

Mapping the Holocaust

Places of Remembrance in Serbia

Introduction

This publication comes as the result of a research conducted under the "Mapping the Holocaust: Places of Remembrance in Serbia" project. Nine locations of concentration camps for Jews and Roma in Serbia during World War II have been mapped. A brief historical essay has been written about each of these places, containing essential information about the interned people, the command structure and the camp itself. The key sources - publications or archival material - have also been listed. Complementing the text are photographs showing the current state of the former camps, and, except in a few cases where they could not be found, historical photographs.

This publication has been conceived as a text to accompany the exhibition because it provides an opportunity to discuss more thoroughly the places that were, for thousands of people, the last destination prior to their death. There is also an aim to draw attention to their present state. In the era of the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, museums were established in Niš and Belgrade (Banjica) on the site of the former camps, in memory of the people who were imprisoned there; memorial plaques have been placed or monuments erected in Zrenjanin, Bor and at the Old Fairground in Belgrade. However, in certain locations there are no marks indicating that concentration camps were located there. Of particular concern is the condition of the former Topovske Šupe camp in Belgrade where Jews and Roma were detained: it is planned to be demolished in order to have a shopping mall built there. This publication, therefore, is not only informative, it carries also a social function: by reading about the places where the camps were located and comparing their history with the present situation, one is compelled to reflect on the propriety of our attitude towards the Holocaust and the genocide against the Roma and the possibility of our changing it, upgrading it through new information and the desire not to let the suffering of the Jews and the Roma be forgotten.

The Center for Public History continues to pursue the preservation of that memory through further research and will regularly publish all new findings at the following links: www.cpi.rs and www.topovskesupe.rs.

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Topovske Šupe (The Artillery Sheds)

Hand in hand with the German conquests during World War II, the intention of systematically destroying Jews in the occupied territories began to take its shape more and more, as well as the specific methods for the *Final Solution to the Jewish Question*. With the establishment of an administrative and military apparatus in the territory of the German occupation zone in the Kingdom of Yugoslavia, as early as April 1941, the new authorities began registering the Jewish population and issuing orders in accordance with the anti-Semitic laws. Representatives of the local administration and the Belgrade special police provided considerable support in their implementation.

The system of internment of culprits designated according to various criteria into concentration camps had already largely been established in the Third Reich. Following the April bombing, as part of compulsory forced labor, many Belgrade Jews were engaged in the rehabilitation of the complex at the Autokomanda quarter of the Voždovac municipality in Belgrade, which housed barracks, a garage and a warehouse of the army of the Kingdom of Yugoslavia. Briefly, until July 1941, the existing infrastructure served to accommodate the Serbian refugees from the Independent State of Croatia. Although the exact date is not known, in August 1941, this space, used as military grounds, was given a new purpose and, like Banjica, was transformed into a concentration camp for Jews and Roma - Topovske Šupe.

The location of the camp, which was situated next to a tram line, a stadium and a school, was very busy, and while the citizens of Belgrade went on with their daily lives, the Topovske Šupe camp started receiving its first detainees. Following the arrest, at the end of August 1941, between 2000 and 4000 male Banat Jews, previously deported to Belgrade were taken to the camp. In the months that followed, all adult male Jews from Belgrade and from other parts of the German occupation zone were captured and imprisoned during raids. Relative to the number of people in the Belgrade Jewish community, the Belgrade Jews were the most numerous group in the camp. In addition to Jews who were discriminated against on the basis of the Racial Laws, Roma were also detained in the Topovske Šupe camp following arrests in Belgrade's Roma settlements. The prisoners were leaving the camp to engage in forced labor in the city itself, while any attempt to escape from such a strictly controlled system would be punished by death. The daily return to the camp meant facing the harsh conditions of life: the torture by the guards was very common, a person had little space to himself, people slept on the cold plank floor and the food which the Union of Jewish Municipalities managed to provide was very scarce.

At the beginning of the camp's existence, if there were partisan sabotages, a certain number of prisoners would be taken to hostage shootings. With the introduction of rigorous German measures involving the retaliation of over 100 civilians for one German soldier killed and 50 for one wounded, beginning in September 1941, the Topovske Šupe camp became the central place from which hostages were taken for such purpose. Under the pretext of being transferred to another camp or going to forced labor, by November 1941, when the camp was disbanded, most of the prisoners were taken to mass shootings that took place at the Jabuka execution site near Pančevo, in Jajinci, Deliblatska Peščara and other places. During the period of its existence, about 5,000 male Jews from Banat, Belgrade, and other parts of the occupied territory were interned in the Topovske Šupe camp, as well as about 1,500 Roma. In December 1941, between 200 and 300 of the remaining male Jews were transferred from the Topovske Šupe camp to the newly established camp at the Staro Sajmište (the Old Belgrade Fairground), as

the last refuge for Jewish women, children and Roma before being transported in gas vans to their certain death.

