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SOCIO-POLITICAL PASSPORT OF ZAKARPATTIA (UKRAINE): A BRIEF HISTORY OF THE REGION'S SURVIVAL IN CENTRAL EUROPE

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Abstract

Zakarpattia is perhaps the only region of contemporary Ukraine which during the twentieth century has experienced complex political processes of regionalization and adaptation to different states and their political systems. A characteristic feature of the changes in the region was a frequent transition of political conditions from authoritarian to democratic styles of state governing of the title nations which had implanted in Zakarpattia their political rules trying to change the political culture and political consciousness of local elites and citizens.

Key words

socio-political development, Ukrainian region, political regime, state policy, civil society, political and non-governmental organizations.

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Introduction

Problems of political development of regional society have recently received considerable attention. They acquire a particular importance in the process of studying political history which brings the necessity to avoid stereotypical errors caused by forced totalitarian-administrative pressure on the scientific field, levelling of political party bias, raising the issue of struggle of Ukrainians for the status of political nation to a high level, and so on. Considerable attention in this respect has been paid in recent years, especially to regional political history, regarded as

one of the constituent elements of political regional studies.

The purpose of the article is a retrospective analysis of the political development of the westernmost region of modern Ukraine – Zakarpattia (Transcarpathia). Taking into account the complex political processes that have influenced its development and the life of the local population during the last 100 years, the author tried to emphasize the key historical facts that form the regional mentality and a kind of political passport of Zakarpattia.

Political history of Zakarpattia in the 20th century is peculiar and, to some extent, symbolic of Ukrainians of this region. This consists in that the

effective political development of the region, when local inhabitants directly began to participate in this process started almost at the beginning of the 20th century. Logical understanding must be found in the possibilities and prospects of Zakarpattia Ukrainians' influence on the course of political events and decisions about important political objectives to their own opinion and their own strength. Until the 20th century, Zakarpattia had a complicated political history, which was marked by the complete disenfranchisement of the local autochthonous population before the nations ruling here (Narisi istorii..., 1993). In turn, this greatly aggravated the discussion about the origin and affiliation of the local population to different nations and peoples (Magocsi, 2015). Therefore, throughout the entire history of Zakarpattia, the fate of the region was meticulously treated by researchers from different countries (*Botlik, 2005; Fredinec, Vehers (eds.), 2010; Kruglašov, Tokar (eds.), 2014; Puškaš A., 2006; Schmidt, 1939; Švorc, 2003*).

At the time of the collapse of the Austro-Hungarian monarchy, hope appeared and favorable preconditions were formed to develop social and political life on their own. And after the end of World War II such hopes received opportunities for realization. Since the beginning of the 20th century, we can safely talk about the evolution of the political institutions of Transcarpathia, as well as the formation of new political realities. The most peculiar in this respect were complex transformational changes which affected the political systems, whereas during the last century the region had experienced a series of political cataclysms. They just were the driving force of the diverse elements of state-formation, formation and decline of the political systems, functioning of the various political regimes and their institutional manifestations, etc.

Thus, it was at the beginning of the 20th century that the real and effective development of the political history of Zakarpattia began, when attempts to politicize the regional society intensified. During this period, the region experienced a number of political changes which emerged in the process of diverse elements of state-formation, formation and decay of political systems, etc. In the 20th century, Zakarpattia had different official names of its own geographical territory, to some extent reflecting the specificity of the political development of the region: Ruska Kraina, Podkarpatska Rus, Karpatska Ukraine, Pidkarpatska territory, Zakarpatska Ukraine, Zakarpatska oblast. Different was also territorial filling of the region, and therefore researchers conventionally used a generalized name to identify the region – "historic Zakarpattia".

To our mind, the fundamental principle of understanding the specificity of the socio-political evolution of Zakarpattia society is the fact that only during the twentieth century it was part of at least eight inherently different state and half-state formations (Austro-Hungarian Monarchy, the Hungarian Republic, the Czechoslovak Republic, Karpatska Ukraine, Hungary, Zakarpatska Ukraine, Ukrainian SSR/USSR, Ukraine). To some extent, this reflects the specificity of the political development of the region, indicating its membership or becoming part of some state formation and, consequently, requiring adaptation of the political institutions of the region to the requirements of that or another political system which increasingly absorbed rather poorly developed and relatively stable political subsystems. Based on the latter, we should understand the influence of transformational processes on party and electoral systems. So far, as mentioned above, state formations had political systems that differed from one another and within which there were different political regimes and, consequently, different methods of formation of the state and local organs of authority.

The historical peculiarity of the region which influenced various political changes during the last century should also be noted. Therefore, it should precede a specific analysis of individual components that make it possible to describe objectively the complex picture of social and political development of Zakarpattia as a political region. The symbolism of the political history of Zakarpattia in the twentieth century in this case is also in sharp evolution, starting with the lack of political traditions, political culture and political leadership, completing the modern institutions of political life. Thus, the political portrait of Zakarpattia should be viewed in chronological order and in the gradual implementation of the evolution of political institutions and relations of the region with the center (Kruglašov, Tokar (eds.), 2014).

2. Attempts of politicization of Zakarpattia Ukrainians at the beginning of the 20th century

The first important period in the political history of Zakarpattia in the twentieth century is based on the political-legal and state-representative basis. Its analysis should begin with a review of the political situation in the region at the turn of the 19th and 20th centuries before the collapse of the Austro-Hungarian Empire, the end of World War I, the problems of finding the state and national identity. This

period was also typical of the national and cultural awakening of Ukrainians of Zakarpattia.

