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КАРПАТО-РУСИНСЬКОГО ОБЩЕСТВА  
НА ЮБІЛЕЙНИЙ РІК 2004-2005**

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## The Rusyn Movement among the Galician Lemkos<sup>1</sup>

In this paper I will provide a brief historical survey of the Rusyn movement among the Galician Lemkos. In doing so I will try to answer the questions of how Rusyn consciousness was manifested throughout history and how the movement was continuously built on the basis of previous achievements. In the article I use the term Galician Lemkos to differentiate the Lemko population which has resided on the northern slopes of the Carpathians – in the south-eastern corner of Poland (the former extreme southwest of Galicia) – from the same population on the southern slopes of the Carpathians. This latter group also (at least to a certain extent) regards itself as Lemko. They will not be discussed in this paper inasmuch as they had a divergent historical experience.

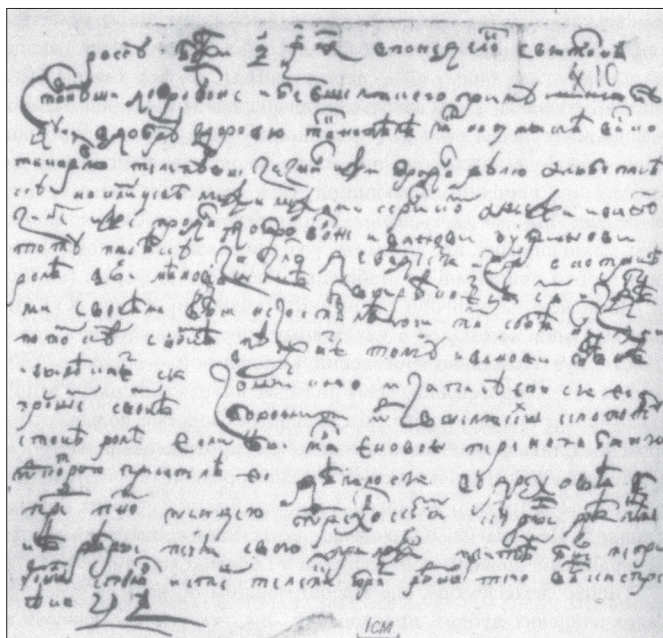
### A Sense of Unity between the Lemkos and Subcarpathian Rusyns

Intensive contacts between Galician Lemkos and Rusyns living on the southern slopes of the Carpathians date back to at least the late Middle Ages.<sup>2</sup> The sense of unity shared by these groups was originally expressed in strong economic, religious and especially family ties. Hundreds of Lemkos crossed the Prešov Region at least twice each year on their way to and from seasonal work on the Hungarian plain. It was not a coincidence that many of them brought home not only money and food, but also Rusyn wives from south of the Carpathians. After all, the Galician Lemkos and Subcarpathian Rusyns spoke the same language, were of the same religious confession and lived very similar lives. The fact that Galician Lemkos had many family ties in the Prešov Region might have had something to do with the fairs held in Krasnýj Brid/Krásny Brod, which, until banned by the authorities for abuses, were apparently utilized as a place to arrange, solemnize, and celebrate marriages.<sup>3</sup>

### Lemko Vernacular Writing

Lemkos produced a considerable number of ecclesiastical, journalistic, and literary works in their vernacular even

before it was standardized in the mid-1930s. This usage of Lemko vernacular in writings – although originally not serving as a manifestation of Rusynophile sympathies, but rather as a practical means of communication – has nevertheless had an enormous impact on the 20<sup>th</sup>-century development of Rusyn ideology among the members of the group. Lemko Rusynophile leaders believed that the usage of their vernacular in writings had proven to be successful and if backed up



Fragment of the oldest extant Lemko Rusyn-language document, from Odrechova

with codification and a program for teaching it in schools, it would serve the literary needs of their people.

The oldest known evidence of the use of the Lemko vernacular in writing is in documents and records of the village of Odrechova/Odrzechowa.<sup>4</sup> It was on the basis of these documents that I. M. Kernyc'kyj concluded that the word change of Lemko dialects was basically formed in the sixteenth-seventeenth centuries and that it was most likely inherited (obviously with some phonetic changes) from the Old Ruthenian period (*starorus'ka doba*). He also underlined that during their historical development, the Lemko dia-

<sup>1</sup>A shorter version of this article was presented during the Annual Convention of the Association for the Advancement of Slavic Studies in St. Louis (October 1999). The latter was possible thanks to the support of the New York Public Library, for which the author is grateful.

<sup>2</sup>Roman Reinfuss, "Związki kulturowe po obu stronach Karpat w rejonie łemkowszczyzny," In Jerzy Czajkowski, ed. *Łemkowie w historii i kulturze Karpat*, vol. 1 (Rzeszów: Editions Spotkania, 1992): 167-181.

<sup>3</sup>Ervin Bonkalo, "Marriage fair," *Journal of Unconventional History* no. 8 (3) (Cardiff-by-the-Sea, CA, 1997): 43-48.

<sup>4</sup>Eighteen volumes of documents of this Lemko village are held in the Central Historical State Archive in L'viv. An excerpt from the collection, which includes records from the period of 1549-1691 was published by I.M.Kernyc'kyj, and O.A.Kupčyn's'kyj, comps., L.L.Humec'ka, ed., *Akta sela Odrechovy* (Kyiv, 1970).

<sup>5</sup>I.M.Kernyc'kyj, "Morfolohični osoblyvosti movy "Vijiv's'kych knyh" XVI-XVII st. s.Odrechovy, kolyśn'oho Sjanic'koho povitu," *Doslidžennja i materialy z ukrains'koj movy* 5 (Kyiv, 1962): 110.

From the mid-16<sup>th</sup> century and continuing throughout the 18<sup>th</sup>, the Sanok and Sącz Regions, as well as Rusyn-populated Spiš, were centers of educational activity in which the Lemko vernacular was used in writings. During those centuries Lemko scribes rewrote a number of liturgical texts, along with explanatory notes, with the ever-growing use of the local vernacular.<sup>6</sup> This was done by, among others, Mychajlo Sanickij (1<sup>st</sup> half of the 16<sup>th</sup> century), Tymofej Vysočanskij (1635), and Stefan Rychvaldskij (1666).<sup>7</sup> Some elements of the Lemko vernacular are present in Mychajlo Vasylevyč's translation of the Psalms (1556-1561)<sup>8</sup> and Ivan Kornickij's translation of Bishop Joseph de Camellis's catechism (publ.1698).<sup>9</sup> The best-known example of the use of Lemko vernacular is in works by the Rev. Ivan Pryslopskij (1700-1773). He used (circa 1750) the local vernacular in order to explain psalms written in Church Slavonic.<sup>10</sup>

