the faces of my father's warmly hospitable cousin and her elderly mother, my grandmother's sister. I experienced the same thing when I ventured north to Prešov and further to Ruská Vol'a to my mother's people.

It was in Ruská Vol'a where I had perhaps the most extraordinary of my experiences. This was the village of my maternal grandmother, Anna, the woman who raised me as a child and whose image glows golden in my mind. During my first trip, friends in Prešov drove me to Vol'a through a number of towns with names familiar from my mother's stories — Sabinov, L'ubotín, and so on. Then came the signs: "Čirč" — my grandfather's village — to the right. My heart thumped! A kilometer down the road: "Ruská Vol'a." Grandma! Could you ever have guessed that the child you cradled would return to a land you never saw again after you had left it? Vol'a — meaning so much in Slavic languages:

freedom, one's own will . . . And Ruská Vol'a — it was an almost sacred name in my family and personal legend.

I felt myself slipping into some incredible fairytale as we navigated the one small village road and came to a stop before the house of my mother's cousins. Embraces and glances of wonderment were followed by the typical hospitality — spicy home-brewed brandy (palenka), tasty sausage sandwiches, mellow-sweet berry preserves. In halting Slovak mixed with Russian and flavored with bits of Rusyn learned from my mother, I launched into a series of questions which the older of the cousins tried to answer. Once he grasped my craving to rediscover my grandmother's past, he took me on a tour of the house in which she was born, the yard and fruit orchard where she played and worked as a child and young woman, and the church she attended — sometimes Orthodox, sometimes Greek Catholic, depending on the politics of the moment.

The small graveyard next to the church, grassy and overgrown with wildflowers, was strewn with gravestones and crosses, some inscribed in Cyrillic, some in Latin letters. In a way, this reflected the present population of Ruská Vol'a which, I found out, is a curious mix of people who identify themselves either as Rusyns, or Slovaks, or Ukrainians, but who almost all speak a native Carpatho-Rusyn dialect they call "po-rusnacky." And immediately to the north over the tiny stream alongside the village, Poland rises majestically in green wooded slopes of the Beskid mountain range. All this variety of ethnicity and identity has typified such border areas for centuries.

But here in the churchyard among scattered graves of relatives were the simple plots of my great grandmother and my grandmother's sister! I pressed my palms to the moist grassy earth over the graves for an eternity, lost in time and the evening breeze. I was shaken by the thrill of some innate impulse to ancestor worship, and I venerated the graves which my grandmother never saw because her mother and sister passed on after she had emigrated. Something of me was right here even before I existed! I felt myself old, ancient, a part of this soil and these hills. I had come home.

Finally, there is no question that the most wonderful element of the entire experience of returning to the homeland was the bond I felt with the living family. This I realized even more last summer when I met young cousins of my own age who were living and working in Bratislava where I studied Slovak. Their vitality, insights, and hopes for the future were not far removed from my own. And this is where my cloak of fantasy was no longer sufficient when I dreamed again about my other "homeland." The tie now, in fact, was even more real and fulfilling. The rich fabric of legend was now only one part of my relationship with the "old country." I came away, knowing that for my children someday the old homeland will be a living reality. Nonetheless, despite the reality, you can be sure that I will also pass on to them the magic cloak of legend and fantasy!

JURIJ VENELIN-HUCA (1802-1839)

East-Central Europe has traditionally been a complex region of many peoples and cultures. Often the interaction between these cultures produces strange and interesting results. One example is that of a Carpatho-Rusyn emigrant who settled in a Romanian-inhabited province of the Russian Empire and who subsequently became one of the fathers of the Bulgarian national renaissance.

