

# Italian Concentration Camps in World War II

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## Background

1926 camps established for political prisoners

1936 Concentration Camps for dangerous and suspicious people, starting with those camps started in 1926

## Racial Laws Enacted in 1938 against Jews and Africans

1920's Fascist propaganda against Slavic people

1940 law didn't recognize mixed-race offspring of Italian citizens. Africans, Jews, Romani, and Slavic people were considered different races

## After 1938

around 6000 Jews left Italy

Enrico Fervi and his Jewish wife went to USA

BUT Jews and other disenfranchised people were still moving into Italy from other European countries

## 1940 Italy declares war

Expanded Concentration and Internment camps in Italy and Italian occupied territories

Romani, Slavic people, dissidents, non-Italian refugees were placed in those camps

Italian Jews had "free internment" (restricted travel, checked in with police daily, no employment in civil service, military, or education, property confiscated, but no camps)

## Types of camps

Concentration camps, 1926-1945

Internment camps, 1940-1943

Provincial camps, mostly former Internment camps, but part of the transit system, 1943-1945

Transit camps, 1943-1945

## Types of prisoners

Jewish Italians after September 1943

Romani people

Slavic people

Non-Italians (mostly refugees from other European countries)

political dissidents

prisoners of war, mostly Italian soldiers from 1943

## Italy moved from Axis to Allied from 3 September 1943 with the fall of Mussolini

Marshal Pietro Badoglio joined Italy with the Allies

Nazis and RSI (Mussolini) move prisoners (civilian and military) to the North where they have control

Transit and provincial camps established to deport more prisoners to death camps in Europe

Mass executions in some places ( including Lake Maggiore, Rome)

## Joint military with Allies

US sent some Italian officers and prisoners (from Italian Service Units) to Italy to assist in the

Liberation of Italy from the Nazis. ISU men had each signed an agreement stating that they would assist the Allies against the Nazis. About half of Italian POWs joined ISU.

Italian volunteers from all over created a new Italian force fighting under US General Mark Clark along the Gothic Line. Their cemetery is at Mignano Monte Lungo, near Monte Cassino.

#### Liberation of Italy, 1943-1945

Allied troops arriving through Sicily and Anzio moved North in pursuit of German troops

Some Italian soldiers were embedded in German units

POW, Concentration, and Internment camps in their path were abandoned by their Italian guards

#### Risiera di San Sabba

Italy's only extermination camps, also a transit camp  
outside Trieste

Now the Civil Museum of the Risiera di San Sabba, a National Monument, is both a memorial and a museum

#### Fossoli Transit Camp

Largest, but one of many

Major Transit camp, moving 22 train loads (about 600 passengers per train) to Auschwitz

Primo Levi was on one of those trains

#### Southern Italy

Camps in this area were evacuated by the civilian prisoners and many of the military prisoners

While those camps no longer provided food, they did offer shelter and sometimes gardens. The neighbors exchanged for food, and they were gathering points when the Allied troops arrived.

#### Campagna

The prisoners (about 270 men) evacuated the camp as the Nazi troops approached

Allied bombs chasing the Nazis did a lot of damage to the buildings and people of this town on 17 September 1943, partly because of a Nazi tank stuck on a narrow street so abandoned when the Nazis left

The doctors (and a few other former prisoners) returned to use the camp as a hospital to care for the townspeople before the Allied troops arrived. Hundreds died from the bombing raid.

#### Campagna

photo of prisoners posing outside the door of the camp (former convent)

The police chief, Giovanni Palatucci, the Catholic Bishop (Giuseppe Maria Palatucci), and Rabbi Wachsberger from the camp in the front row

Giovanni Palatucci was executed at Dachau for his efforts saving 5000 Jews from deportation by falsifying identification

#### Ferramonti

once described as the "anti-Auschwitz" because it had three Synagogues, a library, a school, and social clubs as well as gardens

more than 20 marriages were performed and 21 children born among about 3200 prisoners

A British Army unit (with Jewish Brigade troops) officially liberated the camp on 14 September 1943. Many of the men joined the Allied forces

The rest of the former prisoners remained there with assistance until December 1945

For many years, former prisoners and their families would return for an annual reunion

## Northern Italy

camps were quickly taken over by Nazi forces when Italian guards left  
prisoners who escaped often joined the Partisan fighters in the countryside

## War Crimes

very few Italians were charged with war crimes

Badoglio (who replaced Mussolini) wasn't tried because the Allies saw him as a strong defense  
against Communism

## Displaced persons

Former prisoners were eventually dispersed to Palestine (now Israel), USA, locations around  
Italy and world-wide

Arolsen Archives and IRO (International Refugee Organization, UN) list 5566 Jewish Displaced  
Persons in Italy from 1945-1951

Some Italian and refugee Jews had hidden from the camps in Italy

Some displaced persons were not Jewish

## Survivors and Victims

[www.ushmm.org](http://www.ushmm.org) (U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum) lists names and locations