2.1. Felvideyk / Prycarpattia (Upper Hungary)

Being a part of dualist Austro-Hungarian Monarchy (1867–1918), the region had a conventional name *Pidkarpattia* (by its geographic location from the center). In the official chronicle, the region was often called *Felvideyk* (Upper Hungary). The social and political situation of the population of Zakarpattia at that time was quite difficult because the general social changes hardly touched the province, but in 1900, the territory of four Zakarpattia *comitats* was about 18,000 square kilometers with the population of 848,160 citizens. Because of the political and legal powerlessness and social inequality, the inhabitants of the province were unable to effectively fight for their political rights. The political system was characterized by the restriction of voting rights (high property and educational qualification), freedom of publishing, freedom of assemblies and so on. In addition, the electoral processes were held under strict political terror (harassment, arrests). Another problem was the policy of the Hungarian political parties regarding Zakarpattia. The participation of Transcarpathians in nationwide political protests and strikes was limited (Narisi istorii ..., 1995).

The similar state of things was affected by poor structuring of the regional society and the lack of political and legal traditions of governance. The most obvious political problem was the lack of the political elite. Its leadership functions were assumed by the national cultural intelligentsia (activity of enlighteners) who performed an important role in the process of the political socialization of citizens. The public addresses by workers of large enterprises led by the newly formed social democratic organizations – the first political centers in the region – were more or less organized. The increase in social and political movement in Zakarpattia took place in 1905–1907. With the new force, struggle for the introduction of general suffrage began.

In spite of that, the increasing activity of workers of large enterprises, together with the newly formed social-democratic organizations (the first political centers in the region) organized political speeches, lack of political rights of the local population, socio-economic backwardness of the region, policy of hungarization (magyarization) and denationalization, actually influenced the political feebleness of regional political institutions within a strong state system. In consequence, institutional manifestations of the political system of dualistic monarchy of Austria-Hungary were extremely weak because centralized power by all means tried to control all

political and economic key factors of social progress. All of the above mentioned also relates to the party system of Austria-Hungary, whose manifestations in Zakarpattia in the early twentieth century were barely noticeable. The policies of pro-government and opposition parties concerning Zakarpattia were the same, and therefore Hungarian political parties were unpopular in the region. If we classify the political system within which Zakarpattia functioned in the early twentieth century, taking into account the formational approach of the typology of societies, it was a bourgeois political system of the Western model. Its political regime was characterized by authoritarian methods of governance.

2.2. Ruska Kraina

Only at the end of World War II, due to the enthusiasm of the national liberation movement, did the strengthening of the struggle against the war also begin to change the political situation in the region. There was the first gradual increase in national consciousness of Ukrainians which promoted finding ways of national-state determination. Therefore, attempts were made by the Hungarian government of M. Karoi to keep Zakarpattia as part of Hungary (Law of Ruska Kraina) (Narisi istorii ..., 1995). Law of Ruska Kraina anticipated the formation of four *comitats* (Ung, Uhocha, Bereg, Maramorosh) of an autonomous region within Hungary. The document also provided the right to self-determination in internal political affairs, and more specifically – the administrative self-governance, justice, education, religion, language. The Ruska National Assembly was declared to be the legislative body of the autonomous region. In contrast to general state duties of the region, the document related to external political (foreign) and economic relations, military, financial, transport and social issues and more. The political power of the region was represented by the governor (regent). However, his power was not absolute, whereas inspection and control of his actions was accomplished by the Minister of Affairs of Ruska Kraina, who was subordinated to the Hungarian State Assembly (Parliament) (Puškaš, 2006).

However, the post-war transformation of the political system occurred in the conditions of dominance of reintegration processes. The main regional peculiarities of the transformation of political systems in Zakarpattia in the first half of the twentieth century were characterized by several factors. Firstly, there was social dissociation which was based on national and religious differentiation of population. The second factor was political and civil uncertainty. At that time when all Slavic nationalities had clearly determined their course to independence of the

nation, Ukrainian Rusyns in Zakarpattia hesitated, and that was the great advantage for other peoples (Fredinec, Vehers (eds.), 2010). A significant negativity in this process was imposed by the absence of a strong political elite, among which liberal attitudes prevailed, in particular in relation to Hungarians. Another factor was the economic and entrepreneurial weakness of the Zakarpattia region, which was traditionally considered agricultural. Therefore, the attempts to keep the historical Zakarpattia within the weak conditions of the Hungarian political system at that time looked pathetic. Alternatively, the given situation influenced numerous attempts to establish one's own locally-autonomous political regimes with specific management models.

2.3. The Hutsul Republic

Another attempt to stabilize the political situation, but rather to determine the orientation of the national government was the existence of the Hutsul Republic in the north-east of Zakarpattia (1918–1919). The existence of the Hutsul Republic ceased after the occupation of Romanian troops, which had received the consent of the European countries to start to put things in order in adjacent territories. It was a semi-political formation that had emerged spontaneously. At that time when the Hungarian authority was losing control over the situation, detachments of people's self-defense, disarmed *gendarmierie* in a peaceful uprising, transferred power in the hands of local residents. On November 8, 1918, at the general assembly in Yasinia, they adopted a unanimous decision about the union with Ukraine (Vegeš (ed.), 2002).

The leadership of the 20,000 population and legislative functions was entrusted with a peculiar parliament – the newly formed Ukrainian National Council, which consisted of 42 members. Moreover, the authority was also clearly divided into branches of power. Executive power belonged to commissions (sections) whose leaders had to report to the Main Board (Holovna uprava). Thus, the administrative, domestic, commercial, school, forestry, trade, food, diplomatic, military and other sections were formed. These elements of state formation were complemented by armed forces (police and border guards). It should be noted that at the first meeting of the Ukrainian People's Council deputies took an appeal to the government of the West Ukrainian People's Republic on the desire to be reunited with it. On January 8, 1919, as a result of an armed uprising against Hungary, Ukrainian People's Council in Yasinia officially declared the separate and independent Hutsul Republic (Vegeš (ed.), 2002).

The Prime Minister, the military commandant and the chairman of the Council – all these functions were actually performed by the President of the Hutsul Republic with extraordinary power. Although this semi-state formation was not recognized by the international community, its internal political life was unfolded by the classic state-forming scenario. If we talk about the realities and prospects of independent existence of such a state, then on the basis of contemporary policy of neighbor states and big countries which had won in the World War I, the duration of its existence also looked ghostly.

