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IMPACT OF THE SECOND WORLD WAR ON SLOVAKIA



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SLOVAKIA IN THE SECOND CZECHOSLOVAK REPUBLIC

A LOOK INTO THE PAST



The weakening of the republic after Munich was used by Hlinka's Slovak People's Party (HSĽS), which on October 6, 1938, with the participation of representatives of other parties, declared the autonomy of Slovakia. In a relatively short time, HSĽS managed to dominate political life in Slovakia. The other parties were dissolved, and the same fate befell their unions, organizations, and associations. The ban also affected the opposition press.

During this period, radical separatist tendencies began to grow in Slovakia. Prague overestimated the influence of the separatists on Slovak politics and on the night of March 9-10, 1939, declared a state of emergency in Slovakia. The autonomous government headed by Jozef Tis was dismissed, and 250 people were arrested by the army and gendarmerie. However, an insufficiently prepared action known as the Homol coup ended in failure after two days.



These events enabled Germany to use the Slovak card in the liquidation of Czechoslovakia. On March 13, 1939, Hitler invited J. Tiso to Berlin, where he presented him with two alternatives: either Slovakia would secede from the Czechoslovak Republic, or it would be handed over to its fate. Despite this threat, Tiso was not willing to declare Slovakia's independence from foreign territory. He argued that only the Slovak Parliament had this power and asked President Emil Hácha by telephone to convene a session of the parliament the next day.



INTERNATIONAL STATUS AND FOREIGN POLICY

● THE NEW STATE UNIT CAME FULLY INTO THE SPHERE OF INFLUENCE OF HITLER'S GERMANY.

● IN THE PROTECTION TREATY, SLOVAKIA RELINQUISHED MUCH OF ITS SOVEREIGNTY, FOR WHICH GERMANY PROMISED TO GUARANTEE THE INVIOABILITY OF SLOVAK TERRITORY.

● HOWEVER, THE GUARANTEES REMAINED ONLY ON PAPER, AS AFTER THE SO-CALLED LITTLE WAR WITH HUNGARY ON MARCH 23-24, 1939, SLOVAKIA HAD TO CEDE TO ITS SOUTHERN NEIGHBOR 74 MUNICIPALITIES WITH MORE THAN 40,000 INHABITANTS.

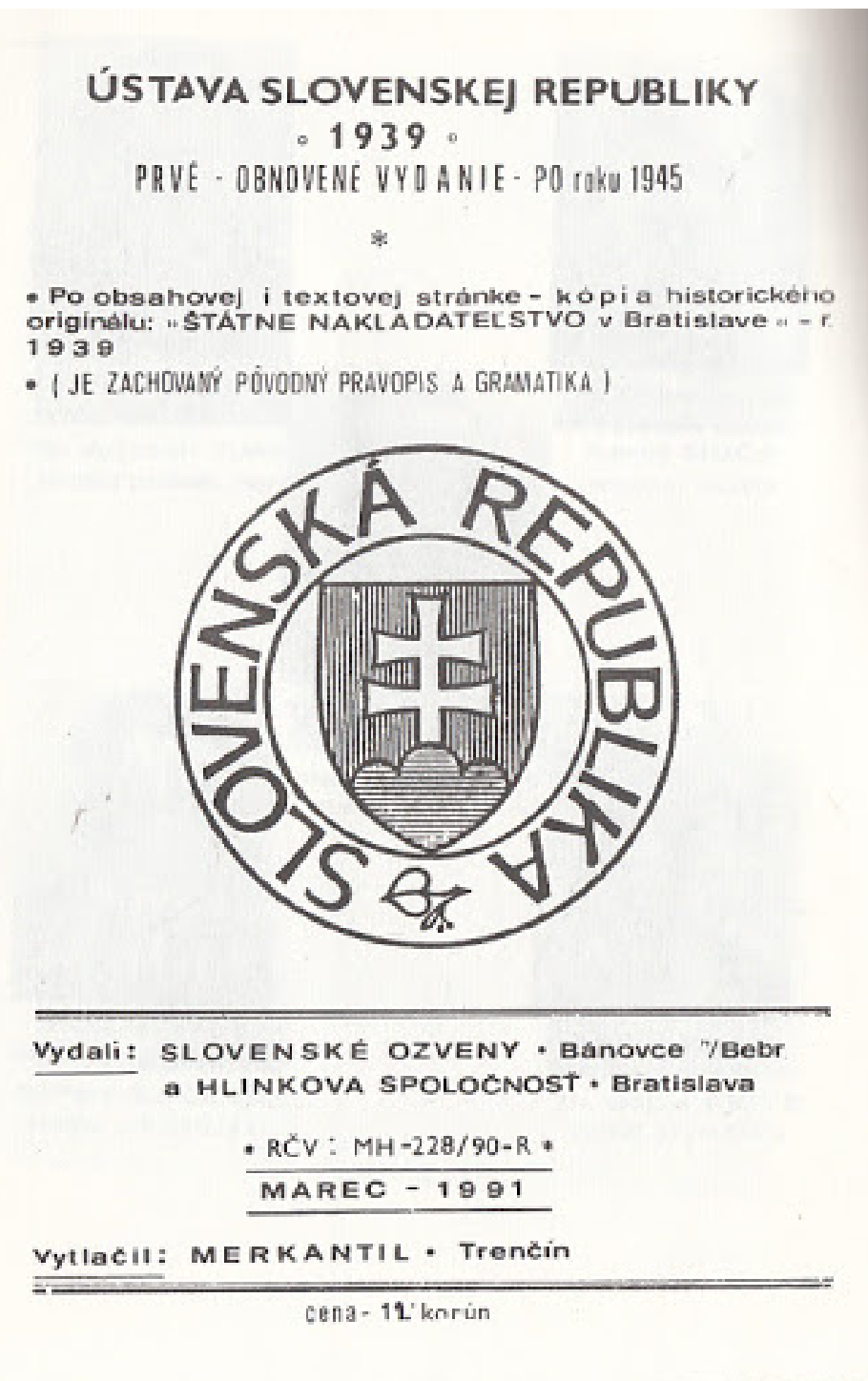
● IN ADDITION TO THE WAR AGAINST POLAND AND THE USSR, V. TUKA DECLARED WAR ON THE USA AND GREAT BRITAIN IN A NON-DIPLOMATIC WAY. FROM JUNE 1944, THE US AIR FORCE ALSO BEGAN BOMBING SLOVAK INDUSTRIAL ENTERPRISES.

