

Hlinka Guard

Militia in Slovakia established by the pro-Nazi Slovak People's Party after the Munich Conference of 1938, in which Western leaders allowed Hitler to occupy the Sudeten region of Czechoslovakia. The Hlinka Guard was named for Andrej Hlinka, a Slovak nationalist who died that same year.

Members of the guard were given military training and were urged to hate Jews, Czechs, and supporters of the Left. They wore black uniforms and used the Nazis' raised-arm salute.

The Nazis and the Slovak nationalist Hlinka Guard shared a common goal: the Nazis wanted to dismember Czechoslovakia, lest it oppose them in war, while the Slovak nationalists wanted to dismember Czechoslovakia so they could gain Slovak national independence. After Germany took over Bohemia and Moravia in March 1939, Slovakia declared itself an independent country. The guard's leader, Alexander Mach, was named prime minister of the Slovak government, and the guard lost no time in attacking Jews and desecrating Jewish cemeteries and synagogues.

In 1942 the guard helped the Nazis capture Slovak Jews and deport them to extermination camps. However, the guard discontinued its participation in those activities after the Vatican representative in Slovakia denounced the deportations. After the 1944 Slovak National Uprising, the SS took over the guard, and used it for its own purposes.