

**EDVARD BENEŠ' DEMARCHES
CONCERNING CARPATHIAN RUTHENIA AND MOSCOW'S POSITION
(SEPTEMBER 1939 – JUNE 1941)**

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Abstract: *The article deals with the problems of Carpathian Ruthenia and its population, which became the object of international negotiations in the 20th century. The issue of Transcarpathian Region is analysed in the context of statements and bilateral discussions between Soviet Union and Czechoslovakia. The author presents the opinions of Edvard Beneš on Subcarpathian Rus' and the attitude of Joseph Stalin on the same topic, as well as the main positions taken by the representatives of Czechoslovakia and the Soviet Union.*

Keywords: *Beneš, Carpathian Ruthenia, Transcarpathia, Ukraine, split, reunion, Rusyns, Soviet Union, Czechoslovakia*

Rezumat: *Demersurile lui Edvard Beneš privind Rutenia Carpatică și poziția Moscovei (septembrie 1939 – iunie 1941)* Articolul abordează chestiunea Ruteniei Carpatice devenită obiect al negocierilor internaționale în secolul XX. Problema regiunii transcarpatice este analizată în contextul declarațiilor și discuțiilor bilaterale sovieto-cehoslovace. Autorul prezintă opiniile lui Edvard Beneš față de Rusia Subcarpatică și atitudinea lui Iosif Stalin pe marginea acestui subiect, precum și principalele luări de poziție ale reprezentanților Cehoslovaciei și Uniunii Sovietice.

Résumé : *Les démarches de Edvard Beneš concernant la Ruthénie Carpatique et la position de Moscou (septembre 1939 – juin 1941).* L'article ci-joint analyse la question de la Ruthénie Carpatique devenue objet des négociations internationales au XX^e siècle. On y analyse le problème de la région transcarpatique dans le contexte des déclarations et des discussions bilatérales soviéto-tchécoslovaques. L'auteur présente les opinions d'Edvard Beneš envers la Russie Subcarpatique et l'attitude de Joseph Staline vis-à-vis ce sujet, ainsi que les principales prises de position des représentants de la Tchécoslovaquie et de l'Union Soviétique.

INTRODUCTION

The world history of the tragic 20th century showed how often the fate of big regions and communities depends on solving problems of small territories and nations. In spite of its marginal nature generated by the general tectonic displacements in Europe, the problem of Carpathian Ruthenia and its native population of Carpathian Rusyns became a subject of international negotiations and agreements at least three times in the 20th century: in 1919 in Paris, in 1938 in Vienna, and during 1941-1945 in London and Moscow. Just before and during the Second World War, this territory (which got a specific name during the 1919 Peace Conference in Paris) caught the interest of European and world media, refined diplomatic officials and Generals of the army.

The issue of the “Carpathian Ruthenia” was analysed in contemporary historiography from various perspectives.¹ Using the “principle of the cone”,

¹ General historiographical guide to the history of Transcarpathia, see: Paul R. Magocsi, *An Historiographical Guide to Subcarpathian Rus*, in “Austrian History Yearbook”, Vol. IX, [Cambridge, Massachusetts], 1973, p. 201-265; Д. Д. Данилюк, *Історіографія Закарпаття в новітній час (1917-1985)* [Historiography of Transcarpathia in modern times (1917-1985)], Львів, Вища школа, 1987, 130 с.; И. И. Поп, *Историко-графія истории русин и Подкарпатской Руси* [Historiography of Rusyns History and Carpathian Ruthenia], in “Славяноведение”, 2003, № 1, сс. 57-72; *Historiography*, in Paul Robert Magocsi and Ivan Pop (eds.), *Encyclopedia of Rusyn History and Culture. Revised and Expanded Edition*, Toronto-Buffalo-London, University of Toronto Press, 2005, pp. 169-185; *Історіографія* [Historiography], in Павло Роберт Магочій, Іван Поп (укладачі), *Енциклопедія історії та культури карпатських русинів* [Encyclopedia of Carpathian Rusyn History and Culture], Ужгород, Видавництво В. Падяка, 2010, сс. 258-284; Омелян Довганич, *За глибоке вивчення джерельної бази та історіографії возз'єднання Закарпаття з Україною*, in *Возз'єднання Закарпаття з Україною (матеріали наукової конференції, присвяченої 60-ти річчю возз'єднання Закарпаття з Україною, Ужгород, 29 червня 2005 р.)* [To Detailed Study of the Source Base and Historiography of Reunification of Transcarpathia with Ukraine (materials of scientific conference devoted to the 60th Anniversary of reunification of Transcarpathia with Ukraine, Uzhhorod, June 25, 2005)], Ужгород, 2006, сс. 34-47; Іван Мищак, *Возз'єднання Закарпаття з Радянською Україною: сучасна історіографія* [Reunification of Transcarpathia with the Soviet Ukraine: modern historiography], in *Історіографічні дослідження в Україні* [Historiographical Investigations in Ukraine], Випуск 20, Київ, 2010, сс. 455-474.

Current problems of modern Russian and Czech Historiographies, see.: Г. П. Мурашко,

suggested by the Ukrainian historian Nataliya Yakovenko², we propose to sort the historical literature “from the bottom to the top”. The main events of the general history of Carpathian Ruthenia – Transcarpathian Ukraine – Zakarpattya are placed in the very “bottom of the cone”.³ As “the middle of the cone” contains the

Советский Союз и общественные трансформации в Восточной Европе в 1940-1950 гг. Некоторые дискуссионные вопросы в современной российской и чешской историографии [The Soviet Union and Public Transformations in Eastern Europe during 1940-1950. Some Debating Points in Modern Russian and Czech Historiography], in Е. П. Серапионова (Отв. ред.), *Власть и общество: непростые взаимоотношения. Страны Центральной и Юго-Восточной Европы. Сборник статей* [The Power and Society: uneasy relationship. The Central and South-East European Countries. Collected Works], Москва, Институт славяноведения РАН, 2008, сс. 219-239; В. В. Марьина, *Клио на перепутье общественного развития (По материалам российского журнала «Новая и новейшая история» и чешского журнала «Современная история» 90-х годов XX века)* [Clio on Crossroad of the Public Development (According to Materials of Russian Magazine “Modern and Contemporary History” and Czech Magazine “Contemporary History” of the 90-s of the 20th century)], in Е. П. Серапионова (Отв. ред.), *Советский Союз и общественные трансформации в Восточной Европы. Сборник статей* [The Soviet Union and Public Transformations in Eastern Europe. Collected Works], Москва, Институт славяноведения РАН, 2008, сс. 421-445.

