

Bohdan Halczak. *Dzieje Łemków od średniowiecza do współczesności* [History of the Lemkos from the Middle Ages to the Present Day]. Tyrsa, 2014. 324 pp. Maps. Tables. Bibliography. Indexes. PLN 25,00, paper.

This book by Bohdan Halczak, a professor at the University of Zielona Góra, aspires to the ranks of monographs that deal comprehensively with the histories of peoples. It joins a series of publications, well known in Poland, that have been put out by Wydawnictwo Ossolineum (Wrocław), Wydawnictwo Trio (Warsaw), and others. While detailed studies are characterized by elaborate scholarly apparatuses, monographs encompassing the entire histories of specific peoples or ethnic groups possess limited factual information and contain generalizing statements. Halczak's monograph is a general overview; its goal is the popular presentation of the history of the Lemkos from the dawn of history to the present day (15).

The book has six main chapters, each concluding with a summary; the structure is akin to that of a university textbook. The author, in discussing terminology and the ethnogenesis of the Lemkos, considers the theories and definitions in the existing literature and clearly declares that the Lemkos belong to the Ukrainian people. He discusses broadly the interchangeability of the terms *Rusyns* and *Ukrainians* in Polish historical literature, referring to this phenomenon as “terminological ‘dualism’” (“‘dualizm’ nazewniczy”; my trans.; 12). He correctly notes that such dual terminology is not used in naming Germans, Italians, or Slovaks. It is a pity, however, that he does not continue this polemic and go on to explain why the Rusyns decided to change their self-designation to *Ukrainians*. It would have been worth mentioning that in the process of the formation of modern nations in the nineteenth century, the Rusyns were often regarded as Poles, and in Russia—as Russians. The Rusyns' adoption of Polish or Russian culture alarmed the Ukrainian national awakeners and was seen as a threat to the Ukrainian ethnos; the new name, *Ukrainians*, was supposed to guarantee the preservation of Ukrainian cultural potential and to stimulate its further development. It is also worth noting that on the margins of Ukrainian settlement, in Transcarpathian Ukraine and the Lemko region, the new name met with resistance, which some researchers have connected with the conservatism of the Rusyn mountaineers, who were reluctant to discard traditional appellations.

In Halczak's book, a broad backdrop for Lemko issues is provided by questions connected with the policies pursued by central and Eastern European states (that is, Rus', the Hungarian Kingdom, Russia, the Austrian Empire, Austria-Hungary, Poland, Czechoslovakia, Yugoslavia, and the USSR). In the case of the Middle Ages, the author emphasizes the allegiance

of the Sanok area to Galician Rus' and Casimir the Great's expansion into Rus'. He clearly classifies the settlement that occurred on the basis of Vlach (Wallachian) law as having been undertaken by the Ukrainian population entering the western Carpathians from the east, first along the southern slope and then along the northern one (48-49). Halczak correctly maintains that the term *Vlachs* refers primarily to the pastoral economy and way of life and in the case of these settlers should not be understood as having an ethnic component—that is, one should not regard the colonizers settling the Lemko region as Wallachians. Furthermore, he underscores the peaceful nature of this settlement, stating that the Lemkos did not carry out conquests but occupied new territories with the full consent of the Polish and the Hungarian gentry (49).

The accounts concerning the process of the formation of a modern national identity among the Lemkos are interesting. In fact, the Lemko intelligentsia was active in public life already in the eighteenth century. The Lemko land as a region, however, became the subject of political life only at the end of the nineteenth century. This was owing to its peripheral situation far from Lviv, the strongest Galician centre with Ukrainian church, cultural-educational, and economic institutions. Halczak properly calls attention to the religious basis of the Lemkos' national identity. From the eighteenth century, the liturgy of the Uniate church was subjected to a powerful Latinizing influence, and Latinization was coupled with Polonization. This reinforced sympathies for Orthodoxy, with its liturgy free from Latin influences, and tsarist Russia exploited this in imposing Russian Orthodoxy on the Rusyns. Halczak also appropriately evaluates the influence of Polish political thought on the formation of the identity of the Rusyns/Lemkos. The Ukrainian national awakening elicited dismay in Polish circles, and a Rusyn culture based on the Cyrillic script began to be treated as a threat to the concept of the reconstruction of the Polish state within pre-Partition borders (85). Fears arose that in the process of achieving a modern national identity, the Rusyns/Lemkos might draw nearer to Russian culture. These circumstances lay at the root of the Moscophilism that developed among the Lemkos at the end of the nineteenth and beginning of the twentieth centuries. However, originally, the Moscophile movement arose in the 1860s and 1870s in the central districts of Eastern Galicia, and it was expelled from there at the beginning of the twentieth century by the Ukrainian national movement. A characteristic feature of Moscophilism is, invariably, the way that this political trend evolved. In a part of the population and also in the case of emigrants returning from America, Moscophilism began to take the form of a Carpatho-Rusyn movement aspiring to the designation of a separate nationality. This does not change the fact that as a whole (as the author properly asserts in many places), Lemkos participated in the creation of a

modern Ukrainian nation and reacted to the same threats—with the difference only that on the northern side of the Carpathians, they were opposed to Polish culture whereas on the southern side, they opposed Hungarian culture.

