

From the North-East Felvidék to Podkarpatská Rus (Kárpátalja), with Special Regard to the Activity of Masaryk and Beneš

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In 1918–1919 the purest region of the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy joined to the Czechoslovak Republic from the Hungarian Kingdom. At the first sight this was a simple proceeding. But according to our opinion in fact, the 1918–1919 developments in the history of the North-Eastern Felvidék were influenced four factors: 1. The conflicting efforts of countries intending to keep (Hungary) and to acquire (Czechoslovakia, Romania, Poland and various Ukrainian state formations) the region. 2. The people's assemblies of the Ruthenian and Hungarian populations, with their diverging (ukranophile, hungarophile, czechophile) orientations and their searching for allies. 3. The activity of the Ruthenian emigration in the US, strongly favouring one possible scenario (i. e. the Czechoslovakian one). 4. The great powers' decision about the fate of the region at the Versailles peace talks. Our paper surveys a seemingly most important element of this complex process, the activity of the Czechoslovak state founders Masaryk and Beneš; we also intend to present how their work resulted in the North-East Felvidék becoming Kárpátalja.

[History of Czechoslovakia; History of Podkarpatská Rus; Masaryk; Beneš]

Introduction, or Defining the Subject

A paper's title usually provides the reader with an immediate direction about its contents and subject matter. In this case, however, the title deserves some supplementary explanation. One such addendum concerns the naming of the discussed area or region. Hungarian historiography about the modern period tends to extremely neglect the precise definition of its concepts, especially about geographical names. In

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addition, Hungarian historiography does not incorporate the terminological results of historical and political geography in its discussions of the Carpathian basin.¹ This is especially true about the so-called historical regions: Délvidék, Erdély (Transylvania), etc. The region of Kárpátalja would surely deserve a paper summarizing a debate and its lessons, to clarify which term should be used to the region in various periods. In the absence of such a study, I decided to use the terminology that seemed most correct to me from the several options, including Ruthenia and Carpathian-Ukraine.² According to this, the region which consisted of the Ung, Bereg, Ugocsa, and Máramaros provinces of the Dualist era was named Kárpátalja by the creators of the Versailles Peace Treaty in 1919. As to the times before 1918, the unified Carpathian-basin concept of Hungarian geography dictates that the region is referred to as (the) North-East Felvidék.³ In other words, we are on the opinion that using the term Kárpátalja regarding times before 1918 is incorrect.

The other addendum is the following: in our view, the 1918–1919 developments in the history of North-Eastern Felvidék were influenced four factors:

1. The conflicting efforts of countries intending to keep (Hungary) and to acquire (Czechoslovakia, Romania, Poland and various Ukrainian state formations) the region.
2. The people's assemblies of the Ruthenian and Hungarian populations, with their diverging (ukranophile, hungarophile, czechophile) orientations and their searching for allies.
3. The activity of the Ruthenian emigration in the US, strongly favouring one possible scenario (i. e. the Czechoslovak one).
4. The great powers' decision about the fate of the region at the Versailles peace talks.

¹ See L. T. VIZI, *Trianon 100 Years Later. From Border Revision to National Cooperation (1920–2010)*, Budapest 2018.

² Zselicky lists 13 possible terms in the introduction of his work B. ZSELICZKY, *Kárpátalja a cseh és a szovjet politika érdekerében 1920–1945*, Budapest 1998, p. 7.

³ G. CSÜLLÖG GÁBOR, A Felvidék Magyarország történeti térszerkezetében, in: S. FRISNYÁK – A. GÁL (eds.), *Dr. Peja Győző emlékkönyv*, Szerencsen 2007, pp. 201 to 225.

Within the confines of our paper, this study details a seemingly most important element of this complex process, the activity of the Czechoslovak state founders Tomáš Garrigue Masaryk and Edvard Beneš; we also intend to present how their work resulted in the North-East Felvidék becoming Kárpátalja.

