

Birobidzhan, in 1934. Until then, Jewish activists operated within a “gray zone of Jewish biopolitics” (226)—neither fully sanctioned nor wholly illegal.

Mogilner’s story ends in the 1930s, but World War II and its aftermath are essential context for understanding one of the main contributions of the book. The reason the story of Jewish self-racialization has not been told until now is the “aphasia” that erased Jewish contributions to creating race science in the pre-World War II period. This was forgotten, censored, or self-censored after, and because of, the Holocaust (158). Mogilner’s book, through thorough and careful intellectual and social historical analysis, recovers the process whereby Jewish intellectuals and professionals deployed “race” as a means of self-reflection and self-reinvention. It took on different meaning in the hands of different people, and in the context of different and variably changing imperial settings. The book is a model of argumentation. It is also a compelling combination of empirical and conceptual contributions to questions of Eurasian and east European Jewish history, the history of race, and the limits and possibilities of human agency in modern “imperial situations.”

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Rain of Ash: Roma, Jews, and the Holocaust. By Ari Joskowicz. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2023. xi, 351 pp. Notes. Bibliography. Index. Illustrations. Photographs. \$32.00, hard bound.
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Drexel Sprecher, one of the assistant prosecutors at the Nuremberg IMT trial (1945–46), wrote in his trial memoir that one of the failures of the Allied prosecutors was to prepare a separate case for the Gypsies (Roma, Romanies). Evidence about the Roma, he notes, was “scattered in a number of submissions by prosecutors of the American, French, and Soviet delegations,” which he included in his detailed case study about the fate of the Roma during the Holocaust.¹

Ari Joskowicz argues in his book that Holocaust scholars interested in the plight of the Roma focused far too much attention on the perpetrators instead of the “lives of their Romani victims” (xi). The question is why? Part of the answer is demographic and a misunderstanding of the difference between the plight of the Roma and Sinti in Germany, the Protectorate, and Austria, and the much larger, diverse Roma populations in other parts of German-occupied Europe and its allied states. Joskowicz’s study deals almost exclusively with the Roma and Sinti, relatively small communities (31,000–42,000). Anton

1. Drexel A. Sprecher, *Inside the Nuremberg Trial: A Prosecutor’s Comprehensive Account*, Vol. I (Lanham, MD, 1999), 378. The charge of genocide against the Roma, Jews, and Poles was included in *Count Three—War Crimes, Section A: Murder and Ill Treatment of Civilian Populations of or in an Occupied Territory and on the High Seas. Office of United States Chief of Counsel for Prosecution of Axis Criminality* (Washington, 1946), 33–34.

Weiss-Wendt estimates that there were 831,000–1 million Roma in Europe before the war, almost half of them in Nazi-allied Bulgaria, Hungary, and Romania. The Roma and the Sinti suffered death rates of 69 to 81%, while those in the rest of Europe ranged from .05–6%. This meant that there were few Roma and Sinti survivors in Germany able to testify in trials or apply for reparations afterwards.²

Joskowicz's study focuses on the relationship between the Roma, the Sinti, and the Jews not only during the Holocaust, but afterwards as each group sought justice, restitution, and reparations. It was and remains an unequal relationship fraught with historical tensions. Joskowicz admits that some of the friction centered on the considerable differences, economically and socially, between Jews and Roma in prewar Germany, which surfaced during and after the Holocaust. Some of this could be blamed on the dynamics of Nazi propaganda, which depicted the Jews as dire threats to Aryan purity, and the Roma and Sinti a *Ziguernerplage*, social misfits who should be removed from the fabric of German society.

Joskowicz discusses three postwar asymmetrical trials that were central to the study of the fate of the Roma, Sinti, and Jews: the Nuremberg IMT trial (1945–46), the Eichmann trial in Israel (1961), and the Frankfurt trial (1963–65). He is critical of what he calls the prosecutorial use of “unequal documentation” when it came to the Roma and Sinti (103, 105). The Nuremberg trial, he argues, viewed the crimes of the Holocaust almost exclusively through the prism of Jewish victimization. This is, to a point, correct, though this was not the intent of the prosecutors, who struggled from the outset of trial planning with finding documents essential to the conviction of the major war criminals in the dock of conspiracy to commit crimes against peace, war crimes, and crimes against humanity. Allied prosecutors were overwhelmed before and during the trial with a flood of documents, most of them in German. There were far more files about the crimes against the Jews than the Roma and Sinti, which is apparent in the indictment.

