

**Luca Bravi, Maria José Casa-Nova,
Maria Alfredo Moreira,
Maria Teresa Tagliaventi (Eds.)**

Leaving a Trace

**Action-research with Roma
and non-Roma young people
between history, memory and present**

Itinerari e dialoghi di Storia dell'educazione



Itinerari e dialoghi di storie dell'educazione

Collana diretta da Gianfranco Bandini, Tiziana Pironi, Gabriella Seveso

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The volume *Leaving a Trace. Action-research with Roma and non-Roma young people between history, memory and present* is a publication produced within the Project “Transformative Roma Art and Culture for European Remembrance” (TRACER), funded by Citizens, Equality, Rights and Values (CERV) programme of the European Commission.

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The TRACER project

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- University of Florence – Department of Education, Languages, Interculture, Literatures and Psychology, Italy.
- C.A.T. – Social Cooperative, Florence, Italy
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4. Representation of Roma persecution in school curriculum development in Europe

by Ivana Bolognesi, Maria Alfredo Moreira** and Luca Bravi****

1. Representing Roma genocide in Europe¹

In July 2020, the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe produced a Recommendation which asked all member states of UE to include the history of Roma in school curricula and teaching materials (DC 099/2020)². In previous years, the European Union has proposed specific digital dissemination tools, including factsheets that tell the story of the persecution of Roma in different countries during Nazism³. The role of the European institutions has been fundamental in promoting remembrance in the Union through numerous recommendations that have been circulated since the 2000s. For a long time, several programmes, funded by the European Commission, have indicated the history of Roma and Sinti people as a central theme to develop training and educational actions. Awareness of Roma history is different for each country; for example in Italy, the history of the fascist concentration camps reserved for “gypsies” between 1940 and

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¹ Luca Bravi is author of the first section of the article (paragraph 1); Ivana Bolognesi is author of section 2 (paragraphs 2 - 2.1; 2.2); Maria Alfredo Moreira is author of Section 3 (paragraph 3 - 3.1; 3.2).

²[https://search.coe.int/directorate_of_communications#{%22CoEIdentifier%22:\[%2209000016809ee553%22\],%22sort%22:\[%22CoEValidationDate%20Descending%22\]}](https://search.coe.int/directorate_of_communications#{%22CoEIdentifier%22:[%2209000016809ee553%22],%22sort%22:[%22CoEValidationDate%20Descending%22]}) (Last access: August, 2024).

³ <https://www.coe.int/en/web/roma-and-travellers/roma-history-factsheets>; <https://www.coe.int/en/web/roma-genocide> (Last access: August 2024).

1943 and the subsequent deportation until 1945 are often unknown⁴. In the Czech Republic, the memorial commemorating the victims of the Lety u Písku⁵ concentration camp (reserved for the persecution of Roma people who were deported and exterminated in Auschwitz) was inaugurated on May 12, 2024. However, for decades, in the same area where the lager stood, the presence of a large pig farm was permitted and only the commitment of survivors, scholars and intellectuals allowed the memorial to be built in Bohemia.

The “National Inclusion Strategies for Roma and Sinti”⁶ elaborated by each European State often recognize the importance of remembering the persecution of Roma for building active citizenship and the “Europe Strategic Action Plan for Roma and Traveller Inclusion (2020-2025)” has focused on the role of the knowledge of history as an element for deconstructing stereotypes⁷. A significant part of the materials on Roma history has also been produced by the main Sinti and Roma associations present in Europe who are promoting both the knowledge in their own community and its diffusion as public memory policies⁸.

From the point of view of school curricula, it's useful to consider the investigation on some specific European countries⁹: Italy, Poland and Portugal (chosen because they are the countries of the partners of TRACER - they had different involvement in the Second World War and they are different regarding the presence and condition of inclusion of Roma and Sinti on their territory nowadays); Germany (it can provide an interesting comparison in relation to the memory policies that it has built since the post war period¹⁰) and France (it represents

⁴ <https://www.porrajmos.it/it/story/04-la-persecuzione-in-italia-1922-1943/> (Last access: August 2024).

