

# BRATISLAVA AS A KEY TRANSIT HUB FOR JEWISH MIGRATION, 1938–1940

## Institutional and Organisational Frameworks and Migration Processes<sup>1</sup>

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Jews, whom the Nazi regime, first in Austria, then in the Protectorate of Bohemia and Moravia, and finally in occupied Poland and other countries, designated as second-class citizens, became the targets of a systematic process known as the “solution of the Jewish question”. One natural response to this situation, initially encouraged and supported by several governments, was to flee or emigrate from the Nazi sphere of influence. Many inhabitants of Germany, Austria, and Czechoslovakia chose this path, and thousands of them passed through Bratislava. Existing scholarship provides only cursory information about the organised transports that transited through, or departed directly from, the Slovak capital between 1938 and 1940. The new research presented in this paper sheds light on previously unknown aspects of the organisation and operation of these transports.

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The emigration of Jews after 1933, triggered by Nazi Germany’s increasingly persecutory policies, was a phenomenon shaped by political, social, economic, moral, and cultural factors. It constituted a direct response to the systematic measures designed to exclude Jews from every sphere of public, cultural, and economic life. The adoption of the Nuremberg Laws in 1935 intensified the pressure on Jewish citizens, which grew even further following the occupation of Austria in March 1938. After the violence of the Kristallnacht several months later, few Jews still believed they had any future under Nazi rule. One possible way out of this desperate situation was to leave or flee across the border. Hundreds of thousands of individuals made this choice during the 1930s. The

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Nazis themselves used forced emigration as an instrument to remove Jews from German territory. Those who left did not form a homogenous group: their reasons for emigrating ranged from political and religious to economic and moral, and they also differed in economic status, family circumstances, and social background. Given the state of research, this paper does not address the experiences of emigrants passing through Bratislava from the perspective of their differing or shared motives, expectations, strategies, or other analytical categories.

Jewish emigration in Europe has been examined from various perspectives,<sup>2</sup> as has the emigration of Jews from Czechoslovak territory after 1933.<sup>3</sup> However, the specific situation in Slovakia has largely remained on the margins of scholarly attention<sup>4</sup> and has yet to be studied systematically. This paper focuses on the place through which most Jewish emigrants passed – Bratislava – reconstructing the

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- 2 See, for example, OFER. The Rescue of European Jewry and Illegal Immigration to Palestine in 1940–Prospects and Reality: Berthold Storfer and the Mossad Le’Aliyah Bet. In *Modern Judaism – A Journal of Jewish Ideas and Experience*, 1984, Vol. 4, no. 2, pp. 159–181 [online]; OFER. *Escaping the Holocaust: Illegal Immigration to the Land of Israel, 1939–1944*. New York 1990; PATEK. *Jews on Route to Palestine 1934–1944: Sketches from the History of Aliyah Bet- Clandestine Jewish Immigration*. Krakow 2012. For the broader context of Jewish migration, see BRINKMANN. *Between Borders: The Great Jewish Migration from Eastern Europe*. New York 2024; CALIC. *Balkan-Odyssey, 1933–1941: Auf der Flucht vor Hitler durch Südosteuropa*. München 2025.
- 3 BRADE. *Networks of Escape: Jewish Flight from the Bohemian Lands, 1938–1941*. Chapel Hill, 2017 [online]; ČAPKOVÁ and FRANKL. *Nejisté útočiště*. Praha 2008; ČERNÝ. Die Emigration der Juden aus den Böhmischem Ländern 1938–1941. In *Theresienstädter Studien und Dokumente*, 1997, pp. 63–85; FRANKL. Azyl nebo dočasné útočiště? Proměny československé uprchlické politiky, 1933–1938. In *Exil v Praze a Československu 1918–1938*. Praha 2005, pp. 56–61; FRANKL and SCHELLENBACHER. *Uzavřít hranice! Rakouští uprchlíci do Československa v roce 1938*. Praha 2022; HEUMOS. *Heimat und Exil. Emigration und Rückwanderung, Vertreibung und Integration in der Geschichte der Tschechoslowakei*. München 2001; SCHELLENBACHER. Sealed Borders, Trafficking and Deportation – Austrian Refugees in the Czechoslovak Border Region after the “Anschluss”. In *Forum Historiae*, 2019, Vol. 13, no. 1, pp. 75–91 [online]. The issue has been discussed in part in ANDERL. “9096 Leben”: der unbekannte Judenretter Berthold Storfer. Berlin 2012; ANDERL. Emigration und Vertreibung. In WEINZIERL and KULKA. *Vertreibung und Neubeginn. Israelische Bürger österreichischer Herkunft*. Wien 1992, pp. 167–337; ANDERL and MANOSCHEK. *Gescheiterte Flucht. Der »Kladovo-Transport« auf dem Weg nach Palästina 1939–1942*. Wien 2001.
- 4 See, for example, BORÁK. Deportace židů na Mauricius (1940–1945). In *Ostrava. Příspěvky k dějinám a současnosti Ostravy a Ostravska*, 2015, Vol. 29, pp. 125–160; MEŠKOVÁ HRADSKÁ. Vyhnanci, alebo migranti? Vystahovalecké akcie zo Slovenska po vzniku autonómneho Slovenska. In MICHÁLEK. *Obraz a odraz osobnosti modernej doby*. Bratislava 2019, pp. 253–267.

organisational framework of Jewish emigration in Slovakia and its institutional dimensions.

### **Czechoslovakia and the Emigrant Issue in the 1930s**

Throughout the 1930s, the attitude of Czechoslovak authorities towards emigrants shifted in response to evolving domestic circumstances and foreign-policy pressures. Living conditions for those seeking refuge in Czechoslovakia depended largely on their social and economic status. Because neither the right of asylum nor the position of emigrants was defined by law, their ability to remain in the country depended on the discretion of individual officials and, above all, the Ministry of Interior.<sup>5</sup> In the early years following the Nazi rise to power in Germany, the Czechoslovak state administration generally adopted a friendly stance towards refugees (except in the cases of communists and Polish Jews). Refugees were allowed to stay temporarily but were not encouraged to settle permanently.<sup>6</sup> Growing international pressure, the escalating persecution in Germany and other parts of Central and Eastern Europe, and the increasing influx of refugees gradually pushed the government from a liberal to a more restrictive policy. At the same time, public attitudes also changed: in an atmosphere of mounting danger, refugees came to be viewed increasingly as a threat. A turning point occurred with the Anschluss of Austria in March 1938.<sup>7</sup> Thousands of people, including thousands of Jews, attempted to flee Nazi control on their own initiative, while many others were forced to do so by violence.<sup>8</sup> Seeking safety was becoming ever more difficult as states, including Czechoslovakia, closed their borders and attempted to prevent illegal crossings. The situation was not eased by the international conference at Évian in July 1938, where participating countries (with a few exceptions) refused to admit substantial numbers of Jewish refugees. As the migration crisis deepened, Czechoslovakia adopted a more stringent approach towards not only Jewish refugees but also its own Jewish

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5 ČAPKOVÁ and FRANKL, *Nejisté útočiště*, pp. 335-341.

6 *Druhá republika a židovští uprchlíci* [online]. For more on Czechoslovakia's refugee policy before 1938, see, for example, ČERNÝ. *Most k novému životu. Německá emigrace v ČSR v letech 1933–1939*. Praha 1967; FRANKL, *Azyl nebo dočasné útočiště?*, pp. 56-61; HEUMOS, *Heimat und Exil*.

7 *Druhá republika a židovští uprchlíci* [online].

8 Ibid. See also FRANKL and SCHELLENBACHER, *Uzavřít hranice*; SCHELLENBACHER, *Sealed Borders* [online]; MOSER. *Československo ako cieľ úteku rakúskych Židov*. In NIŽŇANSKÝ. *Židovská komunita na Slovensku. Obdobie autonómie. Porovnanie s vtedajšími udalosťami v Rakúsku*. Bratislava 1999, pp. 86-88; IGGERS. *Die Emigration der deutschen und österreichischen Juden in der Tschechoslowakei*. In HOENSCH, BIMAN and LIP-TÁK. *Judenemanzipation – Antisemitismus – Verfolgung in Deutschland, Österreich-Ungarn, den Böhmischem Ländern und der Slowakei*. Essen 1999, pp. 143-154.

population.<sup>9</sup> Interventions by certain Western powers mitigated the most extreme forms of discrimination: in particular, the conditions attached by Great Britain during negotiations over the British-French loan moderated Czechoslovakia's anti-Jewish attitude. This did not, however, alter the fundamental expectation that German and Jewish refugees were to leave the country as soon as possible. Jewish emigration was organised by a department of the Institute for the Care of Refugees in Prague, in cooperation with the HICEM<sup>10</sup> Jewish organisations and the Palestine Office.<sup>11</sup>

While Czechoslovakia<sup>12</sup> supported the departure of Jews, it did not welcome the accompanying transfer of Jewish capital abroad, the closed foreign exchange system of the Second Republic strictly limiting the outflow of foreign currency. In January 1939, the Presidency of the Ministerial Council established the economic conditions under which individuals could leave the republic. The emigration of large numbers of Jews was made possible only through a transfer agreement concluded between the Ministry of Finance in Prague and the Jewish Agency. The transfer of Jewish property was financed by a loan granted to the Czechoslovak government by Great Britain under the agreement of 27 January 1939. This consisted in financial assistance to migrants amounting to four million pounds,<sup>13</sup> deposited in a special account at the Bank of England in the name of the Czechoslovak National Bank.<sup>14</sup> In October 1938, the British embassy in Prague created the position of Officer for Refugee Affairs, filled by Robert J. Stopford, a former member of Lord Runciman's mission. In addition to handling migration matters, Stopford reported on the situation in Czechoslovakia to the British government and oversaw compliance with the relevant financial agreements.<sup>15</sup>

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- 9 Legislation targeting the Jewish community included Government Directives No. 14/1939, Coll. I, which amended the regulations governing the residence of foreign emigrant, and No. 15/1939 Coll. I on the review of the Czechoslovak state citizenship of certain persons.
- 10 The acronym HICEM was derived from the initial letters of the three organisations involved in Jewish emigration: HIAS (Hebrew Sheltering and Immigration Aid Society), ICA (Jewish Colonization Association), and Emigration-Direction. HICEM was headquartered in Paris, and its Bratislava branch was established in May 1938.
- 11 BENDA. *Útěky a vyhánění z pohraničí českých zemí 1938–1939*. Praha 2014, pp. 251; 399–409.
- 12 For the sake of clarity, I use the terms “Czechoslovakia” and “Czechoslovak” to refer also to the era of the so-called Second Republic.
- 13 BENDA, *Útěky*, pp. 260–265; see KUKLÍK. *Do poslední penze: československo-britská jednání o majetkoprávních a finančních otázkách 1938–1982*. Praha 2007.
- 14 GEBHART and KUKLÍK. *Druhá republika 1938 – 1939: svár demokracie a totality v politickém, společenském a kulturním životě*. Praha; Litomyšl 2004, pp. 168–169.
- 15 Slovak National Archive (SNA), fund (f.) Ministerstvo zahraničných vecí (MZV), box (b.) 606, number (no.) 1494/1944. BENDA, *Útěky*, p. 263; LONDONOVÁ. *Britská vláda a židovští uprchlíci z Československa*. In *Tereziánské studie a dokumenty*, 2003, pp. 107–194.

