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2

The Deportation of Sinti and Roma from Flensburg on May 16, 1940

Prehistory, the Ordeal, and the Struggle for Compensation and Prosecution

SEBASTIAN LOTTO-KUSCHE

"DEPORTED ON MAY 16, 1940." This is how an employee of the Flensburg city administration summed up the deportation of dozens of Sinti and Roma, including Selma Weiss, from the city that spring.[1] Ernst Beireis, a locomotive stoker who lived near the "Gypsy barracks," gave a more detailed description of the same events in late 1940 in his testimony before the Flensburg District Court: "The Gypsies . . . who one day in June of that year were ceremoniously led out at the earliest hour of the morning."[2] Gerda Trollmann had this to say about the deportation to Bełżec (Belzec) forced labor camp: "As children, we arrived into the camp from Flensburg. My parents were born in Flensburg, I was born in Flensburg. And from there we all got to Poland, to camps."[3]

These three different perspectives on the May 16, 1940, deportation of Sinti and Roma from Flensburg via Hamburg to German-occupied Poland are among the few available sources on that particular event. For one, the files of the Flensburg Criminal Police Office (Kriminalpolizeistelle) have for

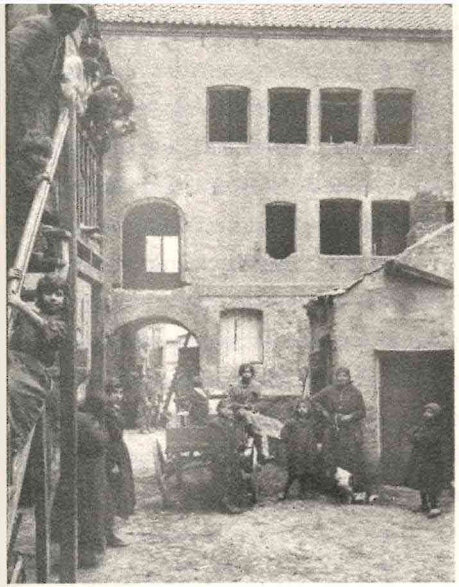
the Flensburg City Archives and other archives, specifically for the study of the "Gypsy" camp on Steinfelder Weg that was established in 1935.[4] All names and biographical data used in this chapter emerge from the research on the deportation of Roma and Sinti who had passed through Hamburg transit camp (Fruchtschuppen C) on their way to the General Government (Generalgouvernement).[5] I double-check the names of the victims against the files deposited at the Arolsen Archives (formerly known as the Red Cross's International Tracing Service, or ITS).[6]

This chapter examines the following issues. First, I paint a collective picture of the Flensburg Sinti and Roma, both before and during the May 1940 deportation. I establish how many of them survived and whether they had received a financial compensation for their suffering. Second, I identify the perpetrators of the resettlement—to use the Nazi euphemism—and probe if any of them had been prosecuted after 1945. Finally, I engage with the question why it took so long to identify all the victims by name.

THE SINTI AND ROMA VICTIMS FROM FLENSBURG

Sinti and Roma had lived in Flensburg at least since the end of the nineteenth century. The municipal street directory lists dozens of people named Weiss or Laubinger at 104 Norderstrasse.[7] Deficient living conditions was the reason why no one but Sinti were living at that particular address until 1935.[8] The poor structural condition of the buildings and complaints from businessmen in Norderstrasse made the Flensburg city government in 1922 decide to relocate "Gypsies" to barracks outside the downtown, near the cemetery. However, due to public protest, this plan had been scrapped.[9] Otherwise, the local police hardly had any problems with the "Gypsies," noting that the Sinti and Roma children were regularly attending school. Nevertheless, the police listed the "Gypsies" separately, registering their arrivals and departures in Flensburg on a monthly basis.[10]

The case of Selma Weiss (b. 1901) from Flensburg shows how comprehensive the police surveillance was. Prior to her deportation she had lived with her parents (her father earned a living as a horse dealer and violin maker), at 104 Norderstrasse in Flensburg. Residing at this particular address at least since 1927, the family was universally respected in Flensburg.[11] Selma was unmarried under civil law but had two children, the youngest of whom died at birth.[12] In early spring 1929 Selma had gone to Magdeburg, where on April 24 she was picked up by the police and registered for identification purposes. According to her police file, she was arrested as a foreign "Gypsy" suspected of begging.[13] Selma Weiss's personal card from 1929 includes a note about her death in October 1943. Entered in the wake of her eventual deportation from Flensburg, it attests to the comprehensive recordkeeping by the police.