⁵ Polanski, *Black silence*.

⁶ <https://democracyinstitute.ceu.edu/projects/roma-civil-monitor-2021-2025> (Last access: August 2024).

⁷ <https://edoc.coe.int/en/roma-and-travellers/8508-council-of-europe-strategic-action-plan-for-roma-and-traveller-inclusion-2020-2025.html> (Last access: August 2024).

⁸ <https://dokuzentrum.sintiundroma.de/publikationen/>; <http://www.stowarzyszenie.romowie.net/Swiadectwa-190.html>; <https://www.porrajmos.it/it> (Last access: August 2024).

⁹ The data are those catalogued by the European Commission in the virtual library <https://www.coe.int/en/web/roma-genocide/virtual-library> (Last access: August 2024).

¹⁰ Wüstenberg, *Civil Society and Memory in Postwar Germany*.

one Western European nation that was occupied and controlled by Nazism).

In the list below, for each country it is indicated:

- whether the Roma genocide has been officially recognized;
- whether the extermination of Roma is a specific part of the national school curriculum;
- whether there are ordinary training processes on the extermination of Roma.

Italy

- There is no official acknowledgment of the Roma Genocide in Italy. The “Law 20 July 2000, no. 211, that institutes the Day of Remembrance” for those who have been deported in the concentration camps during the Second World War, doesn’t specifically mention the Roma.
- In every school level curriculum, the Holocaust and the Genocide of the Jews is included, but not specifically the Roma Genocide. School textbooks often do not mention the Roma genocide or include it in a generic way in the events of the Second World War.
- State institutions, research centers, foundations, non-governmental associations offer training seminars on the Roma genocide, but this action is not yet precisely defined in the training curricula. The National Strategy of Roma and Sinti is a fundamental reference to promote activities in this cultural context.

Poland

- In 2011, the Parliament of Poland declared 2nd August as the official Roma and Sinti Genocide Remembrance Day.
- Activities to learn about the Roma genocide are generally part of Holocaust studies and are not generally included in school textbooks but in scientific books edited by foundations, associations and research centers;
- Some important training activities about the Roma genocide are planned by the Association «Romów w Polsce» (officially recognized since 2023 as a representative of the Roma community in Poland) in collaboration with Centre for Educational Development, the Jewish Historical Institute, the Institute of National Remembrance, universities, and the Auschwitz-Birkenau Museum.

Portugal

- Portugal has not officially recognised the Roma Genocide through law.
- The study of the Holocaust is compulsory in schools and it is part of the National History curriculum. It is taught at the third level of elementary education and in secondary school. All Portuguese students in the ninth grade (ages 13 to 14) study the Holocaust, but there is no specific indication on the study of the Roma genocide, except for the reference to a book on Roma in the Holocaust, as an example of bibliography that can be used in secondary education.
- State institutions, research centers, foundations, non-governmental associations offer training seminars on the Roma genocide, but this action is not yet precisely defined in the training curricula.

Germany

- The racial extermination of the Roma and Sinti was officially recognized in 1980.
- The teaching of the Holocaust includes remembrance of all the victims of the National Socialists' regime. Special reference is made to persecution and Roma Genocide in the curricula of the *Länder* of Baden-Württemberg (secondary school: "Gymnasium"), Hamburg (secondary school: "Gymnasium", "Hauptschule" and "Realschule"), Hessen, Mecklenburg-Vorpommern (lower secondary school and "Gymnasium", "Hauptschule" and "Realschule") and Rheinland-Pfalz (lower and upper secondary school: "Gymnasium", "Hauptschule", "Realschule"). Since the curricula of the *Länder* are implemented, the description of the Roma Genocide can be found in the textbooks within the topic of Holocaust.
- The Education Department of the "Dokumentations- und Kulturzentrum Sinti und Roma", which was established in January 2001, focuses on gathering information on public and private education services, designing seminars for teachers and preparing teaching materials dealing with the history of the persecution of the Roma and Sinti minority during the National Socialist era and with civil rights activities in the Federal Republic of Germany. The department also analyses standard schoolbooks and makes recommendations. For each country, it is indicated whether the extermination of the Roma has been officially recognised, whether specific

policies exist in school curricula and whether ordinary training experiences exist:

