

Deportations from Romania

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The Deportation of Itinerant Roma, July-August 1942 | The Deportation of Sedentary Roma Deemed “Undesirable”, September 1942 | The Treatment of the Roma in Transnistria | The Postwar Years and the Treatment of the Roma Deportations in War Crimes Trials | The Future of the Past: The Recognition of Slavery and the Holocaust against Roma

➤ *The fate of the Roma did not receive attention by the Romanian state for almost a hundred years after slavery had been abolished in 1856. Then, after they had come to power in 1940, it took but two years for the fascist Iron Guard to start with mass deportations of Roma. Like many Jews, the Roma were brought across the river Dniester, to South-Western Ukraine, then so-called Transnistria. They were deported there without even their most vital belongings and had to endure two years of hunger, illness and death. Only about half of the Roma deported managed to survive until March 1944, when Romania began to evacuate all its citizens from Transnistria.*

INTRODUCTION

Long before the time of their liberation from slavery in the mid-19th century, and even in the decades preceding the Second World War, Roma were not taken into consideration as a subject for public policies by the Romanian state. In the absence of any integrative measures, the abolishment of slavery basically meant the remission of the ex-slave owners of any responsibility towards their ex-slaves. In this manner, the freedom given was transformed into a new form of economic dependence, even more dramatic than the previous one. In searching for living resources, a significant part of the liberated Roma were forced to (re-)discover an itinerant life style. Others, comprising an historical wave of migration, left for Western Europe, despite occidental states’ repressive measures.

ROMANIA 1941 - 1942

III.1A (based upon Ioanid 2000, p. xxvi)

CAMPS, GHETTOS AND MASSACRE SITES IN ROMANIA 1941 - 1942

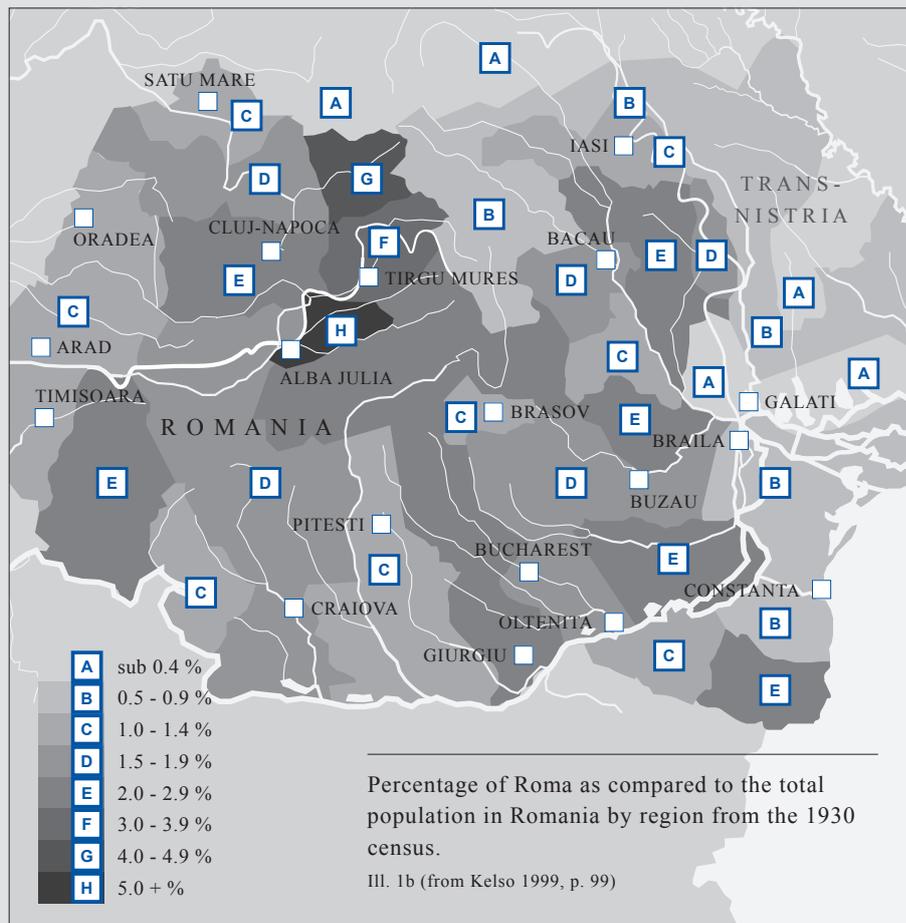
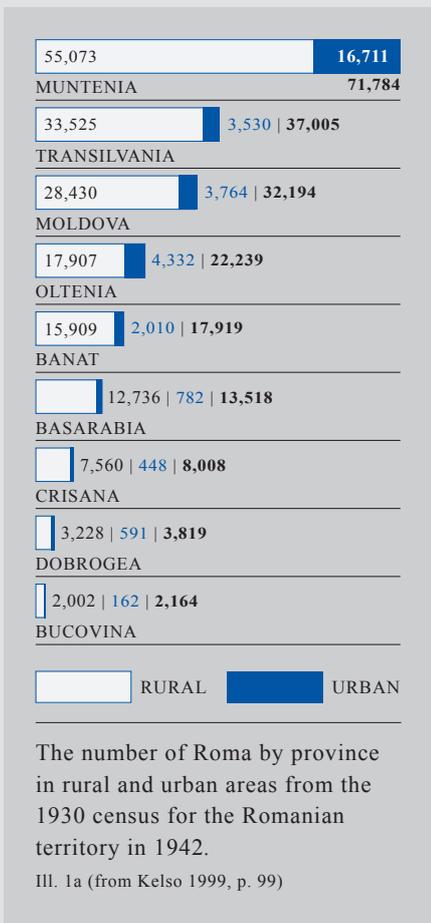
III.1B (based upon Ioanid 2000, p. xxvi)



