

Gypsies and Jews Under the Nazis

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This article compares the fate of the Gypsies under the Third Reich to that of the Jews, arguing that, despite parallels, the treatment each group underwent differed fundamentally. The Nazis never formulated a plan for a "Final Solution" to the Gypsy problem analogous to that for the Jews. Compulsory sterilization affected only a relatively small portion of the Gypsy population, and killings that did take place were carried out to achieve Nazi solutions to specific local situations. Numerous sources, especially recently discovered local police files, show that large numbers of "racially pure" and "socially adjusted" Gypsies were exempted from deportation to the Gypsy family camp in Auschwitz and were allowed to survive the war.

The persecution of the Gypsies^{*} is one of the most neglected chapters in the history of the Nazi regime. While hundreds of works examine the Nazis' onslaught on the Jewish people, the fate of the Gypsies forms the subject of only one book in the English language, and this book, published in 1972,¹ falls far short of a satisfactory treatment. A 1995 edition² omitted all footnotes in order, as the publisher explained, to make the book suitable for high-school students. During the last twenty years, German authors have begun to tackle this long-sighted subject, though most of their studies are monographs of limited scope. It was not until late 1996 that Michael Zimmermann's *Rassenutopie und Genozid*³ appeared, the first comprehensive scholarly work in any language that does justice to the intricacies of Nazi policy toward the Gypsies.

Most students of Nazi Germany accept the notion that Gypsies, like the Jews, were the victims of genocide, and that one half million of them died as a result of the

^{*}Some authors consider the word "Gypsy" pejorative, using instead the term Roma (or Sinti and Roma for the Gypsies of Germany). Others, including several Gypsy writers, have insisted on the uninterrupted use of Gypsy in order to maintain historical continuity and to express solidarity with those who were persecuted under this name.

Nazi reign. In this essay, however, I will argue that the treatment of Gypsies and Jews, despite some parallels, was fundamentally dissimilar in that there was no plan to destroy all Gypsies analogous to the “Final Solution of the Jewish Question.” The article focuses on the Gypsies of Germany and Austria, but the conclusion holds for all of German-controlled Europe. The purpose of raising this issue is not to engage in what with justice has been called the vulgar exercise of comparative victimization. I agree with Lucy Dawidowicz that to affirm the uniqueness of the murder of six million Jews does not represent “an attempt to magnify the catastrophe that befell them nor to beg tears and pity for them,” or “to minimize the deaths of millions of non-Jews that the Germans brought about, or to underplay the immeasurable and unendurable suffering of Russians, Poles, Gypsies, and other victims of the German murder machine.”⁴ Nor is the question whether the mass murder of the Jews during World War II is more evil than other Nazi abominations. At stake, rather, is the accuracy of the historical record, and to clarify that record is the purpose of the comparison undertaken in this essay.

A Three-Track Policy

Germany’s numerically small population of about 26,000 Gypsies was at first of no particular concern to the Nazi leaders. *Mein Kampf* does not mention the Gypsies, for Hitler regarded them as at most a minor irritant. During his twelve-year rule, Hitler referred to Gypsies only twice, and that in connection with the issue of Gypsies serving in the military. The fact that Hitler was largely unconcerned about the “Gypsy problem” helps explain why Jews and Gypsies were ultimately treated so differently. The Jews, for Hitler and the Nazi movement, were the incarnation of evil, a powerful people who literally threatened the existence of mankind. The Gypsies, on the other hand, were simply a nuisance; few in number, they could be handled with more or less traditional measures.

The sharp escalation of persecution during the last three years of the war (as indeed the start of oppression earlier), in large part resulted from pressure by the lower ranks of the Nazi movement, who considered the war a good opportunity to get rid of the Gypsies. It also represented the culmination of efforts by the criminal police (*Kripo*), and its “Gypsy experts” to solve the problem of the Gypsy *Mischlinge*, labeled asocial, through deportation, incarceration, and sterilization.

Nazi policy toward the Gypsies evolved in consecutive stages. During the regime’s first four years, local and state authorities continued and intensified measures of control and harassment they had employed since the turn of the century. In the second phase, beginning in 1937, Gypsies were caught up in a “crime prevention” program that brought many into “preventive police custody” in concentration camps. The third phase got under way in late 1938 with Himmler’s decree on the “Fight Against the Gypsy Plague,” which for the first time made explicit use of racial criteria. Unlike in the case of the Jews, however, Hitler himself played practically no role in

the course of their persecution, which unfolded in a disorderly manner without a clear plan.

Reflecting the preoccupations of the different actors involved, each approach stressed specific reasons for imposing punitive measures upon the Gypsy population. Local, state, and police officials emphasized the alleged asocial conduct of the Gypsies and the prevention of crime. Party stalwarts and “race scientists” invoked the racial factor and the need to protect the purity of German blood. Much of the incoherence of Nazi policy toward the Gypsies arose from the fact that these different elements were never successfully merged, and at times actually conflicted with each other. Thus while it was considered axiomatic that the alleged asocial conduct of the Gypsies had roots in the racial inferiority of the *Zigeunermischlinge*, “socially-adjusted” Gypsies, including some *Mischlinge*, could be and often indeed were exempted from various restrictive provisions and punitive measures. Despite the Nazis’ fixation with race, social adjustment could override racial origin. In fact, in many instances when the “racial background” of an individual could not be ascertained with certitude, social status became normative, in effect reversing the Nazis’ causal chain. However arbitrary the labels “asocial” or “socially adjusted” may have been in individual cases, the very use of such criteria shows that conduct played an important role in Nazi policy toward the Gypsies.

The importance of social conduct irrespective of race is further demonstrated by the treatment of so-called Gypsy-like itinerants, the “white Gypsies” or *Jenische*. Many of the measures directed against the Gypsies were also applied against the *Jenische* even though they were considered Germans. For example, in September 1941 the *Reichskriminalpolizeiamt* (RKPA) instructed local *Kripo* offices to ascertain whether persons initially classified as Gypsies but later identified as *Jenische* could be subjected to preventive police custody authorized for asocials under the Ministry of Interior decree of December 14, 1937.⁵ In some places, notably Bavaria, the *Jenische* were seen as a bigger problem than the Gypsies. As late as May 19, 1943, the Munich *Kripo* issued an order requiring identity cards be carried by “Gypsies, *Zigeunermischlinge*, and Gypsy-like itinerants.”⁶ We do not know how many *Jenische* actually ended up in concentration camps, for as a rule neither the police nor the camps listed them as a separate subcategory of asocials,⁷ the Austrian camp at Weyer (district Braunau/Inn) in 1941 constituting the only exception.⁸ An attempt to learn more about the fate of the *Jenische* under the Nazi regime was recently started in Switzerland, the only European country in which the *Jenische* have their own organization.⁹

“Resettlement” in the General Government

The onset of war brought a tightening of control. Gypsies were no longer allowed to itinerate or even leave a place of enforced residence without special permission. They were subjected to compulsory labor, dismissed from the armed forces, and generally treated as social outcasts. A program to “resettle” them in the newly acquired territor-

ies in the East had to be abandoned because of the logistic logjam created by the resettlement of large numbers of ethnic Germans. Still, 2,500 Gypsies were sent to the General Government in May 1940.¹⁰ Some were put to work in agriculture, road construction, flood control, or in armaments factories. A transport from Hamburg was set to digging anti-tank ditches near the border with the Soviet-occupied zone of Poland. Other deportees were left to fend for themselves, most eventually making their way to the larger towns in search of employment.