France

- Roma genocide is not officially recognized. In October 2010, a law proposal, (*Proposition de loi n°273*), was presented to the National Assembly stating the official recognition of the Roma Genocide and setting the official commemoration of this genocide on the 5th April. In 2013, French President François Hollande acknowledged the State responsibility in the internment of Roma from 1940 to 1946 during a tribute ceremony in Montreuil-Bellay, one of the 31 camps managed by the Vichy regime.
- The Holocaust studies are a general part of the French school curriculum. In 2008, the Ministry of Education issued an official bulletin directed at all educational authorities and enforcing the teaching of the Shoah and Roma victims of the Genocide. Yet, in the history teaching syllabi, Roma are referred to as “Tziganes” (“Gypsies”) and not “Roma”. The study of the extermination / Genocide of the Roma (and the Jews) is included in study of the Second World War. It is carried out at three levels of schooling: Primary “extension course”- “extermination of the Jews and Roma: a crime against Humanity”; lower secondary, third class: “Theme 3: Second World War, a war of annihilation (...) This is the context in which the Genocide of Jews and Roma was perpetrated in Europe.”; upper secondary, first class: Second World War, Genocide of the Jews and Roma – common strand of European history and memory.
- The question of the Roma Genocide is only sketchily addressed in teachers’ basic training.

According to the volume *The Representation of Roma in European Curricula and Textbooks*¹¹, which carried out an analysis of references to Roma and Sinti in textbooks in twenty different countries, some elements can be highlighted on history textbooks for secondary schools: in countries where the official recognition of the genocide of Roma and Sinti has taken place (Germany in particular), attention to the dissemination of history and the deconstruction of stereotypes is more

¹¹ Spielhaus, *The Representation of Roma in European Curricula and Textbooks*.

widespread and generalized. In Germany, the Central Council of German Sinti and Roma¹² was founded in February 1982 and its role was important for advocacy actions and for the recognition of Roma and Sinti as a national minority. In countries where there has not been specific recognition, activism is less widespread, and the knowledge of their genocide is less known. In Italy and France, books that generically name Sinti and Roma among the victims in the extermination camps always indicate them as “gypsies”, without reflecting on the word “gypsies” as a stereotype. The same volume analyses textbooks of other school subjects and in the same countries, even when dealing with books on civic education or geography, the most used term by authors remains “gypsies”.

In Poland, Roma activism is growing thanks to their association recognized by public institutions; Roma genocide is officially recognized. The derogatory use of the word “gypsies” is present in 2 out of 15 books analyzed by the European study. Deconstructing stereotypes is not just about using the right words (in 1981, in the town of Oświęcim - next to the Auschwitz State Museum - a pogrom took place against Roma families who were made scapegoats for the Polish economic crisis of that period), but a language that eliminates “wrong” words demonstrates a process of reflection on prejudice. In both Germany and Poland, the direct civic engagement of Sinti and Roma in the deconstruction of stereotypes is essential. The word “Zigeuner” (Gypsy) is totally absent in German history textbooks for the secondary school, or it is used specifically to indicate the category that the Nazis used in the concentration camps. Germany is also the country with the lowest percentage of hatred towards Roma and Sinti (37%); in France, it is 44%, in Italy 83%, in Poland 55%¹³, there is no data for Portugal; in the Pew Research study, the Iberian Peninsula is represented by Spain, which reports a percentage of 40%. Antigypsyism in Portugal is discussed in a recent article by sociologist Olga Magano and Tânia D’Oliveira¹⁴ (about Roma in Portugal see the volume *Roma*

¹² <https://zentralrat.sintiundroma.de/en/central-council/who-we-are/> (Last access: August 2024).