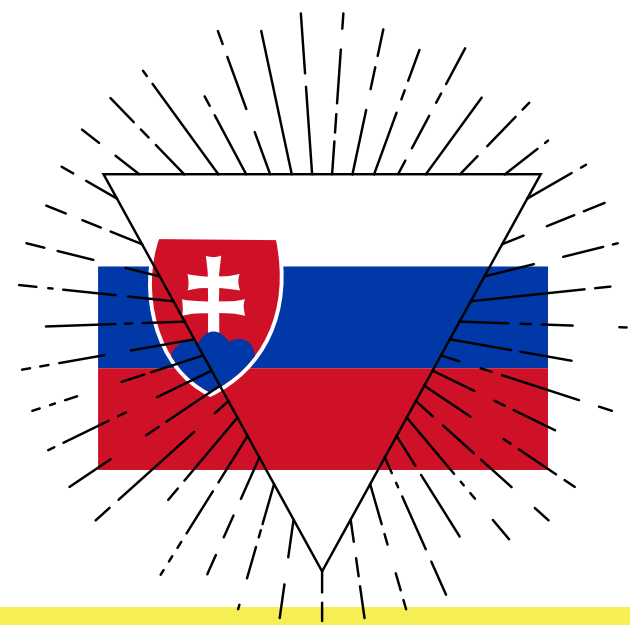


INTERNAL STRUCTURE, POLITICAL SYSTEM AND REGIME OF THE SLOVAK REPUBLIC

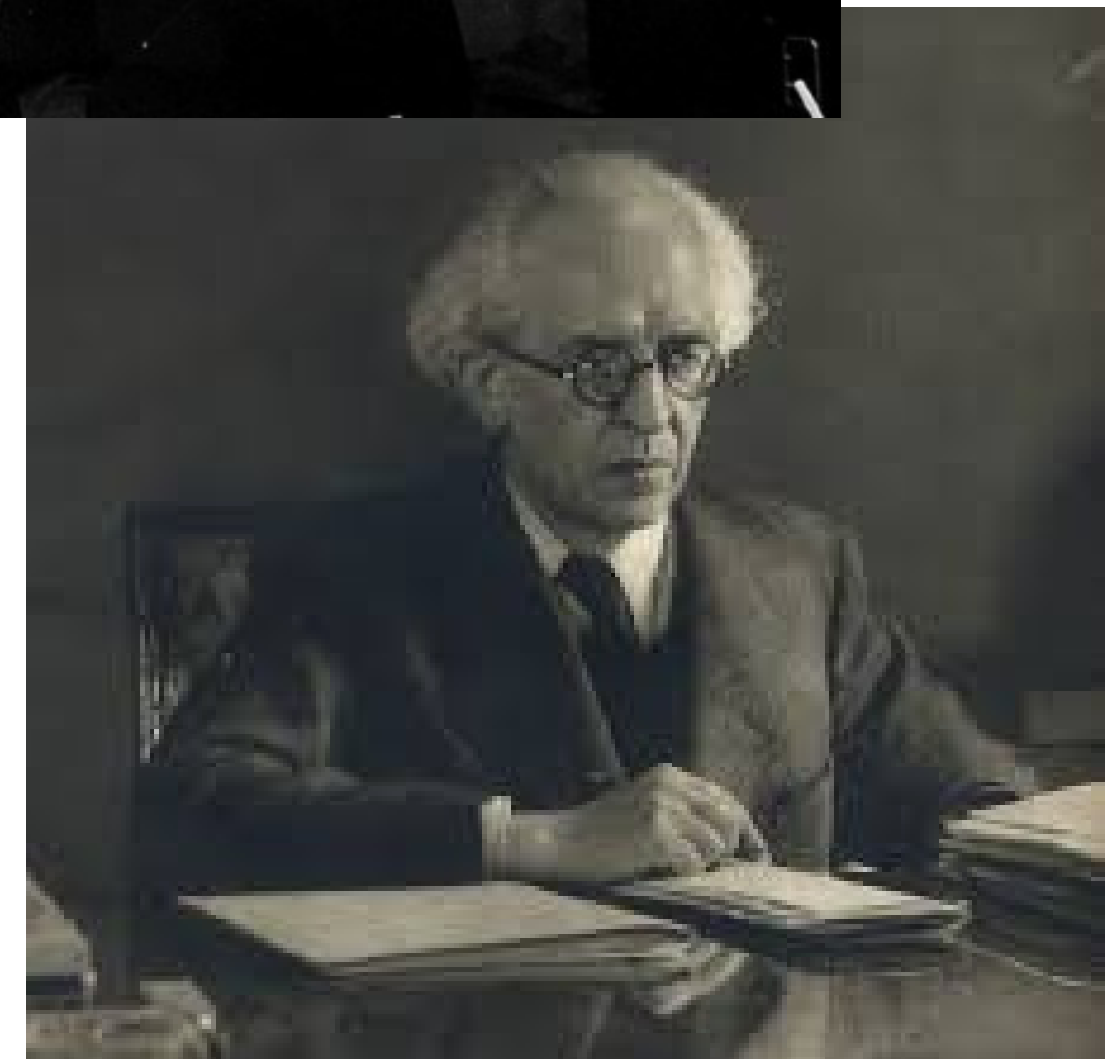
After the adoption of the Constitution on July 21, 1939, the name of the state was changed to the Slovak Republic.