Views of the Czechoslovak Emigration on the North-East Felvidék, 1915–1918

The program of the group of Czechoslovak émigrés headed by Masaryk and Beneš formed through the course of WWI.⁴ A focal point was the autumn of 1915, when Masaryk drafted a memorandum on the objectives of the Czechoslovak National Council.⁵ This manifesto was published on November 14, 1915 at the same time in Switzerland, France, Russia and in the US. Territorial goals were summarized as follows: “From the Allied victory we expect the complete independence of the Czech nation and the unification of actual Czechia with Moravia and Slovakia, under the same government.”⁶

Another important rendition of the émigrés’ goals was communicated by Beneš, publishing his book *Détruisez l’Autriche-Hongrie! Le martyre des Tchéco-Slovaques à travers l’histoire* in the autumn of 1917 in Paris.⁷ Entente Powers were urged to “crush Austria-Hungary” and he claimed that “the Czechoslovak state must emerge from their ruins, constituted by Czechia, Moravia, Silesia and Slovakia”.⁸

As to the Eastern borders of the Czechoslovak state, he wrote as follows: “the Czechoslovakian state shall be bordered by Russia in the Carpathians, the two forming an impenetrable barrier against Germany”.⁹

⁴ L. GULYÁS, Egy sikeres emigráció anatómiája. E. Benes 1914–1918, in: AETAS, 2–3, 1996, pp. 103–118. See more L. GULYÁS, “ZÚZZÁTOK SZÉT AUSZTRIA-MAGYARORSZÁGOT” Avagy a Masaryk-Benes-féle csehszlovák emigráció érvrendszerének első szintézise, in: *Limes*, 4, 2000, pp. 35–50.

⁵ F. HADLER (hrsg.), *Weg von Österreich! Das Weltkrieg von Masaryk und Benes im Spiegel ihrer Briefe und Aufzeichnungen aus des Jahren 1914–1918*, Berlin 1995, p. 22, Doc. No. 97.

⁶ G. G. KEMÉNY, *Iratok a nemzetiségi kérdés történetéhez Magyarországon a dualizmus korában. VII. kötet 1914–1916*, Budapest 1999, p. 77.

⁷ In Hungarian see: L. GULYÁS (ed.), *Zúzzátok szét Ausztria-Magyarországot!*, Documenta Historica 5, Szeged 1992.

⁸ *Ibidem*, p. 45.

⁹ *Ibidem*.

As obvious from the above excerpts, Masaryk and Beneš considered the Carpathians to be within Russian sphere of interest. Through secret diplomatic channels, the leaders of emigration were kept informed on Russian military goals. Thus they were aware that one war objective of Russia was to acquire the Ukrainian-populated¹⁰ regions of the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy (Galicia, Bukovina and the North-Eastern Felvidék).¹¹ Masaryk based on his views on regionalism in accordance with this.¹² His memoirs relate the following: “While Russia was winning, it needed to be considered whether they were to claim Kárpátalja after invading Eastern Galicia.”¹³

The question arises: When and how the Czechoslovakian emigration leaders changed their mind about the North-Eastern Felvidék? Masaryk’s memoirs provide the following answer: “Russia being defeated made it possible for Kárpátalja to belong to our republic.”¹⁴ The citation clearly suggests that as Russia was weakened by the events of 1917 (the revolution in February, the failure of Kerensky’s offensive, etc.), Masaryk and Beneš began to consider the claiming of the North-Eastern Felvidék as a possibility.

In May 1917, Masaryk visited Russia and stayed until April 1918. During his time in Saint Petersburg, Moscow and Kiev, he met politicians of various ranks to move forward the Czechoslovak cause, he held public lectures, and wrote newspaper articles. The future of the North-East Felvidék also came up in some of these meetings: “In Russia and especially in Ukraine, I had to address the plan [of the region being annexed to the Czechoslovak state], as several Ukrainian leaders discussed with me the future of all little-Ruthenians (Ukrainians). They had no objections against Kárpátalja becoming ours.”¹⁵

During his stay in Russia and while travelling to the US from Vladivostok, Masaryk dedicated another book to his views on the reorganization of Europe after the war, including the formation of a Czechoslo-

¹⁰ Leaders of the Russian Empire clearly considered the Ruthenians to be Ukrainians.

