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**“MOTHER OF ALL UKRAINIAN LIFE”: IMAGES OF “PROSVITA”
AND ITS MEMBERS ON THE PAGES OF “NASH LEMKO”**

Abstract. *The purpose of the article consists in understanding the peculiarities of the reception the “Prosvita” society members’ multifaceted work in the columns of “Nash Lemko”. The research methodology is an interdisciplinary approach. In the article there have been used such methods and*

approaches as systematic, comparative and critical analysis of the source base represented by large text arrays. The use of the content analysis method made it possible to interpret various newspaper information correctly. **The scientific novelty** of the article consists in the attempt to analyse the reception of educational issues in the newspaper “Nash Lemko” comprehensively. **The Conclusions.** In conclusion, we should note that the urgency of educational issue for the Ruthenians during the interwar period determined a special focus of the editorial board of “Nash Lemko” to the activities of “Prosvita”. Actively popularizing its cultural mission, the newspaper persistently advised the reader to become proactive members of the institution and to work in solidarity with fellow citizens on educational and, therefore, national awareness of the Ruthenian community. The pragmatic consequence of this work, it was emphasized in the newspaper, was supposed to be an increase in the well-being of the inhabitants of the Eastern Beskyds, tired of economic troubles. The “Nash Lemko” combined such popularization activity with consultative and methodical activities, suggesting to the Ruthenians optimal models of organizing educational work in mountain villages and effective methods of protection against persecution by the Polish officials. At the same time, having established a close communication with its subscribers and well understanding the specifics of cultural challenges before it, the newspaper itself turned into an initiative agent of educational changes and a full-fledged partner of “Prosvita”. Despite a discriminatory nature of the Ukrainian policy of the governments of the Second Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, they managed to modernize a cultural and national landscape of the Eastern Beskyds through their joint efforts radically. This had the consequence of existentially important cohesion to the Lemkos on the eve of difficult trials brought by World War II and the subsequent mass deportations from their native lands.

Key words: “Nash Lemko”, “Prosvita”, the Second Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, cultural and educational activity, reception.

“МАТІР ВСЬОГО УКРАЇНСЬКОГО ЖИТТЯ”: ОБРАЗИ “ПРОСВІТИ” ТА ПРОСВІТЯН НА СТОРІНКАХ “НАШОГО ЛЕМКА”

Анотація. *Мета* дослідження полягає у з’ясуванні особливостей осмислення авторами “Нашого лемка” діяльності товариства “Просвіта” на теренах Східних Бескидів у міжвоєнний час. **Методологічне підґрунтя** роботи становить міждисциплінарний підхід. У статті використано такі методику **та** підходи, як систематичний, порівняльний і критичний аналіз джерельної бази, представленої великими текстовими масивами. Здійснити коректну інтерпретацію різножанрової газетної інформації уможливило застосування методики контент-аналізу. **Наукова новизна** статті полягає у спробі комплексного аналізу реценції “Нашим лемком” просвітницької проблематики. **Висновки.** У підсумку відзначено, що злободенність для русинів міжвоєнного часу освітнього питання визначила особливу увагу редколегії “Нашого лемка” до діяльності “Просвіти”. Активно популяризуючи її культурну місію, часопис наполегливо радив читачеві ставати ініціативними членами інституції та солідарно із земляками працювати над освітнім, а отже, і національним освідомленням русинської громади. Прагматичним наслідком цієї роботи, наголошувалося в пресодрucci, мало стати зростання добробуту втомлених економічними негараздами мешканців Східних Бескидів. Таку популяризаційну працю “Наш лемко” поєднував із консультативно-методичною діяльністю, підказуючи русинам оптимальні моделі організації просвітницької роботи в гірських селах та ефективні методи захисту від переслідувань польських чиновників. Водночас, налагодивши тісну комунікацію зі своїм передплатником і добре розуміючи специфіку посталих перед ним культурних викликів, часопис сам перетворився на ініціативного агента освітянських змін та повноцінного партнера “Просвіти”. Незважаючи на дискримінаційний характер української політики урядів Другої Речі Посполитої, солідарними зусиллями їм вдалося радикально модернізувати культурно-національний ландшафт Східних Бескидів. Це мало наслідком екзистенційно важливу для лемків згуртованість напередодні важких випробувань, що їх принесли Друга світова війна та подальші масові депортації з рідних земель.