² Наталя Яковенко, *Вступ до історії* [Introduction to the History], Київ, Критика, 2007, сс. 317-318.

³ Иван Поп, *Номо totalitaricus? Історія Закарпаття: критичні роздуми* [Номо totalitaricus? The History of Transcarpathia: Critical Thoughts], in “Карпатський край. Історико-краєзнавчий журнал”, VI, 1996, № 5-7 (114), сс. 4-22; Павло Роберт Магочій, *Формування національної самосвідомості: Підкарпатська Русь (1848-1948)* [The Shaping of a National Identity: Subcarpathian Rus', 1848-1948], Ужгород, Полічка «Карпатського краю», 1994, сс. 142-153; *Нариси історії Закарпаття. У трьох томах* [Essays on the History of Transcarpathia. In three volumes], Том II (1918-1945), Відп. ред. і керів. авт. кол. проф. І. Гранчак, Закарпаття, Ужгород, 1995, сс. 467-575; Peter Švorc, *Zakliata krajina Podkarpatská Rus (1918-1946)* [Charmed Land: Carpathian Ruthenia (1918-1946)], Prešov, Universum, 1996, ss. 87-104; József Botlik, *Közgazgatás és nemzetiségi politika Kárpátalján. I. Magyarok, ruszinok, csehek és ukránok, 1918-1945* [Public administration and nationality policy in Transcarpathia. I. Hungarians, Ruthenians, Czechs and Ukrainians, 1918-1945], Nyiregyháza, Nyiregyházi Főiskola Ukrán és Ruszin Filológiai Tanszéke, 2005, oo. 352-388; Д. Поп, І. Поп, *Історія Підкарпатської Русі* [The History of Carpathian Ruthenia], Ужгород, Приватна друкарня Р. Повча, 2005, сс. 211-233; Андрей Пушкаш, *Цивілізація или варварство: Закарпатье 1918-1945* [Civilization or Barbarism: Transcarpathia

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⁴ Роман Офіцинський, *Політичний розвиток Закарпаття у складі Угорщини (1939-1944)* [Political development Transcarpathia within Hungary (1939-1944)], Київ, Інститут історії України Національної Академії Наук України, 1997, 244 с.; Василь Маркус, Василь Худанич (Ред.), *Закарпаття під Угорщиною. 1938-1944 рр.* [Transcarpathia under Hungary rule], Нью-Йорк-Чикаго-Ужгород, Гражда-Карпати, 1999, 232 с.; Fedinec Csilla (Szerkesztőben), *Kárpátalja 1938-1941. Magyar és ukrán* [Transcarpathia 1938-1941. Hungarians and Ukrainians], Budapest, REGIO, 2004, 277 old.; József Botlik, *Közigazgatás és nemzetiségi politika Kárpátalján. II. A Magyarországhoz történt visszatérés után 1939-1945* [Public administration and nationality policy in Transcarpathia. II. After the return to Hungary, 1939-1945], Nyiregyháza, Nyíregyházi Főiskola Ukrán és Ruszin Filológiai Tanszéke, 2005, 445 old.; Май Панчук, *Закарпаття в умовах угорської окупації та Другої світової війни (етнополітичний аналіз). Угорська окупація краю* [Transcarpathia under the Hungarian occupation in the Second World War time (ethno-political analysis). Hungarian occupation of the region], in "Історичний журнал", 2008, № 5, с. 82-99; Май Панчук, *Закарпаття в умовах угорської окупації та Другої світової війни (етнополітичний аналіз). Рух опору, входження до складу СРСР* [Transcarpathia under the Hungarian occupation in the Second World War time (ethno-political analysis). Resistance Movement, joining the USSR], in "Історичний журнал", 2008, № 6, с. 44-60; Иван Поп, *Подкарпатская Русь - Карпатська Україна - Kárpátaljai terület - Закарпатська Україна (1938-1945 гг.)* [Carpathian Ruthenia (1938-1945)], Ужгород, 2008, 104 с.; Ігор Мазурок, *Правове становище Закарпаття у 1939-*

Carpathian Ruthenia (Transcarpathian Ukraine) issue in bilateral foreign relations between the USSR and Czechoslovakia are situated at "the top of the cone".⁵

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(Ужгород, 26 травня 1995 р., Ужгород, Патент, 1995, с. 28-40; Richter Karel, *Podkarpatští rusíni v boji za svobodu* [Carpathian Rusyns in the Fight for Freedom], Praha, 1997, 117 s.; Омелян Довганич, *Ставлення чехословацького емігрантського уряду і президента Е. Бенеша до національно-визвольного руху і возз'єднання Закарпаття з Україною* [The Attitude of the Czechoslovak Emigrant Government and President E. Beneš to the National Liberation Movement and Reunification of Transcarpathia with Ukraine], in В. І. Худанич (Укладач), *Возз'єднання. Матеріали Міжнародної наукової конференції, присвяченої 55-річчю возз'єднання Закарпатської України з Україною (26 червня 2000 року, Ужгород, Україна)*, Ужгород, Мистецька лінія, 2001, с. 94-101; В. В. Марьина, *К событиям в Подкарпатской Руси (Закарпатской Украине) осенью 1944 - зимой 1945 года* [About Events in Carpathian Ruthenia (Transcarpathian Ukraine) during the Autumn 1944 – Winter 1945], in “Славяноведение”, 2001, № 3, с. 27-48; В. В. Марьина, *Закарпатская Украина (Подкарпатская Русь) в политике Бенеша и Сталина. 1939-1945 гг.* [Transcarpathian Ukraine (Subcarpathian Rus') in Beneš' and Stalin's Policy], Москва, Новый хронограф, 2003, 304 с.; Омелян Довганич, *Так ламалися долі репресованих закарпатців. Сторінками обласного тому «Реабілітовані історією»* [So the fate of the repressed Transcarpathians were broken. On the materials of a regional issue «Rehabilitated by History»], Ужгород, Гражда, 2008, с. 15-37; Jiri Plachý, Ivo Pejčoch, Prokop Tomek, *Občané Podkarpatské Rusi v boji za svobodu Československa 1938-1945* [Citizens of Subcarpathian Rus' in the Fight to Freedom of Czechoslovakia 1938-1945], Praha, Vojenský historický ústav, 2014, 12 s.; Іржі Плахи, Іво Пейчох, Прокоп Томек, *Громадяни Підкарпатської Русі в боротьбі за свободу Чехословаччини 1938-1945* [Citizens of Subcarpathian Rus' in the Fight to Freedom of Czechoslovakia during 1938-1945], Прага, Інститут військової історії, 2014, 12 с.; Ігор Шніцер, *Проблема Підкарпатської Русі (Закарпаття) у відносинах Чехословаччини і Радянського Союзу в 1943-1945 роках* [The Issue of Subcarpathian Rus' (Transcarpathia) in Relations between Czechoslovakia and the Soviet Union during 1943-1945], in *Закарпатська Україна: перспективи та реалії розвитку. Матеріали Всеукраїнської наукової конференції, присвяченої 65-й річниці возз'єднання Закарпатської України з Радянською Україною (Ужгород, 24 червня 2010 року)*, Ужгород, ТІМРАНИ, 2010, с. 70-77; Jiri Plachý, *Obyvatelé Podkarpatské Rusi v československém zahraničním odboji na Západě (1939-1945)* [Citizens of Subcarpathian Rus' in Czechoslovakian Foreign Resistance in the West (1939-1945)], in В. І. Фенич, І. О. Шніцер (Упорядники), *Підкарпатська Русь в роки Другої світової війни. Матеріали міжнародної наукової конференції 16-17 жовтня 2014 року.*: Ужгород, АУТДОР-ШАРК, 2015, с. 151-160; Milan Hauner, *Podkarpatská Rus (PR) v zahraničné-politické koncepcii prez. Beneše, 1938-1945* [Subcarpathian Rus' in Beneš' Foreign Political Concept. 1938-1945], in *Ibidem*, с. 161-180; David Hubený, *Podkarpatská Rus na jednáních československé Státní rady v Londýně* [Subcarpathian Rus' at the Meeting of the Czechoslovakian State

