

# Karpatska Rus'

Carpathian Rus'



Vol. 84, 2014, combined № 1 (Winter) & № 2 (Spring), Series IV

## The Tragedy of Thalerhof

On the 100th anniversary of the outbreak of World War One



### The Thalerhof "Ikon"

This pen and ink iconic sketch, entitled "In Memory of the Martyrs of Thalerhof", was made in 1932 by Ivan Rusenko (1890-1960), a famous interwar sketch artist, writer and Lemko activist. The frame, constructed in Canada in 1935, is made of hundreds of very sharp pieces of wood and needs to be handled carefully with gloves. The frame represents both the Crown of Thorns of Jesus Christ and the barbed wire which surrounded the *K.u.K. [Kaiserlich und Koniglich] Interniertenlager am Thalerhof bei Graz*— The Imperial and Royal Internment camp in Thalerhof [village] near [the city of] Graz [in southern Austria]. It shows a representative grave and perhaps the tree in the background is a "weeping" pine tree. The grave yard in Thalerhof was known, by the prisoners, as "Under the Pines". Thalerhof bei Graz is several kilometers south of the southern border of the city of Graz, the capital city of Steiermark Province, in Austria. This iconic picture and frame is the property of the Lemko Association.

*KARPATSKA RUS'*, Series IV, is the continuation of the oldest Lemko and Rusyn newspaper published anywhere.

Series I, *Lemko*, was published in Lviv, Nowy Sącz, and Gorlice, 1911-1913, in Austrian Galicia.



(Interim 1: The original *Lemko* ceased publication in the lead-up to WW I.)

Series II, *Lemko*, was a monthly, biweekly, and then weekly published first in Philadelphia, then Cleveland and New York City, 1928-1940, by the Lemko Association. The first editor was Dymytrii Vyslotskii (pseudonym Van'о Hunianka), an editor of *Lemko* Series I.

(Interim 2: In 1939, the Carpatho-Russian National Committee in New York City began to publish the newspaper *Karpatska Rus'*, with 12 issues in 1939 and one in 1940. In January 1940 this paper was merged into *Lemko*, with the combined publication keeping the *Karpatska Rus'* name but the *Lemko* numbering.)

Series III, *Karpatska Rus'*, was published first on a weekly, then on a bi-weekly, monthly, and finally an occasional basis in Yonkers, New York 1940-1999 and Allentown, New Jersey, from 1999 through January 2008.



(Interim 3: After the January 2008 issue, Volume 80 No. 1 (Winter), *Karpatska Rus'* became dormant due to the grave illness of editor Alexander Herenchak.)

Series IV began as a quarterly with the No. 2 issue of Volume 80 (2010), with No. 3/4 (Summer/Fall) wrapping up Volume 80. The new publication schedule includes Winter, Spring, Summer, and Fall issues.

It is hoped that Series I, II, and III will eventually appear online at [www.lemkoassociation.org](http://www.lemkoassociation.org).

# The Thalerhof Tragedy

by Paul Best

One hundred years ago, in August 1914, the Great War to End All Wars broke out. The reasons for the war and who was at fault are the subject of thousands of books and articles and whole forests have been felled to supply the paper to print all these publications, thus we cannot possibly go into war guilt here. Many readers may think, on reading the following, why have I never heard of the Thalerhof Tragedy before? The answer is fairly straightforward. Nearly every writer, writing in English, about WW I (and WW II as a matter of fact) is/was living in Western Europe or North America or is/was someone tied to the English-reading and -speaking world, thus the almost exclusive focus on the Western Front. On the Eastern side of Germany, in both wars, were battles that equaled or exceeded those in the west, but since French, British, British Empire, Canadian and American troops did not take part in them those actions were little noticed. Thus the Thalerhof Tragedy was hardly noticed in WW I and soon the massive violations of human rights in WW II overwhelmed anything that had happened in WW I. However the victims of Thalerhof did not forget nor have their descendents, wherever they are now.

World War One was the greatest war ever fought to that time (1914-1918) and that war laid the ground work for an even greater disaster, that of WW II (1939-1945) and the Cold War which followed it. In a real sense August 1914- December 1991 was a single long nightmare, identified by some historians as the “short 20th century.”

It is often supposed that the Carpathian Rus' region in the very center of Europe and its inhabitants and the Diaspora played only a minor to non-existent part in history— not so! The Carpathian Region was in the thick of the action in both wars and the Thalerhof\* Internment/Concentration Camp was in many ways a precursor/rehearsal for worse things to come in WW II. The only analogous situation in North America is the notorious Andersonville prison camp in Georgia where 13,000 union prisoners died during the U.S. Civil War. The extent of this precursor role can be judged by the reader in the following pages. Also the extent of the influence of virulent nationalism can still be seen, as this essay is being written, in the fight going on in Kyiv's Maidan/Independence Square where Ukrainophiles are fighting it out with Russophiles, and in the struggle between Ukrainophiles and Carpatho-Rusynophiles both in Central Europe and the Diaspora.

Unfortunately this essay cannot be said to be a definitive study of the whole Thalerhof Tragedy. When we sat down to compile the information found in the archives of the Lemko Association in Higganum, Connecticut, USA, it turned out to be an overwhelming job. The best we could do is to outline the history of Thalerhof and to invite someone to write a thorough history, which could easily be a 500-800 page typescript, as a monograph or a Ph.D. dissertation.

Thus the Lemko Association begs the readers' pardon and offer to him/her the best we could do at this time in this combined issue of *Karpatska Rus'* (No. 1 & 2 of 2014).

For those interested in reading more, we refer you to the following, our principal sources for this essay.

1. Peter Hardy, editor, *Galitskaya Golgotha; Voennie Prestupleniya Gabsburgskoi Monarkhii* (Galician Golgotha: The War Crimes of the Habsburg Monarchy), Peter Hardy [publisher], Trumbull, Connecticut,

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\* Note that the German for the village near Graz is spelled “Thalerhof” though pronounced “Talerhof”. The transliteration into English from Cyrillic sources is “Talerhof”, there are also other spellings extant. According to academic convention the current spelling of a place should be used thus we use “Thalerhof”.

USA, 1964, 566 pages. This book is a complete reproduction of the four *Talerhofskii Almanakh'* (Thalerhof Almanac) journals which were published in 1924 (210 pages), 1925 (154 pages), 1930 (160 pages), and 1932 (162 pages) plus an introduction, conclusion and separate index (see below). If you want to read about what the victims of Thalerhof thought then this book has almost all there is to say. The language is Russian but in the "Galician-Russian Dialect".

2. V.R. Vavrik', *Terezin i Talerhof: k 50-letei godovshchine tragedii Galitsko-Russkago Naroda* (Terezin [Theresienstadt] and Talerhof: On the 50th Anniversary of the Tragedy of the Galician-Russian People), R.N.Samilo Publishing House, Philadelphia(?), 1966. Vavrik was a *Thalerhofvets* (a prisoner in Thalerhof) who writes from personal experience and he adds information about about the *Klein Festung* (Little Fortress) at Terezin where many of the "more dangerous" prisoners were held, at least initially.

3. Kohanik, Peter G. (ed), *Belgium of the East: An Interview with Dr. Dimitri A. Markoff*, Wilkes-Barre, PA: American Relief Committee for Carpatho-Russians, 1920. This is a 16 page English language publication reproduced in *Karpatska Rus'*, vol. 80, 2010, No. 3/4, series IV.

4. Mirovich, Roman Denisovich, *Ukazatel k Talerhoskomu Almanakhu I, II, III, IV* (Index to the four Thalerhof Almanacs), Lviv, 1965; and *Alfavitnii ukazatel zhertv Avstro-Mad'yarskogo terror vo vremya pervoi mirovoi voini 1914-1918* (An Alphabetical Index to the victims of Austro-Magyar terror during the First World War 1914-1918), Lviv, 1971.

We refer you also to the Lemko Association Archives, held at our headquarters in Higganum, Connecticut, USA. The Thalerhof section consists of three boxes of books, drawings, reports and memoirs in Polish, Russian, German, Rusyn (the Galician dialect of Russian?). Included are 16 rolls of black and white photos and print-outs of same from the Graz archives. There are also six notebooks with notations from the archives in Graz from 1984 and 1985 and two notebooks from the Vienna archives in 1982. See text of this essay for details. All illustrations herein come from this archive.

## Karpatska Rus' / Carpathian Rus'



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Published by and distributed to members of:

The Lemko Association

184 Old County Road

Higganum, CT 06441

[www.lemkoassociation.org](http://www.lemkoassociation.org)

ISSN 1042-5640

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The mission of the Lemko Association and the Carpathian Institute is to further the study of the history and culture of the Lemko Region and the larger Carpathian Rus' area of Central Europe and to support Lemkos and Rusyns whether in the homeland or in diaspora.

Submissions of articles and letters to the editor are welcomed and may be sent to the address above, or by electronic mail to [editor@lemkoassociation.org](mailto:editor@lemkoassociation.org).

PART ONE

# The Thalerhof Tragedy-what was it?

One hundred years ago, at the beginning in August 1914, in what was called the Galician Golgotha, thousands of people identified as "Russians"\* were shot, hanged, stabbed, beaten, starved, maltreated, persecuted, incarcerated and lost their health. In the whole process up to ten thousand died. But first let us outline where this occurred.

The area we deal with in this essay is north and east of the crest of the Carpathian Mountains in Central Europe, in an area formerly (1772-1918) called the Galicia Province [Crownland] of the Austrian Empire and especially its eastern part, though the Western part, the Lemko Region, was also included as was the Bukovina Province (1774-1918). The incidents rehearsed hereinafter also touched the *Karpatalja* area of the northeast corner of the Crownland of St. Stephen (Hungary / Magyarszag). The territory stretches from roughly the east side of the High Tatra mountains in the south-central area of today's Poland and Slovakia's north western edge to the somewhat east of the Romanian city of Sighet-Maramures. This area was in the main inhabited by East Slavs who by definition were of the Eastern Rite Christian persuasion, if religious. Part of this region was originally controlled by Halych-Volhynian princes who claimed descent from Rurik, the semi-mythical founder of the Rus' state. In 1340, based on dynastic claims, and on the extinction of the Halych line of princes, Kazimier the Great of Poland asserted rule. On the south side of the Carpathian crest, over the centuries, nobles related to the Hungarian state, even if not ethnically Hungarians themselves, gradually pressed up into the mountains, enserfing the inhabitants, until Polish and Hungarian claims met, approximately where the Polish-Slovak border is now and where Subcarpathian Rus' (today's Ukrainian Transcarpathian Oblast) borders with Ukraine proper. These territories changed names several times until the first partition of Poland (1772), when the former Red Rus' or Rus' Province went to Austria and was renamed Galicia, a name retained until 1918. Austria also acquired, from Moldavia in 1774, the Bukovina (Beech Forest) territory at the very southeast outer face of the Slavic Carpathians. The inner face of the northeast Carpathian range also eventually came under Austria because of the Hungarian defeat at the hands of the Ottoman Turks in 1526 at the great battle of Mohacs. Since the Hungarian throne then became vacant, the Habsburgs pressed a dynastic claim and were able, over a several hundred year period, to successfully gain control of the Hungarian kingdom. Some Hungarians, over a long period of time, tried to throw off the Austrian "yoke" but were unsuccessful until Austria became weakened due to losses in war, first with France, in northern Italy, in 1859 and then with Prussia in Bohemia in 1866.

Thus in 1867 Hungary and Austria came to an "*Ausgleich*" (compromise) whereby the Hungarian and Austrian ruling classes divided up the Austrian Empire into the Empire itself and the Kingdom of Hungary, in other words Austria-Hungary (*Osterreich und Ungarn*), a dual monarchy ruled over by a king and emperor in the same person, to be a Habsburg. Each part had control of its own internal affairs but foreign affairs and the military were controlled by the Empire from Vienna. The joint administrative language was German. Little-noticed historically was the establishment, at the same time as the *Ausgleich*, of "Galician Autonomy" whereby the Polish landlord class, which was "*Kaiser Treu*" (loyal to the Emperor), was given the right to rule in Galicia. The administrative language was Polish assisted by German in general and a kind of East Slavic (called Ukrainian by some, Russian of the Galician variety by others) in Eastern Galicia and the Lemko Region. In the Hungarian Kingdom a very heavy Magyarization campaign was put into action whereby anyone who wanted to take part in the political life of the kingdom had to, at least, learn Magyar (that is, Hungarian), and if one wanted to advance in the professions or in the church one had to identify with Hungarian culture and Magyarize oneself and one's family.

