

Czechoslovakia's ethnic policy in Subcarpathia

(Podkarpatskaja Rus or Ruthenia)

1919 – 1938/1939

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Table of Contents

POLITICAL MACHINATIONS.....	3
THE RUTHENIANS OF HUNGARY	6
FOREIGN MILITARY OCCUPATION OF SUBCARPATHIA	18
ARMED OPPOSITION TO CZECHOSLOVAK RULE	29
SUBCARPATHIA	41
CZECH COLONIZATION	63
THE PERIOD OF GOVERNMENT AUTONOMY, THE SOJM.....	104
THE FIRST VIENNA ARBITRAL ACCORD	124
THE REUNION OF SUBCARPATHIA WITH HUNGARY	138
BIBLIOGRAPHY.....	145

Political machinations

American Ruthenians and Czechoslovakians, May 1918 – November 1919

The foreign occupation, and later annexation in 1919-1920, of the four counties that constitute Hungarian Subcarpathia - Ung, Bereg, Ugocsa and Máramaros - by Romanian and Czechoslovak troops at the end of the First World War, is not without precedent. Before we briefly outline its history, we must emphatically state: the more than half million Ruthenians and over quarter million Hungarians who inhabited this territory were not consulted whether they wished to be a part of Czechoslovakia or Romania. The annexation of the major portion of Subcarpathia by the Czechoslovak state was primarily the work of American Ruthenian activism and Czech diplomacy and, not the least, the successful swaying of popular opinion, if not its formation. Its prospects were considerably improved during the propaganda tour of the United States made in May 1918 by Tomáš Garrigue Masaryk (1850-1937), president of the Czechoslovak National Council.

Here, we must make note of the Czech politician's American connections and its background. After his university studies in Vienna, Masaryk went to Leipzig in the early 1870's to study philosophy. Here he met his future wife, the American citizen Charlotte Garrigue, niece of Woodrow Wilson, who, as sitting American president took part in the Paris Peace Conference. The founder of the Czechoslovak state also took his wife's maiden name and the Czech, later Czechoslovak, politician became known as Tomáš Garrigue Masaryk.¹ Subsequently, he spent varying lengths of time in the United States on four occasions (in 1878, 1901, 1903 and 1918). Five years after his first trip to America, in 1883, he moved from Vienna to the Czech capital where, during the previous year, the Czech-German language Carolus-Ferdinand University of Prague was separated. The Czech nationalist and political career of one Tomáš Garrigue Masaryk, born of a Moravian-Slovak father and a Germanized Czech mother, was thus begun. Between 1883 and 1914, he was an instructor, then professor, at the Prague Czech-language University. At the same time, from 1891 to 1893, and after 1907, he served as representative in the Austrian Reichsrat, or Empire Council. His books, studies and articles defining the new Czech national historical perspective and socio-political program began to see the light of day from the middle years of the 1890's. Masaryk worked out his theory of "Czechoslovakism" in this period. He began from the conviction that, as a result of the close linguistic and cultural ties, the Czechs and Slovaks were one people, the component parts of a "Czechoslovak" nation. This theory by the founder of the state proved to be wrong, as the two "people of Czechoslovakia" never considered themselves as such, then or now. The erroneous belief, however, had a long-lasting life. Czechoslovakia disintegrated first in 1938-1939 and more recently, on January 1, 1993, into the independent Czech and Slovak Republics. Returning to Masaryk's mistaken theory about "Czechoslovakism", his view was adopted by the Slovak 'Hlas'-ists who came under his influence. They were young liberal intellectuals who, at the turn of the 19th-20th century, were drawn around the magazine *Hlas* (Voice), published in the Uplands city of Szabolca, later in Rózsashegy. [The northern crescent of mountainous territory of historical Hungary, running from the Austrian border to Romania, was variously called, then as now, Northern or Upper Hungary, the Upland-estates, the so-called Felvidék. The well-known name was widely applied after the 1920 Trianon Treaty to the formerly Hungarian parts annexed to Czechoslovakia. Hereafter, we shall refer to it by the shorter Uplands name-*Ed.*] Their leaders were Vavro Šrobár and Pavol Blaho. At the outbreak of the First World War, Masaryk first emigrated to France in 1914, then to Great Britain. It was during this time that he broke with the possibility of maintaining the Monarchy or its federative reorganization. Along with Eduard Beneš, he conducted a sharply anti-Monarchy political and propaganda campaign in the Allied/Entente countries. He demanded the creation of an independent Czechoslovak state, for which the Monarchy courts sentenced him to death, *in absentia*, for treason. Masaryk was elected to the presidency of the newly formed Czechoslovak National Council in Paris on February 13, 1916. The Council was recognized by the Allied Powers – France on June 29, Great Britain on August 9, the United

¹ Masaryk Tomáš Garrigue a Podkarpatská Rus - Т. Г. Масарик та Закарпаття. Šefredaktor Ivan Latko. Ужгород. (T. G. Masaryk and Subcarpathia /in Ukrainian and Czech languages/) Užhorod, 2000, Klub T. G. Masaryka v Užhorodě. p. 6.

States on September 3 - as an allied combatant party and the temporary Czechoslovak government.²

Returning to the Czech politician's fourth, and now aggressive, propaganda tour of the United States, on May 30, in Pittsburgh, the Народна Обрана (Narodna Obrana, National Defense) Ruthenian political association handed him a memorandum, in which they set out, as the main goal, the following: the unification of all the Carpatho-Russian (Ruthenian) people with the Czechoslovak state on an autonomous basis.³ The movement caused great shock among the masses of American Ruthenian emigrants loyal to the Hungarian state, especially among the ranks of the Greek Catholic clergy. They attributed the Czech-friendly Obrana to Pravoslav and Hussite influences.

Two and a half months later, on June 13, 1918 they formed a counter-movement in Homestead, the center of American Ruthenian emigrants, under the name of Американська Народна Рада Угросусинов (Amerikanska Narodna Rada Uhrorusinov, American Hungarian-Russian National Council). Of the 23 presiding members, nine were Greek Catholic clergymen, including the president, Miklós Csopey.⁴ This organization also wrote another memorandum, giving it not to Masaryk but sending it to President Woodrow Wilson. The memorandum outlined three possible solutions for the fate of the Ruthenian peoples: one, complete independence of the Hungarian and Ruthenian people; two, if this is not possible, permit the Ruthenian people to merge with either the Galician or Bukovina Ruthenians; and three, at a minimum, to attain autonomy within a state, perhaps Hungary.⁵

In the meantime, a third Ruthenian political organization was established on June 26, in Mokesport, Pennsylvania, under the name of Ruthenian American National Council /RANC/. Its president was Gregory Zhatkovych (1886-1967, Жаткович Григорий Игнатьевич, Žatkovič in Czech)⁶ an American lawyer of Ruthenian descent, born in the village of Galambos in Bereg County. At the time, he was legal counsel to the General Motors Corporation in Detroit, later to become the first governor of Podkarpatská Rus. The RANC also saw three valid possibilities: one, the complete independence of the Ruthenian people; two, union with the Galician and Bukovina Ukrainians; and three, if the previous two were unattainable, complete territorial autonomy. It must be noted that the three American Ruthenian organizations, spinning plans in those weeks and months for the fate of their brethren living in the Monarch, when those were fighting against Russia on the various fronts as part of their countries' forces and suspected nothing of the American plans or Czech intrigues behind their backs.

The Mokesport and Homestead competing memoranda's first two points are essentially identical but differ sharply on the third. The Homestead memorandum's third point did not exclude the retention of the status quo, after the demands were met, i.e., the Ruthenian populated areas remaining within the framework of Hungary. The following months passed in inactivity until, at its November 1 meeting in Scranton, the Narodna Rada also accepted the Zhatkovych memorandum. Here, however, not a word was said about union with Czechoslovakia, only the three potential options. This astounded Masaryk, who then suggested meetings in Pittsburgh with Zhatkovych regarding the

² Szarka, László: *Egy XX. századi államalapító emlékiratai* [The memoirs of a state founder of the 20th century], In: Masaryk, Tomáš Garrigue: *A világforradalom 1914-1918* [The world revolution 1914-1918]. Vál., utószó, jegyz. Budapest, 1990, pp. 429-463, 469-480.

³ The complete text of the memorandum in Darás, Gábor: *A Ruténföld elszakításának előzményei (1890-1918)* [The background to the separation of Ruthenia (1890-1918)]. Budapest, 1936, pp. 119-127.

⁴ For background, see Mayer, Mária: *Kárpátukrán /ruszin/ politikai és társadalmi törekvések 1860-1910* [Political and social aspirations in Carpatho-Ukraine /Rusyn/ between 1860-1910]. Budapest, 1977, pp. 198-199, 201, 203.

⁵ Kemény, Gábor: *Verhovina feltámad. (A ruszin sors könyve.)* [The resurrection of Verhovina. (The book of Rusyn fate.)]. Budapest, 1939, p. 108.

⁶ *Encyclopedia of Rusyn History and Culture*. Toronto, Buffalo, London, 2002, Paul Robert Magocsi and Ivan Pop editors, pp. 512-513.

American Ruthenian demands. A decade later, in 1929, President of the Republic Masaryk wrote a letter about the agreement, referred to as the Pittsburgh pact, to the leader of the faction, parliamentary representative Andrej Hlinka (1864-1938), demanding autonomy for Slovakia as promised in the agreement. Masaryk directed Hlinka not to make demands. “Look at the mistakes you made in the Pittsburgh pact. You had *de facto* autonomy since the turn of events and have to date received everything you wished for in the pact. However, the main point is that the document of that meeting is false; not only because the people signed it after the fact but chiefly because, in those days, when the American Slovaks demanded that discussion, the (Slovak) League did not officially exist, the (Czechoslovak) state only recognized it in 1919.”⁷ The preceding illustrates that Masaryk and Beneš – similar to the October 30, 1918 Turócszentmárton declaration (the joining of a not-yet legally recognized ‘Slovakia’, without defined borders, with the Czechs) – had no other aim with the Pittsburgh pact than to influence world opinion and mislead those making decisions about the fate of nations at the peace treaties.

Shortly after, Zhatkovych achieved with President Wilson to meet with his negotiating partner, Masaryk, which took place on October 21, 1918. The American president rejected the first two of Zhatkovych’s points and the Hungarian solution (*status quo*), instead suggesting direct discussions with a neighboring country. After this, Zhatkovych only saw the future of his nation ensured in a Czech-Slovak-Ruthenian national union. Two days after the meeting, on October 23, Ruthenians were added to the list of “oppressed Central European nations,” with the Czechoslovaks, Poles, South-Slavs, Ukrainians, Lithuanians and Romanians. They continued negotiations with Masaryk, who promised autonomy and favorable border settlements. The Philadelphia congress took place three days later, on October 26, where the previously mentioned nations made their claims of independence. Zhatkovych and three delegates represented the Ruthenians. On the map hanging behind the speakers in the hall, ‘Russinia’ was shown among the new countries. Of this country, Zhatkovych and followers declared as “an independent kindred-state voluntarily joining the Czechoslovak state.”⁸

The now famous and often cited Philadelphia agreement – this was the first noticeable sign of Ruthenian autonomy – did not come into existence at the congress. It was born the same afternoon in one of the city’s hotels between Masaryk and Zhatkovych, at the time an Austrian and an American citizen, respectively. It means that the document was a private agreement without any international legal basis, one, which Masaryk already had the congress accept symbolically in the morning. The agreement stated: “the Ruthenians of Hungary, living with the civil right (?) to belong to a completely independent nation, wish to unite with the democratic Czechoslovak Republic on the condition that the Hungarian-Ruthenian counties, such as Szepes, Sáros, Zemplén, Abauj, Gömör, Borsod, Ung, Bereg, Ugocsa and Máramaros will form part of Subcarpathia.”⁹ Zhatkovych presented the pact to Wilson the next day and asked that it be the only basis of negotiation at the Paris peace conference. The American president denied publication and signing such a unilateral declaration. In fact, he stated that copies of the agreement should be sent to the leaders of the Hungarian Ruthenians for their opinion. These same leaders had, in the same time period, formed three national councils, with opposing aims, in Eperjes, Ungvár and Huszt.

Masaryk clearly felt the legal limitations of the Philadelphia pact and called for a referendum among the American Ruthenians. The majority of those taking part were members of the Pravoslav – Russian friendly – wing and readers of the 10,000-copy circulation newspaper СВѢТ (World). Nobody supervised the voting, hence, it is impossible to say how many of the 300,000 Ruthenians living in America – the majority of whom emigrated from Galicia and not Subcarpathia – were behind the results. Thus, the referendum ‘results’ can be deeply questioned. Yet, Masaryk could still make use of it with President Wilson in showing support for the Philadelphia pact. According to the ‘plebiscite,’ among the American Ruthenians 67% voted for union with Czechoslovakia, 28% with Ukraine, Greater Russia / Galicia and remaining with Hungary each received 2%, and 1% wished for complete independence.¹⁰ Even this was

⁷ Magyar Országos Levéltár [Hungarian National Archives, hereafter MOL]. K 28. 1937–P–16 622. sz., p. 5.

⁸ For more detail, see: Magocsi, Paul Robert: The Ruthenian Decision to Unite with Czechoslovakia, In: *Slavic Review*, June 1975.

⁹ Kemény: Verhovina ... op. cit. p. 109.

¹⁰ Darás: A Ruténföld ... op. cit. p. 108.

not convincing for Masaryk, who instructed Zhatkovych to reconvene the American Ruthenian National Council and correct the agreement's legal shortcomings.

The two signatories of the pact, Masaryk and Zhatkovych, had no legal authorization to make such a declaration in the name of the American Ruthenians, or to conclude such a pact. The main flaw was that, at the time of their conference, Ruthenia did not exist in the eyes of international law and the territory earmarked for secession, the Northeastern Uplands counties from Szepes to Máramaros, were integral parts of Hungary. At the same time, Czechoslovakia did not exist either, according to international law. Putting his finger on the issue, Miklós Halász noted: "The Czechoslovak state preceded the country! On the other hand, it existed *de jure* in August, 1918, the Allied powers recognized it, it had an executive, an army but could not exercise sovereignty over a square inch of land."¹¹ The National Council of Prague declared the birth of Czechoslovakia on October 28, two days after the Philadelphia agreement. Two days later yet, on October 30, the Slovak National Council of Turócszentmárton passed a resolution for the union of 'Slovakia' - before the peace treaties defined the boundaries in northern Hungary - with the Czechs. The previous legal uncertainty was rectified by the so-called Scranton agreement, which reiterated the terms of the Philadelphia pact¹² but stressed that it was to take effect on November 12, 1918.

The 'Scranton Resolution' was established by the American Ruthenian National Council. The agreement affirmed the union of the "ancestral Rusyn territories" – the counties of Szepes, Sáros, Zemplén, Abauj-Torna, Gömör, Borsod, Ung, Bereg, Ugocsa and Máramaros – with Czechoslovakia, with "sweeping legal autonomy." Only subsequently did the Czechoslovak parliament meet in Prague, on November 14, which passed the country's temporary constitution and elected Masaryk as the Republic's President. Afterwards, it was up to the cleverness of the Czechoslovak diplomats, most recruited from the foreign service of the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy, how best to make use of the American agreement at the Paris peace conference, and enforce it on territories that were still integral parts of Hungary.

The Ruthenians of Hungary

Ruska-Krajna Autonomous Region, November 1918 – April 1919

The populace of the Northeastern Uplands, mostly Ruthenians, had little inkling until the fall of 1918 of the American Ruthenian endeavors taking place behind their backs – mainly without their consent – or of the Czech international diplomatic intrigues. While ordinary Ruthenians were troubled by social worries and their Greek Catholic religion wracked by schism, these were not enough for them to turn against Hungarians and the state that for centuries gave them a home. The severing of this ethnic minority, along with the territory they inhabited, could only be accomplished by external force, carried out by those striving to bring it about as a result of unique international circumstances. The majority of the Ruthenian people – similarly their intellectuals – were loyal to Hungary even in the weeks before the collapse. It is enough to mention here the aims of the Council of Ruthenians of Hungary, founded in Ungvár on November 9, 1918 or the Rusyn National Assembly held in Budapest on December 10. However, in the closing year of the First World War, by 1918 food shortages became catastrophic in the counties of Ung, Bereg, Ugocsa and Máramaros – similar to other regions of the country – which affected the Ruthenian people more severely due to unique natural conditions. They were barely able to produce the staples of their diet, potatoes and corn.¹³ All these contributed to the propaganda finding fertile soil, which had a decisive role in severing the Northeastern Uplands from Hungary and annexing it to a completely new, as yet unknown state, Czechoslovakia. As a result of effective

¹¹ Halász, Miklós: Csehszlovákia 1918-1938 [Czechoslovakia 1918-1938]. Budapest, 1938, p. 38.

¹² Král, Jiří: Podkarpatská Rus. V Praze, 1924, p. 5.

¹³ Botlik, József: Egestas Subcarpathica. Adalékok az Északkeleti-Felvidék és Kárpátalja XIX-XX. századi történetéhez [Addenda to the 19th-20th century history of the Northeastern Uplands and Subcarpathia]. Budapest, 2000, p. 134.

Czech collaboration – as we shall see – the Rusyns chained themselves to the East, from where their ancestors escaped centuries earlier to the Kingdom of Hungary.

The truce signed in the Italian city of Padua on November 3, 1918, and taking effect the following day, ordered the forces of the Monarchy to be withdrawn to the pre-war 1914 borders. For Hungary, this meant the historical thousand-year old frontier of the encircling Carpathian Mountains. The truce brought the conflict to a close for the Dual Monarchy, Austria-Hungary, begun with the July 28, 1914 declaration of war. The defeat made the question of the Galician Ukrainians and Ruthenians unambiguous, whether through secession or independence, which could also be expected to influence the future of the Ruthenians of Hungary. The Hungarian government of Mihály Károlyi addressed the ethnic question from the direction of national self-determination. A group of Rusyn intellectuals led by Péter Gebé¹⁴ (1864-1931, Гебей Петр, Greek Catholic canon) and the Hungarian-Rusyn cultured Ágoston/Augustin/ Volosin¹⁵ (1874-1945, Волошин, Августин, Byzantine-rite canon, and later bishop, at this time principal of the Ungvár Greek Catholic teachers college) conducted preparatory discussions. Here Volosin asserted that, “there is a need for a national council where all the Ruthenians can rally against the annexation ambitions of the Ukrainians, Romanians and Slovaks.”¹⁶

On November 9, 1918, more than 100 clergymen, lawyers, teachers, civil servants, along with numerous representatives from the settlements, established the Hungarian-friendly 35 member Council of Ruthenian People of Hungary - referred to in some sources as Hungarian-Ruthenian People’s Council -, commonly called the Ruthenian Rada of Ungvár. On the day of its establishment, the body sent a telegram to Prime Minister Károlyi: “We respectfully inform you that at our public meeting, held on the 9th of the current month in Ungvár, we created a Council of Ruthenian People of Hungary, which sends greetings to the reorganized, independent Hungary. We join with (the) Ruthenian and Hungarian National Councils on the basis of the following platform points: the Ruthenian people of Hungary remain devoted to their ancient homeland, Hungary and its territorial integrity. At the same time, we protest against all such efforts, which wish to separate the Hungarian Ruthenians from their Hungarian homeland, or those which threaten the unity of the country.”¹⁷

The founding meeting was opened by Volosin who declared, among other things: the Ruthenian people object to the foreign directed intrigues, which aim to separate them from their ancestral land. Following this, the council chose as its president Simon Szabó (1863-1929, Сабов Симеон),¹⁸ who also went on record: the Rusyn movement, rather the People’s Council, have no secessionist aims; on the contrary, they wish to serve the cause of Hungary’s territorial indivisibility. The Rada then elected Ágoston Volosin as its Secretary, followed by the reading of the four-point program, in Hungarian and Rusyn, developed by the Council and Volosin. It was accepted by the delegates.

1. Remain faithful to the territorial integrity of Hungary.
2. Claim all such rights that democratic Hungary intends to grant to all non-Hungarian speaking peoples.
3. Greek Catholic autonomy.
4. Socio-political reforms to raise the intellectual and material standard of the Ruthenians.¹⁹

Among the founders was József Kaminszky (1879-1944, Joszif Kaminszkij,²⁰ Каминский Йосиф), who later, during

¹⁴ Encyclopedia of Rusyn ... op. cit. pp. 123-124.

¹⁵ Мишанич, Олекса: Життя і творчість Августина Волошина. Ужгород. [Mishanych, Oleksa: Life and works of Avhustyn Voloshyn.]. Užhorod, 2002, pp. 1-48

¹⁶ Darás: A Ruténföld ... op. cit. p. 98.

¹⁷ MOL. Microfilm: Dob. sz./box no.: 7052., cím/title: 11., tét/item: XVII-XVIII., távirat sz./telegram no.: 230.

¹⁸ Поп, Иван: Энциклопедия подкарпатской руси. Ужгород. [Pop, Ivan: Encyclopædia of Podkarpatsoi Rusi]. Užhorod, 2001, p. 335.

¹⁹ Darás: A Ruténföld ... op. cit. pp. 98-99.

the period of the soviet republic, became the political commissar of the Ruska-Krajna Autonomous Territory.

In the following weeks, the villages of the surrounding counties, or rather their people's councils joined the Ruthenian People's Council of Ungvár. The elected leader of the Rusyns living in the Szepesség, Antal Beszkid (1885-1933, Anton Beskid,²¹ Бескид Антон) is, at the time, the legal counsel for the Greek Catholic bishopric of Eperjes, later, from 1923, governor of Subcarpathia. The Ruthenian Rada of Máramaros accepted the Ungvár program, including the principle of continued territorial integrity for Hungary. This was important because, during these weeks, foreign political propaganda grew aimed at dismembering Hungary. The municipal council of Máramaros county held an extraordinary public meeting on October 21, 1918 in Máramarossziget where it took a position against "foreign interests coming from outside," which "proclaim their intent to separate our county from Hungary." The emergency meeting was convened so that "the Ruthenian and Romanian members of the municipal council may have an opportunity to face these attacks and make their feelings public in an official forum." After the three Ruthenian and two Romanian representatives made remarks, the body drafted a note to the government to look after the defense of the country's integrity. At the same time, it asked the Ruthenian populated counties to send a similar note.²²

Quotes from the resolutions of the municipal council of Bereg County, from the extraordinary meeting held in Beregszász on November 6, 1918. "With the feeling of Hungarian sympathy left to us by our ancestors ... we hereby officially declare – in the most uncertain terms – against the actions of Ukrainians and Galician Ruthenians who are attempting to separate us from Hungary and annex us to Galicia, or a Ukrainian state yet to be formed." At the meeting, the representatives of the Greek Catholic Hungarians of Alsóverecke swore on oath of loyalty to the Hungarian state, saying: "we do not want to create a country with the Ukrainians ... leave us in peace!!!"²³ (*sic*) At a meeting of the 22 villages of Ugocsa County, held in Nagyszőlős on December 5, the representatives pronounced that, "in spite of the many indignities," they wish to remain in the bosom of Hungary, and agree with the council of Ungvár.

In the meantime, the rising anti-Hungarian propaganda began to be felt in Ugocsa County, too. The high constable of Halom district – the chief administrator of the district -, sent a telegram to Minister of Nationalities, Oszkár Jászi, that from the villages of Kiszgérce and Nagygerce, "citizens of Vlah (Romanian) descent, about 200 in all, appeared in my office on the 4th of this month (December) and asked to have the following written into the record: we have knowledge that on the first of this month (December) at the meeting of the Romanian National Council held in Gyulafehérvár (Alba Iulia), our priests, namely János Dobosi from Kiszgérce, Jusztin Pap from Nagygerce, as well as Halom residents, lawyers János Dobosi jr. and Szevér Papp, were present as representatives of the Ugocsa County Romanians. We wish to register our protest over this ... *we sent no one at all to represent us*. We protest in the strongest terms against our joining (annexation) to Romania. We have lived in Hungary for a thousand years, where we are completely satisfied, and we merely ask to be able to communicate with the authorities in Romanian, our schools to be Romanian and our religion to be unfettered. – Signatures." The high constable added to the preceding: "I would consider it timely and important that in my district a constable of Vlah (Romanian) origin be appointed. I nominate a local resident, János Leményi Papp, as being completely dependable. I await your timely instructions."²⁴ (As is well known, on December 1, 1918, in Gyulafehérvár, the ancient Transylvanian seat of the Hungarian princes, the 1,228 delegates to the national meeting of the Transylvanian Romanians declared Transylvania's union with Romania. The nine-point resolution promised, among other things, that the Transylvanian minorities will receive

²⁰ Encyclopedia of Rusyn ... op. cit. p. 217.

²¹ Ibid, p. 36.

²² MOL. Mfilm. Dob. sz. 7052., 8. cím, IX. tét, (266/1918. kgy.-20 389./1918. alispáni sz. ir.)

²³ MOL. Mfilm. Dob. sz. 7052., 8. cím, X tét, 836/N. M. 1918. XII. 13. sz. ir.

²⁴ MOL. Mfilm. Dob. sz. 7051., 7. cím, IX. tét.

“complete independence.”²⁵ This promise was never realized. The newly created Greater Romania carried on a policy of ethnic repression, worse than Czechoslovakia, against the estimated 2 million Transylvanian Hungarians. In any case, a portion of the Gyulafehérvár delegates – who went arbitrarily on their own – had no mandate. Not from individual settlements, nor, as in the case of Ugocsa, authorization from the Romanians of the county.)

A memorandum remains from the Hungarian National Council of Visó district at Felsővisó, in the southeast part of Máramaros County – president dr. Kálmán Doroghy, lawyer, vice president dr. István Kovássy. The (undated) memorandum must have been written at the end of November, as it makes clear reference to the discussions carried on between November 13 and 15 in Arad. A Hungarian delegation, led by Minister of Nationalities, Oszkár Jászi, held talks with the principal leaders of the Romanian National Council of Transylvania, Iuliu Maniu (Gyula Maniu) and Vasile Goldiș (László Goldis). Jászi and company offered autonomy for Transylvania modeled on the Swiss canton system, re-apportioning the old counties. The Romanian leaders wanted complete independence. The dialogue broke off. From the memorandum of the Felsővisó Hungarian council: “We were shaken to the core when we read that our government offered to the Romanians, as part of a Romanian imperium (a semi-independent state or overlordship-*Ed.*), the whole of the south of our county, including our district and a center of Hungarian culture: our community of Felsővisó, too. This news is so shocking ..., that we can barely think but still feel and know that the reason for this offer can not be other than ignorance of the state of affairs. That the government was not aware of the district’s, or county’s, Romanian populated portion’s history... The Romanians of Máramaros never subscribed to any anti-Hungarian activities espoused by Transylvanian Romanians... I refer to the events at the extraordinary county meeting held on October 21 of this year (1918). Following a motion from vicar Endre Szabó [Ruthenian, Greek Catholic], the Ruthenian county council members and a motion from Vlad Darius [Romanian parochial worker from our district of Petrova], the Romanian council members all decided unanimously to state their unbroken loyalty to the Hungarian state concept. We, in Máramaros did not have a minority question to date, and so we had no Romanian question, either. Minister Jászi’s offer upset this peaceful coexistence. When a portion of the Romanians of Máramaros saw that a portion of the county was offered to the Romanian imperium – even though they never wanted it, never asked for it – for obvious reasons they too established a Romanian National Council in Máramarossziget, this year on November 22. We can not but point out that in its founding, the most notable Romanian families of Máramaros did not take part ... the other Romanian gentry, who were most active in public life.”²⁶

The memorandum goes on to analyze the history of the Máramaros Romanians, and their peaceful coexistence with Hungarians. Quoting census figures, it made known the county’s ethnic makeup, stressing the importance of Felsővisó – as district seat -, its advanced state, “it has electric lighting, surveyed streets.” The Hungarian council’s memorandum – which was signed by 19 members – finally summed up the position of the Hungarians: “We await the decision with serious trepidations. We have stated our position factually and the facts cited above we offer for anyone to check. They prove our case beyond a doubt. We believe, therefore, that our words will not today become a cry in the wilderness. Our trust remains steadfast in our government and we plead: make all effort that the Visó district, and especially the settlement of Felsővisó, does not pass from the Hungarian imperium but continue remain as an integral part of the Hungarian homeland, that they remain under Hungarian administration.”²⁷

A week later, on December 12, in a telegram to Prime Minister Mihály Károlyi and Oszkár Jászi, the Máramarossziget Hungarian “national council, in agreement with the Ruthenian People’s Council, protests in the strongest terms that, taking into consideration Wilson’s principles and statistical facts (i.e., ignoring the principles of self determination and statistical data! – *J.B.*), that Máramaros County be torn from Hungary’s domain or come under foreign rule and be occupied by the Romanian army.” The executive committee of the National Council asked that the government organize the rural propaganda and seek their opinion when selecting delegates.²⁸ The executive committee

²⁵ Mikes, Imre: Erdély útja Nagymagyarországtól Nagyromániáig [Transylvania’s path from Greater Hungary to Greater Romania]. Sepsiszentgyörgy, 1996, pp. 170-172.

²⁶ MOL. Mfilm. Dob. sz. 7051., 7. cím, IX. tét., p. 1, 3-4. (691/1918. N. M. december 6. sz. ir.)

²⁷ MOL. Mfilm. Dob. sz. 7051., 7. cím, IX. tét., p. 11.

²⁸ MOL. Mfilm. Dob. sz. 7051., 7. cím, IX. tét., 823/N. M. /1918. XII. 13. sz. ir.

of the Hungarian National Council of Máramarossziget sought help in a telegram from the County Prefect, then staying at the Savoy Hotel in Budapest. “Our council has received news that a Romanian guard unit is being formed here ... we protest against the Romanian regime, against the possibility of having our city be occupied by the Roman army (too); we ask for protection for our much suffering citizens, we ask your Excellency with confidence, to take the most effective steps with the government in our welfare regarding law and order, as well as distribution of food and fire wood.”²⁹ The Hungarians of Máramaros did not get any protection from the Károlyi government, either.

After the fruitless, and broken off, conference of Arad, the contact was maintained between the Hungarian government and the Romanian National Council of Transylvania. The Romanian leaders – in contrast to their ultimatum of November 9: “we will cease all future cooperation” with the Hungarian authorities – remained ready to cooperate in “safeguarding public order, personal and property safety.” In light of this, the Hungarian government “continued not to create obstacles to the workings of the Romanian national councils, and was not loath to provide financial aid to the [armed] Romanian guards, although the November 18 meeting of the Cabinet refused to sanction the handing over of arms.”³⁰ It is a fact that the advancing Romanian army entered Transylvania without obstacles on January 18, 1919. They were aided by the cooperation of the Romanian guard of Máramaros, armed in early November, with the approval of the Hungarian government, from the local armory of the Hungarian army. And so, another part of the planned Ruska-Krajna autonomous region, Máramaros County South of the Tisza River, came under foreign military occupation.

The Ruthenian Rada of Ungvár – in the document the “delegation of the Ruthenian people of Hungary” – handed a memorandum to Minister of Nationalities Oszkár Jászi, in which they ask for the appointment of new chief bailiffs to oversee the counties of Ung, Bereg, Máramaros and Ugocsa, ones who are close to the Ruthenian people. Also, the creation of a Rusyn department in the Ministry of Education, as well as the establishment of a special chair for the “study of the Ruthenian language and literature” at the Budapest university of arts and sciences. The position of the Ministry with regards to the requests was that, “the Ruthenian people, living in the country’s Northeastern parts, are continually influenced by Polish independence attempts and targets of ongoing secessionist aims. For these reasons, fulfilling their wishes is in the highest national interest.” Híador Stripsky was suggested as councilor to department to be formed at the Ministry and professor Sándor Bonkáló³¹ (1880-1959, Бонкало Александр) was nominated to the Rusyn chair at the university.³²

Oreszt Szabó³³ (1867-194?, Orest Szabó, Сабов Орест) was charged with making the necessary preparations to fulfill the Rusyn wishes. Szabo, a lawyer and retired Ung County Prefect, was duly appointed as the High Commissioner of Ruthenia.³⁴ His sphere of authority extended to the four counties of Subcarpathia - Ugocsa, Bereg, Máramaros and Ung -, as well as the Ruthenian inhabited areas of Zemplén, Sáros, Szepes and Abaúj-Torna Counties. Antal Papp³⁵ (1867-1945, Папп Антонин), Greek Catholic bishop of Munkács, was instrumental in the selection of

²⁹ MOL. Mfilm. Dob. sz. 7051., 7. cím, IX. tét., 10 448/1918. B. M. Res. sz. ir.

³⁰ Magyarország története 1918-1919, 1919-1945. 8. köt. [Hungary’s history 1918-1919, 1919-1945. vol. 8] Budapest, 1976, p. 112.

³¹ Keresztyén, Balázs: Kárpátaljai Művelődéstörténeti Lexikon [Encyclopedia of cultural history of Subcarpathia]. Budapest – Beregszász, 2001, pp. 36-37.

³² MOL. Mfilm. Dob. sz. 7051., 7. cím, IX. tét. (662/1918. XII. 5. sz. ir.)

³³ Encyclopedia of Rusyn ... op. cit. p. 415.

³⁴ MOL. Mfilm. Dob. sz. 7052., 8. cím, X. tét., 655/1918. december 4. sz. ir.

³⁵ Поп / Pop: Энциклопедия ... op. cit. p. 293.

Orest Szabó. At the urging of the prelate, the Ruthenian People's Council of Hungary suggested him as the High Commissioner of Ruthenia. On the day after his appointment, on November 20, Szabó had already begun organizing Ruthenian self-government while still in Budapest. After various discussions and coordination, the new central authority was formed, its structure and roles defined. Accordingly: "all Ruthenian matters are to be addressed by the High Commission, and the High Commission will ask for guidance from the Ministry only in matters of principle."³⁶

On hearing of these developments, the priests of the Greek Catholic diocese of Munkács also drafted their demands and, on November 24, 1918, the clergy of Ungvár formed a Clerical Council, with the backing of bishop Antal Papp, which joined with the similar national body. At the same time, they outlined their wishes in nine points. Of these, none were of a political nature; all were concerned with the situation of the clergy or touched on their education.³⁷ Due to the change of authority, none of the items were implemented. Orest Szabó convened a meeting on November 29, in Budapest, of the leaders and representatives of the local Ruthenian people's councils of the Northeast Uplands to discuss the most urgent measures. During the discussions, Ágoston Volosin once again declared his belief in the indivisibility of the country's territory. In fact, he stated, "The Ruthenian nation does not deviate from their thousand-year customs, even for their own clearly understood benefit. We will not drive a wedge into the country's cohesion but, in the area of religion and education, we will state all our wishes with regards to civil rights and public administration, which will ensure our development."³⁸ Subsequent to this meeting, on December 10, High Commissioner Orest Szabó invited the leaders and representatives of the Hungarian Ruthenians, still in the capital, to debate, then accept, a plan for self-government, which would be forwarded to the Hungarian government.³⁹ The almost 500 participants of the Ruthenian Grand National Council – mostly down-to-earth peasants and forestry workers – were conveyed to Budapest by special train, supplied by MÁV, the national rail service. The president of the rail service opposed this last move, citing "a catastrophic shortage of coal." Minister Jászi ordered that the train be made available.⁴⁰

At the county offices in Pest, they debated, then accepted, the Hungarian language version of the 'Rusyn People's Program,' which also contained the Ruthenian definitions in Latin letters (the original shown in parentheses). The first seven points of the program were: "The Ruthenian people wish to have the benefit of all its national rights in all areas... Beside the enlargement of the Ruthenian-speaking territory of public administration, full autonomy to be ensured for the area... For the Ruthenian-tongued counties, a central national council is to be set up. The control of public administration and the administrative direction of the judiciary within the Ruthenian territory to be under a new Ruthenian Governorship, with adequate staffing... The structure of the self-government is as follows: National Council (Sobor) [later: Sojm – *J.B.*], county national council (Zupanska rada), district national council (Okruzna rada), national councils of incorporated towns (Horodska rada), village national councils (Hromadska rada). In religious matters, "complete church autonomy, including the right to elect bishops," and, naturally, "the free practice of religion."

In point 8, they defined the fundamental questions of public education in the mother tongue. The program's 9th point contained the wishes of civil rights and public administration. Thus, proportional representation in Parliament, the unhindered use of their language, the possibility of a Rusyn delegation to the peace conference, and the employment of a Rusyn person in each ministry and government central bureau to handle Rusyn matters. The creation

³⁶ MOL. Mfilm. Dob. sz. 7051., 7. cím, IX. tét., 655/1918. XII. 4. sz. ir.

³⁷ Pirigyi, István: A magyarországi görög katolikusok története. II. köt. [The history of the Greek Catholics of Hungary. vol. II]. Budapest, 1990, p. 72.

³⁸ Darás: A Ruténföld ... op. cit. p. 99.

³⁹ Domokos, László: Ruszka-Krajna a népek ítélőszéke előtt [Ruska-Krajna before the people's judgement]. Budapest, 1919, pp. 22-23.

⁴⁰ MOL. Mfilm. Dob. sz. 7052., 8. cím, X. tét., 709/1918. XII. 7. sz. ir.

of “a Ruthenian ministry without portfolio, accountable to the Rusyn National Assembly, without whose assent important matters affecting the Ruthenian nation and its members can not be decided. On Ruthenian territory, the introduction of the Ruthenian language in official communications in national and administrative departments... The employment of Ruthenian officers in the armed forces and the use of Ruthenian as the language of command.”

Point 10 defined the other areas of Rusyn self-government infrastructure. The touched on appropriate Rusyn representation in public health, transportation, customs, industrial, water, technological, agricultural and other councils. As well, the operation of a “railway network that effectively advances our industry, trade and culture, run by an independent executive [i.e., control over railways through Rusyn populated areas to fall under the chief Ruthenian self-government body-*J.B.*]. The Hungarian government should create independent Rusyn chambers of trade and commerce, a worker’s insurance bureau, Ruthenian banks, savings and credit unions. It should also provide aid to the creation of model farms - agricultural and viticultural – and forest management. Point 11 laid down the creation of a regional museum of commerce – in all likelihood, to showcase the achievements of the Uplands Commerce Movement, begun by the Hungarian government in 1897 and continued under the direction of Ed Egan to raise the social standard of the Ruthenian people. The movement accomplished significant achievements. Point 12: “In general terms, great attention to be paid to solving the dire commercial difficulties of the Ruthenian population.” Point 13: “Creation of social and welfare institutions, which will aid the financial situation of the people.” Point 14 asked for the immediate transfer of state forests into the ownership of the Rusyn nation, along with “just land reforms.” Common pastures to be apportioned honestly, keeping the people’s welfare at the forefront – “crown-owned pastures to be transferred for common grazing use.” School-age children to be enrolled.

The Prime Minister’s office crossed out the word ‘Ruthenian’ in the title of the Rusyn People’s Program and noted that, “They agreed that it is not Ruthenian but Rusyn.”⁴¹ Subsequently, the term Ruthenian – in use in documents since the Middle Ages – and the people’s self-title of Rusyn was used interchangeably in documents, as in everyday life.

On December 25, the Károlyi government read into the National Statutes, Statute X. of 1918, enacted two days earlier, titled ‘Regarding the autonomy of Rusyns (Ruthenians) living in Hungary,’ based on the wishes of the Ungvár Ruthenian People’s Council of Hungary and the Clerical Council.⁴² The decree assured self-determination for the Ruthenians in the areas of internal administration, judiciary, public education, advancement, the exercise of religion and use of language. It also stated that, of the Ruthenian populated portion of Máramaros, Ugocsa, Bereg and Ung Counties, “an autonomous (self-governing) zone, called Ruska-Krajna (Ruthenian Territory) is henceforth created.”

According to articles 4 and 5 of the law, in independent matters the legislative body of the autonomous region is the Ruthenian National Council; in common matters – foreign affairs, defense, finance, citizenship, the passage of civil and criminal laws, commercial, transportations and socio-political – the convened Hungarian Parliament. Crown assets on Ruska-Krajna territory (lands, mines, forests) become the property of the “lawful representatives of the Ruthenian people.” The non-Ruthenian population of the territory could expect local and cultural independence. The territory’s highest governing body was the Ruska-Krajna Ministry in Budapest. Orest Szabó was appointed as its head, Minister of Rusyn Affairs, on December 30. Day to day activities of the territory were administered by the newly created office of Governor of Ruska-Krajna, based in Munkács. On January 3, 1919, the Hungarian government appointed Ágoston Stéfán⁴³ (1877-1944, Штефан Августин), a lawyer from Rahó, as its head and Governor.

Statute X. was published in Budapest in Ruthenian-Rusyn, with the title: „Народный законъ числа 10. про самоуправу руського народу живущого на Угорщинѣ (Narodnŷ zakon chysla 10. pro samoupravu rus'kogo narodu

⁴¹ MOL. Mfilm. Dob. sz. 8919., szám nélk. ir. /undated document/, 1918. december 10. (pp. 3-7.)

⁴² MOL. Mfilm. Dob. sz. 7052., 8. cím, X. tét., 1918. december 24., 6570/M. E. I. sz. ir.

⁴³ Encyclopedia of Rusyn ... op. cit. p. 428.

zhivuschogo na Ugors'chyni)"⁴⁴ on December 21, signed by the Cabinet.

According to the Hungarian census of 1910, the population of Ung, Bereg, Ugocsa and Máramaros counties consisted of (in rounded figures) 356,000 Ruthenians (42%), 267,000 Hungarians (31.5%), 95,000 Romanians (11%), 93,000 Germans (10.9%), 37,950 of Slovak nationality (4.5%) and 129,000 of Jewish faith. The majority of the Israelites enumerated themselves as either German or Hungarian in the census. Ruthenians living in neighboring counties - Zemplén, Sáros, Szepes, Abaúj – were not part of the autonomous territory. According to the statistics of the day, they numbered around 100,000 but Statute X. did not extend to them as the matter of 'Ruthenian populated areas' outside Ruska-Krajna was deferred until the peace treaty. One strong reason was that, on December 3, Lt. Col. Fernand Vix, head of the Allied Military Mission to Budapest, handed a note to the Hungarian government in which he demanded the removal of Hungarians from Northern Hungary and handing it over to the Czechoslovak government. The document, however, did not define the southern border of the area. Hence, Minister of Defense Albert Bartha (1877-1960) and Milan Hodža (1878-1944), Budapest envoy of the Prague government, signed an agreement. The agreed demarcation line, based on ethnic distribution, followed the Hungarian-Slovak language boundary. It ran, in part, from Pozsony-Szenc-Galánta-Nyitra-Léva-Korpona-Gács-Nagyróce-Kassa to Nagymihály. Past the last, the district seat, it came to the historical boundary of Subcarpathia when it crossed into the western part of Ung County. From here, it proceeded in a straight line to the district seat of Szobránc where it turned North, until it reached the valley of the Laborc River, between Homonna and Mezőlaborc, and ended at the Polish border.

The Czechoslovak government, with Foreign Minister Eduard Beneš in the lead, did not accept the Bartha-Hodža agreement, based essentially on ethnographic lines. In fact, it recalled Hodža from Budapest on the grounds of acting without authorization and rescinded the agreement. The demarcation line drawn by the Allies, forwarded on December 23, again by Lt. Col. Vix, determined the Hungarian-Czechoslovak boundary as along the Danube and Ipoly Rivers, then in a straight line between Rimaszombat and Töketerebes, which completely disregarded the ethnic boundaries. The new section East of Töketerebes ran northward along the Ung River, all the way to the Uzsoki Pass. Under this decision, the Czechoslovak army could occupy almost half of Ung County, a move that was accomplished in the following month, January. The Károlyi government deferred incorporating the Ruthenian populated areas of Zemplén, Sáros, Szepes, Abaúj Counties with the Ruska-Krajna Autonomous Territory because those areas were already occupied by Czechoslovak military units.

While these were going on, the (Hungarian) National Council of Ungvár forwarded a note on December 12, 1918 to the government. In it the body clearly stated that it "fully expects ... the rights of Hungarians to be guaranteed, similar to the rights of the other minorities of the country." In their reasoning, they suggest the creation of a separate county, citing that the city of Ungvár, areas to the South and other Hungarian zones are "almost wholly Hungarian populated, according to the statistical evidence." The government – "not encroaching on the responsibilities of the High Commissioner governing the Ruthenian settlements" -, to name a Hungarian High Commissioner to head the latter who would "look after the affairs of the Hungarians, in cooperation and harmony with the Ruthenian High Commissioner." Also, that the "potential Czech occupation" of Ung County be restricted to the areas where Slovaks are in the majority, that "settlements with Ruthenian and Hungarian majorities fall outside the demarcation line."⁴⁵ (The population of Ungvár in 1910: 16,919, of which 13,590 are Hungarian (80.3%), 1,151 German (6.8%), 1,219 Slovak (7.2%), 651 Ruthenian and the rest of other nationalities.⁴⁶ In the town – population of 15,335 (90.6%) – more people spoke Hungarian than those who denoted Hungarian as their mother tongue.)

The drawing of the border of Ruska-Krajna Autonomous Territory was not an easy matter due to the imprecise linguistic boundaries. The delays created much uncertainty, hence it was not accidental that the National Council of Nagyszőlős sent a telegram in the early days of 1919, hastening "the final determination of the borders of

⁴⁴ Kárpátaljai Területi Állami Levéltár [Subcarpathian Territorial State Archives, hereafter KTÁL], Ungvár. Fond 59., opisz 1., od. zber. nr. 1.

⁴⁵ MOL. Mfilm. Dob. sz. 7051., 4. cím, VII. tét., 174., illetve 906/1918. sz. ir.-ok.

⁴⁶ Botlik, József – Dupka, György: Magyarlakta települések ezredéve Kárpátalján [A millennium of Hungarian-populated settlements in Subcarpathia]. Ungvár – Budapest, 1993, p. 228.

Ruska-Krajna.”⁴⁷ Oreszt Szabó – head of the ‘Ruska-Krajna Ministry,’ as it read on his official letterhead – called the Governor of the autonomous territory, Ágoston Stéfán, on January 8, 1919, and instructed him to contact the Interior Ministry “with regards to settling the interim border of Ruska-Krajna” and, at the same time, to propose the distribution of electoral districts.⁴⁸ The Governor responded on January 13 with his proposal of the temporary boundary of the territory and attached his own comments to the proposal. The border will be determined by a committee “based on the actual linguistic boundaries, which do not always correspond to the statistical one.” Several towns and villages with Hungarian majorities were included in the area of Ruska-Krajna because they were surrounded by Rusyn hamlets. As well, the public institutions of the Ruthenian majority counties are situated there; the population of Máramaros County would have no road access to the mother country; Ungvár is the center of Rusyn cultural institutions. An unnumbered sheet is attached to the document, originally bearing the letterhead “Royal Hungarian Interior Ministry,” bearing a circular seal crossed out with an ‘X’. It bears the title “From the Commissioner responsible for the preparation of autonomy of the Ruthenian nation of Hungary.”⁴⁹ The seal was used by Oreszt Szabó from the middle of November 1918 who was, as noted earlier, the High Commissioner of Ruthenia at the time, to be appointed Minister for Ruska-Krajna at the end of the year.

In response to the previous directive,⁵⁰ Governor Ágoston Stéfán forwarded to Oreszt Szabó the electoral district plan for Ruska-Krajna, which divided the territory into 54 electoral districts. Máramaros County contained 25 electoral seats, Ugocea 5, Bereg 14, Ung 9. In all, they represented 408 settlements.⁵¹ There was unease among the Rusyn population of Nagyszöllős, with a Hungarian majority, that the town and its surroundings would not be a part of the Ruthenian Autonomous Territory and with the eventual determination of the border for Ruska-Krajna. In his telegram to the President of the Republic, the Interior Minister and Oreszt Szabó, Governor Ágoston Stéfán made his position clear that, “I strongly maintain and deem important for national interest,” that Nagyszöllős and its surroundings be a part of Ruska-Krajna.⁵² The county seat of Ugocea County, Nagyszöllős had a population of 7,811 in 1910, of which 5,943 were Hungarian (78.1%), 1,266 Ruthenian (16.2%) and 540 German (6.9%). The tensions were not without reason as, with the exception of Munkács, not one town or village of any size fell within the designated territory. Also excluded were the Tisza River and the railway running parallel to it, railway hubs, mines, county seats, institutions of higher education and, in fact, the site of the “sole religious forum,” Ungvár (the centre of the Greek Catholic diocese of Munkács). Hence, “the towns carved out of Ruska-Krajna will be deprived of their natural economic hinterlands. Their government offices will have to be shut as lacking the area and population that was provided by the Rusyn numbers, which will lead not only to the disappearance of their Hungarianness but will indeed end the very basis of urban way of life. The once flowering centers of trade will be exposed to the dangers of deterioration and withering.” These were voiced at a meeting of the National Union of Ethnographic Studies, held on February 23, 1919 to debate the Ruska-Krajna issue.⁵³

Popular opinion of Hungarians in Bereg County regarding the formation of a Ruthenian autonomous region held that it was “forced, a revolutionary movement which has nothing to do with the Ruthenian people and condemned

⁴⁷ MOL. Mfilm. Dob. sz. 7053., 14. cím, 60/1919. I. 9. sz. ir.

⁴⁸ KTÁL. Fond 59., op. 1., od. zb. nr. 4., sztr. 5. (40/1919. sz. ir.)

⁴⁹ KTÁL. Fond 59., op. 1., od. zb. nr. 4., sztr. 3.

⁵⁰ MOL. Mfilm. Dob. sz. 7053., 14. cím, 40/1919. sz. ir.

⁵¹ KTÁL. Fond 59., op. 1., od. zb. nr. 41., sztr. 1-22. (Szám nélk. ir.)

⁵² KTÁL. Fond 59., op. 1., od. zb. nr. 47., 350/1919. II. 24. sz. ir.

⁵³ Ruszka-Krajna politikai jelentősége [The political meaning of Ruszka-Krajna]. Budapest, 1919. Comments made by László Domokos, Endre György and others.

the action. At the same time, it had no opinion against institutionally ensuring the ancient rights of the Ruthenian people regarding religion, language, cultural and ethnic rights, which were observed in the past. However, it was aghast that Hungarian populated areas were to be ceded. A movement was started against the plan and a decision made to send a delegation to Budapest and register their objections.” The Beregmegyei Kaszinó⁵⁴ (Bereg County Casino) [Ed: more a club for the notables and nobility, than a gaming establishment], established in 1841, joined in this action of the Hungarians and nominated three representatives to the delegation. The Károlyi government refused to meet with the delegation on the grounds of the Allies’ professed belief in the right of self-determination of peoples, believing in the statements and promises of the victors.

The day after the formation of the Ruthenian Governor’s post, on December 26, the president of the Rusyn National Council of Hungary situated in Ungvár, Simon Szabó, sent a telegram “expressing warm greetings and thanks to the Hungarian nation on behalf of the Rusyn people ... expresses loyalty to the Prime Minister and his government ... sends a delegation to Budapest on the 31st to continue discussions concerning material and personal matters and to make recommendations.”⁵⁵ The delegation went from Ungvár to the capital under the leadership of the council’s secretary, Ágoston Volosin. Volosin, however, besides his official discussions carried out clandestine meetings on January 1 with the Czechoslovak Consul, Milan Hodža, the founder of the so-called Viennese ‘Slovak mafia’ during the First World War, about the possibility of an agreement with Czechoslovakia.

According to the terms of Statute X. of 1918, the Hungarian government appointed persons of Subcarpathian origins to leading positions, naming as county prefects Pál Legeza in Ung County, lawyer Miklós Kutkafalvy in Bereg and Emilián Zombory in Máramaros. In documents from January of 1919, these persons were referred to as government prefects or high sheriffs. In the lower positions of public administration, knowledge of the Ruthenian language became mandatory, similarly in the courts. In the county administrations, separate clerks were named for the handling of Ruthenian matters.⁵⁶ Also at the beginning of the year, a Rusyn language weekly was begun in Ungvár under the editorship of Ágoston Volosin and Viktor Zselvay with the title of Руська Краина (Ruska Kraina), printed in the local *Unio* press. Only issues 1 to 6, published between January 1 and February 6, survived in the Országos Széchényi Könyvtár [National Széchényi Library].⁵⁷ In the meantime, descendents of a wider Subcarpathia, mainly Greek Catholic intellectuals living in Budapest, began to take an active part. They created their own political group on January 3, 1919, under the name of Rusyn National Independence Party. The organization set down as its main aim “the creation of the greatest possible Rusyn self-government within the economy of Hungary.”⁵⁸

After his January 3, 1919 appointment as Governor, Ágoston Volosin circulated a proclamation ‘To the People of Ruska Krajna,’ in which he exhorted the populace “to work even more diligently at their everyday tasks. Everybody work... The statute creating Ruska Krajna is merely a guide and only paper. We must bring it to life. We must establish complete autonomy based on the right of self determination.”⁵⁹ On February 11, a government decree⁶⁰

⁵⁴ Kozma, György: A Beregmegyei Kaszinó százéves története [The 100-year history of the Bereg County Casino]. Budapest, 1942, p. 147.

⁵⁵ MOL. Mfilm. Dob. sz. 7052., 8. cím, X. tét., 1084/1918. sz., illetve 230. sz. ir.

⁵⁶ MOL. Mfilm. Dob. sz. 7053., 12. cím, I-IV. tét.

⁵⁷ Szabolcs-Szatmár-Bereg sajtóbibliográfiája /a történelmi Bereg, Szabolcs, Szatmár, Ugocsa és Ung vármegyék/ (1845-2000) [Bibliography of the press in Szabolcs-Szatmár-Bereg, 1845-2000]. Nyíregyháza, 2002, p. 261.

⁵⁸ Fedinec, Csilla: A kárpátaljai magyarság történeti kronológiája 1918-1944 [The historical chronology of the Subcarpathian Hungarians]. Galánta - Dunaszerdahely, 2002, p. 49.

⁵⁹ KTÁL. Fond 59., op. 1., od. zb. nr. 3.

ordered that in Ruska-Krajna elections must be announced, or held, by no later than March 5. its aim: “Until the time a Rusyn National Assembly can be formed, a Rusyn Governing Council is to be formed, which will oversee the functions of the Ruska Krajna governing bodies and convey its recommendations regarding matters concerning Rusyn autonomy to the Ruska Krajna Minister.”⁶¹ A meeting was convened in Munkács for the creation of this body on February 17. Concurrently, the establishment of public administration was proceeding. On February 28, the Prefect of Bereg County announced the 11 new members of the city People’s Council of Munkács.⁶²

The teaching of the Ruthenian language became mandatory in the territory’s 11 middle and 2 high schools. The Greek Catholic elementary schools were also given a Ruthenian character. The Minister of Religions and Education, Márton Lovászy (1864-1927), with order 200.532/1918 discontinued the compulsory teaching of Hungarian in grades 1 and 2. The public and denominational teachers met with superintendent János/Ivan/ Kurtyák⁶³ (1888-1933, Куртяк Иван) – later, between the wars, the leader of the Autonomous Agrarian Party, leading light of the Ruthenian autonomy movement – about filling the educational posts.⁶⁴

The Károlyi government was primarily able to carry out the creation of Ruska-Krajna in a turbulent country because the emerging West Ukrainian state in Galicia – which would have had first claim on the Ruthenian populated northeaster Uplands – was far too weak to carry out its plans, which remained on paper. The West-Ukrainian Republic was at war with Poland, Romania and, later, with Soviet Ukraine, too. Its situation demanded that it try to maintain good relations with Hungary. The Ukrainian leaders wanted commerce, hoping to get supplies and war materiel in return for suitable counter-trade.⁶⁵ The precise name of the republic, at this time mostly on what was the Monarchy’s Galician province was Західноукраїнська Народна Республіка, ЗУНР (Zahidnoukrajinska Narodna Respublika, West-Ukrainian People’s Republic). Part of the big picture – as we have seen previously – is that the majority of the Rusyn intelligentsia and the common people remained loyal to Hungary. They did not identify with the Ukrainians living on the other side of the Carpathians, or their political movements.

The appearance of the Czechoslovak and Romanian armies played a decisive role in the events unfolding in the northeastern Uplands. It was not unprecedented, since events proceeded on several tracks parallel to the activities of the council of Ungvár. The Ukrainian Rada formed in Galician Lemberg (Lwow, Lvov) already stated on October 19, 1918 its intention to unite Ruthenian living on both sides of the Carpathians into one state – although the Ruthenians of Galicia had not yet seceded from the Monarchy. As a result of the Lemberg Rada, a group of Ukrainian friendly people living around Huszt began discussions as early as November 3, then on November 10 declared a union with the Kiev Ukraine. What’s more, declaring war on the council of Ungvár, formed a Ukrainian Rada in Máramarosziget. Its leaders were two brothers, Gyula/Julij/ Brascasajko (1879-1955, Бращайко Юлий, jurist) and Mihály/Mihajlo/ (1883-1969, Михайло, lawyer), journalists⁶⁶ who organized Ukrainian councils in the surrounding villages.

⁶⁰ *Budapesti Közlöny*, 1919. február 11. Announcement of decree 928/1919, regarding the announced date of the elections.

⁶¹ KTÁL. Fond 59., op. 1., od. zb. nr. 40., 197/1919. III. 4. sz. ir.

⁶² KTÁL. Fond 59., op. 1., od. zb. nr. 25.

⁶³ Поп / Pop: *Энциклопедия ...* op. cit. p. 226.

⁶⁴ KTÁL. Fond 672., op. 1., od. zb. nr. 5., 309/1919. II. 25. sz. ir.

⁶⁵ Siklós, András: *A Habsburg-birodalom felbomlása (1918)* [The disintegration of the Habsburg empire (1918)]. Budapest, 1987, pp. 264-265.

⁶⁶ Поп / Pop: *Энциклопедия ...* op. cit. pp. 104-105.

During this time, counsel to Minister of Minorities Jászi, Hador Stripsky, asked newspaper publisher Kálmán Szarvady to disclose the rural situation, the people's mood. He was also to help distribute the proclamation of November 24 of the Ungvár Ruthenian Council and, finally to write a report of his trip. Szarvady arrived in Huszt on December 4 from where he and his companions were to visit the surrounding settlements – their major stops were Nagyszöllös, Iza, Máramarossziget, Bustyaháza, Gyertyánliget, Tiszabogdány, Kőrösmező -, then filing a report of his finding with the government. Social problems formed the majority of the discontent, which is why the Ukrainian propaganda, promising a better life, fell on fertile soil among the villagers. The people expected land redistribution. Ukrainian agitators were active in a number of villages, along with Czech and Romanian propagandists who “promising deliverance from Hungarian rule, flood the Carpathians with millions of pamphlets.”⁶⁷ On December 12, Szarvady made a special situation report to the National Propaganda Committee from one of the centers of the Ukrainian movement, Huszt.⁶⁸

In the meantime, Ruthenian intellectuals in other counties were also organizing. The Szepes County Ruthenian People's Council was formed in Ólubló on November 8, 1918. It did not carry much weight as only 9.2% of the county's population was of Rusyn nationality, around 12,000 people spread over 17 settlements. Of these, nine were located in the Poprád basin, the rest forming linguistic islands in the valleys of the Gölnic, Hernád, Poprád and Dunajec Rivers. The county seat, Lőcse, had a community of perhaps 200 Ruthenians (2.7%), the site of the founding of the Ruthenian Rada, Ólubló, had, according to the 1910 census, only a few Ruthenians out of its 1,841 population. The majority (73.8%) were Slovaks!⁶⁹ Since the end of the 19th century, the Slovaks of Szepes forcefully absorbed the Rusyns. In the middle of the 1890's, 17,500 Ruthenians lived in Szepes County⁷⁰ while by 1910 almost a third less, shrinking to the mentioned 12,000.

In Sáros County, Ruthenians made up one quarter (25.9%) of the population in 1910, 39,000 in number.⁷¹ The Rusyns were mainly to be found in the Northeast portion of the county – in the Felsővízköz district – where they formed a contiguous linguistic bloc. From the middle of the 1890's – when 35,000 Ruthenians lived in Sáros, being in the majority in 119 settlements – the number of Rusyns did not increase significantly in the following decade and a half. In 1910, their numbers grew by a mere four thousand. This can be attributed to two reasons: one, the strong assimilative pressure of the Slovaks, and two, the emigration of the Ruthenians, mainly for economic reasons. It was not by accident that Pál Balogh noted meaningfully in his monograph published in 1902: “... as if Russian ethnic consciousness was beginning to awaken ... under the effect of our times and reaction to the expansion to date of the Slovaks ... since the statistics of Elek Fényes [of 1851], in 367 villages did the ethnic majority change. The Russian (Rusyn) element lost ground in 214 villages, of which 37 became Hungarian, 176 Slovak and 1 German.”⁷² At any rate, even in the county seat of Sáros County, Eperjes, there were hardly any Ruthenian communities at the end of the 1910's. A portion of the several hundred of this race were intellectuals who were drawn to the Greek Catholic bishopric located here. According to the 1910 census, the population of Eperjes was 16,323 people of which almost

⁶⁷ In more detail, see: KTÁL. Fond 59., op. 1., zb. nr. 50., sztr. 17-30.

⁶⁸ MOL. Mfilm. Dob. sz. 7051., 7. cím, IX. tét.

⁶⁹ Magyarország Közigazgatási Atlasza, 1914. A Magyar Szent Korona országai [Public Administrative Atlas of Hungary 1914. The countries of the Hungarian Holy Crown.]. Baja–Pécs, 2000, pp. 75, 143.

⁷⁰ Balogh, Pál: A népfajok Magyarországon [The races of Hungary]. Budapest, 1902, p. 532.

⁷¹ Magyarország Közigazgatási ... op. cit. p. 74.

⁷² Balogh: A népfajok ... op. cit. pp. 532, 561, 634.

half (48.9%) were Hungarian, Slovaks made up 39.8% and Germans 8.6%.⁷³

The Ruthenian People's Council of Ólubló merged with the Rada active in Eperjes on November 19, 1918. Under the leadership of Anton Beskid, they created the Carpatho-Russian Central People's Council. By January 7, 1919 the Eperjes Rada, representing the Rusyns living in Sáros County changed its tune to demand that the Czechoslovak occupation be extended to the "whole of the Russian lands," meaning the Ruthenian populated areas of Hungary. On the other hand, their declaration of January 31 made the statement: "From this day, we hold ourselves to be an autonomous part of the Czechoslovak Republic."⁷⁴

Foreign military occupation of Subcarpathia

January 12 to April 30, 1919

A few days after the demands of the People's Council of Eperjes, the Czechoslovak legionnaire forces crossed the Ung River, the Eastern part of the demarcation line fixed by the Allies on December 23. Under the command Italian colonel Ciaffi, the 31st regiment entered Ungvár on January 12, 1919, where "they stressed that in the transition days, they merely came to restore order and not to conquer the city but to occupy it and restore calm."⁷⁵ Ciaffi was the military commander of the area occupied by the Czechoslovak forces in Northern Hungary and the part of Ung County, West of the Ung River, until May 2, when the post was assumed by French General Edmond Hennoque. The Czechoslovak military command announced a state of emergency and press censorship in the occupied zone. Through these means of control, the execution of the intentions of the Ruthenian Council of Eperjes, initially Ukrainian leaning, became more and more Czechoslovak friendly as Czechoslovak forces made gradual advances.

In this situation, the policy of the Hungarian-Ruthenian People's Council of Ungvár, loyalty to the Hungarian state's policy of territorial indivisibility, became impossible to carry out. On the day of the occupation of Ungvár by the Czechoslovak military, county prefect Pál Legeza resigned from his post, one he held since his appointment on December 10. A week later, on January 18, 1919, Interior Minister Vince Nagy (1886-1965) notified Prime Minister Dénes Berinkey (1871-1944), "Hungarian Prime Minister and head of the Nationalities Ministry," that: "The Hungarian government relieved Pál Legeza, appointed as ministerial counselor to the Ruska-Krajna Ministry, from his duties as Ung County prefect, gratefully recognizing his devoted service."⁷⁶ The head of Bereg County, Miklós Kutkafalvy, headquartered in Beregszász – according to his signature 'government commissioner-prefect' – was still in his post on February 28. On that day, he notified the city of Munkács that – as part of his authority as stipulated in Statute VIII of 1919, article 2 – he named the new members of the city council.⁷⁷ This in spite that a month earlier the Worker's Council of Beregszász made an attempt to have Kutkafalvy removed. The council organized a demonstration on January 31 in which it demanded not only the removal of the prefect but also a recognition of the Worker's

⁷³ Magyarország Közigazgatási ... op. cit. p. 74.

⁷⁴ Szpivak, B. – Trojan, M: Felejthetetlen 40 nap. (Az 1919-es tanács hatalomért a Kárpátontúlon vívott harc történetéből.) [Unforgettable 40 days. (From the history of the struggle for power in the 1919 Soviet Republics, fought in Trans-Carpathia)]. Uzshorod, 1969, pp. 38-39.

⁷⁵ Csomár, Zoltán: Ungvári magyarok a cseh megszállás alatt [Hungarians of Ungvár under Czech occupation], In: *Ungvár és Ung vármegye*. Budapest, 1940, p. 55.

⁷⁶ MOL. Mfilm. Dob. sz. 7053., 12. cím, II-IV. tét., 329. p. (470/ eln. sz.)

⁷⁷ KTÁL. Fond 239., op. 1., od. zb. nr. 25., (413/1919. főisp. sz. ir.)

Council's authority.⁷⁸

Let us note here that the head of the government, Prime Minister Dénes Berinkei, temporarily also assumed the portfolio of the Nationalities Ministry. The background to this was that on January 11, 1919, at the meeting of the Hungarian National Council, Prime Minister Mihály Károlyi announced his resignation. The assembled body appointed him as temporary head of the government - president - and acting prime minister of the Republic. Károlyi then named Attorney General Dénes Berinkei to temporarily take over the duties of Prime Minister, then named him to the post on January 18. The following day, President Károlyi relieved Minister Jászi from his post citing "concerns regarding the resignation of the government and his previously presented request." To Jászi he wrote: "on this occasion I would like to express my honest acknowledgment and warm appreciation for the excellent services rendered through extraordinary circumstances."⁷⁹ Subsequently, Prime Minister Berinkei took over Jászi's previous post as "minister without portfolio designated with the preparations for the right to self-determination of minorities living in Hungary."

On the eve of 1918-1919, the Western-Ukrainian Soviet Republic was attempting to expedite the demands of the Ukrainian Rada of Máramarossziget and sent armed forces – the territorial army of Galicia, as it was called – to occupy Subcarpathia. This was urged by one of the leaders of the Máramaros Rada, one Mihály Brascsajko, who also made contact with the leaders of the Western-Ukrainian state in the early days of 1919 in the Galician town of Stanislaw (today Ivano-Frankivsk), on the eastern side of the Carpathians. He suggested that they take steps to "free" Subcarpathia, which they promptly took. A Ukrainian regiment of legionnaires crossed over the Tatár Pass, breaking through to Máramaros County. On January 7, they occupied Kőrösmező and built defensive positions at the village of Tiszaborkút, in the valley of the Tisza River. When the unit received news of the Czechoslovak occupation of Ungvár, they pressed on and took the district seat of Rahó on January 14. On the same day, the Foreign Minister of the Western-Ukrainian Soviet Republic sent a note to the Hungarian government in which it stated that: his government has issued orders to the armed forces to occupy those Subcarpathian districts in which Rusyns form the majority. Aside from that, also those territories where the populations "wishes it so."⁸⁰

Two days after taking Rahó, the Galician Ukrainian units that breached the Tatár Pass marched into Máramarossziget, through Nagybocskó, on January 16. At the same time, on January 15, a train bearing a Ukrainian unit crossed the border from the Galician station of Lavocsne, on the other side of the Carpathians. Its main target was the occupation of Munkács where it unloaded a battalion, which began to loot. The people of Munkács hastily formed a militia and through a ruse captured the Ukrainian officers living it up in the Csillag Hotel. The leaderless Ukrainian soldiers surrendered in their billets. The militia loaded the disarmed enemy soldiers on the train, their weapons – by agreement – placed in the last car, under militia guard. At the border crossing of Lavocsne, the last car was 'accidentally' unhooked from the train and the Ukrainians arrived in Poland without weapons.⁸¹ The attacking Ukrainian units advanced a company by rail and took two important railway hubs, the stations of Bányú and Csap. They were forced to withdraw on January 19 when news reached them that the main Ukrainian forces that broke through to the Tisza valley were pushed out of Máramarossziget and beat back to Kőrösmező.⁸²

The Ukrainian friendly movement of Máramaros convened an open mass meeting for January 21, 1919 in Huszt. The date was decided at a Máramarossziget meeting a month earlier, on December 18. The Hungarian government banned the planned meeting on December 27 on the grounds that it was more important to prepare for the

⁷⁸ KTÁL. Fond 69., op. 1., od. zb. nr. 62., sztr. 6.

⁷⁹ MOL. Mfilm. Dob. sz. 7053., 12. cím, I-IV. tét., 249-251. p., III. 26/1919. sz. ir.

⁸⁰ Szpivak – Trojan: Felejthetetlen ... op. cit. p. 38.

⁸¹ Voith, György: 20 év története [The history of 20 years]. Munkács, 1939, p. 168.

⁸² Rubinty, Dezső: Az ukránok és románok betörése Kárpátaljára [The assault of Subcarpathia by the Ukrainians and the Romanians], In: A Felvidék és Kárpátalja hadtörténete 1914-1918. Budapest, 1941, p. 281.

election of the Rusyn National Assembly. The meeting was finally held on January 21, when 175 towns and villages (80 from Máramaros County, 57 from Bereg, 29 from Ugocsa and 9 from Ung) were represented by 420 delegates. After the speeches, the council decreed union with the Western-Ukrainian state, lead by Semjon V. Petljura (1879-1926), commander (ataman) of the Ukrainian forces and leader of the five-person directorate of the Ukrainian Rada. The next day, January 22, the directorate of the Ukrainian National Council in Kiev announced the unification of Western-Ukrainian Soviet Republic, consisting of Galicia, Bukovina, and Угорська Русь (Uhorska Rus, that is, the Rusyn populated areas of Hungary) and the Greater Ukraine of the Dnieper. The new state was christened Соборна Україна (Soborna Ukrajina, Unified Ukraine).⁸³

The Hungarian at this time maintained some minor forces in Máramaros and Bereg Counties but they offered scant resistance against the Ukrainian units. The reason was that the Ukrainian ambassador to Hungary briefed Prime Minister Károlyi well in advance of the action. Minister Jászi opined at the December 29 Cabinet meeting that, if the northern parts of the country are in the hands of not only the Czechs and Romanians but also the Poles and Ukrainians, “this is a tactical advantage for us.”⁸⁴ Hence, the Hungarian forces were instructed to “take a completely neutral stand” if the Ukrainian forces clash with the Czechs and Romanians. As a result of the Ukrainian advance, the local Hungarian command post relocated to Nagyszőlős in Ugocsa. This is how two reports, initialed as ‘Acknowledged,’ made their way into the archives from prefect Zombory of Máramaros reporting the Ukrainian occupation of Kőrösmező and the incursion into Máramarossziget.⁸⁵ This was not unplanned, since the Defense Ministry, on December 22, 1918, sent to all Hungarian military and militia regional headquarters orders, titled: “Directives on the military evacuation of certain parts of the country.” The order covered Ung County, too, the areas North and West of the Latorca River and the line running from the villages of Szerednye and Uzsok.⁸⁶

In the end, the Hungarian military units stationed in Subcarpathia offered no resistance to the incursion of the enemy forces. As a result – we just noted – the Romanians evicted the Ukrainian units from the valley of the upper Tisza River. Only the right bank of the river, around Nagybocksó, remained under Ukrainian occupation, which permitted the continued operation of the so-called “Hucul Republic” in and around Kőrösmező, population 10,000. as a prelude, on November 8, 1918, a public meeting was held by Kőrösmező and surrounding villages where a decision was born to unite Hucul territory with the Ukraine. Subsequently, a Hucul People’s Council was formed and on November 9 announced the formation of the Hucul Republic. A month later, on December 10, the representatives of the Rada took part in the Budapest council meeting where Rusyn autonomy was decided and on December 18 they were elected into the Máramaros People’s Council. On December 22, however, to break the grip of the Rada, Hungarian units entered Kőrösmező, resulting in the escape of the council members into the mountains. Two weeks later, on January 7, 1919, aided by the Ukrainian troops crossing the Tatár Pass, the council organized an uprising for the night of the 7th to the 8th. They succeeded in ejecting Hungarian forces from Kőrösmező.⁸⁷ After the final withdrawal of the Ukrainian troops from the occupied areas of Máramaros County, the Tisza valley, control of the ‘Hucul Republic,’ covering the Rahó district, reverted to the Hucul Rada. Further territorial encroachment by the Rada was prevented by the advance of the Romanian army. As a result of its military actions begun in May, the Hucul Rada was completely eliminated on June 11.

