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Our People at 40: A Special Section

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Резуме

***Our People* по 40 роках. Специяльна секция**

Кєд перед 40 роками напечатано книжку Павла Роберта Маґочія *Our People: Carpatho-Rusyns and Their Descendants in North America* (Нашы люде: Карпатскы Русины і іх потомны в Америці), была то перша обшырна історія карпаторусиньскых іміґрантскых спільнот в Зъєднаных Штатах і Канаді. Была она так науковым, як і популярным текстом, што чынило з нєй «біблию» для вельох карпаторусиньскых Американців і Канадийців. Помагала она ім зрозуміти кым сут, одкале походят і чом іх предкы забрали ся з Європы, жебы осісти за Вельком Млаком. Єдночасно тота публикация стала ся початковом базом для вченых, што занимают ся темом Карпатскых Русинів в Америці. Приняли они єй наррацию што до формы і трансформаций карпаторусиньской міґрациі такой як доґму.

В 2023 р. опубликуване было пяте поправлене выданя книжкы *Our People* з уактуальненым текстом і пошыреном наррацийом, што стало ся нагодом, жебы провести дискусийный панель на шторічным Конґресі Асоцияциі Славяньскых, Східньоєвропскых і Євроазиятскых Студий (ASEEES) в Філядельфіі в Пенсильванії. Пятеро вченых – Патрішія А. Крафчік (Evergreen State College), Річард Кастер (Carpatho-Rusyns of Pennsylvania), Роберт Зекер (Saint Francis Xavier University), Богдан Горбаль (New York Public Library) і Ніколяс Кайл Купенскій (United States Air Force Academy) – дискутувало над історийом Маґочія, подля принципу *pro et contra*. Аналізували його выповіди на тему культуры, економіі, расы, реліґіі і соспільства і критычні пізрили на його текст в сопоставліню з актуальныма досліджынями в обшыри

культуровых студий над дияспором, міґрацийных студий, транснародовых студий і досліджынь над робітничом клясом.

Взором подібных, специяльных секций посвяченых творчости Маґочія, опубликуваных в «Nationalities Papers» (2011, 2019), сеса публикация з симпозиі під наголовком Our People *at 40* (Нашы люде по 40 роках) зберат і пошырят одповіди панелистів на пяте поправлене выданя той історіі. В навязаню до темы сесого чысла «Річника Руской Бурсы» авторе омавляют значыня той канонічной студиі карпаторусиньской міґраций і оціняют стан днешніх досліджынь в обшыри карпаторусиньскых студий в Америці.

Ключовы слова: міґрацийны студиі, перформатывніст плоти, ґлобальне село, народова обоятніст, постпамят, студиі над робітничом клясом, транснародовіст

Abstrakt

***Our People* po 40 latach. Sekcja specjalna**

Kiedy 40 lat temu została opublikowana książka Paula Roberta Magocsi'ego *Our People: Carpatho-Rusyns and Their Descendants in North America* (Nasi ludzie: Karpatorusini i ich potomkowie w Ameryce Północnej), była to pierwsza obszerna historia wspólnot imigrantów karpackorusińskich w Stanach Zjednoczonych i Kanadzie. Była zarówno tekstem naukowym, jak i popularnym, stając się „biblią" dla wielu karpackorusińskich Amerykanów i Kanadyjczyków, pomagając im zrozumieć, kim są, skąd pochodzą i dlaczego ich przodkowie opuścili Europę, aby zamieszkać w Nowym Świecie. Jednocześnie publikacja ta stała się punktem wyjścia dla naukowców zajmujących się tematem Rusinów Karpackich w Ameryce, którzy potraktowali jej narrację dotyczącą kształtu i przemian migracji karpackorusińskiej niemal jak dogmat.

W 2023 r. opublikowano 5. poprawione wydanie książki *Our People* z odświeżonym tekstem i rozszerzoną narracją, co stało się okazją do przeprowadzenia panelu dyskusyjnego na dorocznym kongresie Asocjacji Studiów Słowiańskich, Wschodnioeuropejskich i Eurazjatyckich (ASEEES) w Filadelfii w Pensylwanii. Pięcioro naukowców – Patricia A. Krafcik (Evergreen State College), Richard Custer (Carpatho-Rusyns of Pennsylvania), Robert Zecker (Saint Francis Xavier University), Bogdan Horbal (New York Public Library) oraz Nicholas Kyle Kupensky (United States Air Force Academy) – podjęło dyskusję nad historią Magocsi'ego, przyjmując podejście *pro et contra*. Analizowali jego omówienia kultury, gospodarki, rasy, religii i społeczeństwa oraz krytycznie zestawili jego tekst z aktualnymi badaniami w dziedzinie studiów kulturowych, studiów nad diasporą, studiów migracyjnych, studiów transnarodowych i badań nad klasą pracującą.

Na wzór podobnych, specjalnych sekcji poświęconych pracy Magocsi'ego, opublikowanych w „Nationalities Papers" (2011, 2019), niniejsza publikacja z sympozjum zatytułowana Our People *at 40* (Nasi ludzie po 40 latach) zbiera i rozszerza odpowiedzi panelistów na 5. poprawione wydanie tej historii. Nawiązując do tematyki tego numeru „Rocznika Ruskiej Bursy", autorzy omawiają znaczenie tego kanonicznego studium migracji Rusinów Karpackich i oceniają stan współczesnych badań nad Karpatorusinami w Ameryce.

Słowa kluczowe: studia migracyjne, performatywność płci, globalna wioska, obojętność narodowa, postpamięć, studia nad klasą pracującą, transnarodowość

Keywords: Migration studies, gender performativity, global village, national indifference, postmemory, working-class studies, transnationalism

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Our People and the New Carpatho-Rusyn American Studies

I. Looking Back at *Our People*: An Introduction

When Paul Robert Magocsi's *Our People: Carpatho-Rusyns and Their Descendants in North America* (1984) was published 40 years ago, it was the first comprehensive history of the Carpatho-Rusyn immigrant communities in the United States and Canada. Both an academic and popular text, it has become the "bible" for many of the 600,000 Carpatho-Rusyn Americans and Canadians to understand who they are, where they are from, and why their ancestors left Europe for the new world. At the same time, it has become the starting point for Carpatho-Rusyn American scholars who have treated its narrative about the shape and transformations of Carpatho-Rusyn migration largely as gospel. Its thematic organization, Magocsi's signature maps and text inserts, the rich illustrations, high-quality glossy pages, and useful "Root Seeker's Guide to the Homeland" have made it an indispensable cornerstone of Carpatho-Rusyn American scholarship.

Our People was one of the first texts that helped establish Professor Magocsi's reputation as leading scholar of immigration history. While a research fellow at the Harvard Ukrainian Research Institute, he began to study the history of Slavic migration to North America and edited *The Ukrainian Experience in the United States: A Symposium* (1979). He also was the map editor for the *Harvard Encyclopedia of American Ethnic Groups* (1980) and contributed an entry on Carpatho-Rusyns, which would become the blueprint for *Our People*. Also noteworthy is his popular history *The Carpatho-Rusyn Americans* (1989), entry on Carpatho-Rusyns in *The Gale Encyclopedia of Multicultural America* (1995), and *Encyclopedia of Canada's Peoples* (1999). Today, a Professor of History and Political Science and the John Yaremko Chair of Ukrainian Studies at the University of Toronto, Professor Magocsi is the author of over 1,000 publications on history, sociolinguistics, bibliography, cartography and immigration studies.

In 2023, the 5th revised edition of *Our People* was published with a refreshed text and expanded narrative, the release of which became the occasion for a book panel at the Association for Slavic, East European, and Eurasian Studies (ASEEES) annual convention in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. Five scholars—Patricia A. Krafcik (The Evergreen State College), Richard D. Custer (Carpatho-Rusyns of Pennsylvania), Robert Zecker (Saint Francis Xavier University), Bogdan Horbal (New York Public Library), and Nicholas Kyle Kupensky (United States Air Force Academy)—responded to Magocsi's history by adopting a *pro et contra* approach. They analyzed his discussions of culture, economics, race, religion, and society and critiqued his text by comparing it with current scholarship in cultural studies, diaspora studies, migration studies, transnational studies, and working-class studies.

Echoing similar special sections on Magocsi's work published in *Nationalities Papers* (2011, 2019), this published symposium entitled "*Our People* at 40" collects and expands the panel's responses to the 5th revised edition of the history. In support of the theme of this issue of *Richnyk Ruskoi Bursŷ*, the authors discuss the importance of Magocsi's canonical study of the Carpatho-Rusyn migration and assess the state of the field of Carpatho-Rusyn American Studies today.

II. *Pro et contra*

The book symposium begins with Patricia A. Krafcik's article "The Evolution and Impact of *Our People*," which analyzes the transformations in each of the five editions. The most noticeable change is the cover of *Our People*, which reflects, Krafcik argues, four different modes of Carpatho-Rusyn American life: immigrants arriving at Ellis Island, a boarding house in coal country, a solitary woman scrubbing the floor of an office building, the cover of a Greek Catholic Union insurance policy. The covers illustrate the precarious journey from the Carpatho-Rusyn homeland to the hard-scrabble urban centers of America's industrial cities and small towns to a modicum of stability offered by the church and fraternal organizations. Krafcik suggests that these images should remind descendants of the first generation of immigrants of the sacrifices of their parents and grandparents and compel them to identify with other new arrivals to the United States today. She also collects testimonials from *Our People*'s readers that illustrate how the history helped them discover their Carpatho-Rusyn roots.

In his article "Our Bible of Carpatho-Rusyn American Religious Life," Richard D. Custer argues that the major achievement of the first edition of *Our People* was that it gave Carpatho-Rusyn Americans an immigration history that was not mediated by any one religious authority. He suggests that it has gained the status of secular scripture for its ability to tell a synthetic story of Carpatho-Rusyn American religious life that included Greek Catholic, Orthodox, and Protestant communities. Custer also proposes a more inclusive model of who ought to be considered a Carpatho-Rusyn American—one that includes many second-, third-, or fourth-generation immigrants who came to identify as Hungarian, Slovak, Russian, or Ukrainian Americans—and he illustrates his approach in an exercise that he calls "A Tale of Four Bishops," all of whom trace their origins to a small cluster of villages in Lemkovyna.

In his article "*Our People* Meet *Their* People: Race, Class, and the Carpatho-Rusyns," Robert M. Zecker discusses the intersection of class, ethnicity, and race in Carpatho-Rusyn American communities. While praising Professor Magocsi's achievement at bringing dignity to the Carpatho-Rusyn immigrant story, Zecker argues the valorization of the "Ellis Island saga" conceals many of its negative qualities. While first-generation Carpatho-Rusyn Americans often were viewed with disdain by native-born Americans, their children and grandchildren would go on to benefit from policies that allowed white—but

not black or brown—Americans to flee deindustrialized urban centers for the suburbs. He also emphasizes that Carpatho-Rusyn workers played a larger role in America's labor movement than *Our People* indicates, and the feelings of class or regional solidary that cut across ethnic and racial lines may explain fluid expressions of national identity (such as Hunky or Slavish) among Carpatho-Rusyns today.

In his article "Clubs, Picnics, Sports: Lemko Organizations, Yesterday and Today," Bogdan Horbal surveys the representation of Lemko organizations in *Our People* and examines their enduring legacies in the twenty-first century. Most importantly, Horbal discusses the role of social media in creating virtual Carpatho-Rusyn American communities, a phenomenon that is only briefly mentioned in the text and poses a different set of methodological challenges compared with the analysis of traditional brick-and-mortar institutions.

In his article "Carpatho-Rusyn Civilization?: Culture, Kitsch, and Values in the New World," Nicholas Kyle Kupensky explores how *Our People* interrogates competing models of Carpatho-Rusyn civilization and culture. He discusses how the text itself not only represents but has helped create nationally conscious Carpatho-Rusyn Americans, for its inclusive model of what it means to be Carpatho-Rusyn generates the feeling of "meanwhile in Carpatho-Rusyn America." At the same time, he argues that *Our People*'s focus on the aesthetic quality of cultural production not only relegates much of Carpatho-Rusyn American culture to kitsch, but also conceals the common values that artists express in their work. This common culture in the new world, he argues, is what has allowed so many Carpatho-Rusyn Americans to forget old forms of factionalism and develop a new, integrated identity in the twenty-first century.

In his article "Making *Our People*: The Author Responds," Paul Robert Magocsi tells the story of how the first draft of his history began with an encyclopedia entry and clarifies a number of issues raised by the reviewers, including how to refer to Carpatho-Rusyns, how to define who may be a Carpatho-Rusyn American, how to approach the study of Carpatho-Rusyns from north and south of the mountains, and how to balance the analysis of objective and subjective characteristics of a people. During the panel, Professor Magocsi regrettably noted that he does not plan to publish a 6th revised edition of *Our People*. In his comments, he reiterates that he is eager to see how the next generation of scholars will build upon, challenge, and revise his work.

Looking into the future, we can see how the articles collected in this special section contain the foundations of what we might call the New Carpatho-Rusyn

American Studies, the field of which may be structured by the following six disciplinary, methodological, and theoretical pillars: (1) Civic Engagement and the Public Humanities, (2) Women's and Gender Studies, (3) New Media Studies, (4) Transnational Studies, (5) Postcolonial Studies, and (6) Memory Studies.

III. Civic Engagement and the Public Humanities

The first pillar of the New Carpatho-Rusyn Studies will incorporate more voices from the community and calibrate our scholarship to make a positive impact on it. The labor historians John Russo and Sherry Lee Linkon argue that it is crucial for scholars and the communities they study to work collaboratively and call this form of intersubjective scholarship the New Working-Class Studies, a field that encourages historians to empower the communities they study to be coauthors of their histories (Russo, Linkon 2005). The next histories of Carpatho-Rusyn America should do the same.

In her article, Krafcik incorporates the voices of ordinary readers of *Our People,* who express their understanding of what it means to be Carpatho-Rusyn and do so in their own words. While Professor Magocsi has resisted the idea that he is an activist historian, many universities have embraced the positive effects that faculty can have on the places where they are located and fund initiatives in Civic Engagement to bind more closely town and gown (Magocsi 2008; Watson et al. 2011). In doing so, they have demonstrated in an age of budget cuts and decreasing enrollments that the so-called Public Humanities can make a meaningful impact on communities underserved by the academy. In fact, the development of public-facing initiatives in Carpatho-Rusyn Studies has already begun, such as Richard Custer's *The Carpatho-Rusyns of Pennsylvania* (2014–present) and Nicholas Kyle Kupensky's *The Emil Kubek Project* (2015–present).

In this respect, Carpatho-Rusyn scholars in Europe have led the way in civic engagement and the public humanities. Scholars at Jagiellonian University in Poland, Prešov University in Slovakia, Uzhhorod National University in Ukraine, and the University of Novi Sad in Serbia where tenured-faculty and research institutes located in or adjacent to the historical Carpatho-Rusyn homelands have used their intellectual capital to organize village-based events, write for newspapers, produce radio programs, participate in folk festivals, perform in dance and music groups, lead tours, and more broadly spend their

free time in the places that they study. While there are not yet chairs, departments, majors, or programs in Carpatho-Rusyn Studies in North America, the network of scholars loosely coordinated by the Carpatho-Rusyn Research Center ought to explore ways to work with and better integrate our scholarship into our North American communities.

IV. Gender and Performance

The field's second pillar is to explore in a more systematic fashion the role of gender in Carpatho-Rusyn America. While Professor Magocsi in the opening paragraphs of *Our People* registers that Carpatho-Rusyns continue to inhabit the "nondescript and grimy urban landscape" of the Rust Belt (Magocsi 2023, xi), scholars have not explored how the collapse of America's industrial heartland and the erosion of blue-collar jobs has transformed what it means to be a Carpatho-Rusyn American man. Likewise, more work must be done to establish the central role of the Carpatho-Rusyn American woman in migration narratives, a phenomenon that Krafcik alludes to in her discussion of the washerwoman on the 3rd edition's cover, Zecker addresses when recognizing that many immigrant women provided economic security to their families by running boarding houses, and Kupensky mentions in his discussion of Ann Walko's memoir *Eternal Memory* (1999). Indeed, many prominent leaders in North America have casually observed the matrilineal nature of Carpatho-Rusyn identity, for many—including the author of this article—tend to have a stronger identification with the Carpatho-Rusyn ancestry of their mother than, say, the Italian, Irish, German, Hungarian, Polish, Slovak, or Ukrainian roots of their father. Perhaps a new generation of scholars will find ways to explain this phenomenon or prove that it is nothing more than an anecdote.

