

Were the “Chingené” Victims of the Holocaust? Nazi Policy toward the Crimean Roma, 1941–1944

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Much has been written about the persecution of the Roma in Nazi-dominated central Europe, but less attention has been devoted to anti-Roma policy in the occupied territories of the Soviet Union. Using a variety of sources, including testimonies, this study sheds new light on how specific features of the culture of the Chingené—the Roma in the Crimea—as well as German political and military considerations affected German practice on the peninsula. The author compares and contrasts the Nazis’ treatment of the Crimea’s Jews to their treatment of the Roma, providing an answer to the question: “Were the Chingené also victims of genocide?”

The subject of the Nazi genocide against the Roma was first brought to scholarly attention in a 1951 article by Philip Friedman.¹ Thanks in part to the efforts of Simon Wiesenthal, a broader public awareness emerged in the mid-1960s. In 1965, Wiesenthal delivered related documents to the Central Office for the Investigation of National Socialist Crimes (Ludwigsburg).² Since then, published studies have outlined the persecution of the Roma in Germany³ and Austria⁴; analyzed the evolution of the Nazi approach to the “Gypsy Question” from reliance on “social” to reliance on “racial” considerations⁵; and traced the deportation of Roma to concentration camps and death camps. Other works treat the fate of the Roma in France, Romania, Croatia, Czechoslovakia, Estonia, and Lithuania.⁶ However, at a general level, the fate of the Roma under the Nazis and their allies remains under-studied.⁷

Significant disagreement marks discussion of whether the *Porajmos* (the Romas’ term for their experience⁸) was a genocide comparable to the Holocaust. The defining questions in the debate are these: Was the annihilation of the Roma intended to be total? Was it perpetrated on the grounds of racial ideology? Was it carried out everywhere according to a well-thought-out plan? Was it realized through the employment of technical resources and administrative links at all levels, leading toward a single goal? And, finally, are the Roma victims of the Holocaust? In their works, Sybil Milton,⁹ Ian Hancock,¹⁰ and Brenda and James Lutz answer in the positive.¹¹ We find opposing views in works by Yehuda Bauer,¹² Michael Zimmermann,¹³ Guenter Lewy,¹⁴ and Gilad Margalit.¹⁵ For the latter group, the character of Nazi

anti-Roma policy seems to have differed from that of Nazi anti-Jewish policy in three significant ways: it had no clearly expressed racist-ideological basis, it was not the culmination of a single plan for all Roma, and it did not aim at total extermination. The massacres that we know of resulted from a confluence of concrete circumstances and racist contempt for the Roma, leading to the destruction of individual communities against a background of total war.

In this article, I compare the Nazis' anti-Roma actions in the Crimea to their actions against Jews in the same region. The destruction of the Soviet Jews was not accomplished overnight, but by August 1941 the killing units on Soviet territories had begun their efforts to destroy every Jewish man, woman, and child; by the time commandos of Einsatzgruppe D appeared in the Crimea in early November, their work had become routinized.¹⁶ On numerous occasions they had carried out mass killings of Roma as well. The question thus arises: Were the Nazis' intentions toward the Roma the same as their intentions toward the Jews? That is, had the central agencies of the Reich taken an analogous decision to annihilate the group in its entirety? As the evidence will demonstrate, the answer to this question must be cautiously negative. I also compare Nazi policy toward the Roma in the Crimea to Nazi policy in other parts of Europe, and consider the influence of regional peculiarities on the formulation and realization of policy.

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The principles that defined the attitude of the occupiers toward the Roma on Soviet territory differed from those prevailing on the territory of the Reich. Basing their approach on the pseudo-scientific work of Robert Ritter and his colleagues at the Racial Hygiene and Population Biology Research Institute, whose conclusions were exploited by bureaucrats of the Reichssicherheitshauptamt (the Reich Security Main Office—RSHA), Nazi authorities in Germany treated the Gypsy Question primarily as a matter of race. Between 1933 and 1942, German pseudo-scientists attempted to account for the cultural heterogeneity of the Roma. Each subgroup had its place in the “racial” hierarchy, and the authorities prescribed differing methods for dealing with each (sterilization, forced labor, internment in concentration camps, and so on). This system of categorization coexisted with another that was based on “biological” criteria and identified groups of “pure Gypsies,” “mixed Gypsies with primarily Aryan blood,” and “mixed Gypsies with primarily Gypsy blood.” An obstacle to the adoption (let alone implementation) of a single plan for handling the Roma was the fact that no overarching system of racial-biological classification was ever fully articulated. Moreover, at the local level officials preferred to use less refined principles for the classification of Roma. Meanwhile, SS-Reichsführer Himmler, who believed that some Roma were the descendants of Aryan ancestors, ordered that these groups be separated out from “mixed” populations” so that they could be preserved for research.¹⁷

Throughout Europe—in the countries under Nazi occupation, in the states allied with Germany, and on the occupied Soviet territories—lower levels of the Nazi administrative machinery left their imprint on the conduct of affairs. At these levels, officials' views on Romani matters varied, as did the methods used for handling them.¹⁸ On Soviet soil, practices differed depending on which occupation authority was predominant in the area: the civil administration, the SS, or the Wehrmacht. The criteria were by no means drawn directly from the “racial” concepts worked out in the racial hygiene institute; rather, in most cases decisions were justified on the basis of the Romas' alleged “asocial nature.” The simultaneous influence of many other factors and the inconsistency of initiatives at various levels further complicated the picture, occasionally rendering the implementation of policy self-contradictory.¹⁹

The view of the Roma as “asocial” was reflected most strikingly in the implementation of policy in the territory under the jurisdiction of the civilian administration, and particularly in the Reichskommissariat Ostland (which included parts of the Soviet Baltic and Belorussia). In autumn 1941, Hinrich Lohse, Reichskommissar of the region, called Himmler's attention to the problem supposedly created by nomadic Roma. In December of that year he issued instructions to his subordinates to “treat [these Roma] exactly the same as Jews” on the grounds that they supposedly were carriers of disease, refused to submit to forced labor, and passed information to the enemy. However, in a decree issued in November 1943, Lohse prescribed a different treatment for the settled Roma; these were to be treated equally with other (non-Jewish) residents of the Ostland and, unlike the nomadic Roma, were not to be interned in concentration camps.²⁰

In zones of military administration and areas where the Einsatzgruppen were active, the distinction between nomadic and settled Roma was not always maintained in practice. Indeed, in some of these places the elimination of Roma was carried out rapidly. Thus, in areas of Wehrmacht jurisdiction on Russian territory, in Belorussia, and in the Ukraine (including Kiev), the eradication of the Roma began as early as fall 1941. On November 24, Generalmajor Gustav Freiherr von Mauchenheim genannt Bechtolsheim, commander of the 707th Infantry division, which provided security in the rear area of Army Group Center (in Belorussia), ordered the annihilation of the Roma in his jurisdiction.²¹ The tragedy that befell first the Kievan Jews and then the Roma led to the circulation among Kievans of the infamous popular saying, “The Germans have come—*gut!* The Jews are kaput. The Gypsies as well. The Ukrainians next” (*Nemtsy prishli—gut! Evreiam kaput. Tsiganam tozhe. Ukraintsam—pozzhe*).

Students of Nazi Romani policy in the occupied territories of the USSR generally base their analyses on the reports of the Einsatzgruppen, as well as on Wehrmacht documents and materials from the trials of Nazi criminals. Because these have been nearly the only accessible sources, and because they contain

material about the massacre of Roma, the Crimea has been considered one of the places where the Roma were subject to total extermination.²² Combined with relevant comparisons to the experience of the Crimea's Jews, an examination of a broader range of sources preserved in local archives—including oral testimonies—reveals that the situation was more ambiguous.

The Roma of the Crimea on the Eve of War

According to data from a 1939 census, 2,064 Roma were living in the Crimea on the eve of the war—998 in cities and 1,066 in rural areas.²³ However, it is unlikely that the entire Romani population was registered during this census; an unknown number of Roma on the peninsula were nomads and therefore were missed. Furthermore, because many Roma at that time viewed membership in a certain clan or religious faith, rather than ethnicity, as the primary factor in self-identification, it is likely that some Roma were registered as Crimean Tatars. One of the main characteristics of the Romani minority in the Crimea was its lack of homogeneity. A significant number were well integrated into the Crimean Tatar milieu; they had adopted Islam and acquired the language, traditions, customs, and names of the Tatars. This integration was the result of the centuries-long presence of Romani communities on the peninsula—within the Crimean khanate until 1783, and then under the continued cultural influence of the Ottoman Empire until its fall. This circumstance, as we shall see below, played a substantial role in the events of the occupation period.

