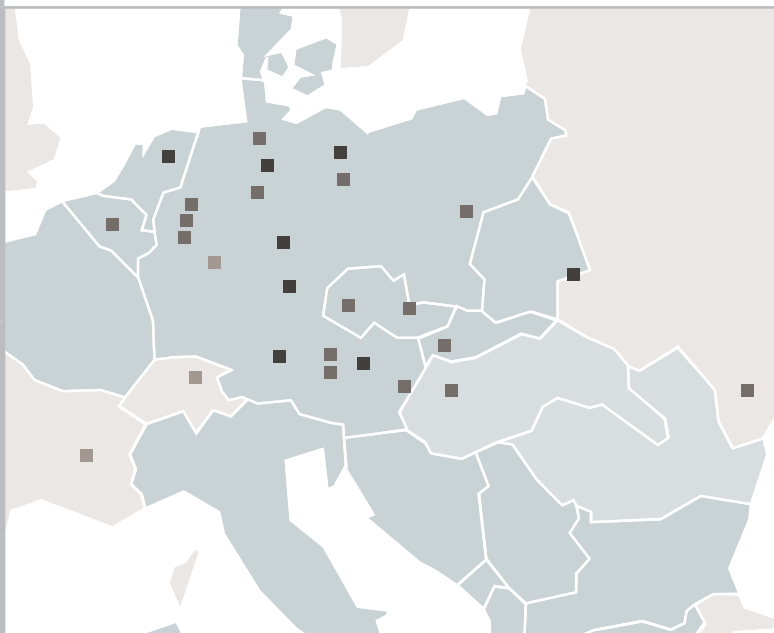


The Fate of European Roma and Sinti during the Holocaust

TEACHERS' MANUAL



**Authors: Gerhard Baumgartner, Irmgard Bibermann,
Maria Ecker, Robert Sigel**

www.romasintigenocide.eu

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Imprint:

Authors: Gerhard Baumgartner, Irmgard Bibermann,
Maria Ecker, Robert Sigel

Editorial team: Maria Ecker, Karen Polak, Werner Dreier

Graphic: Sabine Sowieja

erinnern.at
Kirchstraße 9/2
6900 Bregenz

THE STRUCTURE OF THE TEACHING MATERIALS Gerhard Baumgartner

The worksheets on the website romasintigenocide.eu present the main topics and events in the genocide of the European Roma and Sinti. The choice of topics was made in close cooperation with representatives of numerous European Roma and Sinti organisations and with the help of a large number of historians from the countries concerned. The worksheets relate exclusively to those countries in which Roma and Sinti were persecuted and murdered between 1933 and 1945.

Each worksheet is devoted to a central event or central element of persecution, which is named in the title of the worksheet and illustrated with the help of a historical photograph. In addition to a short explanatory text, each worksheet offers further information under the heading “Did you know”, suggestions for independent work on the topic, “For you to do”, and a reference to the source of the photograph. A timeline in the left margin of the sheet indicates the year or period in which the photograph was taken.

The worksheets are grouped in five chapters. The worksheets in Chapter A offer an insight into the situation of the European Roma and Sinti at the beginning of the 20th century. Chapter B presents the main elements in the persecution and marginalisation of the Roma and Sinti well before the National Socialists came to power. Chapter C illustrates the increasingly radical and systematic persecution organised by the National Socialists, while the worksheets in Chapter D address the main events in the genocide practised by the National Socialists and allied fascist organisations. Chapter E, finally, focuses on the situation of the survivors of the genocide, their fight for recognition and compensation, and culture of remembrance.

In addition, readers are introduced to Karl Stojka, who accompanies them through the chapters of the website. The various phases of his life illustrate the biography of a particularly well documented European Romani family, from the 1930s and through the years of persecution during the Nazi period right up to the present. The worksheets also contain further biographical information on individual Roma and Sinti, such as Sofia Taikon and Zoni Weisz (see also “Working with Biographies”).

At the beginning of each chapter, there is a map which can be used to localise the main events. Most of the places shown on the maps are the sites of concentration camps. Clicking on them takes you to a worksheet on that specific concentration camp. The maps show the concentration camps of greatest historical importance; only selected examples are shown of the many internment and detention camps.

ROMA: EUROPE'S LARGEST MINORITY GROUP Gerhard Baumgartner

An estimated total of about 8 million Roma and Sinti live in Europe today. They speak different languages, some of which are quite dissimilar. Although all these languages have common Indian roots – with varying numbers of loan words from Persian, Armenian and Greek – they have become distinct in the course of their development, as is the case with all big language groups. Various Sinti languages are spoken in North and West Europe, while the Romani languages of Central and South Europe were strongly influenced by the surrounding languages like Albanian and Turkish on the Balkans as well as by Romanian, Hungarian and Slavic languages.

The majority of the European Roma and Sinti live in the countries of Central Europe or on the Balkans, i.e. in countries like Hungary, Slovakia, the Czech Republic, Bulgaria and Romania. These countries have become members of the European Union in the last few years, or are currently negotiating membership. There are huge discrepancies between the figures for the Roma population listed in official censuses and the estimates published by independent human rights organisations and organisations representing Roma and Sinti. The official census data are based partly on the languages spoken, but not all members of the Roma and Sinti groups still speak the language of their minority.

As a result of their traumatic experiences during the Holocaust and continuing discrimination and persecution today, many members of the minority prefer not to be registered as Roma or Sinti. As the self-perception and external perception of these people often differ, experts find it difficult to “define” who should be considered Roma or Sinti. In some countries of western and northern Europe, the Roma and Sinti groups occasionally intersect with other itinerant groups, such as the Tinkers in Ireland, the Travellers in Great Britain or the Yeniche in western Austria, southern Germany, northern Italy and Switzerland. There is no agreement – neither in the research community nor among minority representatives – on the question whether these groups should be included in the European Roma and Sinti populations or not.

History

The European Roma and Sinti are thought to have their origins in north-eastern India, where culturally and linguistically related groups still live. Between the 5th and the 11th centuries, there were several waves of migration from that region to Persia and the Byzantine Empire. That is a period in which the many Persian, Armenian and Greek loan words entered the Romani languages. The equivalents for the English word “gypsy” in German (“Zigeuner”) and the Romance languages (e.g. Italian “zingari”, Spanish “gitanos”, French “gitans”) also go back to the time when the Roma adopted Christianity in the Byzantine Empire. In those days the Greek word “atzinganos” was used to designate so-called “untouchables”, mostly Christian hermits and others living beyond the jurisdiction of the local authorities. The German and Romance language terms were thus indicative of a specific legal status, which the Roma held on their arrival in Europe and in some cases continued to hold until well into the 17th century. In the majority society, the words “Zigeuner”, “zingari” etc. still usually involve negative stereotypes. That is why they are unacceptable to most Roma and Sinti, who consider them pejorative.

The first reference to Roma in Constantinople is dated 810, but it was not until the 14th century that the first major migratory movements to Europe took place. One of their areas of settlement was in a region of the Peloponnese known as “Little Egypt”. That is why many Roma and Sinti later called themselves “Egyptians” on their arrival in western Europe. The English word “gypsy” is an abbreviated form of “Egyptian”. The term “Egyptians” can also be explained by the fact that some of the migrating Roma and Sinti arrived in Europe on the Iberian peninsula via Egypt and North Africa.

After the collapse of the Christian crusader states in Palestine and Asia Minor, large numbers of “gypsies” made their way to western Europe with the returning armies. Their descendants today call themselves Sinti, a name whose origins have still not been completely clarified. They often declared themselves “nobles” or “Egyptian princes”, although they were probably simply freemen, i.e. they were not the subjects of any lord. For centuries, they served as musicians or as mercenaries, armourers and respected canon-makers for mercenary armies. With the introduction of national armies in the 17th century, however, these groups of free Sinti were increasingly displaced and made illegal and finally were persecuted as “robbers”.

