

# STONE *tears*

Remembrance and learning about the Holocaust and Genocide of the Roma



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# **STONE TEARS**

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# THE JEWS AND ROMA ON EUROPEAN SOIL

On European soil, the Jews have been present since Roman times when they settled in various parts of Europe. In Europe, they have constantly faced many restrictions to their freedom and their rights arising from their economic activities and their relations with different social groups: the rulers needed the Jews for economic interests; however, they represented competition and an obstacle in material progress for the aristocracy and other classes. As early as the Middle Ages, the Jews were frequently violently persecuted, e. g. in 1290 they were exiled from England and in 1394 from France. Due to economic, religious and social interests, at the end of the 15<sup>th</sup> and at the beginning of the 16<sup>th</sup> century, forced expulsions of the Jews from several European countries, from Portugal to Lithuania, including from Slovenian regions, began.



As early as in the Middle Ages, the Jews had to wear a special distinguishing sign or clothes, so that they were explicitly differentiated from other people. The most characteristic pieces of the outfit were a pointed yellow headgear, a long gown and a walking stick for men and a scarf for women. The picture shows Jewish clothes from the 12<sup>th</sup> to the middle of the 19<sup>th</sup> century in different countries (source: <http://www.jewishencyclopedia.com/articles/4699-costume>).

Up until the 18<sup>th</sup> century, the Jews were not allowed to move freely but were allowed to settle only in those areas for which they had obtained special permission. If they managed to get permission, they still faced several prohibitions, e. g. of purchasing land and horses. In some cities, they were allowed to live only in special city areas, the so called ghettos. Only at the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> century, did the Jews in France gain the right to citizenship and became equal citizens. In the 19<sup>th</sup> century, a gradual emancipation of the Jews including in other western and central European countries followed; however, adaptation to the development of economic and social life resulted in a high level of assimilation and acculturation: the number of mixed marriages, withdrawals of the Jewish religion and changes of language of communication rose. The Western European Jews lived mainly in urbanized environments where, as a rule, they represented only a small part of the city population. In the East of Europe, where at that time the majority of the Jews lived, in the 19<sup>th</sup> century they faced gradually more and more restrictions. In tsarist Russia, the government forced the Jews to move to certain, overpopulated areas where they lived in poverty and straitened circumstances. The tsarist authorities also perceived the Jews as a dangerous element of revolution, therefore they increased the pressure on the Jewish population. They restricted entry to universities for Jewish students, often performed anti-Jewish pogroms which lasted right up until the First World War. This resulted in a mass emigration of Jews, especially to the United States of America. Even so, before the beginning of the Second World War, more than half of the total Jewish population lived in Europe.

In greater numbers, the Jews started to move to the territory of the present Republic of Slovenia during the 12<sup>th</sup> and 13<sup>th</sup> centuries. The largest Jewish communities on Slovenian soil in the Middle Ages lived in Maribor, Ptuj and Ljubljana; the Jews also lived in Piran, Izola, Koper, Trst (Trieste), Gorica (Gorizia), Celje, Slovenj Gradec, Radgona (Bad Radkersburg), Slovenska Bistrica, Dravograd and Ormož. Like in other parts of Europe, the Jews in Slovenia dealt primarily

with trade and money lending. The general economic, spiritual and social crisis of the 15<sup>th</sup> century echoed in Slovenian lands, as well. At the exhortation of the Styrian and Carinthian representatives of nobility, clergy and townspeople, in 1496 the emperor Maximilian I issued two decrees about expulsion of the Jews from Carinthia and Styria (they had to leave the latter by 6 January 1497), while in 1515 the Jews were expelled from Ljubljana. This was the only city in Carniola in which the Jewish community lived. In the centuries that followed the medieval expulsions, the Jews in the majority of Slovenian regions under Habsburg jurisdiction were not allowed to permanently reside up until the 19<sup>th</sup> century. However, in the 18<sup>th</sup> century they started to settle down in Prekmurje which belonged to Hungary. Up until the Second World War, the greatest number of the Jews in Slovenia lived just in the region along the Mura river. The centres of Jewish life were Murska Sobota and Lendava.



In the Middle Ages, one of the largest and most important Jewish communities in Slovenia lived in Maribor. Today its remaining legacy is the preserved synagogue, which is one of the most significant remnants of the Jewish heritage on Slovenian soil (photo credit: CJCH Synagogue Maribor, photo by Bojan Nedok).



The Jew Baruch's signet ring, probably from the 14<sup>th</sup> century, is the only Jewish signet ring which has been preserved on Slovenian soil. The medieval Jews used signet rings primarily for correspondence and making business transactions (source: National Museum of Slovenia, Inv. No. 2529, photo by Tomaž Lazar).

The majority of the Jews in Prekmurje made a living out of trade, they also owned butcher's shops and inns, shoemaker's and other shops, they worked as builders, carriers, typographers, pharmacists and later as hotel and factory owners and bankers as well. One of the Jews who dealt with trade was Herman Bader who had his shop at today's Glavna ulica street in Lendava (source: Mirjana Gašpar, Beata Lazar, *Židje v Lendavi*, 1997).



Like the Jews, the Roma people were characterized by extremely negative labels, persecution and continuous discrimination after their arrival on European soil. They are believed to have started to move to Europe in the 9<sup>th</sup> century and between the 11<sup>th</sup> and 13<sup>th</sup> century they reached the territory of present day Greece. However, the first written references of the Roma in central European regions date back to the 14<sup>th</sup> century. In order to be more kindly received, the Roma in Central Europe first pretended to be pilgrims. Despite this, other inhabitants soon started to perceive them as "suspicious" due to their appearance and tainted complexion. The attitude characterized by defence against the Roma and their persecution started to become mainstream in the 15<sup>th</sup> century. With the adoption of several "anti-Gypsy" laws, the Roma, when present in a particular place, could be subjected to various punishments, whipping, stamping, torture and hanging; rewards were even offered for catching and killing a Roma. In the 18<sup>th</sup> century, there was an attempt to change the Roma into "decent" people with an ordered forced assimilation: they were not allowed to use their own language, perform hawker trades, own horses and caravans, they had their children taken away from them and were forcibly resettled. At the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the Roma began to be officially registered and the data recorded later became the basis for the destruction that followed.



Itinerant Roma people in Great Britain at the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century (source: [https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Gypsy\\_caravan.jpg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Gypsy_caravan.jpg))



Roma in the outskirts of Novo mesto before the Second World War (source: Miran Jarc Library Novo mesto, Department of Local Studies and Bogoj Komelj's Special Collection, Inv. No. 197912668)

In Slovenia, the Roma started to settle permanently in the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> centuries, especially in the regions of Prekmurje, and Lower and Upper Carniola (Dolenjska, Bela krajina, Posavje and Gorenjska). They dealt in knife sharpening and the blacksmith trade, they helped with farm chores, they made a living from working in quarries and gravel breaking and as musicians, grumblers and merry-go-round managers in travelling amusement fairs. Despite all this, they were subjected to numerous attempts of the authorities to ensure a more efficient oversight of the Roma and their activities in Slovenia as well, just like in other parts of Europe, due to the common perception that the Roma are born with an inclination to vagrancy, begging, theft and fraud. The characteristics associated with the Roma which were most disruptive for the authorities were travelling from one place to another, their life style and social order. With the adoption of measures to limit the opportunities of performing travelling crafts and reselling at fairs, they therefore tried to prevent the arrival and settlement of "foreign" Roma.

#### Did you know?

**JUDAISM** is the religion of the Jewish nation. It is the oldest monotheistic religion. It was the basis for Christianity, as well as for Islam. The **TORAH** or the Pentateuch (the Five Books of Moses) is the foundation of the Jewish bible and denotes the whole Jewish tradition in the broadest sense.

**GHETTO** is a closed area of a city in which the Jews lived separately from other, non-Jewish population. The expression comes from the Italian word *ghetto* (foundry). It was used for the first time for a Venetian quarter near an artillery foundry, to which the Venetian Jews had to move in 1516.

**EMANCIPATION** denotes liberation from any dependence or inequality. **ACCULTURATION** is the adaptation to a second cultural environment and the adoption of the external characteristics of the culture of the majority, especially the language. **ASSIMILATION** refers to endeavours to accept the national identity of the majority nation or melting one nation with another.

**POGROM**, from Russian 'destruction', is an expression used to describe the violent attacks aimed at the Jews in Jewish city quarters and villages.

The expression **ROMA** refers to several Roma communities which share the same social-ethnic identity. The Roma communities in Europe can be grouped into three branches: the Roma, Sinti (or Manouche) and Kale (or Gitanos or Spanish Gypsies). The Roma further divide into several subgroups.

# ANTI-SEMITISM AND ANTI-GYPSYISM

The Jews have always raised feelings of hatred, fear and envy in their surroundings, which originated from a lack of knowledge of Jewish culture and tradition and especially from economic competition and indebtedness. The hatred towards the Jews appeared with the ascent of Christianity, and this earliest form of intolerance towards them is termed Christian anti-Judaism. With the beginning of the crusades, the religious intolerance only increased. The Jews were most frequently accused of ritual murders and profanation of holy hosts. In the time of the "Black Death", they were blamed for poisoning of Christian wells and even for causing the plague.



The majority of the Jewish population who lived in Eastern Europe belonged to the lower middle and working classes. They lived in special, small rural communities or shtetls in which they represented the majority of the population. A scene from an unknown shtetl in Eastern Europe (source: <http://www.judaica.cz>, courtesy of František Bányai).

