

UNITED STATES
HOLOCAUST MEMORIAL MUSEUM

CENTER FOR ADVANCED HOLOCAUST STUDIES

Roma and Sinti
Under-Studied Victims of Nazism

Symposium Proceedings

WASHINGTON, D. C.

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CENTER FOR ADVANCED HOLOCAUST STUDIES
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2002

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Third printing, July 2004

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Foreword

“Having studied documents in my life primarily pertaining to the Jewish fate, I have turned a lot of pages in folders. And every once in a while, I encountered the *Zigeuner*, the Gypsies. But whenever I did encounter a reference to these people, I took out my pen, and I wrote down what I saw. I will not say that the references to what happened to the Roma, or Sinti, or Gypsies were plentiful—they were not. But after some decades, I felt myself having to segregate these notes and find another filing cabinet for them. And that convinced me in an empirical way, that the fates of the two communities were inextricably linked. It’s not a question of whether one must talk about both—one has to.”

The eminent scholar of the persecution and destruction of European Jews, Raul Hilberg, drew this connection between the Jewish and Roma victim groups at a symposium entitled *Roma and Sinti: Under-Studied Victims of the Holocaust*, which was organized by the Center for Advanced Holocaust Studies of the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum and held at the Museum on September 21, 2000. Holocaust scholarship has focused on the Jewish victims of the Nazis for many reasons—the scope and intensity of the Nazi persecution of European Jews, the international reach of the Nazis’ intentions regarding the Jews, the magnitude of the number of Jews murdered, the number of governmental, military and private institutions that became involved in the destruction process, etc. The so-called “other victims,” including Roma and Sinti (Gypsies), have received less attention, even though the Roma and Sinti were also considered a threat to “Aryan racial purity” and their persecution was pursued beyond the boundaries of Germany alone. The Center organized this symposium specifically to encourage research on the fate of Roma and Sinti during the Holocaust and to strike a balance in Holocaust scholarship that is in keeping with the evidence.

The mission of the Center for Advanced Holocaust Studies is to promote and support research on the Holocaust, to inspire the growth of the field of Holocaust studies, and to ensure the ongoing training of future generations of Holocaust scholars. Within this broad mission, study of the victimization of all the major groups targeted by the Nazis—Jews, Poles, homosexuals, people with disabilities, Jehovah’s Witnesses, and the Roma and Sinti—constitutes a scholarly act of memorialization that is particularly appropriate for the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum.

This symposium was part of an ongoing series organized by the Center to bring to bear the knowledge, wisdom, and insight of Holocaust scholars on topics of major significance, and thus help to shape future research endeavors as the field of Holocaust scholarship passes through a time of generational transition. Eyewitnesses, some of whom were moved to become principal scholars teaching and writing about the Holocaust, and survivors, whose telling of their stories rivets our attention on the greatest crime of the twentieth century, are reaching the ends of their careers and will pass from the scene in the twenty-first century. This is occurring just as an avalanche of newly available documentation about the Holocaust is pouring out of formerly closed archives in Eastern Europe, including those of the former Soviet Union, and the West, including those of the United States. Thus, ironically, just as the people upon whom we have most relied finish their careers, newly emerging research materials are providing unprecedented opportunities to understand the whats, hows, and whys of the Holocaust; to ensure the survival of memory of the Holocaust at the small town, village, and individual level; and to explore the lessons of the Holocaust for ourselves and our children.

Eleven leading scholars in the field, whose research, analysis, and insights have significantly increased our understanding of Nazi policies against Roma and Sinti, participated in the Center's symposium.¹ Their presentations addressed Nazi racial policy concerning Roma and Sinti, how Roma were persecuted in various regions of Eastern and Western Europe, the human cost, and future research possibilities on this subject. The one-day symposium was preceded by a three-day workshop, during which the panelists discussed, deliberated, and debated this important field of study and its future research directions.

The symposium was divided into three sessions. The first session, entitled *Persecution in the Third Reich*, consisted of papers by senior scholars in the field. Ian Hancock, a member of the United States Holocaust Memorial Council, opened the symposium by providing a general background and historical context for understanding the persecution of the Roma and Sinti. He analyzed how the core values of Romani culture and the essential structures of Romani familial, social, and religious life provided the basis for the survival of the Roma in often hostile European host societies.

1. Short biographies of the speakers are provided in the appendix at the end of this publication.

Wolfgang Wipperman² then set the persecution of the Sinti and Roma in the context of the development of Nazi racial policy towards minorities.

The next two presentations focused on the principal question of whether the persecution of the Roma and Sinti was genocidal in conception and intent. Michael Zimmermann argued that the Nazi treatment of the Gypsies was not simply a continuation of traditional German Gypsy policy, which was based on a sociographic or behavioral definition of the Roma and Sinti as a public “nuisance.” He asserted that the Nazi policy was based on theories of racial hygiene that stigmatized the Roma as “antisocials” and, in practice, resulted in mass detention, compulsory expulsion, and genocidal murder. Guenter Lewy challenged this position, drawing on his analysis of the treatment of the Gypsies in German concentration camps. Lewy argued that Nazi Gypsy policy was directed toward the punishment of “asocial conduct” and that no program of utter annihilation was ever planned or intended. John Brown, whose work has included research in the Romani Archives and Documentation Center at the University of Texas at Austin, closed the first session with an analysis of visual representations of traditional anti-Roma sentiments in European and American popular culture.³

The second session, entitled *Persecution in the Axis and Occupied Countries*, focused on the persecution of Roma in Romania, Croatia, Belgium, and France. Radu Ioanid opened the session with an overview of the varied treatment of Gypsies in wartime Romania, including the deportation of a segment of the community to Transnistria.⁴ Mark Biondich followed with a summary of Ustasa persecution of the Roma in Croatia, stressing that the lack of reliable pre-war statistics on the Roma, poor record-keeping by the perpetrators during the war, the destruction of records at the end of the war, and the complex of religious identities within the Croatian Romani community posed challenges to historians seeking to investigate the genocide of the

2. Wolfgang Wipperman’s paper is available in audio format on the Museum’s website at www.ushmm.org/research/center.

3. John Brown’s paper is available in audio format on the Museum’s website at www.ushmm.org/research/center.

4. Radu Ioanid’s presentation is available in audio format on the Museum’s website. His presentation was based on his recent book, *The Holocaust in Romania: The Destruction of Jews and Gypsies under the Antonescu Regime, 1940–1944* (Ivan R. Dee, 2000), which was published in association with the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum through the Center’s Academic Publications program.

5. Raul Hilberg’s concluding remarks are available in audio format on the Museum’s website at www.ushmm.org/research/center.

Roma in Croatia. Denis Peschanski closed the second session with comparisons of the policies toward and treatment of Roma in the German-occupied and Vichy zones of France. Although the German occupiers based their decrees and actions on Nazi racial theory, the Vichy government's Roma policy formed an integral part of its plan for the "regeneration" of French society.

The third session concentrated on the historical memory of the persecution of the Roma and its legacy to the present. Viorel Achim, a Charles H. Revson Fellow at the Center for Advanced Holocaust Studies, described the gradual process of suppression of Romanian collective memory of persecution of the Roma, despite the fact that many public figures and ordinary citizens loudly voiced their opposition at the time of the wartime deportations. He attributed the suppression of memory to the rise of the Antonescu cult of personality and the resurfacing of anti-Roma attitudes and racism in contemporary Romania. David Crowe assessed contemporary consequences for the Roma of the failure of Allied jurists at Nuremberg and of post-war historians to document sufficiently the wartime fate of the Roma, as well as the failure of scholars to document their history, culture, language, and ethnicity. Crowe identified the essential elements for a scholarly program to rescue this history, arguing that full understanding of the depth of Nazi hatred towards the Jews demands the study of the "collective hatreds" that drove the Nazis and their collaborators to commit the crimes of the Holocaust.

Raul Hilberg closed the symposium by delineating the scholarly and ethical challenges presented by the historical treatment of the Roma and Sinti in Europe generally and under Nazi rule and occupation specifically. Hilberg stressed that scholarship needed to examine both the differences between the treatment and fate of the Gypsies and the Jews and the dramatic parallels between what happened to these two communities. Tens of thousands of Roma and Sinti men, women, and children were killed across German-dominated Europe during World War II by the Nazis and their collaborators, who viewed them as "asocials," "racial inferiors," and outside "normal society." Little has been done by former perpetrator and collaborator nations, or by the Allied countries for that matter, to recognize the crimes committed against the Roma and the Sinti during World War II, secure restitution for them, or protect them against post-war persecution that continues in some parts of Europe to this day. Hilberg concluded by noting that while the Jews have a country that is theirs, albeit a small one, the Roma "have no such geographic focus, they have no protector, they have no refuge.

They are ignored because they are powerless.... They are vulnerable wherever they go. What does that mean? If we want to build a world in which there is justice for all, where do we start? The answer is, the Roma.”⁵

The essays contained in this occasional paper are not verbatim transcriptions of the presentations. Some of the authors submitted revised versions of their presentations, incorporating additional information and footnotes, and all of the contributions were copy-edited. Although the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum makes every reasonable effort to provide accurate information, the Museum cannot guarantee the accuracy, reliability, currency, or completeness of the information contained in this set of presentations. The opinions, findings, conclusions, or recommendations expressed are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the views of the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum. The Museum disclaims responsibility for any errors in the information provided.

Many people deserve thanks for the organization of the symposium and the production of this occasional paper. From the Center for Advanced Holocaust Studies, Benton Arnovitz, Dawn Barclift, Aleisa Fishman, Patricia Heberer, Wendy Lower, Ann Millin, Alexander Rossino, Gwen Sherman, and Madeline Vadkerty all played a role. The speakers all deserve our greatest thanks for their excellent presentations and their subsequent participation in the editing of those presentations for publication in this occasional paper.

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Romani Americans (“Gypsies”)

Ian Hancock

Popular ideas about Gypsies (more accurately referred to as Romanies) are mixed. In January 1992, the *New York Times* published the findings of an opinion poll spanning a quarter of a century; it surveyed the attitudes of the general public towards fifty-eight different ethnic and racial groups in the United States. Surprisingly, Gypsies were ranked at the very bottom. Since very few Americans know any Gypsies personally, and since most of the population still believes Gypsies to be fantasy figures rather than real people, the responses to the poll can only have been based upon fictional images such as Carmen and Esmeralda and Heathcliff, or on songs such as Cher’s “Gypsies, Tramps and Thieves,” or Hollywood movies such as *King of the Gypsies*, *Gypsy Hot Blood*, or *Golden Earrings*.

Practically invisible in the rich ethnic mix that makes up this country, the Romani Americans or “Gypsies” are found in every major city and continue to maintain their language and cultural identity with a vigor other minorities might envy.

Ironically, it is the persistence of this colorful and mysterious Gypsy image that shields the real population of Gypsies from the outside world; it’s as though there are two different Gypsy identities, and if people expect to see wagons and tambourines and horses and campfires, they certainly may be excused for believing that there are no Gypsies in America. In fact there are more than a million here, and the number is steadily growing.

Another reason for the near-invisibility of the Romani American population is that, in this multihued society, it has been easy for Gypsies to “pass” as members of other groups, such as Mexican American, Native American, or Greek American. The camouflage is completed by having, in addition to an “ethnic” name for use within the community, an “American” name for use in dealings outside it; thus a woman known in the Romani community as *E Rayida le Stevoski* might be Rita Stevens to the rest of the world, and *O Vosho le Nikulosko* plain Mr. Walter Nickels. And both individuals would be sure to keep their true ethnic identity to themselves.

The Romani population in the United States came here from Europe as many other emigrant groups did, yet here comparisons end. The Roma aren’t Europeans but originated in India, and while they have lived in the West for nearly eight centuries, the heart of the language and culture is Indian. It is because of their status as outsiders that their experience in Europe has been so relentlessly harsh; arriving at the time of the Turkish

takeover of the Byzantine Empire around the beginning of the fourteenth century, they were first thought to be a part of the Islamic threat, and also were shunned for their dark skin and foreign ways, particularly because they had no homeland in Europe. This nonterritorial status has dogged the Romani population to this day, where staking claim to one’s own territory has led to ethnic cleansing and the fragmenting of the European map. While Slovaks now have Slovakia, Serbians Serbia, and Belorussians Belarus, the Roma, easily the largest and most widely dispersed ethnic minority in Europe, have no homeland and are consequently deemed interlopers on everybody’s turf. This has been particularly true in Eastern Europe since the collapse of communism in 1989 and has led to a massive movement of refugees towards the West, especially to Germany, but also to the United States and elsewhere overseas.

It was the discovery of the Indian identity of the Romani language that first set Western scholars on the trail of Gypsy origins in the late eighteenth century. Common words, such as man, woman, eat, drink, run, jump, sit, big, small, water, milk, and the numbers—indeed well over half the entire vocabulary—are almost the same in both Romani and Hindi. But identifying the language didn’t identify its speakers, and for the last two centuries academics have been trying to answer some basic questions: if the Gypsies came from India, who were they, when did they leave India, and why? Until this discovery, many suggestions had been made about the identity of the Roma, not one of them correct. It was claimed that they were Egyptians (hence the word “Gypsy”), Turks, Jews, Africans, and even people from the moon. For more than a century and a half it was believed that the first Gypsies were musicians given as a gift by the king of India to the Persian court in the fifth century. Today, mainly on the basis of linguistics and serological studies, a growing number of specialists believe that the Roma descend from a composite population of non-Aryan Indians, and possibly from African mercenaries in India, who assembled in the eleventh century into a military force to repel the Islamic invasions led by Mohammed of Ghazni. Moving farther and farther west in a succession of conflicts with the Muslims, the Roma passed through the Byzantine Empire in the thirteenth century and were pushed up into Europe as that empire, too, was occupied by Islam.

After arriving in Europe, some of the Gypsy population were held in slavery in the Balkans, but others moved up into the rest of Europe, reaching every country there by the year 1500. And while Roma in the East were used as a labor force in the Principalities of Wallachia and Moldavia (present-day Romania), in Western Europe they were subject to strict legislation and kept on the move. In some places, attempts were made either to

exterminate them or to assimilate them by force. The establishment of colonies overseas provided a useful dumping ground for this unwanted population, and from the very beginning the Spanish, Portuguese, French, Dutch, and British governments began transporting numbers of Gypsies to their overseas official and unofficial colonies. In the seventeenth century, Gypsies were sent from the British Isles to work as slaves in the plantations in Barbados, Jamaica, and Virginia. The Portuguese sent them to Brazil, to Africa, and even back to India, while the French sent them to Louisiana, and the Germans to Pennsylvania. Even the Swedish government had a policy of banishment to its short-lived colony on the Delaware Bay. Today, in Louisiana and Cuba, there are mixed Afro-Gypsy populations, which resulted from intermarriage among the freed slaves in those places. The most drastic example of European anti-Gypsyism took place in this century, when Gypsies, together with Jews, were singled out for annihilation as part of the Nazis' "Final Solution." Jews and Gypsies lost about the same percentage of their total number by 1945,¹ but the fate of Roma was not discussed at the Nuremberg War Crime Trials, and almost no reparations have been made to Romani survivors since then.

While it is true that the origins of Romani language and life are Indian, it would be wrong to ignore the centuries of influence the Roma acquired since leaving India; as in the case of African-Americans, centuries of contact with Europeans and Euro-Americans has created a new syncretic population, both in genetic heritage and in culture. This being the case, it is truly remarkable that, a thousand years later and thousands of miles away from the original homeland, Gypsies have retained so much of their original character.

There are several reasons for this. First, their marginal status as nonterritorial outsiders minimized their access to the mainstream culture. Forbidden to attend school, or to participate in national life, Roma existed on the fringes of European society. In southeastern Europe they were enslaved for some five and a half centuries, only being granted full emancipation in the 1860s. Following this event (in what is today Romania), the first large-scale migration to North and South America began, with the ancestors of most of their present-day descendants in the United States having arrived around the turn of the century. A second and equally significant reason is that Romani culture itself (called *rromanipé*) does not permit involvement with the non-Gypsy world beyond the minimum required for business. One of the legacies inherited from India, and rigorously maintained in the United States, is the belief in ritual pollution, and in the importance of maintaining a spiritual harmony or balance (*kintála*) in one's life, a balance that can easily be upset by not observing proper cultural behavior. Socializing too intimately with non-Romani people

(*gadže*) is a serious transgression, which leads to defilement, spiritual disharmony, and perhaps to illness. Disdain for *rromanipé* can even lead to banishment from the community. In countries where severe assimilation policies were enacted upon the Romani minority, such as in Hungary or Spain in the 1700s—where it was illegal to speak Romani or to call oneself a Gypsy, and where Romani children were removed permanently from their families and put into state institutions or with white families—Romani identity thrives nevertheless. Strong social bonds exist within the families because of a natural “drawing together” for protection. Because time spent among the *gadže* is considered debilitating and upsetting to the natural balance of things, being with Roma redresses this, thus “recharging” the spiritual batteries. Interaction within the Romani community is so fundamental to daily life that in the Gypsy English ethnic dialect, “the public” refers not to the larger population but only to the members of the Romani community.

In the past, Roma were able to sustain a livelihood by providing many services to the non-Gypsy population; among them were metalworking, horse trading, renovation, and repair. But the demand for these services has declined, and in the midst of rapidly growing and increasingly technological societies, Roma are being pushed more and more to the side. One occupation, fortunetelling, survives among some groups and continues to provide an adequate income; but while this profession has prestige in India, from where it was brought to the West, here it is regarded with skepticism and often leads Gypsy fortunetellers into conflict with the law.

It is a mistake to think that Gypsies constitute a homogeneous population, as novelists and screenwriters tend to do. As the migrating population spread out into Europe, individual groups became associated with one country or another, acquired local characteristics over time, and intermarried with local populations. It is for this reason that Gypsies in Britain, Hungary, and Spain, for example, differ from each other in appearance, and in the extent to which *rromanipé* has been retained or modified. This has led some scholars to regard Roma not as one people but rather as a population of historically related but distinct ethnic groups. Spokespersons representing various Romani political organizations, which have begun proliferating in recent years, maintain that any differences that exist are the result of uninvited external factors, and that the Romani subgroups, coming from what was originally one population before entering Europe, should emphasize their respective similarities and Indian retentions, rather than their differences.

In the United States there are several distinct Romani populations, and most of

them would not subscribe to this sort of rhetoric. But an increasing number of American Roma are attending Romani conferences in Europe and bringing back stories of what is being accomplished there.

The first Roma to come to America accompanied Columbus on his second voyage in 1498; during the seventeenth century, small numbers arrived in North America from various parts of Western Europe. The first major wave of Gypsies to come here, however, were from Britain in the mid-1800s, while the abolition of slavery in Eastern Europe led to the second major influx at the end of that century. The collapse of communism and the re-emergence of ethnic tensions in the Eastern European states has led now to a third big immigration, centered for the most part on the large northeastern U.S. cities. Whereas it was contrary to communist ideology to put one's ethnic identity before one's allegiance to the state, all that has changed, and Serbs, for instance, or Slovaks or Moldovans have all demanded their own national territories. In Europe, Roma stand alone as a people without any historical homeland, and therefore are widely viewed as trespassers wherever they are. Lacking any sort of political or military defense, they are an easy target for nationalist extremists.

From our own informed sense of the matter, many Romani Americans believe that there are at least one million of us, though the census figures tell a different story. This is because all Gypsies don't complete the census form, or else don't report their ethnicity (a Roma from Serbia is likely to put "Serbian" rather than "Gypsy"), and because when questioned as to their own estimates of population, individuals will refer only to their own group. For example, a Russian Gypsy will not include the Hungarian-Slovak Gypsies in his estimation.

Russian Gypsies and the Hungarian-Slovak Gypsies are two of the largest subgroups in the United States. The latter came in with the large-scale migration from Eastern Europe following the collapse of the Austro-Hungarian Empire; this population, sometimes called the *Bashaldé* or "musician" Gypsies, found work in the steel mills in Pennsylvania and Ohio, and as musicians. Today they live in Chicago, Cleveland, Pittsburgh, and elsewhere. The Russian Gypsies are part of a larger community of *Vlax* Roma, and descend from the slaves who were freed in the 1860s. Those who could left Romania, some going east into Russia (hence the "Russian" Gypsies), and others going west into Serbia, Hungary, and elsewhere. Some went south into Greece, though most lacked the means to go anywhere, and their descendants, over two and a half million strong, still live in Romania. The word *Vlax* (*x* like the German "ch") comes from

Wallachia, the Romanian principality in which they were enslaved. Those who came into the United States via Greece are still called *Grekuria* today, while those who came by way of Argentina, after U.S. immigration policy began to exclude Gypsies in the 1880s, are called *Arxentinuria*. The largest group of Vlax Roma from Serbia is the *Machvaya*, a name originating in the Mačva region in eastern Serbia.

Romani culture in the United States varies somewhat from group to group, but among the Vlax, the family and the community are central to daily life and to the maintenance of *rromanipé*. Although there are lawyers, filmmakers, police officers, politicians, restaurateurs, and teachers among the Vlax, such occupations are not common. Jobs allowing more freedom of movement are preferred, as well as jobs having less direct involvement with the American establishment. This is partly because of fear of defilement, and partly because it is important to be able to leave and visit another community at any time, for a wedding, a funeral, or a saint’s day banquet. Communities usually are not clustered together, because this would put the economic opportunities of the families in conflict; there typically are no “Gypsy neighborhoods” in American cities (although there are exceptions, e.g., in Chicago, where families have been settling since the nineteenth century). Religious festivals, particularly Christmas and Easter, are important, and the *Machvaya* traditionally follow Eastern Orthodox rites. A saint’s day feast (*sláva*), of which there are several throughout the year, is characterized by special foods and prayers. In recent years, born-again Christianity has been making inroads into the Romani community, and many evangelical churches have been established; some now broadcast services in Romani over AM radio. Born-again Christian teaching, however, preaches against much that is typical of traditional Romani culture, such as fortunetelling and arranged and early-teen marriages. This has led to a conflict within the Romani population, who see such churches as eroding Romani values. On the other hand, churches now are some of the few places where Roma are able to be together in large numbers on a regular basis, and some of the churches have attached schools where literacy in Romani and in English is being taught. Another occasion to travel and meet is the *kris* or tribunal. An internal system of regulating justice and behavior, it probably derives from the Indian *panchayat*, although something similar is also found among villagers in the Balkans.

As with all ethnic minorities in the United States, there is a fear among the older generation that the identity of the group is being jeopardized by the pressure of Anglo-dominated culture, and that the young people are losing their heritage and language. This is true in some cases, but the Romani American minority is not likely to disappear, and

Romani-language-dominant children are still the rule rather than the exception, which is a good sign since loss of the ethnic mother-tongue is the first indication of assimilation towards mainstream society. The latest influx of Romani immigrants has brought with it new ideas about ethnic awareness not generally characteristic of the much more conservative American Roma. Young Roma now attend university, and an all-Romani network called *Drakhin* (“grapevine”) is on the Internet.

Given the tremendous difficulties that have faced Gypsies over the past thousand years since their exodus from India, the attempts to destroy and enslave them, and efforts to drive them from every host country, it is a remarkable tribute to their endurance as a people that Roma, their language, and their culture continue to flourish. To an extent, the exclusive nature of Romani society is responsible for this but, ironically, it has been the same rejection of the outsider that has caused many of the problems with which Roma have had to contend. The key to Romani existence is balance, the *kintála* that is spiritually fundamental within the culture, and socially fundamental outside it. Survival over the centuries has been ensured by maintaining harmony between the inside and the outside, by preserving the internal values of community and tradition while adapting to the ever-changing demands of external society. And American Gypsies are doing just that.