Therefore, our research objective is to present the Carpathian Rus' (Transcarpathian Ukraine) issue as a subject of bilateral Soviet and Czechoslovakian discussions, with particular emphasis on the policy of Beneš and Stalin. The documentary support of our investigation (represented by archive documents and materials, journals, memoirs and letters written by diplomats from those two countries) concerns the fate of Carpathian Ruthenia during and after the Second World War.⁶

Council in London], in *Ibidem*, c.181-200; Ján Stefanica, *Právne postavenie Podkarpatskej Rusi z pohľadu československej exilovej vlády v Londýne* [Legal Status of Carpathian Ruthenia from the Point of View of Czechoslovakian Exile Government in London], in *Ibidem*, c. 201-213; Ігор Шніцер, *Проблема Підкарпатської Русі (Закарпаття) у чехословацько-радянських відносинах в роки Другої світової війни* [The Issue of Carpathian Ruthenia (Transcarpathia) in the Czechoslovak-Soviet Relations during the Second World War], in *Ibidem*, c. 214-228; Zdenko Maršálek, *Rusíni a Ukrajinci v čs. vojenských jednotkách v zahraničí v letech druhé světové války* [The Rusyns and Ukrainians in Czechoslovakian Military Units Abroad During the Second World War], in *Ibidem*, c. 229-246; Jan Dvorák, *Útéky československých občanů do SSSR a jejich reflexe ve vzpomínkách pamětníků* [Czechoslovakian Citizens Escape to the USSR and its Depiction in Memoirs], in *Ibidem*, c. 247-254; І. Поп, Д. Поп, *Підкарпатська Русь в часи Другої світової війни (1939-1945)* [Carpathian Ruthenia during the Second World War (1939-1945)], in <http://prozak.info/mobile/IIstoriya/Pidkarpatska-Rus-v-chasi-Drugoyi-svitovoyi-vijni-1939-1945> (Accessed on 16.12.2016)

⁶ Edvard Beneš, *Reč o problému Podkarparském a jeho vztahu k Československé republice* [The Speech about the Carpathian Issue and his Relationship with Czechoslovakian Republic], Praha, 1934 (Reprints: *Podkarpatsko a jeho vztah k Československu /1996/*; *Edvard Beneš a Podkarpatská Rus /2006/*); Michael Winch, *Republic for a day. An Eye-Witness Account of the Carpatho-Ukraine Incident*, London, Robert Hale Limited, 1939, 287 p.; Володимир Бірчак, *Карпатська Україна: Спомини й переживання* [Carpathian Ruthenia: Memories and Uneasiness], Прага, «Нація в поході», 1940, 91 с.; E. Táborský, *Beneš and Stalin – Moscow 1943 and 1945*, in “Journal of Central European Affairs”, Vol. 13, July 1953, pp. 154-181; Ladislav Karel Feierabend, *Soumrak československé demokracie (Vzpomínky z londýnské vlády. Od jara 1944 po návrat do vlasti)* [Twilight of Czechoslovakian Democracy (Memories from the London-based Government. Since the spring of 1944 after returning to homeland)], Washington, D.C., 1967, p. 106-115; О. Довганич (Ред.), *Крізь пекло ГУЛАГів (Документи, спогади, нариси)* [Through the Hell of Gulags (Documents, memories, sketches)], Ужгород, Полічка «Карпатського краю», 1996, 185 с.; Володимир П. Стахів, *Про українську зовнішню політику, ОУН, Карпатську Україну та політичні вбивства Кремля* [About the Ukrainian Foreign Policy, OUN, Carpathian Ukraine and the Kremlin Political Murders], Гадяч, 2005, с. 163-225; О. М. Корсун, О. М. Пагіря (Упорядники),

HISTORICAL CONTEXT

Edvard Beneš (1884-1948) served as the President of Czechoslovakia twice, from 1935–1938 and 1939–1948. After the Munich Agreement, in the most difficult period of this state, in October 1938, “*the famous European democratic person*”⁷ resigned and emigrated. A few months later, in March 1939, when the German military dismembered and occupied Czechoslovakia, he decided to take the lead in the fight for the renewing of his country within its borders.

