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КУЛЬТУРНО-ПРОСВІТНИЦЬКА ПОЛІТИКА ЧАСОПISY «НАШ ЛЕМКО»

Анотація. *Мета статті* полягає у спробі узагальнення культурно-просвітницької політики видавців «Нашого лемка», зорієнтованої на ліквідацію масової неписьменності серед русинів. **Методологічною основою** статті є принципи системності, історизму та компаративності із застосуванням культурно-історичного і порівняльно-типологічного методів. **Наукова новизна** статті полягає у спробі комплексного аналізу матеріалів «Нашого лемка» як інформаційного джерела про особливості культурно-просвітницької діяльності русинської інтелігенції Другої Речі Посполитої. **Висновки.** Проведене дослідження засвідчило багатовимірність культурно-просвітницької діяльності видавців «Нашого лемка». Цілком виправдано вбачаючи у масовій неписьменності українського населення Бескидів головну причину їхніх життєвих проблем, редактори часопису продумали та втілили у життя ефективну модель просвіти своїх земляків. Головними її елементами стали популяризація діяльності читалень «Просвіти» у лемківських селах, різнопланові видання у серії «Бібліотека «Нашого лемка», систематичний ідеологічний спротив

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польській та московфільській пропаганді тощо. При цьому головним інструментом стало виховання активістського ставлення до життя у середовищі самих українських горян. Усе це сприяло стрімкому поширенню освіченості у русинському середовищі, яке мало наслідком збільшення національної свідомості та зміцнення громадської солідарності. Це допомогло лемкам згуртуватися напередодні трагічних подій Другої світової війни та повоєнних депортацій.

Ключові слова: «Наш лемко»; неписьменність; культурно-просвітницька політика; товариство «Просвіта»; Друга Річ Посполита.

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CULTURAL AND EDUCATIONAL POLICY OF THE "NASH LEMKO" NEWSPAPER

Summary. *The purpose of the article is to generalize the cultural and educational policy of the publishers of "Our Lemko" aimed at eliminating mass illiteracy among the Ruthenians. The methodological basis of the article is the principles of systematisation, historicism and comparability with the use of cultural-historical and comparative-typological methods. The scientific novelty of the article is an attempt to comprehensively analyse the materials of "Our Lemko" as an information source about the peculiarities of cultural and educational activities of the Ruthenian intelligentsia of the Second Commonwealth. Conclusions.* *The study showed the multidimensionality of cultural and educational*

activities of the publishers of "Our Lemko". They viewed the mass illiteracy as the leading cause of the life problems of the Ukrainian population of the Beskids. The editors devised and implemented an effective education model for their compatriots. Its main elements were the popularisation of Prosvita reading rooms in Lemko villages, various publications in the "Our Lemko" Library series, systematic ideological opposition to Polish and Moscovophile propaganda, etc. At the same time, the primary tool was to cultivate an active attitude to life among the Ukrainian highlanders. All this contributed to the rapid spread of education in the Ruthenian environment, which resulted in an increase in national consciousness and the strengthening of public solidarity. This allowed the Lemkos to unite on the eve of the tragic events of World War II and the postwar deportations.

Key words: "Our Lemko"; illiteracy; cultural and educational policy; "Prosvita" society; the Second Commonwealth.

The statement of the problem. In recent years, Lemko periodicals have become the subject of great interest for researchers of the Lemko subethnic group. This can be explained by the source's peculiar status as a well of knowledge, covering every aspect of life of Ukraine's westernmost ethnographic branch. At the same time, newspapers that were not only addressed to a wide Lemko audience, but were also created by the Lemko Ruthenians themselves, became particularly important. During the interwar period, the "Nash Lemko" newspaper (1934–1939) was the most authoritative amongst the periodicals according to researchers.