An early example of a non-ecclesiastical work which has some elements of Lemko speech is *Kosmografija, opysanie vseho svita* (late sixteenth century). It was a translation of Marcin Bielski's *Kronika, opisanie całego świata*/Chronicle: the Description of the Entire World (1551).<sup>11</sup> Other early non-ecclesiastical works include two poems from the early 18<sup>th</sup> century (1702)<sup>12</sup>, as well as a translation of *Gesta Romanorum*/Roman Histories, rendered by Stefan Samboryna between 1742 and 1766.<sup>13</sup>

Uncodified Lemko speech was also the language of many articles as well as literary works published during the nineteenth century in a number of Galician periodicals. It was used by the editorial board of the first-ever periodical (a weekly) devoted entirely to Lemko issues – *Lemko* (1911-1913)<sup>14</sup>, as well as in a number of Lemko publications put out by the Lemko immigrant community in America. Produced entirely in Lemko were the flagship publications of the Lemko Association of the United States and Canada – *Lemko* (1928-1939), superseded by *Karpatska Rus'* (1939-present).<sup>15</sup>



Dymytrij Vyslockij's *Karpatorusskij bukvar'* (Cleveland, 1931)

<sup>6</sup>Mychajlo Dzvinka "Literatura pivničnych zemel", in Bohdan O. Struminskij, ed., *Lemkivščyna: zemlja, ljudy, istorija, kul'tura*, vol. 1 (New York, 1988): 379-385; Ivan Franko, *Karpato-rus'ke pys'menstvo XVII-XVIII vv.*, in idem *Tvory v dvadcaty tomach*, vol. 16 (Kyiv, 1955): 313-314.

<sup>7</sup>Feofyl' Kuryllo, "Kratkaja svodka pysatelej i žurnalistov na Lemkovščyni", *Nauchno-Literaturnyj Sbornik Halyc'koj Matcy* 8 (Lviv, 1934): 22-50.

<sup>8</sup>Ivan Ohijenko, "Peresopnyč'ka jevanhelija," *Put' pravdy* no. 1 (Warsaw, 1930): 15-16.

<sup>9</sup>Paul R. Magocsi and Bohdan Struminskij, "The First Carpatho-Ruthenian Printed Book," *Harvard Library Bulletin* 25, no. 3 (Cambridge, MA, 1977): 304.

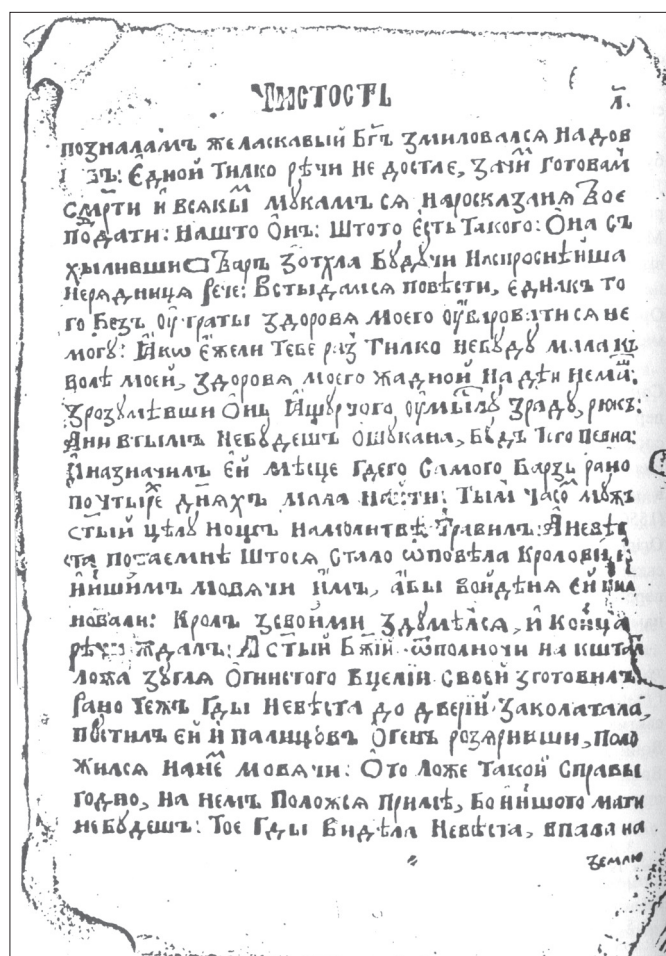
<sup>10</sup>Ivan Ohijenko, "Psaltyr polovyny XVIII st. v lemkiwskym perekladzi," *Zapysky Naukovoho Tovarystva im.Ševčenko* 99 (Lviv, 1930): 197-240.

<sup>11</sup>Mychajlo Dzvinka "Literatura pivničnych zemel", ... p. 386-387.

<sup>12</sup>Bohdan Strumiński, "Wiersze ukraińskie z początku XVIII w. na marginesach 'Minei prazdnicej' z XVII w.," *Slavia Orientalis* 9, no. 2 (Warsaw, 1960): 385-406.

<sup>13</sup>Mychajlo Dzvinka, "Literatura pivničnych zemel", ... p. 387.

<sup>14</sup>Helena Duć-Fajfer, *Literatura lemowska w drugiej połowie XIX wieku i na początku XX wieku*, Prace Komisji Wschodnioeuropejskiej PAU; 7 (Kraków, 2001): 284-294.<sup>15</sup>Paul Robert Magocsi, "The Carpatho-Rusyn Press," in Sally M. Miller, ed., *The Ethnic Press in the United States* (New York, 1987): 19-20.



A section of Father Ivan Pryslopskij's Rusyn-language *Velyke dzerkalo* (1932).

In order to support the usage of Lemko vernacular Dymytrij Vyslockij produced *Karpatorusskij bukvar'* Vanja Hunjanky (1931). Despite these efforts in favor of Lemko vernacular, the Lemko Association could never decide between a Russophile and Rusynophile orientation.

### Russophile or Rusynophile?

Russophile ideology – now a non-factor among the Galician Lemkos – was once professed by a substantial number of members of the group. It seems that beginning from the 19<sup>th</sup>-century national revival in Galicia and up to World War II the Russophile movement was the best-organized and the strongest of the three ethno-national ideologies competing among the Galician Lemkos. It is interesting, however, to examine how the Lemko membership of the moment evolved towards a certain degree of "separatism" and how this led to the creation of strictly-Lemko Russophile organizations, which in turn eventually became more Rusynophile than Russophile-oriented.

### The Lemko Rusyn Republic

Since the first partition of Poland (1772) and through the end of World War I Galician Lemkos and Subcarpathian





Front page of the Lemko Rusyn-language newspaper *Lemko* (L'viv/Nowy Sacz/Gorlice), January 1/14, 1911.

