

The July 2015 copy of the Roma Support Group newsletter includes:

- Details for the two major events in London commemorating the Roma Holocaust on 2 August
- The recent major United Nations report on the worldwide issues of human rights and Roma
- Two recent opinion polls on attitudes towards Roma in Europe
- A campaign against 'refusal of service' experienced by Roma, Gypsies and Travellers
- Roma families and communities in Newcastle; a living tradition
- Training opportunities and jobs



[July 2015 newsletter](#)

Welcome from Roma Support Group

Welcome to the July 2015 edition of the newsletter. We want to bring you information, reflections, arguments and discussion about the issues that face Roma communities in the UK. The Roma Support Group has developed over the last fifteen years into a major service agency working for and with Roma communities, mainly in London. We run advice and advocacy sessions; education support programmes (including homework support) for children and families; a Roma Support and Engagement Programme (including tailored staff training and development); and an arts and culture programme. Recently, RSG has been able to develop its work on developing Roma advocacy and mediation, community engagement and development, and also in policy development and information provision. This e-bulletin is one manifestation of these recent developments.

Contact us via:

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EVENT

SUNDAY 2 AUGUST – ROMA GENOCIDE COMMEMORATION DAY

12 noon. Holocaust memorial garden, Hyde Park (between Rotten Row and Serpentine Lake). Tube: Knightsbridge; click here for map
<https://plus.google.com/102434461621358781385/about?gl=uk&hl=en>

“MA BISTAR” – DON’T FORGET

In May 1944, the Nazis started to plan the Final Solution for the “Gypsy Family Camp” in Auschwitz. The initial date for the liquidation of the “Gypsy camp” was planned for the 16 May. The prisoners of the camp were ordered to stay in the barracks and surrounded by 60 SS men. When the SS men tried to force the prisoners out of the barracks they faced a rebellion of Roma men, women and children, armed with nothing more but sticks, tools and stones, and eventually the SS had to withdraw. The resistance of Roma prisoners gave them only a few additional months of life.

The Nazi also feared that an insurrection could spread to other parts of the camp and they planned the “Final Solution” on 2 August. On orders from SS leader Heinrich Himmler, a ban on leaving the barracks was imposed on the evening of 2 August in the “Gypsy Camp”. Despite resistance by the Roma, 2,897 men, women, and children were loaded on trucks, taken to gas chamber V, and exterminated. Their bodies were burned in pits next to the crematorium. After the liberation of Auschwitz concentration camp in 1945 only 4 Roma remained alive.

In April 2015, European Parliament overwhelmingly supported a resolution to support 2 August as Roma Genocide Day. See here for the official announcement.

<http://www.europarl.europa.eu/news/en/news-room/content/20150414IPR41851/html/MEPs-urge-end-to-Roma-discrimination-and-recognition-of-Roma-Genocide-Day>

UN special Rapporteur on minority issues report (May 2015) said:

The Special Rapporteur remains concerned that globally there is little awareness that Roma were targeted by the Nazi regime and were subjected to arbitrary internment, forced labour and mass murder. Together with the Special Adviser of the Secretary-General on the Prevention of Genocide, she has called for stronger measures to keep the memory of the Roma Holocaust — referred to as Porrajmos or Pharrajimos in the Romani language — alive, and to enable survivors and others to mark it in a recognized, dignified manner.¹⁴ The Special Rapporteur also notes that violence against Roma is not only an historical circumstance but remains a current reality for many Roma communities. Therefore, Governments must remain vigilant and take appropriate measures against signs of hatred and stigmatization.

Ladislav Balaz, chair of the Europe Roma Network, declared: "We must be as ready to fight for our lives, and our rights, as were those who resisted the fascists back then". In the run up to the commemoration, the ERN and other Roma organizations are renewing calls to Prime Minister David Cameron to demonstrate that he recognizes their right to equal status by appointing Roma representatives to his Holocaust Commission.

For more information, see here

<https://www.facebook.com/Europe.Roma/photos/pb.317293751705240.-2207520000.1437217230./677799505654661/?type=1&theater>

Or email dale.farm@btinternet.com

Or euoperoma.eu@gmail.com

Please make every effort to attend.

WEDNESDAY 29 JULY – “A PEOPLE UNCOUNTED”

7pm. 17-25 New Inn Yard, London EC2A 3EA. Amnesty International

A film and discussion about the Roma Holocaust

Free screening of the documentary film *A People Uncounted*, a moving film about Roma in Auschwitz, their brave and desperate fight against the guards and SS and their almost complete annihilation on 2 August 1944 in the Porajmos, or Roma Holocaust.

The screening will be followed by a Q&A with the film's producer William Billa, alongside two survivors of Porajmos who will tell their story.

