

The Old and The New

Address to the VII World Congress of Rusyns

Prešov, Slovakia—June 7, 2003

Paul Robert Magocsi

The World Congress of Rusyns is already a relatively old phenomenon. Begun back in March 1991, our congress is now thirteen years old. This means that the World Congress of Rusyns is even older than three of the countries from which it receives delegates – Slovakia, Ukraine, and Serbia and Montenegro. And we have certainly become experienced at holding congresses. This is the seventh congress, and with regard to the breadth of activity and associated events it is the largest.

Nonetheless, the very existence of the World Congress raises some practical problems. Considering the enormous cost in terms of money and human effort, one must wonder whether in the future it will still be possible or even desirable to continue to hold our congresses according to the “old” format. That is a question which I simply pose for consideration, but will not attempt to answer here. We should, however, express our deepest gratitude to all those who made this wonderful Seventh

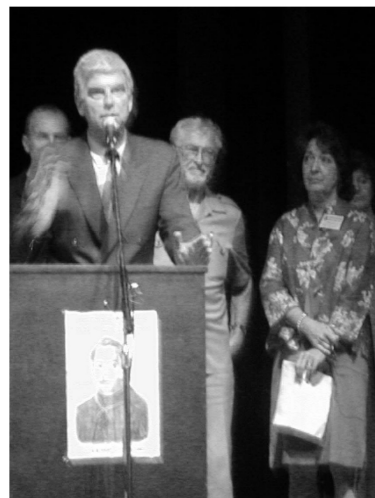
World Congress of Rusyns and its associated events possible: the government of Slovakia; the organizing committee of our host, the Rusyn Renaissance Society; and in particular, the chairman of the World Council, Aleksander Zozuliak.

There is as well much that is “new” in our World Congress. For the last two years we have a new chairman; the congress is finally registered formally as a legal body (specifically in Slovakia) with its own bank account; we have increased the number of associate members and hopefully will agree to add as our eighth full member, the Rusyns of Romania; and perhaps most important, we are holding our congress in conjunction with the First International Forum of Rusyn Youth, a tradition which we are beginning here in Prešov and that hopefully will continue in the future. Not surprisingly, these new developments raise new problems.

One such problem has to do with the size of the delegations from various founding-member countries. Should each of these delegations continue to comprise ten members? And should not associate members, either individually or as a group, be given a vote on the World Council? Should there be separate delega-

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Paul Robert Magocsi

tions for the United States and Canada, or should there remain one North American delegation?

There is also one other matter of concern: the official organ of the World Congress, the magazine *Rusyn*. Since its inception back in 1991, the magazine *Rusyn* has been funded entirely by Slovakia's Rusyn Renaissance Society. Some members of that society (Milan Andraš and Ivan Bandurič) have suggested that the World Congress, not the Rusyn Renaissance Society, should finance its own official organ. This would leave more funds for the Rusyn Renaissance Society to carry out local cultural activity. I would agree with this argument. Therefore, I suggest that the World Congress formally thank the Rusyn Renaissance Society for funding the magazine *Rusyn* for over a decade and that beginning in 2004 the magazine should become the financial as well as editorial responsibility of the World Congress of Rusyns.

There are, however, three other topics about which I would like to share with you some thoughts today. I believe, moreover, that they are most important for the future direction of the Rusyn movement. These three topics are: business, scholarship; and youth.

With regard to business, there are two aspects that I have in mind. The first has to do with businesses – restaurants, food stores, gasoline stations, shops selling products of various kinds – that are part of the general economy and that are owned or operated by persons of Rusyn descent. These and other such businesses need to be actively supported by Rusyns in general. In other words, Rusyns should try to buy their bread and milk, or to have their car repaired, or to drink their beer or coffee in businesses owned or operated by fellow Rusyns. In order to make this possible, the first step would be to draw up a list of Rusyn-owned businesses in each country. Then it would be desirable to convince their owners to put up a sign or a sticker on their door that reads something like: “our store or company supports the World Congress of Rusyns”, or that it supports a specific country's Rusyn organization.