To return to the events of Ungvár: after capturing the city, Czechoslovak forces took up positions along the

⁸³ Szpivak – Trojan: Felejthetetlen ... op. cit. pp. 41, 46-47.

⁸⁴ MOL. K 27. Minisztertanácsi jegyzőkönyvek [Minutes from Council of Ministers meetings], 1918. december 29.

⁸⁵ MOL. Mfilm. Dob. sz. 7053., 12. cím, I-IV. tét., 182/1919., 129/1919., 131/1919. sz. ir.

⁸⁶ MOL. Mfilm. Dob. sz. 7050., 1. cím, II. tét., 249-255. p. (34 200/el. 1/a.-1918. sz. ir.)

⁸⁷ More on the Hucul Republic, see: Нариси історії Закарпаття. Том II. 1918-1945. Ред. кол. І. Гранчак. Ужгород, Видавництво „Закарпаття” [Narisi istoriï Zakarpats’ka. Vol. II. 1918-1945. Edit. I. Hrachak. Vidavnitstvo „Zakarpats’ka”.] Uzhhorod, 1995, pp. 68-74.

Ung River between January 14 and 23, 1919. This was sanctioned by the Allied memorandum of December 23, 1918, which set Slovakia's temporary border as North of the Danube and Ipoly Rivers, South of Rimaszombat and West of the Ung River. Hungarian forces and administration evacuated the area behind the line of demarcation by the end of January. The Romanians controlled the Southeast part of Máramaros County, around Nagybocksó. Hungarian administration continued to function in most parts of Ruska-Krajna and Ruthenian autonomy continued to make headway – albeit slowly - in spite of the circumstances noted above. Amidst all this, the Ruthenian People's Council of Ungvár continued to exist. Its secretary, Ágoston Volosin, continued to voice loyalty to the Hungarian state until the end of 1918 but, by January of 1919, he became an enthusiastic proponent of the union of the Ruthenian populated areas with Czechoslovakia. On February 1, the personal representative of Czechoslovak President Masaryk, Captain Ferdinand Písecký, aide-de-camp to the Defense Minister, arrived in Ungvár to give the Hungarian-Ruthenian People's Council the documents of the Philadelphia and Scranton agreements. The captain conducted meetings with Simon Szabó, Péter Gebé, Ágoston Volosin and Illés [Elias] Hadzsega, whom he called on to create a wide ranging action to influence public opinion, using the Rada, in support of the union of Ruthenia with Czechoslovakia. Three days later, the council changed its name and continued to function as the Ruthenian Council of Ungvár.⁸⁸

Three weeks after the ceremonial beginning of the Paris Peace Conference, at the February 5, 1919 meeting of the Council of Ten, Czechoslovak territorial demands were tabled as item 2 of the agenda. At the invitation of British Prime Minister Lloyd George – according to the minutes of the meeting - Edvard Beneš, Foreign Minister of Czechoslovakia, expounded: “the duty has fallen to me to bring to the attention of the Conference certain proposals, which are not part of Czechoslovakia's territorial claims. Among these proposals, the first concerns the Ruthenians living in Hungary... The Ruthenian do not wish to remain under Hungarian jurisdiction and thus offered to form an independent state in close federation with Czechoslovakia. Their numbers can be placed at 450,000. It would be unjust to leave them to the whims of the Hungarians and although it does not form a part of Czechoslovak claims, he has taken it upon himself to present their case before the Conference.”⁸⁹ To add to the preceding: we have already commented on the political intrigues of Czechoslovakia, especially Beneš, in regards to gaining control of Subcarpathia. Let it suffice, regarding the ‘joining’ of the Ruthenians, that their lands were conquered by force of arms by Czechoslovakia. In the case of Subcarpathia, it barely had any military strength left, which is why the eastern part of the territory was occupied by Romania. As we shall describe in detail later, the Czechoslovak and Romanian armies met in the last days of April 1919 between Munkács and Csap.

On the day after the discussion of Czechoslovak territorial claims, on February 6, 1919, Czechoslovakia, Romania and the Kingdom of Serbia-Croatia-Slovenia presented a joint memorandum to the Paris Peace Conference detailing their territorial claims against Hungary. All strenuously objected to the plebiscites requested by the Hungarians. A week later, two delegates of the Rusyn People's Council of America arrived, Grigorij [Gregory] Zhatkovych and Julij Gardosh (Гардош, Юлий, Gardoš Julius in Czech), along with the president of the Rusyn National Council of Sáros County, located in Eperjes, Antal Beszkid. To represent Rusyn interests, they formed a committee with dual purpose: on the one hand, to appear at the peace conference, on the other, to negotiate with the Czechoslovak government.

To oversee the administrative handover of the territory occupied by the forces of the Prague government – and about to be seized -, Ladislav Moys, the “Czech prefect” arrived in Ungvár on February 21. He was greeted by a band and an honor guard. At the county hall, he spoke to the public servants in Slovak, at which they attempted to leave the room, led by Bánóczy. The prefect then switched to Hungarian and recalled them, calling for the civil servants to swear an oath of allegiance to Czechoslovakia. County vice-prefect Béla Bánóczy declared: “he will not bow to force.” On the same afternoon, the prefect suspended police captain Bona, disarmed the Hungarian police and limited them out of the city. “The city employees are being held hostage. Today, they are trying to usurp the public administration of the county,” stated the report sent by the Governor's office of Ruska-Krajna on February 23 to

⁸⁸ Botlik, József: *Hármas kereszt alatt. Görög katolikusok Kárpátalján az ungvári uniótól napjainkig (1646-1997) [Under the triple cross. Greek Catholics of Subcarpathia from the Union of Ungvár to today (1646-1997)].* Budapest, 1997, p. 225.

⁸⁹ *Sorsdöntések. (A kiegyezés – 1867. A trianoni béke – 1920. A párizsi béke – 1947.) [Fates decided (The Conciliation: 1867, Trianon Peace Treaty: 1920, Paris Peace Treaty: 1947)]* Budapest, 1989. p. 138.

Minister Oreszt Szabó.⁹⁰

During these days, on March 7, 1919, Alajos Pós become the first Hungarian martyr of the Czechoslovak military occupation of Subcarpathia. He was the city of Ungvár's financial auditor, journalist and reporter of the local newspaper, *Ung*. On the previous day, in honor of President Masaryk's name day (Thomas), a military band held a torchlight parade through the town. It was playing the Czechoslovak anthem in front of the Millennium Café when the Czech soldiers thought, mistakenly, that Pós made disparaging remarks about them. They began to beat the 35 year old journalist on the open street, while inflicting 28 bayonet stabs on his body. Afterwards, they carried him toward the military hospital but he died of his wounds *en route*. The sobered and outraged city mourned him and deputations of leading citizens protested in person in front of the Ungvár Czechoslovak authorities. In protest, not a shop opened its doors on March 9, drawing punitive reaction against them. The March 11 funeral of Alajos Pós became a huge protest demonstration.⁹¹

The Allied powers – mainly at the urging of the United States and France – decided in Paris, after a long debate, on March 13, that the major portion of Ung, Bereg, Ugocsa and Máramaros Counties will be annexed to Czechoslovakia. The decision was made simpler by the emerging unanimous opinion that the Ruthenian population cannot be left to decide over their national self-determination, to determine to belong to a state. Two days later – March 15 - Gregory Zhatkovych was already conducting talks in Ungvár about the amalgamation of the Eperjes, Ungvár and Máramarossziget Radas, and the possibility of holding a plebiscite.⁹²

In the meantime, a month after Ágoston Stéfán, Governor of Ruska-Krajna, prepared a plan of electoral districts Oreszt Szabó, Minister of Ruska-Krajna, sent him on February 7 the typed copy of statute 928/1919 M.E., to take effect on February 11. In his covering letter, the Minister drew the Governor's attention to the following: "To enable the appropriate cooperation and influence in Rusyn affairs according to Rusyn national wishes in regards to the autonomy granted by statute X. of 1918, before the formation of the Rusyn National Council, the government of the Hungarian Soviet Republic ... by the attached statute, 928/1919 M.E., makes provisions for the creation of a Rusyn Governing Council, to be elected by the Rusyn population of Máramaros, Ugocsa, Ung and Bereg Counties [essentially all of Subcarpathia!–J.B.]."⁹³

The statute made the Governor responsible for preparing and overseeing the election, which, according to article 3, he must hold no later than March 5. The Minister, "mainly for political reasons," thought it advisable to create the governing council as soon as possible, asking for "particular attention" in the naming of the election supervisors. "The people chosen for this position should have adequate political and social respect in their district /town, village/, who identify with the position of Law X. 1918 and who do not hold political views contrary to the Hungarian state ... at the same time, I have called the commissioners of Máramaros, Ugocsa, Bereg and Ung Counties, to instruct the public administrative organs and civil servants to carry out forthwith the Governor's, your, verbal instructions regarding the election, as well as all legitimate orders regarding autonomy ... I have decided on a uniform recording format for the election supervisors to ensure identical procedures, and have also attached adequate numbers of them, printed in Hungarian and Rusyn languages. I also attach a larger number of bilingual copies of government decree 928/1919 M.E., to be made available as required to the election supervisors and public authorities."⁹⁴

According to the oft-quoted decree, the Rusyn Governing Council, located in Munkács, was to be in existence until "the formation of the Rusyn National Assembly." After the creation of the latter, the former ceases operation. The

⁹⁰ KTÁL. Fond 59., op. 1., od. zb. nr. 64. (313/1919. sz. ir.)

⁹¹ Révai Új Lexikona, XI. köt. [New Révai Encyclopedia, vol. 11]. Szekszárd, 2003, p. 307.

⁹² Botlik: Egestas ... op. cit. p. 147.

⁹³ KTÁL. Fond 59., op. 1., od. zb. nr. 40., sztr. 1. (399/1919. február 7. R. M. sz. ir.)

⁹⁴ KTÁL. Fond 59., op. 1., od. zb. nr. 40., sztr. 2-3. (399/1919. február 7. R. M. sz. ir.)

Governing Council to consist of two delegates from each Rusyn populated district of Máramaros, Ugocsa, Bereg and Ung Counties, similarly two delegates of the cities of Máramarossziget, Munkács and Ungvár, as well as two delegates to represent the Rusyn population of each of the villages of Huszt and Nagyszöllős. The date and place of the election, done by secret ballot, was publicized in every hamlet in ample time, including the name of the election supervisor. Men were eligible to vote if older than 21, women if 24 and the proviso that they “must be able to read and write in any living language of the country.” The decree defined those who, for any reason, were excluded from exercising their electoral rights. Minutes of the events of the voting had to be made, in triplicate. The decree also made provision if, for whatever reason, the election cannot be held in any district. It must be remembered that a significant portion of Ung and Máramaros Counties were battle zones as a result of the incursion of enemy troops! In such a case, at the recommendation of the electoral supervisor, the Governor can order that a public meeting in the seat of the district nominate the two delegates to the council.⁹⁵

Governor Ágoston Stéfán convened the founding meeting of the body by telegram for February 17, in the Ruska-Krajna Governor’s official chambers in Munkács. The district constables were also invited. This group of 17 was mainly composed of Greek Catholic clerics-pastors, teachers and administrators. With the exception of a few, the document lists their place of residence. In Bereg County, they came from Alsóverecke, Volóc, Szolyva, Borhalom, Munkács, Mezőterebes, Nagylucska, Oroszveg, Bilke and Ilosva. The newly formed Governing Council was made up of 41 members, 36 of them the representatives and *ex officio* Minister Oreszt Szabó, Governor Ágoston Stéfán and three officials from the Ruska-Krajna Ministry. The Governor held a meeting on February 20, in the offices of the high constable of Huszt “in the matter of the formation of the Rusyn Governing Council.”⁹⁶ The bilingual bylaws of the Governing Council were completed by February 23, setting out its mandate, organizational structure, scope of activities of its president, the form of its meetings and deliberations, and the process of decision making. A separate paragraph detailed the creation of a book recording the minutes of meetings, to be kept in two copies, one in each of Rusyn and Hungarian languages.⁹⁷ On March 4 – a day before the deadline set out in decree 928/1919 M.E. – the election of the Governing Council of Ruska-Krajna took place.

The Rusyn Governing Council was already holding meetings on March 12 and 13, as evidenced by a telegram from its president, János Egressy, to the members as a reminder that the next session was to be held on March 27.⁹⁸ The council could not begin serious work due to the problems surrounding its beginnings, as well as the fact that, with the establishment of the soviet republic, circumstances changed drastically. On March 20, the head of the Allied Military Mission in Budapest, Lt. Col. Fernand Vix, handed a note to President Mihály Károlyi in which the victorious powers agreed on the Hungarian-Romanian demarcation line of February 26. The note informed that the neutral zone defined by Szatmárnémeti–Vásárosnamény–Debrecen–Békéscsaba–Szeged–Arad–Nagyvárad–Nagykároly–Szatmárnémeti was to be controlled by Allied troops, in reality the Romanian army. The government of Berinkei did not accept the new demands and resigned. At this time, in fact since the middle of January, the southern parts of Máramaros County and some areas North of the Tisza River, Nagybocksó and its surroundings, were under Romanian occupation. The northern part of the county’s Tiszavölgy district – as we know – was part of the state of the ‘Hucul Republic’ with its center in Körösmező, under the control of the Hucul Rada. According to the Vix note, Bereg and Ugocsa Counties were Hungarian territory in their entirety; of Máramaros County the districts of Ökörmező, Dolha, Huszt, Técső and Tiszavölgy; of Ung County all of the districts of Szerednye, and Percseny, most of Nagyberezna and Nagykapos, and part of Ungvár.

After the proclamation of the People’s Republic of Hungary on March 21, Oreszt Szabó, nominated as people’s commissar for Ruthenia, declined to accept the post. Even though his name and position is among the list of officials of the Revolutionary Governing Council announced on the same day. Governor Ágoston Stéfán assumed the post of Rusyn people’s commissar from March 25, naming his friend, lawyer József Kaminszky, one of the founders

⁹⁵ KTÁL. Fond 59., op. 1., od. zb. nr. 40., sztr. 23-26. (399/1919. február 7. R. M. sz. ir.)

⁹⁶ KTÁL. Fond 59., op. 1., od. zb. nr. 40., sztr. 12-13. (197/1919. február 15.)

⁹⁷ KTÁL. Fond 59., op. 1., od. zb. nr. 40., sztr. 3-6, 27-34. (466/1919. február 23. sz. ir.)

⁹⁸ KTÁL. Fond 59., op. 1., od. zb. nr. 40., sztr. 7. (Szám nélk. irat, 1919. március 15.)

of the Ruthenian People's Council, as political commissar of the autonomous territory. This was accomplished by telegram on March 25, the text of which is as follows: "To József Kaminszky, political commissar, Governor's Office, Munkács. I direct you to assume control of the Ruska-Krajna Governorship and continue its operation in the spirit of the soviet republic, in the most effective manner. – soviet commissar for Ruska-Krajna."⁹⁹

Rusyn people's commissar Ágoston Stéfán also notified by telegram the directorates of the four counties - Ung, Bereg, Ugocsa and Máramaros – of Kaminszky's appointment and scope of authority. We quote the decree: "I addressed the following decree, 1071/1919, to Dr. József Kaminszky, representative of Ruska-Krajna, in Munkács. I appoint him as political commissar for Ruska-Krajna. His territorial sphere of authority, until all the Rusyn populated areas are liberated, will extend to the Tiszavölgy, Máramarossziget, Taracköz, Técső, Huszt, Dolha and Ökörmező districts of Máramaros County, the Nagyszöllős and Királyháza districts of Ugocsa County, the Vereczke, Szolyva, Volócz, Munkács and Uplands districts of Bereg County as well as the Berezna, Perecseny, Ungvár and Szerednye districts of Ung County. The directorates and its public servants are to carry out his instructions and orders. Establish contact with the directorates of Csap, Beregszász and Szatmárnémeti and, in concert with them, you will (*sic*) ensure that the directives of the Revolutionary Governing Council of Hungary, as well as my decrees, are carried out and executed precisely. Regarding questions in which you have no public servants to carry out, seek out the directorate to wit, to have them, have their public servants enforce your orders on the above named territory. I reserve for myself the right to replace and appoint public officials or political commissars. Any of your suggestions in this regard are to be made to me, of which I will immediately notify the directorate for their information. Dr. Ágoston Stéfán, Rusyn soviet commissar, member of the Revolutionary Governing Council of Hungary."¹⁰⁰

The majority of those towns and villages of Ruska-Krajna not occupied by Czechoslovak or Romanian units formed local soviets, which assumed direction of local administrative duties. In Ugocsa County from March 22. As county center for Ung County – since Ungvár was under Czechoslovak control since January 12 – the village of Csap was designated. There, on March 23, the local soviet of workers, soldiers and peasants organized a three man county directorate. The following day, that body proclaimed Edict I. of the Revolutionary Governing Council regarding the introduction of a state of emergency, of steps intended to prevent counter-revolutionary activities.¹⁰¹ The directorate of Bereg County was settled on Beregszász, of Ugocsa County in Nagyszöllős, and of Máramaros County – the county seat, Máramarossziget, being under Romanian occupation – in the village of Huszt.

In a mere three days – between March 22 and 24 – settlements in all seven districts of Bereg County, in all three districts of Ugocsa County, and a portion of Máramaros County (Huszt, Dolha, Volóc, Técső and Taracvölgy districts, and a part of Tiszavölgy) proclaimed the authority of the soviet republic [modeled on the Russian soviets-*Ed.*]. The parts of the county North of the Tisza River, as well as the area North of Máramarossziget, in the vicinity of Nagybockó was held by Romanian troops. Local directorates were also formed in most settlements of Ung County. They encompassed all of Szerednye district, parts of Nagyberezna and Perecseny districts – the temporary seat of both being in the village of Turjaremete – and 37 villages (of 46) in the Nagykapos district, as well as a part of Ungvár district, which, as we noted previously was partly under Czechoslovak military control.¹⁰² The remainder of Ung County, the majority, to the demarcation line along the Ung River, was occupied by Czechoslovak units.

The so-called transitional constitution – which the Revolutionary Governing Council proclaimed on April 2 as edict XXVI – stated in article 2: "In the Soviet Republic of Hungary, every nation, if living in a large, contiguous area will form a separate national council and executive committee. The permanent constitution of the Soviet Republic of Hungary, based on federal lines, the formation of the various national councils, their relations to each other will be

⁹⁹ KTÁL. Fond 59., op. 1., od. zb. nr. 56., sztr. 52.

¹⁰⁰ KTÁL. Fond 59., op. 1., od. zb. nr. 56., sztr. 5-6.

¹⁰¹ KTÁL. Fond 172., op. 1., od. zb. nr. 2330., sztr. 1.

¹⁰² Szpivak – Trojan: Felejthetlen ... op. cit. p. 62.

determined by the National Council of Soviets.”¹⁰³

As we have already written, the governing council of Ruska-Krajna held elections on March 4. The Governing Council of the newly elected was only able to meet a month later – by then under the soviet republic – on April 8, in Munkács. This body – contrary to some historical sources¹⁰⁴ – was not the chief governing body of Ruska-Krajna as it did not function as a territorial assembly. Nor was it the first Rusyn parliament. The enabling legislation that brought it into being, the previously cited statute 928/1919 M.E., clearly declared in article 1: “Until such time as a Rusyn National Assembly can be convened, a Rusyn Governing Council will be created to oversee the functioning of government bodies of Ruska-Krajna and makes its recommendations dealing with Rusyn autonomy known to the Minister of Ruska-Krajna. The seat of the Governing Council is Munkács.”¹⁰⁵

During the interlude of the soviet republic, the Ruska-Krajna Governor’s office continued its activities under the supervision of the newly created Rusyn Commissariat, which oversaw is as one of its directorates. The role of the Ruska-Krajna Governing Council shrank into insignificance. Hence, it held its first meeting in Munkács only April 8. Its second – and final – meeting took place on April 17, also in Munkács, where some members of the Governing Council voiced their objection to the policies of the soviet republic. Not only objected but some expressed sharp anti-communist views, which led to heated debate in the chamber. At the command of the directorate of Munkács, the armed workers of the local tobacco factory and construction workers of Munkács and Várpálánka were dispatched to the scene under the commissar of Beregszász, Gyula Katkó. On their appearance on the scene, the Governing Council dissolved itself.¹⁰⁶ Although articles 86 and 87 of the constitution enacted on June 23 recognized as “Rusyn National Territory”¹⁰⁷ the Rusyn populated areas – consisting of most of Máramaros, Ugocsa, Bereg, Ung, Zemplén and Sáros Counties -, however, most of the affected areas, with the exception of Bereg and Ugocsa, were under Czechoslovak or Romanian military occupation for months. Thus, the articles of the statute carried merely hypothetical force of law.

In spite of it, the upper echelon of soviet republic government continued to create a working Ruthenian self-government based on national self-determination. To implement this goal, it only had a window of 40 days in the area designated as Ruska-Krajna by the Károlyi government. That is the period it was in control of the situation of the autonomous territory of Ung County (from Ungvár and East of the Ung River), most of Bereg County, and Ugocsa and Máramaros Counties North of the Tisza River. The plan of the soviet created a Ruska-Krajna of 20,130 km² with a population of 980,000. It would have encompassed Máramaros County, without the southern districts of Izavölgy and Aknasugatag, and six villages of Felsővisó district; Ugocsa County; Bereg County without the district of Mezőkaszony, six villages of Tiszahát district and the city of Beregszász; Ung County without the district of Nagykapos. Also included was Zemplén County, less the districts of Bodroghöz, Sárospatak, Szerencs and Tokaj, 10 villages of Sátoraljaújhely district and the city of Sátoraljaújhely. Finally, it was to extend over Sáros County, minus a small portion of Eperjes, Kisszeben, Lemes and Girált districts and the towns of Eperjes and Kisszeben. The territorial capital was designated as Munkács. The Northeastern Uplands thus delineated essentially (would have) contained the Ruthenian populated areas. Of course, only on paper. The military reality only permitted a Ruthenian Governorship area of 9,700 km², with a population of 460,000. Thus, only a partial governmental framework could be realized.¹⁰⁸

¹⁰³ Tanácsköztársasági Törvénytár. I. 1919 [Statutes of the Soviet Republic of Hungary, vol I, 1919]. pp. 43-44.

¹⁰⁴ Нариси історії Закарпаття. Том II / Narisi istoriï Zakarpats’ka. vol. 2 ... op. cit. pp. 80-81; Fedinec: A kárpátaljai ... op. cit. p. 11, etc.

¹⁰⁵ KTÁL. Fond 59., op. 1., od. zb. nr. 40., sztr. 23.

¹⁰⁶ Нариси історії Закарпаття. Том II / Narisi istoriï Zakarpats’ka. vol. II ... op. cit. p. 81.

¹⁰⁷ Tanácsköztársasági ... op. cit. vol. V, pp. 20-21.

¹⁰⁸ Pinczés, Zoltán: Kárpátalja gazdasági életének természetföldrajzi alapjai [Geographic basis of Subcarpathia’s economic life], In: *Kárpátalja*. Nyiregyháza, 1999, p. 11.

At the same time, the soviet republic's constitution laid down the principles to be contained in the constitutional proposal of the to-be-created autonomous "Rusyn National Territory," Конституція Руської Країни (Konstitucija Ruskoj Kraini, Constitution of Ruska-Krajna). The proposed constitution was published on April 12 in Munkács, in the *Руська Правда* (Ruska Pravda),¹⁰⁹ the official weekly of the Rusyn Commissariat. It is important to point out that it consisted of sketchy basic concepts and was not as detailed as the constitution of the Germans living in Hungary. The essence of the constitutional proposal was that Ruska-Krajna, as an independent territorial union (самостойный крайнский союз), remains an integral part of the Soviet Republic of Hungary. "The constitution decrees the complete independence of the internal affairs of the Rusyn people... based on the system of the soviets." Working men and women of the territory are eligible to vote after 18, the exception being those unemployed, shopkeepers, the clergy, criminals, etc. In Ruska-Krajna, a representative was to be elected to the local soviet after every 100 in the villages, after 500 in the towns. The old counties disappear in the autonomous territory, to be replaced by five precincts (округ, okrug): Máramaros, Bereg, Ung, Zemplén and Sáros. Representatives from the soviets of the cities and districts of Ruska-Krajna will form a "separate Congress," 10 from each precinct. This 50 person "governing congress" (управительный конгрессъ) would constitute the highest governing body of the population of Ruska-Krajna. They would be the Rusyn National Assembly. They would send 20 representatives to the Hungarian National Assembly (до собора Угорських державныхъ советовъ).¹¹⁰ Thus, the plan was that Ruska-Krajna remains as part of the Soviet Republic of Hungary on a union (allied) basis, replacing the counties with five precincts. In the first phase, three Ruthenian precinct soviets were planned – Bereg, Ung and Máramaros – with their centers in Munkács, Szerednye and Huszt.

The official paper of the Rusyn People's Commissariat, the *Ruska Pravda*, grasped the essence of the special territory, rather, its self-government, in its publication – in the same issue that published the constitutional proposal. The headline states "Ruska-Krajna – independent governorship (Руська-Країна – самостойна губернія)," subtitled "Friendly Pact between Hungary and the Russian (Rusyn) people" (Союзъ братскій Угорщины съ Руськимъ народомъ). The paper stated, among other things, that "the nation consist of equals. The sole difference is that every village can freely use the language it holds dearest... There is no boundary between the people because every village and town can decide for itself where it wants to belong."¹¹¹ It must be added to the preceding that a week earlier, on April 7, the Revolutionary Governing Council passed its Edict XLI,¹¹² titled: "The language of petitions and decisions" – regarding official language usage. The decree, consisting of one chapter, directs that offices must accept petitions in any language used in the country, and the response is to be in the same language.

The executive of the soviet republic – as we wrote – planned that the National Assembly of Soviets will hammer out and ratify the ultimate constitution, in which the boundaries of the autonomous national territories will also be fixed. (The Assembly of Soviets finally met between June 14 and 23. The passages of the ratified constitution dealing with the territory of Ruska-Krajna¹¹³ could not be enforced as the area in question came under Czechoslovak or Romanian military occupation a month and a half earlier.) However, up to that time, they were occupied in defining the boundaries of the autonomous precincts. This is evidenced by Revolutionary Governing Council Edict LXXVII. Of

¹⁰⁹ Руська Правда (Ruska Pravda / Rusyn Truth). Its first issue appeared in Munkács on April 12, 1919, as the official forum of the 'Ruska-Krajna Commissariat.' The last, fourth, edition of this weekly was published in Budapest on May 13.

¹¹⁰ *Ruska Pravda*, April 12, 1919, p. 2.

¹¹¹ *Ruska Pravda*, April 12, 1919, p. 1.

¹¹² Tanácsköztársasági ... op. cit. vol. I, p. 60; *Tanácsköztársaság*, 1919. április 7.

¹¹³ *Ibid*, vol. V, pp. 20-21.

April 28:¹¹⁴ “The election of German and Rusyn soviets,” which ordered the election of Rusyn (and German) precinct soviets. The order meant the creation of the Rusyn precinct autonomous bodies, since local elections already took place in the early days of April on most of the territory controlled by the soviet republic – and not under foreign military control -, hence, in Ruska-Krajna, as well.

It is important to point out that according to the laws of the supreme governing body, the Governing Council, territorially widely dispersed nations were referred to as national minorities. Those living in larger, contiguous areas were called nations. For “cultural development,” all non-Hungarian minorities were allowed to form national councils. They, however, did not get territorial governing or other legal rights. According to article 84 of the constitution:¹¹⁵ the creation of the different national ethnic bodies “can not weaken the organization of the soviets, established on a territorial basis.” Aside from the previous limitation, they received deciding authority in the election of the Rusyn (and German) commissar. At the highest level, the various nationalities were represented by their national ethnic councils. In the case of the Rusyns (and Germans), the national councils of the precincts represented an intermediate level, which acted as executive bodies in the territorial soviet organization. The authority of the soviets of the precincts created out of the ethnic districts was equal to the county soviets. A national precinct of a given minority was ultimately to be made up of the independent districts. Due to a shortage of time, this was only partly accomplished for the Germans of Hungary. In Ruska-Krajna, due to enemy military attacks, the autonomous organization of Rusyn soviets could only partially be completed.

In the days of the already mentioned April 7-8 elections in Ruska-Krajna, the precinct directorates and soviets were established. The creation of the directorates – executed by József Kaminszky of Munkács – was based on Directive 10/1919, dated April 5, of Rusyn commissar Ágoston Stéfán: “§ 1. Every Rusyn precinct will immediately convene a three-man directorate. These directorates will immediately assume the rights and authorities of the previous county directorates. § 2. The members of the directorate will be appointed by the Rusyn Commissar from a list nominated by the political commissars of Munkács. The precinct directorates will immediately begin their activities after the nomination by the political commissars of Munkács. § 3. The county directorates will cease to exist immediately after the creation of the Rusyn precinct directorates.”¹¹⁶ The preceding makes it crystal clear that, after the election of the soviets, the role of the county directorates of Ruska-Krajna ceased with the creation of the Rusyn precincts. In this, the regional government structure diverged completely from the rest of the country where the county-based organization remained.

After the creation of the precinct directories, on April 15, Rusyn commissar Ágoston Stéfán named the Ruska-Krajna Directorate. Due to the threatening situation from the Czechoslovak army occupying most of Ung County, the Ung precinct soviet only came into being on April 23, with its seat in Csap – as we know, from the previously quoted instructions of Kaminszky, only of the Ungvár and Szerednye districts – holding its first and last meeting on that date.

In the last two weeks of existence of the Soviet Republic in Ruska-Krajna, the dual governing structure of the autonomous region was essentially created. On the one hand, in the form of soviets at the village, district and city levels, under the local precinct soviets or directorates; similarly, from the bottom up to the level of the Rusyn districts, whose highest body was the already mentioned Ruska-Krajna Directorate.

The Czechoslovak Legion units recommenced their attacks on April 5, 1919, pouring artillery and machinegun fire on the Hungarian occupied areas of Ung County. In occupied Ungvár, mass arrests were carried out, especially among the railway workers. Aside from this, 74 occupants of the city were held as hostages. On April 9 – again crossing the demarcation line illegally – Czechoslovak units attacked in the region of Perecseny and were again repulsed by troops of the soviet republic. A week later, on April 16, an all out attack was begun to take control of the neutral zone as detailed in the note of Lt. Col. Vix on March 20, i.e., along a front running from Máramarossziget – Técső – Huszt – Szatmárnémeti – Nagykároly – Nagyvárad – Nagyszalonta – Arad. At the same time, an attack was

¹¹⁴ Ibid, vol. II, p. 52; *Tanácsköztársaság*, 1919. április 29.

¹¹⁵ Ibid, vol. V, p. 20; *Tanácsköztársaság*, 1919. június 28.

¹¹⁶ KTÁL. Fond 59., op. 1., od. zb. nr. 47., sztr. 2. (1301/1919. Eln. sz. ir.)

made to the Northwest and Huszt was occupied on April 19. On the same day, in Ungvár, French General Hennoque ordered the representatives of the city to City Hall and announced to them: Ungvár is annexed to Czechoslovakia. He then declared a state of emergency.

Romanian forces launched a new attack on April 20, but it soon became bogged down. In the important rail center of Ugocsa County, in the area of Királyháza and Felsőveresmart, more than 600 Red soldiers engaged the enemy. In the city of Nagyszőlős, armed citizens and workers took up arms. The Hungarian command, stationed in Csap, ordered an armored train into the desperate fight, which successfully engaged the Romanian forces three times. In two days, the superior numbers overcame the Hungarian forces in Ugocsa. Királyháza and Nagyszőlős were only taken after an artillery barrage.¹¹⁷ Romanian forces thus occupied the area of traditional Subcarpathia South of the line of Körösmező–Rahó–Nagybocskó–Técső–Huszt–Királyháza–Nagyszőlős–Beregszász, the named settlements included. With it, the main Romanian military objectives were achieved: the railway lines of Beregszász–Tiszaújlak–Nagyszőlős and Szatmárnémeti–Királyháza–Huszt–Máramarossziget–Rahó–Körösmező, along with the salt mines in the vicinity of Aknaszlatina.

On receiving news of the enemy attacks on April 19, armed groups in Beregszász, led by army officers, revolted against the Soviets to wrest power from them. After two days of fighting, on April 21, they took control of the city. The Directorate of Bereg County, in retaliation, arrested 22 notable citizens – called ‘bourgeois’ of the times, land-, mill- and factory owners, wine dealers, bank director, public servants too: district attorney, railway director and judge – and sent them to Budapest under special Red Guard unit.¹¹⁸ A similar anti-Soviet movement was started in the center of the Ruthenian autonomous region, Munkács. The ex-mayor of the town, retired Hussar Captain Gábor Bay, and 14 others – militiamen and junior officers – attacked a superior, well armed force of Red Guards 35 times their number. In a three-hour battle on the night of April 21 to 22, they managed to disarm 523 of them, securing that many weapons, along with two handguns and four machineguns. At the same time, they also managed to free 41 officers, 21 NCOs, 18 border guards and 17 customs officers from captivity.¹¹⁹

Two days later, on April 23, Czechoslovak forces began extensive attacks to the Southwest, towards the Hungarian populated areas of Nagykapos and Csap, and to the South and East, into the Ruthenian Autonomous Region. A special regiment, comprised of Red Army soldiers, was sent to Subcarpathia from Budapest. This unit assumed control of Bereg County and Munkács on April 24, a fact announced by the county directorate to the populace in a proclamation. The body announced special measures, declaring a state of emergency in Munkács. On the afternoon of April 26, units of the Romanian army entered Beregszász, accompanied by parliamentarians who went out to greet them. The following day, they occupied the village of Gát, half way to Munkács where, as was their normal procedure in occupied villages, the Romanian cavalry requisitioned hay and oats from the villagers. Their robberies were everyday occurrences. They took not only feed for their horses but forcibly took food – poultry, eggs, bread – from the villagers, nightly stealing cows and pigs from the farmers. During the three months of occupation, in the village of Gát alone, the looting Romanian soldiers caused several hundred thousand Crowns of damage.¹²⁰ The Czechoslovak legionnaires linked up with units of the Romanian army on April 28 between Csap and Munkács, in the vicinity of the village of Nagydobrony. Together, on the same day, they entered Bereg County’s second largest city, Munkács, where Prefect Kaminszky assumed control of public administration in the name of the Czech authorities.

The Rusyn Red Guards and Red units gradually retreated toward the West, toward the center of the country. In the evening of April 29, the 40-day reign of the Soviet republic came to an end in Subcarpathia. There was especially bitter fighting around the train station of Csap. The 65. Hungarian Red Brigade was able to withstand for two weeks, until May 2, the day and night attacks of the Czechoslovak forces, later reinforced by the Romanians. When the brigade withdrew, Czechoslovak forces were able to enter on May 3 into Csap unopposed. Hence, all of

¹¹⁷ Szpivak – Trojan: Felejthetetlen ... op. cit. pp. 100-103.

¹¹⁸ KTÁL. Fond 709., op. 1., od. zb. nr. 41., sztr. 1-2.

¹¹⁹ MOL. K 28., 102. tét., 1940–L–15 246. sz., pp. 42-50; *Kárpáti Híradó* (Ungvár), 1939. augusztus 19.

¹²⁰ Botlik, József: Gát [Dam]. Budapest, 2001, p. 73.

Ruska-Krajna came under foreign occupation. Three months later, on July 21, Romanian troops suddenly withdrew from Beregszász, their place taken by Czechoslovak troops. Their commander, Colonel Hostas, and commissar Kaminszky administered the oath of allegiance to the Czechoslovak Republic to the civil servants. Czech administration was begun using Hungarian public servants.¹²¹

A month after the fall of Csap, on June 6, 1919, the Czechoslovak government announced a state of emergency in the areas conquered by its armies (Ung, Bereg, Máramaros and Ugocsa Counties) and decreed a military dictatorship that was only lifted after two and a half years, on January 9, 1922.¹²² Censorship of the press in Subcarpathia was ended almost four months later, on April 27.

As its final military action in the theater, planes of the Soviet Republic of Hungary bombed the village of Csap on July 25, 1919. In response, the Czechoslovak army occupied the Northern Hungarian demilitarized zone as defined in the truce signed in Pozsony (Bratislava) on July 1. The agreement was signed by Justice Commissar Péter Ágoston (1874-1925) and French General Eugene Mittelhauser, representing the Czechoslovak Army. The line of Hungarian-Czechoslovak demarcation was drawn after the June 30 withdrawal of Hungarian units from the reclaimed areas of the Uplands taken during the successful Northern campaign of the soviet republic. The line ran along what was essentially to become the subsequent Trianon border, leaving a 4 km. demilitarized zone between the armies. The agreement was of a military nature but admitted the introduction of Czechoslovak administration in the evacuated areas. This sanctioned the final severance of Northern Hungary and Subcarpathia.

Armed opposition to Czechoslovak rule

May 1919 – February 1923

Now to take in hand history that has been generally forgotten, or intentionally twisted or rewritten by Czechoslovak, Hungarian and Russian historians. “It filled the soul of every homeland loving Hungarian with sadness when he saw the sacred land of Rákóczi in the hands of Czech pickpockets and there, where once the mournful sound of the tárogató [a reed instrument similar to the clarinet-*Ed.*] called to battle against Austrian oppression Hungarians and the *gens fidelissima* [faithful people] of our great Prince – the Ruthenians, always loyal to Hungary -, armies of cowardly Czech mercenaries swaggering... Is it possible for a Hungarian to accept this? No, no, it is an impossibility that sacred Hungarian soil, soaked with the blood of so many countrymen, become the plunder of cowardly Czechs. It is our sacred belief that the Hungarians of the Great Plains will not permit it and the time will soon come when the ‘Charge!’ sounds, once again to plant the Hungarian tricolor on the peaks of the Carpathians. So that the day of the Hungarian resurrection should not find unprepared the *gens fidelissima*, the Ruthenians, thus preparations for an armed revolt have begun in (Lower) Verecke district” – begins the memoirs of Andor Komporday (1884-1964), Greek Catholic minister of Sebesfalva in Bereg County, born in the settlement of Bező in Ung County.¹²³

After the military occupation of Bereg County, preparations were made in May of 1919 for the armed revolt of Hungarians and Ruthenians against the new regime. Close to the foot of the 1,405 m. high Pikuj Peak, part of the

¹²¹ Kozma, György: Egy vármegye harca és haldoklása [A county’s struggle and demise]. Szentes, 1933, pp. 141-142, 153, 165.

¹²² Szarka, László: A (cseh)szlovákiai magyar közösség nyolc évtizede 1918–1998 [Eight decades of a Hungarian community in (Czech)Slovakia, 1918-1998], In: A (cseh)szlovákiai magyar művelődés története 1918–1998. I. köt. Budapest, 1998, p. 20.

¹²³ Menekültek könyve. (A megszállott magyar területről kiűldözött magyar testvéreink kálváriája) [The book of the refugees. (The Calvary of our Hungarian brethren expelled from occupied Hungarian territory)]. Miskolc, 1940, p. 83.

Hungarian border for a millennium, lies Sebesfalva, population 172, mostly Ruthenians. The local Greek Catholic minister and his companions gathered at the rectory. “We swore to the holiest name of Hungary and God that we will labor against the Czech bandits, that we will organize the Ruthenian people for an armed uprising, that we will eject the Czechs by force of arms and the Ruthenian people, the sacred land of Rákóczi, will once again be free.” After the oath, they began to organize, to maintain permanent contact with Budapest and Poland. “The Ruthenian villagers joined enthusiastically, lining up under the flag of the revolt and swearing with holy oath to remain loyal – even to the death – to the Hungarian homeland.” All this the organizers carried out with the greatest of secrecy, making inroads into those parts of Bereg, Máramaros and Ugocsa Counties under Czechoslovak control. “It was impossible to work openly, because we were surrounded by Czech bayonets and we knew well that if the Czech became wise to our organizing, we were as good as dead.”

Pastor Komporday’s wife travelled to Budapest in November of 1919, which “was dangerous in those days because the Czechs looked with at it with suspicion and created difficulties. It was only thanks to her bravery and ingenuity that the Czechs did not nab her.” In the capital, the woman was put in contact with the appropriate circles, through the offices of Minorities Minister Miklós Kutkafalvy, who again assured her of their ‘utmost’ support for the movement. They also informed her, that the armed uprising must take place in the spring of 1920, and that all must be completely organized by then. On returning home, the woman sewed a flag, putting on one side a picture of the Virgin Mary with the words “For God and Country.” It was not easy to assemble a flag. In Munkács, only red silk or material was sold, in Kassa only white, while green was not to be had anywhere. The Czechs were careful that on their occupied territory Hungarian tricolors would be difficult to make. Finally, green silk for the flag was acquired from the Polish village of Sztrij. The standard was taken among the ordinary Ruthenian men, those who served in the world war, and then “... such a scene took place, that it stands a shining example of the loyalty of the Ruthenian boys. The brave Ruthenian boys bent over the flag, crying, kissing it and renewing their oath to carry the flag to victory. And to properly greet the Poles who will hurry to their aid, my wife made a Polish national flag, too, with ‘Vivat Polonia’ written around the white eagle.”¹²⁴

On March 20, 1920, a messenger from Budapest arrived to the Komporday family with the news that the uprising will break out in two weeks, and to be prepared. The messenger also conveyed that in a few days Hungarian officers will arrive in Sebesfalva who will take control of the uprising, or rather its military direction. In the final weeks of organizing, the minister managed to convince Hungarian, Ruthenian and Slovak soldiers serving in the Czech army to his side. What’s more, he convinced a whole battalion of ‘deutsch-boemisch,’ or Czechoslovak Germans, too. The armed uprising was completely organized, the time was fixed and the plan was ready. From the Great Plains, the South, Hungarian forces will attack, while from the North the Ruthenian-Hungarian rebels will attack the occupying Czechoslovak soldiers and gendarmes, in a cross fire. On the last day, instructions came from Budapest delaying the action, as the foreign political situation was not suitable for an armed uprising. Komporday later found out that in the decision to begin the action was one vote short. “We painfully acknowledged the order and awaited the suitable time,” which never came.

In the meantime, Czech authorities got wind of the movement through the betrayal of a Hungarian intellectual and began a hunt for the organizers of the uprising. On April 3, 1920, a person calling himself Bálint Simon, an officer in the Horthy army, showed up at the rectory of Sebesfalva. He stated that he came from the Hungarian capital and was on his way to Warsaw. The minister and his wife greeted the alleged Hungarian officer, offering him food, wine and cigarettes, talking about the fate of the country. During their conversation, the visitor made certain remarks, related certain news, which aroused the suspicion regarding his Hungarian officer status. His nervous behavior made the hosts even more suspicious. In a private moment, the woman warned her husband to beware, because their visitor is not a Hungarian officer but a Czech detective or *agent provocateur* (a secret police spy). “I pocketed my revolver, as I was ready for the worst – continued Andor Komporday in his memoirs. – Our conversation continued and he asked several times for me to make out travel documents, and that I should guide him across to Poland. I assured him that he will receive the documents and not to be afraid of the Ruthenians, as they were all Hungarian sympathizers and there would not be a traitor among them. As I myself was completely certain that the person was a Czech detective sent to capture us and that he has not arrested us because he wanted to get the documents as well, I did not feel it necessary to hide my emotions as I knew we would first sit down to break bread together.”

Tensions mounted in the room with the delay, which could have erupted at any moment. “However, God intended otherwise” – wrote the minister. A Ruthenian peasant woman knocked on the door and, on entering, asked

¹²⁴ Ibid, pp. 83-85.

that the minister go to the neighboring settlement of Latorcafő, population 639 Rusyns, to hear the confessions of three seriously ill persons. (The settlement was an independent parish, but its priest died a few weeks earlier. Komporday looked after it from Sebesfalva.) The pastor had the horses hitched to the carriage, while assuring the visitor: he will return soon, have supper together, make out the required documents and have a Ruthenian peasant guide him across the border to Poland. The alleged Hungarian officer pleaded with him to return as soon as possible. The pastor reassured him that he will hurry. At the edge of the village, four Czech gendarmes were standing in front of the tavern, bayonets fixed. The carriage of the Czech high constable of Alsóverecke was also in front of the hostelry, with him inside. The gendarmes greeted Komporday, then sent him on his way. The circumstances convinced the pastor that they came to detain him. The only reason they did not arrest him was because the detective was in the rectory and he must have had reason to let him go.

The preacher heard the confessions of the three ill people. When he was finished, three sworn Ruthenian revolutionaries were waiting at the local rectory where he left his carriage. Shortly, a fourth appeared – “an intelligent youth who was also a member of the revolutionary band, whom I sent to Ungvár a week earlier to enquire from the priests of the neighborhood who had contacts in the Czech military intelligence, some important information.” In his conversation, Komporday told about his suspicious visitor. They told him that the so-called Hungarian officer went to Sebesfalva, accompanied by the high constable and the four gendarmes. They saw them on their way home from Alsóverecke. Komporday saw the situation clearly and that he must act quickly. The trusted Ruthenians suggested that they take out their hidden weapons and disarm the gendarmes. If they fail to surrender, then shoot them; then capture the high constable and the detective and cross over to Poland with their prisoners. Their friend will greet them gladly, not only because of old friendships but because they convey the Czech high constable of Alsóverecke, whom “the Poles despise, and would like the pleasure of his company.”

The preacher took the offered suggestion and ordered that they gather another 5-6 rebels with arms and ammunition and gather in the yard of the rectory. Then, they will all proceed to Sebesfalva to disarm and capture the Czech gendarmes, detective and high constable. The three Ruthenian youths immediately left to carry out the order but were soon running back to report: the four gendarmes are already here in Latorcafő, there is no time to gather more men or the weapons. They implored the priest to flee immediately and not worry about them. Komporday wrote a hasty letter to his wife and let her know that they came to arrest him and that he was taking refuge in Poland. She should try to be brave and, if possible to flee also. He would wait in the first Polish village. He gave the letter to his driver who was also a trusted rebel, stressing to give the letter to his wife secretly. While this was taking place, the gendarmes appeared at the rectory. The priest took flight in his cassock, on foot. In minutes, he disappeared among the houses of Latorcafő, reaching the forest and hastily heading for the Polish border. This was no easy matter as he had to cross the cordon of Czech border guards. “The battalion stationed in Alsóverecke contained Hungarians, Ruthenians and Slovaks who were sympathizers, but there were rabid Czechs, too. The success of my escape depended on who was on guard: our friends or the Czechs?”

Andor Komporday set out at 7PM on April 3, 1920, reaching the Polish border at midnight, having wandered through the forests of the Carpathians. He proceeded for another 15 minutes when he heard barking dogs and indistinct human voices. They were Czech and tracking him with dogs. After one hour of tramping, he reached a Polish farm where he was given food and the farmer’s son took him to the nearest village, Visvek. Here Komporday visited the Polish gendarme station where he found old friends. He recounted his tale and asked them to look into what happened to his wife and children. He stayed a week in Visveki. During that week, he found out that his wife was arrested by the Czechs on the day he escaped, April 3, and that his children were in the care of his older sister. He also found out from the Polish gendarmes, who crossed over to the Czechoslovak side *incognito*, that on the night of the 3rd, the Czech conducted a “thorough identity check.” The whole battalion stationed at Alsóverecke was mobilized to give him chase, with dogs. Every house, barn and granary in the surrounding five villages were searched with the intent to hang him on the spot, if found.

The Czech authorities would not rest but wanted to capture Komporday at all cost. “They appeared in Visveki, disguised as Polish Jews, and asked about where I was staying. My Polish friends warned me that, as Visveki was very close to the border, it would be better if I moved deeper into the country, although they would be happy to guard me, for which they raised the number of gendarmes posted.” Andor Komporday went to the village of Turka, then Lemberg and finally Warsaw where he met the Hungarian ambassador, count István Csekonics. “I told him of our plotting and why our plan did not succeed. The count surprised me by saying that he knew of my work and that he was informed of it. And, too bad that it failed but it was not my fault... Still on the same day, I visited the anti-Czech Ruthenian propaganda office, also operating in Warsaw, under the direction of a former lawyer from Rahó, Gusztáv Stefán. We discussed organizing anti-Czech movements in the future. Sadly, this Stefán later changed sides and became a traitor to the cause of the Hungarian and Ruthenian people.”

The next day, Komporday again paid a visit to ambassador Csekonics and asked him to take steps through diplomatic channels to free his wife from jail. The count replied that he will not even talk with the Czechoslovak ambassador in Warsaw, as he knows him from the Monarchy, when they served together in Munich. Instead, he will try through the Spanish ambassador, who is on good terms with the Czechs, and try to arrange the exchange of his wife with a Czech prisoner held by Hungary. Due to an embargo on the Polish-German border, the minister could only get a passport a month later. In the meantime, he was the guest of the Hungarian-Ruthenian propaganda office, put up in the Victoria Hotel in Warsaw. Finally, as a Hungarian diplomatic courier, he made his way to Budapest via Berlin and Vienna on May 18. On the same day, he made his way to the Ministry of National Minorities and recounted the details of his escape to Under-Secretary of State Miklós Kutkafalvy and two of his counselors. They replied that steps have already been taken to secure the release of his wife. The next day, Komporday visited the Italian Mission in Budapest in the matter of freeing his wife. At the end of the month, he secured employment in the propaganda office located in Sátoraljaújhely where he worked with a lawyer friend from Munkács, also a refugee. The Minister of Defense appointed him as army chaplain and he worked in this capacity until July 1, 1921 when he was given the parish of Rudabányácska in Zemplén County. "I heard from friends who escaped from the Czech occupied area, one of whom was named Medveczky and who worked in 1920 in the Czech prefect's office in Munkács and thus witnessed first-hand the surprise of the prefect and the military commander at the news of my escape. The Czech sentenced me to death, *in absentia*, in April of 1920 and posted a reward of 50,000 Sokols for my capture. The sentence and reward are still in effect (i.e., at the writing of this memoir, in 1933)." The year after my escape, "in 1921, those Czech bandits fired five shots at my wife and I, and sent word here, in Kány, that they will kill me. But I believe in God's protection not to fall into Czech hands."¹²⁵ (At the time of writing his memoirs, Andor Komporday was the Greek Catholic minister of the village of Kány, pop. 264, close to the Czechoslovak- Hungarian border in Abaúj-Torna County.)

As recounted by his wife (1893-1981) born in the village of Tiszabogdány in Máramaros County: When the pastor went to hear confessions in Latorcafé, the Czech detective stayed behind and "continued his act as a Hungarian officer." He enquired of the woman if the Ruthenian people truly like and await the Hungarians? The minister's wife stated: "Yes, the vast majority of the Ruthenian people – excepting those traitors who went as a delegation to the Czechs in Prague, among whom were priests and teachers, to offer the Ruthenian populated Northeastern Hungary to the Czechs – liked the Hungarians and could hardly wait until Hungarian administration returned. At which he stated that he, too, hates the pillaging Czechs. I commented: a real Hungarian officer can feel no other way." The visitor then asked permission to look around the village and see first-hand if the people truly feel that way. The woman remarked that the people will not open their souls to a stranger and will look at him as an *agent provocateur*. The woman looked after him from the garden and saw him with a Czech policeman, in heated gesticulation. When they noticed her watching, they immediately stopped and moved apart. The sham officer continued toward the village and the policeman came up to the rectory where he asked her who the gentleman was who just left. The wife replied that the stranger introduced himself as a veterinary from Munkács who was interested in buying animals. The policeman returned to the village. The minister's wife sent her two small children into the village with the maid and asked her to see where the gendarme went and if he met with the so-called Hungarian officer. The maid returned shortly to report that the visitor went into one of the village houses with the gendarme. A short while after, the peasant woman into whose house they went ran up breathlessly and said: the gendarme gave the civilian a pair of handcuffs with the instruction to put them on the Reverend Father as soon as he returned from Latorcafé. The wife wanted to notify her husband but couldn't, as the 'officer' returned to the rectory. He followed her wherever she went, he never left her side. Forcing calmness on herself, she asked him what he talked about with the gendarme. I checked his papers, he answered and told the wife that he wrote a letter to Komporday to hurry back because he (the officer) did not feel safe in the village.

According to the wife's calculations, the minister should have returned by five o'clock – but didn't. As time passed, she felt more certain that her husband successfully crossed to Poland. He was sure to have escaped, otherwise the rebel Ruthenian soldiers would have sent word. The 'officer,' on the other hand, became more nervous. At seven, the driver arrived without the Reverend. The wife asked: Where is the Reverend Father? He went to another village to hear confessions, but walked because the horses are hungry and sent me home – answered the driver. Then he slipped the letter into her hand. The 'officer' saw it but the wife did not hand it over. Instead, she quickly read it in the kitchen. "Dear Annus! If at all possible, flee. Take money with you. I am going to Poland and wait for You in the first Polish village. Do not be sad about the children because Annie (my sister-in-law) /i.e., the minister's sister/ is arriving on Monday, April 5." The woman slowly tore up the letter and slipped it into the fire. She told the 'officer' that her husband also had to go to Medvefalva (pop. 113 Ruthenians) – in the opposite direction, South – to hear confessions.

¹²⁵ Ibid, pp. 92-93.

Let them search. Thus, she gained time for his escape. She then offered the ‘guest’ that Ruthenian peasants will guide him across the border. This he did not want and left shortly after.

The woman then set out on foot toward Poland, arriving two hours later, muddy and tired, at the rectory of Latorcaľó and the widowed minister’s wife. The gendarmes and the detective arrested her. In the meantime, back at the rectory of Sebesfalva, the police detective and gendarmes were beating the maids with rifle butts, trying to force confessions out of them. Where did Mrs. Komporday go? Must have gone for a walk – they said – not revealing that she fled. They threw the girls out of the room, then took them along to the next village but since they could not find the minister’s wife there, they let them all go. The gendarmes put the wife on a wagon in Latorcaľó and arrived back at the Sebesfalva rectory at midnight. The two maids were again interrogated but again they revealed nothing. The gendarmes and detective conducted a search of the house, turning everything upside down but found nothing incriminating, apart from three Hungarian language Budapest newspapers and a snippet of national tricolor ribbon. “The gold items kept in the cupboards disappeared in sticky Czech hands.” One gendarme was asking questions from her seven year old daughter, while holding a bayonet at the wife, offering candy and money, to reveal who visited the rectory. The child merely said: “I am a Hungarian little girl, I know nothing.”¹²⁶

At two in the morning, the Reverend’s wife was taken to Alsóverecke, to be interrogated by the Galic constable. He was irate, “tearing his hair madly, walked up and down angrily, berating the detective and the gendarmes,” that they could not capture Komporday. He yelled at the woman: “Are you waiting for the Hungarians?” “Yes, I’m waiting for them and wish they were here.” “Did you agitate against the Czechoslovak state and take part in organizing an armed revolt?” “No.” “You lie!” – screamed the constable. The minister’s wife: “Perhaps You are used to lying but not me. Even if you are holding me, behave honorably with a woman.” “When was the last time you were in Budapest?” “June of 1918.” The high constable alternated rude threats with conciliatory words, trying to elicit a confession – who were her husband’s accomplices in preparing for the armed insurrection. “The unfortunate Czech thought he was facing a spineless Ukrainian woman who will be frightened by his yelling and immediately confess everything and become a traitor of the Hungarian cause. I looked him in the eye and said: ‘Yes, I will confess everything I know but it will get you nowhere because I know nothing about the organization of an uprising.’” In answering the question, Why did you travel so often to Munkács?, she answered: “To buy food, because you don’t look after anything, so that since you Czechs arrived, all of the Uplands are starving!” “Did the Poles offer armed support?” “I know nothing about that.” The constable: “Does the Hungarian government know about the organization of a rebellion? We have certain information that Under-Secretary Kutkafalvy is working hard against the Czechs.” “If you have sure information about it, why ask me? I have never heard of it.” The high constable lost his patience and shouted at the woman: an arrest order has been issued not only for her husband but her, too. She will confess everything in Beregszász.

They finally permitted the exhausted minister’s wife to sleep on the office couch, after posting a gendarme in front of the window. Two hours later, she woke to shouting. The men of the Sebesfalva diocese demanded that the constable free her. In the morning, the “kind orderly of the old-regime constable” brought her breakfast, encouraging her, with tears in his eyes, to be brave and trust in God’s help. She was later taken by cart to the train station of Volóc, accompanied by a detective and two gendarmes, to be transported to Ungvár and not the promised prison of Beregszász. It was Easter. The streets of the town teemed with people and the sight of the minister’s wife, with a pack on her back, escorted by armed Czechs, created a scene. She saw frightened faces in all directions. Acquaintances who passed greeted her but there was fright in their eyes. In 10 minutes, the whole town knew of the arrest of Minister Komporday’s wife. They took her to the police cells where only a dirty cot stood. The woman sat down and reflected: “My dear God, on the day of Your resurrection I fell into the hands of these cowardly Czechs who now brag about the capture of frail women. My sin is my burning love for the Hungarian homeland.” She slipped to the cot and slept from exhaustion. She woke around noon to the sound of laughter. “They were Czech women who pointed at me, laughing, shaking their fists and spitting. They brought some food, something close to slop, which I refused to touch. I took a piece of bread from my pack and ate. This was my Easter lunch. In the afternoon, I was taken for interrogation.”

The woman was kept for ten days in the Ungvár jail where rats ran scurried and jumped around her on the cot. “Sleeping on the cot, or at least lying on it, created sores on my body. I was a wreck. Among the Ungvár people, the coachman of Bishop János Kuczka, the widow of Emánuel Roskovics and my mother-in-law brought me food.” (According to the custom of the day, pre-sentenced prisoners had to arrange their own food, or order it from outside.) The minister’s wife could barely sleep at night because, except for the first day, she was always interrogated around

¹²⁶ Ibid, pp. 93-98.

midnight. The Czech women who worked around the police station visited her every day to abuse and mock her, shake their fists and spit.

On the eleventh day, she was again put on a train and escorted to Beregszász where she was locked into a courthouse cell with seven Gypsy women. When the delinquent women found out she was a political prisoner, they behaved with utmost respect toward her. Here, too, she was questioned daily – always at midnight. On an afternoon walk, she saw seven chained Ruthenian youths of the sworn rebels brought in. She immediately recognized them. “Every day we would silently greet each other ... They tortured these fine Ruthenian boys something terrible but none confessed. The oath they swore, they kept.” She was questioned by a military judge from Prague who shouted at her in consternation that “the Czechoslovak state would have been shook to its foundations if the armed revolt of the Ruthenian people, of which I was a chief organizer, had succeeded.” The woman answered that “you are quite mistaken because I have no knowledge of any revolt and never had.” She was allowed out of her cell for a half hour walk every day and directed into that section of the yard where those suffering from typhoid were sitting in the sun. The disease was rampant in the Beregszász jail in those days. Two doctors in the jail contracted the disease and both died from it. “Thank God, I did not contract it. I became just skin and bones in the jail.”

At the intercession of the Italian military mission of Budapest, she was temporarily released from jail on June 4, 1920 until the date of the military tribunal to be held in Kassa. She had to report daily at the police station, or they checked whether she was at home. Later, she was able to outwit the vigilance of the Czech authorities and cross the Hungarian border with her two young children. She met with her husband in Sátoraljaújhely. There they found out that the alleged Hungarian officer sent to capture them was a former Hungarian border guard who went over to the service of the Czech authorities. The Hungarian flag sewn for the forces of the uprising, decorated with the picture of the Virgin Mary, was secreted in the altar pillow of the church of Sebesalom. It was never found by the Czech detectives. The flag was later brought to Hungary by a Greek Catholic preacher and at the time of the recording of her memoirs, 1933, was in the safekeeping of National Guard Captain Vilmos Rajnay.”¹²⁷

The planned armed insurrection was recounted in a publication during the soviet era as the anti-social activities of the Greek Catholic Church, the faithful servant of the Austro-Hungarian and Czechoslovak ruling class and Fascist enslavers. “A. (Andrej) Fankovich Unitarian (Greek Catholic) minister, organizer of the ‘Rusyn legion’ terrorist and diversionary unit, received a prison term of 18 months, and a five year ban from public affairs, from the court in Kassa for his spying and agitation acts on behalf of the Horthy-ites ... In 1920, a Czechoslovak agent in Budapest sent a message to the governor of Podkarpatská Rus that the preacher of Alsóverecke, Minister Andor Komporday, along with his brother-in-law, Gyula Koszej, are the spies of the Hungarian and Polish Fascists. They are spreading provocative writings and weapons. Subsequently, the agents (i.e., Komporday and Koszej) left Czechoslovakia and fled to Poland.”¹²⁸ The statement needs to be corrected: Andor Komporday’s brother-in-law was minister Endre Fankovich and not Gyula Koszej. Fankovich’s wife was, Elizabeth, the younger sister of Komporday. (Personal recollection by the son of Andor Komporday, lawyer Zoltán Komporday (1925-), resident of Miskolc, Hungary.)

Here we complete the parents’ 1933 record with the son’s personal recollection. “A friend of my mother from Munkács undertook to paint the portrait of the Patroness of Hungary, the Virgin Mary, onto the national flag sewn for the uprising. After a while, she went for the flag to take it back to Sebesfalva. The flag was hidden under the bed of the Czech lieutenant billeted in her friend’s apartment. At supper the officer was present and my mother offhandedly mentioned, “I don’t know how I shall get home. I have not been able to send a message to my husband to send a carriage for me.” The officer politely offered to make his carriage available the next day. In the morning, they took the package containing the flag from under the officer’s bed and my mother sat in the carriage driven by a Czech uniformed soldier. On the way home, she went through all the checkpoints unchallenged. In fact, they saluted her. Those were the circumstances surrounding the return home of the Hungarian flag, later hidden in the altar pillow. The Ruthenian men swore their oath on this flag to free Subcarpathia from Czech rule... My mother was a courier to Budapest from where she and her girlfriend would bring certain documents and notices. On one occasion, they were waiting for the train at the little station on the Czechoslovak side of Sátoraljaújhely. It was cold and they were standing on the platform. The Czech stationmaster invited them into the office and out of the cold. When my mother took off her

¹²⁷ Ibid, pp. 98-101.

¹²⁸ Букович, Д.: Павутиння омани. [Bukovych, D.: In the net of intrigues]. Užhorod, 1974, p. 49.

coat, several leaflets fell to the floor. They would have been unmasked but for the inattention of the stationmaster who merely picked them up and returned them without reading.”

[About the little rural station of Sátoraljaújhely: the Czechoslovak delegation to the Paris peace talks wanted to secure the hub of the Kassa-Csap-Királyháza railway line, the city of Sátoraljaújhely (1910 population of 19,940, of which 18,965 were Hungarian, 478 Slovaks and 273 Germans). They had to be content with the little station by city’s industrial park on the far side of the shallow Ronyva Creek (claimed to be navigable only by the Czech territorial claimants). Hence, to this day, this section of the main railway line connecting Czechoslovakia with Romania runs at the edge of the town, a few meters from the Hungarian border, on the other side of the bridge over the creek.¹²⁹ The industrial area annexed from the city – some 1,400-1,500 hectares whose only importance was the train station and the Hungarian State Railways repair facility – had a population in 1910 of 205 people which more than doubled in the daytime with those who worked there (in 1930, 678). The industrial park was returned to Hungary prior to the November 2, 1938 first Vienna Arbitral Accord. It was part of an agreement reached on October 9, the first day of the broken-off Hungarian-Czechoslovak talks held in Komárom, along with the county seat of Hont County, Ipolyság. Possession of the territory was assumed two days later.¹³⁰ The name of the little industrial station of Sátoraljaújhely is Slovenské Nové Mestvo, or Slovak Newtown (Tótújhely).]

“When the Budapest Italian Mission temporarily secured my mother’s release until the court hearing – continued dr. Zoltán Komporday with his reminiscence regarding his parents’ tale – the Czech prison warden let her out with the comment: ‘Try hard, so we don’t meet again.’ After more than a month, she succeeded in illegally crossing the border... In 1942, I was in a Boy Scout camp in Volóc and a friend and I went over to Sebesfalva, a little over 20km. away. On the way, we stopped at the notary office in Katlanfalu – Sebesfalva fell into its area – where my friend’s older brother was the notary. We talked and I told him where we were going. A Ruthenian peasant overheard us. He followed us out and came up to us. He used to be the bell ringer in 1919-1920, he guarded the flag hidden in the altar pillow. They were questioned but gave nothing away... In 1942, my mother and father were decorated with the ‘National Defense Cross,’ instituted by the Governor of Hungary, Miklós Horthy. This high honor is not among those decorations which are permitted to be displayed, according to the 1990 law, passed after the fall of Communism.”

On June 12, a week after Hungary was forced to sign the Trianon Peace Pact of June 4, 1920, following a decision in the Council of Ministers, the Foreign Minister authorized the head of the National Refugee Office to “establish food warehouses along the border in support of the Hungarian-loyal population of Ruthenia.” The Office was funded out of the budget to the extent of 2.4 million Korona, of which the “Ruthenian food affair” spent more than 1 million Korona. What this meant was that great quantities of food were taken, or smuggled, over the - as yet poorly guarded – border by farmers with lands on both sides and others. There was still a great deal of famine among the Rusyns of the mountains. The food warehouses by the border were in operation for a year. These no doubt contributed to the success of the ‘movement of statements of loyalty’ to Hungary. The head of the National Refugee Office notified Prime Minister count István Bethlen (1874-1946) on September 17, 1921, that “the continuation of this program, carried out under the direction of the Foreign Ministry, is no longer necessary.” The warehouses were ordered to be liquidated. This realized the sum of 552,882 Koronas, which were added by the Prime Minister to the Office’s aid fund. Of the initial 2.4 million Korona budget, 1,356,502.94 were left unspent which was added to the budget of the refugee office.¹³¹

A few month after the planned but aborted armed uprising, following the signing of the dictates of the Trianon Peace Pact, a signature gathering movement was started – this in an area with a state of emergency and military tribunals! One of the organizers was a civilian clerk at the Munkács city police department, Ferenc Feczkanics (later Forrai). He spoke eight languages, among them Slavic ones, including Ruthenian. We know from his son, Sándor Forrai of Budapest, born in Munkács in 1913 and a researcher of runic writing, the following two addenda: “There were scarcely any Rusyn families in Subcarpathia without a portrait of Rákoczi... They were the ones who

¹²⁹ Palotás Zoltán: *Trianoni határok*. [Trianon’s borders]. Budapest, 1990, p. 46.

¹³⁰ Thirring, Lajos: *Ipolyság és Sátoraljaújhely-gyártelep* [The Ipolyság and the factory complex of Sátoraljaújhely], In: *Magyar Statisztikai Szemle*, 1938, 9. sz., pp. 869-872.

¹³¹ MOL. K 28., 367. tét., 1923–N–556. sz.

were, at the same time, good Rusyns and good Hungarians and who valued the ethnic freedoms given to them by the Hungarians... They did not renounce their loyalty to Hungarians on the occasion of the Trianon Peace Pact. My father was working in the offices of the Munkács police department and I know from his recollections that a signature gathering was started in Subcarpathia. The intention was that, after signing the treaty, a plebiscite must be held within 5 years in Subcarpathia to decide the national affiliation of the area. My father alone collected about 40,000 signatures. The signatures were forwarded to Paris in time and, to my knowledge, were received but the plebiscite was never mandated. After the Czech takeover, my father's activities became known and in 1921 he had to flee from Munkács. He found employment in the police department of Miskolc [Hungary].¹³²

On another occasion, the runic researcher stated: "The sheets were sent to Paris but the plebiscite was not carried out because the West was not happy with the outcome of the Sopron plebiscite. We had to flee and so crossed the green line."¹³³ According to the statement by the son of the former police bureaucrat, his father had good relationship with the Ruthenians of Subcarpathia, helping many in their minor problems. He was well known in Bereg County and collected signatures demanding the plebiscite not only in Munkács but in the surrounding larger towns – Szolyva, Volóc and Alsóverceke – and villages.

[The 'Sopron vote': A referendum was held, under Allied supervision, on December 14-16, 1921, in Sopron and its surrounding area. It was occasioned by the armed resistance, begun on August 28 of the previous year, in Western Hungary [today Burgenland, Austria]. Shortly before the referendum, on October 4, the independence of the territory, named Lajtabánság, was declared at the headquarters of the leader of the resistance, Pál Prónay, in the Hungarian populated area of Felsőőr [today Oberwart], later to be annexed to Austria. Under the close scrutiny of the Allies, 24,063 votes were cast in the plebiscite held in Sopron, of which 23,661 were valid. Of the votes, 15,334 (65.08%) declared to remain with Hungary, 8,227 (34.91%) to join Austria.¹³⁴ With this vote, the city of Sopron and eight surrounding villages were permitted to remain in Hungary. As part of the terms of the treaty of Saint Germaine, 4,312 km² (with a population of 340,917) was annexed to Austria, which was reduced, by the plebiscite and a minor border adjustment in southern Burgenland the following year, to 3,965 km². The Hungarian National Assembly rewarded Sopron with the title of *Civitas fidelissima*, most faithful city. An arch, called the Loyalty Gate, was subsequently built South of the city's 61m. high Fire Tower.]

The fact of the signature collection action in Subcarpathia, mentioned in Sándor Forrai's account, is supported by archival sources, although the document found attests to a "35,000 signature Declaration of Loyalty," signed by one József Illés (Illyasevics), university professor and member of the Hungarian Scientific Academy who, after Trianon, became professor of the Erzsébet Science University after it relocated from Pozsony to Pécs. The portion of the document "35,000 ... Loyalty" is not in his handwriting but some ministerial functionary. The professor's memorandum, dated January 10, 1921, Budapest, reads: "I hereby attest that I have accepted, and is in my possession, the forms of the Declaration of Loyalty, acquired at the risk of their lives by the Szócska brothers. The Szócska brothers acquired these shining documents of Ruthenian loyalty to the Hungarian state with great ingenuity and tireless effort."¹³⁵ The document makes no note of the contribution to the signature gathering of Ferenc Feczkanics, but does not rule it out. The attestation given by József Illés cites 35,000 signatures, arguably beyond the capability of one person.

Of the brothers, we know the following: a Hungarian-German language identity document was made out in

¹³² Forrai, Sándor: A kárpáti ruszinok és a trianoni békediktátum [The Carpathian Rusyns and the peace pact of Trianon], In: *Heti Nemzeti Újság*, 1994, Május 13. p. 21.

¹³³ Farkas, Adrienne: Forrai Sándor rovásírás-kutató. (Arckép) [Sándor Forrai, runic writing researcher], In: *Demokrata*, 1998. 41. sz., p. 45.

¹³⁴ Zsiga, Tibor: Burgenland vagy Nyugat-Magyarország? / Burgenland, oder Westungarn? [Burgenland, or Western Hungary?] Kiad. Burgenlandi Magyar Kultúregyesület. Oberwart / Felsőőr, 1991, p. 5.

¹³⁵ MOL. K 28., 267. tét., I. rész, 1939–P–16 133. sz.

the name of Pál Szócska (in some sources Szocska), 30 year old office worker, on May 25, 1919, in Kovácsrét. It was, “at the same time a travel document in the neighboring areas. I herewith attest that the named is trustworthy and there are no concerns regarding his travels.” This is unusual because Pál Szócska was a resident of Szolyva, as shown on the document. His brother, István, received a Czech language document on August 8, 1919 in Szolyva – the stamp still read in Hungarian: Bereg County, Village of Szolyva, 1904 – allowing him unrestricted travel in the settlement, as well as the environs of Munkács, Volóc, Alsóverceke. The signature collection activity must have been begun by them later, probably December of 1919. As proof, there is a typed document, number 3032/1919, dated on the 4th from the Ruthenian Department of the Minorities Ministry, signed “for the Minister” by Under-Secretary Miklós Kutkafalvy. It is addressed to the chief of the Keleti (Eastern) train depot in Budapest of the Hungarian Railways. “My confidante Pál Szócska is carrying out important external political activities and carries with him large quantities of important pamphlets. I ask the respected Directorate, please ensure that these important publications arrive with Pál Szócska, and without delay, in Sárospatak.” (Remember that the wife of minister Andor Komporday met with Kutkafalvy in Budapest regarding the organization of the Subcarpathian uprising.) The letter signed by the Under-Secretary bears two Hungarian Railways notations and stamps: “On the basis of personal appearance, 15 parcels, between 5-7 kg., of propaganda publications are to be conveyed on the Dec. 8, 15:00 train as express freight, on payment of usual tariffs.” The second: “Accept 15 parcels to Sárospatak.”