Members of the group referred to themselves as *Daifa* (or *Taifa*), but from the Crimean Tatar population that surrounded them the Roma had acquired the name *Chingené*.²⁴ The subgroup that was most closely integrated with the Tatars acquired from the latter the appellation *Tatar Chingenesi* (Tatar Gypsies).²⁵ Within this group the clans were distinguished according to their social status and professional specializations. The *Gurbety* (or *Kurbety*) worked as horse traders or wagon drivers.²⁶ The *Altyn dzhi* were the most prosperous stratum, earning their living as jewelers. The *Sepetchi* were craftsmen who worked as blacksmiths and small businessmen. A special subgroup of Crimean Roma—the *Daul dzhi*—were renowned as professional musicians who performed at weddings and other celebrations.²⁷ Other groups known by their professions were the *Elekchi* (sieve-makers), the *Demerdzhi* (blacksmiths), and *Khalaidzhi* (tinsmiths). In addition to these groups, there was a group known as the *Ayudzhi* (“bear trainers”), who referred to themselves as *Krimuria/Krimi*. This group came to the peninsula at the end of the eighteenth or beginning of the nineteenth century, after it had been incorporated into the Russian Empire; the group was less tightly integrated into society and was considered nomadic. In addition to animal trainers, the *Ayudzhi* were horse dealers and fortune-tellers. The cities with the largest Romani communities were Simferopol', Bakhchisarai, Karasubazar (today Belogorsk), and Evpatoriia. Each of

these cities had a suburb or quarter in which the majority of the residents were Roma; often the non-Romani residents of the city referred to these areas as “Gypsytown.”²⁸

It should be pointed out as well that in the course of stormy social change and the breakup of traditional structures in the 1920s and 1930s in the USSR, Romani sub-groupings began to lose their closed character and their sharp demarcation from one another, and many Roma became integrated into an over-arching Soviet Crimean social order. Despite individual instances of Romas’ complete integration into Tatar society, however, the attitude of the Crimean Tatars toward the Chingené in their midst was highly ambivalent. The Tatars retained a somewhat disdainful attitude toward the Chingené, viewing them as people who might well be considered Tartars—but not Tatars of the best sort. The very term “Chingené” had a slightly pejorative shading. This attitude, as we shall see below, also played a role during the occupation.

The Germans began to implement the solution of the “Gypsy Question” and that of the “Jewish Question” simultaneously on the peninsula and, just as in other occupied regions of the USSR under the jurisdiction of the Wehrmacht, at maximum speed. The destruction of Romani groups in Crimean cities, like that of the Jews, began as early as November–December 1941. What orders and instructions formed the basis of the occupation authorities’ actions? Did the security police leaders and the SD (Security Service) issue similar instructions to the Einsatzgruppe commanders concerning treatment of the Roma and the Jews?

Nazi Perceptions of the “Gypsy Question”

During the Nuremberg trials, former SS-Gruppenführer Otto Ohlendorf testified that in May–June 1941, as Einsatzgruppen were being formed, Reichsführer-SS Himmler and RSHA chief Heydrich issued verbal orders (through intermediaries) to commanders to defend areas to the rear of the army—and for this purpose to kill Jews, Roma, Communist Party members, and anyone else who posed a security threat.²⁹ On the basis of this testimony some researchers have concluded that the task of killing the Roma had been assigned to the Einsatzgruppen before the Germans entered Soviet territory.³⁰ However, other researchers, believing Ohlendorf’s statement to be unreliable, question the existence of any such command regarding Roma.³¹ Heydrich’s written orders, which identified the groups that were subject to annihilation, did not mention the Roma.³² In a special instruction to the Einsatzgruppen requiring monthly reports on groups and individuals who were subject to “special treatment,” Heydrich’s deputy Heinrich Müller listed five categories: partisans, communists, Jews, the mentally ill, and “other elements dangerous to the state.”³³ The Roma were not mentioned.³⁴

However, operational groups had the right “to take executive measures concerning the civilian population within the scope of their missions, upon their own

responsibility.”³⁵ In practice this meant that in each area and in every concrete situation the commander of an operational group could, at his discretion, identify groups that “represented a threat” to the Wehrmacht.

During the “Einsatzgruppen Trial” of suspected war criminals conducted by U.S. authorities in 1947–1948, prosecutor James E. Heath questioned Ohlendorf about orders, instructions, and commands dealing with Roma. The former commander of Einsatzgruppe D might have been expected to produce a concrete documentary foundation for his actions. Ohlendorf, however, testified as follows:

- Q. On what basis did you kill gypsies [*sic*], just because they were gypsies? Why were they a threat to the security of the Wehrmacht?
- A. It is the same as for the Jews.
- Q. Blood?
- A. I think I can add up from my own knowledge of European history that the Jews actually during wars regularly carried on espionage service on both sides
- Q. I was asking you about gypsies
- A. There was no difference between gypsies and Jews. At the time the same order existed for the Jews
- Q. [Presiding Judge Musmanno]: Well, now, what we are trying to do is to find out what you are going to say about the gypsies, but you still insist on going back to the Jews, and Mr. Heath is questioning about gypsies. Is it also in European history that gypsies always participated in political strategy and campaigns?
- A. Espionage organizations during campaigns.



Defendant Otto Ohlendorf testifies on his own behalf at the Einsatzgruppen Trial, October 9, 1947. USHMM, courtesy of the National Archives and Records Administration, College Park.

- Q. [Presiding Judge Musmanno]: The gypsies did?
- A. The gypsies in particular
- Q. Could you give us an illustration of any activity of a band of gypsies on behalf of Russia against Germany during this late war?
- A. Only the same claim that can be maintained as with regard to Jews, that they actually played a part in the partisan war.
- Q. You, yourself cannot give us any illustration of any gypsies being engaged in espionage or in any way sabotaging the German war effort?
- A. That is what I tried to say just now. I don't know whether it came out correctly in the translation. For example, in the Yaila Mountains, such activity of gypsies has also been found.
- Q. Do you know that of your own personal knowledge?
- A. From my personal knowledge, of course, that is to say always from the reports which came up from the Yaila Mountains
- Q. Mr. Ohlendorf, you say the gypsies are notorious bearers of intelligence? Isn't it a fact that the nationals of any invaded state are notorious bearers of intelligence . . . ?
- A. But the difference is here that these populations, for example, the German population, or the American population have permanent homes, whereas gypsies being unsettled as people without permanent homes are more prepared to change their residence for a more favorable economic situation, which another place might promise them³⁶

In his testimony, Ohlendorf does not refer to leadership commands or other “rational” justifications to explain the elimination of the Romani population. Rather, he prefers to make assertions about the group’s alleged proclivity for espionage and to argue that there is no distinction between Roma and Jews in this respect. (The total destruction of the Jews, we recall, had begun by this time.) It seems certain that, if a directive concerning the Roma had been issued, Ohlendorf—who built his defense on the assertion that he was carrying out “the Führer’s order”—would have mentioned it. Ohlendorf ascribes “asocial” characteristics to all Roma without exception and insists that the reasons for the elimination of the two groups are identical. His argument gives us grounds to conclude that the decision to liquidate the Roma was made by Ohlendorf himself—not received from higher up—in the fall of 1941, as Einsatzgruppe D followed the Eleventh Army. Andrej Angrick documents two instances of mass execution of Roma by units of Einsatzgruppe D as early as September and October 1941 in Nikolaev and its environs. In the first instance 100 to 150 men, women, and children were murdered; the number of victims in the second instance remains unknown.³⁷

The leaders of the security police and the SD defined the array of “political opponents” of the regime quite broadly. Similarly, on the question of which groups represented a threat to the army’s security in the rear areas, the Einsatzgruppen leaders were guided by the demands of the moment and the local situation. In addition to the shortage of food supplies and billeting space, the partisan threat was

another essential factor in decision-making in the Crimea. Under these circumstances, the decision to include the Roma—whom Nazi ideology and propaganda had declared inferior—among the groups to be exterminated seemed entirely logical to the local occupation administration. The officers brought with them to the “Eastern Territories” their own stereotypes of the Romani population, and these served them as guides in carrying out occupation policy. Their frequent references to the potential for Romani “espionage” demonstrate how widely the Wehrmacht’s position influenced the decision to liquidate the Roma in the region. Similar measures were taken under the influence of the Wehrmacht elsewhere. For example, in spring 1940 three thousand Roma were deported to the Generalgouvernement from the western areas of Germany as a result of direct pressure from the Wehrmacht High Command (OKW), which wanted to rid the area of potential spies while the war with France was in progress.³⁸ Similarly, German officers saw executions of Roma in Serbia in fall 1941 not as part of a general plan to wipe out Roma, but as part of a “system of punishments” and as a response to suspected espionage.³⁹

This lack of clarity, compounded by the absence of orders from above or concrete justifications for the extermination of the Roma, was confirmed by the Nuremberg tribunal in the indictment. The tribunal was unable to gain a full understanding of the details of the decision-making process in regard to the Gypsy Question or to track the role that local conditions and the occupation administration officers’ prejudices played in the particular circumstances of the Crimea; as noted in the transcript, “no explanation was offered as to why these unoffending people, who through the centuries have contributed their share of music and song, were to be hunted down like wild game.”⁴⁰

The Implementation of Anti-Roma Measures

From December 1941 through August 1942, Einsatzgruppe D regularly sent information to Berlin concerning its actions in the Crimea. Some Operational Situation Reports contained information about the resolution of the Gypsy Question:

- *Operational Situation Report USSR No. 150 (Berlin, 2 January 1942)*: “Simferopol, Yevpatoria, Alushta, Karasubasar, Kerch, and Feodosiia, and other districts of western Crimea are free of Jews. From November 16 to December 15, 1941, 17,645 Jews, 2,504 Krimchaks,⁴¹ 824 Gypsies, and 212 Communists and partisans have been shot.”⁴²
- *Operational Situation Report USSR No. 178 (Berlin, 9 March 1942)*: “From February 16 to 28, 1942, 1,515 people were shot, 729 of them Jews, 271 Communists, 74 partisans, 421 Gypsies and asocial elements, and saboteurs.”⁴³
- *Operational Situation Report USSR No. 184, (Berlin, 23 March 1942)*: “During the time under report, 2,010 people were shot, of them 678 were Jews, 359