The majority of the Roma living in Central and Eastern Europe moved to the countries they live in today in the course of the Turkish Wars. In many cases they were settled there by Christian rulers. In 1423 the Hungarian King Sigismund, for example, issued a letter of safe conduct for his “loyal Ladislaus and the gypsies who are subject to him”. A number of Roma even managed to rise to the ranks of the nobility, and in 1595 the Rom Ștefan Răzvan assumed the office of a Voivode in Moldavia. Most of the Roma in Romania, however, saw their status reduced to that of serfdom or slavery, from which they were not freed until 1859.

The discovery that the Roma probably originated in India was made by a Protestant clergyman from Győr in the west of Hungary. While studying in Leiden in the Netherlands, he met some students from India, and their language reminded him of that of the Roma in his home town. He reported this discovery in a Viennese newspaper in 1763.

Most of the groups of Roma living in Eastern Europe led settled lives. In many cities, such as Istanbul, they occupied separate suburbs. In the 18th century, Empress Maria Theresa and her son Joseph II made several attempts to force those Roma who were still itinerant to settle down. Imperial decrees were issued in 1771 and 1782 allocating land to the Roma. At the same time, however, they were deprived of their horses and forced to work as day labourers. Many of the Romani settlements in Austria are the result of those decrees. Not only were the “gypsies” forbidden to use their language and practise their traditional trades; they also had their children taken away from them to be brought up by Christian families. Many Roma fled from this compulsory exposure to “civilisation”.

The initiative of another Habsburg ruler, Archduke Karl Ludwig of Austria, on the other hand, met with the undivided approval of the Roma. In 1888 he had a six-volume dictionary of Romanes published called *Romano Csibakero Sziklaribe*, which was an attempt to combine forty Romani dialects into one written language.

Towards the end of the 19th century, most of the Eastern European Roma earned a living as day labourers, farm hands or harvest workers. In winter most of them sought to add to their meagre wages through various itinerant trades, such as tinkers, grinders, umbrella repairers, rake makers and basket weavers. Many of them also found an additional source of income as musicians. Many of the western European Sinti and Roma also practised itinerant trades: As horse dealers and pedlars they moved from fair to fair or worked as actors and musicians. All the attempts at emancipation and social integration of the so-called “gypsies” came to nothing in the 19th century with the establishment of rigidly organised nation states. Strict citizenship and pass laws left many Roma stateless, while new vagrancy laws prevented them from pursuing their itinerant trades. In the late 19th century, the Roma suffered increasingly from the workings of the modern police system. Deported by the police or locked away in poorhouses, the Roma became increasingly impoverished and were generally criminalised. During the First World War, many countries interned itinerant Roma in prison camps for many years. On the other hand, many settled Roma served in various armies and often returned as highly decorated soldiers. During the Great Depression and the interwar years, tensions greatly increased between Roma and Gadje, i.e. non-Roma. Local authorities were less and less willing to provide the funds for the school fees, hospital bills and welfare services that the mostly penniless day labourers among the Roma could not pay themselves.

Many countries of Europe introduced restrictive “gypsy laws”. The police authorities also became increasingly involved in international cooperation to create records of the “gypsies”, and widespread fingerprinting was employed for the first time for that purpose. From 1912 onwards, files of so-called “gypsies” were created, complete with photographs and finger prints. In 1933 representatives of all the Austrian political parties came together in Oberwart, in the province of Burgenland, for a so-called “gypsy conference”, where the first plans were discussed for forced labour or deportation to Africa – in view of the fact that the “gypsies”, as one participant put it, could not simply be killed. That task was left to the National Socialists. In 1938 the Nazis started deporting Roma and Sinti to labour camps – such as the Lackenbach “gypsy camp” in Burgenland – and later, starting in 1941, to Auschwitz-Birkenau and Chelmno in Poland.

Several hundred thousand European Roma and Sinti were murdered in the camps between 1938 and 1945. It was not until the 1980s that a gradual change in policy towards the Roma and Sinti occurred in Europe. In the following decades they were accorded official minority status in almost all countries.

Links for more on the history of the Roma:

<http://www.ushmm.org/wlc/en/article.php?ModuleId=10005219>

Roma factsheets:

<http://romafacts.uni-graz.at/index.php/history/persecution-internment-genocide-holocaust/holocaust>

A Chronology of significant dates in Romani history:

<http://web.archive.org/web/20040908144722/http://radoc.net/chronology.html>

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION ON INDIVIDUAL WORKSHEETS Gerhard Baumgartner

- A1 The photograph is one of a series of eleven that were taken in the south of Burgenland in 1931 by RAVAG (former Austrian broadcasting company) for a radio documentary programme. As can be seen in the other photos in the series, the recording team placed microphones along the road. The photos were published in RAVAG's programme magazine before the documentary was broadcast, and listeners could look at the photos while listening to the programme. Originally the photos were erroneously interpreted and used by anthropologists as images of a Romani wedding.
- A2 Little is known about the Bamberger family. Max Bamberger was murdered in Croatia. See also the worksheet on the massacre in Hrastina.
- A3 With the decline of mining for gold, silver and iron ore throughout Europe in the 18th century, many miners lost their source of income and had to live as itinerant seasonal workers. Later, in the 19th century, rationalisation measures in agriculture forced many sectors of the rural population to lead itinerant or semi-itinerant lives. Not all of them found work in the new industries and coal mines so that, by the end of the 19th century, many itinerant groups had formed, especially at the economic margins of Europe (for example, in Ireland, Scotland, the valleys of the Alps, and also Bohemia, Italy and Transylvania). That is the origin of the Tinkers, Yeniche, Savoyards and Scandinavian "Travellers" as marginalised itinerant groups in Europe. In Eastern Europe especially, they included many Roma.
- A4 Starting in the 17th century, Romani musicians and orchestras were hired to play in the palaces of the Hungarian nobility. The popular form of Hungarian folk music that developed in the 19th century under the patronage of the nobility was – and still is – largely played by so-called "gypsy bands" and for that reason is often incorrectly referred to as "gypsy music". In fact it is an early form of popular folk music, which developed with the emergence of the Hungarian national movement. The music has no more to do with traditional Romani music than flamenco – also largely played by Roma musicians.

A career as a professional musician in a classical orchestra was a family tradition in many Central European Romani families. Starting in the middle of the 19th century, these musicians received their training at Europe's leading music academies. Today also, the big orchestras of Europe's operas and concert halls include many Romani musicians. For the ordinary agricultural workers among the Eastern European Roma, too, music was a welcome source of additional income, especially in winter. Today Romani families still encourage their children to learn a musical instrument at an early age because music is seen as a good alternative source of income in times of crisis.

A6 Most of the Burgenland Roma were settled farm workers who lived in their own settlements and worked in summer as day labourers for the farming families in the villages or helped with harvest on the big estates of the nobility. In autumn and winter they had to earn additional income through seasonal itinerant labour. Many of them travelled from place to place as knife and scissor grinders, tinkers, rake and broom makers or pedlars. For this kind of work, they normally had an itinerant trade licence. These were successively revoked in the course of the economic crisis in the late 1920s and early 1930s when local authorities sought to protect local members of the various trades from outside competition.

A7 Many of the names of groups of Eastern European Roma are indicative of their traditional occupations. Most members of the subgroup of the Lovara, for example, used to be horse dealers; the Aurari were former gold miners and panners, and the Calderari or Kalderash were noted copper smiths and boiler makers.