Poland	3,125,000
Romania	800,000
Germany	589,500
Hungary	473,000
Czechoslovakia	380,000
Austria	220,000
Lithuania	167,000
France	160,000
Yugoslavia	68,405
Italy	45,000

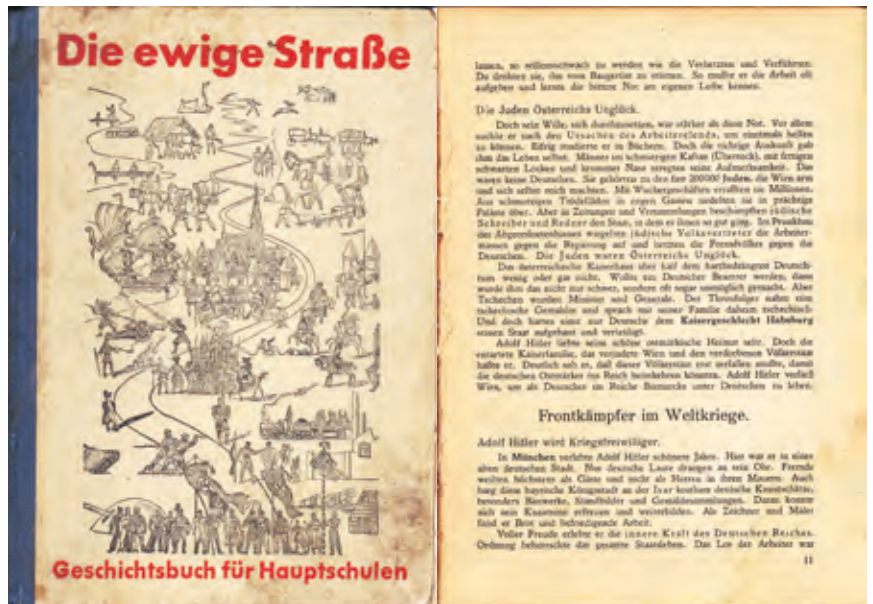
The number of Jews living in individual European countries around the year 1931 (source: Andrej Pančur, *Judovska skupnost v Sloveniji na predvečer holokavsta*, Celje 2011)

The anti-Jewish atmosphere started to strengthen again in the time of the industrialization of Europe in the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries. One of the causes is most certainly economic competition. Especially in western and central Europe, the Jews started to become the carriers of economic and social development. The equality according to citizens' rights enabled them to gain positions which used to be reserved for Christians. The so-called modern anti-Semitism appeared which perceived the Jews as an ethnically inferior group and race. The aggressive wave of anti-Semitism began in Germany in the 1870's and quickly spread to France, Russia and Austria-Hungary and thus to the Slovenian territory.





An important part of the Nazi system was the education of children in the spirit of the Nazi social and political ideology. Page from the book *The Poisonous Mushroom* from 1938, one of several anti-Semitic children's books published by Julius Streicher's Der Stürmer-Verlag. The text below the picture reads, "The Jewish nose is crooked at its tip. It looks like the number six." (photo credit: United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, source: Ernst Hiemer, *Der Giftpilz: ein Stürmerbuch für Jung u. Alt: Erzählungen*, Der Stürmer-Verlag).



During the Second World War, in the occupied areas of Styria and Upper Carniola the language of teaching became German, while the history textbooks, used in the schools, glorified the image of Nazi leader Adolf Hitler and the greatness of the German race. In the textbook *Die ewige Straße: Geschichtsbuch für Hauptschulen* the Jews were referred to as Austria's misfortune (private collection of Igor Vodnik).



Anti-Semitic propaganda was spread by all accessible media: printed media was an especially strong propaganda tool. The picture shows examples of anti-Jewish propaganda in the Independent State of Croatia and so-called Nedić's Serbia. Posters were one of the cheapest and most efficient propaganda tools, since they were printed in large formats and vivid colours, with horrifying images and inflammatory texts (exhibition *Remembering the Holocaust* in Synagogue Maribor, 2010, photo by Marjetka Bedrač).

**In Slovenia, where the Jews have never been present in great numbers, anti-Semitism appeared primarily as a consequence of following the trends from Austro-Hungarian regions with greater shares of Jewish population.** In the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the Jews were negatively described in numerous articles in Slovenian newspapers and some examples of anti-Jewish riots appeared (public slander, threats of death and violence, throwing stones at the windows of Jewish houses and business premises, etc.). At the fast economic ascent of the immigrant Jewish merchants, they were reproached that they made money in a morally reprehensible way. For the Slovenian public sphere, it was characteristic that the negative attitude towards the Jews was shared by both main political options – the liberals and the Catholics.

**The Roma, as well, have been subjected to persecutions and attempts of violent assimilation throughout their history of settlement in European countries.** They have always been accused of not wanting to work, of being vagrants and thieves. In the 18<sup>th</sup> century, the Roma living in the area of the Habsburg monarchy were offered the possibility of permanent settlement provided that they renounce their tradition, language and their Roma name. The stereotypical prejudice towards the Roma as a group of people who are supposed to deal with illegal business and criminal acts have not faded away up to the present day.



panje. m. ići se ka tu a po-Mestu pogo- je šla la dva doma laj pri- ta na- če do- nepro- b hodo

Mefistu — »Morgenluft«.

(Židovski praznik.) Iz Trsta : V Trstu je bil zdaj nek židovski praznik, kakšen, ne vem, a povedalo se mi je, da so imeli avoj praznik. V neki ulici se je prodajal sad cedre libanonske, kateri sad ne sme manjkati na nobeni judovski mizi o tem prazniku. Pri tej priliki kupovanja tega sadu pa sem imel priliko videti, koliko grozno je židovske golazni v Trstu. Naravnost rečem, mrz me je pretresal, ko sem zagledal te prikazni la- ziti po mestu v svojih črnih haljah. In tu v Trstu se čutijo le harpije prav domače, hodijo po mestu, kakor bi hoteli reči: tu je in bode vse na a e!

(Razpis dobave.) C. kr. ravnateljstvo državnih železnic v Beljaku je za leto 1899 razpisalo do-

Lloyd dožen gala s pričar kvotno ogerst B nju s dela 1000 dela 1345 B Naplo zavezi

The Slovenian newspapers *Slovenski gospodar*, *Slovenski svet* and *Slovenec*, were among the media in which anti-Semitic writing was often present, as well. On 2 September 1898, the *Slovenec* newspaper published an anti-Semitic article on the Jews in Trieste (source: <http://www.dlib.si,URN:NBN:SI:DOC-C2WV4ZTT>).



After the First World War, the anti-Jewish atmosphere in Slovenia gradually escalated, as seen in the advertisement at the Carinthian plebiscite from the time around 1920 (source: <http://www.dlib.si,URN:NBN:SI:IMG-RRX2BRH7>).

5. Obrazec odgonskega protokola  
1902. Odgonski protokol.

Odgonski - Del oddajatelj		Odgonski - Del oddajatelj		Odgonski - Del oddajatelj	
Ime in priimek	Prejeto	Ime in priimek	Prejeto	Ime in priimek	Prejeto
1. Priglasitev...	...	...	...	...	...
2. ...	...	...	...	...	...
3. ...	...	...	...	...	...
4. ...	...	...	...	...	...
5. ...	...	...	...	...	...

Mesto: Rudolfswerth, 1902

In Slovenia, municipalities were obliged to prepare lists of all Roma people, which had a homeland right in the area of these municipalities. The Roma who did not have a homeland right were exiled. For this purpose special forms existed, the so-called "exile protocols." The exile protocol from Rudolfswerth/Novo mesto from 1902 (source: Historical Archives Ljubljana, Unit for Dolenjska and Bela krajina Novo mesto, folder Central District).

Between the World Wars, intolerance towards the Roma in Slovenia continued. For example, in 1936 the Mayor of Kranj Dr Fran Ogrin wrote in the bulletin of the mayoral association of Ljubljana: "Regarding the Gypsies, it is high time to make the decision: will we include the Gypsies in the existing social and public order (including fulfilment of school and military obligations) or break their contact with the general population and settle them on individual isolated islands at the sea coast, as it was advised in a newspaper. With the increasing number of Gypsies, the Gypsy pest has become dangerous for the law and order!"

**Did you know?**

**ANTI-SEMITISM** is a view, a movement directed against the Jews, especially from political or economic reasons. The expression originates from the late 19<sup>th</sup> century and denotes anti-Jewish views and activities. There are three kinds of anti-Semitism: **traditional** or **religious anti-Semitism** (or anti-Judaism), which is based on the difference of religion; **economic anti-Semitism**, which is associated with the frequent activities of the Jews - their trade; and **racial anti-Semitism**, which is founded on the idea that the Jews are an inferior race.

**ANTI-GYPSYISM** is ethnical hatred against the Gypsies through the centuries. It is a specific form of racism, ideology based on racial superiority, as a form of dehumanization and institutional racism, which preserves historical discrimination. This is expressed, among other things, with violence, hate speech, exploitation and stigmatization.

# NAZIS ACCESSION TO POWER AND ESCALATION OF PERSECUTION

After the First World War, in Germany there lived approximately half a million Jews, who represented less than one per cent of the whole German population. The majority of the Jews were German citizens; many of them occupied important positions in public life, in politics, as well as in economy and culture. The first precursor of the increased anti-Semitism in Germany was the legend about the "knife in the back" which was allegedly stabbed by the left-wing politicians, including many Jews, into the back of the undefeated German army with capitulation and proclamation of the republic at the end of the war. After the escalation of the economic crisis, the Jews were started to be blamed for all financial and economic problems. Therefore a great part of the German public considered them a global threat. Following Hitler's take-over, the position of the Jews in Germany greatly deteriorated, anti-Jewish intimidation and violence started to spread across the whole country. The Nazis started to systematically eliminate the Jews from German public life. Because of fear, many Jewish families tried to leave Germany in the first years after the victory of Nazism but there were only a small number of countries ready to accept them.