In June 1939, Beneš arrived in the USA⁸, but after a month he returned to Europe and began to organize the Czechoslovak resistance movement abroad. The traumatic dilemma⁹ of Beneš started at the same time. In the autumn of 1939, the temporary Czechoslovak Government in Exile or the Czechoslovak National Committee (further CNC)¹⁰ was not recognized by Great Britain and France. In addition, the implementation of the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact and its Secret Protocol was in progress. As it is known, its first victim was Poland, the “artificial creation of the Treaty of Versailles” as it was called by Hitler or the “monster-state” as it was named by People’s Commissar of Foreign Affairs of the USSR, Vyacheslav Molotov. On September 1, 1939, the German troops invaded Poland from the North, West, and South; on September 17, the Soviet troops started their attack from the East. On the ruins of a conquered country, after common parade of the Wehrmacht and Red Army’s victory, Berlin and Moscow signed the “Treaty of Friendship, Cooperation and Demarcation”.¹¹

These events influenced the choice of E. Beneš, who by searching found a

Закарпатські втікачі в СРСР: через табори ГУЛАГу і БУЗУЛУК до рідних Карпат. 1939–1949. Архівні документи і матеріали [Transcarpathian Escapees in the USSR: Through the Camps of Gulag and Buzuluk to native Carpathians. 1939-1949. Archive Documents and Materials], Карпати, Ужгород, 2011, 768 с.

⁷ “The University of Chicago Magazine”, 1938, November, pp. 17-18.

⁸ Milan Hauner, *Edvard Beneš v Chicagu a počátky druhého odboje* [Edward Beneš in Chicago and the Beginning of the Second Opposition], in “Historie a vojenství”, 1996, No 1, s. 31-55.

⁹ See: Milan Hauner, «*We Must Push Eastwards!*» *The Challenges and Dilemmas of President Beneš after Munich*, in “Journal of Contemporary History”, Vol. 44 (4), 2009, pp. 619-656.

¹⁰ Валентина Мар’яна, *Закарпатская Украина (Подкарпатская Русь) в политике Бенеша и Сталина...*, с. 19-20.

¹¹ Тімоті Снайдер, *Криваві землі: Європа поміж Гітлером та Сталіном: монографія* [Bloodlands: Europe Between Hitler and Stalin], Київ, Грані-Т, 2011, с. 125-127.

new ally: Joseph Stalin. It was evident that the former Czechoslovak president paid much attention to the cooperation with the USSR; he considered this country to be a liberator and a ruling power in Central-Eastern Europe. As his own land was a bridge between West and East, it could influence Stalin to eradicate "feudalism" in neighbouring Poland and Hungary.¹²

CARPATHIAN RUTHENIA, ITS TERRITORY AND POPULATION

From autumn 1939 till autumn 1944, the territory of Carpathian Ruthenia covered 12,146 square kilometres. Of the 671,512 (or 667,561) citizens who lived there, at that time, 498,290 (74.7%) were Rusyns.¹³ This small region in the centre of Europe had not been as ethnically homogenous as it was at that time. Nevertheless, the previous events that happened in the Republic ("of one day") of Transcarpathian Ukraine¹⁴, the authoritarian one-party rule, the concentration camps for political opponents, and the election for Sejm of February 1939¹⁵ influenced and modified the population's attitude and perception. Some Rusyns insisted on being Ukrainians, promoting national or communist views.¹⁶ While some of them turned to Nazi Germany (which later betrayed them in favor of Hungary, its new ally according to the Anti-Comintern Pact)¹⁷, those with communist opinions

¹² Пьотр Вандич, *Ціна свободи. Історія Центрально-Східної Європи від Середньовіччя до сьогодення* [The Price of Freedom. A History of East Central Europe from the Middle Ages to the Present], Київ, Критика, 2004, с. 288.

¹³ József Botlik, *op. cit.*, pp. 352, 387.

¹⁴ Michael Winch, *Republic for a day...*

¹⁵ See the memories of the Englishman Michael Winch (*Republic for a day...*), Galician Volodymyr Birchak (*Карпатська Україна: Спомини й переживання*) and Vikentiy Shandor – the Subcarpathian Rusyn of Ukrainian orientation (*Спомини, У 2-х томах; Нариси історії Закарпаття...*, Том II (1918-1945), сс. 283-293, 302-317.

¹⁶ Іван Лисяк-Рудницький, *Карпатська Україна: народ у пошуках своєї ідентичності* [Carpathian Ukraine: the Nation in the Search of its Identity], in І. Лисяк-Рудницький, *Історичні есе* [Historical Essays], В 2 т, Том 1, Київ, Основи, 1994, сс. 451-470; Павло Роберт Магочій, *Формування національної самосвідомості: Підкарпатська Русь...* сс. 138-141; Маріан Токар, *Політичні партії Закарпаття в умовах багатопартійності (1919-1939)* [Political Parties of Transcarpathia in a multi-party system], Ужгород, 2006, сс. 167-240.

¹⁷ Дмитро Злепко, *Українське питання у 1938–1939 роках і Третій Райх* [Ukrainian Issue during 1938-1939-s and the Third Reich], in *Записки наукового товариства імені Шевченка*, Том ССХХVIII: *Праці Історично-філософської секції*, Львів, 1994, сс. 249-308.

preferred the Bolshevik Soviet Union (that promised help and refuge to the “political emigrants” on its territory). All of these changes in the ethno-political identification of the eastern Slavic population of Carpathian Ruthenia were used – in different speculative and hybrid forms – by Czechoslovakia and the USSR, from September 1939 till June 1945.

EDVARD BENEŠ OPINIONS ABOUT CARPATHIAN RUTHENIA

Even before becoming the country's president, E. Beneš created his own vision of Transcarpathia, joining the position of the famous Tomáš Garrigue Masaryk. As Minister for Foreign Affairs of Czechoslovakia (1918-1935), he and his wife, Anna, left Prague and went to Carpathian Ruthenia to celebrate the 15th Anniversary of the population of this land and its decision to live with the Czechs and Slovaks in the Czechoslovak Republic (May 8, 1919). At a cinema in Uzhhorod, Beneš held a speech on the “*Problems of Transcarpathia and its belonging to the Czechoslovak Republic*”¹⁸, stating that “the fate of Carpathian Ruthenia has been finally decided. Carpathian Ruthenia belongs to you: Transcarpathian people and Czechoslovak Republic”.¹⁹ He considered Carpathian Ruthenia as a “bridge between East and West”, understanding that nationally and linguistically, it was stretching to the East, to the Russians and Ukrainians, although its political and social institutions were based on the principles of western democracy. For this reason, Carpathian Ruthenia could not see Czechoslovakia as a single national and cultural landmark.

