

Carpatho-Rus'

Karpatska Rus'



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Continued from Issue #4, 2/16/96

The History of Lemkovina Part 19

BANDITRY IN LEMKOVINA

Inasmuch as the Polish proprietors of large communities could not administer their wealth themselves, they found it expedient to have village sub-elders, official stewards, to manage them. These people, subject to their superiors, were ruthless in the discharge of their duties. They frequently resorted to the use of repression and terror in executing their duties. All kinds of grievance to the district government authorities or to the King were ignored since they were intercepted by the landlords and their cohorts and the petitioners were expeditiously given a minimum 20 or more blows with a cane and other obligations imposed on them.

The villagers, driven to extremes by these *landlord abuses*, began to organize themselves for self-protection and vengeance on their landlord oppressors. The worst oppressors of that time were; Samuel lablokowsky, Hrabenski, Shanyski, Pavlovski, Rykovski, Troetski, Shaya, Berko, Opalinski, Mnishekh, Iuri Krasitski, Sladnitski and scores of others. The avenging gangs of villagers, from their hideouts, made raids on the landlords estates. Their numbers increased daily and they even attacked affluent merchants while in transit from Hungary with their products across the peaks of the Carpathian mountains or moving south from Poland. (The gang was usually headed by the "harnas". [?]) These people's avengers came into history under the name of "zboiniki" [?] or "Beskidniki". In documents they are called "latrones Beskidenes in montio Carpathicis". [?]

In short they were the original defenders and avengers of the people but in time, however, they became "bandits". The majority of them were Magyars, Slovaks and Poles, but they did include a good number of Lemkos. The best known were Savka, Cherep, Bachinsky Lazarchuk, Prochpak, Kvochka, Fedor, Kapka, Shuhai, Makovitsky, Pushkar and Hrits Akhno. These bandits had special hideouts where they felt secure; caves near Matslova, Krinitsa and Verkhornlia, two pot-houses (taverns?) near Krizhovska Hula, the homes of Rostitsky in Tostoka and Danilchak in Losie, underground hideouts in the forests, etc. The bandits hijacked a plate of gold and 8 pairs of horses in Kraina Halia. The bandits were also hidden in the homes of certain wealthy Hungarian and Polish noblemen--the Druhets of Homonna, Trenchinis of Uzhorod. These noblemen used them for their own purposes and gain. When Sweden threatened Poland, the King drafted the bandits into military service. They acted as spies and provided arms, ammunition, horses, hiding places and some jews enriched themselves from their association with the bandits.

The most dangerous of the highwaymen were Savka and Chepets. In 1649, at lamhorod,

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Scholarly Convention Features Panel Discussion on Carpatho-Rusyns

These types of projects require large government subsidies and are as a result dependent on governmental policies toward minorities. Minority policies are in turn dependent on the political lobbying skills of Rusyns and on the changing economic and political fortunes of the countries in which Rusyns reside. This reality makes the success of this third Rusyn renaissance uncertain.

Magocsi nonetheless found hope in the existence as never before of a relatively high percentage of educated young Rusyns who believe that they are part of a distinct Rusyn nationality and who are likely to pass these convictions on to future generations. The existence of this group of people is the best possible guarantee that this Rusyn revival has a future.

The Status of the Rusyn Language

The second speaker was Professor Robert A. Rothstein, a specialist in Slavic linguistics at the University of Massachusetts, Amherst. Conscious of controversy surrounding the question of whether Rusyn is a language or a dialect, Professor Rothstein began by noting that linguists have no agreed upon mechanism for distinguishing between a language and a dialect. The true difference between the two, Rothstein suggested, might not be found in esoteric linguistic norms, but in politics. He quoted a noted French linguist who wrote that "A dialect is never anything more than a defeated language, and a language is a dialect that has succeeded politically."

Rothstein related that some critics have mocked the idea that linguists should place themselves in the position to "pass judgement" on whether a particular form of speech is a language or a dialect, and thus on whether or not a cultural group has the "right" to have its own literature.

