

Romani Holocaust 1939-1945

August 2 European Roma Holocaust Memorial Day

The Romani genocide or the Romani Holocaust was the effort by Nazi Germany and its World War II allies to commit ethnic cleansing and eventually genocide against Europe's Romani people.

Under Adolf Hitler, a supplementary declaration to the Nuremberg Laws was issued on 26 November 1935, labelling the Romani as "enemies of the race-based state", thereby presenting them in the same category as the Jews and Poles. Thus, in some ways, the destiny of the Roma in Europe correspond that of the Jews in the Jewish Holocaust.

Hitler and Reinhard Heydrich, head of the Reich Main Security Office, saw the Roma in German territory as a illness to rural Germans, based on ancient stereotypes. They put great efforts into "fighting the Gypsy nuisance." The Nazis expelled them from their permanent homes; placed legal restrictions on Roma, included the forbidden marriage between Aryans and lesser races; put the Law for the Protection of German Blood and German Honor into place, and more. Romani people, like jews, lost their right to vote in 1936.

With the purpose of cleaning towns throughout Europe starting with regulations of the "Preventative Fight Against Crime" in 1938 between 1938-1945 thousands of Romani displaced from their home and sent to concentration camps in Dachau, Buchenwald, Mauthausen, Auschwitz-Birkenau, and more. Thousands of them died of hunger and diseases. Those who did not die from the disease were gassed to death at the camps or mascaraed at the gunpoint. Many survivors of concentration camps were forced to join the German army by being front lines to fight with the Red Army.

The accepted estimate is that during WW2 between 220,000-500,000 were murdered by Germans and their collaborators. Since Romani people were dispersed and lacked a strong community organization, it is hard to estimate accurately. Some researchers believe that around one million Romani people were murdered.

After Genocide

Germany recognized the genocide of the Roma in 1985 only formally and held two official ceremonies to commemorate the genocide victims. This came after 40 long years of

disagreements, and political and legal red tape on the matter of recognizing the genocide. Also, the German government paid war apology to Jewish survivors of the Holocaust, but not to the Romani people.

Even today Romani people suffer from racism and discrimination from their neighbors and even attempted to expulsions. In 2008 Romani people camp in Naples Italy was burned to the ground and also, a public survey conducted in Italy shows that 68% of Italian would like to have Romani expelled from Italy. Former president of France Nicholas Sarkozy announced in August 2010 that Roma camps would be dismantled and their residents deported to Eastern Europe.

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