PHARRAJIMOS

The fate of the Roma during the Holocaust

Edited by János Bársony and Ágnes Daróczi

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The Fate of the Roma During the Holocaust

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Preface to the English Edition

"Pharrajimos"[1] means cutting up, fragmentation, destruction in Romani language, a language with Sanskrit origins. In the international literature, the atrocities suffered by the Roma during the Nazi regime are also called "Samudaripen" or "Roma Holocaust."

Our volume relates and analyzes the events of the Pharrajimos in Hungary, with a brief chronological overview of the Gypsy policies of the Third Reich. The authors of the essays in this volume present the process, the events and the local historical background of the Hungarian Pharrajimos. More precisely, the authors chronicle the anti-Gypsy administration of the Horthy era [1919–1944], recount the history of the concentration camp at Csillagerőd and recall the events of the mass murder at Várpalota.

Oral history has greatly aided research on the "forgotten Holocaust," and so it is especially important to have Károly Bari's essay analyzing the role of the Pharrajimos in Roma oral tradition republished in this volume. From over 3,000 recollections, János Bársony compiled the history of the sufferings of about 560 settlements, presented here in the form of a table. Moreover, some of these interviews were conducted with survivors. In the appendix, we publish a series of texts from the debate over the interpretation of the Pharrajimos that focus on the recognition of the Roma Holocaust. We included these texts to offer readers different views in this debate. The Holocaust is a sensitive topic, and there are many controversies surrounding it in Hungary and internationally. There are two main themes in this debate: one, the so-called exclusivist view, says that the Holocaust was the fate exclusively of the Jews, and the other is held by those who question this position and do not accept that what happened to the Roma can be considered as "only" a genocide. The debate is ongoing in Hungary today.

The editors of this volume have been called Gypsy nationalists, fundamentalists, and functionalists. We were labeled well before those who labeled us thought about our arguments, and the fact is that not much is known about the Pharrajimos.

The genesis of this volume is closely connected to the exhibition organized at the Holocaust Documentation Center (HDC), a former synagogue, on the 60th anniversary of the Holocaust in Budapest, where at the last minute a Roma Holocaust section was installed. Three weeks before the opening of the exhibition, with the personal intervention of the president of the board of the HDC, we obtained permission to organize a small exhibition in the

1 Pronounced PaRajimos.

female gallery of the former synagogue. The exhibition was put together by the Romedia Foundation; Roma Press Center, led by Gábor Bernáth; and the Roma Ethnographic Collection. All of these are non-governmental organizations (NGOs) that receive no state funding but operate through private donations. To expand the small exhibition, some written sources were displayed and these became the bases of this volume. We were very gratified when L'Harmattan published these essays and other texts along with photographs in a two-volume. This English version is an extended version of the Hungarian first edition.

We also feel obliged to mention the debate among the Roma researchers about the creation and use of the term *Pharrajimos*. Ian Hancock, a professor at the University of Texas, uses the term in English as *Porrajmos*. However, in Romani culture this is a *marhime* notion.[2] Porrajmos is unpronounceable in the Roma community, and thus is incapable of conveying the sufferings of the Roma.[3]

The researchers, except for one, have not received any state funding for their work. There is no Roma museum or research institute in Hungary, and the national research institutes do not think it is their task to document this segment of the national history. The struggle for a narrative of the history of our community has to be initiated by Roma NGOs and intellectuals. The inauguration of the Roma Holocaust Memorial on the bank of the Danube in 2006 is a milestone in this struggle.

In January 2007 Romani Rose, the president of *Verband Deutscher Sinti und Roma* in Heidelberg, led a delegation to the UN in an effort to improve the situation of the Roma. We cannot envision any improvement, however, without the recognition of our history and the nomination of a UN commissioner of Roma origin who has expertise in Roma issues.

We hope that these efforts lead to a political groundswell that brings us closer to the realization of the need for Roma emancipation in both the Hungarian and the global community.

And finally, the editors would like to thank the following for helping with the English edition:

- Isabela Mihalache and Bernard Rorke, OSI RPP
- Noel S. Selegzi, International Debate Education Association
- Martin Greenwald, OSI New York

2 The Romani *marhime*, *mahrome*, *magerdo* mean unclean, untouchable.

3 See Ian Hancock, *On the Word Porrajmos*, http://radoc.net, February 2005; and the debate about the term in Beszélő-Visszabeszélő [Talk Back], *Beszélő* 11 (2000): 121.

We would like to again thank the following for their help with the Hungarian edition:

- Mohácsi Viktória, MEP
- Dr. Katona Attila, researcher at the Szombathely City Museum
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- Herbert Heuss, researcher, Germany
- Michael Sinclair Stewart, professor at the University of London
- Márványi Péter, journalist
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- and the survivors, who told us their sufferings and their stories so that there is a trace of our history. Special thanks to Holdosi Vilmosné, Kazári József, Komáromi Károly, Sárközi Jenőné, Sztojka Istvánné, Lakatos Angéla, Pilisi Istvánné, Balogh Gyula, Murzsa Miklósné, Kazári Józsefné, Rostás Jánosné, Dömötör Imréné, and Peller Piroska.

Budapest, February 15, 2007
Ágnes Daróczi and Dr. János Bársony, editors

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Facts and Debates: The Roma Holocaust

Holocaust researchers still debate about whether what happened to the Roma is part of the notion of Holocaust or "just another" genocide, similar to many previous and subsequent atrocities. Some revisionists wish to relativize the facts of the Holocaust, and even in the case of the Jews, others question whether the Holocaust occurred.

The authors of this volume believe that the specific events and details of the Holocaust separate it from previous and following genocides. Based on race, it was planned on an industrial scale and in a bureaucratic manner by a totalitarian state. It had many millions of victims and stands out as a unique point in human history. At the same time, the authors think that the events of Pharrajimos are part of the Holocaust, together with what happened to the Jews. It is important, however, to show both the similarities and the differences in the fate the two communities suffered. We share these views with Donald Kenrick, Grattan Puxon,[1] Ian Hancock,[2] and Sir Angus Fraser.[3] Simon Wiesenthal advocated recognition of the Roma Holocaust in 1985,[4] and in his later years Elie Wiesel also spoke out.

Some, the "exclusivists" wish to limit the notion of Holocaust atrocities and genocide to the Jews. The most important thinker among them is the historian Jehuda Bauer,[5] who was the director of Yad Vashem, Israel's official memorial to victims of the Holocaust. In Hungary, this view is represented by László Karsai. One of his articles is published in the Appendix.

The exclusivists say that the figures of Roma losses are exaggerated; they question the Nazis' intent to exterminate the Roma race and even dispute that the persecution and mass murder of the Roma was based on the idea of racial superiority. They maintain that the treatment of the Roma as "collective criminals" with the "usual preventive measures" was at the core of the "procedure" the Nazi used. Thus, they allude to the victims' "personal responsibility" in the case of the mass murders.

The facts, however, refute these allegations. The Nuremberg race laws defined both the Jewish and the Roma as "enemies of the race-based state."

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1 Donald Kenrick and Grattan Puxon, *The Destiny of Europe's Gypsies* (London: Sussex University Press, 1972). Donald Kenrick and Grattan Puxon, *Gypsies: Under the Swastika* (Hertfordshire: University of Hertfordshire Press, 1985).

2 Ian Hancock, *The Pariah Syndrome: An Account of Gypsy Slavery and Persecution* (London: Karoma Publishers, 1987).

3 Angus Fraser, *The Gypsies* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1995).

4 Simon Wiesenthal, "The Tragedy of the Gypsies," *Bulletin of Information* (Vienna), n.d., 26.

5 Jehuda Bauer, "Whose Holocaust?" *Midstream* 26 (9). Jehuda Bauer, *The Holocaust in Historical Perspective* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1978).

Both communities experienced the industrial and bureaucratic specific task-oriented organization of the annihilation. Proportionately speaking, the losses of the Roma and the Jews hardly differ from each other in Nazi-controlled areas. The exact number of victims cannot be defined in either case, since it was not in the interest of the murderers to record everything precisely. Nevertheless, the overall proportion and the size of the mass murders and persecutions can be clearly seen from the research data available today.

The deniers of total Roma genocide often point to Hitler's Auschwitz Order in 1942, which appears to spare the Sinti and Lalleri groups from the wider Roma "race" destined to be eradicated. This argument, however, highlights the fact that those to be murdered were selected on a "racial basis" and that Heinrich Himmler and other Nazis reserved for themselves the right of "racial classifications" in the course of organizing the genocide. At any rate, there was no "sparing" of anybody when it came to the implementation, according to the historical data. In Robert Ritter's racial classification typology at his Institute of Racial Hygiene and Population Biology, hereditary criminality was one of the "traits of the Roma race." The argument of using genocide as a preventive measure against criminality is a barbarian concept. It is obvious then that the Jews and the Roma were both victims of the genocide planned by the Nazis and implemented via modern industrial methods—the Jews as a primary target and the Roma as a secondary one. Only if the Holocaust is viewed theologically as part of God's plan leading to the creation of the state of Israel can the Roma be excluded from the notion of the Holocaust. But this view has nothing to do with historical scholarship.

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When delving into modern European and Hungarian history and the fate of the Roma people, we need to keep in mind the thesis of cultural anthropologist Claude Levy-Strauss, who proposed that the tradition of European humanism and its system of values was, for a very long time, applicable only to white Christians living in Europe.

The oppression, enslavement, eradication, plundering of "foreign" nations, races, and religious groups; the elimination of their culture; and their treatment as inferior, parasitic, almost subhuman people had been for a long time conveniently compatible with the moral values and thinking of those who viewed themselves and those like them as Christian humanists. After the 15th century, this "limited understanding of humanism" supplanted the previously dominant idea of Christian universalism, the thought of unity in God. As all this occurred after the discovery and conquest of new continents,

the notion of "limited humanism" amounted to the exclusion of "foreign" religious/racial/cultural groups from the "universal brotherhood of man," and consequently these groups were condemned to submission, humiliation and eradication.

This exclusionary, limiting set of values and form of identity was broken by the French Enlightenment and the gradual spread of bourgeois humanist thinking, with its ideals of liberty, equality and fraternity. Thus, there emerged a new chance for Christian universalism to redeem itself and a new chance for peaceful and tolerant coexistence, on an equitable basis, between the various religious, racial or cultural groups hitherto deemed foreign and the economically and militarily dominant cultures of Europe and North America.

The principle of limited humanism had to be constructed on such notions as "cultural superiority" and "cultural minority," the "struggle against barbarism and heathenism," the "primitive, backward" nature of conquered people, their "lack of culture" and "inability to evolve," and the dangers of "criminal hordes" and "exotic savages" in order to be able to legitimize its own behavior toward these cultures, which was characterized by murder, pillage and oppression.

The ideas of humanism and its practice were gaining ground. However, it was a gradual and painstaking process—for instance, the struggle against slavery and the emancipation of slaves in the case of the Roma people in Romania occurred in the late 19th century.

The advances of the ideas of modern humanism occurred simultaneously with the emergence of modern European nation-states, ever growing in strength, the spread of capitalist economies, the intensification of competition and resulting wars, as well as the deterioration and demise of feudal, peasant communal traditions, values and hierarchies. These resulting tensions paved the way for the emergence of new ideologies that actually pitted the elements of the triadic principle of humanism (liberty, equality, fraternity) against each other (e.g., Leninism) and for new Fascist ideologies that repudiated certain processes of modernity and modern humanism as such.

One such ideology, National Socialism, or Nazism, declared a struggle for the absolute primacy of the *völkisch* (linked in an ethnic-nationalist sense) state and nation, for a new "superior commonwealth of nations," for "racial primacy" in order to realize its goal of world domination. In its infinitely twisted view of the world, the "superior racial community"—be it of Germans, Japanese, Croatians, Hungarians, etc.—made up of "racially superior individuals," so declared by illegitimate science, engages in a "life-or-death struggle" with the "inferior, foreign, racially alien" groups and nations that "have designs" on the pure races' *Lebensraum* ("living space"), which they "occupy illegitimately" or "set out to conquer."

The Nazi identity construct had for its central element a "superior community of people" organized into a totalitarian state and governed by revelations from the supreme leader, the *Führer*. All citizens had to submit to the corporatist state and the objectives of the nation and to obey even if it meant jettisoning all religious, moral and legal values. This totalism of the race, the nation and the state determined everything. For example:

- economic production and the assessment of capital (there was "good" and "bad" money)
- the conditions of wage labor (e.g., the dismantling of trade unions and the forced creation of corporations)
- the availability of cultural goods (e.g., books were burned, artwork was banned and indexed, and artists were interned)
- the control and militarization of communication and education
- the very right to life (e.g., the organized eradication of the mentally ill)

Social Darwinist violence, the false notion of racial selection and a master race of Aryan superiority, and the Prussian military tradition of unquestioning obedience as well as the economic misery of the depression and the humiliation of the Treaty of Versailles all contributed to the temporary defeat of the forces of modern humanism in post–World War I Germany. Humanist democracies were pictured as weak, effeminate, decadent and cowardly, the very antitheses of the Nazis' racial superiority and unscrupulous racism and nationalism, proclaiming the right of the mighty.

This Nazi identity construct needed a cohesive agent and found it in the idea of "the enemy" that threatens the existence of the "racially superior community of people," weakening it from the inside by "sucking its blood, sapping its life force, poisoning its air and polluting its purity." The enemy also needed to be somewhat distinguishable from its environment, preferably on an ethnic, racial, religious or cultural basis. The distinguishing marks were understood as the typical characteristics of the group. In other words, the image of the enemy had to be distinguishable, within the context of pseudo-scientific theories of race, from the "superior, chosen race."

The ideology, on the one hand, had to extol the virtues of a people "naturally chosen for racial leadership" and inspire a consciousness of superiority, while on the other hand, it had to demonize whoever in the Nazi terminology was of an "inferior race," an enemy conspiring against the purity, world dominance and livelihood of the "racial community of people." The incessant inculcation of the idea of this paranoid "struggle" and its presentation as a

life-or-death battle made it possible for masses of people to accept the "us or them" proposition and the monstrous terror that followed as well as the abandonment of the principles of democracy and humanism. They accepted and obeyed the commands of their leader(s), even if they were incompatible with morals, religious faith, human rights and the essence of humanity—in other words, they became participants in the well-organized, industrial-style mass genocides that took place before their eyes. There were extremely few who resisted openly or in secret, who revolted, who showed solidarity with the victims used as scapegoats.

This Nazi ideology was a return to the late medieval principle of limited humanism, rationalized as the "calling of the dominant, superior race, its exclusivity to be fought for and defended." The Nazis rejected the universal legitimacy of modern humanism.

After assuming power, the Nazis and their organized, militarized instruments of state terror first turned against the actual and potential sources of political resistance: political institutions, parties, organizations, leaders and activists. Democratic and leftist parties, trade unions and associations were banned, and their active members were dragged off to concentration camps. They banned or hijacked competing media and cultural institutions and intimidated the church. The institutions of democracy were supplanted by state-controlled corporatist institutions. Uncontrollable networks of espionage and "internal security" emerged from this.

Once their power was consolidated, the Nazis set about realizing their ideological objectives. The Nuremberg Laws pointed out the "enemy within": Jews, Roma, and blacks, who were relegated to the status of second-class citizens. To protect the "purity of the German blood," miscegenation became a criminal offense and sexual intercourse between Aryans and their racial enemies was to be punished. A sharp dividing line was drawn between the dominant race and the scapegoats.

Some other groups were designated to be eradicated later: mental patients who were "superfluous to society, gobbling down resources and carrying hereditary dangers"; homosexuals, who were "inhibiting goals of procreation"; criminals, who through "heredity carry impulses contrary to the interests of the nation"; as well as political opponents and members of smaller, pacifist churches who rejected war as a matter of conscience. The military, administrative, economic and party elite were preparing for revenge, for war, for the realization of Nazi world domination and their own profit.

One might wonder why the Nazis had singled out these specific groups for the role of scapegoats. In the case of the Jews, hatred stemmed from long-standing, traditional, religiously influenced sentiment. Various elements con-

tributed to this prejudice—the notion of deicide (that the Jews had killed Christ); the Jewish belief that they were God's chosen people; Jewish adherence to ritual purity—all of which seemed strange and were largely incomprehensible to the superstitious peasantry, which viewed all foreigners with hostility .

The Jews' confinement to certain areas of economic activity (trade, banking, services, crafts) in medieval Europe and their absence from the productive work of tilling the land were significant factors in their social status. However, with the development of capitalism, the economic areas where Jews were overrepresented became increasingly dominant in business and social life, contributing to an increased pace of emancipation for the Jews. As learning and books gained significance, the Jews, with their background of dedicated religious learning, found themselves at an advantage in areas requiring education. A large proportion of them embarked on careers that had previously been inaccessible to them and became lawyers, doctors, teachers, administrators and so on, generating envy and resentment on the part of the dominant population. As a significant part of the Jewish population became wealthy, there emerged envy, resentment and a desire to reclaim the "ill-gotten riches" that were clearly not the fruits of real work (i.e., agricultural or industrial labor) on the part of those who "actually worked for their bread." All this, of course, ignored the much larger group of non-Jewish people who were accumulating wealth in a similar manner and who actually welcomed the sentiments directed against their Jewish competitors. And of course, most Jews were not wealthy at all.

A number of the ideologues and leaders of the international workers' movement and international Communist movement were of Jewish origin. This may have had some connection to their intellectual upbringing and the assimilative, internationalist and egalitarian characteristics of these ideologies. The ever-faster pace of modernization and the internationalization of the culture of capitalism made many fear that they would fall behind. This fear generated local, inward-turning paranoid responses. In addition, the number of Jews among the heads of international companies and banking institutions as well as among internationally renowned artists, scientists and scholars gave rise to false accusations and myths of a Jewish conspiracy for dominance.

The Nazis ideology was composed of these theories, falsehoods, half-truths and outright lies, including a conspiracy of the Judeo-Bolshevist plutocracy for world dominance. Individually and collectively, the Jews, by virtue of their birth, had been made the scapegoat for all the ills of humankind and all the problems of the "superior German race."

Masses of people were motivated by this ideology, especially after they had been corrupted with the wealth taken by force from the Jews or bribed with social, cultural, scientific or economic appointments, favors or gifts. One way or another, they had been made to accept the state-run industrial genocide.

The scapegoating of blacks was based on the lingering colonial pride of the day and the dominant view of blacks as an inferior race, which was also a result of the late medieval concept of limited humanism. German blacks were usually the children of German mothers and foreign fathers who immigrated from the colonies or returned from colonial wars in the English or French armies. Blacks were living, visible proof of Germany's defeat in World War I and a large thorn in the side of the race-purifying Nazis.

The third ethnic group that was made a Nazi scapegoat was the Roma population, which had lived in Germany for some 500 years. From the 16th century on, the Roma, in the eyes of the authorities and the elite, had always been one of the foreign, inferior groups whose skin color destined them to persecution, oppression and eradication, according to the theories of limited humanism. Roma integration into host societies had for centuries been impeded by the competition between itinerant craftsmen and the artisans of the guilds; and in the age of religious wars, the Roma's itinerant lifestyle could no longer be tolerated in an environment where all foreigners were viewed as enemies of the faith. Likened to the threatening Ottomans with their Muslim faith, the Roma, too, came from the East and were therefore always suspected of being dangerous spies, especially as their outward appearance, customs and language differed so greatly from those of their intolerant and suspicious hosts.

European monarchs issued a great number of edicts, usually banning or punishing the Roma. In Germany, organized manhunts designed to kill a large number of Roma were still being carried out in the 18th century. The bloody goal of the ruling classes, i.e., the eradication of the Roma people from Europe, was never achieved, however. Thanks to their ingenuity, the Roma managed to find markets for their goods and services on the peripheries of society in isolated places, where they bartered successfully and found allies and helpers, earned themselves a livelihood and managed to escape from their persecutors. During the long years of coexistence, new dialects came into being: *Kalo* (Romani mixed with Spanish), *Manush* (Romani mixed with French), and *Sinti* (Romani mixed with German).

The 18th and 19th centuries did not bring about the emancipation and rise of the Roma. Furthermore, industrial development devalued their services as craftsmen, resulting in the disintegration of their communities and their social marginalization. Some joined the ranks of the urban working

class and became wage laborers, and others managed to assimilate into the middle class. Only a select few, however, could aspire to reaching a somewhat higher social status: circus artists, carpet dealers, musicians and blacksmiths. The remaining communities were exposed to police persecution of increasing efficiency. Miserably poor, they tried to eke out a living on the peripheries of society.

Commissioned by the Interior Ministry of Bavaria, Alfred Dillmann's *Zigeunerbuch* (Gypsy Book), published in 1905, characterized the Roma people as a group of hereditary and incorrigible criminals. The police started files on all Roma, purely on a racial basis, treated them as hardened criminals, issued them special ID cards and continually harassed them. In the public consciousness, Roma people slowly came to be thought of as a dangerous, parasitic, criminal race. The Nazis took up this tradition, and in order to realize their goal of race purity, systematically persecuted the Roma, made them scapegoats, sterilized them, interned them and used industrial methods to murder them with the goal of their total eradication.

In the eyes of the Nazis, the primary enemy was the Judeo-Bolshevist plutocratic world conspiracy, which was on a collision course with the destiny of the German nation. In this struggle, the Roma constituted only a "second front," so their eradication was a secondary objective. However, their persecution was based on the same racial ideology, took the same forms, was directed by the same institutions and resulted in a proportionately similar loss as that of the Jewish people.

The two national histories are alike as regards their fate during the World War II. However, their respective histories after the war are very different. The Roma could not turn their persecution and demand or recognition and compensation into a subject of public discourse, as the Jews did. Roma social structure had collapsed in the Holocaust, and thus for a long time, the Roma had no leaders, organizations, allies or political representatives to record their losses or to intervene on their behalf in the political, legal, communication, scientific, economic, administrative or social arenas.

The development of a Roma identity and the formation of their historical consciousness started very late and are still ongoing. As part of this process, the interpretation of the Holocaust, its memories and events are being transformed from a narrow family or community consciousness to a collective Roma memory. The Roma are currently fighting to interpret their experience in the Holocaust in the context of their own history.

In Eastern Europe, including Hungary, the Roma had a different fate after the 16th century. For a long time, the exclusionist practice of limited humanism with its roots in colonialism did not take hold in these regions. Here, far

from the seas and from the mainstream of economic development, the proximity to the Ottoman Empire, with its ongoing wars, led to a steady demand for the services of itinerant Roma craftsmen for centuries. These Roma economic activities were integrated into the economies of the various countries, including the military and industry. Roma communities often enjoyed the protection of the monarch, sometimes even privileges of autonomy, and they paid their taxes regularly.

From the middle of the 18th century on, however, the situation changed drastically with the decline of the Ottoman Empire in Europe. In Romania, the Roma's patriarchal slave status (which meant that the slave could wander about the country and perform work and then return to winter at the estate of his owner, sharing a set portion of his profit with the owner) was turned into actual slavery: Roma were forced by beatings, mutilations and other violence to perform agricultural labor. After the mid-19th century the emancipation of slaves in Romania combined with a lack of land and tools turned masses of the former slaves into paupers and created a vast pool of agricultural wage workers. During the 20th century, in the Central and Eastern European states allied with Germany but not occupied by it, anti-Roma genocide was most rabid in Croatia, but Roma people were also deported by the tens of thousands from Romania into Transnistria, condemned to starve to death.

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The Austrian emperors in the 18th century ordered forced settlement of Roma people into Hungarian villages, where no serf plots were available. Their free movement was curtailed, so they could not pursue their traditional itinerant occupations, and they were helplessly exposed to the whims of landowners, magistracies and Gendarmes. The use of the Romani language was prohibited, so was the wearing of traditional Roma costumes. Their children were forcefully removed and given to peasant families to raise.

From the 19th century on, the majority of the Roma provided cheap labor reserves for agricultural villages. Roma and Hungarian peasant families lived in a sort of symbiosis: at peak labor times, Roma went to the peasant holdings to harvest, thrash, hoe and plow. Generally, they took care of the rougher, dirtier work around the house, in exchange for which they received payment in kind, in the form of goods priced below market. In the winter and spring, when shortages of food and fuel threatened the Roma households, the peasants charitably provided them with these. The Roma were also made to clean

and maintain roads and public places, and employed as occasional or seasonal workers on larger estates and in forests.

The Gendarmes continually harassed and terrorized traveling Roma communities, including new groups coming from the East. At the same time, they treated the settled Roma as "unreliable elements" and harassed them through fear and intimidation. The development of a middle class did not provide the Roma with the same legal protection it afforded others. Marginalized and disenfranchised, the Roma lived in village or forest ghettos, vulnerable to the whims of anybody in a position of power. Emancipation was an avenue open only to a select few: mostly urban musicians and artisans.

In the 1940s, the overwhelming majority of the Roma of Hungary lived as poor agrarian workers. The peasantry or the landowners could not possibly envy their wealth and exploited them for minimal payments. However, the population at large harbored deep-seated prejudices against the Roma, who lived in slums, were considered "inferior, lazy, impure, disease-spreading, primitive, dirty, thieving" and, of course, were viewed as exotic savages. In the minds of the locals, these prejudices legitimized the continuous harassment, humiliation and disenfranchisement of the Roma population at the hands of the authorities.

The zeitgeist of pseudo-scientific theories of race coming from the West first took roots in narrow but influential segments of Hungarian society: physicians fighting epidemics who borrowed racial ideas from some of their German colleagues, some of the administrators, the Gendarmes, and adherents of far-right ideologies friendly to the Nazis.

With the intensification of the war effort, more and more Roma soldiers were taken to the front to be used as cannon fodder or dragged off with their families to forced-labor sites at state-owned or other large estates, organized along military lines, to make up for the pressing labor shortage. Those declared "unreliable" were often interned. After the Vienna Awards of 1941, tens of thousands of Jews and Roma, who were unable to prove their Hungarian citizenship with the proper documentation, were deported into theaters of military operation in the Ukraine and Serbia, where without papers to identify them they were either executed or sent to concentration camps.

The German Army occupied Hungary on March 19, 1944. Applying genocidal race theories and the principle of total war, the Hungarian authorities and the Gestapo collaborated to quicken the pace of disenfranchising, plundering, incarcerating and deporting Jews to Auschwitz. The occupying German forces could put off the persecution and massacre of the Roma population as long as "the focus was on the main tasks of the war effort, the control of the country and the eradication of the Jews."

For a long time, anti-Roma measures were issued by Miklós Horthy's authorities. In the name of the war effort, Hungarian authorities detained the Roma population of significantly large areas in collection camps in eastern Hungary, from where the men were dragged off to military-run forced-labor camps and put to work on the fortifications called the Árpád Line, which was created to guard the passes of the Carpathian Mountains. Women and older men were put to work in the fields. Roma men detained in collection camps in the Transdanubian region were also used at fortification construction sites. Military authorities set up separate forced-labor units, called labor companies, for the Roma, who, guarded by a special contingent or armed soldiers, were forced to carry out such dangerous work as sweeping mines or constructing fortifications under enemy fire. It was in these camps that the military gendarmes were to commit the first mass murders.

After the botched attempt by the Horthy regime to renounce its alliance with the Germans on October 15, 1944 and the assumption of power by the Arrow Cross Party, whose members were willing lackeys of the Nazis, raids rounding up Roma began almost immediately and so did administrative measures aimed at transferring the Roma to concentration camps in the Third Reich. At a number of locations, Roma were massacred in or near their places of residence. The center of Roma genocide and collection for transportation to Germany was the fortress of Csillagerőd, run by the Gestapo and the Arrow Cross. From the courtyard of the fortress, trains were dispatched on Saturdays to Dachau, Mauthausen, Natzveiler, Ravensbrück, Bergen-Belsen and Buchenwald.

In the territories under the control of the Third Reich, state-organized racist genocide against the Roma was launched in Hungary much later and with much less efficiency. The approach of the Red Army late in the summer of 1944; fear of future reprisals; the disorganized state of the administrative institutions under Arrow Cross control; the hesitation of authorities, who quite often were simply playing for time; and the economic interests of the peasantry all contributed to the slow, reluctant and inefficient implementation of the anti-Roma measures. The peasants, who did not have a vested interest in eliminating the Roma population, continued to profit from their patriarchal exploitative relationship with the Roma and were more than willing to use their nearly free labor. Nevertheless, according to my estimates, of the entire Roma population of wartime Hungary, about 200,000 people,[6] fifty thousand to 60,000 suffered persecution: interned in ghettos, taken for

6 Dr. János Herczinger, "Cigányság és egészségügy" [Roma and Health], in *Népegészségügy* [Public Health], XX/18 (1939): 900–902.

forced labor or conscripted into labor service units, sent to concentration camps.[7] About 10,000 to 12,000 of them died.[8]

As happened in other countries, the terrible crime committed against the Roma was not publicly acknowledged after the fall of Nazism. The persecution of the Horthy era went on almost without missing a beat. Anti-Roma measures were formally reinstated in Hungary in 1947, at the time of the declaration of the Second Republic, in violation of the Paris Peace Treaty that ended the war. The Roma population was excluded from the redistribution of land and from avenues of redress and compensation that were opening up after the war.

Terrorization and persecution by the authorities, with the aim of total control, and continuous discrimination and humiliation toward the Roma became a tradition. Exclusion from the rule of law followed the community for decades with varying intensity and success; however, this has always been a defining element of Roma history.

There was no catharsis at the liberation, there was no common confronting of the past, there was no forgiving and no common drawing of a lesson, there was no social debate.

János Bársony

7 Author's estimation.
8 Author's estimation.

Chronology—the Pharrajimos in the Third Reich

1905
Alfred Dillmann's *Zigeunerbuch* was published, exhorting people to take up the "struggle against the Gypsy menace." The Munich police create a central Gypsy bureau, which continually collected data until 1970.

1926
Decrees were issued in Prussia to regulate and deport traveling Roma.

1933
The *SS-Rasse- und Siedlungshauptamt* (SS Race and Settlement Bureau) demanded the sterilization of "Gypsies and half-Gypsies."

1934
Beginning in 1934, the National Socialist German Workers' Party, or Nazi Party, made repeated attempts to bar Sinti and Roma representatives from trade and professional organizations.

September 15, 1935
The Nuremberg Racial Laws (Law for the Protection of German Blood and Honor and Reich Citizenship Law) made marriage or sexual union between Roma and non-Roma a criminal offense.

November 1936
Robert Ritter was appointed to head the newly created Eugenic and Population Biological Research Station of the Reich Health Office.

After 1936
Sinti and Roma were deported to concentration camps at Dachau, Buchenwald, Mauthausen and Ravensbrück. On the outskirts of some cities, such as Cologne and Berlin, police-guarded collection camps were set up for Gypsies. Mass murder took place under the aegis of a euthanasia program; Roma patients, adults and children alike, were killed in hospitals and mental institutions. Authorities forced the sterilization of tens of thousands of Roma men and women.

October 1, 1938
Adolf Eichmann proposed a mass deportation of Jews and "Gypsies." The Gestapo confiscated the properties of deported Sinti and Roma.

December 8, 1938
Heinrich Himmler proposed a "final solution" of the Gypsy problem. Gypsies were those designated as such by Ritter's race-biology institution.

After March, 1939
Sinti and Roma were ordered to wear distinguishing marks and carry a special "race identification card." A 15% "race tax" was deducted from the wages of Gypsy workers.

September 21, 1939
A Reich conference was called to discuss the transfer of Roma who had not yet been deported to Poland.

October 17, 1939
On Himmler's orders, Gypsy collection camps were set up in numerous cities of the Reich. Roma and Sinti were deported to these locations before being transferred to concentration camps.

January 30, 1940
Reinhard Heydrich held a meeting that decided to deport 30,000 Roma.

April 27, 1940
On Himmler's orders, entire families began being deported to collection camps and to the Jewish ghettos of the occupied eastern territories (Lodz), and murdered in concentration camps in so-called gas vans (at Kulmhof).

1940
South of Vienna, in the Lackenbach concentration camp, Sinti and Roma were buried in mass graves dug in the Jewish cemetery.

Early Summer 1941
Mass murders of Sinti and Roma by the Einsatzgruppen as well as local police and Wehrmacht units took place behind the eastern front.

August 8, 1941
Himmler announced that the Reich Criminal Police would base its Roma deportation decisions on reports from Ritter's institution. Ritter and his colleagues compiled 24,000 reports by the end of 1944.

January 1942
Some 5,000 Roma and Sinti were gassed in the extermination camp at Kulmhof. In eastern Prussia, the families of all Sinti and Roma were taken to Bialystok, and in 1943, they were transferred to Auschwitz.

December 16, 1942
Himmler issued the Auschwitz Order calling for the deportation of additional 22,000 European Sinti and Roma from the occupied territories to the "Gypsy camp" at Auschwitz-Birkenau.

May 1943
Dr. Josef Mengele was appointed head physician for the Auschwitz camp. He immediately decided to gas hundreds of Sinti and Roma. He commenced his infamous experiments on twins with the support of the German Research Fund and the Kaiser Wilhelm Institute for Anthropology, in the course of which many Jewish and Sinti children were murdered. SS physician Carl Clausberg and his colleagues performed mass sterilization experiments on Roma girls. In other experiments victims were required to drink saltwater and have their body temperature lowered.

May 1943
The SS began dismantling the Gypsy camp at Auschwitz and gassing its inmates in order to make room for new transports from Hungary. Roma inmates resisted with all available means. The SS finally suspended the operation.

August 2, 1944
The Nazis began dismantling of the Gypsy camp at Auschwitz-Birkenau. In the course of two years, more than 22,000 Roma from various European countries had been transferred to what was called the "family camp." Crushing Roma resistance, the SS murdered most of those still alive on the night of August 2. The victims numbered 2,986—only a few hundred fit-to-work survivors were transferred to other camps.

May 1945
Of the 40,000 Sinti and Roma registered in Germany and Austria, more than 25,000 had been murdered;[1] 90% of the Roma and Sinti population of

1 Rose Romani, *The Nazi Genocide of the Sinti and Roma* (Heidelberg: Documentary and Cultural Centre of German Sinti and Roma, 1995).

Burgenland perished.[2] The number of Roma and Sinti murdered in concentration camps or executed by the Einsatzgruppen in Europe was estimated half a million.[3]

2 Gerhard Baumgartner and Florian Freund,"Daten zur Bevökerunsgruppe der burgenlanfischen Roma und Sinti 1945–2001" [Data about the History of Roma and Sinti of Bernerland 1945–2001], *Zeit Geschichte* [Contemporary History] (March–April, 2003): 91.

3 Ian Hancock, *A Brief Romani Holocaust Chronology* (Budapest: Open Society Institute, n.d.); Rose Romani, Walter Weiss, *Sinti und Roma im "Dritten Reich"* [Roma and Sinti in the "Third Reich"], Göttingen: Lamuv Tachenbuch, 1995); Simon Wiesenthal, "Zsidók és cigányok" [Jews and Roma], in igazság malmail [The Mills of Truth] ed. in S. W., Az, 314 (Budapest: Európa, 1991).

Chronology—the Pharrajimos in Hungary

1907
Mass hysteria swept the village of Dános over a robbery and murder in the local tavern. For months, Gendarmes kept some 20,000 Roma locked up in a concentration camp in the Hortobágy Plains, starving and beating them. The surviving members of the Calderas Roma fled the country.

1916
A decree was issued to regulate "wandering Gypsies"—prohibiting them from leaving their official place of residence, ordering them to register at regular intervals, and instructing officials to mark Roma bodily as well as to transfer the more "recalcitrant" of them to state-run work camps.

1928
The Interior Ministry issued a decree on holding nationwide "Gypsy raids." (NB: The decree was in effect until the 1950s.)

1929–1944
Nationwide Gypsy raids were held at least twice a year.

1934
László Endre (later the state secretary responsible for the transfer of Jews to the concentration camps) demanded that traveling Gypsies be interned in concentration camps and males be sterilized.

March 1, 1938
The Ministry of Home Affairs issued a circular instructing the Gendarmerie to treat the Roma population collectively as "unreliable." The unreliable elements of society could be legally interned according to later, wartime regulations.

1939
The rounding up of the Roma in Austria and Germany began. A concentration and extermination camp was set up in Austria at Lackenbach (five kilometers from the Hungarian town of Sopron) where trans-border relatives of Hungarian Roma were also imprisoned. About a thousand Roma (Hungarian-speaking or having Hungarian names) were transferred from there and from the surrounding territories first to local collection camps, then to the Lodz ghetto in Poland, and finally in 1943 to the Gypsy Camp at Auschwitz,

where the men and women were given registration numbers beginning with 6,000 or 7,000.

August 1, 1940
Fingerprint-based Roma registration at the Gendarmerie's Central Command for Investigations was introduced. Plans called for registration of all Roma, but in the course of nine months, only 2,475 Roma were registered.

July 18, 1941
The president of the Hungarian National Medical Association submitted a motion to the Upper House of the Parliament calling for a legal prohibition against the mixing of Roma and Hungarian blood. The Upper House rejected the motion. Roma people in Nagyszalonta were forced into ghettos, where they were kept under armed guard.

July 1941
The Commissioner of Transcarpathia ordered all Roma who could not prove their Hungarian citizenship with the proper documents, to be driven across the border into areas of German military operations, where most of them, along with Jewish victims, were murdered at Kamenec-Podolsk.

1942
City authorities ordered that closed camps be set up for all Roma. They were allowed to leave the camps for work purposes only.

1944
During the summer and the autumn, a number of local officials proposed interning the Roma, in the manner of "the solution to the Jewish question." In a number of counties (such as Szolnok or Bács-Kiskun), forced-labor camps, guarded by the Gendarmerie, were set up for the Roma on larger estates.

From June 1944 on
A significant number of Roma were transferred to various extermination camps in Germany from Hungarian internment camps for "unreliable elements."

July 1944
Internment and collection camps were set up in a number of counties for the "idle, wandering and unreliable" Roma. In Szabolcs-Szatmár County, these camps were set up near larger cities (Nyíregyháza, Újfehértó, Mátés-

zalka, Nyírbátor). The Roma population of many settlements in Szolnok, Csongrád, Bács-Kiskun, Heves, Pest and Nógrád counties were transferred to labor camps. Roma labor camps were established in Szekszárd, Véménd, Szentkirályszabadja, Pécsvárad, Marcali, Sárvár, Újhartyán, Baja and Nagykáta.

August 23, 1944

The Ministry of Defense ordered the creation of Gypsy labor service units. People were forced into service in the course of the Gypsy raids and on the basis of their registration for sugar ration coupons. Usually, Gypsies from counties as far flung as Zemplén, Tolna, Somogy, Csongrád, Zala, Fejér, Baranya, Pest, Heves, Borsod, and Komárom and the Felvidék (southern Slovakia, which was under Hungarian control at the time) were forced to join the labor units in the last week of September.

September 29–30, 1944

The counter-espionage unit of the 1st Hungarian Armored Division and members of the military police committed murders at Nagyszalonta.

October 5, 1944

Using hand grenades and heavy machine-guns, members of the 1st Hungarian Armored Division and local Gendarmes executed some 20 Roma—women and children included—who had been rounded up locally and tortured. In Pocsaj, hundreds of local Roma were herded into the courtyard of the village hall. Their execution began, but was cut short by a Russian artillery barrage.

October 16, 1944

The commissioner for the Southern Area of Operations issued an order prohibiting Gypsies from leaving their places of residence.

November 2–10, 1944

Roma families from Zala, Vas, Baranya, Veszprém, Somogy, Tolna, Komárom, Győr, Sopron and Pest counties, as well as from the part of southern Slovakia under Hungarian rule, were rounded up and interned. Their first stop was the fortress of Csillagerőd in Komárom, where selection took place: women and children unable to work were usually set free, the others transported to Germany.

Roma families from the vicinity of Budapest (Csepel, Pesterzsébet, Kispest, Újpest, Rákospalota, Budafok, Budakalász) were rounded up by local Gendarmes between November 2 and 6 and were taken to the brick

factory in Óbuda. On November 10, they were put on trains in Budaörs, and traveling in cattle wagons, they were taken to Mauthausen and Dachau. Three days later, the women and children were transported to Ravensbrück and Bergen-Belsen, the men to Buchenwald, Netzweiler and other, subsidiary camps.

November and December 1944

Four raids were held in the territories under Arrow Cross control. Gypsies previously designated homeless, vagrant, migrant or work-shy were interned. After November, this fate primarily awaited Roma able to work.

A ghetto was set up in Körmend for Roma living in northwestern Zala county and southern Vas county. Three weeks later, the inmates were transferred to work camps along the border with the Third Reich.

December 20, 1944

With the approaching Russian offensive, some women and children were set free from Csillagerőd. The camp continued to operate for another month and a half, when, at the end of February, the inmates were forced to march toward the Third Reich. The Russian advance caught up with these inmates near Galánta.

Hundreds of the victims of the internment camp at Csillagerőd, mostly children and the elderly, were buried locally.

Early February 1945

The Interior Ministry issued a decree calling for the roundup and internment of entire Roma families. The Gendarmerie set up collection camps in the village of Keléd and the local coffee factory in Nagykanizsa.

Roma from Zala County were also taken to camps in Csáktornya and Draskovec (Croatia). Many of them were murdered as the Russians approached. Some managed to make it home, while the rest, along with Roma from Vas County, were transferred to the internment camp at Kőszeg, then onto concentration camps in Germany.

February 23, 1945

The Arrow Cross minister of the interior Gábor Vajna announced: "I have commenced the total, and if need be, Draconian resolution of the Jewish and Gypsy questions."

There are different estimates regarding the number of Roma victims in Hungary. In the 1950s, researcher Kamill Erdős put the number of victims at

50,000. In the 1970s, the Committee of the Victims of Nazism, responding to a request for data from international researchers, set the number of victims at 28,000. In his work published in 1992, historian László Karsai estimated the number of Roma victims from Hungary at 5,000, basing the number on archive data. He conceded that documentation was scarce at best and contemporary Gendarmerie and labor service documentations as well as documents relating to the fate of the Roma transported to Germany were still to be processed.

Besides interning Roma and transporting them to extermination camps, Gendarmes and Arrow Cross personnel murdered many Roma in their homes. In the late autumn of 1944, Roma were murdered in Lengyel (Tolna County). In January 1945, murders took place in Lajoskomárom (Zala County) and in February, in Lenti (Zala County). During the last days of February and the first days of March, Arrow Cross members executed some 230 Roma near Várpalota. Of this number, 118 were murdered at the same time at Lake Grábler in Inota. They were from Várpalota, Inota-Lake Grábler, Szabadbattyán and Szolgaegyháza.

Based on his research, János Bársony estimates that about one-third of the Roma living in wartime Hungary suffered from persecution because of their origin. This is about 60,000–70,000 people, of whom 10,000–12,000 died during the persecutions in Hungary and Nazi occupied territories.

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20th Century Roma History and the Pharrajimos

By János Bársony

I. Europe

1. European Roma History from the Turn of the Century to World War II

By the beginning of the 20th century, significant numbers of the Roma in Western Europe and in North America were employed in industrial or agricultural wage labor or joined the middle class, living in circumstances that hardly differed from those of their compatriots. Other Roma groups, however, continued to live on the periphery of society, working in trade or services, moving around in their caravans, selling carpets or second-hand goods, playing music, or performing tricks. These groups were continuously exposed to harassment by the police, who not only kept close tabs on them but also restricted their civil rights as well as their rights to set up camp, to stay in an area or to travel.[1]

The public viewed the Roma with a certain degree of discomfort and prejudice. Their situation took a turn for the worse after the turn of the century with the spread of [discredited criminal anthropologist] Cesare Lombroso's groundless and controversial ideas about the hereditary nature of criminal

1 Angus Fraser, *A cigányok* [The Roma] (Budapest: Osiris, 1996): 230.

behavior,[2] especially when these concepts were being used against the Roma with hostile intent. This time period also saw the rise of racial biology, various pseudo-scientific views on superior and inferior races that provided the German police with a "scientific basis" for creating a registry of tens of thousands of Roma and Sinti. In 1905 Alfred Dillmann, a "researcher" of the issue, published his *Zigeunerbuch*,[3] filled with serious anti-Roma accusations that, albeit false, were propagated widely to generate hatred and fear of the Roma. He ignored the fact that World War I was fought by conscript armies on both sides and tens of thousands of Roma saw action, died or were maimed for the greater glory and power of the various nation-states. Roma were represented in disproportionately large numbers, since very few of them could acquire waivers or buy their way out of service.

In Eastern Europe, Russia, Romania and the Balkans, Roma communities continued their traditional lifestyle, based on various crafts and services, some traveling, some settled. Certain groups made their living as miners or industrial and agricultural laborers. During World War I, Roma were pressed into service and shipped to the fronts.

In Eastern Europe, during the first decades of the 20th century, Roma pushed for equality and began developing Roma institutions. An association of Bulgarian Gypsies in 1906 submitted a motion to the Parliament to legislate the equal status of Gypsies. Roma in Romania gathered in 1913 for a commemorative celebration at the grave of Mihail Kogălniceanu, the 19th-century statesman who had initiated and accomplished the abolishment of slavery. In the 1920s, the Roma established cultural and political organizations and founded newspapers in Romania, Yugoslavia and Bulgaria.[4]

The situation in Russia was somewhat different. Many Roma died in the Bolshevik Revolution and during the subsequent civil war and famine. After the creation of the Soviet Union, the Roma in the 1920s were treated as an ethnic minority, which meant that they could create Gypsy *kolkhoz*, or artisan's cooperatives, publish the journal *Romani Zarja* in their own language, found a Roma-speaking school of pedagogy, and, thanks to the work of various Roma associations and organizations, set up their own Romen theater in Moscow. This liberalization process, however, had ground to a halt by the early 1930s, and the Roma cooperatives, schools and newspapers were

2 Cesare Lombroso, "Der Verbrecher" [Homo Delinquents], in *Antropologischer Artzlicher und Juristischer Beziehung* [Medical-antropological and Legal Formation] (Hamburg: Verlaganstalt und Druckerei A.G., 1894).

3 Alfred Dillmann, *Zigeunerbuch* [Gypsy Book] (Munich, 1905).

4 Ian Hancock, *Mi vagyunk a Romani nép* [We Are the Romani People] (Budapest: Pont Kiado, 2004): 127.

dismantled. The only thing to survive Stalin's ethnic policy was the theater, because it was well liked and frequented by army officers.[5]

Between June 28 and July 3, 1933, some 5,470 Roma were arrested in Moscow and deported to "labor villages" in Siberia; they included many Roma leaders and intellectuals. The same year saw the deportation of 4,750 "declassed elements" from Kiev and 18,000 more from Moscow and Leningrad. The first group of deportees ended up on the island of Nazine, where two-thirds of them died within a month due to inhumane conditions.[6]

The situation of the Roma in Western Europe changed very little after World War I: they were kept on the peripheries of society and civic life by their way of life and by the prejudices of their countrymen. Only a few artists of outstanding talent managed to break this mold, such as the poet Federico Garcia Lorca, the actor Charlie Chaplin, the jazz musician Django Reinhardt and the painter Otto Müller. In the 1930s in Italy, the Fascist authorities deported a number of Roma groups to Sardinia or the Adriatic islands. In Germany, the Weimar Republic's police continued to register the Roma and to harass and persecute Roma communities.

The Gypsy Center in Munich, founded and headed by Alfred Dillmann, was a repository of information on thousands of Roma, boasting of 14,000 files by 1925. After the Nazis came to power, this institution was integrated into the Reich Criminal Police. Called the Reich Center for Combating Gypsy Nuisance, it kept tabs on 33,524 people, which constituted nearly 90% of the Roma population of Germany.[7]

After coming to power in 1933, Hitler and his followers set their sights on eliminating all political opposition in the Reich and on creating a racially pure nation. This newly constructed national community needed an enemy and found it not only in their political opponents but mainly in the Jews and the Roma, whom they deemed inferior to themselves. They had designs on securing a *Lebensraum* (literally "living space"), enslaving, subjugating and decimating a number of European nations—among them Hungary, which was ultimately regarded as part of the German Lebensraum.[8] In 1935, the so-called Nuremberg Laws excluded Jews, Gypsies and blacks from the community of German people, restricting their rights and prohibiting marriage or sexual intercourse with them.

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5 Dobos-Schiffer "A cigány lakossággal kapcsolatos problémák a Szovjetúnióban" [Problems regarding the Gypsy Population in the Soviet Union], *Belügyi Szemle* [Internal Affairs Review] 2 no. 3 (1963): 66.

6 Barna Gyula Purcsi, *A cigánykérdés gyökeres és végleges megoldása* [The Radical and Final Solution to the Gypsy Question] (Debrecen: Csokonai, 2004): 268.

7 Fraser, op. cit., 228, 235.

8 Fraser, op. cit., 233.

To put their theories of racial segregation and racial extermination into practice, the Nazis, in 1936, set up the Eugenic and Population Biological Research Station (Department L3 of the Ministry of Interior) under the leadership of Dr. Robert Ritter. This institute delivered data and scientific rationalizations for "classification as inferior," i.e., the planned extermination of the Roma and Sinti people in Europe. Ritter, registering and examining tens of thousands of Roma with pseudo-scientific methods, had repeatedly demanded the sterilization of people of mixed Roma stock. The classification of "Gypsy" or "Gypsy mix" was tantamount to deportation to Auschwitz. The researchers of the institute carried out their work in ghettos and concentration camps as well, performing mass sterilizations on both males and females.

In 1935, the Nazis created the first concentration camp for the Gypsies in Ehrenfeld, near Cologne, which was guarded by the police.[9] After 1936, many other concentration camps were set up, and thousands of Gypsies were incarcerated and pressed into forced labor in these locations. The most notorious of them was the Marzahn camp near Berlin, where inhumane conditions prevailed. Camps were also set up in post-*Anschluss* Austria, and some Roma families, fleeing the persecution, managed to cross into Hungary. One such group was taken in by the Roma community in the Budapest district of Pesterzsébet.

2. The Pharrajimos in Europe during World War II

In the German Reich, including Austria, Roma were rounded up and transported to concentration camps as early as 1940. One of the bigger camps was located in Lackenbach, Austria, some 15–20 kilometers from the Hungarian town of Sopron. Thousands of Hungarian-speaking Gypsies with Hungarian names were imprisoned in what they called the Lakompak camp. (News of this was published in the Hungarian-language newspaper of the region.) In 1940, thousands of Roma also were deported from northern Germany and Austria to the Jewish ghettos of newly occupied Poland.[10]

From 1939 on, there were a number of additions to the list of existing camps, such as Dachau, and these new Nazi concentration camps, designed to hold tens of thousands of inmates, were set up to extract the last drop of slave labor from their inhabitants. There were hundreds of Sinti and Roma

9 Frank Sparing, ed., *A cigánytábor—szintik és romák a náci rendszer alatt* [Gypsy Camp: The Sinti and Roma under the Nazi Regime] (Pont Kiadó, Interface series, 2001): 38.

10 Herbert Heuss, "A szinti és romaüldözés politikája" [The Policy of Sinti and Roma Persecution], in Frank Sparing, ed., *A cigánytábor—szintik és romák a náci rendszer alatt* [Gypsy Camp: The Sinti and Roma under the Nazi Regime] (Pont Kiado, Interface series, 2001): 31.

among the first inmates of Buchenwald and Ravensbrück—the Nazi death machine was gradually expanding. The Einsatzgruppen—mobile death squads—operating behind the front lines in the Ukraine, Moldova, Belarus, Russia and what used to be the Baltic States, massacred Jews and Roma by the hundreds of thousands.

The Nazis and their vassals rounded up Roma living in occupied France, Belgium, Czechoslovakia, Poland, Latvia, Bulgaria, Lithuania, the Netherlands and other areas and put them in concentration camps. In Jasenovac, Croatia, the Ustashe (Croat nationalists [allied with the Nazis]) operated an extermination camp.[11] In German-occupied Serbia, the concentration camp for the Roma was set up in Nis. For every German soldier partisans killed or wounded, the Nazis executed 100 local hostages, most of whom were Jews or Gypsies. In 1941–42, over 25,000 Roma were deported from Romania to the occupied territory of Transnistria, eventually destined to starve to death, as no food was provided.[12]

In a number of countries, the Roma embarked on a mass exodus or stood up to their persecutors. Many of them joined the local resistance movements in Serbia, Croatia, Italy, France, Slovakia, Montenegro, Bulgaria, Macedonia, Greece and Albania.

During October and November 1942, some 5,000 Roma were murdered by exhaust fumes in the backs of specially designed trucks in the Kulmhof concentration camp. Most of the victims were Hungarian-speaking Roma from the Burgenland region who had been transported to Kulmhof from the Lodz ghetto because of a typhoid fever epidemic.

On December 16, 1942, SS Reichsführer Heinrich Himmler issued an order to deport all Sinti and Roma people to the extermination camp Auschwitz-Birkenau II, where a so-called family camp was set up for the Roma. The deportations started on March 1, 1943, and the same year saw many thousands of Roma transported from Burgenland to the separate Gypsy camp.[13] Until the summer of 1944, the Nazis transported most of their Roma victims from camps in Germany, Poland and other European countries to this camp, where they were murdered. Nazi doctors Mengele and Clausberg carried out bestial medical experiments on Roma women and children. The inmates were worked to death, starved and tortured. On the night of August 22, 1944, the nearly 3,000 Roma still alive were murdered and incinerated as

11 Dragoljub Ackovic, *Stradanja Roma u Jasenovacu* (Beograd-Nis, 1994).
12 Viorel Achim, *Cigányok a román történelemben* [Gypsies in the History of Romania] (Budapest: Osiris, 2001).
13 Heuss, op. cit., 33.

the camp was being dismantled.[14] The extermination of the Roma went on in the other concentration and extermination camps until the fall of the Third Reich. Researchers estimate the number of European Roma victims of the Holocaust to be between 300,000 and 500,000.[15]

II. Hungary

1. Before World War II

At the beginning of the 20th century, a significant majority of the Roma population in Hungary lived a settled life, supporting their families by working as agricultural laborers, artisans and traders, by making mud and clay bricks, and by working in construction. As in past centuries, villagers felt themselves superior to the Roma population residing in their environment, but they were also dependent on the Roma and developed a working relationship based on mutual assistance. Patriarchal collaboration, in which Roma performed menial work in return for food and care from the non-Roma "boss," was quite the common.

Industrialization soon obviated the need for most traditional Roma occupations (manufacture of pots and pans, bricks and assorted metal articles) and thus undermined their livelihood. Roma became even more poverty stricken with the decline of village economies and the resulting oversupply of day laborers. Indigence and an influx of newcomers from the East had started to erode the earlier values and the symbiotic social equilibrium in a number of Roma communities, especially as the customs and habits of the newcomers often clashed with local norms. To make matters worse, the racist ideologies of the West had also started to take root.

Such concepts as middle class, legality and individual freedom were hardly applicable to the lives of the Roma people. Authorities countered any breach of the laws or norms by individuals or small groups with collective punishment and retaliation. The most outrageous incident of this kind happened in 1906 in Dános, where a group of five or six criminals robbed the local

14 Memorial Book—*The Gypsies at Auschwitz-Birkenau* (KG Saur, 1993).

15 Ian Hancock, *A Brief Romani Holocaust Chronology* (Budapest: Open Society Institute, n.d.); Guenter Lewy, *The Nazi Persecution and the Gypsies* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000): 222; **Joachim S. Hohmann,** *Zigeuner und Zigeunerwissenschaft* [Gypsy and Gyspy Science] (Reihe Metro: Marburg, 1980): xxx; Rose Romani, Walter Weiss, *Sinti und Roma im "Dritten Reich"* [Roma and Sinti in the "Third Reich"] (**Göttingen: Lamuv Tachenbuch,** 1995).

tavern and killed the tavern keeper. Witnesses claimed that the perpetrators were Gypsies. In response, the police rounded up thousands of Roma, even from faraway counties, assembled them on a barren field near Dános, and kept them there for months, starving, torturing and regularly beating them to make them hand over the perpetrators or at least reveal their identities. For a murder committed by a handful of men, an entire ethnic group was made to suffer. Many died or were maimed for life by the tortures. Most of the Gypsies belonging to the metal tinker tribe of the Calderas (the word means "cauldron" or "pot") fled the country as a result of these events.[16]

Some in Parliament and in the press wanted the state "to exterminate the Gypsy race." It was perhaps the first time that the notion of collective guilt and genocide of the Roma surfaced in an enlightened, liberal state. There is some consolation in the fact that in the contemporary press, people also spoke out in favor of the Roma—one such voice was that of Endre Ady, the greatest Hungarian poet of the period.

During World War I, the Roma fought shoulder to shoulder with other ethnic groups of the Austro-Hungarian Empire. They were numerically overrepresented in the army, since poor people—and generally those who were termed "not indispensable at home," i.e., those in lower social strata and without leverage—were conscripted into the army in the greatest numbers.

In an atmosphere of war-induced paranoia, a number of restrictive decrees that violated civil rights were issued in the name of military mobilization. One such decree was Interior Ministry decree 15.000/1916 on the Regulation of Traveling Gypsies.[17] This decree mandated that traveling Gypsies be tied to the land (forbidding them to leave their place of residence and depriving them of their rights to their possessions and earnings, which were confiscated or administered by others); that their carts and wagons be confiscated for the use of the military; and that their tribal symbols made of precious metal be confiscated for "a Gypsy museum to be established in the future." (It was never established and the confiscated objects were lost.) A full registration of traveling Roma was prescribed, and they were ordered to be physically marked (by administering the inoculation against smallpox in a certain way). Those who had left their place of residence were to be returned, and those found violating regulations were to be interned in state-run labor camps.

The determination of their traveling status was the task of the local authorities. Most of the traditional Gypsy occupations, such as fixing pots and

16 Purcsi, op. cit., 16–20.

17 Barna Mezey, László Pomogyi, and István Taubert, *A magyarországi cigánykérdés dokumentumokban* [Documents of the Gypsy Question in Hungary] (Budapest: Kossuth, 1986): 183–191.

pans, playing music, and making washtubs and metal implements, required an itinerant existence since no single village could provide enough permanent work in these areas even for one person. Thus, most Roma could be classified as traveling—unless they could "convince" the local authorities to the contrary. Convincing usually involved bribes or free labor. Even though this decree was supposed to be a temporary wartime measure, it remained in effect after 1945,[18] providing the authorities with very convenient means of treating any Roma group that they arbitrarily labeled "traveling" as outlaws, stripping them of their rights and even interning them. During the war, this decree also served as the legal basis for interning or rounding up groups of Roma.

For the implementation of the decree and for the up-to-date registration of the Gypsies, the Interior Ministry issued Decree 257000 of 1928. This allowed the authorities to hold twice yearly raids, beginning in 1929, to round up traveling Gypsies and deport, intern or imprison them.[19] The decree specified that those suspected of criminal activities must be brought before a court of local jurisdiction. After the legal proceedings were over or the penalty served, the police could initiate "administrative proceedings" against them. (A draft of the decree contains references to an institution called the "administrative workhouse," which was never actually set up, leaving internment as the usual decision.) Essentially, suspicion on the part of the authorities was sufficient to detain traveling Roma.

In 1921, a number of county administrations (namely, Győr, Veszprém, Zala and Fejér) also recommended the internment of Gypsies to the minister of the interior. In 1934, László Endre—then chief magistrate of Gödöllő, later deputy-lieutenant of Pest County, and then state secretary in the Interior Ministry of the Arrow Cross government, responsible for deportations—called, in the journal *Magyar Közigazgatás* [Hungarian Public Administration], for the internment and sterilization of traveling Gypsies.[20] In 1938, acting as deputy-lieutenant, he persuaded the County Council to embrace his ideas and forward his recommendations to the minister.

During this period, both the local and national governments routinely passed anti-Roma measures in violation of the general rule of law and the proclaimed equality before the law. Counties and districts often deported Gypsies collectively from their territories, introduced prohibitions on Roma

18 László Pomogyi, *Cigánykérdés és cigányügyi igazgatás a polgári Magyarországon* [The Gypsy Question and Administration of Gypsy Issues in Bourgeois Hungary] (Budapest: Osiris-Szazadveg, 1995): 125.

19 Mezey, Pomogyi, and Taubert, op. cit., 200.

20 László Endre, "A kóborcigány kérdés rendezése" [Settling the Issue of Migrant Gypsies], *Magyar Közigazgatás* [Hungarian Public Administration] 16 (1934): 5. See also Mezey, Pomogyi, and Taubert, op. cit., 225.

leaving their places of residence, banned them from markets and fairs, prohibited them from appearing as witness before magistracies or courts in cases related to ownership of horses, and enabled the Gendarmerie to perform arbitrary body searches on Gypsies at their discretion. Some regulations prohibited Gypsies from owning horses; others made confiscation of horses legal.[21] The Roma were territorially restricted in practicing their craft or trade. A decree of the veterinarian general prohibited Gypsies from building dwellings on village greens and ordered the demolition of those already built; most Gypsy camps were located on lots classified as common pasture land.[22] Those who were forced to adopt a traveling lifestyle as a consequence of these measures could become victims of police brutality, deportation or internment at any time. According to Roma recollections of the period, the Gendarmes went into Roma quarters and beat everybody up at least twice a year. Communities could avoid such atrocities only if they could pay large bribes or had a powerful local protector. Finally, in 1938, the Ministry of the Interior issued a circular (No. 66.045/eln. VI.c/1938, attached to the service manual containing the standing orders of the Gendarmerie [23]) that stipulated that all Roma people had to be treated with suspicion. The traveling vs. settled distinction was no longer in effect, and the state targeted for prosecution a part of its population on an ethnic basis. This decree became the basis for the wartime persecution of the Roma.[24]

Persecution by the administrative authorities constituted only one facet of Roma existence in this period. In villages, the traditions of patriarchal symbiotic economic relationships between Roma and non-Roma were still largely intact, and Gypsy musicians continued to fulfill their roles as "entertainers of the nation." This latter phenomenon served as a basis for a counter-campaign, which emphasized peaceful coexistence with the Roma and stressed their positive aspects in the most effectual medium of the day, the emerging "talkies." In films like *A Cigány*, *Gül Baba*, *Rákóczi Nótája*, *A Beszélő Köntös*, *A Megfagyott Gyermek* and *Dankó Pista*, a patriotic perspective was used to stem the tide of German racial theories. The film *Dankó Pista* was screened at a Munich film festival, where it came under attack from a local Nazi paper

21 Pomogyi, op. cit., 282–290.

22 Pomogyi, op. cit., 198; Interior Ministry decree 198.892/1931.

23 The so-called NYUT.

24 Mezey and Taubert, "A magyarországi cigányság jogi helyzetének rendezését célzó szabályozás egyes kérdései" [Some Issues of the Regulations Aimed at Settling the Legal Status of the Gypsy Population of Hungary], in *Acta Facultatis Politico-Juridicae Universitatis Scientarum* [Acts of the Faculty of Politics and Legal Affairs, Sciense University] (n.p., n.d.); A supplement to the circular decree was published in *The Gendarme Gazette* (appendix 1938.12.9) stating that "fingerprints must be attached to the gendarme report on a Roma suspect."

critic. At this time, neither the political elite nor Hungarian public opinion supported the racist persecution of the Roma.