"Well, what can a linguist say objectively in such a situation?" asked Rothstein. One possibility, he suggested, is that a linguist could measure the linguistic "distance" of one dialect from another, but even so, this measurement cannot be used to "decide" which dialect "should" have a literature and which "should" not.

"In the context of our present discussion, a linguist could say for example that Carpatho-Rusyn is more closely related to Ukrainian...than, say, to Russian or Slovak. At the same time, you can point to borrowings and influences from Slovak, Hungarian, even Rumanian [languages]. You can call Rusyn an 'east Slavic dialect'...." Beyond that, Rothstein cautioned, the linguist risks injecting his own biases with sometimes humorous results. Rothstein illustrated this by quoting a Slovak linguist, who described the Vojvodinian Rusyns [who migrated to Vojvodina from the Carpathians 250 years ago] as "...Slovaks who consider

themselves to be Russians or Ukrainians."

"Are we [linguists] then not in a position to evaluate whether 'X' is a dialect of 'Y' language?" Rothstein asked. Linguists agree that there are "crucial features in taking the step from dialect to language, from vernacular to standard, and that one could assess the extent to which an 'underdeveloped' language has moved down along the path to being a 'developed' language."

These aspects of language development Rothstein summarized as "selection of norm," "codification of form," "elaboration of function," and "acceptance by the community," "degree of difference," "stability of form," "breadth of function," and "speaker's language loyalty."

Rothstein then went on to apply these measures to the case of Carpatho-Rusyn. He began with the Congress of the Rusyn Language which in 1992 began the process of "selecting a norm" and "codifying its forms" [the first two aspects Rothstein listed earlier]. Rothstein indicated that it is still too early to know if Carpatho-Rusyn will achieve the aforementioned "stability of form," which will depend on "degree of acceptance [by the community]" and the growth of "speaker's language loyalty." Also as yet unknown is whether Rusyn will achieve a "breadth of function" - usage by more speakers in an increasingly broad range of situations. This would mean that Rusyn would have to be employed not just in the home, but in schools, the media and scholarly publications. Rothstein saw evidence for such expanded function in the existence of the Alexander Duchnovyč Theater in Prešov, which performs in Rusyn and for audiences far beyond its home base in eastern Slovakia.

"The last of the...criteria for evaluating a dialect from a language is what was called 'degree of difference,'" Rothstein continued. A certain degree of difference, in terms of linguistic structure, is a necessary but not sufficient condition for speaking of two different languages. "Czech and Slovak, Ukrainian and Russian are different enough to have achieved the status of different languages, while Phoenician and Sicilian, which are much more different from each other, to the point that the two cannot understand each other, are both considered to be dialects of one Italian language.... Linguistic differences are often accompanied by ethnographic differences..."

Returning in light of this discussion to the question of the distinctiveness of Carpatho-Rusyn, Rothstein suggested that in addition to examining the linguistic distinctions of the Carpathian subgroup of southwestern Ukrainian dialects, linguists could examine the extent to which the speakers of Rusyn constitute an ethnographically distinctive group.

"There is evidence on this question from music, food, and other areas of material culture....," noted Rothstein, citing the contradictory analysis of one academic who studied Carpathian folk songs and defined them as "...part of the Ukrainian tradition - yet distinctive." In the area of food culture, Rothstein said, the Carpathian region is the

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near Dukla, they raided estates in Rona and Rohak. Both men in their time, were in the ranks of Kostka Napersky-Vzovsky, the national Polish hero. In 1653, Savka joined Hrits lakhno from Tsehelka. Savka took part in the Swedish war, at the conclusion of which he resumed his banditry and frequently rested at the place of his friends, Rostotsky in Rostoka and Danchak in Losie. When Rostotsky was imprisoned in Mushina, Savka threatened the judges with the burning of Mushina unless his friend was released. The court acquiesced and released Savka. Savka often appeared in public under the assumed name of Hanchovsky and he was a man of good heart. Once, when a friend was shot, he gave him a horse and helped him to get to Bardiov where, for two zlotys, he purchased salve for his wound. He attacked only the unjust and shared the booty with the victims of the unjust. Savka was captured by the Mushinian "Garniks: (police watchmen or guardians). On December 22, 1654, the court found him guilty and he was summarily executed. Savka remains a national hero in the memory of the Lemko people, no less than Oleksa Dobosh from the Hutsuli and Ianosik and Ondrashik from the Poles.

