

The **PARIAH SYNDROME**

Ian Hancock

AN ACCOUNT OF GYPSY SLAVERY AND PERSECUTION

Apartheid policies here? You bet: in Pennsylvania, Texas, New Jersey, Mississippi, and Maryland (the list continues), it is illegal to be a Gypsy without a license. Since 1885, Gypsies have been excluded by official immigration policies and routinely deported. Since 1980, Illinois has retained a special investigator (call: 217-785-4630 in Springfield) for patently racist "Gypsy criminality." Stereotyped and uniformly scorned by the American mainstream, Gypsies were the very first victims of the Holocaust, though Aryan in origin, and many have been forced to deny their heritage to gain admission to the melting pot. German Gypsies have even assumed Jewish names to obtain jobs, so selective is the conscience of guilt. This riveting exposé documents Gypsy origins from the Exodus out of India to their arrival in the Balkans, where they were enslaved until less than a century ago, their dispersal over the globe, and gives a rich portrait of a people condemned to The Pariah Syndrome.

The author, himself a Romanichal Gypsy who has spent a decade researching this volume, received his doctorate from London's prestigious School of Oriental and African Studies and is well known among scholars for his outstanding studies of creole languages. He is currently Professor of Linguistics, The University of Texas at Austin.



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Announce Production of

GYPSY CARAVAN

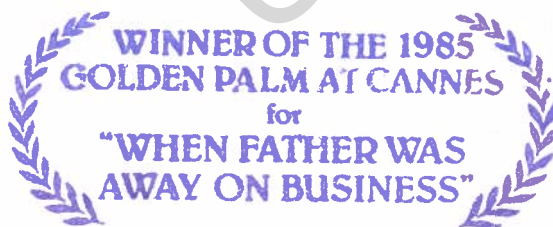
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A motion picture based on today's true
story of the kidnapping of Yugoslavian children
by Yugoslavian criminals for the purpose of thieving,
pickpocketing and prostitution in Italy, France & Germany.

Directed by

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(NGOs - ECOSOC)

Permanent United Nations
representation 1979

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Sandrainstrasse 4

o Yanko le Redžosko
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Harry Saltzmann Lowndes
Productions, Ltd.
The Globe Theatre
Shaftesbury Avenue
London W1
England

26th October 1986

Sirs:

We have noted with some alarm your intention to produce a screenplay entitled *Gypsy Caravan* documenting kidnapping and theft as it involves the Romani population in Yugoslavia.

It is strongly to be hoped that this will not portray our people negatively; we have National Minority status in Yugoslavia, and the International Romani Union has held NGO status in the United Nations Organization since 1979. We are adamantly opposed to negative stereotyping and constantly stand on guard to counter it.

The situation in Yugoslavia is the result of the treatment of the Romani people there. We urge you to be absolutely sure of your facts, historical as well as contemporary, before committing yourselves. If you would not produce such a film about Jews, or Serbs, or the Irish or the Italians, then the same consideration must be extended to the Gypsy people.

Please avail yourself of our organization if you need factual background information. We are committed only to the dignity and human rights of our people, and will oppose all efforts to exploit such situations.

Yanko le Redžosko
Secretary, RIJ(USA)

YR:sc
cc. Romani Anti-Defamation League
B'nai B'rith ADL
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Gypsies seek bigger part in Holocaust remembrance

Associated Press

MINNEAPOLIS — A Day of Remembrance for victims of the Holocaust should not overlook the Gypsies also killed by the Nazis in World War II, Gypsy-American leaders say.

"We lost a higher proportion of our numbers than the Jews did," Sam Connick, secretary of the U.S. Office of the International Romani Union in Austin, Texas, said Wednesday.

Connick said Gypsy-Americans, who are also called Roma, are worried the tribute that was planned today by the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Council in Washington, D.C., does not recognize their losses.