After the liberation of Belgrade, the area of the former Topovske Šupe camp regained its military purpose and served the needs of the Yugoslav National Army. The first memorial plaque on the Topovske Šupe building, dating back to 1951, was dedicated to "comrades who fell for the victory of the people's revolution and independence of the fatherland" and did not suggest that it was put up on the grounds of a former camp. In the period that followed, there were various initiatives to transform the site, while plans to establish a shopping mall at the site are still in place. The first marking and naming of Jews and Roma as the victims of the Topovske Šupe camp dates back to 2005, when a memorial plaque was put up on the wall of the building. This memorial of the victims of the Holocaust in Serbia has meanwhile been taken down, and, on 2 May 2019, on the occasion of the Day of Remembrance and Courage, representatives of the Jewish Community of Belgrade unveiled a new memorial plaque for the victims of the first camp for the Jews and the Roma in Serbia.

Literature: Nenad Žarković, Prolazni logor Topovske šupe“ (The Topovske Šupe Transit Camp). In *Nasleđe (The Heritage)*, No. 10 (2009), p. 103-112 ; Logori Topovske šupe i Sajmište kao centralna mesta holokausta u okupiranoj Srbiji – numeričko određenje i kvantitativna analiza” (The Topovske šupe and Sajmište Camps as Central Sites of the Holocaust in the Occupied Serbia – numeric Determination and Quantitative Analysis), (*The History of the 20th Century*), No. 1 (2018), p. 69-92, Milovan Pisarri, *Beleške o istoriji logora Topovske šupe u Beogradu: avgust-novembar 1941 (Notes on the History of the Topovske Šupe camp in Belgrade: August-November 1941)*, www.topovskesupe.rs

The Banjica camp

Despite the relatively quickly quashed resistance that the Yugoslav army had put up in the April 1941 war, the rebel spirit of the anti-fascists in the occupied territory of the former Kingdom of Yugoslavia did not break. The idea of establishing a concentration camp for the perpetrators and potential instigators of subversive activities against the German administration came to light in May 1941, but the actual fulfillment of that intent was accelerated by the German attack on the Soviet Union.

In early July 1941, representatives of the German administration in Serbia and the Gestapo made the decision to establish a concentration camp in Belgrade, while the Belgrade City Administrator, Dragomir Dragi Jovanović, was in charge of its implementation. It was the second camp in occupied Serbia after the establishment of the Svilara camp in Pančevo. The building of the former prison for communists at Ada Ciganlija was initially thought of as a potential location for the concentration camp in Belgrade, but the decision was made to use the existing barracks of the 18th Infantry Regiment at Banjica for these purposes. The Banjica camp (the Dedinje Reception Camp, that is, the Belgrade Concentration Camp are the names appearing in the original documents) was run by representatives of the Gestapo and the Serbian police. The camp warden was a representative of the Serbian police, Svetozar M. Vujković, but despite certain powers that were in the hands of the local administration and the Belgrade Special Police, the main orders came from the German Gestapo.

The process of adapting the former barracks to the needs of the newly formed camp, ensuring its safety by adding metal bars and iron doors, went hand in hand with bringing the first prisoners into this three-story building. The prisoners from the Banjica camp were further interned in camps outside the Serbian territory, taken to forced labor, executed, or released after a certain period of detention. Among the prisoners were members of different nationalities, different political backgrounds, ages and occupations, who, according to the established classification of 1942, were disaggregated by category of their offence and their treatment in the camp was defined accordingly. Political prisoners, including supporters and members of the National Liberation Movement, the Ravna Gora Movement, intellectuals and patriots, were the most numerous detainees in the Banjica camp. In addition, the prisoners included peasants who failed to fulfill their obligations to the occupier, hostages, as well as Jews and Roma. Hundreds of Jews from the Yugoslav territory and Jewish refugees from different parts of Europe passed through the Banjica camp. The brutal retaliation measures proclaimed by the occupying authorities in October 1941 made the Banjica camp the main concentration point for large groups of hostages who were being taken to mass shootings. The Communists and the Jews were the most numerous among them. The registration of the Jewish population, the implementation of discriminatory measures, the seizure of property, the prohibition of free movement and forced labor, which marked the first half of 1941, were followed by internment in the camps and mass liquidation of Jews. In late 1941 and early 1942, the process of systematic destruction of the Jewish population on the territory of the German occupation zone was largely underway. The Jews who were subsequently at liberty were those who disobeyed the German orders, obtained false documents or were in hiding. The German, but also the Belgrade Special Police were actively searching for them, and, following arrest, a prisoner would be taken to the Banjica camp.