Ключові слова: “Наш лемко”, “Просвіта”, Друга Річ Посполита, культурно-освітня діяльність, реценція.

The Problem Statement. In modern Lemko studies, there is observed the belief that the educational issue was of a special importance to the Ruthenians during the period of the second half of the 19th – the first third of the 20th centuries. It is about the fact that among the generally poorly educated mass of the Ukrainian people of that time, the representatives of its most western ethnographic branch had an unprecedentedly high level of analphabetism as compared to other European regions. This social disease led to archaic economic practices and, what was especially threatening, vagueness of ethnic self-identification. This was usually used by the political elites dominating the region in order to exploit the Lemkos economically and manipulate their national choice. A large volume of historiography is devoted to the above mentioned issue, in which the multifaceted persistent efforts of the Ukrainian intelligentsia to educate and nationalize the autochthonous inhabitants of the Eastern Beskyds.

But in the studies, the focus is on a personal dimension of the issue, i.e. a specific contribution of this or that public intellectual to the cultural education of his compatriots. Instead, the institutional aspect of the “Prosvita” movement in the Lemkos region continues to be on the margins of research interest. However, it is the very institutional aspect of the Prosvita movement that allows us to trace the duration and systematicity of educational work among the Ukrainian highlanders. Drawing the attention of colleagues to the significance of an institutional dimension of culturally aware work, below we will elucidate the place of “Prosvita” and the public rank of its employees in the spiritual life of the Ruthenian community during the interwar period through the receptive prism of the newspaper “Nash Lemko”. In addition to satisfying a purely Lemko studies interest, this will allow researchers of the most authoritative educational society among the Ukrainians to draw attention to its regional history.

The Review of Recent Researches. The newspaper “Nash Lemko” was the most requested periodical for pro-Ukrainian Ruthenians in interwar Poland. In view of this, a lot of researches were done on it, in which comprehensively there was clarified a publishing phenomenon (Telvak, Nakonechnyi, Telvak, 2022) and the editorial policy of this periodical (Nakonechnyi, 2019), as well as the peculiarities of reception of numerous problems on its pages that posed considerable challenges to the Ruthenians during the last five years before the war. Therefore, we are well informed about the struggle of the Lemkos with bad habits (Telvak, Nakonechnyi, 2021), illiteracy (Telvak, Nakonechnyi, Telvak, 2022), uncontrolled mass emigration (Telvak, Nakonechnyi, 2020), violent actions of the Polish administration (Nakonechnyi, 2017; Nakonechnyi, 2018), etc. On the other hand, the interest of the authors of “Nash Lemko” in the work of “Prosvita” activists on the territory of the Eastern Beskids has not received coverage of this issue to this day. This fact determines the relevance of our research.

The purpose of the article consists in understanding the peculiarities of the reception the “Prosvita” society members’ multifaceted work in the columns of “Nash Lemko”.

The Results of the Research. First of all, it should be noted that meticulous attention of the editors of “Nash Lemko” to the activities of “Prosvita” in the territories of the Eastern Beskyds during the interwar period was determined not only by the importance of this problem to the Ruthenians. We should also remember the significant educational traditions of the Galician and Ruthenian intelligentsia, whose representatives, since the beginning of the Society’s formation in 1868, had directed their efforts to comprehensive cultural awareness of the population of the westernmost Ukrainian region. They wanted to, through the spread of mass literacy in the Ukrainian language, neutralize a powerful influence of muscophile figures among the Lemkos who, manipulating the similarity of the ethnonyms “a Ruthenian”

and “russky”, preached the idea of Ruthenism as an organic part of the Russian Orthodox culture. At that time, the Greek-Catholic clergy was at the forefront of this struggle, the prominent representative of which was the well-known Ruthenian intellectual priest Anton Beskyd – the grandfather of the editor-in-chief of “Nash Lemko” Julian Tarnovych. Thus, during the interwar period, actually the grandson became the successor of a cultural and national mission of his famous ancestor, popularizing the work of “Prosvita” on the pages of the newspaper edited by him.

