

CHAPTER 4

The Rusyn Language Revisited*

In 1929, a Rusyn satirist named Marko Barabolja wrote "a one-act dramatical work" that poked fun at the idea of an autonomous territory called Subcarpathian Rus'. This political entity was supposed to exist in the far eastern region of the former Czechoslovakia. One of the play's characters recalled that only recently writers in Subcarpathian Rus' had begun to create a literature. That, in turn, led to the question of what language should be used for this new literature.

"Those were the days," quipped Barabolja's character, "when the language question [*jazykovyj vopros*] was the dominant issue, a time

* An early version of this essay, with greater emphasis on the period before 1945, was commissioned by a Yale University project on Slavic languages and published under the title, "The Language Question Among the Subcarpathian Rusyns" (see below, note 3). The Yale study also appeared under the same title in a booklet with illustrations (Fairview, N.J.: Carpatho-Rusyn Research Center, 1979; reprinted 1987) and in a translation into Vojvodinian Rusyn, "Pitanje jazika medzi podkarpatskima rusinami," *Tvorčosc*, X (Novi Sad, 1984), pp. 6-22.

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moreover that was the most romantic in the history of Subcarpathia. Just imagine, everywhere in cities and villages, in reading rooms, theaters, government offices, and cafés, no matter where people were, everywhere they talked continually about the language question."¹

Six decades later, when the Revolution of 1989 unfolded throughout east-central Europe and the Soviet Union, it seemed as though nothing had changed. Once again, wherever Rusyns lived, they were talking about the language question. And they are still doing so today! This is because the Rusyn language question, like language questions past and present among all peoples, is intimately related to the issue of national identity. As Rusyns continue to wrestle with the problem of who they are, so too has the language question become a problem that once again has to be addressed and hopefully resolved.

Ever since the second half of the nineteenth century, Rusyn intellectual and political life has addressed and tried to resolve the following dilemma: are Rusyns part of the Russian nationality, or the Ukrainian nationality, or do they comprise a distinct Slavic nationality known as Rusyn or Carpatho-Rusyn?² Not surprisingly, the supporters of these orientations have argued that the appropriate literary language should be either Russian, or Ukrainian, or a distinct Rusyn language. This on-going and still unresolved debate is what constitutes the Rusyn language question.

There is a substantial literature dealing with the language question, or more precisely the development of a literary language among Rusyns before 1945, including monographic studies by Georgij Gerovskij, František Tichý, Mykola Štec', and Paul Robert Magocsi.³ Considering

¹Marko Barabolja, "Oj, stelysja ty, barvinku, na joho mohyli!," *Pčólka*, no. 6 (Užhorod, 1929), p. 158—recently reprinted in Marko Barabolja, *Proekt avtonomiji: tvory* (Užhorod, 1991), pp. 27-31.

²For details, see Paul Robert Magocsi, *The Shaping of a National Identity: Subcarpathian Rus', 1848-1948* (Cambridge, Mass. and London, 1978).

³Georgij Gerovskij, "Jazyk Podkarpatské Rusi," in *Československá vlastivěda*, Vol. III (Prague, 1934), pp. 460-517; František Tichý, *Vývoj současného spisovného jazyka na Podkarpatské Rusi* (Prague, 1938); Mykola Štec', *Literaturna mova ukrajinciv Zakarpattja i Schidnoji Slovaččyny* (Bratislava, 1969); Paul R. Magocsi, "The Language Question Among the Subcarpathian Rusyns," in Riccardo Picchio and Harvey Goldblatt, eds., *Aspects of the Slavic Language Question*, Vol II: *East Slavic* (New Haven, Conn., 1984), pp. 49-64.

the existence of such studies and the space limitations allotted to this essay, only the main developments before 1945 will be touched on here. The era before 1945 may be subdivided into four stages or periods, each of which differed in terms of the kind of language or languages that were favored. Those periods are: (1) the seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries; (2) the late eighteenth century to 1848; (3) 1848 to 1918; and (4) 1919 to 1944.

One theme has prevailed throughout all the above periods as well as the era from 1945 to the present. That theme concerns *dignitas* or prestige. All linguists agree that Rusyns living on both sides of the Carpathian Mountains speak a series of dialects which, based on their phonetic, morphological, and lexical characteristics, belong to the family of East Slavic languages. There is also agreement that Rusyn dialects are distinguishable from other East Slavic dialects by the high number of loanwords and other borrowings from neighboring Polish, Slovak, Hungarian, and to a lesser degree Romanian.⁴

There is disagreement, however, as to the relationship of Rusyn dialects to other East Slavic languages. Most linguists classify them with Ukrainian; while a few consider them part of a common-Russian (*obščerusskij*) linguistic area that comprises together modern Russian, Belarusian, and Ukrainian. Regardless what classification scheme is adopted, there still remains what might be called a basic psycholinguistic problem. In essence, do or can Rusyn dialects have a sufficient degree of *dignitas* to serve as the basis of a distinct literary language? Or do they intrinsically lack prestige, leading to a situation where the linguistic medium for Rusyns has to be taken from an already existing norm, whether Russian, Ukrainian or some other language? The

⁴The literature on Rusyn dialects is very well developed. The standard work is by Ivan Pan'kevyč, *Ukrajins'ki hovory Pidkarpats'koji Rusy i sumežnych oblastej* (Prague, 1938). There are also multivolume linguistic atlases by Josyf Dzendzeliv's'kyj, Zuzanna Hanudel', Vasyl' Latta, Petro Lyzaneč', Zdzisław Stieber and unpublished dialectal dictionaries by Ivan Pan'kevyč and Mykola Hrycak. See Josyf Dzendzeliv's'kyj, "Stan i problemy doslidžennja ukrajins'kych hovoriv Zakarpats'koji oblasti URSR ta Schidnoji Slovaččyny," in Mychajlo Ryčalka, ed., *Žovten' i ukrajins'ka kul'tura* (Prešov, 1968), pp. 255-291; and the bibliographies by Olena Pažur, *Bibliohrafija pro doslidžennja ukrajins'kych hovoriv Schidnoji Slovaččyny* (Prešov, 1972), and Vida Zeremski et al., *Bibliografija Rusnacoch u Jugoslaviji, 1918-1980*, Vol. II (Novi Sad, 1990), esp. pp. 178-198.

question of *dignitas*, then, has historically pervaded and is still present in any debate regarding the language question among the Rusyns.

The Rusyn language question before 1945

The earliest Rusyn-language texts that came into relatively widespread use date from the seventeenth century. This was a time when the Protestant Reformation was making its strongest impact in northeastern Hungary and neighboring Transylvania. Although conversion to Lutheranism or Calvinism did not have any serious impact among Rusyns, their own clerical leaders were influenced by the Reformation's emphasis on living languages as the best way to communicate with the masses. Thus, the first printed books for Rusyns, a *Cathechism* (1698) and *Primer* (1699) prepared under the auspices of the Greek Catholic Bishop Joseph de Camillis (1641-1706), were written in "a simple dialect in order to be understood by the people."⁵ Despite criticism in certain quarters for not using the traditional liturgical language, Church Slavonic, most of the religious polemics and other writings from this earliest period were in Rusyn vernacular.

The next period, which begins in the second half of the eighteenth century, witnessed a reaction against the "vulgarization of the church language" that supposedly characterized the earliest writings in Rusyn.⁶ This meant that Church Slavonic, which because of its association with the Divine Liturgy of the Eastern rite had the appropriate *dignitas*, became the preferred language in publications destined for Rusyns. Although it was a literary language used in sacred books and in other communication among clerics throughout the Eastern Christian (Orthodox and Greek Catholic) world, Church Slavonic never had a single standard. Its form depended on the skill of individual authors who, when they lacked knowledge of a given word, would often borrow from the immediate linguistic environment in which they lived. The resultant variants of Church Slavonic were known as recensions, and the recension of Church Slavonic that developed among the Rusyns

⁵From the introduction to Josif de Camillis, *Katechysys dlja nauky Ouhrorouckym ljudem* (Trnava, 1698), p. ii.

