



Keeping the Memory Alive: the Roma and Sinti Holocaust

**REGARDS
DE FEMMES
TSIGANES**

**“An Untold Story, Roma and Sinti Holocaust:
Inclusive history at the crossroads of memories and
historical narratives: a tool for genocide and
epistemicide understanding”**

Screening/Debate



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AN UNTOLD STORY, ROMA AND SINTI HOLOCAUST

Inclusive history at the crossroads of memories and historical narratives: a tool for genocide and epistemicide understanding

1. Presentation

This open meeting focused on two debates and on the screening of several documentary films. The debates intended to shed light on the different articulations which permit to link, analyse and historicize the epistemic and genocide logic. It also aimed at taking stock of the different educational and legislative tools available in France and in Europe regarding inclusive history.

- The first round table entitled "**Inclusive History at the crossroads of memories and historical narratives**" proposed to develop a strong reflection on:
 - ✓ 1: the challenges implied by the linking of minorities' memories and histories on the different modern and contemporary genocides and epistemicides
 - ✓ 2: its inclusions in French historical narratives and teaching materials on inclusive history.
- *The Slave Route*: an UNESCO global project, *A People Uncounted / Un Peuple Visé* of Aaron Yeger, *Une histoire jamais racontée, l'Holocauste des Roms et des Sinti* (MemoROM); *Mémoire partagée* de Fabrice Teicher were some of the audiovisual media supports our work was focused on.
- The second and the main roundtable, whose title was "**Roma, Gypsies, and Travellers. Internment, genocide and Resistance. Exploring the inclusive approaches to minorities history in France**", focused more deeply on the



Romani paradigm from the historical perspectives, the educational policies and societal concerns (need of official recognition, specific legislation on Travellers, race policies, structural race racism and Gypsyphobia).

2. Detailed agenda

13.30: Introduction

- Mme Esther Benbassa, Senator EELV, university researcher; Mme Sarah Carmona, university researcher, 2014-2015 Lillian Robinson Scholar, Concordia University, Montréal; Karel Fracapane, UNESCO Education for Peace

14.00: Round Table 1 - *“Inclusive History at the crossroads of memories and historical narratives: tool for genocide and epistemicide understanding (Shoah, slavery, Porrajmos/Samudaripen, rwandan génocide)”*

- Moderator Tara Dickman, Humanity in Action France former director

The following key points were tackled during the debate:

Discussions about written and audiovisual educational materials. What values and challenges do they embrace and dispute?

Advocacy initiatives on crossing minorities' histories on genocides and their inclusion on the French and European national historical narratives. What does it mean when we consider education on history as an emancipated enterprise?

- Françoise Vergès, Political scientist, Comité pour la Mémoire et l'Histoire de l'esclavage former president, Chair "Global South(s)" au Collège d'Etudes Mondiales ; Fabrice Teicher, Founder member of Passeurs de Mémoires ; Rokhaya Diallo, Journalist, Founder member of the Indivisibles ; Marc Cheb Sun, Journalist, editorialist ; Franco Lollia, Brigade Anti Negrophobie Member

Public Debate

15.30: Break



15.45: Documentary screening MemoROM “An untold story: Roma and Sinti Holocaust”
16.45 - 18.00: Roundtable 2 - “Roma, Gypsies, and Travellers. Internment, genocide and resistance. Exploring the inclusive approaches to minorities history in France”

- Moderator Tara Dickman

The following key points were tackled during the debate:

How our pedagogies on Roma and Sinti Holocaust can pave the way for the restitution of oppressed memories and epistemologies?

In what ways are/should we- as Roma and non Roma educational theoreticians, pedagogues, curriculum planners- advocate for a romani genocide and internment teaching inside and outside romani communities?

- Nara Ritz, Centre Européen de Formation aux Diversité, Romed CoE ; Bill Bila, La Voix des Roms ; Sarah Carmona, University Researcher Lillian Robinson Scholar, Concordia University ; Jacques Debot, Previous Parliamentary Assistant, writer

Public Debate

Conclusions and closing speeches

- Mme Esther Benbassa / Mme Sarah Carmona

3. Areas for improvement

The main points concerning education which had been discussed during the pre and post screening sessions were:

- The imperative needs for rigorous works on history and historiography genocide episodes taking into account a multi centric educational philosophies and theories.
- If advocacy on Roma and Sinti Internment and Genocide is fundamental in order to bring awareness inside the mainstream society, decolonizing

knowledge and memories on history and if is relevant to address these topics to Romani and Sinti communities.

- To rethink the concept of historical memories from multiple perspectives is the key to transform education on liberating praxis. The reflection on history and memory must be enriched by minorities' epistemological paradigms. How may Romani and Sinti experience improve the way of teaching history?
- There is a strong urgency to bring together stakeholders who worked on the various pitfalls in memorial paradigms (narratives on history, memory, restitution of undervalued epistemologies and educational practices and transmission)
- It appeared fundamental to underline the importance of historicizing and to understand the mechanisms that led to the establishment of genocide policies, articulating similarities and particularities. The aim of this articulation does not consist on highlighting a reduced historical determinism that would lead to the use of simplistic comparisons to justify and explain some contemporary events or atmosphere, but to decipher and expose the structures of these phenomena which govern our societies still today and the rapports we have with otherness, standards and power (see related story Porrajmos and internment with current "racial policies" and the specific laws against freedom of movement for Travellers in France) .
- One of the key points is bringing awareness of the ability to annihilate as understood to be a "long and terrible education by experience, is an inevitable need for mental and physical health without which civilized life would be unbearable; but also the mental faculty that helps the submission and the waiver. Forgetting is also to forget what should not be forgotten: that justice and freedom triumph. Such faculty of forgetfulness reproduces the conditions that reproduce injustice and slavery: forget the past suffering is to forget the forces that caused them and forget them without defeat" (Marcuse).