The woyewodas and the elders of the village councils issued various ordinances urging the magistrates to take more drastic measures against the bandits. They set up different ways to combat crime and offered rewards for the whereabouts of the criminal elements. Captured criminals were tried in the criminal courts and, if convicted, were given death penalties. The nature of the death penalty varied; torture on the wheel, tearing limbs apart using four horses, beheading, burning at the stake or simply by hanging. One day in 1604, in Bich, 120 highwaymen were executed. In 1736, bandit, Lazaruk with his companions, was executed in Lavocho. In 1654, a dreaded bandit in Carpathia, Fedor, aliases Semchak, Potopok, Nohavitsky of Nova-Ves was executed. His victims were mainly rich merchants. His band consisted of 11 members. At one time Savka was affiliated with this gang. Matej and Andrei Kvochka had a gang of 8 who limited their banditry to Hungary. They were apprehended and died by torture.

In 1656, bandits killed a Polish priest in Vrotslanets, and in 1768 bandits killed a Russian priest Fr. I. Gozhsky of Izby. Bandits never attacked poor villagers, and since no complaints came from villagers; it was assumed the gangs limited themselves exclusively to attacks against Polish gentry.

The source and the upsurge of banditry was the inhuman mistreatment and attitude towards the village inhabitants by the Polish landlords. The history of banditry covers the XVII and XVIII centuries. The father and protector of banditry was Iuri Rakochy. In the past, many accounts were written by the Lemkos about the bandits and their protection of the poor people.

THE RISING RUMBLE IN LEMKOVINA

To be Continued

Passaic Branch #5--16

1996 Schedule of Events

| | | |
|--------------|-------------------------|-------|
| May 5 | Spring Banquet, 2:00 PM | \$15. |
| July 21 | Annual Picnic, 1:00 PM | \$15. |
| October 20 | Fall Banquet, 2:00 PM | \$15. |
| | Birthdays Meetings | |
| March 10 | 2:00 PM | |
| June 9 | " | |
| September 15 | " | |
| December 8 | " | |

All functions are held at the Lodge, corner of Ann Street and Lanza Avenue, Garfield, NJ.

NOTICE

The annual meeting of Lemko Assoc. Elizabeth Branches 35-7-38, will be held on Sunday, March 10, 1996 beginning at 2:00 PM. The meeting is to be convened at:

P.A.L. Youth Center
400 Maple Avenue
Linden, New Jersey

The Committee requests that all members please attend since important matters will be up for discussion.

Branch Committee

CARPATHO--RUS

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Schedule of Events, 1996

| | | |
|------------------------|------|-----------------------|
| Spring Dance | " | May 11, '96; 9:00 PM |
| Annual Membership Mtg. | Sun. | June 2, '96; 2:30 PM |
| Annual Picnic | Sun. | July 14, '96; 2:00 PM |

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|--|-------|
| Olga K. Shast, in memory of my husband, Andrew | \$30. |
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| Geri Ledford | 20. |
| Helen K Ostrosky | 20. |
| Nona Shirak Fyrckiak, in memory of George & Mary Fyrckiak and Metro & Helen Shirak | 10. |
| John Petro Garbera | 10. |
| Pauline Ziaya, in memory of my husband, Theodor | 10. |
| Helen Labash | 5. |

Total \$170.

