

THE EXPULSION OF THE CARPATHIAN GERMANS
FROM SLOVAK TERRITORY IN 1946

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On August 2, 1945, President Edvard Beneš signed a constitutional decree, according to which everybody belonging to the German minority in the then Czechoslovak Republic was deprived of Czechoslovak citizenship. Aliens could only remain in country, according to contemporary law, with specific permission of the proper administrative authority. When this was withheld, they were obliged to leave Czechoslovak territory. During the period 1939-1945, Carpathian Germans had been citizens of the Slovak state as opposed to Sudeten Germans, who had been citizens of the German Reich. The decree, however, assigned both groups the same definitive status. The Carpathian Germans now coming under the decree either had not been evacuated, for whatever reason, when the Red Army advanced, or they had already returned during spring and summer 1945. One may well assume that these people had not actively engaged in activities of either the *Deutsche Partei* (German Party), the *Heimatschutz* (Homeland Protection), or the *Freiwillige Schutzstaffel* (Voluntary Protective Squadron), and that they had neither occupied any important office nor committed any crime. They were now deprived of the right to live in their homeland – the place their ancestors had inhabited since centuries – simply because they were of German descent. This was in flagrant contradiction to elementary principles of humanity.