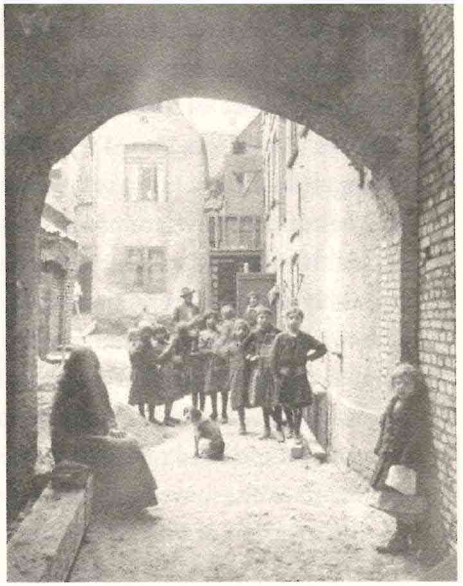


FIG. 2.1. (*left*) Members of the Weiss and Laubinger extended families at 104 Norderstrasse in Flensburg. Selma Weiss peeps cautiously from under the beam of the staircase. Photograph from a series of images of Flensburg Roma taken by an anonymous photographer between 1920 and 1930. Museumsberg Flensburg, II/2113.
FIG. 2.2. (*right*) Children from the Weiss and Laubinger extended families at 104 Norderstrasse in Flensburg. In the background, by the door, stands Selma Weiss. Photograph from a series of images of Flensburg Roma taken by an anonymous photographer between 1920 and 1930. Museumsberg Flensburg, II/2112.

The Nazi seizure of power in 1933 had intensified the persecution of German Sinti and Roma. The 1933 Law for the Prevention of Hereditary Ill Offspring, the Blood Protection Act, and the Marriage Health Act, the latter two

to mandate sterilization of individual Sinti and Roma and prohibit all Sinti and Roma from marrying "non-Gypsies."[14] In the late 1930s, cities had supplemented police surveillance of Sinti and Roma by establishing fenced-off "Gypsies" camps as a way of separating them from the German racial society (*Volksgemeinschaft*). From 1933 onward authorities forcibly sent the children of the Sinti and Roma to special schools (Hilfsschule) and beginning in 1941 denied them any education. Compulsory labor performed by camp inmates ostensibly provided for a monthly rent they had to pay for their accommodation.[15] In Flensburg such a camp was built in 1935 at 41 and 43 Steinfelder Weg, on the outskirts of the city near the train station. The camp consisted of two barracks with several rooms in each. Equipped with a small stove, each room accommodated one family. The rent was set at 5 Reichsmark per family.[16] Selma Weiss moved into this camp on October 4, 1935.[17]

The invasion of Poland further radicalized the Nazi anti-Roma policy. On October 17, 1939, the Reich Security Main Office (Reichssicherheitshauptamt, or RSHA) issued the ban on mobility for Sinti and Roma.[18] Noncompliance was punished by dispatch to a concentration camp.[19] The Nazi reorganization of occupied Poland provided for the deportation of Jews, Poles, and other "foreign races," including some 30,000 "Gypsies," into the General Government. To appease the Wehrmacht leadership—which was paranoid about possible spies among the Sinti and Roma—the head of German police and the SS, Heinrich Himmler, ordered the initial deportation of 2,500 Sinti and Roma from the northern and western parts of the German Reich to the General Government. Consequently the Reich Criminal Police Office ordered the branch offices in Hamburg and Bremen to deport on May 16, 1940, a total of 1,000 "Gypsies."[20] This order applied also to the Flensburg Sinti and Roma. No contemporaneous documents on either the arrests or the deportation have come to light so far. According to postwar press reports—which tended to whitewash the police and its practices during the Nazi period—the Sinti and Roma in Flensburg received twenty-four-hour advance notice of impending deportation and were able to sell their belongings and even keep the proceeds.[21] The ostensibly advantageous treatment of the Flensburg Sinti and Roma cannot be corroborated by other sources.