The other aspect of business has to do with non-profit Rusyn organizations, such as the Rusyn Ren-

naissance Society, the Lemko Association, or the Ruska Matka, each of which produces products such as books, music cassettes, and other related cultural items. In general, and I would say most unfortunately, there is little or no thought given to selling these products for a profit. In an effort to address this problem, last year we carried out an experiment by investing \$2,000 (US) to create a publication fund with the World Congress. The first book published was Mykola Kseniak's *Bida ikh z domu vŷhaniala*. The goal of the experiment was not simply to publish Kseniak's book. That is relatively easy, since with modern technology virtually anyone can publish a book! Rather, the real challenge was to sell the book so that the Congress could at least recover its investment. Part of the publication and marketing plan included the participation of the author himself in the sale of the book. In fact, Mr. Kseniak fulfilled his responsibilities quite well. I had hoped this experiment would provide a kind of model. Instead, other books have appeared without any serious thought about marketing and sales.

Let me be frank and perhaps somewhat brutal. If enough copies of a book cannot be sold in order to recover at least the original investment, then maybe such books should not be published at all. For twenty-five years, I have operated the Carpatho-Rusyn Research Center in the United States. That center has sold during those years nearly 50,000 books and maps all dealing with Rusyns. And although we have never received any governmental funding, we nevertheless are able to sell enough books to cover our costs, to publish or purchase for resale new titles, and still to have some funds left over to provide Rusyn scholars and writers in Europe with grants to carry out their research and publish their books.

I am sure many if not most of you sitting in this audience would like to dismiss what I am saying simply because you believe that the kind of market principles I am describing may be possible in wealthy America but not among our “poor Rusnaks” in Europe. Let me provide, however, one important counter-argument. Paradoxically, it is in economically the poorest country where Rusyns live that the most successful publishing house oper-

ates. I have in mind Ukraine, specifically Uzhhorod, and more specifically the Padiak Publishing House. I do not think it is an exaggeration to say that in the last three or four years Padiak has published more titles in Rusyn or about Rusyns than all the other Rusyn publishing houses in Poland, Slovakia, Hungary, and Yugoslavia combined. Moreover, he has done this without any government subsidies. How is this possible? Is Mr. Padiak some kind of miracle worker? No, it is sound and wise business practices that make his publishing house successful. I mention this example to show what is possible not simply in “wealthy” America but also in “poor” Ukraine. Put quite simply, Rusyn organizations in other countries should learn from Valerii Padiak and adopt what we might call the Padiak phenomenon.

At the same time it must be said that even if Rusyns in other countries can understand business logic, there are still some serious psychological problems to be overcome. Unfortunately, many Rusyn activists look down on business activity as something below their allegedly higher artistic or intellectual goals. Those same people are not averse, however, to asking for money from others, whether from their own governments or from Rusyn organizations in America. But will such grants always be available in the future? I think not. There is also another psychological problem, which I guess cannot be called by any other name but jealousy or envy. In other words, instead of supporting Rusyn businesses to make their owners successful, most Rusyns would likely shop elsewhere based on the principle that if I cannot become rich myself, then my neighbor – even my family member – should not become rich either. It is with regard specifically to this problem that the old characteristics of jealousy and envy need to be replaced by new characteristics: generosity of spirit and help for one’s people.

The second topic I should like to address is scholarship. In one sense, the past few years have been remarkable. This is because of the appearance of several scholarly monographs whose quality is comparable to the best works in contemporary European and North American scholarship here I have in mind major books about various aspects of Rusyn culture, ranging in size from 300 to 600 pages. These include literary histories by Olena Duć-Fajfer, Elaine Rus-

inko, and Vasyl’ Choma; linguistic studies by Juraj Vaňko, Alexander Teutsch, and Julian Ramač; sociological analyses by Marian Gajdoš, Stanislav Konečný, and Ewa Michna; cultural and sociolinguistic studies by Istvan Udvari, Aleksander Dulichenko, and Marc Stegher; historical works by Bohdan Horbal’; and even an English-language *Encyclopedia of Rusyn History and Culture*. It is too bad we do not have on display at the VII World Congress this selection of what I would consider the twelve best scholarly works about Rusyns written by authors from no less than eight different countries.

I am also happy to report that the annual visiting fellowship in Rusyn Studies at the University of Toronto funded by philanthropist Steven Chepa has begun to function successfully during the 2002-2003 academic year. As many as fourteen candidates from six countries applied for the annual fellowship. Among the first persons chosen are Dr. Anna Pliškova from Prešov University, Mychajlo Fejsa from the University of Novi Sad (who for health reasons is not able to accept the fellowship), Dr. Peter Purdes from the Faculty of Law at Safarik University in Košice, and Boris Varga from the Vojvodina. Future candidates who have the strongest applications are from Hungary, Ukraine, and the Czech Republic.