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\* The definitions of Rus', Rusophile (one "s"), Russophile (two "s"s), Russian, Rusyn, Staro-Rus', Moskal/Moskalophile, Ukrainian, Ukrainophile are too complicated to go into here and will be the subject of a future essay in *Karpatska Rus'*.

This all meant that the Rusyns (Rusyn was a name used in the 19th and 20th centuries for all the East Slavs in Austria-Hungary, no matter what their political orientation) were squeezed by Polish and Hungarian pressures to accommodate to Western/Roman/Latin Rite Christianity and to “westernize” in a Polish or Hungarian version (not, interestingly enough, after 1867, in an Austro-German version of westernization). The Hungarians, who were only 50% of the Hungarian state’s population, were most successful in their campaign to Magyarize people. All education, by 1914, was Magyarized. Thus all government officials, people who went on to higher education and students in seminaries had to Magyarize. Many of these people became “Magyarones”— people who rejected their ethnic own heritage in favor of the state language and culture. This is why comparatively few Hungarian citizens were caught up in the Thalerhof Tragedy. On the north side of the Carpathians, however, the church was never captured by the Poles even though most people were either Latin Rite Catholics or Greek Rite Catholics. The Greek Catholic Church fought hard to preserve itself from Latinization. Thus some East Slavs in Uhro-Rus’ (another name for the East Slavic area of Hungary) and a very large number of Greek Catholics and Eastern Orthodox pushed back and a bitter clash could be foreseen.

## PART II

# What were the conditions in which the Thalerhof Tragedy occurred?

*The First World War is nothing to be jubilant about for anyone. Where’s the fault for this war? It’s the fault of strong nationalism.*

—Karl von Habsburg, great-grand nephew of Archduke Ferdinand, The Hartford Courant, Feb. 16, 2014, p. A7. Ferdinand’s slaying in Sarajevo, Bosnia, June 28, 1914 was the spark for WW I.

The year of 1848 has been called the “Springtime of Nations” when European revolutionaries tried to establish liberal national self determination in Germany, the Czechlands (Bohemia and Moravia), Austria, Hungary, Italy and other places. These movements were severely repressed by conservative forces. Only at the end of WW I, under Woodrow Wilson’s famous “14 points” doctrine, was a national basis for statehood in Europe widely tried. In the meantime, in 1849 the Imperial Russian army suppressed Hungarian nationalist revolutionaries on behalf of the Austrian Habsburgs. But in 1855-1856, during the Crimean War, a war fought to put a stop to Russian expansionism into the Balkans and against Ottoman Turkey, the Austrians not only did not support Russia but rather stayed neutral and even, ungratefully, threatened to join the coalition against Russia, which activity, as one may supposed, made Russia very angry and revenge-seeking. At the same time so-called “Pan-Slavism” began to gain influence in Russian ruling circles. Pan-Slavism, at its widest, encompassed all Slavs in Europe but in actual fact Russian Pan-Slavism really concerned itself with East and South Slavs of the Orthodox Christian variety. East and South Slavs should work together to fend off alien influence— either German, whether of Germany proper or Austria, or Latin/Roman or Protestant Christianity. Eventually, by the turn of the 20th century, there was a reversal of alliances, with Russia, Great Britain and France now against the German and Austro-Hungarian Empires. Russia especially coveted the Galician and Bukovinian Provinces of Austria and the Uhro-Rus’ portion of Hungary, based on Pan-Slavism and on the notion that all the East Slavs there were Russians, pure and simple, whether they knew it or not.

In these lands, there already was a *Staro-Rus'* (Old Rus') movement which identified with Eastern/Byzantine Rite Christianity, the use of Church Slavonic as the liturgical language, and East Slavic traditions, without leaning toward Moscow politically or the Russian Orthodox Church religiously. The local *Staro-Rus'* knew that the Russian Orthodox Church was a state church ruled over on a daily basis by a lay *Oberprocuror* (Supervisor) appointed by the Tsar. The Tsar was de facto the head of the church and the church was a government department. We should note several things here to better explicate the rest of this essay: First, there was no Patriarch in Moscow from 1721 to 1917; second, the official title of the ruler was "*Imperator*" (Emperor) although the popular term was Tsar, as will be used here; third, the selection of being Greek Catholic or Eastern Orthodox was that of jurisdiction, not that of rite or even dogma— even though many make much ado about nothing in this regard; fourth, the government of the Russian Empire was based in St. Petersburg from the time of Peter the Great to 1918 when the Bolsheviks moved the capital back to Moscow as a more defensible place. Nonetheless we will use the term "Moscow" for Russia here, as did writers in our area of interest before 1918.

Eastern Rite Christians in Bukovina, Eastern Galicia, the southern part of Western Galicia (the Lemko Region) and Hungarian Uhro-Rus' were the subject of great interest from Moscow. If these people, along with immigrants from this area who had gone to the United States (yes, there were immigrants in Canada and South America but they were smaller in number and played little part in what is being discussed here) could be brought over to the Russian cause they could be of great help in the anticipated annexation of those lands. In fact, if additionally some West Slavs (Poles, Czechs, Slovaks) and South Slavs, whether Orthodox like the Serbs, Bulgarians and Macedonians or Roman Catholics like the Croats and Slovenes, could also be drawn into Pan-Slavism, then the overthrow of Austria-Hungary would be assured.

The Austro-Hungarian police and military noted a shift in thinking amongst their East Slavs from the *Staro-Rus'* (also called "Russophile") position, some to that of Moscophilism: all East Slavs should be under the scepter of the "Little Father"/"The Most Holy Orthodox Tsar", in other words the "Russian Idea", not exactly in the interest of Austria-Hungary; and some to the "Ukrainian Idea" that there was a *Malo Rus'* (Little Rus') people, now to be called Ukrainian, which was separate from the *Vielyka Rus'* (Great Rus') people based in Moscow.

The *Staro Rus'* and the Moscophile movements both agreed that there was a common East Slavic nationality while the Moscophiles carried the idea to a political unity under the Romanovs (the Russian ruling dynasty). The Ukrainians would have none of that and sought a state of their own. This developed into a fight between "separatists" (Ukrainians) and "Unified" East Slavs (*Staro Rus'*, Russophiles and Moscophiles). Unfortunately for historians trying to understand that period of time, many people were not fixed in their views and they switched back and forth; this is true also of jurisdiction switches within the Eastern Rite church, from Orthodoxy to Greek Catholicism and back. What is written here also applies to the Diaspora— as anybody who has studied the East Slavs in the USA can attest. To be sure the majority of the population stayed out of this struggle, quietly, but they were little noticed since they did not take part in meetings, processions, street fights or tumults in churches and did not join societies or reading rooms sponsored by the various orientations. The minority made the biggest noise and thus were the most noticed. Eventually the Austro-Hungarian authorities settled on the idea to arrest them all, when the war started, and to sort it all out later. It should be noted that active Ukrainians supported Austria-Hungary in WW I and even served in the Ukrainian Sich rifle units in the Austro-Hungarian army and many hoped, even up to 1945, that the Germans, whether Reich Deutsch or Austrian, would establish for them a "*Samostiina Ukraina*" (Independent Ukraine). But back to the beginning of the Thalerhof Tragedy.

PART III

# What actually happened?

## Memoirs, articles, stories

*Thalerhof was the 'Golgotha' and martyrdom for the Carpatho-Russian people who always have been oppressed nationally and socially for their ancestral faith, their traditional Russian religion, their faith in national unity and social freedom. Therefore they have been constantly persecuted, later provoked and disgraced nationally by the tragedy of martyrdom in Thalerhof. "Thalerhof" was in fact the first concentration camp or "Death Camp" in our modern world, for the extermination of undesired races or small national minorities in the Austro-Hungarian Empire during World War I in 1914-1917.*

*In Thalerhof, Terezin and many other similar "Death Camps" in Austro-Hungary, tens of thousands of patriots and true sons of Carpatho-Russian nationality have been exterminated by the martyr's death.*

—Page 5 of an 85 page document entitled "In the Name of Honor, Truth and Justice: The 50th anniversary of the 'Thalerhof Tragedy'", handwritten in the Galician dialect of Russian with a parallel English translation (appearing with light editing above.) Lemko Association Archive, Higganum, Connecticut, USA.

Starting in February 1912 the K.u.K. Armeem, the joint army of both the Austrian and Hungarian parts of the dual monarchy, as part of its war planning, asked the governors of the various lands to collect names of suspected disloyal persons— Galicia and Bukovina were no exception.

A reply from one county was received on February 15, 1912 in which it was stated that there were 85,804 inhabitants of the county of which 71,462 were Rusyns(sic), 4,565 Poles and Armenians, and 9701 Jews.

*From the Governor's Council of the Imperial and Royal Province of Galicia, Lviv, February 7, 1912.*

*Order concerning the Rus' parties in the counties*

*To all administrators in Eastern Galicia and [the Lemko counties of]  
Krosno, Jaslo, Gorlice, Grybow, Nowy Sacz and the Director of Police in Lviv*

**SECRET— HAND DELIVERY ONLY**

*I call upon you to respond within 8 days to this request from military authorities—  
What is the percentage of your inhabitants in relation to political parties, to wit:*

1. *Radical Russophiles [Moscophiles] (the Dudykievich Party)*
2. *Moderate Russophiles (Staro-Rus')*
3. *Ukrainophiles*

*Please indicate the main leaders and agitators of the above mentioned parties in each county giving the first and second names, profession (place in society) and permanent address.*

*Yours, Governor [namiestnik]*

*Bobrzynski*



1. *The percentage of Rusyns belonging to radical and moderate Russophiles was 5%. There is no difference between radicals and moderates since they both work together.*
2. *Ukrainophiles (nationalists)– 10%*
3. *Radical [?] Ukrainians– 65%*
4. *No party– 20%*

Then “agitators and leaders” were listed.

Note that the government officials knew who the Russophiles/Moscophiles were since they were able to answer, with details, within the time frame of eight days. [See Hardy, Sec. III, pages 146-149.]

How then did the authorities know who was who? Firstly the county police, the Gendarmerie, were always tasked with keeping an eye on local political activities, and the state censor authorities were tasked with knowing what was published and who was receiving what in the public post. It was simple to do mail covers, noting the names and addresses of people who subscribed to what newspapers and magazines and who got Russian publications. Additionally “private” mail was censored— opened and read, especially that from Russia and the overseas Diaspora, which was coming under the influence of the Russian Orthodox Church’s foreign missionary activities. Additionally the Gendarmerie noted who attended what meetings and what was preached in church. Also lists were kept of students who claimed “Russian nationality” in their school records and the Russian language as their own. Also note was taken of pilgrimages to Russian Orthodox sites within the Russian Empire, especially to the monastery of Pochaev. Those who led such pilgrimages and those who took part were noted in Gendarme records. Additionally, as soon as the war started the general citizenry was publically called upon to denounce “traitors”

But before we get to the World War itself let us note several other things of interest. As in most European countries at the time, with the notable exception for laicized France, there was a state church. In Austria-Hungary, that was the Catholic Church, whether Greek or Roman Rite, but other churches were tolerated— varieties of Protestantism and Romanian, Serbian and Bukovinian Orthodoxy. Of the suspect variety, and de facto banned, was the Russian Orthodox Church, for the simple reason that joining that church meant political allegiance to a foreign ruler. Before WW I began there were several trials of people who wanted to become Russian Orthodox, a phenomenon too complicated to go into here, the “Olga Grabar” Trial of 1882 in Galicia where a village went over to Orthodoxy under the influence of Fr. Ioann (Ivan) Naumovich, a nominally Greek Catholic priest known as the “Galician Enlightener”, who later immigrated to the Russian Empire and soon thereafter died, some say due to poison. Then there was the Sighet Maramures trial of another village which went over to Orthodoxy in the Hungarian Kingdom (1912), and then the 1912 trial in Lviv of Fr. Maksim Sandovich and others, who had gone to Russia for religious training and had come back ordained to propagate Eastern Orthodoxy. The trial ended in acquittal. All those involved in these trials had been accused of treason to Austria-Hungary.