However, the political aspect of the Transcarpathia issue had to be separated from the cultural particularities of the local population: the Russians, Ukrainians (*Little Russians*) or Rusyns (*Carpathian Rusyns*). From the political point of view, Carpathian Ruthenia belonged to the Czechoslovak Republic, eventually; “for centuries, its political affiliation had been decided”, so it could no longer return to Hungary, nor came under the domination of Ukraine or Russia because of the new status of Poland. Furthermore, considering the language, education, and religion, it should not have been ignored that the Russian citizens accounted for nearly 70% of the population (according to the 1930 census, when 447,000 of 727,000, or 63% were declared “Rus” and “Rusyns”). This fact was supposed to be emphasized in the discussions on the autonomy of Carpathian

¹⁸ Jaromír Horec, *Význam Benešovy cesty* [The meaning of Benes' path], in *Edvard Beneš a Podkarpatská Rus*, Užhorod, 2006, s. 40.

¹⁹Apud: *Edvard Beneš a Podkarpatská Rus*, Užhorod, 2006, s. 22.

Ruthenia. Even so, from the international point of view of Eastern Europe, on behalf of Russia and the Republic of Czechoslovakia, all Rusyns and "little Russians" were really less important than they seemed to be.

Regarding its historical development, geographical, and political possibilities and common European obligations on national particularities, renewal and liberation, Carpathian Ruthenia could benefit from the unification of states such as Czechoslovakia, Poland and Yugoslavia. In the view of E. Beneš, Carpathian Ruthenia had the mission to connect Czechoslovakia with Romania in such a way as to make possible the policy of the "Small Treaty".²⁰ At the end of his speech, the Czechoslovak politician stated that Carpathian Ruthenia is the example of how "a small country and a small part of a nation can speak loudly about its problems and about their solutions".²¹

In January 1939, living in London as a *persona non grata*, but tolerated as a political emigrant by the British authorities, the former Czechoslovak president painted for himself and for his inner circle the image of the post-war Central Europe: "Russia will play a great role ... [Hitler] will help us become neighbors [of Russia]. Thinking of all future catastrophes, Russia should be in Uzhhorod at last, [and] Prešov as nearest to Russia as it can be possible... The border with Russia should be as long as possible".²²

STALIN AND THE CARPATHIAN UKRAINE QUESTION

If the president Beneš had reacted promptly to solve the problem of Carpathian Ruthenia by granting its autonomy in 1919, maybe Stalin's plans might have been different. Unlike the Czechoslovak politician, Stalin was not so prolix upon the territory of Transcarpathia. Following the Munich Agreement, Moscow could not bear to react to rumors spread in the West about Germany, which was promoting among Ukrainians a policy similar to that in the Sudetenland. Western

²⁰ *Ibidem*, s. 37-38. This is so called the Little Entente (Czechoslovakia, Romania and Yugoslavia) created in 1926 for the opposition to Hungary and its policy concerning revision of borders after the Treaty of Trianon in 1920. Details about this direction of Beneš' foreign policy, see: Milan Hauner, *The Quest for the Romanian Corridor: The Soviet Union, Romania and Czechoslovakia during the Sudeten of 1938*, in Fritz Taubert (Ed.), *Mythos München*, Mnichov, 2002, pp. 39-77.

²¹ *Edvard Beneš a Podkarpatská Rus...*, s. 39.

²² Аруд: Иван Поп, *Подкарпатська Русь - Карпатська Україна - Kárpátaljai terület - Закарпатська Україна (1938-1945 гг.)...*, с. 57-58.

scholars wrote that Hitler, by manipulating the people's right to self-determination, was ready to help the Ukrainian separatist movement from Poland, Czechoslovakia, and the Soviet Union, intending to create an independent Ukraine.²³ As a matter of fact, Stalin expressed his point of view in his report to the XVIIth Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, on March 10, 1939: "A typical agitation, propagated by the Anglo-French and North American press about the Soviet Ukraine. The activists of these newspapers screamed that the Germans are moving to the Soviet Ukraine, that they have already occupied the so-called Carpathian Ukraine – with about 700,000 inhabitants – to which, no later than this spring, they will join the Soviet Ukraine, with a population of over 30 million people [...] Of course, it is absolutely possible to find in Germany some brainless who will join the elephant that is the Soviet Ukraine, to the puppy, which is the so-called Carpathian Ukraine". Talking seriously about it, in Stalin's opinion, was "ridiculous and ignorant".²⁴

HITLER'S VIEW ON CARPATHIAN UKRAINE

As it is known, before the attack of the USSR on June 22, 1941, the Third Reich used the Ukrainian map with the goal of enforcing the policy of "Thrust toward the East" (Drang Nach Osten), widening the "living space" (Lebensraum). At first, from autumn 1938 to spring 1939, Nazi Germany drew a separate project of Carpathian Ukraine, on the Carpathian Ruthenia autonomous territory of the sovereign Czechoslovak state, using the Organization of Ukrainian Nationalists and the local Ukrainian nationalists.

However, neither on March 15, 1939 in Khust, nor on June 30, 1941 in Lviv, the Nazis proclaimed the creation or re-establishment of the Ukrainian state.²⁵ In the first case, the "Ukrainian map" (as well as the Slovak) was used against the official regime in Prague, after Czechoslovakia was dismembered and the former

²³ The point of view of Western Europeans and North Americans before the Second World War on the Ukrainian issue, see Іван Патриляк, *Перемога або смерть! Український визвольний рух у 1939-1960 роках* (друге видання) [Victory or Death! Ukrainian Liberation Movement in 1939-1960. Second edition], Харків Клуб сімейного дозвілля, 2015, с. 10-24.

²⁴ Й. В. Сталин, *Вопросы ленинизма* [Questions of Leninism], Москва, 1947, с. 571-572; В. В. Марьина, *Закарпатская Украина (Подкарпатская Русь) ...*, р. 6-13.

²⁴ Володимир П. Стахів, *Про українську зовнішню політику*, с. 163-225; Дмитро Злепко, *Українське питання.*, с. 249-308.

²⁵ Іван Патриляк, *op. cit.*, pp. 21-22, 68-79.

authorities did not think to cooperate with the Ukrainian nationalist power. In the second case, the Ukrainian nationalist movement, consisting of former Polish and Czech citizens and some citizens of the USSR, was used by the Third Reich against Moscow. This time, Stalin lost: together with the remains of the former "pug" (Carpathian Ukraine) the Germans attacked "the elephant" (the USSR) on June 22, 1941.