The head of the republic was the president elected for a period of 7 years. From October 1939 until the end of the state, this function was performed by the priest J. Tiso, who had previously served as prime minister.





However, he gradually lost his powers in favor of the government, and so most of the legal norms adopted at the time of the Slovak Republic had the character of government regulations. The Government of the Slovak Republic consisted of eight members and a chairman. Vojtech Tuka held the post of prime minister for almost the entire existence of the state of time.



The most powerful political force in the state was the HSL'S, which had its leading role enshrined in the constitution. The HSL'S sought to control public life in its entirety. In addition to the ban on inhuman associations and organizations, their own organizations with originally compulsory membership served this purpose, in particular Hlinka's Youth and Hlinka's Guard (HG).



From 27 to 28 July 1940 in Salzburg, German officials dictated to Tis a change in government. V. Tuka was appointed Prime Minister, and HG Commander A. Mach became Minister of the Interior. A new stage begins in the formation of the regime of the Slovak state, in which the National Socialist elements penetrate into all areas of life.

In 1943, in connection with the turn on the fronts of the Second World War, the National Socialist principles gradually disappeared from public life.



CULTURE



IN THE FIELD OF CULTURE, SLOVAKIA SUCCESSFULLY CONTINUED THE PERIOD OF THE CZECHOSLOVAK REPUBLIC. THE NETWORK OF SECONDARY SCHOOLS HAS GROWN BY 26 FACILITIES

IN 1942, THE SLOVAK ACADEMY OF SCIENCES AND ARTS WAS ESTABLISHED, WHICH BEGAN ITS ACTIVITIES A YEAR LATER.

WITH THE ESTABLISHMENT OF TWO NEW THEATERS, THE CHAMBER THEATER IN MARTIN AND THE FOLK THEATER IN PREŠOV, THE PROCESS OF PROFESSIONALIZING SLOVAK THEATER CONTINUED SUCCESSFULLY.

UNTIL THE AUTUMN OF 1944, ALL DOMESTIC SPORTS COMPETITIONS TOOK PLACE WITHOUT INTERRUPTION, AND INTERNATIONAL FORCE MEASUREMENTS WERE ALSO CARRIED OUT, MOST OFTEN WITH GERMAN, HUNGARIAN AND CROATIAN TEAMS.

ECONOMY



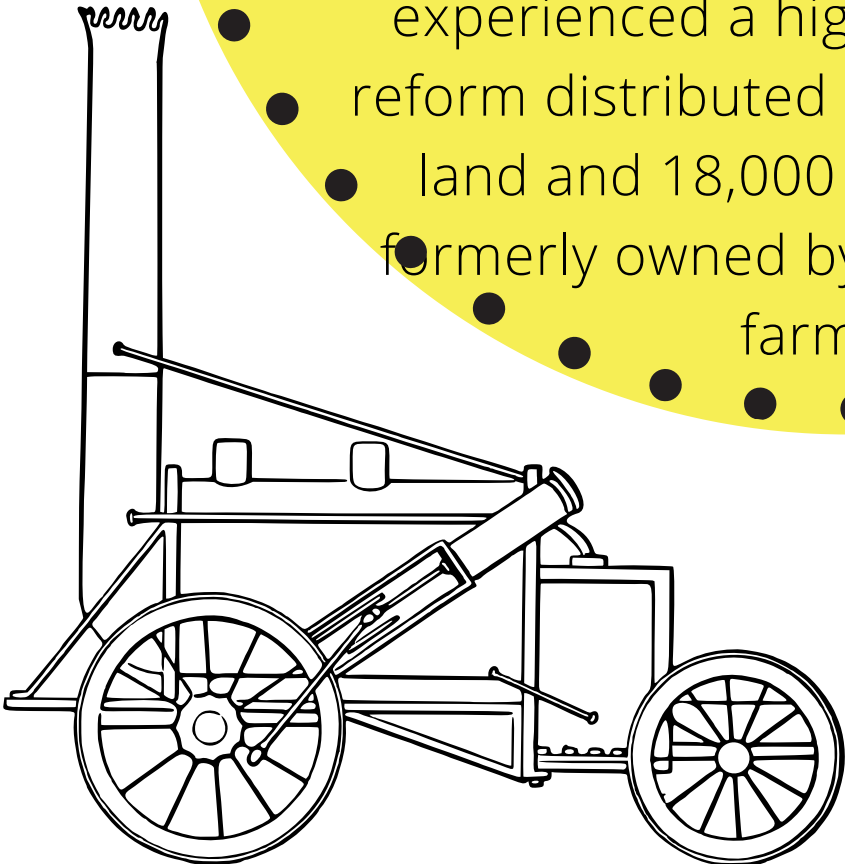
Like the political sphere, the Nazis wanted to control the Slovak economy. Already in the first year of the Slovak Republic's existence, German capital secured control over large industrial enterprises; on the contrary, the development of certain sectors became undesirable for Germany. Slovakia's subordinate position was also reflected in the artificial maintenance of the overvalued conversion rate of the German currency against the Slovak koruna at the level of 1 RM: 11 pcs.

The development of the economy was also negatively affected by the territorial losses after the Vienna Arbitration, which deprived the Slovak Republic of the most fertile land fund and disrupted the railway network. Nevertheless, the Slovak economy prospered. This fact was significantly influenced by the war boom, but also by the skilful economic policy of the state.