In Hamburg, the local police initially held the Sinti and Roma in the "Fruchtschuppen C" transit camp near the harbor. The police took away their

and their racial status ("Mischlingsgrad," or the percentage of non-Aryan blood).[22] This means of assessing one's racial worth had been created by the "race researcher" Robert Ritter to emphasize the perceived threat posed by "Gypsies of mixed blood" (*Zigeunermischlinge*).[23] To mislead the victims, they were promised land and farms upon arrival in Poland.[24] No complete name list is available for the further deportation from Hamburg, while regional figures remain fragmentary.[25] Michael Zimmermann has estimated the number of Sinti and Roma deported from Schleswig-Holstein on May 16, 1940, at 200.[26] Researchers at Hamburg have so far identified the names of 257 victims.[27] The earlier estimates of the number of Sinti and Roma deported from Flensburg vary between 26 and 50.[28] According to my research, 44 persons at a minimum were deported from Flensburg on May 16, 1940.[29]

TABLE 2.1. Sinti and Roma deported from Flensburg on May 16, 1940

NO.	LAST NAME	FIRST NAME	DATE OF BIRTH	PLACE OF BIRTH	SURVIVAL
1.	Weiss	Jakob Karl	March 15, 1872	Hirzenach	no
2.	Weiss	Helene	May 24, 1913	Kiel	yes
3.	Weiss	Robert	November 14, 1906	Berlin	yes
4.	Weiss	Antonie	May 10, 1875	Kassel	no
5.	Weiss	Rosette	February 25, 1926	Flensburg	yes
6.	Weiss	Selma	February 28, 1901	Hanover	no
7.	Weiss	Heinrich	August 4, 1939	Flensburg	no
8.	Weiss	Eduard	October 3, 1897	Oppersdorf	yes
9.	Weiss	Amalie	June 22, 1900	Kannawurf	no
10.	Weiss	Christof (Christoph)	September 22, 1922	Borsum	no
11.	Weiss	Anna Rosina	March 8, 1925	Flensburg	yes
12.	Weiss	Elfriede	May 31, 1927	Flensburg	yes
13.	Weiss	Erich Otto	May 24, 1930	Flensburg	yes
14.	Weiss	Robert	July 17 (18), 1933	Flensburg	yes
15.	Weiss	Hans Bruno	August 4, 1939	Flensburg	no
16.	Weiss/ Trollmann	Willi	July 25, 1932	Flensburg	no

NO.	NAME	FIRST NAME	DATE OF BIRTH	BIRTH	SURVIVAL
17.	Weiss/ Trollmann	Gerda	March 3, 1934	Flensburg	yes
18.	Weiss	Reinhold	September 4, 1935	Flensburg	yes
19.	Weiss	Marie Alwine Antonie	March 25, 1904	Kalkberge	no
20.	Weiss	Herta	January 10, 1939	Flensburg	no
21.	Weiss	Wilma	April 16, 1940	Flensburg	no
22.	Weiss	Christof (Christoph)	January 11, 1937	Flensburg	no
23.	Weiss	Karl	August 25, 1935	Flensburg	no
24.	Weiss	Hermann	July 30 (31), 1933	Flensburg	no
25.	Weiss	Ida	September 10, 1932 (April 10, 1933)	Flensburg	no
26.	Weiss	Amanda	August 8, 1931	Flensburg	no
27.	Weiss	Thomas	August 21, 1927	Flensburg	yes
28.	Weiss	Anna Rosine	May 9, 1899	Hollenstedt	no
29.	Weiss	Heinrich	March 12, 1900	Unterkatz	no
30.	Weiss	Hulda	May 24, 1930	Flensburg	no
31.	Laubinger	Lina (Lena)	November 3, 1918	Flensburg	yes
32.	Laubinger	Luise	February 19, 1878	Schlotheim	yes
33.	Laubinger	Eduard	November 26, 1906	Warberg	no
34.	Laubinger	Selma	April 14, 1922	Flensburg	yes
35.	Laubinger	August	June 8, 1872	Voldagsen	no
36.	Weiss	Hedwig	February 6, 1905	Amsterdam	unknown
37.	Weiss	Eduard	March 28, 1931	Flensburg	unknown
38.	Weiss	Maria	February 12, 1933	Flensburg	unknown
39.	Weiss	Alwine	August 9, 1935	Flensburg	unknown
40.	Weiss	Otto	October 14, 1902	Wettershausen	unknown
41.	Rose	Katharina	February 11, 1903	Bischleben	no
42.	Rose	Maria	February 14, 1927	Höchstenbach	yes
43.	Rose	Erwin	April 18, 1932	Rickling	yes
44.	Rose	Dorathea	May 2, 1937	Schiol	yes