⁶The descriptive phrase quoted here is by Ivan Paňkevyč, "Zakarpats'kyj dialektnyj variant ukrajins'koji literaturnoji movy XVII - XVIII vv.," *Slavia*, XXVII, 2 (Prague, 1958), p. 181.

came to be known as Slaveno-Rusyn (*slaveno-ruskij*).

When, under the impact of the Theresan and Josephine enlightenment, church-run elementary and secondary schools began in the 1770s to be established throughout the Austrian Empire, several teachers prepared grammars and other textbooks for instructional use. The first of these was a grammar by Arsenij Kocak (1737-1800) completed in the 1770s,⁷ followed in the first half of the nineteenth century with grammars by Mychajlo Lučkaj (1789-1843) and Ivan Fogorašij (1786-1834) and by the widely-used primer of Ioan Kutka (1750-1812).⁸ Both authors reflected well the era in which they lived, one in which the ideas of Pan-Slavism emphasized the cultural unity among all the Slavic peoples as the most desirable goal.⁹ Lučkaj, in particular, regretted the trend among many Slavic peoples to create "their own languages." He feared this proliferation of languages would lead to their being "swallowed up by other [larger] languages."¹⁰ Church Slavonic, therefore, should be promoted, because it was already understood by the educated elite among all the East Slavs and South Slavs. In this regard, Rusyns had a special role to play, since they were the living preservers of the "one language . . . Rusyn or Carpatho-Rusyn" [*unica Dialectus . . . Ruthenica, aut Karpato-ruskaja*], which had not yet been "corrupted" and was closest to Church Slavonic.¹¹ Lučkaj's grammar, then, which recorded Rusyn vernacular and pointed

⁷The manuscripts of Kocak's "Hramatyka russkaja" (1772-1778) and "Škola ili učylyšče hramatyky ruskoy" were published for the first time with an extensive analytical introduction by the compiler, Josyf Dzendzeliv's'kyj, in *Naukovyj zbirnyk Muzeju ukrajins'koji kul'tury u Svydnyku*, Vol. XV, tom 2 (Bratislava and Prešov, 1990), pp. 73-284.

⁸Michael Lutskay, *Grammatica Slavo-Ruthena* (Buda, 1830); Ivan Fogorossi, *Rus'ko ouhorska ili madjarska hramatyka* (Vienna, 1833); [Ioan Kutka], *Bukvar' jazyka ruskaho* (Vienna, 1797), 4th ed. (1846). Lučkaj's grammar was reprinted in facsimile version and translated into Ukrainian by P. M. Lyzaneč' and Ju. M. Sak: Mychajlo Lučkaj, *Hramatyka slov'jano-rus'ka* (Kiev, 1989). Kutka's primer was also printed in facsimile and with an afterword by István Udvari (Nyíregyháza, 1998).

⁹Lučkaj was well known throughout the Slavic world and was one of five figures singled out in a pantheon listed in Jan Kollár's renowned epic poem, *Slávy dcera* (1832), 4th ed. (Prague 1868), p. 249.

¹⁰Lutskay, *Grammatica*, p. vii.

¹¹*Ibid.*, p. viii.

out how it differed only slightly from Church Slavonic, was to be the model for the Slavic world.

There were other Pan-Slavic sympathizers, however, such as L'udovít Štúr (1815-1856), who did not shirk from codifying distinct languages, in his case Slovak. When some of his countrymen urged Rusyns to use Slovak as their literary language, Štúr responded to them with a rhetorical formulation: "Who asks here that Rusyns should accept the Slovak language as their own? Why they have their own beautiful Rusyn [*rusínsky*] language."¹²

It was the call of Štúr and a few other Slovak activists that prompted a change of attitude toward language among Rusyn cultural activists, in particular Aleksander Duchnovyč (1803-1865), the most influential figure during the third period that began in 1848. Duchnovyč came to be known as the "national awakener of the Carpatho-Rusyns" (*narodnyj buditel' karpatorossov*), and he is still revered today as the most important of all Rusyn cultural figures past and present. Already on the eve of the revolution of 1848, Duchnovyč published a primer based entirely on the Rusyn dialects of his native Prešov Region in northeastern Slovakia.¹³ He also wrote a wide body of poetry and edited the first literary almanacs, all in Rusyn vernacular.

But even Duchnovyč was unable to sustain full confidence in the Rusyn vernacular as an instrument of literary endeavour. As early as 1852, he asked: "Which German, Frenchman, or Englishman writes as the average person speaks? None! . . . We must liberate ourselves from the mistakes of peasant vulgarisms and not fall into the mire of peasant phraseology. . . ." ¹⁴ To escape from the Rusyn "mire," Duchnovyč like his predecessors turned to Church Slavonic, and then more often to Russian.¹⁵ The pro-Russian or Russophile trend was even more

¹²*Slovenskije národňje novini* (Bratislava), March 6, 1846.

¹³A.D., *Knyžycja čytalnaja dlja načynajuščych* (Buda, 1847), 2nd ed. (1850), 3rd ed. (1852). Reprinted in Olexandr Duchnovyč, *Tvory*, Vol. II (Bratislava and Prešov, 1967), pp. 97-271.

¹⁴*Zorja halycka*, V, 50 (L'viv, 1852), p. 498.

¹⁵In 1853, Duchnovyč published a grammar *Sokraščennaja grammatika ruskago jazyka* (Buda, 1853), reprinted in Duchnovyč, *Tvory*, Vol. II, pp. 321-371, whose language was russianized (according to some without his consent) by his countrymen Ivan Rakovs'kyj and a Russian Orthodox priest in Budapest, Vasiliij Vojtkovskij.

pronounced in the writings of Duchnovyč's contemporaries and successors: whether in polemical tracts by the dynamic political activist, Adol'f Dobrjans'kyj (1817-1901), or in several grammars of the Russian language by Kyrylo Sabov (1838-1914), Ivan Rakovs'kyj (1815-1885), Evmenij Sabov (1859-1934), and in dictionaries by Aleksander Mytrak (1837-1913) and Emiljan Kubek (1859-1940).¹⁶ These works set the Russian-language standard used in Rusyn schools, newspapers, and cultural life in general until nearly the end of the nineteenth century.

Rusyn cultural and language developments were not, of course, taking place in a vacuum. Late nineteenth-century Austria-Hungary, in particular its Hungarian authorities, were uneasy about the foreign policy goals of their neighbor to the east, the Russian Empire. Among Russia's goals was to support what tsarist officials and propagandists argued were the best interests of the Slavic peoples in Austria-Hungary. Promoting the Russian language (and the Orthodox religion) among the Rusyns was, therefore, favored by tsarist Russia but not by Hungary.

In response, the Hungarian government sponsored translations into the Rusyn vernacular of several textbooks for use in its state-run elementary schools.¹⁷ The new Rusyn standard was formulated by Vasyl' Čopej (1856-1934), who in 1883 published the first dictionary using the Rusyn vernacular, specifically the lowland dialects of today's Transcarpathian region. Čopej stressed that the "Rusyn language is

¹⁶A. Iv . . . tsch [Adol'f Dobrjans'kyj], "Nomenclation der österreichisch-ungarischen Russen," *Parlamentär*, no. 7 (Vienna, 1885), and his "Ugro-russkoe narječie v nastojaščem i prošlom," in A. L. Petrov, *Materialy dlja istorii Ugorskoj Rusi* (Petrograd, 1905), pp. 186-188; Kirill Sabov, *Grammatika pis'mennago russkago jazyka* (Užhorod, 1865); János Rakovszky/Ioann Rakovskij, *Orosz nyelvian/Russkaja grammatika* (Buda, 1867); Eumén Szabó/Evmenij Sabov, *Orosz nyelvian és olvasókönyv/Russkaja grammatika i čitanka* (Užhorod, 1890); Aleksandr Mitrak/Sándor Mitrák, *Russko-mad'jarskij slovar'/Orosz magyar szótár* (Užhorod, 1881); Emil Kubek/Emilij Kubek, *Ó-szláv-, magyar-, ruthén, (orosz) német szótár/Staroslavjanskij-ougorskij-russkij-njemeckij slovar'* (Užhorod, 1906).