Also the decision of the General Public Congress influenced the increase in politicization of Zakarpattia Ukrainians. The Khust Forum (January, 21, 1919) and its decision once again confirmed the orientation of local residents for reunification with Ukraine. The Hutsul Republic (1918–1919) and the activity of its leaders were reinforcing the idea of Conciliarism of Ukraine (Vegeš, Tokar, 2018). And only complex foreign circumstances prevented the unification processes of the Ukrainian nation, which eventually made Zakarpattia Ukrainians start the movement for inclusion of the region in the framework of a newly formed state – the Czechoslovak Republic.

2.4. Ruska Kraina (under Soviet rule in Hungary)

In 1919, another attempt was made for the formation of a new political regime on the territory of Zakarpattia. It was associated with the establishment of Soviet power in Hungary. Due to the crisis of M. Karoi's government, the socialists came to power, who on March 21, 1919, proclaimed Hungary as a soviet republic. Owing to the merger of socialists with communists, the United Socialist Party of Hungary and one-party government were created, which carried out peaceful socialist revolution in Hungary. This was a surprise for all subjects of contemporary political processes. In the following three days, the soviet power spread on the territory of Zakarpattia. The soviet power forced the territorial allegiance and named the region – Ruska Kraina (Narisi istorii..., 1995).

The priority task of the new power was to change the political system of the state. It greatly considered the of social-political and social-economic content of state livelihoods. Among the major plans for the realizing of tasks, the revolutionary government council of Hungary marked the nationalization of banks, the submission of financial, economic and industrial institutions, the creation of the Red Army and other military units (Puškaš, 2006). The Soviet power did not have time to implement the vast majority of these bold plans. Its policy both in Hungary and in Zakarpattia was characterized by duplication

of internal political development of Soviet power in contemporary Russia and Ukraine. The process of the formation of Soviet organs of power acknowledged the importance of the role of Councils, their executive committees, directories with involving broader circles of population. It is confirmed by the results of elections, according to which we can speak about the heterogeneous social membership of councils (Narisi istorii..., 1995).

If the formation of the People's Councils had a positive response among the local population, other forms of government became unpopular. Administrative innovations had negative consequences, because power was increasingly gaining dictatorial traits. The most vicious in the contemporary situation was the way of duplicating of the Soviet Bolshevik policy with its main negative manifestations (e.g. repressions against opposition and dissidents). Furthermore, the internal political situation deepened the problem of the adaptation of a new political system, which did not contribute to the implementation of new forms of functioning institutions of a weak political regime. Those institutional manifestations which the representatives of the Soviet power tried to initiate in Zakarpattia for the lack of time could not find the adequate support from the citizens. But the implementation of fundamental changes in social-political and economic directions was failed by the Soviet power, owing to external political rejection of a "Soviet Island" in Central-Eastern Europe.

The Soviet power lasted 133 days in Hungary and only 40 days in Zakarpattia. It is impossible to speak about the formation of a new political system and also about its stabilization and adaptation of local people to the new requirements of state livelihoods. Those institutional manifestations which the representatives of the Soviet power tried to initiate in Zakarpattia, for the lack of time, could not find appropriate support from citizens. Furthermore, politicians failed to realize a considerable range of social and political changes. It was not just the temporal reasons, but also complex internal and external political reasons. Therefore, as the previous attempts that we have examined above, the latter also failed (Narisi istorii..., 1995).

The reasons are also common in the mentioned cases. The external political situation did not contribute to the implementation of new forms of the functioning of institutions of weak political regimes. Directly or indirectly, we consider that in the contemporary conditions, key factors could only predominate the external nature.

3. Checking by democracy and authoritarianism (1919–1944)

3.1. Podkarpatska Rus (1919–1938)

The next stage of national belonging of the region is the formation of the Czechoslovak Republic, which called on the inhabitants of Zakarpattia to be actively involved in political life and to become a real political entity of the postwar world order. In particular, the fact that political history of 1920–1930 was based on the foundations of a democratic society was new to the population. And the establishment of a multi-party system gave a push to a comprehensive development of political thought, ideological struggle and political culture in general. Indeed, dramatic changes took place when, owing to the voluntary decision of the local political elite, elite immigrant groups and the support of the European countries who were winners of the First World War and also of the USA, Zakarpattia lands were included to the newly formed Slavic state – the Czechoslovak Republic (Boldižar, Mocni, 2002). During 1919–1939 the region, under the name Podkarpatska Rus Ruthenia, was able to fulfill itself in a democratic political system. It carried out a gradual evolution of a new state structure in Zakarpattia and its integration into the political system in Czechoslovakia. In practice, establishing a new political elite began, whose representatives considered it a priority to defend acting autonomy. The Czechoslovak political system had all the characteristics of a democratic society, primarily expressed in the effectiveness of pluralism, the implementation of legislative framework, the practice of political equality.

According to the General Statute of organization and administration of Podkarpatska Rus adopted by the Czechoslovak Authority, the Directory was formed as an advisory body in the autonomous affairs. The administrator together with the military commander concentrated the executive branch of power in their hands. During 1919–1920, the Czechoslovak government reorganized the administrative-territorial structure in Podkarpatska Rus. However, the relationships between local and central authorities were almost constantly in conflict, as broad authority and autonomous power expected in the General Statute were not implemented. In all administrative bodies, there was the dominance of Czech officials because the government believed that local residents were not ready to perform administrative functions professionally in the local authorities (Švorc, 2003).

In September 1919, political and school departments (referats) and also the health care department were formed in the region. Subsequently, there were

the legal department, police department, department of public works, department of post-offices and telegraphs, economic and financial departments, department of social care (Narisi istorii..., 1995). Thus intense political integration of Zakarpattia into the political and state system of the Czechoslovak Republic began.

