

Extermination of the Gypsies in Estonia during World War II: Popular Images and Official Policies

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A discussion of Nazi anti-Gypsy policy in Estonia needs to center on local interpretation and implementation of RSHA and RKO orders. Contradictions between various German instructions, which often discriminated among sedentary and itinerating Gypsies, created a state of confusion that increased chances for survival. Since in Estonia Sonderkommando 1a of the German Security Police exercised oversight rather than itself carrying out atrocities, the destruction of the Gypsy community in Estonia proceeded at a pace slower than elsewhere in Eastern Europe. Interested in exploiting slave labor, the German Security Police in Estonia did not consider liquidation of the Gypsies a priority. Acculturated to traditional anti-Gypsy prejudices and burdened by their own wartime travails, the majority of Estonians remained indifferent when Estonian police deported Gypsies.

Among all ethnic groups in the Baltic States, the Gypsies are the most under-studied. So far most research on the Nazi extermination of the Gypsies in this area has been done in Latvia, with authors including both survivors and scholars.¹ Several younger scholars are working on the subject in Lithuania.² The first attempt to summarize the fate of the Estonian Gypsies under the Nazis was Jüri Viikberg and Roman Lutt's admirable contribution to a collection dealing with minorities living in the territory of Estonia.³

Some scholars of the Porrajmos (the Gypsy Holocaust) concentrate on documents of central German agencies, whereas local historians often stress the importance of regulations issued on the spot, sometimes shortchanging the broader context. The following attempts to bring the two currents together, first by introducing the Estonian case into the discourse on Nazi handling of the "Gypsy Question," and in particular by investigating whether orders proceeded without impediment down the chain of command. To what extent did local initiative delay or contradict the implementation of directives? To put it differently, did central and peripheral interests intersect, and if not, what were the issues at stake? On a more general level this article recounts the fate of the Estonian Gypsies starting with a short overview of their original settlement in Estonia.

The Gypsies in Estonia

The earliest reference to the presence of Gypsies in Estonia dates to 1533. The records of the Town Council of Reval (Tallinn) mention two Gypsies (Zigeuner), Claves von Rottenberch and Christoffer Rottenbech. The document implied that the two came from the town of 'Rottenberg' (Rothenberg?), in Germany.⁴ Gypsy migrations through Estonia probably occurred even earlier. Thus according to a sourcebook about medieval Finland, the first Gypsy settlers came to the Finnish mainland via Estonia, in 1515.⁵ There have been Gypsies in the Baltic continuously since the beginning of the sixteenth century. Nevertheless, the Gypsies did not settle permanently in Estonia before the beginning of the seventeenth century. Having been persecuted in Sweden and Poland, and searching for a more tolerant environment, some Gypsies traveled to Estonia. But this influx was paralleled by the eagerness of the authorities—first Swedish and then Russian—to fight “vagabondage.” Russian Senate decrees of January 24 and November 4, 1784, infringed the freedom of movement of Gypsies. In accordance with the first, all itinerant Gypsies from across the border were put under surveillance and eventually sent back. The November 4 decree forbade Gypsies without passports to travel outside Riga and Tallinn. We have no precise statistics on the Gypsy population in the Estonian and Livonian provinces of the Russian Empire in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. The relatively accurate census of 1897 gives the figure for Estonia and Latvia of 1,750,⁶ of whom 154 were in Estonia.

However insignificant the numbers, the Gypsies did not settle in Estonia as a homogeneous group. One should distinguish among three main geographical and linguistic groups: Latvian, Russian, and Laiuse. The most distinctive and also the oldest were the Gypsies of Laiuse, the *Lajenge Roma* as they are known in Romani. In 1841 the authorities ordered all Gypsies in Estonia to be concentrated in Laiuse Parish, about twenty-five miles north of Tartu. By the time Estonia became independent in 1918 the *Lajenge Roma* had been largely assimilated, and the dialect they spoke—closely related to that of the Finnish Gypsies and something of a hybrid of Gypsy and Estonian—was disappearing. According to the Estonian linguist Paul Ariste, who has extensively studied Gypsy language, the older groups of Gypsies such as *Lajenge Roma* underwent thorough Estonization. No rigid social barriers separated the latter and the peasants. The majority led a sedentary way of life. Over time, Estonian was substituted for the Gypsy language; intermarriages were frequent. The eminent Estonian writer Friedebert Tuglas is perhaps the best-known example of an Estonian with Gypsy roots.⁷

The question of language is particularly important here. The great majority of Gypsies who settled in Estonia during the interwar period of the twentieth century came from Latvia. Another distinctive group, the so-called Russian Gypsies, was concentrated in the eastern borderlands. While the Latvian Gypsies generally had a good command of Estonian, only a few among the Russian Gypsies knew it. Because of that fact, their movements were limited to the predominantly Russian-settled areas, that is, the vicinity of Narva, Lake Peipus, and the Southeast. Each Gypsy group kept largely

to its own, which, however, did not completely stop interactions among the Laiuse, Latvian, and Russian Gypsies. There were cases of intermarriage and occasionally even itinerating together.⁸

Ariste argues that despite the assimilation of some Estonian Gypsies, there was no decisive break with tradition. The percentage of illiterates remained high. Others have found little indication of the religious indifference that Ariste ascribes to them. Partial evidence suggests the continuing importance of the traditional Gypsy connection with horses.⁹

According to the 1934 Estonian census, there were 766 Gypsies in Estonia. Ariste estimates 900 on the eve of World War II (60 Laiuse, 800 “Latvian,” and 10 “Russian” families). In the Holocaust literature the number usually is rounded up to 1,000. In June 1941 the number of Gypsies who were sedentary amounted to 743.¹⁰ Shortly after their occupation of the Baltic countries the German authorities conducted a census to calculate human losses during the preceding year of Soviet rule; not surprisingly, however, the census-takers were prohibited from counting Jews and Gypsies.¹¹ For that reason the German civil authorities never knew the precise number of Gypsies in Estonia.¹² Considering that the overwhelming majority of Gypsies in Estonia were sedentary, a good estimate would seem to be 800 to 850.

The partial assimilation of the Gypsies into the Estonian majority in no way eliminated social and racial prejudices against the “swarthy aliens.” The very Estonian word for Gypsies, *mustlased* (Finnish, *Mustalainen*)—“black,” “dirty”—has negative connotations. The scornful “*mustlased*” may be contrasted with the Estonian word for “Germans,” *sakslased* (related to “Saxons”). It is significant that a shortened version of *sakslane*—“saks” (master)—was extended in the nineteenth century to include any educated, non-working-class, German-speaking individual, regardless of nationality. Thus in the case of the Gypsies, the national was identified with the racial, while in the case of Germans, national overlapped with class.¹³

Traditional antisemitism and anti-Gypsy attitudes share certain characteristics. Most of the popular images and clichés were created by the Church. This is true in the case of Germany,¹⁴ but to some degree also Estonia. For example, one story recorded in 1922 talks explicitly about Gypsy use of Christian blood for religious purposes. The story starts with the Gypsies, and then continues—“but Jews have been even worse!” According to the narrator, a priest mentioned the “blood offerings” in his sermon.

Little research has been done on the images that Jews and Gypsies had of each other. Some have suggested that Gypsy folklore is bereft of anti-Jewish sentiments. The following example, which comes from Latgale, the easternmost province of Latvia, proves the opposite. The Latvian Gypsies, while wanting to scare their children, used to say “a Jew will murder you!” (*zhid zarezhel*, in Russian).¹⁵ Although this single example does not change the overall picture, it may testify to the fact that interaction between Gypsies and Jews in the Baltic states remained minimal. Contacts with the majority population were, however, more frequent.

Estonians during the interwar period usually perceived Gypsies as outsiders, except for the Lajenge Roma, assimilated by the turn of the century. Prejudice against the Gypsies was as strong in Estonia as any other East- or Central European country. A knowledge of both the Estonian and Russian languages made it possible for Gypsies to maintain irregular business contacts with the rural population. An indication of the importance of language is the fact that the Russian Gypsies, without a proper command of Estonian, were able to itinerate only in areas with a predominantly Russian population. Despite the Gypsies' ability to eke out an existence, the majority population seems to have regarded interaction with them—basically limited to the marketplace—as a nuisance. Considering the marginal position of the Russian minority in independent Estonia, anti-Gypsism was one of the few attitudes it shared with most Estonians. But everywhere negative representations of the Gypsies were widespread and usually generalized, while positive evaluations by and large were based on personal interaction with one or another specific individual.

Gypsy dress and habits were so exotic that they both alienated and attracted. A Gypsy woman smoking a pipe aroused particular consternation. The significant role the Gypsies played in horse trading rather reinforced social stereotyping. Thefts on market days were often ascribed to Gypsies, all the more so incidents of the theft of horses. The belief that Gypsies were dishonest vendors was widespread. For some, a natural desire to profit was accentuated by the flamboyant desire to “outwit the Gypsy”; it would be considered particularly commendable to sell a Gypsy a defective horse. Despite the ongoing process of nation-building, interwar Estonia remained very much a traditional rural society, and thus negative attitudes toward Gypsies continued to be transmitted from generation to generation. Children were warned away from this “tribe of beggars and thieves.” Only a small minority of Estonians were neutral toward the Gypsies, stressing their “otherness” without condemning it. Examples of a positive disposition were extremely rare. As for the Gypsies' attitudes towards Estonians, according to one observer, those individuals whom the Gypsies accepted as their own would be treated with hospitality and generosity.¹⁶

Soviet rule in Estonia in 1940 and 1941 had no strong effect on the Gypsy community. Secluded from the rest of the population, the Gypsies were traditionally apolitical, and only a few references to the Roma during that period have survived. Despite the Soviet authorities' attempts to press the Gypsies into employment and their children into school—something the Gypsies did not perceive as a positive development—the new regime won some support from the Gypsy population. The fact that the Soviets did not discriminate did not, however, completely eliminate anti-Soviet sentiment among the assimilated minority, particularly the students. Some individuals even started looking favorably upon Nazi Germany as a force that might cast out the communists.¹⁷ In this the Baltic Gypsies were far from alone: Albanian Gypsies, for instance, perceived the Serbs as enemies worse than the Nazis.¹⁸ Among Estonian Jews, too, there were individuals who at first hoped that life under the Nazi occupation

would be better than the miserable existence under the Soviets.¹⁹ The Gypsies, unlike the Jews, did not become any more visible as a result of the Soviet occupation. Consequently, there was no reason for Estonians to blame the Gypsies for their loss of independence. However, social stereotypes persisted. One of the ways Estonians disparaged the new regime was to equate its representatives with Gypsy stereotypes from the past. On June 23, 1940, for instance, the Soviet authorities organized in the southern town of Tõrva a “march” and a meeting in support of the new government, to which only twenty-five people showed up; witnesses referred to the event as the “Gypsy funeral procession.”²⁰

“Socially Dangerous Elements”

Squeezed between Germany and the Soviet Union, Estonia almost inevitably was influenced by processes occurring in both countries, including their handling of the “Gypsy Question.” The most recent Western scholarship demonstrates certain parallels in the treatment of the Gypsies under both the Nazi and the Stalinist regimes, although substantial differences characterize the two states. While Nazi anti-Gypsy policy evolved parallel to the anti-Jewish legislation, in the Soviet judicial system the Gypsies were never dissociated as a separate category. Throughout the Third Reich’s history, the precise status of the Sinti and Roma remained unclear. Scholars still cannot reach a consensus on whether they were defined on a racial basis or as a “socially marginal” group. Early scholarly accounts drew the parallel between Nazi plans for the Jews and for the Gypsies; their racialist ideology was considered dominant over the traditional perception of the Sinti and Roma as criminals. By branding the Gypsies an “asocial element”—it is argued—the Nazis disguised their genocidal intent to exterminate them as a race.²¹ Another group of scholars, though admitting the priority of the biological factor in the Nazi definition of Gypsies, argues that the conception of racial inferiority and hereditary criminality equally contributed to discrimination against, and eventually the murder of, the Gypsies.²² The most persistent view argues that (despite the Nazis’ fixation upon race) in the case of Sinti and Roma, “social adjustment” was considered more important than racial origin. Leo Lucassen expresses an even more extreme view, arguing the direct continuity between anti-Gypsy police measures adopted before and after 1933, and disparaging the racial factor as strictly secondary.²³

In the Soviet Union too the concept of Gypsy as social outcast was endemic. The policing of “marginals” stood apart from the political and administrative purges of the 1930s. The process of removing “socially alien” and “socially dangerous elements” started with the round-ups of prostitutes in the summer of 1929, if not earlier, and culminated in mass operations that took place during the Great Terror of 1937–38. A definition of “danger” referring specifically to habitual criminals was established as early as 1924. With the crash industrialization program that got underway in the late 1920s, the words “Gypsy” and “criminal” once again grew close. Gypsies now might be assigned to categories such as “parasites” and “pests.”²⁴ The first known legal case against

them, when eighteen members of a Gypsy cooperative enterprise were arrested and tried in early 1932, should be viewed as part of the gathering campaign against minority cultures in general. The charges included economic sabotage, conspiracy, and bribetaking; the authorities interpreted the maintenance of Gypsy kinship networks as disloyalty to the state. In the summer of 1933, the OGPU (security police) were instructed to expel from Moscow all beggars and those with a criminal past. Around the same time, 5,000 itinerant Gypsies were deported from the Moscow region to internal exile in remote regions.