Actually, the contributors of “Nash Lemko” focused on the above mentioned aspects of the historical presence of “Prosvita” in the towns and villages of the Eastern Beskyds. Opposing the theses of the Muscovite and Polish press about the aggressive nature of the latest Ukrainian cultural expansion into the territories allegedly historically occupied by Muscovitism, they pointed out the duration of the struggle for the Ukrainian educational choice of the Ruthenians. On the basis of these posts, we can reconstruct the still unknown history of the activity of “Prosvita” in the Lemkos region. Thus, the mass establishment of “Prosvita” reading rooms by Greek-Catholic priests in the Lemkos territories during the last decades of the 19th century resulted in the formation of the first regional branch of the society in the then cultural centre of the Ruthenians, the town of Nowy Sącz in 1902. It was the branch and reading room of “Prosvita” in the town that became a platform for the spread of the Ukrainian cultural influences in the region. The author of “Nash Lemko” noted: “With their establishment, Nowy Sącz gathers around itself people who are aware of their origin and goals, firm people who spread calls to awareness and open their eyes to the sad reality: Muscovites who are conducting their anti-Ukrainian work” (Stii na storozhi, 1937, p. 3).

Effectiveness of this cultural and educational activity increased in September of 1902 after the “Prosvita” members established the first purely Lemkos educational institution – bursa, which was initially located in a rented premises, and from June of 1904 in their own home. This first Ruthenian secondary special educational institution became an educational centre for nurturing the cadres of the Ukrainian intelligentsia in the Lemkos region. Vasyl Yavorsky, a prominent Lemko intellectual, became the spiritual guide of this difficult cultural work, as the authors of the Ruthenian periodical emphasized (V odyndatsiati rokovyny, 1937, p. 2). In the columns of “Nash Lemko” the public status of this figure was depicted with a considerable respect on more than one occasion: “His honest name is closely associated with the bright times of Nowy Sącz and all-Lemkos movements, because he was a real artist-organizer, and at the same time, the head and the founder” (V odyndatsiati rokovyny, 1937, p. 2).

Unfortunately, the horrors of World War I practically destroyed the cultural work of the Lemkos Prosvita-pioneers. Therefore, the hard work of awareness of the Ruthenians during the interwar twenty years had to be started practically from the beginning. Its urgency is evidenced by the statistics given in the “Nash Lemko”, according to which the level of illiteracy reached a frightening figure of 41.7% in the Eastern Beskyds (Ukraintsi!, 1938). In view of this, on the pages of the periodical the most space was almost devoted to the conviction of the Ruthenians in the importance of “Prosvita” in their lives and the need to establish community reading rooms in the villages. At the same time, the publicists of “Nash Lemko” emphasized the pragmatic aspect understandable for their readers, portraying illiteracy as the worst social defect. On the contrary, they stated that, together with the eradication of illiteracy, public consciousness would spread in the village, which, together with knowledge, would bring the Ruthenians the dream of well-being (Prohaniaimo, 1935, p. 2). “The Prosvita reading room is the hearth of a cultural life in the community, the second

shrine next to the church”, Yu. Tarnovych emphasized. – [...] We call for the following: pound the rock! Buy books, organize your own library. Read and teach others to read books. And the rock will crack: the fulfillment of this most important task will benefit us and bring new, bright days to our entire nation... ” (YuT., 1934, p. 1).

Cultivating the high authority of “Prosvita” and its activists in the minds of its readers, the “Nash Lemko” appealed to the creative heritage of the poet Taras Shevchenko, who is a symbol to every Ukrainian. Justifiably certifying Kobzar as one of the first “Prosvita” members, the contributors to the newspaper cited excerpts from his famous works, which encouraged to active cultural work. Moreover, Shevchenko Days in March were declared by the authors of the Ruthenian newspaper to be the time of intense self-education. On this occasion, the pages of the newspaper ran: “Study, my brothers, think, read” – our greatest poet Taras Shevchenko wrote to us in his will. These words are a signpost to us, and “Prosvita” stands guard over them. It has a clear, holy goal in front of itself, to spread education among people, to teach them how to live, to point and lead them along the path of truth and science to a better tomorrow. “Prosvita” fulfills a great task, we must cooperate with it, help it” (De shukaty, 1934, p. 3).