Despite such attention to detail, unusual for regional periodicals, there are still many stories that are only sporadically covered in the literature of recent decades. The problem is that the dominant issue of the Polish-Ukrainian confrontation during the times of the Second Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth had in some ways overshadowed other thematic priorities of the "Nash Lemko" publishers in terms of modern historiography. Among the latter was the problem of overcoming mass illiteracy among the Ukrainian highlanders which is an issue of substantial semantic and quantitative significance. At present, Lemko scholars only point out the extraordinary importance that the publishers of "Nash Lemko" were attributing to this problem without delving into the essence of the newspaper's educational policy. Instead, as we will show in our study, the mentioned problem was merely a starting point for under-

standing many other issues that came to the newspaper's attention for the editors of "Nash Lemko".

Analysis of previous research. The "Nash Lemko" newspaper has long been one of the most popular periodicals among researchers of the Ruthenian subethnic group. Evidence of this journal's importance lies in the analytical studies devoted to it (Telvak & Nakonechnyi, 2020; V.V. Telvak, V.P. Telvak, & V.M. Nakonechnyi, 2021), as well as two published anthologies of the most resonant articles (Denysiuk & Kroyvtska, 2002; Maslei & Pylypovych, 2004). However, there is no independent analysis of the peculiarities of various cultural and educational issues on the pages of "Nash Lemko" and discussions of it today. This determines the relevance of our study.

A set of journals located in the M. Drahomanov Scientific Library of the Ivan Franko Lviv National University became the primary source basis for this article. The unique aspect of these journals is that they come from the censorship committee, which means that we were able to review all the materials planned for publication, not just those that survived meticulous censorship.

The purpose of this article is to generalize the cultural and educational policy of the editors of the "Nash Lemko" newspaper.

The scientific novelty lies in the attempt to comprehensively analyze the materials of "Nash Lemko" as an information source about the peculiarities of cultural and educational activism of the Ruthenian intelligentsia of the Second Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth.

The statement of the main material. The understanding of the importance of a comprehensive discussion centered on cultural and educational issues by the publishers of "Nash Lemko" is evidenced by the fact that it was given considerable attention in the very first issue of the newspaper. Thus, identifying the most immediately apparent issue hampering the gradual development of the Ruthenian world, the editors of the new newspaper emphasized the priority of overcoming illiteracy. Concerning this difficult problem, the editorial board wrote the following in the "What will Nash Lemko be about" article – they promised to "show our people that it is difficult to give advice without the involvement of science and proper schooling and that we, for the good of ourselves and our children, must unite in our aspirations to attend reading rooms and educational cooperatives" ("Pro shto bude pysaty", 1934, p. 2).

First and foremost, the authors of the newspaper focused on identifying this problem, revealing its truly threatening scale. Numerous articles provided shocking statistics on the unprecedented level of illiteracy among the Ukrainian highlanders. The publishers posed emotionally evocative questions to their readers: "Did you know that half of the Ukrainian population in Galicia and three quarters of it in the northern lands are illiterate? And did you know that some three million Ukrainians in our western lands do not know the basics of grammar today?" ("Do borotby", 1934, p. 1). Citing these obvious numbers, it was emphasized that the 20th century belongs exclusively to educated communities. Those nations that did not understand such simple truths voluntarily subjected themselves to be left on the sidelines of human civilization, dooming themselves to become a source of cheap labor for their more enlightened and progressive neighbors.

Many examples of illiteracy as a form of spiritual and sometimes physical enslavement were shown on the pages of "Nash Lemko", highlighting that an uneducated person narrowed their life opportunities to a critical minimum. Illiteracy was established as the root cause of the majority of problems that Lemkos were facing, primarily that of chronic poverty which was a very painful concern for the inhabitants of the Ukrainian Carpathian region. "However, the root-tree of evil is on our side", was stated in the Ruthenian newspaper, – "We do not know how to sell the hard-earned fruit of our labor because we do not strive for education" ("De shukaty", 1934, p. 3). Therefore, a resolute struggle against illiteracy was declared on the pages of the newspaper, symbolically referred to as "the greatest internal enemy" of the Lemkos ("Do borotby", 1934, p. 1).

