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**THE CZECHOSLOVAK CRISIS ISSUE OF 1938
(BASED ON THE PERIODICALS OF SUBCARPATHIAN RUS')**

Abstract. *The purpose of the research* is to analyze the materials of the periodicals of Subcarpathian Rus', which contain some information and interpretations of the essence of the Czechoslovak crisis of 1938, with regard to the peculiarities of interstate and international relations, and the formation of new political realities in Eastern Europe. **The research methodology** is based on a combination of principles (historicism and objectivity) and methods (general scientific and special-historical) of scientific work. **The scientific novelty** of the article consists in an attempt to interpret the factors influencing the deployment of the Czechoslovak crisis and the position of the public and informal policies of European states in action and their contribution to the formation of Carpathian Ukraine as an autonomous part of Czechoslovakia. **The Conclusions.** The public assessment of the political events of the autumn of 1938 is best demonstrated by the press, which is the subject of this article research. Based on some periodicals of Subcarpathian Rus' (Ruthenia), the development of international relations is shown for

key world powers, which played a diplomatic game with each other, seeking to turn a political vector in a direction that would be safe for them. During August-November 1938 in the newspapers "Slovo" (Word), "Ukrainske Slovo" (Ukrainian Word), "Svoboda" (Freedom), "Nova Svoboda" (New Freedom), "Vpered" (Forward), "Karpato-Russkoye Slovo" (Carpathian-Russian Word), "Nash Put'" (Our Way), "Karpatorusskiy Holos" (Carpathian-Russian Voice) and "Rusyn" (Ruthenian) reported about different aspects of international relations. In early September 1938, the newspapers noted that Germany was suggesting that the support of Czechoslovakia by the United Kingdom and France could lead to a military conflict. The public concern of Subcarpathian Rus' regarding Germany's aggressive plans was revealed by the press as was the appeasement of the world powers. The crisis raised the visor of Great Britain and France, which virtually agreed with every next aggressive step of Hitler. Public despair is demonstrated by the title of one article of the newspaper "Vpered" – "New borders or national death". The headline about the second Czechoslovak crisis carried the slogan "The great Success of World Politics" and led to a conference in Munich on September 29–30, 1938. The research of the Munich conference revealed the true aspirations and demands of Europe economic opponents. Following the Munich conference, the Czechoslovak crisis faced internal political conflicts and complex international claims. Territorial claims of Poland and Hungary allowed Hitler to justify a subsequent annexation of the Sudetenland by an international nature of the demands advanced on the Czechoslovak Republic.

Analyzing materials of the press of Subcarpathian Rus', covering international relations in the autumn of 1938, we found out that the publications under review had a wide access to information regarding diplomatic negotiations, a political game of world powers, gave an estimation of the events and analyzed their cause-and-effect relations.

Key words: the Czechoslovak crisis of 1938, the Carpathian periodicals, press, Subcarpathian Rus' (Ruthenia), Carpathian Ukraine.

ПИТАННЯ ЧЕХОСЛОВАЦЬКОЇ КРИЗИ 1938 Р. (ЗА МАТЕРІАЛАМИ ПЕРІОДИКИ ПІДКАРПАТСЬКОЇ РУСИ)

