



## Genocide or Holocaust? Gypsies and Jews

*The History Teacher*, Vol. 26, No. 3. (May, 1993), pp. 385-386.

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## Genocide or Holocaust? Gypsies and Jews

The Editors

*The History Teacher*

WE HAVE RECEIVED FURTHER CORRESPONDENCE from Yehuda Bauer, Professor of Holocaust Studies, The Hebrew University of Jerusalem, in response to Sybil Milton, senior resident historian at the United States Holocaust Memorial Council, whose views appeared in rebuttal to his in our August 1992 issue (pp. 515-21). Professor Bauer continues to take exception to Dr. Milton's definition of the Holocaust, a term which he believes should not be applied to the fate of the Gypsies, but only to that of the Jews. He argues that however similar pronouncements, laws, or techniques for the murder of those deemed undesirable by the Nazis (the handicapped, Gypsies, or other "non-Aryan" peoples) might have been, there was a special animus and thoroughness in the Nazi assault upon the Jews who were seen "not just [as] a population targeted for destruction, but [as] *the* quintessential enemy of Aryan humanity.... Behind all their enemies, they [the Nazis] thought, lurked the International Jew, and in a very real sense the war they ultimately waged was directed in the final resort, against the Jews." Their fate, therefore, had to be total annihilation.

In order to terminate the correspondence on this issue, we pass by in this note the further evidence presented by Professor Bauer on the fate of the Gypsies (we believe his differences with Dr. Milton are clear from our earlier publication) and return to the problem of definitions he argues

for: "Holocaust is a special case of genocide, because it involves total annihilation, in this case for purely ideological reasons. Genocide is the elimination of a people, not necessarily the murder of all of them, but in all cases involving selective mass murder as well. Poles and Gypsies were victims of genocide. Jews were the victims of Holocaust — this time around. We live in an era in which Holocausts are possible, and the victims, next time, if we are not careful, could be any other group." Understanding this difference, Bauer contends, is important in the strategies we must adopt "to prevent a recurrence of these crimes."