So, what are the solutions to these difficult issues offered by "Nash Lemko"? The greatest efforts by the newspaper were made to awaken an interest in reading in the Ruthenian society. Utilizing the authority of Taras Shevchenko and Ivan Franko, geniuses of Ukrainian wordsmithery, the newspaper's pages displayed their authoritative views on the importance of cultivation of a reading culture with a varying degree of frequency. Thus, one of the editorials emphasized: "Study, my brothers, think, read" – our greatest poet Taras Shevchenko left this to us in his will. These words should become our guideline..." ("De shukaty", 1934, p. 3). While another "Nash Lemko" contributor, imitating Ivan Franko's style, said the following: "Who knows once the value of a good

book, will be her lifelong faithful friend, will not renounce such a friend in sorrow or in joy" ("Chomu treba", 1934, p. 2).

In pursuit of practical adaptation of such advice, the newspaper focused on popularizing the educational experience of Ukrainians of the Galician and the Upper Dnieper regions, cultivating conciliar sentiment in the Ruthenian environment. Unsurprisingly, the pivotal role of such popularization fell on the shoulders of the oldest Ukrainian institution – the "Prosvita". The "Nash Lemko" authors chronicled in detail the long-term public service of this most distinguished cultural institution, in a highly complimentary tone. The biggest achievement of "Prosvita", in the newspaper's opinion, was overcoming illiteracy – first in the Western, and subsequently in the Eastern Ukrainian territories. "The "Prosvita" had a clear, sacred goal", told us the "Nash Lemko", "of bringing education to the people, teaching them how to live, showing them the way of scientific truth, and leading them to a better tomorrow" ("De shukaty", 1934, p. 3). The "Prosvita" authors in particular, in the eyes of "Nash Lemko", were the first Ukrainian figures to declare a war on illiteracy in the late 19th century and have since successfully waged it, carrying out their crucial, tireless mission. The editorials repeatedly emphasized: "Prosvita – calls out to you today! Let us surge into battle with our biggest enemy – into battle with darkness!" ("Do borotby", 1934, p. 1).

Implementing this slogan, throughout the period of its existence, "Nash Lemko" provided comprehensive assistance to its readers in organizing a network of "Prosvita" reading halls in Ruthenian villages. First of all, such assistance was of a legal nature, as it involved legal aspects of registration, unbeknownst to the local peasantry, of a branch of a cultural and educational institution. This issue became especially significant in view of the attempts by Polish officials to assimilate the population of the Ukrainian Carpathians into Polish culture. As we know, legally obstructing the activities of branches of Ukrainian institutions due to inadequate legal support in their formation was one of the most effective tools of the Polish officials.

No less important was the methodological assistance of "Nash Lemko". The newspaper instructed the locals that the establishment of "Prosvita" reading halls was quite a simple process, and that it was affordable to the relatively poor Ruthenian people. The highlanders were offered a set of basic popular literature to serve as the groundwork of the "Prosvita" reading halls. These publications for Ruthenians were purcha-

sed by the newspaper's editorial staff and sent to Lemko villages along with prepaid subscriptions to the newspaper itself. In cases where the number of people willing to establish "Prosvita" reading halls in a particular village was currently insufficient, "Nash Lemko" advised to distribute Ukrainian literature through mutual exchange, thereby increasing the number of people willing to read ("Nasha chytalnia", 1934, p. 2). Another way to increase literacy in the villages, offered by "Nash Lemko", was to read collectively in the homes of nationally conscious Lemkos, doing it in turns (Berezivskyi, 1938, pp. 2–3). At the same time, the newspaper advised to start reading with light-hearted, humorous literature, eventually moving on to historical fiction and later – to books on popular science ("Yak vesty", 1934, p. 5).