CARPATHIAN RUTHENIA ISSUE IN THE DIALOGUE BETWEEN BENEŠ AND MAISKY

While he was in the USA, in his Chicago speech of June 8, 1939, E. Beneš called Carpathian Ruthenia as a part of Czechoslovakia: "We do not recognize and will not recognize either legally or politically any *fait accompli*. We will not recognize any occupation; that is why, at present time, our state continues to exist *de jure* for us. We do not recognize the Vienna Award concerning Slovakia and Carpathian Ruthenia, which was an unfair blow from Hungary".²⁶

The first meeting between Beneš and Maisky was held on September 22-23, 1939. The recordings made by interlocutors or their secretaries contain essential differences concerning the Carpathian Ruthenia issue. According to Maisky's affirmation of September 22 on "Ruthenia", Beneš would have suggested that its territory "will be a future part of the USSR". A day later, the Czechoslovak politician would have confirmed the USSR intervention in Poland, calling for regulation within the Western Ukraine problem and supporting the idea of a common border for USSR and Slovakia (which, at that time, was a puppet-state of Germany). He would not have been against the Soviet power in Czechoslovakia, as long as his country could be relieved from the German pressure. Regarding Carpathian Ukraine, he reaffirmed that it was supposed to be a part of the USSR, recognizing that, as President of Czechoslovakia, he considered it a "future part of the USSR"²⁷. Such information comes from a document sent by Molotov to Beneš in Moscow, in March 24, 1945. This text suggest the positive attitude of the Czechoslovak president towards the future of Carpathian Ruthenia, by including its territory in the USSR²⁸.

However, in Beneš' records of September 22, 1939 on the negotiations with Maisky, the approach is quite different. Speaking about the attack of the Red Army

²⁶ Milan Hauner, *op. cit.*, p. 31-35.

²⁷ *Документы внешней политики*, [Foreign Policy Documents] Т. XXII, Кн. 2, Москва, 1992, с. 122.

²⁸ В. В. Марьяна, *op. cit.*, p. 20.

on Lviv, Maisky emphasized that the Ukraine problem could be solved once and for all by including of the region in the Soviet Union. As he just smiled, but did not answer the question about Carpathian Ruthenia, Beneš declared: "it is our land and we have right over it... We can solve it in two ways: it will remain our or, eventually, if it (the USSR) will be our neighbour and required it, we would not be against it. But neither Poles, nor especially Hungarians should have it".²⁹

Thus, having two opposite versions of the dialogue between Czechoslovakia and the Soviet Union it is very important to investigate them and to identify their accuracy. Milan Hauner (an American historian, of Czech origin) and Valentina Maryina (a researcher from Moscow) trust Beneš version. Both historians credit the diary of Beneš secretary, Yaromir Smutnyy who witnessed those events. He affirmed that in one of the Beneš orders on the resistance movement it was written: "We insist to see Carpathian Ruthenia as a republic, if Russia is not the neighbour".³⁰

From October to November 1939, the rumours about Carpathian Ruthenia joining the USSR were spread in Western Europe. Diplomatic missions and special services in France and Great Britain found out that Russia was planning or at least was trying to occupy Carpathian Ruthenia within one month.³¹ While he was in Paris, in October 1939, Beneš was excited about the spheres of influence distributed between the USSR and Germany. Following the Berlin decision, Carpathian Ruthenia, Hungary, Slovakia, and the Protectorate of Bohemia and Moravia were recognized by Moscow.³²

²⁹ *Československo-sovětské vztahy v diplomatických jednáních. 1939-1945, Dokumenty* [The Czechoslovak-Soviet Relations at Diplomatic Meetings. 1939-1945, Documents], Díl. 1. *Březen 1939 - červen 1943*, Praha, 1998, s. 87.

³⁰ L. Otáholová, M. Cervinková (Ed.), *Dokumenty z historie československé politiky 1939-1943* [Documents on the History of Czechoslovakian Policy 1939-1943], Sv. 1. *Vztahy mezinárodno-diplomacie k politice československé emigrace na západě* [International and Diplomatic Attitude to Czechoslovakian Policy Concerning Emigration in the West], , Praha, 1966, № 69, № 288; *Češi a sudetoněmecká otázka. 1939-1945. Dokumenty* [The Czechs and Sudeten German Issue. 1939-1945. Documents], Praha, 1999, s. 20.

³¹ *Zápisy ze zasedání Československého národního výboru. 1939-1940* [The Minutes of the Session of the Czechoslovakian National Committee. 1939-1940], in *Dokumenty československé zahraniční politiky. Od rozpadu Česko-Slovenska do uznání československé prozatímní vlády. 1939-1940* [Documents of Czechoslovakian Foreign Policy. Since the Split of Czechoslovakia until the Recognition of Czechoslovakian Provisional Government], Praha, Příloha, 1999, ss. 83, 128.

³² J. Néměček, *Československá diplomatická mise v Moskvě (březen-prosinec 1939)* [Czechoslovakian Diplomatic Mission in Moscow (March-December 1939)]. Příloha 2,

During the next meeting with Ivan Maisky, on November 21, 1939, in London, E. Beneš complained about the unwillingness of England and France to support his plans, confirming that he could not imagine the existence of his country without the USSR as its neighbour, with the inclusion of Carpathian Ruthenia in Czechoslovakia or in the USSR.³³ Obviously, these discussions did not result in any legal measures.

THE SLOVAK STATE AND THE ISSUE OF CARPATHIAN UKRAINE

On September 16, 1939, the Soviet Union recognised *de facto* and *de jure* the Slovak Republic and established diplomatic relations with it. After the Slovak Ambassador's visit to Moscow, the Embassy of Czechoslovakia was closed in December 1939 and the Czechoslovak diplomat, Zdenek Firlinger, stopped his diplomatic relations with E. Beneš.³⁴ From that time to July 1941, Beneš and Maisky had no other meetings.³⁵

As it has been recently investigated, on September 19, 1939, Firlinger met the head of the Central European Department of the National Commissariat of Foreign Affairs (later, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs), A. M. Aleksandrov, and expressed his hope that the Carpathian Ukraine will be occupied by the Red Army, which corresponded to the "interests of future Czechoslovakia": a common border with USSR. According to his words, the "Czechoslovak government wanted this joining earlier, but the Polish territory prevented it".³⁶ On this issue, Firlinger did not talk with Beneš.³⁷

On February 2, 1940, the Soviet Ambassador, G. M. Pushkin, visited Bratislava and said that Slovakia is full of rumours about how the USSR would wish to "take Carpathian Ruthenia". These comments were spread even by the representatives of the highest authority of Slovakia. In particular, on May 9, 1940, the Minister of Foreign Affairs, F. Dyurchanskyy, talked about this problem during his meeting with the Soviet diplomat. He declared that his acquaintances were afraid of a full

in "Moderní dějiny", Praha, 4, 1996, s. 53.