At the same time, with gender as a lens, we also may be able to better see how the diaspora's food culture reflects the creativity of Carpatho-Rusyn American men and women. One possible starting point could be *Paňis' Cookbook* (1977), the popular, sprawling collection of old and new world recipes published by the American Carpatho-Russian Orthodox Diocese that has appeared in nine printings and two editions. Indeed, in her "Performing Pierogi" (2024), Anna D. Jaroszyńska-Kirchmann has suggested that "collective pierogi making has become an important symbolic action of claiming one's Polish American identity" (Jaroszyńska-Kirchmann 2024), a thesis that surely applies

to Carpatho-Rusyn communities as well. Scholars of the new Carpatho-Rusyn American Studies may find it useful to draw upon ideas of performativity and self-fashioning to explore the intersection between gender and ethnicity in the new world (Butler 1988, Greenblatt 1980). More importantly, we should begin to investigate almanacs, magazines, and newspapers to determine how Carpatho-Rusyn American men and women cultivated their subjectivity in the press. Here, Elaine Rusinko's approach to the art and life of Julia Warhola will serve as a model for these projects (Rusinko 2016; Rusinko 2022a; Rusinko 2022b; Rusinko 2024). Happily, new digitization projects—the Paul Robert Magocsi Carpatho-Ruthenica Collection at the University of Toronto, the magazine *Carpatho-Rusyn American* at the Carpatho-Rusyn Research Center, and the newspapers *Lemko* and *Karpatska Rus'* at the Lemko Association—will make these topics much more accessible than in the past.

V. Global Villages

For this reason, New Media Studies will be the third pillar of the New Carpatho-Rusyn Studies, as the field—belatedly but productively—enters the digital age (Manovich 2001). In his article, Horbal registers the need to document, preserve, and analyze the new Carpatho-Rusyn American media, which is especially urgent due to its ephemeral nature. This is no easy task. The first scholar to analyze the emergence of Carpatho-Rusyn digital media was Brian J. Požun, who described how the Carpatho-Rusyn Internet before the era of social media supported "the cohesion of Rusyn communities and the strength of the Rusyn movement" but could not replace the work of local and national communities (Požun 2005; Požun 2009, 387). In the past, Professor Magocsi also has been skeptical that digital media can make a meaningful impact on "real people living in concrete space" (Magocsi 2008, 888); however, in his comments to the special section, he unexpectedly acknowledges that today digital "instruments, like the Internet and social media, may be more effective than the traditional printed word"—or even, he suggests, the church!—in carrying out the "identity-building task." There now may be enough evidence to test this hypothesis, for new media scholars can analyze virtual Carpatho-Rusyn communities in a complex digital ecosystem that includes Rusyn-themed Yahoo and Facebook groups, Wikipedia pages, accounts on Instagram, channels on YouTube, threads on Twitter and X, and servers on Discord.

One of the already tangible impacts of new media is their democratization and dissemination of Rusyn-language materials. While Magocsi notes that "all religious and fraternal publications are almost completely in English" (Magocsi 2023, 109), third-, fourth-, and even fifth-generation Carpatho-Rusyn Americans have taken steps to reacquire proficiency in the language that was lost by their parents and grandparents. With the help of Rusyn-language dictionaries, phrasebooks, and textbooks, Carpatho-Rusyn Americans have started to study the Rusyn language in immersion environments—most notably at the Studium Carpatho-Ruthenorum in Prešov, Slovakia—and in virtual ones, whether in the Carpatho-Rusyn Society's online language courses, self-study groups on Zoom, and language lessons by Marko Lyshyk's *The American Lemko*. Case (Starik) Pollock at the Rusyn Literary Society (2020–2022) and the Society for Rusyn Evolution (2022–present) has funded and produced Rusyn-language content both for North America and the homeland. Some, such as the Slavic linguist Nathan Marks, have acquired such a high level of fluency in Rusyn that they contribute to Rusyn media outlets in Europe (Маркс 2024).

These developments call upon scholars to think through how Carpatho-Rusyn Americans are situated in what Marshall McLuhan has called the global village. When he popularized the concept in the 1960s, McLuhan anticipated that the rise of new media would allow for instantaneous communication among individuals all around the world, which would paradoxically replicate village-like networks on a planetary scale: "We live in a single constricted space resonant with tribal drums" (McLuhan 1962, 31). Similarly, Benedict Anderson has emphasized the role of the proliferation and circulation of print media, in particular, the novel and the newspaper, in constructing national consciousness (Anderson 1983, 25). If Carpatho-Rusyns in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries used print media to create international networks to link home and abroad, today digital media have brought about village-like behaviors, communities, and mentalities on the Carpatho-Rusyn Internet, a phenomenon that is creatively interrogated by the North American-based Facebook Group Rusyn Memes.

Founded in 2012, Rusyn Memes draws upon the viral discourse and images from American Internet culture and reproduces them with Carpatho-Rusyn content and references. A sign that Professor Magocsi's history has become ubiquitous among Carpatho-Rusyn Americans, some of the first memes published in the group make explicit reference to *Our People*. One image of Aleksander Dukhnovych is edited so that he is wearing dark-rimmed glasses and

captioned with "only hangs out with our people" (Rusyn Memes 2012b), which appropriates the fashion accessory that signifies craft culture, hyperlocal sensibilities, niche interests, and rejection of mainstream conceptions to reinterpret Dukhnovych as a hipster *avant la lettre* ("Hipster Glasses").

Figure 1. Hipster Dukhnovych, Rusyn Memes

That is, what vintage clothing was to twentysomethings in Williamsburg in the early 2000s, Carpatho-Rusyn culture was to Dukhnovych. To be considered "our people," Carpatho-Rusyn readers would have to be familiar with Dukhnovych's historical role as a national awakener, Magocsi's *Our People*, and the meaning and signifiers of hipster culture. The ability to get the joke allows Carpatho-Rusyns in the global village to accrue "cybercapital" and perform "their ethnicity by activity promoting it" (Silvestri 2016). A second image reproduces the cover of the 3rd edition of *Our People* with the washerwoman

and includes the caption "Červena Ruža lady goes 'Za Dunaj' in the fifth verse / Becomes a cover girl" ("Rusyn Memes" 2012a).

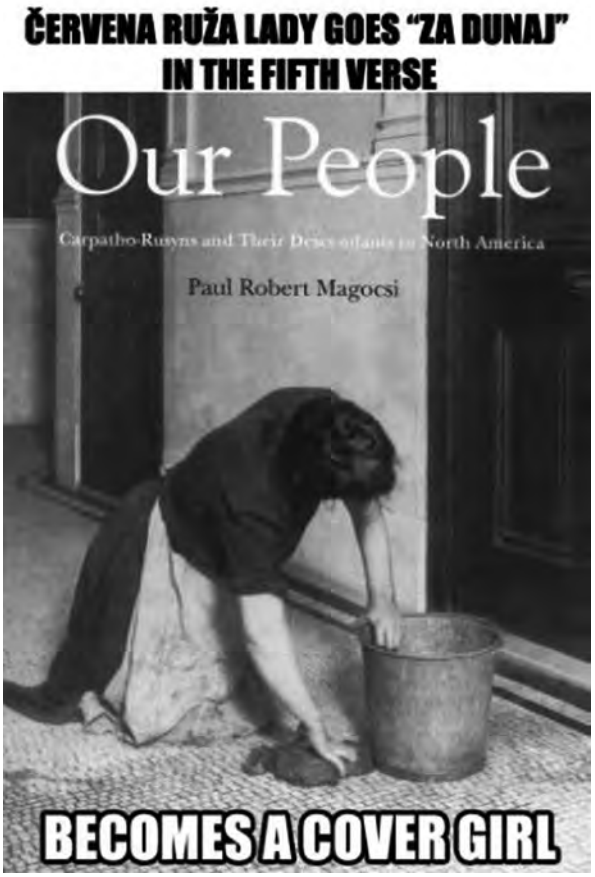

Figure 2. Our People Meme, Rusyn Memes

While Krafcik views the washerwoman as a touching reminder of under-appreciated and often unacknowledged women's work, Rusyn Memes reinterprets the migration story of Carpatho-Rusyn American women as the logical extension of perhaps the most popular Carpatho-Rusyn folk song *The Red Rose* (*Chervena ruzha*), which inhabits the voice of a woman who leaves her abusive, alcoholic husband by escaping Carpathian Rus' and traveling "beyond the Danube" (*za Dunai)*. Here, we can view the washerwoman—and by extension many Americans' Carpatho-Rusyn mothers and grandmothers—not only as a symbol of blue-collar American labor, but also as a nationally specific form of Carpatho-Rusyn women's liberation that aspires not for

approval and recognition on the pages of glamorous, glossy magazines but instead on the cover of Professor Magocsi's history. Like hipster Dukhnovych, the meaning is clear: today, the expression of Carpatho-Rusyn identity and a sophisticated knowledge of Carpatho-Rusyn culture is cool, hip, sexy. For this reason, Rusyn Memes has playfully claimed that it is actually "the world's most accurate source of information about Rusyns".

Figure 3. Bald Eagle and American Flag Meme, Rusyn Memes

VI. Digital Birds of Passage

In the era of the digital Carpatho-Rusyn global village, the conceptual borders between the new and old world, *Ameryts'ka Rus'* and *starŷi krai* are increasingly becoming blurred. For this reason, the fourth pillar of the New Carpatho-Rusyn American Studies will be Transnational Studies, which will

encourage scholars to view Carpathian Rus' not only as a physical place located at the intersection of Slovakia, Poland, Ukraine, and Romania, but a symbolic space that includes and integrates all the diasporic communities from Pannonia and Prague to Pennsylvania and the Pampas. At the same time, it will allow scholars working in North America greater latitude to find new conceptual paradigms to illuminate the specific realities, subjectivities, and allegiances of their Carpatho-Rusyn American subjects.

In many ways, there is nothing new about the transnational nature of Carpatho-Rusyn communities in the Western hemisphere. During the great Slavic migration of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, Professor Magocsi notes that approximately 16% of Carpatho-Rusyns returned to Europe (Magocsi 2023, 14), and these birds of passage often brought back with them an American mentality, hard-won economic capital, and Western social and political ideas. Meanwhile, Carpatho-Rusyn American leaders also exerted influence on the politics of interwar Carpathian Rus', especially through their advocacy to United States President Woodrow Wilson for the inclusion of Carpatho-Rusyns in the newly formed First Czechoslovak Republic and the appointment of Gregory Zhatkovych as the first governor of Subcarpathian Rus' (Magocsi 2023, 88–96; Magocsi 2020). After Carpatho-Rusyns in Europe found themselves behind the Iron Curtain and subject to Communist regimes that did not recognize them as a distinct nationality, Professor Magocsi registers that the new and old world no longer meaningfully shaped each other's societies for much of the second half of the twentieth century: "the decisive political influence that Carpatho-Rusyn immigrants had once been able to exert over events in Europe following World War I was no longer possible" (Magocsi 2023, 96). However, *Our People* concludes by cataloging the ways that the fall of the Berlin Wall and collapse of the Soviet Union brought about a renewed wave of collaboration between Carpatho-Rusyn communities around the world (Magocsi 2023, 112–116).

Today, Carpatho-Rusyns are as integrated as ever, as the transnational nature of the *Richnyk Ruskoi Bursŷ* itself attests. The twenty-first century's digital birds of passage include the increasingly online Paul Robert Magocsi Carpatho-Ruthenica Collection (the so-called Carpatho-Rusyn National Library), the Carpatho-Rusyn Research Center's digitized *Carpatho-Rusyn American,* Summer Seminars, and forthcoming online course *The People from Nowhere*, the Lemko Association's digitized newspapers *Lemko* and *Karpatska Rus'*, the Rusyn Literary Society's and Society for Rusyn Evolution's media hubs, and the Timo Foundation's documentary films, most notably Maria Silvestri

and John Righetti's *The Resurrection of a Nation* (2019). Likewise, while the twenty-first century has not seen a new wave of Carpatho-Rusyn immigration to the United States, articles and stories published by media outlets, such as Poland's *lem.fm,* Slovakia's *rusyn.fm*, and Ukraine's *Ottsiuznyna*, digitally migrate to North America every day.

At the same time, the ways to be a Carpatho-Rusyn American are as varied as they have ever been, a reality that is especially embraced by Carpatho-Rusyn Americans from Generation X (born 1965–1980), Millennials (born 1980–1995), Generation Z (born 1995–2010), and Generation Alpha (born 2010–present). Carpatho-Rusyn Americans are not only multiethnic, multiconfessional, and multicultural, but increasingly multiracial. They are gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender, queer, intersex, and asexual. Their families are documented and undocumented. And their Carpatho-Rusyn identities will variously clash with, echo, harmonize with, and illuminate their other intersectional identities, a phenomenon that has begun to be explored anecdotally but deserves a study of its own ("Carpatho-Rusyn Research Center" 2020; "Carpatho-Rusyn Research Center" 2021).

VII. Hunkies, Slavish, and National Indifference

While the new transnational networks established and maintained by Carpatho-Rusyn Americans allow scholars to think beyond the geographic and temporal limits of diasporic communities and across political boundaries, the new scholarship ought to bring to bear the methodologies and perspectives of Postcolonial Studies on the identities of today's Carpatho-Rusyn Americans. The first scholar to explore how Carpatho-Rusyn culture exhibits features of a postcolonial identity is Elaine Rusinko, whose *Straddling Borders: Literature and Identity in Subcarpathian Rus'* (2003) illuminates the fluidity of Carpatho-Rusyn identity, hybridity of its culture, heterogeneity of its languages, and discontinuity of its histories (Rusinko 2003, 15). Since Rusinko's study focuses exclusively on Carpatho-Rusyn literature in Europe, the next generation of scholars now must explore whether her theories apply to the diasporic and immigrant communities of the new world.

Professor Magocsi summarizes the four general orientations that Carpatho-Rusyn Americans have assumed about their ethnic identity or national orientation. Carpatho-Rusyn Americans may understand that they

are (1) a distinct "East Slavic nationality known as Rusyn, Rusnak, Ruthenian, Carpatho-Rusyn, or Uhro-Rusyn" or that they are part of (2) the Russian, (3) Slovak, or (4) Ukrainian nationality (Magocsi 2023, 99). He goes on to say that "for some individuals it is possible to be simultaneously a Rusyn and a Russian, or a Rusyn (Rusnak) and Slovak, or a Rusyn and Ukrainian," especially since "the vast majority of the group's members have preferred to consider themselves first and foremost Americans" (Magocsi 2023, 99–100). While Professor Magocsi chronicles the various ways that first- and second-generation immigrants were adopted, assimilated, or appropriated by these other national orientations, his core conviction—further illuminated in his article in this special section—is to restrict the concept of a Carpatho-Rusyn American to a person who "actively defines oneself as a Carpatho-Rusyn." While conceptually justified, this approach poses many difficulties and lacunae. An example from Rusyn Memes: one of the first memes published on the page parodies the struggles of the Carpatho-Rusyn Society (C-RS) to promote the existence of Carpatho-Rusyn identity and encourage new generations of Carpatho-Rusyns to opt in. A photograph of an elderly man and elderly woman bears the caption: "Joined C-RS 10 years ago. Still call themselves Slovak" (Rusyn Memes 2012a).

Figure 4. C-RS Meme, Rusyn Memes

That this is one of the first jokes made on the page illustrates the foundational nature of this phenomenon. In fact, I have experienced this ethnonational disconnect firsthand. After I delivered an hour-long lecture on the poetry of Andrii Karabelesh at a Carpatho-Rusyn Society event in New Jersey, the first question that a member of the audience asked was: "What is a Rusyn?" How are we to make sense of this using Magocsi's model? On the one hand, that these individuals identify as something other than Carpatho-Rusyn seems to mean that they ought not to be considered *our people*. On the other hand, should not their conscious choice to join the Carpatho-Rusyn Society or attend its events be read as a form of expressing Carpatho-Rusyn identity, even if the mode of expressing this identity does not conform to Professor Magocsi or the Carpatho-Rusyn Society's preferred categories? For this reason, Brendan Karch distinguishes between the "*value-driven* stance towards nationalism, typically embraced by activists" and "an *instrumental* stance towards nationalism, embraced by a large cross-section" of communities who often find creative and spontaneous ways to mimic the discourses of nationalism without internalizing their totalizing logic (Karch 2019, 182). In her analysis of Nikolai Gogol's complex national identity, Yuliya Ilchuk calls this phenomenon "hybrid self-fashioning," which draws upon Stephen Greenblatt's theory of self-fashioning as an act of subject formation and Homi Bhabha's concepts of mimicry and hybridity as forms of assimilation and subversion of colonial cultures (Ilchuk 2021, 42). In Carpatho-Rusyn American Studies, we still do not have a full view of the instrumental factors that influence individuals to opt into and out of the various orientations that Magocsi describes. We have not yet developed a critical vocabulary to navigate the subtle ways that individuals self-fashion, perform, subvert, and undermine their Carpatho-Rusyn identities.

