

**EDUCATION
FOR REMEMBRANCE
OF THE ROMA GENOCIDE**

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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

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Preface:
Transgenerational Transfer of War
Trauma within the Roma and Sinti
Community

Zoni Weisz

Within the Roma and Sinti culture, it is not generally customary to hold public commemorations for the loved ones who were murdered during the Nazi period. This does not mean to say that our loved ones have been forgotten. On the contrary: they are still always present in our thoughts and are frequently commemorated within our own circles. We talk about them and reminisce about them.

The survivors will always retain the traumatic experiences, which they underwent during the Nazi period, but these also play a major role among their children and grandchildren to this day. They remain a great sorrow, a scar. It is very difficult to share this sorrow with *gadje* (outsiders). As a result of centuries of exclusion and persecution, we have become an inward-looking community. We are a community which finds it difficult to communicate with *gadje*. Only a few of us will speak about our experiences of the war with outsiders, at schools, meetings and conferences.

Personally, I feel that it is extremely important for our story to be told. I speak at commemorative events, conferences and schools. When I do so, I discover how little the general public know about the Romani Holocaust, the *Porrajmos*, the Genocide of the Roma and Sinti. Thankfully, some of our young people recognise the importance of our history and are also driving the message home today. The annual commemoration events on August 2nd, the day

when 2,900 elders, women and children were murdered in the so-called „Gypsy camp” in Auschwitz-Birkenau, are a good example of this. The ternYpe International Roma Youth Network brings young people to this site from all over Europe to teach them about the Roma and Sinti Holocaust and to remember together that so many of our loved ones were murdered by the Nazis. Lectures on various subjects are given by experts and survivors. These are very informative and will make young people think about the horrors of the Nazi era and also about the current situation of the Sinti and Roma in Europe, which is certainly not unimportant.

I was able to address large groups of young people and answer their questions. This was highly educational, both for the young people and for me. The fact that I was allowed to take a large group on a tour of Birkenau was an unusual experience. Being able to stand together in the place where so many of our loved ones were murdered was a special and educational experience for everyone. It made a huge impression on all the participants. It was an experience, which will stay with me forever and which drives me to keep on commemorating the dead and to continue to tell people about the great injustice and sorrow, which the Nazis brought upon our people. In this place, you experience the horrors and immense sorrow which were inflicted upon an entire generation.

This sorrow is handed down from generation to generation. Despite the fact that the survivors found and continue to find it very difficult to speak about their experiences, there is still a transfer, which is not just verbal but also non-verbal, the unspoken story: the sorrow always has a tangible presence.

Thankfully, certainly in recent years, some survivors and their children have been “coming out” and sharing their experiences, not just with young people from the Roma and Sinti community, but also with young people at schools.

“We fear what we do not know”. In my opinion, we should communicate with the *gadje*, the civil society, in order to ensure that the Nazi genocide of over 500,000 Roma and Sinti is no longer

a “Forgotten Holocaust”. We must seize every opportunity to draw attention to the history of the persecution during the Nazi period, but also the persecution and exclusion throughout the centuries. The general public are not sufficiently aware of the Genocide of the Sinti and Roma and the history of our people.

Does the number of victims determine the attention, which is generated, or is it a question of communication and organisation? Are we, the Sinti and Roma, doing enough to draw attention to our history? I feel that we can and should educate people a lot more than is currently the case in order to share our history with society.

In contrast to the Jews, we did not form a particularly organised group after World War II and therefore did not have a voice which was heard. Even during the high-profile court cases against the Nazi leaders in the Nuremberg trials, the fate of the Roma and Sinti received very little coverage. It took years before the Genocide of the Roma and Sinti people was officially recognised. The 17th of March 1982 was a historic day for the Roma and Sinti community. On this date, the former Federal Chancellor Helmut Schmidt received a delegation from the Central Council of German Sinti and Roma. On this occasion, the Federal Chancellor took a very important step under public international law, namely to recognise the national socialist crime against the Sinti and Roma as genocide on the basis of “race”. This pronouncement was once again confirmed by his successor Helmut Kohl in November 1985. In 1997, when the permanent exhibition about the Sinti and Roma Holocaust was opened in Heidelberg by the former Federal President Roman Herzog, he also declared that the genocide of the Sinti and Roma was carried out for the same racial motives as the genocide of the Jews.

What about our own young people, do they know enough about the dramatic events during World War II? In my experience, their knowledge could be greatly improved. Young Roma from Eastern Europe, above all, often know little about their history. Even now, in 2015, we are not sufficiently organised. In most countries, we have no political influence whatsoever. Our networks are too limited.

Education and schooling at all levels are the keys to a better future. We must learn to be free thinkers, to expand our world view and thus to gain a full place in society. Tradition is important and must be cherished, but we live in 2015 and need to leave our victim role behind us and become fully-fledged citizens. People who close their eyes to the past also lose sight of the future.

Introduction

Anna Mirga-Kruszelnicka, Esteban Acuña C.
and Piotr Trojański

Why are we compiling this book?

On August the 2nd of 2014, ternYpe International Roma Youth Network gathered over 1,000 young Roma and non-Roma from 25 countries to commemorate the 70th Anniversary of the Roma Holocaust. The event – Roma Genocide Remembrance Initiative “Dikh he na bister” (*Look and don’t forget*)¹ – was the biggest commemorative event of the Roma Holocaust in history. Never before had so many people gathered in one place to reflect on collectively shared history and discuss its importance for Roma people today.

In the framework of this event, in partnership with the Pedagogical University of Cracow, an international expert conference on “Education for Remembrance of the Roma Genocide”² was organized. The event brought together over 70 experts, scholars, representatives of public institutions and intergovernmental organizations (The European Commission, The United Nations, The Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, The Council of Europe, The European Parliament), as well as Roma and non-Roma youth organizations and activists. The conference aimed at

¹ <http://2august.eu/> (access: 14/09/2015).

² The agenda from the conference can be found in the Annex section of this book.

providing a space for interaction and exchange of practices and knowledge regarding the Roma Genocide commemoration and education. The conference, through its thematic sessions, focused on three intersecting fields: (i) scholarship, (ii) commemoration and recognition, and (iii) Holocaust education. Throughout the event, the youth – as scholars, educators, multipliers and activists – were at the heart of the discussions, recognizing the strength and potential of youth agency.

The book you have in your hands is a result of this exchange. However, rather than a report from the conference, this volume aims at reflecting on current developments regarding the Roma Holocaust remembrance and provides basis for further discussion. We acknowledge the intersecting fields of scholarship, institutional engagement and youth movements, which reinforce each other, and collectively contribute to the Roma Genocide education. Our aim is to stimulate further discussion across different fields of engagement and disciplines, and among the variety of actors involved in the Roma Holocaust commemoration and education.

The “forgotten Holocaust” remembered – role of scholarship, commemoration and Roma mobilization

For years, the horrors experienced by Roma people during World War II (from now on WWII) were referred to as the “forgotten Holocaust”. Indeed, for decades it was. In the years after the war, little attention has been paid to the fate of the Roma under the Nazi rule by scholars or governments. There was not a single Romani witness during the Nuremberg trials and Romani victims were mentioned only marginally. It was not until 1962 that the crimes against Roma were explicitly mentioned, proven and judged during the trial of Adolf Eichmann. Since the 60’s, Roma and Sinti organizations have begun to fight for official recognition of the Roma Genocide and, over time, this plight became an essential aim of Romani ethnic mobilization across Europe. The role of German Sinti and Roma organizations was key in mobilizing

public attention through actions such as demonstrations in the Bergen-Belsen concentration camp in 1979 or the famous hunger strike in 1980 at Dachau.

The Roma Genocide has also become a recurrent theme of World Romani Congresses, especially those in 1981 in Gottingen (Germany) and 1990 in Serock (Poland). Despite multiple demands on behalf of Romani organizations, for years they remained largely fruitless. The Roma Genocide was denied recognition based on the conviction that the Roma were not targeted by the Nazis based on racial grounds but due to their alleged “antisocial” and criminal nature. It was not until 1982 that Chancellor Helmut Schmidt³ acknowledged that Roma as a people were targeted for complete extermination by the Nazis. Despite this official recognition by the German authorities, the Roma Genocide continued to remain largely unknown.

In recent years, however, the plight for Roma Holocaust recognition and remembrance has entered a new stage. Rather than a “forgotten Holocaust”, *Samudaripen/Porrajmos*⁴ gradually becomes a better-known and widely accepted historical fact. Undeniably, the topic of the Roma Holocaust is gaining an unprecedented momentum. A number of interdependent and parallel

³ “The Nazi dictatorship inflicted a grave injustice on the Sinti and Roma. They were persecuted for reasons of race. These crimes constituted an act of genocide.” Helmut Schmidt, Federal Chancellor of Germany (17 March 1982).

⁴ In an attempt to construct a Romani parallel to the Hebrew term *Shoah*, Roma and non-Roma scholars have proposed *Romanes* terms to refer to the Roma Genocide. Ian Hancock proposed the term *Porrajmos* („devouring“ or „destruction“), now increasingly accepted. However, in a number of Romani dialects this word originates from the term „rape“ and for this reason is still regarded as controversial. The term *Samudaripen* („mass killing“), introduced by Marcel Courthiade, is also used commonly with regards to the Roma Genocide. There are also other terms, such as *Kali Traš* („Black fear“) or *Berša bibahtale* („unhappy years“), which are less known and less commonly used. Ian Hancock, *On the interpretation of a word: Porrajmos as Holocaust* (RADOC). Retrieved August 17, 2015 from: http://www.radoc.net/radoc.php?doc=art_e_holocaust_interpretation&lang=en&articles=true

developments contributed to this process in three different spheres of social practice and discourse: scholarship, commemoration practices and Roma mobilization.

Firstly, scholarship on the Roma Genocide has played an essential role. In the years right after the war, few scholars were inclined to inquire into the fate of the Roma during WWII⁵. However, as the Romani plight for recognition of the Roma Genocide increased, so did the interest of scholars in researching this chapter of European history. Documenting the Holocaust of the Roma became an essential tool for supporting Romani claims: it brought academic evidence and gave legitimacy to the Romani struggle for historical justice. In recent years, one can note a visible augment of academic literature on the Roma Holocaust⁶, and increasing percentage of it is written by scholars of Romani background. Although there has been an undeniable progress in terms of historical knowledge of the Roma Genocide, there are still multiple blind spots and numerous questions remain problematic, or even controversial. Consensus is yet to be reached regarding the number of Romani victims, the genesis of Romani persecutions, or the terminology used to refer to these events. Furthermore, expanding historical knowledge on the Roma Holocaust seldom translates into greater awareness of the Roma Genocide – *Porrajmos* is still rarely taught at schools and history books mention the Roma only sporadically, if at all.

In an attempt to tackle the general lack of knowledge about the Roma Holocaust, especially among the younger generation,

⁵ One of the first academic articles on the Roma Genocide was published in 1949 by Dora Yates (*Hitler and the Gypsies. The Fate of Europe's Oldest Arynas*, Commentary, American Jewish Association). Until mid-70's when the first monography of the fate of Roma during WWII was published (Donald Kenrick and Grattan Puxon, *The Destiny of Europe's Gypsies*, London: Chatto-Heinmann for Sussex University Press, 1972), there was only but a handful of academic texts dealing with the Roma Genocide.

⁶ Sławomir Kaprański, *Naród z popiołów. Pamięć zagłady a tożsamość Romów* (Warszawa: Wydawnictwo Naukowe Scholar, 2012), p. 138.

a number of toolkits, websites, books and handbooks have been published in the last few years. New research on the Roma Holocaust increasingly engages with the communities, gathering personal testimonies of the survivors, their relatives and neighbours in order to save them from oblivion. Initiatives undertaken by scholars (for example the book on Roma Genocide in Hungary written by two Romani scholars Agnes Daroczi and Janos Barsony⁷), nongovernmental organizations (Yahad-in Unum and Roma Dignity) and governmental institutions (International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance – sponsored Multi-Year Work Plan project on Killing Sites) increasingly contribute to identifying and mapping out killing sites and mass graves where Romani victims have perished. Some of these new developments are presented and discussed in this book.

Secondly, Roma Holocaust commemoration practices, especially those hosted or promoted by governmental institutions, proliferated across Europe in the past years⁸. Commemorative plaques can be found in various concentration camps where the Roma were imprisoned or in various locations where the Roma have been murdered; the State Museum in Auschwitz-Birkenau in cooperation with Roma organizations has opened a permanent exhibition devoted to the suffering of the Roma during the Nazi time (located in the Block 13) in 1997. Memorials in memory of Romani Victims have been erected in diverse locations, most notably in 2012 erected in front of the Bundestag, in Berlin, Germany. Today, Romani victims are remembered during the International Day of Memory of Victims of the Holocaust, celebrated on January 27th, from Spain to Poland. Romani speakers have also been

⁷ Agnes Daroczi & Janos Barsony, *Kali Trash – Fekete félelem, Pharrajimos – Szétvágatás, Samudaripe – Legyilkolás* [Kali Trash : Pharrajimos - Samudaripe - The fate of Roma during the Holocaust in Hungary II] (Budapest: Romani Intitudo, 2015).

⁸ CAHROM (2013)¹⁵, *Overview On The Recognition Of The Genocide Of Roma And Sinti (Pharrajimos / Samudaripe) During World War II And On Related Remembrance Days In Member States Of The Council Of Europe.*

invited twice for the UN Holocaust Remembrance ceremonies (Ethel Brooks in 2013 and Andrzej Mirga in 2010) although the fact that they are not included every year has raised controversies and numerous complaints on behalf of Romani victims and organizations⁹. The 2nd of August, established this year as a Roma Holocaust Memorial Day by the European Parliament¹⁰, is also commemorated internationally; local commemorative events are also taking place in different locations. Two national Parliaments (in Poland, 2011 and in Croatia, 2014) have recognised the 2nd of August as the Roma Holocaust Memorial Day; other states will hopefully follow suit¹¹. As the Roma Holocaust gains visibility, other sites of Roma genocides and persecutions are commemorated in the same spirit of seeking historical justice – for example in Srebrenica¹² (Bosnia, 1995) or the *Gran Redada*¹³ (Spain, of 1749). Although there has been an undeniable progress and a growing commitment of public authorities to commemorate Romani

⁹ A coalition of Roma organizations and networks started a petition to Secretary General of the UN Ban Ki-Moon, to include Romani speakers in the Official Commemoration of the Holocaust: <https://www.change.org/p/mr-ban-ki-moon-take-immediate-action-to-include-romani-speakers-in-the-official-commemoration-of-the-holocaust-at-the-un> (access: 15/08/2015).

¹⁰ European Parliament News, *MEPs urge end to Roma discrimination and recognition of Roma Genocide Day* (15/04/2015). Retrieved July 27, 2015 from: <http://www.europarl.europa.eu/news/en/news-room/content/20150414IPR41851/html/MEPs-urge-end-to-Roma-discrimination-and-recognition-of-Roma-Genocide-Day>.

¹¹ Recently, Spanish socialist party (PSOE) has presented a motion before the Spanish Parliament to recognize the 2nd of August as an official Memorial Day of the Roma Genocide. Europapress, *PSOE Institucionalizar el 2 de Agosto como fecha conmemorativa del holocausto gitano* (15/10/2015). Retrieved October 19, 2015 from: <http://www.europapress.es/sociedad/noticia-psoe-institucionalizar-agosto-fecha-conmemorativa-holocausto-gitano-20151017115536.html>.

¹² ternYpe, 2014 *Srebrenica*. Retrieved August 16, 2015 from: <http://2august.eu/events/2014-srebrenica/>.

¹³ FAGIC, *Jornada de la conmemoración de la “Gran Redada”*. Retrieved July 17, 2015 from: <http://www.fagic.org/es/comunicacion/noticias/615-2015-07-17-07-40-51>.

Victims, there are still numerous places which have not received a dignified treatment, for example the Lety concentration camp site, which today is occupied by a pig farm (see the article by Miroslav Brož in this volume). Despite undeniable progress, as 2013 CAHROM report¹⁴ on the overview of recognition of the Roma Genocide in member states of the Council of Europe shows, much still remains to be accomplished; although the Holocaust is recognized throughout Europe, seldom does the Holocaust education and commemoration practice include the Roma explicitly.

Finally, the gradual recognition of the Romani Holocaust is a result of decades of Romani struggle for “a worthy place among the victims”¹⁵. After all, history is a constitutive element of collective identity, important to understand who we are and where we come from as a people. Events of the past, however, undergo a process of interpretation which infuses specific moments in history with meaning and particular significance, reinforcing understanding of collective belonging and shared fate of people. In the process of remembering the past, traumatic moments in which our very existence becomes endangered by experiences of death play a key role¹⁶. The plight for recognition of the Roma Genocide has been a driving force for Romani activism ever since post-war times. It guided efforts to ensure historic justice and led action to introduce Roma narrative into dominant narrative of the Holocaust, making it part of the official and institutionalized memory of WWII. This struggle goes beyond simple declarative recognition; rather, it should be understood as a process of conscious construction of a collectively remembered past. A collectively shared history also becomes a resource for Roma ethnic mobilization: narratives

¹⁴ CAHROM (2013)¹⁵, *Overview On The Recognition Of The Genocide Of Roma And Sinti...*

¹⁵ Andrzej Mirga, „For a worthy place among the Victims. The Holocaust and Extermination of Roma during World War II”, in: Joanna Ambrosewicz-Jacobs and Leszek Hońdo (eds.), *Why should we teach about the Holocaust?* (Cracow: The Jagiellonian University, Institute of European Studies, 2005)

¹⁶ Sławomir Kaprański, *Naród z popiołów...*, p. 21.

of collective memory support mobilization struggles and give foundation to a movement identity. After all, “social movements – sustained collective challenges to political and cultural authority – rely on memory to provide the legitimacy and identity that comes from continuity with the past”¹⁷.

For the Roma youth of present generation too, the Roma Genocide is becoming an important touchstone of their identity as well as a powerful mobilizing tool. “Dikh he na bister” is a good example of this. This initiative, organized since 2010, constructs a powerful historical narrative, by not only commemorating past events but also, and most importantly, linking it to present times and mobilizing the youth to action. Remembrance of the past becomes a pretext for a critical debate about existence of collective identities shaped by historical traumatic events, as well as collective goals and interests in the present and foreseeable future. For many young Roma, “Dikh he na bister” has become a moment of “awakening”¹⁸, reinforcing a deeper understanding of self and collective ethnic identity, and becoming a strong mobilizing force for civic and political action. Roma youth activists also re-frame historical events by infusing them with a new meaning, as in the case of the “Romani Resistance” (see the article by Pierre Chopinaud in this book). Powerful narratives of the Roma Holocaust acquire an empowering potential and gradually permeate the local level. Remembrance of the fate of the Roma during WWII opens up questions about local histories of Roma communities during different periods and mobilizes youth activists to explore their past, as in the case of Spain (anti-Roma Pragmatics, Spanish Civil War and *Franquismo* period) or former Yugoslavia.

The Romani youth uses a variety of tools in their Holocaust-related activism as a pretext for a deeper discussion regarding

¹⁷ Timothy Kubal and Rene Becerre, „Social Movement and Collective Memory”, *Sociology Compass*, Vol 8. Issue 6 (June 2014) pp. 865–875.

¹⁸ Federico M. Rossi, “Youth Political Participation: Is This the End of Generational Cleavage?” *International Sociology* 24 (4) (July 2009): pp. 467–497.

collective identity, common history and the situation of Roma communities today. This activism gradually permeates into other fields, in which the theme of the Roma Genocide becomes a source of inspiration, for example in film (most notably, the work of Romea Foundation but also grassroots initiatives like the documentary movie “Samudaripen. El Holocausto Gitano Olvidado”¹⁹ of *Veus Gitanes* in Spain), visual arts (for example the Holocaust-inspired exhibition *Zalikerdo Drom*²⁰, or the Warsaw mural-painting of Krzysztof Gil, which inspired the cover of this book), theatre and music (for example, the hip-hop song by Purse & T-MOE “Ihr seht was passiert”). In this, Romani youth often transgresses ethnic boundaries and constructs alliances with other youth movements, most notably with Jewish and Armenian youth, reflecting together on the shared experiences of historical persecution, experienced genocides and present-day discrimination²¹.

What is in the book?

The book we present here is not a typical academic volume neither in its content, selection of authors, nor its format. The volume is conceived as interdisciplinary, cross-institutional and inter-generational. The heterogeneity of voices included in this volume reflects richness of perspectives, experiences and points of view. We invited to contribute to this book Roma and non-Roma scholars of various disciplines, senior and youth Roma activists, organizations and institutions, and, most importantly, Roma Holocaust survivors. The articles included in this book have diverse formats – scholarly articles, manifests, personal

¹⁹ <https://goteo.org/project/holocausto-gitano?lang=es> (access: 17/10/2015)

²⁰ OWZPAP, *Zalikerdo Drom/ Przerwana Podróż* (12/09/2014). Retrieved October 15, 2015 from: <http://www.owzpap.pl/start/29-archiwum/262-zalikerdo-drom.html>.

²¹ Anna Mirga-Kruszelnicka, „Roma civil society, non-Roma involvement and modern Roma youth activism“, in: *New Roma activism in the New Europe*, Sam Beck and Ana Ivasic (eds.) (Berghahn Books: *forthcoming*).

testimonies, speeches and an interview. Our aim is to provide an inclusive space which uplifts non-academic knowledge to ranks of equal importance with academic discourse. Many of those, beyond providing unique perspectives, can be treated as primary sources for further research.

The sections of the book correspond to the three trends described above, which happened to meet and interact in the context of “Dikh he na bister”.

The first section of the book reflects on academic viewpoints and new research regarding Holocaust education. It is introduced by Carla Andrés and Anna Martínez Millán’s critical review of the conference. From this piece, readers who have not been present at the venue will be able to get a view of how the event elapsed, provided by two attending academics and volunteers. Their informed views tie with the academic perspectives that follow.

Sławomir Kaprański in his article explains the long period of silence regarding the Roma Genocide by analysing various factors that have caused it. He then characterises the process of regaining memory and shows how the experience of persecution and fear has been changed into empowerment of the Roma people. In the subsequent chapter, Mikhail Tyaglyy seeks to explore how the fate of the Roma who perished during the German and Romanian occupation is being remembered in contemporary Ukraine. He discusses this question from the perspectives of culture and politics of memory. Andrzej Mirga looks at the history of the Roma Holocaust recognition and commemoration through an inter-generational lens. He analyses the differences of approaches with regards to memory and history of the Roma Genocide of the three generations of Roma activists since the end of WWII. In her piece, Ethel Brooks looks at the changing role of remembrance for Romani communities, emphasizing the present time as a crucial breaking point: the last moment where we are able to engage in dialogue with those who lived and survived the Holocaust. She elaborates on the importance of testimonies, stories, and acts of resistance, which are yet to be given the place they

deserve on WWII archives, our collective memory, and remain disconnected from present realities. Finally, Andrej Umansky and Costel Nastasie share some findings from a unique documentation project conducted in Eastern Europe by Yahad-In Unum and Roma Dignity organizations. Their project is at the forefront of fieldwork on under-researched events during WWII, including digital mapping and recording of life-stories that continue telling us about the magnitude of extermination technologies beyond the concentration camps.

The second section of the book deals with “commemoration as practice” and aims at reviewing various strategies and tools used to commemorate the Roma Holocaust. This practice is not restricted to commemorative events explicitly, but rather looks at how the Roma Holocaust is being remembered, and what tools can be used to teach and disseminate knowledge on this historical event. Karen Polak introduces us to how workshops on the Roma Holocaust education have taken place in different contexts and with different audiences. Her work provides valuable lessons and references for readers who wish to explore pedagogical practices. From here on, the pieces focus on concrete cases: Marcin Szewczyk provides a concise but powerful description of how a publication for children can tackle such crucial topics; Miroslav Brož reminds us of the open wound of the Lety concentration camp in the Czech Republic, to this day a pig farm; and finally Adam Bartosz gives us hope through an account of the self-organized commemoration in the Polish town of Szczurów, which has its own history of recognition and commemoration of experiences during WWII. Pierre Chopinaud concludes with a poignant voice from Paris, the place where the Romani Resistance movement has raised the question of how to link past and present experiences shared by Roma people.

The third section of the book is dedicated to the youth perspectives. We recognize the potential of youth agency and their immense role in advancing with the Roma Holocaust recognition. The Roma and non-Roma youth organizations and activists, and

ternYpe specifically, have played a key role in promoting the Roma Holocaust internationally and have become multipliers locally. We invited Roma youth to share their experiences, their thoughts and their feelings regarding the Roma Holocaust and the “Dikh he na bister” experience and to show us what role they see for themselves in this process.

Karolina Mirga and Jonathan Mack introduce this final section with a description of the road that ternYpe has traversed since its first members came together in 2010. To conclude the book the reader will find four testimonials of young Romani thinkers from different European countries (Bulgaria, Spain, Romania/France, Serbia/Canada) who took active part in the event’s organization. Their experiences are intertwined with their own messages about the importance of such opportunities in the future.

What has come out of this exercise?

As it is evident above, the conference itself was a gamble for cross-disciplinary, cross-institutional and cross-generational dialogue. The multiplicity of both participants and presenters allowed for a constant exchange of views in between sectors that are not necessarily characterized for working together. It made evident the need to cross the boundaries of policy making, academic work and grass-roots mobilization towards collective action. It also made evident the intertwined interests, and objectives that convened all of the sectors involved; as well as how lived experiences go beyond the boundaries previously imposed to these disciplines and movements.

Another realization is the evidence of the need to multiply efforts through different types of educational practices. The articles show a variety of techniques and approaches that span from direct intensive face-to-face workshops, to virtual education; from academic articles and research, to publications focused on children and their families; from official and ritual commemorations of past events, to actions that also concern present-day developments. Formal and non-formal education came together

during this event, with unexpected and many times exciting results. Techniques used by one or the other allowed for the deep involvement of many of the participants.

We have made the decision to frame the volume between two testimonies, the voices of two Romani Holocaust survivors, Zoni Weisz (preface) and József Forgács (epilogue) for very concrete reasons. Narrative and orality have been central to Romani social life and movements, especially in such a context that archival knowledge has been so fragmented and in lieu of recovery. The conference assumed the need of a space where “intangibles/nuances that are best transmitted and understood when shared experiences, epistemologies and the relationship to both are evident”²². The construction of knowledge about the Roma Holocaust would need to be made from within the experiences of the survivors themselves in perhaps the last moment in which their embodied knowledge is present with us.

As said before, it is only these spaces that have allowed for their own life-story to inform dominant views on education and research on the Roma Holocaust. As a lesson from indigenous methodologies in other contexts, “The knowledge framework will be one that is holistic and integrated, and this will further the view of research and research training and its impact on peoples and cultures.”²³ The important presence of non-Roma **and** Roma thinkers, intellectuals, scholars, practitioners, among many others, granted a unique chance for the construction of new possibilities of collaboration and new routes for thought and action. That this event took place in Cracow, and later allowed the participants to go back to Auschwitz-Birkenau concentration and death camp, has also an added value. As Ethel Brooks reminds us in her previous writings:

²² Christopher Dunbar, “Critical Race Theory and Indigenous Methodologies”, in: N. K. Denzin & Y. S. Lincoln (eds.), *Handbook of Critical and Indigenous Methodologies*. (Los Angeles: Sage, 2008). p. 90.

²³ Ibidem, p.92.

Reclaiming the camp reminds us – that we are still relegated to camps for refugees, and internment camps for migrants, while at the same time acting as a challenge to those facilitating the expulsion across Europe, in Kosovo, Italy, Serbia, France, Germany, the UK and beyond. This reclamation of the camp would also relocate a collective memory and a recognition of collective suffering, genocide, and ethnic cleansing to which we have been subjected throughout history.²⁴

The present volume could not have been completed without the financial contribution of the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance (IHRA) and the Europe for Citizens Programme of the European Commission. We are extremely grateful for the generosity of these institutions and organizations. The conference needed the selfless efforts of a very large number of volunteers and coordinators who, without expecting anything in return, made the event a great space for exchange, dialogue and debate that resulted. We also thank the authors, who generously contributed to the volume and dedicated their time to produce the polished pieces that are without a doubt a first step towards a more engaged scholarship of the Roma Holocaust. We hope that these resources and efforts will encourage many more instances for reclaiming the camp.

²⁴ Ethel Brooks., "Reclaiming: The Camp and the Avant-Garde", in: D. Baker & M. Hlavajova (eds.), *We Roma: A Critical Reader in Contemporary Art* (Amsterdam: BAK, 2013).

Education for Remembrance of the Roma Genocide: Reflections from the Conference

Carla Andrés and Anna Martínez-Millán

Introduction

On July 31st, 2014 an important event took place in Cracow. “Dikh he na bister” Roma Genocide Remembrance Initiative gathered over one thousand people from twenty-five countries to mobilize for the official recognition of August 2nd as the Roma Holocaust Memorial Day and to continue fighting against discrimination, Antigypsyism and racism, which Romani communities still face today¹. On the occasion of the 70th anniversary of August 2nd, ternYpe International Roma Youth Network called for the remembrance of the 2,897 Romani people murdered in 1944 in the gas chambers of Auschwitz-Birkenau, and for the need for involvement, engagement and solidarity among Roma and non-Roma people to prevent past atrocities from happening again.

In the framework of this event, an international expert conference “Education for Remembrance of the Roma Genocide” took place, co-hosted by ternYpe and the Pedagogical University (UP)

¹ Find useful information about anti-discrimination against minorities in Europe at the ERGO Network website <http://www.ergonetwork.org/ergo-network/advocacy/anti-gypsyism/>, and at Romareact website <http://www.romareact.org/>, also regarding anti-discrimination and minority rights. You can visit also the European Roma Rights Centre <http://www.errc.org/> for more information.

of Cracow. The conference reflected on the key issues regarding commemoration, recognition, Holocaust education and Human Rights of the Roma people.

The term “Genocide” is defined, according to the United Nations, as “a denial of the right of existence of entire human groups”², aiming at extermination of minority groups such as the Roma. The term “Roma Genocide” refers to the mass extermination of the Roma and Sinti throughout Europe, which took place under the Nazi regime and its allied fascist regimes³. Holocaust, on the other hand, refers to acts of genocide which took place during World War II. The genocide of the Jews is known as *Shoah* and the Roma Genocide is known as *Porrajmos* or *Samudaripen*. Both groups were persecuted with the objective of their complete extermination. LGBT groups, people with disabilities and political opponents were also targeted by the Nazi regime.

During the Roma Genocide Remembrance Initiative 2014, participants over the course of four days could join diverse workshops and debates about the current situation and its links with the past, Holocaust education and remembrance initiatives and policies. Additionally, the program also included a visit and official Commemoration of the Romani victims of the Holocaust at the Auschwitz-Birkenau concentration camp. With the motto “Dikh he na bister!” (meaning “Look and don’t forget!”), a number of cultural events and workshops took place, at the same time as the international expert conference “Education for Remembrance of the Roma Genocide”. The conference brought together over seventy experts, stakeholders and educational multipliers of Roma and non-Roma youth organizations and activists. It was based on the need to raise awareness about the Roma Genocide and to strengthen educational value and significance of memorial events, focusing mainly on new Roma generations. This article presents

² *The Roma Genocide*. Retrieved October 10, 2015 from: <http://2august.eu/the-roma-genocide/>.

³ *Ibidem*.

a summary of the key issues discussed during the conference at the UP of Cracow between July 31st and August 1st.

Topics of discussions and aims of the lectures

The conference was a great success thanks to the wide participation of different stakeholders, both Roma and non-Roma. Activists, Roma, Jewish and other minority organizations, institutions from the European Union, Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE), the United Nations (UN), the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance (IHRA), the Council of Europe as well as Roma and non-Roma scholars from different countries, participated and shared their knowledge, experiences, concerns and expectations.

One of the most meaningful issues discussed was the importance of keeping memories alive⁴. Remembering is a key pillar for action. Demonstrating and commemorating are possible tools, among others, to seek historical and present justice. Claiming recognition of the Roma Genocide by making it part of mainstream history is fundamental for Roma inclusion in the European context today. Agency and self-organisation in the contemporary world goes through the creation and spreading of historical discourses and memories of those who were silenced for decades. This was an opportunity to create a space of reflection where youth perspectives, academic research and institutional practice could intersect and engage in a dialogue.

The first panel focused on “Awareness and Research about the Roma Genocide in World War II”. This issue is indeed very complex because, among other facts, death toll statistics have not been exact, as Dr. Piotr Trojański presented in his talk about the IHRA Project “Multi-year work plan on killing sites”. As mentioned in the handbook presented by Ellie Keen, “Right to Remember.

⁴ See the program of the “International Conference on Remembrance and Holocaust Education” in the Annex of this book.

A Handbook for Education with Young People on the Roma Genocide”, there are serious debates regarding the disagreement about the number of Romani victims during World War II. Furthermore, there are still numerous blind spots in research about the Roma Genocide and it is necessary to unravel what happened to Roma people during the war and under the fascist regimes in the past. Many Roma people were sent to the gas chambers directly, without being registered in the official documents. The omission of this crude part of European history partially legitimates how European and national policies were implemented in detriment of minorities, including Roma people. For example, there were no Romani witnesses in the Nuremberg Trials after the war⁵. And there has not been an appropriate Holocaust and anti-discrimination education and policies. This has its consequences, as hate speeches and hate crimes still happen in the current European context despite the existence of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the willingness to promote democratic values by numerous national and international institutions. Thus, there is a need to raise awareness about the horrors of the past by promoting education about the Roma Genocide as there is still a general lack of knowledge about it. Even in the present day it is still rarely mentioned in school and history textbooks.

Nonetheless, all the suffering and human rights violations cannot only be remembered from the perspective of victimhood. This would underestimate the acts of resistance of Roma people. For example, the uprising of Roma on May 16th, 1944, is now a symbol of resistance and humanity⁶. Remembering resistance and keeping struggling is empowering, as stated by La Voix des

⁵ Guenter Lewy, *The Nazi persecution of the Gypsies*. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000).

⁶ Regarding this, the *Romano Ustipen Day* (Roma Up-rising day) and ahead of the European Elections on 22–25 May 2015, a campaign was raised calling members of Roma youth organizations, partners and activists to mobilize for a “Wall Free Europe”. See more at: <http://2august.eu/the-roma-genocide/16-may-romani-resistance-day/> (access: 15/09/2015).

Rroms, a Roma youth NGO in France, represented by Saimir Mile and Pierre Chopinaud⁷ at the event⁸.

“Memorial days, commemoration and recognition” were main topics of the second panel. Ethel Brooks⁹, Associate Professor in the Departments of Women’s and Gender Studies and Sociology at Rutgers University, first addressed the question of how to bring meaning into memorial days, how to find alternatives and to talk across generations through different sources, such as oral histories. She talked about international recognition and commemoration and pointed out that analyzing life stories allows us to understand diversity of experiences and not transform it into a simple number. It is important to tell history from the perspective of difference. Transnationality and trans-generationality should enrich how we think about historical records.

There has never been a consistent reeducation to avoid both the regrowth of fascist movements and their renewed presence in public spheres. Therefore, there is still a long way to fight discrimination and hate towards difference. We need to build resources, collaborate and work together on alternatives, across countries, ethnicities and generations. Institutional recognition is also important. August 2nd as the Roma Holocaust Memorial Day has been recognized by the Polish Government and recently by the European Parliament¹⁰, where the need to commemorate the victims of the Roma genocide and combating Antigypsyism

7 See Chapter “A Romani Resistance Manifesto” by Pierre Chopinaud.

8 An interesting book called “Avava Ovava” has been recently written and published by Anina Ciuciu, Lise Foisneau, Pierre Chopinaud, Samir Mile and Valentin Merlin, co-edited by Al Dante /La Voix des Rroms, France, 2014.

9 See Chapter “International Commemoration: A Watershed Moment in History and a Wish List for the Future” by Ethel Brooks.

10 “European Parliament recognizes August 2 as the European Roma Holocaust Memorial Day” (2015) <http://2august.eu/ep-recognition/>. Also, see the Declaration of the European Parliament at <http://www.europarl.europa.eu/news/en/news-room/content/20150414IPR41851/html/MEPs-urge-end-to-Roma-discrimination-and-recognition-of-Roma-Genocide-Day> (access: 15/09/2015).

at all levels was supported by a large parliamentary majority. This is a step forward, but it has still not translated into establishing systematic Roma Genocide education. In addition and despite achieved progress, there are still camps like Lety (Czech Republic)¹¹ or Jasenovac (Croatia)¹² that remain largely unknown. The suffering of many Roma communities is invisibilized in the mainstream history. It is not possible to live in a democratic society if lies continuously appear in the public discourse and an important part of our European common history is forgotten. Collective action must be linked to commemoration, therefore organizing and participating in public events to raise awareness is as important as activism at an international, national and local level.

The second day of the conference on August 1st started with a concert performed by the children of the Superar Choir¹³ from Slovakia, who sang songs both in English and the Romani language. The welcoming was also made in *Romanes*, remarking that the language is a common identity symbol for the Roma and pointing out that there is a need to recognize it as part of the transnational and cultural richness by including it in official educational curricula. The day began by reviewing attendance and participation in the Social Forum organized at the Pedagogical University of Cracow, which took place the day before. Participants exchanged experiences, ideas and different perceptions among each other.

The last panel focused on “Experiences, methodologies and educational tools” in Roma Genocide and Holocaust education. In a more practical approach, experts presented relevant information and interesting toolkits and methodologies for Holocaust education. The handbook “Right to Remember”, written by Ellie Keen, was also presented. The author is a Human Rights activist who works for the Council of Europe and committed to the fight

¹¹ For more information on the Lety camp, read Chapter “Lety Pig Farm Case” by Miroslav Broz.

¹² “Jasenovac Memorial Site” <http://www.jusp-jasenovac.hr/>.

¹³ <http://slovakia.superar.eu/?lang=en> (access: 15/09/2015).

against hate speech and the promotion of Human Rights education and education for democratic citizenship¹⁴. This handbook is an interesting tool for education with young people on the Roma Genocide which focuses on remembrance and Human Rights education. Another example was the initiative presented by Gerhard Baumgartner¹⁵ and Karen Polak¹⁶ with the teaching materials “The Fate of European Roma and Sinti during the Holocaust”¹⁷, a useful online educational tool that makes us think about the best practices and new online strategies. It shows that we need to work towards a wider audience, not only schools. Teresa Wontor-Cichy, historian and worker at the Auschwitz Museum, which the participants could visit on August 2nd, presented this memorial place and its work for Holocaust education. To sum up, all initiatives noted how important it is to create spaces, physical and virtual, to learn the history of the Roma and about human rights challenges.

The closing session was a balance of all efforts that are still needed against discrimination and racism, but also a reflection on how the movement has grown in the last years together with other social demands from other sectors of society and populations. It is not a single or an isolated struggle. During the two days of lectures, the underlying question was: What kind of 21st

¹⁴ Some other featured books written by Ellie Keen: “Bookmarks: A Manual for Combating Hate Speech online through Human Rights Education” (2014) or “Companion: A Campaign Guide About Education and Learning for Change in Diversity, Human Rights and Participation” (2007).

¹⁵ Gerhard Baumgartner is a historian, journalist and a Council of Europe expert. He is a senior fellow at the Vienne Wiesenthal Institute for Holocaust Research, leader of the current project “Name-Database of Austrian Holocaust Victims among the Roma and Sinti”, lecturer at the University of Applied Science FH- Joanneum in Graz (Austria) and TV editor. He has lectured in several universities in Salzburg, Vienna, Budapest, Klagenfurt and Tel Aviv.

¹⁶ See Chapter “Teaching the Roma Genocide” by Karen Polak.

¹⁷ You can visit this online educational tool at the website: <http://www.romas-intigenocide.eu/en/teacher> (access: 15/09/2015).

century do we want for us and our children? Institutional violence towards all minorities is still there, including the Roma, Jews, LGTB, migrants from the so-called Global South, among many others. If we want to coexist in a world with equal rights, it is urgent to share common struggles and mobilize together.

Participation

The Roma Genocide Remembrance Initiative 2014 was an exceptional space for intergenerational and international participation. A space where hundreds of people of different ages and countries found a unique moment to share their knowledge, experiences, perspectives and concerns about the past and present of the Roma people.

The participation during the panels was always very active. Lecturers and attendees were receptive and predisposed to feedback, to share their different points of view and their own perspectives. Also the workshops, which took place in the campus of the Pedagogical University of Cracow, became spaces with a large audience and a participatory environment. These workshops were given by a wide number of experts and addressed various issues related to the Roma. Facilitators offered talks about the Roma Genocide, Holocaust education, Human Rights and Antigypsyism. Some workshops aimed to share with the participants different aspects of the Romani arts and culture¹⁸. The interest and the proximity among participants and facilitators favoured the active involvement of the attendees. In general, panels of the conference and workshops were places where everyone could participate in the construction of common narratives and ideas.

The heterogeneous environment at the event was not only very different for its international environment, but also for its intersectional nature. The event counted with the participation

¹⁸ Find more information about the workshops: http://2august.eu/wp-content/uploads/2013/07/booklet_v7-final-online.pdf (access: 15/09/2015).

of people linked to the academic world, activists, different civil organizations, and with the support of international organizations like the European Parliament and the Council of Europe. It is important to note that not only Roma people joined - there were also non-Roma academics, attendees, activists and volunteers who wanted to be part of the commemoration of the tragedy of the Roma Genocide during World War II. Participation of both Roma and non-Roma people was an opportunity to exchange points of view across borders, making evident the need to communicate. Fighting against discrimination and racism is a common struggle for the society as a whole. There was also the participation of the European Union of Jewish Students (EUJS), represented in the conference by Andi Gergely, its president¹⁹. "Dikh he na Bister" shared a common aim with EUJS: the struggle against stereotypes and prejudices that legitimize segregation and social exclusion processes; this becomes then a joint responsibility. The conference was a necessary space for the exchange of experiences, learning from each other, and sharing a common history.

The intersection of different speeches of experts and non-experts, Roma and non-Roma, youngsters and elders, was a key element at the event and absolutely necessary to build a rich, well-informed and comprehensive discourse. In addition, as an essential part of the event, we could hear statements of various Roma Holocaust survivors: Zoni Weisz²⁰, József Forgács²¹, Else Baker, Raymond Gurême and Rita Prigmore²². Through their dramatic stories we could learn from lives marked by tragedy and overcoming but also by a strong sense of resistance and justice.

¹⁹ Find more information about the organization (EUJS) at <http://www.eujs.org/> (access: 15/09/2015).

²⁰ See the Preface "Transgenerational transfer of war trauma within the Roma and Sinti community" by Zoni Weisz.

²¹ Read the interview with Jozsef Forgacs in the Epilogue of this book.

²² You can find the full list of Romani survivors who participated in the event at: http://2august.eu/wp-content/uploads/2013/07/booklet_v7-final-online.pdf (access: 15/09/2015).

Through these survivor testimonies, young participants could understand better the terrible events experienced at the concentration camps. During these talks, survivors and participants could discuss the importance of remembering the Holocaust within an intergenerational space.

The commemoration of August 2nd and the remembrance of the Roma Genocide took place in Cracow and in the premises of the Auschwitz-Birkenau concentration camp. This country suffered especially under Nazi occupation, and its territory contains one of the most infamous extermination camps: Auschwitz-Birkenau. In this camp, established by Nazi Germans in 1940, thousands of Roma, Jews, homosexuals, people with disabilities, among others, were enslaved and murdered by the Nazis during Hitler's regime²³. Visiting the concentration camp and listening to the testimonies of the survivors were emotional and revealing experiences. These moments of remembrance and recognition also took place in an atmosphere that was relaxed, friendly, very cohesive and collaborative.

The event became a field for reflection and discursive construction, a space for non-formal education and mutual learning. This is especially interesting since the lectures and workshops showed that some of the most important elements were education as a tool for empowerment, the defence of Roma Rights and the recovering of shared historical memory. Furthermore, the participation of numerous Roma youth organizations gave the event a strong youthful atmosphere, full of hope.

Conclusions

Without a doubt, the "Dikh he na bister" Roma Genocide Remembrance Initiative 2014 was an exceptional event in terms of commemoration of a past that deserves to be remembered and

²³ Find more information about Auschwitz-Birkenau concentration camp <http://auschwitz.org/en/history/the-number-of-victims/> (access: 15/09/2015).

fully recognized by institutions and society in general. Participation of hundreds of people united for memory and the struggle for recognition found a meeting point in a space of great communicative interaction, in which all opinions and experiences could be shared freely. The magnitude of the event and the rate of participation were of great historical importance and made it the biggest Roma commemorative event ever held.

Such an initiative is a key element in the processes of empowerment of the Roma who, since their arrival in the European continent, have been victims of numerous discriminatory acts, being the target of persecutions, tortures and hate crimes²⁴. Roma people could find in this event a place for convergence and joining forces to define common objectives and to express their demands for the recognition of their particular and common historical destinies. If there was something crucial that the participants could learn, it was the importance of education in the recovery of historical memory and the empowerment of youngsters. Creating non-formal educational spaces is important for the awakening of social consciousness and critical spirit among the new generations. These spaces should be positively valued as an educational alternative. The formal educative institutions transmit only a part of the history, a “selected culture” that makes educational resources in the reflection of certain ideology and makes textbooks legitimizing tools of a unique historical vision that does not consider the history of certain groups²⁵. Thus, the transmission of knowledge in informal and non-formal spaces as well as outside the socially accepted sources of knowledge becomes indispensable to recognize the forgotten groups like the Roma and the histories ignored by institutions. The experiences shared by Roma survivors with

²⁴ Julio Vargas Claveria & Jesus Gómez Alonso, “Why Roma do not like mainstream schools: Voices of a people without territory”, *Harvard Educational Review*, 2003, 73(4), pp. 559–590.

²⁵ Nieves Blanco, “La dimensión ideológica de los libros de texto”, *Kikiriki Cooperación Educativa*, 2001, pp. 61, 50–56.

the other generations become an immeasurable element of great educative value. With this in mind, it is necessary to create action areas in which past and present converge, where past histories and struggles of today come together, and where citizens and political organizations unite with a common goal. It is fundamental to give voice to people that want to continue fighting against Antigypsyism, discrimination and oblivion. This initiative has shown that Roma activism has a great capacity for self-organization and claim.

Challenges

The first seminar of Roma and Sinti issues organized by the ternYpe International Roma Youth Network took place in 2010. Although there were no previous experiences or know-how, it became an important moment in which Roma youth activists started building bridges between the survivors and the generations that followed them, as well as across national borders. History needs to be written also by the Roma as it is a tool for empowerment and self-consciousness. Four years after the first event and after long processes initiated by organizations and civil society, an important activist basis has been built. Nonetheless, although events like the Roma Genocide Remembrance Initiative are fundamental, what counts the most is what happens on daily basis: how individuals strive to self-organize through activism and in local initiatives. Collaborating with home organizations in every country and teaching and developing educational tools and materials about the Roma Genocide is necessary and urgent.

Furthermore, there is the challenge to create opportunities for alternative dissemination of knowledge in order to fight for the recognition of a plural history that goes beyond what is stipulated by institutions. We need an interpretation of history which includes multiple voices. The Roma, too, need to be able to articulate their own narratives of historical past. It is necessary to develop and promote collective human rights at an international level and work to build mechanisms that ensure rights of individuals but

also for groups and minorities; to create legal mechanisms that veil for the compliance of the Roma civil rights as well as to promote active citizenship and political participation. It is also important to create democratic intergenerational spaces for dialogue and to think about what the specific roles are within society. We need to look deeper and acknowledge existing inequalities that come from variables such as gender, age and socio-economic status. The final aim is to eliminate all existing inequalities and create equal opportunities for all, changing the society as a whole. To achieve this, it is necessary to work with communities, to understand their views and make local struggles the basis of global changes. It will be necessary to promote equitable access to these spaces for learning and reporting. These spaces should be open to everybody as much as possible.

To ensure that the Roma people, like other minorities, are represented in public spaces, intersubjective dialogues between communities, organizations and institutions are essential to create social policies according to their needs and to promote Roma participation in political and educational arenas. Holocaust and human rights education provide a context for reflection about values of equality, human dignity, respect, freedom, non-discrimination, justice, responsibility from a Human Rights perspective. Remembering and commemorating the Roma Genocide during World War II is part of a collective process claiming for Roma rights and recognition of a common history and identity. Institutional recognition of this collective history serves young Roma as an important mobilizing force for being active citizens, proud of their identity, empowered and self-organized. Being aware of our history and our present is a first step to create trust and mutual respect among the Roma and non-Roma.

SECTION 1

Academic Viewpoints and New Research

Roma Holocaust: The End of Silence

Sławomir Kaprański

The silenced memory

The long period of silence regarding the genocidal policies that affected many Roma communities in Europe and formed a part of the crucial event in the European history – the Holocaust – calls for an explanation. One can find three interrelated groups of factors that have caused the silence mentioned: the first is related to the very nature of the Roma genocide and its consequences; the second – to the scholarship on the Roma and the Holocaust as well as to the broader cultural context in which such scholarship has been carried out; the third comprises some features of the situation of Roma groups in the post-Holocaust Europe.

The genocide of the Roma during the Second World War was a result of a complicated process in which old anti-Roma measures and policies merged with Nazi regulations based on racist ideology. Crimes against the Roma were decentralized and desynchronized. Decision-making occurred at different levels of the Nazi apparatus of terror and was implemented by various units of the SS, army, and the police, with a particular role performed by the allies of Nazi Germany. The degree and nature of persecution varied depending on place, the kind and level of the involved institutions, particular constellation of interests, relations between different agencies, and ideologi-

cal frames¹. The intensity of persecution did not have a stable pattern and in different periods of time different categories of the Roma were targeted with different strength².

