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**“EVERY EVIL EVOLVES FROM DRUNKENNESS”:
ANTI-ALCOHOL POLICY OF “NASH LEMKO”**

Abstract. *The purpose of the research* is to find out the features of the anti-alcohol policy of the newspaper editorial board of “Nash Lemko” (“Our Lemko”). *The methodology of the research* is based on the interdisciplinary approach. The following methods and approaches have been used as systematic, comparative and critical analysis of the source base, represented by large text arrays. The application of the content analysis technique made it possible to carry out the correct interpretation of various genres of newspaper information. *The scientific novelty* is that for the first time an attempt has been made of a comprehensive analysis of anti-alcohol issues on the pages of the newspaper “Nash Lemko”. *The Conclusions.* Taking into consideration the anti-alcohol issues on the pages of “Nash Lemko”, we will point out its richness and plot, which correlated with the real scale of this threat to the Ruthenians during the interwar period of the XXth century. In the newspaper there was the issue of promoting a

healthy lifestyle among its readers quite systematically as the newspaper editorial board even used the considerable work of the European and Ukrainian movement activists, who were fighting for sobriety at that time. Appealing to the readers' minds with eloquent data of statistics and criminal chronicles, the newspaper at the same time disturbed the imagination of the Ruthenians by many means of artistic influence. The consequences of the above-mentioned policy, despite its sometimes inconsiderable moments, were a growing awareness among the Beskyd population that numerous problems were due to their own abuse of alcohol and nicotine. The Lemkos, in general, gave a worthy answer to the social disaster, as evidenced by the positive dynamics of the "Vidrodzhennia" ("The Renaissance") Society foundation in the mountain villages, which united more and more Ruthenian abstainers. Such consolidation was very important for the Lemkos community on the eve of the ordeal of World War II.

Key words: "Nash Lemko", Ruthenian, anti-alcohol policy, II Rzeczpospolita, "Vidrodzhennia" Society.

"ВІД ПИЯТИКИ БЕРЕ ПОЧАТОК УСЯКА ПОГАНЬ": ПРОТИАЛКОГОЛЬНА ПОЛІТИКА "НАШОГО ЛЕМКА"

Анотація. Мета дослідження полягає у з'ясуванні особливостей протиалкогольної політики редакції часопису "Наш лемко". **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 протиалкогольної проблематики на сторінках часопису "Наш лемко". **Висновки.** Підсумовуючи протиалкогольну проблематику на сторінках "Нашого лемка", вважаємо на її насиченість і полісюжетність, що корелювало з дійсними масштабами цієї загрози для русинів у міжвоєнне двадцятиліття. Використовуючи тогочасні чималі напрацювання активістів європейського й українського руху за тверезість, часопис підійшов доволі системно до справи популяризації здорового способу життя у середовищі своїх читачів. Апелюючи до їх розуму промовистими даними статистики та кримінальної хроніки, видання водночас збуджувало увагу русина багатьма засобами художнього впливу. Наслідками такої політики, попри її подекуди неприглядні моменти, було зростаюче розуміння серед населення Бескидів, що причинами багатьох негараздів є власне нерозважливе ставлення до алкоголю та нікотину. Лемки, загалом, дали гідну відповідь цьому громадському лиху, свідченням чого була позитивна динаміка закладання гуртків Товариства "Відродження" у гірських селах, що об'єднували дедалі більше русинів-абстинентів. Така консолідація була дуже важливою для лемківської громади напередодні важкого випробування, яким виявилася Друга світова війна.

Ключові слова: "Наш лемко", русини, протиалкогольна політика, Друга Річ Посполита, товариство "Відродження".

The Problem Statement. Diverse researchers of the history of the Lemko sub-ethnic group are practically unanimous in their belief in the importance of the interwar period for the crystallization of the national self-awareness of the representatives of this westernmost branch of Ukraine. Hence, the clear quantitative dominance of literature could be easily explained, which covered various aspects of the life of the Ruthenians in the Second Commonwealth (II Rzeczpospolita). Thus, nowadays we are quite well informed about the cultural and economic life of the Lemkos, as well as their difficult struggle with the challenges of that time, first of all, the anti-Ukrainian policy of the Polish governments, which neglected the national choice of their citizens, as well as the mass emigration, as a result of which the Beskyds were rapidly depopulated.