The distribution and collection of the signature sheets were carefully prepared. This is evidenced by the Czech language permit – again made out in Kovácsrét, the stamp still in Hungarian – made out on January 1, 1920, allowing Pál Szócska to “purchase and transport school books.” We can conclude two things from the preceding. Subcarpathia was occupied in its entirety by Czechoslovak forces in early May of 1919. Public administration in the cities and larger towns was assumed almost immediately. In the villages this was accomplished gradually, over a period of months, during which the previous (Hungarian) office holders were left in place. It must have been thus in the Dolha District Kovácsrét where the notary – judging by his name, Karpinecz, a Rusyn – made out a 30 day permit to Szócska (born: Ungvár, nationality: Rusyn) to transport school texts. On this side of the demarcation line, in Hungarian Tiszakerecseny, judge József Enyedy jr. signed a 15 day travel permit on January 5 – the Czech language document made out in a different hand, possibly ahead of time, containing a few words of Slovak and Rusyn – to local residents László Rezela, age 33, and his brother-in-law, the 30 year old Pál Szovár. The date and place of issue is, however, recorded in Hungarian. The persons named are permitted to travel to the Upper Bodroghköz village of Királyhelmece “for the purpose of transporting family documents.” This they did – probably intentionally – not along the significantly shorter Hungarian route but the longer Czechoslovak one. The two men crossed the frontier at the nearby settlement of Hetyek on the same day, as attested by the signature of Czechoslovak ‘četník’ (gendarme) Vlad.(imir) Pošušta.

We do not know the possible family relationship but we can speculate because, in the file concerning the loyalty declarations, we found a ‘reliability certification’ (čestovni-preukazka), with photograph, for an Emilian Szocska, for “travel of a personal nature.” (The photograph shows a middle-aged man with beard and mustache, a cigar in his mouth and wearing a hat.) According to the Czech language document, issued to the man born in Kerecke (in the Dolha District, the same as Kovácsrét) by the notary of Vinna District in Ung County on July 23, 1920, it allowed unrestricted travel in ‘Karpatska Rus,’ as well as in Zemplén, Abauj and Sáros župa (counties). The Hungarian authorities eased Pál Szócska’s travels, aside from the Hungarian Railways, to facilitate his reaching Subcarpathia. A travel permit, number 1404/kt. 920, issued by the military command of Miskolc district on August 22, 1920 (on ‘verbal instructions from the Ministry of Defense’), permitted Szócska to make use of the Hungarian Railways between Sárospatak-Miskolc-Budapest,¹³⁶ as well as other eastern Hungary rail-lines, between August 26 and September 30 (later extended to October 31), with two second-class tickets. The travel permit allowed Szócska “the use of any type of transport or railway stock,” from freight trains to hand-driven inspection cars.

The back of the document contains stamps of approval from the Civil Guard of Bodroghköz, the military command of Sátoraljajhely and the station master of Zemplénagárd, which leads one to believe that, for Hungarian citizens, access to Subcarpathia was easier from Bodroghköz than the more closely guarded truncated Bereg border. The collection of the loyalty declarations from among the Hungarian and Ruthenians must have finished by the end of 1920 because on January 10, professor József Illés, president of the Rákoczi Association, writes a receipt that the signed sheets are in his possession. These were undoubtedly appended to the memoranda in Paris, assembled earlier by Pál Teleki for the peace conference. According to Sándor Forrai, “we should make an attempt to find among our

¹³⁶ MOL. K 28., 267. tét., I. rész, 1939–P–16 133. sz.

government documents relating to the peace conference the signatures collected in Subcarpathia, or at least try.”¹³⁷

Two decades later, on January 9, 1939, ministerial counsel Endre Vaszkó wrote to the president of the Upper Hungarian Alliance of Associations, Pál Szócska, among other things: “We wish to express our deepest appreciation for your outstanding and significant efforts made in regards to the re-annexation of Upper Hungary.” On March 1, he forwarded a recommendation for decorations to the head of the state, Governor Miklós Horthy, for the preparatory work that culminated in the re-annexation of the southern, Hungarian populated, portion of Upper Hungary on November 2, 1938. The commendation names Pál Szócska, director of the finance office, lawyer Dr. István Gurgély, and association president Lajos Siegrist, all residents of Budapest. “In the most dangerous of times, the perilous autumn of 1938, the above named voluntarily braved the possibility of death and in the momentous early months of the occupation carried out several assignments with conscientiousness and precision... they ensured the continued flow of information during the decisive months during which information gathering was disrupted, encouraged the frightened Hungarians to endurance and resistance. Bordering on the foolhardy, they smuggled into the Czech dominated territory significant amounts of Hungarian colored emblems, Bocskai ties and other symbols of national pride. With these and their indispensably valuable reports, they significantly aided and assisted the historical work of the relevant responsible groups. Thus, I respectfully recommend to Your Excellency, for the highest honor, the above named responsible citizens for their heroic and exemplary services.”¹³⁸ According to the preceding, Pál Szócska contributed his fair share to the 1938 re-annexation. Among the documents supporting his recommendation for the decoration are papers regarding the gathering of the loyalty signatures in late 1919.

With that, we return to Subcarpathia, to the period following the Trianon peace treaty, where - after a 1,000 years - the Allied powers thrust into minority the Hungarians, who had difficulty accepting the new circumstances, the reign of the new power. During the attempted return to the throne by King Károly IV (1916-1918) on October 23, 1921 – who resigned on November 13, 1918 from taking part in Hungarian state affairs but did not abdicate from the throne – Czechoslovakia (and the Kingdom of Serbia-Croatia-Slovenia) declared partial military mobilization against Hungary. During these days, a group of ten formed a secret society in Munkács, called the Association of Hungarian Brethren, who each swore that “at all times and under all circumstances to serve the interests of Hungary.” In the event of armed conflict between the two countries, they will offer aid to the Hungarian military and work toward the reintegration of Subcarpathia and Slovakia (Slovensko) into Hungary, wrested away by the Trianon peace settlement. According to the charges laid by the district attorney’s office of Kassa, seven persons committed treason, based on statute 131, article 2, paragraph 3. The case was argued before judge Emil Toronszky – who was named as one member of the 5 person executive committee to assist Ivan Brejcha when he was appointed as temporary administrator of Subcarpathia in September of 1919 – who finally dismissed all charges. Of the accused, Zoltán Czifra contracted serious pulmonary disease during the hearings from the unheated Kassa jail cell and László Walla’s mind became unbalanced and he committed suicide. The case was reported by newspaper editor György Voight who was part of the organization, similarly persecuted and prosecuted but could conduct his defense while on bail.¹³⁹

It is today a forgotten fact that numerous acts of sabotage took place in Upper Hungary and Subcarpathia during the first years of Czechoslovak rule. Among them, the bombings of Ungvár caused the most stir. The first: on the evening of January 14, 1923, persons unknown placed a bomb in the cafeteria of state employees, which went off around 6pm. Vice-governor Ehrenfeld’s rooms were above the cafeteria and the offices of the Subcarpathian central administration. A Hungarian officer was apprehended in connection with the action – the authorities did not release a name – who arrived a few days earlier in Ungvár where he contacted the leader of the Hungarian resistance. His passport, by the way, was valid to Beregszász. The newspaper article made no mention of victims.¹⁴⁰ Three days later, the newspapers reported that a pharmacist, Zoltán Burger of Ungvár, was arrested and is being questioned in connection with the incident. Representatives of the Subcarpathian parties visited Vice-governor Ehrenfeld and

¹³⁷ Forrai: A kárpáti ... op. cit. p. 21.

¹³⁸ MOL. K 28., 267. tét., I. rész, 1939–P–16 133. sz.

¹³⁹ Voith: 20 év ... op. cit. pp. 104-108.

¹⁴⁰ MOL. K 28., 89. tét., p. 151.

expressed their outrage at the bombing incident. Ákos Árky spoke on behalf of the parties. The leaders of the Rusyn organizations also were present who expressed similar views.¹⁴¹

The February 12 issue of the newspaper *Kassai Napló* (Kassa Diary) reported the events thus: “The state of public safety in Rusynsko has made possible an endless string of bloody atrocities. Hardly a day goes by that the Rusynsko media does not report hamlet churches being robbed (in several places, the Czechoslovak authorities gave silent assent for the Greek Orthodox to forcibly take over Greek Catholic churches), bands of thieves terrorizing entire districts, murder and mayhem.”¹⁴²

The police prefecture of Ungvár received a confidential tip that explosives hidden in firewood will be used in a series of assassination attempts against local leading police and political personages. The denunciation came from a Radvánc farmer, who was offered a reward of 400 Koronas to place an explosive equipped piece of firewood in the wood pile of the Ungvár police prefecture. The next day, the authorities forbade the lighting of the stoves in the offices. The warning was received everywhere in time, except the apartment of French general Pascal Castella in the Greek Catholic bishop’s palace. His servant lit the fires. Several hours later, a tremendous blast shook the dining room, causing great destruction. There was no injury as nobody was in the vicinity. (General Castella was the military commander of Czechoslovak forces in Subcarpathia between October 29, 1922 and September 10, 1925. His predecessor was general Paris, also French, from December of 1919.) The Ungvár police arrested customs high commissioner Marián Kalmár, workers János Óri and Sebestyén Roskó and in nearby Radvánc the Greek Catholic minister, Konstantin Neviczky and railway worker András Kődöböcz. According to initial information, the younger brother of the minister, major Neviczky, head of the Miskolc military investigative section, was the originator and ‘director,’ who maintained contact with the detained through Kődöböcz.

The necessary explosives and 5,000 Koronas were smuggled into Ungvár two weeks earlier by the son of the customs high commissioner, Barnabás Kalmár, a medical student with Czechoslovak papers. The bombs were assembled, under his direction, at the homes of Óri and Roskó where a search turned up 8 kg. of explosives and seven packages of fuses and detonators. They peeled off the bark of wood intended for the fireplace, placed 1.2 kilos of explosives inside with fuse and detonator and replaced the bark. The firewood bombs were smuggled beside the fireplaces of rooms where the attempted assassination was planned. The population of Radvánc marched in front of the prefecture, demanding their preacher and the freeing of the prisoners. The protest was broken up by truncheon wielding police who arrested the organizers. The authorities in Ungvár found bombs in the buildings of the police directorate, the prefect’s office, the Subcarpathian governor’s office and the courts.¹⁴³ Four days later, the parson from Radvánc was freed as the investigation disclosed his innocence. At the same time, investigation into the affair led to the arrest of a Rusyn-born sergeant in the 31st Infantry Regiment stationed in Ungvár.¹⁴⁴ The newspapers informed on February 22, 1923 that the Czechoslovak government will ask for the extradition of medical student Barnabás Kalmár from Hungary.

Because of the bomb attempts and a series of border incidents, Czechoslovakia strengthened the southern borders of Subcarpathia with military units. The line was divided into sectors where 20-30 strong military patrols were posted, also assigning gendarmes and customs guards. The intent of the decision was the reassurance of the population living close to the border zone and put an end to the continuous flare-up of the revisionist movement.¹⁴⁵ General Gajda, commander of the 11th Infantry Division, had the following to say about the Uplands (Northern Hungary) and Subcarpathian assassination attempts: “They are only of a warning nature, actions badly organized or not at all. The

¹⁴¹ MOL. K 28., 89. tét., pp. 163-164.

¹⁴² MOL. K 28., 89. tét., p. 257.

¹⁴³ MOL. K 28., 89. tét., pp. 257-258.

¹⁴⁴ MOL. K 28., 89. tét., p. 279.

¹⁴⁵ MOL. K 28., 89. tét., p. 296.

actions of some laymen or fanatics do not seriously threaten the peace of the Uplands and Rusynsko. The defensive measures have already been taken, primarily to ensure the safety of the citizenry living along the border. Anyone apprehended will be punished to the full extent permitted by the new regulations.”¹⁴⁶ These regulations were introduced because, up to that time, the border was not closely guarded. Hence, Barnabás Kalmár could smuggle explosives from Hungary to Ungvár. Hungarian students of Subcarpathia repeatedly crossed the border using Hungarian passports and, as alleged Hungarian citizens, managed to elude Czechoslovak military service. The government of Prague warned the Czechoslovak embassy in Budapest not to issue visas to students wishing to travel to the Republic. Several students from Ungvár had their visa applications to Hungary rejected by the Subcarpathian authorities, of which “the Hungarians of Ungvár made great political capital, citing the democratic nature of the Republic, forgetting that even the most democratic of states has the right and duty to safeguard its security.”¹⁴⁷ It is illustrative of the times that the authorities confiscated the issue of the Hungarian language *Ungvári Közlöny* dealing with the bombing attempts.¹⁴⁸

As we noted previously, a local resident, pharmacist Zoltán Burger, was arrested by the Czechoslovak police in connection with the bombing of the Ungvár civil servants’ cafeteria. He was held until early August. At the hearing, he was released due to lack of evidence but the Czechoslovak attorney’s office appealed the judgment and he was afterwards continually harassed. Because of that, he crossed to Hungary in the middle of the month and requested immigrant status with the National Refugee Office. The Minister of Public Welfare, József Vass, only reviewed the petitions when they reached 30. Burger’s petition was deemed ‘very urgent’ and his request was granted out of turn.¹⁴⁹ Customs high commissioner Marián Kalmár, arrested in connection with the explosion in the Ungvár bishop’s palace – arrested in place of his son, then released due to lack of evidence – also requested a settlement permit in Hungary in the event of his expulsion. His reason being that “he does not wish to place himself at risk of another arrest and the attendant tortures.” His name does not appear on the list of persecuted persons and the defensive organization to which his son belonged, did not provide any information.¹⁵⁰

At the time of the Subcarpathian anti-Czechoslovak attempts, resistance actions took place in the Uplands, too – distribution of flyers, anti-state agitation, weapon gathering and a series of sabotages. As an example, a bombs were found along the Érsekújvár and Nagysurány, Szliács and Tornalja, and the Galgóc railway lines. The explosives came from the Pozsony dynamite factory. They failed to explode because the fuses were defective.¹⁵¹ According to the Kassa reporter of the Czech paper *Večer*, “The perpetrators of the bombing attempts in Slovensko and Rusynsko are, for the most part, Hungarian officers and officials, who were taken into the service of the state... not enough foresight was put on reliability, and finally this situation must be cleared up.”¹⁵² In early 1923, the *Czech Officers Gazette* wrote about how “inadequate” was the closing of the Rusynsko border. As a result, people crossed with no documents, or forged ones, between the two countries. Many border guards and gendarmes paid with their lives because they could not effectively resist the armed Hungarians and their groups. “Nothing else remained but that at least some portions of the border be closed militarily. However, it is miraculous that these moves were immediately known by those it was

¹⁴⁶ MOL. K 28., 89. tét., p. 346.

¹⁴⁷ MOL. K 28., 89. tét., p. 378.

¹⁴⁸ MOL. K 28., 89. tét., p. 173.

¹⁴⁹ MOL. K 28., 370. tét., 1923–T–884. sz., pp. 75-76.

¹⁵⁰ MOL. K 28., 267. tét., I. rész, 1923–T–576. sz., pp. 2-4.

¹⁵¹ MOL. K 28., 89. tét., pp. 279, 69, 200, 389.

¹⁵² MOL. K 28., 89. tét., p. 279.

aimed against.”¹⁵³

Subcarpathia (Podkarpatská Rus – Подкарпатська Русь) April 29, 1919 – October 10, 1938

The Ruthenian representatives of the Ungvár, Máramarossziget and Eperjes People’s Council [read soviet] met on May 8, 1919 in the building of the Ungvár County offices under a state of emergency and military dictatorship introduced by the occupying Czechoslovak authorities. The building – not to put too fine a point on it – was surrounded by armed soldiers. In the meeting, presided over by Ágoston Volosin, the representatives of the three soviets formed a Central Russian (Rusyn) National Council (Центральна Руська Народна Рада, Centralna Ruska Napodna Rada). The activities of the previously constituted Radas were reported by Simon Szabó. Next to speak was Gyula Hadzsega who demanded wide sweeping Ruthenian autonomy, independence – with the exception of military, financial and external affairs -, Rusyn used as the language of command in the army, and the promotion of Rusyn officers. Volosin insisted on autonomy for the Greek Catholic Church and a Ruthenian university. Following these, there was displayed, “for the commencement of (Rusyn) ethnic life,” the 2.5 million Austro-Hungarian Koronas collected among the Ruthenians who emigrated to America and the announcement of the founding of the first Ruthenian bank with a starting capital of 5 million Kč, or Czechoslovak Kroners.

The meeting finally declared the ‘voluntary’ union of Ruthenia with Czechoslovakia, which was summarized in 14 points. Of these, the first point states that, “The Rusyns constitute an independent state in the Czech-Slovak-Rusyn Republic.” Essentially, the 14-point document stipulated, beyond territorial autonomy, cultural autonomy, an independent national assembly in Ungvár, as well as complete control over interior, language, education and religious affairs.¹⁵⁴ Anton Beskid was elected president of the new Central Rusyn National Council, with three vice-presidents who were Ágoston Volosin, Mihály Brascasajko and Miron Stripski. The decision of the council was conveyed to Prague by an authorized delegation, led by Volosin, who handed it to President Masaryk. Three months later, on August 5, 1919, Miklós Kutkafalvy, as president of the Hungarian-Ruthenian Political Party and former high constable of Bereg County, forwarded a memorandum to the Allied Powers “in the interest of resolving the Ruthenian question in Hungary.”¹⁵⁵ The document was, naturally, disregarded by the victorious countries.

To return to the May 8 meeting of the Central Rusyn National Council, the delegates made no decision regarding the two most important matters. They failed to define the terms of Ruthenian self-government and the boundaries of the new administrative unit, Subcarpathia, in the bosom of Czechoslovakia. This last became a continuous source of tensions for the next two decades, until the dissolution of the country. The source of the argument was, then and later, that of the territory designated as Subcarpathia did not contain the northern part of the divided county of Zemplén (divided between Hungary and Czechoslovakia as part of the peace treaty), nor the Ruthenians living in Sáros and Szepes Counties. The second fundamental question was the establishment of Subcarpathian self-government, stressed by every Czechoslovak-Ruthenian agreement, but continually delayed by the Prague government. In twenty years, it failed to materialize.

The meetings of the Paris peace conference, held between June 7 and August 12, 1919, decided on the temporary Western boundary of Ruthenia, which was initially called the line of demarcation. In broad terms, this

¹⁵³ MOL. K 28., 89. tét., p. 351.

¹⁵⁴ Csomár: Ungvári magyarok ... op. cit. pp. 55-56.

¹⁵⁵ A Magyar–Rutén Politikai Párt tevékenysége és memoranduma az ententehez a rutén kérdésnek magyar kapcsolatban való megoldása érdekében [The activities of the Magyar-Ruthenian Political Party and its memorandum to the Allies in the interest of resolving the Ruthenian question]. Budapest, 1919, pp. 1-20.

followed the Eastern direction of the Csap-Ungvár railway line, “ceding Ungvár and its surroundings to Podkarpatská Rus,” running along the Ung River to the Uzsok Pass and then to the Polish border.¹⁵⁶ In the South, a section of the demarcation line crossed the Csap-Ungvár rail line. As a result, three villages to the East of the railway - Kistrát, Nagyrát, Tiszaásvány - were attached to Slovakia for administrative purposes, governed from Pozsony (Bratislava). According to the 1921 Czechoslovak census, they totaled 2,213 hectares with a population of 1,502, of which 1,172 were Hungarian (78.0%). On the western side of the line, on the right bank of the Ung River, official Czechoslovak statistics of the day list 32 hamlets, which were administered from Ungvár.¹⁵⁷ The Subcarpathia thus defined consisted of 12,694 km² with a population of 606,568 people. The resulting territory was sparsely settled with a density of 48 people/km².¹⁵⁸

The major portion of Subcarpathia became an integral part of the newly created state, under international law, as a result of the “Agreement on Recognizing the Independence of Czechoslovakia and the Protection of Minorities,”¹⁵⁹ signed in Saint-Germain-en-Laye on September 10, 1919. In article 2, paragraph 10, Czechoslovakia guaranteed that in the Ruthenian populated area South of the Carpathians “an autonomous unit will be organized, such that will be compatible with the unity of the Czechoslovak state, while vested with the most far reaching self-government,” whose elected representatives will take part in the Czechoslovak National Assembly. According to article 11, “the Ruthenian populated area South of the Carpathians will have a separate territorial assembly. This assembly will exercise legislative power over language, public education, religion, local public administration, and all such matters as determined by the laws of the Czechoslovak state. The governor of the Ruthenian territory shall be appointed by the President of the Czechoslovak Republic and shall be accountable to the Ruthenian territorial assembly.” Article 12: “Czechoslovakia agrees that, where possible, the officials of the Ruthenian territory shall be selected from among the population of the territory.”¹⁶⁰

As part of the treaty of Saint-Germain, Czechoslovakia received more than two-thirds (12,694 km² or 70.7%) of the former Subcarpathia of Ung, Bereg, Ugocsa and Máramaros Counties (17,945 km²).¹⁶¹ The area at the foot of the Carpathians, the flatlands of the Tiszahát, at the time a contiguous, purely Hungarian land and its population were, naturally, not mentioned in the Saint-Germain treaty. The lofty principle of the Paris Peace Conference, the self-determination of nations, did not extend to the people of Subcarpathia, as it also did not extend to the purely Hungarian populated areas of historic Hungary occupied by Romanian and South-Slav troops. The Hungarian populations of Northern Hungary, Transylvania and Vojvodina could not resort to a plebiscite and decide to which state they wished to belong.

The new official Czech name of Subcarpathia, ‘Podkarpatská Rus,’ alternatively ‘Rusynsko,’ was announced six months later, enacted on February 29, 1920 and decreed on March 6 to take effect the same day, as part of the Czechoslovak Republic constitutional document.¹⁶² Chapter 1, article 3, paragraphs 1 to 9 again reiterate: “The territory of the Czechoslovak Republic forms a united and indivisible whole, whose borders can be altered only

¹⁵⁶ Král: Podkarpatská ... op. cit. p. 3.

¹⁵⁷ Statistický lexikon obcí v Podkarpatské Rusi. V Praze, 1928. Nákladem Státního Úřadu Statistického. p. 31.

¹⁵⁸ Král: Podkarpatská ... op. cit. pp. 10-11.

¹⁵⁹ Halmosy, Dénes: Nemzetközi szerződések 1918-1945. A két világháború közötti korszak és a második világháború legfontosabb külpolitikai szerződései. II. átdolg., bőv. kiad. [International agreements 1918-1945] Budapest, 1983, pp. 89-93.

¹⁶⁰ Ibid, pp. 92-93.

¹⁶¹ Král: Podkarpatská ... op. cit. p. 10.

¹⁶² Sbírka zákonů nařízení státu československého. 1920. évf., XXVI. rész. pp. 255-267. A Csehszlovák Köztársaság Alkotmánylevele [The Constitution of the Czechoslovak Republic]. Prague, 1923. (Official Hungarian edition.)

through constitutional amendment.” A part of this indivisible whole, according to the terms of the Saint-Germain treaty, was the “self-governing territory of Podkarpatská Rus, on the basis of voluntary union, which shall be endowed with the most far reaching self-government compatible within the Czechoslovak state. Podkarpatská Rus possesses its own national assembly, electing its own executive. The National Assembly of Podkarpatská Rus is entitled to make laws regarding language, public education, religion, local public administration, and all other such matters as conferred upon it by the laws of the Czechoslovak state. Laws enacted by the National Assembly of Podkarpatská Rus, if receiving the assent of the President of the Republic, are to be proclaimed separately and are also to be signed by the Governor. Podkarpatská Rus is to be represented in the Czechoslovak National Assembly by an appropriate number of senators, in accordance with electoral laws. At the head of Podkarpatská Rus is a Governor, appointed by the President of Czechoslovakia on the recommendation of the government, who shall also be accountable to the National Assembly of Podkarpatská Rus... The statute of the National Assembly affixing the borders of Podkarpatská Rus shall form a portion of the constitutional document.”¹⁶³

After determining the temporary Western border of Ruthenia, the villages of Ung County, bisected by the line of demarcation, protested sharply against being ordered to be a part of Slovakia. As an example, the delegation of the villages of Kistrát and Nagyrát, headed by Ferenc Egry, the president of the Subcarpathian Small Landholder’s Party, visited Governor Gregory Zhatkovych in Ungvár and pleaded for his help in transferring the two villages from Slovensko to Subcarpathia. The request was not granted. As an aside, the Rusynsko Regional Organization of the (Czechoslovak) National Small Landholder, Farmer and Small Craftsmen’s Party was founded the day before, on January 16, 1921, in Beregszász. The founders, representatives of the Bereg, Máramaros, Ugocsa and Ung Hungarians elected Ferenc Egry as the Subcarpathian regional president. The meeting in Beregszász made a motion – among others – that the organization will begin action to have the settlements carved out of Ung County by the line of demarcation and attached to Slovensko be returned, putting an end to a costly economic situation for them.

In the meantime – shortly after the drawing of the line of demarcation – Czechoslovak authorities began the creation of a civilian public administration. French general Edmond Hennocque officially became the commander of the Subcarpathian territories under Czechoslovak military occupation. He assumed his post on May 2, 1919, after the fall of the 40-day long Subcarpathian Soviet Republic (Ruska-Krajna). On June 6, he instituted military administration in areas controlled by his troops. Shortly after, on July 29, discussions were held in Prague regarding the final Rusyn-Slovak border and the organization of the executive of the Rusyn autonomous organization. The meeting was attended by President Masaryk, Interior Minister Antonin Švehla, as well as Gregory Zhatkovych, representing the American Ruthenian National Council. Their final decision was to appoint an interim executive council. In August, the government named Zhatkovych as its president. On the same day – July 29 – Jan Breicha¹⁶⁴ (Брейха Ян) arrived in Ungvár with a mandate from the Czechoslovak government to organize the civil administration of Subcarpathia. It can be divided into three sections: first, the so-called interim period, lasting almost a decade from his appointment to June 30, 1928; second, the territorial regime from July 1, 1928 to December 15, 1938; and finally, the autonomous era from December 16, 1938 to March 14, 1929.

Zhatkovych notified from Prague Central Rusyn National Council, on August 12, of his appointment as president of the 5-member executive council governing Subcarpathia, citing a letter initialed by President Masaryk. At this time, he was under the impression that all the Ruthenian populated areas would “eventually be a part of our province” (i.e., Subcarpathia), including the Ólubló district of Szepes County, Northern part of Sáros and Zemplén Counties, Northern and Eastern parts of Ung County, as well as Bereg, Máramaros and Ugocsa Counties. “The others that we are demanding will remain neutral until such time as confirmed by a census. The census will be carried out by Czechoslovak and Rusyn committees. The neutral portion of Ung County will be administered under our authority. /The Rusyn territory will be independent in language, school, religion and internal affairs./ It will have its own National Assembly in Ungvár. As well, it will have separate representation in the Prague Parliament.”¹⁶⁵

¹⁶³ Ibid, pp. 255-267.

¹⁶⁴ Поп / Pop: Энциклопедия ... op. cit. p. 105.

¹⁶⁵ Árky, Ákos: Ruszinszko küzdelme az autonómiáért 1918-1927 [Rusynsko’s struggle for autonomy, 1918-1927]. Budapest, 1928, p. 8.

After Jan Breicha's ceremonial swearing-in on August 20, 1919, the creation of Czechoslovak administration in Subcarpathia proceeded apace. The offices of the judiciary were created in Ungvár on September 6. The most important branch of administration, the postal service, was also begun, although initially of a military nature. The 46th Field Post Office, earlier located in Késmárk and Eperjes, relocated to Ungvár in early April of 1919. It continued to use its stamp, reading 'ČESKOSLOVENSKÁ POLNÍ POŠTA' (Czechoslovak Field Postoffice), until May 29, 1920, when the office was closed. In time, the Czechoslovak authorities slowly organized the civilian postal services and introduced new stamps. (The reign of the 40-day Soviet Republic in Subcarpathia had no effect on local postal affairs.) The second Czechoslovak Field Post Office, number 14, was created on August 30, 1919 in Ungvár, which functioned until June 30, 1920. Its seal read: POLNÍ POŠTA 14 – Č. S. P.

With the permission of the Prague government, the North American YMCA, Young Men's Christian Association, organized 'soldier shelters' in the rear areas of the Czechoslovak army in May of 1919. In Subcarpathia, one such establishment was opened in Ungvár, where soldiers could pass their free time, receive alcohol-free drinks, and loans of books and magazines. Letters posted from the shelter were cancelled on the back with a red stamp reading: VOJENSKÝ DOMOV – AMERICAN – YMCA. These letters were not reviewed by the military censors. Hungarian stamps were used to cancel letters up until 1920, as it took time to make and distribute the new Czechoslovak ones.¹⁶⁶

The parallel military and civilian administrations between August and September of 1919 created tensions. Thus, on October 1, Prague named French general Edmond Hennoque as military commander of the Ruthenian populated areas beyond the line of demarcation, a post he held until the end of December. On October 3, the Interior Minister decreed that the ultimate authority is the military commander, while defining Jan Breicha's sphere of civilian authority.

The Czechoslovak National Assembly ratified the Saint-Germain peace treaty on November 10, 1919. Hungary acknowledged the sovereignty of Czechoslovakia, which included the 'Ruthenian autonomous area,' as part of the June 4, 1920, Trianon peace treaty. Its implication for the Northeastern Uplands were: almost half of the 3,230 km² area of Ung County, including the city of Ungvár, a portion of the districts of Nagykapos and Szobránc, and the western rim of the district of Ungvár were added to the Slovak part of the new state. The eastern portion of Ung County already was a part of Subcarpathia: all of the Szerednye district, most of the Ungvár district and almost all of Nagyberezná and Perecseny districts. In the latter two, the exception was the narrow strip of 50 km containing 32 hamlets West of the Ung River. These lay to the West of the line of demarcation and thus were part of Slovakia but were continued to be administered from Ungvár.¹⁶⁷ The Rusyn-Slovak temporary boundary, from the vicinity of Újkemence to the Czechoslovak-Polish border essentially followed the old county boundary of Ung and Zemplén. Hungary retained a mere 13 km² of Ung County with the villages of Záhony (pop. 1,231) and Győröcske (pop. 258) in the Nagykaposi district. Of Szabolcs County's area of 4,637 km², including the city of Nyíregyháza, 69 km² on the right bank of the Tisza River were carved out and ceded to Subcarpathia. This affected three villages with purely Hungarian populations: Eszeny (pop. 2,013), Szalóka (pop. 791) and Tiszaágtelek (pop. 675).¹⁶⁸ (The 1910 census showed a population of 3,479.)

Of Bereg County's 3,786 km², a total of 3,327 km²'s were annexed to Czechoslovakia, including the cities of Beregszász and Munkács. All that was left to Hungary were 459 km², reduced to 436 km² as a result of subsequent border revisions. Of historical Hungary's smallest county, Ugocsa, almost all of its 1,213 km² were taken with the exception of 0.1 km² (10 hectares, or 25 acres) of uninhabited land. Czechoslovakia received 60% of it, the rest going to Romania. In Szatmár County, with an area of 6,289 km², the purely Hungarian populated village of Nagypalád (pop. 1,525 in 1910) was first assigned to Romania, then in 1921, its 32.4 km² were reassigned to Czechoslovakia. (We shall comment later on the territorial exchange of this period.) Máramaros County, making up an area of 9,716 km², was divided by the treaty of Saint-Germain. The larger, northern portion went to Czechoslovakia while the smaller

¹⁶⁶ Simády, Béla: Kárpátalja postatörténete [Postal history of Subcarpathia]. Budapest, 1991, pp. 49, 51-52, 58.

¹⁶⁷ Statistický lexikon ... op. cit. p. 31.

¹⁶⁸ Magyarország Közigazgatási ... op. cit. pp. 74-75, 77, 107, 114, 154, 161, 168.

southern portion South of the Tisza River – 3,417 km² – was given to Romania.¹⁶⁹

On November 16, 1919, the constitutional document for Subcarpathia was released, the “Generálly Statutum,” or General Regulations, also containing the basic articles of the Saint-Germain treaty. “That the Czechs felt it to be important is shown by the fact that Tomáš Masaryk wrote it. The statute is more a philosophical treatise than a public administrative guide.”¹⁷⁰ For that possible reason, the Regulations were not included in the body of laws but publicized merely on street posters.¹⁷¹ According to other sources – from Ákos Árky, president of the Native [or, aboriginal-*Ed.*] Settler’s Independent Party of Rusynsko, as well as the Alliance of Hungarian Parties – “unexpectedly, on November 18, 1919, posters appeared on the walls of Ungvár. It was a ‘Manifesto’ dated November 8, signed by general Henoque (*sic*) as chief commander of Podkarpatská Rus, countersigned by dr. Bréjcha (*sic*) on behalf of the Interior Minister, publicizing the General Regulations concerning the organization of the Rusyn territory.”¹⁷² The ‘Manifesto’ thus had no legal status, not being accepted into law and proclaimed. As mentioned previously, it was in this document that Subcarpathia’s new Czech name - Podkarpatská Rus, or Rusynsko - first appeared.

The regulation – promising “the widest possible self-government” – placed a Governor at the head of Subcarpathia, accountable to the Interior Minister. Under him, the statute created a five-man appointed directorate, whose function it was to advise and guide the Governor in all those areas, which belong under the authority of the autonomous National Assembly. The statute also stated that, no later than 90 days after the Czechoslovak National Assembly elections, elections must be held for the autonomous Rusyn territorial assembly, the Sojm. The “Generálly Statutum” defined the western boundary of Subcarpathia following the temporary line of demarcation (Csap-Ungvár rail line, Ung River, Uzsok Pass). Territory to the East and Southeast was organized into four new administrative units: the Ungvár, Munkács, Beregszász and Máramaros “župa”-s, or counties, each one under a “župan,” a county chief or high constable. The Czech authorities intentionally located the seat of Beregszász župa in Munkács, robbing the completely Hungarian city - Beregszász, the county seat for centuries - of its rank, where only a subsidiary office was maintained.¹⁷³

According to other sources, the document titled “Generální Štatut pre organizáciu a administráciu Podkarpatskej Rusi” (*sic*) was announced on November 18, 1919, but this constitutional document of Subcarpathian self-government was never included in the collected Czechoslovak laws and statutes. “The statute assumes Rusynsko to be the area as designated by the Supreme Allied Military Headquarters in Paris East of the line of demarcation in eastern Slovakia to the Romanian border. (This latter portion turned into the Czechoslovak-Hungarian border after 1920 – *J.B.*) This line was determined during the peace conference and without a doubt seen as temporary. The Supreme Allied Military council first drew the line East of Ungvár, then, at the insistence of the Czechoslovak

¹⁶⁹ Ibid, pp. 68, 72, 75, 77; Botlik, József: A húség csapdájában. Kovács Vilmos (1927-1977) emlékének. Pályakép és korrajz [Trapped by loyalty. In memory of Vilmos Kovács (1927-1977). His career and times]. Ungvár – Budapest, 2003, p. 49; Magyar föld – Magyar nép. A megnagyobbodott Magyarország községeinek adattára. II. kiad. [Hungarian land – Hungarian people. Collected data on the settlements of the enlarged Hungary. 2nd ed.]. Budapest, 1943, p. 150.

¹⁷⁰ Cottely, István: Kárpátalja közigazgatás- és alkotmányjogi helyzete a Cseh-Szlovák Köztársaságban [Subcarpathia’s administrative and constitutional situation in the Czech-Slovak Republic], In: *Közigazgatástudomány*, II. évf., 1939. 4. szám. p. 235.

¹⁷¹ Gyönyör, József: Közel a jog asztalához [Close to the altar of the law]. Pozsony / Bratislava, 1993, p. 83.

¹⁷² Árky: Ruszinszkó ... op.cit p. 9.

¹⁷³ Botlik: Egestas ... op. cit. p. 162.

delegation moved it West of Ungvár, along the Ung River up to the Polish border.”¹⁷⁴ For two decades, this demarcation line was not taken as permanent, not by the Prague government, not the Ruthenians nor the Slovaks.

The General Statute created the positions of Governor and Vice-Governor, as well as a governing or executive council. Jan Breicha was appointed as Governor, Gregory Zhatkovych as the president of the advisory council, whose members were Ágoston Volosin, Gyula Brascasajko, Gyula Hadzsega and dr. Emil Toronszky. (Toronszky worked in the Ruska-Krajna Governor’s office in the early months of 1919. Among others things, he was in charge of organizing the Rusyn governing council.)¹⁷⁵ Organizationally, the council was broken down into six areas: presidential and external (cross-border); cultural and educational; religious, industrial and trade; justice, agriculture and food distribution; internal matters; and finance.¹⁷⁶ In a short time, tensions mounted between the council and Breicha, who held the real power. It came to a head on February 19, 1920, when the council resigned.

Public administration in Subcarpathia continued to struggle with difficulties, which were not helped when, contrary to the previously cited promises, the population was not able to cast votes for representatives to the Czechoslovak National Assembly or the Senate in the first national general elections held on April 18 and 25. Subcarpathia, as electoral district 23 of Czechoslovakia, was entitled to elect 9 parliamentary delegates and 4 senators. The government in Prague justified the delay in voting with the fact that a portion of Podkarpatská Rus was still under Romanian military occupation. This was actually true as Romanian troops were only gradually withdrawn. The last unit to leave from the territory designated as the Czechoslovakian zone of Subcarpathia, from the area of Kőrösmező, did so on August 30, 1920. Two days earlier, the Czechoslovak Council of Ministers decreed (with decree 2616) a state of emergency (with military courts) for the territory of Podkarpatská Rus, which was in effect until April 21, 1922.¹⁷⁷ [The sentence of these courts were carried out immediately, especially capital punishment-*Ed.*] Different sources record that Vice-Governor Ehrenfeld signed the order ten days earlier, on April 11, 1922, rescinding the state of emergency, which was announced on posters and in gazettes on April 26.¹⁷⁸ At the same time, censorship of the press was repealed, as well as restrictions on political parties. In regard to party activity, until the introduction of new laws, the old Hungarian regulations on political activity were in force. On May 22, 1920, the authorities again permitted the Rights of Hungarians of Rusynsko Party to operate.

In the meantime, on March 6, 1920, the Czechoslovak government announced its ‘Introductory Legislation, numbered 121 (passed on February 29), consisting of 10 articles. It took effect the same day, along with the ‘Constitutional Document’ passed earlier. (This latter – passed by the Czechoslovak Parliament – was not called a constitutional law but referred to merely as a “Charter.”) Shortly after, on April 26, government edict 356 appeared as the new, second statute concerning Subcarpathia but it omitted reference to the promised autonomy. (With its decree, the first statute of November 18, 1919 was superceded.) The new regulation consisted of four chapters. The first contained – verbatim – article 1, paragraphs 10 to 13 of the Saint-Germain peace agreement cited previously. The second detailed the state boundary as determined in Paris. Chapter III, article 1 of the new statute – until the decision of the elected territorial assembly – decrees that the Ruthenian populated area is to be referred to as Podkarpatská Rus, but that Rusynsko may also be used. In schools, the people’s language - lidový jazyk - is to be employed. In Hungarian-language schools, instruction of the Ruthenian language will become mandatory. Chapter IV legislated that the government appoint an administrator to lead Podkarpatská Rus, who wields executive powers. To assist him, an advisory council, a temporary autonomous directorate, is created. The new statute created the three executive bodies of

¹⁷⁴ MOL. K 28., 386. tét., 1939–K–16 376. sz., p. 147.

¹⁷⁵ KTÁL. Fond 59., op. 1., od. zb. nr. 40., sztr. 1.

¹⁷⁶ Encyclopedia of Rusyn ... op. cit. p. 86.

¹⁷⁷ Árky: Ruszinszkó ... op.cit p. 34.

¹⁷⁸ Fedinec: A kárpátaljai ... op. cit. p. 104.

Subcarpathia: the Governor, the Vice-Governor and the Governing Council.¹⁷⁹

The new reality in Podkarpatská Rus reflected the improvisation in Czech politics, i.e., the delay in granting autonomy. The appointment of a governor and his sphere of responsibility were not in concurrence with the Saint-Germain treaty, which prescribed: “The governor of the Ruthenian territory will be appointed by the President of the Czechoslovak Republic and will be accountable to the Ruthenian Territorial Assembly.”¹⁸⁰ The Czechoslovak Constitution states (§ 3, para. 6) that the governor reports not only to the Sojm but also to the President, which is to say, the government. This last point of the Czechoslovak Constitution, in contravention of the terms of Saint-Germain, essentially reduced the role of the governor to a trusted appointee of the Prague government. Article 13 of the treaty also instructed an “equitable representation” (in the French original ‘une représentation équitable’) in the Czechoslovak legislature. The Constitution, however, only makes mention of “adequate” (přiměřeným počtem) number of representatives and senators (§ 3, para. 5).¹⁸¹ In that spirit, the government introduced such an unfair method of elections that the territory had far fewer representatives and senators than it was entitled. The creation of the post of Vice-Governor was not a requirement of either the treaty or the Constitution but was the ‘invention’ of the Prague government.

The Vice-Governor was the head of the civil administration workers and – as we shall see – the post was always filled by a Czech national. In reality, he directed Subcarpathia. The Governing Council was doubled to 10 members. Its function was restricted only to advisory, not legislative. The executive order governing its creation never saw the light of day. In our view, the chief reason for the previously sketched conflicting situation in Subcarpathia was that the Czechoslovak government – and more narrowly, those guarding Czech interests – could not decide whether in the question of Subcarpathian autonomy who had predominance: international law (i.e., the terms of the treaty of Saint-Germain) or the laws of the country? After lengthy arguments, the latter won, creating an unconstitutional situation in Subcarpathia. It was, not surprisingly, never tabled in front of the Czechoslovak Constitutional review panel.

On the day that Subcarpathia’s second statute took effect, April 26, 1920, Jan Breicha was relieved of his post as head of civil administration. “On an interim basis, until the sitting of the Sojm,” on May 15, President Masaryk appointed Zhatkovych as governor (губернатор) of Podkarpatská Rus and as vice-governor (вице-губернатор) the Czech Peter Ehrenfeld. On July 27, new legislation was issued (number 1920/476) governing the interim civil administration of Podkarpatská Rus. Military administration continued to be in effect in Subcarpathia. The Czechoslovak Council of Ministers only repealed that on January 9, 1922.¹⁸² At this extraordinary sitting of the Prague government they once again, as several times before, debated the reorganization of the administration of Podkarpatská Rus, as well as the posting of the writ for local, Sojm and parliamentary elections.

Governor Zhatkovych was unable to make meaningful headway. Earlier, he made an invaluable contribution to Czechoslovak politics in the annexation of Ruthenia to the Czechoslovak state. However, now he was up against the centralizing forces within the Prague government and those rolling obstacles into the path of Rusyn self-government. He was unable to reach the promised target of Ruthenian self-government, nor the call to sitting of the Sojm. As well, he was unable to affect the alteration of the Ruthenian populated territory’s boundary further West of the Ung River to include the Rusyns of Zemplén and Sáros Counties. The frustrated Zhatkovych, who was opposed locally from the very beginning, tendered his resignation to President Masaryk on March 16, 1921. He also handed over a memorandum reminding the government of its promise of autonomy and the disappearance of any tangible Ruthenian self-determination.

The topic was debated at the April meeting of the Council of Ministers. The resigned governor met with

¹⁷⁹ Gyönyör: Közel a jog ... op. cit. pp. 83-84.

¹⁸⁰ Halmosy: Nemzetközi ... op. cit. p. 92.

¹⁸¹ Gyönyör: Közel a jog ... op. cit. pp. 84-85.

¹⁸² For more detail, see Cottely: Kárpátalja ... op. cit. pp. 236-238.

President Masaryk and Prime Minister Jan Černý on May 5. The former governor refused to withdraw his resignation, in spite of political pressure, which was officially accepted.¹⁸³ Officially, he bade farewell from Ungvár and his homeland on May 17 and returned to the United States.¹⁸⁴ The illness and death of his young daughter prevented his earlier departure. Before his departure, his followers gave a reception to the former governor on July 28 which, according to the *Ruszinszkói Magyar Hírlap* [Hungarian Gazette of Rusynsko], the official paper of the opposition Hungarian parties, was “the first large political demonstration of all the Rusyns of Rusynsko.”¹⁸⁵ The third chapter of Béla Illés’s (1895-1974) book “*Kárpáti rapszódia*” [Carpathian rhapsody], published in 1939 and several later editions, is titled “The Kingdom of Gregory Zhatkovych.”¹⁸⁶ Illés was a favored writer during the communist era in Hungary.

For a period of two and a half years, Prague did not appoint a new governor to head Rusynsko, having Vice-governor Ehrenfeld look after matters. On November 18, 1923, the well-known Anton Beskid (one of the leaders of the Carpatho-Russian Central People’s Council of the time) was appointed as Governor. He held the post until his death on June 15, 1933. The real power was in the hand of his assistant – the new Vice-governor – the Czech ministerial councilor Antonín Rožypal¹⁸⁷ (Рожипаль / Розсыпаль Антонинъ). With the gubernatorial appointment of Beskid, the vacancy created by Zhatkovych’s May 17, 1921 departure ended.

It is indicative of the hesitation and lack of direction of the Czechoslovak authorities settling into Subcarpathia that the already cited General Statute of November 16, 1919 for public administration (carving Subcarpathia into 4 counties) remained in effect for only a short period. In its Constitution (February 29, 1920), the Prague government decreed the newly conquered territory as the 22nd incorporated county (velka župa) of Czechoslovakia. The interim demarcation line was affixed as its permanent western boundary. The government decree was issued by the Interior Minister on August 26, 1921 and took effect on October 15. The incorporated county known as Podkarpatská Rus was re-apportioned into three smaller counties (župa) instead of the previous four. The cities of Ungvár, Munkács and Nagyszőlős gained the stature of county seats. The whole territory was further defined into 18 districts. (Ungvár župa: the city of Ungvár, Perecseny, Nagyberezna and Szerednye; Bereg or Munkács župa: city of Munkács, Alsóverecke, Oroszveg, Szolyva, Beregszász, (Mező)Kaszony and Ilosva; Nagyszőlős župa: city of Nagyszőlős, Huszt, Dolha, Volóc, Rahó, Taracköz and Técső.) Local administrative offices were spread over each of the counties: Ungvár had 24, Munkács had 44 and Nagyszőlős had 69.¹⁸⁸ The county of Nagyszőlős, with a temporary county seat of the same name, effectively meant the county of Máramaros but whose administrative center, Huszt, was not finished constructing the required administrative buildings.

The permanent drawing of the previously mentioned line of demarcation was ordered by the Czechoslovak Interior Ministry on September 21, 1922. Following the instructions, the task of determining the boundary between Slovensko and Podkarpatská Rus fell to a mixed committee of the Slovak ministry, the representatives of the Subcarpathian authorities, and Slovak and Rusyn politicians. The law, number 280, at the same time decreed the administrative union of those areas now belonging to Slovakia of the former counties of Abauj-Torna, Sáros and Zemplén, and the western portion of Ung County. The final determination of the Rusyn-Slovak internal boundary was not carried out for two decades.

¹⁸³ Árky: *Ruszinszkó ... op.cit* pp. 19-20.

¹⁸⁴ Поп / Pop: *Энциклопедия ... op. cit.* p. 172.

¹⁸⁵ *Ruszinszkói Magyar Hírlap* (Ungvár), 1921. július 29.

¹⁸⁶ Illés, Béla: *Kárpáti rapszódia*. XVI. kiad. [Carpathian rhapsody, 16th ed.]. Budapest, 1965, pp. 375-597.

¹⁸⁷ *Encyclopedia of Rusyn ... op. cit.* pp. 395-396.

¹⁸⁸ Král: *Podkarpatská ... op. cit.* pp. 10, 98.

On January 31, 1923, the district of Mezőkaszony was dissolved, its settlements and territory divided among the three neighboring districts (okres) of Beregszász, Ungvár and Munkács. Law 113, dated June 7, 1923, defined the activities of the administrative bodies of Subcarpathia and their jurisdiction; law 171, dated August 7, sought to regulate the legal relationships of the Subcarpathian settlements. (This extended to Subcarpathia the January 31, 1919 law (#75) covering local elections in Slovakia.) Among other items, it also resulted in the mayors of Ungvár and Munkács not being elected by the city's representative body but appointed by the Interior Minister from a five-man elected presidium. In the two cities, the city representatives could only elect 9 of the 14 councilors as the 5-man presidium was deemed to be part of the council. The position of city notary was erased, replaced by a state notary's office. The head of this office and two members were also on city council with rights of appeal and veto. The county high constable (župan) was empowered - without appeal - to dissolve representative bodies. The new legislation left only Ungvár and Munkács as incorporated cities, reducing Beregszász to a town.¹⁸⁹ The first meeting of the elected representatives of Ungvár met on October 22, 1923; Edmund Bacsinszky became the first mayor.

The first Czechoslovak census in Subcarpathia was held on February 15, 1921 when 604,745 people were counted. The majority of the population was Rusyn, 372,884 (62.17%. In 1910, it was 56.16%). Hungarians numbered 102,144 (17.03%). This showed a loss in the area (extrapolated to the 1919 borders) from the last Hungarian census of 1910 when it was 21.96%. Jews – a new nationality category introduced by the Czechoslovak authorities - numbered 80,059 (13.35%), Czechoslovaks 19,737 (3.29%, in 1910 they made up 1.29%, mostly Slovak nationals), Romanians 13,610 (2.27%), and Germans 10,460 (1.74%). Jiří Král explains the shift in ethnic makeup of the previous decade since 1910 by “the Jews were lumped in with the Germans.” The proportion of Hungarians living in some of the districts: Perecseny 1.85%, Berezna 1.39%, Alsóverecke 0.69%, Volóc 0.34%, Rahó 8.31%, Szolyva 3.36%, Dolha 0.44%, Szerednye 7.47%, Oroszvég 7.74%, Munkács (without the city) 11.92%, Ilosva 1.11%, Huszt 6.87%, Técső 11.16%, Taracköz 4.47%, Ungvár (without the city) 38.17%, Nagyszöllős 25.23%, Mezőkaszony 93.20%, Beregszász (without the town) 79.28%. As one progressed from the mountains to the lowlands, the proportion of the Rusyn population decreased, while that of the Hungarians increased. In 1921, the population of (the city of) Ungvár was 20,601, of which 38.89% were Hungarian; (the city of) Munkács was 20,685 (24.15% Hungarian) and (the city of) Beregszász was 13,864 (62.15% Hungarian).¹⁹⁰

The most surprising is the drop in the number of Hungarians counted. In 1910, a decade earlier, in the area of Subcarpathia bounded by the line of demarcation, it showed around 185 thousand which was – through statistical means – reduced by the Czechoslovaks to around 111 thousand. “The chief reasons for this loss of more than 70 thousand can be accounted by the 18,600 Hungarians who moved or were ejected from the country, the placing of Hungarian mother-tongued Jews and Gypsies in new ethnic categories (in other words, separation from the Hungarians), the adjustment of the majority of Greek Catholic Hungarians into Rusyns, and the bilingual, bicultural Hungarian-Rusyns of Ugocsa changing allegiance to the Rusyns. For the reasons mentioned, between 1910 and 1921, according to statistics, the number of Hungarians living in cities dropped by half (Munkács to 38% of 1910, Nagyszöllős to 33%).¹⁹¹ The data of the minorities varies, to a lesser or greater degree, according to individual sources. The 1933 publication of the Czechoslovak Census Bureau – containing the 1930 census – cites the 1921 numbers as: Subcarpathia had a population of 604,593 of which 19,775 were Czechoslovak, 372,500 were Rusyn, 10,326 were German, 103,690 were Hungarian, 79,715 were Jewish, 10,810 were Romanian, 6,862 were foreigners, and the rest

¹⁸⁹ Árky: Ruszinszko ... op.cit pp. 40-41.

¹⁹⁰ Král: Podkarpatská ... op. cit. pp. 51, 56-60, 103; Statistický lexikon obcí ... op. cit. p. 45.

¹⁹¹ Kocsis, Károly – Kocsisné Hodosi, Eszter: Magyarok a határainkon túl a Kárpát-medencében [Hungarians outside our borders in the Carpathian basin]. Budapest, 1991, p. 36.

were other nationalities.¹⁹² Some sources differ by several hundred, others by several thousand.¹⁹³

It must be noted here that Czechoslovakia and Romania could not agree for years on the final location of the border. The border was initially fixed on August 7, 1919, then altered a year later on August 10 and finalized, with a minor realignment, about three months after the first Czechoslovak census, on May 4, 1921. The border drawn in the summer of 1920, from East to West, followed the mountain ranges or peaks: Asztog-havas (Sztog / Sztoj), Mezőpataki-hegység (Mezipotok / Meze-Potok), Ivan Pop-csúcs, Havaska-tető (Mencsul), along the Tisza River to Técső, then the heights of the Avas Mountains to the mouth of the Batár River and to elevation point 123. This formed the triple border between Hungary-Czechoslovakia-Romania. The final determination brought “minor but painful border adjustment” to Czechoslovakia. It was forced to hand over to Romania the coal and mineral rich valley of the Tarna Creek, in the vicinity of Királyháza, the glass works of the Ferencvölgy factory outside Técső and four villages (Bocskó, Ugocsakomlós, Avaspatak, Nagytarna) with a combined population of 4,367. The net result of the Czechoslovak-Romanian land exchanges reduced the area of Subcarpathia from 12,694 km² to 12,653 km² (down 41 km²); its population was reduced to 581,059.¹⁹⁴ It is less well known that the natural hub of the upper Tisza River, Máramarossziget (1910 pop. 21,370, of which 17,542 were Hungarian (80.72%), 2,001 Romanian, 1,257 German),¹⁹⁵ was deemed by the Paris treaty to go to Czechoslovakia so that the Csap-Körösmező rail line would not be bisected by a border. In June of 1920, the Prague government gave the city to Romania “as a token of friendship, and proof and guarantee of good neighborly intentions.”¹⁹⁶

After the border adjustment, Subcarpathia recorded a population of 606,568, an increase of 8,223 over the last Hungarian census of 1910. Apart from the 599,808 Czechoslovak citizens, there were 6,760 foreigners living in Subcarpathia. Romania had to recompense Czechoslovakia for the lost territory. In return, the ‘totally insignificant’ western and northwestern area between the Batár and Túr Rivers, still under Romanian occupation, was ceded (the purely Hungarian populated villages of Fertősalmás, Nagypalád and Akli, with a combined population of 2,544) – with the exception of the district centre of Halmi (1910 population of 3,455, 97.56% Hungarian). The point where the three borders met was fixed East of the Hungarian village of Nagyhódos, at elevation point 123.¹⁹⁷

Postal service was begun in the second half of April of 1919 in the Romanian occupied zone South of the Körösmező – Rahó – Nagybockó – Técső – Huszt – Királyháza – Nagyszöllös – Beregszász line. Hungarian stamps, cancellations and tariffs were used. From a postal service perspective, the Subcarpathian region was distinct from the neighboring Debrecen postal region, also under Romanian occupation. Romanian military authorities instituted censorship of the mail, carried out centrally in Máramarossziget. Letters were stamped with the Romanian coat-of-arms and “CENZURÁT OFICIUL – SIGHETUL MARMAȚIEI” (Censor’s Office – Máramarossziget).¹⁹⁸ The Romanian army withdrew from Körösmező and areas South on August 30, 1920, finally vacating the Subcarpathian territory granted to Czechoslovakia by the peace treaty. After that time, the responsible authorities of the Prague government took over the postal services.

¹⁹² MOL. K 26., 320 tét., 1934–P–15 204 sz., p. 174.

¹⁹³ Popély, Gyula: Népfogyatkozás [Population loss] Budapest, 1991, p. 60; Kocsis: Magyarok a ... op. cit. p. 36; MOL. K 26., 320 tét., 1934–P–15 204 sz., pp. 170-178.

¹⁹⁴ Král: Podkarpatská ... op. cit. p. 7.

¹⁹⁵ Magyarország Közigazgatási ... op. cit. p. 133.

¹⁹⁶ Beneš, Karel: Vasúti közlekedés Kárpátalján [Railway transportation in Subcarpathia]. Budapest, 1996, p. 35.

¹⁹⁷ Král: Podkarpatská ... op. cit. pp. 8, 10, 51; Statistický lexikon obcí ... op. cit. p. 8.

¹⁹⁸ Simády: Kárpátalja posta... op. cit. pp. 54-56.

Ten months after the Czechoslovak-Romanian land exchange, Hungary attempted to reclaim two hamlets - Fertősalmás and Nagypalád – within the workings of the Hungarian-Romanian border review committee, citing the Millerand covering letter. The committee's Hungarian member proposed a border adjustment, dated March 27, 1922, in an attempt to reclaim 20 settlements along the Trianon border drawn with Romania, including the two named above. The recommendation was rejected and of the 20 villages, 18 remained in Romania and the named two in Czechoslovakia.¹⁹⁹ At the same time, Hungary made attempts to have Szatmárnémeti (1910 population of 34,984, of which 33,094 were Hungarian (94.84%, 986 Romanian (2.83%), 629 German) re-annexed to Hungary as its industry, commerce and transportation “was such that it linked Ugocsa [*nota bene-J.B.*], as well as the Avas mountains and the mining towns, Mátészalka, Csenger, Fehérgyarmat and the Nyírség [Eastern Hungary].”²⁰⁰

The Millerand letter was also cited by the Hungarian member of the Hungarian-Czechoslovak border review committee, general Gábor Tánczos (1872-1953). The letter's gist: the January 16, 1920 speech by the Hungarian leader of the peace delegation, count Albert Apponyi (1846-1933) and memoranda prepared by count Pál Teleki regarding the future borders of Hungary were not without result. Five days later, Apponyi presented a memorandum to the Supreme Council on “The Ruthenian question.” In the carefully assembled document, numerous economic, commercial, transportation and other reasons were marshaled to demonstrate that the Ruthenian populated areas of Ung, Bereg, Ugocsa and Máramaros Counties should remain integral parts of Hungary. It stressed that “it would override all principles, and be closest to the spirit of the Allied Powers, if the autonomous Ruthenian people could decide for themselves in regards to their national affiliation... In spite of everything, the four counties have not yet had an opportunity to decide their own fate.”²⁰¹ The lofty ideals espoused by the Paris Peace Conference – the self-determination of people – was only applied to the so-called oppressed peoples of the Austro-Hungarian Empire, the Czechs, the Slovaks, the Romanians and the South Slavs. It did not pertain to the 3.5 million Northern Hungarian, Subcarpathian, Transylvanian, Vojvodina and Western Hungarian Hungarians, nor the Ruthenians, now thrust into a minority position.

At the February 25, 1920 meeting of the Supreme Council of the peace conference, Prime Ministers Francesco Nitti (Italy) and Lloyd George (Britain) proposed a review of the Hungarian border question on the basis of the presented material, “without prejudice.” Lloyd George cited accurate statistical data when he said that the peace treaty proposes to place 2,750,000 Hungarians, or “a third of the Hungarian population,” under foreign domination, which “will not be easy to defend.” In fact, he predicted that there will not be peace in Central Europe “if later it becomes clear that Hungary's claims are justified and that entire Hungarian communities were given to Czechoslovakia and Transylvania [*sic*, i.e., to Romania] as if herds of cattle only because the conference declined to discuss the Hungarian matter.”²⁰² Even though French Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Alexandre-Étienne Millerand opposed it, the Council of Foreign Ministers and Ambassadors returned to the question of the Hungarian borders at their meeting of March 8. In the debate, the Italians proposed a thorough review of the Hungarian counterproposals. The French, however, declared any reexamination superfluous and pointless.

The driving force British diplomats, among them Foreign Minister George Curzon, threw their support behind the French position and not that of their Prime Minister, Lloyd George. In the end, they made a symbolic compromise in Curzon's proposal: they rejected a review of the Hungarian border settlement before the signing of the peace treaty. However, they allowed for the border inspection committees to make recommendations regarding minor modifications if certain sections of the border, on local inspection, are found to be truly inequitable. It was also

¹⁹⁹ MOL. K 28., 386. tét., 1939–K–16 376. sz., p. 14. (1043/hat. 1922. sz. ir.)

²⁰⁰ MOL. K 28., 386. tét., 1939–K–16 376. sz., pp. 54, 56.

²⁰¹ Trianon. A magyar békeküldöttség tevékenysége 1920-ban [The activities of the Hungarian peace delegation in 1920]. Budapest, 2000, p. 308.

²⁰² Romsics, Ignác: Magyarország története a XX. században [Hungarian history in the 20th century]. Budapest, 1999, p. 40.

decided that the possibility of later border adjustments not be included in the text of the peace treaty but be conveyed to the Hungarians in a separate covering letter. This became the so-called Millerand *lettre d'envoi*, which was indeed later attached to the Trianon edict. Although the letter was a result of British diplomatic activity, it was signed by the French Prime Minister because he was the president of the peace conference.²⁰³ It was he who handed the final text of the Trianon treaty to the Hungarian delegates on May 6. The attached letter made it clear: Hungary's wishes could not be taken into consideration but petitions for minor border adjustments would be discussed by the national assemblies. The letter raised unfounded optimism in official Hungarian circles. It was further fuelled by the fact that the United States, for reasons other than the Hungarian question, did not sign the peace treaties. In fact, America signed a separate peace treaty with Hungary on August 29, 1921.

While these were going on, Subcarpathia seemed to have become a burden for the Prague government. It was not an accident that in June-July of 1920, while the Red armies were conducting operations against Poland, President Masaryk communicated to Gillerson, the representative of the Soviet Red Cross: "In my opinion, the Ruthenian people are only temporarily part of Czechoslovakia and we will hand them over to the Soviet Union at the first opportunity. This I tell you as President of the Republic. I authorize you to report this to your government in Moscow."²⁰⁴ After the preceding, it is not surprising that Foreign Minister Edvard Beneš denied right of transit across Czechoslovak territory not only to Hungarian forces sent to the aid of the Poles fighting the Russian Red Army but also to French units, as well. His behavior stems from Pan-Slav solidarity.

The Millerand letter discussed previously remained in the news. The March 2, 1923 issue of the *Čechoslovenská Republika* quoted the month old Ruthenian daily of Ungvár, *Rusyn*: "Of late, rumors are flying in Rusynsko, spread by irredentist Hungarian papers, as if Millerand stated that the Carpathian National Assembly will decide on the affiliation of this part of the country. News of this alleged statement is spread by Hungarian agitators because the affiliation of Rusynsko was decided by the peace conference."²⁰⁵

The preceding hopes were fuelled by the fact that the final determination of the Subcarpathian sector of the Czechoslovak-Hungarian border was scheduled for 1927. Of the four border inspection committees, the joint Hungarian-Czechoslovak body was the first to begin its deliberations with a meeting in Brno on July 27, 1921 – more than a year after the June 4, 1920 Trianon peace edict. At the first meeting, the Hungarian representative, general Gábor Tánczos, stated the Hungarian government's position regarding the Millerand letter when he declared: "the Hungarian government wishes to apply the terms of the letter assured to Hungary to the entire length of the disputed border because the Trianon border creates ethnic and economic injustice along its entire length."²⁰⁶ The general related that: his reference to the accompanying letter was unanimously rejected by the committee members on the grounds that, according to paragraphs 1 and 2 of the supplemental instructions of the Ambassadors Council, sweeping alterations can not be made to the Trianon border. The Hungarian delegation requested the return of Hungarian populated areas and adjustment of the linguistic border based on the principle of ethnicity, as well as economic and geographic considerations. In the Northeastern Uplands, it recommended a new line North of the cities of Ungvár and Munkács. The proposed border would begin from Szobránc, through Perecseny, turning Southeast, passing South of Szolyva, turning to the South toward Huszt. According to the map, the Hungarian populated Visk would have ended up in Czechoslovakia.²⁰⁷ The committee rejected the Hungarian proposal. The Hungarian delegation was able to achieve few results on the joint Czechoslovak-Hungarian border defining committee on the Trianon designated, but not accurately defined, border.

²⁰³ Ibid, pp. 140-141.

²⁰⁴ Hokky, Charles: *Ruthenia spearhead toward the West*. Gainesville, 1966, pp. 17-18; Erdélyi, István: *Kárpátalja [Subcarpathia]*. New York, 1984, p. 11.

²⁰⁵ MOL. K 28., 89. tét., p. 342.

²⁰⁶ MOL. K 28., 386. tét., 1939–K–16 376 sz., p. 74.

²⁰⁷ MOL. K 28., 386. tét., 1939–K–16 376 sz., p. 62.

Modifications to the border from the Subcarpathian villages of Csap to Magosliget were asked for by the Hungarian delegation based on two reasons. One economic, as the settlements left within Hungary had their pastures assigned to Czechoslovakia, making animal husbandry impossible. The other flood control, as only the proposed new border offered any hope of success. The Trianon edict severed the huge flood plains into two. The result here too was minor. The committee made only minor alterations to the demarcation (Trianon) line. "It attempted to occasionally rectify the most obvious splitting of major landholdings. As a gain, we can only show about 900 acres in the outskirts of the village of Beregdaróc and some small-holdings (approx. 20 acres) to the East. Also, the ferry and some small Hungarian farms to the West of Badaló."²⁰⁸

On January 27, 1925, a report was written²⁰⁹ in Budapest collecting the requests, complaints and suggestions regarding 'political border crossings.' The submission dealt with the use and maintenance of the dirt roads, bridges, railways and the activities of flood control associations now severed by the peace treaty. Villages that used to be in close proximity suddenly had a national border separating them. To get from one to the other now meant a long detour or coming up against the bureaucracy. Section 4 of the submission dealt with 'new passport and customs declaration stations. This was necessitated by dual landholdings, made possible by bilateral agreements sanctioned by the Trianon treaty. Such agreements existed between Hungary and Czechoslovakia, Romania, Serbia-Croatia-Slovenia, and Austria. A similar agreement existed between Czechoslovakia and Romania. This is what allowed, between the two world wars, the 539 farmers of Técső to use their 1,450 acres of fields and pastures in what was now Romania, as well as the communal 2,000 acre forest. Under this so-called 'minor border traffic,' they could tend their fields and orchards on the other side and bring the harvest back on a simple verbal declaration. Wood cut in the forest was brought across on a Romanian forestry voucher.²¹⁰ A similar agreement was in place between Czechoslovakia and Hungary. In the village of Tiszabездéd, close to Záhony, a group of 45-50 citizens bought a pasture of 400 acres before the First World War close to the hamlet of Eszeny. As a result of the Trianon peace treaty, Eszeny now belonged to Czechoslovakia but the pasture continued to be the property of the Tiszabездéd group who used it, year after year, for their animals. Even the shepherds were Hungarians.²¹¹ This institution of dual property only existed between the two world wars between Hungary and the surrounding countries and was based on private ownership as a human right. In the years after 1945 and the birth of the new "brotherly socialist countries," the institution of dual ownership was ended and Hungarian properties in the neighboring countries, and vice versa, were expropriated. Private properties thus nationalized were sanctioned by bilateral agreements.

Hungarian authorities tabled the issue of water traffic between villages in the bend of the Tisza River to the Czechoslovak and Subcarpathian authorities. Before the Trianon treaty there was, of course, unimpeded crossing of the river, which now became sections of the border. Until that time, practically every village had its own river crossing. The Hungarian member of the border review commission suggested ferry, and border crossing, rights be established at certain points for commerce and passengers. The permission of the city of Beregszász was required for the building of levees, buildings and canals on the lands of the flood control association. The building of a new canal (linking Vérke-Déda-Micz) and the dredging of another (Déda-Micz) was suggested.²¹² These were of particular importance because a portion of the creeks and drainage canals of the 25,000 acre Szernye swamp, now in Czechoslovakia, along with the Csaronda canal became the border. The lack of maintenance of the banks became a problem. Fishing in the Tisza and its tributaries was an important source of income for centuries for the inhabitants of both banks. Since the late 19th century, fishing guilds existed and their waters were divided by the Trianon border. Attempts were made to resolve the fishing rights of these villages and guilds but the non-cooperation of the

²⁰⁸ MOL. K 28., 386. tét., 1939-K-16 376. sz., p. 86.

²⁰⁹ MOL. K 28., 3. tét., 1926-K-615. sz., pp. 301-306. (2325/C/1924. sz. ir.)

²¹⁰ MOL. K 28., 266. tét., 1939-P-18 044. sz., pp. 7-16.

²¹¹ MOL. K 28., 462. tét., 1937-T-15 781. sz.

²¹² MOL. K 28., 3. tét., 1926-K-615. sz., pp. 303-304.

Czechoslovak parties made it endlessly difficult.

Those living on either side of the border often complained about the difficulties created by the Czechoslovak authorities to this ‘minor border traffic,’ even though a separate agreement between the two countries regulated it. Czechoslovak authorities created a ‘border zone permit’ for the Hungarians living in the border zone and an ‘estate travel permit’ for those owning land on the other side. From time to time, they withdrew these for ‘renewal’ and occasionally asked for a reissue fee. In the latter case, the official authorization of documents took two to three months. During that time, the Subcarpathian Hungarians had no opportunity to cross the border, tend their fields or look after their affairs.²¹³

Section 12 of the January 27, 1925 ‘political border crossings’ submission listed a series of border realignment and territory swap proposals. In practical terms, because the Trianon border was finalized in the preceding years, very little could be accomplished. The bilateral agreement between the two countries made those kinds of adjustments possible only until 1927.

Between 1921 and 1927, Hungarian authorities requested numerous modifications to the designated border for economic, religious and flood control reasons. In the case of the village of Badaló, now become a part of Subcarpathia, the representative of the Hungarian Agriculture Minister petitioned to have the border moved back 5 m. from the bank of the Tisza River for more effective flood control. On occasion, the population of the affected settlement, or even the whole district, petitioned for the change. The new border posed impossible situations for those living on either side of it, callously disrupting the natural relationship evolved over the centuries between settlements. This deeply affected even the churches. As an example, in the Máramaros-Ugocsa diocese of the Hungarian Reformed Church, as a result of the ‘carving up,’ in 1921 only 25 vicarages remained out of the previous 32. In the period mentioned, Czechoslovak-Hungarian agreements resulted in 16 land exchanges in favor of Subcarpathia and 9 to Hungary, some as a result of the data collected by the 1921 Czechoslovak census.

The final determination of the Czechoslovak-Romanian border inside Subcarpathia was carried out in 1925, which affected the settlements of Ugocsa and Máramaros Counties, a portion of which were mainly, or in part, Hungarian populated. Some lands and hamlets originally transferred to Romania by the peace treaty were handed over to Czechoslovakia, and vice versa. A part of the village of Fertősalmás, situated in the tri-border area, went to Hungary, a part to Romania. The 1925 normalization of the Czechoslovak-Romanian border in Máramaros County affected 20 settlements in total.²¹⁴

Presumably after the majority of the border realignment was completed, the Czechoslovak government also reorganized the military structure of Subcarpathia. On orders of the Defense Ministry, as of September 1, 1925, the military commands of Slovensko and Rusynsko were combined, ending the independent national military command of Podkarpatská Rus that functioned since 1919. The territory from Pozsony (Bratislava) to Kőrösmező was divided into two command areas, headquartered in the West in Pozsony, in the East in Kassa. Subcarpathia was a part of the eastern command. The 12th division was stationed in Rusynsko under the command of general Lev Prchala. Shortly after, on September 10, French general Pascal Castella, up until then the military commander of Podkarpatská Rus, left Ungvár.

A third administrative reorganization took place in Subcarpathia on June 4, 1926 (statute 84) – less than five years after the October 15, 1921, in which the previous four counties were reshuffled into three. The new order amalgamated the three counties of Ung, Bereg and Máramaros into one. The parliamentary representatives of Subcarpathia protested sharply against the decree – with justification – seeing in it another delay in the granting of autonomy. The law took effect on July 1 and another statute (#106), dated the following day announced the organization of the local administrative bodies. The high constable (velka župa) was situated in Munkács where the appointed Czech constable assumed his office on July 8. “It was obvious that the Czech government was completely disinclined to establish Ruthenian autonomy, breaking the accepted terms of the peace treaty and the articles of the

²¹³ MOL. K 28., 266. tét., 1938–P–16 576. sz.

²¹⁴ Kárpátalja településeinek nemzetiségi (anyanyelvi) adatai (1880-1941) [Data of Subcarpathia’s ethnic (linguistic) settlements (1880-1941)]. Központi Statisztikai Hivatal, Budapest, 1996, pp. 23-25.

constitution.”²¹⁵ The population of Ungvár protested at a public rally on February 8, 1927, about the loss of ‘capital of Subcarpathia’ status. As a result of decisions made at the protest, no shops or factories opened the following day. Cars and buses did not run.