Although the image of an emigrant is most often associated with waves of poor Europeans who came to America's shores in search of a better life, it is interesting to note that the first Carpatho-Rusyns who left their homeland did not depart in large numbers. Nor did they go west to the New World, but rather east to the Russian Empire. Whereas at the end of the nineteenth century the northeastern United States was in need of brawn to man its rapidly expanding industrial complex, at the outset of that same century the Russian Empire was in need of brains to staff its newly established western style system of higher education. Lacking its own intellectual cadres, Russia's officials looked to the west, and in particular to the Orthodox and Greek Catholic populace of the Austro-Hungarian Empire, including the Carpatho-Rusyns in the Habsburg-ruled Hungarian Kingdom. Several young educated Rusyns became aware of job opportunities in the Russian Empire, and they went east to seek their fortune. Among these was Jurij Venelin-Huca.

Jurij Huca was born in 1802 in the Carpatho-Rusyn village of Velyka Tybava, then located in Bereg county in the Hungarian Kingdom and today in the Transcarpathian Oblast' of the Soviet Ukraine. Son of a Greek Catholic priest, the young Jurij was educated to follow in the footsteps of his father. But he changed his career plans — as well as his name from Huca to Venelin — and together with his cousin crossed in the spring of 1823 the Austro-Hungarian border and settled in Kišinev, the center of the Romanian-inhabited province of Bessarabia within the Russian Empire. It was in Kišinev that the 21-year old Venelin first encountered a group of Bulgarian immigrants and began what was to become his lifelong interest in that nationality.

All during his student years Venelin had been fascinated by history, and already in 1824 he wrote his first work — a brief history of the Carpatho-Rusyn people and their church. But it was the history and culture of the Bulgarians which occupied most of his time, even after he was persuaded by fellow Carpatho-Rusyn emigrants in Moscow to go there and study medicine. Venelin did in fact spend four years in medical school (1825-1829) and became a doctor. However, his devotion to Bulgarian studies proved the stronger attraction, and after a year of work in a hospital he left the medical profession for good.

During the rest of his short life, Venelin was never to be financially secure, and he worked most of the time as a tutor for the children of well-to-do Russians in Moscow, including



the distinguished publicist and scholar Michail Pogodin. Venelin's somewhat Bohemian life-style did give him time, however, for research and writing, and with the help of Pogodin he was able in 1829 to publish the first volume of his most famous work — *The Ancient and Modern Bulgarians*. This pioneering study was the first to appear that treated the Bulgarians as a people representing a distinct culture. In rapid succession, a whole series of other works on Bulgarian language, literature, folklore, and history flowed from Venelin's pen, but none was to be as influential as his *Ancient and Modern Bulgarians*.

Venelin's crucial role in the Bulgarian national renaissance was the result of existing political conditions. At the time, Bulgaria was controlled by the Ottoman Turkish Empire, which frowned on any kind of Slavic revival within its boundaries. Venelin, however, was able to pursue his research and also to provide encouragement to Bulgarian émigrés living in Russia who were interested in promoting their cultural heritage. For his services, Venelin remains inscribed in Bulgarian annals as an important contributor to that country's national rebirth.

Venelin was a typical child of his age. The spirit of Romanticism and Pan-Slavism prompted in him a self-sacrificing devotion to study the past of a brother Slavic people. And even if his writings often reflected romanticized fantasy more than serious scholarship, their impact on the Bulgarian cultural renaissance was undeniable.

Venelin's scorn of material security in order to continue his cultural work did not come without high costs. Wasted from overwork, in 1839, he died from tuberculosis in his small Moscow apartment — at the age of only 37. His memory lives on in Bulgaria as it should among all those interested in the Carpatho-Rusyn heritage.

Philip Michaels

OUR READERS SPEAK

The following remarks are in response to articles by Professors Vasyl Markus and Paul R. Magocsi published in the Carpatho-Rusyn American, Vol. IV, No. 3 (1981). This series of responses to the Markus-Magocsi discussion was initiated in Vol. V, No. 1 (1982). — Editor

Dear Editor:

Any contacts between the Carpatho-Ruthenian and Ukrainian communities in the United States must be based on each community's understanding the attitudes and self-perceptions of the other group. Such understanding will not come easily, because the two groups hold contradictory views of their identities and interrelations.