However, almost nothing was written so far concerning the Lemko activists reaction to the problems, the roots of which were in the Ruthenian environment. It is, first of all, about the epidemic nature of the spread of alcoholism, which destroyed the Lemko community

from within. The paramount evidence of the above-mentioned threat is the ever-increasing attention of the Ruthenian periodicals, in the columns of which the rapid addiction to alcohol of the Lemkos is marked by the greatest social disaster of the time. Therefore, ignoring this problem by the Lemkos researchers contrasts with its scale clearly, which makes it impossible to reconstruct the Ruthenian phenomenon of the interwar period completely. Therefore, as the first step towards the study of this topic, we should recreate the anti-alcohol discourse of the newspaper “Nash Lemko” (1934 – 1939), the most popular among the Ruthenians of the Second Commonwealth (II Rzeczpospolita).

The Analysis of Recent Researches. Taking into account the special importance of the newspaper “Nash Lemko” as a historical source for the reconstruction of the history of interwar Rusynism, the magazine was mentioned in the historiography of the Lemko studies many times by numerous researchers (Telvak & Nakonechny, 2019). At the same time, currently there are no independent studies to clarify the heuristic value of the newspaper materials for the reconstruction of the anti-alcohol struggle in the Lemko region during the interwar period. As a result, the above-mentioned information determines the relevance of our study.

The purpose of the research is to find out the features of the anti-alcohol policy of the newspaper editorial board of “Nash Lemko” (“Our Lemko”).

The Main Material Statement. First of all, we should describe briefly the genesis of the abstinence discourse of the Ruthenian periodicals during the interwar period. Taking into consideration the growing threat of the alcohol addiction spread in the Lemkos environment, since the last decades of the XXth century in the territory of the Ukrainian Beskyds, the movement for sobriety became more and more active. At that time it was headed by the Greek Catholic pastors, who were almost the only representatives of the Ruthenian intelligentsia. For instance, the renowned Ruthenian intellectual, the priest Anton Beskyd (*Za tverezist*, 1934, p. 3), was especially active in the field of public struggle against alcoholism. Hence, it should come as no surprise that when his grandson Yulian Tarnovych headed the editorial board of the authoritative Ruthenian biweekly newspaper “Nash Lemko” (“Our Lemko”), he turned it into a mouthpiece for the active sobriety movement among his compatriots.

First of all, the authors of the magazine resorted to diagnosing the “ulcers” of a public life, according to their fair observation, reaching the origins of the problem of the Ruthenian alcoholism. While covering genesis of the issue, the authors of “Nash Lemko” came to the paradoxical conclusion that the acquisition of personal freedom in 1848 “had very serious consequences to our people, and among other things it concerned their sobriety” (*Za tverezist*, 1935, p. 8). It was written that before 1848 a peasant-alcoholic could drink and pay the only money he had earned, but it was very difficult for him to get rid of his house and a plot of land, because it required the permission of the ‘pan’ (owner, master) and some other measures. After liberation from serfdom, the peasant became a full owner of his house, garden and field. Since then, each peasant-owner received a large loan from a barkeeper and could drink until he drank his own property and became a beggar. “Indeed, since 1848,” the newspaper correspondent claims, “drunkenness has spread even more among our people; vodkarni, taverns multiply even more, and thousands of our peasants drink away all their property easily, which passes into the hands of the others” (*Za tverezist*, 1935, p. 8). In addition, the rapid spread of drunkenness among the Lemkos, the reporters also explained the material interest of *didych* (the title of a hereditary owner of a certain estate) and innkeepers, to whom the sale of horilka and tobacco brought unprecedented benefits. It even came to the point that in the 1870s and the 1980s, in many suburbs of the Lemko region, the people

received horilka and tobacco as their wages not money, which further spread drunkenness among the peasants.