The Cooking Corner

Potato Soup

| | | |
|-------|------|---------------------------------|
| 6 | oz. | rindless smoked bacon, 9 slices |
| 2 | | large cloves garlic, crushed |
| 1 | | leek, sliced |
| 1-1/2 | lb. | potatoes, cut into 1 inch cubes |
| 3-3/4 | cups | beef, veal or chicken stock |
| | | salt and freshly ground pepper |
| 2 | tbls | chopped fresh parsley or dill |

Place the bacon in a large, heavy-based saucepan and heat gently until the fat runs. Add the garlic and leek and cook, stirring occasionally, until the leek is slightly softened.

Stir in the potatoes and stock, then add some seasoning. Bring to a boil and cook at a good simmer, with the pan half covered, for about 15 minutes. The soup is ready when the potatoes are just beginning to break up -- give it a good stir and the liquid will thicken slightly but there should still be pieces of potato left. Sprinkle in the parsley or dill and serve at once.

IN APPRECIATION

We extend our thanks for help in producing this week's issue of Carpatho-Rus to Svetlana Ledenieva and Susyn Yvonne Mihalasky.

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structure of the state will not be altered to allow for regional autonomy.

"Rusyns in these countries have opted - some would say wisely - to avoid making demands that would likely remain unfulfilled and complicate their other efforts toward cultural progress. So there is not and will not be demands for territorial autonomy among Rusyns in Slovakia and Poland."

Richard Custer, editor of the Carpatho-Rusyn Society's flagship newsletter, *New Rusyn Times* inquired about what needs to be done by the Rusyn intelligentsia to ease the process of acceptance of the new literary standard among the Rusyn speaking population.

Professor Rothstein, speaking with the cautions and modesty expected of a linguist speaking in his own discipline, answered that bringing a language to full maturity, achieving the standards that he had outlined earlier in his talk, was not an easy task. Professor Magocsi interjected with comment that resistance to a new standard was a normal phenomenon at the start of any new literary language.

In answer to a later inquiry, Magocsi emphasized that the new literary standard employed in Slovakia, as well as recent Lemko-vernacular dictionaries and grammar texts produced in Poland, all use only the Cyrillic alphabet.

In terms of language retention, he described Transcarpathian villages, where Rusyns continue to reside in large numbers, and the Vojvodinian region of Yugoslavia, where an educational support system is in place, as the two groups of Rusyns who have best been able to retain the original language intact. In the Slovak region, Rusyns face the greatest degree of assimilation, and in Poland the language has been considerably altered by forced resettlement and an intolerant climate which for decades caused Lemko families to avoid speaking Lemko even in their own homes. Rusyns in Hungary are currently using school texts written in accord with the recently codified Rusyn language in Slovakia to educate young Rusyns residing in Hungary.

Informal discussions between panelists and assembled listeners continued for another half hour after the formal conclusion of the panel session.

Susyn Yvonne Mihalasky

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only one in the world where the traditional basic, daily bread is unleavened. In the field of material culture, Rothstein defined as unique the traditional homespun bags worn draped over the shoulder by residents of the Carpathian region.

"These examples are not intended as 'proof' of anything, but rather as evidence suggesting that there is a degree of ethnographic distinctiveness to go along with the linguistic distinctiveness of Carpatho-Rusyn."

Rothstein concluded with his perspective, as a linguist, on the program of creating a new [Carpatho-Rusyn] literary language. Rothstein emphasized that he gives much weight to the viewpoints of the speakers of a given language. He recalled that the Australians, English, and Americans all consider themselves to speak the same English language, while Serbs and Croats have now chosen to redefine the former "Serbo-Croatian" language as two distinct languages. This, Rothstein argued, is the right of the speakers of these languages, and linguists should not presume to tell them otherwise.

"Whether future textbooks of Slavic linguistics will have to include Rusyn as one of the Slavic languages will depend on the success of the effort by Rusyns themselves to achieve for their linguistic code stability of form, breadth of function, and acceptance by their own community...."