For this reason, Custer, Kupensky, and Zecker all propose different models of identity formation to make sense of individuals who do not easily fit Magocsi's reasonable but restrictive definition of a Carpatho-Rusyn American, a framework that treats a conscious, positive articulation of Carpatho-Rusyn identity as a prerequisite. Zecker's previous scholarship has analyzed how the discourse, identities, and values of Carpatho-Rusyn Americans have been shaped by class, ethnicity, religion, and race (Zecker 2011, Zecker 2024). In his article, he suggests that the analysis of Carpatho-Rusyn identity demands an *integrative approach* that goes beyond ethnic or national identification and incorporates economic, regional, and transnational subjectivities. Custer

takes an *inclusive approach*, for the method that he employs in his "Tale of Four Bishops" illustrates how he includes as a member of the community any American whose ancestors could be viewed to be Carpatho-Rusyn. Kupensky argues that using a *value-driven approach* can allow scholars to widen the field of Carpatho-Rusyn culture even if not all its practitioners positively express a Carpatho-Rusyn identity: of equal importance are the artistic practices that they employ and the traditions that they belong to (Kupensky 2023a; Kupensky 2023b). The diversity of these approaches should be taken as a sign of the foundational importance of *Our People* to Carpatho-Rusyn Studies and the field's intellectual vitality to polemicize with it.

Beyond the four orientations that Professor Magocsi defines, activists and scholars alike know all too well that many Carpatho-Rusyn Americans do not identify with any of these groups and instead articulate creole, fluid, or hybrid identities. Agnieszka Halemba has observed that many Carpatho-Rusyns resist looking at the world through the lens of the "nation," although "citizenship" is often an important category. For this reason, she argues that many Carpatho-Rusyns in Ukraine favor an "anational self-identification," for "to declare oneself to be Rusyn is not necessarily to declare oneself to be a member of a nation" but often "a refusal to participate in the history of Europe seen through a national lens" (Halemba 2015, 125, 123). As a result, Halemba suggests that *anationalism* is often a way to express a certain ethic or moral view that eschews the logic of the nation. Tara Zahra has called this phenomenon "national indifference," a category she proposes to address "the absence of a suitable term to describe nonnational or nationally ambivalent populations" who have not been persuaded by the benefits or need to participate in nation-building projects (Zahra 2010, 98). One of the methodological challenges to studying the failures and limits of national consciousness, she argues, is that "national indifference has not left much of a paper trail" (Zahra 2010, 106). Yet, for scholars who want to examine populations who choose not to be *our people*, Professor Magocsi's history provides many fruitful further paths. For this reason, Rogers Brubaker and Frederick Cooper have suggested that scholars should rethink their use of "identity" as a category of analysis in favor of terms such as "loyalty," "affiliation," "identification," "self-understanding," or "subject position" (Brubaker, Cooper 2000, 1). Their broader definition of subjectivity allows for scholars to incorporate the many varied ways that Carpatho-Rusyn Americans conceptualize, express, and negotiate their selves.

Once again, the parodic creativity of Rusyn Memes has managed to anticipate the analytical categories that Carpatho-Rusyn American Studies may use in its scholarship.

Figure 5. Potential Rusyn Immigrant Identities—A Hierarchy, Rusyn Memes

Drawing upon the galaxy brain meme—which ironically represents a faulty or flawed thought process as an act of visionary genius—an image entitled "Potential Rusyn Immigrant Identities—A Hierarchy" illustrates the ecstatic flight of fancy when an individual realizes they are "Carpatho-Rusyn," which they view as a form of "Russian," then "Austrian," and eventually "Slavish" identity (Rusyn Memes 2019). While Magocsi suggests that many of the alternative identities that Carpatho-Rusyn Americans have assumed—like "Bohunk," "Hunky," "Polak," or "Slavish"—are, in essence, "meaningless" (Magocsi 2023, 76), Zecker argues that they may represent forms of class-based, interethnic,

or transnational solidarity. Scholars of the New Carpatho-Rusyn Studies ought to investigate these identifications, self-understandings, or subject positions as manifestations of anational identity, hybrid self-fashioning, instrumental nationalism, or national indifference as well.

VIII. Postmemory, Nostalgia, Retro

Professor Magocsi's histories have given scholars an encyclopedic view of what the Carpatho-Rusyn immigration looked like. The next step is to study how Carpatho-Rusyn Americans collectively remember—and misremember—this past. Thus, the final pillar of the new scholarship will be Memory Studies, a field that will allow academics to interrogate the production, maintenance, evolution, and contestation of narratives about Carpatho-Rusyn American history.

One useful point of departure may be Alison Landsberg's concept of prosthetic memory, or what she calls "a new form of public cultural memory" that emerges when links between "individual persons and community—kinship ties—were broken" and then replaced by mediated representations of the past (Landsberg 2004, 2). What makes a memory prosthetic is that it is not natural but "artificial," often "worn" as a sign of trauma, "interchangeable" with other commodified models, and aspires to articulate "an ethical relation to the other" (Landsberg 2004, 20–21). Indeed, many U.S. immigrants in the 1910s and 1920s expressed "a desire for a form of cultural amnesia enabled by 'remembering' an American rather than a European past" (Landsberg 2004, 51); thus, the concept of prosthetic memory allows us to make sense of the ways that Carpatho-Rusyn Americans misremember their families' immigration stories and creatively write themselves into the deep history of American culture, such as by converting to Protestantism (Magocsi 2023, 47). If Landsberg explores how American mass culture ruptured immigrants' ability to remember their homeland, Marianne Hirsch's theory of postmemory illustrates how traumas from the old world persisted across generations in the new one. Based upon her exploration of how the Holocaust is remembered not only by survivors but their children, Hirsch argues that the encounter with *images* of and *stories* about trauma has the power to generate new forms of trauma among populations who did not experience the atrocities first-hand. "Postmemory describes the relationship that the generation after those who witnessed cultural or collective trauma bears to the experiences of those who came before, experiences that they 'remember' only by means of the stories,

images, and behaviors among which they grew up," she writes: "But these experiences were transmitted to them so deeply and affectively as to *seem* to constitute memories in their own right" (Hirsch 2008, 106–107).

The new Carpatho-Rusyn American Studies can learn a lot from Memory Studies. In his article, Zecker rightly cautions that the field should not fall into the trap of glorifying the Ellis Island narrative. This warning is generally well heeded among scholars. One wonders, though, what has been the collective effect on the Carpatho-Rusyn American psyche of not only the real stories of determination and struggle but also the outlandish, tall tales of adventure, discrimination, or survival? Has the modern literature about the Carpatho-Rusyn immigrant story, say, in Thomas Bell's *Out of This Furnace* (1941), Ann Walko's *Eternal Memory* (1999), or Nicholas Stevensson Karas' *Hunky: The Immigrant Experience* (2004) not only represented the past but simulated memories among future generations? Has *Our People* not only chronicled the history of the Carpatho-Rusyn immigration but generated prosthetic memories or postmemories for its readers?

When writing the cultural history of the Carpatho-Rusyns of Pennsylvania's Coal Region, Erin Frey and I collected all the stories published in the local press from the 1880s to 1910s about Slavic immigrants and performed a discourse analysis of the results. The findings were not surprising but nonetheless shocking. The most common terms to refer to Slavic migrants were "strike," "shot," "killed," "murder," and, above all, "foreign" (Kupensky 2022, 140–141). Slavs were commonly referred to using degrading and derogatory language, including "brutes," "fiends," "rats," and "maniacs." In Jon Hagofsky's forthcoming essay "Roots" (2025), he describes the jarring emotional effect of reading in the twenty-first century ethnic slurs uttered about one's ancestors in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. "It was just beginning to set in that these were our families that the newspapers were talking about," he writes: "We were the 'fiends,' the 'tricksters,' and the 'brutes' from the Orient" (Hagofsky 2025). That is, Hagofsky's comments illustrate the power of nativist discourse from the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries to reach into the twenty-first century and have a traumatic effect.

Another field for future study will be to explore the parameters of Carpatho-Rusyn American nostalgia, or how Carpatho-Rusyns long for a lost homeland, real or imagined. In her canonical study of post-Soviet nostalgia, Sveltana Boym distinguishes between what she calls restorative and reflective nostalgia. Restorative nostalgia "stresses *nostos*," "attempts a transhistorical reconstruction of the lost home," views itself as the defender of "tradition," and

"protects the absolute truth." Reflective nostalgia, however, "thrives in *algia*, the longing itself," "delays the homecoming," "dwells on the ambivalences of human longing," "does not shy away from the contradictions of modernity," and calls truth "into doubt" (Boym 2001, xviii). Restorative nostalgia is the stuff of the "my *baba* said…" or "in my village…" gate keeping that often shuts down discourse in diasporic spaces, real and virtual.

Figure 6. My Baba Meme, Rusyn Memes

Figure 7. My Village Meme, Rusyn Memes

These talismanic phrases insist in absolutist terms on the truth claims of one's mythical Carpatho-Rusyn grandmother or phantom Carpatho-Rusyn village and polices what is allowed to present as authentic Carpatho-Rusyn culture (Rusyn Memes 2015a; Rusyn Memes 2015b). However, reflective nostalgia, at its core, is creative and forward-looking and is the force that perhaps explains recent manifestations of Habsburg, Hungarian, and Czechoslovak hybrid identities among Carpatho-Rusyn Americans.

During the 2023 ASEEES convention, Magocsi, Krafcik, Kupensky, and John Kopcha of the Carpatho-Rusyn Society held a roundtable discussion of *Our People* at Holy Ghost Byzantine Catholic Church in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, where a portrait of the former Austrian Emperor Franz Joseph I continues to preside over coffee hour in the church basement.

Figure 8. Portrait of Franz Joseph I, Holy Ghost Byzantine Catholic Church, Philadelphia, PA

When Carpatho-Rusyns founded the church at the end of the nineteenth century, this portrait naturally would have been an artifact of the parishioners' identity as recent subjects of the Habsburg Empire, which would have competed with and shaped their Byzantine Catholic, Carpatho-Rusyn, and new American identities, among others. But the persistence of a Habsburg identity among Carpatho-Rusyn Americans in the twenty-first century is an altogether different matter, one which has even been parodied by a meme depicting Franz Joseph that reads: "Miss me yet?" (Rusyn Memes 2013b).

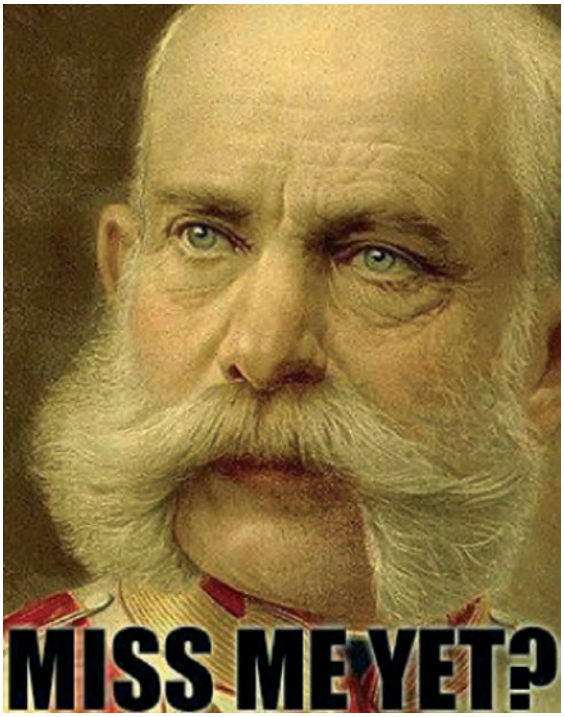

Figure 9. Franz Joseph Meme, Rusyn Memes

Here, the image reveals the connection between a primordialist view of the first Carpatho-Rusyn "national awakening" in the nineteenth century and the only political entity that managed to unify Carpatho-Rusyns in a single state. The manifestation of Habsburg—or, for that matter, Hungarian or Czechoslovak—nostalgia among Carpatho-Rusyn Americans today is one aspect of a much wider phenomenon of identity formation that future scholars will have to grapple with using new methodological and theoretical frames.

One problem with the idealization of the *starŷi krai* is that there are no Carpatho-Rusyn Americans alive today who remember the Austro-Hungarian Empire, so the longing for a lost home seems to be thoroughly inappropriate. Yet, perhaps something else is at work. Kevin M. F. Platt has argued that the mode of retro is related to but distinct from nostalgia insofar as it "makes past history close, rather than reminding us of insurmountable distance." "Retro," he argues, is "a matter of accessible styles rather than irretrievable loss" (Platt 2024, 159). In this respect, the cultivation of Habsburg retro, especially among the Carpatho-Rusyn American intelligentsia, can be read as a way of

imaginatively bridging old and new world identities, whether it includes janker hunting jackets and linen suits or pilgrimages to and performances at monuments to Sisi, Empress Elisabeth of Austria who Professor Magocsi playfully calls "our Carpatho-Rusyn queen" (Magocsi 2024, 480–481).

Figure 10. Studium Carpatho-Ruthenorum Tenth Anniversary students, teachers, and alumni guests before the bust of Habsburg Empress Elizabeth (Sisi) of Austria and Queen of Hungary, Prešov, Slovaka (June 2019)

After all, the place where Professor Magocsi has written so brilliantly about the Carpatho-Rusyn American immigration is not the coal patches or steel towns of the American Midwest's Rust Belt but the Mediterranean seaside town of Roquebrune-Cap Martin, France, a location that he especially values because it was "the very spot where the sovereign of our Carpatho-Rusyn ancestors—Elizabeth, Habsburg Empress of Austria and Queen of Hungary—spent the last four summers recuperating after the suicide of her beloved son Rudolf" (Magocsi 2024, 520–521). Is this a Habsburg prosthetic or postmemory? Habsburg nostalgia? Habsburg retro? Scholars of the New Carpatho-Rusyn American Studies will decide.

IX. Beyond History

Whatever approaches future scholars take, what we can look forward to is that the next story to be written about Carpatho-Rusyns in the Americas will be likely something other than a history. It will focus not exclusively on the expression of Carpatho-Rusyn ethnic identity but on anational, class-based,

creole, inbetween, indifferent, instrumental, hybrid, performative, postcolonial, postmodern, or simulated identities. This work has already begun. In *Andy Warhol's Mother: The Woman Behind the Artist* (2024), Rusinko explores the class, gender, regional, and religious identities in the art of Julia Warhola. Custer and Horbal continue to be the leading immigration historians who explore the Carpatho-Rusyn origins of American businesses, churches, cities, and celebrities, past and present, even if their subjects no longer retain their Carpatho-Rusyn identities (Custer 2016, Horbal 2024). Kupensky and Zecker have written about the intersection of class, ethnicity, and race in Carpatho-Rusyn literature and journalism (Kupensky 2022; Zecker 2011; Zecker 2024). Others will find new avenues into Carpatho-Rusyn American Studies, but none of this future scholarship will be possible without the path-breaking work of Paul Robert Magocsi's foundational history *Our People: Carpatho-Rusyns and Their Descendants in North America*.

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The Evolution and Impact of *Our People*

My contribution to our roundtable discussion is based on an examination of Paul Robert Magocsi's *Our People: Carpatho-Rusyns and Their Descendants in North America* in its five editions over the course of a forty-year publication history. I scrutinized changes from edition to edition and explored the book's reception in the Carpatho-Rusyn community. Beyond purchase by university libraries and relevant church organizations, the bulk of sales, to date numbering over 8100 copies, is most certainly linked to readers among the descendants of Carpatho-Rusyn immigrants hungry for information about their roots in the "Old Country" as well as the history of their forebears' experience in the New World. Relatively few books boast five editions—testimony to the community's demand for the book but also to the author's concern as an educator. Over the years, he considered new information, newly unearthed historical photos, and some readjustments in emphasis sufficiently crucial to the book's content as to warrant the formulation of multiple editions. Supportive prefaces by scholarly experts in American Ethnic Studies, such as Oscar Handlin in the first edition (Magocsi 1984, vii), Michael Novak in the second (Magocsi 1985, vii), and then both in subsequent editions, provided an official endorsement (Magocsi 1994; Magocsi 2005; Magocsi 2023, v-vi). From an initial 160 pages, the book expanded to 244 in its final incarnation.

