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Lemko Rusyns in the  
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BRAUMÜLLER

# Contested by Whom?

## Lemko Rusyns in the Post-Communist World

Bogdan Horbal

*The Lemko people are a numerically small and dispersed minority, which has experienced big changes in post-Communist Poland. During the Communist period, all Lemkos were administratively declared to be Ukrainian. However, the Rusyn movement among the Lemkos officially reemerged in 1989 and the group appears to be permanently divided. Lemko Rusyns are now recognized by the authorities which provide funding for their cultural activities. The Lemko Rusyn language has been codified and is taught in public schools at all levels. Polish society appears to be divided into those who extend moral support to the Lemko Rusyn movement and those who treat all Lemkos as Ukrainians. The attitude of most Ukrainian circles remains negative to the Rusyn movement in general, and to the idea that Lemkos may actually be a part of something other than the Ukrainian nation.*

*Big changes in the situation of ethnic minorities occurred in Poland after the fall of Communism.<sup>1)</sup> After years of political non-existence and abuse of minority rights,<sup>2)</sup> national and ethnic differences became an issue of political and legal importance in Poland. As early as 1989, a parliamentary Commission for National and Ethnic Minorities was established and it subsequently drafted a bill on National and Ethnic Minorities, with the aim of providing effective protection for national minorities. It began being debated in parliament in 1993. While it took more than a decade to enact it,<sup>3)</sup> a number of other laws secured rights for minorities, most notably the right to learn native languages, cultures and histories (1992), and access to the mass media (1992),<sup>4)</sup> so that by 1999 Poland's branch of the Helsinki Foundation for Human Rights declared that the Polish legal system in its specific regulations guarantees protection of rights of persons belonging to national minorities and that the regulations are – to a large extent – consistent with European standards.<sup>5)</sup>*

### 1 The Official Polish Government's Stance on the Lemko Rusyns

During the Communist period, all Lemkos and other Rusyns in all countries where they lived, except for those in Yugoslavia, were administratively declared to be Ukrainian. The Rusyn movement officially reemerged in 1989.<sup>6)</sup> It was actually none other than the Lemko Rusyns of Poland who led the way with the creation of the Lemko Association/*Stowarzyszenie Łemków*<sup>7)</sup> in April of 1989. The Association has since engaged in various publishing, educational, and cultural activities and it remains in close cooperation with Rusyn organizations worldwide. It helped to establish the World Council of Rusyns, and regularly participates in World Congresses of Rusyns, hosting two (in 1993 and 2005).

After decades of having administratively incorporated all Lemkos into the Ukrainian group, current Polish law

w Polsce po 1989 roku (Warszawa, 2005); Lech M. Nijakowski, *Polityka państwa polskiego wobec mniejszości narodowych i etnicznych* (Warszawa, 2005).

2) Alfred F. Majewicz, Tomasz Wicherkiewicz, "Minority Rights Abuse in Communist Poland and Inherited Issues," *Acta Slavica Iaponica* 16 (Sapporo, 1998): 54–73. Also available on-line at: <http://src-h.slav.hokudai.ac.jp/publictn/acta/16/alfred.html> ; accessed 14 December 2007.

3) On issues surrounding this process see Sławomir Łodziński, "Spory wokół ustawy o ochronie mniejszości narodowych i etnicznych w Polsce okresu transformacji," in Elżbieta Michalik, Henryk Chalupczak, eds., *Mniejszości narodowe i etniczne w procesach transformacji oraz integracji* (Lublin, 2006): 287–312.

4) Ministerstwo Spraw Wewnętrznych i Administracji, "Mniejszości narodowe i etniczne w Polsce: Podstawowe prawa," <http://www.mswia.gov.pl/portal/pl/61/38/> ; accessed 14 December 2007.

5) Sławomir Jodziszki, "The Protection of National Minorities in Poland," Helsinki Foundation for Human Rights, Warsaw, Poland, September 1999, [http://www.minelres.lv/reports/poland/poland\\_NGO.htm](http://www.minelres.lv/reports/poland/poland_NGO.htm); accessed 14 December 2007.

6) Paul Robert Magocsi, "Carpatho-Rusyns: Their Current Status and Future Perspectives," *Slovakia* no. 35 (64–65) (Middletown, Pa., 1991/92): 36–60. Ewa Michała, *Kwestie etniczno-narodowościowe na pograniczu Słowiańszczyzny wschodniej i zachodniej. Ruch rusiński na Słowacji, Ukrainie i w Polsce*, Prace Komisji Wschodniostoińska PAU 8 (Kraków, 2004).

7) See its web page at: <http://www.stowarzyszenielemkow.pl/>; accessed 14 December 2007.

and the government recognize Lemko Rusyns as an ethnic group.<sup>8)</sup> The Polish government's recognition of Lemko Rusyns is based on the fact that there is a group of people who consider themselves Lemko Rusyns (and not Ukrainians).<sup>9)</sup>

The Polish government's recognition of the Lemko Rusyn orientation and movement has been applauded by the Council of Europe's Advisory Committee on the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities, which in its "Opinion on Poland" (Strasbourg, 27 November 2003) wrote in Section III, Article 3, Point 22:

"As regards the Lemks [sic], the Advisory Committee notes with satisfaction that, for some years now, the authorities have taken care to respect their identity better, in particular by designating them as Lemks. In the past Lemks were systematically assimilated to Ukrainians and it is therefore particularly important to pay proper attention to the calls from many of their representatives for the distinctive elements of the Lemk identity to be recognized."<sup>10)</sup>

On January 6, 2005, almost a year after Poland's accession to the European Union, an omnibus law pertaining to national and ethnic minorities was enacted as the Act on National and Ethnic Minorities and on Regional Languages/Ustawa o mniejszościach narodowych i etnicznych i o języku regionalnym.<sup>11)</sup> This Act describes Lemkos, along with Karaims, Roma and Tartars, as an ethnic minority. Ethnic minorities in Poland enjoy identical rights to those of national minorities. The only difference is that a national minority is that which identifies itself with a nation organized in its own state. Therefore Armenians, Belarusians, Czechs, Germans, Jews, Lithuanians, Russians, Slovaks, and Ukrainians are recognized in Poland as national minorities.

The Act on National and Ethnic Minorities and on Regional Languages is the first legal document in Poland that defines what both national and ethnic minorities are.<sup>12)</sup> According to this legislation, when speaking about Lemkos as an ethnic minority, it is only the Lemko Rusyns that can be taken into consideration as they do not identify with a nation organized in a state. At the same time, per this very same piece of legislation, Ukrainian-oriented Lemkos should simply be treated as Ukrainians as they do identify with a nation (Ukrainians) organized in a state (Ukraine). This however is clearly not the way in which the Polish government interprets the Act on National Minorities.

In a brief description posted on the Ministry of Internal Affairs and the Administration's web site, Lemkos are specifically described as an ethnic minority. It is, however, also stated that the "Lemko community [underlined by B.H.] is divided into two groups: Lemkos considering themselves a separate national minority and Lemkos identifying as an ethnic group of the Ukrainian nation."<sup>13)</sup> This approach contradicts the Act on National Minorities and leaves sufficient room for bureaucratic manipulation.

The Act on National Minorities called for the creation of a Joint Committee of the Government and National and Ethnic Minorities/Komisja Wspólnej Rządu i Mniejszości

Narodowych i Etnicznych, to which Lemkos were to elect from among themselves two candidates. On June 4, 2005, seven Lemko organizations and institutions elected Helena Duć-Fajfer and Jerzy Starzyński.<sup>14)</sup> The only organization which could not find common ground with the rest of the Lemko community in Poland and which actually per the Act on National Minorities should not even have been included in the process, was the Ukrainian-oriented Union of Lemkos. Despite this democratic election, the Ministry of Internal Affairs and Administration removed Starzyński as a Lemko representative and replaced him with a Lemko-Ukrainian activist, Stefan Hładyk, arguing that both Rusyn- and Ukrainian-oriented Lemkos should be represented on the committee.<sup>15)</sup> Faced with such an arbitrary decision, seven Lemko Rusyn organizations and institutions issued a protest to the minister,<sup>16)</sup> but the decision stood.<sup>17)</sup> As a result of this decision, Ukrainians in Poland have three members on the Committee (two of their own seats, plus one Lemko seat) and Lemko Rusyns are left with only one. Most ethnic and national minorities have two seats on the committee.

8) See Poland's Ministry of Internal Affairs and Administration's "Raport dla Sekretarza Generalnego Rady Europy z realizacji przez Rzeczpospolitą Polską postanowień Konwencji Ramowej Rady Europy o Ochronie Mniejszości Narodowych," Warszawa, 2002, p. 14-15, [http://www.wspolnotapolska.org.pl/pdf/raport\\_mn.pdf](http://www.wspolnotapolska.org.pl/pdf/raport_mn.pdf) ; accessed 14 December 2007.

9) Sławomir Łodziński, "Czyje prawa chronić? Sporne kwestie związane z pojęciem "mniejszość narodowa" (etniczna) w Polsce po 1989 roku," in: Małgorzata Mieczkowska, and Janusz Mieczkowski, eds., *Polityka i mniejszości narodowe na pograniczu* (Szczecin, 2007): 37.

10) Council of Europe's Advisory Committee on the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities, "Opinion on Poland" (Strasbourg, 27 November 2003), [http://www.coe.int/t/e/human\\_rights/minorities/2\\_framework\\_convention\\_\(monitoring\)/2\\_monitoring\\_mechanism/4\\_opinions\\_of\\_the\\_advisory\\_committee/1\\_country\\_specific\\_opinions/1\\_first\\_cycle/1PDF\\_1st\\_OP\\_Poland.pdf](http://www.coe.int/t/e/human_rights/minorities/2_framework_convention_(monitoring)/2_monitoring_mechanism/4_opinions_of_the_advisory_committee/1_country_specific_opinions/1_first_cycle/1PDF_1st_OP_Poland.pdf) ; accessed 22 April 2007.

11) The original Polish text and several official translations (including English and Lemko) are on the web page of the Ministry of Internal Affairs and Administration at <http://www.mswia.gov.pl/portal.php?serwis=pl&dzial=353&id=4392&sid=a52d5ee252af087abbdb45b9eec0f4a>; accessed 21 April 2007.

12) Such definitions are not present in any international documents and therefore it is up to particular countries to define minority groups. Sławomir Łodziński, "Czyje prawa chronić? ..." p. 31-34.

13) Ministerstwo Spraw Wewnętrznych i Administracji, "Lemkowie," <http://www2.mswia.gov.pl/portal.php?serwis=pl&dzial=61&id=37#lemkowie> ; accessed 23 April 2007.

14) (pt), "Výbrano predstavitele Lemkiv do Komisyj Spil'noi Riadu ta Narodnykh i Etnichnykh Menshyn," *Besida* 17, no. 3 (Legnica-Kryniczka, 2005): 10-11. See also: "Protokól z zebrania organizacji lemkowskikh ..." in the same issue of Besida, pp. 11-12.

15) See the statement dated October 13, 2005 by the co-chair of the Joint Committee, Jan Schön from the Ministry of Internal Affairs and Administration, "Organizacje mniejszości lemkowskij," reprinted in *Vatra* 15, no. 1 (52) (Gorlice, 2006): 11.