By March 1939, some 12,000 migrants had received British financial aid and resettled in Palestine, the United States, and Great Britain.<sup>16</sup>

In addition to HICEM and the Palestine Office, migration flows were also handled by private agencies that organised illegal transports to Palestine, such as the Globus travel agency or Wagon Lits Cook in Prague. Several of these agencies, however, operated illegitimately and offered migration to Palestine under the guise of travel to other destinations, despite efforts by the Czechoslovak authorities to curb the activities of fraudulent organisations.<sup>17</sup>

In Slovakia, following the declaration of autonomy in 1938, responsibility for the fate of Jews fell to representatives of Hlinka's Slovak People's Party. As part of their efforts to exclude Jews from public life, the Slovak authorities did not hesitate to exploit the Vienna Award, which transferred the country's southern territories to Hungary, by forcibly sending approximately 4,000 individuals across the new border.<sup>18</sup> The government welcomed voluntary Jewish emigration. Those whose departure was most desired were people of unclear nationality, refugees, German and Austrian emigrants, individuals expected to lose their citizenship under Government Directive 15/1939 Coll. I, and others whose continued presence in Slovakia was deemed undesirable for various reasons.<sup>19</sup> Prime Minister Jozef Tiso addressed the matter in a government declaration in February 1939, stating:

*“With respect to the endeavours of a considerable portion of the Jewish population to leave Slovakia, the government does not intend to hinder such efforts, but shall lend its support to them, and for this purpose shall avail itself of the assistance of both domestic and international Jewry in seeking a satisfactory solution to this matter. At the same time, the government will ensure that such migration does not imperil Slovak economic enterprises.”<sup>20</sup>*

Simultaneously, the Ministry of Interior's Social Care Department ordered the preparation of a list of individuals who wished to emigrate and of

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16 *Stopford's action* [online].

17 NIŽŇANSKÝ. *Holokaust na Slovensku 1. Obdobie autonómie (6. 10. 1938 – 14. 3. 1939)*. Bratislava 2001, document no. 31, pp. 79-81.

18 For more, see FRANKL. *Země nikoho 1938. Deportace za hranice občanství*. In *Forum Historiae*, 2019, Vol. 13, no. 1, pp. 92-115 [online]; FRANKL. *Občané země nikoho. Uprchlíci a pohyblivé hranice středovýchodní Evropy 1938–1939*. Praha 2023; NIŽŇANSKÝ, *Holokaust na Slovensku 1*, pp. 245-313; NIŽŇANSKÝ. *Židovská komunita na Slovensku medzi československou parlamentnou demokraciou a Slovenským štátom v stredoeurópskom kontexte*. Prešov 1999.

19 NIŽŇANSKÝ, *Holokaust na Slovensku 1*, document no. 54, pp. 113–114.

20 *Společná česko-slovenská digitální parlamentní knihovna* [online].

“undesirable” persons falling under Government Directive 14/1939 Coll. I. The ministry subsequently recommended that municipal authorities support such “undesirables” in their efforts to leave the country.<sup>21</sup>

The organisation of migrants transiting through Bratislava also involved both local and international Jewish aid organisations, including branches of HICEM and the Jewish Agency’s Palestine Office, the Jewish Central Office (ŽÚÚ), the Central Zionist Association (ÚSZ), the Social Institute for Jewish Refugees and Emigrants, and the Transport Bureau of the New Zionist Organisation in Slovakia. On the part of local authorities and institutions, the process engaged representatives from the Ministries of Interior (MV), Finance (MF), Economy (MH), National Defence (MNO), and Foreign Affairs (MZV), as well as the Provincial Office (KÚ), the Police Directorate in Bratislava (PR), the Central Office of State Security (ÚŠB),<sup>22</sup> the Slovak National Bank (SNB), and the Supreme Economic Bureau (NHÚ). Financing for the emigration process was largely provided by the American JOINT organisation,<sup>23</sup> whose Slovak branch operated as the Central Committee for Social Care of Jews in Slovakia. Its funds were used to cover emigration-related expenses, including the accommodation of migrants in Bratislava and the camp at Vyhne, and social support for Jews throughout Slovakia.<sup>24</sup> JOINT also facilitated a limited transfer of emigrants’ property abroad, reimbursing sums deposited in Slovak crowns in Bratislava to recipients in their destination countries. From March 1940 onwards, however, the Slovak Ministry of Interior ceased approving these transfers, significantly complicating opportunities for emigration.<sup>25</sup>

The primary challenge for Jewish migrants was determining where they could immigrate. Great Britain, which had increasingly restricted Jewish settlement in Palestine since the mid-1930s – particularly after 1939 – rejected many applications. Certificates authorising entry into Palestine were issued in a manner designed to limit tensions in the mandate territory.<sup>26</sup> As illegal migration intensified after 1938, the British administration began to prevent disembarkation

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21 SNA, f. Ministerstvo vnútra (MV), b. 14, no. 2285/1939.

22 The Central Office of State Security was established on 1 January 1940.

23 The American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee (JOINT) was a Jewish charity organisation.

24 Roughly half of JOINT funds were allocated for support of emigrants, with the other half dedicated to social affairs. See, for example, MEŠKOVÁ HRADSKÁ, *Vyhnaní*, pp. 253-267.

25 The ministry began rejecting transfer applications in late March 1940, which caused considerable financial difficulties for JOINT. One consequence of this was the organisation’s inability to further finance the migrant camps in Bratislava and Vyhne. SNA, f. Policajné riaditeľstvo Bratislava (PR), b. 502, no. 1506/1940; LIPSCHER, *Židia v slovenskom štáte 1939 – 1945*. Banská Bystrica 1992, pp. 55-56.

26 BENDA, *Útěky*, pp. 406-408.

of transport ships through diplomatic, policing, and naval measures. The situation for Jewish migrants was further exacerbated by the issuance of the so-called White Paper in May 1939, which imposed a five-year limit of 75,000 on new arrivals. This quota was far too low to accommodate the mass of Jews attempting to settle in Palestine, prompting increased efforts to enter the country illegally (from the perspective of British authorities). There were also numerous cases in which migrants travelled to Palestine holding visas issued by South American countries. As a result of British policy, many of these migrants were detained in internment camps in Palestine, Cyprus, and Mauritius.<sup>27</sup> Despite British restrictions, between 1938 and the outbreak of war, illegal immigrants accounted for nearly half of all new arrivals in Palestine – approximately 17,240 out of ca. 40,000.<sup>28</sup>

Illegal transports to Palestine (the so-called Aliyah-Bet) frequently departed from Bratislava or Vienna, following the so-called Danube Route, which passed through Black Sea ports, the Bosphorus, and Greece. Because the Danube was considered international waters, Hungary and Romania did not require migrants to hold transit visas; nevertheless, the voyage remained complex and hazardous. In Czechoslovakia, these transports were primarily organised by Revisionists (or New Zionists), with the support of Czechoslovak – and later German and Slovak – authorities, who treated them as legal.<sup>29</sup> To increase the migrants' chances of successfully settling in Palestine, requalification courses and training camps were established. Practical training for youth was provided by organisations such as Maccabi<sup>30</sup> and the Zionist HeHalutz.<sup>31</sup> The outbreak of war in 1939 further complicated emigration options. Despite these challenges, several transports departed from Bratislava to Palestine before September 1940.

### Refugees from Austria in 1938–1939

A pivotal event in Czechoslovakia's migration policy was the Anschluss of Austria in March 1938, which triggered a new influx of immigrants into the country. Czechoslovakia sought to prevent their arrival through a range of restrictive measures. As soon as 11 March 1938, the Ministry of the Interior in Prague

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27 BENDA, *Útěky*, pp. 257-272; *Druhá republika a židovští uprchlíci* [online]; BORÁK, *Departace*, pp. 125-160; LENK. *The Mauritius Affair. The Boat People of 1940/41*. Brighton 1993; PITOT. *Der Mauritius-Schekel. Geschichte der jüdischen Häftlinge auf der Insel Mauritius 1940–1945*. Berlin 2008; ZWERGBAUM. *From Internment in Bratislava and Detention in Mauritius to Freedom*. In *The Jews of Czechoslovakia, 1971*, Vol. 2, pp. 599-654.

28 ANDERL, *Emigration und Vertreibung*, pp. 256-259.

29 *Druhá republika a židovští uprchlíci* [online].