Анотація. Метою дослідження є аналіз матеріалів періодичних видань Підкарпатської Русі, які містять інформацію та інтерпретації сутності чехословацької кризи 1938 р., що стосується специфіки міждержавних та міжнародних відносин і формування нових політичних реалій у Східній Європі. **Методологія дослідження** базується на поєднанні принципів історизму й об'єктивізму та методів (загальнонаукових і спеціально-історичних) наукової роботи. **Наукова новизна** статті полягає у спробі інтерпретувати фактори, що впливають на розгортання чехословацької кризи та позицію публічної та неформальної політики європейських держав у дії, їх внесок у формування Карпатської України як автономної частини Чехословаччини. **Висновки.** Публічна оцінка політичних подій восени 1938 р. найкраще демонструється пресою, що є предметом дослідження цієї статті. Згідно з інформацією періодичних видань Підкарпатської Русі (Русі), розвиток міжнародних відносин залежав від дії ключових світових держав, які грали між собою дипломатичну гру, прагнучи скерувати політичний вектор у безпечному для себе напрямі. У серпні-листопаді 1938 р. газети "Слово", "Українське слово", "Свобода", "Нова Свобода", "Вперед", "Карпато-Русское слово", "Наш путь", "Карпаторусский голос", "Русинь" розповіли про різні аспекти міжнародних відносин. На початку вересня 1938 р. газети зазначали, що Німеччина, приховуючи власні агресивні плани, звинувачує Великобританію і Францію у підтримці Чехословаччини, через що може статися військовий конфлікт. Суспільну стурбованість Підкарпатської Русі щодо зазіхань Німеччини на частину Чехословацької території виявила преса. Чехословацька криза показала позиції Великобританії і Франції, які практично погоджувалися з кожним наступним зазіханням Гітлера. Громадський відчай демонструється назвою однієї статті газети "Вперед" – "Нові кордони або національна смерть". Заголовок наступної публікації мав гасло "Великий успіх світової політики", що акцентував увагу громадськості на проведенні конференції в Мюнхені 29–30 вересня 1938 року. Після Мюнхенської конференції чехословацька криза посилилася внутрішніми політичними конфліктами та складними міжнародними претензіями. Територіальні претензії Польщі та Угорщини дали змогу Гітлеру виправдати подальшу анексію Судетської землі міжнародним характером вимог, висунутих до Чехословацької Республіки.

Аналізуючи матеріали преси Підкарпатської Русі, що охоплюють міжнародні відносини восени 1938 р., ми з'ясували, що оглядові публікації мали широкий доступ до інформації про дипломатичні переговори, політичну гру світових держав, оцінювали події та аналізували їх причинно-наслідкові зв'язки.

Ключові слова: чехословацька криза 1938 р., карпатська періодика, преса, Підкарпатська Русь (Карпатська Україна).

The Problem Statement. For 80 years after the signing of the Munich Agreement, historians, political analysts and publicists have been continuing to discuss the causes and consequences of the political crisis on the eve of World War II. Today scientific studies are enriched with new sources and deal with world-famous events from a different viewpoint. Specifically, the interpretation of the Munich Agreement of October 30, 1938 by the Ukrainian press of Subcarpathian Ruthenia, the region of Ukraine, which is nowadays known as Transcarpathia, is among the unexplored issues that significantly enrich the historiography of the problem, offering an assessment of the above-mentioned events from the national-state perspective, declared by international law.

The public assessment of the political events of the autumn of 1938 is best demonstrated by the press which is the subject of the research of this article. Based on some periodicals of Subcarpathian Ruthenia, the development of international relations is shown for key world powers, which played a diplomatic game with each other, seeking to turn a political vector in a direction that would be safe for them. Highlighting a source studies potential of the press media of Subcarpathian Ruthenia in the context of international escalation of the Czechoslovak crisis affords an opportunity to evaluate the events in the issue of their standpoint impact on the public opinion and to outline Ukrainian identity through the following:

- learning an ideological and political focus of the Subcarpathian Ruthenia press before the war;
- studying a thematic component, intensity and tone of response of Subcarpathian Ruthenia periodicals to international political events of the autumn of 1938;
- analyzing the factors of evolution of the Ukrainian press views on actions of world powers as well as Poland and Hungary before and after the signing of the Munich Agreement;
- evaluating the international events through the secondary press of Germany, England, France and other world powers.

The Analysis of Sources and Recent Researches. A detailed analysis of a source base and published studies where the authors dealt with the above-mentioned issue shows that certain aspects of Czechoslovak crisis II of 1938 in the region during the above-mentioned period were covered in works by such authors as: I. Hrachak, M. Vehesh, V. Bodnar, V. Halas, I. Popp et al. (Hrachak, 1999; Vehesh, 1997; Bodnar & Vehesh, 1997; Halas & Pop, 1995). Various aspects of domestic and foreign policies of Subcarpathian Ruthenia have been analyzed on the basis of archival documents and materials, made available to an academic community (Dokumenty i materialy. Khronika podii. Personalii, 2009). A considerable source array can be derived from the literary memoirs of Yuliy Brashchaiko and Augustine Stefan (Brashchaiko, 2009), who show a difficult stage of political development in the region while describing their professional activities. Such newspapers and magazines as the “*Slovo*” (Word), the “*Ukrainske Slovo*” (Ukrainian Word), the “*Svoboda*” (Freedom), the “*Nova Svoboda*” (New Freedom), the “*Vpered*” (Forward), the “*Karpato-Russkoye Slovo*” (Carpathian-Russian Word), the “*Nash Put*” (Our Way), the “*Karpatorusskiy Holos*” (Carpathian-Russian Voice) and the “*Rusyn*” (Ruthenian) serve as direct documentary evidence of

