

DEPORTATION OF JEWS IN AUTONOMOUS SLOVAKIA ON NOVEMBER 4-5, 1938

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The tragedy of "dealing with the Jewish question in Slovakia" is usually viewed exclusively in connection with the Slovak national state which was, however, founded only in 1939. This contribution aims at furnishing proof that the methods of deportation then in use had been applied beforehand, in 1938, by the government of the autonomous Slovak region that was still part of Czechoslovakia. At that time, more than 7500 Jewish people were sent to the regions that had been ceded by Slovakia, albeit not for long, since the Slovak government had to order them transported back in a matter of weeks or even days. When deportation of Jews to extermination camps set in four years later, the experience with handling deportation of large groups of people within a few days (how to prepare lists of deportees, assemble and transport those on the lists, set up and staff internment camps, coordinate activities between various governmental institutions, the HSĽS party and the Hlinka Guards, confiscate Jewish property) came in handy for the Slovak government. Political responsibility for the earlier deportations of 1938 rests exclusively with Jozef Tiso, since at the time there was no government institution capable of taking such decisions, and Tiso decided all by himself. Apart from that, the deportations were a violation of the Czechoslovak constitution then still in force.