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LITTLE-KNOWN FACTS ABOUT THE LEMKO COMMISSION'S ACTIVITIES IN 1932–1934

Abstract

This article presents little-known facts about the activities of the Lemko Commission created in 1932 by the Prosvita Society in Lviv for the purpose of ameliorating the economic situation in the Lemko region and spreading consciousness of a Ukrainian national identity among Lemkos. The article discusses the activities of production and trade co-operatives, including data from their balance sheets, and describes the engagement of the local intelligentsia with these issues.

Key words: Lemko region, national identity, co-operative movement.

Słowa kluczowe: Łemkowszczyzna, tożsamość narodowa, ruch spółdzielczy.

The first Lemko Commission was convened on 1 November 1911, during the period of the Ukrainian national movement's development in the province of Western Galicia. The Prosvita Society's branches in Sanok and Nowy Sącz were actively engaged in education campaigns at the time.¹ After World War I broke out, the Commission ceased its activities, and in the years immediately following the war the Prosvita's efforts to rebuild its local structures were focused mainly on the territory of the former Eastern Galicia.

Not until the second half of the 1920s did these organizations renew their support for the Ukrainian movement in the counties of Sanok, Krosno, Jasło, Gorlice, Grybów, and Nowy Sącz. For that purpose, on 27 April 1926, the Prosvita leadership held talks on the subject of the Lemko region's social and economic development. Specific proposals for work in the area were put forth, whose implementation was meant to rely on the efforts of local priests, lawyers and doctors. They also expected to have the support of Metropolitan Andrey Sheptytsky, to whom they addressed a letter asking for "help for the Lemko

¹ The Nowy Sącz branch of Prosvita was formed in 1902, and the Sanok branch in 1903. See Y. Tarnovych, *Ilustrovana istoriia Lemkivshchyny*, Lviv 1936, pp. 226–231.

region, a land nearly forgotten, threatened with the loss of national values.”² At the same time, they proposed to open a head office for the development of the Lemko region and found an agricultural school for Lemkos, as well as to provide aid to Lemko reading rooms and trade co-operatives.³ Next, they organised a conference in Lviv on 29 September 1926, with the participation of 16 delegates representing the Executive Board of the Prosvita Society, its branches in Sanok and Nowy Sącz, and a number of Lviv financial and economic institutions.⁴ These operations were co-ordinated by the organisation’s members, but relied most heavily on members of the Eastern Rite clergy, who greatly outnumbered the teachers, lawyers and doctors involved.

Systematic action on a wider scale developed several years later, when the decision was made to reactivate the Lemko Commission at the Prosvita conference of 13 December 1932. The legal foundation for this decision was Paragraph 28(Y) of the Prosvita Society charter, by which the Commission had been made an assisting organ of the Lviv head office for the development of the Lemko region. The revived Commission included members of various Ukrainian economic and cultural-educational institutions with headquarters in Lviv. Among them were Marian Dzerovych, Ivan Gyza, Ivan Bryk, Antin Havrylko, Volodymyr Zubrytsky, Semen Magalats, Maks Brylynsky, Volodymyr Kobii and others.

At the conference on 13 December 1932, the importance of Lemko regional affairs was raised to the level of “nationwide” and the region was called “the farthest-lying western bulwark of the nation.”⁵ The political context of the initiative to reconvene the Lemko Commission was openly articulated in resolutions agreed on at this conference. This action was a response to government policy based on support for the Old Rusyns (the government had planned the creation of a pro-Polish organisation, the Lemko Association [Lemko-Soiuz]), and against the Moscovophile movement, which was developing a network of Kachkovsky reading rooms in the Lemko region and had succeeded in winning over a considerable part of the Lemko population. One of the resolutions approved on 13 December contained the words: “we perceived factors working against our national identity in these activities (referring to the Polish state) undeniably working with the vestiges of the corrupt Russophile group, taking

² Central State Archives in Lviv (henceforth – CSAL), f. 348, op. 1, case 5, Administratyvna karta Lemkivshchyny ta informacii i vidomosti pro ekonomichni i suspilni vidnosyny, toshcho, 1913–1933, p. 25.

³ *Ibidem*.

⁴ CSAL, f. 348, op. 1, case # 12, Obizhnyk, protokoly, zaproszenia ta inshi dokumenty pro stvorennia tak zvanoho „Komitetu pratsi na zakchidnykch zemlach”, 1926, pp. 2, 3, 4, 7, 9.