2. The War and the Hungarian Pharrajimos

At the beginning of World War II, the earlier, discriminatory anti-Roma measures (i.e., the 1926, 1928 and 1938 Interior Ministry decrees on the settlement and internment of traveling Gypsies, the raids on Gypsies and their collective classification as unreliable) were exacerbated by the issuance of military measures. Act II/1939 on Defense stipulated in IV/II/87 that "all persons, regardless of gender, between the ages of 14 and 70, must perform work according to their physical and intellectual capacities, in the interest of Home Defense." Act 14/1942 introduced military labor service, from which point on, local authorities issued "defense labor notices" to large groups of Roma and put them to work on military and civilian construction projects on state and private properties under armed guard. Most of the time they failed to provide transport, clothing, food and heating for the Roma.

In the Upper House of the Parliament, Ferenc Orsós, a professor of "race biology" who followed the German example of classifying people as superior or inferior according to their ethnic origins, demanded the application of German race laws in Hungary as well as the sterilization and internment of the Roma. On January 25, 1939, Győző Drózdy, a Party of National Unity member of Parliament, called for a separate census of the Roma, citing the imperative of racial preservation, the Gypsies being "overly procreative and parasitic." These motions failed, but registration of all Roma commenced on August 1, 1940. The files at the Gendarmerie's Central Command for Investigations contained data not only on an individual's birth and place of residence but on fingerprints as well. In the course of nine months, some 2,475 Roma were registered. Photo identification cards for Gypsies (even children) were introduced in a number of counties.

Some politicians and political groups—such as the Rákospalota Chapter of the Party of Hungarian Life (in 1940), its MP, György Forster (in 1941), and the national headquarters of the Transylvanian Party (in 1942)—submitted motions to draft Roma into military labor service units, to transfer them to special labor camps and to declare martial law over them. Citing lack of resources, the Ministry of Defense rejected the demands for setting up Roma military labor service units because these would have siphoned off budget resources earmarked for the guarding of Jewish military labor service units.

The district physician for the village of Lengyel in Tolna County, Ákos Okályi, wrote in the journal *Népegészségügy* [Public Health] that "the ultimate

goal must be the extermination of all Gypsies." He proposed deportation, sterilization and forced-labor camps. His reasoning? "What we have here is a malignant tumor in the body of the nation, which cannot be positively treated by conservative therapy, and the only remedy is that of the surgeon and radical surgery."[25] On November 30, 1944, local Gendarmes executed many Gypsies in their homes in Lengyel, as if fulfilling prophecy. Articles in *Népegészségügy* encouraged Hungary to emulate the Germans' persecution of the Roma and accept the theories of German racial biologists.

In consequence of the Vienna Awards many Roma in the territories newly reoccupied by the Nazis were found "to lack local residence certifications" or to be "unreliable" and were subsequently interned. In July 1941, Commissioner Miklós Kozma ordered Roma groups to be driven across the border into German-occupied territories, from where they were transported to concentration camps or fell into the murderous hands of the Einsatzgruppen in the territories behind the Eastern front. This incident has been brought to light only recently. Special attention ought to be paid to the following document, which the researchers of the Cultural and Documentary Center for German Sinti and Roma in Heidelberg returned to Hungary. It details part of an exchange between the interior minister and the lord-lieutenant on the advisability of adopting the practice of other counties and transferring the Roma into military operation zones, thus practically handing them over to death squads. This practice is one of the reasons why we have such sketchy information on the number of victims.

Through Councilor Dr. Kemény, Ugocsa Lord-Lieutenant Siménfalvy telephoned the minister of the interior with regards to the following:

> It is known that His Excellency Commissioner [Miklós] Kozma is cleansing Transcarpathia of Jews of non-Hungarian citizenship, driving them to the north and using this opportunity to do the same to the traveling Gypsies of Transcarpathia. Yesterday His Excellency Kozma told me that it would be advisable for me to embark on a similar course of action, especially as it is highly probable that caravans of Gypsies will head south from Transcarpathia. There is a minimum of 500 and a maximum of 1,000 such Gypsies in the territories of Ung and Ugocsa that could be got rid of this way. But as I intend to do nothing without the approval of my superiors, I now respectfully ask the Interior Minister's permission to follow the example of Transcarpathia and, in a few days, remove those Gypsies that are not Hungarian citizens, lack regular livelihood and dwellings and are unreliable from the standpoint of law enforcement point.[26]

25 *Népegészségügy* [Public Health] 23 no. 8 (1942): 1160.
26 National Archives, Section K, K 149-1941-6-12103.

After Hungary's entry into the war, the Roma were conscripted in a proportionally greater number than their countrymen. The front needed cannon fodder—i.e., people who at home were deemed dispensable. Many Roma fell as soldiers in the Hungarian Army at the Battle of the Don, and a great number were taken prisoners of war by the Red Army and held for many years.

Regular raids and internment of traveling Gypsies continued throughout 1942 and 1943. In certain cases, local authorities took it upon themselves to "regulate" the situation of the local Roma.[27] One such instance was in Esztergom in 1942, when city authorities ordered the creation of a closed Gypsy camp—a ghetto—for all local Roma, stating: "We must regard as Gypsies all persons of Gypsy extraction and all persons cohabiting with them. Gypsies may leave the camp only to work, but they may not use the city promenade and may not sit on city benches."[28] As a local paper wrote, "The Gypsy camp in Székesfehérvár has been placed under police supervision."

During the occupation of Novi Sad and Bácska, that is the annexation of Yugoslavia, the Hungarian Military Command transferred 48,000 people to occupied Serbia. Many of them were Roma.[29]

After the Germans occupied the country in the spring of 1944, Jews were confined to ghettos and deported. The first prisoners sent to Auschwitz were taken from the internment camps at Kistarcsa, Nagykanizsa and other locations. The Roma population of these camps was quite numerous. They were collected during the great raids of that spring. Many Roma were transferred along with the Jewish inmates from the internment camps to concentration camps in Germany, where they were often driven into the gas chambers without any prior selection or registration process.

Up until this time, those identified by the subjective decisions of local authorities as "traveling" or as "shunning work" had been sent to internment camps—but after April and May of 1944, this situation would change.

2.1 Roma Imprisoned in Ghettos

Throughout the spring, entire Roma families were locked up, like the Jews, in district ghettos in some counties (e.g., Hajdú and Szabolcs-Szatmár). For months—usually until the arrival of the Red Army—they were kept there and subjected to forced labor. From a number of larger ghettos (e.g., Mátészalka and Nyíregyháza), the Roma men were taken to the Carpathian Mountains

27 Purcsi, op. cit., 56–89.

28 László Karsai, *Cigánykérdés Magyarországon 1919–1945* [The Gypsy Question in Hungary 1919–1945] (Cserépfalvi Kiadó, 1992): 61.

29 MTI report of 30.04.1941 in János Buzási, *Az Újvidéki Razzia* [The Novi Sad Razzia] (Budapest: Kossuth, 1963): 24.

to such camps as Gyergyótölgyes, Ojtoz, Rahó and Tatárhágó and put to work on military fortifications. After the Russian offensive, many were taken to labor camps in the Transdanubian region or in Germany.

Gendarmes herded the Roma into the ghettos. First the Gendarmes surrounded the Roma quarter, then ordered all residents to leave with whatever belongings they could carry and made them walk to the collection centers. There, they were subjected to disinfection and a humiliating shaving of their hair, quite often while being beaten or insulted. From here, they were herded into the ghettos, guarded by Gendarmes, though survivors report that in certain cases, the guards were German or Hungarian military personnel.

People in the ghettos were starved, beaten and subjected to cruel punishments. Many who tried to escape were caught and beaten to death in front of the others to deter further escape attempts. Not even minimum hygiene or medical services were provided. Newborn babies were snatched from their parents and were never seen again. Large ghettos were established in the eastern regions in the vacated former Jewish ghetto downtown of Újfehértó, in the Cserepes farm in Kisvárda, in Nagykálló-Misó, in Bánréve (those living in and around Ózd), in Tiszalök-Rázonpuszta, in Debrecen, in Nagyszalonta, in Mátészalka, and in Nyiregyháza. Ghettos were also set up in other parts of the country: in Révfalu (Szigetvár district, Baranya County), on the Livia Farm, near Patvarc in the vicinity of Balassagyarmat (Nógrád County). Many Roma residents of the Jászság region were taken to Bácska. Numerous Roma in Zemplén, Somogy and Tolna counties were taken to ghettos and forced-labor camps. The valuables and livestock the Roma left behind disappeared immediately, and those who returned had to restart their lives from scratch.[30]

Roma were taken from certain ghettos to distant country farms or to military construction sites. Roma from the Great Plains, for example, were taken to Transdanubia to the vicinity of Pápa. We have information on Roma from Szabolcs, Vas and Zala Counties being taken across the Austrian border into the Third Reich, where they were imprisoned in a camp near the border and put to work in logging or agriculture.[31] Roma residing near Körmend were rounded up in August 1944, taken across the border, interned in a forest camp near the village of Strém and put to work at a German logging facility nearby.

In July 1944, a Somogy County newspaper (*Somogyi Újság*) and a Sopron newspaper (*Soproni Hírlap*) reported that "lazy" Roma were interned in

30 See interviews in the Oral History section (e.g., Mrs. Miklós Murzsa, Piroska Peller, and others).

31 *Roma Holocaust* (Roma Sajtóközpont, 2001): 108–110.

a number of counties, their food coupons were taken away as they were "rehabilitated" in labor service camps and taught the "correct view of life." These reports must have referred to some of the ghettos and labor camps described above.[32]

In the late summer and early autumn of 1944, Roma were taken to ghettos from many villages and towns. We have information on Roma being transferred into ghettos in Újhartyán (Pest County) and Nagykanizsa (Zala County) during August. In the course of the autumn, a Gypsy ghetto was set up near Baja, where the inmates were put to work on the reconstruction of a bridge across the Danube that suffered Russian bombing damage. Near Szedres, the residents of a Gypsy camp-turned-ghetto were forced to work on the construction of a German military airport.[33]

2.2 Forced-Labor Military Service

In a number of counties, military labor service notices were used to drive the Roma, under military guard, to state-owned estates and construction sites to perform forced labor. Along with Gypsies from other settlements, the Roma of the Borsod County village of Hagony were first taken to Sajószentpéter and then to Valkó in Pest County, where they were put to work with the Jews. Then they were transported by rail to Poland, via Esztergom, to a German concentration camp, where their task was to bury the dead. Two weeks later, as the Russian front was approaching, the guards suddenly disappeared, allowing the Roma to leave the camp. They set out for home on foot. On a road through the Carpathian Mountains, Russians detained them and took them to a POW camp, where they worked for a year at a logging site until their release.[34]

As early as November 29, 1942, the Ministry of Defense issued an order (68.781/eln. 1.a/1942) to create ethnic forced-labor units to be comprised of members of groups labeled unreliable, namely: Serbians, Croatians and Romanians.

2.3 Military Forced-Labor Camps

A decree published in May 1944 ordered that all people "shunning work" be pressed into labor units. Under this decree, the military set up camps to handle the army's need for forced labor. There were construction camps, primarily for the building of fortifications (along the eastern line of defense, at Gyergyótölgyes, Ojtoz and Tatárhágó) and the construction of the military airport

32 Karsai, op. cit., 87.
33 See the table in "Place by Place: Events of the Pharrajimos."
34 Ibid.

of Szentkirályszabadja as well as logging camps, such as the ones at Rahó and Marcali or the ones in the Börzsöny Mountains. Many Roma were imprisoned in these camps.[35] In July, the able-bodied Gypsies in Hódmezővásárhely were registered by the local Gypsy judge, rounded up by the Gendarmes and herded into cattle cars. Ironically, the last man to be pushed into the cattle wagons was the helpful judge. They were taken to the military logging camp in Rahó, in Carpathian Ukraine.[36]

2.4 Military Labor Service Units

On August 23, 1944, Lt. Gen. Gusztáv Hennyei signed two decrees (653/1944.M.421344 as well as the Ministries of Defense and Interior joint decree 15740/1944) ordering the creation of Roma labor service units. The plans called for 50 Roma labor service units, called labor companies, incorporating some 10,000 to 12,000 people. All units were supposed to be set up by September 20. The Roma pressed into these units were mostly between the ages of 18 and 52 and had no permanent work or place of residence. This "call to arms" took place by force, in the course of raids performed jointly by the Gendarmerie and the military. The units were set up and registered by the district draft boards.

We have information about the creation of such a unit under the command of Col. Lipót (Metz) Muray in Nagykáta, where Roma were assembled in the local school building. Some of the Gypsy forced laborers were taken to the front for fortification works, sometimes as far afield as Austria, and some were handed over to the Germans, who put them to work in the basement of the Dreher brewery in Kőbánya, which was turned into an aircraft assembly facility of the Danubius Aircraft Factory.

Similar units were set up in Eger, Szeged, Kecskemét, Jászberény, Marcali, Kaposvár, Pécs, Nagykanizsa, Szeged, Nagyvárad, outside Miskolc, Szekszárd, Véménd and Kassa. In Vác, the Gypsies, taken from among the local nail-smiths, were put to work in the local barracks until being set off on foot for the Ipoly region in December. Roma were pressed into forced labor in Bihar and Nógrád counties as well.[37] Those pressed into the labor companies, or "shovel brigades," as they were called, were guarded by armed soldiers. Roma forced laborers were generally put to work digging trenches, sweeping mines and toiling at various military construction projects, often at the front, in the line of enemy fire. The number of dead and wounded was high.

35 Ibid.
36 Ibid.
37 Ibid.

2.5 Closed Gypsy Camps and Ghettos

In the southeastern regions of Bihar, Békés and Csongrád counties, as the Russians were approaching during the winter of 1944–45, the Gendarmes sealed off most of the Gypsy quarters. The residents were registered, and a headcount was nailed to each house prior to the arrival of the order for deportation. The residents could not leave their homes for weeks, except when the Gendarmes took them to work. There was no food or medical care. Their homes were turned into a ghetto. They were supposed to be shipped to Germany after all the Jews were deported, but because of the rapidity of the Russian advance, this never happened.[38]

2.6 Mass Murders

Pushing westward, the Red Army reached the current borders of Hungary in late September 1944 and began driving out the Nazis and their Hungarian lackeys. This presented the Roma with a chance to avoid persecution—or it at least lifted the immediate threat.

On September 29, in Nagyszalonta, near the South-Transylvanian border, the counter-espionage unit of the 1st Hungarian Armored Division and local Gendarmes murdered 17 Roma.[39] Mass murder continued on October 6, in the graveyard of the village of Doboz, where 27 Roma from Nagyszalonta and Kötegyán were killed. In early October, an unidentified German and Hungarian military unit began to massacre local Gypsies in the courtyard of the Pocsaj village hall. Hundreds of Gypsies were assembled there, but fortunately Russian artillery fire halted the massacre, and after killing three of their intended victims, the murderers ran away.[40]

The Horthy regime botched the attempt to break the alliance with Germany and sue for peace with the Allied forces. The Hungarian Nazis, called the Arrow Cross (or Hungarist) Party, assumed power with the help of the occupying German troops. On October 16, 1944, the day that the Arrow Cross came to power, the commissioner for the Southern Area of Military Operations ordered the Roma to stay at their places of residence.[41] Violation of the order was to result first in punishment, then in internment. Local Gendarmes and the Arrow Cross militia were to implement the order.[42]

On November 3 and 4, the Ministry of Defense and the Department VII of the Ministry of the Interior, under the command of Gendarme Lt.

38 Ibid.
39 Data provided by researcher Michael Sinclair Stewart.
40 See the table in the chapter Place by Place: Events of the Pharrajimos.
41 Defense Ministry Commissioner decree 147/1944.Szombathely.
42 Mezey, Pomogyi, and Tauber, op. cit., 205.

Col. László Hajnácskőy, organized a nationwide series of raids and arrests to round up Roma, who were to be taken to concentration camps in Germany to perform slave labor. In the course of November and December, four comprehensive raids were held.[43]

Prior to this event, entire Roma families were rounded up in and around Budapest (Rákospalota, Csepel, Pesterzsébet, Soroksár, Kispest, Pestlőrinc, Nagytétény, Budakalász, and Újpest) and taken to the Óbuda brick factory. At dawn, on November 8, they were taken to the railway station in Budaörs and put on trains. On November 18, they arrived at the Dachau concentration camp. They were hosed down, had their heads shaved, and five days later, some of them were transported to the concentration camps in Bergen-Belsen and Ravensbrück. Groups of Roma subsequently rounded up in Budapest and its environs were taken to Csillagerőd fortress in Komárom (Komárno).[44]

Roma taken in the course of nationwide raids in Vas, Zala, Pest, Heves, Nógrád, Baranya, Tolna, Somogy, Fejér, Győr, Komárom and Veszprém counties, and in Felvidék (southern Slovakia) were transported first to local collection ghettos (such as the one in Mezőkövesd), then on to the Gypsy camp at Csillagerőd, officially called the Royal Hungarian Military Internment Camp of Komárom. On September 12, 1944, a German SS unit (Gendarmerie-Einsatzkommando 8.) was quartered in Komárom. They used furniture and equipment that had been confiscated from local Jews prior to their deportation to furnish the quarters of their 100-strong unit.[45]

By the end of 1944, Komárom had become a transit camp, where deportation was preceded by a selection process. The war effort created a serious labor shortage in the Third Reich, and the demand for slave labor was great: Ferenc Szálasi's Arrow Cross government promised to supply tens of thousands of workers "to manufacture our victorious arms."

The many thousands of Roma imprisoned in Csillagerőd were first housed in subterranean bunkers. Then, after these filled up, the inmates, including women and children, were kept outdoors in the late autumn and early winter cold. The prisoners were guarded by Hungarian soldiers. Food was at a bare minimum—the daily diet consisted of some watery soup, though no plates or utensils were provided. There were no washing facilities, and water was drawn from polluted wells. Due to the lack of latrines, heaps of excrement piled up in certain corners of the dungeons. Disease and lice infestation were

43 Karsai, op. cit., 124.

44 See the table in the chapter "Place by Place: Events of the Pharrajimos," pp. 185–225 in this volume.

45 See the chapter "One of the Roma Killing Fields: Komáromi Csillagerőd, Autumn 1944," pp. 98–114 in this volume.

rampant due to lack of proper nourishment, hygiene and heating. Children under 12 died in droves but were never buried: their bodies were thrown into the latrines or, in the wintertime, into the Danube through holes cut in the ice. Sometimes, dead children would lay unburied in the camps for three or four days. Roma prisoners were mercilessly beaten and flogged.

Survivors often described Komárom as a place of horrors more terrible than Bergen-Belsen or Ravensbrück. In Komárom, where the inhuman conditions took their toll primarily on the children and the elderly, the number of Roma victims killed was estimated between 700 and 1,000.

The Germans selected the Roma in the camp who were "fit-for-labor" to be transported into the interior of the Reich. Between mid-November and the end of December, a minimum of eight trains departed from the courtyard of the fortress on Saturdays. The main destinations were Mauthausen, Auschwitz and Dachau. Research in the Dachau registers has so identified 1,126 Roma from Hungary. Many, however, were transported from Dachau on to Buchenwald, Bergen-Belsen, Ravensbrück, Natzveiler, Sachsenhausen and other camps. Apart from this register we have few records of the thousands of Roma who were shipped on to these, and the data we possess are of those inmates who arrived in the camps in a relatively good state and were selected for work—in other words, those who survived the first round of selection. The trains departing from Komárom were guarded by Gendarmes. One of these trains suffered a bombing attack near Győr, and some of the prisoners managed to escape.

By the end of December, the Russian siege had closed around nearby Budapest, and there was a reasonable chance of attack on the Komárom camp as well. At this time, mothers with children were released from the camp—some survivors attributed this to the approaching Russians or the lack of transport trains. They tried to make their way home on foot, but many children died of exhaustion en route.

From the direction of Esztergom, German and Hungarian troops launched a counter-offensive to relieve Budapest, so the Roma imprisoned in the fortress were kept there for weeks, before being marched toward the German Reich via Győr and Galánta. The front, however, overtook them around Galánta, and the guards fled, abandoning their victims. The surviving Roma tried to make their way home from there.

The men, women, and children who had been transported to German concentration camps were kept in bestial conditions for five to six months, usually performing pointless labor at the death camps, whose time was running out. In Dachau and Ravensbrück, many suffered permanent injuries as subjects of so-called medical experiments. Survivors spoke mainly of

attempts at rendering females sterile. Those who survived had a very difficult time getting home. Many of them were illiterate, spoke no foreign languages, did not even know the name of the place where they had been imprisoned, and had little idea of what was happening to them beyond their immediate feelings of suffering, and shock and grief for the friends and family members they had lost.

In early February 1945, Department 10 of the Arrow Cross Interior Ministry published a decree (Interior Ministry Dept. 10 decree 166.578/1945) on civilian evacuation that also ordered the round up and incarceration in internment camps of Gypsies and their families, carrying on the practice instituted the previous November. Arrow Cross Interior Minister Gábor Vajna announced at a cabinet meeting on February 23, 1945—held at Kőszeg because the government was in flight—that "I have commenced the final, if necessary, Draconian resolution of the Jewish and Gypsy questions, which was made necessary by the behavior of these two races alien to our nation."

On the basis of this decree, an internment camp was set up in February, in a former coffee factory in Nagykanizsa, from where Roma were transferred to Csáktornya and Draskovec in Croatia. The camp came under aerial attack, and many inmates perished. Because the front was approaching, many inmates were sent to the internment camps in Sárvár and Kőszeg, from where they were taken to Germany along with the Roma from Vas County.[46]

Besides being interned or shipped to Germany to perform slave labor, Roma also had to face the danger of being hunted down by the Arrow Cross authorities; many Gypsy groups were murdered by the Gendarmes or by the Arrow Cross at or near their homes. In the winter of 1944–45, Roma living in Lajoskomárom, Szabadbattyán Szolgaegyháza (today Szabadegyháza), Lengyel (Tolna County), Kiskassa (Baranya County) and Lenti (Zala Country) suffered this fate and as did the Roma who died in February 1945 at Lake Gràbler near Inota and Várpalota in Veszprém County.

We can only estimate the number of Hungarian Roma who perished in the Pharrajimos, the Roma Holocaust. The figure is most probably between 5,000 and 10,000 but some put it at as high as 50,000 (according to researcher Kamill Erdős, whose 1959 estimate probably includes the loss of Roma during the entire war). According to estimates, the casualty rates among Roma of Hungarian identity and language were even higher in neighboring countries (Austria, Serbia, Croatia, Slovakia, Slovenia)—for instance, some 90% of the Roma population in Burgenland (Austria) and Croatia was wiped out.

46 Ibid.

Based on research, we can estimate that tens of thousands of Roma suffered from Nazi persecution, internment, forced labor, military labor service and transfer to camps abroad. Probably 25–30% of the contemporary Roma population was impacted. Having analyzed the accounts of 3,000 survivors, we could identify 570 towns and villages where the Roma community met with some sort of persecution (deportation, forced labor, confinement to ghettos, local massacres). However, research is still far from complete.[47]

Besides mentioning the perpetrators, we should also point out the many honorable non-Roma people who actively or passively resisted the Nazi and Arrow Cross plans for exterminating the Roma in Hungary. We know, for instance, of a Hungarian field hand from Tüskevár who protested the deportation of the local Roma until the Gendarmes locked him up with Roma. He never returned from a German concentration camp. Bishop Vilmos Apor prevented the deportation of the Gypsy musicians in Győr who had already been rounded up for internment. He confronted the inhuman acts from the pulpit, holding the bureaucrats responsible for these heinous crimes. Some, like those in Újfehértó, may have been poor, but they risked their livelihood and safety to smuggle food into the ghetto for their Gypsy neighbors. In many places, people hid Roma from their persecutors.

Roma communities hid Jews fleeing persecution, preventing their deportation—until a few months later the Roma were dragged off to a concentration camp with them. Unfortunately, most of these cases also remain undocumented.

Many village notaries and officials sabotaged the implementation of anti-Roma measures, and some even intervened on behalf of the Roma, providing them with documents certifying that their work was indispensable for the local community. Numerous local bureaucrats "did not understand" or "misunderstood" their orders, thereby gaining precious time for the victims to save their lives. Of course, the Russian front was approaching, and so was the possibility of retribution for deporting Jews and persecuting Roma. Nevertheless, brave people performed brave deeds to help the Roma survive and to preserve a sense of communal and national responsibility that took centuries of cohabitation to develop.

3. The Aftermath of the Pharrajimos in Hungary

The victims' names and numbers are largely unknown. No systematic research has been performed in the individual communities and settlements. We are

47 See the table in the chapter "Place by Place: Events of the Pharrajimos."

in the early phase of carrying out research and conducting interviews, and the available archival material on the events is extremely fragmentary.

When examining the aftermath of the Pharrajimos in Hungary, we must keep in mind that low Roma social prestige, their lack of political leverage and economic power, as well as their disadvantages in education and communication and lack of formal organizations has made a comprehensive analysis of their losses during the Pharrajimos impossible. The victims were never identified and the events never fully confronted, neither in Roma communities nor in the broader Hungarian population.[48]

In earlier periods, most of the Roma were never emancipated, with the exception of a narrow class of musicians numbering a few thousand and some tradesmen and craftsmen in big cities. The majority lived in enclosed quarters, on the peripheries of villages, next to the brick-making pits, in miserable huts and hovels on land they did not own. At any given time, their local residency was subject to attack if the hovels were in the way of the villagers, if the lots they occupied were allocated for other purposes, or if the community had any sort of conflict with the Roma.[49] The tradition and everyday reality of their vulnerability to institutionalized violence, their second-class status, and their practical disenfranchisement have hardly changed since the Holocaust.

It took an extremely long time for the Roma to recover from the trauma of their persecution and their fears were heightened by the fact that most returning Roma found their homes ransacked. Their sufferings were met with little sympathy from the local communities. In their terror, they kept hiding in forests months after their release from the camps. In one instance, a survivor returning to ask about his family and property was driven off by his former neighbors wielding scythes and hoes.[50] (A village inhabited by ethnic Germans, like Lajoskomárom, must have dreaded the discovery of the complicity of some locals in the murder of the Roma because it could have led to the deportation or expatriation of the entire community.)

Anti-Roma pogroms were carried out in certain villages in Baranya County.[51] Magnifying the Roma's fears were the isolated nature of most of their communities, their lack of information, and the fact that law enforcement officers—policemen, criminal investigators, gendarmes—very frequently managed to keep their positions after the war. In the eyes of the Roma, these officers, who had participated in the deportations, represented the continuity

48 Pomogyi, op. cit.
49 Karsai, op. cit.
50 Pomogyi, op. cit.
51 Karsai, op. cit.

of the "criminal, persecuting, foreign power." In other cases, former gendarmes terrorized returning victims into silence.[52]

The authorities soon reinstated the earlier racist police measures in their struggle against "traveling Gypsies" (Interior Ministry Decree Nr. 165.106/1947) and "in defense against typhoid fever" (Interior Ministry Decree Nr 198.348 of 1 April 1947),[53] which reactivated Interior Ministry Decree 257.000 of 1928 on Gypsy raids and other discriminatory measures. The new police, now under Communist direction, picked up where the old Gendarmerie had left off.

In traditional Roma-speaking communities, the common history and traditions of the community are handed down from generation to generation through oral folklore, in the form of songs and ballads. To this day, the Roma have used these to preserve story of the Pharrajimos.

After the Pharrajimos, some Roma communities, anticipating that the authorities would not change their attitude, took justice into their own hands. The well-known "Bánó Ballad" tells the true story of an informer who ended up sown into the belly of a dead horse. The story goes thus: a Roma informer named Bánó helped the Gendarmes round up the Roma in the Csallóköz region and around Komárom. After the war, the Roma exacted revenge. On the decision of the more respected members of the community, an ambush was laid for him in Szőny. He was stabbed in the loft of a house, and his body was stuffed into a dead horse and then buried in a dung heap.[54]

The poet György Faludy first addressed the Hungarian public on the issue of the fate of the Roma during the war, but his calls to commemorate and confront the events of the Pharrajimos elicited little response.[55]

Only seven years had passed since the Pharrajimos when on January 2, 1952, the Interior Ministry proposed to register the inhabitants of all Gypsy quarters in order to imprison and intern them in labor camps guarded by the police and to transfer their children to state orphanages. The registration of Gypsy quarter residents began in 1953, and the police collected data on tens of thousands of "itinerant inhabitants of Gypsy camps." On November 11, 1953, Gen. Tibor Pőcze of the National Police issued an order, evidently directed at the Roma, for "the provision of identification cards to people shunning work and lacking permanent residence" (Issue 7, Police Orders). This ID card was valid for a year and differed in color from the ID cards of other

52 Mezey, Pomogyi, and Tauber, op. cit.
53 *Rendőrségi Közlöny* [Police Gazette] Nov. 1, 1947, 593.
54 Purcsi, op. cit.
55 See the interviews and the table in the chapter "Place by Place: Events of the Pharrajimos."

citizens. The decree was repealed in the early 1960s.[56] (Senior archivist Gyula Barna Purcsi of the research group under my direction discovered the facts surrounding the issuance of black ID cards.) Yet, covert anti-Roma and racially discriminative internal police orders were issued or stayed in effect until the change of the political regime in 1990.

The struggle for public remembrance and public recognition has been long. The short-lived Cultural Alliance of Hungarian Gypsies, under the direction of Mária László, attempted in 1958 to register the surviving victims for a proposed compensation plan. László submitted a list of names to the Committee of the Victims of Nazi Persecution, but by the 1970s it had been lost. Ten years after the submission of the list, the Committee of the Victims of Nazi Persecution, responding to an international inquiry, estimated the number of Roma victims of the Pharrajimos at around 28,000.[57] On June 12, 1961, the Politburo of the Hungarian Communist Party (MSZMP) issued a decree to disband the Cultural Alliance of Gypsies in Hungary.[58] From this point on, the Roma were no longer regarded as an ethnicity, a nation or a people, but as a social class.[59]

In 1974, under pressure from Roma intellectuals in the emerging emancipation movement, the National Council of the Patriotic People's Front convened a Roma Forum under the supervision of László S. Hegedűs. The subject of the forum was the preparation of a Roma Decree by the Propaganda Council of the Communist Party. The authorities were taken unaware by the participants' call for the erection of a memorial to the victims of the Lake Inota-Grábler and Várpalota massacres.[60] During the next session, at the request of Menyhért Lakatos, the sculptor György Jovanovics presented his plans for the memorial. The Propaganda Council, although branding the Roma intellectuals as "anti-Party" and "New Leftist nationalists" and initiating various punitive measures against them, approved the plans for the memorial and entrusted the National Council of the Patriotic People's Front with its implementation.

The task was delegated to the Fejér County Secretariat of the People's Front, which, after a lengthy silence, informed the National Council that the local authorities rejected the plans because it was common knowledge that

56 *Roma Holocaust*, op. cit.

57 Karsai, op. cit.

58 Erna Sághy, "A magyarországi cigányság története a holocausttól az 1961-as párthatározatig—a politika tükrében" [The History of the Gypsies of Hungary from the Holocaust to the 1961 Party Decree] (bachelor's thesis, Department of Modern History, ELTE University of Budapest, 1996): 42.

59 See survivors' testimonies.

60 See the table in the chapter "Place by Place: Events of the Pharrajimos."

when the Red Army invaded Hungary the Roma helped them confiscate horses—in other words, they were criminals who did not deserve a memorial. (Apparently, the comrades were unimpressed by the fact that many of the victims to be commemorated were infants, children and old people.)

At this point the People's Front declined to carry out Party instructions in spite of the fact that in 1974, in a country under Russian occupation, the Gypsies' "crime" could very easily have been construed as anti-Fascist heroism. It is also interesting that this "common knowledge" was nowhere reflected in the 1946–47 trial documents of József Pintér and others, who were the perpetrators of the Lake Inota-Grábler massacre of Roma. (Immediately following the massacre, the perpetrators of the Lake Inota-Grábler and Várpalota atrocities, which left 123 dead, were tried for the mass murder. After being found guilty of initiating the atrocities, Arrow Cross Deputy-Lieutenant József Pintér was executed on September 28, 1948.)

The efforts to erect a memorial at Várpalota were renewed in 1998. After some hesitation, no local authority opposed the plans. Roma organizations submitted grant applications to raise money for the memorial. The applications were denied, and a memorial has yet to be erected. The victims of the mass murders lie in unmarked mass graves to this day.[61]

We know of only two cases in which legal proceedings were initiated against perpetrators of mass murders against the Roma. Both took place in the mid-1950s, after Roma identified the perpetrators. The first of these cases involved the massacre in the village of Doboz, which seemed a continuation of the Nagyszalonta atrocities, since the same perpetrators used the same methods. The Gyula County Court found János Boldizsár and others guilty and the Supreme Court upheld the verdict. The events that took place in Nagyszalonta were not included in the charges against the perpetrators, since Romania annexed the town after the war and evidence could not be acquired.[62] The other case, which dealt with a mass murder in the village of Lengyel, was adjudicated in the Kaposvár Military Court. The trial of Lajos Timár and others lasted from 1958 to 1960, and he was found guilty. No legal proceedings were initiated on other massacres, whose victims lie in unmarked mass graves in Lajoskomárom, Pocsaj, Szabadbattyány, Szabadegyháza, Kiskassa, Lenti and at the site of the gravest atrocities, Csillagerőd.

The first plaque commemorating the Roma dragged off to concentration camps was unveiled in 1984, on the 40th anniversary of the event, in the village of Torony on the wall of the local kindergarten, which in 1944 served as

61 The exhibition of the Holocaust Documentation Centre on unmarked mass graves of the Roma, 2004.

62 Data provided by researcher Michael Sinclair Stewart.

the local jail. From here, the Roma were taken to Ravensbrück, where many of them perished.[63] The Amalipe Association for the Preservation of Roma Traditions and the city council in Nagykanizsa erected a second memorial in 1991 in memory of the local Roma who were first collected in the coffee factory, then taken to Draskovec, Komárom and German concentration camps.[64] The Cultural Association of Gypsies in Hungary established a third memorial, a symbolic grave, or cenotaph, in a Nyiregyháza graveyard on April 28, 1993, on the 39th anniversary of the creation of local ghettos. In 1996 the local Roma community in Babócsa erected a traditional grave marker in memory of the victims. In 1997, at the initiative of the Roma Minority Authorities, a memorial stone was set up in the Városmajor (a park) in the city of Szombathely, at the location of the former Roma ghetto. A year later, a controversy broke out in the press and in the city council over the legitimacy of the memorial, and reports circulated of people desecrating the memorial.

In 2003, preparations were under way to erect a central Pharrajimos memorial in Budapest on the embankment of the Danube (Nehru Park), after the Budapest City Council approved plans by Roma organizations: Roma Civil Rights' Foundation (RPA), Romedia and the Roma Press Center (RPC). At the initiative of the Roma Press Center and Wesley János College, plaques were unveiled in a number of railway stations, villages and locations of former Gypsy ghettos.

In 1992, the Independent Gypsy Organization of Vas County became the first Hungarian Roma organization to hold a commemorative event in Dachau and Ravensbrück. Two years later, on the 50th anniversary of the Pharrajimos, hundreds of delegates from various organizations traveled to Auschwitz to bow their heads for the victims.

Every year since 1995, a central commemorative event takes place, organized by the RPA, in front of the Parliament in Budapest and on the Nehru embankment, where an ecumenical service and a vigil are held in memory of the victims of the Pharrajimos. The National Gypsy Authority (OCÖ) has held its annual commemorative event in Nagykanizsa since 1997.

A number of documentaries have been filmed on the Roma suffering during the Pharrajimos. In the last 15 years, films, largely of survivor testimonies, have tried to compensate for what historians have neglected to do, both in uncovering the facts and in integrating them into public social discourse.

Apart from the demeaning compensations in the 1960s, the only source of compensation was the Hungarian Act III on Compensation, which went

63 Survivor testimony.
64 Karsai, op. cit.

into effect in 1997. But without a targeted information delivery effort, news of the legislation and the possibility of submitting claims largely failed to reach the Roma. A Swiss aid effort in 1999 was somewhat more successful, even though it allowed only six weeks for notifying people entitled to submit claims. More than 300 claimers received aid in this program managed by the Hungarian Red Cross.

The registration of survivors who were forced laborers, who were subjects of medical experiments in the course of their detention and who lost children in the course of their deportation was closed in 2001. Claimers were paid from German and Swiss funds. Claims initiated on the basis of a decision by an American court are being handled by the International Organization for Migration. As a result of a system of direct information delivery, some 3,500 individuals from 1,561 Roma settlements have submitted claims. Payments, however, are being made in a scandalously slow manner. To this day, only a few hundred out of the thousands of Hungarian claimers have had their cases adjudicated. The opportunity for compensation from Austria remained open until 2004, but unfortunately a number of criminals abused this offer.

A Swiss aid program, handled by the International Organization for Migration and the Hungarian Baptists, is currently in operation, but unlike that in 1999, when individual claimants were awarded money, aid packages are sent to elderly Roma as "collective compensation" in certain countries. The same program offers care for the elderly and a controversial health information program that treats the Roma like children.

In 2004, the Parliament appointed an investigative committee to explore the compensation process and to consider the need for a Hungarian compensation program. The Holocaust Museum and Documentation Center was opened in Páva Street, Budapest, and is housing a temporary, independently sponsored exhibition on the Roma Pharrajimos.

Anti-Gypsy Initiatives and Raids in Pest County under Deputy-Lieutenant László Endre (1928, 1939–1944)

By Gyula Purcsi Barna

Drafting the "Gypsy-Raid Decree"

In the first quarter of the 20th century, modern Western European states dealt with the "Gypsy problem" through law enforcement and criminal law, which promised a quick and simple resolution of the issue. Hungary was very interested in resolving the problem and attempted to emulate the most recent European administrative and legal measures. Administratively, Hungary created three categories of the domestic Roma population: the "settled," the "semi-traveling" and the "traveling." From the perspective of public administration, only the latter category was perceived as a problem: it was the traveling Roma that authorities attempted to settle and integrate into Hungarian society through various administrative measures.

In 1902, Kálmán Széll called a scientific conference on the "Gypsy issue." Its findings could be summarized as follows: (1) the issue of traveling (or Vlach) Roma was primarily an administrative issue, and (2) the solution to the problem could not be addressed without the temporary restriction of certain human rights. The meetings produced an upbeat conclusion, and the participants agreed that given the low number of traveling Roma, the issue

might be successfully resolved with the active involvement of law enforcement agencies and local communities.[1]

The Gypsy issue in the Hungarian part of the Austro-Hungarian Empire was equated exclusively with the problem of traveling Gypsies, and proposed solutions always invoked the participation of law enforcement and public administration. This perspective on the problem remained the same during the Horthy period (1920-44), though the methods changed somewhat. Besides the measures aimed at forcing Roma to settle (i.e., revocation of travel permits, confiscation of draft animals), new methods were introduced, such as banning Roma from markets and fairs and restricting their economic activities. Frequently, these measures worked against the integration of the Roma and endangered their very livelihood. In the absence of legislation, the issues involving Gypsy administration were addressed by punitive measures and decrees, with the Interior Ministry in the forefront of the efforts. Institutional discrimination manifested itself in declaring the Gypsy problem to be an administrative issue, and no efforts were made to address highly relevant social problems, such as employment, education, or welfare, i.e., those that required a complex approach and solution.[2]

Until 1928, there were no widespread systematic efforts to locate traveling Gypsies, and the occasional police and Gendarmerie detentions of Gypsies and repatriations to the areas they came from were on a rather ad-hoc basis. A fundamental change occurred with the issuance of Interior Ministry circular 257.000/1928, which ordered new data collected in order to "more efficiently regulate traveling Gypsies." This circular institutionalized annual Gypsy raids over several Hungarian counties:

> I [Béla Scitovszky] declare it incumbent on the heads of all second-tier police authorities to identify the number of traveling Gypsies found in their jurisdiction and report them to the Ministry by carrying out annual raids in several municipalities, simultaneously if need be, in accordance with the measures prescribed in Article 1. These reports must also contain detailed treatments of other issues related to the Gypsy problem. . . . The traveling and the illicit activities of the Gypsies and people falling into the same category threaten public order and safety, and must be prevented. Generally, the radical solution of the Gypsy problem is an urgent task for the state that cannot be postponed

1 László Pomogyi, *Cigánykérdés és cigányügyi igazgatás a polgári Magyarországon* [The Gypsy Question and Administration of Gypsy Issues in Bourgeois Hungary] (Budapest: Osiris-Szazadveg, 1995): 77.

2 László Pomogyi, "A Cigányság történelme a közigazgatási vonatkozások tükrében" [Roma History and Public Administration], conference paper delivered at the József főherceg történeti szimpózium [Prince Joseph Historical Symposium], available at www.romaweb.hu/romawebindex.jsp?p=tortenelem.

any longer. Therefore I have decided on the comprehensive guidelines and final solution of the issue while revoking those public law enforcement measures that were either insufficient or never fully executed.[3]

Béla Scitovszky was interior minister from October 1926 to August 1931. Prior to that, from 1922 he was president of the National Assembly. Despite the urgency of the task, which was "not to be postponed any longer," it took two years before the order was implemented.

The first two points of the order defined its purpose and its targets:

1. I declare it incumbent upon the heads of all police authorities to carry out all necessary measures to identify the number of traveling Gypsies to be found in their jurisdiction without any further delay. These measures are to be regularly repeated as necessary. 2. Traveling Gypsies, whether they travel to shun work altogether or do it under the pretext of looking for work or claiming to practice some occupation, must be immediately arrested by law enforcement personnel and escorted, under armed guard, to the nearest police authority.

Part of a decree issued by the Ministry for Public Welfare (102.875/1927) provided a probable reason for the above-mentioned regulations:

Recently, I have been receiving reports complaining that in settlements in the regions bordering Czechoslovakia, roving bands of Gypsy families, who had never been seen there before, are traveling from village to village, which is extremely detrimental to public health and safety. I have been informed that the Czechoslovak government has banned all traveling Gypsies from its territories, driving them across the border at less closely guarded stretches, and they disperse from there, primarily throughout the territories of the villages in the border regions.[4]

In the wake of legislation in Bavaria in 1926, which served as an example for the other German provinces as well, the Czechoslovak state enacted a law on traveling Gypsies in 1927. The Bavarian law granted the authorities broad powers to revoke residence permits and to ban people from the country. Compared with the positivist legal attitude of pre-war Hungary—which held that a traveling Gypsy is a Gypsy who travels—the 1928 decree was more complex in its definition and scope. All persons who lacked a permanent place of residence, who "shunned work," who lacked a permanent place of work, and who traveled "under the pretext of pursuing some occupation" were considered "traveling." In other words, itinerant craftsmen, engaged in traditional Roma occupations—bell-maker, tub-maker, grinder, charcoal

3 Interior Ministry circular 257.000/1928 on increasing the efficiency of regulating traveling Gypsies and a new wave of data collection.

4 Pomogyi, op. cit., 11.

burner, lumberjack and others—were also included in this category, and consequently deprived of their livelihood, even though earlier Interior Ministry decrees permitted the pursuance of these occupations.[5]

The July announcement of the Raid Decree was prepared over many months. On January 13, 1928, a preliminary version was sent to all deputy-lieutenants of all counties as well as to the chief of the Budapest Police and all district chiefs of the Hungarian Royal Police, instructing them to delegate a colleague to attend a meeting beginning March 1 in the Ministry of Interior at 30 Országház Street. The principal points of the decree were to be discussed at this meeting.[6]

In 1931, the Interior Ministry and the Ministry of Commerce issued new decrees, imposing requirements on so-called family ventures using animal-drawn vehicles that were impossible to meet.[7] Most of the measures that were aimed at the forcible integration of the Roma produced results diametrically opposed to the proclaimed purposes. The restrictions led to the withering of self-sustaining occupations, thus preventing the attainment of an economic status necessary for integration.

The draft version of the decree bore the working title "On the termination of group migration of Gypsies and other persons," and it provided a "precise" definition of the heart of the issue, the term "traveling"[8]:

> By traveling one is to understand the habitual, nomad-like movements between places, performed by Gypsies and other persons lacking a permanent, place-specific occupation—whether said migration takes place in order to shun work or under the pretext of looking for work or pursuing some occupation. Persons who can be identified as belonging to the same company and traveling in the same direction [!] having intervals of smaller or larger distances between them are to be considered group travelers.[9]

5 Interior Ministry circular 151.041119.117, section VII: "all available help must be rendered to those registered Gypsies who pursue a regular itinerant craft temporarily staying in one settlement, such as tub makers, woodcutters, basket weavers, charcoal burners and similar workers, that they, in the possession of the appropriate permits, be able to pursue their occupation unhindered during the winter."

6 Pest County Archives (PCA) IV.408-b general Deputy-Lieutenant documents of Pest-Pilis-Solt-Kiskun County, 1928.3405. (Interior Minister VIII-159.200/1927VIII.)

7 KM 141.113/1931 on the restrictions on the itinerant or traveling sales activities of settled Roma people. Also see Interior Ministry decree 192.304/1931 on the permits for the itinerant or traveling sales activities of the Roma people. MCD: 207.

8 "Vándorló" in Hungarian, which also means itinerant and wandering. —Translator's note.

9 Pest County Archives (PCA) IV.408-b general Deputy-Lieutenant documents of Pest-Pilis-Solt-Kiskun County, 1928.3405. (Interior Minister VIII-159.200/1927VIII.) Draft: "Elimination of Migration of Gypsies and Other Persons" (§1).

The draft version diverges from the final decree. According to §4, travelers' documents and valuables were to be confiscated and entrusted to safekeeping until the termination of the legal procedure. Any firearms Gypsies might possess were also to be confiscated (as stipulated by Prime Ministerial Decree 9862/1920) and put into safekeeping, which seemed justified considering earlier regulations on possession of firearms.

More befuddling, however, was the animal health decree, which stipulated that in addition to destroying sick draft animals, "dogs and other animals used in earning money (bears, monkeys, etc.) must also be put down unless they can be sold to a zoo or a similar institution." It was hardly consistent with constitutional rights to the free use of one's private property that

> Gypsies and other persons caught in the act of migration must immediately sell, under the supervision of the authorities, their vehicles and those draft animals that are deemed healthy by the District Veterinarian. Should they fail to do this, said movables are to be sold off by the authorities. The proceeds from the sale of the above-mentioned movables belong to their owners and should be used primarily to cover the cost of feeding them while in detention.[10]

These ministerial proposals—the extermination of healthy animals not used for pulling loads, the forced sale of movables, draft animals and vehicles, and the use of the proceeds toward covering the costs of prison rations while in temporary detention—as well as the wording "nomad-like," were not included in the final text of the decree announced in July. A number of other proposals were also eventually omitted, such as the stipulation "Gypsies and other persons detained . . . after the appropriate disinfection and, if deemed necessary, shaving, must be examined by a medical doctor."[11] It was also proposed that "in order to establish a person's identity," the authorities should "turn to the Central Criminal Registry and present the person's fingerprints," even if the person to be identified was not wanted by the police or suspected of a crime.

The latter is confirmed by §7, which ordered that "all police units must fill out a registration form, complete with fingerprints, in accordance with the enclosed sample, on each Gypsy person over the age of 15 detained for traveling and must submit the registration form to the National Central Criminal Registry."[12] This demonstrates the increasing severity of these decrees, since formerly, traveling registration forms had to be submitted to the Central Statistics Office. The draft also called for the transfer to workhouses of those

10 Ibid., §4.
11 Ibid.. §5.
12 Ibid., §6–7.

found guilty of the misdemeanor of traveling and the removal of their children to state homes:

> [P]olice authorities, if unable to ascertain the place of residence of Gypsies or other persons detained because of traveling, in order to prevent their continued migration and to make sure the children in their company do not sink into moral corruption, shall undertake the following measures:
>
> - transfer, for an indeterminate period of time, those members of the group that are over the age of 15 to a workhouse run by public administration
> - transfer those members of the group that are under the age of 15 to the nearest Hungarian Royal Home for Children and instruct the head of the institution to temporarily accommodate said children, as per Welfare Ministry Decree 2000/1925, until such time as they are declared abandoned. The accommodation request must include the description of all circumstances that threaten the child's existence and interests as well as all other information known to the authorities about the child. Children should never be transferred to a children's home under armed supervision but should be escorted by a reliable civilian person or a police employee in civilian clothes. The age of the child, if there are no available records, must be determined by a municipal doctor.[13]

Earlier measures expressly forbade this procedure. Interior Ministry Decree 86.471/1916— referring to Interior Ministry Decree 15.000/1916, §4, which stipulated that children of traveling Gypsies under the age of seven who were not receiving proper care should be transferred to state homes for children by the local police or city authorities—emphatically warned:

> [S]ome authorities understand this decree to be an order for all or most children of traveling Gypsies to be sent to state homes for children, even if they are indisputably receiving appropriate care relative to the lifestyle of traveling Gypsies. But the decree cited above has no such purpose or intention . . . [that] traveling Gypsies and their children be exposed to unjustifiable violent treatment or that their parental feelings be unjustly hurt.
>
> The unjustified and violent removal of children from Gypsy families would only elicit feelings of desperation and defiance and would turn them against society instead of making them try and adjust to it.
>
> . . . I therefore call upon the Honorable Deputy-Lieutenant Mayor to make sure that only those children be sent to state homes who are to be regarded abandoned even considering the circumstances of traveling Gypsies . . . in

13 Ibid., §9. section B.

other words, only those children whose life, without admittance to the home, would be in immediate danger.[14]

An Interior Ministry decree in 1901 created the concept of "legal abandonment," which was applied to situations when a child had no relative who could be compelled to raise and provide sustenance for him or her, in which case the child was admitted to a state home for children. This decree was modified in 1907 to include in the concept of legal abandonment children who, in their immediate environment, were exposed to moral or social corruption. Thus, many Roma children found themselves in state homes while their parents were still alive.[15]

In order to fully appreciate the significance and the spirit of the measure that prohibited admitting a child to a state home if there were parents or relatives able to provide care, we should compare it with the practice in Switzerland. Legal efforts to forcibly settle traveling Roma were introduced in Switzerland only later, in 1926, but the law then provided for the possibility of forcibly separating children from their parents, of changing their name,[16] and of transferring them to orphanages, psychiatric institutions or the educational institutions administered by the Pro Juventute Foundation, which otherwise served serious charitable purposes. One child, separated from his mother at the age of eight months, was not reunited with her until the age of 20. In the course of their first encounter, his mother, a complete stranger to him, informed him that he had 10 living siblings. In the 1920s and 1930s, Roma fathers returning home from their military service found their children missing. Those who desperately struggled to get the children back often ended up in prison or a psychiatric hospital. The Swiss weekly *Der Schweizerischer Beobachter* finally exposed this scandalous practice in 1972, but it was not until 1996 that the authorities brought the issue fully to light. In other words, the possibility of institutionalized kidnapping was open and legal in Europe's model state until 1973.[17]

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14 Interior Ministry decree BM 86.471/1916 on the placement of the children of traveling Gypsies in state-run shelters for children. Also see Interior Minister 76.3341908, MCD: 210.

15 László Pomogyi, "A Cigányság történelme a közigazgatási vonatkozások tükrében" [Roma History and Public Administration], conference paper delivered at the József főherceg történeti szimpózium, available at www.romaweb.hu/romawebindex.jsp?p=tortenelem.

16 This practice may remind some people of the great Hungarian poet Attila József, who received the name "Pista" in a foster home.

17 Angus Fraser, *A cigányok* [The Roma] (Budapest: Osiris, 1996): 229; and Laurence Jourdan, "Long Pursuit of Racial Purity—Gypsy Hunt in Switzerland," *Le Monde Diplomatique*, October 1999, availabe at www.monde-diplomatique.fr.

The sections about admitting children to state homes were missing from the final text of the 1928 decree on Gypsy raids, except for a reference to the transfer to a workhouse (point 4) as a punishment, provided for in Act XXI/1913, which introduced the concept of "endangering the public by shunning work" into the Hungarian legal system. Transfer to a workhouse, however, could only be ordered on the basis of a binding court sentence issued by a court of proper jurisdiction—but not for the crime of traveling. This form of punishment could be applied to people who were shunning work, as well as repeat offenders, illegal gamblers, con artists, "women of pleasure," or persons making a living out of women of pleasure. Another original draft section missing from the eventual decree proposed to immediately send all members of traveling Gypsy groups over the age of 15 "to a workhouse run by public administration for an indefinite period of time."

The interior minister had plans to create a "public administration workhouse," the 19th century, which would have served in particular the "dangerous elements specified in this decree (i.e., Gypsies and other persons)." The new institution would have operated under the authority of the interior minister, and the longest detention period would have been three years. A year of probation with police supervision would have followed the end of one's sentence, so that all those who were found not leading a "proper working life" could have been sent back by the police without a court order.[18]

All this was modified in the eventual text of the decree:

> Of the Gypsies and other people who were detained for migration, the ones suspected of a criminal act violating Act XXI/1913 or other provisions of the law must be brought before the court of proper jurisdiction. Those suspects who have not been sent to a workhouse or a reformatory institution will be, after serving their sentences or after criminal proceedings against them are over, subjected to further administrative proceedings by the police.[19]

In all probability, this was the procedure by which those "traveling Gypsies or other persons" could be transferred to the penal institution or administrative workhouses, and the police authority of proper jurisdiction was to provide the legal grounds. The available statistical data show that the order could not be implemented: compared to previous years, the number of inmates sent to workhouses after the issuance of the decree actually decreased and almost disappeared.

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18 PCA Draft: "Elimination of Migration of Gypsies and Other Persons" (§12).

19 Interior Ministry circular decree 257.000/1928 on increasing the efficiency of regulating traveling Gypsies and a new wave of data collection. (4) MCD: 200–202.

The ratio of people receiving workhouse sentences between 1923 and 1940 to the number of people with binding sentences on average is 0.038%. Approximately 150 people out of 400,000 decisions. This is the total number of inmates; consequently, the number of Gypsy inmates must be less.[20] Finally, even though §15 of the draft decree was to overturn Interior Ministry Decree 15.000/1916 as well as all other government decrees referring to traveling Gypsies, the final text of the decree as issued did not include this stipulation. Although the decree as issued was a watered-down version of the draft over which the discussions were held, it still strikes one as anachronistic. Its true significance lay in the introduction of concerted action by armed law enforcement officers from one or even a number of counties.

The Proposals of the Pest County Administrators for the Ministerial Decree

Even though the draft of the 1928 Interior Ministry decree was in many ways more severe in its penal concepts than its German counterpart, and the proposed procedures—forced sale of vehicles, extermination of healthy animals, transfer to shelters for children under 15, and transfer to workhouses for those over 15—were even more Draconian, the entire proposal was never enacted in law. The draft was "unconstitutional"—in terms of the unwritten Hungarian constitution—but it was not technically unlawful. A provision of a World War I–era act (§10 of Act 50/1914) conferred powers on the executive to issue restrictions on the freedom of movement of its citizens should the security of the state require it. To prevent law enforcement excesses, a government decree (4352/1920 issued on March 20) after the fall of the short-lived Communist regime listed the specific reasons that could be used to intern or detain people, to put them under police supervision or to ban them from their places of residence.[21] The Interior Ministry decree of 1928, as issued, very consciously referred to the "prevention of migration and other dealings of traveling Gypsies and other persons falling in the same category that endanger the public order, public health and public safety," for these were the circumstances in which the aforementioned government decree permitted restriction of freedom of movement. These measures make the "propos-

20 Pomogyi, op. cit., 152.

21 *Magyar Alkotmánytörténet* [History of the Hungarian Constitution] (Budapest: Osiris, 1999): 247

als for solutions" offered by county-level civil servants more understandable, though not any more acceptable.

How did the local civil servants view the Gypsy question? Did they have any practical suggestions? These were the questions the interior minister put to the local deputy-lieutenant offices when he circulated the draft degree for comments. On January 17, 1927, the deputy-lieutenant of Pest-Pilis-Solt-Kiskun sent a circular to all district chief magistrates and the chief of the county's public health services: "The Interior Minister informed me that because of the administrative importance of the Gypsy question and its public health implications, he decided to re-regulate the issue and invited me to a conference in the matter. Please send me your recommendations, based on your practical experiences in the matter."[22] The district magistrates submitted their reports and proposals by the indicated deadline and also voiced their private opinions, leaving it to the deputy-lieutenant to pass them on or keep them confidential.

The chief magistrate of the Ráckeve district was very terse in his reply: "I respectfully submit that Interior Ministry Decree 15.000/1916 on the issue of traveling Gypsies is completely adequate in my view, and no re-regulation of the Gypsy issue is necessary—though it would be desirable to instruct the villages to implement the cited decree with due severity."[23] The proposal made by the Pomáz chief magistrate revived the idea of providing traveling gypsies with photo ID cards: "I think it necessary to enact in law the settlement of the Gypsies and the prohibition of their movements, and it would be desirable to provide every Gypsy with a photograph identity card and keep them under permanent police supervision. Their change of residence would be subject to the preliminary permission of the police, to be granted only in special cases." The proposal neglected to discuss the conditions and resources necessary for permanent police supervision but offered another piece of advice: "[S]hould the necessary resources be available, it would be desirable to reconstruct Gypsy settlements with proper dwellings."[24]

The head of the Dunavacse district was in favor of supervising the Gypsies primarily out of public health considerations and would only issue ID cards to Gypsies with itinerant craftsman permits "in exceptional cases" and only on condition that "Gypsies provided with itinerant craftsman permits be prohibited from pitching their tents or from encamping right outside villages."[25]

22 PCA IV.408-b 1928. 3405. (39051928 kig. Sz. Pest-Pilis-Solt-Kiskun County Deputy-Lieutenant, Re: Regulation of the Gypsy Issue, Deadline: February 15.)
23 Ibid. (5061928 kig. Sz. February l, 1928. Chief Magistrate of the Ráckeve District).
24 Ibid. (6081928 kig. Sz. March 7, 1928. Chief Magistrate of the Pomáz District).
25 Ibid. (3481928 kig. Sz. January 23, 1928. Chief Magistrate of the Dunavecse District).

Like the Ráckeve magistrate, the chief magistrate of the central district saw little reason to revise the regulations. On February 8, he discussed the matter at an administrative meeting with his notaries, but in the course of the meeting, "no idea was introduced that could lead to tangible results in practice. The idea was brought up that primarily the free movement of the Gypsies should be restricted somewhat, naturally, without violating their personal freedoms. Some thought it practicable to transfer and admit Gypsy children to homes for children. . . . In our opinion, the prevention of free movement, especially considering its public health implications, may be permissible given the importance of the goal to be achieved, even if certain restrictions upon personal freedom need to be resorted to."[26]

The chief magistrate of Abony submitted a detailed treatment of the issue, even though he lacked practical experience with it, since, as he admitted, traveling Gypsies "almost never showed up" in his district. His recommendations included registering Gypsies, issuing them ID cards and including them in agricultural labor, through which measures their propensity to travel "could be reduced to a minimum, even if it is impossible to totally eradicate it, because it is in their blood." This proposal offered an original solution for those Gypsies unable to earn a living within the boundaries of the district: they could cross into neighboring districts "so that they can buy and sell what they need, but only after the magistrate of the district contacted the magistrate of the destination district and discussed issuing the permit. If the crossing is to be between counties, the deputy-lieutenant of the county would conduct this preliminary discussion on the permits."[27] Unfortunately, there is no record of the deputy-lieutenant's reaction to this proposed discreet, diplomatic procedure, but none of these recommendations made it into the decree as issued.

In his report, the magistrate of Nagykáta said that the Gypsies in his district lived in appreciable numbers in the villages of Nagykáta, Tápiószele, Tápiógyörgye, Tápioszecső and Kóka, but "most of them possessed settled residences in these villages. They have houses and small properties; they make their living from playing music, making bricks and tubs; and they pose few problems for the authorities. In recent times, traveling Gypsies have not passed through the district, they have almost totally vanished." The Nagykáta magistrate pointed out the problem areas of public health and hygiene, but "by conducting vigorous inspections and by keeping the Gypsies clean, we have so far managed to prevent any problems." Then he adds, contrary to what he wrote in the earlier part of his report, that "Gypsies will never be

26 Ibid. (1169 kig. Sz. 1928. February 10, 1928. Chief Magistrate of the Central District).
27 Ibid. (3881928 kig. Sz. February 8, 1928. Chief Magistrate of the Abony District).

made to work, they will never do anything besides 'bricking' and making tubs, which is partly due to the fact that day laborers are reluctant to accept Gypsy field hands among their own. At any rate, Gypsies are not fit to work because most are afflicted with venereal disease. They are weaklings unfit to do work . . . with their venereal disease they infect the Hungarian population and we can only see improvement in this area if we completely isolate them from other parts of the population."[28] He was silent about the particulars of this contagion, and the deputy-lieutenant ignored his recommendation. However, the isolation of the Gypsies became a reality a decade later, when in Germany a Nazi Party decree declared that "the race of Gypsies, must, once and for all, be separated from the German race in order to prevent miscegenation." In the same year, 1939, the Research Center for Racial Hygiene and Population Biology issued a statement announcing that "all Gypsies should be treated as people carrying hereditary diseases—the only solution is isolation. Our purpose, therefore, must be to steadfastly separate this contagious element from the rest of the population."[29]

The author of the Kiskőrös report attempted to kill two birds with one stone: apart from resolving the Gypsy issue, he attempted to transfer its cost to the Welfare or Interior ministries, relieving the villages of the burden of this expenditure. He proposed to make the terms of the 1916 decree more severe and added, "instead of the local authorities, whose proper jurisdiction is hard to establish in any case, it would be necessary for the Ministry of Welfare or the Ministry of Interior to cover the costs of regulating this nearly totally unproductive race of people which thus pose a threat to society." He also proposed the construction of permanent residences for Gypsy families to better entice them to settle, and to prohibit them from owning horses, for "most of their mischief can be traced back to striking shady, suspicious deals involving horses . . . and this would also render their movement from village to village more difficult."[30]

The reality-based report from the Kiskunfélegyháza district had nothing to say about law enforcement and public safety considerations, citing insufficient knowledge of these aspects, but proposed to improve living conditions:

> On the issue of public health considerations, based on information from the District Chief of Public Health, I can report that . . . Gypsies in the district are of two kinds. The so-called musician Gypsies live an ordinary, civilized life, dwelling in central areas in proper houses and being no different in their

28 Ibid. (4131928 kig. Sz. February 1, 1928. Chief Magistrate of the Nagykáta District).
29 Ian Hancock, *A Brief Romani Holocaust Chronology* (Budapest: Open Society Institute, n.d.).
30 PCA (642/1928 kig. Sz. February 22, 1928. Chief Magistrate of the Kiskőrös District).

ways than their neighbors. The rest of the Gypsies live separately from the general population, in mud-walled hovels, supporting themselves from odd jobs. The lifestyle of the latter exhibits a lot of public health deficiencies. They live in overcrowded hovels, which are almost totally devoid of sunlight and fresh air. They possess few items of upper-body clothing and even less in way of undergarments. Their diet is deficient both qualitatively and quantitatively. We should construct homes for them; provide them with clothes and underclothes, etc. However, because these items fall outside of the scope of their actual needs, it is rather likely that even strenuous efforts at aiding them would bear no fruits.[31]

According to the magistrate of Alsódabas, the first step in addressing the Gypsy question was registration by place of residence on the 1st of January of the then current year. He also proposed to give municipalities the right to employ people willing to perform "such work as is shunned by the citizens of the municipality (collecting abandoned animals, burying dead animals, assisting in dissecting animals, cleaning lavatories, etc)."