"Jews are not wanted here," an anti-Semitic notice in Hornstein in the Burgenland region around 1938 (source: Burgenländisches Landesarchiv, Eisenstadt, Photographic Collection)

In April 1933, the German authorities adopted a law on the basis of which they started to dismiss Jews from state administration. During the same month, a law against overcrowding in schools and universities was adopted which limited the enrolment of Jewish secondary and university students to all schools and universities. The Nazis also organized the public burning of books written by Jewish authors and opponents of Nazism. They also started to limit the cooperation of the Jews in cultural life; as a result important educated people of Jewish origin started to leave Germany.



After the annexation of Austria to the Reich in March 1938, many Jews from the Burgenland region immigrated to Palestine. The photograph shows Jewish refugees who reached Haifa in October 1938 on the ship "Romania." First from the right is Eduard Roth, who was soon after the Nazi takeover imprisoned and forced to renounce all his belongings with his signature. Along with his family, he was exiled from Gols in Burgenland. Since Hungary and Czechoslovakia did not want to accept Jewish refugees, they became stuck in the no man's land at Schleppekahn on the Danube river (picture on the right) for several months, which was organized for them by the Jewish community from Bratislava. Only when world media became informed of their fate, some refugees got permission to move to Palestine. This was one of the first cases of deportation of Jews from the Third Reich (source: Research Society Burgenland, Eisenstadt).

On 15 September 1935, the so-called Nuremberg laws were adopted, including the *Reich Citizenship Law* and the *Law for the Protection of German Blood*. The Jews were declared as second-class citizens. The German authorities prohibited marriages between Jews and non-Jews. In November 1935, a decree was adopted which defined who, according to Nazi understanding, was considered a Jew and who a "Jewish Mischling": The Jews were deprived of the right to vote; a year later they lost other civil rights. The German state fired all Jewish doctors, lawyers, professors and teachers who were employed in state institutions. Up to the beginning of the Second World War, around 250 laws, decrees, acts, regulations and directions were adopted which were aimed at limiting the freedom and life opportunities of the Jews. Up to 1939, more than half German Jews had fled the Reich but due to the speed of the Nazis conquering Europe, they soon became victims of persecution again.



The first executive order of the *Reich Citizenship Law* defined who was to be considered a Jew: a Jew is considered a person with at least three Jewish grandparents; "First degree Mischlings" or Half-Jews were people with two Jewish grandparents; "Second degree Mischlings" were people with one Jewish grandparent. They were equal to the people "of German blood" (source: [http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Nuremberg\\_laws.jpg](http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Nuremberg_laws.jpg)).



At night from 9 to 10 November 1938, the Nazis in the so-called Kristallnacht performed a pogrom against the Jews in Germany and the annexed Austria. They destroyed the majority of synagogues, many Jewish flats and shops and imprisoned around 30 thousand Jews. Thus the Jews became economically restricted and excluded from public life. They were not allowed to visit the theatre, cinema, concerts or other public events. In Berlin, the Jews were prohibited from public transport. They were deprived of their driving licences and of access to universities. In some places, a general restriction of movement was introduced and their radio receivers were confiscated. In the Kristallnacht, the Ohel Jakob synagogue in Munich was also destroyed (source: [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Destroyed\\_Ohel\\_Yaaqov\\_Synagogue.jpeg](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Destroyed_Ohel_Yaaqov_Synagogue.jpeg)).

During the times of the Nazi regime, racial hygiene was implemented among the whole population, including the Germans. Like the Jews, the Roma were treated as second-class citizens, anti-social and retarded creatures who hindered the development of the Third Reich and should therefore be exterminated. Since the Nazis were not in possession of complete lists of the Roma and Sinti living in Germany, they tried to determine whether individuals were of Roma origin on the basis of their physical characteristics. By means of genealogical data and anthropometric measurements, the Race Hygiene Centre, which was led by Dr Robert Ritter after 1936, established classifications of "purity of Roma blood." In 1938, a command "to combat the Gypsy nuisance" was issued, the Roma became subjected to the Nuremberg Laws, as well as the *Law for the Prevention of Hereditarily Diseased Progeny*, and the *Law against Dangerous Habitual Criminals*. On their basis the Roma and Sinti started to undergo planned sterilization and later also euthanasia. The Nazi government had decided to look for a solution of the Jewish, as well as the Roma question.



Types of "Gypsies," Tatra region, Slovakia. A page from a German soldier's album on Roma prisoners (photo credit: Yad Vashem, Jerusalem).

#### Did you know?

Nazism or **NATIONAL SOCIALISM** is a totalitarian ideology which was created by Adolf Hitler. He outlined his programme in his book *Mein Kampf* which was published in 1924/1925. After 1933, when the elections were won by the Nazi party, it became German state ideology.

**ANTHROPOMETRY** is a method for measuring the human body and the ratios between an individual's body parts. The Nazis used it to identify differences between races and as a method of criminalistics identification.

During the time of the Olympic Games in Berlin in 1936, the Nazis tried to conceal their racist policy by temporary removal of anti-Jewish signs, the newspapers softened the anti-Semitic rhetoric and the Roma and Sinti who lived in the city were forcibly transported to the **MARZAHN** camp on the outskirts of the city. There they had to live in their caravans and shacks, in unsustainable living conditions. They were not allowed to leave the camp without permission. Later the camp was fenced and served as a labour camp. Many men were transported from Marzahn to the Buchenwald and Sachsenhausen camps. The camp was abolished in 1943 when all remaining prisoners were transported to Auschwitz-Birkenau where the majority of them were murdered.

# BEGINNING OF THE SECOND WORLD WAR

When on 1 September 1939, the German armed forces attacked Poland, the persecution of the Jews only increased. Their movement became restricted; the Jews were not allowed to leave their homes at certain times of the day. Also, they were taken away their radio receivers and telephones, the quantity of food they were allowed to buy got significantly restricted. The anti-Jewish legislation was soon adopted also in other countries. In 1940, the Nazi Germany or its State Security Office planned to deport all the Jews from Europe to Madagascar. The "Madagascar Project" was designed by Franz Rademacher, the Head of the "Jewish department" of the Foreign Ministry. The idea to deport all the Jews to distant places had appeared in anti-Semitic literature in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. The plan to deport all German Jews to Madagascar was not realized, since the German navy was far from being strong enough to implement it.



In public the Jews had to wear a yellow Star of David sewn to the outerwear on the chest or back or a yellow band on the upper arm. The Nazi and pro-Nazi authorities used this to publicly mark the Jews and thus achieved perfect control over them. The picture shows an example of identification, which had to be worn by the Jews in the Independent State of Croatia (source: Koprivnica City Museum).



The Jewish street in Oświęcim at the beginning of the German occupation in 1939. In the background on the right, there is the Great Synagogue (source: Jewish Museum in Oświęcim, courtesy of The State Archives in Katowice).



The prisoners from Auschwitz remove the ruins of the destroyed Great Synagogue in Oświęcim, 1940 (source: Jewish Museum in Oświęcim, collection of Emilia Weźranowska).

After the occupation of Poland, due to a growing number of Jewish population under German authority, the Nazis started to issue instructions for accommodation of the Jews in closed city quarters or ghettos. They were introduced in the Eastern part of Middle Europe and in Eastern Europe as places of forced residence for the humiliation and exploitation of the Jews. The largest ghetto was founded in Warsaw where around 450 thousand people were imprisoned for a longer or shorter time. There were also large ghettos in Łódź, Kraków, Lublin, Vilnius, Riga, Minsk and Lviv. The Germans founded the ghettos with the intention of separating the Jews from the rest of the population. Living conditions in the ghettos were horrible; they were over-crowded, people starved to death and lived in extremely poor unhygienic circumstances, which resulted in the spreading of infectious diseases. It was prohibited to leave the ghetto without permission, something which was liable to the death penalty.



To the Theresienstadt ghetto, around 140 thousand Jews from Czechoslovakia, Austria, Germany, Netherlands, and Denmark were deported. The ghetto population included many artists and scientists, therefore the Germans managed to achieve making Theresienstadt act like a city in which the Jews lived productively and creatively. To Theresienstadt, approximately 13 thousand children were deported, of which only a few hundred survived (photo credit: Jewish Museum in Prague, Photo Archive).

In 1931, in Slovenia in the so-called Drava Province (which included today's territory of Slovenia without the Primorska region) lived approximately 820 Jews. Immediately before the beginning of the War, the number of Jews increased for a short time on the account of refugees who had fled from Nazism in Central Europe, across Yugoslavia. Towards the end of the thirties, the Yugoslav policy towards the Jews also gradually tightened: in October 1940, the first two anti-Semitic laws were introduced. They introduced *numerus clausus* for Jewish students and restricted the purchase and sale of some food products which affected a great deal of Jewish merchants. The anti-refugee policy towards Jewish refugees tightened as well; gradually it became difficult to get a visa for entry to the then Yugoslavia and one had to cross the border illegally. The border most exposed was the Northern border with Austria. The applications of foreign Jewish citizens who met all criteria for the acquisition of citizenship were as a rule rejected – only for one simple reason: because the applicants were Jewish.