The number of Gypsies who died as a result of deportation to the General Government is not known. Living conditions in numerous instances were very harsh and many perished as a result of severe deprivation and mistreatment, or were killed outright. They were sent to the East as part of a plan to rid Germany of its Gypsies; their return, as the RKPA informed the Nazi party's Office for Racial Policy on September 4, 1940 was "not expected."¹¹ Yet deportation was not tantamount to a death sentence; then as later there existed no plan for the physical annihilation of all German Gypsies. While 2,500 of them were sent east, and without very much regard for what would become of them there beyond their occasional subjection to forced labor, most soon gained freedom of movement, and a considerable number managed to make their way back to Germany. After the arrest of one of these in August 1940, the Cologne *Kripo* complained to the RKPA that "the supervision of the Gypsies in the General Government appears to be insufficient."¹² When a Gypsy from Duisburg applied to the RKPA in November 1941 for permission to join his children in the General Government, his application was rejected on the grounds that the authorities there had enough problems with their Gypsies. "According to experience up to now," the RKPA told the *Kripo* of Duisburg on December 16, "the Gypsies and *Zigeunermischlinge* who have been resettled in the General Government are not tied down to a specific place. Hence their roaming around without target and plan causes the authorities there considerable difficulties."¹³

Although the authorities in the General Government were hardly pleased with the Gypsies in their territory, no orders were issued for their seizure or liquidation. On December 22, 1942, at a time when the systematic murder of the Jews was fully under way, the administration of the General Government bemoaned the absence of guidelines for the treatment of the German Gypsies, "especially with regard to whether they are to be treated like the Jews."¹⁴ Ten months later, in October 1943, the district government of Lublin queried the SD and *Kripo* commander about policy toward the German Gypsies and was told again that there existed no "instructions or orders in this regard."¹⁵ Word was received from the RKPA in March of 1944 that a decree about the treatment of the Gypsies in the General Government was in preparation, but the approach of the Red Army and the consequent retreat west quickly made the issue moot.¹⁶ When in August the General Government was evacuated, the authorities treated the German Gypsies like other Germans and actually issued them papers certifying their right to return to Germany. Some *Kripo* offices were upset

about the reappearance of the Gypsies, but eventually accepted this unwelcome development.

Deportation from the *Ostmark*

In November 1941, 5,000 Gypsies from the *Ostmark* (Austria) were deported to Łódź (Litzmannstadt) in the Warthegau, the annexed part of Poland. The great majority came from the Burgenland, the easternmost and poorest province of Austria, where they had eked out a precarious existence. Most had lived in squalid quarters on the edge of villages and were considered by Nazis particularly “asocial.” This deportation was also part of the plan to rid Germany of its Gypsies by sending them east.

The first mention of sending Gypsies to the Jewish ghetto in Łódź comes in a letter from Mayor Werner Ventzki in September 1941. Initially, it appears, the intention had been to move 60,000 more Jews from Germany and the Protectorate of Bohemia and Moravia (today’s Czech Republic) into the already crowded ghetto. However, after objections from *Reichsstatthalter* Greiser, the governor of the Warthegau, that number had been reduced to 20,000 Jews and 5,000 Gypsies. Still, the authorities in Litzmannstadt remained strongly opposed to the plan.

On September 24, Mayor Ventzki expressed great concerns about the expected influx in a letter to Warthegau *Regierungspräsident* Friedrich Übelhör. The planned transfer, Ventzki wrote, would create serious problems. Population density would increase dramatically, an outbreak of typhus could be expected to endanger the entire city, not to mention the ghetto factories producing for the war. Order and security in the ghetto would be threatened by bringing in Gypsies: agitators, criminal types, and “arsonists of the worst sort.”¹⁷ On October 4 Übelhör forwarded this letter to Himmler, adding his own fears. Surrounding the ghetto, he pointed out, lived 120,000 Germans who would be in grave danger in the likelihood of an epidemic. The Gypsies represented “a permanent danger for the security and order of the ghetto.” If the transfer took place against his advice, Übelhör warned, he would have to decline responsibility for the consequences.¹⁸

In his reply of October 10, Himmler rejected Übelhör’s objections to the planned move: the danger of an epidemic was exaggerated, and the demands of war production had become the favorite reason for opposing any new venture. As for the Gypsies, the danger of arson could easily be handled by warning them that in case of any fire, irrespective of origin, ten Gypsies would be shot. Thus approached, the Gypsies would become the “best firemen.”¹⁹

And so, starting on October 16, transports of Gypsies (and Jews) began to arrive in Litzmannstadt. On November 5 the first trainload of Gypsies from the *Ostmark* arrived, and by November 9 some 5,000 had been deposited in the ghetto. Of these 1,130 were men, 1,188 women, and 2,689 (i.e., more than half) children; eleven had died during transport.²⁰

A surviving chronicle composed by inmates of the Łódź ghetto provides infor-

mation about the events that followed. The Austrian Gypsies were squeezed into several buildings separated from the Jewish inhabitants by a barbed wire fence. The houses had no furniture or even beds, and sanitary conditions were catastrophic.²¹ It is not clear whether the Germans ever had any clear plans about what to do with the Gypsies. On November 22, the employment office in Posen requested the dispatch of 120 Gypsies for a weapons and munitions factory,²² but we do not know whether any were in fact sent, for soon a deadly epidemic of typhus in the ghetto made any scheme of putting the Gypsies to work academic.

The Jewish administration of the ghetto was ordered to supply the Gypsy sector with food and medical care, and during the first six days after their arrival the Gypsies received soup and coffee. Two kitchens were started, though the Jewish ghetto continued to supply the provisions. Jewish undertakers removed and buried the dead, who already numbered 213 by November 12.²³

The German authorities had predicted that crowding so many people into the already hungry ghetto would lead to epidemics; the atrocious conditions they created soon made this a self-fulfilling prophecy. One victim of the typhus outbreak was the German commandant, *Kripo* officer Eugenius Jansen, who died in late December; and at least one of the Jewish doctors ordered to administer there also perished. On December 29, the chronicle tells us, Dr. Karol Boehm from Prague, fifty years old, died in the hospital for infectious diseases from the typhus he contracted while serving in the Gypsy camp. Four other Jewish physicians also caught the disease there and had to be hospitalized. One of them died subsequently.²⁴

Typhus is a highly contagious disease transmitted by lice. In untreated cases, mortality ranges between ten and forty percent; those older than forty are especially vulnerable. The spread of the disease is facilitated by hunger, exhaustion, and overcrowding in accommodations lacking facilities for washing, precisely the conditions the Germans imposed on their captives. Moreover, the second quarter of 1941 saw an outbreak of typhus among the civilian population in the General Government, and large numbers of German soldiers too became infected. In December alone, there were some 90,000 cases.²⁵ Under such circumstances, the Germans were all too ready for radical remedies.

