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PAUL ROBERT MAGOCSI

NATION-BUILDING OR NATION DESTROYING?: LEMKOS, POLES, AND UKRAINIANS IN CONTEMPORARY POLAND

In 1972, the political scientist Walker Conner published in *World Politics* a provocative and still seminal essay entitled “Nation-Building or Nation-Destroying?,” in which he chided scholars and political analysts concerned with state integration for having systematically avoided and effectively discounted as an “ephemeral nuisance” the existence and persistence of national or ethnic minorities in modern states, even those in western European countries which had ostensibly attained political integration decades if not centuries ago.¹

Conner’s essay remains a valuable corrective to the literature on nationalism and political integration, since it forces the reader to realize that the existence—some would say problem—of national or ethnic minorities is not the exceptional remnant of underdeveloped regions but rather the vibrantly alive and growing norm in modern states throughout the world. East Central Europe is certainly no stranger to the existence of multinational states whether in the past or present. In this regard, one of the region’s typical states is Poland, which remains today as it has throughout history a country comprised of several national or ethnic groups.² Among those groups are the Lemkos.

Who are the Lemkos? What is their present status and potential future? What is their relationship to the country’s dominant ethnic group, the Poles, and to the group with which they are officially associated, the Ukrainians? Or, to borrow Conner’s terminology, does the existence of Lemkos represent a nation-building or nation-destroying element vis-à-vis the Poles, the Ukrainians, or both?

¹ Walker Conner, “Nation-Building or Nation-Destroying?,” *World Politics*, XXIV, 3 (Princeton, N.J., 1972), pp. 319–355.

² Certainly, in territorially-reduced and ethnically “purer” post-World War II Poland, the percentage of minorities is much less than the 32 percent of the population during the interwar years. Today, less than 2 percent of Poland’s population of 36,500,000 (1983) comprise national minorities. These include Ukrainians (350,000), Belorussians (165,000), Slovaks (22,000), Gypsies (15,000), Lithuanians (12,000), Russians (10,000) and Greeks, Macedonians, and Czechs (5,000). S. I. Bruk, *Naselenie mira: ètnodemograficheskii spravochnik* (Moscow, 1986), p. 246.

First, a few words about the origins of the Lemkos and why they are called by that name.³ The Lemkos represent the westernmost element of the East Slavic world. They have lived since the Middle Ages along the northern slopes and valleys of the Beskyd and Bieszczady ranges of the Carpathian mountains. Historically, this was a border region between Catholic Poland and Orthodox Kievan Rus'. Until the fourteenth century, the area was part of Kiev's Galician Rus' kingdom; from the 1340s until 1772, it was in the Polish Kingdom; from 1772 to 1918 part of Habsburg Austria's province of Galicia; and since that time (with the exception of the German occupation during World War II) part of Poland. The historic province of Austrian Galicia was divided into western and eastern spheres separated by the San River, which also corresponded roughly to the ethnographic boundary between West Slavs (Poles) west of the river and East Slavs (Rusyns/Ukrainians) east of the river. An exception were the East Slavic Lemkos, who lived west of the San River, and therefore were surrounded by lowlands to the north and west that were inhabited by Poles and to the south beyond the mountain crests by fellow East Slavic Rusnaks in what until 1918 had been the Hungarian Kingdom and thereafter Czechoslovakia.

As East Slavs and, therefore, as part of the world of Eastern Christianity, the Lemkos traditionally identified themselves—or more precisely distinguished themselves from neighboring peoples of different religion—by use of the names Rusnak or Rusyn, that is, the people of Rus'. The term Rus' had since the Middle Ages, become synonymous with Orthodox Eastern Christianity. During the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, the East Slavs gradually began to differentiate themselves, and this process intensified during the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries by which time the term Rus' and its derivatives were being replaced by various ethnic names—Russian, Belorussian, and Ukrainian. The Lemkos were faced with the option to maintain their traditional name, Rusnak/Rusyn, or to adopt one of the more ethnically specific names, such as Russian, or perhaps Ukrainian, which was becoming increasingly popular among the East Slavs closest to them on the eastern side of the San River. In the end, the Lemkos chose neither option.

By the outset of the twentieth century, all East Slavs in the Carpathian

³ There is a significant body of literature on the Lemkos. For an introduction to their historical evolution, see Paul Robert Magocsi, "The Lemko Rusyns: Their Past and Present," *Carpatho-Rusyn American*, X, 1 (Fairview, N.J., 1987), pp. 5–12. For further literature on the subject, see Tadeusz Zagórzarski, *Łemkowie i Łemkowszczyzna: materiały do bibliografii* (Warsaw, 1984).