It is unlikely, however, that the Soviet authorities intended the expulsion of Roma as ethnic cleansing; rather, it was more likely part of a general social purge. But increasing administrative pressure on petty criminals led in the late 1930s to a redefinition of categories of “ordinary” versus “political” crime. Gradually, public-order offenses merged with the category of “counter-revolutionary crimes.” During the period of mass operations a considerable number of Gypsies were picked up and sent east. Their criminal reputation combined with the regime’s eagerness to settle “backward” nomadic people encouraged local officials to see the Gypsies as “socially harmful” and therefore a potential threat to the Soviet system. During the collectivization of agriculture some Gypsies were arrested as “kulaks.”²⁵

Nazi segregationist legislation defined Sinti and Roma, despite their meager numbers (.04% of the population), as a separate category. Nevertheless, for the first six years of the regime, the “Gypsy Question” was treated primarily as a social problem. The December 1937 Interior Ministry decree authorizing preventative custody aimed at “asocial” elements in general. Thus the Gypsies rounded up during Operation Work-Shy later the following year were detained as “asocials” without permanent residence. Nevertheless Reichsführer-SS Heinrich Himmler’s December 8, 1938, decree for “Combating the Gypsy Plague” signaled an important departure from previous practice. From then on the Criminal Police were advised to treat the Sinti and Roma by racial criteria. The decree made a distinction between “pure Gypsies,” Gypsies of mixed ancestry (*Zigeunermischlinge*) and “Gypsy-like itinerants.”²⁶

Regarding the treatment of the Gypsies, Soviet and German security police functions bore much in common. Following the abolition of the OGPU in February 1934, its police functions were incorporated into the newly established NKVD (People’s Commissariat of Internal Affairs). Several months later a Special Board of the NKVD was created, with the power (among others) to exile “socially dangerous” persons for up to five years.²⁷ As regards persecution of the Gypsies in Nazi Germany, a similarly important restructuring took place in 1936. Having embarked on a campaign to control both political enemies and asocials, Himmler organized the police into two main components: the Security Police, which included the Gestapo and the Kripo (Criminal Police); and the so-called Order (or uniformed) Police. Until the outbreak of war, the Gypsy Question was handled by the Kripo.²⁸ Essential issues such as definition, deportation, and ultimately killing, however, were later confirmed on the highest level,

that is, by Himmler himself or the RSHA (Reichssicherheitshauptamt, the security apparatus), into which both Gestapo and Kripo were integrated in September 1939.

Unfortunately, there has been no proper research on police practice in interwar Estonia. Thus we cannot substantiate the thesis of Ruth Bettina Birn, a distinguished authority on indigenous collaboration with the Nazi occupation: according to Birn, one of the main factors contributing to Estonian collaborationism lay within Estonian society itself. The conservatism of the “respectable people” who constituted the Estonian elite made them view the world as “threatened by the revolt of the lawless underclass, which was lazy, promiscuous and comprised mainly of non-Estonian ethnicities.”²⁹ In order to demonstrate that, however, one would need to identify continuities in official state policy with regard to the Gypsies, something about which we can only speculate in the case of Estonia. As regards the Jews, by way of comparison, there were no such outbursts of violent antisemitism in Estonia in the late 1930s as occurred in other East European countries or as would occur under the German occupation; nor did the Jewish minority suffer any restrictions of its cultural autonomy during the period of independence. In the case of the Gypsies the majority of the population certainly continued to harbor traditional cultural stereotypes, but this did not require any deliberate encouragement on the part of the state.

The Einsatzgruppen and the First Killings

Did Einsatzgruppe A (one of the four major mobile killing units) start immediately massacring the Gypsies in the Baltic region as it followed invading German troops in late June 1941? Historians disagree on the matter of an explicit order allegedly delivered to Einsatzgruppen commanders to kill Gypsies. Most tend to credit the 1948 testimony of Otto Ohlendorf, commander of Einsatzgruppe D: Ohlendorf points to an order of Bruno Streckenbach, RSHA chief of personnel, delivered at Pretzsch shortly before the invasion of the USSR; Ohlendorf affirmed that his unit killed Gypsies on the same grounds as Jews.³⁰ Several defendants at Nuremberg confirmed their belief in a “Führer’s order” to liquidate Jews, communist functionaries, and Gypsies. But this rather shaky evidence is insufficient to prove that any fundamental order with regard to the Gypsies ever was given. In any case, Reinhard Heydrich’s order to Higher SS and Police Leaders on July 2, 1941—contrary to what Lewy argues—does not explicitly mention the Gypsies.³¹ Donald Kenrick arrives at what seems the most probable conclusion, namely that the latter were not obliged to kill Gypsies. However, in his most recent work Kenrick altered his views, stressing the logical nexus between the order that the Einsatzgruppen presumably received to eliminate “racially undesirable elements,” and the large number of occasions when the Gypsies were mentioned among their victims.³² One is entitled to doubt those authors who generalize the fate that befell the East European Gypsies swept up in the initial phase of Einsatzgruppen activity.³³ According to Einsatzgruppen reports, the latter did indeed murder many Gypsies but the variation in the way they were categorized indicates the lack of definite

instructions: in some cases the victims were listed along with “asocial elements,” the mentally ill, and saboteurs; at other times they were included among “asocial elements.” Otherwise Gypsies were condemned to death for “different offenses and crimes.”³⁴ Judging from the list of execution “motives” in one October 1941 Einsatzgruppe C report, Gypsies most likely were murdered either as “undesirable elements” or as “asocials.”³⁵ This assumption is further corroborated by one of the special orders (*Einsatzbefehle*) of the chief of the German Security Police and the Security Service (Sipo); in the guidelines for compiling monthly reports on the people subjected to “special treatment,” Heydrich’s deputy, Heinrich Müller, established five categories of offenders: partisans, communists and functionaries, Jews, the mentally ill, and “other state-subversive elements.”³⁶ Unlike the situation in the Ukraine, where, due to the scope of anti-German guerrilla activity, many Gypsies were branded as partisans or spies, the Gypsies captured in the operational area of Einsatzgruppe A were automatically listed as mere subversive elements.³⁷ As regards Einsatzgruppe activities in the Baltic countries generally, in no case were Gypsies targeted as a blanket category, at least not officially. Nor, with few exceptions, did the killings start immediately. In Estonia Sonderkommando 1a was not directly involved in murdering Gypsies.

Those few Gypsies murdered during the first months of the German occupation of Estonia were handled nearly exclusively by indigenous collaborators. The first killing is closely connected with the establishment of the Tartu concentration camp. It is not clear whether the camp came into existence on a direct German order or as a result of local initiative. The German military authorities probably approved the establishment of the detention facility *ex post facto*, on July 14, four days after the city was conquered. In any case, it was the chief of anti-Soviet partisans units in the south of the country who appointed the first head of the camp. At first the camp operated under the auspices of the Tartu Self-Defense, or *Omakaitse* (Estonian auxiliary police created by the Germans on the base of the anti-Soviet partisans); thereafter, however, the German Sipo took over, the city military commandant sending his own representative as overseer. During the first days of operation some 100 people, including a dozen Jews and Gypsies, were taken into custody. Arrests were carried out by members of the Self-Defense, who also guarded the camp. The prisoners were quickly executed as suspected political enemies.³⁸ Itinerant Gypsies families were ordered into a separate building across the Emajõgi River. There they were kept for about two months, until October, when the police characterized the Gypsies’ complaints as “rioting” in order to justify sending them to the concentration camp where they were shot.³⁹

During the summer no proper judicial proceedings were observed, court duties being delegated to a department of the concentration camp. In the absence of special execution-commandos, guards unassigned to other duties carried out death sentences. According to witness testimony, no one had to be forced to take part in the executions, for there were always volunteers.⁴⁰ It appears, however, that the city military commandant adopted a milder stance with regard to the Gypsies. In the fall the remaining

sedentary Gypsies from the Tartu concentration camp were subjected to compulsory labor outside the city. Gypsies still at liberty were barred from the city without special permission.⁴¹ Considering that even those incarcerated itinerant Gypsies were killed as “criminals” and not as Gypsies, it is rather difficult to establish the precise number of them who lost their lives during the summer of 1941. Thus on September 19 the Sipo reported that out of 1,200 cases of arrest in the Tartu area, the total number of executed communist functionaries and criminals amounted to 405, among them fifty Jews—but Gypsies were not mentioned.⁴²

Sedentary vs. Itinerant Gypsies

The role of the German military in accelerating the destruction of the Gypsy population in Eastern Europe is controversial. Referring to instructions of the German military authorities, on September 19, 1941, the prefect of the Estonian security police in Viljandi requested that “all” Gypsies be sent to the local prison.⁴³ Apparently this order did not apply to the whole of Estonia, but definitely to the district of Pärnu, to which Viljandi Prefecture was subordinate. According to a witness, among the (itinerant) Gypsies incarcerated in Viljandi prison that fall were women, children, and the elderly. All of them were shot shortly after by the Omakaitse.⁴⁴ It is known that the first Jews had already been arrested in Pärnu by the end of July. On September 10, the chief of Sonderkommando 1a, Dr. Martin Sandberger, issued an order authorizing the arrest of all Jews in Estonia. By September 15, there were eighty-seven Jews and thirty Gypsies in the Pärnu concentration camp for “political prisoners.” Over the next week, however, the number of incarcerated Gypsies rose—obviously, as a result of the Wehrmacht order mentioned above—to forty-nine. As one older Gypsy woman died in the meantime, the same figure persisted through October 9, 1941.⁴⁵ On another occasion some Wehrmacht commanders used their authority to stop the bloodshed.⁴⁶ One such intervention on the part of the military is closely connected with the name of Hinrich Lohse, Reich commissioner for the Baltic states and Belorussia (Reichskommissariat Ostland). On November 15 Lohse, concerned for the economic exploitation of the region, asked Berlin if the work-fit Jews might be spared. At the same time, however, he perceived nomadic Gypsies as unnecessary ballast.⁴⁷ As an indirect response, on November 21 the commander of Army Group North Rear Area, Gen. Franz von Roques, issued an order that exempted—with certain reservations—sedentary Gypsies from execution.⁴⁸