The consequence of such glorification of the society was a consistent formation of the cult of “Mother-Prosvita” – the most authoritative Sobornytska cultural institution – on the pages of “Nash Lemko”. Following the rhetoric of Lviv Prosvita members, the Ruthenian periodical presented “Prosvita” as the seat of all cultural endeavors of the Ukrainians divided by borders. With an undisguised pathos, the newspaper’s authors emphasized: “Prosvita” was the first to awaken us to a new life, to lay a lasting foundation for our cultural and economic development. “Prosvita” is our victory! It is our immortal, free Spirit! It is our conscience, pride, honour and glory! It was born from the spirit of the people, It nurtured spiritual values for decades” (Ukrainskyi Narode!, 1935, p. 1).

In the opinion of “Nash Lemko”, the cultural leadership of “Prosvita” among the Ukrainians deserves an exceptionally respectful attitude towards the oldest national institution. Its manifestation, the newspaper authors insisted, should be a mass membership as the main prerequisite for the effectiveness of educational work. “Our Prosvita must develop, we must all cooperate with it”, explained Yu. Tarnovych, “then it will fulfill its tasks” (YuT., 1934, p. 1). Undermining the social atomism traditional for the Ukrainians-highlanders, the Ruthenian periodical encouraged them to become proactive activists of “Prosvita” and unite for the implementation of numerous cultural initiatives. Overcoming centuries of self-doubt, the editor of “Nash Lemko” wrote the following: “Who can be an educator in Lemkivshchyna? Each and every one, a conscious boy and a conscious girl, a householder, a spiritual and secular intellectual, in a word, all those who worry about the current state of their native Lemkivshchyna” (“Nash lemko”, 1934, p. 4).

Convincing its readers of the need for cultural work led by “Prosvita”, in the newspaper “Nash Lemko” the focus was on the logistical, legal and methodical aspects of establishing branches and reading rooms in the Ruthenian towns and villages. In the periodical, it was emphasized that the establishment of “Prosvita” centres was organizationally simple and materially accessible to the Lemkos. Facilitating the work of rural “Prosvita” members, in the periodical there was a list of popular literature of various genres recommended for reading in “Prosvita” reading rooms. Moreover, at the request of the Ruthenians, the newspaper editors often bought and delivered this literature to the Lemkos villages, thus forming the first “Prosvita” library there (Podiaka, 1937, p. 1). Encouraging fellow countrymen

to organizational work, Klym Berezhivskyi explained: “In a village a powerful engine and seedbed of “Prosvita” and a cultural life is a skillfully organized and well-run reading room” (Berezhivskyi, 1938, p. 3). If the number of people willing to establish educational centres in a certain village was not enough, the “Nash Lemko” offered to hold reading parties at houses of the Lemkos conscious of a national choice alternately. At the same time the focus was on special effectiveness of a collective reading practice, which made it possible to involve currently illiterate fellow villagers in educational work. In the newspaper it was advised to start diving into the world of the Ukrainian word with easy-to-understand humorous texts, then move on to historical fiction, and then read popular science books.

The “Nash Lemko” also popularized a number of cultural initiatives of “Prosvita” actively. Thus, at the request of Lviv central office, in the newspaper it was announced the winter period of the year, when the Lemkos had a longer rest from agricultural chores, the time of a mass active reading. Every year, the newspaper displayed the slogan: “The whole December is the month of “Prosvita”!”. Another effective cultural initiative was the obligation of each member of “Prosvita” to teach literacy to at least one illiterate. For this, the authorities of the society promised a reward in the form of valuable books. Explaining the importance of this initiative, the “Nash Lemko” insisted that “every literate person should teach at least one illiterate person to read and write, giving him the basis of national consciousness” (Vyiavim, 1938, p. 2). But among the Lemkos “Prosvita” members, the most popular were the informative local history excursions to the Galician capital organized by Lviv headquarters. Their goal was to show the Lemkos, who are far from the centre of the Ukrainian life, considerable results of national solidarity work. Readers shared their impressions on these trips in their favourite newspaper, thus fostering Soborny values among the Ruthenian community (Vrazhinnia, 1937, p. 5).

Such well-thought-out popularization and consultative methodical work of the Ruthenian periodical quite quickly produced the expected results in the form of an increase in the number of “Prosvita” centres in mountain villages. On the pages of “Nash Lemko” there was information on the opening of new reading rooms and the increase in the number of visitors. The newspaper did not spare its columns for self-reflection of the peasants. Thus, Yakiv Volianskyi, the head of the “Prosvita” centre in Surovychni Poliany, wrote in the newspaper: “Owing to the “Prosvita” reading room, the Ukrainian national consciousness and the Ukrainian organized cultural and educational life of the village rose high” (Volianskyi, 1937, p. 8). It should be noted that on the pages of “Nash Lemko” we see a lot of similarly stylized posts from various Ruthenian villages.

