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DIFFERENCES IN DENIALS OF THE HOLOCAUST: COMPARATIVE STUDY OF TWO CASE STUDIES

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Introduction

Holocaust revisionism is a controversial topic not only for people in Europe but all over the world, due to the scope of the Holocaust, which affected most societies (Antoniou 2007). Nonetheless, the discourse on the Holocaust tends to account for each targeted population differently. For example, the Roma population has not received substantial attention from the historians for the atrocities perpetrated on their population (Kapralski 1997), while the Jewish victims are recognized in the literature and in the general public (i.e. Lipstadt 1993). The fact is that more Jewish people were murdered during the Holocaust than Roma people (Smith 2012). However, in percentages the difference was not as significant. Smith (2012) argues that the Roma were discriminated against all over Europe and that is why the Roma genocide happened in the first place; the nomadic lifestyle of Roma was too different to accept for European societies; therefore, they were not protected by the countries and became an easy target. Additionally, Roma people oftentimes lacked education so they could not share their testimonies in writing, but Smith (2012) also states that there is a shortage of

available literature on the subject, which further implies a lack of interest. The explanation, as to why the Roma genocide lacked interest from the public, is as follows: “Right after World War II it was not explicitly stated that those who were persecuted based on their race were also Romanis, because the Nazi theory that Gypsies/Romanis are asocial fractions of the society was more or less accepted” (Schuester 2012). The author further notes that the attempts to try people accused of the crimes against humanity of the Roma population were not successful.

The objective of this qualitative study is to establish what the differences are between the two denials: the denial of the Jewish genocide and the denial of the Roma genocide. The underlying question to be answered is: what constitutes Holocaust denial? This paper will be structured as follows: first, the denial of the Jewish genocide will be introduced through two cases, which were termed as the “denial milestones” in this study. The Jewish genocide denial milestones are: 1) two globally-known authors who denied the Holocaust in connection to the Jewish population; and 2) the emergence of Laws against Holocaust denial, which is supposed to be “an ‘insult’ to every Jew in Germany” (Bayzler 2006: 3). Subsequently, the milestones of the Roma genocide introduced are: 1) the denial of the Roma Holocaust by the Czech National Party and by Jiří Gaudin; and 2) the status of the Roma genocide in the countries that are members of the European Union, specifically in the Czech Republic.

The findings of this qualitative study show that while the ideologies of the deniers of both genocides are related to one another through supremacist views, the stance of the international community and the entities within it differs in connection to the Jewish and Roma population.

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Literature Review

Several authors of literature on genocide denial address Holocaust denial (e.g. Lipstadt 1993, Shermer and Grobman 2000, Cohen-Almagor 2013). Holocaust denial is usually described as the promotion of facts, which deny the history of the Holocaust (Cohen-Almagor 2013). Cohen-Almagor (2013) enhanced the definition by explaining that Holocaust denial may be viewed as hate speech, due to its nature of denying mass killings. Lipstadt describes Holocaust denial in a way that is closely related to denialism in general, she states: “The attempt to deny the Holocaust enlists a basic strategy of distortion” (Lipstadt 1993: 2). Furthermore, she continues by saying that “truth is mixed with absolute lies, confusing readers who are unfamiliar with the tactics of the deniers” (Lipstadt 1993: 2). Therefore, Holocaust deniers and any individual who resorts to denialist tactics rely on the lack of knowledge of the fraction of society they aim to manipulate.

Shermer and Grobman (2000) claim that the denial of Nanking atrocities is similar to Holocaust denial in the methodology and tactics the deniers use. Interestingly, the authors clarify the fact that Holocaust denial and Nanking denial developed independently of one another. The authors deduce: "... we contend that such historical denial is a form of ideologically driven pseudohistory, which adopts techniques designed to undermine historical claims that do not fit with present ideologies and beliefs" (Shermer and Grobman 2000: 237). Hence, the authors argue that there are underlying tactics, which are used in connection to denying history, which are not dependent on specific historical events.