For more details of the film, see here <http://www.apeopleuncounted.com/>

For more information about the event, see here <http://www.amnesty.org.uk/events/remembering-porajmos-roma-holocaust#.VZupNhtVhHw>

MA BISTAR!



70th Anniversary Genocide Commemoration

12 noon 2 August Holocaust Memorial Garden, Hyde Park

Located between Rotten Row and the Serpentine lake. Nearest Underground: *Knightsbridge*

The Commemoration will include a short address by a member of the Prime Minister's Holocaust Commission, poem recital by Valdemar Kalinin, chairman of Romano Ekiye (Gypsy Council) and a reading of the names of some of those who perished in the concentration camps, and the singing of *Dzelem Dzelem*.

PUBLICATIONS

UNITED NATIONS HUMAN RIGHTS COUNCIL

A study of the humans rights situation of Roma worldwide, with a particular focus on the phenomena of anti-Gypsyism.

The UN's special Rapporteur on minority issues, Rita Izsak, presented a report to the UN Human Rights Council last month. See here for the UN press release. <http://www.un.org/apps/news/story.asp?NewsID=51184#.VaofWaRVhHw>

The report catalogues the situation of Roma populations not just in Europe, but in the Americas, the Middle East as well as in Asia. She argues that for progress to be made, four related “pillars” are required to underpin a humans rights approach:

- The protection of Roma, including combating violence and preventing further genocide
- Protection and promotion of Roma identity and rejection of assimilation
- A guarantee of rights to non-discrimination and equality, including the support for affirmative action
- A right to participation in public life and decisions which affect the Roma

She describes the present treatment – particularly but not only in Europe – of Roma communities, and then identifies the positive developments globally. This includes the growing governmental recognition of 2 August as commemoration of the Roma Holocaust, the growing commitment to see anti-Roma violence as part of hate crime; the emergence of positive promotion of Roma by Roma and non-Roma organisations; different approaches to tackling discrimination against Roma (e.g. in the Balkans, Spain, Argentina and Colombia); and finally different approaches to Roma inclusion.

However, she argues that Roma globally face “extreme poverty and marginalisation across a wide range of human rights indicators”, and says there has to be an understanding why existing approaches have not brought about structural change. She suggests these reasons include:

- A lack of accurate data
- The lack of political will

- The lack of human rights centred policy
- Low Roma participation
- Better access to complaint mechanisms
- Lack of measures to address long standing prejudice and racism
- Insufficient funding and bureaucratic obstacles

She concludes that states should be emphasising two particular approaches. First, taking concrete steps to stop discrimination, anti-Gypsyism and the threat of violence. And secondly, that it shouldn't be primarily about adopting "anti-poverty" approaches to Roma Communities (like the European Commissions emphasis on work, education, health and housing). She says,

The special Rapporteur thus urges all relevant stakeholders to think outside the 'poverty paradigm' and incorporate all aspects of minority rights into strategies that address Roma disadvantage, including the promotion of Roma identity, language and culture and the guarantee of dignity and equality

See the full report here <http://daccess-dds-ny.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/G15/093/50/PDF/G1509350.pdf?OpenElement>

EUROPEAN ATTITUDES TOWARDS THE ROMA

Two major opinion pollsters have recently published surveys about European citizens views of 'minorities', including the Roma, or "Gypsies and Roma" in the case of the UK. The Pew Research Centre conducted polling in April – mid May of this year in six countries – the UK, Italy, Poland, Germany, France and Spain; they interviewed about 1,000 adults in each country. You Gov UK conducted their polling in late May, again of about 1,000 adults in each of seven countries – UK, Germany, France and the four Scandinavian countries (of Denmark, Norway, Sweden and Finland). The Pew Research question asked "how you rate different groups of people according to how you feel about them – very favourably, mostly favourably, mostly unfavourably or very unfavourably". The different groups asked about were – Jews, Roma and Muslims.

You Gov asked “do you have a positive or negative impression of the following groups”? The groups asked about were – Roma/Gypsy/Travellers, gay people, Muslims, Jewish people, black people, Christians, young people and the elderly. The You Gov results range from very positive to very negative, but included an option (unlike Pew) of “neither positive nor negative”. Both surveys included “don’t knows”.

Both surveys found that unfavourable or negative attitudes towards Roma were higher than any other group.

However, Pew research found that people were more “favourable” (rather than “unfavourable”) towards Roma in Spain (by 23%), Germany (by 18%) and UK (By 17%); however, people were generally less “favourable” in Poland (by -7%), in France (by -21%) and particularly in Italy (by -77%). In Italy, only 9% of the sample were either “very or mostly favourable” towards Roma, compared to 86% who were “unfavourable”. And all views of the Roma are more favourable, in the case of the UK, much more favourable, than they were in 2014.