¹⁷These included a translation of the Hungarian-language primer and first-grade reader by Pál Göncze into Rusyn by Vasylij Čopej, *Rus'ka azbuka j pervonačal'na čytanka dlja pervoho kljasa narodnych škol* (Budapest, 1881); and another translation by Avhustyn Vološyn, *Azbuka j perva čytanka dlja pervoho kljasa narodnych škol na rus'kom jazyci* (Budapest, 1898), 2nd ed. (1913).

independent and in no way can be considered a dialect of Russian."¹⁸ The trend toward use of the Rusyn vernacular for instruction in schools was continued during the first decade of the twentieth century in widely-used primers by Mychal Vrabel' (1866-1923) and Avhustyn Vološyn (1874-1945).¹⁹

The fourth stage in the evolution of the Rusyn language question began in 1919 under profoundly new political circumstances. The Austro-Hungarian Empire had fallen and Rusyns were living in several new countries. The vast majority (about 80 percent) that had lived in the far eastern portion northeastern Hungary found themselves in Czechoslovakia (three-quarters in the province of Subcarpathian Rus'/Transcarpathia and one-quarter in the Prešov Region of Slovakia). Rusyns living north of the mountains in the Lemko Region of former Austrian Galicia were incorporated into Poland. As for the small group (about 20,000) who lived in the Bačka and Srem regions of southern Hungary, they were joined to the province of Vojvodina in Yugoslavia. The language question among the Rusyns during this fourth period, 1919-1944, evolved differently in each of the three countries where they lived.

Within Czechoslovakia, the legal status of Rusyns and, therefore, the status of their language also varied. In Subcarpathian Rus', which was in theory a province with international guarantees for Rusyn autonomy, the "local language" was alongside Czech one of the two official "state" languages. In Slovakia, on the other hand, Rusyns were a national minority, whose language was guaranteed for use in schools only in those areas where they comprised more than twenty percent of the population.

In practice, the democratic nature of the new Czechoslovak republic provided an important incentive for instruction and publications in the

¹⁸Laslov Čopej/László Csopei, *Rus'ko madjarskij slovar'/Rutén-magyar szótár* (Budapest, 1883), p. x. Čopej understood the "Rusyn or Little Rusyn language" (*rus'kyj abo maloruskij jazýk*) to comprise what in modern-day terms are Ukrainian, Belorusan, and the various East Slavic dialects south of the Carpathians. *Ibid.*, p. xxiii.

¹⁹M. V[rabel'], *Bukvar'* (Užhorod, 1898), 4th ed. (1910); Avhustyn Vološyn, *Azbuka uhro-rus'koho j cerkovno-slavjanskoho čtenija* (Užhorod, 1901), 4th ed. (1919); Ágoston Volosin, *Gyakorlati kisorosz (ruszin) nyelvian* (Užhorod, 1907), 2nd ed. (1920).

"local language." The government did not for the most part interfere in the language debates.²⁰ As a result, the 1920s and 1930s were, as the satirist Barabolja pointed out, the decades when people everywhere "talked continually about the language question." While everyone agreed that the "local language" should be adopted for official and educational purposes, no one was certain what specifically was meant by the term. As in the past, the issue of *dignitas* played a large part in determining which language should be used. Some felt that the local dialects should form the basis of a distinct Rusyn literary language that would evolve from the late nineteenth-century dictionary of Čopej and the primers and grammar of Vološyn, which went through several new editions and were widely used in Subcarpathian schools.²¹

Others, including newly-arrived émigrés from Polish-ruled eastern Galicia, felt that Rusyn was simply a dialect of Ukrainian, which should serve as the literary language. To introduce Ukrainian to the region in a gradual manner, the Galician-Ukrainian writer Volodymyr Birčak (1881-1952) compiled a series of readers for secondary schools,²² and

²⁰The Czechoslovak authorities consulted with academicians in Prague who: (1) advised against creating a new literary language for the Rusyns; (2) recognized Rusyn dialects as part of the Ukrainian language; yet (3) also argued that since Ukrainians "were part of the Great Russian people," Russian should be taught as well. See Magocsi, *Shaping of a National Identity*, pp. 136-138.

²¹Avgustyn Vološyn, *Azbuka karpato-rus'koho j cerkovno-slavjanskoho čtenija*, 7th ed. (Užhorod, 1924). His still heavily Russian-influenced *Metodičeskaja grammatika ugro-russkogo literaturnogo jazyka dlja narodnyh škol* (Užhorod, 1901) became the vernacular *Metodyčeska hramatyka karpato-russkoho jazjka* (1919) and, in its sixth edition, the *Metodyčna hramatyka rus'koho jazjka dlja nyzšych klas narodnyh škol* (Užhorod, 1930). For upper levels he wrote the *Praktyčna hramatyka rus'koho jazyka*, 2nd ed. (Užhorod, 1928).

Among Vološyn's more popular readers in use during the interwar years were: *Čytanka dlja II. klasny narodnyh škol* (Užhorod, 1921); *Mala čytanka dlja II. y III. klasny narodnyh škol* (Užhorod, 1921), 4th rev. ed. (Prague and Prešov, 1937); *Čytanka dlja IV. y V. škôl'nych rokôv narodnyh škol* (Užhorod, 1932); *Čytanka dlja rus'koï molodežy dlja IV., V. y VI. klas narodnyh škol*, 3rd ed. (Užhorod, 1925); *Čytanka dlja rus'koï molody dlja VI-VIII. škôl'nych rokôv narodnyh škol*, 5th ed. (Užhorod, 1932).

²²Volodymyr Byrčak, *Rus'ka čytanka dlja I. klasny gymnazijnoï y horožanskyh škol* (Prague, 1922), 2nd ed. with title added *Vesna: rus'ka čytanka . . .* (Prague, 1925); *dlja II. klasny* (Prague, 1922); *dlja III. klasny* (Prague, 1923); *dlja IV. klasny*

linguist from Galicia, Ivan Pan'kevyč (1887-1958), prepared a grammar of the Rusyn language. Although written in the traditional etymological alphabet and using special symbols to depict vowel sounds unique to the Subcarpathian region, Pan'kevyč's grammar was based on the dialects of the high mountainous area (the Verchovyna), which were closest to the Ukrainian speech in Galicia.²³ By the late 1930s, other émigrés from Galicia in cooperation with local pro-Ukrainian Subcarpathian activists produced school texts that were in standard Ukrainian using the modern phonetic alphabet.²⁴

The third trend was represented by the Russophiles. These included local activists who carried on the tradition of the nineteenth-century national awakener Duchnovyč, together with Russophile émigrés from Galicia who helped the "locals" write in correct Russian. The standard text for this orientation was a grammar published in 1924 under the editorship of a local priest, Evmenij Sabov (1859-1934), although it was written in large part by a Russian émigré from pre-war tsarist ruled Warsaw, Aleksandr Grigorjev (1874-1945). The "Sabov grammar" did not even pretend to reflect local Rusyn speech, since it contained "the Russian literary language in its written and not its spoken form."²⁵ The goal of this grammar was to help its users read local "Carpatho-Russian" authors (who until then wrote in a Russian language corrupted by local dialectisms) and, in particular, to enjoy "Puškin, Gogol', Lermontov, and other classics of Russian literature."²⁶ Like the Ukrainian

(Prague, 1924; 2nd ed., 1928).

²³Ivan Pan'kevyč, *Hramatyka rus'koho jazjka dlja molodšych klas škôl serednyh y horožanskyh* (Mukačevo, 1922), 3rd rev. ed. (Prague, 1936).