Shermer and Grobman (2000) admit there is a difference between denial and the revisionism of history. Hence, there are several interpretations and views of historical events, which are studied and investigated. However, a further difference lies between historical revisionism and the Holocaust revisionism. While many events in world history are still subjected to investigation and interpretation, the Holocaust, even though still studied, is a historical fact and its existence can no longer be questioned. The Holocaust revisionism is a creation of "pseudohistory, whose purpose is the denial of the past for present political or ideological reasons" (Shermer and Grobman 2000: 238). While historical revisionism is "the modification of history based on new facts or new interpretations of old fact" (Shermer and Grobman 2000: 238). Different aspects of the Holocaust can still be interpreted in new ways; nevertheless, the history of the Holocaust cannot be modified anymore, because the evidence does not leave space for doubt (Samelson 1999).

Method

This research deals with two case studies, which belong to a larger phenomenon of Holocaust denial: 1) Holocaust denial in connection to the Jewish population, and 2) Holocaust denial in connection to the Roma population. While these two phenomena seemingly go hand in hand, many Holocaust deniers focus specifically on denying the impact of the Holocaust on the Jewish population. This approach to the topic of Holocaust denial may provide a clearer understanding of the "Jewish uniqueness" (Churchill 2003: 27), since the comparison will allow for particular patterns to appear in the context.

Due to the nature of this study, it is crucial to compare the attitudes of individuals who deny the Jewish Holocaust and those who deny the Roma genocide. The questions the current study is consequently trying to answer are: 1) whether the two groups are treated in the same manner by the international community in connection with the Holocaust; and 2) what are the

common patterns of Holocaust denial in both of the types. The analysis will be conducted in terms of text and case analysis. The method will be focused on examination of terminology used in connection to each case, and the argumentation of the authors to capture the discourse on the topic. The language devices will be especially beneficial in the debate on the Roma genocide denial.

The text provides a source of data, which will be studied to determine logical connections among the possible denial aspects, which construct an account that can serve as an argument in the social reality. This unique account will be examined to provide initial answers to the research questions. An account is defined as “a statement made by a social actor to explain unanticipated or untoward behavior – whether that behavior is his own or that of others, and whether the proximate cause for the statement arises from the actor himself or from someone else” (Scott and Lyman 1968: 46).

The data for this research was obtained from Internet sources. The data analysed consist of Arthur Butz’s book and speeches, and David Irving’s statements and speeches that are available on the Internet. In connection to the second case study, the work of Jiří Gaudin was analysed in order to investigate his method of the Roma genocide denial, and two articles from the Czech mass media were analysed for the statements of the Czech National Party. Furthermore, the legal materials were studied in connection to the laws against Holocaust denial and the status of Roma population in the European Union.

Internet sources are relevant in connection to a qualitative study, since cyberspace is an ever-changing location, in which new data is offered on a daily basis. Since Holocaust denial is a specific topic, and many publishers are reluctant to publish books by the Holocaust deniers, the free nature of the Internet allows for free expression of the most controversial opinions. For example, Taylor (2005) argues that the decreasing number of Holocaust survivors may cause an increased number of publications, which claim that the Holocaust never happened. The author also identifies the spread of the Internet and its relative freedom of expression as one of the driving forces behind the expected rise in numbers of deniers (Berg 2005). The impact of the Internet on Holocaust denial is discussed by several scholars (Bennett 1997, Berg 2005, Lasson 2007, Weaver, Delpierre and Boissier 2009). Bennett (1997) recognizes the Internet as one of the biggest driving forces behind Holocaust denial, asserting that the user-friendliness of websites leads to the spread of the views of the deniers.

The choice of the Roma genocide denial was made because of the availability of the data and the EU’s recent recognition of the Roma genocide. Due to the large number of murdered Roma during the Holocaust this topic has been gaining substantial attention from the media,

especially due to its controversy and the status of Roma in Europe (Aktuálně 2011b). The case of recognition of the Roma victims by the EU was chosen because of the delayed reaction of the Union to this major topic, and the Czech Republic was examined due to the recent development of events in Lety u Písku, and the provocative suggestions made by the Czech National Party (Spitzer 2006).