^{3a} To be precise, the Lemkos do not even reach as far east as the upper San River, but rather only the valley between that river's tributaries, the Oślawa and Solinka, which is considered by many scholars as the eastern boundary of the Lemko Region. Cf. Roman Reinfuss, "Łemkowie jako grupa etnograficzna," *Prace i materiały etnograficzne*, VII (Lublin, 1948–49), pp. 84–102.

region and throughout the province of Austrian Galicia still called themselves Rusyns. However, one faction of the intelligentsia in East Galicia, known as the populists, argued that the term Rusyn was just an older equivalent of the modern name Ukrainian and that it would be preferable to use the new name as a means of national self-identification. With the help of the Austrian government, especially after the 1890s, the name Ukrainian gained increasing popularity among the population of East Galicia. But west of the San River where the Lemko Rusyns lived, the local intelligentsia actively opposed adopting the new name, Ukrainian. Moreover, in an effort to distinguish themselves from those who called themselves Ukrainian, Lemko spokespersons even went so far as to downplay the use of their own historic name Rusnak/Rusyn and thereby hope to distance themselves from the ostensible Rusyn-Ukrainian nomenclature equivalency. In short, they adopted an entirely new name—Lemko.⁴

Thus, the Rusyns on both sides of the San River in old Austrian Galicia were trying to rid themselves of their historic name, Rusyn, although for different reasons. The populist-Ukrainians did so because they feared the name Rusyn was being confused with Russian; the Lemkos did so because Rusyn was being described as an older equivalent for Ukrainian, a name with which they feared being confused. In this regard, it is interesting to note that many Lemkos did not fear confusion with Russians, and some, recalling their historic name Rusyn whenever it was convenient, would openly embrace what they supposed was their association and identity as Russian. What is important to remember for future developments is that the very term Lemko began—and for some has remained—a rejection of association with things Ukrainian.

But why in the first place, should the question of identity with Ukrainians be a problem for Lemkos? Stated most simply, if Lemkos are East Slavs, and if the East Slavic inhabitants of the Carpathians and Galicia have come to be designated as Ukrainians, then the Lemkos are Ukrainians, too. Since most modern Slavic scholarship accepts the modern term Ukrainian for the East Slavic inhabitants of the area—not to speak of the official position of the countries that rule the area (Poland, the Soviet Union, Czechoslovakia)—then Lemkos are simply a tribe or ethnographic group of Ukrainians.

By the same taxonomic logic, the Francophone Walloons and Occitans are French; the Germanic Luxembourgers and Austrians are Germans; and if one were to accept earlier and even some present-day writings, the South Slavic Macedonians are Bulgarians, and the East Slavic Belorussians and

⁴ Bohdan Struminsky, "The Name of the Lemkos and of Their Territory," in Jacob P. Hursky, ed., *Studies in Ukrainian Linguistics in Honor of George Y. Shevelov*, in *Annals of the Ukrainian Academy of Arts and Sciences in the United States*, XV (New York, 1985), pp. 301–307.

Ukrainians are Russians. As is obvious from the few examples just mentioned, such classification—often based on linguistic criteria—may be acceptable in terms of modern-day concepts of national identity for certain groups, but certainly not for others. In some sense, the problem of the Lemkos in Poland stems from the contrasting and often contradictory manner by which they are classified on the one hand by scholars and governments and on the other by the way they perceive themselves.

With regard to self-perception, it is also necessary to mention the issue of regional identity and the related problem of what has been called the phenomenon of multiple identities. It is quite natural that individuals have several levels of identity based on family, village/town, region, ethnographic group, national group/nationality, and country, and that these identities may be complementary.⁵ Thus, a person from the town of Arles near the mouth of the Rhône River in southern France could be perfectly comfortable in choosing to identify him or herself simultaneously as Arlésien (town), Rhodanien (region), Provençal (ethnographic group), Occitan (nationality), and French (country). Analogously, a Macedonian born in Moskohori could simultaneously identify as a Moskohorin (village), Kastorian (region), Macedonian or Slavophone (ethnographic group or nationality), and Greek (nationality or country). In the case of the Lemkos, a person born in Bartne/Bortne could simultaneously identify as a Bortnianyn (village), Gorlician (region), Lemko (ethnographic group), Ukrainian, Russian, or Carpatho-Rusyn (nationality), and Polish (country).