The Carpatho-Rusyns' phenomenal cultural revival in Europe at the end of the 1980s and into the 1990s and the new millennium, a result of the 1989 revolutions and the demise of Soviet-inspired Communist rule, also provided a powerful historical context for subsequent editions. Events in the Homeland offered unanticipated possibilities for interaction with the descendants' Homeland cousins. On top of the so-called "roots movement" in 1970s North America, which helped give birth to the book's first edition in 1984, Homeland events also encouraged descendants to establish—alongside the already existing Carpatho-Rusyn Research Center (established in 1978)—new grassroots organizations in North America, such as the Carpatho-Rusyn Society, founded in 1994. The reassertion and fine-tuning of Carpatho-Rusyn identity, language, and culture in the Homeland inspired the two or three generations

of descendants in North America to seek out precisely the kind of information which Magocsi's book provided.

The two thousand copies of the initial printing in December 1984 immediately flew off the shelves, but the demand was still strong. The second edition coming right on its heels in spring 1985 was, as the author explained in a special note, largely just a reprint (Magocsi 1985, 3); the remaining three editions in 1994, 2005, and 2023 were bona fide "revised and enlarged" editions. All this while, the book's structure remained remarkably stable, as the Table of Contents across editions demonstrates. The initial eight chapters continued in all editions: "Origins," "Migration," "Settlement Patterns," "Religious Life," "Organizational Life," "Culture," "Politics," "Group Maintenance." An appendix with a "Root Seeker's Guide to the Homeland," offered a list of villages in historic Carpathian Rus' from which immigrants came, with village names as they appeared over the decades in Rusyn, Ukrainian, Hungarian, Czech, Slovak, Polish, and Romanian depending on their location and changing borders. Other information for each village included its former Hungarian county or Galician district location, its present administrative subdivision, and its present country. The last category had to be readjusted by the 1994 edition when Czechoslovakia no longer existed as a country and only Slovakia remained as the location of many Rusyn villages.

One specific observation about the final chapter, "Group Maintenance," focused on how Carpatho-Rusyns and their descendants organized themselves in immigration: Its mere three pages in the initial edition expanded to eight pages in the final edition, testifying to the exponential increase in activity on the part of descendants through the turn of the 20th into the 21st century (Magocsi 1984, 89–91; Magocsi 2023, 109–116). Ironically, this increase may—at least in part—be precisely because of *Our People* itself and how it educated descendants through texts, photos, and maps, inspiring readers to embrace their own genealogical explorations and celebration of their ethnic identity. In the final edition, the author highlights the Internet and how it will continue to serve the goals of grassroots organizations, as well as permitting easy communication between descendants of immigrants and their Homeland cousins. In this regard, *Our People* not only looks back, but also ahead.

In the revised edition of 1994, a new chapter was tacked on after "Group Maintenance," with the title "Carpatho-Rusyns in Canada" (Magocsi 1994, 104–110). This full chapter covered issues around Carpatho-Rusyn immigration to Canada, which in the first two editions was addressed only in

a two-page box text (Magocsi 1984, 56–57). By the final edition in 2023, that full chapter was then placed prior to the last chapter on "Group Maintenance" perhaps reflecting the author's desire to demonstrate that commentary on the Canadian immigration should not be perceived as an afterthought (Magocsi 2023, 101–108). A closing section, titled "For Further Reading" (Magocsi 1984, 141–145; Magocsi 1994, 194–202; Magocsi 2005, 207–215) became the three-fold larger "Bibliography" by the final edition, providing researchers with a myriad of valuable primary and secondary sources for further exploration (Magocsi 2023, 212–224). The final edition also included a helpful "Note on Names" explaining transliteration issues encountered in working from Cyrillic to English (Magocsi 2023, xiii).

The "Root Seeker's Guide to the Homeland" is a genuine treasure trove for descendants and genealogists. It consists of a voluminous list of all the Carpatho-Rusyn villages in historic Carpathian Rus' based on the Hungarian census of 1910, and the 1921 censuses of Czechoslovakia and Poland. It expanded from initially 977 to 1,159 villages by the final edition (Magocsi 1984 93–140; Magocsi 2023, 117–211). In no other scholarly or academic resource does such a list exist. Indeed, the value of *Our People* extends far beyond those who claim Carpatho-Rusyn heritage as it provides crucial information for all scholars and students of central and eastern European history.

In the first edition, the author placed four maps which he continued through all the editions: the Carpatho-Rusyn Homeland Before World War I; the Carpatho-Rusyn Homeland Today; Medieval East-Central Europe; and Carpatho-Rusyns in North America.

Figure 1. "Carpatho-Rusyns in the United States," Paul Robert Magocsi, Our People: Carpatho-Rusyn Americans and Their Descendents in North America (1984)

Alas, in the final edition, the North American map is cut off to the west beyond Manitoba, the Dakotas, Nebraska, Kansas, Oklahoma, and Texas, even though some Carpatho-Rusyn immigrants settled also in Alberta, Montana, Wyoming, Colorado, California, and the present state of residence of this writer, Washington—and specifically *there* in the significant old historical mining towns of Wilkeson and Carbonado (Magocsi 2023, 18).

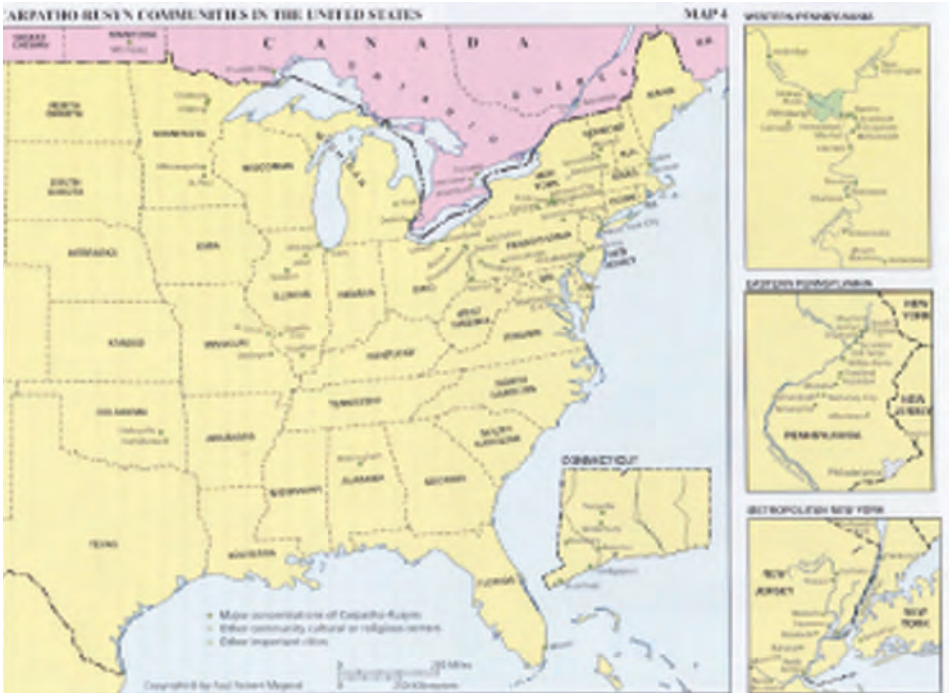

Figure 2. "Carpatho-Rusyns Communities in the United States," Paul Robert Magocsi, Our People: Carpatho-Rusyn Americans and Their Descendents in North America (2023)

Overall, though, there are vast improvements in the physical look and layout of the final edition, better spacing of text and photos and, for instance, entries in the Table of Contents and in the "Bibliography," making the book even more user-friendly. In the final edition, many of the invaluable historical photos scattered throughout are printed with markedly greater clarity; some are slightly reduced in size to make more room for text, and some photos and illustrations that were displayed in black and white in previous editions are now in their original color.

In a final and separate "Acknowledgements" section, the author lists several community members, most of whom have already passed on, and gratefully recognizes their input toward the creation of *Our People* with their contributory materials and photos. In previous editions, a handful of acknowledgements were woven into two paragraphs of the "Introduction" (Magocsi 1984, 1994, 2–3; Magocsi 2005, xiv–xv) but in the final edition the acknowledgements stand alone (Magocsi 2023, 245–246). This readjustment is significant because it highlights a crucial reality about the book: *Our People* is not just a popular or

scholarly study about Carpatho-Rusyn immigration to North America. Nor is this book solely Professor Magocsi's. If there were no actual community, there would be no book and certainly not five editions. The author is a vessel through which the voice of the community of immigrants and their descendants has found expression. He himself is not entirely separate from the immigrant and descendant community, and, in fact, repeated in each edition is a touching dedication which he made to his father, Alexander B. Magocsi, a child of immigrants (Magocsi 1984, v; Magocsi 1994; Magocsi 2005, xi; Magocsi 2023, viiii). As a scholar, though, Magocsi has the professional wherewithal to study the community closely and objectively, to gather information, analyze it, and categorize it into units/chapters/subjects. This book is the community guided by the author and speaking to subsequent generations of its own.

The book's covers are all carefully chosen to capture the essential core of *Our People*. The first two editions display a photo of "Slavic coal miners in eastern Pennsylvania, c. 1900".

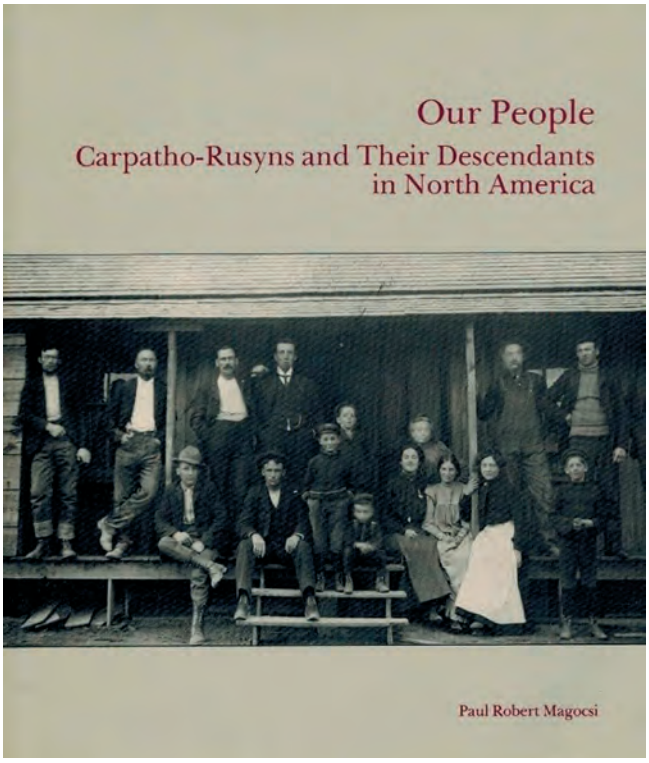

Figure 3. Cover of Paul Robert Magocsi, *Our People: Carpatho-Rusyn Americans and Their Descendents in North America* (1984)

It may be safely assumed that some if not all pictured here are Carpatho-Rusyns. The 2005 cover offers a template of the colorful front page of the Greek Catholic Union's insurance policy, 1927, with the insurance text cleverly replaced by the title of the book and author.

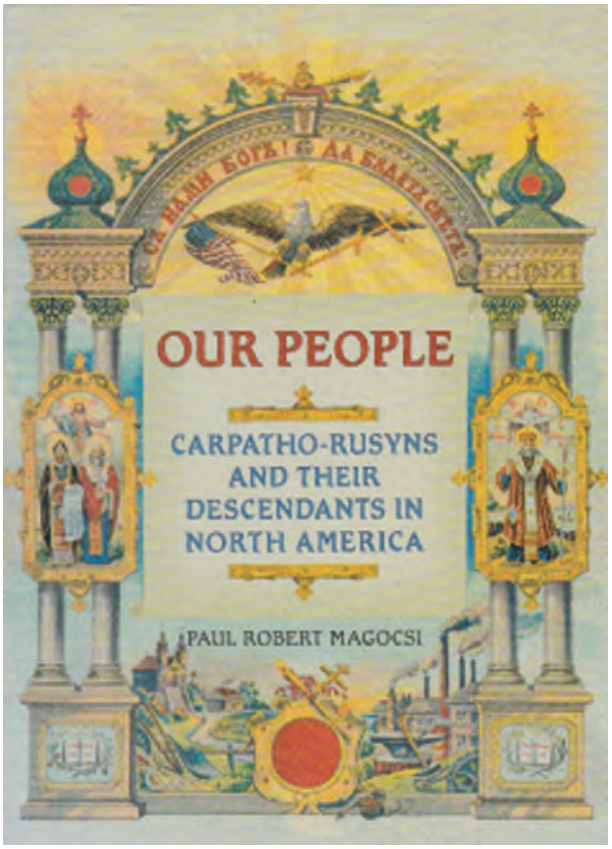

Figure 4. "Carpatho-Rusyns in the United States," Paul Robert Magocsi, *Our People: Carpatho-Rusyn Americans and Their Descendents in North America* (2005)

The cover of the final edition resonates with the first cover as it shows "Immigrants arriving at Ellis Island, New Jersey, c. 1910".

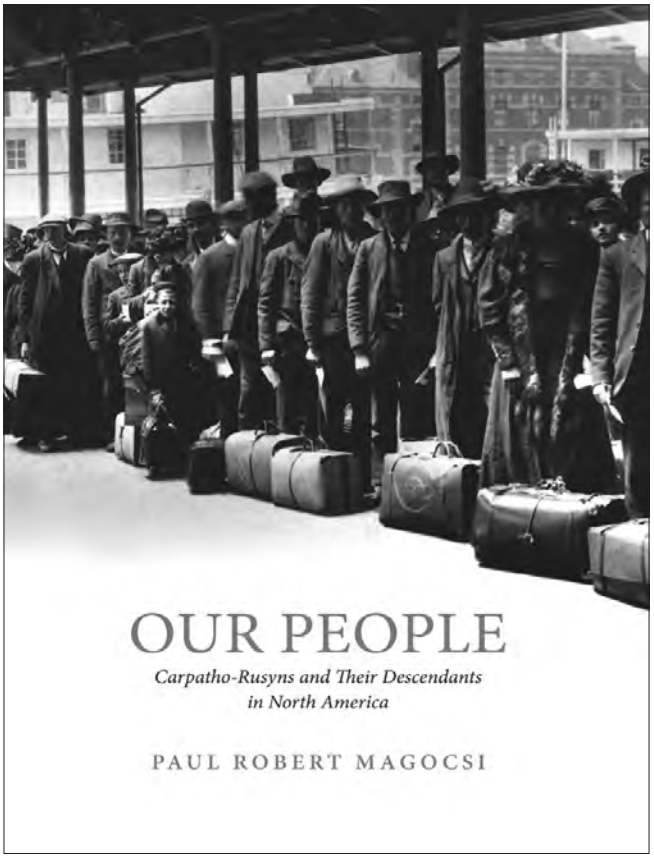

Figure 5. "Carpatho-Rusyns in the United States," Paul Robert Magocsi, *Our People: Carpatho-Rusyn Americans and Their Descendents in North America* (2023)

The caption of this historical photo does not clearly define exactly who these immigrants are, but, once again, they are the face of the immigrant experience, including that of Carpatho-Rusyns, that fuels this book.

The 1994 edition is particularly moving as its cover features a "Scrubwoman, New York City, 1920".

