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The Greek Catholic Rustic Gentry and the Ukrainian National Movement in Habsburg-Ruled Galicia

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This article discusses the national allegiances of the Byzantine-rite Galician petty gentry during the second half of the nineteenth century and the early years of the twentieth century. Noble status set this social group apart from other Ruthenian inhabitants of nineteenth-century Galicia. Both contemporaries and later scholars saw the Galician Ruthenians as a typical “non-historic,” or “plebeian,” nation consisting of “priests and peasants.” However, the petty gentry did not fit into this picture. Throughout much of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries both the Polish and the Ukrainian national communities claimed that the Galician Greek Catholic petty gentry was theirs. The petty gentry’s position in between these two communities helped attract public attention, but at the same time it determined the partisan character of the study of this question. For non-partisan scholars, a major limitation was the acceptance of a framework that emphasized sociological differences between “historic” and “non-historic” nations in determining the character of the nation-building process: the petty gentry did not fit well into either of these “ideal types.”

The Ukrainian descendants of petty-gentry families were for some time their only students. They tended to stress the importance of the petty gentry in the history of the Ukrainian nation, viewing the latter as a community stretching over many centuries. After the Soviet interlude, during which the Ukrainian petty gentry were lionized only in diaspora publications,¹ a renewed interest in that gentry arose in western Ukraine in the 1990s.² Even well-known historians succumbed to the temptation to overestimate the impact of this unusual social group. In his scheme of the nineteenth-century Ukrainian national awakening, the late Harvard historian Omeljan Pritsak, who was a descendant of the petty gentry on his mother’s side,³ claimed that the Eastern-rite gentry that dominated in Galicia’s organized Ukrainian life uninter-

¹ In Soviet Ukraine researching this subject was taboo for ideological reasons. Meanwhile the editors and authors of post-war émigré Ukrainian publications about the regions where the Galician petty gentry once lived compactly were preoccupied with the latter. Articles about individual members of the gentry in the Boiko region can be found in almost every issue of *Litopys Boikivshchyny* (Philadelphia, 1969–89).

² Panegyric articles about the petty gentry appeared in *Litopys Boikivshchyny* after the Boikivshchyna History and Ethnography Museum in Sambir, Lviv Oblast, revived that publication, and in numerous local miscellanies and new books, e.g., Ivan Volchko-Kulchytsky, *Istoriia sela Kulchytsi i rodu Draho-Sasiv* (Drohobych: Vidrozhennia, 1995).

³ Hryhorii Demian, *Talanty Boikivshchyny* (Lviv: Kameniar, 1991), 292.

ruptedly for several centuries also played a key role in Ukraine's nineteenth-century national awakening.⁴

Since their emergence, these Ukrainian narratives have been contested by structurally very similar Polish ones. However, unlike their Ukrainian counterparts, Polish historians have tended to attribute Polish identity to Galicia's Greek Catholic petty gentry. In the absence of direct evidence, such an identity was inferred from some actions by members of the gentry, for example, their participation in the Polish uprisings of the nineteenth century.⁵ For Polish historians, the ultimate proof of that gentry's Polishness was their sharp dissociation from their peasant neighbours. For the most part, both Polish and Ukrainian historians have sought to essentialize the gentry's identity, despite the volatility of the gentry's national allegiances.

Armed with Ernst Gellner's theory of nationalism, John-Paul Himka was the first scholar to discuss the Galician petty gentry's national affiliation in the context of the formation of a nation that did not previously exist. His thesis was that although the petty gentry was Ukrainian according to the two most important ethnographic criteria—religious affiliation and language—the heritage of the feudal era turned them into an ally of the Polish nobility and an enemy of the overwhelmingly peasant Ukrainian national movement. Although Himka's analysis ends with the 1880s, he believes “that with the passage of time, as one moved away from the feudal era and as the Ukrainian movement grew more differentiated, the petty gentry also found a place in the movement.”⁶

This article re-examines Himka's arguments and pays closer attention to the years before and after the 1880s. Following Himka's methodology, it explores the relationships between the petty gentry and the national movement, not the petty gentry's identity per se. This choice is based on the assumption that national identity is a historical phenomenon sustained by the purposeful effort of social institutions, groups, and individuals, which inevitably change over time. Accordingly, the only meaningful way to establish the “identity” of a group is to trace the relationship between the group and nationalized or nationalizing agents' efforts and representations. This paper will deal only with the period in which such agents can be identified.