This partially explains why the comprehensive picture of the Roma suffering starts to emerge only recently. It requires a strenuous intellectual effort to understand that the persecution of the Roma had a single meaning, otherwise concealed behind divergent mechanisms and practices of implementation. The specific nature of the Roma Genocide made it difficult for threatened Roma people to work out efficient strategies of survival in the time of the Nazi rule, as well as to elaborate a consistent and commonly shared memory of that time afterward. Such common memory could not emerge spontaneously because of the different experiences of particular Roma groups and lack of a unitary political organization.

Although the Nazis' conception of "Gypsies" was built upon a racist ideology, on the level of concrete decisions and legal acts the racial thought had been concealed behind labels such as "asocial," "work-shy," or "socially unadjusted people." The difference drawn by racial scientists and some Nazi officials between "racially pure Gypsies" and "Gypsies of mixed origin", along with shifting policies toward those groups, further contributed to the postwar misconceptions and silence regarding the nature of the crimes committed against the Roma. Finally, the fate of the Roma has not been sufficiently documented by the perpetrators and we do not have rich archival materials that would reveal the full scale of the genocide.

The crimes committed against the Roma by National Socialists and their allies have not been brought to the attention of the world immediately after the Second World War and have not been condemned in a way similar to the crimes against Jews. When historical discourse that placed the Holocaust in the center of human

¹ Michael Stewart, "How Does Genocide Happen?", in R. Astuti, J. Parry, C. Stafford, eds., *Questions of Anthropology* (Oxford: Berg, 2007).

² Michael Zimmermann, "The Wehrmacht and the National Socialist Persecution of the Gypsies", *Romani Studies*, vol. 11, no 2 (2001).

history was eventually established, the Roma were at first excluded from the category of victims. This situation has changed only later, together with deconstruction of the thesis that the Holocaust was uniquely Jewish and its new presentation as a part of a historical continuum of genocidal persecution of various groups³. In many countries the very same people who participated in the administration of the Roma Genocide have been handling the matters of Roma survivors after the war, often perpetuating racist stereotypes and – with the support of public opinion – denying the Roma their basic rights⁴. This often caused fear among the Roma, associated with the feeling that anti-Roma violence can break out again at any time. Additionally, in the post-war Western Germany, the silence regarding the Roma Genocide can be attributed to the persistence of the “Nazi-like” narrative, according to which the persecution of the Roma had not been racial and could be justified by the alleged “criminal lifestyle” of the persecuted⁵.

Roma communities emerged from the Holocaust with severe wounds that threatened their physical, social, and cultural existence and had detrimental impact on the lives of the individuals. The death of approximately half a million people⁶ fundamentally damaged the social tissue of Roma life. In terms of social memory it should be mentioned that a large group of Roma victims con-

3 Dan Stone, “The Historiography of Genocide: Beyond “Uniqueness” and Ethnic Competition”, *Rethinking History: The Journal of Theory and Practice*, vol. 8, no. 1 (2004).

4 Günter Saathoff, “Preface”, in J. von dem Knesebeck, *The Roma Struggle for Compensation in Post-War Germany* (Hatfield: University of Hertfordshire Press, 2011), p. ix.

5 Gilad Margalit, “The Representation of the Nazi Persecution of the Gypsies in German Discourse after 1945”, *German History*, vol. 17, no. 2 (1999).

6 According to Donald Kenrick this is a “symbolic figure” based on estimation. Due to the lack of archival material, which is related to the specificity of the Nazi genocide of the Roma, the exact number of the Roma victims of the Nazi persecution will probably never be known (Donald Kenrick, “The Genocide of the Gypsies: What We Now Know and What We Still Don’t Know”, *The Holocaust in History and Memory*, vol. 3 (2000)).

sisted of the elderly and children: those who pass on the memory of group's life and those who receive it. The threat to the chain of generations which put in danger the continuity of Roma life turned to be also a missing link in the chain of Roma memories.

The experience of Nazi persecution created a cultural trauma for the Roma – a situation in which categories of traditional culture could no longer perform their role of regulators of social life and frames of interpretation that could give meaning to the world. The survivors associated their experience not only with oppression and threat of physical elimination, but also with destruction of the whole symbolic universe supported by cultural patterns (which was tantamount to cultural death). They learned first-hand that there are situations in which the elaborated protective mechanisms of traditional culture can offer no defense against the external threat. This experience subverted the sense of traditional culture and left Romani survivors with a permanently emasculated culture, ruined tradition, destroyed family and clan bonds, and weakened system of cultural cohesion⁷.

Having been socially discriminated against, the postwar Roma communities did not have access to means of production and reproduction of historical knowledge, nor was there a space for their experience in the public memories of European societies. The social and economic exclusion was therefore associated with exclusion from the community of memory. In this situation, the Roma have developed a number of defensive tools that further contributed to the silence regarding the Roma Genocide. One can thus speak of two mechanisms which together have contributed to the silence about the Roma Genocide. On the one hand, the non-Romani world has not been able (and willing) to recognize the Roma suffering as a part of the Holocaust discourse. On the other hand, Roma themselves have not been able or willing to bring their fate to public consciousness.

⁷ Lech Mróz, „Niepamięć nie jest zapomnaniem. Cyganie-Romowie a Holocaust”, *Przegląd Socjologiczny*, vol. 49, no. 2 (2000).

The postwar Roma often took a passive attitude and withdrew from public activities. Some decided to assimilate with the hope that this move would offer them more security. Some others – to the contrary – formed close communities and refused to integrate, separating from the dangerous world of non-Roma by the boundaries of traditional law and ritual.

It does not mean that the Roma generally tried to forget their experiences in the time of the genocide (although some indeed repressed their memories because of the fears they caused). In fact, many communities preserved living memories of persecution. These, however, had their resonance limited within particular families and clans. Family memories have not been supported by institutional structures, education, established practices of commemoration, and public recognition.

However, things have started to change. New systems of social relations have developed, no doubt – in no small measure – thanks to processes in which the Roma are acquiring agency and organizing themselves in a conscious search for new formulas for living in the contemporary world. As a result of this process, the Roma have not only found new partners with whom to talk about the past, but have also begun entering the precincts of the media, education, and popular culture along with their own discourses and visions of memory and commemorative practices. This has gradually led to the rise of forms of memory where the Roma preserve their past experience and make it relevant to their present and future.

Memory regained

Crucial factors in the growing interest in the historical approach to Roma identity are the growth of Roma organizations and attempts of at least some of them to devise the self-definition of the Roma in nation-like categories (including, for example, a concept of a “transnational nation”). In this approach, as well as in a modest one, in which the Roma are presented as a conglomerate of various groups, an important role is played by common memory that

could serve as a homogenizing factor, to the extent in which unity is needed in contemporary world to achieve the goals of the group(s).

Chronologically, the Nazi persecution had been first invoked in political discourse in the 1970s as a part of the German Sinti struggle for compensation and enfranchisement⁸. A crucial moment of this process was the hunger protest set up in 1980 by several Sinti activists in the former concentration camp Dachau. This event, which received broad media coverage, may be perceived as a turning point in the German Sinti struggle for recognition of their fate under the Nazi regime.

In 1981, German Sinti occupied the University Archives in Tübingen, where about twenty thousand files of German Sinti and Roma collected by the Nazis were stored. German Sinti and Roma were denied access to these files that contained evidence needed in their struggles to receive compensation. Symbolically, the protest in Tübingen can be interpreted as an attempt of the organized movement of Sinti and Roma to take control of their own past and to mobilize memory as a resource in their struggle for just treatment, against present-day discrimination, and as a part of their new identity-politics.

Identity politics has become even more important in activities of the International Romani Union. Its trans-national concept of pan-Romani identity, with great help of the East-European Roma political activists and traditions, involved a clear reference to the memory of the Roma Genocide during World War II. In this way, the Roma started to appear publicly as a people who have their own history, which was largely the history of their interactions with European societies and persecution the Roma suffered from them⁹. The Roma Holocaust may be perceived as the culmination of per-

⁸ Julia von dem Knesebeck, *The Roma Struggle for Compensation in Post-War Germany* (Hatfield: University of Hertfordshire Press, 2011).

⁹ Henriette Asséo, "L'avènement politique des Roms (Tsiganes) et le génocide. La construction mémorielle en Allemagne et en France", *Le Temps des Médias*, vol. 2, no. 5 (2005).

secution and as a condensation of different forms of discrimination to which the Roma were subjected. As such, the Roma Holocaust creates the linearity of Romani history, dividing it into periods “before” and “after”, and gives this history meaning as a continuous unfolding of persecution¹⁰.

Making the genocide a fundamental dimension of Romani history is – firstly – an effort to show the Roma as a people at the center of the most important events in Europe’s modern history, not as a marginalized people who vegetate outside of history. Second, a historical narrative of the fate of the Roma during the war can become an excellent link to unite the different groups into which the Roma are divided, by making them aware that in certain historical situations their differences did not matter: they were treated the same (at least in principle) because they were stigmatized as “Gypsies.” In this way, a uniform narrative of the Holocaust allows members of different Romani groups, who often do not feel closely associated or are even in conflict, to envision commonality of fate of the Roma, and this can have important consequences for the forms their political cooperation takes now and in the future. Third, the conception of history of the Roma as a (transnational) nation, which Romani activists have elaborated, can contribute to the creation of a paradigm of collective memory in which they can bring together dispersed individual or family memories. Fourth, the vision of Roma history based on experience of the genocide allows depicting contemporary persecutions of the Roma as a continuation of the Nazi persecutions and thereby surrounding them with a similar aura of moral condemnation.

The narrative of the Roma Holocaust victims may, therefore, perform well as a factor that unites different groups of the Roma by providing them with a cultural frame in which they can develop

¹⁰ Ian Hancock, “Gypsy History in Germany and Neighboring Lands. A Chronology Leading to the Holocaust and Beyond”, in D. Crowe and J. Kolsti, eds., *The Gypsies of Eastern Europe* (Armonk: New York: M. E. Sharpe, Inc., 1991).

their communicative memory of the Nazi persecution, or – if such memory is absent – with a “prosthetic” memory of suffering that is memory we wish to perceive as “ours”, even if it is not rooted in our direct experiences or those of our ancestors¹¹. It may strengthen the political construct of Roma as a people with history, the crucial point of which was the same as the history of other European nations and is paradigmatically exemplified by the narrative of the Holocaust. Apart from having been a useful (although not always efficient) tool for building a pan-Romani identity, such narrative is also a mean of empowerment. It helps Roma activists to claim the power of representation in a cultural sense: “the power to give a human community a symbolical representation of itself – that is, an identity which subsumes its inner divisions”¹².

One can thus say that memory of the genocide becomes the “foundational trauma”¹³ of the new Roma identity. This concept describes a situation when the perception of disastrous historical events that shattered the very base of a group’s existence becomes the starting point of a reflective, critical redefinition of the group’s identity that results in the incorporation of that perception as its important building block. In addition, foundational trauma offers a deeper sense of commonality for those who share the traumatic pain¹⁴ and a growing chance for the recognition of the group’s painful history within contemporary culture of memory which is

¹¹ Alison Landsberg, *Prosthetic Memory: The Transformation of American Remembrance in the Age of Mass Culture* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2004).

¹² Natalie J. Doyle, “Rediscovering Political Sovereignty. The Rebirth of French Political Philosophy”, in G. Delanty, S. P. Turner. eds., *Routledge International Handbook of Contemporary Social and Political Theory* (London: Routledge, 2011), p. 90.

¹³ Dominick LaCapra, *Writing History, Writing Trauma* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2004).

¹⁴ Frank R. Ankersmit, “Trauma and Suffering. A Forgotten Source of Western Historical Consciousness”. in J. Rüsen, ed., *Western Historical Thinking. An Intercultural Debate* (New York: Berghahn Books, 2002).

largely a “culture of trauma” and privileges traumatic memories as something worth remembering¹⁵.

The phenomenon of breaking the silence regarding the Roma genocide must be interpreted in the context of contemporary situation of Roma communities. The collapse of Communism in the Eastern part of Europe and the transformations of the economic situation in Western Europe radically altered the situation of the Roma and contributed to inadequacy of strategies of dealing with the environment they elaborated in the course of time¹⁶. If we apply Piotr Sztompka’s concept of the trauma of social change to the situation of the Roma, we could speak here of the “damage inflicted by major social change” on the “cultural tissue” of Roma groups¹⁷.

Such experience has contributed to unblocking or reconstitution of memories of the genocide during World War II, which form the cognitive frame in which the present situation becomes intelligible. It may be expected that people whose social world collapses would search for meaning of this situation in memories of similar moments in the past, especially when the conditions in which silencing of those memories had been functional, disappeared. This mechanism resembles to some extent the relation between “structural trauma” and “historical trauma” in the conception of Dominick LaCapra, in which anxieties caused by structural transformation receive a form of concrete fears associated with the past events¹⁸.

Finally, the broken silence regarding the plight of the Roma during World War II can contribute to recognition of the history of

¹⁵ Michael Lambek and Paul Antze, “Introduction. Forecasting Memory”, in P. Antze, M. Lambek, eds., *Tense Past. Cultural Essays in Trauma and Memory* (London: Routledge, 1996).

¹⁶ Zoltan Barany, *Explaining Marginality: Portrayals of East European Gypsies* (Budapest: Central European University, 1998).

¹⁷ Piotr Sztompka, „Cultural Trauma. The Other Face of Social Change”, *European Journal of Social Theory*, vol. 3. no. 4 (2000).

¹⁸ Dominick LaCapra, *Writing History...*

the Roma as a part of the European past and to the growing sense of solidarity with the present-day Roma. Jeffrey Alexander is rather pessimistic regarding this issue when he makes a direct reference to the situation of the Roma. As he says, "The Roma ('Gypsies') are acknowledged by many contemporary Central Europeans as trauma victims, the bearers of a tragic history. Yet insofar as large numbers of Central Europeans represent Roma people as deviant and uncivilized, they have not made that tragic past their own"¹⁹. In a more optimistic spirit, I would claim that the relation between recognition of trauma and solidarity with contemporary descendants of its victims is a dialectical process which may well start from the opposite end: the recognition of someone's trauma may lead (although by no means easily) to the social inclusion and broadening the boundaries of solidarity and identification.

The key role in this process will be performed by Roma intellectuals and activists, in a dialogue with non-Roma scholars and practitioners. Both sides can benefit from such an encounter. The non-Roma may revise their approaches to the universal history, including the concept of genocide, and critically examine their involvement in the acts of discrimination against the Roma. The Roma, in turn, may cultivate their own ways of representing their past, drawing upon resources of general theory of genocide and get a better insight into the complicated interpenetration of truth and politics, unity and diversity, memory and history. In this way, the preservation of tragic memory may be not only a part of politics of identity, but also a sign of respect for historical truth.

Memory, identity and empowerment

It is not an easy thing to change the experience of persecution and fear into empowerment and pride and there are many ambushes along the way. For example, when memory focuses mostly on

¹⁹ Jeffrey C. Alexander, *Trauma. A Social Theory* (Cambridge: Polity, 2012), p. 19.

past persecution, it forms a circle from which it is difficult to get out and which creates an obstacle to seeing the real problems of the present. Shimon Samuels rightly observes that the “massive investment in memory has neither prevented nor mitigated the resurgence of anti-Semitism, gypsophobia, homophobia or even skinhead violence against the disabled. Dare one suggest that mourning for the victims of 70 years ago is so much easier than defending the same victims groups of today?”²⁰ As a matter of fact, it is easier, which makes some Roma activists reject the Holocaust discourse together with the whole issue of identity politics as not contributing to solution of the most vital problems of Roma communities.

Pal Tamas argues, for example, that in the history of the Roma movement the decade of 1990s was marked mostly by efforts to cope with the economic deprivation and institutional discrimination, while towards the end of that period we could witness the beginnings of self-organization of the Romani elites and growing importance of political forms of activity as well as identity discourses²¹. It may be hypothesized that this sequence is a result of the general failure of the attempt to improve the living conditions of the Roma and the following switch of Roma organizations to identity politics, success that has been easier to achieve. But we may also claim that even if the attempts to improve the economic situation have been largely unsuccessful, institutional frameworks developed on this occasion have strengthened and become focal points of Romani activities and contributed to the development of a political agenda, including the struggle for recognition of Romani identities.

²⁰ Shimon Samuels, “Holocaust memory as a fig leaf for modern hate”, *The Times of Israel* (January 24, 2013). Retrived October, 14, 2015 from: blogs.timesofisrael.com/memory-as-a-fig-leaf-for-contemporary-hate/.

²¹ Pal Tamas, “Central European Roma Policy: National Minority Elites, National States and the EU”, in: R. Stauber and R. Vago, eds., *The Roma: A Minority in Europe. Historical, Political and Social Perspectives* (Budapest and New York: Central European University Press, 2007).

It should be noted that for some authors the two aims of the Roma movement may contradict one another. For example, Martin Kovats claims that “greater political attention and...representation” has not contributed to the betterment of economic situation and living conditions of the large masses of the Roma. Moreover, according to this author, the politics of identity, which claims that all Romani groups make up a more or less homogenous cultural-political unit, essentially different from their social environments, shall be rejected as contributing to: (1) the ethnic and nationalist divides; (2) the economic fragmentation of Romani communities; (3) the perpetuation of anti-Roma stereotypes and the political and social isolation of the Roma²². Also, for Dimitrina Petrova, it is the issue of human rights that unites the Roma, while the issue of identity divides them²³.

Political activists have recently found an ally in the groups of Roma intellectuals of younger generation²⁴, who critically reflect on those leaders who impose a ready-made identity of the Holocaust victims on all Roma, in spite of the fact that many of them may prefer to identify differently. Behind this criticism there is a rejection of fixed identities having been imposed by some sort of external authority, regardless whether this is a Roma political activist or a non-Roma scholar. At the same time, new Roma intellectuals assert the primacy of self-ascription in the field of identity-building processes, which makes an identification with the Nazi persecution possible even for those whose ancestors did

²² Martin Kovats, “The Politics of Roma Identity: Between Nationalism and Destitution”, *Open Democracy*, (July, 29, 2003), p. 1–2. Retrived October, 14, 2015 from: <http://www.opendemocracy.net/>.

²³ Dimitrina Petrova, “Competing Romani Identities”, *Roma Rights*, no 3 (1999).

²⁴ Brian A. Belton, *Questioning Gypsy Identity. Ethnic Narratives in Britain and America* (Walnut Creek, CA: Altamira Press, 2005); Damian Le Bas, “The Possible Implications of Diasporic Consciousness for Romani Identity”, in D. Le Bas, T. Acton, eds., *All Change! Romani Studies Through Romani Eyes* (Hatfield: University of Hertfordshire Press, 2010); Gregor Dufunia Kwiek, “Afterword: Rom, Roma, Romani, Kale, Gypsies, Travellers, and Sinti... Pick a Name and Stick with It, Already”, in D. Le Bas, T. Acton, eds., *All Change! Romani Studies through Romani Eyes* (Hatfield: University of Hertfordshire Press, 2010).

not suffer from them, but also secures descendants of the victims the right to identify themselves in a different way.

We may thus speak, in more general terms, about a split of the agenda of the Roma movement, which is paralleled by the split within Romani studies²⁵, into the economy/human rights approach and the cultural politics of identity. The problem of the two approaches is that there hardly is a connection between policy-oriented research on the conditions of life and the cultural-political approaches to identity. Rare exceptions focus on a very general link between the social position of the Roma and their identities, and interpret “being Rom” as a defensive social mechanism against the hostile environment²⁶ or, less radically, as a social and cultural “response to the nature of the symbiotic relationship between the Roma and the wider majority communities on which they have always depended for their livelihood”²⁷.

An interesting perspective of synthesizing the “inequality/exclusion” approach and the “identity approach” within a single theoretical perspective is offered by Axel Honneth’s recognition theory, modified in view of Nancy Fraser’s criticism. This theory conceptualizes society as a network of the relations of recognition²⁸ and identifies cultural recognition of identity and difference as the main goal of political struggle to eliminate social injustice²⁹. In this

²⁵ Thomas Acton, “Romani Politics, Scholarship, and the Discourse of Nation-Building”, in A. Marsh, E. Strand, eds., *Gypsies and the Problem of Identities: Contextual, Constructed and Contested* (Istanbul: Swedish Research Institute, 2006).

²⁶ Michael Stewart, “How Does Genocide...”

²⁷ Will Guy, “Romani Identity and Post-Communist Policy”, in W. Guy, ed., *Between Past and Future. The Roma of Central and Eastern Europe* (Hatfield: University of Hertfordshire Press, 2001), p. 5.

²⁸ Axel Honneth, *The Struggle for Recognition: The Moral Grammar of Social Conflicts* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1995).

²⁹ Fraser, Nancy (2003) Social Justice in the Age of Identity Politics: Redistribution, Recognition, and Participation. In: N. Fraser and A. Honneth, *Redistribution or Recognition? A Political-Philosophical Exchange*. London and New York: Verso.

way, it is capable of simultaneously handling two types of justice in contemporary world: one aiming at a “more just distribution of resources and wealth,” the other at a “difference-friendly world, where assimilation to majority or dominant cultural norms is no longer the price for equal respect”³⁰.

In this perspective, a special attention shall be given to the problem of recognition of Romani memories/histories and the right of the Roma to express their perception of the past³¹. In other words, the field of history can be seen as an area in which the politics of identity and the fight for redistribution and human rights may successfully merge in the process of Romani mobilization of the past, understood as an exercise in legitimation of their communal goals.

Consequently, we may say that identity-oriented activities can contribute to the improvement of the economic situation of the Roma, for example thanks to their potential in fighting Antigypsyism, which is often at the core of the economic discrimination, or because the identity-oriented activities of a community may legitimize its leadership and improve its position in the fight for resource redistribution. An interesting case of a Romani mobilization that comprised identity politics, material issues, and human rights was the fight for the compensation for the Nazi persecution fought by the German Sinti³². It means that the last twenty years of Romani movement in Europe can also be seen as a balanced development of multiple claims and goals in which economic issues have mixed up with political or cultural ones³³.

³⁰ Nancy Fraser, “Social Justice in the Age of Identity Politics: Redistribution, Recognition, and Participation”, in N. Fraser and A. Honneth, *Redistribution or Recognition? A Political-Philosophical Exchange* (London and New York: Verso, 2003), p. 7.

³¹ Anna M. Reading, “The European Roma: An Unsettled Right to Memory”, in P. Lee, P. N. Thomas, eds., *Public Memory, Public Media, and the Politics of Justice* (Houndmills, Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012).

³² Julia von dem Knesebeck, *The Roma Struggle...*

³³ Jean-Pierre Liégeois, *Roma in Europe. Strasbourg* (Strasbourg: Council of Europe Publishing, 2007).

We may thus speak of the Roma as a community that has divided group memories but which – through its political movement – tends to unite in acts of remembrance. Their aim is to secure a better future not only in terms of the recognition of the tragic past of the Roma, but also through their claim for a more just redistribution of resources and an improvement of their material situation.

Roma Genocide: Historic and Symbolic Meanings for Collective Memory and Identity

Andrzej Mirga

During the last decade, and especially in the last years, the efforts of Roma activists with regard to the recognition of the Roma Genocide have brought visible results. The international community and its organizations, along with several countries, have recognized the Roma Genocide and the practice of commemorating it has been officially established. This is a remarkable achievement of few Roma activists, however, after so many decades since the end of WWII.

In this paper I analyse approaches of survivors, their children and present-day Roma youth to memory and history of the Roma Genocide.¹ I argue that each generation has had their own aims and accomplishments and has thus faced specific challenges acting in given historic circumstances. For each one memory and history of Roma persecution has also represented a different meaning for identity construction. Overall, their struggle, which started in the 1960s, has been successful, both historically and symbolically. The unveiling of the monument to honour the Roma and Sinti Victims of Genocide in *Tiergarten*, near the Bundestag in Berlin, in October 2012, marked its closure. The Roma Genocide has

¹ Marianne Hirsch, "The generation of Postmemory", *Poetics Today* 29:1, (Spring 2008). Retrieved October 12, 2015 from: www.columbia.edu/mh2349/papers/generation.pdf.

been officially and symbolically recognized and commemorated at the highest political level. I conclude, however, that at the level of general public, efforts to expand knowledge and teaching about the Roma Genocide have not had similar transformational impact as they have with regards to mainstream elite. Negative or racist anti-Roma attitudes remain high in majority societies across Europe. The third generation of Roma or Roma youth faces, therefore, a serious challenge: How to deal with anti-Gypsyism that is on rise in various parts of Europe?

Explaining Roma “forgotten Holocaust”

History is marked by events and stories which are the basis for people’s memory and narratives. Among these are key historical or traumatic events, such as the Holocaust, that delineate symbolically and historically all that has been “before” and “after”.² The past that is framed in a group’s own historic narratives entail also institutionalized memory, such as remembrance events. These events are important not only because they signify the attachment of the living to those who perished, but they offer a way to overcome the trauma of the war for those who survived and continued a life afterwards. Remembering, therefore, keeps these memories alive and ultimately serves the group’s identity.³

All of these can be traced and identified in historical narratives and politics of historic memory among established nations or ethnic communities who faced persecution or genocides. When it comes to the Roma and their fate during the war, however, scholarly reflection points to relative absence of such narratives among its survivors, or its late appearance, arriving to rather

² “Holocaust: Memory”, *Encyclopedia Judaica* (2007). Retrieved October 13, 2015 from: www.encyclopedia.com/article-1G2-2587509142/holocaust-memory.html.

³ Daniel Levy, Natan Sznaider, “The Politics of Commemoration: The Holocaust, memory and Trauma”, in: Gerard Delanty (ed.), *The Handbook of Contemporary European Social Theory* (New York: Routledge, 2006).

questionable conclusions.⁴ Searching for some answers, scholars such as Kathie Trumpener⁵, Gay y Blasco⁶ or Michael Stewart⁷, to name a few, turn to Roma culture or specificity of their traditions to explain why it remained for so long a “Forgotten Holocaust”. Contrary to this standpoint, I would rather follow here the view of van Baar who contests these assertions.⁸ I uphold here the view that nothing in the way the Roma remember the past or keep its memory differs from that of majority, including trauma issues, nature of remembrance, learning about the past, interest of the third generation in the Roma Genocide, its use as a frame in reaching other political objectives, etc. Kapralski rightly observes that Roma memory and approach to the past is changing and that what was relevant in the past is not necessarily relevant now. Roma activists of today modernize their way of perceiving the past and their identity and develop it in a similar way as the mainstream populations do.⁹

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- ⁴ Sławomir Kapralski, *Naród z popiołów. Pamięć zagłady a tożsamość Romów* (Warszawa: Wydawnictwo Naukowe Scholar, 2012). Kapralski provides an overview of approaches among scholars and critically discusses them in Chapter 4 of his book devoted to History and memory, pp. 194–249.
- ⁵ Kathie Trumpener, “The time of the Gypsies. A ‘People without history’ in the Narratives of the West”, *Critical Inquiry*, Vol. 18, No. 4 (Summer, 1992). Retrieved October 24, 2015 from: www.colorado.edu/geography/leyk/geog_4742/readings/Trumpener_K_1992.pdf.
- ⁶ Gay y Blasco, “Evangelical transformations of forgetting and remembering: The politics of Gitano life”, in: F. Pine, D. Kaneff, H. Haukanes (eds.), *Memory, Politics and Religion. The Past meets the Present in Europe*, (Munster: Lit Verlag, 2004). Also: “ ‘We don’t know our descent’: How Gitanos of Jaramana manage the past”, *The Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute*, 2001/7(4). Retrieved October 20, 2015 from www.colorado.edu/geography/leyk/ant_4020/readings/gay_y_b;asco_2001.pdf.
- ⁷ Michael Stewart, “Remembering without commemoration: The mnemonics of politics of Holocaust memories among European Roma”, *Journal of Royal Anthropology Institute*, 2004 10.
- ⁸ Huub van Baar, *The European Roma: Minority Representation. Memory and the Limits of Transnational Governmentality* (Amsterdam: University of Amsterdam, 2011) Chapter 8, pp. 271–315.
- ⁹ Sławomir Kapralski, *Naród z popiołów...*, pp. 245–249.

As I argued elsewhere, this absence of the Roma Genocide narratives is better explained by the simple fact that the Roma did not have an educated elite or a tradition of historical reflection on the past that could be recorded and transferred to the next generation.¹⁰ The other side of the coin was that mainstream historians were the least interested in the fate of Roma population and it took time to break down a certain mental barrier, both among scholars, including Jewish ones, and the political elite.¹¹

In the case of the Roma, however, other key factors, often omitted in scholarly reflections, have displayed a significant role. First, master narratives of the Holocaust and the war served to build up and sustain the ideas of nation or the state, building and developing collective identities. This has been evident, for example, in the case of Jews and the state of Israel, but is also true for other nations or peoples who fell victims of Nazi persecution; memory of the past has been institutionalized and has become part of history teaching, therefore, serving identity building. Lack of such need or demand among the Roma, or its late and unclear manifestation, corresponds with the idea of the Roma as a non-territorial nation or a nation without a state¹², effectively limiting the urgency of developing such a Roma narrative. This has been changed with the emergence of minority rights discourse in the Romani movement. German Sinti and Roma activists developed and used the Roma Holocaust narrative to demand national minority rights.¹³ In

¹⁰ Andrzej Mirga, „For a worthy place among the Victims. The Holocaust and Extermination of Roma during World War II”, in: Joanna Ambrosewicz-Jacobs and Leszek Hońdo (eds.), *Why should we teach about the Holocaust?* (Cracow: The Jagiellonian University, Institute of European Studies, 2005).

¹¹ Ibidem, p. 99.

¹² Andrzej Mirga and Nicolae Gheorghe, *Roma in the Twenty First Century. A Policy Paper* (Princeton: Project on Ethnic Relations Report, 1997), Andrzej Mirga and Nicolae Gheorghe, *Leadership, representation and the status of the Roma* (Cracow/ Princeton: Project on Ethnic Relations Report, 2001).

¹³ Romani Rose, „Sinti and Roma as National Minorities in the Countries of Europe”, *Patrin* (1999). Retrieved October 14, 2015 from: <http://www.oocities.org/~patrin/sinti-roma.htm>.

post-communist Europe, the Roma were granted ethnic or national minority rights, partly, in reference to the Roma Genocide past.¹⁴

Secondly, the Roma survivors' own efforts at recognition of their persecution depended on the historic contexts and processes in divided Europe, after WWII. In new Germany, favourable conditions were established by the demand of the Allies to compensate the victims of Nazism. To realize it, Germany enacted a number of federal laws since the 1950s.¹⁵ In other parts of Europe that found themselves under the Soviet power, no such claims were made or raised by Roma survivors nor were attempts made to pursue this by Roma organizations. On the contrary – any initiatives aiming at self-organizing were supervised or simply suppressed.¹⁶ As a result, Roma's own Holocaust or genocide narratives in those territories were marginal, at best, until the transition period, when many Roma organizations found this issue as legitimizing and formative for their functioning and cause.

Thirdly, whereas in West Germany Sinti and Roma survivors and their children pursued a battle for recognition of their suffering, in other parts of Europe where the Roma experienced persecution there were few non-Roma scholars who first raised up and documented their fate under Nazi times.¹⁷ Some evidence of Roma persecution has been collected during investigation by

¹⁴ Countries that have granted such rights usually acknowledge the Roma Genocide.

¹⁵ Federal Foreign Office, *Compensation for National Socialist injustice*. Retrieved October 12, 2015 from: http://www.auswaertiges-amt.de/EN/Aussenpolitik/InternatRecht/Entschaedigung_node.html.

¹⁶ A detailed analyses for communist policy and Roma efforts at self-organizing in cases of Czech and Slovak Republics and Hungary can be found in Peter Vermeersch, *The Romani Movement. Minority Politics and Ethnic Mobilization in contemporary Central Europe*, (Oxford/ New York: Berghahn Books, 2006), pp. 102–150.

¹⁷ In Poland, Jerzy Ficowski was one among the first scholars to study the Roma Genocide; he devoted one chapter entitled "Genocide", in his book from 1964: *Cyganie Polscy. Szkice historyczno-obyczajowe* (Warszawa: Państwowy Instytut Wydawniczy, 1964), pp. 162–181.

state commissions established after the war (for example in Poland or in Serbia); however, these data were rarely used or presented to the public.¹⁸

All three aspects mentioned above explain better the concept of “Forgotten Holocaust” of the Roma. They relate and refer to the key issues of power relations: to the subordinate and marginal position of Roma and their narrative *vis-à-vis* dominant nations or that of majority; to the inability of Roma themselves to produce and provide evidence on the Roma Genocide history; and, as a result, to the invisibility of the Roma in public discourse on the Holocaust.

Efforts and contribution of Roma war survivors and post war generations to the history and memory of the Roma Genocide

Without a doubt, German Sinti and Roma activists played a crucial role in raising up this issue in Germany, and in mobilizing Roma organizations and activists around this topic in other parts of Europe. The generation of still-living victims of the Nazi persecution demanded historical justice, as many victims did after the war. Their demands have been formulated on moral and legal grounds. Sinti and Roma survivors demanded recognition of the racial ground of their persecution and of its fair compensation. The federal laws on compensation allowed German Sinti and Roma survivors to seek redress in courts, even if these efforts were not successful.¹⁹ The long-term effects of this struggle have brought

¹⁸ I myself studied the files of the Main Commission for the Investigation of Nazi Crimes in Poland; this has been part of my task in preparatory phase for the BBC documentary on “Forgotten Holocaust” directed by George Case. On Serbia, see: Milovan Pissarri, *The Suffering of the Roma in Serbia during the Holocaust* (Belgrade: Forum for Applied History 2014). Retrieved October 10, 2015 from: <http://www.fpi.rs/blog/wp-content/uploads/The-Suffering-of-the-Roma-in-Serbia-during-the-Holocaust-e-book.pdf>.

¹⁹ A key role has been played by *Verband der Sinti Deutschlands* established by Oscar and Vincenz Rose in 1952. For more, see: Sławomir Kaprański, *Naród z popiołów.....* p. 265; Julia von dem Knesebek, *The Roma struggle for compensation in post-war Germany* (Hatfield, University of Hertfordshire Press, 2011).

result much later and for the much larger population of the Roma in Europe who suffered Nazi persecution during the war.²⁰

The second generation, often children of the survivors of the Roma Genocide, while continuing the struggle of their fathers, also pursued their own objectives: challenging the dominant narrative in which the Roma experience was non-existent. Again, Germany has been a crucial battlefield. This generation of activists have been supported by new publications on the Roma under the Nazi regime. Unknown data and evidence of persecution brought in by Simon Wiesenthal²¹ and the historic publication by Grattan Puxon and Donald Kenrick²² strengthen their claims and arguments.

This generation has been encouraged to move from courtrooms, where their fathers fought, to public spaces, where they have organized protests or hunger-strikes, as in former concentration camps in Bergen-Belsen in 1979 or in Dachau in 1980. They have staged a protest also at the University of Tübingen, in Germany in 1981,²³ where – in its archive – more than 20,000 Nazi files on German Sinti and Roma were kept. Those files, including genealogical charts of thousands of families collected by Nazi police and the Institute of Racial Hygiene, were the basis for placing German Sinti and Roma in concentration camps and, eventually, for extermination. Their claims and action were singular and shocking for the majority. A similar role has been displayed by Katrin Seybold and Melanie Spitta documentaries²⁴.

²⁰ After the fall of communism, Roma survivors of Nazi persecution have benefited from several compensation schemes.

²¹ Simon Wiesenthal, *The Murderers Among Us: Simon Wiesenthal Memoire* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1967).

²² Grattan Puxon, Donald Kenrick, *The Destiny of Europe's Gypsies* (London: Chatto-Heinemann for Sussex University Press, 1972).

²³ For more, see: Sławomir Kapralski, *Naród z popiołów....*, pp. 267–269.

²⁴ *Wir sind Sintikinder und keine Zigeuner* (We are Sinti children and not Gypsies), 1981, a documentary about experiences in the concentration camp at Auschwitz, by Katrin Seybold and Melanie Spitta. 22 min; *Es ging Tag und Nacht, liebes Kind - Zigeuner (Sinti) in Auschwitz* (It was night and day, dear child – Roma in Auschwitz), 1982, a documentary about Roma people

Sinti and Roma activists also largely benefited from the international Romani movement and, most notably, its congress that was organized in Gottingen in 1981²⁵. The congress was organized in Germany with strong engagement of German Sinti and Roma to further pursue the campaign for recognition of the Roma Holocaust. All of these eventually led to the long-awaited statement of the Federal Chancellor, Helmut Schmidt, in which he assumed Germany's responsibility for Sinti and Roma racial persecution during the Nazi era, in 1982²⁶.

The late 1970s and beginning of 1980s can be considered a breakthrough in the struggle of survivors and their children, a successful fight for the recognition of the Roma Genocide, at least in Germany. This period can also be considered formative for the rising interest in the Roma Genocide among scholars, state institutions and civil society in Germany and in Europe. This struggle has also been staged in the US, where Roma scholar Ian Hancock, with his numerous publications, tried to challenge the Jewish scholars, among others, by questioning Jewish uniqueness of the Holocaust ("Uniqueness of the Victims")²⁷. Eventually, Hancock, representing the Roma, in 1997 joined the Council for US Holocaust Memorial Museum, the key institution dealing with memory of the Holocaust; he served at the Council as the second Roma in its files. The first one was William Duna, who joined in 1987.

in the Nazi era the continuing discrimination against the Roma up to the present, by Melanie Spitta and Katrin Seybold.

²⁵ For more, see: Sławomir Kaprański, *Naród z popiołów...*, pp. 270–271.

²⁶ Romani Rose (ed.), *The National Socialist Genocide of the Sinti and Roma, Catalogue of the Permanent Exhibition in the State Museum of Auschwitz* (State Museum of Auschwitz-Birkenau, 2003), p. 9; see also, Yaron Matras, "The Development of the Romani Civil Rights Movement in Germany, 1945-1996", in: S. Tebbut (ed.), *Sinti and Roma: Gypsies in German Speaking Society and Literature*, (Oxford: Berghahn Books, 1998).

²⁷ Ian Hancock, "Uniqueness' of the victims: Gypsies, Jews and the Holocaust", *Without Prejudice: International Review of Racial Discrimination*, 1(2), 1988c, pp. 45–67.

The second breakthrough period in this area has been brought by the fall of communism in Central and Eastern Europe. For many organizations that were established in the transition period it was quite obvious to turn to the wartime period; raising up the Roma Genocide question was a powerful legitimizing tool, both among the Roma community, but also in relation to authorities and society.

That was the case, for example, with the first Roma organization established after the fall of communism in Poland. It was registered in Oświęcim in 1991, in a city known by the Nazi death camp in Auschwitz-Birkenau, a symbol of the Holocaust, extermination of Jews and later on, of the Roma as well. The organization made recognition and commemoration of the Roma Genocide a statutory activity; it began to organize commemorative events, in cooperation with the *Zentralrat* of Romani Rose from Germany, in the former *Zigeunerlager* camp in Birkenau annually since 1992.²⁸

With the support of Romani Rose, the State Museum of Auschwitz published “A Memorial Book: Gypsies of Auschwitz-Birkenau” in 1993, a monumental publication also called “The Death Book”. It includes nearly 21,000 names of Sinti and Roma that have been transported and eventually majority of them killed in Auschwitz-Birkenau Nazi death camp.²⁹ A delegation of Roma, including Carl Stojka, a survivor of *Zigeunerlager* in Auschwitz-Birkenau and a painter, handed this publication to Pope John Paul II in Vatican in 1994.

Another major commemorative event took place in Auschwitz-Birkenau and Cracow in the same year. Part of this commemoration was a philharmonic concert composed on this occasion by Jan-Kanty Pawluśkiewicz, a young Polish composer, to the poem of a Romani poet Bronisława Wajs – Papusza, “Bloody Tears”, based on her wartime experience in Poland. The concert, entitled “Papusza’s Harps”,

²⁸ For more, see the website, at: www.stowarzyszenie.romowie.net/aktualnosci-2.html (access: 13/10/2015).

²⁹ More available at: <http://auschwitz.org/en/museum/about-the-available-data/sinti-and-roma> (access: 10/10/2015).

was performed by a full philharmonic orchestra, 4 opera singers and a chorus for about 10,000 people in an open space in Cracow.³⁰

The State Museum in Auschwitz-Birkenau in cooperation with the Roma organization from Oświęcim and support of *Zentralrat*, opened a permanent exhibition devoted to the suffering of Roma during the Nazi time (located in the Block 13) in 1997. As a result, the former death camp in Auschwitz-Birkenau also became a symbol and a centre for the Roma Genocide commemoration and related activities, including carrying out research and publishing their findings.³¹

Today, organizations and state institutions focusing on the Roma Genocide are numerous. State authorities are eager to recognize the Roma Genocide, commemorate it. In addition, the international community is advocating mainstreaming of the Roma Genocide narrative. The OSCE Action Plan from 2003 tasks ODIHR with playing an active role in promoting and supporting the Holocaust and Roma Genocide teaching.³² The Council of Europe has been engaged in producing “Fact Sheets on Roma History”, published in 2008, which include information on the Roma Genocide, among a number of other initiatives set up to this aim.³³ These two organizations created together the website hosted by the Council of Europe that could be used for teaching purposes.³⁴

³⁰ More available at: http://pawluszkiewicz.pl/?page_id=351 (access: 10/10/2015).

³¹ For more, see the website at: www.stowarzyszenie.romowie.net/aktualnosci-2.html.

³² OSCE Decision No. 3/03, “Action Plan on improving the situation of Roma and Sinti within OSCE area”, chapter V. Improving access to education; for more, see at: www.osce.org/odihhr/107406?download=true (access: 10.10/2015).

³³ http://www.coe.int/t/dg4/education/roma/histoculture_EN.asp (access: 10/10/2015). In 2014, the Council of Europe has also published a handbook “Right to Remember. A Handbook for education with Young People on the Roma Genocide” <https://book.coe.int/eur/en/youth-other-publications/6105-pdf-right-to-remember-a-handbook-for-education-with-young-people-on-the-roma-genocide.html> (access: 10/10/2015).

³⁴ A number of other similar websites dedicated to the Roma Genocide history have been created for educational purposes. For example: <http://www>.

Similarly, the Holocaust and the United Nations Outreach Programme and especially the UN International Holocaust Remembrance Day, held every year on the 27th of January, the day of liberation of Auschwitz-Birkenau camp, has become open to the Roma.³⁵ Up to now, two Roma were invited to speak at UN Headquarters in New York during the main Commemoration Ceremonies: Andrzej Mirga (in 2010)³⁶ and Ethel Brooks (in 2013)³⁷.

Countries such as Germany and the Czech Republic supported setting up institutions that promote knowledge and reach out to the Roma and non-Roma regarding the Roma Genocide; the German Sinti and Roma Documentation Centre in Heidelberg³⁸ and the Brno Roma Museum³⁹. There are many more such institutions, organizations and foundations that have developed activities upholding, commemorating and teaching about the Roma Genocide⁴⁰. In 2011, the Polish Parliament adopted a decree recognizing the 2nd of August as “Roma Genocide Commemoration Day”.⁴¹ Most

romasintigenocide.eu/en/home , <http://www.romasintiholocaust.eu/en/> , <http://www.romasinti.eu/>.

³⁵ *United Nations General Assembly resolution, A/RES/60/7* on 1 November, 2005. <http://www.un.org/en/holocaustremembrance/docs/res607.shtml> (access: 10/10/2015).

³⁶ Andrzej Mirga, “The Legacy of the Survivors: Remembering the Nazi Persecution of Roma and Sinti – a Key to Fighting the Modern-Day Racism”, *UN Discussion Paper Series*, Volume II. Retrieved October 10, 2015 from: <http://www.un.org/en/holocaustremembrance/docs/paper10.shtml>.

³⁷ Ethel Brooks, “Remembering the Dead, Documenting Resistance, Honoring the Heroes”, *UN Discussion Papers Series*. Retrieved October 10, 2015 from: <http://www.un.org/en/holocaustremembrance/docs/paper23.shtml>.

³⁸ www.sintiundroma.de (access: 10/10/2015).

³⁹ <http://www.rommuz.cz/en> (access: 10/10/2015).

⁴⁰ For an overview of educational projects regarding the Roma Genocide: Karen Polak “Teaching about the genocide of the Roma and Sinti during the Holocaust: chances and challenges in Europe today”, *Intercultural Education*, 24:1–2 (2013), p.79–92. Also, see Chapter “Teaching the Roma Genocide. «Society Never Regarded Me as an Individual»” by Karen Polak in this book.

⁴¹ Resolution M.P. 2011 no. 70, pos. 690 of the Polish Parliament, approved on the 29th of July 2011. Retrieved July 27, 2015 from: <http://isap.sejm.gov.pl/De tailsServlet?id=WMP20110700690>.

recently, in 2015, the European Parliament, by an overwhelming majority, adopted a resolution recognizing this date as the “Roma Holocaust Memorial Day”.⁴²

Untold stories of the Mirgas in Auschwitz-Birkenau death camp

The Roma’s own narratives on the genocide still contain too many missing elements: well-documented and personalized stories of persecution, testimonies of survivors or their own accounts of what the Roma faced during the Nazi era horror, data and evidence on many places, individuals or instances of killings that are still to be uncovered⁴³. The Roma still have to name victims and uncover true stories that could encapsulate and symbolize their experience of persecution and would be remembered for generations. The Roma Genocide narrative needs such well-documented, personalized and compelling stories, which can be then used for teaching, and for building up collective Roma historical memory. Today, however, it is more difficult to trace such figures, not only because the memory of the past is fading away but also because there is ever-diminishing number of witnesses who can tell us such stories.

Speaking at the UN Holocaust Memorial Day of January 27, 2010 in New York, I chose purposely to mention a Sinti girl “Unku”, who died in Auschwitz camp. The true story of “Unku” or Erna Lauenburger, could be one of such telling stories symbolizing

⁴² European Parliament News, *MEPs urge end to Roma discrimination and recognition of Roma Genocide Day* (15/04/2015). Retrieved July 27, 2015 from: <http://www.europarl.europa.eu/news/en/news-room/content/20150414IPR41851/html/MEPs-urge-end-to-Roma-discrimination-and-recognition-of-Roma-Genocide-Day>.

⁴³ Such as Ceilia and Karl Stojka, Bronisława Wajs (Papusza), Zoni Weisz, etc. There are numerous efforts to gather and publish Roma survivors testimonies in Heidelberg Centre, in United States Holocaust Memorial Museum (USHMM) in Washington, in Auschwitz-Birkenau Museum, or by Steven Spielberg’s USC Shoah Foundation.

the Sinti and Roma Genocide. Erna, born in 1920, has become a model for the heroine of the children's book "Ede and Unku" by Grete Weiskopf-Bernheim (pseudonym: Alex Wedding).⁴⁴ The book was published in 1931. The writer was Jewish and her book was banned by the Nazis in 1933. Erna as a Sinti was "racially" registered in 1939 and was classified as a "Gypsy of mixed race" in 1941. She was deported with her family from the detention camp in Magdeburg directly to Auschwitz on the 1st of March 1943, and died there that same year. Out of eleven Sinti children mentioned in this book, based on real life-stories, only one child survived the persecution.⁴⁵

There are other stories of victims who survived which should be heard and widely known. One of them is the story of Zoni Weisz⁴⁶, who, as a 7-year-old child, was saved, along with his aunt, unlike the rest of his family, who died in the Nazi camps. Zoni Weisz was honoured by speaking at the ceremony of unveiling of Roma and Sinti monument near Bundestag in Berlin.⁴⁷

There is also a story to be told about the Mirgas in Auschwitz-Birkenau. On the occasion of writing a paper on Roma identity, my daughter Ania got interested in knowing more about another Anna Mirga, whose picture is among the pictures of prisoners hanged on the wall in the hall of the Auschwitz-Birkenau Museum (*Mirga, Anna, Rabka, Krzywon, born 1918-00-00 (Rabka), religion: katholisch, remarks: died, 1943-02-15 in Auschwitz*).

⁴⁴ Romani Rose (ed.), *The National Socialist Genocide of the Sinti and Roma...*, p.251; S. Tebbut (ed.), *Sinti and Roma: Gypsies in...*, pp. 124–127.

⁴⁵ Romani Rose (ed.), *The National Socialist Genocide of the Sinti and Roma...*, p. 251.

⁴⁶ Zoni Weisz is the author of the Preface of this book. For more, you can consult his biography attached at the end of the book.

⁴⁷ Alexander Hudson, "Germany opens memorial to Roma Victims of the Holocaust, *Reuters* (October 24, 2012). Retrieved October 4, 2015, from: <http://www.reuters.com/article/2012/10/24/us-germany-roma-monument-idUSBRE89NoYD20121024> Zoni Weisz was also invited to speak to the German Bundestag about the Roma Genocide a year before, in 2011. <https://www.bundestag.de/rede> (access: 10/10/2015).

Inquiring about her at the Museum she learned that data on prisoners is made available by the Museum online⁴⁸. Mirga is a typical Romani family name, contrary to other surnames, such as Kwiatkowski, Kamiński or Wiśniewski, which can be found both among Poles and Roma; Mirga does not appear among non-Roma. Even though we were aware of this picture since long before, we did not know who she was and whether there were other Mirgas in the camp. We also did not encounter testimonies confirming that there were Mirgas there.