16) Reprinted in *Besida* 17, no. 6 (Legnica-Kryniczka, 2005): 17-18.

17) Reactions by Lemko Rusyns are in: PeTro, "Rizovyný demokratsy?" *Besida* 17, no. 6 (Legnica-Kryniczka, 2005): 17-18; Olena Duts'-Fajfer, "Spotniam svili oboviazok," *Besida* 18, no. 1 (Legnica-Kryniczka, 2006): 12-14.

## 2 Government Subsidies

In 1990, the Polish government assigned substantial amounts of money that were subsequently allotted to minorities to lay the foundations (*na zagospodarowanie*) of their organized activities in democratic Poland. It appears that Lemko Rusyns did not get anything.<sup>18)</sup> As a matter of fact, no central government subsidies were allotted to Lemko Rusyns before 1995, although already in 1990 Lemko Rusyns lobbied for governmental help and were promised it.<sup>19)</sup> In 1994, the Polish government spent 13.5 billion old zloties on minorities, including 7.9 billion zloties on the minority press. Several years later, a leading Lemko Rusyn activist in Poland, Piotr Trochanowski, noted that the Lemko Association's childhood was wasted because of the lack of governmental funding.<sup>20)</sup>

In 1995, the Lemko Association received eighty million zloties to publish an anthology of poetry, and fifty million zloties for the annual Lemko festival "Vatra" in Michałów.<sup>21)</sup> The Lemko Rusyn flagship publication, *Besida*, started receiving a governmental subsidy after enthusiasts of Lemko Rusyn culture led by the founding editor Piotr Trochanowski published nineteen quarterly issues. With the government support, *Besida* has improved over the years, becoming a bimonthly published partially in color and with some supplements. By 2007, *Besida* had published 93 issues,<sup>22)</sup> although it does not have editorial offices and has to be put together from the editor's apartment. The quarterly *Zahoroda*, published since 1994 by the governing body of the Lemko Museum in Zyndranowa, has received governmental subsidies since 1996 and by 2005 had published 43 issues.

Historical data on how much money the Polish central and local government allocated to support Poland's minorities is not readily available.<sup>23)</sup> According to Lemko sources, in 1998 central government subsidies were not large.<sup>24)</sup> A disproportional allocation of available subsidies has also been noticed.<sup>25)</sup> This perhaps is best evident when subsidies for publications with identical frequency and somewhat similar size, the Lemko Rusyn *Besida* and the Ukrainian *Nad Buhom i Narvoiu*, are compared.

**Table 1:**

**Central Government Subsidies for Besida and Nad Buhom i Narvoiu**

Periodical	1998 subsidy <sup>1</sup>	2002 subsidy <sup>2</sup>	2007 subsidy <sup>3</sup>
<i>Besida</i>	10,000	17,000	27,000
<i>Nad Buhom i Narvoiu</i>	65,000	80,000	134,400

Sources:

- 1 Petro Trochanowski, "Stricha v Ministerstvi Kul'tury," *Besida* 10, no. 1-2 (Krynica-Legnica, 1998): 1.
- 2 Lech Nijakowski, Sławomir Łodziński, eds., *Mniejszości narodowe i etniczne w Polsce: Informator 2003* (Warszawa, 2003): 252.
- 3 Ministerstwo Spraw Wewnętrznych i Administracji, *Dotacja na realizację zadań z zakresu kultury mniejszości narodowych i etnicznych w 2007 roku – stan na dzień 19 czerwca 2007 roku*, <http://www.mswia.gov.pl/portal/pl/384/4758/>; accessed 6 July 2007

It is also interesting to see how Lemko activities are funded by the central government in comparison to other minority groups. A closer examination of central government subsidies for Poland's minorities can be done for 2000, 2003, and 2006.<sup>26)</sup> The total subsidies for Poland's minorities rose in 2006 to almost one hundred fifteen million zloties. In comparison to 2000 they increased nineteenfold, from six and a half million zloties. This substantial increase, however, does not mean that each minority got more money from the Polish government in 2003 than it did in 2000. Some minorities enjoyed raises in subsidies, while others had to manage with smaller financial resources. In 2006, each minority received bigger subsidies than in 2003 – in many cases the subsidies were substantially bigger than previously. It is important to stress that the Polish government does not simply allocate money to particular minority groups for their activities but rather subsidizes particular cultural events or undertakings.<sup>27)</sup> Every year minorities need to apply for subsidies for particular events and projects. In other words, if they do not apply, they do not get any money. This system of financial support is probably in part responsible for the sometimes dramatic changes in the amounts of money allotted to each minority at different points in time. Still, it is surprising that for

18) Ukrainians apparently received 5,226 billion old zloties, Belarusians over four billion, Jews almost three billion, and Lithuanians 1,751 billion. Piotr Trochanowski, "Wokół problemów redaktorskich i wydawniczych publikacji Stowarzyszenia Lemków," *Besida* 16, no. 4 (Krynica-Legnica, 2004): 10.

19) pt. "I Konkurs Stowarzyszenia Lemków," *Besida* 2, no. -34 (Krynica, 1990): 2.

20) Piotr Trochanowski, "Wokół problemów redaktorskich ...," p. 10.

21) Piotr Trochanowski, "Wokół problemów redaktorskich ..." 50 million old zloties equals 5,000 current zloties, or some \$1,500 while 80 millions old zloties equals some \$2,500. Oddly enough, more money was allocated to publish an anthology than to support the largest Rusyn cultural event, which lasts over a weekend and is attended by a few thousand people.

22) Most issues are also now available on the Internet at: <http://www.stowarzyszeniemlekow.pl/modules/sections/index.php?op=viewarticle&articleid=89>; accessed 14 December 2007.

23) Data for current year only is on the web site of Poland's Ministry of Internal Affairs and Administration, <http://www.mswia.gov.pl/portal/pl/112/>; accessed 14 December 2007.

24) Information on subsidies allotted to minorities by local government is not available.

25) Disproportions in money allotted to various minorities for publishing activity was noted by Eugeniusz Czykwin who heads the parliamentary Committee on National and Ethnic Minorities. See a report from June 13, 2007 meeting of the Committee on National and Ethnic Minorities, <http://orka.sejm.gov.pl/Buletyn.rst/0/49F1CCD0FA1D81F7C12573090037B6EF?OpenDocument>; accessed 14 December 2007.

26) Initial subsidies for 2007 were posted on the web page of the Ministry of Internal Affairs and Administration in late June 2007 (see <http://www.mswia.gov.pl/portal/pl/384/4758/>; accessed 6 July 2007) but since later during the calendar year ministry allocates additional funds for the minorities, 2007 subsidies were not taken under consideration in this paper.

27) This system of subsidies has been criticized by minorities, including Lemko Rusyns. Zanion Jasiński, "Problemy kultury mniejszości narodowych w Polsce w pracach Komisji Mniejszości Narodowych i Etnicznych Sejmu RP w latach 1997-2001," in: Zenon Jasiński, Tadeusz Lewowicki, eds., *Kultura mniejszości narodowych i grup etnicznych w Europie* (Opole, 2004): 25-26.

example Lithuanians, a minority that according to the latest census is actually slightly smaller in size than Lemkos, received in 2003 more than four times as much subsidies as Lemkos. Between 2000 and 2003

Lithuanians have also enjoyed a raise in their subsidies which actually was bigger than all subsidies allotted to Lemkos in 2003. In 2006, subsidies allotted to Lemkos and Lithuanians were comparable.

**Table 2: Central Government's Subsidies for Poland's Minorities in 2000, 2003, and 2006**

Minority	Size (2002 census)	2000 subsidy <sup>1</sup> (new zloties)	2003 subsidy <sup>2</sup> (new zloties)	2006 subsidy <sup>3</sup> (new zloties)
Armenians	262	?	8,000	96,879
Belarusians	47,640	4,918,982	3,860,717	7,972,541
Czechs	386	?	?	27,100
Germans	147,094	11,339,936	19,545,648	54,245,498
Jews	1,055	395,700	491,364	2,646,850
Karaims	43	?	12,000	31,488
Kaszubs	5,100	?	2,550,478	13,905,159
Lithuanians	5,639	2,316,000	2,979,557	3,004,505
Lemkos	5,850	265,434	649,934	2,608,251
Roma	12,731	516,160	2,890,720*	15,661,999
Russians	3,244	?	7,000	0
Slovaks	1,710	875,267	788,548	2,050,187
Tatars	447	120,000	70,000	535,147
Ukrainians	27,172	3,918,179	4,391,425	12,179,145
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>6,538,000</b>	<b>38,245,391</b>	<b>114,961,749</b>

\* Pilot program for Roma in Małopolskie voivodeship.

**Sources:**

- 1 Zanion Jasiński, "Problemy kultury mniejszości narodowych w Polsce w pracach Komisji Mniejszości Narodowych i Etnicznych Sejmu RP w latach 1997-2001," in: Zenon Jasiński, Tadeusz Lewowicki, eds., *Kultura mniejszości narodowych i grup etnicznych w Europie* (Opole, 2004): 37.
- 2 Ministerstwo Spraw Wewnętrznych i Administracji, "Uwagi do Opinii Dotyczącej Polski Komitet Doradczy Konwencji Ramowej o Ochronie Mniejszości Narodowych," Warszawa, April 2004, załącznik, p. [41], <http://www.mswia.gov.pl/portal/pl/118/278/>; accessed 15 December 2004.
- 3 II Raport dla Sekretarza Generalnego Rady Europy z Realizacji przez Rzeczypospolitą Polską postanowień Konwencji Ramowej Rady Europy o Ochronie Mniejszości Narodowych," Warszawa, 2007, p. 50, <http://www.mswia.gov.pl/portal/pl/118/5208/>; accessed 14 January 2008.

The only calendar year for which the internal distribution of central government subsidies for various Lemko organizations can be traced is 2002. The single largest Lemko recipient of governmental subsidies that year was the Ukrainian-oriented Lemko Union. However, if one adds up all subsidies allotted to Rusyn-oriented organizations and institutions (Lemko Association, Kyczera Ensemble, Lemkovyna Ensemble, Zyndranowa

Museum, Rutenika Foundation, Ruska Bursa) it is the Rusyn orientation that got better central government funding among the Lemkos. In 2002, Lemko organizations received slightly less than half of the money that they had applied for and the amount received was enough to pay for about a third of the estimated cost of their cultural events and undertakings.

**Table 3: Central Government's Subsidies for Various Lemko Organizations in 2002**

Organization	Membership <sup>1</sup>	Estimated cost of cultural events <sup>2</sup>	Requested subsidy <sup>2</sup>	Received subsidy <sup>2</sup>
1. Lemko Union	707	491,300	226,500	179,000
2. Kyczera Ensemble	n/a*	454,000	163,000	77,000
3. Lemko Association	176	222,400	93,000	76,000
4. Lemkovyna Ensemble	n/a*	145,000	130,000	70,000
5. Rutenika Foundation	n/a*	n/a	40,000	40,000
6. Zyndranowa Museum	n/a*	40,000	34,000	35,000
7. Ruska Bursa	n/a*	43,100	34,300	8,000
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>1,395,800</b>	<b>1,029,500</b>	<b>480,000</b>

\* not a membership organization

**Sources:**

- 1 Główny Urząd Statystyczny, *Wyznania religijne, stowarzyszenia narodowościowe i etniczne w Polsce 2000-2002* (Warszawa, 2003): 226-232.
- 2 Lech Nijakowski, Sławomir Łodziński, eds., *Mniejszości narodowe i etniczne w Polsce: informator 2003* (Warszawa, 2003): 252-276.