Communist officials, 153 partisans, and 810 asocial elements, Gypsies, mentally ill, and saboteurs.”⁴⁴

- *Operational Situation Report USSR No. 190, (Berlin, 8 April 1942)*: “Except for small units which occasionally show up in the northern Crimea, there are no more Jews, Krimchaks or Gypsies [in the Crimea] In the second half of March, a total of 1,501 people were executed. Among these were: 588 Jews, 405 Communists, 247 partisans, 261 asocial elements, including Gypsies.”⁴⁵

These reports demonstrate that, in contrast to Jews, Roma for the most part were not singled out and put into a separate category of targeted victims. SS troops in the Crimea regarded them exclusively as asocial elements and saboteurs, regardless of their actual occupations, professional membership, or social status. The quite heterogeneous professional and clan-based structure of the Romani population, as we see from the sources, likewise held no significance for the organs tasked with the destruction of Germany’s “enemies.” Therefore, from November 1941 through the first half of 1942 the mere fact of their belonging to this ethnic group was a death sentence for Crimean Roma. However, as we see from the reports, the principle varied in the case of the Roma: it was not the Romas’ ethnic identification as such that was used to justify their elimination (as was the case for the Jewish population); rather, the occupiers interpreted the Romas’ case in terms of socio-political danger and in this way created a justification for their extermination. (As we shall see, the German authorities did not carry out this policy throughout the entire occupation period, but only up to a certain point).

Meanwhile, this reading of the Romani way of life contradicted the evaluation given by the civilian administration of the regional General Commissariat (which was however much less influential on the peninsula). In a December 15, 1941 report, the civil administration authorities characterized the Roma on the basis of an analysis of population census data as “obvious urban dwellers” (75%), with the majority working as wagon drivers, small traders, smiths, jewelers, or musicians.⁴⁶ Facts of this nature provided no basis whatsoever for labeling all members of this ethnic group nomads, much less “asocial.” But it was not the civilian bureaucrats of the Reich Ministry for the Occupied Eastern Territories who made decisions in this area; rather, the SS set policy in collaboration with the Wehrmacht.

The Solution of the Gypsy Question in the Cities

After the war, eyewitness testimony formed the basis of the findings of the Crimean branch of the Soviets’ Extraordinary State Commission for Ascertainment and Investigation of Crimes Committed by the German Fascist Invaders and their Accomplices (hereinafter ChGK). The documents of this commission, which operated in the Crimea from June 1944 through May 1945,⁴⁷ allow us to

reconstruct—if only partially—the circumstances of the occupiers’ violence against the Romani population in various parts of the peninsula.

According to the testimony of a Romani craftsman who survived the shooting in Evpatoriia, early in 1942 the German authorities informed all Roma that they were required to report for registration. The Roma, however, went into hiding and did not appear at the appointed time and place. In response, the Germans conducted raids throughout the city and apprehended more than one thousand people. The Romani area was encircled by troops, and the inhabitants were loaded into trucks. Small children were simply thrown into vehicles. These people were taken to Krasnaia Gorka and shot. The survivor described the scene as follows: “I personally was in the second row of people assigned to be shot. The people in the row in front of me were killed, and I was wounded in the shoulder. The fallen corpses covered me, so I just lay there wounded, and after the shots died down and stopped I climbed out from under the corpses and hid in the neighboring village.”⁴⁸ The final report of the Evpatoriia ChGK noted that “as a result of mass shootings, the entire population of Jews, Krimchaks, and Gypsies was exterminated in the city.”⁴⁹

According to a Romani blacksmith who lived in the village of Kamysh-Burun and also survived a massacre, all Romani families in Kerch were arrested and put in prison on December 29, 1941. The next day they put the Roma into twelve vehicles and took them to an anti-tank ditch. The guard detachment was made up of Romanians, and at the Bagerov ditch German soldiers with submachine guns were standing fifty meters away. The guards unloaded the people from the vehicles one by one and directed them to the anti-tank ditch. There people fell into the ditch after being hit by bullets from the German guns:

My father and I were in the second group to be shot When the second round of submachine shots rang out, my father and I fell on corpses and I pulled a dead man over me After it was all over the Germans fired on the people who were still moving. That was when they wounded me in the left shoulder and I lost consciousness, but I later came to and saw that my father was alive next to me. That night my father helped me climb over the corpses and toward morning we reached Churbash village.⁵⁰

A Russian woman who lived in Dzhankoi described to the local branch of the ChGK the disposal of the bodies of murdered Roma:

I personally saw, approximately a month or so after the shooting of Soviet Jewish citizens, three big, black vehicles, closed on all sides, drive up to the anti-tank ditch [on the outskirts of town] several times, and people were thrown out of them fully clothed with their belongings. From questioning people who were passing along the road at this time I learned that these were Gypsies who had been gassed earlier, and then they tossed out the dead straight into the pit, and then Russian prisoners of war buried the corpses. I don’t know who brought the corpses of these Gypsies, but I could see from a distance that they were Germans. How many Gypsies were thrown

out and buried this way in the anti-tank ditch I do not know exactly, but I heard later from talking with neighbors that it was about 300 people.⁵¹

According to the findings of the local branch of the ChGK, excavations carried out on May 19, 1944 in northeastern Dzhankoi along the road to Chongar established that about two hundred Soviet citizens of Romani nationality had been murdered in March 1942 in gas vans; their corpses were brought in these vehicles to the ditch, where they were tossed in at random in several layers and then buried.⁵²

The Nazis used local collaborationist entities—town councils—to establish the number of Roma among the local population. In Feodosiia, which had a total population of 28,434, ten Roma were registered on December 10, 1941.⁵³ In March 1942, in Staryi Krym, Mayor K.K. Artsishevskii compiled a list of the twenty Roma living in the city and the surrounding area. The mayor later testified that he gave the list to the gendarmerie, and that the list was used by the German police to arrest all the Roma. The police then transported these people to Feodosiia and shot them there.⁵⁴ In Simferopol', according to the recollections of eyewitnesses, the residents of "Gypsytown" were rounded up on December 9, 1941—the same day that the Nazis gathered the city's Krimchaks. At Nuremberg, H.H. Schubert, aide to the commander of Einsatzgruppe D, testified that he oversaw the assembly and execution of Simferopol's Roma as Ohlendorf's plenipotentiary: "I went to the Gypsy quarter of Simferopol' and supervised the loading of the people who were to be shot into a truck. I took care that the loading was completed as quickly as possible and that there were no disturbances or unrest on the part of the native population. Furthermore, I took care that the condemned persons were not beaten while the loading was going on."⁵⁵

In his diary, the cultured and observant Kh.G. Lashkevich described the circumstances of the occupiers' solution to the Gypsy Question:

At the same time [as the Krimchaks] the Gypsies went in compliance with the order. Why they wanted to expel the Gypsies I do not understand. For in harmony with the Germans' racial distribution of people, they are not associated at all with the Semitic tribes. The Gypsies came in crowds on carts and wagons to the Talmud-Torah [school] building. For some reason they raised a kind of green flag (the symbol of Islam) and they set a mullah at the head of their procession. The Gypsies tried to persuade the Germans that they were not Gypsies; a few identify themselves as Tatars, others as Turkmens. But their protests were ignored and they were moved into the big building.⁵⁶

As one witness testified, 800 to 1,000 Roma were exterminated in Simferopol' in December 1941 and January 1942.⁵⁷ On August 2, 1942, the newspaper *Golos Kryma* carried an announcement of the renaming of several streets in the city, including Tsyganskii Pereulok (Gypsy Lane), which was to be called Kachinskii Street in Russian and Katschagasse in German.

Nevertheless, according to eyewitness statements, many Roma were able to escape the massacres by fleeing the city. In addition, thanks to linguistic and religious similarities between the two groups, many Roma were able to survive by presenting themselves as Crimean Tatars. Significantly, the Crimean Tatar administration (“Muslim committees” were formed in each city and district center) undertook to protect the Romani minority—or at least that part of it that professed Islam. According to stories that are undocumented, but to this day remain deeply rooted in the collective memory of the Crimean Tatar intelligentsia, the Crimean Tatar Muslim Committee interceded for the Roma with the German command during the height of the campaign to round up and destroy the Roma in Simferopol’; the mass persecutions then stopped.⁵⁸ Inasmuch as the committee was formed only at the end of December 1941 or the beginning of January 1942, only a few Roma in Simferopol’ could have benefited from its intercession. In any case, since the Nazis were hoping to win over the Crimean Tatars, and since much of the Romani population had already been destroyed by this time, it cost the Germans little to permit themselves this gesture. This story is therefore not without foundation. At Nuremberg, Ohlendorf testified that the “solution” to the Gypsy Question in Simferopol’ did not proceed along a straight path, but was complicated by the fact that the Roma and the Crimean Tatars shared a religious faith: “There were certain difficulties [in the identification of Roma], because some of the Gypsies—if not all of them—were Muslims. For this reason we considered it important not to damage relations with the Tatars, and therefore, [in searching out and selecting Roma for extermination] we used people who understood the situation and the population.”⁵⁹ The Muslim Committee and its consultants may have been involved in deciding “on the spot” which of the Roma were “essential” and which might be handed over to the Germans.