"We're not protesting at the ceremony," he said. "That would detract from the dignity of the ceremony. We hope to work out a friendly understanding with them. They haven't been willing so far to recognize us."

William Duna, a University of Minnesota professor and member of the council who is a Gypsy, said he had "deep concern" about the ceremony.

"The Holocaust Council seems to have relegated Gypsies to the position of second-class or inferior victims by its steadfast refusal to include Gypsy-Americans in the planning of the ceremony," he said in a statement.

Other council members could not be reached for comment Wednesday.

Connick said the council had invited two Gypsies from Romania to the ceremony, bypassing Gypsy-Americans, whose population he estimated at one million. He said the Gypsies would light one of six candles on a menorah.

"The argument that the council makes is that the candles are for everybody, not just Jews," he said. "But that's a specifically Jewish symbol. The council was set up to honor the memory of the victims of the Holocaust. As it turns out, the attention is going to the Jewish victims."

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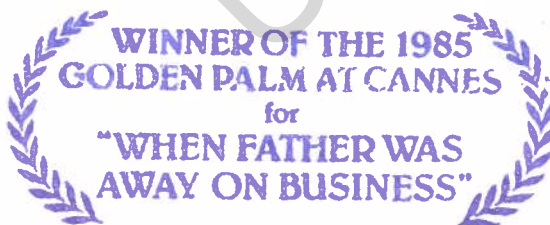
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October 7, 1986

The Honorable V. Vajnar, Minister of Interior
Federal Government of The Czechoslovak Socialist Republic
Prague, Czechoslovakia

Dear Minister Vajnar:

An alarming story about treatment of the Romani people in Czechoslovakia has recently been brought to our attention. If this information is correct, a path has been taken which defies the lessons of history. While we recognize that rumors and false reports are not uncommon, the source of this information is from your own government report by Jozef Prokop, in Bratislava Smena, published August 6, 1986. Therefore we cannot disregard the appeal that came to us. We do wish to offer you and the Czechoslovakian Government a fair opportunity to respond before these reports become even more widespread and or more distorted when told to the United States Congress.

We have been informed that the Czechoslovakian government is considering a program of compulsory sterilization of the Romani population, referring to it as an act of "socialistic humanity." It is reported that government officials have stated that by sterilizing this ethnic group the number of unhealthy or handicapped children born in Czechoslovakia will be reduced. Other officials have been quoted to us as expressing horror at the high Romani birthrate and judging this group as genetically unfit. Further intervention into private family life, and violation of basic human rights, is the announced intention to take Romani children from their parents and place them in foster homes or special boarding schools.

We are horrified at the possibility that there could still exist in Europe these Hitlerian racist, genocidal, attitudes which almost brought destruction to civilization on our planet only twenty-five years ago through the Fascist machine that overran Europe. Can it be possible that such attitudes can still be part of the official program of a modern government?

We have discussed this information with Ambassador Miroslav Houstecky and have advised him that this letter was being prepared by Members of Congress. We earnestly hope that you will take our concerns about these allegations seriously, and will provide evidence that such inhumane policies are not being practiced; but, on the contrary, you are providing enlightened programs of health and education which support the full development of human potential among the Romani people.

Respectfully Yours,

Tom Lantos
Member of Congress

John Porter
Member of Congress,

Co-Chairs, Congressional Human Rights Caucus

European Romani Parliament

REPRESENTING 3-4 MILLION PEOPLE scattered across the continent, a Gypsy parliament could become a force to be reckoned with in the new Europe. At last November's Romani Union congress in Germany delegates resolved to bring a close to the era of self-appointed Kings and government-appointed General Secretaries, making it possible for all Gypsies to vote for their own representatives.

Statements from the founding document:

'Given that the Romany people constitute by far the largest non-territorial ethnic minority in Europe, and that since their arrival seven centuries ago they have consistently been isolated, pursued, and the object of genocidal policies...

