

educational screening kit

Theme #holocaust

Porraimos Europe's Gypsies in the Holocaust

Director Producer: Alexandra M. Isles
Cinematographer: Fred Goldey
Writer: Alexandra M. Isles
Editor: Doug Rossini
Narration: Dearbhla Molloy
Music: Violin played by Robert McDuffie

Buy / Rent DVD : <http://store.cinemaguild.com/nontheatrical/product/1898.html>
<http://www.alexandraisles.com/porraimos.html>

Synopsis

Porraimos, translated from Romani as 'The Devouring', chronicles the Romani Holocaust. It is the first American documentary to expose how the pseudo-science of eugenics was used to justify genocide, not only against Jews, but also Roma. The film includes German archival footage and photographs and the stories of Czech, German, and Austrian Roma and Sinti survivors. Dina Gottliebova, a Jewish artist who was ordered by Joseph Mengele to paint portraits of prisoners in the Roma Family Camp in Auschwitz, also speaks about her experience.

Biography

Alexandra Isles is a New York-based documentary filmmaker, whose work reflects her deep commitment to human rights and dignity. *Porraimos* is her third film. Isles has directed and written all of her documentaries; two of which she also produced. Her filmography deals with the effects of racial and political persecution. Two films focus on the Holocaust; the third on the blacklisting of African-American performers in the early days of McCarthyism.

For more info, see the press kit here: http://www.lesliejerman.com/docs/Porraimos_presskit.pdf

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What to read to get some useful background information?

★ To learn key facts about the Roma Genocide

You can check the key fact section (pages 66-67) of “Mirrors: Manual on combating antigypsyism through human rights education” a manual produced by Council of Europe and written by Ellie Keen (2015).

<https://rm.coe.int/1680494094>

★ To learn about the Roma Genocide and how to facilitate youth activities around this topic

You can read “Right to Remember: A Handbook for Education with Young People on the Roma Genocide” produced by Council of Europe and written by Ellie Keen (2014).

<https://rm.coe.int/CoERMPublicCommonSearchServices/DisplayDCTMContent?documentId=090000168046d024>

★ To go further

Read the publication “Education for remembrance of the Roma genocide: Scholarship, commemoration and the role of youth”, edited by Anna Mirga-Kruszelnicka, Esteban Acuña C. and Piotr Trojański, published in the framework of the project Roma Genocide Remembrance Initiative of ternYpe International Roma Youth Network (2014).

<https://www.wsiz.rzeszow.pl/pl/Uczelnia/kadra/mszewczyk/Documents/How%20I%20Had%20Not%20Been%20Surviving%20World%20War%20II.pdf>

You can explore the educational website “The Fate of European Roma and Sinti during the Holocaust”. <http://www.romasintigenocide.eu/>

You can read “Teaching about and Commemorating the Roma and Sinti Genocide: Practices within the OSCE Area” produced by OSCE (2015).

<http://www.osce.org/romasintigenocide?download=true>

You can visit the website of the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum.

<https://www.ushmm.org/>

Questions for discussion after the screening

- Did you know about the Roma Genocide before watching the film?
- Today, many people are still unaware of it. For example in France, President Hollande recognized France's role in Nazi Roma persecution only in October 2016, 70 years afterward the fact. Why do you think that is? What does it say about today's society?
- How could it affect the identity of the community members?
- Do you think that it is important to remember? Why? Is it relevant for today's issues? If yes, why? What could the message of remembrance be? What are convenient ways of remembrance for you?
- Who is responsible for remembrance? What can we do to contribute to awareness-raising and remembrance of the Roma Genocide? What benefits and difficulties can be encountered in terms of remembrance in the internet era?
- How can narratives of the genocide of Roma during the Holocaust be used as a tool to bring awareness to current human rights violations experienced by Roma?

Workshop outline ideas:

Objectives:

- Raise awareness about the Roma Genocide
- Raise awareness about the importance of remembrance
- Reflect on the role of youth in remembering the Roma Genocide

1. Discuss

What comes to your mind when you think about the Holocaust or Roma Genocide? Write the answers on flipchart paper.

How did you hear about it for the first time and how did you learn about it in school?

About the film: Was there anything in the stories that was surprising for you? What type of resistance or survival techniques (physical and intellectual) did you encounter in the stories? Do you know other stories of how people survived?

2. Draw

Tell the participants to imagine that the group is preparing for an exhibition about the Roma Genocide. Ask the participants to paint or draw their own personal image that reflects to the Roma Genocide for them. You can put them on the wall as an exhibition. Before they start drawing, you can give them background information to read.

3. Build

Tell the participants to imagine that the municipality wants to build a memorial for the Roma Genocide and consults with them. They can choose one person from the film and imagine making memorial to that person. Ask them to collect ideas for a memorial in small groups, write them down on small sheets of paper or Post-its, put them on the wall, and ask them to present their ideas.

4. Commemorate

Tell the participants to imagine that they will organize a commemoration on 2 August for the Roma Genocide. Ask them to think about the messages that they want to convey with the event, write them on Post-its, and put them on the wall.

5. Educate

Tell the participants to imagine that they are preparing a workshop for children in their community or school. Ask them to think individually or in small groups. Give them some questions for discussion:

How would you develop it?

Would you emphasize historical facts or personal stories?

What would be the main objectives and messages?

6. Museum of the Roma Holocaust

Our pedagogical sheet has been inspired by the work of Phiren Amenca about Roma Genocide Remembrance. Here is a methodological guide for educators and activists to organize an educational activity and exhibition on the topic of the Roma Genocide. This guide offers a complex educational program; however, its parts can form separate workshops too.

<http://phirenamenca.eu/museum-of-the-roma-holocaust/>

7. Holocaust remembrance activity from the COMPASS Manual for Human Rights Education with Young People

In this activity, participants plan and carry out an action project to raise awareness about Roma victims of the Holocaust.

<http://www.coe.int/en/web/compass/dosta->