Rusyns lived within one political structure, the Austrian, later the Austro-Hungarian Empire. This situation changed with the 1918 establishment of the Polish-Czechoslovak border on the crest of the Carpathians in 1918. It was only natural that some Galician Lemkos and Subcarpathian Rusyns resisted the artificial, from their point of view, separation of their community by a "modern," strictly-controlled border. "Reunification" of the Galician Lemkos and Subcarpathian Rusyns became one of the major goals of the Lemko Rusyn Republic, which was established in the western part of the Lemko Region in late 1918. The Lemko Rusyn Republic was controlled by Russophile activists, but was torn between whether or not to push for incorporation of their people into Russia or Czechoslovakia. All were agreed on one point, however: that the Rusyn territory in the Carpathians should remain intact. During the first major meeting of Lemko activists, which took place in the village of Florynka (Dec. 5, 1918), the following resolution was adopted: "We, the Rusyn nation, living in a compact settlement in the southern parts of the Galician administrative units of Nowy Targ, Nowy Sacz, Grybów, Gorlice, Jasło, Krosno, and Sanok do not wish to be incorporated into the Polish state, and wish to share the fate of

our Rusyn brothers [living] in Spiš, Šaryš, and Zemplyn counties as one indivisible geographic and ethnographic unit."<sup>16</sup>

## Lemko Organizational Life in North America

The issue of Lemko political faith was also discussed in immigrant circles in America, most notably in Galician Russophile immigrant circles. Since the Galician Lemkos constituted an important and influential part of the Russophile-oriented League for the Liberation of Carpatho-Russia (created in New York in 1917),<sup>17</sup> the fate of the Lemko Region was frequently mentioned in articles and during meetings. The Galician Lemkos, however, were still not fully satisfied with the attention that their homeland received and undertook actions towards the establishment of their own organization.

By the early 1920s the need for a strictly Lemko ethnic organization was fully realized, which was manifested by the staging of the Lemko Congress in New York (1922). At the same time Victor Hladick (Hladyk) initiated the organization Lemkos' Committee of the U.S.A. in various places where Lemkos lived.<sup>18</sup> Lemko ethnic consciousness manifested itself also in a series of cultural events, including the recording *Lemko Wedding* (1928),<sup>19</sup> followed by numerous other records with Lemko folk music, and the movie *Lemko Wedding* (1929),<sup>20</sup> as well as radio programs (beginning in 1929)<sup>21</sup> -- many of which were initiated by Stephen Skimba/Štefan Škymba. In the late 1920s the stage was set for the creation of a Lemko organization, with its first branch established in the



Viktor Hladyk



Štefan Škymba in the title role as "starosta" in the first Lemko Wedding film *Lemkovske veselja*, 1929).

<sup>16</sup>Bogdan Horbal, *Działalność polityczna Łemków na Łemkowszczyźnie 1918-1921* (Wrocław, 1997): 45.

<sup>17</sup>Out of the total of some 250 delegates to the 3<sup>rd</sup> Carpatho-Russian Congress in New York (Dec.30, 1919-Jan.1, 1920), there were 94 Lemkos. *Tretij vseobščij Karpatorusskij kongress v Amerike, sostojavšijsja v N'ju Iorke s 28-31 dekabrya 1919 g. i 1-go janvarja 1920 goda* (New York, 1920).

<sup>18</sup>Bohdan Horbal, "Osnovnja peršoj lemkivskoj organizaciji – Lemkivskoho Komitetu," in Petro Trochanovskij, ed., *Lemkivskij ričnyk 2002* (Krynica-Legnica, 2002): 56-61.

<sup>19</sup>Stefan Škymba, "Ystoryja peršoj rekordy "Lemkovske Vesilja," in Nikolaj Cyslyjak, ed., *Karpatorusskij kalendar Lemko-Sojuza 1963* (Yonkers, NY, 1963): 114-132.

<sup>20</sup>"Lemkovske Vesilja" na fyl'mi: odohrane v 1929 roku," in Nikolaj Cyslyjak, ed., *Karpatorusskij kalendar Lemko-Sojuza 1963* (Yonkers, NY, 1963): 132-134.

<sup>21</sup>Viktor P. Hladyk, "Perša karpatorusska hodyna po radio," *Jubilej Almanac of the Russian Brotherhood Organization of U.S.A. 1900-1940* (Philadelphia, 1939): 148-152.

<sup>22</sup>The most comprehensive history of the organization is in the 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Almanac of the Lemko Association of the USA and Canada/Jubylejnyj al'manach 50-ityja Lemko Sojuza v SŠA y Kanadi (Yonkers, NY: Lemko Sojuz, 1979 (107 pp.) with parallel text in Lemko and English.



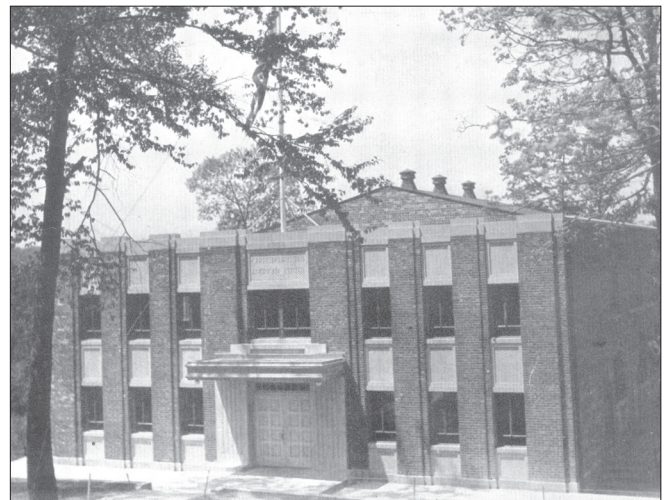


Cast of *Lemkovske vesilja*, 1929.

ularity mostly due to the incredible talents of its two most prolific leaders, Dymytryj Vyslockij (1888-1968) and Simeon Pysh/Seman Pýž (1894-1957). In the 1930s the Lemko Association got involved in the leftist, anti-fascist movement. It was manifested by staging subsequent Carpatho-Russian National Congresses in New York (1936 and 1939) and the creation (1940) of the Carpatho-Russian Section of the International Worker's Order/Karpatorusska Sekcyja Meždunarodnoho Robočoho Ordena. On the verge of World War II it protested against the Polish and Hungarian actions against Subcarpathian Rus'.<sup>23</sup>

During the war the Lemko Association took an active role in sending financial aid as part of the American War Relief program to the Soviet Union, fulfilling its pro-Soviet orientation. The latter was achieved, among others, with the help of a regular Lemko vernacular radio program "Holos karpatorusskoho naroda" aired between 1943 and 1947 for the New York City-New Jersey metropolitan area. Since the Association could never decide whether it should be Russophile- or Rusynophile-oriented, Lemkos continued to participate in broader "Carpatho-Russian" events, including two congresses (Pittsburgh 1942, and Philadelphia 1944), and helped to establish the American League of Russians and Carpatho-Russians/Amerikanskij Russkij Karpatorusskij Sojuz.