In order to confront the rapidly changing social and political situation throughout Europe, especially growing overt discrimination and racially-motivated violence in the East and systematic deportations in the West...

.....We call for: protective laws for minorities at pan-European and global levels; aid projects designed to tackle poverty within Romany communities; the treatment of Romany refugees according to the Geneva Convention; economic and political sanctions to combat systematic human rights violations against Roma in states such as Romania, Czechoslovakia, Yugoslavia and Albania.'

Romanian Gypsies make bulk of orphans

Parents relinquish children with hope culture survives

By TOBY F. SONNEMAN

While families in the Northwest anxious to adopt children from Romanian orphanages try to glean all available information from media reports, there's one major fact that they probably won't hear about: The overwhelming majority of children interned in these dismal institutions are Gypsies.

More than a year after the overthrow of Nicolae Ceausescu, Romania is still wrapped in the dark shroud of his legacy. The grim orphanages filled to overflowing with children who suffer neglect, inhumane conditions and inadequate care are the result of the former dictator's plan to breed a large, uneducated work force.

To encourage population expansion, the Ceausescu regime denied access to birth control and abortions, forcibly required pregnancy tests and gave incentives for bearing children for the state. Many parents, unable to feed so many children, interned them to the orphanages hoping they could reclaim them in better times. For Gypsy parents, the better times have never come.

At least 75 percent of these children are Gypsies, reported the New York Times Magazine. Firsthand accounts put the percentage even higher. Although by official census 2.3 million Gypsies live in Romania, population 23 million, unofficial counts range as high as 6 million.

These disproportionate figures are symptomatic of the environment of persecution that Gypsies face, explained Dr. Ian Hancock, who represents the International Romani (Gypsy) Union to the United Nations and Unicef. He believes impoverished Gypsy parents have surrendered their babies to offer them a chance to escape the intense atmosphere of hatred and violence in Romania.

John Nickles, an American Gypsy who wants to adopt a child from Romania, agreed. "When Gypsy parents have to give up their child to non-Gypsies, that's a tragedy for them," he said in a recent phone interview from his home in New Jersey. "But they would hand them over to orphanages rather than watch them die of starvation."

Gypsies, who prefer the name Roma or Romani, have suffered a long and bitter history of persecution in Europe. Originally from India, they left there about 1,000 years ago and made their way slowly to Europe. From the time of their appearance there in

the 13th century they were subjected to discrimination, hostility and anti-Gypsy legislation.

In the Balkans, Gypsies were so valued for their skills that institutional slavery was put into effect to keep them from leaving. Gypsies were enslaved in what is now Romania from the mid-1300s until abolition in 1864.

Persecution of the Roma spiraled to a deadly crescendo during the Nazi occupation of Europe. Gypsy populations were decimated by Hitler's policy of racial extermination.

Postwar communist regimes did little to improve the lot of Eastern Europe's Roma. Under the false guise of equality, Gypsies were pressured to assimilate and relinquish their traditions and language, yet were offered no way to integrate into society.

Life for the Gypsies has further deteriorated under the new governments. Denied legal work, poverty-stricken and uneducated, Gypsies' survival depends on begging and black market and criminal activities. Citizens in Romania blame the Gypsies for their economic ills, believing they are profiting from them.

Fueled by centuries of hatred, anti-Gypsy violence, formerly kept in hand by police, is now allowed to rage unrestrained. With full support of the government, Romanian citizens have instigated pogroms against Gypsies. Houses are set on fire, ransacked and robbed as the Roma are forced to flee. Ordinary citizens and police beat and brutalize Gypsies.

A shocking account of attacks on Gypsies by miners last June was reported by the Group for Social Dialogue, Romania's main dissident organization: Romani men executed; women beaten and raped; children and old people tortured; Gypsies taken away to unknown destinations. The National Salvation Front held a press conference, and Prime Minister Petre Roman defended his government's support of the brutal assault.