30 Maccabi was an athletic organisation for Jewish youth.

31 HeHalutz – the organisational centre for *halutzim*, young Zionists preparing to build settlements in Palestine. BENDA, *Útěky*, pp. 410-419.

ordered that Austrian citizens be barred from entering Czechoslovakia, even if they held valid passports, making exceptions only for those with demonstrable economic interests in the country.<sup>32</sup> On the same day, the Provincial Office in Bratislava was instructed to maintain “*exceptionally strict*” control of all transit points between Bratislava and Vienna, with the explicit goal of preventing the entry of refugees or suspicious persons, to be carried out “*as rigorously as possible, with no exceptions.*”<sup>33</sup> Czechoslovakia also limited mutual transport connections and increased the number of border patrols.<sup>34</sup> The Czechoslovak embassy in Vienna reported that the Gestapo was forcing Austrian Jews to sign pledges to leave Austria within three days (while simultaneously rejecting their requests for entry into Czechoslovakia). Authorities did everything possible to block “*absolutely unwelcome*” illegal immigration, expelling entrants and refusing to allow them to settle.<sup>35</sup> Even immigrants who entered the country legally faced precarious conditions and were afforded little protection.<sup>36</sup>

Despite the measures adopted, migrants continued to attempt illegal border crossings. Several Jews from occupied Austria who were apprehended by the police in Bratislava in March 1938 were punished with short prison terms, fines, and were “*pushed back into Austria.*”<sup>37</sup> Many of these individuals had not left Austria “voluntarily”. The press reported, for instance, that over fifty Jews from Burgenland, driven from their homes by the Nazis in mid-April 1938, were deposited in the middle of the night with no means of support on an island beneath Devín Castle. These Jews had been forced to sign declarations relinquishing their rights vis-à-vis Germany and their property, committing to leave the territory of occupied Austria. Before they could be resettled, they were expelled back to Austria and subsequently to Hungary, ultimately spending several months on a barge on the Danube, where no state exercised authority over their stay.<sup>38</sup> Following the occupation of Austria, local authorities employed similar methods to remove hundreds of individuals, who subsequently ended up on the borders with Czechoslovakia or Hungary. This situation prompted a meeting at the Praesidium of the Provincial Office with representatives of the Police Directorate, the General Financial Directorate, and the District Commissioner. The purpose was to implement measures preventing further illegal border crossings of large

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32 SNA, f. Krajinský úrad (KÚ), b. 329, no. 1696/1938.

33 SNA, f. KÚ, b. 328, no. 1636/1938.

34 SCHELLENBACHER, *Sealed Borders*, pp. 84-85.

35 SNA, f. KÚ, b. 329, no. 1636/1938; b. 403, 19441/1939.

36 SNA, f. KÚ, b. 329, no. 26979/1938.

37 SNA, f. KÚ, b. 328, no. 1636/1938; SCHELLENBACHER, *Sealed Borders*, p. 90.

38 FRANKL and SCHELLENBACHER, *Uzavřít hranice*, p. 151. For more, see GRÜNHUT. *Katastrofa slovenských Židov*. Bratislava 2015, 2021.

groups of Jews, including reinforcing divisions of financial guards, increasing gendarme patrols, and deploying motorboats to patrol the Danube and Morava rivers.<sup>39</sup>

Several migrants attempted to reach Czechoslovak territory by boat, often without success. On 15 September 1938, a military patrol apprehended ten Jews on the left bank of the Danube. They were German citizens who lacked permits to cross the border and had reached Hainburg on two boats. Coming from Vienna, their journey to Bratislava had reportedly been organised by the Tempo travel agency at a cost of 300 reichsmarks per person. Of the group, only one individual without identifying documents was detained; the remaining nine were returned to the German border at Berg by midnight.<sup>40</sup>

Jewish organisations were actively attempting to assist these migrants.<sup>41</sup> The Ministry of Interior reported that a significant number of Jews from Austria were allegedly supported by the Solidarity association in Bratislava,<sup>42</sup> a claim denied by the association's regional secretariat. According to the Police Directorate, many of these individuals could have been illegal migrants, as evidenced by arrests during numerous police raids. To prevent the entry of 'undesirable' persons, the Police Directorate conducted daily searches of lodging houses, public houses, and commercial premises.<sup>43</sup> All apprehended individuals were immediately sent back across the border, while even those who had arrived in Bratislava before the occupation of Austria with valid passports and intentions to settle in the city faced similar expulsion.<sup>44</sup>

Attempts by Austrian Jews to flee to Czechoslovakia continued into early 1939, but this route became effectively useless after Slovakia declared independence in March 1939 and the Protectorate of Bohemia and Moravia was established.

### **The Role of Jewish Organisations in Slovakia in Jewish Migration**

The Slovak declaration of autonomy on 6 October 1938, followed by the rise to power of Hlinka's Slovak People's Party, marked a decisive moment for the Jewish community in Slovakia. It resulted not only in an escalation of anti-Jewish rhetoric and attacks, but also in the regime's first attempt to remove 'undesirable' Jews by transporting them across the post-Vienna Award border in November

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39 SNA, f. KÚ, b. 329, no. 1636/1938.

40 SNA, f. PR, b. 2171, Udalosti z 15. na 16. septembra 1938.

41 Inter alia, HICEM provided food and clothing and endeavoured to secure emigrants' departure to countries elsewhere in Europe or overseas. SNA, f. PR, b. 41, no. 1644/1939.

42 Solidarity – the Association for Rights Protection and Social Assistance – was a support organisation based in Prague.

43 SNA, f. KÚ, b. 331, no. 1838/1938.

44 SNA, f. KÚ, b. 329, no. 33888; 30918/1938.

1938, as well as in the beginning of efforts to draft anti-Jewish legislation. This situation prompted a swift response by Zionist leaders with political experience, who established the Jewish National Council for Slovakia, an initiative that did not receive government approval.<sup>45</sup> For this reason, in November 1938 the Council was transformed into the Jewish Central Office for the Land of Slovakia. Although the Office was intended to represent the interests of Jews in Slovakia, its attempts to unite all segments of Slovak Jewry were unsuccessful. Long-lasting tensions between the Zionist movement and the Orthodox community proved insurmountable. The Orthodox Central Office of Autonomous Orthodox Jewish Communities refused to join the ŽÚÚ and persuaded the Association of Jewish Religious Communities in Slovakia (Yeshurun) to do the same.<sup>46</sup>

The representatives of the new organisation (Otto Löbl, Oskar Neumann, Eugen Winterstein, Armin Frieder) recognised the urgent need to respond to the changes in political life and their consequences for local Jewry. One of the most important activities of the ŽÚÚ therefore became the spiritual and physical training and requalification of young people for occupations needed both domestically and abroad. According to the Police Directorate, the Office initially functioned merely as an informational body funded by voluntary contributions, to which were later added an *“institute for the resettlement of Jews to foreign countries and the information office for immigration to Palestine.”*<sup>47</sup> By early 1939, the central activities of the ŽÚÚ included resolving social issues, providing assistance in emigration, as well as *“offering legal protection to the Jewish population and, finally, promoting Jewish emigration and occupational requalification... To fulfil these tasks, the Central Office has created a committee for occupational requalification, which has launched training courses for men as well as women.”* The priorities of the Jewish community and its representative institutions had to be adjusted in light of political developments at home and abroad. After the proclamation of the Slovak State on 14 March 1939, the Office acknowledged:

*“that it should be necessary to adjust the numbers so as to comport with the interests of the Slovak State by means of the gradual outflow of the superfluous Jewish inhabitants. The necessity for such outflow, which the Jewish population of Slovakia regard as a grievance... seems to us to pertain to matters of economic and social import.”*

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45 For more, see MEŠKOVÁ HRADSKÁ. Vznik a činnosť Židovskej ústrednej úradovne. In *Forum Historiae*, 2019, Vol. 13. no. 1, pp. 116-130 [online].

46 Ibid.

47 SNA, f. KÚ, b. 404, no. 75365/1938.

The Office judged its own efforts to integrate Jews into economic life through requalification as insufficient, which prompted it to take a more active role in facilitating emigration. It began close cooperation with HICEM and the Palestine Office. The ŽÚÚ operated on the assumption that non-propertied emigration candidates – especially those under 35 seeking to leave for Palestine – needed thorough spiritual and physical preparation to ensure their immediate integration into their new environment. Palestine primarily welcomed agricultural workers, while other countries sought trained craftsmen. Accordingly, the requalification centres (*hakhsharot*) and courses for selected individuals, organised by the ŽÚÚ in cooperation with the Central Zionist Association, were structured to meet these demands.<sup>48</sup>

In the summer of 1939, an independent Zionist association – the Central Zionist Association in Slovakia (Oskar Neumann, Róbert Füredy) – was established in Bratislava. Among other roles, it functioned as an umbrella organisation for the Zionist Provincial Association's Central Bureau, the HeHalutz Information Bureau, the Palestine Office Information Bureau,<sup>49</sup> and the Assistance Committee for Jewish Youth (Youth Aliyah, operating under the Palestine Office in Slovakia). According to Armin Frieder, the Association also served as the umbrella organisation for the Maccabi movement, Torah va'Avodah (under the Mizrahi movement), and HaOved.<sup>50</sup>

The Palestine Office in Slovakia, operating under the Jewish Agency and incorporated into the ÚSZ, was a key institution in organising legal emigration to Palestine. Also dedicated to emigration issues was HICEM,<sup>51</sup> which primarily assisted Jews seeking to move overseas. An exceptionally important role in supporting emigration was played by JOINT, whose office, working closely with its European headquarters, was established in Bratislava as the Central Committee for the Social Care of Jews in Slovakia. Both HICEM and JOINT in Bratislava were headed by Gisi Fleischmann, a highly respected leader within the Jewish community in Slovakia, head of WIZO,<sup>52</sup> and trustee of the Lord

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48 SNA, f. Židovská ústredná úradovňa (ŽÚÚ), b. 1, List ŽÚÚ Slovenskej národnej banke 30. 5. 1939; MEŠKOVÁ HRADSKÁ, *Vznik a činnosť*, p. 128; MEŠKOVÁ HRADSKÁ, *Vyhnanci*, pp. 253–267; LIPSCHER, *Židia v slovenskom štáte*, pp. 54–55.

