



THE NEW RUSYN TIMES

A Cultural-Organizational Publication of the Carpatho-Rusyn Society
Културно-сполоченський часопис Карпато-Русинського общества

Volume 8, Number 3

May/June 2001 • Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania

Рочник 8, Число 3

SUBCARPATHIAN RUS' FLOOD DISASTER 2001 – THE AFTERMATH

*News Reports on the Response, Cleanup, and Blame for the March Disaster
in Subcarpathian Rus' Continue to Appear*

Hungarian Envoy Denies Flooding Ukrainian Area to Save Hungarian Villages

There is major outrage in Transcarpathia. The embittered residents accuse the Oblast leadership of having made a kind of pact with northeast Hungary's Szabolcs region defense committee and allowed the villages to be flooded.

[Zoltan Szakacs, Hungarian consul in Užhorod:] "Yes, I also heard such rumors and accusations today. This is particularly uncomfortable for me as a Hungarian diplomat because it is completely unfounded. I would like to state the most resolutely that there was no pact whatsoever between the Hungarian side and the Transcarpathian leadership. They did not agree to flood the Ukrainian Bereg valley. This was an unstoppable process resulting from the double rupture in the dike at Tarpa [in Hungary]. This equally hits Hungarian and Ukrainian territories because 45 percent of the area flooded is in Hungary while about 55 percent of it is in Ukraine."

"Contrary to these rumors, the Hungarian side immediately warned the Ukrainian side after the event so that it can get prepared."

"Within our limits, we [Hungary] are trying to help them. We have brought 150,000 sandbags in this region. This afternoon we brought here 5,000 torches. For two days, we have been flying over the region in an aircraft to assess the situation and make forecasts for the expected direction of the water. Furthermore, as soon as we could, we [Hungary] opened the flood-gates at Tiszaszalka, which relieves this region of about 20 million cubic meters of water. Every pump will be operated as soon as possible to pump the water back to the river Tisza from this region, but no pumping is taking place to move the water to Ukrainian territory."
(BBC Monitoring Service, from Hungarian TV2, March 13)

Ukrainian Authorities Accuse Hungary of Causing Second Wave of Flooding

Experts accuse neighboring Hungary of this and forecast a further rise in the water level. We recall that as a result of this year's floods, 250 population centers have been

flooded and eight people have died.

[Tetyana Bol, reporter:] "Whether the water level of the Tysa River rises depends not only on the melting of snow in the mountains and on rains but also on the water level of rivers in neighboring Hungary. Over 10 Ukrainian villages in Berehovo District suffered as a result of a break in the dike near the Hungarian village of Tarpa. In particular, the village of Danylivka has been completely flooded. The Hungarians say that in their country 20 population centers suffered and that it was only for that reason that they dug out highways and let water run off into Ukrainian territory by pumps."

[Ivan Zajac, Environment Minister:] "We are not just taking water in such big volumes from the Hungarian side in this case, but we are also pumping this water into the rivers Tysa and Latorycja at our own expense, spending huge funds."

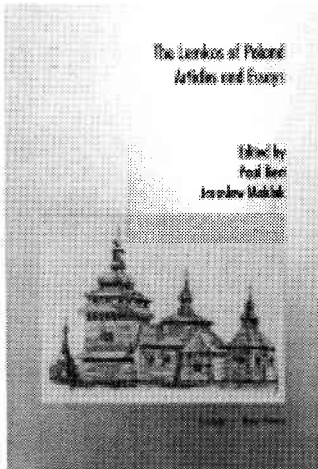
This is the first official acknowledgement of the fact that Hungary has been directing water onto Ukrainian territory. A whole week has passed since the dike was broken [in Hungary], but high-ranking officials were afraid of, as they say in private talks, causing an international scandal. Journalists were not allowed at a joint intergovernmental commission sitting, which lasted about eight hours, and the next



Ukrainian soldiers pass by houses damaged during heavy floods in the Rusyn village of Sasovo (former Ugoča County) near Vynohradiv, Subcarpathian Rus', Saturday, March 10, 2001. (AP Photo/Sergei Grits)

The Lemkos of Poland: Articles and Essays

Edited by Paul J. Best (C-RS, Higganum, CT), Political Science Dept., Southern Connecticut State University, New Haven, CT, and Jaroslaw Moklak, History Institute, Jagiellonian University, Cracow, Poland.