trends and features of the crisis events in 1938 through periodicals. Starting the presentation of the main material, it is worth noting that one of the means for shaping a political culture of Subcarpathian Ruthenia during the first half of the 20th century was the periodicals. That method was however effective, provided that democratic principles of a public space and political pluralism were implemented, which became apparent only during the entry of the region into the Czechoslovak Republic (1919 – 1939). In view of the announced political pluralism and its constitutional regulation in the state, there arose an issue of raising a level of a general culture and its capabilities for shaping the attitude of the population to international events.

The Statement of the Basic Material. The Subcarpathian press widely covered the events of the political drama of the autumn of 1938: the prerequisites for Czechoslovak crisis II, diplomatic relations of world powers, the course of events regarding the conclusion of the Munich Agreement, etc., demonstrating a public vision of the region inhabited mainly by the Ukrainians-Ruthenians.

Czechoslovak crisis II of 1938 began in September but its manifestations had been felt even a few months before the historically known events. Viewing the events from the perspective of a collective interaction, one can actually trace through articles of the “*Nash Put*” newspaper (Nash Put’, 3 September, p. 1) that the actions of Germany and its allies in August, including Hungary and Poland, were aimed at compromise. The “*Svoboda*” newspaper published the information about intentions of France and Britain to act in concert (the visit of the British royal couple to Paris) for amicable settlement of the Sudeten-German issue, which was also publicly accepted by the Germans (Svoboda, 13 May, p. 1).

On September 1, 1938, the “*Nova Svoboda*” quoted the words of German General Erich Ludendorff: “military capabilities of democratic states, which exceeded those of dictatorial and fascist states, and similarly military mathematics helped to temporarily maintain weak peace” (Nova Svoboda, 1 September, p. 1). The General expressed an opinion about the impossibility of a blitzkrieg of Germany and Italy, which would lose the war for lacking extensive resources for a long-term military campaign (Nova Svoboda, 1 September, p. 1). And the above was proved during the Spanish civil war, which exhausted the fascist states and forced them to put everything at stake in 1938, rattle the saber, set the allies at loggerheads and thus consolidate a dictatorial power.

The newspapers indicated that a military conflict that could be prompted by the Czechoslovak crisis was regarded by Germany in early September not only as a result of the intransigence of Czechoslovak authorities but also the support for such a policy by Great Britain and France. For that reason, after numerous negotiations of the British diplomat Lord W. Runciman and Ambassador N. Henderson with his German counterpart J. Ribbentrop in Berlin all the responsibility for the delay in the negotiations was placed on the representative of the United Kingdom. During the autumn Ukrainian periodicals time and again published items with reference to *Völkischer Beobachter*, where German public wondered why nobody remembered the demands of the Sudeten Germans. “The world offers a one-sided coverage of the affairs and is hostile to Germany and the German people. Why would England and France protect Czechoslovak interests rather than their own? It is impossible to solve the Sudeten-German issue with phrases and leave it to its fate. The Sudeten Germans have the right to decide their own destiny” (Svoboda, 16 September, p. 1).

The formation of a special attitude to the Czech Germans is confirmed by the statement of Hitler in the “*Svoboda*”, following his speech in Nuremberg on September 12,

where he demanded a just solution of the issue, emphasizing that 7 million Czechs oppressed 3.5 million Sudeten Germans and considered the latter traitors (Promova Adolfa Hitlera, p. 2).

