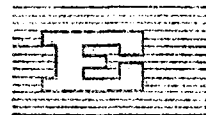


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COMMISSION ON HUMAN RIGHTS
Sub-Commission on Prevention of
Discrimination and Protection
of Minorities
Thirty-fourth session
Geneva, 17 August-11 September 1981
Agenda item 6

QUESTION OF THE VIOLATION OF HUMAN RIGHTS AND FUNDAMENTAL
FREEDOMS, INCLUDING POLICIES OF RACIAL DISCRIMINATION AND
SEGREGATION AND OF APARTHEID IN ALL COUNTRIES, WITH
PARTICULAR REFERENCE TO COLONIAL AND OTHER DEPENDENT
COUNTRIES AND TERRITORIES: REPORT OF THE SUB-COMMISSION
UNDER COMMISSION ON HUMAN RIGHTS RESOLUTION 8 (XLVIII)

Written statement submitted by the Romani Union, a non-governmental
organization in consultative status, Roster

The Romani people has been and is still being persecuted - after more than 1,000 years of its history. As everyone knows, the Romani were tortured, ill-treated, experimented upon and gassed in the concentration camps of Fascist and Nazi Germany. They were destroyed both physically and psychologically. Here, in Europe they are still being persecuted today: because of their way of life and their culture, which is nevertheless so rich, and, it goes without saying, because they are Gipsies and thus, for many people throughout the world, "a race apart". All kinds of manipulations are still being used in an attempt to destroy this people. The Gipsies are a nation scattered throughout the entire world, from the Urals to Florida and from the Far North to Australia.

All the Gipsy-Romani groups form a unit: Romano-Jekhetanibe. Their laws, their way of thinking and their way of life are close to nature. Some countries have a false idea of them, with the result that they are victims of repression and of methods designed to condemn them. It must be emphasized that the Romani have always assimilated themselves into the countries in which they have lived and still live, and that they will continue to do so.

The Romani appeal to all countries to accept their people and to give them the financial and economic possibilities of organizing themselves.

In May of this year, the third World Romani Congress was held at Göttingen in the Federal Republic of Germany. Representatives came from everywhere: from America and even from Australia. Everybody mentioned the word "human being". In this same Göttingen Congress - with a few exceptions - the word "complaint" was constantly repeated. It was noted that the Romani live on the margin of society.

Discrimination continues everywhere. Not all countries have yet accepted the Romani Union, although it is officially recognized. There was much discussion at Göttingen about the fact that, 35 years after the Holocaust of the Romani Nation during the Fascist Hitler era, it is no longer officially mentioned by anybody. Nevertheless, that fact must not be forgotten.

The Romani Union exists, but it does not want to be forced to act politically or to create religious problems. Its aim has been, is and always will be social equality and justice and recognition of the human rights of the Romani. Their cultural heritage is immensely rich and should be preserved, not forgotten.

The Romani (Tziganes-Gitans-Gipsies, etc.) live throughout the whole world. They number some 14 million people, dispersed everywhere. They are the last nomads, with a way of life close to nature. Their language is the foundation of all the Indo-European languages. It is living Sanskrit.

In this way they can understand one another, and they are also anxious to do something to improve communications between the various nations.

The Romani Union requests the Sub-Commission to promote the protection of the rights of the Romani and thus protect them against the danger of genocide.