Several local authors using the language of Pan'kevyč prepared introductory texts for elementary schools: E. Egreckyj, M. Huljanyč, and A. Markuš, *Podkarpatorus'kyj bukvar'* (Užhorod, 1923); A. Markuš, S. Boček, and N. Šutka, *Rôdne slovo: učebnyk rus'koho jazjka dlja narodnyh škol* (Užhorod, 1923); Aleksander Markuš and Julijan Revaj, *Bukvar': čytajte y pyšit'* (Prague, 1931; 2nd ed., 1937).

²⁴A. Štefan and I. Vasko, *Hramatyka ukrajins'koji movy* (Mukačevo, 1931); Jaroslav Nevrlí, *Hramatyka j pravopys ukrajins'koji movy* (Užhorod, 1937); Franc Ahij, *Žyva mova* (Užhorod, 1938).

²⁵Evm. Iv. Sabov, ed., *Grammatika russkago jazyka dlja serednyh učebnyh zavedenij Podkarpatskoj Rusi* (Užhorod, 1924), p. 1.

²⁶*Ibid.*, p. 5.

orientation, the Russian orientation also had other primers and grammars.²⁷

Each of the three orientations had its own cultural organizations, newspapers, journals, writers of poetry, prose, and drama, and of course polemicists to defend the various language orientations. The school system in Subcarpathian Rus' used all three languages—Rusyn, Ukrainian, Russian—as symbolized by the grammars of Vološyn, Pan'kevyč, and Sabov.

In neighboring Slovakia during the interwar years, the situation was somewhat simpler. For all intents and purposes, a Ukrainian orientation did not exist. Most secular and religious activists spoke of the desirability of maintaining their local "Carpatho-Rusyn traditions." These traditions included use of a language that, in practice, was not Rusyn vernacular but rather Russian with a varying number of local dialectisms. Already in 1920-1921, the Greek Catholic school system published a primer and a heavily-dialectal reader by Ivan Kyzak (1856-1929) and a grammar of Russian by Aleksander Sedlak (1862-1927).²⁸

In Poland as in Czechoslovakia, the language question among the Lemkos (the local name for Rusyns) was closely linked to the policy adopted by the central government in Warsaw for minority schools. For most of the 1920s, the textbooks used in the Lemko Region were either in Ukrainian or in Russian, which reflected the language dichotomy that prevailed in Galicia while it had been part of the Austro-Hungarian Empire.²⁹ In the early 1930s, however, the Polish government and the

local Greek Catholic Church administration (the Lemko Apostolic Administration) favored instruction in Lemko-Rusyn vernacular. A primer and reader attributed to a local teacher Meletij Trochanovs'kyj were published, and by the end of the 1930s these texts were used in most Rusyn schools in the Lemko Region, which eventually became Polish schools with some instruction in Lemko Rusyn.³⁰

The situation among the small Rusyn minority in the Bačka that after World War I became part of Yugoslavia was yet again different. There the local intelligentsia adopted the vernacular principle and developed a literary standard based on the local speech of the inhabitants. That speech was substantially different from Rusyn as spoken in the Carpathian homeland and, instead, was a transitional dialect very close to eastern Slovak dialects, in particular those of the central and southern Zemplín region. While scholars argued about whether the Bačka-Rusyn speech should be classified with a West Slavic (Slovak) or East Slavic (Rusyn/Ukrainian) language, the speakers themselves called their language Rusyn (*ruskij jazik*) and identified themselves as Rusnaks (*rusnaci*).³¹

The formation of a Bačka-Rusyn standard is intimately tied to the work of one person, Gabor Kostel'nik (1886-1948), who published his first book of poetry in 1904 and then a grammar in 1923. Kostel'nik was of the pro-Ukrainian orientation, and he actually wrote his grammar in the local vernacular as only the first step that would eventually "open the road to a Rusyn-Ukrainian literary language."³² Despite his hopes, there were to be no publications or school instruction in Ukrainian for the Rusyns of the Vojvodina (Bačka).

There was also a language question among Rusyns in the United

64.

³⁰*Bukvar: perša knyžečka dlja narodnych škol* (L'viv, 1935). A reader was included in the above book. Ukrainophile Lemkos also produced a reader that was used in a few schools during the interwar period: *Perša lemkivs'ka čytanka* (L'viv, 1934).

³¹The debate about classifying the speech of the Bačka/Vojvodinian Rusyns was carried out before World War I between the Galician-Ukrainian ethnographer, Volodymyr Hnatjuk, and the Slovak philologist, František Pastrnek.

³²Gabor Kostel'nik, *Hramatika bačvan'sko-ruskej bešedi* (Sremski Karlovci, 1923), p. 2. This grammar was reprinted in Havrijil Kostel'nik, *Proza* (Novi Sad, 1975), pp. 207-312.

²⁷M. Iv. Vasilenkov, *Naša rječ: metodičeskaja grammatika dlja russkich narodnych škol Podk. Rusi* (Mukačevo, 1925); I. Doboš and P. Fedor, *Karpatorusskij bukvar'* (Užhorod, 1925), 3rd rev. ed. (1930); P. Fedor and M. Vasilenko, *Svět: kniga dlja čtenija dlja 2-3. škol'nych godov*, 2nd rev. ed. (Mukačevo, 1931); Michail Mikita, *Kniga dlja čtenija dlja 4-5. škol'nych godov*, 4th ed. (Mukačevo, 1932); Michail Mikita and Vasilij Popovič, *Rodina: kniga dlja čtenija VI-VIII. škol'nych godov* (Mukačevo, 1931).

²⁸Ioann F. Kizak, *Bukvar' dlja narodnych škol eparchiji Prjaševskoj* (Prague and Prešov, 1921); Ioann Kyzak, *Čytanka dlja narodnych škol* (Prešov, 1920); Aleksandr Iv. Sedlak, *Grammatika russkago jazyka dlja narodnych škol eparchii Prjaševskoi* (Prešov, 1920).

²⁹For details, see Paul R. Magocsi, "The Language Question in Nineteenth-Century Galicia," in Riccardo Picchio and Harvey Goldblatt, eds. *Aspects of the Slavic Language Question*, Vol. II: *East Slavic* (New Haven, Conn., 1984), pp. 49-

States, where before World War I an estimated 225,000 had immigrated. In the New World, the immigrants published several newspapers, books, and other works, and they established a school system connected with their Greek Catholic and Orthodox churches in order to pass on to children knowledge of their Rusyn heritage. Aside from importing school texts from the European homeland (the primers and readers of Vološyn were especially popular), Rusyn Americans published a series of their own language books for use in schools and as a normative guide for their publications.

These books can be classified into three linguistic orientations. Those approved for use by the Greek Catholic Church basically used the "traditional Carpatho-Rusyn language" of the late nineteenth century, in which authors tried to write in Russian while including a large number of Rusyn and Church Slavonic words. This "American Rusyn" language was best represented in a grammar and reader by Joseph P. Hanulja (1874-1962) and in a few other elementary primers.³³ The second orientation, used almost exclusively in Orthodox publications and schools, was standard Russian.³⁴ During this period, only the Lemko-Rusyn immigrant Dmitrij Vislockyj (1888-1968) produced a textbook written exclusively in the Rusyn vernacular.³⁵

The fourth stage came to a close during World War II, when the Rusyn language question took a new turn, most especially in Subcarpathian Rus'. In March 1939, Hungary drove out the short-lived autonomous Carpatho-Ukrainian government (which had ruled since November 1938) and annexed the former Czechoslovak province which

³³Iosif Hanulja, *Grammatika dlja amerikanskich rusinov* (McKeesport, Pa., 1918); Iosif P. Hanulja, *Čitanka dlja amerikanskoy rus'koj molodeži* (McKeesport, Pa., 1919; 2nd ed., 1935); Petr Iv. Mackov, *Novyj bukvar' dlja greko-kaftoličeskich ruskich dětej* (Homestead, Pa., 1921).