By the end of 1941, the typhus epidemic raging uncontrolled in the Gypsy camp had killed 613. Medical care apparently consisted of little more than separating the sick from the healthy. The fact that not only Jews and Gypsies, but a high-ranking German official had died of the disease probably led to the decision to liquidate the camp and kill those still alive. The chronicle of the Jewish ghetto recorded the Gypsies being taken away in trucks during early January 1942. "The camp, which is practically deserted now, will no doubt be entirely eliminated. . . . Apparently, its elimination was dictated by necessity, since there was a danger that the typhus would spread."²⁶

This was not the first time that the Nazis had used murder as a means of combating an epidemic among non-Germans, nor was it to be the last. Jews, Gypsies, and

other “alien races” were seen as natural carriers of lethal parasites such as lice,²⁷ and the resort to draconian measures for ending epidemics among them had become almost standard operating procedure. “The Nazi methods of ‘fighting’ infectious diseases,” writes Isaiah Trunk, “were well known and were feared not less than the epidemics themselves.”²⁸ One of the mobile killing units operating behind the German troops advancing into Russia, *Einsatzkommando 9* of *Einsatzgruppe B*, reported on September 23, 1941 that a contagious disease had broken out in the Jewish ghetto of Janowitschi. “Since there was reason to fear that the disease would spread into the city and to the rural population, the inmates of the ghetto numbering 1,025 Jews were subjected to special treatment [*sonderbehandelt*]”²⁹—the standard euphemism for murder. Another such report from Belorussia noted that “from January 23 to 29, 1942, on account of the spread of the typhus epidemic, [the unit] has shot 311 persons in Minsk in order to clean up the prisons.”³⁰ *Einsatzgruppe A* reported on April 24, 1942 that it had executed 1,272 persons, “among them 983 Jews who were afflicted with contagious diseases or so old and decrepit that they were no longer suitable for work.”³¹

The German administration of Litzmannstadt had not wanted the Gypsies in the first place and had accepted them only under protest. The outbreak of typhus eliminated any chance of recovering the cost of their upkeep from forced labor, and thus in effect doomed even those not yet infected. The decision to stop the typhus epidemic by liquidating the Gypsy camp and killing all its inhabitants was probably taken in late December 1941. By early January 1942, the Gypsies were being taken to the village of Chelmno (Kulmhof) about thirty-five miles northwest of Litzmannstadt, where a killing center for Jews had started to operate on December 8, 1941. The practice was to kill a certain number of Jews whenever the Łódź Ghetto became overcrowded,³² and this same facility was now used to “solve” the typhus epidemic among the Gypsies. In January 1942 about 4,400 Gypsies from Litzmannstadt were killed in the gas vans of Chelmno.

We know next to nothing about the decision-making process that led to this end. The decision to deport 5,000 Austrian Gypsies to the East came at a time when no other large-scale deportations of Gypsies were being planned or carried out. It is likely that the Gypsies from the Burgenland were singled out and deported in response to pressure from local state and party authorities who had long wished to make the Burgenland “*zigeunerfrei*!” It is improbable that the decision included the idea of killing them. There had been frequent calls for sterilization and confinement in camps, but none for physical annihilation. The authorities in Berlin who approved the deportation probably sought no more than getting rid of a long-standing annoyance, but gave little thought to the ultimate fate of the deported Gypsies. The decision to liquidate the camp and murder all inmates still alive was most likely a local response to the spread of typhus. It certainly was not part of any master plan to annihilate all Gypsies.

The same holds true for the treatment of Gypsies in the Soviet Union and Serbia. Following the invasion of the U.S.S.R., Gypsies there were targeted as a blanket category—like Jews and communist functionaries—to be destroyed. Yet since the main reason for subjecting the Soviet Gypsies to the murderous actions of the roving *Einsatzgruppen* was their alleged tendency to spy, in practice most of the victims were itinerating Gypsies. Sedentary and “socially-adjusted” Gypsies in many instances were left alone. A decree issued on December 4, 1941 by Hinrich Lohse, *Reichskommissar* for the occupied Baltic states (*Ostland*), provided that “Gypsies who wander about in the countryside” were “to be treated like the Jews.”³³ Instructions of January 27 and April 3, 1942 made it clear that “sedentary Gypsies engaged in regular work and who do not constitute a danger . . . in political or criminal respects” did not come under this decree.³⁴ Gypsies benefited in other ways from the bureaucratic chaos and struggle between rival offices and organizations that characterized German rule in the eastern territories.

In German-occupied Serbia, local military commanders included male Gypsies with the thousands of Jews shot in reprisals for an uprising organized by the partisan movement—but women and children were spared. As Christopher Browning has argued convincingly, the shootings of male Jews in Serbia in the fall of 1941 “were carried out within the framework of a reprisal policy developed in response to the partisan uprising and were not part of the European-wide genocide program which in any case was still in the planning stage, [though] the Wehrmacht in fact dealt with Jewish hostages differently than Serbs solely because they were Jews.”³⁵ The same holds true for the Serbian Gypsies. They were singled out to become hostages and to be shot because they were Gypsies and because German commanders considered Gypsies given to espionage and in favor of the enemy. Both in the Soviet Union and Serbia racial considerations were unimportant. “Pure” Gypsies and *Mischlinge* were treated the same way. In addition to these ordered killings, in the East as well as in other German-controlled areas, Gypsies occasionally fell victim to unauthorized murders, yet none of these crimes were part of an overall plan for extermination.

Deportation to Auschwitz

As of 1940 and 1941, hopes of deporting all Gypsies from the Reich had come to naught. Some 2,500 German and 5,000 Austrian Gypsies had indeed been sent to the General Government and the Warthegau respectively, but most Gypsies continued to live in the places to which they had been assigned at the outbreak of the war. On December 16, 1942, Himmler decreed the deportation of “asocial” Gypsies, thought to be inferior *Mischlinge*, to a special Gypsy camp in Auschwitz. This mass-deportation began in March 1943, and for most of the deported proved a one-way journey.

No copy of what is generally referred to as the Auschwitz decree of December 16, 1942 has been found. It would appear that it consisted of a short order by Himmler

for the deportation of the *Zigeunermischlinge*, an order that never left the premises of the RSHA in Berlin. Full details were distributed on January 29, 1943. According to this instruction, several categories of Gypsies were declared exempt: "racially pure" Sinti and Lalleri Gypsies (considered Aryan or closely related); "good *Zigeunermischlinge*" who could be accepted into the "racially pure" clans; Gypsies legally married to "persons of German blood"; socially-adjusted Gypsies who had regular jobs and permanent addresses before 1939; Gypsies still in military service or discharged during the current war after being wounded or decorated; Gypsies engaged in work important for the war effort; and Gypsies who could prove foreign citizenship.³⁶ Except for the "racially pure," all those exempted from deportation and above the age of twelve were to be urged to consent to sterilization.

Preparations for the large-scale deportation began shortly after receipt of the January 29 decree. The proportion exempted varied. In the Magdeburg area practically all Gypsies were selected for deportation. In April 1941 Kurt L. had just been released from jail after a five-year term for killing another Gypsy in a fight. A police report noted that L. was legally married and lived in an apartment that was "very clean." Both he and his wife had regular jobs. "She is described as hardworking. Both make a clean impression. . . . The prison term served by L. has had an obvious effect and also mellowed him. There is no reason to expect that L. will again run afoul of the law." Given this positive assessment one expects that Kurt L. and his wife would have been exempted as socially adjusted Gypsies, but both were deported on March 1. Kurt L. died in Auschwitz on March 13, 1944; he was thirty-seven years old.³⁷ Meliza L. claimed Turkish citizenship, but since she was unable to provide proof she and her six children were deported. Their subsequent fate is not recorded.³⁸