Whereas scholarly publications related to Rusyns continue to appear in various countries, the authors of such significant works do not necessarily interact or even know each other personally. I believe the time has come to renew the practice of organizing scholarly conferences that are seriously planned at least on year in advance and that would be truly international in their composition, and that would place greatest emphasis on participation by scholars of the kind I have just mentioned as authors of the best recently published books.

In this context, I would make a special request to Rusyn linguists working in various countries: that they renew the idea of inter-regional working seminars in order to address the need for

common terminology. Here I have in mind not only linguistic terminology, but also historical and geographical terminology. For instance, several people have asked whether, and if so when, the English-language *Encyclopedia of Rusyn History and Culture* might appear in Rusyn. Of course, this would be very desirable. But a translation of this magnitude requires first and foremost terminological standardization. I, for one, cannot see how this is possible in an environment where there is not even agreement on ethnonyms to designate Rusyns in contrast to related peoples.

The third and last area of concern is youth. At our sixth and last gathering held in Prague, I proposed the idea of a permanent international forum of Rusyn youth to be held independently, but perhaps in conjunction with the World Congress. To our very pleasant surprise, Rusyn young people took up the challenge and established Rusyn national youth organizations whose delegates have come to Prešov where they will meet tomorrow at the First International Forum of Rusyn Youth. Quite frankly, I believe this gathering of young people is one of the most important, if not the most important, achievements of our Rusyn community in the past two years.

Our Rusyn young people have themselves decided how and in what form to organize their international forum. In other words, they have acted independently of the World Congress. And this is how it should be. At the same time, Rusyn youth activists have not functioned in isolation. They have consulted with various members of the World Congress and they have worked closely with Gabriel Hattinger who wisely proposed the idea of an international Rusyn summer youth camp which first took place last summer in Komloska, Hungary.

In the spirit of consultation, not dictation, might I propose here a few projects for consideration by our younger colleagues. We know how important it was for Rusyns to identify as Rusyns during the 2001 census in Slovakia. There will, of course, be censuses in the future not only in Slovakia but also in other countries where Rusyns live. We also know, for instance, that the number of schools where Rusyn are taught could and should be greater in Poland, Slovakia, and Hungary, but that state support can only

come if parents request Rusyn-language instruction. Perhaps youth organizations in each country could take the large Settlement Map of Carpathian Rus' and decide to visit systematically each village over the next few years with the goal to make rural inhabitants aware of the Rusyn movement, its newspapers, its books, its cultural activity, and, most importantly, to encourage people to request Rusyn-language classes to declare themselves as Rusyns on censuses and other official documents. And to return to the topic of business, perhaps it is from among young people that the sale of the Rusyn-language books, newspapers, and magazines will help to make publishing houses profitable.

Finally, our young people at the First International Forum might wish to remember the following. Although there is a thirty-year old age limit, do remember that you, too, are not that young any more. Put another way you need to look forward and backward: forward in the direction of eventual participation in the World Congress and in your individual national Rusyn organizations; backward in the sense that you and only you can inform even younger kids, who are ten, or twelve, or sixteen that they have a rightful place and opportunity to participate in the Rusyn youth movement that you now direct.

In conclusion, let me simply reiterate what is most important for the World Congress and its participants: that we can value both the old and the new; in other words, to retain what is useful in the way we have done things in the past, but to be ready to adopt and change in order to enhance the possibility for greater success in the future. In that regard, I hope you will agree that in the next few years the greatest concern of the Rusyn movement should be in the areas of business, scholarship, and youth.