³⁴Ivan G. Boruch, *Rodnaja reč': vtoraja kniga dlja čtenija i besėd ustnyh i pis'mennyh upraženij v školě i v sem'ě* (New York, 1916); Stepan F. Telep, *Russkij bukvar' dlja cerkovno-prichodskich škol v Sěvernoj Amerikě* (Mayfield, Pa., 1937; 2nd ed., 1938); V. Ternavcev, *Naša škola: bukvar' i pervoe čtenie* (New York, 1938); Stepan F. Telep, *Praktičeskij područnik grammatiki dlja cerkovno-prichodskich škol v Sěvernoj Amerikě* (Mayfield, Pa., 1940); Ioann Gr. Dzvoničik, *Pervaja rusko-angliiskaja kniga dlja čtenija* (Philadelphia, Pa. 1943).

³⁵Van'o Hunjanka [Dmitrij Vislockyj], *Karpatorusskij bukvar'* (Cleveland, Ohio, 1931).

it renamed simply Subcarpathia (Kárpátalja). Although Hungarian authorities allowed the Russian orientation to function, they forbade the use of Ukrainian. Officially, it returned to the so-called Uhro-Rusyn orientation, which a short-lived Hungarian democratic regime had introduced in Subcarpathian Rus' in early 1919. At that time, the Hungarian authorities acted quickly to publish a reader and an anthology of literature and to set up a Department (*Katedra*) of Rusyn Language and Literature at the University of Budapest which began to function in 1919-1920.³⁶ With the return of Hungarian rule in 1939, Uhro-Rusynism meant, as well, a return to local traditions that would be neither Russian nor Ukrainian.

The first step in that direction was the publication of five readers for elementary schools,³⁷ and a grammar for secondary schools by a local Greek Catholic priest and official in the Hungarian Ministry of Education, Julij Maryna (1901-1983). The language was quite similar to that used in the late nineteenth century, that is, Russian with a heavy influence of local Rusyn dialectisms.³⁸ More influential was the language adopted by the newly-founded Subcarpathian Academy of Sciences in its publications, including a Rusyn grammar by Ivan Harajda (1905-1945). Harajda hoped to find a "true compromise" that would reflect Rusyn vernacular speech as well as incorporate certain words that supposedly had become accepted—and expected—as part of the traditional "Carpatho-Rusyn language." Many, however, appeared to be borrowings from Russian (*dovol'no, tol'ko, prosviščatysja*, etc.).³⁹

³⁶Jador [Stryps'kyj], *Čytanka dlja doroslych* (Mukačevo, 1919) and O. Rachiv's'kyj [Aleksander Bonkalo], *Vyimky yz uhors'ko-rus'koho pys'menstva XVII-XVIII vv.* (Budapest, 1919). On the Department of Rusyn Language and Literature at the University of Budapest, see the brief biography of its holder in Alexander Bonkáló, *The Rusyns* (New York, 1990), p. xiii-xiv. Also at this time a dictionary of Rusyn verbs was prepared by Tonij Romanuv [Antal Hodinka], *Hlaholycja: sbyrka vsích hlaholov pudkarpats'ko-rusyns'koho jazýka* (1922), although it only recently appeared as: Antal Hodinka, *Ruszin-magyar igetár*, compiled by István Udvari (Nyíregyháza, 1991).

³⁷*Pervyj/Drugij/Tretij/Četvertyj/Pjatyj cvět dětskoj mudrosti dlja I./II./III-IV./V-VI./VII-VIII. klassa narodnoj školy* (Užhorod, 1939).

³⁸Julij Maryna, *Grammatika ugorusskogo jazyka dlja serednich učebnyh zavedenij* (Užhorod, 1940).

³⁹Yvan Harajda, *Hrammatyka rus'koho jazýka* (Užhorod, 1941).

Thus, the era before 1945 ended without any solution to the language question. Wherever Rusyns lived, they used either Russian, Ukrainian, or the local Rusyn vernacular in their schools and publications. Moreover, polemics between defenders of the three orientations reached a new intensity in the first half of the twentieth century and no consensus seemed in sight.⁴⁰ All was to change, however, with the establishment after 1945 of a new political order throughout the Rusyn homeland.

Ukrainianization and the "end" to the language question

In late 1944, the Soviet Army 'liberated' Subcarpathian Rus' from Hungarian control. Although the Soviets initially agreed with the other Allied Powers to restore the province to postwar Czechoslovakia, Stalin changed his mind. Consequently, the political wing of the Soviet Army was ordered to give support to local Subcarpathian Communists, who in turn arranged in November 1944 for the populace to request unification with the "Ukrainian motherland." In June 1945, Czechoslovakia formally ceded to the Soviet Union the province of Subcarpathian Rus', which became the Transcarpathian oblast of the Soviet Ukraine.

As early as 1924, the Fifth Congress of the Comintern had addressed the identity question in western Ukrainian lands. Regardless which "foreign occupier" might still be ruling those lands and regardless what the people themselves may have thought, the Rusyns were declared to be a branch of the Ukrainian nationality. The Fifth Comintern's decision was reiterated one year later by the Communist party (Bolshevik) of Ukraine and accepted by the Subcarpathian Communist party in 1926 with a resolution that in part read: "It is obvious that we

⁴⁰Among the numerous polemical works from this period are: Avhustyn Vološyn, *O pys'mennom jazyci podkarpatskych rusynov* (Užhorod, 1921); Igor Iv. Gus'naj, *Jazykovyj vopros v Podkarpatskoj Rusi* (Prešov, 1921); Evm. I. Sabov, *Russkij literaturnyj jazyk Podkarpatskoj Rusi i novaja grammatika russkago jazyka* (Mukačevo, 1925); N. Zorkij, *Spor o jazykě v Podkarpatskoj Rusi i češskaja Akademija Nauk/Kak osvědomljaet d-r Ivan Pan'kevič češskuju publiku o našich jazykovych djělach* (Užhorod, 1926); *Za ridne slovo!: polemika z rusofilamy* (Mukačevo and Užhorod, 1937); G. I. Gerovskij and V. Krajnjanica, eds., *Razbor grammatiki ugrorusskogo jazyka* (Užhorod, 1941); Aleksander Bonkalo, "Rus'kyj lyteraturnyj jazýk," *Zorja/Hajnal*, I, 1-2 (Užhorod, 1941), pp. 54-71.

are part of the Ukrainian people. . . . and finally we will end . . . all 'language questions' [and dispense] with the names 'Rusyn', 'rus'kyj', or 'rususkij'."⁴¹

It took nearly two more decades before the 1924-1926 decisions could be implemented by the new Soviet authorities in Transcarpathia. By late 1944, all schools for the indigenous East Slavic population taught in literary Ukrainian according to Soviet norms, and Ukrainian was in theory considered the titular language of the country to be used in the local administration. In actual practice, however, the Russian language was taught as a subject in all schools; it became the dominant language at the newly-founded Užhorod State University; and it served as the operative language in most official and public transactions. This meant that both the Ukrainian- and Russian-language orientations from the pre-1945 era were in large measure satisfied—or equally dissatisfied—with Soviet policy.

Only the Rusyn orientation was banned. The very name *Rusyn* was associated with the "unenlightened" pre-Soviet past and was linked in Soviet propaganda with the bourgeois Czechoslovak and fascist Hungarian regimes that had occupied the province, as well as with the "reactionary" Greek Catholic Church which in 1949 was abolished entirely. From 1945 until nearly the very end of Soviet rule in 1991, not a single publication in Rusyn vernacular appeared in Transcarpathia. Even the language of published local folk songs and tales was ukrainianized as were the few reprints of pre-Soviet Transcarpathian literature.

Soviet policy regarding the national and linguistic identity of the Rusyns was also implemented in neighboring countries that came under Communist rule, first Poland and then Czechoslovakia. The language situation among the Lemko Rusyns was in a sense simplified by the fact that they were all deported from their Carpathian homeland—first "voluntarily" in 1945, then the remainder forcibly in 1947. Two-thirds were resettled in the Soviet Ukraine, those who remained behind (40,000-50,000) were forcibly resettled in Poland's "recovered" western (formerly German) territories, most especially Silesia. The Lemkos who were resettled in Poland's "West" were considered by the government to be part of the country's Ukrainian minority.