During the existence of the Slovak state, more than 200 industrial enterprises were established, almost 100 km of new railways and 287 km of roads were built. Water works were built, municipalities were electrified, the telegraph and telephone network expanded, and the number of radio concessionaires increased. Agricultural production also experienced a high boom. The land reform distributed 13,400 ha of arable land and 18,000 ha of forest land formerly owned by Jewish owners to farmers.



Despite many shortcomings, the supply situation was satisfactory in comparison with the surrounding states, the Slovak currency was firm and in demand. Sufficient income enabled the Slovak Republic to implement many social measures, such as child allowances, social contributions, etc. Unlike the first Czechoslovak Republic, the Slovak state managed to eliminate the problem of high unemployment, which, in addition to economic growth, was mainly due to the departure of Czech employees and the exclusion of people of Jewish origin from the economic process.

JEWISH QUESTION

Already in the period of autonomy, the issue of the Jewish population also took on a new position. Gradually, anti-Jewish propaganda spun, with the strong position of Jews in economic life becoming the subject of the greatest criticism.



AFTER THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE SLOVAK STATE, THE SO-CALLED THE SOLUTION TO THE JEWISH QUESTION OF THE LEGAL FRAMEWORK AND THE JEWISH POPULATION GRADUALLY MOST BASIC HUMAN, CIVIL AND PROPERTY RIGHTS



Anti-Jewish legislation culminated on September 9, 1941 with the adoption of the so-called Jewish Code, which summarized and deepened the measures so far.



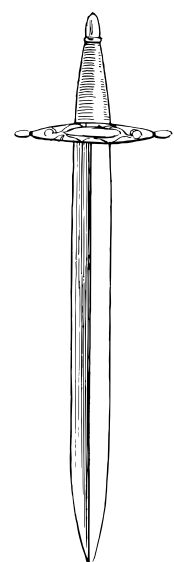
THE MOST SERIOUS CRIME FOR WHICH THE SLOVAK AUTHORITIES WERE RESPONSIBLE (ESPECIALLY PRIME MINISTER V. TUKA AND INTERIOR MINISTER A. MACH) BECAME DEPORTATIONS.

Germany's efforts to resume deportations in the spring of 1943 were no longer successful.

The new wave of transports thus began only after the occupation of Slovakia by Nazi Germany.

In eleven transports from September 30, 1944 to March 1945, the Nazis exported about 13,500 Jews, about 1,000 of whom were murdered directly in Slovakia.

In particular, thanks to the selfless help of the civilian population, about 10,000 Slovak Jews survived the winter of 1944/45.



Between March 25 and October 20, 1942, almost 58,000 Slovak Jews were deported to Nazi extermination camps, of whom only a few hundred survived. Slovak Republic paid 500 Reichsmarks for each deported person.

THE CRISIS AND THE END OF THE SLOVAK REPUBLIC

The implementation of the uprising was complicated by intensifying partisan activity, which accelerated the occupation of the country by Germany. The uprising finally broke out on August 29, 1944 in response to the occupation of Slovak territory by German military units.

A series of military failures of Nazi Germany and its allies during 1943 led to an increase in opposition sentiment in Slovak society. These resulted in the creation of illegal bodies - the Slovak National Council (SNR) and the Military Headquarters, which began preparing armed acts against fascism.

With the outbreak of the uprising, a concrete process of disintegration of the Slovak state began. While the regime of the Slovak Republic was maintained in western and eastern Slovakia with the help of the occupying forces, the Czechoslovak Republic was restored in the insurgent territory for two months.



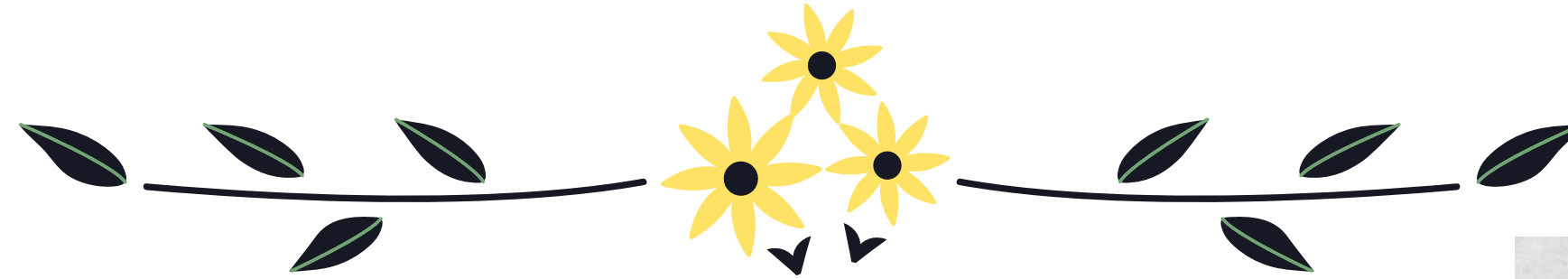
However, the dual government in the territory of the Slovak Republic did not end even after the defeat of the uprising on October 28, 1944, as at that time Czechoslovak statehood was declared in parts of eastern Slovakia, which was liberated by the Soviet army.