The Deportation of Itinerant Roma, July-August 1942

The Deportation of Sedentary Roma Deemed “Undesirable”, September 1942

The Treatment of the Roma in Transnistria



Most of the Roma, however, continued to live on the periphery of Romanian towns and villages, being used as labour, practicing traditional crafts, unqualified, living from expediency. If, until then, the prejudices had arisen from the medieval racism towards the religious “deviants”, the new hard feelings targeted non-inclusion of Roma (“old Romanians”) in competition for access to development resources (especially in the case of Jewish people, called “new Romanians”). Being built on the basis of an ethnic nation, similar to other Eastern European states, the modern Ro-

manian state has faced – and is still facing – a recurrent syndrome of non-acceptance and exclusion of the “Other”, with painful consequences throughout its history.

The situation became explosive after 1940, when the country entered into the sphere of Nazi political and ideological domination. After coming to power, the Iron Guard considered for the first time to adopt a racial policy toward Roma. The legion journal, “Cuvântul”, published an article on January 18, 1941, that stressed the “priority of the Gypsy issue” on the government agenda and suggested that

appropriate legislation be passed to make marriages between Romanians and Roma illegal and to gradually isolate the Roma into some kind of ghetto. During the same decade the Roma became the target of Romanian proponents of eugenics. [III. 3]

In this context, the Romanian government decided on the deportation of the Roma to Transnistria. In the first stage, it was decided that all the itinerant Roma were to be deported, without exception, following the deportation of sedentary Roma which was to happen gradually. [III. 6]

THE DEPORTATION OF ITINERANT ROMA, JULY-AUGUST 1942

The deportations began on June 1, 1942, with the itinerant Roma. That day, the gendarmes began to gather them in the capital cities of the counties and then send them to Transnistria.

Marshal Antonescu, himself, gave the order for the deportation “of all nomadic Gypsies from camps all over the country.” The Roma travelled on foot or with wagons from one precinct to the other, making their trip several weeks long. Officially, the operation finished on August 15, 1942. Those Roma, who were at the front or mobi-

lised within the country at the time of the deportation, were expelled from the military by order of the Army General Staff, sent back home and made to follow their families to Transnistria. Up until October 2, 1942, a total of 11,441 Roma were deported to Transnistria (2,352 men, 2,375 women, and 6,714 children). [III. 2]



III. 2

A group of semi-nomadic Roma in Romania on a photograph dating from before the deportation.