Such a complementary hierarchy of multiple identities would, in Conner's terminology, contribute to France's, Greece's, or Poland's nation-building process. However, the traditional problem in the Lemko (and for that matter in the Provençal-Occitan and Macedonian-Slavophone-Greek) hierarchy of multiple identities has been the ethnographic and nationality categories. Is Lemko only an ethnographic category? If so, then Lemkos are simply an ethnographic group belonging to the Ukrainian, Russian, or (together with their brethren just south of the mountains) Carpatho-Rusyn nationality. Or should the ethnographic and nationality categories be collapsed into one, with Lemko serving as a designator for a distinct nationality? The ethnographic-nationality dichotomy, or the question of whether Lemkos are a distinct nationality or part of a larger nationality, remains to this day an unresolved theoretical issue for Lemko leaders and a practical problem of self-perception for the Lemko people in general.

⁵ On the question of multiple identities, see David M. Potter, "The Historian's Use of Nationalism and Vice-Versa," *American Historical Review*, LXVII, 4 (New York, 1962), esp. pp. 924–938; and Paul Robert Magocsi, "The Ukrainian National Revival: A New Analytical Framework," *Canadian Review of Studies in Nationalism*, XVI, 1–2 (Charlottetown, Prince Edward Island, 1989), pp. 45–62.

In one sense, it is surprising that such a problem still exists at all, since based on what is often expected as the overwhelming assimilationist tendencies of modern industrialized societies, the question of Lemko self-identity should have been decided long ago. Such assimilationist tendencies were enhanced in 1947 by the forcible removal of the Lemkos from their Carpathian homeland and their dispersal generally in small groups throughout cities and towns in western and northern Poland.⁶ Driven from their homeland, resettled in a Polish environment, lacking any Lemko cultural or other organizations, having one of their churches (Greek Catholic) proscribed and the other (Orthodox) limited in its activity in a Roman Catholic environment, and finally having to send their children only to Polish schools—all these factors would certainly lead one to expect the complete assimilation of the younger generation born in the “emigration.” Logic would seem to dictate that with the passing away of the older generation (born and raised in the Carpathian homeland before the deportation), the Lemkos would eventually disappear and this problem would be resolved.

Yet, forty years after the dispersal of Lemkos from their homeland and after the birth and acculturation of at least one generation in the emigration, it seems that the Lemko problem has not gone away. In a real sense—as is evident from the Polish press in the 1980s—not only have the Lemkos not gone away, on the contrary, they are going through a revival, a rebirth, a rediscovery of their roots. Not surprisingly, this revival has prompted a restatement of the identity question. Who are the Lemkos—a distinct people (perhaps part of a Rusyn/Rusnak people living in the Carpathians—including, in particular, the Rusnaks in neighboring Czechoslovakia), or simply an ethnographic group that is part of a larger nationality: Ukrainian, perhaps Russian, or even Polish?

Two important factors contributed to the Lemko revival. By the outset of the 1980s, Poland had entered the Solidarity period of its recent history, at which time the country’s inhabitants, of whatever social or national background, were swept up by a mood that called for increased criticism of present-day realities and for an inquiry into the recent past that created those

⁶ The fate of the Lemkos was part of a larger trend in many places during the immediate post-World War II years to clean up ethnically-mixed border areas through a program of population transfers and exchanges. In Poland this affected both Ukrainians and Lemkos living along the country’s southeastern borders. Of the 180,000 Lemkos in 1945, 120,000 opted or were administratively encouraged to go to the Soviet Ukraine between 1946 and 1947. Of the 60,000 who remained mostly in the westernmost Lemko Region, they were forcibly deported by the Polish government in the spring and summer of 1947 (having been accused of aiding the Ukrainian Insurgent Army—UPA) to newly acquired lands (*Ziemie Odzyskane*) in western and northern Poland that had previously belonged to Germany (Silesia, Warmia, Pomerania, northern Mazuria).

realities. The 1980s also witnessed the coming of age of a new generation of Lemkos born in the emigration, who by then had reached their twenties and thirties—that classical age for self-discovery whether as individuals or as members of a group.

During the 1980s, the Lemko revival has witnessed the following type of activity: (1) the publication of poetry in the Lemko vernacular⁷; (2) newspaper articles (mostly by non-Lemkos) on aspects of the Lemko past, especially the post-World War II deportations and the question of national identity⁸; and (3) annual cultural festivals (Vatra), which since 1983 have each year attracted upwards of 5,000 Lemkos from all parts of Poland who in the month of July descend upon some remote Carpathian village in an effort to rediscover or be exposed for the first time to the traditional Lemko heritage.