Notes

1. But see Brenda Davis Lutz and James M. Lutz, “Gypsies as Victims of the Holocaust,” *Holocaust and Genocide Studies*, vol. 9, no. 3 (Winter 1995): 346–59.

**Intent, Failure of Plans, and Escalation:
Nazi Persecution of the Gypsies¹ in Germany and Austria,
1933–1942**

Michael Zimmermann

Traditional Gypsy Policy

During the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries in Germany, the police exercised monopoly control of Gypsy policy. Churches', schools', and welfare organizations' isolated attempts to assimilate the Gypsies by means of a combination of assistance and discipline were insignificant. The police declared the Gypsies—a group of perhaps 20,000 persons, or not quite 0.03 percent of the German population in 1910—to be a “nuisance” that was to be combated. Police practice was influenced by a sociographic definition of “Gypsies and persons moving about in the manner of Gypsies.” Those who were or whom the police suspected of being on the road in a family group for any significant part of the year were included among those so designated.

Expulsion was ordained for the small group of foreign Gypsies; for the German Gypsies discriminatory treatment was more differentiated. The most important was the demand for numerous personal and travel papers, as well as harassment by requiring a “traveling trades permit,” which was essential for travelers to be allowed to work. This “combat against the Gypsies,” the discriminatory character of which is obvious, nonetheless remained without apparent effect. The various local authorities aimed only to keep the Gypsies out of their own areas and therefore came into conflict with each other, rather than collaborating on a single plan to implement the “fight against the Gypsy nuisance.”²

Escalation of Persecution

Discrimination against and oppression of the Gypsies in the first years of Nazi rule were not simply a continuation of traditional Gypsy policy.³ Laws and regulations were in many instances made more severe. Public social welfare benefits were considerably reduced. The lower police authorities tried using extremely high rentals for itinerant quartering sites and inadequately equipped premises, suddenly closing or even destroying public campsites, and harassing police checks on private premises to get the Gypsies to move on.

In towns such as Cologne, Berlin, Frankfurt, and Düsseldorf, the conditions imposed on the Gypsies who stayed were made worse. The Gypsies had to live in centralized, sometimes fenced and guarded camps that, unlike previous Gypsy campsites, were strictly supervised.⁴ The source material does allow us to conclude that most of these camps were erected in or near the large cities that many travelers favored, at least for their winter base.

The idea of concentrating the Gypsies in local camps should be seen in relation to the importance the Nazi regime attached to the institution of the “camp” itself. Between 1933 and 1939 it became virtually a routine matter for mayors, police chiefs, and other higher officials to demand that Gypsies “be admitted to a concentration camp,” that “a general camp be erected,” and that they be “concentrated in labor camps” or be “forcibly admitted to a closed camp.”⁵

On the central, national level measures based on the particular racist dynamics of the Nazi system were introduced. Some Gypsies were sterilized after the 1933 passage of the “Law to Prevent Genetically Deficient Offspring.” In the autumn of 1935 the “Protection of the Blood” law, which prohibited marriages between “Aryans” and “members of alien races,” and the “Marital Health Law” were adopted. They forbade “inferiors,” regardless of their ethnic background, to marry. On this basis, Gypsies were prohibited from marrying, some because they were “alien,” others because they were “inferior” to the German “Volk community.” In this way, the traditional twofold image of the Gypsies as adversary—excluding Gypsies both as strangers with a mysterious lifestyle and as allegedly work-shy spongers—was incorporated into *völkisch* racism.

Enlightenment and Racial Hygiene

The most prevalent policy toward Gypsies—including persons whom the authorities labeled as Gypsies—in Germany during the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries was based on concepts that went back to the periods of late absolutism and the Enlightenment. Enlightenment writer Heinrich Grellmann depicted the Gypsies as rough, depraved, and irreligious.⁶ But his work offered two new insights: On the one hand, his conception of the Gypsy was influenced by Enlightenment ideas of upbringing, which presupposed the malleability of man. On the other hand, Grellmann ascribed to the Gypsy an innate character that was hardly changeable. For him they were “orientals” who had descended from Indian untouchables. Grellmann aimed at a

“Solution of the Gypsy Problem” analogous to contemporaneous writings on the “Jewish Problem”:⁷ Gypsies as a group were to be dispersed through assimilation of their individual members. This goal, however, seemed to contradict and therefore would be unattainable in view of the innate and unchangeable Gypsy character he postulated.

Caught in this contradiction, Grellmann’s writings anticipated two discourses that would shape European state policy toward the Gypsies up through the twentieth century. The educational concept saw the Gypsies as inferior beings whose supposed backwardness could, however, be influenced by sociopolitical interventions. The opposing view declared all attempts to educate the Gypsies as senseless, given their unchanging nature.

Racism decided in favor of the latter view. It asserted Gypsies’ fundamental and constant “inferiority,” which was attributed to an unalterable “genetic fate.” This was, for instance, the opinion of the criminological biologist Robert Ritter, whose Research Institute for Racial Hygiene greatly influenced National Socialist Gypsy policy. Ritter declared the Gypsies to be “typical primitives,” whose “racial character” “could not be changed by environmental influences.”⁸ Although this view was based on common clichés about Gypsies, its total predominance nonetheless marked a significant conceptual change. For despite the influence that racist thought already had gained over the view of Gypsies,⁹ until 1933 their inclusion in society, their schooling, and their cultural adaptation were not completely contested. The juxtaposition of relative tolerance and racial hygiene was nonetheless rooted in a common perspective: the “Solution of the Gypsy question” would be to dissolve the Gypsies as a particular group. Ritter referred to exactly this goal in 1938, when he claimed that previous attempts by police and social policy “to solve” the “Gypsy problem” had failed. In “recognition of their racial character,” he said, “new paths must be taken.”¹⁰ The distinction between the pure life of a Gypsy and his molding by social factors was no concern for *völkisch* racism.

Ritter’s notions were characteristic of the racist paradigms that became state policy in National Socialist Germany. In the scientific world, Ritter, whose research institute within the Hereditary Medicine section of the Reich Health Office was founded in 1936, was not alone in making Gypsies the object of racial hygiene research. Similar if less ambitious efforts were planned or realized at the universities in Giessen, Münster, Berlin, Frankfurt am Main, Munich, Vienna, and Königsberg.

In practice, it was the task of Ritter's Racial Hygiene Research Institute to do genealogical research into the Gypsies and classify them in terms of racial criteria as "Gypsies," "Gypsy *Mischlinge*" (persons of mixed origin), or "Gypsy-like itinerants." From 1938 on, these classifications were reflected in "expert assessments" (*Sachverständigen-Gutachten*), which were sent to the Reich Criminal Police Department (*Reichskriminalpolizei*) and to the regional Criminal Police offices. The police paid 5 *Reichsmark* for each of those expert assessments. They needed them for their own registration of the Gypsies and forwarded them to the local registries (*Einwohnermeldeämter*), too, that kept records of inhabitants.

As did other researchers in racial hygiene, Ritter directed his main attack against "Gypsy *Mischlinge*." In this category he included more than ninety percent of "persons counted as Gypsies." He stigmatized them as a "riff-raff without form and character."¹¹ Ritter's suggestions for the "Solution of the Gypsy Problem" culminated in the notion, which he set forth in numerous articles and lectures, of dispersing the Gypsies among various types of camps. For the very small group of "ethnically pure wandering Gypsies," he proposed limited and police-supervised freedom of movement, and winter internment in non-enclosed camps. For "Gypsy *Mischlinge*," he wanted sex-segregated "security detention." "Mischling" married couples would be allowed to live together only after sterilization.¹² This was meant to accomplish the "disappearance"¹³ of a population stigmatized by Ritter as "antisocial."

"Prevention of Crime"

During the late 1930s the Criminal Police, at the Reich level, developed a conception of police intervention in society. Racial hygiene-based research on Gypsies fit into that construct. The Criminal Police, after all, had been responsible for the harassment of the Gypsies even before 1933. Criminal Police chief Arthur Nebe declared in 1937 that his responsibilities included not just "the elimination of criminals" but also "preserving the purity of the German race."¹⁴ In accordance with this goal, in late 1937 the Criminal Police designated as a "Fundamental Decree" its first order for the "preventive combating of crime."¹⁵ It attributed crime to behavior "injurious to the community" by particular segments of society. This behavior was itself said to be explained by genetic factors.

The primary tool of "preventive combating of crime," behind which stood the utopian goal of a "German Volk body" without crime and criminals, was "preventive

detention.” It was modeled on protective detention and similarly could not be nullified by the courts. Preventive detention was to be ordered for persons alleged by the Criminal Police to be “professional criminals,” “habitual criminals,” “common threats,” and “common pests.” Especially for “common pests” the criteria were totally arbitrary. It included those who “showed themselves unwilling to fit into the community.”¹⁶

As a result of this social-racist “preventive combating of crime,” beginning in 1938, in addition to other prisoners, more than 2,000 German and Austrian Gypsies were stigmatized as “antisocial.” They were incarcerated in the concentration camps at Buchenwald, Dachau, Mauthausen, Ravensbrück, and Sachsenhausen, where the prisoners were set to forced labor in stone quarries, brickworks, or repair workshops. For the Gypsies, as members of the “antisocial” category of prisoners, a long way down in the camp hierarchy, these assignments often proved to be death sentences.¹⁷ Following Germany’s occupation of the Czech lands, Poland, Alsace-Lorraine, and the Netherlands, the “preventive combating of crime” was in modified form also imposed in these territories.¹⁸

The Decree “On Combating the Gypsy Nuisance”

In addition to the “preventive combating of crime,” a decree entitled “On Combating the Gypsy Nuisance”¹⁹ was formulated by the Criminal Police in consultation with Ritter. Signed by Himmler in late 1938, it stated that police experience as well as “knowledge gained through race-biological research” demanded a “solution of the Gypsy problem on the basis of this race.” The distinction envisaged by this order among “genuine ethnic Gypsies,” “Gypsy Mischlinge,” and “persons traveling about in the manner of the Gypsies” was reflected in different colored identity papers for these three groups.

For the Criminal Police leadership, this decree marked the definitive transition from a Gypsy policy that was understood as a component of the separation of “aliens” from “the community” to a persecution *sui generis*. In local police practice, the discourse of race and biology now replaced the prior sociographic view of Gypsies, which had focused on migrant lifestyle at the center and was directed equally “Gypsies” and “persons who traveled about like Gypsies.”

Ban on Free Travel 1939, Deportation to Poland 1940, the Ghetto in Lodz 1941

After the outbreak of war, this anti-Gypsy policy was once again greatly intensified. Analogous to the German goal of expelling all Jews and Poles from the Reich, the Criminal Police now favored the compulsory expulsion of 30,000 Gypsies, too. In October 1939, the Reich Security Main Office, to which the Reich Criminal Police belonged as Office V, ordered that “Gypsies who were later to be detained” were to be accommodated “in special collection camps until their final deportation.” “Gypsies and Gypsy Mischlinge” were not to leave their place of residence “until further notice.”²⁰

In May 1940, 2,330 Gypsies—and by the autumn some 500 more—were sent to the General Government. In Poland itself, some few deported Gypsies succeeded in making a living as musicians or artists. Others were unable to find any way to survive, and many of these died of starvation or disease; some attempted to re-enter the Reich illegally. The majority of the deported Gypsies were, especially from 1942 on, concentrated into forced labor columns under SS control, primarily for the construction of roads, military trenches, bunkers, airfields, or concentration camps.²¹

Further deportations of Gypsies, planned for 1940, failed because of the internal contradictions that also characterized Nazi policy toward Jews. The deportation intentions of the central authorities in Berlin were expressed in an increasing number of short- and intermediate-term plans in which ever larger numbers of Jews and Gypsies were to be crammed together in German-occupied or -annexed Poland. This effort, however, was delayed by resistance from the occupation administrations, whose own goal, too, was removal of these groups. The forced presence of the “undesirables” was seen as temporary but in the long-run an “untenable situation.”²²

The fact that the deportations of the German Gypsies in 1940 had included only 2,800 persons—quite contrary to the intentions of the Reich Security Main Office—changed the character of the detention that had been planned in October 1939. A provisional arrangement became a situation that lasted several years. The Gypsies’ social isolation was heightened now by “Gypsy community camps,” which were built again in some places after 1939 on the models of the pre-war years. In nearly all the communities where Gypsies were detained, their caravans and barracks fell into disrepair. The starvation wages most of the Gypsies received as unskilled laborers, as well as the fact that the communal administrations gave the lowest priority to improving the Gypsy camps, frequently led to total dilapidation of their

accommodations. As a result, serious infections and lung diseases increased among the inhabitants.²³

When, in the fall of 1941, the systematic deportation of German Jews began, Roma from Austrian Burgenland were affected as well.²⁴ The ground for persecution of this particular group was prepared by Tobias Portschy, who in 1938 was made Landeshauptmann for Burgenland, where Roma had lived a settled existence for more than 150 years. Portschy gave the “Gypsy question” priority over the “Jewish question.”²⁵ As a “National Socialist solution of the Gypsy Question,” Portschy suggested sterilization, forced labor in work camps, deportation to eventual German colonies, and bans on school education, military service, and hospital care.²⁶

In the following years, many in the *Ostmark* (the former Austria) continued vehemently to demand a radical solution of the Burgenland “Gypsy problem.” The extraordinary fervor of this particular witch-hunt, against the Burgenland Roma, explains why, after the first Gypsy deportation in May 1940, these Roma were made the priority group for a second Gypsy transport to the General Government.²⁷ When the police saw this possibility in the fall of 1941, 5,000 Burgenland Roma were deported to the Lodz Ghetto and crowded together there in a special sector. Like the Jews, the Roma were suffocated in gas vans in Kulmhof.

Conclusions

Summarizing the National Socialist persecution of the German and Austrian Gypsies between 1933 and 1942 (that means before Gypsies from different European countries were deported to Auschwitz-Birkenau), I want to stress six aspects:

1) Nazi Gypsy policy within the Reich primarily combated the imagined threat from “Gypsy Mischlinge,” who, because partially or fully settled, had closer contact with non-Gypsies and thus allegedly penetrated and poisoned the “German *Volk* body” by spreading restlessness and antisocial behavior.

2) The enemy images of the *völkisch* racism displayed variations in accent and balance.²⁸ The Gypsies were stigmatized as both an “alien race” and “alien to the community” in racial hygiene terms. According to National Socialist conceptions, they seemed ready to “destroy” the “volk community” from below. But the central threat was imagined to be “Jewry.” Jews had been declared the “anti-race.” For biological and historical reasons, they were said to possess characteristics that were particularly “subversive”; moreover they were believed already to have made deep inroads into the

“German Volk community.” Or, as Eva Justin, a leading member of Robert Ritter’s staff, claimed in 1943: “The Gypsy problem cannot be compared with the Jewish problem, because the Gypsies are not able to undermine or endanger the German *Volk* as such.”²⁹

3) The Criminal Police, responsible for the registration and persecution of the German Gypsies, had felt that categorizing this group in a racist manner was a task beyond their competence. Here the responsibility went to the Research Institute for Racial Hygiene, which was expected to develop a scientifically based conception of Gypsy policy. In this way Criminal Police and racial hygienists actually formed an institutional complex that translated racist theory into the practice of persecution.

4) Even in the prewar years, racial hygienists such as Ritter and politicians such as Portschy intended an eventual depopulation of the German “Gypsy Mischling” and the Burgenland Roma by sterilization, sex-segregation, camp internment, or deportation. Such demands cannot be equated with a politically implemented extermination program from above,³⁰ but they were an ideological framework ruling out a humane solution in every case. Criminal Police, racial hygienists, and leading party functionaries did agree that the “Gypsy Mischlinge” and the Burgenland Roma were somehow to be purged from the Reich. They did not hesitate to express their intentions very frankly about the increasingly marginalized Gypsies.

5) Whereas the deportation of German Gypsies to Poland in 1940 resulted from discussions that took place on a national level, the extermination of the Burgenland Roma was brought about not simply by orders from Berlin, but by a complex interrelation between pressure from below and directions from above. The Burgenland Roma were deported to Lodz because regional mayors, party functionaries, and police tried very hard to get rid of them. The ghetto administration and the mayor of Lodz, on the other hand, refused to take them. In this conflict the policy of deportation got the upper hand because it was supported by the Reich Security Main Office and by the Criminal Police, who had favored the transportation of all German and Austrian Gypsies to the East since the fall of 1939.

The extermination of the Burgenland Roma then became a self-fulfilling prophecy. The ghetto administration had predicted that lack of space, increasing food-supply problems, and infectious diseases would be the result of the deportations. A short time after the arrival of the victims, the accommodation and food-supply situation indeed spread in terrible measure, since the German authorities, who had predicted the

catastrophe, did everything to ensure that it really did take place. Ultimately those detained in Lodz were so starved, sick, and weak that they, like the Jews, were regarded by those responsible for their horrible condition as “subhumans” who must somehow be eliminated.

6) The precondition for the killing in Lodz and Kulmhof was not the development of the various plans to deport Gypsies and Jews, but the repeated failure of these plans until the autumn of 1941. No one in a position of authority in German-occupied or -annexed Poland was prepared to accept deported Jews or Gypsies into his domain. Thus a system of stopgap measures and compromises developed that created pressure for the Wannsee Conference and a nonterritorial “Final Solution of the Jewish Question.” And it created pressure for the extermination of the Burgenland Roma and the overwhelming majority of the German Gypsies, too. It is true that this extermination policy cannot be equated with the murder of the Jews, but in the end it was still genocide.³¹

Notes

1. The members of this group whom the Nazis persecuted are known as “Gypsies” as “Roma” or as “Sinti and Roma.” These terms incorporate a variety of meanings; despite a measure of commonality, each renders a different composition and number.

A sociographic concept that equates Gypsies with an itinerant population, and in many countries with a foreign itinerant population, forms one extreme; the other is based on categories such as “ethnicity,” “people,” “clan,” or “race.” This second view often assumes a particular life-style and culture—one that differs from that of the majority population—in addition to a biological definition that sees Gypsies as united by descent or “blood.” For those so inclined, either the cultural or the biological construct can become the basis for a racial concept of the “Gypsy.” In one case the cultures of non-Gypsies and Gypsies are juxtaposed, the cultural differences are declared unbridgeable and the Gypsy culture declared intolerable to the majority. In the other case, Gypsies are not only defined as “alien-blooded” (*Fremdblütige*), but are stigmatized as inferior.

Modern gypsy-originated civil rights movements have proposed the self-definition “Roma” as a concept inclusive of all Gypsy groups. In the German-speaking world in particular, the combination “Sinti and Roma” has become accepted as a common designation. The Sinti are the largest living Gypsy group residing in the German linguistic area. Their presence there goes back some 600 years. In this same area, Roma is used for Gypsy groups from Eastern and Southeastern Europe.

“Roma” and “Sinti” originally were self-identifications used as elaborations on, or alternatives to, the term “Gypsy.” Identity as Roma or Sinti, determined by inner group cohesion as well as stigmatization from outside, is thus decided in different ways. Familial relationships and the original common language, Romany, play a role, as does the group’s own culture, the distance from non-Gypsies, and, for a minority, an itinerant way of life. The civil rights movements and political organizations of Roma and Sinti also point to the common fate of persecution suffered under National Socialism.

In short, the terms “Gypsies,” “Roma,” or “Sinti,” in themselves include a variety of meanings. If the specific National Socialist policy toward Gypsies is to be stressed in contrast to the prior German policy, it is important to analyze the various discourses about “Gypsies” in terms of the origins and influence of those discourses.

2. Rainer Hehemann, *Die ‘Bekämpfung des Zigeunerunwesens’ im Wilhelminischen Deutschland und in der Weimarer Republik, 1871–1933* (Frankfurt am Main, 1987), pp. 243–402; Michael Zimmermann, *Rassenutopie und Genozid: Die nationalsozialistische ‘Lösung der Zigeunerfrage’* (Hamburg, 1996), pp. 44–55.

3. Zimmermann, *Rassenutopie*, pp. 81–162; Guenter Lewy, *The Nazi Persecution of the Gypsies* (New York, 2000), pp. 17–62.

4. See for instance: Wolfgang Benz, “Das Lager Marzahn: Zur nationalsozialistischen Verfolgung der Sinti und Roma und ihrer anhaltenden Diskriminierung,” in: Helge Grabitz, Klaus Bästlein, and Johannes Tuchel, eds., *Die Normalität des Verbrechens: Bilanz und Perspektiven der Forschung zu den nationalsozialistischen Gewaltverbrechen. Festschrift für Wolfgang Scheffler zum 65. Geburtstag* (Berlin, 1994), pp. 260–79; Ute Brucker and Wolfgang Wippermann, “Das ‘Zigeunerlager’ Berlin Marzahn 1936–1945: Zur Geschichte und Funktion eines nationalsozialistischen Zwangslagers,” in *pogrom 130*, 1987, pp. 77–80; Karola Fings and Frank Sparing, “Das Zigeunerlager in Köln-Bickendorf 1935–1958,” in *1999: Zeitschrift für Sozialgeschichte des 20. und 21. Jahrhunderts* (1991), pp. 11–40; Karola Fings and

Frank Sparing, “‘z.Zt. Zigeunerlager’: Die Verfolgung der Düsseldorfer Sinti und Roma im Nationalsozialismus,” (Köln, 1992); Sybil Milton, “Antechamber to Birkenau: The Zigeunerlager after 1933,” in *Die Normalität des Verbrechens*, pp. 241–59; Wolfgang Wippermann, *Das Leben in Frankfurt zur NS-Zeit. II: Die nationalsozialistische Zigeunerverfolgung. Darstellung, Dokumente und didaktische Hinweise* (Frankfurt am Main, 1986).

5. Staatsarchiv Detmold, M 1 JP/1611, Kommandeur der Gendarmerie Minden, 27.2.1937; Landesarchiv Berlin, Rep. 142 OGT 1-10-123, Landrat Hameln, 20.9.1934; Generallandesarchiv Karlsruhe 364 / Zug 1975 / 3 II / Fasc. 23, Bezirksamt Mosbach, 11.6.1934; Staatsarchiv Marburg, Landratsamt Marburg, Bürgermeister von Neustadt, 21.2.1936.

6. Heinrich M. G. Grellmann, *Die Zigeuner: Ein historischer Versuch über die Lebensart und Verfassung, Sitten und Schicksale dieses Volkes in Europa nebst ihrem Ursprunge* (Dessau and Leipzig, 1783); Wim Willems, *In Search of the True Gypsy: From Enlightenment to Final Solution* (London, 1997), pp. 22–92.

7. See Christian Wilhelm Dohm, *Über die bürgerliche Verbesserung der Juden* (Berlin, 1781).

8. Robert Ritter, “Primitivität und Kriminalität” in *Monatsschrift für Kriminalbiologie und Strafrechtsreform*, 31, 1940, pp. 198–210, here p. 205.

9. See, for instance, the Bavarian Law against Gypsies, Itinerant People, and Work-Shy Persons (*Bayerisches Zigeuner-, Landfahrer- und Arbeitsscheuengesetz*), which was decreed in 1926. A ministerial declaration concerning this law explained: “The concept ‘Gypsy’ is well known and needs no further explication. Racial science (*Rassenkunde*) tells us who has to be seen as Gypsy.” (Werner K. Höhne, *Die Vereinbarkeit der deutschen Zigeunergesetze und Verordnungen mit dem Reichsrecht, insbesondere der Reichsverfassung* (Heidelberg, 1929), pp. 142–53, here p. 146: Ministerialentschließung zur Ausführung des Zigeuner- und Arbeitsscheuengesetzes vom 16.7.1926 des Bayerischen Staatsministeriums des Innern.

