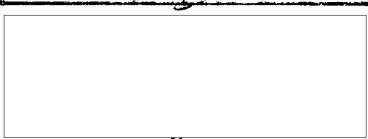


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COUNTRY USSR/Czechoslovakia

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SUBJECT Past and Present Developments concerning Carpatho-Ruthenia

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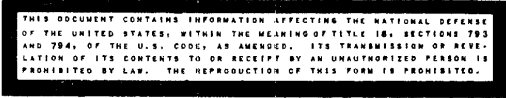
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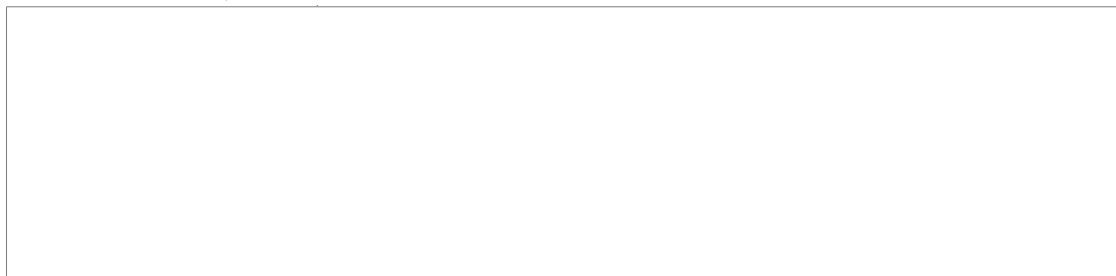


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1. In 1848 the Ruthenian independence leader, Dobriansky, sent a letter to the Austrian emperor, Francis Joseph, in which he asked that independence be granted to Bukovina, Galicia and sub-Carpathia. In 1918 Ruthenian spokesmen addressed a memorandum to President Wilson asking for the independence of their homeland. In the same year, a large number of Ruthenian delegates convened in Scranton, Pennsylvania, and debated the future of Carpatho-Ruthenia. About 26 to 27% of those present voted in favor of merging the area with the Ukraine, whereas 60% favored the establishment of an autonomous area within Czechoslovakia. Their votes strongly influenced the disposal of that problem.
2. Czechoslovak policy toward Ruthenia was quite liberal during the period from 1920 to 1924. Thereafter the Prague government followed a narrow Czech policy vis-a-vis Carpatho-Ruthenia. From the viewpoint of the Ruthenians, this policy had the following defects:
 - a. The personnel policy was so one-sided that administrative positions on all levels, including the police and post office, were filled predominantly by Czechs.
 - b. The cultural policy was closely tied in with the personnel policy. In the 1930s, more than 1,200 teachers in Carpatho-Ruthenia were of Czech national origin. By contrast, practically none of the schoolchildren were Czechs. [Redacted] to point out frequently during those years, this narrow Czech policy offered the Communists good propaganda arguments. 50X1
 - c. Under a land reform sponsored by the Prague government, most of the land re-distributed in Ruthenia was awarded to Czech legionnaires (veterans of World War I). The Communists successfully utilized this fact for propaganda purposes as well.