In any case, having destroyed most of the Roma in Simferopol’ in the first half of December 1941, the occupiers did not pursue those individuals who had survived. The eyewitness Lashkevich wrote about this as well: “They did not manage to catch some of the Gypsies, and for reasons unknown to me, these were spared and were no longer persecuted.”⁶⁰ Interestingly, on March 27, 1942 the newspaper *Azat Kirim* (Liberated Crimea), which was published in the Crimean Tatar language and was the organ of the Simferopol’ Muslim Committee, published an article about a group of Roma on the peninsula who called themselves *Turkmen*. Author N. Seidametov maintained that Crimean Roma were “related to Iranian tribes” and that the Turkmen were different from other Roma in terms of “their language, their ceremonies, and their conduct.” The article contained no negative assessments of the Roma. In all probability, the editors were trying, in an indirect manner, to clarify to the Tatar population the committee’s position. In making it clear that the Islamicized Romani population was not to be persecuted, it sought to legitimize the committee’s presence on the peninsula.

One preserved source that sheds light on the surviving Romas' strategy for survival in the city is the data from the statistical office of the Simferopol' city council. According to these data, as of November 1, 1941 (the beginning of the occupation period), 1,700 Roma were registered in the city.⁶¹ According to "strictly provisional estimates," on January 1, 1942 (as the wave of destruction of the Roma was sweeping the city), the municipal administration counted 1,100 Roma in the city.⁶² According to the data of that same statistical bureau, as of January 1, 1943, only eight Roma remained in the city.⁶³ We know of no mass actions against Roma in Simferopol' in 1942. It seems likely that while the data for the period November 1, 1941 through January 1, 1942 reflect the number of people killed during the *Gross-Aktion*, the reduction in numbers of officially registered Roma over the course of 1942 can be explained not in terms of destruction, but by a mass change in the official ethnic status of those Roma who were not caught up in the murderous events of December, 1941: in municipal records—possibly as a result of the Muslim Committee's influence—they began to be identified as Crimean Tatars.

The "Muslim factor" stood out in even sharper relief in Bakhchisarai, where, according to various eyewitness oral testimonies, the Romani population did not suffer. The Bakhchisarai Crimean Tatar oral tradition includes the following story: When the Roma were assembled for "resettlement," the Muslim Greek headman of the city, Fenerov, "went up to the weeping crowd and asked [the German] officer to pick out three [Roma] at his discretion. This was done. Fenerov brought them to the headquarters and asked them . . . to take off their trousers in front of the Germans. Before the amazed Germans stood . . . Muslims. Fenerov then said that he could no longer be head of a city in which Muslims were being shot. The repressions were called off."⁶⁴ This is, in all likelihood, a mythologized version of events. The reality was probably more complex; efforts to save the Roma were made not only by the municipal administration, but also by the Bakhchisarai Muslim Committee. The petitions were made not on behalf of all Roma, but above all for the benefit of Roma who had lived side by side with the Tatars for decades, had gone to the same mosque, had spoken the same language, and had worked a trade or a retail business that was necessary to the community.⁶⁵

A dearth of sources prevents us from constructing a more detailed assessment of the significance of the "Muslim factor" and Muslim neighbors in rescuing some of the Crimean Roma. The question thus arises: Since the available sources are for the most part memoirs or oral histories, or were obtained relatively recently—and in any case not from Roma themselves but from their ethnic neighbors—could the role and achievements of Crimean Tatars in rescuing Roma be exaggerated? Is this not a Crimean Tatar representation of the image of the rescuer? There is at least one source, however, that records the events through the eyes of victims. In his diary, the above-mentioned Russian witness, Simferopol'

resident Kh.G. Lashkevich, cited a conversation he had had with one of the Roma who survived the December *Aktion*:

My first [conversation partner] (I don't know his name) told me: "I was already in the truck with my daughter and we were waiting to be sent off. When I saw a Tatar acquaintance of mine talking to the Germans, I shouted at him: "Save me, tell the Germans that I'm not a Gypsy, but a Tatar, after all we're friends." And that Tatar began to tell the Germans that I wasn't a Gypsy, but a Turkmen, and they let me and my daughter out. Then I began to plead for them to release my wife and my other children and grandchildren, who were sitting in the other trucks. But the other Roma, seeing that I had been let out, began to shout all at once that they weren't Roma, but also Turkmen like me, and begged to be released. Then my friend, the Tatar, said to me: "better to save yourself. You won't save your family anyway, and they'll take you back into the truck, and I'll catch hell for protecting you." So I ran away with my daughter, and my wife and all my children and grandchildren perished⁶⁶

This fragment demonstrates that attempts to present Roma to the Germans as Tatars were initiated not only by Tatars, but also by the Roma themselves. It seems that, precisely because of numerous appeals of this kind to the Germans, some of the Roma of Simferopol' survived, and then, over the course of 1942, hurried to change their official ethnic group membership to Crimean Tatar in the city's registry.

The Solution of the Gypsy Question in the Villages of the Peninsula

In the rural areas of the peninsula, too, the Gypsy Question was solved throughout the first half of 1942 simultaneously with the Jewish Question. The Romas' integration into the rural economy was the result of the Soviet authorities' attempts in the 1920s and 1930s to win them over to agricultural labor.⁶⁷ Many Romani families did in fact settle in the villages, working on collective farms in Biiuk-Onlar, Dzhankoi, Stary Krym, Kolai, and other districts.

The identification and registration of the Romani population was undertaken on the initiative and orders of the field commandant offices, which issued orders to the district headmen, who in turn passed them on to the village headmen. The documents provide evidence of broad participation on the part of the local administration—village headmen and auxiliary police—in registering and rounding up Roma. The actual extermination of the Roma was the responsibility of detachments of Einsatzgruppe D and subunits of the field gendarmerie. It is important to note that in rural areas, as well as in the cities, the killing units made no distinctions between settled and nomadic Roma. For the Germans, the fact that a group of Roma or even a few families were living close together would be sufficient reason to include them among those slated for destruction—even if they were completely socially integrated into the surrounding community.

Thus, the Buraliev family lived in Karagoz village in the Stary Krym district. The mother and father worked on a collective farm and their daughters went to school. According to a witness's testimony, "in February 1942 a truck pulled up to the house where the Buralievs lived. Every member of the family was loaded onto the truck and taken to Stary Krym We never saw these people again, but the other villagers and I believe that they were all shot since, after the troops arrived in the Crimea, the Germans killed Jews, Krimchaks, and Gypsies without mercy."⁶⁸

In similar examples, the seven members of the Asanov family were transported out of the Dzhuma-Eli village in the Stary Krym district and shot.⁶⁹ At the Biiuk-Onlar station on January 15, 1942, Petr Fursenko and his family of six from the village of Dzhaichi in the Biiuk-Onlar district were shot "for being Gypsy by nationality."⁷⁰ In the Kolai district, thirty-two Roma were killed in the village of Terepli-Abash, six in Arlin-Barin, eight in Nem-Barin, two in Shirin, two in Mikhailovka, twenty-five in the "Bolshevik" kolkhoz, two in Avlach village, and three in the "March 8" kolkhoz.⁷¹

In March 1942, the German gendarmerie in the village of Abakly-Toma in the Dzhankoi district ordered the headman of the rural council, his deputy, and the clerk of the rural council to compile a list of the sixty Roma who lived in the village. On March 28, when a gas van came to the village, these local officials helped collect the Roma and load them into the truck. Later, investigators established that the Roma were killed and their corpses tossed out into the open in the northeastern section of Dzhankoi.⁷² In the neighboring village of Burlak-Toma, the forty-five Romani residents were likewise assembled and loaded into the "gas chamber on wheels" with the assistance of the local headman and two local policemen. It is important to stress here that these Roma were not nomads, alien to the local population; on the contrary, in the words of one witness, they were "native residents of Burlak-Toma village; before the war they were members of our kolkhoz and were good workers. The gassed Gypsies included Komsomol members and old people."⁷³

After the liberation of the peninsula, the former policemen and village headmen mentioned here claimed that they had not known the purposes of the Romani registration or the gas vans—or the plans of the Germans in general. There may have been some truth to these claims. The local collaborationists simply wanted to rid themselves of the Roma, not least because they wanted to acquire their property. In all likelihood, they did not trouble themselves with thoughts about the Romas' fate. We cannot know how they would have conducted themselves if they had known in advance what lay ahead for those whose names were on the registration lists they presented to the authorities. However, when the Roma were carried off and news of their elimination became known, this did not stop the headmen and the police from appropriating the victims' property for

themselves. For example, one took some trousers, a summer dress, a mattress, and other things, while another took a dress, a record player, a suit, slippers, and other items. One local official testified: “Of the grain that was left over from the gassed Gypsies I swapped two centners of wheat for sixty eggs, and in exchange for a four-month-old pig and the sixty eggs I got from the Germans one cow that had belonged to these same Gypsies.”⁷⁴

The postwar claims of many witnesses underline the role of the local administration in identifying Roma to the German authorities. According to these testimonies, Roma who lived in villages throughout the Dzhankoi district survived because the local headmen did not provide information about “their” Roma to the German administration; usually they listed them instead as Tatars.⁷⁵ It is difficult to determine why they did so. One explanation might be that the rural administration sincerely considered these Roma to be Tatars—again owing to their religious-cultural kinship with them. Another might be that these village chiefs guessed what was in store for these Roma, and therefore took the risk of telling the Germans a falsehood.