The very existence of such activity has raised administrative concerns and, by extension, the nationality question, both in terms of the problem of self-identity and the relationship of the group to the Polish state. These problems have become most evident with regard to the Vatra festival. When the organizers planned to hold their first one in 1983, they were told by the Polish authorities that since Lemkos were Ukrainians they could only hold such affairs if they were sponsored by or under the aegis of the official cultural organization for Ukrainians in Poland, the USKT (Ukrains'ke Sotsio-Kul'turne Tovarystvo—Ukrainian Socio-Cultural Society).

Ever since 1956, when the USKT was founded, Lemkos played an important role in that organization. However, the new generation of Lemko activists in the 1980s was displeased with how the USKT treated the Lemkos in the past, and in any case some began to argue that Lemkos were a group distinct from Ukrainians and therefore deserving of their own cultural organization. Not surprisingly, USKT leaders (Lemko as well as non-Lemko Ukrainians) branded such demands by the Vatra organizers as “separatism.” Nonetheless, the “separatists” persisted and the annual Vstras have taken place with increasing popularity and success.⁹

⁷ Among the poets who have recently published Lemko, bi-lingual Lemko-Polish, or Lemko verse translated into Polish are: Olena Duts (*W modlitewnym bluźnierstwie*, 1985); Vladislav Hraban (*Twarz pośród cieni*, 1984); Petro Murianka (*Suchy badył*, 1983, *Murianchyško*, 1984, *Jak sokół wodę z kamienia/Jak sokil vody na kameny*, 1989); Pavlo Stefanovskyy (*Lemkivs'ka ikona*, 1985); and Stefania Trokhanovska (*Potem, teraz, przedtem*, 1984).

⁸ See the extensive list of newspaper articles in Andrzej A. Zięba, “The Lemko Question in the Polish Press, 1980-1986,” *Carpatho-Rusyn American*, XI, 1 (Fairview, N.J., 1988), pp. 9-11. The recent number of books, articles, and other studies appearing within and beyond Poland about the group is no less impressive. See the 94 entries on the Lemko Region/Lemkovshchyna/Lemkos in Paul Robert Magocsi, *Carpatho-Rusyn Studies: An Annotated Bibliography*, Vol. I: 1975-1984 (New York, 1988).

⁹ From the outset of the Vatra festivals, the organizers have been Vladislav Hraban, Petro Trokhanovskyy (pseudonym: Murianka), and Olena Duts, all three of whom are among the 10,000 or so Lemkos who have returned to the Carpathian homeland since the late 1950s.

What exists today in Poland is a classic example of an intelligentsia-inspired national movement. Namely, there are people who in some way identify as Lemkos and whose "interests" are represented by a small group of intellectuals—cultural activists and writers in the most generous sense of the word. Some of these leaders argue that Lemkos are Ukrainians and should function within Poland's Ukrainian society; others argue that Lemkos should not be lumped together with Ukrainians because they represent a distinct group; still others are not certain which orientation to support.¹⁰

Somewhat on the sideline are the Polish authorities. On the one hand, ever since World War II, Communist spokespersons in Poland have accepted the view that Lemkos are a branch of Ukrainians. After all, it was the unfounded charge of Ukrainian bourgeois nationalism and the supposed massive participation of Lemkos in support of the anti-Communist Ukrainian Insurgent Army (UPA) which was given in 1947 as the government's justification for the forcible deportation of Lemkos. On the other hand, those same authorities have permitted the "unofficial" Lemko "separatist" Vatra festivals to take place, although it would seem this is a result of the Polish government's inability to control many (and from its point of view much more dangerous) kinds of unofficial activity. Also, in the "Polish camp" are several Polish scholars and publicists who have written recently about the Lemko revival, describing and often siding with both the Ukrainian and Lemko orientations.¹¹

The position of the Polish authorities is, not surprisingly, viewed quite differently by the participants in this process. Ukrainian and pro-Ukrainian Lemko commentators (in the Soviet Union and North America as well as in Poland) consider the "Lemko separatists"—if they mention them at all—to comprise a small group of misguided enthusiasts whose activity is "supported" by the Polish government and by "concerned" Polish writers precisely because their presence contributes to a weakening of the Ukrainian element within Poland. Polish society, it is said, has in any case been traditionally fiercely anti-Ukrainian, and the postwar Communist governments,

¹⁰ The independentist Lemkos include mostly members of the younger generation: Olena Duts (Duć), Vladislav Hraban, Iaroslav Hunka, Andrei Kopcha (Kopcza), and Petro Trokhanovskiy (Trochanowski). The pro-Ukrainian Lemkos include the long-time cultural and political activists Mykhal Donskyi, Fedir Goch (Gocz), Mykhal Koval'skyi, Pavlo Stefanovskiy (Stefanowski), all three of whom in the 1960s spoke out forcefully that Lemkos were distinct from Ukrainians and should have their own distinct organizations. The pro-Ukrainian Lemkos have been encouraged by Volodymyr Mokryi, a professor of Ukrainian background at Cracow's Jagiellonian University and recently-elected member of the Polish parliament, and by Ivan Krasovskiy, a prolific author on Lemko affairs who is from L'viv in the Soviet Ukraine.