<sup>23</sup>"Karpatska Rus'" in Van'o Hunjanka, ed., *Karpatorusskij kalendar Lemko-Sojuza na 1938 hod* (New York, 1938): 17-23.



Carpatho-Russian American Center (built 1939), Yonkers, New York

The Lemko Association welcomed incorporation of Subcarpathian Rus' into the Soviet Union,<sup>24</sup> but was shaken by the postwar resettlements of Lemkos. Soon, however, it adopted the view that the resettlement to Soviet Ukraine (understood as a resettlement to "Russia") would benefit Lemkos, while the resettlement within the borders of Poland was only a temporary one.

<sup>24</sup>"Karpatska Rus' bude svobodna," in Van'o Hunjanka, ed., *Karpatorusskij kalendar Lemko-Sojuza na 1944 hod* (Yonkers, NY, 1944): 17-21.





While the pro-Soviet orientation of the older generation discouraged many younger American-born Lemkos from participation in the organization's activities, its Russophile sympathies caused the "russification" of other members of the younger generations (expressed through interest only in Russia but not "Carpatho-Russia"). This was noted by the newer generation of Lemko immigrants to America (which started arriving in the 1960s). Led by Teodor Doklia (1931-1982)<sup>25</sup> and Stefan Kitchura (1912-1997),<sup>26</sup> this group went as far as the open criticism of the pro-Soviet stance of the organization and promoted a Rusynophile ideology. This, however, was too much for the "old-timers" to accept and both these "reformers" were expelled from the organization. They nevertheless managed to gain some supporters and continued their independent activity throughout the early 1980s, cut short by the premature death of Doklia.



Stefan Kitchura

Staying true to its ideology, the Lemko Association jeop-

ardized its future. It began rapidly losing influence among the Lemkos. The weakened organization lost Lemko Hall in Cleveland (1986), Lemko Park (1997), as well as the Lemko Hall / Carpatho-Russian American Center in Yonkers (1999). The Lemko Association by then had shrunk to a few branches with a handful of members. With the establishment of the Carpatho-Rusyn Society in Pittsburgh (1995), a large number of Rusyn-oriented Lemkos joined its membership.

### The Lemko Association in Poland

The 1930s saw the intensification of the Rusyn movement among Galician Lemkos. Two separate East Lemko and West Lemko regional subcommittees were established in 1932-33, along with a general coordinating committee for the entire region. The subcommittees had financial, cooperative and cultural-educational sections; a separate school section was established in the city of Gorlice. The Lemko Association's two-pronged program was to encourage the further development of Lemko-Rusyn ethnic identity on one hand, and eliminate Ukrainian influences in the region on the other. These goals were to be achieved through: 1) the introduction of Lemko vernacular in schools and publications; 2) the immediate establishment of a Lemko Greek-Catholic Eparchy, separate from the Ukrainian Greek-Catholic Eparchy of Przemyśl; and 3) the removal from the region of priests and teachers who advocated a Ukrainian position.<sup>27</sup> Although all

<sup>25</sup>Petro Trochanovskij, "Teodor Doklja," in Petro Trochanovskij, ed., *Lemkivskij ričnyk 2002* (Krynica-Legnica, 2002): 108-113.

<sup>26</sup>Bohdan Horbal, "Stefan Kyčura," in Petro Trochanovskij, ed., *Lemkivskij ričnyk 2002* (Krynica-Legnica, 2002): 82-85.

<sup>27</sup>Jaroslav Mokljak, "Holovni polityčni naprjamy na Lemkivščyni v mižvojenyj period," *Zustriči*, no.19 (1) (Warsaw, 1989): 103-104.



## The Introduction of Lemko Vernacular in Schools and Publications

In realizing the first goal, Metodyj Trochanovskij (1885-1947), a leading member of the Lemko Association, developed a program for the teaching of Lemko vernacular. He produced two textbooks in the vernacular which were subsequently introduced into the primary schools of the region: *Bukvar: Perša knyžečka dlja narodnych škol* (1935), and *Druha knyžečka dlja narodnych škol* (1936). The first textbook was basically a primer, while the second was in fact a first reader. The challenge facing Trochanovskij lay in the fact that the various Lemko dialects diverged from one another in both vocabulary and grammar.<sup>28</sup> To assure the steady flow of professional Lemko pedagogues into Lemko schools Trochanovskij organized and supervised the education of Lemko teachers in the Pedagogical College in Stary Sącz.

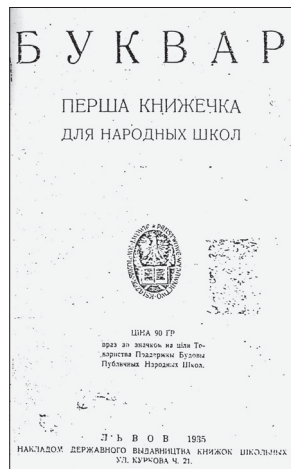
The Association also put out a number of publications in the Lemko vernacular, including its flagship weekly, *Lemko* (1934-39) and community almanacs.<sup>29</sup> Writings in Lemko vernacular appeared, like those of the noted poet Ivan Rusenko (1890-1960). He produced a number of "educational" texts that concerned problems of everyday life, but he also wrote on ethno-national issues. He is the author of what is considered to be the Lemko anthem: "Na Lemkovyni" (In the Lemko Region):

In the Lemko Region, in the old country  
Fir trees rustle  
A victorious song they sing  
From Užhorod to Szczawnica:  
Because in the Carpathians today  
A nation is resurrected! (...) <sup>30</sup>

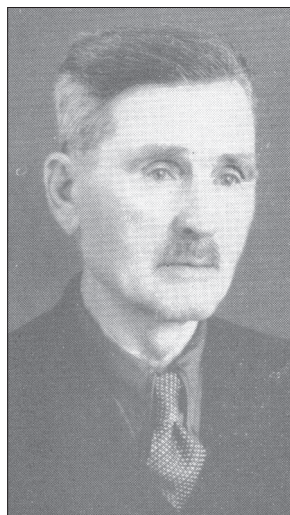
<sup>28</sup>Trochanovskij's primers were based on the Lemko speech found in the western part of the region. It was the major reason why some of the Lemkos living in other (especially far eastern) parts of the region rejected it. Andrzej Stepek, "Akcia polska na Łemkowszczyźnie," *Libertas* 1, no.1 (Paris, 1984): 33-47.

<sup>29</sup>These publications more closely resemble the *Farmer's Almanac* than they do a typical American "date book." They offer a wide selection of articles, poetry, biographies, pictures, and even advice in much the same way as the *Farmer's Almanac*.