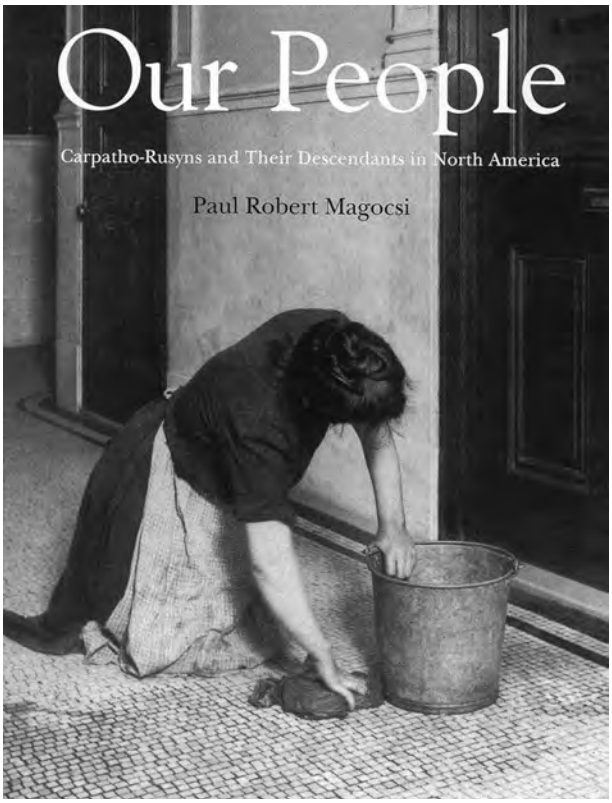

Figure 6. "Carpatho-Rusyns in the United States," Paul Robert Magocsi, *Our People: Carpatho-Rusyn Americans and Their Descendents in North America* (1994)

She is kneeling on a hard tile floor in an office building, her face bent away from the camera and toward the floor as she focuses on her work, one hand grasping the edge of a metal pail, the other a washrag. Is she Carpatho-Rusyn? Slovak? even perhaps Irish? It doesn't matter. She is the face of our grandmothers, including of the writer of this roundtable contribution. Some might find this photo demeaning. I argue that it honors the genuine sacrifice of women immigrants by displaying someone not in holiday dress at a church function or in a mock wedding (Magocsi 1984, 74; Magocsi 1994, 80; Magocsi 2005, 78), but in a cold midnight hallway. It ought to remind us that the same experience is presently unfolding for new waves of immigrants, and that the memory of our own people's struggles must inspire us to empathize with others.

Several readers of *Our People* responded to my request for their reactions to the book. Clearly, it had a significant impact on them. Permit me to close my contribution with their words:

> After years of constantly hearing over and over who we were 'NOT'—not Russian, not Ukrainian, not Slovak—I wondered who we were. Then one day in the mail *Our People* arrived, and I finally knew who I was. I devoured this book to find out every detail to answer all those questions I had asked for oh, so long. And the answers were there… This book is a gold mine of information.

> *Our People* has been my constant and reliable companion from the start of my journey to discover my ancestry and to grow in my identity as a Carpatho-Rusyn American…

> *Our People* lit a fire inside me that burns brightly to this day which is my fascination with Carpatho-Rusyn immigration history in the US. I remember clearly that once I opened the book, I couldn't put it down.

> The book makes me feel ever prouder to be Carpatho-Rusyn. There's so much that I don't know, and this book with its balance of photos, text, and lists is digestible. Magocsi's writing is informed, well researched, yet buoyant and approachable, engaging, not stuffy scholarly… The box texts and the topics therein offer a comfortable way to tackle big questions separately so that one can return to the topic again and mull the subject over.

> Reading *Our People* in the 1990s was an emotional experience for me. Growing up in Southern California in the 1960s, I became curious about my family's origins. My uncle told me: 'We are from Czechoslovakia; however, our people are not Czechs or Slovaks or Poles or Hungarians or Russians.' His caveat was confusing, and the phrase 'our people' puzzling. An Internet search for our ancestral villages led to an awareness of the book, and the enigmatic phrase 'our people' was right there in the title! I ordered the book and devoured it. There at the end was the Root Seeker's Guide with my family's village listed among hundreds of other Carpatho-Rusyn villages. The fog lifted and through moist eyes everything came into focus. Here was the story of my family and thousands of other families from the same region. Eventually, I visited my ancestral village where I met family members who were themselves reclaiming their Carpatho-Rusyn heritage.

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Independent Scholar

Our Bible of Carpatho-Rusyn American Religious Life

The description of the roundtable dedicated to the fifth edition of *Our People: Carpatho-Rusyns and Their Descendants in North America* (2023) explains that "in the years since [*Our People*'s publication], it has become the 'bible' for Carpatho-Rusyn Americans to understand who they are." It's fitting then, that I have the opportunity to speak about this "bible" and reflect on the aspects of its presentation of Carpatho-Rusyn American religious history—because ever since its first edition, *Our People* definitely was that for me.

In the years leading up to the "roots fever" of the late 1970s, Americans of Carpatho-Rusyn background had few English sources in which to read about their heritage. For those still connected to the traditional churches, mainly the Byzantine Ruthenian Catholic and Carpatho-Russian Orthodox, but primarily just on the Byzantine Catholic side, there were some general surveys of "Carpatho-Ruthenian" religious history, but they were not widely available nor promoted outside the churches (Gulovich 1945; Pekar 1977; Shereghy 1978). Additionally, they were mostly focused on religious history and, to be frank, almost hagiographic in their writing about Carpatho-Rusyns as a chosen

people whose lofty qualities were of the finest of humanity, except, in their view, for the misled or impious Orthodox. The eparchial newspapers of the Byzantine Catholic and Carpatho-Russian Orthodox Churches occasionally included short articles on historical or cultural-religious topics, as did the fraternal benefit society papers and almanacs. But the 1978 founding of the Carpatho-Rusyn Research Center by professors Magocsi and Pat Krafcik created a general-interest newsletter, the *Carpatho-Rusyn American* and eventually books, maps, and many other materials (Krafcik, Rusinko 2004). These were a sign that the education of Carpatho-Rusyn Americans about their roots was no longer the sole domain of the churches with their particular perspective of that history and culture.

Contrast this with the English-language resources produced by and for our ethnic neighbors. On the one hand, the Ukrainians: Wasyl Halich's detailed study of Ukrainians in the U.S. appeared way back in 1937, followed by a more concise and easier-reading booklet covering the same ground by Yaroslav Chyz in 1939. On the other hand, the Slovaks did not have any comparable English-language resources until 1978 with the comprehensive but less scholarly *Slovaks in America* by Joseph C. Krajsa and others (Krajsa et al. 1978).

Each of these were essentially secular histories that of necessity dealt extensively with religious history. The most striking difference between them was their approach to the existence of Carpatho-Rusyn immigrants, their organizations, and their separate church structures. The Slovak study mentioned Byzantine/Greek Catholics only in passing and ostensibly as an integral part of the Slovak community, while the Ukrainians took a more expansive approach:

> The closest study reveals that in 1934 there were two hundred and twenty-three Ukrainian churches in Pennsylvania. Of this number, fifty-five were under the spiritual guidance of Russian Orthodox bishops, therefore being classified as "Russians." One hundred and forty-two belonged to the Greek Catholic dioceses of bishops Bohachevsky and Takach (Halich 1937).

This was later refined by authors like Myron Kuropas, whose definitive work *Ukrainian Americans, Roots and Aspirations* (Kuropas 1991) approached the factionalization of initially unified Ruthenian/Ukrainian immigrants as a divergence into three more or less equally valid "ethnonational streams" (Rusyn/Carpatho-Ruthenian, Russian, and Ukrainian) until the Ukrainian stream attained its national consciousness in the 1920s and beyond (Kuropas 1991,

113–125, 132–161). I do not believe that Magocsi gave enough similar attention to the Carpatho-Rusyn element within the so-called Ukrainian stream nor the non-Ukrainian-identified Rusyn parts of the official Ukrainian churches once he described the 1924 separation of the Greek Catholic jurisdiction into Subcarpathian and Galician/Ukrainian groups.

Some of the American Ukrainian (primarily Catholic, although some also Orthodox) churches represent a large part or all of the historically largest Lemko immigrant settlements in the United States in places like Ansonia, Connecticut; Olyphant, Shamokin, and Carnegie, Pennsylvania; Yonkers, and Auburn, New York, and others. Moreover, some parishes in the Ukrainian Catholic Church included a large minority of Subcarpathian Rusyn parishioners—Shenandoah, Mount Carmel, Centralia, Plymouth, Ford City, Northampton, and Maizeville, Pennsylvania; Syracuse and Buffalo, New York; Ansonia, Connecticut, and are attended by significant numbers of their descendants today. Unfortunately, after the 1924 separation from the Subcarpathian churches, Magocsi hardly mentions the Ukrainian Catholic Church at all.

There is a line in the table *Carpatho-Rusyn Church Statistics in the United States* (Magocsi 2023, 48) called "Other Orthodox, Ukrainian Catholic, Roman Catholic, and Protestant denominations" that indicates there are approximately 150,000 in this group. What is the basis for that number? What share of it is from the Ukrainian Catholic (we should also include Ukrainian Orthodox) churches?

Magocsi readily acknowledges that not every immigrant from a historically Carpatho-Rusyn village would have identified with the Carpatho-Rusyn ethnolinguistic or national group; they might have chosen Slovak, Hungarian, Russian, Ukrainian, or Lemko. However, he also states that "for our purposes, a Carpatho-Rusyn American is defined as: (1) any person born in Carpathian Rus', or born in the United States of at least one parent, grandparent, or other generational ancestor who came from one of the 1,159 Rusyn villages listed in the Root Seeker's appendix to this volume" (Magocsi 2023). So, with that concept in mind, let's look at four American Christian religious leaders among East Slavs. I call this "A Tale of Four Bishops." One of them was born in Europe, the second was the son of immigrants, the third was the grandson of immigrants, and the last and youngest is the great-grandson of immigrants.

Two of these have appeared in *Our People* as bishops of American Carpatho-Rusyn churches, and their Carpatho-Rusyn ancestry is described therein. The other two bishops, the Ukrainian Catholics, have not. I have researched the ancestry of all four.

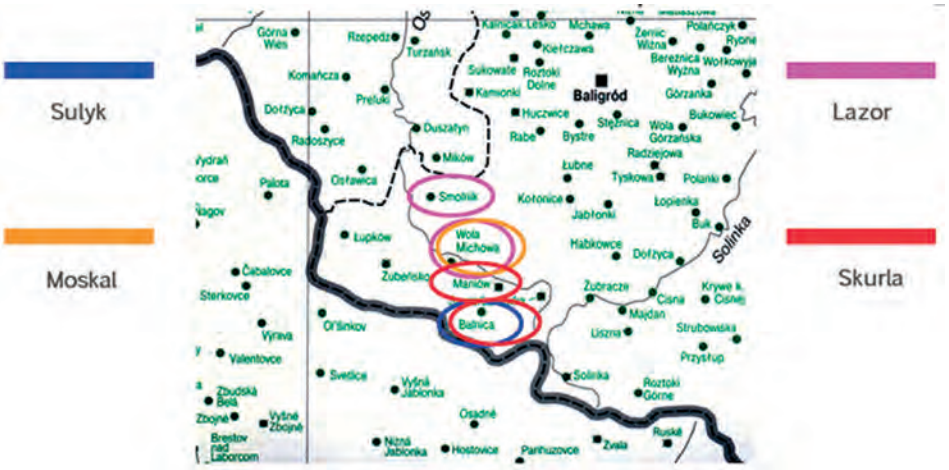

Figure 1. Adjacent Carpatho-Rusyn ancestral villages (4 villages in Lesko County) of Metropolitan Stephen Sulyk, Metropolitan Theodosius Lazor, Bishop Robert Moskal, and Metropolitan William Skurla

The first bishop is Metropolitan Stephen Sulyk, who was born in former Austrian Galicia in the Lemko village of Balnica. He is not mentioned in *Our People*. If we travel just a few kilometers to the north, we find the villages of Wola Michowa and Smolnik, which is where the parents of Met. Theodosius Lazor were born. However, Met. Lazor is included in *Our People*. Likewise, Bishop Robert Moskal's paternal grandfather also was born in Wola Michowa, but he does not appear in *Our People*. Yet, three of Metropolitan William Skurla's great-grandparents came from Maniow—just a kilometer to the south—and Balnica, and he is included *in Our People*. However, all of these villages are listed in the Root Seeker's Guide, which means that, according to Professor Magocsi's criteria, all these bishops are *our people* and should be included in the history. In other words, this exercise should be called "A Tale of Four Carpatho-Rusyn American Bishops."

To extend this beyond religious life, *Our People* contains a plethora of recognizable individuals who have Carpatho-Rusyn ancestry. Some of the newer additions to the latest edition—as we continue to "discover" such people—are Steve Ditko, Cathy Guisewite, Meg Ryan, Bret Michaels, Michael Smerconish, and John Kasich. These and the rest ostensibly share one other trait: they have not publicly identified as Ukrainian (but may well have identified as Russian or Slovak). Other notable Americans of Carpatho-Rusyn background who could have been included but were not, include Melanne Starinshak Verveer (four Lemko grandparents), Mary Beck (both parents Lemkos), and Michael Metrinko (four Lemko grandparents). Most likely they were omitted because

they identified, in some cases quite strongly, as Ukrainians, but they absolutely meet Magocsi's own criteria to be seen, at least within the Carpatho-Rusyn community, as Carpatho-Rusyn Americans.

Our People's treatment of the at times convoluted and controversial history of the major Carpatho-Rusyn religious bodies in the United States was, at its first publication in 1984, somewhat of a watershed. It was a logical evolution from works of authors like Walter C. Warzeski (Warzeski 1971; Warzeski 1973) and Athanasius B. Pekar (Pekar 1974, Pekar 1976). In this, it presented a break from tendentious, even triumphalist histories of the past from jurisdictionally focused sources like the Byzantine Catholic Basil Shereghy or Constance J. Tarasar and John H. Erickson on the Orthodox side. It paved the way for a new era of historical works from more objective authors—Keith P. Dyrud (Dyrud 1992), Pekar (Pekar 1992), and even some updated works from within the jurisdictions themselves—the Ruthenian Metropolia's 75th anniversary directory (Janocsko 1999), Lawrence Barriger's history of the Carpatho-Russian Orthodox Diocese (Barriger 2000), and Christopher Lawrence Zugger's just-published history of the Ruthenian Church (Zugger 2023). It is evident in these publications and elsewhere that the Byzantine Ruthenian Catholic Church and the American Carpatho-Russian Orthodox Diocese have become more comfortable identifying with the name "Carpatho-Rusyn," which is now is even used occasionally in the Orthodox Church in America.

In this latest edition, Magocsi updated his statistics on church membership and noted a severe loss in membership, which not only affects these traditionally Carpatho-Rusyn institutions, but also gives an indication that these churches will be even less likely to be a means by which Americans of Carpatho-Rusyn background encounter aspects of their heritage.

Finally, what we don't find in *Our People* is an indication of the state of Carpatho-Rusyn awareness among the rank-and-file members of the traditional churches. Here, Magocsi has not gone much further from the previous edition in 2005. He notes the support of the donation of funds to construct a Greek Catholic seminary in Uzhhorod (in the 1990s) and receiving students from the homeland into the Byzantine Catholic Seminary in Pittsburgh, but in the last decade or so, among Byzantine Catholics more than 20 priests from the Eparchies of Mukachevo and Prešov have been serving parishes in the U.S. on loan from the homeland bishops. Is this more recent phenomenon leading to a revival of interest in the "old country" religious heritage? Anecdotal evidence suggests that in some places yes, but in other cases these priests identify strongly as either Ukrainians or Slovaks and are apathetic toward if not

downright negatively disposed to a Carpatho-Rusyn identity for themselves or their congregations mostly disconnected from the past century of developments in the homeland. I would be interested to read Magocsi's take on this. To date, I have not seen it evaluated by anyone.

Having just learned that Magocsi does not plan any further editions of *Our People*, there are nevertheless still many more important recent developments in American Carpatho-Rusyn religious life that should be chronicled and interpreted. Not all are negative. Two signs of progress are evident in images from two churches of the Carpatho-Russian Orthodox Diocese: a new sign outside St. Nicholas, now Carpatho-Rusyn, Church in Manhattan,

Figure 2. Newly-installed sign (2022) on St. Nicholas, formerly "Carpatho-Russian," Orthodox Church (American Carpatho-Russian Orthodox Diocese), New York City, New York

and Holy Ghost Church in Manville, New Jersey, often flying the official Carpatho-Rusyn flag.

Figure 3. Flagpole flying U.S. and Carpatho-Rusyn flags on grounds of Holy Ghost Carpatho-Russian Orthodox Church, Manville, New Jersey (2015–present)

I welcome these signs of hope amid many negative trends and will eagerly await in whichever form or place Magocsi may wish to examine these in the accessible and enduring manner with which he has brought us five editions of the remarkable Carpatho-Rusyn American "bible" that is *Our People*.

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Our People Meet *Their* People: Race, Class, and the Carpatho-Rusyns

This article will look at the economic and cultural aspects of the Rusyn migration to America, as presented in Professor Magocsi's wonderful book. In re-reading *Our People: Carpatho-Rusyns and Their Descendants in North America*, I again found so much to admire in this work, a fount of information on the Carpatho-Rusyn migrants to America, people such as my great-grandparents, Stefan Hnat and Susanna Havran. As when I first read it during my grad-school days at the University of Pennsylvania, I found the book a model of engaged immigration scholarship, rigorous but also an absorbing read. However—and you knew there was going to be a "however"—as my own research has increasingly moved away from ethnic studies per se and toward matters of race and class among "white ethnics," and their complicated place in America's *Herrenvolk* racial schemas, I have come away from my latest reading of Professor Magocsi's book with some questions and caveats. I once made the mistake of telling a non-academic friend that I was "problematizing" something. "I thought you were supposed to find answers, not problems," she replied. So anyway, I hope I'm not "problematizing" this commentary.