The new administrative infrastructure remained in place for a mere year. In the middle of the following year – for the fourth time in the eight years since 1919 – Subcarpathia’s administration was again reorganized. Law 125, dated July 14, 1927 – dealing with the reorganization of the Czechoslovak political structure stated (sec. 2, § 1): the country is organized into four administrative areas (provinces), which are “Czech, Moravia-Silesia, Slovensko and Podkarpatská Rus. This law also contains no directive regarding the mutual boundary between the last two provinces.”²¹⁶ The administrative boundaries of the counties and districts inherited from the Hungarian era were modified; the number of districts was reduced by a third, being replaced by 12 ‘okres’; county self-government was repealed. As part of this reorganization, settlements were divided or amalgamated and, to break up large estates, Czech colonist villages were created. Of course, these were located within the boundaries of Hungarian populated areas to dilute the Hungarian ethnic cohesion. The reform law took effect on July 1, 1928. The provincial capital of the newly created province of Podkarpatská Rus was moved to Ungvár from the previous seat of Munkács. A two-tier government was introduced consisting of provincial (national) and district officials to look after matters. “This new law, 125 of July 14, 1927, regarding government reorganization, in contravention of the terms of the Saint-Germain treaty and the constitution, assigned civil authority and the office of the high constable (župan) to the newly created provincial bureau.”²¹⁷

Antonín Rožypal, the current Vice-Governor, was appointed as President of the new National Office of Subcarpathia on August 1. As an aside, the post of Governor was not even mentioned in the new law. The position was held, until his death in 1933, by Anton Beskid. Rožypal held the post of President of the National Office until his retirement on January 1, 1937. The position was not filled again. The Czech authorities justified this with continuous promises of the “imminent introduction” of autonomy. After Rožypal’s retirement, until the October 1938 turn of events, the presidential duties were carried out by the Czech Jaroslav Mezník. Subcarpathia only differed from the other three Czechoslovak provinces in that law 103, also dated July 15, 1927, made continued provision for a governor, alongside the provincial National Office.

The new administrative reorganization negated the core of the promised autonomy. The people of Subcarpathia, elevated to a province, could only elect a portion of the representatives to their own assembly because a third of the seats were filled by appointment by the Interior Minister of Czechoslovakia. And the President was appointed by the Prague government, hence it was not accountable to the Rusynsko assembly. This highest body of the province could not make recommendations in political matters regarding Subcarpathia, thus it also could make no decisions. It could not enact laws of a local (Rusynsko) nature. “The territory of Rusynsko, vested with administrative autonomy, was reduced to merely a central administrative unit. /Under the terms of the Saint-Germain Treaty, Rusynsko was invested with the widest autonomy regarding matters of language, religion, education and administration. As such, the Parliament of the Czechoslovak Republic had no power to enact administrative laws covering Rusynsko. The Sojm of Rusynsko, under the terms of the treaty, had legislative powers in these areas. As well, the Governor of the autonomous unit was solely accountable to the Sojm, in spite of the word “too” (take) unlawfully inserted into the Czechoslovak constitution [section 3, article 6]./ In its cynicism, the Czechoslovak government went so far as to dismiss the Saint-Germain Treaty and, thus, repudiating the legal basis on which it, at the

²¹⁵ Karl, János: Kárpátalja jogállása 1918 óta [Legal status of Subcarpathia since 1918], In: *Kisebbségvédelem*, 1942., 5-6. sz., p. 12.

²¹⁶ MOL. K 28., 386. tét., 1939–K–16 376. sz., p. 148.

²¹⁷ Flachbarth, Ernő: Ruszinszkó autonómiája a nemzetközi- és a csehszlovák alkotmányjog szempontjából [Rusynsko’s autonomy from the perspective of international and Czechoslovak constitutional law]. Miskolc, 1934, p. 27.

time, acquired Rusynsko.²¹⁸

The main goal of the Prague government with the administrative reform law was to ensure the greatest obedience to its will in Subcarpathia – and in such a manner that the centralized authority would seem externally to be self-government. Government law 229/1928 decreed that in the Subcarpathian National Assembly (really just a provincial assembly) debates can not be in Hungarian and the minutes of meetings had to be recorded in the official, i.e., Czechoslovak, language. On the territory of Podkarpatská Rus, this effectively meant the Czech language. The provincial representative body held its first meeting in Ungvár on January 10, 1929.

At the same time as the administrative reform law of 1927, the review of the Subcarpathian village names was finished – a seven year task. Czechoslovak legislation already decreed in February of 1920 the renaming of villages and hamlets, before the official regime change; later banning the use of the Hungarian names in public life. The settlement-name revision committees, made up of administrative and scientific experts, made their recommendations based on historical, linguistic and administrative aspects. The Subcarpathian committee began its work in Ungvár in 1923. The Prague government made its recommendations, with the assistance of the Czechoslovak Scientific Academy, and enacted it in a 1924 law according to which Subcarpathia's settlements were officially renamed in the Czech language, following the rules of Czech grammar. An exception was the 32 hamlets on the right bank of the Ung River, West of the line of demarcation, whose names were in the Slovak language and Slovak grammar – even though they were administered from Ungvár. The 1924 law enabled the committees to define the settlements' Rusyn name, too. The official Czech, and equivalent Rusyn, names of the settlements of Subcarpathia was ratified by the Czechoslovak government in 1927.²¹⁹

The 1928 edition of the Prague statistical office (*Statistický lexikon obcí v Podkarpatské Rusi*) published the following under a separate heading: “Those settlements, which lie East of the line of demarcation /which line serves as the temporary border between Slovakia and Subcarpathia under the terms of the General Statute, part II, for the organization and public administration of Podkarpatské Rus/, but are under the administrative control of the national bodies of Pozsony (Bratislava).” The three settlements were: Ašvaň (Tiszaásvány), Veľké Rátovce (Nagyrát) and Malé Rátovce (Kisrát). Then, their area (in hectares), the number of houses, families, population, as well as the inhabitants' ethnicity and religious affiliations were detailed.²²⁰ The statistical report went on to detail, under a separate but similarly titled heading, the make-up of the 32 settlements which fell on the West side of the line of demarcation but which were administered by the National Office in Ungvár. The names of the settlements were printed in Czech, in alphabetic sequence. Some of the Hungarian-populated villages were designated only in Hungarian.²²¹

The Hungarian and Rusyn press of Subcarpathia, as well as general political life, continually maintained an awareness of the matter of Rusynsko's autonomy during the two ‘Czech decades.’ Of course, so did the Czechoslovak government, which made, from time to time, announcements of its imminent implementation but which actually meant its continued postponement. One such event was the visit of Eduard Beneš - Foreign Minister of Czechoslovakia between 1918 and 1935, as well as its Prime Minister in 1921-1922 - to Ungvár on December 31, 1921, when he

²¹⁸ Árky: Ruszinszkó ... op. cit. p. 53.

²¹⁹ Kárpátalja településeinek ... op. cit. pp. 11, 25-26.

²²⁰ Statistický lexikon obcí ... op. cit. p. 31.

²²¹ Ibid, p. 31: [The villages were: Berezny Malý (Kisberezna), Berezny Velký (Nagyberezna), Botfalva, Bystrý (Határszög), Domašin (Domafalva), Dubriniče (Bercsényifalva), Homok, Huta (Unghuta), Jovra (Órdarma), Kamenica nad Uhom (Ókemence), Ketergeň (Ketergény), Kňahynin (Csillagfalva), Konkovo (Koncháza), Kostrina (Csontos), Lekart (Lakárd vagy Lekárd), Lubňa (Kiesvölgy), Minaj, Mirča (Mércse), Nevické (Nevicke), Novoselica (Újkemence), Onokovce (Felsődomonya), Perečín (Perecseny), Soľ (Sóslak), Stričava (Eszterág), Stuzica Nová (Patakújfalú), Stuzica Stará (Patakófalú), Šišlovce (Sislóc), Tarnovce (Ungtarnóc), Užok (Uzsok), Volosianka (Hajasd), Záhorb (Határhegy), Zavosina (Szénástelek)]

stated: “I am an autonomist. There is merely a difference in timing between my approach and Yours. Because I want to implement autonomy on a gradual basis... Our relationship with Hungary could be cordial. But for that, first there is a need for a fundamental shift in the direction of the Hungarian government.” In response, Beneš was analyzing the previous after the Subcarpathian Hungarian parties submitted their memorandum. In it, the Hungarian associations demanded: the introduction of autonomy, rescinding the ban on the Rights of Hungarians of Rusynsko Party, permission to display the Hungarian national colors and to sing the Hungarian national anthem, a new census, and an equitable educational policy. The filling of important offices with persons who were eligible for them on January 1, 1919; a redrawing of the borders of Subcarpathia, taking into consideration ethnography and economic interests. An immediate end to land reforms, the restitution of the damages caused by the Czechoslovak military, the repayment of war bonds, easing of border crossing toward Hungary and Romania, and finally, national expenditures to do away with unemployment.²²² It can be clearly seen from the demands in the memorandum that the opposition Hungarian parties were fighting for the autonomy promised for Subcarpathia in the Saint-Germain treaty. This was also demonstrated by the publication of the four-point ‘ultimate resolution’ of the Association of Hungarian Parties of Rusynsko, dated May 6, 1923.²²³

In the midst of all this, President Tomáš G. Masaryk formulated it thus in his New Year’s message to the Czechoslovak National Assembly on January 1, 1922, titled “National tasks.” Subcarpathia is the most neglected area. The effects of pre-war Hungarian absolutism and Magyarization can most be felt in Subcarpathia. Much more so there than in Slovensko. The citizens of Subcarpathia must be taught in public administration, and must be educated. In this regard, our management has already accomplished solid success. Governor Zhatkovych has continually assured me that the Subcarpathian public administration is honest, more honest than it was under the previous regime. But in Subcarpathia they like to cultivate the so-called ‘high politics.’ Especially a significant portion of the intelligentsia, which has become alienated from the people, and carries on unproductive party politics to the detriment of the apolitical people. The land reforms must be implemented in Subcarpathia, as well as in Slovensko, but at the same time, the people must be educated to work the land. To date, they have relied too much on non-intensive land use in farming, especially grazing. It is evident, that public administrative reforms demand an educated populace, which is why school and public education actions are such undelayable needs. We have achieved much in this too but it is not possible to accomplish in three years what generations neglected. In my view, the Czech-German question is the most important, in fact, that is the only question facing us. The question of Slovensko and Subcarpathia is far easier. In regard to our national minorities, we must make distinctions on quantitative and qualitative bases. Stereotypical solutions are not possible.”²²⁴

The *Beregi Hírlap* [Gazette of Bereg] of Beregszász raised the question on its front page, “Why have they not convened the Sojm?” It did so following the lead of Ákos Árky, president of the Native Settler’s Independent Party of Rusynsko. The politician wrote a front-page column dealing with the topic, writing: “at the present time, the most pressing wish of the original settlers of Podkarpatská Rus is the announcement of elections to the Sojm.” The *Beregi Hírlap*, citing Árky, wrote: the reason for the delay is that the Prague government is afraid that as a result of the Subcarpathian parliamentary elections, Hungarians would achieve a majority because they have more practice and experience than the Ruthenians. The article also went on, “In the very same way there are manipulatable statistics, there are manipulatable election rules. The newly emerged nations certainly know how to run elections. However, the problem with the Sojm is completely different! The Sojm could end up with a Rusyn majority, not just a Hungarian one, and the Prague government would equally have a problem with that as with a Hungarian majority.”²²⁵

The Ungvár publication, *Rusyn*, allowed an insight into the Czechoslovak government’s previously noted behavior. A reporter held an interview with Prime Minister Antonín Švehla in February of 1923, in which he said

²²² Árky: Ruszinszkó ... op. cit. pp. 23-24.

²²³ Ibid, pp. 36-37.

²²⁴ Masaryk, Tomáš Garrigue: Politikai gondolatok. A magyar Masaryk. III. köt. [Political thoughts. The Hungarian Masaryk, vol. 3]. Bratislava, 1935, pp. 212-213.

²²⁵ *Beregi Hírlap* (Beregszász), 1922. május 10., p. 1.

regarding the elections in Ruthenia: "... we must be aware of the primitive circumstances of the local population, as well as that the local population can not distinguish between the previous Hungarian and current Czechoslovak regimes. As soon as circumstances permit, elections will be held. Preparations are already under way. Naming a Governor is complicated by party politics... The government wishes to select a governor from among the Ruthenian people."²²⁶ Local representative elections were first held in Subcarpathia a half-year later, on September 13, 1923. This was the first opportunity for the parties to gauge their political strength.²²⁷

János Kurtyák, president of the Rusyn Autonomous Agrarian Alliance party, also popular among the minority Hungarians, forwarded a petition to the League of Nations on August 21, 1928. The memorandum detailed how Czechoslovakia sabotaged the minority protection articles of the Saint-Germain Treaty and the constitution of Podkarpatská Rus, along with economic and cultural rights. Kurtyák listed the main contraventions: the Ruthenian National Assembly, the Sojm, was not convened; the official language of Subcarpathia is Czech, Rusyn is merely a means of discourse; of the officials, 90% are Czech, who do not know Ruthenian, yet they are in the leading positions; the land has been overrun by 40,000 Czech clerks, police and customs officers. In 1928, class size in the Czech parts was 17-25 pupils, in Subcarpathia it was 80 (in many places, 100). There was one high school per 46,000 in the Czech areas, one per 86,000 in Rusynsko. At the end of the 1920's, only one institution of higher learning – a teachers college – was operating in Subcarpathia, with a population of 700,000. Young Ruthenians with diplomas could obtain no jobs. The original inhabitants were left out of the benefits of land reforms, receiving only 19,000 acres out of 260,000 doled out. At the behest of the Czechoslovak government, Kurtyák's memorandum was not tabled at the League of Nations.²²⁸ As an addendum to his memorandum, a decade later, in 1938, of the 12 district chiefs, 10 were Czech, with one Rusyn and one Hungarian.²²⁹

President Tomáš G. Masaryk seemed as if to occasionally consider border adjustments based on ethnic populations – as in the case of the 100% Hungarian Csallóköz [defined as North of the main tributary of the Danube and a side branch, once named Csalló-Ed.] – but never progressed past promises and references of a “democratic and civil Czechoslovak republic.” The president often returned in subsequent years to the flashy rhetoric of ceding territory, as in the December 28, 1929 interview in the Slovak language Christian-Socialist Party's paper *Voľa Ludu* (People's Will). In it Masaryk stated: "... I am prepared, even today, to discuss the revision of the borders. A section of the Danube is incredibly important for us and thus Pozsony (Bratislava) and its Hungarian populated area is terribly important. On the other hand, we can discuss the other areas, all of the areas where Hungarians make up over 50%. And we can even talk of revision in areas populated by other minorities (i.e., Ruthenia-*J.B.*) True, both sides would end up with ethnic islands, but the end result would be that we would deal with our minorities better. For our part, we would be happy to set up a Hungarian ministry in Prague."²³⁰ The assessment of President Masaryk and the “Czech period” is conflicted in Subcarpathia today. According to some, the territory advanced, with many new institutions. According to others, events were not beneficial for the Rusyn people, the promised autonomy was not delivered.²³¹

At the party congress of the Autonomous Agrarian Alliance on September 18, 1932, at the suggestion of János Kurtyák, demanded the self-government rights of the Ruthenian people in a 36-point resolution. It was not able to resolve its struggle, whose essence was the recognition that improvement in the situation of the Ruthenian people would only come from the achievement of autonomy. The physically imposing and strong Kurtyák died at age 45 in

²²⁶ MOL. K 28., 89. tét., p. 230.

²²⁷ Botlik: Egestas ... op. cit. p. 155.

²²⁸ Bonkáló, Sándor: A rutének (ruszinok) [The Ruthenians (Rusyns)]. Budapest, 1940, pp. 41-42.

²²⁹ Darás, Gábor: A rutén kérdés tegnap és ma [The Ruthenian question yesterday and today]. Budapest, 1938, p. 43.

²³⁰ MOL. K 28., 19. tét., 1930-P-5110. sz.

²³¹ For more detail, see Masaryk, Tomáš Garrigue a Podkarpatská Rus – Т. Г. Масарик та Закарпаття.

the hospital of Nagyszőlős in January of 1933,²³² amid symptoms of poisoning. His successor was András Bródy, the party's political secretary-general, who, after the 1935 elections, became a member of the Czechoslovak National Assembly as the alliance's leader. He became a representative two years previously, after the death of Kurtyák, having won his seat. In his first speech – in response to a report by Foreign Minister Beneš – created a stir when he stated: Subcarpathia did not voluntarily join Czechoslovakia but was conquered by the Czech army. As the political heir of Kurtyák, he continued the fight for the autonomy of Podkarpatská Rus. In the interest of these aims, he closely cooperated with the Subcarpathian Hungarian opposition party alliance, as well as the Andrej Hlinka led Slovak People's Party, demanding autonomy for Slovakia, in sharp opposition to the Czech unifying efforts.²³³ (We must recall the harsh words used by President Masaryk when, in 1929, he lectured Hlinka who demanded the autonomy that was promised for Slovakia in October of 1918.)

By the early 1930's, the weight of the Czech administration became more and more onerous, Hungarian and Rusyn native population having been almost completely excluded from the leadership of the territory. We cite the following facts from the speech of representative András Bródy, made in December of 1933 to the Prague Parliament: the President and Vice-president of the National Office of Subcarpathia are Czechs, of the official department heads 7 are Czechs, 2 are émigré Russians, 1 émigré Ukrainian, and 2 Ruthenians. Of the notaries in the territory, 163 are Czechs, 11 Ukrainians, 3 Russians, 42 Ruthenians and 29 Hungarians. Of the remaining office holders, 497 are Czech, 20 Ukrainians, 12 Russians, 85 Ruthenians, and 44 Hungarians. In the finance offices, of 1,375 positions, only 164 are held by natives. The 19 directors of the customs bureau are all Czechs. At the state railroads, of the heads and directors 26 are Czechs, 4 Hungarians, one each of Ukrainian and Russian – and not a single Ruthenian. Among the railway clerks, 77 Czechs, 17 Slovaks, 41 Hungarians, 6 Ruthenians, and 3 Ukrainians. The postal service offices staffed 85% by Czechs, etc, etc.²³⁴ To the previous data we must add the facts contained in the speech of István Fencik, the representative of the Russian National Autonomy Party, made in the Prague Parliament on May 27, 1936. At the time, the ethnic division of civil servants in the administration of Subcarpathia was: Czech 73.9%, Russian (Rusyn) 12.9%, Hungarian 8.0%, Ukrainian émigrés 1.9%. That is to say, three quarters were Czechs.²³⁵

The Prague government continually delayed implementing the self-government of Podkarpatská Rus. This became eminently clear when Foreign Minister Beneš declared in a speech in Ungvár, on May 3, 1934, during another of his Subcarpathian visits: “the matter of Rusyn autonomy represents a serious financial question,” and “Podkarpatská Rus first belongs to the Republic, then to the local people.”²³⁶ His statement came from Czechoslovakia's *de facto* head. For some years past, he was the country's primary decision maker - the aged President Masaryk was 84 years old at the time and would step down from his office at the end of the following year on December 14, 1935. (After Masaryk's death, Beneš was elected on December 18, 1938 as the Republic's second President.)

The Foreign Minister's declaration also suggests that, at the time of his visit, Subcarpathia was in the second interregnum [transitional period-*Ed.*]. Anton Beskid, for a decade the second governor of Podkarpatská Rus, died the previous year on June 15, 1933, having held the office since November 18, 1923. His successor – Subcarpathia's third governor in the person of Greek Catholic cleric Konstantin Hrabar²³⁷ (1877-1938, Грабарь Константинъ) – was only appointed by President Masaryk on February 15, 1935. “Papa Kostiu,” as he was called by the people, was the chief mayor of Ungvár since 1927. The real power in Ungvár was his deputy, the Czech dr. Adolf Markl, who was elected

²³² Botlik: Hármás kereszt ... op. cit. p. 246.

²³³ Ibid, p. 246.

²³⁴ *Kárpáti Magyar Hírlap* (Ungvár), 1933. december 29.

²³⁵ Фенцик, Степанъ: Интерпеллации. Ужгород. [Fencik, Stěpan: Interpolations], Užhorod, 1936, p. 169.

²³⁶ Fedinec: A kárpátaljai ... op. cit. p. 223.

²³⁷ Encyclopedia of Rusyn ... op. cit. pp. 197-198.

by the representatives only after strong pressure was exerted by the authorities.²³⁸

Governor Hrabar, willing collaborator with Czechoslovak authority, was forced to admit the state of the promised Rusynsko self-government in the official publication *Подкарпатская Русь* (Podkarpatskoj Rusi) dealing with developments in Subcarpathia between 1919 and 1936. The piece was titled: Наканунѣ автономіи (Nakanuni avtonomii, On the Threshold of Autonomy).²³⁹ The Governor's previous statement first was made on December 29, 1935, when he called a press conference and communicated that "preparatory work for the law will begin shortly." In July of 1936, Governor Hrabar carried on discussions in Prague with Prime Minister Milan Hodža regarding the introduction of "partial autonomy" in Subcarpathia. It soon became evident that there was no intention to so.

The Prague authorities were merely planning to expand the scope of authority of the Governor and his office. The Subcarpathian parties were, once again, canvassed for their opinions. Of those, the Central Russian National Council forwarded a memorandum to the Czechoslovak government in August of 1936. In it, they demanded that the Governor immediately be granted all powers, that the Rusyn language be made official, that the preparations for the Sojm election be begun and, finally, that the Rusyn populated areas of the former counties of Zemplén, Sáros and Szepes, now part of Slovakia, be transferred to Podkarpatská Rus. In November, the combined deliberation of the representatives of the Rusyn, Russian and Ukrainian factions published a memorandum in which they demanded the autonomy of Rusynsko. At the meeting, the autonomy proposal of the Russian National Council was adopted, which was presented the following year to the Prime Minister, in March of 1937, by Mihály Brascsajko, András Bródy and József Kaminszky.

In the meantime, the facts told another tale. We quote from the November 30, 1936, parliamentary speech of representative Endre Korláth, made while debating the 1937 budget. Regarding the autonomy of Subcarpathia, he postulated the following: "The Prague government wishes to escape from the odium of granting Rusyn autonomy in accordance with its international agreements with a completely anemic, pretend-autonomy, which it has been delaying for over a decade and a half – often on contradictory grounds... unquestionably, the moment autonomy is granted to Podkarpatská Rus, the question of autonomy for Slovensko can not be put off any longer." With his last comment, Korláth touched upon the gist, and the sore point, of Czech politics.

The Hungarian representative then continued speaking of how the Prague government broke its international responsibilities regarding the promised introduction of Rusyn autonomy, the minority agreement, and how the powers of the Governor of Subcarpathia now retained no substantive authority in public administration. "If you wished to make the Governor truly independent [meaning from the Prague government-*J.B.*] and you really wished to introduce autonomy in this territory, then, in all honesty, the only thing you could have done is to have the Governor's salary paid out of the budget of the autonomous region and he makes his oath of office to the autonomous territory ... he should be primarily responsible to it ... the autonomy of Podkarpatská Rus should at least manifest itself in that, as part of the national budget, the revenues and expenses associated with our autonomous territory should be broken out in every ministry... I have already shown at the party congress of Beregszász on October 14, 1928, that in the first decade of existence of the Republic, the Prague government has cheated and deprived the impoverished people of Subcarpathia by about 1 billion (Kč)."²⁴⁰

After the fourth administrative reform, the next round of changes took place a decade later. The Czechoslovak National Assembly enacted law 172 on June 26, 1937, which dealt with the "the temporary regulations of the Podkarpatská Rus Governor's sphere of authority and associated bodies," coming into effect on October 8. Article 1 again reiterated the promise of autonomy and raised the prospect that, after the creation of the territorial assembly, the

²³⁸ Csomár, Zoltán: *Húsz év Ungvár történetéből 1918-1938*. [Twenty years in the history of Ungvár, 1918-1938]. Budapest, 1939, p. 50.

²³⁹ Грабар, Константинъ: Наканунѣ автономіи, In: *Подкарпатская Русь за годы 1919–1936*. [Hrabar, Konstantyn: On the doorstep of autonomy], In: *Podkarpatskaja Rus za godi 1919–1936*. Užhorod, 1936, p. 9.

²⁴⁰ Korláth, Endre dr. parlamenti beszéde a kárpátaljai autonómiáról [Parliamentary speech of dr. Endre Korláth on the autonomy of Subcarpathia]. Berehovo-Beregszász, 1936, p. 7, 11, 14-15.

Governor would also be responsible to that body. The President would continue to appoint him and the Governor swears his oath of office to the President. He makes periodic reports to the Prague government, at which time he is also invited to attend the Ministers' Council. His authority extends over religious affairs, which, up to now, were handled by the state authorities in Ungvár. With regard to the allotment of Catholic assets, he exercises the *ius praesentationis*, or the right of investiture. In language matters, he can only make recommendations. He can transfer or retire educational personnel, appoint superintendents, and has the right to question school council matters. He also has the right to appoint or transfer members of the local administrations, and is the president of various bodies.²⁴¹

Under the new law, the Governor received several new rights, which were, until then, the prerogative of the head of the Rusynsko administration (National Office). His office, however, continued to be linked with the Vice-Governor. "In the interest of harmony, it should have been separated from the Governor's. Its omission was the source of new friction. In case of a disagreement between the Governor and his deputy, the Minister makes a decision – at which point Ruthenian interests are again relegated to the background. Until the creation of the territorial assembly, the governing council was left in place. With this law, the Ruthenians received no new rights. However, with the national security law of 1936, it became possible to bar completely from political life unreliable persons (from the state's perspective) in Subcarpathia. Ninety-five percent of the territory became a border zone and in the event of military readiness, local government could be completely suspended. Thus, the last hope for the introduction of autonomy evaporated."²⁴²

Government-friendly media hailed the new law - with the usual fanfare - as "the foundation of Podkarpatská Rus autonomy." Moreover, October 8 was hailed as an "historic day in Subcarpathia," saying that territorial self-government was born. All the while, the law only granted certain rights to the Governor - instead of the autonomy promised for a decade and a half -, whose role until then was mostly ceremonial. When law 172 took effect, a National Governor's Office was created in Ungvár, without a single Hungarian civil servant.

With the extension of the Governor's authority, the problems of Subcarpathia were far from resolved. In fact, the territory's situation hardly changed. This was reflected by the following facts. At the March 3, 1938, sitting of the Prague Parliament, representative Endre Kórláth objected to "the colonial treatment, whereby the salaries of civil servants sent to Subcarpathia – and working towards the centralizing aims of Prague – were coming from the budget of Subcarpathia. Czechoslovakia was transplanting its own excess population, instead of the terms of the peace treaty – filling the positions with local people and thereby raising the welfare, social and cultural standard of the local population. The government committed a serious breach of the treaty by not establishing the autonomy of the Podkarpatská Rus territory in the past 19 years. It has aggravated this contravention by misleading European popular opinion by introducing such legislation, under the name of 'introduction of autonomy,' which bears no relation to autonomy. We need the kind of autonomy that provides bread and jobs – at least to the extent as the Hungarian law X of 1918, or the Croatian-Slovenian autonomy. According to the international agreement and the state constitution, it must be of the 'widest measure.' Of the 24 member governing council, Prague names 9 members directly and 5 indirectly. The government's will is carried out completely in the governing council as the appointees can, at any time, outvote the 10 representatives of the people. The majority of the appointees are Czech; there is not one Hungarian and only the occasional Rusyn. It shows that this institution was also created under foreign pressure, to give the impression of compliance with international agreements."²⁴³

The new administration of Subcarpathia existed for only one year. By the time it was ready to assume its task, it ceased to exist. Two decades after the birth of the state, by early 1938 it was patently evident that Czechoslovak governmental power was teetering due to the unresolved German, Slovak, Hungarian and Ruthenian minority questions. In early March, Prime Minister Milan Hodža began discussions with the leaders of the national parties and declared: "in the near future, the government will make sweeping concessions on the minority question, all the

²⁴¹ For more detail, see Cottely: Kárpátalja közigazgatás ... op. cit. pp. 4, 244-249.

²⁴² Karl: Kárpátalja jogállása ... op. cit. pp. 5-6, 13.

²⁴³ A csehszlovák válság és a nemzetiségi statutum előkészületei. Csehszlovákia [The Czechoslovak crisis and the preparations for the minority statute], In: *Kisebbségvédelem*, 1938., 2-3. sz., pp. 2-3, 67.

complaints will be remedied to the satisfaction of all.”²⁴⁴ In the name of the government, he asked for willing trust and patience until the introduction of the legislation. The British government sent a friendly diplomatic note to Prague: “It would be beneficial, from viewpoint of European peace, if the Czechoslovak government settled the minority question as soon as possible and to the satisfaction of all concerned.”²⁴⁵ In the note, London also made reference to the grievances and wishes that the minorities living in Czechoslovakia forwarded to it.

The deterioration of the minority question undoubtedly contributed to the softer treatment by the Subcarpathian authorities of national events by the Hungarians. One example: The population of the Hungarian village of Tiszakórod, on the left bank of the Tisza River, celebrated the March 15 holiday by the river. A portion of its Czechoslovak neighbor across the river, the hamlet of Mezővár, went down to the river to listen to the speeches. The police and customs agents quickly removed the people of Mezővár from the riverbank. Two days later, some 150-200 people went down to the tavern by the river where they sang irredentist songs, someone recited the nationalistic poem “Talpra magyar,” and finally the Hungarian national anthem was sung. Next day, the Czech authorities arrested the instigators and fined each of them a relatively lenient 20 Kč.²⁴⁶

By mid-April of 1938, placards were widely distributed in the town of Csap, as well as elsewhere in Rusynsko, of the appeal by the United National Christian-Socialist and Hungarian National Party. The appeal appeared as a special issue of the newspaper *Prágai Magyar Hírlap* (Hungarian Gazette of Prague), and was signed by twelve Hungarian representatives and senators of the Czechoslovak Parliament, including Endre Korbáth and Károly Hokky from Subcarpathia. The posters urged action by the Hungarians of Czechoslovakia. “We can all feel that these are fateful days. The time has come for us to act with iron will, a united front and conviction to elevate minority Hungarians to equals. We are all responsible for success... The nations of the republic are uniting in front of our eyes... unite then, in one camp, all minority Hungarians!” The appeal was intended for distribution during the meeting planned in Csap on April 13, 1938. However, the authorities announced a ban on public meetings in the meantime. The placards were collected by Csap police officers on bicycles and “allegedly everyone will be prosecuted if found in possession of a flyer.”²⁴⁷ (Károly Hokky (1883-1971) writer/journalist, publisher of the Ungvár *Határszéli Újság* from 1921-1929, as well as a contributor to the *Prágai Magyar Hírlap* between 1922-1938. Emigrates to the United States after 1945.)²⁴⁸

In May of 1938, the Prague government began a massive anti-border revision campaign, especially in the mainly Hungarian-populated border areas, as well as the Sudeten German parts of Czechoslovakia. Its aim was to preserve the unity of Czechoslovakia. Its proponents toured the villages by car and handed out the brochure, titled “An appeal for unity to all loyal Czechs, Slovaks and Rusyns.” The publication was signed by the mayors of Prague and Brno, the Slovak politician from Trenčín [Trenčín] Vavro Šrobár, and József Kaminszky and Ágoston Volosin from Subcarpathia. “... we must form one, indivisible unit and heed Dr. Edvard Beneš: suppress in ourselves everything that separates us as a nation, we must swear an oath to brotherly unity and loyalty, in life and death.”²⁴⁹ The Ruthenian National Council went further still when, on its May 30 meeting in Ungvár, attended by a delegation from the American Slovenská League, it sided with the “indivisibility of the Czechoslovak state and inviolability of its borders,” as well as addressing a six-point memorandum to the government. The council asked that, “Ruthenia’s

²⁴⁴ MOL. K 28., 59. tét., 1938–P–15 406. sz.

²⁴⁵ MOL. K 28., 59. tét., II. rész, 1938–P–15 565. sz.

²⁴⁶ MOL. K 28., 59. tét., II. rész, 1938–P–15 864. sz.

²⁴⁷ MOL. K 28., 59. tét., II. rész, 1938–P–15 705. sz.

²⁴⁸ A Magyar Emigráns Irodalom Lexikona. II. köt. [Encyclopedia of Hungarian emigré literature, vol 2.]. Budapest, 1992, p. 58.

²⁴⁹ MOL. K 28., 59. tét., 1938–P–15 944. sz., p. 5.

borders be extended all the way to the Poprád [River] because this area is populated with Slovakized Ruthenians.”²⁵⁰

In June of 1938, the United National Christian-Socialist and Hungarian National Party, headquartered in Pozsony (Bratislava), printed a proclamation - “Our Nation Calls!!!” (Nemzetünk hív!!!) - on red-white-green flyers. In it, it urged Hungarians to participate in the local elections: “... our duty dictates unity, welding into one, accepting our common fate and striving to work for every Hungarian.” According to confidential sources, “the Czech authorities made no note” of the flyers displayed,²⁵¹ printed on Hungarian national colors. The actions towards self-determination of the Sudeten Germans in the spring and summer months revealed the deep inner rifts within Czechoslovakia. The country was drifting into an equally impossible situation in foreign affairs.

Czech colonization

Political, economic and cultural discrimination in Subcarpathia, 1919 – 1938

The “Czechoslovak Republic” – as it was generally called in the two decades after its inauguration – officially held itself to be a civil, democratic state. In the country, “an officially sanctioned and openly applied *numerus clausus* did not exist. But the countless cases of discrimination against minorities – as in the filling of government jobs – revealed a matter of fact *numerus clausus*, which went a long way towards the state supported artificial assimilation intentions. Certain determining forces – economic and cultural subjugation, assimilation, etc. – were continually present among the regime’s economic and ideological configuration, presenting such a danger for the existence of minority groups that defensive measures had to be taken.”²⁵² (Numerus clausus: a state determined number, or percentage, which was not to be exceeded in the filling of jobs or school admissions.)

After Subcarpathia was attached to Czechoslovakia, the Ruthenian people did not receive what its leaders and intellectuals expected. Czech politics resembled the portrait of Janus, the two-faced household god. Externally, it continued the tried and true Beneš method of continually trumpeting progress in development of the region. Internally, however, the crux of the policies were of a relentless colonizing nature. From time to time, there were the occasional episodes of Slavic solidarity with the Rusyn people, especially if it could be exploited against the Hungarians. They – being foreign even in their language – were simply treated by Czech politics as enemies. After all, Subcarpathia’s 1,000-year existence and ancient homeland continually reminded the new regime that it had acquired the territory through deception. Thus, Czech ethnic policies made use of relentless methods against the Hungarians, now in a minority position. One of the first means was the demand for an oath of allegiance from civil servants. Namely, “public office can only be held, even temporarily, by those who submit themselves to the sovereignty of the Czechoslovak Republic, who profess themselves to be citizen and functionary of this state, and who swear the oath of allegiance as set down in statute 64, article 2 of December 10, 1918.”²⁵³ Of the notables of Subcarpathia, Antal Papp, Greek Catholic bishop of Munkács, refused the demand. Along with him other intellectuals and citizens by the thousands, among them János Harajda, the father of the later executive president Subcarpathian Scientific Society, János Harajda (1905-1944).

²⁵⁰ MOL. K 28., 59. tét., 1938–P–16 263. sz.

²⁵¹ MOL. K 28., 59. tét., 1938–P–16 240. sz.

²⁵² Turczel, Lajos: Két kor mezsgyéjén. (A magyar irodalom fejlődési feltételei és problémái Csehszlovákiában 1918 és 1938 között) [Between two eras. (The pre-conditions and problems of the development of Hungarian literature in Czechoslovakia between 1918 and 1939)]. Bratislava, 1983, pp. 23, 25.

²⁵³ MOL. K 28., 266. tét., 1927–P–79. sz.

In Beregszász, the teaching staff of the academy and the municipal workers were required to take the oath in front of the Czechoslovak military commander of the city. Those who refused were let go from their jobs – and the government refused to remit their pension when they reached that age. For this reason, many escaped to Hungary.²⁵⁴ In August of 1920, the staff of the Beregszász district court was fired for not swearing the oath to the state. Their positions were filled by employees relocated from the Munkács and Ungvár district courts.²⁵⁵ On December 9, a delegation of lawyers from Beregszász and Munkács visited the judicial department of the Governor and complained that, as a result of letting the Hungarian judges go, “judicial proceedings have come to a virtual standstill.” The situation was made worse by the slow pace of replacement of Czechoslovak judicial administration in Subcarpathia. The courts of Huszt were only established on March 1, 1921, encompassing the district courts of Huszt, Técső, Ökörmező and Rahó.

Those forced to leave the land of their birth were forced to appeal for assistance, for jobs and shelter, from their new country. The latter was in particularly short supply in the truncated country. For years, thousands of refugee families lived in railway cars in and around the capital. A report by the state railway (MÁV) to the Minister of Trade, dated July 6, 1922, stated that “with the activities of the state run Budapest small-housing construction and the ministerial commission to free-up the rolling stock, the number of railway cars thus used has declined since September of 1921 from 4,601 to 2,545 ... (but) a very significant increase threatens in the near future.”²⁵⁶ According to the terms of the Trianon treaty, those with ‘option’ rights – those Hungarians living on annexed territories but having the option to choose between the two citizenships – had to vacate the annexed territory within one year of July 26, 1922. Their number was impossible to accurately estimate. The refugee Office was expecting several tens of thousands of families. Between 1918 and 1924, 106,841 Hungarians fled, or were driven by the authorities out of, Czechoslovakia. Of those, about 88,000 came from Slovakia and 18,000 from Subcarpathia.²⁵⁷ The Czechoslovak census of 1921 counted 6,862 foreigners, or stateless persons, living in Podkarpatská Rus while that number grew to 16,228 by 1930.²⁵⁸ The increase is notable because – especially between 1926 and 1930 – thousands of Ukrainian settlers from Galicia and Russians were granted Czechoslovak citizenship and immediately obtained jobs. The majority of the stateless were Hungarians from whom the authorities withheld the Czechoslovak entitlements.

This, in spite of articles 3 and 4 of the Saint-Germain treaty, signed September 10, 1919, dealing with minorities, according to which citizenship must be provided to all with entitlement or whose place of previous domicile now fell into Czechoslovak territory, or whose parents had entitlement or whose place of domicile fell into this territory. This, however, was modified by the 1920 statute (number 236), which only recognized the entitlement of those who established - prior to January 1, 1910 - claim through family descent, marriage, settlement (after 4 years of residence and payment of local taxes), and registration in the settlement rolls. In subsequent years, the authorities introduced sundry directives to make it increasingly difficult for Hungarians to obtain citizenship. One such was the Supreme Court decision of October 6, 1923, which narrowed the definition of the right to entitlement. It proposed as a requisite that the applicant, or father of the applicant, must appear in the given settlement’s registry no later than 1906, thus negating the assurance provided in the Saint-Germain treaty regarding claims to entitlement. As a result, the already obtained entitlement documents of thousands of Hungarians, holding approved citizenship papers, were invalidated. In this matter, former Slovak Minister Ivan Dérer commented: “the decision fundamentally alters the

²⁵⁴ MOL. K 28., 266. tét., 1935–A–15 400.; 370. tét., 1925–T–459.; 1926–T–181. sz.

²⁵⁵ Fedinec: A kárpátaljai op. cit. p. 65.

²⁵⁶ MOL. K 28., 367. tét., 1923–N–38. sz.

²⁵⁷ Petrichevich-Horváth, Emil: Jelentés az Országos Menekültügyi Hivatal négy éves működéséről. [Report of the four year activity of the National Refugee Office]. Budapest, 1924.

²⁵⁸ MOL. K 28., 320. tét., 1934–P–15 204. sz.

citizenship of tens of thousands of peaceful residents of Slovensko and Rusynsko.”²⁵⁹

The authorities deemed thousands as foreigners, even though they could not obtain a passport because the required extract of the settlement rolls would not be issued to them. All the while, they were at the mercy of police harassment. By the mid-1920's, after the conclusion of the peace treaties, Czechoslovakia “created a new breed from its Hungarian-national citizens: the citizen without citizenship.”²⁶⁰ As noted previously, the 1930 census recorded more than 16,000 foreign or stateless persons in Subcarpathia – the official tally of Hungarians was 109,472 -, which meant that around 14% of Hungarians residing there were still without citizenship.²⁶¹ The Czechoslovak denationalization policy is signified by the fact that in one decade – compared to the 1921 census of 103,690 – the number of Hungarians in Subcarpathia grew by merely 5,782.

In Hungarian populated towns, the state police and administrative authorities individually examined the entitlement rights of entire social classes or branches of employment (ministers, doctors, lawyers, pharmacists, restaurateurs, craftsmen, shopkeepers, railways, city clerks, etc.). A memo from the Prime Minister's office of January 31, 1925, titled “The question of entitlements and citizenship, and the Hungarian ethnic minority,” lists 140 cases from the former Northern Hungary, 25 cases from Subcarpathia (of the 165 cases, 28 were farming families).²⁶² Teachers, professors, the disabled and war-widows were put through the entitlement screening process earlier, resulting in mass annulments or the reduction of benefits to a fraction. Many widow's pensions were reduced to 20 Kč a month; families with children rarely reached 200 Kč a month. For comparison, Czech state employees – taxation, customs, police – had a monthly salary of 5,000-6,000 Kč.²⁶³ A new citizenship review of widows and pensioners was planned by the authorities, casting doubt on their meager incomes. The Hungarian Foreign Society forwarded a petition to Prime Minister István Bethlen regarding the wrongs concerning obtaining the entitlement documents from the Hungarian settlement rolls in Northern Hungary and Rusynsko.²⁶⁴ The provisions “are aimed at breaking or sapping the strength of the Hungarian ethnic minority. If the Hungarian minority can be robbed of its leaders, its intellectuals – the most loyal guardians of the national belief -, or if they can be intimidated or put into a position of dependence on the government, the Czechoslovak government would reach its political goal, which is the thinly veiled ambition of a Czech nation state.”²⁶⁵

After more than a millennium of statehood, the Hungarians of Subcarpathia, thrust into a minority position by the terms of the Trianon peace treaty, found it difficult to accept the new circumstances, the Czechoslovak occupation. The foreign occupiers “introduced strict military dictatorship” – a state of emergency and press censorship were in effect – and a nightly curfew of 9 pm was announced in the settlements, from which no one was given exemption. The Czech authorities looked with suspicion at Hungarian activities, trying especially to control intellectual life, seeing conspiracy everywhere. In spite of it, there were thousands of Hungarians and Ruthenians who offered resistance to the conquerors.

²⁵⁹ MOL. K 28., 266. tét., 1925–P–86. sz, p. 14.

²⁶⁰ MOL. K 28., 266. tét., 1925–P–86. sz., p. 19.

²⁶¹ MOL. K 28., 320. tét., 1934–P–15 204. sz. p. 174.

²⁶² MOL. K 28., 266. tét., I. rész, 1925–P–86. sz., pp. 1-70.

²⁶³ MOL. K 28., 266. tét., I. rész, 1925–P–86. sz., p. 33. Lásd bővebben: Uo. 19. tét., 1930–P–5015.; 59. tét., 1929–P–560. sz.

²⁶⁴ MOL. K 28., 266. tét., I. rész, 1925–P–2.; 19. tét., 1934–K–15 909. sz.

²⁶⁵ MOL. K 28., 266. tét., 1925–P–86. sz., p. 20.

The following incident can be taken as indicative of all of Subcarpathia. The Czech military commandant of the city of Beregszász summoned the president of the Bereg County Casino [social club-*Ed.*], the meeting place of Hungarian functionaries and intellectuals, on March 17, 1920, saying: 'The previous evening, there was a secret meeting held in the Casino, during which anti-Czech political statements were made. If the accusations are true, the authorities will close the Casino.' The denunciation was without basis but the board introduced an earlier closing, at 8 pm, and warned members in a bulletin to refrain from making political statements on the premises of the Casino. The affair was far from over. Shortly, an order of the župan prevented the Casino from operating, its premises padlocked by the authorities. "At the same time, the persecution of Hungarians gathered momentum. There came an eight-month hiatus in the Casino's activities, during which time its executive dispersed. Vice-president Zoltán Szutor, a teacher, fled with the entire academy to Tarpa (Hungary) where teaching continued ... The Casino furnishings were mostly requisitioned and used in the worker's hostel. Most of it was never returned. Two chambers and the kitchen were used by the officers of the Czechoslovak 10th mounted regiment. Later, they paid a monthly rent of 160 Kč for the facilities, which was nowhere near its real value."²⁶⁶ Only after lengthy petitions could the board again convene in December; a member of the Czech state police was also present at the deliberations. The Casino operated for more than a year under police supervision. Then, adapting to the changed circumstances, beside offering relaxation and spreading culture in Beregszász and its surroundings, "its significance was that it also contributed to the integral unity of Hungarian society, which continued to keep alive the national affection of Hungarians now fated to a minority role."²⁶⁷

The Czechoslovak authorities consistently and continually pursued any occurrence of Hungarian national feeling, removing all symbols of Hungarian statehood. Some examples: during the King Saint Stephen's day parade of August 20, 1920, the people of Beregszász and Munkács who took part in Hungarian national costumes were arrested. Chaplain Márton Sepsi was banned on the same day from Beregszász for celebrating Mass in the city's Roman Catholic church. On November 12, the commemorative plaque honoring the founding of the former Royal Hungarian Catholic high school, requisitioned by the Czechoslovak military, was plastered over in the main hall.²⁶⁸ (The school was founded in 1613 in the Zemplén County town of Homonna by the magnate János Drugeth. It was relocated to Ungvár in 1640.)

At the same time, in April of 1920, an ordinance came into effect for "the naming of towns, hamlets, settlements and streets," which meant the changing, or rather the expunging, of Hungarian place names. The street names in Ungvár were changed in May of 1921, which spelled the end of Hungarian nomenclature. The new street names were later publicized by the official newspaper of the Alliance of Hungarian Parties of Rusynsko.²⁶⁹ Also in November of 1920, Lajos Körmendy-Ékes, Christian-Socialist representative from the Uplands, sent a protestation to the Prague government in which he objected that "Hungarian speech was not being permitted in long-distance telephone conversations" in Slovensko and Rusynsko. Then, to intimidate the Hungarians and break their resistance, a state of emergency was decreed in three towns of predominantly Hungarians: Ungvár on August 29, 1920, Munkács on August 31, and Beregszász on September 4.

A secret society, called the Alliance of Hungarian Brothers, was formed in Munkács in October of 1921, whose members swore an oath to fight for the re-annexation to Hungary of the detached Subcarpathia. The conspiracy was betrayed. At the trial convened in Kassa, the presiding judge of the judicial panel, Emil Toronszky, found the defendants not guilty. Of the defendants, Zoltán Cziffra contracted a serious case of pulmonary disease from the unheated jail, László Walla went mad as a result of the crude questioning and committed 'suicide.' Newspaper editor György Voith, himself a member of the organization, reported on the events. He was equally harassed but was able to

²⁶⁶ Kozma: A Bereg megyei Kaszinó op. cit. p. 157.

²⁶⁷ Ibid, pp. 159-160.

²⁶⁸ Fedinec: A kárpátaljai op. cit. pp. 64, 70.

²⁶⁹ *Ruszinszkói Magyar Hírlap* (Ungvár), 1921. augusztus 3.

defend himself while on parole.²⁷⁰

In the fall of 1922, the court in Ungvár sentenced each of 10 Hungarian nationals with a 14-day jail term and a fine of 200 Kč for having sung the Hungarian National Anthem in the city's Roman Catholic church on August 20, the feast of King Saint Stephen. On appeal, the Appeals Court at Kassa reversed the court's decision. The verdict was received with elation by the Hungarians of Ungvár. The Hungarian-language papers wrote of the accused as national martyrs.²⁷¹ Typical of the policies of the Subcarpathian Czech authorities, eighteen months later, after the first Subcarpathian elections on March 16, 1924, the court in Ungvár reintroduced charges against Endre Korláth and the other defendants in the so-called Anthem case. The president of the judicial panel, Gyula Hadzsega, ordered the dismissal of the case against Endre Korláth on the grounds of his being elected to Parliament.

In early May of 1922, the coat of arms of Hungary was chiseled off the front of the Beregszász courthouse. The Beregszász educational authorities decreed in 1922 that the Czechoslovak crest and a picture of President Tomáš G. Masaryk were to be displayed in every classroom and a bilingual seal was to be used. The 1918 founding of Czechoslovakia had to be commemorated for the first time in 1925 by the Hungarians of Subcarpathia. Thereafter, on every October 28, the Czechoslovak flag had to be displayed on buildings, church services held at which student attendance was mandatory, along with the singing of the Czechoslovak anthem.²⁷²

Judge Emil Toronszky, who dismissed or passed very lenient sentences in the hundreds of cases of Subcarpathian Hungarians falsely accused of spying or treason, was forced into retirement by the Czechoslovak authorities in 1932. He had to vacate his post because his conscience could not reconcile passing guilty verdicts in the anti-Hungarian levente-cases [military cadets-*Ed.*] as directed by the Czechoslovak Justice Ministry. In 1928, for example, "the latest arrests have taken the scale of a widespread levente persecution," as hundreds of cadets, and their instructors, were arrested in the Uplands and Subcarpathia. Hungarian diplomacy intervened in their behalf. The infamous law 50 of 1923, dealing with the defense of the Czechoslovak Republic, was used to sentence them to one to two year jail terms. In their case, of the seven sentenced, one was from the Subcarpathian village of Beregdéda, who had already completed his one-year term by sentencing time.²⁷³

By the early 1920's, more than 10 different political parties were active in Podkarpatská Rus. Among them were the (Czech) Agrarian Party, the Russian People's Union, the Kurtyák-led Independent Agrarian Alliance, the Work Party, the so-called "Christian Party," the Czechoslovak Social Democratic Party, the Czechoslovak People's Democratic Party, the Czechoslovak People's Socialist Party, the Czechoslovak Communist Party, the Shopkeeper's and Artisan's Party, the Jewish (or Zionist) Party.²⁷⁴ In 1922, there were 22 active parties in Rusynsko.

We must take special note of two organizations. The Subcarpathian Hungarian parties sent a 250-man delegation – representing 127 settlements – as early as May 4, 1921, to Prague to present their complaints in official places. President Tomáš Masaryk, citing illness, did not receive the group. Two days later, on the 6th, the group met with Foreign Minister Eduard Beneš. Led by the Native Settler's Independent Party of Rusynsko, which stated in the submission: "We have been living under the Czechoslovak state regime for two years; the agreement to grant

²⁷⁰ Voith: 20 év op. cit. pp. 104-108.

²⁷¹ MOL. K 28., 89. tét., p. 84.

²⁷² Botlik: Gát. op. cit. pp. 73-74.

²⁷³ MOL. K 28., 19. tét., pp. 12-17.

²⁷⁴ Поповъ, А. В.: Школьное дѣло на П. Руси въ 1919–1929 г. Политическое развитие за 10 лѣтъ, In: *Карпаторусскія достиженія*. Составилъ и издалъ А. В. Поповъ, 1930. Мукачево. [Popov, A. V.: Educational matters Subcarpathia from 1919 to 1929. Political development in 10 years. oe razvitie za 10 lit., In: *Karpatorusskija dostizheni'a*. Sostavil i izdal A. V. Popov.] Mukachevo, 1930, pp. 290-291.

autonomy for Podkarpatská Rus, with the assurance of the Great Powers, was born a year and a half ago. Even though this agreement has been ratified, we must sadly observe that not one single step has been taken towards its implementation. Our grievance is made more grave by the fact that, while Czechoslovak law specifically stated that election in Podkarpatská Rus must be held no more than 90 days after that held in Slovensko, we are still awaiting its announcement... the government has no active plans to grant autonomy, in fact, it continues its past centralizing policies. We officially protest against this intention.” To quote from Beneš’ reply, “The question of Carpatho-Russia is an administrative and civilization [cultural-*Ed.*] question. Thus far, we have solved the questions assigned to us... We have had to do reconstruction work from the very beginning. It is a contributing factor that our autonomous region lacked intelligence (*sic*, meaning intellectuals-*J.B.*) and thus had to carry out the work with our own resources. Statistics prove our effort and the League of Nations is aware of our accomplishments. Naturally, we can only gradually establish autonomy in this province but I state and stress with the honesty with which I discuss every issue – not making merely a diplomatic statement – that there are no doctrinaire obstacles in the way of autonomy, merely technical ones.”²⁷⁵

The Kurtyák organization’s origins are associated with the party movements of 1924. As background, the Rusynsko Agrarian Alliance, formed in June of 1924 and led by József Kaminszky, separated from the united Czech agrarian party, the Carpatho-Russian National Agrarian Party, on January 3, 1924. The reason for the separation – vehemently opposed by those leaving the party – was that instead of the promised autonomy, the Prague government merely planned to introduce a provincial system in Subcarpathia. (Kaminszky remained with the Czech agrarian party.) The two parties now in opposition, the Rusynsko Agrarian Alliance and the Independent Rusyn Agrarian Party, held a common meeting in Huszt on January 26, 1924, where they announce a merger of the two parties. Thus, the Independent Agrarian Alliance was born (Автономный Земледельский Союз, Avtonomnij Zemlegilskij Sojuz, commonly known as A3C), which soon grew to be the largest party of ‘Czech-controlled’ Subcarpathia. (A faction of the new organization, the Podkarpatská Rus Independent Agrarian Party, was founded on July 17, 1921 in the village of Beregrákos, outside Munkács, by its president Ivan Mocskos (Иван Мочкош). It was also commonly referred to as the Mocskos Party. [Mocskos in Hungarian means filthy or immoral-*Ed.*])

The newly founded Independent Agrarian Alliance (Party) elected Ivan Mocskos as its president, Iván Kurtyák as executive manager, András Bródy as political secretary-general, and Mihály Demkó as its organizational secretary-general. Of them, the most influential was Iván Kurtyák²⁷⁶ - generally referred to as János Kurtyák in the Hungarian press of the period – who was seen as the founder of the alliance. Through a tremendous organizing effort, he soon built the party into an effective organization and assumed its *de facto* leadership. The party was generally referred to as the Kurtyák Party. Kurtyák was born in Huszt in 1888 and finished his schooling in 1910 at the Ungvár teachers college. He taught in the villages of Csepe and Száldobos. During World War I, he fought on the eastern front, was seriously wounded and worked as a military censor in Vienna until the end of the war. He was a school superintendent in Huszt between 1918 and 1919. In 1920, he founded the Подкарпатский Хлѣборобский Союз (Podkarpatskij Hliborobskij Sojuz, Subcarpathian Agrarian Alliance) organization, which, as noted previously, merged with the Mocskos Party in early 1924. From 1924 to 1933, Kurtyák was a Czechoslovak Parliamentary representative. An unsuccessful attempt was made on his life two weeks before the November 15, 1925 elections at a Máramaros County party meeting in Vucskómező.

András Bródy²⁷⁷ (1895-1946, Бродий Андрей) was elected to the post of political secretary-general. He was born in the Bereg County village of Beregkövesd to a Hungarian father and a Rusyn mother. The family belonged to the Greek Catholic church.²⁷⁸ He obtained his diploma in the Ungvár teachers college and was posted as an elementary teacher to Nagybocksó in 1914. During World War I, he served for four years in the 12th Infantry Division and was wounded in action. After demobilization, he enrolled in 1918 in the law faculty of the Péter Pázmány University of

²⁷⁵ Fedinec: A kárpátaljai op. cit. pp. 84-85.

²⁷⁶ Encyclopedia of Rusyn ... op. cit. p. 247.

²⁷⁷ Поп / Pop: Энциклопедия op. cit. p. 106.

²⁷⁸ MOL. K 148., 1153. csomó, p. 26.

Liberal Arts and Sciences in Budapest, then returned to Munkács. Here he published the satirical paper *Tyukodi Pajtás*, then, between 1921 and 1924 the newspaper *Kárpáti Futár* (Carpathian Courier). In 1923, he also assumed editorship of the official gazette of the Subcarpathian Agrarian Alliance, then, from 1924, the gazette of the Independent Agrarian Alliance *Русський Вѣстникъ* (Russkij Vistnyk, Rusyn Gazette).

Mihály Demkó²⁷⁹ (1894-1946, Демко Михаил), the new party's organizing secretary-general, was born in the Zemplén County village of Bodzásújlak. He completed his schooling in 1913 in the Greek Catholic teachers college of Ungvár. During World War I, he served in the 1st Infantry Regiment of the Home Guard. After the regime change, he was a journalist, then, in 1920, the first Secretary of the Rusynsko Agrarian Alliance led by József Kaminszky. Demkó started the previously mentioned *Kárpáti Futár* newspaper in 1921. In 1924, the Czech authorities banned the publication – bringing proceedings against him on 22 occasions – and imprisoned him four times for various periods. His literary legacy is significant, having published in Hungarian, Rusyn, Slovak and Czech languages.

While these were going on, Hungarian parties were also being formed. Initially, three such opposition organizations existed. Primarily, they were concerned with matters of importance to the Hungarians: political representation, possibilities of government jobs, questions of Hungarian education and cultural development, and taxation. They presented a united front during elections and the various political movements. First, the Hungarian Right Party of Rusynsko was formed on June 1, 1920, counting on the electoral support of the nationalistic feelings of urban citizens. Its founder, dr. Endre Korláth (1883-1942?), lawyer, was elected as its president. Two days later – on June 3 – the party's official daily newspaper, the *Ruszinszkói Magyar Hírlap*, appeared, edited by Dezső Zombory. In early August, a civil rights protection league was created within the party with the aim of “defending the civil rights Hungarians, affording protection to their political and common interest grievances before the authorities and, if need be, through the press and in Parliament.” Later the same month, on August 22, the authorities banned the Right Party's regional organizing meeting in Munkács. In June, the Ung County Small Landholders Party was formed, under the presidency of Ferenc Egy (1864-194?); in late July, the Bereg County Small Landholders Party, under Miklós Rátz, a Protestant minister. By August, among the parties officially recognized by the authorities we find the Right Party, the Egy led Hungarian Small Landholder Party and the Agrarian and Craftsman Party. This last was mainly supported by Protestants and those employed in agriculture. On March 23, 1920, the National Christian-Socialist Party, formed in 1919 by the amalgamation of Catholic associations of Kassa and Pozsony (Bratislava), held its first congress. The three parties formed the Alliance of Hungarian Parties of Rusynsko on November 30, 1920 in Ungvár. At its deliberations, among other things, it was stated that, “while retaining the Party frameworks, they enter into an alliance and union, to fight under one leadership for the rightful aspirations of Hungarians.”²⁸⁰ The Native Settler's Independent Party of Rusynsko was formed in the spring of 1921, however, the authorities only recognized it as an official organization on December 7. Its president was Ákos Árky.

The previous process reached a climax on December 7, 1920, when the joint meeting of the Hungarian civic parties of Slovensko and Rusynsko agreed to create the United Committee of the Alliance of Opposition Parties of Slovensko and Rusynsko, with which the Alliance of Hungarian Parties of Rusynsko allied itself. At the meeting, Subcarpathia was represented by Endre Korláth and Ferenc Egy. The latter mentioned the “impossible internal borders of the new state” as a source of serious problems. The leaders of the Subcarpathian Hungarian submitted a memorandum to the Czechoslovak government on May 4, 1921, in which they detailed, at length, the wrongs suffered by the Hungarians and their political demands.

Partly in response to the memorandum, a month later – on June 6 – Foreign Minister Beneš forwarded a 36 page note to the League of Nations in which he attempted to bear out the existence of self-government granted to the Rusyns of Subcarpathia, all the while twisting, or evading, the reality. The falsification so shocked the two Rusyn-born scientists, Antal Hodinka and József Illés (1871-1944), law historian, professors of the Pozsony Elizabeth University of Liberal Arts and Sciences, which relocated to Pécs after the Trianon treaty that they presented a note to the League of Nations in which they countered the distortions of Beneš. They shed light on the real situation of the Rusyn people, saying that the gist of Czech policy is “the Prague government has, from the beginning, supported, and at the same time encouraged, both the Russian and Ukrainian factions, so that by strengthening the two opposing views weaken

²⁷⁹ Encyclopedia of Rusyn ... op. cit. p. 85.

²⁸⁰ Fedinec: A kárpátaljai ... op. cit. pp. 63, 71.

the Rusyn people's linguistic and cultural situation, along with the leading role of the Greek Catholic Church. The so-called language argument served the same aim, namely whether to use Russian or Ukrainian grammar as the basis of a literary Rusyn language.²⁸¹

The United Committee of the Alliance of Opposition Parties of Slovensko and Rusynsko created a Central Office – located in Losonc – at their meeting of February 4, 1922, appointing as its director Oszkár Petrogalli²⁸² (1874-1925), politician and publicist. At the same meeting, it was decided to commence the *Prágai Magyar Hírlap*, also disseminated in Subcarpathia. Its first editor-in-chief was Petrogalli. The publication continued from June 1, 1922 to November 5, 1938.

The uniting of the Hungarian parties was in response to a pressing need. Subsequent to the results of the first Czechoslovak census of 1921 - which posted a significant reduction in the number of Hungarians through various manipulations by the authorities -, the use of the Hungarian language in official and public usage was regulated. The new restrictions brought about its suppression in every facet of daily life. Language law 122, enacted on February 29, 1920 was embedded in the constitution. As a point of origin, it enshrined into law the 'Czechoslovak language,' which did not exist in reality. For "ethnic and linguistic minorities," the official language use (offices, judicial, etc.) was determined at the 20% level of foreign national citizens (not residents). It now becomes clear why thousands were denied Czechoslovak documents or citizenship. Following the language law, numerous government regulations appeared which, following the previous principle, restricted the languages used by the county representative bodies and committees, regional and district self-governments.²⁸³ In 1922, incorporated cities, with their own courts, were demoted to 'large' village status; Ungvár and Munkács remained Subcarpathia's only two cities. Among others, Beregszász, Nagyszőlős and Huszt lost their standing, which adversely affected their Hungarian residents. On the basis of the language law, the official use of Hungarian was only permitted in the Beregszász, Munkács, Nagyszőlős and Ungvár districts. The use of Rusyn was allowed in all but the Beregszász district.²⁸⁴ The Czech authorities further constrained the already restricted language use, as soon as opportunity permitted, if through devious methods – of which more later – they achieved the desired numerical or proportional reduction of Hungarians in a village. The directive to enforce the language act was issued in February of 1926. The Subcarpathian Rusyn parties expressed vehement opposition. They felt – with complete justification – that the directive relegated Rusyn to a minority language, whereas, according to the promised autonomy, it was to have equal ranking with the 'Czechoslovak' state language.

In the early 1920's, a linguistic Babel existed in Subcarpathia. An official Czechoslovak government paper reported that the courts of Ungvár arbitrarily decide the official language used in court. (The use of Hungarian was forbidden in the courts of law.) One counsel accepts Czech as official, the other Ruthenian. As a result, court announcements are publicized once in one language, then in the other. A similar state of affairs existed in the Huszt

²⁸¹ Hodinka, A. – Illés, J.: Jelentés a Népszövetségnek a ruszin kérdésről [Report to the League of Nations regarding the Rusyn question], In: *MTA Könyvtára Kézirattár*. Hodinka Antal Kéziratai. 1992. évi jövedék. Bevét. szám, 38/1992.

²⁸² Botlik–Dupka: Magyarlakta op. cit. p. 26.

²⁸³ For more detail, see Flachbarth: Ruszinszkó op. cit. p. 33; Flachbarth, Ernő: A csehszlovákiai népszámlálások és a felvidéki kisebbségek nyelvi jogai [The Czechoslovak censuses and the language rights of the Uplands minorities]. Pécs, 1935, pp. 12-13, 31-37. A kisebbségi nyelvjogok csökkenésének kárpátaljai statisztikai adatai falvanként [Statistical data of the declining minority language rights in Subcarpathia, by village], pp. 45, 47, 49-51, 53-54, 62-66, 70-72, 74, 83-84, 88-92.

²⁸⁴ MOL. K 28., 89. tét., p. 489.

courts, as well.²⁸⁵ The authorities, as mentioned, further restricted the already limited language usage through the various means of reducing the number or proportion of Hungarians. At the time of the first Czechoslovak census, Munkács was Subcarpathia's most populous town (20,865), not Ungvár (20,601), where the Hungarian majority of a decade before was statistically erased by the device of counting Jews as a separate nationality. (Of the 1910 count of 17,275, 12,686 were Hungarian (73.43%), 3,078 were German and 1,374 were Ruthenian. The city's population in 1921: 20,865 of which 4,936 were Ruthenian, 4,864 were Hungarian, 8,394 were Jews, 1,493 were Czechoslovak (!), 720 were alien (foreigners, or stateless) and 512 other.) The religious distribution is even more informative: 10,012 Jewish, 4,735 Greek Catholic, 4,346 Roman Catholic, 1,355 Evangelical Protestant, 111 Greek Orthodox (Pravoslav) and 316 agnostic.²⁸⁶ In 1921, the proportion of Hungarian in Munkács is officially 23.37%, while in the county seat of Ungvár, with 7,712 Hungarians, the ratio was 37.43%.²⁸⁷ At this time, the Hungarians in both cities were able to use their mother tongue in offices and public life.

Czechoslovak democracy made certain to be able to demonstrate ethnic minority islands of more than 20% in as few settlements as possible. "Even villages and towns populated entirely by Hungarians could not exercise their linguistic rights. In places where the existence of a Hungarian minority was unavoidable, (because, in reality, this minority was an overwhelming majority) they made certain that the use of the Hungarian language was made seemingly impossible through various schemes."²⁸⁸ As one example: the chief district magistrate of Munkács, raised in the Hungarian culture and once a proud Hungarian - now, of course, a Rusyn - forbade the April 15, 1923 celebration in Barkaszó to honor the centennial of the death of the poet Petőfi that the villagers planned - in spite of the proper notice given in advance. He only consented for the dance to take place.²⁸⁹

Aladár R. Vozáry (1895-1959) founded the paper *Az Őslakó* /The Native/ in 1926, which he wrote and edited through its years of existence. On the front page, the following fine printed passage could be found: "The Native is the spokesman and champion for the rights and interests of the Hungarian-language natives of Podk. Rus. It respects everyone's conviction, national and religious belief. It promulgates the necessity of understanding and peace between the nations, religions and social classes but calls for a rejection of injustice and oppression, giving voice to the oppressed and those suffering from injustice." For his minority 'vetoes,' the Czechoslovak authorities often confiscated his papers, arresting Vozáry on several occasions, then dragging him to court.²⁹⁰

During the 1930 census, the office of the district attorney fined several local Jewish persons with fines from 300 to 1,000 Kč because during the enumeration they declared themselves to be Hungarian. An inmate of a poor house was jailed for 30 days because she convinced her friend to affirm herself as a Hungarian. A late December issue of the *Az Őslakó*, published in Munkács, recounted numerous cases whose participants received serious penalty for claiming

²⁸⁵ *Prager Tagblatt*, February 7, 1923.

²⁸⁶ Петригалла, П. И.: Мукачево въ теченин за 10 лѣтъ республики, In: *Карпаторусскія достиженія*. Составиль и издалъ А. В. Поповъ. Мукачево. [Petrigalla, P. I.: Munkács during the 10 years of the republic], In: *Karpatorusskija dostizheni'a*. Sostavil i izdal A. V. Popov.] Mukachevo, 1930, p. 294.

²⁸⁷ *Statistický lexikon obcí ...* op. cit. p. 25.

²⁸⁸ Voith: 20 év op. cit. p. 27.

²⁸⁹ MOL. K 28., 89. tét., pp. 479-480.

²⁹⁰ About Vozáry's cases: Mit élt át a Felvidék? [What did the Uplands live through?] Budapest, 1939, Hangel László /szerk./, pp. 591-594.

themselves to be Hungarian during the census taking.²⁹¹ Vozáry and István Bíró, an architectural draftsman, were arrested in early February of 1934 on trumped up charges of spying for Hungary and treason. After a hearing lasting several days, the court in Ungvár found no evidence of the charges, yet still found them guilty on a charge of ‘omission of mandatory self-denunciation,’ even though that charge was not proven, either. The judges could not find him innocent, for they were risking their positions. Vozáry received a 10-month sentence on top of his 8 months served, Bíró received a 9 month jail term. Bíró suffered a nervous breakdown due to his jail term and died a few years later. The Czechoslovak authorities again re-arrested Vozáry in the summer of 1938, along with the editors of the other two papers in Munkács. This time, writer Menyhért Simon (1897-1952) and Mihály Demkó were also imprisoned, gaining their freedom only at the time of the regime change.

The spring of 1919 brought the Czechoslovak monetary reforms, primarily aimed at asserting independent statehood by establishing the new currency, the Czechoslovak Krona (Kč). This consisted of overprinting the previous Austro-Hungarian banknotes, which could be exchanged for Kč within two months - at a government announced conversion ratio. In Subcarpathia, the Hungarian Korona in use earlier was exchanged at 10:1 ratio. The similar currency exchange in Slovakia was accompanied by only a 55% discount. In the early days of January, 1923, the Czechoslovak Finance Ministry warned the population that the blue-violet 100 Krona and red 5,000 Krona notes, dated April 15, 1919, would only be accepted by banks and financial institutions only until January 31. Once past the deadline, they are deemed to be worthless paper.²⁹² The currency exchanges resulted in millions of losses among the populace of Subcarpathia. At the general outcry, the authorities promised to remedy the complaints - but never did.²⁹³

The national taxation policies of the early years struck the population of Podkarpatská Rus especially heavily - as compared to the Czech regions - because the asset tax was collected relentlessly, as well as the previously mentioned disadvantageous currency exchange. Income tax in Subcarpathia was two and a half times higher (10%) than what it was in the Czech areas (4%). On top of it, there were taxes in Subcarpathia that were no longer in effect in the Czech provinces, or were never introduced there. It was no accident that an article was published with the following title: “Murky, Asiatic conditions in the tax collections of Rusynsko.” For non-compliers, enforcement - meaning auction - was ordered by the taxation office, even if the debtor was officially permitted by the executive office of the finance department to pay by installments.²⁹⁴ The Subcarpathian financial directorate, located in Ungvár, was only established on February 9, 1922, with law 59.

In 1923, in the town of Huszt, and surrounding villages, the financial authorities demanded taxes going back seven years, to 1917, along with the current year. The fact was that the people paid their taxes to Hungary until 1918 and during 1919 and 1920, it was collected by the occupying Romanian forces. A delegation went to the Finance Ministry in Prague and argued that ‘the people are willing to pay their taxes but only for those years when they didn’t pay - or after the end of the Romanian occupation. The rest of the assessment is unfair.’ The delegates also referred to the multi-millions of losses from the currency exchange. They complained that not only was the exchange rate unfavorable but that many were not given receipts for monies held in escrow by the government. Among the villagers surrounding Huszt, there were millions in cash that the authorities did not want to exchange. The communal trust had 221,000 Korona of the so-called ‘blue notes,’ which, by law, should have been exchanged on a one-for-one basis. They were promised a rate of one-for-four but when it was taken to the financial directorate office in Užhorod (Ungvár), they were told to come back later, subsequently given the run-around in different offices. Finally, finance director Kugler told them he will not exchange the former Hungarian currency because it was not on deposit. Then, they were sent to a “reparations committee,” even though it had nothing to do with currency exchanges. “We - said the people of Huszt in Prague - voluntarily joined the Czechoslovak Republic, whose founders, in the American agreement, deemed us as equal citizens with the other citizens of the republic. If the Czech citizens were not burdened with losses from the currency exchange, then, under the equality afforded to all citizens, the poorer citizens of

²⁹¹ *Az Őslakó* (Munkács), 1930. december 17.

²⁹² MOL. K 28., 89. tét., p. 160.

²⁹³ MOL. K 28., 89. tét., p. 42.

²⁹⁴ Cases like these reported by Voith: 20 év op. cit. pp. 13-17, 22-25.