*"Jew!" We keep hearing this loud cry from the mouths of Germans who until yesterday used to be our neighbors. The wolf has shed his lambskin and he craves prey. German youths lie in wait for passing Jews. They attack them mercilessly, pull at their beards and hair until blood flows, all the while beaming with sadistic pleasure at their wild sport. This has become their 'national mission,' and they carry it out with proverbial Germany thoroughness. One of our neighbors was taken away for forced labor in the central administration building. After he had scrubbed the floor he was ordered to dry the tiles with his own coat ... Only when his clothes were thoroughly soaked with the filthy water was he allowed to get up. Then they shaved off all the hair from part of his head and pushed him out onto the street."*

Testimony of an unknown Jewish woman from Łódź (source: Wolfgang Benz, *The Holocaust. A German Historian Examines the Genocide*, New York 1999)



Public humiliations became a part of Jewish everyday life. The members of pro-Nazi Slovak government cut off a Jew's beard, a sign of his piety. The photograph was shot at the deportation of the Jews from the Slovak city Stropkov in 1942 (source: Slovak National Museum – Museum of Jewish Culture Bratislava).

At the start of the war, Nazi policy towards the Roma radicalized like that towards the Jews. After 1939, the Roma were prohibited from leaving their home town or home. Thus the local police authorities were able to count the Roma population and on this basis, performed its deportation to ghettos and camps in Poland. Systematic organized deportations of Roma and Sinti began in May 1940. In November 1941, Austrian Roma were deported to the ghetto in Łódź and from there to Chełmno where they were among the first victims of gassing in adapted vehicles. Similarly, Roma from Germany and Poland who were being held prisoners in the Warsaw ghetto, were deported to Treblinka and murdered there in summer 1942.

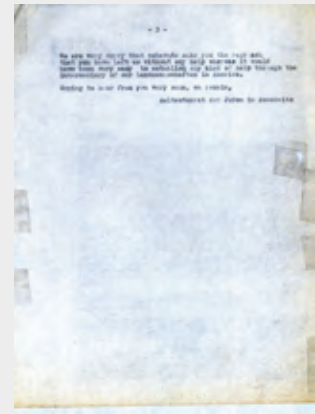
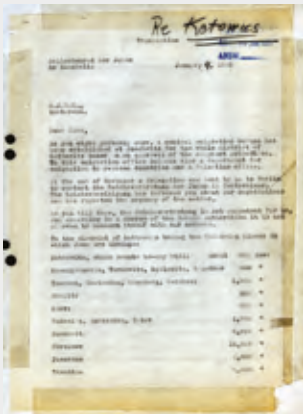
**Did you know?**

**NUMERUS CLAUSUS** (Latin) is an expression, which refers to restriction from enrolment of Jewish students to universities, high schools, colleges and secondary schools, schools for teachers and other professional schools. The number of Jewish students at these schools had to be in proportion to the number of Jewish population in the cities where the schools were located.

The first ghetto founded by the Nazis was in the town of **PIOTRKÓW TRYBUNALSKI** near Łódź. It was founded on 8 October 1939.

The second largest ghetto was founded in **ŁÓDŹ** in Poland; it operated from February 1940. For a longer or a shorter time, around 200 thousand people were imprisoned there, including 5 thousand Roma from Austria. It was also the ghetto which was destroyed last: its inhabitants were deported to the Auschwitz-Birkenau camp in August 1944.

Following the instructions of the Nazi authorities, in Jewish communities and ghettos Jewish **JUDENRÄTE** were founded. Following Nazi commands, Judenräte had to implement different administrative and economic measures. After the adoption of the "final solution," they had to prepare lists of the Jews who were to be deported to extermination camps. The activities in Judenräte remain one of the most controversial acts from the time of the Holocaust to the present day, although the majority of members cooperated because they believed that by following the Nazi orders, they would manage to withhold the implementation of anti-Jewish measures or at least to mitigate them.



The letter which was written by Judenrat from Oświęcim/Auschwitz to the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee in Amsterdam discussing the plan for the transportation of Jews from the Katowice area as soon as possible. Among other things, the letter lists cities with numbers of the Jewish population (photo credit: Jewish Museum in Oświęcim, courtesy of The Joint Archives, New York).

In November 1940, the German authorities forcibly accommodated the whole Warsaw Jewish population into the **WARSAW GHETTO**. In the Warsaw ghetto, an average meal in 1941 contained only 184 calories. By comparison, a small roll contains approximately 262 calories. In this year, almost 40 thousand people in the ghetto died of various diseases and hunger.

On 19 April 1943, the Jews in the Warsaw ghetto rose up. The resistance endured for three weeks, until the SS general Jürgen Stroop ordered the burning of the ghetto. The **WARSAW GHETTO UPRISING** represents the largest and most important uprising of the Jews against the Nazi persecutors.



Jews captured during the suppression of the Warsaw ghetto uprising are marched to the *Umschlagplatz* for deportation. The woman at the head of the column, on the left, is Yehudit Neyer (born Tolub). She is holding onto the right arm of her mother-in-law. The child is the daughter of Yehudit and her father, Avraham Neyer, a member of the Bund, who can be seen just behind the little girl. Of the four, only Avraham survived the war (photo credit: United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, courtesy of National Archives and Records Administration, College Park).



# “FINAL SOLUTION” OF THE JEWISH AND ROMA QUESTIONS

In the area of the occupied parts of the Soviet Union in 1941, the Nazis organized mobile death squads or the so-called *Einsatzgruppen*, which were specifically trained for liquidations. The task of these units was to eliminate primarily the Jews, as well as the Roma, the mentally ill, communists and other “unwanted.” At the same time, they encouraged the local population to kill Jews and usurp their belongings. Up to 1943 in the occupied areas of the Soviet Union, more than one million four hundred thousand Jews were killed.



An Ukrainian Jew is kneeling in front of a mass grave full of dead bodies just before being killed by a member of Einsatzgruppe (photo credit: United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, courtesy of Sharon Paquette).

In the autumn of 1941, the last phase of the Nazi Jewish policy targeted to the extermination of the European Jewish people began with a systematic and precisely planned deportation of the Jews from Germany. From October onwards, the Jews began to receive notices with the information as to where they must meet and instructions of what to bring with them due to “resettlement to the East” and in what condition their flats should be left. Their belongings were confiscated by the Gestapo.



Deportation of the Jews from the Polish town of Oświęcim accompanied by German police. The photograph was taken by German denunciator Andreas Kasza in 1941. The majority of the Jews from Oświęcim were sent to the ghettos Będzin, Chrzanów and Sosnowiec, and from there to the Auschwitz camp in 1942 (photo credit: Jewish Museum in Oświęcim, collection of Mirosław Ganobis).



Deportation of the Jews from Stropkov, 1942 (photo credit: Slovak National Museum – Museum of Jewish Culture Bratislava)

**The plan of the total destruction of European Jews was officially finalised at a conference in the suburbs of Berlin by lake Wannsee on 20 January 1942.** At the conference, the coordination of all responsible organs for the “final solution of the Jewish question” was established; whereas the Head of the Reich Main Security Office (RSHA) Reinhard Heydrich made it clear that “the final solution” would include the transport and death of all Jews incapable of forced labour. The remaining ones will be sentenced to labour until death. Soon after, the Jews started to be transported to extermination camps in Poland. The locations for the camps were selected practically, that is in areas where several millions of Jews lived and where the railway connections enabled the Germans to transport several thousand Jews from all parts of Europe to the camps. In western parts of Europe, there were no mass killings of Jews as a rule. However, the Jews were deported to the death camps in the eastern parts of Europe. From western parts of Europe, more than 400 thousand Jews were sent to death.



The Jews from the ghetto in Łódź being loaded into cattle wagons for transport to the Chełmno extermination camp. The photograph was taken between 1942 and 1944 (photo credit: United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, courtesy of National Museum of American Jewish History).



Deportation of the Jews from Körmend, 1944 (photo credit: Hungarian Jewish Museum and Archives, Budapest)

From 1942 to 1945, Jews from all countries under the national socialistic rule were transported in massive numbers to labour and extermination camps. It has been estimated that around 1,200 Nazi camps with their branches existed, according to other estimations there were as many as 15 thousand permanent or even 40 thousand temporary camps which were specifically established for certain operations. Extermination camps were founded with the intention of providing an efficient process of mass destruction. The first extermination camp – Chelmno started to operate in December 1941. There the Jews and Roma were initially gassed in gas chambers in adapted vehicles, and only later were gas chambers constructed, which increased the capacity of mass killing and made the process for its performers even more impersonal. Daily, in gas chambers in different camps, several thousand people were killed.



Deportation of Jewish children in 1942 from the orphanage in the Marysin quarter of the Łódź ghetto to the Chelmno extermination camp (source: [http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Litzmannstadt\\_Ghetto\\_deportation\\_Marysin\\_orphanage\\_01.jpg](http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Litzmannstadt_Ghetto_deportation_Marysin_orphanage_01.jpg))

**Systematic deportations of Roma and Sinti from the area under the control of the Nazis to the concentration camps began in December 1942.** The majority were deported to Auschwitz where some of them became the victims of medical experiments. As early as from 1941, the Roma from the territory of the Independent State of Croatia were massively deported especially to the Jasenovac camp, while many Roma from the occupied Serbia were killed as hostages and imprisoned in the Sajmište camp in Belgrade between 1941 and 1942.

#### Did you know?

The expression the **"FINAL SOLUTION OF THE JEWISH QUESTION"** is a national socialistic label for persecution and massacre of the Jews living in Germany and in the whole area of Europe occupied by German army and under the control of the German Reich.