When Ukrainian-Americans deal with the Carpatho-Ruthenian community, they should remember that common language, customs, and traditions are not sufficient to form common nationality. Although linguistic, cultural, and historical factors have served to define modern nations, the definition of what national territories should be or what populations constitute a nation has never been clearcut. Political factors have frequently outweighed culturo-linguistic ones.

It is important to remember that the process of modern Ukrainian nationbuilding was particularly difficult. Widespread literacy, mass communication, and urbanization came late to Ukrainian territories. Governments such as tsarist Russia, the kingdom of Hungary, and interwar Poland reverted to brutal measures in order to retard the growth of national consciousness among the Ukrainian masses. The failure to set up an independent state in 1917-1921 deprived the Ukrainian movement of a major instrument of, and focus for, nationbuilding. Although the Soviet government has recognized the existence of a Ukrainian nation, it has assured that the Ukrainian SSR remains a political nonentity, it has undermined the fabric of authentic Ukrainian culture, and it has sought to russify the Ukrainian populace.

In the face of all these obstacles to modern nationbuilding, a problem of nomenclature has been added. By accepting the modern designation "Ukrainian," Ukrainians gained a common name and differentiated themselves clearly from Russians. However, by rejecting the traditional name "Rusyn" (Ruthenian), they cut themselves off from their past and unleashed controversies in Austrian Galicia and Bukovina and in Hungarian Transcarpathia that complicated the process of modern nationbuilding.

All these factors must be kept in mind when the Ukrainian community deals with the Carpatho-Ruthenian community. The immigrants from Transcarpathia who arrived before World War I represented a people strongly differentiated from other Ukrainian speakers by their experience as inhabitants of the Hungarian crown of St. Stephen. I believe that Ukrainian Americans should keep in mind that given the difficulties of modern Ukrainian nationbuilding, it is not surprising that descendants of immigrants who came at the turn of the century from a region with so different a history from the rest of the Ukrainian lands should not possess Ukrainian identity. They should also be aware that for most members of the Carpatho-Ruthenian group, knowledge of the "old country" and its culture is limited and interest in ethnicity is peripheral.

The Carpatho-Ruthenian community faces considerable problems in maintaining an identity separate from Ukrainian. There is no single "Carpatho-Ruthenian" dialect, and it is

therefore very difficult to speak of a common "Carpatho-Ruthenian language." Even more important, the Carpatho-Ruthenian community possesses no uniform literary language. Ultimately, the failure to form a Carpatho-Ruthenian literary language in the homeland and in America undercuts the concept of a separate Carpatho-Ruthenian identity. Attempts to use the spoken vernacular inevitably lead back to the quandary that the dialects are so close to spoken and written Ukrainian.

Most ethnicity in the United States depends heavily on folklore. The region from which the Carpatho-Ruthenian community originates possesses a rich inheritance in folk-song, dance, handicrafts, and folk rituals, some of which differ from those of other Ukrainian territories because they developed under Hungarian, Slovak, and Romanian influence. Here too, however, we find much that is common with the Ukrainian community.

While the Carpatho-Ruthenian community possesses certain distinctive religious customs, in particular its church singing, in general its rites and traditions are identical with those of the Galicians. Although the formation of separate ecclesiastical jurisdictions was one of the major factors separating Carpatho-Ruthenians from Galicians in America, Orthodox and Catholic jurisdictions of both groups are united by the Byzantine-Ruthenian rite and common Ruthenian-Ukrainian popular traditions.