Rusynsko should also not be made to suffer losses. The delegation demanded that the Austro-Hungarian currency held by the poor Rusyn people be exchanged at a ratio of at least 1:4, saying that no taxes would be paid until the notes were converted.”²⁹⁵

It was common practice for Czech financial institutions in Ungvár, Munkács and other places to levy a higher interest for Hungarian or Rusyn clients or debtors. As a consequence of the agricultural policies of the government, the Hungarian poorer, and to some extent middle, farmers sank into debt. This affected mostly those with 1 to 5 hectare holdings. In Subcarpathia, only 11.4% of these were debt free.²⁹⁶ The situation could have been greatly alleviated by the establishment of a Hungarian bank, but “the economic life of the occupied Uplands (and Subcarpathia) was directed by the Czechs in such a manner as to deliver their goals: the devastation of Hungarian assets in as short a time as possible. Aside from taxation and land reform, their banking policies were among their most effective weapons.”²⁹⁷

György Voith, publisher of the Munkács papers *Az Élet* (Life), later *Magyar Élet* (Hungarian Life), already wrote articles in the 1920's pointing out that the political battles of the Hungarian minority should be on an economic basis. “A Hungarian Bank is necessary to successfully defend Hungarian lands, Hungarian companies and rescue the small people. Unfortunately, our public life is overly politicized and the examples from the peaceful times (meaning from pre-World War I Hungary-*J.B.*) of the ethnic-economic work carried out by the Romanian and Saxon banks failed to convince those in responsible quarters.”²⁹⁸ The concept of establishing minority Hungarian banks across the borders - in the Uplands, Transylvania and Vojvodina - is still topical, after eight decades, and could be the chief method of restoring economic, fiscal health to the Hungarian minorities. It was no coincidence that Edgár Balogh (1906-1996), a leader of the young Sarló movement (more on them later) wrote in 1932: “*The government policy that treats Slovensko and Subcarpathia as a colony of Czech industry and capital investment* (my emphasis-*J.B.*) denied the means for the large scale emergence of a Hungarian bourgeois.”²⁹⁹

The oppressive economic policies of the Czech government, the adverse land reforms affecting Hungarians and Ruthenians, especially the various and high taxes, the unfavorable social situation, the harsh living conditions and chronic unemployment forced a portion of the people of Subcarpathia to seek their prosperity abroad, beginning shortly after the regime change. “The emigration of Rusyns due to hunger and poverty took on such dimensions that its results are, for the moment, impossible to predict. The economic crisis, which was hoped to ease by spring, has not lived up to expectations and, for the time being, emigration will greatly increase,” wrote the *Keleti Újság* of Ungvár in the spring of 1923.³⁰⁰ The phenomenon was already observable in 1922. According to the quarterly publication of the Czechoslovak Statistical Office, in the first nine months of the previous year 1,453 people emigrated from Subcarpathia, mostly in the 15-39 year old category. They represented 9.92% of the total emigrants leaving Czechoslovakia. Of those, in the first quarter 42 were of Hungarian nationality, rising to 198 in the third quarter, most

²⁹⁵ MOL. K 28. 89. tét., pp. 157-159; Чехъ, Ф.: Финансовый вопросъ на П. Руси въ годахъ новаго возрожденія, In: *Карпаторусскія достижения*. Составиль и издаль А. В. Поповъ. Мукачево. [Cseh, F.(rantišek): The financial question in Subcarpathia during the years of the new rebirth], In: *Karpatorusskija dostizheni'a*. Sostavil i izdal A. V. Popov. Mukachevo, 1930, p. 274.

²⁹⁶ Arató, Endre: *Tanulmányok a szlovákiai magyarok történetéből (1918-1975)* [Studies from the history of the Hungarians of Slovakia]. Budapest, 1975, pp. 94, 97.

²⁹⁷ Voith: 20 év op. cit. pp. 139-140.

²⁹⁸ Ibid, p. 140.

²⁹⁹ Cites Botlik: *Egestas* op. cit. p. 189.

³⁰⁰ MOL. K 28., 89. tét., p. 440.

of whom settled in the greatly reduced mother country.³⁰¹

At this time, two-thirds of those leaving the country were Slovaks. “These are illuminating numbers, showing, on the one hand, the weak economic structure of Czechoslovakia; on the other hand, they strongly contradict the lies of Czech agitators of that period against historical Hungary, according to which Slovaks were leaving the country in great numbers to escape from the despotic reign of the Hungarians. And yet, now that the Uplands have come under Czech rule, Slovaks are still leaving in goodly numbers and assuredly more would leave if the North American immigration law would not put a rein on this movement.”³⁰² In fact, in one instance, the entire population of a village decided on this course of action. The people of Szentmihálykörtvélyes, close to Técső by the Czechoslovak-Romanian border - after countless petitions, and bloody clashes, the authorities refused to recognize their claim to lands around the settlement - sent a delegation to the Governors office in Ungvár. They declared to the agricultural representative that the whole population of Szentmihálykörtvélyes wishes to emigrate to Russia, where they will be given land that they can cultivate.³⁰³

Emigration from Subcarpathia continued to increase in the following years: in 1925 930 people, in 1927 1,873, and in 1929 up to 3,822. In that last year, “Slovak and Subcarpathian emigration exceeds that by Czechs by 17 and a half times! If the proportion of emigration expresses the ratio of social pressures, then we can conclude that the poorer strata of Slovakia and Subcarpathia are under a burden of social pressure 17 times as heavy as the lower strata of Czechs.”³⁰⁴ The nationality of those leaving the land of their birth fell into the following categories in Subcarpathia in the decade between 1923 and 1933: of the emigrants, 11,249 were Ruthenians, 2,736 Hungarian, 1,978 Jews, 390 Germans, and the rest ‘other.’ The 1937 Czechoslovak statistical yearbook contains the following surprising data: the numbers cited above contain 184 Czechoslovaks emigrating from Rusynsko. “Obviously, they left their limited Czech homeland for the economic benefits of advantageous jobs. Hence, they were hardly forced to emigrate. Therefore, the probability is high that among the emigrants classified as Czech-Slovak, there were only a few true Czechs.”³⁰⁵ We know that the Prague government settled masses of Czechs in Slovakia also, creating legionnaire colonies in Hungarian populated regions of the Uplands. Otherwise, neither Czech state policy, nor population policy hindered emigration because it sought to loosen the ethnic-ties of regions, making life easier for the Czech settlers being relocated. From 1933, the widespread unemployment following the Great Depression prompted some countries to halt immigration. Possibly for that reason, Czechoslovak authorities do not publicize emigration data in the following years.

Those emigrating wanted mainly to move to the United States of America but, if the year’s quota was filled, they went to settle in Argentina and Brazil. There were a number of emigration agents, and groups, active in Subcarpathia. Their unmasking was delayed because police infrastructure (a captaincy) was only set up on October 14, 1922 in Munkács, Beregszász and Huszt. The authorities already noticed in 1922 that the inhabitants of certain villages around Munkács were requesting passports by the hundreds, primarily to Brazil. They began an investigation, which found that “a well organized and dangerous agency entices the gullible rural Rusyns to emigrate.” The awed-by-promises peasants - many of who were draft age - were smuggled across the border to Germany and put on board America-bound freighters as deck hands. For this, they had to pay enormous amounts, 11,000 Kč each. To be able to

³⁰¹ MOL. K 28., 363. tét., 1923–446. szám, pp. 200–201.

³⁰² MOL. K 28., 363. tét., 1923–446. szám, p. 208.

³⁰³ *Kassai Napló*, 1923. március 30.

³⁰⁴ Jócsik, Lajos: *A Közép-Dunamedence gazdasága*. [The economy of the Central-Danubian Basin]. Budapest, 1944, pp. 301-302.

³⁰⁵ Szabó, Béla: *Kivándorlás* [Emigration], In: *A Ruténföld statisztikája*. – Magyar Statisztikai Szemle, 1939, 3. sz., p. 208.

do so, they were instructed to sell everything.³⁰⁶ Many, however, never reached the port of departure. After crossing the border, many agents simply robbed them and disappeared; others did the same in Hamburg. The police - based on a denunciation - arrested a number of agents in Alsóverecke, Nagylucska and Munkács for enticing the peasants and “for having carried out their activities for some time.”³⁰⁷ The magnitude of the migration was similar to that of 1919 when several hundred also perished along the way. Now, whole families went together and the necessary funds were produced by the agents. According to one of the papers, “it is not impossible that, in this act of migration, the hand of white slavers plays a part.”³⁰⁸

A great friend of President Masaryk and the to-be-created Czechoslovakia, the defining personality of British foreign policy in 1918, the British publicist Viator Scotus (aka Robert W. Seton-Watson, 1879-1951), opined thusly a mere decade later: “Especially the unsolved question of citizenship and documentation, which creates a vast class of ‘stateless’ people, is becoming a major scandal, leading to the suffering of many thousands, and contributes, more than anything else, to the poisoned relations between Hungary and Czechoslovakia. This and the pensioners’ parallel situation, although lesser but not to be ignored, which has been mixed together with the official equivocation and legal wrangles.”³⁰⁹

There were also economic objectives to depriving Hungarian intellectuals from their jobs and pensions, as withholding their salaries saved considerable amounts for Czechoslovakia. The raising of the citizenship question, however, had primarily political aims for the Prague government. The governing country’s nationalistic parties and bodies addressed thousands of petitions to remove ethnic Hungarian electors from the voters lists. As a result, hundreds of eligible voters were dropped from the lists in Subcarpathia’s Hungarian populated cities and towns, mainly on the pretext of lack of proof of citizenship. In the villages, this task was carried out by the state attorneys, aided by the police. In practice, this activity was primarily carried out in the Hungarian populated regions. After all, the more voters were removed from the lists, the greater the chance that fewer Hungarian representatives would get into Parliament where, in any case, their number was not proportional to that of the size of the minority population. In the suburbs of Prague, a representative needed 10-12,000 votes, while in the Hungarian districts, it required 28-32,000 votes to secure a mandate. The situation was even worse in the case of a senate seat. In Prague, 74,000 votes were enough to elect a senator; it took almost double, 143,000 votes, to elect one in Subcarpathia.³¹⁰

At the first parliamentary elections - both representatives and senators - held in Subcarpathia on March 16, 1924, thirteen parties vied for seats. Among them were four Hungarian parties, united as the Alliance of Hungarian Parties of Rusynsko, under the presidency of Ákos Árky. The defined common goals and ran common nominees. The united front was a success as the alliance garnered more than 28,000 votes in 1924 (11%), 29,000 in 1925 (11.8%), 30,000 in 1929 (11.4%), and 34,000 in 1935 (10.6%). The best know representatives and senators of the era were: Endre Korláth, Jenő Ortutay, Aladár Vozáry, Pál Rácz and Ferenc Egry. Many Hungarians cast their vote for the Czechoslovak Communist Party, which had a strong organization in Subcarpathia, winning the 1924 elections with 100,000 votes. Of its four representatives, two were Hungarians (József Gáti and Pál Török). The alliance’s parliamentary representative of the time was Endre Korláth, its senator Ferenc Egry.³¹¹

During the 1925 parliamentary elections, in the almost entirely Hungarian-populated voting district of

³⁰⁶ MOL. K 28., 363. tét., 1923–446. sz., pp. 142, 146.

³⁰⁷ MOL. K 28., 89. tét., pp. 385-386; 363. tét., 1923–446. sz., p. 145.

³⁰⁸ MOL. K 28., 89. tét., pp. 348-349.

³⁰⁹ *Prágai Magyar Hírlap*, 1928. október 30.

³¹⁰ Arató: *Tanulmányok* op. cit. p. 58.

³¹¹ Révai Új Lexikona. XI. köt., 2003: p. 309. (Botlik, J.: Kárpátalja szócikke.)

Beregszász (without the city of the same name) of 36 villages, out of a voting population of 45,479, 23,142 persons cast a ballot (50.88%), of which 20,258 were valid. The electoral gazette publishing the results notes that, “after the border realignment, the final border between Subcarpathia and Slovakia has not been determined. At the time of the voting, three villages [on the East side of the Ungvár–Csap railway line-*Ed.*] were deemed to be under Slovak authority.”³¹²

With Subcarpathia, Czechoslovakia gained power over 2,000 km² of essentially Hungarian populated territory, mostly in the lowlands around the Tisza River (Tiszahát), roughly bound by the railway line of Ungvár – Munkács – Nagyszőlős, the Romanian-Czechoslovak and Hungarian-Czechoslovak borders and the rail link between Ungvár–Csap. The government in Prague considered the Hungarian populated areas abutting the post-Trianon Hungarian border a continual source of revisionist threat. It tried to break up, or dismember, the cohesive blocks with numerous measures. It held land reform as one of the most effective method to achieve its aims. For Hungarians, this meant that the state, repeating social needs and objectives, simply confiscated the Hungarian large and middle-sized estates, which, after being broken up, were given to members of the ruling nation. The poorer, or landless, members of the minority Hungarians were essentially left out of the process. The first significant political measure regarding the estates was the law of November 9, 1918, which froze the large estates. In essence, the law banned the sale or mortgaging of the lands without government permission. The nationalization of the properties was carried out under the April 16, 1919 law, which affected agricultural lands over 150 hectares (arable lands, pasture, vegetable gardens, vineyards or hops) and general holdings over 250 hectares.

The stated goal of the directive was the breaking up of the excessively large estates to enable the tiny and small estate holders to acquire additional lands on which they can carry out viable agriculture from which they can make a living. In reality, this was not the law’s real aim. If it were, then the owners could have been made to sell, within a specified time, their holdings above a specified size, for a fair price determined by the national land office. This way, claimants could have received land in a short time. Land with a market price of 3-8,000 Kč per acre was nationalized by the state for merely 500-800 Kč. The large estate owners objected in the media.³¹³ “The current implementation of land reforms in Hungarian populated areas proves beyond doubt that its aims are not the economic and social goals of land sharing but the distribution of Hungarian held lands into Czechoslovak hands, making the Hungarian areas mixed, then completely denationalized.” Proof can be found in the minutes of the official land reform meeting. Duras: “From a national perspective, we must achieve, through estate reform, the transfer of lands currently in Hungarian and German hands to Czechoslovak ownership.” Representative Bergmann: “*The implementation of the publicized estate reform is closely linked with the colonization* (my emphasis-*J.B.*) question, which is to be carried out in areas not primarily inhabited by Czechs.”³¹⁴ The newspaper of Edvard Beneš, the *České Slovo*, defined the aim of land reform as the imperative to settle Slavs into the ethnic areas and there create a strong Slav agricultural middle class. The agricultural expert of the Czech Communist Party, Volavka, naturally agreed with the nationalistic goal: “We must extract revenge for the evil deeds committed after the White Mountain (Fehérhegy) battle. We must drive out all foreigners from the lands and take retribution.”³¹⁵ (The November 8, 1620 battle of White Mountain, lasting barely two hours, was the first decisive engagement in the early part of the Thirty Years War /1618-1648/. The Imperial armies marching towards Prague defeated the Czech troops - among whom were 8,000 Hungarian cavalry - leading to the Czech’s loss of their constitution and independence, becoming a permanent province of the Habsburgs until 1918.)

Shortly after the regime change, the settlement of Slovaks, Czechs and Moravians in entirely Hungarian populated regions was begun leading to the loss of earning opportunities of Hungarian agricultural share croppers, day laborers and small land holders. Having done so, it cast into poverty “and facing a most dismal future ... Such estates

³¹² Volby do národního shromáždění na Podkarpatské Rusi v roce 1925. Užhorod, 1925. Vydala Civilní správa Podkarpatské Rusi nákladem vlastním. pp. 2, 26.

³¹³ MOL. K 28., 89. tét, p. 33.

³¹⁴ MOL. K 28., 266. tét., I. rész, 1929–P–265. sz., p. 6-7.

³¹⁵ Jócsik: : A Közép-Dunamedence op. cit. p. 300.

comprise many-many thousands of acres, which are no longer the property of their former owners, having been taken over by the land office, they are under cultivation, but nobody knows who owns this or that estate. This process of the land office is greatly enabled by the slow procedure of the land registry system.” The president of the land office, Vozenilek, said on October 5, 1929, that “the registration of the new lands in Czechoslovakia may last until 1936, or even 1950, and only after that will it become clear who have become the ‘new landowners’... If no other affront was handed to the Hungarians annexed to the Czechoslovak Republic than what happened during the execution of the land reform, that in itself is enough for them not to quietly accept their situation.”³¹⁶ Law 99 only appeared in the summer of 1938, which addressed the harmonization between land registry records and the actual ownership situation.³¹⁷ The fraudulent transfer of Hungarian estates into Czechoslovak ownership was accomplished in three ways: the settlement of Czechoslovak small landholders, the establishment of a residual estate category, the so-called Kategorie I. Finally, the former owner could sell, with the land office’s permission, the estate, or a portion of it, - residual estate and Kategorie II - to a purchaser of Czechoslovak nationality.³¹⁸

In Subcarpathia, 440,000 cadastral acres (1 c.a.= 1.422 acres) were designated for redistribution, which included the 223,000 c.a. of the Schönborn manor, the 40,000 c.a. of the Teleki ancestral lands and the 5,000 c.a. of the Odeschalchy estate.³¹⁹ Of the planned amount of land, 111,000 c.a. were already distributed by early 1923, the majority of it in the Ungvár and Munkács districts - reported ministerial councilor Frankenberger, sent by the Prague government to Rusynsko to study the state of land ownership and organize agriculture.³²⁰ Of the nationalized agricultural lands, only 24% remained with their former owners; of the ‘other’ category of real estate, a mere 4.16%. Hungarian peasants received 18,496 hectares in Slovakia, only 970 hectares (!) in Subcarpathia - divided among 11,036 claimants. The allotment was less than two hectares per person. The Subcarpathian Hungarian peasants received less than 1% of properties confiscated from Hungarian owners. To break up the Hungarian populated areas, settler grants, called legionnaire plots, were created. (The Czech-nationality deserters of the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy, who formed, and fought in, the Czechoslovak army, the ‘legionnaires,’ mostly received land grants as a reward.) They numbered 2,054 in Slovakia, with an area of 22,473 hectares; 222 in Subcarpathia, with an area of 3,013 hectares.³²¹ The land was given to the Czech settlers for free, or at a very low price, along with animals and financial aid. In Subcarpathia, the majority of lands confiscated by the state remained under the control of the land reform office. In the Ungvár district, 4,700 c.a. was nationalized and 2,415 were distributed; the officially admitted 35% Hungarian minority received 546 acres. In the Beregszász district 14,000 acres were seized and 5,100 were given to new owners; the Hungarians, comprising 75% of the population, received only 1,000 acres.³²² In Bányú, 4 Czechoslovak settlers received 417 c.a. from the estate of Gábor Lónyay. In the village of Tiszasalamon, in the vicinity of Csap, 875 c.a. (only 787, according to a different source) from the estate of Mrs. Zoárd Odeschalchy were given to the colonists; the village of 744 people - 737 Hungarians - was given 135 c.a. by the land office.³²³ The

³¹⁶ MOL. K 28., 266. tét., I. rész, 1929–P–265. sz., pp. 13, 17.

³¹⁷ MOL. K 28., 59. tét., II. rész, 1938–P–16 294. sz.

³¹⁸ MOL. K 28., 59. tét., II. rész, 1938–P–16 294. sz., p. 10.

³¹⁹ MOL. K 28., 89. tét., p. 467.

³²⁰ MOL. K 28., 89. tét., p. 348.

³²¹ Jócsik: A Közép-Dunamedence op. cit. p. 300.

³²² Hubai, Imre: Adatok Kárpátalja gazdasági földrajzához (1919-1939) [Data of Subcarpathia’s economic geography]. Munkács, 1940, p. 41.

³²³ MOL. K 28., 266. tét., I. rész, 1929–P–265. sz.

Hungarians protested, to no avail, against the settling of the Czech legionnaires, as the National Party of Hungarian Small Landowners, Farmers and Craftsmen tried. They raised their objection in a memorandum drafted at their meeting on June 22, 1921, regarding the grants of land to the colonists in Bányú and Tiszasalamon. The authorities, naturally, took no notice. The Subcarpathian president of the Small Landowners Party urged the participants at the July 28 founding meeting of the Ung district party to protest against the Prague directive in which “foreign settlers are to be brought to Hungarian populated areas.”

The official Czechoslovak publications of the day were politely silent about the ‘colonization.’ A rare exception is the previously cited, Rusyn language, multi-authored, work, titled *Карпаторусскія дасяжэння* (Carpathorussian results), published in 1930, which reports the results of the first decade. With regard to the land reform, it speaks openly about the Czech settlements in the entirely Hungarian-populated Tiszahát: “Колонизовано было до сихъ поръ” (“It was colonized to now”), listing the Hungarian-populated villages affected.³²⁴ Official papers, documents and publications most often only showed the improvements, forgetting that these came about as unique circumstances, as part of the duplicitous, Janus-faced Czechoslovak politics. The stance is indicative by the following typical view: “The results of the land reform will not be immediately evident, especially in Podkarp. Rus. A long time will pass before the farmer of Verhovina learns to make use of the ensured opportunities for production, until he learns to farm effectively, even if the circumstances are assured.”³²⁵

As part of the land reform actions begun in the early 1920’s, Czechoslovak authorities located eleven colonist settlements between the two wars in the Tiszahát region, to break up the entirely ethnic Hungarian-populated area. By 1927, eight colonies - in the original Rusyn text: колонія (colony) - were a reality. In ‘Sztrázs-by-Csap’ (Страж у Чопа), in reality the settlement of Tiszasalamon, 23 Czech settlers (families) were granted 787 c.a. At ‘Szvobodá-by-Bányú’ (Свобода у Батю), its Czech name Svoboda means freedom, three colonies were created on the former Lonyay estate, where 66 legionnaires were granted 2,814 c.a.³²⁶

It should be added here that the lowlands of Subcarpathia were visited, in August of 1930, by members of the Hungarian university students of Czechoslovakia social and cultural village study movement, the Sarló (Sickle). The movement was active between 1928 and 1934. Their leader, Edgár Balogh, later a noted member of Transylvanian literary circles, recounted their 10-day walking trip in the columns of the Beregszász *Ruszinszkói Magyar Gazda* (Hungarian Farmer of Rusynsko), “Poor country.” “The four of us have been tramping the Hungarian lands of Rusynsko. Everywhere an astonishing sight greets us: this land is the home of destitute people. Centuries of problems unsolved and the bitterness of the new colonial situation.”³²⁷ In the important rail hub in the village of Bányú - population 1,812, 85.6% Hungarian - the Sarló youths found that the land only supported three-four farming families. The small landholders, the offspring of former estate sharecroppers, were forced into becoming [wagon] drovers and day laborers to make a living. They were oppressed by back taxes and loans. The micro-estate owners and those without land turned to animal husbandry, and accepted work with the railway. Previously, the poor rented 140 c.a. of pastures from the Lonyay estate. With the settling of the legionnaires, this practice was stopped and, for a time, their 400 cattle had no grazing land. Later, the village was able to buy land from the Hungarian village of Mándok, which was glad to be able to sell village land now in Czechoslovakia. “Thus, the community was able to compensate itself, from its own resources, for the losses suffered from colonization, at the time of the land reform. Even so, half the population is without land... The huge estate bordering the settlement ... became the property of the colonists. The

³²⁴ Заиць, І.: Земельная реформа, In: *Карпаторусскія дасяжэння*. Составиль и издалъ А. В. Поповъ. Мукачево. [Zaic I.: Land reform, In: *Karpatorusskija dostizheni'a*. Sostavil i izdal A. V. Popov]. Mukachevo, 1930, p. 195.

³²⁵ Ёирковскій, Іосифъ: Земельная реформа на Подкарпатской Руси, In: *Подкарпатская Русь за годы 1919–1936*. Ред. Эдмундъ С. Бачинскій. Ужгород. [Jirkovszkij, Ioszif: Land reform in Subcarpathia, In: *Podkarpatskaja Rus za godi 1919-1936*. Red. Edmund Sz. Bacsinszkij.] Užhorod, 1936, p. 50.

³²⁶ Заиць / Zaic: Земельная op. cit. p. 195.

³²⁷ Balogh, Edgár: Szegény emberek, In: *Ruszinszkói Magyar Gazda*, 1930. augusztus 24.

Hungarians of Bányú received no land around Bányú... The community received two acres for a cemetery, at a heavy cost, after much difficulty. The authorities forbade the use of the old cemetery. The gravedigger dug into bones, not dirt. Only then could they squeeze out these two acres.”³²⁸

The new colony close to Bányú, Svoboda, was created out of the surrounding settlements of two villages that remained as part of Hungary after the Trianon treaty. These peripheral settlements that came under Czechoslovak administration were: Badó-farms, Bagolyszállás, Csarondahát, Hosszúgorond, Kisbakos, Magyar-ház, Nagybakos, Rókafarok, Újbányú and Újtanya. Twelve years later, in 1939, the colony had an area of 7,194 c.a., with a population of 868 and 205 houses.³²⁹ The Czechs built a new settlement, with new houses, drainage tiled a large portion of the fields and introduced modern agricultural and animal husbandry practices. A three-classroom, Czech-language school was opened in Svoboda, a two-classroom, Rusyn-language elementary in Badó. At the request of the colonists, the authorities opened a Czech-language high school in Bányú, four kilometers away, where many Hungarian parents also sent their children in the hopes of a better future. The village also received a five-grade, Czech-language middle school, primarily because the railway hub of Bányú employed numerous Czechs. The other two colonies were Kisbakos and Bagolyszállás.³³⁰ Between 1938 and the fall of 1944, the official name of Svoboda was Horthyfalva,³³¹ today Nagybakos. In the nearby village of Nagydobrony, the locals used to work the field of the Lónyay estate on a 50-50 basis. After the change of regimes, they obtained a 6-year lease on the lands. Out of the blue, news arrives that they can no longer plant the fields as it will belong to someone else. The villagers planted anyway, holding that it is a sin to let the land sit fallow. “A delegation went to Prague, to let the villagers in possession of their lease, with three more years left of it. All will be well in Prague, no need to worry. ‘In spite of it, the legionnaires raided us. They took the lands and built on top of the planted seeds’ - says the villager of Nagydobrony impassively. They are used to natural disasters, storms, fire and deadly accidents in the forest.”³³²

The fourth legionnaire colony, Újbótrágy (Boutrad'-kolonie in Czech, Нова Ботрадь in Rusyn), was created between Bányú and its neighbor, the village of Bótrágy, with 32 settlers on 900 c.a. Two Czech-language schools were opened, one elementary school for the new colony, and a middle school for the children of the Czech employees of Bótrágy. The sixth and seventh colonies were located along the main road between Munkács and Beregszász, on the western side of the Szernye marsh, in two existing settlements. In Gát (Гат', Гать), 13 settlers received 184 c.a., and in the public school parallel, bilingual classes in Hungarian and Rusyn were begun. In the adjacent colony, in the outskirts of Pusztakerepec (Пустокоропец, Pusztokoropec, Nižný Koropec), 18 legionnaires were given 248 c.a.³³³ This area, previously called Kerepecpuszta, earlier belonged to the village of Dercen, and was converted to a colonist village in 1925. By 1939, it had 129 houses and a population of 676.³³⁴ In Hedze-pusztá (Гедзепаста, Gedzepasta), a part of the village of Tiszacsoma southwest of Beregszász, 25 colonists were allotted 450 c.a. In the eight colonies created in Subcarpathia until 1927, 177 colonists were given 5,383 c.a. (the table gives incorrect totals!). Other

³²⁸ Balogh, Edgár: Tíz nap Szegényországban [Ten days in Poor country]. Budapest, 1988, pp. 35-37.

³²⁹ A visszacsatolt Felvidék és Ruténföld címtára. Magyar Királyi Központi Statisztikai Hivatal, Budapest, 1939. STUD /Statisztikai Tudósító. p. 139.

³³⁰ Botlik–Dupka: Magyarlakta op. cit. pp. 57, 99-100.

³³¹ A visszacsatolt Felvidék és Ruténföld op. cit. p. 139.

³³² Balogh: Tíz nap op. cit. p. 30.

³³³ Заиць / Zaic: Земельная op. cit. p. 195.

³³⁴ A visszacsatolt Felvidék és Ruténföld op. cit. p. 288.

government aid, financial or in kind, is unclear.³³⁵ The newspapers were already reporting at the end of 1922 that, “The settlers are afraid to pay for the price of the land because they fear that the Hungarians, if they return, will take away their land.” According to another paper: “The lack of success of the Czech settlement policy is illustrated by many of the large estates, confiscated from the owners before they subdivided, are not lying untilled.”³³⁶

Over and above the eight existing colonies in 1927, Czechoslovak authorities planned for, and brought into existence, a further three in Subcarpathia. The inclusion of Rusyn settlers from Verhovina served to swell the colonists' numbers. When, and where, they were settled, Czech and Rusyn language schools were begun for their children.³³⁷

Over and above the previously noted settlements, the Czechoslovak national land-reform office handed over 12 estates, totaling 13,848 c.a., to the Agriculture Ministry as future colony sites. Three-quarters of the designated area lay in the mountainous regions, the two biggest - at 4,006 and 5,633 c.a. - close by the villages of Antalóc (Анталовцы, Antalovci), Volóc (Воловецъ, Volovec) and Zúgó (Гуклива, Hukliva). The remaining 3,399 c.a. was made up of smaller holdings, mostly on the Hungarian inhabited flatlands.³³⁸ At the end of the 1920's, new legionnaire, and Czech-Moravian, settlements were created. These were sited East of Bányú, in the vicinity of Izsnyéte and Szernye, and near the Ugocsa village of Nevetlenfalú.³³⁹ The Teleki family estates near the village of Dolha was only begun to be nationalized by the Czechoslovak national land office in September of 1931. Half of the estate was purchased by the Order of the Knights of Malta; numerous small and middle-sized holdings are created on 3,000 c.a.

Apart from the Czech colonies, the Rusyns lured down from the mountains - happily employed by Czechoslovak authority to break up Hungarian populated areas, to begin the assimilation process - also established colonies, enjoying various benefits. Near Csap, the Czech authorities settled Rusyns on the Szalánci farm, formerly part of an estate, beginning in 1927, which grew into the small village of Cervona (Червона, today Csarondahát). In 1925, new colonized settlements grew out of lands in five settlements around Munkács, of which one, Dercen - whose population was 80% Hungarian - was named Nižni Koropec in Czech (in Hungarian: Alsókerpec, Schönbornfalva, or Alsóschönborn). The settlement of Bábakút became the Czech colony of Pokuťa, the village of Hátmeg became Klimovice (not Klimovec!), Dávidfalva became Henderovice, and Malmos became Čerenik (not Černik!).³⁴⁰ The former estate Tasnád farm was settled with Rusyns in the '20s where a Rusyn-language school was established by the authorities. Today, it grew into the small village of Tasnád (Загишне, Zatisnye). The Verbóc colony was established in the vicinity of the village of Verbóc (Вербовець, Verbovec) in 1923 on lands confiscated by the land reform. (István Werbőczy /1458-1541/ was born in this village. He was the famous assembler of laws in his *Tripartitum*.) The settlement was called Puskino (Пушкіно) after 1946. At about the same time, a Rusyn-settlement was begun near the then-Czechoslovak-Romanian border, close to the village of Akli. In 1946, it was renamed to Nove Klinove (Нове Клинове, Újakli). Its population, at the end of the Czechoslovak-era of Subcarpathia, did not reach 200.³⁴¹ After the Vienna Arbitral Accord of November 2, 1938, the Czech settlers moved back to Czechoslovakia. (After the end of the Hungarian period, ending at the end of 1944, from 1945 onward, Soviet authorities brought in Rusyns from the

³³⁵ Заиць / Zaic: Земельная op. cit. p. 195.

³³⁶ MOL. K 28., 89. tét., p. 19.

³³⁷ Botlik–Dupka: Magyarlakta op. cit. p. 113.

³³⁸ Заиць / Zaic: Земельная op. cit. p. 195.; Botlik–Dupka: Magyarlakta op. cit. pp. 63, 115, 200, 209.

³³⁹ A visszacsatolt Felvidék és Ruténföld op. cit. pp. 38, 59, 63.

³⁴⁰ Kárpátalja településeinek nemzetiségi op. cit. p. 26.

³⁴¹ Botlik–Dupka: Magyarlakta op. cit. pp. 226, 72, 175, 184, 159.

mountains to take their place. In fact, they continued the Czechoslovak practice of breaking up the ethnic makeup of Hungarian settlements in new locations.)

While these were going on, still in 1924, the representatives of the Czech German and “the united opposition parties of Slovensko and Rusynsko” - József Szent-Ivány (1884-1941) and János Jabloniczky - conveyed a new petition to the League of Nations in which they listed the ethnic injuries with stemming from agrarian reform.³⁴² They summed these up as: “the execution of the laws governing land ownership, although seemingly of a universal nature, are not in harmony with the rights and responsibilities of the contracting countries, as defined by the peace treaties, but rather represent the trampling of the rights of minorities in contravention to the lofty protection assured by the League of Nations.” The complaint only contained Czech, Moravian, Silesian and Slovakian instances, no Subcarpathians, with the exception of the forest estates. (To this, it must be added that, for purely technical reasons - possibly the owners’ claims to the choice lands, based on §. 11 of the confiscation law - the state endorsed a wider nationalization claim than it, in reality, expected to achieve.³⁴³) The Secretary-General of the world body forwarded the petition to the Prague government on October 3, 1924. In its response, it again stressed that the petition distorted, and inaccurately presented, the cases, which do not substantiate that “harm was caused to minority rights.” With that, both the League of Nations and Prague - *ad acta* - filed the matter.

At the conclusion of the agrarian land reforms, at the end of the 1920s, 96.1% of the population of Subcarpathia possessed 63.85% of the total land area, in 1 to 10 c.a. parcels. On 15.26% of the surface area, 3.32% had parcels of 10 to 30 c.a. Estates of 30 to 100 c.a. were held by 0.51% of Subcarpathians, taking up 7.25% of the total area; 0.16% possessed parcels over 100 c.a., comprising 13.51% of the land.³⁴⁴ According to the data of the central Czechoslovak land registry office, based on the law of April 16, 1919, of the total 442,258 hectares of arable land in Subcarpathia, 45,379 hectares (10.26%) came under agrarian reform action until January 1, 1931. This affected 104 mid-sized and 104 large estate owners, as well as 116 farms. From the perspective of reforms: of Subcarpathia’s total area of 1,268,692 hectares, the government confiscated 238,908 (18.83%), or almost a fifth.³⁴⁵ The Subcarpathian agrarian reforms, lasting almost two decades, not only erased the previous agricultural structure but, with the breaking up of the large estates, the release of the farm workers and share-croppers constantly swelled the numbers of the unemployed in the villages. A large percentage of these agricultural workers flooded to the cities in search of work, which were unable to absorb the growing masses. This was the immediate cause of the acute housing shortage in the Subcarpathian cities between the two wars.³⁴⁶

The Czechoslovak land reform - as we have already written - selected 440,000 c.a. of land in Subcarpathia, of which more than half, 223,00 c.a., came from the Schönborn estates of Munkács-Szentmiklós. The largest estate of the area for centuries, it was the family property of the Rákóczi princes until 1726, when Emperor Charles VI gives it to the German bishop of Mainz in return for the huge loans made to the House of Habsburg during the Rákóczi-led war

³⁴² MOL. K 28., 320. tét., 1925–P–333. sz., pp. 2-4, 101-137.

³⁴³ MOL. K 28., 320. tét., 1925–P–333. sz., pp. 132, 134.

³⁴⁴ Брандейсъ, Янь: Прогрессъ въ Подкарпаторусскомъ земледѣліи за первыхъ десять лѣтъ самостоятельности республики 1918–1928. г. г., In: *Карпаторусскія достиженія*. Составиль и издалъ А. В. Поповъ. Мукачево. [Brandejsz, Jan: The development of agriculture in Subcarpathia during the first 10 years of the independent republic, 1918 to 1928, In: *Karpatorusskija dostizheni'a*. Sostavil i izdal A. V. Popov.] Mukachevo, 1930, p. 179.

³⁴⁵ Szeibert, János: A felvidéki területátcsatolás mezőgazdasági szociális kérdései [The social questions of agriculture following the territorial annexation of Northern Hungary]. Sopron, 1939, p. 5. (Klny.: *Magyar Gazdák Szemléje*, XLIV. évf. július.); Заиць/ Zaic: Земельная op. cit. pp. 194-198.

³⁴⁶ MOL. K 28., 266. tét., I. rész, 1925–P–86. sz., p. 23.

of freedom. The deeded land changed hands in a unique manner within the framework of the land reform, with a contract signed in Prague, dated May 17, 1928 - taking effect on the previous January 1. According to the agreement, Frigyes Károly Schönborn-Buchheim, and his son György, residents of Vienna, sold their landed estates, with all chattels fixed and movable, to a Swiss-French financial consortium, for 35 million Kč. The new owner organized the Latorica Economic and Industrial Co. (Latorica Gazdasági- és Ipari Rt.), named after the Czech name of the area's main river, with a holding of 165,314 c.a. This was comprised of 138,659 c.a. (84.48%) of forest, 6,164 c.a. of clearings, 8,654 c.a. of meadow and pasture, and 9,718 c.a. of other agricultural land. The investment group thus acquired the property for the average price of 211.71 Kč per c.a., which was extremely cheap in comparison for land prices at the time. The properties sold to the investment group were spread out in and around 119 settlements, registered on 118 land title deeds. The remainder of the parcels retained by the Schönborn estate - its executives were located in Vienna - were spread out in the vicinity of 10 villages, mostly around Beregszentmiklós, Munkács, Beregszász, Kölcsey and Kékesfüred. It meant that only the center of the land grant remained in the Schönborn-Buchheim family, its vast majority became the property of the Latorica Co.³⁴⁷

The real value of the property, sold to the Swiss investment group for 35 million Kč, was estimated to be close to 2 billion Kč. Within the framework of the land reform, according to the official position, this most valuable portion of Subcarpathia was sold so cheaply "to begin the industrialization of Rusynsko... The aim was to provide a livelihood for the poor of Subcarpathia." Instead, the Latorica Co. "reduced the existing job opportunities, became the ruthless tax collector of the needy, thrust thousands into poverty, and introduced the most unimaginable usurious practices."³⁴⁸ The company first let go the experienced, old employees, who spent all their lives in the service of the estate. Then, it did away with the pensions and estate favors. The Latorica brought no work for the people. Instead, it signed exorbitant agreements with the people for the lands it acquired so cheaply. The 12,000 c.a. of the Szerney marsh, now the property of the Latorica Co., provided a livelihood to the inhabitants of 70 Rusyn and Hungarian settlements. In the early 1930s, the landlessness and poverty drove the population of several settlements to begin negotiations with the company. They in turn offered to sell land at 3,600 - 4,000 Kč per Hungarian acre (1Ha = 1.067 acre) - but only pasture land and hay fields -, land for which they paid 187.50 Kč only a few years previously.³⁴⁹

To control forest management, the Prague government created three forestry management offices in Subcarpathia (situated in Ungvár, Bustyaháza and Rahó), reporting to the central national forest management directorate. Forestry related activities were carried out on 336,000 hectares, annually producing 500,000 cu. meters each, of soft- and hardwood. The three forestry offices controlled about 54% of the forest covered land of Subcarpathia. The majority of the remainder was controlled by the Schönborn estate, later the Latorica Co., and smaller owners.³⁵⁰ The aggressive cutting - in places clear cutting - and reduced reforestation brought about that between 1921 and 1927, forested land shrank by 4,325 hectares, from 619,046 to 614,721.³⁵¹ In the 1930s, there were 50 sawmills operating in Subcarpathia, 15 of them government run.³⁵² Between the two wars, the only European chemical plants dry-distilling wood operated in Subcarpathia, the Bantlin Co. in Perecseny, Turjabisztra and Szolyva,

³⁴⁷ MOL. Z. 1554., 1. csomó. (64 322. sz. ir., 1928. május 17.)

³⁴⁸ Voith: 20 év op. cit. p. 128.

³⁴⁹ Ibid, pp. 130-131.

³⁵⁰ Питтерманн, Зд.: Лѣсное хозяйство на Подкарп. Руси, In: *Подкарпатская Русь за годы 1919–1936*. Ред. Эдмунд С. Бачинский. Ужгород. [Pittermann, Zd.(enek): Forestry in Subcarpathia, In: *Podkarpatskaja Rus za godi 1919-1936*. Red. Edmund S. Bachyns'kyi.] Uzhhorod, 1936, pp. 29-32; *Подкарпатская Русь / Podkarpatskaja Rus*, 1936, p. 194.

³⁵¹ Брандей / Brandejsz: Прогрессь op. cit. p. 179.

³⁵² Hubai: Adatok Kárpátalja op. cit. pp. 27-30; Král: Podkarpatská ... op. cit. pp. 91-92.

and the Klotild Co. in Nagybocksó.³⁵³

Second to the forests, Subcarpathia's next important natural resource was crystalline salt. The deposit ran West from the village of Aknaszlatina to Taracköz, from there North to Nyéresháza in a seam 300 m. thick, making in all a deposit of 3.6 million m². The deposit was closest to the surface around Aknaszlatina, where an average of 40 to 60 railway cars were mined each day. The marketing of salt was a state monopoly in Czechoslovakia between the two wars. In Aknaszlatina, annually they mined, on average, 155,000 tons of salt. It covered the country's consumer needs, with Subcarpathia and Slovakia consuming 43,000 tons and the rest going to the Czech and Moravian parts.³⁵⁴ Prague did not permit the selling abroad of any portion of the salt. "All the surplus salt was shipped to Brno, they were always afraid that one day it would not be theirs."³⁵⁵

Large-scale government building programs were begun in Subcarpathia between 1922 and 1928,³⁵⁶ which boosted the brick and tile industries, as well as stone quarrying. Around this time, numerous brick works were founded but as a result of the 1930 worldwide economic depression, their output declined rapidly.

The Czechoslovak State Railways, ČSD, achieved the complete and trouble-free functioning of rail traffic in Subcarpathia only six months after the military occupation of the whole region, at the end of 1920. One reason for this was that a significant portion of the rolling stock, locomotives and wagons, was appropriated from the former Hungarian territory and directed to the neighboring countries of Romania, Ukraine and Poland. The Saint-Germain peace treaty of September 10, 1919, allocated a mere 632 km. of railways to Czechoslovakia on Subcarpathian territory lying East of the line of demarcation. Of this, 509 km. were owned and operated by the Royal Hungarian State Railway (Magyar Kir. Államvasutak, MÁV), which ran the main lines as well as shorter, local spur lines.³⁵⁷

The 'occupation committee' of the ČSD Prague central directorate reorganized rail transportation in Subcarpathia after the advance of the Czechoslovak army and after taking control of the railway offices. Czech officials and rail yard workers were dispatched to the area. The state Railway Ministry created the ČSD directorate in Kassa on February 5, 1919, which later operated all the railway lines in Subcarpathia. The ČSD reorganized the Csap hub's inspectorate on June 6, which initially ran the Szürte - Uzsok line. The Csap - Bányó - Munkács - Kisszolyva line was, at this time, under the control of the Romanian army, which withdrew from Csap only on July 7. The Czechoslovak forces sweeping behind it reached Beregszász on August 1, which, for the period of a few weeks,

³⁵³ Král: Podkarpatská ... op. cit. pp. 92-93; Ронь, Северинь: Промышленность Подкарп. Руси въ годахъ 1919–1936, In: *Подкарпатская Русь за годы 1919–1936*. Ред. Эдмундъ С. Бачинский. Ужгород. [Ron, Szeverin: The industry of Subcarpathia between 1919 and 1936, In: *Podkarpatskaja Rus za godi 1919-1936*. Red. Edmund S. Bachyns'kyi.] Užhorod, 1936, p. 53.

³⁵⁴ Hubai: Adatok Kárpátalja op. cit. p. 38.

³⁵⁵ Illés, József: A ruszinszkói kérdés [The Rusynsko question]. Budapest, 1939, p. 16.

³⁵⁶ Милауць, (I.): Государственныя постройки, регуляція рѣкъ шоссе и т. д., In: Карпаторусскія достиженія. Составиль и издалъ А. В. Поповъ. Мукачево. [Milautc, I.: State construction, regulation of rivers, public roads, etc., In: *Karpatorusskija dostizheni'a*. Sostavil i izdal A. V. Popov.] Mukachevo, 1930, pp. 284-286; Миллауць, I.: Общественныя работы на Подкарп. Руси, In: *Подкарпатская Русь за годы 1919–1936*. Ред. Эдмундъ С. Бачинский. Ужгород. [Milautc, I.: Public works in Subcarpathia, In: *Podkarpatskaja Rus za godi 1919-1936*. Red. Edmund S. Bachyns'kyi.] Užhorod, 1936, pp. 13-20.

³⁵⁷ Tisza, István: A magyarországi vasúthálózat állapota és változásai 1915–1944. között [The state and changes in the Hungarian railway network between 1915-1944], In: *Magyar vasúttörténet. 1915-től 1944-ig*. V. köt., Kovács László /főszerk./. Budapest, 1997, p. 62.

became the Czechoslovak-Romanian border station. Only afterwards could the Czechoslovak military assume control of the Bány-Kisszolyva main line. After long bickering, Romanian forces fell back, their place taken by Czechoslovak units. Only when the latter units entered Kőrösmező, on July 23, 1920, could the ČSD begin traffic in Máramaros. Five weeks earlier, on June 17, the Czechoslovak and Romanian State Railways signed an agreement on parallel transportation. From then on, the trains crossed a bridge to the left bank of the Tisza River, a few kilometers East of the village of Taracköz.³⁵⁸ From there, the ČSD trains ran on Romanian territory from Hosszúmező - Szarvaszó - Máramarossziget - Szigetkamara - Tiszaveresmart - Tiszakarácsonyfalva - Bocskó - Tiszalonka - Erdésvölgy - Visóvölgy, where it crossed the bridge over the Visó River to return to Czechoslovak territory a few kilometers from Terebesfejrpaták. (The station for Bocskó, on Romanian territory, was the station of Nagybocskó, in Czechoslovakia.)

Between the two wars, Kőrösmező was the terminus of the longest ČSD national rail line, almost 1,200 km, which had scheduled express service to and from Prague. In 1922, regular gauge railway lines totaled 481 km, narrow gauge passenger lines (the earlier local spur lines) totaled 159 km, narrow gauge forestry lines (some of which were used for passenger transportation) totaled 188 km, for a total of 828 km. There were also 640 km of narrow gauge rail lines used exclusively for the transportation of logs.³⁵⁹ (Data from early 1930s.)

In the early 1920s, the majority of mountain roads of Subcarpathia are narrow and in poor repair. In 1922, the length of the state maintained roads totals 521 km, which grew to 941 after the modernization of the Técső - Aknaszlatina - Nagybocskó section. Under county maintenance are 794 km, with a further 958 km. of Macadam secondary roads. The state, county and secondary roads averaged 17.8 km for each 100 km² (in the Czech portion it was 68 km), or 3.75 km for each 1,000 of population.³⁶⁰ The road between Técső and Nagybocskó connected the easternmost point of Subcarpathia with Ungvár and replaced the railway line on the left bank of the Tisza River, which was given by Prague to Romania as a friendly gift. The main road running Ungvár - Beregszász - Huszt - Nagybocskó - Rahó - Kőrösmező was opened in 1928.³⁶¹

At the beginning of the 1920s, Subcarpathia was serviced by 95 post and telegraph offices (one per 136 km², or 6,503 people). The postal and telegraph head office operated from Kassa, overseeing the Ungvár district.³⁶² These were the years that the 'Mikrofon' company of the Knotkov brothers received the contract to develop the Subcarpathian telephone network. In Ungvár, they installed a completely automated telephone center with 800 main lines, in addition to being connected to 140 satellite stations and 10 postal substations on Rusynsko territory.³⁶³ The publicity brochures of the Czechoslovak era conveniently omitted that work on the Subcarpathian telephone network was begun two decades earlier, when they were quick to make references to the Hungarian era's lesser achievements in other areas. The public administrative committee's March 13, 1900, meeting recommended that the existing telegraph poles be used to create a telephone network in the Ungvár - Uzsok, Ungvár - Perecseny - Havasköz (Lyuta), and the Perecseny - Turjasebes (Turjabisztra) sections. The Treasury's forestry office of Ungvár, as an interested party,

³⁵⁸ Beneš: Vasúti op. cit. pp. 23, 26.

³⁵⁹ Král: Podkarpatská ... op. cit. p. 96.

³⁶⁰ Ibid, p. 94.

³⁶¹ Милауць / Milautc: Государственныя op. cit. p. 286.

³⁶² Král: Podkarpatská ... op. cit. p. 102.

³⁶³ Подкарпатская Русь за годы 1919–1936. Ред. Эдмунд С. Бачинский. Ужгород. [*Podkarpatskaja Rus za godi 1919–1936*. Red. Edmund S. Bachyns'kyi.] Užhorod, 1936, p.194.

contributed money and lumber.³⁶⁴ The June 26, 1902, general assembly of Ung county directed the deputy constable to “begin discussions with the company building the Brezna - Uzsok railway, to transfer the telephone network built by them, after construction is completed.”³⁶⁵

The Czechoslovak postal service introduced their new cancellation rubber stamps in 1920. Of them, only a few were unilingual, i.e., Czech, bearing the inscription “Č.S.P.” (Československá Pošta). Czech-Ruthenian bilingual stamps were introduced in the same year. Naturally, in entirely Hungarian populated locations, the second language beside Czech was not Hungarian but Rusyn to denote the settlement. Thus, Bány was shown as BAŤU – БАТЮ, later as BOŤOVO – БАТЬОВО, Gát was HAŤ – ГАТЬ, Tiszaújlak became VULOК – ВУЛОК, later VÝLOK – ВЪЛОК, and Szürte as SIRTE – СИРТЕ. The postal stamp for Beregszász, completely Hungarian populated, was also bilingual: BEREKSAS – БЕРЕГСАСЪ, later changed to BEREHOVO – БЕРЕГОВО. Between the two wars, 95 postal stations and 25 village post offices used the Czech-Ruthenian bilingual stamps. The stamps used for registered mail were similarly bilingual.³⁶⁶

The Prague government shook the foundations of the Hungarian and Ruthenian produce co-operatives and credit unions operating previously in Subcarpathia. Law 210 of 1919 created a credit union central for the Uplands - sited in Pozsony (Bratislava) - with the ostensible aim to wrap up the financial affairs of the unions now in Czechoslovakia with their Budapest centers. This was the process of the unions founded before 1918 and the Subcarpathian produce and credit unions created by Ede Egan, later led by József Kazy, as part of the Economic Movement of the Mountains. The implementation of law 210 ended in 1924 but, in the meantime, Czechoslovak authorities passed a law according to which tax and duty advantages could only be claimed by the unions, which belonged to the new credit central, and not any others. This meant that it became impossible to start a new credit union. By the early 1930s, the several hundred co-operatives and credit unions found in Ung, Bereg, Ugocsa and Máramaros counties of the Hungarian era were reduced to 70, being a part of the Ungvár produce payment and distribution centre.³⁶⁷ According to the official view, the co-operatives and credit unions were ‘amalgamated’ on the basis of law 131 of 1926 under the supervisory role of the credit union central. In 1928, a total of 363 such associations operated in Subcarpathia: 142 credit unions (39.1%), 114 co-operatives (31.4%), 28 agricultural, 17 home industry, 14 fruit grower, 9 milk producer, 8 warehouse, 7 grape growers, and the rest ‘other.’³⁶⁸ In the same area, in 1935, 357 associations were registered but only 293 were operating. The distribution of their fields of activity was similar to the previous list.³⁶⁹

By the early 1920s, a large portion of the national budget cuts were applied by Prague against Subcarpathia (and Slovakia), meaning that the loans taken out for planned road and rail construction, and extraordinary investments, were withdrawn. For this and other reasons, the Slovak and Subcarpathian Hungarian and German opposition parties sent a memorandum in April of 1923 to the League of Nations, in which they listed primarily the grievances of the

³⁶⁴ KTÁL. Fond 4., op. 1., od. zber. nr. 421.

³⁶⁵ KTÁL. Fond 4., op. 14., od. zb. nr. 594., sztr. 335.

³⁶⁶ Simády: Kárpátalja op. cit. pp. 59-66, 78.

³⁶⁷ MOL. K 28., 463. tét., 1938-G-15 680. sz., 80., p. 85. p.

³⁶⁸ Трейбаль, Б.: Дружества на Подк. Руси, In: *Карпаторусскія достиженія*. Составиль и издалъ А. В. Поповъ. Мукачево. [Trejbal, B.: Co-operatives in Subcarpathia, In: *Karpatorusskija dostizheni'a*. Sostavil i izdal A. V. Popov.] Mukachevo, 1930, p. 282.

³⁶⁹ Бачинский, Др. Эдмунд С.: Кооперация на одкарп. Руси, In: *Подкарпатская Русь за годы 1919-1936*. Подкарпатская Русь за годы 1919-1936. Ред. Эдмунд С. Бачинский. Ужгород. (Bachyns'kyi, Dr. Edmund S.: Co-operatives in Subcarpathia, In: *Podkarpatskaja Rus za godi 1919-1936*. Užhorod, 1936, p. 62.

Hungarian minority. The memo cataloged actual complaints, such as the discriminative handling of minority groups by Czechoslovak public administration, the distortion of ethnic statistics, the problems of communicating with the state, and examples of economic, educational and cultural discrimination. The Secretary-General of the League of Nations brought the petition of the minorities, and the detailed refutation of the Czechoslovak government, to the attention of the world body. No further action was taken by either body.³⁷⁰

The first appointed educational superintendent assumed the office on September 27, 1921, within the Subcarpathian governing body. Organizing teaching was a challenging problem as numerous buildings were damaged during the war, there was a shortage of teachers and classrooms, the language of instruction was unclear, and there were no school books. The Czechoslovak authorities suspended Hungarian-language instruction in several noted schools, among them the high school of Munkács on September 11, 1919. A year later, on October 12, 1920, the Hungarian parents held a meeting where they drafted memoranda and sent them to the Subcarpathian governor's office, the prime minister's office in Prague and the Ministry of Education. In it, they demanded the reinstatement of the Hungarian schools in Munkács, among them the high school, the re-hiring of the teachers who were let go, and objected that the authorities restricted enrollment into Hungarian-language classes based on religious affiliation. The last graduating class received their matriculation diplomas from the Munkács high school on June 9, 1925.

A delegation from Nagyszöllős visited the governor's educational ministry offices in Ungvár on September 9, 1921 and protested that their previous year's request received no response. The delegates repeated their request to have Hungarian elementary and middle schools in place of the suspended educational institutions in the settlements, to which the parents were willing to contribute financially. The office again rejected the parents' request. Some time before, on April 14, 1920, a decision was made on the details surrounding the acceptance of teaching certificates obtained before December 31, 1918, being deemed as "foreign documents." Up to August of 1925, Governor Anton Beskid signed the permanent appointment of only 252 Subcarpathian teachers, leaving the fate of another 1048 in limbo. The Subcarpathian authorities ordered in January of 1921 that, by the end of the year, every "foreign language" (hence mainly Hungarian) teacher must take a language examination in Rusyn, the geography and history of Czechoslovakia, and the history of Podkarpatská Rus. The Education Ministry also announced in November of 1921 the equivalency requirements of Hungarian high school diplomas. This was the time when the newspaper *Ruszinszkói Magyar Hírlap* wrote: "The books of the schools' youth literature, educational and instructional were relegated to attic, basement and shed. Rather, what remained of them. Those few remains that the national fanaticism of the occupying army (i.e., the Czechoslovak-*J.B.*) neglected to burn, or strew to wind and water."³⁷¹

The initial cost of regular education in Subcarpathia would have required at least 20 million Kč for each district. The problems were amplified by the fact that of the 674 teachers and instructors in Subcarpathia in 1925, only 379 took the loyalty oath to the Czechoslovak Republic, the rest opting to wait out the clarification of the situation. The new state body was "forced to employ émigré teachers from neighboring Galicia and Russia (Ukrainians and Russians) to ease the need." In 1921, Subcarpathia had 530 newly organized elementary and public schools, of which 357 were Carpatho-Russian (Rusyn), 118 Hungarian, 9 German and 17 of mixed languages. There were also middle and high schools in operation but their numbers were not recorded in the document. In Ungvár and Munkács, a Rusyn commercial school was also in operation, with a Czechoslovak and Hungarian section. The one in Munkács was upgraded into an academy, and moved into new facilities. In Nagyszöllős, apart from a commercial school, a state metallurgical school also ran; in both Ungvár and Kőrösmező, a forestry technical school was open, each with attached boarding facilities. "These commercial and technical schools and academies had little significance in the present economic situation (i.e., in the early 1930s) as the graduates could find no positions appropriate to their qualifications. Many graduates of the commercial academy applied for teacher's assistant positions because the public schools still had a great shortage of instructors."³⁷² The National Assembly of Czechoslovakia passed law 137 on June 8, 1923,

³⁷⁰ Botlik: Egestas op. cit. pp. 191-192.

³⁷¹ *Ruszinszkói Magyar Hírlap*, 1921. március 8.

³⁷² Клима, Викторъ: Школьное дѣло и просвѣщеніе на Подкарп. Руси, In: *Подкарпатская Русь за годы 1919–1936*. Ред. Эдмундъ С. Бачинскій. Ужгород. [Klima, Viktor: School affairs and education in Subcarpathia, In: *Podkarpatskaja Rus za godi 1919-1936*. Red. Edmund S. Bachyns'kyi.] Užhorod, 1936, p. 102.

which ordered the mandatory teaching of the state language in every minority, meaning non-Czech/Slovak, high school and teachers college, beginning with the 1923-1924 school year.

Czechoslovak authority held that the restriction of Hungarian-language schools, and instruction, was the most effective means of beginning the assimilation process, beside land reforms. Hence, along the Czech schools, numerous Rusyn-language schools were opened in mainly Hungarian populated villages. Czech-language schools operated in the Hungarian settlements, among others: Macsola (a kindergarten, also), Mezőkaszony, Nagyberég (for 50 Czech families), Nagybégány, Rafajnaújfalu, Szernye, in the former Ugocsa County; Csepe, Feketeardó, Tiszaújlak, as well as the Upper Tisza region Nagybocksó, where a Czech middle school was also established for 270 Czech inhabitants. Rusyn education institutions in Ung: Császlóc, Fornos, Kereknye, Nagydobrony, Nagygejóc, Órdarma, Unghosszúmező; in Ugocsa: Batár, Fancsika, Gödényháza, Karácsfalva, Mátyfalva, Tiszafarkasfalva, Salánk, Tekeháza; in the more or less Hungarian populated settlements of the Upper Tisza region: Visk, Técső, Aknaszlatina, Rahó. Beside Czech-language schools, Rusyn-language ones operated in the following places: Beregrákos (with two dozen Czech inhabitants), Barkaszó (to support the vigorous Rusyn resettlement), Királyháza, Bustyaháza, Gyertyánliget, Kőrösmező. For the children of the 40,000 Czech public administrative and public order personnel ordered to Subcarpathia, and the settlers, 4 kindergartens, 22 elementary and 1 middle schools were opened. By 1931, their numbers grew to 45, 158 and 14, respectively. There were also 3 Czech-language academies and one teachers college. It means that in Podkarpatská Rus there was a Czech-language elementary school for each 212 Czech inhabitant; in the case of Hungarians, one for each 945; and one for each 998 Rusyns.³⁷³ By the early 1930s, there were a total of 365 Czech-language elementary schools, 23 middle schools, three academies and a teachers college in Subcarpathia.³⁷⁴

In the 1935-1936 school year, 769 public schools operated in Subcarpathia with 3,271 classes, 3,131 teachers and 146,681 students. The number of Rusyn elementary schools grew significantly from 357 in 1921 to 465. In total, they operated 2,207 classrooms, with 2,069 teachers and 101,152 pupils. In the previous school year, the state maintained 158 Czechoslovak (in reality Czech) schools with 613 classrooms, 618 teachers and 22,178 students. As an aside, the previous fact includes those thousands of Rusyn and Hungarian pupils whose parents enrolled them in the Czech schools in the hopes of a better future. On the other hand, the authorities used various enticements - free school supplies, discounts, gifts of clothing - to encourage the minority populations to take this option, especially the Hungarians, Gypsies and Rusyns. Otherwise, the 40,000 Czech employees working in Subcarpathia could not have sent 22,000 pupils to the Czech public school system. In a decade and a half, to the 1935-1936 school year, the number of Hungarian public schools remained unchanged (118), with 365 classroom, 363 teachers and 18,171 students. The number of German-language schools grew to 17 (39 classrooms, 34 teachers and 1,818 pupils). Also, there were 4 Romanian elementary schools (31 classrooms, 31 teachers and 1,620 pupils) and seven Jewish public schools (16 classrooms, 16 teachers and 741 pupils). The number of middle schools operating: 18 Rusyn (125 classrooms, 151 teachers and 5,311 pupils) and 17 Czechoslovak (100 classrooms, 108 teachers and 3,626 pupils). At the time, there was no independent Hungarian middle school but 24 Hungarian classrooms operated in other language institutions (28 teachers and 988 students). The Germans were in a similar situation, with 3 classrooms (3 teachers and 139 pupils).³⁷⁵

An especially serious loss struck the Munkács Greek Catholic bishopric's school network. In 1919, the diocese maintained 384 schools, almost all of which were closed by the Czechoslovak authorities. In 1936, only 25 are still in operation. The simple reason was that each parish could not maintain the schools out of their own efforts and the Prague government not only did not support them but persecuted them, holding that a religious moral education was not desirable. It also suspected that the Greek Catholic schools would continue to foster the Hungarian connections.³⁷⁶ Around this time, several hundred refugee Russian and Ukrainian teachers were active in Subcarpathia,

³⁷³ Erdélyi: Kárpátalja. op. cit. pp. 14-15.

³⁷⁴ Marina, Gyula: Ruténsors. Kárpátalja végzete [Ruthenian fate. The destiny of Subcarpathia]. Toronto, 1977, p. 103.

³⁷⁵ Клима / Klima: Школьное op. cit. p. 103.

³⁷⁶ Bonkáló: A rutének op. cit. p. 146.

effectively playing a role in the withering of the Rusyn people's national consciousness. The Czech authorities gladly appointed them to educational institutions where the Ruthenian language was taught.³⁷⁷

At the time of the regime change in 1919, there were three high schools operating in Subcarpathia (Ungvár, Munkács, Beregszász), three teachers colleges (a public one in Munkács and two Greek Catholic ones in Ungvár, one for men, another for women) and a Greek Catholic seminary in Ungvár. The Reformed Church operated an high school in Huszt. In 1919-1920, the high schools taught 706 pupils, which grew to 2,285 by the 1927-1928 school year. In the same year, the three teachers colleges had an enrollment of 347; a total of 121 teachers were active in these facilities.³⁷⁸ The Czechoslovak authorities tried to limit Hungarian-language education in Subcarpathia from the beginning of their reign. Through nationalization, they shut the centuries old Drugeth High School in Ungvár, established in 1646, locating a similar Czech and Rusyn school in the facilities. In Munkács, the previous Hungarian public high school was converted to Rusyn-language instruction; in Beregszász, the similar Hungarian high school, established in 1888, was reorganized into a bilingual, Hungarian-Rusyn, institution.³⁷⁹ It is indicative of the sign of the times that for the 1919-1920 school year, the high school had two commencement exercises - because the school split into two. There was the early September one held in Beregszász, then, a second one in mid-May in the Hungarian village of Tarpa, after a portion of the teachers and students fled. The school's official name: "the Beregszász Royal Hungarian State High School, operating in Tarpa." The institution moved to Fehérgyarmat at the end of August - with a suitable change of name - where it continued to operate for several years. There were less and less Hungarian pupils from Subcarpathia and the Uplands. In the Beregszász high school, in spite of official pressures, only one teacher swore the loyalty oath to the Czechoslovak Republic.³⁸⁰

How did the government change affect the area of the Greek Catholic bishopric of Munkács? Of the diocese only the parish of Rudabányácska in Zemplén County, and the two satellite parishes of Beregdaróc in Bereg County and Kölcse in Szatmár County remained in Hungary. The parishioners of all three were Hungarians who continued to maintain contact with the governing body of the bishopric in Ungvár. Four parishes of the Hajdúdorog bishopric - Bodrogmező, Bodrogszerdahely, Kisdobra and Zemplén - ended up annexed to Czechoslovakia. The archbishop of Nyíregyháza exercised uninterrupted control over them until 1937, directly until 1929, then through a local representative appointed by him. Then, the Holy See - taking into consideration its own interests and its relations with Budapest and Prague - came to an agreement with Czechoslovakia, *modus vivendi*, whereby the four named parishes were transferred to the bishopric of Munkács. When the first Vienna Arbitral Accord of November 2, 1939, transferred the southern, almost exclusively Hungarian populated, strip of Czechoslovakia back to the mother country, Rome reversed its position and, on July 3, 1939, again transferred the four parishes back under the jurisdiction of the bishop of Hajdúdorog.³⁸¹

Following the setting of new borders after World War I, eleven parishes from the Munkács diocese, all in Máramaros County South of the Tisza River, were annexed to Romania (Felsőróna, Havasmező, Hosszúmező, Máramarossziget, Oroszkő, Pálosremete, Petrovabisztra, Rónaszék, Visóoroszi, Tiszakarácsonyfálva, as well as the portion of Tiszalonka on the left bank of the Tisza). According to 1915 data, these parishes had 22,336 Greek Catholic

³⁷⁷ Kemény: Verhovina op. cit. pp. 164, 168.

³⁷⁸ Поповъ / Попов: Школьное op. cit. pp. 43-45.

³⁷⁹ Botlik, József – Dupka, György: Ez hát a hon... (Tények, adatok, dokumentumok a kárpátaljai magyarság életéből 1918-1991.) [So this is home ... (Facts, data, documents from the life of the Subcarpathian Hungarians 1918-1991)]. Budapest – Szeged, 1991, pp. 78-79.

³⁸⁰ A beregszászi magyar gimnázium története [History of the Hungarian high school of Beregszász]. Budapest, 1990, editors: Benda István, Orosz László, pp. 15-19.

³⁸¹ Pirigyi, István: A görögkatolikus magyarság története [The history of the Greek Catholic Hungarians]. Budapest, 1991, pp. 61-62.

parishioners, of whom 16,956 were of Rusyn mother tongue, 4,756 were of mixed Hungarian and Rusyn speakers and 654 were of Hungarian mother tongue. These eleven parishes were assigned to the Greek Catholic bishopric of Máramaros, established in 1930.³⁸²

After the signing of the Trianon peace treaty, Bishop Antal Papp of Munkács was openly attacked for a long time. It was not only for his openly held Hungarian sympathies, but also his role in the reform of the calendar and the standard letters used in writing. The enemies of the union simply could not forgive him. To be historically accurate, these opponents contributed on many occasion after the first world calamity that a number of Greek Catholic believers of the Munkács bishopric converted to the Pravoslav (Greek Orthodox) religion. Between 1918 and 1920, almost 55,000 left - nearly half of the number counted a decade later. About this time, the prospect of the creation of a new Greek Catholic diocese in Subcarpathia arose. Many priests wished Rome to separate the Munkács, Eperjes, and Hajdúdorog diocese, and the Körös diocese of the South, from the jurisdiction of the archbishops of Esztergom and Zagreb. They wished these to be organized into a new diocese, with a newly appointed metropolitan (archbishop), who is one rank below the Patriarch in the Greek Catholic hierarchy. All these were to be accomplished by raising the ancient bishopric of Munkács to an archbishopric.³⁸³ Nothing came of this concept.

After the occupation of Subcarpathia, one of the most important goals of the Prague government was the encouragement, through the most varied means, of converting as many Rusyn inhabitants as possible to the Pravoslav religion. Their reason was that they looked on the Greek Catholic Church as 'Hungarian,' or Hungarian-friendly. Hence, Czechoslovak authorities oppressed and persecuted without cease the Greek Catholic Church during the early years of their administration. At the same time, they offered effective support to the Greek Orthodox sect and its Russian priests. The Russian and Ukrainian emigrants who settled in Subcarpathia were exploited to undermine the Rusyn-Hungarian character of the Greek Catholic Church, as well as to spread Pravoslav and Ukrainian ideas. The authorities turned a blind eye when Greek Catholic churches were plundered, and lifted not a finger when the inhabitants of numerous villages expelled the Greek Catholic minister from the settlement. In one of the centers of the early-20th century schism-movement, Nagylucska, the enraged converts demolished the Greek Catholic church. The consistory of the bishop of Munkács collected a list of the injuries that befell the diocese, but there was no concrete result to its written complaint. While the 1910 census counted a total of 577 persons of Greek Orthodox faith in the territory of the subsequent Podkarpatská Rus, by the end of 1922, 70,000 parishioners were organized in 76 Pravoslav parishes.³⁸⁴ It is also not coincidental that the commander of the Subcarpathian occupation forces, French general Pascal Castella and his large family, occupied the Ungvár residence of Bishop Antal Papp. A permanent military guard ensured their safety and peace. The bishop was restricted to a single room - effectively house arrest - on the logic that, as a person of undetermined citizenship, it was enough for him. The bishop's 'sins' were aggravated by his refusal to swear the loyalty oath to the Czechoslovak Republic.

The authorities limited the bishop's ability to travel. When, finally in the spring of 1920, he was able to make it to Máramaros County, then the scene of heated conversion activities, the leader of the local Rusyns, Iván Kurtyák, a teacher and trustee of the Huszt Greek Catholic diocese, had to protect him. This was the time when the Pravoslav ministers baptized a large number of people around the confluence of the Tisza and Nagy-Ág rivers, in the Greek Orthodox abbey near the village of Iza. Orthodox nuns, recruited from among the older peasant women, roamed the area, followed by beggars and ragged children, provoking bar-room fights and bloody street clashes between Greek Catholics wishing to remain true to their beliefs and Pravoslav converts. In shrine village of Husztbaranya, or Boronya, barely 10 km from Huszt, armed Greek Orthodox inhabitants committed acts of brigandry. The fury of the authorities reached its zenith with the bishop's tour because the cleric drove from village to village to tally his flock and, with apostolic bravery, urge them to a crusade against Pravoslav and communist ideals.

János Kurtyák rode out with 200 selected Rusyn horsemen to meet his bishop and escorted his car into Huszt. Under the castle mount, in the garden of the former Rákóczi palace, hidden Czechs hurled jeers, and rotten eggs, at the

³⁸² Bendász, István - Koi, István: A Munkácsi Görögkatolikus Egyházmegye lelkészsképeinek 1792. évi katalógusa [1792 catalogue of the parishes of the Greek Catholic Diocese of Munkács]. Nyiregyháza, 1994, pp. 21-22.

³⁸³ Pirigy: A magyarországi op. cit. p. 72.

³⁸⁴ MOL. K 28., 89. tét., p. 29.

procession. The massive Kurtyák, riding beside the car, shook his fists at the balconies and rooftops where the assailants took cover, promising death to those who would dare harm the prelate. At night, he posted men at the windows of the dean's house, where the bishop took shelter. Kurtyák made several rounds of the neighborhood that night because unidentified Czechs managed to break some windows. The following morning, he rode at the head of his horsemen when people, leaving church and carrying banners, followed the bishop on the highway towards the shrine at Husztbaranya. On arrival, Pravoslav rowdies had to be routed twice. His men, armed with sticks and axes (fokos) were denied entry to the church-yard by the gendarmes. Only Kurtyák was permitted to accompany the bishop through the throng to the pulpit. At the first word of his sermon, "Wisdom ...," he was pelted with stones. Pravoslavs, mixed in with the crowd, made a loud commotion. Kurtyák stood in front of the bishop, protecting him with his own bulk, and managed to make a path through the angry mob. For his bravery, Kurtyák was later decorated by the Pope with the Knight's Cross of the Order of St. George,³⁸⁵ which he accepted at a ceremony in Huszt on January 20, 1925.

From the memoirs of Gyula Marina, recounting the previous episode: During the ceremonial preaching of the prelate, a well organized group of 150-200, under protection of the Czechoslovak gendarmes, began to sing loud, profane songs. When the organizers attempted to quiet them, they began to throw rocks, which precipitated chaos and fighting. Many were injured on both sides. A rock was thrown at the bishop but his secretary, Sándor Sztojka, later to become bishop, standing at his side managed to deflect it at the cost of a minor wound to himself. The Czechoslovak press reported the incident countrywide, with considerable venom, saying that the majority of Rusyns have had enough of their Hungarian bishop and the Greek Catholic religion forced upon them by their 'Hungarian' clergy, wishing instead to return to the 17th century orthodox religion of their ancestors.³⁸⁶

The attack against bishop Antal Papp's pastoral visit to the shrine of Husztbaranya brought about the opposite result. Aside from a few errant ministers, the Greek Catholic clergy - and their flocks - expressed their stronger support. The Czechoslovak authorities, instead of coming to an accord, began a general and open attack on the Greek Catholic Church, foremost against the Hungarian-born bishop of Munkács. "The result was that the whole of Subcarpathia became a virtual battleground. Although the fight began on a religious plane, at least six Greek Catholic ministers fell victim and the civilian victims or wounded of the religious conflict can be estimated at several hundred. It continued, often amid wild savagery, until July of 1924."³⁸⁷

Many held Antal Papp responsible for the tragic events - which stemmed from several sources - and held that 'the situation immediately changes, the unity is restored, if the bishop steps down from his post and leaves Subcarpathia.' To reach their goal, they resorted to various methods, which received the support of the Czechoslovak authorities. Through the offices of Governor Gregory Zhatkovych, a few Pravoslav-sympathizer ministers of the Munkács diocese lodged a complaint against the bishop in Rome, asking for his removal. They opined that primarily Antal Papp was responsible for the spread of the schism-movement in Subcarpathia, the multitude of conversions, and hence unsuitable for his position. Yet, the main reason for the dissatisfaction of the parishioners was the church tax system, inherited from the feudal period. Law 290, enacted by Prague on April 14, 1920, unevenly remedied the countless grievances and punishable offences. It stated that henceforth the parishioners did not have to pay the harvest tax (kobliná, коблина) and other church taxes, nor the obligatory annual day of labor (rokoviná, роковина). However, it did not definitively prohibit their demand and collection. Thus, the instructions became the source of misunderstanding for years. In places, the parishioners continued to pay in part, or in whole, the noted duties according to the old customs. In other places, they refused, coming into conflict with their Greek Catholic priest. As an example, in the village of Bedőháza in Máramaros County, the villagers refused the collection of the tithe, then drove out the minister and his brother-in-law, also a minister. They were only later able to return to their parish with a police escort.³⁸⁸

³⁸⁵ Oláh, György: *Jajkiáltás a Ruténföldről* [A plaintive cry from Ruthenia]. Budapest, 1928, pp. 57-58.