Source: City of Flensburg, street directory, records from Arolsen Archives and Schleswig-Holstein State Archives.

labor camp as its destination. (Bełżec forced labor camp should not be confused with Bełżec death camp, which was constructed beginning in November 1941 as part of the Operation Reinhardt.) The camp was under the leadership of SS-Obersturmbannführer Hermann Dolp, described by prisoners as a sadist.[30] Once there, the prisoners had first to build an enormous tank ditch on the newly demarcated border with the Soviet Union. A considerable number of Flensburg's Sinti and Roma did not survive the inhumane living conditions and the grueling forced labor.[31] The surviving prisoners were transferred to the former Krychów (Krychow) penitentiary, where they performed drainage works on the Bug River and its tributaries. The early onset of winter in October 1940 brought the works to a halt. The SS and the civil administration effectively left the prisoners to their own devices, unwilling to pay for their upkeep. Some of the Sinti and Roma prisoners who hailed from Flensburg, including Robert, Heinrich, and Eduard Weiss, were able to subsequently survive in Siedlce (Siedlez) and Piotrków (Petrikau) by performing unskilled labor. Others, including Selma Weiss, died at "freedom," so to speak.[32]

The surviving Sinti and Roma were forbidden to reenter the Reich territory. Some of them, however, managed to do so anyway. Luise Laubinger made her way from Siedlce via Warsaw with her daughter Lina (Lena) back to Flensburg, but her husband August and her son Eduard perished.[33] Katharina Rose was able to get back to Schiol near Flensburg with two of her three children (Maria and Dorathea; her son, Erwin, had gone missing) at the beginning of 1941. However, she was instantly denounced, deported to the Ravensbrück concentration camp, and eventually murdered in 1944. Her partner, Christian Petersen, who was not a Sinti himself, managed to save their two children, Dorathea and Maria.[34] Twelve individuals surviving in Piotrków were able to return to Flensburg in September 1944 thanks to a work permit issued by a local German official.[35]

Of the forty-four deported persons, evidence exists of at least twenty-two who had been murdered or died due to inhumane living conditions. The date of death in most cases can be established only tentatively. The May 1940 deportation did not signify the end of persecution. The Nazis subsequently introduced even more radical measures, especially against the "Gypsies of mixed blood."

sparked at least two major deportations from Hamburg to the Auschwitz-Birkenau "Gypsy" family camp. Thus, over 330 Sinti and Roma were deported to Auschwitz-Birkenau on March 11, 1943. The last transport left Hamburg on April 18, 1944, with thirty people onboard, including a number of children and youths.[36] According to the preserved "Gypsy" family camp prisoner lists, at least ten individuals from that transport originally came from Flensburg.[37]

