

P. 12. *Legacies of the Holocaust: Racial Discrimination, Social Marginalization, and Resistance among Roma People in Europe*

Venue: Institutul de Istorie „George Barițiu”, Conference Room,
Str. M. Kogălniceanu, nr. 12-14, et. 1
Friday, October 18th, 09.00-11:00

Organizer: PhD. Manuela MARIN

Chair: PhD. Manuela MARIN

The panel focuses on the Holocaust during World War II by looking not only at the event in itself but also at its roots and long-term consequences for the Roma people in Romania and in Eastern and Central Europe. It aims to map in *longue-durée* what were the causes and underlining mechanisms that placed Roma people at the margins of the European societies and how this marginality was reinterpreted to gain a racial (and a social) meaning during the interwar period and especially during World War II. The deportation of Roma people will also be considered by underlining two interconnected facets: the deportation as the final outcome of the racial discrimination and social marginalization experienced by the Roma people in the previous historical periods of time, and the deportation as an opportunity to fight or resist against discrimination and abusive administrative treatment. A special attention will be given to the period of communist rule in Eastern and Central Europe. Despite invested efforts in Roma people's integration into mainstream the legacies of the Holocaust and its underlining discrimination practices survived the change of the regimes and outpaced the best intentions of the new political actors. Consequently, the panel will consider the diverse experiences of Roma people in communist states and how they identified new means to oppose the discrimination and social marginalization and asserted their rights as a national minority.

The languages of the panel will be Romanian and English (in person or online).

Tamás HAJNÁCZKY (Archiepiscopal College of Veszprém, Károli Gáspár University of the Reformed Church in Hungary), *(Dis)continuity in Gypsy Policy in 20th Century Hungary*.

-Abstract-

In my research, I set out to examine the ideas and actions of the authorities and the bureaucracy that embodied them in relation to Gypsy settlements in 20th century Hungary. During this period of over ten years which meant in-depth source research and systematic work, it has become increasingly obvious to me that there is a continuity in the Gypsy policies conceived during the last century, which spanned various historical periods. It is generally believed that policies related to Gypsies were derived in an essentialist way from the ideological set-up at the fore of the given historical period. Most researchers have been content with analysing a well-known decree or decision, examining it during within the period under study and describing its implementation as

a unidirectional process, free of any repercussions. However, the bureaucracy's actions and ideas on Gypsy settlements were shaped by the interaction of previous decrees, the experience of their implementation and the current social situation of the Gypsies. In time, it had a different rhythm and dynamic than the events of major policy and epochal changes. In my research, I relied primarily on Fernand Braudel's theory of timelines as the best way to capture the continuity of the bureaucracy's regulation and insights on Gypsy settlements across the ages.

Alexander MUŠINKA, Lucia Segľová MUŠINKOVÁ (Centre of Languages and Cultures of National Minorities University of Presov, Slovakia), *Resettlement of Roma settlements during the Second World War and its Consequences* (online)

-Abstract-

The Hungarian census of Roma (called Gypsies at that time) from 1893 found that settled Roma in Hungary lived outside the municipality (i.e. in separate settlements) in 52% of municipalities, in another 40% of municipalities they lived scattered within the municipality and in 8% they lived both outside and within municipalities. In Slovakia, however, four times as many Roma were to live outside the municipalities, i.e. segregated. Since Roma were only a small number of landowners until the middle of the 20th century, this fact greatly influenced the character of Roma settlement. Some of the Roma settlements were very unstable and many municipalities changed the location of the Roma settlement several times during the half century. Relocation of Roma settlements outside the municipality, i.e. to a relatively large distance from the village, we already have evidence from the interwar period in Czechoslovakia. However, until the Second World War and the establishment of an independent Slovak state, this was only a local practice and not an official national policy. This practice became mass and nationwide in 1941. There is still no list of all Roma settlements that were moved during the years of the Second World War, but we know that it was a mass practice in many regions of Slovakia. The goal of our research is to develop such a list based on the literature published so far. The practice of resettling Roma settlements continued even after 1945. These measures meant a fundamental intervention in the life of the Roma in Slovakia and represented serious consequences for this ethnicity until the present day. They broke the existing economic and other ties between the majority and the Roma, disrupted the differentiation process taking place inside the Roma community itself and forced the Roma into even greater isolation from the civilizing processes taking place in the whole society, they accelerated the demise of traditional sources of livelihood and destroyed the ethical standards of the Roma community. According to the latest Atlas of Roma communities 2019 almost half of the recorded Roma population in Slovakia lives in concentrations on the outskirts of villages and towns or completely outside villages and towns.

László FOSZTÓ (Romanian Institute for Research on National Minorities), *Roots and Legacies of Forced Mobility: Segregation, Deportation, and the Genocide of the Roma*

-Abstract-

The historical mobility of Roma groups has often been seen as a key aspect of their culture. Many sources romanticize this mobility, describing it as a "Gypsy soul" driven by a desire for freedom or an inherent urge to wander. However, these idealized views contrast sharply with the harsh reality of exclusion and violence that Roma communities have faced.