Joskowicz is also critical of Israeli prosecutors and judges in the Eichmann trial when it came to the Roma and Sinti, who were mentioned in the indictment. He argued that there was not only “substantive neglect in regard to the Roma” but also “interest in a ideological reading of Jewish -Romani relations” (124). Yet a careful reading of the transcript shows that, with the exception of one or two instances, the Roma and Sinti were barely mentioned throughout the trial, principally in the context of Jewish testimony about the 20,982 Roma murdered in Auschwitz. Gideon Hausner, the chief prosecutor, also says little about the Roma in his trial memoir, *Justice in Jerusalem*.³

2. Anton Weiss-Wendt, “The Number of Romani Deaths during the Nazi Era Revisited” (unpublished paper delivered at the ASEES Conference, November 12, 2022), 31; David M. Crowe, *The Holocaust: Roots, History, and Aftermath*, 2nd ed. (New York, 2022), Appendix B, 479.

3. *The Trial of Adolf Eichmann: Record of Proceedings, Vols. 1–5* (Jerusalem, 1992), 1239–40, 1244, 1257–64, 1288; Francis Piper, *Auschwitz, 1940–1945, Vol. III: Mass Murder* (Osweicim, 2000), 223–24; Gideon Hausner, *Justice in Jerusalem* (New York, 1968), 59, 66, 129, 301, 397, 424.

The field of Roma Holocaust studies exploded after the collapse of the Soviet empire in central and eastern Europe. The deep-seeded anti-Roma prejudice that haunted this diverse minority for centuries resurfaced, and some Roma leaders thought that a discussion about their suffering during the Holocaust would draw attention to their contemporary plight in Europe. Joskowitz does a good job discussing all of this in chapter 6. He writes that the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum (USHMM) in Washington, DC, which opened in 1993, played an important role in generating new interest in the fate of the Roma during the Holocaust.

I was a member of the museum's Education Committee from 1990–2004, and played a role in these discussions. Several years before the museum opened in 1993, it began to send teams to central and eastern Europe, and later Russia, to gather what is now one of the largest archival and library collections on the Holocaust in the world. Joskowitz adds that "there is no record of major deliberations on the inclusion of Roma" in the museum's displays or archives, though well before it opened, Elie Wiesel, Michael Berenbaum, and Sybil Milton, among others, were strong voices for the inclusion of the Roma and other groups in the museum's exhibits, and later its library and archival collections. I recall many sensitive discussions about this question. Jewish Holocaust survivors played extremely important roles on the museum's committees, and though they did think of it principally as a Jewish museum, were sensitive not only to the plight of other victim groups but also the fact that it was a national museum that would draw visitors from all over the world. At first, the Roma question was haunted by two issues: the lack of significant information about the plight of the Roma and claims by some Roma leaders that between 500,000 to 1.5 million Roma were murdered during the Holocaust. Some also argued that a greater percentage of Roma died than Jews. Regardless, as Joskowitz notes, the USHMM became a "central hub of Jewish, and eventually, Romani Holocaust Studies" (184).

It is a little surprising that Joskowitz does not say more about the role of the Auschwitz-Birkenau Museum and Memorial, which opened in 1947. It is sacred ground to the Roma and Sinti and each year survivors and their families gather at the inspiring memorial site of the Gypsy Family camp in Birkenau to commemorate the almost 3,000 Roma and Sinti gassed on August 2, 1944—*Zigeunernacht*. The museum also has a permanent exhibit on the Roma and Sinti at Block 13 in Auschwitz I. Romani Rose, one of Germany's most prominent Roma leaders, published, in league with the museum, *The National Socialist Genocide of the Sinti and Roma* (2003), a detailed catalogue of the history of the Roma and Sinti dating back to World War I.

The Auschwitz museum also has a vast archives on the history of the camp and has published several important studies on the plight of the Roma in Auschwitz-Birkenau, such as the two volume *Memorial Book; The Gypsies at Auschwitz-Birkenau* (1993), which includes camp lists for female and male Roma. It has also published *Sinti und Roma im KL Auschwitz-Birkenau, 1943–44* (1998), as well as a five-volume history of the camp, works that are essential to any study of the history of the Roma and Sinti during the Holocaust.

Research on the study of the history of the Roma and Sinti in the Greater Reich has received more attention than the plight of the Roma in other parts of

central and eastern Europe and the Soviet Union. One of the most impressive things about Ari Joskowicz's study is his mastery of the large body of writings and documentation on the Roma and Sinti. His detailed endnotes and bibliography take up about a third of his book, and will serve as an important scholarly roadmap for those interested in the complex interrelationship between Roma, Sinti, and Jews as they struggle to remind the world of their suffering and pain during the Holocaust.

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