The term “petty gentry” is a confusing one. In the context of the nineteenth century its usage is a misapplication of the social reality of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth to the new social order created during Habsburg rule. This paper will discuss only the so-called “rustic gentry”—the petty gentry that owned “rustical” (peasant) and not “dominical” (demesne) land. These gentry folk either lived in their own villages or, more commonly, shared villages with their peasant neighbours. Other kinds of petty gentry (i.e., impoverished dominical, service, employed by the state or the church, or leasing and purchasing dominical estates) are not con-

⁴ Omeljan Pritsak, “Prolegomena to the National Awakening of the Ukrainians during the Nineteenth Century,” in *Culture and Nationalism in Nineteenth-Century Europe*, 109, ed. Roland Sussex and J. C. Eade (Columbus, Ohio: Slavica, 1983).

⁵ Krzysztof Ślusarek, “Szlachta zagrodowa w Galicji, 1772–1939: Stan i przeobrażenia warstwy pod zaborem austriackim i w okresie niepodległości,” in *Galicja i jej dziedzictwo*, vol. 2, *Spoleczeństwo i gospodarka*, 120, ed. Jerzy Chłopecki and Helena Madurowicz-Urbańska (Rzeszów: Wydawnictwo Wyższej Szkoły Pedagogicznej, 1995).

⁶ John-Paul Himka, *Galician Villagers and the Ukrainian National Movement in the Nineteenth Century* (Edmonton: Canadian Institute of Ukrainian Studies, 1988), 212–13, 214.

sidered, even though in most cases their ancestry can be traced to the rustic gentry. The majority of the Galician Greek Catholic rustic gentry in the first half of the nineteenth century lived in the Habsburg administrative territory called Sambir “circle” (German: *Kreis*).

From the point of view of the late eighteenth-century Habsburg state, the rustic gentry was not much different from the peasants. State governance of the countryside relied on the manors (*dominia*) and not on those claiming noble blood. Rustic gentry communities frequently had a history of conflicts with the *dominia* not unlike the conflicts that peasant communities had.⁷ The rustic petty gentry did not have to perform corvée labour and allegedly had a greater number of literate people, but their written and customary culture was very much like that of the peasants.⁸ In the 1840s a peasant impostor born in a state-owned village could present himself as a member of the petty gentry in another district of the same circle without arousing suspicion.⁹ The rustic gentry maintained their distinctiveness from the local peasants, but marriages between their members, although not frequent, were not considered abnormal.¹⁰

When the national movement was making its first inroads into the villages of Sambir circle, the petty gentry reacted much as the peasants did. Individuals from both groups took part in the Polish nationalist conspiracies of 1846. Although the rustic gentry’s involvement was proportionately somewhat higher,¹¹ nonetheless the majority of both the rustic gentry and the peasants did not take part. In 1848 representatives of both groups participated in the activities of the Ruthenian Council that was formed in the mountainous area of Sambir circle. The council was chaired by a peasant but included a number of rustic gentry from several villages, and once again members of the rustic gentry were proportionately more involved than the peasants.¹² In the circle’s lowlands both the rustic gentry and peasants abstained from taking part in the Ruthenian Council.¹³

In the 1860s, with the return to the constitutional system and with the granting of freedom of the press and of association, the issue of the rustic gentry’s national affiliation was raised in public debates for the first time. During the 1860s the num-

⁷ Antoni Schneider, *Encyklopedia do krajoznawstwa Galicyi po względem historycznym, statystycznym, topograficznym, orograficznym, handlowym, przemysłowym, sfragistycznym ...*, vol. 2, pt. 7: 288, 289 (Lviv: Drukarnia J. Dobrzańskiego, 1874); Ivan Franko, “Zapysky ruskoho selianyna z pochatku XIX v.” *Zapysky Naukovoho tovarystva imeny Shevchenka* 115 (1913): 157.

⁸ Franko, “Zapysky ruskoho selianyna,” 155–66; Zofja Strzetelska-Grynbergowa, *Staromieskie: Ziemia i ludność* (Lviv, 1899), 330, 545–50.

⁹ The case of Onufer Stebelsky is described in my monograph *Idiomy emansypatsii: «Vyzvolni» proiekty i halytske selo v seredyni XIX stolittia* (Kyiv: Krytyka, 2007).

¹⁰ Narrative testimony can be found in Mykhailo Zubrytsky’s autobiography, preserved in the Manuscript Division of the Lviv National Scientific Library (hereafter VR LNNB), fond (hereafter f.) 206, *sprava* (hereafter spr.) 922, *papka* (file, hereafter p.) 27, *arkush* (folio, hereafter a.) 3. Marriages between members of the rustic gentry and peasants were recorded already at the end of the eighteenth century: see, e.g., the Central State Historical Archive of Ukraine in Lviv (hereafter TsDIAL), f. 201, *opys* (hereafter op.) 4a, spr. 635.

¹¹ See my *Idiomy emansypatsii*, passim.

¹² TsDIAL, f. 180, op. 1, spr. 4, a. 51.