Creating paid positions within Lemko cultural organizations or institutions has proved to be very difficult. The Museum of Lemko Culture in Zyndranowa,<sup>28)</sup> which was created in 1968 and consists of several preserved traditional buildings (including a Gypsy smithy and a Jewish house) in which numerous farming tools, furniture, crafts, costumes, and artifacts are on display, faced serious financial crises in the mid-1990s. It subsequently entered into a partnership with the Regional Museum in Krosno, which allowed for the creation of paid positions as well as ongoing renovation and the cataloging of holdings. This, however, lasted only a few years and in 1999 the Regional Museum in Krosno withdrew its support for the Zyndranowa Museum, which subsequently had to be closed to individual tourists in 2000 (groups were still admitted by appointment).<sup>29)</sup> The 2002 government subsidy for the museum was for the publication of the quarterly *Zahoroda* and organization of a festival "Od Rusalia do Iana."

No paid positions exist at the Rusyn Boarding School Society/Stowarzyszenie Ruska Bursa in Gorlice,<sup>30)</sup> which was re-established in 1991 (originally established in 1908) and four years later was able to regain from the Polish government the building it used before World War II. Similarly, the Center of Lemko Culture/Centrum Kultury Łemkowskiej that has been in existence in Legnica for several years does not have any paid positions despite repeated requests for state financial assistance by its founder Jerzy Starzyński. Incidentally, Starzyński is also the founding director of the widely popular Lemko Ensemble Kyczera, which has extensively toured Europe and visited Mexico, China and Indonesia representing not only the Lemkos but also Poland. The group has been getting some funding from the state, but heavily depends on its director's financial creativity. Starzyński is also the founding director of "Under Kyczera European Gathering of National and Ethnic Minorities/Europejskie Spotkania Mniejszości Narodowych i Etnicznych pod Kyczerą." This is the largest regular undertaking of its kind in Europe (featuring concerts, workshops, exhibitions and scholarly conferences) and is organized in several cities in southwestern Poland. State subsidies for this event are usually promised, but delivered late thus creating financial difficulties.<sup>31)</sup>

Financial support of minorities' cultural and educational activities through timely delivery of subsidies has recently become a major problem for all of Poland's minorities. On June 13, 2006, a dozen national minority organizations including Lemko Rusyns', sent an open letter to Prime Minister Kazimierz Marcinkiewicz complaining about delays in the delivery of subsidies, demanding 25 percent advanced payments on the subsidies as well as long-term subsidies which are required to properly conduct their cultural activities.<sup>32)</sup> In the light of recent difficulties, the letter reads, the fulfillment of state policy towards minorities is a fiction. Low budget subsidies for cultural activities, too rigid control of the use of financial means and problems in ensuring the teaching of minority languages at schools were also major issues discussed

by the leaders of national and ethnic minorities at a conference in the lower house of Poland's parliament, the Sejm, on June 28, 2006.<sup>33)</sup>

### 3 Standardization and Teaching of the Lemko Rusyn Language

One of the major goals of the Lemko Rusyns in Poland was the standardization of the Lemko vernacular and codification of a grammatical system. The Lemko Association's Committee of National Enlightenment started its activities with a revised, updated reissuing (1991) of Metody Trochanowski's primer (1935). During the following year a grammar was printed,<sup>34)</sup> and a year later a Lemko-Polish dictionary.<sup>35)</sup> Miroslawa Chomiak prepared a number of children's primers, readers and grammars intended for the first and second grade of primary schools.<sup>36)</sup> As early as the 1991/1992 school year, Lemko Rusyn classes were offered in the villages of Kunkowa and Uście Gorlickie, and the next year in Krynica.<sup>37)</sup> All of these early education activities were carried out without any help from the Polish government. The situation, however, changed in subsequent years. It took a few years to establish an official curriculum approved by Poland's Ministry of Education. In 1999, the Ministry of National Education and Sport approved a curriculum for Lemko Rusyn at the primary and gymnasium level.<sup>38)</sup> It was followed two years later by a curriculum

28) Elżbieta Śliś-Janusz, *Nad rzeką Panną Z działalności społeczności łemkowskiej w Zyndranowej* (Krosno-Zyndranowa 1998). Also available on-line at [http://lemko.org/books/gocz\\_panna.html](http://lemko.org/books/gocz_panna.html).

29) Józef Matusz, "U Gocza nad Panną zamknięto Muzeum Kultury Łemkowskiej," *Rzeczpospolita*, 20 June 2000.

30) See its web page at: <http://ruskabursa.org/>; accessed 14 December 2007.

31) Wanda Dybalska, "Kyczera to znaczy szczyt," *Gazeta Wyborcza/Wrocław*, 8 August 2004; Zygmunt Mulek, "Koń w kolorze piasku," *Ślово Polskie/Gazeta Wrocławskie*, 9/10 July 2005; Zbigniew Budych, "Szkockie studi w Papuasi," *Ślово Polskie/Gazeta Wrocławskie*, 14 February 2006.

32) "Poland: National Minorities Protest Interior Ministry Behaviour on Subsidies," BBC Monitoring, 13 June 2006, in *ISI Emerging Markets* [database on-line], Poland, News File; accessed 19 April 2007.

33) "Poland: Leaders of Ethnic, National Minorities Discuss Current Issues," BBC Monitoring, 28 June 2006, in *ISI Emerging Markets* [database on-line], Poland, News File; accessed 19 April 2007.

34) Myroslava Chomiak, *Persha gramatyka suchasnoho lemkiivskoho jazyka* (Legnica, 1992). See also hers: *Lemkiivska gramatyka dla dity* (Legnica, 1992).

35) Iaroslav Horoshchak, *Pershyi lemkiivsko-pol'skii slovnyk/Pierwszy słownik lemkiwsko-polski* (Legnica, 1993).

36) Lemkiivský bukvý - chast 1 (Legnitsia, 1992); suplemented by: *Bukvý - ukladanký* (Gorlice, 1992); Lemkiivský bukvý - chast 2 (Legnica, 1993); *Vchýme sia i bavyme - chast 1* (Legnica, 1993); suplemented by: *Nazvnyky i chasoslova: Leksykal'ný hrý* (Legnica, 1993); *Vchýme sia i bavyme - chast 2* (Legnica, 1993).

37) Helena Duć-Fajfer, "Contemporary Lemko Poetry and the Problem of So-called "Lemko Separatism," in Paul Best, Jarosław Moklak, eds., *The Lemkos of Poland* (Kraków - New Haven, 2000): 156.

38) Miroslawa Chomiak, Halina Granatowska, Piotr Trochanowski, Helena Duć-Fajfer, Marta Wanca-Szawluk, Andrzej Kwoka, *Program nauczania języka łemkowskiego (rusiškiego) dla szkoły podstawowej i gimnazjum* (Warszawa-Legnica, 1999).

for Lemko Rusyn at the high school.<sup>39)</sup> A new primer for elementary schools was prepared by 1996, but because of financial difficulties it waited for publication for seven years,<sup>40)</sup> at which time other textbooks for teaching Lemko Rusyn also appeared.<sup>41)</sup> Almost all of them were commissioned by the Ministry of National Education and Sport and published by the Foundation for the Support of Lemko Minority "Rutenika." Ever since their official introduction, Lemko Rusyn classes have been attended by a steadily growing number of students.

This educational activity is carried out in state-funded elementary schools and gymnasiums where to set up a minority-language class the minimum requirement is seven pupils at the primary level and fifteen students at the secondary level. All of the students learning Lemko Rusyn (and 90% of all minority students learning their respective languages in Poland)<sup>42)</sup> do so during additional school hours, usually three hours per week.

**Table 4: Teaching of Lemko in Elementary Schools and Gymnasiums: 1997/1999–2004/2005 School Years**

School year	Elementary schools	Number of students	Gymnasiums	Number of Students
1997/1998	4	51	–	–
1998/1999	4	44	–	–
1999/2000	8	66	2	14
2000/2001	9	98	5	29
2001/2002	12	92	6	37
2002/2003	14	118	6	32
2003/2004	16	180	8	57
2004/2005*	20	164	13	109

**Sources:**

Ewa Pogorzała, "Szkolnictwo mniejszości narodowych i etnicznych w Polsce w okresie transformacji," in Elżbieta Michalik, Henryk Chalupczak, eds., *Mniejszości narodowe i etniczne w procesach transformacji oraz integracji* (Lublin, 2006): 336–338.

\* *Mały rocznik statystyczny* 49 (Warszawa, 2006): 234.

The growing interest in the Lemko-Rusyn language was reflected in the seminar for Lemko Rusyn language teachers which was held in Krynica (2000) and attracted forty people.<sup>43)</sup> All participants received ministerial permits/zaświadczenie ministerialne to teach the Lemko Rusyn language.<sup>44)</sup> In order to produce a Lemko teaching cadre, a division of Lemko philology was opened at a state college, the Advanced School of Learning/Akademia Pedagogiczna in Cracow in 2001/2002 school year.<sup>45)</sup> The program, which had eleven students in the school year 2004/2005,<sup>46)</sup> was set up and is led by one person, Helena Duć-Fajfer. In May 2006, the parliamentary Committee on National and Ethnic Minorities turned to the Minister of Science and Higher Education requesting the ministry's support for the program,<sup>47)</sup> but nothing was done to improve its situation. Therefore, the issue was raised again during a meeting of the parliamentary Committee on National and Ethnic Minorities which took

place March 28, 2007,<sup>48)</sup> and was also discussed during a meeting of the Joint Committee of the Government and National and Ethnic Minorities on June 20, 2007.<sup>49)</sup>

#### 4 2002 Census of Population

In 2002, the first census in post-Communist Poland took place. It was also the first census since 1931<sup>50)</sup> that was to determine the size of ethnic minorities living in Poland. The minorities have complained that official figures (1.23 percent or 471,000 persons) underestimate their presence which should be at least 5 percent, and say that the discrepancy is due to either pressure to assimilate or "poor" census-taking methodology. In fact, some observers noted a general pressure to assimilate and pointed to shortcomings in the way census information was gathered. A prominent Polish politician, Jacek Kuroń (1934–2004) underlined that: "The way the question was being asked virtually forced people to declare Polish nationality. We will thus mass-produce 'Poles' yet what is the use of that."<sup>51)</sup> However, it also appears that minorities, including Lemko Rusyns, need to do better

39) Miroslawa Chomiak, *Program nauczania języka lemkońskiego (rusińskiego) dla szkoły średniej* (Warszawa-Legnica, 2001).

40) Petro Murianka [Piotr Trochanowski], *A ja znam azbuku: lemkiwskii bukvar* (Warszawa-Legnica, 2003).