In this paper, I aim to explore the external factors – such as political changes and socio-economic conditions – that have influenced, and sometimes forced, the mobility of Romani groups over the centuries. By tracing the roots of enforced mobility and sedentarism back to the Enlightenment period, I will attempt to outline the history of segregation, persecution, and genocide experienced by the Roma people. The primary goal of this paper is to build a genealogy of the various forms of segregation, persecution, and genocide that the Roma people have endured, and to connect these historical patterns to the present-day forms of discrimination they continue to face.

Part 2 (in English and Romanian) Chair: dr. László Fosztó

Cristina Teodora STOICA, “Marshal Antonescu, true Romanians will not forget you”: *Legacies of the Romanian Holocaust*

-Abstract-

According to a 2017 survey conducted by the Elie Wiesel National Institute of the study of the Holocaust in Romania (INSHER-EW), of the 68% of Romanians who had ever heard of the Holocaust, only 33% knew that it had occurred in Romania. Of these, only 22% claimed the responsibility of the Romanian Holocaust lies with the Antonescu regime, compared with the 55% who place the blame on Nazi perpetrators. Also, 36% recognized that Roma were targeted for persecution and deported to Transnistria, alongside the more-well known mass murder of Jews. Holocaust memory has been a contentious topic in the Romanian political realm and academic circles inside and within broader European circles. In a political incident in 2003, government officials declared, “within the borders of Romania between 1940 and 1945 there was no Holocaust.” The incident, which evoked international outrage and condemnation from historians but also political actors at large across Europe and in Israel, resulted in the creation of a commission that investigated the history of the Holocaust in Romania.

In spite of the steps taken toward public acknowledgement of the genocide of the Roma, present dominant narratives pertaining to the Roma’s wellbeing, lifestyle, social and economic living conditions continue to plague the popular narrative and depiction of the group, as well as Holocaust memory. Prejudicial perspectives of the Roma rooted in a long history of antiziganism shape and hinder the memory of the Roma persecution. Stereotypical attitudes of Roma as victimizers of Romanians, of being either very poor, ‘work-shy’ or very wealthy as a result of stealing and theft, and the perception of Roma as asocials unwilling to assimilate into society and adapt the current social and cultural norms can be traced back to the justifications for marginalization and persecution offered by the Ion Antonescu regime and Romanian political actors during World War II.

This paper will discuss Holocaust remembrance and the commemoration of Romani persecution in Romania. Emphasis will be placed on selective and deflective negation on behalf of the Romanian government, as well as Holocaust education and present discriminatory narratives targeting and centered on the ethnic group. Current prejudicial perceptions of the Roma as ‘thieves’ and ‘asocials’ who do not want to assimilate into society rooted in a long history of antiziganism shape the public narrative and memory of the Romani genocide in Transnistria.

Manuela MARIN („George Barițiu” Institute of History), *The Beginning of the Roma Civic Activism in Communist Romania*.

-Abstract-

My paper analyzes the beginning of the Roma emancipation movement in communist Romania by focusing on the activity of the Roma sociologist and activist, Nicolae Gheorghe. It is divided in three parts. The first part describes the situation of the Roma people during the communist period, and how the communist regime used their social marginality to exclude them from the ranks of the officially recognized national minorities. The second part offers a short biography of Nicolae Gheorghe identifying those elements that prompted his involvement in supporting the Roma people’s quest for civic emancipation. Lastly, the paper focused on Gheorghe’s actions meant to build a case for the recognition of Roma as a national minority.

Ioan Valentin NEGOI (Roma Education Fund, București), *Situația rudarilor din satul Glod* (online)

-Abstract-

Identitatea rudarilor a fost și încă reprezintă o temă intens dezbătută de către specialiști nu numai în spațiul românesc, dar și în spațiul sud-est european, unde regăsim comunități mari de rudari. Studiul de față este unul descriptiv care prezintă geneza satului de rudari Glod. Pe lângă partea descriptivă, autorul studiului a încercat să ofere un răspuns la întrebarea „Cine sunt rudarii din Glod și cum se percep ei însuși?”. Deși rudarii sunt percepuți de populația majoritară într-un anumit fel, ei înșiși se identifică diferit.

Cătălina OLTEANU (Consiliul Național pentru Combaterea Discriminării, București), *Discriminarea sistematică a romilor: o nouă provocare*

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Discriminarea sistemică a romilor reprezintă un fenomen complex, cu rădăcini în istoria României, o istorie care are efecte și manifestări și astăzi regăsite sub forma atitudinilor și percepțiilor negative, discriminării instituționale etc.

Istoria romilor este marcată de o lungă perioadă de discriminare și excluziune, cu impact profund în rândul romilor, perpetuând percepțiile și atitudinile negative ale societății și lipsa de acțiune a statului față de formele de discriminare și rasism existente în societate.

Discriminarea sistemică nu se delimitează la un singur domeniu, aceasta se poate manifesta în toate aspectele vieții, de la educație și ocupare până la locuire și justiție, românii se confruntă cu bariere sistемice care le limitează oportunitățile și exercitarea drepturilor cu deplinătate. Prezentarea de față urmărește să analizeze pe de o parte factorii istorici, sociali și culturali care au contribuit la crearea și perpetuarea acestei forme de discriminare, și pe de altă parte cum se manifestă discriminarea sistemică în diferite domenii ale vieții și care sunt consecințele în rândul romilor.