⁵ Lviv National Vasyl Stefanyk Scientific Library (henceforth – LNSL), f. 122, Prosvita, case # 15 n. 1, Zvit diialnosti lemkiivskoi komisii pry holovnomu viddili t-va „Prosvity” u Lvovi za period 13 hrudnia 1932 do 1 serpnia 1934, p. 2.

advantage of the trust of Lemkos, which will lead to the inevitable death of our nation [...].” Harsh words were also directed at “Warsaw’s Eastern Orthodoxy”, which was associated with “the destruction of Ukrainian schools, cooperatives, and reading rooms.”⁶ The context of the struggle for Lemko identity was also apparent in the text of the third resolution, which in Point A called upon “all conscious Ukrainians” to work on behalf of the “national awareness of the Lemko region”.⁷

The commission began at once to pursue two tracks of activity, one in the direction of developing Lemko cultural and educational life and the other towards improving agricultural expertise, promoting new technologies in farming and the farming industry. Toward this aim the Commission first began a fund-raising campaign, approaching Ukrainian banks and trade centres as well as private individuals with requests for support. They received positive responses from the Dnister Insurance Company, Tsentrobank, Mortgage Bank, The “Future” Cooperative Bank in Tarnopol, Tsentrosoiuz, Karpatia, Maslosoiuz and one private individual who desired to remain anonymous. They also received support from the Ukrainian Institute in Berlin, with which one of the leaders of the Ukrainian movement in the Lemko region, Petro Smerekanych from Świerzowa Ruska in Jasło County, worked. The initial funds thus gathered were successively supplemented and replenished with others thanks to constant co-operation with these banks and economic organisations. Another mode of fund-raising was through collections among Lemko emigrants in the United States. This plan of action was described in the text of the third resolution.

In view of the government authorities’ preference for the Old Rusyn organisations and establishment of favourable conditions for their development in the Lemko region, the Ukrainian movement faced some difficulties from the local administration. Numerous Prosvita reading rooms were inspected by the police and those where illegal literature was found were suspended or closed. For this reason, the Commission was particularly mindful of adapting its organisational work to the demands of the legal regulations. The point was to avoid making Prosvita reading rooms vulnerable to repression from the authorities. Care was taken to ensure that initiatives agreed upon did not transgress the legally approved Prosvita charter or the regulations of the statute on associations. It was mainly the leadership of the Prosvita branches active in the Lemko region who kept an eye on this, to the extent that they organised inspections of the reading

⁶ LNSL, f. 122, Prosvita, case # ½ п. 1, Rezolutsii ustanovchoi konferentsii v spravakh Lemkivshchyny, 13 hrudnia 1932, Lviv, pp. 1, 5.

⁷ „В цьому змаганні найшли денационалізаційні чинники без заперечень поміч в скорумпованих русофільських недобитках, які використовуючи довіря лемків, ведуть їх до нехвибної національної смерті [...]”. [In this struggle, anti-nationhood groups have received help from corrupt Russophile remnants, who have abused Lemkos’ trust and are leading them toward the certain death of their nation.], LNSL, f. 122, Prosvita, case # ½ п. 1, pp. 1, 5.

rooms in the area, ridding their libraries of all forbidden publications. In order to maintain even reading rooms with low levels of activity, steps were taken to prevent being charged with possession of “anti-governmental literature and agitation”.⁸

The slogan “Books to the West”

From 13 December 1932 to 1 January 1934, the Lemko Commission had seven programme conferences at which the schedule of work on behalf of the Lemko region was co-ordinated. According to the charter, the main field of activity was to be cultural and educational affairs, but, unofficially, political action was also undertaken, aimed at spreading the sense of Ukrainian national identity among uneducated peasantry. The slogan “Books to the West” perfectly expressed the ideas of the Commission’s head office, which was helping local Prosvita reading rooms by sending massive shipments of books and magazines to their libraries. In the years 1932–1934 the Silskyi Hospodar (Farmers’) Society alone sent 3,114 books, valued at 1,200 zlotys, and 10,000 copies of the *Silskyj Hospodar* magazine to Lemko reading rooms.⁹ The most commonly circulated magazines were: *Life and Knowledge* (ЖУТТЯ І ЗНАННЯ), *Village Squire* (СІЛЬСЬКИЙ ГОСПОДАР) and *Children’s World* (СВІТ ДИТИНИ), totalling 7,420 copies. This last indicated the importance attached to educating children. In addition to stationary libraries, 24 travelling libraries were organised, which targeted mainly the furthest-flung mountain areas. There are records of the expenses of some travelling libraries, e.g. in Czeremcha, Surowica, Gladyszów, Komańcza, Szklary, Wola Arłamowska, and Łodzina. Each of these libraries cost 150 zlotys, but later travelling libraries, of which there were 14, were to cost 250 zlotys apiece.¹⁰ We do not know what was purchased with these sums, since the source does not provide that information.