There was also a contest going on in Eastern Galicia and the Lemko Region between people of the Ukrainian and Russophile/Moscophile persuasions. Each group organized various sorts of social groups and self help clubs and there was a special rivalry between the Ukrainophile “*Prosvita*” (Enlightenment) and the Russophile Kachkovsky (the founder’s family name) reading rooms. (These reading rooms also appeared in North America.) Each reading room was supplied with publications supporting the cause for which the reading room was established. As far as this writer can tell, the Hungarian police were able to successfully keep these rivalries out of the lands of the Crown of St. Stephen by repressing all movements which did not support the Magyar regime.

Another factor in the brewing battle in the eastern part of Austria-Hungary was that of the Diaspora in North America. (Again, there were East Slavic immigrants in South America but conditions there were so harsh that many re-immigrated home or to North America, or were rather quickly assimilated so that they played only a minor role in the on-coming crisis.) Imperial Russia was very active in North America after 1867 when it sold Alaska to the USA. In the USA, Russia was seen as an ally and a market. After the Civil War the Colt Manufacturing Company shipped thousands of pistols and rifles to Russia and other US manufactur-

ers found a market there too. During the Civil War itself, Russia was thought to support the North since it emancipated its serfs at roughly the same time as America emancipated its slaves. Also, in the fall of 1863 Russian naval ships sailed into New York and San Francisco harbors and stayed until spring 1864. This was interpreted as support for President Lincoln (although historians have other opinions on the meaning of the Russian fleet's visits.) During this era of good feelings, the Russian Orthodox Church, initially based in Sitka, Alaska, from 1868-1905 in San Francisco and 1905-present, in New York City was given a free hand. When the missionary bishop of San Francisco realized that there were thousands of Greek Catholics ripe for conversion to Orthodoxy the church set out to do just that, a phenomenon we cannot go into here. Suffice to say the newly Orthodox converts were encouraged to aggressively carry their Orthodoxy back to the homeland either directly when they returned home or indirectly by means of correspondence. These people were to think of themselves as Russians, to switch to the Russian church jurisdiction and to see the Tsar as their leader in both religious and civil matters. In fact in a recent (2012) doctoral dissertation offered at the University of Pittsburgh, the author even goes so far as to state that the beginnings of WW I can be found in Minneapolis, Minnesota where the Greek Catholic priest, Alexis Toth, switched jurisdictions in 1891 and began to encourage East Slavs to think of themselves as Russian supporters of the Tsar.

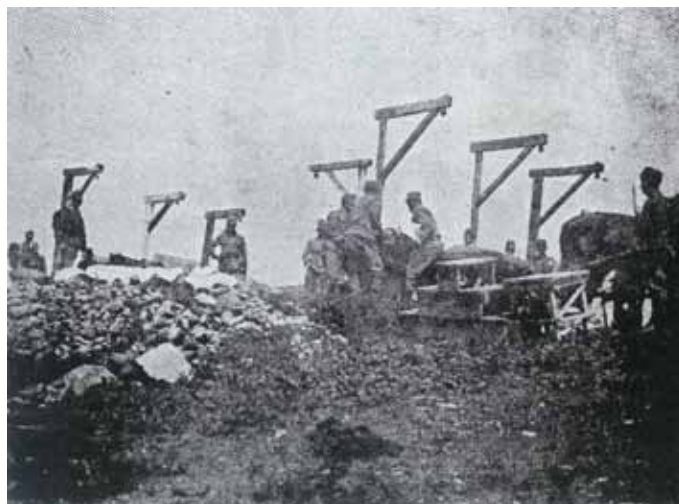
In any case, after the assassination of the Habsburg Grand Duke Ferdinand and his wife in Sarajevo on June 28, 1914, the whole house of cards of European stability collapsed and the countries who had previously gamed out war decided to carry the game into actuality. Based on the already prepared lists and the flood of denunciations, those suspected of being disloyal to the Habsburgs were rounded up— without making much of an attempt to distinguish cultural Russophiles from Moscophiles. Martial law was declared in the frontier zones and city police, the gendarmerie in the countryside and military police began to arrest people by the hundreds and thousands. Some were bundled directly off to Thalerhof, from the very northeast of Austria to the far southwest, diagonally across the whole of the Empire, sometimes in cattle cars not cleaned of the animal feces from previous use, for an up to two week trip without food, water or sanitary facilities. Others passed



*Off to Thalerhof*

through military containment camps or prisons or fortresses, almost all ending up in Thalerhof.

In the process of sweeping up of “undesirables” many received summary “justice” by being hanged or shot on the spot, and others were beaten with clubs, bayoneted and “shot while trying to escape.” There was the terrible Przemysł Massacre where on August 15, 1914, 46 suspected Russophiles, being marched under escort by six soldiers from Przemysł-Bakonczyce Railway station down Dworski street toward the city garrison prison, were met at the corner of Semiradzki street by a band of Hungarian *Honved* (National Guard) soldiers. The *Honved* pulled out their sabers and pistols and proceeded to kill 44 people on the spot; two survived. No one was ever prosecuted for this mass killing. One commentator also mentions that “during the two weeks [spent in Przemysł's garrison prison] every day several people were taken out and shot...as spies”. The initial lists of those to be arrested did not spare young children or the elderly (prisoners from eight months old to eighty years old



*Gallows built by the Austrians for hanging Carpatho-Rusyns*

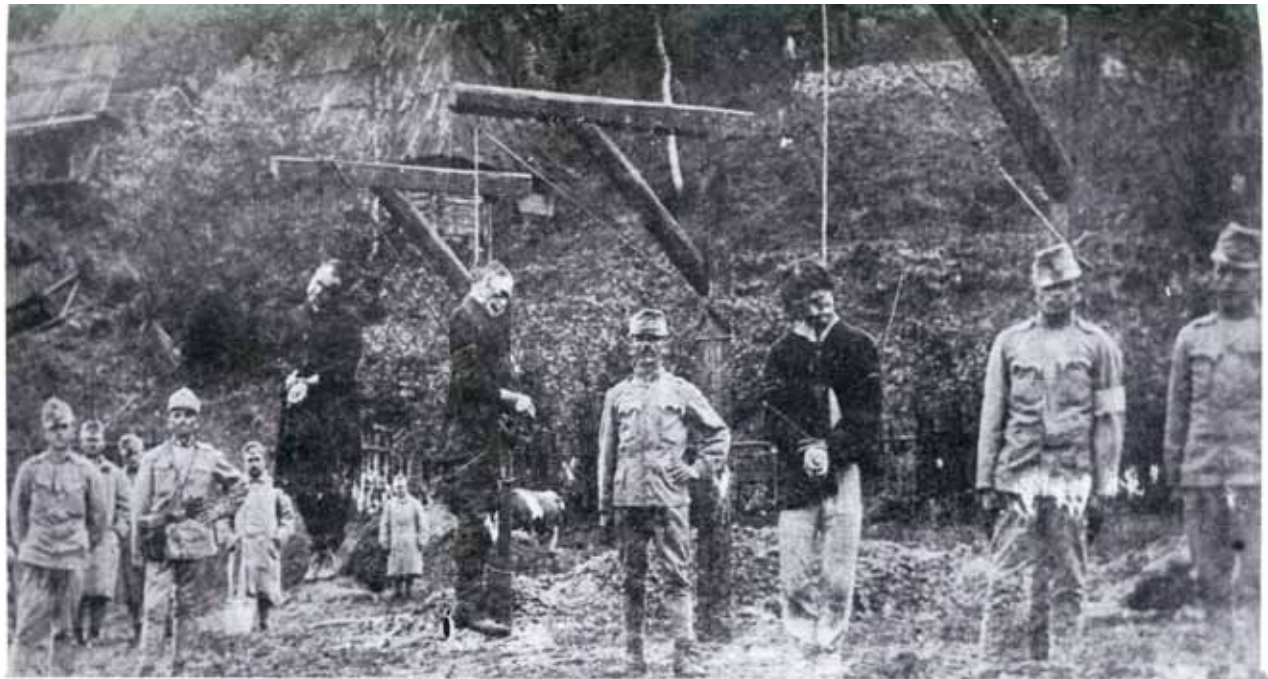


Экзекуція во Львові.

*Execution in Lviv (above & below)*



Наша дорогая Галичина. Смотри брате — и помни.  
*Our dear Galicia. Look, brothers— and remember*



**Романъ Березовскій.**

*Roman Berezovsky*

**Левъ Кобылянскій.**

*Lev Kobilyansky*

**Пантелеймонъ Жабякъ.**

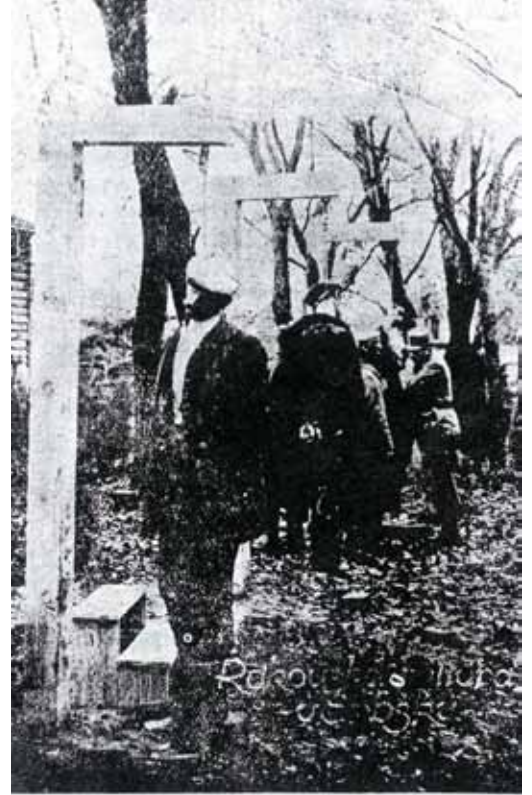
*Panteleimon Zabyak*



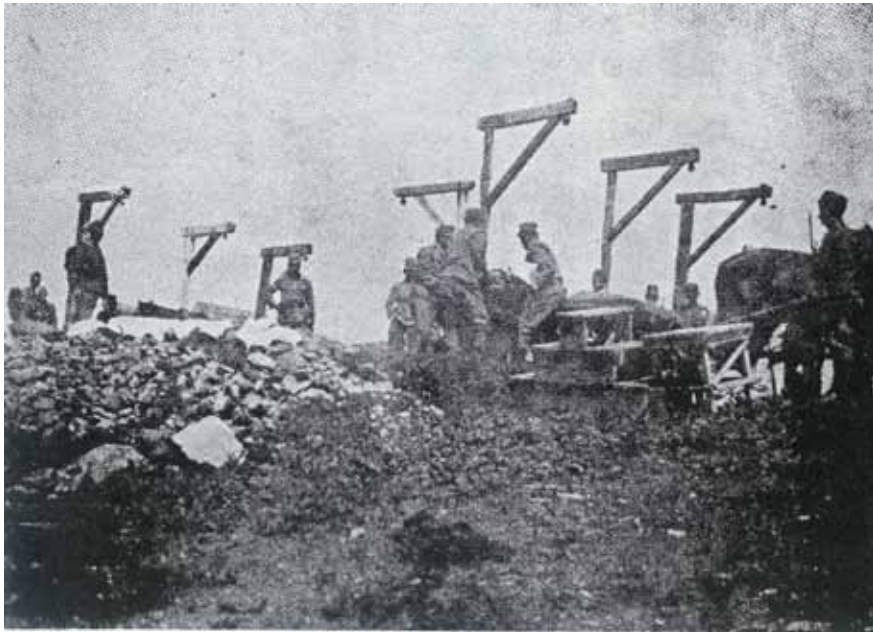


Одна изъ экзекуцій

*Group Executions (above & right)*



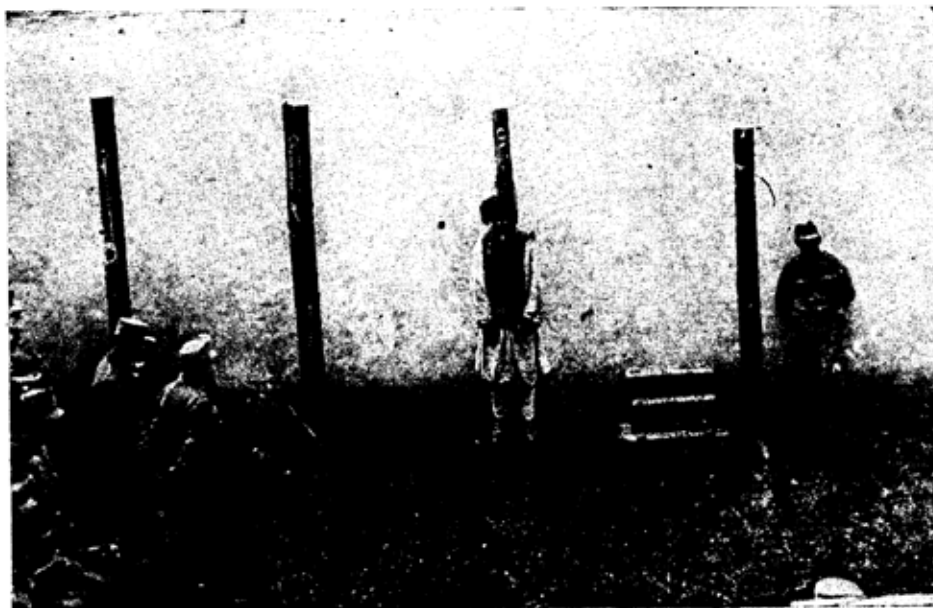
Одна изъ экзекуцій.