Over time, such information became so much that from the sixth issue of 1936, a permanent column “Educational Page” was started in the newspaper, aiming specifically at popularizing the activities of “Prosvita” centres in the Lemkos region. Justifying the need for a new section, the editors noted: “Until now, the newspaper “Nash Lemko” did not contain detailed reports on the life and activities of the “Prosvita” reading rooms in the Lemkos region. [...] Therefore, with the beginning of March 1936, the month of Shevchenko Days, we are starting an Educational page in the “Nash Lemko”. Here we will post detailed and truthful reports on the activities of cultural, educational societies in the Lemkos region” (Osvitno-vykhovna storinka, 1936, p. 6). Consistently covering the past and current work of the “Prosvita” centres in the Eastern Beskyds in this column for a long time, the “Nash Lemko” created a kind of encyclopedia of the “Prosvita” movement among the Ruthenians. An important part of it were the obituaries of prominent Lemkos educators (V. Chaikivskyi,

A. Shevchyk, B.-I. Antonych, etc.), which enable us to personify the Ukrainian cultural life in the Eastern Beskyds. An organic addition to this book of knowledge were numerous photos of institutions, events and activists, which quite fully visualize the “Prosvita” life in the Lemkos region. It should be noted that this unique local history information is still little known to modern researchers of the “Prosvita” society.

It is important that while popularizing the “Prosvita” movement in the Lemkos region, the Ruthenian newspaper showed its development against the background of all-Ukrainian and even world cultural processes. Thus, emphasizing the synodical influence of “Prosvita”, “Nash Lemko” informed the reader about a fruitful activity of the members of the society in all Zazbruchansky territories that were under the rule of Poland, Romania and Czechoslovakia at that time (Prosvitne zhyttia, 1934, p. 1). Also, it was not uncommon to talk about the fate of prominent intellectuals in the Bolshevik-occupied Dnipro region (Pomer M. Hrushevskiy, 2934); Telvak, 2008, pp. 356–405; Telvak & Telvak, 2022). Moreover, the newspaper also focused on the establishment of “Prosvita” in the diaspora Lemkos centres, pointing at an important unifying, cultural and educational mission of the society in the new countries where the Ruthenians lived (Kulturno-osvitne zhyttia 1934; Prosvita v Arhentyni, 1935). After all, the “Nash Lemko” popularized a foreign educational experience, and the fruitful work of the Bulgarian “Prosvita” was often mentioned (Konhres, 1934). All these posts had the primary task of instilling faith in the Ruthenians in the importance of their consciousness-raising activity.

According to the plan of the Ukrainian “Prosvita” members, the establishment of reading rooms and branches of the society in the Lemkos towns and villages was only the first step in the Ukrainization of their public space. “Prosvita”, they rightly assumed, was supposed to create cultural prerequisites for the Lemkos’ interest in the activities of other specialized societies and associations. “Nash Lemko” covered this process of Ukrainization of the Ruthenian village quite well through the establishment by “Prosvita” members of such authoritative institutions at the time as “Narodna torhovlia”, “Lemkos Union Cooperative”, “Sian”, “Silsky Hospodar”, “Renaissance Anti-Alcohol Society”, “Brotherhood of Sobriety” and the others. Along with the mentioned public institutions, “Prosvita” members also founded educational institutions at which Lemkos were taught modern economic practices. The economic and horticultural school “Prosvita” in Mylovan gained special authority among the Ruthenians (Hospodarsko-sadivnycha shkola, 1936). Highlighting such institutional initiative of “Prosvita” members, the “Nash Lemko” metaphorically called the society the “Mother” of all other Ukrainian institutions. The editor-in-chief wrote the following: “With Prosvita, our economic institutions, native schooling, physical education associations will be born – in a word, our entire national development” (Ukrainskyi Narode!, 1937, p. 1).