¹¹ *Az Első Világháború*, Budapest 1980, p. 345.

¹² T. SEATON-WATSON, *Masaryk in England*, New York 1943, pp. 44–45.

¹³ T. G. MASARYK, *A világháború*, Budapest 1990, p. 286.

¹⁴ *Ibidem*.

¹⁵ *Ibidem*.

vak state.¹⁶ The volume was published in London in late 1918, titled *New Europa, the Slav Standpoint*.¹⁷

In this work, he wrote the Ruthenians of the North-Eastern Felvidék as follows: “*The Ruthenians in Hungary have recently proposed a new plan. Their representatives in the US favour the unification of their nation in the Czechoslovakian state, becoming an autonomous part of the country. Naturally, this proposal needs to be approved by the population in Hungary first. These Hungarian Ruthenians – as they are called in America – are cruelly oppressed by the Hungarians; their numbers are around a half million.*”¹⁸

It seems reasonable that Masaryk changed his views from 1915 to 1916, as he claimed in 1918 that the region could be annexed to the Czechoslovak state.

Masaryk and the Ruthenian Emigration in the US

Masaryk arrived at Vancouver, Canada, on April 29, 1918, from where he travelled to Chicago. During the next weeks, he contacted the main American organizations of the Czech, Slovak and Ruthenian emigrants and discussed with their leaders. Meanwhile, he also met influential personalities of the American political scene, most notably president Wilson.¹⁹

Let us examine how relations between Masaryk and the Ruthenians in America developed during these months. Prior to WWI, large numbers of Ruthenians had emigrated the US, mainly to the east coast. Their organizations became politically active during 1918, with the People’s Council of American Rusyns soon emerging as a new major entity, formed by the merging of two Greek Catholic organizations in Homestead on July 23, 1918. Nikolai Chohey was elected as president, while lawyer Gregory Zhatkovych drafted the program of the organization. His program involved three options as to the future of the North-East Felvidék:

¹⁶ Before the publication of his book during the autumn in London, Masaryk must have worked on the manuscript while still in the US, this is how the Ruthenians’ potential joining the Czechoslovak state could be included in the text. The “official” Ruthenian standpoint was communicated in early November 1918.

¹⁷ T. G. MASARYK, *New Europa: The Slav Standpoint*, London 1918.

¹⁸ Translated from the Hungarian edition, see T. G. MASARYK, *Az Új Európa. A szláv álláspont*, Košice 1923, p. 100.

¹⁹ For details on his American activity, see MASARYK, *A világorradalom*, pp. 235–344.

1. Total independence for the Ruthenians in Hungary, a sovereign Ruthenian state.
2. Unification of Ruthenians in Hungary and the Galician and Bukovina Ukrainians, and annexation of this territory to one of the Slavic states, with granted autonomy (it remains unspecified which Slavic state could that be).
3. Keeping the status quo, meaning that the North-Eastern Felvidék remains within Hungary but with granted autonomy.²⁰

With the help of a Democrat politician, Zhatkovych met president Wilson in early October of 1918, then had meetings with Masaryk, where the latter suggested to Zhatkovych that the Ruthenians could side with the Czechoslovak state and gain full autonomy.

Meanwhile, Masaryk worked to form an organization encompassing all Central European emigrants except Hungarians and Germans. On November 3, 1918 he wrote the following to Beneš, who was in Paris at the time: *"This would be a constructive organization of small peoples. Such is my idea and plan."*²¹ He continued with founding the Central European Democratic Union, which was joined by the People's Council of American Rusyns. On November 7, Masaryk informed Beneš as follows: *"We have the favour of the Hungarian Rusyns."*²²

On October 23, 1918, members of the Central European Democratic Union signed a Charta of independent central European peoples. On November 12, 1918, the People's Council of the American Rusyns organized a "referendum" in Scranton, with the participation of members of the Ruthenian organizations in the US. To this day, the exact circumstances and process of this referendum are unknown to history.²³ However, the results are known and must suffice here: 67.2 %

²⁰ About the formation and program of the organization see P. R. MAGOCSI, *The Shaping of National Identity Subcarpathian Rus 1848–1948*, Cambridge, Massachusetts 1978, pp. 77–78.

