



2.2 A Select Timeline of Roma People

1000-1100

Ancestors of the Roma people left Northern India for Armenia (later known as Anatolia, Turkey) speaking an Indian language which becomes Romanes.

1350s

After the Armenian genocide, Roma began to flee Turkey going to Christian Europe. Many Roma who stayed in Turkey became Muslims.

1400s-1800s

Anti-Gypsy laws were passed in many European countries, which persecuted Roma and forbade them to settle into any one country, expelled them, punished them for being 'vagabonds', executed them or made them into slaves.

1496-1498

During the Holy Roman Empire, the Reichstag (parliament) in Landau and Freiburg (now Germany) declared Roma traitors of the Christian countries, said to be spies in the pay of the Turks, and also carriers of the plague.

1530s

The Egyptians Act of 1530 was passed by the Parliament of England, during the reign of Henry VIII, to expel Gypsies from England and forbid them from entering. The word Gypsy, 'Gipcyan', appeared in the Oxford English Dictionary and was an abbreviation for Egyptian, as it thought that Roma came from Egypt.

1554

Queen Mary passed an Act making it a crime punishable by death to be a Gypsy, or even found in the company of an 'Egyptian'. This death penalty remained in place until 1780.

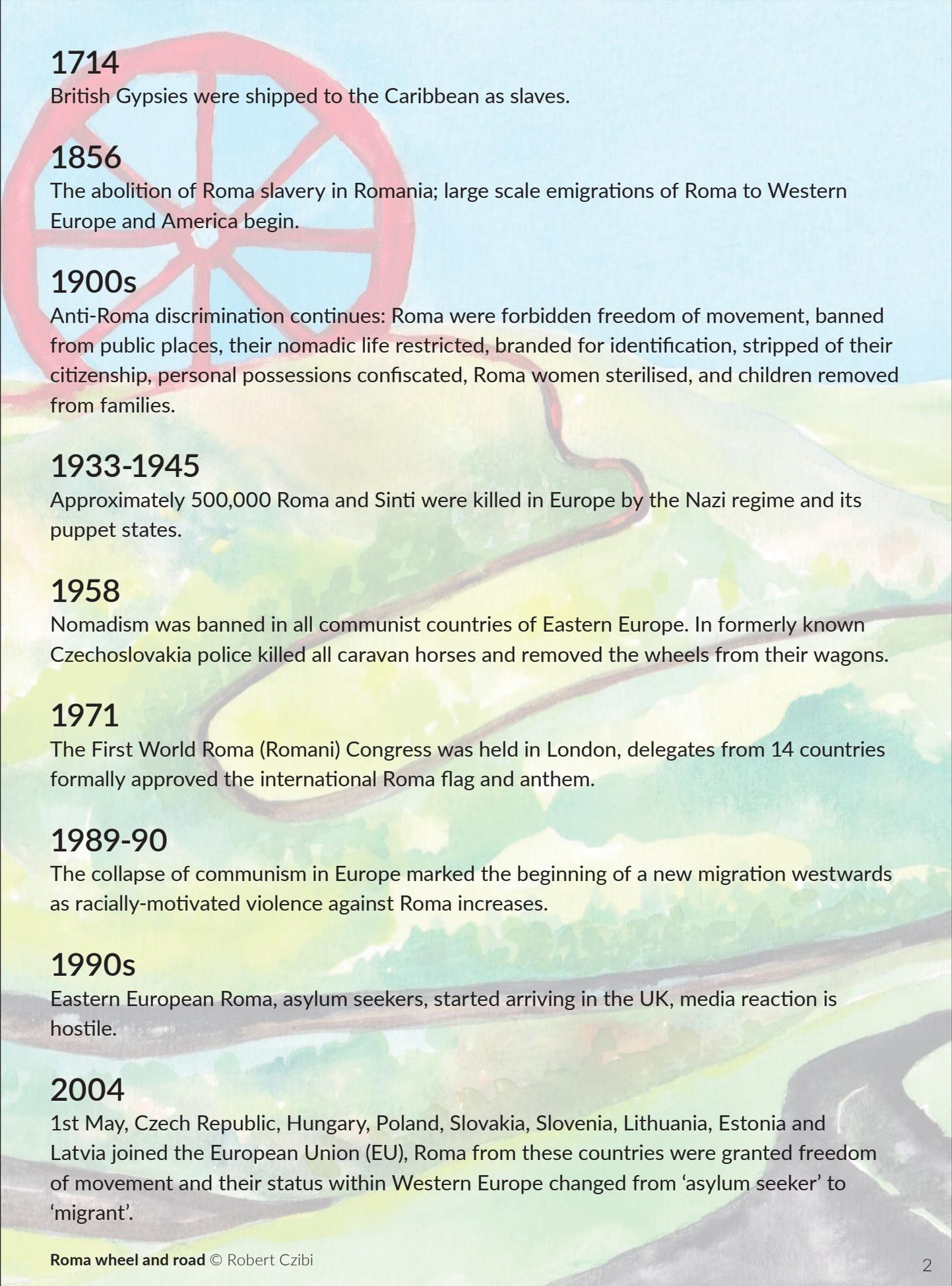
1562

Queen Elizabeth I passed a law, that if Gypsies do not give up their way of life, then they will be put to death and their belongings taken away.

1650s

Last known hanging execution for the crime of being a Gypsy in Suffolk.

Roma wheel and road © Robert Czibi



1714

British Gypsies were shipped to the Caribbean as slaves.

1856

The abolition of Roma slavery in Romania; large scale emigrations of Roma to Western Europe and America begin.

1900s

Anti-Roma discrimination continues: Roma were forbidden freedom of movement, banned from public places, their nomadic life restricted, branded for identification, stripped of their citizenship, personal possessions confiscated, Roma women sterilised, and children removed from families.

1933-1945

Approximately 500,000 Roma and Sinti were killed in Europe by the Nazi regime and its puppet states.

1958

Nomadism was banned in all communist countries of Eastern Europe. In formerly known Czechoslovakia police killed all caravan horses and removed the wheels from their wagons.

1971

The First World Roma (Romani) Congress was held in London, delegates from 14 countries formally approved the international Roma flag and anthem.

1989-90

The collapse of communism in Europe marked the beginning of a new migration westwards as racially-motivated violence against Roma increases.

1990s

Eastern European Roma, asylum seekers, started arriving in the UK, media reaction is hostile.

2004

1st May, Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland, Slovakia, Slovenia, Lithuania, Estonia and Latvia joined the European Union (EU), Roma from these countries were granted freedom of movement and their status within Western Europe changed from 'asylum seeker' to 'migrant'.

Roma wheel and road © Robert Czibi

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2004

The first Roma woman, Hungarian Livia Jaroka, is elected as a Member of the European Parliament.

2007

1st January, Bulgaria and Romania joined the EU, and Roma from these countries can now travel freely looking for work within EU member states.

2008

Gypsy Roma Traveller History Month (GRTHM) is established in Britain as a way of raising awareness of Gypsy, Roma Traveller communities and their contributions to society, and to offset negative stereotyping and prejudices. GRTHM takes place in June.

2018

MPs addressed at the Parliamentary Women & Equalities Select Committee (WESC) regarding the Race Disparity Audit and absence of Government policy to generally recognise and support migrant Roma communities in the UK.