Analysis

Denial of the Jewish Genocide

The first case study deals with denial of the Jewish genocide. One of the most important milestones in the Jewish Holocaust denial history has been the stance of two internationally-known Holocaust deniers – Arthur Butz and David Irving. Arthur Butz wrote *The Hoax of the Twentieth Century* in 1976. In this research, his work is identified as denying strictly the Jewish Holocaust since the subtitle of his book is *The Case Against the Presumed Extermination of European Jewry*. Stern (1993) writes about several scholars and teachers, who were influenced by Butz's work to such an extent that denial of the Jewish Holocaust made it to some lectures and classrooms in the United States of America. Furthermore, Butz claimed that the international community terrorizes the revisionists of the Holocaust, and therefore hinted that freedom of speech is threatened if measures are taken to stop Holocaust denial. It may be argued that Butz's book became "a classic" for Holocaust deniers, due to the strength of language that Butz uses in connection to the Holocaust, and the reactions his statements cause. The author states: "A recognition of the amazing crudeness and clumsiness of that effort [an effort to "misrepresent" what happened in the Dachau camp], and the ludicrous nature of the 'evidence' put forward, will prime the reader quite suitably for our analysis of the central part of the hoax, the Auschwitz lie" (Butz 2003: 70). Hence, Butz's work may be identified as one of the milestones, due to the fact that he is frequently referred to by the new age revisionists, and his book has certainly become one of the major pieces on Holocaust denial.

Butz presented anti-Zionist views in his book, such as: "The 'justification' that Zionists invariably give for driving the Arabs out of Palestine always involves the six million legend to a great extent" (2003: 330). The fact that the author put the word "justification" in quotes implies that the justification provided is false, and an irony. Another important word in his statement is "legend". Therefore, the usage of two such specific features means that his work is not objective, and free of his personal emotions and connotations. The author's book cannot be perceived as

a scientific work, since the language he uses is of an emotive nature. He argues that the Jewish population abuses the “myth” of the Holocaust to enhance their position in the international community.

According to Zimmerman (2000), David Irving is a Holocaust denier, who has an advantage of the ability to reach a broader audience, due to his international impact. The scholar started as a historian, who investigated the Third Reich, and did not speak of the Holocaust to a great extent; he offered an alternative explanation as to what happened to European Jews. At first, through these explanations, he denied the Holocaust indirectly; however, later in his career claimed that no gas chambers in Auschwitz were used to murder human beings (Zimmerman 2000).

The judge who tried David Irving claimed, “Irving is anti-Semitic. ...He is content to mix with neo-fascists and appears to share many of their racist and anti-Semitic prejudices” (The Guardian 2000). Hence the Judge, Charles Gray, explicitly revealed that Irving’s views and opinions are offensive, racist and anti-Semitic, as they are targeted to humiliate the Jews and to minimize the suffering they went through during the Holocaust. Irving’s claims have a supremacy undertone; a reporter who interviewed Irving at his house noted that after complimenting Irving’s mug, he said: “Well, it is an Aryan cup” (Hari 2009). This statement alone implies that the Aryan race is supreme to other races, due to the fact that Irving answered the compliment with an explanation of why he believed the mug was beautiful. Hari (2009) also notes how Irving was “shaken” from an encounter with a Jewish man who claimed to be a former classmate that he went out of his way to check whether there were truly Jewish people at his school. The fact that Irving was as emotive as “shaken”, shows how strong Irving’s reactions to Jewish people are.

Hall (2012) links Irving to another of the Holocaust denial milestones, and that is the laws against Holocaust denial, as practiced in Europe. While it may be argued that such laws also take into consideration the extermination of all targeted populations, the European Union only recognized the Roma genocide in 2011 (Šefčovič 2011); nevertheless, the laws have started appearing in Europe since the 1980’s. Even though Irving was tried on the basis of denying historical facts, and his presence was claimed as unwanted in several countries all over the world, Irving remains one of the most known names in connection to Holocaust denial, even though he has admitted to changing his mind about the Holocaust saying that: “I admit that in 1989 I had denied Nazi Germany had killed millions of Jews. ...The Nazis did murder millions of Jews” (Hall, 2012). It is important to observe that Irving only spoke of the Jewish genocide.