Soon, another initiative aimed at promoting Ukrainian identity among Lemko youth, was developed and implemented by means of stipends. In the years 1932–1934, between ten and twenty students from secondary and trade schools were given financial support, but the report does not provide their surnames or the names of most of the schools they attended.¹¹ Other sources reveal a plan to place about 100 boys in schools of the former Eastern Galicia (that designation is used in the official documentation) in order that they could “observe

⁸ LNSL, f. 122, Prosvita, case # 15 п. 1, p. 2.

⁹ LNSL, f. 122, Prosvita, case # 3/1, Zvit z diialnosti lemktivskoi komisii pry holovnomu viddili t-va „Prosvity” u Lvovi za period 13 hrudnia 1932 do 1 serpnia 1934, k. 2.

¹⁰ *Ibidem*.

¹¹ LNSL, f. 122, Prosvita, case # 15 п.1, p. 2.

Ukrainian life, which is the best cure for Moscophilism.”¹² The further story of this initiative, however, shows that the Commission had a rocky road in its search for donors to provide the stipends. When Ivan Gyzha, from Wysowa in Gorlice County, twice called a meeting with representatives of the Town Guild, it turned out not to be easy to get help for the stipend recipients. The lack of enthusiasm was explained by the economic crisis, as well as “failure to understand the issue.”¹³ In the end, it is not possible to consider the publicity for the stipend program for Lemko youth a success.

The consideration given to the selection of publications to be sent to Prosvita reading rooms in the Lemko region was a result on the one hand of fear that they might be confiscated, and on the other – more importantly – was dictated by the needs of those who lived in the region. The Commission did not make planned purchases, but approached publishers, editors of periodicals and private individuals with requests for donations of a portion of their circulation or individual copies. In this way, the Commission made it possible for the Lemkos gathering in its reading rooms to have access to both belles-lettres and technical literature on farming. Not all reading rooms received the same literature and periodicals. Some titles were common, such as *National Affairs* (Народна справа), *Our Standard* (Наш прапор), *Sunday* (Неділя), *Truth* (Правда), *The Goal* (Мета) and *The Bell* (Дзвіночок).¹⁴ The contents of the publications were conveyed in two ways: the small number of literate members independently acquainted themselves with the literature, and the majority who could neither read nor write took part in group readings – all gathered to listen as most often a teacher or Eastern Rite priest read aloud.

The Lemko Commission worked in unison with Eastern Rite parishes, which was predictable enough given the direct engagement of their priests in the activities of the Prosvita reading rooms. The parishes were, however, a separate entity in their co-operation with the Lemko Commission and, like the reading rooms, were provided with books and periodicals. In the years 1932–1934, 62 Eastern Rite parishes were given 18 books each and 30 copies of various magazines and newspapers.¹⁵ One of the priests who worked most actively with the Commission was Fr. Ivan Kachmar of Złockie, in Nowy Sącz County, who organised 18 centres of Catholic press propaganda, mainly in the western part of the Lemko region and in Pogórze Strzyżowskie in the region of so-called “mixed-up folk”.¹⁶ Among other priests who stood out

¹² LNSL, f. 122, Prosvita, case # 3/1, Zvit z diialnosti lemkiivskoi komisii pry holovnomu viddili t-va „Prosvity” u Lvovi za period 13 hrudnia 1932 do 1 serpnia 1934, p. 3.

¹³ *Ibidem*.

¹⁴ *Ibidem*, p. 2.

¹⁵ *Ibidem*.