A large number of prisoners of the camp at Banjica were taken to shootings in Jajinci, Jabuka, Trostruki Surduk in the Bežanija quarter, Mali Požarevac, Mladenovac, Marinkova

Bara and at the New Belgrade Cemetery, or were killed in gas vans that were used in the camp at Staro Sajmište (the Old Fairground). More recent estimates show that nearly 30,000 prisoners passed through the Banjica camp, while the post-war State Commission for the Investigation of the Crimes of the Occupiers and their Collaborators established the number of 8,756 inmates killed by the time the camp was liquidated in 1944. In addition to the Military Academy, which is now situated in the Banjica camp building, since 1969, one part of this building has been used as the Museum of the Banjica camp. It testifies to the layout of the authentic camp space and provides an insight into the harsh living conditions in it.

References: Sima Begović, *Logor Banjica 1941–1944 (The Banjica Camp)*, 1–2, Belgrade 1989; *Logor Banjica: Logoraši, knjige zatočenika Koncentracionog logora Beograd-Banjica 1941–1944 (The Banjica Camp: the Inmates, Records of the Inmates of the Belgrade-Banjica Concentration Camp). I–II*, (Evica Micković and Milena Radojčić ed.), Belgrade 2009, Branislav Božović, *Stradanje Jevreja u okupiranom Beogradu 1941–1944 (The Suffering of Jews in the Occupied Belgrade 1941–1944)*, Beograd 2012, *Mesta stradanja i antifašističke borbe u Beogradu 1941–1944 (Places of Suffering and Antifascist Struggle in Belgrade 1941–1944)*, (Rena Rädle and Milovan Pissarri, ed.), Belgrade 2013. Photograph source: Jewish History Museum, c. 24-1-1/1.

The Staro Sajmište camp

In the early 1930s, in the immediate neighborhood of the Yugoslav capital, on the left bank of the Sava River, there was only a large swampy area. The decision to build the Belgrade Fair there, as a symbol of the economic and technological progress of the Kingdom of Yugoslavia was made in 1936. Five Yugoslav pavilions were erected in a large area around the central tower: the Nikola Spasić pavilion, intended for the French and Dutch exhibitors, the German, Italian, Hungarian, Romanian, Czechoslovakian and Turkish national pavilions, while the construction of the Soviet pavilion began in 1940. Arriving at the fair from the magnificent King Aleksandar Bridge, the citizens of Belgrade were able to enjoy cultural events, as well as attractive exhibitions of some of the most prominent European brands such as *Skoda* and *Philips*, which would promote their innovations at the fair.

In the Kingdom of Yugoslavia, and especially in Belgrade, where they were most numerous, the Jews participated freely in daily life like other fellow citizens until 1940 and the first Yugoslav anti-Semitic orders which announced the subsequent events. With the German occupation of a part of the Yugoslav territory, followed by the establishment of strict anti-Semitic laws, beginning in April 1941, the Jewish population fell out of favor and a policy of complete dehumanization began to take place. The same laws applied to Roma, but above all to vagrants, that is, those who could not prove to have a permanent residence. Following their marking, confiscation of property, restriction of liberty, all kinds of discrimination and being sent to forced labor, mass arrests of male Jewish and Roma population from Belgrade and Banat began in August 1941. Men over the age of 14 were interned at the newly established Topovske Šupe camp. With the exception of 200-300 Jews, all the detainees in this camp were shot.

Under the German Racial Laws, the entire Jewish population, regardless of gender and age, was labeled as "an enemy that must be eliminated." Thus, at the end of October 1941, after the original location in Sremska Mitrovica proved to be inadequate due to the marshy terrain, the decision was made to establish a camp at the former Belgrade Fairground. Women, children and all the remaining men of Jewish and Roma descent were to be housed here. According to the division of the territory of the Kingdom of Yugoslavia, the eastern part of Srem, including the area in which the Belgrade Fair was situated, belonged to the territory of the Independent State of Croatia. However, an agreement was reached that the administration of the camp at the Staro Sajmište, that is, the *Zemun* Jewish camp, should belong to a German military-administrative apparatus which took care of the camp's procurement.

The first group of Jews from Belgrade was brought to the camp on 8 December 1941 across a pontoon bridge, since the King Alexander Bridge, or the Brankov Bridge as it is called today, was destroyed in the April bombing. While the first prisoners were arriving, the fair was still being adapted to the needs of the camp. The rehabilitation of the facilities and their securing was granted to the German organization *Todt* (whose camp was located close to the Staro Sajmište). The remaining group of Jews from the Topovske Šupe camp, who were transferred to the Staro Sajmište camp too, also worked on the rehabilitation of the buildings. The entire Jewish population from the territory of the German occupation zone soon found themselves in the camp and the number of detainees distributed in the former fair pavilions increased to about 7,000. Some 6,300 Jews and 600 Roma were among them. The preserved letters of Hilda Dajč, a young nurse who volunteered to assist in the camp's clinic, sent to her friends, are a rare treasure and an invaluable testimony to the living conditions in the camp. Accommodation in a pavilion implied

a square meter of space per person and a wooden bed sprinkled with straw. The kitchen, the toilets and the bathrooms were distributed in other buildings and prisoners could only go there within the timeframe provided. In addition to illness, cold and inadequate hygiene conditions, one of the causes of their falling ill was starvation, since the inmates' diet was extremely inadequate.