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SECRET/SECURITY INFORMATION

- 2 -

- d. In the political sphere the policy of the Czechoslovak Government favored the extension of Czech political organizations to the Carpathian area. Czech parties established affiliates in the Carpatho-Ukraine although there was no indigenous need for them.
3. When confronted with the argument that the Treaty of San Germain accorded a high degree of autonomy to Carpatho-Ruthenia, the Czechoslovak Government claimed that the cultural level of the Ruthenians was too low to permit the application of such progressive principles. Autonomy was promised to the Carpathian Ukraine at a later date but in the meantime every single government measure was directed toward the suppression of Ruthenian influence in the Carpatho-Ukraine.
4. The 1938 constitution of Czechoslovakia awarded to Slovakia and Carpatho-Ruthenia the status of federated republics. In October 1938 a state government for the Carpatho-Ukraine was formed in which Dr. Bacinsky, (fnu) Brody and Julian Revey were ministers; Monsignor Voloshyn and Dr. Piescak served as "secretaries" to that government. On 15 Mar 39 the government of the Carpatho-Ukraine proclaimed its independence from Czechoslovakia. Monsignor Voloshyn became President, and Julian Revey became Prime Minister. These appointments were quickly confirmed by the Sejm (Parliament), whose president, Professor Augustine Stephan, now lives in the US.
5. The establishment of an independent Carpatho-Ukraine at that time was favored also by the "Scranton group" which addressed a memorandum to that effect to the US Government. Almost at the moment that an independent Carpatho-Ukraine was established, the Hungarians invaded the country. Resistance was fierce. Count Teleki afterwards told the Hungarian parliament that the Hungarian Army had suffered greater casualties in the occupation of the Carpatho-Ukraine than in the occupation of all other areas combined. Although the Hungarians had established complete control over the country by 30 Apr 39 active resistance continued throughout their occupation. Thousands of Ruthenians were severely penalized by the Hungarians for activities directed against their occupation authorities. Thousands of other Ruthenians fled eastward to Soviet-held territory. Prior to the occupation of Czechoslovakian territory by the Soviet Army, 90% of the soldiers of the Svoboda Army were from Carpatho-Ruthenia; only the officers were predominantly Czech. After the occupation of Slovak territory, there was a marked influx of Slovaks into the so-called Czech Army of General Svoboda. After the occupation of Prague by the Soviet Army, the Svoboda Army was disbanded and most of the men returned to their homes.
6. Because of their disappointment with the Czechoslovak regime and their hatred for the Hungarian occupation, not only the Communist supported partisans but also the Ruthenian nationalist underground viewed the Soviet Army as a liberation force in 1944. For the same reasons politically vocal elements among the Ruthenians favored the incorporation of the area subsequently known as the Carpathian Oblast (Zakarpatska oblast) into the Ukrainian SSR. A public drive for signatures in favor of incorporating the Carpatho-Ukraine into the USSR was apparently quite successful. To understand this one must bear in mind the people's reaction to Hungarian misrule and the effectiveness of propaganda which at that time was more or less echoed by Western information media. In November 1944 a council or rada was convened at Mukacevo and voted unanimously to join the USSR. 50X1
7. [redacted] initial reaction to collectivization in the Carpathian oblast was likewise favorable and that there was no significant opposition to it as late as 1950. Large landholders, especially Hungarians and churches, had owned most of the land in Carpatho-Ruthenia prior to collectivization, whereas the majority of the people led a sub-standard existence. When the Soviets transformed the former estates into big collectives, many Ruthenians

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SECRET/SECURITY INFORMATION



- 3 -

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were therefore quite pleased. Although no detailed information is available [redacted] signs of opposition and even acts of sabotage against collectives have occurred during the last three years and indicate that the Ruthenian population has finally understood that any short-range gains under the Soviet system are elusive.

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8. The people of the Carpathian oblast are most strongly opposed to Soviet policy in religious matters. Following the practice adopted earlier in the Soviet Ukraine, the Soviet regime has suppressed the Catholic Church of the Eastern Rite in the Carpathian oblast. All Catholic priests who would not announce their subservience to the Orthodox Church lead an illegal existence in the country but it has been stated that they are supported ideologically and materially by many people. I have even been informed that Catholic masses are still being celebrated in the forests. Many Orthodox priests are considered as Moscow agents since it has become known that they use confessions to obtain denunciations of anti-Orthodox and anti-Soviet individuals.

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9. Russification, which is being advanced all over the USSR, is as wholeheartedly opposed in the Carpathian oblast as Magyarization was some years ago.

10. [redacted] In general, consumer goods including clothing and mechanical equipment are more plentiful in the towns (at the cooperative stores) whereas the rural areas are relatively better supplied with agricultural products. The result is a considerable extra-legal barter and outright black market trade between urban and rural areas.