The postwar depositions of relatives of the dead may shed some light on the question of the victims’ national identification. When the relatives made their depositions to Soviet state security bodies, they identified themselves as Tatars; they insisted that the deceased had been Crimean Tatars by nationality, but that the village headmen had handed them over to the Germans as “Tatar Gypsies.” Thus one witness, identified as a Tatar in the interrogation protocol, testified that “in March 1942, during the German occupation of our district, a part of the Tatar population numbering forty-five persons was assembled by local headman Krivoruchko under the designation of ‘Tatar Gypsies,’ although they were all part of the native population of Tatars, workers and poor peasants. Personally I was an eyewitness who saw how the Germans put everyone who was under arrest in chief Krivoruchko’s courtyard into the gas van that had driven up.”⁷⁶ The evidence is clear that there was no single opinion in society regarding the ethnic affiliation of this population group. Some people, including the victims themselves (according to their relatives), preferred to be considered Tatars. Others, including a portion of the Crimean Tatar population, were in no hurry to accept the Chingené as “their own.” This ambivalence, which did not play a substantial role in peacetime, played a crucial and at times tragic role in the events of the occupation period—when the criterion of group membership was decisive in matters of life and death.

As in the cities, the destruction of the Roma in the countryside was not carried to its conclusion. Thus, the report of the Evpatoriia Feldkommandantur (Field Commandant) (V) 810 of July 9, 1942, stated that according to the information provided by the local headmen in the Evpatoriia district, seventy-six Roma were still living among a total population of 91,910 people.⁷⁷

The general situation in the Crimea, as stated in an April 8, 1942 Einsatzgruppe D report, was that “with the exception of small groups still showing

up in the northern Crimea, there no longer are any Jews, Krimchaks, or Gypsies on this territory.” However, according to a June 15, 1942 army report, 405 Roma were counted on the peninsula out of a total civilian population of 573,428.⁷⁸ The last known references to the extermination of the Roma date to the middle of 1942. No later testimonies about this have surfaced to date. This does not mean, however, that there were no longer any Roma on the peninsula after that time.

Some information about occupation policy toward the Roma in the Crimea can be found in reports to the Central Headquarters of the Partisan Movement (CHPM) in Moscow. An agent’s report for October 1942 to Ponomarenko, the head of the CHPM, from Seleznev, the head of the Southern Headquarters of the Partisan Movement, stated that “the Germans have begun to resolve the nationality question by totally exterminating Jews and Gypsies.”⁷⁹ A few months later, however, this information had to be corrected. In a July 1, 1943 report, Bulatov, the plenipotentiary of the headquarters of the partisan movement in the Crimea wrote to Belchenko, the deputy chief of the CHPM, that “the Jewish population is undergoing complete physical extermination, as are the Krimchaks and *some* of the Gypsies.”⁸⁰

That a small part of the Romani population survived the occupation is also confirmed by the fact that the Soviet authorities subsequently deported Roma from the Crimea, together with Crimean Tatars, Armenians, Bulgarians, and Greeks, in the spring and summer of 1944. In the official documents of the NKVD—telegrams, reports, and statistical accounts of the progress of the deportation—the Roma were not singled out as a separate category. Apparently, in their haste the police organs responsible for deportation assumed that the remaining Roma were Tatars. (For the same reason, several representatives of another culturally Turkicized Crimean ethnic group that was not included in the NKVD’s instructions, the Karaites, were deported as well.)

According to local Party records, from the rural Kirovskii district alone at the end of June 1944 “Gypsies from sixteen families, or 111 persons—of them 16 men, 31 women, and 64 children”—were deported.⁸¹ Among the 4,286 people arriving in the Gur’evskii *oblast’* of the Kazakh SSR in July 1944 from the Crimean ASSR were Bulgarians, Greeks, Armenians, Tatars, Karaites, and a number of Roma.⁸² In 1948, officials of the Ministry of Internal Affairs (MVD, the successor of the NKVD) discussed petitions for exemption from the “special deportee” category⁸³ for people who could not prove their ethnic identity; Crimean Roma also figured among them.⁸⁴ In 1949, an MVD report noted that among the people in the “others” category who had been deported from the Crimea in 1944 alongside the “basic contingent” were 1,109 Roma.⁸⁵

It is highly likely that the group of surviving Crimean Roma who were closest in language and culture to the Crimean Tatars was in fact the group who were deported; thus it was a bitter irony of fate that the Roma, having been saved from

Nazi persecution because of this closeness, were persecuted by the restored Soviet power for the very same reason. In any event, there is reason to believe that more than one thousand Roma survived the Nazi occupation of the Crimea.

* * *

Based on the analysis presented above, we may conclude that the Romani ethnic minority on the peninsula was doomed to destruction so long as the occupation authorities saw them as a distinct group, and until the authorities began to take into consideration the specifics of the local circumstances. But, once they had obliterated the more or less significant communities, the occupation forces did not bother to search out individual Roma—something that they had done in the case of the Jews. Likewise, the Russian-language Crimean press—the newspapers *Golos Kryma* (Voice of the Crimea), *Feodosiiskii vestnik* (Feodosiia Herald), *Evpatoriiskie izvestiia* (Evpatoriia News), *Sakskie izvestiia* (Saki News), and others—was filled to overflowing with antisemitic propaganda, but did not devote a single line to the “Gypsy Question.”⁸⁶ No evidence has come to light of even a single case in which Roma were denounced to the SD or the local police, though there were many instances of denunciations of Jews. Having escaped the waves of extermination that swept the cities and villages of the peninsula between the end of 1941 and the middle of 1942, the surviving Roma did not arouse great interest on the part of the occupation authorities. Of no little importance was the fact that the Einsatzgruppe D detachments who had carried out the mass executions of Jews and Roma left the peninsula in August 1942. From its headquarters in Simferopol’, the permanent apparatus of the SD took up the task of ensuring political security in the Crimea. A special department was established within this apparatus to implement policy on the Jewish Question. The sources known to us are silent, however, on the extent to which the Gypsy Question was part of this institution’s sphere of responsibility.

Paradoxically, a number of sources confirm that some Roma served SS in police structures and in auxiliary collaborationist formations on the peninsula. For example, the poorly educated Romani artist Il’ias Arifov, a native of Evpatoriia, served as a squad leader in the 147th Volunteer Tatar Battalion.⁸⁷ Another Rom, Kurtmambet Seitumerov, was serving as a private in the 152nd Volunteer Tatar Battalion as of March 1943.⁸⁸ Roma also served in the guard regiment under the Simferopol’ detachment of the SD: Riza Grabov, a native of Simferopol’ and a guitarist before the war, “served in the regiment as a volunteer private and like everyone else wore the military uniform of a German army soldier and had his own weapon. He also stood guard over arrested Soviet citizens held in the internal prison of the SD.”⁸⁹ Anafii Sattarov, who lived before the war in the Simferopol’ “Gypsytown,” had a reputation in the regiment as a “fervent” participant in conducting arrested Soviet citizens to the SD to be shot.⁹⁰

There are also documented cases in which Roma—along with members of other nationality groups—served as SD informers. A former employee of the Karasubazar city council stated that the Roma Amet Moldavanov, Yunus Furundzhiev, and Shamatovskii were among the six informers who worked for the local section of the SD.⁹¹

How should one interpret Romas' service in the organizations that had annihilated most of their ethnic group? Was this service grounded in conviction, or compulsion, or fear of being exposed and having their names added to the list of those to be destroyed? From the postwar interrogation records of their colleagues, we learn that at the lowest level—the level of privates and platoon leaders in the SD company—the ethnicity of these men was well known. However, the sources do not tell us whether this information went beyond the Crimean Tatar leadership of the volunteer formations. The most likely explanation for these individuals' survival is that rumors about their background never reached the German command of the units. One man who was officially identified as a Crimean Tatar in his SD guard company later explained his service in terms of pressure and threats from the Muslim committee: "I am really a Gypsy by nationality, and the Germans were shooting Gypsies. A member of the Muslim Committee whose name was Ennan knew that we were Gypsies and threatened to expose us to the Germans. I had no intention of joining the volunteer Tatar battalion, but at that time it looked as though our whole family could be shot. My family and I talked about this and we all decided that I should go to the Muslim Committee and voluntarily enlist in the German army."⁹²

Clearly, in this and analogous cases the threat of reprisals led to the decision to disguise one's ethnic identity and to serve zealously in order to deflect possible suspicion. The will to survive overcame feelings of ethno-psychological community with those who had been murdered. At the same time, however, it is worth considering that if witnesses had other motives, they may have characterized their choices to Soviet investigative bodies as the result of compulsion in order to deflect responsibility for criminal acts and charges of willing collaboration. Of course, the fact of collaboration does not distinguish the *Porajmos* from the Holocaust: it is natural for individuals to use every possible means to survive in the face of mortal danger. The Jews, however, had far fewer opportunities available to them.

Key Factors in Nazi Policy toward the Roma in the Crimea

In summing up, we should note that both the Jewish and the Romani populations of the peninsula were largely exterminated by the Nazi occupiers. However, the Jews in Nazi-occupied regions (including the Crimea) faced total eradication throughout the entire occupation period, and their annihilation occurred as the occupation authorities carried out unambiguous decisions taken in Berlin and applicable to all occupied territories. The various leaders of the Reich and the

heads of occupation agencies in the East did not regard the Gypsy Question in the same way; policy with respect to the Roma bore the marks of polycentrism and lack of coordination.