The further fate of the detainees at the Staro Sajmište was long considered. The initial intention of mass deportation of detainees to the Eastern Front was a major logistical undertaking which led to the decision to implement the "Final Solution to the Jewish Question" locally. Before the establishment of gas chambers as a means of mass destruction in the occupied territories of Serbia, Poland and the Soviet Union, the victims were liquidated in hermetically sealed vehicles in which they were killed by carbon monoxide. The infamous gas vans had their pre-war history when they were used to kill the mentally ill in the process of euthanasia conducted in the Third Reich. Starting in March 1942, a Berlin manufactured *Zaurer* vehicle transported its passengers daily from the Staro Sajmište camp to their death. By May of the same year, when German authorities proudly pointed out that the Jewish question in Serbia had been resolved, with the exception of the Roma who had been able to obtain certificates of residence and about 50 Jewish women married to Christians, all the inmates had died en route to mass graves in Jajinci near Belgrade.

As the Jews were no longer in the camp, it was renamed the *Zemun* Reception Camp. Political enemies who were subsequently deported to labor camps in and outside the country were further detained here. About 30,000 prisoners passed through the camp, one third of whom were killed by various means of torture, through illness or exhaustion, which provides a clear view of the living conditions in the camp. The detainees of the Staro Sajmište camp during the second phase of its operation were predominantly Serbs, mostly from the territory of the Independent State of Croatia and Bosnia, but also Croats, Bosniaks, Italians, Greeks, Albanians and Jews brought from different parts of the former Yugoslav state. The Staro Sajmište camp was hit during the Allied bombing in April 1944, killing a number of inmates. The collapse of the German system was imminent and a few months before the camp was closed, its administration came under the jurisdiction of the Independent State of Croatia. The last detainees at the Staro Sajmište camp, just like in December 1941, were Jews. This time, they were Jews from Kosovo who were on their way to the Bergen-Belzen camp.

The memory of the Jews, as victims of the suffering in the Staro Sajmište camp, was present already in the early stages of socialist Yugoslavia. The best evidence of this is the construction of the monument to the Jewish victims of fascism, by architect Bogdan Bogdanović, at the Jewish Cemetery dating back to 1952 and the beginning of the construction of the Jajinci Memorial Park in 1951. The erection of the first memorial plaque at the site of the former camp in 1974, as well as the monument unveiled ten years after, aimed at glorifying the anti-fascist struggle, while the memory of the Holocaust was marginalized at the time. This trend continued over the following decade, when, dictated by the political and ideological aspirations of that era, the process of moving away from the Yugoslav heritage began. In line with such tendencies, one should reflect on the symbolism of the monument at Staro Sajmište, built in 1995, openly suggesting that it is a place of remembrance of the Serbs killed in the Independent State of Croatia. For a couple of years now, serious debates have been taking place in the Republic of Serbia that raise a broad range of issues related to the construction of the memorial center at the Staro Sajmište and the search for their answers is inseparable from the knowledge of the camp's history and, most importantly, all its victims.

Literature: Jovan Bajford, *Staro Sajmište. Mesto sećanja, zaborava i sporenja (Place of Memory, Oblivion and Disputes)*, Belgrade: Beogradski centar za ljudska prava (The Belgrade Human Rights Center), 2011, Venceslav Glišić, *Teror i zločini nacističke Nemačke u Srbiji 1941-1944 (Terror and Crimes of Nazi Germany in Serbia 1941-1944)*, Belgrade: Rad, 1970, Milan Koljanin, *Nemački logor na Beogradskom sajmištu 1941-1944 (The German Camp at the Belgrade Fair 1941-1944)*, Belgrade: Institut za savremenu istoriju (The Contemporary History Institute), 1992.

Novi Bečej

The first Jewish communities in the territory of Novi Bečej were mentioned as early as the 18th century. The traces of the establishment of the oldest Jewish organisations such as the funeral society and the Jewish municipality date back to the 19th century. A Jewish cemetery was then founded and a synagogue was built in 1865, which was demolished after World War II. About 200 members of the Jewish community lived in this town during World War II. Many of them have made a significant contribution to the economic and cultural development of Novi Bečej.

