

= Jadovno concentration camp =

The Jadovno concentration camp was a concentration and extermination camp in the Independent State of Croatia (NDH) during World War II . Commanded by Juco Rukavina , it was the first of twenty @-@ six concentration camps in the NDH during the war . Established in a secluded area about 20 kilometres (12 mi) from the town of Gospi? , it held thousands of Serbs and Jews over a period of 122 days from May to August 1941 . Inmates were usually killed by being pushed into deep ravines located near the camp . Estimates of the number of deaths at Jadovno range from 10 @,@ 000 to 68 @,@ 000 , mostly Serbs . The camp was closed on 21 August 1941 , and the area where it was located was later handed over to the Kingdom of Italy and became part of Italian Zones II and III . Jadvono was replaced by the greater sized Jasenovac concentration camp and its extermination facilities .

The camp site remained unexplored after the war due to the depth of the gorges where bodies were disposed and the fact that some of them had been filled with concrete by Yugoslavia 's Communist authorities . Additional sites containing the skeletal remains of camp victims were uncovered in the 1980s . Commemoration ceremonies honouring the victims of the camp have been organized by the Serb National Council (SNV) , the Jewish community in Croatia , and local anti @-@ fascists since 2009 , and 24 June has since been designated as a " Day of Remembrance of the Jadovno Camp " in Croatia . A monument commemorating those killed in the camp was constructed in 1975 and stood for fifteen years before being removed in 1990 . A replica of the original monument was constructed and dedicated in 2010 , but disappeared within twenty @-@ four hours of its inauguration . As of 2013 , the construction of a new monument is planned .

= = History = =

= = = Background = = =

On 6 April 1941 , Axis forces invaded the Kingdom of Yugoslavia . Poorly equipped and poorly trained , the Royal Yugoslav Army was quickly defeated . After the invasion , the extreme Croat nationalist and fascist Ante Paveli? , who had been in exile in Benito Mussolini 's Italy , was appointed Poglavnik (" leader ") of an Usta?e @-@ led Croatian state ? the Independent State of Croatia (often called the NDH , from the Croatian : Nezavisna Dr?ava Hrvatska) . The NDH combined most of modern Croatia , all of modern Bosnia and Herzegovina and parts of modern Serbia into an " Italian @-@ German quasi @-@ protectorate " . NDH authorities , led by the Usta?e militia , then implemented genocidal policies against the Serb , Jewish and Romani populations living in the new state . Aiming to exterminate the entire Serb population of the NDH , the Usta?e sought to murder one @-@ third of Serbs , convert one @-@ third to Roman Catholicism , and force the rest from the country . A series of massacres were committed by the Usta?e , and the degree of cruelty with which the Serb population was persecuted shocked even the Germans . The Cyrillic script was banned , Orthodox Christian church schools were closed , and Serbs were ordered to wear identifying armbands . Similar measures were enacted against Jews , who were required to wear a yellow armband with a black @-@ on @-@ yellow Star of David for identification . These armbands bore the word " Jew " in two languages : German (" Jude ") and Croatian (" ?idov ") .

= = = Operation = = =

Located in a secluded area about 20 kilometres (12 mi) from the town of Gospi? , the Jadovno camp was formed during the early stages of the persecution of Serbs in the NDH and was placed under the command of the Usta?a Juco Rukavina . Intended as an extermination camp , it was established between 11 and 15 April 1941 and was the first of twenty @-@ six concentration camps located in the NDH during the war .

Most inmates at Usta?e camps ? including Jadovno ? were Croatian Serbs . Other victims included

Jews and anti-Semitic Ustaše Croats . Notable Jadovno inmates included the mayor of Koprivnica , Ivica Hiršl , and Croatian Jewish Communist Aleksandar Savić .