For both of us it was revealing to go through the camp files on the Mirgas. Altogether, Mirga's name surfaced in the camp's files over 100 times. Some individuals were registered in various camp documents, therefore, appearances in files do not correspond with the number of individuals registered. Analysing these data, in particular first names, date of birth, place of birth, camp number or date of death; it can be concluded that forty-six different Mirgas were registered in the Auschwitz-Birkenau camp files.⁴⁹

For forty Mirgas, it is possible to identify from where they were originating (data provides information of place of birth or place of living). For the remaining six persons, only camp numbers were registered and in one case, only the year of birth is given. Eight Mirgas originated from a single Roma community in Nowy Targ; others from Stary and Nowy Sącz, Rabka, Szczawnica, Ostrowsko, Czarny Dunajec, and others.

From that number, most of Mirgas were killed or died between February and March 1943 and three Mirgas between September and October of 1942. Only in one case, there is a note in the file that a person survived.⁵⁰ In the case of another one, there is infor-

⁴⁸ <http://www.auschwitz.org/muzeum/informacja-o-wiezniach/> (access: 10/10/2014) Note, that the search engine of the Auschwitz Museum website has changed since the first inquiry into the number of Mirga in the camp registries. An improved search tools point today to 58 Mirga in the archival records of the camp.

⁴⁹ List of Mirgas identified in these files is attached as an Appendix to this article.

⁵⁰ *Mirga, Maria, born 1922-00-00, camp number: 32547, remark: survived.*

mation that a person was transferred to the Ravensbruck camp.⁵¹ In yet another case, there is a notice that a person left the camp with a transportation, however, without information where to.⁵² And in the last case, there is no information whatsoever regarding what happened to that individual.⁵³ At this stage, we are not aware of how these Mirgas and communities they originate from were interlinked with our family.

This story, that began with a picture and inquiry about another Anna Mirga, led us to uncover other forty-six Mirgas registered in files of Auschwitz-Birkenau and will need to be continued with further research. This example demonstrates how much is out there still that is not part of our knowledge and memory of the past. It also presents a dramatic statistics: out of these prisoners only one for sure may have survived. Furthermore, we may never fully uncover the truth of how many Mirgas have perished in Auschwitz-Birkenau and other concentration camps, as it is known that frequently prisoners were processed through the camps without ever being included in the camps registries.

Roma youth and Roma Genocide – past and present-day racism

In 2014, over 1,000 young Roma and non-Roma from twenty-five countries of Europe, mobilized by the ternYpe International Roma Youth Network, came to Cracow and Auschwitz to learn about the Roma Genocide and commemorate those killed⁵⁴. This has been a new and unprecedented gathering⁵⁵. Young people came with

⁵¹ *Mirga, Michał, born 1922-03-10, camp number: 116744, remark: transf. in 1944 to KL Ravensbrück).*

⁵² *Mirga Andrej, born 1922-00-00 (Czycyza), camp number: Z-9369, occupation: Arbeiter, category: Z.Pole, remark: transf. in 1944-04-15.*

⁵³ *Mirga, Władysław, camp number: 113417.*

⁵⁴ <http://2august.eu/> (access: 10/10/2015).

⁵⁵ No similar gathering could be reported in the past. Commemoration events in former Nazi concentration camp in Auschwitz-Birkenau usually gathered several hundred Roma from few countries, but never such a number.

the intention to commemorate, learn and experience this reunion with others, including few survivors and a generation of post-war activists who struggle for recognition of the Roma Genocide.

For the Roma youth, the commemoration in Auschwitz-Birkenau was the last in a series of events that ternYpe has organized on this occasion in Cracow (which include a very rich programme of workshops, panels and conference; four days of activities, altogether)⁵⁶. The “Dikh he na bister” (Look and don’t forget) program included, among other, sharing memories with youth by Sinti and Roma Holocaust survivors coming from Poland, Romania, Hungary, France, Germany, the Netherlands and the United Kingdom⁵⁷. TernYpe managed to provide a much-needed space for intergenerational dialogue; survivors have shared their traumatic stories, whereas youth reflected on the current situation of the Roma community worldwide.

With time passing, a key challenge in the present is different: What is the relevance of the Roma Genocide for the third generation of the Roma after WWII? How do present-day Romani youth affirms memory about the Roma Genocide and gets interested to learn more about it? What is the role of memory of the past in Roma youth identity politics at present?

The Roma youth gathering in Cracow and in the former death camp in Auschwitz-Birkenau indicated that Roma youth is able, eager and interested to develop new and comprehensive narra-

⁵⁶ For short history of ternYpe activities, consult Chapter “From Holocaust Remembrance to Youth Empowerment” by Karolina Mirga and Jonathan Mack in this book.

⁵⁷ As organizers declare: “Through these encounters, we give value and make justice to the survivor’s experiences, as well as to those of the first activists for the Roma Genocide Recognition. They can share what happened with a larger community and give young people the chance to learn and keep the memory alive. With this event we aim to inspire young participants to become active in oral history research and to collect the memories of survivors in their own communities.” *Dikh he na bister. Look and don’t forget. 70th Anniversary. Roma Genocide Remembrance Initiative Programme booklet.*

tives of the Roma Genocide in the context of the persecution of the Roma during WWII. They are broadening their knowledge of genocide: Roma youth is commemorating in Treblinka (former Nazi camp north of Warsaw), in the former camps in the Czech Republic (for example in Lety⁵⁸), in the Jasenovac extermination camp in Croatia, etc. They are interested in learning more about historic places of Roma extermination in Russia and Ukraine. Some are emphasizing the Roma dimension of the contemporary forms of genocide – specifically, during the Balkan wars.

This new interest in commemoration can be interpreted in the context of the increased education level of Roma youth and, as its consequence, a need of historical consciousness among the Roma youth. Signs of it can be traced as far as Spain where a *Gitano* Federation of Catalonia, FAGIC⁵⁹, organized a conference⁶⁰ about the Roma Genocide and local *Gitanos* were eager to learn about the Roma sufferings during WWII (Zoni Weisz was one of key speakers there). By participating in this conference, and other similar activities hosted by FAGIC and other organizations, the participants (whose ancestors did not suffer in the genocide during WWII) have a feeling of being a part of a universal Roma history that is discovered by them in the context of their search for identity.

The discussions in Cracow demonstrated also that there is rising awareness of developing a new elite, well-educated, conscious of the past, integrating this past into its identity concept and embracing it. For the majority of Roma youth, knowing about it and commemorating the Roma Genocide has been considered an important step towards the creation of such an educated, universal elite. Latest initiatives, such as the OSF Roma Initiatives

⁵⁸ See Chapter “Lety Pig Farm Case” by Miroslav Brož to learn more about Lety camp.

⁵⁹ FAGIC has also created a mobile exhibition about the Roma Genocide. <http://www.fagic.org/ca/quefem/projectes/locals/150-exposicion-porrajmos> (access: 10/10/2015).

⁶⁰ <http://www.romasintiholocaust.eu/en/2-uncategorised/16-workshop-es> (access: 10/10/2015).

Office *Barvalipe* program and the activities of *ternYpe*, all include teachings about the Roma Genocide.

The gathering of Roma youth in Cracow and in former Nazi death camp in Auschwitz-Birkenau also needs to be interpreted in the context of the Roma's demand for equality: Genocide is strongly associated with the practical issues of fighting discrimination. A reference to the past is made for the sake of the future. This new historical consciousness among Roma youth is growing continuously. While the survivors of the genocide were struggling for recognition of their suffering and persecution, and the generation of their sons continued this struggle and were involved in the fight for compensation, the third generation, or current Roma youth, employs the memory of the Genocide and the symbols of the Roma past in their fight against present-day racism.

Why is the Roma Genocide discourse important and attractive to the third generation of the Roma? Part of the answer to this question is provided by the present-day context: rise and resurfacing of racist behaviour and actions led by extreme right groups and populist parties that are keen to profess and promote Nazi-type ideologies and racist prejudices. The Roma are among the main targets of anti-Roma racism in many parts of Europe. Therefore, recognizing the Roma Genocide and making it part of mainstream teaching provide a high moral ground for acceptance and social inclusion of Roma masses and, in negative sense, for opposing or struggling with anti-Gypsyism. In the absence of regular Roma history teaching, including the Roma Genocide (these are not parts of history teaching curricula in schools), the main challenge lies in how to teach about the Roma Genocide and be able to reach out to the Roma and, more broadly, to the general public. It is promising that international organizations and some governments pay more attention to this issue and are ready to support such efforts, as numerous examples described above demonstrate.

Paradoxically, however, recognition of the Roma Genocide at the highest level, as mentioned earlier, does not necessarily

translate into positive changes when it comes to attitudes and imaginary of the Roma among non-Roma masses. At the beginning of the transition period, in 1989, the BBC released a documentary on the Roma Holocaust. For the general public in Europe, as BBC documentary by George Case captured it well, the Roma Genocide remained “The Forgotten Holocaust”. The other part of the title explained that it is about “The persecution of Gypsies by the Nazis”. The level of knowledge and awareness about the Roma Genocide among general public in Europe was, indeed, very low. This continues to be true nowadays: the percentage of those who declare negative attitudes towards the Roma is very high⁶¹ and does not seem to diminish in certain countries. Such attitudes limit interest in knowing more about the history of the Roma Genocide.

It raises questions: How to deal with such social dynamics or trends, including extreme manifestation of anti-Roma racism that is increasingly common, including in the Internet? Currently, we are living through hard times in Europe, with extreme right and populist groups on the rise, local level politics getting more negative and hate-speeches and hate crimes becoming more numerous.

Conclusions

Teaching about the Roma Genocide, as teaching the Holocaust, is important first of all to the Roma themselves, and especially the Roma youth. Knowledge and affirmation of the past provide a solid ground for identity building. Roma youth of today is different from earlier generations. First of all, they are better educated and have bigger numbers. They easily and in obvious ways relate

⁶¹ For example, 2015 YouGov Survey Results. Retrieved October 3, 2015 from: https://d25d2506sfb94s.cloudfront.net/cumulus_uploads/document/g96awulgzv/Eurotrack_Minorities_W.pdf or the 2014 Pew Research Centre Report. Retrieved October 3, 2015 from: http://www.pewglobal.org/files/2014/05/2014-05-12_Pew-Global-Attitudes-European-Union.pdf.

memories of the Roma Genocide with present-day anti-racist efforts to combat anti-Gypsyism.

Roma youth of today possesses skills and capacities to organize and undertake common action, including the use of modern social communication tools that earlier generations did not have. These circumstances change both the character and scope of youth potential action (easy to congregate, with a potential of organizing massive-scale events). Roma youth of today is eager to look for innovative solutions and positive messages regarding Roma identity: looking for and building on Roma pride rather than Roma victimhood elements.

Finally, Roma youth has an ability to join others or build a wider support for their action among non-Roma sympathizers (both individuals and organizations). They also realize that recognition and remembrance of the Roma Genocide does not necessarily translate into changing the public image of Roma communities.⁶² For the third generation of Roma youth a key question is how to deal with anti-Gypsyism phenomenon in many societies. This considering the impact and influence that new social media have on the youth, in general, and on extreme right and populist groups, in particular, who are increasingly eager to exploit these tools to campaign against the Roma.

While some non-Roma scholars view the Roma Genocide and its identity formation as more problematic⁶³, for Roma activists and scholars memory and history of the Roma genocide is an indispensable element of modern identity construction. It worked

⁶² Richard Wike, "In Europe Sentiment against Immigrants, minorities runs high", *Pew Research Centre*. Retrieved October 10, 2015 from: <http://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2014/05/14/in-europe-sentiment-against-immigrants-minorities-runs-high/>.

⁶³ Elena Marushiakova, Veselin Popov, "Holocaust and the Gypsies. The reconstruction of the historical memory and creation of new national mythology", in: J. D. Steinert, I. Weber-Newth (eds.), *Beyond Camps and Forced labour. Current International Research on Survivors of Nazi Persecution* (v. 2) (Osabruch: Secolo, 2006).

to motivate their struggle for historic justice and recognition of Roma experiences during WWII. For the third generation of young Roma, historical past of the Genocide is foundational. It provided also with a strong reference legitimizing their own struggle with racism they might face in contemporary Europe, such as rising political popularity of right wing, populist or openly neo-Nazi groups that target, among other, the Roma as their main enemy (for example, Jobbik and Mgyar Garda in Hungary).

The young generation of Roma leaders can easily mobilize, are sensitive to symbols but are also pragmatic and aware of the needs of the intergenerational dialogue (as it was in the activities organized by ternYpe in Cracow and in Auschwitz in 2014).

Roma youth makes attempts to come up with alternative forms and meanings of the commemoration: young Roma with a broader, universal perspective, seek elements of the past that indicate Roma resistance and want to uphold these. The symbolism of the genocide, especially with such a focus (Roma Resistance⁶⁴ in the *Zigeunerlager* in Auschwitz-Birkenau), is being used in political activism of Roma youth, especially in the acts of protest and in the ways determined by the needs of current civil movements. In this way, the Roma movement receives a new dynamics originating from these parts of Genocide memory.

This illustrates well the difference in approaches towards the Genocide: the survivors of the Genocide were seeking moral and legal recognition of their suffering, including compensation; the generation of their sons was involved mostly in challenging the dominant narrative of Holocaust that also helped to make a breakthrough in addressing this issue by politicians and scholars. The youngest generation employs the memory of the Genocide and the symbols of the Roma historical past in their fight against racism nowadays.

⁶⁴ See Chapter "A Romani Resistance Manifesto" by Pierre Chopinaud.

Appendix

List of Mirgas recorded in the files of Auschwitz:

1. **Mirga, Adam**, Zabrzeze, *ur.1910-09-14 (Maniowa)*, wyznanie: *grekokatholisch*, uwagi: *zgin.1943-03-18 w Auschwitz*
2. **Mirga, Agnieszka**, *ur.1906-00-00 (Szczawnica)*, numer obozowy: *32531*, uwagi: *zgin. 6.2.1943 w KL Auschwitz (14.2.1943 wg dok)*
3. **Mirga, Andrej**, *ur.1922-00-00 (Czycyza)*, numer obozowy: *Z-9369*, zawód: *Arbeiter*, kategoria: *Z.Pole*, uwagi: *Tr.1944-04-15*
4. **Mirga, Angela**, *ohne feste Wohnung*, *ur.1923-00-00 (Neumarkt)*, wyznanie: *katholisch*, uwagi: *zgin.1942-09-21 w Auschwitz*
5. **Mirga, Aniela**, *ur.1916-05-10 (Zemstów)*, numer obozowy: *32559*, uwagi: *zgin. 6.2.1943 w KL Auschwitz*
6. **Mirga, Aniela**, *ur.1923-00-00 (Nowy Targ)*, numer obozowy: *6786*, uwagi: *zgin. 21.9.1942 w KL Auschwitz*
7. **Mirga, Aniela**, *ur.1892-00-00*, numer obozowy: *32546*, uwagi: *zgin. 6.2.1943 w KL Auschwitz (15.2.1943 wg dok)*
8. **Mirga, Aniela**, *Bochonice*, *ur.1902-00-00 (Geburtsort nicht bekannt)*, wyznanie: *katholisch*, uwagi: *zgin.1943-02-15 w Auschwitz*
9. **Mirga, Anna**, *Rabka, Krzywón*, *ur.1918-00-00 (Rabka)*, wyznanie: *katholisch*, uwagi: *zgin.1943-02-15 w Auschwitz*
10. **Mirga, Antoni**, *Neumarkt*, *ur.1929-00-00 (Neumarkt)*, wyznanie: *katholisch*, uwagi: *zgin.1943-03-01 w Auschwitz*
11. **Mirga, Antoni**, *Mostki*, *ur.1905-03-23 (Mostki)*, wyznanie: *katholisch*, uwagi: *zgin.1943-03-06 w Auschwitz*
12. **Mirga, Antoni**, *Mostki*, *ur.1926-01-15 (Mostki)*, wyznanie: *katholisch*, uwagi: *zgin.1943-03-06 w Auschwitz*
13. **Mirga, Antoni**, *Tylicz*, *ur.1920-01-20 (Rabka)*, wyznanie: *griechischorthodox*, uwagi: *zgin.1943-03-13 w Auschwitz*
14. **Mirga, Antonina**, *ur.1908-00-00 (Nowy Targ)*, numer obozowy: *32541*, uwagi: *zgin. 14.2.1943 w KL Auschwitz*
15. **Mirga, Bronislaw**, *Długa Laka*, *ur.1918-00-00 (Przyszowa)*, wyznanie: *katholisch*, uwagi: *zgin.1943-03-06 w Auschwitz*

16. **Mirga, Bronisława**, ur.1928-00-00 (*Stary Sącz*), numer obozowy:32521, uwagi: zgin. 6.2.1943 w KL Auschwitz (13.2.1943 wg dok)
17. **Mirga, Eugeniusz**, Mostki, ur.1925-04-05 (*Mostki*), wyznanie: *katholisch*, uwagi:zgin.1943-03-07 w Auschwitz
18. **Mirga, Grzegorz**, Neumarkt, ur.1889-03-08 (*Czarny Dunajec*), wyznanie: *katholisch*, uwagi:zgin.1942-09-09 w Auschwitz
19. **Mirga, Josef**, Zabrzeze, ur.1905-10-29 (*Neumarkt*), wyznanie: *katholisch*, uwagi:zgin.1943-02-28 w Auschwitz
20. **Mirga, Jozef**, Ludzmierz, ur.1913-01-15 (*Ostrowsko*), wyznanie: *katholisch*, uwagi:zgin.1943-02-19 w Auschwitz
21. **Mirga, Jozef**, Krakau, ur.1917-04-28 (*Neumarkt*), wyznanie: *katholisch*, uwagi:zgin.1943-03-01 w Auschwitz
22. **Mirga, Jozef**, Rabka, ur.1898-00-00 (*Neumarkt*), wyznanie: *katholisch*, uwagi:zgin.1943-03-13 w Auschwitz
23. **Mirga, Jozef**, Neumarkt, ur.1902-03-04 (*Ostrowsko*), wyznanie: *katholisch*, uwagi:zgin.1943-03-13 w Auschwitz
24. **Mirga, Jozef**, Mszana Gorna, ur.1895-00-00 (*Krymbach*), wyznanie: *katholisch*, uwagi:zgin.1943-03-16 w Auschwitz
25. **Mirga, Karolina**, ur.1926-00-00 (*Kaluzna*), numer obozowy:32558, uwagi: zgin. 6.2.1943 w KL Auschwitz, (13.2.1943 wg aktu zg.)
26. **Mirga, Karolina**, Zabrzez, ur.1926-00-00 (*Kaluzna*), wyznanie: *katholisch*, uwagi:zgin.1943-02-15 w Auschwitz (?)
27. **Mirga, Katarzyna**, ur.1924-00-00 (*Mszana Dolna*), numer obozowy:32568, uwagi:zgin. 7.3.1943 w KL Auschwitz
28. **Mirga, Katarzyna**, Lonck, ur.1873-00-00 (*Kamienica*), wyznanie: *katholisch*, uwagi:zgin.1943-02-13 w Auschwitz
29. **Mirga, Kunegunda**, , numer obozowy:32516, uwagi: zgin. 6.2 1943 w KL Auschwitz
30. **Mirga, Ludwik**, Mostki bei Alt-Sandez, ur.1926-07-10 (*Alt-Sandez*), wyznanie: *katholisch*, uwagi:zgin.1943-02-19 w Auschwitz
31. **Mirga, Maria**, ur.1922-00-00, numer obozowy:32547, uwagi: *przeżyła*
32. **Mirga, Michal**, Mszana Gorna, ur.1926-05-13 (*Lostowka*), wyznanie: *katholisch*, uwagi:zgin.1943-03-01 w Auschwitz

33. **Mirga, Michał**, *ur.1922-03-10, numer obozowy:116744, uwagi: przen. 1944 do KL Ravensbrück*
34. **Mirga, Pankracy**, *ohne feste Wohnung, ur.1882-00-00 (Slonca), wyznanie: grekokatholisch, uwagi:zgin.1943-03-03 w Auschwitz*
35. **Mirga, Rozalia**, *ur.1911-00-00 (Stary Sącz), numer obozowy:32511, uwagi: zgin. 6.2.1943 w KL Auschwitz (12.2.1943 wg dok)*
36. **Mirga, Rosalia**, *Tem barkow, ur.1922-00-00 (Raciowice), numer obozowy: 32517, wyznanie: katholisch, uwagi:zgin. 6.2.1943 w KL Auschwitz*
37. **Mirga, Rozalia**, *ur.1910-00-00 (Nowy Sącz), numer obozowy:32522, uwagi: zgin. 6.2.1943 w KL Auschwitz (13.2.1943 wg dok)*
38. **Mirga, Stanisław**, *Mszana Górna, ur.1925-00-00 (Podobin), wyznanie: katholisch, uwagi:zgin.1943-02-22 w Auschwitz*
39. **Mirga, Stanisław**, *Naszacowice, ur.1907-05-10 (Naszacowice), wyznanie: katholisch, uwagi:zgin.1943-03-13 w Auschwitz*
40. **Mirga, Stanisław**, *Zabrzeze, ur.1913-09-06 (Ochotnica), wyznanie: katholisch, uwagi:zgin.1943-03-20 w Auschwitz*
41. **Mirga, Stanisław**, *ur.1905-05-08 (Spytkowice), numer obozowy:46681, zawód: handlarz końmi, uwagi: zgin. 8.9.1942 w KL Auschwitz*
42. **Mirga, Stanisław**, *ur.1921-06-06 (Nowy Targ), numer obozowy:45070, zawód: robotnik, uwagi: zgin. 2.8.1942 w KL Auschwitz*
43. **Mirga, Stefania**, *ur.1921-00-00 (Podgrodzie), numer obozowy:32524, uwagi: zgin. 6.2.1943 w KL Auschwitz (13.2.1943 wg dok)*
44. **Mirga, Waleria**, *ur.1912-00-00 Alt Sandez (Ukowice), numer obozowy:32510, uwagi: zgin. 6.2.1943 w KL Auschwitz (13.2.1943 wg dok)*
45. **Mirga, Władysław**, *, numer obozowy:113417*
46. **Mirga, Zofia**, *ur.1913-00-00 (Mordarka), numer obozowy:32535, uwagi: zgin. 6.2.1943 w KL Auschwitz*

International Commemoration: A Watershed Moment in History and a Wish- List for the Future¹

Ethel Brooks

In October 2012, in Berlin, the Memorial for the Murdered Roma and Sinti under National Socialism was dedicated, directly across from the Reichstag in the *Tiergarten*. That Memorial came thirty years after Germany officially recognized the racially based motives for annihilation of the Roma and Sinti. Its inauguration occurred nearly forty years after the first activists began calling attention to the losses suffered by Roma and Sinti communities, after their persecution had gone unacknowledged in the decades after the end of World War II. At the inauguration of the Roma and Sinti Memorial, Romani Rose, head of the German Council of Sinti and Roma, a *Sinto* activist who lost 13 members of his family at Auschwitz-Birkenau, said, “There is not a single family of Sinti and Roma in Germany, who have not lost immediate family members. It shapes our identity to this day.” The Holocaust claimed the lives of three-quarters of the Roma and Sinti population in Europe; in

¹ This chapter contains part of the speech I gave for UN Holocaust Memorial Day 2013, available at <http://www.un.org/en/holocaustremembrance/docs/paper23.shtml> (accessed October 23, 2015); <http://www.un.org/en/holocaustremembrance/docs/paper23.shtml> (access: 15/10/2015). I would like to thank Andrzej Mirga, Krista Hegberg, Irina Carlota Silber and Farhan Haq for their invaluable suggestions and comments on this article. Thanks also to the USC Shoah Foundation for pointing me to the testimonies of Amilcare Debar and Iosif Teifel.

some areas, such as the Czech Republic and parts of Poland, the Romani population was decimated.

The persecution of Roma and Sinti predated the Nazi era, with historiographic evidence of pogroms, harassment and genocide reaching as far back into the Middle Ages through the nineteenth century.² While under Article 109 of the Weimar Constitution, Roma and Sinti were accorded full and equal citizenship rights, by 1926, Bavaria required registration of all Sinti and Roma and instituted measures for “Combating Gypsies, Vagabonds and the Work-Shy.” In 1936, a central office for “Combating the Gypsy Nuisance” opened up in Munich, and the Interior Ministry set up directives authorizing police to conduct raids on Gypsies in preparation for the Berlin Olympics. That same year, Roma became subject to the Nuremberg Race Laws, and many Roma who came under the scrutiny of the state were forcibly sterilized. The first concentration camp for Sinti and Roma (called *Zigeunerlager*, or Gypsy Camp, by the Nazis) was established at Marzahn, on the outskirts of Berlin, on July 16, 1936. Located between a sewage dump and a cemetery, the camp imprisoned Roma and Sinti who had been rounded up during the pre-Olympic period. Directly after, local municipalities established concentration camps for Sinti and Roma throughout Germany and beyond, set up by the Nazis and their allies throughout Europe.³

While concentration camps are the best-documented sites of wartime atrocity by the Nazis and their allies, their prisoners tortured, worked to death, gassed and murdered by other means, they are just one facet of the genocidal project of the Holocaust in Europe. Approximately 20,000 concentration camps were set

² For an historical account of Antigypsy laws, persecution and oppression, see Ian Hancock, *The Pariah Syndrome: An account of anti-Gypsy slavery and persecution* (Ann Arbor: Karoma Publishers, 1987).

³ United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, *Sinti and Roma: Victims of the Nazi Era*. Retrieved June 13, 2013 from: <http://www.ushmm.org/education/resource/roma/roma.php> (<http://www.ushmm.org/education/resource/roma/roma.php>).

up across Europe, some for transport, others for forced labour, and still others for mass murder. Along with the concentration camps that imprisoned millions, ghettos were set up in major cities, set apart by brick walls, barbed wire and armed guards, housing Jews, Roma and Sinti, and others. In occupied Poland, the Czech Republic and beyond, German troops (*Wehrmacht*) and police murdered countless Roma and Sinti, who were buried in mass graves in the countryside.⁴ Along with official and unofficial pogroms throughout Europe, mobile death squads – *Einsatzgruppen* – were deployed across the countryside as the Nazis pushed eastward into the Soviet Union. The numbers of Roma and Sinti who perished in the camps is only part of the story – the excavation of mass graves – most unmarked – and the identification of those buried in them is still being carried out in the eastern part of Europe in the present day. There is much work to be done to document Romani experiences of the Holocaust, and still much more to determine an accurate estimate of the numbers who were murdered, both inside the camps and by mobile killing squads, pogroms and other forms of violence. In the seventy years since the end of World War II, we still have no accurate count of the Romani and Sinti lives lost during the Holocaust, especially in the areas in the East, where the Romani population was greater and, we can assume, the number of those murdered rose accordingly.

I believe that is crucial for us to hold memorial ceremonies and set aside spaces and monuments to those who were murdered, to those who lost family, loved ones and community, to those who returned from the camps or hiding only to find their cultures and life worlds decimated; to those who survived genocide. As we remember the dead and commemorate the survivors, we also

⁴ Gerhard Baumgartner, “Concentration Camps,” for Project Education of Roma Children in Europe, Council of Europe, <https://www.un.org/en/holocaustremembrance/docs/Roma%20concentration-camps%20OSCE%20.pdf><https://www.un.org/en/holocaustremembrance/docs/Roma%20concentration-camps%20OSCE%20.pdf> (access: 13/05/2015).

celebrate the heroes, those who reached out beyond their families, beyond their communities, who – in the work of saving the lives of others – ran the risk of losing their own.

What about Roma and Sinti resistance to the terror and destruction carried out by the Nazis and their allies? One of the most significant – but understudied – acts of resistance carried out by Roma and Sinti prisoners occurred on 15–16 May 1944 in the *Zigeunerlager* of Auschwitz-Birkenau. Roma and Sinti prisoners were deported to Auschwitz in family groups, and at least 23,000 were murdered in the gas chambers there; throughout the network of death camps and mobile gassing units, Jews and Gypsies were the two groups systematically targeted for murder⁵. By the end of 1943, the Nazis had imprisoned 18,736 Roma and Sinti in Birkenau Gypsy Camp; by May 1944, 6,000 remained, with the others having been gassed or deported to other camps for forced labour.⁶ On 15 May 1944, the prisoners in the *Zigeunerlager* discovered that the Nazis planned to gas all 6,000 of those who remained; when the SS guards, armed with machine guns, surrounded the camp for the transport to the gas chambers:

[...] [T]hey met armed resistance. After stealing scraps of sheet metal, the prisoners had sharpened the metal into crudely fashioned knives. With those improvised weapons, and with iron pipes, clubs, and stones, the Gypsies defended themselves. Guards shot some resisters.⁷

Unnamed heroes carried out this armed resistance to the SS guards, over the course of those two days in May. The resistance of the prisoners in the Gypsy Camp prevented the camp from being liquidated in May, although not for long: the final liquidation of the *Zigeunerlager* took place on 2 August 1944, when guards

⁵ United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, *Resistance During the Holocaust* (Washington, DC: USHMM Miles Lehrmann Center for the Study of Jewish Resistance, nd), p. 23.

⁶ *Ibidem*, p. 28.

⁷ *Ibidem*.

gassed 2,897 men, women, and children in the middle of the night. Even at that last moment, there was resistance; according to documents located in the Memorial Museum at Auschwitz-Birkenau, “The prisoners attempted to resist, but the SS crushed their opposition brutally”⁸. The near-impossible uprisings by Roma and Sinti men, women and children at the death camp of Auschwitz-Birkenau are part of a larger story of uprisings and other forms of resistance in which Roma and Sinti played a part. We have no documentation on Romani participation in ghetto uprisings, but Roma and Sinti were active in Resistance activities, camp uprisings and in work to save individual lives from murder by the Nazis and their allies.

As an American Romani woman and a scholar, I sometimes find it a strange and new experience to research and write about Holocaust testimonies of Romani survivors. I grew up in a Romani community that did not talk about the losses our people suffered in Europe in the Holocaust; my community has been in the United States since the 1880s and did not know the extent or the details of what our brothers and sisters were suffering in Europe, but all of us lived under the cloud of that unspoken genocide. My father and uncles⁹ fought against the Nazis in World War II; before they died, I never thought to ask them whether they were part of any camp liberations, or what they witnessed during that period of their lives, or what work they had carried out during their time as soldiers. They, too, were part of the resistance against the Nazis, yet this, too, was unspoken in our family and in our community.

As community members, scholars and policymakers, is important for us to record, to analyse and to publish the numbers, stories, data and historical facts pertaining to the persecution and

⁸ “Sinti and Roma (Gypsies) in Auschwitz”. Retrieved October 25, 2015 from: <http://auschwitz.org/en/history/categories-of-prisoners/sinti-and-roma-gypsies-in-auschwitz/>.

⁹ Members of my family who served in the US military during World War II include my non-Romani father and uncles from both sides of my family, Romani and non-Romani alike.

genocide of the Roma and Sinti, much of which remains untold and undocumented. We need to also tell these stories of resistance and struggle, of heroes and heroines, and of how the common compassion that people have for one another can help to fight the worst forms of oppression. A focus on rescue, and on “The Courage to Care,” can teach all of us to look for, and to emulate, the courage of those who stood up against dehumanization and genocide. This theme points us to lessons that we can learn from those whose kindness, and humanity, remained strong even as fascism and barbarity swept through Europe.

Take, for example, the story of Dutch Romani survivor Zoni Weisz, who, as a 7-year-old, was saved, along with his aunt, by the kindness of a guard who kept them on the platform while Weisz’s parents, brothers and sisters boarded the trains that would transport them to concentration camps, and, eventually, to their deaths. At the ceremony inaugurating the Berlin memorial, Weisz recalled the last glimpse of his family before the trains took them away, the vivid blue colour and the feel of the soft wool of his sister’s coat as he held onto it when his family was boarding the train. That was his last memory of his family, haunting him even as he remembered the quietly heroic actions of the platform guard.

As Belgian photographer Jan Yoors recounts in his autobiography, Roma and Sinti across Europe took part in partisan and resistance activities. Yoors lived in France with a *Lovaro* Romani family during World War II, and his autobiography is a record of day-to-day life during that time and the work that those Roma and Sinti who were not deported carried out with the partisans. Yoors documents the ways in which Roma and Sinti were able to help the Resistance:

Roma... used their wagons to transport refugees and smuggle small arms and explosives. The frequent movement of those Gypsies also allowed them to accrue ration cards under different names in a variety of places. Those ration cards were important in supplying food to resistance fighters. When German authorities began tighter scrutiny of rations, the

Yoors group joined French partisans in raiding ration distribution posts. They also brought the partisans news heard on BBC radio broadcasts.¹⁰

Another way to resist was to save the lives of children, hiding them from Nazi persecution and near-certain death. Alfreda Markowska, a Polish Romani woman, was born in 1926 in a caravan in Stanisławów, Poland. As the President of Poland recounted in 2006:

In 1941, her family was murdered and she was taken captive... After her escape from prison, she and her husband resided first in the Lublin ghetto, and later in Łódź and Bełżec. She escaped from each of these places, saving Jewish and Romani children. Upon receiving the news of yet another pogrom, she would visit execution sites in search for surviving children. She then transported the survivors to her “base” and procured false papers for them. Some of them she gave back to their ... guardians, others she placed in the care of [Romani] families or brought up herself.¹¹

Mrs. Markowska saved nearly 50 Jewish and Romani children over the course of the war. On 17 October 2006, the President of the Republic of Poland awarded Alfreda Markowska a Commander’s Cross with Star of the Order of Polonia Restituta for heroism and exceptional courage, and for outstanding merit in saving human life.¹² Her life has been marked by the courage to care and by resistance under seemingly insurmountable odds. Alfreda Markowska is one of our true heroes – showed true heroism by first saving her own life in the face of the murder of her family and then going on to save the lives of others.

¹⁰ United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, *Resistance During the Holocaust*, p. 36.

¹¹ See the website of the President of Poland: <http://www.president.pl/en/archive/news-archive/news-2006/art,158,outstanding-heroism.html>, <http://www.president.pl/en/archive/news-archive/news-2006/art,158,outstanding-heroism.html> (accessed 17 January 2013).

¹² *Ibidem*.

When we start to look for them, in the footnotes of history, in the hundreds of oral and video testimonies of Roma and Sinti survivors, there are other moments of compassion, other heroic acts and other heroic lives, such as those of Sinti and Roma who were part of the resistance to the Nazis and their nationalist collaborators, such as Amilcare Debar, who worked with the Italian Resistance in reconnaissance – scouting and delivering messages – and procuring weapons and carrying out ambushes and other military operations as a member of the communist partisan group the Garibaldi Brigade. Iosif Teifel, a Rom from Czechoslovakia, worked clandestinely in the Mukacevo ghetto. Through his work with the partisans, he was able to hide people, provide food aid and carry out resistance activities inside and outside the ghetto during the war¹³.

As I ponder how much my people had to go through to survive attempted mass extermination, it gives me great pleasure simply to write the names of these true heroes: Zoni Weisz, Amilcare Debar, Iosif Teifel, Alfreda Markowska.

These are just a few of the lives that have been marked by the enormity of the Holocaust. They are just a few of the Romani survivors whose stories make us aware of the power and meaning of ordinary kindness and compassion that spared lives during the Holocaust. I fully concur with what the architect of the Berlin Memorial to the Murdered Roma and Sinti, Dani Karavan said in Hebrew at its inauguration: “I feel like my family was killed and burned with the Sinti and Roma in the same gas chambers and their ashes went with the wind to the fields. So we are together. It is our destiny.” Our destiny is documented in the work of remembering the dead, in listening to the survivors and in giving credit to the heroes.

Hundreds of thousands of Roma and Sinti were murdered during the Holocaust; the death toll could be significantly higher

¹³ The complete testimonies of Amilcare Debar and Iosif Teifel can be found in the Visual History Archive of the Shoah Foundation Institute at the University of Southern California.

than half a million, with countless casualties more still to be documented in the search for mass graves and unmarked massacre sites throughout the Nazi-occupied areas, especially in the eastern regions. I welcome the opportunity to speak up and recall the names of some of our Roma and Sinti survivors, of some of our heroes, and to mark our place in the resistance against the Nazis. It is a time for the world to listen to our histories, as part of the history of the Holocaust and as part of the history of Europe.

Seventy years after the liquidation of the so-called *Zigeunerlager* at Auschwitz-Birkenau, we find ourselves at a critical moment – a crossroads – for rethinking and reclaiming commemorative practice. This crossroads is marked by a deep sadness and potential crisis as we witness the passing away of our elders, those who survived the attempted destruction of Roma and Sinti by Nazis and their allies, who survived deportations, internment, torture and dehumanization, and the loss of their families and loved ones, whose experiences were often overlooked, at times denied, and mostly relegated to the footnotes of history. The Roma and Sinti survivors of the Nazi Genocide were often denied reparations and their own memory; they, along with the first post-war generation, struggled to have that memory heard and to gain recognition of the suffering and atrocity they and their communities experienced. While many did not speak of that which they suffered, we are lucky to have a number of stories, testimonies, histories and narratives by those who struggled to be heard. While the survivors have been ageing and dying, without seeing the kind of justice that they – and we – might have hoped for, their stories remain as testaments to the collective suffering they endured.

The survivors that are with us and those who have passed on, their stories, their lives, their families and communities remain as living proof of their survival. They can help us understand this critical moment as also marked by possibility, by a number of openings in our understandings of collective memory and the possibilities for commemoration. We are at a watershed moment that has built upon decades of work to claim our history.

As the survivors and witnesses of the horrors of the Nazi period are aging and dying, subsequent generations of family members, scholars, students, activists and others interested in commemoration are faced with a number of dilemmas: Who will tell the stories of suffering, survival, victimization, resistance and everyday life in the midst of war and genocide? What are the alternatives to in-person narratives, be they in the form of oral histories, testimonies, or, even, conversations?

Before it is too late, we have to rely upon third generation and youth remembrance: grandchildren talking to their grandparents, young people learning history from archives and from their elders. For example, Costel Nastasie from Yahad-in Unum learned about the fate of his grandparents who were deported to Transnistria while also carrying out research into the fate of Roma in Romania and beyond¹⁴. This experience – of grandparents talking to grandchildren, of grandchildren learning their histories, of taking up the stories and also the commemorative practice of the experiences of their grandparents – is also something that we can draw from Romani narrative tradition and oral transmission of history.

This oral transmission can also be carried out through video and audio interviews, oral histories, testimonies and their circulation. There are hundreds – perhaps more – of videos showing Roma and Sinti Holocaust testimonies, and many of them have not been analysed for scholarly or historiographical purposes. I have been working with testimonies from the USC Shoah Foundation, of which there are 402 of Romani survivors. A number of other testimony projects carry key testimonies from survivors who are no longer with us, including those produced by Gerhard Baumgartner, the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance (IHRA), as well as from Roma and Sinti youth organizations such as Romano Centro, the United States Holocaust Memorial

¹⁴ See Chapter “Giving the Roma Survivors a Voice – Investigating the Roma Genocide in Eastern Europe” by Andrej Umansky and Costel Nastasie in this book.

Museum and those by the late Gabrielle Tyrnauer for USHMM, Fortunoff and Concordia University. The ones that I am familiar with are simply the tips of the iceberg, and I would love to have a way of putting multiple sources of testimony and multiple interviews in conversation with one another – to be able to create a repository of Romani testimonies that could be accessed by Romani people from all over the world. These are our archives, our histories – and our legacy that to which we have access.

If archives are repositories of public memory, we still have not mined our own archives, our own repositories. This conference, with its focus on intergenerational conversations, has become a site of living repositories and archives passed down through the generations – oral, embodied, relational. We can read them intimately, as stories of everyday life under genocide. We need to listen to these testimonies, oral histories and narratives, because they do tell our history. In all our diversity, one thing that Roma and Sinti share across generations, across geographies, is a narrative tradition, a transmission of history across generations and not just a respect for our elders, but a living, intimate connection with between young and old, between and among families. This is how we should think about the wealth of testimonies and oral histories that we have, that we collect and that have been recorded.

How do we make them accessible? One way is to connect the history of the Romani Genocide with today's climate of Antigypsyism. I worked on a project, "Giving Memory a Future" (<http://www.romsintimemory.it/http://www.romsintimemory.it/>), coordinated by the USC Shoah Foundation and The University of the Sacred Heart in Milan, that makes connections between the Nazi-period archives, testimonies by Romani survivors and testimonies, stories and documents of the violence, discrimination and racism suffered by Roma in Italy and across Europe in the current period, including the mass fingerprinting of Roma in Italy and the serial murders of Roma in Hungary in 2009.

We need to make such connections, to draw on archives, to bring to light even more repositories. Need to share our resources –

not just to remember the past, but also to understand the current moment, when anti-Roma rhetoric and violence have seen a resurgence that is all too reminiscent of the 1930s and 1940s. Partly because, with regard to Roma and Sinti, there was never a consistent re-education program in Europe – the same old tropes, same language, same violence and discrimination, where segregation, marginalization are everyday realities. These realities are reinforced through the rise of neo-Nazi and ultra-nationalism, but also by the nation-states themselves as they officially propagate Antigypsyism, from France to Hungary, from the Czech Republic to the UK.

Thirty-five years after the hunger strike carried out by Romani Rose and other German Sinti activists, mentioned in the chapter by Sławomir Kapralski, we have a monument in Berlin in the *Tiergarten*, we have a monument in Auschwitz-Birkenau, August 2nd has been marked as an official day of commemoration at the European level, and there are now three Romani members of national delegations to the IHRA. All of these advances – and they are true advances – have not translated into Romani Genocide education in schools; there is still a pig farm operating on the site of a former concentration camp for Roma in Lety¹⁵, Czech Republic, and there are scores of unmarked mass graves of Roma and Sinti victims across Europe.

In this way, across the world and at scales ranging from the international through to that of the family, we are genuinely at a crossroads. International commemoration, international cooperation is key to this. It is inspiring to be at a point in history when we, ourselves, Romani people from across Europe and throughout the world ask: How do we honour those who perished? Those who survived? Those who survived but have passed away in the past few years? The “Dikh he na bister” project and the work of ternYpe has been key to the current watershed moment, as has the work of everyone who came together to make the commemoration of

¹⁵ See Chapter “Lety Pig Farm Case” by Miroslav Brož.

the 2nd of August a reality and those who have struggled to commemorate the 16th of May uprising across Europe. We are building our archives, our databases, our resources and our websites – we are listening more and more to the stories of our elders before it is too late to hear them – is a way to take this moment, to stand at this crossroads, and to work together for a future where Roma are recognized as central to Europe’s – the world’s – culture, its history, its present and its future, where we fight against racism and violence and show the world an alternative and create that alternative together.

Since Pierre Chopinaud has already posited a “Manifesto for Romani Resistance”¹⁶ in this volume, I would like to outline a wish list of the kinds of work we still need to do, as academics, as activists, as Roma and Sinti:

1. We need to continue to work with those survivors who are living, and the family members and descendants of survivors. They are our repositories of history. There are still oral histories and testimonies that need to be recorded, from Russia to Ukraine and Moldova, from Romania to Hungary and the former Yugoslavia, across the Czech Republic and Slovakia to Poland, Germany, Austria, France, Spain and the Netherlands into Scandinavia and beyond. Their stories are our history and their legacy is our future.
2. As we talk to survivors and their families, we also have to find ways to work with them to bring justice. The commemoration days and monuments are a beginning; reparations and actual recognition, a place in history and restitution, both material and symbolic, are goals that we must never forget. Our communities continue to live with the material, political, familial and symbolic consequences of the Holocaust. It is our job to work toward a more just accounting

¹⁶ See Chapter “A Romani Resistance Manifesto” by Pierre Chopinaud.

of twentieth-century atrocities and their consequences for our communities, which extend to the present day.

3. We must carry out and fund more research into killing sites and camps alike. We need to further map the killing trajectories of the Nazis and their allies, for scholarly and archival purposes; for commemoration; and for restitution. The pig farm at Lety must be closed and proper deference given to our dead.
4. There are multiple document, photographic and video archives that are located across Europe, in the US and beyond. We need to disseminate their contents, index them and make them more accessible to scholars, teachers and community members for research and educational purposes. Ideally, we should be able to centralize the archives and allow for cross-archival analysis and comparison. This would aid tremendously the work of knowledge production and increase our ability to claim justice and to carry out commemoration and education.
5. We need to educate Romani and non-Romani youth in our history, we need to promote research on the Roma Genocide and its consequences, and to train scholars, teachers and activists to be able to work with the archives, oral histories and testimonies, including in multiple languages and with the diversity of trajectories and histories of life before, during and after the Holocaust.
6. Through the use of oral history, testimony, visual and written archives, through family stories and practices, we need to work to document more fully our history and all that was lost in the mass murder carried out in the 1930s and 1940s and beyond. As we know, genocide does not only kill people it also destroys cultural foundations. Through research and oral traditions, we can continue to document that which was lost and to preserve it for future generations.
7. We need funding for the indexing, preservation and accessibility of archives, for collecting oral histories of sur-

vivors and their families, for disseminating research and for revising our educational materials and making them accessible to schools in Europe, the Americas, the Middle East, Africa, Asia and Australia. The Genocide of Roma and Sinti is part of world history and should be researched, taught, remembered and disseminated as such. This can only be done through training, fellowships, funding for commemoration and research and for education.

8. We need to found a Research Centre for Critical Study of the Genocide of Roma and Sinti, where students could be trained as scholars, where community members could come to learn about the Holocaust and the Romani and Sinti Communities, where educational materials could be produced and taught in schools across the world.
9. We need to have Alfreda Markowska recognized as a hero by the international community. She has been recognized in Poland, but everyone should know about her courage and her dedication to justice. Alfreda Markowska, Iosif Teifel and Amilcare Debar are virtually unknown, and they should be honoured and celebrated as heroes by Roma and non-Roma alike world-wide.

Much work still needs to be done by us, Roma and Sinti, historians, leaders and activists to fully document it, but also to recognize and honour the victims and survivors of this genocide in official commemoration and in everyday acts of remembrance. We are creating a repository for our archives, for our stories. We will create sites where we can bring together our histories – from the familial to the international and everything in between. We can recognize our victims and that which we lost, but also the heroism that saved lives and preserved even a small part of our culture. This recognition includes continuously fighting against discrimination, persecution, and racial and ethnic violence, by which, unfortunately, Roma and Sinti are still targeted in many places in Europe in the current moment.

Memorial ceremonies, events of remembrance and scholarly articles alike are fitting places to raise such concerns: We need all to be vigilant and stand up against xenophobia, hate crimes, discrimination against anyone, including against our people. Just as ordinary kindness and compassion could help to spare lives during the Holocaust, there remains a need for solidarity, for compassion and heroism in our uneasy times, in which some politicians, nation-states and extremist groups alike throughout Europe are renewing calls for our destruction.

Even as we remember the dead, we honour the living – the survivors and heroes among us – and we renew our commitment to documenting, listening to and claiming our histories as part of the larger history of the Holocaust, and as part of the history of Europe and of the world. In so doing, we also renew our commitment to the legacy of those who rose up in the face of imprisonment, gas chambers and death squads; to the legacy of individuals such as Amilcare Debar, Iosif Teifel, and Alfreda Markowska; to the legacy of countless unnamed heroes who rose to the occasion and risked their lives in the face of xenophobia, intolerance, extremist violence and mass murder. May we all have, as they did, the courage to care.

Genocide of the Roma, 1941–1944: How Is It Being Remembered in Contemporary Ukraine¹

Mikhail Tyaglyy

Among hundreds of thousands of Roma who fell victims of the Nazi and their allies persecution and extermination politics prior and during the Second World War, more than 20,000 Roma perished in what today is the independent state of Ukraine. Although this subject is still extremely understudied, the preliminary historical research available shows that in many regions of the Soviet Union, particularly occupied Ukraine, the Roma communities were murdered unmercifully by Wehrmacht, *Sipo-SD*, gendarmerie and other units, often with the assistance of the local administrative and police forces, in big cities as well as remote villages, with the peak of the extermination policies in spring-autumn of 1942².

The article presented seeks to explore how the fate of the Roma who perished during the German and Romanian occupation of

¹ The article is written in the frames of the project «The Genocide of the Roma during the occupation of Ukraine (1941–1944): Research, Teaching, and Commemoration» which is being run by the Ukrainian Center for Holocaust Studies with the support by the German “Erinnerung, Verantwortung und Zukunft” Foundation (EVZ).

² See Mikhail Tyaglyy, ed., *Peresliduvannia ta vbyvstva romiv na terenakh Ukrainy u chasy Druhoi svitovoi viiny. Zbirnik dokumentiv, materialiv ta spohadiv* [Persecution and mass killings of the Roma in Ukraine occupied during WWII. Collection of documents, materials and testimonies], (Kyiv: Ukrainian Center for Holocaust Studies, 2013), p. 195.

Ukraine is being remembered by the contemporary Roma community in Ukraine as well as by the wider Ukrainian society. According to this aim, we will observe several layers of this subject. First, is there any consistent politics of memory in regard to the Roma Genocide (for short I will use RG) run by the Ukrainian government? How does the state support, if at all, RG research and commemoration? Is there any historical information present on the subject in school curricula and textbooks? Second, how were/are civic society and non-governmental organizations involved into this process? Third, how do the Ukrainian Roma themselves remember what happened to them during World War II? Is the memory about wartime suffering being preserved and transferred to the younger Roma generation? Finally, if taken altogether, are all these efforts sufficient for the RG to be remembered?