49 Ústredný sväz cionistický pre Slovensko. In *Židovské noviny*, 24. 11. 1938, Vol. 1, no. 22, p. 6.

50 Mizrahi is a religious Zionist movement; HaOved was a Zionist settler movement. FRIEDER. *Z denníka mladého rabína*. Bratislava 1993, p. 25.

51 The Bratislava HICEM branch was established on 17 May 1938. The organisation was affiliated with a branch of the Assistance Organisation for Jewish Emigrants and Immigrants, which had been operating in Bratislava since the autumn of 1938. MEŠKOVÁ HRADSKÁ, *Vyhnanci*, p. 259.

52 The Women's International Zionist Organisation (WIZO), as the name suggests, was a wo-

Mayor's Fund for Czechoslovak Refugees.<sup>53</sup> In April 1939,<sup>54</sup> Gisi Fleischmann and Oskar Neuman, travelling with the support of a recommendation from the Ministry of Interior, undertook a mission to London and Paris to advocate for Jewish immigrants from Slovakia. They visited diplomatic missions of North and South American countries as well as representatives of rescue organisations. Particular attention was devoted to securing opportunities for the resettlement of children and youth. These efforts resulted, inter alia, in a commitment to admit a group of girls, widows, and divorced women aged 18–32 for a three-month hospital training course in England. According to Fleischmann, British authorities showed limited interest in admitting household helpers, yet “*after intensive interventions*” she and her colleagues were permitted to compile a list of qualified candidates. Fleischmann gave little hope to doctors, estimating that only 40 to 50 would be admitted to England from all of Czechoslovakia. Another topic addressed by the Slovak representatives in London concerned the availability of British loan funds for immigrants. They personally met with R. Stopford and Herbert Emerson, the League of Nations High Commissioner for Refugees.<sup>55</sup> According to Fleischmann, the visit of the Slovak Jewish delegates prompted increased activity on the part of the Selfaide [sic!] Association for Slovakia, founded in London to advocate on behalf of immigrants from Slovakia.<sup>56</sup> Negotiations continued in Paris at HICEM's central office regarding visas for farming families bound for Argentina, the immigration of several dozen skilled workers to other foreign destinations, and the departure of 125 children to France.<sup>57</sup>

Around the same time, one Ing. Kemény undertook a similar mission to Sweden and Norway. In Sweden, he requested an additional quota for the admission of children from Slovakia (“*The 500-children quota has already been exhausted*”). Four household helpers were soon to be sent to the country. In Norway, Kemény's negotiations focused primarily on the Nansen Hjelp organisation, led by architect Odd Nansen:

*“Two girls from Bratislava will accompany the transport and then remain in Norway. We have launched a children's action in Norway. Of the 60*

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men's Zionist organisation.

53 The Lord Mayor's Fund for Czechoslovak Refugees was founded by Lord Mayor of London Harry Twyford on 5 October 1938.

54 SNA, f. PR, b. 41, Mat 9/103.

55 The High Commission for Refugees succeeded the work of the Nansen International Office for Refugees and the High Commission for Refugees from Germany, both of which had ceased operations on 31 December 1938. BENDA, Útěky, p. 259.

56 Pi. G. Fleischmannová a inž. Kemény rozprávajú o svojej ceste do Londýna, Paríža a škandinávskych štátov. In *Židovské noviny*, 15. 6. 1939, Vol. 2, no. 23, p. 6.

57 Ibid.; MEŠKOVÁ HRADSKÁ, Vyhnanci, p. 260.

*permitted children, 15 are from Slovakia. The action is underway. Only children under 13 will be considered. We will send a list of 30 emigrants to Norway whose occupations are suitable for the country... From this list, Oslo will select 10 to 15. I hope we can also send several holders of Nansen passports – nurses and maids – to Oslo.*"<sup>58</sup>

Odd Nansen, the son of renowned scientist and diplomat Fridtjof Nansen, took a personal interest in the situation of refugees in Slovakia. In early March 1939, he visited Bratislava as a guest of the local HICEM branch. During an in-person meeting with Prime Minister Tiso, Nansen informed him of the activities of the Nansen Office and obtained permission to visit a Jewish refugee camp at Červený most. According to the newspaper *Židovské noviny* [Jewish Newspaper],

*“the prime minister asked Mr Nansen to help arrange the emigration of as many refugees as possible. Mr Nansen then visited a refugee camp. During the three-hour visit, he closely examined the conditions of 136 refugees. As a result of this visit, we may say that Norway and other countries will admit holders of Nansen passports. Mr Nansen could not yet specify the number. HICEM will be given the opportunity to send household helpers and nurses to Norway. Work will also begin towards the resettlement of Jewish children to Norway. This matter will be handled by a special study committee, which will also address the potential placement of Jewish children in less affluent Norwegian Jewish families. (At the same time, negotiations regarding financial support for these families will be held.) Also discussed was the possible establishment of a Jewish foster home in Norway. The children, however, may remain in Norway for no longer than three years.”*<sup>59</sup>

According to data compiled by the ŽÚÚ on emigration from Slovakia, only fourteen people left for Norway with the assistance of HICEM between March 1939 and early January 1940 (see figure 2). The situation of seven of the ten Jewish children sent by HICEM, who arrived in Norway in October 1939,<sup>60</sup> developed rather lamentably. Already in November of the following year, Nansen Hjelp contacted the Slovak authorities with a request for their repatriation. This was reportedly prompted by the organisation's inability to secure adequate care for the children, as most foster families were unwilling to keep them over the

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58 Pi. G. Fleischmannová a inž. Kemény rozprávajú o svojej ceste do Londýna, Paríža a škandinávskych štátov. In *Židovské noviny*, 15. 6. 1939, Vol. 2, no. 23, p. 6.

59 Odd Nansen v Bratislave. In *Židovské noviny*, 10. 3. 1939, Vol. 2, no. 10, p. 4.

60 *Židovské noviny* claimed that 'a final 10 children' were expected to leave for Norway, but this group never reached the country. Zprávy Hicemu, detská akcia. In *Židovské noviny*, 13. 9. 1939, Vol. 2, no. 35, p. 4.

coming winter. Slovakia refused to repatriate the children, aged 11 or younger and from impoverished families, arguing that “*repatriation of Jewish children from Norway would contravene the measures and strategy that the government has been pursuing with respect to the Jews.*”<sup>61</sup>

Jewish emigration could not be carried out without the cooperation of local authorities and state institutions. The government welcomed initiatives aimed at removing Jews from the country and was, to a significant extent, willing to cooperate with Jewish organisations and individuals.<sup>62</sup> The ŽÚÚ regarded itself as particularly authorised to organise emigration transports, considering itself the only institution capable of meeting the social needs of prospective emigrants. It therefore requested authorisation from the Ministry of Interior to centralise all emigration-related activities in its hands – an appeal that aligned with the Ministry’s own support for Jewish emigration. In a five-year plan drafted towards the end of 1939, the Ministry’s Social Policy Department stated that its objective was “*to enable and organise Jewish emigration and take various measures to encourage Jewish inhabitants to emigrate.*”<sup>63</sup> The living conditions of Jews in Slovakia were intended to become so unbearable that they would come to regard emigration as their only viable option.

Jewish organisations involved in the emigration process were under constant surveillance by state authorities. House and office searches were not uncommon. During a raid in the summer of 1939, the ŽÚÚ’s financial resources, derived from donations and contributions from the Jewish community and essential for supporting the emigration of impoverished individuals who were often unable to cover travel costs, were confiscated. The ŽÚÚ subsequently appealed to the Police Directorate for redress, arguing that the lack of funds jeopardised immigration to Palestine in particular (“*...and this would imperil the attendant interest of the Slovak State.*”) Police advisor Jozef Jakubócy supported the ŽÚÚ’s position and recommended that the Police Directorate’s Department of Associations release the seized funds, noting: “*The state authorities regard the [ŽÚÚ] as the only Jewish organisation capable of officially organising the transports.*”<sup>64</sup>

Representatives of the Orthodox religious community also played an important role in assisting hundreds of Jews in leaving the country. They had

61 SNA, f. MZV, b. 142, no. 30006/1941; Detská akcia. In *Židovské noviny*, 13. 9. 1939, Vol. 2, no. 35, p. 4.

62 Individual initiatives concerning emigration included the Plan for Jewish Immigration to Palestine, developed by Selig E. Soskin, Director General of the Association for the Colonisation of Palestine. SNA, f. Ministerstvo hospodárstva (MH), b. 1, no. 501/1938; NIŽŇANSKÝ, *Holokaust na Slovensku I*, document no. 53, p. 113; MEŠKOVÁ HRADSKÁ, *Vznik a činnosť*, p. 123.