**LABOUR and EXTERMINATION CONCENTRATION CAMPS** can be differentiated. In labour camps the labour force was exploited; the prisoners died from torture, malnutrition, epidemics, and circumstances of poor hygiene. However, in extermination camps, the prisoners were killed in gas chambers in massive numbers; their bodies were burnt in crematoria and buried in mass graves. There were six extermination camps in Poland: Auschwitz, Chelmno, Bełżec, Sobibór, Treblinka and Majdanek. In Auschwitz, the first trial killing of people with poisonous gas Zyklon B was performed four months before the Wannsee conference.

The first concentration camp **DACHAU** was established in 1933. It was first intended for imprisonment of the opponents of the Nazi regime: communists, socialists, liberals and all people who were supposedly disloyal to the Reich.

The Nazis started to perform **EUTHANASIA** (Old Greek: easy or good death) of "incurably" ill and physically and mentally handicapped regardless of their racial origin in October 1939. The first victims were children, they were killed with injections. After January 1940, they killed grown-ups, as well. The executions were performed in hermetically sealed gas chambers which looked like showers. Due to increasing negative opinion of the public, Hitler ordered a halt to the programme but in reality it was carried on: the patients were then subjected to death from starvation or overdose of medicine in psychiatric institutions and hospitals. The gas chambers the Nazi used in the euthanasia programme, served as a prototype of gas chambers for mass killing in death camps.

# THE JEWS DURING THE HOLOCAUST

*"At five in the morning, Hungarian gendarmes together with state officials knocked at our door, demanded our father to hand over all the money, jewellery, in short, everything that was worth something. We were ordered to pack our things and take with us only what was really necessary. One of the gendarmes hinted we should also take some food. We went on foot to the synagogue where SS soldiers took us over. They walked across the synagogue with German shepherd dogs and intimidated us from the very beginning. When the synagogue became a little bit more filled, they loaded a few families, including us, my father, mother, my sister and me, to yoke carts and drove us to Čakovec. Others probably came by train. In Čakovec we were locked up for two days, we were all examined to see if anyone had any more money or jewellery. Afterwards we were transferred from Čakovec to Nagykanizsa in cattle wagons. The next day, all the young men and women were called and taken to the railway station in Nagykanizsa. My father was one of these men. That was the last time I saw him."*

Erika Fürst was 13 years old when she with her father, mother and her older sister was deported from Murska Sobota to Auschwitz-Birkenau (narration of Erika Fürst at the Synagogue Maribor, 26 April 2010).

**After the arrests in the occupied areas, the Jews were gathered in transit camps.** They were allowed to bring some luggage, while all valuable things were taken away from them. The Jews were transported to the camps by trains, in cattle wagons. They were crowded to capacity, and during the journey, which lasted as much as a few days, they were forced to stand. They were without any food; in the wagon, they had a bucket of water and a bucket functioning as a toilet. Many people did not survive the transport. After arriving at the camp, selection followed, one row was intended for the gas chambers and the other for forced labour. Children, old people and mothers with children were, as a rule, sent to instant death. Those who were selected for forced labour were subjected to starvation and exhaustion to death and torture, sadistic medical experiments and brutal games of the camp staff. They were killed for the smallest offence. People became numbers, they were totally dehumanized.



Forced laborers building the crematorium in Auschwitz (photo credit: Yad Vashem, Jerusalem)



A group of Jews in Auschwitz-Birkenau on their way to gas chambers and crematoria II and III, 27 May 1944 (source: *Auschwitz Album*, public domain; provided by Yad Vashem, Jerusalem)



Unloading of the confiscated personal belongings of the deportees from the trucks next to the "Canada" barracks, 27 May 1944. The prisoners, who were selected for the work in "Canada", had to sort the taken goods: suitcases, dentures, blankets, clothes, underwear, medicines, etc. (source: *Auschwitz Album*, public domain; provided by Yad Vashem, Jerusalem).



Yoel Shachar was born as Tamás/ Tomislav Berthold Schwarz in 1931 in Lendava. When he was twelve and a half, his family and other Jews from Prekmurje were deported to Auschwitz-Birkenau. He survived the Holocaust as the only member of the family. Afterwards he lived in Israel (source: Mirjana Gašpar, Beata Lazar, *Židje v Lendavi*, 1997).



The Jews tried to save their lives during the war by hiding in the most impossible places; some of them joined the resistance or Partisan movements. One of them was Jew Danilo Fogel from Zemun, Serbia (private archive of Nenad Fogel).

After the German occupation of Hungary on 19 March 1944, the number of transports and people transferred to Auschwitz reached its peak. From 2 May to 22 July 1944, around 430 thousand Jews from the then Hungary were transported to the largest death camp, and around 320 thousand of them were killed in gas chambers immediately after their arrival. When the war was nearing its end, the Nazis drove the prisoners who were relatively strong to the so-called death marches towards Germany. Those who fell on the road, were killed.

In the Holocaust, approximately six million Jews lost their lives, including 1.2 million children.

The cruellest concentration camp, Auschwitz, was liberated by the soldiers of the Soviet Red Army on 27 January 1945. When the first Soviet and then American and British soldiers in other camps saw the starved and ill prisoners and piles of dead skeletons, they were shocked despite the fact that they were used to the cruelty of war. Soon afterwards the world public was informed about the brutality of the Nazi crimes. In 2005, the 27 January was declared International Holocaust Remembrance Day with a resolution of the United Nations General Assembly.

**Did you know?**

The **HOLOCAUST** (Greek *holókaustos* from *hólos*, "whole", and *kaustós*, "burnt") is an expression referring to a systematic genocide of the Jews performed by Nazi Germany during the Second World War. The word was originally used to denote a burnt offering at which the offered animal is completely burnt. From the Jewish point of view, the Hebrew expression **SHOAH**, which means a "catastrophe", is more appropriate.

The word **GENOCIDE** is combined from the Greek root *genos*, which means a race, and the Latin verb *coedere*, to kill. It refers to any attempt to totally destroy a nation. In 1948, the Organization of United Nations declared genocide for a crime according to international law.

The Nazis perhaps tested the lethal gas **ZYKLON B** for the first time as early as at the beginning of 1940 when they killed 250 Roma children from Brno in Buchenwald. However, it is certain that they tested it for the first time in September 1941 when they used it to kill around 600 Soviet captures and 250 exhausted imprisoners in Auschwitz.

The expression **SONDERKOMMANDO** (German "special command unit") denotes a prisoner who was obliged to remove the bodies of the dead prisoners in the extermination camps. Sonderkommandos had to help prisoners sentenced to death to undress, to take them to the gas chambers, remove their bodies from the gas chambers afterwards and clean them each time, collect false teeth from the dead, extract golden teeth and cut the women's hair off, burn the dead bodies in the crematorium stoves and cover up any traces. As a rule, Jews were chosen to perform the Sonderkommando function. With their work in the gas chambers and crematoria, being Sonderkommandos extended their lives for just a couple of months; finally they were killed, as well. Only rarely did they manage to survive.

During the Second World War, many Jews, in their fight for survival, were helped by numerous Non-Jews who despite hard times and violent countermeasures, hid the Jews in basements, flats, attics, stables, earth cabins and helped them with falsifying documents and issuing false identities, saving children and providing them with food. These were people who altruistically helped the Jews during the Second World War at the price of their own lives. They are known as the **RIGHTEOUS AMONG THE NATIONS**.



The number of individuals who have been declared the Righteous Among the Nations so far is 26,120, including people of Slovenian origin. One of them is Uroš Žun (source: CJCH Synagogue Maribor).



People declared Righteous Among the Nations receive special medals with their name and certificates of honour. Their names are added to the Wall of Honour. The certificate of Honour awarded to Slovenian Righteous Andrej Tumpej (source: CJCH Synagogue Maribor, courtesy of family Tumpej).

# THE JEWS IN SLOVENIA DURING THE HOLOCAUST

From 6 April 1941, Slovenia was occupied and divided among German, Italian and Hungarian occupiers. Immediately after the occupation of Styria, Upper Carniola, Carinthia and the Northern part of Lower Carniola, the Germans started to persecute everybody who was not "acceptable" to the Nazi regime. The majority of the Jewish population from the German occupation areas escaped persecution before the arrival of the Germans or immediately afterwards. Many

Jews retreated to the Ljubljana region or Serbia and Croatia where in their efforts to save their lives, changed their names and hid under false identities. The Jews who still lived in these areas at the time of the occupation were quickly forced to leave. The Germans confiscated their belongings and thus made their life impossible. Some found refuge in cities, towns and villages where their relatives lived. Not everybody succeeded in retreating, since many were captured or killed in the areas to which they had retreated or had been driven. The German occupation area in Slovenia was thus "clean of Jews" as early as at the beginning of summer 1941. Therefore it can be correctly considered as one of the first, if not the first such area.



First page of the form for the trade register of the belongings confiscated to Arnošt Kohnstein and appointment of a trustee; Maribor, 11 September 1941 (source: National Liberation Museum Maribor)



With the notification about the confiscation of a flat and money, the Maribor Gestapo notified the Office of the Representative of the National Commissioner for Consolidation of German Nationality that on 30 May 1941, Jew Mirko Herzer, his Slovenian wife Ida, née Novak, and their son Boris, a Half-Jew, were deported (source: Archives of the Republic of Slovenia, AS 1625, The Office of the Representative of the National Commissioner for Consolidation of German Nationality in Maribor).