To answer these questions, one has to start from consideration of more general situation in the culture of memory and the national memorial politics dominating in contemporary Ukraine. Particularly, does the memory of the RG have a room within contemporary visions of the past that exists in the Ukrainian society?

According to the ideology and politics of memory that existed in the Soviet Union, the Second World War (rather, the part of it, which took place in 1941–1945 and was called *The Great Patriotic War*) was considered to be among the greatest moments in the history of the USSR. As many scholars have noted, the victory by the USSR functioned almost as a cult, and was seen as the best tool to legitimize the Stalinist regime and Communist party power generally³. This ideology promoted the view that all Soviet people, disregarding their ethnic background, heroically defended together their socialist Motherland. The few exceptions

³ For further reading regarding the role of the “Great Patriotic War” in post-war Soviet ideology and place of the Holocaust in it, see, for example, Amir Weiner, *Making Sense of War: The Second World War and the Fate of the Bolshevik Revolution*, (Princeton and Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2001), p. 416.

were condemned as “bourgeois nationalists” or “betrayers of the Motherland”. As a result, there was no room in official Soviet memory for the research and remembrance of some particular groups exterminated on the basis of racial ideology. This applied more generally for any explicit research and commemoration of ethnic victim groups of either the National-Socialist or Soviet regimes. Thus, the Holocaust was downplayed, the special fate of the Roma (as well as the Jewish) victims was neglected, and those victims were instead enumerated as among the Soviet martyrs of the struggle against fascism. The Nazi genocide victims were officially considered by authorities to be part of the broader Nazi plan to eliminate the entire population of the USSR. Any attempts by the Roma individuals as well as informal Roma communities to commemorate their relatives by erecting monuments were forbidden; no memorials specifying the ethnic background of the victims existed.

Even after gaining independence in 1991, Ukraine was never a monolithic society: pro-European (mostly in the Western part of the country) and pro-Russian (mostly in the Eastern areas) sentiments competed with each other. Following these lines of division, perceptions of the past differed as well. When the Communist rule failed and the process of constructing a national narrative started, most politicians and historians adopted a moderate nationalistic rhetoric and tended to present the Ukrainian past as a pattern of suffering inflicted by external powers (Russian Empire, Soviet Union, Communism, etc.)⁴. The majority of historians easily abandoned their Marxist-Leninist concept of the historical process, adopting instead one that emphasized nation-building and state-building as the most important tasks and the core of the historical processes. Within these frames, most historians believed the ethnic Ukrainian nation to be the heart of that pro-

⁴ For detailed analysis, see Andrii Portnov, “Velyka Vitchyzniana viina v politykah pamiaty Biorusi, Moldovy ta Ukrainy: kilka porivnialnyh sposterezhen,” *Ukraina Moderna*, vol. 15 (4) (2009), pp. 206–218.

cess and the only subject deserving mention in the emerging grand-narrative⁵. Another main feature differentiating memory politics in Ukraine was its “regionalization”. While being unable to formulate a united national vision of the past that would satisfy all regions of Ukraine, the authorities allowed the local models of the past to prevail in their regions. If it was impossible to avoid clashes between contradictory visions at the national scale, these questions were simply being concealed or silenced by the central government⁶. In addition, Ukrainian perceptions of WWII underwent some “humanization” (comparing to Russian and Belorussian examples), which shifted the focus of educators and memory agents from “mass heroism of the Soviet people” to the life and suffering of average people under occupation⁷. This shift also assisted the integration of traumatic memories of particular ethnic minorities into a general narrative of WWII.

However, in the situation of competition and, sometimes, opposition to alternative memories, there is little room for memories of traumas like those the Roma suffered from the Nazis. Both memories – the post-Soviet one and the nationalistic one – tend to marginalize it. For those confessed to the post-Soviet vision of the past, they do not constitute a separate group targeted by the Nazis to total extermination; they are regarded and commemorated only as an active part of all-Soviet resistance to the

5 For analysis of conceptual and historiography developments in Ukrainian academic scholarship after the collapse of the USSR see, for example, Mark von Hagen, “Does Ukraine Have a History?,” *Slavic Review*, vol. 54, no. 3 (Autumn, 1995), pp. 658–673; for more recent analysis of Ukrainian historiography and historical politics see Georgii Kasianov, “Sovremennoe sostoianie ukrainskoi istoriografii: metodologicheskoe i institutsionalnye aspekty,” *Ab Imperio*, vol. 2 (2003), pp. 491–519; idem, “Istoricheskaia politika v Ukraine: 2000-e gody,” *Russkii vopros*, issue 2 (2012), Retrieved October, 14, 2015 from : <http://www.russkiivopros.com/index.php?page=one&id=457&kat=6&csl=58>.

6 Andrei Portnov, “Velyka Vitchyzniana viina ...,” p. 215.

7 Idem, “Istorii dlja domashnego upotrebleniia,” *Ab Imperio*, vol. 3 (2012), pp. 309–338.

“German-fascist invaders”, or as “peaceful Soviet citizens killed by the occupiers”. For those adhering to the nationalistic visions, the RG do not constitute a particular subject to be commemorated, since the core of Ukrainian liberation movement implied pursuit for ethnic homogenization of the historical space, both physical and symbolical.

One more obstacle from preventing RG from being taught and commemorated was that the consensus in the scholarly literature was absent about the essence of the Nazi politics towards the Roma. To say more, this subject was totally understudied by the scholars. The key monographs by Western scholars (like Michael Zimmermann’s book *Rassenutopie und Genozid*) have never been translated into local language. Research by local scholars was absent as well. The Roma were never singled out as a subject for historical explorations of their fate in Soviet and post-Soviet monographs. In this situation, an opinion among the scholars and wider audience was prevailing for a long time (and still prevails) that the Roma, when killed on mass scale by the Nazi Germans, suffered because they were considered by the perpetrators to be “asocial elements”, an opinion that implied transferring guilt on the victims. Post-Soviet, particularly Ukrainian, historiography and popular literature still needs to path its way to readers in order to show them the racial nature of the Nazi persecution of the Roma⁸.

In 2000, following the Stockholm International Forum, the Ministry of Education of Ukraine recommended that universities

⁸ It is only recently that the situation has begun to change. See, for example, contemporary works that stress the racial nature of the Nazi persecution of the Roma in the occupied Soviet territories: Martin Holler, *Der nationalsozialistische Völkermord an den Roma in der besetzten Sowjetunion, 1941–1944* (Heidelberg, 2009); Alexander Kruglov, “Genotsid tsigan v Ukrainie v 1941–1944 gg. Statistiko-regionalnyi aspekt,” *Holokost i suchastnist. Studii v Ukraini i sviti*, vol. 2 (6) (2009), pp. 83–113; Mikhail Tyaglyy, “Nazi occupation policies and the mass murder of the Roma in Ukraine,” in Anton Weiss-Wendt, ed., *The Nazi Genocide of the Gypsies: Reevaluation and Commemoration* (New York: Berghahn Books, 2013), pp. 120–152. However, few of this research is available to wider audience in Ukraine.

provide courses on Holocaust history⁹. In 2006, the Holocaust history (as well as the term itself) was introduced into school curricula, though very briefly, and into the list of questions for examination in secondary state schools¹⁰. However, most writers evaluate these innovations as formalistic and insufficient, covering only a very small part of the school audience¹¹. Paradoxically enough, in 2004 the Ukrainian parliament (Verkhovna Rada) created the legal ground for RG commemoration in Ukraine: on initiative of two parliament members from Communist party, the Parliament passed a separate law introducing annually the 2nd of August as the day for commemoration of the RG in Ukraine¹². The very title of this law as well as how it was introduced shows that it was adopted without careful expert preparation and with no intent by the authorities to keep an eye on its implementation. The day proposed in this act was called “The International day of the Roma holocaust” (sic!). The historical preamble of the act states that “During World War II Hitlerite fascists together with their accomplices, fulfilling the racial politics of ethnocide, took out from the occupied countries and burned in the concentration camps about 500,000 Roma...”. Despite some factual and terminological mistakes in the text, this act prescribed to the Cabinet

⁹ Anatolii Podolskyi, “Aktualnist ta stan vikladannja istorii Holokostu v suchasnyj Ukraini,” *Uroki Holokostu*, issue 2 (14) (2008), pp. 2–4.

¹⁰ Idem, “Ukraïnske suspilstvo i pamiat’ pro Holokost: sproba analizu deiakih aspektiv.” *Holokost i suchasnist’: Studii v Ukraini i sviti*, vol. 1 (5) (2009), pp. 47–59.

¹¹ For instance, experienced Kievan schoolteacher and methodologist Iurii Komarov estimated in his brief survey, that in regard to Holocaust education the Ukrainian teaching plans and textbooks remain behind those of Europe and do not use European experience; the Ukrainian Ministry of Education do not realize common to all mankind nature and teaching potential of Holocaust; some responsibility for that is of Ukrainian historians who still prefer to cultivate the ethnocentric paradigm of history based on the history of ethnic Ukrainians. See Iurii Komarov, “Formalni mozhlivosti: mistse temy Holokostu v navchalnyh kursah MON Ukraini,” *Uroki Holokostu*, issue 2 (14) (2008), pp. 4–6.

¹² See <http://zakon4.rada.gov.ua/laws/show/2085-iv> (access: 14/10/2015).

of Ministers together with the regional authorities “to elaborate actions directed to research the scale, number of victims and sites of the Hitlerite ethnocide of the Roma during World War II, as well as to commemorate the deported and murdered representatives of this ethnic minority”. However, closer examination of how that law was implemented shows that almost no systematic activities recommended and prescribed by the act were carried through in the following years. Despite the fact that this Day in official state commemoration calendar means annual address from the higher officials of the state, it was only in 2009 that the president of Ukraine (at that time – Victor Yushchenko) delivered public address to the Roma community on August 2nd, 2009, and no media (excluding “Forum of Nations”, a small monthly newspaper published by the NGO called “Congress of National Minorities of Ukraine) disseminated it¹³. In 2011, the Ukrainian Institute for National Remembrance included this day into the “Calendar of outstanding and memorial dates for 2011”, but no event was run by the Institute on that day. In the following years, which include 2015, this date has been absent in the Institute’s calendar¹⁴. The practice shows that, in most cases, the activities prescribed by this law to the regional authorities to foster research and education were mostly left on paper.¹⁵ The local authorities prefer only to

¹³ Address by the President of Ukraine on the occasion of the International Day of the Roma Holocaust (Retrieved October, 14, 2015 from: <http://www.forumn.kiev.ua/2009-08-87/87-04.html>). Later, in 2013, only one more public address was issued that day signed by the 1st deputy of the head of the Ministry of Culture in Ukraine, see <http://mincult.kmu.gov.ua/mincult/uk/publish/article/336250;jsessionid=4C686292653E8BCC86DD2300BBCB10A2.app6:2> (access: 14/10/2015).

¹⁴ See <http://memory.gov.ua/page/istorichnii-kalendar> (access: 14/10/2015).

¹⁵ Systematic web-monitoring made by the author shows that only in four regions (out of 25) in Ukraine – Lviv, Mykolaiv, Odessa and Zakarpattia oblasts – local administrations elaborated a plan of events to have these included into their annual activities agenda or issued “methodical recommendations” for the administrative bodies and educational institutions subordinated to them about how to mark the “International Day of the Roma Holocaust”.

join memorial building, commemorative ceremonies and public events which are typically initiated and organized by NGOs, and do that only if the latter hold responsibility for organization of events of this kind.¹⁶ In 2013, the *Strategy and Action Plan on the protection and integration into Ukrainian society of the Roman minority for the period up to 2020* was adopted and signed by the president of Ukraine (at that time Victor Yanukovych), but nothing was included into this document regarding teaching and commemoration of the RG¹⁷.

The same is true when considering the field of education. Is RG being taught at schools? To what extent is the information about RG present in teaching curricula and history textbooks? For the last 25 years, textbook writing in Ukraine has experienced some development, and the state of affairs one can see in this field now is ambiguous. Several years ago Oleksandr Voitenko, Ukrainian expert in the field of formal and informal education, observed in his article specifically devoted to the RG teaching that in Ukrainian textbooks and teaching manuals

multiculturalism and multi-ethnic character of the country are hardly represented. ... And the Roma, judging from the analysis of educational textbooks in history for junior and senior schools, have never been present in Ukrainian history. So, how are the Roma represented in school teaching materials? The only mention of the Roma in the context of Nazi racial

¹⁶ In his recent article exploring contemporary commemoration of the RG in Ukraine, Swedish scholar Andrej Kotljarchuk provides about 20 examples of sites in various parts of Ukraine where the monuments to the murdered Roma were erected recently. See Andrej Kotljarchuk, "Natsistskii genotsyd tsygan na territorii okkupirovannoi Ukrainy: rol sovetskogo proshlogo v sovremennoi politike pamiati," *Holokost i suchasnist'. Studii v Ukraini i sviti*, vol. 1 (12) (2014), pp. 24–50. However, closer examination of these cases shows that almost all of them were possible due to the initiatives of NGO sector of the society – first of all, the Roma organizations, but also other groups, while the role of the state bodies was limited usually to granting permissions for the public activists to build a monument, and taking part in the dedication ceremonies.

¹⁷ See <http://zakon4.rada.gov.ua/laws/show/201/2013> (access: 14/10/2015).

policies is found in textbooks on World History and History of Ukraine for the 10th school grade. But from these textbooks we do not see why Jews? Why the Roma? Why was it them to be «chosen» as victims? And where from do they appear in Ukraine, if they haven't been mentioned in earlier schooling? Roma history, their culture and contribution to the culture of Europe and Ukraine, history of their national movement, integration issues, etc. must be included in the school courses of history. Information on Roma genocide in WWII must be embraced by the school curricula. It must not be «separated» from the context of Roma history in Europe and Ukraine.¹⁸

Has the situation changed since 2009? No one, standardized textbook exists for Ukrainian students of every grade; instead, there is a range of textbooks recommended by the Ministry of Education annually to be used in classrooms, and school administration can choose the one it considers to be more appropriate from this range. History is being taught in Ukrainian schools within two courses: “World History” (for which 5 textbooks were available last year) and “History of Ukraine” (for which also 5 textbooks were available last year). The period of 1939–1945 is covered in the beginning of the last (the 11th) grade of each course. Let us consider how textbooks published in 2010–2013 cover this period.

As for “World History” course (in which WWII is presented in the context of global and European perspective), all of these contain the term “Holocaust” and its definition within the lesson about the Nazi occupation regime in Europe or the Nazi “New Order”. But this term is explained differently. In most textbooks, one can see the statement that “the Holocaust means extermination of the Jewish people during World War II”. However, this definition is always accompanied with the information about the Nazi “New Order”, which presents it as a consistent policy pursued by the Nazis to eliminate “inferior people” like Jews, the Roma (or Gypsies), Slavic population on the basis of racial ideology. In

¹⁸ Oleksandr Voitenko, “Genocid romiv u navchal’nih kursah MON Ukraïni ta neformalni praktiki uvichnennja tragedii v osvıtjanskomu protsesi,” *Holokost i suchasnist’. Studii v Ukraïni i sviti*, vol. 2 (6) (2009), pp. 141–147.

this context, one can see that the term “Roma” is present in all the textbooks, though in most cases Nazi racial policy is misinterpreted by the authors as something which had exterminationist intentions, also in regard to the Slavic people, and Roma fate is mentioned in them quite briefly. One textbook, however, is outstanding of this range¹⁹, and presents quite nuanced and explicit explanation of the “genocide committed in regard to the Gypsy people (Sinti and Roma)” (though the passage that the textbook contains states inaccurately that the Roma were persecuted by the Nazis as thieves, “fortune-tellers and kidnappers”, thus neglecting the racial grounds for the Nazi persecution of the Roma)²⁰.

As for the textbooks on the history of Ukraine (where WWII is given in Ukrainian context and focused geographically on the territory of contemporary Ukraine), they give similar picture. Out of 5 textbooks under consideration, 4 contain the term “Holocaust”, which is formulated as destruction of the Jews by the Nazi regime (while the remaining one mentions information about the mass murder of Jewish people without using the term), but only 3 out of 5 also contain a brief hint that the Roma were also the subject of the Nazi extermination politics. One can come to a conclusion that the tragic fate of the Roma is still externalized at the Ukrainian teaching narratives: it is rather regarded as a part of the general history which had happened elsewhere but not really as part of Ukrainian historical past. One more conclusion out of the analysis of textbooks is that in most cases, even when dealing with the RG, the authors mention it very briefly, in passing, and do not actually emphasize the racial nature of the Nazi politics towards the Roma.

When trying to interpret the reasons why the RG-related (as well as the Holocaust related narrative) is present in the textbooks in different proportions, it might be helpful to have a look on the

¹⁹ Ihor Shchupak, *Vsemirnaia istoriia. Noveishii period (1939–2011). Uchebnoe posobie dlia 11 klassa obshcheobrazovatelnykh uchebnykh zavedenii* (Zaporizhzhia: Premier, 2011), 272 p.

²⁰ *Ibidem*, p. 33.

personal professional background of the authors. It reveals that the more the text author was involved in the activities initiated by NGOs working in the field of informal education, the more detailed narrative about this subject can be found in his/her textbooks. Several NGOs today are focused on the promotion of Holocaust education among governmental education structures and schoolteachers. The central ones are Ukrainian Center for Holocaust Studies in Kiev²¹ and “Tkuma” Institute for Holocaust Studies in Dnepropetrovsk²²; both include RG history into their agenda and educational workshops for schoolteachers and school administrators that they actively run. The above-mentioned textbook, which contains a separate passage on the RG, was compiled by Ihor Shchupak, director of the “Tkuma” Institute for Holocaust Studies. One more example of the RG (as well as general Roma history) covered comes from another part of the country, but still NGO: a textbook called “Together on the same land. Multicultural history of Ukraine” was published by “Nova Doba” Association of Teachers of History and Civics in Lviv about various ethnic groups of Ukraine.²³

To conclude textbook exploration, one must add that sometimes textbook writing can be a very bright example of how the stereotypes regarding the Roma are kept and transferred to the younger generation. For instance, manual “Basics of Health” for pupils of the 4th grade (10 years old) describes to a kid what to do when no adults are at home and someone rings to the door, and this situation of danger is personified with an image which can be identified easily with a Romani woman²⁴. The textbook was published in 2004, but today is still in use in schools.

²¹ See <http://www.holocaust.kiev.ua> (access: 14/10/ 2015).

²² See <http://tkuma.dp.ua/> (access: 14/10/2015).

²³ Razom na odnii zemli. Istoriia Ukrainy bahatokulturna. Posibnyk dlia uchniv (Lviv: ZUKTs, 2012), chapter *Roma History* and chapter *Jewish and Roma Genocide*. See <http://www.novadoba.org.ua/ukr/together-on-the-same-land-book> (access: 14/10/2015).

²⁴ N.M. Bibik, T.E. Boichenko, N.S. Koval, O.I. Maniuk, *Osnovy zdorovia. Pid-ruchnyk dlia 4 klasya* (Kyiv: Navchalna knyga, 2004), p. 81.

Therefore, it would not be going too far to say that in the field of education it is NGOs who introduce memory of the RG into the official curricula and textbooks and classrooms. The governmental bodies remain clumsy and inert in accepting this approach, though they do not prevent it from being integrated into curricula. Having appeared originally on the margins of the state educational system, the RG teaching still remains there with some occasional attention of a symbolical nature provided by the governmental structures. However, some important developments can be observed: (1) the more effective activities of NGO sector, (2) “humanized” image of WWII, (3) the prevailing regional memories over the national ones, and (4) also some European integrationist rhetoric and practices used to a different extent, but by all Ukrainian presidential administrations. While the Holocaust has happened to be in their focus for already more than 20 years, the RG became a focus of educators’ attention only recently.

Comparing this situation with that of Russia and Belorussia, other Slavic post-Soviet states, one can see that general history and memory politics there makes it more difficult for the RG to be included into national memory canon²⁵; this can indirectly be confirmed by the total absence of the publications attempting to reflect the RG teaching or at least suggesting methods and recommendations for the teachers on that subject. As for Ukraine, polycentrism and pluralism in the process of shaping national historical narrative made it possible for such efforts to appear (though, again, as NGO initiatives). In this process, as it has been mentioned above, initiatives by the Roma communities and other non-Roma groups and the civil society actors are intertwining. Now it is time to consider them with greater care (some of them have been mentioned above) to find out what is their contribution to the RG remembrance in Ukraine and what

²⁵ As for Belorussia, see Andrej Kotljarchuk, “World War II Memory Politics: Jewish, Polish and Roma Minorities of Belarus”, *The Journal of Belarusian Studies*, vol. 1 (2013), pp. 7–37. As for Russian Federation, no critical examination of this subject, even made by a foreign observer, ever existed.

is the outcome of their activities. The NGO activities generally are going on in three directions (for the purpose of convenience I would divide these into three groups, but, one has to keep in mind that this division is rather conditional, because in most cases these initiatives are the result of mixed interrelations and cooperation):

(1) *Research and educational initiatives of the local actors supported financially by the international or foreign foundations. In this case, initiatives belong to the local NGOs, which are successful to secure funding of their projects.* In 2008, a first scholarly conference in Ukraine focused especially on the RG was run by the Ukrainian Center for Holocaust Studies (UCHS) due to support of the *Friedrich Ebert Stiftung*; a year later, the conference proceedings were published separately thanks to support of the German Embassy in Ukraine²⁶. One more example is the 4-year project currently being run by the UCHS in Kyiv, combining research and educational activities and supported initially by the “Mutual Understanding and Tolerance” Foundation and then by the EVZ Foundation;²⁷

²⁶ See http://holocaust.kiev.ua/news/chasopis_2010.html (access: October, 14, 2015).

²⁷ See www.romagenocide.com.ua (access: 14/10/2015). In the autumn of 2013, the UCHS launched a new three-year research and education project, *The Genocide of Roma (Gypsies) during the occupation of Ukraine (1941–1944): Research, Teaching and Commemoration*. The research aim of the project lies in promoting the search of documentary sources and introducing them into scholarly use; recording oral historic accounts pertaining to the fate of the Roma living in the Ukrainian territories occupied during World War II; facilitating research by local historians in this direction. The educational goal presupposes the cooperation of researchers with teachers from educational institutions; involvement of students in search activities; recording memories of the witnesses of the genocide against the Roma; identifying Roma mass murder sites during World War II and their present-day condition; development of methodological materials for the teaching of this topic; and the writing of research works by students to be presented at the annual *The History and Lessons of Holocaust* contest run by the UCHS. The UCHS launched new website to promote the interaction of all those willing to join the subject, as well as to create an online resource that will help find and utilize in work reference materials or recent literature on the subject. This page offers visitors

due to their support the UCHS was able, particularly, to publish a map with 113 killing sites of the Roma in German-occupied area of Ukraine identified on the basis of archival documentation available. This map (which continues to be updated, since the project is still in progress) could become a base for the nation-wide registry of the Romani victims.

(2) *Initiatives carried out by local branches of international institutions, which include RG-related education. In this case, international institutions in Ukraine find local partners from the civic sector to fulfill a particular project.* For example, Ukrainian branch of the International Renaissance Foundation in Kyiv has, among others, a Roma program initiative²⁸, which is mostly focused on the Roma-related social and legal issues but also embraces humanities and, particularly, conferences and teaching courses on Romani Studies, including the RG²⁹; as for teaching courses, one-year program on Romani Studies has been established at the National University “Kyiv-Mohyla Academy” in 2012–2013³⁰; currently an agreement has been signed to establish the Romani Studies Program at Uzhgorod National University.³¹ At the same time, this organization sponsored travelling of several Ukrainian students of Roma and non-Roma origin to the annual ceremony of commemoration on August 2 in Krakow-Auschwitz, and now is discussing the possibility of adapting into Ukrainian the recently published Council of Europe’s textbook *Right to Remember*.

updates on latest developments within the project; bibliography and full-text publications of Ukrainian and foreign researchers of Roma history and the genocide of the Roma; guidance papers regarding search activities, ways of witness search and the rules of oral recounts recording, auxiliary materials for writing student research papers; as well as a forum to enable the exchange of opinions about the status quo and way forward of the project.

²⁸ See <http://www.irf.ua/en/programs/roma/> (access: 14/10/2015).

²⁹ As for conference proceedings, see http://issuu.com/irf_ua/docs/roma-2014-1/1?e=2879057/7849618 (access: 14/10/2015).

³⁰ See <http://priansak-center.com/en/about-roman-studies> (access: 14/10/2015).

³¹ See <http://www.uzhnu.edu.ua/uk/news/v-uzhnu-zapratsyuyut-romski-studiji.htm> (access: 14/10/2015).

(3) *Initiatives developed by the Roma community and its various individual and collective parts, being realized on their own or in cooperation with state bodies and/or non-governmental sector.* With no doubt, present-day Roma ethno-cultural organizations and their leaders can be seen as main memory agents interested in commemorating the RG, sharing this traumatic experience with the wider society and introducing this knowledge into the Ukrainian historical narrative, both on academic and public levels. Comparing to the situation of post-war time or late Soviet period, their memory cannot be called “muted” anymore, and, similarly to what Polish scholar Sławomir Kapralski demonstrated in regard to the Roma community in Europe, particularly in Poland³², the Ukrainian Roma today are getting more and more involved into public commemoration ceremonies and “inventing tradition” process, as far as the resources allow them to do so.

Especially, this is true for a younger Roma generation, which is on its way of integration to the wider society. It is impossible yet to evaluate and give a representative picture of at which level the RG is in the historical background of the Roma community, since the research on this subject has never been done. However, some indirect tools to measure this awareness can be used, particularly, on the basis of essays written by the young Romani students applying annually to the Roma Education Fund for the fellowships. One of the chapters in application form, which they need to fill in, is the so-called “Essay on Roma Issues”, which expects from them to deliver their vision, limited to 500 words, on what it means to be Roma in individual and social dimensions.³³ Instruction to this section, asks, among other questions, the following: *What*

³² See, for example, Sławomir Kapralski, “The Holocaust in the Memory of the Roma. From Trauma to Imagined Community?”, in L. Stillman and G. Johanson, eds., *Constructing and Sharing Memory: Community Informatics, Identity and Empowerment* (Newcastle: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2007), pp. 114–123.

³³ I am grateful to the Roma Educational Fund, particularly to Stela Garaz, for giving me a permission to use peer data of the application process.

is your opinion on Roma identity? Do you consider it important for young Roma? Or, do you see a need to strengthen it – and if so – how? As one can see, this guidance, though indirectly, leaves some space for a respondent to expound one’s personal feeling of identity in the terms he/she prefers. Some young Roma applicants indeed used what we can call “historical discourse” (particularly the notion of the RG and its implications) when explaining what it means for them to be a Roma.

Year	Total number of essays	Number of essays where Holocaust (genocide, or alike) discourse is present	% to total
2012	93	3	3,2
2013	131	10	7,6
2014	133	10	7,5
2015	181	13	7,1

This demonstrates that, for the reasons yet to be researched, since the year of 2013 the proportion of Roma students aware of this tragic element of their past multiplied twice comparing to the previous year and, since that time remains stable, constituting about 7% of the total amount of the young people who applied for the support. In my opinion, the fact that they used the notion of the RG in their self-representation can be interpreted not only as just awareness of this past, but also their readiness to use this knowledge actively in their personal and social life strategies, particularly when facing present-day instances of discrimination or intolerance. On the other hand, this also demonstrates that the overwhelming majority of young Roma people (about 93%) are reluctant or unable, when speculating on the present-day situation of the Roma community, to perceive themselves as being part of historical process and to see the connection between potential discrimination nowadays (which the application form asked about too) and the persecution that occurred in the past, in order to learn lessons from it. In other words, the meaningful

past is still not considered as a possible resource for shaping the future by the most of the students.

As it has been mentioned above, over the last two decades Roma communities and individuals were main memory agents interested in commemorating RG in Ukraine, particularly erecting monuments of memorial signs on the mass graves where the Roma perished. Perhaps the long story of erecting a memorial to the Roma perished in Babyn Iar (Kyiv) is most symbolical when considering how the Roma initiatives interact with the governmental bodies and public actors. Babyn Iar in Kyiv is the place known for its tragic history, a site where mostly Jews, but also the Roma, Soviet POWs, Ukrainian nationalists, underground members, mentally disabled persons, as well as all those believed by the occupants to be “suspicious” and “undesirable” elements, were murdered in big numbers over 1941–1943³⁴.

As early as in 1995, the Roma organization “Romanipe” in Kyiv in cooperation with a well-known architect and sculptor Anatoly Ignashchenko projected a monument to the Roma killed in Babyn Iar in 1941. The monument, made of iron, was created in the form of the Roma nomad tent. Then, the base for the monument was ready, and the monument was about to be put on the pedestal. In 2000 this was suddenly prohibited by the city administration, which argued that the new monument “does not fit the area of secured landscape”³⁵. After attempts by the architect to overcome that prohibition, finally the monument was taken to another location, Kamianets-Podilskyi, and put there in the suburbs of the town above a ravine, remote area which can hardly be visited (*see photo 1*). Thus, the position of Kyiv city bureaucracy prevented putting that monument there despite the support of the Roma

³⁴ For most profound research on Babyn Iar, see collection *Babi Yar: chelovek, vlast, istoriia. Dokumenty i materialy*, T. Evstafieva, V. Nakhmanovych, eds. *Kniga 1: Istoricheskaia topographiia. Khronologiiia sobytii* (Kiev: Vneshtorgizdat, 2004). The book is available for download at <http://www.kby.kiev.ua/book1/> (access: 14/10/2015).

³⁵ See <http://www.forumn.kiev.ua/2009-08-87/87-04.html> (access: 14/10/2015).

community and public opinion given to this project. In 2006, a National Reserve “Babyn Iar” was created by decision of president Yushchenko, but in fact this organization existed on paper only³⁶. For some years, there was no monument to the Roma in Babyn Iar until 2009, when Roma community again collected funds and erected a small memorial sign with inscription on it promising that “On this site a memorial will be erected to the victims of the Roma Holocaust” (*see photo 2*).



PHOTO 1. Monument to the victims of the genocide of the Roma, by Anatoly Ignashchenko, created initially to be located in Babyn Iar, and situated finally in Kamianets-Podilskyi. 2008. Source: © Erud/ Wikimedia Commons/ https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Kamyanets_Podilsky_Kibitka.JPG

³⁶ See <http://babyn-yar.gov.ua/> (access: 14/10/2015).



PHOTO 2. Memorial sign in Babyn Iar (Kyiv) saying “On this site a memorial will be erected to the victims of the Roma Holocaust”. Photo by Mikhail Tyaglyy, 2009

In June 2011, this small monument was destroyed in Babyn Iar by unknown people. Investigation brought no results. For some period, the site remained without any stone with inscription (*see photo 3*), and soon the Roma community put one more small monument with another inscription, which – this time – did not contain on the stone any promise of the future memorial to be erected. The new one says only: “In memory of the Roma shot in Babyn Iar” (*see photo 4*).

This story remains completely incomprehensible for an outside observer without some extra attention paid to the context – but it becomes quite clear when the role and activities of both governmental and non-governmental organizations involved are considered. The area of Babyn Iar, or rather what remained of this huge area after the attempts by the Soviet authorities to erase and reshape this part of Kyiv in 1950–1960s, became - during the



PHOTO 3. Memorial sign in Babyn Yar (Kyiv) vandalized. Photo by Mikhail Tyaglyy, 2011



PHOTO 4. Current memorial sign in Babyn Yar (Kyiv) saying "In memory of the Roma shot in Babyn Yar". Photo by Mikhail Tyaglyy, 2013

independence period – a tasty morsel for numerous commercial companies and nouveau riches who had their lobby in the city administration responsible for maintaining city territory. For more than two decades, city authorities were making decisions in a completely opaque manner, ignoring civic initiatives directed to creation of the united site of memory in Babyn Iar which would shape common space of memory for various victim groups murdered there. In 2003, Civic Committee for Commemoration of Babyn Iar Victims was established and elaborated a project to implement the model of the memorial site, which would represent every victim group's fate and, therefore, create a symbol of national past, uniting victims of different background around one commemorative space³⁷. But initiatives like that were ignored. Instead, at least three initiatives by various private Jewish organizations (controlled or supported by the Ukrainian businessmen of Jewish origin) were discussed, and were nearly accepted to build a museum in Babyn Iar devoted exclusively to the Jewish victims³⁸. It would not be going too far to assume that Ukrainian civil servants responsible for the state of affairs of this memorial area were obtaining some unofficial and indirect means to meet the above-mentioned initiatives in quite friendly and positive way; other explanation can be their absolute ignorance of the history of Babyn Iar and its present-day symbolical meaning. It is not surprising that to those who associate themselves today with the other victim groups (Ukrainian nationalists, Orthodox

³⁷ See <http://www.kby.kiev.ua/> (access: 14/10/2015).

³⁸ The most prominent scandal occurred in 2002–2004, an initiative by the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee, supported by the part of the local Jewish leaders, to construct Jewish Community Center in Babyn Iar; this inappropriate idea was confirmed by the authorities with no public discussion on this issue and was canceled only after polemics had come out of the borders of the Jewish circles and involved wider Ukrainian intelligentsia, see <http://babiya-diskus.narod.ru/Index.html> (access: 14/10/2015).. Needless to say that in this and other initiatives all the local actors of Jewish origin pursued their own PR goals when introducing projects like that and allocating funds for them.

church, etc.), the initiatives listed above seemed to be totally inappropriate, as they did not include memory of “their” groups in a common memorial narrative. This situation leads to what can be called “memory wars” in the Ukrainian society. Particularly, the most recent conflict happened in 2011, when the Ukrainian parliament approved a decree “On 70th anniversary of Babyn Iar”³⁹. This document contained a list of measures to be implemented in order to hasten activities of the National Reserve “Babyn Iar” (created in 2006) and to commemorate victims of massacres. This time the reason for discord was that the Committee on preparation and running of the events devoted to the 70th anniversary of massacres in Babyn Iar was formed exclusively of the representatives of Jewish organizations. Both Ukrainian and Roma ethno-cultural organizations addressed Ukrainian prime-minister (at that time Mykola Azarov), criticizing this decision and demanding to have their representatives included into the Committee.⁴⁰ No public reaction followed to these criticisms, and the effect of these addresses remained unknown. Up to the present day, the Babyn Iar territory remains a cake, sliced into several chunks, and every victim group (or, rather their descendants associating themselves with any victim group) enjoys its own chunk, i.e. visits particular

³⁹ See <http://zakon4.rada.gov.ua/laws/show/3560-vi> (access: 14/10/2015).

⁴⁰ For the address of the Organization of Ukrainian Nationalists, see <http://www.istpravda.com.ua/columns/2011/09/26/56627/> (access: 14/10/2015). For the address of the Roma organizations, see <http://www.unian.ua/society/517746-romi-vimagayut-vid-azarova-vshanuvati-vbitih-u-babinomu-yaru.html> (access:14/10/2015). Remarkably, the appeal by the Ukrainian circles refers only indirectly to the composition of the Committee, saying that “Some particular civic organizations are undertaking one more attempt to cross out historical truth and national fairness, above all in regard to the death of the thousands of Ukrainian patriots, who during the war struggled for Ukrainian independence”. The letter by the Roma organizations was much less politically correct: “[The fact that the Roma are not represented in the Committee] gives us a ground to consider the Plan of Events proposed by the Committee as a business plan for money-laundering of the budget funds through the Jewish institutions”.

part of Babyn Iar territory on their own commemorative dates with no regard to the other victim groups. One memorial site which would unite and consolidate present-day Ukrainian society by means of the common tragic fate has not been created yet.

Summing up, one can come to a conclusion that the RG is being remembered and commemorated in present-day Ukraine in a specific and ambiguous way. The memory is being preserved and transformed to the younger generations, but very insufficiently. In the context of inconsistent and ambiguous politics of memory, and in the situation of constant struggle between “post-Soviet” and “nationalistic” discourses of history, the dynamics of spreading RG-related memory is positive, but this is mainly the merit of non-formal education and commemoration activities developed by NGOs and it covers small sector of the society. Besides, as one scholar noted, the wider Ukrainian society is not ready to discuss sensitive and painful questions related to involvement into the Holocaust⁴¹. The same can be referred to the RG.

Teaching about the RG in the FSU space remains to be still in the beginning stage and is being initiated merely by few memory agents such as the Roma community activists and NGO educators. Comparing the situation in Ukraine to that in the rest of the FSU states, one can see that elsewhere RG teaching has reached more success due to several reasons; one is general and consists in a more active role the NGOs and civic sector play in the society, shaping pluralistic vision of history; the more particular one was that the 2004 Law by Ukrainian parliament created a framework where civic initiatives, particularly commemorative ones, if not supported, at least can be carried out with no prevention from the side of the authorities.

⁴¹ Tetiana Portnova, “Holokost v ukrainskikh obrazovatelnykh praktikakh,” online publication, see <http://urokiistorii.ru/learning/edu/51948> (published 9/12/2013).

Giving the Roma Survivors a Voice – Investigating the Roma Genocide in Eastern Europe

Andrej Umansky and Costel Nastasie

Introduction

The mass deportations and genocide directed against Europe's Roma during World War II by the Nazis and their allies have largely been forgotten. Estimates of the death toll of Roma people in World War II range from 220,000 to 1,500,000¹.

Most Roma survivors have never fully recovered from the terrible treatment to which they were subjected and have received little or no compensation for what they and their families endured. Some of them have never spoken about their ordeal and survival during World War II.

A special partnership between two organizations, the Roma Dignity Centre in Brussels and Yahad-In Unum in Paris, has generated a specialized archive concerning the Roma genocide in Europe – through specialized collection methods. They have collected testimonies of victims deported to Transnistria and have reconstructed their personal histories, family by family, group by group, village by village.

¹ See for example Donald Kenrick, Grattan Puxon, *Gypsies Under the Swastika* (Hertfordshire: University of Hertfordshire Press, 2009), p. 153 and Martin Gilbert, *The Routledge Atlas of the Holocaust* (London: Routledge, 2012), map n° 182 (with deaths by country).

Creation of a unique project

Yahad-In Unum is the leading organization investigating the mass executions of Jews and other victims in Eastern Europe between 1941 and 1944 during World War II. Since 2004, Yahad-In Unum has led a truly historic undertaking to identify and locate undiscovered mass graves of Jews and the Roma, some of which still remain without a memorial or marker².

To date, Yahad-In Unum has carried out research concerning 1,615 execution sites, including fifty-eight extermination sites of Roma people, in eight different countries. It has also gathered 4,115 testimonies during the course of its ninety-three investigative research trips. Only in 2014, between January 1 and December 6, 2014, Yahad-In Unum conducted research trips to 470 villages in Eastern Europe, gathering 554 new testimonies and recording 233 new mass killing sites, including thirteen extermination sites of Roma people³.

A notable example from Yahad-In Unum's findings is the extermination of a Roma kolkhoz in Alexandrovka⁴ near the city of Smolensk in Russia. Roma kolkhozes were created in the 1920s and 1930s in the Soviet Union, one of which was established in Alexandrovka. In one day, a German killing unit entered the village and murdered all the Roma in a mass grave. Through the accounts of a survivor and of Russian neighbors, Yahad-In Unum was able to reconstruct the day of the crime⁵.

² For further reading see: Patrick Desbois, *The Holocaust by Bullets: A Priest's Journey to Uncover the Truth Behind the Murder of 1.5 Million Jews* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008) and Patrick Desbois, Edouard Husson, „Neue Ergebnisse zur Geschichte des Holocaust in der Ukraine. Das ‘‘Oral History’’-Projekt von Yahad-In Unum und seine wissenschaftliche Bewertung“ in Johannes Hürter, ed., *Besatzung, Kollaboration, Holocaust. Neue Studien zur Verfolgung und Ermordung der europäischen Juden* (Munich: Oldenbourg, 2008), pp. 177–187.

³ The figures are from early 2015.

⁴ Also known as Alexandrovskoye.

⁵ For the historical contextualization see Martin Holler, *The National Socialist Genocide of the Roma in the German-occupied Soviet Union* (Heidelberg: Zentralrat Sinti und Roma, 2009), pp. 35–38 and 76–83.

After the discovery of this critical number of shooting sites of the Roma, especially in Ukraine and Russia, Yahad-In Unum decided to partner with a Roma association to cast a light on what happened to the Roma people during these years in Eastern Europe. Roma Dignity was the perfect partner to develop such a project.

This Belgian association was founded in 2011 as a non-profit organization by Costel Nastasie, a Belgian Roma and co-author of the present article. Originally from Romania, he left his country after confronting discrimination and racism at a very young age. 70 years ago, his family was subjected to deportation from their village in Transnistria under the Antonescu regime. The majority of them were not able to return and a large number of families died there from cold and hunger. Currently, he lives in Brussels as a Belgian citizen. For a number of years, he worked as a peacekeeper and mediator for the Roma community in Brussels. Since 2011, Costel Nastasie has been the president of Roma Dignity. The project he envisioned is to centralize an archival base and to document the persecutions endured by the Roma population during World War II and to teach this history to both young Roma as well as the public at large in Belgium and across Europe.

Another key member of the team is Serban Catalin, who has worked for Roma Dignity since 2011 in a variety of roles, including as an investigator and interpreter on the field during trips conducted in partnership with Yahad-In Unum, as well as a translator. He currently works at the Roma Dignity Center in Brussels where families of survivors, researchers and the general public can access the testimonies gathered in the field in Romania and in the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia. In addition to his work on the field, Serban Catalin works with Costel Nastasie to help the Roma, especially youth, to integrate into Belgian society by helping them with administrative work, drafting resumes, filling out paperwork, and redirecting them to appropriate institutions for certain services.

Methodology

Preparation

Before a research trip, an intensive preparation takes place involving a large-scale analysis of scholarly publications and archival materials. For instance, for fieldwork in Romania and the historical territory of Transnistria, we work primarily with Romanian and Soviet Archival documents. Following archival collections allows us to prepare for research trips and to provide a historical framework necessary to contextualize the testimonies we collect.

Romanian national and regional archives are often our starting point. These are essentially composed of records on the deportation of the Roma, as well as directives issued by Romanian heads, which help clarify their policy towards the Roma people. Yahad-in Unum and Roma Dignity prepare future research trips to Romania by reading, sorting, and translating these materials.

We often consult the war-period archives of the Odessa, Nikolayev and Vinnitsa Oblasts (present-day Ukraine). This is a corpus of administrative documents, police and legal texts dating from the period of the war in the current Ukrainian regions of Odessa and Nikolayev, corresponding to the former region of Transnistria, which was under Romanian authority from 1941 to 1944. It was in this area that more than 18,000 Roma were deported between 1942 and 1943. The archives shed light on the dates of the deportations, on the sanitary conditions of the camps and villages where the Roma families were detained, and on the execution orders⁶.

The third source is material from the Soviet Extraordinary State Commission⁷. Since these investigations took place only

⁶ We have access to the archives via the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum (USHMM) in Washington DC, e.g. the collections RG-31.004M for the archives of the Odessa region and RG-31.008M for the archives of the Nikolayev region.

⁷ For more information about the „TchGK“, a commission that gathered evidence about persecution of the civil population in the soviet territories

weeks or months after the liberation of the villages by the Red Army, we can learn approximate details as to how and where the Roma were killed.

Finally, the expertise of various researchers such as Martin Holler, Viorel Achim, Radu Ioanid and Ovidiu Creanga, among others, is used to steer our research better. All collected information is compiled into a file that does not leave the team when they are on the ground. During the fieldwork, the team is also in constant contact with researchers from the offices in Paris and Brussels.

Collection of testimonies

The planned research trip to Romania shares the same goal as our other mission trips conducted throughout Eastern Europe so far: to collect testimonies of Roma survivors of persecution and deportation during the Second World War, and to record information on the different ethnic groups that make up the Roma people of Romania. As previous research trips show, there was a disparity of political policies of Romanians towards Roma people from one region to another. Through interviews with survivors of the deportation and of local witnesses, we have uncovered different reasons for nonsystematic deportations, as well as reasons for the exemption of some nomadic Roma from deportation, and not of sedentary Roma who had houses and steady work in other villages.

Yahad-In Unum has already conducted several research trips to the regions of Odessa and Nikolayev, Ukraine, which was part of Transnistria during World War II, and has collected testimonies of Ukrainian witnesses on the situation of Roma deportees: conditions of their humiliation, detention, forced labor and execution. In addition, Yahad-In Unum's teams have recorded the GPS

occupied by German forces and their allies during WWII see: Andrej Umansky, "Geschichtsschreiber wider Willen? Einblick in die Quellen der Außerordentlichen Staatlichen Kommission und der Zentralen Stelle", in Angelika Nußberger et al., ed., *Bewusstes Erinnern und bewusstes Vergessen. Der juristische Umgang mit der Vergangenheit in den Ländern Mittel- und Osteuropas*, (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck 2011), pp. 347–374.

coordinates of the shooting sites of the Roma, the camps (which are villages today) where they were detained and the mass graves where thousands of bodies were buried, of those who died from hunger, diseases and inhuman living conditions. The majority of those mass graves remain without monuments. The collection of testimonies in Romania of Roma deportees is part of a reconstruction of this history, from Romania to Transnistria. The testimonies collected in Romania are cross-referenced not only with the archives housed at Yahad-In Unum, but also with the testimonies of the Ukrainian witnesses of former Transnistria which will eventually allow Yahad-In Unum and Roma Dignity to retrace the route of the deportation.

With these research results, Yahad-In Unum and Roma Dignity are more determined than ever to investigate the fate of the Roma during the Second World War. With every research trip, the team discovers new, previously unknown facts which help fill the gap in the missing history of the Roma genocide and reveal the extent of these heinous crimes. Another objective of such research is to give proper respect to the victims' burial places and enable their preservation.

The main goal of the present project is to document, in as much detail as possible, the almost unknown and undocumented history of the Roma genocide. We believe that through this research we can give back to Roma people their history and their dignity.

By disseminating the results of our work, we firmly hope to raise the public's awareness to this history and the scale of the tragedy. Through different events, Yahad-In Unum and Roma Dignity take part in preserving the memory and contribute to the education of future generations, by participating actively in international conferences and seminars in order to highlight the results collected during the research trips and to give the opportunity to discuss these findings. The results of the project are intended for students, teachers, historians and Roma communities in Europe.

Each research team is composed of ten members: a team leader, who directs the team and conducts the interviews, one transcript

recorder, who takes notes during the interviews and is in charge of daily reports, one professional cameraman, one professional photographer, two interpreters who are native Roma and speak the Romani language, one investigator in charge of witness research and three drivers.

All the recorded testimonies with Roma survivors are edited and housed at both CERRESE (European Resource Centre for Research and Education of the Holocaust in the East) in Paris⁸, and at the Roma Dignity Centre in Brussels⁹. Access to this information is free. Moreover, anyone can complete a request form to Yahad-In Unum or Roma Dignity Center to receive free access to video interviews via the Internet.

Understanding that our project on the persecution of the Roma worldwide can help broaden our knowledge surrounding the victims of World War II, we will disseminate our research results worldwide through different tools, including through social networks, like Yahad-In Unum's web and Facebook page, Twitter account and blog page¹⁰.

Results

Yahad-In Unum's and Roma Dignity's research specifically aims to uncover Roma persecutions and to gather as much information as possible on this undocumented period of World War II history. Within this mission, Yahad-in Unum and Roma Dignity have conducted five research trips so far by investigating over seventy-one villages and towns and interviewing 122 witnesses, deportees, survivors and eyewitnesses to those deportations.

Working together, Yahad-In Unum and Roma Dignity conduct research into the mass deportations and killings of the Roma by

⁸ See <http://www.yahadinunum.org/fieldwork/research-center/> (access: 14/10/2015).

⁹ See <http://romadignity.org> (access: 14/10/2015).

¹⁰ See <http://www.yahadinunum.org> (access: 14/10/2015).

the Nazis and their allies. This includes conducting research to document the history of the Roma deportation from Romania to Transnistria by the Antonescu regime through videotaped interviews with survivors.

Investigators also accompany survivors back to the villages in Transnistria to which they were deported, conducting interviews with them and with their Ukrainian neighbors who lived nearby at the time of the deportation; this methodology often yields mutually corroborating evidence and unique, new insights. Archival materials are being collected to combine existing historical research with the results from the investigations. These trips have enabled the collection of proof of this little-known genocide.

During the course of five research trips, our teams investigated throughout the South, Southeast, East and Northeast of Romania and collected testimonies of Roma survivors, members of different ethnic groups, as well as non-Roma people who happened to be eyewitnesses to those deportations. Thanks to the fieldwork, we can expand our knowledge about the differences and similarities between the nomadic and sedentary Roma, the life and tradition of nomadic groups such as the *Calderari*, *Rudari*, *Lingurari*, and others. We discovered that the life and tradition of the same ethnic groups vary from one region to another, due to historical contexts and geographical positions. Deportation policies differed as well. Through the personal history of the Roma deported by the Antonescu government, as well of those who were not deported, our teams revealed the different reasons for nonsystematic deportation, the complexity of the deportation process, and the mechanisms of persecution which had not been documented before.

Two examples should demonstrate more precisely the field work done by our investigation teams.

Fate of the Roma during World War II.