The scale of this disaster increased significantly during the interwar period. Then the chemical industry was enriched by the invention of relatively cheap technical alcohol for domestic use. As this product did not belong to food items, the police were not interested in the peculiarities of its use and distribution for a long time. Instead, various dealers learned how to make a strong-alcohol denaturant from it, which received several names – “shpirytaika”, “eter” and “kropka” by the Lemkos. In addition, its toxicity was significantly higher than that of ordinary horilka, leading to faster habituation of the body weakened by chronic malnutrition and considerable disability due to irreversible damage to the digestive, visual organs and psyche. Taking into account the above-mentioned information, the Lemko periodicals sounded the alarm, showing many readers the perniciousness of the new-fangled drink. Hence, the newspaper “Nash Lemko” explained the following: “Eter mixed with horivka has the characteristics that people are more intoxicated by it than horivka. Consequently, those who drink eters very soon fall into the trap of drunkenness and the so-called drug addiction, of which they should be cured in the appropriate hospitals later” (Troily, 1934, p. 1).

It should be mentioned that while understanding the reasons for such a significant popularity of alcohol in the then Ruthenian environment, the newspaper “Nash Lemko” stated decently that it was one of the consequences of the frustration of unrealized life plans. It was said that the inhabitant of the mountain village, burdened with landlessness and unbearable taxes, also felt his own helplessness before the arbitrariness of the foreign bureaucracy, which treated him as a man of a lower class. As a result, people with insufficient resistance chose to escape from the unattractive reality and preferred increasingly the state of alcohol-altered consciousness due to the existential hopelessness. It should be mentioned that the authors of the magazine depicted the above-mentioned issue on a national scale, emphasizing the unhealed historical trauma of the Ukrainians. “Both poisons were not inflicted on any people in the past and do not bring as much harm to the present as to the Ukrainians, – the correspondent of “Nash Lemko” emphasized. – Maybe because the nation has been and is in captivity for the longest time of all, which sucks the best forces out of it and destroys its resilience. And that is why, our people must fight in front of others with poisons that threaten their lives and break their strength” (Berezhitsia, 1937, p. 7).

Furthermore, realizing the threat of alcoholism to the very existence of the Lemko world, the Ruthenian activists, including the authors of the newspaper “Nash Lemko”, launched a broad information campaign. First of all, an economic argument that was particularly sensitive to the average impoverished Ruthenian was adopted. Using state statistics, the newspaper “Nash Lemko” demonstrated eloquently that despite the chronic economic crisis, the population of the Second Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth (II Rzeczpospolita) did not reduce its spending on bad habits. The newspaper claimed the following, while illustrating the amount of such costs: “The terrible numbers speak for themselves: 120 million złoty spent on alcohol and 60 million złoty on tobacco! This very figure of 180 million złoty, spent annually, denies the fact as if nobody had drunk or smoked, because there is nothing to be spent ... Let these terrible figures shake the dormant conscience of the citizenry, and draw attention” (Do naishliakhetnishoi borotby, 1936, p. 4). In addition, analyzing large figures of state statistics and the daily expenses of a peasant, one of the issues of “Nash Lemko” provided indicative information that for one glass of horilka you can buy a wide range of goods either 6 glasses of milk, 3 eggs, a kilogram of bread, 12 rolls, 350 grams of cheese or 4 kg of potatoes (Shcho mozhna kupyty, 1938, p. 4).

The economic argument on the pages of the newspaper was reinforced by the depiction of numerous personal and social troubles that alcoholism brings to the Lemko environment. Thus, one of the active contributors to the newspaper, who hid under the pseudonym “Vidrodzhenets” (“Renaissancer”), systematized in great detail the calamities that bring drunkenness to a man. First of all, he claimed that alcohol can destroy a person spiritually, because it stunned his mind, took away consciousness, weakened resistance to bad influences, shortened memory, destroyed the balance of the spirit, pushed him to adventure and adversity. Moreover, the author of the post carried on writing, highlighting that alcohol may destroy people physically, it causes irreparable damage to the offspring, “causing great spiritual devastation”. In addition, the “Vidrodzhenets” (“Renaissancer”) pointed out that drunkenness can destroy a person financially, wasting hard-earned money and leaving the family hungry. In the end, the post put emphasis on the fact that alcohol can also also destroy a person socially. The point was that a person devoted to drunkenness became incapable of any positive social work and active life. “Vice versa! – the author put emphasis, – It becomes a burden for the society which for maintenance of itself before it has to keep guards of a public safety, criminals, personalities and courts!” (Vidrodzhenets, 1937, p. 3). Hence, the “Vidrodzhenets” summed up, the Lemko community was destroyed by an alcoholic addicted person because of the alcoholic his family suffered from poverty, as a result, may lose its strength for cultural progress. While demonstrating the threat of alcoholism from various aspects, the author urged his readers: “Therefore, let us beware of alcohol and related poisonous drinks, both formidable and dangerous, and private and family, as well as the national enemy, who repeatedly tried to destroy our people [...]” (Vidrodzhenets, 1937, p. 3).