¹³ Minority groups in Europe, Pew Research Center 2019: <https://www.pewresearch.org/global/2019/10/14/minority-groups/> (Last access: August 2024).

¹⁴ Magano, D’Oliveira, *Antigypsyism in Portugal*.

*in ten European countries*¹⁵, published by FRA – European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights).

The following analyses by Ivana Bolognesi (Italy) and Maria Alfredo Moreira (Portugal) on textbooks allow us to verify the data proposed by the European volume. They demonstrate how textbooks can risk transmitting fake information: processes of miscommunication can reinforce prejudices in public opinion, especially when the transmission of incorrect knowledge occurs in educational contexts such as school.

2. Italy: the representation of the extermination of the Roma communities in history textbooks for upper secondary school

What is the representation of the Roma communities in textbooks for upper secondary school?

Starting from this question, a preliminary investigation was carried out on a small number of history texts for this school level with the main aim of understanding whether and how these communities are remembered on the theme of the Second World War, a central theme of the TRACER project.

The texts considered were eleven, all of them history texts for the third grade of secondary school, published in the time period 2009 - 2023¹⁶.

The historical period considered goes from the beginning of the twentieth century to the contemporary age: therefore, they describe the

¹⁵ European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights (Ed.), *Roma in ten European countries*.

¹⁶ The texts consulted are as follows: Calvani, *Finestre sulla storia dell'età della globalizzazione*; De Vecchi and Giovannetti, *Storia in corso. Civiltà, tecniche, industria*; Variuos authors (not specified) *Capire la storia. Il Novecento e la globalizzazione*; Borgognonea and Carpanetto, *L'idea della storia. Il Novecento e il Duemila*; Cioffi and Amerini, *Storia. Imparo con metodo. Il Novecento e il mondo attuale*; Paolucci, Signorini and Marisaldi, *Di tempo in tempo. L'età contemporanea*; Necci, Jacomuzzi and Montanaro, *Nel grande gioco. Storie idee persone*; Ardone and Pianura, *Voci della storia. Il Novecento e il mondo attuale*; Biggio, *La Storia a colori. Dal Novecento ai giorni nostri*; Greppi and Persico, *La storia è presente. Dal Novecento a oggi*.

causes that led to the First and Second World Wars and the social, economic and political consequences that ensued.

The Roma people appear in connection with anti-Semitism and racial discrimination, particularly when minorities deported to concentration camps in Germany are listed.

The criteria identified for the analysis of the texts were the following: terms used to define the Roma people; description and insights into the Porrajmos.

2.1 Terms: *Roma*, *Sinti*, *Gypsies* and *Nomads*

As already pointed out, all the texts considered include references to the extermination of this people, even if they are defined using different terms.

Some texts, five in total, use words such as *Roma* and *Sinti*: definitions considered appropriate by the communities themselves because they respect their own linguistic and cultural roots. However, they also continue to use the term gypsies as synonyms.

The other six texts use the definitions *nomads* and/or *gypsies*. We know that these two terms carry with them political choices (nomads) and historical aspects (gypsies) often derived from various forms of discrimination. These are terms that have been abandoned over time because they are characterised by semantic ambiguity: *zingari* has always been used in a derogatory sense, used by the native populations to negatively connote these groups; while *nomads* refers to a condition of wandering and vagabondage that, if it has characterised the lifestyle of these groups, today no longer distinguishes the majority of these communities present in Italian and partly European territory. Even today people prefer to use the term nomad rather than gypsy, which is considered more derogatory, but both are neither correct, nor are they in line with the historical-cultural identity of these communities.