¹¹ Among the more well-known Polish sympathizers have been Ryszard Brykowski, Antoni Kroh, Tadeusz Olszański, and the controversial poet Jerzy Harasymowicz, who has frequently included Lemko themes in his writings.

like their interwar non-Communist predecessors, have always followed a policy of *divide et impera* in order to weaken and eventually absorb through assimilation ethnically non-Polish groups. According to this scenario, the Lemko "separatists" are playing into the hands of the Poles, or even worse, they are accused of being Russophiles (Muscophiles) and therefore traitors to the Ukrainian cause. Regardless of what they are accused, if such recalcitrant Lemkos do not recognize their Ukrainianness, the argument goes, they will simply become assimilated Poles.¹²

It seems, moreover, that ideological intransigence on the question of national identity is the predominant attitude. To cite only one of many examples, let us turn to an active spokesperson in the West for Polish-Ukrainian reconciliation, Professor Jaroslaw Pelenski, himself of Ukrainian background. When asked by a Polish-American interviewer whether Lemkos were Ukrainians or a separate nationality, the generally intellectually tolerant Pelenski, who was otherwise critical of "nationalist prejudices," could himself find no room for compromise or even nuance on this issue. "If we characterize the Kashubes as Poles [which is not necessarily what all Kashubes themselves nor all scholars have done—PRM], then the Lemkos should definitely be characterized as Ukrainians. An attempt to invent a separate Lemko nationality in order to divide the Ukrainian community in Poland, for whatever purpose, reminds me of certain pre-1945 German efforts to divide the Poles. . . . It is the concensus not only of Ukrainian, but also of informed Polish scholarly opinion today, that the Lemkos are an integral part of the Ukrainian people exhibiting their own distinct regional and dialectal peculiarities."¹³ Similarly, the very text of this essay, first delivered at the American Association for the Advancement of Slavic Studies in November 1988 and then at a conference on the Lemko question at the University of Warsaw in December 1989, was described (but never published) in the Polish press and then fiercely criticized for "separatist" or his-

¹² Polish-Ukrainian antipathy has a long history stretching back at least to the Cossack revolution of Bohdan Khmel'nyts'kyi in the seventeenth century, and it was fueled even more during the twentieth century by the Polish-Ukrainian war for Galicia in 1918–1919; terroristic acts by both sides during the 1920s; the Polish pacification of 1930; the mutual killing of underground military personnel, partisans, and civilians in an undeclared Polish-Ukrainian war between 1942 and 1947; the Polish Communist campaign against the Ukrainian Insurgent Army in 1946–1947; and the psychological terror against persons who identified as Ukrainian in Poland during the Stalinist era.

The past decade has seen efforts among Poles and Ukrainians both in Poland and the West to overcome their mutually destructive hate-filled stereotypes. The best reflection of this new attitude is Kazimierz Podlaski, *Białorusini—Litwini—Ukraińcy: Nasi wrogowie czy bracia* (Warsaw, 1983; 2nd rev. ed.: Warsaw, 1984 and London, 1985), in Ukrainian translation as *Bilorusy—Litovtsi—Ukraińtsi: nashi vorohy—chy braty?* (Munich, 1986).

¹³ "Polish-Ukrainian Relations: An Interview with Jaroslaw Pelenski," *Studium Papers*, XII, 2 (Ann Arbor, Mich., 1988), p. 50.

torically antiquated tendencies by Ukrainian-oriented Lemkos in the Soviet Union and in the United States.¹⁴