10. Robert Ritter, “Zur Frage der Rassenbiologie und Rassenpsychologie der Zigeuner in Deutschland,” in: *Reichsgesundheitsblatt* (1938), pp. 425–26, here p. 426.

11. Robert Ritter, “Die Zigeunerfrage und das Zigeunerbastardproblem,” in *Fortschritte der Erbpathologie, Rassenhygiene und ihrer Grenzgebiete* 3 (1939), pp. 2–20, here pp. 10, 15.

12. Ritter, “Zigeunerfrage,” p. 18; Ritter, “Primitivität,” p. 210; Robert Ritter, “Zigeuner und Landfahrer,” in *Der nichtseßhafte Mensch: Ein Beitrag zur Raum- und Menschenordnung im Großdeutschen Reich*, edited by Bayerischer Landesverband für Wanderdienst (München, 1938), pp. 71–88, here p. 87.

13. Ritter, “Zigeunerfrage,” p. 16: “...the ever recurring problem: What is the best way of causing the disappearance of these itinerant people?”; Eva Justin, “Typoskript zur ‘Zigeunerforschung,’” in Joachim S. Hohmann, *Robert Ritter und die Erben der Kriminalbiologie: ‘Zigeunerforschung’ im Nationalsozialismus und in Westdeutschland im Zeichen des Rassismus* (Frankfurt am Main, 1991), pp. 469–500, here p. 484 with

the term “slow disappearance of the Gypsy *Mischling* population.” Justin was a leading member of Ritter’s staff.

14. Arthur Nebe, “Aufbau der deutschen Kriminalpolizei,” in *Kriminalistik* 12 (1938), pp. 4–8, here p. 4.

15. Bundesarchiv Berlin, Erlaßsammlung “Vorbeugende Verbrechensbekämpfung” (hereafter BAB, VV), “Grundlegender Erlaß über die vorbeugende Verbrechensbekämpfung durch die Polizei,” Pol. S-Kr. 3 Nr. 1682/37-2098 - 14.12.1937.

16. BAB, VV, BAK, VV, RKPA, Tgb. Nr. RKPA 60.01 250/38, “Richtlinien des RKPA über die Durchführung der vorbeugenden Verbrechensbekämpfung,” 4.4.1938, Abs. 9.

17. Zimmermann, *Rassenutopie*, pp. 118–24.

18. Zimmermann, *Rassenutopie*, pp. 214–17 (Alsace-Lorraine), 218-22 (Bohemia and Moravia), 235-37 (Netherlands), 278 (Poland). For the Czech lands see Ctibor Necas, *The Holocaust of the Czech Roma* (Prague, 1999), pp. 39–151; for the Netherlands see Leo Lucassen, *En men noemde hen zigeuners...: De geschiedenis van Kaldarasch, Ursari, Lowara en Sinti in Nederland (1750–1944)* (Amsterdam-Gravenhage, 1990), pp. 210-25.

19. BAB, VV, RdErl.d.RFFSSuChdDtPol.i.RMdI. v. 8.12.38-S-Kr. 1 Nr. 557 VIII 38-2026-6; BAB, VV, RKPA 1451 /28.39, Berlin 1.3.1939, Ausführungsanweisung des RKPA zum Runderlaß des Reichsführers SS und Chefs der Deutschen Polizei, I. RMdI, 8.12.1938, Abs. IV.

20. BAB, VV, RSHA Tgb. Nr. RKPA 149/1939-g-, Schnellbrief, 17.10.1939, Betrifft: Zigeunererfassung, Abs. 1.

21. Zimmermann, *Rassenutopie*, pp. 176–84.

22. Götz Aly, *“Endlösung”: Völkerverschiebung und der Mord an den europäischen Juden* (Frankfurt am Main, 1995). For the term “untenable situation” see Ulrich Herbert, “Arbeit und Vernichtung: Ökonomisches Interesse und Primat der ‘Weltanschauung’ im Nationalsozialismus,” in Dan Diner, ed., *Ist der Nationalsozialismus Geschichte? Zu Historisierung und Historikerstreit* (Frankfurt am Main, 1987), pp. 198–236, here pp. 208–11.

23. For the Gypsy camp in Lackenbach in Austrian Burgenland see Erika Thurner, *National Socialism and Gypsies in Austria* (Tuscaloosa and London, 1998), pp. 36–101.

24. Thurner, *National Socialism*, pp. 102–105; Lewy, *Nazi Persecution*, pp. 56–62, 107–16; Zimmermann, *Rassenutopie*, pp. 101–05, 223–29.

25. Dokumentationsarchiv des österreichischen Widerstandes (hereafter DÖW), 11.532, *Grenzmark Burgenland, Wahlzeitung zum 10.4.38*, Folge 5, 5.4.1938.

26. DÖW 4.969, Tobias Portschy, *Die Zigeunerfrage*, August 1938.

27. In February 1942, in a third transport about 2,000 Eastprussian Sinti were deported to Bialystok and, in the fall of 1942, from there to the Brest Ghetto. We do not know much about the backgrounds of these deportations (Zimmermann, *Rassenutopie*, pp. 228–29).

28. Concerning the Nazi persecution of the Gypsies, it is true that comparison is a very important subject, but it is not the only one. The discussion has also to be focused on the mass murder itself, the motives of the perpetrators, and the suffering of the victims.

29. Eva Justin, *Lebensschicksale artfremd erzogener Zigeunerkiner und ihrer Nachkommen* (Berlin, 1944), p. 120.

30. This is an obvious parallel to the persecution of the Jews: In 1938/39 the National Socialist policy against the Jews aimed to expel them from Germany. Three years later the persecution escalated to murder. If National Socialists had been planning the extermination of the Jews from the beginning, it seems most likely that they would not have expelled their intended victims from their domain in 1938/39. See also Hans Mommsen: The origins of the Holocaust and its consequences “should appropriately be recognized as embedded in the diversity of factors that led to the ever escalating, but not initially deliberately planned persecution of the Jews, a process that nevertheless was the inevitable culmination of the destructive nature of the Nazi regime, not only in ideological but also in political terms.” (“Future Challenges to Holocaust Scholarship as an Integrated Part of the Study of Modern Dictatorship,” United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, Center for Advanced Holocaust Studies, March 2000, p. 6)

31. For a scholarly discussion of the concept genocide see, for instance, Frank Chalk and Kurt Jonassohn, eds., *The History and Sociology of Genocide: Analyses and Case Studies* (New Haven, 1990), pp. 23–32. Regarding the National Socialist Gypsy policy one has to take into consideration the differences between the persecution in German-occupied Europe, on the one hand, and within the Reich, Austria, and Bohemia and Moravia on the other, where a remarkably high percentage of the Gypsy population was either exterminated or forcibly sterilized. These differences were ultimately attributable to emphasis on two different facets of the anti-Gypsy phantasmagorias. Outside the Reich, and above all in Eastern Europe, the anti-Gypsy clichés were primarily directed against the itinerant Gypsies, whose wanderings provided supposed camouflage for potential spying as agents of the “Jewish-Bolshevik world enemy,” while in Germany and Austria the imagined threat was primarily from Burgenland Roma and “Gypsy Mischlinge.”

Gypsies in German Concentration Camps

Guenter Lewy

The first large-scale arrests of Gypsies* destined for the concentration camps took place in 1938 during Aktion Arbeitsscheu (Operation Work-Shy). The ostensible purpose of this operation was to proceed against asocial elements who shirked regular work and were a burden on society. Especially targeted were vagrants, beggars, and pimps as well as Gypsies or Gypsy-like itinerants if they had not demonstrated a readiness to take up regular employment or had a criminal record. In fact, the main purpose of Operation Work-Shy appears to have been to provide slave labor for the new economic enterprises the SS had started to operate in or near the concentration camps of Sachsenhausen and Buchenwald. As a result of the prevailing hostility toward Gypsies, often the mere fact that someone was without a steady place of residence or job resulted in his or her being labeled asocial or criminal and being subjected to custody in a concentration camp.¹

The proportion of Gypsies among those arrested as asocials during Operation Work-Shy is not known. It is likely that between 1,500 and 2,000 Gypsies were taken into what was called “preventive custody.” Some of them were released within twelve months, but many others remained in the camps for additional years.² According to non-Gypsy inmates who survived, the treatment meted out to the “asocials,” whose camp uniform was marked with a black triangle, was brutal. In the hierarchy of the SS they ranked very low, only above Jews and homosexuals. Their stay in the camps was designed to “educate” them and make them into worthy members of what the Nazis called the “German people’s community.” Many did not survive this schooling, which was accompanied by systematic brutalities. The asocials had a mortality rate higher than that of the political or criminal inmates of the camps.³ On the other hand, the new inmates were to be treated in such a way that they could serve as a labor force in the new SS economic enterprises. Then as later, the tension between these two functions of the concentration camps remained

* Some authors consider the words “Gypsy” or “Zigeuner” pejorative and substitute a new nomenclature. In fact there is nothing pejorative per se about the words Gypsy (derived from Egyptian) and *Zigeuner* (derived from *atzinganoi*, by which they were called in fourteenth-century Greece), and several Gypsy writers have insisted on the uninterrupted use of the traditional terms in order to maintain historical continuity and to express solidarity with those who were persecuted under this name. I agree with this view.

unresolved.

During the war years the Germans continued to send Gypsies to concentration camps for various perceived offenses; these behaviors, as those before the war, were grouped under the term “asocial conduct.” Others ended up there after completing a prison sentence. Hence the conclusion of the war found Gypsies in practically all the German concentration camps. Information about their fate is preserved from some of the larger camps, though we have only estimates of the number of Gypsies held there. In some cases no records are preserved; in others, Gypsies were registered as asocials rather than as Gypsies. In a few instances Gypsies were marked with a brown triangle, but most Gypsies were given the black triangle used for asocials.⁴ Gypsy camp inmates were used for slave labor as well as for medical experiments.

In Dachau in 1944 German doctors conducted experiments on the potability of sea water, experiments for which the Luftwaffe requested forty healthy inmates. Arthur Nebe, head of the criminal police, proposed the use of “asocial *Zigeunermischlinge*” (Gypsies of mixed ancestry) and Himmler approved this suggestion even though *Reichsarzt* Ernst Robert von Grawitz expressed concern that the foreign racial characteristics of the Gypsies might invalidate the significance of the experiments for German men.⁵ In early August, forty-four Gypsies in Buchenwald, recently transferred from Auschwitz, were selected for these experiments from a larger group of “volunteers.” According to Ignaz Bauer, a French inmate employed in the infirmary, the victims soon manifested symptoms of starvation and of dying of thirst. They rapidly lost weight and became increasingly agitated; those who started to scream and rave were tied to their beds. When they were close to death they were injected with a preparation that was supposed to prevent their demise. Only the fact that fellow inmates were able to smuggle in food and drink is said to have saved the lives of the persons involved in this torturous experiment.⁶

On November 12, 1943, a transport of 100 Gypsies arrived in the Natzweiler-Struthof concentration camp from Auschwitz. The prisoners were to be used in experiments conducted by Professor Eugen Haagen using a new typhus vaccine; however the “experimental material” turned out to be unsuitable. Eighteen of the Gypsies were dead upon arrival. Others, as Haagen complained bitterly to his superiors, were in such bad shape as to make them unusable. He therefore had the Gypsies sent back to Auschwitz and requested a second contingent of 100 Gypsies, twenty to forty years old and in good physical condition. This second transport reached Natzweiler on December 12.⁷

The experiment began in January 1944. The Gypsies were divided into two groups

of forty each. One group was vaccinated, the other was not, and both groups then were injected with the typhus bacillus. Dr. Poulson, a Norwegian inmate doctor, who was assigned to watch the development of symptoms among the human guinea pigs, described the conditions as “terrible.” Both groups were kept inadequately clothed in small rooms, without blankets and under horrible hygienic conditions. Some patients developed high temperatures but, miraculously, none died.⁸ Sixteen of these same Gypsies were used in June 1944 in experiments run by Professor Otto Bickenbach of the Medical Faculty at the University of Strasbourg; these involved exposure to phosgene gas. Some of the victims received varying amounts of a protective injection; others were sent into a gas chamber unprotected. Four Gypsies in the control group died as a result of the experiment.⁹

In Ravensbrück, Gypsy women and girls as young as eight and ten became the subject of sterilization experiments conducted by Dr. Carl Clauberg in 1945. Dr. Zdonka Nedvedova-Nejedlá, a Czech inmate physician who worked in the camp hospital, testified after the war that most of these sterilizations were performed without anesthesia. “I nursed these children all night after the operation. All these girls were bleeding from the genital and were suffering such pain that I had to give them sedatives secretly.”¹⁰ Dr. P.W. Solobjewa, a Soviet woman physician held captive in the camp, reported that about 100 Gypsy women were sterilized in February 1945, among them twelve-year-old girls. Two of these died two days after the operation.¹¹ For those who survived, she noted in a recollection authored in 1987, the physical and psychic damage incurred was inestimable.¹²

Despite the proclaimed intent to “reform” inmates and despite pressure from above to use them as a labor force, mortality in the camps, the result of systematic mistreatment, malnutrition, and disease, was always extremely high. Most inmates’ long-term survival depended on finding a special position such as work in the kitchen, in a repair shop, or as a clerk. Conditions were especially harsh in Mauthausen, where a large number of Gypsies were imprisoned. Inmates were given light clothing and wooden slippers and put to work in the stone quarry. This involved carrying heavy stones up 180 steps, known as the “staircase of death” because of the beatings, shootings, and fatal accidents to which the crowded mass of inmates were exposed there. The food was utterly inadequate for the heavy labor performed, and the prisoners suffered other tribulations that could lead to death. The SS guards amused themselves by kicking the prisoners’ caps from their heads. When the victims sought to retrieve their caps—it was forbidden to be without a cap—the guards opened fire and reported the deaths as “shot while trying to escape.” Punishment

for violating the camp rules, such as failing to make beds with the required precision, consisted of beatings or several hours of a cold shower. At first Gypsies were the worst treated inmates. Later Poles and Russians achieved this dubious distinction.¹³

Plans to expel all Gypsies from the Reich had been made as early as 1939, but had come to naught for various reasons.¹⁴ Some 2,500 German and Austrian Gypsies had indeed been sent to the General Government and the Warthegau respectively, but most Gypsies continued to live in the places to which they had been assigned at the beginning of the war. On December 16, 1942, Himmler ordered the deportation of all *Zigeunermischlinge*, considered racially inferior and an asocial element, to a special Gypsy camp in Auschwitz.¹⁵ This directive, known as the Auschwitz decree, led to the deportation of more than 13,000 German and Austrian Gypsies. So-called “racially pure” Gypsies and members of various other categories such as “socially adjusted Gypsies” were exempt from deportation; their number may have been as high as 15,000.¹⁶

On February 26, 1943, the first large transport of Gypsies arrived in Auschwitz. By the end of 1943, a total of 18,738 Gypsies had been registered by name. Eventually about 23,000 men, women, and children were incarcerated for varying lengths of time. Gypsies from Germany and Austria constituted by far the largest group of inmates. Gypsies from the Protectorate of Bohemia and Moravia—the former western half of Czechoslovakia—numbered about 4,500. The remainder came from various other German-occupied countries in Europe.¹⁷

Unlike the Jews and other victims of the Auschwitz death camp, the arriving Gypsies were not subjected to selection—they were not chosen for either slave labor or the gas chambers. Instead they were put into the newly built Gypsy family camp, so called because entire families were allowed to stay together. In early April 1943, shortly after the establishment of the family camp, camp commandant Rudolf Höß requested a special ration for pregnant women, babies, and small children. This request was sent to Oswald Pohl, the head of the SS Economic-Administrative Main Office (*SS-Wirtschafts-Verwaltungshauptamt*), which administered the German camp system. Pohl thereupon inquired from Rudolf Brandt, Himmler’s personal secretary, what he should do. The administration of the Auschwitz camp, he wrote, had asked for this special ration on the grounds that “the *Reichsführer-SS* desires it because he has in mind something special for the Gypsies (*weil er etwas Besonderes mit den Zigeunern vorhabe*).” Pohl outlined various types of rations that could be provided and asked Brandt to let him know of Himmler’s wishes. On April 15, Brandt informed Pohl of Himmler’s decision. Pregnant Gypsy

women were to receive a ration equivalent to that provided for women from the East engaged in forced labor; children were to be given a ration midway between that for these women laborers and that provided to German children.¹⁸ According to Höß, these special rations soon stopped “for the Food Ministry laid down that no special children’s food might be issued to the concentration camps.”¹⁹

As a result of inadequate nourishment and atrocious sanitary conditions in overcrowded barracks, diseases, especially typhus, spread rapidly. In addition to hunger and disease, the inmates suffered from deliberate cruelty at the hands of Kapos and SS guards. Gypsy children and women were also used and died in medical experiments. Still, on the scale of misery that characterized life in the death factory of Auschwitz, the Gypsy family camp did not represent the worst that was possible, and often was the envy of other Auschwitz inmates.²⁰ The very fact that families were able to stay together helped sustain a measure of morale.

Between April and July 1944 about 3,500 Gypsies considered fit to work were transferred to various concentration camps in Germany. On August 2, the remaining 2,898 inmates—most of them sick, older men, women, and children—were gassed. Strong circumstantial evidence suggests that the decision to kill the Gypsies deemed unable to work was made by Höß, who in May had resumed command of Auschwitz with the special mission to prepare facilities for the murder of the Hungarian Jews. The first transport of Hungarian Jews arrived in Auschwitz on May 16, and by May 24 more than 100,000 Jews had been gassed. Yet the capacity of the gas chambers and crematoria soon proved insufficient for this huge influx, and temporary housing had to be found for those who could not be killed immediately. It appears that the Gypsy camp was liquidated in order to make room for these Hungarian Jews. That Hungarian Jews were housed in the former Gypsy camp is confirmed by several witnesses.²¹

About 23,000 Gypsies, defined as asocial *Mischlinge*, had been put into the family camp at Auschwitz-Birkenau, apparently without much forethought about their ultimate fate. Of this total, more than 5,600 were killed in the gas chambers, and about 3,500 were moved to other camps. That leaves approximately 14,000 who died in the Gypsy camp from disease, medical experiments, or maltreatment, or who were murdered by guards. Altogether then, at least eighty-five percent of the Gypsies sent to Auschwitz died there as a result of their incarceration.²² And yet despite this extremely high rate of mortality, confinement in the Auschwitz Gypsy family camp was not tantamount to a sentence of death nor was it meant to be such a sentence. The purpose of sending the Gypsies to

Auschwitz was to rid society of their presence, not to kill them. If a program of annihilation had been in effect, it would have made little sense to wait more than a year to murder them. Why provide special rations, even for a short while, to pregnant women and children? Keeping the Gypsies alive for seventeen months cost precious and scarce wartime resources as well as manpower. Deportation to Auschwitz was not part of a plan to annihilate all Gypsies; instead it probably represented the lowest common denominator among the notions of various Nazi officials concerned with Gypsy policy. Responding in part to steadily increasing hostility toward the Gypsies among all parts of the population, these officials had gradually adopted more radical views and had come to agree on taking decisive measures in confronting the “Gypsy problem.”

Höb has written that the Gypsies were to be kept in Auschwitz until the end of the war and then were to be released,²³ and such a scenario is not inconceivable. We know that some of those involved with making Gypsy policy had contemplated putting the Gypsies into areas of the East not needed for German settlers. In 1942, when the deportation to Auschwitz was decided upon, a German victory in the East and the consequent availability of vast new territories still seemed a real possibility. The expulsion of about 2,500 German Gypsies into the General Government in 1940 had resulted in disruptions since most of the deported eventually regained their freedom of movement. These kinds of problems were prevented by putting the deported Gypsies into a camp. The question of how many could survive the rigors of such a camp apparently was of no interest to anyone in authority, for the individuals involved were considered asocial and racially inferior elements to whose death the regime and most of society was supremely indifferent.

The incarceration of German and Austrian Gypsies in concentration camps, including the special Gypsy camp in Auschwitz, involves parallels to the fate of the Jews, but also important differences. Unlike the Jews, Gypsies were never subjected to an overall plan for physical annihilation. Nazi policy toward the Gypsies lacked the kind of single-minded fanaticism that characterized the murderous assault upon the Jews. Gypsies were viciously persecuted and many died, but they were not the chosen victims of the Holocaust.

Notes

1. Hans Buchheim, “Die Aktion ‘Arbeitsscheu Reich,’” *Gutachten des Instituts für Zeitgeschichte* (Stuttgart: Institut für Zeitgeschichte, 1966), 2: 189–91.
2. For some individual cases see Guenter Lewy, *The Nazi Persecution of the Gypsies* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2000), pp. 31–35.
3. Falk Pingel, *Häftlinge unter SS-Herrschaft: Widerstand, Selbstbehauptung und Vernichtung im Konzentrationslager* (Hamburg: Hoffmann und Campe, 1978), p. 87.
4. Wolfgang Sofsky, *The Order of Terror: The Concentration Camp*, translated by William Templer (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1997), p. 23.
5. Grawitz to Himmler, June 28, 1944, Nuremberg document NO-179, National Archives (hereafter NA) Washington, RG 238, box 4; Brandt to Grawitz, July 8, 1944, Bundesarchiv (hereafter BA) Berlin, N 19/1584.
6. Affidavits by Ignaz Bauer, Fritz Pillwein, and Josef Tschofenig, Nuremberg document NO-910, 911, 912, NA Washington, RG 238, box 21; affidavit by Karl Höllenreiter, Nuremberg document NO-3961, *ibid.*, box 73; affidavit by Dr. Franz Blaha, Nuremberg document PS-3249, *ibid.*, box 49.
7. This account is based on testimony and documents used by a French military court sitting in Metz, summarized in Hauptstaatsarchiv Wiesbaden, Abt. 518, Nr. 4654, vol. 1.
8. *Ibid.* See also the recollection of the French inmate physician Dr. Henri Chretien, Nuremberg document NO-3560, NA Washington, RG 238, box 68.
9. Sabine Schleiermacher, “Die Stiftung ‘Ahnenerbe’: Menschen als Material für ‘exakte’ Wissenschaft,” in *Menschenversuche: Wahnsinn und Wirklichkeit*, edited by Rainer Osnowski (Cologne: Kölner Volksblatt, 1988), pp. 80–82.
10. Nuremberg document NO-875, NA Washington, RG 238, box 20.
11. Institut für Geschichte der Arbeiterbewegung/Zentrales Parteiarchiv, Berlin, St 63/72, cited by Ludwig Eiber, “*Ich wusste es wird schlimm:*” *Die Verfolgung der Sinti und Roma in München, 1933–1945* (Munich: Buchendorfer, 1993), p. 93.
12. Cited by Thomas Rahe, “Aus ‘rassischen’ Gründen verfolgte Kinder im Konzentrationslager Bergen-Belsen: Eine erste Skizze,” in Edgar Bamberger and Annegret Ehmann, eds., *Kinder und Jugendliche als Opfer des Holocausts* (Heidelberg: Dokumentationszentrum Deutscher Sinti und Roma, 1995), p. 141.

13. Dokumentationsarchiv des österreichischen Widerstandes, Vienna, Nr. 1371. On Mauthausen generally see Gordon Horwitz, *In the Shadow of Death: Living Outside the Gates of Mauthausen* (New York: Free Press, 1990).