Yahad-In Unum carried out its first trip to the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia (FYRM)

Within the same goal to know more about the fate of the Roma during World War II, we carried out our first trip to the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia (FYRM) in April 2014. Over ten research days, the research team video-recorded 42 testimonies which allowed to understand the life of Muslim Roma, to learn about their culture and living conditions before the war and to clarify what happened to the Roma during the Bulgarian occupation. The team investigated in the region of Skopje, in the East and Northeast regions of the country. For the investigation team, it was a real challenge to work in a country where there is little archival support and minimum information of what happened to the Roma during World War II. Basically, we knew that the FYRM was occupied by the Bulgarians during the war. Therefore, this trip provided an opportunity to discover the history without having any previous research results.

Our first investigations were in Shouto Orizari, commonly referred to as Shoutka or Šutka. It is characterized by a very large Roma population and was created after the 1963 earthquake, to decently relocate the Roma who were left homeless. Shoutka is reputed to be the largest city in the Roma world and the municipality is the only one in the world to have adopted the Romani language as an official language.

The key findings of this first trip were, among others: the abuse and humiliation of the Roma by the Bulgarian and German military; attempted shootings of the Roma and rape of Roma women. Furthermore, we gathered interviews about Roma participation in local partisan groups. Exemplary are the memories of Rifat, who was born in 1932 and grew up in a Muslim Roma family:



PHOTO 1. Rifat, born 1932 [copyrights: Yahad-in Unum and Roma Dignity]

My family was large. My father had four wives. When the war started, I remember the arrival of the Germans and Bulgarians. The Germans went into the village to pick out pretty girls and then came at night to take them and rape them. The Germans also came to my family. The Bulgarians came and they forced all Roma to wash themselves and to wash their clothes. There was a special large washing machine in the Gypsy neighborhood where all Roma brought their clothes every week. They put the clothes in the machine and had to wait for it to wash. Then, after putting in the product, they went to shower at the place that still exists. Two doctors went into the village to see if the Roma had lice. They cut our hair.

The second example are the results of our most recent fieldwork in Romania, from August 2014, presented to demonstrate the importance of our findings.

Fifth research trip to the Districts of Botoșani and Suceava,
Region of Bucovina, Romania

Within the framework of our investigation on Roma genocide, Yahad-In Unum carried out the fifth investigation trip to Romania, in the districts of Botoșani and Suceava. Over thirteen days, by visiting nineteen towns and villages, Yahad-In Unum continued interviewing different groups of nomadic and sedentary Roma as well as local inhabitants who witnessed the deportation of Jews and the Roma into Transnistria.

As a result of the policy of Antonescu's regime, from the June 1 until the end of September 1942, about 25,000 Roma being deemed "anti-social" or "trouble-makers" and more than 300,000 Jews under the pretext of "ethnic and political cleansing" were deported from Romania to Transnistria, part of Soviet Ukraine, which was occupied by the German and Romanian armies in the summer of 1941 and remained under Romanian authority until 1944.¹¹

The investigated districts used to be a part of Bucovina, which existed from 1918 until World War II, and now is divided between Ukraine and Romania. This research trip revealed the complexity of the region. Most of the Roma people deported from this region were sedentary and had houses and constant work in the village. The interviews of survivors of the deportation and of local witnesses confirmed the nonsystematic nature of the deportation and presented new information about the conditions, the process and the mechanism of persecution of the Roma and Jews during WWII. The fieldwork let Yahad In-Unum uncover information about reasons why some Roma were not deported while others were; the role of military reservists, Romanians and Roma among them, in the deportation process and the executions of Jews who are believed to have been deported.

The fate of Roma victims

The results of our fifth field investigation confirm certain facts about the Roma who were not deported. Some sedentary Roma, for instance *Lingurari*, were not deported because they spoke Romanian and were considered non-Roma by Romanian authorities. The *Lingurari* are related with the *Rudari*, best-known for their talents as woodworkers. Present across all of Romania and in the rest of Europe, they made baskets, cradles, while others created

¹¹ Viorel Achim, *The Roma in Romanian History* (Budapest: Central European University Press, 1998), pp. 163–188; Dennis Deletant, *Hitler's Forgotten Ally: Ion Antonescu and His Regime, Romania 1940–1944* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006), pp. 150–204.

spoons, bowls and other wooden utensils – these *Rudari* bear the name “Lingurari.” The majority of *Rudari* that we met spoke Romanian, as a result of their strong settlement within the local population. The mixed families where one of the parents was Romanian were not deported either. Some of interviewed survivors, for example Steliana from Soci, could stay in the village because her father was enlisted in the Romanian army.



PHOTO 2. Steliana, born 1931 [copyrights: Yahad-in Unum and Roma Dignity]

In Dolhasca, our team interviewed a son of a former mayor, who explained that skilled sedentary Roma could stay in the village because they were useful for the village. Vasile, born in 1935, explained:

Even if the Antonescu's order concerned only those Roma who didn't have fixed houses, the sedentary Roma from our village were also subjected to deportation. On the eve of deportation, at noon, all Roma came in the yard of our house. The Romanian gendarmes and some villagers were also present. My father selected and drew up the list of skilled Roma who got the permission to stay in the village. Later, I passed with my father by the village where he made the speeches to the Roma prepared to be deported.”

From the testimonies collected during this trip, we observed that some sedentary Roma left by themselves for Transnistria as they thought that their life there would be better. This was the

case of Costache, born in 1932, from Mășcăteni, who left Romania for Bug with all his family once their house was sold, but they could not anticipate what was expecting them in Transnistria. Notably, he informed us that once there, his father managed to get a Romanian uniform and came back to Romania before the end of the war:

My father went to Bucharest to ask for an explanation. He was told that sedentary Roma were not subjected to deportation and that if we ended up in Transnistria, it was by our own will. In the end, my father was given an official paper with a stamp which proved that he was not nomadic Roma and he could live in Romania. Having this paper he returned to Transnistria to look for us, but we could not return back with him as the paper was only on his name.

Deportation to Transnistria

Our team also focused its research on the interviews of deported Roma. Through the personal history of survivors and through those of their families, we could bring to light some information about the conditions of their detention in Transnistria. Thanks to the precise testimonies, we could trace the map of their itinerary. In most cases, the Roma were first brought to Trusesti, after crossing the River Prut, they were settled in Ochakov district by changing different villages and later transferred to Domanivka and Triduby, today in Ukraine.

In Varatec, we found three Roma survivors who identified themselves as *Calderari*, nomadic Roma who make steel items. The *Calderari* are undoubtedly the Roma group that the team has met the most often in Romania, particularly in the Eastern region of the country. Their name originates from the Romanian *căldare*, meaning “cauldron.” They were known as specialists in copper and sold kitchen utensils, including pails. Certain *Calderari* that the team met recounted that their parents were nomadic and went from village to village to sell cauldrons.

Vergina, who was deported to Triduby and Domanivka along with her sister-in-law Tasia, recalled:

As we reached the camp, we settled down in the tents, although there were also bunkers. The camp was watched over by the Romanian gendarmes. Later, we were placed in the *kolkhoz* building. I remember at that moment our cart was taken. After a while, we moved to Triduby, where we first slept in the tents and then in bunkers. For winter, we went sleeping in huts made in the forest.



PHOTO 3. Vergina, born 1934 and Tasia, born 1921 [copyrights: Yahad-in Unum and Roma Dignity]

What emerges from this research is that there were several types of camps: the Roma were settled placed into buildings resembling bunkers, into holes dug into the ground, into tents in open fields or into *kolkhoz* buildings. Some Roma were placed in villages and houses where the Ukrainians used to live but were driven out. Once there, most Roma belongings and the official register were taken away. Alexandrina, a sedentary Roma born in 1929, who was deported from Gulia with all her family, remembered that they were almost shot by the German settlers as they passed by their colony:

The Germans thought that we would take their houses. As we approached, they were armed and on horses. Being scared, we rushed in different directions to save ourselves. A lot of children were run over by the horses. Luckily, I could take my little brother by the hand and we survived.

Some of the deportees received food rations according to the lists drawn up at arrival. Ruza, 89 years old, from Gulia recalled:

We received some food rations, like flour and potatoes. But only our team leader, whose name was Gadzhu, 60 years old, was in charge of distribution. He had to go to the Primaria to look for them and then he gave out the rations to us.

Another Roma survivor told us that they were not given the rations at all. Her parents would leave the camp in secret to barter in the village. Raitan, a *Calderas* deported to Cholobocha, said:

Being aware that it was forbidden to go out and they could be roughly beaten by bulibas, the Roma from our group went to the village to look for food. They had to walk about 7 km to the village. We took water from the river Bug.

Due to the inhuman living conditions of the Roma deportees, many of them died from hunger, thirst and disease. The corpses of victims were thrown into mass graves by Ukrainian policemen or by the Roma themselves; some were buried in separate pits by the relatives or were carried around. Costache from Mășcăteni lost his mother and four brothers in Transnistria. He remembered that after their deaths he had to take care of his little brother: "I don't remember what happened to him. For a while I took care of him, but later... Even today, I don't know if he is alive or not." These mass graves lack any memorial still today. Ukrainian and Romanian guards requisitioned the Roma for different types of work, such as farm work in the kolkhoz or digging anti-tank ditches. While working, the Ukrainian policemen or Romanians watched over them.

The fate of Jews from Bucovina

This trip revealed the complexity of the Roma and Jewish genocides and the close interactions between them. According to archival sources, the Jews were deported by train starting in the fall of 1941. Several witnesses interviewed during the trip stated that the official version imposed by Antonescu's regime was that all

the Jews were deported to Israel. They were not able to witness it because they left at night. Others told us that the Jews were deported to Transnistria. In either case, they have not returned.

None of archives reported on the small-scale executions of Jews taken from deportation trains. Through the testimonies of Roma people who were not deported for different reasons (because they spoke Romanian, members of their family were enlisted in Romanian army, they were born in mixed families, etc.) our team could look into several executions of Jews.

In Gulia, our team interviewed Petru, a sedentary Roma born in 1923, who witnessed one of these executions:

When the train stopped, three Jewish men were forced out. It was a train of seventeen carriages. They were shot while clothed at the edge of the pit situated near the railroad tracks. Later, the soldiers took the valuables and covered the pit; I was hiding in the bushes not far from there.

According to the several collected testimonies, we concluded that the trains with deportees were stopped in Probotă by Romanian gendarmes, even if it was officially forbidden. They did it in order to steal jewelry and valuable items from Jews and/or to exploit Jewish women. Such shootings took place frequently, and the number of victims varied from 3 to 100 people.

Apart from those random executions, the Jews were the victims of mass shootings organized by the Germans. Gheorghe, half Roma and 97 years old, who was interviewed in Plopenii Mici, had seen about 40 Jews murdered in the town of Darabani. Enlisted in Romanian army, he made his service in Darabani and with other Romanian gendarmes sealed off the territory during the execution:

The Jews were lined up at the edge of the pit. The pits were dug in advance according to the number of victims. All 40 Jews were shot at the same time. There were four shooters, ten Jews for each shooter. They fired all together at the nape of the neck.



PHOTO 4. Gheorghe, born 1917 [copyrights: Yahad-in Unum and Roma Dignity]

During this research trip our team recorded thirty-four testimonies and identified one mass grave.¹²

Conclusion

Since 2011, we have worked to document the genocide of the Roma. This work is undertaken in the hopes of helping the Roma learn about their past and reclaim their dignity.

Yahad-In Unum and Roma Dignity are working to identify the mass graves of the Roma who were victims of genocide in Eastern Europe and to press for the protection and memorialization of these sites. These organizations are making the results of their investigations available to historians, academics and the families of victims. Presentations are also organized regularly for government bodies and public audiences.

These organizations also gather information and images regarding the daily existence and living conditions of the Roma people in Europe today. The objective is to portray the human face of the Roma people, to underline that each human being is not the prejudiced stereotype of a thief or beggar, but rather a mother, a grandfather or a child.

¹² The exact location of the execution site could not be identified.

The four main objectives that are at the core of this work are: Research, Educate, Dispel, Include.

The first step in this mission involves conducting trips to interview Roma survivors in Eastern Europe, which allows us to collect and to translate testimonies on the Roma genocide and persecutions.

On this basis we can educate young Roma, decision-makers and the public at large about Roma history in order to develop an engaged, informed society. Working to dispel stereotypes through a better understanding of Roma identity and their situation today is equally important. Finally, this work helps to advance toward the inclusion and integration of the Roma in Belgium and Europe.

SECTION 2
Commemoration
as Practice

Teaching the Roma Genocide. “Society Never Regarded Me as an Individual”¹

Karen Polak

Since 2013, workshops have been held throughout Europe to introduce the genocide of the Roma to diverse groups of learners and educators. The central focus of these workshops revolved around online teaching materials “The Fate of the European Roma and Sinti during the Holocaust”, compiled by an international team of historians and educators. The implementation of these teaching materials is an ongoing process. In this article, different examples of how these materials are used are presented. The way in which they are received in various settings provides insight into both the opportunities and the challenges the educational community faces in teaching about this “forgotten” genocide. The significance of this history for society today and the urgent need for work on this topic are highlighted by some of the experiences of educators and responses from learners.

Educational practices developed through the workshops mentioned above are set against a wider framework of international developments. In April 2015, the OSCE/ODIHR Contact Point for

¹ I would like to thank Catherine Mueller, College of Charleston, U.S.A., for her thoughtful comments on this article and invaluable editorial advice. This article will also be published in a slightly adapted version by the Sarah and Chaim Neuberger Holocaust Education Centre, UJA Federation of Greater Toronto. See: Carson Phillips (ed.), *Holocaust Education in Pedagogy, History, and Practice* (2015).

Roma and Sinti Issues (CPRSI) presented a report on “Teaching about and Commemorating the Roma and Sinti Genocide – Practices within the OSCE Area.”² In the same month, the European Parliament adopted a resolution calling for a European day dedicated to commemorating the victims of the genocide of the Roma during World War II. The work of the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance (IHRA) Committee on the Genocide of the Roma also forms an important background to many of the exchanges described here.³

Introduction

In November 2012, a project aiming to create a network of educators and policy-makers to support teaching about the genocide started with a seminar in Eisenstadt, Austria.⁴ Thirty-three educators from thirteen countries met to discuss ways of implementing the teaching materials “The Fate of the European Roma and Sinti during the Holocaust” in schools, teacher training and informal education. The participants gave detailed feedback and suggestions for improvements of the materials that were subsequently handled by a small pedagogical team led by the main author, Gerhard Baumgartner, and the Austrian organisation *Erinnern.at*.

² The report will be published in late 2015 at <http://www.osce.org/odihr/roma>

³ The International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance (IHRA) is an inter-governmental body with 31 member countries. When some of the work described in this article started, it was known as the Task Force for International Cooperation on Holocaust Education, Research and Remembrance (ITF). The name was changed in 2013. Throughout this article I will refer to the IHRA. The Committee on the Genocide of the Roma, first initiated in 2007, is chaired by the author. See: www.holocaustremembrance.com.

⁴ *Erinnern.at* (Austria) was the leading partner in this implementation project, co-funded by the IHRA and the Austrian Ministry of Education and Women’s Affairs. The other partners were the Anne Frank House (The Netherlands) and the Museum of Romani Culture (The Czech Republic). The first meeting of the project “International Conference on Teaching Materials on the Roma Genocide” took place from 8 to 10 November 2012.

The materials were made available on the website www.romasintigenocide.eu in July 2013 in German and English. It contains 80 downloadable PDF sheets and a teachers' guide. A French version followed in 2014.⁵

At a follow-up meeting in November 2013, hosted by the Museum of Romani Culture in Brno, the Czech Republic, twenty-five experts from eleven countries shared their experiences and their future plans in working with the materials. Roma NGO experts from Poland, Germany, Serbia, and the Czech Republic provided links with other efforts to raise awareness about the history of the genocide of the Roma and Sinti. The participation of international organisations, such as the OSCE/ODIHR, Erionet, and ternÝpe, as well as institutions with an international outreach, such as Yad Vashem and Living History Forum, gave extra impetus to future international cooperation.

In this article I will describe experiences from several workshops, with different audiences across Europe: from Polish secondary school students and Dutch trainee teachers, to Bulgarian Roma activists and educators with varying experience working on the topic.⁶ I will also reference several articles from "When Stereotype Meets Prejudice. Antiziganism in European Societies", published in 2014, which gave me further insight into recent

⁵ The Swedish language version of the website is being prepared by Living History Forum (expected launch: 2015) and a version in the *Kalderash* Romani dialect will also be developed by LHF. The Bratislava based Milan Simecka Foundation is leading a project that aims to develop a Slovak, Czech, Polish, Croatian, Romanian, Hungarian and Romani language version with partners across Europe.

⁶ The experiences discussed in this article are taken from twenty-eight seminar reports on seminars submitted by educators who met in Eisenstadt and Brno, as well as from eight workshops that I moderated. These eight were all organised by different (international) organisations. They took part in Zagreb, January 2013; Nijmegen, June 2013; Amsterdam, November 2013; Tilburg, January 2014 (with Lalla Weiss); Cracow, August 2014; Budapest, August 2014; Amsterdam, September 2014 (with Karolina Mirga); Graz, April 2015.

developments.⁷ Then I will offer tentative conclusions on what priorities we need to set in the educational field.

Diversity and dialogue

My initial introductions to both individual Roma and the Roma genocide came during an expert meeting on the initiative of the IHRA Education Working Group in the Museum of Romani Culture in 2007. The participants came from a wide range of backgrounds and represented a diverse range of educational pursuits. Some brought expertise on the genocide of the Roma, knowledge of Roma history and culture or more in general on teaching about the Holocaust, while others had experience working with Roma students and communities, focusing on contemporary issues both in education and in response to discrimination. This diversity of backgrounds at this first meeting was essential for the work that followed. Disagreements arising from different experiences, knowledge bases and sensitivities were out in the open in a relatively safe space. Still rare in most parts of Europe, this sort of dialogue is necessary both in understanding history and reflecting on its relevance for today.

The “Others”

The Anne Frank House has a long-standing cooperation with the history department at the HAN University of Applied Sciences in Nijmegen. Future teachers, in pre-service training colleges, are an important target group for the implementation of new fields of knowledge and methods of teaching. Within a course on teaching about the Holocaust, I was invited in June 2013 to give a two-hour workshop on the genocide of the Roma. The students had been given homework in advance of my meeting with them.

⁷ Timofey Agarin (ed.), *When Stereotype meets prejudice. Antiziganism in European Societies* (Stuttgart: Ibidem Press, 2014).

They had been asked to research one of the six life stories from the digital exhibition “The Forgotten Genocide” (www.romasinti.eu), and to study the online teaching materials.⁸ One student had been particularly diligent in preparing for the workshop and in class shared his enthusiasm about both websites and his interest in the topic, but then sighed and said he wished the Roma and Sinti were not such “complicated” people. He wished they were more like Jews, “all the same”.

The fate of the European Roma and Sinti during the Holocaust www.romasintigenocide.eu

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In 1933, the German boxer Johann Wilhelm Trollmann - known as Rukeli to his family and friends - won the German light heavyweight boxing championship against the reigning champion Adolf Witt. Because Trollmann was from a Sinti family, the judges at first refused to recognise his victory and declared the result void. They then changed their minds in the face of public protest, but Trollmann was stripped of his title ten days later on the grounds of “unmanly” behaviour.

He was arrested and deported to a concentration camp, where he is reported to have been made to box against an endless number of SS men. In 1944 he was murdered in Wittenberge, a sub-camp of the Neuengamme concentration camp.

C.6

Did you know

... that in the 1930s, Johann Trollmann adopted the dancing style of boxing that was later to become the hallmark of the world heavyweight champion Cassius Clay (Muhammad Ali)?

... that it took the German Boxing Association 70 years to fight this wrong and put Johann Wilhelm Trollmann on the list of German light heavyweight champions in 2007?

For you to do

Do you know of any other sportsmen or women who were deprived of their titles for political reasons?

The photo

Official photograph of Johann Wilhelm Trollmann taken by Hans Firzlaff in 1928. Documentation Centre of German Sinti and Roma, Heidelberg, Germany.

PHOTO 1. Example of the worksheets on “The Fate of the European Roma and Sinti during the Holocaust” website. Source: <http://www.romasintigenocide.eu/>

I was taken aback. He explained: “It would be a lot easier to understand if all the Roma had the same religion, just as Jews did (*sic*), and if there were not so many different groups.” He was not

⁸ Karen Polak, “Teaching about the genocide of the Roma and Sinti during the Holocaust: chances and challenges in Europe today”, *Intercultural Education*, 24: 1–2, 79–92 (2013). This article describes the content of two websites, www.romasinti.eu and www.romasintigenocide.eu and other international projects on the genocide of the Roma.

familiar with Ashkenazim and Sephardim, and in general had no real knowledge about Jews or the Roma. More importantly, he seemed to take for granted a view of the world in which ‘the others’ should fit a simple pattern and be easy to label. He didn’t seem at all aware of the controversial or offensive nature of his statement. Other students pointed out that such a view is hurtful to all minorities and questioned him quite severely. However, only one student, whose family came from the Balkans, had personal contact with the Roma. On reflection, the rest of the class was surprised that they had never met a Roma or Sinti or been taught anything about them.

Six months later, I facilitated a similar workshop with a comparable Dutch audience at the Fontys University of Applied Sciences in Tilburg on a day dedicated to the Roma genocide, as part of Holocaust Memorial Week. The workshop was co-moderated by Lalla Weiss, a Roma activist and spokesperson, and the daughter of a survivor, and myself.

Early on, the question “who are the Roma and who are the Sinti?” was raised and the fact that Lalla Weiss was there to answer immediately set the stage for dialogue on all the subsequent questions. The Dutch term for Gypsy, *Zigeuner*, is still commonly used, although it is considered offensive by most Roma.⁹ These terms

⁹ Per language, the use of terms is very different. Some organizations in the UK (and elsewhere) adhere to the term “Gypsy”, but mostly internationally, the term “Roma” is used. In the German speaking language, “Sinti and Roma” are used as a pair. In the rest of Europe, “Roma”, as a term to describe the different groups that all speak Romani languages and have a common history of migration to Europe some 2000 years ago is the most generally shared term. Huub van Baar purports that “despite Romani and pro-Roma attempts to ban the use of this label in German and Dutch-speaking societies, these endeavours have never been fully successful. Indeed, we are now faced with the opposite trend, in which scholars such as Dina Sigel present ‘*zigeuner*’, usually written with a lower case ‘z’, as a legitimate alternative marker for ‘Roma.’ “Homecoming at witching hour: The securitization of the European Roma and the reclaiming of their citizenship”, In: *We Roma: A Critical Reader in Contemporary Art*. BAK Critical Reader Series. Maria Hlavajova and Daniel Baker (eds.) (Utrecht: Basis voor actuele kunst (BAK), 2013), p. 50–73. Dina Sigel, a professor in criminology at University of Utrecht, got a lot of media attention for her research

and the use of the word Gypsy were debated. Tilburg has a popular annual International Gypsy Festival, which was a co-organiser of this day of workshops and presentations, and Lalla Weiss is one of their presenters. The complexity of the use of language, the diversity of backgrounds and identities of the Roma and the (lack of) sensitivity toward the points of view of a minority group were addressed during a discussion with the workshop participants. Although the aims and the materials used in the workshop were the same as for the workshop in Nijmegen, the setting was different. It was part of a whole commemorative day involving more than 100 people, including the Roma and Sinti in many roles.

Roma involvement

During a workshop for an international group of teachers at the Anne Frank House in September 2014, Karolina Mirga, one of the leaders of the ternYpe International Roma Youth Network, was able to share the experiences of the international youth conference called “Dikh he na bister” (Look and don’t forget) and the commemoration in Auschwitz-Birkenau on August 2nd. In the night of the 2nd of August 1944, 2,879 Roma and Sinti, all the remaining prisoners in the *Zigeunerlager* in Auschwitz-Birkenau, were sent to the gas chambers. On the 70th anniversary of August 2nd, in 2014, ternYpe held a youth conference for more than 1,000 young Roma and non-Roma from 25 countries, hosted by the Pedagogical University of Cracow. TernYpe is a network of European youth associations helping young people to become active citizens. One of its main goals is to bring young Roma and non-Roma together to strengthen the intercultural dialogue between them, to promote trust and mutual respect, and to fight prejudice, racism and discrimination. I attended the expert meeting and youth conference in Cracow. However, at the teachers’ seminar in

undertaken with the department Police and Science of the Police Academy, when she claimed the need to break down the *zigeuner taboo*.

Amsterdam a few weeks after the event, the presentation by one of the Roma organisers clearly created different dynamics to the exchange with educators than would have been the case if only I had shared my experiences in Cracow.

Cracow, late July 2014, was teeming with meetings and initiatives: Roma survivors speaking to large groups of young people, and conversations between young people from across Europe. I led a workshop for fourteen people from eight countries that was memorable for its intensity, with all the participants thoroughly engaged. The Bulgarian participants expressed their gratitude to have been introduced to carefully researched and respectfully presented historical sources, and for these resources being available online.

Personal stories and historical sites were discussed and topics that relate to contemporary issues, such as “crime prevention”. The racist persecution of the Roma and Sinti was framed by the Nazis as “crime prevention”. Today in several European countries systematic institutional registration of the Roma, including ethnic profiling by police forces, still takes place with a framework of the so-called crime prevention.

In the workshop, five Roma youth leaders, all active in high schools in Bulgaria, discussed how the murder of four Roma in Hungary in 2008 connects to the biographies of perpetrators during the Holocaust. There are no straightforward answers here, but the open space to discuss the link between past and present was important.

Worksheets with the biographies of the Roma active in the resistance and articulating their own experiences served as positive examples. The participants saw that these personal stories would be helpful in leaving behind the perception of the Roma as perpetual victims. Worksheets on “The Fate of the European Roma and Sinti during the Holocaust” website draw, among others, on the life stories of partisan Josef Serynek, Red Army commander Aleksandr Baurov, writer Ceija Stojka and her brother, painter Karl Stojka, both survivors of several concentration camps.

The fate of the European Roma and Sinti during the Holocaust www.romasintigenocide.eu

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"When we got out, we were ill, completely ill! Our hearts were wounded; our heads, our souls were ill ... Those people should all have been given treatment. They should not have had children for five, six years - the few who did get out, who were still there - until they had enough strength, were healthy again, were able to laugh again and see that the world is not so bad ... And the fear, always the fear. The children grew up with it. That is why they still turn round when they walk the streets today. Do you understand? They turn round. Only someone who is afraid turns round! Somebody who emerges ill from the camp, whose head hurts and soul bleeds for a father, a sister, a brother who never came out can only have children that are also wounded in their souls. They come into this world, you see how sweet they are, how beautiful. You raise them and care for them, you kiss them and love them. They grow up. But the fear that was in you flows to the children with their mothers' milk."

E.1

Did you know
... that Ceija Stojka's book "We Live in Isolation", which was published in 1988, was one of the first books telling the tragic fate of the Roma and Sinti during the Holocaust from a survivor's point of view?

For you to do
Choose a sentence from Ceija Stojka's text that moves you most. Discuss it in small groups.

The photo
Ceija Stojka (1933 - 2013), a survivor of Auschwitz, with her daughter Silvia in 1953. Documentation Centre of Austrian Roma, Vienna, Austria.

PHOTO 2. Example of the worksheets on "The Fate of the European Roma and Sinti during the Holocaust"¹⁰ website. Source: <http://www.romasintigenocide.eu/>

Professional development

In May 2014 a meeting was held with project leaders from across Europe, all working on the genocide of the Roma. The meeting was hosted by the Centre for Holocaust Education at the Institute for Education, University of London and organised by the IHRA Committee on the genocide of the Roma. Twenty people from sixteen European countries shared the outcomes, including both achievements and challenges, of eight projects.¹⁰ At the end of

¹⁰ Six of the eight projects were co-funded by the IHRA, here marked by *:

- *The Fate of European Roma and Sinti during the Holocaust* by Kanzlei-Internationaler Verein für
- Wissenschaft und Kultur (Austria), Anne Frank House (The Netherlands) & Mémorial de la Shoah (France). See: www.romasintigenocide.eu *
- *International Conference on teaching material on the Roma Genocide* by Erinnern.at (Austria), Museum of Romani Culture (The Czech Republic) & Anne Frank House (The Netherlands). See: www.romasintigenocide.eu *

a day of in-depth discussion, several topics were defined as of importance for all the projects:

- **Involving the Roma of all ages.** Roma survivors in the projects that were presented were sometimes sharing their story for the first time.
- **Meeting and recording survivors.** Oral testimony projects need to be encouraged with a sense of urgency. Young Roma need to take ownership of their families' stories in order to become spokespeople for their communities.
- **Empowering young Roma.** A lack of historical knowledge throughout the Roma community was discovered in several projects. Creating more opportunities for young Roma to acquire historical expertise will be important. The special educational opportunities that peer education offers include both the empowerment of the peer educators and the positive aspect of peer role models on the learners.

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- *Requiem for Auschwitz* by International Gypsy Festival & Alfa Foundation (The Netherlands). See: www.requiemforauschwitz.eu and www.gipsyfestival.nl/eng *
 - *Giving memory a future* by Sacred Heart Catholic University of Milan (Italy) and USC Shoah Foundation (U.S.A.). See: www.romsintimemory.it and <http://sfi.usc.edu/education/roma-sinti/en/> *
 - *Research on Roma deportations and Mass Killing Sites during World War II in Eastern Europe* by Yahad In Unum (France) & Dignité Roms (Belgium). See: www.yahadinunum.org *
 - *School of Remembrance – Producing knowledge about the Roma genocide and how to prevent anti-Gypsyism* by Women's Space, Niš (Serbia), Forum for Applied History, Belgrade (Serbia) & Roma Center Göttingen e.V. (Germany). See: www.fpi.rs/blog/category/skola-secanja/ *
 - *Between Discrimination and Emancipation: History and Culture of Sinti and Roma in Germany and Europe* by Documentation Centre of German Sinti and Roma & Bavarian and Federal Agency for Civic Education. See: <http://www.sintiundroma.de/en/home.html>
 - *Save from Oblivion – Roma and Sinti Holocaust in testimonies and contemporary discourse* by The Roma People Association, The Dialog-Pheniben Foundation and Jagiellonian University (Poland). See: www.stowarzyszenie.romowie.net.

- **Professional development.** Lack of knowledge and expertise in general, among professional educators, was highlighted as a problem that can only be addressed if professional development opportunities are created. Resources for educators in their own languages are essential, but attention should be paid to the quality of translations, so as not to, for example, reproduce the terminology of the Nazis in educational materials.

It became clear during this expert meeting in London that there are many related educational and commemorative projects taking place across Europe and that the international organisations engaged in initiating or supporting these projects are not sufficiently aware of each other's work. After sharing the previously stated recommendations within the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance, the IHRA Committee on the Genocide of the Roma initiated two small research projects:

- To compile an overview of nineteen international organisations working on the genocide of the Roma and contemporary issues concerning discrimination; and
- To compile an annotated bibliography of the genocide of the Roma.¹¹

The outcomes will further inform the work of the IHRA, and be a guiding principle in the cooperation with other organisations such as the OSCE/ODIHR, Council of Europe, the EU Fundamental Rights Agency and major Holocaust institutions.

Anti-Roma rhetoric

Following the expert meeting, a public conference on the genocide of the Roma took place at the UCL Institute of Education, in London. During workshops many of the previously mentioned projects were presented in a practical way to people working in

¹¹ Both reports will be available in winter 2015 at <http://holocaustremembrance.com/focus/genocide-roma>.

the educational field. Keynote speeches focused on the challenges faced by historians in researching and teaching the genocide of the Roma, and on the contemporary situation of the Roma across Europe, where hate crimes, human rights violations and discrimination are far too often part of daily life.¹²

Mirjam Karoly, Senior Adviser on Roma and Sinti Issues at the OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights, spoke of the importance of the commemoration of the genocide of the Roma and Sinti and its relevance for combating racism and discrimination. Her focus on the current public discourse on the Roma in Europe, “led by right-wing politicians but not restricted to these circles” is mirrored in some of the statements made by students quoted further along. Karoly said: “It is clear that the current discourse refers to long-standing negative stereotypes against the Roma, whether criminalising them and portraying them as a threat to internal security or labelling them as ‘socially inadaptible’ people. This discourse bears a dangerous potential, deepening racism and serving to legitimise certain policy actions.”

In his article “The Emergence of a Reasonable Anti-Gypsyism in Europe” Huub van Baar, who has written extensively about the Roma in Europe, elaborates on this point of view.¹³ He looks at the media coverage of the bomb attack that killed four Roma in Oberwart, Austria, in 1995, and the alleged kidnapping of children by the Roma. He outlines the emergence of what he calls “reasonable anti-Gypsyism” – criminalising allegations against the Roma, not just by extremist groups but also by moderate politicians, citizens, policy-makers, the police, and sections of the media. “A widely supported movement of non-Roma seeks retaliation under the

¹² The conference was attended by more than 100 people from twenty-two countries. See: Report on IOE and IHRA committee on the genocide of the Roma Expert Meeting and Conference on the Genocide of the Roma, 10–11 May 2014, for more detail <http://holocaustremembrance.com/focus/genocide-roma>.

¹³ Huub van Baar, *The European Roma: Minority Representation. Memory and the Limits of Transnational Governmentality* (Amsterdam: University of Amsterdam, 2011).

pretext that the Roma frequently exhibit undesirable behaviour.”¹⁴ Van Baar analyses media coverage of four recent cases of allegedly stolen children. He refers to the myth, widespread in European societies since the late Middle Ages, that the Roma steal children. In May 2008, sixty Italians attacked a Romani settlement in the Ponticelli district of Naples over an alleged kidnapping. The houses of 400 Roma were burnt down.¹⁵ Three more recent incidents (all in 2013) in Serbia, Greece and Ireland did not lead to the same level of violence, but raised similar questions about ethnic profiling. DNA testing was considered necessary to have a proof that the children were Roma, and not stolen. “If considering a child having a different appearance to its parents is being seen to be a legitimate reason for the authorities to intervene in the private lives of a family and resort to DNA test for ‘answers’ is not ethnic profiling, what is?”¹⁶

Redoubled efforts

At the conference in London, Mirjam Karoly referred to the legacy of the past: “The victims who survived and returned from concentration camps were again confronted with prejudices and rejection, while the perpetrators of the genocide were not prosecuted. If we want to understand today’s situation, we have to account for what happened in the past under National Socialism

¹⁴ Huub van Baar, “The Emergence of a Reasonable Anti-Gypsyism in Europe”. p. 27–45. In: Timofey Agarin (ed.), *When Stereotype meets prejudice...* Van Baar tells the story of how the houses in the Roma settlement where the murdered men lived were first searched and the media and public opinion for weeks presumed it was an internal Romani dispute, although there was no evidence to indicate this.

¹⁵ Giving Memory a Future is a website that includes Roma testimonies on persecution and discrimination from the Second World War and today. There is a short video about the attacks on the Roma in Italy. See: <http://sfi.usc.edu/education/roma-sinti/en/>. See also Huub van Baar (2014) p. 29.

¹⁶ Van Baar refers to ERRC, *Legal Factsheet: Child Protection – What should states do?* (Budapest: European Roma Rights Centre, 2013).

but also how post-war societies dealt with the past and the victims of the Roma and Sinti genocide.” She concluded that although the “forgotten Holocaust” has receiving more attention, efforts to share knowledge through formal education needed to be redoubled.

In January 2014, OSCE/ODIHR sent a questionnaire to all OSCE member states to establish which practices exist in the OSCE area to teach about and commemorate the Roma and Sinti genocide. In June 2015, a group of around fifteen people were invited to Warsaw to review the first analysis of answers provided by 17 states, to discuss the persistent challenges and define follow-up initiatives for the OSCE institutions. These included partnerships with ministries of education to promote teaching about the Roma and Sinti genocide. This is a long path to go down. However, the efforts over many years to get a resolution on the genocide of the Roma through the European Parliament are a recent example of what might be achieved. In April 2015 a text was published, stating that:

Recognition of the genocide of the Roma during World War II and the establishment of a dedicated European memorial day would thus constitute an important symbolic step in the fight against anti-Gypsyism and contribute to general knowledge of Roma history in Europe

and:

...that a European day should be dedicated to commemorating the victims of the genocide of the Roma during World War II and that this day should be called the European Roma Holocaust Memorial Day.”¹⁷

The Dark Unknown History

Just days after the European Parliament passed the preliminary resolution, an international seminar took place in Stockholm

¹⁷ The provisional text of the resolution was published Wednesday, April 15, 2015, Brussels: <http://www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getDoc.do?type=TA&reference=P8-TA-2015-0095&language=EN&ring=B8-2015-0326>.

organised by the ODIHR Contact Point for Roma and Sinti Issues with the Living History Forum and the Swedish Equality Ombudsman. More than sixty civil society and state authority representatives discussed how teaching about the Roma and Sinti genocide might promote tolerance and non-discrimination.

Mirjam Karoly opened the conference: “We have to address how state authorities and public institutions deal with the past, as well as promote reconciliation to bring justice to the victims and following generations.”

The presentation by Thomas Hammarberg, chair of the Swedish Commission against Anti-Gypsyism, was particularly impressive. He gave a brief overview of the events leading to the publication of the “White Paper on Abuses and Rights Violations Against Roma in the 20th Century”, published in 2014 by the Swedish ministry of culture under the title “The Dark Unknown History”. It is a 300-page review, mostly based on government documents. Thomas Hammarberg: “Most people don’t know that Sweden was one of the sources of the theories of race biology. And it is also not known how the Roma were moved around and in this way were denied the opportunity to be educated. The report was an eye-opener as this history was not forgotten, but hidden.”

Furthermore the report testifies the multiple crimes against the human rights of the Roma that took place in Sweden throughout the 20th century. The systematic registering of the Roma continued until the very recent past, with lifelong consequences. Kurt Magnusson is one of the people who testified¹⁸:

A journalist showed me a document from the ‘*tattare* inventory’ from the 1940s. I was only a few months old when the inventory was drawn up. I’m in it, along with my whole family. The inventory was in preparation for Nazi Germany. That’s what I believe. If Sweden had been occupied and the Germans had come here, I wouldn’t have been alive today ...

¹⁸ Ministry of Culture in Sweden, *The Dark Unknown History. White Paper on Abuses and Rights Violations Against Roma in the 20th Century* (2014) p. 27.

society never regarded me as an individual, rather I was part of a group that should be eradicated. My life has been marked by the fact that my ethnicity has been included in all documents. If this hadn't been recorded, I would have had a different life. This documentation about me and my family is punishment for a crime I'm innocent of.

After "The Dark Unknown History" was published, the Swedish government set up a committee consisting of five Roma and four non-Roma members to promote understanding of the content, particularly in the educational field. Special training for professionals, teachers and police, is in preparation.

In 2013, it was revealed that a register of more than 4,000 Roma in Swedish police files were still being used. In his article "It is in their DNA: Swedish Police, Structural Antiziganism and the Registration of Romani", Matthew Kott analyses the persistence of institutionally racist cultural practices within the Swedish police force. Referring to the relationship between "structural anti-Gypsyism" and the otherwise successful and liberal welfare state in Sweden, Kott says:

The problem in Sweden and elsewhere in Europe in 2013 is not that the Roma have any genetic predisposition towards criminality, as *antiziganist* constructs would have us believe. On the contrary, given the prominent role of the idea of 'Gypsy criminality' in the development of modern policing, one could say that *antiziganism* is programmed into the very DNA of police forces of nation states.¹⁹

Croatian educators

During a workshop in Zagreb in January 2013, Croatian teachers were asked to consider how to include teaching about the genocide of the Roma in their lessons on the Holocaust.

¹⁹ Matthew Kott "It is in their DNA: Swedish Police, Structural Antiziganism and the Registration of Romanis" p. 45–77. In Timofey Agarin (ed.), *When Stereotype meets prejudice. Antiziganism in European Societies...*, p. 68.

The fate of the European Roma and Sinti during the Holocaust www.romasintigenocide.eu

DEATH CAMPS

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D.2

Did you know

... that when worried friends and relatives enquired about the deportees in March 1942 and asked for permission to visit them in Poland, the police said no visiting rights applied to people "resettled" in Łódź?

... that "gassing vans" were first used to murder patients in mental hospitals and asylums?

For you to do

What were the conditions like for the people living in the ghettos? What were the consequences of such living conditions?

The photo

A Magirus-Deutz "gassing van" of the type used in 1941 and 1942 to murder Austrian Roma on the journey from the Litzmannstadt "Gypsy" camp to the death camp in Chelmno/Kulmhof. Yad Vashem Archives, doc. no. 1264/2, Jerusalem, Israel.

In December 1941, when a typhoid fever epidemic broke out in the "Gypsy" camp in the Litzmannstadt ghetto in the Polish city now known as Łódź, 4,600 Roma were killed in gassing vans used to transport them to Chelmno/Kulmhof. Ten weeks after arriving in Łódź, all 5,007 Austrian Roma and Sinti were dead; 4,400 of them are buried in unmarked mass graves in the forests around Chelmno, together with 150,000 Jews and thousands of Soviet prisoners of war.

Фото 3. Example of the worksheets on "The Fate of the European Roma and Sinti during the Holocaust" website. Source: <http://www.romasintigenocide.eu/>

The group was motivated but had little, if any, prior knowledge of the topic. On the first day of the two-day seminar, they were given a lecture by the local historian Daniel Vojak on the history of the Roma in the Balkans and on the second day, set to work with the selected pages from the website, translated into Croatian. As a first step in this workshop, a "word web" of their own associations with the word Roma was made. This brought interesting aspects of the group forward, such as examples of prejudices they were confronted with in class. Some teachers had Roma students and most were positive about the need to address prejudices. One civics teacher was emphatic that addressing prejudices should be part of the curriculum for civics education.

During work in groups with four or five teachers they used the photos, documents and information from www.romasintigenocide.eu to prepare a model lesson on the genocide of the Roma. One group made a lesson plan aimed at learning about the fate of the Roma through the story of an individual, by

developing empathy and critical thinking and discussing and analysing pictures. The topic was to be introduced using a family photo of Max Bamberger, who was murdered at the Hrastina massacre in Croatia in 1945. The students would be prompted to look carefully at the pictures. Alongside engagement with Bamberger's life story, other issues would be introduced: the change of status of the Roma, the role of Interpol, racial laws and eugenics, economic crisis and the concentration camp Jasenovac. The students would present the photos to each other and in conclusion the class would talk about the post-war 'oblivion,' taking the Hrastina massacre as an example of how the fate of the Roma had been ignored or forgotten.

The second group took the story of Max Bamberger and discussed how to raise awareness about prejudices, including their own. There was not much focus on history. They proposed starting with a discussion about prejudices in jokes. This would be followed by a brainstorming session with selected photos. The aim: to expose contradicting ideas. Focussing on the first use of passports, to register the Roma, the students would be asked to reflect on what passports are for and why they were created. Next, racial laws and the Holocaust would be introduced. This would be followed by a task: Students would be asked to put themselves in an isolated imaginary position: where would you go, if, like Max Bamberger, you needed to flee your country?

This seemed to be a step away from history to a distant and imaginary "what if" place. However, in the Croatian context, the recent war made such a question quite relevant. One educator in the group had been sent to Hungary at the age of 10 to escape the war. When she came back two years later, the family had great difficulties to bridge the different experiences they had had. Such an assignment plays a different role against the background of a still very present war, with refugees and genocide, than it would in other parts of Europe.

In Graz, 2015, a workshop for an international group of teachers was structured along the same lines as the workshop in Zagreb.

A motivated and engaged group of teachers also developed their own lesson plans, but prejudices in society today did not play a role in the group discussions or presentations. When, at the end of the workshop, the participants were asked to reflect on the possible contribution of such lessons in fighting prejudice and discrimination, a Greek teacher described her experience in a small local shop, just days previously: A customer had paid for her goods and was packing them in her bag, and the shopkeeper had turned away when another customer started to shout “Thief, the Gypsy woman is stealing from your shop”. The woman had continued to scream, even after the customer, the teacher and the shopkeeper had told her she was wrong. The Roma woman left the shop in tears. The group of educators seemed dispirited and shared the opinion that learning about history would not help to deal with this kind of prejudice.

Students in Poland

A Polish history teacher shared short texts written by students in her school after a lesson on the Roma genocide using the teaching materials. Some of the quotes are shocking in their blatant racism. However, it can be educationally useful to have these opinions out in the open during a structured lesson, so that students can challenge their peers and reflect on the consequences of stereotypes and prejudices and discrimination can be encouraged.

Boy A: “I think Poland isn’t a very tolerant country, but in my opinion it is good. If Polish people are more tolerant, many people from Turkey and many Roma people will come to Poland. It’s not good because many of them are thieves, burglars and something like that. Look at Germany. Soon there will be more Turkish than German people. My cousin lives there and two months ago two men from Turkey stole his iPhone. So in my opinion, we don’t need them in Poland.”

Boy B: “I’m not racist, in fact I am a pacifist. Everyone who is a well-behaved person can be my brother and sister. But I think that the Roma

are not a well-behaving nation. Stereotypes, which in fact are not good and true, say that Gypsies are thieves and they are dirty and smell bad. Maybe it's not true. But all the Roma I have ever seen were begging for money."

Boy C: "The problem of the Sinti is not of their origin or colour of skin, or even not the language. They are just poor and the poverty is the biggest problem. It is always difficult to help poor people. In this case it is even more difficult because of the culture barrier. The laziest solution is make them go away, which is not good in my opinion. It is just not right, and the history proves that we shouldn't accept any examples of intolerance. We have to show more action, then we will feel the reaction."

Girl D: "In the class we were talking about Roma people. There are many stereotypes about them. It didn't help even if we couldn't recognise Roma on the photos. Everybody was still talking about negative things and how others are different from us. I think we should look for similarities and be more tolerant."

Apart from concluding that stereotypes and discrimination needed to be addressed in lessons, the teacher stressed how important it was to empower those students who speak out against the stereotypes. These students were aged 16–17 and at a school with a good reputation. Many would go to university. As the teacher said: "Most of them have educated parents. They know the definitions of terms such as stereotype, prejudice and discrimination."

- "It didn't help even if we couldn't recognise Roma on the photos." The student pinpoints the limitations of using historical sources to counter prejudice.
- "Everybody was still talking about negative things and how others are different from us." To work with the prejudices students have, educators must have time, determination and specific skills, and be trained in methods that open up minds. This is a major challenge in education: can we equip educators with the skills and working environment (colleagues and school administration) conducive to this? In the meantime, working to empower peers and to introduce peer education can make a difference.

Conclusions

This article is based on my own observations and exchanges with the Roma and non-Roma involved in educational projects. To gain more substantiated insight into how learners and educators respond to projects about the genocide of the Roma and Sinti, more thorough research is necessary. This might be participatory in nature, or led by researchers not involved in a project, but both types of research need careful planning and execution.

A unique study is underway at the Bavarian State Centre for Civic Education and the Department of Sociology, Ludwig-Maximilians-Universität München. A research project into the use and resonance of the teaching materials “The Fate of European Roma and Sinti during the Holocaust” started on April 2015. The aim has been to gain insight in how the topic is taught and learned. The study will also look at whether different types of knowledge about the Sinti and Roma play a role in school settings. Experiences with the online teaching material will be analysed and discussed through guided interviews with teachers and students. The results, due to be published in 2016, are expected to give important input for further development of the education in this field.²⁰

It is hoped that other projects will also be evaluated in this way and that international exchange on the outcomes will be used to inform both NGOs and educational authorities.

The Dutch student struggling to understand who the Roma are wants to be able to see “them” as a homogenous group. Markus End argues that we should focus on this mechanism in majority society to understand anti-Roma discrimination. “The process

²⁰ Robert Sigel is a member of the German delegation to the IHRA, a history teacher also working for the Bavarian Ministry of Education and the Bavarian State Centre for Civic Education. He has presented the teaching materials to many German audiences including students, teachers, policemen and policy makers.

involves not only the construction of the out-group, such as the “other” or Gypsies, but purports an equally homogenized picture of the in-group.”²¹

Essential to the task that we must set ourselves is a focus on the majority and on mainstreaming education about the history of the genocide. This should include the mechanisms that led up to the genocide, but also an understanding of how many of these mechanisms are still manifested in contemporary hate speech and discrimination. It is encouraging that many educators are keen to take part in workshops and use the available educational materials in their lessons about the genocide of the Roma. However, it is clear that many are at a loss how to respond to prejudices. Concrete suggestions for effective educational approaches and professional development opportunities for educators, specifically in dealing with anti-Roma sentiments, are essential. Considering the influential role that the media have, it might be considered to look more carefully if students can, by analysing the role of the media, understand better the mechanisms of stereotyping and scapegoating in society. It would also be valuable to bring good practises in the media to the foreground.

However, the first step must be to empower the Roma to play a bigger role in education, by creating opportunities to acquire knowledge, develop skills and make exchanges between active Roma possible. A second step is to promote dialogue between Roma and non-Roma educators, in formal and informal education. This might also lead to more non-Roma educators inviting the Roma into their classrooms to meet with students.

The many conversations that I have had with Zoni Weisz, a Sinto from the Netherlands, have given me important knowledge, insights and most importantly inspiration to work on this topic. His international role in commemorative and educational projects

²¹ Markus End, “Antiziganism as a Structure of Meanings: The Racial Antiziganism of an Austrian Nazi.” In Timofey Agarin (ed.), *When Stereotype meets prejudice. Antiziganism in European Societies*, pp. 77–93.

include speaking to the German Bundestag on January 27, 2011 and, more recently, leading the Auschwitz Requiem project. Commemorating his family who perished in the Holocaust, education and dialogue all seem to be intricately linked. In this sense, his example embodies many of the conclusions above.