¹⁶ Nowy Sącz, Maciejowa, Łabowa, Brunary, Banica, Śnietnica, Małastów, Męcina Wielka, Gładyszów, Kremplna, Myscowa, Świątkowa, Bonarówka, Węglówka, Rzepnik, Daliowa, Wola

for their work on behalf of diffusing the spirit of Ukrainian culture among Lemkos we must mention Stepan Dmytryshyn of Maciejowa, Stepan Kornova of Łabowa, Ihnatii Halushka of Brunary, Mykhailo Zhuk of Śnietnica, Dmytro Stupak of Świątkowa, Panteleimon Saluk of Krempna, and Ivan Klufas of Bonarówka.¹⁷

The diffusion of Ukrainian national consciousness was taking place in confrontation with Polish government and administrative actors who supported the Old Rusyn movement and were trying to block the development of the Ukrainian movement among the Lemkos. In the context of the political struggle for the Lemkos' identity, this led to the involvement of Ukrainian Parliamentary Representation in this issue, with that party making an interpellation in the Sejm regarding the introduction of Metody Trokhanovsky's primer in Lemko schools, arranged according to the Old Rusyn political programme.¹⁸ In the second half of the 1930s, the primer was replaced by Polish textbooks.

Economic Action

As mentioned in the introduction, it was resolved at the conference of 13 December 1932 to ask Ukrainian economic institutions to contribute to the improvement of economic conditions in the Lemko countryside. In Point B of the conference's third resolution it was agreed to undertake efforts to interest the Auditing Union of Ukrainian Cooperatives (*Ревізійний Союз Українських Кооперативів* – RSUK)¹⁹ in the affairs of the Lemko region. The decision was well-considered because the RSUK remained under the influence of the Ukrainian National Democratic Alliance (UNDO), the strongest Ukrainian political party, and its position represented common Ukrainian economic, political and social interests. In the second half of the 1920s the RSUK was reorganised; it had risen to the rank of a national system of co-operative institutions and become the organisational superstructure for the following head offices: Tsentrosoiuz, (the head office for farm and trade co-operatives engaged in general commerce); Narodna Torhovla (the head office for urban grocery co-operatives);

Niżna, Szklary. The report does not provide the surnames of the priests active in those localities, but we may surmise that they were the rectors of each place. See LNSL, f. 122, Prosvita, case # 3/1, p. 3 – “mixed-up folk” (*zamieszaniec*) was the lighthearted Lemko term for the inhabitants of the region who had intermingled with the Polish population.

¹⁷ J. Moklak, *Lemkowszczyzna w Drugiej Rzeczypospolitej. Zagadnienia polityczne i wyznaniowe*, Kraków 1997, p. 119.

¹⁸ LNSL, f. 122, Prosvita, case # 3/1, p. 3.

¹⁹ LNSL, f. 122, Prosvita, case # 1/2 п. 1, Rezolutsii ustanovchoi konferentsii v spravakh Lemkivshchyny 13 hrudnia 1932, Lviv, pp. 1, 5.

Maslosoiuz (the head office for dairy co-operatives) and Tsentrobank (the head office for savings and loans co-operatives).²⁰

In order to improve farming efficiency, the Commission dispatched agronomists to the eighteen areas mentioned above. The formally declared economic goal was achieved, but Commission documents show that along with agricultural advice, the “heightened national consciousness of the Lemko region” was being propagated. This goal was not successfully implemented everywhere. In certain areas, the influence of competing Old Rusyn and Moscovophile organisations was so strong that they paralysed the Lemko Commission’s initiatives. Its local operatives indicated the strengthening of Eastern Orthodoxy in some areas of the Lemko region, which made it impossible for Eastern Rite priests to expand their activism. These priests supported the agronomists, but it sometimes happened that their support was insufficient and the Commission took the decision to look for nationally-minded young Lemkos, most often students from institutions of higher learning in Lviv and Kraków.²¹