14. Christopher Browning, "Nazi Resettlement Policy and the Search for a Solution of the Jewish Question, 1939–1941," *German Studies Review* 9 (1986): 504–5. See also Lewy, *Nazi Persecution of the Gypsies*, pp. 67–70.

15. No copy of this decree has been found. The implementing regulations, *Einweisung von Zigeunermischlingen, Rom-Zigeunern und balkanischen Zigeunern in ein Konzentrationslager*, issued on January 29, 1943, can be found in a collection of decrees issued in 1941 by the Reichskriminalpolizeiamt and known as *Erlasssammlung Nr. 15*.

16. Most of the literature on the subject maintains that the exemptions provided in the Auschwitz decree were essentially ignored and that only a handful of Gypsies escaped deportation. Among recent authors to repeat the false observation that the Auschwitz decree ordered the deportation of *all* German and Austrian Gypsies is Gabrielle Tyrnauer, "The Fate of the Gypsies in the Holocaust," in *The Widening Circle of Genocide*, edited by Israel W. Charny (New Brunswick, N.J.: Transaction, 1994), p. 229. For a critical discussion of this matter see Lewy, *Nazi Persecution of the Gypsies*, pp. 148–49.

17. Waclaw Dlugoborski, "On the History of the Gypsy Camp at Auschwitz-Birkenau," in State Museum of Auschwitz Birkenau, *Memorial Book: The Gypsies at Auschwitz-Birkenau* (Munich: Saur, 1993), 1:3.

18. Pohl to Brandt, April 9, 1943, Brandt to Pohl, April 15, 1943, BA Berlin, NS 19/180, pp. 3–4.

19. Rudolf Höss, *Commandant of Auschwitz: The Autobiography of Rudolf Höss*, translated by Constantin FitzGibbon (Cleveland, Ohio: World, 1959), p. 139.

20. For example, see Olga Lengyel, *Five Chimneys: The Story of Auschwitz* (Chicago: Ziff-Davis, 1947), p. 112.

21. Randolph Braham, "Hungarian Jews," in Yisrael Gutman and Michael Berenbaum, *Anatomy of the Auschwitz Death Camp* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1994), p. 465; Krystyna Zywulska, *I Came Back* (London: Dennis Dobson, 1951), p. 179; testimony of Erich Bruchwalski, *Zentrale Stelle der Landesjustizverwaltungen Ludwigsburg*, 402 AR-Z 47/84, vol. 3.

22. This tabulation is based on figures provided by Dlugoborski, "On the History of the Gypsy Camp," p. 4; Bernhard Streck, "Zigeuner in Auschwitz: Chronik des Lagers B II e," in *Kumpania und Kontrolle*, edited by Mark Münzel and Bernhard Streck (Giessen: Focus,

1981), p. 128; Michael Zimmermann, *Rassenutopie und Genozid: Die nationalsozialistische 'Lösung der Zigeunerfrage'* (Hamburg: Christians, 1996), p. 494 n. 212. Slightly different figures are given by Tadeusz Szymanski, "The 'Hospital' in the Family Camp for Gypsies in Auschwitz-Birkenau," in *Nazi Medicine*, edited by International Auschwitz Committee (New York: Howard Fertig, 1986), pt. 3, pp. 41–3. The difficulty of arriving at more precise numbers is stressed by Franciszek Piper, head of historical research at the Auschwitz-Birkenau State Museum, in "The Number of Victims," in Gutman and Berenbaum, eds., *Anatomy of the Auschwitz Death Camp*, p. 70.

23. Höss, *Commandant of Auschwitz*, p. 115.

Persecution of Roma-Sinti in Croatia, 1941–1945

Mark Biondich

The terrible fate of Roma in wartime Croatia and partitioned Yugoslavia has not received much scholarly attention, either in former Yugoslavia or elsewhere.¹ In Yugoslav historiography, the fate of Roma was often mentioned but not systematically researched. There are basically two reasons for this fact. First, despite the fact that the Roma of the Independent State of Croatia probably suffered proportionately higher losses than either the Serb or Jewish populations,² the Ustaša regime saw the Serb and Jewish “questions” as being of greater importance. Scholars have geared their researches accordingly. The Ustaša movement (1929–45) was essentially an anti-Serb movement. Anti-Serbdom had always been central to Ustaša ideology; in the words of one prominent Ustaša, it was “the quintessence of the Ustaša doctrine, its *raison d’être*.”³ Antisemitism began to acquire greater importance in the movement only in the late 1930s, but Roma were never mentioned in prewar Ustaša tracts. Second, there is little in the way of extant documentation pertaining to the Roma in wartime Croatia, either because it was destroyed or never kept by the perpetrators in the first place. The documentation that we do have is incomplete, and almost all of the survivor literature that mentions the fate of Roma has been written by non-Roma.

Western scholars have hardly addressed the topic at all, which reflects the general neglect of the Roma within the Western scholarly community. As the University of Texas scholar Zoltan Barany recently observed, scholars have for the most part considered Roma studies a peripheral subject, and in researching the fate of Roma during the Second World War, historians “face the absence of reliable demographic data and the deficient accounting of the Nazi administrators who documented the extermination of the Gypsies far less meticulously than that of the Jews.”⁴

Determining the number of Roma victims in Croatia is no simple task, in large part because even the number of Roma in pre-war Croatia (and Yugoslavia) is still debated. In Yugoslav historiography, it is argued that there were anywhere from 26,000 to 40,000 Roma in the territory of the Independent State of Croatia in 1941, most of whom were subsequently murdered in the Jasenovac camp system.⁵ According to the Yugoslav census of March 1931, the last prewar Yugoslav census, which used religion

as its main criterion for recording the population, there were approximately 70,000 persons who registered themselves under the category “other and unknown” religion or “without confession.” It is likely that most Roma were recorded in this category. However, since there were Roma who were nominally Serbian Orthodox, Muslim, and Roman Catholic, it is possible that some registered under those categories in 1931. Of the 70,000 persons in this category, approximately 31,000 lived in those territories that subsequently formed part of the Independent State of Croatia (Croatia, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Srijem): 11,272 in Bosnia-Herzegovina (i.e., Drina and Vrbas provinces) and 20,528 in Croatia (i.e., Sava and Primorje provinces).⁶

Legislation: The Race Laws

Within a month of its creation in April 1941, the Croatian state issued a series of race laws. This legislation consisted of three decrees: i) the “Legal Decree on Racial Belonging”; ii) the “Legal Decree on Citizenship”; and iii) the “Legal Decree on the Defense of Aryan Blood and the Honor of the Croat Nation.” The influence of the Third Reich was all too evident; the decrees were essentially copies of the Nuremberg Laws. These laws segregated both Jews and Roma by defining them as “non-Aryans.” They were forbidden henceforth from marrying persons defined as “Aryans,” employing Aryan women and from participating in Aryan affairs, whether political, cultural, social, or economic. As one Ustaša writer observed, the intent of the race legislation was “clear”: “The aim of our national state, which is Aryan, is and must be to rid ourselves of non-Aryan elements.”⁷ Although the Jewish population was the primary and intended victim of this legislation, the Roma were affected just as severely as Croatian Jewry.

Two months after issuing the race legislation, on July 3, 1941, the Croatian Ministry of Internal Affairs ordered that all Roma in Zagreb, regardless of sex or age, register with the police on July 22–23. This order was published in the press, and placards were posted around the city. Those who did not register were cautioned that they would be “harshly punished.”⁸ The registration of Roma coincided with a registration of the city’s Jewish population between July 22–26, 1941.⁹ At the same time, the Ministry ordered all local civilian (county, district, and city prefects) and police officials to compile a census of Roma in their localities by the end of July 1941. They were to record each Roma family (with the sex, age, date of birth, and name of each member), and whether they owned property and had a profession or trade. The

Ministry asked local officials to pay close attention to whether these Roma were nomadic or sedentary, and added, “Those Roma who wandered [*doskitali*] onto the territory of the Independent State of Croatia since the outbreak of the world war should now be driven across state borders.”¹⁰ We do not know how many Roma were driven out of Croatia in 1941, but it is possible that some were deported to German-occupied Serbia.¹¹ If the race laws were the first step of the Ustaša authorities in segregating the Roma population, as was the case with the Jewish population, then the registration and census indicate, certainly in retrospect, a planned effort on the part of the Croatian government to lay the groundwork for much harsher measures.

Indeed, in the summer of 1941 the Croatian government began entertaining various proposals on the “Roma question.” For example, already in June 1941 the Croatian Institute for Colonization proposed to the Ministry of Internal Affairs the deportation of Roma. The reasons cited for deportation reveal some of the typical stereotypes affecting Roma, not only in Croatia but elsewhere. The Institute for Colonization believed that the Roma were a source of infectious diseases, and as such posed a danger to the general population. Moreover, it was alleged that “nomadic” Roma had inflicted economic losses on the peasant population by stealing on a regular basis from the peasantry. The Institute proposed that the Roma be immobilized and then resettled, although it did not propose a location for their resettlement.¹² The Ministry of Internal Affairs received similar suggestions from other quarters. For example, the city administration of Križevci proposed that its Roma population (roughly 450 persons) be removed from the town and its environs. It, too, argued that the Roma had inflicted economic losses on the local rural population, and were perpetrators of various crimes. The city administration proposed that they either be resettled to an undisclosed area or be utilized as forced labor.¹³

Arrests and Deportations

The central authorities did not react immediately to these proposals. Large-scale arrests and deportations of Roma in Croatia began only in May 1942.¹⁴ By that point the central Ustaša authorities clearly had reached a decision to arrest all Roma, regardless of sex or age, to deport some and to intern others, in Croatian camps. Yugoslav historiography has not adequately addressed the reason(s) for this lag between the race laws and census of mid-1941 and the arrests of May 1942. Here are three possible reasons: first, although the Croatian authorities wished to settle the so-called Roma

question in Croatia, in 1941 they were very much preoccupied with the Serb and Jewish questions, which were perceived as of greater import.¹⁵ The state's nascent bureaucracy and police apparatus were directed at these two so-called "national enemies." Second, the Croatian authorities had to contend with Bosnian Muslim religious leaders' opposition to the application of anti-Roma measures against Muslim Roma. This opposition, which I will discuss in greater detail, may well have delayed, although it did not prevent, the implementation of an over-all anti-Roma policy. Third, in the spring of 1942 the Croatian government began deporting all Jews, some to Croatian camps, some to Auschwitz. Arrests and deportations of Jews to Croatian camps had begun in 1941, but they became widespread in 1942. When these all-encompassing Jewish deportations began, the Croatian government may have concluded that the deportations should be widened to include the Roma, who were, after all, the only other group in Croatia defined as "non-Aryan." This last point is speculative, since little documentary evidence exists to support it, but the timing of the deportations suggests a link between the implementation of anti-Jewish and anti-Roma measures.

On May 16, 1942, the Ustaša secret police (UNS, or *Ustaška nadzorna služba*) and Ministry of Internal Affairs ordered district civilian and police officials to begin arresting all Roma and deporting them to the Jasenovac camp system. Croatian military and gendarme units were instructed to assist in these operations, where assistance was needed by local officials.¹⁶ For the most part, however, the regular police (and usually the criminal police) conducted the operations. Arrests and deportations followed immediately, but we have only a few extant documents relating to the deportations. On May 28, 1942, the Zagreb criminal police deported sixty-nine Roma to Jasenovac.¹⁷ In the first week of June 1942, the police of Zemun (Srijem region) deported approximately 400 Roma to Jasenovac.¹⁸ The prefect of Županja district in eastern Croatia reported on June 5, 1942, that approximately 2,000 Roma had been detained in his district (of an estimated population of 2,600) and that all had been deported to the Jasenovac camp system in eighty-three railroad cars. An inventory was compiled of their goods, some of which had been auctioned to the local population.¹⁹ These arrests were often conducted at night or early in the morning, and with great haste. In some cases, the Roma were told they were simply being resettled, and would be given land in other parts of the country.²⁰

These sweeping anti-Roma arrests were even mentioned in the Ustaša press. For example, on June 14, 1942, the government's flagship Zagreb daily, *Hrvatski narod* (The Croat Nation), carried a short article reporting that the government was in the process of "solving the Roma question." According to this article, the government was studying the Roma "problem" and was determined to find a solution. In the meantime, it had to adopt measures against the Roma. Roma "vagrants" were being "collected" and sent to "separate camps" where they would be put to work and supposedly perform socially redeeming labor.²¹ District officials in the provinces were also rounding up "beggars" who would be put to work on public works projects.²² What is interesting about these articles is that the Croatian press was almost completely silent about the Roma, which was not their approach to reporting on the Jews. These two short articles, the only two that I have found in the Croatian press from 1942, are unusual only in that they broke the public silence typical of Croatian government circles to the Roma question.

Bosnia: Muslim Roma

The Ustaša authorities did encounter difficulties, however, in implementing these measures. In Bosnia-Herzegovina some Roma, predominantly Muslim Roma (or so-called "White Roma"),²³ were spared. This was because of the early and repeated intervention of Bosnian Muslim religious leaders.²⁴ Not long after the race laws had been issued and a census of Roma was ordered, a delegation of Bosnian Muslim Roma appealed, on July 17, 1941, to the *Ulema*, that is, the Islamic religious body in Sarajevo, to intervene on their behalf against the application of the race laws to them. In short, the Bosnian Moslem religious leadership took up their cause and established a committee to defend Muslim Roma. For the most part, their interventions were successful. On August 30, 1941, the Ministry of Internal Affairs informed the Reis ul-ulema, the head of the Muslim religious community in Sarajevo, that no measures would be adopted against Muslim Roma, who were to be treated as Muslim "Aryans," that is, as Muslim "Croats."²⁵ Although it was evidently not their original intention to do so, Ustaša leaders deliberately decided to exempt Muslim Roma from persecution. This was done purely on political grounds, in deference to the Bosnian Muslims, whom the regime courted from the outset.

This is not meant to suggest that all Muslim Roma were spared. Some were still affected by the Ustaša government's anti-Roma policy. When the Ministry of Internal

Affairs ordered the arrest of all Roma in May 1942, some zealous local officials applied this order to Muslim Roma. For example, on May 26, 1942, Muslim religious leaders from the town of Zenica (Bosnia) protested the local Ustaša party officials' deportation of local Roma to the Croatian camps. On the basis of this protest, the Reis ul-ulema again called on the central authorities to release all Muslim Roma who had recently been arrested. Just days later, the Ministry of Internal Affairs agreed to release them from Jasenovac.

On the other hand, some local Croatian officials in Bosnia asked the central authorities to clarify the term "Roma" (*Cigani*) before they initiated arrests. For example, on May 29, 1942, the prefect of Konjic district (Herzegovina) reported to his superiors that in Herzegovina many Muslims referred to themselves as Roma. In the interwar period, they consistently voted "together with the remaining Muslim Croats [*sic*] for Croat interests and [the Croat] cause. They have permanent addresses and many have their own homes, land, and other immovable property."²⁶ They also had professions and worked. Were they supposed to be arrested and deported? Just days later the central authorities replied that their earlier orders pertaining to the arrest and "evacuation" of Roma were to be implemented only against "nomadic" Roma, those without a permanent address, property, or occupation. There likely were many such queries from Bosnia, because in the spring of 1942 the Ministry of Internal Affairs subsequently issued local officials a clarifying circular regarding these Muslim Roma. It ordered "the so-called White Roma Muslims are to be left alone, because they are to be considered Aryans."²⁷

It is because of these repeated interventions in 1941–42 that the Bosnian Muslim Roma survived; the communities of Sarajevo, Dobož, Brčko, Srebrenica, and some smaller localities escaped the horrible fate of most of the country's Roma. They were spared as Muslims and because of their high degree of assimilation; they had Muslim names, dressed like Muslims, had homes and professions.²⁸ How many Roma were saved because of Muslim protests is difficult to say because we do not know how many Muslim Roma there were in Bosnia. The intervention of the Muslim leadership was the only serious intervention made on their behalf.²⁹

Roma in the Jasenovac Camp System

The vast majority of Roma were not that fortunate. Virtually all captured Roma were sent, beginning in the late spring of 1942, to the Jasenovac camp system.³⁰ Once there,

almost all of them were herded into Camp III-C, where a separate section was formed for them. By late 1942 most had been killed. One survivor, the communist Mladen Iveković, later wrote, “I watched rivers of Roma, their wives and children, flow daily into Jasenovac. They came to be slaughtered. Wagon-loads [of Roma] were killed daily.”³¹ Another camp survivor, Milko Riffer, arrived in Jasenovac’s Camp III-C in October 1942. Other inmates told him that there had been anywhere from 10,000 to 20,000 Roma in the camp in the late summer of 1942. By October 1942 virtually all Roma had been murdered. The section of the camp that had earlier been designated for the Roma was now being used as a sanatorium.³² Other survivors support Riffer’s account. Egon Berger and Đorđe Miliša also claim that the Roma who began arriving in large numbers in the summer of 1942 were all placed in and near Camp III-C and murdered within months.³³ Based on survivor testimonies and memoirs—we have no camp documents pertaining to the Roma—between June and October 1942 virtually all Roma in the Jasenovac camp system had been murdered.

Conclusion: Roma Losses

As I have mentioned earlier, it is difficult to determine the exact number of Roma who were murdered at the hands of the Ustaša authorities. The first postwar Yugoslav census, conducted in 1948, determined that there were 405 Roma in Croatia and 422 in Bosnia-Herzegovina. These numbers alone indicate how high Roma losses were in Croatia: from a 1941 population of probably 26,000–28,000, only 827 were recorded in 1948.³⁴

And yet, there is no consensus among scholars in former Yugoslavia or in the West on the exact number of Roma victims in Croatia. For example, Milan Bulajić claims that 40,000 Roma were killed in Croatia, which seems like a statistical improbability given that most scholars believe there were no more than 27,000–28,000 Roma in wartime Croatia.³⁵ Antun Miletić, who has authored a detailed, three-volume study of the Jasenovac camp system, believes that approximately 25,000 Roma were killed.³⁶ The Croatian Jewish historian Ivo Goldstein, in a recently published history of Croatia, believes there were only 15,000 Roma in wartime Croatia, all of whom were killed.³⁷ Both the Israeli scholar Menachem Shelah and American scholar Dennis Reinhartz believe that 26,000 Roma, out of a prewar population of 27,000–28,000, were killed in Croatia.³⁸ Although most scholars have settled on a figure of 25,000–27,000, there is still wide disagreement on the numbers. This is because we do not

know how many Roma there were before the war. Second, perpetrator documents are few and far between. Like the Nazi administrators in Germany and occupied Europe, Ustaša officials either did not maintain detailed records of Roma, or destroyed them. Third, it seems likely, based on the 1948 census figures, that many Roma fled to occupied Serbia during the war or were deported there by the Croatian authorities in 1941. According to the 1948 census, the number of Roma in Serbia was far greater than in 1931, which suggests that some Roma may have fled or were deported there from Croatia.³⁹ We must also keep in mind that some Roma managed to flee to the Italian-occupied zone of Croatia, as did many Jews and Serbs, where they were given shelter and, in some cases, even removed to Italy.⁴⁰ Fourth, although Roma were recognized as a national minority after the war, many Muslim Roma in Bosnia, who were spared during the war only because they were Muslim, may have chosen to register themselves after the war as “Yugoslav Muslims” rather than as Roma, which would have further reduced postwar Roma numbers. As both Tatomir Vukanović and David Crowe have observed, after 1945 there were probably thousands of “closet” Roma who simply felt uncomfortable identifying themselves as Roma in the immediate postwar era.⁴¹

In the final analysis, however, we should not dwell too long on numbers alone. Despite disagreements on this issue, there is absolutely no doubt that Croatian Roma suffered an indescribably horrible fate, and that almost the entire community that fell into Ustaša hands was killed. Roma losses in Croatia may have accounted for five to ten percent of Roma losses in Europe, depending on one’s calculation of total Roma losses.⁴² Although from the outset the Ustaša authorities devoted much greater attention both to the Serb and Jewish populations, and regarded the Roma as a lower priority, when they moved against the Roma in 1942 they did so rapidly, thoroughly, and with fatal consequences. Between May and October 1942, in a period of just six months, virtually the entire Roma community was annihilated, regardless of age or sex. What adds to this immense and horrible tragedy is that we have so few resources, so few records, to investigate this genocide.

Notes

1. The persecution of Roma in wartime Croatia is treated by Jozo Tomasevich, *War and Revolution in Yugoslavia, 1941–1945: Occupation and Collaboration* (Stanford, 2001), pp. 380–415, 608–10; Milan Bulajić, *Ustaški zločini genocida i sudjenje Andriji Artukoviću 1986. godine* (Belgrade, 1988), vol. 2, pp. 82–174; Mirko Peršen, *Ustaški logori*, 2nd ed. (Zagreb, 1990); and, S. D. Milošević, *Izbeglice i preseljenici na teritoriji okupirane Jugoslavije, 1941–1945* (Belgrade, 1982), pp. 239–42. For a survey of Yugoslav Roma, see Tatomir Vukanović, *Romi (Cigani) u Jugoslaviji* (Vranje, 1983). There are only a few Western studies that address the topic. See Menachem Shelah, “Genocide in Satellite Croatia during the Second World War,” in *A Mosaic of Victims: Non-Jews Persecuted and Murdered by the Nazis*, Michael Berenbaum, ed. (New York, 1990), pp. 74–9, which mentions the Roma in passing; Dennis Reinhartz, “Damnation of the Outsider: The Gypsies of Croatia and Serbia in the Balkan Holocaust, 1941–1945,” in *The Gypsies of Eastern Europe*, David Crowe and John Kolsti, eds. (Armonk, NY, 1991), pp. 81–92; Donald Kenrick and Gratton Puxon, *The Destiny of Europe’s Gypsies* (London, 1972), pp. 108–17; David M. Crowe, *A History of the Gypsies of Eastern Europe and Russia* (New York, 1994), pp. 195–233; and Rajko Djurić, et al., *Ohne Heim - Ohne Grab: Die Geschichte der Roma und Sinti* (Berlin, 1996), pp. 277–84.

2. Western scholars of Yugoslavia now believe that the old, communist-era official Yugoslav estimates of wartime casualties in Yugoslavia (1.7 million dead) are too high, and that approximately 1 million died in all of Yugoslavia. The approximate breakdown of losses by nationality is as follows: Serbs (between 487,000 and 530,000), Croats (192,000–207,000), Bosnian Muslims (86,000–103,000), Jews (60,000), Montenegrins (50,000), and Slovenes (32,000–42,000). It is now estimated that roughly 350,000 Serbs (or 18 percent of the Serb population in 1941) and 27,000–30,000 Jews (or 75 percent of the Jewish population in 1941) were killed in wartime Croatia. Determining Roma losses is much more difficult. Most scholars believe that 25,000–27,000 Roma were killed, out of a 1941 population of roughly 28,000. If true, this would mean that, in proportionate terms, Roma losses (approximately 90 percent) were higher than either Serb or Jewish losses in wartime Croatia. For a summary of the figures, see John R. Lampe, *Yugoslavia as History: Twice There Was a Country* (Cambridge, 1996), p. 380 n. 10; and Tomasevich, *War and Revolution in Yugoslavia*, pp. 718–50. These figures are based on the work of Bogoljub Kočević, *Žrtve Drugog svetskog rata u Jugoslaviji* (London, 1985); and Vladimir Žerjavić, *Gubici stanovništva Jugoslavije u Drugom svjetskom ratu* (Zagreb, 1989).

3. Eugen “Dido” Kvaternik, *Sjećanja i zapažanja: Prilozi za hrvatsku povijest*, comp. by Jere Jareb (Zagreb, 1995), p. 285.

