

Persecutions and Genocidal Violence against Roma and Sinti in Western Europe, 1939-1946

Edited by Ilse About

Proposal abstracts must be submitted before October 1, 2021.

Applicants will receive a response on November 1, 2021

Articles must be received before April 10, 2022.

[Articles will be published in French in both print and digital formats. The articles submitted in English will be published in French and English as well, in a paginated and digital format.]

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During World War II, Roma and Sinti were the target of multiple persecutions and genocidal violence, the chronology and timing of which varied greatly between European regions. These attacks affected every population referred to as Romani, including the Roma, Sinti (or Manouches), Calé (or Gitanos), as well as groups associated with the Romani through their history or through the categorical measures levied against them, such as the Yenish, and groups that were singled out because of their professions, like Basket makers (*Vanniers* or *Korbmacher*), Fairground people (*Forains*), and Circus Folk. In Western Europe, the terms used to target these populations varied from country to country. Additionally, these terms, such as Nomads, Gitanos, Bohemians, Zigeuner, and Cigani, were never exclusive or limited to a specific region or time period.

With respect to historical accounts and national memorials, the often deliberate cover-up and delayed recognition of these persecutions helped marginalize the events that murdered over 100,000 people throughout Europe and permanently displaced Romani societies from the pre-war period. Although many questions remain unanswered, the chapters and turning points of this story have now been clearly outlined (Asséo, 1993, 2014; Zimmermann, 1996, 2007; Lewy, 2000; Weikersthal *et alii*, 2008; and Weiss-Wendt, 2013). The first step opens with segregation, which began as early as 1933, followed by the racial definition, deportation, and murder of the Roma and Sinti by the Greater Germanic Reich (Germany, Austria, Bohemia and Moravia, and Poland). The next step in the escalation covers the targeted and deadly repression of the Roma within nations allied to the Reich, such as Croatia, Hungary, Slovakia, and Romania, while the third step involves the systematic killing of the Roma in the East as mobile murder squads advanced from the Baltic states to Crimea.

This issue of the *Revue d'histoire de la Shoah* will publish articles focused on Western Europe, specifically the arc of nations encompassing the Netherlands, Belgium, France, Italy, Switzerland, and Slovenia (excluding Germany). Within these regions, the composite nature of the repressive tools that were employed during this time seem to defy generalization. These countries relied on measures as varied as house arrest, detention, internment, concentration camps, targeted and

random executions, and deportations to extermination camps and the concentration camp network. The approaches of these governments and their modalities, which did not include specific genocidal action paired with targeted and conventional violence, are difficult to describe with certainty. The key study conducted by Karola Fings (Fings, 2013), which called into question the overall timeline of the persecutions within the Reich, encouraged researchers to extend this same approach to other parts of Europe. As a continuation of the research conducted as part of the ANR RomaResist program, *Dislocations and Resistance: Genocidal Violence and Persecutions of Roma, Sinti, and Travellers in Western Europe, 1939-1946*, directed by Ilse Eschen at the EHESS (School for Advanced Studies in the Social Sciences), this issue of *Revue d'histoire de la Shoah* seeks to examine the various historical, social, and memorial facets and dimensions of the persecutions of the Roma and Sinti in Western Europe.

Proposals should primarily focus on defining the events surrounding the persecution of these groups and the effects of this violence on the relevant people and communities. Case studies, monographic analyses, and studies centered on groups, collectives, families, or individuals will be especially favored, as will transversal and comparative studies that draw in the experiences of regions outside of Western Europe.

From an editorial standpoint, the importance of offering researchers new platforms to communicate their ideas and opportunities to promote recent scientific advances on the topic could not be more apparent. The last issue of *Revue d'histoire de la Shoah* dedicated to this topic dates back to 1999 (“Les Tsiganes dans l’Europe allemande”, *Revue d'histoire de la Shoah*, n° 167, 1999, <https://www.cairn.info/revue-revue-d-histoire-de-la-shoah1-1999-3.htm>), and the last article on the subject was published in 2004 (Filhol, 2000, 2004). The journal *Études tziganes* also published three issues dedicated to the persecutions (“France 1939-1946: l’internement des Tsiganes”, no. 6, 1995; “L’internement : des lieux de mémoire”, no. 13, 1999 ; and “Des territoires d’extermination à l’Est de l’Europe (1941-1944)”, no. 56-57, 2016). Outside of France, historical research into this topic grew significantly. However, this increase was not reflected in the French-speaking academic environment. It is important to shed the light on persecutions in Western Europe because these events can be used to draw general conclusions about genocide and genocidal violence. In a region characterized by persecutions of varying intensities and timelines, it is critical to use a specific lens to examine a geographic area whose history of persecuting the Romani and Sinti ethnic groups, while diverse, offers a number of cross-cutting perspectives that merit further exploration.

The following themes will be of particular interest:

House arrest and day-to-day violence.

This approach, which was adopted by several countries, including France and Italy, has not been thoroughly studied, and there have been very few research projects published on this topic (Moreigne, 2013). A numerical evaluation of this type of persecution could be considered, as well as an assessment of the various aspects related to the decision-making process, initial organization of house arrests, and relationships with local authorities, and especially with cities authorities and local populations. Special attention could be paid to the day-to-day living conditions of those confined to house arrest and the persecution framework that led to house arrest or resulted in other types of violence. The violence and executions committed against these populations, especially at the end of WWII, have not been sufficiently explored in the literature. Similarly, examples of resistance, concealment, refuge, mutual aide, and solidarity are still poorly understood and could be the subject of specific articles and further study.

Dynamics of internment.