The numerous—and often contradictory—decisions about the fate of the Baltic Roma evolved around the question of their social status. The occupied territory of the Soviet Union, including the Baltic countries, was one of the few areas in Europe where the Nazis drew a distinction between sedentary and itinerant Gypsies. Since the Estonian Gypsy population was directly affected by fluctuations in Nazi policy towards the Gypsies in general, it makes sense to consider the decision-making process. The incoherence of Nazi policy left space for local initiative. Past experience taught the Nazis to

prepare justifications for their gruesome deeds. Public revulsion at the execution of Jewish women and children in the Latvian town of Liepāja (Libau, in German) in late September was still on their minds. German military opposition to some killings prompted Lohse to take up the issue with Franz Walter Stahlecker, commander of Einsatzgruppe A.⁴⁹ However it seems unlikely that Lohse objected on principle to the latter's approach. Moreover, Lohse's decree of December 4, 1941, which defined anti-Gypsy policy in the Baltic states, most probably was supposed to provide an after-the-fact justification for the execution of 100 Libau Gypsies, an event that took place around the same time. The order dealt with the Gypsies "who wander about in the countryside." According to Lohse, those Gypsies constituted a twofold danger. First, they carried disease, especially typhus. Second, they were unreliable elements who could not be put to useful work. The essence of the order was formulated in the last paragraph, where Lohse—branding the Gypsies potential spies—determined that they should be treated in the same way as the Jews.⁵⁰

The fact that Lohse did not specify what should be done with sedentary Gypsies permits different interpretations. In the case of Latvia, Lewy finds it difficult to define whether the individuals murdered were itinerant or sedentary, concluding that much depended on the whim of local authorities. In corroboration he cites the rather evasive statement of Higher SS and Police Leader Ostland Friedrich Jeckeln, according to whom the Gypsy Question "was being solved by the police in the exercise of its own jurisdiction."⁵¹ Zimmermann is more nuanced, insisting that the commander of the Security Police and the Security Service in Latvia, Rudolf Lange, did discriminate between nomadic and sedentary Gypsies, exempting the latter from execution. The SS and Police Leader in Latvia, however—so Zimmermann argues—did not convey this stipulation further to the commander of the Order Police. Therefore, the Order Police understood the term "non-nomadic Gypsies" broadly, which resulted—during the first months of 1942—in the death of a significant segment of both categories of Latvian Gypsies.⁵² The absence of a clear differentiation between nomadic and sedentary Gypsies did indeed give the police a free hand. Contrary to what Zimmermann argues, however, the commander of the Latvian Order Police did indeed receive, on January 12, 1942, the SS and Police Leader's instructions regarding the "Gypsy Question": all nomadic Gypsies were to be arrested, and of the sedentary Gypsies only those engaged in regular employment and deemed neither criminal nor politically dangerous might be exempted.⁵³

From Police Surveillance to Compulsory Labor

Despite any confusion in Latvia, things may have been simpler there than in Estonia. In Latvia the executions went on unimpeded from April 1942 to March 1943, carrying off nearly half of the 3,800 Gypsies; but in Estonia, as the available empirical data suggest, the situation was more complex. Although a number of people were in custody by 1941, mass arrests did not start until Lohse's order was confirmed in January 1942,

and even then only in the larger towns. For the most part, however, only in the winter of 1942 did the police start screening the Gypsy population. The Tallinn, Haapsalu, Paide, and Saaremaa prefects received the corresponding order to start screening the Gypsies during the last week of January 23, 1942.⁵⁴ An order issued by the Tartu office of the German Sipo for the southern part of Estonia conveyed Lohse's basic wishes regarding the Gypsies.⁵⁵ The Petseri (German, Petschur; Russian, Petchory) police collected data on Gypsies by February 15, 1942, but did not act on it until a year later.⁵⁶ Two Gypsy children were in fact arrested in Narva in November 1941 (on their father, Vilep Indus, see below), but this took place as part of a round-up of Russians.⁵⁷ Nevertheless, January–April 1942 Narva security police statistics indicate diminishing numbers of Gypsies resident there.⁵⁸ Of the forty-two Gypsies living in the territory of the prefecture at the beginning of 1942, only thirty-three were still registered there in March, and by April only twenty. There may be a twofold explanation to that drastic reduction. Considering that the Gypsies were able to travel within the borders of Estonia through 1942, it is not impossible that some of them might have moved to other districts. Out of the twenty Gypsies residing there in April, sixteen had Estonian citizenship and four were “stateless,” though probably permanent residents.⁵⁹ The itinerant Gypsies, in accordance with Lohse's regulations, may have been killed.

Itinerant Gypsies were incarcerated locally. For Gypsies from the Türi (German, Türgel) District (Paide Prefecture), for example, the destination was the Paide (German, Weissenstein) Prison. According to numerous testimonies, by summer 1942 the number of Gypsies in Tallinn Central Prison reached one hundred. It is likely that all were shot.⁶⁰ Otherwise there is no evidence of any single bigger execution of Gypsies in Estonia before October 1942. Zimmermann's suggestion that some Gypsies incarcerated in the Harku camp⁶¹ had been killed in the fall of 1941 runs contrary to the existing evidence: The Harku camp, located in Harju Province near Tallinn, had been in operation since 1922. After the retreat of the Soviets in September 1941 the detention facility was re-established. Officially, Harku was a branch of the Tallinn Central Prison. Most of the Gypsy inmates of the Harku camp probably were rounded up during the *Zigeuneraktion* of February 19, 1942.⁶² Within the next couple of days, officials of Tallinn-Harju (German, Reval-Harrien) Security Police—who exercised jurisdiction over the camp—started interrogating the Gypsies. Shortly, the lists of Gypsy prisoners were compiled.⁶³ As of July 1942, there were altogether 1,133 prisoners in the Harku camp. It is significant that the Gypsies were listed separately, as interned persons. According to the head of the Harku camp at that time, from among 328 Gypsies (170 men and 158 women, 189 of whom were under the age of eighteen), only forty-two were fit for work. However, even those few, due to the contagious disease, could not be employed. But during the period under consideration the Tallinn-Harju Security Police executed only one Gypsy, a woman.⁶⁴

Only adult Gypsies were kept in Harku. After arrest family members were immediately separated. Shelters accommodated small children (through age eleven),

while adolescents went to the “work and education colony” for young criminals in Laitse, also Harju Province. Needless to say, none of some sixty to seventy-five Gypsy boys incarcerated in Laitse had committed any “crime” other than being born into an “impure race.” Speaking both Estonian and Russian, the Gypsies very quickly found a common language with the rest of the colony inmates. The youngest of the twelve-to-seventeen-year-olds studied at school, while the rest were set to various types of manual labor. The situation in the colony was so “idyllic” that the director could mention the existence of a Gypsy choir there.⁶⁵

Police kept track of all Gypsies, including those killed. According to a circular issued by the Estonian Security Police on June 11, 1942, local branches were to maintain card files on executed Jews, Gypsies, and POWs, these categories to be listed separately.⁶⁶ This leads back to the question of how Gypsies were categorized and which particular agency dealt with them in Estonia. The role of the Estonian Criminal Police was to handle the formalities in each particular Gypsy case, which was then submitted to the Political Police, who exercised the highest authority over the Gypsies in Estonia. If a Gypsy was charged with “political crimes,” the material went further to the German Special Court, or *Sondergericht*.⁶⁷ Surveillance was entrusted to the Criminal Police.

The police apparatus had been created immediately after Estonia fell to the Germans, retaining for convenience much of the prewar Estonian apparatus. While the Estonian Criminal Police was for the most part independent in its conduct, the Security Police reported to the German Security Police.⁶⁸ In 1941, the Security and the Criminal Police (800 people altogether) were united in an overall structure; yet the most significant reorganization followed on May 1, 1942, when the Security Police apparatus was divided into two sections, a German (Group A) and an Estonian (Group B).⁶⁹ Investigation was carried out by the Estonian Security Police. The so-called Punishment Planning Commissions (*Strafprojektierungskommissionen*) linked the two sections. Those commissions, consisting of three Estonian Security Police officers, prepared case summaries and made recommendations that were decided ultimately upon by the Germans (in the case of execution, exclusively by the Commander of the German Security Police in Estonia, KdS-Estland).

Dr. Martin Sandberger, commander of the Security Police and Security Service in Estonia, had always promoted cooperation between the Estonian and the German branches of the Security Police. Similarly Obersturmführer Heinrich Bergmann, head of the Criminal Division of the German Kripo in Estonia (and later Bergmann’s successor Obersturmbannführer Dr. Ullmann) stressed the important role his Estonian colleagues were to play in the fight against “asocial elements.” Gypsies—along with prostitutes, habitual criminals, and the work-shy—thus constituted a group defined as “incorrigible offenders.” Instructions from Bergmann concerning the treatment of the Gypsies in Estonia repeated general Nazi discourse: as asocials who wander the countryside “like nomads” (*nomadenart*), the Gypsies were to be treated like the Jews. Sedentary Gypsies engaged in regular work, however, should be tolerated, but remain

under police supervision. In the fight against habitual criminals, preventive police custody was considered a particularly effective means. Bergmann recommended sending such individuals to the Tallinn concentration camp. In the case of asocials with a significant history of previous convictions (*bei besonders asozialen Personen mit entsprechenden Vorstrafen*), officials could propose execution.⁷⁰ What Bergmann called a “concentration camp” had since July 29, 1942, borne the euphemistic name of “work and education camp” (*Arbeits- und Erziehungslager*, or AEL).⁷¹ The belief in social utopia found its way as well into AEL regulations. Through education and work—it was stated—the individuals confined in AEL would be saved for society. Asocial elements were just one category among those imprisoned in the camp.⁷² Assignment to the AEL—explained the head of the Estonian Security Police—was meant as punishment and retribution, but at the same time the AEL was the place where that individual should be “educated.”⁷³ In order to facilitate the work of the Estonian Criminal Police, during 1942 central Nazi legislation regarding preventive police custody was translated into Estonian.⁷⁴

By June 1942, there were no more itinerant Gypsies in Estonia according to the author of an unidentified commentary on a presentation by Bergmann on May 27, 1942. According to the compiler, the “Gypsy Problem” in Estonia had been completely resolved, as all remaining Gypsies by then had been subjected to compulsory labor service (*als sich sämtliche Z. im geschlossenen Arbeitseinsatz befinden*).⁷⁵ Actually police records from winter 1943 show that the statement reflected wishful thinking rather than established fact, for quite a few Gypsies, particularly in the southeastern districts, still exercised freedom of movement. Thus on June 22, 1942, the Valga Province Security Police filed a report on the Gypsies “who have not yet been confined to a concentration camp.”⁷⁶

Increased interest in the “solution of the Gypsy problem” on the part of German police officials in Estonia paralleled that of the Ostland Ministry in Berlin. On June 11, 1942, Dr. Otto Bräutigam, head of the General Politics Department of the Ministry of the Occupied Eastern Territories, for the first time asked Lohse for information on the Gypsies. Bräutigam was particularly concerned whether the Gypsies in the Baltic States were sedentary; he also asked which occupations they practiced, and whether the number of *Zigeunermischlinge* was substantial. Keeping in mind the establishment of a unified policy, he inquired about the Ostland Reich Commissioner’s opinion on whether the Gypsies were to be treated “like the Jews.” The reply of the Reich Commissariat Ostland implied that the sedentary Gypsies should be shot as well. This suggestion served as the basis for drafting (during July) of a decree on “the treatment of Gypsies in the Occupied Eastern Territories.” It was affirmed that, unlike foreign citizens who might be permitted to remain temporarily in the Ostland, the Gypsies should be treated as the Jews. This, as a rule, included the *Mischlinge*. No distinction was to be made between sedentary and itinerant Gypsies.⁷⁷