In general, the Subcarpathian press of the first decade of September naturally presents a somewhat positive image of the head of the Third Reich. Tracing the evolution of journalistic connotations which certainly influenced a public opinion, we see that according to the information on hand, the first references to the Chancellor were made as early as at the end of 1937, when he assured the Foreign Secretary of Great Britain Lord E. Halifax that he would not lay a claim to Austria and Czechoslovakia, according to the Ukrainian diary of North America "Svoboda" (Svoboda, 21 May, p. 1). It reports on Hitler's actions in August-September of 1938 were of factual, often of a non-judgmental nature, then in October-November, prior to the Vienna conference, the press was sympathetic to Germany despite gloomy prospects of international relations.

In early August the "Vpered" press organ of the SDP (the Social Democratic Party) indicates that the head of the German Nationalist Party in the Sudetenland (the SNP) K. Heinlein, as one of the main subjects of the conflict at its beginning, pointed out that he demanded only autonomy from the Czechoslovak authorities and did not call for armed clashes (Vpered, 1 August, p. 1). In fact, in his interview with "The Daily Telegraph", he mentioned that while asserting rights of the German people, who were "not second-rate in the Czechoslovak Republic", his party did not seek to join Germany (Vpered, 1 August, p. 1). According to the press, however, the Germans exaggerated the problem of oppression in Czechoslovakia since Prime Minister M. Hodža made significant concessions to the Sudeten Germans within the third plan of W. Runciman. It was intended to set up five German cantons without violating the state border, which would possibly lead to the creation of a federal state in the future. And yet, according to Ukrainian periodicals, the situation provoked by Germany evolved in such a way that as soon as there had been autonomy negotiations initiated between the two conflicting parties, Germany began mobilization movements on the border and put a psychological pressure on the opponent.

The Prime Minister M. Hodža made concessions to not only the Sudeten Germans but also all national minorities inhabiting Czechoslovakia. However, according to *Deutsche Allgemeine Zeitung* of September 7, 1938, after discussion with the Sudeten Germans A. Hitler rejected the third version of the plan and returned to the previous Karlovy Vary program and the June Manifesto, which were on the verge, which was impossible to cross without undermining the state sovereignty (Ukrainske Slovo, 9 September, p. 2). Thus, the Czechoslovak leadership made unprecedented concessions to the SNP. The fourth plan was made public on September 10, when the activists of the Sudeten-German Party E. Kundt and M. Roche met with the Prime Minister and put forward the demands for a free distribution of Hitler's work "Mein Kampf" (Ukrainske Slovo, 15 September, p. 2). In the territory of the region, breaking off the relations with the Soviet Union and an increase in the number of German officers in the army up to 22%.

The situation in Czechoslovakia was aggravated by provocations committed by the Germans. On September 13, there was K. Heinlein's SNP uprising scheduled in the Sudeten region. In response, the authorities imposed a curfew in 11 German districts, banned mass meetings and closed the Party's printed organ *Die Zeit* (Svoboda, 12 September, p. 1). A telephone message to the Police Department of the Subcarpathian towns of Uzhhorod and Khust regarding arrests of all the SNP MPs, the magazine editors and forced surrender of

all private radio stations informs about the facts of a terrorist nature (State Archives of the Transcarpathian Region – SATR, f. 117, d. 1, c. 328, p. 26).

The “*Svoboda*” of September 16 describes the insurgency in Schwaderbach, with 23 killed and 75 wounded, and compares the events with the Spanish scenario (Svoboda, 16 September, p. 1). According to Czech police, the riots in Moravian Ostrava, Třepaw, Carlsbad, Cheb and Liberec were well planned and resulted in prosecution and suspension of the SNP activists Gellner and Mayer from political activities.

Subcarpathian periodicals contain information about persistent provocations on the German-Czechoslovak border. SNP activists, interested in chaos and confusion, armed with hand grenades and Iver automatic revolvers of German production, and spurred on by K. Heinelein’s appeals for “reunification with the German mother state and fight by all means against “foreign riders” (Ukrainske Slovo, 15 September, p. 1), made power assaults upon gendarmerie and post offices in the border lands. We learn from the press that border guards and customs officers used signal flares rather than fire arms for bullets not to reach the territory of Germany and complicate the already tense relations with the neighbor. Supporting the protesters, Hitler said that “...the Germans were neither unarmed nor defenseless and the Czechs would not chase them as a wild beast” (Svoboda, 17 September, p. 1). That speech has an unambiguous context because there were both the killed and wounded in the clashes whereas Czech courts did not react to the events through the so-called “inactivity” (Svoboda, 17 September, p. 1). The whole world watched the Czechs, German communists and socialists to start leaving the Sudeten.