Bazyler (2006) describes the rigid stance Europe took against the Holocaust revisionists and other genocide deniers. However, since the Holocaust originated in Germany, the laws are

aimed at eradication of Nazi and neo-Nazi ideas. The common issues in laws against Holocaust denial are anti-Semitism, with no specification on the background ideology, but also racism and xenophobia, and hate speech and hate crimes arising from those. The aforementioned author specifically states that in Germany “in 1985, Holocaust denial was outlawed as an ‘insult’ to personal honor (i.e. an ‘insult’ to every Jew in Germany)” (Bazyler 2006: 3). Nonetheless, Bazyler does not provide a source from German Criminal Code that would specifically state that denial is offensive only to the Jewish population. On the contrary, German Criminal Code, Section 130, states that incitement to hatred is committed by: “Whosoever publicly or in a meeting approves of, denies or downplays an act committed under the rule of National Socialism of the kind indicated in section 6 (1) of the Code of International Criminal Law, in a manner capable of disturbing the public peace shall be liable to imprisonment not exceeding five years or a fine”. (German Criminal Code 2009). The Code of International Criminal Law defines genocide in section 6 as:

For the purpose of this Statute, ‘genocide’ means any of the following acts committed with intent to destroy, in whole or in part, a national, ethnical, racial or religious group, as such: (a) Killing members of the group; (b) Causing serious bodily or mental harm to members of the group; (c) Deliberately inflicting on the group conditions of life calculated to bring about its physical destruction in whole or in part; (d) Imposing measures intended to prevent births within the group; (e) Forcibly transferring children of the group to another group (The Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court 2011: 3).

Bazyler’s interpretation of these laws had nothing to do with Germany’s official stance. Hence, it may be concluded that these laws aim to protect all victims equally, and are not discriminatory towards the Roma population, but the interpretation of these laws by different scholars might have other implications.

Denial of the Roma Genocide

The second case study investigates holocaust denial in connection to the Roma population. The denial of the Roma genocide does not attract much academic attention, as the Holocaust is in most cases linked only to the Jewish population (Churchill 2003). Kapralski claims that the atrocities, which were perpetrated on the Roma population during the World War II are “neglected in historical writings and had not received the proper attention of historians” (1997:

276). Not surprisingly, the European Union only officially recognized the Roma genocide in 2011, more than 60 years after countless Roma were killed by the Nazi regime (Šefčovič 2011).

The Czech National Party provided a clear example of denial of the Roma genocide, as they attempted to build a memorial in Lety u Písku, which would state that the Roma who died there of natural causes, and that the camp was run by Germans, even though it was run by Czechs (Spitzer 2006). The camp in Lety u Písku was called a “Gypsy camp”, this camp has gone through internment of 1309 individuals, out of which 326 did not survive this action (Genocide of the Roma 2014). Many of the prisoners from this camp were later transferred to Auschwitz (Holocaust CZ 2013a). The chairman of the Federation of Jewish Communities in the Czech Republic claimed that this action by the Czech National Party, renaming a concentration camp “a labor camp”, is a first step towards Holocaust denial (Spitzer 2006). The case of Lety u Písku was surrounded by controversy from the beginning, due to the fact that a pig farm was built at the spot of the camp. One member of the National Party, Petr Eliáš, claimed that: “If someone died there it was because he behaved like a pig, did not wash himself etc.” (Pokorný 2006). Eliáš’s accusation that Roma are unclean may be derived from the ritual distinction between “clean-žuže” and “unclean-degeša” tribes of Roma, therefore, this primary distinction may be the cause of the allegations that Roma are unhygienic, since degeša Roma are known to engage in jobs, which are perceived as not clean (Frištenská and Višek 2002). However, Eliáš did not take into account the conditions of the camp, as he stated that the lack of hygiene was a fault of the Roma. The way Eliáš compared Roma to pigs, may be tied together with the Nazi comparison of the Jewish people to different kinds of insects. Such names are voiced in order to humiliate or degrade certain individuals. The memorial was later built in order to remember the Roma killed in the Holocaust and did not follow the suggestions provided by the Czech National Party. Another “Gypsy camp” was located in Hodonín u Kunštátu (Holocaust CZ 2013b) where a pig farm was also built (Aktuálně 2011a).