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11. [redacted] The largest military detachments reportedly are stationed at Uzhorod. According to rumors, up to 15,000 troops were stationed there in 1950. Population figures are believed to demonstrate the influx of personnel of the armed forces or working in defense industries. The total pre-World War II population of the Carpathian Ukraine was 750,000. Of the 120,000 Jews included in this number, fewer than 20,000 are still residing in the area. Of 100,000 Hungarians, only about one half are left in the Carpathian oblast. Some 50,000 inhabitants of the area were forcibly resettled in different regions of the USSR.

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[redacted] In spite of these sizable population movements, the population of the Carpathian oblast was estimated at 950,000 to one million in 1950 or considerably more than the pre-war figure. Of the total population, some 600,000 are believed to be ethnically Ukrainians. Only a sizable influx of non-Ukrainian elements, presumably from other areas of the USSR and for military service and defense industries, could account for the present population picture.

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12. [redacted] the Soviet-Czechoslovak border is much more strongly guarded than the Soviet-Hungarian border. On the Soviet side of the frontier an area several kilometers deep has been cleared and mine fields laid.

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[redacted] MVD border patrols in the area are accompanied by dogs. The reason for these extraordinary security precautions is presumably that many Ruthenians have relatives or friends in Slovakia and would attempt to escape in that direction rather than to Hungary. About 150,000 Ruthenians of Ukrainian ethnic stock now live in Slovakia. They enjoy certain autonomous rights, maintain a Ukrainian National Rada in Presov and live altogether under less pressure than their fellow countrymen on the Soviet side of the border.

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- 4 -

13. Ruthenian nationalist resistance to Soviet rule has been reported by a few defectors from the Carpathian oblast. [redacted] 50X1
 [redacted] many young 50X1
 Ruthenians have taken to the woods and formed anti-Soviet partisan units. While it cannot be claimed that they control any given area, they make the more inaccessible regions extremely hazardous. Thus army or MVD escort in company strength is said to be required for Soviet officials moving through mountainous areas in the Carpathian oblast. At least prior to 1950 several bridges were blown up and trains on the line from Uzhorod to Kiev were repeatedly sabotaged. [redacted] 50X1
 [redacted] 50X1
 [redacted] 50X1
14. The future of the Carpatho-Ruthenians appears doubtful even if the Soviet regime were removed and Russian influence reduced. Ruthenian emigres are split into groups--not necessarily well organized--one of which seeks the establishment of an independent Ruthenian state in a federation of Central and East European countries. Other Ruthenian elements favor a Ruthenia integrated into a free Ukraine. And there are still other Ruthenians who aspire to a certain autonomous status for Ruthenia in a new Czechoslovakia.
15. The attitude of Czechoslovak emigre groups toward Ruthenia likewise varies between the different organizations:
- a. The Prchala Group claims to represent only Czech nationality interests; it does not attempt to represent Slovaks and Ruthenians. It takes the position that friendly relations with these nationality groups would be desirable from the Czech point of view but that the initiative should rest with the representatives of the other nationalities. [redacted] 50X1
 [redacted] Prchala did not appear to be opposed to Slovak independence. Prchala views the Ruthenians as a part of the Ukrainian nationality stock and believes that Czech politicians should not complicate the future by renewing territorial claims to Carpatho-Ruthenia. 50X1
- b. The Czechoslovak National Committee under Zenkl is working for the restoration of the Czechoslovak Republic as it existed prior to 1938. Some Slovaks and Ruthenians are represented on the Committee. One of the Ruthenians is Ladislav Ferdinec [redacted] He and others of like mind argue that their policy represents US State Department views on the future of Czechoslovakia. [redacted] 50X1
 [redacted] 50X1
- c. Slovak independence groups, including the Slovak National Council under Sidor (Toronto, Ontario) and the Slovak Liberation Committee under Durcansky (in Argentina) advocate the establishment of independent states formed on the basis of ethnic homogeneity within a mid-European federation. It stands to reason that they are strongly opposed to any Czechoslovak orientation. 50X1

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