With the adoption of the Constitution, the Czechoslovak power was to make some concessions in determining the status of Podkarpatska Rus, as the continuation of the conflict between central and local authorities did not promote the stability of the political situation in the state. According to the changes to the General Statute, adopted on April 26, 1920, the civilian administrator was denied the right to exercise the local executive branch of power. Instead, the post of the Governor of Podkarpatska Rus was introduced, whose competence included the exercise of executive power in matters within the jurisdiction of autonomy (Puškaš, 2006). The Constitution of the Czechoslovak Republic gave fairly extensive rights to the future Soim of Podkarpatska Rus (regional parliament). In accordance with the norms of the Constitution, the Soim could adopt laws that dealt with the issues of language, religion, education and also the functioning of local administration. In addition, the Soim was granted the right to make special laws relating to Podkarpatska Rus which were in force on this territory, in the case of granting it such right by the Czechoslovak Parliament and if the adopted laws did not conflict with the existing legislation of the Czechoslovak Republic. The Constitution defined the Governor of Podkarpatska Rus as the highest representative of the autonomy, appointed by the president of Czechoslovakia. It was also noted that the governor was responsible not only to the Soim of Podkarpatska Rus, but also to the Czechoslovak authority. The representation of Podkarpatska Rus in the legislative organ of state was to be determined by the legislation of Czechoslovakia about elections. The subjects of the election process were political parties which appeared after 1919 (Tokar, 2006).

After the legal registration of Zakarpattia lands being part of a new state, the dynamics of democratization of the socio-political life in the region was appreciable. The gradual evolution of the new state structure was carried out in Zakarpattia along with its integration into the political system of Czechoslovakia. In practice, establishing of a new political elite began (G. Zhatkovych, A. Beskyd, A. Voloshyn et al.). Its representatives raised a priority question about giving the region effective autonomy. The Czechoslovak political system had all the characteristic features of a democratic society, primarily expressed in

the effectiveness of pluralism, the implementation of legislative framework, the practice of political equality. Podkarpatska Rus, as part of Czechoslovakia, was in the epicenter of political changes due to the transformation of the political system in participation of the state formation and so on. The process of involving citizens in the development of the state passed through a prism of representative democracy whose intermediaries were political parties. The multiparty system that had both positive and negative characteristics contributed to faster involvement of public masses into the state policy.

During the 1920–1930s, the manifestation of political pluralism took effect of direct participation in the political evolution of the state by its citizens. The newly formed Czechoslovak Republic, which immediately began large-scale development of democratic principles, among which there was the establishment of a multiparty system, gave opportunity to implement freely their political ideas of different orientations into life. Some political parties undertook the main burden concerning the implementation of reunification processes.

The accumulation of the priority issue among local residents, i.e. bringing the objective communion of Ukrainians on both sides of the Carpathians to the awareness of population, was an important factor in their activity. We can consider Ukrainian politicians and party leaders of the interwar period, the best representatives of Ukrainian political nation of Zakarpattia, as the forerunners of reunification of those political processes that had happened in the second half of the 1940s. However, the achievements of many Ukrainian political parties and their representatives in this way actually were privatized by one communist political organization that, objectively speaking, did not pretend to have a leader role of general Ukrainian reunification and did not bear the idea of unity of a nation in its modern sense.

Just at this time political parties led the struggle for policy of the Ukrainian nation in Zakarpattia and the idea of reunification of Ukrainian lands on both sides of the Carpathians. However, it was not a new idea in the interwar period. Therefore, at the end of World War I, the idea of forming a unified national state in ethnographic boundaries was really considered. However, external political factors prevented this. They included a so-called pro-Ukrainian political trend in contemporary Podkarpatska Rus. Among them, there were the Rus grain-growing (zemledilska) Party (1920–1924), the Christian People's Party (1924–1938) (both had the status of autonomous political organizations) and affiliated organizations of national parties – Zakarpattia Regional Committee of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia

(Regional Committee of CPCz) (1921–1938) and the Social Democratic Party of Podkarpatska Rus (1920–1938) (Tokar, 2006). In the programs of the named political parties, open requests for connection of Zakarpattia to Ukraine did not sound as the ultimate goal, but radicalization in the political sense gradually evolved. By the mid-1930s, another two pro-Ukrainian parties appeared on the political scene – the Ukrainian Peasant Party and the Ukrainian fraction of Agrarian Party. The leaders of the Ukrainian Peasant Party saw its main task in the formation of a unifying core of all Ukrainian public and political forces on the basis of the party: “Therefore, all Ukrainians, under blue and yellow flag, under which we stood in 1918! We must fight for the idea of autonomous Ukrainian Podkarpattia!” (Doboš, 1995).

It is interesting that both left and right political parties, in spite of the ideological difference, wanted to unite Zakarpattia Ukrainians with Ukrainian people on the other side of the Carpathians. The only difference consisted in that some (Regional Committee of CPCz) saw this union being part of the Soviet Ukraine, and others (the Christian People's Party, the Ukrainian Peasant Party, the Social Democratic Party, the Ukrainian agrarians) – saw it in a non-communist United Ukrainian State. Ukrainian leaders played a progressive role in the party representative body – the first Rus (Ukrainian) Central People's Council. Their cultural and national support was fellowship “Prosvita”, which in 1937 united all progressive national forces, regardless of their party affiliation. However, despite the successes of democracy in the region and the activity of political and non-governmental organizations in social life, linguistic and national contradictions remained unresolved (Botlik, 2005; Magocsi, 2015).

It should be noted that the transformation of the political system, and especially its stabilization and gradual adaptation of Zakarpattia regional political institutions of the Czechoslovak political system was a significant step forward in comparison with previous attempts of a similar nature. The progress was obvious in all social and political spheres for local citizens even in spite of the incompleteness of the process.