Even though the July draft did not materialize in a fully fledged decree until May

1943—and at that time with completely opposite provisions—it provides the context in which the mass murder of a significant proportion of the Estonian Gypsy population took place. The scarcity of documentary evidence does not allow us far-reaching conclusions regarding the origin of the order to kill the Gypsy inmates of the Harku concentration camp. However, one is inclined to see local initiative behind the decision. In the search for immediate culprits the figure of Heinrich Bergmann inevitably appears. Bergmann, who advocated the imprisonment of Gypsies on the grounds that they were a nuisance to the general populace, should have been the most interested in the disappearance of the Gypsies from the territory he was in charge of. On October 30, 1942, Ervin Viks, the head of the Tallinn-Harju Security Police, informed Bergmann of the execution of the Gypsies imprisoned at Harku three days before. The list of executed consisted of 243 names—91 men and 152 women.⁷⁸ In his desire to accelerate the pace of elimination of “socially undesirable elements” (at his 1960s trial he claimed that he had signed the execution order only “ex post facto”), Bergmann might have been prompted by both incoming communications from the Ostland Ministry, and participation in, or knowledge of, an infamous meeting between the Nazi Propaganda Minister Joseph Goebbels and Dr. Otto Thierack of the Justice Ministry.⁷⁹ The latter had proposed on September 14, 1942, that “Gypsies should be exterminated unconditionally.” It should be noted that in any case the October executions, and others that followed, could always have been explained as “necessary security measures”: the mere fact that Estonia was close to the front and therefore belonged to a combat area—actually it was under dual military and civilian control—made explanations optional.⁸⁰

The Winter 1943 Deportation

The year 1943 became fateful for the Estonian Gypsies. During the last week of January and the first week of February, all remaining Gypsies without discrimination were concentrated in Tallinn and its vicinity. The order had been issued by Sandberger as commander of the German Security Police in Estonia (Department A-V) on January 22, though we don't know whether on the basis of superior instructions or his own initiative. “Superior instructions” might mean Himmler's Auschwitz Decree of December 16, 1942, which led to the deportation of 23,000 Gypsies from the Reich and occupied countries, although several categories of Sinti and Roma, including “socially adjusted Gypsies who had regular jobs and permanent residences” were—at least officially—exempted. Even though Sandberger's order went into effect before the deportation instructions were issued (January 29), it is rather doubtful he was unaware of Himmler's order. It would seem that KdS-Estland deliberately misinterpreted Himmler's Decree in order to crack down on still-free sedentary Gypsies of the Commissariat General. The entire process, including identification and expropriation, is best documented for the southeastern district of Estonia, Põlva maakond.

During the first week of January the Põlva Criminal Police requested from the local administration information on the Gypsies living there. According to the statisti-

cal data provided by parish elders, as of January 13, 1943, there were altogether eighty-seven Gypsies (thirty-three men and fifty-four women) living in the province. The information included name, birthdate, place of residence, and occupation. The authorities were particularly interested in “work-fit” Gypsies. Usually one or several extended families made up the entire Gypsy population of a particular parish; the ratio of children to adults was one to two. Civil authorities claimed that all Gypsies then in the area were free, and that as of summer 1942 all work-capable adults (twenty-six) had been employed. The statistics reveal only an insignificant number of “asocials.” In six parishes in which the Gypsies were registered the great majority were employed in agriculture. Only a few individuals were listed as “vagabonds” and/or “beggars.”⁸¹

The next stage involved the expropriation of the Gypsies’ property. Only in rare cases did the number of requisitioned items exceed twenty or thirty. Virtually the entire operation was carried out in one day, February 7. Both Criminal Police officials and the “elder” of each respective parish were present. Customarily, the property—mostly harnesses and other equipment for horses—was left in the care of the latter, their final disposition to be decided subsequently. Sometimes, as for instance in the case with Evgenii Ivanov, illiterate owners could not even verify the compiled list.⁸² What was going to happen next to the Gypsies was clear from the outset: the very lists referred to the “deported” (*väljasaadetud*) Gypsies. The concentration of the Gypsies started on February 8 and continued through the next day, when forty-seven were taken to the Petseri prison. This measure was temporary though, and two days later an order followed to send the Petseri Gypsies to Tallinn, where they would be at the Security Police’s disposal. The transport departed Petseri at 5 a.m. on February 12.⁸³ With later additions, the total number of Gypsies deported from Petseri Province during the month of February amounted to seventy-three.⁸⁴

In the rest of Estonia a similar pattern was followed, except that the deportation was supposed to be accomplished by February 8. Not later than 10 a.m. on February 8, the police prefects had to inform the Sipo authorities in Tallinn of the numbers to be removed. In response the former would announce the exact timing for the deportations, by train (Rakvere, Petseri) or truck (Haapsalu; German, Hapsal) depending on the distance from the destination. The February 1943 *Zigeuneraktion* was the first and the only all-Estonian police operation aimed specifically at Gypsies. At the time it was not yet clear to which particular camp the incoming Gypsies would be transferred. Apparently, the Harku camp was not a destination. Eventually, all remaining Estonian Gypsies, with the exception of a group of Gypsy teenagers temporarily imprisoned in the Laitse colony, ended up either in Tallinn AEL or in Tallinn Central Prison. The most significant departure from all previous, selective, regulations was that the KdS-Estland Order of January 22 did not discriminate between sedentary and itinerant Gypsies. All of them, regardless if already in custody or still at liberty, were subjected to deportation.⁸⁵

Confusion ensued among some local police officials, who failed to understand

the order correctly. Thus the Rakvere Security Police inquired whether it was not a mistake on the part of the local district commissioner (*Gebietskommissar*) to remove forty Gypsies employed at the Kunda Cement Plant. Otherwise, the Rakvere Police assistant went on, because of the limited amount of manpower available, the plant might meet severe difficulties. A reply from the German Security Police (via the Narva office) was short and unequivocal—the train with interned Rakvere Gypsies was scheduled for 12:45 on February 8.⁸⁶ The deportation order included all working Gypsies. The representatives of a construction company in Püssi, near Rakvere, sent a complaint that the three Gypsy workers removed from the power station construction site had failed to return the overalls, gloves, and boots the employer provided them.⁸⁷

Except for sixty-nine deported from Haapsalu and seventy-three from Petseri, we do not know the total number of Gypsies concentrated in Tallinn. However, it is clear that the purge was complete. The question is what happened to those Gypsies transferred to Tallinn. Considering the indirect evidence available, it would seem that the majority of those fit to work survived the summer of 1943. Let us first check if, following Himmler's decree, any Estonian Gypsies had been sent to their death in Auschwitz. The main deportation of Gypsies from the territory of the Third Reich, the Protectorate, Austria, Hungary, Holland, and Belgium, took place in March–April 1943. However only small, irregular transports from east or north of Poland, including those from Grodno and Orel on November 28, ever arrived in Auschwitz.⁸⁸ Of all Gypsies registered at Auschwitz-Birkenau, only twenty-seven were from Russia (pre-1939 Soviet Union?), and twenty-two (all females) from Lithuania. It is true that among the Gypsy prisoners were listed thirty-year-old Hanna Gorbanowicz, a worker from Narva, and nine-year-old Edmund Böhmer, whose place of birth was indicated as Tallinn. The latter, it is said, arrived in the camp on February 15, while the entry for Gorbanowicz was made in June.⁸⁹ However, considering that we do not know the circumstances under which these individuals entered Auschwitz, both cases seem rather accidental. The same accidental element may apply to a man from Riga listed among the inmates of the Gypsy Camp. Altogether, some scholars have argued recently that Himmler's *Auschwitz-Erlass* applied to the German Gypsies only.⁹⁰ If not sent to die at Auschwitz, were the Estonian Gypsies murdered on the spot, immediately after arriving in Tallinn in February 1943? Apparently not. In order to trace the fate of the remaining Gypsies in Estonia, we need to return to the Ostland Ministry decree, originally proposed in July 1942 though not adopted until May 1943.

The Final Chapter

The decree finally adopted in May 1943 varied greatly from the previous summer's draft. This time it was proposed to keep the Gypsies in special camps instead of shooting them. The treatment of Gypsies was not to be on the same basis as that of the Jews (i.e., murder) anymore, but nevertheless from now on no distinction would be made between sedentary and itinerant Gypsies:⁹¹ one recalls in this regard the resentment of

managers at the removal of their Gypsy workers, as well as the emphasis the KdS-Estland put on counting the “work-fit” Gypsies. During the spring of 1943, the Gypsies had been used continuously as laborers.⁹² There seems to have been a desire to mobilize and centralize control over Gypsy labor in Estonia. Those unfit for work, however, were doomed.

We have very little information on who was still alive, and in most cases even their last journey remains an untold story. The fate of work-unfit Gypsies sent to Tallinn Central Prison is an exception. Their path ended in Jagala. Established in September 1942 by the German Sipo as a “work and education camp,” Jagala soon came to play its role in the Nazi plan to exterminate European Jewry. After having received during the month of September two *Judentransporte* from the Theresienstadt ghetto and from the Reich territory, the camp was to have been dissolved. Nearly all the Jews from the two echelons were liquidated upon arrival. Not more than fifty young women remained to sort the clothes of the victims or work in the fields.

It was still cold in early March 1943; the freshly dug pit in Kalevi-Liiva—the usual place for executions at the Jagala camp—was full of snow. After having received instructions from the Estonian Sipo in Tallinn, Alexander Laak, the commandant, notified his subordinates about the forthcoming execution of Gypsies. A group of Gypsies under escort of Sipo officials arrived earlier than scheduled: a small bus with some twenty-five Gypsy women and the elderly from Tallinn Central Prison, and on a truck about the same number of “five- and six-year-olds” from Vasalemma. The bus stopped in front of a pit already surrounded by guards from the Jagala camp—all of the personnel of the camp, including Commandant Laak, were Estonians. Ralf Gerrets, the deputy commandant, directed the arrivals toward the pit. After realizing what was going on, the women started crying hysterically. Insensitive to their cries, the guards drove them, one by one, to the pit, where Laak dispatched them with a single shot to the back of the head. The last one was an old woman without legs. Only after she had handed over to the guards—by then well drunk—her last money and a gold ring, was she carried, instead of being dragged, toward the mass grave. After the bus drove away, the truck pulled up. Gerrets threw the children, shivering in the cold and screaming in terror, onto the ground. Guards took two children each to the pit. This time—a departure from the usual practice—the children were not even ordered to remove their clothes, dirty and full of holes as they were. And another departure: Laak, whose seemingly limitless ability to kill was restrained only by the size of the pit he had to fill, could not bring himself to start shooting. The guard Ian Viik saved everyone’s face by opening fire first.⁹³

Indirect evidence that the Final Solution of the Gypsy Question had not been completed in Estonia before early October 1943 comes from Robert Ritter’s Institute for Criminal Biology.⁹⁴ In September 1943 Georg Wagner, a former staff member of that institute, went on a field trip to Lithuania, Latvia, Estonia, and Finland to investigate the Indo-Germanic roots of the Gypsies on behalf of Himmler.⁹⁵ Considering that

the Institute for Criminal Biology had been operating under the auspices of Himmler's security apparatus, one can suppose that Wagner had been supplied with information regarding the Gypsies of the Baltic region before departing on his trip. A "racial biologist" under the special patronage of Himmler likely would not have gone on this journey if the subjects of his study already had been destroyed. On September 24, 1943, the Office of Estonian Security Police in Haapsalu notified the Tallinn authorities about the arrest of Otto Koslovsky, a nineteen-year-old Gypsy. Koslovsky claimed to have been traveling all over Lääne as a casual farm laborer. He apparently had been jailed first in the Haapsalu prison, whence he was supposed to be transferred to Tallinn AEL and then to "an appropriate camp" (*edasisaatmiseks Tallinna TKLI teie korraldusse, tema paigutamiseks vastavasse laagrisse*).⁹⁶ Thus, as late as September and even October 1943 at least some Estonian Gypsies were still alive. In October, however, in response to a request from the Department of Labor and Social Welfare (Abteilung Arbeitspolitik und Sozialverwaltung) of the Ostland Ministry, High Commissioner for Estonia Karl Litzmann reported that all Gypsies had long been apprehended by the Security Police.⁹⁷