In contrast, the non-Ukrainian-oriented Lemkos feel that the process of assimilation among the younger generation has occurred, in part, precisely *because* with the help of Polish government policy Lemkos have since the 1950s been identified as Ukrainians—an identity, moreover, which was hardly an easy one to have in Stalinist Poland. Older Lemkos have responded to the situation with silence or have actively tried to hide their identity; younger Lemkos have often simply rejected their East Slavic origins and identified themselves as Poles. The non-Ukrainian-oriented Lemkos also argue that it is the Ukrainians who are recognized by the Polish government as a national group, and that with the help of that government they have consistently blocked recent attempts to create distinct Lemko organizations (including the Vatra festivals when they were first held). This seems to make present-day Ukrainians no different from their predecessors, who ostensibly cooperated with the Austrian authorities in the deportation of Lemkos to the Talerhof concentration camp during World War I, or who cooperated with Nazi German authorities in the incarceration and eventual death of some Lemkos in concentration camps during World War II. Finally, it was the supposedly misplaced identification of Lemkos as Ukrainians that led to their forced deportation *en masse* during the Vistula Operation (Akcja Wisła) in 1947.¹⁵ From such a perspective, it would certainly seem that there is no evident advantage for Lemkos to identify as Ukrainians. The result of such attitudes or as some would say myths, reinforced as they are by historical “proofs,” has been increasing recrimination between Lemkos of Ukrainian and non-Ukrainian orientation.

Unfortunately, there has been no serious effort by either Lemkos or Ukrainians to address the issue of their mutually negative stereotypes. This could be done by investigating such past events as the 1914 deportation to Talerhof (at which Ukrainians ostensibly denounced Russophile Lemkos

¹⁴ Andrzej A. Zięba, “O Lemkach w Honolulu,” *Tygodnik Powszechny*, XLIII, 12 (Cracow, 1989), p. 5; Andrzej Chodkiewicz, “O Lemkach,” *Ład*, VIII, 6 (Warsaw, 1990). The Ukrainian commentary began with Ivan Krasovs’kyi, “Kil’ka dumok u spravi Lemkiv: z pryvodu statti A. Ziemby ‘O Lemkach w Honolulu,’” *Nashe slovo* (Warsaw), July 30, 1989—reprinted in *Lemkivshchyna*, XI, 3 (Clifton, N.J., 1989), pp. 14–15, and was continued by Ivan Lyko, “Lemko-rusyn—ukraïnets’-’lemko’i,” *ibid.*, XI, 4 (1989), pp. 12–14; Ivan Hvozda, “Podiï, iaki khvyliuiut’ lemkiivs’ku spil’notu, iak i vse ukraïn’s’ke suspil’stvo,” *Lemkivshchyna*, XII, 1 (Clifton, N.J., 1990), pp. 6–11—reprinted in *Novyi shliakh* (Toronto), May 19, 26 and June 2, 1990; Myroslav Levyts’kyi, “Politychni ta suspil’ni napriamky sered lemkiiv u XX stolitti,” *Nashe slovo* (Warsaw), January 21, 1990; and V. Mel’nyk, “Neorusynstro i ioho interpretatory,” *Zakarpats’ka pravda* (Uzhhorod), esp. pt. 4, August 24, 1990. See also Diura Latiak, “Ishche raz o Lemkokh u Honolulu,” *Ruske slovo* (Novi Sad, Yugoslavia), June 27, 1990.

¹⁵ The preceding interpretation of recent developments in the twentieth century is most forcibly presented in I. F. Lemkyn [Ioann Polianskyi], *Ystoriya Lemkovyny* (Yonkers, N.Y., 1969).

but, in fact, were also incarcerated themselves), or the role played by Ukrainians (frequently from East Galicia) in the Nazi administration of the Lemko Region, which was part of Germany's Generalgouvernement from the very outbreak of World War II. Nor, for that matter, has there yet been any serious comparative analysis of Lemko support for varying military forces in the last years of World War II (Polish partisans, Red Army, Ukrainian Insurgent Army) with a discussion of what such support says, if anything, about the group's national orientation.¹⁶

Instead, both non-Ukrainian and pro-Ukrainian Lemko spokespersons have reiterated their ire based on frequently unsubstantiated generalizations. In the absence of serious analysis, attention has been focused on symbolic "black sheep." For Ukrainians, their "black sheep" is Jerzy Harasymowicz, a well-known poet of unclear Polish-Ukrainian background who has written on Lemko themes and who recently has come under attack for favoring the generally negative stereotypes of Polish society toward Ukrainians. For non-Ukrainian-oriented Lemkos, their "black sheep" is Pavlo Stefanovskiy, a Lemko poet and cultural activist who in the past had often called for the legalization of separate Lemko organizations and who argued that Lemkos were a people distinct from Ukrainians, but who recently (the accusation says since his return from trips among wealthy Ukrainian immigrant communities in North America in the mid-1980s) has switched to a Ukrainian orientation.¹⁷