2.2 Description and insights of the events of the Porrajmos

While the Jewish minority is given extensive coverage and references to other periods, such as the establishment of the Jewish state before the Second World War, the space devoted to the other minorities, who were also subjected to discrimination and extermination, is somewhat reduced.

All texts refer to the Roma minorities, when the subject of Nazi persecution of all those who were not part of the Aryan race is addressed; here is an example of a list: political and religious dissidents, Jews, gypsies and asocials such as homosexuals, the mentally ill or common criminals whose behaviour did not conform to Aryan social norms.

Two of these texts mention the Roma minority when referring to the symbols, triangles and stars, sewn on the jackets of people imprisoned in the camps.

In the camps there was a precise hierarchy among the prisoners who were distinguished according to the markings they were obliged to wear: at the bottom of the hierarchical scale were the Jews, marked by a star or a yellow triangle; then there were homosexuals (pink triangle); antisocials and gypsies (black triangle); political prisoners (red triangle); priests of different Christian denominations and Jehovah's Witnesses (violet triangle); immigrants, stateless persons and refugees (blue triangle); common criminals open round (green triangle)¹⁷.

In a single text, the extermination figures of all minorities are reproduced. This information is prefaced by the clarification that it is difficult to calculate the number of dead belonging to these groups. Those reported in this text have been made known by the British Foreign Office and are as follows: “5.6-6.1 million Jews; 3.5-6.1 million Slavic civilians; 2.5-4 million prisoners of war; 1-1.5 million political dissidents; 200,000-800,000 gypsies; 200,000-300,000 handicapped; 10,000-250,000 homosexuals; 2000 Jehovah's Witnesses) [...] total 13,012,000 to 18,952,000”¹⁸.

¹⁷ De Vecchi, Giovannetti, *Storia in corso*, 154.

¹⁸ Calvani, *Finestre sulla storia dell'età della globalizzazione* p. 93.

Almost all of the texts considered (10) do not provide any in-depth study of the Roma minority: there is no mention of their history, let alone how families and groups were imprisoned in the camps and subsequently exterminated.

Except for two texts.

In the first text, in a brief explanation of the lexicon in a box in the margin of the page, the meaning of the terms *Roma* and *Sinti* is given, describing the following:

The two terms indicate a nomadic population spread throughout Europe and the world, often referred to as ‘Gypsies’. The word *Roma*, in the language spoken by this population, means man; the word *Sinti*, on the other hand, refers to the place they originally moved from, namely Sind, in present-day Pakistan¹⁹.

In the second text, there is an entire paragraph entitled “Gypsies are also persecuted”.

Although in the text of the paragraph the two terms, Gypsies and *Roma*, are used as synonyms, some insights are provided into the persecution and extermination of this minority.

It is pointed out that from the mid-1930s onwards, the *Roma* were segregated in camps built in large German cities and that from May 1940, as they were considered potential spies, they were transferred en masse to Poland and locked up in concentration camps from where they were transferred to the Auschwitz-Birkenau camps. 2 August 1944 was the day on which three thousand *Roma* inmates were gassed to death. It is also pointed out that concentration camps were also established in Italy for *Roma* who were later deported to Germany.

The most interesting aspect in this paragraph is the reference to the Porrajmos, i.e. the massacre of gypsies, which took place in many camps in Poland, Baltic countries, Serbia and Croatia.

This word is highlighted in the passage and refers to a small section, at the side of the page, where a brief elaboration is presented:

In the post-war period, the extermination of the Gypsies by the Nazis and their allies was called Porrajmos, which means ‘destruction’ in the Romani

¹⁹ Cazzaniga, *La Storia che si vede. Il Novecento e il mondo di oggi*.

language. To commemorate the Porrajmos, a Day of Remembrance of the massacre of Roma and Sinti has been established in some European countries, which is celebrated on 2 August²⁰.

Also in the margin of the page there are questions to verify the contents of the paragraph, such as: «What were the Gypsies accused of? How many European Gypsies were victims of Nazi executions?».