As Oscar Handlin notes in his introduction to the first edition of *Our People*, the revival of interest in ethnicity largely developed in the 1970s and has had both "beneficial and damaging aspects" (Handlin 1951; Handlin 2023, v). Beneficial, certainly, has been the documentation of the history and contributions that "new immigrant" groups from South and East Europe—Carpatho-Rusyns among them—made to the United States, and the instilling of pride in descendants of people who not that long ago were stigmatized as "Hunkies" (or worse epithets) by nativist, Old Stock immigration restrictionists (Ross 1914). Welcome, too, is his noting that many thousands of Carpatho-Rusyns circa 1900 entered the United States "illegally"—a refreshing counter to the current white ethnic myth that "our ancestors" were legal, unlike currently stigmatized Latinos (Magocsi 2023, 11, 15).

The negative aspect of the white ethnic pride movement, an aspect that Professor Magocsi does not consider, is that the telling of the saga of hard-working

Carpatho-Rusyns (Poles, Italians, Russian Jews, etc.) began to be disseminated in and out of academia at the very moment a political backlash was occurring against Black civil rights. I want to be clear: I do not in any way think that it was the intention of Professor Magocsi or other scholars of the late 19th- and early 20th-century "new immigration" to denigrate African Americans or other non-European groups. I would agree, however, with Matthew Frye Jacobson, who in his masterful *Roots Too* convincingly argues that the valorization of the Ellis Island saga of groups such as the Carpatho-Rusyns has sadly all too often colloquially set up an insidious comparison between praiseworthy, hard-working South and East Europeans and supposedly welfare-chiseling, don't want to work African American (or Latino/a) "them" (Jacobson 2006). The degree to which Carpatho-Rusyns, and other newcomers circa 1900–1910 were denounced for supposed moral failings or condemned for undercutting the wage rate of "white" Americans due to supposedly lower standards of living and therefore eagerness to accept substandard wages, is often forgotten in the popular memory of hard-working, play-by-the-rules ancestors who therefore seemingly easily ascended into the great middle class in a generation or two. Unlike today's "you know who's."

These elements—how Carpatho-Rusyns were perceived by the receiving culture, and the degree to which Carpatho-Rusyns fashioned a "white" identity or benefited from their white identity, especially with the coming of the New Deal—are absent in Professor Magocsi's book. As in other immigrant newspapers, the pages of *Amerikansky russky viestnik* reveal that a slighting attitude toward African Americans was developing among editors, writers and readers of the paper, attitudes qualitatively different from the views expressed toward other, "white" ethnic groups (Zecker 2011). This may, I freely admit, be a bit unfair of me to stress—to criticize a book I greatly admire for neglecting to do what was not the author's project, and what other scholars have admirably performed, i.e., situate South and East European newcomers in America's tragic history of *Herrenvolk* republicanism and racism, or examine the role 1930–1940s New Deal social reforms and the success of industrial unionism, played in aiding Carpatho-Rusyns' move into the middle class (Barrett, Roediger 1997; Zecker 2011; Jacobson 2002; Cohen 1990).

Professor Magocsi correctly notes the strong life goal of owning land, which translated in the New World into high rates of home ownership (Magocsi 2023, 11). However, while Carpatho-Rusyns certainly took great pride in their homes near the mine or mill, and the thrifty housewife often contributed to

the family pay packet by keeping boarders in these households, I wonder how these homes would have been perceived from outside the Carpatho-Rusyn immigrant community. These were small, often owner-built structures, adjacent to hazardous industrial "noxious uses," which often sunk all the immigrant's hard-earned cash into a fixed asset with little real economic value even if it attained much psychic importance to the Carpatho-Rusyn householder. Simply put, home ownership was not, circa 1910, the engine of socioeconomic mobility that it would become following the New Deal and white suburbanization. And as Professor Magocsi notes, the festive activities (think *pivo*) that went on within its walls or at the Sokol hall was often a nativist Progressive reformer's nightmare of Slavic dysfunction (Magocsi 2023, 23).

Moreover, in discussing Carpatho-Rusyn suburbanization, Professor Magocsi states that in the 1970s second-generation migrants left older cities out of "fears of the dangers of urban life" (Magocsi 2023, 21, 58–59). Of course, circa 1900 nativists saw those very cities as a Hunky Hell due to the Carpatho-Rusyns and other slighted newcomers. The immigrant neighborhood could be both Paradise and Hell, depending on who was looking at, say, Pittsburgh's *Ruska Dolina* (Ardan 1904).

What's forgotten, too, in these sagas are the profound changes that have occurred over the last 50 years (at least) to what Olivier Zunz in *The Changing Face of Inequality* called the "opportunity structure" (Zunz 1982). I in no way want to mythologize the glories of the long turn in the steel mill, or any shift in the coal mines or textile mills. But once union contracts were won in the hard battles of the Congress of Industrial Organizations, such jobs became the building blocks for a toehold in the middle class (am I mixing my metaphors here?), and were also the engines of economic mobility supporting Carpatho-Rusyn, Polish, and other white ethnic entrepreneurs (restaurant owners, immigrant bankers, small businessmen and the like) in downtown Passaic, New Jersey (in my family's case), Detroit, or Youngstown and countless other blue-collar cities. Once these industries closed or were subsidized by the federal government to move to maquiladoras in Mexico, Guatemala or other low-wage countries, once unions were broken by aggressive union-busting tactics beginning in the Reagan years, of course such cities seemed poorer, maybe "bad" or "dangerous" places.

Moreover, the move to suburban cul-de-sac Edens (that Professor Magocsi mentions) by second- or third-generation Carpatho-Rusyns and other white ethnics was not quite as "natural" a process or reaction to the "changing" old

neighborhood as this book seems to suggest (Magocsi 2023, 21). As Kenneth Jackson, Beryl Satter and Richard Rothstein all make clear, suburbanization was a heavily racialized process of redlining, a process that subsidized the move of hundreds of thousands of white ethnics out of Rust Belt cities, while denying mortgages into the 1970s to "Negroes" (Jackson 1987; Satter 2009; Rothstein 2017). This move had profound economic and cultural implications for the cities left behind. In 1960, a German-Rusyn American newlywed (Bob Zecker Sr.) and his Italian bride (my mom Joan) moved out of Passaic-Garfield and Newark, New Jersey, and into the suburbs, while Black and Hispanics continued to be hemmed in in such cities with fewer industries and an aging infrastructure. Moreover, white ethnics such as suburbanized Carpatho-Rusyns now shopped at sylvan malls such as the Garden State Plaza of my Paramus childhood and stayed away from the stores of Slavic Passaic or Newark's formerly buzzing commercial hub, the Five Corners at Broad and Market. Likewise, close to Philadelphia, the Cherry Hill Mall and King of Prussia sucked white-ethnic consumer dollars out of Center City. Research into these larger structural political, economic, and cultural factors and their differential effects on Carpatho-Rusyns (and other white ethnics) and Black and Latino/a Americans is needed, especially in an era when the Ellis Island saga is colloquially presented as a "just-so story": "We" came, sacrificed, worked hard, built something. Then "they"—someone else—brought decline, so we moved to the suburbs and gaze with regret at what used to be.

A word has to be said, too, about *Our People*'s slight treatment of strikes or unionization. Professor Magocsi correctly notes that a high percentage of Carpatho-Rusyns (like other South and East European groups) conceived of their move to America as temporary, intending to move back *na kraju* after a few years with the nest eggs they built up from industrial labors in America. He argues that therefore Carpatho-Rusyns were not interested in the U.S. labor movement or in striking (Magocsi 2023, 88). I'd have to demur here and say that Victor Greene noted long ago in his seminal *The Slavic Community on Strike* that many Slavs quickly learned that if they wanted to maximize their pay packets and minimize health and safety hazards, their best bet was to hitch their star to the United Mine Workers of America, as many Poles, Lithuanians, and almost certainly, Carpatho-Rusyns did (Greene 1968). The pages of *Ameriansky russky viestnik* are replete with articles and letters denouncing the rapacious "bosses" and "capitalists" and supporting strikes in coal fields such as Connellsville and Westmoreland County, Pennsylvania. Letter writers

to *Ameriansky russky viestnik* similarly supported strikes and union drives.[1] One could plan on returning to the home village and still care about industrial conditions in the here and now, and many therefore supported union drives.

To be sure, the drive for industrial democracy was a decades-long, violence-laden battle. Carpatho-Rusyns such as my great grandparents participated in the year-long 1926–27 Passaic textile general strike, along with workers from many other East European backgrounds. Strike notices there and in countless other places were printed in Rusyn, Polish, and other languages into the 1930s.

Professor Magocsi gives an illuminating exploration of the various fraternal societies that sustained the Carpatho-Rusyn migrants. Often an accident or death benefit policy from the Greek Catholic Union or other fraternal was the only thing keeping the wolf from the door (Magocsi 2023, 49–50). The annual report on death benefit payouts by the GCU in 1933–35 indicates the grim nature of industrial America, with teens and 70-year-old men alike expiring from everything from cancer, black lung, explosions, pneumonia, and "suicide by dynamite" (Zeedick 1936). Professor Magocsi says that politically the only organization that supported the Soviet Union was the Lemko Association (Magocsi 2023, 62–63, 104). Again, though, I'd have to disagree and point to the Carpatho-Russian Society affiliated with the Communist Party's interracial, multiethnic International Workers Order. The IWO provided insurance policies but also worked to minimize the likelihood of so many black lung, cancer, and pneumonia cases. The Carpatho-Russians, led by Michael Logoyda, worked within the IWO to organize CIO unions, and forcefully lobbied for racial equality; enactment of social democratic policies such as Social Security and federally funded universal health care; and also supported the Soviet Union, as well as in the 1930s the Spanish Republic battling Franco when it came to foreign policy. Within the interracial, interethnic framework

[1] See, for example, *Amerikansky russky viestnik*, April 10, 1894, 9, "Smutny koňec strajku vedľa Cechov, Poľiakov i Slovakov;" April 17, 1894, 9, "Strajk nedokončeny;" May 8, 1894, 10, "Strajk na okolici Connellsville, Pa.;" *Amerikansky russky viestnik*, July 10, 1894, 13, letter to editor on the Connellsville strike; *Amerikansky russky viestnik*, October 2, 1902, 2, letter to editor criticizing Wilkes-Barre, Pennsylvania, papers' criticism of strikers; January 21, 1904, 3, letter from Rouse, Colorado, striker criticizing companies' use of scabs; July 15, 1909, 1; June 30, 1910, 3, letter from Bradenville, Pennsylvania, urging Carpatho-Rusyns not to scab during a strike; January 28, 1915, 5; February 5, 1915, 1; February 5, 1915, 2, letter from striking Carpatho-Rusyn in Stewartsville, Ohio, urging his fellow Carpatho-Rusyns not to scab; February 18, 1915, 1; February 18, 1915, 3, letter from Canonsburg, Pennsylvania, from striking miner; May 27, 1915, 2–3, letter from Rockvale, Colorado; July 29, 1915, 1, on Bayonne, New Jersey, refinery strike.

of the IWO, the Carpatho-Russian Society nevertheless preserved and valorized Rusyn culture in the choirs, bands and theater troupes attached to its lodges, as well as a Carpatho-Russian IWO radio program in New York (Zecker 2018). "The Lemko Association Annual Almanac for 1944 published photographs of 'the founders and first officials' of the Binghamton, New York, lodge of the International Workers Order Carpatho-Russian Society as well as the lodge's 'present officials'".

Figure 1. International Workers Order Carpatho-Russian Society, Binghamton, New York (1944)

Figure 2. International Workers Order Carpatho-Russian Society, Binghamton, New York (1944)

Members of the IWO's Ukrainian Society lodge in Hudson, New York, enjoyed a picnic in 1940.

Figure 3. The International Workers Order's Ukrainian Society Lodge, Hudson, New York (1940)

In 1943, the Lemko Association Annual Almanac published an advertisement extolling the insurance benefits offered by the IWO's Carpatho-Russian Society.

Figure 4. Advertisement about Insurance Benefits Offered by the IWO's Carpatho-Russian Society (1943)

Figure 5. Advertisement about Insurance Benefits Offered by the IWO's Carpatho-Russian Society (1943)

The IWO points to the interactions progressive Carpatho-Rusyns had with like-minded workers of different races and ethnicities. But it might be noted, too, that even non-political Rusyns living, working, shopping, and striking among people of various backgrounds developed a sort of pan-Slavic, working-class identity. Professor Magocsi notes that upon arrival many Carpatho-Rusyn migrants had only an inchoate ethnic identity and more readily identified with the village or region of their birth. In places such as Passaic, my grandmother recalled conversing (haggling!) with shopkeepers in Polish, Slovak, Ukrainian, and yes, "our language." She also called it "Slavish," which Professor Magocsi calls a "meaningless term" (Magocsi 2023, 76). But maybe the meaning was that she was part of a pan-Slavic worker community in the hardscrabble Dundee section of Passaic near the woolen mills. These ties between Carpatho-Rusyn and Slovak, Pole and Ukrainian, or even Magyar, no doubt strengthened on the picket line during the long Passaic strike. Ewa

Morawska demonstrates such a working-class pan-Slavic community seems to have developed in Johnstown, Pennsylvania, culminating in the successful campaign by the Steel Workers Organizing Committee to unionize that city's mills (Morawska 1985; Metzgar 2000). But more research is needed on the pan-Slavic, interethnic communities in which Carpatho-Rusyns often lived, shopped, socialized, and worked.

None of this is meant to problematize my admiration for Paul Robert Magocsi's masterful examination of the Rusyns, *Our People*.

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Bogdan Horbal
New York Public Library

Clubs, Picnics, Sports: Lemko Organizations, Yesterday and Today

Let me begin by congratulating Professor Paul Robert Magocsi on the 5th revised edition of *Our People: Carpatho-Rusyns and Their Descendants in North America* (2023). It is an incredible achievement to write a book that goes

through four sold-out, revised, and expanded editions. Well done. My task is to offer a few observations on Chapter 5, which is devoted to Carpatho-Rusyn organizations. For the sake of brevity, I will focus primarily on the lives of Lemkos in the New World.

In Chapter 5, Professor Magocsi discusses fraternal and cultural organizations. He offers basic information about these organizations, names their leaders, main publications, affiliations, size and tells us what has become of them. After discussing nineteen other organizations, Magocsi states that "those Carpatho-Rusyn immigrants from Galicia known as Lemkos often felt the need to have their own organizations" (Magocsi 2023, 61). Among these Lemko organizations, as Magocsi writes, is the Lemko Committee, which was established in New York City by Victor Hladick/Hladyk as early as 1922. Magocsi states briefly that "it published the magazine *Lemkovshchyna* (1922–26) and raised funds to help elementary schools in what was by then the Polish-ruled Lemko Region" (Magocsi 2023, 61). While the history of this organization requires more research, we can state today that it was the first Carpatho-Rusyn organization ever established in North America, a fact that I think could have been mentioned in the book that we discuss today (Горбаль 2002).

Figure 1. The Lemko Association, branches 5 and 16, Passaic, New Jersey (1930s)

No other cultural organization discussed by Magocsi in this chapter receives more attention than the Lemko Association. While that much coverage is necessary to explain the Lemko Association's accomplishments as well as various twists and turns in its ideology and activities, one should also underline that this is the oldest existing cultural Carpatho-Rusyn organization in America and in a few years will celebrate its one-hundred-year anniversary. This fact could also have been mentioned in the book.

The Lemko Association went through a challenging period after the death of its president Alexander Herenchak in 2010. However, activity was

successfully continued thanks to efforts of a few individuals, including Walter Maksimovich, John Madzik and most of all Professor Paul Best (Best 2018). But let us first go back to the beginning of this organization. While the early years of the Lemko Association still require research, it appears to me that the Lemko Association might have been informally created on the basis of older Lemko Committee structures or at least adopted the name.

The Lemko Association came into existence, possibly only informally, in March of 1929, rather than in 1931, as Magocsi suggests. The March 1929 issue of the newspaper *Lemko* was described as "published by Lemko's Committee," while the April 1929, entirely redesigned issue was described as "*organ Lemkovskoho Soiuza*," that is, "published by Lemko Association in the United States and Canada." Magocsi further observes that "even after other Rusyn-American periodicals adopted English, the Lemko Association continued to use the Lemko-Rusyn vernacular (in the Cyrillic alphabet) in some of its publications. For instance, the association's official newspaper, *Karpatska Rus' / Carpatho-Rus*, "only became bilingual in the 1980s" (Magocsi 2023, 63). I should add that this newspaper still published materials in Lemko-Rusyn vernacular (in the Cyrillic alphabet) as recently as 2006!