Before concluding, it might be useful to return to the formulation of Walker Conner expressed at the outset of this essay. Is the recent Lemko revival, which seeks to consider the group distinct from Ukrainians and Poles, an example of nation-building (from the perspective of Poland as a country) or nation-destroying (from the perspective of Ukrainian nationhood)? At the risk of moving from a descriptive to a prescriptive mode, I

¹⁶Peter J. Potichnyj has provided a well-documented study of Lemkos who participated in the UPA, but the figures he produces are given in isolation and tell us nothing about the perhaps greater participation of Lemkos in the Polish partisan movement or the Red Army. See his unpublished manuscript, "The Lemkos in the Ukrainian National Movement After World War II," prepared for the session on Lemkos at the American Association for the Advancement of Slavic Studies National Convention held in Honolulu (November 1988).

¹⁷On Harasymowicz's current views, see "Rozmowa *Gazety Krakowskiej* z Jerzym Harasymowiczem: chwast plomienisty i zlowrogi—burzan nacjonalizmu," *Gazeta Krakowska* (Cracow), No. 135, June 11, 1986, p. 3, which prompted a spirited response by Mykhal Koval'skii, "Iezhy Harasymovychovy, poetovy—odkryty lyst," *Nashe slovo* (Warsaw), No. 31, September 7, 1988 ("Iemkivs'ka storynka"), pp. 5–6; and Jerzy Harasymowicz, "Łemkom pod rozwagę," *Gazeta Krakowska*, No. 168, July 19, 1989, pp. 1–4—translated as "To the Lemkos for their Consideration," *Carpatho-Rusyn American*, XII, 3 (Fairview, N.J., 1989), pp. 10–11, and followed by a commentary by A. Dryja.

For Stefanovskiy's former anti-Ukrainian views, see the text of a 1959 memorandum to the Polish government co-signed by him and reprinted in "Ukraińcy w PRL—dokumenty," *Spotkania*, No. 12–13 (Warsaw, Lublin, and Cracow, 1980), pp. 158–171.

might in conclusion offer a few observations that bear more on the present and future than on the past. But before doing that, there is one other matter that should be mentioned. While we in the West bask in the luxury of circumstances conducive to intellectual discussion safely removed thousands of miles from the territory and people under analysis, it should not be forgotten that what we frequently comment upon in theoretical and often clinically antiseptic terms are issues that have often created and still create profound personal and psychological problems for the individuals in what may seem to us from so far a distance as a rather esoteric game.¹⁸ Hopefully, without forgetting the human dimension, we can with greater sensitivity move on to some theoretical issues.

I would think that any dispassionate observer must admit that, in theory, and given the right conditions, in practice, Lemkos could develop into a distinct nationality. It was such a theoretical possibility, combined with the right conditions, that allowed Slovaks, Macedonians, and Ukrainians themselves, among many others, to evolve into distinct nationalities. There is, after all, no hard and fast rule based on either historical circumstance or intrinsic characteristics that would prevent—again under the right conditions—any group of people of whatever size from evolving into a distinct nationality.¹⁹ Having accepted this premise, then one could ask whether the Lemko revival in Poland would best advance the preservation of an East Slavic Lemko heritage by becoming a distinct nationality or by becoming a regional component of a Ukrainian nationality? Moreover, if the route of Lemko distinctiveness were chosen, just what would that mean—Polish Lemkos as a distinct nationality or their association with other Rusyns in the Carpathians as a distinct Carpatho-Rusyn nationality?

In a sense, the very fact that the contemporary Lemko issue has become a subject of debate among the group itself suggests that an answer to the

¹⁸Both Ukrainians and non-Ukrainian Lemkos in Poland—even those seemingly at odds with each other—have suffered remarkably similar fates. For an excellent insight into the current Ukrainian psyche, see Włodzimierz Mokry, "Dzisiejsza droga Rusina do Polski," *Tygodnik Powszechny*, nos. 46 and 47 (Cracow, 1981)—republished in a shortened English translation as "A Way to Go Home: One Ruthenian's Road to Present-Day Poland," *Stadium Papers*, XII, 2 (Ann Arbor, Mich., 1988), pp. 29–33 and 41. For an insight into the non-Ukrainian Lemko psyche, see Jaroslav Hunka, *Lemkowie—dzisiaj* (Warsaw, 1985)—republished in a full English translation in the *Carpatho-Rusyn American*, X, 4 (Fairview, N.J., 1988), pp. 4–8; and Piotr Trochanowski, "Słowo Łemka o sobie i swoim narodzie," *Regiony*, no. 2–4 [48] (Warsaw, 1987), pp. 5–15.