3.2. Carpathian Ukraine (1938–1939)

Features of the national state formation of Carpathian Ukraine at the end of 1930s forced focusing on a political and legal basis. This stage was the top state forming competitions of Ukrainians in Zakarpattia, who in full force declared themselves as a political nation. The Prague government during the interwar period constantly delayed the implementation of its promises of the autonomy of the region,

arguing that Ukrainians were not yet ready for independent life. However, the political maturity of local inhabitants had not raised doubts of conscious representatives of regional politics yet. 1938 was a year of dramatic political changes in the historic Zakarpattia. The party development of 1920–1930, during which two party blocks crystallized, which were following Ukrainophilic and Russophilic orientations, was also on the doorstep of transformation. At that time, national councils had the greatest influence on political life, in particular Persha Ruska (Ukrainian) the Central People's Council and the People's Ruska Central Council (Russophile), whose actions were coordinated by representatives of the regional political elite.

Due to the compromise on October 11, 1938, the first autonomous government of Podkarpatska Rus was formed, headed by A. Brodiy – the leader of Russophile policy orientation in the region. But the autonomous government lasted a very short period and managed to hold only three ministerial sittings (15, 18, 22–23 October 1938), during which the main governing bodies, a number of important economic and business issues, problems of border demarcation with Slovakia, creating a center of social security, internal political situation in Podkarpatska Rus and so on were viewed and approved. Soon, it became known that Adam Brody had been working for a long time to Hungary under the nickname “Bertalon”. He was accused of state treason and arrested (Vegeš, 2004).

The situation in political life changed especially dramatically with the arrival of the second autonomous government headed by the leader of pro-Ukrainian orientation A. Voloshyn (October 1938). After the prohibition of activity of all political organizations, Persha Ruska (Ukrainian) the Central People's Council, which had to stabilize the socio-political situation, monopolized political life of the region.

Simultaneously, the organizational work to create a new (ruling paradigm) Ukrainian National Party began; its apparatus was formed by the ruling elite of the region. Established in January 1939, the party Ukrainian National Organization (Obiednannia) (UNO) acted as a single electoral subject. These facts point to the one-party system, and there was no alternative to elections to Soim (regional parliament), which indicated the authoritarian character of the political system. Although the authority justified it by the need to stop a political chaos, its actions violated the already acquired in previous years democratic victories.

We assume that authoritarianism was temporary because the convocation of Soim and the importance of its decisions, in particular the proclamation

of the independence of the Carpathian Ukraine on 15 March, 1939, the election of the president and ministers, the approval of the state symbols, pointed to the political and legal framework of a democratic state status of Carpathian Ukraine. However, unfavorable conditions for the deployment of state life and also the beginning of the Hungarian occupation negated attempts of political construction.

The government was working in extreme conditions. The political crisis in the region was deepened by the contradictions between Czech officials and the local population, as well as by numerous conflicts in the Ukrainian sphere (camp). In 1938–1939, representatives of two generations faced each other: young radical nationalists, who demanded the government to act decisively and older moderate politicians, who tried to keep the autonomous status of the region through some maneuverings. After the decisions of the first Vienna Arbitrage, the autonomous government of Carpathian Ukraine moved to Khust.

The political regime of Carpathian Ukraine started on the basis on a one-party system represented by UNO. Its policy symbolized the authoritarian type of government. The formation of a single pro-state party UNO and the presence of its members in the government determined the state position of the government that was based on authoritarianism and nationalism, despite the proclaimed democratic content of documents. Party leaders chose a radical way owing to internal and external crisis circumstances and thus tried to stop the political chaos in the region. So, this way was chosen as acceptable in the contemporary conditions and had to solve two major problems. Firstly, all national Ukrainian political and cultural forces should gather and unite to stand out as a single front in favor of their conquests. Secondly, a possibility to organize a strong opposition should be given that would bring to naught all attempts of Ukrainian association to form prerequisites for building a full autonomy of Carpathian Ukraine.

In November 1938, the Organization of People's Defense of the Carpathian Sich (OPDCS) was formed, although the first Sich troops in the early 1930s started to be formed by Dmitry Klympush from Yasinia. On November 9, 1938, in Khust the Constituent Assembly of the Carpathian Sich took place. Dmytro Klympush was elected the commander of the Carpathian Sich (Vegeš, 2004).

On November 22, 1938, the Czechoslovak Parliament changed the constitution, adding resolutions of the federal system. At the same time, a separate Constitutional Charter of Podkarpatska Rus was adopted, according to which the region was

considered as a federal part of the renewed Czechoslovak Republic (so-called "second" republic). Thanks to the adoption of this law, the legal status of Podkarpatska Rus / Carpathian Ukraine went far beyond the autonomy defined in the Saint-Germain contract and the Czechoslovak constitution of 1920. In accordance with these decisions, forming their own regional government and convening Soim (Parliament) was foreseen. In January 1939, the Prague authority proposed a new government of the Carpathian Ukraine (the third autonomous government), under the leadership of Avgustyn Voloshyn.

On February 12, 1939, the elections to Soim of the Carpathian Ukraine were called. 92.4 per cent of voters voted for the party list of UNO (Tokar, 2006). It gave the right to the government of Carpathian Ukraine to summon Soim – the first parliament in the history of the region. On March 14, 1939, the Prime Minister A. Voloshyn declared independence and sovereignty of Carpathian Ukraine and appointed the convocation of Soim on March 15, 1939, which had to adopt this decision. In general, six sittings of Soim were held which adopted decisions that had a great historical importance for the establishment of the young Carpatho-Ukrainian state.

The sitting of Soim officially proclaimed the independence of Carpathian Ukraine – a republic headed by the President. 22 members of the parliament adopted the Constitutional Law. Part 1:

§1. Carpathian Ukraine is an independent State. §2. The name of the state is: Carpathian Ukraine. §3. Carpathian Ukraine is a republic with a president elected by Soim of Carpathian Ukraine headed. §4. The official language of Carpathian-Ukraine is Ukrainian. §5. The color of the national flag of Carpathian Ukraine is blue and yellow, whereby the blue color is the upper stripe and yellow is the lower stripe §6. The state emblem of Carpathian Ukraine is the previous regional emblem: a bear in the left red semicircle, and the trident of St. Volodymyr the Great with a cross on the middle dent. §7. The state anthem of Carpathian Ukraine is: "Ukraine's glory has not perished...". §8. This law is binding immediately upon its adoption (Vegeš, 2004, p. 286).