(from Kelso 1999, p. 102)

“THE GYPSY SHALL BE
STERILISED AT HOME”

Drawing on the ideas of Robert Ritter, the intellectual mastermind of the Roma tragedy in Nazi Germany, Romanian “researchers” considered the Roma a plague:

“Nomadic and semi-nomadic Gypsies shall be interned into forced labour camps. There, their clothes shall be changed, their beards and hair cut, their bodies sterilised [...]. Their living expenses shall be covered from their own labour. After one generation, we can get rid of them. In their place, we can put ethnic Romanians from Romania or from abroad, able to do ordered and creative work. The sedentary Gypsy shall be sterilised at home [...]. In this way, the peripheries of our villages and towns shall no longer be disease-ridden sites, but an ethnic wall useful for our nation.”

III. 3 (translated from Făcăoaru, Gheorghe

(1941) *Câteva date în jurul familiei și statului biopolitic*, București)

THE DEPORTATION OF SEDENTARY ROMA DEEMED “UNDESIRABLE”, SEPTEMBER 1942

Those selected for the initial deportation were Roma considered to be “dangerous and undesirable” along with their families – a total of 12,497 individuals. The remaining 18,941 were to be deported later. At the time of the deportation of itinerant Roma, the authorities had not yet formed a definite plan of action concerning the sedentary Roma. They were either to be deported to Transnistria or

imprisoned in camps within Romania. In the end, the authorities chose deportation. According to the initial plan, the Roma were to be transported by ship to Transnistria in July, first on the Danube and then via the Black Sea. This plan was prepared in detail but ultimately abandoned, and they were transported by train instead. Ion Antonescu set the beginning of the operation for August 1, 1942. However, the deportation of sedentary Roma did not take place until September. It lasted from September 12 to September 20, 1942, used nine special trains, and began in different towns in the country. The modification of the

plan from water to land explains why the deportations did not begin until September 1942. During that month, 13,176 sedentary Roma were deported to Transnistria. At the same time, Roma were forced from their homes without even their most vital personal and household belongings and were not given time to sell their possessions. So, heads of the local gendarmerie and police stations would often buy the Roma’s belongings and livestock at extremely low prices. The houses and all other goods belonging to the deported Roma were confiscated by the “National Centre for Romanisation”.

THE TREATMENT OF THE ROMA IN TRANSNISTRIA

The Roma were settled at the border or inside villages located in Eastern Transnistria on the bank of the Bug, in

the counties of Golta, Otchakov, Berzovka and Balta. Some Roma were accommodated in huts, others in houses. A few villages on the Bug were completely evacuated for this purpose, with the Ukrainian population being relocated to the central areas of the

county. These were the so-called “Gypsy colonies” in Transnistria, consisting of several hundred people (in the beginning there were even thousands of people). The confiscation of their horses and wagons, which served as both “mobile homes” and a means to

Vasile Ionita was forty years old when the constables came to announce that he must leave the village to relocate in Transnistria:

“A year before, articles started to appear in the press, talking about this deportation. I was in a pub and some Romanians reading a newspaper said: ‘Listen here, man, it says that all Gypsies will be sent to Transnistria.’ We didn’t believe that it was going to happen. We didn’t expect to be sent there. Before the deportation, it was perfect in the country. We lived in peace with the people. We accepted each other. We were taken by surprise, unprepared. People should have reacted then, many should have woken up. There were people who protested, some intelligent people with book learning, but without any effect.

I was a coppersmith, making objects for home use. My father taught me. It is a trade you learn which comes from the old times. We learned it from the elders. A village constable I knew told me: ‘You will have to leave, like all the others, to Transnistria.’ I said: ‘Why send me? Look, I will give you some money.’ I gave him 1,000 lei. And a copper pot that I made. The constable told me: ‘Okay, hide until this wave of fury and evil passes. I’ll help you then.’ But it seems that a Gypsy who had his family sent didn’t like this, and he turned me in to the authorities. He told them where I was hiding, and they came and took me and my family to Transnistria.

The constable tried to keep his promise and help me. We left with a wagon and horses, my wife and four children. I had four brothers and a sister named Natalita who left. The police and constables accompanied me. I was sent from place to place to Transnistria.

On the road to Transnistria we were beaten, [but] beaten less by the Romanian constables. On the other hand, when we passed Bessarabia there everybody beat us. Antonescu hated the Gypsies. He was the one who hated and harmed us. When we arrived there they made fun of us and put us to hard labour, working us like animals. They kept us there for two years without us being spared any suffering.