The Arolsen Archives hold records for a person with a Flensburg residential address who had been listed as a prisoner at Auschwitz-Birkenau death camp. The person in question is Manfred Rose (b. 1929). The family situation of Manfred, who was born out of wedlock, was complicated: his mother, the Dutch national Maria Hansen, apparently hailed from a Sinti family and had died in 1940 or 1941, while his biological father was the senior prosecutor Manfred Engelhardt.[38] His foster father, Kurt Baldauf, lived in Zwickau. At the time of his arrest, sometime in early May 1944, the fourteen-year-old Manfred had just completed an apprenticeship as an electrician and was living in the municipal foster home in Flensburg. He was among the victims deported to Auschwitz-Birkenau according to the 1943 decree targeting "Gypsies of mixed blood." Yet he was not part of the Hamburg transport of April 1944 but arrived at Auschwitz-Birkenau on May 8, 1944. By then, the liquidation of the "Gypsy" family camp had been predetermined. The camp commandant, Rudolf Höss, made that decision on May 15, 1944, likely in order to make space for the arriving Hungarian Jews.[39] Manfred joined the last transport with 911 prisoners onboard out of Auschwitz-Birkenau prior to the "Gypsy" family camp liquidation on the night of August 2–3, 1944.[40] Some of the prisoners from that particular transport had survived by performing forced labor at Buchenwald concentration camp. Tragically, Manfred Rose was deported once again to Auschwitz-Birkenau on September 26, 1944, and murdered there with two hundred other Sinti and Roma.[41] The Flensburg registry office has May 8, 1945, as the date of his death.[42]

SURVIVORS STRUGGLE FOR COMPENSATION

At least seventeen Sinti and Roma from Flensburg and the environs had survived. Except for the family of Luise Laubinger and the children of Kath-

family moved to Göttingen and into a barracks of the former forced labor camp (Ostarbeiter-Lager). The survivors tried to apply for compensation—with various success, as the following cases demonstrate. First, however, an overview of the compensation provisions with regard to the May 1940 deportation in place in West Germany is due.

The survivors' claims under the 1953 Federal Compensation Act had often been rejected by the compensation offices, on the grounds that no Nazi persecution warranting compensation had taken place. Many an individual case made evident the conspicuous absence of a legal provision that would recognize the early deportations as a violent Nazi policy triggering automatic compensation.[44] However, the courts of appeal ruled inconsistently on the status of the May 1940 deportation.[45] Finally, on January 7, 1956, the Federal Court of Justice (Bundesgerichtshof, or BGH) issued a landmark ruling. This ruling provided for rejecting compensation claims of the Sinti and Roma who had been deported to the General Government on the grounds that the deportation was not racially motivated and thus illegible for compensation.[46] Historian Hans Buchheim, in his expert opinion, begged to differ: "In view of the facts and contexts presented, it is hardly possible . . . to see anything other than racial persecution of the Gypsies."[47]

Although Buchheim's conclusion was noted by legal experts, it had had only limited impact.[48] In 1958 Buchheim reaffirmed his earlier conclusion, though that time around his expert opinion appeared only in court files.[49] The legal reassessment occurred in 1963, largely thanks to the president of the Frankfurt Higher Regional Court Senate, Franz Calvelli-Adorno.[50] Half-Jewish, Calvelli-Adorno was in 1933 dismissed from his position of a district court judge and survived in hiding. Reinstated in 1946 as a judge on the Higher Regional Court in Frankfurt, he shaped the court's decision-making practices to favor the interests of the persecuted.[51] As early as 1952 the Frankfurt Higher Regional Court recognized the racial dimension of the Nazi persecution of "Gypsies" and, like several other courts, consistently resisted legal interventions attempted by the Federal Court of Justice between 1956 and 1963.[52] On December 18, 1963, the BGH revised its basic decision from 1956, recognizing racial motives driving in part the 1940 deportation.[53] The 1965 German Federal Indemnification Law (Bundesentschädigungs-Schlussgesetz), in reference to the BGH's landmark decision, enabled those

had been earlier rejected by the compensation authorities and the lower instance courts to resubmit their applications. Many claimants were nevertheless left out in the cold, as they had already died or had failed to submit an initial application in time.[54]

As regards Sinti and Roma survivors in Schleswig-Holstein, the state compensation authority (Landesentschädigungsamt, or LEA) in Kiel proved excessively strict when it came to approving applications from persons persecuted as "Gypsies."[55] It became even worse with the appointment of Karl August Zornig as head of the Kiel LEA in February 1957. During the Nazi era Zornig had processed politically motivated criminal cases at various public prosecutor's offices and had later meted out several death sentences as a Wehrmacht judge.[56]