⁴¹*Karpats'ka pravda* (Užhorod), December 5, 1926.

When, after 1956, Poland allowed the creation of organizations and publications for some of its national minorities, the Lemkos also hoped to have their own organizations. This was not permitted, however, although a Lemko branch of the government-funded Ukrainian cultural society existed for awhile and a Lemko dialect page ("*lemkivska storona*") appeared in that organization's weekly newspaper. Since the Lemkos scattered throughout the country were living in a Polish environment, many enrolled their children in Polish-language schools. When in certain communities Lemkos had the possibility to attend minority language schools or classes, they were given instruction in Ukrainian.

In Czechoslovakia, specifically the Prešov Region of northeastern Slovakia, the situation was even more complex. The Communists did not come to power until 1948, and it was to be another four years until the language question was "resolved." From 1945 until 1952, the situation was truly paradoxical. All of the group's cultural and political organizations were called *Ukrainian*, yet in actual fact the language of their publications, theatrical performances, and instruction in schools was Russian. This approach responded to the interwar tradition in eastern Slovakia that was continued during World War II, whereby instruction at the very elementary levels was in Rusyn vernacular but at the higher and *gymnasium* levels in Russian. New Russian-language textbooks were published and some teachers were imported from the Soviet Union for instruction throughout the 275 elementary and nearly 50 higher-level schools (1948/1949) throughout the Prešov Region.⁴²

In 1950, the Czechoslovak Communist government, following the Soviet model, abolished the Greek Catholic Church throughout the country and took over control of the school system. Then, in June 1952, the nationality and language policy was abruptly changed. Russian-language instruction in all schools was replaced with Ukrainian, and a new "cultural organization of Ukrainian workers" was established to promote publications and other cultural activity that followed Soviet

⁴²Among the textbooks in use were: Aleksandr Ljubimov, *Načal'naja grammatika dlja 6-8 goda obučeniya narodnykh škol* (Prešov, 1944); Ivan Vanca, *Novyj bukvar' dlja 1-ogo goda russkich narodnykh škol* (Prešov, 1945); and M.M. Lichvar, *Naša reč': kniga dlja čtenija dlja 2-go i 3-go godov obučeniya načal'noj školy* (Prešov, 1947).

Ukrainian linguistic and ideological models.

Initially, language guidelines were provided by a brief guide to Ukrainian orthography for specific use in former Prešov Region Russian-language schools.⁴³ But this gradualist approach was almost immediately replaced by the importation of textbooks from the Soviet Ukraine, and the adoption of literary Ukrainian without any consideration for local Rusyn conditions. This policy was also adopted by the Department (Katedra) of Ukrainian Language and Literature which was established in September 1953 at Šafárik University in Prešov to train teachers for service in the new Ukrainian-language school system.

As a result of such short-sighted linguistic practices and the abrupt bureaucratic manner in which Ukrainian was introduced—all carried out during the height of Stalinist repression—the Rusyn populace reacted by sending their children to Slovak schools in neighboring towns or by demanding Slovak instead of Ukrainian schools in their villages. This process of voluntary slovakization spread rapidly during the 1960s. If in 1948, when the Communists had come to power, there were 322 Rusyn (actually Russian-language) schools with over 23,000 pupils, when Communist rule disappeared in late 1989 there were only 15 schools left with just 900 pupils, in which a few subjects were taught in Ukrainian.⁴⁴ Thus, the Rusyn language question in Slovakia was "resolved" as in Soviet Transcarpathia by the adoption of Ukrainian. The cost, however, was a two-third's decline in the number of Rusyns who willingly assimilated and adopted a Slovak national identity.

The situation among the Rusyn minority in Yugoslavia's Vojvodina was entirely different. There the Rusyn nationality and the Rusyn language were officially recognized. In fact, by 1974, Rusyn became one of the five official languages of the autonomous province of the

⁴³*Korotki pravyla ukrajins'koho pravopysu dlja vžytku Prjašivščyny* (Prešov, 1952). This work was actually written by the distinguished linguist and pedagogue, Ivan Pan'kevyč, who worked in interwar Subcarpathian Rus' and then moved to Prague during the war. Because the Communists suspected Pan'kevyč of being a Ukrainian bourgeois nationalist, the guidebook was simply signed by the "research staff" of the Cultural Union of Ukrainian Workers.

⁴⁴Ivan Vanat, Mychajlo Ryčalka, and Andrij Čuma, *Do pytan' pisljavojenneho rozvytku, sučasneho stanu ta perspektyv ukrajins'koho škil'nyctva v Slovaččyni* (Prešov, 1992).

Vojvodina. With liberal funding from the Communist (but non-Soviet dominated) Yugoslav government, a Rusyn-language publishing house, press, elementary and secondary school system, and radio and television programming came into being. A series of school grammars, a codification of grammatical norms, and a terminological dictionary were prepared by Mikola Kočiš (1928-1973).⁴⁵ In order to enhance further knowledge and use of the Bačka-Srem or Vojvodinian variant of Rusyn, in 1973 a professorship and by 1981 a Department (Katedra) of Rusyn a Language and Literature was established at the University of Novi Sad, and in the early 1970s a Society for Rusyn Language and Literature came into being. While some Rusyn cultural activists in Yugoslavia believed that their people were part of the Ukrainian nationality, they never switched to the Ukrainian language, but continued to publish, teach, and develop further what scholars in other parts of the world were, by the 1980s, describing as a sociologically complete distinct "Slavic micro-language."⁴⁶

Like the Rusyns in Yugoslavia, Rusyns in the United States also began after World War II to prepare grammars, phrasebooks, and even dictionaries that used a vernacular-based Rusyn language instead of the variants of Russian that were popular in the 1920s and 1930s. Some of these new texts used the Latin alphabet, which made understanding easier for American-born students who otherwise spoke and were educated primarily in English.⁴⁷

⁴⁵Mikola M. Kočiš, *Macerinska bešeda: gramatika za V-VI, VII i VIII klasu osnovnej školi* [3 pts.] (Novi Sad, 1965-68), 2nd ed.: *Gramatika ruskoho jazika za V i VI klasu osnovnej školi* (Novi Sad, 1974-77); Mikola M. Kočiš, *Priručni terminološki rečnik srpsko-hrvatsko-rusinsko-ukrajinski* (Novi Sad, 1972); Mikola Kočiš, *Pravopis ruskoho jazika* (Novi Sad, 1971).

⁴⁶The term was popularized by A. D. Duličenko, *Slavjanskije literaturnye mikrojazyki* (Tallin, 1981), who considers Vojvodinian Rusyn one of the twelve micro-languages within the Slavic world. By the late 1970s, the Vojvodinian-Rusyn language phenomenon had captured the attention of Slavic linguists worldwide, including Henrik Birnbaum (United States), Aleksander Duličenko (Estonia), Sven Gustavsson (Sweden), Horace Lunt (United States), and Jiří Marvan (Australia), among others.

⁴⁷John Slivka, *English-Rusin Dictionary* (Brooklyn, N.Y., 1973—unpublished) and his *Rusin-English Dictionary* (Brooklyn, N.Y., 1973—unpublished); Atanasij Pekar', *Lekcii z rus'koho jazyka/Lessons in Ruthenian* (Pittsburgh, Pa., 1975—unpublished); Paul R. Magocsi, *Let's Speak Rusyn/Bisidujme po-rus'kyj*:

The return of the Rusyn language question

The political changes that began in the Soviet Union during the late 1980s and that culminated in the Revolution of 1989 had a profound impact on all countries where Rusyns lived. The Communist regimes that for four decades had determined nationality and language policies collapsed, as did most of the countries where Rusyns lived. In December 1991, those living in Soviet Transcarpathia found themselves in an independent Ukraine. By mid-1992, the Rusyn community in Yugoslavia was divided between two countries, with the Vojvodina remaining in a reduced Yugoslavia (Serbia-Montenegro) and the Srem becoming a war-torn zone that was theoretically part of an independent Croatia. Finally, in January 1993, Rusyns in the Prešov Region were living in an independent Slovakia.