[In Transnistria] all of us were living in the open air, except for those who had wagons and they could sleep in or under them. [It was] a place in a kind of field, which was very long and flat. It was an open field. It was hot because it was springtime or summer and we could stay outside without needing a roof. We didn’t have houses to stay in at that time. There were maybe 10,000 families there. We were left free by ourselves. But when winter came, they took us from there and brought us to a big town. They put us in a sort of house, a barn where animals stayed. Hundreds of families were kept together with the [Ukrainian] people: They gave us an ear of corn and a potato per day. They gave us 200 grams of corn meal that we couldn’t do anything with; it had sand in it. We were dying of hunger.

There were all kinds of Gypsies there. The first to be deported were nomads and then the semi-nomads. But after this also those who didn’t speak the language [Romani] were sent. However, we had an easier life compared to the nomadic Gypsies, who were sent outside [of the barn]. They made earth houses and had to live there. So terribly were those people living that they reached the point of eating their horses for which they cared so much. In those days horses were so sacred, especially for them as they were nomads. They had long hair, and different, more colourful clothing. For semi-nomads like us, it was much easier to live than for the nomads who were mistreated because they were seen as different.

The deportation of the Jews started a long time before [us]. The majority were killed. But before, they were selected by their trade tailors, shoe-makers, and others. They were sent to Germany [sic] to work. Those who did not correspond to the authorities’ standards were shot. The Jews made large graves, they were put on the edge of the grave and shot with automatics. [...]

Those who were guarding us immediately shot him. They shot him with an automatic. The sunflower field was like twenty or thirty meters from us. But when that person crossed [the line], he was shot. We couldn’t escape. Because if we ran away, we were caught and killed. If they caught us on the train, they threw us off and killed us.

earn an income, affected the Roma very harshly.

The Roma were not provided with enough food and they were unable now to support themselves. The food rations established by the government were not observed; sometimes none would be distributed for weeks. The Roma were not provided with firewood either, so they could neither prepare their food, nor warm themselves. Clothing was another major problem, since the deported Roma had not been allowed to take any clothes or any personal belongings with

them. The deportees lacked the most basic things, including pots for preparing their food. Medical assistance was almost nonexistent, and they also lacked medicine. [III. 5]

Until spring 1943, the situation of the deportees was dramatic from every perspective. Many thousands of Roma died. In fact, almost all of the deaths of the Romanian Roma deported to Transnistria occurred in winter 1942/1943. A report of the Landau District Preture to the Prefecture of the Berezovka county regarding the exanthematic typhus epidemic, which

broke out in the middle of December 1942 in the Roma camps, stated that due to typhus, the number of Roma located in Landau decreased from around 7,500 to approximately 1,800–2,400. The situation in Landau was an exception, but the number of deceased was high everywhere. [III. 9]

The situation of the Roma later improved somewhat. Since the concentration in large groups made it extremely difficult to provide work and food as well as supervision, and after the dramatic experience of winter 1942/1943, the authorities dissolved the colonies and

I did agricultural work, harvested wheat, dug the ground. I would have rather gone to war because my family would have remained at home and I wouldn't have had this daily fear. For me it would have been easier to be by myself than with my family that I had to look after. I couldn't bring anything for my children. I was watching them die of hunger, watching how they got sick.

Many people died of hunger. Where they were lying down on the earth, they died after a while of hunger, and remained where they lay. We didn't have cemeteries there. We made shallow graves with a little earth. My brother died of hunger, of misery, of sickness. When we buried him we didn't have the strength to make a deep grave. We made it on the surface. We covered him with a little earth and put plants over him.

God and my family [kept me alive]. I was thinking of the return and my oldest brother encouraged us all the time. He told us we had to live. We had to live so that we could come back. Many people died of hunger there. Three quarters. A quarter remained. We didn't argue anymore. Hunger was so great that the stronger one made life harder for the weaker one. It was a fight for survival. We didn't know what to do to escape. Our only hope when we saw how bad the situation became was in God. We didn't think of people anymore. We didn't think that they could help us."

