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Grobišče talcev v Begunjah na Gorenjskem – The burial ground of hostages in Begunje na Gorenjskem

Aprila 1941 je nacistična Nemčija zasedla Gorenjsko, da bi jo ponemčila in priključila Tretjemu rajhu. Maja so žensko kaznilnico v graščini Kacenštajn v Begunjah preuredili v zbirno mesto za množični izgon prebivalstva, avgusta pa v gestapovski zapor in mučilnico za politične zapornike Gorenjske in sprva tudi slovenske Koroške.

Med 11.477 zaprtimi so vsaj 8500 sumili delovanja proti okupatorju. 1931 je bilo ujetih partizanov, 2280 žensk in 405 otrok, petina zapornikov je bila mlajša od dvajsetih let. V prenapolnjenih prostorih so mnogi ležali na tleh na slami, ogrevanja ni bilo, hrane je bilo premalo. Bile so bolezni, zaredile so se bolhe in uši, slabe higienske razmere so še posebno prizadele ženske. Najhuje je bilo v desetih celicah, kjer je zdaj muzej talcev. Da bi izsilili priznanja, so mučili tudi otroke, ženske in ranjence, nekatere celo do smrti.

Zaporniki so bili raznih narodnosti, večina je bila Gorenjcev, prek 1900 iz Ljubljane. Vseh niti niso vpisali. V druge zapore in taborišča so deportirali okoli 5200 ljudi, čez polovico v koncentracijska taborišča Mauthausen, Dachau, Ravensbrück, Auschwitz, od koder se mnogi niso vrnili.

In April 1941, Nazi Germany occupied the Gorenjska region with the aim of Germanizing it and annexing it to the Third Reich. In May, the women's prison at the Katzenstein manor in Begunje was converted into a collection center for the mass deportation of the population, and in August into a Gestapo prison and torture chamber for political prisoners from the Gorenjska region and, initially, also from Carinthia.

Of the 11,477 inmates, at least 8,500 were suspected of acting against the occupiers. There were 1,931 captured partisans, 2,280 women, and 405 children; one-fifth of the prisoners were under the age of twenty. In the overcrowded quarters, many lay on the floor on straw; there was no heating, and food was scarce. Diseases spread, fleas and lice infested the area, and poor sanitary conditions particularly affected the women. Conditions were worst in the ten cells that now house the Hostage Museum. To obtain confessions, they also tortured children, women, and the wounded, some even to death.

The prisoners were of various nationalities; most were from the Gorenjska region, with over 1,900 from Ljubljana. They didn't even register all of them. Around 5,200 were deported to other prisons and camps, more than half to the Mauthausen, Dachau, Ravensbrück, and Auschwitz concentration camps, from which many never returned.



Na očetovem grobu. Foto Slavko Smolej.



Vseh mrtvih dan leta 1945 v Begunjah. Foto Slavko Smolej.

Okupator se je za partizanske napade maščeval s streljanjem in obešanjem talcev. Pomorili so 849 begunjskih zapornikov. Spočetka so jih streljali in pokopavali v dolini Draga, po maju 1942 pa morili v Begunjah in na mestu partizanskih akcij. Pobite so običajno pripeljali nazaj v Begunje, sojetniki so jih pokopali v graščinskem sadovnjaku.

Borci Kokrškega odreda so 4. maja 1945 zavzeli zapor z več kot 600 jetniki in ga osvobodili. Leta 1953 je bilo grobišče po načrtu arhitekta Edvarda Ravnikarja urejeno kot spominski park. Na 25 skupnih grobovih je 474 nagrobnih kamnov za 467 žrtev z imenom in 4 brez imena. Kipe v parku je ustvaril Boris Kalin. Park s Plečnikovima paviljonoma in grobiščem ter grad z zapori so kulturni spomenik državnega pomena.

The oppressors retaliated against partisan attacks by shooting and hanging hostages. They killed 849 prisoners from Begunje. At first, they were shot and buried in the Draga Valley, after May 1942, they were killed in Begunje and at the sites of partisan actions. The bodies were usually brought back to Begunje, where fellow prisoners buried them in the manor's orchard.

On May 4, 1945, partisans took over the prison, which held more than 600 prisoners, and liberated them. In 1953, the cemetery was converted into a memorial park according to a design by architect Edvard Ravnikar. There are 474 tombstones in 25 mass graves, marking 467 named victims and 4 unnamed ones. The sculptures in the park were created by Boris Kalin. The park, featuring Jože Plečnik's pavilions and cemetery, and the castle with its prison are cultural monuments of national significance.



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