41) Henryk Fontański, Miroslawa Chomiak, *Gramatyka języka lemkońskiego/Gramatyka lemkiwskiego lajżka* (Katowice, 2000), 2nd ed. (Warszawa, 2004); Miroslawa Chomiak, *Lemkiwskii lajżk: osnovnyi kurs* (Warszawa-Legnica, 2003); Miroslawa Chomiak, Bogdan Matała, *Lemkiwskii lajżk z komputerem* (Warszawa-Legnica, 2003); Miroslawa Chomiak, Magdalena Górska, *Słowniczek tematyczny szkoła: polsko-lemkowsko-angielski, angielsko-lemkowsko-polski* (Warszawa-Legnica, 2003); Jarosław Horoszczak, *Słownyki lemkiwsko-polski, pol'sko-lemkiwskii* (Warszawa, 2004); Miroslawa Chomiak, *Lemkiwskii lajżk II* (Warszawa, 2005); Miroslawa Chomiak, *Lemkiwskii lajżk III* (Warszawa, 2005).

42) Sławomir Łodziński, *Równości i różnice: mniejszości narodowe w porządku demokratycznym w Polsce po 1989 roku* (Warszawa, 2005): 189, 191.

43) Myrosława Chomiak, "Kurskonferencja dla uchýteliv i kandydativ na uchýteliv lemkiwskoho lajžka v Krenytsi 6–8 lyptsiia, 2000 r.," *Záhoroda* no. 3 (26) (Zyndranowa, 2000): 19–20; Petro Trokhanovskii, "Kurskonferencja lemkiwskoho lajžka i susidskii (i ne lem) shum popry nii," *Rusyn* no. 5–6 (Prešov, 2000): 19; Pavel Korobchak, "Lemkiwský uchýtel na lemkiwské budučie," *Besida* 12, no. 6 (Legnica-Krynica, 2000): 10–12.

44) Lecha Nijakowski, Sławomir Łodziński, eds., *Mniejszości narodowe i etniczne w Polsce: informator 2003* (Warszawa, 2003): 52.

45) Olena Duts'-Faifer, "Lemkovyna," in Paul Robert Magocsi, ed., *Rusynskii lajžk* (Opole, 2004): 359.

46) *Mały rocznik statystyczny* 49 (Warszawa, 2006): 234.

47) "Dezyderat nr 3: Komisji Mniejszości Narodowych i Etnicznych uchwalony na posiedzeniu w dniu 18 maja 2006 r. do Ministra Nauki i Szkolnictwa Wyższego," [http://orka.sejm.gov.pl/opinie5.nsf/nazwa/mne\\_d3/file/mne\\_d3.pdf](http://orka.sejm.gov.pl/opinie5.nsf/nazwa/mne_d3/file/mne_d3.pdf); accessed 14 December 2007.

48) See a report from this meeting, <http://orka.sejm.gov.pl/Biuletyn.nsf/0/EBB75C18DE0C91ACC12572C600349E34?OpenDocument>; accessed 14 December 2007.

49) "VI posiedzenie Komisji Wspólnej Rządu i Mniejszości Narodowych i Etnicznych," Ministerstwo Spraw Wewnętrznych i Administracji, <http://www.mswia.gov.pl/portal/pl/2/4764/>; accessed 14 December 2007.

50) The results of 1946 census, during which minorities were also counted, have limited value due to major political changes and forced movements of minority populations.

51) "Poland's Minorities – Zealous Pollsters Stir Old Fears," *Polish News Bulletin*, 20 June 2002, in Factiva [database on-line], accessed 7 May 2007; Józef Matusz, "Znikający Lemko," *Rzeczpospolita*, 14 February 2005.

job educating and encouraging their own people to take full advantage of the next census.<sup>52)</sup>

In the 2002 census, 5,850 persons identified themselves Lemkos, while 5,696 declared that they speak Lemko at home. This constitutes some ten percent of the commonly quoted estimated number of Lemkos in Poland before the census, around 60,000. The official Polish government estimate right before the census was 60,000–70,000.<sup>53)</sup> Considering some problems surrounding the gathering of the census data, several contemporary Polish scholars estimate number of Lemkos as follows: Sławomir Łodziński, 10–20,000; Eugeniusz Mironowicz, 25,000; Henryk Chałupczak, 30,000; and Marek Hałuszko, 50–60,000.<sup>54)</sup>

### 5 Polish Society and Minorities, Including Lemkos

In 1998, Polish scholars Alfred F. Majewicz and Tomasz Wicherkiewicz observed that the prevailing tendency in the Polish society seems to lead towards a more tolerant society, as one may conclude from the unprecedented interest of Poles, especially the younger intelligentsia, in minorities, their cultural heritage and their differentness. They have, however, also stated that the growth

of minority ethnic self-consciousness goes together with intolerance – individual, rooted in ignorance, as well as institutionalized, rooted in nationalist parties or movements.<sup>55)</sup>

In the same year, Barbara Weigl stated that Poles know very little about minorities, underlining that a primary school student knows more about the French and Americans than about Poland's minorities.<sup>56)</sup> Perhaps in an attempt to change that, in 1999 the Ministry of Education developed a program for teaching "Regional Cultural Heritage" and although special competitions on multiculturalism in particular regions more and more often make their way to Polish schools it was also noted that school textbooks include very little information on Poland's minorities.<sup>57)</sup> In the late 1990s, another Polish scholar, Beata Klimkiewicz, argued that despite the rhetoric in favor of minorities and the recognition of the multi-ethnic character of Polish society, the Polish mainstream media promotes assimilation into the dominant Polish culture.<sup>58)</sup> In the light of these somewhat contradicting opinions, one may ask: what is Polish society's attitude towards minorities? A recent poll by Poland's Center for Research of Public Opinion/Centrum Badania Opinii Społecznej (CBOS) sheds some light on this.

**Table 5: Attitude of the Polish Society to Minorities**

	QUESTION	YES (percentage)	NO (percentage)
1	Should minorities be able to learn their languages in Polish schools during additional tutoring?	82	11
2	Should minorities be able to learn in their own languages?	61	29
3	Is it possible to have two homelands ( <i>dwie ojczyzny</i> )?	71	20
4	Is it desirable to have non-Polish neighbors?	53	26 [21 – no opinion]
5	Is it desirable to have only one ethnic group inhabiting a country?	56	34
6	Should non-Poles living in Poland adopt the Polish language and culture as their own?	46	42 [12 – no opinion]
7	Should Poles living abroad adopt the culture and language of their new homeland?	32	53
8	Should minorities receive financial help from the state to maintain their culture?	41	43 [16 – no opinion]
9	Should minorities be able to communicate in their languages with the local government where they live?	37	52 [12 – no opinion]
10	Should minorities be excused from meeting the 5% minimum in national election?	18	57 [25 – no opinion]
11	Should signs in minority languages be placed next to signs in Polish in places where minorities live?	26	63

Source:

Joanna Lewandowska, compl., *Tożsamość narodowa Polaków oraz postrzeganie mniejszości narodowych i etnicznych w Polsce: komunikat z badań* (Warszawa, 2005). Also available online at [http://www.cbos.pl/SPISKOM.POL/2005/K\\_084\\_05.PDF](http://www.cbos.pl/SPISKOM.POL/2005/K_084_05.PDF); accessed 14 December 2007.

52) Bogdan Horbal, "Results of the 2002 Census of Population in Poland: Present Lemkos (and other Minorities) with a Challenge," Rusyn International Media Center, [http://www.rusynmedia.org/Documents/Articles/census\\_horbal.html](http://www.rusynmedia.org/Documents/Articles/census_horbal.html); accessed 14 December 2007.

53) Ministerstwo Spraw Wewnętrznych i Administracji, "Raport dla Sekretarza Generalnego Rady Europy z realizacji przez Rzecznostkę Polską postanowień Konwencji Ramowej Rady Europy o Ochronie Mniejszości Narodowych," Warszawa, 2002, p. 14–15, [http://www.wspolnota-polska.org.pl/pdf/raport\\_mn.pdf](http://www.wspolnota-polska.org.pl/pdf/raport_mn.pdf); accessed 14 December 2007.

54) Official data and some estimates given by Henryk Chałupczak, "Liczba mniejszości narodowych i etnicznych w Polsce w świetle powszechnego spisu ludności z 2002 roku oraz badań naukowych," in Elżbieta Michałek, Henryk Chałupczak, eds., *Mniejszości narodowe i etniczne w procesach transformacji oraz integracji* (Lublin, 2006): 269–270, and Sławomir Łodziński, *Równość i różnica: mniejszości narodowe w porządku demokratycznym w Polsce po 1989 roku* (Warszawa, 2005): 94.

55) Alfred F. Majewicz, Tomasz Wicherkiewicz, "Minority Rights Abuse in Communist Poland and Inherited Issues," *Acta Slavica Iaponica* 16 (Sapporo, 1998), <http://src-h.slav.hokudai.ac.jp/publictn/acta/16/alfred/alfred-1.html#6>; accessed 14 December 2007.

56) Barbara Weigl, "Podsumowanie: postawy wobec mniejszości narodowych," in Barbara Weigl, Beata Malisziewicz, eds., *Inni to także my: mniejszości narodowe w Polsce: Białorusini, Cyganie, Litwini, Niemcy, Ukraińcy, Żydzi* (Gdańsk, 1998): 69.

57) Mirosław Pecuch, "Wpływ szkolnictwa na procesy akulturacji, asymilacji i rekulturności Lemków," *Rocznik Lubuski* 30, no. 1 (Zielona Góra, 2004): 136–137.

58) Beata Klimkiewicz, "Ethnic Minorities and Media in Poland: Democracy without Advocacy?" [1997?] [http://www.idsnet.org/Papers/Communications/BEATA\\_KLIMKIEWICZ.HTM](http://www.idsnet.org/Papers/Communications/BEATA_KLIMKIEWICZ.HTM); accessed 14 December 2007. See also her recent study: *Mniejszości narodowe w sferze publicznej: reprezentacje, praktyki i regulacje medialne* (Kraków, 2003).

It appears that Poles are supportive of minorities, as 82 percent of the respondents are in favor of minorities' right to learn their respective languages in Polish schools and more than half of those polled (62%) believes that minorities should be able to learn in their respective languages. Positive for minorities is also the fact that almost three-quarters of Poles (71%) think that an individual may have two homelands. It is not clear, however, whether respondents had in mind minorities identifying with their respective ethnic states or the millions of Poles who live abroad. Answers to a set of questions about adopting dominant culture as one's own show that a different principle was applied by respondents depending on whether Poles or other nationalities were discussed.

Slightly more than half of the respondents (53%) agreed that it is desirable to have non-Polish neighbors (those who already have such neighbors were even more eager to say so), but, contradicting this opinion, a little more of the respondents (56%) stated that it is desirable to have only one ethnic group inhabiting a country. The latter contradiction is somewhat characteristic for respondents. After declaring support for minority education, 46 percent is in favor of non-Poles living in Poland adopting Polish culture as their own (42% against it), 43 percent is against state financial help for minorities (41% for it), 52 percent is against minorities being able to communicate in their languages with the local government where they live (37% for it), 57% is against minorities be excused from meeting the 5 percent minimum in national elections (18% for it), and as many as 63 percent is against posting signs in minority languages next to signs in Polish in places where minorities live (26% for it).