63 SNA, f. MV, b. 96, no. 13198/1940.

64 SNA, f. PR, b. 558, no. 7880/1939.

been active in helping Austrian refugees already in 1938 and continued their efforts throughout the period of the independent Slovak State. Thanks to the interventions of Heinrich Schwarz, Aron Grünhut, and Miklós Eichner, it was often possible to secure one-time residence permits for refugees and, insofar as circumstances allowed, to arrange their swiftest possible departure.<sup>65</sup> At the beginning of 1939, the Social Institute for Jewish Refugees and Emigrants was established in Bratislava by members of the Orthodox community in response to the plight of Jews who had been deported into no man's land after the Vienna Award as well as the many who had been forced from their homes:

*“There are still many homeless people on Slovak territory who were not expelled in 1938 but whom police organs are summarily driving out from our territory... This Institute plans to arrange the removal of these individuals to Palestine in joint transports amounting to 500 people each... In their negotiations with us, the Ministry of Social Care in Prague expressed the wish that each collective transport of Orthodox Jewish persons from Slovakia to whatever state be carried out through our [Institute].”*

The Institute was also expected to provide emigrants with travel documents and to submit detailed information about each transport to the Ministry. Under the leadership of Aron Grünhut and Ludovít Kastner, the Institute continued its activities with substantial support from the Orthodox religious community.<sup>66</sup> On 21 February 1939, following an agreement with the Slovak Ministry of Interior, the Institute for Refugee Care in Prague granted permission to the Central Office of Autonomous Orthodox Jewish Communities to organise mass transports of Jews from Slovakia to Palestine. These transports were intended primarily for individuals of unclear nationality, refugees from Germany, Austria, and the territories affected by the Vienna Award, as well as “undesirable” persons.<sup>67</sup> The Central Office and the Yeshurun Association of Jewish Religious Communities continued their efforts to cooperate with government authorities even after the establishment of independent Slovakia. In April 1939, they offered to assist the government in organising Jewish emigration from the country.<sup>68</sup>

Several other Jewish organisations were also involved in arranging emigration from Bratislava, though the available documentation does not currently allow for a full reconstruction of their activities. The incomplete nature of surviving sources complicates attempts to trace the work of the Transport Bureau of the New Zionist Organisation in Slovakia in Bratislava, which represented the Betar

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65 GRÜNHUT, *Katastrofa*, pp. 8-9.

66 SNA, f. PR, b. 41, Mat 9/108.

67 SNA, f. PR, b. 501, no. 2351/1939.EN 1999, p. 200.

68 SNA, f. MH, b. 234, no. 504/1939; GRÜNHUT, *Katastrofa*, p. 9.

movement.<sup>69</sup> The Bureau was preparing an emigrant group at least until the end of 1939. In December, it requested permission from the Provincial Office for the participants of a transport that, according to the Bureau, was scheduled to leave Slovakia by ship on 27 December 1939. The group consisted mainly of young people without financial means or stable accommodation.<sup>70</sup>

We also know little about the specific activities of the Emigration Action for Craftsmen and Farmers in Bratislava (*Auswanderungsaktion für Handwerker und Landwirte*). The organisation was led by Mór Wohlmuth and Vojtech Balázs, who had been active even before receiving the necessary authorisation from the Ministry of Interior (August 1939). In dealings with the authorities, the organisation was represented by barrister Július Virsik, a close collaborator of Minister Ferdinand Ďurčanský. In November 1939, the Ministries of Interior and National Defence approved an emigrant transport of 125 individuals (61 of them without means). The group was supposed to leave Bratislava via the Čedok travel agency, travel through Budapest to Varna, and from there continue by a ship arranged by Jewish ship operator Baruch Confino of Sofia. The journey, however, did not take place as scheduled. Further details remain unknown.<sup>71</sup> The activities of the Emigrant Action nevertheless raise serious questions. In December 1939, several applicants for immigration to Palestine filed a criminal complaint against the organisation.<sup>72</sup> The promised journey never occurred, and the organisation refused to refund the fees that had been paid – amounting to as much as 18,000 Slovak crowns. The police were unable to question Wohlmuth because he had been released on the order of police advisor Jakubócy, allegedly “because he urgently needed to depart by transport to Budapest.”<sup>73</sup>

The situation is similar regarding the emigration of children and youth from Slovakia. In the summer of 1939, in an effort to rescue children particularly from Germany, a new category of entry certificate for Palestine was introduced. It applied to children aged 12 to 14 (the so-called Aliyat Noah Operation), but only to those whose presence in Palestine had been formally requested by their legally settled relatives. In Slovakia, this limited opportunity fell under the auspices of the Assistance Committee for Jewish Youth (Youth Aliyah), which organised emigration based on allocated certificates.<sup>74</sup> Youth Aliyah’s efforts led

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69 Betar was a right-wing Zionist movement advocating the establishment of a Jewish state in Palestine through armed means. The New Zionist Organisation in Slovakia most likely sought approval of its charter on the cusp of 1939. SNA, f. KÚ, b. 5130, no. 26903/39.

70 SNA, f. PR, b. 502, no. 11084/1939, 1156/1939.

71 SNA, f. PR, b. 501, no. 5643/1939, 13732/1939; b. 502, 1444/1940

72 This was not the first case involving fraudulent practices by an organisation engaged in emigration. SNA, f. PR, b. 501, no. 638/1940, 1261/1940.

73 SNA, f. PR, b. 2172, Udalosti z 9. na 10. decembra 1939.

74 Detská alija. In *Židovské noviny*, 14. 7. 1939, Vol. 2, no. 27, p. 3.

to the first documented transport in August 1939,<sup>75</sup> which sent 28 children<sup>76</sup> to Palestine from Vienna via Trieste. However, the ship *Galilea*, intended to carry the migrants to Haifa, was forced by Italian authorities to return to Trieste, and the transport could only resume its voyage in September. According to *Židovské noviny*, another group of young people was preparing to depart for Palestine, while an additional fifty youths were intended for resettlement to Denmark.<sup>77</sup> Existing accounts of child emigration remain cursory.<sup>78</sup> According to Jaakov Ronen, the last group of young people legally to leave Slovakia departed in the spring of 1941.<sup>79</sup>

A lack of information also prevents a clearer understanding of the roles of the Čedok travel agency and Slovak Railways' Želka travel agency in securing emigrant transports. This is the case despite the fact that, under Act 39/1940 Coll., Želka was designated as the sole organisation authorised, under the supervision of the Ministry of Interior, to arrange travel for emigrants "by land as well as by sea".<sup>80</sup> In mid-April 1940, adjunct notary Julius Pečuch was tasked by the Ministry of Interior's emigration commissioner with overseeing the agency's emigration agenda: specifically, with "supervising and protecting emigrants at home and, if necessary, abroad, in accordance with the intentions of Emigration Act 71/1922 Coll. of 15 February 1922".<sup>81</sup>

### **Jewish Emigration in Bratislava in 1938–1940**

Organised groups of Jewish refugees arrived in Bratislava from Brno, Prague, and Vienna, travelling mostly by train and occasionally by car or bus. If they did not proceed directly to the port, they typically made their way, on foot or by public

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75 According to J. Ronen, the first group of seven boys and six girls departed for Palestine in April 1939. RONEN, Vyst'ahovanie židovských detí a mládeže v rokoch 1939 – 1941. In POLÁKOVÁ NADUBINSKÝ and MEŠŤAN. *Hašomer Hacair: dejiny hnutia*. Bratislava 2001, pp. 53-54.

76 According to a police report, a transport comprising 30 Jewish boys and girls departed for Palestine by express train en route to Marchegg. The migrants were accompanied to their destination by clerk Adolf Feldmann. SNA, f. PR, b. 2172, Udalosti z 24. na 25. augusta 1939.

77 Razíme cestu ostatným; Momenty z Alija. In *Židovské noviny*, 18. 8. 1939, Vol. 2, no. 32, p. 3; Čo robia naši olim. In *Židovské noviny*, 1. 9. 1939, Vol. 2, no. 34, p. 1; Z Terstu do Haify. In *Židovské noviny*, 13. 9. 1939, Vol. 2, no. 35, p. 2.

78 According to a report from March 1940, Leo Rosenthal, chief of the Palestine Office in Bratislava, escorted a group of Jewish youths holding certificates to the embarkation pier at Trieste. SNA, f. PR, b. 502, 1595/1939.

79 RONEN, Vyst'ahovanie, pp. 53-54.

80 SNA, f. MZV, b. 336, no. 9715/1940; Slovenský zákonník, 1940, nariadenie s mocou zákona č. 39/1940 z 21. 2. 1940.

81 SNA, f. PR, b. 501, no. 3062/1940.

bus, to the lodging house on Železničiarska Street and, from late November 1939 onwards, also to the former munitions factory at Patrónka.<sup>82</sup>

Several groups of emigrants bound for Palestine passed through Bratislava en route to Italy, Romania, or, more rarely, Yugoslavia, either via Vienna or Budapest. In early January 1939, the Police Directorate in Brno informed the Provincial Office about preparations for a transport of some 600 people that was expected to travel through Bratislava, Hungary, and Romania before continuing overseas. Customs, passport, and foreign currency inspections were intended to be completed in Brno so that no further checks in Bratislava would be necessary, “*seeing as the Jews are departing in sealed carriages and thus will not be able to leave the train... We inform that further transports of Jews shall follow in due course.*”<sup>83</sup> However, mass transports to Palestine using the so-called Danube Route had already begun appearing in Bratislava as early as the autumn of 1938 (figure 1). A complaint submitted by the New Zionist Organisation in Brno to the Praesidium of the Provincial Office in Bratislava describes the arrival of some 500 emigrants on 22 November 1938, who had travelled by bus from Brno and were awaited at the port by the steamship Melk. The complaint also details the harsh treatment of Jewish emigrants by the Hlinka Guard (HG) and authorities of the Autonomous Land of Slovakia.

*“Around six o’clock in the evening, it came to pass that the emigrants from Bratislava were subject to inspection,<sup>84</sup> followed by those from Prague, and finally, those from Brno. The inspection of the Bratislava emigrants proceeded swiftly and without impediment. During the inspection of the Brno emigrants, a band of young people in civilian clothing appeared, expelling our president, Mr Flesch, from the customs hall, and, as reported by the emigrants, stripping them of all the valuables they carried upon their persons, which were their lawful property... Hlinka Guard Ján Klempa issued a receipt for the confiscated pounds... He had the audacity to assert that it was our intention to smuggle money, and that the export thereof was prohibited.”<sup>85</sup>*

The subsequent investigation by the Police Directorate confirmed the confiscation of valuables, gold, and money “*which the emigrants wanted*

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82 For more, see FIAMOVÁ, Židovskí emigranti v Bratislave v rokoch 1938 – 1939. In *Historický časopis*, 2024, Vol. 74, no. 4, pp. 43-74; BORÁK, Deportace, pp. 125-160; LENK, *The Mauritius Affair*, pp. 19-41; PITOT, *Der Mauritius-Schekel*, pp. 26-41; ZWERGBAUM, *From Internment*, pp. 599-654.