Zoni Weisz was staying with his aunt when in 1944 his parents, sisters and younger brother were arrested during a national round up. He was seven years old at the time. His entire family was taken, via Westerbork, to Auschwitz-Birkenau. Zoni managed to survive the war by going into hiding. But the sudden loss of his family was a trauma he carried with him for the rest of his life. Describing the post-war search for family members and the haunting memory of lost lives he passes on a message to us all:²²

...It also shapes your behaviour towards the community. You know the people around you. It also determines how you raise your children. Treat others with respect, do not judge, do not condemn. That's what it is all about.

²² www.romasinti.eu, short filmed interview with Zoni Weisz under the heading "Search".

“How I Had Not Been Surviving
World War II” – How a Precise
Combination of Text and Images
Has the Ability to Evoke Emotions

Marcin Szewczyk

“Mietek at war” is the first Polish-language publication that talks about *Samudaripen*, which can also be read by children. Dissemination of information about *Samudaripen* is very important, because for many years (until 1970s-1990s) the Roma were not treated as victims of the Nazis. Restoration of this fact to the self-knowledge of all the Roma helps strengthen their unity. In addition, awareness of this fact across Europe may contribute to abolish negative stereotypes about the Roma.

The subject of this analysis is the form of communication construction of the publication “Mietek at war” (“*Mietek na wojnie*”), created by Natalia Gancarz¹. This illustrated book - published in a form that can be easily understood by children - is the element used as a tool to restore the memory of the Roma Holocaust during World War II (*Samudaripen*, often called *the forgotten Holocaust*). The term “Holocaust” is strongly associated with the plight of the Jews during WWII and for this reason the “Roma Holocaust” has often been contested. For this reason, other two terms have been adopted: *Samudaripen* and *Porrajmos*. However, it is very important to highlight the difference between both Romani words used to refer to the Roma Genocide. The first one means “mass

¹ Natalia Gancarz, *Mietek na wojnie*, illustrator: Diana Karpowicz (Tarnów: Muzeum Okręgowe w Tarnowie, 2013).

“killing” and was coined by linguist Marcel Courthiade and is generally accepted by Romani intellectuals. The second one means “destruction” (or “devouring”) and was popularized by Romani linguist and activist Ian Hancock in 1990s, but it is not accepted by all Romani activists².

It is, therefore, necessary to provide some important information that may help clarify this text. Natalia Gancarz, the author of the book, is an ethnologist who works in the Ethnographic Museum in Tarnów (Poland)³. She has been involved in working with Romani issues for a long time and is considered an expert on Romani culture. Every year she co-organizes the Roma Memory Caravan⁴, which is dedicated to the memory of the Roma murdered during World War II. Natalia is the author of many photo collections and many books on the Roma. In 2012, in collaboration with Diana Karpowicz (illustrator), she published an illustrated book “Romano abecadło” (“Romano ABC”), which taught kids the basics of Romani language. Natalia and Diana cooperated for the second time publishing “*Mietek na wojnie*”.

Experts consider that between 25% and 50% of all the European Roma (about 90% of the Roma population in certain countries) were exterminated during World War II. In percentage terms, these estimations make them the ethnic group most affected by the fascist regimes. It is estimated that the number of Roma victims would be between 220,000 and 1,500,000⁵. The *Gypsy Family Camp* in the Auschwitz II-Birkenau concentration camp is

² Elena Marushiakova, Popov Vesselin, “Holocaust, Porrajmos, Samudaripen... Tworzenie nowej mitologii narodowej”, *Studia Romologica*, No. 3 (2010), p. 78.

³ The Museum has a permanent Roma exhibition (oldest and unique in Poland), <http://www.muzeum.tarnow.pl>.

⁴ http://romopedia.pl/index.php?title=Miedzynarodowy_Tabor_Pamieci_Romow.

⁵ Cristina Rat, *Social Transfers and Capability-Building for the Roma. Conference Paper*, (Groningen: International Conference of the Human Development and Capability Association, 2006), p. 3; Marushiakova, “Holocaust, Porrajmos, Samudaripen...”, pp. 81–82.

a symbol of the extermination for the Roma; 23,000 Roma were gassed in this camp and on the night from the 2nd to the 3rd of August 1944, 2,897 Roma were massacred as part of the camp's final solution.

The book written by Natalia Gancarz does not revolve around facts. Instead, it tells a story that is able to transmit to the reader the painful truth about the destruction of the nation, much more convincingly than the best documented history book would. The main tool for achieving the book's educational purpose are not facts, but a skillful awakening of emotions in the reader.

Paradoxically, this children's story is not for children. Rather, it may be considered a children's tale, but only if they read it together with an adult. It is a difficult (despite appearances), important (in multiple dimensions) and, unfortunately, a true story; its purpose is to awake emotions. Generating emotions is much more important than a simple transfer of information, given that the content can be summarized in the description: a pictorial-text story about a Roma boy and his life in imprisonment with his family in the death camp of Auschwitz II-Birkenau, on the eve of the night from the 2nd to the 3rd of August 1944⁶.

The level of technical sophistication of this release strikes at the first moment. After this first impression, we forget about this aspect and let the authors manipulate our emotions. Taking into consideration the content, one could easily be fooled by the belief that this seemingly careless form would strengthen the transmission and aid the reception by emphasizing realism. However, nothing is able to improve this release because its form contains significant part of the coded meanings⁷. On the whole, the book is at the level where – reaching out to the Japanese aesthetics and

⁶ Richard L. Rubenstein and John K. Roth, *Approaches to Auschwitz, Revised Edition: The Holocaust and Its Legacy*, (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2003), pp. 206–207.

⁷ Alicja Helman, *Słownik pojęć filmowych*, (Wrocław: Wydawnictwo "Wiedza o kulturze", 1991), tom II, p. 25; André Bazin, *What Is Cinema?* (Berkeley, Los Angeles, and London: University of California Press, 1968), p. 30.

state *yugen*⁸ - all forms of visual and verbal expression achieved perfect harmony⁹.



PICTURE 1. Seemingly careless but sophisticated form. Source: Natalia Gancarz, *Mietek na wojnie*, illustrator: Diana Karpowicz (Tarnów: Muzeum Okręgowe w Tarnowie, 2013), cover.

The horizontal orientation of the book is one of the misleading clues, which suggests that if this is not an album, then it must be a book for children. The characteristic shape of the paragraphs, the way of combining and placing text in relation to pictures can bring poetry to our mind. Also, due to the scale of emotions (those which arise in the reader, not those that accompany the narrator), we could categorize this tale as poetry. Visual plasticity and visual expression resemble a form of theatrical scenario. There is, after all, a ready stage design (illustrations) in it, and there are even stage directions, hidden in the section entitled “Facts for Parents”. This title is actually another false tip directing us towards children

⁸ The term “yugen” refers to works in which “all forms of visual and verbal expression achieved perfect harmony”. Andrew A. Tsubaki, “Zeami and the Transition of the Concept of Yugen: A Note on Japanese Aesthetics”, *Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism*, Vol. XXX/1 (1971), pp. 56–57, 65–66.

⁹ “Słowniczek terminów japońskich”, *Film na świecie*, vol. 12 (1981), p. 96.

as recipients. Stage directions themselves - despite their informational content – are not technical guidance, but determination of how to locate and shape the readers’ emotions.



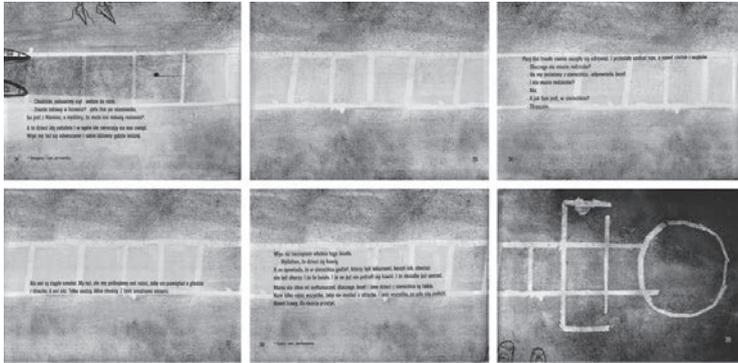
PICTURE 2. True narration hidden in the pictures. Source: Natalia Gancarz, *Mietek na wojnie*, illustrator: Diana Karpowicz (Tarnów: Muzeum Okręgowe w Tarnowie, 2013), endpaper.

If we refer to certain features of the book, it is hard not to think about it as something other than a comic book. Even more, if we recall specific characteristics of the comic book genre: concrete elements of iconic sphere and associated method for constructing meanings; special rhythm of certain boards, and visuality of the whole story¹⁰. Coherence between the image and the text is the essence of the message and is constructed by two separate stories - pictorial and verbal – into one coherent narrative layer. Undoubtedly, another important clue is the rhythm¹¹. Rhythmical visual repeatability is noticeable right from endpapers¹² covered with the image of barbed wires, repeated in more than one place in the story.

¹⁰ John Bateman, *Text and Image: A Critical Introduction to the Visual/Verbal Divide* (London: Routledge, 2014), pp. 78–80.

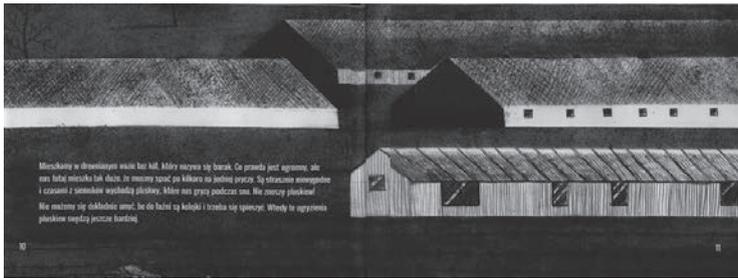
¹¹ Thierry Groensteen, *The System of Comics*, (Jackson: University Press of Mississippi, 2007), pp. 132–134; Thierry Groensteen, *Comics and Narration*, (Jackson: University Press of Mississippi, 2013), pp. 133–158.

¹² Endpaper is a leaf of paper at the beginning and end of a book, especially one fixed to the inside of the cover endpaper, examples: <http://penandink.com/2013/08/19/the-story-with-endpapers>.



Picture 3. Rhythm in monotonous pictures. Source: Natalia Gancarz, *Mietek na wojnie*, illustrator: Diana Karpowicz (Tarnów: Muzeum Okręgowe w Tarnowie, 2013), pp. 34–39

Some aspect of their stability and invariability is reinforced by the horizontal format of the publication, typical of popular newspaper comic strips. Similarly, an image of tracks is dragged here in monotonous visual rhythm along with several other static elements of the story, carrying a sense of inevitability and irreversibility. Two cadres (pages) should be added to this set, forming one image with obvious, though not specified title: “Barracks”.



Picture 4. The world of wooden houses without wheels. Source: Natalia Gancarz, *Mietek na wojnie*, illustrator: Diana Karpowicz (Tarnów: Muzeum Okręgowe w Tarnowie, 2013), pp. 10–11

The majority of pages is similarly shaped by rhythm and dominated by static durability and inevitability. After all, frames on the visual plane belong to the most powerful and influential pages.

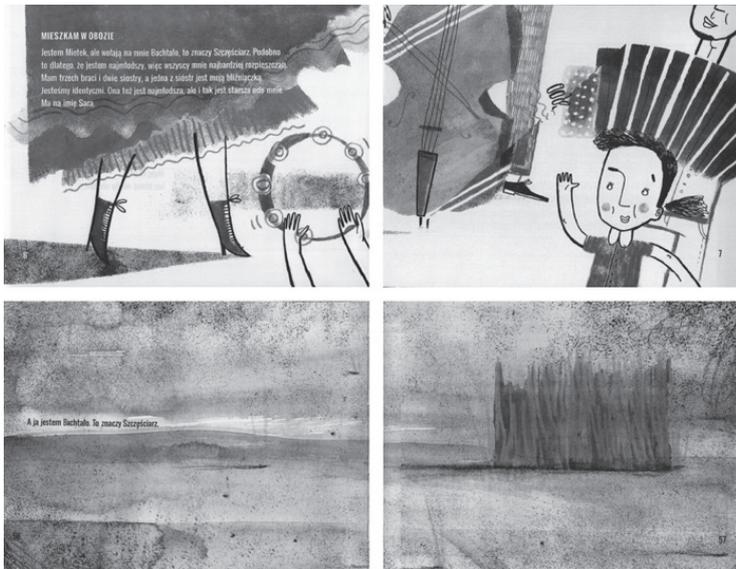
These genre considerations are only to show the potential of interpretation and use of the comic's poetics, however, at the same time, show possible paths of reception. Such analysis is possible because it is a story that is told by pictures and painted by the words it contains.

While the use of such tools shapes the content of the story (understood in opposition to the form), the first key to understanding the story structure is the phrase included in stage directions: "They did not realize it." This phrase also becomes a guideline to interpreting the narration and the portrayed reality. The narrator initially did not realize what kind of reality surrounded him and which eventually absorbed him (*Porrajmos*)¹³. The second step in the perception and understanding of the story is the image which allows the reader to expand the understanding of presented reality, and which acts in parallel to the expanding consciousness of the narrator, who is also experiencing increasingly horrifying images of the world around him. The last stage of understanding is, however, the exact reading of "Facts for Parents" and these facts are the ones who tell the reader that it is not just a sad story of a boy, a family, smaller or larger group of people. They do say that it was only a single story, but such stories might emerge thousands of times, and they would all become part of a broad common narrative about the tragedy of the whole nation.

Thus, in this book, there is a multi-level building of meanings in the following order: word – picture – word. This hierarchy of circles of consciousness is not even interfered by the fact that the image is perceived as the first one. This is because the image clearly refers the reader to the narrative of the author and it is the image that complements the narration, not the other way round (as it might be understood from the above-described construction of wider and wider concentric areas of understanding).

¹³ Ian Hancock, "On the Interpretation of a Word: Porrajmos as Holocaust", *The Holocaust in History and Memory*, vol. 3 (2010), pp. 19–23.

The key to the order of reception of individual layers of the story remains in the person of the recipient reader. If we assume that it is a child, then we reduce the importance of the text to a supporting role (in order of importance of the components of the reception). Then, it is particularly significant that the opening and closing frames of the story are colourful. The first frame is fully coloured and also certainly happy.



PICTURE 5. From colourful beginning until the colour end of all. Source: Natalia Gancarz, *Mietek na wojnie*, illustrator: Diana Karpowicz (Tarnów: Muzeum Okręgowe w Tarnowie, 2013), pp. 6–7, 56–57

The last frame is only partially coloured with green meadows, boundless as on the Roma flag. It is only symbolic expression of desire and dreams. The last frame does not indicate - even in combination with one short line of text on the opposite page, ensuring that Mietek is Lucky (*Bachtato*) - a happy ending (which will not happen), but it gives at least some hope. If you finish reading this book here, it can be considered as a story for children. It happens

because the remnants of hope dissipate completely until the section entitled "Facts for Parents". It is an obvious manipulation of narrative levels and the readers' perception. But that is the point of this story. It is just as manipulative to make a child the main character, all the more so if the reader is an adult. Although it is not a misleading manipulation, the described story happened inside the *Gypsy Family Camp* in Auschwitz II-Birkenau¹⁴.

The title of the book also has significance for the reception. It's meaning, which is closely related to the figure of the main character and, at the same time, the narrator. Construction of the title subtly, although not fully, suggests that the main character has participated in war¹⁵. However, Mietek did not go, he was not even at war - this war came to him ("Mietek at War"). The war which came in the form of the end of his childhood. Meanwhile – as described in the book – the old life became a dream, a dream without wires, camp, hunger, bugs and death.

A small addition to the title is one – apparently never translated – line of a text in Romani language, which is the second title page of the book: *Bachtało and-o bibachtalipen*. This sentence is the title of the book in Romani language¹⁶. However, it is also a specific wordplay. Therefore - in some imprecise way, but closely related to the structure of the story – perhaps the following interpretation of the title would be accepted: "Happy end of the

¹⁴ It should be noted that the story of Mietek does not draw from a historical person, rather it draws inspiration from true events and imagines a story of Mietek, which might have happened.

¹⁵ In Polish language there is a small, but still significant difference between going to war (*iść na wojnę*), being at war (*być na wojnie*), and the form "(sb) at war" (*ktoś na wojnie*), which is the form of sentence without verbs (called equivalent of sentence). In the general linguistic awareness - someone who certainly was at war definitely fought, perhaps even willingly. Although it is not in terms of the will as forceful as he went to war.

¹⁶ rom. *Bachtało and-o bibachtalipen* is an attempt to translate the title "Mietek at war" into Romani language. Romani name of the boy is *Bachtało* (*Lucky* but also *Happy*), *bibachtalipen* is evil time. Translator did not find separate concept at „war” in Romani language.

unhappiness”;¹⁷ despite the fact that the direct literal translation is: “Happy in evil times”.



PICTURE 6. Subtitle as wishes or even dreams of the narrator. Source: Natalia Gancarz, *Mietek na wojnie*, illustrator: Diana Karpowicz (Tarnów: Muzeum Okręgowe w Tarnowie, 2013), second title page

It is possible to follow this foggy trail, though it is a very sad subtitle or a very sad translation of the title. This is because the only happiness in the end of the disasters that followed is that the end will come, eventually.

Finally, the figure of the narrator is given the name – *Mieczysław*, a traditional Slavic name. As some linguists and historians claim, it is perhaps the contemporary form of *Mieszko*¹⁸, the first historical ruler of Poland. Is it surprising that a family with centuries-old tradition of living in Poland¹⁹ gives such a name to their child? This child tells us the whole story: recognizing the details, spreading accents of validity differently than adults do,

¹⁷ In Polish the significance of unhappiness is near to disaster or tragedy.

¹⁸ Józef Dobosz et al., *Słownik władców polskich*, (Poznań: Wyd. Poznańskie, 1999), p. 276.

¹⁹ Agnus Fraser, *Dzieje Cyganów*, (Warszawa: PWN, 2001), pp. 94–95.

interpreting facts according to their own understanding of the world, often without feelings or emotions, with different distribution of emphasis than adults have. However, this children's story evolves. Not to perceive and interpret reality in a typical, for an adult, way, but there is a particular evolution towards terrifying visible adulthood. At the end of the story, one can still find hope, even though it is not certain but complemented with more and more sorrow, because understanding of the world around him is coming slowly; the world of the death camp.

The attentive reader of this comic can thank the authors for this manipulation: for the way they manage to control the reader's emotions; for how multi-layered and at the same time how simple the narrative structure of the story is; and also for how much content the author was able to convey. It leaves no room for indifference during and after perception.

The way to tell this story – influencing emotions of the reader – is a great way to show the reader the true scale of the tragedy of the Roma during WWII. This book shows the meaning of *Samudaripen*. It does not focus on the facts, although facts are skillfully hidden in the story. It does not talk about the number of exterminated Roma. It does not enumerate all the names of the murdered. It does not indicate all the places where the Roma were killed. Despite this, the book tells the truth. It shows the truth about what might have happened to anyone who was at that time a Roma. The book allows anyone to emotionally identify with Mietek – the narrator and protagonist – and feel a bond with the entire Roma nation.

And this is the true goal of this story.

Lety Pig Farm Case

Miroslav Brož

This article¹ describes the case of Lety pig farm from the perspective of the civic association Konexe², a small grassroots Romani organization from the Czech Republic. Konexe was registered in May 2012 and represents a new type of organization in the context of the Czech Republic: it brings together members of impoverished Romani communities from across the country, people who provide assistance to one another, to their own communities, and to other impoverished Roma during times of crisis, as well as times of relative calm.

Konexe advocates for the removal of a pig farm from the Romani genocide site in Lety and conducts community education activities to spread information about the Romani Holocaust in impoverished Roma communities. These activities principally target the generation of young Roma.

¹ The author of the article has written a number of pieces about the Lety pig farm case. See: "Hate speech and anti-Roma violence in the Czech Republic", *ENARgy webzine*, Retrieved September 15, 2015 from: <http://www.enargy-webzine.eu/spip.php?article391> ; "A Battle for Roma History in the Czech Republic", *Open Society Foundations Voices*, Retrieved September 15, 2015 from: <https://www.opensocietyfoundations.org/voices/battle-roma-history-czech-republic>.

² Konexe Facebook page www.facebook.com/konexeinenglish (access: 15/09/2015).

Timeline

The persecution of the Roma has a long and bloody history in the Czech lands. First mentions of the presence of Roma people in the Czech territory are from medieval chronicles³. The first remarks about persecution of the Roma and anti-Roma laws and regulations are also from nearly the same historical period. In the XVII century, when the Czech lands were part of the Austro-Hungarian Empire, which was at war against the Ottoman Empire, Roma people were considered spies of the Ottomans because of their dark skin colour⁴. In 1688, the Emperor of the Austro-Hungarian Empire ordered all the Roma to leave the Czech lands by decree. This law was not effective and Roma people did not comply with the Emperor's order. It was followed by another decree, which made the killing of Roma males legal. The hunt for Roma men started across the country. Another decree legalizing the killing of both Roma males and females came several years later, resulting in the first genocide of the Roma in the Czech territories⁵.

The subsequent historical period was characterized by anti-Roma repression, expulsions, and marking by cutting their noses or ears, branding, etc. This state of things when the Roma were dehumanized, considered and treated more like animals than as human beings, changed during the rule of Maria Theresa (1740–1780), who devised the first integration attempts. These attempts were very paternalistic and Roma people were treated as little children, who did not understand the world they lived in and needed to be re-educated and assimilated⁶.

³ More specifically in the Chronicle of Dalimil. Dalimil Chronicle is the first chronicle written in the Czech language by an unknown author at the beginning of XIV century. The chronicle describes the events until 1319.

⁴ *Doba vyháňení a pronásledování*. Retrieved September 15, 2015 from: <https://www.pf.jcu.cz/stru/katedry/pgps/ikvz/podkapitoly/do1kapitoly/o7.pdf>.

⁵ *Ibidem*.

⁶ „Dějiny Romů“, *PONTIS Šumperk o.p.s.*, 2010, Retrieved September 15, 2015 from: http://www.pontis.cz/e_download.php?file=data/editor/71cs_16.pdf&

After the formation of independent Czecho-Slovak state (1918), which is considered as the state with the highest level of democracy in Central European region in that period, the Roma never reached an equal citizenship status. In 1927 a new “Anti-Gypsy Law” was introduced by the Czechoslovakian parliament. This law put the Roma officially in the category of second class citizens and legalized their repression in the environment of the young democracy. The Roma were forbidden to enter some areas, for example spa towns. The explanation given was that the Roma would bother spa guests and would destroy the spa atmosphere. In this period, a new phenomenon emerged: anti-Roma hatred induced by media. “The Cannibal Case of Moldova” is an example of one of the most famous media cases in-between wars in Czechoslovakia, where a group of the Roma were arrested and stood trial because of alleged cannibalism⁷.

Roma Holocaust – *Samudaripen*

The Nazi occupation of the Czech lands came in two phases. During the first period, the Nazi Germany occupied the border regions of Czechoslovakia with a strong German minority – The Sudetenland. The Czech inner land was taken by the Wehrmacht several months later in March 1939 and the Protectorate Bohemia and Moravia was created. Slovakia declared independence and became a puppet state and an ally of the Nazi Germany.

In the period between occupation of border regions and occupation of the Czech inner land, the Czechoslovakian government founded several “labour”, “reformatory” camps for “people who were slave labour”. People with different lifestyles were

original=Modul+pro+u%C4%8Ditele+-+D%C4%9Bjiny+Rom%C5%AF+(m ultikultur%C3%AD+v%C3%BDchova).pdf.

⁷ The anti-Gypsyists historically believed that the Roma are cannibals, the same way as anti-Semites believed that Jews are using the blood of Aryan virgins to make Passover bread.

soon interned in these camps: homeless people, sexual workers, professional gamblers, circus community members, as well as the first members of the Roma community. One of such camps was established in a small village situated south of Prague: *Lety u Písku* (Lety in the district of Písek). Prisoners were forced to carry out heavy slave labour, such as stone mining, road construction, or gathering lumber in the woods. Some lucky prisoners were used for work in agriculture. No German Nazi served in this camp and the prisoners were only adult men. The guards were Czech police officers (gendarmes) and the camp was administered by the headquarters of the Czech criminal police in Prague.

Everything changed in June 1942 when the Protectorate Minister of Internal Affairs ordered the collection of statistics about “Gypsies, mixed Gypsies and people with Gypsy style of life” and their deportation to camps. On the 2nd of August, 1942 the camp in Lety was transformed into a “Gypsy camp”. Non-Roma prisoners were released or transferred to other camps or prisons, while Roma families began to be deported to Lety. The number of prisoners increased exponentially in a very short time and the camp was soon overcrowded. Eventually, the conditions in the camp deteriorated. Even though female, children and elder prisoners were present, according to the testimonies of the survivors, the hostility and brutality of guards escalated; prisoners were often beaten, many of them to their death. Roma females were raped and Roma children were being drowned in the Lety Lake. Every prisoner had to work, even the elderly were forced to work in a quarry and in road construction.

Dead prisoners, mostly children, were buried in the village cemetery in the nearby village of Mirovice until the graveyard was full; then the guards started to use mass graves in the area surrounding the camp. The first transports to Auschwitz Birkenau left Lety camp in December 1942. More transports followed. The camp was officially closed in August 1943. Only 200–500 Roma survived the Roma Holocaust in the Czech lands.

Forgotten and rediscovered history

An investigation started in the years after World War II (1948). Guard Josef Hejduk was accused of torture, and former prisoners accused him of several murders. He was acquitted in 1947; the witnesses were not deemed trustworthy due to their criminal records. Harsh treatment was explained by the “need to deal with dangerous criminals”. The most brutal guard, sadistic psychopath Josef Luňák, was only given an “official warning”⁸. After the communists took power, the history of Lety was forgotten, becoming a taboo in the Czech history. In 1973, the Czechoslovakian communist government built a large-scale industrial pig farm with a capacity for 25,000 pigs on the very site of the former concentration camp. The pig farm was overtaken by a private company AGPI Písek shortly after the fall of communism.

The history of Lety death camp was accidentally discovered by American genealogist Paul Polansky in the early 90s, while he was searching for family history of American families who migrated to the United States from the Lety region in the middle of XIX century. He published his findings in the US media and he later published the testimonies of survivors in the book “Black Silence”⁹. The book “And Nobody Will Believe You”¹⁰ by Markus Pape, a German journalist living in Prague, also denounced the camp’s existence¹¹.

⁸ “Romani Holocaust - Official complaint against Czech war criminal”, *ERRC blog*. Retrieved September 15, 2015 from: <http://www.errc.org/article/romani-holocaust--official-complaint-against-czech-war-criminal/32>.

⁹ Paul Polansky, *Black Silence: The Lety Survivors Speak* (Prague: G PLUS G editions, 1998).

¹⁰ Markus Pape, *Nikdo vám nebude věřit* (Prague: G plus G Publishers, 1997)

¹¹ Ctibor Nečas, a Czech historian and university professor, has also published a number of articles and books on the topic (for example: *Andr'oda taboris. Tragédie cikánských táborů v Letech a v Hodoníně*, (Brno: 1995); *Holokaust českých Romů* (Praha: Prostor: 1999). He has been researching the Lety camp (as well as others) since the 1970s.

These books and articles published in the US media started a public discussion about the need to remove the pig farm from the Romani genocide site in Lety. A small memorial in the shape of a stone was built several hundred meters east of the pig farm, thanks to the initiative of the Czech president Václav Havel in 1995. The place stinks because of the smell of thousands of pigs.

The Czech Republic has faced international pressure to remove the pig farm from the site of the genocide since the 1990s. International institutions have sent open letters calling the Czech government to remove the farm and to clean the site of the genocide from pig excrement; still, the European Union Agricultural Fund keeps sending agriculture subsidies to the pig farm. Without these EU subsidies, the farm would soon be out of business.

The Committee for Readdressing the Victims of Roma Holocaust (*Výbor pro odškodnění obětí romského holokaustu - VPORH*), an NGO representing the survivors of the Roma genocide, started to work in 1999. The VPORH has lead the negotiations with the Czech government, although unsuccessfully. At least VPORH succeeded in gaining permission and small funds to build sculptures and a memorial plaque in the Mirovice village cemetery, where many bodies of Lety prisoners were buried.

Unfortunately, the Czech government has used a “bad cop, good cop” tactics towards the survivors and the international community. The “good cop”, represented by the Minister of Human Rights or by the Minister of Culture, claims that they are working very hard on the removal of the farm: with patience the farm will be closed soon. The “bad cop”, represented by the Minister of Financial Affairs, or directly by the Prime Minister, says they do not have money for the removal, and it cannot be done.

The new wave of Roma activism for the removal of the pig farm

Konexe civic association was founded in 2012 as a Roma grassroots organization and very soon started activities against the existence of the pig farm in the site of the Romani Genocide. During our ground

fieldwork in Roma ghettos we realized that impoverished Roma communities do not have any information or knowledge on the issue of the Roma Holocaust in general or about the Lety case specifically. Unfortunately, most of the members of Roma communities are educated in segregated Roma schools, where the history education and curriculum is reduced, compared to standard schools. That is why Konexe started community education projects about the Roma Holocaust, and we are trying to spread this information and knowledge among impoverished Roma communities. In 2013, we brought the first group of Roma youngsters to Lety farm and the author of this text gave a speech¹² during the commemoration meeting organized by the survivors.

Konexe continued to educate impoverished Roma communities during 2014 and published an open letter¹³ to European citizens and to the European institutions, asking them to support the struggle against the pig farm, and urging to stop the cash flow from the EU Agriculture Fund to Lety pig farm. There is still no answer from the EU to these requests.

In May 2014, Konexe decided to take direct action against the pig farm in Lety and organized a one-week blockade of the main gate of the pig farm. Protesters slept there in tents, blocking the supply trucks using their own bodies, prohibiting them to enter the premises of the pig farm. The blockade brought no reaction of the government, but the owners of the farm were able to meet with Konexe activists. The results of this meeting were shocking: the pig farm owners do not want to speculate, do not want to make profit on this case, and they do not want cash. They would prefer a simple solution: - all they want is a new land and a new farm building established somewhere. If this happens, they also want to contribute and are ready to pay

¹² Speech of Miroslav Brož in Lety in 2013.

¹³ Open letter by Konexe www.facebook.com/notes/konexe-english/open-letter-from-the-konexe-civic-association-to-the-citizens-and-institutions-0/469182099892176 (access: 15/09/2015).

for the transportation of the pigs and of the equipment. They also claimed that the Czech Government never approached them in order to negotiate a solution by providing them with another location for the farm.

The blockade attracted huge media attention and a documentary movie about the blockade was created. This movie was awarded a special prize of the jury in the competition for the best Czech documentary of 2014 at The International Documentary Film Festival Jihlava¹⁴. Since then, Konexe has started to organize commemoration meetings every 13th day of every month in Lety since May 2014¹⁵. Activists are meeting at the parking lot of the pig farm and then walk to the north-west corner of the pig farm premises, where they establish an improvised commemoration place. This is the only place where they can really sit on the area of former concentration camp as the rest of this area is occupied by the pig farm.

Konexe, together with EGAM (European Grassroots Antiracist Movement), organized an international commemoration meeting in June 2014, in which young Roma activists from 14 European countries participated¹⁶. In October 2014, partner activists of Konexe from Germany erected an improvised memorial in the

¹⁴ *Několik Let*, directed by Martina Malinová, Czech Republic 2014, 47 min. <http://www.dokument-festival.com/database/movie/17535%7CNekolik-Let> (access: 15/09/2015).

¹⁵ Video from Konexe commemorations in Lety in English <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pIWbpopgGXM> (access: 15/09/2015).

¹⁶ "Participants of the European Meeting of Antiracist Leaders hold pictures in front of a pig farm, situated at the site of a former Roma concentration camp, to commemorate victims of the Holocaust in Lety", *Yahoo News*. Retrieved September 15, 2015 from: <http://news.yahoo.com/photos/participants-european-meeting-antiracist-leaders-hold-pictures-front-photo-152802490.html>, "Militantes protestam contra chiqueiro em campo de concentração tcheco", *Correio Braziliense*, Retrieved September 15, 2015 from: http://www.correio braziliense.com.br/app/noticia/mundo/2014/06/14/interna_mundo,432649/militantes-protestam-contra-chiqueiro-em-campo-de-concentracao-tcheco.shtml.

shape of a cross, situated by the bank of the Lety Lake, where Roma children used to be drowned by the camp guards¹⁷.

Konexe also fights against the Roma genocide denial which is happening in the Czech Republic. Interesting examples of how this denial has permeated daily life settings are internet discussions, where denialist web pages operate without consequence. In August 2014, Czech MP Tomio Okamura gave an interview to a tabloid magazine where he said:

When it comes to Lety, it would be good to clarify what we want to build there. According to the information available, this myth that it was a Romani concentration camp is a lie. There was a labour camp there for people who avoided proper work [...] No one was killed at the camp – people died there as a result of old age and the diseases they brought with them as a result of their previous travelling lifestyle. [...] The victims of the camp definitely were not victims of any kind of Holocaust. On the contrary, comparing them to Holocaust victims disrespects the actual victims of the Holocaust, whether they be Jews or Roma, who perished in the real concentration camps. Naturally, I condemn and reject any kind of violence against people¹⁸.

The next day after this statement, Konexe civic association filed criminal charges against Okamura as would several other NGOs and engaged individuals. After one month of investigation, the Czech police rejected the criminal charges, with the explanation that Okamura did not carry out any criminal act, despite the fact that Holocaust denial is illegal in the Czech Republic.

¹⁷ „Memorial to Roma children who were murdered in Lety”. Retrieved September 15, 2015 from: <http://akana.cc/2014/12/news-en/news-local-en/memorial-to-roma-children-who-were-murdered-in-lety/>.

¹⁸ “Czech MP Okamura insults Romani victims of the Holocaust, media and politicians sharply criticize him”, *ROMEIA*. Retrieved September 15, 2015 from: <http://www.romeia.cz/en/news/czech/czech-mp-okamura-insults-romani-victims-of-the-holocaust-media-and-politicians-sharply-criticize-him><http://www.romeia.cz/en/news/czech/czech-mp-okamura-insults-romani-victims-of-the-holocaust-media-and-politicians-sharply-criticize-him>.

In January 2015, Konexe organized a commemoration meeting in the National Cemetery in Terezín (*Theresienstadt*) and at the same time as an international commemoration meeting for the memory of the victims of the Holocaust organized by European Jewish Congress, with the support of the Czech Government, took place. In the last period, Konexe has aimed its “pressure activities” at Germany. In March 2015 Konexe and its friends have been travelling across Germany talking about the Lety pig farm case to the German public¹⁹. Another, second blockade of Lety pig farm, was organized in May 2015 and after five days ended in a march of the Roma and activists from Lety pig farm to nearby village Mirovice, where the bodies of some of Lety death camp victims were buried at the local cemetery²⁰.

The thesis of Konexe is that the industrial pig farm in the very site of the Romani genocide in Lety is a monument to Czech Anti-Gypsyism and is actually the Czech Republic’s greatest memorial²¹. Until it is removed, until a dignified memorial to the Romani victims of the Holocaust is built at that site, the place is a grievous sign of how the situation of Romani people in the Czech Republic is neither changing nor improving. As long as this society is capable of running a pig farm at the site of the genocide of that minority, there is little chance for acceptance.

¹⁹ www.freelety.org (access: 15/09/2015).

²⁰ <http://denikreferendum.cz/clanek/20441-lety-u-pisku-2015-dalsi-rok-romskeho-ponizeni> (access: 15/09/2015).

²¹ If we see the pig farm in Lety as a symbol of Czech Anti-Gypsyism, it is then the biggest memorial in the Czech Republic.

Szczurowa. Memory and Commemoration

Adam Bartosz

The debate about the Roma victims of National Socialism emerged only in 1980s, more than three decades after the end of the Second World War and the annihilation of a substantial part of this nation by the Nazis¹. Before the Roma themselves started to reclaim the memory of their tragic fate in public space, such an initiative had been carried out by non-Roma historians, politicians, activists, or simply the neighbors of the murdered victims.

In Szczurowa, a village in the Małopolska Province in southern Poland, the neighbors of the Roma who had been murdered during the war decided to commemorate them twenty years after the crime. In this village there was a settlement inhabited by more than one hundred Roma, who settled there few generations ago. Their integration with the non-Roma villagers was confirmed by a few mixed marriages: a rare phenomenon in other places. Although the Roma inhabited their own settlement in the outskirts of the village, they had formed a natural part of the local cultural landscape and had been accepted and integrated in the economic life of the community as musicians at the wedding parties, agricultural laborers or blacksmiths.

¹ The most detailed account of the process of “retrieving” the memory of the genocide of the Roma can be found in: Sławomir Kapralski, *Naród z popiołów. Pamięć zagłady a tożsamość Romów*. (Warszawa: Scholar, 2012).

Next to the Roma, there was still another ethnically different group: the Jews. They too formed an integral part of the village, having been living there for generations and having various economic and social relations with the Christian villagers. The Jewish community was more or less as big as the Roma one. There were, however, essential differences regarding the relations between the majority and these two communities. The Roma were marginalized, mostly because of their economic status. In the village hierarchy they were at the very bottom, but they were Roman Catholics. They had their children baptized in the church and the local priest was accompanying their deceased to the parish cemetery. The Jews, in contrast, were at least as affluent as the average villagers and quite a few were actually better-off than the peasants. The distance between the majority and the Jews was a consequence of mainly religious differences, which was proved by the absolute lack of mixed, Jewish – non-Jewish, marriages. But the neighborhood ties between Jews and non-Jews were stronger than in the case of the Roma: the Jews participated in the public events, had their representation in the village council and, together with their neighbors, celebrated national holidays. Besides, most of the villagers depended on the Jewish shopkeepers, merchants, and tradesmen. Contrary to the Roma, the Jews were in most cases equal partners in business and neighborhood relations.

These two communities turned out to be selected for annihilation when the Germans entered the area. But the “technology of genocide” was different regarding each of them. The Jews had been subjected to an elaborated process of dehumanization, which preceded hauling them to death camps. The Christian inhabitants of the village witnessed only a part of this process. They were spared the very act of killing the Jews, who in one day (in Summer 1942) had been herded at the market place and driven to a ghetto in the nearby town of Brzesko. The Jews disappeared from the local landscape in a stroke and, as for wartime, not in particularly dreadful circumstances.



PHOTO 1. The commemoration ceremony at the mass grave of over 50 Roma people murdered by the Nazi Germans in Żabno, photo Natalia Gancarz, 2008.

The time for the Roma came one year later, in the summer of 1943, when the Jews in the area were already almost completely annihilated. Szczurowa was one of the sites in which Roma had been murdered that summer throughout the entire territory of occupied Poland. Contrary to the tragedy of the Jews, the fate of the Roma was witnessed by the whole village to the very end.

In the morning of July 3, German policemen, supported by the Polish policemen at their command, entered the Roma settlement. Amidst the chaos of wailing women, crying children, gunshots, the attempts to resist or to escape, the Roma had been forced on the carts. The convoy went through the village, observed by the horrified peasants. There were attempts to bribe the Germans by offering them vodka, to invite the policemen to a tavern for a treat, to persuade them that the Roma are decent people, needed in the village, while mixed marriages were evoked to give the Roma spouses a chance of survival. Meanwhile, two persons had been pulled out of the carts and a child managed to sneak out of the convoy. But 93 persons had eventually been brought to the parish cemetery,

among them the elderly and newborn babies. A big hole awaited them, dug by the members of the local fire brigade. The whole village heard the shots fired by the policemen. Then the firefighters, the neighbors of the murdered Roma, were ordered by the Germans to bury their bodies. The murderers, as usual on such occasions, went to a tavern to celebrate what they perceived as their next success.

This crime deeply moved the villagers. The memory of the tragedy, witnessed by so many inhabitants of the village, was alive not only during the first years after the war (in which, we shall add, nearly all families of Szczurowa dwellers also lost some of their relatives), but the memory remained in the next generation as well. In May 1965, the local people, on their own initiative, supported by the political authorities of that time, encased the tomb of the murdered Roma with stone and placed a huge rock as a memorial next to it. The ceremony of the unveiling of the memorial was attended by the Roma from a nearby town of Tarnów, where they had settled some time ago and established their own cultural association².

The memorial set up next to the grave of the murdered Roma had the following inscription:

MASS GRAVE
OF THE 93 INHABITANTS OF SZCZUROWA
MURDERED BY THE HITLERITES
ON JULY 3, 1942³
HONORED BE THEIR MEMORY

Today it is difficult to trace the intention of the author(s) of the inscription, which does not call the victims Gypsies⁴ but “inhabitants” of the village. However, we can make some guesses. It was

² Adam Bartosz, Natalia Gancarz, *Tarnowscy Romowie. Półwiecze osiedlenia – pięćdziesięciolecie Stowarzyszenia*. (Tarnów: Muzeum Okręgowe w Tarnowie, 2014).

³ This wrong date was originally placed on the memorial tablet. It was replaced with the correct 1943 in the 1990s.

⁴ At that time the term “Roma” was not used in Polish.

communist policy to count all victims of the Nazi persecution as “Polish.” We can easily see this tendency on the graves of the Jewish victims, who have often been presented as the “victims of fascism” or similarly. In this way, by not mentioning the ethnic identity of the victims, policy created an *a priori* impression that all the victims were Polish, and obscured the nature of the German racist doctrine. It is probable that this was the case of the Szczurowa memorial. On the other hand, when one can see how deeply the tragedy of the local Roma is imprinted in the memory of the residents of Szczurowa, one would like to believe that once building the memorial to their Roma neighbors, they identified with the victims so strongly that it has been taken for granted that those Roma were simply “our fellow-citizens.” In any way, the memory of the execution, perpetuated in ceremonial speeches and in the history classes in the local school, is already cultivated by the third generation. It forms one of the elements of local historical identity.

Whatever were the motives behind the erection of the memorial, it should be stressed that this act was the first attempt in Europe to commemorate the crime committed by the Nazis on the Roma⁵. The history of this memorial is an illustration of the changing attitude of the Polish society to the preservation of the memory of suffering of the Roma as well as an indicator of the particular stages of political transformation in Poland.

In 1965, during the ceremony of inauguration of the memorial, the authorities carefully eliminated any references to religion. At the grave there was no cross, the sign that was so important for the local culture. Next to the grave of the Roma there are tombs of the soldiers fallen during the First World War and there is a cross on each of them, as on any other grave in this cemetery. But the grave and the memorial of the Roma were kept secular, according to the political trend of the time. The ceremony of inauguration was conducted by the first secretary of the local unit of the ruling

5 Two years later (1967), a tablet in Romani language, which commemorated the genocide of the Roma, became part of the memorial at Birkenau.

communist party in the company of a military guard and boy scouts. Later on, the anniversary ceremonies which took place there always had a secular character. The cross appeared on the grave of the Roma only after the fall of communism, in the beginning of the 1990s. In the same period, a new tablet was put in the footing of the cross, this time mentioning that the victims were “Gypsy-Roma”⁶.

This place has received a special meaning since 1996. In that year, the Museum in Tarnów organized the first “Roma Caravan Memorial”⁷. This project is a form of a pilgrimage and, simultaneously, a reconstruction of a traditional Gypsy caravan in which the Gypsy wagons from the Museum’s collection are used. During few days, the Museum’s caravan visits the sites related to the genocide of the Roma in the vicinity of Tarnów. The main aim of this project is the instruction of the Roma, who throughout their whole lives have no occasion to receive school education about their history and culture⁸.

Over time, a stable scenario of this pilgrimage has been formed: the route, resting stops, meetings with the local people, gatherings of the Roma in the encampment, etc. Prayers, presence of a Roman Catholic priest, and religious symbols have become constant elements that accompany visits to the sites where the murdered Roma have been buried. In addition to the religious symbolism, the organizers display Roma symbols: the flag and the anthem. A list of murdered Roma, elaborated on the basis of the registers of the deceased (*Liber Mortuorum*) kept by the parishes, is read out loud. The traditional Roma customs are usually followed as well: leaving

⁶ In Poland, the terms “Rom”, “Roma” were introduced into public space in 1984, when the Gypsy Cultural-Educational Association, which was established in 1963, changed its name into the Cultural-Social Association of the Roma.

⁷ Adam Bartosz, *Tabor Pamięci Romów/Roma Caravan Memorial*, (Tarnów: Muzeum Okręgowe w Tarnowie, 2003); Idem, „The Gypsy Caravan of Memory”, *Pro Memoria*, vol. 10 (1999), pp. 3–55; Kaprański, *Naród z popiołów*, Chapter 6.

⁸ Adam Bartosz, „Rola muzeum w edukacji międzykulturowej. Przykład Muzeum Okręgowego w Tarnowie”, ed. Joanna Horyń, *Edukacja międzykulturowa – przełamywanie barier społecznych w szkole* (Radom 2012, pp. 73–78).

lit cigarettes on the graves or drinking a glass of vodka, with few drops having been poured on the grave to please the deceased.



PHOTO 2. Roma Caravan Memorial organized by Tarnów Museum, photo Adam Bartosz, 2007.

As an outcome of the activities related to the *Caravan* in several years of its existence, the sites of the crimes committed on the Roma, which form a particular route of the genocide, have been described in a booklet which details the various forms in which they are commemorated⁹. The organizers of the *Caravan* continue to develop new forms of commemoration. In 2011, on the site of execution of 29 Roma near Borzęcin Dolny, a memorial authored by a Roma artist Małgorzata Mirga-Tas was built. In 2014, a granite tablet with names of the 93 victims was placed on their grave in Szczurowa. As for the cemetery in Borzęcin Dolny, there are plans to rebury the bodies of the murdered Roma in a more decent place, marked by a memorial.

⁹ Adam Bartosz, *Małopolski szlak martyrologii Romów* (Tarnów: Muzeum Okręgowe w Tarnowie, 2010).



PHOTO 3. The monument on the site where 29 Roma people had been murdered in 1942. The author of the monument is a Roma artist Małgorzata Mirga-Tas, photo Adam Bartosz, 2007.

Thinking of the new forms of commemoration of the fate of the Roma in the region, the organizers of the *Caravan* particularly emphasize the role of the grave in Szczurowa, which continuously receives new symbolic signs of the tragedy that took place there. It needs to be underlined that it was the first case of commemoration of the fate of the Roma and that it is probably the biggest mass grave of the Roma on the present territory of Poland¹⁰. Together with Auschwitz-Birkenau, where the Nazi Germans committed the gravest crime against the Roma nation, Szczurowa is the site around which the commemorative narrative of the fate of the Roma in Poland is being created.

¹⁰ The areas in which the Germans committed the biggest mass murders of Jews and the Roma after the Second World War were annexed by the Soviet Union and now form the western parts of Ukraine and Belarus.

A Romani Resistance Manifesto

Pierre Chopinaud

The following speech, written by Pierre Chopinaud, was given on May 16, 2015 at the Romani Resistance Day celebration in Paris. The performance took place in front of the symbolically significant Basilica of St. Denis. Commonly known for housing tombs of the royal families of France, this site was specifically chosen because it also happens to be where the presence of Romani people was first documented in France, precisely in 1427, according to the French National Archives. The author appeared on stage wearing a mask, as a symbol of what he calls Bare Life. The text that follows was addressed directly to a gigantic effigy of State Sponsored Racism personified, which was set on fire at the end of the speech¹.

Additional notes have been added for this edition.

I'd like to have a word with you to explain the meaning of what we are doing today, the Romani Resistance day. Here in front of you, I shall address the monstrous effigy standing there: the Racism of the State.

If it is with joy and pride that we show you the power residing in the gestures and voices of the musicians, singers, and dancers of the "Terne Roma" Band and the beauty of those who will follow in subsequent performances, it is not because we are duped by the hypocrisy that makes us appear beautiful as we perform

¹ The author would like to thank William Billa for his help translating the text.

in front of a world that drudgingly and begrudgingly makes us ugly day in and day out.

Seduction, among Romani people, as among other subjugated peoples, is a way to avoid being beaten by turning yourself into something pleasing to the master.

Without wanting to ruin anyone's fun, I have to confess that in any colonial imagination, exotic pleasure is the tails side of the coin of racial hatred.

The master brings the violin player into his home and the Gypsy woman into his bed or his dreams, while he sends her brother, the thief, and her son, the thug, to prison.

He explains that the fiery musician is a "Gypsy", while the human trafficker is a "Roma". These are two of the master's representations that take great delight in domination.

But to those with a good ear, a warning sound resonates: the pride, audacity, and provocation of those who have struck back without being seen. It is destiny that carries the song with the cries of the oppressed and that will ring on afterwards to the melody of *the Lorie La Armenia* and the beat of *Los Duendes del Cante Flamenco*.

On May 16, 1944, the Roma and Sinti in the "Gypsy family camp" of Auschwitz II-Birkenau rose up. They rebelled with the support of the clandestine resistance network of the camp, which comprised Jews, Poles, Communists, and, above all, the so-called *Sonderkommando* in charge of the destruction of corpses².

The "intelligence services" of that network warned them of their imminent liquidation.

Liaison officers circulated inside the camp. Some had even infiltrated that hell in order to coordinate a general uprising plan that would be implemented in the autumn of 1944.

Of this forgotten uprising only four images³ taken by insurgents remain. More importantly, they are the only images of the gas cham-

² Filip Müller, *Trois ans dans une chambre à gaz* (Pygmalion Editions, 1997).