Resolutions of the Delegates of the 7th World Congress of Rusyns June 7th, 2003

Translated by Brian Požun

1. We appreciate the work of the Office of the President of the World Council of Rusyns, Aleksander Zozuljak, since the last, sixth, World Congress of Rusyns, in Prague in 2001.
2. We express dissatisfaction with the relocation of the main editorial office of the national-ethnic broadcasts of Slovak Radio from Presov to Kosice. We understand the economic requirements, but part of the savings should be effectively utilized to raise the level and expand Rusyn programming, which is the most important thing for us. We also support the efforts of the radio employees, as well as all Rusyn and other social, cultural, official and legislative institutions to defend the editorial offices against this relocation, which could have negative consequences for the cultural-national life of the Rusyns.
3. We welcome the fact that Father Petro Pavel Hal'jo, CSVV, has been named the vicar of the Greek Catholic Church in Slovakia for the Rusyns, and we recognize this as the first step towards the establishment of a bishopric for Rusyn believers in Slovakia.
4. Understanding the specific situation of Rusyns in Romania and bearing in mind decisions of previous Congresses, we accept the Rusyn Cultural Society of Romania as a regular member of the World Congress of Rusyns.
5. We value the decision of the Transcarpathian regional Rada of National Representatives on the recognition of the Rusyn nationality in Subcarpathia and urge the central government of Ukraine to hear the voice of the national representatives of Subcarpathia and adopt this decision at a meeting of the High Rada of Ukraine.
6. We resolve that delegations to the World Congress of Rusyns from each state must include at least one representative of every Rusyn cultural-social organization registered in that state and operating in accordance with the Articles of the World Congress of Rusyns.
7. We call on the World Council of Rusyns to prepare and publish an anthology of Rusyn prose before the eight World Congress of Rusyns.
8. We call on all members of the World Congress of Rusyns to regularly pay annual membership dues, which are USD 100 for regular members and USD 50 for association members.
9. We call on the newly-elected World Council of Rusyns to focus their activities in the upcoming period on three priorities: scholarship, business and assistance to the World Forum of Rusyn Youth.
10. We call on the competent Church organs and institutions to accept the fact that Rusyns are Christians of the Eastern rite (Orthodox and Greek Catholic). At the same time we ask that priests in Rusyn villages deliver their sermons in Rusyn and read the Epistles and Gospels in Rusyn, according to the wishes of Rusyn parishioners.
11. We support the opening of secular and parochial schools which use Old Church Slavonic and Rusyn as languages of instruction.
12. We call on the Orthodox and Greek Catholic Rusyn faithful to take part not only in the religious, but also in the cultural-national life of the Rusyns actively.
13. We turn to the regions where Rusyns live to take an active role in the Biennial of Rusyn Culture in Krynica and in the International Biennial of Rusyn Fine Arts at the site of

the World Congress of Rusyns.

14. We call on all members of the World Congress of Rusyns to submit written information to the World Council of Rusyns at the end of each year about those cultural activities prepared for the next year.
15. We resolve that every member of the World Congress of Rusyns is to organize a children's folklore festival in their country
16. We resolve that the next, eight, World Congress of Rusyns will be held in Krynica, Poland.
17. We praise the establishment of the new World Council of Rusyns, composed of the following members: Andrij Kopcza (Poland), Paul Robert Magocsi (North America), Ahata Pilatova (Czech Republic), Anna Kuzmiakova (Slovakia), Migajilo Almasij (Subcarpathia in Ukraine), Julijan Ramac (Vojvodina in Serbia and Montenegro), Gabriel Hattinher (Hungary) and George Fircak (Romania). At the same time, the members of the new World Council resolved at their first meeting that the president of the World Council of Rusyns is Andrij Kopcza and its secretary, Aleksander Zozuljak.

Declaration of the First World Forum of Rusyn Youth

We young Rusyns, who have met in the context of the VII World Congress of Rusyns in Prešov at the first historic World Forum of Rusyn Youth on 8 June 2003 in the historic hall of the Aleksander Duchnovyè Theatre, hereby declare that:

We proudly align ourselves with and are aware of the fact that we belong to the separate, Rusyn, nation which henceforth has its own World Council of Rusyn Youth and thereby sets forth on a new path in the history of the Rusyn movement.

We declare 23 August of each year the Day of Rusyn Youth in honor of the founding of the

We want to live with all other nations in the states in which we live in community and peace and in democratic conditions.

We declare 23 August of each year the Day of Rusyn Youth in honor of the preparatory committee for the World Forum of Rusyn Youth.

We do not want to be nationalists, but want to be devoted sons and daughters of our nation and to work for its good.