¹⁹For an interesting survey of the current status of small and in some cases still emerging peoples (Cornish, Occitans, Frisians, Friulans, Galicians, Sardis) in western Europe, see Meic Stephens, *Linguistic Minorities in Western Europe* (Llandysul, Wales, 1976). For perhaps the ultimate example of a nationality that can be made, "given the right conditions," even in a territory that is less than one square mile in size, see Paul Robert Magocsi, "Monaco Becomes Monégasque: Language Revival in a Country Rediscovering Itself," *The World and I*, IV, 7 (Washington, D.C., 1989), pp. 620–631.

question has already been given. Namely, there does exist a group of Lemkos in Poland who have opted for an identity distinct from Ukrainians, and they have already embarked along the path of classic intelligentsia-inspired national movements with the intent to produce literary works in the Lemko vernacular for use as a full-fledged literary language, to carry out historical research on Lemko topics, and to sponsor annual festivals that encourage the masses to become aware and proud of their Lemko identity. An important step in this process was achieved in April 1989, when the first specifically Lemko organization to exist in Poland since World War II came into being. This Lemko Society (Stovaryshynia Lemkiv), which has 10 branches to date—3 in Lemko Region and 7 in the western regions of Poland—and which has its own theater, has also begun to publish a quarterly journal, *Besida*, edited by the poet Petro Murianka-Trokhanyovskiy. *Besida* is written in a language that is intended as the basis for a Lemko literary standard. Indeed, some of these activities and others were tried in the past, although their purpose was usually intended to convince Lemkos that they were either Russians, Ukrainians, or Poles. However, the present generation of often university-trained activists is different in that they are convinced that they wish to be associated with none of the above groups when it comes to the question of their individual national identity.

Indeed, there may be Poles, both within and beyond governing circles, that see this development as a means to weaken the Ukrainian group in Poland and as a first step to assimilate the Lemkos into Poles. However, if Lemkos have survived assimilation in Poland for four decades without any national revival to sustain them, why should they now assimilate in the midst of a movement that is providing them with a concrete Lemko identity? Moreover, Ukrainian ideologists should have nothing to fear. Certainly the potential loss of the Lemko minority in Poland with at most approximately 100,000 members would not seriously affect the 50,000,000 strong Ukrainian nationality. Moreover, if the “Lemko separatists” continue to base their activity on the enhancement of their local culture—and their ideology in fact forces them to do so—then Ukrainians should welcome such efforts at preserving the cultural integrity of what in any case they would call a regional variant of Ukrainian culture. While fully aware that Ukrainians at no time in the twentieth century have functioned in a political situation in which their culture was itself not in a precarious situation, is it asking too much for Ukrainian spokespersons to realize that if they are as evolved a nationality as their historical heritage suggests, then the Ukraine must be prepared to have its Tyrols and Bavarias.

In this sense, the Lemko revival could become a nation-building phenomenon both for Poland as a state and for Ukrainians living as a minority within that state. Since the only alternative practiced until now—an administratively imposed Ukrainian identity—has neither stemmed assimilation

to Poles nor created in all Lemkos the desire to be Ukrainians, the present efforts to sustain a distinct Lemko identity could do no worse than previous policies. In this context, it is instructive to note that the administrative imposition in 1951–1952 of a Ukrainian identity for Rusyns living in neighboring Czechoslovakia has contributed to a devastating decline in their number (from 91,000 in 1930 to 37,000 in 1980). In stark contrast, Rusnaks/Rusyns in Yugoslavia have been recognized as a distinct nationality by that country's postwar government and they have flourished with their own schools, organizations, and standard fourth East Slavic literary language.²⁰

In the end, the success or failure of the Lemko national revival will depend less upon the policies of an increasingly decentralized Polish government or the opposition of Ukrainians and pro-Ukrainian Lemkos than upon the concentrated efforts of Lemko activists themselves. Moreover, it will do no good for Lemkos to blame the Polish government or Poland's Ukrainians for what until now has been their own tendency toward wavering on the question of national identity and a reluctance (or simply laziness) to undertake the difficult task of collecting, codifying, and propagating the local culture. To be sure, the Lemko national revival has only begun. It will be at least a decade before we will know whether it will survive and, if so, what specific direction it will take.

²⁰For a concise comparison of these developments, see Paul Robert Magocsi, *The Shaping of a National Identity: Subcarpathian Rus', 1848-1948* (Cambridge, Mass., 1978), pp. 268–271.