

## INTRODUCTION

The formation of the Carpatho-Ukrainian state was the result of many years of activity of the Ukrainian patriotic forces in all spheres of social and political life. However, we should mention that the short-lived existence of an autonomous, and subsequently independent Transcarpathian region (Subcarpathian Rus', Carpathian Ukraine) coincided with the acute political crisis in Central Europe that took place on the eve of World War II. It is natural that the international factor made its mark on the socio-political processes that took place in Europe in general, and in Czechoslovakia and Transcarpathia, as an integral part of it, in particular. Despite the complexity of the international situation at that time, Transcarpathia won the autonomous rights and built its statehood in alliance with the Czechs and Slovaks.

Clarification of these and some other problems, an objective and comprehensive study of the place and role of Carpathian Ukraine in the context of the Central European political crisis before the Second World War deserves a special research. The situation of Carpathian Ukraine in the late 1930s should be considered in two respects: as a subject of political processes that took place in Central Europe on the eve of World War II, and as one of the stages of the struggle of Ukrainian people for the restoration of their statehood, taking into account such fact that here we can talk only about a separate part of the Ukrainian lands.

Twenty years of being a part of the democratic Czechoslovak Republic has created optimal conditions for the diverse national and cultural development of Transcarpathia, though it is not necessary to idealize it. Owing to the active work of the Ukrainian parties, societies and individual socio-cultural figures, the national consciousness of the people in Transcarpathia grew up, the people who, in fact, underwent a peculiar evolution from the Hungarian Ruthenians to the Transcarpathian Ukrainians, to the self-awareness of their identity, to the idea of political unity with all Carpathian people.

Czechoslovakia's attitude to Transcarpathia and to the Ukrainian problem in general differed significantly from the policy on the Ukrainian idea of other European countries, especially Poland. This fact undoubtedly contributed to A. Voloshyn's clear Ukrainian course, albeit with a focus on German patronage, and the Transcarpathian autonomous governments received comprehensive support from Ukrainians in Eastern Galicia, European countries, the United States and Canada, who saw in that autonomous state the embryo of united Ukraine. Researching of this problem has got an indisputably scientific meaning. The small branch of the Ukrainian people, having received material and moral support from the Ukrainian emigration, causing wonder in all over the world, became able to carry out to some extent their own internal and foreign policy, which resulted in an attempt to form a Ukrainian statehood. This was not possible for the Ukrainians who were under totalitarian regime in the USSR, who were in Poland and Romania.

The relevance of this study is also determined by the need to debunk the claims of modern neo-Ruthenian theorists who question the region's belonging to Ukraine. They deny in every way the regularity of the political processes that took place here in 1918-1919 and, especially in the late 1930s, they attempt to prove that the idea of independence of Carpathian Ukraine was brought to Transcarpathia from outside, in particular from Galicia. The sources from a number of national and foreign archives have arguably proved all the baselessness and pseudoscience character of such separatist interpretations. On the contrary, these sources convince that Carpathian Ukraine was a creation of local factors, although it was influenced by a number of international and internal factors.

The chronological boundaries of the research cover the period from September- October 1938, when the political forces of Transcarpathia intensified their activity in the struggle for autonomous rights and soon acquired them, until the end of March 1939 – the proclamation of independence of Carpathian Ukraine and the initial period of occupation of the land by the troops of the

Horthy's Hungary. In order to trace the regularity and systematic nature of certain processes (the activities of the Hungarian irredentism in Transcarpathia), an excursion into the past is made. In 1938-1939, the Ukrainian people of Transcarpathia once again became convinced that only an independent Ukraine could guarantee the security of the region. On this basis, it will be undisputed that the existence of Carpathian Ukraine as an autonomous, and subsequently independent state has accelerated the process of reunification of all Ukrainian lands in a single state mechanism.

An attempt to answer the above-mentioned problematic questions gives an opportunity to fill a significant gap in the history of Ukraine, allows us to approach in a new way a number of problems of national history.