It is expected that the nationally conscious work of “Prosvita” was not liked by the officials of the revived Polish state, who at any cost tried to divert the Lemkos from the Ukrainian choice. From historiography it is known that they resorted to obsessive ideological propaganda, violent polonization of the educational process, violent administrative and even criminal persecution of activists, etc. On its pages “Nash Lemko” quite fully covered this unequal struggle of the Ruthenians with the state machine for their national choice and the right to have “Prosvita” centres in the villages. From the newspaper, we learn that the government officials first of all tried to decapitate the “Prosvita” movement, insisting on the incompatibility of the pastoral duties of Greek-Catholic priests with their traditional involvement in “Prosvita” activity. Responding to this challenge, in the “Nash Lemko” there were published several articles in

which, citing arguments of a canonical, legal and moral nature, naturalness of the involvement of the Ukrainian clergy in “Prosvita” activity was proved. Encouraging popular preachers to engage in a cultural service, it was written the following in “Nash Lemko”: “Each active Ukrainian priest in the Lemkos territories is by nature and should be a leader of the educational movement in the village” (Berezivskyi, 1938, p. 3).

Having lost the fight on a canonical field, the Polish officials tried to revive the once popular Russophilism in the Lemkos territories, which during interwar period took on the features of anti-Ukrainian dogmatic muscophilism, whose adherents popularized the idea of “Rus from the Carpathians to Kamchatka”. To this end, the relevant state bodies contributed in every possible way to the takeover of Greek-Catholic parishes by Orthodox priests, the introduction of the Lemkos dialect instead of the Ukrainian language into the educational process, the distribution of the muscovite primer by Methodius Trokhanovsky, etc., in public schools. On the institutional level, the influence of “Prosvita” had to be undermined by M. Kachkovsky Society, which since its establishment in 1874 had been positioned as an ideological counterweight to the Ukrainian institution. The “Nash Lemko” not only depicted in detail the struggle of “Prosvita” members with muscophile influences in the Lemkos villages, but also became an active participant in this confrontation.

Analyzing the relevant thematic posts, one notices a consistent alienation of the activities of M. Kachkovsky Society members on the pages of the newspaper. The editor-in-chief and other authors of the press did not spare sharply critical, and often sarcastic ironic words addressed to ideological opponents. The latter were depicted as fierce enemies of the Greek-Catholic Church, immoral personalities and intriguers, destroyers of the Lemkos traditions and even sympathizers of Bolshevism. The article by Klym Beskydskyi helps us have an idea of the rhetoric of these posts: “[...] In Kachkovsky reading rooms, there are groups of different communitarian, disorganized elements in our Lemkos parishes. For this reason, a Lemko, who values the Greek-Catholic faith and healthy morality of his parents, turns away from the harmful influence of Kachkovsky reading rooms, and rushes to his Ukrainian “Prosvita” and to its religiously morally nurturing reading rooms. [...]. The Kachkovsky Society is a typical Moscow exposition, created to break the national unity of the Ukrainian people and for the national confusion [...] of our Ukrainian Lemkivshchyna” (Beskydskyi, 1937, p. 2). In the end, owing to a solidary resistance of the Lemkos community, muscophilism did not gain the influence desired by the Polish officials.

Thus, in this situation of failure to confront the influence of “Prosvita” on the Lemkos territories with the help of competitive projects, state officials took the path of bureaucratic arbitrariness. And in this case, the “Nash Lemko” is almost the most informative source for researchers of the Polish governments national policy. From its columns, we learn about the governmental hampering of the process of establishing reading rooms; groundless constant checks of the document flow of branches with a programmed desire to find any inaccuracies and impose heavy fines for it; revocation of permits for various public actions; sending provocateurs who were supposed to commit riots, which allowed to stop the work of educational centers, etc. In turn, the “Nash Lemko” provided a constant legal support for the activity of reading rooms, explained the logic of opposition to officials, helped to file appeals, and suggested ways of bypassing bans. Thus, in the newspaper it was advised reading gatherings in the houses of activists after closing of the reading rooms. The “Nash Lemko” offered to compensate the losses by sending individual funds, which was not regulated by law. However, the results of this struggle were determined in advance and the Ruthenian

periodical informed its readers with undisguised anxiety about a regular closure of branches and reading rooms in the Lemkos towns and villages. As expected, this information was subjected to merciless censorship interventions, as evidenced by the abundant white spots in the chronicle columns of the “Nash Lemko”.