**В ПАМЯТЬ  
ВОЕННЫХ МУЧЕНИКОВ**

Кобы вітры не віяли,  
То бы тут не были,  
Коб не люты вороженькы,  
Мы бы ся любили.  
Кажут люде, што суд буде,  
А суда не буде,  
Бо без суда нас связали,  
Поламали груди.

*In memory of the war martyrs*



A Carpatho-Russian "Hutzul" hanged on a post by the Austrians.

## 2. Новосандецкая расправа.

L. 595/mob.

# OBWIESZCZENIE.

Wyrokiem doraźnym Expozytury c. i k. Sądu wojennego w Nowym Sączu z dnia 28. września br. K. 1/14. zostali: Piotr Sandowicz, w Żegiestowie urodzony, 56 lat liczący, greckokatolickiego obrządku, żonaty, proboszcz w Brunarach, i Antoni Sandowicz, w Roztoce wielkiej urodzony, 27 lat liczący, greckokatolickiego obrządku, stanu wolnego, słuchacz Akademii, zamieszkały w Brunarach, za zbrodnię zdrady stanu po myśli §. 334:c. kodeksu karnego wojskowego (par. 58:c. kodeks karny cywilny) na śmierć przez rozstrzelanie zasądzeni.

**Wyrok został w dniu 28. września 1914. w Nowym Sączu wykonany, co podaje się do publicznej wiadomości.**

*Nowy Sącz dnia 3. października 1914.*

Z C. K. STAROSTWA.

*Announcement of execution of 56 year old  
Father Piotr Sandovisch and his 27 year old son*





О. М. Т. Сандовичъ.

*Father Maksim Sandovych*

are noted in the records).

While mass arrests took place in the Western Galician Lemko Region, Eastern Galicia, and Bukovina, in Hungary only isolated individuals were picked up and incarcerated. This was due to the efficiency of Hungarian repression of anti-Magyar expression quickly, as soon as it happened— it never got going. In the Austrian area arrests, summary deaths without courts, death sentences or orders of internment under martial law by military field courts martial increased in volume as Austria-Hungary suffered more and more losses on the Galician battle fields. Especially severe repression occurred in the Lemko region as Russian arms advanced along the northern slopes of the Carpathians— as far as Cracow. After the “Great Retreat” of the Russian army in spring and summer of 1915, caused by the defeat at the great and decisive battle of Gorlice-Tarnow (May 1915), people

accused of helping the Russians (after all popular Russian and Lemko-Rusyn were mutually understandable and religious services were similar) were arrested and condemned, sometimes without trial, or incarcerated in local prisons to be soon shipped off to the farthest side of the Empire without formalities. Later agents-provocateurs, always identified as “Ukrainians” in the memoirs and stories, were sent into the villages formerly under Russian control to sniff out supporters of the Tsar. We should note that many locals chose to evacuate with the retreating Russian Imperial army, many of whom returned only after 1918, if at all.

Note that Russian prisoners of war, with rare exceptions, were not sent to political prisons or political internment camps, though oddly enough a few Russian POWs did end up in Thalerhof later in the war as the camp became a dumping grounds for all sorts of undesirables.

What was the Thalerhof Internment Camp like? A visit to “*Graz am Mur*” (Graz on the Mur River,) the capital city of Austria’s Steiermark Province, in August of any given year, assuming it is not a rainy year, will indicate the intensity of the sun and the heat of the air in relation to the weather of the Galician plain and the Carpathian mountains, which situation the new internees met on arrival in the “*Abtissendorf bei Graz*” railway station. Graz was a garrison city of the Austrian Empire and just south of the city proper, and west of Abtissendorf, was a military exercise area— essentially a large flat grassy area/hay field. As airplanes were added to the Austro-Hungarian arsenal that flat area was noticed and in 1913 a “*Militarflugfelds Thalerhof*” (Military airfield) was put together with hangars, a few planes and a grassy runway. Today the area is the civilian Flughafen Graz-Thalerhof airport with all the modern airport features. The very southern end of the 1913 military airport was not in use and for two reasons was selected for the internment of politically undesirable people. Reason one was it was very far from Galicia and nobody in the area spoke any Slavic language— internees couldn’t easily disappear into the countryside without being immediately noticed if by chance they were able to escape. (There are no known stories of escape from the camp.) Secondly, the flat grassy fields allowed for people to be dumped out directly on the ground where they could be easily monitored and controlled by the camp watch.

Initially internees were left in the open field, surrounded by barbed wire and under surveillance of the camp guard. Some say a few people found shelter in the hangars (to be driven out later?) while the rest had to stay outside for several months (September, October and into November.) Eventually earth floored shelters were constructed, some writers mention “*Erd Hutte*” (Earth Huts)—dug-out dirt floors with tarpaulins or tents over the top. Others mention leaky-roofed huts made of wood also with dirt floors. Both had used straw or hay brought in, apparently, from nearby animal barns, which all writers mention as being dirty and insect-filled—living hay. This hay was used to sleep on and with fall rains it became moldy and damp. There were no sanitary facilities other than ditches. Thus the dampness, cold, lack of sanitary devices, poor food and contaminated water soon lead to outbreaks of all the human diseases that would spring up in such conditions and most especially typhus, such that by December, 1914 several people were dying a day. By the end of March 1915 upwards of 1500 people died and were buried on the west side of the camp, “Under the Pines.” Finally in spring 1915 sanitary officers were brought in to clean up the place and primitive wooden barracks were built, altogether two hundred of them, and the camp was regularized. Note that there are no pictures of the camp in its original form, during the horrifying winter of 1914-1915— all illustrations are from May 1915 and thereafter.

Discipline in the camp was always draconian, all memoirists mention beatings with clubs and whips and frequent stabbings by the camp guards whose rifles carried long round, sharp bayonets. Food was notoriously poor like Nazi and Soviet camps, thin soup with some stuff thrown in with little food value. A camp hospital was later set up but you mainly went there to die, although a few nurses and one physician are praised by camp survivors. Theft of money sent to run the camp and pilfering of food from camp supplies was uncovered in 1916 by supervisory authorities in Graz and a few criminals were prosecuted.



*View of the camp*



Общій видъ бараковъ 3-го десятка.

*Another view of the camp*

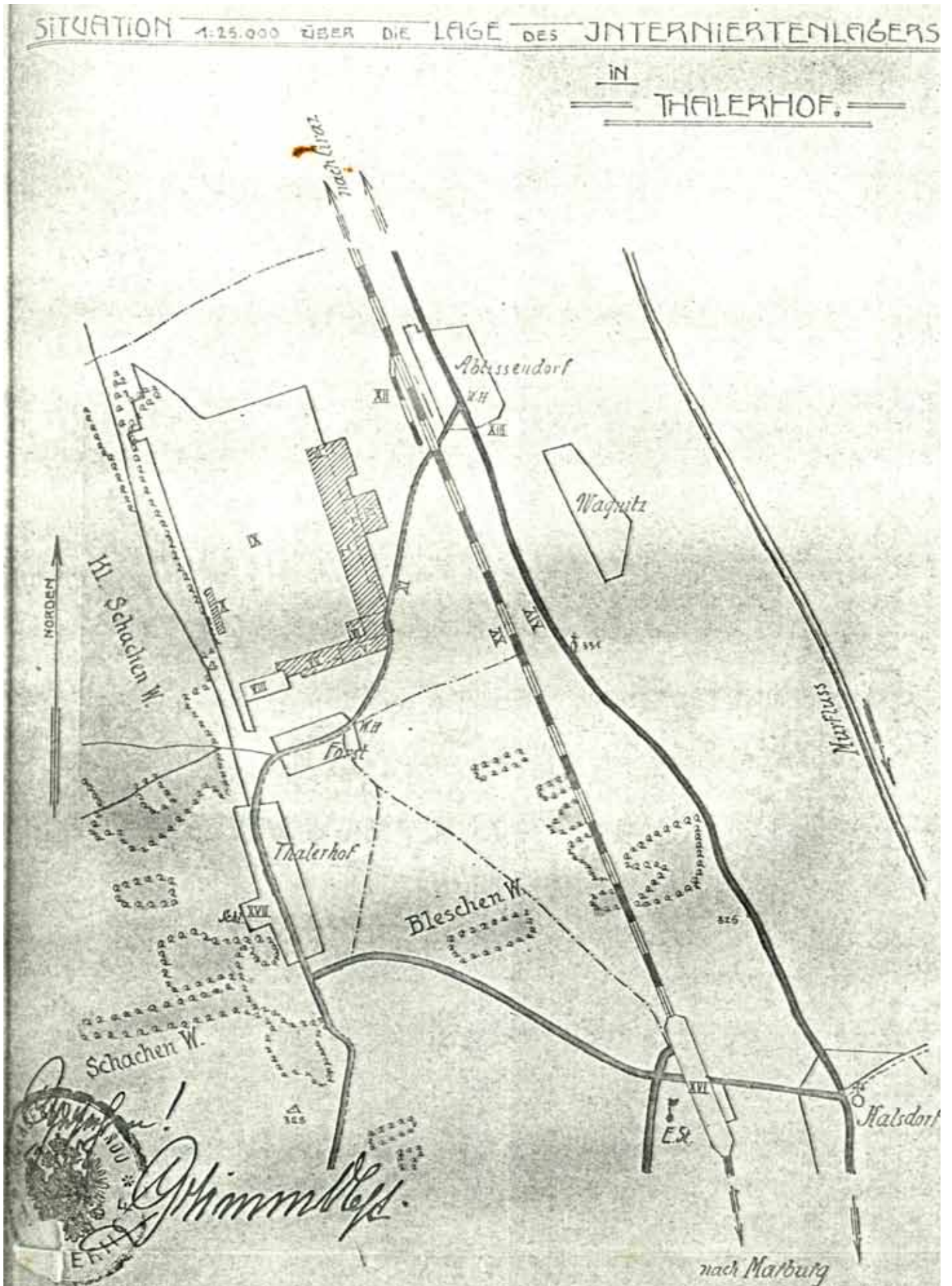


У ворузь лагерьа.

