

SUBCARPATHIA'S RE-INCORPORATION CREATES COMMON POLISH-HUNGARIAN FRONTIER

BY

ANDREW BAJCSY-ZSILINSZKY

Within three days, counting from 15th March, Subcarpathia, together with the honest, loyal and religious Ruthenians, returned to the Sacred Crown and took its ancient place in historical Hungary.

The restoration of Subcarpathia took place in the following manner. On 14th March the Hungarian troops repulsed attacks on the frontier, and on the 15th three detachments took action; one advancing from Ungvár towards the Uzsok Pass, another from Munkács towards the Verecke Pass and a third along the valley of the Tisza towards Körösmező. The first to reach the Polish frontier, at 1.25 p. m. on 16th March, was the detachment from Munkács. That same day this detachment reached the Verecke Pass through which Árpád led the conquering Hungarian horsemen a thousand years ago. Next day the troops from Ungvár reached the Uzsok Pass. The reason why they took a day longer to do so was that, although the other line had also to be cleared of Sitch Guards and Czech soldiers, who offered resistance here and there, waging a guerilla warfare on the advancing Hungarian troops, it was on the Uzsok line at Perecseny that regular Czech troops attempted to make a serious stand, and it was not until the latter were completely routed that the Hungarians could advance. The same day the detachment advancing from the Tisza towards Körösmező gained the Polish frontier along a

line almost 270 kilometres long. Struggling with a terrible blizzard and with Czech troops and bands of Ukrainians that lay in ambush for them, the Hungarian soldiers covered exceedingly rough ground with surprizing rapidity. These little forces, consisting partly of raw recruits with only six weeks of training, may be said to have accomplished the hard task of occupying Ruthenia with the astonishing verve of the ancient Hungarian military spirit.

It is, however, undoubtedly true that this action was not a campaign of conquest; had, in fact, no resemblance to one, if only because the task of the Hungarian National Army was facilitated by the enthusiastic, wellnigh fanatical, willingness to assist displayed by the Ruthenian folk, a people so sorely harassed by Czech and Ukrainian — a people known as Prince Rákóczi's "most loyal folk", the gens fidelissima of Hungarian history. Their zeal in lending assistance to the Hungarian troops has been recorded by the foreign journalists who witnessed it. At Órhegyalja, for instance, Hungarian flags made their appearance, and at Szélestő a portrait of Admiral Horthy was set up on the War of Independence (1848) Memorial. In other words, despite all the persecution the Ruthenians had to endure, for twenty years they preserved the Hungarian colours and the Hungarian Regent's portrait. The welcome accorded to the Hungarian troops in Huszt was particularly enthusiastic. Foreign Press correspondents established the fact that, besides the older people, an astonishing number of young Ruthenians could speak Hungarian. In spite of Czech and Ukrainian propaganda and a reign of terror, the Ruthenians showed that at heart they belonged to Hungary by teaching their children Hungarian, even though they had no Hungarian schools.

The Hungarian military action was not simply the restoration on the basis of Hungary's historical rights of one of the most valuable and important parts of the kingdom of the

Sacred Crown; it was actually a plebiscite on the part of the Ruthenians: an act of self-determination according to the Wilsonian principles, nay more, enthusiastic and voluntary reunion with Hungary. It has also restored the ancient boundaries between Hungary and Poland, making a closer co-operation between the two countries possible. This is important for Poland as well as for the entire Danube Valley; in fact for the whole of Europe.

Within a short time the future is bound to show that the re-establishment of the old Polish-Hungarian frontier was one of the greatest events of the past five years. Its restoration has liberated great Hungarian and Polish forces and this will prove to be one of the fundamental pillars upon which a natural reconstruction of the Danube Valley may be built.

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Országos Széchényi Könyvtár