³ Georges Didi-Huberman, *Images in spite of all, four photographs from Auschwitz* (Chicago and Longon: The University of Chicago Press, 2008).

bers that exist. The institutions who charge themselves with bearing witness to these atrocities deny the existence of these photos since, according to them, no such images could possibly exist. By holding contempt for those images, this memorial selectively neglects to remember that even amidst this horror, people resisted, fought back.

After the children, women and men of the “Gypsy family camp” had been massacred on the night of August 2, at dawn, atop the pile of corpses shown to the *sonderkommandos* charged with their destruction, was the dead body of Kaminsky, a “*sonderkommando*” himself, and leader of the clandestine resistance network.

It is to those people we wish to pay tribute today!

And that’s why, in addition to the solemnity owed to their memory, on this May 16, we are also celebrating the power of life as exhibited in the acts of those heroes.

Seventy one years later, we want to remember the power held by *Bare Life*⁴ when faced with deadly political violence, including the psychological, biological, and physical destruction of certain peoples by the state, and the possibility of the people being political.

Whether you understand it or not, the space those camps occupied has never closed for most of us.

And those who try to obscure the fact that these revolts took place by enforcing a prescriptive memory as a form of duty under the law are the ones who, in so doing, are complicit in authorizing or committing present day political crimes to be repeated in the future. Only the ability to resist will enable us to face and fight off the deadly political forces that have arisen across Europe, as the Roma did in Birkenau on May 16, 1944.

It doesn’t take long for anyone who enters a Romani community anywhere in Europe to see the political reality of European societies from a hitherto unseen perspective.

What they will see is that the political process of psychological and physical destruction – that is, genocide – has never stopped,

⁴ Giorgio Agamben, *Homo Sacer, Sovereign Power and Bare Life* (Stanford University Press, 1998).

and that a multi-faceted war with no known origin is ongoing, prolonged.

Geneviève De Gaulle-Anthonioz⁵, a member of the French resistance who was deported to the Ravensbruck concentration camp, and whose grave has recently been moved to the Panthéon⁶, explained her activism in support of Algerian migrants living in slums in the sixties as the continuity of her action within the resistance movement of World War II. She saw that the material violence perpetrated on the residents of the slums was similar to the violence she suffered at Ravensbruck.

Slums are a political product of State sponsored racism. Everything is done so that the odds are against anyone ever getting out. They are a tool for governing through racism. That's why, for the last 10 years, so much attention and political weight has been placed on pointing out how the presence of a few thousand people living in such terrible conditions is actually a peril to all of society.

Anyone who knows the details of what life is like down there, and who has also read the works of Primo Levi, for instance, cannot, without being dishonest, fail to see a comparison in many ways to daily life in a German concentration camp.

Thus, it's no coincidence that today the word "camp" is used by the media, the government and, too often, civil society to name a slum in which many Romani people live. The shantytown slum is a tool for State sponsored racism to be maintained by government administrators as a matter of good governance.

That's why the current socialist Prime Minister⁷ is being taken to court by the Romani NGO La Voix des Rroms for having publicly stated that Romani people don't want to be a part of society

⁵ Geneviève De Gaulle-Anthonioz, *The Dawn of Hope: A Memoir of Ravensbruck* (Arcade publishing, 2011).

⁶ Mausoleum of national heroes of French history, such as Voltaire, Zola and Marie Curie.

⁷ M. Manuel Valls.

for culturally specific reasons. This essentially means that, in his opinion, they are doomed to the “camps”.

Let’s make things clear. In utterances from the mouths of public officials and representatives of the State, whether heard correctly or as interpreted in rumours, the word “Roma” cannot describe, and has never described, a real flesh and blood person.

As everyone should know, there are at least half a million Roma in France: they have diverse names, vary in appearance, come in so many forms, shapes and sizes that they are indiscernible, just like any other minority in France.

Nowadays in France, however, “Roma” has become the word for “Race”.

At the State level, it is the new name attached to “immigrants,” the word used to replace “indigenous” at the time of the end of the colonial occupation.

Names are changing with time and context, but content remains. You can be sure that people targeted under the name “Roma” are being racially profiled, even if many of them have an outwardly “white” appearance. I think, in particular, of the “Travelers” who were previously called “nomads” (as a legal term). In the treatment they suffer lies the proof, if we need it, that “race” isn’t a biological reality, but a political treatment of people. The only link that exists between the concept of “race” and the flesh of people is the wound inflicted by a police force that perceives this difference racially.

Historically, genocide is the ultimate height attained by State racism. Though it targets one or more groups by racially isolating them, it aims to destroy a people as a political invention. It is a term of war delivered by the State. The opposite would be the possibility of humanity – *bare life* emancipated of any content out of the single act of its insurrection.

State racism against Romani people has a double impact. It operates first at the national level by uniting the majority white community against the peril presented by the abstract figure of the immigrant, while at the local level it spreads the deadly poison

of racial tensions among the populace in order to conjure up the emerging power of a newly created people.

That's what Romani Resistance aims to resist. That's what is at stake in this war delivered within the "Romani camps".

"The camp is the space that opens up when exception becomes the rule"⁸. This space of exception is also the highway shoulders on which migrants, trying to cross the Channel between England and France, are beaten by the police; or police stations where Blacks, Muslims, Arabs and Romani people are beaten. It is a school from which a child was sent to the police for a "crime of opinion"⁹, the State surveillance of all by the new "intelligence" law. *Bare life* is the wounded flesh upon which the State establishes its sovereignty. It has no content other than this injury. In this wound stands the destruction that is our reality, the destruction of humanity as well as its opposite: the possibility of humanity for anyone.

We expect nothing from the State, but to remove its arms, and remove itself entirely. We expect nothing from the recognition of its past crimes because what we are mainly concerned with now is survival.

We ask nothing of the State, but to disappear along with the tool it uses to root in our wounded flesh: racism. Creating multiple people held by the idea of its autonomy, it is obvious that none among us would ever need it, and we shall let this effigy die as today we make this paper monster disappear.

⁸ Giorgio Agamben, *Homo Sacer, Sovereign Power and Bare Life...*

⁹ After the Paris attack on *Charlie Hebdo*, an 8-year-old boy was arrested at school and brought to the police station because he said he supported the terrorists.

SECTION 3

Youth Perspectives

From Holocaust Remembrance to Youth Empowerment

Karolina Mirga and Jonathan Mack

On April 15th, 2015, the European Parliament decided to officially recognize the Genocide of the Sinti and Roma under the Nazi regime and to proclaim August 2nd as the Roma Holocaust Memorial Day¹. In the last few years, remembrance and recognition of the Genocide has become a key element of the Roma youth movement. On the occasion of the 70th anniversary of August 2nd, 2014, ternYpe International Roma Youth Network gathered over 1,000 young Roma and non-Roma from 25 countries in Cracow and Auschwitz-Birkenau to commemorate the Roma Genocide. Roma and non-Roma youth from all over Europe got involved and took action against right-wing extremism and Antigypsyism, which lead to a continued discrimination and exclusion of Roma in Europe.

The “forgotten Holocaust” and the long road to recognition

The Holocaust survivor Zoni Weisz was the first Sinti and Roma representative to give a speech in the German Bundestag on the occasion of the Holocaust commemoration ceremony on January 27th, 2011. He called the Roma Genocide the “forgotten Holocaust”

¹ ternYpe, *European Parliament recognizes August 2 as the European Roma Holocaust Memorial Day*, (20.04.2015). Retrieved August 4, 2015 from: <http://2august.eu/ep-recognition/>.

because it received attention only in the last few years². Today, scholars believe that at least 500,000 Roma were victims of the genocide. After the war, the Roma Genocide was denied in politics and society; there was no recognition or “reparation” and the Roma continuously experienced racist treatment by the majority of society. Following a hunger strike by Roma civil rights activists and Holocaust survivors in 1980 in the former concentration camp in Dachau, the German government under Chancellor Helmut Schmidt politically recognized the persecution and genocide of the Roma based on racial grounds in the year 1982³. Only in 2012, the memorial for the murdered Sinti and Roma was inaugurated in Berlin next to the German Bundestag. Federal German President Roman Herzog declared in 1997:

The genocide of the Sinti and Roma was motivated by the same obsession with race, carried out with the same resolve and the same intent to achieve their methodical and final extermination as the genocide against the Jews. Throughout the National Socialists’ sphere of influence, the Sinti and Roma were murdered systematically, family by family, from the very young to the very old.⁴

Since the mid-1990s, commemoration ceremonies take place on August 2nd on annual basis in the former Auschwitz-Birkenau concentration camp. On the night from the 2nd to the 3rd of August 1944, the Nazis liquidated the “Gypsy family camp” in Auschwitz-Birkenau and murdered the last 2,897 men, women and children.

² Zoni Weisz, *Speech on the „Remembrance Day for the victims of the National Socialism”* (January 27, 2011) Berlin: Deutscher Bundestag, Retrieved 20 April, 2015 from: <https://www.btg-bestellservice.de/pdf/20099800.pdf>.

³ Romani Rose, *‘Den Rauch hatten wir täglich vor Augen...’ Der nationalsozialistische Völkermord an den Sinti und Roma* [‘We had the smoke daily in front of our eyes...’ The Nazi Genocide of the Sinti and Roma], (Heidelberg: Das Wunderhorn, 1988). See also www.sintiundroma.de (access 15/09/2015)

⁴ Website of the Memorial Foundation which is responsible for the Roma Holocaust Memorial in Berlin: <http://www.stiftung-denkmal.de/en/memorials/sinti-and-roma-memorial/chronology-of-the-genocide-of-the-sinti-and-roma.html> (access: 15/09/2015).

August 2nd has become a symbolic date for the remembrance of the Roma Genocide. Originally, the SS planned the assassination of more than 6,000 Roma imprisoned in the *Zigeunerlager* already on May 16th, 1944, but this was stopped by the vehement resistance of the Roma. Over the past decade Roma (youth) organizations have started to commemorate May 16th as the “Rromani Resistance Day”⁵.

The development of the Roma Genocide Remembrance Initiative “Dikh he na bister”

A few years ago the remembrance education with Roma (youth) organizations hardly played any role. The ternYpe activists led a vivid debate since the first youth seminar in Auschwitz-Birkenau around August 2nd, 2010 (just one year after ternYpe was newly founded in 2009 by Roma youth organizations from eight European countries), regarding how much remembrance education reflects and contributes to the ternYpe mission and vision. Today, after 5 years of experience with the Roma Genocide Remembrance Initiative, the answer to this debate seems obvious.

TernYpe is a network of youth and youth associations which creates space for young people to become active citizens through empowerment, mobilization, self-organization and participation. TernYpe believes in the common efforts by creating trust and mutual respect between Roma and non-Roma youth.⁶

From its beginning, ternYpe strived to raise the voice of Roma youth in the public sphere, such as through the European Roma Youth Summit⁷, which made young Roma visible in front of the EU

⁵ <http://www.sintiundroma.de/en/sinti-roma/the-national-socialist-genocide-of-the-sinti-and-roma/extermination/resistance.html> (access: 15/09/2015) and <http://rromani-resistance.com/> (access: 15/09/2015). See also Chapter “A Romani Resistance Manifesto” by Pierre Chopinaud in this book.

⁶ www.ternype.eu (access: 15/09/2015).

⁷ ternYpe, *European Roma Youth Summit*. Retrieved August 4, 2015 from: <http://www.ternype.eu/european-roma-youth-summit>.

Roma Summit in April 2010 in Cordoba, Spain. TernYpe identified Antigypsyism as one of the root causes of social exclusion; however, young people in their daily life often struggled with the question how to challenge the stereotypes of majority society, and how to be proud of one's own identity. TernYpe, therefore, aimed to empower young people to articulate a critical understanding of society and injustice among young Roma and non-Roma. The ternYpe activist Vicente Rodriguez Fernandez explained:

For me a very useful tool is not just identity, or background or knowledge of culture, but history. History is a really nice tool to motivate youngsters. Most of the youngsters in my community are not motivated, they believe in European stereotypes about Roma people, they are totally conservators [conservative], or they are totally assimilated, but when you talk with them about history, about our history, our heritage or legacy or actual situation in Europe and a lot of countries, if you talk about the pain that we suffered, they say something is wrong, we must do something, we must study. But why must we study? Not just to improve our personal lives we must study, but to improve our people, the state of all our people. We must work creating a sense of community. Even if you work at grassroots level, but we don't use this identity sense, this community sense, the work at long-term is not working. Of course, we can use these youth strategies, like games, activities, programs and this is great and this is working. But I think at long-term, history and community sense is stronger, maybe we can mix both.⁸

The debates initiated among Roma youth activists through the Roma Genocide Remembrance Initiative in 2010 raised awareness in the ternYpe network that history and injustice may be the basis of the motivation of young people to become active for social change.

⁸ Jonathan Mack, *The social movement of Roma in Europe. Chances and problems of transnational social movement coalitions for empowerment and grassroots mobilization: The case study of ternYpe International Roma Youth Network*. Diploma thesis (Freie Universität Berlin, 2012), p. 47.

With only a few remaining Holocaust survivors and eye witnesses, in recent years the following questions became central: What is our role as Roma youth in carrying the memories and lessons for the future, through learning, exposing patterns which led to the Holocaust, and taking actions in the present against Antigypsyism and racism? Why is remembrance relevant for our own identity and a sense of self-dignity? The ternYpe network started a process to address these questions attempting to trigger a new discussion.

The ternYpe International Roma Youth Network defined the aims of its initiative as the following:

The initiative aims at raising awareness among young Europeans, civil society and decision-makers about the Roma Genocide, as well as about the mechanisms of anti-Gypsyism in a challenging context of rising racism, hate speech and extremism in Europe.

TernYpe aims to empower young Roma to have a voice to become key agents of change, and to foster solidarity among young people! We have a strong vision to make a change in Europe. As young Roma and non-Roma we believe that we can build a European culture based on respect, dialogue, human rights and equal opportunities. We advocate for a wider official recognition of the Roma Genocide in Europe and for the formal establishment of August 2 as the memorial day of the Roma Genocide.

TernYpe believes that the youth plays an important role in the process of constructing tolerant and inclusive societies, based on deep understanding of the past. That is why ternYpe's vision of the education for remembrance is to develop solidarity among Roma and non-Roma youth, through analysis and interpretation of history as a tool to evaluate and act in contemporary societies.⁹

The ternYpe youth approach was welcomed as a new and inspiring form of remembrance by young people. During the last commemorations on August 2nd in Auschwitz-Birkenau the Roma youth came up with its own answers and programs. The

⁹ ternYpe International Roma Youth Network, *Concept paper of the Roma Genocide Remembrance Initiative 2013 and 2014*. Retrieved August 4, 2015 from: www.2august.eu.

Roma youth remembrance days carried out during the last five years were welcomed for their new approach in bridging older and youth generations. While at the beginning it seemed very difficult to find Roma survivors and eye-witnesses who would share their story with the young people, suddenly since 2013 more and more survivors that would share their testimony appeared. In 2013, the Holocaust survivor Zoni Weisz, a Dutch *Sinto* who lost many family members in Auschwitz, spent 4 days with the young people from around Europe sharing his story and vision, and deeply touching the emotions of the participants.

Furthermore, in 2013, an international youth group from Albania, Macedonia, Germany and Poland made a theatre performance in the Galicia Jewish Museum about the young *Sintezza* Else Baker/Schmitt, who was deported to Auschwitz but survived. When some of the young actors returned to the “Dikh he na bister” event in 2014, it was an emotional moment to be able to meet Else Baker in person, whose story they have read and played on stage. In 2014, the French *Manouche* Raymond Gurême shared how he escaped from 10 internment and labour camps in France and Germany, and how he fought with the French resistance for the liberation of Paris. Raymond became a role model of resistance for young people, fighting even today, aged 90, with police violence and racism in France, and advocating together with the young people in the European Parliament for the recognition of the Roma Genocide. During the “Dikh he na bister” event the survivors engaged with people of different generations into a debate about the importance of remembrance and the role of young people in the present and future to remember the Holocaust, but also to act against racism today.

For ternYpe the Roma Genocide Remembrance Initiative became one of the flagship projects of the network. The importance and great impact of the Roma Genocide Remembrance Initiative were appreciated by the European institutions as it was selected one of the 27 national winning projects for the European Charlemagne Youth Prize 2011.

From Holocaust Remembrance to Youth Empowerment

TernYpe – International Roma Youth Network has brought together young Roma and non-Roma from Europe for commemoration trips and seminars to Cracow and Auschwitz for the last five years. While in 2010 only 40 young people and activists met, intensively discussing for the first time about the Genocide of the Sinti and Roma, over the years the commemoration events grew considerably - already in 2013 over 420 participants and in 2014 more than 1,000 young people came together in Cracow¹⁰.

Thus, the Roma Genocide Remembrance Initiative, which became known as the “Dikh he na bister” (*Look and don't forget*) initiative, increasingly developed from a commemorative trip and a seminar on Holocaust education into a new and unique encounter and a movement of Roma and non-Roma youth organizations from all over Europe. The volunteer-based organization of the initiative was only possible due to the rapidly emerging mobilization. Young people and youth organizations contacted ternYpe and signaled that they want to be part of the initiative. Young people from marginalized communities were involved as much as Roma students. Over the years, a wide informal network developed among over 60 Roma and non-Roma youth organizations from 25 countries.

The project opens up a new direction in the Roma movement, not only because representatives of associations and structures meet at European level, but also local activists address their concerns directly, exchange experiences and strengthen each other as part of a wider movement. For many young Roma the “Dikh he na bister” event symbolizes the potential of the youth to claim power and responsibility, to write their own history, and to advocate for the recognition of the genocide at the European level.

The network created a space of empowerment, in which young activists could feel the power and solidarity of an increasing mobilization and a bigger structure with the potential to raise a voice

¹⁰ See www.2august.eu.

among the public. Another important aspect was that ternYpe strived to involve other non-Roma youth organizations to support and advocate for the common cause, such as the European Union of Jewish Students, Youth of European Nationalities, the European Youth Forum, other international youth organizations and national youth councils. Andi Gergely, at that time President of the European Union of Jewish Students, wrote after her participation about the “Dikh he na bister” 2013:

I've held many different workshops about numerous topics in the past, and spoken in front of many different types of groups, but speaking in front of this particular group was such an honor, and was one of the most memorable experiences of my life. Speaking about the Holocaust is never easy to begin with, especially not when a big part of the group doesn't speak English. I was a bit shocked when I started to speak and I heard my words immediately repeated in four different languages as participants simultaneously translated my words into other languages so that their friends could understand.¹¹

Remembrance and Holocaust education in the social context of increasing Antigypsyism and right-wing extremism

The ternYpe General Secretary Karolina Mirga outlined the objectives and commitment as follows: “70 years have passed since the tragic events on August 2, however, the Roma face to date daily acts of violence, persecution and dehumanisation. Due to the lack of recognition of persecution in the past, we allow the continuation of a similar rhetoric in the present. For this reason, ternYpe advocates a broad public recognition of the genocide of the Sinti and Roma. We stand for the dignity of the Sinti and Roma¹².”

¹¹ ternYpe, *Documentation: Dik i na bistar 2013*. Retrieved September 15, 2015 from: <http://2august.eu/past-editions/2013-event/documentation-dik-i-na-bistar-2013/>.

¹² ternYpe, *1,000 young Europeans remember the 70th anniversary of the Roma Genocide*. Press release, Krakow (July 24, 2014). Retrieved April 10, 2015 from: www.2august.eu/2014-event/media/press-release/.

Although the focus is on learning and memory of the genocide, this is done in close connection to the present time. In workshops, working groups and conferences in the past years the question was addressed as to why the Genocide of the Sinti and Roma is still a “forgotten Holocaust”¹³, which draws little attention in the media, society and education. Young people talked about a culture of remembrance, about identity and the importance of remembering as well as about issues of justice, recognition and human dignity. Always present are the stories, experiences and questions that the young people bring to the table and which reflect the daily reality of young Roma. Workshops addressed, for example, discrimination, Antigypsyism, right-wing extremism, school segregation, illegal evictions and hate crimes. Over the years, the event turned into a social forum in which the current situation of the Sinti and Roma is discussed and, at the same time, it provides a space for empowerment, networking and self-organization. Roma and non-Roma youth organizations from across Europe exchange information about their experiences, working in their own localities against Antigypsyism and discrimination, or how they can play a greater part in society and politics.

Roma youth on the path to recognition

Remembrance and commemoration do not take place only during the international event on August 2nd in Auschwitz-Birkenau and Cracow, but also through numerous initiatives and projects developed at the local level in all countries. As part of the ternYpe “Dikh he na bister” initiative, numerous local seminars, commemorations and small documentaries were realized in recent years. Thus, young people brought the subject to schools and to their own environment. In particular, increasingly more youth groups have organized actions on May 16th, on the occasion of the

¹³ Zoni Weisz, *Speech on the „Remembrance Day for the victims of the National Socialism“...*

“Romani Resistance Day”. Remembering is increasingly perceived as a subject of local self-organization and as a tool for empowerment. Here are some examples from the fall 2014 and spring 2015:

- The partner organization *Romano Centro* from Vienna organized an international youth conference on Antigypsyism with a youth commemoration ceremony in the “Gypsy detention camp” Lackenbach on November 15th, 2014. They also organized, in June 2015, a study visit and commemoration in the concentration camp Jasenovac in Croatia.¹⁴
- The Catalan Roma youth organization *Nakeramos* developed an exhibition presented at the municipality of Barcelona and, through local advocacy efforts, achieved the official recognition of August 2nd by the local government in 2014.¹⁵
- The Berlin-based youth organization *Amaro Foro* organized a visit to the former concentration camp Sachsenhausen¹⁶, and young people of the youth organization *Terno Drom* in Düsseldorf wrote a hip-hop song¹⁷ about the theme.
- The Phiren Amenca International Network organized in April 2015 an international training for a group of Roma and non-Roma volunteers on remembrance and human rights education¹⁸. This network also built a concept of a temporary and interactive youth museum on the Roma Genocide, which was realized as well by young activists of *Roma Active Albania* in Tirana and during the “So Keres,

¹⁴ *Romano Centro magazine*, nr 81, February 2015. Retrieved July 1, 2015 from: http://www.romano-centro.org/index.php?option=com_docman&task=doc_download&gid=101&Itemid=18&lang=de.

¹⁵ „Reconocer el genocidio Gitano”, *El Digital Barcelona* (22 July, 2014). Retrieved July 14, 2015 from: http://eldigital.barcelona.cat/es/my-new-post-6583_71417.html.

¹⁶ <http://www.amaroforo.de/sinti-und-roma-die-geschichte-wach-halten-fahrt-die-gedenkst%C3%A4tte-sachsenhausen> (access: 14/07/2015)

¹⁷ Purse & T-MOE “Ihr seht was passiert” (Official Video). Retrieved July 15, 2015 from: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zFIw1Yw7jwc>.

¹⁸ www.phirenamenca.eu (access: 15/07/2015).

Europa?! Young Roma and non-Roma Claim their Space in Europe”, in the 2015 European Youth Capital Cluj-Napoca in Romania¹⁹.

- In the Czech Republic, young Roma activists of *Konexe* and *Free Lety Movement* advocate for the removal of the pig farm on the concentration camp site in Lety u Pisku, and hold monthly commemoration events there²⁰.

As a result of “Dikh he na bister”, the Youth Department of the Council of Europe included the topic of Holocaust education and remembrance as a theme in the “Roma Youth Action Plan” and developed a training manual on the genocide of the Sinti and Roma for youth organizations²¹.

At the institutional level, the Roma Genocide Remembrance Initiative has generated great visibility for the Memorial Day on August 2nd as well as for the Roma self-organizations and the youth movement. The President of the European Parliament and the Secretary General of the Council of Europe as well as a Polish Minister took over the patronage in 2014. Notably, Martin Schulz, President of the European Parliament, took notice of the increasing Antigypsyism and deteriorating situation of Romani communities in Europe:

European Integration was a response to the suffering inflicted by two world wars and, even though today’s Europe is enjoying its longest ever period of peace, I can only note with concern the current rise in xenophobia, racism and hate speech. It is therefore essential to foster remembrance of the Holocaust in all its aspects, as there can be no reconciliation without truth and remembrance.²²

¹⁹ www.sokeres.eu (access: 15/07/2015).

²⁰ www.freelety.org (access: 15/07/2015).

²¹ See: Ellie Keen, *Right to Remember. A Handbook for Education with Young People on the Roma Genocide* (Strasbourg: Council of Europe, 2014).

²² ternYpe, *Patronage*. Retrieved July 16, 2015 from: <http://2august.eu/past-editions/2013-event/patronage/>.

In his 2014 patronage address, Schulz acknowledged the importance of ternYpe's work:

The work of your organization and the purpose of your initiative, namely to raise awareness of the Roma genocide during the Holocaust, are much appreciated by the European Parliament. Atrocities such as the ones committed against the Roma population during WWII should never be allowed to happen again. That is why your committed work to keep the memory alive is so important. An official day of remembrance of the Roma Genocide will not undo the sufferings or bring back the victims of the Holocaust, but it can serve as a warning, a tribute and a lesson.

Unfortunately, even today in a modern and free Europe, the Roma are still being subject to discrimination. One of the core values of the European Union is the principle of non-discrimination and it is our duty to ensure the respect of fundamental rights for all. The European Parliament is known for its dedication to promoting and defending human rights in Europe and all over the world, and its efforts to put an end to any form of social exclusion and discrimination affecting minority groups, including the Roma.

It is therefore with great pleasure that I grant the European Parliament's high patronage to your initiative.²³

In addition, representatives of the United Nations, the European Commission, Council of Europe, the OSCE and the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance were involved in the "Dikh he na bister" initiative.

In mid-March 2015, ternYpe brought about 40 young Roma activists to Brussels, who met in small groups together in a "working breakfast" with four members of the European Parliament (MEP)²⁴. The youth presented their commitment and the remembrance initiative, as well as advocated for the official recognition of the

²³ ternYpe, *European Parliament Patronage*. Retrieved July 16, 2015 from: <http://2august.eu/events/supporters/european-parliament-patronage/>.

²⁴ Meeting with the MEPs Soraya Post, Damian Draghici, Barbara Lochbihler, Péter Niedermüller. ternYpe, *Roma Genocide Survivors and Young Roma activists meet Members of the European Parliament* (April 20, 2015). Retrieved July 16, 2015 from: <http://2august.eu/roma-youth-in-european-parliament/>.

genocide by the European Parliament. The Swedish MEP Soraya Post, who openly declares herself as Romani, initiated a resolution – as initially mentioned – which was adopted on April 15 by the European Parliament by a large majority:

The European Parliament,

Recognises solemnly, therefore, the historical fact of the genocide of Roma that took place during World War II;

Declares that a European day should be dedicated to commemorating the victims of the genocide of the Roma during World War II and that this day should be called the European Roma Holocaust Memorial Day;

whereas recognition of the genocide of Roma during World War II and the establishment of a dedicated European memorial day would thus constitute an important symbolic step in the fight against anti-Gypsyism and contribute to general knowledge of Roma history in Europe.²⁵

Perspectives

The Roma Genocide Remembrance Initiative continues on international level. Every other year, the major international youth conference “Dikh he na bister” shall take place in Cracow and Auschwitz. Great challenges remain in order to set up long-term structures, to build the educational capacity of young Roma multipliers and educators, and to find the institutional support and funding in order to facilitate the participation of thousands of young Roma in the “Dikh he na bister” initiative. However, this can be an investment for the future that strengthens Roma youth identity, youth structures and their civic activism to combat Antigypsyism. We believe that this will have a strong impact

²⁵ European Parliament Resolution P8_TA-PROV(2015)0095, *International Roma Day – anti-Gypsyism in Europe and EU recognition of the memorial day of the Roma genocide during WW II*. Retrieved 15 July, 2015 from: <http://www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getDoc.do?pubRef=-//EP//NONSGML+TA+20150415+SIT+DOC+PDF+Vo//EN&language=EN>.

on the Roma movement, and constitutes a great achievement in the development of civil society structures if “Dikh he na bister” motivates young Roma still in 30 or 50 years to remember the Roma Genocide, and to take action in the present.

For the moment, much advocacy work still has to be done to achieve the recognition of the Roma Holocaust. This means acknowledging that the Roma were persecuted like Jewish people, based on the same racial ideology, by the same perpetrators, the Nazis and their allies, and killed in the same concentration and extermination camps and by the same shooting squads. TernYpe aims for the recognition of August 2nd as the Roma Holocaust Memorial Day by national parliaments, as well as by the Council of Europe, the OSCE, the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance and the United Nations²⁶.

²⁶ August 2nd was recognized by Poland in 2011 and Croatia in 2014, as well as by the mentioned European Parliament Resolution in April 2015, which was confirmed by the European Commission, while a support is still missing by the European Council. A draft resolution in the Council of Europe failed a few years ago, and many international organizations such as IHRA, OSCE and UN still do not recognize the Genocide of the Roma as part of their Holocaust definition. Roma activists criticize the UN heavily for not involving any Romani speakers into the commemoration events for the International Holocaust Remembrance Day on January 27.

Auschwitz-Birkenau: a Must-place to Visit

Atanas Stoyanov

Auschwitz-Birkenau concentration camp is definitely not the most pleasant place to visit. Rather, it is the most terrible place I have ever been to. However, I would include it in that great list of places you must visit before you die.

I am a Roma from Bulgaria. When I was a student, we did not talk about the Holocaust. The theme of World War II focused mainly on the war: On which front were the Bulgarians fighting? Who were the opponents, and who were the allies? Bulgaria has been on both sides of the conflict and the Second World War is one of the so-called “national disasters”. The theme of the Holocaust was very superficially represented in our history books. We learned that many people were killed in the concentration camps and that “Bulgaria saved the Bulgarian Jews”. Today still every Bulgarian is proud that Bulgarian Church at that time did not allow the Nazis to take the Bulgarian Jews by trains.

The Roma people? I do not remember whether Roma were mentioned at all. In fact, coming from a country where 1 million Roma live, I must say that in Bulgarian textbooks the word “Roma” is almost absent. Although Roma are living in Bulgaria not since yesterday, but for hundreds of years, they seem as a million of invisible people. The Roma are seen as having no language, culture or history. At least, the fact that these topics are missing from our books leads to that conclusion.

For the first time I visited Auschwitz-Birkenau concentration camp last year, at the age of 27. Before that, I barely knew anything about the Roma history from that time. I had heard from my friends, Roma from other countries, about the genocide suffered by their grandparents, but it was hard to believe. I had to go in that barrack with the lamentable number 13, the so-called Roma barrack, to see the whole terror that the European Roma have experienced. I learned a lot about the tragedy of Hungarian Roma, Romanian Roma, of those coming from the Balkans, Scandinavia and from all over Europe.

Initiatives such as the Roma Genocide Remembrance Initiative should not happen only when we commemorate 70 years since that day in which thousands of Roma were exterminated in one night¹. Such initiatives have to happen at least every year. There must be movies, books, plays and paintings. Humanity should know what happened to Roma. One should see and one should remember. Roma have hundreds of thousands of reasons to remember. Thousands of names and fates killed. I must say that, while facing the death camps accompanied by other young Roma from across Europe, I felt more solidarity and pride with the Roma community than ever before. I had to learn there, in Auschwitz-Birkenau – the

¹ In May 1944, the Nazis started to plan the “Final Solution” for the “Gypsy Family Camp” in Auschwitz. The initial date for the liquidation of the “Gypsy camp” was planned for May 16. The prisoners of the camp were ordered to stay in the barracks and surrounded by 60 SS men. When the SS men tried to force the prisoners out of the barracks, they faced a rebellion of Roma men, women and children, armed with nothing more but sticks, tools and stones, and eventually the SS had to withdraw. The resistance of Roma prisoners gave them only a few additional months of life. The Nazis also feared that an insurrection could spread to other parts of the camp and they planned the “Final Solution” on August 2. On orders from SS leader Heinrich Himmler, a ban on leaving the barracks was imposed on the evening of August 2 in the “Gypsy Camp”. Despite resistance by the Roma, 2,897 men, women and children were loaded on trucks, taken to gas chamber V, and exterminated. Their bodies were burned in pits next to the crematorium. After the liberation of Auschwitz concentration camp in 1945, only 4 Roma remained alive.

concentration camp, that although coming from different countries, speaking different languages, having even different traditions, Roma share a common history. A history of hatred, which remains unwritten. A hatred that continues today.

Standing there, in the gas chamber, staring at the systematic machine invented to kill those of my kind, at that moment I was thinking of how this same hatred is so alive today: serial killings of Roma women and children in Hungary; Roma expulsions from France; segregated Roma schools in Slovakia and the Czech Republic; demolished houses of Roma in Bulgaria. I was thinking about the victory of far-right parties in the European Parliament, just two months before my visit to Auschwitz-Birkenau, in the same year 2014. Around me – a thousand of young Roma were staring at the same terrifying gas chamber and probably thinking the same.

Our task, as young Roma from all over Europe, is to solve this age-old problem of hatred, and fill niches left empty for centuries. We are the ones that have to write our own narratives on the Roma history, language and culture, because the narratives about us are single-side stories. If you are wondering where to start from or you need inspiration, I recommend you to visit Auschwitz-Birkenau and to be part of the next Roma Genocide Remembrance Initiative. It is definitely a must place to visit.

The Danger of Forgetting and the Duty of Remembering

Dafina Savič

“Those who do not remember the past are condemned to repeat it.” It was in August 2013, during my participation in the “Dikh he na bister” Roma Genocide Remembrance Initiative that I had truly understood the depth and relevance behind the words of philosopher George Santayana. Here, my horizons were broadened, but my thoughts confirmed. Within the dialogue, something crucial is brewing, there is a seemingly renewed consciousness about the imperative of remembering and the danger of forgetting.

Today, discrimination, marginalization and hatred towards the Roma are not only widespread through the media and the political spectrum, but are also widely accepted and rarely condemned.

In January 2013, a leading journalist and co-founder of Hungary’s ruling Fidesz party, published an article where he described the Roma as “animals” that “need to be eliminated (...) right now by any means”¹. A few months later, in July 2013, a French mayor suggested that Hitler “did not kill enough” Roma². Seventy years

¹ Bayer Zsolt, “Ki ne legyen?”, *Magyar Hirlap* (January 5 2013). Retrieved August 4, 2015 from: <http://archivum.magyarhirlap.hu/ki-ne-legyen>.

² Chrisafis, Angelique, “French MP accused of saying Hitler ‘didn’t kill enough’ Travellers”, *The Guardian* (July 23, 2013) Retrieved August 4, 2015 from: <http://www.theguardian.com/world/2013/jul/23/french-mp-hitler-kill-travellers>.

have passed since the 2nd of August 1944, when 2,897 Roma men, women, children and elderly were murdered in the gas chambers of Auschwitz-Birkenau, a date which became a Memorial Day of the Roma Genocide. Yet, those lessons from the Holocaust have not been learned.

In many countries³, physical walls have been built to separate Roma communities from non-Roma citizens. Roma pupils continue to face segregation in schools and are disproportionately placed in schools for children with disabilities without prior testing. Throughout Europe, thousands of Roma families live in segregated and polluted sites on the margins of society and are continuously forcefully evicted from settlements. In recent years, several cases of forced sterilization of Roma women have been recorded in the Czech Republic, Slovakia and Hungary⁴. Neo-Nazi power and ideology has resurged to the surface of European politics. In this context, incitement to violence and hate crime remains a current reality for Roma communities. In Hungary, the Czech Republic, Slovakia and Bulgaria, extremist far-right groups have organized anti-Roma marches, walking through Roma villages carrying torches and chanting anti-Roma slogans. More than 120 serious violent acts, including shootings, stabbings and arson attacks on the Roma, were recorded between January 2008 and July 2012. One of the main reasons this continues to occur is simple lack of knowledge. By allowing the Roma history, including genocide and slavery, not to be known, we are allowing for discrimination against the Roma to continue today. With the growing influence of Neo-Nazi movements taking place throughout European cities, we have witnessed in the last years the very dangers and consequence of forgetting the past. In current-day Europe, growing Antigypsyism has led to racially motivated killings of six Roma, including

3 Amnesty International, *Segregation, bullying and fear: The stunted education of Romani children in Europe* (April 2015).

4 Amnesty International, *Human Rights on The Margins Roma in Europe* (April 2008).

one child, by far-right extremists in Hungary⁵. Such widespread hatred and violence against Roma would not be allowed today, had the history of the Roma Genocide been rightfully recognized, taught and understood.

More often than not, the Roma are excluded from the very debates which pertain to their future. Despite the achievements of Roma academics, professionals and activists, the Roma remain underrepresented in all aspects of public and political life. An essential step in challenging the root causes of Antigypsyism today lies in giving the Roma the opportunity to voice their interests and influence the decision-making process which affects them directly. The “Dikh he na bister” event has given me the chance to do just that, by allowing me to make my voice, as a Roma, be heard.

As a participant in the event, I was invited to speak about my experience of the “Dikh he na bister” Roma Genocide Remembrance Initiative during the meeting of the working group on the Roma Genocide during the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance (IHRA) meeting under the Canadian chairmanship in 2013. As a young Romani woman, being given the opportunity to be included as an equal voice in discussions which concern my community was a truly empowering experience. Later, in 2014, I was honored to have the chance to contribute to the organization of the “Dikh he na bister” Roma Genocide Remembrance Initiative, marking the 70th anniversary of August 2nd.

Stigmatization of Roma and Antigypsyism are often the main causes of social exclusion of Roma communities in many countries. Being appointed the task of media coordination in the 2014 edition of the event, as a Roma, I felt it was of crucial importance to take this opportunity in order to challenge the often negative image of the Roma presented in the media. An essential step in breaking the vicious cycle of stigma, discrimination and marginalization

5 François-Xavier Bagnoud Center for Health and Human Rights and Harvard School of Public Health and Harvard University, *Accelerating Patterns of Anti-Roma Violence in Hungary* (14 February 2014).

lies in giving the Roma the opportunity to be equal partners in these types of forum, not simple bystanders and recipients of information. It is for that reason that, during the event this past year, we invited young Roma to host workshops, creating a multiplier effect of knowledge-sharing with, by and for the Roma! It is we, young Roma, that are responsible for teaching generations ahead about the history of their ancestors and the future that is possible for them.

One of the most memorable experiences throughout this event was being granted the honor to meet with Holocaust survivors. Facilitating this inter-generational dialogue and simply being able to interact with these heroes was a revelation on a personal level, but also instilled in me a sense of purpose. As a young Roma, I felt that it was not only my right but rather my duty to bring the story of my ancestors to the forefront. For the past 70 years, the stories of those who have witnessed the unfortunate history of the Roma Genocide have been ignored and forgotten; a fact, which has allowed for discrimination against the Roma to continue today. Being told the story of the atrocities of the Roma Genocide by the people who have witnessed it with their bare eyes was a life-changing experience for me. The words of Raymond Gurême particularly struck me as he said: “It is up to you, the young generation, to carry on our stories to make sure that such things do not happen again”.

This experience has not only impacted me on a personal level, but it has also greatly influenced the work and the direction of the organization I represent⁶. The recognition of the Roma Genocide has become an essential objective for us. We have since

⁶ Romanipe is a Montreal-based not-for-profit organization. Its main objective is to address the tangible human rights issues that emerge from real experiences lived by the Roma: widespread misrepresentation, prejudice, discrimination, and racism. We seek to do so by pro-actively creating opportunities for self-organization, participation, and inclusion in civil society, fighting racism and securing rights for Roma refugees to Canada is an important objective for us.

been actively working towards obtaining the official recognition of the Roma Genocide by the Canadian Government and have continued to shed light on the history of the Roma Genocide. As a young Roma living in Canada, where Roma have lead an almost invisible life for decades, being able to participate in the “Dikh he na bister” event and meeting with a wide variety of experts, political stakeholders, members of civil society organizations and fellow Roma and non-Roma youngsters from different countries, backgrounds and experiences, was a truly inspiring experience. Canada is certainly not the first country that comes to mind when discussing Roma issues, yet even in Canada the Roma have been facing increasing discrimination. With the rise of anti-Roma rhetoric in Europe, many Roma have sought refuge in Canada to escape from ongoing oppression and stigmatization. The Canadian Government’s response has unfortunately resulted in several legislative and policy instruments aiming to restrict the acceptance of Roma asylum claimants. Past statements by this government assume the Roma are not a persecuted group in Europe, depicting them as “bogus refugees” and discouraging them from seeking asylum in the country. Having recently founded not-for-profit organization aiming to challenge discrimination against the Roma in Canada and worldwide, I was grateful to be able to contribute to the content of the event and bring light to the issues faced by the Roma in Canada.

With this event, our aim is to use this opportunity in order to create a movement of people who are here to honor the past, but will use this experience to challenge the present situation. I am proud to say that we took an important step towards reaching that goal in the past year.

This past April, the work of ternYpe along with numerous Roma activists and organizations that have been fighting for the fate of the Roma to be rightfully included into European history has finally led to the European Parliament to officially recognize August 2nd as the official day of commemoration of the Roma Genocide.

This recognition is one step further in advancement of the Roma cause. However, there is a need to continue to bring heightened public attention to ensure that the Roma Holocaust becomes part of public consciousness. We need to shed light on the rising Antigypsyism in current-day Europe, which is a consequence of predominant, widespread ignorance and lack of recognition of the Roma Genocide. Now, we need to ensure that history of the Roma Genocide is rightfully incorporated in the history of the Holocaust, including all official ceremonies, commemorations and events honoring victims of World War II. We are living in a fragile time and an impressionable place. Now, more than ever is a crucial time to act against these injustices. It is only once we recognize the past that we will be able to challenge the present and move forward in the future. We must honor our duty of remembrance to prevent history from repeating itself. Let us look and never forget the history of the Roma Genocide.

“Dikh He Na Bister”.

Closing Speech¹

Anina Ciuciu

Good afternoon Ladies and Gentlemen,
Romale, Romniale, Misto arachlemtume

First of all, I would like to thank the ternYpe team, and all of the volunteers, for the tremendous amount of work they put into organizing this event taking place here in Cracow and bringing together over 1,000 people from across Europe, strengthening the cohesion of the Roma youth emancipation movement.

For the past two days, here at the Pedagogical University in Cracow, through the presentations of numerous experts, we have increased our knowledge and improved our comprehension of the tragedy of the Holocaust, which had greatly affected our recent history and which seems once again, to a certain extent, to affect our people across many countries in Europe and all over the world. I am speaking about the massive deportations of Romani asylum seekers from Germany to Kosovo for the past several years; the neo-Nazi marches in Roma neighbourhoods in Ostrava Czech Republic; the racially motivated violent attacks associated with the rise of the extreme right party in Hungary; the construction of a wall to separate the Romani ghetto and the rest of the city,

¹ This is the text of the closing speech given by Anina Ciuciu during the international expert conference “Education for remembrance of the Roma Genocide”, on 1st of August 2014 at Pedagogical University of Cracow.

followed by the destruction of homes and the expulsion of the Roma residents in Baia Mare, Romania, between 2011 and 2012. Hate against the Roma is a fact and it is demonstrated as well by the recent extremely violent attack on a young Roma man named Darius in Paris, in the context of increasing racism in France at all levels. All these examples are just some drops from the storm of Antigypsyism raging across Europe.

I have personally lived and suffered from this violence, this intolerance and this racism since my earliest childhood. I am a *Romni* from Romania and recently have become a French citizen. My family found itself in a situation that required us to leave Romania in 1997, when my parents lost their jobs due to racial discrimination. After a perilous and illegal journey, facing police brutality while crossing several borders, we arrived in Italy. There, we ended up in one of the most miserable migrant ghettos which housed hundreds of the Roma from Bulgaria, Serbia, ex-Yugoslavia and Romania but also many other poor people. This place is called Casilino 700. We spent 6 months there, which was way too long; we suffered the inhumane and humiliating conditions associated with extreme poverty. After leaving this horrible Western European settlement, far more hostile place than the Romania that we had left, we were off again on an illegal and dangerous journey toward France. In this country, which we saw as a real “El Dorado,” we also lived in misery, in dirty squats, former military barracks, or in trucks. Thanks to the help of engaged French citizens we were able to step out of the vicious cycle of poverty and start a decent life, which is what every human being deserves! My parents were then able to find jobs and my three sisters and I were able to start going to school in France. At that time I was 9 years old. School, it seemed to me since then, was the only means by which to rise above such conditions and obtain access to a life where one could become master of one’s own future. My desire to learn was fed by my aim to always succeed as best as I could, despite occasional teasing and racial rejection of school colleagues. In this way, thanks to hard work, I passed my *baccalaureate* (high school diploma)

in science with honourable mention and then decided to pursue a law degree for my university studies. This choice was not, as you can imagine, without some serious consideration on my part. The choice of studying law was dictated to me as plain as day, by my hunger for justice, the justice of which we and countless others have been deprived. Thus, my ambition of becoming a judge took form, a position from which, in my eyes, I would be able to actively promote justice, equity, and legality for all. This dream is not that far away now as I just completed my law master degree at the prestigious university Sorbonne in Paris and I am preparing for the exam to enter in the National School for the Judiciary (*École nationale de la magistrature*).

My unusual path started to attract attention in the context of the so called “Roma question”, which was taking dangerous importance in the French political and media spaces. When a journalist approached me to write my story, I agreed, sacrificing my modesty and shyness, to fight these prejudices and change the dirty image placed upon our shoulders, but also to ask the Roma to change their own perception of themselves, to have the courage and the strength to take back their dignity. The publication of my book “Je suis Tzigane et je le reste”²(I am a Gypsy and I remain) had a significant impact on the French public. I was then able to take my message across to a bigger audience, and reach people through major newspapers, radio broadcasts and national televisions. At the same time, I became a member of a French NGO called la Voix des Roms (the Voice of the Roma) in order to reinforce my engagement in a collective sense.

It was with members of this NGO that we participated in the “Dikh he na bister” meetings about the Roma genocide last year, and I became aware of the potential power of mobilization of Roma youth and the promising future it can help to shape. Following this profound and powerful experience, we have written

² Anina Ciuciu, *Je suis Tzigane et je le reste Des camps de réfugiés Roms jusqu'à la Sorbonne* (City Editions, 2013).

a book together, entitled “Avava-Ovava”³ presented this year as a part of Youth event at the stand of “la Voix des Rroms”. In this book I explained how I fully realized the magnitude of the impact of the genocide and the huge threats we face today. Coming back in this writing about what the experience was for me to discover the concrete process of extermination. I remembered that my great grandfather Latica was deported between 1942 and 1944 to Transnistria near the city of Odessa, by the fascist Antonescu government. I was then overtaken by a sense of fear not just because of the horrible tragedy of the past, but far more due to the feeling that the mechanism of the genocide is reactivated nowadays.

A few months ago, after the translation and publication of my book in Romania under the title of “Mandrà sà fiu Rromà”⁴, I was offered the title of Honorary Counsellor of the Romanian Prime Minister in charge of Roma issues. After much hesitation, I accepted the position with the intention of making the highest levels of politicians listen to our voice, our truth, our vision of the political changes we need. Unfortunately, the storm of Antigypsism will not stop if we, the Roma, continue to submit to the inferior image forced upon us by society and the social and political violence that go with it. Only by becoming strong will we be able to confront the current dangers. This strength comes through education, awareness of the history and particularly, through understanding of mechanisms that have led our European societies to genocide.

It is from this perspective that the ensemble of presentations during these two days appears to me not just lines of research but also lessons that one can learn from towards changing mentalities and practices, a change which is absolutely necessary. We, the Roma, are the only ones capable of making these changes and in particular Roma youth can be the initiators. It is our duty!

3 Anina Ciuciu, Lise Foisneau, Pierre Chopinaud, Saimir Mile, Valentin Merlin, *Ovava – Ovava* (Al Dante – La Voix Des Rroms, 2014).

4 Anina Ciuciu, *Mândră sã fiu rromã. De la Fața Luncii la Sorbona : un destin de excepție* (Editura Pandora, 2014).

Haj akana kamav te dav duma amare romença Rromanès. Rromalen, Rromnialen, Chavalen, Chejalen, amen o terne sam I nevi generacia, amen trubul te anas paruvimos. Ci trubul amen te adjukàras numaj o gajde te den amenqe vast, trubul AMEN te das amenqe vast maskar amende. Haj savore and-a jekh than te siklovas, te akharas amari istoria, Amari situacia. Amen savore, save sam Kothe, musaj, kana aresas amare khereste, te sikavas o drom o lacho amare phralen, amare phejen, amare chaven. Musaj savore te djanas thaj te sikavas kaj amen, i rromani chel sam shukar, sam zurale, sam barvale manus. Numa o yakha e averenqe dikhen amen cior, ciorà, nasul thaj bengale. Musaj te djanas sakothe kaj avilo o vaxt te usten rromanlen akana !

Te aven sasteaveste, bahtale hai barvale romale.

Thank you for your attention.

Remembrance as an Ideal of Hope

Vicente Rodriguez (Magneto)

Introduction

Explaining the influence of the Roma Genocide Remembrance Initiative in my life, both emotionally and intellectually, could be an exercise not exempt of certain difficulty. Not in vain has it been a long way to the present day, a long way for my own mind and heart, an a long way to gather together over one thousand brothers and sisters and to bring back to life the voices of our ancestors, referents and lost heroes.

Their historical times and circumstances have been the object of many different approaches, but it was here in Poland, in Cracow, where for me and for many of us young Roma, our history became understandable and, more importantly, it became an integral part of our modern identity.