Jiří Gaudin, another member of the National Party, published *The Final Solution to the Gypsy Question*. Gaudin seemed to be cautious about the Roma genocide topic, when he claimed:

The first transport to Auschwitz from Moravia came on the 7th of March. Until the end of war, 4.500 Gypsies died in this and other Nazi concentration camps. In the disciplinary camps in the Protectorate most of the gypsies died because of the lack of hygiene and typhoid epidemic. Due to the epidemic hundreds more Gypsies died in the Protectorate (Gaudin 2009: 13).

This statement deserves closer attention; first of all, the offensive term “gypsy” is used in the whole piece. However, the author capitalises the word each time, which is likely done to shift attention to this specific terminology. Even though he talks about the Czech Republic and the Protectorate, in the first sentence of the statement it is not specified where the 4.500 Roma died. It may be argued that since the sentence is unclear and does not identify particularly that he is speaking of the Czech Roma population that the author himself denies the Roma genocide, because the number of murdered Roma in Europe is much higher (Hancock 2005). The question, whether the location was omitted on purpose, remains unanswered. Gaudin does not even indicate that the Roma were murdered; the strength of the author’s language is mild, and he claims they “died”, while adding that many of individuals died of the lack of hygiene.

The Council of Europe released an Overview on the Recognition of the Genocide of Roma and Sinti (Pharrajimos/Samudaripen) and On the Officialisation of the Date of 2 August as a Commemoration Day for the Victims of World War II in Member States of the Council of Europe (further Overview) in April of 2013. This Overview deals with official recognition of Roma and Sinti genocide in Europe. Interestingly, in Armenia, Roma population is not included in the official statement on the Holocaust. Furthermore, the Overview cites Ministry of Foreign affairs that claims that the Holocaust was “the attempted murder of the Jewish people by the Nazi Germany regime” (The Council of Europe Overview 2013). Similarly, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Georgia and Lithuania also recognize only Jews as victims of the Holocaust. On the other hand, several European countries recognize the Roma genocide: Austria, Croatia, the Czech Republic, Estonia, France, Germany, Hungary, Montenegro, the Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Romania, Russia, Serbia, the Slovak Republic, Ukraine, and the United Kingdom. The Council of Europe either lacks information on other countries, or the status of Roma victims is not specified. Many of the countries, which officially recognize the Roma genocide, did so countless years after the Holocaust ended (European Green Party 2011).

As established above, the Czech Republic officially recognizes the Roma genocide, known under the name “Roma Holocaust” or “Porrajmos” [The Council of Europe Overview 2013; “‘The Devouring’ is the term that the Roma use to describe the Nazi regime’s attempt to wipe their people off the face of the earth” (Spritzer 2006)]. Furthermore, the Czech Penal Code no. 40/2009, §405 states that those who publicly deny, question, approve of, or justify Nazi, communist or other genocides, or other crimes committed against humanity, will be punished by imprisonment from six months to three years. Jiří Gaudin, a member of the National Party, was sentenced to an imprisonment for 14 months; however, he was suspended for two years. The crime Jiří Gaudin committed was “inciting racial hatred” (Lehane 2010) through his publication

The Final Solution to the Gypsy Question. The Czech Supreme Administrative Court later suspended the activities of the National Party in 2011 not based on their discriminatory views towards the Roma population in Lety u Písku (Pokorný 2006, Spitzer 2006), but on the lack of financial reports provided (Česká Televize 2011).

Holomek (2008) argued that the denial of the Roma Holocaust was institutionalized in the Czech Republic, due to the existence of the Act 261/2001 Coll., which is an act on providing of one-time-shot financial payment to the participants of national revolt of liberation, political prisoners and to the people in case of race or religious belief collected to the military working camps and on change of Act Nr. 39/2000 Coll. (Collection of Czech Legal Statutes 2001; Act Nr. 39/2000 Coll. On providing one-time-shot financial payment to the members of Czechoslovak foreign armies and allied armies in years 1939 to 1945). Although several Roma individuals in the Czech Republic were supposed to be able to obtain the financial payment, the Czech Social Security Administration provided a list of requirements, which were claimed “impossible” (Holomek 2008) to fulfil, because of the need to be proclaimed as a political prisoner by the Czech Ministry of Defense. However, the Czech Supreme Administrative Court decided that the genocide of the Roma population is an indisputable historical event; therefore, the Roma population should not be required to fulfil unachievable conditions in order to receive the financial support (Holomek 2008).