83 SNA, f. PR, b. 501, Správa Policajného riaditeľstva v Brne KÚ v Bratislave z 5. 1. 1939.

84 The passport inspection was conducted under the supervision of police trainee Ján Krajmer, with assistance from members of the HG.

85 NIŽŇANSKÝ, *Holokaust na Slovensku 1*, document no. 89, pp. 191-193.

to export illegally”. The confiscated items were handed over to the Criminal Department of the General Financial Directorate in Bratislava.<sup>86</sup>

The above case was not the only transport to depart for Palestine from Bratislava. According to a report from the Police Branch Office IV (Bratislava – Port), already on 30 October 1938, 54 Jews from Brno holding Nansen passports<sup>87</sup> had departed for Palestine from Bratislava aboard an express steamship. The report noted that, in the following week, several hundred more people were expected to leave the country secretly for Palestine, though no further details are currently available.<sup>88</sup>

On 12 March 1939, a group of 680 Jews arrived in Bratislava from Brno, accompanied by representatives of the Police Directorate and the Financial Guard, and proceeded directly to the port. The transport had already undergone inspection in Brno. In Bratislava, the emigrants transferred to two Austrian river vessels, the *Tulln* and the *Minerva*, which sailed under the Nazi flag, and departed the day before the proclamation of the Slovak State. This transport included Jews from Austria who had fled to Czechoslovakia following the Anschluss in 1938. From Bratislava, the emigrants boarded the ship *Aegues Nicoulaus* and reached Palestine via Sulina in Romania.<sup>89</sup> On 29 April 1939, 720 Jews departed Vienna aboard the ship *Helios*, though it is unclear whether the vessel also stopped in Bratislava. The *Helios* reached the shores of Palestine in June 1939.<sup>90</sup>

In July, roughly 700 members of the Orthodox religious community (the so-called Grünhut Transport) left Bratislava aboard the ships *Car Dušan* and *Erzsébet Királyné*. The transport was organised by the Social Institute for Jewish Refugees and Emigrants.<sup>91</sup>

On 11 October 1939, the ŽÚÚ requested that the Police Directorate in Bratislava issue entry permissions for 300 Jewish emigrants from the Protectorate of Bohemia and Moravia. For logistical reasons, the group could not arrive in Bratislava all at once, and the ŽÚÚ pledged to accommodate them “*in separate rooms, where they can be supervised and from where they will proceed directly to the port to board the transport for onward travel.*”<sup>92</sup> These were most

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86 Ibid., document no. 93, pp. 196–198.

87 Nansen passports were internationally recognised travel documents for stateless refugees issued from 1922 to 1938.

88 SNA, f. PR, b. 2171, Udalosti z 30. na 31. oktobra 1938; ANDERL, Emigration, p. 278.

89 SNA, f. PR, b., no. 3042/1939, 3116/1939; f. ŽÚÚ, b. 1, 18561/1939; Visual History Archive USC Shoah Foundation (VHA), IC 29707, Testimony of Kurt Gregor.

90 ANDERL, Emigration, pp. 284–286. In a 19 July 1939 letter to the Ministry of Interior, the ŽÚÚ reported on a transport “that reached its destination within five days of embarkation.” Neither the organiser nor the vessel used for the transport is named.

91 GRÜNHUT, *Katastrofa*, pp. 46–67; SNA, f. PR, b. 2172, Udalosti z 3. na 4. júla 1939.

92 SNA, f. ŽÚÚ, b. 1, unnumbered.

likely the refugees who departed Bratislava in mid-October aboard Slovenská Dunajplavba's O-I and O-II passenger steamships, destined for Moldova Veche in Romania, from where they were expected to continue to "the Levant"<sup>93</sup> aboard a Romanian vessel. The use of two ships is confirmed by historian Jürgen Rohwer, according to whom a group from Prague arrived in Bratislava on 14 October and left four days later on two small Slovak ships. In November, the transport, carrying 530 people, transferred at Moldova Veche to the Romanian ship *Spyroula*.<sup>94</sup> Police records document the departure of the steamship *O-I*, carrying 250 Jews from the Protectorate, on 18 October 1939, but they do not record the departure of the *O-II* on the same date.<sup>95</sup>

The transports departing Bratislava in October and November 1939 are difficult to reconstruct due to the fragmentary nature of surviving documentation – a problem that persists for subsequent months of the period. What is certain is that on 20 October 1939, 362 Jews from the Protectorate departed aboard the Yugoslavian ship *Kraljica Maria*.<sup>96</sup> The River Shipping Company of the Kingdom of Yugoslavia had initially announced the dispatch of a steamer for 300–500 Jewish emigrants to Sulina on 19 October and requested the presence of representatives of the River Shipping Authority, the Main Customs Authority, and the Police Directorate to oversee the departure.<sup>97</sup> This vessel, carrying a transport from the Protectorate organised by Maccabi and HeHalutz in Prague, also took on board a group of 76 Jews under the responsibility of the ŽÚÚ. It was the first group of emigrants whom the ŽÚÚ dispatched under its newly granted authorisation to organise emigration.<sup>98</sup> More ambiguous are the circumstances surrounding the voyage of the steamship *Car Dušan* (20 October 1939?). A reference to its boarding by 85 persons appears in a report by the ŽÚÚ and in a note by police advisor Jakubócy from September 1940. However, the records of the port's police branch office, which might have clarified the transport, have not been preserved.<sup>99</sup>

93 SNA, f. PR, b. 2172, Udalosti z 10. na 11. októbra 1939.

94 ROHWER. Jüdische Flüchtlingsschiffe im Schwarzen Meer. In BÜTTNER. *Das Unrechtsregime. Band 2: Verfolgung /Exil/ Belasteter Neubeginn*. Hamburg 1986, [online].

95 According to a police report dated 10 October 1939, the departure of the *O-II* to Moldova Veche, carrying Jewish emigrants, was anticipated. SNA, f. PR, b. 2172, Udalosti z 10. na 11. októbra 1939.

96 SNA, f. PR, b. 2172, Udalosti z 20. na 21. októbra 1939.

97 SNA, f. Poriečny plavebný úrad (PPÚ), b. 98, no. 939/1939.

98 SNA, f. ŽÚÚ, b. 1, no. 90298/1939.

99 According to Anderl, the steamships *Car Dušan* and *Kraljica Maria*, carrying Austrian emigrants, were expected to depart from Vienna and reach Sulina on 6 November 1939. ANDERL, *Emigration*, pp. 288–289.

Similarly problematic is the voyage of the *Saturnus* steamship in November 1939. According to Gabriele Anderl, the *Saturnus* departed Vienna on 19 November 1939 with 211 passengers on board, who were joined in Bratislava by the so-called Mandler Group from Prague.<sup>100</sup> Jürgen Rohwer notes that on 28 October, a transport of 600 Jews arrived from Prague and spent several days in Bratislava. The vessel is believed to have been rented in Vienna by Berthold Storfer,<sup>101</sup> who, together with his group of 211 emigrants, invited the Jews waiting in Bratislava to board.<sup>102</sup> The steamship, carrying a total 811 passengers, reportedly reached Sulina on 23 November 1939.<sup>103</sup> However, this account conflicts with records from Police Branch Office IV – Bratislava, Port, which indicate that the DDSG (*Donaudampfschiffahrtsgesellschaft*) intended to board between 600 and 800 Jewish emigrants on the *Saturnus* in Bratislava on 12 November, with the ship already moored in the port.<sup>104</sup> Other sources also suggest that boarding likely occurred on that date.<sup>105</sup>

At the same time, the port of Bratislava dispatched one of the most tragic Jewish transports to Palestine. According to the literature, on 25 November 1939, some 800 Jews arrived in Bratislava from Vienna by train and were lodged at Patrónka (another 100 Jews were expected to join them in the city). Due to the threat of the Danube freezing over and pressure from Slovak authorities for the group's departure, the emigrants boarded the *Uranus* steamship in December 1939. The departure was beset with difficulties, and the transport was subsequently divided among three different vessels. As a result of further complications, the group soon ended up in the small Yugoslavian port of Kladovo and never reached Palestine. Several months later, the majority of its members fell victim to Nazi persecution – in 1941 and 1942, following the German invasion of Yugoslavia, they were murdered.<sup>106</sup> Police reports allow reconstruction of the transport's circumstances. The DDSG's *Uranus* was in port as early as 10

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100 Ibid., p. 294.

101 Berthold Storfer was a Viennese commercial advisor who headed the *Ausschuss für jüdische Überseetransporte* [Committee for Jewish Overseas Transports]. In preparing the transports, he collaborated, among others, with the SS. He successfully organised the immigration of thousands of Jews to Palestine, though he himself perished in Auschwitz. Ibid., pp. 271, 308. For more, see ANDERL, "9096 Leben"; ROHWER, *Jüdische Flüchtlingschiffe* [online].

