

From Transnational to Local Remembrance: European Roma Genocide Memory and the Commemoration of *Samudaripen* in Lithuania

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Paper Presented at the 2021 ASN World Convention, 5-8 May 2021

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Studies of Holocaust remembrance in Central and Eastern Europe rarely pay attention to a recent phenomenon—the rapid increase in Romani memorial practices in this part of the world. This is partly because Holocaust remembrance studies still tend to treat the Holocaust as a monumental trauma, and the experiences and memorialization practices of minority groups, including the Roma, are often overlooked. However, a look at the recent activities by Roma communities suggests that various Romani groups are mobilizing their memories of genocide to change the European memoryscape and attempting to transform the cultures of societal exclusion and discrimination they face in Central and Eastern Europe. This paper will trace the formation of a memory culture focused on the commemoration of the Roma Holocaust in Europe in general and in Lithuania in particular, paying attention to both grassroots memory practices and activists as well as the influence of national and international actors. Although Lithuania's Roma community was severely affected by the Holocaust (it is estimated that every third Roma was killed), this case has not yet attracted much attention from scholars who focus on Roma remembrance practices. Theoretically, it draws on a growing body of literature that explores transnational memories and their groundedness in local contexts. By tracing the interaction between the Roma and Jewish communities in Lithuania, it shows how the formation of this memory culture is not just a top-down process associated with the transnational European memory of the Roma genocide, but one that is enabled and shaped by local actors.

Keywords: transnational memory; transcultural memory; Roma genocide; Lithuania

Introduction

A resolution to commemorate the Roma genocide passed by the European Parliament in 2015 is considered a major development in Holocaust memorialization. This resolution recognized that the genocide of Roma during World War II was a historical fact, and it established a ‘European day’ (August 2) to commemorate this trauma. It commemorated the 4,300 Roma and Sinti in Auschwitz-Birkenau who lost their lives on August 2, 1944 even though they resisted fiercely. This resolution was devoted to the memory of approximately half a million of Roma and Sinti who were killed in Nazi-occupied Europe.¹ Importantly, the resolution linked the commemoration of the Roma genocide to human rights—an invitation to confront anti-Gypsyism, labeling it as a type of racism prevalent in Europe.²

This connection between Holocaust remembrance and human rights is not new. Movements supporting Roma rights, such as the Central Council of German Sinti and Roma and the International Romani Union, have made this connection for many decades now, as they were fighting for recognition of the Roma Holocaust both nationally and internationally. As a matter of fact, the EU resolution was accompanied by growing Roma activism in Europe that explicitly linked commemoration of the Roma genocide to social inclusion and the improvement of the situation of Roma minorities in different European countries (e.g., putting an end to systemic discrimination in education, labor market, housing and law enforcement).³ For various Roma groups, the commemoration of the Roma genocide by the identification of August 2 as a special day for the Roma genocide by the European parliament and EU Commission became important politically. Even though many young Roma activists did not experience it first hand, they have linked the recognition of the Roma genocide to the fight against anti-Roma racism (antigypsyism) in Europe.⁴ Political activists have used the Romani term *O Baro Porrajmos* (The Great Devouring) or *Porrajmos* to refer to the Roma genocide. In addition, the terms *Mudaripen* or *Samudaripen*, referring to killing or murder, have been used as well.⁵

Many international organizations and non-governmental organizations, such as the Council of Europe and the European Commission against Racism and Intolerance, have recently made a similar

connection. In its overview of international organizations focusing on the Roma genocide and human rights, the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance has identified five major intergovernmental organizations (including the Council of Europe and the European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights), nine international civil society organizations (including Amnesty International and the International Romani Union) and five museums (including the Museum of Romani Culture in Brno and the US Holocaust Memorial Museum) that have been engaged in commemorative activities of the Roma genocide and the related fight for human rights and the social inclusion of Roma communities.⁶

The governments in Europe, including post-communist European states, such as Poland, Serbia, or Lithuania, that have struggled with Holocaust memory, mostly by refusing to fully acknowledge the level of local participation in the killing of Jews and equating communism with fascism, appeared to be willing to acknowledge the Roma genocide as an official commemorative day in their national calendars. Following the initiative of the Joint Commission of National and Ethnic Minorities, the Polish parliament recognized August 2 as the Day of Remembrance of the Roma Holocaust. Thus, Poland became the first state to establish an official national day of commemoration in 2011—even before the resolution issued by the European Parliament. The Oświęcim Association of Roma in Poland was the primary organization behind the commemoration of the Roma genocide, and it has been working for the commemoration to achieve political recognition since 1991.⁷