Another important educational initiative of "Nash Lemko", borrowed from the didactic arsenal of "Prosvita", was to proclaim certain months of the year as a time dedicated to collective reading. Usually, winter months were chosen on the grounds of free time availability, when the Lemkos were not encumbered by as much agricultural labor. The newspaper managed to convince its readership that reading was the most exciting and helpful leisure activity ("Hromadiany!", 1934, p. 3). This appeal was primarily targeted at the Lemko youth, who often preferred gambling, gossiping, spreading superstitions, as well as tobacco and alcohol abuse to reading. "[...] There is another, good world of science, to which we must aspire, even if we are asked not to know what kind of obstacles lie ahead", "Nash Lemko" assured. – "[...] We will try our best to make the darkness disappear from our beautiful mountains" ("Lemkivska molod", 1934, p. 2).

Importantly, "Nash Lemko" nurtured an activist attitude to life amongst its readers. Offering full support, the editorial board at the same time insisted that one should always rely only on oneself. Stimulating public initiative, the newspaper called not to wait for outside help when it comes to the education of fellow villagers, but to become aware of their educational mission. The newspaper's editors explained: "Who can help educate Lemkivshchyna? Anyone and everyone, any conscious man and any conscious woman, any any gázda or gazdýnja, any spiritual and secular intellectual, in short – any and all whose hearts ache for the current state of our beloved Lemkivshchyna" ("Nash lemko", 1934, p. 4).

In order to strengthen the belief of the Ruthenian community in their educational abilities, "Nash Lemko" introduced a special, perma-

ment "Our Readers' Tribune" column, through which the Ruthenians could share the successes and difficulties of educational work with their favorite newspaper. Promoting the educational cooperation and self-governance of the Lemkos, the newspaper claimed: "It is high time to break the shackles of darkness and backwardness! Go ahead, it's time to work!" ("Rymanivshchyna", 1934, p. 1). Thanks to this column, today we have a detailed chronicle of the development of the educational movement in the Lemko territories in the last 5 years preceding the war. It shows that despite numerous difficulties, the Lemko community was successful in dynamically eradicating illiteracy.

Aside from popularizing educational activities in Western Ukraine, "Nash Lemko" also highly publicised cultural activism performed by Ukrainian diasporas, thus showing the spiritual unity of compatriots scattered around the world ("Prosvita", 1935, p. 2). Therefore, Ukrainians hailing from Lemkivshchyna, could learn about the persistent cultural activism of their fellow countrymen all the way from China to the United States, becoming more aware of their own responsibilities to their homeland. Ultimately, the publishers of "Nash Lemko" willingly partook in promotion of other nations' educational experiences, most of all – those of Western Europe. All while trying to adapt these practices to the realities of Lemkivshchyna. For example, in his writings on the educational expertise of the Swiss, Yulian Tarnovych called for imitation of their Protestant ethics: "Let's abandon unnecessary quarrels, religious disputes, eliminate party intolerance, various shindigs, demoralizing activities and other shenanigans and open up a book to read for once! Science will be our greatest wealth and the key to unlocking our people's destiny, our road to a better tomorrow..." (Tarnovych, 1934, p. 2).

Such well-thought-out consultative and methodical activism of "Nash Lemko" resulted in important advancements in a short period of time, which included a noticeable growth of the network of "Prosvita" reading halls in mountain villages. Summing up the hard work on the occasion of the first 6 months anniversary since the newspaper's first publication, its editorial board had every reason to be proud of its educational achievements: "We are very happy that the long-standing darkness and confusion are disappearing from our beloved Lemkivshchyna. Our hearts grow when we see that our dearest Lemko brothers are driving this darkness and turmoil out of their households, which has caused us so much trouble and misery. Indeed, if it were not for this darkness and

tumult, our native Lemkivshchyna would not look the way it does today. Our task, our most sincere desire, is to banish this very darkness and disorder from our beloved Lemko mountains. This darkness and bedlam are our greatest misfortunes. Let us be done with it! Let us wage the fiercest war against it to the death and for life!!!" ("Vypovidzhmo viinu", 1934, p. 2).