Furthermore, the newspaper “Nash Lemko” went on to explain to its reader a positive programme to overcome this social disaster by depicting the many misfortunes that accompany alcoholism. It should be mentioned that its main points were developed by figures of the authoritative Ukrainian anti-alcohol society “Vidrodzhennia” (“Renaissance”) in Western Ukraine, and the Lemko newspaper adapted them to the realities of its reader’s life. First of all, “Nash Lemko” drew attention to the young part of its audience justifiably, in which the dynamics of alcoholism was particularly threatening. Hence, the newspaper took the initiative to establish anti-alcohol clubs in the senior classes of rural schools, in order to distract young people from the bad habits of the older generation. According to the newspaper “Nash Lemko”, in order to be efficient and successful concerning the above-mentioned case, it should be taken care of by education officials. “[...] The school authorities must take care, – we read on the pages of the newspaper, – that in all schools, without distinction, there must be established anti-alcohol clubs and appropriate reports must be made for the young and the old to teach how to conduct anti-alcohol work among the rural population” (Shche pro denaturku, 1936, p. 7).

In addition, one more vital initiative, which was taken and presented to its readers by the Lemko biweekly was the idea of holding non-alcoholic holidays. In the columns of “Nash Lemko” we can spot numerous calls for a sober celebration of milestones as weddings, birthdays, baptisms, Christmas and Easter. In order to reinforce their appeal emotionally, the authors of the newspaper contrasted the descriptions of diverse misfortunes that occurred on holidays with alcohol, with the depiction of the carefree fun of abstainers. There was a lot written about fights, murders, robberies and deaths as a result of denaturation poisoning at the Lemkos parties in the section of information messages. Such news was accompanied by the expected summary – “It is time for our peasants to have a mind and not to cause trouble to themselves and people” (Palinka, 1935, p. 7).

It should be highlighted that in contrast to such information, descriptions of non-alcoholic celebrations were given in a completely different tone – a tradition that gradually gained popularity in the Lemkos villages. Often such texts were published on the first column, which raised their significance in the eyes of a reader. For example, with a lot of emotional enthusiasm on the pages of “Nash Lemko” it was written about non-alcoholic weddings in the villages of Riabim and Matviyeva. The newspaper informed that during these celebrations, conscious Lemkos raised funds for the Ukrainian disabled people and for the “Ridna Shkola” Society. “Honor to the conscious Brothers!”, – an eyewitness of the events tried to encourage the others to follow a piece of advice (Na bezalkoholnim, 1936, p. 1). Moreover, non-alcoholic celebrations of Christmas and Easter were depicted with no less expression. The festive issues of “Nash Lemko” dedicated to them certainly contained appeals to refrain from consuming strong drinks. For greater authority, such appeals were signed by renowned religious or secular figures. The newspaper assured: “Only sober holidays will give you pleasure and leave you the best memory. [...] Get the poison out of the holiday table! [...] Alcohol and tobacco destroy health and destroy property! They are our enemies and we will not allow them to violate the sanctity of Christmas!” (Sviatkuimo, 1937, p. 2).