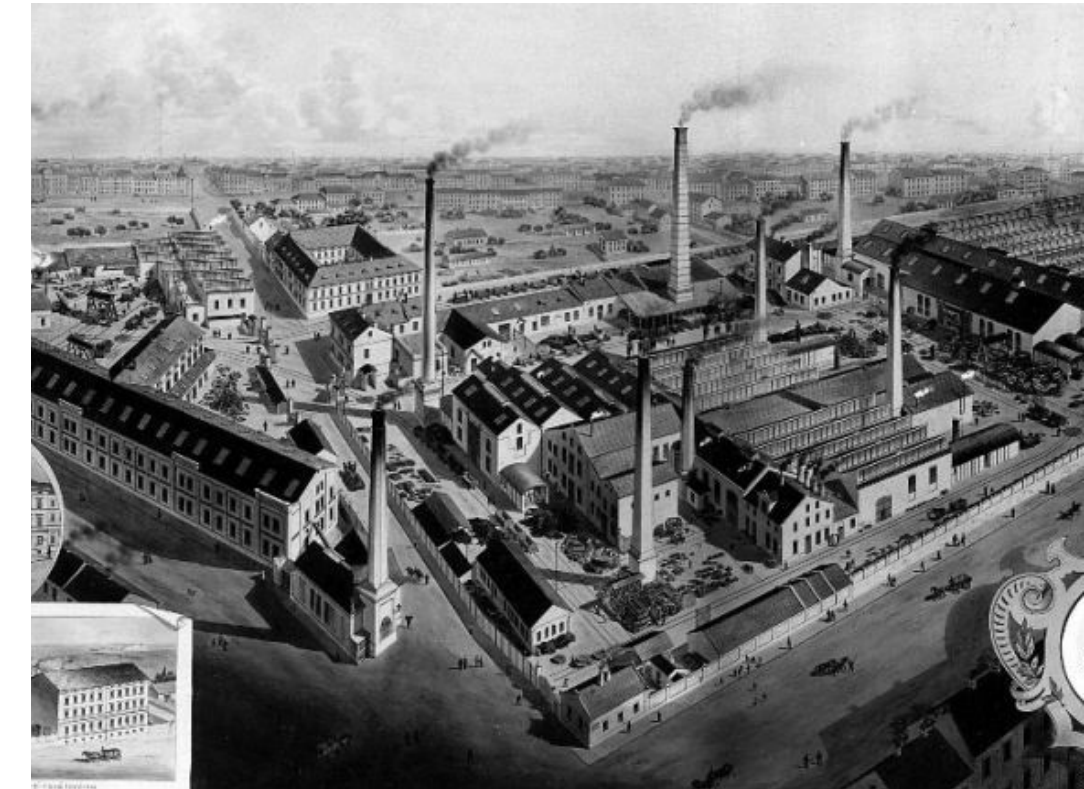
In January 1945, Košice and Prešov were liberated, on March 25, Banská Bystrica and on April 4, 1945, Bratislava. By the end of April 1945, almost the entire territory of Slovakia was liberated, the last on May 2, 1945, the village of Makov was liberated.

On April 1, 1945, the political representation of the Slovak state evacuated in front of the advancing front to Záhorie and from there emigrated to Austria. The territory of Slovakia became a part of the renewed Czechoslovakia.

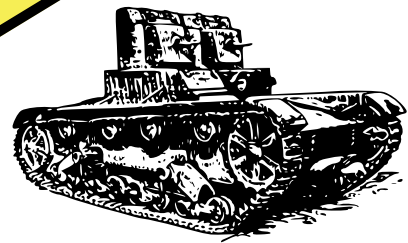
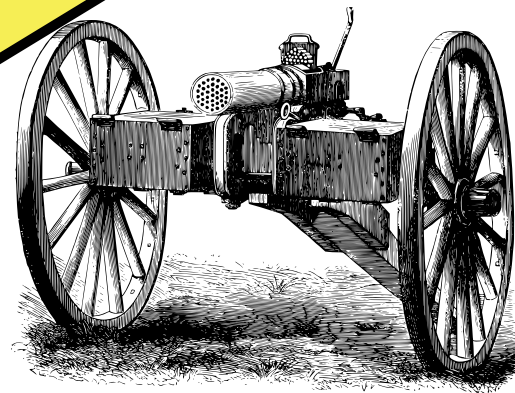
CONSEQUENCES OF WORLD WAR II.



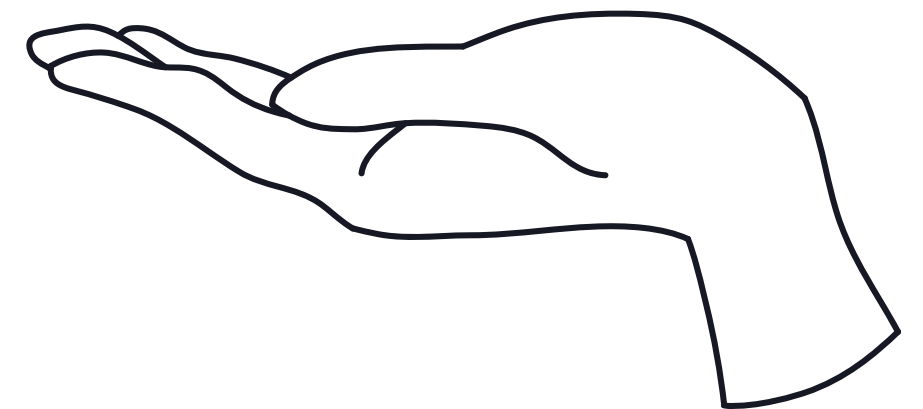
THE WAR CLAIMED ABOUT 380,000 VICTIMS FROM THE RANKS OF CZECH-SLOVAK CITIZENS. THE ECONOMY OF THE REPUBLIC SUFFERED MUCH GREATER DAMAGE THAN IN THE 1ST WORLD WAR. MANY FACTORIES WERE DAMAGED (ŠKODA'S PLANTS IN PILSEN, OIL REFINERIES IN BRATISLAVA, DUBOVÁ). PRAGUE, BRATISLAVA AND NOVÉ ZÁMKY WERE BOMBED AND ALMOST COMPLETELY DESTROYED.