[yadvashem.org](http://yadvashem.org) (Yad Vashem) has the Book of Names commemorating 4,800,000 people from  
the Pages of Testimony and many other documents world-wide

[www.annapizzuit.it](http://www.annapizzuit.it) focuses on the Internment camps in Italy, and has collected 9745 names to  
date

Thanks to:

Rabbi Barbara Aiello,

Ferramonti (<https://cultura.gov.it/luogo/museo-della-memoria-di-ferramonti>),

Mario Rende's Ferramonti di Tarsia,

David Ropschitz's Ferramonti,

Campagna ([www.museomemoriapalatucci.it](http://www.museomemoriapalatucci.it)),

Una Storia Diversa: Ebrei A Campagna 1940-1943 (documentary),

Elizabeth Bettina's It Happened in Italy,

Carlo Spartaco Capogreco's I Campi del Duce.

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[www.gentracer.com](http://www.gentracer.com) (genealogy)

[www.gentracer.org](http://www.gentracer.org) (military)

[gentracer@gmail.com](mailto:gentracer@gmail.com)

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Location	Concentration	Population	Internment	Population	Transit
Italy	57		592	5509	27
Abruzzo Region	14		55	667	1
Chieti Pr	6		18	286	
L'Aquila Pr			21	283	
Pescara Pr			7	34	
Teramo Pr	8		9	64	1
Basilicata Region	1		38	400	
Matera Pr	1		7	36	
Potanza Pr			31	364	
Calabria Region	1		14	103	
Cosenza Pr	1		14	103	
Campania Region	4		24	80	
Avellino Pr	3		10	49	
Benevento Pr			4	7	
Salerno Pr	1		10	24	
Emilia E Romagna Region	2		64	719	4
Bologna Pr			15	148	
Ferrara Pr			2	16	
Forli-Cesena Pr			1	1	
Modena Pr			19	241	1
Parma Pr	2		19	280	1
Piacenza Pr			2	5	
Ravenna Pr					1
Reggio Emilia Pr			4	21	1
Rimini Pr			2	7	
Friuli Venezia Giulia Region	2		3	3	3
Gorizia Pr			2	2	
Trieste Pr			1	1	1
Udine Pr	2				2
Lazio Region	5		34	133	2
Frosinone Pr	1		5	46	
Latina Pr	2		1	1	
Rieti Pr	1		9	40	
Roma Pr	1		2	2	1
Viterbo Pr			17	44	1
Liguria Region	1		7	8	1
Genova Pr			5	6	
Imperia Pr					1
Savona Pr	1		2	2	
Lombardia Region			99	744	2
Bergamo Pr			20	138	
Brescia Pr			14	69	
Como Pr			27	159	
Cremona Pr			2	10	
Lecco Pr			9	54	
Manitova Pr			2	4	
Milano Pr			5	9	1
Monza E Della Brianza Pr			3	4	
Pavia Pr			10	23	
Sondrio Pr			3	260	1
Varese Pr			4	14	
Marche Region	6		39	241	2
Ancona Pr	2		3	3	
Ascoli Piceno Pr			6	34	
Fermo Pr			4	11	1
Macerata Pr	4		10	76	1
Pesaro e Urbino Pr			16	117	
Molise Region	5		12	89	
Campobasso Pr	3		9	67	
Isernia Pr	2		3	22	
Piemonte Region			33	386	2
Alessandria Pr			2	12	
Asit Pr			11	249	
Biella Pr			1	2	
Cuneo Pr			6	81	1
Novara Pr			3	8	
Torino Pr			2	14	1
Verbano Cusio Ossola Pr			2	3	
Vercelli Pr			6	17	
Puglia Region	4		3	3	
Bari Pr	2				
Barletta-Andria-Trani Pr			1	1	
Foggia Pr	2		2	2	
Sicilia Region	5		2	2	
Agrigento Pr	1				
Messina Pr	1				
Palermo Pr	1		2	2	
Trapani Pr	2				
Toscana Region	3		47	317	2
Arezzo Pr	1	10000	7	65	
Firenze Pr	2		15	27	
Grosseto Pr			6	68	1
Lucca Pr			2	99	
Massa-Carrara Pr					1
Pisa Pr			1	2	
Pistoia Pr			8	43	
Prato Pr			1	1	
Siena Pr			7	12	
Trentino Region			4	7	1
Bolzano Pr			1	1	1
Trento Pr			3	6	
Umbria Region	1		23	108	2
Perugia Pr	1		20	102	2
Terni Pr			3	6	
Valle D'Aosta Region			6	161	
Aosta			6	161	
Veneto Region	2		85	1338	5
Belluno Pr			17	151	
Padova Pr	1		8	51	1
Rovigo Pr			15	125	
Treviso Pr	1	3000	18	386	
Venezia Pr			1	7	1
Verona Pr			1	32	2
Vicenza Pr			25	586	1
Sardinia Region	1	15000			
Sassano Pr	1				