Besides registering the Roma, the chief magistrate recommended compelling them to enter into legal, registered marriages and enabling villages and towns to resettle those Roma from sites unacceptable from public health and safety perspectives "to a suitable place." He commended the example of Lajosmizse, where a Gypsy magistrate was appointed to report to the authorities when out-of-village Gypsies arrived in the area and to generally represent the Gypsy community vis-à-vis the authorities.

The chief magistrate of Alsódabas proposed additional measures, such as providing a photo ID card, renewed annually, for those over the age of 12, and disinfecting the clothes and cutting short the hair of all Roma regardless of gender. He proposed banning common-law marriages and applying §7 of the Ministry of Justice Decree 20.000/1906 to marriages "so that their bestial nature is gradually eradicated." He also wanted to ban them from keeping horses and declared that until "they are integrated into the citizenry" they cannot be admitted "to public drinking establishments, and they can only be served on the fly, outside the pub building."

In addition, he emphasized the problem of education, saying that until a nationwide solution was found for schooling the Roma, "a district Gypsy school is to be appointed for Gypsy children, and thus, with the humane application of child protection laws and with the proper amount of severity from the authorities, great advances could be made in integrating the Gypsies

31 PCA (39051928 kig. Sz. February 11, 1928. Chief Magistrate of the Kiskunfélegyháza District).

into the citizenry."[32] However, the entirety of these proposals—their wording and the proposed discriminatory measures stripping the Roma of their rights—foreshadowed more of an apartheid state than one in which the Roma were fully integrated.

To Intern or to Segregate?

The report from the Monor district, which, though taking into consideration the Roma's difficulties in making a living, proposed preventing their migration by requiring even those traveling with a permit to report on arrival to the local police authorities,[33] offered an interesting contrast to the reply of the chief magistrate of Kalocsa.

After a few curious pieces of legislation born out of the hysterical atmosphere of the Dános trial,[34] it was the proposal of the Kalocsa magistrate that tabled again the insane idea of concentrating the Gypsies into internment-like camps by forcibly resettling them. The proposal offered the radical solutions mentioned by the minister:

> The Gypsy society would be concentrated in camps, in total segregation from the rest of the citizenry, which would allow for constant public health and law enforcement control over them. I must point out that such an arrangement allows for their group use for public works. The best places for their settlement would be barren pasturelands, designated by the Ministry for Agriculture, where they could be grouped into community organizations under supervision of the Gendarmerie. Gypsies could be settled here from all corners of the country and could be periodically taken outside in groups to satisfy their wanderlust.

After detailing this procedure, which resembled the walking of horses or dogs or prisoner exercise, he goes on to articulate the principle of collective discrimination:

> Since they [the Gypsies] in no way fulfill their obligations as citizens, they should be forced to comply with all this collectively and not individually. If an appropriate legal status is to be found, the purpose of their stay should be registered as 'internment,' which they deserve by neglecting their duties as citizens of the homeland and behaving in ways detrimental to public safety.[35]

32 Ibid. (4061928 kig. Sz. March 10, 1928. Chief Magistrate of the Alsódabas District).
33 Ibid. (8281928 kig. Sz. February 28, 1928. Chief Magistrate of the Monor District).
34 For details of the trial see next section.
35 For details of the trial see next section.

The proposal uses the rather obscure concept of "Gypsy society" and includes, besides forced resettlement, internment, collective treatment and the full spectrum of administrative measures, the novel idea using the Gendarmerie for supervision, which had no basis in law.

But even the Kalocsa proposal seems rather restrained compared to the one offered by the Honorable Dr. László Endre, the chief magistrate of the Gödöllő district.[36] He actually submitted two proposals. On February 14, he sent this report to the office of the deputy-lieutenant:

> To His Excellency, the Deputy-Lieutenant. I respectfully submit that there are but few Gypsies in my district and that I have but limited experience in this respect. In my opinion, there are two ways to make the Gypsy work and observe order, or, even more probably, to make them emigrate: (1) is the issue of registration. All Gypsies must carry photo identification cards and birth certificates, and report with these documents to the authorities of the village through which they travel. Ever frequent disinfection and shaving of beards and hair. (2) to press the work-shy Gypsies into public works, road constructions, etc.[37]

László Endre acceded to the post of chief magistrate in 1928, upon the death of the former officeholder, and became, at the age of 28, the administrative head of the country's largest and perhaps most important district, which included the summer residence of the regent.[38]

For mysterious reasons, he followed up the above report a few weeks later with a detailed proposal to the deputy-lieutenant.

> In reference to the above-numbered decree, I have the following supplementary proposals to make: (1) Compel them to legalize the marriages of those hitherto living in common-law marriages, thus clearing up the issue of residency and terminating the immoral unions. They would no longer serve as examples to other residents of the municipality. (2) Compel them to construct healthy houses in keeping with building regulations. This should impose no financial burden on them, since in the autumn, they return with ample amounts of money, and the sale of their horses constitute another source of revenue. (3) Ban them from keeping horses, for two reasons: to spare the animals the pain of bad keeping methods, since their lives are nothing but misery, when in the harshest of winters they spend the entire day covered only with a rag, with no food, out in the open. They often purchase ill or injured horses for 10 to 15

36 The title "Honorable" translated literally means valiant and refers to a Hungarian knightly order founded by Miklós Horthy.

37 PCA (63528 kig. Sz. February 14, 1928. Chief Magistrate of the Gödöllő District).

38 Zoltán Vági, "László Endre. Fajvédelem és bürokratikus antiszemitizmus" [László Endre: Race Protection and Bureaucratic Anti-Semitism] in *Tanulmányok a Holocaustról* [Essays on the Holocaust], ed. R. L. Braham (Budapest: Balassi, 2002): 98.

pengős,[39] and these, if they drop dead, will be secretly eaten, while if they live, present the sorriest sight, dragging their diseased bodies along, with their ribs sticking out, spreading contagion and desensitizing people to the pain animals feel . . .

After presenting these images, reminiscent of Raskolnikov's dream in *Crime and Punishment*, László Endre goes on to say:

(4) Compel them to clothe themselves properly and not scandalize the citizenry with their full nudity [*sic*], which deadens the sense of modesty in children.[40] (5) Compel them to report twice a week for a medical examination, at which times the municipal doctor will check them thoroughly, without charge, not only for cleanliness but for diseases as well. The authorities should shave off their hair and beard. They should be banned from begging in the strictest possible terms and the gendarmes should check-up on them at least once a week. (6) Pubs should be strictly prohibited from serving Gypsies alcoholic drinks, and two violations of this regulation should result in revocation of their license. (7) Butchers should be prohibited from giving the filthy and excrement-infested innards of slaughtered animals to the Gypsies. (8) Field rangers of the appropriate district should be alerted to keep a close eye on the carcass dump, and Gypsies who dig up dead animals should be immediately reported to the municipality. (9) All Gypsies, from the youngest to the oldest, should be provided with a photo identification card . . . which should contain their name, place of birth, physical description, special identifying marks, place of residence and municipality of registration. Past penalties, their cause, nature and duration, should also be indicated. (10) In case traveling Gypsies are not willing to enter into a legal marriage, the foreign women living in common-law marriages should be deported back to their municipality of registration.[41]

Endre, whose public health measures had produced extraordinary bad results in his district, broke quite significantly with reality as well as with the realm of possibility with regard to his proposals concerning the Roma. What happened to the categories of "traveling, Vlach, vagabond" Gypsies—i.e., those who could be lawfully persecuted—when the compulsory system of photo ID cards, resembling a criminal registry, was to be applied to all, "from the youngest to the oldest"? Endre himself admitted, in his first letter to the deputy-lieutenant, that he had no experience with the Roma. Then he apparently changed his mind and offered his recommendations for resolving

39 Hungarian currency until 1946.

40 The 1760 edict of Marie Therese addresses the issue of child nudity: "The same royal and imperial majesty wishes that the children of the gypsies dare not to exit their abode in the nude, in which case she orders the parents to be subjected to corporeal punishment and the children to be captured and whipped or lashed" (MCD: 85).

41 Ibid. (6351928 kig. Sz. February 21, 1928. Chief Magistrate of the Gödöllő District).

the issue—at least in theory, which he expounded in his radical proposals in response to the draft decree of the Interior Ministry in 1928.

Most of the proposals the magistrates and chief magistrates submitted in response to the 1928 Gypsy raid decree saw the key to success in the strict implementation of administrative measures. Almost no proposal took a different approach, addressing social, health, and employment or education problems. Most proposals deemed it absolutely unnecessary to modify current procedures, and even the more impatient of them, sympathetic to segregation, stayed within the current legal boundaries with regards to concentrated settlements and separation. The Interior Ministry never implemented these proposals.

László Endre's First Anti-Roma Proposals

In 1934, László Endre published a "more mature" version of his 1928 ideas about "settling the traveling Gypsy issue" in the pages of the *Magyar Közigazgatás* [Hungarian Administration Review]. He warned that "a radical resolution of the Gypsy problem is an urgent task for the state," which echoed his 1928 introduction, and while none of his new proposals were original, as most of them had already been foreshadowed by various Interior Ministry decrees, administrative proposals, or newspaper reports, there were novel demands here as well, and its entire tone struck a note that had not been heard before:

> All the traveling Gypsies nationwide must be transferred to concentration camps at various locations in the country where previously there had been internment camps or barracks. All their children, without exception, must be transferred to a shelter or building specially designated for this purpose or perhaps be removed to an agricultural family in a wholly reliable part of the country, and efforts must be made within the above-mentioned camps to put the Gypsies to work. Appropriate apparatus and administration should be provided for this purpose. . . . Through mass feeding, the costs incurred by the state in running the concentration camps can be minimized and concentration also makes public health supervision the most efficient.[42]

42 Endre's ideas regarding the work camps—apart from the element of sterilization—are rehashed almost verbatim in an internal recommendation of the Communist Interior Ministry in 1952. See B. Gy. Purcsi, "Fekete személyi igazolvány és munkatábor. Kísérlet a cigánykérdés megoldására az 1950-es évek Magyarországán" [Black ID Cards and Work Camps: An Attempt to Resolve the Gypsy Issue in Hungary in the 1950s], *Beszélő* III./VI/6 (June 2001): 30.

> There is an inevitable procedure that must be carried out, Endre wrote, and it is to sterilize the murderers whose mean instincts have for generations involved them in crime, as well as those Gypsies who suffer from demonstrable diseases such as tuberculosis or venereal disease. Even in the territory of the United States, which is vastly greater than that of Rump Hungary, it was deemed necessary to confine the Indians to certain territories, even though there, the Indians are the indigenous population and the white race is the unwelcome intruder. We have exactly the reverse situation with the Gypsies. . . . It is largely thanks to [the Gypsies] that most of Europe regards us, who with our learning and moral and intellectual values constitute a culture-nation vastly superior to the Gypsies, as a sort of Gypsy-mix, an inferior race not quite belonging to the European community of cultures. This situation cannot be tolerated much longer, and this is the reason why our new government must concern itself with the radical, final, and successful resolution of the issue.[43]

The article suggested two "formulas" for the solution—one was the concentration camp (as labor camp) and the other was the specific instrument of eradication within the camp: sterilization. It is reasonable to suppose that Endre, who hailed the Nazis' accession to power in 1933, visited Germany, and met Hitler, was somewhat well-informed in the area of German criminal and social legislation and the war launched against what were termed asocials (*asozialer Zigeuner*) .

Another piece proposing a solution was published in the *Hungarian Administration Review* in 1936. The article was written by Magistrate István Vassányi and titled "Cigánykódex" [Gypsy Code]. In it, the administration of Fejér County proposed compiling and publishing a collection of regulations regarding the Roma in order to make the process of "combating the Gypsy nuisance" more efficient. This piece was just as savage as Endre's, but Vassányi, lacking Endre's "practical" mindset and probably rooted in German ideas, exhibited signs of a mind sinking into insanity. Vassányi would have compelled all Gypsies to settle permanently; to expedite things, he would have confiscated and sold off all vehicles in their possession. He would have revoked their permits to trade horses and canceled their itinerant craftsman licenses. He would have forced them to perform labor—only menial labor He would have limited their wages to the amount sufficient to buy the most basic necessities. He would have placed every Roma person under police supervision and proposed corporal punishment as "a highly appropriate instrument in regulating the Gypsies." He suggested caning for males, and for females, he would have shaved their hair and put them in pillories or solitary

43 "A kóborcigány kérdés rendezése" [Settling the Issue of Traveling Gypsies], *Magyar Közigazgatás* [Hungarian Public Administration], 16 (1934): 5, cited from MCD: 225.

confinement with no light and little food. He proposed to indelibly mark all Gypsies over the age of six, regardless of gender, with some kind of inerasable chemical. The marking would have said, for instance, "F.m" (meaning Fejér County, Mór district) "and should be administered to an inconspicuous but easily accessible place, such as the inside of the upper left arm . . . and should have a binding effect on the Gypsies."[44]

This magisterial legal opinion had historical precedents dating back centuries. The Roma were distinguished by bodily markings, reserved for animals, slaves, and criminals, and for no crimes at all but for the sole reason of having been born Roma. Later the Jews also suffered this fate. One such branding technique was applied in England, where the right ears of Gypsies were pierced with a hot iron an inch in diameter. In areas of Germany preferred technique was branding scaffold-shape mark onto the back of captured "travelers" or onto the forehead of women. Part of a regulation issued in Hungary in 1726 called for one of the ears to be cut off in certain cases. Echoes of this practice of physical branding lived on into the 20th century in the forms of triangle-shaped chickenpox inoculation marks, shaved heads and pubic areas, certain tattoos used in concentration camps, yellow or white armbands with the letter Z (*Zigeuner*, German for Gypsy), and the forced washings ordered by local councils.[45]

In 1936, István Vassányi had no intention of bringing the branding iron back into service; he merely recommended the reinstitution of caning, pillory, solitary confinement, and the stigma of branding. After the first proposals were published, however, general public outrage forced the magistrate to revise his "reform" ideas, "given the public opinion about these things" as he put it.

The name of István Vassányi appears again, after the German occupation of Hungary, in László Endre's Arrow Cross Interior Ministry. Vassányi's recommendations would be put into practice, to the letter, in Auschwitz, where branding included tattooing marks on children's left lower arms. Another proposal of his was eerily reminiscent of what actually happened during a settlement program in the Third Reich in 1940. In this program, 2,500 Sinti and Roma German citizens were deported to occupied Polish territories for the crime of belonging to an alien race. In the first phase, all Roma over the age of six were fingerprinted, and all over the age of fourteen were photographed. Then, a registration number was inscribed with indelible ink on the lower left arms of the Sinti and Roma. That number had to match the number on the

44 István Vassányi "Cigánykódex" *Magyar Közigazgatás* [Hungarian Public Administration], 44, 46, 47 (1936).

45 Fraser, op. cit., 134–144; Interior Ministry Decree BM 15.000.1916; Kamill Erdős, *Cigánytanumányok* [Gypsy essays] (Békéscsaba, 1989): 57.

photograph and on the main register. The main register, sorted by family, also had to contain the name and personal details of each person. A so-called race diagnostic expert opinion had to be included in the files.[46]

As mentioned earlier, the idea of confining the Roma to internment camps appeared in the press and in administrative proposals around the time of the Dános incident in 1907 and 1908. At the time, one such camp was actually set up in the plains of Hortobágy. The use of internment camps was revived after World War I, when the deputy-lieutenant of Pozsony County proposed to use the existing "barrack camps" for this purpose,[47] and when on November 21, 1921, a proposal from Győr County reached the interior minister:

> On the basis of a wartime regulation, the possibility of interning individuals deleterious to society is open to us and we hold the traveling Gypsy to be a most deleterious individual, since he does no work and his idle life is a bad example to the poor, provincial population already corrupted by Communist tenets.[48]

Győr County sent the proposal to all other county administrations to garner their support, but while Vas and Komárom counties rejected the proposal outright, Zala County proposed to apply a less radical solution and to intern only traveling Gypsies. Those exhibiting behavior less deleterious to society would be kept at home, under police supervision. Heves, Csongrád, and Jász-Nagykun-Szolnok counties, while they might have agreed with the proposal on some points, finally rejected it altogether.

In 1934, the administration of Veszprém County submitted a proposal to Interior Minister Ferenc Keresztes-Fischer, urging the resolution of the problem, because "the criss-crossing of the country by these hordes is not only culturally impermissible but it also threatens public health and public safety."

Fejér County, in 1936, proposed a compilation of a Gypsy Code, the collection of dispersed regulations under one title to facilitate the operation of administrative procedures and make them more efficient.[49] Above, we have already cited the ideas Vassányi put forward in this regard. The initial idea for the codex was probably borrowed from Germany, modeled on the col-

46 Herbert Heuss, "A szinti és romaüldözés politikája Németországban (1870–1945)" [The policy of persecution against the Sinti and the Roma in Germany from 1870 to 1945], in Centre des Recherches Tsiganes, *Szintik és Romák a náci rendszer idején. **A fajelmélettől a lágerekig*** [Sinti and Roma in the Nazi System: From Racial Theory to Lagers] (Budapest: Pont, 2001): 30.

47 See the text of the deputy-lieutenant of Pozsony County 11370.1916; see also MCD: 191.

48 Idem.

49 Pomogyi, op. cit., 64–69.

lection of regulations titled Procedures for Combating the Gypsy Nuisance, prepared by Alfred Dillmann, as authorized by the Bavarian Interior Ministry. This work contained Germany's laws and regulations against the Gypsies between 1816 and 1913. In Hungary, Interior Ministry decree 66.045/1938 instructed all law enforcement personnel to treat all Gypsies as suspects.[50] On September 13, 1938, authorities at Pest-Pilis-Solt-Kiskun County submitted the last proposal for administrative measures to the government.[51] The county reiterated the urgent need to regulate and resolve the Gypsy question, and to support their position, the authors borrowed verbatim from László Endre's 1934 article in the *Hungarian Administration Review*, arguing in support of setting up state-run concentration camps for the Gypsies.

In the meantime, Endre, then chief magistrate of Gödöllő, had made great strides toward becoming the county's deputy-lieutenant. Neither the head county administrator, Elemér Preszly, nor his deputy, Lóránt Erdélyi, approved of Endre's political activity—he ran for a parliamentary seat as a candidate of the Race-Preserving Socialist Party in 1937. However, in the same year, after forming a "blood alliance" with Ferenc Szálasi, Endre helped found the Hungarian National Socialist Party. When Endre decided to run in local elections for a seat in the County Assembly in 1938, he received 48.8% of the votes in the first round and 65.4% in the second round, easily defeating his rivals, Count Lajos Szapáry, a government-allied politician, who was forced to bow out after the first round with only 24.6%, and János Horvát, chief magistrate of Vác, with 34.6%.

Deputy-Lieutenant László Endre's Decrees and Anti-Roma Raids

A deputy-lieutenant was the highest-ranking publicly elected official of a county, head of the county's public administration and of its civil serviced. His task was to implement the decisions of the General County Assembly and its committee, and he had power to act in all cases that did not specifically fall under the jurisdiction of some other county body. He received and implemented government decrees and signed official documents for the

50 Barna Mezey and István Taubert, *A magyarországi cigányság jogi helyzetének rendezését célzó szabályozás egyes kérdései* [Issues of the Regulations Aimed at Settling the Legal Status of the Gypsy Population of Hungary], in *Acta Facultatis Politico-Juridicae Universitatis Scientarum Budapestiensis de Rolando Eötvös Nominatae. Tomus XXIII* (Budapest, 1980): 230.

51 Pomogyi, op. cit., 67.

county. He represented the county at the governmental and ministerial level and with local, social, administrative and economic organizations. He had full authority over officials and other county employees.[52]

Six months after the proposal of September 1938, the Public Administration Committee of Pest County submitted another memorandum to Interior Minister Ferenc Keresztes-Fischer that branded traveling Gypsies as "beasts and criminals" who were "alien to the nation and alien to the decent, settled, music-playing type of Gypsies as well," and that urged the minister to implement a nationwide plan to resolve the Gypsy question.[53] Endre obviously continued to be concerned with the issue. Not only did he send proposals, he also took actions on his own, assuming leadership on the Gypsy issue. The new deputy-lieutenant in 1939 doubled the number of Gypsy raids in his jurisdiction, thereby forcing neighboring counties to raise the number of their own raids as well.

The circular Endre issued on April 22, 1939 instructed the head district magistrates as follows:

> To the heads of all district magistracies. With reference to the circular 47.051/1928 (see VHL, vol. 1928, p. 434) issued by my predecessor, I hereby set the dates for seeking out and registering traveling Gypsies in the territory of the county to the 8th of May and 2nd of October of the current year, 6 a.m. with the exception of territories under the jurisdiction of the Royal Hungarian Police. I am simultaneously informing of my decision the deputy-lieutenants of neighboring counties as second-tier police authorities, the chiefs of the Budapest and national police, as well as the Budapest and Pécs District Commands of the Hungarian Royal Gendarmerie. I hereby instruct all district chief magistrates to contact their liaison in the Hungarian Royal Gendarmerie and work out the details of the general raid in their specific districts. The number of traveling Gypsies found in their district, along with their gender, age and number of horses and carriages in their possession must be reported along with any proposals toward the resolution of the Gypsy question. Note that the Nógrád county deputy-lieutenant set the date for the general raid in that county for 20 May. (Signed, In the absence of the deputy-lieutenant, by Dr. Blaskovich, Chief Notary.)[54]

The signature of Dr. Lajos Blaskovich, head county notary and right-hand man of László Endre will recur on a number of documents and not just on those anti-Roma regulations he signed for the deputy-lieutenant. In 1942,

52 Vági, op. cit., 113–115.

53 Pomogyi, op. cit., 68.

54 Budapest Archives IV 402-a, Documents of the Chief Magistrate of the Central District. General Administrative Documents. 11029.1939. "Registering and Regulating Traveling Gypsies." (Nr.: ad. I. 14059.1939 kig. Sz.).

Zoltán Bosnyák joined Endre at the County Hall, and it was here that he started to produce his extremist anti-Semitic fliers. He remained a protégé of Endre even after the German occupation, and later joined Endre, Vassányi and Blaskovich in the Interior Ministry department that was responsible for the deportation of the Jews in 1944.[55]

Endre and his company of friends played a significant role in anti-Semitic and Arrow Cross movements and circles. Endre and Bosnyák met in the early 1930s at a meeting of the so-called Association for Pest and Insect Control, where they also made the acquaintance of László Levatich. This circle of friends exerted increasingly strong pressure in domestic politics. Lajos Méhely was a proponent of pseudo-scientific views on anti-Semitism and racial biology. Bosnyák collected historical and international literature on the Jewish question and relied, in his anti-Semitic pamphlets, on the statistical and economic data provided by the statistician and economist Alajos Kovács and the economist and member of Parliament Mátyás Matolcsy. László Levatich, who was head of the Association for Pest and Insect Control, had a good relationship with the Germans. After the 1939 elections, Endre's best friend, Count Miklós Serényi, a member of the Municipal Committee of Pest County, won a seat in the Parliament as a representative of the Arrow Cross Party. Serényi's party assignment was to head up the department concerned with Jewish issues, and he was considered an extremist even among Arrow Cross members.[56]

In November 1938, shortly after entering office, Endre, referring to an Interior Ministry decree dated 1935, ordered chief magistrates to hold raids twice a year (in January and on July 15) to find foreigners who slipped into Hungary, i.e., Jews fleeing persecution. These Jews, mostly Polish citizens, were deported from the country by order of the Central National Authority for Controlling Foreigners,[57] but the procedure took years to complete, during which time the Jews could stay in the country in relative safety. In 1941, however, German occupation police forces massacred some 17,000–18,000 Jews near Kamenetz Podolski, after they had been declared "displaced persons" and deported from Hungary.[58]

55 Jenő Lévai, *Endre László a magyar háborús bűnösök listavezetője* [László Endre at the Top of the List of Hungarian War Criminals] (Budapest: Müller K., 1945): 50; Randolph L. Braham, *A népírtás politikája. A Holocaust Magyarországon* [Policy of Genocide: The Holocaust in Hungary] (Budapest: Belvarosi Kiado, 1997): 458.

56 Vági, op. cit., 125.

57 KEOKH in Hungarian.

58 Vági, op. cit.

In his circular of April 24, 1939, Endre, citing the legal precedent of the decade-old decree issued by his predecessor in response to the raid decree of 1928, wrote:

> The traveling Gypsies are especially harmful to the general public in terms of public health, safety and public morals. This situation is a serious concern of the Public Administration Committee of my municipality, which is now petitioning the government to settle the Gypsy issue nationwide. Until these governmental measures go into effect, I have issued the following orders to deal with the issue in my jurisdiction:
>
> - Register all settled Vlach (traveling) Gypsies and those musician Gypsies who reside in Gypsy quarters and who cannot support themselves from their music. This register should be updated by deleting the deceased or emigrated persons and entering newly born ones.
> - Determine the number of Gypsies over 14 of both genders on the basis of this register and report the figure to me.
> - Also report the lowest local cost of a photograph to be used in a photo identification card. Make your report within 14 days.[59]

According to this decree, the traveling Gypsy category also included settled Roma and those Roma musicians who could not support themselves solely from playing music. The entire concept, including registering newborns and photo IDs, had been published earlier by Endre in the *Hungarian Administration Review* and in texts of measures approved by the Public Administration Committee. The trick Endre employed was to define broadly, though on the basis of existing decrees, the concept of traveling Gypsies, and he also included settled *Vlach* (traveling) Gypsies and those musicians, who lacking permanent employment, could not support themselves solely from playing music. The county administration undertook the implementation of the deputy-lieutenant's orders. On May 5, the chief magistrate of the central district of Pest County, wrote to the station commander of the local Gendarmerie:

> To the Station Commander of the Royal Hungarian Gendarmerie
> Soroksár, Dunaharaszti, Pestszentimre, Rákoseresztúr
>
> On the basis of our discussion with the wing command, I hereby inform you that I designated Soroksár as the holding area for the potential traveling Gypsy detainees for the Soroksár-Dunaharaszti area and Cinkota for the Ráckeve-Cinkota area. Since both municipalities are equipped with centrally switched telephone lines, the station commander should contact our offices before mak-

59 Pest Vármegye Hivatalos Lapja [Official Review of Pest County], 1939.18. 22.659-1939 kig. Sz. "Registering and Regulating Traveling Gypsies," Budapest, April 24, 1939.

ing detentions so that we could dispatch a clerk to draw up deportation documents. At the same time, you are notified to make your recommendations and proposals in the Gypsy question after carrying out the raid to me, in the form of a written proposal.[60]

On May 8, the Gendarmerie stations held the raids. The Pestszentimre station reported to the chief magistrate that "no traveling Gypsies were found in the station district during the 8 May 1939 Gypsy raid."[61] The report from Dunaharaszti stated that "during the raid, located were Gypsies constituting six adults and two children. The Gypsies were escorted to the Soroksár holding area and there handed over. The same night, the patrol of the Soroksár station escorted the Gypsies back here, saying that on the basis of Your Excellency's decree 8.291/1939 dated on the 8th of the current month, they were to be handed over to the Kiskunlacháza station. The patrol handed the Gypsies over to the appropriate station. No-one here has any recommendations to make in the Gypsy question."[62]

The Gendarmerie station at Rákoskeresztúr reported that during the raid held on the 8th, three adults were detained along with their children, including Szelenc, Ilona, and Piroska, in the southern part of the village of Rákoshegy and "on the basis of a telephone conversation conducted on the 8th with Head Magistrate Dr. Hazay, they were handed over on the 9th to the Kispest police authorities. No more Gypsies could be located in the station district. I have no recommendation to make in the Gypsy issue."[63] For all the trouble involved, the Soroksár station sounded rather irate in its report.

> Per instruction of cited reference number, in the above station district, from 6 am to 6 pm of the 8th of the current month, a total of seven gendarmes . . . held a raid to supervise and register traveling Gypsies, without any success. Because, for the above-described raid, Soroksár was designated as a holding area, patrols from the Dunaharaszti station district escorted three adult Gypsies and five children to the Soroksár Town Hall. I telephoned a report on the detentions to Your Excellency and I also called Chief Magistrate Dr. Hazay who instructed me to have the Gypsies escorted back to the Dunaharaszti command, to have their place of residence identified, then have the Gypsies escorted to that place and file a report of criminal activity with the appropriate magistracy. Because no traveling Gypsies could be found in our station district, I have no recommendation to make regarding them.[64]

60 BA IV.402-a. 11029.1939. 8291.1939. kig. Sz. (Chief Magistrate of the Central District of Pest County).
61 Ibid. 1951.1939 (RH Gendarme District Budapest I, Pestszentimre station).
62 Ibid. 1061.1939 (Dunaharaszti station).
63 Ibid. 753 bün.1939 (Rákoskeresztúr station).
64 Ibid. 137.1939 (Soroksár station).

In a circular issued on May 16, the chief magistrate of the central district called on local authorities to immediately implement the measures announced in the official gazette of the county.[65] He dispatched his report to the deputy-lieutenant the same day: "Your Excellency, I respectfully report that detainments took place in Rákoshegy and Dunaharaszti during the Gypsy raid conducted on the 8th day of the current month. My proposals were preempted by your Excellency's order 22.659/1939."[66]

In his circular dated May 17, László Endre called on the chief magistrates of all the districts: "With reference to my decree dated 24 April of this year noted I.14.059/1939, I inform you that the Deputy-Lieutenants of Csongrád and Jász-Nagykun-Szolnok counties set the date of 22 May for the Gypsy raid to be conducted pursuant to Interior Ministry decree 257.000/1938 while the Deputy-Lieutenant of Bács-Bodrog county set the date of 5 June of this year."[67] On May 27, he informed the chief magistrates that Csongrád County had postponed the May 22 raid to May 26.[68] These circulars demonstrate how the raid decree of 1928 set in motion a cycle of concerted raids that could be held a number of times a year across counties—their number was not restricted by law.

After the chief magistrate of the central district issued the instruction on May 16, reports from the local authorities started trickling in. The chief notary of Rákoshegy reported the presence of no traveling Gypsies in his village.[69] According to the chief notary of Pestújhely, "in my village, there are no traveling Gypsies . . . with no permanent residence. Similarly, there are no areas in my village where musician Gypsies, unable to make a living from music, are residing. My village includes Gypsies of permanent residency status, who are settled and own property, even though most of these are hovels that violate building regulations. Therefore the only way to get at them would be through the building authorities."[70]

The reports from Pestszentimre and Csepel also stated that there were no traveling Gypsies in these places, with the chief notary of Csepel adding that the local price of photographs was 1.5 pengő.[71] The chief notary of Soroksár reported that there were no "traveling Vlach Gypsies at all in our jurisdiction.

65 Ibid. 9334.1939 (Re: "Registering and Regulating Traveling Gypsies." Chief Magistrate of the Central District of Pest County).
66 Ibid. 9284.1939 (Chief Magistrate of the Central District of Pest County).
67 Ibid. 25.898.1939 kig. Sz. (Deputy-Lieutenant of Pest-Pilis-Solt-Kiskun County).
68 Ibid. 27.960.1939 kig. Sz. (Deputy-Lieutenant of Pest-Pilis-Solt-Kiskun County).
69 Ibid. 9234.1939 kig. Sz. (from the municipal authorities of Rákoshegy).
70 Ibid. 6024.1939 kig. Sz. (from the municipal authorities of Pestújhely).
71 Ibid. 8176.1939 (from the municipal authorities of Pestszentimre) and 11.246.1939 (from the municipal authorities of Csepel).

There are a few Gypsy families living in the village but they are permanent residents, some of them factory workers, but most of them make their living by odd jobs, making nails, mending pots and pans. The lowest local price for an identification card photograph is 50 fillér."[72] Laconic, negative replies were submitted from Sashalom and Rákosszentmihály.[73]

By June the deputy-lieutenant had run out of patience. The reports by the magistrates and gendarmes failed to support his concern for public safety, public health, and public morals. On June 9, he ordered the chief magistrate of the central district to hurry things along. "I instruct you to fulfill the terms of my order issued 22 April of this year noted I.14.059 of 1939 without any further delay." He actually underlined the words "chief magistrate of the central district" with red ink, and in a less than polite manner, he underlined twice the phrase "without delay." On July 5, he issued another, even harsher and more impatient notice to Dr. Hazay, who protested, in vain, that he had already made his report in response to the deputy-lieutenant's May 13 decree. "I urge you to make your report in response to my decree published in issue 17 of the official county gazette without delay, or make a full report of the circumstances preventing you from carrying out said instructions."[74]

The chief magistrate of the central district must have realized that the results had to be different than they were during the previous annual raids. On July 15, he asked for an extension: "Your Excellency, I respectfully request 30 days to make my full report." In turn, he issued urgent notices to the local authorities. By August, only Cinkota and Dunaharaszti reported detainees, 16 men and 28 women, and 4 men and 4 women respectively. Photograph costs came in from Cinkota, Csepel, Dunaharaszti, Mátyásföld and Soroksár.[75] It is noteworthy that with the exception of Cinkota, the notaries reported not a single "traveling Gypsy" or a "musician Gypsy unable to support himself by playing music." The chief notary of Cinkota said he ". . . created a registry of such musician Gypsies in my village as reside in the Gypsy quarter and are unable to make a living from playing music. The current headcount of these Gypsies is 84."[76] Ignoring the Cinkota notary's report, the chief magistrate submitted his final report on September 29, writing: "Your Excellency! I respectfully submit that only musician Gypsies reside in my district, all of them

72 Ibid. 7383.1939 (from the municipal authorities of Soroksár).
73 Ibid. 6236.1939 (from the municipal authorities of Sashalom) and 8988.1939 kig. Sz. (from the municipal authorities of Rákosszentmihály).
74 Ibid. I.27960/1939 kig. Sz. (Deputy-Lieutenant of Pest-Pilis-Solt-Kiskun County) 11029/1939 (Chief Magistrate of the Central District), I.22.659/1939 (Deputy-Lieutenant of Pest-Pilis-Solt-Kiskun County).
75 Ibid. 11029.1939 (Chief Magistrate of the Central District).
76 Ibid. 3834.1939 (from the municipal authorities of Cinkota).

over 14; there are 16 men and 28 women in Cinkota and 4 men and 4 women in Dunaharaszti. In these villages, photographs cost 80 fillér."[77]

The results of the raids, especially compared to "the traveling Gypsy menace" described in the deputy-lieutenant's decree, were hardly significant. That, however, was before the October 1939 raid. On October 2, the Gendarmerie stations conducted the second raid ordered in April. The commanders of the Dunaharaszti, Soroksár, Pestszentimre and Rákoskeresztúr stations unanimously stated that they could find no traveling Gypsies in their district and had no proposals to make regarding the Gypsy question.[78] The gendarme platoon commander of Soroksár attached a proposal to his report to the chief magistrate, stating that the process as outlined by relevant regulations was highly inefficient. Under the current system, gendarmes escorted traveling Gypsies to the public authorities, who, in most cases, ordered them transferred to their official places of residence without imposing any other punishment. His proposal called for enabling gendarme patrols to have a medical doctor examine "the Gypsy" and to transfer those suffering from contagious disease to a hospital. The Gypsies who are found infested with lice should be ordered shaved. (Regulations allowed for this procedure, but one can imagine how the gendarmes put this into practice. The "as frequent as possible" shavings of hair and beards was a hobbyhorse of the deputy-lieutenant as well.)

The Magossányi platoon commander wrote:

> The Gypsy is very sensitive about his hair, therefore, if a Gypsy is shorn two or three times, he would be compelled to observe cleanliness on the one hand, while on the other hand, this procedure would become well-known among traveling Gypsies who would consequently be deterred from traveling. . . . In my opinion, this procedure, although offensive from the perspective of humaneness, is in the best public interest from the perspective of the nation's health and cleanliness, since a traveling Gypsy visits many places and spreads all sort of diseases through the lice he carries.
>
> The Gypsy would thus be forced to live permanently in one place and should, by the cessation of a work-shy lifestyle, perform some decent job to make his living . . . residents will be aware of the kind of lives led by Gypsies who are living locally. . . . The Gypsy uses a variety of names, but the residents know the settled Gypsies by their distinguishing name while ignorant of the nicknames, the pseudo-names and distinguishing names of the traveling Gypsies. . . .
>
> The "inside procedure"—i.e., the shaving of one's head—"would provide such a universal instrument for the authorities [. . .] that would be suitable to

77 Ibid. Ad.8096.1941 kig. Sz.. (Chief Magistrate of the Central District).

78 Ibid. Gendarme, Budapest I, 104.1939 (Dunaharaszti station) 17.1939 (Soroksár platoon commander) 195.1939 (Pestszentimre station) 130.1939 (Rákoskeresztúr station).

control traveling Gypsies efficiently, because the Gypsy, if largely ignorant of the law, is still aware that the gendarmes, as officers of the law, besides their basic procedural rights, cannot enforce any other regulations against them."[79]

The gendarme station commander at Soroksár had a fully developed image of the Gypsy that saved him a lot of thinking. The Gendarmerie recruited their personnel from the agricultural sectors of the society, from among the peasants, who traditionally were most in conflict with the Gypsies and whose traditional lifestyle, conception of private property, hard-earned non-commissioned status in the army, and discipline implanted by the Gendarmerie put them in starkest contrast with the traditional ways of the traveling Gypsies. For political reasons, high ranking Gendarmerie officers preferred peasants for trial service periods, presumably thinking that village farmers were less corrupted by destructive ideas. For each candidate, admission to the ranks was a significant step up the social ladder. An admission committee decided whether to accept the volunteer on a conditional basis, after they had determined his political reliability. Even the probationary period was open only to those who had already reached a non-commissioned rank in the army. This is why all gendarmes held the basic rank of corporal. [80]

The chief magistrate of the central district received another urgent notice during the second Gypsy raid of 1939. In a letter dated October 22, the deputy-lieutenant instructs him to "fulfill the terms of my order issued 22 April of this year noted I 14.059/1939 without any further delay."[81] On November 20, the reluctant chief magistrate finally assembled his report and submitted it with his proposals: this raid produced even more meager results than the previous. In his proposals, he restricted himself to merely repeating what had been put forward in the deputy-lieutenant's decree.

I respectfully submit that during the conducted raids, no detention occurred. My proposals are as follows. The Gypsy question needs to be resolved with respect to public health and public safety. [The chief magistrate here omitted the deputy-lieutenant's concerns for public morals.]

As Your Excellency suggested, [I recommend the Gypsies be provided] with photograph identity cards. [They] would be issued by the Gendarmerie. The identification card to be monthly stamped, by the authorities of the owner's place of residence. This would also include monthly medical examination. Departure from the village could only be affected through a permit previously

79 Ibid. 137.1939 (Soroksár station).

80 Ervin Hollós, *Rendőrség, csendőrség* [Police, Gendarme], VKF 2. (Budapest: Kossuth, 1971): 87.

81 Budapest Archives, ih. 53.763/1939. kig. Sz. (Deputy-Lieutenant of Pest-Pilis-Solt-Kiskun County).

issued by local authorities. The photo ID card would have a number of pages for comments and be replaced every other year. The card would list medical exams, departure permits and possibly detentions. 10 years of residency without breaking the law would result in the removal of these restrictions as long as local property purchase and permanent local residency appears to be secured.[82]

With the exception of a negative response from the chief magistrate of the Kunszentmiklós district, no records of the 1940 raids have been preserved. This report contained a brief proposal: "My proposal with regards to the Gypsy issue is that the Gypsies should be locked up in internment camps where they ought to be forced to be self-sufficient so that they incur no cost for the State but be in a location where they can be easily supervised."[83]

On April 10, 1941, the deputy-lieutenant set the dates for the Gypsy raids to be May 19 and October 13. Out of the 17 district reports, 13 reported no actions taken. On May 22, the Buda Environs district reported the detention of 12 "traveling Gypsies: (1) Jùlia K. age 37 (2) Lina K. age 12 (3) József K. age 8 (4) Krisztina K age 7 (5) Manci K. age 3 (6) Ferenc K. age 9 months (7) Margit V. age 21 (8) József V, age 1 (9) Hermina V. age 17 (10) György K.S. age 21 (11) Jùlia B. age 22 (12) Teréz K. age 19. The above-named persons have been disinfected and transferred to their place of recorded residence."[84]

On May 28, the chief magistrate of the Dunavecse district reported that "the gendarmes detained a 29-strong Gypsy caravan near the village of Solt. The horses in their possession were confiscated because ownership could not be established beyond doubt. One of the Gypsy horses had a runny nose and could be suspected of disease so I had a Royal Hungarian veterinarian test it. The test results are not yet known." After being urged by the deputy-lieutenant, the chief magistrate of Dunavecse was forced to pen another report: "Your Excellency! With reference to your second urgent notice dated 31 July of this year, I respectfully submit, for the second time, that in response to the decree issued by your Excellency on May 10, I submitted my report on May 18, that is, well before the deadline. In my report I informed you that the gendarmes of Solt apprehended a 29-strong Gypsy caravan in a raid and since the ownership of the horses in their possession could not be established, the horses were confiscated. Subsequently I had the horses auctioned off. Dunavecse, 8 August 1941."[85]

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82 Ibid. 11.029/1939 (Chief Magistrate of the Central District).

83 PCA Deputy-Lieutenant's documents of Pest-Pilis-Solt-Kiskun County, general administrative documents, IV.408-b 14.399/1944 Controlling traveling Gypsies. (Ad. 2601.1944. kig. Sz. from the Chief Magistrate of the Kiskunszentmiklós District).

84 Ibid. 5628.1939 (Chief Magistrate of the Buda Environs District).

85 Ibid. 2134 kig. Sz.1941.kig. Sz. (Chief Magistrate of the Dunavecse District). "The Answers of the Deputy-Lieutenant to the Documents 28.202/1941 kig and II.39.580/1941 Urging a Response."

The chief magistrate of the Monor district also submitted a "positive" report: "During the raids, two men with one wagon and four horses were found in Üllő and one man and one woman in Vecsés, against whom I initiated the proper procedures. I also need to report that because of an urgent and unexpected demand for the services of the Monor, Gomb and Albert gendarmerie stations, the May 19 raids could not be conducted. The Albert gendarme station held the raid on 20 May." The chief magistrate of the Ráckeve district reported that he found a 36-year-old and a 16-year-old woman and the 5-year-old child of the latter, with no horses or wagons. The other gendarme stations submitted negative reports.[86]

Of the reports submitted in the autumn of 1941, only the chief magistrate of the Monor district wrote that "in Vecsés, the gendarmes found Gypsy males aged 34, 25, 21 and 17 and, in addition to the men, women aged 42, 21 and 20 . . . no horses or wagons were found. As for the Gypsy question, my recommendation would be to force the Gypsies to settle permanently and to take up regular work."[87]

In February 1942, Endre submitted his summary report on the Gypsy raids conducted in the course of 1941: "To His Excellency, the Royal Hungarian Minister of Interior! With reference to decree 257.000/1928 issued by your Excellency, I respectfully submit that in order to locate and regulate traveling Gypsies I issued orders to hold raids in the areas under my jurisdiction on 19 May 1941 and 13 October 1941. In the course of the raids, 58 men, 18 women, 6 horses and 2 wagons were found. The district magistrates took the appropriate steps. 3 February 1942 Budapest."[88] The statistics mentioned only the number of men and women (the number of children and infants were included in the latter) and of horses and wagons.

In a new development in 1942, the Public Administration Committee of Pest County petitioned the interior minister to effect a speedy resolution of the Gypsy question: "Since all efforts at resolving the Gypsy issue proved to be treatments for the symptoms of the disease, we are respectfully asking Your Excellency to remove, as soon as possible, all obstacles from placing these traveling Gypsies into concentration and work camps."[89]

In 1942, the deputy-lieutenant issued his Gypsy raid instructions on April 1, setting the raid dates for May 19 and October 13. The chief magistrate of Gödöllő reported nine Roma men and women and added: "In my opinion the

86 Ibid. 4981.1941 kig. Sz. (Chief Magistrate of the Monor District of Pest-Pilis-Solt-Kiskun County) 2301.1941 kig (Chief Magistrate of the Ráckeve District).
87 4981.1941 kig. Sz. (Chief Magistrate of the Monor District).
88 Ibid. 4731.1941 (draft).
89 Pomogyi, op. cit., 68.

most appropriate method to settle the Gypsy question would be to intern the Gypsies into work camps."[90] According to the chief magistrate of Monor, "the gendarmes located only one traveling Gypsy in the course of the raid, who, after the conclusion of the misdemeanor procedure and the imposition of a penalty, was escorted to his registered place of residence."[91]

The chief magistrate of the Nagykáta district reported that traveling Gypsies were found only in the village of Nagykáta, and they were charged with a misdemeanor. He neglects to mention their number but adds, "I think it is necessary that the Gypsy's right to free movement be suspended by a decree, at least in the territory of the county, which would settle the whole Gypsy question. But I also think it desirable to set up a separate Gypsy work camp where Gypsies who shun work or who are unable to make a living, would be placed."[92]

The chief magistrate of the central district enclosed the report submitted by the gendarmes at Rákoskeresztúr, who in the course of the May 19 raid apprehended Jolán K., who was transferred to the Royal Prosecutor's Office after being charged with defrauding a Rákoshegy resident—István K., his common-law wife, and his daughter Erzsébet "because they were staying in Rákoskeresztúr at the apartment of a Gypsy, by the name of János L., without registering or having a permit."[93] They were handed over to the chief magistrate of the Gödöllő district. So far, only the district of Nagykáta and Gödöllő appeared to be supportive of the proposal regarding Gypsy work camps made by Endre and the Public Administration Committee of Pest County.

The autumn Roma raids in 1942 were held on October 13. A memorandum dated October 31, written by the mayor of the city of Esztergom, asked the deputy-lieutenant of Pest County to inform him should a general raid be held in his jurisdiction, because "it is an unfortunate and generally observed circumstance that Gypsies traveling nationwide endangering the public order and public morals, if held under stricter supervision in one jurisdiction, tend to flock over to the territories of neighboring cities and jurisdictions."[94]

According to reports, in the village of Rákoskeresztúr in the central district, a maiden, born in Vép, was detained for "staying with her Gypsy relative, a resident of Rákoskeresztúr, without a permit." This is the only person the central district reported to have detained and handed over to the Gödöllő

90 PCA, loc. cit., 5429/1942 (Chief Magistrate of the Gödöllő District).
91 Ibid. 3569/1942 (Chief Magistrate of the Monor District).
92 Ibid. 2977/1942 (Chief Magistrate of the Nagykáta District).
93 Ibid. Ad 7033/1942 (Chief Magistrate of the Central District).
94 Ibid. 15.834/1942 pm.sz. (Mayor of the free royal county seat Esztergom).

district while neglecting to mention another Gypsy male who was detained in Soroksár and handed over by the gendarmes to the chief magistrate.[95]

In the village of Kiskőrös, gendarmes found nine Gypsies who could not produce proper identifications, "but this is due to the fact that on the day in question a market was held in the village, otherwise no traveling Gypsies ever show up either in the village or in the district . . . no horses or wagons were in the possession of the detained Gypsies." The reports mentioned no action—probably the chief magistrate took none.[96] The report submitted by the Dunavecse district mentioned 6 males (between the ages of 18 and 50), a 31-year-old woman and 3 maidens (between 14 and 31). "After they serve their penalties, I will order the internment of the 6 detained traveling males or their transfer to a work camp," the chief magistrate wrote.[97] None could outdo the mayor of Esztergom in officiousness and severity—except perhaps the chief magistrate of Dunavecse.

On January 22, 1943, Endre prepared his summary report to the interior minister on the 1942 Gypsy raids: "To His Excellency, the Royal Hungarian Minister of Interior! With reference to decree 257.000 of 1928 issued by your Excellency, I respectfully submit that in order to locate and regulate traveling Gypsies I issued orders to hold raids in the areas under my jurisdiction on 19 May 1942 and 13 October 1942. In the course of the raids, 21 men and 18 women were found. The district magistrates took the appropriate steps."[98] The deputy-lieutenant refrained from providing further details or recommendations.

In 1943, László Endre issued his Gypsy-raid instructions on March 31, setting the raid dates for May 17 and October 13. This time, there was a new element in the order, in the deputy-lieutenant's handwriting: "In the course of the raids, special attention must be paid to horse keeping permits, which should be annulled in all possible cases."[99] This addition, however, was omitted from the version passed on by the central district to the local authorities at Soroksár, Dunaharaszti, Pestszentimre and Rákoshegy as well as the gendarme station command at Gödöllő.[100] Only Esztergom County adopted the notice—no such provision was found in the memoranda in Tolna,

95 Ibid. 20.204/1942 and ad. 7033/1942(Chief Magistrate of the Central District).
96 Ibid. 8.262.1942 kig.sz. and 3.047/1942 kig.sz. (Chief Magistrate of the Kiskőrös District).
97 Ibid. 1964/1942 (Chief Magistrate of the Dunavecse District).
98 Ibid. 4305/1943 (draft).
99 Ibid. 15.554/1943 kig March 31.
100 PCA, loc. cit., 6170/1943 kig (Chief Magistrate of the Central District of Pest county).

Heves, Fejér, Csongrád, Jász-Nagykun-Szolnok and Csanád-Arad-Torontál counties.[101]

The total yield of the Roma raids in the spring of 1943 was two adolescent traveling Gypsies detained in Kiskőrös. As the chief magistrate of that district wrote, "in the territory of the Kiskőrös district, gendarmes checked the identifications of 59 people, and only two of them were traveling Gypsies, males, aged 16 and 17. No horses or wagons were found in their possession. Most of the people whose identifications were checked were not Gypsies."[102] The chief magistrate of Abony also reported that "in my entire district, Gypsies keep no horses at all."[103]

On November 22, Gödöllő reported that the two persons detained there in the autumn raid turned out not to be traveling Gypsies: "Only the Gödöllő gendarmes detained two persons (pot mending Gypsies) against whom legal procedures were initiated for craft permit violations."[104] We have even less information regarding the three persons detained in the Monor district: "in the territory of my district, gendarmes . . . found only three traveling Gypsies, against whom the appropriate actions were taken. No traveling Gypsies in possession of horses and wagons were found."[105] A larger group was detained in the Kiskőrös district, but they, too, turned out not to be traveling Gypsies: "The mounted gendarmes detained on this day 6 women and 6 men over the age of 15 and with them, 19 children, all under the age of 15. They possessed no horses or wagons. . . . They are not traveling but brick-making Gypsies. Of the October 13 raid in search of traveling Gypsies I can report no success."[106]

Before László Endre was transferred to the Interior Ministry, he issued a decree on the annual Roma raids on March 3, 1944. He set the raid dates for May 3 and October 4. He left the addendum concerning the cancellation of horse-keeping permits in the text of the decree.[107] A report from Nagykáta said, "in the district of the Kóka Gendarme Station, three vagrant Gypsies were captured and detained. Legal procedures have been initiated against them. 20 May 1944, Nagykáta." The report from Monor stated that "the Gendarme Station at Vecsés reported the capture of a traveling Gypsy on May

101 Ibid. 4166/1943 (Deputy-Lieutenant of Tolna County), 11.379a/1943 (Deputy-Lieutenant of Heves County) 5.313/1943, (Deputy-Lieutenant of Fejér County), 4581-1alisp/1943 (Deputy-Lieutenant of Csongrád County), 12.160 kig. Sz./1943 (Deputy-Lieutenant of Jász-Nagykun-Szolnok County), 1943 (Deputy-Lieutenants of Csanád-Arad-Torontál Counties)

102 Ibid. 2.677/1943 (Chief Magistrate of the Kiskőrös District).

103 Ibid. 2.454/1943 (Chief Magistrate of the Abony District).

104 Ibid. 4.438 /1943 (Chief Magistrate of the Gödöllő District).

105 Ibid. 3.475 /1943 kig. Sz. (Chief Magistrate of the Monor District).

106 Ibid. 2.677/1943 kig. Sz. (Chief Magistrate of the Kiskőrös District).

107 Ibid. 14.399/1944 kig. Sz. (Deputy-Lieutenant of Pest-Pilis-Solt-Kiskun County).

3 in Vecsés, but a check of his fingerprints revealed he was not wanted for a crime . . . 13 June 1944, Monor."[108]

Only fragmentary documentation has survived from the autumn raids. On October 11, the chief magistrate of Nagykáta reported that no traveling Gypsies were found in the Gendarmerie districts of Tápiószele, Tápiógyörgye, Tápióbicske, and Kóka. In Nagykáta, however, "the gendarme station reported the capture and detention of six vagrant Gypsies against whom legal procedures have been initiated."[109]

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In his five years in office as the deputy-lieutenant of Pest County, László Endre—who responded to the "danger" posed by traveling Gypsies by doubling the number of Roma raids, urging steps to register all Gypsies and provide them with ID cards, and, in his article published in the *Hungarian Administration Review*, proposing their concentration in camps where sterilization could be performed more easily—could only produce two groups of Gypsies in possession of horses and wagons.

If we examine the details—as opposed to the summary data the deputy-lieutenant's office compiled—it is easy to see that in all other instances, the reports of the Roma raids could mention only smaller groups on foot, solitary traveling Gypsies, men and women (whose number also included infants), adolescents, itinerant craftsmen, visiting relatives, vagrants, and others.

The apprehended Roma had to face an array of possible penalties, such as immediate, humiliating forced disinfection, a misdemeanor citation resulting in return to their place of recorded residence, and, in cases of repeat offenders, the initiation of an administrative procedure that could land them in workhouses. Given the efforts to prevent their movement, the most serious offense Gypsies could commit was the keeping of horses and wagons—this usually resulted in confiscation and auction of the property, causing severe financial harm to their owners. Gypsies were detained and punished with no detailed justification. The district could report no evidence of traveling Gypsy lifestyle, such as traveling route and area, caravans, tents, or temporary campsites. The number of negative reports submitted by gendarmes, notaries, and magistrates—of the 125 reports submitted between 1941 and 1944, 104 were negative and 21 positive—is an outright refutation of the grave concerns over traveling Gypsies articulated by the deputy-lieutenant, some

108 Ibid. 3013/1944 (Chief Magistrate of the Nagykáta District) 2305 /1944 kig. Sz. (Chief Magistrate of the Monor District).

109 Ibid. 3013/1944 (Chief Magistrate of the Nagykáta District).

magistrates, and the county's Public Administration Committee. Even the positive reports failed to provide support for the proposals that unsuccessfully urged the Interior Ministry to establish Gypsy concentration camps and sterilize the inmates. These ideas probably came from German sources.

While in his capacity as deputy-lieutenant, László Endre on March 3, 1944 issued an order to conduct annual Gypsy raids, he did not oversee its implementation. When German troops invaded Hungary, Interior Minister Ferenc Keresztes-Fischer, who was hated by the Arrow Cross, was arrested along with his brother, Lajos, the former head of the Military Bureau of the Governor, and dragged off by the Gestapo on March 20. The new interior minister, Andor Jaross, transferred Endre to the ministry effective March 27. On March 29, the Council of Ministers approved his appointment as a state secretary; the regent signed the appointment on April 8. One of Endre's first actions in the ministry was to issue an order, stating that no Jews could be served in shops with sugar or cooking fat. As state secretary, he oversaw the operations of County and Municipal Department Nr. 2 (involved in the Jewish question), Urban Department Nr. 4, Housing Department Nr. 21 and the so-called Department for the Rationalization of Public Administration. After May 13, 1944, a new service was established in the Refugee Subdepartment of Housing Department Nr. 21, which was concerned with the deportation of the Jews and their placement in camps. The administration of these matters, which had previously not been assigned to any department, was to commence now "on the basis of the direct instructions of state secretary Dr László Endre."[110]

At the same time, the Interior Ministry's Sub-department VII/B for Controlling Associations—which also came to be known as the Jewish Department, as it directly oversaw the activities of the Jewish Council—was now under the direction of Lajos Blaskovich, who as chief notary had been one of László Endre's closest colleagues in Pest County. A number of times, he personally issued the orders of his superior for the "regulation" of Gypsies, traveling or otherwise. The secretary of the sub-department, in all probability, was the same Dr. István Vassányi who, as a magistrate in 1936, published an article in the *Hungarian Administration Review* proposing to introduce caning, forced labor, pillories, solitary confinement with reduced food rations, and indelible markings on the skin in order to deal with the Gypsy problem. Endre's chief adviser on the Jewish question was Zoltán Bosnyák, who was appointed director of the Hungarian Institute for Researching the Jewish

110 *Dokumentumok a zsidóság üldözésének történetéhez* [Documents of the History of the Persecution of the Jews] (Documents from the Pest-Pilis-Solt-Kiskun County Archives), (Magyar Auschwitz Alapítvány with Holocaust Documentációs Központ, Budapest, 1994): 17.

Question, which was established after the country's occupation by the Germans.[111] The anti-Semitic and anti-Roma circle of Endre and his friends reached positions of power and set about preparing the "final solution" of the Jewish question. Endre, in his post as state secretary, was able to personally participate in setting up the ghettos that had formerly existed only on paper, and later, in direct collaboration with Adolf Eichmann, in arranging the deportation of the Jews from the ghettos. His actions were not confined to administration: he personally toured the country to supervise and help the construction of ghettos and the rounding up and transportation of people. When standing accused before the People's Tribunal, he said he was not aware of the real purpose of the deportations. Yet he and László Baky had delivered a detailed report on the preparations at the June 21, 1944 meeting of the Council of Ministers—and the People's Tribunal, on the basis of the evidence that emerged in the course of the trial, declared that he was responsible for the deaths of hundreds of thousands of people.

After the fall of the Sztójay government in August 1944, the incoming Lakatos administration removed Endre from the Interior Ministry. He temporarily went into retirement and reported for duty at the front, but a few weeks later Ferenc Szálasi and the Arrow Cross came to power, and Endre was appointed government commissioner for all war zones. He was given authority to administer the areas involved in military action, which in essence meant all the territories under Arrow Cross rule. As a commissioner, he had authority to secure property and valuables left behind after evacuations, to supervise the media and civil associations, to initiate detention or internment, and to oversee telephone and telegraph communications as well as the postal services. After his appointment as state secretary in March, he simply did not have as much time to devote to the Gypsy issue as he did during his tenure as deputy-lieutenant, and in this period, he focused all his energies on finally resolving the Jewish issue. There is little doubt, however, that had he enough time before the collapse of the fascist regime to turn to the "radical and final solution of the Gypsy question" he would have done it with the same enthusiasm he displayed in relation to the Jewish issue.

As the sources reveal, those county-level public administration officials who were influenced by National Socialist theories of race were inclined to be receptive to the radical and final solution of the Gypsy question—in fact some made recommendations to this effect. But at the highest level in Hungary, it was not until February 20, 1945 that the Arrow Cross government, on the run and meeting in Kőszeg, decided on the "most radical and

111 Lévai, op. cit., 50 and Braham, op. cit., 458–513.

uncompromising final solution" of the Gypsy question. As a result, Lt. Gen. Ferenc Kisbarnaki Farkas, in his order concerning the evacuation of the civilian population, informed officials that the Gypsies in their districts were "to be transported to concentration camps."[112]

Franz Novak had the task of procuring cattle cars and engines in the occupied countries, where the Reich Bureau of Security organized the deportations. In Hungary, this work was performed by Sub-department IV/B/4 and by Adolf Eichmann, who had gained wide experience from the deportations of the Roma and Sinti of Germany and other countries. The Einsatzgruppe marching into Hungary along with the Wehrmacht numbered some 500 to 600 Gestapo and SD members. The group was led by SS-Standartenführer Hans Geschke. His deputy and the head of the Budapest Sicherheitspolizei (SIPO) was Obersturmbannführer and Government Councilor Alfred Trenker. The official name of Eichmann's commando unit was Einsatzkommando der Sicherheitspolizeiund des SS and was subordinated to the Einsatzgruppe in Hungary. Eichmann's colleagues—Alois Krumey, Otto Hunsche, Dieter Wisliceny, Theodor Danneker, Franz Novak, Franz Abromeit and Siegfried Seidl—had many years of experience in the organization and implementation of the final solution.

But in 1944, the fate of Gypsies in Hungary took a turn for the worse. Yet to come were Gypsy labor units, evacuations, concentrations ordered by collaborators and the Arrow Cross, deportations, mass retaliations behind the rapidly moving front lines, and mass murder—in other words, the Pharrajimos. The collection and deportation of the Roma to concentration camps began, although not with the same efficiency as in Austria and Bohemia. Efficiency was hindered not only by the rapid approach of the Russian front and transportation difficulties, but also by the lack of legal and administrative groundwork—until the Germans occupied the country, Hungarian legislators and the successive governments issued no decrees for the nationwide registration of the Roma or for the establishment of Roma ghettos. Therefore, the kinds of registers that the Germans and their lackeys used to round up Gypsies in neighboring countries were simply not available. The Gypsy question remained alive after Endre left office as deputy-lieutenant, and the autumn raids that he scheduled were held.

112 *Documents of the History of the Persecution of the Jews* (Documents from the Pest-Pilis-Solt-Kiskun County Archives): 18.

The Mass Murder of Gypsies at Várpalota and Inota-Lake Grábler at the End of January 1945

By János Ury

After the October 15 coup, the Arrow Cross leaders—Ferenc Ács, József Pintér, József Dominó—assumed power in Hungary, and the first item on their agenda was to coordinate their efforts with the Germans, especially with the Gestapo. In November, Arrow Cross chief Ferenc Szálasi appointed József Pintér, formerly the head of the Fejér County chapter of the Arrow Cross Party to the post of the lord-lieutenant of the country. His first move was to make sure that the martial law announced on October 28 was being used wherever possible. He called on local head notaries to help the law enforcement officers in their districts in the course of their search for deserters. On October 26, 1944, he issued an order that all school buildings in Székesfehérvár be turned over to the Germans for billeting purposes. Pintér, in his capacity as commissioner for zones of operations, had a list of fit-for-work Roma drawn up.[1] Under the pretense of performing home defense duties, they were put to work on road constructions, rubble clearings, and other public works. Later, Pintér also ordered all Roma under 16 to be registered, since he intended to resolve the Gypsy question on his own until a central

1 Unfortunately, I have not yet been able to find this list.

solution was found. However, he had only limited opportunities to realize his intentions.