93000 homes destroyed or damaged. During retreat, the Germans destroyed bridges, railways, took away wagons and trucks ,in 1945, all traffic was paralyzed. The most important task was to restore normal life.



The restoration of life was helped in the first months by the supply of raw materials from the USSR, later assistance from the international organization UNRRA (United Nations Office for Aid and Reconstruction), which supplied the Czechoslovak Republic with raw materials for 270 mil. dollars. 1946-47 - The government adopts a two-year economic recovery plan for 1947-48.



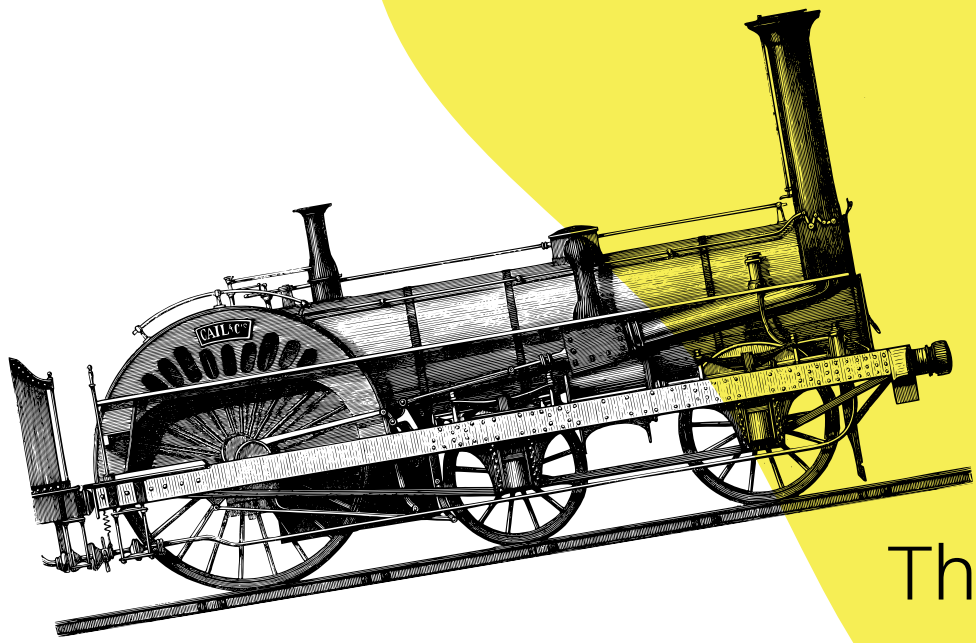
HOW SLOVAKIA LOOKED AFTER THE WORLD WAR II

This devastating, and in some places the war of extermination, has affected the lives of several generations and millions of people have suffered the consequences for the rest of their lives. It also brought enormous material damage, and not only cities, but also entire countries had to rise literally from the ashes after the end and start building everything again. The end of the Second World War did not bypass Slovakia either, which was affected by frontal operations much more than, for example, neighboring Bohemia and Moravia.

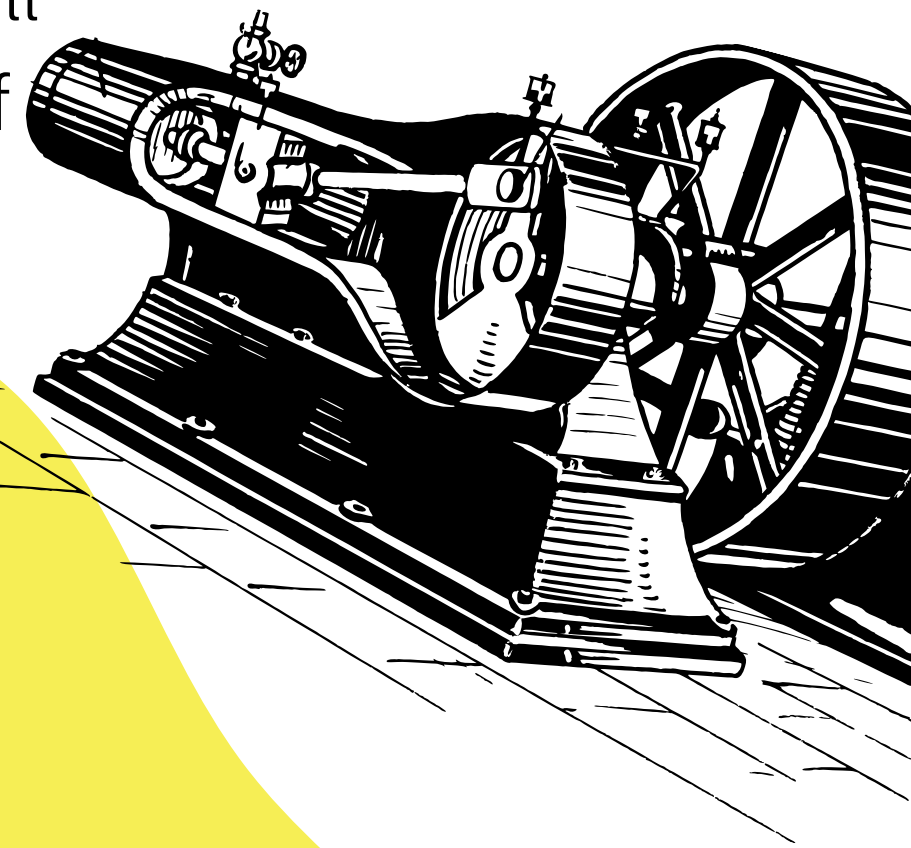


At the beginning of May 1945 he looked mainly eastern, medium and southwestern Slovakia as burnt and broken landscape. Destroyed railway tracks, bridges, tunnels, road infrastructure, burned villages, massacred population, bombing broken cities, thousands of people without roof overhead. The receding German army, except for communication destruction, she took everything with himself, which proved to take away and utilize. For example, the strong allied bombing experienced, for example, Prešov, Nitra and, in particular, new locks that were completely compared to the ground.