The history of the internment camps has been particularly well studied in France and Italy (Filhol, Hubert, 2009). Despite a few ground-breaking articles on the topic (Pioger, 1968 and Bertrand, Grandjonc, 1984), there are still very few studies published in academic journals (Guinle Lorinet, 2005; Jouand, 2008; Peltier, 1999; and Trevisan, 2010, 2013). Many camps that were part of the internment network in France and Italy have not yet been the focus of monographic studies, and confinement places are still poorly understood throughout Western Europe. Research into the mechanisms that preceded the creation of the camps and the day-to-day operation and long-term management of the internment camps for so-called Nomades, Zingari or Zigeuner will be prioritized. Similarly, efforts to examine archival records and first-hand accounts to better understand the living conditions, in both day-to-day and exceptional circumstances, of the interned persons will be given special attention as the effects of internment on social organization and displacement have not yet been thoroughly studied.

Mechanisms of deportation and mass violence

The recent study by Monique Heddebaut on “Convoy Z,” which left Mechelen on January 15, 1944 (Heddebaut, 2018), underscored the need to investigate the history of racial and political deportations through the lens of anti-Romani persecution in Western Europe. The planning of specific deportations in occupied Alsace (spring of 1943), Belgium (early 1944), and the Netherlands (spring of 1944) raises the question of the possibility of coordinated targeted deportations of the Roma and Sinti ethnic groups in Western Europe. Other deportations, committed to either secure forced labor, hostages, or repress the population in a general sense, also occurred periodically, as demonstrated by the deportation of several dozen Roma and Sinti prisoners from the Poitiers internment camp in France in January 1943. Mass violence, especially in Slovenia (Košir, 2020) in the form of targeted executions and random massacres, occurred throughout the war. Nevertheless, this perspective has not been examined by historians. Studies that take into account one or more of these questions while adopting original methodological perspectives will be given special attention.

Refugees, concealment, and resistance.

Examples of Romani resistance to occupation and persecutions were featured in the iconic work of Jan Yoors published in 1971 (Yoors, 1971). However, no further studies have been published yet. Research into some of the essential aspects of resistance has though been recently proposed, and a number of extremely promising research approaches has been presented (Kóczé, Szász, 2018 and Foisneau, 2018). However, our understanding of the strategies adopted by the persecuted in order to escape repressive measures, limit their effects, or stand in opposition to them, remains limited. The various aspects of resistance could be evaluated as a whole to better understand the forms of conflict and opposition employed not only within places of persecution, but also within the broader social societies of countries at war. The accusation of espionage mentioned by Michael Zimmermann as one of the motives or pretexts for the repression of the Roma and Sinti deserves to be examined through the lens of historical research in particular. The concept of refuge, especially in the period after the war (Joskowicz, 2015) could be expanded to include new aspects, including forced exile, concealment (whether through avoidance or fraud), survival in times of war, and the roles of mutual aid and support.

Individual and collective trajectories

A recent series of studies on the individual, collective, and familial dimensions (Bartash, 2020; Reuss, 2020; and Sadílková, 2020) of anti-Roma persecutions in Europe further explores the path first blazed by pioneering studies, including the research from Heiko Haumann regarding Căcilie Zilli Reichmann (Haumann, 2016). It seems to be especially important to propose case studies that help understand the effects of the persecutions on individuals and small groups to grasp the steps

of the trajectories and consider both the weight of the violence committed and the strategies deployed by the victims of persecution. By choosing to focus on this scale, researchers could also highlight the pre-war regional and historical origins and potentially the role played by systems of control, and especially police identification, in the roll-out of repressive measures starting in 1940.

Compensation, memorials and commemorations

A number of studies have examined the history of the various forms of recognition and commemoration that took place in Germany after WWII and other countries in Central and Eastern Europe (Margalit, 2002; Kelso, 2007, 2008; Knesebeck, 2011; Blumer 2013; Kapralski, 2013; and Reuss, 2015). Nevertheless, large swaths of history regarding compensations, memorials, and commemorations in Western Europe have not yet been written (Doorslaer, 2001). While pioneering studies have looked at national memorials in general and described a collective indifference (Filhol, 2004), further research should be conducted on how this indifference manifested itself through the study of testimonials (Joskowitz, 2020), the analysis of individual compensation requests, the study of dispossessions, and the forms of restitution that might (or might have not) occurred. Moreover, the actions and mobilization of activist groups and associations are still not well understood. The same can be said for the role played by central figures and stakeholders involved in the recognition of these persecutions, with some exceptions (Baumann, 2017 and Sierra, 2019). Lastly, there is insufficient research to analyze the various forms of recognition of this violence, the creation of memorials to commemorate it, and the attempts (most of which are artistic in nature, dated, and often misunderstood) to give shape to a history that has long been silenced.

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La Revue d'histoire de la Shoah

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The *RHS* examines the history of the genocide of Jews in Europe. It also focuses on the consequences of the destruction of Jews in Europe on Jewish history. As the only journal of its kind to be published in French, its purpose is to contribute to the latest research on the Holocaust in the fields of history, other social sciences, anthropology, sociology, literature, and our collective memory. Film studies, gender studies, and the history of ideas are just some of the disciplines included in the scope of the journal. The journal is interested in an area that includes all of Europe, including countries that remained neutral during World War II, as well as colonial empires and beyond (the United States, Latin America, etc.).

Articles should be no longer than 50,000 characters and will be evaluated by two anonymous reviewers. Articles not written in French may be submitted. Following the review process, they will be translated into French by the *RHS*.

Articles must adhere to the bibliography style guide included in the appendix.

The bibliography should appear in the footnotes. It is preferred that authors do not include an additional bibliography at the end of their article. However, this type of bibliography may be used in certain specific cases.

If you have any questions or would like to submit your article, contact Pauline de Ayala at p2ayala@gmail.com.