Elsewhere too the authorities tried to get rid of as many Gypsies as possible. The mayor of the small community of Breitscheid, under the jurisdiction of the *Kripo* of Frankfurt/Main, had been trying to have thirty-eight Gypsies sent to the Gypsy camp in Frankfurt since at least March of 1941, but that camp, he had been told, was full.³⁹ But in early March 1943, much to the satisfaction of the mayor and the *Landrat*, twenty-one Gypsies were deported to Auschwitz. The local officials had wanted all of the Breitscheid Gypsies sent away, but the Frankfurt *Kripo* sent word that three families (fifteen persons) were racially pure and therefore exempt.⁴⁰ The *Landrat*, however, was unwilling to accept this decision and asked for reconsideration. The Gypsies of Breitscheid, the mayor wrote the *Kripo*, were a great burden to the community and could not be adequately supervised. None were engaged in work essential to the war effort, and the local employment office had no objection to their expulsion. Now that they were to be deported they all of a sudden wanted to be racially pure. "That the named families are racially pure was not known until now. Their conduct certainly does not support this assumption."⁴¹ Two months later, on May 10, the three families were indeed moved to the Gypsy camp in Frankfurt. "As a result," noted the *Landrat* with satisfaction, "the district is . . . free of Gypsies."⁴²

Ever since the late 1930s an ever more vociferous chorus had demanded a solution of the "Gypsy problem" through incarceration and sterilization. In March of 1943, after several false starts, a significant attempt to realize this program finally got under way when more than 13,000 were deported to a special Gypsy camp in Auschwitz and many of those exempted were made subject to compulsory sterilization. What portion of the Gypsy population was affected by the Auschwitz decree?

In November 1942 the RKPA had given the number of racially pure Gypsies as 1,097; it was estimated that some 3,000 "good *Mischlinge*" would be added, thus bringing the total falling under the protective provisions of the October 13 decree to more than 4,000,⁴³ surely more than the handful often asserted. Himmler, it has been said, wanted to keep alive just a few pure Gypsies as a kind of living museum, an insignificant exception to his plan to destroy the Gypsy people.⁴⁴ But if Himmler indeed sought to save only a handful, why did he authorize the elaborate scheme of taking "good *Zigeunermischlinge*" into the ranks of the racially pure Gypsies? According to two highly-placed RKPA officials in early November 1942, Himmler had given orders to the RSHA "to regulate the treatment of the Gypsies in Germany in a new manner." According to this plan, about 20,000 Gypsies would be expelled, and "about 5–8,000," for whom no special administrative measures would be necessary, left in the Reich.⁴⁵ These figures coincide with other estimates.⁴⁶

Deducting the number of Gypsies deported to Auschwitz from the number living in the Reich at the time of the Auschwitz decree gives us another indication of how many Gypsies were actually exempted. In November 1942, the RKPA reported 28,627 Gypsies in the Reich (Germany and Austria).⁴⁷ According to the official registry (*Hauptbücher*) of the Auschwitz Gypsy camp, buried by prisoner clerical workers and salvaged after the war, 13,080 Gypsies from Germany and Austria arrived in Auschwitz in several transports, constituting almost two thirds of the total Gypsy camp population.⁴⁸ This suggests that about 15,000 Gypsies remained in the Reich after the mass deportation of March 1943, but we cannot be entirely certain. The accuracy of the figure of 28,627 Gypsies in the Reich in 1942 has never been established. In many instances, the nationality of the inmates listed in the Auschwitz registry was based on nothing but their names. Also, when the registries were dug up in 1949 the books were very wet and some pages damaged or illegible.⁴⁹ Still, there can be little doubt that the number of Gypsies left in Germany was much more than a handful.

Most of the literature on the subject maintains that the exemptions provided in the Auschwitz decree were essentially ignored and that practically all the Gypsies of Germany and Austria were deported to Auschwitz in March of 1943.⁵⁰ That has also been the quasi-official view propounded by contemporary spokesmen of the German government. In an address on December 16, 1994 during a special commemoration of the Auschwitz decree by the upper house of the German parliament, *Bundesrat* President Johannes Rau declared that on the basis of this decree "the SS carried off

all the Sinti and Roma they could get hold of.”⁵¹ In the light of available evidence, this view is unsustainable. It should go without saying that whether the deportation of 1943 encompassed practically all or *only* about half of the Gypsy population has no bearing whatsoever on the criminality of the Nazis’ uprooting and murder of thousands of Gypsies.

Unlike the Jews and other victims of the Auschwitz death camp, the arriving Gypsies were not subjected to selection—division into those going to slave labor and those to the gas chambers. Instead they were put into the newly built “Gypsy family camp,” so called because entire families were allowed to stay together. From September 1943 to July 1944 the Nazis operated another family camp in Auschwitz: for Jews from Theresienstadt, set up for the specific purpose of refuting reports of mass exterminations and deceiving an expected Red Cross delegation. Inmates were made to write postcards stating that they were being well treated, but all this was for show: the eventual gassing of the prisoners had been decided before the start.⁵² In the case of the Gypsies no such consideration was involved. As Yehuda Bauer has commented, “That the Germans kept the Gypsies alive in family groups for almost a year and a half without separating men from women indicates that no decision as to their fate had been made when they were sent to the camp. If there had been a plan to murder them, it would not have taken the SS that long to do so.”⁵³

The Gypsies in the Auschwitz family camp were not given regular work. They were put into overcrowded barracks where hygienic conditions quickly deteriorated, leading to the outbreak of disease. Food was utterly inadequate in quantity and quality. In early April 1943, shortly after establishment of the camp, Höss requested a special ration for pregnant women, babies, and small children, making that request to Oswald Pohl, head of the SS Economic-Administrative Main Office (*SS-Wirtschafts-Verwaltungshauptamt*), which administered the Nazi camp system. Pohl thereupon inquired of Rudolf Brandt, Himmler’s personal secretary, what he should do. The administration of the Auschwitz camp, he wrote, had asked for this special ration on the grounds that “the *Reichsführer-SS* desires it because he has in mind something special for the Gypsies” (*weil er etwas Besonderes mit den Zigeunern vorhabe*). Pohl outlined various types of rations that could be provided and asked Brandt to let him know of Himmler’s wishes. On April 15, Brandt informed Pohl of Himmler’s decision. Pregnant Gypsy women were to receive a ration equivalent to that provided for women from the East engaged in forced labor; children one ration midway between that and the amount of food provided to German children.⁵⁴ According to Höss, these special rations soon stopped “for the Food Ministry laid [it] down that no special children’s food might be issued to the concentration camps.”⁵⁵

As a result of poor nourishment and atrocious sanitary conditions, diseases spread rapidly. By May of 1943, an epidemic of typhus had broken out and the Gypsy family camp was put under quarantine, with no additional inmates being admitted for several months. Once a month inmates were deloused in the so-called “sauna,”

but this did not end the epidemic. Between thirty and forty percent of the Gypsies who contracted typhus died. Other diseases that contributed to the high mortality were diarrhea caused by hunger, and by scabies leading to secondary infections.⁵⁶ In the summer of 1943, the ordinarily rare disease of noma or “water cancer,” a disease manifesting itself in a gangrenous condition of the face and mouth that leaves gaping holes in the cheeks, made its appearance in the camp; children and young people were hardest hit by this affliction. Dr. Josef Mengele, who served as chief physician of the Gypsy family camp, conducted studies on the “genetic causes” of noma, even though it was clear to all that the disease was caused by inadequate diet and terrible hygienic conditions. Mengele also used Gypsy twins for his experiments on the hereditability of eye color and various abnormalities. After his completion of the studies, many of the human guinea pigs were killed by injection of phenol into the heart and their organs sent to Berlin for further study.⁵⁷