Lithuania added the commemoration of the Roma genocide to its calendar of commemorative days in 2019. During this year, after a series of high-profile commemorative events the Lithuanian parliament approved a resolution to include Roma Genocide Remembrance Day to the list of observable special occasions. These developments signal the possibility of the emergence of hybrid activist Holocaust memories—commemorative cultures in which the trauma of the Roma during World War II is recognized not only by Roma, but also by other communities, and in which the commemoration of the Holocaust is linked to an awareness of the current discrimination against the Roma.

These observations suggest that Roma genocide memory has the potential of being analyzed as both a transnational memory and a transcultural memory. As described by Barbara Törnquist-Plewa,

transnational memory is a type of traveling memory, and it is shared across national borders. In contrast, transcultural memory is shared within states, and involves processes of hybridization (involving people from different cultural minorities). Thus, transnational memories have the potential to become transcultural, but they do not necessarily have to be such.⁸

Both transnational and transcultural memories are related to the concept of multidirectional memory, which suggests that communities can share their memories instead of engaging in fierce competition over them. According to Rothberg, multidirectional memory is dynamic and fluid, subject to ongoing negotiations and discussions by various groups.⁹ Rothberg believes that it is possible to use the presence of widespread Holocaust consciousness (a form of transnational memory) as a way to articulate a platform to fight against various forms of racism, past and present. The presence of Holocaust memory can help various groups, including the Roma, to articulate their traumatic memories and traumatic everyday experiences, perhaps making a link between the two. Furthermore, the articulation of traumatic memories can help the Roma to establish ‘imaginative links’¹⁰ between different histories and different memories. Such links can elicit empathy and solidarity between different groups. Thus, traumatic memories triggered by Holocaust consciousness can be an inspiration for fruitful exchanges and perhaps even ways to combat various expressions of racism, including antigypsyism.

The focus of this essay is the formation of memory culture focused on the commemoration of the Roma genocide in Lithuania. Using the concepts of transnational and multidirectional memories, my goal is to understand the influence of emerging international norms regarding the commemoration of the Roma genocide as well as international and domestic actors on the emergence of this memory culture. Although the study of Holocaust commemoration in Lithuania has been the focus of many scholarly and even popular studies,¹¹ the commemoration of the Roma genocide in Lithuania has been by and large ignored by memory scholars. Only a handful of studies briefly explore the historical dimensions of Roma genocide in Lithuania.¹²

To capture the contours of an emerging commemorative culture surrounding the Roma genocide in Lithuania, this essay is divided into three parts. The first part outlines the emergence of a transnational

European memory that focuses on the commemoration of the Roma genocide and asks the following: How did the Roma genocide enter the transnational sphere? Which memory agents were essential for this development? What is the relationship between global Holocaust memory and the commemorations of the Roma genocide? Furthermore, what is the relationship between the commemoration of the Roma genocide and attempts to fight antigypsyism? The second part focuses on the local expressions of transnational Roma genocide memory in Lithuania. It outlines the most important developments associated with the creation of this memory, and tries to identify the ways in which transnational memory has affected local remembrance practices. Which actors served as the memory agents of this transnational memory? What were the mechanisms of memory transmission? The third part, drawing of the concept of multidirectional memory, explores the relationship between Jewish Holocaust memory and the emerging Roma genocide memory in Lithuania. How does Roma genocide memory affect various Holocaust memories in Lithuania, including the discourse about the Jewish Holocaust? What is the outcome of cooperation between the Lithuanian Jewish and Lithuanian Roma communities in creating this new commemorative culture? Are we witnessing the emergence of a transcultural Holocaust memory? Is it possible that in the future a transformation of the Jewish Holocaust narrative—a movement away from a single event-based story about individuals toward a story about the suffering of several groups—will take place?