It was to be expected that the successful cultural and educational activism of "Nash Lemko" would be met with considerable concern by Polish authorities, who attempted to sway the population of the Carpathians from Ukrainian identity. As an alternative to the measures taken by Ukrainians, Polish government officials tried to establish branches of Polish cultural institutions everywhere they could. This was especially prevalent in villages where Ukrainian teachers were forcibly replaced by Polish ones. As an example, we can mention a letter by a resident of the "Ropytsia Ruska" village of the Gorlice district, about the establishment of a "Prosvita" reading hall that he referred to as "the salt in the eyes of dark spirits". After this event, a local teacher, together with a Polish teacher, managed to unify the nationally inert representatives of the Lemko community, and, to counter the efforts of Ukrainians, founded the "Kółko młodzierzy rusko-polskiej".

Several gázdas were prompted to join this denationalization center by the allure of "sausages, sweets and cigarettes". "The cattle were seduced by a neighbor's hay" – one local remarked amusingly. Criticizing such simple-mindedness of fellow villagers, the writer emphasizes the danger of such public behavior, which creates an impression of indifference to the national cause in the minds of the oppressors. "Fellow villagers of Ropytsia Ruska, Lemkos" – emotionally addresses the Ruthenian community a witness of those events – "who would sell their nationality, their faith? Only a traitor, a Judas, or a suicidal fish that wilfully jumps on a gázda's hook. Come to your senses, open your eyes and see who your real brother is and who is your enemy? Do not indulge your greed, which is unfit for even a good dog to do. Unite with your brothers and sisters. What do you need other people's gods for? Look at other nations, all united, presenting a consolidated front, and what about you?" ("Selo Ropytsia", 1934, p. 8). As expected, this quote was banned for publication in local newspapers, according to the censor's copy of "Nash Lemko".

Eventually, the efforts to assimilate the Ruthenians into Polish culture were in vain, because the Lemkos felt that the linguistic and

mental differences between the two were quite evident. This didn't dissuade Polish officials, who decided to confront the Ukrainian identity rampant in the Ruthenian environment with the Moscowphile one. The calculation was that the latter had a traditionally strong influence on the Lemkos since the mid-19th century. To this end, large-scale activities were initiated to popularize Moscowphile ideology among the Lemkos: nationally conscious priests and teachers were forcibly replaced by Moscowphiles, and the state did its best to disseminate relevant literature and to heavily promote such ideas. An important component of this policy was the mass establishment of a network of Moscowphile reading halls of the "Kachkovsky Society" as an ideological alternative to "Prosvita" centers. "Nash Lemko" contributors wrote en masse about the interest of the local administration in "spreading the Moscowphile miasma" ("Yak tvoriatsia", 1934, p. 2) which was in stark contrast to the biased, and often openly hostile, attitude towards "Prosvita" and its members.

Taking this into consideration, the fight against Moscowphile ideology and its promoters in the Ukrainian Carpathians became an important component of the "Nash Lemko" educational policy. The newspaper's editors tirelessly explained to their readers that Moscowphiles are ethnic turncoats who will attempt to tear the Lemkos away from Ukrainian identity at any cost. Attention was also drawn to the obvious fact that the Polish state administration was involved in these activities, with the aim of undermining the Ukrainian choice of Ruthenians, so that later it would be easier to assimilate them into Polish culture. This explains the extreme intolerance of the "Nash Lemko" contributors regarding the destructive actions of their ideological enemies. In the pages of the newspaper they were called nothing more than "Judas-traitors" to their people. The newspaper's idea of anti-Moscowphile rhetoric is eloquently conveyed by the following slogan, one of many: "Get out of our Ukrainian mountains, you Muscovite worms – says a conscious Lemko!" (Hist, 1934, p. 7).

