

POSTWAR IDENTITY

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Traurigi Čerheni

Traurigi Čerheni ando učo nebo.

Nan man blajbens ande mro šatno khere.

Ari man line andar mro šatno vodro,

mra džuvla muklom odoj le čavorenca.

Traurigi Čerheni ando učo nebo.

Legede man andar mro šatno khere.

Ando logeri man legede,

odoj tharde man upro praho.

A sad star

A sad star in the high heavens.

I no longer have a home in my own house.

They came for me in my own bed.

I left my wife and children behind.

A sad star in the high heavens.

They came for me in my own house.

They took me and brought me to the camp,
where they burnt me to ash.

Survivors of the concentration camps preserved the memory of the genocide of the European Sinti and Roma in concentration camp songs like this one from the Austrian province of Burgenland. Their fate in the Holocaust became a central element of the post-war identity of all European Sinti and Roma. The loss of their parents and grandparents, brothers, sisters and children, left many survivors traumatised. For the first time, their common fate as victims of racist persecution created a group identity and a new, strong bond among the various groups of Roma and Sinti throughout Europe.

E.9

Did you know

... that in some parts of Central Europe, up to 90 per cent of the Roma died in the Holocaust?

... that because often only young men and women survived the genocide, much of the artistic and cultural heritage of the Roma has been lost?

For you to do

Do you remember any songs or stories you learned from your grandparents or other older members of your family? Give an example. Explain the connection between genocide and the loss of cultural identity.

The song

Folksong in Romanes sung by the Burgenland Roma, written down by Ursula Hemetek and Moses Heinschink in *Romane Gila, Lieder und Tänze der Roma in Österreich*, Vienna 1992.