

Chart 2. THE SINTI AND ROMA

Unit 1

Dr Ritter, Research Institute of Racial Hygiene:

We have identified the Roma as totally primitive people of ethnic origin, whose mental retardation renders them incapable of real social adaptation... The Gypsy question can only be resolved when... reproduction of this population of mixed blood is stopped once and for all.

Johannes Behrendt, Office of Racial Hygiene:

All Gypsies should be treated as hereditarily sick; the only solution is elimination. The aim should therefore be the elimination without hesitation of this defective element in the population.

Right to Remember. A Handbook for Education with Young People on the Roma Genocide, <https://rm.coe.int/168070309>

Dr Robert Ritter (far right) talking to a Romani woman in the presence of a policeman, 1936. Bundesarchiv R 165 Bild-244-71, Wikipedia



Eva Justin measuring a Sintesa, 1938. Bundesarchiv Bild 146-1986-044-08,





The Sinto **Max Friedrich** (shown here with his wife Grete around 1941) came from a traveling family. He was drafted into the Wehrmacht in 1941 but expelled a year later for 'racial reasons'. In early March 1943, he and his wife Grete and their five children were deported to Auschwitz. Many German Sinti fought for Germany not only in the First World War but also in the Wehrmacht from 1939 on. In 1941, the German high command ordered all 'Gypsies and Gypsy half-breeds' to be dismissed from active military service for 'racial-political reasons'. Documentation and Cultural Centre of German Sinti and Roma, Heidelberg

EXERCISES:

Look at the photographs, read the texts and answer the following questions:

- How did Dr Ritter assess the ability of social adaptation of the Roma?
- How, in his view, could the 'Gypsy question' be resolved?
- Why did Johannes Behrend state that Gypsies (Sinti and Roma) should be eliminated?
- What situations are shown in the photographs?
- What are individual people doing in these photographs? How could they have felt then?
- What did the photographer want to show with these photographs? What do they tell us today?
- Why was Max Friedrich expelled from the Army and then deported to Auschwitz with his family?

Search for additional information and think:

- Who were Dr Robert Ritter and Eva Justin?
- What did their anthropological and racial studies entail?
- What was their significance for the Holocaust of the Sinti and Roma?
- What was the fate of Dr Ritter and Eva Justin after the war?
- What was the subsequent fate of Max Friedrich's family? How were they able to survive?
- Using the example of his fate explain the Nazi policy towards the Sinti and Roma.

Unit 2

German Sinti and Roma await deportation to labour camps in occupied Poland, Asperg, May 1940. Bundesarchiv



An announcement in Polish and German restricting the area of residence of Gypsies in the Warsaw district from 1 June 1942. Pursuant to it, Roma were forced to reside in the Warsaw ghetto without the ability to leave. Additionally, this order allowed confiscation of their movable property and their deployment to labour camps. USHMM

ANORDNUNG

betreffend

Aufenthaltsbeschränkung für Zigeuner im Kreise Warschau-Land.

Aufgrund der Verordnung über Aufenthaltsbeschränkungen im Generalgouvernement vom 13. September 1940 (VBl GG S. 288) in Verbindung mit der Zweiten Verordnung über Aufenthaltsbeschränkungen im Generalgouvernement vom 29. April 1941 (VBl GG S. 274) ordne ich hiermit an:

1. Zigeuner, die im Gebiet der Kreishauptmannschaft Warschau-Land ausserhalb der jüdischen Wohnbezirke angetroffen werden, werden in den nächsten jüdischen Wohnbezirk eingewiesen. Ihr Aufenthalt wird für dauernd auf diesen Wohnbezirk beschränkt. Die Einweisung von arbeitsfähigen männlichen Zigeunern in ein Arbeitslager bleibt vorbehalten.
2. Bei der Einweisung der Zigeuner in den jüdischen Wohnbezirk kann angeordnet werden, dass sie ihren Hausrat und ihre Fahrzeuge, Pferde und sonstige Habe ohne Entschädigung zurückzulassen haben.
3. Zigeuner, die den jüdischen Wohnbezirk nach ihrer Einweisung wieder unbefugt verlassen, werden gemäss den Vorschriften der eingangs erwähnten Verordnungen mit Gefängnis und Geldstrafe bis Zl. 10.000 bestraft.
4. Die Anordnung...

Warschau, am 28. 1942

ZARZĄDZENIE

dotyczące

ograniczenia pobytu dla cyganów w powiecie warszawskim.