Somewhat similar opinions on minority issues were present in responses by high school students polled in 2002 and 2003. They showed themselves to be tolerant of minorities, supporting their right to learn their respective languages and cultures and having religious services in their respective languages, but were largely against having minority members present in the local and central government(s).<sup>59</sup>

In a 1999 poll by CBOS, respondents were asked about their attitude towards various minorities. Unfortunately, Lemkos were not included.<sup>60</sup> In 2005, CBOS did not broach the attitude question, but did ask respondents to name all of the minorities they knew.

It appears that the only research on the attitude of Poles towards Lemkos was conducted among a group of 200 students at Zielona Góra University in 2003.<sup>61</sup> Consid-

ering that 80 percent never met any Lemko (although 44% have heard about them) it is not surprising that the respondents showed varying and in general rather poor knowledge on Lemko issues. This should be considered disappointing, as Zielona Góra is a significant center of Lemko activities.

Only 11 percent of the respondents knew where Lemkos came from, while 51 percent gave the wrong answer and 36 percent had no idea. Some 36 percent stated that Lemkos as a group have common, unique characteristics, and only 16 percent thought that they do not (48 percent did not know). Despite not knowing much about them, respondents showed a quite positive view of Lemkos, describing them as hard-working (23%), sociable (15%), sympathetic (15%), frugal (14%) and gentle (8%).<sup>62</sup> Perhaps in part because of this positive view, 88 percent of the respondents would vote for a Lemko both in local and central elections. There appears to be a positive stereotype of Lemkos among the students as only a much smaller part of the respondents described Lemkos in negative ways: aggressive (5%), antipathic (5%), unsociable (3%), wasteful (2%) and lazy (2%). Surprisingly, only 1 percent of the respondents believed that Lemkos are religious and 1 percent called them sentimental.

In the questionnaire, authors asked about who the Lemkos are from an ethnonational point of view. Almost half of the respondents had no idea, while 24 percent believed that they are Ukrainian, 21 percent saw them as a separate nation (i.e., as Rusyns, although the authors made no mention of whether respondents noted which separate nation they had in mind) and only 7 percent believed they are Polish.

59) Piotr Olejnik, "Młodzież wobec mniejszości narodowych: między tolerancją a ksenofobią" in: Małgorzata Gwoździcka-Piotrowska, Andrzej Zduniak, eds., *Edukacja w społeczeństwie "ryzyka": bezpieczeństwo jako wartość*, Edukacja XXI wieku 11 (Poznań, 2007): 439-446.

60) Michał Wenzel, comp., *Stosunek do mniejszości narodowych: komunikat z badań* (Warszawa, 1999). Also available on-line at [http://www.cbos.pl/SPISKOM.POL/1999/K\\_138\\_99.PDF](http://www.cbos.pl/SPISKOM.POL/1999/K_138_99.PDF); accessed 14 December 2007.

61) Bohdan Halczak, Czesław Osękowski, "Stereotyp Lemka w świadomości zielonogórskich studentów," *Rocznik Lubuski* 30, no. 1 (Zielona Góra, 2004): 51-60.

62) According to a recent study the most common Lemko self-description is that they are good people (36.4%), hospitable (30%), hard-working (29.1%), honest (23.6%), and helpful (17.3%). Joanna Okulska, *Tożsamość etniczno-kulturowa Lemków w Polsce południowo-wschodniej. Na podstawie badań ludności lemickiej w Beskidzie Niskim*, unpublished MA thesis, Katolicki Uniwersytet Lubelski, 2007.

**Table 6: What Ethnic or National Minorities do you Know?**

Germans -	54%
Ukrainians -	42%
Roma -	41%
Jews -	31%
Russians -	19%
Belarusians -	17%
Lithuanians -	11%
Silesians -	7%
Kaszubs, Lemkos, Romanians, -	6% mentioned each of the groups
Vietnamese, Czechs -	5%
Tartars -	3%
Slovaks, Greeks, Arabs -	2%

Africans, Turks, Chinese, Highlanders/Górale, Armenians, Bulgarians - 1%  
Muslims - 5%

1% of respondents denied the presence of any minority in Poland.  
3% (every eighth respondent) could not name any.

**Source:**

Joanna Lewandowska, compl., *Tożsamość narodowa Polaków oraz postrzeganie mniejszości narodowych i etnicznych w Polsce: komunikat z badań* (Warszawa: CBOS, 2005). Also available online at [http://www.cbos.pl/SPISKOM.POL/2005/K\\_084\\_05.PDF](http://www.cbos.pl/SPISKOM.POL/2005/K_084_05.PDF)

**Table 7: Who are the Lemkos?**

Answers	Women (135)		Men (65)		Total (200)	
	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage
Separate Nationality	27	20	16	25	43	21
Poles	7	5	7	11	14	7
Ukrainians	27	20	22	34	49	24
I do not know	74	55	20	30	94	48

**Source:**

Bohdan Haczak, Czesław Osękowski, "Stereotyp Lemka w świadomości zielonogórskich studentów," *Rocznik Lubuski* 30, no. 1 (Zielona Góra, 2004): 54.

There is also a group of Poles who are torn between accepting the Lemko Rusyn orientation and supporting the Ukrainian one. They usually note the Lemko Rusyn cultural struggle and feel moral obligation to support it, but also note the similarities between Lemkos and Ukrainians and want to have good relations with Ukrainians as well. They do not think that Lemko Rusyns have achieved their goals yet and believe that the future holds the answer to whether Lemko Rusyns succeed or not. A clear example of such an attitude is in writings of Michał Jagiełło,<sup>63)</sup> former vice-minister of culture in the Polish government and current director of the National Library.

## 6 The Polish Media and Lemkos

The coverage of Lemko topics by the Polish press has undergone a significant change since 1980. Andrzej Zięba, who is the author of a Polish press review which spanned the years 1980–1986, felt that press often portrayed Lemkos as "rustic exotica." Discussions of current Lemko community concerns, especially the question of the Lemkos' national identity, was largely absent. Many journalists wrote with a certain impression that Lemkos are "something other" than Ukrainians, although what that "otherness" might be was never clearly identified. While Ukrainian voices on the question of Lemko identity were present in the press, no Lemko voices were heard.<sup>64)</sup>

Susyn Mihalasky, who reviewed Polish reporting about Lemkos from 1987 to 1997<sup>65)</sup> concluded that the most obvious continuity in the approach taken to Lemkos during that period was the portrayal of them as exotic aborigines with a mysteriously romantic and tragic past and a lack of interest in discussing the troublesome question of Lemko national identity. Mihalasky has also noted that, perhaps in an attempt at neutrality, the overwhelming majority of journalists favored the more neutral terminology designating only cultural and geographic origin – "Lemko" – over the more politicized terms designating ethnonational orientation – "Ukrainian" or "Rusyn."

Based on their use of terminology, Mihalasky concluded that most writers (as in the early 1980's) still regard Lemkos as other than Ukrainian. Few writers used the terms "Lemko" and "Ukrainian" as synonyms. Some journalists' anti-Ukrainian bias<sup>66)</sup> sometimes seemed to affect their attitude toward Lemkos. If a journalist used

the "Ukrainian" and "Lemko" ethnonyms interchangeably, suggesting a belief that Lemkos were Ukrainians, there was often less sympathy for Lemkos. If a journalist appeared to regard Lemkos as "something other" than Ukrainian or specifically as Rusyns, then there was generally a more sympathetic portrayal of them. A small but significant new development in the question of ethnonational terminology and press bias is the fact that a small number of journalists in the late 1980's, according to Mihalasky, have begun to use the term "Rusyn" (in Polish: *rusin, rusiński*) and to note the view that Lemkos may be a branch of the Rusyn nationality.

The Polish press has continued to show interest in Lemko subjects in the decade since Mihalasky's research, but nobody has analyzed journalistic reporting about Lemkos the way Zięba and Mihalasky have done. The only systematic review of the Polish press regarding Lemkos has been on the pages of Lemko bimonthly *Besida* since 2000.<sup>67)</sup> Getting a precise picture of the Polish press coverage of Lemko issues is practically impossible due to the vast media resources of contemporary Poland. It is clear from the selections reprinted in *Besida* and from my own research that *Gazeta Krakowska*,<sup>68)</sup> with its local editions published in Nowy Sącz and Gorlice leads the way in the amount of Lemko coverage. Two of its journalists, Ewa

63) "Lemkowie," in his: *Partnerstwo dla przyszłości: szkice o polityce wschodniej i mniejszościach* (Warszawa, 2000): 315–330.

64) Andrzej Zięba, "The Lemko Question in the Polish Press, 1980–86," *Carpatho-Rusyn American* 11, no. 1 (1988): 9–11.

65) Susyn Y. Mihalasky, "A Select Bibliography of Polish Press Writing on the Lemko Question, 1987–1997," in Andrzej Zięba, ed., *Lemkowie i Lemkoznawstwo w Polsce, Prace Komisji Wschodnioeuropejskiej PAU* 5 (Kraków, 1997): 284–303. Also available on-line at <http://www.carpatho-rusyn.org/susyn/susyn2.htm>; accessed 14 December 2007. See also her older works: "Lemkos in the Polish Press, 1987–1992," in Paul Best, Jarosław Mokliak, eds., *The Lemkos of Poland* (Kraków–New Haven: C-SSG, 2000): 129–142; "The Lemko Question in the Polish Press, 1987–1993," *East European Quarterly* 31, no. 1 (Boulder, 1997): 43–54.

66) In a poll conducted in 1994, 42 percent of Polish respondents declared antipathy towards Ukrainians (only 16 percent declared sympathy). In 1999 their number dropped, but was still significant at 33 percent (19 percent declared sympathy). Michał Wenzel, comp., *Stosunek do mniejszości narodowych: komunikat z badań* (Warszawa, 1999): 5. Also available on-line at [http://www.cbos.pl/SPISKOM.POL/1999/K\\_138\\_99.PDF](http://www.cbos.pl/SPISKOM.POL/1999/K_138_99.PDF); accessed 14 December 2007.

67) Its chief editor, Piotr Trochanowski devotes two full pages to partial reprints of 5–10 selected articles on Lemko subjects: "Z dostępnej prasy/Z komentarzem i bez." He is also responsible for occasional commentaries.

68) On-line edition available at: <http://www.gk.pl/>; accessed 14 December 2007.

Bugno and Robert Drobisz, have consistently addressed Lemko subjects. *Ślово Polskie/Gazeta Wrocławskiego*<sup>69</sup> has made it its business to report on Lemko-related topics covering the territory of southwestern Poland. National, mainstream newspapers, like *Gazeta Wyborcza*<sup>70</sup> and *Rzeczpospolita*<sup>71</sup> have also regularly visited Lemko topics. All these newspapers have an Internet presence with extensive on-line archives and are also available through the Emerging Markets and Factiva databases. When possible, I have also examined random articles published in other newspapers.