<sup>30</sup>Dymytrij Vyslockyj, ed., *Naša knyžka* (Yonkers, 1945): 149. Translation by B. Horbal.



Metodyj Trochanovskij's *Bukvar* (l'viv, 1935)



Ivan Rusenko

In another poem, "Lemkovyna," Rusenko quite precisely describes the geographical scope of what he considers to be his homeland:

(...) Clouds flow over the mountains – silently, like geese –  
Over the mountains, over the forests from Carpathian Rus':  
From Tjačevo, Užhorod, through Humenné, Prjašiv,  
Friendly clouds flow to us with news from our people,  
Further they go to Szczawnica, over the Tatras' peaks,  
Through Šljachtova, Bila Voda – as far as Osturnja. (...) <sup>31</sup>

## The Establishment of the Apostolic Administration of the Lemko Region

The Lemkos have always been affiliated with Eastern Christianity, originally being under the jurisdiction of the Orthodox Church. By the early 18<sup>th</sup> century the process of the replacement of that Church with the Greek Catholic Church was completed, and all of the Lemkos became "Uniates." Religious affiliation among the Lemkos, never a purely spiritual matter to begin with, had by the early 20<sup>th</sup> century acquired still more political "baggage."<sup>32</sup> Religious affiliation had by then become closely linked with the question of Lemko national identity.

The turn of the 19<sup>th</sup>-20<sup>th</sup> century brought back the issue of Orthodoxy.<sup>33</sup> This was due mainly to Lemko immigrants in America who were returning to the Lemko Region as Orthodox converts and spreading interest in – as they framed it – the "return to the faith of our forefathers." The Rev. Maksym Sandovyč (1886-1914) became the first Orthodox clergyman in the Lemko Region in some two hundred years. Groundlessly accusing Sandovyč of spying for Russia, Austrian authorities at the beginning of World War I executed him primarily because he was Orthodox. This event gave the Orthodox Church a martyr and eventually its first and so far only Lemko saint (1994). With the return of Russophile-oriented Orthodoxy and the Ukrainianization of the Greek Catholic Church, the issue of religious affiliation of Galician Lemkos had, now more than ever, political implications.<sup>34</sup>

After World War I, Lemkos' distrust of the Ukrainian-oriented Greek Catholic Church grew along with their sympathy for Orthodoxy. This tension erupted into open conflict

<sup>31</sup>Dymytrij Vyslockyj, ed., *Naša knyžka* (Yonkers, 1945): 147-148. Translation by B. Horbal.

<sup>32</sup>Jaroslav Moklak, "Rosij'ske Pravoslavija na Lemkivščyni v 1911-15 rokach: Polityčni aspekty joho rozvytku," *Lemkivščyna* 19, no.1 (Clifton, NJ, 1998): 3-8.

<sup>33</sup>Petro Virchnjans'kyj, "Pravoslavija na Lemkivščyni 1926-1931," Bohdan Huk, ed., *Zustrič* 6, no.19 (1) (Warsaw, 1989): 111-121.<sup>34</sup>Anna Krochmal, "Specyfika stosunków wyznaniowych na Łemkowszczyźnie w XX wieku," in Andrzej Zięba, ed., *Łemkowie i łemkownictwo w Polsce*, Polska Akademia Umiejętności, Prace Komisji Wschodnioeuropejskiej, 5 (Kraków, 1997): 135-143.

<sup>35</sup>Jaroslav Moklak, "Kształtowanie się struktury kościoła prawosławnego na Łemkowszczyźnie w Drugiej Rzeczypospolitej," in *Przez dwa stulecia. XIX i XX wiek. Studia historyczne ofiarowane profesorowi Wacławowi Felczakowi* (Kraków, 1993): 51-77.

<sup>36</sup>Anna Krochmal, "The Greek Catholic Church and Religious 'Sects' in the Lemko Region, 1918-1939," in Paul J. Best, ed., *Papers from the Conference on the Carpatho-Rusyns of Poland* (Kraków, Poland July 20-24, 1992), Carpatho-Slavic Studies, vol. 2 (New Haven, CT: Carpatho-Slavic Studies Group, 1993): 93-110.



Father Vasylij Mascjuch

in 1926 when the village of Tyl'ova/Tylawa converted *en masse* to Orthodoxy. By 1934 some 25,000 Lemkos in 40 villages had followed suit.<sup>35</sup> In some villages, non-traditional religious affiliations were also spreading,<sup>36</sup> but it was the stormy relationship between followers of the Greek Catholic and Orthodox faiths that was most disturbing for the region and the local authorities.<sup>37</sup> The Lemko Association, led by Greek Catholic activists, saw the Ukrainianization of their church as the major reason for the conversions and hoped to stop the process by pushing for the creation of a separate Lemko Greek Catholic Eparchy to put Lemko believers beyond the ecclesiastical reach of the by-then Ukrainian-oriented Przemyśl Greek Catholic Eparchy. The Apostolic Administration of the Lemko Region (AAL),<sup>38</sup> an administrative semi-diocesan structure for Lemko Greek Catholics subject directly to the Pope, was established in 1934. It kept Lemkos out of the jurisdiction of the Przemyśl Greek Catholic Eparchy, led until the end of World War II by the Ukrainian-oriented Lemko, Bishop Josafat Kocylovs'kyj (1876-1947).

## The Removal of Ukrainian Activists

Once the AAL was established, its leaders succeeded in removing a number of Ukrainophile priests from the region. They were transferred to other Greek Catholic eparchies within the borders of Poland. Those who remained were forbidden by the leaders of the AAL to preach Ukrainian nationalist ideology. They were, for example, not allowed to subscribe to Ukrainian newspapers. The Polish authorities, with their own anti-Ukrainian agenda, were more than willing to cooperate in the removal of at least some of the Ukrainian schoolteachers from the region.

## Summary of Rusynophile Activity in the 1930s

The board of directors of the Lemko Association was made up of people who hoped to mount a full-fledged Lemko political program. Their activities, however, were hindered by two facts. The first was the lack of a clearly defined ethno-national policy. Most leaders of the Lemko Association remained members of Russophile organizations. The enduring and strong sympathy for Russophilism among Lemkos might have been one of the reasons for that. Another hindrance to the development of a clear ethno-national identity among Association leaders was probably the fear of political isolation in the dangerous world of Polish-Ukrainian-Russophile rivalry. Rusynophiles chose to flirt with Russophiles while accepting financial support from the Polish authorities and pushing for Rusyn identity. This strategy backfired in the late 1930s when Warsaw cut off the Lemko Association's subsidy. Not used to independent activism, the Rusynophiles faltered. The AAL also failed to live up to the Rusynophiles' expectations. First led (1934-36) by an energetic native of the region, the Rev. Vasylij Mascjuch, it later entered a period of stagnation and Polish control when it came under the leadership of a stranger to the region, the Rev. Jakov Medveckij.