At the end of the paragraph, there is a colour photo in which «the head of the Centre on Racial Hygiene interviews an elderly Roma woman. The tragic consequences of this pseudo-scientific research were the deportation and extermination of thousands of Sinti and Roma»²¹.

Thus, a paragraph that, if brought to the attention of the students by the teacher, introduces various topics and related insights concerning this minority, often treated in a cursory and superficial manner.

However, two brief considerations should be added that relate the Roma minority to the Jewish minority.

The first. Jews and their persecution are often associated with the Nazi and Fascist regimes, but not with other totalitarianisms such as Stalinism, which also discriminated against and exterminated this and other minorities.

The second. It follows from this that even the Roma, who appear in the history text only in connection with the genocide of the Jews, are only associated with these tragic events, whereas these communities with their cultures, as described in the literature, intertwined their history with that of the majority groups and were an integral part of it, contributing to cultural development (music, painting, etc.)²².

²⁰ Paolucci, Signorini, Marisaldi, *Di tempo in tempo*, p. 232.

²¹ Ibidem.

²² Fings, *Sinti e Rom. Storia di una minoranza*.

3. Portugal: the representation of the extermination of the Roma communities in history textbooks for lower secondary school

3.1 *The National Curriculum*

In the case of Portugal, schooling is compulsory for 12 years, embracing both basic education (grades 1-9) to secondary education (grades 10-12). There is a mainstream curriculum for basic education, with minor adaptations done locally by schools. However, the History subject is taken by all students, from grade 5 until grade 9²³. In secondary education, students have to choose a specific path that can be within a scientific area (like natural sciences, technology, humanities, etc.) or within a vocational or professional one (like music, dance, tourism, electricity, etc.). At this level, the History subject is only taken by students who choose either the path of Social and Economic Sciences, or Social and Human Sciences.

Regarding the topics of the Second World War, the Nazi Regime and the Genocide/ Holocaust, the national curriculum includes these in the 9th, 11th and 12th grades, with the aims, content and methodological suggestions shown in Table 1.

As all students attend the 9th grade, our choice was to select this grade for the analysis of how the Roma genocide is dealt with.

²³ In grades 5 and 6, the History subject is done with Geography. From grade 7 onwards, it is a single subject.

Tab. 1 - Aims, content and methodological suggestions that frame Roma genocide²⁴

9th grade	11th grade – History B (Social and Economic Sciences)	12th grade – History A (Social and Human Sciences)
[Within the topic World War II] - To identify/ apply these concepts: Genocide; Resistance; Holocaust.	[Within the theme Totalitarian options] - Concepts/ notions: Totalitarianism; Fascism; Nazi Germany; Corporativism; Anti-Semitism; Genocide; Propaganda.	
Strategic actions: - To collect and select data from relevant historical sources to analyse the subject matter; - To organize information collected in different historical sources; - To use different media to express learning (...)	Methodological suggestions: - Multimedia assignments and debates – The Holocaust: Collecting information on the Holocaust. Using bibliography such as (...) Otto Rosenberg (2001). <i>A Lente de Aumento, Os Ciganos no Holocausto [Roma in the Holocaust]</i> . Lisboa: Âncora Editora) or using the internet - http://www.remember.org/ . Organising a data base. Selecting, analysing information and recording on a CD ROM (...) Presentation to the school and debate (...)	

3.2 Description and insights of Roma and the events of the Porrajmos

We analysed all the existing certified²⁵ textbooks for teaching the History subject in the 9th grade (n=6), as schools cannot adopt non-certified textbooks. We looked at the teacher's book, as it has methodological suggestions and extension activities.

²⁴ República Portuguesa - Educação (2018). Aprendizagens Essenciais – História. Ensino Básico e Ensino Secundário. <https://www.dge.mec.pt/aprendizagens-essenciais-0> (our translation). (Last access: August 2024).