In 1933, the Lemko Commission held five plenary meetings in which the representatives of all Ukrainian organisations supporting the Commission’s work participated. The economic crisis meant that financial support had weakened, and towards the end of 1933 the Commission faced the possibility of being forced to suspend its activities. Nonetheless, it nearly managed to balance its books and make ends meet. The Commission’s financial report for 1933 lists 1,739.10 zlotys as the sum of its earnings and 1,750.84 zlotys as the sum of its expenses.²² In the report, the Commission revealed the seriously-neglected economic and cultural-educational state of the entire region and made a detailed, multi-tiered diagnosis of the situation in even the smallest localities. The Commission’s reports of 1933 confirmed that beekeeping, dairy and chicken farming and all types of crafts were still at a primitive level.²³ In some areas, farming – e.g. the farming of medicinal herbs, particularly linden – had not improved at all.²⁴ The report addressed the lack of initiative among Lemkos in commercial trout fishing as well as the lack of wool and dairy production despite the large number of sheep and cows. The report stated that, “it would be possible to sell *bryndza* [a kind of sheep cheese], which is so eagerly bought, for mass consumption.”²⁵ It should be noted that economic questions were not the main

²⁰ A. Prowalski, *Spoldzielcze związki mniejszosci narodowych w Polsce a nowelizacja ustawy o spoldzielniach*, „Sprawy Narodowosciowe” 5: 1935, p. 416.

²¹ LNSL, f. 122, Prosvita, case # 3/1, p. 4.

²² *Ibidem*, p. 5.

²³ „Не вийшли з примітивізму”, LNSL, f. 122, Prosvita, case # 3/2 п. 1, p. 3.

²⁴ *Короткий огляд території Лемківщини, її населення та економічні умовини життя лемків, виголошений дня 25. 12. 1933 р., під час четвертої анкети освітньої для Лемківщини*, in: LNSL, f. 122, Prosvita, case # 3/2 п. 1, p. 3.

²⁵ „Можнаби довести до масової продукції так охоче купованої бриндзи”, *ibidem*, p. 4.

target of the Commission's report – political matters were. The report stated, “Whoever is first to grasp the significance of the Lemkos' economic betterment will hold in his hands the entirety of the Lemko region without exception.”²⁶ The report also addressed the need for educating Lemko youth in the domain of farming. To this end, it declared the need for Ukrainian economic institutions headquartered in Lviv to take the entire region under their protection.²⁷

There were three centres for co-operatives in the Lemko region, in Ustrzyki Dolne, Sanok and Nowy Sącz. In Ustrzyki Dolne the co-operatives were organised by Mykola Nehrebetsky, director of Ukrainbank and employee of the People's House. In Sanok the Lemko Cooperative Union, whose co-operative inspector was Vasyl Yurchenko, paid by the RSUK and Narodna Torhovla, was active. Mykhailo Havranko, who fulfilled the function of cooperative inspector for the whole Lemko region, lived in Nowy Sącz. He was supported financially by the RSUK, which provided him with a flat in the building that housed the Nowy Sącz branch of Prosvita, and his work involved frequent trips to Lemko villages in the foothills.²⁸

In 1933 there were 95 co-operatives throughout the whole territory of the Lemko region: one Ukrainbank, one regional dairy, six branches of the Raiffeisen Cooperative and 87 general buying and selling co-operatives.²⁹ 48 co-operatives, more than half, were in the Sanok district, 25 in the district of Ustrzyki Dolne and 22 in the Nowy Sącz district. The most highly developed network of co-operatives was in the county of Nowy Sącz. In 30 villages with Eastern Rite majorities, there were 12 co-operatives that belonged to the RSUK. Proportionally the least number of co-operatives were in Sanok County, where in 90 villages with Eastern Rite majorities there were 19 RSUK co-operatives. In the county of Lesko, in 140 villages with majority Ukrainian populations there were 45 co-operatives belonging to RSUK. In addition, the report counted as belonging to RSUK six co-operatives from the Dynów area, one in the county of Krosno, two in the county of Strzyżów, two in the county of Jasło, five in Gorlice, one in Grybów and two in Nowy Targ.³⁰

The Lemko Commission's activities led to an increase in the number of Ukrainian co-operatives and, at the same time, a rise in the number of members in each. In 1933, there were approximately 6,300 members in all of the co-operatives throughout the Lemko region, averaging about 60 members per co-operative. In the Ustrzyki Dolne area there were approximately 2,000 mem-

²⁶ „Хто перший зрозуміє вагу піднесення економічного лемків, цей захопить в свої руки всю без винятку Лемківщину”, *ibidem*.

²⁷ *Ibidem*, p. 5.

²⁸ Звідомлення освітніх і господарських централей про свою працю на Лемківщині, in: LNSL, f. 122, Prosvita, case # 3/3, п.1, p. 3

²⁹ LNSL, f. 122, Prosvita, case # 3/3, п.1, p. 3.