Immediately , the Ustaše trucked several hundred detainees to a site intended almost exclusively for extermination near Gospić . Located on Mount Velebit , the town contained gorges some up to 91 metres (300 ft) deep that were used as dumping grounds . The Jadovno camp itself was surrounded by such abysses (Serbo-Croatian : jame) which were difficult to gain access to and characteristic of the karstic mountain range . The camp itself acted as a " way station " en route to these pits . Here , prisoners had to work the entire day with almost no food until exhaustion . The nearest pit to the camp was the Aran pit , located 1 kilometre (0.62 mi) away , while the pit where inmates were executed and dumped was 5 kilometres (3.1 mi) from the camp . Here , inmates were bound together in a line and the first few victims were murdered with rifle butts or other objects . Afterwards , an entire row of inmates were pushed into the ravine . In some cases , inmates were also killed by gunfire , as well as with knives and blunt objects . Once inmates were thrown into the ravine , hand grenades were hurled inside in order to kill off the victims . Dogs would also be thrown in to feed on the wounded and the dead . The pits in the vicinity of the camp were filled with the bodies of Jewish and later Serb inmates . However , killings were not confined to these two groups , and the bodies of some Croats and Roma were disposed of in this fashion as well .

By the end of June , the Ustaše transferred several hundred Jewish families from Zagreb to Jadovno . Afterwards , the camp was visited by Ustaše commander Vjekoslav Luburić , who opened his visit by cutting the throat of a two-year-old Jewish child . Luburić then forced a camp guard to murder and squash the skull of a second child with his foot . The last group of inmates at Jadovno were killed with machine guns . The camp was closed on 21 August 1941 , and the remaining Croat inmates were transferred to other NDH-controlled camps , while the remaining Serbs and Jews were murdered . Work on the replacement Jasenovac concentration camp started in the same month . The area in which the Jadovno camp was located was later handed over to the Italians and became part of Italian Zones II and III .

= = Aftermath and legacy = =

The Jadovno camp site remained unexplored after the war due to the depth of the gorges where bodies were disposed of and the fact that some of these had been filled with concrete by Yugoslavia's Communist authorities . Additional sites containing the skeletal remains of camp victims were uncovered in the 1980s .

The number of deaths at the camp is difficult to establish as many inmates often went unregistered as they were taken directly to the edge of ravines and murdered . Historian Paul Mojzes lists 38000 Serbs , 10998 Jews , 88 Croats and several " others " as being killed at Jadovno . 1000 children also perished in camp , as did 55 Serbian Orthodox priests . Mojzes states that the total number of deaths at the camp was 40123 . As it operated over a period of 122 days , this would suggest that an average of 329 people were killed there every day . Sources generally offer a range of 10000 to 68000 deaths at the camp . Estimates of the number of Jewish deaths range from several hundred to 2500 to 2800 . The Military Encyclopedia of Yugoslavia estimates that 72000 inmates perished in the camp . On the other hand , the Encyclopedia of Yugoslavia states that at least 35000 were killed in Jadovno , with a possible final death toll of 50000 to 60000 . The highest recorded estimate of Jadovno deaths was made in 1983 by Reverend Atanasije Jevtić , when he claimed that 80000 inmates were killed . However , historian Jozo Tomasevich has referred to this claim as being " exaggerated " , stating that it is not based on any documentation or detailed investigation .

Franjo Tuđman , the President of Croatia from 1990 until his death in 1999 , denied that any deaths took place in Jadovno during the war . This claim was put forward in his 1989 book *Horrors of War : Historical Reality and Philosophy* . Tuđman has since been called a Holocaust denier by some , including the World Jewish Congress . Commemoration ceremonies honouring the victims of the camp have been organized by the Serb National Council (SNV) , representatives of the Jewish community in Croatia , and local anti-fascists since 2009 . 24 June has since been designated

as a " Day of Remembrance of the Jadovno Camp " in Croatia . A monument commemorating those who perished was constructed in 1975 and stood for fifteen years before being removed in 1990 prior to the outbreak of ethnic violence during the Croatian War of Independence . A replica of the original monument was constructed and dedicated in 2010 , but disappeared within twenty @-@ four hours of its inauguration . The construction of a new monument is planned .

= = = Books = = =

= = = Websites = = =