Figure 2. Masthead of the newspaper *Lemko* (March 1929)

Figure 3. Masthead of the newspaper *Lemko* indicating the name change of the governing body (April 1929)

Overall, Magocsi's book lacks information on Lemko organized life in America over the past twenty years, so let me address this period. In the late 1990s, Lemko Park in Monroe, New York, was lost and Lemko Hall in Yonkers was sold. Initially, it seemed like this would be the end of Lemko organized activity in the vicinity of New York City. However, while Lemkos in New York do not own a physical place to honor their culture, two events have been taking place every year for a long time. These events are organized by the members of the former Lemko Hall.

The Lemko Picnic takes place every spring or early summer in Ridge Road Park, in Hartsdale, Westchester County, just north of Yonkers. About a hundred people attend every year. In 2023, a small and rather modest exhibit on the history of the Lemko Hall was presented, the first such attempt ever at this event. I'm happy to note that it was not my idea. I was not even there. As a side note, I'd like to mention that the food decoration stressing the ethnic Lemko character of this event becomes more and more sophisticated with every passing year and the appropriate flags seem to be everywhere!

The same group organizes a *kermesh*, a dance, in the fall, held at a hall on the grounds of a golf club in Yonkers. There is no shortage of Lemko and broader Carpatho-Rusyn memorabilia there, including T-shirts commemorating the 100th anniversary of the Lemko Republic and proclaiming "*nai vshŷtkŷ znaiut, zhe Lemkŷ ne hovirku, lem svii iazŷk maiut*." Of course, a group picture with the appropriate flag has become a fixture at this event.

Figure 4. Lemko Kermesh group picture, Yonkers, New York (2023)

Lemko music is a part of these two events. In the case of the *kermesh*, the music is provided by a live band, Lem Joy Trio, also known as Vox Ethnica, which comprises Jurko (*nomen omen*) Harmonik, a Rusyn from Slovakia,

his wife, and their American-born daughter. With professional recordings to their credit and many concerts they have become an institution among Carpatho-Rusyn Americans in the vicinity of New York.

While these events are mostly social in nature, the Lemko Association has been organizing Thalerhof Day, a commemoration of the Lemko victims of Thalerhof internment camp during World War I. It had been organized since the 1960s at Lemko Park. After the Park was lost it was revived at the Lemko Association's headquarters in Higganum, Connecticut, about a hundred miles from New York City. Perhaps because of this location, the commemoration could never attract more than twenty participants. Those that did participate, after taking part in a memorial service known as *panachida*, enjoyed exploring the Lemko Association's library, archives, and artifacts. In an attempt to bring this event closer to the city, in 2023 we gathered in Stamford, Connecticut, at a church belonging to the Orthodox Church in American (OCA) led by Father Vladimir Horoschak, a Lemko himself. After the longest *panachida* that I have ever attended, which was co-celebrated by Deacon David Dutkanicz of the Russian Orthodox Church Outside of Russia (ROCOR), also a Lemko, there was a social and educational gathering in the church hall. A reprint of the 1929 map of Carpathian Rus' was intensely consulted, and we had a lively discussion during which I did my best to answer questions about Lemko past and present.

In his book, Magocsi also mentioned Lemko clubs in Ansonia and Bridgeport, both in Connecticut. While I'm not familiar with the club in Bridgeport, the Lemko Club in Ansonia was established in 1963 and was run by the governing committee, which consisted of eight people. Although it has retained its original name, the Lemko Club became a non-ethnic, private club some 15 years ago. In 2009, the *Connecticut Post* stated that in Ansonia "you no longer have to be […] from Russia's [sic!] Carpathian Mountains to join the Lemko Club" (Mayko 2009). Various Lemko memorabilia are still on display, among them a commemorative plaque with the names of 45 Lemkos who organized the Ansonia branch of the Lemko Association back in 1932! From 1936 to 1958 the Lemko Association owned the Lemko National Hall at 109 Broad Street in Ansonia (1936–1958). This building was probably lost in a horrific flood in 1955.

Figure 5. Lemko Club, Ansonia, Connecticut (2023)

Since I spoke about Ansonia, let me also mention the American-Russian Citizens' Club of nearby Shelton, organized in 1929 and formally founded in 1932 by immigrants from the western Lemko Region and the Prešov Region. The club is active to this day with members who are still largely of Lemko background. As a side note here, let me mention that a few years ago an immigrant from Russia joined this "Russian" Club and rather quickly realized that the members are not quite Russian. Despite that, or perhaps because of that, her American husband of Italian descent subsequently joined as well.

The history of Lemko, Rusyn, Carpatho-Russian or Russian clubs organized by Carpatho-Rusyn immigrants in the United States requires more research and the best specialist on this topic, Richard Custer, sits behind this table. One very important topic that is certain to emerge in a discussion about Carpatho-Rusyns in the United States and Canada is the Carpatho-Rusyn Internet, or the part of it that originates from North America. In the second edition of the *Encyclopedia of Rusyn History and Culture* (2005), Brian Požun wrote a substantial entry on this topic, which if addressed today would require

many more pages of text (Požun 2005, 212–215). While the Internet provides the good, the bad, and the ugly, it is to many people the main source of information on Carpatho-Rusyns, including more than 18,000 members of a Facebook group Carpatho-Rusyns Everywhere and more than 4,000 members of the Lemko Rusyns and Friends group ("Carpatho-Rusyns" 2023, "Lemko-Rusyns" 2023). These groups in fact are sort of organizations. The latter group provides a significant amount of valuable and useful information on Lemkos, mainly obtained and posted by its moderator, Richard Custer.

Another topic that warrants discussion is the presence of Carpatho-Rusyns in American sports. George Pawlush of Cheshire, Connecticut, a retired healthcare and higher-education public relations and marketing senior executive, as well as a football and minor-league baseball historian and author, has finished writing forty-three profiles of American sport figures of Carpatho-Rusyn background. Hopefully, we will see this material published soon. While *Our People* does mention sports in passing as an activity that brought Carpatho-Rusyns together, there are many more stories to tell about Carpatho-Rusyn American athletes.

I will conclude by comparing the careers of two American boxers of Carpatho-Rusyn background. Pete Latzo, who is mentioned in the book, and Johnny J. Jadick [Dziadyk], who is not. Their careers overlapped in time and were similar regarding their professional boxing records and achievements. Each became the World Champion in his respective weight category (BoxRec 2023). They were well known in Carpatho-Rusyn circles and served as a source of ethnic pride.

Pete Latzo (1902–1968)		Johnny J. Jadick (1908–1970)
Colerain, Pa.	Born	Philadelphia, Pa.
1919–1934	Career	1923–1937
96	Bouts	153
63–29–3	Record	91–54–8
1926–27 World Welterweight	Champion	1932–33 World Light Welterweight

In short, I very much hope there will be a 6th expanded and revised version of Professor Magocsi's *Our People*, the most important and influential book on Carpatho-Rusyn Americans.

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Carpatho-Rusyn Civilization?: Culture, Kitsch, and Values in the New World

I. Carpatho-Rusyn Civilization

In "Origins," the first chapter of *Our People: Carpatho-Rusyns and Their Descendants in North America* (2023), Professor Paul Robert Magocsi writes that "Carpatho-Rusyn civilization" emerges at the crossroads of the eastern Byzantine Orthodox and western Roman Catholic cultural spheres. This is an interesting formulation. While the terms "civilization" and "culture" are often used synonymously, they have different etymologies and intellectual histories. The term *civilization* comes from the Latin *civilis* ("civic" or "public") and *civis*

("citizen") and first emerged in France as *civil* ("civil") and *civilité* ("civility"), which refer to good manners and a mild temperament (Starobinski 1993, 1–3). However, "culture" comes from the Latin *cultura* ("cultivation") and the agricultural verb *cultus* ("to till, to cultivate"). Cicero is often credited with coining the term in his *Tusculan Disputations* (45 BCE), where he describes philosophy as "the cultivation of the soul" (*cultura animi*) (Cicero 1927, 159). Thus, if civilization broadly refers to the developed, often rational, qualities of a *state* or *society*, culture tends to describe values that naturally or organically emerge among a *people* in a *place*. Since Carpatho-Rusyns have never had a state of their own, the use of the term "civilization" would appear to be inappropriate. However, in his "The Clash of Civilizations?" (1993), Samuel P. Huntington defines a civilization as "the highest cultural grouping of people and the broadest level of cultural identity," even if this identity may include "a very small number people, such as the Anglophone Caribbean" (Huntington 1993, 24). In this sense, while Carpatho-Rusyns have always been forced to integrate into and participate in surrounding civilizations, there may be a certain cultural remainder that is not dissolvable or assimilable into these larger, higher entities, the quality that Michael Novak suggests made Slavic immigrants in the new world "unmeltable ethnics" (Novak 1971). In other words, is "Carpatho-Rusyn" the "highest" and "broadest" identity that unites what often on the surface seem to be disparate, insular, parochial groups of Central European immigrants who made a home in North America?

II. Meanwhile in Carpatho-Rusyn America

My task is to evaluate Professor Magocsi's representation of Carpatho-Rusyn American culture, a subject that *Our People* enters from a fascinating angle—not through high culture but through the material culture of daily life. Its point of departure is to compel readers to look around and discover the places, practices, and products that bear legible traces of Carpatho-Rusyn identity: the cemeteries and churches that shape the historical centers of Carpatho-Rusyn immigration, the *vyshyvanka* and *pysanky* that have been passed down from one generation to the next, the *halushki* and *holupki*—though, for some reason, not *pyrohy*—that continue to be the staples of third- and fourth-generation cuisine, the *prostopiniie* that distinguishes the *rus'ka vira*, the religious *otpusti* and modern manifestations of *Ruskyi Den* that fill summer calendars. For the hundreds of thousands of Americans who lost or have not yet fully

developed a Carpatho-Rusyn identity, this is an effective narratorial device: it allows *Our People*'s likely imagined reader—an assimilated, denationalized, or prenational Carpatho-Rusyn American with some awareness of their heritage—to recognize that the remnants of their family's European identity are actually manifestations of and contributions to Carpatho-Rusyn American culture. This is also precisely the device that elicits the feeling of "meanwhile" or the experience of the "simultaneity" of "past and future in an instantaneous present" that Benedict Anderson argues is crucial for the formation of national identity as an imagined community (Anderson 1983, 24).

In fact, when the Carpatho-Rusyn lawyer Orestes Mihaly gave me the first edition of *Our People* in the basement of St. John the Baptist Carpatho-Russian Orthodox Church in Stratford, Connecticut, this feeling of "meanwhile in Carpatho-Rusyn America" was what drew me into the text and, in some way, helped me fully realize that I was Carpatho-Rusyn too. I was raised Orthodox and did not know what a Greek Catholic was, but I did visit the Orthodox-sponsored Camp Nazareth in Mercer, Pennsylvania. If the camp was part of Carpatho-Rusyn history, I guess that I was too. Then I went to the "Root Seeker's Guide" in the back of the book and saw that my grandfather's village Čirč was part of this world, so I guess my ancestors were *our people* too. I then began to speak in the first-person plural about my identity, and this "we" included identities—Greek Catholics, Lemkos, Pannonian Rusyns, Subcarpathian Rusyns, Uhro-Rusyns, Rusins with an "i"—that I did not have but could now begin to identify with. And for me, the most moving section is when *Our People*, in a text written by Patricia Krafcik, represents a typical immigration narrative: leaving home, a heart-rending departure, weeping relatives in the village, a blessing under the wayside cross, a bumpy ride in a cart when the migrants could reflect upon their decision, the arrival at the train station, the exit to the port (Magocsi 2023, 13). These narrative features are what have made *Our People* such a popular and powerful text: they help Carpatho-Rusyn Americans not only rationally understand but emotionally feel their place in history writ large.

III. Carpatho-Rusyn Values

When it comes to high culture, *Our People* primarily focuses on the exemplars of Carpatho-Rusyn American literature (Emil Kubek, Dmitry Vislotsky, Dmitrii Vergun, Sevastiian Sabol), their prominent genres (lyric poetry, short stories,

drama, the first novel written in Rusyn), and the peculiarities of their literary language: Carpatho-Rusyn American authors wrote in the Cyrillic and Latin alphabets, in a language variously called *rus'kyi*, Slavish, or *po-nashomu*, based upon Subcarpathian and Lemko variants of Rusyn or the Rusyn variant of Russian, and drawing upon English loan words such as *bos*, *kara*, *majna*, *burder*, *salun*, *boysik*, *štor*, *porč*, *šusy* (Magocsi 2023, 75–80). In doing so, *Our People* shows how Carpatho-Rusyn American culture is creole, fluid, hybrid, performative, or transnational. New histories will be written to test these theoretical frames. When they are, *Our People* undoubtedly will be the starting point.

At the same time, the fact that *Our People* is deliberately undertheorized means that it does not speculate about what, if anything, unites Carpatho-Rusyn American artists. In his canonical "What is a Nation?" (*Qu'est-ce qu'une nation?*, 1882), Ernest Renan famously argues that a nation does not come into being because of race, language, mutual interests, religion, or geography, but instead is a "soul" united by a "spiritual principle" and "moral consciousness" (Renan 2018, 260–263). After reading *Our People*, we are forced to confront the lingering question: what is in the soul of Carpatho-Rusyn American culture? Elaine Rusinko has suggested that some of its values expressed in literature include "economy," "hard work," "modesty," and "temperance" (Rusinko 2009, 277). I might suggest a few others: (1) a deep sensitivity to cultural, economic, and political inequality, (2) a profound suspicion of the desire for power, status, or wealth, (3) an intense preference for hyperlocal communities rooted in church, neighborhood, or village life, and (4) a deep commitment to expressing the inherent dignity of one's own culture, whether it is viewed by others as high-brow or not. However, *Our People* tends to focus only on aesthetic quality or lack thereof—Kubek is "the most talented"; Maczkov and Brinsky are "amateurs"—which misses an opportunity to tell a synthetic story about Carpatho-Rusyn American culture. In fact, if we do use aesthetics as a yardstick, then we are forced to confront the fact that much of Carpatho-Rusyn American culture today is kitsch.

At the same time, if we undertake a thematic analysis of Carpatho-Rusyn American culture, we find that a common trope is the sympathetic representation of the downtrodden, oppressed, or weak. In Kubek's travelogue "My Journey to Florida" (*Moia podorozh' do Florydŷ,* 1926)—written in the Prešov variant of Rusyn—he is moved by the plight of disenfranchised southern blacks (Кубек 1926, 2–3; Kupensky 2022). Thomas Bell's English-language novel *Out of This Furnace* (1941) ends with a moment of solidarity between the Slovak

protagonists and their new African American neighbors (Bell 1976, 330). Ann Walko's English-language memoir *Eternal Memory* (1999) describes how her immigrant father identified with Mexican railway workers because they also had icons of the Virgin Mary in their kitchen (Walko 1999, 98). Dmitry Vislocky's short story "Miss Mary Gellon" (1927)—written in the Lemko variant of Rusyn—represents the disastrous social and moral effects of workers who are victimized by American capitalism (Гунянка 1927, 25). These are four *very* different writers, but there is a distinctive ethic that unites them. Then there is Warhol.

The question of whether Andy Warhol ought to be considered a "Carpatho-Rusyn artist" or an "American artist of Carpatho-Rusyn heritage" is a never-ending debate. Since Warhol never publicly identified as Carpatho-Rusyn, *Our People* describes him as a "descendant of Carpatho-Rusyns" who happened to make a successful career in the American art world (Magocsi 2023, 86–87). In the *Encyclopedia of Rusyn History and Culture*, Professor Magocsi categorically states that "Warhol himself never contributed anything to Rusyn culture" (Magocsi 2005, 539). But this is only true if our concept of Carpatho-Rusyn culture is limited to nationally conscious Carpatho-Rusyns who explicitly strove to work in a national-patriotic tradition. Elaine Rusinko has suggested that there is a legible "Carpatho-Rusyn Andy" whose working-class upbringing made him attentive to the aesthetic qualities of everyday consumer objects—Campbell's soup cans, Brillo pads, Coke bottles—and how his Byzantine Catholic faith illuminates his interest in not only sacred but secular icons, like Marilyn Monroe, Jacqueline Kennedy, or Elvis Presley (Rusinko 2012, 45). In short, by conceiving culture differently, we would have a more robust view of what the Carpatho-Rusyn American intelligentsia looked like and how it fits together (Kupensky 2023, 223–226).