The first mass murder of Gypsies in Auschwitz took place on March 23, 1943. On that day, a group of about 1,700 from the Bialystok region, alleged to have among them cases of typhus, were taken to the gas chambers. These Gypsies had arrived just a few days earlier, and had been isolated in barracks 20 and 22. Their fate must have been decided upon arrival, for they were neither registered nor assigned numbers. Another such killing took place on May 25, when 1,035 Gypsies either sick with or suspected of having typhus were gassed.⁵⁸

By the spring of 1943, however, the shortage of labor in Germany had grown acute, and in the following months an increasing number of concentration camp inmates were put to work in various enterprises producing weapons and other material. The Gypsies were included, and between April and July 1944 about 3,500 were transferred to various other camps for labor throughout Germany. On August 2, the remaining 2,898—most of them sick, elderly, or children—were gassed. Strong circumstantial evidence suggests that the decision was made by the commandant of Auschwitz, Rudolf Höss, who on May 8 had resumed command with the special mission to prepare facilities for the murder of the Hungarian Jews. The first transport of Hungarian Jews arrived on May 16, and by May 24 more than 100,000 had been gassed. Yet the capacity of the gas chambers and crematoria soon proved insufficient, and temporary housing had to be found for those who could not be killed immediately. It appears that the Gypsy camp was liquidated in order to make room for the Hungarian Jews. That Hungarian Jews were housed in the former Gypsy camp is confirmed by several witnesses.⁵⁹

About 23,000 Gypsies overall, alleged asocial *Mischlinge*, had been put into the family camp of Auschwitz without much forethought of their ultimate fate. The more than 13,000 from Germany and Austria constituted the largest group by far. Those from the Protectorate of Bohemia and Moravia numbered about 4,500. Polish Gypsies, with about 1,300, made up the third-largest group. The remainder came from various other German-occupied countries in Europe.⁶⁰ Of this total of about 23,000,

more than 5,600 were killed in the gas chambers, and about 3,500 were moved to other camps. That leaves close to 14,000 dying in the Gypsy camp from disease, medical experiments, maltreatment or killing by the guards. Altogether then, at least 85 per cent of the Gypsies sent to Auschwitz died from the conditions of their incarceration.⁶¹

And yet despite this extremely high rate of mortality, confinement in the Auschwitz Gypsy family camp was neither a sentence of death nor intended as one. The purpose of sending the Gypsies to Auschwitz was to get rid of them, not to kill them. If a program of annihilation had been in effect, why postpone their murder for over one year? Why provide special rations to pregnant women and children? Keeping the Gypsies alive for seventeen months cost scarce wartime resources as well as manpower. Deportation to Auschwitz was not part of a plan to annihilate all Gypsies; instead it probably represented the lowest common denominator among various Nazi officials concerned with Gypsy policy. Responding in part to increasing hostility toward the Gypsies among all parts of the population, these officials had gradually settled on more radical measures in handling the "Gypsy problem."

Höss later wrote that the Gypsies were to be kept in Auschwitz until the end of the war and then released,⁶² and such a scenario is not inconceivable. We know that some of those making Gypsy policy had contemplated relocating the Gypsies into areas of the East not needed for German settlers. In 1942, when the deportation to Auschwitz was decided, victory in the East and the consequent availability of vast new territories still seemed a possibility. The expulsion of about 2,500 German Gypsies into the General Government in 1940 had produced new problems since most of the deported eventually regained their freedom of movement. In the future such problems were prevented by confining the deported Gypsies in camps. The question of how many could survive the rigors of camp life was of no interest to anyone, for the individuals involved were "asocial" and "racially inferior elements" to whose death everyone was supremely indifferent.

The Issue of Genocide

No precise count of the number of German and Austrian Gypsies who perished during the reign of the Nazis is possible. Estimates based on the numbers sent to concentration camps, deported to the East, or known to have been gassed yield figures that range between 15,000 and 22,000, out of a population of about 29,000 in 1942.⁶³ When it comes to the number of European Gypsies who lost their lives under Nazi rule, the situation is even more difficult since most countries kept no good statistics on the size of the Gypsy population then. Michael Zimmermann speaks of at least 90,000 killed in the territories controlled by the Third Reich and its allies.⁶⁴ Unfortunately, most of these figures will have to remain more or less firm estimates and no exact count will ever be attainable.

Whatever estimate is accepted, the losses in life experienced by the Gypsy com-

munity at the hands of the Nazis are clearly horrendous. The *Zentralrat deutscher Sinti und Roma* (Central Council of German Sinti and Roma), has put forth even higher figures. More than 25,000 German and Austrian Gypsies are said to have been killed by the Nazis; the number murdered in all of Europe (in camps, by SS-Einsatzgruppen, and otherwise) is estimated as one half million.⁶⁵ No sources or break-down by country accompany this estimate, rendering it questionable. Still, this number has gained wide currency. The government of the Federal Republic regularly speaks of one half million Gypsies killed by the Nazis. The assertion of the *Zentralrat* that the treatment of the Gypsies at the hands of the Nazis constituted genocide has also been widely endorsed.⁶⁶ In the United States too scholars have contended that "the Gypsies were a target for total genocide."⁶⁷

The Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide was approved by the General Assembly of the United Nations on December 9, 1948. It went into effect on January 12, 1951 and since 1948 has been ratified by 120 countries. In line with the view of the jurist Raphael Lemkin, who coined the term genocide from the Greek word *genos* (race or tribe) and the Latin *cide* (to kill), the convention is not limited to the physical destruction of an entire people. It defines as genocide any series of "acts committed with intent to destroy, in whole or in part, a national, ethnical, racial or religious group, as such." These acts include "causing serious bodily or mental harm," inflicting upon a group "conditions of life calculated to bring about its physical destruction in whole or in part," as well as measures "intended to prevent births."⁶⁸ The intent was to outlaw as criminal not only a master plan for the extermination of an entire people such as the "Final Solution of the Jewish Question." The treatment of the Slavs by the Nazi occupiers, for example, designed to turn the Poles and Russians into slaves of the Germanic master race, would also constitute genocide.

The definition of genocide in the convention involves shortcomings noted by many critics, not the least of which is the failure to spell out the meaning of "in part." What percentage or part of a group must be affected by the destructive acts enumerated in the convention in order to qualify as genocide?⁶⁹ In the absence of an answer to this question the convention displays a rather sweeping scope, and at least some measures adopted by the Nazis against the Gypsies can be considered genocidal.

In order to establish that the crime of genocide has been committed an "intent" to destroy a group "as such" in whole or in part must be shown to have been present. The occurrence of a large number of deaths is not proof of genocide, for objective effect is not the same as subjective intent. Hence, in my view, the various deportations of Gypsies to the East and their deadly consequences do not constitute genocide. The deportations, including those to the Gypsy camp of Auschwitz, were put into effect not out of an intent to destroy the Gypsies as such but in order to expel large numbers of this widely despised minority from Germany. As we have seen, neither the mass gassings in Chelmno nor in Auschwitz took place in order to annihilate the Gypsies as a defined group. Based on a vicious utilitarian calculus, these killings were carried

out to achieve Nazi-type solutions to specific local situations—the prevention of the spread of typhus and making room for the doomed Hungarian Jews respectively. Undoubtedly, the resort to murder presupposed the belief that the Gypsies constituted an inferior group whose lives were dispensable; remedies other than the cold-blooded murder of perfectly innocent men, women, and children would surely have been available. Still, these acts of murder were not part of a plan to annihilate the Gypsy people, and neither do the killings of Gypsies in the Soviet Union and Serbia fit into such a scheme. Whatever the moral depravity and criminality of these deeds, they do not constitute genocide within the meaning of the genocide convention. Neither do these deeds represent genocide in terms of other revisionist definitions of genocide, practically all of which affirm that any mass killings, to be considered genocide, must be part of a more encompassing program of extermination directed against an entire group of people.⁷⁰ The various measures taken against the Gypsies were discussed openly and left a lengthy paper trail. Hence we can be quite sure that no such a plan was ever devised or put into effect.