According to Friedrich Jeckeln's subsequent testimony, in mid-1943 Friedrich Panziger, commander of the Security Police and the Security Service Ostland from September 1943 to May 1944, conveyed to him (via Ernst Kaltenbrunner, Reinhard Heydrich's successor as head of the RSHA) Himmler's order regarding the liquidation of the Gypsy population (why Kaltenbrunner would have been delivering messages for Panziger is a mystery). Jeckeln sanctioned the order.⁹⁸ We do not know the date on which the remaining Estonian Gypsies were shot, but we do know the place, the town of Hargla, near Tallinn. Kenrick and Puxon mention Hargla, adding that those killed included the Mitrowski, Kozlowski, and Burkewiecz families.⁹⁹ All three names appear on the list of those deported from the district of Petseri in February 1943. By March 24, 1944, out of the original 2,867 inmates, only some sixty-one Jews and thirty-one Gypsies remained at the Tallinn concentration camp.¹⁰⁰

Among the last Gypsy victims on Estonian soil were the teenagers from the Laitse colony. Alfred Rosenberg's circular of December 16, 1943, equating sedentary Gypsies with the rest of the populace¹⁰¹ did not spare the lives of the colony's wards. In early spring 1944 (the exact date is unknown), the director of the institution was ordered by the Sipo to deliver the children. They were told that they were going to meet their parents, and they were issued holiday clothing. To maintain this fiction, the Sipo officials said they would return in a week, and those who were sick (perhaps fifteen, perhaps seventeen) were not sent (we don't know their subsequent fate). Upon request of the director regarding the clothing (or so interrogators were told), it turned out that the teenagers in Kalevi-Liiva had been executed as well.¹⁰²

How many Gypsies perished in Estonia? An estimate of 1,000 appeared for the first time in Kenrick and Puxon's study, based on the number of Estonian Gypsies prior to World War II.¹⁰³ Their figure later appeared in numerous popular publications.¹⁰⁴ It

should be noted that, because of the lack of documentary evidence, no figure can be anything more than an intelligent guess. Actually the calculation may be accomplished in two ways. First we can add all Gypsy victims listed in German documents to those mentioned by witnesses. This rather uncritical method would produce a conclusion that the entire Gypsy population of between 800 and 850 was exterminated. The second figure can be derived by deducting the latest known number of Gypsies still alive in 1944 (thirty-one in Tallinn and fifteen in Laitse) from the total Gypsy population on the eve of the war: about 850. That makes the percentage of survivors not higher than five or six—close to the estimate offered by Lutt and Viikberg.¹⁰⁵

What Estonians Thought

So far we have concentrated on official German policy regarding the Gypsies. Estonians' negative attitude toward the Gypsies did not disappear under wartime conditions, but on the contrary changed for the worse. We should nevertheless distinguish between popular opinion and the attitude of Estonian Police officials. The February 1943 deportation of Gypsies was met with indifference bordering on public approval. It is significant that the expulsion of Gypsies was one of the few questions on which the Estonian and Russian communities—though for different reasons—saw eye to eye. Among the rural population it was no secret that the Gypsies were going to be sent away. Vassily Gremov, the Sokolovo village elder, knew that Nikandr Kozlovsky's family had been taken to "some compulsory camp" (*kuhugi sundlaagrissa*).¹⁰⁶ Nevertheless, the local Russian and Estonian population by and large approved of the deportation. The local police reported that the people were positive about the removal of "such elements."¹⁰⁷

To many Estonians, the Gypsies seemed a nuisance—asocials who could not be tolerated at a time of mobilization against "the Bolshevik enemy." In the case of the Russians, however, other factors applied. The Russian minority, particularly in the eastern districts, had been living under constant fear that they might also be deported or subjected to compulsory labor. Nor were rumors that the Estonians wanted to get rid of their Russian neighbors without basis. Thus, in August 1941, Kasepää Parish Omakaitse undertook the deportation of the Russian population from the Lake Peipus area. It was not until the German authorities interfered that the villagers were allowed to return.¹⁰⁸ Russians' approval of Gypsy deportations may have reflected a psychological defense mechanism: if it sated the cruelty of the Germans and Estonians it might lessen the likelihood that the latter would turn on the Russians.

On the other hand, it should be re-emphasized that neither Estonians nor Russians hoped for the *extermination* of the Gypsies, but for their *elimination*.¹⁰⁹ The majority of Gypsies spoke Estonian. Unlike the Jews, the Gypsies eschewed politics and therefore did not seem pro-Soviet: even a vivid imagination could not transform the Judeo-Bolshevik into a "Gypsy-Bolshevik."¹¹⁰ As the Soviet partisan movement was nearly nonexistent in Estonia, no connection between Gypsies and pro-Soviet guerillas could be conjured up. Estonians might have been annoyed by Gypsies, but not to the

point of demanding their extermination. This may be fairly well illustrated by the following example. One of the members of Pärnu District Self-Defense was reprimanded for loudly conversing in the middle of the sidewalk with a group of Gypsies he was conveying. As a result, ordinary pedestrians had had to use the road. Needless to say, the guard himself was drunk.¹¹¹ But the point is that people got annoyed—that's all.

As a rule, in regular police reports, Gypsies were listed under the category "Russians, Other Foreigners, and Individuals of Alien Origin." Those rare cases when racial categorization was employed may be attributed to aping the Germans rather than local tradition. It is notorious, however, that Lohse's December 1941 decree was written on the letterhead of the Department of Health and People's Welfare (*Gesundheit und Volkspflege*), while the Estonian Security Police advised its local offices to report on the population's attitude toward the Jews and the Gypsies under the rubric "Race and Public Health" (*Rasse- und Volksgesundheit*).¹¹²

Those most imbued with racist hatred were primarily, but not only, officials of the Estonian Security Police. An official of the Estonian Sipo in Haapsalu, the Tartu University Law School graduate Roland Rand, had been active in the Haapsalu Punishment Planning Commission. On November 3, 1941, he signed a death sentence against Karl Ernst Siimann for alleged participation in the Shock Battalion movement (Soviet paramilitary units operating in the Baltics during the summer months of 1941). Across the file of the accused was written "Gypsy."¹¹³ The officers of the Estonian Sipo were often characterized as "openly antisemitic" and made no effort to disguise their anti-Jewish sentiment.¹¹⁴ Combined with persistent social stereotyping, sometimes racist hatred found its way into Gypsies' files of the Estonian Security Police, too. Thus in January 1943 (after a year-long investigation) the Punishment Planning Commission condemned to death Vilep Indus, a Gypsy from Narva. The statement read: "Gypsy by nationality. Taking into consideration that he has not hitherto acquired permanent residence and job, it is doubtful that he may become a useful citizen of the state in the future either."¹¹⁵

Conclusion

As we have seen, confusion in Berlin regarding the treatment of the Gypsies in Berlin affected the experience of the Gypsies in the Baltic states. Anti-Gypsy regulations issued either by the Reich Security Main Office or by the civil administration of the Ostland (in Berlin and Riga) were applied in Estonia. Unlike in Latvia and Lithuania, where the Einsatzgruppen were directly engaged in atrocities against the Gypsies, Sonderkommando 1a, assigned to Estonia, took a rather wait-and-see attitude. No "Final Solution of the Gypsy Question" was among the priorities of the German Security Police there. By the same token, the RSHA authorities in Berlin did not press to hasten completion of this murderous task, as distinct from what was planned for Jews. This lack of direction left the Gypsies—particularly the sedentary Gypsies, who were the majority in Estonia and who were needed as slave laborers—an illusory chance for sur-

vival. Given this, the fate of individual Gypsies depended on the whim of local German authorities. As regards the extermination of the Gypsies, Kripo Chief Heinrich Bergman played by far the most crucial role in the decision-making process. Eventually, the Estonian Gypsies lost the right to remain alive: of their 850-strong community, virtually no one survived the war.

Acknowledgments

The archival research for this article was made possible through grants from the Center for German and European Studies at Brandeis University and the Department of Near Eastern and Judaic Studies at Brandeis University. I am grateful to Alexander Gribanov, Andres Kasekamp, Guenter Lewy, the late Sybil Milton, and particularly to Michael Zimmermann for their valuable comments on an initial draft.

Notes

1. Vanya Kochanovski, "Some Notes on the Gypsies of Latvia by One of the Survivors" in *Journal of the Gypsy Lore Society* 25, No. 3–4, July–October 1946, pp. 112–16; Margers Vestermanis, "Ciganu genocids vacu okupacija Latvija (1941–1945)" in *Latvijas Vesture* 4, 1993, pp. 37–40; Janis Nielands, "Lo Stermimo Dei Roma in Lettonia" in *Lacio Drom* 1, 1995.
2. Vytautas Toleikis is doing archival research on the extermination of the Gypsies in Lithuania. Ausra Simoniukstyte is preparing to defend her dissertation in the field of social anthropology. Simoniukstyte's research is based on interviews with Romani survivors.
3. Roman Lutt, Lembit Vaba, and Jüri Viikberg, "Mustlased" in *Eesti Rahvaste Raamat: Rahvusvähemused, -rihmad ja -killud / The Book of Estonian Nationalities: National Minorities and Ethnic Groups: From the Largest to the Smallest* (Tallinn: Eesti Entsüklopeedia Kirjastus, 1999), pp. 334–39.
4. Paul Ariste, "Supplementary Review (Concerning the Baltic Gypsies and Their Dialects)" in *Journal of the Gypsy Lore Society* 43:3 (July 1964), p. 59.
5. Cited by Angus Fraser, *The Gypsies* (Oxford, MA: Blackwell, 1992), p. 123.
6. David M. Crowe, *A History of the Gypsies of Eastern Europe and Russia* (New York: St. Martin's, 1994), pp. 156, 170.
7. Ariste, "Supplementary Review," pp. 59, 60; Ariste, "Mida on Teada Mustlastest ja Nende Keelest?" / What Do We Know About Gypsies and Their Language? in *Küsimused ja Vastused* 6 (1966), pp. 36–37.
8. Paul Ariste, "Mustlastest" / On Gypsies in *Eesti Loodus* 1 (1959), pp. 24–25.
9. Ariste, "Mustlastest," pp. 26–27. List of property of the Gypsies Nikolai Koslovsky, Nikandr Koslovsky, and Konstantin Ivanov, February 7, 1943, Estonian State Archives (ERA), R-63/1/8, pp. 110, 112, 113. According to the list, Ivanov owned altogether thirteen items: a horse, two carriages, two horse collars, two pairs of hip straps, a saddle, two reins, and three "gods," most likely Christian figurines.
10. Lutt, Vaba, and Viikberg, "Mustlased," p. 335. The original source is not indicated.