Literature Among the Rusyns

The last speaker was Professor Elaine **Rusinko** of the University of Maryland's Department of Modern Languages, whose presentation focused on literature among the Carpatho-Rusyns. She began by noting the appropriateness of her position on the panel, following the previous papers on politics and language, because, "...literature is the focus of the conjunction of national concerns and national language."

Rusinko first raised the question of whether or not Rusyn literature is truly "new." As Professor Magocsi had said earlier regarding the Rusyn nationality itself, Rusinko said that Rusyn literature might likewise be considered a "renewed" rather than a "new" literature.

"Rusyn literature goes back at least to the 17th century, and perhaps earlier, and it has existed into the present in several forms and languages." Rusinko argued that their literature has acted as the "conservatory for Rusyn national culture and consciousness."

"What affect, then, does the assertion of a new or renewed nationality have on that new nation's literature?" Rusinko described this as a "chicken-and-egg" problem, since it is not always certain whether literature merely reflects or leads the way in national consciousness movements. The relationship is close and often very difficult to untangle.

Rusinko cited examples of writers who were central to shaping national identity movements, such as Pushkin [for the Russians], Shevchenko [for the Ukrainians], or Mickiewicz [for the Poles]. On the other hand, Rusinko cautioned, these writers' literary creativity did not spring out of thin air. "...the writer himself, his predilections for genre and form, style, theme, imagery, and of course language, are products of ideology, of cultural attitudes, and of inherited traditions." With these general theoretical comments, Rusinko then turned to discussion of Subcarpathian Rusyn literature. She suggested that the Rusyns' unique historical and political situation poses a challenge to the existing "post-colonial" theoretical framework which interprets literature as arising out of two often competing cultural influences. Rusyn literature, in contrast to this framework, has always been inspired by a multiplicity of competing cultural influences.

Rusinko speculated that the future of Rusyn

literature lies with what the post-colonial theory terms "hybridity," the combination of independent national traditions with outside cultural influences. A return to a historically "pure" Rusyn tradition is not possible, she felt, and not in keeping with current trends of shifting borders, falling empires and global communications. This new international reality has affected the development and expression of national literatures throughout the world. Fortunately, hybridization should allow for the preservation and perpetuation "...of the most distinctive aspects of an oppressed culture within new formations....the past provides a set of ways to react to new phenomena." Rusinko sees these trends toward hybridity evident in the new Rusyn literature.

"And for Rusyn culture, this is nothing new. In fact, it has always been an essential feature of Rusyn literature, which from its beginnings has blended various forms and languages in creative ways. Aleksander Duchnovyč was keenly aware of the limits of Rusyn culture and believed that an appreciation for heterogeneity and boundary crossing was essential for its survival. While he tirelessly promoted the Rusyn cause against Magyar cultural imperialism, his life's work shows constant efforts to forge new alignments across national, ethnic, linguistic, and cultural borders by promoting the solidarity of Rusyns within the cultural unity of Slavs. The founder of Rusyn national culture, Duchnovyč stressed dialogue across national borders, diversity within national borders, and a simultaneous awareness of the global and the local. Rusyn culture, then, as a result of practical political reality, inherited a legacy of hybridity...." Thus, the modern age provides the perfect environment for the emergence of a "new" or "renewed" Rusyn literature.

Rusinko then turned her attention to analysis of Rusyn language prose and poetry emanating recently from Rusyn writers in the Transcarpathian region of Ukraine, the Prešov region of Slovakia, and Hungary. Among these writers were Štefan Suchyj, Vasyľ Petrovaj, Gabriel Hattinger-Klebaško, and Marija Mal'covska.

These writers "...span the continuum of Rusyn geography and experience. It's a literary illustration of what Professor Magocsi described as one of the more striking aspects of the current national revival: its interregional context.... For a literature to come into its own, there needs to be not only good poems and stories, but a whole nexus that supports the literature. This means a language, of course, but also a publishing industry, including literary journals, its own set of norms and values, scholarly and critical evaluators,...its sense of settling in to keep doing a job that has to be done, and its own community of readership which receives the work and feeds back into it reciprocally."