After the German invasion of the Kingdom of Yugoslavia, in the new redistribution of the territory, Novi Bečej nominally belonged to the German occupation zone, but the primary administration of the Banat was entrusted to the local Germans - the *Volksdeutsche*. The occupation was accompanied by the adoption of the anti-Semitic laws. Male members of the Novi Bečej Jewish community were the first to be subject to freedom restriction measures. In mid-May 1941, most of them were detained in the courtyard of the synagogue in Novi Bečej and forced to perform very degrading tasks. With the invasion of the Soviet Union by the Germans, the regime began to take on the features of increasing cruelty, and, in addition to communists and anti-fascists, all the remaining Jews were then captured and imprisoned in the synagogue. As early as July 1941, they were moved to the premises of the "Klein and Horvat" grain storage, but the spacious grain storage, located in the center of Novi Bečej, was just another temporary residence for local Jews. The following month, the arrests of the remaining Jews from the vicinity of Novi Bečej were carried out intensively. As a collective camp for Jews from the greater Kikinda, Novi Kneževac and Novi Bečej districts was to be established in this town, the premises of the "Klein and Horvat" grain storage were no longer adequate. "Leo Weiss", also a

grain storage, was designated as the new camp. Its building is now in a very poor condition and without any mark that there was once a camp at this location. Both storages were built in the period between the two wars and their permanent inmates were specifically local Jews who took over the whole grain trade from the end of the 19th century. At the beginning of September 1941, there were about 700 Jews in the storage, who suffered the torture of József Klapka, the camp commander, previously a local municipal clerk, and his eight police officers guarding the camp. They were placed in a small area, with inadequate infrastructure, hygiene and scarce food.

Unlike the middle-Banat and south-Banat Jews, who were transferred to Belgrade in mid-August 1941, the Jews who were detained in the Novi Bečej concentration camp were transported on 20 September 1941. The separation of men, women and children took place in Belgrade; the men were transferred to the Topovske Šupe camp and then taken to mass executions, while women and children were temporarily distributed in Belgrade Jewish families, after which they would meet their tragic end at the Staro Sajmište camp. During the Holocaust, almost the entire Jewish community of Novi Bečej was destroyed.

Literature: Lazar Mečkić, *Novi Bečej i Vranjevo kroz istoriju (Novi Bečej and Vranjevo through History)*, Novi Bečej 1989, Božidar Ivković, "Uništenje Jevreja i pljačka njihove imovine u Banatu: 1941-1944" ("The Destruction of the Jews and Plundering of their Property in Banat: 1941-1944"), *Tokovi Revolucije (The Courses of Revolution)*, No. 1 (1967), p. 373-403., Branislav Kiselički, *Nastanak, razvoj i uništenje jevrejske zajednice u Novom Bečeju (The Beginning, Development and Destruction of the Jewish Community in Novi Bečej)*, Novi Sad 1992, [YVDA-O.39-164](#)

Zrenjanin

A third of the Jewish population in Banat was settled in Zrenjanin (in the past it was called Petrovgrad and Veliki Bečkerek), an important administrative and industrial hub. In addition to the Jewish municipality and the magnificent synagogue, built in the late 19th century, the Jewish community in Zrenjanin had a number of cultural, sports and humanitarian organisations. Before World War II, 1267 Jews lived in Zrenjanin.

Shortly after the defeat of the Kingdom of Yugoslavia in the brief April war, Zrenjanin became the center of the German occupation region in Banat, while the actual power was given to the native Germans. Immediately after the first *Volksdeutsche* (native Germans) entered the town, on 14 April 1941, a discriminatory policy against the Jews took effect. On this occasion, arrests were made of predominantly wealthy men of Jewish descent and a small number of women, after which they were detained in a camp located in the basement of the Central Primary School and a part of the former Torontal county seat. At that place, which is now the building of the Nikola Tesla Electrical and Civil Engineering School, there is no mark indicating that there used to be a camp there. The prisoners gave away considerable sums of money and valuables in the hope of being released, but still remained in captivity, forced to engage in hard and degrading labor. Soon after, like in the other German occupation zones, announcements were made of the impending registration of all Jews and of a series of anti-Semitic measures, while the Jewish synagogue was demolished.

In May 1941, the interned Jews were transferred to a new camp located at the site of the former Honved barracks, today housing the Agricultural School in Zrenjanin. In addition to this, mass arrests of the remaining Zrenjanin Jews, even women and children, started. The arrests and seizure of Jewish property were managed by the German army units, as well as local detachments of armed ethnic *Volksdeutsche* – the *Deutsche Mannschaft*. The living conditions in the aforementioned camp were characterized by poor nutrition, poor hygiene, being tortured by guards and forced to engage in hard labor.