²⁵ In order to be used in Portuguese schools, all textbooks have to be certified by the Ministry of Education. Textbooks are analysed and evaluated by higher education teaching and/or research staff, following a national call. The evaluation process aims to ascertain whether the textbooks are in accordance with the national curriculum.

As certified textbooks, all are adopted in Portuguese schools (both public and private)²⁶. Those adopted by most schools are Textbook 1 (309 schools) and Textbook 3 (307). Textbook 5 follows (273), then Textbook 4 (168). Textbook 2 is adopted by 66 schools and Textbook 6 by 90.

All are published by Portuguese publishing houses and are of Portuguese authors. The authors are basic and secondary education teachers, with many years of experience, and higher education teachers. All books are 2023 editions.

In accordance with the national curriculum (see Table 1), the theme of Roma genocide is approached within the larger themes of the Second World War and the rise of totalitarian regimes in Europe, following the Great Depression of the 1930s. The Roma genocide is included within the topic of the Nazi regime, its principles and propaganda, among which anti-Semitism, racism and racial persecution, eugenics, pan Germanism, and *Lebensraum*. However, one of the textbooks (Textbook 6) does not mention Roma genocide and/or persecution, so it was excluded from our analysis.

In the remaining 5 textbooks, Roma people are referred to as 'Gypsy'. The Holocaust, also referred to as Shoah, is highlighted in all the textbooks, being the Roma persecution and/or extermination included *merely* as *examples* of other minorities that were subjected to Nazi racism, persecution and extermination, as the following excerpts²⁷ show:

Textbook 1: "With the aim of guaranteeing the purity of the Aryan race, the Nazi regime used repressive means and practices: persecuting or eliminating those who were regarded as 'impure' (disabled, homosexuals, gypsies) (...) Nazi racism took a violent nature, namely with the persecutions of jews and

²⁶ All the available textbooks are the following: Luís Sousa and Luiz Soares, *H.9, Asa*; Cláudia Amaral, Bárbara Alves, Tiago Tadeu, and Olanda Vilaça, *HSI9 – História Sob Investigação*, Porto Editora; Francisco Cantanhede, João Silva, Marília Gago, and Paula Torrão, *O fio da História*, Texto; Rui Correia, Jorge Guerreiro, and António Nabais, *Procura 9*, Raiz Editora; Cristina Maia, Ana Margarida Maia, and Ana Margarida Caraméz, *Vamos à História 9*, Porto Editora; Andreia Andrade, Helena Vieira, Patrícia Remelgado, and Teresa Magano, *Somos História 9*, Areal Editores.

²⁷ All excerpts are translations from the Portuguese language. They show all the mentions to Roma (Gypsies) that appear in the 5 textbooks.

gypsies." (p. 104); "During the **Holocaust**, other ethnic groups, like the gypsy, were also victims of the Nazi hatred." (p. 136, bold by the authors)

Textbook 2: "«Holocaust» or «Shoah» have been the most common expressions to name the systematic extermination of the jews, firstly, but also of communists, homosexuals, gypsies, physically and mentally disabled, psychiatric patients, Soviet war prisoners, Polish and Russian political activists, Jehovah witnesses, some catholic and protestant clergyman, and common criminals. They were all executed in the extermination camps, like Auschwitz-Birkenau, Belzec, Treblinka, Sobibor, Majdanek and Chelmno, purposefully built for this dark purpose." (p. 140)

Textbook 3: "Nazism presented itself as **racist** and **antisemitic**. The regime implemented a policy of **mass extermination** of their political opponents, Jews and minorities (like gypsies, homosexuals, physical and mentally disabled)" (p. 87, bold by the authors)

Textbook 4: "The Germans would have the right to dominate the «sub-human» and protect themselves against those they perceived as able to «contaminate» the German purity, like Jews and gypsies, but also people with mental illnesses or even political opponents, like the communists." (p. 81)