4. Zoltan Barany, “The Poverty of Gypsy Studies,” *NewsNet: The Newsletter of the AAASS* 40 (May 2000), no. 3, pp. 2–3.

5. Bulajić, *Ustaški zločini genocida i sudjenje Andriji Artukovi u 1986. godine*, p. 83.

6. Peršen, *Ustaški logori*, p. 157; Milošević, *Izbeglice i preseljenici*, p. 239. Milošević believes that the 70,000 persons in the “other and unknown” category of the 1931 census were all Roma, which seems unlikely since other groups were probably recorded under that category. According to Peršen, the autonomous prewar Croatian government (1939–41) claimed in its 1940 official almanac that there were 14,879 Roma in Croatia (or 0.37 percent of the population). The fascist Croatian state established in 1941 was larger than the prewar autonomous Croatian province in Yugoslavia (1939–41). One must therefore add up to 11,000 Roma from Bosnia, which would result in a figure of approximately 26,000 Roma in the Independent State of Croatia in 1941. The Western scholars Paul R. Magocsi and David Crowe also provide a figure of 70,000 Roma in 1931. Crowe estimates that in 1941 there were 28,500 Roma in Croatia. See P. R. Magocsi, *Historical Atlas of East Central Europe* (Seattle, 1993), p. 141; and David Crowe, *A History of the Gypsies of Eastern Europe and Russia*, p. 216.

7. “Zaštita arijske krvi i časti hrvatskog naroda,” *Hrvatski narod*, October 26, 1941, p. 2.

8. “Cigani sa područja grada Zagreba moraju se prijaviti,” *Hrvatski narod*, July 19, 1941, p. 7.

9 “Poziv židovima,” *Hrvatski narod*, July 19, 1941, p. 24.

10. Cited in Bulajić, *Ustaški zločini genocida*, p. 84.

11. On June 4, 1941, a Croato-German deportation agreement was signed in Zagreb. According to the terms of this agreement, the Croatian government was to accept over 100,000 Slovenes from German-occupied Slovenia in exchange for being allowed to deport the same number of Serbs to German-occupied Serbia. These deportations began in early July 1941 and soon degenerated into chaos, as zealous local Croatian officials exceeded centrally imposed quotas and guidelines; the terms of the Croato-German agreement were largely disregarded in the process. By late August 1941 the German military authorities of occupied Serbia, faced with a huge influx of deported Serbs from Croatia (in addition to over 30,000 from Hungarian-occupied Bačka (Bácska, in Hungarian), and a smaller number from Bulgarian-occupied Macedonia), had temporarily halted the deportations. A month later they permanently put an end to the deportations. On September 22, 1941, the German ambassador to Croatia, Siegfried Kasche, informed Berlin that a Croato-German conference was held that day

concerning resettlement policy. Although it was impossible to determine precisely how many Serbs had been deported to Serbia, there was “mutual agreement” that, according to counts in Serbia, over 100,000 had been deported. On September 26, 1941, SS-Obergruppenführer Reinhard Heydrich wrote to Foreign Minister Joachim von Ribbentrop that the Croatian government had “so far deported 118,110 persons in legal and illegal transports to Serbia.” *Documents on German Foreign Policy*, Vol. XIII (Washington, DC, 1964), Docs. 350, 360, pp. 552–55, 570–71. It is quite possible that some local officials, especially in eastern Croatia (Slavonia, Srijem regions), deported Roma as well, since many of them in the region were of the Serbian Orthodox faith. After all, the Ministry of Internal Affairs’ July 4, 1941, census order to local officials did permit them to deport Roma who had “wandered” into Croatia since the outbreak of the world war. Given the over-all behavior of local Croatian officials vis-à-vis the Serbs, it is likely that many Roma were swept up in the deportations and simply herded across the border.

12. Milošević, *Izbeglice i preseljenici*, p. 240; Peršen, *Ustaški logori*, pp. 55–56.

13. Milošević, *Izbeglice i preseljenici*, p. 240.

14. Bulajić, *Ustaški zločini genocida*, p. 100; Peršen, *Ustaški logori*, p. 157.

15. In the prewar period, Ustaša periodicals and propaganda emphasized anti-Serb themes and, to a much lesser extent, antisemitic themes. The Roma were never mentioned. Furthermore, all anti-Serb and anti-Jewish decrees and measures were published in the Croatian press in 1941, and anti-Serb and anti-Jewish articles justifying these harsh policies are legion. However, after examining the Ustaša newspaper *Hrvatski narod* (The Croat Nation), the fascist regime’s flagship daily paper in Zagreb, I have been unable to locate a single article from 1941 devoted solely to the so-called “Roma Question” in Croatia. Furthermore, local Croatian civilian, gendarme, and military officials, in their weekly situation reports to Zagreb, regularly reported, under “General Political Conditions,” on the behavior of the local “Croat” (i.e., Catholics and Bosnian Muslim populations), Serb, and Jewish populations. It is virtually impossible to find references in these reports to Roma, either in 1941 or later. There was a sharp contrast in both the press and official documentation: on the one hand, an explicitly anti-Serb and anti-Jewish tone, and on the other, almost universal silence on Roma. Among other things, this would indicate that the Croatian authorities regarded the Serb and Jewish “questions” as much more serious. Finally, although the Ustaša authorities formed a central office for Jewish affairs (the “Jewish Section”), no such office was formed to coordinate and implement policy toward the Roma.

16. The documents are reproduced in Miletić, *Koncentracioni logor Jasenovac*, pp. 289–91. Based on the extant documentation, it is impossible to infer any German involvement in the Croatian government’s May 1942 decision to arrest and deport

Roma. In the case of Bulgaria and Hungary, David Crowe has argued that Germany applied various degrees of pressure in 1941–42. In both countries, racial and compulsory work decrees were issued, but these decrees were not necessarily followed by deportations or killings. In the Bulgarian case, the German government evidently decided by mid-1942 not to press Sofia on deportations. In Romania, as Radu Ioanid has recently shown Nazi Germany paid great attention to the government's handling of the Roma "problem." Crowe, *A History of the Gypsies of Eastern Europe and Russia*, pp. 89–91; and Radu Ioanid, *The Holocaust in Romania: The Destruction of Jews and Gypsies Under the Antonescu Regime, 1940–1944* (Chicago, 2000), pp. 225–37.

17. Miletić, *Koncentracioni logor Jasenovac*, pp. 291–94.

18. *Ibid.*, pp. 294–96.

19. *Ibid.*, p. 299.

20. For example, Josip Joka Nikolić, from the village of Predavec (Čazma district), recalled that he and the other Roma were told they were being resettled either to Bosnia or to central Croatia, where they would be given land. See Bulajić, *Ustaški zločini genocida*, p. 91.

21. "Hrvatska rješava pitanje Cigana," *Hrvatski narod*, June 14, 1942, p. 4.

22. "Čišćenje Zagreba od prosjaka," *Hrvatski narod*, June 18, 1942, p. 6.

23. There had been three categories of Roma in Bosnia-Herzegovina. The oldest group, known as "White Roma," was most assimilated. It was gradually losing its Romany language and customs. These Roma were Muslim, whereas their counterparts in Serbia were Orthodox Christian. On the other hand, the "Black Roma" were more nomadic. They were popularly referred to as čergaši (from the Turkish word çergi or "tent"). Although Muslim, they were much less assimilated than the so-called White Roma. The third group was known as the Karavlas ("Black Vlachs"), who tended to regard themselves as Vlachs or even Romanians, although they were often regarded by others as Roma. See Noel Malcolm, *Bosnia: A Short History* (London, 1994), pp. 116–18.

24. Bulajić, *Ustaški zločini genocida*, p. 149.

25. *Ibid.*, p. 150. The Ustaše, like most Croat nationalists since the late nineteenth century, regarded the Bosnian Muslims as Muslim "Croats." This was based on their belief that the Bosnian Muslims had, in the medieval period, belonged to the Catholic community (which thus supposedly made them Croat) and then the Bogumil religious sect. With the arrival of the Ottoman Turks, these Bogumil converts, so the argument went, to Islam, but conversion did not alter their Croat nationality and character. A

summary of the Ustaša attitude towards the Bosnian Muslims can be found in Malcom, *Bosnia*, pp. 174–92; and in Francine Friedman, *The Bosnian Muslim: Denial of a Nation* (Boulder, 1996), pp. 117–32. A more detailed treatment is provided by Fikreta Jelić-Butić, “Bosna i Hercegovina u koncepciji stvaranja NDH,” and Mile Konjević, “O nekim pitanjima politike ustaša prema bosanskohercegovačkih Muslimana 1941. godine,” in *1941. u istoriji naroda Bosne i Hercegovine*, Zdravka Antonić, ed. (Sarajevo, 1973), pp. 43–9, 263–74.

26. Cited in Miletić, *Koncentracioni logor Jasenovac*, p. 290 n. 3.

27. Cited in Miletić, *Koncentracioni logor Jasenovac*, p. 290 n. 3.

28. Bulajić, *Ustaški zločini genocida*, pp. 150–52.

29. The Roma encountered a good deal of hostility or indifference from the population. However, we do have a few recorded instances of the population assisting arrested Roma. For example, when the eighty Roma of Pisarovina district of Croatia were arrested in May 1942, a group of forty Croat peasants protested their arrest to the local prefect, Dragutin Stare. They asked that the Roma be released because they had not done anything wrong. Stare informed the Ministry of Internal Affairs of the protest, but the Ministry never replied and the Roma were duly deported. The peasants of Kutjevo village (Požega district) protested the arrest of forty-four local Roma, as did the villagers of Vrpolje (Brod district). In both cases, the peasants submitted written petitions to the authorities asking for the release of the Roma, who were law-abiding citizens and innocent of any wrongdoing. Only in the case of Vrpolje was the petition successful. Ten Roma families, all of whom were Catholic and permanently settled in the village, were saved. Bulajić, *Ustaški zločini genocida*, pp. 85, 94; Milošević, *Izbeglice i preseljenici*, p. 241; and Slavica Hrečkovski, *Slavonski Brod u NOB i socijalističkoj revoluciji, 1941–1945* (Slavonski Brod, 1982), pp. 46–48.

30. The only work on Roma in Jasenovac is Dragoljub Acković, *Stradanja Roma u Jasenovcu* (Belgrade, 1995).

31. Cited in Jefto Šašić, “Predgovor,” in Miletić, *Koncentracioni logor Jasenovac*, p. 8. Iveković believed that approximately 30,000 Roma had been killed in the camp.

32. Milko Riffer, *Grad mrtvih: Jasenovac 1943* (Zagreb, 1946), pp. 38, 154–55.

33. Egon Berger, *44 mjeseca u Jasenovcu* (Zagreb, 1966), pp. 67–69; and Đorđe Miliša, *U mučilištu-paklu Jasenovac* (Zagreb, 1945), pp. 59–61, 139–42. Camp III of Jasenovac had been formed in November 1941. By the summer of 1942 it had become the largest camp of the Jasenovac system, with three sections (III-A, III-B, III-C). Camp III-C, where most of the Roma were detained, was formed in July 1942. Witness

and survivor testimonies often provide high figures for the number of Roma killed at Jasenovac. For example, Berger believed that 45,000 Roma perished in the camp, while Miliša estimated 40,000 Roma victims.

34. Peršen, *Ustaški logori*, p. 159.

35. Bulajić, *Ustaški zločini genocida*, p. 173. Unfortunately, Bulajić does not seriously question or scrutinize the numbers he uses in his study. He bases his estimates entirely on survivor accounts (Đorđe Miliša, Egon Berger, et al.), which tend to exaggerate the number of Roma killed in Jasenovac. Mladen Colić, although not discussing in any detail the Croatian government's policy towards the Roma, also believes that there were 40,000 Roma victims in Croatia. See Mladen Colić, *Takozvana NDH* (Zagreb, 1973), p. 394. The figure of 40,000 is also cited in Djurić, et al., *Ohne Heim*, pp. 280–82. During the 1999 war crimes trial of Dinko Šakić, who served for eight months in 1944 as commander of the Jasenovac camp system, the President of the Roma Party in Zagreb, Kasum Cana, claimed in an interview that over 20,000 Roma had been killed at Jasenovac, but that the figure may have been as high as 40,000. See “Rom za bježanje,” *Feral Tribune*, 9 August 1999.

36. Miletić, *Koncentracioni logor Jasenovac*, p. 37.

37. Ivo Goldstein, *Croatia: A History* (London, 1999), p. 137.

38. Shelah, “Genocide in Satellite Croatia,” p. 78; Reinhartz, “Damnation of the Outsider,” p. 84.

39. According to the March 1948 census, there were approximately 52,000 Roma in the Socialist Republic of Serbia (i.e., Serbia proper, with Vojvodina and Kosovo provinces). According to the 1931 census, there were approximately 29,000 persons in Serbia (Belgrade prefecture, Dunav and Morava provinces, i.e., Vojvodina and Serbia proper) in the “other and unknown” category. According to David Crowe, in 1939 there may have been 39,000–40,000 Roma in Serbia proper and 60,000 in wider Serbia (with Vojvodina and Kosovo). Viewed in relation to the 1931 census, these estimates may be too high. See Peršen, *Ustaški logori*, p. 159; and Crowe, *A History of the Gypsies of Eastern Europe and Russia*, p. 220.

40. On Italian assistance to Croatian Roma, see Crowe, *A History of the Gypsies of Eastern Europe and Russia*, p. 219; Angus Fraser, *The Gypsies* (Oxford, 1992), p. 271; Kenrick and Puxon, *The Destiny of Europe's Gypsies*, p. 109; and Giovanna Boursier, “Gypsies in Italy during the Fascist Dictatorship and the Second World War,” in *In the Shadow of the Swastika: vol. 2: The Gypsies during the Second World War*, D. Kenrick, ed. (Hatfield, 1999), pp. 25–8.

41. Crowe, *A History of the Gypsies of Eastern Europe and Russia*, p. 223; Vukanović, *Romi (Cigani) u Jugoslaviji*, pp. 129–32. According to the March 1948 census, there were 72,000 Roma in Yugoslavia, and according to the 1953 census, there were almost 85,000. Vukanović believes that there were actually 150,000 Roma in 1953, but that most still refused to identify themselves as Roma.

42. This assumes that Roma losses in Europe numbered around 250,000, a figure provided by a number of authors. For example, see Kenrick and Puxon, *The Destiny of Europe's Gypsies*, pp. 183–84; and Magocsi, *Historical Atlas of East Central Europe*, p. 164. Henry R. Huttenbach believes that between 250,000 to 500,000 Roma were killed during the Second World War. See H. R. Huttenbach, “The Romani Pořajmos: The Nazi Genocide of Gypsies in Germany and Eastern Europe,” in *The Gypsies of Eastern Europe*, pp. 44–45.

The Gypsies in the Upheaval: The Situation in France, 1939–1946

Denis Peschanski

This essay on Gypsies in World War II Europe focuses on those of France because of rather recent betterment of our knowledge about their situation. Large numbers of Gypsies in occupied France were systematically confined in internment camps,¹ whereas those in Belgium, in January 1941, were confronted almost from the first with deportation.

As an exceptional measure internment was implemented before the defeat of the Third Republic by the Ministry of the Interior (Home Office) and not by the Ministry of Justice. It was exercised against suspect groups and individuals. The question of such internment arose before the defeat and was not resolved even with the Liberation.

The first French internment camp opened in February 1939; the last one closed in May 1946. This was, of course, the result of various policies: exceptional measures (presented as temporary answers to an exceptional situation) such as those of 1939 or of 1945, policies of exclusion such as those in France under the Vichy government, and policies of deportation beginning in the spring of 1942 when the first trains left for Auschwitz-Birkenau.

One must remember the situation in the summer of 1940. After the defeat of the French armies, Marshal Pétain became head of the French government and signed an armistice agreement with Germany: among its provisions, France was divided into zones. The “demarcation line” separated the two primary zones. One zone was to be under the German *Militärbefehlshaber in Frankreich* (Paris), and the other (seated in Vichy and called “the Free Zone”) was to be left under French sovereignty until an authoritarian state was established under Marshal Petain. However, French administration functioned on both sides of the demarcation line and the Vichy government was determined to assert the validity of its authority over all French territory on the whole—even if that required resort to repression and persecution ordered by the Germans. The Germans were satisfied with a French right-wing regime as long as it was willing to be used as a puppet.

The map of zones was quite complicated in the eastern provinces because of the de facto annexation of Alsace and Moselle to the Reich. Later, in the north, the

départements of the Nord and of the Pas-de-Calais were placed under the command of Brussels, and not Paris.

This short introduction is prologue to two questions: Why were the Gypsies of France confined in internment camps? And were they included among the targets of a “Final Solution”?

THE WEIGHT OF LEGACY

Suspicion about the Gypsies and a close watch over them did not start with the Occupation. One should take into account two legacies in order to understand the situation of these people.

On the French Side

Let us turn our attention to the period preceding World War I. As of 1912, French law required the “Nomads” to prove their identities when they arrived in France. Each was given a *carnet anthropométrique* (anthropometric booklet) to be shown when arriving at or leaving a town.

This law was introduced in response to two prevailing stereotypes: the “spy-Gypsy” (believed to be potentially dangerous in wartime because of his easy mobility) and the “thief-Gypsy” (a notion derived from a pronounced wave of organized crime that characterized the early years of that century).

Such notions, not surprisingly, were raised again when war was declared in 1939. The most important measure was the April 6, 1940, decree that forbade the free movement of the Nomads within France as a whole and for the duration of the war. The Nomads had to declare themselves at each police prefecture upon their arrival, and were compelled to live in the town chosen by the prefect in every département.

In the preamble to the decree, one could read that the Nomads were considered dangerous because they could detect the movement of French troops, and provide that information to the Germans. Military authorities even thought of confining them in camps but then gave up the idea.

In this regard, the argument of Interior Minister Albert Sarraut deserves to be quoted:

I estimate that the gathering of the nomads in a sort of concentration camp would present a very serious double disadvantage favoring the regrouping of the bands that my services sometimes had the greatest difficulty dissociating, and raising sensitive problems of housing, provisioning, and

guarding, which could not be solved without entailing significant expenses and necessitating the reinforcement of the surveillance staff.

On the German Side

We already have been informed by very competent historians about relevant aspects of German politics. You may then remember that Germans had been exercising themselves to denounce “the Gypsy plague” since the second half of the nineteenth century. In 1926, under the Weimar Republic, Criminal Police commission set up an organization of German citizens for the struggle against this “plague.” During its first years, the policy followed by the Nazis derived from the prior general framework of widespread German anti-Gypsy measures. Local and regional authorities were at the vanguard of progressively escalating anti-Gypsy legislation in the 1930s. In regard to the racial laws concerning the Gypsies, the centralization of repressive measures and structures dates to 1938–1939, after which simple repression raced out of control until radicalization under central control at the end of 1942.²

A MASSIVE INTERNMENT IN THE OCCUPIED ZONE

In the foregoing context, the German decision to intern the Nomads of occupied France is not surprising. The proportion of their population affected was comparable to that of the Jews.

The Decision of October 4, 1940, and Its Implementation

After they had taken various measures against so-called undesirable people such as Jews and Nomads, and British living near the French Atlantic coast, on October 4, 1940, the *Militärbefehlshaber in Frankreich* (Paris) ordered the transportation of Gypsies living in the Occupied Zone to internment camps “under the surveillance of French policemen.”³ While the German and French authorities were about this, the practice of “ambulatory professions” was forbidden in twenty-one départements of western France.

As we shall see, French authorities did not shrink from playing an active role in the decision to intern Gypsies. The reaction of the Interior Ministry deserves to be quoted because of the powerlessness it expresses: “Even if the bringing together of Nomads in concentration camps is not desirable, it doesn’t seem in today’s

circumstances possible for the Government to answer by a blunt refusal to the orders of the occupying authorities.”⁴

The prefects were in charge of carrying out the German desires. In some cases, these French police officials took advantage of the situation to indulge personal animosities, going further than the German dictates, and rounding up vagrants and other unwelcome groups.

Living conditions in those camps were bad, even if the death rate was not very high. Hygienic conditions were quite basic. Food was in limited supply as in any other French camp, but in these camps aid organizations were almost nonexistent and the internees were rarely able to obtain food supplements. Actually these normally nomadic populations were doubly affected by their internment: the unwarranted internment they suffered, not based upon any crime, contravened their chosen “traveling” lifestyle even more than “settled” captivity affected members of most other prisoner groups. Moreover, their conditions were aggravated by their status in society. Rejected by the rest of the population, Nomads who escaped were easily identified and sent back to the camp. Social control over the Gypsies was complete.

It was quite difficult to know precisely how many Gypsies were interned. Yet the various available reports evidence that approximately 3,000 Nomads remained in these camps for periods of a few weeks to a few years, but most of them for a few years.⁵

The map (see next page) shows the great number of them confined in camps and the difference in numbers between the two zones.

Vichy, Standing Back

The politics of Vichy were quite different from those many would expect. When I began to look closely at the fate of the Gypsies of France, I anticipated that I would find the French government policy of exclusion expanded to a new target. To recall the basis of that policy, one should remember that, in the view of the new leaders, the French defeat was not linked to military or even political errors, but to a deterioration of the French society undermined by a plot. This plot was the result of the actions of those deemed to be “anti-France,” to use Pétain’s terminology—namely the communists, the Jews, the foreigners, and the Freemasons. The leaders of Vichy saw little sense then in struggling against the occupation, which was perceived as merely a manifestation of the root problem. One had to tackle the profound causes of the defeat,

gathering

together

Camps for the Internment of Nomads*



* The Nomads constituted only a small percentage of the internees in the camps of Rivesaltes, Le Barcarès, Argelès, and Gurs.

----- Boundaries of the principal zones.

the social components called “pure,” and melding them with traditional values such as work, family, homeland, order, and piety. “Impure” elements were to be excluded. This was the prescription to regenerate the French society in order to save it. The principle of exclusion was definitely at the heart of the Vichy regime.

I then thought I would find the Gypsies officially ascribed as a group of social outcasts. Yet I found mention of them absent from official speeches. Moreover, in the southern zone there is no equivalent of the German orders in the occupied zone. The April 6, 1940, law promulgated by the Third Republic was still applied. House arrest

was implemented with differing degrees of stringency: The Gypsies were to be kept from traveling about.

But as shown on the map, some Gypsies were confined in the southern zone, and their case warrants particular attention in several respects. Numbering only in the hundreds, they were far fewer than in the northern zone. During the second half of 1940 and continuing through 1942 and into 1943, some Gypsies were expelled from Alsace and Moselle by the German authorities who wielded control in these départements of the East, the zone annexed to the Reich. The Gypsies were pushed out to unoccupied France, and without the agreement of the French authorities. Like the Jews who, too, were expelled from this zone during July–October, 1940, they were transferred into camps after they crossed the demarcation line.⁶

The only southern zone camp that was specifically designated for Gypsies was erected in Saliers (Bouches-du-Rhône, not far from Marseille and Avignon) in June 1942.⁷

On the whole, the internment of the Nomads in the southern zone was thus a “marginal” phenomenon linked to exceptional circumstances; in the northern zone the Germans undertook mass internment. As a rule, the prefects, the local governments, and the rest of the French society were satisfied to be rid of these undesired populations.