Thus, ruthless struggles changed Slovakia to the landscape full of ruins. The new state authorities that gradually overwhelmed the power from the Soviet Army, had to ensure at least a major communication recovery, ensuring basic supply for the population and take care of homeless people. It wasn't a simple task at all, because the railway connection between Bratislava and Kosice managed to fall in autumn 1945. Eastern Slovakia was cut from the rest of the country. Multiple fields that could normally sow the grain, were zamed. Was an acute lack of machines, cars, wagons, locomotives.






FROM ALL THIS, YOU CAN SEE THAT THE INHABITANTS OF SLOVAKIA HAD TO START LITERALLY ON A GREEN FIELD, NOT TO MENTION THAT ALMOST EVERY FAMILY LOST SOMEONE IN THE WAR OR THAT THEIR SONS, BROTHERS OR SPOUSES RETURNED HOME WITH CONSEQUENCES.



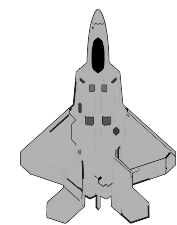
THE SOLDIERS OF THE ADVANCING RED ARMY, AND ESPECIALLY THE NKVD UNITS, WHICH DRAGGED THOUSANDS OF INNOCENT PEOPLE TO THE SOVIET GULAGS, DID NOT ESCAPE VARIOUS EXCESSES EITHER.



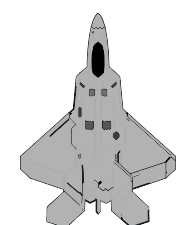
THE SITUATION BEGAN TO CALM DOWN ONLY AFTER CROSSING THE FRONT AND THE END OF THE FIGHTING.



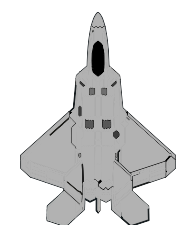
THE NEED FOR CONSOLIDATION AND IMMEDIATE RESTORATION OF THE WAR-TORN COUNTRY WAS ALSO REALIZED BY THE REPRESENTATIVES OF THE SLOVAK NATIONAL COUNCIL AND THE BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS, IE THE DECISIVE LEGISLATIVE AND EXECUTIVE BODIES THAT WERE NOW IN CHARGE OF THE COUNTRY AND ITS RESTORATION.



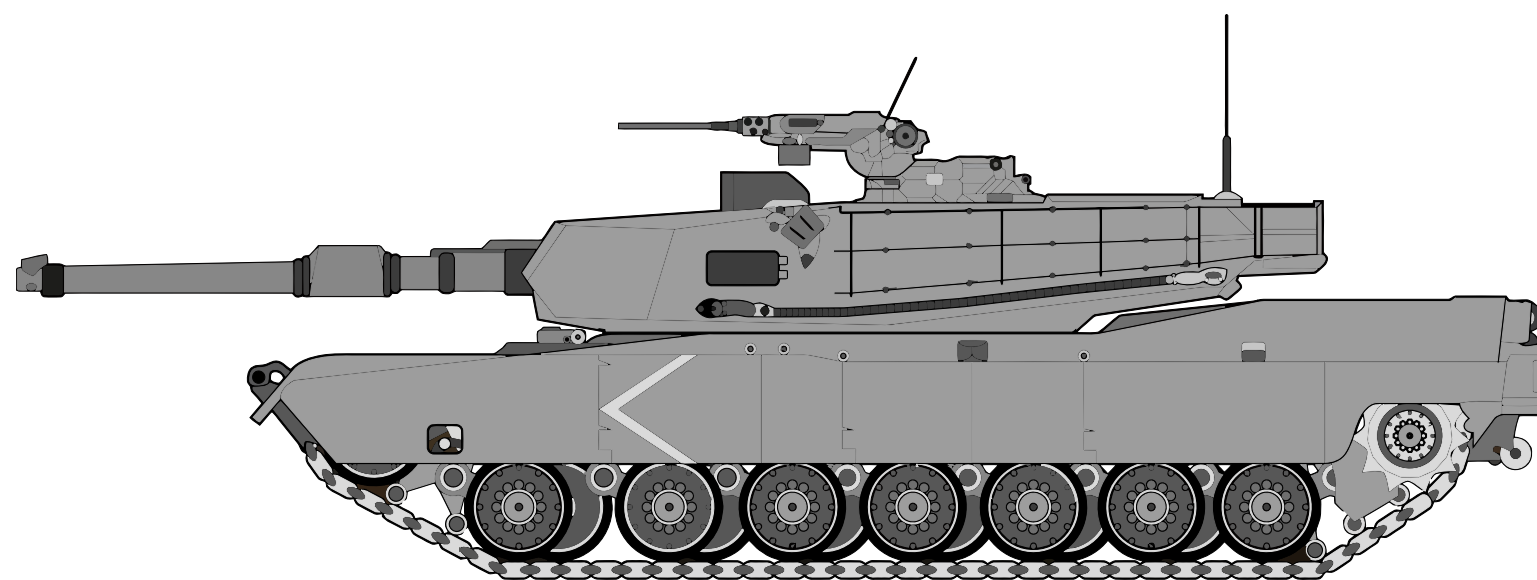
SLOVAKIA BECAME PART OF THE RENEWED CZECHOSLOVAKIA, WHICH, HOWEVER, WAS NO LONGER RESTORED ON CENTRALIST FOUNDATIONS FROM THE INTERWAR PERIOD.