III. 4 (from Kelso 1999, pp. 118ff.)

"IN GENERAL, THE SITUATION OF THE GYPSIES IS TERRIBLE"

From a report signed by an intelligence agent, explaining the situation in the Otchakov county, December 5, 1942:

"Due to malnutrition, some of the Gypsies – and these make up the majority – have lost so much weight that they have turned into living skeletons. On a daily basis – especially in the last period – ten to fifteen Gypsies died. They were full of parasites. They did not receive any medical visits and they did not have any medicine. They were naked [...] and they didn't have any underwear or clothing. There are women whose bodies [...] were naked in the true sense of the

word. They had not been given any soap since arriving; this is why they haven't washed themselves or the single shirt that they own.

In general, the situation of the Gypsies is terrible and almost inconceivable. Due to the misery, they have turned into shadows and are almost savage. This condition is due to bad accommodations and nutrition as well as the cold. Because of hunger [...] they have scared the Ukrainians with their thefts. If there had been some Gypsies in the country who were stealing [...] out of mere habit, here even a Gypsy who used to be honest would begin stealing, because the hunger led him to commit this shameful act."

III. 5

A SURVIVOR OF THE DEPORTATIONS RECALLS

"There were maybe over one hundred people [crowded] into the car without seats. You stayed in groups with your family. It was hot, it was September. We slept one on top of another. [There were] no toilet facilities. You went to the WC when the train stopped. The windows had iron bars as thick as a finger so no one could escape. Where was there to go? Constables gave us bread and salami. The train stopped in every little station and sometimes stayed for

a day. If you asked, one person from the family could go [into town] for an hour or two to get food. We gathered water in wooden bottles.

If some got sick, that's how they stayed. Many women had babies on the train. We made spaces for them. Gypsy women became midwives for each other. One would put her foot on a woman's back, another would cut the [umbilical] cord, another would wrap the baby up, and another would take a rag, and wipe the mess up and throw it out of the window. [...]"

III. 6 (from Kelso 1999, p. 110)

distributed the Roma among the villages in the spring and summer of 1943. Thus, the Roma began to live – long-term or short-term – in many villages of the Golta, Balta, Berezovka, and Otchakov counties, where they used to work, either on former state farms and “kolkhozes”, or in workshops or other places where they were but marginally compensated for their work.

The archives created by the occupation authorities in Transnistria or by the administration of some communes and farms provide great detail about the type of work done by the Roma, including

agricultural labour, repairing roads and railroads, chopping down willow trees on the bank of the Bug, chopping wood in forests, and military-related tasks in the Nikolaev region (on the opposite side of the Bug in German-occupied territory). Through a series of measures taken in summer 1943, the authorities tried to provide the deportees with work. At the time these steps were referred to as “organisation of labour”. The work was paid and the deportee and his family could somewhat earn their living.

Some of the deportees managed to adapt to the adverse conditions

in Transnistria. They found a niche in the village economy, doing some work and making crafts for the natives, exactly as they had done in their villages in Romania. One such group, which managed to preserve its occupation and thereby was able to some extent to ensure its welfare, was the Pieptanari (comb makers) Roma. In February 1944, 1,800 Roma living in the county of Berezovka earned their living by making and selling combs.

However, not all deportees could be provided with work. So, measures were taken at county or dis-



III. 7

Ion Antonescu and Horia Sima take the oath following the establishment of the National Legionary State with General Antonescu as its leader and Sima, Commander of the Legionary Movement, as Vice-Premier, September 1940.

(from Ioanid 2000, p. 194b)

“I HAVE THE HONOUR OF REPORTING TO YOU THAT THEY ARE EXHAUSTED FROM HUNGER. PLEASE ADVISE.”

The situation was not the same everywhere. In some places, Roma were confronted with hunger and cold again in 1943. The situation was extremely serious in the Golta county. The May 10, 1943, report of the Gendarmes Legion Golta to the General Inspectorate of the Gendarmerie describes the extermination regime applied to Jews and Roma:

“I have the honour of reporting to you that from the information I have verified throughout the entire county, the following is the result: The Jews have not been given food for months. The same is true for the Gypsies and prisoners in the Golta camp, where 40 individuals are

imprisoned. All of these are working and are forced to work until they are exhausted from hunger. Please advise.”

In another report, dated November 22, 1943, to the Prefecture of the Golta county, the legion states that the Roma interned in the Golta labour camp (including some who had tried unsuccessfully to flee from Transnistria) were faced with starving to death. Likewise, in September that year, Ion Stancu, “mayor of the Gypsies” in Kamina Balka in Golta, denounced the fact that the Roma were not given sufficient food:

“During the day we work at the kolkhoz, but at night we patrol the precinct; they give us very little food: 300 grams of [corn] flour, 500 grams of potatoes and 10 grams of salt per person, without any other kind of food; we haven’t been given oil for 8 months.”