Na podstawie rozporządzenia o ograniczeniu pobytu w Generalnym Gubernatorstwie z dnia 13 września 1940 r. (Dz. Rozp. GG str. 288) w połączeniu z drugim rozporządzeniem o ograniczeniu pobytu w Generalnym Gubernatorstwie z dnia 29 kwietnia 1941 r. (Dz. Rozp. GG str. 274) zarządzam niniejszym:

1. Cyganów, znajdujących się na terenie powiatu warszawskiego poza obrębem dzielnicy żydowskiej, należy umieścić w najbliższej dzielnicy żydowskiej. Pobyt ich w tej dzielnicy zostaje ograniczony na stałe. Zastrzegę się przydzieleniu zdolnych do pracy cyganów do obozu pracy.
2. Przy umieszczaniu cyganów w dzielnicy żydowskiej może być wydane zarządzenie oddania bez odszkodowania posiadanego przez nich sprzętu domowego, pojazdów, koni i innego mienia.
3. Cyganie, którzy po umieszczeniu ich w dzielnicy żydowskiej opuszczą teren ten bez uprawnienia, zostaną ukarani wzięciem i grzywną do zł. 10.000, — lub jedną z tych kar — w ciężkich wypadkach kara ciężkiego wzięcia w myśl przepisów wyżej...

em 1 czerwca 1942 r.

**Kreishauptmann
eises Warschau-Land
Dr. Rupprecht**



A German soldier performing a search on a Roma (Gypsy) man forced to stand with his arms in the air (Photo: ca. 1940 in occupied Poland). USHMM



Roma (Gypsies) weaving baskets in the Rivesaltes internment camp, 1941–1942. This camp was one of 30 operating in Vichy where 3,000 to 6,000 French Roma were held. Living conditions in the camps were similar to those of concentration camps. Many Roma held there died from diseases and hunger. The camps operated until May 1946. USHMM

Roma and Sinti in a Nazi German labour camp in Belzec in occupied Poland, 1940. Public domain



EXERCISES:

Look at the photographs, read the texts and answer the following questions:

- From what countries did the Sinti and Roma originate and where were they brought?
- What was the purpose of their deportation? Who carried it out?
- What was the situation of the Roma in occupied Poland? List some restrictions and limitations placed on the Roma.
- How did Vichy France authorities treat the Roma? Where were they held and in what conditions?
- What conditions prevailed in labour camps for the Roma in occupied Poland?
- Were all Romani deported there capable of work?

Search for additional information and think:

- What was the purpose of deporting the Roma to labour camps?
- How did the Nazis justify anti-Roma restrictions?
- Why were the rights of the Roma restricted in other occupied countries and why were they sent to labour camps?
- What similarities and differences do you see in the treatment of the Roma and the Jews?
- Why did the Germans confined the Roma in Jewish ghettos?

Unit 3

The Roma girl Settela Steinbach staring out of a deportation train in the Westerbork camp.

Settela was born in 1934 in Limburg, the Netherlands.

During the war, she was imprisoned in the Westerbork camp. On 19 May, 1944, along with other family members, she was deported to Auschwitz-Birkenau, where she was murdered. Yad Vashem



An excerpt from an account of Jerzy Adam Brandhuber, an Auschwitz prisoner:

Brought in at the start of 1943 the Gypsies placed in section B11e in Birkenau walked around in their civilian clothing. On the left front of their outer clothing they wore a sewed on upside down black triangle. On the right side of the triangle slightly downward was the letter Z (from the word 'Zigeuner') and alongside a prisoner's number (...). As for the Gypsies from section B11e, we were instructed before their arrival to prepare 30,000 rag tags in the Bekleidungskammer with the above described insignia that they later wore.



Dina Gottliebova, a talented artist and prisoner of a Roma camp recommended by SS Dr Josef Mengele; in 1944, she painted pastel portraits of Roma who he used for pseudoscientific experiments.
Wikipedia/PMAB



Three SS officers socialising on the grounds of the SS retreat outside of Auschwitz, at 'Solahütte', 1944. Left-right]: Richard Baer (Commandant of Auschwitz), Dr Josef Mengele and Rudolf Höss (a former Auschwitz Commandant).
Wikipedia.org

An excerpt from an account of Helmut Clemens on the medical experiments of Dr. Mengele.

I was there when Mengele sought out twins for his experiments. I had to bring them to him and he gave them special numbers. I was not allowed to be present during the experiments. He then always sent me somewhere. One time, I accidentally happen to be in the room where Mengele conducted his experiments. I saw how he gave the children eye-drops with some liquid after which they had greatly enlarged pupils. Several days later I saw the corpses of these children in the morgue.

A testimony of Helmut Clemens, a prisoner at the *Zigeunerfamilienlager*, acting as a messenger for Dr Mengele. *Memoirs. Gypsies at the Auschwitz-Birkenau concentration camp, München– London–New York–Paris 1993, vol. 2, 1494.*

**An excerpt from
a testimony of Vera
Alexander, a Jew who
survived Auschwitz:**

One pair of twins called Guido and Nina was barely older than four. Mengele picked them up and brought them back mutilated in a perverse way. They had been sewn together at the back like Siamese twins. Mengele had also connected their veins. Their wounds were suppurating, they cried day and night. Their mother, I remember that she was called Stella, had somehow been able to get hold of some morphine and used it to put an end to the suffering of her children.

Right to Remember. A Handbook for Education with Young People on the Roma Genocide,
second edition 2017, written by Ellie Keen, edited by Rui Gomes.

