

Since 1969



Slovak National Uprising Memorial
in Banská Bystrica

1944/1945



Wreckage of a rebel tank destroyer
Marder III, destroyed during fights at
Turčiansky Sv. Martin

“Slovakia primarily needed the uprising for its own sake. Even if the war end had been decided a hundred of times before (however, there were still eight bloody months until the end of fighting in Europe and until German capitulation), it was not decided what the position of Slovakia would be after the war, whether as a passive object decided upon by others, or whether it would show the world its own will, its own idea about its future, and its will to participate in the decision about its destiny.”

Vilém Prečan,
historian

“The very fact that an anti-Nazi uprising of such size was organised in a small, conservative or even indifferent Slovakia, can become a source of our pride even with a distance of time.”

Martin Lacko,
historian



Fighter Air Regiment and the 2nd Independent Parachute Brigade moved to the rebel territory from the eastern front.

The highest authority in the rebel territory was the Slovak National Council. It was established on September 1, 1944 in Banská Bystrica on the principle of a parity representation of the Communist Party and the Democratic Party. The new political system was represented by Revolutionary National Councils at municipality and district level. HSL'S and its related organisations, as well as political parties of German and Hungarian minorities were forbidden in the rebel territory.

CONSEQUENCES OF THE UPRISING

After the occupation of Banská Bystrica by the German army on October 27, 1944, General Viest gave an order to the members of the rebel army to shift to guerrilla warfare. Even if the uprising was militarily defeated, its consequences enabled Slovaks to participate in the creation of the foundations of the after-war Czechoslovak state. After 1948 the Slovak National Council was usurped by the communists who wanted to legalise their power in this manner. The fight against the communist totality, therefore, included also a fight for the truth about the uprising.

UPRISING IN NUMBERS

- 55,000 men and women fought with a weapon in their hands.
- Members of 32 nations and nationalities joined the uprising side by side with Slovaks.
- The German command put up almost 30,000 men to destroy the uprising.
- About 2,000 rebels were killed in the battles.

WOULD YOU LIKE TO KNOW MORE?

Recommended websites:
www.upn.gov.sk; www.enrs.eu



EUROPEAN NETWORK
REMEMBRANCE AND SOLIDARITY

SLOVAK NATIONAL UPRISING

The Slovak National Uprising started on August 29, 1944 as a reaction of the national resistance movement to the entry of German occupation troops into the territory of the Slovak Republic. Its political aim was to remove the authoritative regime of the Hlinka's Slovak People's Party (Hlinkova slovenská ľudová strana, HSL'S) and incorporate Slovakia into the renewed Czechoslovak Republic. The centre of the uprising was Banská Bystrica. The uprising ended after two months with the defeat of the rebel army, which then partly transferred to the guerrilla warfare.

September/October 1944



Brigade General Ján Golian (1906–1945), the first commander of the rebel army

September 1944



Rebel armoured train Štefánik

October 30, 1944



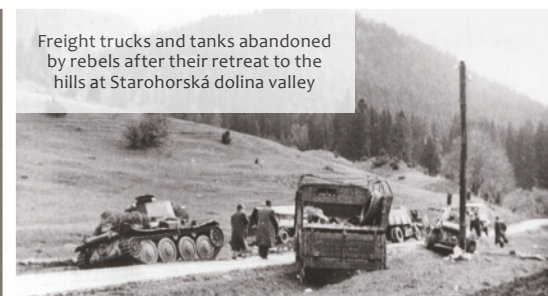
President Dr. Jozef Tiso decorating German soldiers in Banská Bystrica

October 1944



Rebel battery of mountain cannons at the fighting section at Sv. Kríž nad Hronom

November 1944



Freight trucks and tanks abandoned by rebels after their retreat to the hills at Starohorská dolina valley

RESISTANCE MOVEMENT IN SLOVAKIA

After the disintegration of Czechoslovakia in March 1939, various civil-democratic, communist and military **resistance groups originated in Slovakia**. Their mutual cooperation, however, was at a very low level. A common platform for the Slovak resistance movement was created only under the pressure of the Czechoslovak Exile Government in London and the Moscow leadership of the Czechoslovak Communist Party. **On December 25, 1943 the representatives of the civil-democratic and communist resistance concluded the so-called Christmas Treaty in Bratislava. They undertook to establish the Slovak National Council to lead the fight for the removal of the people's regime and take-over of political power in Slovakia.** At the same time, the signatories to the Christmas Treaty supported the renewal of Czechoslovakia as a common state for the Slovak and Czech nations. **The most influential resistance group in the Slovak army acted at the Military Headquarters in Banská Bystrica.** It was led by Ján Golian who was made familiar with the contents of the Christmas Treaty during a secret meeting on April 27, 1944. **A plan of armed action by the Slovak army against Germany was then elaborated under Golian's charge.** In an optimal sce-

nario, the uprising should have begun in coordination with the Soviet counterpart. The second variant counted with the declaration of military resistance in case the Germans would have tried to occupy Slovakia.

The Soviet authorities were informed about the uprising plans. However, they did not do anything because they assessed the whole action as unrealistic. At the same time, Soviet partisan groups started to take action in Slovakia, committing sabotage to railway lines and terrorising members of the German minority. These actions severely disrupted the preparations for the uprising and precipitated a German intervention.

REACTION OF NAZI GERMANY

Given the successful offensive of the Soviet army in the summer of 1944, the Slovak infrastructure was still important in supplying the German army in the eastern front. **The inability of the Slovak Government to prevent partisan sabotage was, therefore, viewed with worry in Berlin.** The last straw which broke the symbolic patience of the Nazi regime was the occupation of the town of Ružomberok by partisans on August 27, 1944. The town was situated at a strategic railway line and produced important military

material. The occupation of Slovakia was approved in Berlin on the next day.

COURSE OF THE UPRISING

After news of skirmishes between members of the garrison in Žilina and the arriving German troops, Ján Golian sent the password to "start the displacement" in the evening of August 29, 1944, which was a signal to begin armed resistance. However, already at the very beginning of the uprising several commanders failed. Golian's summons were not obeyed by the majority of West-Slovak garrisons, while the East-Slovak troops were disarmed by the Germans almost without any fight, and a lot of military material was lost. Nevertheless, the uprising organisers did not give up and continued to fight for the next eight weeks. **The main component of the rebel armed forces was the Czechoslovak Army in Slovakia** (renamed the 1st Czechoslovak Army in Slovakia on September 30, 1944). Its first commander was Lieutenant Colonel Golian (promoted to Lieutenant on August 30, 1944 and to General on October 7, 1944). **Besides soldiers, also partisans and members of the police and financial guard joined the fighting.** The 1st Czechoslovak Independent