³⁸⁶ Marina: *Ruténsors*. op. cit. pp. 76-77.

³⁸⁷ *Ibid*, p. 94.

³⁸⁸ Botlik: *Hármas kereszt* op. cit. p. 233.

In early February of 1921, Eduard Beneš visited the Vatican Secretary of State, Cardinal Pietro Gasparri, to ask for the removal of the bishop of Munkács, after having successfully achieved it in the case of István Novák, the bishop of Eperjes. "At the time of the Vatican conference, Antal Papp's position was ... strengthened by the memorandum of a Ruthenian-born Hungarian professor, József Illés, regarding the Ruthenian question and the situation of the Munkács diocese to Pope Benedict XV (1914-1922) during a longer audience. The presentation was of such effect on the pope that he refused to see Foreign Minister Beneš who was waiting for an audience. The hunt and intrigue against Antal Papp thus was headed off in the most pertinent place and his situation temporarily solidified."³⁸⁹ Antal Papp traveled to Prague in May of 1921 where he visited papal nuncio Micara, who received him with surprising consideration. They reviewed the charges brought against the bishop in a lengthy conversation. Afterwards, the nuncio suggested that the bishop visit Beneš. At the meeting, the bishop asked the Foreign Minister to end the virtual religious anarchy in Subcarpathia by activating the pre-1918 Hungarian laws governing religious conversions. The politician unequivocally refused; in fact, he declared, plans are under way to make conversions easier.

At the time of the Foreign Minister's revelation, the latter was the usual practice, which the Prague government sought to expedite through various means. They continually brought up the 1,000-year repression by Hungary, to create distrust between Hungarians and Rusyns. They were well aware of the considerable sway of the Greek Catholic clergy among the people, thus they looked for points of friction. They whispered to the people that the 1646 Union of Ungvár was prepared by the Hungarians, that they brought on the primacy of the pope - the Pravoslav religion was the ancient true one, that they must return to it. Whoever was opposed to it was immediately labeled as 'Hungarian,' or at least Hungarian-friendly. There was no word now of the religious autonomy suggested in the Treaty of Saint-Germain, which, among other things, contained the promised "widest possible autonomy." In fact, immediately after the regime change, Czechoslovak authorities energetically supported the Greater Russian and Ukrainian directions - to counterbalance the 'Hungarian period.' Although their goals diverged in several areas, they agreed in that the Rusyn people must be separated from the Greek Catholic Church and its clergy, whom they held to be 'Hungarian.' These undertakings were not particularly new in Subcarpathia. From the middle of the 19th century "the two differing directions tried to win the support of the Ruthenian masses by opposing means. The Greater Russian propaganda brought religious considerations to the forefront, with which to infuse the Rusyn people; the Ukrainian direction was intellectual and definitely political in nature, with the aim of organizing Ruthenian separatism."³⁹⁰

The Czechoslovak authorities used the legionnaires returning from Russia in the mass conversions to the Orthodox faith. Many legionnaires married, and brought with them, Russian Pravoslav wives. These soldiers - mainly officers and non-coms - were dispatched to the local Subcarpathian military posts, so they could be in constant contact with the thousands of Russian refugees flooding the region. Their numbers were swelled by the members of the Ukrainian Nationalist Guards, the so-called Szics-units (Українські Січові Стрільці, Ukrainian Szics Rifles),³⁹¹ constituted in Galicia in August of 1914 and originally part of the Austro-Hungarian armed forces, most of whom became Polish prisoners in April of 1920. Three thousand of them fought their way to the new Czechoslovakia, to Subcarpathia. Here they were interned in temporary camps - in Ungvár, Csap, etc. - but they were free to create the "Ukrainian Szics Committee."³⁹² Many joined the Czechoslovak infrastructure of Podkarpatská Rus, accepting office or actively taking part in the spreading the Pravoslav religion.

This last activity primarily manifested itself in that the legionnaires, with the support of the state central administration, replaced the Greek Catholic ministers with ordinary village people, barely able to read and write, but

³⁸⁹ Salacz, Gábor: *A magyar katolikus egyház a szomszédos államok uralma alatt* [The Hungarian Catholic Church under the rule of the neighboring countries]. München, 1975, p. 26.

³⁹⁰ Kemény: *Verhovina* op. cit. p. 23.

³⁹¹ For more detail, see Гордієнко, Володимир. І.: *Українські Січові Стрільці*. Львів [Gordienko, Volodimir, I.: *Ukrainian Szics Rifles*] L'viv, 1990, pp. 8-55.

³⁹² Udvari, István: *Tallózások ukrán, ruszin és szlovák könyvek körében* [Collections from Ukrainian, Rusyn and Slovak books]. Nyíregyháza, 1995. (Vasvári Pál Társaság füzetei 9. Előszó: Viga Gyula) pp. 155-156.

of the Pravoslav religion. Their sole merit was that they could perform the religious rites, even if frequently imperfectly. It was more important that they loyally serve the authority of the state. The Czechs were not concerned that they would continue to cultivate the centuries old Hungarian-Rusyn coexistence and friendship. The new clerics willingly complied with the Czech political rabble-rousers, a role readily assumed by the lawyers, customs officers, police, road and forest inspectors, and every Czech whose fortunes led them to the Subcarpathian region of the day. With the newly minted Orthodox clerics, it was as if the legendary folksy, simple era of the 17-18th century was revived.³⁹³

Behind the apparent religious questions lay the Pan-Slav ideal, dressed in schism, - as between 1849 and 1918 - whose proponents envisioned the Russian Orthodox empire stretching from Vladivostok to Prague. This illusion, in which they firmly lived, is what they tried to instill in the naive, and often misled and deceived, Rusyn people. As a result of the prepared plan and the resolutely guided mood, more and more villages converted to the Pravoslav religion voluntarily or, if required, with the 'help' of the Czech authorities. It frequently occurred that a Greek Catholic minister, trained in Ungvár or Budapest, was evicted from the rectory in the presence of the gendarmes and his illiterate Pravoslav replacement ushered in. a portion of the Rusyn people blindly followed, as if mesmerized, the teachings of the new missionary 'apostles.' Often, unbelievably, they abandoned their old churches and built new ones. More often, they simply expelled their former Greek Catholic brethren.

The ranks of the newly-minted Pravoslav ministers from Subcarpathia were swelled by the almost 300 immigrant Greater Russian Greek Orthodox priests who were doing missionary work in Podkarpatská Rus between the two wars. We do not judge on their spiritual motivation but merely note that they carried in themselves, as the greatest onslaught against the Orthodox Church, the 1913-1914 'Ruthenian schism case' of Máramarossziget, in which a ruling was made on the basis of Hungarian law. They spoke of the defendants as martyrs and the most unfortunate victims of Hungarian oppression, inciting hatred in those contemplating conversion. The chief figure of Pravoslav media manipulation from the 1920s onward was the Russian immigrant from Bukovina, then resident of Ungvár, Curkanovics Illarion³⁹⁴ (Цурканович Илларион, in Hungarian sources: Hilarion), who followed the case as a newspaper reporter. He organized the Carpatho-Russian Work Party, with Czech government money, becoming its representative and senator in the Prague government. With his collaboration, the Школьная Помощь (Skolnaja Pomoses, School Aid) printing press was founded, which also maintained a boarding school for the benefit of needy Rusyn students. Their welfare was looked after, their education entrusted to Russian immigrants and promising students were given bursaries to complete their education in Prague. After obtaining their diploma, most were lost to the Rusyn people, becoming 'Czechoslovak' civil servants.³⁹⁵

In the first years following the regime change - in spite of the rapid spread of the Pravoslav religion - there was not a person among the Greek Orthodox ministers who was suitable to organize and lead an Orthodox bishopric. The Serbian church sent the patriarch of Niš, in the person of Dositheus, to Subcarpathia in August of 1921. He led the missionary work, and generally Pravoslav religious life, until 1926. From the background, he directed the schism movement, the conversion of Greek Catholics to orthodoxy. Concurrently, the representatives of the Subcarpathian Pravoslav parishes held their first congress on August 21, 1921, in the village of Iza, in Máramaros County. At the deliberations, they elected the Pravoslav Committee and its president, Vladimir Homicsko (1879-after 1944, Гомичков Владимир) who held, since the previous year, the post of vice-president of the Central Russian National Council. The congress also made a decision on the official name of the church organization, Carpatho-Russian Eastern Pravoslav Church, and passed its temporary charter.³⁹⁶

By the middle of the next decade, 80 Orthodox parishes were active in Máramaros County. Seminarians studied in Serbia or the United States. Apostasy, the changing of religion, was vigorously encouraged by the Czech

³⁹³ Botlik: Hármás kereszt op. cit. p. 235.

³⁹⁴ Поп / Pop: Энциклопедия ... op. cit. p. 398.

³⁹⁵ Udvari: Tallózások op. cit. pp. 155-156.

³⁹⁶ Fedinec: A kárpátaljai ... op. cit. p. 91.

authorities, its methods developed by Foreign Minister Beneš himself. Its basic tenet was that the Greek Catholic religion and its ties to Rome was the only obstacle to the assimilation of the Rusyns - to their becoming part of the 'Czechoslovak people.' With the help of the Serbian Orthodox Church, work was begun in 1924 on the creation of a Subcarpathian Pravoslav bishopric and its organization. Since the regime change, all Pravoslav believers, including the Subcarpathians, belonged to a single autonomous diocese overseen by the Orthodox Metropolitan of Prague, Savatij, under the jurisdiction of the Patriarch of Constantinople.

The forceful Pravoslav conversions of Subcarpathia was facilitated by the Prague government by exerting pressure on Pope Pius XI, who, on June 4, 1924, relieved the Greek Catholic bishop of Munkács, the strongest opponent of apostasy, from his post. The bishop was, in the same breath, appointed auxiliary archbishop as well as the apostolic governor of a new exarchate, comprised of the parishes formerly part of the Eperjes and Munkács bishoprics, now remaining with Hungary. After his resignation, Antal Papp was forced to remain in the bishop's palace of Ungvár because he could not find suitable accommodations in the Hungarian city selected as his new seat, Miskolc. The replaced bishop left the country on September 11, 1925, forcibly manhandled by the authorities across the Czechoslovak-Hungarian border at Záhony.³⁹⁷ The police order for his expulsion was signed the day before.

To bring together the Calvinist congregations now finding themselves in the new state, the Tiszáninnen [referring to the right bank of the Tisza River-*Ed.*] Reformed Church diocese was organized on July 1, 1920, with István Pálóczy Czinke elected as bishop-administrator. After a two-year hiatus, dean István Szücs and trustee Zoltán Bernáth convened the first general assembly of the Reformed Church diocese of Ung on October 13, 1920, where they bade farewell to bishop Kálmán Révész, departing for Miskolc. The assembly debated the memorandum of the Reformed Church diocese of Gömör, which invited them to take a part in the forming of a new diocese, that of the Calvinists of Slovensko, or to join it at a later date. This was not by accident as a large part of the southern, Hungarian populated, portion of Ung County fell under Slovak administration, as delineated by the often-mentioned line of demarcation. The Ung diocese assembly "felt the organization of the new diocese important and urgent," and asked for the inclusion of the Reformed churches of Subcarpathia.³⁹⁸ The following year, June 8, 1921, the Ung Reformed diocese assembly of ministers, meeting in Ungvár, insisted on retaining a consistent diocese, stating that Protestant-religious villages of Slovak nationality always observed their services in Slovakian. In the same month, the Reformed Church ministers and church trustees of Ung and Zemplén swore the loyalty oath to the Czechoslovak state.

After long deliberation, the Subcarpathian Reformed Church congregations, formerly a part of the Tiszántúli [referring to the left bank of the Tisza River-*Ed.*] Reformed Church diocese, created an entirely new association, the Reformed Church diocese of Máramaros and Ugocsa Counties. At their meeting on June 30, 1921, held in Nagyszöllős, it was suggested that the Subcarpathians of the Helvetic sect [anti-Trinitarians-*Ed.*] should be organized into a separate bishopric. The assembly invited the Reformed ministers of Bereg and Ung to support this initiative. The tri-county delegates quickly came to an agreement in Beregszász on August 2 that a 10-member committee should represent their common issues with the Subcarpathian Governor's office. In the middle of December of the same year, they formed the organizing committee of the diocese of the Subcarpathian Reformed Churches. The new organization was born on October 31, 1922. Of the affected 78 congregations, 66 accepted, without reservation, the formation of the new association. The following year, on April 17, the diocese elected its first bishop in the person of Béla Bertók, minister in Munkács and church trustee in Bereg and Endre György as chief trustee. The diocese, born of according to the synod-presbytery principle, constituted of the former Bereg-Ung- Máramaros-Ugocsa diocese consisted of 77 congregations, three filia and three missions; in all, 65,000 members, 76 ministers and five assistant ministers. Although Czechoslovak law prescribed the state funding of churches, the Prague government did not recognize the diocese of the Subcarpathian Reformed Churches, nor its bishop. In so doing, a sum of 480,000 Kč in support was withheld from the Reformed Church between 1919 and 1927.³⁹⁹ Official recognition only came in the summer of

³⁹⁷ Salacz: A magyar op. cit. p. 27.

³⁹⁸ Fedinec: A kárpátaljai ... op. cit. p. 68.

³⁹⁹ Héder, János: A kárpátaljai református egyház helyzete a két világháború között [The state of the Hungarian Reformed Church of Subcarpathia between the two world wars]. In: *Kárpátaljai református templomok*. Ungvár – Beregszász, 2000, Radvánszky Ferenc /szerk./, pp. 8-9.

1932, after which bishop Béla Bertók and chief trustee Iván Polchy convened an extraordinary diocese general assembly on July 1 in Beregszász.

The Ung Reformed Church was thus split into two by the oft-mentioned line of demarcation. Each part was under its own dean, trustee and governing body. The Ung diocese retained this internal duality into the 1920s. This is reflected in the volume recounting the history of the Reformed Church of Ung, edited by Károly Haraszty and published in 1931. It can be taken as official as the second page notes that it was “reviewed by Mihály Péter, bishop of the Tiszáninnen Reformed Church diocese.” The work lists the ‘current’ leadership in the following manner. “*The dean of the Subcarpathian diocese of Ung, minister Gábor Komjáthy of Ungvár since 1923 ... trustee [also from the same date] Ferenc Egry. ... The current leadership of the Ung diocese of Slovensko: dean István Szűcs, minister of [Tisza]salamon, trustee Zoltán Bernáth, landowner of Vaja.*”⁴⁰⁰

Since the 1919-1920 border realignment, the Roman Catholic parishioners in Ung, Bereg, Ugocsa and Máramaros Counties were a part of the Szatmár diocese. With the Trianon peace treaty, 44 parishes of the bishopric were transferred to the newly created Czechoslovakia, 45 to Romanian, and 14 remained with Hungary (in Szabolcs, Szatmár and rump-Bereg Counties).⁴⁰¹ The parishioners now in Podkarpatská Rus were initially shepherded by the head dean of Ungvár. In 1921, after a bilateral agreement between the Vatican and Prague, the Subcarpathian Apostolic Governorship was created. Its first leader was András Tahy, head dean of Ungvár. The Roman Catholic bishop of Szatmár, Tibor Boromisza (1840-1928), was able to visit his former jurisdiction since the regime change on a Subcarpathian confirmation [the sacrament-Ed.] tour on June 9, 1923. In the meantime, the Holy Father named Lajos Szabó as Dean of Bereg, who took his ceremonial vows in the church of Munkács on June 16, 1921. The second apostolic governor after András Tahy, papal councilor Ferenc Szvoboda, minister of Jenke near Ungvár, was appointed by Pope Pius XI on September 1, 1934. The new governor was installed as parish priest of Ungvár on February 9 of the following year. The prelate of the Subcarpathian priests, apostolic governor Ferenc Szoboda, refused to permit churches under his jurisdiction to offer funeral masses on October 7, 1937 for the soul of the departed Tomáš G. Masaryk. He justified his decision by pointing out that the former Czechoslovak head of state left the Roman Catholic Church. In spite of the ban, Jestribek, chaplain of the local Czechoslovak military post, held a funeral mass by force in the Ungvár Roman Catholic church.⁴⁰²

Pope Pius XI appointed Péter Gebé⁴⁰³ (Gebe in some sources) as the Greek Catholic bishop of Munkács in the summer of 1924. The former chief provost’s chief goal in his seven years as prelate was the struggle against apostasy. As mentioned before, by the mid-1920s the number of Pravoslav believers grew to 76 thousand from the 55,000 at the regime change. The prelate was able establish good relations with vice-governor Antonín Rožypal, who was the real decision maker in Subcarpathian affairs. He, unlike his predecessors, was a well meaning and wise administrator and what is more important, a humanitarian person. Thanks to him, by the end of the ‘20s, the tensions left behind by the unresolved situation between the Munkács diocese and the Czechoslovak authorities surrounding bishop Antal Papp disappeared. Among other things, Gebé was thus able to double the number of seminarians in the Ungvár seminary. Although government financial support did not increase for the institution, monies always arrived from the Subcarpathian governor’s office - even if often late. It was primarily due to the bishop’s close contact with the vice-governor. “Rožypal tried to express with his benevolence that he saw as necessary the cessation, as quickly as possible, of the schismatic propaganda encouraged by his predecessors. His steps in this direction began after an agreement with the bishop under which churches, unlawfully taken by the schismatics, were quietly returned to their

⁴⁰⁰ Az Ungi Református Egyházmegye története. Adalékok az Ungi Református Egyházmegye történetéhez. [The history of the Hungarian Reformed Church Diocese of Ung. Addenda to the diocese history]. Nagykapos, 1931, Haraszty Károly /szerk./, pp. 2, 103.

⁴⁰¹ Majnek, Antal: A kárpátaljai római katolikus egyház története [The history of the Roman Catholic Church in Subcarpathia], In: *Útközben*. Tanulmányok a kárpátaljai magyarságról. Ungvár, 1998, p. 54.

⁴⁰² Fedinec: A kárpátaljai ... op. cit. p. 268.

⁴⁰³ Поп / Pop: Энциклопедия ... op. cit. p. 130.

rightful owners. He advanced very cautiously in this area but, when the bishop took the return of the churches to court, Rožypal assumed a portion of the court costs.”⁴⁰⁴

More than a year after the April 26, 1931 death of Péter Gebé, Sándor Sztojka⁴⁰⁵ (1890-1943, Стойка Александр), until then a vicar, was anointed in the cathedral of Ungvár as the new Greek Catholic bishop of Munkács on July 12, 1932. The new prelate was born in the Ugocsa County village of Karácsfalva, attended high school in Ungvár, as well as the Greek Catholic Theological Academy, going on to the Budapest University of Arts and Sciences. He was ordained as a priest in 1916 in Ungvár and began his career in the diocese offices of the bishop of Munkács. For 12 years from 1918, he was the secretary first to bishop Antal Papp, then his successor bishop Péter Gebé. From 1930, he was canon of the chapter finances (prebendary), director of the bishop’s office and, for a short period after Gebé’s death, prebendary. Bishop Sztojka’s work was aimed at two goals. First, he tried, with all his might, to counter the schism movement supported by the Czechoslovak authorities. Second, he took up the fight against the communist ideals making significant headway in Subcarpathia. He protected the interests of his priests against the encroachments of state power and, always retaining his objectivity, fought against Pravoslavism.

Bishop Sztojka never hid his Hungarian sympathies and leanings, yet remained a faithful shepherd to the Rusyn people. In this work, he gathered around himself avid and eager priests and, similar to bishop Gebé, supported the Kurtyák party and the efforts toward Rusyn autonomy. His possessed a well-known sense of social justice. It was at his urging that a collection was begun for the benefit of needy Rusyns, carried out primarily by the priests, teachers, students and the better-off Rusyn farmers. In the first five years of his effort, he visited almost every village and satellite (filia) - close to 850 settlements -, raising a string of small and beautifully decorated churches. The two rival political directions, Greater Russian and Ukrainian, did everything to win the bishop to their side. It would have meant real victory for one side or the other but the prelate sided with neither. Citing the people’s rights and the folk language, the ‘Rusyn’s vladika’ (bishop) helped in starting the weekly publication *Недѣля* (Sunday), which took up the battle against the two extreme camps.⁴⁰⁶ The paper’s editor was Sándor Illiczky.

‘Under the Czechs,’ the Greek Catholic bishops of Munkács first of all tended to the spiritual needs of the Rusyn people, avoidance from schism and the protection of Catholicism. Sztojka, too, clearly saw the essence of this battle. “It was at this table that I said to Masaryk - he recounted much later - that there will be no peace and calm as long as the Hradcany (the Prague government) intentionally introduces into the communal life of the territory the Greater Russian and Ukrainian problem, so that through these two opposing trends weaken the situation of the folk language (i.e., the Rusyn) and culture, and the leading role of the Greek Catholic Church. The President then promised that the Czech government would offer means for the strengthening of the folk-linguistic stream. But in 1932 (actually in 1931), politically motivated Masaryk Academy of Pozsony (Bratislava) was founded and became the hotbed of Czech-friendly activists, and of the political donation of a million, the Rusyns saw not a penny.”⁴⁰⁷ The bishop took a strong stand, when necessary, against the Prague government if his Greek Catholic church or the rights and customs of the Rusyn people needed defending.

To cite an example: in 1936, when the newly built Governor’s palace in Ungvár was ceremonially opened without a religious blessing, Sztojka, in protest, refused to take part in the official reception for the Czechoslovak Interior Minister, or the tea organized in his honor, or the inaugural celebration for the new residence. With his similar actions, he conveyed that without the Subcarpathian Greek Catholic bishop of Munkács - who was also the head of the largest religious group - it will be impossible to create calm and contentment in the region. Party politicians and popular figureheads may only have had the support of several hundreds; the bishop enjoyed the backing of the vast majority of the Rusyn people because, in clinging to their faith and folk customs, they always saw the embodiment of

⁴⁰⁴ Marina: Ruténsors. op. cit. pp. 101-102.

⁴⁰⁵ Encyclopedia of Rusyn ... op. cit. p. 447.

⁴⁰⁶ Harajda, János: Sztojka Sándor [Sándor Sztojka], In: *Зоря – Hajnal*, 1942. 1-2. sz. pp. 205, 207.

⁴⁰⁷ Kemény, Gábor: Utolsó beszélgetésem Sztojka Sándorral [My last conversation with Sándor Sztojka], In: *Láthatár*, 1943. július, p. 165.

their political life in their bishop.

The former religious composition of Subcarpathia showed marked change already in the first decade of the 'Czech era.' These are mirrored in the 1930 census figures of religious distribution (rounded): 360,000 Greek Catholics (49.5%), 112,000 Greek Orthodox or Pravoslav (15.43%) in 315 parishes, 102,000 Jews (14.12%), 72,000 Reformed Protestants (9.77%, practically all Hungarians), 70,000 Roman Catholics (9.5%, the majority Hungarians), the remainder 'Other.' In recording the religious data of the census, the Czech authorities resorted to their usual practice of falsification and dishonesty. It can be taken as the rule that the census takers everywhere tried to record Hungarians of Greek Catholic religion as Rusyns, while citing instructions from above. A series of complaints were lodged from Munkács with the Governor's office - and other places, too - regarding a series of discriminative treatment of the Greek Catholic Hungarians. In spite of the firm statement of the declarer, the census takers recorded a number of people as 'Ruthenian,' or left the 'Nationality' column on the sheet blank. Later, those Greek Catholics of Munkács, who insisted on their Hungarian-ness and complained about the unlawful procedures of the census takers, were cited *en masse* to appear in the district office to "have their nationality reviewed." These so-called 'nationality-settling interviews' rarely admitted that the complaint was justified. In fact, the police later took strong actions against them. In numerous cases, they were fined 1,000 or 2,000 Kč, or jailed on the grounds of 'intentionally misleading a census taker' or 'knowingly giving false information.'⁴⁰⁸

Of the Greek Orthodox recorded on the 1930 census, almost half - some 55,000 - left the Greek Catholic faith and converted to the Pravoslav.⁴⁰⁹ In the same decade, bishop Dositheus, who was the religious leader of the Subcarpathian Pravoslavs until the beginning of 1926, was replaced in the middle of January by Ireneus, the prelate of Novi Sad, whom both the Prague government and the Subcarpathian Governor exceedingly supported. He was followed, between 1928 and 1930, by the prelate of Prizrend, Serafin. They all directed the schism, the conversion movement, from behind the scenes. At the end of December, the bishop of Bitolia, Josif, was toiling in Subcarpathia, having just arrived in Ungvár. It was due to his efforts that in the following year, on July 20, 1931, the Pravoslav bishopric was established in Munkács. On October 2 of the same year, the synod of Serb bishops elected the Serb prelate, Damaszkín, as the prelate of the Pravoslav Rusyn people, with the title of bishop of Munkács-Eperjes. At the beginning of August of 1933, the Subcarpathian Pravoslav Church held a synod in Huszt, where it strenuously complained against further Serbian control, demanding to be placed under the jurisdiction of the Orthodox archbishop of Prague. According to the 1936 organization chart, the new diocese consisted of 140,000 parishioners, 138 ordained priests, 127 churches and 5 large monasteries. The three most significant monasteries operated in the villages of Iza, Talaborfalu and Ladomérvágása. (As we have written earlier, at the time of the 1910 census, a mere 577 Greek Orthodox persons lived in the territory later to become Podkarpatská Rus.) Only a portion of the priests tending to the spiritual care of the Pravoslav believers were Russian immigrants. The new generation of Orthodox priests, from the mid-1920s, were taught in Serbian seminaries, where they learned nothing of the centuries-old Hungarian-Rusyn coexistence. The Pravoslav bishops of Subcarpathia "sent to the little seminary of Belgrade those novitiates who completed the 4 grades of middle school or the 4 grades of high school. In fact, in 1936, two novitiates with matriculations were found. They were sent to the theological faculty of the University of Belgrade."⁴¹⁰

The Pravoslav denomination continued to grow in Subcarpathia. The movement's organizers were presented with an opportunity in 1934: the 20th anniversary of the 'Ruthenian schism case' of Máramarossziget. In the two historical centers, the towns of Iza and Huszt, celebrations were held on May 28, to where the Prague authorities gave railway discounts to the pilgrims. The Czechoslovak state was represented by minister without portfolio Bogdan Pavlic. Also present were the Pravoslav bishops Gorazd (Czech), Vitaly (American) and Damaszkín (Munkács-Eperjes); archbishop Ireneus represented the Yugoslavian Patriarch. The 'main actor' of the long-ago case, Aleksei Kabalyuk, having since risen to high priesthood, was at the head of the 3-kilometer procession. He was followed by the 44 defendants of the case, holding high in their hands those church books once confiscated by the Hungarian authorities - now fervently kissed by the fanatic people. The procession stopped in Iza, where the priests blessed a marble plaque fixed to the wall of the church. It contained the following inscription: "Glory to our God! This plaque is

⁴⁰⁸ Botlik: Hármaskereszt op. cit. pp. 228-229.

⁴⁰⁹ Hubai: Adatok op. cit. p. 13.

⁴¹⁰ Bonkáló: A rutének op. cit. pp. 151-152.

ordained to the memory of the Russian martyrs who suffered for their faith in Carpatho-Russia. 1914-1934. Consecrated in Iza, in the twentieth year of the Máramarossziget case, on May 15, 1934.”⁴¹¹ (The date of the plaque is according to the old Julian calendar.) According to the Russian priest of Ungvár, at the end of the 1930s, the Pravoslavs of Subcarpathia exceeded 150,000 souls.⁴¹² In 1938, bishop Damaszkín returned to Serbia. In his place, the Serb synod sent Vladimir Raics to be the Orthodox prelate of Munkács.

Russian and Ukrainian intellectuals, fleeing to Subcarpathia from czarist or Bolshevik Russia shook up Rusyn intellectual life beginning in early 1920. Their ranks were swelled by numerous Ukrainian intellectuals from Galicia, who could not accept the idea of a Poland reunited after WWI - having been divided into three at the end of the 18th century - or its authority. Rather, they chose to settle in Podkarpatská Rus. Among them was Ivan Panykevics⁴¹³ (1887-1958, Панькевич Иван Артемович), linguist, folklorist and literary historian, who, with the support of the Czech authorities, played a significant role in Subcarpathian Rusyn education, or rather, the Ukrainization of the Rusyns.

On May 9, 1920, the Просвѣта (Prosvita, Enlightenment)⁴¹⁴ cultural association, modeled after the Galician Ukrainian cultural association, was founded by the Ukrainophiles Ágoston Volosin, Julij Brascasajko, Ágoston Stefán, Illés Hadzsega, Hiador Stripsky and the leadership of some Ukrainian immigrants. Prosvita held itself to be a public educational organization, whose aims were the publications of newspapers and books, the organization of reading circles and theatrical groups, choirs and orchestras, farming clubs in the cities and villages. Rusyns belonging to Prosvita held themselves with conviction to be Ukrainian and considered the language spoken by the Subcarpathian people of the time to be crude, when compared to the more advanced Ukrainian language. The association started a magazine with the title *Науковий Збірник* (Naukovij Zbornik, Scientific Collection), which showcased mainly the studies of Ukrainian immigrants living in Subcarpathia. In the fall of 1938, Prosvita, excluding its Ungvár center, represented a conglomeration of 8 rural branches, 250 reading circles, 150 amateur folk theatrical groups, more than 100 choirs, close to 20 orchestras and some 50 sport associations. In all, its membership was over 16,000.⁴¹⁵

The Duchnovich Society (Общество А. Духновича) was founded much later, on March 23, 1923 in Ungvár with the aim of continuing the Russophile work of the St. Basil Society, founded in 1864 and twice reorganized. Among the founders we find Anton Beskid, six month later to be Subcarpathia's second Governor, Péter Gebé, head of the Greek Catholic diocese of Munkács and later to become bishop, canon Simon Szabó, József Kaminszky and others. The society's first elected president was Eumén Szabó, literary historian, Greek Catholic minister of Nagyszöllös and head Dean of Ugocsa County, who filled the post until his death in 1934. His successor, as Secretary-General, was dr. István Fencik⁴¹⁶ (1892-1946, Фенцик Стефан, variously as Shtefan/Stepan Fentsyk, Fenczik). The society's aims, founded with the help of Subcarpathian Russian immigrants, were similar to Prosvita except that it tried to reach its goals based on a union with Russia, not the Ukraine. In the 1920s, its membership is around 30,000, its reading circles number more than 300. The Duchnovich Society published its magazines in Russian. In 1923-1923, it was the *Карпатский Край* (Carpathian Countryside), then, the longer lived, from 1928 to 1933, *Карпатский Свѣтъ* (World of the Carpathians). Both published valuable scientific articles for their readers but the authors were

⁴¹¹ Darás: A Ruténföld op. cit. p. 117.

⁴¹² Botlik: Hármás kereszt op. cit. p. 247.

⁴¹³ Поп / Pop: Энциклопедия ... op. cit. pp. 292-293.

⁴¹⁴ Ibid, p. 315.

⁴¹⁵ Ortutay, Tivadar: Cseh világ a Kárpátokban. II. kiad. [Czech world in the Carpathians. 2nd ed.]. Ungvár, 1941, p. 105.

⁴¹⁶ Encyclopedia of Rusyn ... op. cit. pp. 117-118.

mainly Russian immigrants living in Czechoslovakia.⁴¹⁷ Finally, it is important to point out the difference between the Ukrainophile Prosvita Association and the Russophile Duchnovich Society: the former gave home to progressive, democratic leaning Rusyns, the latter was mainly a gathering of elderly priests and conservative elements.

The third direction - the Rusyn national - was forced into the background for most of the 1920s, only gaining strength at the end of the decade. Until then, the literati made use of three languages, Russian, Ukrainian and the local Rusyn, which caused such linguistic difficulty that the youngest generation growing up after the war spoke none fluently. Initially, the Czechoslovak authorities supported both Prosvita and Duchnovich to split the Rusyn masses and prevent the birth of a unified Rusyn national idea. However, Czechoslovak politics managed to turn both of them against each other, as well, so that they refused to read each other's press, having no influence on each other.⁴¹⁸

The outstanding personalities involved with the Rusyn linguistic and cultural trend were Antal Hodinka and Hiador Stripsky who, through these years, followed with particular attention the situation of the Rusyn people, their shifting fortunes, and contributed much to their intellectual growth. Hodinka published his seminal work in 1923, *The Habitation of the Rusyns of Subcarpathia, Their Economy and History*, which was reprinted in facsimile form in 2000.⁴¹⁹ The noted scientist wrote, among other things, that lightning should have struck those traitors who misled his people, the Rusyns. They were the ones who lit the fires of Hell and danced around the flames. They cried 'Wolf,' who eventually turned up and scammed the original inhabitants into "a strange, to date unheard of, country," meaning Czechoslovakia. According to Hodinka, the Rusyns today - in 1923 - are sitting in hot pitch, fainting and smelling the aroma of the promised paradise. All the while, they are being asked to enjoy themselves - as much as they used to in Hungary, where they were at home. Moreover, "they chatter that the Rusyns were freed from under the Hungarian yoke... We were torn out of Hungary and dragged under foreign mastery."⁴²⁰

Antal Hodinka felt that one of the greatest perils for the future of the Rusyn people lay in that every movement in Subcarpathia (Ukrainian, Russia, etc.) was preparing a grammar, or inventing one, and strives for universal acceptance. "Our Slav brothers gathered from all over the world and so inundated us that we now have hardly any room to move - and all write in their own language. Thus, we, poor autonomists - without autonomy -, have become a complete Slavic Babel ... we have existed for 700 years. We were Hungarian-Rusyns (угоророссы) and are now disdainfully called Hungarophiles by those who, not so long ago, shamed and laughed at us. Yet we existed."⁴²¹ Yet, Hiador Stripsky, in his late creative period at the end of the 1930s, translated into Rusyn our second national anthem, the "Szózat."

By the end of the 1920s, the middle strata of Subcarpathian Ruthenians became more and more disenchanted with the Ukrainian direction. The district cultural advancement councils recorded the following demographics on March 1, 1929, regarding the distribution of reading circles and their slant: of the Carpatho-Russian, or Rusyn, circles 47.2% were completely Russian, 28.6% Ukrainian, 11.6% Hungarian, 2.8% Czechoslovak, 1.4% German, and 8.4%

⁴¹⁷ Bonkáló, Sándor: A kárpátaljai rutén irodalom és művelődés [Subcarpathian Ruthenian literature and culture]. Pécs, 1935, p. 64.

⁴¹⁸ Bonkáló: A rutének op. cit. p. 134.

⁴¹⁹ Годинка, Антоній / Hodinka, Antal: Утцюзнина, газдуство и прошлост южнокарпатських русинувъ. [The facsimile re-issue (Budapest, 1923) of the Rusyn language version of 'The settlements, economy and history of the Ruthenians of Subcarpathia'. /Előkészítette, utószó: Udvari István./ Nyíregyháza, Nyíregyházi Főiskola Ukrán és Ruszin Filológiai Tanszéke, 2000.

⁴²⁰ Ibid, pp. 4-5.

⁴²¹ Ibid, p. 7.

were mixed, under Rusyn-Hungarian or Rusyn-Czechoslovak influence.⁴²² At the end of the previous year, on December 29, the number of the various cultural associations, their ethnic makeup and affiliation essentially mirrored the previous proportions. Reading circles: Duchnovich Society 168, Prosvita 101, village 37, Hungarian 26, Czechoslovak 6, German 3, others 20. Libraries: Duchnovich Society 152, Prosvita 103, village 136, Hungarian 25, Czechoslovak 14, German 3, others 20. Theatrical groups: Duchnovich Society 79, Prosvita 43, village 29, Hungarian 36, Czechoslovak 15, German 6, others 16. Orchestras: Duchnovich Society 24, Prosvita 9, village 1, Hungarian 6, Czechoslovak 12, German 1, others 4. Choirs: Duchnovich Society 29, Prosvita 15, village 19, Hungarian 14, Czechoslovak 27, German 1, others 4. The number of various performances in 1928: Duchnovich Society 3,151, Prosvita 718, village 649, Hungarian 382, Czechoslovak 34, German 2, others 214. A portion of the cultural organizations were mixed or blended, reflecting the given location's ethnic makeup.⁴²³

The leadership of the Duchnovich Society sharply criticized the Ukrainophile trend in a October 1930 memorandum and subsequently took an increasingly stronger stand for Rusyn national interests. At this time, the association carried on its work in more than 400 reading circles, over a hundred theatrical groups, 70 choirs and orchestras and a number of scout troops; its membership was around 30,000. The Duchnovich Society worked closely with the Ivan Kurtyák-led Independent Agrarian Alliance, the Carpatho-Russian Nationalist Party and the Ruthenian Teachers Union. It launched the Rusyn *Карпаторусский Голосъ* (Carpatho-Russian Voice) magazine in May of 1932 with the intention of uniting the intellectuals of the original inhabitants of Subcarpathia and a forum for autonomous Rusyn national ideas.⁴²⁴

Within the framework of the Duchnovich Society and Prosvita Association, two linguistic trends competed within Rusyn intellectual circles, stemming from their leaning, Russian and Ukrainian. This situation was thoroughly exploited by the Czechoslovak state apparatus under the motto of *divide et impera* (divide and conquer). It supported both sides, not knowing which would eventually win. While the Rusyns were occupied with the unproductive language battle, Czechoslovakization of Subcarpathia proceeded undisturbed. While members of the Duchnovich Society and the Prosvita Association fought a bitter intellectual battle, the Czech educational authorities ordered a trial vote in 1937 on the linguistic question - the rationale for it is not clear - in all the schools of Subcarpathia. It was to decide between the grammars put forward by the past president of the Duchnovich Society Eumén Szabó (1859-1934, Сабов Евмений)⁴²⁵ and Ivan Panykevics, an immigrant Ukrainian from Galicia. "... the Russian grammar emerged victorious with 70%. The Ukrainian grammar received merely 15%, while the remainder of the parents were not interested in the question. It happen during the voting that the same parents voted for Ukrainian in the elementary school, while opting for Russian in the high school. Finally, the Czechs deemed the results peculiar and forgot about it... Although the Duchnovich Society had a bigger membership (double), the Prosvita Association emerged victorious in October of 1938 and commandeered the complete political leadership of Subcarpathia, ruthlessly dealing with all who stood in its way."⁴²⁶

⁴²² Фенцикъ, Степанъ А.: Чехословаки и Карпатороссы (1919–1929). Подкарпатская Русь за годы 1919–1936. Ред. Эдмундъ С. Бачинский. Ужгород. [Fencik, Stěpan A.: Czechoslovaks and Carpatho-Russians (1919-1929)], Užhorod, 1929, p. 26.

⁴²³ Ibid, p. 28.

⁴²⁴ Kemény: Verhovina op. cit. p. 180; Fenczik, Jenő: A rutén kérdés [The Ruthenian question], In: *Kisebbségi Körlevél*, 1942. 6. sz. (november), pp. 271-272.

⁴²⁵ Balczyk, Emil: Szabó Eumén orosz nyelvtanának hangtana [The acoustics of Eumén Szabó's Russian grammar]. Budapest, 1943; Геровский, Георгий Ю.: Евмений Сабовъ и его дѣятельность в области преподавания русскаго языка на Карпатской Руси, In: *Русская школа* (Прага), [Gerovszkij, Georgij J.: Szabó Eumén and his work in teaching Russian in Subcarpathia, In: *Russkaja skola* (Prague).] 1935, II/2-3, pp. 83-85.

⁴²⁶ Ortutay: Cseh világ op. cit. p. 106.

What was the secret of the success of the Ukrainian course? In the 1930 census, only 2,355 people in Subcarpathia declared themselves to be Ukrainian.⁴²⁷ They emerged at the turn of the 19-20th century, led by Zhatkovych, Volosin and Stripsky. The Ukrainophile group gained significant strength between 1918 and 1920, primarily with followers in Máramaros, the Brascasjko brothers, with Ágoston Stefán and especially the Ukrainian immigrants settling in Subcarpathia. The latter group spread their ideas especially among teachers - school is power! -, gaining for their side Ágoston Volosin, the priest-teacher of the Ungvár teachers college, ensuring the education of the new generation of teachers. Thus, they were successful in achieving that from the end of the 1920s, education was in the Ukrainian character in both the men's and women's teachers colleges of Ungvár, the high schools of Ungvár and Beregszász, the commercial school of Munkács, the middle schools of Nagyszőlős, Ilosva, Nagybockó, Rahó and elsewhere. The more outstanding students continued their education in the Ukrainian section of the Prague University, and other Czechoslovak educational institutions, where they organized their Ukrainian-leaning student associations. The supporters of the Ukrainophile track built their movement with laborious single-mindedness, whose merely public agenda was the language question. Its real essence was creating an atmosphere for the rebirth of 'Greater Ukraine,' in which Subcarpathia 'naturally' belonged. A significant proportion of the native Rusyns were unaware of the intellectual-spiritual pitfalls of these efforts. They became embroiled in a similar fight with the Russian movement, a fight, which was hotly pursued between Moscow and Kiev, on the other side of the Carpathians.⁴²⁸

Beside the Russian and Ukrainian movements, there existed a third, the so-called 'home grown Rusyn' or Hungaro-Russian, whose practitioners wanted to slowly develop, by degrees, their own unique language. This movement abhorred the situation that occurred in places where, in the same Subcarpathian school, one teacher taught in 'Russian' and another in 'Ukrainian.' All the more so because "centuries of living with the Hungarians did not eradicate the people's own mother tongue. It is also a 'Russian' tongue but not of Moscow, and even less 'Ukrainian' of Kiev. A special 'Ruthenian' tongue, with which they communicate well with each other, less so with immigrants from Kiev or Moscow. Before the (first) world war, the ministers used this Subcarpathian language for their sermons and the basis of grammar was the old Volosin grammar (the famous *Азбука* (Book of ABC)). Before the war, Hungaro-Russian writers looked for research in the writings of the Russian writers, and found it. But what they found, they remade for the Subcarpathian people and made it available for the Rusyns after a process of filtration. Few turned to Ukrainian sources, very few."⁴²⁹

While these were happening, the local Rusyn language fell under neither Russian nor Ukrainian influence because it was the language used by the Greek Catholic clergy, the teachers, civil servants, the peasants and a part of the forestry workers. They knew they were related to the Slavs on the other side of the Carpathians - the Russians, the Ukrainians and the Poles. At the same time, they felt that, having lived for centuries on the northeastern rim of the Carpathian basin, they were inseparably tied to, and were a part of, the Latin world by geography, economy, politically, culturally and especially by their Greek Catholic religion.

Finally, let us analyze the unique features of Subcarpathia under the 'Czech era.' We must firstly admit that in this period, especially in the towns and district seats, a lot of new construction took place. They were mainly infrastructural such as administrative centers for the newly installed state, schools, homes for the relocated Czech officials and public institutions. A few examples: Ungvár was developed into the 'capital' of Subcarpathia by the creation of a government and official's district, the Galagó, on the banks of the Ung River. By this time, an airport was also built. The state hospital of Munkács was expanded by a surgical section; the hospitals of Beregszász and Nagyszőlős were also enlarged. New roads were built, mainly in Máramaros, in the area of the Upper Tisza River, between Rahó and Kőrösmező. Its goal was the creation of an adequate transportation link with Ungvár along the line of Técső-Huszt-Nagyszőlős-Beregszász. New bridges were thrown across the Tisza, the Ung, the Ilosva and the Gyertyános (Szoporka) rivers. Flood control levees were built along some sections of the Nagy-Ág, the Latorca, the Tarac and the Vérke rivers. According to official documents, the Czechoslovak government spent 490 million Kč on Subcarpathian development, an average of 30.5 million a year. This does not include 80 million Kč spent on

⁴²⁷ Botlik: Hármaskereszt op. cit. p. 229.

⁴²⁸ Ibid, p. 250.

⁴²⁹ Ortutay: Cseh világ op. cit. p. 107.

improvements.⁴³⁰ We can legitimately add that the further enhancement of the transportation network, already created during the Hungarian era, primarily served the purpose of modernizing transportation - to expedite and lower the cost - of Subcarpathia's two chief natural resources, lumber and salt, to the more highly developed parts of the Czech lands.

The road building and flood control efforts had significant military value. Good quality paved roads enabled the two allied powers, Czechoslovakia and Romania, to provide military cooperation, especially in the event of a potential war scenario. This was all the more important for the two countries as their link was a solitary rail line, which ran in close proximity to the Czechoslovak-Hungarian border - the sector of Csap-Beregszász-Nagyszőlős - before branching southwest at Királyháza towards the Romanian Halmi. As an aside, Czechoslovakia spent a great deal on the defense of this rail link, as well as the roads. Hundreds of small fortifications and bunkers were built, which also served as border security. One such was the system of bunkers and gendarme garrison in Csonkapapi, near Beregsom.⁴³¹ It was not coincidental that the Prague government was planning a new railway line from Slovakia towards Ungvár, Munkács and Beregszász. For this reason, the tracks between Ungvár and Vaján, and the Slovakian sector of Nagykapos and Vaján were converted to regular gauge tracks, linking to the main Kassa line near the village of Bánóc.

The mountainous terrain that makes up the majority of Subcarpathia did not lend itself to agricultural production. Its industry, rather than expanding, declined from the early 1930s. Social conditions were meant to serve the ruling sector of the region, the 40,000 Czechoslovak official, and their well being. According to the last Hungarian census (1910), extrapolated to the area that was to become Podkarpatská Rus after the Trianon treaty, there were 234 Czech and 7,728 Slovak persons living there.⁴³² By the first Czechoslovak census (1921), these grew to 19,775 Czechoslovaks (9,477 Czech, 10,298 Slovaks) in Subcarpathia, while in 1930, there were 33,961 Czechoslovaks tallied (20,719 Czechs, 13,242 Slovaks).⁴³³ The backwardness of the region was not erased by the Czechoslovak authorities. In truth, they could not have wiped it out. The chief reason - as stated by the 1931-1932 report of the Circle of Hungarian Academicians of Prague - "can be found in the Czechoslovak policy of weakening the native population's economy."⁴³⁴ Hence, the region did not enjoy even as high a level of economy - even in Czech statistical and economic publications - as was regularly touted in the press and voiced in public. "That the Czechs write and speak of Subcarpathia's developed economy can simply be explained that they wish to demonstrate that Czech democracy ensures a higher standard of living, with a willingness and legislation, than the Hungarian reign."⁴³⁵

The Czechoslovak economic crisis of the 1920s drastically contributed to the continued decline of the standard of living of the Subcarpathian population, especially the Rusyns living in the mountains. In October of 1927, Dudley Heathcote, reporter for the British *Daily Mail*, was on a fact-finding trip to study the situation. This was not accidental. As background: in the spring of 1927, Hungarian foreign policy was able to break out of its isolation

⁴³⁰ Милаутць: Государственныя op. cit. pp. 284-286; Милаутць: Общественныя op. cit. pp. 13-20; Бергманнъ, Иос.: Водогосподарская меліорація на Подкарп. Руси, In: *Подкарпатская Русь за годы 1919-1936*. Ред. Эдмундъ С. Бачинский. Подкарпатская Русь за годы 1919-1936. Ред. Эдмундъ С. Бачинский. Ужгород [Bergmann, Iosz./ip/: Water distribution and river management in Subcarpathia, In: *Podkarpatskaja Rus za godi 1919-1936*. Red. Edmund S. Bachyns'kyi.] Užhorod, 1936, pp. 21-27.

⁴³¹ Botlik-Dupka: Magyarlakta op. cit. p. 80.

⁴³² Kertész, János: Magyar-lengyel közös határ [The common Hungarian-Polish border]. Budapest, 1938, p. 11.

⁴³³ MOL. K 28., 320. tét. 1934-P-15 204. sz., p. 174; Ibid, p. 11.

⁴³⁴ Prágai Magyar Akadémikusok Körének 1931-1932. évi évkönyve [The 1931-1932 yearbook of the Hungarian Academicians Circle of Prague]. Kassa, 1931, p. 178.

⁴³⁵ Hubai: Adatok op. cit. p. 43.

through a friendship treaty with Italy. Around the same time, the unjust Trianon borders received a great deal of coverage in the world press. Lord Harold Sidney Rothermere (1868-1940), British newspaper magnate and politician, published an article in his paper, the *Daily Mail*, on June 21, 1927, titled "Hungary's Place in the Sun,"⁴³⁶ which caused a great impact. In his writing, he expounded that calm cannot be maintained in the long term in Central Europe if the Trianon borders are not revised in a peaceful manner. He felt that war can be avoided with a border modification is favorable to Hungary. Lord Rothermere attached a map to his article,⁴³⁷ which would make it possible to reattach 2 million Hungarians living along the borders. Of these, one million were living in the southern, Hungarian populated zone of Czechoslovakia, between the border and the line of Pozsony-Nyitra-Kassa-Ungvár-Nagyszőlős; 600,000 in Romania, in the Partium to the line of Máramarossziget-Zilah-Élesd-Lippa-Arad-Nagyszentmiklós; 400,000 in the South Slav state in Northern Bácska and Bánát, North of the Nagybecskerek-Óbecse-Szenttamás-Zombor line, as well as the entirety of the Drávaszög. Lord Rothermere's map did not include with the previous regions the entirely Hungarian populated Seklerland (Székelyföld) of Transylvania, along with Kolozsvár and Kalotaszeg, home to approximately 1,150,000 Hungarians. According to the press baron, the Hungarians here were intermingled with Romanians. In this, he was mistaken.

The *Daily Mail* reporter sent to Subcarpathia tried to get an assessment of the lot of the population, mainly Rusyns, along the Ungvár-Munkács-Beregkövesd-Huszt-Iza-Vucskómező-Repenye road. A few quotes from the reporter's experiences and notes: "Turning to his escort: - How long has Pravoslavia been here? - Since 1919. Only infrequently before that. - And who did this village vote for in the elections? - The communists. The Brit looks at his notes and exclaims with surprise: Every Pravoslav village voted for the communists? But then, Beneš was supporting the communists here with Pravoslavism."⁴³⁸ The unbelievable poverty of the early 1920s cast the population of the mountains into a brutal, animal-like existence. Hundreds of the starving died due to a lack of doctors and social intervention. Amid such conditions, incitement, mutiny and revolutionary propaganda found a wide audience. Subcarpathia was fertile soil for communist ideas between 1919 and 1933. Often, behind that mask also lurked Ukrainian and Czech-Russian politics. It was not by accident that the Communist Party received 45% of the votes in the 1925 elections, 32% in 1929, and close to 25% in 1933.⁴³⁹

To return to the newspaperman's tour: between the villages of Herincse and Berezna, on the banks of the Nagy-Ág, he had the driver stop the car where a bunch of Ruthenians were standing around, contemplating a document, which he silently handed to him. "- Look, sir, the Czechs assessed me 6,000 Kč in taxes but my horse and cow are long gone for past taxes, my lands are pawned, I can't afford any bread... -Where is it better: under the Czech-Slovaks or the Hungarians? -Oh sir, how can you ask, - answered the peasants with glowing eyes - ... If we only had a chance to go to Nyíregyháza... In Alsóbisztra, he sees a barefoot farmer and asks straight out: -Show me your bread. - Don't have any, sir - replies the Ruthenian, opening his bag. -We haven't eaten bread in a long time because our fields are in hock. Maybe we can beg a little beans or potatoes along the way."⁴⁴⁰ People often have none of their main staple, corn bread. It astounded the reporter that in the valley of the Nagy-Ág, at the top of the Verhovina, every Ruthenian knew Hungarian. After seeing a great number of starving cattle, he saw a fat Swiss cow beside one of the farmers. "-How did this one get here? -It is left over from the Egán breeds. -Who was that, this Egán? -A man from the Hungarian government, his name is still blessed today, because he saved the Ruthenians from ultimate disaster." In the valley of the Nagy-Ág River, the saw-mills have stood silent for years, not providing jobs for the locals. The journalist arrived late in the evening in Repenye, where he was invited to a wedding. Here, the guest could not be offered any white bread, as of old when the flour was brought home from Nyíregyháza. When he entered the yard, he was greeted with the Rákóczi March and was feted as "the messenger of freedom... all the bitterness of their destitution broke into

⁴³⁶ In Hungarian In: *Rubicon*, 1997, 1. sz., pp. 35-37.

⁴³⁷ Reprinted in Romsics: *Magyarország* op. cit. p. 236.

⁴³⁸ Oláh: *Jajkiáltás* op. cit. p. 50.

⁴³⁹ Kemény: *Verhovina* op. cit. p. 171.

⁴⁴⁰ Oláh: *Jajkiáltás* op. cit. pp. 50-51.

cheers... -When are the Hungarians coming? - they asked repeatedly.’⁴⁴¹

The Prague government was in no hurry to ease the poverty of the region, its aid efforts were smoke and mirrors. In March of 1932, two International Aid workers, German writer Ludwig Renn (1889-1979) and Gerard Hamilton, were horrified by the situation that confronted them. Hamilton’s statement was widely reported in the world press: “I have been in the hunger-stricken parts of China and India. I was in the hunger blockaded Germany at the end of 1918 and the beginning of 1919 but I never saw hunger and poverty on the scale as I saw in Rusynsko.”⁴⁴² The Governor of Subcarpathia, Anton Beskid, sent out a petition for assistance during the tour of the two aid workers but it quickly became clear that it was not supported by the Czechoslovak Finance Ministry or the National Bank. The 365 boxcars of corn sent to ease the hunger of the people were not distributed, rather, they were sold by merchants who marketed it, without supervision, at the going daily rate. The 33 boxcars of wheat - also intended for the hungry populace - imported without duty also did not reach the Ruthenians. It was embezzled by Struk, the director of the Obchodni jednota.⁴⁴³ In the spring of 1932, Czechoslovak authorities and the Red Cross distributed 32,000,000 lbs. of corn among the needy population but it barely eased the lot of the approximately 200,000 starving Rusyns. Grain and other foodstuff gathered in Hungary for the assistance of the starving were not allowed into the country by the Czechoslovak authorities. One such case was the 70,000 lbs. of planting seeds and 30 boxcars of grain collected by the Greek Catholic bishop and parishioners of Hajdúdorog in 1932.⁴⁴⁴ The number of emigrants swelled due to the poverty, reaching 16,789 between 1923 and 1933 (including 11,249 Rusyns, 2,736 Hungarians). Afterwards, for the 1930s, the number rose to about 30 thousand annually.⁴⁴⁵

According to the 1933 Czechoslovak statistics, each Czech farming family in Czechoslovakia annually spent an average of 339 Kč on meat and butcher products, 187 Kč on cooking lard, 143 Kč on sugar, 659 Kč on clothing and shoes. In Subcarpathia, the comparable figures were: meat 76 Kč, lard 79 Kč, sugar 19 Kč, clothing and shoes 168 Kč. The Czech farmer was able to devote 221 Kč in a given year on the education of his children, the Subcarpathian only 33 Kč. In 1933, the per capita consumption of a Czech farming family was 5,068 Kč; in Subcarpathia, it was 1,369 Kč.⁴⁴⁶ Subcarpathia essentially sank to the level of a colony denoted by the fact that during the first decade of Czechoslovak administration, taxes rose by ten-fold. The residents of Podkarpatská Rus were levied more than 40 different taxes in 1930. Merely the tariff stamps on documents represented an annual income of 8 million Kč to the state. Direct tax assessed on the residents of the region by the Czech authorities was 83 million Kč in 1927, 104 million Kč in 1932 and 107 million Kč the following year.⁴⁴⁷ Expressing its opinion on the Ruthenian question, the *Lidove Noviny* wrote the following at the beginning of 1932: “We can declare bankruptcy. Our capital, industry, commerce and public administration in the region of Rusynsko achieved nothing worthy of mention. Everything is as

⁴⁴¹ Ibid, pp. 52, 55.

⁴⁴² Kemény: Verhovina op. cit. p. 170.

⁴⁴³ Voith: 20 év op. cit. pp. 123-126.

⁴⁴⁴ Kemény: Verhovina op. cit. pp. 169-171, 177-178.

⁴⁴⁵ Botlik: Hármás kereszt op. cit. p. 245.

⁴⁴⁶ A felvidéki magyarság húsz éve 1918–1938 [The twenty years of the Hungarians of the Uplands, 1918-1938]. Magyar Statisztikai Társaság Államtudományi Intézete, Budapest, 1938, p. 115.

⁴⁴⁷ Bukovics, Dmitro - Gajdos, Béla - Gajdos, Mihály: A haladás útjában. (Az igazság a görög katolikus egyházzól), Uzshorod [In the way of progress. (The truth about the Greek Catholic Church)], 1980, p. 25.

wretched as before, in fact, even worse today. The hunger is real, which can not be alleviated with excuses.”⁴⁴⁸

The Czechoslovak authorities in vain built more and more ostentatious public institutions, roads, bridges and other facilities in Subcarpathia, the poverty of the population, a majority of Rusyns, was barely changed. Cities and county seats continued to have their facilities and infrastructure improved. Primarily, the public administrative hubs necessary for the governing of the territory were created, along with the necessary housing, schools and public facilities for the transplanted Czech officials. The social institutional system of the Prague government was primarily interested in keeping the Czech public official staff of the government contented, some 40,000 by the middle of the 1930s. The well oiled news media, continually reporting improvements, officially hyped Rusynsko as a successful area of the civic democracy of Czechoslovakia. The cases documented previously do not bear this out.

For the Czechoslovak Republic, its 20th year of existence - 1938 - represents the sunset of the country. The fundamental reasons stem from the circumstances surrounding its foundation and from the fact that, from the very beginning, Czechoslovakia looked on Subcarpathia as its colony. It was loath to grant autonomy to the region and, when it was forced to do so in the final weeks of the Republic, it was tragically too late.

The period of government autonomy, the Sojm (Карпатська Україна / Carpathian Ukraine) October 11, 1938 – February 12 to March 15, 1939

When the Independent Agrarian Alliance approved in Subcarpathia the formation of the Russian Autonomous Bloc on September 6, 1938, it also demanded the posting of an election date necessary to convene the Sojm, the creation of the independent constitution of the Rusyn populated territory, as well as the determination of the Carpatho-Russian - Slovak border. As a result of the bloody clashes between September 12 and 14, Czechoslovakia declared a state of war, while the forces of the German Reich massed on the Czechoslovak border on September 14.

From the middle of September, parallel activities took place in Prague, Podkarpatská Rus, Budapest, after the November 2 Vienna Arbitral Accord, in the counties of Ung, Bereg and Ugocsa reunited with Hungary, and the Carpathian Ukraine. Dictated by the time-line, will deal first with Podkarpatská Rus, then the Carpathian Ukraine created in the mountains of Subcarpathia; in the final chapter, the history of the returned Hungarian populated area of the Tisza bend.

The Hungarian government directed its ambassador in Berlin to convey to the Reich Foreign Ministry on September 14: the Hungarian government holds any arrangement regarding Czechoslovakia as inconceivable, which does not take Hungarian interests into consideration to the same extent as the Sudeten Germans. The United Hungarian Party, feeling effective support from the mother country, held a grand assembly in Pozsony (Bratislava) with the Sudeten Germans on September 17. At the meeting, a joint manifesto was drafted demanding the right of autonomy for the Hungarian minority of Czechoslovakia. Three days later, on September 20, the Independent Agrarian Alliance and the Central Russian National Council signed a joint declaration after bilateral deliberations. The memorandum was handed to the Prague government the following day by Edmund Bacsinszky, in the name of the so-called Russian bloc. The main demands of the memorandum were: the removal from office of people not suitably representing the Rusyn people's interests, the union of the Rusyn populated areas around Eperjes with Podkarpatská Rus and aid for the poverty stricken people of Verhovina.⁴⁴⁹ On the same day, Admiral Horthy (1868-1957) sent a letter to Chancellor Hitler, in which he asked for assurance of the right of each minority in Czechoslovakia to decide, through a plebiscite, to which country they want to belong.

⁴⁴⁸ *L'idove Noviny*, 1932, February 28.

⁴⁴⁹ Нариси історії Закарпаття. Том II. / Narisi istoriï Zakarpats'ka. vol. II ... op. cit. p. 276.

The Hungarian ambassador in London forwarded a note on September 19 to British Prime Minister Neville Chamberlain, in which the Hungarian government requested the same rights and treatment for the Hungarian minority of Czechoslovakia as received by the German minority. Two days later, on September 21, when Prime Minister Béla Imrédy (1891-1946) and staff returned from Germany, having held talks in Berlin the day before, a huge demonstration in Budapest demanded the re-annexation of the Uplands. The Hungarian government forwarded a note to Prague, in which it stated that, in the case of a potential solution to the Sudeten German question, a similar solution is expected for the ethnic Hungarians and demanded the return of the Hungarian populated areas. On the same day, Czechoslovak Prime Minister Milan Hodža stepped down. His successor was general Jan Syrový, who formed the 16th government since the fall of 1918. As the Prague government did nothing meaningful in the case, on September 28, Edmund Vacsinszky⁴⁵⁰ (1880-1947, Бачинский Эдмунд) and Gyula Földesi⁴⁵¹ (1875-1947, in some sources Földessy), the parliamentary representative of the Agrarian Union, supported by governor Konstantin Hrabar, again handed the memorandum drafted a week earlier. Still on the same day, the Hungarian government handed a note to the Czechoslovak government in which it demanded the voluntary return of the settlements populated mainly by Hungarians, as well as the granting of autonomy for Slovakia and Subcarpathia.

On the following day, September 29, 1938, the Four-Power meeting in Munich of the British, French, Germans and Italians decided that Czechoslovakia was to hand over the Sudeten German populated areas of Czechoslovakia to Germany. The following was attached to the Munich Pact, titled "Addendum to the agreement": "As soon as the question of the Polish and Hungarian minorities of Czechoslovakia reaches a settlement, Germany and Italy will also provide guarantees to Czechoslovakia." The third paragraph of the addendum states: "The heads of state of the four powers affirm that, in the question of the Polish and Hungarian minorities of Czechoslovakia, if a settlement is not reached by the affected governments in a matter of three months, the matter will become a subject at the next meeting of the heads of the four powers here present."⁴⁵² German forces began moving into the Sudetenland on October 1. (Prague handed over to Poland the Silesian Techen (540 km²) and the Polish populated areas of Freystadt (257 km²) between October 2 and 10.)⁴⁵³

In the meantime, the Czechoslovak government enacted law 206 on October 1, which created a second vice-governor in Podkarpatská Rus.⁴⁵⁴ The decree had no practical significance as events would bypass it in a matter of days. Also on the first, the Hungarian government called upon the Czechoslovak cabinet, through a diplomatic note, to open direct negotiations as prescribed by the Munich agreement, and to grant the right of self-determination to the Hungarians of the Uplands.

Still on the first, Prime Minister Béla Imrédy summoned former Interior Minister Miklós Kozma (1884-1941) who recorded the meeting in his diary, titled 'the Retaking of Subcarpathia,' thusly: "Imrédy summoned me for 10:30 and requests that I accept responsibility for the political guidance, propaganda and direction of the Ruthenian skirmish, as well as direction of the rebels. Everything I suggested, he accepted and agreed that, if the situation demands it, illegal and violent means, too."⁴⁵⁵ Three days later, the highest Hungarian leadership accepted Kozma's plan.

Most members of the subsequently reorganized so-called free-militia companies - commonly referred to as

⁴⁵⁰ Поп / Pop: Энциклопедия ... op. cit. p. 86.

⁴⁵¹ Ibid, p. 86.

⁴⁵² Halmosy: Nemzetközi ... op. cit. pp. 445-446.

⁴⁵³ Ibid, p. 448.

⁴⁵⁴ MOL. K 28., 59. tét., II. rész, 1938-P-17 270. sz.

⁴⁵⁵ MOL. K 429., Kozma-iratok 1938-1939., 28. csomó, 1. dosszié, p. 44.

the 'Tattered Guard' - have already taken part, almost two decades earlier, in reclaiming a portion of the territories annexed by the Trianon treaty. Namely, the armed uprising of August 28, 1921 in western Hungary, leading to the October 4 proclamation of the neutral state of Lajtabánság in the village of Felsőőr, at the instigation of commander Pál Prónay (1874-Dec. 1944 or Jan. 1945). The territory existed until November 4 and was able to force the victorious allies to hold the Sopron Referendum. The referendum held on December 14-16, 1921 was able to reclaim the city of Sopron and eight surrounding villages, and 10 villages between Szombathely and Szentgotthárd, deeded by the treaty to Austria. In all, one city and 18 villages returned to Hungary.⁴⁵⁶

Incidentally, the organization of the rebels into military units was begun in September of 1938 around Kecskemét and in Budapest. Units of the 996-man Tattered Guard, organized into six volunteer companies, crossed the Hungarian - Czech-Slovak border starting on October 2 from the villages of Csonka-Bereg [truncated-Bereg, the portion of the county that remained as part of Hungary-*Ed.*]. Groups of 20-30 often penetrated into Subcarpathia to a distance of 30-50km. In their forced-march forays, they often ambushed Czech military units, damaged or destroyed military or gendarme facilities (posts, billets, warehouses), telephone and telegraph wires, railway lines and bridges. Among others, in the outskirts of Ungvár, and the villages of Szolyva, Huszt, Nyíresújfalú (Dunkovica) and Borsova (Nagyborzsova). At the latter settlement, they attacked a Czech military train of 12 cars, disarmed the Czech officers and accompanying gendarmes and freed the almost-500 forcibly drafted Hungarian and Rusyn youths.⁴⁵⁷

One of the bloodiest encounters of the Tattered Guard was fought close to the villages of Dercen and Fornos, where serious losses were inflicted on the occupiers. The 98 members of the Guard's 1st Company were able to slip across the border undetected on the night of October 9 close to Tarpa. They advanced to the North, in the direction of Beregszász and Munkács. The following night, the company was able to negotiate the marshes between the settlements of Kisgút and Gát, arriving in the morning in the Nyíres forest between Dercen and Fornos, where they pitched camp. The Guard was secretly supplied with food and information by three young men of Dercen. One item was that "the Jewish shopkeeper of Gát betrayed the rebels to the Czechs. The news was conveyed to the unit. The rebels split into three groups and planned to slip across into the deeper forest in broad daylight. Two groups were successful but the third was caught by the Czechs in the marshes. A Czech company arrived, with automatic weapons, supported by three armored cars. The rebels, 32 of them, held out against the 240 for three hours. Slowly it became dark but by then only four were alive. Their leader was János Esze, the great-grandson of Tamás Esze [of Rákóczi's War of Freedom fame-*Ed.*]. A bullet smashed his knee and he dragged himself into the forest. His men found him and handed him to the men from Derce who spirited him across the Hungarian border. His two wounded men were drowned by the Czechs in one of the canals.⁴⁵⁸ Of the 32-man Guard unit, 28 fell in the fighting with the superior Czech force.

In the pitched battles of the following days, another 15 Guard members fell, 22 fought their way back to Hungary, 6 reached the Polish border, 30 managed to hide until the Hungarian military took control and some 40 were captured by Czechoslovak forces. "The Czechs were incredibly cruel. The other day, a body was found in a flooded ditch near Pusztakerepec, about three arrow-shots from here (i.e. the village of Derec). The clothes were ripped from the body, the face battered with a rifle butt to pulp. The flesh was ripped from his left shoulder to the bone, the body stabbed innumerable times with bayonets. The tendons on the soles of his feet hung in shreds. There was a small Virgin-medallion found beside him. That is what identified him as a rebel ... The gendarmes of Kisgút captured several rebels. Two were shot on the spot, the other two were taken to the police post (of Kisgút), where they were tortured to death.

⁴⁵⁶ Botlik: A hűség ... op. cit.

⁴⁵⁷ Ádám T., István: Vértó Ruszinszók. A rongyos gárda hősi küzdelme az északkeleti felföldért [Bleeding Rusyns. The struggle of the tattered guard for the northeastern highlands]. Budapest, 1939, pp. 35-61; Enyedy, Balázs Dénes: A Rongyosok felvidéki harcainak története. (Egy Rongyos Gárdista naplója.) [The history of the battles of the Tattered for the Uplands. (The diary of one of the Tattered Guard)]. Budapest, 1940, pp. 23-47.

⁴⁵⁸ Felvidékünk – honvédségünk. (Trianontól Kassáig) [Our Uplands - our army. (From Trianon to Kassa)]. Budapest, 1939, pp. 177-178.

One's arm was bound between two planks and, because he would not confess, hacked off with an ordinary saw. The cells of Munkács castle - the same where Kazinczy Ferenc (1759-1831, writer) was imprisoned - held a large number of Czech prisoners. At night, their screams penetrated the thick walls. Day after day, they were tortured by the most horrible Soviet methods.⁴⁵⁹ (The author here hints at the barbarous treatment and interrogation methods of prisoners employed by the NKVD, which was already well known at the time.)

As a result of the raids and incursions of the free-militias, Czech authorities announced a state of emergency in Subcarpathia. Yet, hundreds of Hungarians and Ruthenians rebelled against the rule of Prague. Many deserters from Czechoslovak units slipped home, the Ruthenian-born soldiers in the Beregszász barracks refused to obey orders, others smuggled weapons out to the Rusyn and Hungarian men. A substantial number joined the Hungarian dissenters. On October 3, the Hungarian government sent a new diplomatic note to Prague, demanding that the Hungarian political prisoners of Czechoslovakia be set free, the demobilization of Hungarian-nationality soldiers and their being sent home, the creation of local law enforcement units, and the immediate return of two-three Hungarian populated villages along the border.

To safeguard the post-Munich Agreement Czechoslovakia, including Podkarpatská Rus, the personal advisor to the republic's President on Rusyn affairs, Ivan Parkanij⁴⁶⁰ (1759-1831, Парканій Іван, in Hungarian sources Párkányi Iván), was appointed as Minister of Podkarpatská Rus Affairs in the Czechoslovak government on October 4. The following day, October 5, President Edvard Beneš resigned. On the same day, in the Uplands city of Zsolna, the autonomous government of Slovakia was formed, under Prime Minister Jozef Tiso. After a struggle of two decades, Slovakia received autonomy on the next day. Henceforth, the country became hyphenated: Czech-Slovakia, and was referred to as the 'Second Republic.'

On this occasion, Subcarpathia received the autonomy it has demanded for two decades, with a separate government - this was formed later, on October 9. András Bródy became leader of this government, as well as being a minister of the allied cabinet in Prague. From this time, Подкарпатська Русь / Podkarpatská Rus was, theoretically, an independent country within Czechoslovakia, the third equal in a federated state with the Czechs and Slovaks. This meant that Czechoslovakia evolved into a federated state, after losing the Sudeten German and Polish populated areas - effectively following the 20-year old example of the maliciously dismembered Austro-Hungarian Empire - with common foreign affairs, defense and finances. This state of affairs lasted but half a year, until its utter termination on March 15, 1939.

The Hungarian Council of Ministers held an extraordinary session on October 6, 1938 and started an international movement to save the 300 Tattered Guard facing stringent martial law in Czech-Slovakia.⁴⁶¹ [Capital sentences of the court could not be appealed and, in most cases, were carried out immediately-*Ed.*] The next day, on October 7, the senators, National Assembly and provincial representatives of the United Hungarian Party created the 'highest national organization' of the Czech-Slovak Hungarians, the Hungarian National Council. The new body addressed a proclamation to the minority Hungarians. It was signed by parliamentary representative Endre Korláth on behalf of Subcarpathia and Jenő Ortutay (1889-1950), dean of the Greek Catholic Church and chief magistrate of Bereg County. The following day, October 8, the Central Ukrainian and Central Russian National Councils held a joint meeting in Ungvár where they made a list of the proposed members of the Subcarpathian autonomous government. András Bródy was put forward as prime minister. The National Council of Podkarpatská Rus was formed from the members of the two organizations. The new council issued a memorandum: it holds itself to be the sole legal representative of the Rusyn populated territories, where authority must immediately be handed over to the Bródy-led

⁴⁵⁹ Ibid, p. 178; See in more detail in Enyedy: A Rongyosok ... op. cit. pp. 31-48, 92-105; Botlik, József: Radarállomás a szétdőlt temető helyén [Radar station in the ruined cemetery]. In: *Szivárvány* (Chicago), X. évf. 31. szám, 1990. június, pp. 104-111.

⁴⁶⁰ Encyclopedia of Rusyn ...op. cit. p. 358.