At the Italian population census at the end of July 1941 in the Ljubljana region (Ljubljana, Inner Carniola, the majority of Lower Carniola), some Jews from Ljubljana declared as Germans, hoping that they would thus save their lives. The Italians interned the majority of the Jews from Ljubljana as early as autumn 1941 or spring 1942 in several places in Northern Italy and in individual camps. After the Italian capitulation, some managed to retreat abroad, others were captured by the Germans. The Jews who survived the Italian occupation were deported after the arrival of the Germans. The German authorities performed the last arrests between the end of 1943 and September 1944.



In 1938 approximately 200 Jews lived in Gorizia. In spring 1942, the fascist authorities sent the Jews of Gorizia to forced labour. In December 1943, the Germans took 48 Jews of Gorizia to Auschwitz and only two survived the hell there. All the belongings of the Gorizia Jewish community were confiscated, the private property plundered and destroyed. The photograph shows the Jews at forced labour at the Crocetti sawmill in Solkan, one of them is the Jew from Trieste and Gorizia, Marcello Morpurgo. After the German occupation, he and his mother claimed false identities and thus escaped the Nazi persecution (source: The Synagogue Museum Gorizia, Associazione Amici di Israele - Gorizia).

After the short-lasting German occupation, the Prekmurje region was surrendered to Hungary. Before that, the Nazi authorities confiscated the majority of items of significant value from the Jewish population of that area, while Jewish shops and inns were subjected to plundering by the *Kulturbund* members. With the arrival of the Hungarian occupation authorities, the Jews were seemingly left alone for some time. Towards the end of 1942 the Hungarian authorities started to gradually put more pressure on them, while the Jews of Prekmurje experienced a death blow after the German occupation of Hungary. In Hungary, during the first days of April 1944, harsh measures were adopted against the Jews, something which affected the Jews of Prekmurje by the end of April 1944. The final cleansing of the Jewish population in the Prekmurje region started on 26 April 1944 when the largest group of the Jews of Prekmurje was gathered in Lendava and Murska Sobota and transferred first to Čakovec, then to Nagykanizsa and finally to Auschwitz-Birkenau. They arrived there in two transports, on 2 and 21 May 1944, the majority ending their lives soon after their arrival at the camp. At the April deportations, few Jews were exceptionally spared: those who lived in mixed marriages, were of special economic value or had merits for Hungary. They were deported in autumn 1944, not to Auschwitz but to other camps.



Among the victims of the Holocaust from Maribor, there were Jewish families Kohnstein and Singer. The photograph shows cousins Milan Singer and Oto Ko(h)nstein in Maribor in 1935. Oto's family moved to Čakovec in the same year, while Milan's family moved there after the German occupation of Maribor. In 1944, the Kohnsteins and Singers were deported to Auschwitz-Birkenau. Milan was killed immediately after his arrival at the camp, while Oto survived the internment (source: Čakovec Museum of Međimurje).



Jew, Lidija Rosner from Maribor (left) with her acquaintance Rene Strassberger, a Jew, as well, from Maribor (in the middle) and an unknown friend on a walk in Terazije in Belgrade. The photograph was taken immediately before the outbreak of the war in Yugoslavia. Lidija and her family managed to flee the Holocaust, while Rene was killed in Belgrade little more than a year later. The fate of the unknown girl is not known (private archive of Barbara Rosner).

Up to now, in Slovenia altogether 558 victims of the Holocaust have been identified. 481 of them lost their lives in camps, including 69 children. The majority of the victims were from just the Prekmurje region. In commemoration of the Slovenian victims of the Holocaust, many cultural and educational institutions commemorate the 26 April as the Slovenian Victims of the Holocaust Remembrance Day.





The Partisan surgeon Robert Kukovec who was Jewish on his mother's side was taken prisoner by the Germans in vicinity of Ljubno at the Savinja river in April 1945. After some weeks of torture, he was killed. Shortly before the capture, he wrote in his diary:

*"I am writing in haste. I have a feeling there will not be enough time available to put everything I would like on paper. Today it is Tuesday; there's something in the air. Something unspeakably beautiful, hardly expected. We do not talk about anything other than the same words and wishes: the end, freedom! It seems they are close, that only days separate us from them or perhaps – if we are unlucky – even death for ever."*

Photograph of Robert Kukovec (private archive of Mojca Horvat)

#### Did you know?

**KULTURBUND** is the name of a cultural and educational organization of the German minority (Volksdeutsche) in Yugoslavia. Towards the beginning of the war, its cultural activities functioned as a disguise for Nazi and intelligence work in favour of the German Reich. Among other things, the members of the Kulturbund primarily prepared very thorough lists of nationally conscious people who were later the first to be subjected to arrests and deportation after the occupation.



Styria and Upper Carniola belonged to the occupied areas, which the Germans wanted to Germanise as soon as possible. To reach this goal, they wanted to deport all "racially inferior" population groups and individuals who could hinder Germanisation for national or political reasons. To these groups, the Jews and the Roma belonged, as well as that part of the non-German population deemed unsuitable for Germanisation. The Commission for admission to the Styrian Homeland Association (*Heimatbund*) examines the "racial suitability" of the population; Šmartno on the Pohorje Massif, 1941 (source: National Liberation Museum Maribor).

**JUDENFREI** ("free of Jews") and **JUDENREIN** ("clean of Jews") are Nazi terms to designate areas where, the consequences of Nazi persecution meant, no more Jews lived. Beside the German occupation area in Slovenia, one of the first areas "clean of Jews" were the Banat region and Serbia. The Banat region was "clean of Jews" very fast, as well. In the night from 14 to 15 August 1941, around 4 thousand Jews were arrested there (only around 200 managed to escape) and on 18 and 20 August transferred to Belgrade. There the majority of men were killed until the end of 1941, while the majority of women and children were murdered until May 1942, when Serbia, as well, was declared "free of Jews".

After the beginning of April 1944, the Jews in Hungary and consequently in the Prekmurje region were obliged to wear the **STAR OF DAVID**.

# GENOCIDE OF THE ROMA

The main organizer of the Nazi genocide of the Roma and Sinti was Heinrich Himmler, the Head of the SS. On 16 December 1942, he announced that the Roma, as well, are ripe for *Sonderbehandlung*, i. e. "special treatment". This meant deportation to Auschwitz. Thus Himmler equalized the Roma with the Jews officially – the "final solution of the Roma question" began. In Auschwitz, where around 23 thousand of Roma from all the Europe were transported, the Roma were among the most frequent victims of medical experiments; they were subjected the injection of poisons, sterilisation, poisonous gases, extremely high and low temperatures, famine, numerous diseases and brutal tortures. The most notorious physician in Auschwitz Dr Josef Mengele especially enjoyed experiments on Roma children, particularly on twins: sometimes he sewed two twins together; sometimes he killed them, so that he could perform an autopsy. Castrations were performed, as well. Many Roma ended up in the gas chambers.



The Roma behind the barbed wire in Poland (photo credit: Yad Vashem, Jerusalem)



Identification card of the Czech Roma Stephani Holomek, who was interned in Auschwitz (source: The State Museum Auschwitz-Birkenau, Archives).



Anton Müller, who used to be Anton Sarközi, with his camp number Z 6835 tattooed (source: Verein Roma-Service, Mri Historija - Lebensgeschichten burgenländischer Roma)

In Auschwitz-Birkenau, the Roma were accommodated in the "Gypsy camp" (*Zigeunerlager*), which the Nazis abolished in the night of 2 to 3 August 1944. Thereby they murdered around 2,900 Roma and Sinti, primarily older men, children and women. This was the largest individual murdering of the Roma, therefore today in many European countries, the 2 August is commemorated as **International Roma Genocide Remembrance Day**.



The B11e sector: the "Gypsy camp" in the Auschwitz-Birkenau (source: The State Museum Auschwitz-Birkenau, Archives)

Before the Second World War, in the Drava region – predominately in Prekmurje and Lower Carniola –, there lived around 1,100 Roma, and around hundred Sinti in Upper Carniola. Their fates were different, depending on the occupation authorities. The Sinti from Upper Carniola were imprisoned at the Gestapo penitentiary in Begunje in summer 1941 and then exiled to Serbia. For the Prekmurje region, as well, the German occupiers prepared a plan for "resettlement of the Gypsies". Since they had handed the power to the Hungarians before, they never executed it. The Hungarians tightened their policy towards the Roma in the landscape alongside the Mura river, they forbade them to breed dogs or use bicycles, they introduced night and day watch in the Roma settlements; later the Roma were sent to forced labour in Hungary and Germany. During the occupation, Italian occupation authorities did not systematically persecute the Roma but they had several plans for their internment. The Roma were imprisoned especially in camps in Italy.

The Sinti imprisoned in Begunje were accurately recorded in the penitentiary books. A page from the penitentiary book No. 14702/1 (source: Museum of Gorenjska, Kranj).

The position of the Roma in Lower Carniola changed with the capitulation of Italy and German occupation. At least two Roma from Lower Carniola arrived in Dachau as early as on 11 November 1943. At the end of November of the same year, 77 Roma from Lower Carniola was sent to Auschwitz from Novo mesto, probably via Maribor; 42 of them died before the destruction of the "Gypsy camp", while a few Roma were transferred from Auschwitz to other camps. The rest of them were probably murdered in the night from 2 to 3 August 1944. After the largest transport, at least four more Roma from Lower Carniola were transported to Mauthausen on 8 March 1944. At least one Roma from Lower Carniola was captured as a Partisan. He was sent to Mauthausen via Begunje, and from there to Auschwitz, where he arrived on 3 December 1944 with one of the last transports. According to the so far collected data, nobody from the Slovenian Roma who was in German camps apparently survived the war.