Resolution of the First World Forum of Rusyn Youth

The World Forum of Rusyn Youth, which met in Prešov on 8 June 2003, makes the following Resolution:

1. Young Rusyns will propagate their activities through radio, television, the Internet and other media.
2. The World Council of Rusyn Youth (WCRY) will support the efforts of Rusyns in Subcarpathia towards the official recognition of the Rusyn nationality in Ukraine.
3. The WCRY will direct its attention towards regulation of the legal statute of Ruska Bursa, and towards its return to its legal owners.
4. The WCRY will support the efforts of Greek Catholics in Slovakia towards the establishment of a bishopric for Rusyns and will actively protest the Slovakization of the Eastern Rite.
5. The WCRY will support cooperation among all Rusyn organizations in the Vojvodina
6. The next meeting of the WCRY will take place in the context of the second World Rusyn Summer Camp, from 22 to 25 August 2003 in the village of Komloška, Hungary.
7. The next, second, World Forum of Rusyn Youth will take place in the context of the XIII World Congress of Rusyns in 2005 in Krynica, Poland.

Revitalizing Rusyn Culture The First World Forum of Rusyn Youth By Brian Požun

Far greater a threat than even the most chauvinist of Ukrainians, the lack of involvement by young people in the Rusyn movement has been a ticking time bomb, as older members die off leaving no one to take their places. After more than ten years, Rusyn leaders finally began to address this, perhaps the movement's greatest weakness, at the VI World Congress of Rusyns held in October 2001 in Prague. That Congress resolved to convene a World Forum of Rusyn Youth in June 2003 in Prešov, concurrent with the VII World Congress. However, at the time of the resolution, no youth organizations existed – indeed few of the existing organizations even had a significant youth membership base upon which to draw.

However, Rusyn youth in Europe wasted no time. Young people in Slovakia were the first to organize, forming the **Association of Rusyn Youth of Slovakia** in December 2001. Young people in Serbia's Vojvodina province were next, founding a youth section of the existing Ruska Matka organization later that month.

The nascent youth movement scored a big hit with the first-ever **World Rusyn Summer Camp**, held from 21 to 25 August 2002 in the Rusyn village of Komloška, Hungary. Young Rusyns from Hungary, Poland, Russia, Serbia and Montenegro, Slovakia and Ukraine, gathered at the camp, most meeting for the first time. During the camp, on 23 August, a preparatory committee was established for the World Forum of Rusyn Youth, consisting of representatives from each of the six countries. Unfortunately, since Canada, the Czech Republic, Romania and the United States did not send representatives to the camp, they were left out of the preparatory committee's work. The preparatory committee's first decision was to declare 23 August **International Rusyn Youth Day**, in honor of the body's creation.

In September 2002, the young Rusyns of Serbia formed an organization independent of Ruska Matka, called **Pakt Ruthenorum**. In March 2003,

the young Rusyns of Poland used the occasion of a preparatory committee meeting in Krakow to announce the formation of their own organization, called **Jar'** (Springtime). Rusyn youth in Ukraine's Zakarpattja (Subcarpathia) province also founded an organization, **Youth of Subcarpathia** in early 2003.

And so, when the Forum convened on 8 June in Prešov, it was the climax of two years of intensive work directed at involving young people in the international Rusyn movement. Of the six countries represented on the preparatory committee, just four became founding members of the Forum: Poland, Serbia, Slovakia and Ukraine. Young Rusyns in Hungary and Russia were unable to found independent organizations in time. Aside from the four member delegations, observer delegations also came from Germany, Russia and North America.

The North American delegation, sponsored by the Carpatho-Rusyn Society of Pittsburgh, was made up of five members: Michael Decerbo, Želimir Koljesar, Paul Mustari, myself and Maria Silvestri. We were joined in Prešov by Peter Gleason.

This was my first World Congress, but my second time visiting Prešov. I was fortunate that not only was I familiar with the setting, but also with some of the people.

Aside from most of the members of the North American delegation, I also knew several members of the delegation from Serbia and Montenegro thanks to a 2001 visit to Ruski Kerestur, the center of Rusyn life in the former Yugoslavia.



The Forum itself, lasting several hours on a Sunday afternoon, was nothing to speak of. Dry, formal and rigid, completely conducted in the various dialects

of Rusyn used by the speakers, but incomprehensible to most of the North American delegation. And despite the event's being called a "forum," little discussion took place – it was mostly speech after speech after speech.

However, it was clear the moment I arrived in Prešov that our trip was about much more than just the Forum. The real point of the trip was to get to know our European colleagues, and this was done in bars over vodka, at five o'clock in the morning on the hostel rooms' balconies, in town over pizza, and so on. Many if not most of the young European Rusyns spoke English, and I was lucky enough to be able to use several regional languages to communicate with most of the rest.