¹³ TsDIAL, f. 180, op. 1, spr. 4, a. 184.

ber of Ruthenian deputies in the Diet was higher than it was in following decades. As a rule, circle and, later, county (German: *Bezirk*) administrations were manned by Austrian bureaucrats and had not yet been taken over by the Polish nobility. In the 1860s the villagers of Sambir circle were represented in the Diet by a Ruthenian whose election may have been backed by the administration. Already in 1861 the newspaper of the Polish “democrats” (the mostly urban-based opponents of the party of large landowners) published a rebuke directed at Ruthenian politicians that was allegedly written by Ruthenian petty gentry from a particular village.¹⁴ The Ruthenian side replied that most rustic gentry supported the movement.¹⁵ A number of rustic gentry were involved in the Polish uprising of 1863, but there were peasant volunteers as well. The fate of these participants in the uprising’s aftermath was equally unenviable, and Ivan Franko claimed that it contributed to the decline of pro-Polish attitudes among the rustic gentry.¹⁶

The elections of 1870 were the first ones in Sambir county to be manipulated in favour of the Polish candidate after the Polish landowning nobility made a deal with Vienna to secure the crownland’s autonomy and their own political dominance there. These elections give us a glimpse into the rustic gentry’s behaviour in the new conditions that were shaping the confrontation between the two national camps. In the small landowners’ curia in the Staryi Sambir-Sambir electoral district, a Polish candidate, Michał Popiel, ran against the Ruthenian Yuliiian Lavrivsky, who had represented the district’s villagers in the Diet in the 1860s. Both candidates were from the petty gentry and both of them had connections to the area. But Popiel’s were stronger—he was born and grew up in one of the local gentry villages. Since the elections were held in two stages, much depended on the profile of the one or two delegates village communities (*Gemeinde*) sent to vote in the county centre. Some mixed (peasant and gentry) villages and the purely gentry village of Silets, sent Greek Catholic priests, who voted for the Ruthenian candidate. The rustic gentry’s delegates voted for Popiel, with the exception of one from the village of Berezhnytsia.¹⁷

In the 1870s the rigging of elections in favour of Polish candidates by the administrative authorities of the newly autonomous crownland became a commonly accepted practice. The number of Ruthenian deputies shrank, and peasant deputies disappeared from the Diet. At first, reports to the Ruthenian patriotic press from the Sambir area complained about “selfish peasants guided by outside influence.”¹⁸ But once the populist trend in Ruthenian politics gained momentum, blame was laid on the leaders—local educated patriots—and later on the rustic gentry. In 1877 the area’s rustic gentry, with the exception of the Silets and Kulchytsi communities, was described as “decisively hostile towards the Ruthenian cause.”¹⁹ Nonetheless neighbouring mountainous Turka county (part of Sambir circle before the administrative reform), which was equally densely populated by members of the rustic gentry, continued electing Ruthenian candidates throughout the 1870s. In this case

¹⁴ Mykhail Kropyva, “Iz Ozymyny, blyz Horodyshcha kolo Sambora,” *Slovo*, 1861, no.10.

¹⁵ “Iz Sambora,” *Slovo*, 1861, no.10.

¹⁶ Ivan Franko, “Dovbaniuk,” in his *Zibrannia tvoriv u p’iatdesiaty tomakh* vol. 16, *Povisti ta opovidannia (1882–1887)*, 207–208, ed. O. Ye. Zasenka (Kyiv: Naukova dumka, 1978), 207–208.

¹⁷ TsDIAL, f. 165, op. 1, spr. 299.

¹⁸ [A voter,] “Iz Sambora,” *Slovo*, 1874, no. 43.

¹⁹ “Iz Sambora,” *Slovo*, 1877, No.41

however, the Ruthenian press did not single out the gentry among other Ruthenian voters.²⁰ Evidently it was not some distinct group identity but other factors, such as candidates' personalities and the strength of patriotic networks in the county's villages, that determined the rustic gentry's electoral behaviour.

In the 1880s the pattern of blaming the rustic gentry for the Ruthenian movement's electoral failures continued. Contributors from Sambir county to the Ruthenian press praised the peasants and described the petty gentry as "a totally different type of people, not like our Ruthenian one."²¹ The petty gentry was allegedly motivated by venality and sold its votes for the best price. For Himka's analysis of the situation in which the petty gentry found itself in the 1880s, the accusatorial writings of Ivan Mykhas, a peasant activist from the Sambir county, served as an important source. Mykhas claimed that the petty gentry "does not consider peasants to be God's creatures and fraternizes with the Poles,"²² and that it conspired with the local Jews against the peasants.²³ Mykhas also complained that the petty gentry "in some places oppresses peasants and considers them to be something as base as cattle."²⁴ During the 1880s the Ruthenian movement's discourse about the petty gentry became so radical that in 1889 a Ruthenian newspaper for the first time identified the petty gentry as Polish: "there are ... many Poles, especially the so-called petty gentry."²⁵

The first attempts to explain the petty gentry's apparent alienation from the Ukrainian national movement were also made in the 1880s. Ivan Franko pointed to the rustic gentry's relative economic decline vis-à-vis the peasants after the abolition of *robot* in 1848.²⁶ Mykhas made the same claim at the time.²⁷ Describing the petty gentry's self-awareness as based on their fresh memories of their privileged position under the feudal order, Himka developed this line of argumentation into an elaborated scholarly interpretation.