Luise Laubinger had submitted her original compensation claim in 1949, with the assistance from the Association of the Victims of the Nazi Regime. Beginning in 1951, she received compensation in amount of DM 7,200 for her time in prison, in addition to a pension for damages, a widow's pension, and several payments to compensate for damages to her health and for the death of her husband. By 1959 she has received the total of DM 63,758 in payments.[57] At the end of 1959, however, the LEA revoked almost all of the payments due to the fact that Laubinger had falsely stated that she had been continually imprisoned from spring 1940 until her return to Flensburg in 1944. The deportation as such did not constitute a deprivation of liberty relevant for compensation in this and similar cases.[58]

Robert Weiss (b. 1906), brother of Selma Weiss, in November 1949 in Göttingen filed an application for compensation for imprisonment on behalf of himself and ten members of his family. In 1954 the compensation authorities at the district president's office (Regierungspräsident) in Hildesheim reversed the negative decision in Weiss's case issued the previous year by the lower-level authorities.[59] The justification read as follows: "The resettlement of Gypsies in 1940 was exclusively a means of racial persecution. This is attested to by the general development in the treatment of the Gypsy question by the Nazi regime." Simultaneously, the compensation authorities acknowledged the difficulty in ascertaining the period of imprisonment following the release of the Sinti and Roma from Bełżec. As a compromise, the authorities proposed counting as the period of imprisonment half of the time lapsed between the

settlement thus reached, eleven members of the Weiss family received DM 4,200 compensation per person.[61]

In 1954 Robert Weiss reapplied for compensation on behalf of his siblings, claiming damages suffered to freedom, property, assets, and professional advancement as descendants of the persecuted (i.e., his deceased parents).[62] The compensation authorities in October 1957 rejected the claim on the grounds that the 1940 deportation of Sinti and Roma was motivated by the factor of security rather than race, as per judgment of the Federal Court Justice of January 7, 1956. The Schleswig-Holstein LEA provided identical reasoning in rejecting compensation claims of Eduard Weiss (b. 1897), Helene Kos (b. 1913), Thomas Weiss (b. 1927), Robert Weiss (b. 1933), Erich Otto Weiss (b. 1930), Elfriede Franz, née Weiss (b. 1927), Anna Rosina Weiss (b. 1925), Reinhold Weiss (b. 1935), Gerda Trollmann (b. 1934), and Rosette Weiss (b. 1926).[63] Many applicants felt disheartened, while others persevered.

In November 1957 Robert Weiss on behalf of his extended family filed a lawsuit against the state of Schleswig-Holstein at the Kiel District Court.[64] The lawyer representing the family, Dr. Hans Beyersdorff, had been classified by the Nazis as half-Jewish and prior to 1933 worked in the law firm of the well-known Nazi opponent Wilhelm Spiegel.[65] Beyersdorff referred to the legally binding decision of the Cologne court that pronounced the 1940 deportation racially motivated.[66] Regardless, the Compensation Chamber of the Kiel District Court in July 1963 dismissed Weiss's claim.[67] Following the amended decision of the BGH, Beyersdorff in June 1964 filed an appeal.[68] Three years later the Higher Regional Court in Schleswig proposed a settlement between the parties to the dispute, which both accepted. The compromise stipulated that the LEA count half of the time the plaintiff's family spent involuntarily in the General Government as time spent in camps, so that the Sinti of the Weiss family only received a partial compensation.[69]

PRELIMINARY INVESTIGATION INTO CRIMES AGAINST HUMANITY

The analysis of the compensation files prompts the inevitable question of individual criminal accountability. Himmler had delegated to the local crim-

Within the Hamburg criminal investigation department, whose authority extended over the city of Flensburg, Kurt Krause headed the "Gypsy" Service ("Zigeunerdienststelle") (since October 1938) and Paul Everding acted as its case officer. Gerhard Junge served as the liaison to the Reich Criminal Police Office (Reichskriminalpolizeiamt, or RKPA) in Berlin and its Office for Combating the Gypsy Nuisance (Reichszentrale zur Bekämpfung des Zigeunerunwesens).[71] A British military court in December 1946 sentenced Krause and Everding to three years of prison. However, they did not serve their sentence in full and were formally placed in the category V (exonerated) during their denazification proceedings in 1949 and 1950.[72]