From mid-November on, the Germans in Hungary behaved as they did in enemy territory: they confiscated livestock, corn, and machinery by the truckloads. They moved into buildings without permission and looted abandoned houses, breaking all furniture inside.[2] The diary of Col. Pál Csoknyai speaks of such events. Col. Csoknyai was appointed commander of the 20th Infantry Division. The command center for the division and the entire infantry was set up on December 9, 1944 in Várpalota. On December 19, Col. Csoknyai visited Székesfehérvár mayor Lajos Kerekes to gather information on the situation in the town and to discuss forthcoming tasks. The mayor told the colonel about the anarchic conditions reigning in town and asked for his help in putting an end to all illegal billeting, hoarding, and looting and in restraining deserters and Arrow Cross members. In the afternoon, Col. Pál Csoknyai summoned the local Arrow Cross head and ordered him to organize the party's militia for the purpose of maintaining law and order in town.[3]

On December 22, 1944, Russian troops took Székesfehérvár and held it until January 23, 1945. Reliable information regarding this period is lacking.

After January 23, 1945, conditions in Székesfehérvár took a turn for the worse as the city ran out of food and fuel. Incessant bombing runs and artillery barrages turned life into a nightmare. Three-quarters of the civilian population, ignored by military authorities, fled the town. The military command did not mind the exodus since the abandoned homes could be used for billeting purposes. Many buildings were converted into forts and even blown up for fortification purposes. The military police barred civilians from entering the city, though some, using German or Hungarian military vehicles, managed to slip in. They reported empty streets in Székesfehérvár at the end of January 1945.

In the uptown section, not a soul was to be seen. All buildings were boarded up. The gendarmes of the Arrow Cross's National Retribution Committee were suspicious of all of the town's civilians,[4] taking them for "Bolshevist agents."[5] On January 23, when Székesfehérvár was retaken, the Arrow Cross leaders re-emerged and Pintér was made commissioner. He was guarded by a

2 Gábor Farkas, "Fejér megye és Székesfehérvár város közigazgatása 1944 március 19-től 1945 végéig" [The Public Administration of Fejér County and the City of Székesfehérvár from March 19, 1944 to the end of 1945], *Levéltári Szemle* [Archival Review] 2 (1965).

3 Col. Pál Csoknyai, manuscript diaries, Fejér County Archives.

4 The committee's correct name was the National Retribution Squad

5 Collected Recollections at the Fejér County Archives.

gendarme named Hajba and a sergeant first class gendarme named Országh as well as his orderly, József Schubert.

Court Documents

The review of postwar court documents was complicated by the fact that trials were held more or less simultaneously, such as the ones at the People's Tribunal at Székesfehérvár (defendant József Pintér), People's Tribunal in Veszprém (defendants Andor Farkas, Imre Kemenesi, Sándor Molnár, and Ferenc Pál) and later, in the appeals stage, at the People's Tribunal of Győr and the National Council of People's Tribunals. These intertwining cases made it difficult to track the records, since court documents were registered by defendant name and not by location. Moreover, a new registration number was assigned to each document when a new court took up the case.

One illustration of this was the case of Sándor Molnár. The People's Tribunal in Veszprém sentenced him to eight months in prison in verdict Nb-421/1945/6 for performing armed service for the Arrow Cross Party. He served his sentence and was freed on March 26, 1947. Arrested again on August 9, 1948 on a warrant issued by the Office of the People's Prosecutor, he was named a co-defendant in the case of Gendarme Sergeant Imre Kemenes for war crimes as stipulated in § 13, Section 2 of the Act of People's Tribunals. Therefore, I had to go through the 1946–48 registry of the Budapest Collection Jail, as well as the registries of the National Council of People's Tribunals between the years 1946 and 1950. Other sources for documents that had to be consulted included the Certification Committee Nr. I of Veszprém County, the unified Veszprém city and district Certification Committee, the Town Hall of Várpalota, the Office of the Notary of the Veszprém district, and the People's Tribunal in Veszprém. Documents pertaining to the years 1945 to 1948 were examined.

The Circumstances Surrounding the Deportation of the Székesfehérvár Roma

The precise date of the arrest and execution of the Roma cannot be established on the evidence of defendant depositions or witness testimonies. Unfortunately, such statements in the testimonies as "because they heard the

Russian tanks coming" are not suitable to determine a date, because Székesfehérvár was ringed by the Russians between January 22 and February 22, 1945, and the position of the front fluctuated in the eastern sections of the town. It is true that the front line stretched along the axis of Fiskális Street, but Soviets were also seen in February and March in Felső-Királysor.

József Pintér's assertion below that he visited Interior Minister Gábor Vajna at Szombathely on the day following the rounding up of the Roma could not be verified because no paper trail of the meeting was ever found. During interrogations and at his trial on October 26, 1946, Pintér testified as follows:

> One day toward the end of January, I spotted the gendarmes of the NSZK,[6] numbering something like 15. I learned that they were headed to the Gypsy quarter. I took an automobile there. By then the residents had been collected. In front of a home, I saw two gendarmes. I asked them what was going on and they replied, "We are liquidating Gypsies." We spoke no more. The next, day, I had to go to Szombathely to meet the Interior Minister. It was two days later that I learned that the Gypsies were executed.

Dr. Lajos Kerekes, former mayor of Székesfehérvár, testified, at the same trial on the same day, as follows:

> Four or five days after the Germans reoccupied Székesfehérvár[7] I was arrested by then Lord-Lieutenant József Pintér, on the order of László Endre, Government Commissioner of the Szálasi administration. Suspected of collaborating with the enemy, I was handed over to the Pét chapter of the NSZK. Present at my arrest were: Lord-Lieutenant József Pintér, Artillery Colonel Tapodi in his capacity as commander of the city, Dr. László Bíró, Commissioner for Military Operations, and a gendarme captain named Utczás. I was arrested at City Hall and then escorted to County Hall, where I spent a day in detention. After this, they had Gendarme Sergeant First Class Kálmán Vörös escort me to Várpalota, where I was kept under his supervision for about a week. From Várpalota, I was escorted over to Pétfürdő, the headquarters of the commandos under the command of István Botond (Pilhoffer), where I continued to be detained. On my arrival at Pétfürdő, Gendarme Ensign István Kozma took charge of me, relieving Gendarme Sergeant First Class Kálmán Vörös, and told me that they were going to execute me on the orders of László Endre, but Gendarme Captain Botond telephoned from Veszprém and said that my execution should be

6 NSZK [acronym for the National Retribution Squad] was set up on November 20, 1944, shortly after the Arrow Cross takeover, for the purpose of monitoring activities deemed to endanger the realization of the goals of Hungarism and of cooperating in the investigation of criminal acts threatening the state or community. These squads were authorized to prosecute both civilians and military personnel. —Translator's note.

7 That is, January 22.

postponed until his arrival. It was around this time that I heard that the Gypsy quarter was to be eradicated. The gendarmes came from Pét.

Katalin Oláh recollected events in 1971 as follows:

> Well, you know, the weather was very cold, so I don't know exactly what month they came to collect us. Not for sure. Then all-of-a-sudden-like I spy these two platoons of Arrow Cross coming. Well, there were two groups, a lot of them. So we were looking at them, thinking, where are these people going?
>
> They came all the way out to the Gypsy quarter. Suddenly they were saying, line up for roll call. "Line up in front of the biggest house!" Well, my father-in-law, he was the *voivode*, he had the biggest place. So we moseyed on down there, and those who could, went inside, the rest stayed outside.[8]

In the course of the testimonies, it became unequivocally clear that Pintér did not just visit the Gypsy quarter out of curiosity but in his official capacity issued orders to round up the Roma. According to one of the witnesses, Pintér, pointing to a bundle of burning rags, told the Gypsies lined up by the gendarmes, "You will all burn like these rags!"

József Pintér was acting on the strength of a decree issued by Department 10 of the Arrow Cross Interior Ministry under Gábor Vajna, which ordered the removal of the civilian population from theaters of military operations. Section 5 of the decree stated:

> Inform all law enforcement authorities that in the territories to be evacuated, those civilians who are unreliable and are likely to collaborate with the advancing Soviet troops, as well as Gypsies with their families and Jews who could still be located, must be detained and interned in camps designated by the Lord-Lieutenant responsible for local internments. These internees must be continuously kept busy in public works. The Lord-Lieutenant should provide these camps. The names of those detained must be immediately reported to Department 7 of the Interior Ministry. The report should list separately men who are fit for work, women who are fit for work, men who are unfit for work and women and children who are unfit for work. The guards for the internment camp must be requested from the police of the proper local jurisdiction.[9]

Excerpt from verdict Nr. NOT III. 7841/36/1946 of the National Council of People's Tribunals in the case of József Pintér:

> At the request of the People's Prosecutor, the People's Tribunal amends the facts of first discovery with [the statement] that the Defendant was involved in the rounding up of the Gypsies of Székesfehérvár for the purpose of their

8 László Szegő, *Mozgó Világ* [Moving World] 12 (1983): 58–66.
9 Interior Ministry decree 166.923/1945, Győr-Sopron County Archives, 2123/1945.

extermination, and, consequently, in their execution as well. Even the Defendant testified that the gendarmes reported to him in the course of the round up that the Gypsies were to "be liquidated." This is why we cannot ignore the testimonies of Angéla Lakatos, Mária Lendvai, Mrs. József Lakatos, Mrs. István Horváth [which concur in that] the Defendant made an appearance at the place where the Gypsies lived, the gendarmes reported to him their [intention to] liquidate them, and also told him that a grave was to be dug but that the intense frost was preventing the effort and that the Defendant used abusive insults toward the Gypsies.

Excerpt from the recollections of Katalin Oláh:

So the Arrow Cross, made the Gypsies in labor service. who came from far away, from the boondocks, very far away, dig a pit for us in the cemetery. Had them dig it. We were still in the apartment, squeezed in all the lot of us inside. And we saw that these Gypsies—but they weren't like Hungarian Gypsies like us, but they were from, wait a bit, from very far away, from Romania or God knows from where. So we did not know. We never thought! Suddenly-like we heard that the Russians were shooting. So one of the Arrow Cross, the biggest of them who ordered them about, that one, he says "Line up for roll call. One [of you] stay with them, the rest run for it." 'Cause they heard the Russian tanks was coming. Then there is this Arrow Cross coming, running over from the cemetery. He says to one of the gendarmes, "you guys were to be on duty from 6 to 9 in the morning and us from 9 to midnight and the pits were gonna be ready for the shooting to start at midnight, but now, just go and flee." So the Arrow Cross fires off one round, but the bullet hit no-one and he was gone, so we too, went back to the apartments, each to his own.

Engine fitter Rudolf Gyenti from Várpalota testified:

I was a deserter from the Army at that time, so I was forced to drive around Arrow Cross district leader Béla Tóth and an Arrow Cross block leader by the name of Ács, a hardware store owner in Fehérvár, in his car. En route I heard that Ács wanted to persuade Tóth to execute the Gypsies.

On the basis of the testimonies of the witnesses cited, József Pintér was responsible for the rounding up and subsequent murder of the Gypsies of Székesfehérvár.

The Issue of Robberies Committed by the Székesfehérvár Gypsies

On the issue of robberies committed by the Gypsies of Székesfehérvár, former Gendarme Sergeant Imre Kemenes testified as follows on August 8, 1948:

> In the first days of February 1945, the Arrow Cross and the Germans transferred a larger group of Gypsies for labor from Székesfehérvár to Várpalota. As I recall, on the day following the arrival of the Gypsies, I was returning from official business and I met the station commander in front of Lechner's store sometime in the evening.[10] Together we set off for the station barracks when we saw a man in Arrow Cross uniform approaching. When we met up, he stopped, introduced himself, and said he was looking for the commander of the Gendarmerie station. I do not recall his name;[11] he introduced himself as head block leader. What he told us, in essence, was that after the Hungarians retook Fehérvár,[12] he visited the city with Gendarme Colonel Orendy and determined that after the Russians entered the city,[13] the Gypsies went looting, robbing and wrought havoc. Thus they decided that Orendy would dismantle the Gypsy quarter with the help of the NSZK. The houses were to be torched and the Gypsies evacuated from the zone of operation.

The same accusation appears in the retrial request that József Pintér submitted on August 23, 1948: "The commander of the NSZK, Gendarme Colonel Orendy, ordered the execution of the Gypsies in Várpalota, allegedly because during military operations the Gypsies went robbing and pillaging."[14] Contradicting this is the testimony of Rudolf Gyenti, which revealed that Ferenc Ács, the Arrow Cross main block leader, tried to persuade district leader Béla Tóth to execute the Gypsies, and no mention was made of looting and robbing.

In explaining the decision of the Supreme Court, Judge István Fekete treated the robbery allegations thusly:

> A Defendant can hope for the extenuation or elimination of his criminal responsibility only if he tried to utilize every possible means, methods and options to avert the danger. The Defendant failed to do this, since even in his own testimony, there was no indication that prior to the mass execution, he at least attempted to separate the children and infants from the adults or to tell the German officer that he refused to murder them. It is the opinion of the Supreme Court that the Defendant could have confronted even the bestial Arrow

10 Gendarme Sgt. 1st Class István Fekete was the station commander.
11 Ferenc Ács.
12 January 23.
13 December 24.
14 Municipal Archives of Budapest, Nb. VII.3327.1948.

Cross and Nazi men and argued that the children and infants did not take part in the robberies and the looting, thus it was impermissible to execute them.[15]

The often-cited *Field Security Services Manual* also appears to contravene the looting argument, for Section 9 of Chapter 5 says that "the right to slay means that members of the Field Security Services are authorized to shoot dead any deserter from the army, from war production factories or labor services they catch in the act . . . but are obliged to shoot dead: spies caught in the act, looters, property destroyers, rebels, mutineers, turncoats and those who enter into any kind of contact with the enemy." In other words, people suspected of collaborating with the enemy or caught looting would have to be immediately turned over to an extraordinary tribunal and, should the accusations prove true, executed on the spot without delay.

In explaining its decision Nb. 224/1948, the People's Tribunal of Győr rejected the argument and stated that "at the end of January or the beginning of February 1945, at a time now impossible to specify with certitude, NSZK gendarmes and Arrow Cross members, in collaboration with the Gestapo, rounded up Gypsies in Székesfehérvár and transported them in trucks to Várpalota, under the pretext of saving them from the approaching front and taking them to work."[16]

The Fate of the Várpalota Gypsies

On the day following the transfer of Székesfehérvár Roma to Várpalota, local Várpalota Roma were also rounded up on the orders of Andor Farkas, head of the local Arrow Cross chapter, and they were locked up in his barn along with the Székesfehérvár Gypsies.

Executions

Excerpt from the court documents in the trial of Imre Kemenes dated June 4, 1949 (Kemenes was sentenced to death earlier, on May 15, 1948, at his public trial in Várpalota):

The Arrow Cross rounded up Gypsies in Várpalota as well, very probably at the instigation of the local Arrow Cross Party chapter, and locked them up with the Székesfehérvár Gypsies in the barn of the Arrow Cross Building. The number of Gypsies thus rounded up reached 113, among them men, wom-

15 Ibid., BV 10.501125/1950.

16 Available at the Municipal Archives of Budapest.

en and children. The Arrow Cross members entrusted with guarding them treated them in the most brutal manner. The Arrow Cross, with the help of the gendarmes, picked the men out of the crowd of detainees in the morning hours and told them they were taking them to work. Instead, they took them to the so-called Akácos area at the edge of the town and had them dig a deep pit. When the pit was dug, the Gypsies were shot dead into it. Five of the selected Gypsies were spared, and around 2 p.m., they were taken to the center of Várpalota—in front of Mátyás Castle—where they were met with an execution squad, made up of local gendarmes under the command of Gendarme Sergeant First Class Fekete. János Németh and Imre Kemenes were members of the firing squad. The five Gypsy males were stood facing the wall of Mátyás Castle. At the command of Sergeant First Class Fekete, the ten gendarmes lined up behind the five Gypsies, killed them with a volley from their rifles, in a way that two gendarmes aimed and fired at each Gypsy. In István Lechner's store, they made up a cardboard placard, reading "This is what happens to traitors of the nation!" and attached the placards to the body of one of the executed. The gendarmes escorted the rest of the Gypsies in smaller groups to the pre-dug pits, and Várpalota gendarmes and armed Arrow Cross militia members massacred the crying, screaming unfortunates.[17]

The trial brought out the possibility that more than one mass execution may have taken place in Várpalota. Mass executions, however, leave behind corpses of the victims and mass graves, but no information pertaining to other events surfaced, neither in the course of the investigation, nor during the trial, so the testimonies suggesting other atrocities must be regarded as without foundation.

The Number of Victims

The number of the victims kept changing from trial to trial. The first court verdict set the number of the victims at 250.[18] On April 9, 1947, the National Council of People's Tribunals struck down the first verdict and ordered a new trial (NOT I.829/1946-19). In the cited second verdict, Imre Kemenes spoke of 62 victims, Anna Lakatos of 60 to 80, Margit Rafael of 111, and witness Gábor Bazsó of 50 to 60, while Mrs. József Marton, in her deposition, said the defendant spoke of 103 victims.

In the course of the investigation, Dr. Ervin László, head of the Székesfehérvár Office of the People's Prosecutor, and Capt. Béla Várnai, of the political police, visited the crime scene at Várpalota. They concluded that the Arrow Cross executed 118 Roma in Várpalota. It was also established that

17 Municipal Archives of Budapest, Criminal Case of Kemenes and Others, NOT.I. 8297/1946.

18 Nb. 102/1946/16, Veszprém, August 16, 1946.

an Arrow Cross militia member named Ács, from Székesfehérvár, conveyed the order for the mass execution. Data supplied by the Office of the People's Prosecutor of Veszprém established that Military Commissioner József Pintér was in Várpalota on the day of the executions.

In determining the number of victims, the testimonies of Margit "Falat" Rafael and Anna "Mici" Lakatos and undertaker Pál Nyitribusz were decisive. The court estimated 25 to 30 Gypsies were executed at Várpalota , since the testimonies agreed that 3 or 4 families were rounded up and killed.

Summary

A perusal of the relevant material yields the conclusion that József Pintér was responsible for the rounding up and illegal execution of the Gypsies of Székesfehérvár. In his request for a retrial (rejected by the People's Tribunal of Budapest in decision VII. 3327/1948/3), József Pintér tried to shift the responsibility to NSZK commander Colonel Norbert Orendy and Gendarme Capt. István Botond, the commander of the Pét chapter of the NSZK.

I have examined the court documents in the Budapest Archives pertaining to Norbert Orendy (Nb. 1131/1946) but found nothing regarding Pintér's claim in the documentation of either the investigation or the prosecution.

The investigative team of Gendarme Capt. István Botond (known as Pilhoffer) moved to Tata after November 1, 1944 and later moved back to the re-occupied Székesfehérvár in order to investigate incidents that occurred during the Russian occupation.[19]

Thus, it may be supposed that Pintér's underlings took part in the rounding up of Gypsies but not in their execution. This is supported by the verdict (BV 10.5012.25/1950) of the Supreme Court in the case of Gendarme Sergeant First Class István Fekete, which established that the "defendant [Fekete] made a last-ditch attempt before the execution to have the gendarmes of the NSZK's Pét chapter carry out the massacre and only when they refused, did he move to implement the execution."

Unfortunately, Gendarme Capt. István Botond (Pilhoffer) escaped the Hungarian justice system despite the extradition request Nr. 1873/1946/NÜ, dated July 30, 1946 by the Office of the People's Prosecutor, because at the time he was in Irlbach or Brienbach in the Eggenfeld district of Germany.

19 Testimony of Gendarme Capt. Dr. Endre Radó, head of the military investigations subdepartment of the NSZK, to the PRO (political police, precursor to the state security police AVO) on January 9, 1946.

Gendarme Sergeant Kálmán Vörös also managed to get away. His arrest warrant, issued on July 31, 1946 (Nb. 179/146), could not be served, and the Court of Budapest (B.III.17.691/1949-4) eventually withdrew it, after it was established that the suspect was residing aboard. A residence-watch warrant was then issued against him. These two persons would be able to provide the answers to the most significant questions, but it is highly unlikely that we will ever hear from them.

Andor Farkas bears unequivocal responsibility for the rounding up and execution of the Roma of Várpalota,. Two witnesses identified him as having been present at the executions, despite having shaved off his beard in the meantime. The local NSZK commander (Gendarme Capt. István Botond) and the commander of the Várpalota chapter of the Gestapo issued the bilingual written order for the execution of the Roma of Várpalota and Székesfehérvár, after Gendarme Station Commander István Fekete refused to carry out the order delivered orally by local Arrow Cross leader Ferenc Ács.

We still do not know where the victims were buried. Since the court and prosecution documents contained no information on this, the only hope of finding the answer would be in locating the funeral logs of the undertaker, Pál Nyitribusz.

I found only one document bearing a victim's name in the Várpalota Archives:

> Lajos József Kolompár, born February, 28, 1888, in Várpalota, mother's maiden name Anna Kolompár. Said person was executed in the course of the mass Gypsy executions under the Arrow Cross rule. Given that the Gendarmerie performed the executions in secret and did not report them to the Town Hall, the deaths were not entered in the Death Registry. The Authorities learned of the executions only after the fact.[20]

20 Veszprém County Archives, Documents of the municipality of Várpalota, 456/1945.

One of the Roma Killing Fields: Komáromi Csillagerőd, Autumn 1944

By Szabolcs Szita

In early November 1944, Hungary was the scene of large-scale military operations. As the situation at the front deteriorated, the terror of the Arrow Cross increased daily in the hinterland. On November 3 and 4, the government of Ferenc Szálasi ordered a nationwide series of arrests. The actions were coordinated by Department 7 of the Interior Ministry, led by Gábor Vajna, and the representatives of the Ministry of Defense, under the leadership of Gendarme Lt. Col. László Hajnácskőy.

During these autumn weeks, the location for the internment of Hungarians, arrested and rounded up in the course of extended raids and waiting to be transported to Germany, was Csillagerőd, one in a series of fortifications in Komárom. The building was constructed in the 1850s and rebuilt in the autumn of 1939 to be used primarily as an ammunitions dump. Hundreds of political prisoners were transferred there from detention centers all over the country and so were Jews who were not with their assigned military labor service units or who were captured after they successfully escaped the death marches from Budapest toward Hegyeshalom.

Other arrivals were large groups of men and women who had already been interned, persons of non-Hungarian citizenship awaiting deportation, and common criminals and undesirable elements, i.e., people whom the police

regarded as subversives and had rounded up previously.[1] The Roma who the gendarmes rounded up were transported to the fortress in various size groups, mostly with their families.

Certain officials of the Horthy regime were also detained and interned in Csillagerőd. The Arrow Cross Party, which assumed power on October 15 with the help of German arms, incarcerated them because of past offenses or because they stood in the way of Arrow Cross goals. Church members with anti-war sentiments and ecclesiastics who became suspect in the eyes of the far-right regime were increasingly also detained there.[2]

Of the forts on the right bank of the Danube, the Monostori Fortress had been used as barracks. From early 1945 on, military prisoners, mostly Serbs and Poles and sometimes Soviet, British, and French POW escapees, were kept in its separate, closed-off section. In the early summer of 1944, it had been used as a collection point for the Jews of Komárom and its environs who were awaiting deportation. In the autumn, interned civilians were kept there.

After 1939, the Hungarian Army used the Igmándi Fortress, much smaller than the Monostori Fortress, as a conscription center and as barracks for Jewish labor service units belonging to the 2nd Public Works Battalion and later for the reserves of the 2nd Supplementary Labor Service Battalion. From September 1939 to early 1942, it was used to house captured Polish troops before they were moved to the Monostori Fortress. Their barracks was first called the Army Collection Camp, then the Royal Hungarian Military Internment (Polish) Camp of Komárom. Army warehouses and workshops were also housed in the fortress.[3]

On September 12, 1944, a German military gendarme unit (Gendarmerie-Einsatzkommando 8), numbering about 100 troops, was stationed in Komárom. Their rooms were furnished with the property confiscated earlier

1 For instance, Andor Kohn was escorted on foot between December 11 and 14, from a detention center in Budapest to Komárom. Later, he was transferred to Dunaszerdahely, where he escaped. See Records of the Committee for the Care of Deported Persons (DEGOB), Nr. 1742. Holocaust Documentation Centre and Memorial Collection, Budapest, 1994.

2 For details, see Károly Hetényi Varga, *Akiket üldöztek az igazságért* [Just Ones Persecuted] (Budapest: Ecclesia, 1990).

3 László Kecskés, *Komárom, az erődök városa* [Komárom, City of Fortresses] (Budapest: Zrinyi Military Publishers, 1984): 220. Please note that *A magyar antifasiszta ellenállás és partizánmozgalom kislexikona* [Handbook of Hungarian Antifascist Resistance and Partisan Movement] (Budapest: Kossuth, 1987): 262 is mistaken in saying that the system of fortifications occupying both banks of the Danube was used as an internment camp. In the summer of 1945, the forts were put to use again. Csillagerőd served as an internment camp for captured Arrow Cross members, and the Igmándi Fortress was used as the so-called screening camp for those returning from the West.

from local Jews who had been deported. The mayor's office and the financial authorities issued the order to hand out "Jewish property for use" at the behest of the Royal Hungarian Military Station Command of Komárom.[4] The stationing of the German Gendarmerie-Einsatzkommando in Komárom was likely part of the preparations for another wave of deportations from Hungary.

The First Inmates Intended for Deportation

After October, Komárom essentially became a transit camp. The deportations, planned secretly by a small group of people, were now preceded by something that was hitherto unknown in Hungary: the selection of internees prior to deportation.

Because of the increasing rate of conscription and losses in matériel and personnel, the Third Reich was desperately in need of laborers. Its new, zealous servants—the ministers of the Szálasi government—well understood the problems of their allies. After formal negotiations, they offered tens of thousands of able-bodied workers for the manufacture of what they called "victorious arms." When after the war, the courts pressed Interior Minister Gábor Vajna to explain, he said they were "transferred for labor service to Germany because there was no other place to intern them."[5]

From the internment camp at Topolya in Voivodina, captured Serbs suspected of partisan activity and many Hungarian prisoners were transported by train under armed guard via Bácsalmás, Nagykanizsa, and Kisbér to Komárom. From this contingent, 150 men and women were transferred to the Monostori Fortress, where armed Arrow Cross members and overage Hungarian Army soldiers guarded them. With the inmates rounded up in the course of raids around Komárom, and in the Csallóköz, their number reached 200. (Among them was a German Reich Baron whose wife was classified as a Jew, as well as a number of captured Jews who had escaped from their labor units.)

4 *Dokumentumok a zsidóság üldöztetésének történetéhez* [Documents of the History of the Persecution of the Jews] (Documents from the Archives of Komárom-Esztergom County) (Hungarian Auschwitz Foundation with the Holocaust Documentation Center, Budapest, 1994): 44–46.

5 Elek Karsai and László Karsai, *A Szálasi per* [The Szálasi Trial] (Budapest: Reform, 1988): 413.

In the courtyard of the gigantic fortress, the inmates watched Hungarian soldiers drill groups of 15- and 16-year-olds. An *Orstkommando* (German commando unit) and a dozen SS troops were also stationed within the formidable walls.

The impression of the inmates who were newly arrived in November was preserved in the recollections of Géza Berey.

> In the eastern part, in the entrance room, there was a bottomless well from which the inmates could draw their water, but they were not allowed to draw more than 10 bucketfuls in one hour. We were herded into this room because the policemen were trying to draw up some sort of registry of us, but an SS man came over and the whole thing was abandoned. So, unsorted, we were herded into a third-floor maze of cubicles, each three meters long and two meters wide. In each cubicle, there was a gun slit one meter tall and no more than 10 cm wide, which provided very little air and even less light to illuminate the iron rings of manacles fastened all around the walls. Our feet sunk ankle-deep into the dry sand—there were no beds or straw in sight.[6]

Unlike those kept in Csillagerőd, the inmates at Monostrori Fortress received nourishing military food, so their physical deterioration was not significant. However, in the hell of aerial attacks and bombardments, they must have been depressed over their future and the unending uncertainty.

In mid-November, transports were dispatched in cattle cars. To the mass of inmates, men, women, and children alike, were added newly captured miners from Felsőgalla and labor service Roma as well as musician Roma rounded up in various locations. In 20 sealed cattle cars, around 1,200 victims, guarded by Hungarian policemen, headed out into the unknown. According to Géza Berey, they were "crying, swearing or whimpering" when they arrived at the border station of Hegyeshalom. There, the train took on a German military guard and chugged through Bruck, Passau, and Regensburg to Weiden. The final destination was the Fossenbürg concentration camp in southeastern Germany. Many were dumbstruck when they faced the cruel reality on November 18. What they saw, fearfully but not without curiosity, was the unthinkable: an SS labor camp and inside, the living dead, moving to and fro in striped prison uniforms.[7]

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6 Géza Berey, *Hitler—Allee* (Budapest: Gondolat, 1979): 107–109.

7 In Fossenbürg, Berey was assigned prisoner registration number 35 938. He mentions some of his fellow inmates: Unitarian pastor Áron Bónis, shoemaker József Budai from Voivodina, convenience store owner Ignác Sümegi from Apc, former Deputy Chief of the Budapest Police Dr. József Sombor-Schweinitzer, attorney Dr. Izidor Király from Székesfehérvár, former Interior Minister Ferenc Keresztes-Fisher, who was given an office job, and former Secretary of the Social Democratic Party of Pécs József Tolna.

Komárom IV: Csillageröd

There is no official paper trail on the 1944 creation of the military detention center (in reality, an internment camp) at Csillageröd. In the summer of that year, the idea of turning it into a deportation center was rumored, although authorities had repeatedly denied the existence of any such plans.[8] From the fragmentary data, we can surmise that it was between October 22 and 24, 1944 that political prisoners, detainees, and internees were transported there from Budapest prisons. Among them were trade union officials, such as István Farkas, Rudolf Gyürei, Sándor Lévai, Albert Szepesi. Some were Communists, like László Erdős, the engineer László Földes, the physician Dr. Ferenc Jahn,[9] Zsigmond Kiss, Gyula Kulich, Dezső Orosz, and attorney Ferenc Vida.

Other inmates were from Kolozsvár,[10] and the members of the Peace Party, the front organization for the illegal Communist Party. Some had managed to smuggle postcards out of the fortress, and according to these testimonies, many of them were put to work at various chores, helping to furnish and paint the camp—but digging graves outside the fortress walls was also one of their daily duties. On November 16, they were transported to the Dachau concentration camp near Munich.[11] The same fate befell the talented 23-year-old painter, György Kondor, who arrived with the next group of transports.

A group of female prisoners was transferred to Komárom next—some 200 women from the Márianosztra penitentiary in the Börzsöny Mountains. Most had been convicted of treason. According to Mrs. Béla Boross, this group was first taken to Ravensbrück, then on to Spandau. Around October 10, inmates from the Sátoraljaújhely prison who had been convicted of treason, anti-war behavior, anti-state conspiracy, and Communist activities, were transferred to Csillageröd. On November 7, selected on the basis of physical examinations, they were deported.[12] Other inmates came from the Vác and Székesfehérvár prisons. Mrs. László Barta recollected that one of the deportations

8 First mentioned in "*Vádirat a nácizmus ellen*" [Charges against Nazism], in *Dokumentumok a zsidóság üldöztetésének történetéhez* [Documents of the History of the Persecution of the Jews], vol. 3, June 26 to October 15, 1944, (Budapest: MIOK, 1967): 303.

9 On November 14, he was transferred to Dachau, then on to Dautmergen. He did not survive.

10 Today, Cluj in Romania.

11 *Új hang* [New Voice], March 3, 1955, 52.

12 Survivor testimonies quoted in an article by Ferenc Vadász in *Kritika* [Criticism], November 11, 1985, 26. According to research, of the Sátoraljaújhely inmates, administration official Sándor Braun from Debrecen was deported to Dachau, mechanical engineer László Erdős to Augsburg, then to Landberg, Benő Wetzler to Dachau, then to Buchenwald. Only half of the 56 political prisoners from around Kassa lived to see the end of the war (some of the men were not sent to concentration camps but were pressed into the special labor unit No. 383).

of female detainees took place on the night of November 10. They were taken, under German guard, from Komárom to Dachau and, shortly thereafter, on to the concentration camp at Bergen-Belsen.[13]

Two hundred inmates managed to avoid being included in this wave of deportations. Because of the pressing labor shortage in Hungary. they were transferred to the nearby sugar factory at Ács for the seasonal work of sugarbeet processing. Their fate, however, eventually took them to Mauthausen, the concentration camp near Linz, infamous for the backbreaking work inmates had to perform in the quarries.[14]

On August 31, the Arrow Cross, for personal revenge, detained Gáspár Alpáry, the respected mayor of Komárom who had recently retired with honors. At the age of 64, he was transported to Dachau on December 21. He could hold out for only six weeks and died on February 5, 1945.

Returning from captivity in Komárom, Érsekújvár attorney Dr. László Winter prepared a memorandum on June 20, 1945, about a group of inmates transferred to Germany. His testimony has allowed us to form a better picture of the composition of a "German transport," his or her occupation, place of residence, and eventual fate.[15] Of the 38 inmates he wrote, about 15 or 40%, had certainly died in Dachau.

Registration of Deportations to Komárom

As previously mentioned, the deportations that took place in November and December 1944 differed somewhat from the "laborer relocation" practices employed after the Germans occupied the country on March 19, 1944.[16] From late autumn 1944, individual registrations preceded the entrainment of inmates. These were not performed in the late summer mass countryside deportations, nor in the winter 1944 death march or train ride through Hegyeshalom, nor in the case of groups of Hungarians handed over to the SS in other areas.

For the people to be transported to Germany, a German-language form, typewritten and stamped, was filled out, registering the inmate's name,

13 Dr. Klára Székely, ed., *Börtönfelkelés Sátoraljaújhely, 1944 március 22* [Prison Uprising at Sátoraljaújhely on March 22, 1944] (Budapest, 1994): 219–220.

14 Ibid. Testimony of Márton Lombos.

15 The typewritten manuscript is in the György Klapka Museum in Komárom. I am grateful to museum director Emese Számadó for letting me study this and other documents.

16 Deportation was officially called "laborer relocation" by the occupying German forces.

occupation, Jewish or non-Jewish extraction, date and place of birth, and original place of residence. According to the registration form, these inmates were to be handed over "in the course of security measures contingent on the military situation" of the Germans, who received them and relocated them to concentration camps. Compared to the registration system the SS employed for detentions, this individual classification was rather narrow and simple, giving the German Security Service (*Sicherheistdienst*) little trouble.

The alleged reason for transferring the inmates was Communist activity, which was broken down into three different categories. In keeping with the practice established by the German secret police, the Gestapo (*Geheime Staatspolizei*), the first category comprised people convicted of Communist activities. The second category was made up of people who had been interned or were in the process of being interned for Communist activities. The third group included people suspected of Communist activities. A fourth category of inmates comprised Roma, who in the eyes of Germans indoctrinated by Hitler's National Socialism, were detrimental to the society, so-called asocials (*asozialer Zigeuner*).

People in the first group were "politicals" from overcrowded prisons. We assume that the people in the second category, deemed "unreliable from the perspective of state security," had been involved in some sort of suspect activity going back to 1918–1919. The third class was a convenient instrument for eliminating anybody who was in the way: for instance, the Hungarian pastors who were arrested and transported to Dachau were in this category.[17]

The registration form was an illustration of German thoroughness. A note at the bottom of the form stated that "detention in all likelihood will last to the end of the war." The form also indicated the point of departure and the date the form was completed, and it was stamped by the German security police commander (*der Befehlshaber der Sicherheitspolizei u.d. SD Ungarn und Chef der Einsaztgruppe 6*) as verification.

Among those deported from Komárom to Germany were the sculptor György Goldmann and László Békeffi, a famous anti-Nazi cabaret host who

17 Among the deported clergymen were István Benkő (Budapest pastor, arrested by the Gestapo), Ferenc Bilkei (priest, Székesfehérvár-felsőváros, arrested by the Gestapo), Iván Camplin (chaplain, Bánokszentgyörgy), István Eglis (pastor, Budapest, arrested by the Gestapo), Imre Gojnik (priest, Szigetvár), József Király (archdeacon, Csicsó, Member of Parliament, arrested by the Gestapo), István Laposa (Evangelical pastor, Tótkeresztúr), István Lestár (abbey priest, Komárom), Bálin Málek (priest, Kisszabadka), Lajos Neményi (provost, editor of the diocese newspaper *Új Fehérvár*, arrested by the Gestapo), József (Bauer) Pór (abbey priest, Bonyhád, arrested by the Gestapo), Dr. Márton Proity (pastor, Bishop's councilor, Székesfehérvár-Maroshegy, arrested by the Gestapo), Antal Pungucz (Roman Catholic priest of the Armenian rite, Budapest), Dr. Antal Somogyi (priest, Kisbér), Emil Szivak (Calvinist pastor, Jolsva), and Gyula Tárnok (Calvinist pastor, Marcalkeszi).

was silenced at the Germans' demand and sentenced to 12 years for treason. He survived Dachau, though he returned gravely ill. The 35 or 40 coal miners who were arrested by the gendarmes in the Tata and Dorog coal fields also died in Dachau.[18]

Conditions in Captivity

Csillagerőd was never intended to be used as a prison or an internment camp. It was unsuitable for either purpose, and the inmates were kept in bestial conditions, in subterranean or semi-basement halls and cells. Most of these had no doors, windows, beds, chairs or toilets. The majority of the halls were unheated. Water was drawn from wells, and the fortress lacked showers or washbasins. Rudimentary latrines were dug in some places, and the stench permeated everything. Where no latrine was available, excrement and urine were deposited in corners.

Mrs. Henrik Vas was transferred to Komárom from Sátoraljaújhely. She recalled that "we were put into these great, underground halls with unending rows of bunk beds, though in some of the rooms, there was only some straw spread on the floor. We were welcomed by a host of mice which did not make our stay very pleasant."[19]

The relatives of Ferenc Tóth, who later died in Dachau, were shocked to see the results of captivity in Komárom: "While he was kept in the fortress, we were permitted once to see him for five minutes. But instead of our strapping father we only met a deathly pale, debilitated old man. This was the last time we ever saw him."[20]

A trade union leader, László Ligeti, arrived in Komárom on foot, via Pilisvörösvár, Dorog, and Nyergesújfalu. He recalled the dire realities of the subterranean caverns: "We were taken to an underground room in which until a few minutes ago, migrant Gypsies were kept prisoners. The dead body of an old Gypsy woman was still lying on the floor. There was a huge heap of human excrement piled up in one of the corners. This may be difficult to believe, but it was never removed during our stay there."[21]

18 On November 22, 2002, the ashes of deported trade union leaders József Drebál, Ernő Fekete, József Heller, and Imre Navara were returned from Dachau and given a burial in Tatabánya. For a description of this, see *Tovább* [Further] 21, no. 57 (December 2003): 1.

19 Székely, ed., op. cit., 219.

20 Ibid.

21 László Ligeti, *Múltakra emlékezve* [Remembering Pasts] (Budapest: Kossuth, 1975): 141.

The Roma transferred to Csillagerőd faced particularly bad conditions. Many of them arrived starving with their entire families, including small children.[22] They had no idea where they were. They were not given blankets, plates, or utensils. They had to scoop their wretched daily food ration out of rusted cans using their hands as a spoon. At times, they scavenged the garbage heap for scraps of vegetables or salvaged from the mud anything that looked vaguely edible. Some tried to improvise some soup in secret corners. Pregnant women gave birth within the fortress, but because no medical assistance or place of at least minimum cleanliness was available, many died in childbirth along with their newborns.[23]

Infectious diseases soon spread as a result of the overcrowding, starvation and filth. Lice infestation spread day by day, and there were cases of scabies. Hundreds of Roma died from the conditions. "Dozens of them died daily from typhus, diarrhea and starvation and we, Jews collected for deportation, were tasked with bringing them out and burying them."[24]

A deported Gypsy girl, Ilona Raffael, recalled that

> Not one doctor was there. Five-, ten-, twelve-year-olds died of hunger. There was a bunker and the dead were thrown in there. I don't know when the bodies were taken away as I never saw it. But I know that dead children were there for a long time. Sometimes for three or four days, and the parents could not go and see them.
>
> If we didn't get in line, they kicked and beat us. One time they beat me because I hid by my mother among the children. They beat me real bad.
>
> You had to line up. If you had six children, they gave you a liter of water—you couldn't call it food—and if you said this was not enough because there is many of us, the soldiers would even lash you. My mother got her head beaten for this.
>
> In a week, a week and a half, it was our turn to be put on trains. From our family, they only took my father and myself, 'cause the other children were too young. They let those ones go. They gave us a kilo loaf of bread and a very spicy paprika sausage. And no water. We went into the trains as we were, a pair of shoes on the feet, a skirt and a coat.[25]

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22 On the arrest and tribulations in Komárom of József Kazári of Meggyeskovácsi, see the interview by Ágnes Daróczi in *Polgárjogi Füzetek* [Civil Rights Booklets] II/1/4, 45–48, reproduced in this volume.

23 Testimony of Rozália Vajda, *Népszabadság*, August 5, 2000.

24 Testimony of mechanical engineer György Hajdu, *168 Óra*, April 5, 2001, 49; and "Cigány foglyok visszaemlékezései" [Memoires of Gypsy captives], in Szabolcs Szita, ed., *Tények, adatok, a cigányok háborús üldöztetéséhez 1939–1945* [Facts and Data about the Wartime Persecution of Gypsies] (Budapest, 2001): 80–97.

25 *Porrajmos*, vol. 2: *Roma Sajtóközpont Könyvek* (Budapest, 2000): 58.

Escapes

On November 14, the police chief of Komárom reported to his supervisor in Székesfehérvár that "there was an organized plot to help Communists and partisans escape from the prison in Komárom." One cannot help suspecting the report was grossly exaggerated, but we should nevertheless examine at the escapes from Komárom. In 1944, the number of escapees reached 55—for instance, on November 10, a total of 12 military internees, Soviet and Romanian officers among them, disappeared without a trace from the Monostori Fortress. This was preceded by the October 24 escape of Béla Patkó, "a most dangerous person, an organizing official of the Communists." On November 11, 10 people "under protective detention" escaped from Csillagerőd, which the police chief called the "R.H. Army Staff detention institution." This led the police to assume that "there may have been a plot."

The police were not involved in guarding the prisoners, but it was their duty to catch the escapees. The police chief, convinced that the 35-strong military guard detail on duty in Csillagerőd was not sufficient, privately asked Hungarian army station commander Colonel Perczel to take immediate action. In the wake of the November 11 escape, the police demanded a "confidential investigation" and insisted that those responsible be taken to task by the military command. The commander of the fortress increased the number of the guards by about 100, which suggests an extensive series of measures. The provost, Lajos Neményi, recalled that the military head warden was Sergeant First Class Csonka.[26]

Besides turning to the counter-espionage unit of the Hungarian Army in Komárom, presumably to shift the blame away from themselves, the police also analyzed the escapes and warned "that the 6,000 to 7,000 Communists, military internees and Jewish labor service prisoners, kept at the R.H. Army Staff detention institution, continue to escape in great numbers and form partisan units behind the front in the Bakony mountains or in the forests around Komárom."[27]

On November 24, another report was submitted to the police supervisor at Székesfehérvár, with the Komárom police chief adding to his dispatch on the 20th that:

> in the early hours on the 22nd of the current month, I have performed a raid with the collaboration of 150 troops of the Komárom military station

26 From a letter to János Érsek, resident of Komárom, in the Klapka Museum. Newspaper editor Lajos Neményi was arrested by the Gestapo on October 20. He regained his freedom on December 7, having avoided deportation from the Komárom fortress.

27 János Harsányi, *Magyar szabadságharcosok a fasizmus ellen* [Hungarian Freedom Fighters against Fascism] (Budapest: Zrinyi, 1969): 618.

command in the islands of the Danube and in the so-called Pártosújtelep area, but did not succeed in arresting any Communist partisans hiding there.

There was no sign of the alleged armed partisans, only vagrant Gypsies from the Gypsy quarter were detained, 10 of whom, in accordance with the confidential orders in effect, were transported Csillagerőd for purposes of protective detention.[28]

The hunt for partisans had thus failed, the only "result" being the 10 Roma victims dragged off to the fortress.

On the basis of the police chief's reports to the State Security Center, Department VII of the Ministry of Interior and to other authorities, the number of inmates squeezed into the subterranean rooms of Csillagerőd in the middle of November can be estimated at 6,000 to 7,000. Survivors' testimonies also mention that those who could not be crammed into the fortress had to somehow make do outdoors. Sensing the danger, some Roma attempted to escape:

Three young Gypsies tried to escape but they were caught. Blows were raining down on them, the handcuffs rattled. Thousands watched them intently from behind bars. We felt like the Christian victims of the Roman circus games in ancient times. At that time, just like now, thousands were thrown to the beasts on the whim of a deranged emperor.[29]

The government of Ferenc Szálasi and the members of the Arrow Cross Party—the Hungarist Movement, which had been declared illegal—emerged, took up arms, and willingly assisted in the deportations renewed at the demand of the Germans. The authorities also detained many of the French citizens in the country, and in early November, Hungarian employers were ordered to dismiss their French employees. These, in turn, were ordered to report to Komárom "to ensure their safety in the face of the approaching Soviet army."[30] Most of the French citizens opted for going into hiding—there is no information on anybody voluntarily reporting to Komárom.

28 Report on public safety, by the Komárom station of the R. H. Police, Strictly Confidential, 92/7/1944. Published by Mária Ember, "Ide is gyütt az ablakra csendőr . . ." [and to the window also came a gendarme], *Magyar Nemzet*, October 21, 1984.

29 Extract from the manuscript "A pécsi partizánper vértanúi" [Martyrs of the Partisan Trial of Pécs], in the collection of the Klapka Museum, Komárom, 30.

30 *Ego sum gallicus captivus—Francia menekültek Magyarországon* [I am a French captive—French Refugees in Hungary] (Budapest: Európa Kiadó, 1980): 85.

The Roma Death Toll

Crowds of inmates were kicked off the train at Komárom and quite often herded to Csillagerőd running. The guards used their boots and the butts of their rifles to speed up progress.

Most of the Roma were rounded up in police raids in Csallóköz and in Baranya, Fejér, Győr-Sopron-Moson-Pozsony, Komárom-Esztergom, Tolna, Zala, and Vas counties. Similar police raids and mass detentions also took place in Budakalász, Újpest, Soroksár, Csepel, Pesterzsébet, Nagytétény, Kispest, Rákospalota, and Budafok. The collection site for Roma apprehended in the capital's outskirts was the brick factory at Óbuda-Újlak, which had previously served the same purpose in the deportation of Jews.

Well-known Roma musicians, middle class entertainers who the Győr police rounded up for political reasons, were also in the crowds awaiting deportation. The most prominent of them appealed to Baron Vilmos Apor, bishop of Győr, and the bishop, who consistently raised his voice to protest against the persecutions, saved them from deportation.[31] No one spoke for the rest—they had to go.[32] A witness noticed that they appeared unaware of their fate:

> They dragged off the poor musicians as well, their women and children were running after them. They dragged those off too! We had to laugh 'cause the poor souls were carrying their clarinets and even a double bass. As if the community marched into the Fortress accompanied by music. They were all well-to-do musicians, their wives wearing nice fur coats.
>
> It was getting darn chilly that November. . . . Transportation was disrupted by bombardments and at these times, and thousands of poor deportees were crammed into the narrow hallways, clutching their bundles. They were so many they could not move at all. . . . People relieved themselves on the spot, men next to the women, children in the lap of their mothers. When they were finally started off, urine and excrement drenched their clothes and were frozen onto them by the time they reached the railway station.
>
> Prisoners were being registered by the thousands, there was a German standing by at each typewriter registering every ragged, dirty one of them as a Gypsy . . . in the deportation lists.[33]

László Ligeti, dumbstruck with terror, had to realize he was facing the prospect of a concentration camp. Roma in the fortress were treated as pariahs, lowly life forms and open targets of violence.

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31 *Győri Munkás* [Győr Laborer], April 4, 1947.

32 For instance, from the nearby Mezőőrs or from Győrszentmárton.

33 Karsai, op. cit.

> In my observation, they were the ones who could bear captivity the least—they howled all day like caged hyenas or lions. But this was not the main reason for their demise. The food, that hardly qualified as slop, which other inmates received in portions, was given to the Gypsies in a big cauldron and they then had to fight each other for their share.
>
> The weak among them never got their share of food. Consequently, they grew even weaker and soon died of starvation. This was in perfect accord with Hitler's race theories and saved the Germans further transportation costs. [34]

The oncoming winter witnessed the mass misery of the inmates, many of whom were exposed to the elements, and in the bestial conditions, children froze to death and adults kept dying as well. As Sándor Szigeti recalled in his letter dated January 15, 1985, the Gypsies "were lying all over the yard, in the rain, in the mud."[35]

New Human Transports to the Reich

The trains carrying the Hungarian prisoners to German territory departed from a nearby freight train station. According to Lajos Nemény's recollections, the inmates were selected for deportation in the courtyard of the fortress on Saturday mornings. In his memoir, titled "Komárom in the War," Zoltán Keszegh recalled that this took place on the ramp between the bridge to Komárom and the passenger train station, where relatives, somehow informed of the event, would often congregate.[36] Unfortunately, no official registry on the thousands deported for work has survived.

In the second half of November, the pace of transporting and handing prisoners over to the Germans accelerated. On November 26, 880 Hungarians arrived, via Vienna, at the Neuengamme concentration camps near Hamburg for their final destination. The Budapest bureau of the Gestapo dispatched this human transport. The same procedure set 1,913 Jews on to their fate—they were registered in Buchenwald concentration camp, north of Erfurt, on December 25. In the course of December, 3,025 Hungarian prisoners (2,519 of them from Budapest) arrived in the Sachsenhausen concentration camp near Berlin.

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34 *Népszava* [People's Voice, Hungarian daily], November 17, 1984.

35 In the collection of the Klapka Museum, Komárom.

36 Testimony (undated) of Zoltán Keszegh in the collection of the Klapka Museum, Komárom.

In mid-December, the masses of Roma detained at Komárom as well as hundreds of political prisoners and groups of Jewish women and children were taken, in a number of transports, from Komárom to Buchenwald and its subsidiary camps at Ravensbrück, Spandau, Sachsenhausen, and Bergen-Belsen.

A locomotive driver from Komárom witnessed a group escape of Roma who were being deported.

> An entire Gypsy train had departed Komárom for the west via Hegyeshalom. It was being escorted by gendarmes. We pulled to a halt at the Ács forest. By that time, the Gypsies in a G car managed to get the bolt out of the door and pushed it open.[37] An entire car of Gypsies escaped. [The gendarmes] shot at them, but it was dark and they could not catch them.[38]

Géza Berey recalled the capture of Gypsy musicians in the Szigetköz region and how they managed to escape en route in Mosonmagyaróvár.[39]

One of the dramatic consequences of the Arrow Cross takeover was the merger of the various prison camps holding Polish military. The hitherto slack guard units were beefed up and offering any assistance to Polish military internees was prohibited. (Those who did help could face military tribunals.) In contrast to previous Hungarian government, the Szálasi administration, regarded the treatment of the Poles as an internal German affair.

This sealed the fate of the camps' inmates. Between December 21 and 31, German security services transported them to various concentration camps, some of them via Komárom. No documentation on the number of victims has been found, but discounting those who might have escaped or went into hiding, their number could have been approximately 4,000.[40]

Dachau, Fossenbürg and Buchenwald

Trainfuls of Hungarian inmates arrived at the Dachau concentration camp in late 1944. On November 11, 1,218 deportees arrived; on the 14th, 461;

37 A G car is a 15-ton freight car.

38 Gyula Lovas, ed., *Magyar vasutak a világháború éveiben* [Hungarian Railways in the War Years] (Budapest: Vasúthistóriai könyvek, 1996): 267.

39 Ibid., 128–130.

40 In early April 1944, Ministry of Defense registers showed a total of 5,000 Polish military and civilian internees. See Ágnes Godó, *Magyar-lengyel kapcsolatok a második világháborúban* [Hungarian-Polish Relations during World War II] (Budapest: Zrinyi-Kossuth, 1976): 113.

on the 19th, 2,229; and on the 20th, 1,711. These transports, many of whom were political prisoners, were sent by the German Security Police (Sicherheitspolizei, or SIPO).[41] A contemporary witness recalled another train on November 26, but no corroborating evidence of this has been found.

Before the Soviet siege ring was closed around Budapest, the SIPO on December 21 sent 629 Hungarians from the capital to Dachau. In total, we can be certain of the arrival of five trains. Because of the general labor shortage, most of the newly arrived inmates were immediately dispatched to perform forced labor.

According to extensive concentration camp archives, 20,075 Hungarians (including 16,546 Jews and 1,126 Roma) were interned at Dachau—8,441 of them survived. There is only occasional mention in contemporary documentation (registration forms, daily labor assignments, shipping lists) of the Roma transferred here from Hungary. The fate of many of them is unknown, but the typically Roma names Bodgán, Balogh, Kalányos, Kolompár, Lakatos, Rigó and Sztojka occur frequently in the lists. These Hungarian Roma arrived in Dachau between November 14 and 20. Most were assigned prisoner registration numbers in the 128,500–129,500 range. Larger and smaller groups kept arriving until mid-December. Of the total, 161 Hungarian Roma perished, 818 were transferred to other camps, and 144 were freed toward the end of the war.

In late November, early December, 3,189 new, drained and exhausted inmates from Hungary were also registered in the Fossenbürg concentration camp. In the Buchenwald camp system, the records showed a total of 11,593 Hungarian inmates. Of this number, 153 were registered as Roma in November 1944. Eighteen of them died in December.

The Fate of the Roma Dragged to the Fortress

Mass deportations from Komárom came to a close around December 27 because of the approaching front—the Russians by that time had reached Dunaalmási. Military evacuation took place swiftly. In the following days, the military leadership had sent off those Roma women and children unfit to work toward the north, via Dunaszerdahely and Galánta. According to survivors' recollections, the march ended at Galánta: All were free to flee wherever they could. Others—often those with a large number of children—were set

41 Data provided by Dachau archivist Albert Knoll.

free from Komárom in the dead of winter, with no provisions or documentation. If they were lucky, they were able to make their way back to their homes. But they often found these wrecked and looted.

With regards to the history of the Komárom deportations, the fact that in January 1945, the military tribunal in Csillagerőd was still operational, is worth further research. A large number of "junior soldiers"—high-school students and boys over 14 rounded up in the course of raids—were being taken to the Monostori fortress. They were to be transferred to Germany, where they were to receive air defense training. Survivor István Sulyok spoke of their tattered lives in the spring of 1945.

> The conditions in the fortress were terrible, unimaginable. 100-120 men were squeezed into a room without as much as some straw on the floor, so they had to spend the night on the bare floor with no blankets. The food was inedible—there was nothing to be had but maggoty beans and peas and moldy, stale bread.
>
> The lice were the only ones to live well. There was no end to them as the authorities gave no thought to cleanliness or disinfection. Consequently, typhoid fever swept through the camp.

The massacre of the Jews in Komárom continued in January 1945. In the biting cold, huge ice floes drifted down the Danube.

> Upstream a hundred meters from the passenger train station, a great floe froze to the bank. The Arrow Cross men herded Jewish men and women onto this floe and shot them dead. They could be seen for another 10 or 12 days before the floe broke free and drifted off.

On January 24, there was a bloodbath on the Komárom bridge. Unidentified victims were murdered en masse. "The Germans could not put up with this so they ordered the Arrow Cross men to clear the bridge. The executions continued on the north bank. One night, a Jewish woman broke free and ran down the embankment screaming . . . the railway workers and the resistance fighters of the railway command ran out and saved her."

Few were this lucky. Massacres carried out by those under the command of Gyula Strahlendorf, a onetime newspaper vendor and crier, were frequent in the nearby city of Győr. They worked in close collaboration with the Hungarian representative of the German Field Police (*Geheime Fieldpolizei*, or GFP), József Szénási. Facing the People's Tribunal after the war, Strahlendorf admitted involvement in the execution of 130 men and women.

Conclusion

Hungarian historiography has barely l touched on the deportations from Komárom in the autumn of 1944. Unfortunately, no local history studies have been published. Sporadic data, however, suggest that as early as the summer of 1944, Komárom was suggested as a site for a camp, a collection point and boarding station. Even though they knew about this, local authorities have denied this.

Mass deportations from Komárom occurred just before the collapse of the military situation, in other words, they occurred late and under peculiar circumstances. The deportations were a manifestation and a result of Ferenc Szálasi and his Arrow Cross Party's assumption of power as well as their desire to subserviently meet all the demands of the occupying German forces. Their purpose was a dual one: on the one hand, to supply the Germans with new slave labor; on the other, to rid the country of all those people whom the new regime deemed dangerous.

The bureaucratic methods used at Csillagerőd differ from those in other Nazi concentration camps, since the inmate registration that usually took place on arrival was performed prior to entrainment. Hungarian inmates received their classifications and were assigned to concentration camps in Germany before transfer, then sent on to the labor camps of the Waffen-SS. The true creators of the process, the German security organizations, managed to stay in the background. Hungarian authorities carried out their dirty work.

Komárom is one of the killing fields of the Roma in Hungary. The interned families and larger or smaller groups of internees were treated inhumanely, forced to exist on a subhuman level. While other groups always appeared to have had a spokesman and some means of contact with the outer world, the Roma languished in a state of total helplessness. They ranked at the bottom of the prison hierarchy and could count on no active sympathy or solidarity.

Due to lack of documentation, we cannot determine the number of adult and children inmates who perished in captivity. Either birth or death certificates were never filled out, or none have survived.

Like most of the other prisoners, the Roma were transferred from Komárom to Dachau, Buchenwald, Ravensbrucken, and Flossenburgen. Some ended up in Bergen-Belsen or Mauthausen. We can only hope to gain further information about their fate from the research centers operating in the former SS camps.

The story of the autumn deportations from Komárom has been but partially revealed. Further meticulous research may shed light on the story of the arrest, captivity and forced labor of some 15,000 Hungarians.

The Holocaust in Gypsy Folk Poetry

By Károly Bari

In the Gypsy communities of old, everybody had the duty to report one's observations and experiences regarding hostile reactions by local communities. Wherever they went, troupes of itinerant Gypsies always left behind signs for other clans. To tip off subsequent Gypsy caravans to any lurking dangers, ribbons in coded colors or dolls fashioned into certain forms from dark rags were tied to roadside bushes, and ancient Gypsy runic signs were carved into the trunks of trees.

The constant sense of threat, the mistrust of the environs, was in no way unfounded. Living by a set of autochthonous customs that differ from those of the prevailing societies, Gypsies have been persecuted since their first appearance in Europe. Awareness of persecution is deeply rooted in their thinking and has produced a strong, vigorous shoot on which the buds of fear and caution have not withered to the present day, as a folk adage recorded in our own days says: "Don't believe strangers, because they smile to your face

English translation by Tim Wilkinson
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but behind your back make laws to hang you!"[1] That warning, embedded in centuries of experience, precisely captures the dread with which Gypsies have continually had to live since fleeing from India's Islamic wars during the 10th century.

Only for a short time were European countries tolerant of caravans of Gypsies, who called themselves "pilgrims" and were furnished with papal safe-conducts. Starting with excommunications in Bologna in 1422, hostility toward Gypsies intensified to the point at which veritable manhunts and massacres by fire and sword were launched against them.[2] The change in attitude is most vividly illustrated by the connotations of a word used in connection with the Gypsies. In 15th-century Germany, the life of the nomadic Gypsies was compared with the freedom of birds, often using the adjective *vogelfrei*. By the time of the rabid persecutions of the 16th century, however, *vogelfrei* no longer meant that the Gypsies were "free as birds" but "free gallows fodder for predatory birds." A number of countries did all in their power to make this a reality by introducing edicts ordering their discrimination and elimination.[3]

In 1500, Maximilian I outlawed Gypsies throughout the Holy Roman Empire, effectively giving a license to capture and kill them.[4] According to some sources, during the reign of Queen Elizabeth I, 18,000 "Egyptians" were hanged in England solely on account of their race.[5] Frederick William I of Prussia issued a decree in 1725 under which any Gypsy—man or woman—caught within his realm was to be executed without trial. On July 20, 1749, the Spanish military, on the orders of Ferdinand VI, rounded up all the Gypsies who could be found, a total of 12,000, and put them to death.

The cause of this unbounded hostility was presumably a moral code followed by the traveling caravans that considered all modes of acquiring food permissible. Gypsies therefore had no respect for private property, and their very way of life differed provocatively from that of societies that had adopted Christian norms. Attempts were made to justify the hostility toward the Gypsies by attributing to them a range of grave crimes—kidnapping, espionage,

1 György Mészáros, *A magyarországi cigányság, és társadalmi beilleszkedésének néhány problémája* [Issues of the Social Integration of Gypsies] (Hevesi Művelődés [Heves Civic Education], 1972): 1–2.

2 Rüdiger Vossen, *Zigeuner* (Catalog zur Ausstellung des Hamburgischen Muzeums vür Völkerkunde, 1983).

3 Ibid.

4 Ibid.

5 Dr. Mrs. István Kozák, "A cigány lakosság- beilleszkedése társadalmunkba" [The Integration of Gypsies into Our Society], *Reflektor* 1 (1983).

cannibalism, the spreading of heresy—in order to give the punitive measures a semblance of justification.

Hitler and the Nazis carried out the worst genocidal campaign in history.. Between 1942 and 1945 around 600,000 Gypsies were killed in or en route to death camps. Some 50,000 Gypsies were dispatched from Hungary alone, very few of whom managed to survive.[6] These deportations started in 1944. Gypsies rounded up in the Transdanubian region, to the west, and in the Budapest area were taken to a selection camp set up in the fortress in Komárom (Komárno) and transported onward, mainly to Auschwitz and Dachau and their satellite camps. Mrs. József Székely, a Gypsy woman from Zalaegerszeg who survived, recalled the horrific events as follows:

> The Arrow Cross men and the police came on November 3rd. They told us to get ready to leave along with the children, because they were escorting us to a new workplace. Except that they didn't take us to work but led us to the railway station, packed us into wagons and transported us to Komárom. When we reached Komárom, the men were separated from the women and children. We were there for three weeks. The Arrow Cross men continually beat and kicked us—the children as well. If they went looking for food, they were thrashed with clubs. Some had arms broken, others both legs, so badly were they beaten. We had to sleep amongst worms, in filth, in pools of water. The children died one after the other; those who were still babes in arms all perished. Many old people also died, starved to death. The Arrow Cross men just tossed their bodies onto carts with pitchforks and took them off somewhere. . . . We were deported. . . . The next stop for the Gypsies then was Dachau.

Most Gypsy transports were murdered on arrival. Those who were not taken straight to the gas chambers were subjected to the horrific tortures of inhuman medical experiments. Gyula Balogh, from the Rákospalota district of Budapest, was shunted around many of the concentration camps before finally managing to escape from Buchenwald and make his way back home on foot. He is unable to erase the memories of what he experienced:

> There was water around the camp and it was fenced off with electrified barbed-wire. They carried out a selection. Those who were made to stand to the left were killed. An SS officer said to us, "You all have come here but there is no way back, you are going nowhere from here!" . . . Every week we were lined up naked for medical examination. Each time they tortured us, injected us with something or other. . . . Ugh! That Mengele! The very ground should spit him back, refuse his body! The world has never seen his like for cruelty!