Such an interpretation is, however, based on the assumption that the petty gentry was to blame for the poor relationships between its members and the Ruthenian national movement. It ignores the earlier contacts between the rustic gentry and the movement and the fact that the antagonism between the petty gentry and the peasants came under public scrutiny only in the 1880s. These two facts seem to indicate that the Ukrainian national movement played a much greater role in the abatement of these relationships, especially if we take into account the fact that during this decade the movement reoriented itself towards the peasants. Only then did the old particularistic conflicts between the peasants and the petty gentry start to matter for the movement. The rustic gentry, in its turn, might have been dismayed by the movement's pro-peasant rhetoric and the advances it started making towards the peasants in the 1880s. Peasant activists entering politics and public discussion during this decade brought with them their own animosity towards the petty gentry.

²⁰ "Ot Sambora," *Slovo*, 1879, no.71.

²¹ "Iz Sambora," *Slovo*, 1885, no. 54.

²² Ivan z nad Dnistra [Ivan Mykhas], "Pysmo z Sambirshchyny," *Batkivshchyna*, 1884, no. 48.

²³ Idem, "Pysmo z Sambirshchyny," *Batkivshchyna*, 1886, no.3.

²⁴ [Idem, "Pysmo z Sambirshchyny," *Batkivshchyna*, 1886, no. 45.

²⁵ *Batkivshchyna*, 1889, no. 35.

²⁶ Ivan Franko, "Prychynok do piznannia ekonomychnoho pobytu nashoho selskoho dukhovenstva v pershii chetvertyni seho stolittia," *Dilo*, 1884, no.109.

²⁷ Ivan z nad Dnistra, "Pysmo z Sambirshchyny," *Batkivshchyna*, 1884, no. 48.

The irony of this situation was that the only rural Ukrainian reading club active in Sambir county in 1884 was located in the petty gentry village of Stupnytsia.²⁸ The gentry village of Silets had been voting for Ruthenian candidates since at least 1861, and in the 1880s its mayor, who was also from the local petty gentry, became the village's leading Ruthenian patriot, replacing the priest.²⁹ In the 1880s the village of Kulchytsi voted for Ruthenian candidates as well. Already during that decade some members of the rustic gentry from Luka and Dorozhiv had become members of the Prosvita popular-enlightenment society.³⁰ The same year that the peasant Mykhas founded a reading club in his native Morozovychi, reading clubs were also founded in the petty gentry villages of Berezhnytsia and Kulchytsi.³¹ Some petty gentry from these villages became activists of the Ukrainian movement on the county level.³²

By 1895 there were seven village Prosvita reading clubs in Sambir county. That four of them were in petty gentry villages shows how engaged the petty gentry was in the Ukrainian national movement.³³ But there are also different statistics regarding the petty gentry. Out of thirty-seven petty gentry votes in the 1895 elections, the Ruthenian candidate received only four, whereas he received twenty-one out of fifty-two votes from Ruthenian peasants.³⁴ However, if we take into account that many of those "peasant" voters were priests, the difference between peasant and petty gentry voting patterns almost disappears. Both petty gentry and peasant delegates were equally tempted by bribes they were offered during the voting, and representatives of both sides were deceived and terrorized by paid agents and hooligans. A teacher from Sambir claimed that during the pre-election campaign in 1897 "many from the gentry, even mayors, are zealous adherents of the national-populists, and we can count on them."³⁵

Even Mykhas revealed that the petty gentry's allegiances were ambiguous: "The petty gentry is against the committee, saying that peasants took it over, and [the petty gentry] would like to play the role of both Poles and Ruthenians, oppositionists and opportunists, to be on the people's and county list. And, in general, the petty gentry keeps with the gentlemen."³⁶

In the 1880s the Ruthenian movement could not afford to alienate its newly discovered peasant constituency: after all, peasant activists and peasant organizations would become its backbone. At the same time the movement sought a solution that would also accommodate the petty gentry. Hryhorii Tsehlynsky's 1887 comedy *The Petty Gentry* presents such a solution, albeit in a fictionalized form.³⁷ The author, like many other leading Ruthenian intellectuals in Galicia, was himself the child of rustic gentry. The plot of his play revolves around the community council elections in a village where both gentry and peasants live and compete with each other in politics and in love. Good judgement helps to overcome old prejudices, and at the play's end a

²⁸ Ibid.