III. 8

“WE WERE DESTROYED”

Ion Neagu, who spent winter 1942/43 in a camp in the Landau district:

“They put us in a big school with two or three floors. We were eating here, there was a toilet. From each Gypsy family, two or three [people] died. They didn’t have wagons, money, they didn’t have anything.

I noticed that when only one person remained alive, out of a family composed of seven, he willed his own death. We were destroyed. I can’t say how many Gypsies died, how many children died, how many mothers and fathers did not care about their children anymore. They were trying to get out alive. Here my sister-in-law, my sister, and my little brother died [from typhus].”

III. 9 (from Kelso 1999, p. 116)

trict level to provide them with food. The various departments of the government of Transnistria – particularly the Department of Labour, which dealt with Jews and Roma deported to Transnistria – did not always share a good working relationship. In summer 1943, in the county of Balta, Roma were removed from their houses, moved into huts and given land to work for food. Other colonies were dissolved and the Roma were distributed among Ukrainian villages, thus making them easier to feed and use for work. There were even proposals to create Roma agricultural colonies with farmland and agricultural equipment.

The gendarmerie appealed to the county prefectures to guarantee the Roma’s living. [III. 5]

At the same time, authorities often criticised the fact that Roma tried to avoid work when it was available. According to the documents, some Roma began to travel around the villages and beg. In order to procure food, Roma started to steal; there were Roma gangs of thieves. These deportees caused difficulties for the Romanian authorities. At the same time, the Roma started to flee from the “colonies” on the Bug. Either individually or in groups, they attempted to return to Romania by any means

possible. However, the runaways were usually caught and brought back. The authorities in Transnistria discovered that it was impossible to put a stop to this. Punishment camps were planned for such situations, but were never realised. Only in the fall of 1943, when the exodus of Roma had grown considerably and the number of those who had fled and been caught exceeded 2,000, was the measure taken to create such a camp in Golta, where 475 Roma were interned.

The situation of the Roma varied from county to county, district to district, and even farm to farm. It depended on many factors, including

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S I T U A T I E - N U M E R I C A

privitoare la evacuarea țiganilor nomazi și nenomazi în Transnistria.

1) Țigani nomazi evacuați între 1 Iunie și 15 August 1942 :

Bărbați	2.352
Femei	2.375
Copii	6.714
Total=	11.441

2) Țigani nenomazi (stabili) nemobilizabili și periculoși ordinii publice, evacuați cu trenurile de evacuare între 12-20 Sept.1942:

Bărbați	3.187
Femei	3.780
Copii	6.209
Total=	13.176

Au mai fost evacuați ulterior cu aprobări speciale, fiind infractori eliberați din închisori:

Bărbați	22
Femei	17
Copii	30
Total =	69

Total general țigani nomazi și nenomazi24.686

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NUMBER OF ROMA DEPORTED
AND VICTIMS

The exact number of the Roma who were deported and died in Transnistria is not yet known. In 1946, Romanian Commission of War recognised 36,000 Roma who died in Transnistria's camps, but other statistics show much higher numbers. Both Romanian archives and Odessa and Nikolaev archives (now in Ukraine) have not been researched yet. According to current sources, the number of Roma deported to Transnistria from June 1942 to December 1943 reached slightly over 25,000. On March 14, 1944, when Romanian citizens – regardless of origin – were to be evacuated from Transnistria, the General Gendarmes Sub-Inspectorate Odessa reported that it had on its territory 12,083 Roma. To this number the number of Roma who escaped from Transnistria before the above-mentioned date must be added, the number being approximately 2,000. The 6,439 Roma recorded by the gendarmerie in the second half of July 1944, when it began to register those who returned to Romania, make up only one part of the survivors, a significant number being children.

III. 11

III. 10

Summary of the 24,686 itinerant and sedentary Roma deported to Transnistria by the end of September 1942. The list is divided into the two categories, and further broken down into men, women and children.