When I went in [to the camp hospital], the children cried and asked, 'Uncle, give bread, give sugar' For me those were the most difficult moments I experienced in the camp. Not the beating, not the interrogation, but those children.

Dr Frantisek Janouch, a Czech prisoner employed as a doctor
in the 'Gypsy' camp at Auschwitz-Birkenau

EXERCISES:

Look at the photographs, read the texts and answer the following questions:

- From where and in what conditions were the Roma deported to Auschwitz?
- In what part of the Auschwitz II-Birkenau camp were the Roma placed?
- How were they marked? In what conditions did they live?
- Who was Dina Gottliebova? What task did she perform for Dr Mengele at the Auschwitz camp?
- What did Helmut Clemens do at the 'Gypsy family camp' in Auschwitz?
How does he recall Dr Mengele and his medical experiments?
- Who are the victims of Dr Josef Mengele's experiments? What did they entail?
- Why was the visit to the hospital for Roma children at the Gypsy camp in Auschwitz by Dr Frantisek Janouch the most difficult time during his stay at the camp?

Search for additional information and think:

- What is the story behind the photograph of Stella Steinbach? Who identified her and when?
Why was she for years considered a Jewish girl?
- When and for what purpose did the Germans set up a Gypsy family camp in Auschwitz?
In what conditions were the Sinti and Roma held there? What was their fate?
- Where are the drawings of Dina Gottliebova stored today? What significance do they have for us?
- Who was Dr Josef Mengele? What was his professional career? What did his service
at Auschwitz entail? What did he do after the war? How did he avoid punishment for his war crimes?

Unit 4

Serbs and Gypsies rounded up for deportation marched to the Jasenovac concentration camp under Ustashe guard, 1942–1943. USHMM



An excerpt from an account of Krešimir Vinaj, an artisan from Dalj on the deportation of Roma.

I am aware that a municipal notary in Dalj, together with the local militia and armed men, arrested all members of eleven Gypsy families from Dalj, on one night in June 1942. This had been ordered by one named Katić, district commander from Osijek. The other day members of these gypsy families were taken to a concentration camp from where they never returned. These gypsies were craftsmen, tough-makers, and were honest and hardworking citizens...

From the indictment of Andrija Artuković in 1951

Ustashe guards in the Jasenovac concentration camp stripping newly arrived prisoners of their personal possessions, 1941–1945. USHMM



A testimony of Joka Nikolić, a Roma survivor from Šarapovo near Čazma.

They have opened our wagon. There is no station. On my left I see a tall chimney, on my right the settlement. On the left I notice a large group of people milling around, some kind of interaction, commotion. Yes, that is the factory. I thought so. They forced us out of the wagons, and lined us up. Both sides, from the wagon to the camp area, at that time

I did not know it was a camp, let alone that I was in Jasenovac, were lined with Ustashe. They led us down to some sort of shed and took all of our belongings. They took everything, things of value, as well as things that could not have possibly had any value.

We are ordered to form a column. An Ustashe in front of us. Leading us somewhere. We pass by a lake. They take us to some kind of wire surrounded area. I mean, this was hard to watch, let alone talk about how hard it was to experience it personally.

'Poruke' -Magazine of the Jasenovac Memorial Area,
yr. 7, no. 1. (10.), p. 4. Ownership: Jasenovac Memorial Site

The Ustashe militia
executing prisoners near
the Jasenovac concentration
camp, 1942–1943. USHMM



**An excerpt from an account
of Stjepan Nikolić from
Velika Gorica on the killing
of Roma in Jasenovac:**

Me and other 34 gypsies were separated from a large group and assigned to work on potato digging and weeding ... On the same day, our wives and children were taken to the dug-out pits, which were 6 x 8 m in length, and 3 or 4 meters high, and were killed there, children too. I went to work on cleaning the railway for eight days, that is how long I stayed in Jasenovac, and every day I saw large groups of gypsies, several hundred accompanied by Ustashe, to the pits and killing them... When the hole was filled with corpses, they were not all dead immediately, first, they were covered with a thin layer of earth and then with lime, and each time I saw the surface of that hole moving, which I believe happened because people were still alive ...

Stjepan Nikolić from Velika Gorica on the killing of Roma in Jasenovac
(from the Public Prosecutor's Office records, District in Velika Gorica, in 1952)

**An excerpt from testimony
of Toso Mitrovic from the
village of Novi Jankovci
about executions in the
camp.**

I was taken to the camp in 1942 in May, with me another 830 gypsies were sent to Jasenovac... While we were in the camp, me and the others that managed to escape, we saw Ustashe killing people with hammers, sticks, axes, shotguns, bombs, pistols, and all other means. When they were killing children and women, I was only 810 meters away, and when we looked they ordered us to turn to the other side and that time my four children were killed, both my wife and my mother.

(from a letter by Romani from St. and N. Jankovci who were in the camp located in
Jasenovac and Gradiška). Source: <https://rmcu.hr/testimonies/?lang=en>