Afterwards, the Soim of Carpathian Ukraine elected A. Voloshyn the president of Carpathian Ukraine, who after taking the oath, appointed a new (the fourth autonomous) government headed by Julian Revaj.

The decision of Soim changed yet again the state-legal status of Carpathian Ukraine. Since then, although somewhat symbolic, Carpathian Ukraine ceased to be part of federal Czechoslovakia and became an independent state. Proclamation of full independence of Carpathian Ukraine was an

important state-political act, but it did not receive enough international recognition, because there was not time for it. It was the highest manifestation of the will of the population, in accordance with the right to self-determination, which belongs to the Ukrainian nation so as it belongs to dominant state-forming peoples (Schmidt A., 1939). We must understand that at that time, there was a general crisis of political systems in the conditions of exacerbation of international relations. Carpathian Ukraine passed a short way from the regional political autonomy to the state independence with transitive authoritarianism.

3.3. Pidkarpatska territory (1939–1944)

The period of Hungarian occupation is also peculiar in the political history of Zakarpattia. Its characteristics indicate a sharp turning point of a newly formed system of democratic relations in society and the revenge of the Hungarian political regime, re-establishment of old Hungarian orders from the beginning of the 20th century (Fredinec, Vehers (eds.), 2010).

During March–July 1939, a military-administrative dictatorship of the Hungarian occupation authority was established in the region. Also the official name of the region was changed – Pidkarpatska Territory. The regime was characterized by repressions and purges, firing of a large number of professionals and civil servants; it indicated a non-tolerant personnel policy of the new power. As before the World War I, Magyarization (Hungarization) of all social spheres increased. The political system experienced significant changes several times. In the summer of 1939, Hungary replaced the dictatorship by civil power. The laws concerning Zakarpattia ratified by the Hungarian Parliament introduced a new political management institute – the Regency Commissariat of the Pidkarpatska Territory. In addition, the Hungarian party system carried back orders of the “Austro-Hungarian” period, and the promised autonomous parties in Zakarpattia could be forgotten. To replenish the regional deputy corpus in the Hungarian Parliament, the “the best” and “faithful” representatives of the local elite were co-opted, and to speak about the system of pluralistic choice at that time was impossible.

4. The loss of regional characteristics in the process Sovietization of Zakarpattia (1944–1991)

4.1. Zakarpats'ka (Transcarpathian) Ukraine (1944–1946)

After the liquidation of Hungarian occupation regime in the autumn 1944, the establishment of people's power began in Zakarpattia with the Soviets and their political force structures. The movement for reunification with Soviet Ukraine was activated. This period obtained the political and legal status of a semi-state (transitive) body and the name – Zakarpats'ka Ukraine (1944–1946). During this period, branches of People's Committees were formed as bodies of local government. However, their formation was only partially from the national initiative. The main role was performed by the representatives of military headquarters of the Red Army, which were appointed by the leadership of localities. At the same time, on pots were local civil servants. Therefore, at this stage, there was somewhat paradoxical situation of dual power. However, in course of time, the Communists and Soviet workers forced out of administrative positions old civil servants and monopolized power in their hands. The control of Soviet force structures over political organs of the Zakarpats'ka Ukraine was exercised everywhere.

The new power made it clear that a return to the «Czech pluralism» with extensive multi-party system would not occur. Instead, it started to form a one-party system with monopolizing role in society. The Communist Party of Zakarpats'ka Ukraine (CPZU), which operated in Zakarpattia from 19 October 1944 to 15 December 1945, was the successor of the Transcarpathian Regional Committee of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia (operating in 1921–1938). At the Organizational conference in Mukachevo it was decided to unite all centers in a single communist organization (Makara, 1995).

The Party's main task was the reunification of Zakarpats'ka Ukraine with Soviet Ukraine, and therefore it obligated its members to lead the movement of national masses for the unity of the Ukrainian people and soon to solve the socio-economic and national-cultural problem through the prism of sovietization of the region. In practice, this meant the establishment of various committees which dealt in the confiscation of private land and creation of collective farms on its basis, the elimination of educational and scout centers and the creation of communist youth organizations. In general, the priority task of members of the Communist Party of Zakarpats'ka Ukraine (CPZU) was total bolshevization of society with the help of force structures.

Moreover, intensified purge of the newly accepted communists was carried out taking into consideration the peculiarities of «recent tenure as a part of foreign state». The activity of the Communist Party of Zakarpats'ka Ukraine (CPZU) had a deeply revolutionary character; it idealized merits of the Red Army and communists in liberation of the region.

In its work, the Communist Party of Zakarpats'ka Ukraine (CPZU) based on the formation of a mass trade union, youth arts and cultural and sports organizations. On the initiative of the CPZU during 1944–1945 mass assemblies, meetings, conferences, congresses of workers, peasants, teachers, cultural workers and others were carried out. Much work was done during the preparation and sessions of the First Congress of People's Committees, which adopted a Manifest on the reunification of Zakarpats'ka Ukraine with Soviet Ukraine on November 26, 1944. The broad strata of local population took part in these events that would contribute to the enthusiasm of the level of political culture in the conditions of adaptation to the new political system.

As a result of implementation of its main task and the unpredictability of outlined further program principles, the existence of the Communist Party of Zakarpats'ka Ukraine (CPZU) as a separate party structural and organizational unit became impractical. On December 15, 1945, the Central Committee of the All-Russian Communist Party of Bolsheviks decided to consider possible adoption of the CPZU to the All-Russian Communist Party of Bolsheviks and automatic transfer of its members to the All-Russian Communist Party of Bolsheviks. However, this decision caused another wave of party-political purge of the staff (only 38 percent of the CPZU became members of the All-Russian Communist Party of Bolsheviks). Instead of the Central Committee of the CPZU was appointed Regional (Oblast) Committee of the Communist Party of Bolsheviks of Ukraine, and on January 5, 1946, its new membership was approved (Makara, 1995).