One can find in this book well-known facts concerning the Lemko republics of the years 1918-19; the social and political situation of the Lemkos in the Second Polish Republic and in the Generalgouvernement; the tragedy of Operation Wisła of 1947; and other questions. The author also refers to facts that have evoked controversial opinions in the historiography—for example, the denunciations attributed by some historians to Ukrainians, which were supposedly an element of the struggle of Rusyns/Lemkos of a Ukrainian orientation with Rusyns/Lemkos of a Moscophile (today—Carpatho-Rusyn) orientation. According to this narrative, “Ukrainian denunciations” from the period of World War I were the chief basis for the Lemko martyrology, which was symbolized by the Thalerhof internment camp. Halczak correctly points out that Austro-Hungarian authorities possessed full lists of localities where Moscophile Kachkovsky Society reading rooms existed and that the denunciations were based chiefly on personal conflicts and were not the main source of the information obtained by officers of the Austro-Hungarian army (94-96). One can add to this evaluation the fact that the information about Moscophile organizations and periodicals penetrating the Lemko region and the resultant lists of names of Lemkos sympathetic to these organizations and periodicals also—and perhaps primarily—came from the documentation created by the Galician administration prior to the outbreak of the war.

Given the rich tradition of Lemko studies in Poland, the Polish reader has easy access to information about the historical homeland of the Lemkos; in relation to the Lemko diaspora, however, Polish-language literature is relatively modest. Halczak’s book partially fills this lacuna. The author describes the road that emigrants had to travel before they arrived at American ports (usually Ellis Island), where they underwent immigration procedures. He rightly points out the dangerous labour conditions, low pay, and harsh housing conditions in the mining and smelting industries. He presents selected aspects of the process of Lemko assimilation into American society. And he mentions the participation of Lemkos in the United States Armed Forces; in relation to this, we find the story of Sergeant Michael Strank of the United States Marine Corps, who fought against the Japanese in 1945 at Iwo Jima in the Pacific (194). The book devotes particular attention to the mosaic of social and economic organizations, cultural-educational societies, and religious communities that were founded and maintained by the immigrants. One can distinguish two tendencies in this mosaic—the Ukrainian and the Carpatho-Rusyn (neo-Rusyn)—which emerged, on the

one hand, as a consequence of the search for a modern national identity in the new land of America and, on the other hand, in clear connection with the social divisions transferred to the United States and Canada from the Lemkos' European homeland. Halczak considers the dynamic development of Ukrainian emigration after the fall of the USSR, the revival of the Organization for the Defense of Lemkivshchyna in the USA, the popularity of (the Ukrainian) Lemko Vatra USA in Ellenville, New York, and the activity of Ukrainians in Canada, and he asserts that today, the Carpatho-Rusyn/neo-Rusyn movement on American soil is not significant (280). The author, in outlining aspects of emigration, could have included the migration to South America, although the scale of this emigration was incomparably smaller than the one to the US and Canada.

Halczak presents the history of the Lemkos who settled in the Balkans, a topic that is also little known in Polish historiography. It finds its place within a broader picture of the general political situation in Yugoslavia and after the dissolution of that state. At the same time, it has been placed within a bipolar context (as has become traditional in more recent Lemko history): the Ukrainian movement versus the Carpatho-Rusyn/neo-Rusyn movement (277-79). Halczak rightly points out the tragic situation of the Rusyn/Ukrainian/Lemko population in Vojvodina during the Hungarian occupation. The textbook structure of his work does not permit him to develop this theme, but it is worth recalling the wider context of the Magyarization policy regarding the Slavs that was conducted from at least the middle of the nineteenth century, which was realized in drastic form by the Miklós Horthy governments. Under Josip Broz Tito's rule in Yugoslavia, Vojvodina became the main region of settlement for the population officially designated as *Rusyns-Ukrainians*. The author notes a series of complications in the perception of this population by the Serbs and Croats, and he points out the difficulties in evaluating the events of the war, relations with the Communist and nationalist communities, and so on. Next, he briefly discusses the formation and activity of organizations of the Ukrainian/Lemko population in the Balkans (237, 277). Unfortunately, the author has not managed to avoid certain imprecisions; for example, he states that Montenegro separated from Yugoslavia in 2006 when that year actually marked the separation of Montenegro from the State Union of Serbia and Montenegro (278).

Halczak devotes much space to the cultural heritage of the Lemko region, which enriches his narrative regarding the concrete contributions of the Lemkos to the development of Ukrainian as well as Polish and American culture. He mentions the composer Dmytro Bortnians'kyi, whose ancestors came from Bartne, and Mykhailo Verbyts'kyi, who was born in Ulucz and wrote the melody to the Ukrainian national anthem, "Shche ne vmerla

Ukraina” (“Ukraine Has Not Yet Perished” [61]). In the realm of literature, he refers to Bohdan Ihor Antonych, whose poetry, written in the Ukrainian literary language, has found recognition in many countries and has been translated into various languages (244). In the sphere of painting, Halczak names one of the most prominent representatives of twentieth-century primitivism—Epifanii Drovniak (or Nykyfor), also known as Nikifor of Krynica, which was the official designation given to him by the government of the Polish People’s Republic (245, 264). The book discusses, of course, an artist who made an enormous contribution to the development of world culture—the prominent American representative of pop art Andy Warhol, whose parents came from the Lemko village of Miková on the territory of present-day Slovakia (244). Lemkos have also participated in the development of scholarship and served as university lecturers; for example, the linguist Ivan Zilyns'kyi was a professor at the Jagiellonian University while his son Orest Zilyns'kyi, also a linguist, was a professor at Charles University in Prague and a member of the Czech Academy of Sciences (232). We find in this book a range of information on the cultural institutions, publishers, museums, festivals, and so on, that have been active in the regions inhabited by the Lemkos.

From an editorial point of view, thanks to Tyrsa, this book presents itself very well. One could only have reservations about the quality of the maps in the introduction (see 10-11). The popular-scholarly structure adopted by Halczak for this book forced the author to be selective in the presentation of his facts. However, it must be stressed that this work is original—it is the first of its kind in Polish historiography.

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