²¹ Z. ŠOLLE, *Masaryk a Beneš ve svých dopisech z doby pařížských mírových jednání v roce 1919, II. Seria B. T. G. Masaryk Ed. Benešovi*, November 7, 1918, Praha 1994, pp. 124 to 125.

²² Ibidem, pp. 133–136.

²³ The Hungarian historiography of the interbellum period refers to a weightless and suspicious referendum, see for example: G. DARÁS, *A Ruténföld elszakításának előzményei*, Budapest 1936, pp. 107–108.

voted in favour of joining the Czechoslovak state and 28.5 % voted for being annexed to the Ukrainian state. 2.5 % favoured a separate Ruthenian state, while 0.8 % voted for remaining within the borders of Hungary.²⁴

One day after the referendum, Zhatkovych met Masaryk in Washington and handed him the minutes from Scranton, and on November 15 he informed Wilson about the results of the referendum. This latter information greatly shaped the standpoint of the American peace delegation at the Versailles Peace Conference.

The result of the Scranton referendum was a great success for Masaryk, providing a crucial argument in favour of annexing the North-Eastern Felvidék to the Czechoslovak state. As we will see, this argument was utilized by Beneš at every possible occasion during the Paris Peace Conference.

Beneš and the Issue of North-Eastern Felvidék at the Peace Conference

On October 28, 1918, the Czechoslovak state was proclaimed in Prague. The Slovaks joined on October 30 in Turócszentmárton, and the cease-fire agreements of November 1918 put an end to the First World War. These developments eliminated the relevance of the emigration led by Masaryk and Beneš. However, Beneš stayed in Paris to work as the foreign minister of the first Czechoslovak government, which was set up on October 28, 1918 in Prague. During the following months, he worked in this position to establish the borders of the Czechoslovak state.²⁵ His Czechoslovak delegation handed over 11 written memoranda at the Peace Conference when they convened in January 1919.²⁶

Memorandum No. 2 and No. 6 are most relevant to our subject matter. The seven chapters of memorandum No. 2 summarize the Czechoslovak territorial demands, with chapter 4 dedicated to the issue of

²⁴ I. VIDNYÁNSZKY, *Önrendelkezési elvek és Kárpátalja állami hovatartozásának kérdése (1918–1919)*, in: Cs. FEDINEC – M. VEHES, *Kárpátalja 1919–2009*, Budapest 2010, pp. 39–44.

²⁵ L. GULYÁS, *Edvard Beneš. Közép-Európa koncepciók és a valóság*, Máriabesnyő–Gödöllő 2008, pp. 144–177.

²⁶ The full text of the memorandums is published in R. H. RASCHHOFFER, *Die tschechoslowakischen Denkschriften für die Friedenskonferenz von Paris 1919–1920*, Berlin, 1938.

the Ruthenians.²⁷ Memorandum No. 6 was titled “The problem of the Ruthenians in Hungary”.²⁸ As chapter 4 consists of only three pages, we proceed with the analysis of the more extensive memorandum No. 6.

Beneš listed the statistics of Ruthenians in the first section of the memorandum and pointed out that while the Hungarian census of 1,900 had 429 thousand Ruthenians in register, data from the Greek Catholic church refer to 488,000. The 60,000 difference was proof, as Beneš explained, that the official Hungarian statistics distorted the number of Ruthenians, presenting them as less numerous than their actual numbers in the discussed region.