You Gov identifies that most of the samples in seven countries had majorities who have “negative” impressions of Roma/Gypsies/travellers. Between a third and a half of the samples had negative views of Muslims. Only one tenth of samples had negative views of black people and gay people and fewer than 10% of samples had negative views of Jewish people.

For more details of the Pew Research, see here

<http://www.pewglobal.org/files/2015/06/Pew-Research-Center-European-Union-Report-FINAL-June-2-20151.pdf> (pp21 – 23, and 33/34).

For more information about the You Gov survey, see here

<https://yougov.co.uk/news/2015/06/05/european-attitudes-minorities/>

and here for the data

https://d25d2506sfb94s.cloudfront.net/cumulus_uploads/document/g96awulgzv/Eurotrack_Minorities_W.pdf

Refused service – in pubs, in clubs, restaurants and hotels? What could be done

A message from Howe & Co

We know that Roma, Travellers and Gypsies are being refused entry and service to pubs, clubs, restaurants and hotels etc on a daily basis up and down the country simply because of their ethnicity. However, up until now Roma, Travellers and Gypsies (and often those working on their behalf) felt that there was nothing that could be done. As a result Travellers and Gypsies were forced to shrug their shoulders and simply move on, despite the unfairness and embarrassment caused. Children seeing their parents treated in this way undoubtedly suffer damage to their self esteem and personal perception. Furthermore, there is a short time frame in which claims can be made after an act of discrimination, normally six months.

You will no doubt be aware that Howe & Co have now won two important discrimination claims on behalf of Travellers and Gypsies against the pub chain, JD Wetherspoon plc. Those cases build on other discrimination cases we have previously won on behalf of Travellers and Gypsies. You will have seen Wetherspoon's public apologies to the Travellers and Gypsies involved in those cases and will have seen the damages and declarations from the Court of unlawful discrimination. You may also know that Howe & Co previously had two of Channel 4's 'Bigger Fatter Gypsies' billboard posters banned by the Advertising Standards Authority and also challenged Ofcom and Channel 4 in the High Court over those programmes and the harm they caused to children as well as having successfully acted for Travellers in civil claims against the Metropolitan Police.

We are working closely with the Equality and Human Rights Commission on a number of other discrimination cases on behalf of large numbers of Gypsies and Travellers.

It is vital that we build as quickly as possible on these successes; so as to consign to history the daily grinding discrimination that GT&R people face at the hands of service providers. Martin Howe, myself and the rest of our

specialist discrimination team are ready, willing and more than able to act on behalf of any Roma, Traveller or Gypsy who faces such discrimination.

We now have the tools to challenge, overcome and defeat this daily discrimination and to get justice, fairness and to restore the dignity of Roma, Travellers and Gypsies across the UK. The biggest problem we face is in getting the word out to the communities that they don't have to accept this anymore and most importantly that there is an expert team of lawyers who are on standby to vindicate their rights.

Can we ask you to engage with us in an aggressive education programme by:

1. Letting the communities that you work with know that if they are refused service due to their ethnicity, that Howe & Co will take forward cases on their behalf. Normally we will be able to do this without charge to the victim of discrimination.
2. Putting up the attached poster in your offices and in other suitable locations, so that GT&R people can access help quickly.
3. Working with us to implement zero tolerance to discrimination against Roma, Travellers and Gypsies and actively and repeatedly challenging such discrimination in the Courts until it is wiped out.

I will be calling you to discuss the above and to seek your advice as to how best to take this campaign forward and to get the message out that we will not take this anymore.

David Enright LL.B (Hons) JP

Partner

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Roma communities in Newcastle

It's about respect: reflections on the lives of the Roma community in Newcastle

This book is based on 18 interviews with Roma women, men and young people in Newcastle in 2013. It is part of a wider project about how Newcastle has changed over its history as a result of migration and the movement of people. The interviews are set against the context of the long hostility towards the Roma (by Peter Sangar) and also an assessment of the human rights struggles in Europe by the Roma more recently.