²⁹ I. S., "Z Sambirshchyny," *Dilo*, 1890, no. 30.

³⁰ TsDIAL, f. 348, op. 1, spr. 4892, a. 1–6.

³¹ VR LNNB, f. 167, op. 2, spr. 291, a. 15.

³² TsDIAL, f. 348, op. 1, spr. 4892, a. 21.

³³ Visti Prosvitni," *Chytalnia*, 1895, no. 23.

³⁴ Tovarysh narodnyi [Ivan Mykhas], "Z Sambirshchyny pyshut nam," *Dilo*, 1895, no. 217.

³⁵ VR LNNB, f. 11, spr. 626, p. 59, a. 32.

³⁶ [Ivan Mykhas], "Z Sambora (Kandydaty do rady povitovoi)," *Batkiushchyna*, 1896, no. 13.

³⁷ Hryhorii Tsehlynsky, *Shliakhta khodachkova: Komedii v IV diiakh* (Lviv, 1887, 2d ed. 1911).

better community government, consisting of both petty gentry and peasant members, is elected and champions the interests of the entire village. Conjugal love and marriage also unites male peasants and female petty gentry.

The implicit message of Tsehlynsky's play is that the petty gentry and peasants have the same interests, but local Jewish middlemen incite antagonism between them and exploit both groups for their own profit. The sameness of the peasants and the petty gentry is emphasized. Like the peasants, the petty gentry preserved their Ruthenian language and religion, while the higher nobility forsook them in order to obtain material and social privileges.

Efforts in Sambir county's mixed villages to implement the solution Tsehlynsky offers in his fictional account also date from the end of the nineteenth century. Local patriotic Ukrainian village priests, who were typically of petty gentry origin, opposed the gentry's particularism. They fought against those local customs that were reminiscent of the gentry's privileged status and estranged the gentry from the peasants.³⁸

Numerous incidents at the turn of the twentieth century prove that, for the movement's leaders, the danger of alienating the peasants outweighed the prospects of winning over the petty gentry. In the 1908 Diet elections, Andrii Chaikovsky, by then a well-known writer of popular fiction who hailed from the rustic gentry, ran as a candidate of the Ukrainian National Democrats (at the time the largest Ukrainian political party in Galicia) in the Sambir electoral district.³⁹ The local petty gentry allegedly supported his candidacy.⁴⁰ But Ivan Mykhas, the well-known peasant activist in the area and a member of the Radical Party, also decided to run in the elections. For the sake of uniting the Ukrainian vote, Chaikovsky withdrew in favour of Mykhas.⁴¹

Within the Ukrainian political spectrum, the clerical and conservative right wing was especially interested in the petty gentry as potential supporters. The representative of this group in Sambir believed that the comparison between the attitudes and abilities of the petty gentry and the peasants showed the former in a more favourable light.⁴² Already in 1905 he suggested inventing "some kind of organization for them." Some of the petty gentry in the villages allegedly supported this plan.⁴³ Local secular Ukrainian patriots of petty gentry origin who were active in the Prosvita society also supported this initiative. They believed that only a petty gentry organization could win over members of the petty gentry who had strong particularist sentiments. There was also a fear that the Russophiles could exploit tensions if they tried to mobilize the gentry against the peasants.⁴⁴

³⁸ Mykhailo Zubrytsky, an ethnographer, Ukrainian patriot, and parish priest in the village of Mshanets, believed that "our influential people should be watchful about this and by all means erase these differences [between the petty gentry and the peasants]." In 1895 he abolished the custom whereby the gentry had their baskets of Easter food blessed inside the village church while the peasants had to wait for the blessing outside in the cemetery. See VR LNNB, f. 206, spr. 922, p. 27, a. 27.

³⁹ *Svoboda*, 1908, no. 6.

⁴⁰ *Svoboda*, 1908, nos. 6–7.

⁴¹ *Svoboda*, 1908, no. 10.

⁴² VR LNNB, f. 11, spr. 628/59, a. 14.

⁴³ VR LNNB, f. 11, 626/p. 59, a. 83.

⁴⁴ Ivan Fylypchak, "Tovarystvo ruskoi shliakhty v Halychyni," *Ukrainskyi Beskyd*, 1939, no. 28: 2.

Eventually a petty gentry organization was founded in Galicia in 1907—the Association of Ruthenian Gentry (*Tovarystvo ruskoi shliakhty*). Its creation was initiated by Petro Pohoretsky, the parish priest in the petty-gentry village of Bilyna Velyka and himself a member of the gentry. The association's local founders consulted the writer Chaikovsky, who drafted the association's statutes. He also warned Pohoretsky that the National Democrats might possibly be negatively disposed: "Politics would rather allow for [the founding of] 100 peasant societies than one for the [petty] gentry."⁴⁵ To forestall a negative reaction, Chaikovsky suggested submitting an article to the leading Galician Ukrainian daily, *Dilo*, demonstrating the benefits of such an association for the entire national community.⁴⁶

The National Democrats' executive committee, the National Chancery, did not show any particular enmity towards the enterprise. Although the committee refused to share its list of its "trusted men" in the counties, it nonetheless supplied the association with information about the counties where petty gentry were concentrated.⁴⁷ Symptomatically, it was not Pohoretsky who approached the National Chancery, but another local activist who was a priest of peasant origin.