Although ethnic cultures can survive in the United States divorced from their ancestral communities, rarely are groups other than religious sects (the Amish or Mennonites) able to do so effectively. Here the Carpatho-Ruthenian community faces great difficulties. As Professor Magocsi has shown, the belief that Carpatho-Ruthenians in the homeland were part of a greater national community, whether "all-Russian" or "Ukrainian," predominated among the educated classes in modern times. What is often forgotten is that even the Russophiles insisted that the Carpatho-Ruthenians were the same people as the Galicians (and usually as the Eastern Ukrainians). Once the Ukrainian national movement triumphed in Galicia and Eastern Ukraine, Russophiles in Transcarpathia faced the incongruous position of advocating that their people were part of a Russian people from whom they were separated by forty million Ukrainians. By the 1930s, the Ukrainian national movement was making great strides in Subcarpathian Rus' and the proclamation of an autonomous Carpatho-Ukraine there crystallized a Ukrainian national consciousness among many. I do not see the Soviet decision to support the idea of a Ukrainian identity after 1945 as a *deus ex machina*. Rather, I believe that it merely hastened processes that dated from the middle ages, that were formulated in the tenets of modern national movements of the early nineteenth century, and that were disseminated widely in Subcarpathian Rus' before 1945. At present, the population of Transcarpathia views itself overwhelmingly as Ukrainian, as does a substantial part of the Carpatho-Ruthenian population living in Czechoslovakia. If the Carpatho-Ruthenian community in the United States wishes to avoid all contacts with "Ukrainians," it must cut itself off from its homeland.

How are we to carry on a dialogue between the Carpatho-Ruthenian and Ukrainian communities given the radical differences of the two groups' mutual perceptions? I believe that each group would profit by examining why it views the contacts so emotionally. I believe that Ukrainian Americans react so strongly to the Carpatho-Ruthenian community's

rejection of Ukrainian identity for a number of reasons. First, they retain the collective memory of the struggle for Ukrainian identity and culture against states and peoples intent on sowing divisions among the Ukrainian-speaking population. Second, they are sensitive to the change in nomenclature from Ruthenian (Rusyn) to Ukrainian that has caused them so much difficulty. Third, and most important, they feel a need to preserve a threatened Ukrainian culture and to struggle for the liberation of their homeland. Were Ukraine to become independent tomorrow, the Ukrainian-American community would undoubtedly lose its intensity and sense of mission. At that time, the question of the existence of a separate Carpatho-Ruthenian community in the United States would seem less urgent, for no longer would the Ukrainian diaspora feel threatened.

The reaction of the Carpatho-Ruthenian community to the Ukrainian community derives from its rejection of the Ukrainian community's claims to absorb it. But the emotionalism of the response stems largely from the confusion of the Carpatho-Ruthenian community as to its ethnic identity.

It is therefore easier to stress American identity and to condemn the Ukrainian community for its attempts to develop "old country" culture. Even the feeble attempts to retain folk and religious customs lead the Carpatho-Ruthenians back to the imbroglia of identity. For the reasons outlined above, it is difficult to preserve the linguistic and cultural elements of the Carpatho-Ruthenian "old country," much less to maintain contacts with relatives and current cultural trends, without becoming involved in the Ukrainian question.

How then can the two communities interact to mutual benefit? I believe the Ukrainian community need not give up its hope that the Carpatho-Ruthenian community will someday join it, but it must learn tolerance for the right of the Carpatho-Ruthenian community to remain separate if this is its wish. I believe the Carpatho-Ruthenian community has a right to develop itself as a separate community in the United States, but it cannot deny the right of the Ukrainian community to treat the language, customs, traditions, and history of Transcarpathia as part of the larger Ukrainian inheritance. Differences in perceptions may remain, but they should not be allowed to hinder personal and group contacts and cooperation.

Frank Sysyn
Assistant Professor of History
Harvard University

Dear Editor:

I have always regarded both Vasyl Markus and Paul Magocsi as close friends. They will therefore not take it amiss if I say that I regard their debate both with amusement and dismay. Their epistolary "confrontation" completely misses the mark. The truth be told — both their extended statements are completely irrelevant to the daily life of both the "Ukrainian" and Carpatho-Rusyn/Ruthenian communities. Only *individuals* in either community could regard this exchange as meriting several pages in the *C-RA* and *Sučasnist'*. I spent almost 8 years travelling throughout many Ukrainian communities in the United States. I therefore believe that I have some reason to say that the "Carpatho-Rusyn" issue is only one of many problems confronting "our Galician and Dnirovian" brothers. As for the Carpatho-Rusyns, their easy adjustment to American life is closely

related to their avoidance of the ethnic prejudice and paranoia sometimes associated with other political *cum* ethnic groups.