Military and political conditions in the Crimea led army commanders to conclude that they needed to eliminate as quickly as possible the unwanted economic burden of “superfluous” elements of the population. The Jewish population was the first to be doomed to destruction, although its liquidation, having been ideologically predetermined, would have been carried out sooner or later in any case. The obliteration of the Roma was not a primary objective of the occupation administration on Soviet territory. But the organs of persecution—the SS Einsatzgruppen whose mission was to ensure the security of the Wehrmacht’s rear area and to liquidate the “political opponents” of the regime—enjoyed great latitude in determining whom to include in that category. Nazi ideology and propaganda regarded Roma, just after the Jews, as racially and socially inferior, and moreover as potentially dangerous. Given the specific conditions of the military administration (which was concerned not with exploitation of the population but with elimination of perceived threats), the local SS organs determined that they should be included among the doomed.

However, this policy proved adaptable wherever the occupiers found it tactically advantageous to maintain good relations with the cooperative part of the local population. Where they did not sense a need to maintain such relations within the local population, the killing units continued the process of extermination up to the point of these forces’ redeployment from Crimean territory. This adaptability more than anything else distinguishes the Holocaust from the *Porajmos* in the Crimean context: no tactical considerations or urgent calculations on the part of the authorities could have saved the Jews from destruction. This contrast places the absence of a universal ideological foundation for anti-Roma measures on the peninsula in particularly sharp relief.

In sum, the measures taken by the Nazi occupiers in the Crimea on the Gypsy Question were the result not so much of the strict fulfillment of central decrees as they were a broad interpretation of general ideological lines in a local situation by separate agencies of the occupying power—an adaptation of the general line by local functionaries under the influence of local conditions. Having destroyed both the Jewish population and the nomadic Romani communities, as well as groups of Roma who lived closely together in the cities and small towns and therefore did not escape notice, the mobile detachments of the security police and the SD abandoned the Crimean peninsula. In the absence of any instructions to complete the annihilation of the remaining Roma, the permanent apparatus of the SS and the police that took their place were not motivated to root out those who had been spared. This gave a few individuals the priceless opportunity to survive.

Translated from the Russian by Jack Piotrow

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Notes

The author is deeply grateful to Dr. Karel Berkhoff and the Center for Holocaust and Genocide Studies (Amsterdam, the Netherlands) for supporting the research project that resulted in this article; and to Elena Marushiakova, Veselin Popov, Nikolai Bessonov, Andrej Angrick, and Martin Holler for their valuable comments. The conclusions, however, are the responsibility of the author alone.

1. Philip Friedman, “Nazi Extermination of the Gypsies: A Nazi Genocide Operation against the ‘Aryan People,’” *Jewish Frontier* 18 (1951): 11–14. Reproduced as “The Extermination of the Gypsies: Nazi Genocide of an Aryan People,” in Philip Friedman, *Roads to Extinction: Essays on the Holocaust* (New York: Jewish Publication Society of America, 1980), 381–86.

2. For more detail on the gradual inclusion of the theme of the Nazi persecution of the Roma in social discourse in postwar Germany, as well as on the differing approaches to the theme, see Gilad Margalit, “The Representation of the Nazi Persecution of the Gypsies in German Discourse after 1945,” *German History* 17, no. 2 (1999): 221–40.

3. Guenter Lewy, “Gypsies in German Concentration Camps,” in *Roma and Sinti: Under-Studied Victims of Nazism* (Washington, DC: United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, 2002), 23–32; Hans-Dieter Schmid, “‘... Treat them like Jewish objects’: The Treatment of the Sinti and Roma at the Hands of the Fiscal Administration,” *Romani Studies* 13, no. 2 (2003): 149–62.

4. Elisabeth Klamper, “Persecution and Annihilation of Roma and Sinti in Austria, 1938–1945,” *Romani Studies* 3, no. 2 (1993): 55–65; Erika Thurner, *National Socialism and Gypsies in Austria* (Tuscaloosa: The University of Alabama Press, 1998).

5. Henry Huttenbach, “The Romani *Porajmos*: The Nazi Genocide of Europe’s Gypsies,” *Nationalities Papers* 19, no. 3 (1991): 373–94.

6. Denis Peschanski, “The Gypsies in the Upheaval: The Situation in France, 1939–1946,” in *Roma and Sinti: Under-Studied Victims of Nazism*, 49–58; Viorel Achim, “Romanian Memory of the Persecution of Roma,” in *Roma and Sinti: Under-Studied Victims of Nazism*, 59–78. See also Radu Ioanid, “The Deportation, Persecution, and Extermination of Gypsies,” in *The Holocaust in Romania: The Destruction of Jews and Gypsies under the Antonescu Regime, 1940–1944* (Chicago: Ivan R Dee in association with the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, 2000), 225–37; Mark Biondich, “Persecution of Roma-Sinti in Croatia, 1941–1945,” in *Roma and Sinti: Under-Studied Victims of Nazism*, 33–48; Jiri Lipa, “The Fate of Gypsies in Czechoslovakia under Nazi Domination,” in *A Mosaic of*

Victims: Non-Jews Persecuted and Murdered by the Nazis, ed. Michael Berenbaum (New York: New York University Press, 1990), 207–15; Ctibor Nečas, *The Holocaust of the Czech Roma* (Prague: Prostor, 1999); Anton Weiss-Wendt, “Extermination of the Gypsies in Estonia during World War II: Popular Images and Official Policies,” *Holocaust and Genocide Studies* 17, no. 1 (2003): 31–61; Vytautas Toleikis, “Lithuanian Roma during the Years of Nazi Occupation,” in *Murders of Prisoners of War and of Civilian Population in Lithuania, 1941–1944*, ed. Christoph Dieckmann, Vytautas Toleikis, and Rimantas Zizas (Vilnius: Margi raštai, 2005).

7. In this regard, it is revealing that the above-cited materials from a symposium at the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum in Washington, DC in 2002 were published under the title *Roma and Sinti: Under-Studied Victims of Nazism*. See also Donald Kenrick and Grattan Paxon, *Gypsies under the Swastika* (Hertfordshire, UK: University of Hertfordshire Press, 1995).

8. On the term’s place in Romani historical memory today and the role that Roma activists envision for it in the future (and in particular its role in consolidation of the various groups into a single Roma community), see Slawomir Kapralski, “Why Teach about the Romani Holocaust?” in *Why Should We Teach about the Holocaust?* ed. Jolanta Ambrosewicz-Jacobs and Leszek Hondo (Cracow: The Jagiellonian University, 2005), 82–92. On the discussion concerning the term *Porajmos* and opposition to its use, see Nikolai Bessonov, “Ob ispol’zovanii terminov ‘Porajmos’ i ‘Kholokost’ v znachenii ‘genotsid tsygan,’” *Holokost i suchasnist’* 2, no. 1 (2007): 71–82.

9. Sybil Milton, “Nazi Policies toward Roma and Sinti, 1933–1945,” *Journal of the Gypsy Lore Society* 2, no. 1 (1992): 1–18; see also Milton’s “Gypsies and the Holocaust,” *The History Teacher* 24, no. 4 (1991): 375–87.

10. Ian Hancock, “Responses to the *Porrajmos*: The Romani Holocaust,” in *Is the Holocaust Unique? Perspectives on Comparative Genocide*, ed. Alan S. Rosenbaum (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1996), 39–64.

11. Brenda Davis Lutz and James M. Lutz, “Gypsies as Victims of the Holocaust,” *Holocaust and Genocide Studies* 9, no. 3 (Winter, 1995): 346–48.

12. Yehuda Bauer, “Gypsies” in *Anatomy of the Auschwitz Death Camp*, ed. Yisrael Gutman and Michael Berenbaum (Bloomington: Indiana University Press in association with the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, 1998), 441–55; and idem, “Correspondence: Gypsies and the Holocaust,” *The History Teacher* 25, no. 4 (August, 1992): 513–21.

13. Michael Zimmermann, *Rassenutopie und Genozid: Die nationalsozialistische ‘Lösung der Zigeunerfrage’* (Hamburg: Christians, 1996); “Intent, Failure of Plans, and Escalation: Nazi Persecution of the Gypsies in Germany and Austria, 1933–1942,” in *Roma and Sinti: Under-Studied Victims of Nazism*, 9–21; and idem, “The National Socialist ‘Solution of the Gypsy Question’: Central Decisions, Local Initiatives, and their Interrelation,” *Holocaust and Genocide Studies* 15, no. 3 (Winter, 2001): 412–27.

14. Guenter Lewy, *The Nazi Persecution of the Gypsies* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000); and idem, “Gypsies and Jews under the Nazis,” *Holocaust and Genocide Studies* 13, no. 3 (1999): 383–404.