NO FINAL SOLUTION FOR THE GYPSIES OF FRANCE

The Historiographic Tradition

Until recently the figures concerning the fate of the Gypsies of France were not well founded. No search in the archives corroborated the conclusions that had been previously drawn. In 1972, Donald Kenrick and Grattan Puxon devoted a seminal work to the lot of the Gypsies; it remained a standard reference for many years.⁸

According to their statistics, 30,000 Gypsies had been interned in France and a great number of these were deported to Germany where 16,000 to 18,000 died. In their first edition these authors included among their sources a less than rigorous study conducted by a French aid organization. Ten years after Kenrick and Puxon, historian Martin Gilbert did not quote the same source, but nevertheless included similar figures in the *Atlas of the Holocaust*.⁹

My own research indicates that apparently 3,000 Gypsies were confined in French camps. We already have an idea that the reckoning will not be neat. So now we must examine the deportations from France and from Belgium.

Transfers and Deportation to Germany

About one hundred interned Gypsies were “voluntarily” transported from France to work in Germany (and were liberated at the end of the war). Forced deportations occurred when French laws imposed work in Germany.

Another convoy, in another context, left on January 15, 1944, from Malines, Belgium; 351 Gypsies were deported to Birkenau, only twelve of whom survived the war. The background of these events is as follows. In the autumn of 1943, the *Militärbefehlshaber in Belgium und Nord-Frankreich* (Brussels) organized a roundup in Belgium and in the French départements of the Nord and the Pas-de-Calais. The French internment camps were *not* utilized in connection with this roundup; indeed it took place in a zone where there were no camps for Gypsies. Neither in Belgium nor France had witnessed any sizeable deportations of Gypsies before, neither were there any afterwards. These figures are confirmed in a memorial book about the Gypsies at Birkenau; it was published several years ago under the auspices of the Auschwitz Museum and the Heidelberg Documentary and Cultural Center of German Sinti and Roma.¹⁰

So how does one explain both the event and its isolated characteristics? Undertaken at the behest of the *Militärbefehlshaber*, no evidence leads us to conclude that any impetus for the action came from local or regional German authorities; Michael Zimmermann has found a reference to a written order issued a few months before the convoy. In any event, the question still has to be asked: Why was the event isolated in Belgium and why wasn't it replicated in France?¹¹

The outlines of the fate of deported Gypsies of Europe are known now, and have been presented elsewhere. Whatever their origins, we know that 23,000 Gypsies were deported to Birkenau. Sixty-three percent of these came from Germany and Austria and 22% from Bohemia-Moravia—a total of 85% from the prewar Reich. Almost 18,000 died there.

During the last stage, between April 15 and August 2, 1944, some 4,300 deemed “fit to work” were transferred to Ravensbruck, Buchenwald, or Flossenbürg. On August 2, the prisoners of the camp B IIe of Birkenau were slaughtered: 3,000 men,

women, and children were gassed. If we take into account the thousands of Gypsies gassed in Chelmno, those who were massacred by the Einsatzgruppen, and more by the regular army, as well as those who were the victims of puppet governments or allies of the Reich (such as Croatia), the number of Gypsies who perished as the result of such measures is between 50,000 and 80,000, in any case nearer these numbers than the 500,000 figure usually given.

In many ways the Nazi persecution of the Gypsies resembled more closely their pre-genocidal treatment of the Jews. An analogous racism fed the exclusion of the Gypsies. The same laws designed for the so-called “protection of German blood” affected the Gypsies. Some of the same camps confined Jews and Gypsies. Yet the process and ultimate goals were different, probably because the Nazis did not consider the Gypsy the same threat they considered the Jew to be. The Jew was seen to constitute not only a danger for “purity” of the German race, but as the primary political and ideological danger to the world. As the perceived dominator of the world, the Jew was to be the target of the harshest war, a fight to death against the embodiment of Nazi-perceived evil. This enemy embodied the ultimate expression of “otherness” and found systematic conceptualization in the artificial construct of the Judeo-Bolshevist. In the similarities and differences the Germans saw in the Jews’ and Gypsies’ otherness, we find some perspective on the fate of the Gypsies of France.

Notes

1. See Denis Peschanski (with the collaboration of De M.-Ch. Hubert and E. Philippon), *Les Tsiganes en France, 1939–1946: Contrôle et exclusion* (Paris: CNRS-Editions, 1994); for Belgium, José Gotovitch, *Quelques données relatives à l’extermination des Tziganes en Belgique: Cahiers d’histoire de la Seconde Guerre mondiale* (Brussels: December 4, 1976).
2. See Michael Zimmermann, *Rassenutopie und Genocid: Die nationalsozialistische “Lösung der Zigeunerfrage”* (Hamburg: Christians, 1996).
3. Hans Speidel, October 4, 1940, archives nationales (France), AJ40 885/2.
4. Ministry of the Interior to DGTO, November 23, 1940, Archives nationales (France) F7 15087.
5. See Denis Peschanski, *Les Tsiganes en France 1939–1946*, op. cit.; and D. Peschanski, *La France des camps : Internement 1938–1946* (Paris: Gallimard, 2002).
6. Scheel to Müller, September 18, 1940, Bundesarchiv Koblenz, R83/3; Befehlshaber Sipo-SD to Einsatzkommando 1 & 2, July 4, 1940, *ibidem*.
7. Francis Bertrand and Jacques Grandjonec, “Un ancien camp de Bohémiens: Saliers,” in Jacques Grandjonec and Theresa Grundtner, eds., *Zone d’ombres: Exil et internment d’Allemands et d’Autrichiens dans le Sud-Est de la France* (Aix-en-Provence: Alinea, 1990), pp. 291–324.
8. Donald Kenrick and Grattan Puxon, *The Destiny of Europe’s Gypsies* (New York: Basic Books, 1972), subsequently published in substantially revised edition as *Gypsies Under the Swastika* (Hatfield, UK : University of Hertfordshire Press, 1995).
9. Martin Gilbert, *Atlas de la Shoah* (French ed.) (Paris: Éditions de l’Aube/Samuelson, 1992), p. 141. (English-language edition, 1982.)
10. *Memorial Book: The Gypsies at Auschwitz-Birkenau* (Munich: K.G. Saur, 1993), 2 vol.
11. BA Koblenz, RSHA VA2 n° 207/43g, March 29, 1943, (Alsace, Lorraine et Luxembourg), 208/43g, 29/3/43 (Militärbefehlshaber im Belgium und NordFrankreich-Brussels, et Pays-Bas). These documents were discovered by Michael Zimmerman, c.f. his *Rassenutopie und Genocid*.

Romanian Memory of the Persecution of Roma

Viorel Achim

The deportation of the Roma to Transnistria was an element of the internal policy of Marshal Ion Antonescu's regime in Romania during World War II. Purportedly motivated by the authorities' concern for public order, the deportation of 25,000 to 26,000 Roma into the Soviet territory between the Dniester and the Bug, while the area was occupied by the Romanian army, was in effect a racist measure. At the same time, the deportation was related to the policy of ethnic cleansing being considered by the Antonescu government. Even if the anti-Roma measures targeted only some of this population, the deportation to Transnistria was in some respects similar to the anti-Roma policy applied in Germany and her satellite states at the same time. The studies on this topic, albeit few in number and virtually all of them published in recent years,¹ clarify the anti-Roma policy in Romania during the Antonescu regime.

The Attitude of the Population Towards the Deportation of the Roma (1942–1944)

One should begin by wondering how contemporaries viewed the deportation of the Roma to Transnistria. These deportations were widely known at the time, since the Roma were picked up in rather large numbers from all regions of the country. Also, the Romanian public, even under Ion Antonescu's dictatorial regime, still enjoyed a measure of freedom of expression. The archives house documents reflecting Romanians' opinion on the deportation of Roma. Politicians and scholars, as well as ordinary citizens, expressed their disagreement with the anti-Roma measures of the authorities, stating their views in letters, memoranda, and other communications addressed to Ion Antonescu, to the King, to the Ministry of Internal Affairs, and to other government entities.

The leaderships of the two democratic parties, the National Liberal Party and the National Peasants Party, were among those who protested against the deportation of the Roma. In a letter addressed to Ion Antonescu on 16 September 1942, Constantin I. C. Brătianu, president of the National Liberal Party, wrote that the deportation of the Roma was setting the country back several centuries. He asked Antonescu, "What is the use of such cruelty? What is the guilt of these wretched people? What benefit will their expulsion bring us? Is the Romanian land, especially after the present war,

overpopulated, and does it abound in skilled craftsmen, so that the sacrificing of a large part of its citizens can be called for?" The Liberal leader also played on Ion Antonescu's feelings, seeing that the latter was concerned at the time with the fate of the Romanians living outside the borders of the country, and added: "Think what will happen in Russia once rebuilt, who would follow our example and deport the Romanians of Transnistria to Turkestan or to northern Siberia and who would send back to Romania the thousands of Romanian citizens deported during the present regime."² The foremost leaders of the National Peasants Party, including their president, Iuliu Maniu, expressed their solidarity with the protest voiced by the Liberal leader.³ The prominent musician George Enescu interceded with Ion Antonescu on behalf of the Roma musicians, stating that he would go with them should they be deported.⁴ The management of some companies, for fear that the deportations would also extend to other Roma categories, interceded on behalf of their employees of Roma origin. The management of the CFR (Romanian Railways Company) workshop in Bucharest requested that its workers of Roma origin not be evacuated.⁵

As for the attitude of average citizens towards the deportation of the Roma, villagers' protests are quite revealing. There are numerous letters and memoranda, bearing dozens of signatures, at times written in the name of all the inhabitants of a village, either requesting that the Roma be brought back to their native village or that the Roma not be deported from the villages in question. Village elders interceded for their Roma neighbors. The latter are pictured as being part of the village; they are described as honest, hardworking citizens, important to the community, especially for their skills as craftsmen.⁶ All the above indicate that the anti-Roma measures had little widespread popular support.

However, such manifestations concerned exclusively the sedentary or settled Roma. The nomadic Roma did not receive the same support. No reference to them is made in the above-mentioned statements. The requests from various Roma for repatriation or that deportation not be inflicted reveal an awareness of the stigma attached to nomadic Roma. These Roma state in their requests that they are not nomads or vagrants, that they have a stable home and are engaged in a useful activity, and decry the fact that the treatment inflicted on nomadic Roma is now being applied to them. Gheorghe Niculescu himself, president of the General Union of the Roma of Romania (UGRR), requested in September 1942 that "the measures of arresting the Roma in view of their deportation to Transnistria should not apply to the native [i.e.,

sedentary—V.A.] Roma, that is to those who have a stable situation and who carry out various trades, but only to the nomadic Roma.”⁷

Given all the above elements, I believe it reasonable to assert that the authorities’ anti-Roma measures did not enjoy much support among the Romanian public. Undoubtedly, there is an explanation for this popular attitude towards the Roma. It resides in the good relations between the majority of the population and the Roma. In interwar Romania, the Roma were not a problem, either ethically or socially, and neither were they widely perceived as being one.⁸ The turning of the Roma into a “problem” was entirely the doing of the Antonescu regime. The adopting of a special policy towards the Roma did not have its roots in the past, but rather in the nature of the Antonescu regime. Moreover, neither before nor during the war was there in Romania an anti-Gypsy propaganda—comparable with the anti-Jewish one—that could have influenced the behavior of the population.

Under these circumstances, the deportation of the Roma to Transnistria took the Romanian public by surprise. In 1942, the overwhelming majority of the Romanian society found it hard to understand why the Roma should have been perceived as a problem that required such radical measures. The General Staff were also taken aback by the deportation of the Roma. They expressed their surprise that soldiers of Roma origin, fighting for their motherland, should be rewarded in such a curious way, with their families being evicted from their homes and deported. The Army requested an explanation and reparations.⁹ The military units in Romania showed their concern for the families of Roma soldiers, who were given leave to return to their homes to inquire about the situation of their families.

The Insignificance Accorded to the Deportation of the Roma in the Postwar (1944–1948) Discussion of the Antonescu Regime

After the Transnistrian episode, the Roma survivors’ return to Romania in the summer of 1944, and the 23 August 1944 change of regime, the “Gypsy problem” ceased to exist in the eyes of the Romanian authorities. The reinstatement of the survivors was made without much noise. There were no complicated problems related to property, since the property confiscated from some of the Roma in 1942 consisted of houses and very modest households that, even if taken over by the National Center for Romanization, had not been sold.

In the eyes of the new authorities, the Roma became what they had been in the

period before the Antonescu regime: a marginal social category rather than an ethnic minority. The authorities resumed their old preoccupations with controlling nomadism and persuading certain Roma groups to take up useful occupations. The State Sub-Secretariat of the Police issued the order ending persecutions on 13 September 1944. The order required that all Roma who had returned from Transnistria be allowed “to carry on with their trades, *and that measures should be taken to orient them towards various activities* [emphasis mine].”¹⁰ The old restrictions in regard to nomadic Roma were reintroduced.

The interest of the authorities and the public in the fate of the Roma and of the Transnistrian survivors faded away. It is nonetheless true that there was a time when the topic of the deportation of the Roma was taken up, namely at the 1945–1946 trials of the war criminals. However, the fate of the Roma during the Antonescu regime appeared to be of marginal importance. In 1945, at the trial of the first group of war criminals, when thirty-eight individuals were tried, only one page of the material published at the time¹¹ refers to the Roma, namely a passage in the Prosecution’s charge against Col. Modest Isopescu, former prefect of Golta County. It is a brief presentation of the declarations by two witnesses concerning the Prefect administration’s seizure of horses and wagons belonging to deported Roma; the seized property was turned over to some kolkhoz and farms. The remaining document (115 pages) pertains to the crimes committed against the Jews in Transnistria.

At the May 1946 trial of Ion Antonescu and his main collaborators the situation was not much different. The deportation of the Roma was one of the counts of indictment against Antonescu. However, it was not dwelled on much. Among the more than 100 volumes in the file none is mainly concerned with the problem of the Roma. Only in one volume are there, among others, documents concerning the Roma deported to Transnistria.¹² In *Procesul mării trădări naționale: stenograma debaterilor de la Tribunalul Poporului asupra Guvernului Antonescu* [The Trial of the Great National Betrayal: Stenography of the Debates at the People’s Court concerning the Antonescu Government], published in 1946 and synthesizing the Court’s works in 315 pages, the Roma are mentioned on only four occasions: in the bill of indictment (p. 42), in the Public Prosecutor’s charge (p. 305), in the cross-examination of Ion Antonescu (pp. 65–6), and in the cross-examination of Gen. Constantin Vasiliu, former Secretary of State at the Ministry of Internal Affairs (pp. 104, 108). The bill of indictment briefly mentions that “thousands of wretched families were evicted from their shanties and

hovels, and relocated across the Dniester. Tens of thousands of men, women, and children perished by starvation, cold weather and disease.” (p. 42) The Prosecution speaks of 26,000 deported Roma (p. 305), and General Vasiliu of 24,000 (p. 108). Under cross-examination, Ion Antonescu justifies the deportation of the Roma by reasons of public order: The Roma, he explained, have been deported as a result of the looting and murders committed in Bucharest and in other towns during curfew (pp. 65–6). The same idea appears in the memorandum sent by Antonescu to the People’s Court on 15 May 1946.¹³ The press, who covered the evolution of the trial at length, did not dwell on these details. *Scânteia*, the Communist Party newspaper, reported about the Roma only in reference to defendant Vasiliu, when reproducing the charge of the Public Prosecutor¹⁴.

In the immediate postwar discussion concerning the Antonescu regime, the Marshal’s policy towards the Roma was not given much weight. When the subject of the deportations to Transnistria is taken up, it refers almost exclusively to the deportation of the Jews. Discussions about the Roma and the members of some religious sects, who suffered almost the same fate as the Jews, are extremely rare. No mention about the Roma is to be found in the documents of the Communist Party, or those of other parties, which list the crimes of the Antonescu regime. Even Romanian Jewish organizations’ published documents dealing with the Transnistrian episode barely mention the Roma.¹⁵

The fate of the Roma survivors from Transnistria seems to have concerned almost no one. The programs of the political parties overlooked this category of citizens. In January 1945, Ion Hudiță, Minister of Agriculture and Estates, proposed to Prime Minister General Nicolae Rădescu that “pensions be granted by the State to all the Jewish families who lost one or several members to the Hitlerian and Legionary massacres.”¹⁶ However, he makes no reference to the Roma who were in a nearly similar situation. No measures by the central or local authorities supporting the formerly deported Roma are known to have been implemented.

Obviously, the deported Roma did not count among the major problems inherited from the Antonescu regime and the war. The Roma who had lived through the Transnistrian experience were not accorded the same consideration as the masses of other Romanian citizens who suffered from such measures. I mean here not only the Jews, but also the hundreds of thousands of refugees from Bessarabia and northern Bukovina, who fled the Soviet Army and poured into Romania beginning in 1944.

Among the numerous problems facing Romanian society and the Romanian state after the war, the Roma were not deemed either a social or ethnic priority by the Romanian authorities and the general public. The political parties of the time—the Communist Party as well as all the other left-wing parties—were mainly concerned with social problems. In party documents on such problems no reference is made to the Roma, neither to Roma having suffered deportation to Transnistria, nor to Roma in general. And neither were the Roma a topic of the discussions and debates on national minorities in Romania. The fact is that the Roma were not considered a national minority: either before or after the war. The measures adopted by the Government, beginning in 1945 targeting national minorities and their rights, simply by-passed the Roma.

Support of Roma survivors of Transnistria came from Roma leaders. In early 1945, the General Union of the Roma of Romania (UGRR)—an organization founded in 1934 and that functioned until World War II—announced that it would resume its activity under the leadership of the old committee presided over by Gheorghe Niculescu. The document states “The Central Committee’s major objective is to offer material and moral support to all the Roma, especially to those who were deported to Transnistria. In addition, one of the items in the program for the future activity of this association is the granting of land to the Roma, especially to those having served in the Army.”¹⁷ The association actually resumed its activity only on 15 August 1947. However, it seems that the activities carried out after this date—such as that recorded in a report of 7 April 1948 by the *Siguranța*¹⁸—did not focus on the formerly deported. Of greater interest to the Roma, in the sense that it could help a larger number of individuals, was land reform for the soldiers in the war.

The situation could have been different if, after 1944, the Roma had managed to organize themselves better. There were a few initiatives in this direction. One of the most active Roma in these endeavors was Grigore Nucu of Timișoara. He had been the one who, in October 1942, in his position as an “inspector” of the Roma, had addressed a memorandum to Ion Antonescu concerning the deportation of the Roma.¹⁹ The postwar organization of the Roma proved to be a tedious process. The Romanian authorities, with no real interest in encouraging this particular group may well have hindered the slow pace of organization. In 1948, when Romania became a “People’s Republic,” the Roma failed to gain the status of “co-inhabiting nationality.” The UGRR was dissolved on 20 January 1949, in consequence of a Council of Ministers decision

relating to incorporated cultural associations.²⁰ In February 1949, during an audience with Prime Minister Petru Groza, the foremost Roma leaders proposed that the UGRR should be replaced by a “Popular Union of the Roma of Romania,” along the lines of the organizations of some recognized ethnic minorities. The goals of this new association did not include dealing with the Transnistrian episode. The *Securitate* report on this project states “The Popular Union of the Roma can be useful in heightening the cultural level of the Roma and eradicating begging and looting by some of the Roma, as well as leading them on a democratic path.”²¹ The proposed new organization never came to fruition.

Quite significant as to the lack of interest in the Roma in the years immediately after the war is the fact that the book of Ion Chelcea, *Țigani din România: Monografie etnografică* [The Gypsies in Romania: Ethnographical Monograph] (Bucharest: Institutul Central de Statistică, 1944) escaped censorship. This remarkable ethnographic book nevertheless bears the imprint of the Antonescu period. It contains racist ideas, taken over from Nazi “science” and practice concerning the Roma; the idea of deporting the Roma to Transnistria, or even across the Bug, or their “colonization” in some remote part of Romania appears here (pp. 100–1). Chelcea’s book is not listed among the books under interdiction by the Commission for application of article 16 of the Armistice Convention of the Intelligence Ministry.²² By mere oversight. This is because neither Antonescu’s policy towards the Roma nor the Roma themselves were of any interest after August 1944.

The Taboo in the Communist Period

In the communist years, the subject of deportation of the Roma became taboo. Not only the topic of the Roma, but also everything relating to Transnistria and Romania’s wartime racist policy were avoided both in research and in political discourse. For a long time, nothing was said about Transnistria or the Romanian occupation of this territory. All crimes committed in the USSR during the war were attributed to the Germans. By contrast, antisemitic legislation and anti-Jewish pogroms in Romania were discussed. However, the tendency was to attribute all of it to the Germans, or to the Legionaries, and therefore to clear the Romanian authorities and civilian population of any responsibility. A few books on Transnistria were published abroad. But the deportation to Transnistria would become a topic of interest in Romania only later.

In December 1948, when the Central Committee of the Romanian Communist

Party (RCP) established the guidelines of the policy of the communist state towards the “co-inhabiting nationalities,” the Roma were not mentioned in the related documents. This simply excluded them from the list of recognized minorities, who enjoyed certain rights. Until 1989, neither legislation concerning minorities nor the political, educational, cultural, or other measures taken in favor of the co-inhabiting minorities included the Roma. They were mentioned only in the census. However, in secret documents, the party bodies and state institutions showed a preoccupation with the Roma, especially in the late 1970s and early 1980s, when a program aimed at socially integrating the Roma was launched, only to be quickly abandoned. This situation, in which the Roma were not acknowledged as ethnic minority, was not only characteristic of Romania, but of other socialist countries as well.

The fact that the Roma were not counted among the national minorities significantly reduced scientific interest in this population. Ethnographical and sociological research on the Roma that was conducted in the 1930s was not resumed after the war. After 1944, this topic was avoided. Only a few studies on the Roma were published in Romania during the forty years of communist rule, these few dealing with Roma language and history. As to the past of this population, only their medieval history was explored.

The writer Zaharia Stancu published the novel *Şatra* [The Gypsy Tribe] (Bucharest, Editura pentru literatură, 1968), which tells the story of a community of nomadic Roma deported to Transnistria.²³ The novel enjoyed huge popularity owing not so much to its Gypsy topic as to its anti-totalitarian message and went through numerous printings. The author uses the term “dark people” rather than “Gypsy.” The name of Transnistria is not expressly mentioned. However, the readers and the critics did not miss the real historical basis of the novel.

Transnistria made a reappearance in Romanian publications only in 1974, in a book on Romanian history written for the general public and published in French and Spanish, where reference is timidly made to the racial persecutions during the war and the deportations to Transnistria. The book mentions that among the deported were 26,000 Roma, of whom between 6,000 to 8,000 were slaughtered and another 3,000 who died of hunger, exposure and, other inhumane conditions.²⁴ However, such a reference and a few other similar references cannot be considered as signs of a surge of interest in the issue of the deportations to Transnistria. The historiography before 1989 barely mentions that individuals were “confined” to the “occupied Soviet territories.”

Transnistria was a delicate subject. A Romanian book on the subject of the Romanian occupation of Transnistria was published only in 1994: Olivian Verenca, *Administrația civilă română în Transnistria* [The Romanian Civil Administration in Transnistria] (Chișinău: Universitas). Written by one of the higher officials of the Government of Transnistria, the book highlights only the positive aspects of the Romanian administration and avoids the deportation of the Jews and Roma.

Regarding the communist period, one must mention an episode that occurred in the 1970s, an episode that was made public only after 1989. Specifically this was the attempt to obtain reparations from the Federal Republic of Germany (FRG) for the Romanian Roma deported to Transnistria. Thirty thousand personal requests for reparations were drawn up and notarized, and were sent to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the FRG. The applicants were—or were represented to be—Roma survivors from Transnistria. This attempt to bring hard currency into the country may be seen in the context of the policy of the Ceaușescu regime towards the minorities. The attempt to obtain compensation for the Roma deported during the war was made at a time when Ceaușescu was “selling” Romanian Germans to the FRG.