I ended up spending most of my time with kids from Serbia, Germany and Poland, who knew nothing if not how to have a good time. On the other hand, their drive and commitment has made them the vanguard of the international Rusyn youth movement. I am quite pleased that I have walked away from the experience counting many of them as friends.

North American Rusyns, young and old, find themselves in a very different situation than their European counterparts. First, we live far from the center of Rusyn activity in the Carpathian homeland and cannot attend events and meetings held there regularly. Both the cost and time required are just too prohibitive. When North American Rusyns do find their way back to the homeland, they must overcome a hurdle most European Rusyns do not regularly face: that of language. Less and less North American Rusyns are able to use their mother tongue, or even any similar language. At home, we face the challenge of creating a sense of unity among an ethnic Rusyn population scattered across an entire continent.

Unfortunately, My experience at the Forum was that most of the European Rusyns do not realize just how different our situation is here in North America, and/or they do not understand the issues we face. Interest on the part of the Forum's organizers in the young Rusyns of North America is sadly – but clearly – lacking. One example is the

fact that the preparatory committee not only did not seek out input from North American Rusyns, but also did not respond to inquiries on our part.

Another clear example is the formal Resolution of the Forum, cited above. This text states that that organization will offer its support to young Rusyns' efforts in Ukraine, Poland, Slovakia and Vojvodina, and is a clear indicator of the focus of the World Forum of Rusyn Youth. Delegations from North America, Germany and Russia were also in attendance, and a delegation from Hungary was also invited. The Resolution's text could have made reference to the Forum's support for efforts towards founding youth organizations in these five countries but did not.

Informal contacts seem to be the best vehicle available to us to influence change in the Forum's attitude. It was therefore immensely important that young Rusyns from North America were given the opportunity to meet the European Rusyns and to begin to develop friendships with them. Technology enables many if not most of us to build and maintain relationships with young Rusyns in Europe, but it is not enough. We must also be able to ensure North American participation at the next World Forum, in Krynica, if not limited participation at the Komloška summer camp and other incidental meetings.

For now, we young Rusyns in North America have a clear task: to organize ourselves and find a new direction for the Rusyn movement here at home. Young people in any society must ensure that their culture progresses, and we are no different. There is much to be done, since Rusyn culture here in North America is mostly genealogy and religious life.

Our brand new youth organization, **Rusyn Outpost: North America (RO:NA)** intends to take a very different direction from that of the existing organizations. Though we must not forget our traditions, our unique Rusyn immigrant culture is dying as traditions are being preserved pristinely while nothing new is added to the mix. Through RO:NA, we must fulfill our duty to ensure that young Rusyns are given an opportunity to fully explore their ethnic identity ways appropriate to the 21st century.

The Rusin Association of Minnesota, the Carpatho-Rusyn Society, the Rusyn Association of North America and others, are already working to promote interest in genealogy and the preservation of Rusyn folk and religious culture. If a young person is interested in those things, they can join those organizations (as I myself did nearly ten years ago). Though we must not forget our traditions, at the same time we must introduce new life into Rusyn culture, before the culture suffocates and dies off.

Aside from the fact that Rusyn culture has always been centered on the village, and not on the city, other reasons for the conservatism are also apparent. Strong assimilation trends in the diaspora and forced Ukrainization in Europe meant that little progress was made in Rusyn culture after 1950, and with the changes begun in 1989, the suppressed culture had to first be reclaimed and popularized before progress could be made. However, fourteen years after the first stirrings of democracy in Eastern Europe, we have yet to popularize a more modern face for Rusyn culture.

Only one figure stands out in discussions of “modern” Rusyn culture – Andy Warhol. Thanks to his presence in the pantheon of cultural figures, Rusyn culture can be viewed as schizophrenic. On the one hand, there is a folk culture based on village life, folk festivals, folk songs and dance, miracle-working icons and wooden churches; on the other, Andy Warhol, the father of Pop Art, cosmopolitan New Yorker, the Rusyns’ most famous son, is promoted as a national spokesman. Many try to sweep his associations with drugs, homosexuality and the like under the carpet, but this will never be entirely successful, thanks to the very feature which has made him so attractive to the Rusyn movement – his world-wide significance.