Polish authorities themselves originally did not approach Lemko issues any differently than they did Ukrainian ones. It was only in the early 1930s that a Lemko Section of the Committee for Scholarly Research of the Eastern Lands/Oddział Łemkowski Komisji Badań Naukowych Ziem Wschodnich<sup>39</sup> was created. Its goal was to study Lemkos. On the basis of the research carried out by that institution, a Committee for the Lemko Region's Affairs/Komitet do Spraw Łemkowszczyzny was to develop an official ethno-national program towards Lemkos. Polish authorities, following their own agenda for the region, sought to diminish the influence of the Ukrainian-identity movement among the Lemkos. They tried to do this in part by subsidizing the Rusynophile identity movement. Once the Ukrainian-identity movement was eliminated, only then could Warsaw "polonize" (that is, assimilate) the Lemkos. Ukrainian historians and activ-

<sup>37</sup>Anna Krochmal, "Stosunki między grekokatolikami a prawosławnymi na Łemkowszczyźnie w latach 1918-1939," in Jerzy Czajkowski, ed., *Łemkowie w historii i kulturze Karpat*, vol. 1 (Rzeszów, 1992): 285-298.

<sup>38</sup>Bogusław Prach, "Apostolska Administracja Łemkowszczyzny," in Jerzy Czajkowski, ed. *Łemkowie w historii i kulturze Karpat*, vol.1 (Rzeszów, 1992): 299-312.

<sup>39</sup>For a brief description of the early activity of this body see: Stanisław Leszczycki, "Prace Oddziału Łemkowskiego Komisji Badań Naukowych Ziem Wschodnich," *Wierchy* 13 (Kraków, 1935): 186-187; "Badania nad Łemkowszczyzną," *Biuletyn polski-ukraiński* no.18 (Warsaw, 1936): 179-180.

<sup>40</sup>Jaroslav Mokljak, "Łemkiv's'kyj separatyzm y Pol'shči - polityčni aspekty," *Łemkivščyna* 17, no. 3 (Clifton, NJ, 1996): 10-13.





Ensemble "Lemkovyna"; director Jaroslav Trochanovskij (front, center)

ists consistently underline this Polish manipulation of the Rusynophile movement as the evidence of the wrongness of the indigenous Rusynophile position.<sup>40</sup>

### World War II and Population Resettlements

During World War II, Ukrainians, many of whom cooperated in the Nazi invaders' persecution of Rusynophile- and Russophile-oriented individuals, dominated the cultural, political and economic life of the Lemko Region. Immediately after the war, two forced resettlements of the Lemko population took place. The first (1944-46) removed some 100,000 Lemkos to Soviet Ukraine, while the second (code name Akcja "Wisła") dispersed the rest (some 50,000-60,000) to the western and northern territories of Poland (1947). The post-resettlement chapter of Lemko history was a very difficult one. The resettlements were ethnocidal in nature and intent, characterized by deliberate brutality, the loss of life and the destruction of many aspects of the Lemkos' indigenous culture and communal life.<sup>41</sup> Less than 10,000 Lemkos (of those who remained within the borders of Poland) managed the financially difficult return to their homeland in the post-1956 political thaw. In many Lemko villages, emptied by the resettlements, new Polish communities had been introduced in a

deliberate demographic "reclamation" of the land. In many places, however, these artificial transplantations did not take hold. Devoid of their original Lemko inhabitants, many Lemko villages simply ceased to exist.<sup>42</sup>

### Ethnic Survival in Communist Poland

Ethnic survival of a minority group in communist Poland was not easy; the creation of a ethnically-monolithic "nation-state" rather than ethnic pluralism was the order of the day.<sup>43</sup> Throughout the communist period in Poland, the Lemko-Rusyn movement was condemned as being "unprogressive." Already in 1958 a chief communist party ideologist, Aleksander Ślaw, while discussing the Ukrainian question in Poland stated that *"Obviously every citizen of Poland belonging to a national minority has the right to declare his national preference, but must choose only from those identities recognized as 'nationalities.' Here we have to point out that there is no Lemko nationality."*<sup>44</sup>

It is thus not a surprise that the Temporary Socio-Educational Committee of Lemko-Rusyns/Tymczasowy

<sup>42</sup> Andrzej Maryański, "Problemy ponownego zasiedlenia południowo-wschodniego pogranicza Polski," *Studia demograficzne* 2, no. 5 (Warsaw, 1964): 95-107.

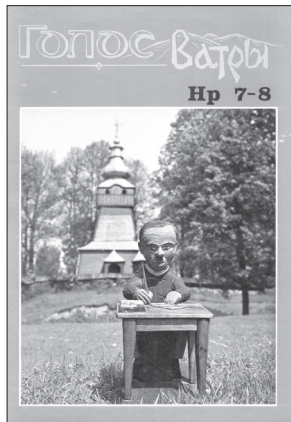
<sup>43</sup> Krystyna Kersten, *Narodziny systemu władzy: Polska 1943-1948* (Poznań, 1990): 340-341.

<sup>44</sup> Aleksander Ślaw, "O kwestii ukraińskiej w Polsce," *Nowe drogi* 12, no. 8 (Warsaw, 1958): 60.

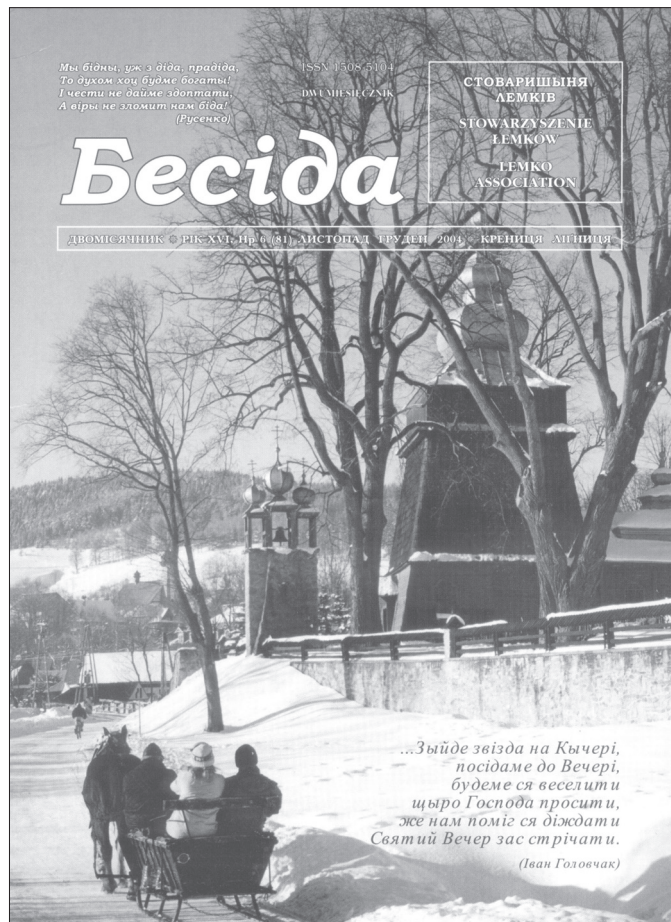
<sup>41</sup> Julijan Tarnovyč, *Na żaryščach Zakerzonnja* (Toronto, n.d.): 72-126.