³³ *Документы внешней политики...*, [Foreign Policy Documents] T. XXII, Кн. 2, с. 327.

³⁴ Milan S. Durica, *Dejiny Slovenska a slovákov* [The History of Slovakia and the Slovaks], Bratislava, Slovenské pedagogické nakladateľstvo, 1996, s.151; Валентина Марьяна, *Закарпатская Украина (Подкарпатская Русь) ...*, с. 19.

³⁵ Валентина Марьяна, *op. cit.*, p. 22.

³⁶ J. Němeček, *op. cit.*, s. 20-42.

³⁷ Валентина Марьяна, *op. cit.*, с. 19.

transformation of Slovakia into a Berlin's puppet, supporting instead a common Soviet-Slovakian border.³⁸ This last proposal was raised again, on July 16, 1940, in the dialogue between Dyurchanskyy and Pushkin.³⁹ However, according to the discussion of the German Ambassador in Moscow, F. Schulenburg, with the People's Commissar for Foreign Affairs, V. Molotov, on June 25, 1940, the USSR claimed just an insignificant part of "the only Ukraine" – Bukovina: "The Bukovina issue, a land where the predominant population is Ukrainians, was considered by the Soviet government as a correct one and timely, since the whole Ukraine was united; but the Soviet Union does not associate the Carpathian Ruthenia question with Hungary, considering that it is not actual".⁴⁰

EDVARD BENEŠ AND THE IDEA OF A RECONSTRUCTED POST-WAR CZECHOSLOVAKIA

From autumn 1939 till summer 1941, E. Beneš talked about Carpathian Ruthenia, emphasizing its natural appurtenance to Czechoslovakia. For example, in the Memorandum entitled *Czechoslovakia after war*, published in March 1940, he referred to the breach of Vienna Award (November 2, 1938) and annexation of Carpathian Ruthenia (March 1939) that led 500,000 Rusyns to join Hungary: "We leave the Carpathian Ruthenia issue for the future and wait for the development of events in Central Europe, suggesting that the Rusyns should manifest their will and opinion about it, as it was in 1918, when they were free to express their desire to be a part of Czechoslovakia".⁴¹ This idea was repeated in his lecture delivered at Oxford University, in March 1940: "The issue about

³⁸ *Ibidem*, p. 14-15.

³⁹ *Ibidem*, p. 16. See: В. В. Марьина, *Словаки в политике СССР и Германии* [The Slovaks in the Policy of the USSR and Germany], in *Восточная Европа между Гитлером и Сталиным. 1939-1941 гг.* [Eastern Europe between Hitler and Stalin. 1939-1941-s], Москва, 1999, сс. 198-240; В. В. Марьина, «Ворота на Балканы». *Словакия в геополитических конструкциях СССР и Германии. 1939-1941 гг.* ["The Gates to the Balkans". Slovakia in Geopolitical Constructions of the USSR and Germany. 1939-1941-s], in *Война и политика. 1939-1941* [The War and Policy. 1939-1941], Москва, 1999, с. 472-479.

⁴⁰ *СССР-Германия. 1939-1941 гг. Документы и материалы о советско-германских отношениях с сентября 1939 г. по июль 1941 г.* [Documents and Materials about the Soviet-German Relations since September 1939 until July 1941], Москва, Telex, 1983, с. 61; Валентина Марьина, *Закарпатская Украина (Подкарпатская Русь) ...*, с. 15.

⁴¹ *Češi a sudetoněmecká otázka. 1939-1945. Dokumenty* [The Czechs and Sudeten German Issue. 1939-1945. Documents], Praha, 1999, s. 46-47.

Carpathian Ruthenia will be solved, after the war, on free vote".⁴² We should underline the choice made by E. Beneš to use the ethno-historical term "Rusyns" in his lectures for the foreign audience.

The Czechoslovak leader compensated for the lack of dialogue with the USSR with the active relations with the West. In July 21, 1940, in London, E. Beneš founded an "advisory body of the President of the Republic" and an "auxiliary control body". As Ivan Pop affirms, Beneš' appointment was connected with the problem of his citizenship after the split of Czechoslovakia. For instance, the Hungarian diplomacy considered Beneš to be a citizen of Hungary, demanding his extradition as he led an "anti-Hungarian activity" on the territory of France (until June 25, 1940) and Great Britain. The above mentioned historian believed that the "requirements of Hungary were legal because, at that time, there have been no war between Hungary and Great Britain".⁴³

Consisting of 40 persons (later it was extended to 50 persons), the State Council created by Beneš existed till October 11, 1944.⁴⁴ On October 12, 1940, Pavlo Tsihere was appointed to represent the interests of the Slavonic population of Carpathian Ruthenia in the State Council. Russophile of the pro-Czechoslovak orientation, Rusyn by nationality, holding a Doctorate in Law (1936), he was the former head of the Agrarian Youth Union of Carpathian Ruthenia and the General Secretary of the Central Rusyn National Council (established on December 11, 1938).⁴⁵ In the State Council, Tsihere was responsible for "the financial and economic sector" (transformed, in 1942, into "the economic and social sector"),⁴⁶ while Yaromir Nechas – an old friend of the Rusyns – was invested as a Minister of State for Carpathian Ruthenia.

⁴² *Dokumenty z historie československé politiky 1939-1943*, Sv. 1. *Vztahy mezinárodno-diplomacie k politice československé emigrace na západě...*, [Historical Documents about Czechoslovakian Policy during 1939-1943. Vol. 1, International Diplomatic Relations to the Policy of Czechoslovakian Emigration to the West...], s. 84.

⁴³ Ivan Pop, *Djiny Podkarpatské Rusi v datech* [History of Carpathian Ruthenia in Dates], Praha, Libri, 2005, s. 406.

⁴⁴ Vojtěch Šustek, *Státní rada v Londýně v letech 1940-1941. Sborník archivních prací* [State Council in London during 1940-1941. Collected Archive Works], Č. 2, 1994, s. 241-244; David Hubený, *op. cit.*, cc.181-182.

⁴⁵ *Encyclopedia of Rusyn History and Culture...*, p. 501; *Енциклопедія історії та культури карпатських русинів...*, c. 795-796.

⁴⁶ *Zprávy Státní rady* [State Council Reports], č. 1, roč. 2, 1942, s. 1, 4; David Hubený, *op. cit.*, c. 183.