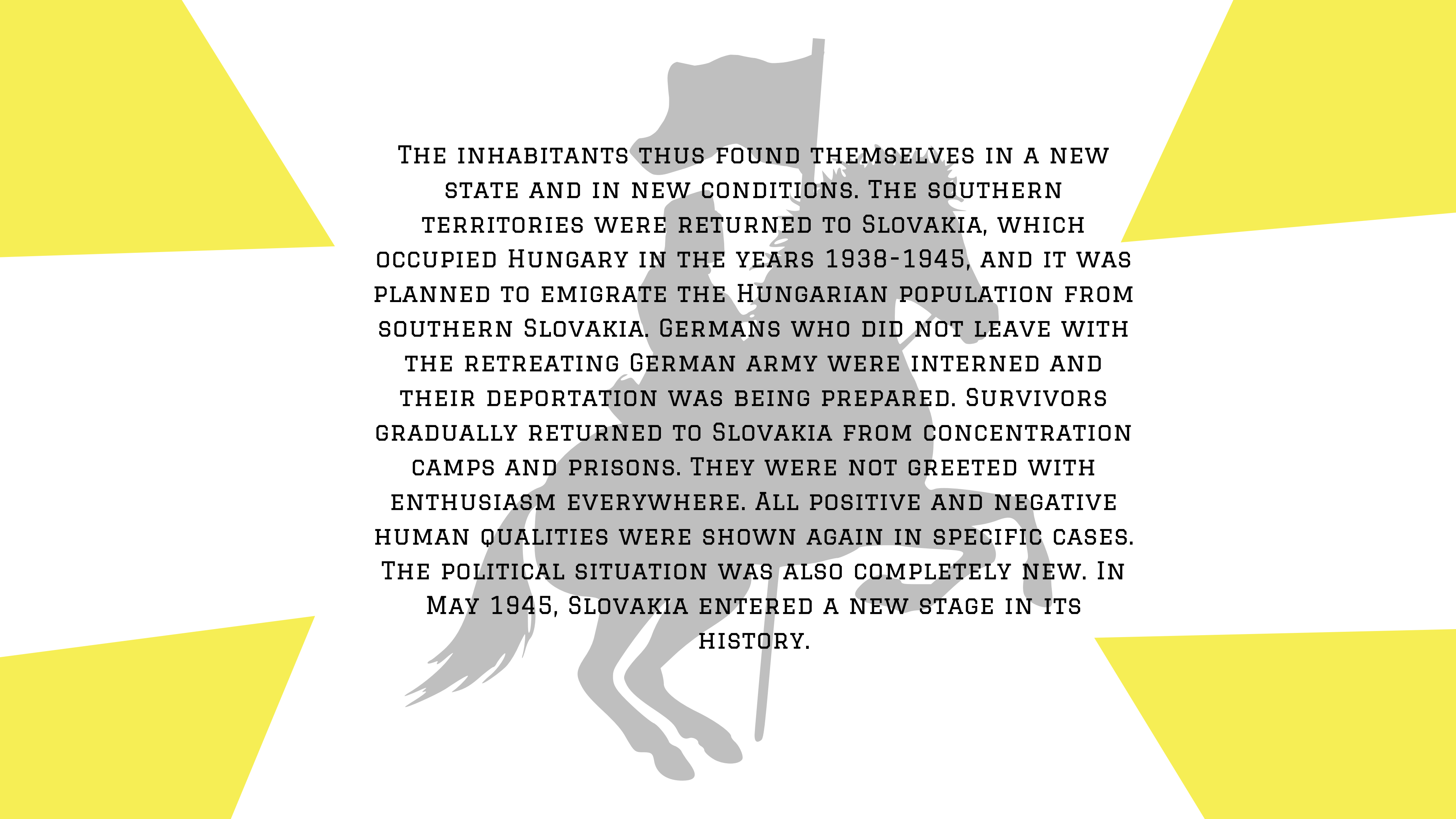


IN THE SPRING OF 1945, SLOVAKIA'S POSITION WAS MORE LIKE A FEDERATION WITH CONFEDERATE ELEMENTS. IN OTHER WORDS, THE CZECHOSLOVAK GOVERNMENT, WHOSE FIRST GOVERNMENT PROGRAM WAS SOLEMNLY PROCLAIMED IN KOŠICE ON APRIL 5, 1945, HAD NO POWERS AND NO IMPACT ON SLOVAKIA IN APRIL-JUNE 1945.



THEN THE MUTUAL RELATIONS AND COMPETENCIES BETWEEN THE CZECHOSLOVAK GOVERNMENT AND THE SLOVAK NATIONAL COUNCIL, THE SO-CALLED PRAGUE AGREEMENTS.





THE INHABITANTS THUS FOUND THEMSELVES IN A NEW STATE AND IN NEW CONDITIONS. THE SOUTHERN TERRITORIES WERE RETURNED TO SLOVAKIA, WHICH OCCUPIED HUNGARY IN THE YEARS 1938-1945, AND IT WAS PLANNED TO EMIGRATE THE HUNGARIAN POPULATION FROM SOUTHERN SLOVAKIA. GERMANS WHO DID NOT LEAVE WITH THE RETREATING GERMAN ARMY WERE INTERNED AND THEIR DEPORTATION WAS BEING PREPARED. SURVIVORS GRADUALLY RETURNED TO SLOVAKIA FROM CONCENTRATION CAMPS AND PRISONS. THEY WERE NOT GREETED WITH ENTHUSIASM EVERYWHERE. ALL POSITIVE AND NEGATIVE HUMAN QUALITIES WERE SHOWN AGAIN IN SPECIFIC CASES. THE POLITICAL SITUATION WAS ALSO COMPLETELY NEW. IN MAY 1945, SLOVAKIA ENTERED A NEW STAGE IN ITS HISTORY.

Sources

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