

Deportation of Jewish population to German extermination camps in 1942



Postwar exhumation of 747 victims murdered by German Nazi occupants and members of Hlinka Guard after crush of Slovak National Uprising in Kremnička



END OF THE REGIME (SEPTEMBER 1944 - MAY 1945)

The crisis of the regime culminated in August 1944 with the initiation of the Slovak National Uprising and subsequent German occupation. The reconstructed Slovak government led by Dr. Štefan Tiso was left with only limited competencies. The actual power was passed to the occupying authorities with whom HG closely cooperated. President Tiso and his ministers expressed unfailing loyalty to Germany and Hitler until the last moment but at the same time they tried to mitigate Nazi reprisals. The agony of the regime was ended in March 1945 by the departure of government officials to exile before the advancing Red Army.

"The Slovak State was not Catholic because when it comes to serious issues its ideology, laws and practice were in conflict with Christian teaching and values."

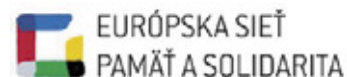
Pavol Martinický, publicist

Jewish Code was at the beginning of "The Final Solution of the Jewish question"



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THE REGIME OF THE SLOVAK REPUBLIC IN THE YEARS 1939 - 1945

The period of the existence of the first Slovak Republic (SR) from 1939 to 1945 still remains the most sensitive and most controversial time in our history. This stems mainly from the non-democratic character of this regime. Its basis was laid after the Munich conference and the subsequent declaration of Slovak autonomy of 6 October 1938, when Hlinka's Slovak People's Party (Hlinkova slovenská ľudová strana – HSĽS) became the only ruling party in the country. However, the functioning of the political system in the first Slovak Republic changed due to the intervention of Nazi Germany, activities of the ruling government and developments on the fronts of the Second World War.

1939 - 1945



Vojtech Tuka, Prime Minister of the first Slovak Republic



Alexander Mach, Commandant of Hlinka Guard, Interior Minister, Deputy Minister of the first Slovak Republic



Jozef Tiso, Prime Minister and President of the first Slovak Republic



Parade of Hlinka Guard

1940



Adolf Hitler meets Jozef Tiso in Berlin

ORIGIN AND STRENGTHENING OF THE REGIME (OCTOBER 1938 - JULY 1940)

The period between October 1938 and July 1940 was characterised by the establishment and strengthening of the power monopoly of HSĽS. In addition to this party, only two other parties representing the German and Hungarian minorities could legally operate on the Slovak political scene: the German Party (Deutsche Partei) and the Unified Hungarian Party (Egyesült Magyar Párt), since 1940 called the Hungarian Party in Slovakia (Szlovenszkói Magyar Párt). The autonomous government also dissolved the majority of social, cultural and sporting organisations and associations that were not members of HSĽS. The opposition press was banned and censorship was reinforced. The political opponents of the regime were imprisoned in concentration camp in Ilava.

Hlinka's Guard (HG) played an important role in building the authoritarian regime. On 28 October, HG became the only armed organisation on Slovak territory. Many guardsmen committed acts of violence directed against Czechs, Jews and opposition-minded Slovaks under the pretence of correcting old injustices.

After the formation of the independent Slovak State on 14 March 1939 (and after adoption of the Constitution of the Slovak Republic on 21 July 1939), the modest con-

servative-clerical wing led by Prime Minister Jozef Tiso (President after 26 October 1939) won the key position within HSĽS. His aim was to establish an authoritarian regime with some democratic elements (parliamentary system, independent justice, apolitical army) which would suit the majority of the Slovak population as well as Nazi Germany. By adopting the so-called Protection Agreement of 23 March 1939, the Slovak government, however, undertook to subordinate its foreign, military and economy policy to German interests. Its direct consequence was that the Slovak Republic was dragged into the Second World War. In 1939, discriminatory regulations against Jewish citizens were approved partially under the pressure of the Nazis and partially on the Slovak government's own initiative.

TEMPORARY RISE OF RADICALS AND DISINTEGRATION OF THE REGIME (JULY 1940 - AUGUST 1944)

In July 1940, after the intervention of Adolf Hitler (the so-called Salzburg dictate), the radical wing of HSĽS led by Prime Minister Vojtech Tuka and the supreme commander of HG, Alexander Mach, gained significant power and with the assistance of German advisors (Beraters), they introduced methods of German National Socialism into the political system of the Slovak Republic.

The acts adopted by the national assembly (Parliament) were replaced by governmental regulations. The so-called Jewish Code, issued in September 1941, restricted even more the civil rights of Jewish citizens and regulated the transfer of Jewish property into "Aryan" ownership (the so-called Aryanisation). The anti-Semitic policy of the regime culminated in 1942 with deportations of the majority of Slovak Jews to Nazi extermination camps. **Total number of holocaust victims is about 70,000 citizens of the first Slovak republic.**

In this period, the radical wing of HSĽS tried to depose President Tiso. However, their plans to plot a coup with the help of HG failed, because the Minister of the National Defence and the Supreme Commander of the Army, General Ferdinand Čatloš, supported the president. In October 1942, the victory of the moderate wing was confirmed by the introduction of the leadership principle in HSĽS that secured the position of President Tiso as the head of state and the party.

As a result of strategic turns on the fronts of the Second World War in 1943, the "ludácky" regime started to fall apart. Concurrently with the activation of the resistance movement, the politicians and staff of the state apparatus started to "turn coats" in order to secure a safe changeover to the new conditions.