11. Andrew Ezergailis, *The Holocaust in Latvia, 1941–1944: The Missing Center* (Riga: Historical Institute of Latvia, in association with the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, 1996), pp. 200f.
12. RKO to RMO, July 2, 1942, Bundesarchiv (BA) (Dahchwitz-Hoppegarten), R-90/147, pp. 716–18. The absence of exact numbers of Gypsies in Estonia and Belorussia implied that the figures were insignificant. In any event, that the main Gypsy residence area in the Ostland—the Reichskommissar's office reported—was in Courland (German Kurland; Latvian Kurzeme).
13. On the conception of *sakslane* see Gershon Shafir, *Immigrants and Nationalists: Ethnic Conflicts and Accommodation in Catalonia, the Basque Country, Latvia, and Estonia* (State University of New York Press, 1995), p. 132; Aleksander Loit, "Nation-Building in the Baltic Countries (1850–1918)" in Justo G. Beramendi et al., *Nationalism in Europe: Past and Present* (Universidade de Santiago de Compostela, 1994), p. 493.
14. Daniel Strauss, "Anti-Gypsyism in German Society and Literature"; Wilhelm Sehns, "On the Demonizing of Jews and Gypsies in Fairy Tales" in Susan Tebbutt, *Sinti and Roma: Gypsies in German-Speaking Society and Literature* (New York, Oxford: Berghahn Books, 1998), pp. 82–83, 105.
15. Paul Ariste, "Juut eesti rahvasuus," in *Eesti Kirjandus* 1, 3, 4 (1932), pp. 9, 132, 220–21, 227.
16. Terje Anepaio, *Laat see Imarahva pulm* (Tartu: Ajaloo Instituut/Studia Ethnologica 2, 1996), pp. 114–20.
17. Kochanowski, "Some Notes," p. 113.
18. David Crowe and John Kolsti, eds., *The Gypsies of Eastern Europe* (Armonk, NY: M. E. Sharpe, 1991), p. 154.
19. Files for Salmon Epstein and Leib Lipelis in Eugenia Gurin-Loov, *Eesti juutide katastroof 1941 / Holocaust of the Estonian Jews, 1941* (Tallinn: Estonian Jewish Community, 1994), pp. 115, 122.
20. Valga Province Self Defense (*Omakaitse*), Activity Survey, January 30, 1943, ERA, R-358/1/19, p. 20.
21. Philip Friedman, "The Extermination of the Gypsies: Nazi Genocide of an Aryan People" in *Roads to Extinction: Essays on the Holocaust* (New York; Philadelphia: Conference on Jewish Social Studies and the Jewish Publication Society, 1980 <1951>), pp. 381–86; Dora E. Yates, "Hitler and the Gypsies: The Fate of Europe's Oldest Aryans," in Jack Nusan Porter, ed., *Genocide and Human Rights. A Global Anthology* (Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 1982), p. 160; Ian Hancock, *The Pariah Syndrome: An Account of Gypsy Slavery and Persecution* (Ann Arbor: Karoma, 1987), p. 65.
22. Sybil Milton, "The Context of the Holocaust" in *German Studies Review* 13:2 (May 1990), pp. 271, 272, 276; Michael Burleigh and Wolfgang Ippermann, *The Racial State: Germany, 1933–1945* (Cambridge University Press, 1991), pp. 119, 126, 167, 180; Gabrielle Tyrnauer, "The Fate of the Gypsies in the Holocaust," in *Genocide: A Critical Bibliographical Review*, vol. 3, *The Widening Circle of Genocide*, Israel W. Charny, ed. (New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction Publishers, 1994), pp. 217–28.

23. Leo Lucassen, “‘Harmful Tramps’: Police Professionalization and Gypsies in Germany, 1700–1945,” in Leo Lucass et al., eds., *Gypsies and Other Itinerant Groups: A Socio-Historical Approach* (University of Amsterdam, 1998), pp. 91, 92. Lucassen differentiates between five consecutive stages in governmental policy: categorization; emergence of a negative image; formation of a negative-group characterization; labeling; and stigmatization. Wolfgang Ayass, “‘Asoziale’ im Nationalsozialismus (Stuttgart: Klett-Cotta, 1995), pp. 196–97; Guenter Lewy, *The Nazi Persecution of the Gypsies* (Oxford University Press, 2000), pp. 16, 36, 128, 195, 219.
24. Michael Zimmermann, “Zigeunerpolitik im Stalinismus, im ‘realen Sozialismus’ und unter dem Nationalsozialismus: Ein Vergleich,” in Dittmar Dahlmann and Gerhard Hirschfeld, eds., *Lager, Zwangsarbeit, Vertreibung und Deportation: Dimensionen der Massenverbrechen in der Sowjetunion und in Deutschland 1933 bis 1945* (Essen: Klartext, 1999), p. 116.
25. Alaina M. Lemon, *Between Two Fires: Gypsy Performance and Romany Memory from Pushkin to Postsocialism* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2000), pp. 169–78; Sheila Fitzpatrick, *Everyday Stalinism. Ordinary Life in Extraordinary Times: Soviet Russia in the 1930s* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), pp. 126–27; Paul M. Hagenloh, “‘Socially Harmful Elements’ and the Great Terror,” in Sheila Fitzpatrick, ed., *Stalinism: New Directions* (London; New York: Routledge, 2000), pp. 287, 289, 291, 298–301.
26. Lewy, *The Nazi Persecution of the Gypsies*, pp. 24–26, 35, 36, 52–55.
27. Decree on the Establishment of the NKVD, February 20, 1934; and NKVD Special Board Regulations, October 28, 1934, in J. Arch Getty and Oleg Naumov, eds., *The Road to Terror: Stalin and the Self-Destruction of the Bolsheviks, 1932–1939* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1995), pp. 121–24.
28. Lewy, *The Nazi Persecution of the Gypsies*, pp. 26–27, 53. For a detailed account on the Kripo see, Patrick Wagner, *Volksgemeinschaft ohne Verbrecher: Konzeptionen und Praxis der Kriminalpolizei in der Zeit der Weimarer Republik und des Nationalsozialismus* (Hamburg: Christians, 1996).
29. Ruth Bettina Birn, “Collaboration with Nazi Germany in Eastern Europe: The Case of the Estonian Security Police,” *Contemporary European History* 10:2 (2001), pp. 197–98.
30. It became clear subsequently that much of Ohlendorf’s testimony at Nuremberg had been false. See Ralf Ogorreck, *Die Einsatzgruppen und die “Genesis der Endlösung”* (Berlin: Metropol, 1996), pp. 13, 47–56, 69–62.
31. Lewy, *The Nazi Persecution of the Gypsies*, pp. 117, 118. Heydrich’s communication, also known as the Shooting Order, listed several categories of people who, with certain reservations, should be executed. The Gypsies were not specifically mentioned; although the category of “other radical elements (saboteurs, propagandists, snipers, assassins, instigators, etc.)” did indeed allow a broader interpretation.
32. Donald Kenrick and Grattan Puxon, *The Destiny of Europe’s Gypsies* (London: Sussex University Press, 1972), pp. 143, 144; Kenrick, *Historical Dictionary of the Gypsies (Romanies)* (Lanham, MD: Scarecrow Press, 1998), p. 76. The mention of “killing of all seized racially and politically undesirable elements” (*die Tötung aller erfassten rassisch und politisch unerwünschten Elementen*) comes, again, from the affidavit of Otto Ohlendorf.

33. Friedman, "The Extermination of the Gypsies," p. 365; Henry R. Huttenbach, "The Nazi Genocide of the Gypsies in Germany and Eastern Europe" in *The Gypsies of Eastern Europe*, p. 42; Burleigh and Wippermann, *The Racial State*, p. 125; Tynauer, "The Fate of the Gypsies in the Holocaust," p. 230; Romani Rose, ed., *Den Rauch hatten wir täglich vor Augen: Der nationalsozialistische Völkermord an den Sinti und Roma* (Heidelberg: Dokumentations- und Kulturzentrum Deutscher Sinti und Roma, 1999), pp. 178–79, 361; Zimmermann, "Die nationalsozialistische Lösung der Zigeunerfrage," in Ulrich Hebert, ed., *Nationalsozialistische Vernichtungspolitik 1939–1945: Neue Forschungen und Kontroversen* (Frankfurt am Main: Fischer, 1998), p. 250.
34. Crowe, *A History of the Gypsies of Eastern Europe and Russia*, p. 182.
35. Helmut Krausnick, *Hitlers Einsatzgruppen: Die Truppe des Weltanschauungskrieges 1938–1942* (Frankfurt am Main: Fischer, 1998), pp. 136–37.
36. Einsatzbefehl No. 20 of the Chief of the Security Police and the Security Service, July 4, 1942, in *Die Einsatzgruppen in der besetzten Sowjetunion 1941/4: Die Tätigkeits- und Lageberichten des Chefs der Sicherheitspolizei und des SD*, Peter Klein, ed. (Berlin: Hentrich, 1997), p. 361.
37. In the case of Estonia, only one witness had ever mentioned Gypsies having been executed on pretext of partisan activities. Although considering the scope of the partisan movement in Pskov area, the Sipo was particularly concerned about uprooting the Roma population there. At one point, a Sonderkommando was dispatched from Tallinn with the particular mission of hunting the Gypsies in the vicinity of Pskov. Kurovskii, September 19, 1960, United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, USHMM/RG-06.026. (original documents related to the Mere-Gerrets-Viik trial held in Tallinn, in 1960–61, are to be found in Estonian State Archives—Party Archives branch—ERA PA, Collection 129, boxes 63 through 70).
38. Jan Tints, October 26, 1960; Juhan Jüriste, November 25, 1960, and February 21, 1961; Leonhard Ivask, December 23, 1960; Leidu Ohu, December 24, 1960; Ingrid Aksel, January 9, 1961; Hans Laats, February 22, 1961; Bruno Eugen Pletenberg, March 14, 1961; Alexander Kroon, March 15, 1961; Voldemar Simo, March 22, 1961; Elfrida Rein, July 12, 1961, USHMM/RG.06.026.11; RG-06.026.12. The camp inmates emphasize that the criterion for the arrest of Jews and Gypsies was their racial origin.
39. Juhan Jüriste, December 13, 1960; Woldemar Oppar, January 26, 1961; Hans Laats, February 27, 1961; Pavel Migachev, March 26, 1961 USHMM, RG-06.026.11.
40. Anton Lihtas, October 29, 1960; Endla Taska, May 5, 1961, USHMM, RG-06.026.11.
41. Tartu Prefecture to Gendarmerie, Kripo and Sipo Commissars, January 27, 1942, ERA, R-60/1/29, p. 100. Although the prefect prohibited begging and roaming, police commissars were advised not to overdo it by assigning all Gypsies—per harsher German directives—to concentration camps. Otherwise, stressed the Prefect, good workers might be arrested.
42. Einsatzgruppen Activity and Situation Report No. 5, September 15–30, 1941, in *Die Einsatzgruppen in der besetzten Sowjetunion*, p. 202; Operational Situation Report USSR No. 88, September 19, 1941, in Yitzhak Arad et al., eds., *The Einsatzgruppen Reports: Selections from the Dispatches of the Nazi Death Squads' Campaign Against the Jews, July 1941–January 1943* (New York: Holocaust Library, 1989), p. 139.