The educated members of Galician Ukrainian society were told that the major goal of the Association of Ruthenian Gentry was to impel the petty gentry to join the national movement. With the creation of the association, the gentry had an opportunity to meet and interact without "encountering rebukes and ridicule from our peasants."⁴⁸ The association's statute emphasized its apolitical nature: "The association's goal is education, enlightenment, and the raising of the well-being of the Ruthenian gentry in Galicia, excluding all political matters." At the same time, at the association's first general meeting Pohoretsky appealed to the petty gentry's egos and explained that the goal was "to elevate them again to a leading position in Ruthenian society, to the position they once occupied in ancient times."⁴⁹

Sambir, Saryi Sambir, and Turka counties were the association's strongholds.⁵⁰ In petty gentry villages the association tried opening "gentry casinos" as alternatives to the village "reading clubs." The first such casino was established in 1909 in the village of Chaikovychi.⁵¹ That year the association had 242 members and its general meeting was attended by the county leader of the Ukrainian National Democrats. He left the meeting convinced that the association's leaders were striving to work for the benefit of the entire Galician Ukrainian community, and not simply to satisfy gentry whims.⁵²

It is difficult to judge what impact the association had on the petty gentry's national allegiances. By 1909, out of five villages with a petty gentry majority in Saryi Sambir county, four adhered to the Ukrainian national movement, and only one was dominated by Russophiles.⁵³ However, the leader of county's Ukrainian National Democrats—a rural parish priest named Ivan Yavorsky—and not the Association of Ruthenian Gentry

⁴⁵ State Archive of Lviv Oblast (hereafter LODA), f. 1245, op. 2, spr. 18, a. 6–7.

⁴⁶ Ibid.

⁴⁷ LODA, f. 1245, op. 2, spr. 18, a. 8.

⁴⁸ "Deshcho pro 'Tovarystvo ruskoi shliakhty v Halychyni,'" *Osnova*, 1908, no. 6.

⁴⁹ Fylypchak, "'Tovarystvo ruskoi shliakhty v Halychyni,'" *Ukrainskyi Beskyd*, 1939, no. 29: 2.

⁵⁰ Ibid., nos. 30: 2 and 31: 2.

⁵¹ LODA, f. 1245, op. 2, spr. 24.

⁵² Fylypchak, "'Tovarystvo ruskoi shliakhty v Halychyni,'" *Ukrainskyi Beskyd*, 1939, no. 31: 2.

⁵³ LODA, f. 1245, op. 2, spr. 24.

should be credited with the Ukrainian movement's success there. In addition, it was reported that in mixed villages where the gentry did not constitute a majority, they were merging with the peasants and become virtually indistinguishable from them. The movement was clearly reaping the fruits of the strategy Tsehlynsky advocated and local patriotic priests implemented.

In the immediate area of Pohoretsky's activity, his efforts provoked peasant resentment. There were complaints about the "gentry casinos" and separate gentry reading clubs, and local peasant correspondents branded Pohoretsky as one who obstructed the villagers' enlightenment.⁵⁴ What is more, Pohoretsky was officially investigated by ecclesiastical authorities. Some parishioners claimed he had been appointed to the parish by bribing local petty gentry,⁵⁵ and peasants complained that he had charged them excessive fees for performing religious rites.⁵⁶ The peasant community of Bilynka Mala, which belonged to Pohoretsky's parish, complained that he had favoured the petty gentry at the expense of the peasants.⁵⁷ Rev. Andrii Detsko, the local dean and a priest of peasant origin in the petty gentry village of Luka, investigated these complaints and concluded that they were justified.⁵⁸ There were also charges that Pohoretsky had engaged in land speculation and usury and had otherwise abused his office.⁵⁹

In 1909 Pohoretsky withdrew from being actively involved in the Association of Ruthenian Gentry.⁶⁰ Dmytro Hordynsky, the parish priest of Kulchytsi, whose political preferences were similar to Pohoretsky's, became the new chairman. In 1910 the association reported that its membership had increased to four hundred. At the same time, however, mass meetings of the association were taking place only in villages that had a long history of involvement with the Ukrainian movement—Stupnytsia, Silets, Horodyshe, and Chaikovychi.⁶¹

