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RICHARD D. CUSTER, Editor

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The Rusyn Movement among the Galician Lemkos

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 southeastern 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. 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 Krasnŷj Bríd/Krásny Brod, which, until banned by the authorities for abuses, were apparently utilized as a place to arrange, solemnize, and celebrate marriages.

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 20th-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 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. 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-

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1A 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.


4Eighteen volumes of documents of this Lemko village are held in the Central Historical State Archive in Lviv. An excerpt from the collection, which includes records from the period of 1549-1691 was published by I.M.Kernyc’kyj, and O.A.Kupčyns’kyj, comps., L.L.Humec’ka, ed., Akta sela Odrechovy (Kyïv, 1970).

From the mid-16th century and continuing throughout the 18th, 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. This was done by, among others, Mychajlo Sanickyj (1st half of the 16th century), Tymofej Vysočanskyj (1635), and Stefan Rychvaldskyj (1666). Some elements of the Lemko vernacular are present in Mychajlo Vasylevyč’s translation of the Psalms (1556-1561) and Ivan Kornyckyj’s translation of Bishop Joseph de Camelis’s catechism (publ.1698). 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.

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). Other early non-ecclesiastical works include two poems from the early 18th century (1702), as well as a translation of Gesta Romanorum/Roman Histories, rendered by Stefan Samboryna between 1742 and 1766.

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), 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 Karpatka Rus’ (1939-present).

In order to support the usage of Lemko vernacular Dymytrij Vyslockij produced Karpaturusskij bukar’ 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 19th-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...
our Rusyn brothers [living] in Spiš, Šaryš, and Zemplín counties as one indivisible geographic and ethnographic unit.”

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), 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. Lemko ethnic consciousness manifested itself also in a series of cultural events, including the recording Lemko Wedding (1928), followed by numerous other records with Lemko folk music, and the movie Lemko Wedding (1929), as well as radio programs (beginning in 1929) -- 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

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Bogdan Horbal, Działalność polityczna Łemków na Łemkowszczyźnie 1918-1921 (Wrocław, 1997): 45.
17Out of the total of some 250 delegates to the 3rd Carpatho-Russian Congress in New York (Dec.30, 1919-Jan.1, 1920), there were 94 Lemkos. Treći vseobščij Karpatorusskij kongress v Amerike, sostojavšijsja v N'ju Iorke s 28-31 dekabrja 1919 g. i 1-go janvarja 1920 goda (New York, 1920).
22The most comprehensive history of the organization is in the 50th Anniversary Almanac of the Lemko Association of the USA and Canada (Dublin, 1979).
ularity mostly due to the incredible talents of its two most prolific leaders, Dymytryj Vyslockij (1888-1968) and Simeon Pysh/Seman Pyž (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 Sekcija Meždunarodnoho Robočoho Ordena. On the verge of World War II it protested against the Polish and Hungarian actions against Subcarpathian Rus’.

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.

The Lemko Association welcomed incorporation of Subcarpathian Rus’ into the Soviet Union, 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.


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) and Stefan Kitchura (1912-1997), 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.

Staying true to its ideology, the Lemko Association jeopardized 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 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. Although all

The Introduction of Lemko Vernacular in Schools and Publications

In realizing the first goal, Metodyi 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 Druga 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. 28 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. 29 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! (…) 30

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 Tatra’s peaks,
Through Šljachtova, Bila Voda – as far as Osturnja. (…) 31

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 18th 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 20th century acquired still more political “baggage.” 32 Religious affiliation had by then become closely linked with the question of Lemko national identity.

The turn of the 19th-20th century brought back the issue of Orthodoxy. 33 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. 34

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.

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28 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. Andzej Stepek, “Akcja polska na Łemkowszczyźnie w Drugiej Rzeczpospolitej, ” in Andrzej Zięba, ed., Wyznaniowy na Łemkowszczyźnie w XX wieku, (Kraków, 1997): 135-143.

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30 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.


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. In some villages, non-traditional religious affiliations were also spreading, 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. 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), 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 Ukrainianophile 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 Mączyń, 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 Lemkowskiego Komisji Badań Naukowych Ziem Wschodnich 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-

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

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.41 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.42

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.43 Throughout the communist period in Poland, the Lemko-Rusyn movement was condemned as being “unprogressive.” Already in 1958 a chief communist party ideologist, Aleksander Sław, 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.”44

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

4Julijan Tarnovyč, Na žaryščach 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 Goć/Teodor Gocz, Jaroslav Poljanski/Jarosław Polański). Even after this drastic move, Lemko independent cultural activity continued to be organized 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).

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. 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/Tovarystvo Ljubytelej Lemkivskoj Kul’turŷ/Towarzystwo Besida.45


Milosnikow Kultury Lemkowskiej. 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 Vatra, 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/Stowarzyszenia Lemkow. 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. It

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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. 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/Mirosława Chomiak, Perša gramatyka sučasnoho lemkivskoho jazyka), and a year later a Lemko-Polish Dictionary (Jaroslav Horoščak, Peršyj lemkivsko-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 języka łemkowskiego=Gramatyka lemkivskoho jazyka (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. At the present time the Lemko vernacular is used by journalists, writers and poets, many of whom also participate 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. In 2001 Chomjak's program for teaching Lemko at the high school level (Program nauczania języka lemkowskiego (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, ethnocides, 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.

Bogdan Horbal
New York, New York

Digitally signed by Walter Maksimovich
DN: cn=Walter Maksimovich, o=www.lemko.org, ou, email=walter@lemko.org, c=US
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