*Gate to the camp*

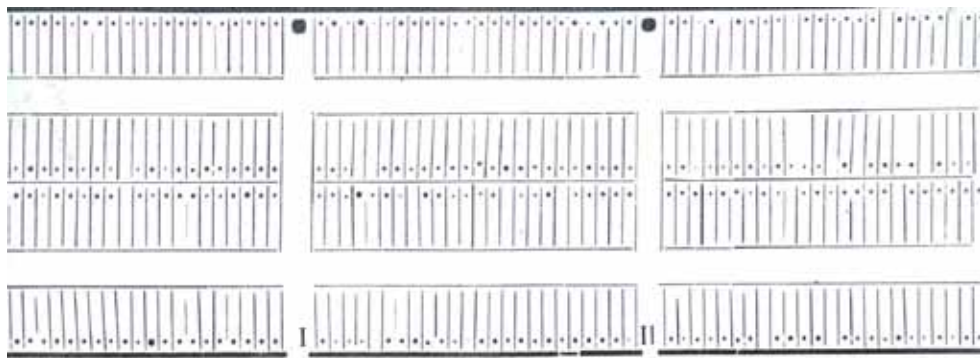
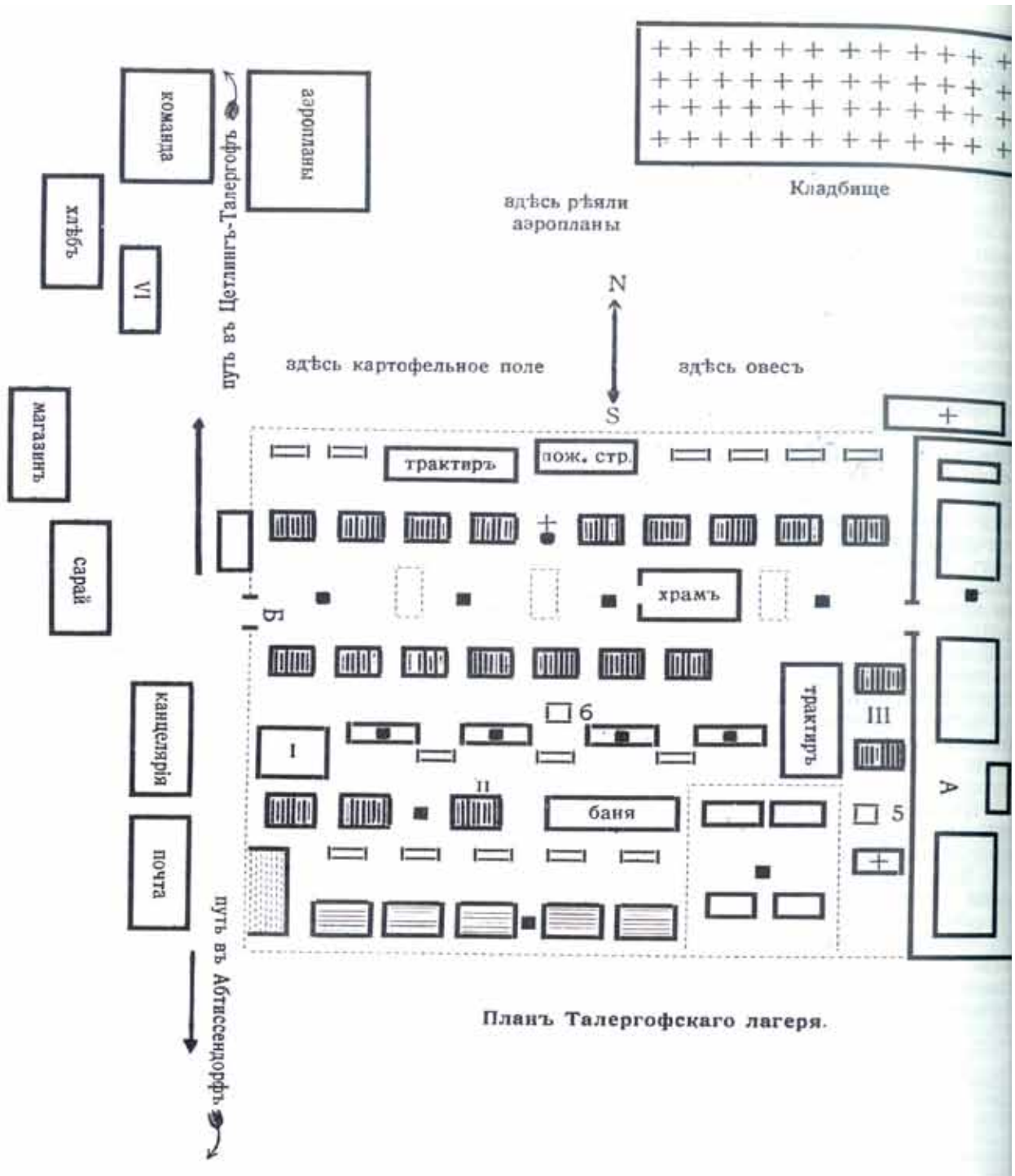


Overview





Plan of Thalerhof Camp

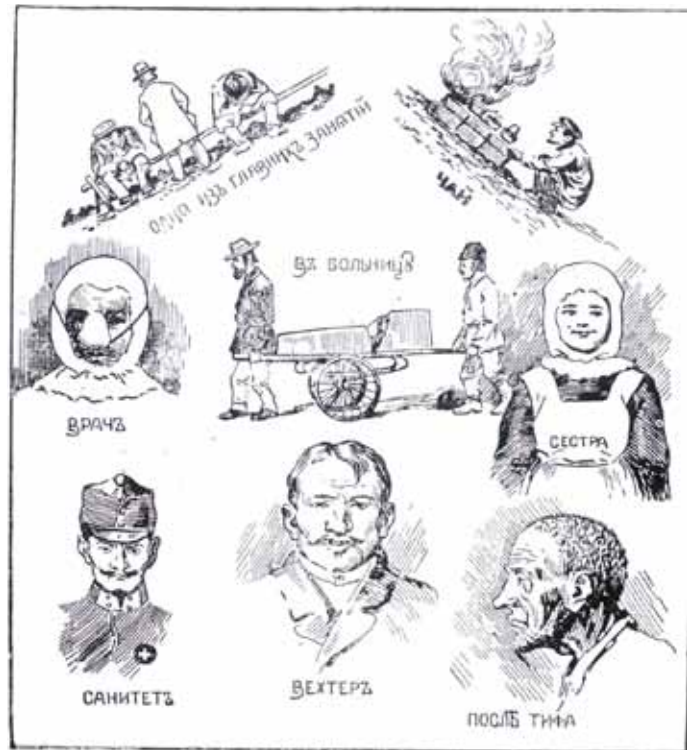


Plan of the barracks



Camp ID card

Thalerhof Camp (top & below)



II ТАЛЕРГОФСКІЕ ТИПЫ И СЦЕНЫ.

I. Thalerhof types  
II. Thalerhof types & scenes



I. ТАЛЕРГОФСКІЕ ТИПЫ.





*in the camp*



*get into the barracks quickly*



*guards of Thalerhof*



*time to eat >*



*you took too much*

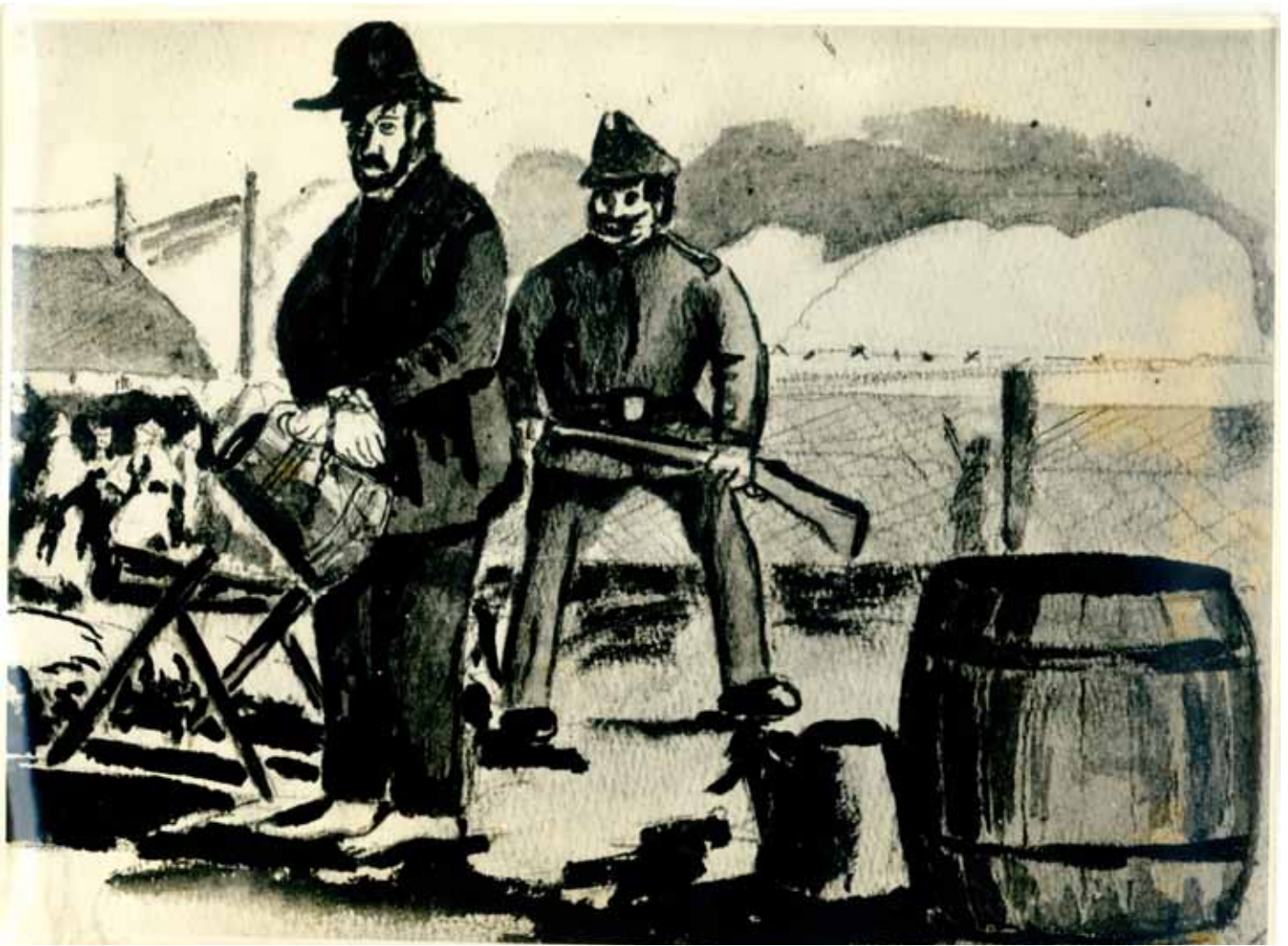


*the cook*



*(one of the guards)  
Guten Tag meine herren /good day gentlemen*



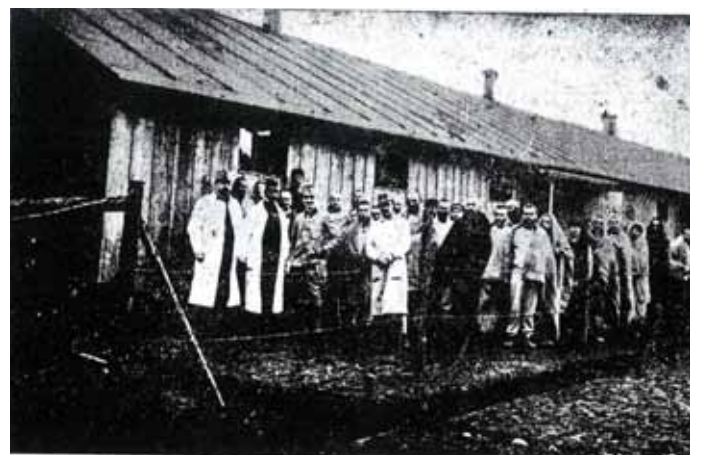


*getting water*



Дезинфекція баракоць.

*disinfection of the barracks*



Зимой передь баракоць.