Alarmed by this horrifying situation, Roma in the United States urge the adoptions of Gypsy children as a way individuals can help. Few Gypsy children have been adopted in the Northwest, however, perhaps because the Romanian caretakers strongly discourage prospective parents from such adoptions.

"To bring a Gypsy child out of Romania is to save a life," said Vinka Cook, who describes herself as an intermediary between Roma and *gaje* (non-Gypsies). Cook, a New Mexico resident, works with the International Romani Union in Texas to provide non-Gypsy parents with information about Romani culture, history, language and community.

Awareness of this cultural and historical legacy concerns the Gypsies of the Romani Union. "Our heritage is a proud one," Cook

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Hamburg

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GYPSIES (ROMAS) OPPRESSION

This English text appears as a supplement to the new Croatian home-magazine Hrvatska Domovina. It must be ordered separately.

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Professor I.F. Hancock,
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U.S.A.

Your reference

Our reference 387/SG/MA

Date 23rd October 1986

Dear Professor Hancock,

My firm is acting for the Commission for Racial Equality, a statutory body charged with the responsibility of eliminating racial discrimination in the United Kingdom.

The Commission is bringing legal proceedings against various owners of public houses who display signs bearing the words "No travellers". In the Commission's view these words indicate an intention to discriminate against travellers or gypsies, who are a group defined by reference to their ethnic origin and therefore a racial group under the relevant UK legislation. The Race Relations Act 1976 has recently been interpreted by the House of Lords in relation to Sikhs and I enclose a copy of the judgment.

The court which is to hear the case has ordered expert evidence. We are in the process of gathering evidence (a) on the meaning of "travellers" and (b) as to common ethnicity, culture, history, language, literature, geographical origin of travellers or gypsies.

I believe that you may be able to help in the provision of documentation, case law, legislation treaties or other material in the United States or more generally. Please let me know if there is any information which you can provide.

You will appreciate that I am anxious to pursue this litigation as quickly as possible and I would be grateful if you could get in touch with me in the near future.

Yours sincerely,


STEPHEN GROSZ

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United States
of America

Congressional Record

PROCEEDINGS AND DEBATES OF THE 99th CONGRESS, SECOND SESSION

Vol. 132

WASHINGTON, TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 16, 1986

No. 121

House of Representatives

The recognition here today by the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Council of the fate of the Rom in Hitler's Europe, marks a turning point in our efforts to bring it to the attention of the nation and of the world. This is a very special day, not only for Romani Americans but for all Americans. With the completion of the Memorial Museum, the fuller story of the Holocaust, as it affected all of its victims, will be told. We are at the beginning of a close and cooperative working relationship with the Council, one dedicated to bringing this to fruition.

Today is a special occasion for another reason as well. For the first time in American history, representatives of the different branches of the Romani Nation have come together in one place: members of the Machvano, Kalderash, Lovari, Kaladitka and Romanichal populations are here in this room to honor jointly the memory of our dead. Let us hope that in the years ahead, our numbers at this annual ceremony will grow, and that through future Days of Remembrance and through our Memorial Museum, the world will no longer remain ignorant of the fate of our people in the Holocaust.

I want to say a few words now about our dear friend John Megel, o Lazo ie' Gyorgosko shavo, who passed away only days before he was to have been here with us in Washington.

Like many Americans Rom whose ancestors arrived here in the early 1900s, Lazo was aware that his people had been murdered in great numbers during the Second World War, but like most other Americans, knew little of the actual details of the Nazi atrocity against our people.

He was originally drawn into our Holocaust-related efforts through his own attempts to revive the Red Dress Romani Benevolent Association, founded almost sixty years ago by his grandfather, Steve Kaslov. John Megel felt, like his grandfather before him, that Romani Americans were the victims of social and economic prejudice which largely resulted from their being poorly understood. Kaslov met with and spoke personally to Franklin D. Roosevelt about his concerns for his people, though to little avail.