After about 1350 Jews from central Banat were concentrated in the camp in Zrenjanin, they were transferred to Belgrade on 18 August 1941. They were transported to Belgrade in two groups with only the essential personal belongings. As in the case of Jews from other parts of Banat, the men were interned at the Topovske Šupe camp and were soon shot, while the women and children were taken care of thanks to the activities of the Belgrade Jewish Municipality. They remained temporarily free only until December 1941, after which they were interned at the newly established Staro Sajmište camp and were killed in gas vans already at the beginning of the following year. According to the first post-war census of 1947, the Jewish community in Zrenjanin had only 92 members.

Literature: Aleksandar Stanojlović, „Tragedija banatskih Jevreja za vreme Drugog svetskog rata“ („The Tragedy of the Banat Jews during World War II“), *Jevrejski almanah (The Jewish Almanac) 1959-1960*, Belgrade 1960, Teodor Kovač, „Banatski Nemci i Jevreji“ („The Germans and the Jews of Banat“), *Zbornik 9*, The Jewish History Museum Belgrade 2009, Božidar Ivković, „Uništenje Jevreja i pljačka njihove imovine u Banatu: 1941-1944“ (The Destruction of the Jews and Plundering of their Property in Banat: 1941-1944), *Tokovi revolucije (The Courses of Revolution)*, No. 1 (1967), p. 373-403, Pavle Šosberger, *Jevreji u Vojvodini:*

kratak pregled istorije vojvođanskih Jevreja (Jews in Vojvodina. A Brief Overview of the History of the Jews from Vojvodina), Novi Sad 1998. Photograph source: The Jewish History Museum, k-24-3-2/2-3.

Subotica

In the run up to World War II, 4900 Jews lived in Subotica, making it one of the largest Yugoslav Jewish municipalities.

Hungary, as an ally of Nazi Germany, annexed the Bačka, Baranja, Međimurje and Prekomurje districts shortly after the April 1941 war in the Kingdom of Yugoslavia, establishing not only its military administration but also its anti-Semitic laws. Although the wealthy and distinguished representatives of the Jewish community in Subotica were earmarked as hostages in guarantee of peace, they were soon released. The initial anti-Semitic measures involved the expropriation of Jewish property and forced conscription of the adult male population. The conscription began in 1942 and envisaged the arrival of the groups of workers to the occupied areas of the Soviet Union, Hungary, or to the Bor mine, while some of them filled the Hungarian Army's combat units on the Eastern Front. A number of Jews from Subotica, accused of resisting the ruling regime, were detained or killed at the infamous prison called "Žuta kuća" (The Yellow House) right in the town center. The period of the Hungarian administration in the said territory lasted until March 1944, after which Germany took over the area.

Unlike the Hungarian regime, under which there was no systematic destruction of the Jewish population, the German administration immediately resorted to measures of retaliation against the Jews. In April 1944, orders were issued which provided that Jews were to wear the Star of David, that all their property was to be confiscated and, finally, imposed restriction of free movement for them. At the beginning of May 1944, the Jewish population in Subotica, which comprised 3,000 to 3,500 people, was relocated to the multi-storey buildings of the first ghetto in Serbia. They were only allowed the essential belongings. The Subotica ghetto was located near the train station. In a confined area, isolated from the town and fenced off by barbed wire, there were a large number of people under constant police surveillance, with limited escape options. However, the ghetto was only a temporary stop for the Jews from Subotica, since they were transported to the camp in Bácsalmás by freight wagons already on 16 June 1944. After ten days in the Hungarian camp, with the exception of a small group that was taken to forced labor in Austria, a large number of Jews from the ghetto in Subotica ended their journey in Auschwitz. Today, there is a monument dedicated to the suffering of Jews located in Subotica, on the site of the former ghetto and the place from which the deportations took place.

In addition to the ghetto, there was a prison camp in Subotica, which in 1944 housed another 4,000 Jews from Novi Sad and central Bačka. The living conditions in the makeshift

camp located on the site of a former mill were completely inhumane. Food was very scarce, and since there were no beds, the inmates slept on concrete. The camp in Subotica was also liquidated by the inmates' further transport to the Hungarian camp in Baja, and after a while, their final departure to Auschwitz.

After the end of World War II, about 1,000 Jews returned to Subotica, and, due to considerable migrations, their numbers continued to decline over time.

Literature: Jaša Romano, *Jevreji Jugoslavije 1941-1945 (The Jews of Yugoslavia)*, Belgrade 1980, Pavle Šosberger, *Jevreji u Vojvodini: kratak pregled istorije vojvođanskih Jevreja (Jews in Vojvodina. A brief Overview of the History of the Jews from Vojvodina)*, Novi Sad 1998, Vladimir Todorović, *Poslednja stanica Aušvic (Last Stop Auschwitz)*, Novi Sad 2015, Dušan Jelić, „Kratak pregled istorije subotičkih Jevreja i njihovog doprinosa razvoju grada” („A Brief Overview of the History of the Subotica Jews and their Contribution to the Town's Development), *Rukovet: časopis za književnost, umjetnost i društvena pitanja (The Collection The Literary, Art and Social Issues Magazine)*, No. 4/5 (1994), p. 2-79.