6 Ibid.

The body of Gypsy folklore that perpetuates the Holocaust in the folk memory fulfills the same function as those warning signs left beside the highway by the caravans of old. It conjures up the polymorphous faces of hatred like a row of admonitory dolls and utters the names of the prejudices whose tentacles reanimate the dark host of effigies time and time again.

I do not aim to give a comprehensive survey of all the folklore genres that draw on the subject of the persecution of the Gypsies, just to present briefly what one might call the typical features of one particular genre and the diversity of its textual material. In showing the origins of that material, it will become manifest how the *Lager* (prison camp) songs, despite their improvisatory character, are pollinated by many existing genres and how the generalizing power of the processes of tradition interweaves the separate strands of individual tragedies into a testimony of communal validity.

An archaic form of song poetry, the dirge, or *zhalvini gilyi*, is best fitted to expressing the camp experiences. The genre is constructed from stereotyped elements of a lament character that form part of the folk lyrical tradition, but the features of the genre offer an opportunity for the insertion of improvised new textual units that narrate individual fates. The improvised song performances of survivors never mention the tortures suffered in the concentration camps, presumably because the pain and fear that these caused is indescribable. What is striking about the texts that refer to the death camps is their dry factual tone. In line with the traditions of the style, the place designated for destruction and the figures of the incomprehensibly cruel soldiers are limned only sketchily, without any details of the benighted bodies of prejudices as background. The weight of the inexpressible feelings is borne by formulaic strophes adopted from related genres. While dirges and chanted supplications may be the source of these borrowed elements, one can also discern the hallmarks of cursing songs from the most archaic stratum of folk poetry.

The passages from the dirges that were transformed into the lager songs are those that palliate the diffuse expressions of pain with devices honed and perpetuated in ancient rites in such a way as to make them acceptable to the conventions of the community. Two noteworthy motifs must be mentioned in this connection—the sending of a message and the survivor's plaints of being left all alone—because in interpreting them one can point to the most typical components of the Gypsy camp songs.

A common method of forming texts in the poetry of funeral rites of archaic Gypsy communities is for the keener to evoke the relationship between the deceased and the mourners in dramatic form. This imitation dialogue of the dirge generally opens with a description of the emotional shock of the wailing lamenters. That is followed by texts, spoken on behalf of the deceased, that

describe the world beyond the grave from which the dead person sends a message back to the living. Transmission of the message is usually entrusted to a bird, in the belief that birds are symbols of the soul and according to which only the soul departing the human body is capable of mediating between the real world and the transcendental sphere. The same corpus of beliefs invests the loan motif in the opening strophes of the camp songs. As a result, the German concentration camp whence the prisoner sends his or her message becomes a metaphor for the realm of the dead. That metaphorical character is reinforced by a mode of textual composition in which only the despairing message is formulated, but the message remains unanswered. There is never a response from those outside the camp. The world of those selected to live does not hear, or has no wish to hear, the calls of those in trouble, has no wish to help the Gypsies—at least that is what may be inferred from the telling absence of traces of such texts.

Following his capture, Adolf Eichmann, organizer of the transports for the Main Office for Reich Security (*Reichssicherheitshauptamt*) of the SS, is reported to have told the Israeli investigating judge: "Intervention on behalf of the Gypsies was impossible from any side at all. Obviously, the prejudice against this group was the strongest."[7] Eichmann's words, sadly, bear out and underscore the Gypsy survivors' sense of the outside world's passivity, manifested in these folklore texts by this striking absence. The horrific freight of this metaphorical absence signals that they were aware nobody felt pity for them and their plaints were merely the death rattle of a fate that had already been sealed.

The lager songs contain special stanzas, rooted in cursing songs of magical function, that call on a supernatural force, or on God the All-Holy Himself, to punish the Germans and Hitler. The ritual pronunciation of curses was once a living custom among Gypsies, but during the era of witchcraft trials, and under their impact, texts of this set of customs sank to the bottom of consciousness, only to resurface on the rare occasions where the affinity became close.

Texts deriving from slave songs of the Transylvanian Gypsies form a similarly important stratum among the motivic components. The most prevalent is a chanted supplication begging for a change of season so that Spring may come round again and green grass cover the tracks of the escaped slave. From the 14th century onward, the Gypsies of Moldavia and Wallachia were held

7 János Szőnyi, *A cigányok sorsa a fasizmus évei alatt, Cigányok—honnét jöttek, merre tartanak?* [The Fate of the Gypsies during the Years of Fascism: Where Do They Come From and Where Do They Go?] (Budapest: Kozmosz Könyvek, 1983).

as slaves by the boyars and treated much as livestock. The Romanian liberal writer Mihail Kogalniceanu wrote in 1837:

> During my younger years, on the streets of Jassy, I saw so-called human beings with chained hands and feet, some also with metal collars around their foreheads and necks. They were cruelly whipped and then thrown naked into a freezing river or tortured with smoke till they choked. Such was the despotism to which the wretched Gypsies were subjected. . . . Neither populace nor Church nor guardians of the law showed any pity towards them."[8]

Slavery for the Gypsies of Romania effectively came to an end only after the Crimean War, with their manumission in 1856. Memories of that servitude were preserved in a broad corpus of epic and lyric tradition, including historical ballads, the supplicatory sections of which were appropriated and built into the lager songs. The singer would see the escapes from slavery that had been evoked so often during communal song performances as completely identical to the situation of his or her own escape from the concentration camp, so it was quite natural that lines of supplication and formulaic texts born of a fear that had already crystallized in folklore practice should be taken over as reflecting the singer's own feelings.

The most common components of the *zhalvini gilyi* are those giving voice to loneliness and to the pain of those who have lost members of their family. They express the defenselessness that these tragedy-scarred souls feel in the world, describing the grief, homelessness, and misery that have become their lot. It is important to remember that in Gypsy thinking the blood ties of clan signify a person's greatest security, so that loss of one's family is equated in archaic consciousness with the community's vulnerability and loss of ability to defend itself. These two contents, intertwined and mutually amplifying, are present in the motifs of self-lamentation of Gypsy survivors of the Holocaust.

The various generic features described are well illustrated by a lager song collected in Transylvania:

Čuruklōri, čuruklōri,	Little bird, o little birdie,
ingar híro, de katharu,	Fly far away, carry the news,
ingar híro, ke daravu,	Tell how I'm in constant terror,
ingar híro ke daravu!	Tell how I'm in constant terror!

8 Vossen, op. cit.

Aj, tãbori de phãrere,
aj, tãbori de phãrere,
gardiãne de nãsule,
gardiãne de nãsule!

German lager, how hard it is,
German lager, how hard it is,
The prison guards are so evil,
The prison guards are so evil!

Aj, Hitleri, taveh mãrdo,
tãveh mãrdo le Dëvlehtãr,
tãveh mãrdo le Dëvlehtãr,
sar o drom le manušendãr!

Hey there, Hitler, curses on you.
May God trample upon your face
like people walk upon the streets.
like people walk upon the streets.

Phurdiñele da bašonu,
phurdiñele de bašonu,
pala mande ol ñjamciju,
pala mande ol ñjamciju!

Machine guns are barking away,
Machine guns are barking away,
My pursuers are getting close,
My pursuers are getting close.

Taj de, Dëvla, tî baxtori,
taj de, Dëvla, tî baxtori,
de pe dromori tangore,
de pe dromori tangore!

God, give me some of your fortune,
Give a little bit of your own,
Help me get onto trackless tracks,
Help me pass along trackless tracks.

De, Dëvla, tî brišindõri,
de, devla, tî brišindõri,
le jívesa hamimëre,
le jívesa hamimëre!

God, send me a drop of rainfall,
God, send me a drop of rainfall,
Mingle it up well with snowflakes,
Mingle it up well with snowflakes!

Le jívesa hamimëre,
le jivesa hamimëre,
te barjol car zelinõre,
te barjol car zelinõre!

Mingle it up with snowflakes,
Mingle it up with snowflakes,
So the green shoots of grass may grow,
So the green shoots of grass may grow!

Te vušãraven le vurmeju,
te vušãraven le vurmeju,
kaj te nakhav hodiniju,
kaj te nakhav hodiniju!

Cover the trail of my footprints,
Cover the trail of my footprints,
So I may find tranquility,
So I may find tranquility!

De mãrdãl man de, Delõro,
de mãrdãl man de, Delõro,
khonikah kade, sãr manre
khonikah kade, sãr manre!

God, oh God! How you have thrashed me,
God, oh God! How you have thrashed me,
Perhaps nobody more than me,
Perhaps nobody more than me!

Aj, tābori nājmcickore,	German lager, German lager,
bašile je phurdiñelere,	There a gun was always barking,
mure šheven mudārdere,	All my family was wiped out,
mure šheven mudārdere!	All my family was wiped out!
Ke korkōre dāšiljomu,	I've lost all my family,
ke korkōre dāšiljomu,	I've lost all my family,
so zānav me te keravu,	Oh, what can 1 do, all alone,
so zānav me te keravu!	Oh, what can I do, all alone![9]

Following ancient Gypsy performance customs, songs about the lagers are always presented before, and with the participation of, an audience. The community joins in the singing of familiar formulaic stanzas and hums along an accompaniment to improvised text passages that the performer fashions from his or her own past. The song melodies are particularly poignant and sad, demonstrating the thesis that human song has a universal expressive aspect. The German concentration camps, in the words of the ballads, were the "killing fields" of peoples, "global cemeteries," and what is articulated in the songs of the survivors is that once a person finds himself or herself inside the barbed wire, hope is no more possible than crying, because the pitilessly searing sun of suffering and destruction scorches the very wells of tears.

As yet no memorial has been raised to the Gypsy victims of the Holocaust. No one has yet asked the forgiveness of Gypsy survivors, or offered any form of compensation for crippling their bodies and souls. My aim in writing this has been to offer words of remembrance for them too.

9 Lajos Gábor (Marosvásárhely).

Oral History

Personal Statements of the Survivors

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Mrs. Vilmos Holdosi (Torony)

I was born here in Torony in May of 1930. We are Romungros. I was one of eight kids in the family. I went to school here and completed four years—that's what you could do at the time. I was still a girl, 14 years old, when I was deported. They took me at dawn, my father and me. There, at the kindergarten in Torony, that's where they were collecting us and that's where we left from. There is now a memorial stone by the kindergarten. Now my father, he was picked out by this Arrow Cross–like man and he let him go—nobody knew why. Maybe that Arrow Cross knew him. I don't know. So my father tells him, "I want to take my Mariska home too." So this man tells him, "You should be happy that I have let you go, and you, you stay here." And he pushed me back into the line. They did not let me go. I was asking them why they weren't letting me go and where they were taking me, but nobody said anything.

We stayed in the kindergarten at Torony for two days. Men, women, children, all together. We did not get anything to eat, and the gendarmes said nothing. We could ask nothing, but we knew that something terrible was going to happen to us. We were too afraid to ask. Two days later, they took us to the Városmajor park, where we stayed a week. All those people, lots of them, all Roma.

A week later, they took us to Komárom—that's where the collection camp was. They took us in a railroad car which they use for animals. It was evening when we got there. I remember it was evening. They herded us into the camp. It was full of Gypsies, Jews, men, women, all together. They were not all picky at all. We stayed there at least a month and a half. We could not wash but they let us relieve ourselves, right in front of the camp. But the gendarmes surrounded us even then. We were dizzy with hunger. For a month and a half we never worked but waited and waited and waited. They treated us like dirt and only gave us water once in a blue moon.

So a month and a half later, they took us to Dachau. They put on trains—the lot of us, Gypsies and Jews. By the time we got there, it was evening. There were so many of us, spilling from the train. Little babies were carried by Jewish women, tiny young women, and the children were crying and the women were crying, "Please don't take my babies away." They bawled their poor heads off, but they took the children anyway. They said they were taking them to the children's hospital, those that were ill, but they never saw any of them again. They were sick from starvation because they never gave them any food either—God rot their guts. Some of them had three with them. They had suitcases with them—they packed up everything, duvets, clothes, everything

for the babies. But they couldn't take them into the camp. There was a great room where they threw everything on the floor—there was so much clothes around, so much jewelry, I can't even tell you. It was like a storage room. There were heaps of clothes and jewelry thrown on top of each other. Everything, but everything! Of course, as we were poor, they couldn't take anything off us Gypsies, only had the clothes we arrived in.

The men and the children were taken away separately. We didn't know to where. We women were left there. Then they had us take off our clothes—can you imagine—we went into the camp naked. What a shame, especially with us it is a great shame, you know. They gave us these striped clothes—you know the kind that clowns wear—but they had no buttons, only a piece of tie-string, and we had to put them on. They gave us tiny slippers for our feet. How could we be not cold? It wasn't difficult to catch a disease when we were standing in the cold, in the snow, wearing those flimsy striped clothes. It was a cold winter, the snow came up to your ankles, and still we had to march, as they were beatings us. We marched from 12 until 6 in the morning and in the morning, went in dead tired and dropped on that little straw, and those who could, slept, but most of us were living dead and couldn't even sleep. The barracks were as big as this village. There were no windows, though some air came from above. It must have been the roof, I think, it must have had holes. So we had a little air. Hardly any lighting though.

Otherwise the soldiers did not hurt us—they wouldn't even touch us. They were disgusted by us. You could tell they hated us. They sometimes beat us with truncheons. They had men up in the high towers—they were watching day and night. But we had women guards with us in the camp. Well, it was they who were real rude—they beat the crap out of us. If someone was not in line, they beat her with truncheons like the soldiers. Later in the Czechs [the Czech part of Czechoslovakia] we found one of them women guards who beat us in Dachau. She ran away there, to the Czechs. So Mariska—that's Mrs. Nyári, she lives here in the village and she was in the camp with me—she says, "you shaved our heads bald," and called her into this room and beat the living shit out of her. She was tearing her hair out, and well done, I say.

It was so darn cold we nearly froze to death in those flimsy clothes. And they also gave us this small slippers for the feet—that's why my feet got such pain in the joints that it's been hurting ever since. They shaved our heads . . . and everything. Women did all this and there was a doctor who looked at everything . . . well, you know, everything. He was the one who gave me this injection, not just to me but to all of us—we all got these injections. It hurt so much. You see, they stuck this big needle into my . . . body . . . you know

what I mean. Everything went dark, my dear. I fell off that examination table. Well, they kicked me aside and the next one came. In those eight months they stuck that big needle in me just once, but I didn't have my . . . monthly thing, you know, for a year. I gave birth to eight children since and one of my daughters, Etus, gave birth to a deaf-mute, Berci. Then her daughters too, so her grandchildren were deaf-mutes too. There were no deaf-mutes in our family before. The doctor here says it's because of the injection they gave me in the camp—that's what's made them sick.

Apart from the injection, they gave us nothing, no medicine even for those who were sick. They didn't care. If they gave them medicine, they would have got better, and they didn't want that. They wanted us to die. They gave us nothing and those who could bear it, lived, those who couldn't, didn't. They gave us carrot leaves and something that looked like spinach. There was a garbage heap—we picked bread crusts and apple skins out of it. We never even saw bread. We were there for eight months and we were lucky if they gave us some slop twice a week, my dear. When I got home I was 25 kilos, bald—my mother hardly recognized me.

There were so many dead every morning, my dear, that we had to carry them out to the burning furnace. It broke our hearts to see those little young Jewish women, 15–16-year-olds. Let's say we were more used to hardship than they were. The worst of it was that we had to carry them over to the burning place. You had to grab those dead bodies and throw them into the furnace, like dogs—this can never be forgotten. They killed so many people—cursed be that Hitler forever. I was one of those carrying them. For that, they whacked me on the leg with something terrible. A little woman from around here died. They did not believe she was dead and sat her on a chair, but she fell off. . . . They told me to pick her up. I said I am not gonna, so one of them whacked me on the left leg with a rubber truncheon. . . . Because I didn't pick her up.

They told us we were never gonna go home from there. And that would have been true, but the war ended in the meantime and the liberation came. The Americans got there. I remember it was nighttime. But what a war it was, the bombs were crackling like mad and the whole camp was shaking. The Lord bless those who knew that the camp must not be bombed because we were inside the camp. Otherwise we would have died too. The soldiers and the SS women were scurrying around—they were so scared.

In the morning, a cleaning woman or something like that came in and said, "Get up—girls and women—the war is over. You can go home." We could not believe it. There was so much shooting, so much bombing, God bless those who knew that we were there and did not drop a bomb on us. But when the

war was over, they all disappeared into the night. That Hitler and Himmler, God rot them. [The Germans] put us on trucks and took us to this meadow, or so, and told us to go back wherever we came from. We were just standing there—we didn't know where we were, where we could go, how we could get home. Down the highway we went, and whenever I could, I took the postal roads, and if I got tired by nightfall, I sat down by the roadside ditch and rested. I was with a friend of mine, but everybody left in all directions, so that my co-villager didn't notice. I was left with a sick Jewish girl with a tiny head who was so sick that she died a few months after getting home.

We walked so much that we went into Czech country. We knocked on the door of a woman and asked her for a little bread. We had no idea where we were. So they brought an interpreter and I could explain who we were, where we were coming from and all that. So the woman brought us some food and gave us some clothes—a fine woman she was. Then she telephoned and they took us to the collection camp where they collected people on their way home. We stayed there for some two months. They took us home from there by train. There were so many people, pushing and shoving, and I am not that type. I was never very pushy. I went and climbed onto the roof of the train and went all the way home like that. I was sitting on the top of the train. The wind was blowing hard but I did not mind. I got off at Szombathely. My mother and my sisters were waiting for me. There were eight of us brothers and sisters.

I got married at the age of 18, to a Gypsy man, a Romungro. He was a musician, played the violin. We were married for 48 years and had 8 children. He has been dead for 3 years—I have been on my own since. I am 70 now and have a monthly pension of 27,000 forints, including that little bit they put on top of the pension because of the deportation. Before, I was getting 23,000 forints. The medicine alone costs 3[,000] to 4,000 forints. My left leg was paralyzed when they hit it with that rubber truncheon in the camp. It hurt so much and I could not even stand on it. . . . My children too live here in Torony. In the autumn, I received 200,000 forints from the Compensation Bureau—the Red Cross helped me to get it. I put 80,000 forints into the savings cooperative so that they will have money to bury me when I die. I gave each child 5,000 forints. They were all very happy as they are on unemployment, the poor ones. The Council holds a commemoration every August to mark our deportation and they put a wreath on, you know, that plaque. But I can't attend any of that, you know, because of my leg.

Recorded in May 1994 in Torony.
Interviewer: Ágnes Daróczi

Mr. József Kazári (Meggyeskovácsi)

I was born in 1931. My mother was Erzsébet Kolompár. My father died of blood poisoning. My mother was married again—can't blame her. She was such a young one at the time. I was three years old when we got here, one of two brothers and two sisters. I was the youngest and a stepson, so I had to fetch for myself the best I could. We grew up like birds on a meadow, as the song says. I was grown up when I left my mother to live on my own. But some left this way, some left that way, and in the end I was left here alone.

First we built a house, which I sold, then I came here and bought this peasant's cottage. My two sisters stayed here in Meggyeskovácsi along with me, and my big brother moved to Szombathely.

My mother had four children from her second husband and she liked them even better than us. I noticed this but didn't much mind by then. Wasn't concerned, being a stepchild and all.

I went to school, finished four years. I really liked to study and was a good student, but then all that came to a stop. . . . It was late autumn in 1944 when they let us go home from the Komárom ghetto.

How did you end up in the Komárom ghetto?

We knew nothing about nothing, but one morning they came for us, with a long wagon. The gendarmes. I can't remember the day, only that it was the morning. They came for us with this long wagon. . . . It was the autumn, in the autumn. They told us to pack our things and get on the wagon because they were going to take us, but did not say to where. Well, they drove us to Sárvár and locked us into a room where they kept firemen's equipment. My mother had all the tiny ones with her. They pushed all of us into this one place. Men, women—they locked all of us up in this one place. They took us from there. . . . They took us from Sárvár to Szombathely, to a farmhouse, and cordoned us off. They only picked up all the Gypsies—the Jews were kept separately. In Szombathely, they had a different place for us and for the Jews.

Somehow, I could step out from the line because I was dressed nicely. They couldn't say Gypsy boy to me. Well, I broke away from my mother, from all those many people, and stepped out of the line. The gendarmes were asking, "Who is that kid in the back?" Then I went back to my mother, but I regretted that.

In Szombathely, they took us to the station and put us on railway cars. Locked the doors on us. . . . They took everybody from Meggyeskovácsi, all the families—old ones, little ones, everybody. How many we were all together—I can't remember. I can't remember if they took people from the other villages.

They only covered this area. Gypsies from Sárvár were taken separately. The Sárvár people and the Meggyeskovácsi people were taken to Szombathely, from the Városmajor to the station, then onto trains, and off to Győr.

But they also rounded up Gypsies from neighboring villages. They took people from there, from Sárvár and also from Cel (Celldömölk). There were some they did not take, like in Zalaegerszeg. There were some Gypsies they did not hurt. It was all up to the village magistrate that they had in those times, whether he intervened or not. Some did not intervene, did not care, and they took those people.

Children, women, men—they were all mixed together. There were no lists of names, no headcount—they just put everybody together. So then they put us into the trains in Szombathely—but they didn't give us any water, we had to bang on the door and ask them to give us a bottle of water. I could've died for a bottle of water. Then the train stopped and they gave us a little water. We started again, for Győr, but in Győr there was an air-raid warning, so the train had to stop again. We begged them for some water again. I was really gonna die without water. It was the evening when we got to Komárom.

We had precious little food with us. Very little, almost nothing. We had to leave everything home, all the grain, this and that, everything. We had some lard in the pots with us and a little bread. So all we could eat was bread with lard spread, nothing else. So we get to Komárom in the evening and there was this underground bunker. Took three days from Meggyeskovácsi to Komárom! We were traveling for three days because the train stopped all the time and there were air raids and shootings and they did not let the train go on.

The guards were Hungarian soldiers, the outside guards, who took over from the gendarmes. So we get there and there we were, all underground. We had to lie on the bare cement floor and couldn't even change clothes. Many got lice and the children were dying in droves. They were piled up in the corner in one big heap. There was a sick woman who fainted and then died. They pulled her out and threw her on a heap. This old man—my stepfather—had a violin and there was this sergeant who always asked me for the violin. I always gave it to him, so then I became privileged. Seeing that I give him the violin, he let me go all over the place. I could even snatch some food inside the camp.

Yes, yes, but only inside the camp. But there were other soldiers, and if they saw one wandering around, they let rip, regularly shooting them down. Then I was getting scared of all the shooting, all the loud bangs, and many times I was too scared to go. I took some carrots to them and potatoes too, which they peeled. They gave us food once a day, half a liter, no more. There

were many old ones who were helpless and died. Then there was this big commotion—Germans were coming in to pick up the men to take them away, to Germany. They just pointed at someone and took him. The pillows and blankets and covers were all packed up in a big bundle. In the corridor, men and women were all mixed up. Then I noticed, through the other door, that the Germans were coming and taking the men away. Then I noticed there was this girl from Badacsonytomaj—God bless her, I say to this day—and I says to her, "Come quickly." She was 14, a girl. "Come here," I tell her. She had one of these big loose skirts. "Put it on my head," I says to her, "then sit on it!" The Germans were coming, four Germans. They were just pointing at the men—get out, get out, get out!

So then this Gypsy gal with her big loose skirt, she was sitting on me and they couldn't see me. They passed me by. I was putting my hands together to thank the good Lord! They collected them, lined them up, and took them all to Germany. Then some of them could come back, some of them could not come back. I tell you, if not for this girl, I would have perished too. I was saved by this girl, when she sat on me. The Germans were coming and so they passed me by.

So they didn't think about the little girl, what she might have under her skirt. I crouched down and she spread it over me, covered me with her skirt. How did I ever get the idea? I couldn't tell you. Perhaps it was the good Lord who made the Germans pass me by. Because they were gonna take me too and I could not have come back from there, from the concentration camp.

Three men and an old one, the four of them, were in the transport from Meggyeskovácsi. One called Horváth, then there was the father of my wife and his brother. . . . They were 34, 22, 19, and 18 years old or thereabouts.

One of them came back, only one. He had been to Germany, in "Zőn," or whatever that village was called. Zőn, they say, was a big prison camp. They say they burned folks there. When the Americans came and surrounded that German city, the Germans wanted to torch the camp. But they could not.

And they let us go from Komárom.

Some could escape from them or run away—those stayed alive. But those who were not crafty enough or could not give them the slip—those did not survive. They either died or they were shot dead, because if they noticed somebody stepping away, the Germans came and shot them dead right there on the spot, with a pistol. I told you I only got away because I was saved by this girl from Badacsonytomaj.

Ibolya Nyári, that was her name. She was a young girl and came to no harm, though they also took older women as well. Yup, those women who could work, but this one was only a girl, 14 years old. She was thin, very thin

but a good looking one nonetheless. They did not hurt her—she was short and they passed her by.

We had been there for three weeks and the soldiers treated us very, very roughly. Then one day, the airplanes came. I don't know what kind of an airplane it was, but it dropped these fliers saying, "All prisoners must be set free within 24 hours!"

So then they opened the doors. That's when they let us go, all of us. Some could not make it home but died there, in the courtyard. Babies, tiny infants died on the way home—they could not pull through.

A little child of my mother also died there. An infant, still swaddled up. Could have been like three or four months old. That's when the typhus broke out and lice covered the people all the time, their hair and their clothes. It was very, very rough, all the way through.

Recorded on March 6, 2000 in Meggyeskovácsi.
Interviewer: Ágnes Daróczi

Mr. Károly Komáromi (Kötegyán)

I was born in Doboz. That's where my mother was from and she married Károly Farkas from Kötegyán. My childhood was quite difficult. We were poor and had little food. Consequently, I was given into day labor. We had no footwear or even clothes, so we could not go to school—I myself did only two years, as I wore my father's shoes to school. I was in school in the autumn, while the weather held, and then again in the spring, when the weather was good enough again. But I had nothing to wear to school. Life was very difficult, because back then Gypsies hardly ever worked and there was no jobs to be had. For a few months, we worked as farmhands in the summer on the estate, so we made a little money. A day of hoeing brought in 80 *fillérs*. Though I was a child, I could drive animals, and I was driving carts and herding livestock, so I made 1 *pengő* a month in 1944. When this summer work was over, we went home because by then the war was on and the workers all went home. The gendarmes came for us because the overseer reported to them that the workers left their work. So the gendarmes came and drove us out to the fields. This István Farkas, this man whose name is written down here, refused to go at all and they set fire under him. Can you imagine? They set fire under him and the gendarme beat his son, József. He is dead now. So István Farkas ran away and they wanted to shoot him down, but they couldn't because there were houses in the way and he got away. It was into October when the Romanian soldiers came in. When these Romanian soldiers came in, Sándor Baksi, the priest, the pastor and this Imre Molnár, who spoke Romanian, went out to receive them.

The Romanian soldiers were here for two or three days—I can't remember now—and the Hungarian soldiers beat them back. So then the Hungarian soldiers were all over Kötegyán. These were from an armored division and wore leather coats. The Hungarian soldiers were asking who received the Romanian soldiers and in what way? They blamed it on the Gypsies. It was the priest and Imre Molnár, who received them with a big white flag at the bridge. The priest said they did it so that the village would come to no harm.

Now that the Romanian soldiers were pushed out, the villagers took bread and everything to the Hungarian soldiers. It was a sight to behold.

The night when the Hungarian soldiers came in, they came down to Gypsy Hill. It was evening-like. Two soldiers came in—I don't know who—they did not introduce themselves. It was wartime. They came in and said, "Hey, Father, all this is your family?" They dined with us on cherry compote. I was there with them. There were two women too, but they left. So this Hungarian soldier was asking us if we knew where they lived. We knew of course. So

me and Károly Hajtai went and showed them. They spend time in there until about midnight. That night, they blew that house up. With a hand grenade. We knew because they left one hand grenade out in the street.

They blew up István Farkas and his wife. A Hungarian man had to pull them out from under the ruins. They were badly hurt—there was blood all over. Giza, his brother, took them to the hospital in Csaba.

There was a lieutenant—maybe a first lieutenant—he was billeted with the priest. The Hungarian soldiers came down to Gypsy Hill and they had with him this Imre Molnár and military gendarme. The head of the military gendarme was an ensign and he herded Gypsies and Hungarians into this courtyard. There, the Gypsies and Hungarians were separated. This gendarme and Imre Molnár did the separating, saying who was Gypsy, who was Hungarian. Then they took us into a house and made two groups of the Gypsies and they were letting them out one by one. You go out, now you go out, you go out. So they picked nine out of here, because the two women were also taken from here. But these later came back. They did not perish.

The thing was, they took them to the village hall. My grandfather and grandmother were old, my granddad walked with a cane. "What do you want from us Imre? We haven't done anything." The gendarme says, "Shut up or I will ram this rod down your throat!" József Makula lived in the village and they sent me to fetch him, to get him to come down to Gypsy Hill. That's where they met and they pushed this kid among the others, the children, and my grandfather and grandmother. Well, it was this kid who took the box of sugar.

This was where the Hangya (Ant) Cooperative was, up on the Main Square. When the Romanians came in, they broke in and took whatever they liked.

There was the Statue Garden—it's still there today—and they threw the sugar box in there. This kid, József Makula, saw it and picked it up—I don't know if there really was any sugar in it—but he picked it up. He was 16.

Those who were rounded up were taken to the village hall. They were there for the night and another day. The third day, [the soldiers] took them to Sarkad with a horse-drawn cart. This László Szobai was a junior soldier and they had weapons; there were the four of them. [The junior soldiers] took [the prisoners] to Sarkad, to the Gendarmerie. The Gendarmerie stood where they have the secondary school now.

Károly Hajtai was following them along with his father and his child. The gendarmes arrested Károly Farkas, my father, in Sarkad and took him to the Gendarmerie and never let him go. They were beating them something awful in there. I know this because those two who came back—Mrs. Kálmán

Kovács and Erzsébet Ungvári—they were there. They told us how the gendarmes beat the Gypsies, who were totally naked so the wall was all splashed with blood. They beat them with truncheons—they were totally naked when they were taken to be interrogated. They were torturing them. Now what does a 12-year-old and a 14-year-old know about life? Nothing. When they arrested my father, they took his watch and beat him bad.

The gendarmes took them from Sarkad to Doboz, to confront them with István Farkas and the others. Because István Farkas was the father of Károly Hajtai. They were the ones who were blown up. The gendarmes—they were taking them along main street in pouring rain, so this gendarme says to my father, who knew his way around since his wife was from Doboz, "You will die here, fuck you!" I don't know about this, but the two women said so, as they were being taken along too. At dawn, they took them to the cemetery in Doboz and the gendarmes were already there waiting and blew them apart with a machine gun and hand grenades. As I heard from the cemetery warden's wife, one child was trying to escape but couldn't because the gendarmes noticed him. When they finished them off, they went down to the Gypsies of Doboz. They had them dig graves and put the bodies in there. Some of them were not even dead but they buried them anyway. The cemetery warden told me this too because she heard the screams and the pleas not to kill them. Because when they were being taken to the cemetery, they realized they were going to be killed—what else would they have been doing in the cemetery at night. This is how this thing happened.

Who were the victims, by name, and how old were they?

The oldest was János Farkas, my grandfather—he was around 60. Then Erzsébet Makula, my grandmother, she was around 58–60. My father, Károly Farkas—he was 34. My sister, Zsuzsanna Komáromi, she was 14. János Komáromi, age 12, Károly Hajtai, age 20, József Makula, age 16, Béla Zsigmond, age 14. These are the ones they massacred.

There was another family too . . .

Yes, there was another family, 12 of them, from Szalonta. They, too, were caught by the gendarmes and massacred there, in Doboz.

Where did the gendarmes round them up?

The ones from Szalonta they caught in Sarkad.

But they were fleeing the war . . .
At that time we have fled too because it was announced that anybody could flee wherever they wanted to. But we did not go and had to pay the price. Because they blamed the Gypsies for their own sins.

Do you remember any of the names of the Szalonta Gypsies?
The girl was called Bimbó—that was her nickname.

How old was she?
About 18 to 20.

She was young . . .
Oh yes. The gendarmes asked this girl to go to the sack with them. She said she will do it but only if they let everyone go. But they weren't going to let anybody go, so the girl didn't get friendly with them. They couldn't make her.

They opened the grave in 1955 and somebody erected a memorial after that.
He was a poor man. He was a local, from Doboz, a tiny little hunchback. He was sorry for them—he knew my mother and wanted them to have a memorial. We had no money and could not pay for a memorial. But the council back then and now the mayor's office, they could not care less, not to this day.

Uncle Károly, I found you because my colleague, who is doing this research with me, found the documents of this court case. Let me read to you the verdict of the court of first instance, which was the Municipal Court of Gyula.

Excerpt from the verdict B-551/1956/6 of the Municipal Court of Gyula, dated February 25, 1956

> At the end of September 1944, the fighting was going on in the area around Arad and Nagyszalonta, between German-Hungarian troops and Soviet-Romanian troops. The First Hungarian Armored Division took part in the fighting. At the end of September, Romanian troops took the villages of Méhkerék and Kötegyán while Soviet troops took Nagyszalonta. In the first days of October, German SS troops pushed back the Romanians and partly the Soviet troops as well. The command of the First Armored Division was set up in Sarkad and the anti-espionage and intelligence units started their cleansing activities around Sarkad and its environs. They rounded up a large number of Gypsy persons, including women and two or three children under the age of 16. They collected other civilians from Méhkerék and accused them of receiving

the liberating Romanian troops with a white flag as they took the village. Apart from these, they also held a few Romanian soldiers in detention. Principal defendant Boldizsár took part in rounding up the people in Méhkerék . . . they transported some to the village hall and some directly to Sarkad, to the Gendarmerie. The people rounded up in different locations were taken to Sarkad and there subjected to horrific abuse. The interrogations were conducted by a gendarme detective. They lined up the unfortunate people rounded up in different locations, had them face the wall and told them they must not move or look around or else they would be beaten. Simultaneously with this, the victims were taken in turn to a smaller room adjoining the hall on the orders of the gendarme detective, were stripped naked and a good number of military gendarmes and soldiers following the detective's orders that no unbeaten spot should remain on the victim's body, beat them with rods two fingers thick. All of the victims went through this treatment which caused some of them lifelong injuries. In the outer hall, the victims lined up facing the wall were beaten with rifle butts and by other methods by the guarding soldiers and the military gendarmes, so much that the wall was splattered with blood as a consequence of their cruelty.

In the afternoon hours of the 5th of October 1944, at the approach of the liberating troops, the command of the First Armored Division ordered a withdrawal of the command to the rear. Captain Kubányi was in charge of transporting to the rear the rounded up prisoners and civilian persons. Defendant Boldizsár was put in charge of the detail escorting the prisoners. Other gendarmes and defendants were also in their company. Boldizsár received direct orders to take the 20 detained Gypsies and release them later while taking the prisoners to the rear. Boldizsár, with his escort and his prisoners, set out from Sarkad in the direction of Doboz at twilight. When the group reached the Doboz forest, the idea emerged among the escorts—under circumstances now impossible to establish—that the Gypsies should be executed in the forest. When the group proceeding along the edge of the forest came to a halt, Corporal Fábián with another gendarme went off to find a suitable spot for the execution. But they came back to report that the terrain was unsuitable for executions. How the principal defendant received this report from Fábián and the other or what orders he issued at the time was impossible to determine, but the fact remains that the group of prisoners was escorted on and after covering some 10 to 14 kilometers they arrived at the castle of Count . . . at the village of Doboz. Arriving at the castle, principal defendant Boldizsár rung the bell and asked the emerging porter for accommodation for the prisoners. Even before taking the prisoners inside, he issued orders for the separation of the 20 Gypsy persons and had the rest of the prisoners put up in the barn. These included soldiers, civilians and two women. Subsequently, Boldizsár with one of the company went ahead to the Gendarmerie station in Doboz and had a conversation with the commander. The content of the conversation cannot now be satisfactorily determined but subsequently, he returned to the castle

and issued orders to transport the group of 20 Gypsies further down the road to Doboz. The precise content of the order cannot now be determined, but it referred to the execution. Following this, the soldiers and the gendarmes took the group to the cemetery where they were joined by other gendarmes ordered there in the meantime . . . but whether all of the latter were actually present cannot be established today. Before they took the group into the cemetery, the co-defendant went to the warden's hut next to the cemetery and told warden Mrs. Károly Szabó that she should not be frightened because they were going to test some new weapons. In the meantime, all 20 Gypsies were taken into the cemetery, ordered to lie down on the ground some 300 to 400 meters from the warden's hut and told that they were going to spend the night there. Subsequently the escort personnel withdrew a few paces, formed a firing line and when the order was issued, fired of a volley at the 20 persons lying on the ground, then withdrew even further, to a nearby group of willow trees and lobbed an indeterminate number of hand grenades at the unfortunate victims. Those who were still alive were shot dead by the military gendarme. When the executioners fired off their volley, the co-defendant also joined them and fired at least two rounds as has been determined. Following this, the other two gendarmes along with two military gendarmes who were ordered to join them went off to an area of the village lying near the cemetery, rounded up 6 to 8 persons and had them dig a grave of some 2 by 3 meters and 1 meter deep. There they placed the dead bodies that included at least 2 or 3 children, 15 men and 2 women as has been determined in the course of the trial. After the burial, some of those who took part in the burial returned to the castle and some went to their homes or posts of duty.

Recorded on July 15, 2000 in Kötegyán.
Interviewer: János Bársony

Mrs. Jenő Sárközi (Torony)

I was born on 29 October 1923. My mother passed away when I was a small child and I was brought up and married off by my mother's sister, a war widow. After my mother's death, my father remarried. I have siblings on my father's side, half-siblings that's what they are, but I was the only one from my mother. When we were getting a bit bigger, we went to work on the estate. That's what you did those days. Harvesting, hoeing, thrashing, working with the machines. We worked and earned the daily bread for my stepmother. That's what I called her, Mom. She was that to me, though she was only my aunt, but she was raising me, so she deserved the Mom, didn't she? We had a neat little cottage with a tiled roof, one room and the kitchen facing the street—it was made of adobe but had tiled roof. I was growing up there with Mom's other daughters, Veri, Rózsi, Juliska, Annus, and Teri and her son Tóni. I went to school, did six years and repeated three years, that's nine altogether, right? All of us children went to school, even if my aunt was raising us on her own.

My great-grandmother was from Rühöt and my granddad's father was the son of the peasant blacksmith of Újperinti. But our grandparents were born and raised here—that's how Mom told me, so that's how I can tell you.

We had no Gypsy quarter. All lived mixed up along the street—there were serfs, or peasants to put it better. And then, of course, we were no Gypsies. Well, you see, we were the musician kind—yes we were—and nobody called us Gypsies. We lived among them but I never heard anybody calling us Gypsies. They all called us honestly by our names, even though all our neighbors were these serf peasants. I worked. I was a sheafer for them. I was a sheafer to those who lived across the road. Then I was a sheafer to those who lived on this side, a few houses down. He scythed and I picked up the stalks after him.

I had been working since I was 12. It's the truth, better believe me. I was 13 when I went to Pest County to work the vineyards, dropping out of school. I was already off, had to get an employment book. I threw them away not long ago—what I am going to do with them? They are nothing to me now. Well then. I was a hard working girl and later a hard working woman. Even as a married mother, I went off to work for six months, in my womanhood, with a family at home. But off to work I went along with my husband. There was a Jew living here, by the name of Grüsberger, that's what it was, Pali and Sanyi Grüsberger. We went to do some hoeing for them. They paid us regularly, every week. We had money because we earned it. I worked long and hard.

Well, how should I put this, I fell in love with my man. But he was a good, handsome, blond man, mark my word. There was this gathering down at the castle—they said it was a ball—so I went along with the neighbor girl. "Come

Terus, off we go!" And off we went. We danced and danced—he asked me to dance many times. We danced so much and embraced so much that he became my man. I have no regrets because . . . I can't talk about him. I loved him so much. It's been seven years . . . it's seven years ago that he died. It will be seven years on the 27th of next month that he is gone. He was a good worker and could make money out of anything. But first he was a field hand, then they made him night watchman, and he retired from that position. I am receiving pension after him. I am getting it as long as I am alive.

Then the children came, one after the other. Jenő was born in '48, in March, my Lajos in '49, a year later, in May. In '52 my daughter was born, then in '54 the one who died on the fourth day, and in '60, this one, my Marika, whose house we are in now.

During the war, they deported me away, to Germany I was deported away. One day this hunchback-like girl comes down here and says, "Go hide yourselves!" I say "Where?" "Anywhere." "Well, I am not hiding," I say. "Why?" She says the gendarmes are coming, they are picking up Gypsies, they are picking us up. And true, there they were already being herded along. But the gendarmes, they were farther down the road.

"I am not hiding myself—why should I hide? I haven't done anything. If they take me, they'll take me." They lied to us, said that we were being taken to Sárvár to pick carrots. Sure we were—we were going to Germany. This happened on 4 November 1944. First they took us to Torony. They rounded us up and took us to Torony to a building which is now a kindergarten. They herded us in there, had us lined up the next day and took us to Szombathely to the Városmajor park. There they had us lined up again and took us to Komárom, where they put us on trains, though first we stayed in Komárom for a few days, in bunkers. They put us on trains there and took us to Dakhao [Dachau]. The village authorities, the magistrate, the notary, they did all this. We were collected by Hungarian gendarmes and in Komárom, there were also Hungarian gendarmes and soldiers too. They were on duty there and we were handed over to German soldiers there. Grief! I cannot tell you how many people they took from Ondód—many never returned, though some did. But how many of them died here since! My poor dear husband—they took two sisters of his at once. One of them, Aranka, never came back, the other, Katica, she died here. At the place she came back from everybody had the typhus and she got it from them and here at home she died in the hospital. Good many of them died after they came back home. The youngest one they took was not even 14. Didn't take that one from here—oh, I can't remember where she was from, that little girl, but she was 14. Cula, that one

was called, and she was dragged off along with her siblings. I met her after we came back but maybe nobody else.

This number I got it in the large German camp. Whatchamacallit, I can't say, big German . . . Ravensburg or whatever it was . . . that's where we got our numbers. They had us strip and took all our clothes, took away all of them and gave us some rags. They gave us this huge nightgown, musta belonged to a woman two meters tall. It swept the ground, so I had to roll up the hem. They had us strip stark naked. There were officers, women, doctor-like, sitting around, around this round table and we had to circle that round table, stark naked as we were. Even though there were men there! Then we had to lie on a table. They gave us an injection, damned if I remember what they gave us, but it put an end to our woman-sickness, so much so, that I did not have any for a year after I returned. They staunched us that bad, I tell you. We suffered so much, so much misery . . . When I saw them I started screaming! My God, I kept telling myself, my God, why did I have to leave my stepmother now when I loved her so much? I was thinking about her all the time, recalling her face so that I never forgot her even there. But I had to leave her and go away to be among so many unfamiliar people, those who herded us there. And then, we got our numbers. There was this red heart on it and below that a number—I threw that coat away like that, threw it in some thicket or some such.

What did we have to eat in the prison camp? Carrot leaves boiled in water—that's what we had, that's what they gave us—they poured boiling water on it and gave that to us and whoever got some could eat, whoever didn't, couldn't eat. There were lots of folks there, all kinds from all parts.

There in the camp we were in block 30. There were these wooden barracks—they shooed us in there. Then they beat us like horses. That night we had to go outside to stand roll call. Like we had to line up to make rows of ten. When we went outside, we were taken to the place we were the day before. When we went outside, I got frightened and I said my number—it was 89772—I know it to this day, perhaps Zsuzsi knows too, I can't say whether she still remembers but I certainly do. Well, the beating I got,—I was called and it was cold, you see, and I was chilled but before I could step up, he dragged me out and beat me like the devil. He had these big buckles on his belt, that SS, that's what they were called. It is better for one not to talk about it, because the heart starts to bleed. Believe me, I have been so sick, ever since.

So then, when we were standing roll call, they threw us out at 3 in the night, and at 1 in the night and made us go back in the next night. There were so many folks there, all kinds, Romanian, "Polski," Russian, Hungarian, and

of course Gypsies. Oh, I can't tell you all the kinds we had. There were so many of us. We marched out at noon. They marched out, they had a pail on their arms and a broom in their hands, they were cleaning the courtyard—that's when they took us there, the day before, but that night, we stood in the courtyard all night long, I am telling you.

There were these little wooden beds and four of us squeezed in there. Pali's mother was with me too. The poor soul, she never came back. Oh if it was as big as this couch here, that would have been fine. But it was as big as this edge here and there were the four us in it, I am telling you.

Once I escaped because they were putting us in trucks. I escaped once but they took me back, 'cause I lost my way. It was all German territory, I had no idea where I was. So from there, they took us back on a transport. On the railway bank, they sat down to rest with us and I got away from there, not only me, but five of us. They brought us back. There was this police woman—she beat us raw. She had this long willow switch. The bank was full of willows and she beat us with that switch. And then they had us all fall in line again.

Now I can't tell you where this happened. It was out there, in Germany—how could I keep all that in my head, all the names and whatnot? The names they had written out there, you couldn't even read them—who could speak German among us? There was this other time when we were marching through the city, or was it a village—darned if I remember. Anyway, I ran into this doorway and stood there, waiting, but this police woman grabbed me out of there. She slapped me silly then.

There was this other time, when we were on this meadow, and there were these short pine trees planted there and these women stuck their heads underneath. The officers, I mean, in the scorching heat, because all the officers were women. So I escaped and went into this ditch or maybe it was a gravel pit. I took myself there and suddenly I see Zsuzsi coming. "Oy," I tell her, "if they find you now, I will knock your head in." I was there on my own. "Come, get in here with me 'cause if they find us, they will beat our heads in." Then there was this little girl, a Vlach Gypsy she was, Milka. Her name was Milka. And after her, Bori. That one, she was a Beash Gypsy. With her, there was this young woman. She was from Rum, can't say if she is dead or alive now, that one, Margit. So all of a sudden we were four, no, five!

When we escaped there were three women coming along the ditch, on their way home from church. They saw us hiding there and we made like, "Shhhh, don't!" After the trucks fell in order and left, the women signaled to us to come out. One of them was living in the very next house. She took us inside. I even went out to do the hoeing for that woman, to help her out, God knows, I am telling you. When the war was over, the woman gave us clothes,

saying, "Don't go in these clothes, they will recognize who you are." Then there was this warehouse, a big one for the soldiers, and we found some cloth there and I made myself clothes to wear. After this happened, we met each other no more. We were there for a week, hiding in that house. We stayed there for a week and the transport was gone and they were not looking for us because we were hiding—they couldn't tell where we were. . . . This happened toward the end. Then, soon after, the camp was liberated.

When the war was over, we were all hiding inside a haystack, the four or five of us, those who escaped with me as I told you. Then we heard bullets hitting the haystack, whistling. "Oy," I said. "Kids, we lived this long but now we are going to die," I told these girls. But Milka, she was saying, "Don't be afraid, don't be afraid!" She was the one I really liked. Oh yes, Aunt Mari was with us too. She was an elder woman. She says, "Don't be scared, Terus—you shouldn't be scared! We got away—we are free!"

Well, in the morning we climbed out of the haystack and saw this young man standing there, in the morning. He escaped just like us. I went back and said to them, "Kids, this haystack must be full of folks." These women say to me, "Don't be afraid, Terus, don't be afraid. They are not going to hurt us." So we weren't frightened and went into the village. We see young men on bicycles pedaling by, going to work. "*Vaina Kaputta*!" they were saying. Who could tell what it meant? "*Vaina Kaputta*! *Vaina Kaputta*! *Vaina Kaputta*! *Vaina Kaputta*!"—so the war was over.

Well, when we hit the Czech lands, the soldiers took us into a bureau—they were Czech soldiers. From there, we came home—they put us on trains and [we] came back home and by the time we were put up in the barracks, all three of us were together again, well, those who survived.

When did I get home? Oh, dear, I cannot tell you now. I can't tell you the day, but the weather was fine again. Yes, it was a fine day and we were walking along the meadow and it was nice and green.

I told these stories to my children, but many don't believe me. Not even in the village.

Recorded on February 4, 2000 at Ondód.
Interviewer: Ágnes Daróczi

Mrs. István Sztojka (Csepel)

I was born in Bölcske, Tolna County, on 27 January 1927. I never went to school and I can't read or write. I was 15 when my future husband came down to Bölcske from Budapest. His family was in horse trading but he was also into playing music and that's why he was down in our parts. So we fell in love with each other and ran away, as it is done among the Roma. We came to Csepel to live, that's where my husband's family always lived, and he also worked here in the factory. I stayed home with my mother-in-law and the family of my husband.

Then the war came. We knew that they dragged off a lot of Jews from Csepel too. They took my husband as junior soldier and in a collection camp in Kistarcsa. They wanted to take him on to Germany. At the time we had no children because [I had had miscarriages]. When they took my husband away, I moved back to Bölcske.

The camp commander liked my husband because he played music to him all the time. That's why, when they came to take them away to Germany, he put a large hat on my husband's head and pushed him among the old ones who were supposed to stay. This is how he was saved, because the Russians soon liberated the camp.

I was on my way to Kistarcsa to visit my husband when they caught and arrested me. If it was only a day later I would have been spared. We lived here, with my father-in-law, in this street and this was my home. The other Roma lived in Királyerdő. They were rounded up too. The Arrow Cross men came at dawn and surrounded the house. They told us to take a pot or a mess tin with us. They took us to the police headquarters in Csepel, then on to the brick factory in Óbuda.

We stayed a month or two in the brick factory. We lived in a place where they warm the bricks or what. There were these mold-like things made of iron, that's what we ate out of because we had no mess tins. There were Jews there too but separately. We were guarded by Arrow Cross soldiers. One of them said, "Well, these will make good canned meat," but at the time we had no idea what they were talking about.

At the time we were still together with the men. Women, children and men. First I was taken for a child and that is why I did not get a number on my arm later. But my sister-in-law, she did get one. But we could still have visitors there. But I had no relatives—my mother in Bölcske had no idea where I was. Once, Hitler came personally, with soldiers. Then they put us on trains like cattle. They gave us something salty and stinky to eat. Water, we got none at all. People emptied themselves in the car and slept on top of

corpses. There was a frightening lot of us, all Roma. Well, then we stopped at Taho (Dachau), which was in Germany. From there, we were taken to Bergenbelsen and Munich where there was electricity in the fence. Wherever we stopped, there was camps.

All we got to eat was boiled beetroot, once a day. We also got a tiny bit of bread, but that too only once a day. Once I dropped my mess tin into the hot beetroot. I was crying as I rummaged around in the hot liquid to find it. My whole arm was all blisters afterwards.

They did not make us work, only the Jews. I don't know what the men had to do, because by then they were separated from us. Happened that once they drove us all outside, barefoot in the cold snow, and poured water on us. Once I could not bring myself to go out, because of the typhus, and the guard smacked my hand with his rifle so hard that it is paralyzed to this day.

Then the dysentery epidemic broke out because we picked the potato peels up from the courtyard. More than half of those whom I went out with together died. They were dropping like flies. But a great many also died when the Americans came in and gave us good food and of course the stomach and the intestines were all dried out, that's why those people died.

We were going to be taken to Auschwitz too, but the Americans came in time. The Jews somehow knew everything about everything and they told us, don't worry now, the Americans are coming. That day, when the Germans felt they were coming, they poisoned all of our food to get rid of us at once. But the Jews spoke German and told everybody not to eat anything because the food was poisoned.

The Americans came—it was a Sunday, I will never forget that day. They brought a lot of food with them. I had my wits about me and had none of the food. I drank tea first, lots of it. That's how I did not die, even though I was so weak that I could only crawl to reach the cauldron, so badly down I was with the stomach typhus. I drank tea and ate those delicious crackers. Then there were doctors and gave us injections. They waited until we got stronger. Then they put us on trains again. We had to report here at the Keleti train station [Budapest]. They gave us these Russian monies—wasn't really worth anything.

I got to know that my husband shacked up with this musician woman because he thought I would never come back. But when he heard that I was alive, he came down to Bölcske, to my mother's house. He left his new woman for me. We moved back to Csepel to my father-in-law's house and my husband got his artisan's permit in tin and pot repair. He also went to play music at weddings. Then the children started coming: four survived out of ten, two

boys, two girls. The others were stillborn and I had miscarriages too. I was with my husband for 36 years. He died in 1977.

After that, Gusztáv Mohácsi became my common-law husband. That one, he was a political prisoner for ten years. They never paid any compensation after him, though he too was deported. He was beaten so much that he got cancer of the lungs.

I worked for 15 years at Hungarian Textile and cleaned for the IKV [property maintenance company] for eight years. My pension is 39,000 forints. After my common-law husband, I am getting 500 forints because we were never married. This is very little—I can just pay the bills. My daughters married early. The four of us live here: my son, my daughter-in-law, my grandchild and myself. I even have 22 great-grandchildren.

Last year I went to Parliament Square, to the Pharrajimos anniversary, but I am quite fed up with the whole thing. What we suffered in the camps, neither America nor Switzerland can compensate us for.

Recorded in July 2001 in Budapest.
Interviewer: Ágnes Daróczi

Mrs. Angéla "Mici" Lakatos (Székesfehérvár)

They got us all together and took us off to Várpalota. There were many of us and we were locked in a barn.

It was raining, it was snowing, the children were screaming—you can imagine—we did not have a bite of bread to eat. We were crying too, like what were they going to do to us? The gendarmes told us that we will get bread and water in the shelter. In the morning, they drove the men there to dig a pit. They never let them come up from the bottom—they got mowed down. When we got there, the men were all dead. Then they started to shoot us, the women and children. I was with a baby then. I was going to have it in July. I got eight bullets, in my arm, in my leg, my side—here look—and my thigh. Eight places I was hit.

Only I survived, and a little girl. When it got silent, they went and brought out a carbide lamp from the railway guard's shack and examined us. I was just lying there in the pit and never moved. When they were gone and it was quiet again, I started pushing bodies around me to see which one was still alive. My hand fell on this girl and she pinched me back. I says to her, "Who are you?" "Which one are you?" And she says, "I am Falat." "Hey," I says to her, "pull me up, I can't get up on my own."

Recorded in 1975 in Székesfehérvár.
Interviewer: György Márványi

Mrs. István Pilisi (Budapest)

I have never seen so many Gypsies like at that time. It was a whole caravan. But they were so many I don't know how to tell you . . . They came in columns—you couldn't see the end of them. Maybe from Transylvania or Yugoslavia. Unending columns, covered wagons. Those who couldn't get on the wagons were running alongside. So many Gypsy men. And lot of women, too, in long, colorful skirts, barefoot. They never looked at anybody, just kept going across the field, like they were crazy. They were fleeing from the Germans—they did not want to be picked up.

You see, this field was close to the Danube. If there was a flood or after heavy rains, all the pits and hollows filled up with water and there were puddles all over the place. At the edge of the field, there were military buildings, military warehouses and barracks, and because of the war, the soldiers had dug trenches around the whole complex.

So there is this mass of migrant Gypsies, marching across the field before the barracks. We, city Gypsies, we were just staring at them . . . The Arrow Cross started to register us musician Gypsies in Baja too, but thank God, there were no deportations . . . So we were watching them as they went by with their carts. Then Bella Dankó noticed that a young Gypsy woman was lying on the bottom of a ditch—she was in labor. The poor soul, she laid herself down in that big ditch so nobody could see her. She was ashamed of her pains. She was also ashamed because nobody was taking care of her. We even had to pull her skirt up to her stomach, they hadn't even done that much for her. When we stood around her, she started screaming and wailing. By then her pains were really on, the head of the child was already out.

Bella Dankó, she was the oldest among us, she assisted with the birth. She even cut the umbilical cord. Because we were just making lace when they came and we went out to watch them and she still had the scissors hanging from a cord around her neck. She used those scissors to cut the umbilical cord. When the baby was out, Bella Dankó took her white blouse off, tore one of the sleeves off and dipped it into one of the puddles, only the top of the puddle so it wouldn't get muddy. She wiped off the baby with that wet piece of blouse—its body was covered with blood-slime—we had to wipe it off. Then she wrapped the baby in the rest of the blouse.

That little Gypsy woman was sitting on the bottom of the pit and took the crying baby into her arms. All of a sudden, she jumped up, was out of the pit like a lightning and started to run after the carts. She was scared the others would leave her behind. This little woman, she never rested as long as it took me to tell you this. She jumped up and ran after the others, because

the caravan kept on going. The Gypsies were beating the horses like the devil, driving them hard. Those who were not on the carts were running alongside in the mud. We were into the autumn by then. I gave my vest to Bella Dankó so she could cover herself with something. The Gypsy woman was running until she caught up with the caravan. We could see her being picked up by one of the carts.

A few days later we heard that not far from Baja, the Germans machine-gunned the entire caravan, killing everybody.

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Interviewer: Károly Bari

Mr. Gyula Balogh (Rákospalota, Budapest)

They came for the Gypsies in November. They collected everyone from Kispest, Rákospalota, Pestlőrinc and took them to the brick factory in Óbuda. They collected 500 gypsies from around Budapest and transported them to the castle in Komárom. There were more than 2,000 people there, men, women, Jews and Gypsies.

In Komárom, they threw dead Gypsy babies onto the dung heap. Whoever died of starvation was thrown on the dung heap. What have those Gypsy babies done? What was their crime? That they had been born? They threw their dead bodies on the dung heap . . . Such hateful soulless there never was in the world as in those days. Then a train came. They put us aboard and took us to Győr. I can't remember how many we were to a car, but a lot, something like 50. Men only. The women and children were separated from us earlier. There was a bombardment at Győr, the railway was bombed and they could not take the women and children on to Hegyeshalom. The train was hit by a bomb and their group was let go free. But when they started running, they were gunned down. Whoever they could, they shot down. The whole landscape was black with dead bodies. Very few were those who survived. . ..

They took us menfolk from Győr. In the morning, we realized we were in Vienna. They took us on, first to Dachau. The camp was surrounded by water and electric barbed wire. There were watch towers everywhere, manned by guards with machine guns. It was evening when we arrived, or night, around 10 pm. They herded us into a large hall where we stayed till the morning.

In the morning, German soldiers and doctors told us to undress. They took away our clothes, shaved our heads and made us have a bath. The water in the pool was as cold as ice. If someone did not want to go in, he was pushed in. But the water was such that it made your eyes smart.

Then a man of great rank came, an officer. They were selecting among us. Whoever was told to stand on the left was killed. An SS officer told us, "You come here, there is no way back from here. You are not going anywhere from here." They took everything off us—they even pulled the gold teeth from the mouths of the Jews. The Jews were made to sleep in tents. The Germans beat them and killed them—and everybody else. They killed like other people breathe. That naturally. They were that cruel. They took away our clothes and gave us some thin striped clothes and striped caps. It was like summer wear but we were into December by then. They put us into a barracks, some one hundred of us. We were lying there like pigs.

In Dachau, there was this Gypsy kid from Nyirbátor; his name was Sanyi. He escaped from the camp but he was caught. I saw with my own two eyes

what they had done to him. They tied him to a cross, like Jesus. In the night. When they tied him to the cross, they drove all of us out into the square to watch him being crucified. We had such colds in the winter of '44 like never before. It was cold and snowing and the Gypsy kid froze on the cross. When the sun came up, he was blue like a plum, frozen. That is how they killed him.

Three weeks later, that doctor, Mengele, came to the camp and examined us. It was all over for the ones he sent to the left. There was a crematorium and they burned them. Many times we said to each other, "Oh, there is smoke coming out of the chimney and so many human lives in that smoke!" Those who had been there longer told us the Germans were making soap out of people. . . . Every week they drove us to the medical examination, naked. They always tortured us with something, always gave us injections. Oh, that Mengele! May the ground reject his body! May he never rest in the ground! There never was such a cruel man in the world as he was.

A few weeks later, they took us to Buchenwald, then on to Muna. We worked in an ammunitions factory. We put shells and bombs into crates and loaded the crates unto trains. I was thinking to myself, maybe God will help me and I can escape from here. I escaped along with Máté, my uncle. He was there too. When we were being watched by this hunchback soldier, we ran away. In the factory courtyard where we worked, the fence in one place was rather low. We jumped over it and ran, barefoot in the snow. The Germans came after us with their dogs, German shepherds, but we got ourselves into a pine forest and they couldn't catch us. We got to a town—it was called Weimar. But we were too afraid to go in. There was garbage dump on the outskirts, where people from town took the garbage to. We got there as the sun was going down. We found ourselves some bad clothes, coats. We wrapped out feet in long rags. Our hunger was so great, my son, that we ate the potato peels that the folks threw away. God strike me if I am lying. I even found a box of matches there, thinking, thank the Lord, now we will make us a nice fire.

We were out in the forests until March. We only moved on the sly, always toward the East. When it was sunny, that was fine, but when it was overcast we didn't know which direction to take. But we moved on, all through the winter, in the forest.

We were not far from the Czech border. Once as we made a little fire in the forest, we were stumbled upon by the forest wardens. That's when they shot Matei dead. He was going to run from them, but they shot him down. . . . I always said, let's never leave each other, Matei, my brother. If there is trouble, the two of us will stand up to it, but we will never make it home without the

other. I hurt my foot, stepping on a nail, that's why I couldn't run away. The forest wardens caught me and that's how my life was saved. Matei ran right away and one of the wardens shot a bullet into him. He died on the spot. I was taken from one captivity to another, until the camps were liberated. I came home in July of 1945.

Coming home with me was a Jewish man whose child was saved by Gypsies. When they started coming for the Jews, the man took his two-year-old son to horse traders he knew in Pesterzsébet to have them take care of him until he comes home. And they took care of the child. Of course, they had to hide themselves in that time too, since after a time, the Gypsies had to hide too, but they survived somehow. The whole family and the Jewish child, too. When we got home, the father went looking for him. Only he stayed alive, the Jewish man—his wife and mother also died. He found the horse trader Gypsy, and get this, the little Jewish child couldn't talk to him because he only spoke Gypsy. So he was talking to his father in Vlach Gypsy and that one, he was just kissing him and weeping. This is how these things were. . . . Three of my uncles—my mother's brothers, Józsi, Matei and Péter—were deported along with me, but I was the only one to come back. They also took my mother. She was killed in Poland.

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Interviewer: Károly Bari

Mrs. Miklós Murzsa (Újfehértó)

My name is Mrs. Miklós Murzsa, my maiden name, Mária Algács, and I was born on the 29th of March, 1931 in Kisvárda.