15. Gilad Margalit, "The Uniqueness of the Nazi Persecution of the Gypsies," *Romani Studies* 10, no. 2 (2000): 185–210.
16. Andrej Angrick, *Besatzungspolitik und Massenmord: Die Einsatzgruppe D in der südlichen Sowjetunion 1941–43* (Hamburg: Hamburger Edition, 2003); Norbert Kunz, *Die Krim unter deutscher Herrschaft (1940–1944): Germanisierungsutopie und Besatzungsrealität* (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 2005); Mikhail I. Tyaglyy, *Mesta massovogo unichtozheniia evreev Kryma v period natsistskoi okkupatsii poluostrova (1941–1944): Spravochnik* (Simferopol': BETs "Khesed Shimon," 2005).
17. For more on this see Guenter Lewy, "Himmler and the 'Racially Pure Gypsies,'" *Journal of Contemporary History* 34, no. 2 (1999): 201–14. Lewy cautiously suggests that as a result of the designation of certain Romani groups as "racially pure" a significant number—perhaps more than half—were able to avoid deportation to Auschwitz (p. 210).
18. Specialized research on the fate of the Roma in the occupied Soviet territories is lacking. Brief sections appear in: Kenrick and Paxon, *Gypsies under the Swastika*, 89–126; I. A. Al'tman, *Zhertvy nenavisti: Kholokost v SSSR, 1941–1945 gg.* (Moscow: Fond "Kovcheg," 2002), 38–39; Angus Fraser, *Tsigani*, 268–71; David Crowe, *Istoriia tsigan skhidnoi Evropy ta Rosii* (Kiev: Megatype, 2003). On the Roma in Estonia, see Weiss-Wendt, "Extermination of the Gypsies in Estonia," 31–61.
19. The foundations on which the Nazi regime rested in the Reich and in the occupied lands were so different that several scholars have concluded that while the anti-Roma policies implemented in the Reich can be qualified as genocide, the policies adopted in the occupied lands cannot be defined as such. See, for example, Christopher Browning. *The Origins of the Final Solution: The Evolution of Nazi Jewish Policy, September 1939–March 1942* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2004), 473n47.
20. Crowe, *Istoriia tsigan*, 219–20.
21. Al'tman, *Zhertvy nenavisti*, 38.
22. See for example: Crowe, *Istoriia tsigan*, 215–16; Lewy, *The Nazi Persecution of Gypsies*, 121; Donald Kenrick and Grattan Puxon, *Tsygane pod svastikoi* (Moscow: Tekst, 2001), 108; Angrick, *Besatzungspolitik und Massenmord*, 342, 346, 512; Kunz, *Die Krim unter deutscher Herrschaft*, 191–94.
23. "Svedeniia o chislennosti naseleniia Kryma po perepisi 1939 g.," Gosudarstvennyi arkhiv Avtonomnoi Respubliki Krym (GAARK), f. R-137, op. 9, d. 14, l. 46.
24. The term *Chingené*, (pl. *çingeneler*), together with the term *kipti*, was the generally accepted term and was used by the administration of the Ottoman Empire to designate the Romani population; Turkish administrators adopted both terms from the Greek (*atsingani* and *yiftos*). See Eval Ginio. "Neither Muslims nor Zimmis: The Gypsies (Roma) in the Ottoman State," *Romani Studies* 14, no. 2 (2004): 131.
25. Unfortunately, we do not know how many of the Crimean Roma were Muslims since this information was not recorded when the Soviet censuses were completed.
26. There are parallels between the name of this group and the ethnonym of one of the Romani groups of Albania (the nomadic group *kurbetë* in Korcha', whose name comes either from the Arabic *kurbetë*, meaning "canopy" or "tent," or from the Turkish *gurbet* meaning

“migration,” and is connected either with the Arabic *gorbat* (“foreign land”) or with the Farsi *ghorbat* (“exile”). See David M. Crowe, “Muslim Roma in the Balkans,” *Nationalities Papers* 28, no. 1 (2000): 94.

27. Significantly, the names of the given groups trace their origins to the Tatar language: *daul*—Turkish drum; *altyn*—gold; *sepet*—basket; *ayu*—bear.

28. For further details about the socio-professional and cultural history of Crimean Roma, see M.A. Aradzhioni, “Krymskie tsygane” in *Khrestomatiia po etnicheskoï istorii i traditsionnoi kul'ture starozhil'cheskogo naseleniia Kryma*. Part 1, *Musulmane: Krymskie tatory, krymskie tsygane*, ed. M.A. Aradzhioni and A.G. Gertsen (Simferopol': Tavriia-Plus, 2004), 21–28; Aradzhioni, “Krymskie tsygane,” in *Ot kimmeriitsev do krimchakov: Narody Kryma s drevneishikh vremen do kontsa XVIII veka*, ed. I.N. Khrapunov and A.G. Gertsen (Simferopol': Dolia, 2004), 241–53; E.S. Zeinalieva, “Tsygane Kryma: Kochev'e dlinoi v sotni let,” in *Kul'turno-etnograficheskii turizm v Krymu: Spravochnoe nauchno-metodicheskoe posobie*, ed. M.A. Aradzhioni and Iu. N. Laptev (Simferopol': 2004), 151–57; Elena Marushiakova and Vesselin Popov, “Segmentation vs. consolidation: The example of four Gypsy groups in CIS,” *Romani Studies* 14, no. 2 (2004): 145–91.

29. *Trials of War Criminals before the Nuernberg Military Tribunals* (Green Series) (Washington, DC: USGPO, [1949–1953]), 4:244; see also Ronald Headland, *Messages of Murder: A Study of the Reports of the Einsatzgruppen of the Security Police and the Security Service, 1941–1943* (London: Associated University Press, 1992), 63.

30. Headland, *Messages of Murder*, 54, 63.

31. Ohlendorf's testimony may be considered unreliable for several reasons. One is that the decision to kill the Roma could have been taken later, at another administrative level and under the influence of other circumstances, but that Ohlendorf could have mistakenly associated it with an earlier situation in May 1941. Another reason is that while the prosecutors sought to prove criminal intent on the part of the accused, the defendants, in order to deflect guilt from themselves, needed to ascribe responsibility for criminal acts to higher administrative authorities and to prove that they themselves were only carrying out these orders. For a detailed analysis of Ohlendorf's defense strategy and the historical reliability of his testimony during the trial, see Hilary Camille Earl, “Accidental Justice: The Trial of Otto Ohlendorf and the *Einsatzgruppen* Leaders in the American Zone of Occupation, Germany, 1945–1958” (Ph.D. thesis, University of Toronto, 2002).

32. In his July 2, 1941 directive to the heads of the SS and the police, Heydrich designated several groups on Soviet territory as subject to execution: 1) Officials of the Comintern (together with Communist activists and politicians); 2) Top- and medium-level officials and radical lower-level officials of the Party, the Central Committee, and district and subdistrict committees; 3) People's commissars; 4) Jews in party and state employment, and other radical elements (saboteurs, propagandists, snipers, assassins, inciters, etc). See Yitzhak Arad, Shmuel Krakowski, and Shmuel Spector, eds. *The Einsatzgruppen Reports: Selections from the Dispatches of the Nazi Death Squads' Campaigns against the Jews* (New York: Holocaust Library, 1989), vii–ix.

33. Weiss-Wendt, “Extermination of the Gypsies in Estonia,” 38.

34. Gilad Margalit expresses the opinion that the April 20, 1942 entry “No extermination of the Gypsies” in Himmler's diary demonstrates that the Reichsführer-SS took a more

moderate stance toward the Romani population in the eastern territories than did his subordinates there, and that he protested the destruction of the Roma by the Einsatzgruppen (Margalit, “The Uniqueness of the Nazi Persecution of the Gypsies,” 202).

35. From the April 28, 1941 order of the high command of infantry forces (the “Brauchitsch Directive”) concerning the “objectives of the security police and the SD in the infantry units” reprinted in *Trials of War Criminals* 10:1242.

36. *Trials of War Criminals* 4:286–87.

37. Angrick, *Besatzungspolitik und Massenmord*, 252.

38. Michael Zimmermann, “The National Socialist ‘Solution of the Gypsy Question’: Central Decisions, Local Initiatives, and Their Interrelation,” *Holocaust and Genocide Studies* 15, no. 3 (2001): 416.

39. Lewy, “Gypsies and Jews Under the Nazis,” 390.

40. *Trials of War Criminals*, 4:415. Kenrick and Paxon (*Gypsies under the Swastika*, 89) give their explanation of the reasons why the Einsatzgruppen slaughtered the Gypsies without having orders to do so: “The Einsatzgruppen were certainly not obliged to kill Gypsies, in particular women and children, and they must have done so for a mixture of three reasons: a general sadistic and bloodthirsty attitude to non-Germans; knowledge that the Gypsies were a legitimate object of persecution and could be hunted like game with the approval of . . . immediate and higher superiors; and indoctrination that the Gypsies were an undesirable and dangerous people.” Such an explanation, although it neither reveals nor describes the mechanism for decision-making concerning the Roma, is in keeping with the “functionalist” approach in that it implies that the local organs of authority and concrete circumstances influenced events more than did orders from the center.

41. The Krimchaks were a small community of culturally Turkicized adherents of rabbinic Judaism (as opposed to the culturally similar Crimean Karaites, who rejected the Talmud).

42. Arad et al., *The Einsatzgruppen Reports*, 267.

43. *Ibid.*, 309.

44. *Ibid.*, 317–18.

45. *Ibid.*, 325–26.

46. “Vorläufige Angaben über die Krim,” December 15, 1941, YIVO Archives, RG-215 (Berlin Collection), box no. 36, folder OCC. E.4–18, pp. 2–22.

47. For details on ChGK documents as sources for the history of the Holocaust, see Kiril Feferman, “Soviet Investigation of Nazi Crimes in the USSR: Documenting the Holocaust,” *Journal of Genocide Research* 5, no. 4 (2003): 587–602.