The second part of memorandum No. 6 presented the “ethnic, political and social situation” of the Ruthenians. First the geographical positions of the Ruthenian territories were discussed, where they lived and in which provinces, then he claimed the following: “*Emigration was especially high in Ruthenian territories. Reasons include the oppressive policies of the Hungarians and the complete abandonment on Budapest’s part, as the Hungarian ruling elite regarded the territory as dangerous.*”²⁹ Beneš also blamed the Hungarian state for the fact that illiteracy among Ruthenians was 85.5 %.

As it can be inferred, Beneš sketched up the darkest possible picture about the Hungarian rule, with the Hungarian state oppressing the Ruthenians, who are poor, illiterate, and emigrating to escape the oppression.

The third section of the memorandum was titled “The possible solution of the problem”; Beneš presented four options as to the future of the region:

1. The Ruthenians join the Russian state.
2. The Ruthenians join the Polish state.
3. The Ruthenians remain within Hungary.
4. The Ruthenian-inhabited areas are annexed to the Czechoslovak state.

²⁷ RASCHHOFFER, pp. 56–58.

²⁸ Ibidem, pp. 206–223.

²⁹ Ibidem, p. 210.

About the first option, Beneš claimed that the majority of the Ruthenians are unwilling to be annexed to Poland, which is not preferred by the Polish politicians either (while he remained silent about a portion of Polish leaders actually thinking otherwise).

He argued about the second scenario that the Ruthenians think “*the Russians should not descend on the far side of the Carpathians*”.³⁰ In our view, the fallacy here is obvious, as the few Ruthenian intellectuals were not considering global politics or geopolitical aspects. By mentioning the Russians possibly showing up within the Carpathian basin, Beneš in fact played upon the fears of the Entente leaders.

As to the third solution, Beneš claimed that the Ruthenians were unlikely to leave the Hungarian state or were at least unwilling to do so. However, the Hungarian state kept mercilessly oppressing them before and after the war, Beneš argued.

He claimed that the fourth option seemed to be acceptable. His argument was as follows: “*the Slovaks are neighbours of the Ruthenians, they share the same race, and the dialect [Slovak] is close to Ruthenian. In Ruthenian provinces the two populations are mixed and live in similar social and economic situations, their interests being completely the same. In geographical terms, both regions are similar and homogeneous*”.³¹

Some lines later Beneš even stated with certainty that “*Ruthenians in Hungary are a nation closely related to the Slovaks and living in very similar conditions, they have a very close connection and their joining the Czechoslovakian Republic would pose no difficulty*”.³² Being aware of Entente rhetorics, Beneš immediately added that “*annexing the territory to the Czechoslovak Republic will be possible in case the Ruthenians either accept it or they demand it themselves*”.³³

Right after the above sentences, he also concluded that the Ruthenians living in the US had already formed their standpoint: “*an autonomy status within the territory of the Czechoslovak state would be acceptable*”.³⁴ The memorandum ends with the following idea: “*We have identified the*

³⁰ Ibidem, p. 211.

³¹ Ibidem, p. 213.

³² Ibidem.

³³ Ibidem.

³⁴ Ibidem, p. 215.

essence of the matter and the possible solutions. These are worth considering and making the decision accordingly.”³⁵

Leaders of the peace conference decided that, beside the submission of written demands, minor allies (Romanians, South-Slavs, Czechoslovaks) can appeal in spoken form as well, and on the highest level. So, it came to pass that Beneš explained the Czechoslovak demands speaking before the Supreme Council on February 5.