³⁰ *Ibidem*, p. 4.

bers, in the Sanok region 3,300, and in the environs of Nowy Sącz about 1,000. The property of the co-operative in the Ustrzyki Dolne region amounted to 11,000 zlotys in shares and 53,000 in a reserve account. In the Sanok region, 27,000 zlotys had been raised in shares and 112,000 in the reserve fund, totaling 139,000. In the Nowy Sącz area, the co-operative's property amounted to 42,000 zlotys – 14,000 in capital and 28,000 in the reserve account. Taken together, the rural and urban co-operatives in the Lemko region disposed of property to the amount of 280,000 zlotys, of which 60,000 were in shares and the rest in reserve accounts.³¹

In 1932 the average takings of a rural co-operative stood at 10,000 zlotys. Urban co-operatives could boast much higher takings. In the same year, those of the Narodny Dim in Ustrzyki reached 139,000 zlotys, the Narodny Dim in Lesko 34,000 zlotys, the Narodny Dim in Baligrod over 58,000 zlotys. The record was set by the Narodna Torhovla warehouse in Sanok, which had takings of 150,000 in 1932. The author of the Lemko Commission's report underscored the educational import of co-operatives in the goal of strengthening Ukrainian national identity. He wrote that co-operatives "teach the population systematic co-operation under their own management for the general good of the nation, and by means of their work they strengthen faith in success among Lemkos and build their confidence in the Lviv authorities."³²

The question of the involvement of priests and teachers in the co-operative movement and the mobilisation of Lemkos toward economic enterprise is most interesting. The intelligentsia's active engagement fused political involvement with the economic sphere, and as a result the intelligentsia influenced the direction in which Lemko identity developed. This is why the Lemko Commission took an interest in the fate of the local intelligentsia. It perceived the phenomenon, onerous to the intelligentsia, of administrative transfers of teachers involved in the Ukrainian co-operative movement to schools in strictly Polish areas, while the teachers who remained in their home districts were intimidated "to such an extent that they were afraid to even buy groceries from their co-operatives."³³ The pressure on the clergy was less intense because the Eastern Rite church was protected by a concordat concluded with the Vatican. Priests were thus in a somewhat stronger position than teachers and more often were members of Supervisory Boards. Among the most active Eastern Rite priests were: Kytsun (Terka), Savoika (Siedliska), Ferents (Lalin),

³¹ *Ibidem*, p. 4.

³² „Вони вчать населення систематично співпрацювати під добрим власним проводом для загального народного добра, вони своїм ділом закріплюють серед лемків віру в успіх власних сил та довіря до національного проводу у Львові”, LNSL, f. 122, Prosvita, case # 3/3, п.1, p. 5.

³³ „Так залякані, що бояться навіть купувати в своїй кооперативі”, LNSL, f. 122, Prosvita, case # 3/3, п. 1, p. 5.

Khomko (Kalnica), Velechko (Łopianka), Mylanych (Moczary), Savchak (Pielnia), Slumka (Rychwałd), Pleshkevych (Małastów) and Seneta (Szlachtowa). Fr. Mylanych was a member of the RSUK Supervisory Board.³⁴

The Lemko Commission made an attempt to solidify the engagement of Lemkos themselves in the development of co-operatives. The report for 1933 mentions 47 Lemko activists. There were 18 in the Lesko area, 17 in the Sanok area and 12 in the Nowy Sącz area.³⁵ The social composition of the activist group is interesting, revealing the group's archaic organisational structure. The majority – 41 activists – were Eastern Rite priests: 22 in the Lesko area, 10 in the Sanok area and 9 in the Nowy Sącz area.³⁶

Support from the ranks of the intelligentsia emboldened the peasant population working in the co-operatives. A good example of the Lemkos' active involvement is the fact that they opened their own shops, e.g. in Odrzechowa, where one was opened by three members of the board of the local co-operative. Next came systematic action led by the RSUK. Approximately 100 co-operatives were opened, selling not only goods brought in from outside the area, but also products made by local producers. Local farm industry production was now taking place in nearly every part of the Lemko region, from the Sanok region through the environs of Rymanów and Dukla to the counties of Gorlice and Nowy Sącz.³⁷