Karl Stojka was born in his parents' caravan near Vienna in 1931. The family spent the winter in Vienna and in summer moved from place to place as Karl's father did his rounds as a horse dealer. In 1939, when the itinerant life of the Roma was forbidden, the family settled in Vienna. There the family were completely integrated. Karl and his brother, for example, were members of a youth band in the city's 16th district. In Burgenland, Romani children had been excluded from schools since 1938, but in Vienna Karl and his brothers and sisters were able to attend school until 1943. In the autumn of 1943, Karl was arrested in the classroom and sent with his mother and his brothers and sisters to the Lackenbach camp in Burgenland and from there deported to Auschwitz.

Further information: www.romasinti.eu

- A8** In the late 19th and early 20th centuries, the fast growing popularity of photography and postcards led to the rise of a romanticised stereotype of gypsies as “homeless wanderers” travelling at random from place to place and living a life in the bosom of nature, completely free of social ties. Even in those days, this image only applied to a tiny fraction of the Roma population of Europe. By the end of the 19th century, over 90 percent of the European Roma and Sinti were leading settled lives. Developments in photography and the publication of postcards helped to ensure that the lifestyle of a minority became decisive for the image of a complete ethnic group. Until the end of the 20th century, this image of the carefree, unfettered and restless wandering life of the European Roma and Sinti helped maintain numerous prejudices.
- B1** In the interwar period, the Austrian province of Burgenland had over 130 Romani settlements with a total of over 8,000 inhabitants. Most of them lived in the district of Oberwart, where the Roma accounted for about ten percent of the population before the Second World War. In 1933 the Roma settlement in Oberwart was home to a total of 282 persons living in 52 houses. The main problem for the Roma was that they did not normally own any land. While other villagers could survive at times of crisis by growing potatoes and vegetables and keeping pigs and poultry, the Roma had to buy all their food. Nor did they own any woodland where they could collect firewood like most other villagers. For those reasons, the world economic crisis and unemployment in the Great Depression had catastrophic effects for them. The Roma of Oberwart and its neighbouring villages became completely destitute and literally starved.
- B2** In the interwar period, the province of Burgenland, which had been ceded to Austria by Hungary in 1921, attracted Austrian photographers who wanted to show it as an exotic, typically Eastern European region. Photographs and travel reports in that period focused on Burgenland’s “otherness” and the contrast it presented to the rest of Austria.
- B3** The number on the photograph is from the old reference system used at the Burgenland Provincial Archives in Eisenstadt. Today the archives house one of the world’s biggest collections of police photographs of Roma. In the 19th and early 20th centuries, police officers in the province were called “gendarmes” and were the responsibility of the provincial authority. The term “police” was only used for urban officers, who were normally agents of the municipal authority.

- B5** In the last decades of the 19th century, European countries started to create increasingly accurate records of their citizens. That became necessary as voting rights were extended to more and more sectors of society, compulsory military service was introduced and social security systems established. Increasing restrictions on the freedom of movement, the introduction of national passports and the development of national identities rooted in the nation state made all members of migrant ethnic groups an object of suspicion. In 1912 France became the first country to establish separate registers of all itinerant persons, who were obliged to carry a special ID complete with photo and finger prints at all times. Many Roma and Sinti, who also spoke a different language, were considered outsiders. In many cases they were denied citizenship and classified as stateless persons. Switzerland even banned all so-called “gypsies” from entering the country – and continued to do so until after the Second World War. Systems of registration with special files and the introduction of “gypsy ID documents” were soon adopted by other European countries. The police in both Czechoslovakia and Hungary issued such documents, while Germany and Austria kept separate records of the citizens they chose to defame as “gypsies”. A leading role in the international coordination of these police measures was assumed by Interpol as the European platform for criminal police. After the rise to power of the National Socialists, the files created by the criminal police served as instruments for the deportation of Roma and Sinti to the concentration and death camps. In general it can be said that those who were classified by the police as “gypsies” in the interwar years and included in special files also suffered subsequent persecution under the National Socialists.
- B6** The psychiatrist Josef Jörger claimed that “vagabondage” was an inherited form of social behaviour and was always associated with other forms of antisocial behaviour such as prostitution, alcoholism and a life of crime. Swiss eugenicists like Josef Jörger and Ernst Rüdin had a significant influence on the formulation and radical enforcement of the racial policy of the NSDAP. During a period of study spent in the Swiss capital Berne, the German “race researcher” Robert Ritter became familiar with the theories of Josef Jörger and made them the basis of his racial categorisation of Germany’s Sinti and Roma.

- C1 As their ancestors had immigrated to Europe from Central India over a thousand years ago, the “race researchers” considered Roma and Sinti to be genuine “Arians”. According to the National Socialist ideology, therefore, they were not to be classified as “racially inferior” ethnic groups as claimed in the pseudo-scientific work of the eugenicists. It was presumably this contradiction that led in 1942 to a change of position in the logic of the persecutors. Whereas previously – as in the case of the Jewish population – it was the so-called “racially pure gypsies” and “first-degree gypsy half-castes” that were persecuted, according to a decree issued by Heinrich Himmler on 13 October 1942 “racially pure gypsies” were to be exempt from persecution. The “racial inferiority” of many “gypsies” was however in this way of thinking a product of centuries of interbreeding between Roma and disparate ethnic groups. Persecution, forced sterilisation and deportation was therefore to be discontinued in the case of particularly “racially pure” groups – which included the “Sinte and Lalleri”. The identification of „gypsies“ considered to be racially pure was entrusted to nine so-called „gypsy headman“. They were tasked to take individual people from the deportation lists on the grounds of being racially pure. In fact, the decree was never implemented as the local authorities ignored it, and deportation continued to be the fate of those who had been registered as “gypsies” in the interwar period. The decision whether the Nuremberg Laws applied in the individual case was not infrequently based on purely social criteria. Moreover, most National Socialist laws and decrees were in any case explicitly targeted not only at so-called “gypsies” but all “persons living in the manner of gypsies.”
- C2 Robert Ritter’s data and reports continued to be used by the German police authorities after 1945. It took a hunger strike by representatives of German Sinti and Roma in Dachau in 1981 to finally force the authorities to grant access to the extensive collections of reports and files and thus make them available for serious research. Robert Ritter and his staff were able to continue their careers after 1945.
Further information: <http://www.sintiundroma.de/en/sinti-roma/civil-rights-movement.html>

- C3 The files kept by local authorities, the police, National Socialist “race researchers” and concentration camp offices very often include contradictory data for one and the same person. In everyday life, many Roma and Sinti were known, not by their official names but by the names of their clans and they were accordingly registered under that name. Karl Stojka, for example, was registered in 1940 as Rigo, which was the name of his mother’s clan. Similarly, their personal documents often show the date of baptism rather than the date of birth. And when sent to the concentration camps, many of the prisoners gave an incorrect date of birth – an earlier one for children and a later one for adults – in order to be classified as fit for labour, which greatly increased the chances of survival in a concentration camp.
- C6 For further information on Johann Trollmann and an interesting memorial project, go to trollmann.info/
- C8 In many small towns and villages it was normal practice until the 1970s to put the costs of purchases on the slate i.e. the shopping was not immediately paid for but put on an account that would be settled at the end of the month or at the end of the working season. In winter especially, when day labourers had a hard time finding work, many workers’ families bought things on credit and then paid off their debts in the spring. That is the most likely explanation for the debts in the document left behind by deported families. Most of the houses in the 19th century Roma settlements were built on public land. At the time the Roma had been permitted to build their houses on poor or worthless plots. In the course of time, many of those plots increased in value, but as long as the Roma houses stood on them they could not be put to profitable use by the local authorities. Demolition of the houses, on the other hand, greatly increased the value of the land. Since most survivors lost all their documents in the years of persecution, they could rarely prove after 1945 that they had ever owned houses on such land and so received no compensation. A similar situation with regard to inadequate or a lack of legal title to property applies in many recent cases where Romani families have been expelled from their traditional inner-city residential areas in Eastern Europe and on the Balkans.