The First Congress of People's Committees, except the Manifest on Reunification of Zakarpats'ka Ukraine with Soviet Ukraine, chose the highest organ of state power – the People's Council of Zakarpats'ka Ukraine (PCZU) with 17 members. I. Turianytsia was elected as the head of the Council. Also the staff of executive and administrative body – the government of Zakarpats'ka Ukraine was approved. According to the decree the People's Council of Zakarpats'ka Ukraine (January 9, 1945), all absolute power belonged to the people in the region and was exercised through freely chosen representative bodies, that is, local people's committees and People's Council – in the center.

Whereas the People's Council of Zakarpats'ka Ukraine was the single highest executive and legislative organ of power in the region, its activity could be described as full consistency of the legislative and executive powers. Elected members of the People's Council of Zakarpats'ka Ukraine, except legislative activities, implemented adopted laws by the Council and the dominated principle was «democratic centralism». But gradually the duplication of the fundamental principles of the Soviet power became more tangible in the context of the Soviet Union, and attempts to resist this were immediately eliminated.

4.2. Zakarpats'ka oblast in Soviet Ukraine (1946–1991)

At the beginning of 1946, a transitional status of Zakarpats'ka Ukraine was changed by the legal adoption of its territory as part of the Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic SSR and the formation of the Zakarpats'ka oblast with the center in town Uzhhorod. Legally, the status of the region was solved on June 29, 1945. Since that time, there was fully legitimate infusion of social and political institutions into the national Soviet political system, and aspects of the politicization of Transcarpathian Ukrainians lost its regional peculiarities in comparison with other regions of Ukraine. It was the third and the last period of sovietization of the region in the twentieth century. This process was completely implemented by a primordial idea of unity of the Ukrainian people.

However, it should be noted that ideas of reunification of the Ukrainian lands on both sides of the Carpathians were not new. At the end of World War I, the idea of formation of a single national state in the ethnographic framework (though in a non-Soviet variant) was really considered. However, the foreign policy factors created some obstacles. In the interwar period, separate political parties that were in Zakarpattia took on the main burden of the implementation of reunification processes. Among them was a communist political organization. Political parties of Zakarpattia could, and it would be rightful, be considered the forerunners of those reunification processes that had occurred in the second half of 1940s. However, the achievements of many Ukrainian political forces and their representatives were actually privatized by a single communist political organization which, objectively speaking, did not claim to be the leader of national reunification in its modern sense (Tokar (ed.), 2016).

In one way or another, at the stage of sovietization, communists remained the core of the political system; their party entirely controlled social and political processes. The party practically monopolized all the levers of regional livelihoods. The main

objective of that time was the strengthening and activation of the Soviet organs of power, the establishment of soviet order, the maintenance of social justice, etc. Ideological work, especially among people who distrusted communists, was also strengthened; the campaign of forming soviet and party senior staff using visitors started. Dismissal of qualified local workers from offices gained a widespread character.

Consequently, we can say that the staff policy of the soviet power was directed to the approval of the new political system and its adaptation to the corresponding institutions as soon as possible. For this, the substitution of the status of transitional semi-state was made, but properly autonomous formation to the equivalent administrative-territorial unit – oblast (region) as a part of the Ukrainian Soviet Social Republic (USSR). As a result, along with the political aspects, economic aspects (normalization of five-year plans, collectivization), cultural and national aspects (breaking with the notion of “Carpathian Ukrainians” and extension of the meaning of the notion «Ukrainians»), social activities (introduction of the soviet passport regime with compulsory registration) were realized. But there were other disadvantages, which in the first years of the soviet power negatively influenced its image. It was extreme militarization of the region due to supersaturation of servicemen, strict borderline regime, anti-religious policy (liquidation of the Greek-Catholic church), the introduction of administrative-command system, the management of all social spheres.

During the sovietization process of 1950–1980, the actual duplication of the main elements of the political system of Soviet Ukraine / the Soviet Union occurred. General trends dominated over regional peculiarities of this process and, as is pointed out, the sovietization of Zakarpattia was carried out in a “from the top”, rapid, emergency mode. Party centers with the full support and control of military units and security organs played a leading role in this process. Therefore, this period is dynamic in terms of social development of the region, and controversial, due to the exaggerated role of “the popular initiative” in this process (Tokar (ed.), 2016).

The electoral process in Zakarpattia during the soviet period underwent a complex evolution, but the electorate – good practice of political training. During this time there was everything: from a strict selection of deputies (cooptation) to alternative and transparency of subjects of the election process. In the postwar years, the conditions for the deployment of civil and political activity of the working people were created, providing their widespread participation in the social and political life. However, during Stalinism there were gross human rights

violations. First of all, that was showed by the conditions of the election campaigns which had nothing in common with the previous pre-Soviet traditions of pluralism and democracy. Therefore, the process of adaptation to the soviet political system in Zakarpattia took place in rather difficult circumstances of post-war reconstruction. If economic successes had an objectively positive character, the political control of livelihoods of local residents left a negative trace on the sovietization of Zakarpattia as a special political region.

5. The post-soviet period (since 1991) – the Zakarpats’ka oblast in independent Ukraine

The development of political life in the period of formation of Ukraine’s independence and its further livelihoods serves today as a new guideline of evolution for Zakarpattia as a political region. The end of the 1980s – the beginning of the 1990s was a landmark in determining Ukrainians as a political nation. The wave of liberalization of social and political relations as well as democratic transformations of public life led to the transformation of national consciousness, the search for truth, freedom, human values, preservation of historical monuments, and the renaissance of cultural heritage. Under the conditions of a single-party system, citizens with common interests grouped by forming unofficial public organizations, associations and unions. As on other Ukrainian lands, in the Zakarpats’ka oblast the process of activation of public associations, centers of political parties, representatives of the regional elite had an accumulating role in making important social changes.