Peter Schneider (b. 1882) joined the Nazi Party in 1933 and assumed the position of head of the Flensburg criminal investigation department in 1939.[73] Schneider was arrested on May 19, 1945, yet released from prison three months later.[74] He never faced prosecution for his involvement in the Nazi solution of the "Gypsy Question," as he prematurely died in September 1945.[75]

The identification service (Erkennungsdienst) of the Flensburg criminal police that dealt with the "Gypsies" had seven officials on staff as of May 1939, including two clerks working on the "preventive fight against crime" (*Vorbeugende Verbrechensbekämpfung*).[76] The head of the identification service since 1928, Paul Linke (b. 1888), had joined the criminal police in 1919. He was not a member of the SS and joined the Nazi Party only in October 1941.[77] Linke had cleared the postwar denazification program, earning the same status as his former colleagues Krause and Everding, that is, he was exonerated.[78] Furthermore, he continued in his job, receiving in September 1946 a promotion as new head of the Flensburg criminal police department. He retired from the service in March 1949.[79]

Paul Linke nearly avoided prosecution. In October 1947 the writer Fritz Stabaginski (b. 1894), an ethnic German, filed a complaint against a certain Schioler gendarme and the "Flensburg Gestapo clerk" for his role in the deportation of the Flensburg "Gypsies," accusing him of crimes against humanity. As the landlord of the Lübeck "Gypsy" Square, Stabaginski mediated between the Sinti residents on the one hand and the municipal offices and the police on the other. He eventually served as a police informer and, in the aftermath of the deportation, as an estate administrator.[80] In particular he denounced the deportation of his sister-in-law, Katharina Rose.

intervening with the RKPA. Regardless, Rose on February 5, 1941, was again deported, this time to Ravensbrück concentration camp.[81] According to official reports, Katharina Rose died at Ravensbrück on June 13, 1944.[82]

The public prosecutor's office in Flensburg forwarded the complaint to Linke, who disputed the charges and claimed that the deportation in 1940 had been a mere resettlement, that the Flensburg "Gypsies" had been treated humanely, and that Katharina Rose—as a "Gypsy of mixed blood" cohabitating with a German—had been rightfully deported.[83] The public prosecutor's office bought into Linke's argumentation and discontinued the proceedings on March 2, 1948. Stabaginski did not give up, however, and requested that the chief public prosecutor's office reopen the case against Linke.[84] Getting onboard the press and the petitions committee of the German Bundestag proved insufficient to sway the chief public prosecutor, Adolf Voss. Cryptically, Voss (b. 1899) defended the decision not to pursue criminal charges by referring to specific orders of the RKPA.[85] During the early Nazi years, Voss had on several occasions represented the prosecution before the Altona special court (Sondergericht). He had been an SS sympathizer since 1933 and joined the Nazi Party in 1937, as soon as the ban on membership had been lifted.[86] A relatively late entry into the Nazi Party enabled him to quickly rejoin the judiciary after 1945.[87]

Against the backdrop of the failed criminal investigation into Linke's wartime activities, a few words are due about the situation of Katharina Rose's children. Her partner, Christian Petersen, lived with their two common daughters first in Schiol and later in nearby Rügge. Beginning in 1950, Dorathea Rose received a standard survivor's pension of DM 70 per month awarded to the victims of Nazism.[88] The son Erwin, who had gone missing in German-occupied Poland, reestablished contact with his sisters in the 1960s through the ITS. He eventually settled in East Germany.[89]

CONCLUSION: DISPLACEMENT AND MEMORY

The question why it took so long to establish the names of the German Roma and Sinti victims has several dimensions. Postwar West German society uniformly rejected the notion of collective guilt, especially against the backdrop of the Nuremberg war crimes trials.[90] The German population

and mass crimes on the Nazi elites.[91] The aftermath of war was strongly felt in Flensburg: the city was full of refugees and experienced immense supply problems. Meanwhile, the German-Danish border conflict over Schleswig was brewing again. Initially, remembrance encompassed the members of Flensburg families who had died in the war.[92]