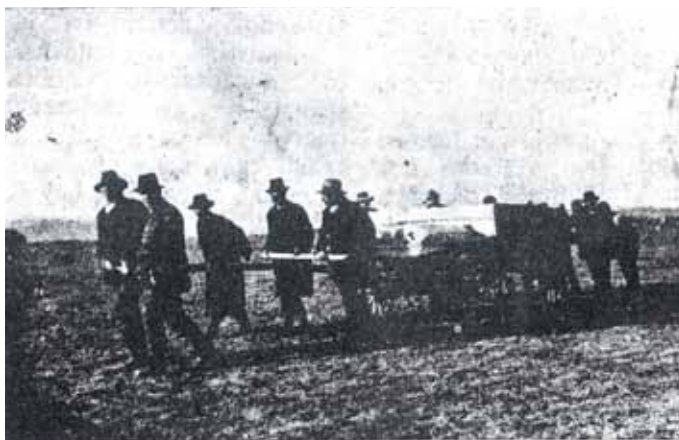
*winter in front of the barracks*



Вместо лошадей,  
*in place of horses*



Сожжение „живой“ соломы.  
*burning the “Living” hay*



Въ последний путь.  
*Last Ride*



*Thalerhof Cemetery Gate*



Послѣ похоронъ.  
*After Burial*





Did the internees just sit there? No; there was a constant churning of the inhabitants, with some being buried, some sent off to other camps for various reasons, some released— especially if one declared oneself as a Ukrainian— and many, if of draft age, were taken into military support work battalions or the Austro-Hungarian army itself. Besides Galician and Bukovinian “Russophiles,” others passed thru the camp, too— Romanians, Jews, prostitutes, thieves, drunks, crooks of all types, deserters, and a few war prisoners— but the vast majority were political suspects. If even barely physically able, internees were used in the camp for physical labor and were sent off to work locally in farming, road building, gravel digging and transport (with payment to whom?)

One history of the Lemko Region describes that “Maybe 30,000 people passed through the Thalerhof camp, about 2,000 stayed “Under the Pines”. Lemkos, although only 2% of the population of Galicia, made up 30% of the camp’s inhabitants, about 5,000 people. In the post WW I, interwar period, it was claimed by Lemko activists, that almost the whole of the Lemko intelligentsia was either killed or had its

health destroyed. Thus many Lemkos, especially survivors of Thalerhof, blamed Galician Ukrainians for delivering the Rusyn/Russophile Lemkos to Austrian authorities.” [<http://www.carpatho-rusyn.org/rich/talerhof.htm>]

Postwar Thalerhof Tragedy commemorations were held four times in Lviv in the 1920s and 30s (see the Peter Hardy volume mentioned above) and a monument was constructed in the Lykachevsky memorial cemetery in Lviv. Commemorations were revived in that city in the 1970s but are not current today.

In North America, in the 1960s, money was collected to build a Thalerhof Memorial Chapel at the American Lemko Park in Monroe, New York. Since Lemko Park was a business, when the park went bankrupt in the 1990s, the chapel was lost too. This occurrence will be the subject of a later report in *Karpatska Rus'*. Much of the chapel’s interior accoutrements, along with two stained glass windows, were saved and now are stored at the Lemko Association headquarters in Higganum, Connecticut, USA.

Commemorations of the Thalerhof incident are now being held by the Lemko Association.



## Лемковщина

*Lemkovyna*



Peasants of Galicia, who fled from their homes because of the Russian invasion, are shown returning under an Austrian military escort





*Przemysl Massacre monument*



*Lviv Thalerhof Monument*



*Thalerhof memorial service in Lviv*



г. ЛЬВОВ — 1934 г.  
 Грандиозный Талергофский Съезд (15 тысяч участников) по случаю  
*The great Thalerhof meeting in Lviv 1934 (15,000 participants)*

## PART IV

## What information can be found in Vienna and Graz?

Vienna, the capital city of today's Austrian Republic and also of the former Habsburg Central European Empire, is not only filled with architectural monuments and museums but also archives. Of particular interest to us is the:

1. *Osterreiches Staatsarchiv* (the Austrian State Archive)/*Kriegsarchiv* (War Archive). This is the place where the records of actual military operations are kept, while the conduct of internal security during wartime, and thus refugee, war prisoner and internment camps was under the supervision of the *Kriegsüberwachungsamt* (KUA) or War Supervision Office. Except for a few pictures and sketches, the KUA in Vienna has little concrete material about Thalerhof.

2. *Haus-Hof* and *Staatsarchiv* (House [of Habsburg] Palace and State Archive) is a huge collection of Habsburg data too vast to be practically researched.

With the exception of the KUA, to go through the whole of the hundreds of years of Austrian state/Habsburg House papers in Vienna to find information on Thalerhof would be a task of months and might not yield any valuable material. However, as luck would have it, there is a treasure trove of material in Graz.

Graz an dem Mur / Graz on the Mur River, as aforementioned, is the capital city of Steiermark Province in the southern part of today's Austria. It also was an important garrison city, and thus valuable military records can be found there. A visit to Graz may have two purposes, a visit to the site of the Thalerhof camp and to the provincial archives. If one wants to see the site of the camp it is fairly easy. Take tram line #5 south to the *Puntigam Brauerei* (Puntigam Beer Distillery) and then walk south about two kilometers along Triester Strasse to Feldkirchen bei Graz. One should be able to see the Feldkirchen parish church about 100 meters to the east of the road. In the church courtyard there is a circular mausoleum about eight paces in diameter, built of white masonry, approximately five meters high, including a pitched roof, topped by a small three-barred cross.

Inside there is an inscription on the round wall:

*Fern der Heimat, gestorben im Lager Thalerhof, ruhen heir 1767 männer, frauen and kinder aus Ostgalizien und der Bukowina als opfer des Weltkrieges. Mogen Ihre seelen in Ewigen heimat frieden finden.*  
 "Far from their homeland, dying in Camp Thalerhof, here repose 1767 men, women, and children from East Galicia and Bukovina as victims of the World War. May their souls find eternal rest."



Grabstätte in Feldkirchen  
für die im Flüchtlingslager Thalerhof Gestorbenen.  
*The Mausoleum in Feldkirchen*



In the mid-1930s during the enlargement of the airport and the extension and concreting of the runways, the Thalerhof camp's graveyard was dug up and the remains transferred to the Feldkirchen mausoleum.

Next one can continue south by foot down to the road, following the parallel railroad tracks to the Abtissendorf station, all the while keeping the airport on the right. Abtissendorf was the off-loading place for all the internees. From there they were marched under guard to the camp itself. Today from there a 20 minute walk around the southern end of the airport, using Thalerhofer Strasse, will bring one through the last houses of the village of Thalerhof and around to the *Schwarzl Freizeitzentrum* (Schwarzl Recreation Area) where one can view the landscape and some woods including pine trees. There is no monument to be found, and if one didn't know of the history of the Thalerhof camp one wouldn't know it had ever existed here. Returning to the Abtissendorf railway station one can take a local train back to Hauptbahnhof Graz, Graz's main railway station.

In the city of Graz there are two places to visit. The first is the Zeughaus (Arsenal) Museum, Herrengasse 16, where, depending on what's on display at a given time, there might be some information about Graz as a garrison city, WW I, and the airport and just possibly about the *Internierten Lager Thalerhof*, the Thalerhof Internment Camp. The real gold mine of information is in the *Steirermarkisches Landesarchiv*, the Steyrmarch Provincial Archive, Bergergasse 2a, postal code A-8010 Graz. This archive contains 38 dusty fascicles (tied bundles of documents) on wooden shelves in the old Aula building of the university.

Since Graz was a garrison city and Thalerhof was nearby at the south end of the military airfield, the Thalerhof Camp came under jurisdiction of Graz's military and civil authorities. These authorities, with the agreement of the *Kriegsüberwachungsamt*, established the TUK or "*Thalerhof Untersuchungs Kommission*" (Thalerhof Investigation-Supervision Commission) attached to the *Staathalterei* (Governor's Office). The Commission, which met in Graz, had the following make up: several military officers, a representative of the Ministry of Justice and two police officers who knew the political situation in Galicia. Interestingly enough, a *Ukrainisch Vertrauensmann* (a Trusted/Loyal Ukrainian, also called *Vertrauensmann der Ukrainische Partei* or *Ukrainschen-Austrophilen Partei*, a Trusted person of the Ukrainian Party or

the Ukrainian-Austrophile Party) was attached to the commission. As documents show, the Ukrainian Trusted/Loyal Man was able to intervene in Commission sittings and decisions in favor of internees who declared themselves as a "Ukrainian." The TUK's job was to supervise the camp and make individual decisions on the fate of each of its inhabitants, according to four categories:

The interned person might:

- a.) Be free to move about, with the exception of the battle zones.
- b.) Be designated as a normal refugee but kept under some kind of watch.
- c.) Be designated as a dangerous agitator and thus kept interned
- d.) Be designated as person who had carried out concrete anti-state activity and thus should be closely interned or imprisoned.

De facto there was a fifth category: government military draft commissions visited Thalerhof and drafted young men into service (see Ioann Polianskii's *Lemkovyna: A History*.)

In the records there is also mention of other, but much smaller, camps: *Interniertenlager Katzenau*, *Waldhofer an den Thaya*, *Gotlersdorf*, *Poggstall* and *Konzentrationslager in Oberhollabrun*. Political prisons were also maintained in Vienna, Graz, Trieste, Pola and Theresienstadt (Terezin, illustrated below) in Bohemia.





**КЛАДБИЩЕ ВОЗЛЕ ТЕРЕЗИНСКОЙ КРЕПОСТИ.**  
Здесь покоятся жертвы австро-венгерского террора времен 1914-1917 гг. и жертвы гитлеровских злодеяний времен II-ой Мировой Войны.

**ПЕСНЬ ТЕРЕЗИНА**

1914-1917 гг.

Ой, цїсарю, цїсароньку,  
На що нас карбуєшь,  
За яку провину в тюрьмах  
Мучишь і мордуєшь.

Ой, скажи нам, цїсароньку,  
Чим ми провинились,  
За що в мурах і болоті  
Ми тут опинились?

*Theresienstadt*

*Cemetery at Terezin Fortress Political Prison*

Officially Thalerhof was opened on September 12, 1914, with the first transports arriving on September 13 and 15. (Were there internees on the Thalerhof fields before Sept 12? It is unclear!) The full title of the operation was *K.u.K. Internierten-Lager am Thalerhof bei Graz*, though that name was rarely used in full. The camp was closed through an amnesty issued by the new Emperor Karl in May, 1917; Franz Joseph had died in 1916.

What do the Thalerhof papers show us? The huge number of documents in the 38 tied fascicles in the Graz archive reveal many interesting pieces of information. The documents are mainly in German but also reports in Polish, Rusyn/Russian and Romanian show up, thus there must have been translators attached to the TUK. To make complete sense of this information is not possible in this short essay but let us list, in no real order, what is there [documents are numbered according to the TUK's particular system]:

- In Lviv fifteen farmers were hanged while others were beaten and stabbed.
- Many internees claim that they don't know why they were arrested, even those that were hanged.
- Males, females and children were stuffed into trains without separation.
- Internees initially lived outside and had no utensils, ate with their hands, no water: "You are Moscophiles and you want water from us?"
- Internees had head lice.
- People were beaten to death during hard labor.
- Report on the "*Russisches Befreiungskomitee*" (Russian Liberation Committee) in St. Petersburg, Russia [There were genuine Moscophiles who did want Russia to invade Austria and annex Galicia; a group of them fled to Russia just before the war started and set up that committee] which spoke of liberation from 600 years of foreign domination
- *Staatsfeiner gesinnung*— the internee had "enemy of the state" opinions
- Many Russophile farmers seek a farmer tsar (*bauenzar*) who has the Russian faith and who would give them more land and take less taxes.
- Russian schismatic propaganda must be forbidden.
- The camp guard detachment was under the *K.u.K. Landwehr* (national guard) in Graz.
- *Legitimation* (identification) papers had to be signed by the Graz governor's office.
- No underwear available, no clean clothes, no shoes, no bedding and no money.
- Internees were often of the intellectual class: teachers, clerks, lawyers, doctors etc.
- Records of "*sitzung*" (sittings) of the TUK where decisions were made to determine the status of an internee.
- Sittings also dealt with appeals and petitions, not only from internees but also from outsiders, with the *Vertrauensmann der Ukrainischen Partei* taking part.
- Mention of 14 brothers of the Greek Catholic Studite monastic order being interned.
- Political suspects were transferred by the Hungarian Internal Affairs department to Thalerhof.
- Interned because received a hundred rubles from St. Petersburg for church repair.
- Some people after being released were returned to Thalerhof for Russophile activities.
- 84 year old seminary director from Lviv interned.
- 14 year old boy, whose brother had died at the front, interned.
- Too little calories per day, got 1600 when 2000 was the minimum.
- 17 year old deaf, dumb and retarded boy ended up in camp.
- People who greeted Russian soldiers or Cossacks, interned.
- People interned for converting to Orthodoxy during the "Invasion" [the Russian occupation of almost all Galicia, September 1914-August 1915.]
- Deaths recorded from: typhus, tuberculosis, influenza, sepsis, pneumonia, heart attack, stroke, bronchitis, nephritis, cancer.
- Some volunteered to the *Landstrum Ersatzbaon* (provincial guard replacement units) to get out of camp
- Altogether 1,179 mustered into the Austro-Hungarian armed forces.