List of people sent to Buchenwald on 3 August 1944. A Roma from Novo mesto is listed under number 912 (source: The State Museum Auschwitz-Birkenau, Archives).

*"There was such hunger! I even ate grass, but it began to run out. Like a cow. When I finally got out, I just wanted to go to a meadow and gorge myself, really! Such was life then."*

The Roma Anton Müller from Burgenland and his family were deported to Auschwitz in 1943. A year later, he was transferred to Ravensbrück and later to Mauthausen, where he saw liberation. His father, sister with her children, his brother with his wife and children did not survive (source: Verein Roma-Service, Mri Historija – Lebensgeschichten burgenländischer Roma, <http://www.roma-service.at/mrihist-ausgaben.shtml>).

*"And when we arrived [in Bergen-Belsen], we saw from a distance: now we can light fires and get warm again, there is wood. There were piles of wood. We thought it was wood. Do you know what it was? It was dead bodies!"*

Walpurga Horvath was one of the first Roma in Burgenland who were deported. She spent six years in Ravensbrück, afterwards she was transferred to Bergen-Belsen, where she saw the liberation (source: Verein Roma-Service, Mri Historija – Lebensgeschichten burgenländischer Roma, <http://www.roma-service.at/mrihist-ausgaben.shtml>).

**The lists made to date of the number of Roma victims have been so far imperfect.** Before the beginning of the Second World War, in some countries, no records of the members of the Roma community had been kept. One of these countries was also Yugoslavia. **According to estimations, in the Genocide of the Roma and Sinti, which is also referred to as the "Forgotten Holocaust", from 250 to 500 thousand people were killed.** So far, the database of the victims of the Second World War in Slovenia has recorded 207 deaths of Roma, including seven shot Partisans. In reality, the number of killed Slovenian Roma and Sinti was higher.



According to data known so far, no Roma from Prekmurje was deported to the extermination camp. However, the occupiers shot some Roma hostages in February 1945. The monument to Roma hostages Adolf and Jožef Baranja in Turnišče (photo credit: CJCH Synagogue Maribor, photo by Marjan Toš).

#### Did you know?

In Slovenian and partially foreign historical studies, the Genocide of the Roma is referred to as **PORRAJMOS** (or Porajmos – with literal meaning "devouring"; "disappearance without a trace", meaning "destruction"). In some Roma dialects, the term bears a negative meaning; therefore the Genocide of the Roma and Sinti is also referred to *Pharajimos, Samudaripen, Kali Trash, Mariben, Holokosto*, etc.

Most Roma and Sinti ended up in the camps of Chelmno, Auschwitz-Birkenau, Treblinka, Mauthausen, Buchenwald, Dachau and Bergen-Belsen. In the Auschwitz death camp, they were obliged to wear a dark triangle and the **LETTER Z** (meaning "Zigeuner" – "Gypsy") was tattooed on their hands.

During the Second World War, the Roma in Slovenia were victims of Partisan killings as well, since they were suspected of treason. In 1942, around 100 Roma were killed in three Partisan killings. In 2015 in Črnomelj, the Committee for Exhumation and Burial of the Roma Murdered during the Second World War for the whole Slovenian area was founded.

# LIFE AFTER THE HOLOCAUST

The liberation of the camps revealed the full extent of the brutality of the Nazi crimes. On their entry into the camps, the allied forces found starved and ill prisoners and piles of dead bodies, which the retreating Nazis had not managed to destroy and conceal the proof of their acts. For the survivors, the much-anticipated liberation did not mean a liberation of the great sadness and loneliness. The majority of the survivors did not have anyone to which they could return. Despite this, some of them, from the camps and dark, stuffy and damp hiding places returned home, hoping to find their loved ones. However, often their homes no longer existed, sometimes other people were living there or their houses had been plundered. There was no compassion and no consolation, while hatred towards the Jews continued to live on. Following the war, some Jews were accused of having been collaborators of the occupier due to their German nationality, especially in eastern parts of Europe where they were subjected to new pogroms – and this immediately after they had barely escaped death. One of the most well-known post-war massacres of the Jews was in July 1946 in Kielce in Poland.



After the war, Lola and Maurycy Bodner got married in Oświęcim and adopted five-year-old Mieczysław/Menachem, who was a victim of medical experiments performed by Dr Josef Mengele in Auschwitz. The photograph was taken in 1946, immediately after the family left Oświęcim (source: Jewish Museum in Oświęcim, collection of Elina Shaked).



Survivors praying in the camp infirmary after liberation; Dachau, 29 April – May 1945 (photo credit: United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, courtesy of Francis Robert Arzt)

After the war, Europe was totally changed. New countries were formed and new social and political systems emerged. The Jewish survivors, who lost almost all of their relatives in gas chambers, had to build their lives anew. After the war, the majority moved to the United States of America or to the newly founded State Israel.

The Slovenian Jews, who survived the Holocaust, were affected by the measures of the new post-war Yugoslav authorities. The latter gradually nationalized their assets; in some cases, the belongings of the Jews were taken away upon accusations of their collaboration with the occupier. The already small Jewish community, which had managed to survive the Holocaust, thus faced the edge of extinction. During the war, the Jews survived terrible things; however, the rough post-war times in Slovenia and Yugoslavia additionally encouraged them to emigrate. In 1948, many Jews emigrated to Israel, the United States of America, Canada, Great Britain and Hungary. At the immigration to Israel, the Jews had to sign that they renounced all their belongings – on their own behalf and on behalf of their eventual descendants. Today, few Jews live in Slovenia.



The twins Milica and Gizela Kohnstein from Maribor, who were victims of medical experiments in Auschwitz, survived the war. Milica/Emilija died of the consequences of the experiments soon after, while Gizela moved to the Czech Republic. The photograph shows her and her grandson David in Svitavy in 1985 (private archive of Ružica Žager).



After the war, the new post-war Yugoslav government expropriated many a Jew with a German-sounding surname or accused them of collaboration with the Nazis. One of them was Jewish entrepreneur from Maribor Marko Rosner. Decision of the City Confiscation Commission in Maribor on the expropriation of the Rosner's belongings (Regional Archives Maribor, Maribor District Court Fond 1945–1978, TE 281495/46, AT 245).



After the Holocaust, only a few Jews returned to Prekmurje. Those who did, could not revive their community. In 1954, the post-war authorities pulled down the former Jewish synagogue and built a block of flats at its place. It is dubbed the "Jewish block" (source: Pomurje Museum of Murska Sobota).



In 1992, the building of the former Jewish school in Lendava was pulled down. It was the only preserved Jewish school on Slovenian soil (source: Mirjana Gašpar, Beata Lazar, *Židje v Lendavi*, 1997).

*"They still felt such hatred towards the Gypsies, many years after 1945 ... It was the same hatred as before – actually, it had become even stronger, since they thought nobody would come back. But some did come back and for them, it became more difficult than it was before the war ... Everybody still wore brown clothes from Hitler and their hearts were brown, as well."*

Karl Sarkösi, a Roma from Burgenland, was imprisoned in the forced "Gypsy" labour camps Koblenz and Zeltweg, afterwards he was deported to the Łódź ghetto (source: Verein Roma-Service, Mri Historija – Lebensgeschichten burgenländischer Roma, <http://www.roma-service.at/mrihist-ausgaben.shtml>).

**Due to the atrocities the Roma faced, for a long time they could not speak about their cruel, fatal experiences during the time of Nazi persecution.** If they did, they were faced with disbelief, which was only a reflection of the centuries-long conviction about the Roma "dangerousness, unreliability, nuisance and inferiority." As late as in the last couple of decades, after intensive research of the Genocide of the Roma and Sinti had begun, did the status of the genocide victim and the right to compensation become acknowledged to them. Even though stereotypical images and rejection of the Roma communities have remained up to the present day.



Memorial to the Sinti, victims of the Nazi genocide, in Begunje (photo credit: CJCH Synagogue Maribor, photo by Nuša Lešnik)

#### Did you know?

After the Second World War, many people were homeless. For them, the United Nations and the allied forces organized assembly centres or the so-called **CAMPS FOR DISPLACED PERSONS**. At these camps, too, there was a shortage of food, clothes, and medicines; the suffering from the war only continued.

The term **NATIONALISATION** denotes the transforming of private assets into public ones. It was most thoroughly performed by socialist countries after the Second World War. Thus the majority of agricultural areas, industry, premises and service companies became public property.

**EMIGRATION** refers to moving abroad, e. g. for political or economic reasons.

After the unconditional surrender of the Third Reich, the International Criminal Tribunal for judging major Nazi war criminals was formed. The trials took place in the German city of Nuremberg in 1945 and 1946 and are referred to as the **NUREMBERG TRIAL**. Afterwards, at twelve Nuremberg trials (1946–1949) before the American military court, further Nazi war criminals were tried. Despite the efforts of the "Nazi hunters", several thousand Nazi war criminals evaded justice.

The Nuremberg trials against the Nazi criminals did not deal with the mass murder of the Roma and Sinti. For this crime, the criminals have never been neither sentenced nor punished.