Ordinance on the collection of refugees, Prague. 1938.

URL: <http://www.vhu.cz/exhibit/vyhlaska-o-sbirce-ve-prospech-uprchliku-1938/>

Newspapers of Subcarpathian Ruthenia along with the world press, in particular the Italian weeklies *L'Osservatore Romano* and *Il Popolo d'Italia*, wrote about the attempts to reach compromise with Great Britain aggressor in order to "save peace in the world" (Nova Svoboda, 21 September, p. 1). B. Mussolini, who strove to bring Italy out of the international isolation caused by sanctions was personally interested in diplomatic negotiations in Rome.

The "*Ukrainske Slovo*" weekly of 21.09.1938 noted a special diplomatic talent of the 70-year-old English Prime Minister N. Chamberlain, who "... as a true angel of peace, a prudent premier, an eternal optimist ...", with moral support of the USA, had made a statement on the next visit to Germany and a meeting with the Chancellor (*Ukrainske Slovo*, 21 September, pp. 1–2). After the signing of the Munich Agreement, the "*Nova Svoboda*" called him "the one, who did everything one person could do" (Nova Svoboda, 1 October, p. 2) whereas all columns of European publications, covering the above event, praised the efforts of Hitler, who was ready for negotiations and compromise rather than those of Chamberlain.

After Czechoslovakia had rejected Hitler's ultimatums, the compromise was to convene a conference of the four great powers. A campaign for convening the conference was also supported by well-known European politicians, such as the leader of the French Socialist Party L. Blum. In his opinion, the above would make it possible to ensure an Anglo-French or international guarantee of resolving the issue in the Sudetenland. After the talks on October 7, the politician, who was a consistent opponent of Nazi Germany and organized socialist movements in Europe, expressed his satisfaction with the outcome of the Munich Agreement as a safeguard against the threat of war. The supporters of a different viewpoint, such as Mussolini, who defended the idea of a plebiscite, considered it the best option that would solve all issues. Neither Great Britain nor France supported the idea of the plebiscite because it would not solve the Czechoslovak-German issue, quite the contrary, it would worsen the crisis of ethnic identification of all European countries. The referendum did not meet the interests of any democratic state, and first of all Czechoslovakia, as announced by the Prime Minister M. Hodža on September 20. The allies of Czechoslovakia in the Little Entente bloc, Romania and Yugoslavia, which did not rely on any support of the already undermined interstate organization and France that was weakened in the international arena by actions of Poland, declared their neutrality and expressed concern about international events.

After the negotiations in London on September 18, the British and French parties agreed that the Sudetenland would be transferred to Germany without any plebiscite, which supposedly had not become an example for Hungary and Poland. The Communiqué also put an emphasis on the conditions for guaranteeing the borders of the state: Czechoslovakia was to renounce its treaty of alliance with the USSR. According to reports of the "*Nova Svoboda*" of September 21, the above in its turn caused a government crisis in France, Daladier found himself on the verge of resignation and workers of the foggy Albion came out again on strike (Nova Svoboda, 21 September, p. 2). However, as early as a month later, the Working People's Party of England approved the foreign policy of N. Chamberlain "for the sake of peace" (Nova Svoboda, 21 September, p. 2), and the French public, which insisted on the implementation of the Collective Security Treaty of the three European States on the eve of Munich, supported Daladier after the scheduled parliamentary elections.

The response of the Czechs to international events of those days was expressed by Edvard Beneš in his speech where the Czech politician asked his fellow citizens to stay calm, emphasizing the fact, which the whole world was unwilling to notice: "Our issue is undoubtedly one of the stages of German expansion to the east. Western states are afraid of war and

especially of what this war may bring along – social revolutions. England is concerned about the strong position of the USSR. Wrong steps may however lead to Bolshevization of England and France. States have to make concessions to German expansion. Interstate treaties and mutual defense or assistance pacts are losing their value” (Nova Svoboda, 24 September, p. 1).