I was here in the ghetto with my parents. They took my father away from here. There were five of us siblings—the others were all little—I was the oldest at 14. I was here with my siblings and they took my father away from here, for work, and he never came back. I was here with my five siblings and my relatives. They also brought in people I knew from Érpatak and Geszteréd. They also brought in many foreign Gypsy men and we were put all together with them. They only left the old folks here, those who couldn't work. We must have been around 200 or 300. I couldn't tell you now, not exactly, but there were frighteningly lots of us.

We slept on the ground. On the floors. In the Jewish apartments. There was no furniture in them, it was taken away by somebody. So we had to sleep on the floor, side by side, like the shepherds. That's how we slept on the ground, on the floor.

This here was the Jewish ghetto before but they took all the Jews away, then they collected us and brought us here. Oh, yes. In these empty houses, because there was no furniture—people had already carried that away. There was no furniture at all, so we had to sleep in the empty houses, on the floor, right on top of each other. That's how many we were.

We were guarded by gendarmes. The gendarme station used to be here, toward the train station. There was a non-com, by the name of Korom. I remember him well—the other was Sergeant Meggyes. And there were strangers too. They brought in police from Nagykálló because there was not enough police here to guard us. There were gendarmes guarding the front gate, standing there all day and all night. I am telling you, all day and all night. They always stood under the windows and in the doorway, the gendarmes.

In these six months, we ate what we were brought by these good Hungarian people. They brought us food by the sackfuls and in these big pots. Then they fixed up a kitchen and they only cooked potato soup. That's the kind they cooked. Always potatoes, never meat.

We were hungry, very hungry all the time. The bigger children got almost nothing because what little there was had to go to the little ones.

They told us to pack all our stuff, but they didn't let us take duvets. Only the clothes we had on our backs—so that's how we had to lie down, with no blankets.

They shaved us, our heads and down there, too. They shaved us and . . . There were some old folks whom they didn't take away and their daughters

were sitting in front of them naked and the old men too. We were looking at each other and no matter how ashamed we were, there was nothing we could do. We were naked. They shaved us up there and down there.

We were locked up all day. We were not allowed to go into the courtyard. We had to be inside and maybe we could stand by the door or the window, but there was no room to walk around much. They divided us and put us up in the Jewish houses. There were these long houses here, like this.

There were old folks and children, tiny children. Some just born. Mothers were suckling their young ones. The old folks were sick. And the women, they were wailing and screaming. They couldn't sleep at night as they were afraid they would be coming for them and take them away from here. See, we knew that the trains were already waiting at the station. In the autumn, they got ready to take us away, but they couldn't because the Russians were already coming. They must have heard something; because we were in there when the Russians took Debrecen, we heard when Debrecen was bombarded.

I cannot tell you when that was. We were just waiting, waiting for them to come and take us away like they did with the Jews. They wanted to take us to the same place. We were always waiting for the order to come down. There were Germans in this courtyard, some Germans. They brought along girls from the Ukraine—the officers had very pretty girls with them. They had this death's head on their caps and they were ordering the gendarmes to beat us. And beat us they did and they didn't give us food, made us starve. They couldn't care whether it was an old one or a child, they beat everybody. They made us line up and they took . . . they did it to the Gypsy girls. You know. Raped them. They raped the Gypsy girls!

I gave birth in the ghetto. There was this Gypsy woman, Aunt Ángyél, Jóska Gyuri's wife—she took it from me. They were waiting for it in the doorway. They took it away. I thought they were taking it into a home and even my mother told me, "They took it to Nyíregyháza, to a home." When we got out, we looked for the child everywhere. Couldn't find the child. So many times I went to the Council, but they always said they couldn't find the child—it was not registered.

The good people brought us food, sacks of bread. They fed us, the good people. Aunt Klárika, Mrs. Köteles—God bless her even in the ground!—she brought us so much food. She did it every day. She cooked and brought along bread in sacks. She baked bread and brought it to us. The gendarmes allowed food to be brought in to us. There was Mrs. Bolega, Aunt Zsuzsóka, Mrs. Koszta, these good women from the Hungarian quarter. They felt sorry for us and they brought us food. Many of them were coming here with food. There was Mrs. Fehér, the old Mrs. Fehér. She drove a cart and brought us

food on the cart. They cooked for us and brought us potatoes, so we could eat. But then they fixed up something here. And that wasn't like the food we were brought from the outside—they gave us mostly potatoes. Yes, lots of potato soup but sometimes there wasn't enough. Then only the little ones could eat.

But if the women here in Újfehértó weren't such good people, we would have starved to death. There were many of them and they brought us food everyday and the gendarmes let them. The German officer was ordered to let them give us the food. They brought the food to us in these large pots.

There were some people from Érpatak and Geszteréd that were full of bugs—they were not clean. There was lots of lice. There was no washing facilities. There was nothing here. The water had to be drawn from the well and they gave us water in bottles, handed them in, because we could not go outside. Whoever did go was beaten.

We could go to the latrine only if they were standing there. And we were not allowed to close the latrine door. They were here, the toilets, in the courtyard. Once I went in and wanted to close the door, so they beat me. That's why they beat me bad. They beat me all the way to the door, because I couldn't help it, I just couldn't, I just couldn't do it because I was embarrassed. I really had to go but I couldn't because they were standing there, watching. But eventually, we got used to it—we had to. We could not close the door: they were standing there and watching what we were doing.

The women gathered their children around them, put their arms around them and they were sitting like that, on the floor. That's how the women, Gypsy women, were holding their children.

They were saying the children were hungry and they also said they didn't care if they were taken away or if they were killed. But they never came for us—we were wondering—but they never came for us. Of course, there were men who were taken away. A big truck came along, they lined all the men up and they took the young ones and left the old ones. We didn't know anything about their fate. My father was among them. His name was Gyula Algács. He was taken from here and they also took István and Kálmán Murzsa. I cannot even remember all that they took. But some managed to escape and come back. Kálmán was one—he ran away and came back.

He said—I can't remember exactly where he was—he said something about the Carpathians or something like that. I can't tell you where they took them. But at the border, he ran away at night. They took all the young ones, those who were forty or fifty, but those who were sixty they left behind. But only this Kálmán managed to get away. Unfortunately, he cannot tell you about it—he is dead now. We never heard again from the rest of those who were taken away.

They never came back. We know nothing about them. . . . I had looked for my father but we never found out anything. I don't know which direction they took them, only that they were taken away that direction, far away, into Germany. Kálmán escaped and brought us news that my father was alive at that time—he was still there.

He was born in 1905, I think, somewhere in Romania. I don't know where exactly, in Nagykároly mayhaps, Nagykároly or Szatmár—I don't know any more. At the time it was Hungary but now it is Romania. I don't know any of his relatives and never looked them up.

As far as I know, the Russians came in the autumn. I can't tell you exactly when. But then, the order came down and even the Chief Notary was out here. He was looking us over and said all the Gypsies had to be let go. We didn't know why they were letting us go, they just did. We had tiny huts in the quarter, no houses there, only huts, so we went back there. We were very poor Gypsies—I didn't even know what a shoe was until I was a married woman and had a husband. We were very poor. There was no work for Gypsies, just like now. We were terribly poor.

In the summertime, we went "graining" and to pick potatoes with my parents. That's how we called it. We gathered fallen grains of corn and potatoes. And the women, they went from door to door. They went to help and do the washing or carry yellow earth—that's what we had back then—we carried the nice yellow clay and used it for glazing and covered it with sand. My mother was lugging it too. Then they gave her potatoes for it . . . but when the Russians came in, things got much better. We made adobe. That was better. Some went into trade, the Vlach Gypsies. Then there were horse traders, like Jóska Gyuri and the Lakatos family. Uncle Jóska, he was the one who lived here with Aunt Ángyél. He was here, he lived here, but when they set up the ghetto, he wasn't here yet. He came here afterwards. Yes, they were horse traders and they were rich. They went around in beautiful carts, wore handsome boots on their feet—nicely dressed—they went to the markets in Debrecen, Nyiregyháza, went all over the place and sold horses.

But we, we were very poor . . .

Recorded on March 31, 2000 at Újfehértó.
Interviewer: János Bársony

Mrs. József Kazárine [born Terézia Horváth] (Meggyeskovácsi)

I was born on 25 September 1933 in Zalakávás. We lived there, the ten of us in the swineherd's hut. There were eight of us sisters and brothers. We did not go to school. We lived in the swineherd's hut and the village was too far to walk to.

My mother? She left us. She went off on her own all the time. We had to go to work on daily wages. Well, there were no wages but they gave us food for work—that's how.

One day they came at dawn and picked up all of us, the gendarmes did. I didn't know them, there were so many of them and there were Arrow Cross men with them too. There were so many people. They rounded us up and we had to leave everything behind. We could only take a little bit of food and clothes along with us. When we came back from the ghetto, even the windows were all broken. They took everything away: we had our wheat up in the loft, because my father worked, but upon our return we found nothing.

There must have been 20 or 30 of us. They put us on carts and took us to Szentgyörgy. We took the Zalakávás route—I mean we did go into the village and then they took us to Zalaegerszeg by train. Then, all of a sudden, they took us away from Zalaegerszeg.

In Zalaegerszeg, there was this big camp-like thing—that's where they took us. There were Jews there and Gypsies like us. We were guarded by gendarmes. It was the autumn but I can't remember which month. It was the autumn—we had very chilly days. We spent something like a week in Zalaegereszeg while they collected all those folks. In the train station in Zalaegerszeg, they put us on trains. There were so many cars, lots of them. Can't remember about how many there were but there were lots.

In one of these cars there was about 40 of us—we could hardly move. There were so many of us. They only gave us food when we got to Komárom. Well, they gave us food, but what food—it was beans with pebbles in there! A lot of children died. And the lice were eating us alive. We were on the train days and days. Must have been three or four days. But there was no food on the train. Not only did they give us no food, we didn't get any water either! Well, I can't remember if they gave us water, there must have been some water somewhere there because you can't survive this many days without water. They must have given us some.

We arrived in Komárom and those big barracks. They were like bunkers. After we got there, my father was with us for a day maybe, then they took him

away. They picked them out of the line. They lined us all up and picked them out. Women, too. All the adults who could work, women too, of course.

We never knew where they took him. They never told us. Took him to the train? Or shot him dead right there? Well we could not see that, right? They lined them up and took them away. Those Germans, those bastard policemen were selecting them, with rubber truncheons. They took from Zalaegerszeg and they took two of my brothers, but one of them managed to come back. One was Lajos Horváth, the other Gyula Horváth, but Gyula Horváth stayed out there—he perished there, in that Germany. Only Lajos came back. Then, when they took them away, they drove us back to the bunkers, right away. We did not have far to go. . . .

They kept us there for more than three weeks. We stayed there for more than three weeks. But there was nothing to do there, nothing at all. Nothing in the world. And they gave us no food, so we starved to death and the lice ate us too.

There were little children there, some still swaddled up—there were so many dead children.

Lots of people died there. I didn't take it to heart then, I was just a little girl. What they did with the dead bodies, where they kept them, where they put them, I don't know that. But I know they took them from the bunkers.

Where to? I don't know but we had so many dead.

We had our mother with us there, but what could she give us to eat, nothing but what they gave us!

I was a little one, but we pulled through. We were hungry like hell. If we did not line up for the bread, they beat us with rubber truncheons. They made us suffer so much. And me, what was I then but a little girl.

And then all of a sudden they let us go.

They opened the doors but gave us no money, nothing. We had to catch trains to come home. Sometimes they threw us off, sometimes they let us get on. . . .

All of us were saved. We couldn't wait to come home. Everybody went off in all directions. . . .

All the folks ran in all directions. Nobody waited for nothing. They opened the doors and we ran. Each one off to wherever they wanted.

But I didn't run from my mother—I could not have come home on my own.

There were no Russian soldiers at that time, only Hungarian ones.

Then this train came and me and my mother and siblings got on and made it home somehow. Sometimes we had money, sometimes they threw us off and sometimes we walked.

That little money we had on us, what was that enough for? My mother had little money. All we had was with my father when they took him away. We had a few *forints*—that was spent on food—then we had no money, no grub, and were starving.

Well, let me tell you no lies, it took us three or four days for us to get home. By Christmas, I think—by then we were home.

There was nobody in the house and all the windows were broken. We were going to freeze to death in that house. The neighbors, they told us nothing. Nothing at all. They never liked us.

The Arrow Cross men who picked us up—I don't know, but I don't think they were home. Perhaps all of them ran away by that time.

I am sure they were not at home. I don't want to tell you no lies—I don't know.

Then, I was growing up in [extreme] poverty, but I grew up somehow and got married.

We planted potato and spring came. Potato and whatever you needed around the house. I was working for food.

Because by then, all my sisters were married.

I was the youngest one.

Once I went to work at Jegespuszta—that's beyond Győr, and that's where I found my husband. Later he left me.

We got together and I bore him a daughter but he left me.

So I had a daughter. She got married a long time ago. She went off to America.

This is my second husband. He was working there, eying me. Then we got together and that's how I ended up here. Ended up here in Bolozsa, this stinking Bolozsa. I wish I had never come here. This is a terrible life here.

We have been living together for forty years. Forty years. And I have four daughters, never had a son. I was bringing up the little ones and my husband went off to work. Of course, I had to get some cleaning jobs. By then, my little daughter was five. Then I stayed for five years.

I get a little money after the children, but very little pension. It is so little, so very little.

Recorded February 6, 2000 at Meggyeskovácsi.
Interviewer: János Bársony

Mrs. János Rostás (Budapest–Kispest)

I was born on 3 November 1926.

We were very poor. My father had had three wives. The first one bore him two daughters who died. I was born of his second wife. My mother died in childbirth when I was about one and my older sibling two. My Grandma must have married my father off pretty soon afterward so that the little orphans can have a mother. He had six children from his third wife. We were well-off and never, but never went off to beg. We sold things. We went to markets. We are Tzolar (carpet weavers and traders)—this is our traditional occupation. But we were poor and the children couldn't go to school. Me neither. We were growing up poor-like. I was raised by Grandma, my father's mother. She was from Csikszereda—they came over in 1926. They wandered about a lot. Where there are many children, there are many poor ones as well. We always lived among Hungarians. We never were quarrelsome or thieving. There were, of course, other Gypsies in our street too. Three brothers in the street but we never lived in a Gypsy quarter. They rented a part of a house and that's where they lived. In Kispest. They took us away from Kispest, all of us. The police came to the house and took us. It was the 3rd of November—I remember that—I don't know which year but it was the 3rd of November. Yes, they took all of us. The police collected us and took us. First, to the police headquarters. Those people sold us out and then we were taken to the brick factory. In Buda. From there, they took us to Germany. They drove us on foot from Kispest to Óbuda, the children too. On the way, they were beating us. Together with the Jews too. They told us it was because we were Gypsies. They were taking the Jews at the same time too. Some managed to run away, but they took all the Gypsies from here, from Kispest. We were still asleep. It was early and we were still asleep when they grabbed us, "Come now, put your clothes on because we are taking you in." They took our clothes and whatever else we had, everything.

Well, it was the Germans who collected us—they gave the orders. They showed us nothing—just like that—"Get up," and we went. By that time we knew that the Germans came in and occupied Hungary. There were so many Germans like hairs on your head. They were taking the Jews already. There were some Gypsies from other countries, who fled here. They told us that the German Gypsies were already being rounded up. We were still children at that time.

As soon as we were on our way, they started beating us. We were there with relatives, some 200 of us. There were Lovari, Tzolars, all sorts of Gypsies. All together. They kept us in the brick factory for some two weeks. They

gave us food in boxes. We were already very badly treated there. All of us were put together in one place and sometimes they gave us food and sometimes they didn't. . . . We were treated very badly in the brick house—we ate very, very little bread. They drove us on foot, into the railroad cars. I couldn't get away. It was snowing. We only had enough space to sit down. They were brutalizing us already. We asked for water but they didn't really give us any. "Go, stinking Gypsies, you're all gonna die here."

When we got off in Germany, they took the men to the left and the women to the right, because Taho [Dachau] was to the right. That's when we saw our menfolk last. Then they took us from prison camp to prison camp, the most Godforsaken places. They had us walk from morning to evening and then they took us into that thing and the icy water came. I didn't even get into the bed—I was hiding underneath it so they couldn't harm me. They treated us very bad. Not just us but the poor Jews too, who were there with us. The dead, Jews or Gypsies, they put in a large pit, poured lime over them and burned them. Some were not even dead and they burned them too. In that Taho. Oh, it would take such a long time to tell you all about it.

When we got there, they took our clothes and shaved our heads, so we were just like this. They gave us boots that made our feet askew. We were crying and telling each other in Gypsy that we are all gonna perish here. They gave us raw potatoes to eat, they put the potatoes into the water they boiled noodles in and that's what they gave us. There were so many kinds of people there. But we knew we were going to die there. If we were not liberated, we would have all perished there. We only spoke to our own kind. They made us work in the barracks. In that big chill, when it was snowing, they threw us outside and told us to wash the barracks. We were guarded by German men. A woman prisoner was the commander of our barracks. We were lying on the bare ground, didn't even have blankets. In the morning they took us outside and counted how many died and how many were still left. Then they took us to work. We swept the courtyard, cleaned, and if somebody died, we had to take the body to the pit. Maybe there was a factory there, but they didn't have us work there. My stepmother was also there and my siblings and my father's siblings. When the guards heard that the camp was going to be liberated, they torched the barracks and all of the prisoners died there.

Six mothers with children came back, seven children and my father. But a lot of us died. Mária Rostás, my father's sister and Gizella, she too was a sister of my father's. János, Rudolf . . . . Lots of us died.

The Gypsies had this red star and the Jews a yellow star. We also got numbers, just on the outside, on our clothes. They didn't have time to kill us—they only made us suffer.

In the end we ate raw potato peelings, 'cause they didn't give us anything else to eat. We were liberated in Salzved. "You are going to eat well today," they said in Hungarian and they said in German.

Well, I says to them, "You hear this—they are going to feed us well today," I tell the women. But that food, that was already poisoned. Then an American appeared and that man, he made them stop—"That food must be buried immediately"—because the Americans arrived first. That's how we were saved. It was wartime and the English shot all those Germans dead. What scenes there were, my God.

I got on a train, then on another train and came back to Budapest through Prague. On my own. And I fell ill. I got some blood poisoning. Yes, because I asked them to give me something for this wound I had and what did they give me? Axle grease! This happened some two weeks before liberation. Then the English came in and the Americans, and I went straight up to them and showed them my hands. I showed them I was sick. The same day they liberated us I had an operation. I was in a hospital for something like a month. I regret that I came back but my husband was here. He was in Újhartyán, on labor service. It was toward the autumn when the gendarmes collected all the men, but fortunately all of them sneaked away and they couldn't take them to Germany. A month later, they took us and the entire family.

Back home we didn't even find the bare walls—there was no place to lay down our heads.

I came back, alone.

God rot those gendarmes wherever they are, deep in the ground. When we came home, we went and reported, but these old gendarmes, they were gone. We only reported at the police, nowhere else. We were telling ourselves, thank God we are home.

We were traders and went off to sell.

Julianna Rostás, Gizella—they were only children when we were out there but they could also tell you stories. They were so sick I had to carry them on my back. There was no doctor to see us. I had no children because they gave us those injections—not just me, everybody, those who were from there, born there too—so that we do not reproduce. In the first camp, in Taho, they already gave us those. All the young ones. Huge injections, like this. Sometimes they gave us injections every week. I myself got three or four. That's why I have no children. Never one born. I could never overcome it, not until this day.

Recorded on February 12, 2000 in Budapest.
Interviewer: Ágnes Daróczi

Mrs. Imre Dömötörné [born Ilona Lendvai] (Tüskevár)

We lived in Tüskevár. There were four of us siblings and I was six when we lost our father. The Germans deported him away. His Gypsy name was Csuri. His real name was István Lendvai. They took my father and my two grandfathers and my uncles from Komárom to Germany, to Dakhaio (Dachau). One of my maternal uncles came back, three years later, but he has died since, the poor soul. He was the only one to come back, from all this family. My father worked for a butcher with his brothers. He was a cart driver. He drove a horse-cart, carrying the meat to the ice. Back then, we had ice pits. In the winter, they filled it with snow and then put salt over it, or whatever it was, and there was ice in the summer. They took all the meat from the butcher to down there. My grandfather kept horses at that time. Because, you know, Gypsies like us, we all had horses. His sons didn't want to let him work—back then the young ones had more respect for their parents than today. So they didn't let their father work. He went to the market, he bought and sold, did the trade. He had a big family, eight children in all, five daughters and three sons, thank the Lord. We were a big family. Back then, we had it pretty good and we weren't like other Gypsies who had nothing. At Tüskevár, listen here my dear, we lived in a farmhouse in Tüskevár.

I was six years old and they took us in October. For eight months. My uncle heard it in the pub—there was this peasant who was a friend of his and he told him, "Go, run for your lives, buddy, because they are going to come and take you away." But there was no time to flee because they came for us that night. I remember, we were already in bed and they ordered us out of our beds. My mother pulled us out and quickly put some clothes on us and we were already on our way. There were some Hungarians who were on our side. There was this one who was taken away because he protected the Gypsies, told them, "Don't hurt these people. They are working Gypsies. Leave them in peace." He wanted the Gypsies to stay, but they took him away too and he never came back. From all around, they took the Gypsies—they only left the ones from Teléris. The magistrate stood by them and the squire as well, telling them to leave the Gypsies alone because they were hard working people.

They took us into Devecser. All the Gypsies from the Gypsy quarter, except one family. Somehow, they were spared. That one family, they went after their relatives to Komárom and ransomed them. They paid the gendarmes—that's how it always was: money talks and the dogs bark. The gendarmes and the Arrow Cross men took what little money and jewelry we had. Very nicely, they took everything from us. My poor mother, see, she slit her skirt at the waist and she stuffed some money there so that if we were ever free again,

she could buy us some food. That's exactly how it happened—when we were finally freed, she took the money out and bought us food, some horse sausage and bread. It was good. Anything that saves a life is good.

We got to Komárom, and they herded us like they herd sheep. Just like that. They brought some corn shuck and spread it on the floor so our place was relatively clean. Compared to everything else there. They put lawns on the roofs of the barracks so nobody could spot them from the air because they looked like they were pasture lands. It was not cold inside, all those folks warmed the place with their breathing and the rain could not get in because the walls were thick.

I have never seen so many dead people as I have there. Every day, there were heaps of dead people, children and elderly people too. Lots died from starvation. Then, if somebody talked back to them, they shot him on the spot or beat him to death. They beat them until they were dead. There were some guards, these felt sorry for the people. Sometimes they threw us a piece of bread and didn't talk to us that rough.

They threw all the dead bodies in one place—they piled them up, like when chickens drop dead or pigs or those fish that they are showing on television. One time, this elderly woman died, I was just right there and they put her into this tub—her children didn't let her be carried out just like that—they put her in a tub, put another tub on top and nailed the two together. I felt so sorry for that poor woman that I was sick to my heart—I was very young and I thought she was still alive but she wasn't. No, the poor woman was dead.

We were in that barracks for eight months. There were all sorts among us, Beash tub-maker Gypsies, all kinds of Gypsies, poor peasants, Jews, all kinds in the world—let me tell you—there were some 5[,000] to 6,000 folks. I could show you that barracks today. I went to see it again with my son and his wife, and this old geezer here also came along, but we were not allowed in because it was the weekend and we were told to come back on a weekday. Says my little son to me, "Mommy, you sure can't remember where you were." Not so, my son. Just come along, I says to them, always to the right, always to the right. There were these sheep pens—you know—they kept sheep in them. I was walking along and I saw the spot and I says to them, "This is where my grandmother was. This is where she gathered all that food that she took to us, on the other side, in the barracks."

We were only allowed out in the courtyard, that's where they ladled the food out to us. The more enterprising of us stood in line two or three times. They never noticed—there was such a throng of folks there. They gave us half a kilo of bread, that for one family. In the morning, we had black coffee. For

food we got some cabbage chopped up and boiled in a little salt water. And sometimes they gave us a few potatoes. There were some Beash who brought some food from home. They let them bring it in. One had a sackful of flour, the other some lard and roast meat. Once, my aunt says to one of them, "Can you give us a bit of flour please?" But they wouldn't give us—they wanted it all for themselves. People did not want to give each other food. The Beash made a fire from corn shucks in the courtyard and were baking buns in the embers. So my father says to them, "Could you please let my children have a bite of that?" "We give you nothing." So my uncle could not stand it anymore, rushed at the fire, kicked it all over the place and picked up two buns and slipped away. They broke them up and gave to everyone. I says to my father, "Father, I am not eating Beash food." You see, Gypsies like us always hated the Beash because they were always dirty.

I was the oldest in the family, with three younger siblings. Once I go outside for food and those other Gypsies snatched the bread from my hands. I says to them, "May the Lord never save you but make you choke to death on it. How can you do this? I am taking it to my little sisters." But he took it from me. And believe it or not, but he died, that one who took the bread from me.

There were these big containers there, for the water. They splashed some in there and that was it. We were so full of lice, so dirty . . . our mother washed our heads three or four times in there, can't remember now, and wiped us off with a bit of a rag, well, that was anything but washing. Those who were enterprising enough could always get something. The women went to the kitchen to help peeling potatoes, vegetables, carrots so that they could steal some of it for us to eat. But those who were caught stealing were beaten to death right away. My aunt, bless her soul, even managed to get some lard once and they cooked some soup thickened with fat and flour out in the courtyard for us. What a feast that was.

Then there was this woman from Nyárád, and the other one, well, they went to bed with the guards, so they had it a little better than us. I am angry with these because I saw it with my own two eyes that they were beating the others. They thought they were big shots and they could boss others about. They did survive, of course.

The men were with us for nine days. After that they separated us, only mothers with children and children stayed behind. Seven men. My children's father, my grandfathers and their sons. Only one of my brothers came home. They took them to Germany and we never saw them again. My mother saved two relatives, two girls, when she put my little sister into the hands of one, my other sister into the hands of the other—[as if] the children were theirs. Nobody checked and they were saved. My dear father, they took him from

us and we have never seen him again. My uncle saw him dead in Dakhaio, recognized my dead father. He said they killed them in a gas chamber. They stuffed them into a gas chamber and piped the gas in. And the dead, they put together with logs, one layer of men, another of wood, so on, and they lit the whole thing and burned the poor souls. My uncle told us many times that "yes, unfortunately, this is how it was, because I saw your father."

If I saw him again, I would recognize him, my father, even though I was a little child. Before that he was a soldier in Russia—he was coming home on leave. He wrote a letter that he was getting off the train in Jánosháza and have his dad meet the train. We all met the train. He was writing letters home—I remember this as if it were only yesterday—before my sister was born, he wrote a letter that "if it is a boy, name him Pityu because if I die at least my name will live on." Oh, the poor one, he did return, but I had little joy in that because they took him away soon after. He was 26 when he died.

The liberation came. They were dropping fliers. I was outside for food and picked up two of these. Quickly I sneaked back in, thinking our liberation was written on these. My aunt read it for us. Well, it said if the prisoners are not let go in the most human way within 24 hours, the whole country will burn in flames.

They let us go and we went out to the train station. They opened the gates and let everyone go to the station. We saw those poor soldiers, those Hungarian soldiers they were taking to battle on the trains, their legs were sticking out of the railway cars. They were looking at us and they were crying, throwing us what little bread and canned food they were given.

We returned to Tüskevár where we had nothing left in the world. They took all that we had. My aunt was waiting for us, she lived in Érd and the magistrate didn't let her be taken away. She learned that they were letting us go and came and waited for us in Tüskevár. She heated up some water and bathed each of us and combed the lice out of our hair, for we had horrifying lots of lice in there. Then she took off our clothes and threw all of it into the fire right away. I had beautiful, thick, long hair and she didn't want to cut it off, so she washed our heads in benzene. The folk around there knew us and they gave my mother some lard, some potatoes, everything they could. But my aunt did not let us gorge ourselves because we could all die. She cooked us some soup thickened with flour and eggs and she put vinegar into it and she portioned out as much to each as was alright to eat. They put us back on food gradually. There was no man in the family, only women. My little sister was three—she wandered around the house on her own. The rest were lying about, so weak we were, young and old alike. They only got up to make fire to feed us. The women were all by themselves, on their own and didn't know

what to do. They kept asking around if their men were still alive. But nobody could tell them anything.

We moved to Zala. We lived in Zalacsé and at the age of nine, I went to work the fields. It was because my grandmother was from there and my uncle said let's go there—we lost everything we had in Tüskevár—let's go to Zala. There my mother was married again and had three more children. So that's how we were seven. My mother was so beautiful that while he could have married a young girl, he married my mother with the four children she had. I don't need to tell you what life is like when you have a stepfather. My mother, bless her soul, she couldn't keep the peace in the family. She was raising so many children, after this marriage. Twenty years later she divorced this husband of hers. My dear mother, it is ten years since she died, right here, in my house.

Then, at the age of 14, I had to get married. I was not allowed to go to school because I was the oldest and had to help with raising the smaller children. When I moved away, back here, I met my husband—we are still together 48 years later. I got married and moved to Keléd and we had been married for ten months when they took my husband to Eger, to the army, and he was a soldier for 27 months. I already had one daughter, the oldest one. My husband was in the army, and went hungry all the time. There were times I worked all day without eating. I was staying with his parents in Keléd and we worked in the fields, hoeing and harvesting. Then we moved to Duka to live and bought a house. We lived there for 12 years, then, so that all those children would have a bigger home and that their father shouldn't have to commute to work, we moved here. Here, at the end of the village, we have a big house. My son also has a big house on Széchenyi Street. That one, we bought for him. We bought that big house so that as long as we are alive we could be together with our children. There is five daughters and this only son of mine. Marika, Margit, Ica, Erzsébet, Rita and the sixth one is Imi. Marika is 47 and my son is soon 31. I have suffered so much so that my children wouldn't have to suffer—I had all of them schooled. I collected scrap iron and medicinal herbs for the state for 43 years. Whenever there was any work, I did it all, but by now, I am completely wrecked.

Recorded in 2001 in Jánosháza.
Interviewer: János Bársony

Lajoskomárom

The following is the script of the documentary we filmed in the venue (the Transdanubian village of Lajoskomárom) of a mass murder that took place 52 years before.

The 16 persons murdered, all members of the Bajza and Peller families, have no cross with their name, or memorial tablet in the village. The only survivor, who married in the next village, is Ms. Piroska Peller. She has only a single picture of her family.

Director: Miklós Jancsó
Camera: Nyika Jancsó
Editor: János Bársony
Expert: Péter Szabolcs Keresztúri
Producer: József Szilágyi
Interviewer: Ágnes Daróczi (AD)

Narrator: *Between December of 1944 and March 1945, the front hardly ever left Lajoskomárom. The village changed hands a number of times: sometimes the Germans, sometimes the Russians managed to occupy it. In the third week of January 1945, the entire Gypsy population of the village was massacred by military gendarmes. First four men were killed, then all their relatives, women and children. Their bones rest in unmarked places in the cemetery ditch at the edge of the village. Does the village remember them? Has their memory been preserved by the collective consciousness? How can the village cope with this unconfronted past, the unburied dead? This is what our documentary is about.*

Pál Macher (PM), mayor of Lajoskomárom

AD: Mayor Pál Macher is serving his second term in office in Lajoskomárom. Mr. Mayor, tell us a little bit about yourself, the village and the history of the village.

PM: Well, I think the village is more interesting to talk about. At least for me it is. I was born here in Lajoskomárom and so were my parents and this, I think, has left its mark on my entire way of thinking.

The village was founded in 1802 by Prince Batthyány. In fact, they were looking for workers for their existing estate. When the word of the founding got around, a mass of settlers moved to the village.

They were from three nations, as our coat of arms also illustrates. The three types of settlers are marked by three denominations: the Hungarians

were Roman Catholic, the Germans Evangelical and the Slovaks (or Tots, as they were called at the time) later converted to Calvinism. They arrived as landed serfs and this later had a great influence on the history of the village.

After the emancipation of the serfs, they became their own masters and you can see this in the village to this day. In neighboring settlements, the count was the only rich man but here, after the emancipation of the serfs, the peasants became rich, thanks to their hard work and diligence. Anybody can see this in the village.

Narrator: *In World War II, between December 3 and 5, 1944, Hungarian troops occupied the village. On December 6, the village fell into the hands of the Soviets. On January 18, 1945, it was retaken by a German-Hungarian combat unit. On February 7, they were pushed out of the village, but the Germans retook it on March 11. Between March 15 and 20, the Red Army took the village for the last time.*

Geographically, we are at the meeting point of the hills of Somogy-Tolna and the plains of Mezőföld, in the southern part of Fejér County, some 30 km from Lake Balaton, and one can tell from the landscape, this is where the hills end and the plains of Mezőföld begin.

Pál Zsednai (PZ), local resident

AD: In 1944, you must have been 12.

PZ: Yes, I just a little older than 12 then.

AD: What kind of memories do you have of that period? What was the situation like then in Lajoskomárom?

PZ: This village changed hands five times during the war. On St. Nicholas Day, Russians came in for the first time and they left for the last time around March 15. Between these dates, the Russians held the village for two weeks, then the Germans for three weeks, then again the Germans for another week, and it went on like this. Then German-Hungarian troops came. In these parts the line of the river Sió was the front, down from Siófok all the way to Simontornya. The Germans could push the Russians back as far as that but no farther. Real fighting went on here, but the village was not entirely ruined. One bomb landed here, a direct hit on the Calvinist church. And we got a few shells as well—one hit our cellar but fortunately we were staying in the neighbors' cellar. Then of course, there were victims, unfortunately. Innocent victims, you might say.

For instance, there was this servant boy in one of the houses. One of the Russians came in and asked,"*Soldatyest?* [Are there soldiers here?]" Poor man!

How was he supposed to know what that meant? So he said yes. "There, in the stables." That's where they got him out of. First they pulled his boots off, then told him to run for it. He did, but they fired a volley into his back. His name was Jóska Horváth. His name is engraved on the hero's tomb. He never got up—they fired the volley and he fell right there in the field.

There was another one: in the cellar of the house next door, where we were staying, and there were other families as well because it was a bigger cellar. Well, they came in there too. There was a junior soldier there and they told him not to go up, not to go outside. But he did. The first thing the Russians did was to confiscate their two beautiful horses. That poor boy, his name was Gyurka Sráj and we don't know what happened. All we heard was a shot and then, "Oh, mother!" That's all he said. Well, such is life . . .

Then the front left the village. There were some people who left with the first front, but these poor Gypsies, well, winter was on its way. They went to these houses and brought blankets for them and this and that. Those who left with their horses and carts, they made it as far as, I don't know, maybe Kőszeg . . . but perhaps not even as far as Körmend, maybe only to the Bakony and then the front caught up with them. They came back and then somebody said they were the ones who took the stuff that was left behind. Immediately, the Germans rounded them up. Four men, I can show you, they are buried right next to our graves, where my mother and the family is resting. Later, they put the women and children onto a truck and took them away along the straight road. Here some 150 meters after the last house, they killed them. They have been long plowed over. They have been plowing over them for a long time. They had a pit dug by the field wardens, the watchmen, and they machine-gunned the people into that. Women too and children, as small as infants, all of them.

Narrator: *The murders took place on January 23.*

AD: Were they criminals or victims?

PZ: Well, ultimately, they couldn't have been criminals. Just because they gathered some blankets to keep them warm in the winter? The rich ones, who left their houses, only took as much as would fit on two carts and were gone. They left the rest of their things here. If they didn't do this to them, if they didn't murder them, they would probably have given everything back if they were asked. But the owners didn't need those things. They had plenty of that stuff left.

AD: How is it possible that there hasn't been any talk of this in the village for such a long time and that the names of the Gypsy victims are not recorded on the memorial plaque?

PZ: Well, that I don't know. I don't know why it has not been done so far. You see, people do like to forget. I think these things are better forgotten.

AD: Why?

PZ: Well, I think this is the way it is. This happens in all walks of life. But aren't you a relative of the Furulyás, or the Pellers? Because they say a daughter of theirs stayed in Siófok, one who got married there.

AD: No, I am not a relative of theirs.

PZ: All right, just asking. If you don't mind my saying so, because you are so dark.

AD: I am dark and I am a Roma person, but I only recently learned of this thing and it was by accident too.

PZ: None of them were left in the village. But people got over it, just like they got over the two Jews who were taken from here. Marci Dolstein and his mother, Aunt Cili.

AD: When were they taken away?

PZ: Well, I couldn't tell you that. I don't know when that collection was, when they took them away. By the way, I know of no other things like this here. But they never came back. What happened to them? They probably perished there.

AD: In the list of the village's victims I can see neither Jews nor Gypsies.

PZ: I can't see them either, unfortunately. What has been placed on it was put there recently, since they relocated it here. Because this stone or memorial was in the Evangelical cemetery. And there were objections, like this was Catholic and that one was not and that we need to put it in a neutral place. This is how it got here—in 1991.

Albert Bognár (AB), former custodian in the Village Hall

AD: Uncle Albert, let me ask you about old times.

AB: Go ahead.

AD: What do you know of the Gypsies of Lajoskomárom?

AB: Well, what do I know . . . how did that happen? Well, we were on good terms with them. They lived here, next door. The Pellers lived across the ditch and the bridge, and Jancsi Bajza lived down here, in the pit. We were on

good terms with both families. They never went begging—they worked from spring to autumn and worked hard.

AD: What kind of work did they do?

AB: Well, they made adobe and they burnt bricks.

AD: Did they also play music?

AB: Well, did they play music? Gyula had a big clarinet and he used to play on that if he had the time or there was a market or something. Jancsi Bajza had a violin but . . . but they didn't really do proper music. They were just fooling around.

AD: How many children did they have?

AB: Jancsi Bajza had two. I don't know how many Gyula had. Gyula may have a daughter who is still alive, Piroska. When that thing happened . . . when they rounded up the parents, Piroska ran away. She went to Kiliti. I can't tell you whether she is still alive or not.

AD: Who were rounding up the Gypsies?

AB: Soldiers.

AD: When and why?

AB: We-ell, why and when? When there was the first big battle at Csörsz. When the Russians were beaten back. That's when they picked them up. Why, that's a difficult one to say. One can only guess. . . ."

AD: And what were people guessing?

AB: What were. . .?

AD: What are they thinking? What are folks saying about this?

AB: We-ell, that I can't say. Because there are some who say, they are just Gypsies! Then there are others who have feelings for them, like, we never had trouble with them. Many people say this. Or used to say. They don't talk about this much anymore. Very few people who knew them are still around. Nobody who was close with them. And perhaps we are the ones in this neighborhood who were on best terms with them.

AD: What happened to them?

AB: They were executed.

AD: Who?

AB: All! All of them. The men were taken up to the cemetery by soldiers—I repeat, soldiers—and executed there and the women and small children were

executed here, at the end of the village. Soldiers dug a pit and executed all of them there.

AD: Women and children too?

AB: Women, children, everyone. Soldiers dug a pit and buried them afterward.

AD: And what did they say their crime was?

AB: I don't know. I cannot give you a definite answer. We never really asked.

AD: Were they Hungarian or German soldiers?

AB: Hungarian ones.

AD: Soldiers or gendarmes?

AB: Soldiers.

AD: Any of them from around here?

AB: Nah! No.

AD: Uncle Albert! Can you tell us how it happened? What do you know about this?

AB: How it happened? Well, what I can tell you is that when they picked up the men, they put the women and children on a cart. Then, next to the Village Hall, there was this kindergarten building, empty. That's where they put all of them. And, toward the evening the soldiers have already dug their graves. Then they ordered a truck and they put everybody on it . . . because the women were putting the kids on the back of the truck and then they took them to that place, made them get off and herded them into the pit, all of them. Then, machine-gun fire. It was all over in a few minutes.

AD: Uncle Albert, how do you know this?

AB: How? Well, I was the Village Hall janitor at the time. I was ordered to go there. At the end of the village, there was a barrier and the soldiers were guarding it. I had to tell the guard who could pass and who could not. Those whom I knew, could pass—those that I did not, could not come in. This took me about two hours, then the truck passed through, taking the women and children. When the truck returned, I could go home because there was nobody else who needed to be checked.

AD: Uncle Albert, did you actually see when they shot them?

AB: Well, I couldn't really see it because I was some 150 meters away and it was getting dark. And the pit was in the corn—it was among cornstalks—you had to go into the cornfield. You could not see for the corn.

AD: And what did you hear?

AB: Not a scream. It all happened so quietly. Except the gunshots, of course. I will tell you frankly, I shed tears for them. It still feels difficult to talk about it. One of the soldiers said, very appropriately, "Did we need to go to Russia to learn all this barbarism?" This was all.

AD: Who buried them?

AB: The soldiers did.

AD: They say Aunt Tera was pregnant.

AB: No, Tera was not pregnant. Maybe Rózsi was, but Tera certainly wasn't.

AD: I heard that there were lootings at the time. That they took things from the wagons left here. And that that is why this happened.

AB: Ahh, nah. No. They were not like that. These people earned their bread all round the year. They worked from spring to autumn. They sold brick for wheat and corn. The village was their customer and gave them wheat and corn for bricks. They had it ground and took it to the baker, who baked them bread, like they wanted him to. They had their flour in deposit. They got their bread from the baker like they wanted to. They never had to go begging.

AD: Were they good neighbors?

AB: Yes, they were.

AD: Only with you or were they on good terms with the whole village?

AB: The village too.

AD: Who initiated their killing?

AB: Like I said, the village authorities.

AD: Who were the village authorities?

AB: None of them are alive now.

AD: But who were they then?

AB: You know, farmers . . . the better kind . . .

AD: By name?

AB: Uugh . . . hmmm.

AD: What's the matter?

AB: That would be difficult to say . . . by name.

AD: Would you help us find your younger brother?

AB: Well, we'll get into your car and we will go look for him. He is a pensioner now. I don't know if he works, but we can go over to his if you so wish.

Pál Szemerei (PS), former cart driver

AD: Uncle Pali, we heard that in December of 1944, when the Gypsies were massacred, you were a cart driver.

PS: I drove the gendarmes.

AD: Where?

PS: Down Enying Street, from the end of the village to the sixth or seventh plot. They were buried in Pál Ruszner's plot. On the right hand side.

AD: How many were the victims and who were they?

PS: Well, you could not do much sightseeing there. The gendarmes threw them on the ground and then we had to get out of there. At least to a distance of 150 meters and we could only come back when they were done. So that we could see nothing of what happened. Because they told us if we didn't beat it we could join those in the pit. At times like that, you don't go mouthing off.

AD: How many gendarmes were there?

PS: I drove three of them and they were the real bloodthirsty type. Then, my friend took the rest of them. The machine gun too, and whatever else there was. The pit was already dug, they herded them in there and let it rip."

AD: How many gendarmes were involved?

PS: I really could not tell you that. Like I said, I didn't have time to look around much. I was glad I could get out of there safely.

AD: And the Gypsies, how many were they?

PS: Well, in my estimate, something like twenty. But that included small children, old women, anything you can imagine. Except men—there were no men among them. Though there was one. He had to be carried because he was nearly beaten to death already. It was a terrible sight, what they had done to them. Well, I ask you, how can a Hungarian man do something like this? Did they not think of the other as human? And they almost put me in there with them too! Well, who buried them afterward, I cannot tell you. They got on the carts and drove off. But they did tell me that I was going to get what was coming to me if I breathed a word of this to anybody. So, you had to be frightened, quite frightened.

AD: And you never talked about it to anyone?

PS: No. Because this thing was torturing me. Why did these poor people have to be knocked off? They haven't done anything. But I was too scared to say anything. Believe me, I was too scared to talk.

AD: Why did they say they were executing them?

PS: Well, that they didn't say. They said nothing about that. Just "shut up!" was all they said.

AD: Who picked them up? Who put them on the carts? Were they walking, were they escorted there, how did it happen?

PS: They were put on carts like I tell you. Like pigs to the slaughter. It was terrible, what they were doing. I am telling you I had one horse. I was taking three gendarmes. Not more. I could not fit more. The rest came as they could. But the machine gun, that was carried by another cart.

AD: How many carts were taking the folks there?

PS: Well, I can't say, there were a few of us.

AD: Approximately?

PS: Well, we were at least four if not more.

AD: So one cart was transporting the gendarmes, one the machine gun and its operators—and the other two?

PS: They took all those unfortunate ones. Those to be executed. It was a horrible sight to behold. Makes my skin crawl, when I think about it, to this day.

AD: Did you actually see how it happened?

PS: No, I did not see it because we were not allowed to look. But when they put people next to the pit, what are you to think? Facing the pit, and then "prrrr"—a volley and it was all over for them. This pregnant woman—she was suffering the most—they fired at least five bursts into her. And then, and as soon as they were done, they were gone. I never saw those people again. They left like they were shot out of a bow. They went on, but where they got to, I can't say.

AD: The names of those who committed to the murders, were those preserved?

PS: Not at all.

AD: Did you know any of them?

PS: No, they were not from around here. Where they came from, we have no idea. They were military gendarmes. We were not asking questions.

AD: And what did people in the village say, why did the Gypsies have to be executed?

PS: Nobody knew anything. They simply knocked them off. What they had done I have no idea. They were decent people.

AD: And who handed the Gypsies over to the gendarmes?

PS: Well, the deputy magistrate said nothing about that. All he said was for us to show up before dark at the Village Hall and that we will receive further instructions there and that we could not speak a word of this to anyone. It was a secret. So we did not say a word of this to anyone, ever.

AD: Who was the deputy magistrate at the time?

PS: He's been dead a long time now. His name was András Szabó, but he is long dead.

AD: Was this ever discussed in the village.

PS: No, people kept quiet about it, all this time.

AD: Why?

PS: Why? Nobody talks about it. We were shocked. Everybody was shocked that they would do a thing like that.

AD: Why was there such a huge silence?

PS: Nobody can say. People were scared.

AD: Of what?

PS: Of what? It was wartime. A lot of things can happen in wartime.

AD: But 52 years have passed by since!

PS: Well, the war was over and it was all forgotten.

AD: Did you too forget?

PS: No, you can never forget a thing like this.

Mrs. Lajos Kecskés (LK), local resident

AD: How old were you then, Aunt Juliska?

LK: Thirteen. I was in my thirteenth year; my twelfth birthday was in November, so I was 13 when the Russians came in. So I remember everything that happened in Lajos. The Russians and everyone else. Hungarians too. There were Hungarian soldiers billeted in our house. There were many soldiers and we were a big family. Nine children and two parents. We had a room and a kitchen but still had to put up soldiers for the night, Hungarian soldiers. Two or three times we did. The village changed hands three times. In the daytime, the Hungarians came in and by nightfall, the Russians were here. And this is why this happened so quickly, that these poor people could be done in by their co-villagers. Because there were two or three peasants and these poor people were in their way. And that bastard Menyus, I am telling you straight, in plain Hungarian, he was a worm. A mean bastard, never was anything else. They died by his hands too. Because when the Hungarian sol-

diers came in, he was kissing up to them, when the Russians came in, he was kissing up to those.

AD: We also heard that the Gypsies were Russian guides?

LK: Not true. They were no guides for the Russians. They behaved exactly the same way as everybody else when the Russians came in.

AD: So the Gypsies were scared like everyone else. But then who were guiding the Russians if it wasn't them?

LK: They went with the Russian soldiers, they went with the Hungarian soldiers, but the Perge kids went with them. And that kid, what's his name, Menyus, he went with them too. These all went with them, that's for sure. Because they came to our house and this Menyus, he had my father beaten up by the Russians—that's a fact.

AD: What Menyus are we talking about?

LK: Sirókai.

AD: How could he be Russian?

LK: Easily. They lived near the Hungarian border here. Not a Russian from Russia, but these people lived nearby here, on the border.

AD: But he was not a resident in Lajoskomárom?

LK: No, no. Only his big brother took a wife from here. And he used to come here, as long as, well, until they cleared him out of Lajos. And the war brought him back here. And he was raising hell, all over the place. He took the Russians to the homes and to the women as well. Showing them where they could find women. Then, when the Hungarians came in, he suddenly joined their side. When the Germans came, he was on their side. Such a turncoat he was. I know for a fact that he was one because he brought the Russians to our house . . . there were girls at our house. They were hiding, and when they came to our door, he was trying to make my father tell him where the girls were hiding. But my father told him there were no girls in the house. "Don't give me that—I know there are girls here!" he said, and he had one of the Russians beat up my father. And we were watching it helplessly but there was nothing we could do, no way we could help. Nor could my mother. Nobody could, that's the truth. This is how it happened and he was the one who was responsible for those deaths. The crime would be on his head if he were still alive. But he died long ago. He made those Gypsies perish too.

István Czéh and his wife (IC-AC), local residents

AD: Uncle István, Aunt Anna, do you think some sort of decent burial should be given to these people or maybe a memorial erected for them? Have you thought about these things?

IC-AC: Well, we are old people now, too old for this, but we are surely not against anything like this, after all, they were human beings. Innocent ones. It is the crime of war, all those massacres. As for me, sure, no problem. They were people, too, God's creatures, like ourselves. They were called Gypsies but they couldn't help that. And couldn't help that we are called something different. And then . . . no . . . as I said, they never harmed us and we were not of the opinion . . . to this day. As far as I am concerned, we are all God's creatures.

AD: So you are saying you would have no problem with a Gypsy as your neighbor?

IC-AC: Why would I? They would surely mean no harm. . . . This hate must be abandoned, you cannot live with hate. That I hate this person and that person because this is of this color and that is of that color, you cannot live your life like that. We should try and live in peace now, after we had so much trouble. And might still have some more. We need to drop this—one must not hate. People must accept that we are all God's creatures, all of us. And that we have to work hard for our country. Because we may be running into trouble. We listen to the radio every day. We hear about those troubles every day.

Piroska Peller (PP), survivor

AD: Aunt Piroska, you are the only survivor from the Gypsy families of Lajoskomárom.

PP: Yes.

AD: What is your name?

PP: Piros.

AD: Piros what?

PP: Peller. My maiden name is Peller.

AD: You were born here? Lived here?

PP: No, we just lived here. I was born in Felsőnyék, but we never lived there. We lived in Lajoskomárom. Together with the parents.

AD: What happened to the family?

PP: Well, what happened to this family was that I moved away from here and later, when the Russians came in, we fled, to Kiliti. We were fleeing to

Kiliti and I heard the news in Alcsút that my parents have been shot dead. I was really frightened and started crying, you know, where have my parents got to? And then, unfortunately, very unfortunately, then I wanted to find my parents. I came back to Lajoskomárom and saw my father's grave. I also went to see the grave of my mother and brothers and sisters and what I found was that they were deep in some big pit, in the ground, and they grabbed pitchforks, spades, whatever they had, scythes. . . . Here, the peasantry, here in Lajoskomárom. They drove us away, saying that "there is nothing here, nobody is lying here and nobody can come snooping around here, nothing ever happened here." Everybody gave the same reply: "Get the hell out of here, you stinking dirty Gypsies."

Narrator: *János "Diamond" Bajza Sr., János Bajza Jr., Elemér Bajza, Gyula "Flutist" Peller. They were shot on January 23, 1945, in the cemetery. Mrs. János Bajza (Tera), age 38; Klára Bajza, 15; Árpád Bajza, 12; Olga Bajza, 9; Teréz Bajza (?); Mrs. Gyula Peller (Rózsi) (?); Gyula Peller Jr., 16; Árpád Peller (Aladár), 12; Miklós Peller, 9; Mária Peller, 7; Julianna Peller, 5; Lujza Peller, 15 months old. They were machine-gunned down at the edge of the village.*

Under the regency of Miklós Horthy, the registration of Gypsies had been made compulsory and they were forbidden to leave their place of residence. Their internment commenced in November [1944]. The Arrow Cross authorities executed the Gypsy residents of Váralja, Lengyel, Szolgaegyháza, Székesfehérvár, Várpalota, Pincehely and Lajoskomárom.

"I have commenced the final, if necessary, Draconian resolution of the Jewish and Gypsy questions, which was made necessary by the behavior of these two races alien to our nation."

From the report of the Arrow Cross Minister of Interior in Kőszeg

PP: Look here, here are the photos. This is my father. He is the one with the clarinet. And this is my aunt here, because my father and this woman, they were brother and sister. And this is my cousin, the son of that one. Of that old woman. And this here . . .

AD: Their names, please?

PP: This is my father.

AD: Gyula Peller.

PP: Yes. And that's me, here.

AD: And she is Rózsi Peller.

PP: Yes, but she is dead now.

AD: She became János Bajza's wife?

PP: No. This woman is the sister of Szereményi. These are full sisters. That one and that one and Aunt Tera. They were sisters. But there is another full sister, living in Kiliti, if still alive.

AD: Is this all the memories you have of your father?

PP: This is all I have, nothing more. This was a picture from a village festival. It was a festival in Kiliti. They took this snapshot . . . for nothing.

Recorded in May 1995 in Lajosmizse.
Interviewer: Ágnes Daróczi

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Place by Place: Events of the Pharrajimos

By János Bársony (2004)

In the present state of research, the process of checking the events listed in this chapter against the sites and archives is still incomplete. Other researchers suggest that the victims came from a significantly broader area than the one delimited here.[1] Nevertheless, we feel it is important to publish these findings even in their fragmentary state, as local historians, minority organizations, young researchers and those who are simply interested in the topic will be able to put them to good use. Sixty years after the event, the Roma of Hungary are finally collecting detailed data on the Pharrajimos so that we can confront our past, our history. At present, we have around 3,000 individual records on the basis of which we indicated the events that took place in the various settlements. Needless to say, the research is ongoing and we hope to be able to increase the accuracy of this list.

The table below contains information about the fate of Gypsy communities in 560 Hungarian locations. Our sources are the following:

1 For instance, referring to contemporary documents, László Karsai thinks it is highly possible that Roma residents of settlements in Baranya, Somogy, and Zemplén counties were also confined to ghettos.

The list of those who obtained compensation in the 1960s distributed by the Állami Értékforgalmi Bank (National Bank) is noted in the text as **ÁÉB**. In the 1960s, Germany paid a very small compensation not Horváth or Sárközi. The news did not really reach the Roma, who often were illiterate. From the list, we only considered those who had a very typically Gypsy names like Kolompár or Pusoma, but since these are common family names throughout Hungary. While protecting the anonymity of the individual victims, we tried to establish their route. We determined where they were taken prisoners, and we recorded the ghetto, labor camp, or concentration camp where they were taken.

The in-depth interviews conducted under the leadership of István Kemény. In the table this is noted **1971**. Each interview revealed the life story of the interviewee as well as the involvement of his/her family. The interview also focused on the route of the victim.

The 2001 demands for non-financial compensation. In the table this is marked **JB**, after János Bársony, who supervised the research. Roma Compensation Units have been founded in 17 countries, including Hungary, to help inform Roma victims of their eligibility for compensation from German and Swiss institutions and banks. We assume that this effort reached the greatest number of victims. In Hungary 2,500 survivors or victim's relatives have submitted demands for compensation for forced labor, ghetto detention or detention in concentration camps.

Public and private research databases on the Roma Holocaust. The public research sources that were made available are the Patrin Televised Magazine (**PM**), the Roma Press Center (**RSK**) and the Roma Civil Rights' Organization (**RPA**). As for the private ones, we had access to the research of the historians László Karsai, Szabolcs Szita, and János Ury, and the writer Ágnes Diósi.

And finally, the anonymous research of the Red Cross, which provided the statements of those who received compensation (designated **KP**) as a result of the Swiss government's action in 1999.

Table Overview

The first column in the table contains a list of settlements that were part of Hungary during World War II. Today many of these places are not in Hungary and no longer have Hungarian names. The place names listed in the table have not been coordinated with the current names of these villages, towns and cities. We apologize for any possible confusion.

The second column summarizes the story of each location's sufferings. When a "source" is mentioned, it is a person interviewed. The third column gives the aforementioned abbreviations for the sources of information. The figures after the abbreviations indicate the number of data sources, personal statements, known cases or mentions. If there is only one, no number is included.

If information is questionable, we have indicated this with (*?*).