- Others assigned to the *arbeitsabteilung* (military support labor battalions) and got out.
- Soldiers assigned to the "*sudwestlichen Kreigsschauplatze*" (the southwest fighting areas, such as the Italian Front, to keep them away from the Northeast front where fighting was going on with the Russians.)
- A woman with five children interned.
- Prisons for political suspects were listed: Drosendorg, Gmund, Krakau, Jaroslaw, Przemyśl, Graz, Gratwein, Lintz, Leoben, Krensier, Rzeszow.
- *Verdachtigen personen/a* "suspect person" to be interned.
- Members of the *Kaczkowski Vereine* (Kachkovsky Society) to be interned.
- Had Russian books at home.
- Had visited Pochaev Monastery.
- Had spent time in America and was politically suspect.
- *Hart altruthenisch*— a strongly Old Rus' internee.
- Many anonymous letters of denunciation (a phenomenon whereby personal or political revenge could be taken— a settling of accounts with one's enemy, as it were.)
- Held secret meetings in his home.
- Had maps in his house.
- Relative of a person who had fled to Russia.
- Celebrated St. Nicholas day, the name's day of the Tsar.
- Interned on military grounds.
- Had children working in Russia.
- Many times names were mixed up, such as: Ariczuk, Arijczuk, Aryczuk, Arejczuk, Areyczuk— all pronounced in the same way but spelled differently; or Wladyslaw, Wladimir, Vladimir, Wolodymir, Volodymir, all the same person but different spellings according to Polish, German usages.
- Russian sympathizer.
- Agitator.
- Some people were arrested by Prussian forces and sent to Thalerhof.
- Visited Russia.
- Wanted literary/"high" Russian to be an acceptable language.
- Suspected Russophile societies were:
  - Narodny Dim*/National Home
  - Obshchestvo Russich Dam*/Society of Russian women
  - Ruskaya Narodnaya Organizatsia*/Russian National Organization
  - Kachkovsky Obshchestvo*/Kachkovsky Society
  - Soyuz Russich Druzyn*/Union of Russian Compatriots
  - Russkoe Kasino*/Russian Casino
  - Skolnaya Pomoshch*/School Help
  - Drug*/Friend [Society]

The records indicate a general paranoia affecting the whole Austro-Hungarian system.

All in all the Thalerhof Investigation Commission files are a mass of undigested but very interesting papers that shed a considerable amount of light on what went on during the war in Austria and specially in the Thalerhof camp.

## PART V

**Conclusion**

In 1848 all the national groups of Austria took part in the revolution [the Spring Time of Nations] except the Tyroleans and the Russians of Galicia [they were *Kaiser treu*, loyal to the Emperor]. The revolution failed. The Tyroleans and the Russians received gifts from Emperor Franz Joseph. The Russians in Lviv got a ruined building from the university and a former Jesuit church out of which came the *Narodny Dim* (National Home) and a church of their own, but rightwing conservatives didn't like this and claimed that we were attracted to Russia. We were drawn to Russia not in a political way but in a cultural way. Just as the Germans looked to Shiller, Goethe, Herder, Kleist and other German writers we Russians counted as ours Pushkin, Gogol, Turgenev, Tolstoy, Lermontov, Dostoyevsky, Chekhov, et al.

The Galician ruling circles cooked up a new "Ukrainian" party in order to pit Rus' against Rus' and these "Ukrainians" began to constantly denounce us both in the provincial legislature and in the Vienna parliament. We, however, worked honestly and legally, establishing many organizations and reading rooms. To our defense rose Ioann Naumovich, Adolf Dobriansky, Olga Hrabar, Osip Markov, Semen Bendasiuk, Ignatii Hudyma, Maksim Sandovich and many others and also many peasants.

Thus in 1914, when the terrible war started, Moscophiles were arrested and taken away. In Thalerhof they [eventually] constructed 42 barracks for 200 people each [8,400 people] with only one iron stove per building. From hunger and typhus 1500 died in the first winter.

It is necessary to remember Ukrainians wrote denunciations against us and how they injured the Russian people.

Emperor Karl I on the 7th of May 1917 issued an amnesty to release all to their homes. The new Polish government recognizes that we are a completely peaceful people but we are still bothered by Ukrainian intrigues.

*(A statement for the Galician-Russian position, written by the Greek Catholic priest, Henrikh A. Polianskii, Sambor, August 17, 1934)*

What is the meaning and result of the whole Thalerhof Tragedy? Of course the reader knows that the First World War caused the collapse of the monarchies: Imperial Russia, Imperial German and Imperial Austria-Hungary disappeared from the world scene but this only led to communism, Nazism, WW II and the post-war "Cold War". Between the wars Galicia fell into Polish hands and Sub-Carpathian Rus' became a part of Czechoslovakia. After WW II the Soviet Union got most of Galicia, though not the Lemko Region which remained in Poland, and annexed Subcarpathia to Soviet Ukraine. The convulsion that began in 1914 only ended in December 1991 with the Soviet dissolution. But turning to Thalerhof, in addition to the official death count of 1,800 there surely were more perhaps up to 3,000, lost at the camp itself and another 7,000 in the whole of the campaign of killings, deportations, ethnic cleansings— a small number to be sure as measured against the millions killed by the Nazis. However the process had been tested in WW I and it proved successful, removing an annoying group from the scene. The summary deaths, with shootings and hangings, the bad to horrible conditions of transport, the bad living conditions, hunger and disease and hard labor to get rid of an unwanted population just needed tweaking in order to get a greater result.

The most interesting thing, for this writer, was to see who the "*Thalerhoftsi*", those who spent time in Thalerhof and survived, blamed for their situation. While obviously the Austrian and Hungarian authorities carried out the Thalerhof Tragedy, it was not they who were blamed, nor the Roman Rite church, but rather their brothers and sisters of the same "race," one's own kin who, joining the Ukrainian cause, were willing to sell out the "Russophiles" to the German-speakers and their supporters.

Two last things should be mentioned. The twentieth century was one of internment camps during war time. In the USA, for example, some 100,000 Japanese were interned, while in Canada Ukrainians were interned in WW I, but the internees were not treated so brutally as in Austria-Hungary and large numbers did not die due to maltreatment. Also, even a hundred years after the Thalerhof Tragedy, the incident is still contentious and there are those who would like to make it out to be other than what is reported above. We would wish to hear, in writing, from those who see Thalerhof differently, for publication in future issues of *Karpatska Rus'*.

We would only ask that signed responses/polemics be on a cultural level without “ad hominem” attacks on another person himself/herself not on their reasoning/refutations, and without vulgar words. Unfortunately the papers in the Thalerhof section of the Lemko Association archives cannot be shipped off-site lest they be lost. Those wishing to consult our archival material may come to Higganum.

Finally **VECHNAYA IM PAMYAT / ETERNAL MEMORY** to all those who suffered in the Thalerhof Tragedy!

## Postscript

The above article was written in January and February 2014. In March a new publication came into our hands with relevant information about the Thalerhof Tragedy. Prof. Andrzej Olejko of Rzeszow University, Poland has written, *Karpacka Wojna Trzech Cesarzy: z dzialan wojennych I wojny swiatowej na ladzie i w powietrzu* (The Carpathian War of Three Emperors: WW I military operations on land and in the air) (Rzeszow, “Carpathia” publishing house, n.d. [2013-2014?], 563 pages including illustrations and a comprehensive index of place names where the war was fought.) This book has three unique characteristics:

1. An extremely detailed description of military operations in and around the Carpathian Mountains in 1914-1915.
2. At initial use, in most cases, place names are given in German (if a German name existed), Polish, Ukrainian, Slovak and sometimes Hungarian, something useful for those who would like to know what happened to their native village if they have the name in one of those languages.
3. An extensive discussion of aerial warfare over the Carpathians.

Of interest to us, however, is the final chapter, number 7, “*Historyczne i literackie post scriptum*” (An historical and literary post script) where the author discusses what happened to the civilian population in the war zone. He particularly notes the rapes, murders and pillaging committed by Imperial Russian troops, especially the Circassians and Don Cossacks and the crimes of the Hungarians who despised the Slavic population. He emphasizes that the elimination of suspect people in the Carpathian area took place in two phases, the first at the outbreak of the war and the second after the Imperial Russian Army was driven out in the spring of 1915. Russia had occupied all of Galicia, except Cracow, and the northern part of upper Hungary, today’s northern Slovakia. When the Austro-Hungarians returned they sought out all who had “cooperated” with Russian occupiers in any way. Denunciations were especially encouraged and “agents provocateurs” roamed the land to root out disloyal people. The author states that Archduke Fredrick Habsburg, the overall commander of Austro-Hungarian forces, issued an instruction, in April 1915, which differentiated Rusyns from Ukrainians: “Rusyns, those are Moscophiles/enemies; Ukrainians, however, want to be under the scepter of the Habsburgs, thus they are our friends.” (p. 504). [See Timothy Snyder, *The Red Prince: the secret lives of a Habsburg Archduke* (Basic Books, New York, 2008) for a discussion of the Habsburg-Ukrainian project.] He further gives the amazing figure, on the same page, that: “under the accusation of treason and other acts seventy thousand [70,000!] people were hanged”. He then lists, p. 504-505, the following internment/concentration camps with their populations [the first two may have been in large part, refugee camps]: Chocnia- 18,000; Nikolsburg- 6,000; Deutsch Brot- 777; Gmund- 702; Gleissdorf -300; Msen-109; Gallendorf- 100. The worst camps were Gussberg and Thalerhof. “The second camp [Thalerhof]... held 8,000 people and up to 20,000 passed through it... 2,000 dying of hunger, cold, torture and epidemics.” Also “there is no data about how many died in Terezin”.

In general the author states that no one really knows how many died in the Carpathian Winter War of 1914-1915 [200,000?] and how many bodies are really buried in the 400+ military cemeteries that dot the Lemko Region and northern Slovakia.



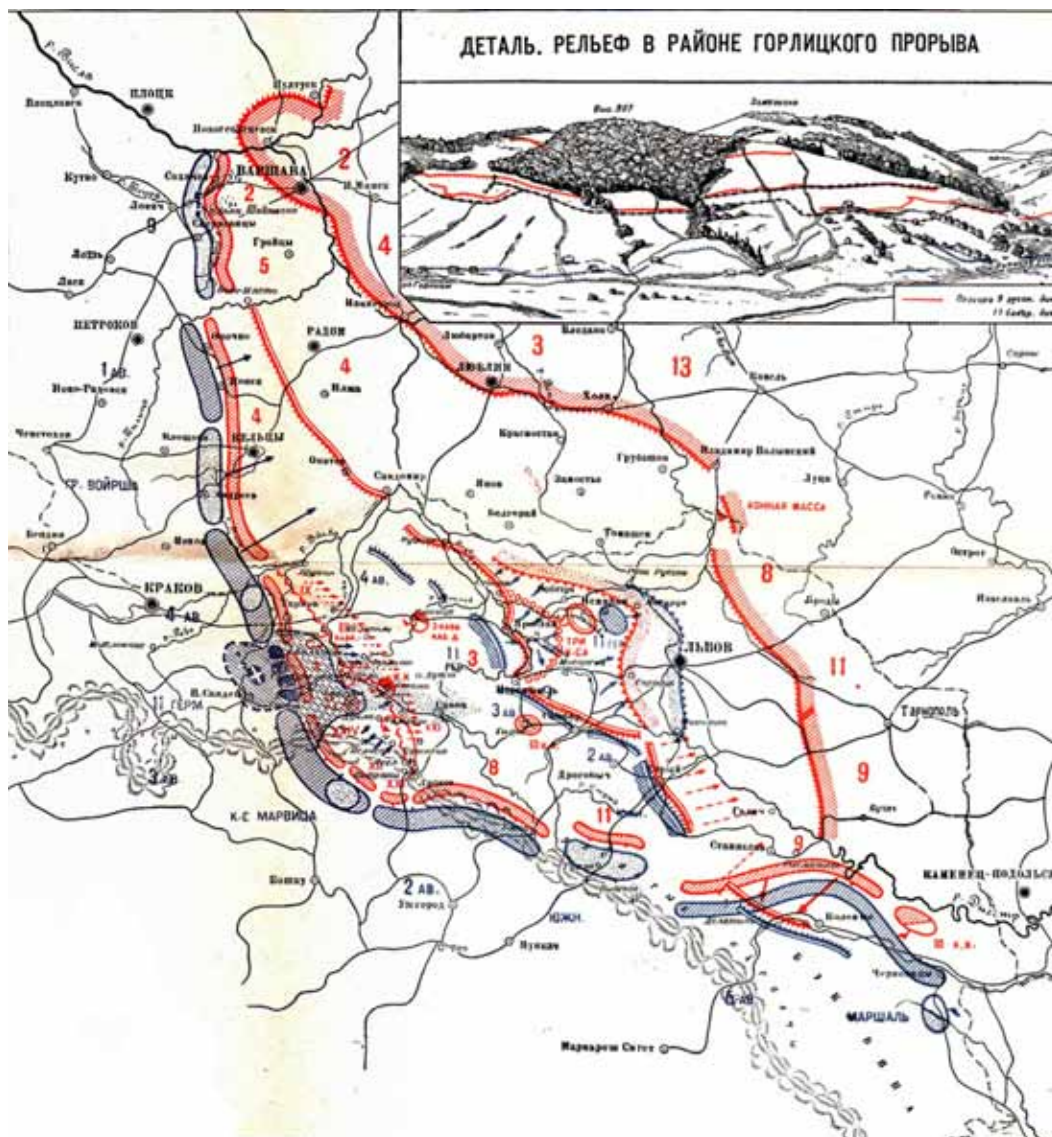
## Future Issues of *Karpatska Rus'*

The next several issues will catch us up with on-going Lemko Association activities.