During the last decade, Polish journalists have not shied away from coverage of controversial issues, including unjust treatment of Lemkos during and after the resettlement,<sup>72</sup> difficulties with regaining lost property (especially forests),<sup>73</sup> and the struggle to return the original Lemko name (Nykyfor Drovniak) to the artist who has been officially known as Nikifor Krynicki.<sup>74</sup> Most interest in Lemkos, however, has been exhibited in numerous articles that describe cultural, religious, and educational events or undertakings, which may *in passim* mention a specific ethnonational orientation if a particular activity is organized by pro-Rusyn<sup>75</sup> or pro-Ukrainian<sup>76</sup> Lemkos. In general, if any discussion of competing ethno-national orientations among the Lemkos is present it is almost always based on opinions presented by the particular individuals interviewed or is simply presented as a quotation of a particular person. Both pro-Ukrainian<sup>77</sup> and pro-Rusyn<sup>78</sup> voices are heard in the press. It is very rare that a journalist presents his or her own view on Lemko ethno-national issues. Strong pro-Ukrainian<sup>79</sup> or pro-Rusyn<sup>80</sup> opinions are usually given by those who rarely get to discuss Lemko topics or simply address them once and never return to the subject. Those who rarely address Lemko subjects, regardless of whether they touch on ethnonational issues, are also prone to make various factual mistakes. At the same time, those who repeatedly report on Lemkos are very careful not to present definitive views on Lemko ethnonational issues and simply report on particular events and quote those who spoke with them. In broader, general articles, authors regularly present both points of view on the national orientations of Lemkos.<sup>81</sup>

## 7 The Ukrainian Stance on Lemko Rusyns

The Ukrainian government continues with the characteristic approach of the previous Soviet regime. In the Soviet Union, all people describing themselves as "Lemko" or "Rusyn" were classified as Ukrainians.<sup>82</sup> Ukrainian publications on Lemkos, whether popular or scholarly most often *a priori* describe Lemkos as a Ukrainian mountain tribe/ukraїн's'ke hirs'ke plem'ia, downplaying or outright ignoring the fact that a considerable amount of them do not identify as Ukrainians. Because of cultural and linguistic similarities, Lemkos and Rusyns in general can not and should not be treated as anybody else but Ukrainians who due to unfavorable cultural and political conditions have not sufficiently adopted the Ukrainian national orientation. A full explanation of the

official Ukrainian stance on the Lemkos is contained in "The report of Ukraine on implementation of the provisions of the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities" (Received on 2 November 1999),<sup>83</sup> which states that:

"(...) Ethnographic (sub-ethnic) groups of the Ukrainian ethnus in small numbers are formed in Ukraine owing to peculiarities of historical development and geographical conditions. They are Boikos, Hutsuls, Lemkos (the western regions of Ukraine) and Lytvyns and Polishchuks (Polissia). Overwhelming majority of representatives of these ethnographic groups identifies itself as the Ukrainians.

Representatives of some ethnographic groups of the Ukrainian people, in particular, Boikos, Hutsuls and Lemkos reside also over the borders of Ukraine. (Eastern Slovakia, Hungary, Poland, Union Republic of Yugoslavia, Croatia, Canada, the USA) and have relevant citizenship of these countries. Part of representatives of these ethnographic groups owing to isolation

69) On-line edition available at: <http://gazeta.naszmiasto.pl/>; accessed 14 December 2007.

70) On-line edition available at: <http://www.gazeta.pl/0,0.html>; accessed 14 December 2007.

71) On-line edition available at: <http://www.rzeczpospolita.pl/>; accessed 14 December 2007.

72) Paweł Smoleński, "Lemko nie może bez lasów," *Gazeta Wyborcza*, 18 October 2002, *Magazyn*, p. 8-15; Anna Gorczyca, "Konferencja: Co wiemy o życiu naszych sąsiadów," *Gazeta Wyborcza*, 13 May 2005; Marek Lubaś, "Czego chcą Lemkowie," *Gazeta Krakowska*, 16 February 2007.

73) Danuta Frey, "Lemkowie występują o nieruchomości utracone podczas Akcji Wiśla," *Rzeczpospolita*, 26 September 2001; Mariusz Jałoszewski, "Zwrot nieruchomości dla Łemków," and "Komentuje dla Gazety Stefan Hladyk, wnuk Marii, prezes Zjednoczenia Łemków," both in *Gazeta Wyborcza*, 1 October 2001; AKA, MR, "Dostaną lasy albo pieniądze," *Rzeczpospolita*, 2 October 2001; Ireneusz Dańko, "Łemkowie zniercierpliwieni bezczynnością państwa," *Gazeta Wyborcza*, 10 December 2001.

74) Ireneusz Dańko, "Tożsamość Nikifora," *Gazeta Wyborcza*, Kraków ed., 14 March 2003; HSZ, "Nikifor to Drowniak," *Gazeta Krakowska*, 27 March 2003; Maciej Kwaśniewski, "Malarz i żebrak," *Gazeta Krakowska*, 28 March 2003.

75) Ewa Bugno, "Elementarz lemkowski," *Gazeta Krakowska*, 23 July 2004; Ewa Bugno, "Werterp lemkowski," *Gazeta Krakowska/Gorlicka*, 25 January 2005; Marian Janiga, "XIII Łemkowska Jesień Twórcza," *Tygodnik Gorlicki*, 4 November 2005; Marian Janiga, "Pamięci twórców łemkowskiej kultury," *Gazeta Krakowska/Gorlicka*, 27 October 2006.

76) dad, "Motywują i jednozę," *Gazeta Krakowska/Nowosądecka*, 27 April 2004; "Batkivszczyna i ojcowizna," *Gazeta Krakowska* 26 July 2005; Wojciech Chmura, "Nikifor Łemkowszczyna malowany," *Dziennik Polski/Nowosądecki*, 20 March 2006.

77) Jarosław Kurski, "Łemko na swoim," *Gazeta Wyborcza*, 19 October 2001; Dorota Wilk interview with Stanisław Stępień, "Rozmowa o mniejszościach etnicznych," *Gazeta Wyborcza*, 30 January 2005.

78) Ireneusz Dańko interview with Andrzej Kopczaj, "Jako Łemko nie czuję się Ukraińcem," *Gazeta Wyborcza/Kraków*, 26 June 2005.

79) Marek Lubaś-Harny interview with Marian Zgórniak, "Przelomowe Gorlice," *Gazeta Krakowska*, 29 April 2005.

80) Andrzej Talar, "Karpaty dla Rusinów," *Nowe Państwo*, no. 41 (October, 2001). Also available online at: [http://www.nowe-panstwo.pl/np\\_41\\_2001/41\\_cywilizacja.htm](http://www.nowe-panstwo.pl/np_41_2001/41_cywilizacja.htm); accessed 14 December 2007.

81) Piotr Pytlakowski, "Łemko szuka grobów," *Polityka*, 1 July 2000, p. 100-105; Cezary Polak, "U innych. Łemkowie," *Gazeta Wyborcza* 2 September 2002; (bs), "Kim jesteś Łemku?" *Gazeta Krakowska*, 15 July 2003.

82) Barbara A. Anderson, Brian D. Silver, "Demographic Ananlysis and Population Catastrophies in the USSR," *Slavic Review* 44, no. 3. (1985): 533.

from processes of consolidation of the Ukrainian nation that happened in the territory of Ukraine preserved ancient own name of the Ukrainians – Rusyny. (...)"  
 (Source: [http://www.coe.int/T/E/Human\\_Rights/Minorities/2\\_FRAMEWORK\\_CONVENTION\\_\(MONITORING\)/2\\_Monitoring\\_mechanism/3\\_State\\_reports/1\\_First\\_cycle/1st\\_SR\\_Ukraine.asp#TopOfPage](http://www.coe.int/T/E/Human_Rights/Minorities/2_FRAMEWORK_CONVENTION_(MONITORING)/2_Monitoring_mechanism/3_State_reports/1_First_cycle/1st_SR_Ukraine.asp#TopOfPage); accessed 15 May 2007.)

The Advisory Committee on the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities in its subsequent "Opinion on Ukraine," adopted on 1 March 2002 criticizes this stance, stating in point 16:

"(...) The Advisory Committee notes that (...) the State Report employs the term "ethnographic (sub-ethnic) groups of the Ukrainian people" – a term that is not defined in any legislation pertaining to national minorities – to describe e.g. the Boikos, Hutsuls and Rusyns (...)." (Source: <http://www.humanrights.coe.int/Minorities/Eng/FrameworkConvention/AdvisoryCommittee/Opinions/Ukraine.htm>; accessed 15 May 2007.)

International pressure in the case of the Rusyns has not changed the official Ukrainian stance on the Rusyns in general and on the Lemkos in particular. In 2003, Ukraine's State Committee on Nationalities and Immigration stated in a response to a report by the United States Department of State that "Rusyn" is an old name for Ukrainians and that Lemkos are a sub-group of Ukrainians.<sup>83)</sup> In a November 2004 interview, one of the key Ukrainian government officials dealing with minority issues stated that she does not envision any change in governmental policy on the Rusyn issue despite considerable pressure from international organizations and Rusyn groups both in Ukraine and neighboring countries where Rusyns are recognized.<sup>84)</sup> In a recent report submitted by Ukraine to the United Nations Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination, point 61 reads:

"Among other things, the following activities are currently being carried out: [...] measures to preserve and develop the culture and way of life of the Hutsul, Boyko and Lemko peoples as distinctive ethnographic groups of Ukrainians(...)"  
 (Source: "Eighteenth Periodic Reports of States Parties due in 2004, Addendum. Ukraine" Submitted in Russian, 6 October 2005, translated 11 May 2006. [http://www.unhchr.ch/tbs/doc.nsf/898586b1dc7b4043c1256a450044f331/44bcb8c24fd53f90c1257198004d08cb/\\$FILE/G0641996.doc](http://www.unhchr.ch/tbs/doc.nsf/898586b1dc7b4043c1256a450044f331/44bcb8c24fd53f90c1257198004d08cb/$FILE/G0641996.doc); accessed 15 May 2007.)

In November 2005, a resolution to recognize Rusyns was introduced in the Ukrainian parliament but it went nowhere.<sup>85)</sup> However, a possible breakthrough in Ukrainian government's attitude towards Rusyns came in March 2007 when the Transcarpathian Regional Council/Zakarpats'ka oblasna rada declared Rusyns the indigenous population of the region.<sup>86)</sup> Although some Ukrainian voices pointed at the ever-changing ethnic structure of many territories and chose to accept the decision,<sup>87)</sup> others immediately criticized it and/or the Rusyn movement in general.<sup>88)</sup> Some Ukrainian political<sup>89)</sup> and scholarly<sup>90)</sup> circles protested the decision, underlining that it is a "dangerous provocation

to mislead the whole Ukrainian nation and an attempt to divide Ukraine" and that the "Rusyn movement is a project of foreign intelligence services and their hirelings in Ukraine."

Throughout its existence in the Post-Communist world, the Rusyn movement has been labeled by some Ukrainian circles as "political Rusynism." According to these circles, it is a political movement because it was created and has been supported by several countries – most notably Poland, Slovakia, Russia and Hungary. This supposed foreign support is aimed at the division and ultimate destruction of the independent Ukrainian state.<sup>91)</sup> Although clearly a product of conspiracy culture in some Ukrainian circles, this undocumented threat to Ukraine is regularly raised in the media and some scholarly works.<sup>92)</sup> Most confusion is based on misin-

83) "Zaiava Derzhevnoho komitetu Ukrayni u sprawakh natsional'nostei ta mihratsii do dopovidii Derzhevnoho Departamentu SShA po Ukrayni za 2003 rik," *Narodnyi Ohladsach*, 3 March 2002, [http://observer.sd.org.ua/prn\\_news.php?id=3159](http://observer.sd.org.ua/prn_news.php?id=3159); accessed 7 May 2007.