It is noteworthy that at the meeting in Munich Hitler warned the participants against the danger from the Soviet Union. In September the Czechoslovak crisis became a part of the issue of world order and reorganization of relations in Europe (Germany, Auswärtiges Amt, 1940, p. 14). The crisis raised the visor of Great Britain and France, which virtually agreed with every next aggressive step of Germany. Public despair in Subcarpathian Ruthenia is demonstrated by the title of one article of the “*Vpered*” – “New borders or national death” (Vpered, 22 September, p. 1).

The Soviet Union was the only country which could be relied upon in terms of interstate assistance. Without putting pressure on his ally in actions, J. Stalin, as subcarpathian press where written, confirmed in an interview with the English publication “*The Times*” and shortly at the meeting of the Assembly of Nations on September 21 that he would come to Prague’s aid. It was promised that when the Poles would cross the Czechoslovak border, the Red Army (and on its Western border the USSR concentrated 1 million in early September and subsequently over 2 million land forces) would also cross the Western border and terminate the non-aggression pact with Poland. It is worth noting that both Poland and Romania refused to let the Red Army through their territories during a flare up of a potential conflict. On September 24, Minister of Foreign Affairs of the USSR M. Litvinov called in Geneva for convening a trilateral meeting of the allies or else holding France responsible for its failure (Nova Svoboda, 23 September, p. 1).

It was indicated in post-war memoirs that the Soviet Union had been ready to provide specific military assistance to Czechoslovakia even without France but under two conditions: if Czechoslovakia would seek such help from Moscow and if it would defend itself from German aggression. The irony is that Czechoslovak public was friendly to the country of Soviets and expected its support. The weeklies of Subcarpathian Ruthenia reported that during September 24–27 there had been manifestations in support of government policy in Czech cities, with one of the slogans being “Long live the Soviet Union!” (Nova Svoboda, 28 September, p. 1). And on October 1, the same weeklies, describing the significance of “nonparticipation” of the USSR in the Munich conference, made use of other definitions in its respect, such as “the powerless power”, “powerlessness of the giant with feet of clay”, “the unreliable ally” and “the ruins of lost illusions” (Nova Svoboda, 1 October, p. 2).

Another political player of that time – the USA, which seemed to be on the sidelines of European events, gradually expressed its position. On September 13, the Americans announced that they were ready to delegate their representative to a conference in Geneva, which meant the end of the policy of American isolationism. According to the press, by mid-September the US Secretary of State C. Hull assured that the United States would be “a defender of a state upon which an act of aggression would be committed” (Svoboda, 11 September, p. 1). Yet on September 23 and 29, however, some information sources revealed Roosevelt’s intention not to cancel the peace negotiations “for the sake of resolving controversial issues” (Svoboda, 11 September, p. 1).

The turbulent September was marked by not only continuous negotiations but also active preparation for general mobilization of the absolute majority of European countries. The “*Vpered*” newspaper (Vpered, 15 October, pp. 1–2) provided a list of countries, which financed the mobilization campaign, specifically:

Table 1

Item	Country	Money spent on mobilization (bln. francs)
1	Great Britain	22
2	Germany	19
3	France	10
4	Italy	2
5	Holland	2
6	Belgium	1.5
7	Czechoslovakia	1
	Other	11.5
	Total	60

As seen from the statistics, the forces of democratic states exceeded those of the fascists but the Czechs, having found themselves in the role of victims, were forced to make concessions.

The Czechoslovak crisis demonstrated a deep unresolved conflict between Germany and France. The German threat was beginning to tell, which gave rise to fear that was growing (by the example of Austria) due to unpredictable actions of Hitler, who made decisions himself and even his inner circle was not always aware of his plans. Back in May 1938, Germany made a fortified line over the Rhine to make it impossible for the French to help the Czechs. On September 8, there were military exercises announced, which were to last from 8 weeks to 3 months. That period exceeded the one of the previous combat training exercises, which was explained by the German generals as a full cycle of military training for beginners. In the context of mobilization hysteria in Germany, factories and plants at the time were run in 3 shifts, the working week increased up to 60 hours. A decision was taken to extend the vacation until 1 October because there were still military units and reservists left in schools; there were peasants' personal transport and agricultural implements confiscated.