This is a testimony of my perspective, not an educational example or a political opinion. I write this text as I live my life, not as an academic or an activist, but as a 27-year-old young Roma man, a young man that has been a witness of the great power of remembrance: Remembrance as freedom, as an act of challenging the chains of oblivion. Not remembrance as a political weapon, or a social engineering tool, but remembrance as an ideal of hope for all.

Where I came from

I grew up as a nerd and a very fat child, coming from a poor Roma family and with a lot of problems. Comic books and science-fiction were some of my only dreams, as was to make small clay figures, to paint, to write stories, in the middle of my early life, inside the cage of my own traumas and complexes, the little time that I spent out of my room showed me about the reality of Roma people, my people.

Neither of my parents attended school and hardly knew how to read or write. My father's business was waterproofing service in the town I came from, Alfafar, a small invisible place in the region of Valencia, Spain.

My mother was a seller of socks and all kinds of underwear in the streets. She still is. I have a brother, one year younger than me. We were all survivors in an environment of real oppression. We never understood that we were suffering racism. To hide it was always normal, what was expected. Who could imagine that to say that we were Roma would help us in something? Racism not always comes in the way of skinheads and Molotov cocktails; many times it comes as a drop of water slowly fulfilling your life with and invisible but powerful pressure.

Alfatar, my town, was a small hell for us. We were hiding from the social services, which oppressed us constantly with their promises of "integration". We were also hiding from the banks and the police menacing us with constant evictions; they still do. I face the reality of Roma people every time I come back from a seminar or a conference. In our world tragedy is the daily struggle, and as much as we try to put in front of the world the powerful colors of our collective spirit, the world insists on sending the cavalries of uncertainty against us, time and again.

There were times and circumstances when I decided to hide my identity, as my parents did or many of my relatives do. In other circumstances, I fought many debates to defend myself from the most horrible accusations; it was the time of my innocence opening my eyes to face an unkind society.

I was born under an eclipse of fear and rage, but I was lucky. Structural discrimination destroyed many of my relatives and childhood friends, back in Alfafar, back in San Roque, in the 3,000 Homes (*Las 3,000 Viviendas*) of Sevilla or similar ghettos. For my generation, prison or church were the only escapes to our struggle. Alone and naked, as we were many times, we all felt we were born to be abandoned in the wilderness of a non-Roma world, a world where we had no place.

Remembrance and Resistance

Thinking back of the time of my childhood now I realize that “genocide” was not a word in our vocabulary, neither was “Holocaust”. In fact, as we were aware of persecution, as we were living under constant oppression. Somehow we thought that was “natural” for the *Gadje* to oppress the Roma, our standards were low, our minds colonized, our hope long ago lost.

I was 23 years old the first time I entered the doors of Auschwitz camp, and I remember the calm that invaded me, as if the time slowed down as I was entering the metal doors of Auschwitz 1. I remember I separated myself from the bigger group of visitors and observed everything as if I was out of my body, understanding the clear message of that place, understanding for the first time the effect of all this on the Roma as a people, I understood the power of persecution and history in my own life, and that shaped my way of understanding everything.

The first decade of the XXI century has witnessed an increasing number of hate crimes against Roma communities and individuals; the popular acceptance of hate speech as political weapon has produced one of the most horrible decades of Antigypsyism since World War II. With the support of a generally apathetic electorate, the far right parties have grown to become a serious political force, in the case of Slovakia, Czech Republic or Hungary. The uncounted popular movements and civil initiatives against the Roma have multiplied in number and increased their visibility.

Very often the only responses of the Roma Civil Society are Facebook chains, letters of complaint or signed petitions. None of these methods create a serious reclaim to the mainstream population moral argument. Why?

A more intriguing question is how we could generate common bonds with *Gadje* population if we are not able to conciliate our own history? I think the time has come to advance, and for it we need, as a people, to look back to our recent history to free ourselves from the chains of oblivion.

Today, as I am very conscious about the terrible reality Romani people face all over Europe, as my heart and soul has been broken many times, I am still full of hope, hope for the change that will come, the change that has started here, in the “Dikh He Na Bister” event.

The Roma Genocide Remembrance Initiative has been the place where many of our elders, survivors of the Nazi horrors were able to talk and to express themselves, the place where our children were listening and learning unforgettable lessons. And if just the last of us are standing on the edge of extinction to remember the past and claim for recognition, victory will be granted, because remembrance is a more powerful tool of resistance than any atomic weapon.

We are now feeling the haunting presence of the Nazi nemesis on Europe, Hungary, Slovakia, Bulgaria, Romania, the Czech Republic, etc.

Liars, killers, demons.

But now that we remember, we are indestructible, we have learned and we are finally free. Remembrance as an ideal of Hope has been my inspiration, and I know it will become a symbol for the ones who are not yet born, the ones who will remember and resist another round in the battle for our right to exist as Romani individuals.

Epilogue:
“Keep It Up!”. The Experiences
of József Forgács, a Hungarian
Survivor of the Roma Genocide,
at the “Dikh He Ne bister” in 2014

Noemi Katona

In August 2014, over a thousand Roma and non-Roma young people came together to remember the Roma Genocide during World War II and commemorate the extermination of the *Zigeunerlager* in Auschwitz-Birkenau concentration camp. We had the honour to meet the survivors of the Genocide and some of them stayed with us during the four-day-long seminar in Cracow. I was happy to take the honourable task of contacting and inviting survivors to the “Dikh he na bister” event and to spend time with them during the seminar.

This is how I got to know József Forgács, a 79-year-old Hungarian Romani survivor. I have read that he had participated in the commemoration ceremonies of the Roma Genocide in his hometown, Zalaegerszeg, in Hungary. When I called him for the very first time and told him about the August 2nd event in Cracow, he immediately agreed to come and said that he was happy to meet young people and share his story with them. Finally, Uncle Bandi, as he asked us to call him, joined us in Cracow. It was a very special experience for all of us to meet him and to hear what happened to him and his family during World War II.

József Forgács was born in a Roma family in Zalaegerszeg, Hungary. In the fall of 1944, gendarmes and Arrow Cross' mem-

¹ The Arrow Cross Party (*Nyilaskeresztes Párt – Hungarista Mozgalom*) led a Hungarian government known as Government of National Unity between

bers surrounded the Roma quarter in Zalaegerszeg. Some of the Roma were deported to Pápa, others to Komárom. József Forgács and his family were taken to the Csillagerőd fortification in Komárom. He told us about the humiliating experiences of being transported on the train without water, food and toilets, where men, women and children were closed in together in a small crowded space. He was nine years old at the time. After arriving to Komárom, the soldiers shaved everyone's hair and put them in a huge building with hundreds of other people. József Forgács still clearly remembers the horrible conditions in the camp, where they did not get enough food and several people died every day. The dead bodies were just put outside of the building, so everyone could see every morning how many of the prisoners did not survive the night.

After a few weeks, the SS selected all men over 15 whom they found fit to work and transported them to Dachau, Buchenwald or Mauthausen camps. It was the last time József saw his father, who was deported to Germany into a concentration camp. After the second selection, the 9-year-old József was also transported into a forced labour camp in Austria. His mother and his sisters stayed behind in Komárom. Uncle Bandi recalls: "I did not really know at the time what was happening to me; day after day I had to clean the floors of that building. They gave us food only once a day, and it was either dried bread or some soup which was more dirty water than soup."²

József spent eight months working in a factory with other children. It was still very painful for him to recall how many

October 1944 and March 1945. Founded and led by Ferenc Szálasi, the party was modeled on the Nazi Party of Germany. During their rule, thousands of Jewish and Roma were murdered and tens of thousands were deported to various camps.

² Antonia, Zafeiri, "Two Survivors of the Roma Genocide share their stories," *Open Society Foundations Voices* (August 6, 2014). Retrieved October 10, 2015 from: <http://www.opensocietyfoundations.org/voices/two-survivors-roma-genocide-share-their-stories>.

children died under the horrible conditions in the camp. He clearly remembered when the Soviet troops liberated the camp. He could not believe that he was finally free and alive, however, he still had a very hard way to get home. After walking hundreds of miles together with other children, he finally crossed the Hungarian border near Sopron. When arriving to Zalaegerszeg, he was happy to find his mother and siblings there, who had also survived the war and returned before him. But his father never came back, József assumes he died in Auschwitz. The family had to face the hard reality – their home was destroyed and all their belongings were taken away. They had to build up everything from the beginning again after the war.

Uncle Bandi stayed in his hometown, Zalaegerszeg, for his entire life. He was working in a furniture manufactory for more than 40 years, got married and raised his children there. He has never received any compensation from the state for what happened to him and his family. Moreover, he had to experience further discrimination later on in his life. Therefore, he became strongly engaged in the remembrance of the Roma Genocide and in the fight against discrimination. For a long time, he has been participating in the annual commemoration event on the 3rd of November in Zalaegerszeg, remembering the deportations of Romani people from the city.

At the “Dikh he na bister” event in Cracow, he shared his story with hundreds of young Roma and non-Roma. Uncle Bandi talked to and spent a lot of time with the youth also apart from the workshops. During the seminar, he was always happy to join all activities and never ran out of energy. It was also his first time to visit Auschwitz and to commemorate the fate of many other Roma who did not survive the Genocide. Half a year after this event, I asked Uncle Bandi how he remembers the “Dikh he na bister” and what the Roma Genocide Remembrance Initiative means for him.



PHOTO 1. Uncle Bandi at the Roma Genocide Remembrance Initiative 2014, during his talk with Roma youth. [copyrights: Ludowig Versace]

Interviewer: How do you remember now the seminar in Cracow?

Uncle Bandi: What I remember the most is meeting young people. I was surprised how many of them came, that so many of them were curious to hear what really happened to us during the war. That we were deported and beaten up. I was very happy that so many young people came. I was telling my story to the youth several times, because they were really curious. And many memorable things happened to me, not just at the workshops, but also during the activities outside. People came from Germany, Cracow, [ex-]Yugoslavia, Romania, from everywhere and asked me to give an interview. I was happy about that. Because I was one of the oldest and I could tell them everything they asked me.

Interviewer: And what do you think, why is it important that you tell young people your story?

Uncle Bandi: Actually, the most important thing is that they also tell their children so that nobody forgets it. They should always remember what happened. The other reason is, as I am used to saying, that this should never happen again. It is a really bad memory, it's hard to remember what has happened to us. Because, I tell you honestly, I didn't have a childhood. And it is a painful memory, I will never forget that. That so many children were beaten up by the police, me too. It was a very bad thing. And after I came back, it was also very hard. We had a nice house, made of brick. And it was all ruined when we came back! My father had horses, coaches. He used it for trading, but nothing remained from it after we had been all deported. It was very hard.

So I was happy to be invited to Cracow, and that people came to pick me up from home and brought me to Cracow. And when we went to the death camp in Auschwitz, I was thinking about my father, where he could have been killed, buried or incinerated, or who knows what happened to him. And when we arrived there,

believe me, I started crying. It was very hard. It was hard to see what happened there. There was a lady who came and told me, "Bandi, I will show you something". And then she showed me a place and told me that it was collected there, what remained of the dead bodies after the cremation. Well, it was also not easy to see all those bones piled up in there.

And I will tell you something else. I wrote twice to the pension institute to ask for compensation. And do you know what they answered me? They told me that it was not a full year I spent in the concentration camp, so they cannot give me anything. Then I asked them how it could be less than a year. Because we were deported in the fall of 1944 and then I was taken to Austria to work. We were deported from Komárom to Austria with eight or ten other kids. And the Soviets came in 1945. So how could I not have been there for a year?

But from Cracow I have beautiful memories. I loved you all so much.

Interviewer: And how do you see the situation of the Roma people now?

Uncle Bandi: I will be honest with you about it, that there are Gypsy people, not Roma. I don't agree with saying Roma, because we are not Roma, but Gypsy.

So these Gypsy people sitting in the parliament, who see what happens to us Gypsies, that we are persecuted even nowadays and segregated from others. So why cannot they say it in the parliament, why don't they stand up, these Gypsies? But they just sit there quietly and do not even dare to raise their voice about what is happening to the Gypsies. Women and children get killed, flats are burnt down, and they pretend that they do not have anything to do with it, with these Gypsies? It hurts a lot. I wish I were at their place, then I would put things in order. But for me, it's not that easy. I just turned 80 in April.

Interviewer: I wish you all the best, Uncle Bandi! And what message do you want to send to the youth?

Uncle Bandi: So I want to tell the youth that I am grateful to them that they came and listened to us, and they asked me to tell my story. The beautiful presentation I did, what they have learned from me, they should tell forward. That's the message I'm sending them. And that they shouldn't believe what others say, that there were no deportations. Because it's a big lie. Now they could see that we were deported and what happened to us. And I'm happy that they were there and saw it. So keep it up! That's what I want to tell them.

Interviewer: Thank you Uncle Bandi.

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Authors Biographies

Carla Andrés

Graduated in BA Social and Cultural Anthropology at the Autonomous University of Barcelona (UAB). Volunteer at the Intercultural Roma Association Nakeramos (Barcelona, Spain). Volunteer at ternYpe International Roma Youth Network.

Adam Bartosz

Ethnographer and museologist, a chief director of the Regional Museum in Tarnów (1980–2012). Creator of the permanent exhibit *Gypsies/Roma History and Culture* (1990), which was the first such exhibition in the world and which is known as “the Roma museum”. Researcher of the Jewish history in Galicia. Author of numerous studies of Roma, Jewish and regional, published locally as well as abroad. He is also a creator of numerous exhibitions in Poland and abroad devoted to those subjects. A chairman of the Committee For Protection of Jewish Heritage in Tarnów as well as Tarnów Culture Association, organizer of such periodic projects as the *Galicyaner Shtetl* and *Roma Memorial Caravan*. Chief editor of annual “Studia Romologica”. Three-time scholar of US government. He teaches Roma culture and history at the Pedagogical University of Cracow.

Ethel Brooks

Ethel Brooks is a professor of Women’s and Gender Studies and Sociology at Rutgers University, and a Tate-TrAIN Transnational Fellow at the University of the Arts London. She was the Undergraduate

Director of Women's and Gender Studies at Rutgers (2012–2014) and the US-UK Fulbright Distinguished Chair at the University of the Arts London (2011–2012). Brooks has served as a Public Member of the United States Delegation to the Human Dimension Implementation meetings of the OSCE and spoke in the General Assembly hall for the United Nations Holocaust Remembrance Ceremony; she is currently a member of the US Delegation to the IHRA and its Roma Genocide Working Group. She is currently leading the Consultation Committee for the proposed European Roma Institute.

Miroslav Brož

Miroslav Brož started his career as a researcher for the Institute of Sociology of the Czech Academy of Sciences and as analyst and PR officer for several Czech NGOs. He then joined Romani Civil Society and became a founding member of the Konexe Civic Association. Since 2009 he focuses his work on the support of communities facing violent anti-Roma demonstrations and riots. He is currently the coordinator of the *Ne farme* campaign (for the removal of the pig farm in the very site of Roma Genocide in Lety, CZ).

Pierre Chopinaud

Born in Lyon (France), in 1981, Pierre Chopinaud is a writer and independent researcher, involved in topics such as contemporary art, literature and political sciences. Self-taught, he has lived since 2000 in many Romani communities in France, central and South-Eastern Europe. Current director and coordinator of the French NGO La Voix des Roms/The voice of the Roms, he aims with others to self-organised Romani communities in France in order to initiate deep social and cultural changes.

Anina Ciuciu

Young Rromni of Franco-Romanian nationalities, she lives in Paris (France) where she obtained a Master 2 in law at the University of Sorbonne, and is preparing for the National Judicial exam to become a judge. Member of the French ONG "The Voice of the Roma" she is also an activist of the European Movement ternYpe. She is also since 3rd April 2014 the honorary adviser of Romanian Prime Minister Victor Ponta in charge of Roma question. She is the author of

two books, her biography "I am gypsy and I remain." edited by City Editions and a collective book entitled "Avava-Ovava" edited by La Voix des Roms and Al Dante.

József Forgács

József Forgács was born to a Roma family in Zalaegerszeg, Hungary. On 3 November 1944, the gendarmes and Arrow Cross members surrounded the Roma quarter in Zalaegerszeg. He was nine. Some of the Roma were deported to Pápa or to Csillagerőd in Komárom. József Forgács and his family were taken to Komárom, where they were detained for a long period of time. After a few weeks all Roma fit to work were transported from Komárom to Dachau, Buchenwald or Mauthausen. József's father was deported to Germany into a concentration camp, where he died later. József was transported to Austria and was forced to work there. After the war he could return to Hungary. Forgács is currently living in Zalaegerszeg, attending the yearly commemoration event of the Roma Genocide in the city.

Sławomir Kapralski

Sławomir Kapralski, Ph.D., is a newly appointed Professor of Sociology at the Pedagogical University of Cracow and Senior Fellow at the Vienna Wiesenthal Institute for Holocaust Studies. For twenty years he has been conducting research, publishing and teaching on the Roma Holocaust and its aftermath. He is a member of Gypsy Lore Society, European Academic Network on Romani Studies, and the Editorial Board of "Studia Romologica." The author of *A Nation from the Ashes. The Experience of Genocide and Roma Identity* (2012).

Noemi Katona

PhD candidate in Social Sciences at Humboldt University of Berlin. She grew up in Budapest, Hungary, where she earned her first degree in humanities and has been volunteering at non-profit organisations. In 2010 she moved to Berlin and started to work at a social service provider for sex workers, helping primarily women from Central-Eastern Europe. In 2011 she started to pursue academic research on prostitution and sex work. In addition to her PhD research, she is also engaged in political and social activism fighting social inequality and discrimination and has volunteered in various projects in Hungary

and in Germany. She has been also supporting the organisation and the implementation of international youth events of Amaro Foro e.V. and ternYpe.

Jonathan Mack

Jonathan has a diploma in political sciences of the Free University Berlin, and currently works as political advisor at the Central Council of German Sinti and Roma. He established with various Roma youth organizations the ternYpe International Roma Youth Network in 2009, and developed the Roma Genocide Remembrance Initiative; since 2006 he supported various local, national and international Roma youth organizations to develop youth strategies and programs for the empowerment and active citizenship of Roma youth, and to combat Antigypsyism. From 2012 until 2015 he worked as the managing director of the Phiren Amenca International Network based in Budapest. In the past 5 years he worked as free-lance trainer and facilitator on issues of Antigypsyism, human rights, remembrance and Holocaust education with the Council of Europe, and various international youth organizations. He has a long time experience regarding youth policies and programs on UN, EU and German federal level.

Anna Martínez-Millán

Graduated in BA Social and Cultural Anthropology at the Autonomous University of Barcelona (UAB). Ethnographer since 2014 at the Anthropological Research Group EMIGRA (UAB) specialized in Anthropology of Education, Migrations and Childhood. Student of International Master's Program in Educational Research in the specialization of Inequalities, Research and Educational Action at the Autonomous University of Barcelona (UAB). Volunteer at the Intercultural Roma Association Nakeramos (Barcelona, Spain). Volunteer at ternYpe International Roma Youth Network.

Andrzej Mirga

Andrzej Mirga is a former OSCE/ODIHR Senior Adviser on Roma and Sinti Issues and chief of the ODIHR Contact Point for Roma and Sinti Issues in Warsaw office (2006–2013). Born in the small Roma settlement in Czarna Góra (Polish Spisz region in Southern Poland) he was the first Romani student at the Jagiellonian University, Cracow,

and later, lecturer, from 1980 till 1992. A fellow of the Kosciuszko Foundation; he taught at Rutgers University, New Brunswick, New Jersey, US, (from 1998 to 2001) and the Pedagogical University of Cracow (from 2004 to 2006). Andrej Mirga is also co-founder of the first Polish Roma association after the fall of communism and its chair between 1991 and 1995. He acted as organizer during two historic events commemorating the Romani Holocaust in 1993 and 1994 in Auschwitz-Birkenau and Cracow; and represented the Roma at the Days of Remembrance ceremony at the Capitol Rotunda in Washington, D.C., in 1995. As the OSCE ODIHR Senior Adviser on Roma and Sinti Issues, he was one of the speakers at the ceremony held on 27 January 2010 at the United Nations Headquarters in NY for the International Day of Commemoration of the Victims of the Holocaust. He served as expert at the Committee of Experts on Roma and Travelers of the Council of Europe (former Specialist Group on Roma/Gypsies, since 1996), and its chair (2003–2005); also at the Poland's Common Commission of the Government and National and Ethnic Minorities (2005–2006) and, at the High-Level Group on Labour Market and Disadvantaged Ethnic Minorities (European Commission, 2005–2007). Since 2014, Chair of the Board of the Roma Education Fund (REF).

Karolina Mirga

Karolina Mirga is a Roma youth activist, International Project Coordinator for Roma Educational Association Harangos in Poland and one of the founders and leaders of ternYpe International Roma Youth Network. Karolina led and worked on many projects dedicated to empowerment of Roma Youth on local, national and international level. Since 2010 she leads the *Roma Genocide Commemoration* project, she coordinated ternYpe campaigns *Be Young Be Roma* Campaign and the *1st International Roma Youth Summit* in Cordoba in 2010, *All in One Society* campaign in 2011 which took place in all 9 countries of the network and various youth exchanges, trainings and workshops for Roma and non-Roma youth dedicated to human rights, Roma youth activism, empowerment and mobilization. From October 2014 - May 2015 she worked as a Project Assistant at OSCE ODIHR Contact Point for Roma and Sinti Issues (CPRSI), organizing the regional Roma youth conference and expert conference in Stockholm on the topic of education about Roma Genocide in Europe.

Costel Nastasie

Director of Roma Dignity, Yahad - In Unum's (a Paris-based organization founded and led by Father Patrick Debois - (<http://www.yahadinunum.org/>)). partner in the research project on mass killings of Roma in Eastern Europe during the Second World War. He currently supervises the translation of the Romanian archives about the deportation of Roma from Romania to Southern Ukraine (Transnistria) and testimonies of Roma survivors. He also coordinates the teams during the field research in Romania and Macedonia to interview Roma survivors and witnesses of the Roma persecution during the Second World War. Costel Nastasie has already given several public presentations and conferences on Roma persecution during WWII. He has presented this work worldwide, most notably in Brussels (The Working Group on Roma Inclusion of the European People's Party), Paris (Hôtel de Ville), London (IHRA et le Institute of Holocaust Education), Rochester, NY (Teacher Seminar, Nazareth College) and Miami (Roma Church Temple).

Karen Polak

Karen Polak is a historian and educator. She has worked for over 20 years at the Anne Frank House. Currently she coordinates a project supported by the European Commission to develop an online learning tool on antisemitism and other forms of discrimination in seven European countries (see: www.storiesthatmove.org). She is a member of the Dutch delegation to the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance (IHRA) and chairs the IHRA committee on the genocide of the Roma.

Vicente Rodriguez Fernandez

Vicente Rodriguez Fernandez (Alfajar,1988), AKA Magneto, is self-taught through Comic books, the Bible and Rock 'n' Roll lyrics. For the last 5 years he has been involved in Roma activism as member of ternYpe International Roma Youth Network and as founder of the Yag Bari movement. He has published several articles and regularly participates in digital media as a blogger. As a contemporary artist, he has collaborated several times with other Roma artists in creative initiatives; his dedication to the Roma cause is completely vocational. During 2014, he co-founded "A Long Way To Justice" together with Bekah Ward, embarking on a journey through 17 countries and visit-

ing Roma families, starting the trip in the tip of Spain and finishing in the New Delhi Gandhi memorial. He lives in Brooklyn where he is developing the “RomaPop” initiative, seeking to use Pop Culture for human rights education as well for advocating for Roma rights.

Dafia Savič

Dafina Savič is the Executive Director and Founder of Romanipe, a Not-for-Profit Organization based in Montreal, Canada seeking to fight discrimination against Roma in Canada and abroad. Dafina holds a Bachelor’s Degree in Political Science from McGill University and is looking to pursue her studies in the field of Human Rights Law. Particularly interested in issues of immigration and human rights, Dafina worked in diverse environments, whether in NGOs or international consulting firms in Quebec. Throughout her studies, Dafina worked as a Desk Officer for the Media Monitoring Project of the Montreal Institute for Genocide and Human Rights. In 2012, Dafina was a selected Fellow for the OHCHR Minority Fellowship Programme where she presented the issues faced by Roma communities in Canada and across Europe. Currently, Dafina is working as a project coordinator and settlement worker for a local School Board in the Montreal region. The aim of the project is to develop measures and resources to facilitate the educational process of migrant children in Canada.

Atanas Stoyanov

Roma (28) from the Burgudzhii group of Northern Bulgaria whose traditional craft is knife-making. Stoyanov holds Bachelor’s degrees in Public Administration and Primary Pedagogy with English. His professional experience includes various positions for a number of Roma NGO’s in Bulgaria and abroad as well as teaching at primary schools in Bulgaria and the Netherlands. Currently Atanas Stoyanov is an elected Municipal Councillor at the Municipality of Strazhitsa in Bulgaria and he is completing his Master degree in Public Policy at the Central European University in Budapest, Hungary.

Marcin Szewczyk

Linguist, European studies and media expert, romologist. Scholarship holder of the Jean Monnet Doctoral Grant. Dr habil (postdoctoral) in social studies/political science at the Nicolaus Copernicus University

in Toruń, topic: *The European Union and Roma. System towards ethnic culture* (2015). PhD in humanities/literary science at the University of Łódź, topic: *Institutional Conditions of Programme Structures in the Nationwide Television in Poland in the Context of the European Integration* (2002). Associate professor at the University of Information Technology and Management in Rzeszów, director of the Regional Centre for the International Debate (2013 Łódź, since 2014 Gorzów Wielkopolski), manager of the European Documentation Centre in Łódź (2009–2014), manager of the Regional Centre for the European Information in Łódź (2000–2012). Author of the book: *Unia Europejska i Romowie. System wobec kultury etnicznej*, Muzeum Okręgowe w Tarnowie, Tarnów 2013 [The European Union and Roma. System towards ethnic culture] and numerous scientific publications in scientific journals and monographs in the field of European studies, philology, media studies, romology, Creates a scientific blog „Nie *pa Romanes* ale o Romach”.

Mikhail Tyaglyy

Research associate at the Ukrainian Center for Holocaust Studies (UCHS) in Kiev and managing editor of the scholarly journal *Голокост і сучасність. Студії в Україні і світі* (Holocaust and Modernity. Studies in Ukraine and the World) published by the UCHS. He authored the book on the Holocaust in the Crimean peninsula (published in 2005). His articles on the Nazi anti-Semitic propaganda in Ukraine and on the Nazi persecution of the Soviet Roma appeared in *Holocaust and Genocide Studies* and other academic journals. Currently he is working on the book on the anti-Roma politics in the Ukraine occupied by the Nazis.

Andrej Umansky

Andrej Umansky is a Research Associate and Board member of Yahad – In Unum, a Paris-based organization founded and led by Father Patrick Debois, that seeks out and interviews witnesses to mass executions of Jews and Roma in Eastern Europe, so as identify each murder site and mass grave (<http://www.yahadinunum.org/>). Having received Master's degrees in Law and History, Umansky is currently a Ph.D. candidate at the University of Picardie, Amiens, France and at the University of Cologne, Germany, where he is also a Research Assistant at the Institute for Criminal Law and Criminal Procedure.

Zoni Weisz

Johan – known as Zoni – Weisz was born in The Hague on 4 March 1937. On 16 May 1944 the entire Weisz family was arrested by Dutch policemen and taken to the Westerbork transit camp, but Zoni escaped this round up because he happened to be staying with his aunt in the neighbouring village. On 19 May 1944, 246 people labelled as “gypsies” were deported by train to Auschwitz-Birkenau in locked cattle wagons. Only 31 of them survived the war. Zoni spent the last year of the war hiding in forests and with farmers. His mother and siblings were murdered in the gas chambers of Auschwitz-Birkenau in the night of 2–3 August, his father was killed in Mittelbau-Dora. Only in the mid-1990s was he able to speak in public about the loss of his family and about the fate of Sinti and Roma in the Second World War. On 27 January 2011 Zoni Weisz became the first representative of Sinti and Roma to be invited to address the German Bundestag.

Editors Biographies

Esteban Acuña C.

Esteban Acuña C. is a doctoral candidate and research fellow at the Cultures of Mobility in Europe (COME) research group at Freiburg University. His interests include displacement, ethnicity, race, violence, discrimination and development. His work incorporates insights from Romani Studies, Border Studies, Mobilities, Migration Studies, Displacement and Refugee Studies. He studied a B.A. in anthropology at the National University of Colombia and an M.A. in cultural anthropology and development sociology at Leiden University. When not working on these matters, Esteban also engages as a volunteer.

Anna Mirga-Kruszelnicka

PhD candidate in Social and Cultural Anthropology at the Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona (UAB, Spain). She holds an MA in European Integration at UAB and an MA in Comparative Studies of Civilizations at the Jagiellonian University in Cracow (UJ, Poland). Roma rights activist, fellow-founder of the Roma Educational Association “Harangos” (Poland) as well as of the Roma Youth Association “Ternikalo XXI” (Spain), both members of the ternYpe International Roma Youth Network. Co-author of the study “Lost in Action? Evaluating the 6 years of the Comprehensive Plan for the Gitano Population in Catalonia” and author of numerous articles. Between 2013 and 2015 she was an Open Society Foundations Roma Initiatives Fellow, conducting a comparative study of Roma associative movements in various countries of Latin America and Europe. During 2014 “Dikh he na bister” events

she was the coordinator and organizer of the international expert conference “Education for Remembrance of the Roma Genocide”, co-hosted by ternYpe and Pedagogical University of Cracow. Member of the Alliance for the European Roma Institute (ERI).

Piotr Trojański

Dr. Piotr Trojański is a historian, an Assistant Professor at the Institute of History of the Pedagogical University of Cracow; a lecturer at the Center for Holocaust Studies at the Jagiellonian University; an academic advisor for the International Center for Education about Auschwitz and the Holocaust and a director of postgraduate studies on “Totalitarianism – Nazis – Holocaust”. He specializes in modern Jewish history, history didactics and especially Holocaust education. He is a member of the Polish delegation to the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance and a former member of the International Auschwitz Council.

Appendix

Conference Agenda

International expert conference „Education for Remembrance of the Roma Genocide“ Krakow, Poland: July 31-August 1, 2014

Outline

The international expert conference brings together 80 experts, stakeholders and educational multipliers of Roma and non-Roma (youth) organizations in order to discuss strategies for Holocaust memorial days, to review educational approaches and materials and to share successful practices and educational tools. This conference is based on the need to raise awareness about the Roma Genocide, which is still not recognized in many countries and in formal and non-formal educational institutions, and to strengthen the educational value and real meaning of memorial events especially for a generation of young Roma and non-Roma.

ternType follows a strategy to raise the involvement and engagement of Roma youth in commemoration and remembrance of the Roma Genocide, and it addresses the question what role the young generation will take, what lessons it will learn and how it is important for the identity in Roma communities. Moreover, the conference aims to create synergies and cooperation between researchers, experts, journalists, educational decision-makers and educational multipliers and trainers, especially from Roma and Roma youth organizations.

Aims and objectives

- Develop strategies to strengthen the involvement of young Roma and non-Roma in Holocaust memorial days, especially around the Roma genocide, and to strengthen Roma communities, youth groups and organizations to develop their practices with an educational value and real meaning;
- Build the capacity of educational multipliers and Roma and non-Roma organizations, working on the education and remembrance of the Roma genocide, in order to improve their educational work and practices;
- Raise and address questions of the role of young people in commemoration and remembrance, in a time with less and less survivors; and in particular the role of Roma Youth in their communities and the relevancy of the Holocaust on the Roma identity;
- To engage governments, educational leaders and decision-makers to raise their awareness about the Roma genocide, and to support educational and remembrance practices in the respective countries.

Long-term outcome

The project aims to produce as an outcome an educational and interactive online platform, and an “Educational Suitcase” for Holocaust Education of young Roma and non-Roma in order to spread tools and strategies in the education and remembrance about the Roma Genocide. The platform targets young people, activists, and young multipliers working in Roma and non-Roma (youth) organizations on Holocaust and Human Rights Education. The project builds on the results and experiences of other institutions working on educational materials regarding the Holocaust and Roma Genocide, and it involves the partners and experts during a one-year lasting process assuring the quality development of the educational results.

Organizers and supporters

The project is organized by ternYpe International Roma Youth Network and Roma Educational Association Harangos in cooperation with the Institute of History of the Pedagogical University of Krakow.



The event takes place under the auspices of the Secretary General of the Council of Europe, Mr Thorbjørn Jagland and the Honorary Patronage of the President of the European Parliament, Mr. Martin Schulz. Moreover, patronage was granted by the Ministry of Administration and Digitalization of the Republic of Poland, the Polish Institute of National Remembrance, the Malopolska Wojewod, as well the Mayor of the City of Krakow.



The project is supported by the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance, the Youth Department of the Council of Europe, the Europe for Citizens Programme of the European Commission, the Foundation for Polish-German Cooperation, the Ministry of Administration and Digitalization of the Republic of Poland, and the Open Society Foundations.



Program

THURSDAY, JULY 31ST, 2014**09:00–09:30****Opening speeches**

Prof. Michał Śliwa, Rector of Pedagogical University
Anna Okońska-Walkowicz, Plenipotentiary of President
of Krakow City, responsible for social policies
Lina Papamichalopoulou, Head of Unit Non-discrimination
Policies and Roma Coordination, DG Justice,
European Commission
Aurora Ailincăi, Head of Strategic Partnerships Unit,
Roma Team, Council of Europe
Soraya Post, Member of the European Parliament (tbc)
Rita Izsak, UN Independent Expert on Minorities
Karolina Mirga, ternYpe International Roma Youth
Network

09:30 – 10:00**Introduction: Key-note speeches: Importance
of Roma Holocaust education and remembrance**

Prof. Sławomir Kaprański, Pedagogical University of
Krakow; Senior Fellow, Vienna Wiesenthal Institute for
Holocaust Studies, *Remembering Roma Holocaust: from
silence and fear to empowerment and pride*
Andrzej Mirga, independent expert, *Roma Genocide:
challenges and opportunities in commemorating and
teaching about horrors of the past*

10:00 – 11:15**PANEL 1: Awareness and research about the Roma
Genocide in the World War II**

Mikhail Tyaglyy, *Ukrainian Center for Holocaust Studies*,
The persecution of Roma in Ukraine and other former
Soviet countries,
Andrzej Umansky and Costel Nastasie, *Yahad in Unum*,
Research in Romania and Transnistria
Dr. Piotr Trojański, *Pedagogical University in Krakow*,
IHRA Project “Multi-year work plan on killing sites”
Michał Kalisz, *Branch Office of Public Education of the
Institute of National Remembrance in Rzeszów (IPN)*, The
extermination of the Roma population in the Rzeszów
region in the years 1939–1944

Zdzisław Jurkowski, *Institute of National Remembrance (IPN)*, Investigation of the Committee of Prosecutors of Nazi crimes against Roma

Dagmara Mrozowska, *Jagiellonian University in Krakow*, Roma and Sinti in the Auschwitz II – Birkenau concentration camp

Moderation: Anna Mirga, PhD candidate – Autonomous University of Barcelona, ternYpe International Roma Youth Network

11:15–11:30

COFFEE BREAK

11:30–13:00

WORKSHOPS 1: Awareness and research about the Roma. Genocide in the World War II

Group 1: Roma Genocide in Serbia and Croatia/ camps where Roma were killed, Dragoljub Acković

Group 2: Local historical research with testimonies and archives, Mikhail Tyaglyy , Ukrainian Center for Holocaust Studies

Group 3: Collecting testimonies in Roma communities, Andrej Umansky and Costel Nastasie, Yahad in Unum

Group 4: The Significance of the Roma genocide for young people in today's Europe, dr. Piotr Trojański

Group 5 Biographies and images of Roma. The Fate of Roma and Sinti during the Holocaust, Karen Polak

13:00–15:00

LUNCH BREAK

15:00–16:30

PANEL 2: Memorial days, commemoration and recognition. How to bring meaning into memorial days?

Prof. Ethel Brooks, *Rutgers University*, International recognition and commemoration

Dragoljub Acković, *Deputy Director, Office for Human and Minority Rights, Government of Republic of Serbia*, Impact of Roma genocide in literary production

Miroslav Brož, *Konexe* Struggle for removal of the pig farm from the site of Romani genocide in Lety u Písku, Czech Republic

Adam Bartosz, *Regional Ethnographic Museum in Tarnów*, International Roma Caravan of Memory

Andi Gergely, European Union of Jewish Students

Emran Elmazi, ternYpe International Roma Youth Network/ Amaro Drom

Moderator: Adriatik Hasantari, Phiren Amenca Network / Roma Active Albania

16:30–16:45

COFFEE BREAK

16:45–18:00

WORKSHOPS 2: Memorial days, commemoration and recognition

Group 1: Remembering the Genocide of Roma and Sinti: The Role of the European Roma Institute, Prof. Ethel Brooks

Group 2: 16th of May – Romani Resistance Day : The danger of beeing a victim, La Voix des Rroms / ERGO Network, Saimir Mile and Pierre Chopinaud

Group 3: “Caravan of Memory” and other educational and archival activities of the Regional Ethnographic Museum in Tarnów, Adam Bartosz and Natalia Gancarz

Group 4: Memorial days, remembrance and identity, Dr. Sławomir Kapralski, Pedagogical University

Group 5: Memorial days and commemoration - sharing from the Jewish perspective, European Union of Jewish Students, Andi Gergely

FRIDAY, AUGUST 1ST, 2014

09:00–09:30

Introduction of the day

Dafina Savić, *ternYpe International Roma Youth Network*, Introduction of the day

Valeria Sauchankava, *Advisory Council on Youth, Representative of the Statutory Bodies of the youth sector in the Council of Europe*, Launch of the handbook “Right to remember?”

09:30–11:00

PANEL 3: Roma genocide and Holocaust education. Experiences, methodologies and educational tools

Tatjana Perić, *Deputy Chief of the OSCE ODIHR Contact Point on Roma and Sinti Issues*, Teaching about Roma and Sinti genocide in the OSCE area

Ellie Keen, *human rights activist and author of ‘Right to Remember’ (Council of Europe)*, Right to Remember: who, what, why and how?

Prof. Gerhard Baumgartner, researcher and author of the teaching materials “The Fate of European Roma and Sinti during the Holocaust”

Karen Polak, IHRA, Best practices and new strategies through online tools

Teresa Wontor-Cichy, Auschwitz Museum – Holocaust education in historical places and museums

Karolina Mirga, ternYpe International Roma Youth Network

Moderator: Esteban Acuña, Freiburg University

11:00–11:30

COFFEE BREAK

11:30–13:00

WORKSHOPS 3: Roma genocide and Holocaust education. Experiences, methodologies and educational tools

Group 1: Consultation on ternYpe interactive, educational online platform, Karolina Mirga

Group 2: Holocaust education in historic places and museums, Auschwitz Museum, Teresa Wontor-Cichy

Group 3: Teaching materials “The Fate of European Roma and Sinti during the Holocaust”, Prof. Gerhard Baumgartner

Group 4: Using Human Rights to Remember, Ellie Keen

Group 5: Video testimonies in Education – using testimonies of the USC Shoah Foundation, Narcisz Vida, Zachor Foundation

13:00–15:00

LUNCH BREAK

15:00–16:00

CLOSING SESSION: Education for remembrance

Vicente Rodriguez, ternYpe International Roma Youth Network

Anina Ciuciu, Honorary Adviser of The Romanian Prime Minister Victor Ponta on Roma issues and member of French NGO “La Voix des Roms”

Closing plenary with observers and participants of the meeting

Conference Workshops

Workshop Session 1: Awareness and research about the Roma Genocide in the World War II

Group 1: Roma Genocide in Serbia and Croatia

Facilitator: Dragoljub Acković

The workshop will present a minimum 6 and maximum 10 concentration camps where Roma were killed in the former Yugoslavia – camps in Serbia: Banjica, Sajmište, Crveni krst, Zemun, Šabac, scaffold Jabuka, Jajinci, scaffold Arapova valley near Leskovac and in Croatia – camp Jasenovac, Kraplje and execution Uštica, Gradina, Mlaka. Some remarks to camps in Slovenia will also be presented. This is the best way for young people to be informed about the suffering of Roma during the World War II. They can hear about the facts that they did not have the opportunity to hear.

Group 2: Nazi policies and the mass murder of the Roma in the occupied Soviet Union, 1941–44

Facilitator: Mikhail Tyaglyy

The fate of the Roma in Nazi-occupied USSR will be discussed. We will provide a basic outline of the Nazi campaign of extermination vis-à-vis the Roma, then explore whether different branches of the Nazi authorities treated the Romani minority differently. We will consider the attitudes of the local non-Romani population and the effect they might have. Generally, the workshop will assess the current state of knowledge and pinpoint the aspects that warrant further research.

Group 3: Collecting testimonies of Roma communities in Romania and Transnistria

Facilitators: Andrej Umansky and Costel Nastasie

The associations Roma Dignity and Yahad – In Unum work to combat discrimination through public education regarding the destiny of the Roma people, yesterday, today and tomorrow. The workshop will present the projects and researched conducted in the framework of this project in Transnistria and Romania, through collecting testimonies among Roma communities.

Group 4: Significance of the Roma genocide for young people in today's Europe**Facilitator: Dr. Piotr Trojański**

The aim of the workshop is to reflect on and discuss the content and methods of working in the field of promotion the knowledge about the Roma genocide in the Roma community and beyond. The role of the seminar participants will then be multiplying the knowledge on this subject in their own environments and communities.

Group 5: Biographies and images of Roma: The Fate of Roma and Sinti during the Holocaust**Facilitator: Karen Polak**

Two recent websites present the history of the genocide through personal stories. What do biographies tell us? And which images do we use when we present the history of the persecution of Roma and Sinti? The point of departure will be a close look at one historical photograph taken from the website, leading to a more general introduction on how we can read images. The second part of the workshop is dedicated to life stories of Roma and Sinti and how we relate to them.

Workshop Session 2: Memorial days, commemoration and recognition**Group 1: Remembering the Genocide of Roma and Sinti: The Role of the European Roma Institute.****Facilitator: Ethel Brooks**

Participants will receive a brief insight into the plans of the new pan-European initiative which seeks to support Roma intellectuals and activists and their non-Roma peers to produce and disseminate a positive image of Europe's largest minority through artistic, cultural and educational means. The workshop will offer an opportunity to reflect and comment on the endeavor in its consultation phase. Specifically, we will explore the ways that participants can become stakeholders of the Institute through ongoing and new work to commemorate the Genocide of Roma and Sinti.

Group 2: 16th of May – Romani Resistance Day: The danger of being a victim**Facilitators: Saimir Mile and Pierre Chopinaud**

For the first time in 2010, “La Voix des Rroms” celebrated the date of the 16 May 1944, day of the uprising of the camp for ‘Gypsy’ families in Auschwitz-Birkenau. The organization of the event has been motivated by the actual situation of political violence in both words and deeds (racist speeches and evictions from housing, expulsions from the territory...) directed against Roma migrants and traditional French Roma groups, Manouches, Sinti, Travellers. First of all, the celebration aimed to set against this violence the symbol of the unknown historic Roma resistance in order to change the image of Roma in public opinion and also to encourage communities to follow the example of their elders to organize themselves and defend today the civic rights.

Back from Dik i Na Bistar 2013, some of the stakeholders of “La Voix des Rroms” started to write a book pointing out Roma heroism, reflecting the genocide mechanism, with the clear intention to develop in the European public space a new image of the Romani Resistance.

Group 3: „Caravan of Memory” and other educational and archival activities of the Regional Ethnographic Museum in Tarnów**Facilitators: Adam Bartosz and Natalia Gancarz**

The workshop will present the variety of projects implemented by the Regional Ethnographic Museum in Tarnów. The participants will be shown clips, films and presentations and will be invited to discuss these projects. Participants will also be presented with the publications of the Museum and the author of the most recent publication will present her work on the Roma Genocide and invite the participants to discuss it.

Group 4: Memorial days, remembrance and identity**Facilitators: Prof. Sławomir Kapralski**

We will discuss first why and when do we need memorial days. Then we will analyze the relation between different forms of memory and practices of remembrance to introduce the problem of authenticity of memory and multiplicity of Roma memories. Finally, we will discuss the relation between history and Roma identities, using Roma political movement as an example. We will deconstruct the anti-Roma stereotype of Roma

as non-historical peoples and analyze the process of reclaiming history as a part of the political empowerment.

Group 5: To the Future: Holocaust commemoration in our Generation. Case studies from Jewish student unions

Facilitator: Andi Gergely

In this workshop, we will look at several programs currently developed and conducted by young Jews in the world today, and discuss what we can learn about the young generation's approach towards Holocaust education and commemoration. This workshop will also introduce peer education, which characterizes the programs of independent, student-run Jewish student and young adult organizations in Europe, as an important educational approach for engaging 20–35 year-olds. Finally, we will also discuss how to further encourage and support initiatives and contributions of young people in the field of Holocaust education and commemoration.

Workshop Session 3: Roma Genocide and Holocaust Education. Experiences, methodologies and educational tools

Group 1: Consultation on ternType educational online platform on the Roma Genocide

Facilitator: Karolina Mirga

This workshop invites experts related to Roma genocide education and multipliers of youth organizations to a consultation about an online educational platform on the Roma Genocide, which ternType aims to develop from September 2014 until April 2015. The online platform aims to enhance education and remembrance of the Roma genocide on the grassroots level around Europe based on new online tools, as well as online educational activities and remembrance events around memorial days involving young Roma and non-Roma. The platform shall give visibility to genocide stories from the local level, as well as practices and actions of (Roma) youth organizations.

Group 2: Holocaust education in historic places and museums, the case of Auschwitz Museum

Facilitator: Teresa Wontor-Cichy

This workshop will present the existing archival documentation in Auschwitz-Birkenau which illustrates the process of Roma genocide in this

camp. The presentation of the archives will be complemented by a presentation of the existing artwork of the prisoners of the camp. During the workshop we will also present the existing memorial places of the Roma genocide in the premises of the Museum and speak about methodologies of education through these memorial sites. Especially the workshop will concentrate on the exhibition in block 13 titled “The Genocide of European Roma” and the monument commemorating the Roma, erected in the Birkenau camp, in the section BIIE where the “Gypsy camp” used to be.

Group 3: “The Fate of European Roma and Sinti during the Holocaust”

Facilitator: Prof. Gerhard Baumgartner

This workshop aims to explore the elements of marginalization and persecution of Roma already present in European society before the Nazis came to power, as well as to describe the different elements of anti-Roma sentiments and prejudices in Interwar Europe, the internal dynamics of Nazi persecution.

Group 4: Using Human Rights to Remember

Facilitator: Ellie Keen

The workshop will explore the possibilities for using human rights to strengthen messages about the Roma Genocide – and to link remembrance education with antigypsyism today. We will look briefly at the history and context of the international human rights framework, making links with the Genocide – both before and in the immediate aftermath. And we shall work on crafting ‘messages’ which bring out these links and which can be used to strengthen advocacy efforts in combating antigypsyism and in ensuring a genuine ‘remembrance’ of past history.

Group 5: Video testimonies in Education – using testimonies of the USC Shoah Foundation

Facilitator: Narcisz Vida

The workshop is built around the Visual History Archive of the USC Shoah Foundation, its activities, features and components of video testimonies. The workshop focuses on what we can learn from the interviews, what teachers and students can use the interviews for, how we can use the testimonies in the classroom. It provides methodological help for educators who would like to experiment with personal history through video testimonies in their classroom.

Photos



PHOTO 1. Author: Frank Roosendaal
Roma Holocaust survivors from Transnistria – Ion Dobrin and Nicolae Fistogeanu – during their meeting with the Roma youth. Cracow, 2014.

PHOTO 2. Author: Frank Roosendaal
Roma Holocaust survivor Rita Prigmore shares her wartime experiences with the Roma youth. Cracow, 2014.





PHOTO 3. Author: Ludowig Versace

Roma and non-Roma participants meet Roma Holocaust survivors and senior Roma activists in an inter-generational exchange. Cracow, 2014.

PHOTO 4. Author: Frank Roosendaal

Roma youth activists pose for a photo with Roma Holocaust survivor Raymond Gurême. Cracow, 2014.





PHOTO 5. Author: Artur Çonka/UnFrame
"Dikh he na bister" participants arrival to the Auschwitz-Birkenau concentration camp on August 2nd,2014.

PHOTO 6. Author: Márton Neményi
"Dikh he na bister" participants on their way to the official commemoration ceremony at Auschwitz-Birkenau concentration camp on August 2nd,2014.





PHOTO 7. Author: Artur Çonka/UnFrame

Roma Holocaust survivors – Rita Prigmore, Raymond Gurême and József Forgács - walk through at Auschwitz-Birkenau concentration camp, followed by Roma and non-Roma youth.

PHOTO 8. Author: Artur Çonka/UnFrame

Roma Holocaust survivor Ion Dobrin listens to the guided tour of the Auschwitz-Birkenau concentration camp.





PHOTO 9. Author: Artur Çonka/UnFrame
Roma youth wear armbands with brown triangles – a symbol of Roma prisoners during the war - upon arriving to Auschwitz-Birkenau concentration camp.

PHOTO 10. Author: Márton Neményi
Youth during the Youth Commemoration Act of the Roma Genocide at the Crematorium V. at Auschwitz-Birkenau concentration camp on the 2nd of August, 2014. Sitting on the chair is Roma Holocaust survivor József Forgács.