IV. The Narcissism of Minor Differences

As it is, I often felt that the only common quality shared by Carpatho-Rusyn Americans was a chronic, hereditary "narcissism of minor differences," a theory that Sigmund Freud in *Civilization and Its Discontents* (*Das Unbehagen in der Kultur*, 1930) notes is particularly acute among "small cultural groups." "It is always possible to bind together a considerable number of people in love," he writes, "so long as there are other people left over to receive the manifestations

of their aggressiveness" (Freud 1961, 61). The persistent factionalism along class, linguistic, orthographical, regional, religious, or village lines is perhaps why we cannot yet speak of a Carpatho-Rusyn civilization. Even today, as Carpatho-Rusyn American culture is truly experiencing a "renaissance," the author of *Our People* struggles to explain why this is the case. In fact, Professor Magocsi seems truly surprised, for the history's final sentence reads: "It seems remarkable that several tens of thousands of poor, often illiterate immigrants arriving in American before World War I have produced offspring who several generations later, and several thousand miles from the European homeland, still in some way retain a sense of Carpatho-Rusyn identity" (Magocsi 2023, 116). Well? Why have they? Maybe it is because the expression of Carpatho-Rusyn identity is not only a statement of national origin but also an ethic, a moral consciousness that expresses something about—however old fashioned an idea it may be—the soul of a nation. Being Carpatho-Rusyn means that you desire something that cannot be satisfied by the other outlets civilization affords. As it is, in the clash between the desires of the individual and the civilizing pressures of society, the reflexive position of the Carpatho-Rusyns is always to be among the discontents.

V. Remembering and Forgetting

There may, however, be something else at work. Renan famously describes how "the act of forgetting" is an essential component in the formation of a nation (Renan 2018, 251), and I am inclined to think that the twenty-first century's Carpatho-Rusyn Americans have collectively forgotten many of the old fights that fractured the first- and second-generation communities. Today's Carpatho-Rusyn Americans are, in fact, in search of an inclusive identity that embraces difference rather than squabbles about whether their *baba*'s idiolect is considered normative or whether their *pyrohy* recipe is viewed to be correct or whether their village in the old world or new world is given precedence on the map. In this respect, *Our People* has created a field in which a collective Carpatho-Rusyn identity can grow new roots. It is a history that remembers our past, but, more importantly, it allows us to forget it for the sake of creating a different future.

In his poem "Ruthenia," the poet Peter Oresick—in perhaps the most apt expression of Carpatho-Rusyn American identity today—writes "I

forget Ruthenia daily, fondly." By forgetting, he says, "you alone are real to us" (Oresick 2015, 8–9).

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The Making of *Our People*: The Author Responds

For any author, the appearance of a published review, whether positive or negative, is a joy. Someone has taken the time to read and comment on what one has written. Just imagine the two-fold, or in this case five-fold joy, that I have experienced reading several detailed commentaries about the fifth, revised and expanded, edition of *Our People: Carpatho-Rusyns and Their Descendants in North America*. The commentaries were first presented in the form of a roundtable book panel at a prestigious annual scholarly convention in the United States and now see the light of day on the pages of the European scholarly journal of Carpatho-Rusyn Studies, the *Richnyk Ruskoi Bursŷ*. I am both humbled and grateful to all five commentators for their insights and especially to Professor Nicholas Kupensky who conceived and organized the original panel and arranged for the publication of its proceedings.

I was particularly struck by the observation of Professor Patricia A. Krafcik that I, as the author of *Our People*, am simply "the vessel through which the voice of the community of immigrants and their descendants has found expression." This, I believe, is the highest compliment any author could hope for. In effect, this was always my goal, even if perhaps an unconscious goal at the time the book was in its gestational stage. And when was that?

Actually, the first draft of *Our People* dates back to the mid-1970s, when I served as a member of the executive editorial board of the *Harvard Encyclopedia of American Ethnic Groups*. That board commissioned me to write a sample entry which could be critiqued and then serve as a model for other ethnic group entries in the encyclopedia that was subsequently published with great fanfare in 1980 by Harvard University Press. Consequently, the organizational framework pointed out by Professor Krafcik that appears in every edition of *Our People* (Origins; Migration; Settlement Patterns; Religious Life; Organizational Life; Culture; Political Life; Group Maintenance) was conceptually sociological or socioanthropological in approach and reflected the guidelines demanded for the draft entry on Carpatho-Rusyns that appeared in the Harvard encyclopedia.

After I left Harvard for the University of Toronto in 1980, I served as an executive board member of the Multicultural History Society of Ontario. Still active in promoting Carpatho-Rusyn Studies in the United States, I decided to expand the Harvard encyclopedia entry, add photos and a list of European homeland villages, and publish the entire package in the form of a book titled *Our People*. The initial text insert, then full-fledged chapter on Carpatho-Rusyns in Canada was a justified requirement of the Toronto-based publisher. After all, at the very least I should know something about "our people" in the country to which I became an immigrant.

* * * * *

I am grateful to Professor Krafcik for commenting on the photo illustrations and maps as they evolved over the five editions. All too often readers and fellow scholars treat illustrations and even maps as a kind of afterthought which may be a pleasant decorative element but seemingly not essential and certainly not on a par with the "scholarly" text. After publishing numerous historical atlases and illustrated volumes, I can assure anyone that it takes as much if not more time to find, select, and describe illustrations (not to mention to draw maps) as it does to write the narrative.

Finally, all the work involved in gathering illustrative and cartographic material can be for nought if the printing process is not of the highest quality. Most scholarly publishers in North America couldn't care less about "decorative" elements like maps and illustrations. Moreover, printing in color is almost always out of the question. And if black-and-white photos are allowed, they are often blurred because of cost-cutting printing techniques and/or use of cheap papers stock that bleeds the ink.

In short, the fifth edition of *Our People* differs from previous ones, not only because it was re-designed, but because it was not printed in North America but rather in Europe, specifically in the Czech Republic. European printers still take pride in producing books and provide all the care necessary to produce a quality (sewed not glued) hard-cover product. To be sure, the fifth edition of *Our People* is as physically beautiful as it is because we—the Carpatho-Rusyn Research Center—controlled the production process. Alas, this is something that most North American academics are unable to do, lucky if they are even to find a publisher to produce their often otherwise important scholarly work.

* * * * *

Richard Custer's insightful comments have brought us to the heart of the matter: how to define a Carpatho-Rusyn, specifically a Carpatho-Rusyn American, or more precisely an American/Canadian of Carpatho-Rusyn ancestral background? The definition given in *Our People* reads: "any person born in Carpathian Rus', or born in the United States of at least one parent, grandparent, or other generational ancestor who came from one of the 1,159 villages listed in the Root Seeker's appendix to this volume."

Given the focus of his remarks on religious life, Mr. Custer tests the book's definition by looking at four bishops—born, or with ancestors from, the Lemko Region—each of whom has headed either the Ukrainian Catholic, Russian Orthodox, and Byzantine Ruthenian Catholic church jurisdictions in the United States. Regardless whether these figures identified (and some have definitely not) as Carpatho-Rusyns, and regardless whether they are typical representatives of the community (which they definitely are not), the fact remains that Custer has found a basic flaw in the identity definition provided in *Our People*.

How, then, to correct *mea culpa*? The verb that I used in the text, "is," implies an absolute. Instead, I should have said: "a Carpatho-Rusyn could (or may) be defined as…" Long live the subjunctive form of verbs, which in this case imply the subjective aspect of self-identity. In other words, it is not from where geographically one or one's ancestors come from, but rather one's personal convictions—how one feels. A Carpatho-Rusyn American is someone who actively defines oneself as a Carpatho-Rusyn. Such a person may have only one Carpatho-Rusyn parent, or grandparent, or great-grandparent who is Carpatho-Rusyn. Even having a small percentage of ancestral Carpatho-Rusynism, that person may consciously choose to be a Carpatho-Rusyn instead (or alongside) some other possible ethnic identity. This is the kind of situational identity or daily plebiscite (*à la* Renan) that sociologists and political scientists

are so fond of theorizing about. In short, we will never know how many Americans belong to any specific ancestral/ethnic group.

One must admit that the definition given in *Our People* reflects the conscious or unconscious prescriptive intent of the author. By using absolute verbal forms "is/are," the implication is that there may be potentially, let us say, 620,000 Americans of Carpatho-Rusyn background, but that not necessarily all, even a majority, know that—yet. Books like *Our People* might help them to reach the stage of knowing. Written evidence by numerous readers of the book's first four editions (including from the organizer of this symposium) seem to confirm that *Our People* is doing its prescriptive job.

Are there other instruments to carry out this identity-building task? Indeed, there are. And some of those instruments, like the Internet and social media, may be more effective than the traditional printed word. The church is potentially another means of building ethnic awareness. In this context, Mr. Custer asks specifically my views on the potential impact of newly arrived priests from the post-Communist European homeland on parishioners to whom they are assigned in the United States.

I would say that the era of churches and their role in sustaining (at best passively) ethnic identity is long gone. Moreover, the recently arrived new priests are literally on strange American ground and, therefore, fearfully cautious of saying anything which may be construed as politically incorrect (pride in a distinct Carpatho-Rusyn identity) or that would reflect their own actual convictions as an ethnic Slovak or ethnic Ukrainian. In short, the Carpatho-Rusyn movement in North America should not expect any help or anything more than benign neutrality on the part of the community's traditional churches.

* * * * *

Our colleague Professor Robert Zecker expresses concern about "problematizing" matters in his comments about *Our People.* Why should he worry? Is not raising problems and questions one of the main, if not the main, jobs of our scholarly profession? Without a doubt he is right in saying that the discussion in *Our People* about economic life lays out at best a few facts but that it needs to be fleshed out, hopefully by future scholars who might be trained by the likes of Professor Zecker whose own interests and sensitivities are in the realm of economic history and social justice.

As he and other scholars might encourage a new generation of North Americans (regardless of their ancestral background) to engage in the socioeconomic

history of Carpatho-Rusyn Americans, one would hope that there be greater concern for terminological accuracy. If for no other reason, I would have thought that *Our People,* in all its editions, has made it clear that the correct name (*ethnonym*) of the group being analyzed is Carpatho-Rusyn. The term *Rusyn* (English: Ruthenian) is, after all, a generic self-designation for all East Slavs from the former Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth (modern-day Belarusans and Ukrainians) as well as from the northeastern Hungarian Kingdom. It is common knowledge that in early U.S. and Canadian (not to mention Vatican documentary sources) there was no distinction made between Ukrainians, Belarusans, and Carpatho-Rusyns. They were all designated as Ruthenians/Rusyns. We scholars should have long ago abandoned the short-hand and ultimately confusing name *Rusyn* and use only *Carpatho-Rusyn* when speaking of "our people."

Perhaps more egregious is the term *Herrenvolk* to describe the top rung of people in America's traditional racial pecking order. Catchingly provocative and even sensational as *Herrenvolk* may be, the German-inspired Hitlerian term is embedded with racial determinants that were never quite present among America's self-designated elite. No less flattering yet more precise is WASP, the prickly acronym for White Anglo-Saxon Protestants—those living on top of the proverbial hill in numerous turn-of-the-twentieth-century company and mill towns. Despite the earnest efforts of Daughters-of-the-American-Revolution-types, WASPs were "racially" diluted by Irish Protestants (Scotch-Irish), by some Irish Catholics (WASCs), by Scandinavian and German Lutherans, and even by Hungarian Calvinist Protestants who ostentatiously attended socially well-established Presbyterian churches in New York City and other large American urban centers. Of course, Eastern Christian Carpatho-Rusyns and other southern and eastern Europe Roman Catholics and Orthodox could never make it—or for that matter want to make it—into the bland world of "superior" American WASP-dom. In short, Carpatho-Rusyns knew their place in the United States as they did in the European homeland where the WASP on top of the hill was the Hungarian or Polish landlord.

Yes, as Professor Zecker's comments remind us, we need more granular studies of the United States labor movement and the role of Carpatho-Rusyns specifically in labor disputes (strikes) and unions. To be sure, this will not be an easy task, teasing out Carpatho-Rusyns from other Slavs and even from other Ruthenians and Russians. It makes no sense to believe one is describing Carpatho-Rusyn Americans by citing sources that speak of generic Slavs, Ruthenians, or Russians.

A case in point is Professor Zecker's mentioning the so-called Carpatho-Russian Association, which was affiliated with the American Communist party's International Workers Order (IWO). Intriguingly to be sure is the fact that I had never heard of or read about the Carpatho-Russian Association (or is it Society?), even though I met and interviewed its ostensible head, Michael Logoyda (mentioned on *Our People*'s Acknowledgment page).

Just where and which were the choirs, bands, theater troupes attached to the association/society's lodges? Are they, in fact, those belonging to another organization, the Lemko Association? Perhaps such concrete information is available in Professor Zecker's chapter (or book?) that he cites, the *International Workers Order* (2018).

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It may seem untoward, nay the very height of irony (even hypocrisy) for someone like me, often described by unfriendly critics as a "Carpatho-Rusyn separatist," to be speaking of separatism. But separatism is, indeed, what comes to mind after reading Dr. Bogdan Horbal's "Lemko take" on *Our People*.

I did not realize that with regard to chapter 5 in *Our People*, no other "cultural organization […] received more attention than the Lemko Association." This fact, unintended by me, is fine, since we are reminded by Dr. Horbal that the Lemko Association is the oldest Carpatho-Rusyn American organization, founded in 1929, not as I write, incorrectly, in 1931.

Correcting such details is undoubtedly important, but the emphasis on Lemko-American at the expense of other Carpatho-Rusyn American organizations seems unwarranted. Dr. Horbal himself published previously some very influential studies on non-purely Lemko-American societies, so it is not for lack of awareness and concrete knowledge that he seems to have become a Lemko "separatist."

Most recently, he has published a small but pioneering book about businesses founded and operated by Americans of Carpatho-Rusyn background. Such businesses did not function in isolation from other Carpatho-Rusyn owned enterprises, a subject in sore need of research. Why, then, limit oneself to only one branch of Carpatho-Rusyn Americans who together were part of one community that was not necessarily divided along Lemko and non-Lemko American lines? Separatism, however, is not intellectually or socioculturally in the best interest of today's Carpatho-Rusyn communitas and the integrated discipline of Carpatho-Rusyn Studies.

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As someone who has always been concerned with definitions and, in particular, defining one's terms at the outset of any book and scholarly article, I must express my appreciation to Professor Nicholas Kupensky for defining in useful etymological terms the concepts "civilization" and "culture." Admittedly, I have been sloppy in my writings, often using the terms as synonyms. No more shall I do this. In keeping with the spirit of Professor Kupensky's injunction, from now on I will refer to "Carpatho-Rusyn culture" in the hope that someday it will rise to the level of "Carpatho-Rusyn civilization," including the good manners and mild temperament that etymologically emerges from the French concept of *civilité*.

Reflecting upon Richard Custer's concern about how to define a Carpatho-Rusyn, Professor Kupensky moves beyond observable objective characteristics of national identity (geographic place, language, material culture) to more subjective characteristics. He bluntly poses the question: what is the soul of Carpatho-Rusyn culture? To define the illusive idea of a soul, Kupensky calls for a closer examination of literary works written by Carpatho-Rusyn Americans themselves or by others about their immigrant lives. He also mentions visual art as a source for finding that illusive soul by trying to convince us that Andy Warhol is, indeed spiritually, a Carpatho-Rusyn.

To be sure, defining a people by its soul may bring into the fold many more Carpatho-Rusyn Americans than definitional criteria based on ancestral geography or personal convictions about national origin. Either way, pursuing such avenues of research suggests a wide range of projects for younger scholars whose future writings will hopefully enrich the discipline of Carpatho-Rusyn Studies for generations to come. The imminent appearance of *Our People* in a Ukrainian-language edition (under the apt Rusyn-inspired title *Nasha faita*) will hopefully draw our European colleagues into research about Carpatho-Rusyn Americans.

Professor Kupensky ends his remarks with a paragraph entitled "Remembering and Forgetting." He notes that Carpatho-Rusyn American life was traditionally characterized by internal squabbles of the Freudian "narcissism-of-minor-differences" variety. And which, one might ask, immigrant or diaspora community has not shared this chronic disease? In the end, perhaps the highest accolade the book *Our People* could receive is embedded in Professor Kupensky's closing statement: "it is a history that remembers our past, but, more importantly, it allows us to forget it for the sake of creating a different future."