

I Bear Witness!

During the Second World War, a triple genocide was committed (on Serbs, Jews and Roma) in the pro-Nazi Independent State of Croatia (Nezavisna Drzava Hrvatska-NDH), which according to Raul Hilberg was Hitler's satellite par excellence. The NDH was formed on the territory of the occupied Kingdom of Yugoslavia and it comprised the territory of today's Croatia, Bosnia and Herzegovina and part of Serbia. In line with the Nazi racial ideology and legislation, the "Croatian political people" were formed in the NDH, consisting of Croats of the Catholic, Muslim and, to a lesser extent, Protestant faiths.

Serbs were the primary victims in the NDH. In accordance with the Nazi new order ideology, in addition to Serbs, Jews and Roma were also designated to be destroyed. During this triple genocide in the NDH political opponents of various nations were also persecuted. The specificity of NDH was reflected in the fact that it was the only country in the Nazi New Order in which Jews were not the primary victims, but nonetheless, they were not spared persecution. In fact, the Jewish community in the NDH, in relation to its total number, perished in a higher percentage than was the case in the rest of Europe under Nazi occupation. At the same time, in relation to the estimated number of Roma living in the territory of the NDH, they suffered the most as a percentage of their total population.

It is important to note that the genocide against Serbs in the NDH was possible in the context of the Nazi destruction of European Jewry, and that Nazi Germany also bears full responsibility for the genocide against Serbs in the NDH.

The victims were exposed to liquidation which cruelty, primitiveness and individual participation in mass murder are cited in the academic world as the main characteristic of the NDH crimes. Apart from a large number of individual and mass execution sites, the NDH was distinguished by the existence of camps, two of which stood out: the Gospić-Jadovno-Pag death camp system and the Jasenovac death camp system, which became a symbol of overall suffering. Special camps only for children were established, making the NDH a unique example in the history of war crimes.

For us, what happened to the Serbs in the NDH was a tragedy of biblical proportions. About 2 million Serbs (about 30% of the population of the NDH) living at that time on the territory of the NDH, were criminalized and targeted by this pro-Nazi state for complete economic, cultural and biological destruction and for the elimination of their national identity.

Serbs were victims of genocide in the pro-Nazi Independent State of Croatia (NDH) during World War II.

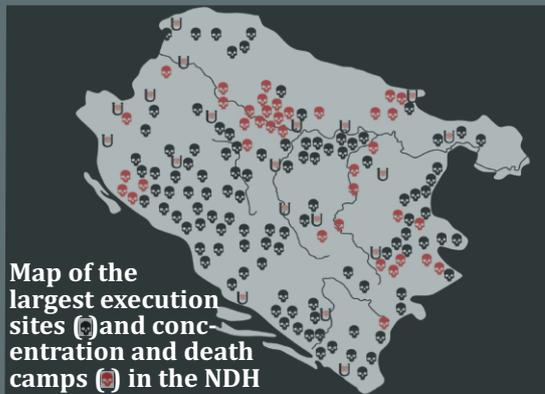
About 2 million Serbs in the NDH were criminalized and targeted for destruction



Genocide in the NDH was planned and implemented through the expulsion of 1/3 of Serbs, the conversion to Catholicism of 1/3 and the killing of 1/3.



Out of the targeted 2 million Serbs, the NDH managed to encompass 1.3-1.4 million victims of the Genocide through its policies and actions.



Map of the largest execution sites (☠) and concentration and death camps (U) in the NDH

On April 22, 1945, the last group of surviving in Jasenovac revolted and liberated themselves.

The NDH official policy for destruction of Serbs in its territory was to be conducted in such a way that one third would be expelled from the state, one third forcibly converted to the Roman Catholic faith and then assimilated, and one third killed. Within the Nazi genocide policy implementation, Serbs, as well as members of other nations and groups destined for destruction, were marked by the obligatory wearing of blue or, in some cases, arm bands of other colors. The blue arm band with the camp number of one of the victims of the Jasenovac death camp system also testifies to that.

By the spring of 1945 and the collapse of Nazism in Europe, the NDH managed to destroy about 2/3 of the Serbian people in this genocide in the above-mentioned ways. Between 20% and 25% of the total Serbian population living in the NDH were expelled to the territory of then occupied Serbia, and approximately as many were forcibly converted to the Roman Catholic faith. About 30% of the total Serbian population was killed. During this period, Serb communities in the territory that was under the effective control of the NDH were almost completely destroyed. **According to estimates, about 1.3-1.4 million Serbs, victims of Genocide in the NDH, were either expelled, converted to Catholicism or killed.**

In the areas where Serbs made up the majority of the population, part of those who managed to avoid death, rebelled against the genocidal policy of the NDH and launched one of the first anti-Nazi resistance movements in occupied Europe. In 1942, this movement finally split into monarchist and communist factions. Until the end of the war, resistance movements on the territory of the occupied Kingdom of Yugoslavia had a predominantly Serbian character, and only after the capitulation of Italy in the fall of 1943, there was a slight increase in the number of Croat and Muslim soldiers and members of other nations in the communist movement.

On April 22, 1945, the last group of surviving prisoners of the Jasenovac death camp system broke out of the camp through a suicidal charge against their captors and heroically saved themselves, attaining liberty through great sacrifice of life. This day is marked as the Day of Remembrance for the Serb victims of the Genocide in the Independent State of Croatia, reflecting on their sacrifice, heroism and suffering we insure their eternal memory.

We are the descendants, compatriots and witnesses of the victims of Serb Genocide in the NDH, but also of the heroes who organized the uprising against the Nazis in Europe. Yes, we bear witness that they lived, perished, fought bravely and eventually won. We are their voice, witnesses to their victory over evil and destruction! That is why we bear witness too!!!

I AM THEIR VOICE AND VICTORY, THAT IS WHY I BEAR WITNESS TOO!