



Building of the Slovak Parliament



The new state's government convenes

“Then the Chancellor of the Reich read to me a report that the Hungarians are currently aiming to occupy Slovak territory. And this needs to be proven. „Aberblitzschnell“ (but lightning fast) it needs to be proven. This proof should be given to the appropriate officials in order that they know the Slovak nation has its own statehood and territory; hence it is necessary to prevent anyone from accessing Slovak territory and the Slovak population. There is no time to wait, not days, time is decisive. And therefore – using the word „blitzschnell“, we seek to address and resolve the issue as German interests in Europe requires.”

Jozef Tiso

speech at the Slovak Parliament meeting on 14 March 1939 on negotiations with Hitler in Berlin

“The Nazis were determined to liquidate Czecho-Slovakia as soon as possible. Hence they sought the most appropriate pretext: to destroy the state from within. Therefore, they favoured a cynical game by playing the Slovak card.”

Ivan Kamenec
historian



Act no. 1/1939 Sl. Coll. of 14 March 1939 regarding an independent Slovak State. The Slovak parliament passed the following Act:

Section 1 The Slovak nation declares itself an independent Slovak state. The Slovak nation's parliament has become the legislative assembly of the Slovak state.

Section 2 Until the constitution of the Slovak state, all governmental and executive power is in the hands of the government as appointed by the parliamentary chair.

Section 3 All existing laws, regulations and measures remain in force, with changes resulting from the Slovak State's spirit of independence.

Section 4 The government is empowered to perform, by means of a regulation, all that is deemed necessary in the interim period to maintain order and safeguard the interests of the Slovak state.

Section 5 This law comes into effect on today's date and will be fulfilled by the government.

CHRONOLOGY

29 September 1938 Munich Agreement (Germany, Italy, Great Britain, France)

October, November 1939 Polish ultimatum and occupation of territory in north of Slovakia

6 October 1938 Declaration of Slovakia's autonomy in Žilina

10 October 1938 Germany occupies Petržalka and later Devín

2 November 1938 First Vienna Award (Germany, Italy), signifying southern Slovakia's occupation by Hungary

22 November 1938 Constitutional Act on the autonomy of the Slovak Land

18 December 1938 Elections to the Diet of the Slovak Land (under the conditions of an authoritarian political regime)

9 March 1939 Homola's coup

13 March 1939 Jozef Tiso meeting Adolf Hitler in Berlin

14 March 1939 Declaration of an independent Slovak state by the Diet of the Slovak Land

18 and 23 March 1939 Protection Agreement (Schutzvertrag) with Germany

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



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Source of photos: Slovak National Archives, dossier Slovak Press Agency

THE SLOVAK STATE'S ESTABLISHMENT

On 14 March 1939, the Slovak parliament in Bratislava declared an independent Slovak State. This was primarily a state-law change with the autonomous Slovak country becoming an independent state, the undemocratic political regime of which having been established several months earlier as a consequence of the Munich Agreement. Through this agreement, the Western democratic powers had forsaken the country to Nazi Germany's sphere of influence – with the resulting pressure and aim to dissolve Czecho-Slovakia also playing a key role in the new state's establishment. Indeed, the Germans also sought to take advantage of the national emancipation process and demands for recognition of the Slovak nation.

10 March 1939



So called Homola's putsch

14 March 1939



Slovak Parliament building where Slovak state was declared



Coat of Arms of the Slovak state

13 March 1939



Jozef Tiso and Ferdinand Ďurčanský during a meeting with Adolf Hitler on March 13, 1939 in Berlin



Contemporary press



Temporary stamps of the new state

POST-MUNICH SECOND REPUBLIC

The Slovak State's establishment was **preceded by Slovak autonomy** as part of the post-Munich Second Czech-Slovak Republic. Throughout the twenty-year interwar period of the Czechoslovak Republic, Slovakia continually repeated its legitimate request for self-government to enable the partial administration of government ministries by Slovak authorities in Bratislava. Eventually, when threatened with the state's complete collapse, the power-weakened post-Munich Czechoslovakian government finally relented to this demand.

The **Munich Agreement** was concluded on 29 September 1938 by France, Great Britain, Germany, and Italy, with the exclusion of Czechoslovakia. It resulted in the **subordination** of the territorially-truncated Czecho-Slovakia to **Nazi Germany**, and the establishment of its **authoritarian political regime**. The following months brought an **end to democracy**, and **human and civil rights violations** that included the **first racial discriminatory measures**. Such regime continued with few changes until 1945. In Slovakia, the most powerful political party (Hlinka's Slovak People's Party) seized complete power, while other parties were banned (except two parties for the German and Hungarian national minorities).

DRAMATIC MARCH DAYS

The culmination of the multi-day internal political crisis came on 9 March 1939. Dramatic events were triggered by a **military intervention in Slovakia** (the 'Homola putsch'), which was supported by the Czech-Slovak government with the aim of preventing the state's gradual dissolution. Members of the Slovak Autonomous Government were removed from office by the President of the Republic, and several political figures were imprisoned. Nazi Germany took advantage of this vacuum to pursue the definitive liquidation of Czecho-Slovakia. In terms of the growing national-emancipatory movement in Slovakia, Germany from its own perspective considered a satellite Slovak state as the best version of the new Central European order.

TISO IN BERLIN

When German emissaries failed to secure an immediate declaration of independence from the new Prime Minister of the Slovak Autonomous Government, Karol Sidor, they turned to his predecessor, Jozef Tiso. The emissaries stated that they did not accept Tiso's dismissal, since not all constitutional procedures had been objectively followed. He instead received an invitation from the Reich Chancellor Adolf Hitler to discuss Slovakia's future. After some hesitation, Tiso

requested political credentials and travelled to Berlin. Hitler exerted pressure by **threatening Slovakia's occupation by neighbouring states**: for example, at the negotiations on 13 March 1939 Tiso was presented with news that Hungarian troops were massing on the border. Nevertheless, **he refused to declare statehood immediately and insisted that the Slovak Autonomous Diet in Bratislava must do so**, which therefore quickly convened on the next day.

DECLARATION OF STATE

At this meeting of the Slovak Diet on 14 March 1939, MPs were read a report by Jozef Tiso regarding the negotiations with Hitler in Berlin, which was followed by a unanimous vote in favour of an independent state. On the same day, MPs adopted Act No. 1/1939 Sl. Coll., which laid down the constitutional foundations for the establishment of an independent Slovak state. **This document can be viewed as a provisional constitution** that constituted its highest authorities – a government and parliament. The legal form of the **subordinate relationship of the new state to Germany** was enshrined in the Protection Agreement. This established the independent Slovak state's subordination to the interests of Hitler's Germany in terms of foreign policy, the army and the economy, including a 'protective zone' in western Slovakia for the deployment of German military units.