I'm surprised (but for different reasons) that both Paul and Vasyl seem to be insensitive to the Apostle's injunction that "there is neither Jew nor Greek. . . ." The Byzantine Catholic Church and its episcopacy does not exist for the perpetuation of ethnic or nationalistic ideals, but rather, and quite properly, to direct souls to the good life and salvation! Thus, both my dear friends are ungenerous when they state that the hierarchy has de-ethnicized the church; better to say, they strove to "balance" and to "diffuse" ethnic factors. The Carpatho-Rusyn jurisdiction in fact contains individuals of several ethnic backgrounds. When appropriate, some hierarchs were willing to assist financially projects to describe and preserve the Carpatho-Rusyn religious and cultural heritage.

Vasyl's comments about a "movement" are manifestly false. I have been a participant, either directly (or vicariously) in every major activity of Carpatho-Rusyn studies in the last decade. I was never pressed by a crowd. The "group" constituted at best an apostolic dozen and even some of these have already been gathered to the bosom of Abraham. So much for the Rusyn renaissance!

Paul, too, is unfair to Vasyl in contending that he and his ideological fellow-travellers have isolated themselves from the Carpatho-Rusyn community and have done little to attempt to inject their views into its life-blood. Mr. Terpak was an active member of the Carpatho-Rusyn Church in New York in the fifties, and figures such as Vincent Shandor and John Fizer, to name but a few, strove to illumine the Carpatho-Rusyn community according to their best lights.

Both Paul and Vasyl have been caught in a dream-like sleep, far from the reality of both communities they purport to represent. Hopefully this "human voice" will raise them before they drown — in the quagmire of their own dreams and illusions.

Edward Kasinec
Slavic Librarian
University of California at Berkeley

Dear Editor:

My first and continued response to the Markus-Magocsi dialogue is one of mild resentment. That the Ukrainians have to be our keepers, so to speak, is absurd. It appears by the remarks of Markus, the pecking order still exists. We all are well aware that the Czechs feel superior to the Slovaks, and at the bottom or tail of Czechoslovakia was Ruthenia. Discrimination, it seems, even by today's intelligentsia, will not die.

If my own ties to the homeland are an example, Markus is wrong. In the search for my roots, I discovered relatives in my grandfather's village and also in nearby towns. This area is located in eastern Slovakia, not far from the Ukrainian border. In correspondence with these people, I found them to be quite adamant about the fact that although they live in Slovakia they consider themselves Rusnaks. Therefore I too consider myself of Rusyn heritage. What we consider ourselves is what is important.

I for one appreciate Dr. Magocsi as our spokesman and look forward to further articles on our Rusyn people.

Larry Goga
Brooklyn Center, Minnesota

While the Markus-Magocsi debate that has appeared in the past several issues of the Carpatho-Rusyn American has focused primarily on relations — or lack of relations — between Carpatho-Rusyns and Ukrainians in the United States, there is, of course, another group whose interaction with Rusyns should be considered, namely the Slovaks. Therefore, we are pleased to print the following commentary by a leading (though unfortunately recently deceased) Slovak historian. — Editor

I consider the work of Paul R. Magocsi (*The Shaping of a National Identity*) the best one ever written on the question of Rusin national development in the century 1848-1948. Magocsi's debate with Vasyl Markus on whether the Carpatho-Rusins are a separate ethnic group or belong to the Ukrainian ethos is of interest, but I wish to offer here a short comment concerning the Rusin issue from the Slovak point of view.

