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Roma map ©Robert Czibi

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1.2 Foreword by Ruth Barnett



Detention camp with Gypsies ©Robert Dawson Collection, RSG

I am delighted to have been invited to write a foreword for this long awaited pack of learning material to bring to light the story of the European Roma caught up in the Nazi Holocaust. This story, in my opinion, should have been part of Holocaust education from the beginning instead of the Jewish-only narrative that first emerged.

The very first learning centre and memorial to Holocaust victims was created in Israel, almost immediately after Israel itself was created in 1948. As so many of the immigrants to Israel were Holocaust survivors, Yad Vashem (literally 'hand of God'), as the memorial centre in Jerusalem is called, naturally focused on the Jewish victims. The Holocaust gradually became generally accepted as 'Jewish property' and 'a Jewish story'. The other victims: Roma as a whole people, disabled and homosexual people and political opponents, were air-brushed out.

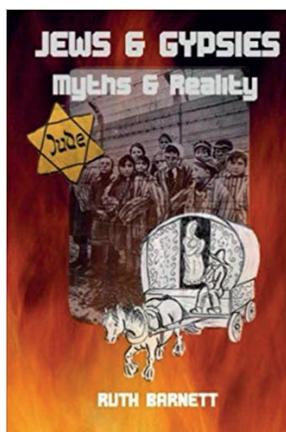
At the end of World War Two in 1945 the whole of Europe and far beyond lay devastated. The people who had lived through it were traumatised as well as stressed, largely undernourished and exhausted. They could barely muster the energy to pick up the shattered pieces of their lives and struggle against the shortages of everything. The true horror of the crimes committed in that war, including the Holocaust, could not be faced and were not spoken about. It did not begin to register in the public domain for almost half a century.

The Holocaust Education Trust (HET) was formed in 1988, forty-three years after the end of the war, and began to promote general awareness and teaching post-war born generations who had not been told what happened by their parents who had lived through it, but had not been able to talk about it. It was due to pressure from HET that in September 1991 the British government put Holocaust education in the national curriculum as a requirement in all secondary schools and to all students. It was at this point that I joined a group, organised by the London Jewish Cultural Centre (LJCC), of people willing to go into schools and support the teachers by telling their personal story of surviving the Holocaust to groups of children. I started telling my personal Kinder transport story in the 1990s.

Pretty soon, I was extremely disturbed, when I asked the audiences what group in their local community did people say nasty things about today and not want them living nearby. I frequently had negative replies about Gypsies phrased in ways reminiscent of Nazi propaganda. To my surprise and delight most teachers realised very quickly that the Roma part of the Holocaust needed to be included.

The source material for learning about Roma in the Holocaust has been very limited and this learning resource is very much needed and particularly valuable as it has been created by Roma themselves. This learning resource, through presenting what Roma families value will contribute much to the understanding that everyone is a member of the one human race.

Ruth Barnett, May 2019



Jews and Gypsies, Myths and Reality by Ruth Barnett



1.3 Introduction



'Roma Stories' – Roma Oral History Project

This Learning Resource has been produced to address the lack of resources on Roma history, to overturn stereotypes by sharing Roma people's positive contributions, and encourage respect and tolerance of other cultures.

The Roma Oral History Project has focussed on the unrecorded oral histories of Roma refugees and migrants from Eastern and Central Europe living in London, exploring themes of displacement and the Holocaust, a sense of belonging and changing identities.

Thirty-two Roma people of different ages and from different countries were interviewed. The stories were audio recorded, filmed, transcribed and are now archived in the London Metropolitan Archives. These collected interviews have informed school workshops, a mobile exhibition, a short film documentary, academic seminars and this Learning Resource.

The Learning Resource includes three individual Oral History Stories: Alexandru Silaghi, Elzbieta Glowacka and Rozalia Glowacka. Their stories tell us about life growing up in their home country; family members' persecution and survival during the Second World War; migration, Roma identity and integration in the UK.

This Project promotes the voices of a group of people that still experience overt racism and discrimination in Europe and the UK. Roma people have often been marginalised, 'hidden' or written out of mainstream history. By using the Oral History method, the Project has given the Roma community a rare opportunity to capture their own knowledge and histories, which have been passed down across generations, orally rather than in a written form, before they are lost.

The Project findings are shared and explained through this Learning Resource. The school materials have been produced in collaboration with Redbridge Primary School and Southern Road Primary School. Some of the text and images used are from class workshops in these schools, and the materials are designed to fit with the school curriculum.



Southern Road Primary School Roma Oral History Workshop ©RSG



Southern Road children's work from the Oral History Workshops with Siladevi Chawda, EAL Coordinator ©RSG

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1.4 Acknowledgments



Roma Support Group would like to thank:

The National Lottery Heritage Fund whose financial contribution made this Project possible.