There is, Rusinko concluded, no time like the present for Rusyn literature to achieve success.

Comments on the Papers

At the conclusion of Professor Rusinko's presentation, Professor Krafcik read the remarks of Professor Alexander **Motyl**, of Columbia University's Harriman Institute (Professor Motyl was unable to attend in person).

The essence of Prof. Motyl's remarks was that the beliefs of a given population regarding their own origins and ethnic boundaries are paramount in considering the question of the viability of their nationhood. The larger the number of such people who believe themselves to be members of a distinct nationality, the greater the likelihood that the nationality will ultimately prove viable.

Motyl felt that there were sufficient numbers of people believing themselves to be Rusyn to conclude that in fact, the Rusyns are a distinct nationality. But the next question, he suggested, was whether Rusyns could continue to survive as such.

Motyl felt that the future was less optimistic

than the two previous speakers had suggested. He argued that some of the same conditions that Magocsi and Rothstein saw as working to perpetuate a Rusyn identity could just as easily work against it. Among these previously cited conditions Motyl mentioned global communications technologies, the international climate, and economic conditions.

Motyl suggested that "...while modern communications could help spread ideas of origins and boundaries, they could just as easily dilute such ideas. To put the matter simplistically: Who needs to be a Rusyn?"

He also felt that the growing economic development of Poland, Slovakia and Ukraine would probably promote Rusyn outmigration from the Rusyn homeland, and assimilation into the dominant nationalities of their respective states. "The economic integration of these states into Europe should also accelerate these processes."

Likewise, the international climate cited by Magocsi as favorable to minorities, and hence to Rusyns, could turn unfavorable to the perpetuation of a Rusyn identity once regional governments decided that current policies favoring minorities run counter to state interests.

With these and other cautions on the optimism of Magocsi and Rothstein, Motyl concluded that, "While the Rusyns are probably here to stay, the promise of the present is unlikely to persist far into the future. A variety of strong forces will push and pull the inhabitants of the Carpathians. Some will resist; many will not. Some will become full-fledged Rusyns. Others will turn their back on their Rusyn heritage. Once the dust settles, the size of the remaining Rusyn nation may well be far smaller than the current estimates suggest. Political insignificance may or may not be the surest guarantee of tolerant national policies by all states concerned."

Following Professor Krafcik's reading of Professor Motyl's remarks, Professor Thomas E. **Bird**, acting director of the Byzantine Studies program at Queens College, offered his own analysis of the three previous presentations.

Bird drew attention to what he felt was the neglect by the panelists of the role of the churches in the question of the present and future status of the Rusyn nationality. Recent developments, according to Bird, point to genuine church support for idea of a Rusyn identity, and thus provide hope for its long-term viability.

"I refer of course to the 'canonization' - their term - of the Orthodox Rusyn Diocese of Pittsburgh by the Ecumenical Patriarchate; and the erection in Eastern Europe and in North America of exarchates and their gradual development and elevation to the rank of eparchies and archieparchies; to the statements by an apostolic delegate in Eastern Europe in recent months, who has spoken of plans on the drawing board of the Holy See to establish one of the East European Rusyn eparchies to archieparchial status, with the rank and rights of a provincial metropolitan."

Comments and Questions from the Audience

One listener, expressing his belief that "political cohesion" was essential for future success of the Rusyn movement, and lauding the autonomist efforts of Rusyns in Transcarpathia, asked about regional autonomy movements among Rusyns elsewhere.

Professor Magocsi answered that Rusyns in Slovakia and Poland are not seeking political or administrative autonomy because they recognize that the present and future political climate in Poland and Slovakia will not tolerate the granting of regional autonomy. Slovakia, concerned with the large Hungarian minority on its southern border, has taken the position that each minority is guaranteed rights as a corporate entity, but that the

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