Komitet Społeczno-Oświatowy Rusinów-Lemków (1959), which petitioned Polish and Soviet authorities on behalf of Lemkos, could not continue its activity. The Lemko-Rusyn movement managed to survive by retreating behind an apparently “apolitical” (non-Ukrainian) parochialism that emphasized “Lemko culture” (narrowly defined), but in fact expressed Rusynophile geo-cultural consciousness. Rusyns developed cultural activities such as concerts, lectures and special events that highlighted Lemko culture and dialect to the complete exclusion of their supposed Ukrainian identity. Inasmuch as these activities took place in the early 1960s under the auspices of the Lemko Section of the Ukrainian Socio-Cultural Society (USKT), Ukrainians and communist authorities soon condemned them. They first dissolved the so-called “separatist” composition of the “Lemko Section” (1965) and replaced them with Ukrainian-oriented Lemkos (Hryhorij/Grzegorz Pecuch, Fedor Goč/Teodor Gocz, Jaroslav Poljanskij/Jarosław Polański). Even after this drastic move, Lemko independent cultural activity continued to be or-



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ganized from within USKT, mainly due to the efforts of the leader of its Rzeszów branch, Mychal Donskij/Michał Doński. This forced the leaders of USKT to remove Donskij from the latter branch and the executive committee (1970), as well as to expel him from the organization (1972).<sup>45</sup>

Prevented from organizing their own Rusyn-oriented Lemko organization, Rusyns could not expand their range of activities beyond isolated cultural ventures. In these circumstances the folk ensemble “Lemkovyna” was established in 1968. Led by Jaroslav Trochanovskij/Jarosław Trochanowski, “Lemkovyna” became more than just a “folk act,” but the public face of Lemko Rusyn cultural identity.<sup>46</sup> Its concerts, which became an instant success well beyond the Lemko community, were extremely emotional and patriotic and would always include the performance of the Lemko anthem “In the mountains, today, the nation has been resurrected.”

During the turbulent years of 1980-1981, when Poland’s workers went on strike and communist authorities had to agree to many political changes, Lemko Rusyns made an attempt to set up the Association of the Admirers of Lemko Culture/ Towarzystwo Ljubytelej Lemkivskoj Kul’turý/Towarzystwo

<sup>45</sup>For a brief, rather simplistic, and viewed from the Ukrainian perspective account of these events see Myroslav Truchan, “Lemkiv’ska problema,” in his *Ukraińci v Pol’sčij pislja druhoj svitovoj viny, 1944-1984 = Ukrainians in Poland after World War II, 1944-1984*. Zapysky Naukovoho Tovarystva im. Ševčenko, 208. Istoryčno-filolohična sekcija (New York, 1990): 311. See also an eyewitness account by one of the Rusyn activists of the turn of 1950s-1960s: Jaroslav Zwoliński, *Rapsodia dla Lemków*, (Koszalin, 1994).

<sup>46</sup>P.T., “Dvadcet p’jat rokov Lemkovyný,” *Lemkivskij kalendar 1994* (Legnica-Krynica, 1994): 110-119.



The 10th annual Lemko Creative Autumn, held at the Ruska Bursa in Gorlice, 2002. (photo: Marija Janko)



The Second World Congress of Rusyns, held in Krynica, 1993.



Miłośników Kultury Łemkowskiej. They were unable to do so before the introduction of martial law (Dec.13, 1981), which ended this brief period of political liberalism in Poland. The idea was revived in 1982 and 1983, but was not realized.

Two years later, Lemkos started organizing an annual festival of Lemko culture under the name "Vatra" (Bonfire), held in one of the villages in the Carpathian homeland. This Lemko festival, with its flagship indigenous language publication *Holos Vatrŭ*, attracts more than 5,000 people annually. Its authentic Lemko character suffered a blow in 1990, however, when Ukrainian activists, who had entered the festival leadership through the regular rotation of leaders, usurped control and disallowed non-Ukrainian participation. Since then, this "Homeland Vatra" has been turning more towards becoming a mainstream Ukrainian cultural event. In the meantime, an older festival of similar character and magnitude and under the same name, but held in the village of Michałów in Lower Silesia, has been controlled by Rusyn activists since its establishment in the late 1970s. Because it takes place in a resettlement village outside the Lemko homeland, this festival is referred to as the "Vatra-in-Exile."

### Post-Communist Period

The collapse of Communism resurrected the repressed but unresolved question of Lemko national identity and language. The Rusyn-oriented Lemkos in Poland wasted little time in founding the Lemko Association/Stovaryšnja Lemkiv<sup>47</sup> as early as April of 1989. It became the first Rusyn organization in post-communist Eastern Europe in a progression of such organizations in Slovakia, Ukraine, and Hungary that developed into a true Rusyn movement.<sup>48</sup> It

<sup>47</sup>Janusz Albin, Jan Chudy, "Z genezy Stowarzyszenia Łemków," in Czesław Lewandowski and Marian S.Wolański, eds., *Studia nad współczesną polską myślą polityczną*, Acta Universitatis Wratislaviensis, no. 1665 (Wrocław, 1994): 123-144.

<sup>48</sup>Paul Best, "The Rusyn Movement: a Ten Year Retrospective 1989-1999," in Paul Best and Jarosław Moklak, eds., *The Lemkos of Poland* (Kraków – New Haven, 2000): 226-230; Paul Robert Magocsi, "Une Nouvelle Nationalité Slave: les Ruthènes de l'Europe du Centre-Est," *Revue des Etudes Slaves* 69, no. 3 (Paris, 1997): 417-428.