The Czechoslovak Foreign Minister spoke for 3.5 hours about his country’s situation and their territorial demands.³⁶ During this long speech, he mentioned the issue of Kárpátalja as well. His views were introduced with the following: “Neighbouring the Slovaks, there is a region to the East, populated by Ruthenians. These Ruthenians originate from the same tribe as the Eastern Galicians, from whom the Carpathians separate them. They live near the Slovaks, in similar social and economic conditions – what’s more, an intermediate dialect has also emerged between the languages of the two peoples.”³⁷

Then he stated that Ruthenians did not intend to belong to the Hungarian state and have thus offered to join the Czechoslovak state. His explanation continued as follows: “It would be unjust to leave them at the Hungarians’ mercy, and though the issue was not among the Czechoslovak demands at first, [he] took up presenting their cause before the Conference.”³⁸

Two dishonesties can be detected here: on the one hand, the Károlyi Government gave the region autonomy in December 1918. On the other hand, the Czechoslovak memorandums submitted to the peace conference between December 1918 and January 1919 did include memorandum No. 2 and No. 6 that addressed the future of Ruthenian territories. In other words, the Czechoslovak state had expressed their claim for the region by drafting the mentioned written memorandums.

The Czechoslovak minister also highlighted in his speech the following: if Eastern Galicia were to belong to Russia, the possibility of Kárpátalja becoming part of Russia would also emerge, meaning that

³⁵ Ibidem.

³⁶ The full text of Beneš’s speech is published in *Paper Relating to the Relations of United States 1919 the Paris Peace Conference* (hereinafter only PCC), Vol. 1–12, Washington 1942–1947, Vol. 3, pp. 876–887.

³⁷ PCC, Vol. 3, p. 887.

³⁸ Ibidem.

the Russian state would spread to within the Carpathians. However, if Galicia were to be annexed to Poland, the Polish state would not hold any claim to Kárpátalja. Which left two options, he argued, the Ruthenians “*have to become either Hungarian or autonomous. If the latter happens, the Ruthenians intend to side with the Czechoslovak state*”.³⁹

Beneš basically repeated the arguments of memorandum No. 6 in his spoken petition, using the following panels: Hungarians are oppressing the Ruthenians, a Russian annexation would result in serious danger, the Ruthenians do not intend to remain within the Hungarian state, the only acceptable solution is to annex them to Czechoslovakia, which is supported by the Ruthenians themselves.

After hearing Beneš, the Supreme Council decided to set up a committee to examine the Czechoslovak demands. This is how the “Committee to Investigate the Czechoslovak Territorial Demands” came to be.⁴⁰

The first session of the Czechoslovak committee took place on February 27, 1919,⁴¹ involving two Hungary-related agenda points: one was the delineation of Slovakia’s borders, the other was the Ruthenian issue, the question of Kárpátalja. A lively debate emerged among the delegates regarding the Slovakian-Hungarian border, lasting for several weeks.

However, the other agenda point was discussed and resolved during this meeting. Seymour, one of the American delegates initiated the discussion of the Ruthenian issue with the following proposal. The American diplomat stated that he is in favour of the solution according to which Ruthenian-populated territories should be annexed to the Czechoslovak state and granted autonomy. However, he also listed the necessary conditions: first, Czechoslovak politicians were to guarantee to the peace conference that they would indeed grant the Ruthenians autonomy. Second, “[i]t must be confirmed that the Rusyns are in favour of this solution”.⁴²

Salvaggo-Raggi, an Italian delegate and vice-chair of the committee, was on the contrasting opinion that the Ruthenians should be

³⁹ Ibidem.

⁴⁰ Ibidem.

⁴¹ The minutes are published in M. ÁDÁM – M. ORMOS, *Francia diplomáciai iratok a Kárpát-medence történetéből 1918–1919*, Budapest 1999, pp. 154–158.

⁴² Ibidem, p. 156.

annexed to that neighbour to which they are connected through economic, strategic and political interests, i. e. the Hungarians. In reply to this, British committee member Sir Eyre Crowe pointed out to the less than well-informed vice-chair that the committee was intending to prevent the territory from belonging to Hungary, or else this would counter the connection between the Romanian and Czechoslovak states. General Le Rond, a French delegate argued as follows: *“another solution could be that the Rusyns are annexed to the Romanians”*. Then he continued with the self-countering argument that there was a religious contrast between the Greek Catholic Rusyns and Orthodox Romanians, which *“could be a source of conflicts. This leaves the solution suggested by the American delegates, namely the annexation of Rusyns to the Czechoslovaks. This is not perfect, but it is the most reasonable”*.⁴³

French delegate Laroche reminded the committee that the idea of annexing the territory to Poland had also emerged. However, he also concluded his talk supporting the Czechoslovak option.