⁴⁶¹ MOL. K 27., Minisztertanácsi jegyzőkönyv, 1938. október 6.

autonomous government.⁴⁶² Also on the same day, the Hungarian Council of Ministers held another special session where it stated that the return of the Hungarian populated areas of Czechoslovakia are demanded “not on historical but on ethnic grounds.”⁴⁶³ A plebiscite should be held in Subcarpathia to let the region decide where they wish to belong.

The next day, October 9, Iván Párkányi briefed the Czechoslovak Council of Ministers in Prague of the events in Rusynsko. Following it, President Jan Syrový called for the resignation of Subcarpathian Governor Konstantin Hrabar and appointed Párkányi in his place.⁴⁶⁴ He could not avoid the ultimate outcome as, on the same day, Hungarian and Czech-Slovak discussions regarding a new border were begun in Révkomárom, under the leadership of Hungarian Foreign Minister Kálmán Kánya (1869-1945), in accord with the Munich Agreement. The unfruitful discussions were ended on October 13 because the Czech-Slovak representatives were only prepared to offer autonomy to the Hungarian populated areas. The Hungarian side insisted on the complete re-annexation of the zone with a majority of Hungarians, declining the lesser offer of the ceding of the Csallóköz. The president of the Subcarpathian Independent Agrarian Alliance, András Bródy, was present at the deliberations, who was named prime minister of Podkarpatská Rus during the meetings, on October 11. The Prague government was, in the meantime, forced to begin consultations on October 10 regarding the creation of the autonomous Subcarpathian government with Edmund Bacszinsky and Julij Revay⁴⁶⁵ (Ревай Юліян /Julijan/, in some sources: Юлий – Julij), the representatives of the Podkarpatská Rus National Council.

After two decades of promises, the Prague Council of Ministers brought a decision on naming three members of the autonomous government of Podkarpatská Rus. One of them, István Fencik,⁴⁶⁶ was vested with ministerial rank and charged with the task of holding discussions with the Slovak government regarding the clarification of the western boundary of Subcarpathia.⁴⁶⁷ The other two persons, Ágoston Volosin and Iván Pjescsák⁴⁶⁸ (1904-1972, Пещак Иван), were named as Under-Secretaries of State. In the evening hours of the same day, the composition of the autonomous government was accepted. The body’s official name was ‘Council of Ministers of Podkarpatská Rus.’ It was headed by the president of the Independent Agrarian Alliance, András Bródy, who was unanimously nominated for the post by the executive of the Central Rusyn National Council and every parliamentary representative and senator of Subcarpathia. Bródy’s official assignment: “official minister of matters pertaining to Podkarpatská Rus” in the Czechoslovak government - Minister of Carpatho-Russian matters, in the parlance of the day⁴⁶⁹ - as well as filling the educational portfolio, beside his prime ministerial duties. Edmund Bacszinsky became Interior Minister, Julian Revay became Communications Minister and István Fencik became Minister without portfolio. Of the two Under-Secretaries, Ágoston Volosin was responsible for Health and Social issues, Ivan Pjescsák for justice.⁴⁷⁰ Prime Minister Bródy’s official newspaper was the *Русская Правда* (Rusyn Truth).

⁴⁶² Fedinec: A kárpátaljai ... op. cit. p. 288.

⁴⁶³ MOL. K 27., Minisztertanácsi jegyzőkönyv, 1938. október 8.

⁴⁶⁴ Нариси історії Закарпаття. Том II. / Narisi istoriï Zakarpats’ka. vol. II ... op. cit. pp. 277-278.

⁴⁶⁵ Encyclopedia of Rusyn ... op. cit. pp. 389-390.

⁴⁶⁶ Поп / Pop: Энциклопедия ... op. cit. pp. 382-383.

⁴⁶⁷ Ibid, pp. 382-383.

⁴⁶⁸ Ibid, p. 366.

⁴⁶⁹ MOL. K 148., 1153. csomó, p. 26.

⁴⁷⁰ Нариси історії Закарпаття. Том II. / Narisi istoriï Zakarpats’ka. vol. II ... op. cit. p. 278.

The era of governmental autonomy ran from the date of the creation of the Bródy government, October 11, 1938, until the March 17, 1939 reunification of Subcarpathia with Hungary. This short span of five months can be analyzed in separate, well-defined periods.

The first, between October 11 and 26, was the period of the Rusyn-leaning Bródy government, replaced on October 26 by the Ukrainian-tending Volosin government. This latter separated the autonomous region by degrees from the Prague federation government, culminating in the evening of March 14, 1939, when Prime Minister Ágoston Volosin, in the name of the government - affirmed the following day by the Sojm - proclaimed the national sovereignty of the Carpatho-Ukrainian state. In the meantime, two other important events took place. On November 22, 1938, the Czechoslovak National Assembly adopted the constitutional law dealing with the autonomy of Podkarpatská Rus, which began the era of legal autonomy, lasting until the election of the members of the Sojm on February 12, 1939.

Returning to the beginning of the series of events, on the day the establishment of the autonomous government of Subcarpathia, October 11, 1938, the central government in Prague passed law 225 which mandated the creation of a high court and state judiciary in Ungvár.⁴⁷¹ This satisfied an older demand as earlier Subcarpathians appealing their cases were forced to travel to the Appeals Court functioning in Kassa. The next day, ministerial order 245 regulated the carrying and possession of weapons, ammunition and explosives in Subcarpathia.⁴⁷² With this latter order, Prague was attempting to stem armed insurrection in Subcarpathia.

On October 12, the four members of the first government of Podkarpatská Rus (András Bródy, Julijan Revay, Ágoston Volosin and Iván Pjescsák) arrived in Ungvár to be ceremonially introduced. The Hungarian local representatives were not invited, to which they sorely objected. In his speech, the new Prime Minister declared that the first government of Podkarpatská Rus will make every effort to unite the Rusyn populated areas, from the Poprád to the Tisza Rivers, in a unified and free state. Edmund Bacsinszky, in the meantime, traveled to Révkomárom to take part in the work of the Czech-Slovak-Hungarian border settlement committee; Fencik went to Eperjes to conduct discussions on the determination of the western border between Slovakia and Podkarpatská Rus.⁴⁷³ The following day, the leadership of the Hungarian National Council - headed by Károly Köszörű - met with Prime Minister Bródy. The delegation demanded the release of the innocent Hungarian national political prisoners, persecuted and jailed by the Czech authorities, which the PM promised to fulfill.

The Hungarian government was, in the meantime, attempting to secure international support for regaining the Hungarian settled territories. At the behest of Governor Miklós Horthy, ex-Prime Minister Kálmán Darányi (1886-1939) was in Berlin on October 14 asking for Hitler's support for the beginning of military action against Czechoslovakia, which the chancellor refused at this time. At the same time, count István Csáky (1894-1941), head of the Foreign Ministry committee and later of the foreign portfolio, held discussions with Prime Minister Benito Mussolini, who agreed with the aims of the Hungarian government - with the exception of the plan of the Slovak and Rusyn plebiscite - and promised diplomatic and military aid. On the same day, Polish Foreign Minister Józef Beck informed the Hungarian ambassador in Warsaw that, insofar as the Hungarian government turns to the four signatories of the Munich Agreement for a decision in the Czech-Slovak question, Poland will remain neutral in the matter. Beck declared the following day that Poland cannot offer military support to Hungary.

The Council of Ministers of Podkarpatská Rus - the autonomous government - met for the first time on October 15. The body removed the Czech Jaroslav Meznik from the head of the Subcarpathian National Office and installed in his place Sándor Beskid⁴⁷⁴ (1887-1975, Бескид Александр). Also removed from his post, the similarly

⁴⁷¹ MOL. K 28., 59. tét., II. rész., 1938-P-17 201. sz.

⁴⁷² MOL. K 28., 59. tét., II. rész., 1938-P-17 271. sz.

⁴⁷³ Нариси історії Закарпаття. Том II. / Narisi istoriï Zakarpats'ka. vol. II ... op. cit. pp. 278-279.

⁴⁷⁴ Encyclopedia of Rusyn ... op. cit. p. 35-36.

Czech František Chmelar, educational director, whose position was filled by László Szulinczák. Four months later, Szulinczák was elected as the president of the Ungvár local of the Association of Ruthenians of Hungary. At the first meeting, the cabinet founded the government's official newspaper, the *Урядовий Вістник Правительства Підкарпатської Русі* (Government Gazette of the Governing Body of Carpatho-Russia).⁴⁷⁵

The Bródy government met for the second time in Ungvár on October 18, when it set up a committee to deal with the continued border talks with Slovakia. The four-man panel was made up of linguist Mikola Farinics, ethnographer Péter Szova⁴⁷⁶ (1894-1984, Сова-Гмитров Петро П.), statistician Stepan Hojdics and religious expert Teodor Rajkovics. The cabinet also brought a decision that, in those settlements where the ethnic numbers do not warrant it, the Czech-Slovak language schools (in reality Czech - *J.B.*) were to be closed. The Bródy government permitted the Czech-Slovak Deutsche Partei (German Party) to operate on its soil and to distribute Adolf Hitler's book *Mein Kampf*. Finally, the cabinet suspended "central (i.e., Prague) government decrees restricting the normal development of economic life," and forbade the export of state and private property from Subcarpathia.⁴⁷⁷ In Berlin, Foreign Minister Joachim von Ribbentrop received the delegation led by Edmund Bacszinsky on October 19, when they held talks regarding the situation of Podkarpatská Rus. The following day, the German ambassador to Hungary conveyed the Reich Foreign Ministry's position in that it is prepared to mediate between Hungary and Czech-Slovakia on the basis that, excepting for the five cities - Bratislava, Nyitra, Kassa, Ungvár and Munkács -, the Hungarian populated areas lying South of them are to be returned to Hungary. The Hungarian government rejected the proposal.

The 10-point manifesto of the Rusyn National Council was publicized everywhere in Subcarpathia on October 21. The first, and most important, demand was a plebiscite to allow the people to decide their national affiliation, and that the language of the people become the official language in public usage. It went on to list that official positions should be filled by Rusyns, land reform, and a review of citizenships secured after 1919; the authorities to end national and linguistic struggles, hold elections to the Rusyn parliament, the Sojm. It ended with a call nationalize the salt mines, state forests and other assets, and the formation of local militias to uphold order. The First Central Ukrainian National Council published its 20-point manifesto on the previous day. It demanded, among other things, that the 'government' ensure the current borders towards Hungary and Poland and annex the counties of Zemplén and Sáros to the Carpatho-Russian territories, as well as the districts of the Szepesség. It continued with demands for a constitution, announcement of elections to the Sojm, state recognition for Greek Catholic and Pravoslav holidays and an end to all political parties - except the Ukrainian people's Unity Party. It closed with a call for a review of land reforms, creation of jobs for the population, the establishment of a university and high schools, and closer co-operation with Germany in all areas.⁴⁷⁸

During these days, beginning in mid-October within the framework of the United Hungarian Party, local Hungarian National Councils were formed in the villages and town of Subcarpathia. They were established based on the national self-determination laid down in the September 29-30 Munich Agreement. These bodies represented the entirety of the Hungarians as membership was not restricted to only the Hungarian party but also embraced the Reformed, Roman and Greek Catholic Churches, schools, associations and members of other organizations.

The Bródy cabinet met for the third, and final, time on October 22. at the meeting, Interior Minister Edmund Bacszinsky reported on his Berlin discussion regarding the new Czech-Slovak-Hungarian border, remarking that "we saved Ungvár and Munkács for Podkarpatská Rus." Then, a decision was born to send Bacszinsky and Fencik to Budapest, to confer with the Hungarian government. The cabinet meeting continued on the following day when it was

⁴⁷⁵ The headline of issue 3 of the *Kormányzati Közlöny* (Government Gazette), In: Гренджа-Донський, Василь: *Щастя і горе Карпатської України – Мої спогади*. Ужгород [Grendzha-Dons'kyi, Vasył': The happiness and bitterness of Carpatho-Ukraine (or Karpats'ka Ukraïna) – My recollections.], Užhorod, 2002, p. 79.

⁴⁷⁶ Keresztyén: *Kárpátaljai ... op. cit. p. 256.*

⁴⁷⁷ Fedinec: *A kárpátaljai ... op. cit. pp. 290-291.*

⁴⁷⁸ Fedinec: *A kárpátaljai ... op. cit. pp. 291-292.*

officially resolved that, under the terms of the peace treaties, the Rusyns living in the southern portion of the Carpathians represent an independent entity, whose northern mountainous and southern plains regions were held together by a millennium of historical and economic ties, and the brotherly coexistence of the natives. The majority of the Carpatho-Russian population always lived in harmony with the minority people living in the former autonomous region. The Hungarian government decreed in 1918 the region's (i.e., Ruska-Krajna) unity and indivisibility, which succeeding peace treaties also enshrined. Only the original natives have a right to make decisions over the fate of this unified region, through a democratic plebiscite. The resolution was signed by every member of the Bródy cabinet and sent to the governments of Czech-Slovakia, Great Britain, France, Germany, Italy, Poland, Hungary and Yugoslavia.⁴⁷⁹

On the very same day, October 22, the Hungarian government received the third Czech-Slovak proposal, which accepted more than 90% of the Hungarian territorial claims, there being a disagreement over the disposition of eight "mixed population areas." Among them the Subcarpathian cities of Ungvár, Munkács and Nagyszöllős, which, according to the previous distorting Czech statistics, were not held to be of a Hungarian majority. In reality, they were, even if surrounded by Rusyn, or in the case of Munkács, German villages. The Hungarian government drafted a resolution on October 24, demanding a plebiscite in the contested areas and stressed that, if one was not held, it would turn to the four signing powers of the Munich Agreement for arbitration. Uncontested areas, on the other hand, were to be immediately handed over by Czech-Slovakia to Hungary.

At the combined Czech-Slovak-Rusyn Council of Ministers meeting held on October 25 in Prague, one of the decisions taken was to turn to German-Italian arbitration in regard to territorial disagreements. Bródy proposed that the matter of Czech-Slovak-Hungarian and Slovak-Rusyn border re-alignments be linked.⁴⁸⁰ In response, the Czech-Slovak Justice Minister suggested that András Bródy be stripped of his parliamentary privilege (i.e., freedom from prosecution) and be taken to court. The Rusyn PM was arrested the next day on charges of 'treason,' the Prague government 'accepted the resignations' of Fencik and Pjescsák, and Bacsinszky voluntarily shelved his membership in the government. Ágoston Volosin was immediately named as the new Prime Minister of the Subcarpathian government, also holding the Justice portfolio, along with Religious and Economic matters. Ágoston Stefán continued in the role of Minister of Education, as well as Julijan Revay as Minister of Communications. The two personal secretaries of the PM were Stepan Rosoha (1908-1986, Росоха Степан) and Ivan Rohacs (1913-1942, Рогач Иван).⁴⁸¹

With the reorganization, the government of Subcarpathia became essentially of a Ukrainian nature. Volosin immediately swore the oath of office by telephone, at 4:40PM, from Ungvár to the Czech-Slovak Prime Minister, general Jan Syrový.⁴⁸² The new head of the Subcarpathian government then declared that he agrees with the points of the First Central Ukrainian National Council memorandum, which cling to the ethnic unity of the Carpatho-Ukraine, its indivisibility, its borders and strongly rejects a plebiscite. Then he called for calm and obedience of the laws on the part of the population. The first point of the cited Ukrainian council memorandum did not reject that Subcarpathia's Hungarian populated areas be attached to Hungary but opposed the use of plebiscite in Rusyn populated areas. He also stated that he was a believer in the Czech-Slovak model, a federated state. In an important parallel development, it was in these days that Rusyn militias were organized in numerous villages, based on the Russian language call of Mihálynek Demkó, authorized by the Central Russian National Council, to safeguard order, calm and property. These militias were named after the former leader in the fight for independence for Podkarpatská Rus, the Kurtyák guard.⁴⁸³ This puts an unarguable Rusyn flavor on the movement, putting it in opposition, after the government change, with the Volosin-led Ukrainian direction.

⁴⁷⁹ Нариси історії Закарпаття. Том II. / Narisi istoriï Zakarpats'ka. vol. II. ... op. cit. pp. 279-281.

⁴⁸⁰ Ibid, pp. 279-281, 282-283.

⁴⁸¹ Ibid, 1995: pp. 284-285.

⁴⁸² Ibid, 1995: pp. 282-283.

⁴⁸³ *Kárpáti Magyar Hírlap*, 1938. október 26.

Incidentally, the official notice that the federal government of Prague relieved András Bródy from his post and naming Under-Secretary Volosin to the prime ministership of the autonomous province of Podkarpatská Rus only arrived in Ungvár on October 29. The document also confirmed that the new PM was also responsible for religious, educational, economic and judicial affairs. As of this date, the territory's highest executive, law-making and regulatory body was the Ukrainian Central National Council (Українська Центральна Народна Рада). The supreme head of it was Ágoston Volosin, who was referred to in the Ukrainian council's proclamation, "To the Ukrainian People of Podkarpattya," of early November as "The fate of our people in Podkarpattya has been laid in the hand of the father of our rebirth, Avgustin Volosin."⁴⁸⁴ The central government, to ensure its continued influence in Subcarpathia, named general Lev Prchala, commander of the local Czechoslovak forces, as a member of the Rusyn government, whom the cabinet members refused to recognize.⁴⁸⁵ The new government immediately banned all political parties on October 29. The offices of the United Hungarian Party, the only one representing the interests of the Hungarians, were officially sealed - that is, shuttered. A few days later, on November 3, the Volosin government dissolved various Rusyn, Russian and Hungarian organizations and shut down several newspapers. This fate befell the Central Russian National Council, the Orel (Eagle) Rusyn youth association, the Demkó militia, the Kurtyák Guard, the Blackshirt National Guard organized by Fencik, numerous Czech and Hungarian Freemason lodges, ex-PM András Bródy's newspaper *Русская Правда* (Russian Truth), the *Наш Путь* (Our Way), and the weekly magazine *Русский Вестник* (Russian/Rusyn Gazette).

Although the Czech-Slovak federal Council of Ministers accepted, at their meeting on October 25, Hungary's demand that a German-Italian panel arbitrate over the question of Hungarian populated areas - and sent a diplomatic note to that effect on the following day -, however the note did not contain the reservation that the decision only pertained to the Hungarian minority, thus excluding the Rusyn people. The matter once again reached international attention when German Foreign Minister Ribbentrop met in Rome, between October 27 and 30, with Mussolini and Foreign Minister Count Galeazzo Ciano regarding the Czechoslovak question. The Hungarian government replied on October 27 to the Czechoslovak note of the previous day, stressing: it maintains the position that every ethnic minority of Czech-Slovakia must be assured a plebiscite and self-determination, and that the area of reference for the arbitrators be restricted only to the disputed areas. A new round of back-and-forth ensued in Prague. Finally, after the German-Italian consultation, Czech-Slovakia requested a decision on October 30, immediately followed by Hungary. At the invitation of Germany and Italy, a delegation, headed by Foreign Minister Kálmán Kánya and Education and Religion Minister Pál Teleki, traveled to Vienna on November 1 to take part in the arbitration process.

While these events were taking place, Britain and France relinquished their rights stemming from the Munich Agreement, ceding it to Italy and Germany. The agreement, signed a month previously by prime ministers Chamberlain and Daladier, bound these two countries to taking part in the decision-making process. Coming from the stated lack of interest of Britain and France, the fate of the Hungarian minority in the Uplands fell to the arbitration of Germany and Italy. The meeting was announced for November 2, in the gold room of the Viennese Belvedere palace.⁴⁸⁶ Ágoston Volosin attended the event as a member of the Czech-Slovak delegation, having flown from Ungvár to Pozsony (Bratislava), from where he drove to Vienna in the company of Slovak Prime Minister Josef Tiso.

According to the decision of the arbitrators, a southern strip of Czech-Slovak territory, some 650 km long, was re-annexed to Hungary - from the Csallóköz city of Somorja to Feketeardó in Ugocea - totaling 11,927 km², and a population, on December 15, 1938, of 1,041,101 (Hungarian 83.7%, Slovak 12.9% and Ruthenian 2.0%).⁴⁸⁷ Of the

⁴⁸⁴ Fedinec: A kárpátaljai ... op. cit. p. 295.

⁴⁸⁵ Botlik: Egestas ... op. cit. p. 213.

⁴⁸⁶ Rónai, András: Térképezett történelem [Mapped history]. Budapest, 1989, pp. 149-155.

⁴⁸⁷ Thirring, Lajos: Az 1939. március közepén birtokba vett kárpátaljai terület., Az 1939. április eleji területgyarapodás [The Subcarpathian region reoccupied in the middle of March, 1939], In: *Magyar Statisztikai Szemle, 1939.* 3. sz., pp. 456, 478.

disputed cities, Kassa in the Uplands - but not Bratislava and Nyitra -, and Ungvár and Munkács in Subcarpathia returned to Hungary.

A quote from the decision named the first Vienna Arbitral Accord: “Germany, Great Britain, France and Italy, in the matter of the annexation of the Sudeten German territories to Germany, signed in Munich on September 29, 1938, have agreed on the following communiqué as an attachment to that agreement. ‘The heads of the four powers affirm that the question of the Polish and Hungarian minorities living in Czech-Slovakia will be tabled for further discussion by the heads of the four powers here present, inasmuch as the affected governments are unable to come to an agreement within three months through direct negotiations.’ This statement, as the Munich agreements in general, rests on the principle of ethnicity. In light of the content of the statement, the Hungarian government opened direct verbal negotiations with the Czech-Slovak government on October 9, 1938, in Komárom, continuing the process through an exchange of notes. During the negotiations, an agreement was reached between the two governments regarding territories of the Czech-Slovak Republic to be re-annexed to Hungary, in that the governments of Germany and Italy will be asked to arrive at a decision. Agreement was also reached between the Hungarian and Czech-Slovak governments that the decision of the arbitrators will be deemed as binding.

The government of the German Reich and the Royal Italian government accepted the post of arbitrators. After consulting with the representatives of the affected countries in Vienna, on November 2, 1938, they designated the territories of the Czech-Slovak Republic to be handed over to Hungary.

“1. The territories to be ceded to Hungary by Czech-Slovakia are indicated on the attached map. The local determination of the border is the task of the Hungarian-Czech-Slovak committee.

2. The evacuation of the territory to be ceded by Czech-Slovakia and its Hungarian occupation will begin on November 5, 1938 and must be completed by November 10, 1938. The phases of the evacuation and occupation, as well as its methods, must be determined without delay by the Hungarian-Czech-Slovak committee.

3. The Czech-Slovak government will ensure that the ceded territories are caused to remain in their proper condition at evacuation.

4. Detail questions arising out of the ceding of territory, especially those of citizenship and opting [to stay or to go-*Ed.*] must be resolved by the Hungarian-Czech-Slovak committee.

5. Similarly, the Hungarian-Czech-Slovak committee must come to an agreement regarding the protective decrees covering persons of Hungarian nationality remaining on Czech-Slovak soil, as well as non-Hungarian nationals resident on the ceded territories. This committee will especially ensure that the Hungarian ethnic group of Bratislava will be in the same position as the other ethnic groups found there.

6. Inasmuch as economic or transportation-type difficulties and hardships arise for the remaining territory of Czech-Slovakia from ceding territory to Hungary, the Royal Hungarian government will do everything possible in its power, in cooperation with the Czech-Slovak government, to address those difficulties and hardships.

7. Insofar as difficulties or questions arise from the execution of this arbitrated decision, the Royal Hungarian government and Czech-Slovak government will come to a resolution directly between themselves. If they are unable to reach a resolution on some question, the question will be submitted for binding arbitration to the German and Royal Italian governments.”⁴⁸⁸

The decision of the first Vienna Arbitral Accord defined in detail, on the accompanying map, the new Czech-Slovak-Hungarian border, to be demarcated on the ground by a joint committee formed by the two countries for this purpose. The line’s Subcarpathian section: “South of Nagyszalánc, lying in the Eperjes-Tokaj mountain range but remaining a part of Slovakia, it (the border) now runs relatively straight in an easterly direction, so that the Ungvár-Nagykapos rail line now becomes Hungarian, as does the city of Ungvár. Circling Ungvár, the border proceeds approximately in a southeasterly direction. It circles Munkács in the North and Northeast, so that Munkács now belongs to Hungary. East of Munkács, the border descends into Ugocsa County in a serpentine line. It passes to the West of Nagyszőlős, until approximately to Feketeardó, which now becomes Hungarian, and proceeds in a straight line to bisect the Királyháza - Halom railway line and end at the Romanian border.”⁴⁸⁹ The decision of the arbitrage panel was accepted on November 12 and attached to law article XXXIV of 1938, enacted the following day, titled

⁴⁸⁸ Országos Törvénytár 1938. november 13. (18. sz.), pp. 529-530.

⁴⁸⁹ Halmosy: Nemzetközi ... op. cit. p. 450.

“The Uplands areas re-annexed to the lands of the Hungarian Holy Crown and reunited with the country”⁴⁹⁰ but without the details of the new line of demarcation.

On the first day of the entry of Hungarian forces into the Uplands and Subcarpathia, November 5, the Carpatho-Ukrainian government, with Ágoston Volosin at its head, relocated its seat from Ungvár to Huszt, a town of 18,000, and declared it to be the new capital of Podkarpatská Rus. The government moved under the protection of the Ukrainian People’s Protective Force (Українська Народна Оборона), formed on September 4. A little earlier, during the month of October, in cooperation with the Czech military forces, it took up the fight against the forces of the Hungarian Tattered Guard, which infiltrated the border.⁴⁹¹ The Subcarpathian National Office only completed its move to the former Hungarian royal city on November 10. Its new location - Huszt - was only announced later by the Czech-Slovak federal government on November 19, in edict 297, dated on the same day. The remainder of the lower echelons of administration of the former autonomous territory also left Ungvár. The Carpatho-Ukrainian supreme court and district attorney’s office moved on November 14 to Nagyberezna; the district courts moved in part there, in part to the neighboring Antalóc, to continue their activities.

In the new ‘capital’ of Carpatho-Ukraine, Huszt, the Carpathian Szics People’s Defensive Organization (Організація Народної Оборони Карпатської Січі, ОНОКС - ONOKSZ) unfurled its flag, similar to Galicia, on November 9. It quickly became known by its abbreviated name of the Carpathian Szics or Szics Guard. The following sign - КАРПАТСЬКА / СІЧ - was displayed on the front of the Huszt building which served as headquarters of the armed organization.⁴⁹² Its main tasks were the liquidation of anti-government activities, effective support for the execution of government decrees and personal protective services for members of the government. The rules governing the military organization were approved the next day by Communications Minister Julijan Revaj. The Szics Guard was soon operating as an armed, uniformed unit within the constraints authorized by the Carpatho-Ukrainian Interior Ministry. These were affirmed by the Volosin government through its decree 372/1938.

The ONOKSZ central headquarters were in Huszt but it had regional, district and local unit posts. The commander in chief of the Carpatho-Ukrainian armed forces was Dmitro Klimpus⁴⁹³ (1897-1959, Климбуш Дмитро, Klempus in some sources). Instructions for the education and training of members of the unit was issued on December 10, and later by the handbook titled ‘Commands and small arms drill,’ issued by the high command on February 20, 1939. It was written by Klimpus and Lt. Petro Csorny of the high command.⁴⁹⁴ PM Volosin primarily tried to solidify his independence-seeking control with the aid of the Szics Guard - which had begun Ukrainian nationalistic propaganda and anti-Hungarian activities - within the confines of the federal Czech-Slovakia. Shortly after the sanction for the Szics Guard, on November 14, the Carpatho-Ukrainian government gave its assent to the creation of a security service, reporting directly to the Prime Minister.

In a Czech-Slovakia divested of significant territory and minority groups numbering 3.2 million Germans, 800 thousand Hungarians and 80,000 Poles, the self-government law proposal for Slovakia and Subcarpathia was tabled in the National Assembly on November 17. The discussions in committee modified the proposal in minor ways in the interest of to strengthening central authority. Primarily, it was in language usage. Minority languages continued

⁴⁹⁰ Országos Törvénytár 1938. november 13. (18. sz.), pp. 528-532.

⁴⁹¹ Нариси історії Закарпаття. Том II. / Narisi istoriï Zakarpats’ka. vol. II ... op. cit. p. 384.

⁴⁹² Гренджа-Донський / Grendzha-Dons’kyi: Щастя ... op. cit. p. 185.

⁴⁹³ Поп / Pop: Енциклопедія ... op. cit. p. 207.

⁴⁹⁴ MOL. K 28., 59. tét., 1939–P–17 155. sz., pp. 3-5; Вегеш, Микола М.: Карпатська Україна 1938-1939. (Соціально-економічний і політичний розвиток). Ужгород. [Vegesh, Mykola M.: Carpatho-Ukraine 1938-1939. /Socio-economic and political development/.] Užhorod, 1993, pp. 53-56.

to be permitted to be used in areas where the given minority reached 20% of the population. Consolidation of central power was also evidenced by Prague retaining parliamentary control over trade and tariff policies, the postal savings bank, currency strategy, patent rights, as well as the export and import of goods. The two associate countries - Slovensko and Rusynsko - could take part in the deliberations of the federal government if matters touching their jurisdiction were under discussion.

The Czech-Slovak House of Representatives accepted the proposed autonomy law for the two associate countries in its November 19 session, which was enacted into constitutional law. With it, “the new temporary constitution of the Second Czechoslovak Republic was born, bringing to a close the twenty-year centralism of Prague.”⁴⁹⁵ The law establishing the autonomy of Podkarpatská Rus, number 328, was entered into the Czech-Slovak law compendium almost a month later, on December 16. Four days before it took effect, on December 12, the Volosin government declared that, effective immediately, the official language of Carpatho-Ukraine, as well as the language of instruction in schools, was Ukrainian. The Ukrainian language as the official one had already been introduced earlier, on November 25. It is probable that the decree was repeated because its execution proceeded slowly in many places, running into opposition among the Rusyn sympathizing population.

While these were going on, on November 20, an internment camp was established in the 1,300m high Dumen mountains, between Rahó and Tiszaborkút, in response to an ‘ukase’ [edict] made by PM Volosin two days earlier.⁴⁹⁶ The Volosin regime, to remedy serious problems, increasingly resorted to escalating terror, the chief instrument of which was the Szics Guard. The armed unit conducted nightly raids, taking into custody leaders of the Hungarians and those of the Ruthenians who did not hold themselves to be Ukrainian. They were conveyed camps in the upper Tisza region - barn-like buildings, unheated in the -20 degree C. weather. In a matter of weeks, several thousands of Russian and Rusyn sympathizers were sent there, among them priests, teachers, doctors, lawyers, notaries and others. The Czech-Slovak authorities and military present in Carpatho-Ukraine expressed disinterest in the proceedings. A confidential report noted: “The Guardsmen keep the Hungarian and Rusyn population under constant terror. It is now forbidden to speak Hungarian or Rusyn in public places, nor Czech, because those caught doing so are sent to the internment camp set up in Jasina (Kőrösmező). The camp is so full that construction of a new camp was begun in Valóc (actually: Volóc).”⁴⁹⁷

The terror of the Szics Guard was fundamentally enabled by the lack of a civil service across most of the Carpatho-Ukrainian territory until the last month of its existence. In fact, the most essential municipal frameworks were also missing. All the while, the Huszt government tried to accomplish with the federal Prague government to officially permit the province to change its name from Podkarpatská Rus to Carpatho-Ukraine. The central government rejected Communication Minister Julijan Revaj’s request in this matter on December 29. At this, the next day the Volosin government decreed that, alongside Podkarpatská Rus, the name Carpatho-Ukraine was also officially sanctioned.

The situation of the Carpatho-Ukrainian regime was greatly hampered by the fact that after the newly introduced autonomy legislation, November 22, 1938, approximately 15,000 Czech civil servants remained in Subcarpathia. They, sensing their impending transfer or firing, sabotaged every directive of the Volosin government. Until January 1, 1939, about 10 thousand of them left Subcarpathia, followed by a gradual trickle into eastern Slovakia of those remaining. Only at Christmas of 1938 did the Carpatho-Ukrainian Interior Minister present the new civil service proposal. It planned to organize the province into 16 districts - each of which could not have been less than 30,000 people -, each headed by a district administrator.

Central police headquarters were established in Huszt on December 17 and by early January, six local police stations were operating; border guards were organized at eight crossings. One of these was the crossing towards Hungary opened two weeks before between Nagyszöllős and Tiszaújlak. The meetings to determine the final boundary between Slovakia and the province only began on December 18. The Volosin government specified that ethnic

⁴⁹⁵ MOL. K 28., 89. tét., 1940–P–17 541. sz.

⁴⁹⁶ Береш / Vegesh.: Карпатська Україна... op. cit. p. 77.

⁴⁹⁷ MOL. K 28., 59. tét., II. rész, 1938–P–17 704. sz., pp. 5-6.

boundaries must be taken into consideration in the determination. In all, in only 15 places did civil service and administrative authority function in the state. In the rest, an unsettled situation developed, exacerbated by the activities of the Szics Guard.⁴⁹⁸

The new state was only able to establish district courts in three places - in Nagyberezna, Alsoverecke and Ilosva -, later adding another court of law in Huszt. PM Volosin issued a decree on January 16, creating a Carpatho-Ukrainian High Court and a Chief Prosecutor's Office but their organization progressed slowly. Decrees remained in effect regarding the handling of dissidents, so-called 'other thinkers.' Those taking a position contrary to the Carpatho-Ukrainian state had their 'legal rights' completely disregarded and interned in camps or, persons deemed suspicious by the authorities, were expelled from the territory. It was indicative of the tense, uncertain state of affairs that the Carpatho-Ukrainian Interior Minister instructed his subordinates thusly: where necessary, suspend the activities of the local village councils and appoint commissars for the handling of matters.

Prime Minister Volosin felt it very important to solve the religious questions in his country to reinforce the position of his government, although it was not in his interest to bolster the Pravoslav sect over the Greek Catholics. Not only because several high-placed members of his government, himself included, were Unitarians but because he was clearly aware that the eastern church was exclusively in the service of the Greater Russian idea, whose goals were completely opposed to his own Ukrainian direction.

The movement was personally directed by Dionisius Nyáradi (in other sources variously Dénes Nyárády, Dioniszij Nyaradi), Greek Catholic bishop of the Körös bishopric. The prelate was named on November 15, 1938, by Pope Pius XI, to be the apostolic visitor - with administrative authority and located in Huszt - of the former Greek Catholic bishopric of Munkács, now part of Carpatho-Ukraine after the first Vienna Arbitral Accord. In the background was the Vatican's eastern congregation - led by cardinal Tisserand - which supported the Greater Ukraine plans. Hence, he paid particular attention to Subcarpathia where he tried to bring about his conception with the help of Nyáradi. Both the Hungarian and Polish governments voiced strenuous opposition to it.⁴⁹⁹ In the meantime, a new Pravoslav bishop, Vladimir Raics, was ordained in Munkács on November 20, 1938, sent by the Serbian church to fill the post.

Shortly afterwards bishop Nyáradi appeared in Carpatho-Ukraine, to the astonishment of the clergy and the parishioners, who was ceremonially installed in his post in Huszt three weeks after the papal appointment, on December 3, 1938. His greatest supporter was the Prime Minister, under whose influence the prelate from the Croatian diocese became one of the most dedicated follower of the Volosin-led 'Carpatho-Ukrainian' idea. All the more so, since his early religious training came from the Metropolitan of Lemberg, Szeptickij, who was well known for his Ukrainian leanings and whose confidante Nyáradi was. In his pastoral letter of December 16, the bishop urged the parishioners' active support for the Ukrainian movement. He wished to make Huszt the center of his see, which was made possible by a papal bull. It was published by Pope Pius XI in September of 1937, laying the groundwork for a Subcarpathian Greek Catholic archbishopric, as well as a bishopric centered on Huszt. Nyáradi could not exercise his control over the Greek Catholics in the part of the Munkács diocese now a part of Slovakia. Those ministers and vicars continued to recognize bishop Sándor Sztojka of Ungvár, once more a part of Hungary, as their prelate and objected against any Ukrainianization. The Holy See decided in early 1939 to force the resignation of Sándor Sztojka, in all probability a result of the accusations of the Ukrainian-leaning Basilian monks of the Munkács bishopric who wished to take revenge on their anti-Ukrainian prelate. Prime Minister Pál Teleki (1879-1941) and Foreign Minister István Csáky personally intervened on behalf of the bishop. As a result, the bishop's position was strengthened by springtime. In the midst of it all, Sztojka was appointing vicar-generals for those parts of his diocese now in Slovakia and Subcarpathia.⁵⁰⁰

The conversion of the Greek Catholic cleric into a Ukrainophile began with Nyáradi's tour between January 3

⁴⁹⁸ Botlik, József – Dupka, György: *Ez hát a hon...* op. cit. pp. 44-45.

⁴⁹⁹ Tilkovszky, Lóránt: *Revízió és nemzetiségpolitika Magyarországon (1938-1941)* [Revision and ethnic politics in Hungary (1938-1941)]. Budapest, 1967, p. 148.

⁵⁰⁰ Botlik: *Hármas kereszt ...* op. cit. pp. 253-254.

and 15, 1939, when he visited the largest parishes. Everywhere, he produced widespread pro-Ukrainian sentiments. The official Vatican newspaper, *Osservatore Romano*, reported in its February 5, 1939 issue that Apostolic Visitor Nyáradi was already making significant gains in his mission to Carpatho-Ukraine.

According to the census conducted in February of 1939, the Volosin-led autonomous territory had an area of 11,094 km², a population of 552,124, living in 390 settlements. The population was almost exclusively of Czech-Slovak citizenship (544,759), with a minuscule 7,365 persons in the 'other' category. The ethnic makeup of the population was: Ukrainian 413,481 (75.9%), Jewish 65,828 (12.1%), Hungarian 25,894 (4.8%), Czech and Slovak 17,495 (3.2%), Romanian 13,268 (2.4%) and German 8,715 (1.6%).⁵⁰¹ These data, "republished in the local Ukrainian press, based on the National Statistical Office of Prague, is an unprecedented falsification of the regional power relationships."⁵⁰² The authorities officially enumerated a significant number of Hungarians among the Jewish nationals. Here we must mention that the state of Israel came into existence only in 1948. Earlier, we noted that during the 1921 census the Czechoslovak authorities introduced Jewish (*židovská*) as an ethnicity. The aim was to differentiate, and reduce the Hungarian numbers by, those thousands of the Subcarpathian population who held themselves to be Hungarian nationals of the Jewish faith. The practice was continued - by cruder methods - by the Volosin regime.

A month before the total collapse of this portion of the country - February 19, 1939 - the strength of the Szics Guard became markedly significant. At its national convention in the capital, Huszt, 10,000 armed members of the organization showed up. "At the ceremonies, 2,000 new members were inducted into the Guard. The necessary funds to equip them is raised from the populace. The uniform-sewing work fell to the Jewish tailors, who were expected to do it for free."⁵⁰³ It is indicative of the might of the Szics Guard that, weeks previous to its show of strength, the high command held a secret meeting in Huszt on January 19 where it was decided that around the middle of March it would seize power from the Volosin government.

The situation was further intensified when the federal government illegally and unilaterally removed - against Volosin's wishes - Minister Revaj from the Carpatho-Ukrainian government. In his place, federal PM Emil Hácha named Czech general Lev Prchala, on January 16, 1939, with absolute power, as Interior Minister in the Huszt cabinet. The Volosin government objected sharply against the action. The general was finally confirmed on January 18 in the transportation portfolio. At the general's appointment, widespread disturbances broke out on January 21, which only abated on the 27th, at the news of his resignation from the post. He continued to be the Czech military commander in Carpatho-Ukraine. Shortly after, on February 7, an unsuccessful attempt was made on his life. The next day, the general declared a state of emergency and of war in the whole of the Carpatho-Ukraine. This, five days before the elections.

The Carpatho-Ukraine elections were announced by PM Volosin in the middle of the previous month, January 12. According to the decree, nominations had to be filed with the president of the national election committee by January 22. The post was still vacant by that date. The filing deadline was also announced a week later. The political rights of the 26,000 Hungarians, according to official census figures, living in the Carpatho-Ukraine were thus restricted. At a press conference on January 25, Communications Minister Revaj explained this turn of events by saying that the United Hungarian Party was not able to take part in the elections "as a result of its internal disintegration and inability to present a common front." As a result, it could not put forward a list of nominees in time for the election. The accusation was rejected in the strongest words by Károly Hokky, the party's senator for Subcarpathia. Three days later, Hokky read into the parliamentary record a remark objecting to the banning of the United Hungarian Party and the forcible exclusion of the Hungarians by authoritarian forces from the elections. The national president of the party, János Esterházy (1901-1957), also protested in the strongest terms to Emil Hácha.⁵⁰⁴

⁵⁰¹ Нариси історії Закарпаття, Том II. / Narisi istoriï Zakarpats'ka. vol. II ... op. cit. p. 294.

⁵⁰² Kemény: Verhovina ... op. cit. p. 211.

⁵⁰³ MOL. K 28., 59. tét., 1939-P-15 660. sz., p. 34.

⁵⁰⁴ Fedinec: A kárpátaljai ... op. cit. p. 313.

The Hungarian government also responded to the events when its ambassador in Prague delivered a verbal communiqué to the Czech-Slovak Foreign Minister on February 3, 1939. The Budapest leadership sharply objected to the steps taken by the Carpatho-Russian, meaning the Volosin, government's actions in not accepting the list of nominees of the Hungarian minority - in fact, arresting some whose names appeared on the list. The Hungarian diplomatic note clearly drew attention to the fact that the proceedings contravened article 5 of the Vienna arbitration decision, whereby "... Hungarian-Czech-Slovak committee must come to an agreement regarding the protective decrees covering persons of Hungarian nationality remaining on Czech-Slovak soil, as well as non-Hungarian nationals resident on the ceded territories. This committee will especially ensure that the Hungarian ethnic group of Bratislava will be in the same position as the other ethnic groups found there."⁵⁰⁵ It must be noted with regard to the preceding that earlier, on December 30, 1938, a delegation of the Hungarian National Party - better known as the Hungarian Party of Rusynsko - paid a visit to Prime Minister Volosin, where they swore an oath of loyalty on behalf of Hungarians living in Carpatho-Ukraine. The party was still not allowed to run in the election.

The Carpatho-Ukrainian government passed a resolution on January 18, 1939, to create the Ukrainian National Association, UNO (Українське Національне Об'єднане). Its leader was Fedor Revaj⁵⁰⁶ (1893-1940, Ревай Федор), who was elected as a Sojm representative the following month. It is important to point out that this organization is not the same as that already mentioned, also called UNO (the Ukrainian People's Protective Force / Українська Народна Оборона) formed on September 4, 1938. The Ukrainian National Association became the sole political power, the party of the state, in Carpatho-Ukraine, whose bureaucratic positions were shortly filled, on January 23, by the Volosin government.

The national unification was brought about for the creation of an authoritarian state. The organization's program unequivocally spelled it out. All aspects of intellectual life - schools, the press, movies, theaters, every intellectual product and its creators, the physical and intellectual creators of the nation - came under strict state supervision. The teachers, journalists, writers, performers of the country could only be pure Ukrainians. The main goal of the Ukrainian National Association was the creation of Ukrainian political, ethnic, national and economic unity. In this effort, it held the German Nazi party as the example to be followed.⁵⁰⁷ On the first day of the creation of the national association, the chief educational directorate operating in Huszt issued a circular on January 18, 1939, ordering the teaching and professorial staffs under its jurisdiction that it is their duty to take an active part in the local chapter of the Prosvita organization, the local Ukrainian national councils, the unions or the Szics defensive units.

The scare tactics of the Szics Guard had a decisive role in the Ukrainian National Association (UNO), The Volosin-led sole sanctioned party, received 92.4% of the votes cast in an election held on February 12, 1939. The voting was preceded by forceful creation of national sentiment. The large poster, titled "Before Elections," drew attention to the fact that the coming Sojm, or parliamentary, election will be the first in the life of the Carpatho-Ukrainian people in which it participates as an independent state, "an equal among equals." Hence, they should vote for Volosin and Revaj.⁵⁰⁸ On February 6, the Subcarpathian Czech National Council printed large posters in Czech, at the order of general Prchala. It called on the Czechs living there to "vote for the Ukrainian unity organization."⁵⁰⁹ Two days later, the Czech general declared a state of emergency and war footing in Carpatho-Ukraine.

The propaganda directed by PM Volosin sharply attacked the Rusyn political leaders, whom it suspected of being Hungarian-friendly. Primarily against András Bródy, who happened to have been released from a jail near

⁵⁰⁵ Halmosy: Nemzetközi ... op. cit. p. 450.

⁵⁰⁶ Поп / Pop: Енциклопедия ... op. cit. p. 320.

⁵⁰⁷ Fedinec: A kárpátaljai ... op. cit. p. 312.

⁵⁰⁸ MOL. K 28., 271. tét., 1939-P-15 601. sz., p. 116.

⁵⁰⁹ MOL. K 28., 59. tét., 1939-P-15 660. sz.

Prague (Pankrac) the day before the election, as recorded in an official document in his own hand.⁵¹⁰ Immediately after, he was received by the President of the Republic, Emil Hácha, from where he traveled to a health resort in the Tatra Mountains for convalescence, at government expense. (As an aside, PM Volosin stated in a memorandum of December 31, 1938, to the federal Justice Ministry in Prague that he assents to the release of Bródy, on condition his predecessor immediately leaves Czech-Slovak soil.) After his convalescence, Bródy arrived in Ungvár on March 5, to be met by a jubilant crowd.

The other two targets were István Fencik and Mihály Demkó⁵¹¹ (1894-1946, Демко Михаил, Михайло), journalist and politician, who were referred to on election posters as “Hungarian agents” and “Hungarian henchmen.” These slogans were indirectly also aimed at the Hungarians. Several examples: “Hungarian henchmen: Fencik and Demkó have become Hungarians! They have amalgamated our (Pravoslav) holidays with the Catholic ones... Down with the Hungarian henchmen.”⁵¹² Another flyer with a similar message: “The Hungarians have eradicated our religious holidays. The Hungarians have combined our holidays with the papists... they have taken our holy churches from our people. Do not believe the bandits!”⁵¹³

A competition was begun among the villages. Those where 98% of the votes cast were for the UNO were permitted to hang a white flag on public buildings as a sign that “they have matured for statehood.” The slogans on the poster for the contest: ‘Glory to our Sojm!’, ‘Glory to our party, the Ukrainian National Association!’, ‘Glory to our home, our beloved Carpathian state!’⁵¹⁴ The electoral identifications were sent out before the voting but it was not received by approximately 25% of those entitled.⁵¹⁵ The election was to fill 32 mandates in the Sojm, as PM Volosin and the UNO’s paper, *Nova Svoboda*, broadcast on January 28. This meant that there was to be one representative for approximately 20,000 people. The voting took place in the spirit of “one party - one leader.” Volosin led in the polls, followed by Revaj and the Brascsajkó brothers. The majority of the nominees were intellectuals - lawyer, doctor, engineer, teacher -, one tradesman from Kőrösmező in the person of Vasil Klempus and a few farmers. The distribution of their nationality was 30 Ukrainians and one each of German and Romanian.⁵¹⁶ As already noted, in the election of February 12, the vast majority of the votes were garnered by the only party in the running, due in no small way to the terror of the Szics Guard.

The official results: in Carpatho-Ukraine’s 11 electoral districts, a total of 284,365 persons were eligible to vote, of who 263,202 cast a ballot. Of the participants, 92.4% (243,557) voted for the UNO, 7.6% (19,645)

⁵¹⁰ MOL. K 148., 1153. csomó, p. 26. According to other - incorrect - sources, Brody was freed on February 15. See Fedinec: A kárpátaljai ... op. cit. p. 315.

⁵¹¹ Поп / Pop: Энциклопедия ... op. cit. pp. 153-154.

⁵¹² MOL. K 28., 271. tét., 1939-P-15 601. sz., p. 112.

⁵¹³ MOL. K 28., 271. tét., 1939-P-15 601. sz., p. 115.

⁵¹⁴ MOL. K 28., 271. tét., 1939-P-15 601. sz., p. 113.

⁵¹⁵ MOL. K 28., 59. tét., 1939-P-15 660. sz., p. 2.

⁵¹⁶ MOL. K 28., 267. tét., 1939-P-16 040. sz., pp. 375-378.

dissenting.⁵¹⁷ The editor of the *Nova Svoboda*, Vasil Grendzsa-Donszkij, published the results by settlements. It is surprising that in what was held to be the center of the state, the Huszt district, the UNO polled less than the national average, only 87.5%. In the capital itself, in Huszt, 6,208 votes were cast for the only party on the slate, 2,122 cast against. In the same district, in the Hungarian populated village of Visk - in spite of the especially strong pressure of the authorities - 2,923 people voted for the UNO, 461 voted against. In another district, in the similarly Hungarian populated village of Técső - with equally strong scare tactics applied by the Szics Guard - the result was 3,744 for, 607 against. The sole entrant received only 80.4% in the Beregszentmiklós district and over 90% in the others, with the exception of Huszt.⁵¹⁸

Commenting on the preceding, István Fencik, by now a representative in the Hungarian Parliament but until his November 3, 1938 resignation, a minister of the autonomous Ruthenian government, wrote: “In contradiction with official numbers, the Ukrainian government of Volosin and Revaj remained in the minority and legally lost in the election of February 12. In spite of the most horrendous terror, they received an electoral minority. Volosin did not even receive 20-26% of the Ruthenian people’s votes. The accurate election results are in my hands. At random, I pull the larger villages in the 12 districts and their results. Comparing them with the official results published by Volosin, I conclude that they are misrepresentation and fabrication. Volosin claimed 263,262 votes out of 284,365 and losing 19,645. The truth is that Volosin did not receive more than 15,000, the rest were all marked with NO. In the larger villages, such as Visk, Técső, Kusnica (Kovácsrét), Beregfalu (more accurately: Beregújfalu), Kustanovice (Kustánfalva), Zahaty (Hátmeg) and Nagylucska, Volosin did not get more than 5-6%, and many ballots had written on them: A noose for Volosin.”⁵¹⁹

Countless irregularities occurred during the election, mainly because everywhere the procedure was supervised by the various organizations of the Ukrainian Central National Council. The authorities “introduced almost everywhere the practice that 2-4 Ukrainian Szics-persons and a gendarme were present in the polling place. No one else was permitted, apart from the electoral commissioner. This electoral commissioner was, in all cases, a Ukrainian sympathizer” - detailed the confidential report of February 21 of the Hungarian Interior Ministry.⁵²⁰ The results from some settlements: in the village of Rákó, 5 Yes and 184 No votes. When it was announced, the people broke into cheers. The crowd shouted down the speaker but “the Ukrainian terrorists stepped in and broke up the noisy crowd. In Turjaremete, 70% No, 30% Yes; in Perecseny, 50% Yes, 50% No and yet officially released a 90% Yes result. According to its information, in Huszt, the votes cast reflected 9,000 No and 8,000 Yes ... the announced official results are a fraud ... the results of the election would have been more dismal if the terrorists and police present in the polling places had not threatened the voters with concentration camp or, taking the ballot out of the voter’s hand, entering a Yes if the ballot was blank or No. In counting the ballots, if too many No votes or blank ballots were found, they resorted to reaching into the box and stating that all the rest are Yes votes.”⁵²¹

In Aknaszlatina, populated mainly by Hungarians, the populace displayed many Hungarian flags and demonstrated against the Ukrainian authority. At once, an army battalion and a Szics Guard unit of 50-60 arrived in the town to maintain order. “They arrested many Hungarians and Rusyns, including the Roman Catholic priest, who

⁵¹⁷ Стерчо, Петро Ю.: Карпато-Українська держава. До історії визвольної боротьби карпатських українців у 1919-1939 роках. Львів. [Stercho, Petro J.: The Carpatho-Ukrainian state. The history of the fight for freedom of the Carpatho-Ukrainians between 1919-1939.] L’viv, 1994, p. 129.

⁵¹⁸ Гренджа-Донський / Grendzha-Dons’kyi: Щастя ... op. cit. pp. 139-148.

⁵¹⁹ Fenczik István: A rutén nép küzdelme a szabadságért [The Ruthenian people’s struggle for freedom], In: Szeghalmy, Gyula: *Felvidék*. Budapest, 1940, p. 527.

⁵²⁰ MOL. K 28., 59. tét., 1939–P–15 660. sz., p. 31.

⁵²¹ MOL. K 28., 59. tét., 1939–P–15 660. sz., p. 31.

was threatened with execution and taken away to an unknown place. The persecution of the Hungarians, and the Hungarian sympathizing Rusyns, continues even now for their anti-Ukrainian behavior during the election.” The report also adds that “The infiltration of Ukrainians from Poland is constant and has taken large proportion. By now, in almost every village of Rusynsko there has formed a local of the ‘Ukrajinska Narodna Obcestva’ (*sic*) party and it has seized the leadership everywhere. Almost every Czech and Moravian official has been removed from public offices, in fact, removed from Rusynsko. Their places have been filled by Ukrainians. Discontent is growing among the natives every day” - informed a similar report on February 25.⁵²²

While these events were unfolding, by the time of the February 1939 Carpatho-Ukrainian elections, the Czech-Slovak military command had withdrawn a large portion of the Republic (Czech) army from the Subcarpathian posts and sold the surplus equipment to Romania. On the 15th of the month, Czech units were withdrawn from the border villages of Gorond, Strabich (correctly Strabicho, or Mezöterebes), Csongor, Ignéc and Nagylucska. The Szics guardsmen assumed border security duties. A number of Czech gendarmes and soldiers enlisted in the Guard - informed the Royal Hungarian Police political police department in a report on the situation to the Hungarian Interior Ministry on March 1.⁵²³ By the second half of February, only a 600-man Czech infantry unit remained in Huszt, a platoon of the 12th Artillery Regiment in Técső, a platoon of the 1st Borderguard Regiment in Nagyszőlős and a platoon of the 10th Cavalry Regiment in Dolha.

In vain did the Republic’s President, Emil Hácha, re-confirm on March 6 in their positions Prime Minister Volosin and Foreign Minister general Prchala, he was unable to salvage an ever worsening situation. On the previous day, Hácha relieved Communications Minister Julijan Revaj from his position for traveling to Berlin without the permission of the federal government and conducting discussions with German officials. The newly appointed minister was Stepan Kločurak⁵²⁴ (1895-1980, Ключурак Степан), who was one of the leaders of the Central Ukrainian National Council in October of 1938, recently the secretary to PM Volosin.

The Hungarian consul in Pozsony (Bratislava), Gyula Petravich (1894-?) described the 10-point program of the “Subcarpathian National Assembly” announced in Huszt, in his report of February 27, 1939. The first of these was “the assurance of Subcarpathia’s independence within the federative framework of the Czech-Slovak Republic,” the second was “the proposal of Carpathian Ukraine as the official name.” The eight point was “the creation of Ukrainian cultural and economic institutions.” The intermediate points covered agrarian and forestry reforms, the use of the natural wealth of the territory, boost of the forest industry to create increased job opportunities, the restoration of external (foreign) rail traffic, support for tourism, the control of rivers and greater use of hydro energy, the organization of safeguard of children and the aged, and finally, the introduction a system of fair taxation. In respect to the Sojm’s program, Minister Revaj (Révay in the consul’s report) reported on Subcarpathia’s financial situation, speaking of finding the necessary financial sources to make possible the previous plans. The Carpatho-Ukrainian government primarily asked the central Prague government for financial aid. Then, he declared the creation of an aid fund out of the voluntary tax payment from all the world’s Ukrainians, to consist of half of one percent of their income. Volosin already addressed a proclamation to the Ukrainians of the world for donations. The consul closed his report thusly: “According to my latest reliable information, from Slovak government circles, Prague has no great hopes for retaining Subcarpathia from which it derives no benefit but is a source of concern and expense.”⁵²⁵ The events of the following days, the withdrawal of the Czech military from Carpatho-Ukraine, reflected the accuracy of the communiqué.

To quell internal political turmoil in the Carpatho-Ukrainian part of the country, President Emil Hácha of the Czech-Slovak Republic issued an order on March 10 to recall the Sojm in Huszt on March 21, although the date was changed to March 15 at the request of Volosin. Also on the 10th, after a decision of the Czech-Slovak government, the

⁵²² MOL. K 28., 59. tét., 1939–P–15 689. sz.

⁵²³ MOL. K 28., 59. tét., 1939–P–15 689. sz., p.34.

⁵²⁴ Encyclopedia of Rusyn ... op. cit. pp. 227-228.

⁵²⁵ MOL. K 28., 59. tét., 1939–P–15 915. sz. (26/pol.-1939. sz. ir.)

army assumed power in Slovakia, introducing military dictatorship in the Uplands portion of the country.

In the early hours of March 14, the Szics Guard attacked the government building in Huszt, along with the police station, the post office, the railway station, and several military installations in an effort to seize weapons. Its secondary aim was to overthrow the Volosin government, which it “branded as soft in regards to the Czechs,” and to seize power. The attack was repulsed by the Czech-Slovak police and army with the commitment of heavy artillery and the Guard was forced to surrender at noon.⁵²⁶ Shortly afterwards, Prime Minister Volosin announced the independence of Karpatska-Ukrajina.⁵²⁷

After Jozef Tiso announced the creation of an independent Slovakia, the same evening Prime Minister Volosin also announced in a radio address at 8 PM the independence of Carpatho-Ukraine, which - as he said - will also be officially announced by the Sojm, meeting at a later date. Afterwards, he introduced the members of the independent government of Karpatska-Ukrajina: Prime Minister Volosin, Foreign Minister Julijan Revaj, Interior Minister Jurij Perevuznik (Перевузнник, Юрій), Finance and Communications Minister Julij Brascsajko, Minister of the Economy Stepan Kloesurak, Health and Welfare Minister Mikola Dolinaj (1894-1970, Долинай Микола).⁵²⁸ In the early hours of the following day, March 15, the new government sent a telegram to the German consul in Huszt, who forwarded it to the German Foreign Minister in Berlin. The text of the telegram, written by PM Volosin, was “In the name of the government of Karpatska-Ukrajina, we wish to notify Your Excellency that we have announced our independence under the protection of the Third Reich.”⁵²⁹ At the same time, Volosin instructed the police and gendarmes to disarm the Szics Guard.

Paralleling these events, on March 14, the Prague government accepted the Hungarian government’s demands that the Czech army be withdrawn from Karpatska-Ukrajina. As a result, general Prchala - now not a member of the new Volosin government - was free to issue orders for the return of Czech units to Czech-Slovakia. Their pull out began in the evening hours of the same day, a fact confirmed by an official Prague communiqué at 23:00 hours. The communiqué also declared that Hungarian nationals in Karpatska-Ukrajina were forbidden to organize armed self-defense units.

According to a situation report dated the afternoon of the same day, March 14, by the Chief of the Hungarian General Staff, infantry general Henrik Werth, the Czech military command ordered a sealing of the border earlier in the day North of Ungvár, along the Ung River and along the roads leading to Lower and Upper Domonya and the district seat of Szobránc. “Accordingly, our response orders: to prevent Czech border incidents, the 1st Cavalry brigade has occupied positions on the heights around Munkács by 10:00, current month 14.”⁵³⁰

To ensure the safety of the city of Munkács and other threatened centers - the district of Beregszentmiklós - Hungarian forces, under the command of general Lajos Béldy, crossed the line of demarcation in three places in the morning hours of March 14. The 26th battalion advanced to the North to the village of Nevicke to cover Ungvár, the second thrust to the Northeast, the already mentioned advance into the vicinity of Munkács. The third formation, to secure Beregszász and Tiszaujlak, advanced into Karpatska-Ukrajina near the village of Fancsika where it met enemy resistance in front of Nagyszöllös, along the railway line leading to Salánk. In response to Czech army movements, general Werth issued the following order: “In view of the events in Subcarpathia, I order the border sealed East of the Ung River (from Ungpinkóc) to the Romanian border. The embargo is to cover both local and long distance border

⁵²⁶ Вегеш / Vegesh.: Карпатська ... op. cit. p. 78.

⁵²⁷ Нариси історії Закарпаття, Том II. / Narisi istoriï Zakarpats'ka. vol. II ... op. cit. p. 332.

⁵²⁸ Ibid, p. 316.

⁵²⁹ Стерчо / Stercho: Карпато-Українська ... op. cit. p. 213.

⁵³⁰ MOL. K 28., 267. tét., 1939-P-16 878. sz.

traffic, as well as the transit railway traffic of Feketeardó.”⁵³¹

Still on the same day, in the late evening hours, Chief of General Staff general Werth sent telegrams to the Hungarian units along the border ordering them to cross the border at midnight and occupy the whole of Subcarpathia's territory. Regent Miklós Horthy, as Commander in Chief, sent the Hungarian forces into battle with a unique command:

Soldiers!
Once again, it is the dawn of an historic day!
The Czech mercenaries used the waning minutes of their country's existence to assault our borders, killing our Hungarian people, wreaking havoc on their property.
These attacks were broken on your walls of steel, the attackers fled with bloodied heads from your avenging arms.
It is with satisfaction that I see that you have stood your ground in these bitter clashes - as befits the glorious past of our military.
Now, when I send You on the road to free the oppressed people of Subcarpathia, our admirable Rusyn and Hungarian brethren, I am certain that you will discharge this burdensome task, which may hold renewed difficult fighting, with equal resolve as when you defended our borders against Czech attacks. And that You will lead our Rusyn brethren back into the empire of Saint Stephen where for a 1,000 years we lived, celebrated and shed blood together, in good times and bad.
Soldiers! In the name of God and country, accompanied by the love of our nation, forward to our 1,000-year borders, to the peaks of the Carpathians, there to clasp the hands of your Polish comrades!
*The eyes of the world are upon you. May the God of the Hungarians protect You.*⁵³²

The Hungarian forces advanced at dawn on March 15, 1939, in three directions from their positions in Karpatska-Ukrajina, occupied the previous day, to completely reclaim the whole of Subcarpathia. One, in the Ung valley towards the Uzsok Pass, the second along the Latorca River in the direction of the Verecke Pass and the third from Beregszász towards Huszt.

At 3:20 PM on the same day, the National Assembly of Karpatska-Ukrajina (the Sojm) met for the first - and last - time, electing Ágoston Volosin as President, then passing two statutes. The first statute, or закон, consisted of eight articles, which declared, among other things, that the Carpatho-Ukraine was an independent state, with the name of Karpatska-Ukrajina. It is a republic, whose head of state was the President, elected by the Sojm. The official language was Ukrainian; the state flag to consist of two horizontal bars, the upper blue, the lower yellow. They also defined the makeup of the state coat-of-arms and the introduction of the national anthem (Ще не вмерла Україна..., The Ukraine has not expired yet ...). Article 8 stated that the statute is to be in force from its enactment, i.e., March 15, 1939.⁵³³ Statute 2, of three articles, empowered the government “to enforce the law by decree, with the assent of the President of Karpatska-Ukrajina, until such time as it is revoked.”⁵³⁴ It was during the late afternoon hours of the session of the Sojm when the telegram from the Hungarian Foreign Ministry arrived. It called on the Volosin government to surrender, unconditionally and without resistance.

After the end of the session of the National Assembly, the recently elected President Volosin convened the council of ministers and acquainted them, among other things, that the Hungarian army was marshalling against Karpatska-Ukrajina, that the ultimatum was rejected and that resistance was fruitless. The affairs of the country require

⁵³¹ MOL. K 28., 59. tét., 1939–P–16 888. sz.

⁵³² Kárpátalja hősei [The heroes of Subcarpathia]. Budapest, 1939, p. 5.

⁵³³ The complete text of statute 1 of the independent Karpatska-Ukrajina can be found in: Нариси історії Закарпаття, Том II. / Narisi istorii Zakarpats'ka. vol. II ... op. cit. pp. 316-317; Стерчо / Stercho: Карпато-Українська ... op. cit. pp. 135-136.

⁵³⁴ MOL. K 28. 110. tét., 1941–P–17 548. sz. (The complete text of law 1 in Hungarian.)

their active efforts, not their deaths. To this end, he dispatched ministers Julij Brascsajko and Mikola Dolinaj to Budapest, and Stepan Klocsurak to Slovakia for consultations. He also appointed Jurij Pervuznik, head of the Interior portfolio, to remain in Huszt, await the arrival of the Hungarian army and address issues that may arise. The remaining members of the government were given freedom to act by the President,⁵³⁵ who immediately traveled to Nagybocksó.

At noon the next day, President Volosin, accompanied by Ágoston Stefán and a few government official, crossed over to Romanian territory at Máramarossziget and requested Romanian government assistance. The following day, March 17, he went to Kolozsvár (Cluj-Napoca). Shortly after his escape to Romania, he journeyed to Berlin, where he stayed for a brief period, finally settling in the hub of the German controlled Czech protectorate, Prague. Here, he received a monthly pension of 4,000 Kč from the Czech puppet regime and was permitted to publish a Ukrainian-language newspaper. The first head of the state of Karpatska-Ukrajina was arrested by the Soviet army on March 21, 1945 and flown to Moscow, where he died in prison on July 11. He was 70 years old.⁵³⁶ (To illustrate the, often dual, Rusyn-Hungarian allegiance of the period, we note that, at the time of the return of Subcarpathia, Volosin's younger brother - who carried the Volosin family name until 1937 - was a general in the Hungarian army under the name of Sándor Nagylucskay. He was born in the Szatmár County village of Nagydobos in 1889. His military career ended on March 18, 1945, when he was retired. He was stripped of his pension on September 1, 1950 and demoted on December 4, 1958 by directive 3307/1958 of the Minister of Defense. He died in Budapest in 1978.)⁵³⁷

Hungarian military assumed complete control of the capital of Karpatska-Ukrajina, Huszt, in the late afternoon hours of March 15, 1939. By 20:00 hours, units reached the following Carpatho-Ukrainian locations: Ókemence in the Ung valley, Szolyva on the Latorca River, Cserhalom (Beregudbróka) in the Borzsa valley and the village of Veréce by the Tisza River. In all, this represented the freeing of more than 100 villages from foreign rule, among them the significant settlements of Beregszentmiklós, Szolyva, Nagyszöllös and Királyháza.

Further military actions associated with the reclaiming of Subcarpathia will be discussed in detail at the beginning of Chapter 9, dealing with the military administration of the territory. To not run too far ahead of events proceeding on parallel tracks, next we turn to the events of the counties of Ung, Bereg and Ugocsa, newly re-annexed to Hungary by the November 2, 1938 Vienna Arbitral Accord.

The first Vienna Arbitral Accord

November 2, 1938 - November 26, 1940

Although the whole of the country's military was mobilized on October 13, 1938, for the planned march into the Uplands, the actual occupation was accomplished by the 1st Air Force brigade, the 1st River Patrol brigade and four mixed infantry brigades. The four infantry brigades were reinforced over and above their normal complements and, at the commencement of the action, were designated as an army corps. The units of the Hungarian army moved up to positions on the Czech-Slovak border on November 3. On the same day, the political and religious organizations functioning in the Rusyn-populated mountainous region of Subcarpathia agreed to a manifesto in Ungvár, which they

⁵³⁵ Нариси історії Закарпаття, Том II. / Narisi istoriï Zakarpats'ka. vol. II ... op. cit. p. 317.

⁵³⁶ Botlik: Egestas ... op. cit. p. 228.

⁵³⁷ Szakály, Sándor: A magyar katonai felsővezetés 1938-1945. Lexikon és Adattár. [Hungarian military high command, 1938-1945.] Budapest, 2003, p. 247.

forwarded to the governments of Czech-Slovakia, Britain, France, Germany, Italy, Hungary, Romania and Yugoslavia. In the manifesto, they unequivocally state that they deem the territory of Rusynsko as “indivisible.” They demanded the right of self-determination for the Rusyns living in the southern Carpathians, and a general plebiscite so that they can determine the unification of their ethnographic territory.

On the following day, November 4, Regent Horthy issued the following directive:

Soldiers!

Our military, after 20 years of anxious waiting, freed from the shackles of Trianon and reborn, crosses that border, which we always held to be provisional.

One million of our brethren wait for You on the other side! For them, after a difficult ordeal of two decades, You represent the fulfillment of all their hopes and dreams.

You are going home to our Uplands, whose soil has been anointed so often by the precious blood of our forefathers!

Let your souls be filled with this sentiment and, worthy of the proud past of our military, accept into your hearts with affection every inhabitant of the reclaimed ancient Hungarian domain: Hungarians, Slovaks, Rusyns and Germans equally.

Proudly, and with confidence, I send you on your way in the certain knowledge that the territories reclaimed by the right of eternal justice and the assistance of the new, re-invigorated Hungarian Vigor we will never relinquish, under any circumstance!

In the name of God and Country: FORWARD!

Dated on this, the 4th day of November, 1938, Budapest.

Horthy (signature)

Rátz⁵³⁸ (signature)

(Jenő Rátz /1882-1952/, Minister of Defense at the time.)

In article 2 of the previously noted Vienna arbitration agreement of November 2, 1938, Hungarian forces were free to occupy, between November 5 and 10, the Uplands territory newly re-annexed to Hungary. The area of the Csallóköz was the theater of operations of the II. Corp, the Ipoly River zone of the I. Corps, the area around Rozsnyó and Kassa of the VII. Corps, and southern Subcarpathia, bounded by Munkács and Ungvár was assigned to the VI. Corps, the “mixed brigade of Debrecen,” under the overall command of general Géza Siegler von Eberswald. His soldiers reached Beregszász, through the villages of Asztély and Bulcsu, on November 9 to be received by a jubilant population. The chief magistrate, Jenő Ortutay, Head Dean of the Greek Catholic Church, greeted the liberating Hungarian forces.⁵³⁹ The minister was earlier forced to hide, between the September 29 Munich Pact and the November 2 Vienna Arbitral Accord, from the persecution of the Czech authorities. After the re-annexation, Jenő Ortutay was reconfirmed in his magisterial post by the Hungarian military, then the civil administration. Later, as a former Subcarpathian provincial representative, he was invited to sit in the Hungarian Parliament.⁵⁴⁰

The cities of Ungvár and Munkács were handed over by the Czech-Slovak authorities on November 10 to the units of the Hungarian army of general Siegler. In the evening hours, the Hungarian forces ceremonially marched into the region’s most important city, Ungvár, whose main square was earlier renamed Miklós Horthy Square.⁵⁴¹ The Hungarian-Rusyn Youth Association was immediately formed on the following day. On the 12th, local born Colonel Gábor Tomcsányi was named as the military commandant of Ungvár. With the conclusion of these events, the southern Hungarian-populated portion of Subcarpathia was reunited with Hungary after two decades.

⁵³⁸ Felvidékünk – honvédségünk. op. cit. p. 128.

⁵³⁹ Ibid, pp. 131, 174.

⁵⁴⁰ Bendász, István - Bendász, Dániel: Helytállás és tanúságtétel. A munkácsi görög katolikus egyházmegye hitvalló és meghurcolt papjai [Believe and bear witness. The devout and persecuted Greek Catholic priests of the Munkács diocese.]. Ungvár–Budapest, 1994, pp. 81-82.

⁵⁴¹ Felvidékünk – honvédségünk. op. cit. pp. 179-181.

After the ceremonial entry of the Hungarian military, military government was introduced in the recently reunited areas of the Uplands and Subcarpathia. The highest authority was general Henrik Werth, Chief of the Hungarian General Staff. To assist him, the Interior Minister assigned Undersecretary of the Interior Béla Csátáry, who was the highest civilian authority in the military government. Beside the military command of the Debrecen VI. Corps, the civil administration of the returned territories of Ung, Bereg and Ugocsa was run in these early days by cabinet chief counsel Endre Tahy, then Interior Ministry counsel Sándor Siménfalvy, finally Zoltán Fekésházy. "As advisor to the military command for Uplands Hungarian national policies, the Rusynsko head of the Hungarian United National Party, dr. Endre Korláth was appointed by the Royal Hungarian Government." In the Bereg zone, district military commands were established in Beregszász, Munkács and Tiszaújlak under Col. Győző Lépes, Lt. Col. István Nábráczy and Col. Géza Botka; city military command in Munkács under Col. (ret.) József Nemes. Beside the district and city military commanders, from the day of the reunification, Interior Ministry appointees - with "political mandates" - operated: István Bodáky in Beregszász, Zoltán Fekésházy in Munkács and the Munkács district, and Ferenc Nagy-Iday in Tiszaújlak district.⁵⁴²

Still on the same day, November 10, the Ministry of Religions and Public Education posted special directives in regards to the school matters of the "re-annexed Hungarian Uplands." The relevant authorities had to fully address the "continued and uninterrupted" school curriculum, as every institution continued to teach according to the curriculum in effect at the time of the liberation. In practical terms, at every level of the educational system, the curriculum, the subject matter and, in most cases, the textbooks remained. In teaching the Hungarian-specific subject matter - the subjects dealing with literature, history, geography and civics -, special attention had to be paid to the pre-eminence of the Hungarian nationalistic spirit and truth. According to the directives, in villages of purely Hungarian and purely non-Hungarian populations (in our case mostly Rusyn or Slovak), the schools with instruction in the mother tongue remained. In Hungarian-populated villages, schools operating in a foreign language (predominantly Czech, occasionally Rusyn) were, naturally enough, ordered to be closed immediately. In mixed population settlements, the instruction of Hungarian students in Hungarian had to be introduced; in non-Hungarian-language schools, the Hungarian language was, at the same time, introduced as a subject. The teaching of the Slovak and Rusyn languages remained unaltered in those institutions where children of those tongues attended. The directive retained unaltered the existing school boards.