In 1911 the Russophiles, who had been losing out to the Ukrainophiles in the contest for the loyalty of the Galician Ruthenians, tried to exploit the rustic gentry's particularism and patchy history of relations with the Ukrainian movement. The Russophile candidate in that year's elections in Sambir county, Ivan Volchko Kulchytsky, was a member of the local petty gentry in the village of Kulchytsi. Another Volchko Kulchytsky, apparently a relative of the candidate, even proclaimed during an election rally in Kulchytsi that "now we have recovered our sight and shall not allow the bastards to trick us with Ukraine.... You should know that from now on we do not give a damn for Ukraine and have returned to the historical road. From now on we are Russians."⁶² The mayor of Chapeli, who was from the petty gentry, allegedly supported this Russophile candidate as well.⁶³ But in other places tensions between

⁵⁴ *Narodne slovo*, 1909, no. 168; "Z Sambirshchyny," *Dilo*, 1909, no. 25.

⁵⁵ State Archive in Przemyśl, Archive of the Greek-Catholic Bishopric (hereafter APP, ABGK), *sygnatura* 4273.

⁵⁶ APP, ABGK, *sygnatura* 4047

⁵⁷ APP ABGK, *sygnatura* 4277.

⁵⁸ APP, ABGK, *sygnatura* 4048.

⁵⁹ APP, ABGK, *sygnatura* 5810.

⁶⁰ Fylypchak, "Tovarystvo ruskoi shliakhty v Halychyni," *Ukrainskyi Beskyd*, 1939, no. 32: 2.

⁶¹ *Ibid.*, 1939, no. 33: 2.

⁶² *Golos naroda*, 1911, no.17.

⁶³ *Golos naroda*, 1911, nos.18, 19, 21, and 22.

the peasants and the petty gentry turned the latter against the Russophiles. In Luka, where local peasants had been under the influence of a Russophile parish priest for several decades, the petty gentry was decisively anti-Russophile.⁶⁴ Even though Ivan Volchko Kulchytsky was paired with the Russophile peasant activist Stefan Pelekhaty as his substitute, he suffered a devastating defeat, receiving only 334 votes in the county while the Ukrainian candidate—a rural priest—received 12,052.⁶⁵

While the formation of the Association of Ruthenian Gentry signalled that there was now room in the Ukrainian movement for the petty gentry's particularist sentiments, the movement had not given up the strategy that it had formulated in the 1880s. But the gentry found the peasant-oriented economic and professional associations that penetrated the villages beneficial, because their main occupations, economic position, and economic interests were identical to those of the peasants. Cells of the Ukrainian economic associations and co-operatives mushroomed in Sambir county, especially around 1910.⁶⁶ The winner of the 1911 parliamentary elections, the parish priest Stefan Onyshkevych, was a leading member of the Silskyi Hospodar society, which had been conceived as a trade-unionlike organization for the Galician Ukrainian peasantry. In 1914 circles of that society were founded even in Bilyna Velyka and Ortynychy, two strongholds of the Association of Ruthenian Gentry.⁶⁷ As Tsehlynsky had envisioned in the 1880s, the petty gentry and the peasants came together in one organization to defend the Ukrainian villagers' interests. It was no accident that the second edition of his play was printed in 1911. By 1912 the only petty gentry village in the Sambir county still voting for the Polish candidate was Rosokhy.⁶⁸ In 1913 the petty gentry of Kulchytsi, Luka, Hordynia, and Bilyna were reported as showing a remarkable unanimity in voting for the Ukrainian candidate.⁶⁹

While conservatives and activists of the Association of Ruthenian Gentry emphasized its contribution to the petty gentry's conversion to the national cause,⁷⁰ the association's role should not be overestimated. The new national co-operative and farming associations and new representations of national history were at least equally as important.

In May 1913 fewer than fifty members of the Association of Ruthenian Gentry took part in its general meeting.⁷¹ Members constantly complained about the ridicule the association suffered from agencies and activists of the national movement. In 1914 the celebration of Taras Shevchenko's centennial in Lviv turned into a manifestation of the strength and spread of organized Ukrainian society in Galicia. The association planned to dispatch a detachment of petty gentry cavalymen to participate in the Ukrainian parade but the idea was never implemented, partly because of the negative attitude of some Ukrainian leaders, who perceived the association as "backward" and "anachronistic."⁷²

⁶⁴ "Luka," *Golos naroda*, 1912, no.8.

⁶⁵ "Rezultaty druhykh vyboriv," *Golos naroda*, 1911, no. 30.

⁶⁶ *Hospodarska chasopys*, 1913, no. 6.

⁶⁷ *Hospodarska chasopys*, 1913, no. 24.

⁶⁸ *Dilo*, 1912, no. 227.

⁶⁹ "Po vyborakh," *Dilo*, 1913, no. 146.

⁷⁰ "Dopys z Sambirshchyny," *Ruslan*, 1913, no. 11.