Textbook 5: "Beyond Jews, all those who opposed the regime or regarded as inferior, as disabled people, gypsies, homosexuals, were taken to Nazi concentration or to extermination camps." (p. 91); "The nazis created more than six dozens of concentration and extermination camps, to where they sent all those who were regarded as a menace to the purity of the Aryan race: Slavic people, gypsies, homosexuals, disabled people and, specifically, jews." (p. 117)

The descriptions of the Roma genocide go from ‘merely’ being the subject of racism and persecution (Textbook 4), to being the object of systematic extermination, like other minorities (in the remaining textbooks). The importance of this genocide is undermined by the use of brackets (Textbooks 1 and 3), that shows how their fate was a by-product of minor importance when compared to the Shoah. There are no testimonials or historical documents specifically on the Roma (or on any other minority, beyond the Jewish people). Only one of the

textbooks explicitly represents the Roma, by including a photograph of a Roma woman being questioned by Nazi inspectors (Textbook 3).

Regarding the methodological approach, in line with the national curriculum guidelines (see Table 1), students are required to analyse historical documents, posters, and photos, researching events (like the *Crystal Nacht*) and life histories (of Jewish people), reflecting on anti-racist practices, writing texts on living in those times (including in Auschwitz), on the discrimination of minorities in present times (Rohingya, Uigures, LGBTI+), or on producing news articles, posters and even a mural. There are also suggestions on watching films on the Holocaust, reading books (most mentioned is the Diary of Anne Frank), and visiting museums in Portugal (like the Holocaust Museum in Oporto) or online Holocaust museums. Besides raising an awareness of the historical events connected to the Holocaust, seeking to advance explanations and interpretations on how and why they were promoted by the Nazi Regime, 3 textbooks explicitly connect past events with present situations, proposing activities that engage students in critical reflection and some form of activism, seeking to prevent a repetition of this dark time.

Conclusion

The presence of stereotypes towards Roma causes a devaluation of the memory of their genocide: in the past, at least until the 1980s, the non-recognition of the persecution of Roma as racial extermination (similar to the Shoah) was often justified by declaring that the “gypsies” had been deported because “they represent a group of asocial people”. The stereotype still active in the present was connected to the racist concepts of the past and described the extermination of the Roma as an acceptable practice for public safety. This type of approach downgrades the importance of history and interprets the events of the past by preserving stereotypes in the present. For the TRACER project, it is paramount to develop a correct knowledge of the history of minorities as a necessary tool for building democracy and full citizenship. To that end, an analysis of the most important regulatory pedagogical tools, as textbooks are, is a key task to develop training and educational actions more adjusted to the several contexts in which they

take place. To conclude, we might add that every minority involved in these tragic events demands due recognition, and that this recognition arises from the awareness of each individual, from the formation of their own thought made up of knowledge and reflection, which can become a barrier to the propaganda of totalitarian regimes, or of the unbridled consumerism to which we are all subjected to today.

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This book seeks to reflect theoretically and empirically on the process and results of the European project TRACER (Transformative Roma Art and Culture for European Remembrance), financed by CERV (Citizen, Equality, Rights and Value) Eu programme. The main protagonists have been young people, mainly Roma and Sinti, living in different places and countries of Europe, with their own history that anchors them to different communities, but joined by belonging to discriminated minorities and to a transnational people who recognise themselves as a community characterised by diaspora. The project's goal has combined historical knowledge of the genocide that occurred during World War II with an analysis of the construction of prejudice and the role that racism has had on the collective consciousness of a modern society. The methodology used is participatory action-research in public history educational context, a process able to make the protagonists aware of a path of knowledge, promoting training actions towards other people and leaving traces of memory in the present through artistic events.

The volume presents the theoretical foundations and practical activities that refer to the public history as a tool for inclusion, participation and social recognition of European communities representing minorities in their countries: a multidisciplinary and participatory action-research aimed at building active citizenship in formal and informal educational contexts.

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