THE CARPATHIAN RUTHENIA ISSUE IN THE CONTEXT OF INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS IN CENTRAL EUROPE

While, in London, Tsibere assumed the role of protector of the Carpathian Ruthenia interests, this territory became a target for the Soviet diplomats in Europe. On November 4, 1940, Kulikov, the General Consul of the USSR in the capital of the German Protectorate of Bohemia and Moravia informed Moscow about the Prague Department delegation visit to the Rus' (in his interpretation "Russian") National Council of Carpathian Ruthenia. The delegation passed him the manifest *About Joining Carpathian Ruthenia to Russia*, signed by "the leader of Carpathian Ruthenia", I. Shlepytskyy, who asked to submit the text to "the Council of Ministers of the USSR".⁴⁷ However, before Hitler's invasion of the Soviet Union, Moscow adopted an officially neutral attitude toward this issue.

As for the Czechs, during the negotiations with the Poles on the creation of the Czechoslovak-Polish Conference (at the end of 1940), they rejected the idea that the Carpathian Ruthenia could be part of Hungary or Poland. Trying to conceal their interest in this territory, they declared: "We do not turn down Carpathian Ruthenia; but it is not because of the prestige. Carpathian Ruthenia joined us freely and we pledged to save this poor Slavonic people from being taken by Hungary by force. We fulfil this obligation. Secondly, Carpathian Ruthenia is the only land for us, which unites the Republic with Romania and the Black Sea region, in the South".⁴⁸

On January 12, 1941, all questions about Carpathian Ruthenia in the State Council were separated and submitted to the "Office dealing with problems of Carpathian Ruthenia" of which P. Tsibere was the head of for two years. Every month he received £75 as a member of the State Council and £10 as the Head of "Carpathian-Rus Office". Being supported in his work by Georgiy Falkovych (a Russian emigrant, Kuban by origin),⁴⁹ Tsibere founded, in London, the "Association of friends from Carpathian Ruthenia", tightening the relationships with the Carpathian-Rus emigration in the USA, Canada, and the Soviet Union.

On February 1-2, 1941, at the request of B. Lockhart, the British representative to the Provisional Czechoslovak Government in London, E. Beneš prepared a Memorandum entitled *Czechoslovakia's goals and the period of peace*. In that

⁴⁷ Валентина Марьяна, *Закарпатская Украина (Подкарпатская Русь)...*, с. 18-19.

⁴⁸ *Dokumenty z historie československé politiky 1939-1943*, Sv. 1. *Vztahy ...*, s. 205-206; Валентина Марьяна, *op. cit.*, p. 23.

⁴⁹ Роман Офіцинський, *Політичний розвиток Закарпаття...*, с. 130.

document, he stated that: "The Czechoslovak Republic considers Carpathian Ruthenia as an integrated (!) part of its territory and will never give it up. There was no information about this territory in the Munich Agreement. Some regions were taken from this autonomous part of the republic*. The Hungarian government signed it and recognized this territory to be a part of Czechoslovakia".⁵⁰

Article 2 of the Memorandum stipulated that, according to the Vienna Award, the following three main regions and cities were taken from Carpathian Ruthenia: Uzhhorod, Mukachevo, and Berehovo with all their suburbs. Therefore, "Carpathian Ruthenia cannot refuse either Uzhhorod or Mukachevo. Uzhhorod was always the capital of this province and a cultural centre of all Carpathian Rusyns and never had a Hungarian majority. Mukachevo was Rus' and Jewish, but never Hungarian; it was the economic centre of the whole province. Berehovo region, where the Hungarian majority lived, can be agreed".⁵¹

Finally, article 3 stated that "during the military entry into Carpathian Ruthenia, the Hungarian army occupied eastern Slovakia adjoining Carpathian Ruthenia, but which did not belong to this autonomous province. The Hungarian government, with the aim of annexation of these regions, joined them to Carpathian Ruthenia. And these regions should be returned back to Czechoslovakia".⁵²

However, until June 1941, the former President E. Beneš was going to redefine his belief that "Carpathian Ruthenia should belong to Czechoslovakia or Russia", as he had previously declared. In other words, he needed to take into account the "senselessness" but "friendly" relations of USSR with Germany, as well as the ability of the Soviet Union to conceal its interest in the Carpathian area.⁵³

* On the first Vienna Arbitration of Germany and Italy on November 2, 1938, to Hungary were transferred the southern parts of Slovakia and Subcarpathian Rus', the majority of which were Hungarians.

⁵⁰ *Češi a sudetoněmecká otázka. 1939-1945. Dokumenty* [The Czechs and the Sudeten German Issue. 1939-1945. Documents] Praha, 1999, s. 88; Валентина Марьина, *op. cit.*, p. 23. The text of the document, see: *Československo-sovětské vztahy v diplomatických jednáních. 1939-1945, Dokumenty*, Díl. 1. Brezen 1939 - červen 1943..., Doc. № 75, ss. 181; Валентина Марьина, *op. cit.*, p. 184.

⁵¹ *Československo-sovětské vztahy v diplomatických jednáních. 1939-1945, Dokumenty*, Díl. 1. Brezen 1939 - červen 1943..., Doc. № 75, s. 181-182; Валентина Марьина, *op. cit.*, p. 184-185.

⁵² *Československo-sovětské vztahy v diplomatických jednáních. 1939-1945, Dokumenty*, Díl. 1. Brezen 1939 - červen 1943..., Doc. № 75, s. 182; Валентина Марьина, *op. cit.*, p. 185.

⁵³ *Československo-sovětské vztahy v diplomatických jednáních. 1939-1945, Dokumenty*, D. 1, ss. 181-182.

CONCLUSIONS

The analysis of events unfolded between 1938 and 1941 leads to the following conclusions: 1) after the Munich Conference (September 1938), the critical diplomatic and political decisions towards the territories of Czechoslovakia led to its dismemberment. Unofficially supported by Germany, the Autonomous Carpathian Ruthenia would become the object of international negotiations, playing an interesting role in the bilateral discussions and statements between the Soviet Union and Czechoslovakia; 2) even if the Soviet Union representatives claimed they were not interested in the fate of this territory (called “pug” by Joseph Stalin, in jest), E. Beneš has upheld the right of Czechoslovakia over Carpathian Ruthenia; 3) since the beginning of the informal relations between the former Czechoslovak president, E. Beneš, and the Soviet ambassador in London, I. Maisky, it was not excluded that Carpathian Ruthenia could have become a future part of the USSR.