84) Oleh Protsyk, "Majority-minority Relations in Ukraine," p. 27. Draft book chapter for Marc Weller, ed., *An Ever Diverse Union? The Future of Majority-Minority Relations in an Enlarged Europe* (Palgrave Macmillan, forthcoming); available online at [http://www.policy.hu/protsyk/Publications/MajMinRelations\\_UKR.pdf](http://www.policy.hu/protsyk/Publications/MajMinRelations_UKR.pdf); accessed 14 December 2007.

85) Oleh Protsyk, "Majority-minority Relations in Ukraine," p. 28.

86) "Zakarpats'ka oblastna vyznala rusyniv na terenakh oblasti," *Zakhidna informatsiina korporatsiia*, 7 March 2007, [http://zlk.com.ua/index.php?news\\_id=74738](http://zlk.com.ua/index.php?news_id=74738); accessed 14 December 2007. For more news on this event and subsequent positive and negative reactions see Rusyn International Media Center, News Archive for 2007, <http://www.rusynmedia.org/News/2007/index.html>; accessed 14 December 2007.

87) Oleh Suprunenko, "Iak rusyns'ke pytannia Zakarpattiv psuie," *Internet reporter*, 4 April 2007, <http://rep-ua.com/66192.html>; accessed 14 December 2007.

88) Iaroslav Muzychko, "Rusyns'ka pastka: Komu vyhidna «nova natsionalist», proholosheна Zakarpats'koi oblasnoi radoi," *Ukraina moloda*, 21 April 2007, <http://www.umoloda.kiev.ua/number/903/219/32885/>; accessed 15 May 2007; Iaroslav Dashkevych, "Etnichni pseudomenhshyni v Ukrayni," *Natsiia i derzhava*, 10 May 2005, [http://naciaj.org.ua/index.php?option=com\\_content&task=view&id=1188&Itemid=3](http://naciaj.org.ua/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=1188&Itemid=3); accessed 14 December 2007.

89) "Na Zakarpats'kakh raionakh rada zvernulasia z protestom do prezidenta ta Henprokuratoru proty rishehnia oblasnoi rady pro vyznannia natsional'nosti "rusyn," *UA-Reporter*, 23 March 2007, <http://www.ua-reporter.com/novosti/20556/>; accessed 14 December 2007; Iryna Bilan, "Ukrainian People's Party Calls on Prosecutor General's Office To Protest Zakarpattia Regional Council Decision Declaring Rusyns Indigenous Population Of Zakarpattia," *Ukrainian News*, 14 March 2007, in *Factiva* [database on-line], accessed 15 May 2007.

90) "Ukrain's'ki vcheni ne vyznaiut' rusyniv okremoiu natsional'nistiu," *Bratstvo*, 26 March 2007, <http://www.bratstvo.info/bratstvo-text-7041.html>; accessed 14 December 2007.

91) Several works on the subject were authored by: Oleksii Myshanych (*Politychnye rusynstvo i shcho za nym*, Uzhhorod, 1993), and Iurii Bacha (*Politychnye rusynstvo i budivnytstvo Ukrayns'koi Derzhavy: zbirnyk statei*, Uzhhorod, 2003). Those available on-line include Oleksa Myshanych, "Political Ruthenienism [sic] – a Ukrainian Problem," *The Ukrainian Quarterly* 53, no. 3 (1997): 234–243, also available at: <http://lemko.org/rusyn/myshanych.html>, accessed 18 May 2007; and Mai Panchuk, "Political Rusynism in Ukraine," *Politychna dumka* no. 2–3 (6) (1995): 116–123, also available at: <http://litops.narod.ru/rizne/panchuke.htm>; accessed 14 December 2007.

92) For example Oleh Protsyk, "Majority-minority Relations in Ukraine," p. 28 states that: "The preoccupation with maintaining territorial integrity, which is one of the traditional security priorities of a state, is an important factor in explaining the Ukrainian authorities' approach towards dealing with the Rusyn question." Victor Stepanenko, "State to Build, a Nation to Form: Ethno-policy in Ukraine," in Anna-Mária Biró and Petra Kovács,

formation about statements present in: 1.) the 1990 Declaration of the Society of Subcarpathian Rusyns,<sup>93</sup> which contrary to often-repeated accusations, does not include any mention of Czechoslovakia "reacquiring Transcarpathia," and in 2.) the 1993 declaration of the Provisional Government of Subcarpathian Rus',<sup>94</sup> which again contrary to often-repeated accusations, does not seek Russian support and does not declare its intention to join the Commonwealth of Independent States.<sup>95</sup> As a matter of fact, there have never been any demands by any Rusyn organization to redraw any borders.<sup>96</sup> Oddly enough, it is the Lemko-Ukrainian Organization for the Defense of Lemkivshchyna, which in its flagship publication *Lemkivshchyna* presents what is described in English as Our Motto (in Ukrainian: *Nasha tsil'*/Our goal): "The unity of Ukrainian ethnographic territory in a free Ukrainian state."<sup>97</sup> The goal, which if fulfilled, would require redrawing of many international borders. The Organization for the Defense of Lemkivshchyna is particularly active in cooperating with and financially supporting Ukrainian-Lemko organizations in Ukraine and in Poland, where Lemko Rusyns are accused by Ukrainian circles of political activity, or "Lemko separatism." Similar to "political Rusynism", "Lemko separatism" was supposedly formed under the influence of the Polish minority policy in the 1930s when government support was extended to the Rusynophile movement.<sup>98</sup> The fundamental view among most Ukrainian circles is that Lemkos (just like other Rusyns) are Ukrainians who due to unfavorable political and cultural conditions have not universally acquired the same level of Ukrainian national consciousness as other Ukrainians. These conditions that have been unfortunate for Ukrainian nation-building processes have endured ever since the second half of the nineteenth century. Some Lemkos in Poland and most Lemkos in Ukraine share this point of view and strongly support the Ukrainian orientation.<sup>99</sup>

## 8 Conclusions

In 2001, Piotr Bajda, Magdalena Syposz and Dariusz Wojakowski concluded that: "While some considerable improvements in minority protection have been made in Poland in the last ten years, the process towards achieving equality in law as well as in fact is nowhere near complete."<sup>100</sup> Among the most urgent issues they listed was an enactment of a comprehensive law on national and ethnic minorities. Such a law is now in place and the legal situation in which minorities, including Lemko Rusyns, find themselves in Poland today may very well be the best it has ever been. Both the Constitution and the Act on National and Ethnic Minorities and on Regional Languages guarantee minority protection in line with international standards. The Joint Committee of the Government and National and Ethnic Minorities should serve as a venue for minorities to relate their concerns to the government (despite the fact that one seat was taken away from Lemko Rusyns), while the parliamentary Committee on National and Ethnic Minorities should continue to present minorities' issues in

the forum of Poland's parliament. Since 1997 there has been an interdepartmental body serving as an advisory committee to the Prime Minister on issues pertaining to minorities. Since 2002, it has been called the National Minorities' Affairs Team/Zespół do Spraw Mniejszości Narodowych.

Since the fall of Communism in 1989, Lemko Rusyns have enjoyed the longest period ever in which they have been continuously recognized as an ethnic minority. The beginnings were difficult, as no organized Lemko Rusyn structures existed under the Communist regime and during the first years of democracy no government subsidies were allotted to Lemko Rusyns. A significant change occurred in the mid 1990s and considerable cultural and educational progress has been achieved by Lemko Rusyns since then, thanks both to the dedication of the Lemko Rusyn community as well as government assistance.

The situation Polish government (and international NGOs)<sup>101</sup> faces in the case of the Lemkos is not an easy one. There is a group of people who originate from a certain territory and do form a single unit from an ethnographic and linguistic point of view, but it is permanently deeply divided along national lines. The Polish government recognizes Lemkos as a group and acknowledges their internal division into adherants of Ukrainian and Rusyn ideologies.

eds., *Diversity in Action: Local Public Management of Multiethnic Communities* (Budapest, 2001): 338 wrote "the 'Rusyn issue' (...) quickly grew beyond its regional borders and united extremist political forces in a movement that threatened regional stability and security."

93) Reprinted in *Otchyj khram*, Sept.-Okt. 1990, Uzhhorod, p. 1-2.

94) Reprinted in *Podkarpatska Rus'*, 3 June 1993, Uzhhorod, p. 1.

95) This misinformation was pointed out in a letter of Paul Robert Magocsi to Oleh Protsyk, dated December 21, 2006. I'm greatfull to Prof. Magocsi for sharing it with me. The letter with supporting documents is also available on-line at the Rusyn International Media Center's web site: <http://www.rusynmedia.org/Documents/ZakObl/PRM-Protsyk.pdf>; accessed 14 December, 2007.

96) Paul Robert Magocsi, "The Rusyn Question," *Politychna dumka* no. 2-3 (6) (1995): 105-115, also available on-line at: <http://litopys.narod.ru/rizne/magocie.htm>; accessed 18 May 2007; Ewa Michna, "Aspiracje narodowe Łemków," in Marian Kempny, Alina Kapciak, Sławomir Łodziński, eds., *U progu wielokulturowości: nowe oblicze polskiego społeczeństwa* (Warszawa, 1997): 228.

97) It appears in every issue on the verso of the front cover. Cited from v. 26, no. 2 (2005).

98) Iaroslav Mokliak, "Lemkiv's'kyi separatyzm u Pol'shchi – politychni aspekty," *Lemkivshchyna* 17, no. 3 (Clifton, NJ, 1996): 10-13; idem, "Separatystychni idei sered Rusyniv Lemkivshchyny: politychni aspekty vyniknennia," in I. Shcherba, ed., *Materialy Mizhnarodnoi naukovoi konferentsii: Aktual'ni problemy etnichnoho vydrozhzhennia Lemkivshchyny (do 70-riachia holovy SFULO Teodozija Staraka)* (Lviv, 2003): 57-63.

99) Ivan Krasovs'kyi, Dmytro Solynko, *Kto my, Lemky?* (Lviv, 1991); Ivan Krasovs'kyi, *Til'ky z ridnym narodom... Pro sytuatsiu v seredovyschchi karpats'kykh rusyniv* (Lviv, 1992); Ihor Duda, Ivan Krasovs'kyi, "Nashe miste v istorii (Lemkami pid rozvahu)," *Lemkiv's'kyi kalendar* 2004 (Lviv, 2004): 45-51.

100) Piotr Bajda, Magdalena Syposz and Dariusz Wojakowski, "Equality in Law, Equality in Fact: Minority Law and Practice in Poland," in Anna-Mária Biró and Petra Kovács, eds., *Diversity in Action: Local Public Management of Multiethnic Communities* (Budapest, 2001): 232.