In Magocsi's book, there is a section: "The Incorporation of Subcarpathian Rus' into Czechoslovakia." Here the author exposes all attempts to incorporate into Subcarpathian Rus' the entire eastern Slovakia, or at least four counties: Abauj, Zemplin, Šariš, Spiš. Those attempts were based on the following principle: All Greek Catholics are Rusins. The Slovaks, however, disagreed with this thesis, and the whole future development in this region showed that they were right. The great majority of the Greek Catholics then and now are Slovaks.

This brings me to my second point which concerns the situation among the Greek Catholics in the Pittsburgh metropolia. Magocsi's book certainly will have a strong impact on the "Rusin renaissance in America." Here the thesis still prevails that all Greek Catholics (except the Hungarians and Croats) are Rusins. According to many indications, this is not accurate. The thesis is based, for example, on the name "Rusnak," which in eastern Slovakia (as Magocsi rightly explains) generally does not indicate an ethnic allegiance, but is synonymous to "Greek Catholic." The term Rusnak refers to a religious affiliation. In eastern Slovakia the people always distinguished between Roman Catholic and Rusnak. Another equivocation is based on the confusion between the Rusin and eastern Slovak dialects. Dr. Magocsi, who wrote two editions of the phrasebook *Let's Speak Rusyn*, calls the language spoken by the Rusins in Bačka (Yugoslavia) as Rusin, although all Slavic philologists agree that it is an eastern Slovak dialect. One can observe something similar in America. For example, some years ago I was present in Kennywood Park (Pittsburgh) at the *Rus'kij den* (Rusyn day) celebration. The master of ceremonies announced several times that a choir would sing "rus'ki pisni." However, they sang mainly not in Rusin, but in an eastern Slovak dialect, and included such songs as "A okolo Levoči."

The question is this — where did the ancestors of the Greek Catholics who belong now to the Pittsburgh metropolia come from? Generally, one reads that they came from Carpatho-Ruthenia or Podkarpatska Rus'. However, a certain research project several years ago tends to refute this (see Nicholas Dorko, "The Geographical Background of the Faithful of the Apostolic Exarchate of Pittsburgh," *Slovak Studies*, Vol. IV, 1964, pp. 217-226). The author studied official lists of the deceased members of the Greek Catholic Union (Sojedinenie) published regularly in the *G.C.U. Mes-*

senger. During the years 1958-1963 he collected 2500 names. From these, 538 had incomplete personal data. Of the rest, most came from former counties in today's eastern Slovakia, and not from counties which comprised Podkarpatska Rus'. Of course, the author Dorko rightly distinguishes that not all those who came from today's Slovakia were Slovaks. According to his research, however, at least 60% came from Slovak villages. This is the reason why even the *G.C.U. Messenger* was printed for several years in two languages: Rusin and Slovak.

Now, we Slovaks wholeheartedly support activities such as those of the Carpatho-Rusyn Research Center. However, we disagree when only the Rusin heritage is indicated as the unique heritage of the Greek Catholic people in the United States. And we are even more disappointed when eastern Slovak songs, costumes, etc., are presented as Rusin.

From these few remarks one can see that there are problems between Greek Catholic Slovaks and Rusins; however, we hope that with serious research they can be cleared up and that useful collaboration will follow.

Reverend Michael Lacko
Pontifical Institute for Oriental Studies, Rome

OUR CENTER REPLIES

Neither the Carpatho-Rusyn Research Center nor the writings of Dr. Magocsi (as Reverend Lacko correctly points out) have ever suggested that all Greek Catholics, whether in the homeland or in the United States, are of Carpatho-Rusyn background. To suggest, as Reverend Lacko does, that the majority in this country are of Slovak background is very problematic and doubtful. The brief study by Nicholas Dorko, for instance, is a classical example of misreading and therefore misusing statistical data.