The cultural schizophrenia resulting from Warhol’s inclusion into Rusyn culture manifests itself in various ways. Among the most obvious examples are events held at either Andy Warhol museum, whether in Pittsburgh or in Medžilabirci, where little girls dressed in national costume folk dance in front of his avant garde works. Clearly there is a problem.

However, the fact that someone as alien to Rusyn culture as Andy Warhol has been adopted into the cultural pantheon does give hope for the culture’s future, in that it clearly shows that the culture is open to adaptation. And in fact, a degree of adaptation is quietly taking place in various ways, primarily in Europe. Slowly, a middle ground is emerging between the little girls in folk costumes and Warhol the decadent gay junkie.

There are numerous examples in all cultural fields – music, art, literature, cinema, and more – but none have found significant resonance among the Rusyns. However, the basic problem is that Rusyns are not aware of what pop culture they in fact do have. Work must be done to bring the modern face of Rusyn culture to light, which would not only make the culture that much more rich and interesting, but would also make it all the more attractive to young ethnic Rusyns who today perhaps do not see a place for themselves in the conservative culture. I cannot think of a more important role for the international Rusyn youth movement to fulfill.

Our colleagues in Europe have already stepped up to the challenge. In Serbia, Pakt Ruthenorum has adopted the iconoclastic, pop-culture oriented magazine MAK as its official organ, and has continued that magazine’s efforts to explore the margins of Rusyn culture. The first event organized by the Association of Rusyn Youth of Slovakia was a concert featuring modern interpretations of traditional folk songs. In Poland, Rusyn leaders themselves are involved in the creation of Rusyn pop music, in the ensemble Sereczna, for example. We in North America must do our share as well: we must not only promote and propagate the European pop culture throughout North America, but we also must identify young Rusyns here at home working in similar veins and support their efforts.

The Forum resolved to concentrate on five issues: the propagation of the activities of young Rusyns through radio, television, the internet and other media; support to the efforts of Rusyns in Subcarpathia towards the official recognition of the Rusyn nationality in Ukraine; the regulation of the legal statute of Ruska Bursa in Poland; efforts to support the Rusyn character of the Greek Catholic Church in Slovakia; and support for increased cooperation

among all Rusyn organizations in the Vojvodina.

Now that we have returned home and are working very diligently on the preparations for our own North American youth organization, we have focused on the first issue, which is the easiest one to which we can contribute. The first issue of the RO:NA newsletter, ***Outpost Dispatch***, was published on 23 August 2003, timed to fall on International Rusyn Youth Day. The publication of the first issue of the newsletter is the organization's first major achievement. Hopefully the first of many. Also in the public-information vein, we are currently working on a website, and hope to start publishing a series of books related to issues important to young Rusyns in North America.

On the whole, my experience at the forum was eye opening. I was lucky to meet so many other young Rusyns from across Europe and North America, to hear their experiences, ideas and hopes for the future, and to share with them mine. I am encouraged by what I saw at the Forum, and by the steps young Rusyns have been taking since to ensure that friendships forged in Prešov are maintained. I have been hesitant to render a final verdict on the trip, however, until recently. Now, with the final creation of **Rusyn Outpost: North America**, I can justifiably say that the trip was an overwhelming success!

Young Rusyns of North America, Unite!

You don't have to be of Rusin ethnicity or descent—the only requirement for membership in Rusyn Outpost:North America is that you be between the ages of 18 and 30, interested in the Rusin people, and recognize Rusins as a distinct ethnic group. Please bear in mind that the group will be of a Rusin national orientation. Affiliate memberships are available for those over 30 who still want to participate, and we also hope to include those under 18 as soon as possible.

If all this sounds interesting, please send an email to RusynYouthNA@aol.com as soon as you can—and be sure to include your name, age, and postal address. We'll send off an information packet ASAP!

Comments from North American Youth Representatives at the World Congress



“I am so proud to have been able to observe both the World Congress of Rusyns and the World Forum of Rusyn Youth. It was so incredibly wonderful to see such a concentration of people so excited and especially proud to be Rusyn and to see the concern for the promotion of our culture and our heritage.” *Maria Silvestri, 18, Pittsburgh, PA*

“I enjoyed the food very much. Most of our meals were at Victoria restaurant. Since we were there for almost a week it is hard to remember all of them, but one of the meals sticks out. It consisted of beef in sauerkraut sauce with this uniquely done white bread called knedla. I especially liked the bread, which was cooked with the steam of boiling water.” *Želimir Koljesar, 22, Kitchener, Ontario.*

Editor's note: Victoria's Restaurant is owned by Victor Krusko of Rusin decent and member of the Rusin Association.