102 ROHWER, *Jüdische Flüchtlingschiffe* [online].

103 ANDERL, *Emigration*, p. 294.

104 SNA, f. PR, b. 2172, Udalosti z 11. na 12. novembra 1939.

105 In November 1939, Police Directorate documents refer to the DDSG passenger steamship *Minerva*, which was reportedly scheduled to embark some 400(?) emigrants on 27 November 1939. However, a report dated 28 November contains no information of this embarkation. SNA, f. PR, b. 2172, Udalosti z 25. na 26. novembra 1939

106 ANDERL, *Emigration*, pp. 297-304; ANDERL and MANOSCHEK, *Gescheiterte Flucht*.

November 1939. According to the police branch office, 605 people boarded the ship on the evening of 12 November under the supervision of guards and police advisor Jakubócy, with the embarkation organised by the Čedok travel agency. The passengers primarily came from the Protectorate, supplemented by some local Jews. Since the ship was scheduled to depart two days later, three patrols – from the port police, the Financial Guard, and the HG – were assigned to it to prevent passengers from leaving. On 14 November, 196 Jews arrived from Vienna and, together with eight local Jews, joined the 606 (!) people already on board, again under the supervision of Jakubócy. The vessel, now carrying 810 passengers, was scheduled to depart the following day, but this did not occur.<sup>107</sup> Further boarding was announced by the DDSG for 26 November.<sup>108</sup> After several postponements, the *Uranus* departed on 4 December but returned the next day after turning around in Gönyű, Hungary, due to passengers' health problems.<sup>109</sup> On the morning of 13 December, a further 150–190 Jews from Germany and the Protectorate boarded before the ship finally departed Bratislava for good.<sup>110</sup> By contrast, the departure of Slovenská Dunajplavba's *O-II* went smoothly, although little is known about its preparation. On 9 December 1939, 105 passengers boarded, with passport control personally supervised by Jakubócy, and the vessel departed the following day.<sup>111</sup> Additionally, a Čedok-organised transport of 100 people boarded the DDSG passenger steamship *Grein* in early December.<sup>112</sup> Although it was initially scheduled to carry 130 passengers on 10 December, a

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107 SNA, f. PR, b. 2172, Udalosti z 11. na 12. novembra 1939; Udalosti zo 14. na 15. novembra 1939.

108 SNA, f. PR, b. 2172, Udalosti z 25. na 26. novembra 1939.

109 On 7 December 1939, the PPÚ dealt with a health incident aboard the ship when, in the words of the bureau president, Doctor O. Wagner “went crazy”. He was transferred by ambulance and examined by a police doctor at Branch Office I, who found nothing seriously wrong, and Wagner was returned to the vessel. The following day, however, he fell gravely ill. The responding doctor diagnosed severe diabetes with complications. Wagner was subsequently transferred to a Jewish hospital. Several days later, Čedok provided three Jewish emigrants to the *Uranus*, who replaced Wagner and his wife, whom the travel agency returned to the lodging house. SNA, f. PR, b. 2172, Udalosti zo 4. na 5. decembra 1939; Udalosti z 5. na 6. decembra 1939; Udalosti zo 7. na 8. decembra 1939; Udalosti z 8. na 9. decembra 1939; Udalosti z 11. na 12. decembra 1939.

110 SNA, f. PR, b. 2172, Udalosti z 13. na 14. decembra 1939.

111 SNA, f. PR, b. 2172, Udalosti z 9. na 10. decembra 1939, Udalosti z 10. na 11. decembra 1939.

112 The *Grein* was boarded on 3 December 1939. In the early hours of 4 December, one passenger became nauseous, prompting the attending guard to summon Dr Schvarc from the lodging house. SNA, f. PR, b. 2172, Udalosti z 2. na 3. decembra 1939, Udalosti z 3. na 4. decembra 1939.

further 126 Jews joined on 14 December, and the steamship ultimately departed on 15 December with 830 emigrants on board.<sup>113</sup>

On 8 April 1940, after several months of preparation, a transport organised by the ŽÚÚ was boarded. Over 740 passengers embarked on the Yugoslavian steamships *Vojvoda Mišič* and *Princeza Jelena*, anticipating a swift voyage to Palestine.<sup>114</sup> However, due to administrative and foreign-policy complications, the transport never left Bratislava, and on 25 April its passengers were forced to disembark.<sup>115</sup>

Later in 1940, the steamship *Pentcho* departed Bratislava to begin its perilous voyage to Palestine. The transport was organised by the right-wing Betar organisation,<sup>116</sup> led by Zoltán Schalk, with assistance from the Jewish charity organisation Relico, headed by Adolf Silberschein and headquartered in Switzerland. The emigrants came from Austria, Germany, Poland, Slovakia, and the Protectorate, and several had spent time at the Vyhne camp prior to boarding. The transport was socially and politically diverse, comprising representatives of multiple social, political, and religious groups. The *Pentcho*, a small and antiquated river steamship, departed Bratislava on 18 May 1940 with around 400 passengers, including 15 emigrants from Silberschein's German group. On 5 June, the Slovak steamship *O-I* followed the *Pentcho* and contributed 101 passengers<sup>117</sup> who boarded the latter ship after the *O-I* had caught up with it. This group included 62 refugees from the German Silberbusch Group and 12 Jews from the Vyhne camp.<sup>118</sup> Additional passengers boarded at Mohács. Due to technical difficulties and the evolving political situation in Europe, the *Pentcho* soon encountered serious problems, failing to reach Sulina until September 1940. By that time, the seagoing vessel intended to transport the refugees onwards had departed, forcing the passengers to continue the sea voyage aboard the decidedly unseaworthy river steamship. In October 1940, the *Pentcho* was shipwrecked in the Mediterranean. After further dramatic events, most of the refugees were interned by Italian authorities and remained in captivity until freed by Allied forces in 1943.<sup>119</sup>

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113 SNA, f. PR, b. 2172, Udalosti zo 14. na 15. decembra 1939, Udalosti z 15. na 16. decembra 1939.

114 For more, see FIAMOVÁ, Židovskí emigranti [online].

115 SNA, f. PR, b. 2266, Mimoriadne služby pri nalodení židov (zoznam gážistov).

116 Betar was represented by the Transport Bureau of the New Zionist Organisation in Bratislava.

117 According to a report from Police Branch Office IV, the number of passengers was 102. SNA, f. PR, b. 2266, Mimoriadne služby pri nalodení židov (zoznam gážistov).

118 Yad Vashem Archives, Jeruzalem, Archives of Dr. A. Silberschein, no. M20/91, p. 63. I thank Eduard Nižňanský for providing the relevant document.

119 NIŽŇANSKÝ. Od obrazu Žida – nepriateľa – k pokusu o vymanenie sa z postavenia obeť...

Several months after the *Pentcho*'s departure, the Police Directorate received an anonymous denunciation. The complainant claimed that the steamship *Stefano*, which had departed from Bratislava on 18 May, carried Jews who had taken five million Slovak crowns with them, and urged the authorities to "bring the little Jews back." *Let them spend the money in Slovakia. Why should Slovakia lose money, gold, and other things? Then people laugh at how naïve Slovaks are. Back with them and off to the labour camps; they can laugh there. The rest, you can investigate yourselves. I cannot divulge more.*" Police advisor Jakubócy remained unmoved by the allegation concerning millions of Slovak crowns on the Danube and dismissed it by noting that "no Jews left Bratislava on the steamer 'Stefano'. Unfounded." The police advisor was surely unaware that *Stefano* had been the original name of the *Pentcho*.<sup>120</sup>

The final transport to depart from Bratislava's port was also the final mass illegal Palestine transport from the territory of the Reich. The so-called Storfer's transport left in September 1940 aboard four DDSG steamships. Several hundred emigrants had spent months waiting at Patrónka and in the lodging house, some since 1939. While Storfer struggled to secure vessels for the emigrants, the Slovak authorities' patience with the emigrants was running thin. Hundreds more potential emigrants were concentrated in Vienna, and the transport was joined by Jews from Gdansk and the Protectorate. On 4 September 1940 – the day of departure – the Police Directorate issued one-way exit visas even to individuals without travel documents. The steamers *Uranus* and *Helios* departed from Bratislava, where they had moored for some time. The transport, carrying over 3,500 people, also involved the steamers *Melk* and *Schönbrunn*, which had departed from Vienna. Several days after departure, the emigrants were transferred to oceangoing ships, including the *Milos*, *Pacific*, and *Atlantic*, at Tulcea to continue their voyage to Palestine.<sup>121</sup>

## Conclusion

Given that the policies of the Nazis and their allies were aimed at the elimination of Jews from society, it is unsurprising that governing regimes – including in Slovakia – initially invested time and resources in supporting and organising emigration. However, the decision to leave home cannot be regarded as entirely voluntary. Even when Jews sought to emigrate on their own initiative, the

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In ŽIAK. *Il ako Izrael. Filmová poviedka*. Bratislava 2015.

120 SNA, f. PR, b. 501, no. 4225/1940.

121 A portion of the emigrants ended up in British internment camps in Mauritius, where they would spend the rest of the war. ANDERL, *Emigration*, pp. 306-308; ROHWER, *Jüdische Flüchtlingschiffe* [online].

Slovak government deliberately made their living conditions unbearable so as to encourage departure. Shifting borders, escalating persecution, and the introduction of discriminatory measures all contributed to growing emigration – not only among Jews – as it became increasingly obvious that the situation would not stabilise. In Slovakia, Jewish emigration accelerated after the declaration of autonomy on 6 October 1938, and especially after 14 March 1939. At that time, Slovakia in general, and Bratislava in particular, was already a major transit hub through which thousands of emigrants passed. The situation changed after 1940, when Germany realised that it would never “solve” the “Jewish question” in Europe through emigration. Even as late as May 1940, the ŽÚÚ, in cooperation with the Želka travel agency, attempted to arrange the transport of around 500 people to Palestine. A further planned transport on 25 October, involving some 160 people, failed.<sup>122</sup> Simultaneously, the Slovak government’s anti-Jewish policies intensified, effectively halting further mass transports. In September 1940, the ŽÚÚ was disbanded and replaced by the Jewish Centre, which maintained an emigration department. Although the department worked hard to assist individuals with voluntary emigration, this task became increasingly difficult. In September 1940, Jews were forced to surrender their passports, and on 18 October 1940, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs decreed with immediate effect that Jews were “*under no conditions*” to be issued visas to enter Slovak territory.<sup>123</sup> Efforts to organise emigration continued into 1941. In a February 1941 letter to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Želka travel agency reported that,

*“In accordance with the intentions of the Slovak revolution and government, our company participated in the emigration of Jews until the autumn of 1940, specifically in so-called illegal emigration, necessitated by the impossibility of conducting large-scale legal emigration. Yet, with the establishment of the Central Economic Office,<sup>124</sup> we were compelled to desist from this activity, for, according to the chairman of the Office [Augustín Morávek], the illegal emigration of Jews from the Slovak Republic was henceforth prohibited.”*

The travel agency nevertheless asserted that it had been presented with the opportunity to legally transfer certain Jews to the United States via Lisbon, in collaboration with the German travel agency *Mitteuropäisches Reisebüro*

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122 SNA, f. ŽÚÚ, b. 1, unnumbered.