The profound changes in state structures and political systems that took place between 1989 and 1992 underscored what many had for some time suspected. Despite its propandistic statements, the Communist regimes repressed but did not resolve certain social problems. Among those problems was the question of national identity and language among Rusyns. On the eve of 1989, several cultural activists began to express their dissatisfaction with the Ukrainian-language orientation and argued the case for publications in Rusyn vernacular. In Poland, a few collections of poetry were published in the Lemko variant of Rusyn, and at the outset of 1989 a Rusyn-language magazine (*Besida*) began to appear. Meanwhile, in the Prešov Region of what was still Communist Czechoslovakia, a small circle of Greek Catholic activists led by Father František Krajnjak (b. 1957), prepared for publication several church manuals in the local Rusyn dialect (the area around the town of Medzilaborce).⁴⁸ The goal was to propagate the faith, especially to young people, in a language that they could most easily understand.

Prešov Region Edition (Englewood, N.J., 1976; 3rd ed., 1989); and Paul R. Magocsi, *Let's Speak Rusyn/Hovorim po-rus'kyj: Transcarpathian Edition* (Fairview, N.J., 1979).

⁴⁸In the late 1980s, Krajnjak actually set up a small "language commission" to help with his work. Of the half a dozen religious texts he prepared, to date only one has been published in parallel Cyrillic- and Latin-alphabet Rusyn texts: František Krajnjak, *Malšij grekokatolyc'kijj katechizm pro rusyns'kyj dity* (Prešov, 1992).

These tentative first steps to publish in the Rusyn vernacular were transformed by the political changes that took place in late 1989 and 1990. In all countries where Rusyns lived, new Rusyn cultural organizations were established, and each one was based on the principle that Rusyns comprise a distinct nationality and should have their own literary language. Several of the organizations also began to publish a newspaper or magazine in the Rusyn vernacular. These included in Ukraine: *Otčij chram* (Užhorod, 1990-91) and *Podkarpats'ka Rus'* (Užhorod, 1992-present) of the Society of Carpatho-Rusyns (Tovarystvo/Obščestvo Karpats'kych Rusynov); in Slovakia: *Rusyn* (Medzilaborce and Prešov, 1990-present) and *Narodný novynký* (Prešov, 1991-present) of the Rusyn Renaissance Society (Rusyns'ka Obroda); and in Poland: *Besida* (Krynica, 1989-present) of the Society of Lemkos (Stovaryšnja Lemkiv). Also, the professional Ukrainian National Theater in Prešov, Slovakia, which since the early 1950s performed in Ukrainian, changed its name in late 1990 to the Aleksander Duchnovyč Theater and since then has been presenting most of its plays in Rusyn.

The rebirth of a Rusyn national and language orientation came as a surprise to the Ukrainian cultural, educational, and publishing institutions. Their spokespersons—many of whom were before 1952 advocates of a Russian orientation—thought that the nationality and language question had been resolved, whether by Communist-inspired administrative decree or as a result of the 'natural' evolution of history. The first reaction of the Ukrainianists was to poke fun at the initial efforts of the pro-Rusyn activists and their amateur-like proclamations that large-scale dictionaries and a codified Rusyn literary standard were about to appear imminently.⁴⁹ When, however, the rhetoric was replaced by concrete publications and linguistic work, and it became evident the Rusyn orientation was not about to disappear, Ukrainians argued that Rusynism was little more than a politically-inspired 'anti-historical' and 'anti-scholarly' aberration provoked by elements who wished to undermine Ukraine and to assimilate further "Rusyn-Ukrainians" living abroad in Slovakia and Poland.

⁴⁹For such claims, see the Rusyn enthusiast from Transcarpathia, Volodymyr Fedynyšynec', *Myrna naša rusyns'ka put'* (Prešov, 1992), esp. pp. 24-28; and the critical Ukrainian reaction by Mykola Myšynka, *Rusynizm na antyukrajins'kij osnovi: perša knyžka 'Rusyns'koji obrody'* (Prešov, 1992).

Thus, by the early 1990s there was a full-fledged return to the polemics about language and national identity that had characterized the interwar years.⁵⁰ There were attacks, for instance, about the very idea of a magazine called *Rusyn* before it even appeared. Ukrainian polemicists and scholars were convinced that "from the standpoint of philology, there is simply no reason to create a so-called Rusyn literary language."⁵¹

Aside from polemics, the Ukrainian orientation faced its own problems, especially in Poland and Slovakia where at best Ukrainian has the status of a minority language. In Slovakia, for instance, Ukrainian spokespersons agreed with their Rusyn critics that the manner in which the Ukrainian language was administratively implemented in the early 1950s had a negative impact on its reception. In an attempt to reverse the perception among many local Rusyns that Ukrainian was a foreign language, there were calls after 1989 to bring Ukrainian closer to its potential users by adding more local dialectal words. Also, to emphasize the Ukrainian argument that the name *Rusyn* is just an older form for *Ukrainian*, a new hybrid term, *Rusyn-Ukrainian*, was adopted to describe the East Slavs in the Carpathians.⁵² As recently as 1994, the head of the Union of Rusyn-Ukrainians in Slovakia proclaimed that "our organization has used and will continue to use the contemporary Ukrainian literary language with a highly democratic [sic] infusion of regional dialects."⁵³ In actual fact, however, Ukrainian publications and radio broadcasts in Slovakia, Ukraine, and for the most part in Poland avoid any local dialectisms.

Meanwhile, the Rusyn orientation has argued that the Ukrainian

⁵⁰Among the numerous polemical pamphlets by Ukrainians, all fiercely critical of the Rusyn movement are: Jurij Baleha and Josyf Sirka, *Čto my je i čyji my dity?* (Kiev, 1991); Mykola Mušynka, *Polityčnyj rusynizm na praktyci* (Prešov, 1991); Oleksa Myšanyč, *'Karpatorusynstvo': joho džerela j evoljucija u XX st.* (Kiev, 1992); Stepan Hostynjak, *Pro četyrtij schidnoslov'jans'kyj narod ta pro plačeni vyhadky j nisenitnyci kupky komediantiv* (Prešov, 1992); and Ivan Vanat, *Do pytannja pro tak zvanu ukrajinizaciju rusyniv Prjašivščyny* (Prešov, 1993).

⁵¹Mikuláš Štec, *K otázke 'rusínskeho' spisovného jazyka* (Prešov, 1991), p. 22.

⁵²The justification for the hyphenated name is found in Mikuláš Štec, *Rusini či Ukrajinci* (Prešov, 1992).

⁵³Viktor Koval', "Zvit Rady Sojuzu rusyniv-ukrajinciv Slovac'koji respubliky," *Nove žyttja* (Prešov), January 3, 1994, p. 2.

language and nationality policy during the four decades of Communist rule has led to large-scale assimilation in Poland and Slovakia and to the degradation (some even speak of "genocide") of traditional Rusyn life and culture in Ukraine. In an attempt to reverse this process and to restore a sense of Rusyn identity, one of the movement's primary goals is the codification of a standard Rusyn literary language. Aside from the newspapers and magazines mentioned above and a few Rusyn books that have appeared in Slovakia, Poland, and even Hungary, there have been several attempts at creating a Rusyn literary standard. All have appeared since 1992 and include: in Ukraine—a grammar by Ihor Kerča and Vasyl' Sočka-Boržavyn, and a poetic guide to dialectal words by Ivan Petrovcij⁵⁴; in Slovakia—an orthographic rule book and terminological dictionary by Vasyl' Jabur and Jurij Pan'ko, and a primer and reader by Jan Hryb⁵⁵; and in Poland—two grammars by Myroslava Chomjak, and a 9,000-word Lemko-Polish dictionary by Jaroslav Horoščak.⁵⁶

These burgeoning efforts on the part of a Rusyn literary language which have occurred in three different countries began as the relatively isolated creative acts of individual authors. The result was the development of almost as many different standards as there were authors, compilers, and editors. In an attempt to put some order and coordination into these efforts, a working seminar on the Rusyn language was convened in Bardejovské Kúpele, Slovakia on November 6-7, 1992. Rusyn writers and editors from Ukraine, Poland, Slovakia, Yugoslavia, and Hungary joined with scholars from those countries and from the United States, Sweden, Switzerland, and Monaco to discuss: (1) theoretical issues concerning language-building, especially among "small" peoples; (2) and practical ways in which the Rusyn codifiers can coordinate their efforts.