- C9** The first Roma and Sinti to be deported to slave labour camps were almost exclusively men, who were deployed for highway and power plant construction. The first Roma women to be deported in large numbers were sent to Ravensbrück in 1939 and forced to work in the factories run by the SS there. It was not until the last years of the war that women were systematically used as slave labour in industry.
- D1** The man with the identification number 17039 is Stefan Hodosy, who was born in 1911. He was sent on to Mauthausen concentration camp in 1939. Pupils can contact the Dachau Memorial Site to receive information on the fate of Stefan Hodosy.
- D2** One of the most frequent causes of death in the camps was the outbreak of an epidemic, and typhoid fever was especially feared. Such outbreaks were mostly the result of inadequate hygiene in the camps and especially contaminated drinking water. Typhoid fever is highly infectious and often ends fatally. As infected persons usually develop a reddish rash, the illness is sometimes also called spotted fever.
- D4** Most of the well-known pictures of children are from photos and films produced in the course of a pseudo-scientific race research project carried out by the German “race researcher” Eva Justin between 1943 and 1944. Many of the children were from families in which the parents had been sent to concentration camps after 1938. On completion of her research for a doctoral dissertation on “Biographies of alien-raised gypsy children and their descendants”, Eva Justin concluded in a written statement: “Every form of upbringing for gypsy children and gypsy half-castes ... including welfare care should cease.” On completion of those pseudo-scientific investigations, the 39 Sinti in the Mulfingen orphanage were sent to Auschwitz in May 1945.
Further information on Eva Justin and the Mulfingen orphans: www.romasinti.eu
- D5** Alex Wedding was the pseudonym of the communist author and journalist Margarethe Bernheim, who was born in Salzburg in 1905. When she married and moved to Berlin she was called Grete Weisskopf. Her nom de plume Alex Wedding is a reference to the Berlin suburb of Wedding, which was a workers’ quarter in the interwar period.

- D6** Transnistria was the name given in 1941 to territories located between the rivers Dnister and Bug, which belonged to Romania until 1944 and today are in Moldova and the Ukraine. The area was much bigger than the region that has been administered by Moldova since 1992.
- D8** The observer in the photo is not easy to find. He is standing in the background in the opening in the fence.
- E1** In 1943 Ceija Stojka and her family were deported to the gypsy camp at Auschwitz-Birkenau. In 1944 she was moved to the concentration camp at Bergen-Belsen and then to Ravensbrück, where she was liberated in 1945. After the war, she settled in Vienna with her surviving brothers and sisters and her mother. In 1988 she published the first autobiographical report of the fate of an Austrian Roma family during the Holocaust. The quotation is taken from her book *Wir leben im Verborgenen: Erinnerungen einer Rom-Zigeunerin* [We Live in Seclusion: Memories of a Romni]. Ceija Stojka is considered one of Austria's most important Romani writers and painters. She died in January 2013 at the age of 79.
- E2** Around 1928 the Burgenland police started creating a systematic photographic record of the Roma living in the province. In the course of "police raids", Roma settlements and buildings were also photographed. All the people living in the buildings had to line up outside their homes so that the police could see who lived where. The photographs provided a record of both the Burgenland Roma and Sinti populations and the work of the police. The Burgenland Provincial Archives today contain one of the biggest collections of such police photographs. The photograph used here is taken from that collection.
- It was not until the year 2000, in the framework of the Swiss banks' Holocaust Victims Assets Programme and the German Forced Labour Compensation Programme, that Roma and Sinti received compensation for their houses and the destruction or loss of property. In some European countries, special funds were established, such as the Austrian General Settlement Fund for Victims of National Socialism (2001).

- E3** Information on notable people of Roma and Sinti descent is to be found on the following websites:
<http://www.imninalu.net/famousGypsies.htm>
http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_Romani_people
<http://anthrocivitas.net/forum/showthread.php?t=9795>
<http://www.kickitout.org/499.php>
<https://www.facebook.com/pages/Famous-Gypsies/123435641009196>
<http://www.geni.com/projects/Romani-Gypsy-Notables/13111>
- E4** Partisans are defined as persons who undertake armed attacks in an area under the control of a power's regular forces such as the army or police. In the history books, the term is generally applied to resistance fighters who fought against the occupying German army in the Second World War.
- Maxglan** The German film director and Hitler favourite Leni Riefenstahl shot her film "Lowlands" in the Salzburg area between 1940 and 1944. As it was set in Spain, where filming was impossible because of the war, Roma and Sinti from the camp in Maxglan, and later from Marzahn in Berlin, were used for the scenes shot in the Austrian and Bavarian mountains. When the filming was finished, the Roma – including many children – were deported to Auschwitz. Leni Riefenstahl never apologised for the sufferings inflicted on the Roma and Sinti: on the contrary, she repeatedly took her critics to court.
- Weyer** The photograph is one of a series of 32 taken by the camp physician Dr. Alois Staufer during one of his visits to the camp in Weyer in Upper Austria. They are all posed photographs, with the prisoners always arranged in the same spot in front of a crumbling brick wall. The photos were discovered by the Innsbruck political scientist Andreas Maislinger in the course of his research in the early 1990s and made available to the Austrian Ministry of Education.
- Hodonin** In most cases, only women and children are to be seen on photographs taken in detention camps. The men were normally used as slave labour for major construction projects, while the women and children spent the days in the camps with nothing to do.

- Montreuil-Bellay** Researchers cannot definitely answer the question why French Roma and Sinti were mostly not deported to death camps. The French internment camps were used to hold all “travellers” or “gens de voyage”. In France, all itinerant persons had been obliged to carry a special ID complete with photo and fingerprints since 1912. That made them easy to identify. On the other hand, it was as good as impossible to distinguish the Roma and Sinti from the other itinerants because – unlike Germany – there was no such thing as a “racial certificate” in France. Only in exceptional cases were Roma and Sinti sent to German concentration and death camps from France.
- Lodz** The “gypsy camp” in the former Litzmannstadt Ghetto in Lodz is the subject of seven surviving photographs, which were presumably taken following the deportation of the inmates of the ghetto to the death camp in Chelmno in Poland. There are no prisoners to be seen in any of the photographs. The photographs are part of a collection of hundreds of diapositives made by the SS on the instructions of the ghetto administrator Hans Biebow and discovered in the 1980s. They can now be seen in the US Holocaust Memorial Museum in Washington.
- Auschwitz-Birkenau** In the middle of the barrack there was a 50 centimetre high brick-built duct with a stove at one end and a chimney at the other. Such stoves were used to heat the huts in winter.
- Babyn Yar** In 1961, the Russian poet Yevgeny Yevtushenko wrote a poem entitled “Babi Yar”, in which he criticised the Soviet distortion of the history of the massacre and the failure to erect a monument to the tens of thousands of victims twenty years after the massacre. Soviet historians systematically suppressed the fact that the victims were mainly Jews from Kiev, referring to them as Soviet citizens instead. The Russian composer Dmitri Shostakovich set Yevtushenko’s poem and other texts to music in his 13th Symphony, which was to become world-famous as the Babi Yar Symphony. Only a few performances of the work were permitted in the Soviet Union and the communist countries of Eastern Europe. The score of the music was finally smuggled out of the Soviet Union and quickly achieved international acclaim. The first monument for the victims of the massacre was built in 1976 and dedicated in general terms to the “Soviet citizens and prisoners of war” who had been murdered on the site by the National Socialist forces of occupation. It was not until 1991 that a monument to the Jewish victims of Babi Yar was erected in the form of a menorah candelabra.