Location	Event	Source
Abaújszántó	Some of the local Roma were rounded up in April and September of 1944 and were kept in ghettos under armed guard. They were finally freed in October 1944.	JB 3
Abony	The local Roma population was rounded up and herded into ghettos at the Halápi and the Salaczy farms in April and June of 1944. They were set free around October and November of the same year.	JB 3
Adács	On All Souls' Day in 1944, numerous families were taken to the collection camp in Komárom, from where they were transferred to Dachau and Buchenwald. Only a few of them returned home.	ÁÉB, JB 3, RSK
Ajka	Local Roma were taken to Komárom in the autumn of 1944. Some were transferred to German concentration camps; the rest were freed during the winter of 1944 and 1945.	JB 3
Alap	Roma from here were taken to the ghetto at Várpalota, then later transferred to Komárom. Some were removed to German concentration camps; some survivors were freed in February 1945.	JB
Alsóberek	The Arrow Cross militia rounded up people living in the Roma quarter. The men were taken to camps in Austria; the women, who were collected later, could not be deported in time because the approaching Soviet Army had already liberated Körmend.	1971
Alsóság	In August 1944, local Roma were taken to Komárom. Many were taken to camps in the Third Reich; the survivors were set free in February 1945.	JB 4

(*continues*)

Location	Event	Source
Alsószentiván	In December 1944, local Roma were taken to Komárom. Some were freed in April 1945, but many ended up in German concentration camps.	JB
Alsószentmárton	A part of the local Roma community was taken to Komárom in September 1944 and many of them were transferred to camps in Sering, Szejlinte and Linz. The survivors were freed on various dates during the summer of 1945.	JB 6
Alsóújlak	In June and October of 1944, local Roma were rounded up, taken to Komárom and interned there until February 1945, though a number of them were transferred to camps in the Third Reich.	JB 3
Alsózsid	Roma were taken to Komárom in October 1944. The source regained his freedom in February 1945; the others were taken to Germany.	JB
Antalbokor	Local Roma were taken to a military labor camp at Huszt.	JB
Apátfalva	Gendarmes dragged off many Roma to Fejér County, where they were forced to perform labor at the Ménesi estate in Mezőhegyes (from March 1944 to September and December 1944). Others were taken to Komárom in September 1944 and not freed until March 1945. Those who survived recall that the suffering ended when the Russians arrived.	RPA/KP JB 10
Aranyosapáti	In May, September and October 1944, local Roma were rounded up and transferred to the ghetto at Kisvárda. Some were freed as early as August, some as late as November.	JB 8
Arló	Local Roma were taken to the ghetto at Komárom in September 1944. In the same month, they were transferred to Auschwitz. Survivors returned in May 1945.	JB 2
Arnót	Members of the Roma community were forced into the local ghetto in September and October 1944 and detained there until November 1944.	JB 4
Ásványráró	Local Roma were taken to collection camps in Komárom, where they were detained from September 1944 to January 1945, though some of them were transferred to the Third Reich.	JB 2
Badacsonytomaj	Some of the local Roma were taken to the ghetto at Komárom and kept from October 1944 on; others were interned at Tapolca beginning in November 1944 and were not freed until February and March 1945. In October 1944, some of the local Roma were taken to Auschwitz, where they were imprisoned until February 1945.	JB 7

Location	Event	Source
Bagolasánc	Local Roma were taken to the collection camp set up in the coffee factory at Nagykanizsa. They were freed on various dates, in March, September, October and December 1944. Some of the internees at Nagykanizsa were transferred to Germany in October 1944 and kept until the summer of 1945.	JB 5
Baja	Local Roma were taken to the collection camp in Komárom in November 1944 and detained there until February 1945.	JB
Bajánsenye	In the autumn of 1944, gendarmes rounded up four or five Roma families and escorted them to the Városmajor park in Szombathely, then on to Komárom. Some of them were set free in the spring of 1945 and some of them were transferred to camps in Germany.	JB
Bajánsenye-Böröce	Beginning in November 1944, local Roma were rounded up and taken to Komárom on various dates. Some of them were put on trains and transported to the concentration camp at Dachau. The survivors were freed in the summer of 1945.	JB
Bajna	The Arrow Cross militia rounded up the local Roma in the winter of 1944. The head of the militia wanted to have a pit dug in Fácánkert and have the Roma shot into it, but instead they drove them on foot to Csillagerőd, the fortress in Komárom. Upon the Red Army's approach and the subsequent evacuation of the fortress, the victims were marched to Győr, from where they made their escape one by one until the Russians liberated the city.	1971
Bak	Beginning in November 1944, local Roma were rounded up and taken to the ghetto at Komárom. Some of them were transported to the concentration camp at Dachau in the same month and imprisoned until May 1945.	JB 2
Bakonybánk	Local Roma were detained at the Komárom ghetto between November 1944 and February 1945.	JB
Bakonyszentlászló	Between July and August 1944, local Roma were taken to the ghetto in Komárom. From here, some of them were transferred to Mauthausen.	JB
Baksa	In March and October 1944 (and even later), local Roma were rounded up and taken to the collection camp at Komárom. Some of them were transferred to Ravensbrück and not released until January 1945.	JB 4
Baktalórántháza	The Roma data source was taken to the collection ghetto at Kisvárda, where he was kept between May and November 1944.	JB

(*continues*)

Location	Event	Source
Balassagyarmat	Between April and June 1944, local Roma were continuously rounded up and collected at the ghetto in Nógrádmarcali. From here, some of them were taken to Tótgyarmat, while others were transferred to forced-labor locations at Derecske, Moha and Magyarnádor.	JB 7
Balozsameggyes	Local Roma were taken to the Komárom and Sárvár ghettos. In Sárvár, they were sent to the sugar and silk factories and kept there from September 1944 to February 1945. Those taken to Komárom in the autumn of 1944 were detained there until February 1945.	JB 4
Balsa	In May 1944, the Roma source was taken to Rázonpuszta (Tiszalök) and kept there until October 1944, when he was transferred to Tevesienedt (?) until freed in May 1945.	JB
Baracska	All Roma males were rounded up and taken away by Hungarian gendarmes.	1971
Bályogszovát	Members of the local Roma community were taken to the collection camp in Komárom in November 1944 and detained there until February and March 1945.	JB 2
Bánfa	From the spring of 1944 on, local Roma were rounded up and taken to Dachau and Ravensbrück to perform forced labor. Only a few returned.	ÁÉB JB
Bánokszentgyörgy	One local Roma was interned at the Nagykanizsa ghetto from October to December 1944, when he was transferred to the Draskovec camp. He was released in April 1945. Another local Roma was taken to Komárom in October 1944; a month later he was transferred to Auschwitz. He regained his freedom in May 1945.	JB 2
Báta	Some of the local Roma were taken in March–April of 1944 to Véménd, where they were interned in the ghetto until October 1944. Some were transferred to the Third Reich in March 1944; the survivors returned in February 1945.	JB 10
Bátaszék	Beginning in the spring of 1944, some of the local Roma were taken to Véménd and had to perform forced labor at Trefortpuszta. Others were put to forced labor nearby, working on a German military airport.	JB 5
Bátya	One Roma was taken to the ghetto in Komárom in October 1944 and was released in February 1945.	JB
Becsehely	Beginning in September 1944, local Roma were collected at the Nagykanizsa coffee factory, where most of them were detained until December. Some of them were transferred to Révkomárom and did not regain their freedom until the spring of 1945.	JB 2

Location	Event	Source
Bedő	In August 1944, gendarmes from Biharkeresztes surrounded the Roma quarter with approximately 80 people inside. Many were taken to perform forced labor. Some were kept in the local ghetto from June to October 1944. All were liberated by Russian and Romanian troops.	RPA/KP JB 5
Belezna	From October 1944 on, the local Roma were being rounded up and detained at the coffee factory at Nagykanizsa. Some of them were transferred to Draskovec, where they were detained between January and April 1945.	JB 3
Berekböszörmény	On September 25, 1944, German soldiers and gendarmes surrounded the Roma quarter at Berekböszörmény, with some 400 people inside. Originally they were to be transferred to the Third Reich but they managed to regain their freedom on October 13, 1944. Some local Roma were taken to Komárom in September 1944 and then transferred to Letmeritz. They were freed in April 1945.	RPA/KP JB 65
Beret	Many local Roma families were rounded up by the gendarmes and taken to Abaújszántó, where they were put to forced labor. They owe their survival to the arrival of Romanian troops.	RPA/KP JB
Berettyóújfalu	Local Roma were collected in the Újfehértó ghetto between April and November 1944.	JB 2
Berhida	The source was taken to Komárom in October 1944 and transferred from there to Dachau, where he stayed until May 1945	JB 2
Berkesd	Between October 1944 and February 1945, local Roma were taken to Komárom. Some of them were dragged off to Peterdpuszta in April 1944 and were not released until December. Some inmates were not freed until February 1945, and others were taken to a POW camp in Romania.	JB 7
Békéscsaba	Local Roma were taken to state-owned estates throughout the county, where they were forced to work. Some of them were taken to the ghetto in Komárom. The source was there from September 1944 to February 1945.	JB
Bélapátfalva	Some Roma from the surrounding areas were taken to Bélapátfalva from April to June in 1944, others to Budapest from March to September 1944 for forced labor. Yet others were dragged off to a concentration camp near Vienna from October 1944 to May 1945.	JB 3
Bicsérd	On November 3, 1944, local Roma were taken to Komárom, from where they were transferred to Dachau, Berlin and Mauthausen. They finally regained their freedom in May 1945.	ÁÉB JB 10

(*continues*)

Location	Event	Source
Bicsérd-Kültelek	Many local Roma were dragged off to Dachau and Buchenwald in November 1944.	ÁÉB
Bicske	The residents of the Roma quarter were rounded up by German soldiers and detained in the courtyard of the Village Hall, but as evening fell, the Red Army reached the village, liberating the Roma. Earlier, however, the Arrow Cross rounded up a group of them—they were among the 114 Roma murdered by the militia at Várpalota Grábler Lake.	1971
Biharkeresztes	The Roma quarter was surrounded by gendarmes at the end of August 1944. Many made their escape in October 1944. Some of the local Roma were taken to the Nagyszalonta ghetto in August 1944 and not released until November.	RPA/KP JB 9
Biharnagybajom	The local source was pressed into forced labor at Sarkad in May 1944 and was not released until September 1944.	JB
Bikács	The local source was taken to the Esztergom ghetto in July and regained his freedom in December 1944.	JB
Bocfölde	On November 3, 1944, gendarmes and Arrow Cross militia surrounded the Roma quarter. Some of the local Roma were then taken to Pápa and to Csillagerőd, the fortress in Komárom. After a few weeks, the more fit-for-work prisoners were transferred to Dachau, Mauthausen and Altruff. Those detained locally and those dragged off to Germany regained their freedom with the fall of the Third Reich, mostly in May 1945.	RPA/KP RSK JB 7
Bogádmindszent	Local Roma were taken to a ghetto in May and were released in August 1944.	JB 2
Bogyiszló	Some of the local Roma were detained in Komárom between September 1944 and May 1945. Others were taken to Mohács in September 1944 and not released until May 1945. However, some Roma were taken from there to Auschwitz and very few of them ever returned.	JB 6
Bokod	Local Roma were taken to Komárom and detained there between November 1944 and January 1945.	JB 2
Borjád	Gendarmes and German soldiers rounded up most of the local Roma and detained them in Csillagerőd, the fortress in Komárom between July 1944 and late November 1944. Some were taken to Mohács or Véménd. They regained their freedom in February or March 1945 with the advance of the Red Army.	RPA/KP JB
Borsodszentgyörgy	Local Roma were dragged off to Mohács, then onto Véménd and Komárom. Their sufferings lasted from July 1944 to February 1945.	JB

Location	Event	Source
Borsodszirák	Local Roma were detained in a local ghetto from April to September 1944, during which time they were kept under guard and forced to perform labor.	JB
Botpalád	One local Roma was taken to Germany in March 1943, never to return. The others were dragged off to the ghetto in Mátészalka in the spring of 1944.	JB
Bódvavendégi	Roma were collected in the local ghetto from May to October 1944.	JB
Böde	After November 1944, local Roma were rounded up and taken to Komárom. Some were then transferred to Dachau and Auschwitz, never to return. Those who stayed in Komárom were liberated in February 1945.	JB 6
Bödő	The local Roma source was detained in Komárom from January to April 1944.	JB
Bököny	Starting in April 1944, local Roma were rounded up and taken to various ghettos in Debrecen, Újfehértó and Rázonpuszta. They regained their freedom in November 1944.	JB 4
Bölcske	Local Roma were transported in April 1944 to the Nagykálló ghetto, where they were detained until November 1944.	JB
Budapest	In the last days of October 1944, most of the Roma were taken from collection sites in the brick factory in Óbuda and the canning factory to concentration camps in Dachau, Ravensbrück, Buchenwald. Medical experiments were also performed on the victims. The more fortunate of them regained their freedom in May 1945.	ÁÉB JB 27
Budapest (Kispest)	From September to November 1944, local Roma were rounded up and transported to Komárom.	JB 2
Budapest (Rákospalota)	While some were fighting in the Hungarian Army at the Battle of the Don, their wives and relatives were detained, taken to the brick factory in Óbuda and later transferred to the Dachau concentration camp.	1971
Buják	Local Roma were rounded up and detained at the ghetto in Komárom between October and December 1944.	JB 2
Bük	In 1944, the Gendarmes rounded up local Roma and transported them to Szombathely, then on to Komárom, where hundreds of them were killed. Some were transferred to Ravensbrück, where they became subjects of medical experiments.	ÁÉB
Bükkösd	Local Roma were taken in November 1944 to the ghettos in Pécs and Komárom. They regained their freedom in January 1945.	JB 2

(*continues*)

Location	Event	Source
Carnelháza-Damonya	In October 1944, the local Roma were taken to the ghetto in Komárom and kept there until November.	JB 2
Cegléd	The Roma population was rounded up and detained at the local synagogue, in Jászberény (at the Vigyázó estate) and Abony-Újszász, where they had to perform forced labor from the summer to the winter of 1944.	JB 4
Celldömölk	On November 3, 1944, gendarmes and Arrow Cross militia surrounded the Roma quarter. Some of the local Roma were then taken to Pápa and Csillagerőd the fortress in Komárom. A few weeks later, the more fit-for-work prisoners were transferred to Dachau and Mauthausen. Those detained at home and those dragged off to Germany regained their freedom only when the advance of the Red Army reached them.	RPA/KP JB 6
Celldömölk-Ság	The local Roma source was taken to Komárom and detained there from September 1944 to February 1945.	JB
Csabrendek	The local Roma source was taken to Komárom in the autumn of 1944 and transferred from there to a concentration camp in the Third Reich.	JB
Csanádpalota	Local Roma were taken to Mezőhegyes, where they were forced to perform labor at state-owned estates from March to August in 1944. Some of them were not freed until February 1945.	JB 3
Csácsbozsók	On November 3, 1944, gendarmes and Arrow Cross militia members surrounded the Roma quarter. Some of the rounded-up residents were taken to Komárom and Pápa. After a few weeks, those who were fit to work were taken to Dachau and Mauthausen. For those left in their homes and those dragged off to Germany, liberation came with the Russian troops in early 1945.	RPA/KP JB 7
Csenger	Roma were transferred to the local collection camp and the one in Mátészalka from April to October in 1944.	JB 10
Csépa	Gendarmes surrounded and closed off the Roma quarter in December 1944. Some of the residents were taken to Komárom and from there to Germany. By the time the Russian troops liberated the area, over half of the local Roma population had perished.	RPA/KP JB
Csepel	Arrow Cross members rounded up local Roma and detained them at the brick factory in Óbuda on 30 October 30, 1944. On November 8, they were put on trains and transferred to Dachau and then to Bergen-Belsen. They were finally liberated in April 1945.	1971 JB 2

Location	Event	Source
Csepreg	Local Roma were dragged off to Nagykanizsa in September and October 1944 and were released only in 1945. Some of them were taken to Baja and forced to perform labor at a bridge construction.	JB 2
Cserdi	Local Roma were taken to the ghetto at Komárom from September 1944 until February 1945.	JB
Cserhátsurány	Local Roma were detained at the collection and labor camp at the Lívia estate between April and November 1944.	JB 3
Csobaj	The local Roma were taken to Nyíregyháza and confined in the ghetto there between August and September 1944.	JB
Csobánka	Local Roma were taken to the ghetto in Vác, where they were detained from the summer of 1944 to the winter of the same year.	JB
Csolnok	The Roma of Csolnok were transported to Komárom, where they were detained until February 1945.	JB 34
Csolnok-Tokod	All of the local Roma were rounded up and transferred to Komárom in September 1944. They regained their freedom in February 1945.	JB 28
Csorna	In the autumn of 1944, local Roma were dragged off to Komárom. When Komárom was evacuated because of the approaching Red Army, they were driven on foot toward Germany, but the Russians caught up with them on the road to Galánta and set them free in April 1945.	JB 6
Csót	In the spring of 1944, local Roma were taken to Komárom, where they were detained until the winter of the same year. Some of them were transferred to Dachau and Ravensbrück in January 1945 and only set free in May 1945.	JB
Csönge	Local Roma were dragged off to the ghetto in Komárom and detained there from October 1944 to February 1945.	JB
Debrecen	Most of the Roma were detained in the local ghetto from April 1944 on. Together with the Roma from neighboring settlements, they were kept under guard and forced to perform slave labor. Some of them were transferred to Sárospatak and Végardó in the spring of 1944. They managed to return home by the autumn of 1945.	JB 4
Decs	On November 3, 1944, gendarmes and Arrow Cross members surrounded the Roma quarter. Some of the rounded–up residents were taken to Mohács, Pápa and Komárom. A few weeks later, those in better physical condition were transferred to Dachau and Mauthausen. The survivors managed to return home in the autumn of 1945.	RPA/KP JB 8

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Location	Event	Source
Demecser	The Roma residents were kept under guard at the local ghetto between June and November 1944.	JB 5
Dencsháza	Local Roma were taken to Komárom and kept there between October 1944 and February 1945.	JB
Derecske	The local Roma were detained in the concentration camp at Királymező between August and October of 1944.	JB 2
Dombrád	In April 1944, local Roma were taken to ghettos in Demecser and Gégény.	JB
Domony	In early September 1944, gendarmes arrived at the Roma quarter, which housed some 300 residents in 21 homes, and ordered the residents to board trucks. They were first taken to Nagykanizsa, then on to Dachau and Buchenwald. They regained their freedom around April 1945, when the German guards fled the camps.	RPA/KP JB
Döbrőköz	Local Roma were transferred in a number of transports to the collection camp at Komárom beginning in the spring of 1944.	JB 3
Dudar	In the winter of 1944, local Roma were taken to the ghetto at Bödő.	JB 2
Dunaföldvár	Beginning in the autumn of 1944, local Roma were taken to the Komárom ghetto. Some Roma were dragged off to Dachau, where they were detained from the spring of 1944 to May 1945.	JB 2
Dunaharaszti	The Roma source was captive at the brick factory at Óbuda from November 1944 on and detained in the Komárom camp until January 1945.	JB
Dunaszekcső	Local Roma were taken to Véménd (Trefortpuszta) and Sopron and kept there between August 1944 and February 1945. Some were transferred to Vienna.	JB
Dunaszentbenedek	Local Roma were detained in the ghetto at Komárom between December 1944 and February 1945. Some Roma were taken to Csolnok and Tokod for slave labor.	JB
Ecseg	The Roma source was detained at the Gyöngyöspata ghetto in October and November of 1944.	JB
Ecsi	Local Roma were taken to the Komárom ghetto and detained there from November 1944 to February 1945.	JB
Edelény	Roma residents were locked up in the local ghetto from May to October 1944.	JB
Eger	Most of the Roma were taken to the local ghetto or transferred to the Komárom ghetto in the autumn of 1944. Some of them were taken from here to Salzburg and kept until 1944–1945.	JB 6

Location	Event	Source
Egerág	Local Roma were taken to the Komárom ghetto and detained there from September 1944 to February 1945.	JB
Encs	Roma residents were locked up in the local ghetto from October to December 1944.	JB
Encsencs	Roma residents of the village were taken to the collection ghetto at Mátészalka from April to October 1944.	JB 3
Ercsi	Local Roma were taken to perform forced labor first at Pusztarom, then at Tatabánya, from June 1944 to January 1945.	JB
Erdőbénye	A number of Roma families were dragged off by the gendarmes to Viss and Végardó, then on to Carnoho, Slovakia, for forced labor.	RPA/KP
Erzsébet (Budapest XX)	Some Roma were taken to the ghetto in Komárom in October 1944, where they were detained until December 1944. Some of them were transferred from there to Dachau. Others were first detained at the brick factory in Óbuda, then transferred to Bergen-Belsen and Ravensbrück, women and children included. Young women were sterilized.	JB
Esztergom	In 1942, the Roma quarter in Esztergom was partially blocked off; residents were allowed outside for only a few hours. Roma were forbidden to sit on park benches. In the autumn of 1944, the Arrow Cross dragged off all residents of the Roma quarter first to the synagogue, then, two or three weeks later, to Komárom. Many dead bodies were dumped in the Danube. Six weeks later, the victims were herded on foot toward Galánta (now in Slovakia). They were freed when the advancing Red Army caught up with them.	RPA/KP JB 8
Écs	Local Roma were taken to the Komárom ghetto and detained there from the autumn of 1944 to 1945.	JB 3
Érpatak	Most of the local Roma (women, children, older people) were taken to Újfehértó in the spring of 1944 and were kept there until the spring of 1945. The men were taken to Rahó, to a military logging camp.	JB 2
Fábiánháza	In May 1944, the local Roma were rounded up and marched by armed gendarmes to Mátészalka. Russians liberated the victims in October 1944.	RPA/KP JB 3
Fehérgyarmat	Some of the local Roma were taken to a military forced-labor camp at Gyergyótölgyes in the autumn of 1944. Others were kept in the local ghetto; still others were marched by armed gendarmes to the collection ghetto at Mátészalka. Russians freed the latter in October 1944.	JB 10

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Location	Event	Source
Felnémet	The local Roma source was taken to Velslambah in Germany in August 1944 to perform forced labor. He regained his freedom in April 1945.	JB
Felsőcsatár	In September 1944, local Roma residents were taken to Komárom and some of them were transferred from there to Auschwitz.	ÁÉB
Felsőnyék	The local Roma source was taken to Germany in October 1944 and released in April 1945.	JB
Felsőpaty	The local Roma source was taken to Őrtorony in June 1944 and released in March 1945	JB
Fernapuszta	After October 1944, local Roma were taken to Révfalu, Szigetvár and then to Komárom, where they were detained until February 1945.	JB
Fertőrákos	Roma residents were taken from Pápadevecser to Veszprém, then to Komárom and kept there from September 1944 on. They were released in February 1945, but some had been transferred to Bergen-Belsen and Ravensbrück.	JB 2
Fony	Local Roma were first taken to the Nyíregyháza ghetto, then transferred to Mauthausen and kept there from October 1944 to March 1945.	JB 2
Fülöp	The local Roma source was taken to the Mátészalka ghetto in April 1944 and released in October.	JB
Fülöpszállás	Roma residents were detained at the Kecskemét ghetto from April to October 1944.	JB 2
Füzesabony	Some of the local Roma were taken in September 1944 to the ghettos in Kompolt and Verpelét, where they also had to perform forced labor until October 1944.	JB
Gádoros	Local Roma were forced to perform slave labor at state-owned estates from 1943 to 1945.	JB 3
Gáva	In April 1944, local Roma were taken to Rázonpuszta and Tiszalök. They regained their freedom in the autumn of 1944.	JB
Gávavencsellő	In April 1944, local Roma were taken to Rázonpuszta and Tiszalök. They regained their freedom in November 1944.	JB
Gerjen	In November 1944, Arrow Cross members rounded up people from the Roma quarter and took them to Komárom. Later, they were driven on foot toward Germany, but the advancing Russian troops caught up with them at Galánta and freed them.	RPA/KP JB 2

Location	Event	Source
Gesztreg	Gendarmes took the local Roma to Komárom in November 1944. Some of them were transferred to Dachau and Ravensbrück, where quite often parents would be murdered and the children submitted to medical experiments.	ÁÉB
Girincs	In the early autumn of 1944—perhaps in September—it was publicly announced that Roma residents were forbidden to leave the settlement. Apart from the ill and the aged, gendarmes and policemen escorted everyone to the ghetto at Tiszalúc. Some of them were transferred to Benerdorf. The advancing Russian troops liberated them.	RPA/KP
Gráboc	Local Roma were taken to the Komárom ghetto in April 1944 and detained there until February 1945.	JB
Guta	In May 1944, local Roma were taken to Harampuszta, then transferred from there to Germany.	JB
Gutorfölde	On November 3, 1944, gendarmes removed a number of families to Komárom, from where many of them were transferred to Dachau and Ravensbrück.	ÁÉB JB
Gyón	Roma residents were detained in the local ghetto in October and November 1944.	JB
Gyömöre	After the autumn of 1944, local Roma were taken to ghettos in Komárom and Hatvan.	JB 4
Gyöngyös	In the summer of 1944, local Roma were taken to Marcali and were released in the winter.	JB
Gyöngyöspata	In 1944, German soldiers took some Roma to Germany via Szurdokpüspöki. In October 1944, many Roma residents were shot dead on the spot, while others were confined to the local ghetto.	RPA/KP JB
Gyönk	Local Roma residents were confined to the ghetto in Komárom in the autumn and winter of 1944.	JB
Győr	In the autumn of 1944, Arrow Cross militia members sealed off the Roma quarter, where local residents and people from nearby settlements were detained for about six months. Some were subsequently taken to Csillagerőd, the fortress in Komárom. They regained their freedom when the guards "disappeared."	RKI/KP JB 34
Győrszemere	Local Roma residents were detained in the ghetto at Komárom from November 1944 to March 1945.	JB
Győrszentmárton	From November 1944 to February 1945, local Roma were detained at the collection ghetto at Komárom. Some of them were transferred to concentration camps in Germany.	JB

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Location	Event	Source
Győrvár	Some of the Roma were taken to Komárom, from where a number of them were transferred to Dachau and kept there from September 1944 to February 1945	JB
Hajdúszoboszló	Between May 1944 and November 1944, local Roma residents were detained at the collection ghetto in Debrecen.	JB
Hangony	One local Roma resident was taken to a camp in Budapest in March 1944. In October, he was transferred to a camp near Vienna. He regained his freedom in May 1945. On September 13, 1944, gendarmes and Arrow Cross militia members surrounded the settlement and dragged off many men and women to Sajószentpéter and Hangony. Two months later, they were transferred to Miskolc (Fazekas Street) and then they were put on trains and taken to Valkó in cattle cars. Next, they were detained in the fortress in Komárom, from about the middle of November to December 6. From there, they were transferred to Auschwitz. They recall that they were in captivity for about two weeks starting January 1945. Then they set off for home on foot, but the Russians picked them up and took them for slave labor to the Carpathians, where they worked from February 1945 to the summer of 1946.	JB RPA/KP JB 6
Hatvan	All Roma were locked up in the slate tile factory on September 20, 1944 and guarded by Hungarian soldiers. Many escaped; the others were all set free a few months later, with the approach of the Russian Army.	RPA/KP
Hács	Between March 1944 and April 1945, local Roma residents were detained at Révkomárom.	JB
Hidvégardó	The local Roma were detained in their own homes, which were turned into a ghetto, from April 1944 to November 1944.	JB
Hodász	Roma residents were detained in the ghettos of Nyíregyháza and Mátészalka from April to November 1944	JB
Homokkomárom	Some of the local Roma were taken to the coffee factory in Nagykanizsa and detained from September to December 1944. Some of them were transferred from here to Draskovec in January 1945 and set free in May 1945.	JB
Homokszentgyörgy	Local Roma were detained in the Komárom ghetto from October 1944 to February 1945 and the Marcali ghetto from November 1944 to March 1945.	JB 2
Hont	Local Roma were detained from November to December 1944 and forced to work at the Lívia estate near Patvarc.	JB
Horvátzsidány	Roma residents were taken by the Germans to Komárom in October 1944, then transferred to Ravensbrück.	ÁÉB JB

Location	Event	Source
Hódmezővásárhely	Hundreds of Roma residents were detained and worked under bestial conditions in the military labor camp at Rahó from February 20, 1944 to November 5, 1945.	RPA/KP JB 35
Hőgyész	Roma residents were taken to the Szekszárd ghetto.	JB
Ibrány	Some of the local Roma were taken to the ghetto in Nyíregyháza, starting April 1944. Later they were transferred to the labor camp at Pápa.	JB
Inám	Roma residents were detained in the Komárom ghetto from October 1944 to February 1945.	JB
Inke	The local Roma were interned at Zalaegerszeg from March 1944 to May 1945.	JB
Inota	Some Roma residents were kept in the local ghetto throughout August and September 1944, while most of them were detained in their own homes or in the cellar of the local manor house.	JB
Istvándi	A few of the local Roma were detained in the Marcali ghetto from summer 1944 to spring 1945.	JB
Iván	The local Roma were first taken to the Komárom ghetto, then transferred to Dachau. Only a few of them managed to return to their homes in January 1945.	JB
Jánk	Roma residents were kept in the ghetto at Mátészalka from April to October 1944.	JB
Jánosháza	Most of the local Roma people were taken to the collection camp in Komárom, while others were confined to the ghettos of Summás, Zalaegerszeg or Sárvár.	JB 6
Jászalsó-szentgyörgy	Some of the Roma residents were detained in the local ghetto, while others were dragged off to Transcarpathia in March 1944. The latter were released only in 1945.	RPA/KP JB
Jászapáti	One Roma resident was detained at Bácska in Voivodina from May 1944 to January 1945.	JB
Jászberény	The local Roma were detained at Nagykáta from June to September 1944, then transferred to Kőbánya (in Budapest), where they were forced to work in the aircraft repair facility that the Germans set up in the brewery. They were kept there from August to December 1944.	JB
Jászdózsa	Roma residents were forced to perform slave labor locally.	JB 2
Jászfényszaru	Local Roma were confined to the ghetto at Dévaványa from May to November 1944. Some were transferred to Dachau did not return until February 1945.	JB 2

(*continues*)

Location	Event	Source
Jászkarajenő	Roma residents were kept in the Abony ghetto from September to November 1944.	JB
Jászladány	Most of the local Roma were dragged off to Bácska in Voivodina to perform slave labor at state-owned estates. Others were taken to Jászalsószentgyörgy or Kisszállás, where they were forced to work until December 1944.	RPA/KP JB 20
Kajdacs	Roma residents were interned at the Komárom camp from November 1944 to February 1945.	JB
Kalocsa	Roma residents were confined to the local ghetto from June 1944 to February 1945. Some were later moved to Komárom, then to Germany.	JB 3
Kapolcs	Local Roma were detained at Munich, Dachau and Stuttgart between November 1944 and May 1945.	JB
Kaposvár	Roma residents were interned first at Nagykanizsa in September and October 1944, then at Draskovec until April 1945.	JB
Kapuvár	Roma residents were taken to Komárom from October 1944 and released in March 1945.	JB 4
Karancsság	Roma from here were imprisoned in Dachau and Linz (probably the Mauthausen camp) in 1944 and 1945.	JB
Karcag	Roma residents were kept in the local ghetto between June and October 1944. Some were transferred to Kunhegyes.	JB
Kassa	The Roma people from here were detained in the local ghetto from September to November 1944. The ghetto also served as a collection camp for forced labor.	JB
Kaszaháza	Part of the Roma population was taken to Draskovec or Nagykanizsa, while others were interned in Komárom from November 1944 to February 1945.	JB
Kál	Roma residents were taken to Gyöngyös starting in April 1944, then transferred to Kőbánya, Budapest. They regained their freedom in the winter of 1944.	JB
Kálló	Local Roma were detained in ghettos, e.g., at Hatvan, from September 1944 to February 1945.	JB
Kálmáncsa	Local Roma residents were kept at Komárom from November 1944 to February 1945. Some were later transferred to Germany, never to return.	JB 8
Kámáncs	Roma from here were detained in the Nagykanizsa coffee factory in October and November 1944, then taken to Draskovec, from where they were released in February 1945.	JB

Location	Event	Source
Kántorjánosi	The local Roma population was taken to the Mátészalka ghetto by gendarmes in May 1944. They unexpectedly regained their freedom in October of that year.	RPA/KP
Kápolnásnyék	Roma residents were forced to work near Baracska in January and February 1945.	JB
Káptalantóti-Rizapuszta	Roma from here were forced to perform slave labor in Badacsonytomaj between November 1944 and March 1945.	JB
Kávás	Roma from here were kept in the Komárom ghetto between September 1944 and March 1945.	JB
Kázsmárk	The Roma population was confined to the local ghetto from April to October 1944.	JB
Kecel	Local Roma were kept in the Kiskőrös-Baja ghetto between March and November 1944.	JB
Kecskemét	Some Roma men were dragged off to Germany in 1944. Many Roma were forced to dig a pit and then were shot into their own grave with their children.	RPA/KP JB
Keléd	Roma residents were taken to Komárom from September 1944 and kept until February 1945. Some were transferred to Dachau and most of them died there. The survivors regained their freedom only in May 1945.	JB 6
Kemecse	The local Roma were detained in the Nyíregyháza ghetto or in the military forced-labor camp at Rahó between May and October 1944.	JB 2
Keménfa	The local Roma source was taken to the Komárom collection camp in March 1944, then transferred to Auschwitz, from where she was released in May 1945 to return home.	JB
Kercaszomor	The source was taken first to the Komárom ghetto in September 1944, then transferred to Auschwitz in October, to be kept there until May 1945.	JB
Kerecseny	The local source was taken to Komárom in November 1944, then moved to Auschwitz, where he was detained until February 1945.	JB
Kerekegyháza	One night in November 1944, Nazis entered the Roma homes and shot many residents, even children, if they faced the slightest resistance. Local sources invariably reported they were treated brutally. They were unable to tell how many of them died, since in most cases the Roma were not even registered.	RPA/KP JB 6
Kerkaszentkirály	Local Roma were detained first in Nagykanizsa, then in Draskovec, from October 1944 until April 1945.	JB 2

(*continues*)

Location	Event	Source
Kesznyét	One dawn in November 1944, the "Gipsy street" was surrounded and all the people, the old and the sick included, were ordered to board horse-drawn carts. It took 10 to 12 carts to transport them to the Tiszalúc schoolyard. For a week they were guarded by gendarmes and Germans, who told them: "Your graves are already dug and we will shoot you into them." The Roma were being herded into cattle cars when the Russians suddenly started shelling Tiszalúc and the Germans fled.	RPA/KP JB 32
Keszthely	The local Roma were forced to perform slave labor in the oil refinery at Pétfürdő from April 1944 to May 1945.	JB
Kék	Roma from Kék were detained in the collection ghetto at Kisvárda from March 1944 until October of the same year.	JB
Kérsemjén	The Roma people were kept in the Fehérgyarmat ghetto from September until the end of November 1944.	JB 2
Királyerdő	The local Roma source was taken to Nyáregyháza in November 1944. He was transferred first to the Arrow Cross headquarters in Budapest, then further to Bevenhausen, where he was detained throughout February and March 1945.	JB
Kisbicsérd	Roma residents were detained at Komárom from October 1944 until February 1945.	JB 2
Kiscsécs	All Roma residents of the settlement were rounded up, most were taken by gendarmes to Kesznyéten, then farther away to Tiszalúc in November 1944. Though the arrival of the Russian troops ended their sufferings, by then their dead outnumbered the living. Some Roma residents were taken to Girincs.	RPA/KP JB 9
Kisgörbő	Local Roma were detained in the Komárom camp from November 1944 to February 1945.	JB 2
Kiskassa	Some of the Roma were detained in Komárom between November 1944 and February 1945. Those who were left at home were surrounded by military gendarmes in January, forced to dig their own graves and shot dead.	JB
Kiskunfélegyháza	The Roma people were interned in Komárom in November and December 1944.	JB 2
Kiskunhalas	The Roma people were kept in the local ghetto between September and November 1944.	JB
Kiskunlacháza-Pereg	Roma residents were taken to the forced-labor camp in Szentkirálypuszta in 1944.	JB
Kisléta	Local Roma were detained in the Mátészalka ghetto from April to October 1944.	JB

Location	Event	Source
Kispest	In the first days of November 1944, Roma families with their children were taken to the brick factory in Óbuda, then most of them were ordered to board cattle cars and transported to Dachau. Some families were interned in other camps such as Ravensbrück or Bergen-Belsen.	ÁÉB JB
Kistarcsa	Some of the Roma of Kistarcsa were first removed to the brick factory in Óbuda, then to Bergen-Belsen.	RSK JB
Kistelek	Local Roma were detained in the Komárom camp from October 1944 to February 1945.	JB
Kisújszállás	Roma residents had to perform slave labor at Szolnok-Szandaszőlős between April and October 1944.	JB 4
Kisvarsány	The source was interned in the Kisvárda collection camp between May and November 1944.	JB
Kisvárda	The Roma people of the area were kept in the local ghetto between September and November 1944. Some of them were taken to Cologne and not released until mid-1945.	JB 2
Komádi	Local Roma were detained in the Graz concentration camp from October 1944 until 1945.	JB
Komárom	The Roma people were kept in the collection camp Csillagerőd, the fortress in Komárom, where they were guarded by gendarmes and SS soldiers from November 1944 on. Those whom the SS found fit to work were later taken to Dachau, Ravensbrück, Auschwitz, Mauthausen, Bergen-Belsen, Buchenwald and other camps. Trains left for Germany every Saturday. People had to endure terrible conditions in the Komárom collection camp; many had to sleep out of doors in winter. There was no latrine, and they were short of food and water. (In October and November about 1,200–1,300 people died.) The total number of Roma in this camp was about 15,000.	RPA/KP JB 4 ÁÉB Szabolcs Szita's research László Karsai's research
Komárváros	Most Roma residents were detained first in Nagykáta, then in Nagykanizsa, from March 1944 to February 1945.	JB
Komlódtótfalu	Roma residents were detained in the Komárom collection camp from November 1944 till December 1944 or some until as late as March 1945. Some were taken to Mátészalka and kept there from May to October 1944.	JB 4
Kopócsapáti	The Roma people were detained in the Kisvárda ghetto from May to October 1944.	JB 9
Koppányszántó	The local source was kept in Prague from May 1944 to May (?) 1945.	JB

(*continues*)

Location	Event	Source
Korpavár	The Roma people were first taken to the coffee factory in Nagykanizsa, then transferred to Draskovec and kept there from October 1944 to April 1945.	JB
Korpád	Local Roma were taken to the collection camp in Komárom in October 1944 and detained there until February 1945.	JB
Kóka	Roma residents were kept in the collection camp at Nagykáta from July to November 1944. Some of them had to perform forced labor in Isaszeg or in the German aircraft factory at Kőbánya.	JB 3
Körmend	The Roma people from here and from the surrounding areas were taken to the local collection camp in December 1944. Soon they were removed to Incehof, Strem or Komárom.	ÁÉB JB
Körmend-Tolnaszecsőd	Roma residents were taken to Komárom, then to Dachau in 1944.	JB
Köröm	Most Roma residents were taken to Tiszalúc, and some to Kesznyét, by gendarmes in November 1944. They regained their freedom with the arrival of Russian troops.	RPA/KP JB 2
Kötegyán	In the last days of September 1944, military gendarmes returned to the Roma quarter of the village that had been retaken. Many Roma people were rounded up and taken to the Sarkad Gendarmerie Barracks, where they and other Roma people from Nagyszalonta were beaten for days. When the news of a Russian assault reached them, the gendarmes marched the victims on foot toward Doboz. There were five guards and twenty-one detainees altogether. They stopped at the Doboz cemetery on October 5, and the Roma were forced to dig their own graves before being shot dead. The murderers were found guilty by the People's Court in the summer of 1956.	RPA/KP JB Ervin Karsai
Kunszentmiklós	About 25 Roma families were locked up in the brick factory close to the settlement in 1944. In March or April 1944, gendarmes collected all Roma in the square at the end of Wesselényi Street. On November 1, Roma men were forced to dig anti-tank trenches from Szalkaszentmárton to Solt and Dunaföldvár. Survivors were liberated by Russian troops.	RPA/KP JB 3
Lajoskomárom	Local Roma were forced to dig their own graves and shot dead by local camp gendarmes. Men were buried in the cemetery ditch, women and children in the field beyond the village. The graves are unmarked.	JB
Lajosmizse	Roma residents had to perform forced labor on the state-owned estate from September 1944 to May 1945.	JB

Location	Event	Source
Lak	The Roma population was kept in the local ghetto from May to October 1944.	JB
Lábatlan	Most Roma people were removed from their homes to Komárom, then to Ravensbrück in autumn 1944 and kept there until February 1945.	JB
Lendvaújfalu	The source was kept in Csáktornya from September to December 1944, then taken to Draskovec, where he was detained until April 1945.	JB
Lengyel	Gendarmes staged a "hunt" and picked off local Roma people. There is a memorial to the victims in the village cemetery. The gendarmes were found guilty in 1957.	JB
Lenti	One local Roma group was taken to Komárom, then transferred to German camps; another group was shot locally by camp gendarmes and Arrow Cross members in February 1945.	JB
Lesencetomaj	Roma residents were taken to Komárom starting March 1944. Most were transferred to Dachau, where they faced further sufferings. All survivors were released in February 1945.	JB 6
Letenye	Some of the Roma residents were kept in the local gendarme barracks from March 1944, while others were removed to Nagykanizsa, then to Germany, to be detained there until summer 1945.	JB 37
Letenye-Molnári	The Roma from here were taken to Nagykanizsa in September 1944 and kept there until December, then transferred to Csáktornya. They were released in April 1945.	JB
Létavértes	The Roma people were confined to the local ghetto from April 1944 to January 1945.	JB
Lőrinci	Some of the local Roma were detained in the ghettos of Komárom and Hatvan between October and December 1944.	JB
Madar	Those Roma who were found fit to work were taken to Auschwitz and Dachau by Hungarian gendarmes and Arrow Cross militia. Many of them died.	1971
Magyarcsanád	Roma residents were interned in the military labor camp at Rahó from July to November 1944.	JB
Magyarnádalja	Local Roma were taken to Komárom in October 1944 and kept there until December of the same year.	JB
Mágocs	The Roma were taken to Véménd (Trefortpuszta), where they were forced to perform slave labor from September to November 1944.	JB

(*continues*)

Location	Event	Source
Mány	The source had to perform forced labor at Kállóz and Nagyhörcsögpuszta between August and December 1944.	JB
Mátészalka	Roma residents were interned in the local collection ghetto in April 1944. Some of them suffered there until October 1944, but many of them were moved to Germany and other places. In June 1944 groups of these people were transferred to Auschwitz or Pápa or to Gyergyótölgyes, Ajtós, Ojtoz and other places in the Carpathians.	RPA/KP JB 4 ÁÉB
Mátraderecske	Local Roma were detained at Nyíregyháza from March to June 1944, then transferred first to Komárom, then to Linz (Mauthausen camp) to be kept there until May 1945.	JB
Mátraverebély	The Roma people were confined to the local ghetto from July to December 1944. Some of them were taken to Komárom or the Balassagyarmat ghetto or the Lívia estate.	JB 7
Mecsekszabolcs	Local Roma were detained in Komárom from November 1944 to February 1945.	JB 3
Medina	Roma residents were kept in the local ghetto and forced to perform labor from November 1944 to February 1945.	JB
Meggyeskovácsi	Some of the local Roma were detained in Komárom from November 1944 to February 1945. From there, some of them were dragged off to German camps.	JB
Megyefa	The Roma from here were taken to the Komárom collection camp in November 1944, then transferred to Germany.	ÁÉB
Ménfőcsanak	The local Roma were interned in the Győr ghetto from November 1944 to February 1945.	JB
Mezőberény	Roma people were forced to perform slave labor at Csongrád-Laskó from September to November 1944.	JB
Mezőkeresztes	Roma residents were confined to the Gyöngyös ghetto from May to October 1944.	JB
Mezőkovácsháza	In the winter of 1941, many Roma were transported to Békéscsaba in cattle cars. The next stop was Budapest, where they were locked up for two-to-three months and many of them were beaten so badly that they died. The survivors were later transported to Nagykanizsa. In spring 1944 they were moved in cattle cars to a new location, which remained unknown to them since they could see only buildings surrounded by barbed wire and woods. At the beginning of 1946, soldiers told them that they could cease work and most were taken back to Mezőkovácsháza or Végegyháza.	RPA/KP

Location	Event	Source
Mezőkovácsi	The Roma population of the village was taken to the collection camp in Komárom in 1944. Some of them were later transferred to German camps.	ÁÉB RSK
Mezőkövesd	The Roma residents were first confined to the local closed collection ghetto. They were then dragged off to the ghettos of Gyöngyös and Hatvan.	JB
Mezőtúr	Local Roma were kept under guard in the local ghetto between April and October 1944.	JB
Miháld-Cseri-puszta	Roma people from here were interned at Nagykanizsa between September 1944 and February 1945.	JB
Mikosszéplak	The Roma were taken to Komárom in November 1944, then on to Dachau in December of the same year. Only in May 1945 could they return home.	JB
Miskolc	Some of the Roma were kept in the local closed ghetto from October to December 1944. Some others were confined in the Szikszó closed ghetto in September and October 1944.	JB 5
Mogyorós	The source was taken to Komárom in November 1944. He set out for home on foot in March 1945, and via Győr, Nagymegyer and Galánta finally arrived home in April 1945.	JB
Mohács	Detention in the Komárom camp from September 1944 to February 1945.	JB
Molnárszecsőd	Local Roma were taken to Komárom in October 1944, then to Dachau in February 1945. They were back home in July 1945.	JB
Monor	The Roma were detained in the local brick factory. At the end of October 1944, Arrow Cross militia rounded up the people in the Roma quarter and took them to Maglód. One person escaped after three or four days;, all others were deported to Germany.	1971 JB
Mór	In November 1944, Roma residents were rounded up and taken to Komárom. In December, the women and the children were released and those fit to work were transported to German camps.	JB
Nagybajom	Roma residents were collected in the local ghetto and Marcali and kept there from August to December 1944.	JB
Nagybakónak	Roma residents were detained in Nagykanizsa from September to December 1944, then in Révkomárom until April 1945.	JB
Nagybicsérd	Local Roma were detained in Pécs and Komárom between October 1944 and January 1945.	JB
Nagycsepely	Forced labor in the Marcali ghetto from spring 1944 to summer 1945.	JB

(*continues*)

Location	Event	Source
Nagydobsza	Roma people from here were kept in the local ghetto from October 1944 to April 1945.	JB
Nagyecsed	Roma residents were rounded up by gendarmes in May 1944 and marched to Mátészalka on foot under armed guard. At the approach of Russian troops they were released.	RPA/KP JB
Nagykanizsa	Residents of a local Roma quarter were first taken to the local coffee factory in October 1944, then dragged off to Draskovec, Yugoslavia in January 1945 along with many other Roma from the surrounding areas. They were detained there until the arrival of Russian troops in April. Another Roma quarter was also surrounded by Arrow Cross militia members and gendarmes on November 3, 1944. Many Roma were locked up in the local coffee factory, and some were taken to Pápa and Csillagerőd, the fortress in Komárom. After a few weeks those fit to work were transferred to Dachau, Mauthausen, and other places.	RPA/KP JB
Nagykálló	Roma from here and the surrounding areas were interned in the forced-labor camp set up for Roma at Nagykálló-Misó.	JB
Nagykáta	Roma from Nagykáta and the surrounding areas were locked up from July to December 1944 in the local school building. The place also served as the headquarters of the Roma military labor service unit. These people were dragged off to fight at the front, to construct fortifications or to work in the German aircraft repair facility set up in the cellar of the brewery in Kőbánya.	JB
Nagykorpád	Roma from here were taken to Marcali in March 1944, then to Prépospuszta, where they were kept until February 1945.	JB
Nagykónyi	Roma residents were detained in Komárom from October 1944 to February 1945.	JB
Nagykőrös	Local Roma were removed to the Komárom ghetto in November 1944 and released in December.	JB
Nagyléta	Most Roma were forced to perform slave labor in the local ghetto from April to October 1944. Some of them were taken to Linz (perhaps Mauthausen camp).	JB
Nagylóc	The local Roma families were dragged off to Balassagyarmat in October 1944, and after a few weeks they were moved to Komárom, then transferred to Germany in cattle cars. They owe their lives to the arrival of Russian troops.	RPA/KP JB 3
Nagyperkáta	Roma from here were taken to Auschwitz (?) in 1944 and released only in May 1945.	JB 4
Nagypeterd	Local Roma were removed to Komárom in October 1944; the survivors were released in January 1945.	JB

Location	Event	Source
Nagysáp	Residents of the Roma quarter were rounded up in 1945. They were transported to the ghetto in Héreg, where many manage to escape. The rest were taken farther to Győr, but many escaped successfully. One Roma woman and a 10-year-old Jewish girl were shot into the Danube in Győr. The second source named Komárom as the collection center for the Nagysáp Roma, many of whom were moved from there to Germany.	1971 JB 2
Nagysimonyi	Roma residents were detained in Komárom from October 1944 to February 1945, then taken to Germany. Few of them ever returned.	JB
Nagyszakácsi	Local Roma were kept in the Marcali ghetto, then in Komárom from 1944 to March 1945.	JB 3
Nagytilaj	Gendarmes took most of the Roma population to the Komárom collection camp in November 1944. Many were transferred to Dachau; most never returned.	ÁÉB JB
Naszvad	Roma from Naszvad were taken to Komárom starting in August 1944. They regained their freedom only in February 1945.	JB
Nádudvar	The Roma from here were dragged off to the Nyíregyháza ghetto in August 1944 and kept there until October.	JB
Nemesdéd	Roma people were transported to several places from here: Letenye, Nagykanizsa or Draskovec, to be kept there from August 1944 until April 1945.	JB 6
Németi	Roma were detained in Komárom in November and December 1944.	JB
Németkér	The source was taken to Komárom in November 1944, then on to a German camp, to remain there until April 1945.	JB
Nick	Roma residents were detained in Komárom from September 1944 to February 1945.	JB
Noszvaj	Roma from here were collected and taken to Mezőkövesd in November and December 1944 to work on grand state estates.	JB
Nova	Local Roma were detained in Nagykanizsa and Komárom from October 1944 to February 1945. Some were taken to Draskovec.	JB
Nógrádkövesd	The source was interned in the ghetto at Komárom from January to March 1945.	JB
Nógrádverőce	Local Roma were kept in the ghetto of Dunavarsány from November 1944 to February 1945.	JB
Nyalka	Local Roma were detained in Komárom from June 1944 to January 1945.	JB

(*continues*)

Location	Event	Source
Nyárád	Local Roma were detained in Komárom from November 1944, then in Dachau until May 1945.	JB
Nyésta	Roma residents were confined to the closed ghetto set up in the local Roma quarter from March to December 1944.	JB
Nyírábrány	Local Roma were collected in the Mátészalka ghetto in April 1944 and kept there until December of the same year.	JB
Nyírbátor	In May 1944, Roma residents were taken by gendarmes to Mátészalka and Nyíregyháza, where they suffered greatly. Quite unexpectedly, they were soon released.	RPA/KP
Nyíregyháza	A huge collection camp was set up near the city in April 1944. The Roma people were taken from there to the military labor camps of the Carpathians: Gyergyótölgyes, Rahó, Ojtoz, Gyimes; or westward to Pápa, Komárom, the border camps of occupied Austria, Mauthausen, Buchenwald (Muna), Dachau, Bergen-Belsen.	JB
Nyíribrony	Roma residents were detained in the Kisvárda ghetto from May to November 1944.	JB
Nyírlugos	Roma residents were taken to the ghetto in Mátészalka in April 1944 and confined there until October of the same year.	JB
Nyírmihálydi	Roma residents were detained in the Mátészalka ghetto from April to October 1944.	JB
Nyírpazony	Local Roma were confined in the Kisvárda ghetto throughout September and October 1944.	JB
Ófehértó	Roma from here were taken to the ghetto at Nyíregyháza, then to Gömör in Slovakia, where they performed forced labor.	JB
Olcsva	The source was in the Mátészalka ghetto between August and October 1944.	JB
Ondód	Local Roma were dragged off to Városmajor park in Szombathely in the first days of November 1944. After a week-long rail journey, they arrived at the Komárom collection camp, then some of them were transferred to Dachau or Ravensbrück. Here girls and women were subject to medical experiments; all were sterilized with injections. Only 10 of 40 women returned.	ÁÉB JB 10
Oroszlány	From here 16 Roma men were dragged off in January 1945. They were taken to several places: Komárom, Bergen-Belsen, Augsburg and Dachau. They returned home as late as October 1945.	JB
Öreglak	Local Roma were confined in Komárom from October 1944 to January 1945.	JB

Location	Event	Source
Őrhalom	The Roma people were collected locally and forced to perform slave labor from April to November 1944.	JB
Őriszentpéter	Many families were transported to Szombathely, then to Komárom, in the autumn of 1944. They were released in the spring of 1945. Other Roma groups had to perform forced labor for eight weeks in 1944 in the collection camp set up at Barracks 48 in Sopron. Some Roma people from here were also taken to Germany.	RPA/KP ÁÉB JB 9
Örkény	In August 1944 Roma men from here were taken to Újhartyán, then to Komárom and to Germany. Some were in Russian captivity for three years.	1971
Pánd	Roma residents were detained in the Szolnok ghetto (Szandaszőlős) to perform forced labor from November 1944 to February 1945.	JB
Pankasz	Most Roma people were taken to the Körmend collection camp for a few days in December 1944, and soon transferred to Strem, Austria or to Germany.	ÁÉB JB5 RSK
Pannonhalma	The local Roma were interned in the Komárom ghetto from November 1944 to February 1945.	JB
Panyola	Roma residents were kept in the ghetto at Fehérgyarmat in September and October 1944.	JB
Pápa	A local ghetto was set up for the Roma in October 1944. Here they were forced to perform slave labor; some were also transferred to Dachau, Mauthausen.	ÁÉB JB6
Pápadereske	Roma from here were transported to Komárom in November 1944, then most of them were taken to Dachau.	ÁÉB JB 6 RSK
Pápasalamon	The source was interned at Rivic (?) between October 1944 and June 1945.	JB
Parád	Roma residents were detained locally or in Komárom.	JB
Párkány	Local Roma were taken by German soldiers to Komárom on November 20, 1944, then to Dachau. Only few of them returned home in December 1945.	RPA/KP JB
Pásztó	Roma residents were detained in the local closed ghetto from June to December 1944. They were made to perform slave labor.	JB
Pata	Roma peope from here were detained locally and in Komárom throughout October and November 1944.	JB

(*continues*)

Location	Event	Source
Patapoklosi	Roma residents were taken to Komárom and Révfalu from May 1944 and interned there until February 1945. Some were later removed to German camps: Dachau or Bergen-Belsen.	JB 3
Patosfa	Local Roma were detained in Komárom from December 1944 to February 1945.	JB
Pátroha	Most Roma residents were kept at Újfehértó and Kisvárda from April 1944 to February 1945.	JB
Pereszteg	Local Roma were taken to the collection camp at Komárom in November 3, 1944, then to Ravensbrück. Medical experiments were also performed on many of the victims. Very few of them would return.	ÁÉB
Perkáta	Roma residents were detained at Kunszentmiklós and Komárom from autumn 1944 until spring of 1945. Some were taken to Ravensbrück.	JB
Perkupa	The Roma people were kept in the local closed ghetto between May and October 1944 and forced to perform slave labor.	JB
Pestszentlőrinc	In November 1944 the local Roma were taken to the brick factory at Óbuda, Budapest, then to Bergen-Belsen. They regained their freedom in May 1945.	JB
Petőhenye	The Roma quarter here was surrounded by gendarmes and Arrow Cross members on November 3, 1944. Some of the Roma were taken to Pápa and Komárom. A few weeks later those who were found fit to work were transferred to Dachau and Mauthausen.	RPA/KP JB 4
Pettend	Local Roma were removed to the Marcali collection camp in October 1944, then to Komárom. They were released in February 1945.	RPA/KP JB 4
Pécs	Roma residents were detained locally and then in Komárom. Some were also detained in Révkomárom between September 1944 and February 1945. Many Roma men were taken away from Pécs to various forced-labor sites. Many were later transferred to Dachau and Sachsenhausen.	JB 30 BJ RSK
Pécs-Málom	Local Roma were detained in Komárom from September 1944 to March 1945.	JB
Pécs-Mecsekszabolcs	Roma residents were confined in Komárom from September 1944 to February 1945.	JB

Location	Event	Source
Pély	The Roma quarter was put under quarantine in 1944 and 1945. Many Roma people were dragged off to perform forced labor in 1941. Several families were removed to Komárom in the autumn of 1944. They came back in 1945, but none of them are alive today.	RPA/KP JB
Pétervására	Roma residents were kept in the local ghetto from October to December 1944. They had to perform labor, e.g., digging trenches, and were very often beaten and caned.	JB
Piliscsaba	The Roma from here were taken to the ghetto in Vác in November 1944.	JB
Pilismarót	Roma residents were taken to the brick factory in Óbuda at the beginning of November 1944. They were later transported to several German camps (Dachau, Buchenwald, Bergen-Belsen), to be interned until March 1945.	JB
Pilisvörösvár	Roma residents were detained in the ghetto at Pestszentlőrinc, later at Dabas, until December 1944.	JB
Pincehely	One group of Roma was machine-gunned by military gendarmes locally in January 1945. Roma people from here were taken to Komárom in September 1944, later transferred to Dachau, and kept there until April 1945.	JB 3
Pocsaj	Some of the Roma quarter residents were taken to the ghetto of Debrecen in May 1944. Those who were left at home were made to dig their own graves and shot dead by a group of military gendarmes in October of the same year.	JB
Polgár	All Roma residents of Polgár were rounded up in the yard of the local synagogue, then taken to Rázonpuszta (located between Tiszalök and Polgár). They were detained there for seven-to-eight months by Arrow Cross militia. Only the arrival of the Red Army put an end to their sufferings.	RPA/KP JB 5
Pomáz	Local Roma were confined in Vác in October and November 1944, later in Strem (?) from November 1944 till March 1945.	JB
Porcsalma	Roma from here were taken to the Mátészalka ghetto in April 1944. Later they were transferred to Pápa to perform forced labor until March 1945.	JB
Poroszló	Local Roma were detained in the ghetto of Dormánd throughout September and October 1944.	JB
Posfa	Arrow Cross members rounded up all males in the Roma quarter in 1944. They were transported first to Sárvár, then to Germany. Women avoided the same fate only because Russian troops liberated the village.	1971

(*continues*)

Location	Event	Source
Pókaszepetk	Most Roma residents were interned in Komárom in November and December 1944. Some were transferred to Dachau until February 1945.	JB 2
Pózva	The source was detained in Komárom in November and December 1944.	JB
Pózva-Felsőtanya	Gendarmes and Arrow Cross militia members surrounded the Roma quarter on November 3, 1944. Some of the Roma were removed to Pápa or to Csillagerőd, the fortress in Komárom. A few weeks passed and those fit to work were taken to Dachau and Mauthausen. Both the ones at home and those in Germany were liberated by the Russians.	RPA/KP
Pördefölde	The Roma residents were detained in Komárom then in Dachau between November 1944 and May 1945.	JB
Pötréte	Roma from here were transported to Komárom in November 1944, then to Hamburg (Ravensbrück?) in December.	JB
Puszta-Mogyoród	The source was taken in September 1944 to the coffee factory in Nagykanizsa, then transferred in December to Révkomárom, where he was kept until February 1945.	JB
Putnok	The Roma residents were detained in the local closed ghetto between May and December 1944. They were also taken to perform forced labor.	JB
Püspöknádasd	The Roma people from here were detained in the Véménd ghetto from April to December 1944.	JB
Rakaca	Roma residents were confined locally from March to November 1944.	JB 10
Rakamaz	On 15th September 1944, Roma residents were dragged off to Morotva, later to Tiszalök and Rázonpuszta by gendarmes. Some families had earlier been removed to the ghetto at Nyíregyháza.	RPA/KP JB
Ramocsaháza	Local Roma were detained in the Kisvárda ghetto from April to October 1944.	RSK ÁÉB
Rábahídvég	One Roma person from here was taken to Vasvár, then to Körmend. Thanks to the village notary, he was soon released. The grinder Roma (those who made their living sharpening knives and scissors) were taken to Germany; four or five of them disappeared.	1971 JB
Rábapaty	Local Roma were confined in Komárom from October 1944 to February 1945.	JB

Location	Event	Source
Ráckeve	The Roma people were taken to the Szúnyog estate in Újhartyán, then to Germany.	Ágnes Diósi, "Past and Future," 1988
Rákospalota	On October 29, 1944, gendarmes took many families from the Aporháza Street Roma quarter to the brick factory in Óbuda. Some of them were transferred to Dachau, Ravensbrück and other camps. Others were later interned in the Komárom camp.	ÁÉB 2 JB 4
Regöly	Roma residents were collected in Komárom from September 1944 to February 1945.	JB
Ricse	Local Roma were confined in the Roma ghetto of Sátoraljaújhely from June to October 1944.	JB
Rinyaszentkirály	Roma residents performed forced labor at the estates of Patosfa and Lajosmajor from the autumn of 1944 to January 1945.	JB
Romhány	Roma from here and the surrounding areas were detained in the local ghetto from October to December 1944.	JB
Rózsafa	Local Roma were confined in the Komárom ghetto from September 1944 to February 1945.	JB
Salgótarján	Local Roma were detained in Komárom from September to December 1944. Many were dragged off to German camps (Dachau, Buchenwald, Bergen-Belsen).	JB
Sarkad	Roma from here and the surrounding areas were collected in the local ghetto in September 1944. They were forced to perform labor.	JB 3
Sárbogárd	The Roma residents were taken to Komárom first, then to Ravensbrück or Bergen-Belsen and interned between November 1944 and January 1945. Few of them ever returned.	ÁÉB
Sárhida	The Roma quarter was surrounded by gendarmes and Arrow Cross members on November 3, 1944. Some of the Roma were taken to Pápa or to Csillagerőd, the fortress in Komárom. A few weeks later those who were found fit to work were transferred to Dachau and Mauthausen.	RPA/KP JB RSK ÁÉB
Sárpilis	Gendarmes and soldiers surrounded the Roma quarter on November 3, 1944. Some of the Roma were taken to Pápa or to Csillagerőd, the fortress in Komárom. Within a few weeks, those fit to work were transferred to Dachau, Mauthausen or Bergenbelsen.	RPA/KP JB 2

(*continues*)

Location	Event	Source
Sárvár	Gendarmes set up a Roma collection camp in Sárvár in June 1944. Many Roma were taken from here to Komárom, then to Auschwitz, Buchenwald, Magdeburg or Ravensbrück. They had to perform forced labor and were also subject to medical experiments.	ÁÉB JB 2
Sátoraljaújhely	In 1944, the Roma residents were rounded up by gendarmes and transported to perform forced labor at the Rózsák farm. They were detained locally or in Komárom between July and November 1944.	RPA/KP JB 2
Sávoly	Local Roma were confined in Sárvár from the autumn of 1944 to February 1945.	JB
Segesd	In the summer of 1944, Roma from here were taken to Sárvár and Nagykanizsa, then to Draskovec. They were kept there until April 1945.	JB
Selyeb	Roma people had to perform forced labor locally between March and August 1944.	JB
Siklósnagyfalu	Local Roma were confined in Révfalu, Komárom, and Linz (probably the Mauthausen camp) between May 1944 and May 1945.	JB
Sióagárd	Roma residents were collected in Szekszárd, then in Komárom in April 1944. They were released in January 1945.	JB
Somogyapáti	Local Roma were detained in Komárom from September 1944 to March 1945.	JB 4
Somogysávoly	Roma residents were detained in Komárom from November 1944 to February 1945.	JB
Somogyszentmiklós	Roma people were taken to the coffee factory in Nagykanizsa in September. Two months later they were transferred to Murakeresztúr and Draskovec and kept there until April 1945.	JB 4
Sopronkőhida	Local Roma were confined in Sárvár, Komárom and Mauthausen between September 1944 and May 1945.	JB
Sopronpereszteg	The source was removed to Komárom on November 3, 1944, then transferred to Dachau.	RSK
Sorokpolány	Roma from here were detained in the ghettos of Szombathely and Révkomárom from November 1944 to February 1945.	JB
Soroksár	Roma residents were taken to the brick factory in Óbuda on October 29, 1944. They were transported to Dachau by rail on November 8, then farther to Ravensbrück, Bergen-Belsen and Buchenwald. Those who were rounded up as late as mid-November were transported to Komárom first; many of them were then sent on to Germany.	JB

Location	Event	Source
Sorokújfalu	Roma from here were detained in Csillagerőd, the fortress in Komárom, from September 1944 till February 1945.	JB
Söjtör	Local Roma were confined in Komárom from November 1944 to February 1945.	JB
Sumony	Roma residents were interned in Révfalu and Komárom between September 1944 and February 1945.	JB
Súr	Local Roma were locked up in the ghetto in September and October 1944, then in Csillagerőd, the fortress in Komárom.	JB
Sümeg	Roma residents were detained in Komárom, then in German camps between autumn 1944 and May 1945.	RPA/KP JB 9
Szabadbattyán	Local Roma were interned in Kistarcsa, had to perform forced labor in Pápa, and were detained in the Várpalota ghetto from November 1944. In January 1945, many Roma had to dig their own graves before being murdered locally.	JB
Szabadegyháza (then called Szolgaegyháza)	Gendarmes staged a "hunt" and picked off local Roma families.	JB László Karsai's research
Szabadszállás	Roma residents were collected in the local ghetto in November and December 1944.	JB
Szabolcsfalu	Roma residents were subjected to forced labor locally from September to December 1944.	JB
Szakony	Local Roma were interned in Komárom in November and December 1944, then in Auschwitz from February 1945.	JB
Szalánta	Roma residents were detained in Komárom from September 1944 to March 1945.	JB
Szamosszeg	Roma residents were detained in the Mátészalka ghetto between September and November 1944.	JB
Szatmárnémeti	Roma residents were detained in the Mátészalka ghetto from August till November 1944.	JB
Szászvár	Roma residents were detained in the Komárom camp from September 1944 to February 1945.	JB
Százhalombatta	Roma residents were detained in Komárom from November 1944 to February 1945.	JB
Szedres	Roma residents were detained in Komárom between December 1944 and March 1945.	JB
Szeghalom	Local Roma were forced to labor at Tiszaderzsi between May and November 1944.	JB

(*continues*)

Location	Event	Source
Székesfehérvár	The Roma quarter was sealed off in March 1944. Many people were taken from here to Komárom in November, then dragged off to German camps (Mauthausen, Dachau). The city was reoccupied by German-Hungarian forces in January 1945. Some Roma were accused of helping the Russians to acquire horses. Arrow Cross members and gendarmes surrounded the quarter and all residents were herded off to Várpalota. They had to dig a mass grave by the Grábler Lake together with other Roma from the surrounding areas. Finally, 130 people were shot into the grave with machine guns. Only two of them survived the massacre; they managed to crawl out of the grave in spite of their injuries.	JB Janós Ury's research
Szekszárd	Roma residents were detained in the local collection ghetto, then in Komárom, between November 1944 and March 1945.	JB
Szendehely	Roma residents were detained in the Vác collection ghetto and in Komárom, then performed forced labor in Germany from October 1944 to May 1945.	JB
Szendrőlád	Roma residents were detained locally and had to perform forced labor between May and October 1944.	JB 30
Szentes	Local Roma were removed to Szolnok, Gyergyótölgyes and Nagygorovics in March 1944 and kept there until October of the same year.	JB
Szentgál	Roma residents were detained in Komárom from August 1944 to February 1945.	JB
Szentgotthárd	Roma residents were detained in Komárom, then in Dachau, from September 1944; they were released in May 1945.	JB
Szentlőrinc	Most Roma from here were taken to Komárom in September 1944 and kept there until February 1945.	JB 25
Szergény	Roma residents were detained in Komárom from December 1944 to March 1945.	JB
Szigetcsép	Roma residents from here were taken by soldiers to the brick factory in Óbuda at the beginning of November 1944, then transported by rail to Ravensbrück. A few of them returned home in autumn 1945.	ÁÉB RSK
Szigetszentmiklós	On March 29, 1944, soldiers dragged off many Roma families to the basement of a ruined building in Dunavarsány. Liberation for them came with the arrival of Russian troops in December 1944.	RPA/KP JB 2
Szigetvár	Roma residents were detained in Révfalu from July 1944 and then Komárom in January 1945.	JB

Location	Event	Source
Szikszó	A local ghetto was set up for the Roma of the surrounding areas. They had to perform forced labor there between September and December 1944.	JB
Szil	Roma residents were detained in the Győr collection camp, then in Komárom from October 1944.	JB
Szín	Roma people had to hide in nearby hills and forests between April and October 1944.	JB 2
Szolnok	Roma residents were kept in the local collection ghetto and forced to perform labor (in Szandaszőlős); later they were transferred to Komárom and detained there from October 1944 to February 1945.	JB
Szombathely	Gendarmes and Arrow Cross members surrounded the Roma quarter on November 3, 1944. Some of the Roma were taken to Pápa or Komárom. After a few weeks, those who were found fit to work were transferred to Dachau, Mauthausen, Hamburg.	RPA/KP5 ÁÉB 1971 JB
Szögliget	Roma were detained locally from June to October 1944.	
Szőny	On November 4, 1944, the Oláh and the Kolompár families, altogether about 100 people, were dragged off by gendarmes to Csillagerőd, the fortress in Komárom. They were kept there for about a month, until they regained their freedom in December.	RPA/KP JB 10
Szuhony	Roma residents were forced to labor locally from April to September 1944.	JB
Tamási	Roma residents were detained in Csillagerőd, the fortress in Komárom, from November 1944 to February 1945.	JB
Tapolca	Roma residents were detained in Csillagerőd, the fortress in Komárom, between November 1944 and February 1945.	JB
Tar	Local Roma performed forced labor in Salgótarján in October and November 1944.	JB
Tarnalelesz	Rome residents were forced to perform slave labor at Szentgotthárd from August 1944 to February 1945. Some of them were taken to other places.	JB 8
Tarnanádaska	The Roma people were confined to the local ghetto from May to October 1944.	JB
Tarnazsadány	Local Roma were forced to labor in Bargo (Romania) between August 1944 and February 1945.	JB 2
Tarpa	Roma residents were detained in the Mátészalka ghetto from June to October 1944.	JB
Tata	Most Roma from Tata were interned in Komárom between October 1944 and February 1945. Some were removed to Salzburg.	JB 7