43. Prefect of Viljandi Security Police to Police Commissars, September 19, 1941, ERA, R-62/1/1, p. 7.
44. Sillandi, September 14, 1960, USHMM, RG.006.026.12. (The figure of 200 in the testimony seems too high. According to another source the shooting took place in spring 1942, Viljandi District KGB to the Head of Estonian KGB in Tallinn, February 16, 1965, USHMM, RG.006.026.)
45. Commandant of Pärnu concentration camp to the Head of Pärnu Security Police, September 15-October 9, 1941, ERA, R-932/1/1, pp. 8, 16, 34, 57, 67. On the Gypsy inmates in Pärnu “prison” see also testimony of Atka, October 10, 1960, USHMM, RG-06.026. The Pärnu Gypsies’ ultimate fate, due to scarcity of evidential sources, remains unknown.
46. In accordance with the order, the Wehrmacht was supposed to hand over all Jews and Gypsies in the operational area to the Einsatzgruppen. On the other hand the order emphasized that the armed forces should refrain from participating in the extermination of these groups; Security Division No. 281 to Field Commandant Office No. 822, March 24, 1943, in Wolfgang Benz et al., eds., *Einsatz im Reichskommissariat Ostland: Dokumente zum Völkermord im Baltikum und in Weissrussland 1941–1944* (Berlin: Metropol, 1998), p. 231. There is reference in the document to the corresponding order of November 21, 1941. Sandberger—who claimed at Nuremberg that he had received the *Führerbefehl* to kill the Gypsies along with the Jews and Soviet functionaries while he was in Pretzch—swore that he had not been aware of the above-mentioned order. At his trial he denied any responsibility of the Sipo for killing the Estonian Gypsies: United States National Archives and Records Administration (NARA), United States of America v. Otto Ohlendorf, et al. (Case IX), microfilm publication M895, rolls 15 and 16 (Transcript of Proceedings, Sandberger, November 13 and 14, 1947, pp. 2361, 2434–35).
47. Crowe, *A History of the Gypsies*, p. 185.
48. Lewy, *The Nazi Persecution of the Gypsies*, p. 120.
49. *Die Einsatzgruppen*, p. 41.
50. RkO Lohse to HSSPF Jeckeln, December 24, 1941, BA (Dahlwitz-Hoppegarten), R-90/147, p. 714.
51. Lewy, *The Nazi Persecution of the Gypsies*, pp. 124–25.
52. Michael Zimmermann, *Rassenu-topie und Genozid: Die nationalsozialistische “Lösung der Zigeunerfrage”* (Hamburg: Christians, 1996), pp. 270, 271.
53. BdO-Latvia (?) to SSPF-Latvia, March 11, 1942, in *Einsatz im “Reichskommissariat Ostland,”* p. 98. Zimmermann argues that the document in question was issued by the KdS and not BdO-Latvia.
54. Gendarmerie and District Chief to Tallinn, Haapsalu, Paide, and Saaremaa prefects, January 23, 1942, USHMM, RG-06.026.12. The registration results were to be reported by February 1, 1942.
55. KdS-Estland, Tartu office to Viljandi, Valga, Võru, Paide, and Pärnu Sipo, February 14, 1942, USHMM, RG-06.025.12.
56. Estonian Security Police in Petseri, List of Gypsies in the Province of Petseri, no date, ERA, R-63/1/8, pp. 94, 94r. Out of fifty-six Gypsies ten were listed as “vagabonds” and ten as “beggars.”

57. Correspondence between Estonian Security Police in Narva and SK 1a, Narva branch, November 11 and December 3, 1941, ERA, R-59/1/40, pp. 50, 53. The extensive round-up was carried out by a force of the local Sipo on November 1 and 2. Some 260 of those arrested were shortly thereafter released: Ereignismeldung UdSSR No. 150, January 2, 1941, BA, R-58/219, p. 366. Despite the lack of incriminating evidence, the Russians were detained as “subversive to the existing state order” (*need venelased kes praegusele riigikorrale vaenulikud, kuid konkreetset süüitõendid puuduvad*).
58. The Narva Prefecture of the Estonian Security Police ranked fourth after Tallinn-Harju, Tartu, and Pärnu, and included branches in Jõhvi (Jewe), Kiviõli, and Rakvere (Wesenberg).
59. Estonian Security Police in Narva, Reports on activities, December 28, 1941–April 18, 1942, ERA, R-59/1/88, pp. 2, 165, 258, 290, 318.
60. Isup, April 5, 1945; Ant, September 19, 1960; Sammalkivi, October 3, 1960; Jehe, October 10, 1960; Orissaar, October 11, 1960, USHMM, RG-06.026.12.
61. The authority of the Inspector of Concentration Camps did not extend over Harku. In that respect, Harku belonged to the same category of concentration camps as Murru in Estonia, and Liepāja, Salaspils, and Frauenburg in Latvia. Gudrun Schwarz, *Die nationalsozialistischen Kamp* (Frankfurt am Main: Fischer, 1997), p. 172.
62. Birn, “Collaboration With Nazi Germany,” p. 196. The other two big round-ups were carried out in Tallinn on 17 and 25 January. While the former aimed at black marketeers, the latter targeted individuals on the Sipo wanted list, Ereignismeldung UdSSR, Nos. 160, 161, January 26 and 28, 1942, BA, R-58/220, pp. 234, 243.
63. Estonian Security Police in Tallinn, Second Precinct weekly reports, February 15–28, 1942, ERA, R-64/1/64, pp. 72, 78.
64. Head of Harku Camp to the Commander of Estonian Security Police, July 18, 1942, ERA, R-64/1/70, pp. 7, 7r; Estonian Security Police in Tallinn-Harju, Activity Report through July 1, 1942, ERA, R-64/1/70, p. 109. The practice of internment was employed against the Jews, too, but for unlimited duration.
65. Kurol, October 19, 1960; Georgii Rents, January 9, 1961, USHMM, RG-06.026.12. Laitse was defined as a KZ-type detention facility. According to Hans-Heinrich Wilhelm, by mid-October 1941, the Laitse colony was as yet unsettled: *Die Einsatzgruppe A, der Sicherheitspolizei und das SD* (Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang, 1996), pp. 217f.
66. Circular of the Estonian Security Police, June 11, 1942, ERA, R-64/1/47, pp. 82–84.
67. Toone, September 28, 1960; Ranne, March 7, 1961, USHMM, RG-06.026.
68. Until September 23, 1941, when the office of the Commander of the Security Police and the Security Service for the General District of Estonia (KdS-Estland) was introduced, its functions remained in the hands of the leader of Sonderkommando 1a. It was basically a structural change; SS-Sturmbannführer Dr. Martin Sandberger retained his position as the KdS-Estland through September 1943, when he was transferred to Verona, Italy.
69. For the structure of the Estonian Security Police see ERA, R-64/1/32, p. 19, and R-819/1/1, p. 36.

70. Bergmann's presentation, May 27, 1942, ERA, R-819/1/11, pp. 23–25. The document is reproduced in part in *Einsatz im Reichskommissariat Ostland*, but the archival reference is incorrect. Surprisingly, Bergmann, who proposed such harsh measures against the asocials, served at the same time as the Head of Referat I-B—Education and Training—of the German Security Police. On a personal level, the difference between Sandberger and Bergmann was obvious. While the latter praised the Estonians' contribution in the building of "the new Europe," the Head of Kripo ranked Estonians low, considering them mere manpower (ERA, R-64/1/21, p. 65).

71. Circular of the Estonian Security Police, July 22, 1942, ERA, R-64/1/740, pp. 249r, 250.

72. Labor and Education Camps Regulations, no date, ERA, R-64/1/46, p. 55. One wonders why it took so long to introduce the system in Estonia. The purpose of such camps was substantiated in Himmler's corresponding decree of May 28, 1941. A year's delay might have been caused by the very nature of the decree. Considering the ever-growing number of slave laborers in the Reich, the idea was to fight sabotage. At the same time, Himmler truly believed in the educational mission of AEL. In any event, the duration of imprisonment in AEL was not to exceed fifty-six days. The establishment of and commitment to the camps were entrusted solely to the Chief of Sipo, BA, R-58/1027, pp. 142–50. Concentration camps such as that in Tartu were oriented toward extermination rather than education. For general information on AEL, see Wolfgang Franz Werner, "Die Arbeitserziehungslager als Mittel nationalsozialistischer 'Sozialpolitik' gegen deutsche Arbeiter" in W. Długoborski, ed., *Zweiter Weltkrieg und sozialer Wandel* (Göttingen: Vanderhoeck & Ruprecht, 1981) and Gabriele Lofti, *KZ der Gestapo: Arbeitserziehungslager im Dritten Reich* (Stuttgart, Munich: Deutsche Verlags-Anstalt, 2000).

73. The Head of the Estonian Security Police to the Head of B-IV Department, July 27, 1943, ERA, R-60/1/4, pp. 41, 41r.

74. Decree on Preventive Police Custody, December 14, 1937; Reich Criminal Police Office to the Reich Commissioner for the Saar District, April 4, 1938; form for assignment to police custody, July 28, 1938, ERA, R-59/1/3. The pattern followed the one already experienced in occupied Czechoslovakia, Poland, Alsace-Lorraine, and the Netherlands. Preparations for the introduction of a sweeping "preventive anti-crime campaign" (*vorbeugende Verbrechensbekämpfung*) started as early as June 1941. It was recommended to use the same system of card-files on professional and habitual criminals that already had been introduced in the Reich. A particularly alarming situation regarding labor discipline was noted in Narva. However, after an agreement between the Employment Office and the Sipo on the introduction of warnings into workers' personal files, the situation improved: *Meldungen von den besetzten Ostgebiete*, No. 6, Juni 5, 1942, and No. 15, August 7, 1942, BA, R-58/697, p. 113; and R-58/698, p. 126.

75. Suggestions regarding Bergmann's presentation of May 27, 1942, no date, ERA, R-819/1/1, p. 28. First page missing in original.

76. Estonian Security Police, Correspondence log, 1942, ERA, R-64/1/740, pp. 151r, 152.

77. Zimmermann, *Rassenutopie*, pp. 273, 274; idem., *Verfolgt, vertrieben, vernichtet: Die nationalsozialistische Vernichtungspolitik gegen Sinti und Roma* (Essen: Klartext, 1989), p. 55.

78. Viks to Bergmann, October 27, 1942, ERA, R-64/1/101, pp. 404–6. Copy available at both the Institute of Contemporary History in Munich (Institut für Zeitgeschichte München, Fb. 104/2), and the Yad Vashem Archives (YVA, 068/558); the document is also reproduced in both

Romani Rose, ed., *Der nationalsozialistische Völkermord an der Sinti und Roma* (Heidelberg: Dokumentations- und Kulturzentrum Deutscher Sinti und Roma, 1995) p. 116 (the place of execution is mistakenly referred to as the Narva camp); and idem, *Der Rauch hatten wir täglich von Augen*, p. 185. The list of the executed was preceded by four separate lists of Gypsy inmates of the Harku camp, ERA, R-64/1/101, pp. 400–3. One should note the difference in numbers for July and October 1942: the October number was eighty-five less than that of July.

79. During the KGB trials (the major trials took place in 1961/62 in Tartu and Tallinn) quite a few witnesses pointed out Heinrich Bergmann as the key-figure behind the persecution of the Gypsies. Bergmann's (b. 1902) police career began in his hometown of Kassel in 1933. A member of the NSDAP from 1937, in May 1940 Bergmann completed a nine-month training course at the RSHA School in Berlin-Charlottenburg. His subsequent posting as Commissar of Criminal Police in Stuttgart was considered sufficiently responsible to appoint him KdS-Estland in December 1941. Bergmann became Chief of Dept. V (Kripo) there on January 11, 1942. Except for brief assignments as Head of Teilkommando-Pskov and of one of the Estonian Police battalions, Bergmann remained in charge of Estonia, and he was among the last German Sipo officials to withdraw from Estonia in fall 1944. At the war's end Bergmann—by then an Abwehr officer—found himself in Innsbruck. In 1955 Bergmann was able to resume his career in the German Criminal Police. Bergmann's testimony at Hessisches Landeskriminalamt, Wiesbaden, June 1, 1960, Yad Vashem Archives, TR-10/1196, pp. 303–306.