It was on the basis of these principles that the returned schools of the Uplands and southern Subcarpathia were integrated into the educational system of Hungary. Pál Teleki, Minister of Religion and Education, sent trustees for the transitional management of education. Affecting our area, they were Tivadar Szentkereszty for the Ungvár and Nagykapos districts and Lajos Kolombán for the Beregszász and Munkács districts and the former Ugocsa county. They began their work from offices in Ungvár and Beregszász. Both were retired former superintendents in the Royal Hungarian educational system who were recalled for the term of their assignment. For the reorganization and supervision of high schools, technical high schools and teachers colleges, Lajos Bessenyei of Debrecen, also a retired district chief superintendent, was appointed. The high school diplomas issued for the year 1938-1939 bore on their cover the imprint "Educational district of the liberated territories" (the Ungvár and Munkács Royal Hungarian public high schools the Jewish high school of Ungvár, as well as the Rusyn-language coeducational teachers college of Munkács), while those for the Jewish high school of Munkács were issued under the "Debrecen educational district."⁵⁴³

The day after the return of the city, on November 11, the Greek Catholic teachers training institute of Ungvár was reclassified as a college for its first school year. After a hiatus of two decades, the ancient Hungarian educational facility, the Drugeth Academy, closed by the Czech authorities, opened its doors on November 14. Classes resumed on November 22 in the Munkács high school, after having been suspended on November 3. On the same day, the teachers college of Munkács also opened its doors under the name of Royal Hungarian State Educational Institute. The

⁵⁴² Bereg és Ugocsa közigazgatásilag egyelőre egyesített vármegyék alispánjának a vármegye közönségéhez intézett jelentése a közigazgatásilag egyelőre egyesített vármegyék állapotáról a cseh uralom alól történt felszabadulástól az 1939. évi június hó 1-ig terjedő időről. 6960–1939. szám. Beregszász, 1939, Fekésházy Zoltán. pp. 4-5.

⁵⁴³ Fedinec: A kárpátaljai ... op. cit. p. 16.

territorial changes of 1939-1940 brought new changes in the educational administration, which will be dealt with later.

After three or four weeks, the Hungarian forces that marched into Subcarpathia returned to their former bases, with the exception of units assigned to local defense and border duties. With the return of the Uplands and southern Subcarpathia, the area assigned to the army's I. and II. Corps grew significantly. Hence, the VIII. Corps was formed, headquartered in Kassa, to provide for the defense of the new territory, including Subcarpathia. The soldiers who took part in the action of reunification with Hungary were decorated with the "Uplands Commemorative" medal, instituted by Governor Horthy on November 4, 1938. The circular bronze medal - with red and blue ribbon - showed the portrait of prince Ferenc Rákóczi II (1676-1735) on the front, encircled by "PRO PATRIA ET LIBERTATE RÁKÓCZI", on the back "IN COMMEMORATION OF THE LIBERATION OF THE HUNGARIAN UPLANDS 1938". The decoration was also given to soldiers taking part in the later, 1939, action in the reclaiming of the mountainous uplands of Subcarpathia.

From the preamble of statute XXXIV of 1938, titled 'Regarding the unification with the country of the re-annexed Uplands territories under the Holy Crown of Hungary': "The Hungarian nation never having lost its faith, even after the profound calamities that smote her, in that if her case ever comes before an impartial judge, amends can not fail to be made. Whereas this restitution, stemming from the present situation of European states and in the context of an ethnic principle, which now comes to partial fruition, the nation gives grateful thanks to Divine Providence, welcomes with deep-felt joy the brethren returning to the Hungarian homeland and looks with confidence toward a better future. Hence, the legislation, concerned with the re-annexation of returning Uplands territories to the lands of the Holy Crown of Hungary after 20 years of painful separation, anguish and heroic resistance against foreign authority, primarily wishes to give expression to this universal national sentiment in this, the preamble to the law proposal.

The Hungarian government gives profound thanks to Divine Providence that a portion of the Uplands, torn from the country, returns to the realm of the Holy Crown of Hungary, after an absence of twenty years of suffering and laudable opposition against an alien power. The country is pleased to greet, and embrace with maternal concern, the returning long-suffering countrymen... The understanding, honest and devoted friendly relations between the two great states, which contributed to the victory of Hungarian Truth, is well known. Hence, it is justified that the Hungarian legislature, acknowledging with approval the efforts of the Hungarian government, gratefully acknowledge the efforts of the two nations and enshrine in law its grateful appreciation."⁵⁴⁴

Article 5 of the statute goes on to state: "Under the existing regulations governing the minting of silver coins, two million coins of 2 Pengő denomination are to be struck in commemoration of the return of the Uplands."⁵⁴⁵

Prime Minister Béla Imrédy and Foreign Minister Kálmán Kánya tabled the statute proposal on November 8; the reports of the lower house judicial and finance committees followed the next day. The House of Representatives debated the proposals on November 12, at its 343rd session. The upper house judicial and finance committees' report was presented, and debated, on the same day at its 74th session. In the statute, the Hungarian Parliament "takes note and accedes" to the government's actions that the German and Italian governments were approached for a decision in the matter of the re-annexed territories, "remembering with gratitude the efforts of the governments of these two friendly nations" (§. 1). It accepted the decision made on November 2, 1938 and rejoined to the territories of the Hungarian state those areas of the Uplands deeded to Hungary by the arbitration decision. The statute then listed the decision of the Vienna arbitration and its border impacts on Subcarpathia, as noted earlier.

Following this comes a crucial portion, article 2, which defined the National Assembly representation of the newly reunited territory. New elections were not ordered, instead politicians were simply invited, who were active during the Czech-Slovak era, playing important parts in the Uplands and Subcarpathia, fighting for the rights of Hungarians at the local or national level. Naturally, there was a certain process of vetting and a Hungarian party had to accept them in its ranks. "Article 2. According to this law presented herewith, those senators, national or provincial assembly representatives elected by the populations of the newly reunited Uplands will become representative members of this Hungarian National Assembly, convened on April 27, 1935, whom the Royal Hungarian Prime

⁵⁴⁴ Országos Törvénytár, 1938. november 13. (18. sz.), pp. 528-529, 530.

⁵⁴⁵ Országos Törvénytár, 1938. november 13. (18. sz.), p. 532.

Minister nominates and both houses of representatives deem acceptable for the invitation.”

The directive was primarily justified by the following argument: the first requisite of the integration of the reunited Uplands territories into the Hungarian constitutional process was that those living there can take part in the legislative processes. In a perfect world, this could be best accomplished by drawing new electoral boundaries and calling for an election according to the laws in effect. This, however, would run into difficulties in the short term and delay population of the reattached territories from taking an active part in the work of the legislature. The creation of ridings, assembling a slate of nominees for representatives, posting and holding an election, naturally enough, would take a longer period of time. “It is impossible to foresee today with any degree of certainty, whether the observance of all aspects of life in the re-annexed territories will not perhaps force the legislative process to make some lesser or greater alterations to our electoral system as defined in statute 1938, article XIX. It would be completely inappropriate if, as a result of this re-assessment, our legislative process would need to do without the benefit of those who, through twenty trying years, attempted to serve and comfort the people of the recently re-annexed territories with dignity, as befitting the Hungarian national historical traditions. But it would be also equally amiss if these elected leaders of the re-annexed Uplands were unable to take their full measure in the great current task of Hungarian national social, cultural and economic reconstruction, which, through the grace of Divine providence, is now of close and immediate interest to the peoples of the re-annexed territories.

In the view of one of the houses of the legislature, the directive found to be necessary would lead to only partial success if, at the same time, we were not to ensure that the prominent representatives chosen from the population of the returned territories were able to make use of their invaluable experiences and represent this region’s common interests with the nation in the upper house of the National Assembly.”⁵⁴⁶ On the basis of the previous considerations, the Hungarian government suggested that both houses of the National Assembly be amended by a number of elected senators, national or provincial assembly representatives, to be invited from a list proposed by the Prime Minister. Hence, the number of appointed Upper House seats was expanded by four to 44 (article 3).

Article 4 of the statute empowered the Hungarian government that, “until the eventual passage of laws regarding the returned Uplands territories, the government may issue directives necessary to integrate the re-annexed territories into the country’s existing public administration, judicial and economic systems and generally the existing legal framework into the country’s legal framework ... these directives may be issued even if they would normally fall within the purview of the legislature.” The justification for this passage: “When the return of the Uplands region, formerly a part of historical Hungary, to the unity of the Holy Crown becomes reality, it must be faced that problem free reintegration into the mother country’s constitutional fabric, public administrative structure, judicial system, economy and the rule of law of the region and its people, twenty years under foreign rule, can only be accomplished gradually and that a series of closely linked directives and orders will be needed – including the ongoing state budget and uninterrupted state finances – which must be trusted to the government to carry out, even if out under our laws similar questions would have to be debated in the legislature. Only in this manner can questions be addressed most expeditiously arising in the diverse jurisdictions and from the varied circumstances resulting from the re-annexation and ensure a solid foundation for the future of a unified national legislative process.”⁵⁴⁷

With the passage of the statute XXXIV of 1938, the southern portion of the Uplands, along with the Hungarian populated zone of the Tisza-bend – also called the Uplands and considered to be its most easterly portion – were reunited with Hungary, after a two-decade separation. On the re-annexed territory, totaling 1,896 km², a census conducted a month later, on December 15, 1938, showed a population of 207,059. Of this, Ung County – with the Nagykapos (30) and Ungvár (29) districts, a total of 59 settlements – represented 692 km², a population of 73,980, of which 63,652 (86.0%) were of Hungarian mother tongue, 6,708 (9.1%) were Ruthenians and 1,758 (2.4%) were Slovaks. Among the total population, more spoke Hungarian (68,714) than those who opted to show Hungarian as their mother tongue. It must be noted – to be covered in more detail later when discussing the new Slovak-Hungarian border of April 1939 – that with the first Vienna Arbitral Award, the major portion of returned Ung County lay West of the demarcation line mentioned earlier and was under Slovak administration and only its eastern portion belonged to Subcarpathia.

⁵⁴⁶ Országos Törvénytár, 1938. november 13. (18. sz.), pp. 530-531.

⁵⁴⁷ Országos Törvénytár, 1938. november 13. (18. sz.), p. 531.

The returned Bereg and Ugocsa Counties, at the time administratively amalgamated, – made up of the Beregszász (32), Munkács (20) districts, the Tiszaújlak (20) district in Ugocsa, and the village of Nagypalád, formerly a part of Szatmár County, in all 73 settlements – comprised 1,204 km² with a population of 133,079. the population distribution was: Hungarians 114,512 (86.0%), Ruthenians 12,334 (9.3%); Hungarian speakers totaled 123,874 (93.0%). To this must be added the truncated Bereg County (436 km²), the Vásárosnamény district with 24 settlements, remaining in Hungary after Trianon, now merged back with Bereg and Ugocsa Counties. With this addition, the December 15, 1938 census showed a population of 161,008 on a territory of 1,640 km².

Of the southern Subcarpathian cities returned, the two most populous were Munkács with 27,223 people (21,938 Hungarians (80.6%) and 2,890 Ruthenians (10.6%)) and Ungvár with 22,624 people (18,037 Hungarians (79.8%) and 2,478 Ruthenians (11.0%)). The third largest city to return was Beregszász, with a population of 19,135 of which 17,907 were Hungarians (93.6%) and 713 Ruthenians (3.7%). More than half of the population of Bereg-Ugocsa County, 53%, found employment in agriculture - ancient production, as it was then called -, significantly below the national average. Of the county's population, 31.4% were employed in mining and industry, which can be attributed to the modernization of the cities of Munkács and Beregszász. Even more favorable was the employment situation in Ung County. Here, less than half worked in agriculture (48.4%) and almost a third (32.7%) in mining and industry.⁵⁴⁸

We must make a special note of the 'capital' of Subcarpathia, Ungvár, which will shed light on the necessity to create a new Ung County, instead of the earlier historical Ung County, with a significantly smaller territory (692 km² vs. 3,230 km²). Primarily, it came about because under Czech rule, promoted to provincial capital and artificially swollen Ungvár, found itself in a critical situation after the borders were redrawn after the first Vienna Arbitral Award. After the change of government, a third of its population – mainly Czech officials – left and the city's industry and commerce fell on hard times. It was exacerbated by the fact that its northern catchment area remained in Czech-Slovak hands, in the shrunken Podkarpatská Rus. These considerations prompted the Hungarian government to establish six new counties on the returned Uplands territory, among them Ung County. At the time, this was the most contentious measure among the new Uplands county distribution. The redistribution could only be achieved by adding 6 settlements from the Nagymihály district in Zemplén County - Abara, Deregyő, Hegyi, Kistráska, Nagyráska, then, in March of 1939, Mészpest – to the 1918 territory of Ung County. These settlements were linked to Ungvár. Also, three settlements from Szabolcs County's Tisza district (Eszeny, Szalóka, Tiszaágtelek) and two from Bereg County Mezőkaszony district (Nagydobrony and Kisdobrony) were left with Ung County. These latter were transferred to the Ungvár district by the Czech authorities. At the same time, the settlements of Záhony and Győröcske, part of Ung County in 1918, were left with Szabolcs County.

A census was held in Ungvár on January 13, 1939, which disclosed 22,687 people living there. This included several hundred refugees. According to the subsequent statistics, since the Vienna Award approximately 12,000 people, mainly Czech, to a lesser degree Ukrainian and Russian, officials left the city. As an aside, according to the Czech-Slovak census of 1930, Ungvár had a population of 26,675, of whom 8,030 were Czech-Slovaks (30.10%), mainly Czechs, 6,260 Rusyns (23.47%), 5,897 židovská (Jewish, 22.10%) and 4,499 Hungarians (16.87%).⁵⁴⁹ The explanation for these numbers is that through the 1930's there was an aggressive settlement of Czech officials in Ungvár.

Here, we take note of the unique position of Ugocsa County. By way of background, its 1,213 km² area was divided by the Trianon peace treaty between Czechoslovakia and Romania. Subsequent to the November 2, 1938 Vienna Award, approximately a fifth, 200 km², returned to Hungarian control and was amalgamated into the newly

⁵⁴⁸ Thirring, Lajos: A népesség a Felvidék visszacsatolt részén [Population figures in the reannexed portion of the Uplands], In: *Magyar Statisztikai Szemle*, 1939, 5 sz. pp. 456, 461, 474-475, 479, 487; A bécsi döntés alapján visszacsatolt terület lakosságának megoszlása anyanyelv szerint /az 1938. december 15-i népszéleírás eredményei alapján./ [The population distribution according to mother tongue in the territory reannexed as a result of the Vienna Resolution /based on the December 15, 1938 census/] Manuscript, Budapest, 1939, pp. 7-8, 22-23.

⁵⁴⁹ *Statisztický lexikon obcí...*, 1937: p. 21.

organized Bereg-Ugocsa County. Its northern parts, Nagyszöllös and its surroundings, remained a part of Podkarpatská Rus until the middle of March, 1939 when Subcarpathia was reunited with Hungary. The southern portion remained a part of Romania until August 30, 1940, the second Vienna Award. At that time, the part of the Partium [Transylvania North of the Carpathians.- *Ed.*] North and Northeast of Nagyvárad, northern Transylvania and the Seklerland were returned to Hungary, along with Ugocsa.

While these events were unfolding, still in the morning of November 5, Miklós Kozma had a meeting with Prime Minister Béla Imrédy and the head of the Army High Command, Henrik Werth. On his return to Vásárosnamény, he prepared a memorandum on the same night with Lt. Col. Sándor Homlok, head of the V. Department of the High Command, and Valér Stefán, one of the chief organizers of the action. They forwarded their proposal to the Prime Minister, the ministers of the Exterior and Defense, the head of the High Command and the commander-in-chief of the armed services. They projected that, after occupying the Hungarian populated zone in the Tisza bend, the new situation could be exploited and that the entirety of Ruthenia must be taken. "On the basis of our plan, the head of the High Command accepted the ABA proposal – wrote Kozma in his diary. – The commander of the ABA group is Homlok, his second-in-command Lt. Col. Zoltán Pisky... Long discussion with Imrédy and Kánya. I am strongly of the opinion that after the initial advance we should immediately continue. I will guarantee that in four days we reach the (Polish) border."⁵⁵⁰ The Hungarian government did not sanction the venture.

In the following days, the Hungarian government took steps to gain control of the whole of Subcarpathia. On November 9, Foreign Minister Kálmán Kánya asked in a note for Polish military assistance for the occupation of Subcarpathia but Warsaw only promised to send so-called 'free troops.' Two days later, Rome announced that – with a nod to Germany – Italy does not support the previous plan of Budapest. In the meantime, other events conspired to hasten the retaking of the mountainous portion of Subcarpathia. The Union of Uplands Associations – representing 18 Hungarian associations with ties to the Uplands – addressed a memorandum on November 15 to the Great Powers in which it asked that a plebiscite be held in Slovakia and Subcarpathia, so that those living there can make a decision of their national association.⁵⁵¹ On November 12, former Prime Minister of Podkarpatská Rus, András Bródy, started a hunger strike in his jail outside Prague. The following day, thousands of torch carrying Hungarians and Rusyns paraded in Ungvár, demanding that the politician be freed, the self-government of the Rusyn people and the reinstatement of the 1,000 year old Hungarian-Polish border.

With the parts of Ung, Ugocsa and Bereg counties returned to Hungary, only a small fraction of the bishopric of Munkács, merely 35 parishes, were transferred with the site of the bishop's see, Ungvár, and Munkács. The bishop of the diocese, Sándor Sztojka (1890-1943),⁵⁵² "felt his greatest torment when he was separated from his followers by the Vienna decision, and his priests and co-religionists were condemned to continue to bear the yoke of oppression."⁵⁵³ Of the 320 Greek Catholic ministers of Subcarpathia, more than 200 reported in person between November 2 and 10 to the prelate, the parishioners' wish to join with Hungary. "In the remaining 120, travel difficulties, partly a fear of arrest or already being under arrest prevented them from appearing in person. But, apart from a minuscule minority, they were of similar opinion and made this known to the bishops' synod through intermediaries. Of the Rusyn settlements, more than 200 submitted written memoranda to the Hungarian government, officially signed and sealed, announcing their wish to become a part of Hungary. On the Hungarian side, the names of the villages were begun to be made public but had to be stopped immediately as the Czechs (i.e., the authorities and state intelligence organs– *J.B.*) began an unimaginable reign of terror."⁵⁵⁴ On November 3, the Subcarpathian Rusyn organizations, functioning unimpeded

⁵⁵⁰ MOL. K 429., Kozma-iratok, 1. dosszié, pp. 111-113.

⁵⁵¹ MOL. K 28., 76. tét., 1939–P–15 278. sz., pp. 1-4.

⁵⁵² Поп / Pop: Энциклопедия ... op. cit. pp. 353-354.

⁵⁵³ Bacszinsky, Tivadar: A görög katolikus egyház [The Greek Catholic Church], In: *Ungvár és Ung vármegye*. Budapest, 1940, p. 135.

⁵⁵⁴ MOL. K 429., Kozma-iratok. 28. csomó, 3. dosszié, p. 260.

under the Czech administration, held a joint meeting in Ungvár and requested in a resolution the unification of the territory with Hungary.

The Hungarian Council of Ministers held an extraordinary session on November 18 at which it decided to launch a military action to reclaim Subcarpathia.⁵⁵⁵ The following day, the German ambassador in Budapest handed over a note from Berlin, which opposed the proposed plan of action. In response, Prime Minister Kálmán Kánya promised that the Hungarian government would not resort to violent means in this matter. It caused quite a stir when the headline of the *Felvidéki Magyar Hírlap* (Hungarian Gazette of the Uplands, previously the *Prágai Magyar Hírlap*) screamed in large letters: To maintain order, the Rusyn National Council brought in Hungarian troops.⁵⁵⁶ The subsequent extraordinary meeting of the Council of Ministers on November 21 halted the planned military move after Germany and Italy forwarded notes to Budapest, consisting of identical four points.⁵⁵⁷ The reclamation of most of Subcarpathia was unsuccessful in the weeks following the first Vienna decision – mostly due to the foreign political atmosphere –, that had to wait for a further three months, until March of 1939.

The 17 invited Uplands representatives assumed their National Assembly seats as enacted in statute XXXIV/1938, article 2. Upper House assent was forwarded to the December 5, 1938 sitting of the Lower House regarding the Prime Minister's statement regarding the aforementioned people, which now became enacted into law. The 17 representatives ceremonially entered Parliament. Of them, five came from Ung and the administratively temporarily amalgamated Bereg-Ugocsa counties. They were: newspaper editor and politician István Fencik (Munkács), press owner, newspaper and book publisher Gyula Földesi (Ungvár), lawyer and county chief constable Endre Korláth (Jenke – Ungvár), Greek Catholic Dean Jenő Ortutay (Beregszász) and newspaper editor Aladár R. Vozáry (1895-1959, Munkács).

Of the Uplands representatives, Andor Jaross – earlier the Czechoslovak president of the United Hungarian Party, and minister without portfolio in the November 15 reshuffled Imrédy government – and István Fencik asked, and received permission, to address the House. Fencik's made a well-received speech, in which he expounded that “The Hungarian nation espoused the struggle for self-determination of the Carpatho-Russian people through the difficult twenty-year separation... Therefore, the Hungarian people agree that full self-government is the right of the Carpatho-Russian people (Hear, hear!), and, living with this right, these people returning to the country of the Holy Crown will have the widest self-government right available to them within the Holy Crown. (Hear, hear!)”⁵⁵⁸

Beginning from the day of the Uplands representatives taking their seats, December 5, travel to the reunited territories was possible, without the prior permission of the military authorities. The measure signified that the situation of the reunited territory was becoming more settled and that the introduction of civilian administration was near.

Article 4 of the statute, XXXIV/1938, enacting the unification of the reunited Uplands territory with the country of the Hungarian Holy Crown, enabled the Royal Hungarian cabinet and government, by its bill 9.330/1938 taking effect on December 22, to create “municipalities in the areas covered by the change,” that is to say, centers of civil public administration. Here “and in parts of the country contiguous with these territories – until jurisdictions are defined by statute” – thirteen municipal areas were created. Two of them affected Subcarpathia: Ung County with a county seat of Ungvár and the temporarily amalgamated Bereg-Ugocsa County, its center in Beregszász. Its reason was that after the first Vienna decision on November 2, only a quarter of the former Ugocsa County returned, around Tiszaújlak, hence it was decided to append it to Bereg County. The new administrative unit was officially referred to as “temp. adm. amalg. cnty.” or temporarily administratively amalgamated county.

⁵⁵⁵ MOL. K 27., Minisztertanácsi jegyzőkönyv, 1938. november 18.

⁵⁵⁶ *Felvidéki Magyar Hírlap*, 1938. november 20.

⁵⁵⁷ MOL. K 27., Minisztertanácsi jegyzőkönyv, 1938. november 21.

⁵⁵⁸ Fencik István beszédének teljes szövege: *Képviselőházi Napló*, 1938. december 5., pp. 311-312.

According to the first chapter of the regulation, the thirteen were comprised of the following units: "... 9. The extent of Zemplén County: Zemplén County plus the returned portion of Zemplén County, with the exception of the villages of Abara, Deregnő, Hegyi, Kistráska and Nagyráska. 10. The extent of Szabolcs County: The temporarily amalgamated counties of Szabolcs and Ung Counties as defined by statute XXXV/1923, article 11, with the exception of the cited statute, article 10, second last paragraph, wherein the settlements of Lónya, Mátyus and Tizakercesny are temporarily attached to Szabolcs County from Bereg County. 11. The extent of Ung County: of the returned portion of Ung County, the villages of Abara, Deregnő, Hegyi, Kistráska and Nagyráska, the returned portion of Szabolcs County and of the returned portion of Bereg County, the villages of Kisdobrony and Nagydobrony. 12. The extent of the temporarily administratively amalgamated Bereg-Ugocsa County: the returned territories of Bereg and Ugocsa Counties, with the exception of Kisdobrony and Nagydobrony, furthermore, those parts of Bereg and Ugocsa Counties temporarily amalgamated with Szatmár County by statute XXXV/1923, article 11, that portion of Bereg County temporarily amalgamated with Szabolcs county by the cited statute, article 10, second last paragraph, and the village of Nagypalád from the returned portion of Szatmár County. 13. The extent of Szatmár County: that portion of Szatmár County which was temporarily amalgamated with Bereg and Ugocsa Counties according to statute XXXV/1923, article 11... The cities of Ungvár and Munkács are elevated to the status of county prerogatives."⁵⁵⁹

Chapter II of the regulation addressed the formation, or amendment, of the local governing bodies at the county and city levels. The regulation specifically directed the creation of administrative councils and sub-councils, as well as the formation of county, city and village representative bodies. Article 12, paragraph 1: "The representative bodies of Ungvár and Munkács, as well as the towns located in the returned territory, shall be constituted in such manner as to be formed from the previously elected representatives of the city or town. Paragraph 2: The individuals mentioned in the previous paragraph shall be invited into the representative body by the mayor of the city, the chief district magistrate of the town. Paragraph 3: In those towns, where the Czechoslovak government dissolved the representative body, the representative body will be constituted by the appointment of a like number of representatives as were in the last elected body. The representative members will be appointed by the chief district magistrate. The representative members must be chosen primarily from among the members of the dissolved representative body, however, the number may be augmented, as required, from among those citizens who were not members of the representative body." Hence, the representative bodies of the counties, cities and towns were mostly filled by officials who were elected during the Czechoslovak era.

Chapter III of the regulation dealt with the structure and staffing of the civil servants and officials; chapter IV addressed the budgets and finances of the various local governments. Chapter V, 'Other Provisions,' whose most important point was article 30, which stated that "The laws covering the right to the election of National Assembly representatives, as well as the election of members of the Upper House, shall not, for the time being, be extended to the re-annexed territories."⁵⁶⁰ Article 15 of the regulation, defining the authority of the Interior Minister, and article 19, defining his right of nomination, became law on the day of proclamation. The remainder took effect on December 22, 1938.

Thus, in the "liberated Hungarian Uplands" civil administration was begun, the laws laid down in the regulation took effect, with the exception of questions regarding financial directions and social welfare. Dr. Endre Korláth was appointed High Constable of Ung and Bereg-Ugocsa Counties, Imre Peltsárszky mayor of Ungvár, retired colonel József Nemes as government commissioner of Munkács and István Engelbrecht as the city's deputy-mayor.⁵⁶¹ In both cities, as well as in Beregszász, the local detachments of the national police force took up their duties. Also on the same day, teaching began in the Hungarian high school in Beregszász.

On the day of the introduction of civil administration, December 22, Andor Jaross, minister without portfolio responsible for Uplands affairs addressed a letter to all the Uplands High Constables, including Endre Korláth of Bereg-Ugocsa. He emphatically drew their attention to the following: "... the vacant positions in the liberated Uplands, as well as revenue producing licenses, may be granted to those persons who distinguished themselves in the

⁵⁵⁹ *Budapesti Közlöny*, 1938. december 18. (284. sz.)

⁵⁶⁰ *Ibid.*

⁵⁶¹ Bereg és Ugocsa ... op. cit. pp. 6-7.

previous years, who proved their national loyalty among the most difficult circumstances... pay close attention that the newly introduced Hungarian public administration ... will not give cause to well-founded criticism and that the appointed officials will act in the most understanding and polite manner with the clients, refraining from such manner and conduct which would lead to the suspicion that they consider themselves the masters of the public and not its servants.”⁵⁶²

Subsequent to the legal unification of the Uplands, along with the Ung, Bereg and Ugocsa territories, with the country and the regulation of public administration, Governor Miklós Horthy announced a general amnesty on December 29, 1938. It extended to those Czechoslovak citizens and, irrespective of citizenship, Czech, Slovak and Rusyn nationals who were found guilty, or under indictment, before the amnesty by civilian or military courts for political or anti-government activities stemming from the tensions in existence between Hungary and Czechoslovakia.”⁵⁶³

Regent Horthy’s general amnesty referred to the Hungarian – Czech-Slovak agreement signed in Budapest on December 23, 1938, in which both countries agreed to amnesties in their country. During the talks, the two sides agreed in a separate memorandum that the amnesty of December 23 will be extended to the populations of territories to be occupied until March 14, 1939, so that, until the latter date they “will be exempted from criminal prosecution as a result of political crimes committed.” The memorandum made no mention of a later, mutual amnesty. Rather, the governments of the two countries undertook the responsibility to petition for amnesty with the head of state of the affected person’s country. As well, the two sides agreed that the population of the affected territories “shall not suffer any restriction in their personal freedom stemming from political tensions between the two states, nor from their behavior in reaction to the territorial settlement between the two states, nor may punitive action be brought against them for such behaviors.”

According to the cited memorandum, the two countries also committed themselves “to pay attention to the psychological mood among the populations of the bilaterally occupied territories, arising from the extraordinary circumstances. Hence, they will ensure that appropriate law enforcement will be available in these territories which is capable of protecting the security of the populace’s person and property from any harm. The law enforcement bodies will be specifically instructed to maintain a moderate and friendly manner towards the population.”⁵⁶⁴

The mutual general amnesty covering the territories to be occupied on March 14, 1939, was based on the final border designation between the two countries, as determined by the Vienna arbitration judgement. The decision redefined the new Hungarian – Czech-Slovak border between the Danube and Ung Rivers. The final agreement was fixed in the minutes of the Hungarian – Czech-Slovak border revision committee on March 6, 1939. Contrary to the existing line of demarcation, 20 settlements were transferred to Hungary, eight to Slovakia, along with the transfers of smaller part-settlements. The village of Mészpest from Zemplén and Bajánháza from Ung were transferred to the recently reorganized Ung County.

The county, after the July 15, 1939 census and the administrative restructuring – including the city of Ungvár – comprised 692 km², and a population of 73,980 (of which Ungvár constituted 23,785). Ung County was organized into two districts (Nagykapos and Ungvár) with 59 settlements and 68 farms, moors and remote hamlets. At the same time, the amalgamated Bereg-Ugocsa County, organized into four districts (Beregszász, Munkács, Tiszaújlak and Vásárosnamény) was made up of 1,204 km², with a population of 133,079 centered in the two cities of Beregszász (19,135) and Munkács (27,291), eight large villages, 92 smaller villages and 261 remote hamlets and farms.⁵⁶⁵ The border defense units of the two countries were permitted to assume their positions along the newly defined Hungarian – Czech-Slovak border by March 14, 1939.

⁵⁶² KTÁL. Fond 47., op. 2., ed. hr. nr. 2., sztr. 1-2.

⁵⁶³ *Budapesti Közlöny*, 1938. december 31. (294. sz.)

⁵⁶⁴ MOL. K 28., 3. tét., 1939–K–15 892. sz., pp. 4-5.

⁵⁶⁵ Magyar Statisztikai Zsebkönyv 1939 [Hungarian statistical primer]. Budapest, 1939, pp. 301-303.

The rule of civil law was re-introduced in the newly re-acquired Uplands territories by regulation 900/1938, dated December 21 and taking effect on January 1. In Ungvár and Beregszász, the royal county courts and royal attorney's offices were once again set up, along with the royal circuit courts in Beregszász, Munkács and Ungvár. Fiscal infrastructure was also being put in place, branches of the Hungarian National Bank opened in Munkács and Ungvár on January 23, 1939. The Royal Hungarian Foreign Trade Office opened its doors in Ungvár on January 1, the Central Customs Office in the train station on January 5. Customs opened another office, in the border station of Feketeardó, on February 18. Beginning on February 1, the postal affairs of Ung and Bereg-Ugocsa Counties were transferred to the Hungarian Post directorate operating in Kassa, under the name of "Postal Directorate of the Liberated Territories."

Government official, of various levels, made local visits to the returned territories to aid in their re-integration into the country. As an example, Prime Minister Béla Imrédy made a tour of Beregszász, Munkács and Ungvár on January 22, accompanied by Antal Kunder (1900-1968) Minister of Trade, Transportation and Industry, and Under-Secretary Tibor Pataky. Later, on March 25, Prime Minister Pal Teleki and Interior Minister Ferenc Keresztes-Fischer visited Bereg-Ugocsa County, again accompanied by Under-Secretary Tibor Pataky. "The honorable prime ministers made visits to the public institutions of Munkács and Beregszász, viewed the damages caused by the Czechs, especially in Beregszász, where the general hospital was still standing empty."⁵⁶⁶ Contrary to point 3 of the cited Vienna arbitration decision – "The Czechoslovak government will ensure that, on vacating the ceded territories, they are to be left in their normal condition" – the Czech authorities either stripped or rendered useless hospital equipment, as in Beregszász. The equipment of numerous public institutions awarded to Hungary suffered a similar fate.

The Hungarian authorities took steps to restore symbols and signs reminiscent of a Hungarian past erased under Czechoslovak rule. One such was the naming of public streets. The authorities in Munkács directed the changing of "streets bearing foreign names" on January 15, 1939, meaning the use of the old names again.

Three months after the re-annexation of the Hungarian populated strip of the Uplands, Interior Minister Keresztes-Fischer issued directive 99.900/1939/VII, dated January 28, 1939, instructing the high constables of the counties and towns to prepare a list of social associations, organizations and political parties as they existed on October 1, 1938, "preferably noting the membership numbers and their assets, cash and real estate."⁵⁶⁷ We were unable to locate the list but know that the Hungarian authorities continued to permit the activities of two parties in the Hungarian populated zone, the Independent Agrarian Alliance of András Bródy and Russian National Autonomy Party of István Fencik. The Hungarian organizations were allowed to continue functioning. However, the various Subcarpathian Czech organizations – foremost the 'Sokol' /Hawk/ Czech athletic associations, which maintained various installations, sports arenas, club assets, etc. – were banned and their assets seized.

In light of the approaching agricultural season, the Hungarian government made an especially important provision for the re-annexed territories. After the November 2, 1938 Vienna decision, the majority of the Czech colonist estate holders departed not only from the former Slovak territories (Csallóköz, Mátyusföld, Garam-mente, Bodrogeköz) but also from the Hungarian populated southern Uplands / Tisza bend regions. Their abandoned fields, farms and barns stood empty. Ordinance 1.730/1939⁵⁶⁸ (*The temporary utilization of unattended properties on the territories re-annexed to the Hungarian Holy Crown*) took effect on February 12, 1939, which stated that "subsequent to the events resulting in the change of state authority, unattended agricultural and forest properties must be taken under custodial care." Depending on the location of the property, the economic sub-committee of the responsible jurisdictional administrative committee was to make the determination, after consulting with the Royal Hungarian Economic Superintendent. A custodian, "reliable and having adequate agricultural and legal skills," shall be appointed to manage the asset.

Ordinance 2550/1939, dated March 4, (*Regulations with regards to questions in the matter of the*

⁵⁶⁶ Bereg és Ugocsa ... op. cit. p. 9.

⁵⁶⁷ KTÁL. Fond 47., op. 2., ed. hr. nr. 13., sztr. 8-9.

⁵⁶⁸ *Budapesti Közlöny*, 1939. február 12. (35. sz.), p. 3.

Czechoslovak land settlement carried out on the Uplands territories re-annexed to the Hungarian Holy Crown) made further provisions.⁵⁶⁹ It directed the review and, if necessary, the setting aside, of property ownership acquired on the basis of statute 215, dated April 16, 1919 to “remedy the inequitable and unreasonable acts which the execution of the property and political laws rendered upon the native population.” The following basic principles were laid down: “If at all possible, the setting aside of ownership must be avoided if the acquirer is 1) a settlement, church, communal estate or a former leaseholder group of nobility property; 2) a co-operative whose members are persons with permanent residence in the re-annexed territories and work the land themselves; 3) a technical teaching institution whose continued operation is deemed necessary by the Minister of Agriculture.” Estates whose ownership is rescinded became the property of the state, existing leases were permitted to be broken by the end of the fiscal year.

The ordinance also made provisions for lands seized under the Czechoslovak land law but not yet applied to agrarian or political purposes. These properties were subject to seizure unless registered in land registry rolls, which the Minister of Agriculture could override in whole or in part, thus to return it to its former owner. Finally, the ordinance directed that a government commissioner will be appointed to ensure compliance with the law.

As noted previously, point 4 of the November 2, 1938 Vienna arbitration decision directed that, stemming from the re-annexation of territories handed over to Hungary, the question of the citizenship of the affected population be decided by a Hungarian – Czech-Slovak committee. The agreement covering this issue was signed on February 18, 1939 and took effect on March 1. Thus, there was no further obstacle for persons newly become Hungarian citizens, as defined in article 1 of the agreement, to receive citizenship papers – if they so requested it. The Interior Ministry directive 254.500/1939. II. a. of March 7 detailed the methods of obtaining the document. The instructions were sent to the deputy constables of the affected counties and city mayors, with the address “*To all the chief officers of the Uplands municipalities.*” Under the terms of article 1 of the agreement, the population of the re-annexed territory was able to reclaim its Hungarian citizenship, effective November 2, 1938, without official measures, if they fell under the terms covered by the article – while, simultaneously, losing their Czechoslovak citizenship acquired on the basis of the Trianon Treaty. The directive specifically covered the handling of exceptional cases.⁵⁷⁰

The border as delineated by the first Vienna decision – also called the line of demarcation – was seen as temporary by all the affected parties, Hungarian, Czech-Slovak and Carpatho-Ukrainian. The border incidents and gunfire of the Czech-Slovak forces posted here became everyday occurrences from November of 1938 onwards. The sites of ambushes at that time were the settlements of Szőlőhegy and Szernye in Ungvár.⁵⁷¹ At the northern gate of the latter village, during the changing of the Hungarian border guard post on November 25, a Czech soldier fired a shot from the other side. The shot killed 12 year old Amália Orbán of Szernye, who happened to be nearby.⁵⁷²

The most serious border incident – more accurately a sneak attack – occurred against the city of Munkács in the early hours of January 6, 1939, when Czech forces, supported by armored cars and artillery, attacked from the direction of the village of Oroszvég. The reason behind it: “The Vienna decision only rendered a partial restitution as the city’s surroundings, the mountains and the adjacent village of Órhegyalja remained in Czech and Ukrainian hands. Munkács thus found itself in a strategically and economically totally untenable position.”⁵⁷³ To top it all off, the border was drawn in such a way that the city’s cemetery remained on the Czech-Slovak side, adding to the tensions. The Czech side did not deign to give permission for the use of the cemetery. Many buildings were seriously damaged during the attack, among them the City Theater, the Csillag Hotel, the Scala movie house and several private

⁵⁶⁹ *Budapesti Közlöny*, 1939. március 5. (53. sz.), p. 3.

⁵⁷⁰ MOL. K 762–j/dosszié, pp. 2-6. (Mikó-iratok, 1. csomó.)

⁵⁷¹ MOL. K 28., 59. tét., II. rész, 1938–P–17 704. sz.; 59. tét. 1939–L–15 883 sz., pp. 1-2.

⁵⁷² MOL. K 28., 59. tét., 1938–P–17 704. sz.

⁵⁷³ Fedeles, Jenő: Munkács, In: *A visszatért Felvidék*. Budapest, 1939, p. 388.

residences. The artillery fire, thankfully, did not claim any lives.⁵⁷⁴ On the afternoon of the raid, at 5PM, the departing Czech-Slovak officers promised a cessation of military activities. Thirty minutes later, the Czech artillery fired two grenades into the area behind the Roman Catholic Church.⁵⁷⁵

The repulsion of the Czech armed aggression of January 6, also called the Battle of Epiphany, claimed eight lives, among the fallen some of the heroically resisting Tattered Guard.⁵⁷⁶ Final farewell from most of the victims took place on January 8 in Munkács, Andor Jaross (1896-1946), minister without portfolio responsible for the Uplands, represented the Hungarian government. At the Kecskemét funeral of one of the fallen, Lt. József Koncz, Miklós Kozma said the eulogy.⁵⁷⁷ Governor Miklós Horthy visited the wounded in the city hospital. The circumstances surrounding the raid were examined by a Hungarian – Czech-Slovak military inquiry on January 13, 1939, under the leadership of colonels Rudolf Andorka and Jan Herman. The panel recorded the facts in a 17-page finding.⁵⁷⁸ “While the Czech officers were negotiating in the city hall of Munkács, the Czech artillery began a new barrage of the city. The city’s representative, Aladár Vozáry asked them to comment on the barrage, and received a flustered stammer as an answer. The Czech high-level officer stated that it was a mystery to him, too. But it is not in his power to stop the bombardment.”⁵⁷⁹ The entire population demonstrated against the violence at a mass meeting on January 15, and petitioned the Hungarian government in a telegram to “demand total redress and compensation internationally, too.”⁵⁸⁰

Subsequent to the January 6 raid on Munkács, the Hungarian government bolstered the border security. The command headquarters of the 1st Mounted Brigade, along with some of its component units, was transferred from Nyíregyháza to Munkács, under the command of Brigadier Alajos Bélydy (1889-1946). The headquarters of the 1st Mechanized Brigade was transferred from Budapest to Ungvár, as well as some component units, most significant among them the 5th and 6th Mechanized Infantry Battalions. In the county seat of Ung County, steps were begun for the creation of the 24th Infantry Brigade. The city of Beregszász became the garrison for the 24th Border Guard Battalion, under the command of Major Alajos Loósy.⁵⁸¹ Part of this unit was a battery of four 7.5 cm. mountain artillery and a bicycle-mounted company. (Between October 31, 1931 and September 30, 1938, the country’s borders were guarded by border guard units who, on October 1, were merged into the armed forces. Border patrol units took over their former duties.)

After the sneak attack on Munkács, border incursions and provocations from the Czechoslovak side became more frequent in January and February of 1939 along the Subcarpathian sector of the Hungarian-Czechoslovak border. Not only were border patrol unit fired upon but Hungarian villages received rifle, light and heavy machine gun fire,

⁵⁷⁴ Ibid, p. 388.

⁵⁷⁵ MOL. K 28., 59. tét., 1939–P–15 069. sz.

⁵⁷⁶ Ádám: Vértő ... op. cit. pp. 67-70; Enyedy: A Rongyosok ... op. cit. pp. 107-109; A Rongyos Gárda harcai 1919–1939 [The battles of the Tattered Guard, 1919-1939]. Budapest, 1999, pp. 18-28, 209-317.

⁵⁷⁷ MOL. K 429., Kozma-iratok, 28. csomó, 3. dosszié, pp. 208-222.

⁵⁷⁸ MOL. K 28., 59. tét., II. rész, 1939–K–15 578. sz.

⁵⁷⁹ MOL. K 429., Kozma-iratok. 28. csomó, 4. dosszié, p. 442.

⁵⁸⁰ MOL. K 28. 59. tét., 1939–L–15 215. sz.

⁵⁸¹ Botlik: Egestas ... op. cit. pp. 216-217.

grenades and phosphorous shells from the far side.⁵⁸²

At 21:00 on the evening of the day following the incursion against Munkács, a 3-man Hungarian border patrol, the village of Nagygejőc and its cemetery were the targets of two hours of enemy fire from the village of Unghosszúmező on the Czech-Slovak side of the border. When the platoon-sized enemy unit crossed the demarcation line and occupied the cemetery, the Hungarian border patrol went on the offensive and beat back the Czechs. Shortly after midnight, by now the 8th, the Czechs again opened fire, then a group of 50-60 of their soldiers again crossed the demarcation line and attacked the Hungarian border patrol squad and the village. The attack was repelled with the help of reinforcement that arrived in the meantime. At 06:00, the Czechs again opened fire on the village and the Hungarian border patrol from the direction the Szlatina Creek and the cemetery, committing the third border incident. A truce was declared at 10:00. As a result of the incident, a house burned down in the village of Nagygejőc from the phosphorous shells used by the Czech artillery. There were no casualties on the Hungarian side.⁵⁸³ The Minister of Defense sent a report of the event, accompanied by maps, to the Prime Minister.⁵⁸⁴

Three days later, on January 10, 1939, again around 21:00 hours, Czech soldiers kept Barkaszó and its vicinity under rifle and mortar fire, which was only lifted at the order of the Hungarian liaison officer. At about the same time, between 20:00 and 22:00 hours, the Hungarian border patrol squad, stationed in the village of Ungdaróc, fought a fire-fight, begun by the enemy forces facing them, reported general Henrik Werth, chief of staff of the Hungarian forces, to the Prime Minister.⁵⁸⁵ In the same time period, “several machine guns were firing on Hungarian territory ...” from the villages of Gerény, Börvinges and Hegyfárok (correctly: Hegyfark). “The Hungarian posts did not return the heavy fire, having received the strictest orders to avoid all incidents, as arranged in the agreement (Hungarian – Czech-Slovak) signed on January 9, 1939 in Nagygejőc.”⁵⁸⁶ After the previous fire-fight, from the vicinity of the village of Baranya “the Czechs fired a flare above Baranya and in its light poured light and heavy machine-gun fire on the Hungarian border patrol and the village. As well, they lobbed about 40 hand grenades and fired several phosphorous shells... A Czech shot severed the high tension wire and the roofs of several houses were damaged in the village of Baranya.” As a result of one of the hand grenades thrown during the action, two Hungarian policemen were seriously injured.⁵⁸⁷ On February 24, another border incident took place near Alsóremete, when the Hungarian patrol was fired on 10 times from the Czech-Slovak side.⁵⁸⁸

The new Prime Minister, Pál Teleki, appointed on February 16, 1939, clearly knew in his first days in office that Adolf Hitler will soon break the terms of the Munich Accord and deal with Czechoslovakia. Events now speeded up as Germany gave Hungary a free hand in the matter of solving the so-called Carpatho-Russian question. At the March 10 meeting, the council of ministers decided that, in the event of a German military occupation of Czechoslovakia or the proclamation of Slovakia’s independence, the Hungarian military will retake all of

⁵⁸² MOL. K 28., 59. tét., 1939–K–15 577. sz., pp. 5, 8; 1939–P–15 248. sz., pp. 2-7; 1939–P–15 742. sz.; 1939–K–15 738. sz.; 1939–K–15 738. sz.; 1939–P–15 372. sz.

⁵⁸³ MOL. K 28., 59. tét., 1939–K–15 577. sz., p. 8.

⁵⁸⁴ MOL. K 28., 59. tét., 1939–P–15 248. sz., p. 2-7.

⁵⁸⁵ MOL. K 28., 59. tét., 1939–P–15 742. sz.

⁵⁸⁶ MOL. K 28., 59. tét., 1939–K–15 577. sz., p. 5.

⁵⁸⁷ MOL. K 28., 59. tét., 1939–K–15 577. sz., p. 5.

⁵⁸⁸ MOL. K 28., 59. tét., 1939–K–15 738. sz.

Subcarpathia, even without German approval.⁵⁸⁹ Two days later, on March 12, Chancellor Hitler warned the Hungarian government, through the Hungarian ambassador in Berlin, that Czech-Slovakia was on the threshold of disintegration: the German Reich will recognize Slovakia's independence, however, it will delay for 24 hours with regards to the Volosin government. In that time, Hungary can solve the Ruthenian question. On the next day, the Teleki government addressed an ultimatum to the Prague and Huszt governments in which it called for the surrender of the Carpatho-Ukraine, in the interest of restoring order and avoiding unnecessary bloodshed.

Following that, on March 15, the final events played out on the territory of the Carpatho-Ukrainian state – the first and last session of the Sojm, Ágoston Volosin fleeing to Romania, the resistance of the Szics Guard around Huszt – as already related at the end of the previous chapter.

The reunion of Subcarpathia with Hungary

March 15-18 and March 23 – April 4, 1939

The military events of the first day after the retaking of Subcarpathia, March 15, 1939, have been already been told in detail. Hence, we will merely mention that at 20:00 hours of that day, Hungarian military units reached the line of Ókemence–Szolyva–Cserhalom (Beregdubróka)–Veréce, which resulted in more than 100 settlements - of them the more important: Beregszentmiklós, Szolyva, Nagyszöllős, Királyháza - being freed from two decade of foreign rule.

On the first day, Sándor Sztojka, the Greek Catholic bishop of Munkács, made a public statement to the Rusyn people on the Hungarian Radio, in Hungarian and Rusyn, which was also aired broadcast in the evening hours by the Hungarian Telegraph Office. Among other things, the prelate said the following: “My dear Rusyn brethren! ...my message to you, clearer than day, that the place of the Rusyn people can only be in that Hungary where it lived for a millennium, in good times and bad, among family – the Hungarian people. That the separation from Hungary became catastrophic for us is, without doubt, shown by the almost tragic present situation of our people... I ask all of you, with all the warmth from my pastoral heart, the members of the revered clergy, the deeply respected educators, the whole of the intelligence (intellectuals) and especially you, my dear brothers, along with the sons and daughters of our dear nation, receive the advancing soldiers with trust and affection. As a sign of happiness, ring all the bells and give thanks to almighty God that, under the crown of Saint Stephen, we will again be the equal citizens of a country where our Church, faith, the language and customs of our beloved people and a better future will be assured for us all, with God's help. My dear brethren, all of you stay at your posts and maintain order, the present jobs will be assured for every honorable Rusyn among us, along with the opportunity to make an honest living.”⁵⁹⁰

According to the 08:00 situation report of the Hungarian high command of March 16, it did not take a full day for Col. Vásárhelyi's group to occupy the villages surrounding Ungvár, then advance towards Nevicke. From Munkács, the mounted brigade led by Col. Béldy advanced along the Latorca valley. One of his rapidly advancing units, the 12th Bicycle-mounted Battalion entered the village of Szolyva in the evening of the 15th, amidst heavy snowfall. The Beregszász group, lead by Lt. Col. Alajos Loósy, reached the eastern outskirts of Nagyszöllős on the first day and began to reconnoiter in the direction of Királyháza. “The enemy only presented small pockets of local resistance. Heavier resistance was encountered around Nagy-Szöllős.”⁵⁹¹ In the vicinity of Tiszaújhely–Fancsika–Szőlősvégárdó and Csepe–Feketeardó–Tiszaszászfalu, attacks by Czechoslovak armored cars had to be repelled by the Hungarian units. The 24th Border Patrol battalion, consisting 80% of recruits with only 2- and 6-week training, reached

⁵⁸⁹ MOL. K 27., Minisztertanácsi jegyzőkönyv, 1938. március 10.

⁵⁹⁰ Magyar Távirati Iroda, 1939. március 15., 21,50 órai kiadás.

⁵⁹¹ MOL. K 28., 59. tét., 1939–P–16 014. sz.

Nagyszőlős at 14:30, after a march of 40 km., occasionally under lively fire, “occupying same, accompanied by the cheers of the Hungarian population.”⁵⁹² The battalion advanced along a 66 km. sector of the first Vienna accord defined border – from Beregújfalu to Szőlősgyula – suffering casualties of 20 dead and 21 wounded on the first day. The commander of the border patrol unit, Lt. Col. Loósy, reported in greater detail on the liberation of the seat of the former Ugocsa County, Nagyszőlős.⁵⁹³

Events around Ungvár on March 15: a 200-strong Czech unit holed up in the castle of Nevicke, which was dislodged by the Hungarian units after a fierce battle. Further North, the forces had to overcome strong Czech military resistance at the village of Ókemence. On the second day of the reclaiming of Subcarpathia – March 16 – Czech forces were routed with the arrival of reinforcement in the form of the 13th Mounted (Bicycle) Battalion and the 101st Armored Train units. Enemy forces were begun to be pushed North in the Ung valley.⁵⁹⁴

The Szics Guard put up its strongest, and final, resistance against Hungarian forces approximately 10 km. in front of Huszt, the temporary capital of Carpatho-Ukraine, between the villages of Veresmart and Rakasz. The Guard’s command marshaled nearly 1,600 guardsmen to the scene, after accusing head of state Volosin for ‘treason’ to Greater Ukraine in a proclamation on March 16 and announcing the organization of defenses.

The Hungarian units assumed defensive positions on the heights in front of Rakasz but the 24th Border Patrol Battalion soon routed the opposing Szics Guard unit. The fleeing unit was taken in chase by the battalion’s bicycle company, overrunning it before it had an opportunity to dig in on the mountaintop West of Huszt. A hand grenade attack was begun. “In minutes, they broke into the enemy positions, from which the Szics Guards fled in disarray. Here, primarily (Rusyn) teachers college students from Ungvár fought, having been misled by the irresponsible Ukrainians of Volosin. Many of them fell in the battle.”⁵⁹⁵ The Czech forces, and the Guard, fought a losing rearguard action on the western edge of Huszt. Of the Szics Guard ordered here, 600-700 fled to Romania after its command deserted, abandoning the guardsmen. The Romanian military arrested them in Máramarossziget and handed them over to the Hungarian authorities.⁵⁹⁶ After the fighting, more than 500 of the Guard escaped through Slovakia to Austria and Germany.⁵⁹⁷

The data regarding the number of victims of the greater-lesser armed clashes, lasting three days, is contradictory. According to nationalist Ukrainian historians, more than 100 Szics guardsmen fell in the fighting around Huszt. Their bodies were interred in a common grave after the battle at Crimson Field (Красне поле, Vörös-mező), close to Huszt. According to other sources, the fighting around Huszt claimed 25 seminary students (Greek Catholic novitiates); later six Szics guardsmen were executed after being subjected to inhumane torture. Mikola Veges reported, based on an unnamed eyewitness, that 3,421 Szics guardsmen were killed at the Torony Pass; contemporary researchers estimate that between 3,000 and 5,000 lost their lives for Carpatho-Ukraine, fighting against Czech and

⁵⁹² Nyáry, Iván: Kárpátalja felszabadítása [The liberation of Subcarpathia], In: *A magyar katona. Századunk legszebb magyar csatái*. Budapest, 1944, pp. 419-421.

⁵⁹³ Loósy, Alajos: Nagyszőlős felszabadítása [The liberation of Nagyszőlős]. Budapest, 1940, pp. 3-16.

⁵⁹⁴ Botlik: Egestas ... op. cit. p. 226.

⁵⁹⁵ Nyáry: Kárpátalja ... op. cit. p. 422.

⁵⁹⁶ Вереш: Карпатська ... op. cit. p. 59.

⁵⁹⁷ Книга пам’яті України. Закарпатська область. (Том.) 2. Головна ред. кол. Ужгород. [Commemorative book of the Ukraine. The territory on the other side of the Carpathians. vol II.] Užhorod, 1998, p. 63.

Hungarian forces.⁵⁹⁸ A Ukrainian historical summary, citing unnamed Hungarian sources, sums it up as 230 Czech and Szics Guard deaths in the fighting around Huszt, many wounded and 450 captured. The remains of the retreating 'Koszak unit' of the Guard were annihilated by Hungarian forces around Aknaszlatina. The names of 13 fallen Huszt high school students and seminarians are recorded in the fighting around Crimson Field.⁵⁹⁹ In the author's opinion, more thorough research is required to arrive at reliable facts.

In the myth-creation process of the nationalistic Ukrainians, 'Crimson Field' acquired its name from the spilled blood of the Szics guardsmen who fell in the fighting against the Hungarians. The reality is that it is the old name of a laneway or path, so named after the reddish soil found there. The events of Crimson Field were first publicly remembered on March 16, 1990 (on the 51st anniversary), organized by PYX (or RUH, the initials of the Ukrainian People's Movement). A funeral mass was conducted by Greek Catholic priests and Pravoslav ministers, a wooden cross was erected and anointed.⁶⁰⁰ The rehabilitation of the Szics Guard is one of the most important objectives of the newest volume of the "Ukrainian Commemorative Book."⁶⁰¹

The fighting spirit of the Hungarian soldiers was greatly boosted during the fighting of the peaks surrounding the city when, unexpectedly, general v. Ferenc Szombathelyi (1887-1946), commander of the VIII. Kassa Corps, appeared in the main square of Huszt and took over command. In the meantime, units that left Munkács re-took Szolyva on the first day and, on the second day, reached the line of peaks of the Carpathians, the 1,000-year marker of the Polish-Hungarian border.⁶⁰² The Hungarian units continued their advance in the Tisza valley, as well, entering Técső in late evening. After a full day of fighting, the battalion had no casualties, while the enemy sustained at least 200.

The following day, March 17, the bicycle-mounted mobile units reached Aknaszlatina at 10:00, then rolling through Nagybocksó, entered Terebesfejérpatak at 14:00. From there, the majority of the battalion took to rail transport, the rest to vehicles, and pressed North along the Tisza, then Black-Tisza, valley towards Rahó, Tiszaborkút, Kőrösmező and the Polish border. The unit reached Kőrösmező at 16:30 where "the population gathered at the train station and greeted the battalion with enthusiastic cheers. Speeches of welcome were said, then the national Anthem was sung."⁶⁰³ Some units of the battalion continued and, at 17:50 on the 17th, took control of the Tatár Pass on the Carpathian ridge, reaching the 1,000-year Hungarian border. The achievement of the bicycle-mounted soldiers was phenomenal. Starting from Vásárosnamény at 10:00 on the 15th, they covered 270 km. of difficult roads in rain and snow, often under fire, in 55 hours and without casualties.

According to the High Command situation report at 17:00 on March 17, new units – namely the 7th, 9th and 11th brigades – and the auxiliary units of the 1st and 2nd cavalry brigades were ordered to Subcarpathia. Their troop trains were already in the process of being loaded or unloaded. The main units of the corps were en route via rail. At mid-day of the previous day, the Hungarian forces advancing from Ungvár for the third day came up against stubborn resistance around the village of Mércse in the Ung valley.⁶⁰⁴ Due to the desperate Czech infantry and artillery attack,

⁵⁹⁸ Вегеш / Veges Карпатська ... op. cit. pp. 60-61.

⁵⁹⁹ Нариси історії Закарпаття, Том II. / Narisi istoriï Zakarpats'ka. vol. II ... op. cit. p. 334.

⁶⁰⁰ Botlik – Dupka: Ez hát ... op. cit. p. 47.

⁶⁰¹ Книга Пам'яті України. Том 2. / Commemorative book ... op. cit. pp. 39-63.

⁶⁰² MOL. K 28., 59. tét., 1939–P–16 091. sz.

⁶⁰³ Nyáry: Kárpátalja ... op. cit. p. 423.

⁶⁰⁴ MOL. K 28., 59. tét., 1939–P–15 936. sz.

the Hungarian advance was temporarily halted. By the afternoon, the Hungarian infantry in the vicinity of Nagyberezna, Kisberezna and Ugar was supported by artillery batteries and bomber planes. This created panic among the enemy, allowing the pincer movement of the bicycle battalion to quell all opposition. All Czech resistance was broken. Révhely was taken at 18:00, Uzsok at 22:00 and the border pass, another 3-4 kms on, was again in Hungarian hands well before midnight. With it, Hungarian forces occupied all of Subcarpathia in the final hour of March 17, after a three-day advance. They now stood along the ridge of the Carpathians, on the millennial Hungarian border.⁶⁰⁵

The High Command situation report recapped that, including the victims of the actions begun on March 13, the total losses to March 17 were “37 dead and 131 wounded on the Hungarian side, 150-200 dead, 200-300 captured on the Czech side... Larger Szics Guard units are trapped around Ilosva, Bilke and Dolha, hence raids can be expected from the surrounding mountains. The area’s neutralization is in progress. The medical inventory of the Munkács hospital was found in the castle of Beregvár, which was put to use by the armed forces.”⁶⁰⁶ A significant portion of the Hungarian forces occupying Subcarpathia were recruits who were to be sworn in on March 15. In spite of their incomplete training, they carried out many feats of bravery.⁶⁰⁷

In the 08:00 situation report on March 18, general Werth reported to Prime Minister Teleki: Hungarian forces are now in control of all of Subcarpathia, after “the 13th bicycle battalion from the Ungvár column broke the enemy resistance at Kisberezna on III. 17 at 22:00 and reached the Polish border at Uzsok.”⁶⁰⁸ Based on the recent availability of archival research, the up-to-now acknowledged time necessary to take possession of Subcarpathia must be modified, as the military action took three – not four – days, from March 15 to 17. According to the just cited situation report, with the taking of the Uzsok Pass, all of Subcarpathia was secured shortly before midnight on March 17. This was the time recorded by Col. Ivan Nyáry in his report, five years after the events.⁶⁰⁹ It can be assumed that the four day elapsed time entered the public consciousness because Hungarian forces took up positions on March 14 in the heights around Munkács, Ungvár and Beregszász and, to secure Tiszaújlak, a portion of the rail line in front of Nagyszöllős. However, these steps must be seen as preliminary measures.

With the three day military action, 11,094 km² of territory was reunited with Hungary – as already noted in the February 1939 census figures -, with a population of 552,124. Of those, 413,481 (75.9%) were Ukrainian, 65,828 (12.1%) Jewish, 25,894 (4.8%) Hungarian, 17,495 (3.2%) Czech and Slovak, 13,268 (2.4%) Romanian and 8,715 (1.6%) German.⁶¹⁰ The reunification affected four former counties. Bereg County was reconstituted to its former size, most of Ung and Ugocsa Counties returned, as well as that part of Máramaros County North of the Tisza River. Máramaros was, until this time, one of the counties completely detached from the previous Hungary. The reunited territory contained 390 settlements, only three of which had a population greater than 10,000 (Huszt-17,833, Nagyszöllős-11,054, Kőrösmező-10,614).⁶¹¹

Governor Horthy left Budapest the previous evening by special train to visit Subcarpathia to visit on March 18 the troops who took part in the military action. He traveled through Csap, arriving in Munkács where, among other

⁶⁰⁵ Nyáry: Kárpátalja ... op. cit. p. 431.

⁶⁰⁶ MOL. K 28., 59. tét., 1939–P–15 936. sz.

⁶⁰⁷ Kárpátalja hősei, 1939. op. cit. pp. 6-12.

⁶⁰⁸ MOL. K 28. 267. tét., 1939–T–16 092. sz.

⁶⁰⁹ Nyáry: Kárpátalja ... op. cit. p. 431.

⁶¹⁰ Нариси історії Закарпаття, Том II. / Narisi istoriï Zakarpats'ka. vol. II ... op. cit. p. 294.

⁶¹¹ Thirring: A népesség ... op. cit. pp. 199-200.

things, he visited the military hospital where the wounded were being tended. From here, he traveled to Beregszász, Nagyszöllös, then Huszt. At noon on this day, March 18, military government was introduced in the 'liberated territory', which lasted three and a half months. The following day, a Hungarian and Ruthenian bilingual proclamation was issued by the Hungarian military and civilian authorities, "To the Rusyn People of Subcarpathia!", in which the population was asked to remain calm and orderly, and continue to work as usual.

The majority of the population, in the Hungary truncated by the Trianon Treaty, met the retaking of the whole of Subcarpathia with elation. Hungarian radio and news media reported that, at the order of the Catholic bishops' council then meeting in the capital, a 30-minute ringing of church bells greeted the return of our Rusyn brethren.⁶¹² Sándor Sztojka, bishop of Munkács, issued a pastoral letter in which he greeted the Hungarian forces as liberators, at the same time also pointing out that "We do not return to the bosom of our new country with empty hands ... we bring with us our huge oak and pine forests, our rivers will flow swifter onto the Hungarian plains... We will open the riches of our salt mines to our new homeland." Not only the prelate but the majority of the Greek Catholic clergy happily greeted the Hungarian soldiers who marched in. Quite a number of them had earlier taken an active part in the struggle against the Volosin-regime, in places helping and hiding the Hungarian rebels, along with their parishioners.⁶¹³

General Werth's situation report at 18:00 on March 20 already reported that the Hungarian forces ordered to the Subcarpathian theater had, on this day, completed their objectives. "The neutralization of the occupied Rusyn territories is continuing according to plan... During the day, Szics guardsmen were seen in some places, who attempted to create panic among the populace, but did not offer armed resistance... The morale of our troops, as well as the general population, remains enthusiastic."⁶¹⁴ The next day, March 21, the Hungarian authorities addressed a summons to the Szics Guard: if they voluntarily turn themselves, and their weapons, in by April 10, then they will not have to answer for any deeds committed against the Hungarian state, but can continue with their civilian life.

The massive marshalling of Hungarian forces foreshadowed the military actions of the following few days. The mobilized 'rapid deployment corps' and the Pécs Corps were redeployed from the Tisza valley to the eastern border with Slovakia, to occupy the zone West of the Ung valley, to the line of a Zellő–Cirókafalu–Takcsány–Remetevasgyár–Szobránc–Sárosremete villages. After the September 29, 1938 Munich Pact, when Slovak autonomy was recognized, this zone was appended to the fledgling new state. Three Hungarian columns were assembled for the attack. In the North, close by Kisberezna and Nagyberezna, the 9th Detached Brigade; in the center, at Ungvár, the 2nd Mechanized Brigade; in the South, in the vicinity of Nagykapos, the 2nd Cavalry Brigade. Their total strength was around 20-25,000 men. The important railway line North of Nagyberezna, leading to the Uzsok Pass, was guarded for several days by the 104th armored train.⁶¹⁵

The westward relocation of the Hungarian-Slovak border was necessary, mainly because here the newly drawn Hungarian border was formed by a completely unsuitable provincial boundary. As noted earlier, the main reason was that the Prague government was, for two decades, unwilling to delineate a permanent western boundary for Subcarpathia, in spite of the numerous pleas of the Rusyns and Slovaks. The September 10, 1919, Treaty of Saint-Germaine, granting Ruthenia to Czechoslovakia – as we have already noted – defined the line as the railway between Csap and Ungvár, and hence to the Polish border along the Ung River. In 1939, this, as the permanent Hungarian-Slovak border, would have been strategically disadvantageous for Hungary. From Ungvár to the Uzsok Pass, the railway line would run right beside the line of demarcation, while most of the nearby hills and mountains belonged to Slovakia. This circumstance endangered the peaceful utilization of the rail link running in the Ung valley towards Poland.

To end the border uncertainty and assure the security of the railway link, Hungarian forces launched an attack

⁶¹² Marina: Ruténsors... op. cit. p. 119.

⁶¹³ Botlik: Hármaskereszt ... op. cit. p. 257.

⁶¹⁴ MOL. K 28., 267. tét., 1939–T–16 090. sz.

⁶¹⁵ Botlik: Egestas ... op. cit. p. 231.

toward the West at dawn on March 23. They advanced to a line running from the villages of Kispereszlő and Kiskolon, further South to Halas Creek and the village of Pálóc. The next day, after an advance to a depth of 20 km, the forces received an order from Budapest to halt, as the zone overrun was adequate to provide for the security of the railway in the Ung valley and between Ungvár and the Uzsok Pass. Slovakia, as successor of Czechoslovakia, retained a claim on this band of Subcarpathia and in subsequent days, launched desperate attacks against Hungarian forces, artillery and train traffic. In the counterattack around Szobránc, Slovak forces deployed mustard gas in an attempt to destroy the Hungarian forces. The attack failed as Hungarian units had gas masks issued as standard equipment.⁶¹⁶

The Slovak aerial attacks were especially dangerous. The airport of Ungvár – prepared, modernized and enlarged in the previous years for the possible use of Czechoslovakia's one-time ally, the Soviet Union – was now the base for the 1st squadron of the 1st fighter wing of the Royal Hungarian Air Force and its Fiat CR 32 planes. The squadron was scrambled before 07:00 on March 24, as observers reported the approach of enemy planes from the direction of Szobránc. Shortly, three Avia B 534 type fighters and three bombers attacked the Hungarian units located between the town and the village of Tiba with incendiary bombs and machine-gun fire. One of the bombers was brought down by anti-aircraft fire and two of the fighters were shot down by Hungarian planes. Thus, the 1/1 fighter squadron in Ungvár received its baptism of fire. Of the next wave of attacking Slovak planes, squadron 1/2 destroyed a plane attempting to make a run for home.

In the afternoon of the same day, two enemy planes bombed the village of Tiba, close to Szobránc, without inflicting serious damage. Hungarian aerial defense performed well, forcing one of the planes to land. The captured pilot confessed that the attack originated from the town of Igló. The Hungarian command ordered the destruction of the Slovak airfield located there, dispatching two bomber squadrons, with two fighter squadrons providing cover. The designated bomber group was shortly in the air, but only accompanied by one fighter squadron. The second fighter squadron became embroiled in aerial combat above the village of Pálóc, engaging an attacking force of nine enemy planes, carrying Czech(Slovak) markings. The enemy planes were attacking the artillery batteries of the 2nd Cavalry Brigade and a column of men from the 16th Bicycle Battalion. The intense machine-gun fire from the Hungarian forces broke up the attacking formations. It was at this point that the Hungarian squadron, also of nine planes, appeared from the direction of Ungvár. Their orders were to meet the bomber unit above Miskolc and accompany then towards Igló. However, they were loath to see the enemy attack go unchallenged. They joined the fray, shooting down seven of the enemy planes and inflicting heavy damage on the remaining two, which managed to escape.

In the meanwhile, the bomber unit managed to reach Igló undetected above the clouds at an altitude of 2,000 m., only descending below the clouds at the last minute to be able to aim more accurately. The attack was pressed home by successive waves from the 12 planes. On the ground, 24 planes were stationed, surrounded by modern buildings, workshops and hangars. The Hungarian waves released their bombs in unison. The enemy planes on the ground were destroyed, along with the facilities. The fighter cover saw no action as no enemy plane rose to engage them. The Hungarian bomber group returned to their bases victorious, sustaining no damage.⁶¹⁷ The Hungarian air force destroyed a total of 34 Slovak planes, anti-aircraft defenses shot down one and forced another to land.

The Slovak-Hungarian conflict was ended by the intervention of Germany. Hungary was permitted to retain the almost 60 km. long and 20 km. wide swath of occupied Subcarpathian territory, a total of 1,056 km². Hence, in two installments – in March and April of 1939 – a total of 12,141 km² of territory of Subcarpathia returned and was reunited with Hungary. The Czech census of 1930 reported a population of 592,901 in the affected region. As well, “a territory abutting the genial Polish neighbors along approximately 300 kms. of the natural Carpathian border

⁶¹⁶ The information is the personal recollection of György Hábel (1922-), forestry engineer living in Budapest: as a university student, he and others heard it at a lecture by general Kálmán Kéri, who was teaching a military course in the 1940-1941 academic year at the Royal Hungarian József Nádor Technical and Economics University (Budapest). General Kéri was promoted by one grade in 1991.

⁶¹⁷ Nyáry: Kárpátalja ... op. cit. pp. 431-434; Pataky, Iván - Rozsos, László - Sárhidai, Gyula: Légi háború Magyarországon felett. I. köt. [Aerial war above Hungary. vol 1]. Budapest, 1992, pp. 20-24, 31-32.

returned.⁶¹⁸

With the modification of the western boundary of Subcarpathia – and the April 14, 1939 Hungarian-Slovak agreement sanctioning it – the reunited territory grew by almost 10% and a further population of 40,777. The military action “merely reunited a somewhat significant northeastern portion of Zemplén, other than the northern Ung zone intrinsically a part of Subcarpathia, enlarging this with a small piece of land of Ung County populated by Slovaks (the majority of them Greek Catholics, some Protestants). According to the former Czech-Slovak civil administrative arrangement, some portions of two districts were thus ceded to Hungary (from the Szinna district and area of 604 km² with a populace of 19,496 and from the Szobrance district an area of 452 km² with a populace of 21,281).⁶¹⁹ With the new organization, it was primarily Ung County that gained. Mostly mountainous, with some wetlands in the South, it contained 74 settlements, with an average population of 551 each. Overall, it meant that with the military action and territorial adjustment, a total of 464 settlements returned, with an average population of 1,278.

After two decades of foreign domination, Subcarpathia was reunited with Hungary in March-April of 1939, erasing another section of the unjust border that was decreed in the Trianon Peace Treaty

⁶¹⁸ Thirring: A népesség ... op. cit. p. 236.

⁶¹⁹ Ibid, p. 237.

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Az orosz, illetve ukrán nyelvű levéltári jelzetek latin átírása: Фонд – Fond; опис – opis = egység, tétel, csomó (rövidítve: оп. - op.) ; номер – nomer = ügyiratszám (rövidítve: нр. – nr.); единица хранения – jegyenica hranyenyija (rövidítve: ед. хран. – egy. hrany.), vagy csak (hrany.), vagy ügyíraton belüli oldalszám. Ukránul: одиниця зберігання – odinicja zberihannya rövidítve: од. збер. – od. zber.).

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