The most profound evidence of the Polish government's interference in the nation-building process of Lemkivshchyna was an attempt to undermine the Ukrainian choice of Ruthenians through primary school. For this purpose, representatives of the state educational administration commissioned a well-known Moscowphile, Mefodii Trokhanovskiy, to write a textbook for Lemko schools. Such a textbook, written using the so-called "Lemko Besida", which was a Moscowphile version of the Ru-

thenian dialect, was soon approved for publication. This textbook was then published in large numbers at public expense and sent to every Lemko school through the educational administration. Exposing such "Judas work" of Moscowphiles, M. Trokhanovskiy's textbook was comprehensively criticized in the columns of "Nash Lemko". The publishers of the Ruthenian newspaper quite justifiably identified the huge threat of replacing the Ukrainian literary language with the Moscowphile dialect in primary schools, which would consolidate the ethnographic features of the mountaineers ("Istoriia", 1934, p. 4). The editorial board tried to convince its readers: "Today, every Lemko knows that his dialect can be used in his home, but in schools only a common Ukrainian literary language must prevail. [...] [Lemkos] seek to speak Ukrainian literary language at school – the kind taught in all Ukrainian schools, because they are all children of one Mother! This is not a declaration of separate people; this is the will of all Lemkos" ("My ne khochemo", 1934, p. 3). It should be noted that due to meticulous censorship, not all critical assessments of the Moscowphile textbook reached the readers of the Lemko newspaper.

In a short time, "Nash Lemko" managed to create a practical application for its criticism of M. Trokhanovskiy's textbook, publishing its own textbook addressed to the youngest school audience, to counter his. This textbook appeared as part of a newly established publishing series – "Nash Lemko Library". The principal position of the authors of the new textbook was a strong refusal to use dialects in the educational process, and the introduction of the literary Ukrainian language from the first grade ("Lemkivskiy Bukvar", 1934, p. 5). Advertising the new publication, the newspaper emphasized to its readers: "For one nation there is only one language that everyone should use" ("Dbaite", 1934, p. 3). According to "Nash Lemko", the Ruthenians gratefully accepted this gift from their favorite newspaper, and in a short time the Ukrainian textbook superseded other ones in rural schools.

While "Nash Lemko" offered a textbook to help strengthen the national feelings of the school audience, the newspaper also addressed its adult readers with numerous articles on historical topics, grouped under the "Educational Page" heading. The subject matter covered in these ranged from historical articles, encyclopedic slogans, local folklore, etc. Quite often the newspaper wrote about prominent representatives of Ukrainian culture of the 19th – early 20th century, most prominently about Taras Shevchenko, Ivan Franko and Mykhailo Hrushevskiy (Telvak,

2008, p. 359). The aim of these articles was to help formulate national self-awareness, and to deepen the pride for the big and small homeland in the Lemko environment. The "Nash Lemko" editorial board emphasized: "With the Ukrainian national identity in our households, happiness and prosperity will follow!" ("Vypovidzhmo viinu", 1934, p. 2).

Conclusions. The conducted research allows us to identify the multifaceted nature of the cultural and educational service of the "Nash Lemko" editorial board to its readership. Rightfully considering the mass illiteracy of the Ruthenians to be the cause of most of their troubles, the newspaper's publishers developed and successfully implemented a program to overcome chronic illiteracy. It consisted of rigorous promotion and establishment of "Prosvita" reading halls, legal and methodological support of their activities, numerous publishing projects of the "Nash Lemko Library", the organization of ideological resistance to attacks by Polish and Moscowophile propaganda, etc. At the same time, the activist position of the newspaper's publishers was vital in offering support and advice to Lemkos in pursuit of self-elucidation. As a result, it culminated in a dynamic growth of literacy in the Lemko environment, which led to the strengthening of national self-awareness and public solidarity. This allowed the Lemkos, as an integral part of Ukrainian culture, to meet more readily the challenges of World War II and the postwar division of the world. We consider the implemented research to be the first step towards identifying a broader issue – the specifics of cultural and educational activities of Lemko institutions throughout the entire 20th century.

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