The book *Its about respect* is available to download here

http://www.alivingtradition.org/uploads/1/1/3/8/11381120/alt_roma_book_it-s_about_respect.pdf

Peter Sagar also visited Krakow and Auschwitz in the summer of 2014 and attended the ceremony commemorating the murder of the last inhabitants of the Roma and Sinti Camp, Auschwitz on 2 August 1944. Also included are some of the speeches at Auschwitz-Birkenau on August 3 2014. From the Press desk at the Ceremony for 70th Anniversary of massacre of Roma and Sinti, 2nd August 1944. These are available here

http://www.alivingtradition.org/uploads/1/1/3/8/11381120/texts_of_speeches_2nd_august_2014.pdf

Opportunities – training and jobs

Opportunity for Film, London

I wonder if you may know anyone from the Gypsy, Traveller or Roma communities who might be interested in the training course we shall be running. The Video College has gained funding from Creative Skillset to match a grant from the ITF/FT2 Legacy Fund to run a 6-month production-based, film training programme, Ready to Work in Film 2015.

We shall recruit:

- four women and four men aged 18-24, from the UK's Black, Asian and minority ethnic communities and we welcome applications from people who are disabled
- people who have recently completed degree courses, apprenticeships, internships or have gained limited professional experience
- people who have a particular interest in camera, sound, editing or production

The deadline for applications is 20 July with interviews on 23 & 24 July and the course beginning on 1 September 2015.

If you are aware of anyone who fits the target groups above whom you think might be interested, we'd be very grateful if you could pass on the attached details of the programme and the application process.

If you'd like further information about The Video College and our training programmes, please visit our website, www.thevideocollege.co.uk or get in touch by email or 'phone.

With best wishes.

Ioana Constantinescu
Project Manager, Ready to Work in Film 2015
The Video College, 1 Thorpe Close. London W10 5XL
Tel: 020 8964 2641

Romani/Slovak speaking Link worker – Greentop Circus, Sheffield

ADVERT LINK WORKER (REACHING OUT PROJECT) 12 hours per week £9.50 per hour

Greentop is an educational arts charity using circus skills to enhance lives and influence positive individual and social transformation. We are currently seeking a part time Link Worker to support the delivery of the Reaching Out Project. This is an exciting new project funded by Awards for All (Big Lottery

Fund) to enable Greentop to develop links with the local community, encouraging participation of young people in group circus classes and working towards strong community cohesion in the local area.

You will be a Romani/Slovak speaker with previous experience of working in a community or youth work setting. The role will require you to assist with promotion of the project - developing links within the community and local schools. You will also support the Youth Tutors with interpretation and translation in class activities where appropriate.

With experience in Youth Work/ Community Development, you will engage young people and families to come to Greentop Community Circus and participate in circus skills workshops and events. You will provide relevant monitoring and activity reports to the Greentop team and funding body when required.

The role is part time - 12 hours per week to be worked flexibly. This may include some evening work. This is a temporary post until April 2016 subject to further funding. The role will be subject to satisfactory DBS check.

For further information, please contact Trudi or Angela on 0114 244 8828. To apply, please send a CV and covering letter to info@greentop.org

The closing date is 31 July 2015.

Qualified tutors – Sheffield

Qualified Tutors required for Roma Achievement Project

Vacancies:

1 x KS2 tutor in maths and English

1 x KS3-GCSE level tutor in English

1 x KS3-GCSE level tutor in Maths

Place of work: PACA Centre, 127 Page Hall Road, Sheffield, S4 8GU

Hours: 3 hours per week, Saturday mornings term time only

Remuneration: £25 per hour

Closing date: Friday 7 August 2015 at 5pm

PACA, in partnership with Sheffield City Council, are seeking three qualified tutors to undertake a new project to improve outcomes for Roma young people through providing extra support with their learning. The project will be open to all pupils of Roma heritage, a severely marginalised community with typically poor educational attainment and employment opportunities, with a mixture of ability levels, and is designed to close the gap in educational attainment for this group leading to enhanced future outcomes for the community in terms of skills, employment opportunities, and income.

The project, the first of its kind in the city, will provide extra support in Maths and English for young people from KS2 through to GCSEs. This will be delivered in a supportive, friendly and relaxed environment, assisted by parent volunteers. Whilst virtually all the young people attending the classes will speak English as an additional language, the classes will need to be taught fully in English in order to achieve the right outcomes.

Are you one of the people we're looking for?

You will be a qualified teacher with a naturally sunny disposition, supportive and friendly but also assertive. You will feel passionate about closing gaps in attainment to improve equalities for young people from different backgrounds. You will be able to think creatively and laterally, drawing upon this at times to ensure you are understood.

You will have a strong character and be prepared to work with schools, parents and the young people themselves to ensure that the right outcomes are being achieved.

In return for your Saturday mornings, we will offer an attractive hourly rate of pay along with the chance to develop a type of teaching experience which is not typically available, allowing you to develop specialisms to assist in your future career development.

If interested, please contact jobs@pacacentre.org.uk to request an application pack.

**Views expressed in this newsletter do not necessarily suggest that they are in
accordance with the trustees of the Roma Support Group**