The behaviour of Polish officials in relation to “Prosvita” centres became especially brutal in 1938, when “Prosvita” planned to celebrate its 70th anniversary. The heads of the institution formulated the ideological message of the holiday as follows: “This is the great national Jubilee of cultural work – the Jubilee of a long and difficult struggle against the unenlightened darkness that killed Your national and human dignity, blocked the path of progress and knowledge in front of You with granite rocks, You – the owner of a fertile land, the great treasures of Your ancestral land – turned You into a hired hand and a beggar” (Ukrainskyi Narode!, 1937, p. 1). But the Polish government, frightened by the prospects of modern Ukrainianism manifestation achievements, instead of supporting a cultural institution that was authoritative among the largest national minority, banned a number of completely innocent actions, such as the mass dedication of the “Prosvita” flag, performances of singing groups and orchestras or a scientific congress. It was also forbidden to visit Lviv by representatives of regional, even Lemkos branches, who were supposed to walk in a column along the streets of their princely capital. Only religious services and a concert with a small number of attendees were allowed. All these bans gave reason to the publicists of “Nash Lemko” to call the 70th anniversary of “Prosvita” as a “silent anniversary” eloquently (Vsenarodnyi movchaznyi poklin, 1938, p. 1). In general, we can only speculate as to how long the Polish authorities would have finally destroyed the institutional foundations of the “Prosvita” movement on the territory of the Eastern Beskyds. This destructive work was hindered by the outbreak of World War, when the demonstrative disregard of the authorities of the Second Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth for the humanitarian rights of the largest minority repeatedly became a reason for the Polish-Ukrainian armed clashes.

Along with the above-mentioned analytical, journalistic and local history articles, the authors of “Prosvita” also addressed educational issues with the help of artistic word. In the newspaper, we read about talented literary images of “Prosvita” members who successfully overcome the inertia of their countrymen on the way to knowledge and national self-awareness (Sfinks, 1935) Along with this, the column of the newspaper was full of motivational slogans such as: “Our Future is in “Prosvita!””, “Let’s join the members of Mother “Prosvita” en masse!””, “Let’s Create one Powerful “Prosvita” Front!””, “Through “Prosvita” to Resurrection !””, “Prosvita” as Mother”, “Through “Prosvita” to Great Tomorrow!” and, etc. on. After all, the “Nash Lemko” awakened the enlightening fervor in its reader also by the power of a visual image, publishing appropriate thematic drawings in which the image of “Prosvita” was combined with symbols of a spiritual elevation and material well-being.

Finally, a few words should be said about the enlightened self-reflection of the editors of “Nash Lemko”. For more than five years, persistently popularizing the society’s activities and participating in the implementation of its numerous cultural projects, the newspaper itself turned into an educational institution that was authoritative among the Lemkos. Having a well-established feedback relationship with its subscriber with the help of the “Tribune of our Readers” column, the editorial board received a direct insight into the success and difficulties of its educational mission. Thus, on the occasion of the publication of the hundredth issue of “Nash Lemko”, Yu. Tarnovych had every reason to be proud of the results of the editorial team work headed by him: “With strong hands, we broke through this heavy dam, which was

blocked by the Khin wall, the path of the Ukrainian word to Lemkivshchyna” (Sotnie chyslo, 1938, p. 4).

The Conclusions. In conclusion, we should note that the urgency of educational issue for the Ruthenians during the interwar period determined a special focus of the editorial board of “Nash Lemko” to the activities of “Prosvita”. Actively popularizing its cultural mission, the newspaper persistently advised the reader to become proactive members of the institution and to work in solidarity with fellow citizens on educational and, therefore, national awareness of the Ruthenian community. The pragmatic consequence of this work, it was emphasized in the newspaper, was supposed to be an increase in the well-being of the inhabitants of the Eastern Beskyds, tired of economic troubles. The “Nash Lemko” combined such popularization activity with consultative and methodical activities, suggesting to the Ruthenians optimal models of organizing educational work in mountain villages and effective methods of protection against persecution by the Polish officials. At the same time, having established a close communication with its subscribers and well understanding the specifics of cultural challenges before it, the newspaper itself turned into an initiative agent of educational changes and a full-fledged partner of “Prosvita”. Despite a discriminatory nature of the Ukrainian policy of the governments of the Second Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, they managed to modernize a cultural and national landscape of the Eastern Beskyds through their joint efforts radically. This had the consequence of existentially important cohesion to the Lemkos on the eve of difficult trials brought by World War II and the subsequent mass deportations from their native lands.

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