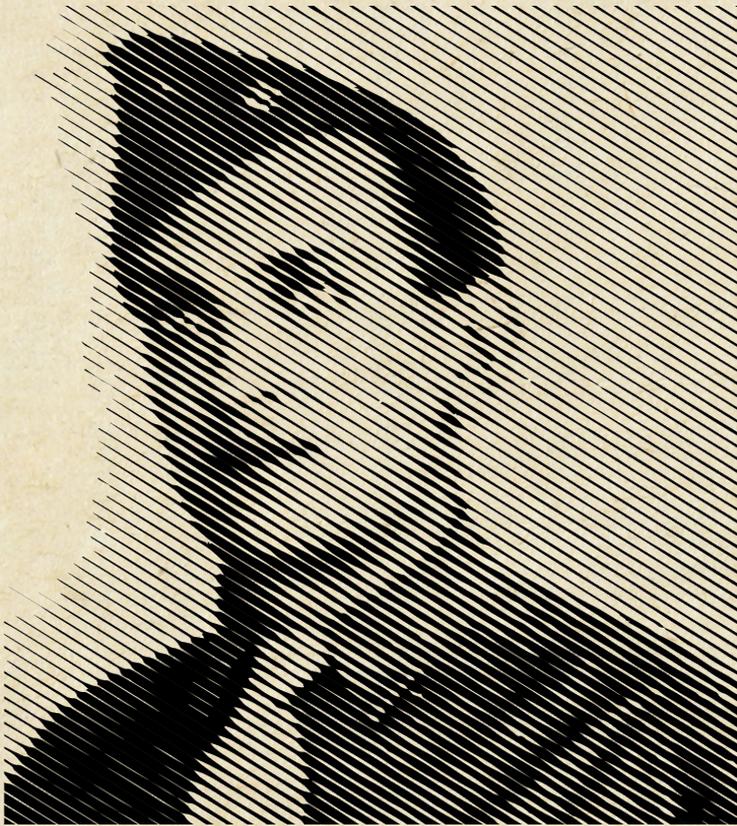




ANTON FACUNA

(Horné Jaseno, Slovak Republic February 1, 1920, – Bratislava, Slovak Republic, October 10, 1980)



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Anton Facuna was born in Horné Jaseno, Slovakia, and later lived in the neighboring village of Sklabiňa.

On October 1, 1941, he became a soldier in the Slovak army. During World War II, the label “Gypsy” was applied to anyone who was either nomadic, or those who deliberately avoided work. Thus many Roma were sent to work camps, or were forced to join the Slovak army. Such was the case of Facuna.

When the front situation changed in 1943, a large part of the Slovak army was transferred to Italy. In April 1944, Facuna defected and joined the Italian partisan group, Rinaldo. Later he voluntarily joined the Czechoslovakian army.

Through the Career Management Fields (CMF) mission he was assigned to work

for the US Army. When the Slovak National Uprising (SNU) broke out, Facuna was listed under the Czechoslovak section of the US Army parachute division. Corporal Facuna became a member of the so-called “Day” group, under the alias Anton Novák.

On October 7, 1944, he boarded a B-17 aircraft together with several others headed for Slovakia, loaded with guns and food in support of the SNU. The plane successfully landed at the Slovakian Tri Duby airport. **Only Facuna, however, would later evade capture** thereafter, all his fellow crew would be deported to Mauthausen. Thereafter **in an attempt to disguise his identity he dyed his hair black and joined the partisans.**

After spending the year 1945 travelling through Germany, France, and Italy, he returned to his home in Sklabiňa by May 15, 1946 at the earliest. There he found out that during the SNU, his childhood home in which he had been born had been burnt down on September 30, 1944. Germans had killed both his father and his brother-in-law.

For his active participation in the SNU he was **awarded by both the local government and US officials.** After 1948, however, he fell from grace due to his cooperation with the US’ intelligence agency, Office of Strategic Services (OSS), and therefore with the “West” in general.

Back then, such activities were unthinkable, and Facuna worked as a geodesist. His long-term plans included the **establishment of the Czechoslovak Romani Association** (Romano kulturno jakhetaniben), with the aim of supporting the minority's efforts in both culture and education. Sadly, his **proposal was denied by the government**.

Later, Facuna became the **leader of the Slovakian Gypsies Association**, as well director of the company Butiker (Work), which was intended to be an umbrella organisation for Romani crafts. An advocate of full Romani integration, he disagreed with authorities on the issue of assimilation. Facuna **criticised the Romani assimilationist policies practiced by the state**, stating they were not well thought-out and ineffective.

Facuna was later fired from his in Butiker, because he refused to participate in, and stood up against the corruption going on around him. The year 1972 brought an abrupt end to his visions and dreams. The minority law passed through the parliament, but the Roma were omitted.

In 1980, Facuna tried to attend the international Roma congress in Geneva; however, the state refused to let him. Two years later, this forgotten hero died in his Bratislava apartment.

"The Germans had put a price on his head. In the village, people tore these posters down."
(Anna Virágová, sister of Anton Facuna)

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