This paperback book contains, in 245 pages (including maps and illustrations), 25 separate studies, many translated from Polish, Ukrainian, Rusyn, and German, dealing with some aspect of the Lemko people. The Lemkos are an East Slavic ethnic group which formerly was the majority population of that area of the Carpathian Mountains still called the Lemko Re-

gion (Lemkovyna in the local language, Łemkówszczyzna in Polish, Lemkivshchyna in Ukrainian).

These articles come from scholarly sessions held at the World Congresses for Central and East European Studies (Harrogate, England, July 1990 and Warsaw, Poland, August 1995) and at a specific conference at the Jagiellonian University of Cracow (July 1992). Some related material has been included.

Authors include C-RS members Paul Best and Susyn Mihalasky, and Lemko scholar/activist Olena Duc'-Fajfer and Polish scholarly authorities on Lemkos such as Andrzej Zieba. Topics range from historical background on the Lemko Region, religion and the Lemkos, Lemko ethnonational orientation, political activity among Lemkos in the Lemko Region and in the emigration, Russophile ideology among Lemkos, Lemko language, and more.

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Izb̄y i Bilyčna: davno i teper

by Adam Barna, Andryj Kvoka (Lignycja: Oficyna Wydawnicza ATUT, 2000), 264 pp., 66 b&w photographs.

Reviewed by Bohdan Horbal (C-RS, New York, NY)



Time is running out for Lemkos, who were forcibly resettled from their homeland during the period of 1944-1946, and 1947. There are fewer and fewer of those who were born and lived in the Lemko Region at least for a while, and who can actually offer a first-hand account of how it really was to live there. It is not a coincidence that the efforts to secure the knowledge preserved by that last

generation are taking place now. They have materialized in a series of books, especially histories of particular villages (some of them reviewed on the pages of this publication).

Adam Barna is not a stranger to this process. He has devoted much energy to research, reading and writing, and since he is meticulous and patient by nature his writings are of great value to the Lemko community. He began with church-related projects, including prayer books and the history of the Orthodox parish in Legnica (*Kronika Parafii Prawosławnej Zmartwychwstania Pańskiego w Legnicy za okres 1948-1994*, Legnica, 1994, 70 pp.), but soon turned to Lemko history. His first larger accomplishment was the history of his native village of Čorne (*Kaval'čŷk ternystoj istoriji sela Čorne na Lemkovyni 1870-1970*, Lignycja: Zarząd Główny Stowarzyszenia Łemków, 1996, 210 pp.).

Most recently, in cooperation with Andryj Kvoka, he has delivered a substantial amount of historical and ethnographic information on the Lemko villages of Izb̄y and Bilyčna [former Grybov County], which once formed one parish. The inspiration and financial help to produce this important work came from the Lemko members of the Orthodox parish in Legnica, many of whom are either *Izbjane* or *Bilyčnjane*.

Eleven chapters of the book are based on two types of materials. The first group includes either small ac-

counts concerning both villages which had been previously scattered in various publications and are brought together here in Lemko Rusyn translation, or chapters by the authors or other persons based on secondary sources. There is here a general geographical and historical description of both villages (pp. 19-38), followed by a chronological table of historical events important for both localities (pp. 39-50), as well as data on the local parish, including statistical information and a partial listing of local priests going back to the late 17th century (pp. 51-72).

A separate chapter (pp. 75-90) is devoted to the Bar Confederacy of 1768-1772, a political and military movement of some Polish noblemen against the reforms initiated by the king of Poland, Stanisław August Poniatowski, as well as against the Russian intervention in Poland. For some time, confederated forces were stationed in the Lemko Region, where they persecuted the local population and hanged a schoolteacher from Izb̄y. These outrageous acts are either "skipped" by Polish historians (who wrote on the subject extensively), or denied outright. The authors also devote considerable amount of attention to the persecution of Lemkos by Austrian authorities during World War I (pp. 91-103).