80. RMO, Dept. III to Dept I (Politics), October 23, 1943, BA (Dahlwitz-Hoppegarten), R-90/147, p. 754.

81. Lists of Gypsies residing in the Province of Petseri, January 13–20, 1943, ERA, R-68/1/8, pp. 93–98, 102–3, 105–7.

82. Lists of Gypsies' belongings, February 7, 1943, ERA, R-68/1/8, pp. 110–13, 116, 120–21.

83. Correspondence between Estonian Security Police in Petseri and the Head of Petseri prison, February 11, 12, 1943, ERA, R-63/1/8, pp. 123, 125, 126. The deportees were provided with food for five days.

84. Estonian Security Police in Petseri, Report on Population's Mood, February 1943, ERA, R-64/1/14, p. 58.

85. Circular of KdS-Estland, January 22, 1943, ERA, R-59/1/70, pp. 2, 2r.

86. Correspondence between Estonian Security Police in Rakvere and Narva, February 2 and 9, 1943, ERA, R-59/1/70, pp. 4–7.

87. P. Teder and B. Pratkan Construction Company to Estonian Security Police in Rakvere, February 15, 1943, ERA, R-59/1/70, pp. 8, 8r.

88. Danuta Czech, *Auschwitz Chronicle, 1939–1945* (New York: Henry Holt, 1990), passim. Minor deportations involving Gypsies from Germany, Austria, Bohemia/Moravia, the Netherlands, Belgium, and Northern France, lasted through June 1944 (Zimmermann, *Rassenutopie*, pp. 291–92, 305–15, 329–30).

89. State Museum of Auschwitz-Birkenau, *Memorial Book: The Gypsies of Auschwitz-Birkenau* (Munich: K. G. Saur, 1993), vols. 2 and 3, pp. 580–81, 936–37, 1469–71.

90. Zimmermann, "Zigeunerpolitik," p. 127; Zimmermann, *Die nationalsozialistische "Lösung"*, p. 254; Yehuda Bauer, "The Holocaust and Comparative Genocide," paper presented at

the international conference “The Impact of the Holocaust on Contemporary Society” at Brandeis University, March 26–29, 2000.

91. RMO Rosenberg to GK-Reval, -Riga, -Kauen, and -Minsk, May 23, 1943, BA (Dahchwitz-Hoppegarten), R-90/147, p. 723.

92. Thus on April 9, 1943, the commandant of the Tallinn concentration camp was instructed by the Security Police to employ in peat-cutting neither Gypsy nor Jewish prisoners; the rationale: the job required only assiduous workers. ERA, R-294/1/10, p. 1r.

93. Madar, July 11, 1960; Mälik, September 6 and December 8, 1960, and March 7, 1961; Palm, September 13, 1960; Udam, November 30, 1960; Ralf Gerrets, June 14, 16, and 28, July 29, September 16 and 23, and October 27, 1960; Viik, July 22, September 23, 1960 and January 6, 1961; confrontation between Gerrets and Viik, July 23, 1960; Laak-Gerrets-Viik trial proceedings, March 6, 1961; USHMM, RG-06.026.12.

94. The Research Institute, headed by physician Robert Ritter, was established in 1941. As regards the Gypsies, the functions of the Institute for Criminal Biology to some degree overlapped with those of the Research Institute for Racial Hygiene and Population Biology, created in 1936. The latter provided criteria for determining who was to be counted as Gypsies. Both institutions worked in close cooperation with the Reich Criminal Police Office (RKPA, Office V of the RSHA).

95. Lewy, *The Nazi Persecution of the Gypsies*, p. 139. Although originally a member of Ritter’s staff, in September 1943 Wagner joined the SS Ahnenerbe Office. For the personality of Georg Wagner see Joachim S. Hohmann, *Robert Ritter und die Erben der Kriminalbiologie: ‘Zigeunersforschung’ im Nationalsozialismus und in Westdeutschland im Zeichen des Rassismus* (Frankfurt: Peter Lang, 1991), pp. 281–86.

96. Estonian Security Police in Haapsalu to the Head of Department B-IV, September 24, 1943, ERA, R-64/1/189, p. 150.

97. RMO, Dept. III to Dept. I (Politics), October 23, 1943, BA (Dahchwitz-Hoppegarten), R-90/147, p. 754. We should not put too much trust in the words “for some time” (*seit längeren*).

98. Friedrich Jeckeln trial proceedings, December 22, 1945, and January 27, 1946, USHMM, RG-06.025.01 (original documents on Riga trial in 1945/46 reside in Central Archives of the Federal Security Service of the Russian Federation, Collection N-18313); USHMM, RG-06.026.12. Jeckeln corroborated the central role of the Sipo in the extermination of the Gypsies. According to the defendant, the Latvian Gypsies were locked in Salaspils camp and thereafter executed, while Lithuanian Gypsies usually were shot on the spot. It seems that, apparently without deliberately trying to mislead the court, Jeckeln lumped several consecutive orders into one. For him, limitation of freedom of movement, concentration, and eventually extermination appear as a chain of events. Leaving aside the question of actors’ personal interest in interpreting Himmler’s order in a radical way (in citing superior orders Jeckeln obviously was trying to justify himself), it is nevertheless clear that the muddle created by conflicting regulations regarding the “Gypsy Question” did not exclude murdering Gypsies either. Himmler’s particular order to which Jeckeln referred may be attributed to some later date in fall 1943, when Panziger occupied the position of BdS Ostland (September 4) and therefore might have had authority to communicate with the HSSPF directly.

99. Kenrick and Puxon, *Gypsies under the Swastika* (University of Hertfordshire Press, 1995), p. 94; idem., *The Destiny of Europe’s Gypsies*, pp. 142, 229f.

100. Commandant of Tallinn AEL to the Sipo, Dept. B-II, March 1944, ERA, R-294/1/8, p. 25.

101. RMO to GK-Riga, Reval, Kauen, December 16, 1943, Latvian State Historical Archives (LVVA), P-69/1a/6, pp. 249–51. In his circular Rosenberg reiterated the Nazi Party concept of Gypsies as an “asocial element.” In the case of the Latvian Gypsies—argued the Reich Commissioner for the Ostland—their Indian ancestry was significantly damaged by Oriental, Mongoloid, and primitive East European crossbreeding.

102. Gerrets, October 27, 1960; Andrei Kurol, October 19, 1960; Georgii Rents, January 9, 1961; Laak-Geerets-Viik trial proceedings, March 7, 1961; USHMM, RG-06.026.11 and RG-06.026.12. Rents and Kurol differ in their testimonies as to when the Gypsy teenagers were shot. Rents dated the removal of Gypsies from Laitse as fall 1942; Kurol is self-contradictory: once he argued that the Gypsies had been in Laitse for one and a half years, but then, however, he insisted they were sent away in spring 1944. The latter date seems more plausible; the Germans might simply have forgotten about the existence of under-age Gypsies outside the KZ-system. Kurol also did not mention any young Gypsies surviving the war at Laitse.

103. Kenrick and Puxon, *The Destiny of Europe's Gypsies*, p. 183.

104. Martin Gilbert, *The Holocaust: A Record of the Destruction of Jewish Life in Europe during the Dark Years of Nazi Rule* (London: Board of Deputies of British Jews, 1978), p. 22; idem, *The Holocaust: Maps and Photographs* (New York: Braun Center for Holocaust Studies, 1992), p. 22; Yehuda Bauer, *A History of the Holocaust* (Danbury, CT: Franklin Watts, 1982), p. 202; Richard Overy, *The Penguin Historical Atlas of the Third Reich* (London: Penguin 1996), p. 92; Kenrick, *Historical Dictionary of the Gypsies*, p. 77.

105. Lutt, Vaba, and Viikberg, “Mustlased,” p. 335. There is no evidence whatsoever that Estonian Gypsies ever were deported to Polish or German labor camps as the authors argue. On the other hand nothing corroborates testimony (witness Kova, December 7, 1960, and March 7, 1961, USHMM, RG-06.026.12) at the Laak-Gerrets-Viik trial regarding the imprisonment in Tallinn Central Prison in fall 1942 of a group of Hungarian Gypsies. Viik’s testimony that some 200 Gypsies were sent in the summer of 1944 to Vasalemma should also be regarded as self-exculpatory (Viik, December 29, 1960, USHMM, RG-06.026.12). As discussed above, not even Himmler’s deportation decree directly affected Estonia’s Gypsies. Another rather absurd figure of 90,000 Gypsies murdered in Estonia was recently suggested by Miranda Vuolasranta, adviser on Gypsy affairs of the Finnish Ministry of Health. See polemics between *Göteborgs-Posten* (Göteborg, January 29, 2000) and *Postimees* (Tartu, February 3, 2000). The author is indebted to Riho Västrik for this information.

106. Vassily Gremov statement, February 8, 1943, ERA, R-63/1/8, p. 123.

107. Estonian Security Police in Petseri, Report on Population’s Mood, February 1943, ERA, R-64/1/14, p. 58.

108. Tartu Province Self-Defense, Report on Activities, ERA, R-358/1/17, p. 129; ERA, R-358/2/17, p. 8. The fact that the report mentioned both the Russians and the Estonians as supportive of the deportation attests to its reliability: given the increased hostility between the two communities, the police usually would not miss a chance to stress their differences. This tendency was particularly strong in the southeastern provinces, densely populated by Russians.

109. Virtually nothing had been published on the attitudes of the population of the Nazi-occupied territories toward Gypsies. The German population—concludes Guenter Lewy—had

on the whole been deeply hostile. According to Lewy, the idea of sterilization enjoyed general support. Popular sentiment contributed to the radicalization of the Nazis' anti-Gypsy policy. Among other authors, Sybil Milton studied German popular opinion on the Gypsies during and after World War II (Sybil Milton, "Persecuting the Survivors: The Continuity of 'Anti-Gypsyism' in Postwar Germany and Austria," in Tebbutt, ed., *Sinti and Roma*, pp. 35–47; idem., "Gypsies as Social Outsiders in Nazi Germany," in Robert Gellately and Nathan Stoltzfus, eds., *Social Outsiders in Nazi Germany* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2001) Another important study—one heavily based on archival sources—was published in Hebrew by Gilad Margalit, *Postwar Germany and the Gypsies: The Treatment of Sinti and Roma in the Aftermath of the Third Reich* (Jerusalem: The Magnes Press; The Hebrew University, 1998). The best summary of the latest publications on the Nazi persecution of Gypsies was compiled by Michael Zimmermann, "Zigeunerbilder und Zigeunerpolitik in Deutschland: Eine Übersicht über neuere historische Studien," *WerkstattGeschichte* 25 (May 2000), pp. 35–58. I am indebted to Michael Zimmermann for a copy of his article.

110. See Anton Weiss-Wendt, "Preconditions for the Holocaust: Estonian Jews and the *Judeobolshevik* Myth" in *Proceedings of the Third Conference on Baltic Studies in Europe* (Stockholm: Stockholm University Press, forthcoming). This is equally true in the case of Nazi Germany. In this respect, the stance of Dr. Tobias Portchy, Head of the Nazi Party in Burgenland, appears rather exceptional. In his 1938 memorandum "The Gypsy Question" Portchy stated that, among other ills, Gypsies were also the bearers of social democracy and Bolshevism (Zimmermann, "Die nationalsozialistische 'Lösung,'" p. 248).

111. Pärnu District Self-Defense, July 28, 1942, ERA, R-210/1/1, p. 160.

112. Circular of the Estonian Security Police, June 10, 1942, ERA, R-59/1/88, p. 14.

113. Avasaar, December 13, 1966, and February 15, 1967; concluding Indictment of Roland Rand, May 23, 1967, USHMM, RG-06.026.13.

114. Hannu Rautkallio, *Finland and the Holocaust: The Rescue of Finland's Jews* (New York: Holocaust Library, 1987), pp. 135, 137.

115. Hans-Heinrich Wilhelm, *Die Einsatzgruppe A*, pp. 219–20f. Apparently this is the very same case Birn describes in her article (p. 196).