The involuntary sterilizations of Gypsies carried out pursuant to the Auschwitz decree, on the other hand, *can* be considered acts of genocide within the meaning of the convention. Not all Gypsies were subjected to what has justifiably been called “biological death,”⁷¹ and the aim was as much to prevent the contamination of “German blood” as to halt the propagation of the *Zigeunermischlinge*. Still, these actions do fulfill the letter of the convention which forbids “measures intended to prevent births” within a targeted group. The individuals caught up in this manifestly illegal program were not killed, yet, without the prospect of descendants, they were the victims of “delayed genocide.”⁷²

Some have conflated the terms “holocaust” and “genocide.” The *Zentralrat* has called the genocide of the Gypsies a “holocaust,” a “genocide motivated by racism, publicized ideologically, systematically planned, bureaucratically organized and executed as in a factory.”⁷³ The purpose of invoking the concepts “holocaust” and “factory” is, of course, to equate the fate of the Gypsies and Jews. Is it valid to do so?

The Persecution of Gypsies and Jews Compared

Sybil Milton, a well-known student of Gypsy history under the Nazis, sees a clear parallel between the treatment of Gypsies and Jews. In an exchange with Yehuda Bauer, Milton stated her case in the following way:

The Nazi genocide, popularly known as the Holocaust, can be defined as the mass murder of human beings because they belonged to a biologically defined group. Heredity determined the selection of the victims. The Nazi regime applied a consistent and inclusive policy of extermination—based on heredity—only against three groups of human beings: the handicapped, Jews, and Gypsies. The Nazis killed multitudes, including political opponents, members of the resistance, élites of conquered nations, but always based these murders on the beliefs, actions, and status of those victims. Different criteria applied only to the murder of the handicapped, Jews, and Gypsies. Members of these

groups could not escape their fate by changing their behavior or belief. They were selected because they existed, and neither loyalty to the German state, adherence to fascist ideology, nor contribution to the war effort could alter the determination of the Nazi regime to exterminate them.⁷⁴

At the time of this exchange in 1992, Yehuda Bauer maintained that “one must reserve judgment on the question of parallelism until some basic problems are cleared up. As things stand at the moment, it is clear that the attitude toward the Gypsies was a mixture of traditional anti-Gypsy prejudice and hatred on one hand, and racist hallucinations on the other hand.”⁷⁵ I believe that we now have sufficient evidence to resolve the question at issue and to reject the alleged parallelism. Nazi actions toward the Gypsies were not determined by “a consistent and inclusive policy of extermination—based on heredity,” as Milton has argued. While racial criteria certainly were invoked, especially from about 1938 on, they operated in a way quite different from the case of the Jews. With regard to the latter, “pure Jews” were the symbol of eschatological evil that had to be destroyed while *Mischlinge* were treated somewhat better. In the case of the Gypsies, it was the other way around. The *Mischlinge* were seen as the dangerous and asocial element while “pure Gypsies” and “good *Mischlinge*,” under the Auschwitz decree, were exempted from deportation and sterilization. Large numbers of Gypsies from the Reich, perhaps even a majority, escaped being deported to the East. As we can learn from the *Zigeuner-Personen-akten* (files on the Gypsy population prepared by the *Kripo* and preserved in several state archives),⁷⁶ the criterion of social adjustment played an important role in the selection process; Gypsies were not selected for extermination “because they existed.”

Most important, unlike the case of the Jews, there existed no overall plan for the extermination of the Gypsy people. The order for the Final Solution, too, is not embodied in a written record, and there is even a question whether there ever was one specific order.⁷⁷ Still, the major elements of the decision-making process leading up to the annihilation of the Jews can be reconstructed from events, documents, and testimony. Leading Nazi personalities as well as a host of minor functionaries—from Hitler and Himmler down to Hans Frank and officials in the Ministry for the Occupied Eastern Territories—repeatedly referred to the destruction of the Jews then underway.⁷⁸ No such evidence exists in the case of the Gypsies, despite the fact that their persecution was far more public and transparent. In the final analysis, as Steven Katz has concluded correctly, “it was only Jews . . . who were the victims of a total genocidal onslaught.”⁷⁹ Nazi policy toward the Gypsies lacked the kind of single-minded fanaticism that characterized the murderous assault upon the Jews. Entire categories such as the “socially adjusted” and “sedentary” Gypsies generally received more lenient treatment. The Gypsies were considered a “nuisance” and a “plague” but not a major threat, and that is why their treatment differed from that of the Jews.

What makes the murder of the Jews unique is not the number of victims but the intent of the murderers. Only in the case of the Jews did the Nazis seek to annihili-

late physically every man, woman, and child. This program of total extermination therefore deserves its own appellation: the Holocaust or the Hebrew word Shoah. While the term “genocide,” as defined by the Genocide Convention, involves various acts designed to destroy a group in whole or in part and is not limited to killing, the term “Holocaust” stands for the attempted physical destruction of an entire people, pursued with relentless determination and, in its most lethal final phase, carried out with the mass-production methods of a modern factory. Only the Jews were caught up in this kind of murderous enterprise. As Elie Wiesel has put it: “While not all victims [of the Nazis] were Jews, *all* Jews were victims, destined for annihilation solely because they were born Jewish.”⁸⁰ Some Jewish *Mischlinge* and a limited number of Jews conscripted for slave labor or released for ransom in the closing months of the war were allowed to escape death, but these were insignificant exceptions to the general policy. Gypsies were viciously persecuted and many died, but fortunately for them they were not the chosen victims of the Holocaust.

Notes

1. Donald Kenrick and Grattan Puxon, *The Destiny of Europe's Gypsies* (New York: Basic Books, 1972).
2. Donald Kenrick and Grattan Puxon, *Gypsies under the Swastika* (Hatfield: University of Hertfordshire Press, 1995).
3. Michael Zimmermann, *Rassenutopie und Genozid: Die nationalsozialistische Lösung der Zigeunerfrage* (Hamburg: Christians Verlag, 1996).
4. Lucy S. Dawidowicz, “Thinking about the Six Million: Facts, Figures, Perspectives,” in John K. Roth and Michael Berenbaum, eds., *Holocaust: Religious and Philosophical Implications* (New York: Paragon, 1989), p. 60.
5. RKPA, “Auswertung der rassenbiologischen Gutachten über zigeunerische Personen,” September 20, 1941, *Erlasssammlung Nr. 15*. This collection of decrees, entitled *Vorbeugende Verbrechensbekämpfung*, was issued by the RKPA in 1941. There is no pagination; the decrees are ordered chronologically. A copy can be found at the *Institut für Zeitgeschichte* in Munich.
6. Staatsarchiv (hereafter STA) Munich, Pol Dir München, Nr. 7033.
7. I have found one such case in a *Kripo* file for Gypsies: Korseda M., said to belong to a family of Gypsy-like itinerants and considered asocial, was sent to Ravensbrück in June 1939 and to the woman's camp of Auschwitz in March 1942. Landeshauptarchiv (hereafter LHA) Potsdam, Rep. 30 Berlin C, Nr. 90.
8. Report of rural police post Wildshut, *Dokumentationsarchiv des österreichischen Widerstandes* Vienna, Nr. 15061/8.
9. Heinz Caprez, “Jenische als Naziopfer: Beschwerliche Suche nach Überlebenden,” *Beobachter*, November 28, 1997, p. 49.
10. The figure of 2,500 may not be precise. A tabulation found in the files of the Ritter Institute in Berlin, in charge of research on the “Gypsy problem,” speaks of 2,330 deported Gypsies.