Chapter 7, which focuses on the period from 1921 to 1939, is partially based on previously published materials, but also includes materials written specifically for this book, including memoirs by Petro Van'ko and Ol'ga (née Plaskon') Brejan. Very valuable are the original materials included in the chapter on World War II. Kyryl Brejan describes his military service in the Polish Army in the west, including the Italian Campaign and the famous battle of Monte Casino (pp. 138-158). Paraska (née Fr̄yckij) Brejan gives a personal account of both resettlements to the Soviet Union (pp. 159-166), including a listing of those families who left the villages in 1940 (of which many returned in 1942), and subsequently in 1945. V. Hoc' and A. Van'ko concisely discuss Lemko forced labor in Germany, also providing the names of those who took part in it (pp. 166-171). A. Kosovkij and Štefan Krynyckij talk about the battles in the region during the final stages of the war and the drafting of Lemko youth into the Soviet Army, offering here again a list of those who were taken (pp. 171-178).

The historical part concludes with a discussion of the final resettlement of 1947 and the settlement in the western parts of Poland (pp. 183-195), as well as with an account by Adam Barna concerning the present situation of former inhabitants of the villages and their descendants (pp. 231-245). He also mentions the present-day situation in both villages, of which Bilyčna has been depopulated for more than half a century, while Izb̄y is inhabited mostly by Poles.

There is also a chapter on famous inhabitants of the

villages, including biographies of the Rev. Dymytrij Ch̄yljak, one of the founders of the Rusyn Lemko Republic and the Rev. Nykyfor Lešč̄yřak, one of the first collectors of Lemko folklore. Some of the songs and poems collected by him, as well as those written by other inhabitants of the villages are also published in the book, along with the description of the annual cycle of rituals (by Petro Van'ko, pp. 107-119) and local industries (by O. Brejan and P. Van'ko, pp. 126-136).



More Rusyn Periodicals
at the New York Public Library
by Bohdan Horbal (C-RS, New York, NY)

The Slavic and Baltic Division of the New York Public Library, which already possesses one of the strongest retrospective collections of Rusyn periodicals published in America (including those microfilmed as part of the Carpatho-Ruthenian Microfilm Project, which was possible thanks to the financial donation from the Byzantine Ruthenian Catholic Metropolia and the Immigration History Research Center), has just added more titles to its extensive Rusyn holdings. (For more details on Carpatho-Ruthenica at the NYPL see <http://www.carpathorusyn.org/ruthenic.htm>) Microfilms of five titles published in Uřhorod, as well as one in Bratislava, Nowy Sacz and Sanok are now available to readers. Newspapers published in Uřhorod include these important and influential periodicals:

1. *Karpat* (holdings: 1873-1880, 1881-1886)
2. *Lystok* (1885-1903)
3. *Sv̄it* (1867-1870) and
4. *Podkarpatska Rus'* (1923-1936).

There is also an independent monthly published in Bratislava, *Podkarpatoruská Revue* (1936-1938), as well as a scholarly publication of the Subcarpathian Academy of Sciences [Podkarpatskoe obshchestvo nauk], *Zorja/Hajnal* (1942-1943). Two Lemko publications added to the collection, *Pidhirs'kyi dzvin* (1912) and *Sv̄it* (1914), belong to a group of extremely difficult to locate rarities published before World War I.

All of the above microfilms were purchased from Norman Ross Publishing Inc., a New York-based distributor of microforms. This company offers for sale to any interested party a collection of some 32 Rusyn publications (25 reels) mostly from the 1930s and 1940s (see <http://www.nross.com/slavic/slavalso.html#> also), as well as many other Rusyn serials (listed together with the Ukrainian serials at <http://www.nross.com/ukraine.htm>), which can also be purchased individually.