48. “Pokazaniia tsygana Iakuba Kurtliarova dlia ChGK g. Evpatoriia,” Gosudarstvennyi arkhiv Rossiiskoi Federatsii (GARF), f. 7021, op. 9, d. 35, l. 34.

49. GAARK, f. R-1289, op. 1, d. 5, l. 27.

50. “Pokazaniia kuznetsa-tsygana Neisha Kemileva iz pos. Kamysh-Burun dlia ChGK g. Kerch,” GARF, f. 7021, op. 9, d. 38, l. 212–13.

51. "Protokol pokazanii svidetelia A.S. Podgornoi dlia ChGK g. Dzhan'koi," GARF, f. 7021, op. 9, d. 193, l. 19ob.
52. "Akt ChGK g. Dzhan'koi," GARF, f. 7021, op. 9, d. 193, l. 12.
53. "Kolichestvo zhitelei, zaregistrirrovavshchikhsia v gor. Feodosii po 10 dekabria 1941 g.," GAARK, f. R-1458, op. 1, d. 4, l. 122.
54. Archival-investigatory case no. 10135, Arkhiv Glavnogo upravleniia Sluzhby Bezopasnosti Ukrainy v Avtonomnoi Respublike Krym (USBU Archive in ARK), ll. 134, 205ob.
55. *Trials of War Criminals*, 4:582.
56. From the diary of Kh.G. Lashkevich, *Peredaite detiam nashim o nashei sud'be* (Simferopol': BETs "Khesed Shimon," 2002), 63.
57. Interrogation of the witness I.M. Veliev, Archives of the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, RG-06.025*05.
58. R. Adil'sha ogly, "Kuda podevalis' krymskie tsygane?" *Krym* 48 (1994): 2.
59. *Trials of War Criminals*, 4: 290.
60. Lashkevich, *Peredaite detiam nashim*, 82.
61. "Spravka o chislennosti naseleniia g. Simferopol' na 1 noiabria 1941 g.," GAARK, f. R-1302, op. 1, d. 9, l. 6.
62. "Spravka 'Sostav naseleniia g. Simferopol' po natsional'nosti i rodnomu iazyku po sostoianniui na 1 ianvaria 1942 g.," GAARK, f. R-1302, op. 1, d. 9, l. 7.
63. "Spravka 'Chislennost' i sostav naseleniia Simferopolia na 1 ianvaria 1943 g.," GAARK, f. R-1302, op. 1, d. 9, l. 2.
64. Reshid Memish, "Zabytoe plemia," *Golos Kryma*, 4 Sept. 1998.
65. The Crimea was not the only region in which Muslim religious affiliation played a role in the survival of many Roma. Here one could draw a parallel to the fate of the Roma in Bosnia-Herzegovina. Thanks to the intervention of the Bosnian Islamic clergy in 1941 and 1942, the local pro-fascist authorities there, the Ustaša, did not include in the deportation the so-called "white Gypsies"—Muslims who were thoroughly assimilated and had gradually lost their language and customs. Two other local Romani groups, the Chergasi and the Karavlas, led a nomadic lifestyle and were assimilated to a lesser degree, and were therefore subject to deportation. For further details, see Yeshayahu A. Jelinek, "Bosnia-Herzegovina at War: Relations between Moslems and Non-Moslems," *Holocaust and Genocide Studies* 5, no. 3 (1990): 289; Mark Biondich, "Persecution of Roma-Sinti in Croatia, 1941–1945," in *Roma and Sinti: Under-Studied Victims of Nazism*, 36–38; and Sevasti Trubeta, "'Gypsiness,' Racial Discourse and Persecution: Balkan Roma during the Second World War," *Nationalities Papers* 31, no. 4 (2003): 505–506. There is at least one testimony about the rescue of Romani Muslims by Tatar Muslims in Odessa in 1943; see Fatima Duduchava and Evgenii Ostapovich, "Nas Riatuvali tatory," *Romani Iag*, 25 May 2005. *Romani Iag* is the newspaper of the Romani cultural-educational association in Uzhgorod.
66. Lashkevich, *Peredaite detiam nashim*, 81.

67. As a result of the policy of encouraging Roma to settle and engage in agricultural labor, approximately 5,000 Roma settled in the Crimea, Ukraine, and the North Caucasus between 1926 and 1928 (Crowe, *Istoriia tsigan*, 208).
68. "Transcript of the interrogation of V.N. Genova," GAARK, f. R-1289, op. 1, d. 6, l. 142.
69. "Testimony of the Gypsy woman Asanova to the ChGK of the Staro-Krymskii raion," GAARK, f. R-1289, op. 1, d. 6, l. 88.
70. Records of the ChGK in the Biiuk-Onlar raion, GARF, f. 7021, op. 9, d. 34, l. 96.
71. Records of the ChGK in the Kolai raion, GAARK, f. 1289, op. 1, d. 12, l. 36–44 ob.
72. Archival-investigatory case no. 7214, ll. 132–35, USBU Archive in ARK.
73. Archival-investigatory case no. 18834, l. 57ob, USBU Archive in ARK.
74. Archival-investigatory case no. 9775, ll. 14, 26, 27, USBU Archive in ARK.
75. Archival-investigatory case no. 18834, ll. 57ob, 65, 78, USBU Archive in ARK.
76. *Ibid.*, ll. 47–48.
77. Yad Vashem archives, Record Group O 51, file 185/I, doc. 12, p. 1.
78. Report [June 15, 1942] of the Center Rear Area No. 553 (Korueck 553) in Department O.Qu./Qu.2 of Eleventh Army Headquarters, Yad Vashem archives, Record Group O 51, file 185/II, doc. 1, p. 1.
79. Rossiiskii gosudarstvennyi arkhiv sotsial'no-politicheskoi istorii (RGASPI), f. 69, op. 1, d. 623, l. 123.
80. *Ibid.*, d. 741, l. 39ob. My emphasis.
81. "Informatsionnaia zapiska sekretariu Krymskogo obkoma VKP(b) Tiuliaevu iz Kirovskogo RK VKP(b) po voprosu spetspereseleniia bolgar, grekov, armian i dr." August 1, 1944, GAARK, f. P-1, op. 1, d. 2262, l. 5.
82. "Iz dokladnoi zapiski v OSP NKVD Kazakhskoi SSR Bogdanova," cited in N.F. Bugai, ed., *Deportatsiia narodov Kryma* (Moscow: Insan, 2002), 97.
83. The term "special deportees" was a bureaucratic euphemism indicating that the people in question did not have the right to leave the regions to which they were being sent. In effect, the petitioners were asking for the right to freedom of movement and the possibility of returning to the Crimea.
84. "Perechen' no. 2 voprosov po rabote sredi vyselentsev-spetsposelentsev, obsuzhdavshchikhsia na soveshchaniu u zamestitelia ministra vnutrennykh del SSSR general-leitenanta Riasnogo," cited in Bugai, *Deportatsiia narodov Kryma*, 103.
85. "Spravka o kolichestve lits drugikh natsional'nostei, nakhodiashchikhsia na spetsposeleonii, vyseleennykh s nemtsami, s vyselentsami Kavkaza, Kryma, no ne vkhodiashchikh v sostav semei etikh kontingentov," cited in Bugai, *Deportatsiia narodov Kryma*, 114. However, it should be noted that not all of those who declared Roma identity were in fact Roma. Crimean Tatars could also avail themselves of this possibility in order to return to their homeland. Crimean Tatars were not allowed to return to the Crimea, but if Roma were

deported in 1944, it was only as a result of an error. Therefore, in order to return to the Crimea, some Tatars may have claimed to be Roma.

86. Quite the contrary: After the Russian émigré singer Petr Leshchenko arrived and began to perform in Simferopol', *Golos Kryma* printed the following on December 5: "On Friday December 3rd the emigrant Petr Leshchenko, who is well known for his presentation of Gypsy songs, performed on the radio. He sang four songs in Russian, including 'Farewell, My Gypsy Camp' and his signature song, 'Chubchik.'" See V.N. Gurkovich, "Russkii pevets Petr Leshchenko, ofitser Rumynskoi armii v Krymu v 1943–1944 godakh," *Istoricheskoe nasledie Kryma* (journal of the Republic Committee for the Preservation of Monuments of the Autonomous Republic of Crimea) 1 (2003): 37. It is noteworthy that similar performances of Romani songs were broadcast in occupied regions of Russia. See B.N. Kovalev, *Natsistskaia okkupatsiia i kollaborationizm v Rossii, 1941–1944* (Moscow: Ast, 2003), 375. For more on the role of antisemitic doctrine as applied in the mass media of the occupied Crimea, see Mikhail Tyaglyy, "The Role of Antisemitic Doctrine in German Propaganda in the Crimea, 1941–1944," *Holocaust and Genocide Studies* 18, no. 3 (2004): 421–59.

87. Archival-investigatory case no. 20404, USBU Archive in ARK, t. 37, l. 273.

88. *Ibid.*, t. 38, l. 85.

89. Archival-investigatory case no. 20423, USBU Archive in ARK, t. 1, l. 155; t. 4, ll. 14, 65.

90. *Ibid.*, ll. 9, 65.

91. "Iz protokola doprosa ChGK Karasubazarskogo raiona svidetelia B.I. Smol'skogo," GARF, f. 7021, op. 9, d. 80, l. 34.

92. Archival-investigatory case no. 20423, USBU Archive in ARK, t. 5, l. 101.