



60. ГОДИНА ПРОБОЈА ЈАСЕНОВАЧКИХ ЛОГОРАША,
ХОЛОКАУСТА И ПОБЈЕДЕ НАД ФАШИЗМОМ

60. GODINA PROBOJA JASENOVAČKIH LOGORAŠA,
HOLOKAUSTA I POBJEDE NAD FAŠIZMOM

60th ANNIVERSARY OF JASENOVAC CAMP INMATES' BREACH,
THE HOLOCAUST AND VICTORY OVER FASCISM

ДОЊА ГРАДИНА, 17. АПРИЛ 2005.

DONJA GRADINA, 17. APRIL 2005.

DONJA GRADINA, APRIL 17, 2005

The complex of extermination camps Jasenovac-Donja Gradina

JASENOVAC, Largest concentration and extermination camp in Croatia, located 62 miles south of Zagreb. Jasenovac, which was actually a network of several sub-camps, was established in August 1941 and dissolved in April 1945. The Nazis gave control of Jasenovac to the puppet Croatian government, which was run by the fascist Ustasa movement. A large number of Ustasa members served in the camp, most notably Miroslav Filipovic-Majstorovic, who was notorious for killing prisoners with his bare hands.

Altogether, about 600,000 people were murdered at Jasenovac, including Serbs, Jews, Gypsies, and Croats who opposed the Ustasa government. Of that number, some 25,000 of the victims were Jews, most of whom had been brought to Jasenovac before August 1942 (at which point the Germans began deporting the Jews of Croatia to Auschwitz).

Jews were brought to Jasenovac from all over Croatia. Most were killed on arrival; a small number of skilled professionals were kept alive to work at the camp. They endured horrible conditions and brutal treatment at the hands of the Ustasa guards. Near the end of the war, Jasenovac's administration blew up much of the camp and killed most of the prisoners in an attempt to conceal evidence of the mass murders that took place there.

"Encyclopedia of the Holocaust", Yad Vashem, Izrael, Robert Rozett and Shmuel Spector, Jerusalem-New York, 2000

There is no place in the history of the Serbian nation, including different locations of mass executions and battlefields, where more people were killed in one place than in the Jasenovac concentration camp.

The killing of children is the proof that the Jasenovac concentration camp was in the very function of extermination of the humans, who in any case could not be the opponents, either military or ideological. According to up to now established data, out of 23.504 killed children in German, Italian and Croatian concentration camp in NDH (Nezavisna Drzava Hrvatska = Independent State of Croatia), Jasenovac has swallowed 19.432 children (from newborn infants to the age of 14).

The total number of people killed in Jasenovac was never established; as was not the total number of killed in the war between 1941-1945. Project "Revision of the 1941-1945 War Victims List in 1964", which is being done in the Genocide Victims Museum, is trying to establish a list of all victims in World War II, as well as for the particular locations, regardless of their race, or religious, ideological, political, military and another affiliation. So far, the revision of the list has brought up much higher figures than the minimalized ones, and it also indicates the untenable high figures which exaggerated the number of victims. It is certain that Jasenovac Concentration Camp is the largest place of mass execution during the World War II in former Yugoslavia and that most of the victims were of Serbian nationality and that the mass liquidation of Jews and Gypsies was carried out (liquidation of Serbs, Gypsies and Jews was carried out because of their national, religious and racial affiliation), and that many victims were political, military and ideological opponents to the ruling regime of NDH.

Due to permanent liquidations and variable structure of certain groups of camp inmates, the camp inmates were trying to organize and put up a resistance. The goal was to preserve their lives and keep up the dignity of a man. Two uprising of the camp inmates in Jasenovac stand out: a breaking out from Camp III and Camp IV. The first one, on April 22nd, 1945, about 10 o'clock and the second one on the same day in the evening at about eight o'clock.

The Jasenovac death factory was operational up to April 22nd, 1945. Realizing that the end was near, NDH decides to hide the crime traces in the Jasenovac concentration camp. For days the corpses were dug out

and then burnt. The last group of women was liquidated on April 21st. In the Camp III (Ciglanina = Brick plant) there remained 1.073 men. In the night of 21/22nd April, realizing that the final liquidation was inevitable, the groups of mainly physically more fit camp inmates were organized and the decision on attempt of breaking out was reached. The goal was that some of them will survive and testify about the sufferings during the 1.241 days of existence of the camp. The attempt was started about 10 o'clock on April 22nd. The unarmed skeletons started to run towards the Eastern gate. In a heroic attempt barely 70 camp inmates succeeded to break out. On the same day, April 22nd, an attempt of breaking out was made in the evening by camp inmates from "Kožara" (tanenery), a separate part of the camp (Camp IV), 167 of them. Only eleven of them survived.

Jovan Mirkovic
The Genocide Victims Museum
Belgrade

The exact number of victims among the Gypsies on the territory of so called Independent State of Croatia (NDH) probably will never be established. There are numerous reasons for this. First of all, the statistical datab on Gypsies in former Yugoslavia is incomplete and by that unacceptable. Namely because a great number of Gypsies did not declare themselves then and do not declare themselves as such even today, but declared themselves as Serbs, Croats, Macedonians, Albanians and so on. According to our knowledge, based on certain exact investigations, maximum 25% members of this people declare themselves as Gypsies. The remainder as we have already mentioned. Hence, the figure of 40 thousand Gypsy victims on the territory of so called Independent State of Croatia (NDH) seems very problematic. All the more, we place a question mark on this data, as the new excavation in Jasenovac concentration camp showed that the number of victims among this people is much higher than the official figures. We estimate, as we still have no official proof, that a genocide was done on over 80 thousand Gypsies in all NDH, of which 50 thousand only in Jasenovac concentration camp.

Dragoslav Ackovic
The Vice-president of the world Gipsy Council/Parliament

DONJA GRADINA is the largest place of execution within the concentration camp Jasenovac. Out of total number of Jasenovac victims at least half of them were slaughtered on the most monstrous way. Gradina had been component part of Jasenovac camp through its entire existence, as the place of liquidations/executions and burials of victims, where Ustashi had been committing genocide over Serbs, Jews and Roma population.

There are 9 burial fields with 105 mass graves on the territory of 156 acres of land. In 1968. was established Memorial Centre Jasenovac with Donja Gradina as its component part. After disintegration of SFRJ, Donja Gradina and locations on the right banks of Una and Sava rivers went to Republic Srpska/Bosnia and Herzegovina. National Assembly of Republic Srpska has in Novembre 1996. passed the Law on Memorial area Donja Gradina.