WORKING WITH BIOGRAPHIES Maria Ecker

The worksheets on the website include a number of short biographies of European Roma and Sinti.¹ In educational work, increasing importance has been attached to the use of biographies. One of the reasons for that has been the availability of more and more eye-witness accounts from the period of National Socialism. Biographies have an emotional quality, and young people in particular have a natural curiosity and empathy. In most cases they would like to know more about the people concerned, their background, and the years before and after the period of persecution. They are moved and left thinking – and have questions they would like to ask. Working with one or more biographies is therefore a particularly good way of introducing a topic. It is important, however, that the biographies should not be viewed in isolation but in their historical context.

The emotional quality of biographies calls for careful treatment and a sense of responsibility. Biographies are an invitation to empathise and sympathise and to identify. They can also trigger feelings of shame and guilt. It is therefore important to offer pupils ways of working with their emotions (see suggestion no. 10). Overpowering emotions are an obstacle to learning from history and to the objectivity needed for a critical assessment of the sources. When people talk about their lives, they always make a selection, and when others write down such biographies and pass them on, they make a selection, too. A biography is like a window through which we view a person's life. We may see a lot, but it is still only a small detail of the whole picture.

Working with biographies normally involves the biographies of victims – and that is as it should be. The perpetrators often remain anonymous. And yet, persecution and murder are not something that simply happened to Roma and Sinti. The actors – the perpetrators – must be made visible, too. The fact that a biographical approach to the perpetrators and onlookers can enrich the educational process is generally accepted today, as is the caveat that such an approach is extremely challenging.

¹ Overview of the “biographical” worksheets:

Karl Stojka (A 7, C 3, E 8, Mauthausen), Wilhelm Trollmann (C 6), Bernhard Steinbach (C 7), Erna Lauenburger (D 5), Settela Steinbach (D 9), Ceija Stojka (E 1), Aleksandr Baurov (E 3), Josef Serynek (E 4), Sofia Taikon (E 5), Zoni Weisz (E 6), Else Schmidt (E 7), Max Bamberger (A 2, Hrastina massacre)

In the teaching materials presented on the website, the perpetrators are often named but not presented in the form of short biographies. However, one of the suggestions for teaching you find here is to work with the biography of a perpetrator.

Most of the following ten suggestions involve working with the content of the biographies, while others relate to the way they are constructed. Suggestions 1 and 2 are suitable as a general introduction to working with biographies and can be combined with the following ideas. Suggestions 3 – 8 relate specifically to the teaching materials. The last two proposals provide ways of going into greater depth and/or as follow-ups.

Suggestions for Teaching

A] General introduction to working with biographies

1] Biographical searches

This exercise offers an introduction to biographical research.

Working unit: small groups

Time: 15 min. (+ homework)

- _ You will do some biographical research, i.e. find historical information about a person.
- _ How will you go about it? Where will you look for information?
- _ What difficulties could that involve?
- _ Share your results with the other groups and collect them in the form of a list.

For homework:

- _ Choose someone you would like to know more about: Settela Steinbach (D 9), Zoni Weisz (E 6) or Else Schmidt (E 7).
- _ Try to find biographical information about that person.

After your biographical research:

- _ Which method of finding information proved to be the best?
 - _ How can the collection be extended?
-

2] Biographical narratives

This exercise is a simple way of showing what can influence biographical narratives and their telling.

Working unit: pairs

Time: 20 - 30 min.

- _ Think of three questions you would like to ask your partner about his/her life.
- _ Ask each other the questions.
- _ Consider for yourself: What is it like to be asked questions? What do you tell?
- _ What do you not talk about? What is it like to ask questions?

- _ Present the results of your questions and answers to the full group.
- _ When your partner has finished his/her report, say what you think about it: Are you in agreement with the way your biography was retold? What was missing? What was not intended for the group?
- _ Discussion: What factors influence biographical narratives?

B] Teaching materials

3] Which biography caught my attention?

This method is a good way of introducing the subject. Pupils are guided by their own interests and develop further questions.

Time: 20 min.

Copies of all the biographical worksheets are laid out in the room. The pupils walk round the room and look for a sheet which catches their attention and which they would like to work on. Then, each for him-/herself, they answer the following questions:

- _ Why have you chosen this worksheet?
- _ What do you learn about the people in the photograph?
- _ What do you learn about the history of the Sinti and Roma in general?
- _ Formulate three questions you would like to ask about these people/this topic.

The results are then discussed in small groups or in the class. The pupils' questions could indicate which chapters should be dealt with next.

4] The Stojkas

The well documented biography of a European Roma family as a case study.

Point of departure: worksheets on Karl Stojka (A 7, C 3, E 8, Mauthausen) and Ceija Stojka (E 1).

Time: 1 teaching unit

- _ First study the photos on the worksheets and make a note of your thoughts and feelings.
- _ What do you learn from the worksheets about Karl and Ceija Stojka?
- _ Formulate one question each about the lives of Karl and Ceija Stojka.
- _ You have been asked to place the worksheets in a logical order for an exhibition. What order do you choose and why?

5] Life after the concentration camps

Pupils are usually very interested in the lives of survivors after 1945. How were they able to live with such experiences? Worksheet E 1 is perfect for dealing with this aspect.

Time: 1 teaching unit

- _ Study the worksheet and then go to “For you to do”.
- _ Research the life of Ceija Stojka. Concentrate on her life after 1945.
- _ Imagine you can travel through time. You go back to 1953 and meet Ceija Stojka and her daughter. What do you say to them? What questions do you ask? How is the meeting? After your journey through time, write to a friend and describe the meeting.
- _ A few years ago, Ceija Stojka’s now adult daughter Silvia Jürs said in an interview: “I feel great fear. Again and again it comes to the surface and I am afraid of the people on the street. In the last ten years the fungus has grown again, completely unseen. And infamy and brutality are on the increase again.”
- _ Imagine you meet Ms Jürs today. What do you say to her? What questions do you ask?

6] Who are the perpetrators?

The example of the “race researcher” Robert Ritter can be used to work on this subject.

Worksheet: C 2 (Robert Ritter)

Time: 1 teaching unit

- _ Study the photograph in worksheet C 2 and describe Robert Ritter (right) as accurately as possible.
- _ What characteristics does the photo suggest Robert Ritter has?
- _ Research the life of Robert Ritter and draw up a short biography.
- _ How does that information fit in with the photo?
- _ What are the consequences of Ritter’s actions?

7] Prejudices past and present

With the help of the biographies of three Roma and Sinti, this exercise shows the relevance of prejudices in the past and present.

Time: 30 min.

- _ In small groups: Study one of the worksheets E 6 (Zoni Weisz), E 7 (Else Schmidt) or E 8 (Karl Stojka).
- _ What is the influence of prejudice against Roma and Sinti on the lives of Zoni Weisz, Else Schmidt or Karl Stojka?
- _ Describe the life of a person which is influenced by other people's prejudices today.
- _ Share your results with the other groups.
- _ Consider what you can do to oppose such prejudices.

8] Four biographies – one person

The product of this exercise is four versions of one biography. The pupils work in four groups. Each group is provided with different information about the life of Karl Stojka. Whereas one group only knows his name and origins, the others are given information about his childhood, the years of persecution and the post-war years. The objective is in-depth involvement with a biography (and the pupils' interpretations of it).