Bundesarchiv (hereafter BA) Berlin, ZSg. 142/22. A summary of evacuations by Heydrich's office gives the figure of 2,800 deported to the East between May 11 and November 15, 1940. Nuremberg document NO-5150, National Archives Washington (hereafter NA), RG 238, box 89.

11. Zentrale Stelle der Landesjustizverwaltungen (hereafter ZSL), Ludwigsburg, 415 AR 930/61, p. 86.

12. *Kripo* Cologne to RKPA, August 21, 1940, Hauptstaatsarchiv (hereafter HSTA) Düsseldorf, BR 2034, Nr. 1115.

13. *Ibid.*, BR 1111, Nr. 48, p. 49.

14. Archiwum Akt Nowych, Reg. GG 433, Bl. 10, cited by Zimmermann, *Rassenutopie und Genozid*, p. 183.

15. *Ibid.*

16. *Ibid.*

17. Ventzki to Übelhör, September 24, 1941, NA, Microfilm Publication T 175, roll 54, frames 2568677, 2568682–83.

18. Übelhör to Himmler, October 4, 1941, *ibid.*, fr. 25668–69.

19. Himmler to Übelhör, October 10, 1941, *ibid.*, fr. 2568662–63.

20. A detailed statistical report on arrivals was compiled by the German authorities in Litzmannstadt. A facsimile can be found in Romani Rose, ed., *Der Nationalsozialistische Völkermord an den Sinti und Roma* (Heidelberg: Dokumentations- und Kulturzentrum deutscher Sinti und Roma, 1995), pp. 101–3.

21. Lucjan Dobroszycki, ed., *The Chronicle of the Łódź Ghetto, 1941–1944* (New Haven, CT.: Yale University Press, 1984), p. 82.

22. *Arbeitsamt* Litzmannstadt to the *Ghettoverwaltung* Litzmannstadt, November 22, 1942, reprinted in Elisabeth Klamper, ed., *Archives of the Holocaust*, vol. 19, doc. 75, p. 188.

23. Dobroszycki, ed., *Chronicle*, p. 86.

24. *Ibid.*, pp. 96, 101, 125.

25. Omer Bartov, *Hitler's Army: Soldiers, Nazis, and War in the Third Reich* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1991), p. 24; Christian Streit, *Keine Kameraden: Die Wehrmacht und die sowjetischen Kriegsgefangenen 1941–1945* (Stuttgart: Deutsche Verlagsanstalt, 1978), p. 177.

26. Dobroszycki, ed., *Chronicle*, p. 108.

27. Cf. Paul Weindling, "Understanding Nazi Racism: Precursors and Perpetrators," in Michael Burleigh, ed., *Confronting the Nazi Past: New Debates in Modern German History* (New York: St. Martin's, 1996), p. 79; Christopher Browning, *Path to Genocide: Essays on Launching the Final Solution* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1992), p. 160.

28. Isaiah Trunk, *Judenrat: The Jewish Councils in Eastern Europe under Nazi Occupation* (New York: Macmillan, 1972), p. 159.

29. *Ereignismeldung UdSSR Nr. 92*, September 23, 1941, Nuremberg document NO-3143, NA, RG 238, box 58.
30. *Ereignismeldung UdSSR Nr. 165*, February 6, 1942, Nuremberg document NO-3401, NA, RG 238, box 65.
31. *Ereignismeldung UdSSR Nr. 195*, April 24, 1942, NA, T 175, roll 235, fr. 2724320.
32. Plans for such a remedy to the problem of overcrowding are said to have been discussed as early as July 1941. Cf. Eberhard Jäckel and Jürgen Rohwer, eds., *Der Mord an den Juden im Zweiten Weltkrieg: Entschlussbildung und Verwirklichung* (Stuttgart: Deutsche Verlagsanstalt, 1985), p. 42. See also the April 15, 1945 confession by Dr. Wilhelm Gustav Schübbe who worked as surgeon in the Erwin Peter hospital of Litzmannstadt, NA, RG 153, box 575.
33. BA Dahlewitz-Hoppegarten, R 090, Nr. 147.
34. ZSL Ludwigsburg, II 207 AR-Z 101/1967, 2: 328–29.
35. Christopher Browning, “Wehrmacht Reprisal Policy and the Mass Murder of Jews in Serbia,” *Militärgeschichtliche Mitteilungen* 33 (1983), p. 31.
36. “Einweisung von Zigeunermischlingen, Rom-Zigeunern und balkanischen Zigeunern in ein Konzentrationslager,” January 29, 1943, *Erlasssammlung Nr. 15*. The decree is also reprinted in Hans-Joachim Döring, *Die Zigeuner im nationalsozialistischen Staat*, (Hamburg: Kriminalistik Verlag, 1964), pp. 214–18.
37. LHA Magdeburg, C 29 Anh. II, Nr. 130.
38. *Ibid.*, Nr. 519.
39. Mayor Breitscheid to *Landrat* in Dillenburg, March 13, 1941, HSA Wiesbaden, Abt. 410, Nr. 488; Kripo Frankfurt to *Landrat* in Dillenburg, May 5, 1941, *op. cit.*
40. Kripo Frankfurt to *Landrat* in Dillenburg, March 3, 1943, *ibid.*, Abt. 410, Nr. 489.
41. *Landrat* in Dillenburg to Kripo Frankfurt, March 5, 1943, *ibid.*
42. *Landrat* in Dillenburg to *Kreisführer* Hampel in Dillenburg, May 5, 1943, *op. cit.*
43. The figure of 1,097 appears in a memo entitled “*Historisches zur Zigeunerfrage*” composed in the RKPA, probably with the help of Ritter. The estimate of those to be added appears in a hand-written memo of Eva Justin. See Zimmermann, *Rassenutopie und Genozid*, pp. 151, 299.
44. Ian Hancock, “Responses to the Porrajmos: The Romani Holocaust,” in Alan S. Rosenbaum, ed., *Is the Holocaust Unique? Perspectives on Comparative Genocide* (Boulder, CO, 1996), p. 47; Wolfgang Wippermann, ed., *Kontroversen um Hitler* (Frankfurt/M., 1986), p. 48.
45. Memo of Minister of Nutrition and Agriculture, November 14, 1942, BA Berlin, R 14, Nr. 156. The meeting referred to in this memo took place on November 4.
46. Hans Buchheim of the IfZ in Munich estimated that the decree of October 13, 1942, providing for the acceptance of “good *Mischlinge*” into the “racially pure” clans, could have benefited 6,000 Gypsies (ZSL Ludwigsburg, 414 AR 540/83, vol. 4, p. 586).
47. “*Historisches zur Zigeunerfrage*,” cited by Zimmermann, *Rassenutopie und Genozid*, p. 151.