The historical significance and the role of informal public organizations can hardly be overestimated. They actually created a mass social base and a broad framework for the rise of a powerful national-democratic movement with a vivid variety of its manifestations. Also cultural and educational orientation did not take the last place.

For the time of contemporary national, cultural and political awakening on the Ukrainian lands 1990–2021, dramatic social and political changes occurred that led to the return of original national sources of the Carpathian region and gave a possibility to touch memorable pages of the past. The Ukrainian society of the contemporary state experienced the period of formation and adaptation of many public institutions to the political system. Choosing the democratic way of development in all spheres of social life and taking a pattern of the Western European variant of democracy, Ukrainians

tried to adjust to the realities and prospects of the development of a modern democratic society. Only under these conditions, can the liberalization of relations and social and political activity of Transcarpathians be expected in the context of forming the principles of civil society.

In everyday vocabulary, the Zakarpats'ka oblast is called by the regional name Zakarpattia (Transcarpathia). It is a geographical and historical territory whose geopolitical position is unique because of its location on the crossroads of economic, trade, national and cultural routes in the center of Europe. The region is located in the far west of Ukraine. In the northeast, east and south-east Zakarpattia borders on Lvivska and Ivano-Frankivska oblasts, and in the northwest, west and south boundaries of the oblast are the state borders of Ukraine with a total length of 467.3 km, which includes Poland – 33.4 km, Slovakia – 98.5 km, Hungary – 130.0 km and Romania – 205.4 km. Hence, in the Zakarpats'ka oblast there are 19 border crossing points with neighboring states. The area of Zakarpattia with the center in Uzhhorod is 12.8 thousand km², or 2.1% of Ukraine's territory and is one of the smallest among the oblasts of the Western region, occupying 11.6% of its territory. The number of de facto population in the oblast on January 1, 2010 was numbered 1244.8 thousand people, 2.7% of the population of Ukraine. According to the population size, the oblast took 17th place among other regions, and according to the average population density (97.6 persons per km) – 8th place. 62.8% of the population live in rural areas. The geographical location of the region also determines the presence of a sufficiently large number of national minorities among its population. In the Zakarpats'ka oblast live citizens from about a hundred nationalities and ethnic groups, including 80.5% – Ukrainians, 12.1% – Hungarian, 2.6% – Romanians, 2.5% – Russians (Tokar (ed.), 2016).

The multinational composition of the population of the region has led to its multi-religious character. Numerous religious organizations of different religious confessions and faiths are registered in the region. Ethno-confessional organizations are the most typical of the Jewish population, Germans, Slovaks, Romanians, and Hungarians. For them, according to their own historical, ethno-cultural and canonical and ritual traditions, normal conditions and opportunities were created to satisfy their religious needs.

On the basis of this survey, it should be noted that during the last preconditions for the formation of a new type of thinking of local population and special features of its regional political awareness and political culture were formed century in the Zakarpats'ka oblast. Transcarpathians regularly

participated in state-forming and other political processes, specifically influencing their dynamics owing to peculiar regional and national traditions, historical, cultural, mental characteristics, the typical content of struggle and defending social and political values.

6. Conclusions

The motivation to write this material is an argument for historical and political traditions of small regions that under any geopolitical circumstances focus attention of the state power on the effectiveness of single-minded policy of "Center" to "Region". Mistakes and negative effects between two subjects lead to the development of appropriate national regional policy that will promote the population's participation in political life. Especially important is the study of the specificity of regions with common characteristics. It gives opportunity to identify traditional trends of political culture, political behavior of the population in the regions and their influence on power to adopt important social and political decisions.

The detailed overview of the past and circumstances of the modern development spur on the formation of the political portrait (passport) of the Zakarpattia region – the most western region of modern Ukraine, which is filled with courses of regional political processes, polyethnicity and multi-religion, geographic specificity of the territory and its border status, the number of population, socio-cultural aspects of the formation of electoral behavior and complex and dynamic political history. The social and political life of the region initiated the creation of new administrative and territorial systems depending on the circumstances and requirements of the time and also led to bearing up the principles of authoritative relations of the «Center» according to historical traditions. The 20th century gave opportunities to many modern Ukrainian regions to realize several different variants of political relations in the context of functioning of various political regimes. But this opportunity was given as a result of global and specifically European transformational processes, somewhere extremely tragic. The 20th century brought a number of fundamental changes in political history that made society flexibly respond to them, adapt or not to accept the content of institutional manifestations in each particular case. The complexity of the transformation of political systems (or particular political regimes) in the geographical boundaries of the Zakarpattia region consisted in the fact that this area was at the turn of several

state formations, in clash of political and international interests in Central Europe, the strategic axis "East – West".

A historic insight witnesses complicated socio-political relations of local inhabitants with the political elite of different levels. However, it primarily concerned the period when the citizens of these areas were forcibly removed from the adoption of socially important political decisions, and thus themselves could not influence the course of current events. That also reflected on the effectiveness of political development of the land. Therefore, only since the early twentieth century, when local inhabitants began to directly participate in this process, have transformations of political relations affected conditions of the historical and geographical, mental and ideological, political and legal character.

So, Zakarpattia, small in area, during the 20th century had different official names of the geographical area, reflecting the specificity of development of the political system of the state to which the region belonged. These transient changes demanded adaptation of political institutions of the territory to the requirements of this or other political system, which every time absorbed rather poorly developed and ad hoc stable/unstable regional political subsystems. Basing on the last, we must understand the influence of transformation processes on the party and electoral systems. As state formations to which Zakarpattia belonged at various times had different political systems within which various political regimes functioned, respectively, there were different methods of formation of the state and local power, just as the character of citizens' participation in social processes.

Consequently, in the context of analysis of the current processes of social and political transformations of the Ukrainian society, consideration of territorial peculiarities of electoral space and electoral behavior in the development of regional policy of the Ukrainian state and the consolidation of the Ukrainian nation is a priority. Indeed, these electoral moods of a territorial society are a sensitive indicator of political mutual understanding between the "Center" and the "Region".

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