First International Rusin Children's Summer Camp in Medžilabirci

The first International Camp for Rusin Children took place near Medzilabirci, Slovakia, from 23 June to 6 July. About 60 children currently studying the Rusin language came: 35 from Poland, 16 from Slovakia and seven from Hungary. Next year, the camp will be held in Poland, and organizers hope to attract more students, from more countries.

The camp was organized by the Rutenika Foundation of Warsaw and prepared by Rusin-language students of the University of Krakow. It was funded by the Vyšegradskyj Fund, the Polish Ministry of Education and the Rutenika Foundation.

Carpatho-Rusin “Wooden Cerkva” Consecrated

Bishops and laity from Orthodox and Catholic jurisdictions in Europe and America gathered on August 16 at Camp Nazareth in Mercer, PA for the consecration of the newly constructed SS Cyril and Methodius Orthodox Church.

The wooden church was designed by architect Joe Parimucha after the traditional Carpatho-Rusin “cerkva” or wooden church. Located in the Carpatho-Rusin areas of Slovakia, Ukraine, Poland and Hungary, these wooden churches dating from the 17th century, were built in response to the Austro-Hungarian Empire’s laws of more than four centuries that permitted only Roman Catholic churches be built out of durable materials such as brick and stone.

Once numbering in the thousands almost all of the original wooden churches were destroyed during the Nazi occupation and subsequent ethnic cleansing by communist governments. About 75 wooden churches remain in the Rusin regions of Slovakia, Ukraine, Poland and many of these have been relocated to outdoor museums.



While there are other wooden churches of various Orthodox or Eastern Rite Catholic jurisdictions which have been constructed in the United States, this is the first and only one built with detailed authenticity.

The 48,000 wood roof shingles were handmade in Tichyj Potik, Slovakia, and installed under the supervision of Rusin Roofers. Three bells, dating from 1907, were donated by St. Mary’s Church of Elkhorn, WV. The domes, the Iconostasis, all Icons and various Liturgical appointments were donated by individuals or families. Some 11,000 members from 76 parishes contributed to the building of the church.

The 1.4 million structure was built to the scale of four such traditional churches, provides space for 30 priests serving a congregation of 3000. The lower level of the church will be utilized as a Carpatho-Rusin Heritage Center.

Trembita

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This newsletter is published in an attempt to bring to the reader whatever news about our Rusin people we are able to find. You will note that our sources are varied and diversified.

Upcoming Events

Sunday, Oct. 5th—St. Mary's Ethnic Dinner

St. Mary's Orthodox Church
17th and 5th St. N.E.— Mpls.

3:30—Entertainment by:

- St. Mary's Balalaika Orchestra
- Lipa Slovak Dancers

4:30—Sit Down Ethnic Dinner

\$30 a person (includes complementary glass of wine), to reserve your tickets, call Leonard Peterson @ 763—574-9280 by Sept. 28. Profits to St. Mary's Cathedral Restoration Fund.

Saturday, Oct. 11, - Regular Meeting (Note change to second Saturday of month)

10:30 a.m. Followed by Rusin language classes.
St. John's Byzantine Catholic Church Hall, 22nd and 3rd St., N.E., Mpls.

Saturday, Nov. 1—Regular Meeting

10:30 a.m. Followed by Rusin language classes.
St. John's Byzantine Catholic Church Hall, 22nd and 3rd St., N.E., Mpls.

Saturday, Nov. 15th—Friends of the Immigration History Research Center - 26th Annual Meeting

Social hour, dinner, annual meeting and Presentation by Debbie Miller.

Eat, Drink, and Be Ethnic!

What the Cookbooks Tell Us

6:00 p.m.

Humanities Education Center

987 E. Ivy Avenue

St. Paul, MN

\$50 per person, for further information contact Friends of the IHRC at 612-624-5774 or 612-625-4800.

Saturday, Dec. 6th—Christmas Hostina

Something new this year— Something for all ages. Bring your kids, grandchildren etc. and introduce them to their Rusin heritage with special activities for the children.

Saturday, March 6, 2004—Duchnovich Dinner

FIRST CLASS MAIL

Rusin Association

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