# REMEMBRANCE AND LEARNING ABOUT THE HOLOCAUST AND GENOCIDE OF THE ROMA

*"Many people – many nations – can find themselves holding, more or less wittingly, that 'every stranger is an enemy.' For the most part this conviction lies deep down like some latent infection; it betrays itself only in random, disconnected acts, and does not lie at the base of a system of reason ... The story of the death camps should be understood by everyone as a sinister alarm-signal."*

Primo Levi (*If this is a Man. The Truce*, London 2000)

**The Holocaust is one of the worst crimes against humanity.** It does not represent simply an attempt to destroy the whole Jewish, as well Roma nations but is a synonym for total dehumanization, for an industrialized process of planned murder either by gassing or shooting, either by starvation or exhaustion from labour, to death. **How could the Holocaust have happened?** It was possible not only due to hatred, but due to indifference of the majority who either witnessed without saying anything or even applauded the fate of a co-human. **Why did its victims not resist?** Because the extermination policy managed to reach a passive cooperation of the majority of the victims by fraud, humiliation and disbelief that such inhumanity was even possible.

*"No, we never thought about that. Unfortunately, we were at the camp like sheep, we had neither the energy nor power to think about something else. Just about food and just about avoiding being hit or being beaten, being cremated, we thought just about that. We received bromine in the food and it calmed us down. Therefore we had no goals, no other wishes, just to avoid hunger and cremation."*

Erika Fürst (narration of Erika Fürst at the Synagogue Maribor, 26 April 2010)



**Slovenian Jews as well, were victims of the Holocaust.** Before the Second World War, the majority of the Jews in Slovenia lived in Prekmurje, therefore just as a result of the beginning of the mass deportation of the Jews of Prekmurje to death camps – on 26 April 1944 – the Jewish population in Slovenia had experienced a fatal blow. With approximately an 86 per cent destruction of the Jewish community, Slovenia belongs to those countries in which the Holocaust was performed most thoroughly. After this the Slovenian Jewish community never really recovered and is today still one of the smallest Jewish communities in the whole of Europe.

Erika Fürst has as one of the rare Slovenian Holocaust survivors shared her story and many of her memories of the war and the time afterwards with the public. For her exceptional contribution to Slovenian and European historical consciousness of the Holocaust from the authentic perspective of a survivor and for her precious contribution to preserving the memory of the history and fate of Slovenian Jews, she was awarded the Golden Order of Merit of the Republic of Slovenia in 2012 (photo by Tomaž Skale, journalistic photographer at the Dnevnik journal).

**Despite some research and endeavours to lighten one of the darkest eras in world history, not enough is known about the Nazi genocide against the Roma.** Public knowledge about Roma history is generally scarce or even non-existent. Despite the fact that the Roma represent the largest ethnic minority in Europe, they are still marginalised due to a deeply rooted prejudice.

**Why remember?** As an expression of the final stage of anti-Semitism, the Holocaust is a model example as to what extreme extent hatred, which gradually grows and starts to infect all parts of society can increase. It is also a reminder of the moral collapse of humanity, therefore through the preservation of the historical memory of the victims of the Holocaust, Genocide of the Roma, Nazi persecution and genocides in general, we endeavour to warn against the emergence of hatred and intolerance, which can lead to crimes against humanity.





In modern society, anti-Semitism and anti-Gypsyism are still strongly rooted; even in places where the communities in which they are targeted are scarce in number. The facade of the former Jewish synagogue in Maribor, marked with anti-Semitic graffiti, January 2009 (photo credit: CJCH Synagogue Maribor, photo by Barbara Štumberger).



The monument to the victims of Nazi persecution in one of the most sinister extermination camps Auschwitz-Birkenau has, among other plaques, a memorial plate written in Slovenian (private archive of Aleš Topolinjak).



*Stolpersteine* are special memorials, dedicated to the victims of the Holocaust and Nazi persecution. These memorials have been placed in numerous European cities, including in Maribor, where twelve *Stolpersteine* are installed to remember the grim fate of the Maribor Jewish families Kohnstein and Singer. *Stolpersteine* for Drago, Erna and Milan Singer (photo credit: CJCH Synagogue Maribor, photo by Bojan Nedok).



Many survivors of the Holocaust were able to speak about their experiences only many years after the end of the war. Their shocking testimonies represent an important part of the research and learning about the Holocaust. Miriam Steiner Aviezer at her meeting with Slovenian participants of the educational seminar in Yad Vashem, July 2015 (private archive of Marjetka Berlič).



In 1953 in Jerusalem, the central documentation, research, educational and remembrance centre – Yad Vashem dedicated to the Holocaust was founded. The vast remembrance centre includes the Garden and the Avenue of the Righteous. In the Garden, there is a Wall of Honour on which the names of the Righteous from all over the world are written, including the Slovenian ones (photo credit: CJCH Synagogue Maribor, photo by Marjetka Bedrač).



On the medal which is received by the Righteous Among the Nations is the citation from the Jewish Talmud: "Whosoever saves a single life, saves an entire universe." The medal of the Slovenian Righteous Andrej Tumpej (private archive of the family Tumpej).

**Beside the 27 January, individual countries commemorate other Holocaust remembrance days as well.** Some were declared official remembrance days, while others are marked only in particular institutions and organizations:

<b>Austria</b>	<b>5 May</b> – Annual Day of Remembrance against Violence and Racism in memory of the victims of national socialism (on the anniversary of the liberation of the Mauthausen camp in 1945)
<b>Croatia</b>	<b>22 April</b> – Events for the commemoration of all victims of the Jasenovac camp (on the anniversary of the escape attempt of the prisoners from the camp in 1945)
<b>Czech Republic</b>	<b>8 March</b> – Events for the commemoration of the victims of the Holocaust (on the anniversary of largest mass killing of the Czech Jews in Auschwitz-Birkenau in 1944)
<b>France</b>	<b>16 July</b> – Commemorations on the anniversary of the Vel' d'Hiv Roundup, the German-ordered mass arrests and expulsion of the Jews from Paris by French police in 1942
<b>Germany</b>	<b>9 November</b> – Commemorative events on the anniversary of the Kristallnacht in 1938
<b>Hungary</b>	<b>16 April</b> – National Holocaust Memorial Day (on the anniversary of the establishment of the first Jewish ghetto in Munkács, today in Ukraine, in 1944)
<b>Israel</b>	<b>April/May (27 Nisan)</b> – National Holocaust Memorial Day ( <i>Yom HaShoah</i> ; on the commemoration of the Warsaw ghetto uprising in 1943)
<b>Latvia</b>	<b>4 July</b> – National Holocaust Memorial Day (on the anniversary of the burning of the Choral Synagogue with the Jews locked inside it in Riga in 1941)
<b>Lithuania</b>	<b>23 September</b> – National Holocaust Remembrance Day (on the anniversary of the destruction of the Jewish ghetto in Vilnius in 1943)
<b>Poland</b>	<b>19 April</b> – National Holocaust Remembrance Day (on the anniversary of the Warsaw ghetto uprising in 1943)
<b>Romania</b>	<b>9 October</b> – National Holocaust Remembrance Day (on the anniversary of first deportations from Northern Romania to Transnistria in 1941)
<b>Serbia</b>	<b>22 April</b> – National Holocaust, WWII Genocide and other Fascist Crimes Victims' Remembrance Day (on the anniversary of the escape attempt of the prisoners from the Jasenovac camp in 1945)
<b>Slovakia</b>	<b>9 September</b> – Victims of the Holocaust and Racial Violence Commemoration Day (on the anniversary of approval of the "Jewish Codex" in 1941, with which the persecution of the Jews in Slovakia began)

**Stone Tears** is one of the projects with which the Center of Jewish Cultural Heritage Synagogue Maribor wants to permanently raise awareness and warn the wider public of the causes and consequences of the Holocaust and the Genocide of the Roma. Within its framework, the Center develops strategies to commemorate three remembrance days: the International Holocaust Remembrance Day (27 January), the Slovenian Victims of the Holocaust Remembrance Day on the occasion of the beginning of the mass deportations of Jews from Prekmurje (26 April) and, the International Genocide of the Roma Remembrance Day (2 August). Besides the programmes of the remembrance of the victims of the Holocaust, an important part of the project is intended to promote learning about the Holocaust with which the Center spreads knowledge of the historical facts and to encourage greater tolerance and mutual understanding. Last but not least, with the Stone Tears project, the Center endeavours to develop intercultural and intergenerational cooperation, to encourage sensitivity for all forms of genocide, ethnic cleansing, racism, anti-Semitism, xenophobia and all kinds of significant violation of human rights, especially among the young.

**Selection of activities performed within the Stone Tears project in 2014 and 2015**



*Fortress of Ashes*, literary evening commemorating Slovenian victims of the Holocaust, Synagogue Maribor, 2015 (photo credit: CJCH Synagogue Maribor, photo by Gero Angleitner)



*Stories of the Past for the Challenges of the Present*, workshop for pedagogical workers, Synagogue Maribor, 2015 (photo credit: CJCH Synagogue Maribor, photo by Marjetka Bedrač)



*No Child's Play: Children in the Holocaust. Creativity and Play*, host exhibition, Maribor Primary School of Drago Kobal, 2015 (private archive of Marjetka Berlič)



*Jews in Slovenia and their fate during the Second World War - The Holocaust*, seminar for pedagogical workers, Synagogue Maribor, 2014 (photo credit: CJCH Synagogue Maribor, photo by Marjetka Bedrač)



*The Night that silenced the Violins*, commemorative event dedicated to Roma victims of the genocide, Maribor, 2014 (photo credit: CJCH Synagogue Maribor, photo by Branimir Ritonja)



*Fatal April of 1944*, lecture, Synagogue Maribor, 2015 (photo credit: CJCH Synagogue Maribor, photo by Marjetka Bedrač)

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## STONE TEARS

### Remembrance and learning about the Holocaust and Genocide of the Roma

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