Worksheets: A 2, A 3, A 4; A 7, E 8, Mauthausen

Time: 1 teaching unit

In four groups:

- _ Group A: For background information, first read worksheets, A 2, A 3 and A 4. Karl Stojka was an Austrian Rom born in 1931. How do you imagine his life?
 - _ Group B: Read worksheet A 7. What do you think became of Karl Stojka in later life?
 - _ Group C: Read worksheet E 8. What kind of life do you think Karl Stojka had before the war?
 - _ Group D: Read worksheets A 7 and E 8 and Mauthausen. Summarise the information provided about the life of Karl Stojka in just a few words.
- _ Share your results, beginning with group A. You will hear four different biographies for one and the same person.
 - _ Ask the following questions to trigger discussion:
 - Where did you get your ideas from?
 - How do they differ from the information provided by group D?
 - What is the difference between ideas and information?
 - Where do we get our "knowledge" from (or what we think is knowledge)?

C] In-depth working and follow-up

9] Producing a biographical worksheet

Time: several teaching units / project work

- _ On the model of E 1, produce a biographical worksheet for a person (e.g. Sinto/Sintezza/Rom from your area or country, or for someone you know personally like a grandparent or neighbour). The worksheet contains the following elements:
 - _ Heading
 - _ Photo
 - _ Text (e.g. excerpt from an interview, description of the person's life, etc.)
 - _ Did you know
 - _ For you to do
 - _ The photo
- _ Which information do you select and which do you omit?
- _ The worksheets are presented in the form of an exhibition. At the opening you can explain the process of creating the worksheet.

10] I can't/can overcome the feeling ...

Intensive involvement with biographies often triggers emotions. The following methods are available for working with such emotions, for overcoming them and – if desired – sharing them with others.

Time: 20 min.

You have spent some time working on a biography. Look for the word that best expresses your mood.

- _ Write it on a piece of paper.
- Choose one of the following options:
- _ Mime: Express the word through body language.
 - _ Transform the word into movement. How fast/slow, smooth/abrupt etc. are your movements?

- _ Name a piece of music that best expresses your word/mood.
- _ Describe your word for the others.
- _ What colour does your word have? Make a drawing of the word in that colour.
- _ Perhaps you can think of some other way of expressing your word/mood.

Share your results in a small group. Then go back to working in the class:

- _ Do you have any impressions, findings etc. from the groups that you would like to mention and discuss?
- _ Finally, create a cluster with the sheets of paper on which you wrote your word at the beginning of the exercise.

WORKING WITH PHOTOGRAPHS Irmgard Bibermann

Photographs are a central element in these teaching materials on the fate of European Roma and Sinti and can be used in the teaching situation in a variety of ways: They offer a good introduction to the subject, and they visualise and problematise the facts, raise questions, offer openings for discussion and are historical sources at the same time.

Photographs are challenging sources: They give the impression of showing reality but in fact they often show only the small part of reality selected by the photographer and in some cases they show a staged reality. We also have to consider the purposes for which the photos were taken. Some of the photos on the website were taken by the police as a record for criminological purposes, others by physicians and ethnologists for pseudo-scientific research. Almost all of them reflect the view of a marginalised minority held by the majority population.

When working with photos it is important that the pupils' perceptions should not be influenced by headings or captions. For that reason, some of the photos on the website are presented without any text for competence-oriented working.

For all the following teaching suggestions, careful study of the photograph is a prerequisite for working with it. When considering the impression a photo makes on them and formulating the thoughts, associations, feelings and perhaps also physical reactions that are triggered, pupils can become aware of their own personal responses. A systematic approach to describing the contents of the photos is offered in the form of questions relating to the choice of motif, perspective and detail, and the composition of the photo with its foreground and centre. Creative approaches are presented for viewing, describing and interpreting the photos. Pupils learn to distinguish between seeing, describing and interpreting. They are provided with a set of tools for the perception, understanding and classification of photos (see Methods).

Finally, the photo is placed in its historical context. For that purpose, each photo is accompanied by a short description including details (where available) about the photographer, the year and the purpose/function of the photo (scientific, criminological, ethnological, journalistic, family photo). Pupils can also call up the page in which the photo is presented in a wider context, including the title, main text and supporting information (Did you know).

A number of examples are presented to show which methods are most suitable for working with the selected photos.

Methods for Working with Photographs

Objectives:

- Ability to look carefully, ability to see accurately
- Awareness of one's response and the steps involved: ability to perceive and formulate impressions
- Ability to question the photos
- Empathic understanding: ability to see the photo and empathise with the content in terms of time, place, persons and event (when, where, who, what)
- Deconstruction of photos
- Ability to place photos in their historical context

Read the photos

“Read” the photo like a text from top left to bottom right, line by line.
Be aware of all the details.

The inner screen

Study the photo carefully. Then close your eyes. Now project the photo onto a screen in your mind and take it in. Open your eyes and compare your screen image with the photo. Are there any differences?

Tell the photos

Find a partner. A closes his/her eyes. B describes the photo to A in as much detail as possible as if to a blind friend. It is important to tell only what you actually see. Then A, with eyes still closed, describes the photo he/she sees. Finally, A opens his/her eyes and compares the inner image with the photo. It is important to first make pupils aware of the difference between description and interpretation: I see a big man at the window looking onto the street with narrowed eyes (seeing). I see a powerful man at the window looking intently onto the street (interpreting).

Take in the photos

Study the photo carefully. Then write the answers to the following questions:
What thoughts and associations come to mind?
What feelings are aroused in you?
What does the photo remind you of?
Find a partner and share your impressions.
Finally, “flashlight-statements” of thoughts, feelings and associations are shared in the full group.

Silent dialogue

Form groups of four. Take a sheet of paper. Study the photo carefully. Collect adjectives that you think describe the picture. One of the group starts and writes down the first adjective and then passes the sheet of paper to the next, all without speaking. This process is repeated several times. Then join up with another group and see which words are the same in both groups and which words differ. Make a note of the result. Present the result to the full group.

Variant:

The teacher projects a photo on the wall. The pupils study it and then get up and write their impressions on the board or on a poster. They do this without speaking until no more new ideas are produced.

First impressions

Study the photo for a few seconds and then put it on one side. Don't look at it again while you are writing. Write down what comes to mind. Now look at the photo again and add to or develop your notes.

Variant:

The teacher projects a photo on the wall for a few seconds and then switches it off. The pupils write down what comes to mind. Then the photo is shown again, and the pupils add to or develop their notes.

Wide angle – zoom

Study the photo carefully. Then perform the following experiment:

Set your eyes to wide angle, i.e. try to see the whole picture. You might have to hold the photo further away or get up and take a step back from the computer screen.

Then set your eyes to zoom, i.e. try to focus on one detail. Go back to wide angle again, and then zoom in once more, this time focussing on a different detail.

Find a partner and show him/her your zoom image as follows: Your partner closes his/her eyes and you cover the photo with sheets of white paper leaving only the zoom detail visible.

Tell your partner to open his/her eyes to see the detail. Change places.

Foreground – background / centre – margin

Study the photo carefully. What can be seen in the foreground and what in the background?

What is at the centre of the photo and what at the margin? What effects does that have?

Ask yourself whether the photographer did that deliberately or not.

Details

Take a sheet of white paper and cover part of the photo. Leave only the top third of the photo free and study it. Then do the same with the lower third and the middle third. Use several sheets of paper to focus on smaller details. What do you notice? How does this affect what you see?

Walk the photos

Let your eyes wander over the photo. Imagine you are present in the picture and can walk around there. What can you hear (noises, voices, words, sentences)? What can you smell? What do you feel?
Variant:
Move around the picture with your eyes. Imagine you arrive at the village at that moment. What do you see there? Write down what you see and feel.

Question the photos

Study the photo carefully. Then put questions to the picture:
I wonder whether / about ...
I should like to know whether ...
I ask myself whether ...