The newspaper “Nash Lemko” also acquainted its readers with the past and present state of anti-alcohol struggle in different parts of the world with a clear propaganda goal. Reaching its origins, the newspaper reported that the first sobriety society was founded in North America in the town of Moreau in 1808, the second appeared in Boston, in 1813, and later such centers began to appear in other US cities. As early as in 1865, the American Sobriety Society was founded. In Europe, such the oldest society was founded in Scotland, in 1826, and then in Sweden, in 1837. The Ukrainians did not lag behind Western Europeans in terms of consciousness, founding such society on the initiative of Cardinal Mykhailo Levytskyi in 1844. Somewhat later, similar organizational centers originated in Norway, in 1850, in Germany, in 1883, in Austria, in 1887, and etc.

Hence, it was expected that the newspaper paid the most attention to the development of the anti-alcohol struggle in the Ukrainian sub-Austrian territories. Its peculiarity was the considerable involvement of the Greek Catholic clergy in this matter: “The leaders of sobriety and fighters against drunkenness were the Ukrainian priests, who worked to improve the moral and ethical condition of the Ukrainian countryside” (Tovarystva, 1935, p. 2). The anti-alcohol struggle was led by representatives of the secular intelligentsia only at the beginning of the XXth century, who in 1909 founded the above-mentioned Ukrainian Anti-Alcohol Society “Vidrodzhennia” (“Renaissance”), which since became the flagship of the movement for a healthy lifestyle. Its popularity among the Ukrainians was evidenced by the fact that in 1914 the society had 6 regional branches and 50 circles with more than a thousand active members.

Furthermore, the newspaper “Nash Lemko” paid a lot of attention to the demonstration of contemporary, sometimes quite radical, practices in the fight against drunkenness. Hence, the newspaper informed its reader that in Germany the police escorted chronic alcoholics with signs on their necks with the inscription “I drank all my earnings” along the streets of cities (Novyi sposib, 1935, p. 3). In turn, Australia decided by Parliament to send alcoholics to distant islands, where they had to work hard under strict security supervision until they get rid of addiction (Avstraliia, 1937, p. 12). According to the newspaper “Nash Lemko”, much was done to fight against alcoholism in the Second Commonwealth. Hence, the pages of the newspaper contained a detailed description of the activities of the International Anti-Alcohol Congress in Warsaw with the participation of the Prime Minister (Borotba, 1937, p. 3).

Instead, in the article “America is Drunk” the newspaper criticized sharply the demolition of the well-known “dry law” in the United States (Ameryka, 1934, p. 3)

It should be emphasized that the newspaper “Nash Lemko” also tried to convert its readers to a healthy lifestyle by the power of the artistic word. For example, the newspaper published stories written by the popular Ruthenian writer Ivan Shevchyk-Lukavychenko “Paliunka” and “Faika”. In addition, a number of stories on anti-alcohol issues were published in the newspaper by its editor Yu. Tarnovych. The column of the publication was also full of motivating slogans such as “The ear of a drunken slave does not hear the rattle of the shackles in which he is chained”, “Money spend on drinking and smoking is money thrown into the swamp!”, “Do not go to the tavern – but go to the reading room!”, “Victory belongs to the sober, to drunkards – captivity”, “Wealth enters the inn, and need comes out” and etc. The newspaper “Nash Lemko” aroused the abstinent mood of a reader by the power of the visual image, containing appropriate thematic drawings in which the theme of bad habits was combined with death and ruin.

The Ruthenian newspaper initiated a broad campaign to establish the centers of the “Vidrodzhennia” (“Renaissance”) Society in the villages as a right consideration of the systemic nature of the anti-alcohol struggle in the Lemkos region as a guarantee of its success. The systematic work was carried out under the general slogan “Spreading the ideas of the “Vidrodzhennia” (“Renaissance”) Society in the Lemko region!”. As a result, the newspaper “Nash Lemko” persuaded the contributors to establish abstinence circles in their villages and to conduct agitation among their compatriots. Numerous articles published on the pages on the Ruthenian newspaper, which chronicled all the new activities of the advocates of a sober living, speak of its effectiveness. The most popular were the solemn oaths in the church of the new “Vidrodzhentsi” (“revivalists”), who promised to give up bad habits forever (P. H. vidrodzhenets, 1935, p. 8). Such information summaries were usually conducted in a similar way: “All sworn Lemkos join the “Vidrodzhennia” (“Renaissance”) Society and read anti-alcohol literature carefully. We ask you all, take Lemkos, set up “Vidrodzhennia” (“Renaissance”) Circles in your villages, let’s leave that spirit secret once again [...]. We take care of our future with common sense – or the better tomorrow of our people” (P. H. vidrodzhenets, 1935, p. 8). It should be noted that the largest number of anti-alcohol actions took place in February, which was the international month against drinking.