While we may not agree with the methodology employed by Czechoslovak government in gathering census data, the fact of the matter is that official Czechoslovak statistics for 1921 and 1930 never used the ethnic designation Slovak. All that appeared in the reports was "Czechoslovak." Not surprisingly, many non-Czechs or non-Slovaks (including Carpatho-Rusyns) were urged to identify themselves as "Czechoslovak" in order to show their loyalty to the republic. To suggest, therefore, as Dorko and Reverend Lacko do, that "Czechoslovak" equals Slovak is both incorrect and misleading. As for Czechoslovak statistics since 1945, there have been numerous studies (published both in the West and even in Czechoslovakia) to show their unreliability regarding the identity of the several national groups who inhabit Czechoslovakia. Hence, it seems very dubious for Slovak writers in the West to use Czechoslovak statistics as a way to prove indirectly the ethnic origin of membership in Carpatho-Rusyn fraternal organizations in the United States and, by extrapolation, to conclude — incorrectly — that the majority of Greek (Byzantine) Catholics in America are of Slovak ethnic descent.

As for the language of the Vojvodinian (Bačka) Rusyns, it is true that their language originally derived from East Slovak dialects and is therefore quite distinct from Rusyn in the Carpathian homeland as presented in the two editions of *Let's Speak Rusyn*. However, Vojvodinian Rusyn has developed for over two centuries in the immigration (in this case, what is present-day Yugoslavia); it has preserved strong

Hungarian and added Serbian influences; and it has been supplemented with words appropriate for modern industrialized societies. Added to this is a clear perception among the people that they form a distinct national group that is neither Slovak nor Ukrainian. In short, Vojvodinian Rusyns have a standardized literary language that is no longer the same as any East Slovak dialect. To say that it is would be the same as arguing that Dutch is German or Macedonian is Bulgarian, simply because they historically were at one time derived from the same linguistic base.

RECENT ACTIVITIES

Binghamton, New York, is a notably Slavic ethnic town. Carpatho-Rusyns number among the Slavic groups, and it is clear that Carpatho-Rusyn awareness is alive and kicking — literally. In the fall of 1980, St. Michael's Orthodox Church in Binghamton witnessed the birth of the Carpatho-Russian Folk Singers and Dancers. The group was organized by Cheryl Dutko, daughter-in-law of the parish rector Msgr. Stephen Dutko. The large group, numbering approximately 40 young people, consists of two sections: children up to the second-grade level and an intermediate contingent into the teens. Cheryl choreographs dances using steps learned from a variety of sources. Parishioners have come forward with dance music on old records and helpful reminiscences. Song and dance music is often provided by accordionist Tom Boback. The dancers' mothers have created costumes which contain elements from various Rusyn areas. St. Michael's parish itself consists of descendants of immigrants who represent many regions in the old country inhabited by Rusyns. The group's repertory of songs and dances is small, but growing. Cheryl teaches standard Russian and Ukrainian, as well as Rusyn dances, and Msgr. Dutko has taught the young people songs and skits to accompany the songs and dances.

St. Michael's Carpatho-Russian Folk Singers and Dancers have performed at church functions as well as at events sponsored by the Binghamton Civic Association. Cheryl informs us that enthusiasm among the young people for the group is strong; for instance, several three-year-olds are anxiously waiting to grow up and join. The *C-RA* congratulates Cheryl, Msgr. Dutko, and St. Michael's young people for their efforts to explore, preserve, and share their Carpatho-Rusyn cultural heritage. We wish them luck in this new season.

RECENT PUBLICATIONS 1978 (continued)

Naukovi zapysky KSUT (Scholarly Proceedings of the Cultural Society of Ukrainian Workers), No. 6 (Prešov, 1978), 150 p.

Despite the change of title from simply proceedings (*Zapysky*) to scholarly proceedings (*Naukovi zapysky*), this most recent volume contains little in the way of new scholarship. Of the 14 articles and several reviews, only the study by Z. Hanudel' on linguistics is of some importance. The remainder are either reworkings of previously published articles or reviews of recent activity by cultural institutions such as the Cultural Society of Ukrainian Workers, the Ukrainian National Theater, the Dukla Ensemble, or the National Museum in Svidnik.