Photo titles

Form groups of three. Imagine you are newspaper reporters at a meeting of the editorial team. The photo is to be placed on the front page. Find a suitable heading and write a caption to be placed beneath the photo. Present the results of your work to the class.

Living photos

Select a person from the photo and write a short biography for him/her: name, age, greatest wish, greatest fear. Narrate that person's view of what is happening at the moment the photo is taken. Then say what the situation was ten minutes before the photo was taken.

Talking photos: thought balloons

Select one or two persons in the photo and consider what they might be thinking at that moment. Draw a thought balloon and write their thoughts in it.
Form a group of three and share your results. Who chose which person and why?
Are the thoughts similar or different?

Talking photos: dialogue

Select two persons in the photo and imagine they are talking about to each other.
Write a brief dialogue.

Variant:

Select two persons in the photo and imagine what they might be saying at that moment.
Draw dialogue balloons and write their words in them.

Change of vantage point

Imagine you are observing the scene from the other side of the road.
Write down what you see.

Point-of-view narration

Imagine you are one of the persons in the picture who sees what is happening as an observer in the background. Write a letter to a friend in which you describe your observations and thoughts.

Change of perspective

Study the photo carefully. Form small groups. Create a group pose to reproduce the content of the photo. Pay attention to the details with regard to mimicry, gesture and posture and also to what is at the centre of the photo. Then consider what the photo would look like if it had been taken by one of the persons in it. What would he/she place at the centre?
What message would he/she wish to communicate?

Before – Now – After

Form small groups. Create a group pose to reproduce the content of the photo in as much detail as possible. Consider what happened five minutes before and what will happen five minutes later. Create group poses for each scenario.

Present your group poses to the full group. The audience must close their eyes while the group assembles on stage for the first pose. When told to open their eyes, they see the finished pose and can study it for a few minutes before closing their eyes again.

The same procedure is followed for the other two group poses. The result is a kind of animated film clip in the minds of the audience.

Different standpoints

Study the photo carefully. Form small groups. Adopt the perspective of each person in the photo one after the other. Say what is happening from the standpoint of the various persons.

Examples from Teaching Materials

Worksheet A.1

Read the photo

“Read” the photo from top left to bottom right, line by line. Be aware of all the details.

Details

Take a sheet of white paper and cover part of the photo. Leave only the top third of the photo free and study it. Then do the same with the lower third and the middle third.

Use several sheets of paper to focus on smaller details. What do you notice?

What changes does this make to what you see?

Photo title

Form groups of three. Imagine you are newspaper reporters at a meeting of the editorial team. The photo is to be placed on the front page. Find a suitable heading and write a caption to be placed beneath the photo. Present the results of your work to the class.

Think the photo

Go to page A1 on the website www.romasintigenocide.eu. Compare your impressions and thoughts with the information in the text and the details of the photo provided.

Try to discover when the photo was taken, by whom and for what purpose.

Worksheet A.3

Wide angle – zoom

Study the photo carefully. Then perform the following experiment:

Set your eyes to wide angle, i.e. try to see the whole picture. You might have to hold the photo further away or get up and take a step back from the computer screen. Then set your eyes to zoom, i.e. try to focus on one detail. Go back to wide angle again, and then zoom in once more, this time focussing on a different detail.

Find a partner and show him/her your zoom image as follows: Your partner closes his/her eyes and you cover the photo with sheets of white paper leaving only the zoom detail visible.

Tell your partner to open his/her eyes to see the detail. Change places.

Walk the photo

Study the photo carefully again and ask some questions with regard to the content. Do it like this:

_ I wonder whether / about ...

_ I should like to know whether ...

_ I ask myself whether ...

The questions are then collected in the group and written on a poster.

Suppose the photo

_ What was the purpose of the photo?

_ Why was it taken?

_ What impression was it meant to make?

_ What message was it meant to communicate?

Think the photo

Go to page A3 on the website www.romasintigenocide.eu. Compare your impressions and thoughts with the information in the text and the details of the photo provided. Try to discover when the photo was taken, by whom and for what purpose. Try to answer the above questions and then look up the facts to see how good your guesses were.

Worksheet A.6

Inner screen

Study the photo carefully. Then close your eyes. Now project the photo onto a screen in your mind and take it in. Open your eyes and compare your screen image with the photo.

Are there any differences?

Change of vantage point

Imagine you are observing the scene from the other side of the road.

Write down what you see.

Before – Now – After

Form small groups (max. 5 pupils). Create a group pose to reproduce the content of the photo in as much detail as possible. Consider what happened five minutes before and what will happen five minutes later. Create group poses for each scenario.

Present your group poses to the full group. The audience must close their eyes while the group assembles on stage for the first pose. When told to open their eyes, they see the finished pose and can study it for a few minutes before closing their eyes again. The same procedure is followed for the other two group poses. The result is a kind of animated film clip in the minds of the audience.

Think the photo

Go to page A6 on the website www.romasintigenocide.eu. Compare your impressions and thoughts with the information in the text and the details of the photo provided.

Try to discover when the photo was taken, by whom and for what purpose.

Worksheet B.3

Fotos erzählen

Find a partner. A closes his/her eyes. B describes the photo to A in as much detail as possible as if to a blind friend. It is important to tell only what you actually see. Then A, with eyes still closed, describes the photo he/she sees. Finally, A opens his/her eyes and compares the inner image with the photo.

It is important to first make pupils aware of the difference between description and interpretation: I see a big man at the window looking onto the street with narrowed eyes (seeing). I see a powerful man at the window looking intently onto the street (interpreting).

Talking photos: dialogue

Select two persons in the photo and imagine they are talking to each other. Write a brief dialogue.

Variant:

Select two persons in the photo and imagine what they might be saying at that moment. Draw dialogue balloons and write their words in them.

Different standpoints

Study the photo carefully again. Form small groups. Adopt the perspective of each of the three persons in the foreground and one person in the background, one after the other. Say what is happening from the standpoint of the various persons.

Think the photo

Go to page B3 on the website www.romasintigenocide.eu. Compare your impressions and thoughts with the information in the text and the details of the photo provided. Try to discover when the photo was taken, by whom and for what purpose.

Worksheet B.7

Walk the photo

Let your eyes wander over the photo. Imagine you are present in the picture and can walk around there. What can you hear (noises, voices, words, sentences)? What can you smell? What do you feel?

Variant:

Move around the picture with your eyes. Imagine you arrive at the village at that moment. What do you see there? Write down what you see and feel.

Foreground – background

Study the photo carefully. What can be seen in the foreground and what in the background? What is at the centre of the photo and what at the margin? What effects does that have? Ask yourself whether the photographer did that deliberately or not.

Talking photos: thought balloons

Select one or two persons in the foreground of the photo and one or two in the background and consider what they might be thinking at that moment. Draw thought balloons and write their thoughts in them.

Form a group of three and share your results. Who chose which persons and why? Are the thoughts similar or different?

Think the photo

Go to page B7 on the website www.romasintigenocide.eu. Compare your impressions and thoughts with the information in the text and the details of the photo provided.

Try to discover when the photo was taken, by whom and for what purpose.

Worksheet C.2

Silent dialogue

Form groups of four. Take a sheet of paper. Study the photo carefully. Collect adjectives that you think describe the picture. One of the group starts and writes down the first adjective and then passes the sheet of paper to the next, all without speaking. This process is repeated until you cannot think of any more words. Then join up with another group and see which words are the same in both groups and which words differ. Make a note of the result. Present the result to the full group.

Variant:

The teacher projects a photo on the wall. The pupils study it and then get up and write their impressions on the board or on a poster. They do this without speaking until no more new ideas are produced.

Question the photo

Study the photo carefully again and ask some questions with regard to the content. Do it like this:

_ I wonder whether / about ...