Among other things we will be running, on readers' request, material from the past 85 years of the publication(s) *Lemko* and *Karpatska Rus'* (see inside of the front cover of any issue of our journal for an explanation of the *Lemko* and *Karpatska Rus'* titles).

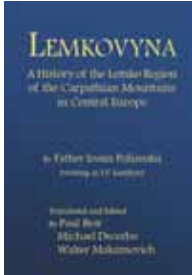
We remind readers that we are always looking for good material to publish, thus if you have something to say about your local Lemko/Rusyn community, please send it in. No need to worry about how it is said, we will fix it up for printing. Digital pictures are especially useful. Send to <editor@lemkoassociation.org>.

Of special interest will be the first issue of 2015, which will be a themed double issue, on the "Carpathian Winter War" of 1914-1915, exactly 100 years ago. In stupendous battles approximately 200,000 soldiers were killed on both sides, not to mention large numbers of uncounted civilians, our Carpathian ancestors and relatives, and vast amounts of property was destroyed. The map below shows imperial Russian plans to envelop and penetrate the Carpathian homeland in order to knock Hungary and then Austria out of the war.



# Lemko Publications Available

The following publications are available directly from Inter-Ed., Inc., 184 Old County Road, Higganum, CT 06441. Please make checks payable to Inter-Ed., Inc. Prices on this page reflect the Lemko Association member discount and include shipping and handling. You can also order online with your member discount, at <http://www.lemkoassociation.org/member-discount/>. Use the password: "Carpathians" (without the quotation marks.)



1. Polianskii, Ioann, *Lemkovyna: A History of the Lemko Region of the Carpathian Mountains of Central Europe* (Higganum: Carpathian Institute, 2012). Fr. Polianskii's important 1969 Lemko history, translated into English with extensive new explanatory notes by three LA members, and with additional new material including Fr. Polianskii's autobiography.

While supplies last, we will include a free copy of the 1969 Lemko language original with each order of this book placed directly with the Lemko Association (to addresses within the USA, only.) ..... Paperback \$20.00, hardcover \$30.00.

2. Lemkyn, I.F. [Ioann Polianskii], *Istoriia Lemkovyny* (A History of Lemkovyna; Yonkers, NY, 1969). The only extant Lemko language history of the Lemko Region. Free (within the US) when you order the new English translation, otherwise ..... \$25.00

3. Vyslotskii, D. F. (ed.), *Nasha Knyzhka* (Our Book; Yonkers, NY: Lemko Association, 1945). An explication of the Lemko Soyuz's case, in the Lemko Language, as of 1945. .... \$25.00

4. Best, Paul, and Jaroslaw Moklak (eds.), *The Lemko Region, 1939-1947: War, Occupation, and Deportation* (Cracow-New Haven: C-SSG/Carpathian Institute, 2002) ..... \$25.00

5. Best, Paul, and Stanislaw Stepien (eds.), *Does A Fourth Rus' Exist? Concerning Cultural Identity in the Carpathian Region* (Przemsyl-Higganum: South-Eastern Research Institute and Carpathian Institute, 2009)... \$25.00

6. Wronski, Pawel, "The Lower Beskids: On the Trail of Churches of the Eastern Rite [in the Lemko Region]," in *Podroze* (Travels), April 2002. A translation of a short but very interesting discussion of Lemko churches with a sketch of how they were built, and full color pictures. .... \$10.00



7. *Lemkovyna (Western Carpathian Rus')*, Scale 1:200,000, 2012. A full color, 24 by 36 inch map of Lemkovyna showing many no longer existing Lemko villages. Suitable for wall mounting or use as a reference. .... \$10.00

Note: If ordering multiple maps, add only \$5.00 for each additional map after the first shipped to the same address: two maps \$15.00, three maps \$20.00, etc.



8. Best, Paul, and Jaroslaw Moklak (eds.), *The Lemkos: Articles and Essays, Second Edition* (Carpathian Institute, 2013). A revised and expanded version of the earlier *The Lemkos of Poland*, this 463-page paperback contains 38 articles and academic papers on Lemkos and Lemkovyna. Subjects covered include archival materials, general history of Lemkovyna, a village history, sociological and political issues, architecture, literature, immigration, churches and extensive book reviews. .... \$20.00



9. 3 by 5 foot Carpatho-Rusyn flag. Produced by the Lemko Association at the request of several members. The flags are made of good quality polyester, suitable for either indoor or outdoor use, and have brass grommets for mounting to a flagpole with rope (not included). .... \$24.00

A complete catalog of publications available, as well as a short inventory of Lemko Association archives, is planned for a future issue of *Karpatska Rus'*. Also, a variety of Lemko books and audio recordings are available from Lemko Association member Walter Maksimovich. Contact Walter at [lemko@lemko.org](mailto:lemko@lemko.org) or (954) 920-1193 for pricing and availability.

## Membership

The Lemko Association and the Carpathian Institute operate in cooperation with Inter-Ed., Inc., which is recognized under Connecticut and U.S. Federal law as a non-political, nonprofit, tax exempt corporation. Inter-Ed., Inc. is a 501(c)(3) organization under the rules of the U.S. Internal Revenue Service and thus may receive tax deductible contributions.

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1. A voting member of the Lemko Association (annual dues: \$25), or:
2. A supporter of the Carpathian Institute (minimum support requested: \$25 per calendar year)

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## Mission Statement

The Lemko Association, founded 1929, and the Carpathian Institute, founded 1988, are independent, non-governmental educational and social organizations (NGOs) which work closely together to preserve and protect the 1500 year old history and culture, both material and intellectual, of Lemkos and Carpatho-Rusyns, and to advance their culture in the 21st century.

Both organizations are non-political and non-partisan, operating under Connecticut state law as non-profits. Additionally, the Carpathian Institute, as a project of Inter-Ed, Inc., not only has a state and federal tax exemption for its activities, but also is part of a 501(c)(3) educational and charitable organization as defined by US federal Internal Revenue Service (IRS) rules.

## Contributions

Under U.S. federal tax rules, contributions to 501(c)(3) organizations are tax deductible to the extent allowed by law. Monetary or material contributions to support the activities of the Lemko Association, must be made payable to Inter-Ed, Inc., in order to take advantage of favorable tax treatment, but may be assigned to the benefit of the Lemko Association, the Carpathian Institute, or both.

Besides monetary contributions, the organizations can accept books, documents, and papers for archiving, and works or art, costumes, implements, etc., for preservation. Contact any officer for assistance in making a contribution.

## Disclaimer

The Lemko Association, founded 1929 in Winnipeg, Canada, is not in any way associated with later Lemko organizations founded as business enterprises, such as the now defunct Lemko Resort/ Lemko Park/American Lemko Park, nor with the Tylawa Club. Although some of these organizations happened to be run by former Lemko Association officers, now deceased, little information about them has survived, and they never had any formal or legal ties to the Lemko Association itself. Thus the Association and its present officers are not responsible for any debts or obligations other than those of the Lemko Association, Inc.



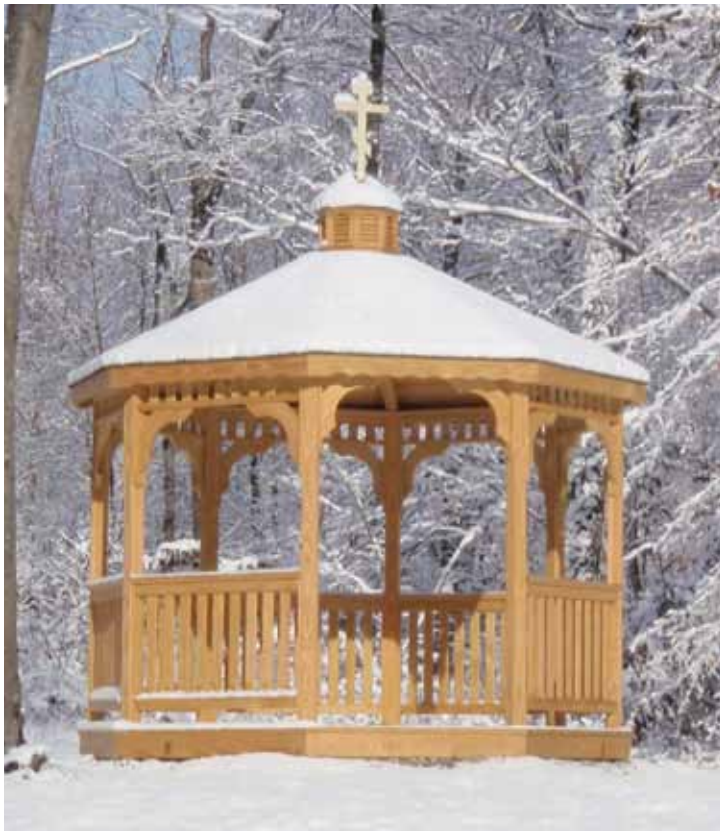
# Thalerhof Memorial Day and 49th Lemko Association Convention

**WHEN:** Saturday, August 9, 2014—rain or shine, there will be a big tent

**WHAT:** 9:00 am, Biennial meeting of the Lemko Association (all may attend but only members may vote.) Please note this new date for the meeting.

11:00 am, Moleben to the Mother of God and Panachida (prayers for the dead) in memory of the victims of the Thalerhof concentration camp, 1914-1917 and all those who lost their lives in connection with WW I and WW II.

1:00 pm, Vatra (picnic), bring a picnic basket, some food will be available for sale



*Thalerhof Memorial Chapel in Higganum, CT*

**WHERE: 184 Old County Road, Higganum, Connecticut 06441-4446.** Higganum is a section of the town of Haddam, just south of the city of Middletown, in the very center of the state of Connecticut. Old County Road is entered via Beaver Meadow Road, not directly from Route 81, even though there is an Old County sign on 81, Old County Road soon becomes impassible near there. You must use Beaver Meadow. Please use MapQuest, GPS tends to lead people off the mark.

**WHAT TO BRING:** Since the morning program commemorates the death of thousands of people, please wear appropriate clothes. The afternoon is picnic wear, remember it may be hot and or rainy and since the meeting place is a farm, solid shoes and covering clothes would be a good idea— who knows what the bugs might be up to at that time. Children should be supervised and not allowed to walk off into the woods.

R.S.V.P: Since we really need to know how many people are coming in order to have food on hand, please RSVP by August 1 via:

e-mail : [merida@snet.net](mailto:merida@snet.net)

telephone: 1-860-345-7997

fax: 1-860-345-3598

—Paul Best, for the Lemko Association