The lack of public awareness went hand in hand with the fact that historical research on Nazi mass crimes commenced in earnest only in the 1970s.[93] In 1980 the Schleswig-Holstein parliament for the first time debated Nazi persecution of the "Gypsies" and the present situation of Sinti and Roma in the state.[94] Yet it took another eighteen years for Stephan Linck and Björn Marnau to publish their important article documenting the deportation of Sinti and Roma from Flensburg on May 16, 1940.[95]

Another factor in the delayed recognition of the suffering inflicted by the Nazis on Sinti and Roma lies within the postwar German society. Decades after the end of the war, a substantial segment of the German population still perceived "Gypsies" as potential criminals in the care of the police. Hence, the Nazi persecution of Sinti and Roma still had a crime prevention ring to it. A gradual shift in collective perceptions began only in the 1980s, with the recognition of the immensity of the Nazi crimes against the Jews.[96]

Nationally, historical research on the 1940 deportation of Sinti and Roma has exploded in Germany in recent years. Among recent examples are the 2015 study on Karlsruhe and the 2021 study on Bremerhaven.[97] With the scheduled opening of the Hanover Railway Station Documentation Center in Hamburg in 2026, the memory of the victims of the deportation will have been properly observed also in North Germany.[98] The increased publication of biographies of individual victims (e.g., from Lübeck and Schleswig) and the installation of memorial plaques (e.g., in Neumünster) represent yet another welcome trend.[99]

Since 2008 a plaque at 104 Norderstrasse in Flensburg has commemorated the six members of the Weiss family who once lived there.[100] Yet the awareness of the Nazi victimization of the Sinti and Roma is hardly universal in Germany. To give just one example, the state association of Sinti and Roma in Schleswig-Holstein met with skepticism the proposal to lay so-called stumbling stones (Stolpersteine) in memory of the murdered Sinti and Roma,

several institutions have engaged with the history of the Sinti and Roma locally. The Flensburg Waldorf school, which is situated in the direct vicinity of the former "Gypsy" camp, since 2018 has been working toward a memorial site that would incorporate the names of the Sinti and Roma victims.[102]

This chapter has identified the Sinti and Roma who were deported from Flensburg via Hamburg to Bełżec on May 16, 1940. Unlike in other German cities, Sinti and Roma at Flensburg stayed in a camp equipped with proper barracks. This does not suggest, however, that the Flensburg police acted in a more humane manner than their counterparts elsewhere, even though this was exactly the claim after 1945.[103] The circumstances of individual victims is possible to document at varying levels of detail. Far too little is still known about the living conditions at both Norderstrasse quarters and the Steinfelder Weg "Gypsy" camp. For one, no photographs of the camp have come to light until now. The findings emerging from the study of the compensation proceedings in Schleswig-Holstein point to a pan-German pattern insofar as the treatment of Sinti and Roma survivors is concerned. The incomplete legal proceedings against the individuals complicit in the May 1940 deportation from Flensburg come as no surprise either. Professional activity of the Flensburg chief public prosecutor during the Nazi time was but one factor that made him decide against pursuing criminal charges, specifically crimes against humanity. The case of Paul Linke perfectly illustrates the issue of impunity. The next, logical step for researchers would be examining the police harassment of Sinti and Roma in Schleswig-Holstein, which had continued after 1945 under the heading of "traveler monitoring" (*Landfahrerüberwachung*), including any continuity from the Nazi period when it comes to the personnel and policymaking.[104]

NOTES

1. City of Flensburg, street directory, May 16, 1940, Flensburg City Archives (hereafter StaFl), 1D156/194, Valentiner Allee.
2. Flensburg court, witness statement of Ernst Beireis, December 12, 1940, StaFl, 1X/01702; Lotto-Kusche, "'Dass für sie die gewöhnlichen Rechtsbegriffe nicht gelten,'" 232–34.
3. National Association of the German Sinti in Lower Saxony, interview with Gerda R., November 8, 1993, no. 46.