

Rab

Italian internment camp on the Yugoslav island of Rab, located in the Italian-occupied zone of Yugoslavia. Rab was established in July 1942 for the detention of Slovenians who opposed the Italian occupation. The Slovenians were treated very harshly; some 4,000 died.

In early 1943 the Italians decided to establish a camp for the Jews of Italian-occupied Yugoslavia next to the Slovenian camp. This decision was not based on the Italians' desire to persecute the Jews. On the contrary: the Italian occupiers refused to surrender the Jews under their control to the Germans, and as a result they feared a German attack. Thus, they decided to concentrate the region's Jews in one place (Rab), close to the Italian border, so they could escape into liberated areas when the time was right. The day after Italy surrendered to the Allies, on September 8, 1943, Rab was liberated and most Jews were taken to the liberated areas. Those who were strong enough joined the Partisans. Several hundred Jews refused to leave for the liberated areas; some made it to liberated southern Italy later on by themselves, while the rest were arrested when German troops conquered the island of Rab in March 1944. They were then sent to Auschwitz, where they were exterminated.