101) See complications regarding who should represent Lemkos and how Lemko speech should be classified that arose during the creation of the Polish Bureau of Lesser-Used Languages, which is a subsidiary of European Bureau of Lesser-Used Languages, Marko Syryk, "Unia Rehional'nykh ta Natsmenshynnykh Mov u Pol'shchi," *Nashe slovo* no. 1, 4 January 2004. Also available on-line at: [http://nslowo.free.ngo.pl/nacmenshynne/unija\\_rehionalnych\\_mow.htm](http://nslowo.free.ngo.pl/nacmenshynne/unija_rehionalnych_mow.htm); accessed 14 December 2007; Brian J. Pozun, "Minorities in the EU," *Outpost Dispatch* [.pdf file] 2, no. 6 (2004): 4.

The Polish government has continuously, although often late, delivered subsidies for minorities, including Lemko Rusyns. However, as of 2002 according to finance regulations, governmental bodies were not allowed to support the permanent costs associated with the functioning of nongovernmental organizations (such as salaries for full-time workers, equipment, rent, telephone costs, etc.). Therefore, government support has been limited to specific activities and events.<sup>102)</sup> Minority NGOs have been forced to look for additional financial resources to survive. For the small and dispersed Lemko Rusyn community and other minorities, this has probably been the biggest obstacle, because nearly all minority communities, with the exception of the Germans, have been further marginalized in economic terms since the fall of Communism. In Slovakia, a number of minority cultural institutions (theatres and museums) are financed by the state through regional state administrations. This is done in addition to subsidies for other minority cultural institutions (cultural associations, media, and cultural events).<sup>103)</sup> In Hungary, the state provides financial support for the self-organization and activities of the minorities through a multi-channelled system that splits operational and program costs. Minority Self-Governments maintain headquarters with operating costs largely covered by government subsidies. Self-Governments, in turn, can found and run cultural and educational establishments, schools, museums, libraries, scientific institutes, theatres and scholarships. At least one nationally-distributed newspaper per minority receives full state support for its publication in Hungary.<sup>104)</sup> In Slovenia, an Office for Minorities within the Slovene government has the task of monitoring the position of minorities and providing financing for the functioning of their organizations.<sup>105)</sup>

It appears that Poland has also turned towards a more comprehensive financial support of its minorities. The 2006 and 2007 subsidies for Poland's minorities<sup>106)</sup> include funds allotted to cover operational costs of maintaining headquarters (*koszta eksploatacyjne lokalu*), as well as the construction and repairs of various real estate properties serving minorities cultural and educational needs. The Polish government has also somewhat relaxed the way in which subsidies are allotted. Most subsidies for 2007 are still for specific events or undertakings, but some were allotted simply for current activities (*działalność bieżąca*, sometimes also called *dotacja podmiotowa*).

Lemko Rusyns are also among those who benefit from this positive change in the way minorities are supported. Ruska Bursa has received general funds to run its cultural center as well as funds for roof renovation and the installation of new electrical wiring and a heating system, while the Zyndranowa museum received long-awaited funds to hire a tour guide and a bookkeeper in addition to funds for new electrical wiring. The Lemko Association received money to cover operational costs in addition to subsidies for various events and undertakings.

The attitude of Polish society towards minorities has improved since the fall of Communism, in large part

thanks to informative materials about minorities presented in significant quantities in the Polish media. However, although it is rarely acknowledged, prejudice, racism, discrimination and xenophobia are not uncommon within Polish society.<sup>107)</sup> Right-wing Polish media and organizations that use rhetoric which claims to be representative of the dominant group do not contribute to an embracing of the cultural heritage of other nations and religions that are part of Polish society.<sup>108)</sup>

The attitude of Polish society to minorities varies from one group to another, but it has often been good towards Lemkos.<sup>109)</sup> Unlike the Rusyn movement in Ukraine, which has not been able to secure moral support among that country's society at large, the Lemko Rusyn movement appears to have moral support in a number of Polish circles. Often it appears to be genuine support, but on occasion it may be motivated by a negative attitude towards Ukrainians. However, to some Poles, Lemkos are simply a subgroup of Ukrainians. The latter opinion is based on a belief in cultural similarities between both groups and/or may sometimes be rooted in (or reinforced by) a desire to have good relations with Ukraine and Ukrainians.

Poland is today overwhelmingly populated by people who consider themselves Poles. In the most recent census (2002) 96.7 percent of the total population of almost 39 million labeled themselves as being Polish. This stands in sparkling contrast to the pre-World War II period when probably every fourth, or as some claim every third citizen of Poland was of something other than Polish ethnicity. Poland is also today well below the European average of about 15 percent of inhabitants who do not identify with the ethnic or linguistic

102) Piotr Bajda, Magdalena Syposz and Dariusz Wojakowski, "Equality in Law ...," p. 216.

103) Ján Bucek, "Responding to Diversity: Solutions at the Local Level in Slovakia," in Anna-Mária Biró and Petra Kovács, eds., *Diversity in Action: Local Public Management of Multiethnic Communities* (Budapest, 2001): 302.

104) Ferenc Eller, Nőra Kovács, "Minority Governments in Hungary," in: Kinga Gáál ed., *Minority Governance in Europe* (Budapest, 2002): 188; Toso Dontev, "Recent Changes in the Condition of National Minorities," *Minorities Research 2*, [http://www.hhrf.org/kisebbsegkutatas/mr\\_02/cikk.php?id=1215](http://www.hhrf.org/kisebbsegkutatas/mr_02/cikk.php?id=1215); accessed 11 May 2007; Office for National and Ethnic Minorities, Budapest, Hungary, "National and Ethnic Minorities in Hungary," updated 24 June 2005, <http://www.ohchr.org/english/bodies/cesr/docs/E.C.12.HUN.3-Annex16.pdf>; accessed 14 May 2007.

105) Albina Nećak Lük, Sonja Novak-Lukanović, Boris Jesih, Katalin Munda Hirnő, Renata Mejak, Mojca Medvešek, Attila Kovács, George Muskens, *Managing the Mix Thereafter: Comparative Research into Mixed Communities in Three Independent Successor States* (Ljubljana, 2000): 62.

106) Ministerstwo Spraw Wewnętrznych i Administracji, "Dotacja na realizację zadań z zakresu kultury mniejszości narodowych i etnicznych w 2007 roku – stan na dzień 19 czerwca 2007 roku," <http://www.mswia.gov.pl/portal/pl/384/4758>; accessed 6 July 2007.

107) Piotr Bajda, Magdalena Syposz and Dariusz Wojakowski, "Equality in Law ...," p. 210.

108) Marcin Starnawski, "Nationalist Discourse and the Ultra-conservative Press in Contemporary Poland: a Case Study of *Nasz Dziennik*," *Patterns of Prejudice 37*, no. 1 (London, 2003): 79.

109) Olena Duts'-Faifer, "Lemký v pol'ský i evropským menshynovým konteksti," *Besida 12*, no. 1-2 (Legnica-Krynicza, 2000): 14-15.

majority of the country where they live.<sup>110</sup> What does this mean for minorities, including Lemko Rusyns? Even without any significant push towards the assimilation of minorities, they find themselves in such an overwhelming Polish sea that their cultural survival (to say nothing of development) is extremely difficult. The attitude of most Ukrainian circles, whether within Poland, North America, or Ukraine, remains negative to the Rusyn movement in general, and to the idea that Lemkos may actually be a part of something other than the Ukrainian nation. Taras Kuzio has pointed out that

"The Rusyn question has been demonized by its Ukrainian opponents because of the insecurity many of them feel about their own nationality, language, and culture. As nation-building is still an on-going process in Ukraine, and Ukrainophones still feel threatened by the domination of the Russian language and the large numbers of Russian speakers, the Rusyn question is usually condemned as a political movement instigated by hostile neighbouring countries or foreign scholars."<sup>111</sup>

Oleh Protsyk has added that while Ukrainian authorities may have their own agenda when dealing with the Rusyn question, the unwillingness of the Ukrainian academic and cultural elite to accept Rusyns' claims of cultural distinctiveness is something else.<sup>112</sup>

By the late 1970s, the leading scholar on the Rusyns, Paul Robert Magocsi, had concluded that: "because of the specific culture of the region and the demands of political reality, only the Ukrainian orientation proved to be enduring [among the Rusyns],"<sup>113</sup> The change of "political reality" after 1989 showed, however, that the Rusyn orientation has proved quite resilient so that in 1992 Magocsi was already rhetorically asking: "The Birth of a New Nation, or a Return of an Old Problem?"<sup>114</sup> Rusyns

in general and Lemko Rusyns in particular have achieved considerable success in their cultural activity since the fall of Communism; success that has already secured a place for them among nationalities. Their cultural perseverance has earned them recognition in all countries where they live, except for one. However, it appears to be only a matter of time before Rusyns are also recognized in Ukraine. In June 2007, Nina Karpachova, Ukraine's Parliament Ombudsman for Human Rights turned to the prime minister Viktor Yanukovych with a request to acknowledge Rusyn nationality in Ukraine.<sup>115</sup>

110) Sławomir Łodziński, *Ochrona praw osób należących do mniejszości narodowych i etnicznych: perspektywa europejska*, Kancelaria Sejmu, Biuro Studiów i Eksperczyz, Wydział Analiz Ekonomicznych i Społecznych, Raport 208 (Warszawa, 2002); 1. Also available on-line at [http://biurosejmu.gov.pl/teksty/\\_pdf/r-208.pdf](http://biurosejmu.gov.pl/teksty/_pdf/r-208.pdf); accessed 14 December 2007.

111) "The Rusyn Question in Ukraine: Sorting Out Facts from Fiction," *Canadian Review of Studies in Nationalism*, 32 (2005): 15.

112) Oleh Protsyk, "Majority-minority Relations in Ukraine," p. 28; also available on-line at <http://www.policy.hu/protsyk/Publications/MajMin-Relations UKR.pdf>; accessed 14 December 2007.

113) Martin Fedor Ziac, "Professors and Politics: The Role of Paul Robert Magocsi in the Modern Carpatho-Rusyn Revival," *East European Quarterly* 35, no. 2 (Boulder, 2001): 223.

114) Paul Robert Magocsi, "The Birth of a New Nation, or a Return of an Old Problem? The Rusyns of East Central Europe," *Canadian Slavonic Papers* 34, no. 3 (Ottawa, 1992): 199-223.

115) Anna Romanenchuk, "Ukraine's Ombudsman for Human Rights for Recognizing the Rusyns," 27 June 2007, *Blogging the Rusyns*, <http://rusyn-pop.blogspot.com/2007/06/ukraines-ombudsman-for-human-rights-for.html>; accessed 14 December 2007.

Doris Wydra

## Autonomie auf der Halbinsel Krim

Eine völker- und verfassungsrechtliche Analyse

Ethnos, Band 68, herausgegeben von Michael Geistlinger

Ziel der Publikation ist es, Wege für die Ausgestaltung einer Autonomie zu finden, die das Zusammenleben von Russen, Ukrainern, Krimtataren sowie zahlreichen anderen Minderheiten auf der Krim ermöglicht. Doris Wydra, Politikwissenschaftlerin und Spezialistin für osteuropäisches Verfassungsrecht sowie Minderheitenschutz, beschreibt mit ihrer Analyse ein Modell für heterogene ethnische Kompositionen, wie sie heute in vielen Teilen Osteuropas, besonders aber auf dem Gebiet der ehemaligen UdSSR vorzufinden sind.

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