Nova dumka (New Idea), Vol. VII, Nos. 17, 18, 19 (Vukovar, 1978), 136, 120, and 112 p.

Like previous issues of *Nova dumka*, the three for 1978 include for the most part articles on the contemporary cultural, social, and political life of Rusyns living in the Vojvodina (Bačka) and Srem regions of Yugoslavia. Most of the articles are written in the Vojvodinian Rusyn language. Of particular interest is the concluding part of Paul R. Magocsi's "Historiographical Guide to Subcarpathian Rus'" (No. 17); Roman Miz's bibliography of works on the name Rusyn (No. 17); and the first two parts of Fedor Labos's history of the immigration of Rusyns to the Vojvodina in the eighteenth century (Nos. 18 and 19).

Puhač, Stepan. *U madjars'kij tjurmi: spomyny molodoho v'jaznja* (In a Hungarian Prison: Memoirs of a Young Prisoner). New York: Carpathian Alliance, 1978, 39 p.

These Ukrainian-language memoirs provide a brief account of the imprisonment and suffering experienced by a young native of Subcarpathian Rus', as well as other local Ukrainophiles and Galician Ukrainians who were arrested after the Hungarian occupation of the region in March 1939. The author is extremely critical of the Hungarians and especially those Subcarpathian leaders who cooperated with them.

Shereghy, Basil, ed. *The United Societies of the U.S.A.: A Historical Album*. McKeesport, Pa., 1978, 172 p.

The United Societies (Sobranije) is a Rusyn-American fraternal society founded in 1903 to serve those Greek Catholics who remained loyal to the policies of the church's hierarchy. The present illustrated volume includes a series of essays authored by Msgr. Basil Shereghy and Rev. Athanasius Pekar, OSBM. The longest of these are popular histories of the United Societies, the Carpatho-Rusyn homeland, and Greek Catholic Rusyn immigrants in the United States. Also included are brief biographies of all the Byzantine Rite Catholic bishops, descriptions of several Byzantine Rite religious and cultural orders and institutions, and a bibliography of publications produced by the United Societies.

(Available from the United Societies, 613 Sinclair St., McKeesport, Pa. 15132 for \$5.95 hardcover and \$3.95 soft cover).

Sirka, Josef. *The Development of Ukrainian Literature in Czechoslovakia 1945-1975: A Survey of Social, Cultural and Historical Aspects*. European University Papers, Series XVI: Slavonic Languages and Literatures, Vol. XI. Frankfurt-on-Main, Bern, and Las Vegas: Peter Lang, 1978, xi, 198 p.

This is the first book-length study in a western European language to survey the cultural and social history of Carpatho-Rusyns (Ukrainians in the words of the author) in the Prešov Region of northeastern Slovakia since World War II. The author is a native of the region and only recently emigrated to West Germany. As a former member of the editorial board of the Prešov Ukrainian-language monthly, *Družno vpered*, Sirka is most interested and at his best when describing literary production in the region. He discusses all the major and minor authors and all genres — poetry, prose, drama. His bibliography of literary works and literary criticism is the most comprehensive that is available to date.

OUR FRONT COVER

"Rusyns from Rachov," watercolor by the Czech artist, Č. Čocek (circa 1934).

Non-Profit Org.
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
MILWAUKEE
WISCONSIN
Permit No. 1744

THE CARPATHO-RUSYN AMERICAN

A Newsletter on Carpatho-Rusyn Ethnic Heritage

Published four times a year by the
Carpatho-Rusyn Research Center, Inc.

Editor: **Patricia A. Krafcik**
Artistic Editor: **Miloš Janovsky**
Business Manager: **Steve Mallick**

Communications concerning content should be sent to:

Patricia A. Krafcik, Editor
Department of Slavic Languages
University of Pittsburgh
Loeffler Building 120
Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania 15260

Annual subscription: **\$5.00**
To subscribe, send check or money order to:

Carpatho-Rusyn American
5485 Forest Glen Road
North Madison, Ohio 44057