_ I would like to know whether ...

_ I ask myself whether ...

The questions are then collected in the group and written on a poster by the group leader.

Change of perspective

Now form small groups. Create a group pose to reproduce the content of the photo. Pay attention to the details with regard to mimicry, gesture and posture and also to what is at the centre of the photo. Then consider what the photo would look like if the woman in the photo had taken it. What would she place at the centre? What message would she wish to communicate? Create a group pose to illustrate that. Present both group poses to the full group.

Think the photo

Go to page C2 on the website www.romasintigenocide.eu. Compare your impressions and thoughts with the information in the text and the details of the photo provided.

Try to discover when the photo was taken, by whom and for what purpose. Try to find answers to the above questions.

Worksheet C.10

Take in the photo

Study the photo carefully. Then write the answers to the following questions:

- _ What thoughts and associations come to mind?
- _ What feelings are aroused in you?
- _ What does the photo remind you of?

Find a partner and share your impressions.

Finally, “flashlight-statements” of thoughts, feelings and associations are shared in the full group.

Foreground – background

Study the photo carefully. What can be seen in the foreground and what in the background?

What is at the centre of the photo and what at the margin? What effects does that have?

Ask yourself whether the photographer did that deliberately or not.

Photo title

Form groups of three. Imagine you are newspaper reporters at a meeting of the editorial team.

The photo is to be placed on the front page. Find a suitable heading and write a caption to be placed beneath the photo. Present the results of your work to the class.

Think the photo

Go to page C10 on the website www.romasintigenocide.eu. Compare your impressions and thoughts with the information in the text and the details of the photo provided.

Try to discover when the photo was taken, by whom and for what purpose.

Worksheet D.8

First impressions

Study the photo for a few seconds and then put it on one side. Don't look at it again while you are writing. Write down what comes to mind. Now look at the photo again and add to or develop your notes.

Variant:

The teacher projects a photo on the wall for a few seconds and then switches it off.

The pupils write down what comes to mind. Then the photo is shown again, and the pupils add to or develop their notes.

Question the photo

Study the photo carefully again and ask some questions with regard to the content.

Do it like this:

_ I wonder whether / about ...

_ I would like to know whether ...

_ I ask myself whether ...

The questions are then collected in the group and written on a poster by the group leader.

Point-of-view narration

Imagine you are the boy observing the scene from the garden fence. Write a letter to a friend in which you describe your observations and thoughts.

Think the photo

Go to page D8 on the website www.romasintigenocide.eu. Compare your impressions and thoughts with the information in the text and the details of the photo provided.

Try to discover when the photo was taken, by whom and for what purpose.

Additional materials: HODONÍN U KUNŠTÁTU

Silent dialogue

Form groups of four. Take a sheet of paper. Study the photo carefully. Collect adjectives that you think describe the picture. One of the group starts and writes down the first adjective and then passes the sheet of paper to the next, all without speaking. This process is repeated until you cannot think of any more words. Then join up with another group and see which words are the same in both groups and which words differ. Make a note of the result. Present the result to the full group.

Variant:

The teacher projects a photo on the wall. The pupils study it and then get up and write their impressions on the board or on a poster. They do this without speaking until no more new ideas are produced.

Living photo

Select a person from the photo and write a short biography for him/her: name, age, greatest wish, greatest fear. Narrate that person's view of what is happening at the moment the photo is taken. Then say what the situation was ten minutes before the photo was taken. Make a prediction about what the situation will be ten minutes later.

Think the photo

Go to the worksheet on HODONÍN U KUNŠTÁTU on the website www.romasintigenocide.eu. Compare your impressions and thoughts with the information in the text and the details of the photo provided. Try to discover when the photo was taken, by whom and for what purpose.

HOW CAN WE DECONSTRUCT HISTORICAL VIEWS BASED ON STEREOTYPES?

Robert Sigel

History is more than the presentation of past events. History also involves selection, assessment, linkage and the creation of meaning. Historians are the expert actors in this process. Their actions do not take place in a void but within real societies. The result is history as it is written and communicated: a specific historical narrative.

These historical narratives are therefore constructions. The construction of narratives includes the creation of self-images and external images: images of one's own group as self-images (family, ethnic group, nation, race, religious community, etc.), and images of other groups as external images (family, ethnic group, nation, religious community, etc.). The creation of such images involves the use of stereotypes, i.e. the attribution of specific characteristics and patterns of behaviour. Stereotypes are not identical with prejudices: prejudices always include negative elements, whereas attributions in the form of stereotypes can constitute positive, negative or neutral assessments.

Historical narratives and the images they contain must be repeatedly reassessed. Images, both self-images and external images, can become stereotypes. These stereotypes move further and further away from reality until they cease to reflect it.

The need for such a reassessment is particularly clear with regard to the image of the so-called "gypsy". It has long been an image based on stereotypes and prejudices, at a far remove from reality. It was these prejudices that became the basis for stigmatisation, deprivation of rights, persecution and genocide under the National Socialists.

A reassessment of historical narratives and the images they contain is also a component in learning about history. The process known as deconstruction is a tool for reassessment. Deconstruction shows the development of a historical narrative by revealing the original construction process. In the deconstruction process, the narrative in question is made the subject of various fundamental thoughts and questions:

- _ Is the event in question verifiable?
- _ Is the event in question representative?
- _ What relationships, causes and consequences are included in the view presented?
- _ What relationships, causes and consequences are suggested without proof?
- _ What possible relationships, causes and consequences are ignored?
- _ What other, different, divergent, opposed arguments and explanations are possible?
- _ What interests could lie behind the view presented?

In teaching, deconstruction of stereotypes can be performed in various ways. The choice of method depends on a number of factors including the pupils' ages, background knowledge, questioning competence, familiarity with the individual methods, powers of reflection and judgment, etc. Many of these factors apply equally to the teachers.

The materials on this website provide ample opportunity for practical implementation of the following teaching methods:

Change of perspective

Change of perspective is the attempt to see others through their own eyes – and also to see one's own group through the eyes of the others.

The attempt to adopt a third-party perspective is not easy. Role play as a form of visualisation, writing diaries, letters and songs, and other forms of artistic expression can serve as a point of departure for such a change of perspective.

The observer as witness

Ultimately this also involves a change of perspective: The independent view of a neutral observer is required to assess an event. Court role play is one possibility or some other form of hearing in which the facts of the case have to be established. This method caters for young people's strong moral sense of justice.

The individual and the group

Stereotypical views of groups are always generalisations; they do not take account of the individuality of the members of the group and automatically ignore the distinctions and variations. This can be illustrated with the help of various items such as eating habits and table manners, rules and standards within the family, or leisure expectations and activities. Such findings from one's own sphere of life can be utilised as an analytical tool: The self-image of one's own group (school class, family, ethnic group, race, religious community etc.) loses its hermetic coherence, and the same can apply to external images.

Biographies retold or continued

Roma and Sinti – like members of other persecuted groups – have biographies that were forcibly interrupted. The lives of the survivors continued but were accompanied by serious lifelong trauma.

Following the biographies of people who survived persecution up to the present day gives the opportunity to understand both the dangers of stereotyping and the individuality of people each with his or her own potentials.

Another possibility is to ask students to imagine how the life of a murdered person would have looked like and in this way to get beyond the prejudices that lead to the murder and see the full potential that Roma and Sinti children for example could have had.

These and other possible teaching methods can open the doors to the fundamental thoughts and questions mentioned above. In the individual case, they can also lead to detailed observation, analysis and discussion of the stereotypes, their genesis, rationale and effects.

Detailed factual knowledge is the basis for all deconstruction work; the materials on this website provide just that.