As John Megel came to understand more and more about the immensity of Hitler's plan to exterminate the Gypsy people, and how the world seemed to have turned its back on our plight since the War, he became consumed with an abiding outrage, and a determination to see justice done. Sometimes he would speak to me with tears in his eyes, wondering why no one seemed to care.

When we began to enter into a dialogue with the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Council about three years ago, he became one of the most vocal, and often impatient, advocates of the Romani cause. Sometimes he would be knocking on their office door once or twice a week. It is very largely due to his efforts that this solemn event has come about, and it is only fitting that a tribute be made to his memory here today. He was to

have spoken, and to have participated in our water ceremony here this morning.

One of Lazo's concerns was the collection of songs and poems in Romani which have to do with the Holocaust. I recently found one such poem which I would like to read in his memory; it was composed by a Serbian Rom shortly after the end of the War.

One morning, about seven,

The Germans came to my door.

"Let's go, Gypsy, let's be on our way".

"Wait, Mr. German, until I light the fire
And kiss my old mother,

For I know I won't be coming back,

I know you're going to take my life".

"Hurry, Gypsy, and take your shovel,

And dig yourself

A grave".

I'd like to have a few moments' silence for
John Megel.

Najis tumenge.



United States
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CONGRESSIONAL RECORD

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WASHINGTON, TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 16, 1986

No. 121

House of Representatives

ROMANI DAY OF REMEMBRANCE

HON. TOM LANTOS

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, September 16, 1986

Mr. LANTOS. Mr. Speaker, today we solemnly observed a ceremony of remembrance for the peoples of Romani, the Gypsies, who were another racist target of the evil inspired Nazi Holocaust. The stories of the deaths of hundreds of thousands of Gypsies at Auschwitz and in other Nazi concentration camps are only beginning to be told. The genocide attempted by Hitler's troops was planned for both Gypsy and Jew. This first day of remembering the Gypsy experience in the Holocaust was sponsored by the United States Holocaust Memorial Council in association with the American Rom (Gypsy) community. I submit for the RECORD the moving and scholarly speech given by Prof. Ian Hancock, specialist in Rom studies at the University of Texas, Austin.

I was just a child when the Second World War ended. But I remember the bomb shelters, and the blackouts, and especially the sirens warning of air attacks from the Continent. I remember the devastation those attacks left behind in London's east end: the empty shells of the buildings remained long after the war.

I was one of the lucky ones: I was born in Britain, and survived. Relatives of mine in Hungary did not; by 1945, over half a million of our people in Europe had been slaughtered. Those of us born here and in Britain must thank God for our deliverance.

German prejudice against the Romani people dates from our very arrival in that part of Europe in the fifteenth century. The methodical persecution which eventually

culminated in genocide began at the end of the last century, with the establishment of the Central Office for Fighting the Gypsy Nuisance in Munich, in 1899. There had already been a proposal at an earlier conference on what was called the "Gypsy Plith" to round up and put into detention centers all Gypsies in German controlled territories. By the 1920s, special police units had been created to keep the Romani population under constant surveillance: everywhere, Rom and Sinti were fingerprinted and photographed, and were not allowed to move about the land without special passes.

When Hitler came to power in 1933, he found anti-Romani laws already well entrenched, and needing only refinement by the Nazis to turn what had been harassment and bigotry into the deadly tool of racism and murder. In that same year, the very first year of Nazi power, German Rom and Sinti became victims of their program to eradicate unwanted elements from their new society: numbers were sterilized and sent to camps at Dachau, Dieselstrasse, Mahrizan and Vennhausen.

In 1935, the Nuremberg Law for the Protection of Blood and Honor made unions between Gypsies and non-Gypsies illegal on racial grounds; a Gypsy was defined at that time as anyone having as little as one eighth Romani ancestry. Ironically, the less Romani blood, a Gypsy had, the harsher was his treatment at the hands of the Germans.