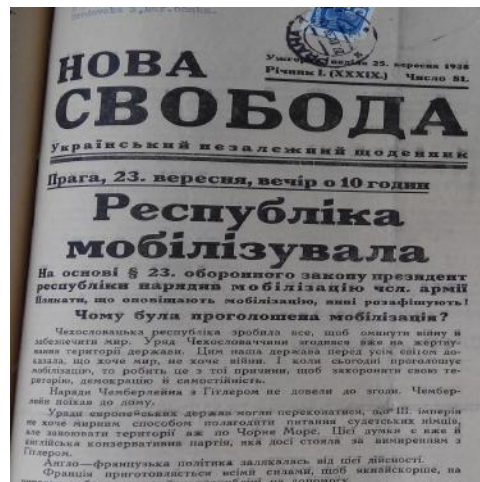


Fig. 1. Title pages of the publications *Narodna Politika* (People's Policy) and *Nova Svoboda* (New Freedom) with the headlines regarding general mobilization

A conference in Munich on September 29–30, 1938 became an apogee of Czechoslovak crisis II. Chief executives of Germany, Italy, Great Britain and France met under press slogans “Great success of world politics”, “The conference, held in the spirit of goodwill and solidarity”, “Concord of European states” to decide fate of the “major problem of Europe” (Nova Svoboda, 30 September, p. 1–2). Out of the great powers concerned, it was the Soviet Union, which was absent. On the one hand, it was publicized that the USSR had authorized the Head of the French government to represent its interests (in official sources, both the French and the Russians did not confirm the above). On the other hand, the dictators (according to E. Halifax) refused to participate in the conference, if they should see Soviet ambassadors in Munich. Justifying his demands, German Chancellor Hitler argued to E. Daladier and N. Chamberlain that the USSR leadership was not only trying to launch a strike at Hitler but also expected to unleash a world war, which might result in the Bolshevik revolution (Dokumenty i materialy kanuna Vtoroi mirovoi voyny, 1948, p. 97).

On the first day of the negotiations in Munich, unsettling news were transmitted to Ukrainian readers and the following items were published under yet another appeal of the authorities to remain unprovoked so as not to aggravate the difficult situation as it was: “We are failing to contain the military demon and will face a new world war that could drag on for years. And the events in our state necessitate the elimination of this state. Versailles Europe has died under the hegemony of England and France. The Munich Agreement turned the last page of this international history. But the system was destroyed not by this event but by the bursting out of the Abyssinian war, the remilitarization of the Rhine and the fiasco of the sanctions of 52 states against Italy”. (Nova Svoboda, 30 September, p. 1). Having found itself alone, betrayed by its yesterday’s allies, Czechoslovakia “has sacrificed itself for the sake of peace, with its hands down but its head up, although any sacrifice is a small price because the forces seek only conquest rather than peaceful coexistence” (Nova Svoboda, 23 September, p. 1).

Analyzing the negotiations in Munich in 80 years, we understand the reasons for the diplomatic game, untrue statements, vacillation and inconsistency of actions of the parties to the Agreement. It was significant that the Ukrainian press, covering the principled persistence of Germany, illustrated a clear duality of the position of official London. The speeches of N. Chamberlain concurrently featured both determined preparations for a military rebuff and reluctance “to dig trenches and test gas masks for a new war” (Ukrainske Slovo, 22 September, p. 1). Former British Foreign Secretary A. Eden pointed out in support of government policy: “If democracies fail to expel the disunity, the determination of the spirit of self-abnegation, how can they hope to hold out in the modern world? Democracies have to seek concord with dictatorships”. (Nova Svoboda, 21 September, p. 1).

The periodicals covering the Munich Agreement offer some conclusions expressed by supporters of various ideological viewpoints. Apart from the historically famous phrase of W. Churchill about “shame and war”, the Soviet newspapers the “*Izvestiya*” (News) and “*Pravda*” (Truth) called the Munich Agreement “the way that opened Ukraine for the seizure by the Nazis” (Nova Svoboda, 8 October, p. 1).