The Deportation of the Roma to Transnistria Within the Framework of the Discussion Concerning Marshal Antonescu

The subject of the deportation of the Roma to Transnistria was taken up in Romania only after the political changes of 1989. The first studies were published only in 1997.²⁵ However, various references to the deportation of the Roma appeared in some publications somewhat earlier.

The authors—first of all “patriotic” historians—who engaged themselves in rehabilitating Antonescu could hardly by-pass the episode of the Roma deportation. One may see here the same tendency as when they addressed antisemitic policy and the deportation of the Jews to Transnistria: the attempt to play down the event and find excuses for Antonescu’s policy.²⁶ While the measures against the Jews are presented as a result of the political framework of the time, and the deportation of the Jews from Bessarabia and Bukovina as a reaction to the “anti-Romanian attitude” of the Jews in 1940–1941, the deportation of the Roma is seen as motivated by the purported criminality and social problems of the population in question.

Iosif Constantin Drăgan—one of the most important proponents of the cult of Antonescu—played the part of a pioneer here. In the introductory study of a collection

of documents entitled *Antonescu, Mareșalul României și războaiele de reîntregire* [Antonescu, Romania's Marshal, and the Wars of Unification] and published in Venice in 1985, Drăgan attempts to justify the policies of the Holocaust against the Roma during World War II by reasons of strategy and public order:

Therefore, the military commanders in World War II were obliged to take defensive measures lest they should leave behind the front potentially subversive elements, with no beliefs or ideals other than those of the immediate moment. Relocation to another area became an imperative measure of safety not only for the troops but for the civilian population as well. With the introduction of terrorist night bombing, conditions were created for unprecedented looting and robbery. As a result, capital punishment was imposed for robbery and murder, the only measure capable of stopping such crime. Highly sensitive to such situations, Hitler adopted radical measures and produced a holocaust of the Gypsies and of the Mosaic Khazar Jews.²⁷

The author shows that Marshal Antonescu, called to power in defense of the interests of the country, had to face the problem of Gypsy depredations. The *Conductor*, the author says, proceeded nevertheless in a humane way, in accordance with the Romanian spirit of humanity, as Antonescu declared during his trial.²⁸

This interpretation robustly survives in Romanian historiography. A book that deals with Antonescu's trial of 1946, considers these procedures a mockery. Referring to the meeting of the Council of Ministers of 7 January 1941, when Ion Antonescu spoke for the first time of measures to be taken against the Roma, the book states, "Not even in the problem of the Gypsies, who caused him great problems and caused even greater problems to the population during curfew, the Marshal did not think of extreme solutions of the Fascist type."²⁹ The author, who gives full credit to Ion Antonescu's declarations at his trial, does not trace the subsequent course of events and does not report Antonescu's "solution" to the "Gypsy problem."

One should nevertheless note that in the discussions of the Antonescu regime—either in the apologetic approaches (such as the ones mentioned above) or in those trying to look objectively at the man and his time—his policy towards the Roma is given little if any attention. Most of the time it is not even mentioned.³⁰ The only element of the Antonescu regime's racist policy that is given weight is the deportation of the Jews. It would be hazardous to consider this a deliberate omission, especially as the literature on this topic is very new and includes very few titles. The research on deportations of Roma is still nascent. Recent published syntheses that aim to look

objectively at the period of the war and at the Antonescu regime do not avoid it.³¹

“Patriotic” historians concerned with the image of the Romanian state of the war years do not highlight the Antonescu regime’s anti-Roma policy. Ion Scurtu and Gheorghe Buzatu’s *Istoria românilor în secolul XX (1918–1948)* [The History of the Romanians in the 20th Century, 1918–1948] (Bucharest: Paideia, 1999) makes no mention of the deportation of the Roma. What happened in Transnistria is labeled as “concocted files” (p. 421).

In those books that focus on the deportation of the Roma, there are differences of opinion as to this aspect of the Antonescu regime’s policy. In some, the deportation is considered a racist measure (Radu Ioanid), or as one with racist and ethnic character (Viorel Achim). In other writings, the explanation is sought in the social policy of the Antonescu regime (Dumitru Șandru, Cristian Troncotă). Troncotă believes that the deportation of the Roma was “an attempt to solve, by the specific measures of a military regime and in time of war, a social problem still left unsolved today.”³² The ethnic and racist aspect of the problem goes unremarked. The article from which I quote “*Deși suntem țigani, vrem să plecăm liberi*” [“Even if we are Gypsies, we want to leave of our own free will”], was published in a magazine with a wide circulation. The title quotes from a letter by a number of Roma who left for Transnistria of their own free will. There were indeed such cases in which the Roma requested to be evacuated to Transnistria or who secretly joined the deportation groups. This was done in response to rumors that the Roma would be allotted pieces of land there. Such cases were isolated and do not change the essence of the Antonescu regime’s anti-Roma policy. In reflecting on historians’ past assessments of the nature of the deportation of the Roma, one should bear in mind the scarcity of documents available at the time the studies in question were published.

The deportation of the Roma recently has become a preoccupation of historical research in Romania. Given the relatively few works so far published on the issue, one cannot speak of a real historiography of this subject. Undoubtedly, future research will shed light on this episode and allow for a more rigorous assessment of this extremely controversial period in the history of Romania.

Efforts to rehabilitate Antonescu are not focused solely on historiographic pursuits. The trend is much wider and its proponents include some political types, a variety of “intelligentsia,” and members of the popular press.

Such reference to the deportation of the Roma were made on several occasions

in the journal *România Mare*. A 19 April 1991 article on a conflict that occurred between the Romanian population and the Roma in a village near Bucharest makes the following statement:

Some people criticize Marshal Antonescu for having taken the Gypsies to the banks of the Bug. To say nothing of the fact that work is no shame, but rather an honor, we are in the position to tell the whole truth about those times: the country was at war, life was difficult, and the social and political situation was critical from all points of view in 1941–1944. Therefore, Antonescu (as confirmed by him in a document) could not ignore security in the areas behind the battlefield. That rear area was the motherland, which had fallen victim to bands of Gypsy robbers and murderers. His decision was the only measure that a clear-thinking military could have adopted, one that was beneficial from two points of view: 1) it protected the life and the property of the peaceful citizens, securing at the same time the real social stability that a country at war required; 2) it protected the Gypsies themselves, for the situation had become unbearable and the population could no longer suffer such humiliation.³³

The author goes further than Antonescu in his declaration at the 1946 trial, who did not state that the deportation was meant to save the Roma from the fury of the population. But in the article, the international community is accused of pressuring Romania and permitting the “bands of Gypsies” to kill and loot at will. The author then takes issue with the alleged enemies of Romania, whom he accuses of using the violence committed against the Roma to tarnish the country’s image abroad.

The Deportation to Transnistria and Anti-Roma Attitudes

The minimization of Antonescu’s policy towards the Roma is related not only to the cult of Marshal Antonescu but also to anti-Roma attitudes and racism in Romanian society today. I do not believe there is a direct and necessary link between the two. Some such political groups in Romania carefully avoid showing any sympathy for Antonescu, and generally are not labeled as extremist. They are rather considered to be intellectual groups. Their intention is to deal with current problems of Romanian society without looking for patterns in the past. However, when it comes to the problem of the Roma, the “solutions” envisaged are sometimes very similar to Antonescu’s. Some of the texts produced by these organizations have a racist tone or undertone. In 1993, one of these organizations suggested in its journal *Noua Dreaptă* that the Roma be imprisoned in labor camps.³⁴

It is not surprising that anti-Roma manifestations in recent years should refer to Transnistria. Antonescu and Transnistria are invoked as a “solution” to the Roma “problem.” “A million crows [“crow” for “Gypsy”–V.A.], one solution: Antonescu,” read a placard that the entire country could see during a televised football match in a Bucharest stadium in 1998. The message was addressed to a football club whose headquarters are in a district with a significant Roma population. Only the Roma organizations decried the incident.³⁵ The stadiums have become places where hooligans frequently employ racist slogans.

But such beliefs are held in high quarters. In 1998 a senator, the leader of an extremist party, proposed the imprisonment of Roma in labor camps. Suggestions that the Roma be compelled to labor or that they should be isolated from the rest of the population have been expressed in a variety of circumstances. At times, the language adopted is very similar to that used during the Antonescu period, including such words as isolation, deportation, and imprisonment.

Lately, such outbursts have become rarer. But the notion of taking radical measures against the Roma still persists. A serious discussion on the modernizing of Bucharest could not avoid the Roma topic. During the campaign preceding the 4 June 2000 local elections, one of the subjects was what should be done with the Roma. One of the candidates for mayor was accused of intending to drive the Roma out of Bucharest. Although the accusation was unfounded, the episode is revealing nonetheless.

Such ideas are hardly in wide circulation in Romania; I believe that very few people share them. But neither are these notions unknown, and the Transnistrian episode is occasionally still evoked when Roma are perceived to be a problem.

The anti-Gypsy sentiment in Romanian society is complex. To understand the phenomenon and to look for solutions, one must keep in mind the social side of the Roma “problem,” particularly the difficulties of social integration of this population, an older problem aggravated lately by the current economic crisis. The Roma are rejected because of their way of life and not because of racial considerations.³⁶ It is difficult to say whether anti-Gypsy feelings in Romania are more intense than in other European countries. In many aspects, the situation of the Romanian Roma seems to be similar to that of Roma in other countries of the region. But Romania still has a long way to go in resolving this complex issue.³⁷

Romanian Collective Memory and the Roma Deportation to Transnistria

One might expect that the Romanian Roma would have a vivid memory of the deportations to Transnistria. However, to judge by publications and public events of this ethnic group, it would appear that most Roma have been little interested in this episode of their past, if at all.³⁸ Transnistria would be vivid in the memory of members of former nomadic communities, deported in their entirety. Yet few members of non-nomadic categories of Roma were deported, and so it is not entirely surprising these should demonstrate little interest in Transnistria. The disappearance and dispersion of most Roma communities in the decades after World War II would seem to be a contributing factor, as well. The attitude of contemporary Roma is beginning to change, however, and it varies considerably. Some of them consider Antonescu a “savior,” in that the Roma did not suffer the extermination measures applied to German Roma and to those of other countries.³⁹ On the other hand, leaders of some Roma organizations have begun to view the deportations as genocidal or near-genocidal acts.

The ethnic and political project recently taken up by some Roma intellectuals—the attempt to build a modern ethnic community by overcoming the distinctions among the various Roma groups—does not draw on the past. When the past is involved at all, the principal emphasis is laid on the century of Roma slavery and discrimination. Even with recent changes Transnistria remains only a secondary focus in the collective memory of Romanian Roma, but it is possible that this picture will look different in a generation or two.

The issue of compensation for the Transnistrian deportations has in recent years contributed to the Roma leaders reorientation, such as it is. However, the request for reparations was addressed not to the Romanian state, the author of the deportations, and at the time in authority in Transnistria, but to the German government.⁴⁰ Romania was asked only to grant moral reparation.

The deportations to Transnistria are not a major element in the collective memory of Romanians despite interest among scholars and politicians. For the Romanian collective memory, the population displacements to which the Romanians themselves were subjected during the war are much more important. Approximately one million people experienced deportation, expulsion, and resettlement. These events are much more present in their memory than what happened to other ethnic groups. This only confirms that one remembers what most directly affected himself.

There has yet been in Romania no public debate on the deportation of the

Roma. Neither has the “Roma problem” been touched on in recent press and television discussions of the Antonescu regime. The mass media and the Romanian public have shown no awareness of the fact that the ethnic and racial persecutions and the deportations to Transnistria are a problem for Romanian society as a whole, not only for the affected minorities. At least for the moment one cannot reasonably expect Romania to assume its guilt for wartime persecutions of the Roma. On several occasions the President of Romania has addressed the persecution of the Romanian Jews, and the Minister of Foreign Affairs has addressed the treatment meted out to ethnic Germans in Romania in the first years after the war. But Romanian Roma are hardly looked upon with particular favor, nor are amends to them likely to be seen as mandated by geo-political reality, and so any such gesture might carry with it real political risks.

Building a real picture of the Romanian past and informing the public on these issues is an imperative not only of historical research. Romania has yet to achieve the moral catharsis it, as a democratic society, sorely needs.

Notes

1. Viorel Achim, "Țigani din România în timpul celui de-al doilea război mondial" [The Gypsies in Romania during World War II], *Revista istorică* 8:1–2 (1997), pp. 53–9; Dumitru Șandru, "Deportarea Țiganilor în Transnistria 1942" [The deportation of the Gypsies to Transnistria 1942], *Arhivele Totalitarismului* 5:4(17) (1997), pp. 23–30; Radu Ioanid, *Evreii sub regimul Antonescu* [The Jews under the Antonescu regime] (Bucharest: Hasefer, 1997), pp. 310–23; Viorel Achim, *Țigani în istoria României* [The Gypsies in Romanian history] (Bucharest: Editura Enciclopedică, 1998), pp. 133–52; Michelle Kelso, "Gypsy Deportations from Romania to Transnistria 1942–44," in: Donald Kenrick, ed., *In the Shadow of the Swastika*, Vol. 2 (Hartfield: University of Hertfordshire Press, 1999), pp. 95–129. See also Cristian Troncotă, "Deși suntem Țigani, vrem să plecăm liberi" ["Even if we are Gypsies, we want to leave of our free will"], *Magazin istoric* 31:3 (360) (1997), pp. 29–31.
2. J. Ancel, ed., *Documents Concerning the Fate of Romanian Jewry During the Holocaust*, Vol. IV (New York, Jerusalem, 1985), p. 225.
3. Arhivele Statului București (ASB), fond Direcția Generală a Poliției (DGP), dosar nr. 190/1942, f. 124.
4. ASB, fond DGP, dosar nr. 194/1942, f. 4.
5. ASB, fond DGP, dosar nr. 190/42, f. 72.
6. Some examples of such interventions: ASB, fond DGP, dosar nr. 189/1942, f. 257; dosar nr. 190/1942, f. 65; dosar nr. 194/1942, f. 133.
7. ASB, fond DGP, dosar 189/1942, f. 96.
8. On the situation of the Roma in interwar Romania, see V. Achim, *Țigani în istoria României*, pp. 120–132.
9. Such documents proceeded from the Army Staff: ASB, fond Inspectoratul General al Jandarmeriei (IGJ), dosar nr. 130/1942, f. 5; ASB, fond Inspectorate Regionale de Jandarmi, dosar nr. 259, f. 143.
10. ASB, fond IGJ, dosar nr. 86/1944, f. 295.
11. *Actul de acuzare, rechizitoriile și replica acuzării în procesul primului lot de criminali de război* [Bill of indictment, accusations, and prosecution's rejoinders in the trial of the first lot of war criminals] (Bucharest: Editura Apărării Patriotice, 1945).
12. Arhivele Serviciului Român de Informații, Fond Documentar, dosar nr. 40010, vol. 89.

13. *Revista Istorică* 4:7–8 (1993), p. 763.
14. *Scânteia*, No. 519, 9 May 1946, p. 4; No. 524, 16 May 1946, p. 2.
15. Matatias Carp published only one document referring to the Roma: the decision to cease any new deportation of Jews and Roma reached by the Council of Ministers in its meeting of 13 October 1942: *Cartea neagră. Suferințele evreilor din România 1940-1944* [The black book: The sufferings of the Romanian Jews 1940–1944], Vol. III: *Transnistria* (Bucharest, 1948), p. 255.
16. *Dreptatea*, 2nd Series, No. 116, 14 January 1945, p. 3.
17. Police report from 3 February 1945: ASB, fond DGP, dosar nr. 87/1943, f. 318.
18. ASB, fond Președinția Consiliului de Miniștri, dosar nr. 87/1943, ff. 352–53.
19. ASB, fond DGP, dosar nr. 202/1942, f. 289.
20. *Monitorul Oficial*, I B, No. 25, 31 January 1949, p. 936.
21. ASB, fond DGP, dosar nr. 87/1943, ff. 385–86.
22. Chelcea's book does not figure in Paul Caravia, coord. *Gândirea interzisă. Scrieri cenzurate: România, 1945–1989* [Forbidden Thinking. Censored Writings: Romania, 1945–1989] (Bucharest: Editura Enciclopedica, 2000), which enlists all the publications forbidden in postwar Romania.
23. *The Gypsy Tribe*, translated by Roy MacGregor-Hastie (London; New York: Abelard-Schuman, 1973).
24. Gheorghe Zaharia, *Pages de la resistance antifasciste en Roumanie*, trans. by Maurice Florescu (Bucharest: Meridiane, 1974), p. 44; *Páginas de la resistencia antifascista en Rumanía*, trans. by Rosa Dimitriu and Luis Galan (Bucharest: Meridiane, 1974), p. 42.
25. See note 1.
26. For the Holocaust in the Romanian historiography, see, e.g., Victor Eskenasy, "The Holocaust and Romanian Historiography: Communist and Neo-Communist Revisionism," in Randolph L. Braham, ed., *The Tragedy of Romanian Jewry* (New York: Rosenthal Institute for Holocaust Studies, Graduate Center/The City University of New York; Boulder: Social Science Monographs, 1994), pp. 173–216; idem,

“Historiographers Against the Antonescu Myth,” in Randolph L. Braham, ed., *The Destruction of Romanian and Ukrainian Jews During the Antonescu Era* (Boulder, New York: Columbia University Press, 1997), pp. 271–302; Radu Ioanid, “How Romania Reacted to the Holocaust, 1945–1992,” in David Wyman, ed., *The World Reacts to the Holocaust* (Baltimore, London: The John Hopkins University Press, 1996), pp. 225–55.

27. Cited from the 3rd ed. (Venice: Fundația Europeană Drăgan, 1991), pp. 37

28. *Ibid.*, p. 42.

29. Ioan Dan, “Procesul” mareșalului Ion Antonescu [The “trial” of Marshal Antonescu] (Bucharest: Tempus, 1993), p. 161.

30. A book that gathers archival documents written by Marshal Ion Antonescu does not even note one referring to the Roma: Vasile Arimia and Ion Ardeleanu, ed., *Mareșalul Ion Antonescu: Secretele guvernării. Rezoluții ale Conducătorului Statului (septembrie 1940–august 1944)* [Marshal Ion Antonescu: The government’s secrets: Resolutions of the head of state (September 1940–August 1944)] (Bucharest: “Românul,” 1992).

31. See, e.g., Dinu C. Giurescu, *România 1940–1947* [Romania 1940–1947] (Bucharest: All, 1999), pp. 170–72; idem, *Romania in the Second World War (1939–1945)*, English transl. by Eugenia Elena Popescu (Boulder: East European Monographs, 2000), p. 243–46.

32. See note 1.

33. *România Mare*, II, No. 45, 19 April 1991, p. 16.

34. N. Petrescu, “Problema țigănească” [The Gypsy problem], *Noua Dreaptă* 1:4 (1993), p. 8.

35. *Evenimentul zilei*, No. 1747, 26 March 1998, p. 15; No. 1748, 27 March 1998, p. 14.

36. In a 1995 poll by the Romanian Institute for Public Opinion Research, 68% of the subjects declared their antipathy towards the Roma, 5% their sympathy, 27% were indifferent (Alina Mungiu, *România după ‘89. Istoria unei neînțelegeri* [Romania after 1989: The history of one misunderstanding] (Bucharest: Humanitas, 1995), p. 187).

37. Some works concerning the present condition of the Roma in Romania: Elena Zamfir and Cătălin Zamfir, eds., *Țiganii între ignorare și îngrijorare* [Gypsies between ignorance and anxiety] ([Bucharest]: Alternative, 1993); Emannelle Pons, *Les Tsiganes de Roumanie: Des citoyens à part entière?* (Paris: L’Harmattan, 1995), p.

55ff; V. Achim, *Țigani în istoria României*, p. 164ff.

38. Roma authors on the Transnistrian deportation: memories (Joan Cioaba, “Il genocidio in Romania: una testimonianza,” *Lacio Drom* 20:2–3 (1984), pp. 54–6); a novel (Gh. Păun-Ialomițeanu, “*Arzoaica*” a stat la masă cu dracul: “*E thabardi*” bes las la meselaq e la bengeça (Slobozia: “Șatra,” 1991)).

39. See Fr. Remmel, “Der lange Weg: Zur Leidengeschichte der rumänischen Roma: Die Deportation nach Transnistrien,” *Allgemeine Deutsche Zeitung aus Rumänien / Karpatenrundschau*, 5 December 1998, p. 2.

40. On 20 August 1998 a protocol was signed between the Federal Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the FRG and the Roma Convention (including several Roma organizations in Romania) on humanitarian aid to some Roma victims of persecutions in Romania in 1941–1944.

Reflections on the Roma and the Holocaust

David M. Crowe

A recent *New York Times* editorial decried that the Roma have received only “a tiny percentage” of the \$60 billion paid by Germany to Holocaust victims since the end of World War II. It argues that the failure of the Roma to receive their fair share of these reparations has been a consequence of their “low social status” and lack of organizational and “political champions.” It added that as late as 1956, the German supreme court (*Bundesgerichtshof*—Federal Court of Justice) ruled that, before 1943, Reich officials deported Roma because they were “antisocials and so were not entitled to compensation.”¹ Actually, there was more to it than this. The 1956 case centered around claims of a female Roma plaintiff who brought a reparations claim before a state court in North Rhine-Westphalia. She said that her deportation by the Germans in 1940 was an act of “‘racial’ persecution.” The state court agreed, though the Federal Court of Justice did not. The Federal Court of Justice argued that Nazi officials had deported the Roma woman because of “demands of national security.” The chief justice added:

. . . the resettlement action was contrary to the principle of legal justice. But though the manner of its execution must be described as cruel and inhuman this should not suggest that the action was in itself a measure of racial persecution. The National Socialist rulers committed innumerable deeds of inhumanity that disregarded the principles of legal justice but this does not entitle anyone to compensation under the present laws.²

Fortunately, seven years later, the Federal Court of Justice changed its earlier position and accepted December 8, 1938, as the starting point for Nazi racial persecution of the Roma. On that date, a quarter of a century earlier, Heinrich Himmler had issued his decree “Combating the Gypsy Plague,” which insisted on “the regulation of the Gypsy question according to racial characteristics.”³

What is remarkable about the German court’s position, at least until 1963, is that it seemed to reflect a broader acceptance by some members of the West German legal profession of the Nazi position that the Roma were an “asocial” criminal element. That opinion probably was not shared by a majority of those jurists, though it certainly is possible that some of the judges were sympathetic to Nazi attitudes towards the Roma. Given that the Nazis relied initially on Second Reich and Weimar legislation and prejudices as some of the bases of their own policies towards the Roma, we should not be

surprised to find that a few of the men who sat on the Federal Court of Justice went to law school before World War II and were affected by those perspectives and approaches. More than likely, though, the uncompromising position taken by many German judges towards Roma reparations claims prior to 1963 reflected what German judges had been doing for nearly two decades—“resorting to the narrowest possible interpretations to deny restitution claims. . . and denying any link between past injustices and subsequent suffering.”⁴ In other words, while it certainly could be argued that judicial prejudice towards the Roma affected their ability to have their claims recognized by West German courts, such judicial nitpicking was more a reflection of hide-bound resistance to demands for claims payments than it was of overt prejudice. One has to look no further than the difficulty that ethnic Germans from Eastern Europe had getting their *Lastenausgleich* (equalization of burdens) payments from West German authorities during this period to see the problems that any ethnic group had in making successful claims against an inflexible bureaucracy.⁵

Yet such explanations are not meant to diminish the significance of age-old prejudice towards the Roma as a factor in their success or failure to draw greater attention to their fate during the Holocaust. A country’s laws, and more important, the enforcement of these laws, are a reflection of a society’s values and prejudices. And in Europe, social prejudices against the Roma have often been backed by law.