The Creation of a Transnational Memory Focused on the Roma Genocide

According to the US Holocaust Memorial Museum (USHMM), during the Holocaust years ‘the fate of Roma in some ways paralleled that of the Jews’.¹³ Even prior to the Holocaust, the Roma in Europe experienced discrimination and persecution that became especially intense when the Nazis came to power in Germany in 1933. The Nazis regarded the Roma as racially inferior, and systematically persecuted them. The Roma were believed to have ‘alien blood’; they were an ‘undesired’ group. After 1936, the Roma were subject to ‘race laws’, including the law ‘against dangerous habitual criminals’, thus accusing them of criminality and linking this ‘trait’ to genes.¹⁴ During the Holocaust, the Roma experienced arbitrary internment (imprisonment without charges in the concentration camps), forced labor, and mass

murder. Tens of thousands of Roma were murdered in the killing centers and concentration camps, and, in Eastern Europe, many of them became victims of the ‘Holocaust by bullets’ (including Lithuania) by mobile killing units.¹⁵ (Although it is unclear how many Roma were murdered in Europe, the USHMM claims that at least 25 per cent of European Roma were murdered during the Holocaust by the Nazis and their allies.¹⁶ Others estimate from 96,000 to 500,000, with the actual number probably more than 200,000.¹⁷

Despite this systematic persecution, for many years after the end of World War II, the Roma genocide was not widely commemorated—despite the fact that the Holocaust has become a dominant European and, according to some accounts, even global memory.¹⁸ Some scholars have even questioned whether the Roma were the victims of a genocide during World War II, arguing that the deportations they experienced did not constitute a systematic premeditated killing.¹⁹ Currently there is a consensus among scholars that ‘genocide’ is an appropriate term to describe the traumatic experiences of the Roma during World War II. In the words of Anton Weiss-Wendt, ‘without departing from the actual wording of the UN Genocide Convention, the contemporary legal practice in establishing criminal intent suggests a common design that rendered the comprehensive destruction of the Roma communities unequivocally genocidal’.²⁰

Romani intellectuals and activists in Europe are usually associated with the change in the global (primarily European) memoryscape and the increasing openness to commemorations of the Roma genocide. Sławomir Kapralski argues that the changes in memory related to the Roma genocide started with the ‘shrinking of the distance between Roma and non-Roma’, particularly in Eastern Europe when industrialization and urbanization took place after World War II.²¹ These processes were related to increasing Romani exposure to education and mass media. He points to public commemorations such as ceremonies by German Sinti commemorating deportations to concentration camps and annual commemorations by groups of Polish Sinti and Roma marking the end of the camps at Birkenau as examples of impactful memory practices.²² These memory practices were internationalized as early as 1981. During that year, the Third World Romani Congress was held in Göttingen, and it focused entirely on the persecution experienced by Roma during World War II.²³ The following year, another important

event with international significance followed. In 1982, due to the efforts of the Central Council of German Sinti and Roma, the German Chancellor Helmut Schmidt recognized the Roma genocide as ‘a racial genocide’ for the purposes of the international law. An official statement by the German government followed, which stated, ‘the National Socialist dictatorship inflicted grave injustice upon the Sinti and Roma. They were persecuted for racial reasons. These crimes have the characteristics of a genocide’.²⁴ Germany’s increasing openness to confronting its Nazi past in 1970s and 1980s has probably contributed to the proliferation of memorial activities that focus on the Roma genocide.

Jewish Holocaust memory was a major influence for these initial attempts to memorialize the Roma genocide. Since the mid-eighties, memorials commemorating the Roma genocide have been erected by Roma groups at former Nazi concentration camps—both inside and outside Germany. After the fall of communism, commemorative practices spread to Eastern and Central Europe, including exhibitions focusing on the Roma genocide in Auschwitz (opened in 2001) in Poland and the Holocaust museum in Hungary.²⁵ Thus, Holocaust memory gradually started to integrate the Roma genocide as well.

As the proliferation of these memory sites as well as monuments and exhibitions took place, ‘a dense network of locations, where the culture if not the cult of collective memory [was] practiced’ was established.²⁶ This traumatic memory of persecution became ‘the central component of Romani national identity’²⁷ as the Romani intelligentsia led the initiative to consolidate various Roma communities into one group. Just like in Jewish communities, Romani intellectuals decided to have an annual commemorative day on August 2—the day when more than 4,000 Roma and Sinti were murdered in Auschwitz in 1944. ‘Pilgrimages’ to Auschwitz became an important aspect of this collective Roma memory as well, highlighting the fact that Roma, just like Jews, were subject to the ‘final solution’ during the Holocaust.²⁸