(from Kelso 1999, p. 109)

the Romanian official at the head of the administrative unit (county of district). Food provision depended heavily on local communities, but the local Ukrainians considered the Roma to be a burden. County and district authori-

ties often had to force the Ukrainian communes and communities to give the Roma food according to the dispositions mandated by the government of Transnistria. The Roma's situation also depended on the group or sub-

group to which they belonged to. In some places, Roma communities managed to secure their subsistence and survive almost two years of deportation. Elsewhere, though, only a small number was able to survive. [III. 11]

**THE POSTWAR YEARS AND
THE TREATMENT OF THE
ROMA DEPORTATIONS IN WAR
CRIMES TRIALS**

After the return of the surviving Roma from Transnistria in spring and summer 1944 and the regime change of

August 1944, the "Gypsy issue" no longer figured on the political agenda in Romania and the reinstatement of the Roma's rights went smoothly. For the new government, the Roma became once again what they were before Antonescu came to power: a marginalised social category, rather than an ethnic minority. As a conse-

quence, the policies adopted vis-à-vis the Roma included such measures as the creation of incentives to make the itinerant Roma sedentary and the re-establishment of former limitations on the same Roma groups in relation to the freedom of movement. There is no evidence indicating that the deportees received reparations, and the Roma's

problems did not make it onto the political parties' agendas.

Although the fate of the Roma during the war – the deportations to Transnistria and the killings – were no longer of interest to either the government or the public, the postwar trials of war criminals temporarily brought these events back into discussion. Yet, the fate of the Roma was fairly marginal in relation to topics of interest. When the first group of war criminals was tried in 1945, only one indictment document mentions the Roma deportations (in the case of Colonel Isopeşcu, Prefect of the Golta county), and even then the offences concerned only the confiscation of Roma wagons and horses. The remainder of the indictment was dedicated exclusively to the murders of Jews.

The situation was similar when Ion Antonescu and his main collaborators were tried in 1946. While charges were formally brought against Antonescu for the deportation of the Roma, the prosecutor did not dwell on the details. Thus, during Antonescu's trial,

the plight of the Roma was mentioned only four times: in the indictment, in the formal reading of the charges, and in statements taken from Antonescu and General Vasiliu. The indictment notes in passing that “thousands of unfortunate families were taken out of their huts and shanty houses and deported beyond the Dniester; tens of thousands of men, women and children died due to starvation, cold and diseases.” The indictment refers to 26,000 deported Roma, while General Vasiliu acknowledged only 24,000. In the statement he gave during the interrogation, Ion Antonescu argued that the deportations were motivated by considerations of law and order: the Roma, he said, committed many thefts, robberies and murders in Bucharest and other cities during the wartime curfew. He made the same argument in his memorandum of May 15, 1946, to the Peoples' Court. At the time, press coverage of the fate of the Roma during the war was scant, even as the details of the trials were systematically presented to the public.

In the early postwar years the fate of the Romanian Roma during the war did not seem to interest anyone. The only initiative to support the ex-deportees in Transnistria came in early 1945 from the “General Union of Roma in Romania”. Its central committee announced that the organisation's main objective was “to give moral and material support to all the Roma, and in particular to all the Roma deported to Transnistria”. However, after this organisation began to function effectively again, on August 15, 1947, its activities no longer concerned the former Roma deportees.

Finally, in 1948 the Roma were close to obtaining the status of ethnic minority (“co-inhabitant nationality”). The December Resolution on the issue of ethnic minorities of the Political Bureau of the Central Committee of the Romanian Workers' Party – a key document of Communist-era minority policies – denied the Roma this status. The situation remained unchanged until the collapse of the communist regime in 1989.

THE FUTURE OF THE PAST: THE RECOGNITION OF SLAVERY AND THE HOLOCAUST AGAINST ROMA

In October 2003, the Romanian government created the International Commission on the Holocaust in Romania, chaired by Elie Wiesel and

Ion Iliescu, the Romanian President, supported by the expertise of the Holocaust Museum from Washington and the Yad Vashem Museum from Jerusalem. The Commission's members elaborated a study on the common destiny of the Jews and Roma in the Holocaust in Romania, which was published in November 2004. After more than 60 years since these atrocities

had happened, for the first time in history an Eastern European state is to include into public and political debate the question of recognition of the fact that thousands of Roma were murdered in the Holocaust. A start which is worthy of being followed by other European states and, at the same time, a chance for Roma to recuperate their past.

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