Šabac

Between the two world wars, the Jewish community in Šabac had between 70 and 80 members. More than 1,000 Jewish refugees from Central Europe, on the run from Nazi persecution, whose journey to Palestine had been interrupted in Kladovo, were granted refuge in this town on the Sava River in 1940. The Jews from the so-called *Kladovo Transport* were settled there in makeshift accommodation, the buildings of a former mill on Janka Veselinovića Street and in warehouses located at the end of Pop Lukina Street, while some of these refugees managed to find private accommodation in town houses.

The April 1941 war brought on a new period of uncertainty. The establishment of the German occupation authority in Šabac was followed by a series of anti-Semitic measures, the marking of all Jews, but also of Roma, prohibition of employment in state and other services, closure of shops, restriction of movement and forced labor. In July of the first war year, there was an internment of the Jewish people in the concentration camp on the bank of the Sava which the German authorities had established for them. A small part of the Jewish refugees managed to continue their journey to Palestine during the German occupation, but still more than a thousand people, including the Šabac Jews, were detained in the camp. It was located on the site of former sheds housing the Yugoslav Army's artillery weapons. The camp was run by the Germans, but some Volksdeutsche (native Germans) could also be found among the guards. The camp, surrounded by barbed wire, comprised six sheds, in very poor condition, designed to house

hundreds of prisoners, as well as several auxiliary buildings. The detained Jews were forced to engage in hard labor in the town itself, and then returned to the camp where they stayed in inhumane conditions, facing food shortages, poor hygiene and disease.

The uprising against the German occupation authorities in September 1941 and the attack on Šabac led to the decision to intensify German repression of the population from the territory of Šabac and its surroundings. At the end of September 1941, one of the most brutal measures of retaliation, known as the “bloody march” took place. The male Šabac population between the ages of 14 and 70, as well as the Jews and the Roma from the Sava camps, were forced to run for 23 kilometers, enduring beatings and torture, to the camp located near the village of Jarak in Srem. Those who could not endure the march were executed, and the rest were returned to the town after a few days, where they were placed in the new Šabac camp at Senjak. A few days later, the male Jewish population was returned to the camp by the Sava river. In accordance with the German penal policy at the time, in mid-October 1941, a decision was taken to shoot 2100 Jews and Roma in retaliation for 21 German soldiers killed. The male Jews from the Sava camps, the Šabac Roma and some Serbs from Šabac and the surrounding area were thus shot dead in the village of Zasavica in Srem on 12 and 13 October, while other hostages were taken from the Topovske Šupe camp in Belgrade. According to the Yugoslav post-war data, collected after the exhumation of the mass grave in Zasavica, a figure of 868 victims was established. After the massacre, only Jews with children remained in the Sava camp. In early 1942, women and children were moved to Ruma, from where, tired and hungry, they were forced to walk in cold weather to the camp at the Staro Sajmište in Belgrade. That same year, they were executed in gas vans. The Sava camp remained in operation until 19 September 1944 and until that time served as a temporary camp for prisoners from Bosnia and Podrinje.

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The Bor mine

Before the start of World War II, the Bor mine, as one of the largest copper deposits in Europe, was operated by French joint stock companies. Ambitious goals related to the economy and primarily the needs of the military industry in times of war made the Bor mine a particularly important facility in German plans. Following the occupation of Yugoslavia in the wake of the 1941 April war, Germany established a military administration in the territories of vital economic and strategic importance which also comprised the location of the Bor mine.

One of the first goals, defined after the German occupation, was the revitalization of the demolished facilities of the Bor mine, followed by a maximum increase in its productivity, which required large contingents of labor force. Former workers were the first to be called to work in the mine, then experts returning from captivity, but also Serbs engaged in compulsory labor run by the National Reconstruction Service of Serbia under the Nedić government. As of 1942, additional labor force was provided through forced labor which was imposed on political opponents, prisoners of war from Greece, Italy, Poland, as well as Jews. The intensity of the military interventions during 1943 caused the engagement of the German allies with the aim of increasing the number of workers in the Bor mine. Thus, the same year, an agreement was concluded with Hungary, according to which about 6,000 Jews from Hungary and its occupation zones were sent for forced labor, including about 600 Jews from Bačka.