All the Roma people who shared their stories and photographs, and particularly: Alexandru Silaghi, Elzbieta Glowacka, Rozalia Glowacka whose stories are in this Learning Resource.

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Ruth Barnet for writing the Forward for this Learning Resource and her encouragement.

Artist Robert Czibi for his artwork.

Robert Dawson for donating the historical photographs and postcards, which often refer to Roma as 'Gypsy' or 'Gypsies'.

Photographer Claude Savona for taking the 'Roma Now' photographs.

All the children and staff who participated in the Workshops and helped develop this Learning Resource, including some of the artwork: Redbridge Primary School, including Parminder Kaur Kambo, Sarah Marriott, Sydney Porter, Aletha Saunders, Colin Turner; and Southern Road Primary School, including Gavin MacGregor, Siladevi Chawda, Liezel Van Schalkwyk, David Lennon and Vlad Petruk.

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Film editor Richard Lipman for the 'Roma Stories' film.

European Roma Rights Centre for allowing us to include the video '7 Things You Should Know About Roma people'.

Roma Support Group's Trustee Professor Thomas Acton, for his Map 'Route of the Roma from India to Europe'; Sylvia Ingmire (CEO) for her time and expertise, and all Roma Support Group staff for their enthusiasm and time.

The City of Bristol for hosting the exhibition 'Roma Stories' in their Town Hall, the Vestibules gallery, and in particular Heather Mundy, Chereke Whitfield and the Lord Mayor of Bristol Marvin Rees for opening the exhibition.

This Learning Resource has been written and produced by RSG Oral History Lead Tania Gessi with the support of Education Consultant Sue Mutter.



Planning the Redbridge Primary School Oral History Workshops, Sarah Marriott EMA Coordinator with Sue Mutter and Tania Gessi @RSG



1.5 The Learning Resource



This Learning Resource includes introductory information about Roma. It consists of eight sections that can be used in Primary (KS2) and Secondary (KS3) schools, with teachers in higher and further education, other professionals and it might also be of interest to non-school audiences to build a broader understanding about Roma people.

Roma people are keen for non-Roma people, and their children, to learn more about Roma history and culture. The positive inclusion of this material in the school curriculum will help to overturn negative stereotypes and create positive relationships based on mutual respect and understanding.

The Learning Resource has been designed to be used in curriculum work focussing on, but not limited to:

- **British Values**
- **Personal, Social, Health and Education (PSHE)**
- **Rights Respecting Schools**
- **English: Life Stories**
- **History: Life in the Second World War**
- **Geography: Journeys**
- **Gypsy Roma Traveller History Month (GRTM)**

Developed through workshops with Year 5 children in Southern Road Primary School (London Borough Newham) and Year 6 children in Redbridge Primary School (London Borough Redbridge), this Learning Resource can be used as stand-alone sections or as a whole (look at *Workshop Outline and Suggested Activities* as an example), and can be adapted to suit the needs of individual classes.



Redbridge Primary School Oral History Workshop ©RSG



Redbridge Primary School Oral History Workshop @RSG



1.6 How to use the Historical Postcards & Photographs Now



Historical Postcards and Photographs Now

There are 4 sets of historical postcards and photographs, and 1 set of Roma Now photographs.

The postcards and photographs can be used individually or in sets and each image depicts historical events and/or lifestyle of Roma people:

1. Roma traditional lifestyle
2. Roma traditional crafts
3. Roma dancers and musicians
4. Roma in the Second World War
5. Roma Now, Roma in the UK

Learners can be encouraged to find out about Roma people through questioning the detail in the postcards and photographs, and their stories.

Working in pairs, small groups and with a member of staff, learners can come up with as many words as they can, associated with the picture:

To enable discussion and find key information.

For example, about what they can see, the environment, the place, time of the year, or who is in the image.

To develop vocabulary and describe what they can see.

For example, who and what they see, woman, children, soldier, caravan, the place, fence, baskets, pots, the weather, names of musical instruments or what is happening in the image.

Additional questions that enable further discussion and understanding using visual evidence:

Learners to give reasons, site the visual evidence in the postcards or photographs and to make connections to understand Roma history, key events, lifestyle and life changes for Roma people and some of the effects on their lives.

1. Roma traditional lifestyle

Why did Roma people make journeys? Compare how people travelled historically with today's modes of transport.

2. Roma traditional crafts

What are some of Roma people's traditional skilled crafts and work? Compare historical work opportunities to today's opportunities.

3. Roma dancers and musicians

Listen to some Roma music, identify the instruments being played, what does the music make you think about or feel, and how might you dance to this music?

4. Roma in the Second World War

Why were Roma people persecuted? Compare and contrast the Roma and Jewish experience of persecution.

5. Roma Now, Roma in the UK

Who in the picture would you like to learn about and why? What can you tell or guess about this Roma person's life?