⁷¹ Fylypchak, "Tovarystvo ruskoï shliakhty v Halychyni," *Ukrainskyi Beskyd*, 1939, no. 33: 2.

⁷² *Ibid.*, no. 34: 2.

A visible demonstration of the petty gentry's return to the nation's bosom was staged in Sambir county in 1912 during the commemoration of the early seventeenth-century Cossack hetman Petro Konashevych-Sahaidachny in his native village of Kulchytsi by both the petty gentry and peasantry.⁷³ Sahaidachny was celebrated as a symbol of the petty gentry's involvement in the Ukrainian national past, and the Cossacks were represented not as merely peasant runaways but as noble defenders of the nation. The gentry's participation in heroic Cossack feats was incorporated into Ukrainian academic history at approximately the same time.⁷⁴

Ivan Fylypchak, an enthusiastic historian of the region and writer who had described the nationalization of the local rustic gentry in the early twentieth century in one of his semi-documentary novels, emphasized the role of historical narratives in this process. His novel also ended in 1912, the year when the petty gentry became unquestionably Ukrainian. As one of his characters proclaims, "there shall be no gentry and no peasants from now on, only noble Ukrainian citizens."⁷⁵

When the interwar Polish state launched an action to "reclaim" the rustic gentry for the Polish nation, Ukrainian patriots turned once again to the Cossack past to counter the Polish narratives. Andrii Chaikovsky wrote a novel about Hetman Sahaidachny,⁷⁶ while Ivan Fylypchak took up the figure of Yurii Kulchytsky, another native of Kulchytsi and the legendary saviour of Vienna during the famous siege of 1683.⁷⁷ But these and other interwar developments deserve a separate study.

This article has demonstrated that by 1914 gentry villages were institutionally absorbed by organized structures of the Ukrainian national movement, that the majority of the rustic gentry were voting for Ukrainian candidates, and that the gentry's particular pride and ambitions had found a rich source of nourishment in the new Ukrainian historical narrative.

As for the history of relations between the petty gentry and the Ukrainian national movement, representatives of the petty gentry became involved in the movement from its inception. Identification with a national group was missing among the majority of gentry folk in the second half of the nineteenth century, but it was also missing among the peasantry. The "problematic" character of the petty gentry's identity was not unusual. What was unusual, however, was the attention this question received from the movement and the discursive and institutional solutions with which the movement

⁷³ "Vichevyi rukh," *Dilo*, 1912, no. 125.

⁷⁴ See Waclaw Lipiński, *Szlachta na Ukrainie: Udział jej w życiu narodu ukraińskiego na tle jego dziejów* (Kyiv and Cracow: Leon Idzikowski, 1909); and idem, ed., *Z dziejów Ukrainy: Księga pamiątkowa ku czci Włodzimierza Antonowicza, Paulina Święcickiego i Tadeusza Rylskiego, wydana staraniem Józefa Jurkiewicza* [et.al.] (Kyiv and Cracow: D. E. Friedlein, 1912). The latter includes an excerpt from the monumental *History of Ukraine-Rus'* that Mykhailo Hrushevsky was still writing at the time.

⁷⁵ Ivan Fylypchak, *Bratnia liubov kripsha vid kaminykh stin: Povist z zhyttia zahonovoi shliakhty z pochatku XX viku* (Sambir: Filiia tovarystva "Prosvita" v Sambori, 1937), esp. 117, 224.

⁷⁶ The first part of Chaikovsky's *Sahaidachny* was published in 1918. After significant revisions, the second edition appeared in 1927. Polish authorities destroyed the entire print run of the second part published in 1929. The complete edition of all three extant parts appeared seventy years later: *Sahaidachny: istorychnyi roman u trokh knykhakh* (Kyiv: Dnipro, 1989).

⁷⁷ Ivan Fylypchak, *Kulchytsky: Heroi Vidnia. Istorychna povist z pryvodu iuvileiu, 1683–1933* (Kulchytsi Shliakhtski and Sambir: Tovarystvo "Boikivshchyna," 1933).

experimented, all of which may be explained by its movement's pro-peasant profile, which had formed in the 1880s. There was no single moment when the petty gentry suddenly became Ukrainian. The movement, working through its institutions and representations, generated a framework in which public choices and manifestations regarding one's national identity became much less volatile and more conforming.

The story of the Greek Catholic rustic gentry's relations with the Polish movement still has to be written. Only preliminary hypotheses can be offered as to why this gentry ended up being Ukrainian and not Polish: the influence and constant presence of Greek Catholic priests, who were frequently Ruthenian patriots; the weakness of Polish organizations in the countryside, where economically useful Polish associations were even more "peasant" than the Ukrainian ones; and the centrality of the petty gentry in the new narrative of Ukrainian history and its marginality in the Polish one.