(*continues*)

Location	Event	Source
Táp	Roma residents were detained to Csillagerőd, the fortress in Komárom, between March and June 1944.	JB
Tápiógyörgye	Roma residents were detained in the Nagykáta collection ghetto from September to December 1944.	JB
Tápiószele	Roma residents were detained in the Cegléd ghetto, then in Budapest and Ócsa, from September to December 1944.	JB
Tárkány	Some of the Tárkány Roma were taken to Komárom on November 4, 1944 and kept there until February 1945. A few of them were transferred to Dachau and Regensburg (?), and none ever returned home.	JB 7
Telekes	Roma residents were detained in Komárom in 1944 and 1945.	JB
Tét	Local Roma were taken to Bakonyság, then to Mezőörs, later to Sopron.	JB
Tikos	All Roma residents were rounded up by gendarmes in November 1944. They were first transported to Csillagerőd, the fortress in Komárom, then to the Dachau concentration camp. Though the camp was hit by a bomb, these Roma survived and came back home on foot. Some of them arrived in Vörs in May 1945.	RPA/KP
Tinnye	Roma residents were detained in Révkomárom from October to December 1944.	JB
Tiszabecs	Roma were detained in the Mátészalka ghetto from May 1944 to March 1945.	JB 4
Tiszabercel	Local Roma were removed to Rázonpuszta in June 1944 and kept there until October of the same year.	JB
Tiszadada	Several families were taken to Tiszalúc in September 1944; they were not released until November.	JB 2
Tiszakanyár	The source was taken to Ardó in September 1944 and released a month later.	JB
Tiszakóród	Roma residents were detained in Bergen-Belsen from November 1944 to May 1945.	JB
Tiszalúc	Roma residents were detained in the local school and the synagogue between September and November 1944.	JB 5
Tiszapalkonya	The Roma people performed forced labor in the local ghetto and the Mezőkeresztes ghetto from August to October 1944.	JB 3
Tokod	Roma residents were detained in Komárom from December 1944 to April 1945.	JB 4
Tolna	The source was taken to Bogyiszló in August 1944, then transferred to Szedres, where he was forced to work on the construction of a German airstrip. He was released in February 1945.	JB

Location	Event	Source
Tornaszentandrás	Roma residents were locked up in local basements. From July to October 1944 they performed forced labor.	JB
Torony	On the night of August 12, 1944, gendarmes rounded up all the Roma whom they could find at home and herded them to the local schoolyard. On November 4, 1944, young girls and women were deported to the Városmajor in Szombathely. They were taken farther, to Csillagerőd, the fortress in Komárom, and many of them were transferred to Dachau, Auschwitz or Ravensbrück. Altogether one-third of the local Roma population was deported (about 200 people), only 13 of them made returned home.	RPA/KP RSK ÁÉB JB
Tóalmás	Local Roma were interned in Komárom from December 1944 to April 1945.	JB
Tótszentgyörgy	Roma residents were detained in Komárom from November 1944 to February 1945.	JB
Törökszentmiklós	All Roma residents were rounded up by gendarmes in April 1944 and taken to Somogyjád to perform slave labor. They were kept there until the arrival of Russian troops.	RPA/KP JB 3
Türje	Local Roma were interned in Komárom from September 1944 to February 1945. Some were taken to Germany, never to return.	JB 6
Tüskevár	Roma people from here were detained in the ghettos of Devecser, Pápa and Komárom between November 1944 and March 1945. Many of them were transferred to Dachau and died there. There was a non-Gypsy farmhand who spoke up for them. The gendarmes also dragged him off with the Roma and he was killed in Dachau.	JB 9 RSK
Udvari	Roma from Udvari performed forced labor in the local ghetto from August to December 1944.	JB 2
Újfehértó	Roma women, children and old people from the neighboring areas were confined to the local Jewish ghetto from April to October 1944. There were 200–300 people in detention there who were often beaten, tortured and starved. Roma men were dragged off to the military labor camp at Rahó.	JB 20
Újpest	Local Roma were detained in Rákospalota between June and August 1944. In the last days of October whole families were dragged off to the brick factory in Óbuda, then transferred to Dachau by rail. Some of them were transported even farther, to Ravensbrück or Bergen-Belsen. They made their way back home in the autumn of 1945.	JB 2
Újszász	Roma residents were interned in the ghettos at the outskirts of Abony and at Jászberény from October to December 1944.	JB 4

(*continues*)

Location	Event	Source
Újudvar	The Roma from here were detained in the coffee factory of Nagykanizsa from October to December 1944. Some were transferred to Draskovec.	JB 2
Vajdácska	Most local Roma were detained in Ardó and Sárospatak from May 1944 to January 1945. Some were taken to Sátoraljaújhely.	JB 2
Vajta	Roma residents were taken to Szekszárd and Kistarcsa and kept from September 1944 to January 1945.	JB
Varsány	Local Roma were detained in Nógrádabony at the Lívia estate from April to October 1944.	JB
Vác	A local ghetto was set up especially for Roma people. They were kept there under dismal conditions throughout November and December 1944.	JB 4
Vámoscsalád	Roma people from here were removed to Komárom, then to Germany, and kept there from October 1944 to summer 1945.	JB
Váralja	Local Roma were taken to Komárom, then to Auschwitz, and kept there from autumn 1944 to April 1945.	JB
Várfölde	The Roma from here were transported to Komárom in October 1944 and kept there until March 1945. Some were removed to Dachau, never to return.	JB 5
Várpalota	Roma were collected into the local barn and massacred together with the Székesfehérvár Roma in the Akácos forest at the end of January or beginning of February 1945.	Janós Ury's research
Várvölgy	Most local Roma were interned at Komárom in October 1944 and released in January 1945.	JB
Vásárosdombó	Roma residents were detained in Komárom between October 1944 and April 1945.	JB
Vásárosnamény	Roma people from here were taken to the Jewish ghetto at Újfehértó in April 1944. They were released in October of that year.	JB
Vencsellő	Roma residents were detained at Rázonpuszta between April and November 1944.	JB 2
Verpelét	Roma people from here were kept in the Gyöngyös ghetto from March to August 1944.	JB
Versend	Roma residents had to perform forced labor at several places: Tarcsapuszta, Komárom and Trefortpuszta, from 1943 to February 1945.	JB

Location	Event	Source
Veszprém	The Roma people of Veszprém were detained in the local ghetto from October 1944. Many of them were later transferred to Komárom, then to German camps. The ones who were left at home, like the Roma of Székesfehérvár, were killed in the Grábler Lake massacre.	JB
Végegyháza	In 1941, 10 Roma were moved to Mezőkovácsháza, then transported farther, to Békéscsaba, Budapest. Many local Roma were also interned at Nagykanizsa. In 1944, they were transferred to a labor camp in Croatia, then finally returned to a place near Szolnok in 1945.	RPA/KP JB 2
Véménd-Erdő	The local source had to perform forced labor at Véménd (Trefortpuszta) from May to December 1944.	JB
Vép	Roma people from here were interned in Komárom from September 1944 to February 1945. Some were taken to Ravensbrück.	JB 2
Vép-Sándorháza	The source was taken to the Városmajor park in Szombathely in October 1944. He was later taken to Komárom and to Ravensbrück, where he was subject to medical experiments.	ÁÉB
Vép-Szombathely	Local Roma were detained in Komárom from October 1944 to March 1945.	JB
Vértesacsa	Local Roma were interned in Komárom from December 1944 to February 1945.	JB
Vésztő	Roma residents were transported to a Gypsy camp by the river Drave in Croatia. They performed forced labor from March 1944 to February 1945.	JB 3
Vizsoly	Many Roma people were taken to the Komárom camp, then to Bergen-Belsen. Others had to perform forced labor in Tolna County between October 1944 and December 1945.	JB
Zagyvarékas	Roma people here lived along the banks of the river Zagyva. As they were trying to escape through a cemetery, gendarmes and German soldiers caught them one by one. Those who were thus caught were interned in the ghetto at Abony-Cegléd.	RPA/KP JB 3
Zalaboldogfa	Roma residents were detained in Komárom, then in Dachau, between November 1944 and April 1945.	JB
Zalacsány	Roma residents were detained in Révkomárom first, then in Berlin (?), between November 1944 and August 1945.	JB 2

(*continues*)

Location	Event	Source
Zalaegerszeg	On November 3, 1944, gendarmes and Arrow Cross members surrounded the Roma quarter. Some of the Roma were taken to Pápa or to Csillagerőd, the fortress in Komárom. A few weeks later those who were found fit to work were transferred to Dachau or Mauthausen. The deportees and the ones detained at home were finally liberated by Russian troops.	ÁÉB RPA/KP JB 52
Zalaegerszeg-Neszele	Roma residents were detained in Komárom from September 1944, taken to Dachau and kept there until May 1945.	JB
Zalaegerszeg-Petőhenye	Five Roma families were rounded up in October 1944. They were kept in the Zalaegerszeg ghetto for two weeks, then transported to Csillagerőd, the fortress in Komárom, to be detained there for 10 to 12 weeks. In 20 to 30 cattle cars, Roma people were taken to Mauthausen, near Salzburg. Some were transported to Dachau. Most of them did not survive, but some were able to escape as Russian troops approached.	RPA/KP
Zalaegerszeg-Pózva	The source was taken to Komárom in August 1944, transferred to Dachau and kept there until January 1945.	JB
Zalagyömörő	Roma residents were interned in Komárom from October 1944 to February 1945.	JB
Zalalövő	Local Roma were collected in the brick factory at Zalaegerszeg from September 1944. In December, they were all transported to Révkomárom and kept there until February 1945.	JB 2
Zalamerenye	Roma people from here were taken to Révkomárom in March 1944 and kept there until October 1945.	JB
Zalaszántó	Roma residents were interned in Komárom from October 1944 to February 1945.	JB
Zalaszentgyörgy-Zélpuszta	Local Roma were detained in Révkomárom in November and December 1944.	JB
Zalaszentmihály	Roma people from here were interned in Dachau from October 1944 to April 1945.	JB
Zaláta	Roma residents were taken to Komárom in September 1944 and were released only in February 1945.	JB
Zákánytelep	Roma from here were taken to Nagykanizsa in October 1944, then taken to Csáktornya and Bélice (?) and kept there until April 1945.	JB
Zámoly	Local Roma were detained in Komárom from October 1944 to February 1945.	JB
Zemplénagárd	Roma people from here were taken to the Ardó ghetto from 1944. Many of them never returned.	JB
Zsid	The source was taken to Germany in August 1944 and returned home in August 1945.	JB

Appendix

The Struggle for an Authentic Narrative of the Pharrajimos: Illustrations

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Roma Holocaust, Hungarian History[1]

Vy Dr. László Karsai, professor of history

Hundreds in Budapest and Nagykanizsa commemorated the Gypsy victims of Nazism, but this was the fourth year that official speakers neglected to mention that there were no Hungarian Gypsies in Auschwitz in August 1944. One of the speakers, Aladár Horváth, chairman of the Roma Rights Foundation, implied that, in what amounted to a sin on the part of the non-Gypsy society, there has been no thorough social history of the Roma Holocaust, no soul-searching or collective facing up to the past.

On August 2, 1998 János Bársony, identified as a minority researcher on the TV program *A Hét* [The Week], claimed that in 1944 Gypsies were hated and persecuted in exactly the same manner as Jews. According to Bársony, in 1944 Gypsies in Hungary were forbidden to leave their places of residence, a prohibition that was soon followed by their massive deportation, as was the case with Jews. Last summer, Bársony, who calls himself a historian, said that he had been conducting extensive research on the Roma Holocaust for decades. Thus, he must know that no order was issued in Hungary in 1944 forbidding the Gypsies to leave their places of residence. Nor is it true that the Roma Holocaust is *terra incognita*. In 1992, Cserépfalvi Kiadó published my dissertation titled "Cigánykérdés Magyarországon 1919–1945. Út a cigány holocausthoz" [The Gypsy Question in Hungary 1919–1945: On the Road to Gypsy Holocaust]. After nearly a decade of archival research, I estimated that the number of Gypsies subjected to any form of persecution amounted to 5,000, of whom about 1,000 were victims of the Gypsy Holocaust.

Some Gypsy intellectuals received my conclusions with skepticism and even open hostility. On one occasion, following a lecture I delivered at the University of Economics, Ágnes Daróczi went so far as to label me, in front of an audience of hundreds, as someone who found excuses for the Neo-Nazis and Arrow Cross. However, no one has yet produced evidence to challenge my research. On the other hand, they "invented" the night of August 2–3. The idea is good. It is possible to maintain that the 70,000 or 100,000—or who knows how many—victims of the Roma Holocaust in Hungary are entitled to be (collectively) compensated. This year, Aladár Horváth told the tale of "only" 30,000 Hungarian Gypsy victims in the business daily *Világgazdaság* [World Economy], claiming that he had come across this figure in

1 This article was published in the large-circulation daily *Népszabadság* (August 17, 1998). It was translated by Eszter Pál. The translation was funded and the publication in this volume permitted by OSI-Roma Participation Program.

the works of German historians. Horváth failed to mention that the original source for the figure of 28,000 victims, which appears in the German and English Holocaust literature, is the Committee of the Persecuted of Nazism (CPN).[2] In a private letter, nearly 30 years ago, one of the leaders of the CPN, on the basis of the files of those seeking compensation, which were kept in a safe of the General Valuetrading Bank,[3] estimated the number of Gypsies deported from Hungary in 1944 at 33,000 and the survivors at 5,000. I spent months searching through these files (there were approximately 80,000 people who submitted claims for compensation to the West German government between 1957 and 1961), but I found barely 300—not 30,000—submissions from Gypsies.

Of course, the most important question is not the number of Gypsy Holocaust victims. In World War II, the Nazis deported barely 200 [*sic*] Danish Jews, and the overwhelming majority of them survived Theresienstadt. Yet despite the small number and high survival rate, the Danish Holocaust has a separate, significant chapter in the international literature of the Holocaust.

We cannot treat the persecution of Gypsies in World War II as if it were the same as the Jewish Shoa, not only because of the difference in scale. Contrary to what Horváth claimed this August, the Nazis did not deport hundreds of thousands of Gypsies to Auschwitz from all over Europe. The overwhelming majority of Gypsies in France, Belgium, etc. survived the war undisturbed. According to seemingly reliable studies, the Nazis and their allies killed fewer than 100,000 European Gypsies between 1939 and 1945, whereas nearly 6 million died in the Jewish Holocaust. In Germany the mainly nomadic Rom and Sippen Gypsies were deported to Auschwitz, but the Sinte [*sic*] and Lalleri tribes were not disturbed. SS "experts" usually spared the lives of "pure-blooded" Gypsies, whereas those of mixed Gypsy and German blood were considered criminals and deported.

When the Nazis occupied Hungary in March 19, 1944, they were not concerned with Hungarian Gypsies. The Arrow Cross seized power on October 15, 1944, but a somewhat organized persecution of Gypsies only began about a month later and exclusively in a few counties of Western Transdanubia. These counties, however, contained only a few thousand Gypsies, and

2 Nácizmus Üldözötteinek Bizottsága. The CPN was a Hungarian antifascist organization that existed until the change of regime in 1989. It collected information from the survivors, from the local administration and the Cultural Alliance of the Hungarian Roma (1957–61) and estimated the number of victims from these sources. —Editor's note.

3 Állami Értékforgalmi Bank handled the compensation of the survivors according to the treaty between West Germany and Hungary. —Editor's note.

therefore suggestions of tens of thousands of deportations could not be accurate.

The crucial difference between the Gypsy and the Jewish Holocaust was in the aim. The Nazis wanted to kill all Jews, but at least some sort of mad logic, a lunatic rationality, operated behind the persecution of Gypsies. Aladár Horváth and his friends refuse to face the fact that in Hungary Gypsies were far less despised before 1945 than they are now. There were no orders concerning Gypsies; no laws defined who was considered a Gypsy. When the Hungarian legislators were discussing the Third Jewish Law in 1941, Professor Ferenc Orsós, the president of the medical society, suggested in the Upper House that marriage between Hungarians and Gypsies should also be forbidden. Mr. Orsós was simply laughed at, and one of those who interrupted him referred to the Indian, and therefore "Aryan," origin of Gypsies. Until August 1944, Gypsy men could fight alongside Hungarian soldiers. It was only after this date that separate Gypsy military labor service companies were organized. Those Gypsies, nomadic or settled, targeted for conscription into these units were primarily those who had no permanent jobs. Those who dare to equate anti-Semitism with anti-Gypsyism try to forget that anti-Semites usually envy Jews. I do not think that any contemporary racist would envy the residents of the Gypsy ghettos of the towns and villages in Borsod or Szabolcs. The assertion of imaginary World War II sufferings has a clear political intention: to generate collective guilt in mainstream society by taking advantage of the ignorance of non-Gypsy media intellectuals, whose stomachs automatically churn when they hear the word "Holocaust." And somewhat more quietly, behind the scenes, it is possible to negotiate with the German and the Hungarian governments about which self-appointed Gypsy minority organizations should obtain more money by right of collective compensation.

Roma Holocaust—Facts and Denials[1]

By Dr. János Bársony minority researcher, and Ágnes Daróczi, journalist
Translation by Eszter Pál

An article by László Karsai ntitled "Roma Holocaust, Hungarian History" was published in *Népszabadság* on August 17, 1998. The publication contains several false statements and political accusations that gravely offended those mourning the Holocaust.

According to László Karsai, there were no Hungarian Gypsies in Auschwitz-Birkenau on the night of August 2–3, 1944 during the liquidation of the Gypsy camp, a "fact" that speakers at the commemoration in Nagykanizsa and Budapest neglected to mention.

But László Karsai is wrong. The register of the prisoners of the Auschwitz Gypsy camp has survived. Two volumes, containing 20,943 names, were edited by the National Museum of Auschwitz-Birkenau, with the contribution of the Heidelberg Sinti and Roma Cultural and Documentation Center, and published in Munich in 1993 (K. G. Saur Publishing). According to this register, 0.16%, i.e., 34, of the prisoners in the Gypsy camp were Hungarian citizens. Nor does Karsai consider worth mentioning the thousands of Hungarian Gypsies from Burgenland,[2] even though the names Sárközi, Pápai, Horváth, Holdosi[3] appear repeatedly throughout the register. And after the phasing out of the separate Gypsy camp, masses of Hungarian Roma were taken to Auschwitz.

Obviously, on the 2nd of August, speakers were commemorating not only the Hungarian Gypsy victims but also all Roma victims of Nazism. According to the resolution adopted by the Gypsy World Organization (Romani Union) congress held in Paris in 1971, August 2–3 is the international day of mourning for the Roma Holocaust—in Gypsy language: Pharrajimos. We would only remind the historian that the survivors of the separate Gypsy camp in Auschwitz-Birkenau—2,897 people—were killed during one night, August 2–3, 1944. This day, therefore, was not "invented" by the Roma of Nagykanizsa, or Aladár Horváth, or Ágnes Daróczi, or János Bársony—as László Karsai cynically claimed—but is commemorated worldwide. It is unthinkable that he dares dispute the right of the Roma to commemorate

1 Translated by Eszter Pál, published in the daily *Népszabadság*, September 14, 1998. The translation was funded and the publication in this volume permitted by OSI-Roma Participation Program.
2 Burgenland is a region of Austria bordering Hungary.
3 Typically Hungarian Roma family names. Editors' note.

their dead, to hold their night of mourning. Mr. Karsai could have kept his views private. However, the publication of such opinions, coinciding with the commemoration, makes it a public affair. It is a public desecration, and the responsibility for it lies also with the editors.

Karsai alleges that Aladár Horváth implied that what amounted to the sin of the non-Gypsy society lay in the "fact" that there has been "no thorough social history of the Roma Holocaust, no soul-searching or collective facing up to the past."

Fortunately, Karsai's article appeared together with Aladár Horváth's commemorative speech in *Népszabadság*, and thus Karsai's distortion is apparent and easily refuted. Horváth never made that implication; he does not consider the dearth of a thorough social history to be the sin of *gadjo* (non-Gypsy) society, for this is not a task linked to a particular ethnic group or people. Historians, researchers—be they German, Gypsy, Russian, Jewish, Romanian or American—can engage in such work. Furthermore, when Horváth spoke about a collective need to acknowledge the past, his meaning was political as well as historical. Nonetheless, the fact remains that such work does not yet exist. For instance, too little is known about the massive forced relocation of Gypsies (many of them Hungarian-speaking and with a Hungarian identity) to Transnistria. Nor has anyone explored the suffering of Gypsies from the Ukraine, Lithuania, Poland, Moldova and Russia. At present, even establishing the number of victims is difficult.

Referring to an interview in *A Hét* [The Week], Karsai alleges that János Bársony asserted that in 1944 Gypsies were hated and persecuted in exactly the same fashion as Jews.

Bársony never said this. Possibly Karsai's preconceptions led him to erroneously attribute such comments to the interviewee. Bársony was not talking about hatred at all, nor did he make comparisons. That the two peoples lived in different historical, economic and demographic circumstances is well known. The majority of the Jews, especially in the towns, had linguistically, residentially and economically assimilated into their communities. The majority of the Gypsy population, on the other hand, was segregated and also easily distinguishable by the color of their skin. Racists did not need to legislate in order to segregate Gypsies or to force them into ghettos. Most Gypsies were, in fact, living in ghettos on the outskirts of settlements, for the most part in subhuman circumstances. On the other hand, it is true, as János Bársony said on TV, that the process was similar for both Gypsies and Jews: registration, compilation of lists of names, prohibition against leaving

places of abode, round up by armed gendarmes, collection in internment camps, deportation to concentration camps, forced labor, organized raids and manhunts to capture those who remained in hiding or tried to escape. That there were relatively fewer victims among the Hungarian Roma—due to the change in the military situation, differences in timing and perhaps the disgust and shame provoked by the rounding up of Jews—in no way detracts from Bársony's account.

The article in question claims that, "as a researcher," Bársony must be aware that there was no order of any sort in 1944 that forbade Gypsies to leave their places of residence.

As a researcher, however, Karsai himself states exactly the opposite. In his own book, *Cigánykérdés Magyarországon 1919–1945. Út a Holocausthoz* [Gypsy Question in Hungary, 1919–1945: On the Road to Holocaust],[4] he cites the order by the IV Hungarian Royal Gendarme Headquarters, issued on October 16, 1944, whose first regulation states: "Gypsies may not leave their permanent residence," closely followed by the stipulation that "every Gypsy who leaves his or her permanent residence without the permission of the local principal [mayor], breaks the law, and, on the basis of an order by the Prime Minister (1500/1944, section 8, § 1) must be punished, and furthermore, in addition to this punishment, is to be interned."

The author's memory misleads him yet again when he makes claims in his article that contradict what he wrote earlier in his own book. In *Népszabadság* he reckons, "The Arrow Cross seized power on October 15, 1944, but a somewhat organized persecution of Gypsies only began about a month later and exclusively in a few counties of Western Transdanubia." This contradicts page 119 of his aforementioned book, which informed readers that in Baranya County Gypsies living in Nagybicsérd and Kisbicsérd were rounded up on November 4, 1944 (a list of their names had been drawn up as early as April 20!). Furthermore, on page 127, the reader is told: "What we can say, with full certainty, is that in November 1944, Gypsies from several districts of the Baranya, Vas and Zala counties, were deported." Again, on page 122, he wrote: "On the first days (3rd) of November 1944 Gypsies were deported from Szombathely and its neighborhood." So, by his own earlier account, all this had occurred within 20 days of the Arrow Cross seizure of power, and not only in Western Transdanubia! Nor does Karsai acknowledge facts presented in other sources that point out deficiencies in his book. He neglects, for

4 L. Karsai, *Cigánykérdés Magyarországon 1919–1945. Út a Holokauszthoz* [Gypsy Question in Hungary 1919–1945: On the Road to Gypsy Holocaust] (Budapest: Cserépfalvi Kiadó, 1992): 117–118.

example, the information contained in an article in *Palócföld* that provided an account of the deportation of Gypsies from Salgótarján, or the filmed interviews about the persecution of Gypsies from Budapest (Újpest, Csepel), Pest County, Borsod, and Szabolcs, in spite of the fact that some of these filmed interviews were shown at the commemoration on August 2 and that one of the survivors from Hangony (Borsod County) spoke at Kossuth Square. He paid no attention to Miklós Jancsó's film that chronicled the extermination of the Gypsy population of Lajoskomárom (Fejér County). Karsai is apparently interested only in archival material. He considers interviewing, searching for survivors, and gathering witness testimonies best left to "minority researchers." But documentation is poor. On many occasions events were simply not documented; many more documents were lost, "not filed" in the confusion of wartime or its aftermath. A serious scholar would tread more cautiously on such swampy terrain, where one has to be "guided by assessments and estimates." And a serious researcher would not make definitive statements about what he does not know, has not found or cannot know. We can consider the facts of the Roma Holocaust completely revealed if, in every settlement, in every community in Hungary, survivors can recall the names of victims; if we can find the names of those responsible for the persecution and forced removals; and if we can discover the names of those who rescued Gypsies and who sabotaged the inhuman persecutions, and record their names for posterity.

Karsai has provoked an argument about the overall number of Gypsy victims of the Nazi regime. His phrasing is as follows: "Contrary to what Aladár Horváth claimed this August, the Nazis did not deport hundreds of thousands of Gypsies to Auschwitz from all over Europe."

Again, no such statement exists in the commemoration speech. Exactly what Horváth said was: "Hundreds of thousands of our brothers and sisters died because of their origin, as a result of forced labor, in concentration camps or on the way to the death camps." As is well known, although Auschwitz was by far the largest, it was only one of the death factories. The Nazis committed genocide against the Roma in several places, in several forms. Karsai does not name his source for the estimate of 100,000 victims, which "seems [to him] to be reliable." Horváth, on the other hand, mentions a larger estimated figure, locates its source and acknowledges that it is disputed. In his speech, Horváth was not asking for numbers, rather he urged the experts to engage in the painstaking task of detailed examination and clarification of facts. Karsai is wrong when he claims that the Nazis did not persecute the "Sinte" (correctly Sinti) and Lalleri Gypsies because they were "Aryan." Certainly Himmler's 1942 order contained such a term, but what happened in practice was that

some members of these groups were given the option of being sterilized instead of being taken to camps. Thousands accepted this alternative. Nevertheless, Karsai could have easily learned that there were many Sinti victims, if he had checked the data of the Heidelberg Roma Cultural and Documentation Center. He could also find thousands of their names in the lists of the prisoners of the Auschwitz Gypsy camp. In fact, after 1943, the Nazis' goal was the total extermination of Gypsies as a people. Even Karsai's own book records the Arrow Cross' plans for Jews and Gypsies[5]: "[Interior Minister] Gábor Vajna announced in Kőszeg on February 23, 1945: 'I have started the complete, and, if necessary, draconian resolution of the Jewish and Gypsy questions, which has been necessitated by the behavior of these two alien anti-national races.'"

László Karsai has invented a separate area of research for himself: comparative Jewish-Gypsy Holocaust research. His purpose is not to examine available sources to determine what happened to the Gypsies, and what were the causes and outcomes, but rather to investigate all these in comparison to the Jewish experience. This narrow approach—the product of his bias—does nothing to advance his work. This was pointed out to him by historians of international renown, other than János Bársony and Aladár Horváth, attending an international Roma Holocaust conference, organized by the University of Vienna, where he delivered a paper.

So much for history. Karsai then moves to politics.

Perhaps he does not realize that when he attacks the Gypsies for commemorating their persecution, he uses the same arguments that extreme-right ideologues employ when challenging the facts of the Holocaust and finding excuses for the Nazis.

They talk about the lie of the Holocaust, about the absurd exaggeration of the "real facts." They also claim that the aims of those researching and commemorating the Holocaust are to arouse pity and collective guilt, and that the motivation is greed, a perpetual grasping for monetary compensation.

The Roma need a historical consciousness of their own; they need to learn and come to terms with their past. They want clarity in their understanding of the Holocaust. They expect an explanation that is free of bias and preconceptions—they do not expect accusations. A clear understanding of the past is in all of our interests. As to the charge of financial exploitation, no Roma organization in Hungary makes monetary claims for collective compensation

5 Ibid.

to use or dispense as they see fit. To suggest this is a libel. Roma organizations demanded the right of individual compensation for victims without any distinctions. As for the issue of collective compensation, Roma organizations in Hungary, similar to the Gypsy groups in Germany, asked the German government to establish a museum, a research and documentation center, where historians could conduct further research and the younger generations could see what happened to the Roma. Karsai was not wrong, however, in perceiving that those at the commemoration sought to arouse solidarity and awareness of the losses endured by both the Roma and the Hungarian nation; to evoke a unity of thought and action against racism; to contemplate both the historical facts of the genocide and the contemporary dangers of hatred and anti-minority violence. If Karsai does not feel such dangers relate to the Roma, it is his private affair. But the Roma and many others in the country feel differently.

Why is Karsai so suspicious of the call for solidarity?

The Roma expect facts from those who research their past and evidence to substantiate their claims, and the Roma then attempt to relate those findings to the experience, traditions and memories of those living around them. Karsai's claims often fail this test, so the Roma have good reason to be skeptical. Because they have far too often been the subject of prejudiced attacks, attacks often dressed in a scholarly guise, they do not accept Karsai's statements and claims uncritically. But it is precisely the Roma whom Karsai should first try to convince of his findings, rather than making accusations and causing offense and hurt to those mourners at the remembrance ceremony who ask for an explanation. For this is primarily about them, the relatives of the victims, about their sense of history. Furthermore, Karsai has committed a sacrilege: he elaborated on his proposed findings at an improper time, and in an improper way, about the loss of others and the pain of the survivors. It is just as if he had told mourning relatives at a funeral: your loss is not that big, you don't have to mourn that much, my loss is much bigger. August 2 is the international day of mourning for the Roma Holocaust: the Pharrajimos. Hundreds, Roma and non-Roma alike, commemorated it with dignity at Kossuth Square, in Nagykanizsa and also in Auschwitz, with speeches, recollections, a memorial service, common prayer and a reading of the names of the victims. Those present were united in mourning and by a desire for historical explanation. It is a great pity that László Karsai's article brought dissonance to this night of remembrance.

An Expert Opinion

To: Péter Sipos, historian and museologist
Chairman of the Committee of Historians and Museologists
Public Foundation for Holocaust Documentation Centre and Memorial Collection
Budapest 1091, Üllői u 47-49

Re: The historical material prepared for the Hungarian Holocaust exhibition

Dear Mr. Péter Sipos,

Per your kind request, I have perused the material you have sent me and formed the following opinion:

In its present form and with its present content, the material is not suitable for historically grounding the first permanent exhibition on the Holocaust in Hungary. My position is based on the following arguments:

The material concentrates on the analysis of the history and injuries of Hungarian Jews, the processes of terror and genocide, the activities of Hungarian political institutions, parties and individuals—often with questionable focus and emphasis. Most of the time, the material ignores the fact that the Holocaust was a crime against all of humankind (including the Hungarians) and not just a crime against the Jews. Its development and events were fundamentally not uniquely Hungarian but were the results of global processes. The material does not adequately present background to the Holocaust—the development of the ideology of the totalitarian state and of the Nazi race theories; therefore the perpetrators' plans (including the planned fate of Hungarians) are not clear. The material does not present the transformation of such concepts as the "superior race" or the "community of the German *volk*" into specific aims of the totalitarian state, then into global objectives. It does not analyze the process of substitution: the substitution of earlier human cultural achievements, especially the civil values of Europe, such as natural and human rights, liberty, equality, fraternity, a law-based state, Judeo-Christian culture, religion and humanism, with a primitive social-Darwinism, unbridled urges to pillage and conquest, mob mentality, racism, terror, intimidation, genocide, breeding a master race, extolling subhuman urges, national corporatism and methods of mass manipulation.

The historical material does not make clear the exhibition's objective—nor is it clear to whom the exhibit intends to speak, what kind of knowledge it presupposes on the part of the audience and what it offers in the way of added knowledge. This problem is all the more conspicuous since the intention is the historical grounding of the first permanent Holocaust exhibition in Hungary. The establishment of the exhibition is the first opportunity since the change of the political regime to create a free, comprehensive, social, ideological and historical consensus in this area. The question is with whom this exhibition intends to create a consensus? With the Jewish community of Hungary or some subgroup of it? With historical scholarship? The democratically minded majority of Hungarian society or only some subgroups? With all of us? The material is not helpful in finding the proper arguments, instruments, objectives, balances and focuses or in harmonizing these. It is questionable, for instance, whether mentioning the real or supposed cannibalism in the concentration camps actually helps us to understand the true nature of events.

The material is rather eclectic in its presentation as in its style. Sometimes it reads like an objective, descriptive, historical text—without the necessary historical context, correlation and analysis—at other times it reads like the very opposite, i.e., a personal account of injuries that fails to show the essential underlying processes.

Conspicuous by their absence are the descriptions of the struggles carried out by those opposed to the "Nazi spirit of the age," their temporary defeat and the analysis of the reasons for their weakness. Also missing are the facts and records of the non-Zionist resistance, as is the description of the *other* "spirit of the age," the similarly unscrupulous totalitarianism of class warriors, whose practices and ideology exerted a paralyzing effect on this struggle to preserve human values.

Missing from the documentation is a presentation of the losses Hungarian society suffered in the Holocaust in terms of ratios within the bourgeoisie, intelligentsia, trained or skilled working class, etc. The material is remiss in examining the reasons for the failure to wipe out the Nazi/Hungarist ideology and to confront the horrors of the Holocaust and the associated responsibilities.

The material fails to present a differentiated picture of the processes of Jewish emancipation, assimilation, integration and segregation, the associated focuses, ratios and balances, the various Jewish identities, their

religious, social and political endeavors, and the determining phenomena of an internal process of bourgeois development.

Stating that Raoul Wallenberg merely attempted but actually failed to save any victims is not in keeping with historical consensus—and probably not with the facts. Wallenberg ransomed my grandmother, Mrs. Bársony Ilona Gyéres, and 30 others, from the death march along the road to Vienna and brought them back to Budapest, where he put them up in a "safe house" on Pozsonyi Street.

The presentation of the material on the Roma Holocaust is unacceptable, biased, quite often racist and defective in both its facts and its perspectives.

Let me elaborate on this last point, as I assume that I have been asked to provide an expert opinion primarily on the strength of my research in this area.

The first mention of the racist persecution of the Roma population occurs on page 25 of the material, in connection with a failed attempt on the part of Professor Ferenc Orsós to convince the Upper House of the Parliament to comprehensively adopt Nazi racial laws and to employ instruments of the "final solution" in the case of the Roma as well. At this time, as apparent from Hungarian press reports, a Nazi concentration camp had been operational for a year, in Lackenbach, 7 kilometers from Sopron, and in Wien Fischaamend, where thousands of Roma, mostly Hungarian speakers possessing Hungarian national identity, were detained. Most of them were transferred in May 1940 to the East, to the Jewish ghetto in Lodz, then on to the extermination camp at Auschwitz-Birkenau. Many of the female detainees became the first inmates at Ravensbrück. The Nazis set up the first concentration camp for the Roma as early as 1936 in Marzahn, in the vicinity of Berlin. The Nazi Institute of Racial Hygiene had also been operational since 1936, under the leadership of Professor Orsós's colleague, Dr. [Robert] Ritter. But the material makes no mention of these facts.

N.B. With the extermination of Hungarian-speaking Jews and Roma with Hungarian identities, the Hungarian ethnic minority in Burgenland dropped to half of its prewar number—but this fact is rarely mentioned these days.

The material then goes on to state that no anti-Roma law was passed in Hungary and the definition of "Gypsy" was not enacted into law either. This much is true. (But the author seems to neglect the fact that decrees

and other measures had the same legal force as law; furthermore the authorities usually had the acumen to decide if the person they wanted to prosecute was a Gypsy on account of the color of his skin or other reasons. Legal grounding was available after the issuance of Interior Ministry decree 15.000/1916, which removed those Roma the authorities deemed as "traveling" from the protection of the law and enabled the authorities to detain such persons, confiscate their properties, intern them or prohibit their movements without due process of law. To harass the Roma and collect "traveling" elements, raids were held twice a year, which, the author contends, the gendarmes did not carry out effectively enough.)

The author writes that Roma men could serve in the army, and it was only in August 1944 that Roma labor companies were set up specifically for them. In reality, this meant forced-labor units, under armed guard, as in the case of the Jews, but the author does not clarify this.

What follows then is an explicitly racist, anti-Roma text: "The Gypsy question in Hungary prior to 1945 was about as serious and important a problem as the Indian question is these days in the United States. It only became a 'Negro question' as a consequence of forced industrialization, the migration of Gypsies into the cities and the subsequent appearance of organized or unorganized but certainly mass Gypsy crime." (It is hard to fathom what the author means by "Indian question" and "Negro question" in the United States. For Native Americans, their own problems are of paramount importance, and people in the United States have rather differentiated views on the issue depending on their particular perspectives, and some of them, especially if they are racist, have ready-made answers. As for the "Negro question," an individual's mere articulation of the phrase would evoke a storm of criticism from African Americans—and almost certainly make him a defendant in a lawsuit—but most whites would shun him, too, as a result. In 1989, at the threshold of the change of the political regime, the last Interior Minister of the Communist state publicly apologized for the application of the phrase "Gypsy crime" and for the propagation of associated ideas because of their inherently racist nature. Regarding the content of the exhibition, I would like to call the author's attention to domestic criminology "literature" published in the 1930s and 1940s, in which similarly racist remarks regarding "Jewish crime" can be found. (Crucially, the Roma people of Hungary at the time simply lacked the political leverage and social position to defend themselves against racist state persecution and political violence, as the majority of them lived in

villages in patriarchal, subordinated relationships with their environment, in a division-of-labor symbiosis with the local population.[1])

The author concludes by saying "they were not afraid of them, though surely, they did not like them." (He omits specifying who was afraid of whom and who did not like whom. These are personal emotions, and their application to an entire population, to a faceless mass of people, can only be a work of superficial, racist thinking. In other areas, racism is supposed to start at the point when somebody hates or envies not the landowner Kohn [who is a Jew] but all Jews as well. I cannot help wondering what a statement like this is doing in scholarly material devoted to the Holocaust.)

As for the structure of the material, it is fundamentally "Jewish-centered," which is understandable because, on the one hand, the overwhelming majority of Holocaust victims were Jews, and on the other hand, the majority of the creators of the present material are experts in this particular area. At the same time, I would very much like to point out that the Roma are the most populous minority in Hungary. Their "involvement" in the Holocaust is undisputed. The interpretation of their past and the creation of a historical consensus on the issue of the Holocaust is a process that the Roma continue to grapple with. It would be terrible if, in the spirit of this material, we were to separate the genocides against the Roma and the Jews and pit them against each other, belittling and trivializing the injuries the Roma suffered. This could result in the emergence of a false, anti-Semitic consciousness on the part of the Roma people that benefits neither party and falsifies history itself, since the two peoples suffered side by side during the Holocaust. Moreover Roma historical identity is under construction, and this exhibition might well contribute to and shape a consensus. The preservation of the current situation might result in unnecessary but unfortunately rather legitimate attacks by the Roma NGOs against the important purpose of the exhibition.

I suggest that the exhibition incorporate a separate section dealing with the fate of the Roma. Separate Roma material should be compiled, using experts less biased than László Karsai. The Roma section should present the fate of the Roma during the Holocaust as well as background material and the specific events, with special attention to the injuries suffered by the Roma people of Hungary. (There is adequate literature in this area, available even in Hungarian, such as the Interface series by Pont Publishers, the Roma Holocaust issue of *Polgárjogi Füzetek* [Civil Rights Booklets],

1 Gypsies bartered their services in return for food.

the publications of the renowned professor of history Szabolcs Szita.[2] and so on.)

Factual errors and mistakes make the revision of the Roma-relevant sections of the material imperative. One such error may be found on page 39: it states that "the life of the Roma people of Hungary went on largely as it did before, until the end of August, 1944." This is not true, since by the end of April and the beginning of May, the majority of the Roma residents of Szabolcs-Szatmár and Hajdú counties (at least 10,000 people) were kept under armed guard in ghettos organized by the district authorities. (In his book, Karsai gives examples of this in Baranya County.) In the ghettos, they were exposed to torture and starvation and were often forced to perform slave labor. In the course of the summer, many of the inmates were transferred from there to military forced-labor camps in Gyergyótölgyes and other locations, set up to assist with the fortifications of the mountainous border regions in Transylvania. By the time autumn came, many inmates were transferred from these ghettos to concentration camps in Austria and Germany. It was also during the summer that Roma families from the Jászság region were taken to labor camps in Voivodina and kept under armed guard. Roma males, sometimes with, sometimes without their families, were put to work under armed guard in state-owned estates in Komárom, Veszprém and Békés counties.

On page 40 we read that the existence of four Roma labor service companies, which incorporated some 1,000 Roma, has been verified so far. According to my latest findings, Roma labor service units (sometimes mixed Roma-Jewish units) were set up in Vác, Szentendre, Jászberény (some of which were transferred to the German aircraft repair facility operating in the basement of the Kőbánya brewery), Nagykáta, Pesterzsébet, Szolnok, Nagyvárad, Miskolc, Szeged, Kassa and Hódmezővásárhely. The number of people pressed into these units totals about twice the figure mentioned in the material.

On page 43, we read that in late November 1944, Roma were being rounded up primarily in the Transdanubian region, transported to the Csillagerőd fortress in Komárom and subjected to a selection process,

2 Szabolcs Szita, *Magyarok az SS ausztriai lágerbirodalmában* [Hungarians in the Lager Empire of the SS in Austria] (Budapest: MAZSÖK, 2000); Szabolcs Szita, *Tények, adatok* [Facts and Information] (Budapest: MAA-HDK, 2000); Szabolcs Szita, *Együtélés, üldöztetés Holokauszt* [Living Together, Persecution and Holocaust] (Budapest: Korona Kiadó, 2001).

following which hundreds of fit-to-work individuals were transferred to concentration camps in Germany.

There is no mention in the material that Roma from Heves and Nógrád counties and as well as from the occupied settlements of southern Slovakia were also transported here. There is no mention of the conditions in the camp, even though witnesses, who saw many children killed and many of their fellows die of starvation, described them as being worse than what they encountered in Dachau. The author seems to be ignorant of the fact that at the end of February, those still left in the camp were forced to march toward Germany and were freed only when Russian troops caught up with them around Galánta.

There is no mention of the fact that in early November, raids were held in suburbs of Budapest (Csepel, Pesterzsébet, Soroksár, Budafok, Kispest, Újpest, Rákospalota, Cinkota) and other settlements, in the course of which many Roma families, women and children included, were detained and taken to the nearest gendarme or police headquarters before they were driven to the brick factory in Óbuda. In the predawn hours of November 6, 1944, over 1,000 Roma inmates were put on a special train at the Budaörs station and transported to Dachau. Many victims were subsequently transferred to Ravensbrück, Bergen-Belsen and Buchenwald.

Nor is there any mention of the fact that Roma were dragged from the ghetto in Körmend and taken directly to Austria, to the concentration camp at Strém, where they were forced to perform slave labor at logging and fortification sites.

What the material does mention is that "the estimates of 30,000 to 70,000 Roma victims from Hungary are obviously exaggerated, since the researchers commissioned by the Yad Vashem archives never found documents substantiating a number higher than a few thousand." Earlier, László Karsai estimated the Hungarian Roma victims of the Holocaust at 5,000, defining as "victims" those who were murdered. Perhaps he was right, though I must say I have serious reservations about that figure. Based on my research, involving the perusal of 2,200 witness testimonies, I concluded that one-quarter of the Roma population of Hungary, some 50,000 people, were subjected to various forms of persecution because of their ethnicity: detention in ghettos, concentration camps and forced-labor camps; internment and deportation to concentration camps in Germany. The material, unfortunately, makes no mention of this.

I respectfully ask you to consider my remarks and suggestions to revise the material and to prepare separate Roma material and set up a separate Roma section at the exhibition.

Budapest, November 30, 2002

Dr. János Bársony
Minority researcher
Director of the Foundation for Roma Civil Rights
Expert at the State Secretariat for Roma Issues at the Chancellery

Observations on the Roma Sections of the Permanent Holocaust Exhibition

By Ágnes Daróczi, September 22, 2004

The current exhibition is a welcome departure from the attitude surrounding the 60th anniversary exhibition, at which time we had to make strenuous efforts to ensure that the Roma victims were mentioned at all. This time, even though we had to compile the exhibition material in the impossibly short time of three weeks, the Roma people have been included in the concept from the start.

However, we would like to state the following about the exhibition:

- The Pharrajimos is not "an illustration to a concept." The presentation of the fate of the Roma during the Holocaust has to be a separate chapter reflecting on their own fate.
- If the fate of the Roma is not presented in its own terms and in the context of its relevance to the Roma, the entire issue becomes relativized and trivialized, and the visitors (perhaps including the victims themselves) will leave the exhibition with the feeling "what do these Roma want, what was their suffering compared to that of the Jews?"
- The Roma experience should be presented from their unique perspective (being declared "unreliable," transferred to theaters of military operation, detention in ghettos etc.).
- The situation in Hungary was never independent from the international situation: there was one Third Reich and one ideology, even if implementing that ideology might have differed from place to place.
- It is through the presentation of the differences between Roma and non-Roma that the symbiosis, which took centuries of coexistence to develop, might be best understood—and consequently, can be used to teach tolerance.
- Because of the scarcity of documents, the lack of research and the destruction of archives, the material that renders the suffering of the Jews palpable many never be available in connection with the Roma. (There will never be photographic evidence to support such sections as "Plunder" or "Lost Rights," etc.)
- The history of any nation can be understood and analyzed only in its own continuity. The creators of the exhibition should keep this in mind.

- Therefore, research should be directed at the relevant stages of Roma history.
- If the current concept of the exhibit is realized, we who possess documents and material collected over the decades with no state funding see the following dangers taking shape on the horizon:

    1. The fate of the Roma people will be relativized.
    2. The fate of the Roma people will be ignored.
    3. We will enter a numbers game (over the number of victims).

As researchers and responsible scholars, we can only lend our names to the exhibition if the issues outlined above are addressed.

We see three possible ways to proceed:

- Leaving the present exhibition material as it is, meanwhile complementing it with international material and continuing the research;
- Creating a separate exhibition;
- Creating an exhibition based on the following concept:

    > Besides Jewish emancipation, space must be given to the lack of Roma emancipation, or to the limited emancipation of a select section of the Roma population. In the case of the Roma, they had always been deprived of their rights, and their persecutors' desire for plunder was not highly relevant to their situation. (These factors, however, were relevant to the experience of the Jews.) In other words, the exhibit focuses on the key events of the Shoa in Hungary, but they cannot be automatically applied to the fate of the Roma—which was often similar to and often different from that of the Jews of Hungary—though the denouement was similar, the Pharrajimos.

We would like to offer a list of theses that can guide you in developing a section on the fate of the Roma.

Theses for the Roma Script of the Permanent Exhibition in the Holocaust Museum

By János Bársony

- Eighteenth century royal decrees (by Emperor Joseph II and Empress Marie-Therese) prescribing the settlement and forced assimilation of the Roma disrupted the earlier spontaneous processes of economic integration and assimilation. Most members of the Roma communities were divested of their civil rights and relegated to the status of landless, barely tolerated farmhands or even lower status. Only select groups of artisans and outstanding urban musicians benefited from limited emancipation. In the case of the Jews, the situation was quite the opposite: mass emancipation and middle-class development—equal civil rights, equal religious rights, success in business and trade and increasing wealth, advancement in education and integration into the intelligentsia—were under way by the 20th century. This emancipation and the consequent gains triggered resentment, envy and a desire to plunder on the part of the peasantry, lower nobility and non-Jewish middle class, all of which made the Shoa possible. The Pharrajimos, on the other hand, was made possible because racist masses thought of their Roma compatriots as "barely tolerated, foreign, dangerous, non-productive elements, a parasite, hereditary criminal and subhuman race."
- The exhibition must present the occasional manifestations of Roma emancipation such as the association of Roma musicians, their compositions and recordings; commercial and industrial orders to artisans for rail and carpentry cramp irons and other products; and grammars, dictionaries, and literary publications. But more space needs to be devoted to documents about the fate of the overwhelming majority of the contemporary Roma population, who were confined within their settlements or to ghettos: details of their helplessness; regular struggle with starvation; exclusion from education and nearly total divestment of civil rights (i.e., Interior Ministry decree 15.000/1916); images of the slums and of gendarme excesses; documents substantiating regular harassment (such as in the Dános case) and forced official delousing; local regulations; and images of everyday discrimination, shown in films like the one made from Endre Ady's short story "Répakapálás" [Carrot Plowing] (1906). We need to show the symbiosis that developed between large estates and the Roma farmhands who constituted inexpensive seasonal labor reserves, and between peasant holdings and Roma families on the basis of paternalistic

subordination. We need to show that, at their whim, the authorities could declare the majority of Roma people to be "traveling," since in most cases Roma quarters were owned by a landholder or a village, and groups of Roma were tolerated only as long as the owners did not have other plans for the land or as long as there was no clash of interests or other disputes. If such situations arose, Roma families could be evicted and "resettled" with impunity. Space should be given to the proliferation in the early 20th century of racist, quasi-scientific views such as Dillmann's *Zigeunerbuch*, Lombroso's *Der Verbechers* and the writings of Kálmán Porzsolt, Emil Molnár and László Endre).

- Space must be devoted to the racist, anti-Roma measures and events during the Third Reich: the loss of civil rights, marriage interdiction, racial purity laws, forced sterilization, closed urban ghettos, mass internment (Dachau, Ravensbrück, Lackenbach, Mauthausen), massacres committed in the East (the Carpathian regions) by the Einsatzgruppen, deportation to ghettos in the East (Lodz), mass murders by gas vans at Kulmhof, Auschwitz Order, the life in the Gypsy Camp at Dachau and the uprising. We also need to document the genocidal measures in the Nazi puppet states (Croatia, Slovakia, Romania). We need to show Roma resistance, the Roma's role in the partisan struggle in Yugoslavia, and in the resistance in Italy and Slovakia, the efforts to save persecuted people in Austria.
- We need to trace the authorities' handling of the "traveling Roma issue" from 1916 through 1928 and continuing from 1931 until to the issuance of Interior Ministry decree 66.045/1938, which declared that the Gypsies should be collectively treated as "unreliable elements." This coincided with anti-Jewish regulations. The ministry's decree legalized authorities' arbitrary treatment of the Roma: the raids, the prohibition of practicing traditional crafts, the forced delousing (e.g., in Dorozsma), the interdiction on keeping horses, the daily harassment and internments. Local anti-Roma regulations (e.g., the ghettos in Esztergom or Nagyszalonta that were sealed for years) must also be presented. We must also give space to anti-Roma articles (quotes from the article in *Népegészségügy* [Public Health] and the Pest County recommendations) as well as films that are sensitive to the Roma experience (*Dankó Pista*, *A Cigány*, *Gül Baba*, *Rákóczi Nótája* and others).
- We also need to present the facts of wartime atrocities: the declaration of the Roma residents of the reoccupied Transcarpathian region as "unreliable and undocumented," their transfer to the German area of military

operations and their handing over to the murderers in the summer of 1941; and the Roma victims of the Voivodina massacres.

- Space should be devoted to the presentation of the fate of Roma families in 1943 and 1944: the head of the family serving in the army at the front, the mother, the aging parents and the children having to perform labor at state-owned estates, e.g., in Voivodina, Mezőhegyes, Pápa, Bábolna and other places. We need to show the proliferation of ghettos and forced-labor camps in the eastern parts of the country (Rázonpuszta, Újfehértó, Debrecen, Nyíregyháza, Sátoraljaújhely, Nagykálló, Mátészalka) and in other areas as well (Révfalu, Patvarc, Újhartyá). The details about the transfer of victims from internment camps to extermination camps in the Third Reich also should be presented.

- Space needs to be devoted to the treatment of the Roma by Horthy's army—the rejected 1941 initiative to establish Roma labor service units, the forced conscription of the Roma at the time of the creation of the 2nd Army, the establishment of Roma military labor camps from June 1944 onward to help with the construction of the Árpád Line fortifications (Rahó, Gyergyótölgyes, Tatárhágó, Ojtoz), the creation of Roma labor service units in August, mass murders in late September and early October (Nagyszalonta, Doboz-Kötegyán, Pocsaj).

- We need to present material on the raids and internment activities following the Arrow Cross coup (from the environs of Budapest and the brick factory at Óbuda to Dachau, Bergen-Belsen, Buchenwald, Ravensbrück; from northern Hungary, the Western Great Plains and Transdanubia to the Komárom camp and on to Mauthausen, Dachau, Natzveiler, Bergen-Belsen, Ravenbsrück, Buchenwald). Mention must be made of Carl Clausberg's sterilization experiments. The history of the Komárom facilities should be included: the rounding up of the victims, the conditions of their captivity, the process of selecting those to be deported, the release of some of the women and children at the approach of the front before Christmas, further captivity and selections work or death camps in Germany, the forced march toward Galánta.

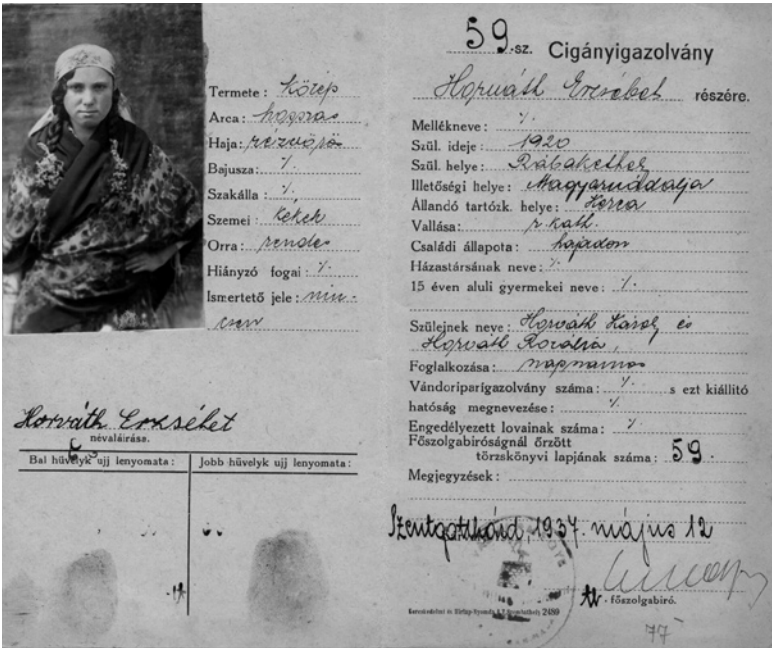
- The exhibition must display information on the local massacres between December 1944 and February 1945 (Várpalota, Inota-Lake Grábler, Lajoskomárom, Szolgaegyháza, Szabadbattyán, Lengyel, Kiskassa in Transdanubia).

- Space should be given to the events that occurred in Zala County and in western Transdanubia (collection of the Roma at the coffee factory at Nagykanizsa and their transfer to Draskovec and Kőszeg; transfer of Roma victims from Körmend and environs to the fortifications on the borders of the Reich, to Strém).
- The declaration of Arrow Cross Interior Minister Gábor Vajna about the commencement of the "total, and if need be, Draconian resolution of the Jewish and Gypsy questions" must be included.
- We need to highlight the fact that the ratio of the persecuted Roma to the total Roma population of Hungary was 1 to 3. Nazis and their puppets eliminated 85 to 90% of the Roma population in Germany, Austria, Poland, Czechoslovakia, Lithuania, Latvia, Croatia and Slovenia. Among the victims were thousands of Hungarian-speaking Roma with Hungarian identity in Burgenland, Austria.
- Roma survival in Hungary was due to the fact that the authorities of the Horthy government rarely took it upon themselves to initiate genocidal activities. The German Army did not occupy the country until March 1944 and the Gestapo gave priority to the deportation of Jews (since the "conspiracy of the Judeo-Bolshevist plutocracy" was one of the reasons for the war). The emancipation of Roma musicians was tied to their service to the upper classes (e.g., the intervention of the bishop of Győr, Baron Vilmos Apor, on their behalf). Furthermore, Roma had few possessions, so there was no motivation for plundering of their wealth, and the demand of the large estates for a seasonal work force also inhibited the zeal of the officials. Later, when the Russians were already in the country, officials in power started worrying about their future, and fear of reprisals may have restrained them.
- The exhibit should present instances of people saving Roma from persecution (and the contrary), as happened in Tüskevár, Bátaszék and Mezőcsát.
- The exhibition should conclude with the presentation on the post-war period: the court trials (Várpalota, Lengyel, Doboz), the lack of sympathy, the return to the ghettos and to secondary citizenship, the 1952 Interior Ministry survey, plans for work camps, black ID cards in 1954 and the presentation of the case for a Roma memorial in Székesfehérvár.

Detail of a special Gypsy family ID
(Courtesy of Holocaust Documentation Center Budapest)

The Gendarmerie enters Transcarpathia, 1941
(Courtesy of Holocaust Documentation Center Budapest)

Members of a Gypsy labor service unit, September 1944
(Courtesy of Holocaust Documentation Center Budapest)


59.-sz. Cigányigazolvány

Horváth Erzsébet részére.

Termete: közép
Arca: hosszas
Haja: rézvörös
Bajusza: /
Szakálla: /
Szemei: kékek
Orra: rendes
Hiányzó fogai: /
Ismertető jele: nincs

Mellékneve: /
Szül. ideje: 1920
Szül. helye: Rábakethely
Illetőségi helye: Magyarnádalja
Állandó tartózk. helye: Sárra
Vallása: r. kath.
Családi állapota: hajadon
Házastársának neve: /
15 éven aluli gyermekei neve: /

Szülejnek neve: Horváth Károly és Horváth Rozália
Foglalkozása: napszámos
Vándoriparigazolvány száma: / s ezt kiállító hatóság megnevezése: /
Engedélyezett lovainak száma: /
Főszolgabirósággnál őrzött törzskönyvi lapjának száma: 59.
Megjegyzések:

Szentgotthárd 1939. május 12

Horváth Erzsébet névaláírása.

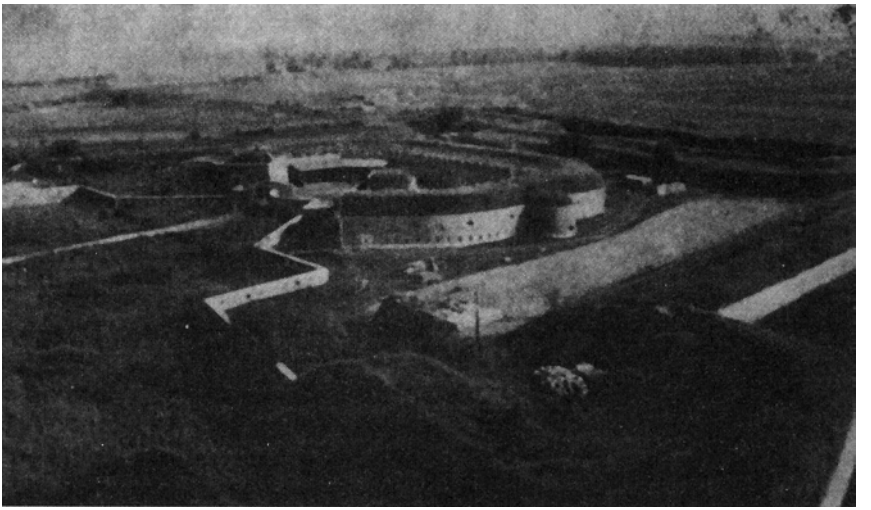
Bal hüvelyk ujj lenyomata: | Jobb hüvelyk ujj lenyomata:

főszolgabiró.

Special Gypsy ID, 1939
(Courtesy of Holocaust Documentation Center Budapest)

The castle at Várpalota
(Courtesy of Romedia Foundation)

Komárom
(Courtesy of Holocaust Documentation Center Budapest)



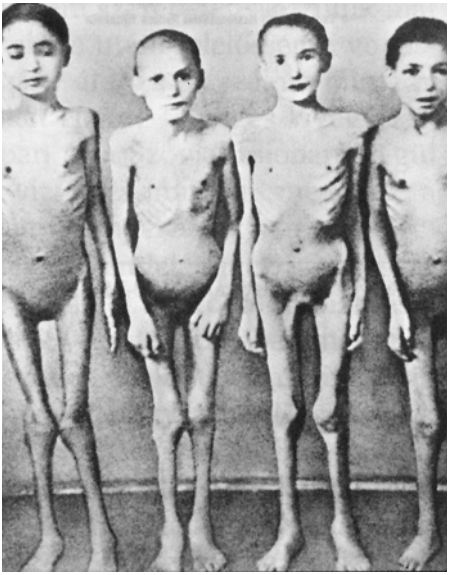
Csillagerőd
(Courtesy of Holocaust Documentation Center Budapest)

Survivors' visit to Csillagerőd
(Courtesy of Holocaust Documentation Center Budapest)

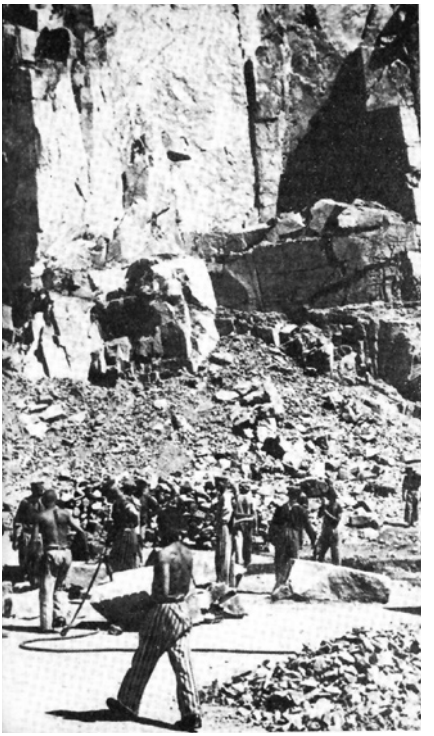
Main gate Auschwitz-Birkenau
(Courtesy of Romedia Foundation)

Inmates of the Auschwitz children's camp
(Courtesy of Holocaust Documentation Center Budapest)

Auschwitz inmate Z 5141
(Courtesy of Holocaust Documentation Center Budapest)



Victims of Josef Mengele's experiments on twins
(Courtesy of Holocaust Documentation Center Budapest)



The stone mines at Mauthausen
(Courtesy of Holocaust Documentation Center Budapest)

Mauthausen crematory
(Courtesy of Holocaust Documentation Center Budapest)