In 1936, Interpol itself supported the persecution of our people by establishing the International Center for the Fight Against the Gypsy Menace, an office which was not officially closed down until 1970.

A Nazi Party proclamation issued in 1938 stated that the Gypsy problem was categorically a matter of race, and was to be dealt with in that light. Johannes Behrend, speaking for the Party a year later, declared that "elimination without hesitation" was the only way to protect the Aryan people from racial contamination from Sinti and Rom. In that year, Gypsies began to be transported to concentration camps in Berlin and Poland. The same began to take place in the Baltic states, Czechoslovakia, Hungary, France, Italy and the Balkans. Large-scale round-ups were everywhere in effect by 1943; by April that year, over 10,000 Sinti and Rom were incarcerated in Sachsenhausen for later extermination. In some parts of Europe, entire Romani populations were destroyed, such as the Layenge Rom in Estonia, who are now an extinct people. Elsewhere in Nazi-controlled areas of Europe, as many as 70 and 80 percent of the resident Romani populations were exterminated. On August 1st, 1944, four thousand of our people were murdered at Auschwitz in just one night.

So complete was the Nazi destruction of the Romani people in Europe, that few survived to tell the story. Still fewer non-Gypsies seemed even to care. After the war, no nation came forward to help the survivors, no attempt was made on the part of any government or philanthropic organization to help reorient them; now war crime reparation was forthcoming, no invitations extended to testify at any of the war crime tribunals.

Hitler's methods of dealing with his Gypsy Problem included at first banishment, then sterilization, and finally extermination. For the Romani people, the defeat of Nazism did not bring an end to any of these, at least as possible solutions in the minds of the authorities: in 1981, police systematically rounded up and expelled numbers of Rom throughout Poland, abandoning them at sea without the papers nec-

essary for them to return. In 1976, a government proposal in Czechoslovakia recommended that the sterilization of its Romani population would be an act of "socialistic humanity"; Romani Union lawyers have reason to believe that the fingerprints and photographs in the files of the Interpol office which was officially closed in 1970, are still being used by the police in Germany against the Rom. The contemporary state of our people remains very critical, and it is functions such as this Day of Remembrance that will bring the larger community to a better understanding of our sit-



United States
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WASHINGTON, WEDNESDAY, MAY 29, 1991

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House of Representatives

ETHNIC VIOLENCE IN ROMANIA

HON. STENY H. HOYER

OF MARYLAND

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, May 29, 1991

Mr. HOYER. Mr. Speaker, as Chairman of the Helsinki Commission, I have had the opportunity to see tremendous change in Eastern Europe over the last few years. Happily, some of the greatest changes have come in the area of freedom of expression. Unfortunately, in some cases this freedom has let loose ethnic intolerance long repressed and long ignored. Now, that intolerance must be recognized and remedied.

This week in Romania, thousands of people attacked and burned the homes of Gypsies—who call themselves Roma—in two villages near Bucharest. As in similar incidents which occurred earlier this year in Romania, it is not known exactly what sparked this conflagration. What is known is that this is part of a growing wave of village assaults on Roma communities.

From the Inquisition to the Holocaust, Roma have suffered humanity's worst abuses. They have been enslaved and targeted for genocide during the Holocaust. They have been alternately subjected to forced assimilation and to virtual apartheid. They have been compelled to submit to involuntary sterilization and have had their children seized from them. And yet they have survived.

It would be a tragedy if the Roma people, who have endured so much, were made to suffer even longer in a time that otherwise holds so much hope for so many. We must ensure that these people, their culture, and their heritage are not destroyed by hatred and violence.

I understand that the Romanian Interior Minister has promised to investigate these events. I urge his government to do so with all deliberate speed and to ensure that those responsible are held accountable in accordance with the CSCE standards for the rule of law and the protection of minorities to which the Romanian government has committed itself. This is an urgent matter, Mr. Speaker. Political prisoners can be set free and banned books published, but lost lives can never be restored.