A poorly explored issue of the Munich talks is identification of true aspirations and demands of European economic opponents, which could really reflect the interests of Great Britain. The maxim of N. Chamberlain’s team “What is the point in feeding a cow that Hitler will slaughter anyway?” (God krizisa, 1990, p.179) was supplemented with the Spanish issue and the participation of volunteers in the civil war in Spain. Yet in 1937 the “*Karpato-Russkoy Slovo*” (Karpato-Russkoy Slovo, 15 November, p. 1) and “*Rusyn*” in 1938 (Rusyn,

27 January, p. 2) suggested that perhaps England was already ready to recognize the government of F. Franco because it required silver, copper and ore for its own needs. But Spanish nationalists, who had taken up the key positions, granted deposit concessions to Germany and Italy. In confirmation of that information the Ukrainian press reported that on October 1, 1938 B. Mussolini called for the withdrawal of volunteers from Spain, and on October 9 the League of Nations established a commission to monitor their withdrawal from the warring country. France, in its turn, fearing isolation, agreed to close the Pyrenees for transportation of munitions from the Soviet Union and concluded a trade agreement with Germany (God krizisa, 1990, p. 185).



Fig. 2. Munich Agreement map (the original).

URL: <http://www.hiu.cas.cz/cs/historicky-ustav-verejnosti-a-skole/jak-to-bylo-s-mnichovskou>

The “*Nova Svoboda*” of October 8 reported yet another result of Munich, namely the conclusion of the Anglo-German Non-Aggression Pact and the development of an identical document for France, followed by the drafting of Franco-German and Anglo-German treaties (Nova Svoboda, 8 October, p. 1). In addition, Daladier was pressurized to break off relations with the Soviet Union. The above-mentioned eventually deteriorated the relationship between Western countries and the USSR. According to “*The Sunday Dispatch*”, Germany was interested in Great Britain and France not signing agreements with the Soviet Union and allowed them a free hand in the east of Europe (Dokumenty i materialy kanuna Vtoroi mirovoi voyny, 1948, p. 136).

According to Subcarpathian publishers, the European states’ policy of non-interference and appeasement of the fascist aggressors led to the situation when “...The fire of the war had not flared up because England feared that fire. And France helped its ally to extinguish the fire in such a way that a part of the house burned down though the fire was localized. The Great Powers bought out peace at the expense of the weaker. The Munich Agreement became another test for the League of Nations, which disguised the sad reality through diplomatic maneuvers. It is however impossible to deceive the world with a false game. The world saw that the Czechoslovak issue was considered one-sidedly without the involvement of the state itself. What new state would then to an operating table?” (Ternystyi shliakh do Ukrainy, 2007, p. 25, 69).

The involvement of the Great Powers of the world in solving the Czechoslovak issue did not come to ought after Munich either. *The "Ukrainske Slovo"* of October 4 reports that before the end of November there was to be held a plebiscite in the disputed lands of the Sudetenland after the pattern of the Saar region, which was to be watched by a corps comprising six English battalions. And the pliability of Czechoslovakia was rewarded by Great Britain in the form of a 10 million pound loan with subsequent accumulation of interest, which even Germany promised to join (*Ukrainske Slovo*, 4 October, p. 1).

The Conclusions. Analyzing the materials of the press of Subcarpathian Ruthenia, covering international relations in the autumn of 1938, specifically on the eve of and during Czechoslovak crisis II, we found out that the publications under review had a wide access to the information regarding diplomatic negotiations, a political game of world powers, gave an estimation of the events and analyzed their cause-and-effect relations. The newspapers pointed out the persistence of aggressive intentions of German Chancellor A. Hitler, who "played on nerves of Europe and the world". Using the language of the press, the world expected the war because no one spoke of preventing a catastrophe, and everyone tried to postpone it for the future.

The Munich events shocked the world but their result, according to publishers and readers of the Ukrainian press, was fair owing to implementation of international guarantees for self-determination of the enslaved peoples. The Nazi leadership expected as much, having successfully veiled its aggressive plans. However, a public opinion shaped by the press, despite positive connotations concerning the protection of national rights, recognized the political game dictated by Germany whereas world leaders were unable to reach an agreement.

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