Conclusion

Those who were involved in the activities of the Lemko Commission simultaneously took an active part in Ukrainian political life via socio-cultural and economic institutions. This shows the extent of the co-operation between economic and political institutions. These connections were made at the highest levels of the RSUK organisational structure and of the strongest Ukrainian party in the Second Republic, the UNDO. As a result, the Lemko Commission obtained support from the most important Ukrainian economic institutions, which granted the initial financial support to the Lemko region. It is important to stress that despite unfavourable external conditions, above all opposition from Polish government and administrative circles, including the closing of Ukrainian reading rooms and co-operatives under the pretext of their having violated the terms of their charter regulations and the reinforcement of Old Rusyn circles after 1933 (the Lemko Association [Lemko-Soiuz]), the Lemko Commission managed to strengthen the Ukrainian movement among Lemkos considerably, even in regions where it had hitherto been weak. One example

³⁴ LNSL, f. 122, Prosvita, case # 3/3, n. 1, p. 5.

³⁵ *Ibidem.*

³⁶ *Ibidem.*

³⁷ *Ibidem.*

is the Sanok region, which before the First World War had been a bastion of Moscovophilism; another is the county of Nowy Sącz, where the confrontation of Old Rusyns with Moscovophiles on the one hand and with activists of the Ukrainian movement on the other was particularly fraught.

The Lemko Commission's success would not have been possible without the support of Ukrainian institutions in Lviv, but it should be underscored that Ukrainian and Lemko emigrant milieux in North America also played a role in it. They responded affirmatively to the resolutions agreed at the conference of 13 December 1932 and developed a widespread campaign on behalf of aiding the Lemkos left in "the old country". The aid from the emigrant community to the Lemko region took two tracks, one to the Lemko Commission's budget and the other directly to particular communities. There is no doubt that the Commission inspired emigrant milieux to institutional action on behalf of helping the Lemko region and gave rise to the creation of the Organization for the Defense of Lemkivshchyna at the USA Lemko Congress in Philadelphia in 1936 – a Ukrainian institution which also helped Lemkos during the Second World War and in the post-war period.

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NIEZNANE FAKTY Z DZIAŁALNOŚCI KOMISJI ŁEMKOWSKIEJ, 1932–1934

Streszczenie

W kwietniu 1926 r. władze ukraińskiej instytucji kulturalno-oświatowej „Proswity” przeprowadziły we Lwowie debatę na temat rozwoju społecznego i gospodarczego Łemkowszczyzny, powołując do życia Komisję Łemkowską, której działalność oparto na aktywności księży, adwokatów i lekarzy. W Sanoku utworzono centralę dla działalności w terenie, planując rozbudowę struktury czytelnianej i spółdzielczej. W celu gromadzenia środków finansowych podjęto współpracę z ukraińskimi bankami oraz instytucjami handlowymi (Dniestr, Centrobank, Ziemiński Bank Hipoteczny, Spółdzielczy Bank „Przyszłość”, Centrosojuz, Karpatia, Masłosojuz i in.). Głównym kierunkiem działań były sprawy kulturalno-oświatowe, ale zajmowano się także działalnością polityczną.

Cel realizowano za pośrednictwem akcji „książka na zachód”, przesyłając do bibliotek czytelnianych literaturę fachową, książki i czasopisma („Narodowa Sprawa”, „Nasz Sztandar”, „Niedziela”, „Prawda”, „Cel” i dla dzieci „Dzwoneczek”). Dla uczniów i uczennic pobierających naukę w gimnazjach i szkołach zawodowych utworzono system stypendialny. W 1933 r. do akcji włączono Ukraiński Związek Spółdzielczy (RSUK), który pozostawał pod wpływem Ukraińskiego Narodowo-Demokratycznego Zjednoczenia (UNDO), najsilniejszej ukraińskiej partii politycznej.

Działalność Komisji Łemkowskiej spotkała się z przeciwdziałaniem polskich władz rządowych i administracyjnych, ponieważ była sprzeczna z założeniami polityki narodowościowej rządu wobec Łemkowszczyzny. Niezależnie od tego Komisja zdołała znacznie rozbudować strukturę terenową „Proswity” i doprowadziła do otwarcia ok. 100 nowych spółdzielni handlowych, przyczyniając się do upowszechnienia ukraińskiej tożsamości narodowej wśród Łemków.