48. Bernhard Streck, "Zigeuner in Auschwitz: Chronik des Lagers B II e," in Mark Münzel and Bernhard Streck, eds., *Kumpania und Kontrolle: Moderne Behinderungen zigeunerischen Lebens* (Giessen: Focus, 1981), p. 115.
49. Danuta Czech, *Auschwitz Chronicle: 1939–45* (New York: Henry Holt, 1990), p. 339.
50. For example, Martin Gilbert writes in his *Atlas of the Holocaust* (New York: William Morrow, 1993), p. 141: "Following a decree of 16 December 1942, all German Gypsies were deported to Auschwitz." See also Henry Friedlander, *Origins of Nazi Genocide: From Euthanasia to the Final Solution* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1995), p. 293; Wolfgang Wippermann, *Wie die Zigeuner: Antisemitismus und Antitsiganismus im Vergleich* (Berlin: Elefanten Press, 1997), p. 167; Selma Steinmetz, *Österreichs Zigeuner im NS-Staat* (Vienna: Europa, 1966), p. 14; Sybil Milton, "Correspondence on 'Gypsies and the Holocaust,'" *History Teacher* 25 (1992), p. 519. On the other hand, Yehuda Bauer writes that "only a minority" of German and Austrian Gypsies were sent to Auschwitz: "Gypsies," in Yisrael Gutman and Michael Berenbaum, eds., *Anatomy of the Auschwitz Death Camp* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, published in association with the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, 1994), p. 451.
51. Johannes Rau, "Damit es niemals wieder so wird: Der Völkermord an Sinti und Roma," *AVS-Informationsdienst* 16:2 (February 1995), pp. 2–3.
52. Nili Keren, "The Family Camp," in Gutman and Berenbaum, p. 429.
53. Bauer, "Gypsies," in Gutman and Berenbaum, p. 451.
54. Pohl to Brandt, April 9, 1943, Brandt to Pohl, April 15, 1943, Bundesarchiv Berlin, NS 19/180, pp. 3–4.
55. Rudolf Höss, (trans. Constantin Fitzgibbon) *Commandant of Auschwitz: The Autobiography of Rudolf Höss*, (Cleveland: World, 1959), p. 139.
56. We have several eyewitness accounts of life in the Gypsy family camp. A valuable recent addition to the memoir literature is Walter Stanoski Winter, *WinterZeit: Erinnerungen eines deutschen Sinto, der Auschwitz überlebt hat* (Hamburg: Ergebnisse Verlag, 1999).
57. Helena Kubica, "The Crimes of Josef Mengele," in Gutman and Berenbaum, p. 323; Miklos Nyiszli, *Auschwitz: An Eyewitness Account of Mengele's Infamous Death Camp* (New York: Seaver, 1986), pp. 53–55.
58. Tadeusz Szymanski, "The 'Hospital' in the Family Camp for Gypsies in Auschwitz-Birkenau," in *Nazi Medicine*, ed. International Auschwitz Committee (New York: Howard Fertig, 1986), part 3, p. 25.
59. Randolph Braham, "Hungarian Jews," in Gutman and Berenbaum, p. 465; Krystyna Zywulska, *I Came Back* (London: Dennis Dobson, 1951), p. 179; testimony of Erich Bruchwal-ski, ZSL Ludwigsburg, 402 AR-Z 47/84, vol. 3.
60. Wacław Długoborski, "On the History of the Gypsy Camp at Auschwitz-Birkenau," in State Museum of Auschwitz-Birkenau, *Memorial Book: The Gypsies at Auschwitz-Birkenau*, vol. 1 (Munich: K. G. Saur, 1993), p. 3.
61. This tabulation is based on figures provided by Długoborski, p. 4; Streck, "Zigeuner in Auschwitz," p. 128; Zimmermann, *Rassenutopie und Genozid*, p. 494, n. 212. Slightly different

figures are given by Szymanski, "The 'Hospital' in the Family Camp for Gypsies in Auschwitz-Birkenau," pp. 41–43. The difficulty of arriving at more precise numbers is stressed by Franciszek Piper, head of historical research at the Auschwitz-Birkenau State Museum, in "The Number of Victims," in Gutman and Berenbaum, p. 70.

62. Höss, *Commandant of Auschwitz*, p. 115.

63. Kenrick and Puxon, *Destiny of European Gypsies*, give a figure of 21,500 (p. 183). Zimmerman, *Rassenutopie und Genozid*, estimates the number of dead as about 23,000 (pp. 381–82).

64. "Letter to the Editor," *Frankfurter Rundschau*, February 20, 1997.

65. Romani Rose and Walter Weiss, *Sinti und Roma im "Dritten Reich": Das Programm der Vernichtung durch Arbeit* (Göttingen: Lamuv, 1991), p. 176; Rose, *Der nationalsozialistische Völkermord*, p. 189.

66. For example, Roman Herzog, the president of the Federal Republic, condemned the crimes against the Gypsies as "genocide" on March 16, 1997 (*Tagesspiegel*, March 17, 1997).

67. Brenda Davis Lutz and James M. Lutz, "Gypsies as Victims of the Holocaust," *Holocaust and Genocide Studies* 9:3 (1995), p. 356.

68. *Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide*, 9 December 1948 (London: Her Majesty's Stationery Office, March 1966), cited by George Andreopoulos, ed., *Genocide: Conceptual and Historical Dimensions* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1994), p. 48.

69. This important point is raised by Steven T. Katz, *The Holocaust in Historical Context*, vol. 1 (New York: Oxford University Press, 1994), p. 128.

70. *Ibid.*, pp. 20–21.

71. Döring, *Zigeuner im nationalsozialistischen Staat*, p. 168.

72. Ludwig Eiber, "Ich wusste es wird schlimm": *Die Verfolgung der Sinti und Roma in München* (Munich: Buchendorfer, 1993), p. 94.

73. Rose, *Der nationalsozialistische Völkermord*, p. 8.

74. Sybil Milton, "Gypsies and the Holocaust" (an exchange with Yehuda Bauer), *The History Teacher* 25 (1992), p. 516.

75. Yehuda Bauer, *ibid.*, p. 513.

76. *Zigeuner-Personenakten* can be found in the *Brandenburgisches Landeshauptarchiv* in Potsdam, in the *Landeshauptarchiv* of Sachsen-Anhalt in Magdeburg, and in the *Nordrhein-Westfälisches Hauptstaatsarchiv* in Düsseldorf. I consulted about 1,000 such files in 1996.

77. For a review of the scholarship see Ulrich Herbert, "Vernichtungspolitik: Neue Antworten und Fragen zur Geschichte des 'Holocaust,'" in idem., ed., *Nationalsozialistische Vernichtungspolitik 1939–1945: Neue Fragen und Kontroversen* (Frankfurt: Fischer Taschenbuch Verlag, 1998), pp. 9–66. An English translation is to be published by Berghahn in 1999.

78. Several such utterances are quoted in Christian Gerlach, "Die Wannsee-Konferenz, das Schicksal der deutschen Juden und Hitlers politische Grundsatzentscheidung, alle Juden zu ermorden," *Werkstatt-Geschichte* 18 (1997), pp. 24–25, 35–37. For other examples see Götz

Aly and Susanne Heim, *Vordenker der Vernichtung: Auschwitz und die deutschen Pläne für eine neue europäische Ordnung* (Hamburg: Hoffmann und Campe, 1991).

79. Steven T. Katz, "Essay: Quantity and Interpretation—Issues in the Comparative Historical Analysis of the Holocaust," *Holocaust and Genocide Studies* 4:2 (1989), p. 145.

80. Elie Wiesel, Preface to *Report to the President* [Carter], (Washington: President's Commission on the Holocaust, 1979), p. iii, quoted in Michael Berenbaum, ed., *A Mosaic of Victims: Non-Jews Persecuted and Murdered by the Nazis* (New York: New York University Press, 1990), p. xii.