The results of the November 1992 seminar, which has come to be

⁵⁴Y. Kerča and V. Sočka-Boržavyn, *Rusyn'skŷj jazŷk: očerŷk kompleksnoji praktŷčnoji gramatykŷj* (unpublished typescript, 1992); Ivan Petrovcij, *Dialektarij, aboŷ myla knyžočka rusyn'skoji bysidŷj u virŷach* (Uŷhorod, 1993).

⁵⁵See below, notes 58 and 59.

⁵⁶Myroslava Chomjak, *Gramatyka lemŷivskoho jazŷka* (Legnica, 1992) and *Lemŷivska gramatyka dlja dity* (Legnica, 1992); Jaroslav Horoščak, *Perŷyj lemŷivsko-pol'skij slovnyk/Pierwszy slownik lemŷowsko-polski* (Legnica, 1993).

known as the First Congress of the Rusyn Language, were as follows. The participants accepted the "Romansch model," that is to allow the development of four standards based on dialects in the countries where Rusyn live: Ukraine, Poland, Slovakia, and Yugoslavia. One standard, Vojvodinian Rusyn in Yugoslavia, already exists; the three others for Transcarpathia, the Lemko Region, and the Prešov Region need to be codified. The participants also agreed to meet periodically to exchange views on their own codifying work as well as to agree on as many principles as possible that will form the basis of an eventual "fifth" Rusyn literary standard, or *koiné* that would be common to all regions. Regardless of which standard is formed, it was decided that Rusyn should appear in the Cyrillic alphabet and be based on the "living spoken language in each of the regions where Rusyns live (Subcarpathia, Lemko Region, Prešov Region, Vojvodina)."⁵⁷

The First Congress of the Rusyn Language also proposed the creation of "a theoretical and applied language institute," which two months later actually came into being in Prešov, Slovakia. The newly-formed Institute of Rusyn Language and Culture has, since its establishment in January 1993, served as a coordinating center for the work of Rusyn language codifiers in all countries where they live. Its first director, Jurij Pan'ko, published a preliminary set of rules for orthography and morphology and completed with input from codifiers in other countries a dictionary (1,100 entries) of Rusyn linguistic terminology.⁵⁸ Under

⁵⁷"Scholarly Seminar on the the Codification of the Rusyn Language," *Carpatho-Rusyn American*, XV, 4 (Pittsburgh, Pa., 1992), pp. 4-5—reported on favorably in several professional journals: *Österreichische Osthefte* (Vienna), *Scottish Slavonic Review* (Glasgow), *International Journal of the Sociology of Language* (Berlin and New York), *Europa Ethnica* (Vienna), *Revue d'études slaves* (Paris), *Canadian Review of Studies in Nationalism* (Charlottetown), *Slovanský přehled* (Prague), *Nova dumka* (Zagreb), *Slavia* (Prague), and *Zeitschrift für Slawistik* (Berlin). The only negative assessment, which talked of "deceit, lies, and falsehoods," was the polemic by the Ukrainian ethnographer Mykola Muŷynka, *Seminar dlja 'izbrannŷch'* (Prešov, 1992).

⁵⁸Jurij Pan'ko, *Normŷ rusyn'skoho pravopysu* (Prešov, 1992) and his *Rusyn'skorus'ko-ukrajin'sko-sloven'sko-pol'skŷj slovnyk lingvistyčnych terminiv* (Prešov, 1994). Despite the declared intent of the author that the rules (*normŷ*) were only proposals for discussion and only about orthography, Ukrainian critics analyzed them as if they were a new standard, then rejected them on principle because they did not conform to Ukrainian grammatical patterns. Cf. Mykola Štec' and Jurij

its present director, Vasyl' Jabur, the institute has published a *Rulebook for the Rusyn Writing System*, a 42,000-word orthographic dictionary, a primer and reader for elementary schools, and is completing work on a grammar.⁵⁹ Finally, the institute is expecting to be transformed into a Department (*Katedra*) of Rusyn Language and Literature at the School of Education (Pedagogical Faculty) of Šafárik University in Prešov.⁶⁰

Conclusion

Thus, the language question that has been part of Rusyn cultural and political life ever since the seventeenth century is still alive and well on the threshold of the twenty-first century. That there are and will continue to be polemics about the issue is not at all surprising, because as the distinguished sociolinguist Joshua Fishman commented after returning from the first Rusyn language congress in 1992:

The replacement of one literary elite by another is never an easy or pleasant affair, and the old-guard self-defined Ukrainian elite can be expected to campaign vigorously against the 'Young Turks,' Rusyn self-defining elites who [themselves] are self-declared candidates for the 'perks' that have until now supported the Old Guard's Ukrainian ethnic and linguistic orientation.⁶¹

Nonetheless, the struggle between the Rusyn and Ukrainian elites is only one, and ultimately not the most important aspect of the problem. For a language to succeed it must have users and therefore be accepted by the people for whom the literary standard has ostensibly been created. And this brings us back to the issue of *dignitas*, which has

Mulyčak, *Analiz norm pravopysu t.zv. rusyns'koji movy* (Prešov, 1992)—reprinted in *Ukrajins'ka diaspora*, II, 4 (Kiev, 1993), pp. 66-79.

⁵⁹Vasyl' Jabur et al., *Pravyla rusyns'koho pravopysu* (Prešov, 1994); Jurij Pan'ko et al., *Orfografičnyj slovnyk rusyn'skoho jazýka* (Prešov, 1994); Jan Hryb, *Bukvar' pro rusyn'ský dity* (Prešov, 1994) and *Čitanka pro rusyn'ský* (Prešov, 1994).

⁶⁰Vasyl' Jabur, "Treba kadrovo posylnynty Inštytut," *Narodný novynký* (Prešov), March 30, 1994, p. 2.

⁶¹"A brief post-script by a non-Rusyn participant"—Joshua A. Fishman—in Paul Robert Magocsi, "Scholarly Seminar on the Codification of the Rusyn Language," *International Journal of the Sociology of Language*, No. 104 (Berlin and New York, 1993), p. 124.

been a constant theme from the very outset of the Rusyn language question over three centuries ago. In the past, several linguistic forms were at one time or another proposed as worthy of use as literary languages: the Rusyn vernacular, Church Slavonic, Russian, Ukrainian, and even Hungarian, Slovak, or Polish. Today, the field has been narrowed down to two alternatives—Rusyn and Ukrainian—and when the emotion-laden polemics and scholarly arguments are stripped away, the issue is once again *dignitas*. Are the local dialects—as pro-Rusyn activists argue—able to be codified, and will they be perceived as worthy to represent the needs of a people at all levels of their cultural, administrative, and educational life? Or, as the pro-Ukrainian activists argue, are such language-building efforts unnecessary, because "Rusyn-Ukrainians" already have a literary language in the form of Ukrainian which is capable of satisfying all their needs?

The Rusyn language question has, indeed, been revisited. It seems certain that in all countries where Rusyns live there will continue to be writers who will produce publications and school textbooks in both Rusyn and Ukrainian. Less certain is the degree to which one or both of these languages—and national orientations—will be accepted as their own by the indigenous East Slavic populace of Carpathian Rus'.