123 SNA, f. MZV, b. 336, no. 9496/1940.

124 The ÚHÚ was established in September 1940 and fell under the authority of the Prime Minister’s Office.

[Central European Travel Agency] (MER)<sup>125</sup> in Berlin. Želka would have facilitated their passage to Berlin, with the remainder of the journey to be arranged by MER. The main obstacle lay in the issuance of transit visas for Jews from Slovakia by the German authorities. In March 1941, the Ministry of Economy expressed its support for the initiative, but the Ministry of Foreign Affairs remained uncertain whether it would be “*in accord with the domestic interests of the Slovak Republic.*”<sup>126</sup> Up until October 1941, the Prime Minister’s Office, together with the Ministries of Foreign Affairs and Interior, repeatedly sought a response from the ÚHÚ, the body competent to deliberate on the travel agency’s proposal, but these inquiries proved fruitless. By this time, the plans of (not only) the Slovak government had already shifted towards an alternative “solution” of the so-called “Jewish question”.<sup>127</sup>

Determining the exact number of Jewish emigrants from Slovakia is difficult. According to Ladislav Lipscher, the Jewish Centre put the number of emigrants who left the country between 14 March 1939 and the end of 1941 at 6,194 Jews from Slovakia, while an additional 922 were present in the country only temporarily, yielding a combined total of 7,116 individuals. Of these, 3,776 immigrated to Palestine, 1,462 to Great Britain, 1,500 did not report a destination, and the remainder dispersed to 23 other countries.<sup>128</sup> According to ŽÚÚ data, 8,474 Jews emigrated from Slovakia between March 1939 and 5 January 1940 with the support of various organisations – a figure that excludes the 650 people from the planned ŽÚÚ transport that never took place. Similarly, some estimates – such as the 1,200 emigrants given in the “*Betar to Palestine approximately*” row in figure 2 – are questionable, as the only Betar transport from Bratislava occurred in May 1940.<sup>129</sup> The reports of the Central Zionist Association for the Ministry of Interior furnish further particulars concerning the number of people facilitated through the Association and the Palestine Office (figure 3). However, their cursory nature prevents a full picture of the scale of emigration.<sup>130</sup>

Despite persisting unanswered questions, which open avenues for further research, this paper illuminates key aspects of the organisation of Jewish emigration from Slovakia. The use of diverse sources, especially materials from the Police Directorate in Bratislava, allows a partial reconstruction of the

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125 The German agency maintained capital and personnel connections with Želka. SNA, f. MH, b. 46, no. 4525/1940.

126 Ibid.

127 SNA, f. Úrad predsedníctva vlády, b. 35, no. 2026/1941.

128 LIPSCHER, *Židia v slovenskom štáte*, p. 57.

129 SNA, f. ŽÚÚ, b. 1, unnumbered.

130 SNA, f. PR, b. 2264, unnumbered; b. 502, no. 1595/1939, 2212/1940.

cooperation between state and non-state actors in facilitating Jewish emigration. A key contribution of this study is the addition of previously unknown information about individual transports passing through Bratislava's port and Central Train Station.

Figure No. 1:  
**Emigration of Jews via the port of Bratislava 1938–1940<sup>131</sup>**

Date	Ship	Number of Persons	Note
30. 10. 1938	Express steam-boat, name unknown	54	Jews with Nansen passports from Brno; Palestine <sup>132</sup>
24. 11. 1938?	Melk	More than 500?	Emigrants from Brno, Prague and Bratislava; Palestine <sup>133</sup>
13. 3. 1939	Minerva Tulln	680	The group was traveling from Brno to Bratislava by train and included Austrians who had fled to Czechoslovakia after the Anschluss in 1938. <sup>134</sup>
3. 7. 1939	Car Dušan	355	The so-called Grünhut transport; Ruse
3. 7. 1939	Erzsébet Királyné	350	The so-called Grünhut transport
17./18. 10. 1939	O-I	250	Jews from the Protectorate; direction Moldova Veche, destination Levanta. <sup>135</sup>
20. 10. 1939	Kraljica Maria/Kraljevica Marica	362	Jews from the Protectorate; Sulina

131 SNA f. PR, b. 2172, 2173, Events from police branch offices in Bratislava.

132 During this period, a large group of refugees also left Vienna on the steamships Grein and Minerva (the so-called Arnoldstein group together with almost 300 other people). ANDERL, *Emigration*, p. 278.

133 NIŽŇANSKÝ, *Holokaust na Slovensku I*, document no. 89, pp. 191-193.

134 On April 29, 1939, 720 Jews left Vienna aboard the ship Helios, reaching the shores of Palestine in June 1939. ANDERL, *Emigration*, pp. 284-256.

135 ROHWER, *Jüdische Flüchtlingsschiffe* [online]. No further information is available on the departure of the second Slovak steamboat, O-II.

20. 10. 1939 ?	Car Dušan	?	The mention of 85 people boarding this ship dates back to September 1940. According to G. Anderl, the steamships Car Dušan and Kraljica Maria sailed from Vienna with Austrian refugees and reached Sulina on November 6, 1939. <sup>136</sup>
24./25.10. 1939 ? <sup>137</sup>	?	?	According to information from Police Branch Office III, on October 24, 120 Jews arrived from Marchegg and were transported to the Winter Port, from where they continued by ship to Palestine.
19. 11. 1939? <sup>138</sup>	Saturnus	811	Saturnus was loaded in Bratislava on November 12, 1939. It landed in Sulina on November 23, 1939. <sup>139</sup>
27. 11. 1939?	Minerva	400?	It was a DDSG steamboat. We have no information as to whether it actually left Bratislava.
4. 12. 1939	Uranus	800?	The Uranus (DDSG) was in the port of Bratislava from November 10, 1939. On November 12, 1939, 605 (?) people boarded the ship. Two days later, 196 Jews from Vienna and 8 local Jews joined them. More Jews from Vienna boarded the Uranus on November 26. After setting sail, the Uranus returned to Bratislava on December 5, 1939.
10. 12. 1939	O-II	105	The steamboat belonged to Slovak Danube Shipping.
13. 12. 1939	Uranus	1000?	Before departure, three people boarded the steamboat as replacements for a sick emigrant and his wife. On December 13, 150 (190) people from Germany and the Protectorate joined them.
15. 12. 1939	Grein	830	On December 3, 1939, 100 people boarded the steamship Grein (DDSG) in Bratislava, and a week later there were 130 Jews on board. On December 14, 126 more emigrants joined them. <sup>140</sup>
	Vojvoda Mišič	455	The steamboats were loaded on April 8, 1940, but never left Bratislava and had to be unloaded on April 25, 1940. The ŽÚÚ lists 736 people in the transport.

136 ANDERL, Emigration, pp. 288-289.

137 Anderl states that on October 23, 1939, the so-called Gelsler-Faltyn group from the Protectorate left Bratislava on two Yugoslav steamships, which does not correspond with the information provided by Police Branch Office III.

138 According to Anderl, Saturnus left Vienna on November 19, 1939, with 211 passengers, who were joined in Bratislava by the so-called Mandler group from Prague. ANDERL, Emigration, p. 294.

139 ANDERL, Emigration, pp. 288-289.

140 Anderl states that Grein left Vienna on December 17, 1939.

	Princeza Jelena	286	
18. 5. 1940	Pentcho	400 (347 <sup>141</sup> )	The transport also included 15 refugees from the German Silberbusch group
5. 6. 1940	O-I	101	An additional transport joined the transport on the steamboat Pentcho on the Danube. Among the passengers were 62 German refugees from the Silerbusch group and 12 Jews from the camp in Vyhne.
4. 9. 1940	Helios	?	The transport was loaded on board on several dates in August and September. <sup>142</sup>
4. 9. 1940	Uranus		

Figure No. 2:

**Emigration of Jews from Slovakia from March 1939 to January 5, 1940, according to ŽÚÚ data<sup>143</sup>**

Palestine Office	
Certificates to Palestine	398
England	4
Denmark	11
Hicem	
England	404
Bolivia	24
USA	58
Argentina	8
Norway	14
Chile	10
Colombia	6
Brazil	2
Sweden	9

141 Information from Police Branch Office IV. Port.

142 Together with the ships Uranus and Helios, the steamboats Melk and Schönbrunn also transported more than 3,500 people. The vessels departed from Vienna and Bratislava on September 3 and 4, 1940. ANDERL, *Emigration*, p. 306.

143 SNA, f. ŽÚÚ, b. 1, without no.

Ecuador	16
Australia	5
New Zealand	6
Morocco	2
Panama	8
Shanghai	32
France	23
Genoa transit	26
Unregistered individual cases approximately	300
Palestine transport ŽÚÚ	
In Palestine	338
Transport pripravený <sup>144</sup>	650
Other organizations	
Betar to Palestine approximately	1200
Grünhut to Palestine approximately	970
Wohlmüt to Palestine approximately	120
Adler to Palestine approximately	180
Gross to Canada	150
ŽÚÚ unregistered cases	
To different countries, approximately	3500
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>8474</b>

Figure No. 3:

**Emigration of Jews from Slovakia to Palestine through the Central Zionist Association for Slovakia and the Palestine Office in the period from August to September 1939 and January to March 1940<sup>145</sup>**

Month	Number of emigrants with assigned certificates
August, September 1939	156
January 1940	0
February 1940	14
March 1940	73

<sup>144</sup> Transport could not be carried out.

<sup>145</sup> SNA, f. PR, b. 2264, without no.; b. 502, no. 1595/1939, 2212/1940.

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