In general, the popularization of the activities of the “Vidrodzhennia” (“Renaissance”) by the Ukrainian press of the Second Commonwealth, but also by the newspaper “Nash Lemko”, proved to be quite effective. According to the report of the Society itself, in 1936 the organization actually doubled its work as compared to the previous year. If in 1935 the Society had in circulation 36,527 zloty, then in 1936 – 57,145 zloty; in 1935 there were published 122,500 copies of popularization publications, and in 1936 – 136,000 copies; the press published 500 anti-alcohol materials in 1935 and 950 – in 1936. In 1936, the number of branches increased to 13 and the number of circles to 115 (Ukrainskyi, 1937, p. 4).

At the same time, we should point out a certain inconsistency of the newspaper “Nash Lemko” in the fight against bad habits among the Ruthenians. Thus, the newspaper constantly put emphasis on the fact that tobacco was no less dangerous than alcohol addiction. That’s why, many plots were devoted to demonstrations of the dangers of smoking for an individual and the whole community (Chomu ne treba, 1934, p. 7). After all, the “Vidrodzhennia” (“Renaissance”) Society popularized by the Ruthenian newspaper also focused on the fight against this long-standing enemy of a healthy person. At the same time, urging to get rid of nicotine addiction, the newspaper “Nash Lemko” also published cigarettes advertisements of

the Ukrainian manufacturers. Ironically, those mutually contradictory materials were often contained in one column! Such kind of illogicality in the editorial policy of the Ruthenian newspaper was explained, apparently, by the urgent need for the financial survival of the chronically subsidized publication.

A dubious shadow of the newspaper “Nasho Lemko” anti-alcohol policy was a doubtful search of those responsible for the rapid spread of bad habits among the Ruthenians. Having completely succumbed to the anti-Semitism of European fashion at the time, the newspaper called the bartender of the Jewish origin, perhaps, the main reason for the alcoholism in the mountainous areas. Therefore, xenophobic statements such as the “Jewish-leech” or the “Jewish-impudent” were common on the pages of the newspaper “Nash Lemko”. It should be pointed out that in order to justify the blatantly racist invectives, the Ruthenian newspaper resorted to another common method of contemporary journalism, bizarrely combining in the person of a Jew the main threats to the Lemkos, both economically and ideologically. Hence, according to the columns of the newspaper, the Jews appeared not only as the only source of alcoholic but also as the communist dope. It should be noted that the mentioned plot requires a deeper special understanding in the broad context of the cultural stereotypes transformation of the European journalism during the interwar period.

The Conclusions. Taking into consideration the anti-alcohol issues on the pages of the newspaper “Nash Lemko”, we should point out its richness and plot, which correlated with the real scale of this threat to the Ruthenians during the interwar period of the XXth century. The newspaper approached the issue of promoting a healthy lifestyle among its readers quite systematically as its editorial board even used the considerable work of the European and Ukrainian movement activists, who were fighting for sobriety at that time. Appealing to a reader’s minds with eloquent data of statistics and criminal chronicles, the newspaper, at the same time, disturbed the imagination of the Ruthenians by many means of artistic influence. The consequences of the above-mentioned policy, despite its sometimes inconsiderable moments, were growing awareness among the Beskyd population that numerous problems were due to their own abuse of alcohol and nicotine. The Lemkos, in general, gave a worthy answer to the social disaster, as evidenced by the positive dynamics of the “Vidrodzhennia” (“Renaissance”) Society foundation in the mountain villages, which united more and more Ruthenian abstainers. Such consolidation was very important for the Lemkos community on the eve of the ordeal of World War II.

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