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Discussion

It may be concluded that the individuals who are directly associated with Holocaust denial usually attempt to express their opinions in an objective and scientific way. However, their argumentation tends to lack the logical flow, and the deniers generally offer false data. As presented on the case of Arthur Butz and David Irving, both authors have strong ideological backgrounds and openly deny the existence of the Holocaust as perpetrated on the Jewish population. The deniers of the Roma genocide, as introduced in the case of two members of the Czech National Party, use offensive language. However, they seem to be more careful in connection to directly denying the murders of the Roma. While Irving and Butz supposedly attempt to educate the public, and, in the case of Irving, purify the reputation of Nazis, the Czech neo-Nazis deny the Roma genocide due to unknown reasons. And finally, the available literature and speeches in connection to the Jewish Holocaust denial are supposed to enhance historical revisionism and enhance individual's public status. On the contrary, Gaudin's *The Final Solution to the Gypsy Question* was supposed to offer an actual solution to the presence of Roma in the Czech

Republic. Therefore, even though Gaudin did not directly deny the Roma genocide in his study, he encouraged violence through it, which is a trait not commonly seen in the tactics of the Jewish Holocaust deniers.

The belated recognition of the Roma victims by the members of the European Union suggest that, while the members might not have denied the Roma genocide in a direct manner, they did not pay substantial attention to it. It may be argued that the denial of the Roma genocide might arise from “not investing the effort to know the facts of the genocide of another people” (Charny 2003: 31). This type of denial might be relevant since the primary factor is the fact that the Roma genocide is inherently the “unnoticed genocide” (Smith 2012). Therefore, while some individuals choose to deny the Holocaust based on the lack of empathy towards certain groups of people (Charny 2003), the European states ignored the scope of the Roma genocide, since the numbers of murdered Roma were available (US Holocaust Memorial Museum 2012).

The analysis of the two case studies points to the fact that the Roma genocide is treated inherently different than the Jewish genocide. The deniers of both share some common characteristics; a common pattern of adherence to a supremacist ideology is recognized in connection to known deniers. Interestingly, the Roma genocide is treated differently in the international community. The atrocities committed on the Roma population are often called the “forgotten genocide” (Smith 2012). While Charny (2003) assesses that indifference to genocides towards other peoples may be considered as genocide denial, it may be argued that omitting non-Jewish victims has a more complex reasoning and deserves a study of social circumstances, before claiming it simply is denial of the Holocaust.

These inconsistencies may be results of the ever-present discrimination against the Roma and the Jewish populations in Europe (Bunzl 2005, Schneeweis 2015), as well as historical ignorance and lack of knowledge. This conclusion is based on the fact that legal non-action maintained by supposedly objective and ideology-free actors, such as the EU and its members, clearly demonstrates that the status of the Roma population is still not stabilized across Europe. These consequences do not form the Roma genocide denial by themselves, but they do constitute further discrimination of the Roma and promote historical ignorance.

It is crucial to further investigate how and why are both populations being revictimized in order for the general public and the policy makers to implement policies that would prevent further revictimization that promotes discrimination, anti-Semitism and racism. Recommendations for future research on Holocaust denial include a study on stateless nations and the effects a stateless nation may have on international recognition of particular victims.

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ABSTRACT

Differences in Denials of the Holocaust: Comparative Study of Two Case Studies

Denial of the Holocaust is a topic that is largely discussed and attracts public attention to this day. However, the language used when debating historical revisionism is oftentimes limited to the Jewish victims and survivors, while other groups, which were targeted during World War II, are regularly omitted from the discourse. The objective of this qualitative study is to establish what are the common patterns of two types of Holocaust denial – denial of the Jewish genocide and denial of the Roma genocide – and how these are treated by the international community. The findings of this research indicate that the deniers adhere to similar ideologies that result in questioning the existence of the Holocaust. The international community poses as an interesting case as the Roma genocide is not denied; however, its existence has been largely unacknowledged until a recent slight turn towards more equal treatment of survivors and victims in several countries.

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KEYWORDS

Genocide, Holocaust, denialism, historical revisionism, Jewish population, Roma population

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