In contrast to the forming American-English-French standpoint, Salvaggio-Raggi made a last attempt and argued that the Hungarian solution should not be ruled out without investigating first. He supported his idea with the following: *“By annexing the Rusyns to Czechoslovakia, all transport between Hungary and Poland would be disrupted. This could result in a huge upheaval in the country’s [Hungary’s] economy.”*⁴⁴

Sir Joseph Cook, the other British delegate replied stating that *“the truth of the matter is to decide whether we intended to push the Rusyns into friendly or hostile treatment. The answer must be obvious, as the Rusyns would rather side with the Czechoslovaks than with the Hungarians”*.⁴⁵

Cook’s declaration put an end to the debate, with French chair of committee Jules Gambon concluding that *“the majority of the committee is in favour of the unification of Rusyns and Czechoslovaks, thus the issue is in theory resolved”*. Then he asked Salvaggio-Raggi if he had any objections to this. The Italian delegate maintained that he *“was still on the opinion that this solution is a wrong one; but all in all, [he] did not wish to submit a formal objection to a solution that is unfavourable for a hostile state”*.⁴⁶

⁴³ Ibidem, p. 157.

⁴⁴ Ibidem.

⁴⁵ Ibidem.

⁴⁶ Ibidem.

Therefore, the fate of the North-Eastern Felvidék was decided and the territory was annexed to the Czechoslovak state. The decision was approved by higher entities of the Peace Conference during March and April of 1919.

Masaryk and the Kárpátalja Issue “on the Field”

While Foreign Minister Beneš was working successfully in Paris toward the annexation of Kárpátalja to Czechoslovakia, Masaryk returned to Prague on December 20, 1918, took the presidential office of the new state, and made efforts to the same end. He ordered the Czechoslovak Army to occupy the North-Eastern Felvidék.

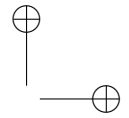
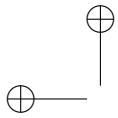
By his command, the Czechoslovak troops took the Western part of the region on January 12, 1919. Led by Italian general Ciaffi, the 31st regiment of the Czech legion invaded Ungvár. In early February, Masaryk’s personal political commissioner arrived and began talks with the Rusyn Council in Ungvár. As a result, politicians representing the various Ruthenian political entities (councils of Eperjes, Huszt, Ungvár) that gathered in Czechoslovak occupied Ungvár formed the Central Russian (Ruthenian) National Council on May 8, 1919. The same day the council declared joining Czechoslovakia.⁴⁷ The delegation of more than a hundred persons led by Avgustin Volosin, handed the resolution to president Masaryk on August 12, 1919 in Prague. The event marked the beginning of Ruthenian political powers’ activity within the Czechoslovak state.⁴⁸

Conclusion

Masaryk and Beneš were fully successful with the Ruthenian problem; first as emigration leaders, then as the president and the foreign minister of the Czechoslovak Republic, both in Paris and Ungvár. Their triumph was acknowledged by Austria on September 10, 1919, in the Saint-Germain Peace Treaty. The treaty stated that the territory was part of the Czechoslovak state, under the name of Podkarpatská Rus.

⁴⁷ Cs. FEDINEC (ed.), *A Kárpátaljai magyarság történeti kronológiája 1918–1944*, Galánta – Dunaszerdahely 2002, pp. 53–54.

⁴⁸ A. TÓTH, The Position of Carpathian Ruthenia in the Political System of the First Czechoslovak Republic on the Background of the Issue of Parliamentary Elections and Preferences of Main Political Currents by Carpathian-Ruthenian Voters (1918–1938), in: *West Bohemian Historical Review*, 1, 2016, pp. 57–78.



In terms of international law, the process which transformed the former North-Eastern Felvidék into Podkarpatská Rus.