Performance from the First International Biennale of Lemko/Rusyn Culture in Krynica, May 26-27, 2000.

set up a Lemko Amateur Theater in Legnica, and prepared a motion picture depicting the resettlement during Operation "Vistula" (2003).<sup>49</sup> It also publishes a bi-monthly magazine,



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*Besida* (1989- ). It organizes the "Vatra-in-Exile"/Vatra na čužyni festival, co-organizes with the Rusyn Bursa/Ruska Bursa an annual gathering of Lemko poets, writers and artists, the Lemko Poetic Autumn/Lemkivska poetycka osin', more recently called Lemko Creative Autumn/Lemkivska tvorča osin' and held at the Ruska Bursa at Gorlice (1993- ),<sup>50</sup> and Meetings with Lemko Culture/Stričy z lemkiwskom kul'turom<sup>51</sup> in Gorzów Wielkopolski. Since 2001 it helps to organize (under the auspices of the

World Congress of Rusyns and Krynica's local authorities) a biannual event called the International Biennale of Lemko-Rusyn Culture/Medženarodne Bjenale Lemkivskoj/Rusynskoj Kul'turŭ that aims to present modern Rusyn culture from all of



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the European states where Rusyns live, and to develop the work of Rusyn organizations.<sup>52</sup> It also extended a helpful hand towards the organizers of another Lemko festival called "Od Rusa' do Jana" held at the Zyndranowa/Zyndranowa museum (1992-2003).<sup>53</sup> The Lemko Association remains in close cooperation with Rusyn organizations worldwide; it helped to establish the World Council of Rusyns, and regularly participates in the World Congresses

of Rusyns (it hosted the second such congress in Krynica, 1993, and will host the eight one in 2005).<sup>54</sup> Recognizing a need to sponsor Lemko cultural activities, the "Rutenika" Foundation for the Support of the Lemko Minority / Fundacija Spomahanja Lemkivskoj Menšynŭ 'Rutenika' / Fundacja Wspierania Mniejszości Łemkowskiej Rutenika<sup>55</sup> was created in 2001 under the leadership of Mychal Sandovyč/Michał Sandowicz. In 2002 it first organized Warsaw Lemko Days/Varšavskŭ Dnŭ Lemkivskŭ / Warszawskie Dni Lemkowskie,<sup>56</sup> and during the fall also in Poland's capital a Celebration

<sup>49</sup>Andrzej Kopča, "Jak sja nam „krutył” fil'm o akcji „Visla,”" *Besida* 14, no. 6 (Krynica-Legnica, 2002): 12-13.

<sup>50</sup>Matyjan Janiga, "Desjata Lemkivska Tvorča Osin'," *Besida* 14, no. 6 (Krynica-Legnica, 2002): 14-15.

<sup>51</sup>Petro Trochanovskij, "X Striča z Lemkiwskom Kul'turom," *Besida* 14, no. 6 (Krynica-Legnica, 2002): 14-16.

<sup>52</sup>V.Dzjaduk, "II Medženarodne Bjenale Lemkivskoj Kul'turŭ," *Zahoroda* no. 2 (33) (Zyndranowa, 2002): 13-15.

<sup>53</sup>Jarosław Zwoliński, "Rusala – już 10-tel," *Zahoroda* no. 2 (Zyndranowa, 2001): 4-5.

<sup>54</sup>A description of the early activity of the organization is in *II Kongres Stovaryšnja Lemkiv* (Lignycja, 1994).

<sup>55</sup>See its web page at: <http://www.rutenika.pl/pl/01/03.html>

<sup>56</sup>Mychal Sandovyč, "Vatra v Varšavi," *Besida* 14, no. 6 (Krynica-Legnica, 2002): 7-9; V.Dzjaduk, "Varšavskŭ Dnŭ Lemkivskŭ," *Zahoroda* no. 2 (33) (Zyndranowa, 2002): 8-12.

of Lemko Culture/ Kermeš Kul'turŷ Lemkivskoj / Kiermesz Kultury Łemkowskiej.<sup>57</sup>

As the Rusyn cultural movement became stronger, the Lemko Association adopted as its primary goal the standardization of the Lemko vernacular and codification of a grammatical system.<sup>58</sup> The Association's Committee on National Education started its activity with a revised, updated (1991) reissue of Trochanovskij's 1935 Primer. The following year, a Grammar was printed (Myroslava Chomjak/Miroslawa Chomiak, *Perša gramatyka sučasnoho lemkyvskoho jazŷka*), and a year later a Lemko-Polish Dictionary (Jaroslav Horošćak, *Peršyj lemkyvsko-pol'skij slovnyk=Pierwszy słownik łemkowsko-polski*). Myroslava Chomjak prepared several children's alphabet primers intended for the first and second grades, and eventually, in cooperation with Henryk Fontański, a linguist from Silesian University, the more-comprehensive *Gramatyka jęzŷka łemkowskiego=Gramatyka lemkyvskoho jazŷka* (2000).

The first Lemko-language classes since the late 1930s were offered in September 1991 in the village of Kunkova/Kuńkowa. Before 1995 six more such classes were established.<sup>59</sup> At the present time the Lemko vernacular is used by journalists, writers and poets,<sup>60</sup> many of whom also partici-

pate in the discussion of Lemko ethnic issues. The growing interest in Lemko vernacular was reflected in a seminar for language teachers, held in Krynica (2000), which attracted 40 people.<sup>61</sup> In 2001 Chomjak's program for teaching Lemko at the high school level (*Program nauczania jęzŷka łemkowskiego (rusińskiego) dla szkoły średniej*) was approved by the Ministry of National Education and Sport. In order to produce Lemko teaching cadres, a department of Lemko philology was opened at the Pedagogical Academy in Kraków in 2002.

### Summary

The Rusynophile movement has survived among the Lemkos despite world wars, border changes, ethnic cleansings, forced migrations, communism, economic crises, martial law, and the chaos of capitalist democracy. Such staying power is possible only because Rusynism fulfilled and continues to fulfill a need among Lemkos. The movement is presently evolving in a rapid manner less troubled by the fits and starts of the past. How it responds to its latest challenge, the charms of the wider non-Rusyn world now open to the Lemkos of Poland, as well as to its traditional challenge, competition with the Ukrainian-identity movement, remains to be seen.

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<sup>57</sup>Żerślak, "Kjermeš Kul'turŷ Lemkivskoj v Varšavi," *Zahoroda* no. 4 (35) (Zyndranowa, 2001): 36-37.

<sup>58</sup>For the present status of the Lemko vernacular see: Janina Fras, "Współczesny status etnolektu łemkowskiego," *Acta Universitatis Wratislaviensis*; no. 2049; *Politologia*, XXII (Wrocław, 1998): 155-163.

<sup>59</sup>Richard D. Custer, "Schools" in *Culture and Culture Evolution Among the Lemkos of Southeastern Poland in the 20th Century*, (1995); available at <http://www.carpatho-rusyn.org/rich/schools.htm>

<sup>60</sup>Helena Duć-Fajfer, "Główne nurty współczesnej poezji łemkowskiej," *Roczniki humanistyczne KUL* 42, no. 3 (Lublin, 1994): 185-200.

<sup>61</sup>Myroslava Chomjak, "Kurskonferencia dlja učyteliv i kandydatyv na učyteliv lemkyvskoho jazŷka v Krenyci 6-8 lypcja, 2000 r.," *Zahoroda* no. 3 (Zyndranowa, 2000).