This particular marriage of prejudice and the law is almost as old as the 800-year-old Roma presence in Europe. Throughout most of this period, the Roma have been subjected to harsh mistreatment and abuse that still occurs today. In Romania’s historic provinces, Wallachia and Moldavia, the Roma suffered five centuries of enslavement. Given the centrality of Romania to the historic Roma presence in the Balkans and other parts of Europe, the impact of their slave experience has been powerful. As Ian Hancock has noted, “once human beings are made the possessions of others, they become stripped of their identity as people and are seen simply as objects.”⁶ The dehumanization of the Roma by means of hate-filled stereotypes continues to this day in parts of Europe.

Elsewhere on the continent, policies alternated between efforts to keep the Roma from settling and forced assimilation that insisted that the Roma give up their rich traditions as the price for the right to settle. Such policies kept the Roma at the lowest rung of Europe’s socio-economic ladder. Forced to live in the shadows of European society, many Roma came to treasure the nomadic way of life that allowed them to retain their unique cultural and social traditions. Nomadism also allowed the Roma to keep their distance from the *gadje* (*gadzé*: i.e., “non-Gypsies”), whom most Roma view with distrust.

At the same time nomadism ensured the Roma's continuing impoverishment, which became the basis of many of the stereotypes that have haunted them over their past eight centuries in Europe. These stereotypes became the nucleus not only of German Nazi attitudes towards the Roma but also of those of many other people throughout Europe.⁷

Roma distrust of the *gadje* would affect Roma willingness to testify in post-Holocaust war crimes trials and to seek reparations. Yet this is not the only reason that the Roma failed to have their day in the courts of Europe after the Holocaust. Although the Roma are mentioned frequently in the various Allied Nuremberg trials after World War II, they are never dealt with as a specific victim group in any depth. This was one of the numerous failings of the Nuremberg trials and helped set the tone for future legal dealings on the Roma and the Holocaust. The failure of the Allied powers adequately to document and emphasize the genocidal nature of German and collaborationist crimes against the Roma has also robbed Roma scholars of some of the key documentation essential to modern investigations of the *Porrajmos*, the Roma Holocaust.

Yet this should never have been the case. The 1945 indictment in the International Military Tribunal trial accused the twenty-two defendants of "deliberate and systematic genocide" against the Roma and other groups, while the Roma are mentioned continually in the records of other Nuremberg trials. Yet a separate brief was never prepared on Roma victimization during any of the trials, though there were briefs for Jewish victims, political opponents of the Nazis, the trade unions, and churches.⁸

If Allied prosecutors had been more evenhanded, the fate of the Roma during the *Porrajmos* would have received the attention it deserved. Instead, this failure affected Roma efforts to draw greater attention to their fate, since it robbed them of the opportunity to give testimony before these important international tribunals. Though others were asked to testify about the fate of the Roma during the Holocaust, few Roma themselves were asked for direct testimony. One, Karl Höllenrainer, did testify about salt-water experiments at Dachau. After Mr. Höllenrainer briefly described his internment in Auschwitz, Buchenwald, and Dachau, the judge asked him to approach one of the defendants, Dr. Wilhelm Beiglböck, and identify him as the person who supervised the experiments. As he approached the defendant, Mr. Höllenrainer lunged at him. After Mr. Höllenrainer regained his composure, the presiding judge, Walter Beals, asked him why he had done this. Mr. Höllenrainer apologized and explained that he was "worked up" because Dr. Beiglböck was a "murderer" who "ha[d] ruined [his] whole life." All of the Roma victims that Dr. Beiglböck tortured with his experiments suffered from delirium and convulsions,

and many died. Judge Beals said that this was no excuse for Mr. Höllenrainer's actions and sentenced him to ninety days in prison for contempt of court. Several days later, after hearing more testimony about these horrible experiments from Mr. Höllenrainer, Judge Beals reduced his sentence to time served, though he did it off the record. According to Drexel Sprecher, one of the American assistant trial lawyers, Mr. Höllenrainer was the only witness to be jailed for contempt during the Nuremberg trials.⁹

In many ways, Mr. Höllenrainer's treatment is symptomatic of the experiences of many Roma before European courts over the past fifty-five years. It is small wonder that the Roma remain suspicious of those who have tried to get them to be more open about their Holocaust experiences. Yet the inability of the Roma to draw greater attention to their fate during the Holocaust is tied to the greater failure of scholars to investigate the history, culture, language, and ethnicity of the Roma, at least until the last decade. In a recent essay in *Newsnet: The Newsletter of the AAASS* (American Association for the Advancement of Slavic Studies), Prof. Zoltan Barany discusses the interrelationship between scholarly failure to look more closely at the Roma tragedy during the Holocaust and the Roma in general. He identifies four general reasons for what he calls "The Poverty of Gypsy Studies": their small population, their "minimal political clout," the decline in the use of their language, Romani, and the fact that "the history of the Gypsies remains veiled in myths, rumors, and saturated by pro- or anti-Gypsy biases." Moreover, few scholars consider Roma studies a "prominent part of Russian or East European history." While there are those who would challenge Professor Barany's statements about population and the significance of the decline of Romani to the broader question of the "poverty" of Roma studies, he does point up some important issues that relate to the lack of adequate scholarship on the plight of the Roma during the Holocaust.¹⁰

At the end of his essay, Professor Barany suggests three areas that beg attention. One of them is the *Porrajmos*. He believes that several factors have prevented an adequate investigation of this topic. One is the lack of "reliable demographic data" combined with the bad record-keeping practiced by Nazi administrators when it came to Roma victims. He adds that the concept of history and memory is not strong in Roma culture. Consequently, we have few memoirs written by Roma survivors. He also adds that with such inexact records and accounts, scholars need to be careful when they state precisely the number of Roma victims. To overcome some of these problems, Professor Barany suggests that scholars undertake "persistent and painstaking archival research" to locate new sources of information on Roma victimization.¹¹

While Professor Barany makes some good points, his comments, particularly on the *Porrajmos*, are sometimes a little too simplistic. In discussing the problems of determining the number of Roma who died during the Holocaust, he places partial blame on bad German record-keeping. While there is some merit to his point, the question is more complex than that. First, the bulk of Roma victims lay beyond the reach of the Germans during most of the war because they lived in Nazi collaborationist states. If there were errors in record-keeping, it was as much the fault of the Hungarians, the Romanians, the Bulgarians, the Slovaks, the Croats, the Serbs, and others. In fact, some of the most precise records that we have on Roma victimization are German. One has to look no further than the detailed reports of the *Einsatzgruppen* in Russia or the Gypsy Family Camp records in Auschwitz II-Birkenau to see German efficiency on this matter. It is important to recall, of course, that the vast majority of German records on all phases of the Holocaust were destroyed during the war.¹²

Professor Barany is right to raise questions about numbers since estimates vary widely among scholars who study the *Porrajmos*. This is a constant problem whether one is dealing with these horrific actions or with contemporary estimates about the number of Roma remaining in Europe. Part of the problem is that many Roma have been and are distrustful of anyone, particularly *gadje*, who attempts to put something down on paper about them. Many Roma are convinced that a document often leads to further persecution. Second, because few countries traditionally recognized the Roma as a separate ethnic group, they have always been under strong pressure to identify with the majority population, particularly in Central and Eastern Europe. Consequently, most census data on the Roma tend to underestimate their true numbers. Consequently, if one was to rely solely on pre- or post-World War II census data to determine the number of Roma who died or suffered during the Holocaust, these figures would be very inaccurate. What scholars need to do, Professor Barany suggests, is to conduct more in-depth, accurate investigations of pre- and postwar Roma population figures and blend them with more accurate wartime statistics. Then we may be able to reach some common ground on the number of Roma who died or were persecuted during the Holocaust. The trap in all of this is the emphasis on numbers. Whether 100,000 or half a million Roma died while hundreds of thousands more were persecuted during the Holocaust is secondary to the fact that over time, the Germans probably intended to make Europe “*zigeunerfrei*.”

Finally, more concentrated efforts should be undertaken to locate and study sources on the *Porrajmos*. This will not be easy. Some basic work, for example, ought to be done

on the transcripts of the Nuremberg trials. In addition, scholars need to spend some time going through the collection of Jewish Holocaust survivor testimony at the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, Yad Vashem, Lochamei HaGheta'ot, and elsewhere to find references to the Roma. There is also a great deal of material on the Roma at various branches of the Bundesarchiv in Germany, some of this already explored by Michael Zimmermann and others. Scholars also need to begin to investigate files related to the Roma in the newly opened archives and depositories in Central and Eastern Europe and in Russia. Scholars such as Professor Zimmermann, Erika Thurner, and Paul Polansky already have shown the value of such efforts.¹³

Yet their work represents the mere tip of the scholarly iceberg, so to speak, when it comes to documentation dealing with the *Porrajmos*. Such work is expensive and time-consuming. I, myself, have spent the past three years doing research on a Holocaust-related topic. And though I have dug up a vast amount of information on my subject, working in Poland, the Czech Republic, Germany, Israel, the United States, and Canada, it has taken a vast amount of time and money to complete my research. In addition, at any given time, I have had to work in six languages.

These are some of the reasons that so little has been done to take advantage of these archival sources. Moreover, though the small number of East European scholars working on the *Porrajmos* have the language skills to do this research, they are often untrained in Western methods of scholarly research and writing. There is also little money available for such undertakings and funding is increasingly limited. I sit on several George Soros-backed grant funding agencies in Central and Eastern Europe. Until two weeks ago, I was going to tell you that an impressive number of the applications are focused on Holocaust studies, with a few of them on the Roma tragedy. As I was preparing this paper, however, I learned that the most important of these grant programs, the Research Support Scheme in Prague, which during the past decade has awarded over \$25 million to fund opportunities for East European and Russian scholars, will be shut down in 2002. The only agency that now funds Roma-specific topics in that part of Europe is the European Roma Rights Center in Budapest.

One might ask at this point about the wisdom of funding research on the *Porrajmos* when so much needs to be done to address the contemporary problems of the Roma in Central and Eastern Europe. The reason is the powerful link between the Roma past and present. For those of us who work to find solutions to the contemporary difficulties faced by the Roma in Europe, it is always shocking to find out how little politicians and others

charged with helping solve some of these issues know about the Roma past. We cannot really understand the nature of the current problems faced by this group if we do not look to their history for explanations.

Slowly, greater sympathy and understanding about the *Porrajmos* is beginning to surface, thanks in part to the pioneering work of the organizer of this conference, Dr. Ian Hancock. In areas of Central and Eastern Europe, where most European Roma live, a new generation of scholars have turned their backs on the traditional prejudicial accounts of the Roma and insist on scholarship that is balanced and accurate. German and Austrian scholars have helped lay the groundwork for this effort. In addition, the Gypsy Research Centre at the University of Hertfordshire Press has begun publishing an extremely valuable series of works on the Roma experience in Europe from 1933 to 1945; these books promise to give us a more detailed look at the fate of the Roma during the *Porrajmos* in various European countries.¹⁴

Yet a great deal more wants to be done. Scholarship on the fate of the Roma is still too uneven and scattered. It would be helpful if some institution, perhaps the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, could provide significant support for a well-coordinated scholarly investigation of the fate of the Roma during the Holocaust. Such a project must begin by exploring the key primary sources such as the records of the various Nuremberg trials and the vast collection of captured German records at the United States National Archives at College Park, Maryland. Perhaps the USHMM could do as it did in the late 1980s and early 1990s, when it sent teams of scholars and linguists to Central and Eastern Europe and to Russia to investigate and acquire archival holdings dealing with the Holocaust. Teams should be sent to Israel, too, where I have come across quite a bit of material on the Roma. What such teams discover undoubtedly will be significant.

This Museum, perhaps working with Yad Vashem, the Shoah Foundation, and the Open Society Institute, should also try to locate and interview as many Roma Holocaust survivors as soon as possible, before we lose forever their unique testimonies. Fortunately, because of the preparatory work done to prepare to distribute the \$1.25 billion in Swiss funds to Roma survivors and others, it is now possible to locate many Roma survivors. In league with this effort, the USHMM would be well advised to hire Roma specialists, and to build up its own archival collections on the Roma. While the museum's library has done an admirable job of assembling an impressive collection on the Roma, its archival acquisitions have been less successful. If the museum really hopes to become the major international center for Holocaust studies, it needs to invest more in the diversity of

victimization during this tragedy. While some justifiably worry that such efforts might take away from the centrality of Jewish victimization during the Holocaust, just the opposite is true. To really understand the depth of German hatred towards the Jews during the *Shoah*, we need to study the collective hatreds that drove the Germans and their collaborators to commit some of the most heinous crimes in history. A look at the full scale horror unleashed by the Germans against the Jews, the Roma, and others enables us better to understand the full nature of Nazi evil in Europe from 1933 to 1945. Looking at the Holocaust in only one dimension would deprive us of the truthful, deep perspective we need to begin to understand these complex events.

Finally, the Roma must be an integral part of this investigation. As more and more Roma have gained a voice, they have justifiably criticized non-Roma scholars and professionals for dominating a field that deals with their own history, culture, and language traditions. We must also do a better job to ensure that future scholarship on the fate of the Roma during the Holocaust is free of the emotion that occasionally colors it. This is not to say that one should be dispassionate about one's scholarship. Just be certain that accuracy and scholarly detachment are key ingredients of such scholarship. As scholarship on the *Porrajmos* gains greater currency, the emotionalism that once was so important to bring the fate of the Roma to the non-Roma world has now become a problem. Scholarship can have no agenda but truth. As we open the doors of greater investigation of the persecution and murder of Roma during the Holocaust, scholars and their broader audience must be prepared to accept conclusions that are uncomfortable and that may change many of the generally held perceptions about the experiences of many of the groups victimized during the Holocaust. If not, the truthful lessons so important to justify ongoing interest in the Holocaust will be lost to future generations.

Notes

1. “Gypsies and the Holocaust,” *The New York Times*, August 14, 2000, p. A20.
2. David M. Crowe, “The Roma Holocaust,” in F. C. Decoste and Bernard Schwartz, *The Holocaust’s Ghost: Writings on Art, Politics, Law and Education* (Alberta: The University of Alberta Press, 2000), p. 199.
3. It is important to differentiate between the West German Federal Constitutional Court (*Bundesverfassungsgericht*) that was modeled on the American Supreme Court, which dealt with constitutional issues between West Germany’s national, state, and local laws as well as treaties and administrative actions, and the Federal Court of Justice, which served as a national appellate court. Dennis L. Bark and David R. Gress, *A History of West Germany, Volume I: From Shadow to Substance, 1945–1963* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1989), pp. 292–95; Erika Thurner, *National Socialism and Gypsies in Austria*, edited and translated by Gilya Gerda Schmidt (Tuscaloosa: The University of Alabama Press, 1998), p. 11; according to Guenther Lewy, this was “the first decree directed against Gypsies” that explicitly referred “to race.” Guenther Lewy, *The Nazi Persecution of the Gypsies* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), p. 36.
4. Jeffrey Herf, *Divided Memory: The Nazi Past in the Two Germanys* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1997), p. 285.
5. Klaus Peter Krause, “Der Lastenausgleich—was er war und was er heute noch ist,” *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, February 24, 1996, n.p.
6. Ian Hancock, *The Pariah Syndrome: An Account of Gypsy Slavery and Persecution* (Ann Arbor: Karoma Publishers, 1987), p. 16.
7. Ian Hancock, *The Pariah Syndrome*, pp. 16, 51; David M. Crowe, *A History of the Gypsies of Eastern Europe and Russia* (New York: St. Martin’s Press, 1994), pp. 107–8, 115–20.
8. Office of United States Chief of Prosecution for Prosecution of Axis Criminality, *Nazi Conspiracy and Aggression*, Vol. I (Washington: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1946), pp. 31–2; Drexel A. Sprecher, *Inside the Nuremberg Trial: A Prosecutor’s Comprehensive Account*, Vol. I (Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 1999), p. 378.
9. *Trial of War Criminals before the Nuremberg Military Tribunals*, Vol. I: *The Medical Case* (Washington: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1949), pp. 456–58; Sprecher, *Inside the Nuremberg Trial*, I, pp. 387–88; Wilhelm Beiglböck was sentenced to fifteen years for his crimes though his sentence was later reduced to ten years. George J. Annas and Michael A. Grodin, *The Nazi Doctors and the Nuremberg Code: Human Rights in Human Experimentation* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1992), pp. 77–8, 105.

10. Zoltan Barany, "The Poverty of Gypsy Studies," *Newsnet: The Newsletter of the AAASS*, Vol. 40, No. 3 (May 2000), p. 1.

11. Barany, "Poverty of Gypsy Studies," pp. 2–3.

12. In the "Einsatzgruppen Case," the Roma were mentioned in nine of the eighty-nine charges. Sprecher, *Inside the Nuremberg Trial*, I, p. 384; excerpts of testimony from the *Einsatzgruppen* trial (July 3, 1947–April 10, 1948—Vol. IV, *Trials of War Criminals before the Nuremberg Military Tribunals* (Washington: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1951), can be found in Yitzhak Arad, Shmuel Krakowski, and Shmuel Spector, *The Einsatzgruppen Reports* (New York: Holocaust Library, 1989); detailed records and accounts for the Gypsy Family Camp at Auschwitz II-Birkenau can be found in *Memorial Book: The Gypsies at Auschwitz-Birkenau*, 2 vols. (Munich: K. G. Saur, 1993); see also Jan Parcer, et al, *Los Cyganów w KL Auschwitz-Birkenau* (Oświęcim: Państwowe Muzeum w Oświęcimiu, 1994) and Waclaw Długuborski, ed., *50-lecie zagłady Romów w KL Auschwitz-Birkenau* (Oświęcim: Stowarzyszenie Romów w Polsce, 1994).

13. See, for example, Michael Zimmermann's *Rassenutopie und Genozid: Die nationalsozialistische 'Lösung der Zigeunerfrage'* (Hamburg: Hans Christians Verlag, 1996). Gilad Margalit called it "the most elaborated research ever published on the persecution of the European Romanies under the Nazi Regime," *Romani Studies*, Series 5, Vol. 10, No. 1 (June 2000), p. 84; also look at Erika Thurner, *National Socialism and Gypsies in Austria*; Paul Polansky describes his discovery of the files of the Czech-run Roma "death" camp at Lety in the Czech Republic and his interviews of almost 100 survivors in "The Gypsy Genocide," *The Patrín Web Journal*, [wysiwy://5/http://www.geocities.com:0080/Paris/5121/bigissue.htm](http://www.geocities.com:0080/Paris/5121/bigissue.htm), pp. 1–4. Because of his efforts, the museum's archives has two collections from the Czech Republic dealing with Lety, *Cikánský tábor Lety u Opisku, 1940–1943*, RG-04.076M, and one folder of documents on Lety and other matters relating to Roma subjects from the Státní Ústřední Archiv v Praze, RG.07.013*01.

14. The first volume in the University of Hertfordshire Press' Roma series is Donald Kenrick and Grattan Puxon's *Gypsies under the Swastika* (Hatfield: University of Hertfordshire Press, 1995). This is an update of their classic, *The Destiny of Europe's Gypsies* (New York: Basic Books, 1972). Two other volumes have since appeared in the series, which promises to be extensive. They are Karola Fings, Herbert Heuss, and Frank Sparing's *From 'Race Science' to the Camps*, Vol. I: *The Gypsies during the Second World War*, translated by Donald Kenrick (Hatfield: University of Hertfordshire Press, 1997), and Donald Kenrick, ed., *In the Shadow of the Swastika*, Vol. II: *The Gypsies during the Second World War* (Hatfield: University of Hertfordshire Press, 1999).

Appendix: Biographies of Contributors

VIOREL ACHIM is an historian at the Nicolae Iorga Institute of History in Bucharest, Romania. He is a specialist in Romanian history, particularly on the history of Roma in Romania, and the author of *The Gypsies in Romanian History* (in Romanian), which appeared in 1998. The Charles H. Revson Fellow in the Center for Advanced Holocaust Studies from September to December 2000 and from November 2001 to February 2002, his research at the Center is on the topic “The Deportation of the Romanian Gypsies (Roma) to Transnistria (1942–1944).”

MARK BIONDICH is an historian with the Crimes Against Humanity and War Crimes Section of the Department of Justice, Ottawa, Canada. He has previously lectured at the University of Toronto, was a Research Fellow in the Institute on East Central Europe at Columbia University, and at the Center for Advanced Holocaust Studies. Dr. Biondich’s area of specialization is modern Balkan history. He is the author of *Stjepan Radić, the Croat Peasant Party and the Politics of Mass Mobilization, 1904–1928* (Toronto, 2000), and is currently completing a new study, *A History of Croatian Fascism: The Ustaša Movement, 1929–1945*.

DAVID M. CROWE is Professor of History at Elon College, North Carolina. He is president of the Association for the Study of Nationalities at Columbia University and a Visiting Scholar at Columbia’s Harriman Institute. Professor Crowe is author of *A History of the Gypsies of Eastern Europe and Russia* (1994, 1996), *The Baltic States and the Great Powers: Foreign Relations, 1938–1940* (1993), and coeditor of *The Gypsies of Eastern Europe* (1991). He is currently completing *Oskar Schindler: A Life*. He sits on the Education Committee of the United States Holocaust Memorial Council.

IAN HANCOCK is Professor of English, Linguistics, and Asian Studies at the University of Texas at Austin, where he is also Director of The Romani Archives and Documentation Center. He is author of nearly three hundred articles and books, including *The Pariah Syndrome: An Account of Gypsy Slavery and Persecution* (1987) and *A Handbook of Vlax Romani* (1995). Professor Hancock lectures widely in the United States and Europe on the persecution of the Roma. He spoke on behalf of the

Roma at the Forum 2000 Conference on the Holocaust, which was held in Stockholm, Sweden. He is a member of the United States Holocaust Memorial Council.

GUENTER LEWY is Professor Emeritus of Political Science at the University of Massachusetts, Amherst. He is author of ten books, including *The Nazi Persecution of the Gypsies* (2000), *The Cause that Failed: Communism in American Political Life* (1990), and *The Catholic Church and Nazi Germany* (1964). Professor Lewy has received numerous distinctions and fellowships from organizations and institutions, including the American Council of Learned Societies, the National Endowment for the Humanities, and the Rockefeller Foundation.

DENIS PESCHANSKI is Research Director at the Center for Twentieth-Century Social History in Paris, France (Sorbonne). A specialist in the history of France during World War II, he has published nearly twenty books and seventy articles throughout his career. He is author of *Les Tsiganes en France: 1939–1946* (1994), *Vichy 1940–1944: Contrôle et exclusion* (1997), *La France des camps: L'internement 1938–1946* (2002), and coeditor of *La police française (1930–1950): Entre bouleversements et permanences* (2000).

MICHAEL ZIMMERMANN is Historian at the Ruhrland Museum in Essen and lecturer at the University of Bochum. He is author of *Rassenutopie und Genozid: Die nationalsozialistische "Lösung der Zigeunerfrage"* (1996), editor and coauthor of *Die Geschichte der Juden im Rheinland und in Westfalen* (1998), and coeditor of *Das Jüdische Museum in Prag* (1991). His analysis of Nazi Gypsy policy in particular is widely recognized as one of the most influential studies on the subject, receiving an award from the University of Jena in 1997.

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