The mining basin, relative to its importance, was under the strict supervision of police, military, intelligence services, as well as the semi-military organization called *Todt*, which was also in charge of building the new infrastructure. Due to the need for new labor force, a large complex of 33 camps was built in the wider area around Bor, bearing the names of the cities in the Third Reich. As the categories of workers were different, the appearance of the camps, the regime and the living conditions in them varied accordingly. The position of Jews, as a discriminated group, was particularly difficult, as were the conditions under which they lived in the Bor mine complex. Some were housed in the Berlin camp, while the rest were classified in the other camps, including Munich, Innsbruck, Bergenz, Westfalen and Foralberg. While in camp, the Jews also had to wear a yellow ribbon and the Star of David sewn onto their clothes. Hundreds of workers lived in the small barracks without the possibility of maintaining hygiene. The nutrition was poor and the inmates' scarce clothing was inadequate for them to perform the otherwise arduous tasks. The Jews' long hours of work in the mine shafts or on the Bor – Žagubica railway were always accompanied by torture, which caused a number of workers to die during forced labor.

The end of the war and the advance of the Red Army in September 1944 caused the closing of the Bor mine camp. The Jewish inmates, including those from Bačka, divided into two groups, went on long marches to Hungary and Germany. A large number of prisoners from the first group died due to exhaustion or were shot on the march, while the march of the second group was stopped by the partisans.

The memory of the bloody march is preserved thanks to a monument in the center of Bor, erected in honour of Hungarian poet and the camp inmate Miklós Radnóti. To commemorate the more than 7,000 victims of forced labor, most of whom were Jews from the Hungarian occupation zones, there is a now completely abandoned memorial ossuary at the Bor cemetery.

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Crveni krst

The Jewish community in the territory of Niš had an extremely long and rich tradition. In the interwar period, between 300 and 400 members of the Jewish community lived in Niš. They were fully incorporated in the dominant social, cultural and political life in the Kingdom of Yugoslavia.

The collapse of the Kingdom of Yugoslavia after the April 1941 war and the establishment of the German military occupation apparatus in Niš, as in other parts of the occupied territories, were followed by stages leading to the systematic destruction of the Jews. These were first reflected in first registering the entire Jewish population, then their marking, which involved wearing the Star of David and a yellow ribbon, restricting their movement, confiscating property and sending them to forced labor. Some of the refugees from various parts of Europe, who had been accommodated in the Kuršumlijska Banja before the war began, were moved to Jewish and Serbian families in Niš, Leskovac and Priština with the arrival of the Germans. Thus, 155 more Jewish emigrants found themselves in Niš and were subjected to the same measures as native Jews.

As early as October 1941, in accordance with a German order, adult Jews from Niš were gathered at the *Park* Hotel and interned at the newly established camp in the Crveni krst municipality. Meanwhile, the Niš Roma were detained and arrested in the camp. Among the detainees were political opponents, insurgents and prominent people from Niš who had been brought as hostages. By the end of the year, the remaining male Jews from Niš and the surrounding area were imprisoned in the camp, while women and children began arriving from the beginning of 1942.

The Gestapo-controlled camp was located on the site of the former Yugoslav Army barracks, near the train station, and, as of April 1941, it operated as a temporary detention camp for the Yugoslav military prisoners and as a prison for opponents of the Reich regime. It was enclosed by a double row of barbed wire, while the camp premises contained a rectangular

building with comprising the ground floor, the first floor and the attic, additional camp premises, as well as observation towers. The life of the Jews in the camp was especially difficult. They were forced to go to forced labor and were subjected to constant psychological and physical torture. Living conditions in the camp, given the inability to maintain hygiene, the cold and the poor nutrition, were extremely difficult.

On the eve of the much-anticipated retaliation against the detainees, on 12 February 1942, the first escape from the Nazi concentration camps of considerable proportions was carried out. The planned reprisals were still carried out, and, in February 1942, more than 850 prisoners of the Penitentiary and those from Crveni Krst were massacred in Bubanj, near Niš. The victims included almost all male Jews from the Crveni krst camp, as well as one part of Roma and Serbs. In late February 1942, women and children from the Crveni Krst camp were deported by train to the Staro Sajmište camp in Belgrade, where they were soon killed in gas vans. The remaining Jews from the Crveni Krst camp were shot dead at Bubanj by February 1943. Almost the entire Jewish community in Niš was destroyed during the Holocaust.

The Crveni Krst camp survived until 1944. During this time, it operated as a temporary camp from which prisoners were being taken outside the borders of the Kingdom of Yugoslavia or shot at Bubanj. The *12 February* memorial is situated at the site of the former Crveni Krst prison camp, in memory of more than 30,000 prisoners who passed through it.

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Impressum

Mapping the Holocaust - Places of Remembrance in Serbia

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Design and layout:

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Belgrade, 2020

The project is supported by the US Embassy in Belgrade

The views expressed in the book do not in any way represent those of the US Government, but solely those of the author.