In 1997, an exhibition focusing entirely on the Roma genocide opened at the Documentation and Cultural Center of the Roma and Sinti in Heidelberg. The goal of political discourse during this important event was to inscribe the narrative of the Roma genocide within the broader narrative of the Holocaust. During the opening, the President of the Federal Republic of Germany, Roman Herzog, argued that the

Roma genocide was as traumatic as the Jewish Holocaust: ‘The Roma Genocide was perpetrated for the same motive of race ideology, with the same intention and with the same goal of methodical and final extermination as the Genocide of the Jews’.²⁹ The unveiling of the Berlin Memorial for the Sinti and Roma of Europe in 2012 was the crowning achievement of activism by the Central Council of German Sinti and Roma. During this ceremony, the memory of the Roma genocide was described by Bernd Neumann, Germany’s Minister of Culture, as ‘a pillar of German remembrance’,³⁰ thus suggesting the importance of the incorporation of the Roma genocide into the narrative of the Holocaust.

Some Roma activists felt that it was essential to integrate the discourse about the Roma genocide into the discourse about the Holocaust, but others felt that it was essential to find their own voice.³¹ Ian Hancock, a prominent Romani studies scholar and activist, who has been a passionate proponent of the use of the term *O Baro Porrajmos* to refer to the Roma genocide, argued the following: ‘To name something is to own it, and for too long Roma have been otherized as a corollary to the Jewish Holocaust. The word has given an identity and a name to the most tragic event in Romani history, and moves it from the collective into the particular’.³² Thus, instead of trying to inscribe their story about the Porrajmos within the Jewish Holocaust narrative, some Roma groups have started to create their own museums and new memorial practices as well as historiographies. Examples include the towns of Tarnów in Poland and Brno in the Czech Republic.³³

Attempts to commemorate both the Roma genocide and the Jewish Holocaust, especially in areas where both ethnic groups had a significant presence, have caused tension. For example, during the post-Cold War era, there was a debate about the size of two plaques—one to commemorate the Jewish Holocaust, and the second to commemorate the Roma genocide—to be placed on the wall of the Museum of the Slovak National Uprising in Banska Bystrica, Slovakia. This commemorative act raised questions about whether the term ‘the Holocaust’ should be used in both cases, and whether the Jewish Holocaust should be commemorated with a larger plaque than the Roma genocide. Eventually, the plaques that were placed were of equal size.³⁴

The conflict over the survival of a pig farm on land that used to belong to a concentration camp in Lety, the Czech Republic, is probably one of the best-known memory wars over the Roma genocide after the disintegration of Communism. For Roma, this space was a mass graveyard where many Roma lost their lives during the Holocaust. Roma activists made a passionate argument for the removal of the pig farm. They led a well-organized campaign attempting to prove that Lety was a concentration camp and that the memory of the Romani people who died there should be respected. As stated by Josef Miker, a Roma rights activist: ‘You’ll never integrate a minority on whose genocide site you dump pig shit’.³⁵ However, for many Czechs, including the former prime minister and President Vaclav Klaus, Lety was merely a labor camp, not a concentration camp, in which many Roma died due to a typhus epidemic.³⁶ This memory war over the Roma genocide included sensitive questions, such as the participation of the locals (i.e., the Czechs) in the Holocaust. Set up by the Czech puppet government during World War II, the camp was staffed by the Czech guards. Thus, most of the killings were done by the local Czechs, not by the Germans. Perhaps unsurprisingly, demands by the Roma rights activists to remove the pig farm became a ‘lightning rod’ for nationalist extremists.³⁷ Ever since the end of the Cold War, nationalist extremists in the Czech Republic have targeted Roma as responsible for the ills of society. These groups have embraced neo-Nazi ideology and anti-Roma discourses, supporting the denial or revoking of Roma citizenship.³⁸ Roma rights to memory were entirely unacceptable to such groups.

In 2005, this memory war acquired an international dimension. During that year, the exhibition ‘Lety Detention Camp: History of an Unmentioned Genocide’ was held in the European Parliament. The exhibition was initiated by Milan Horáček, a Czech-born German politician and member of the Greens/EFA in the European parliament.³⁹ During that same year, the European Parliament issued a resolution requiring the removal of the farm in Lety. However, the involvement of European institutions was complicated: as the European Parliament was requesting the removal of the farm in a resolution, the farm was receiving funding from EU social funds.⁴⁰ Eventually, in November 2017, the Czech government agreed to sign a deal to buy the farm, and the site was handed to the Museum of Romani Culture. This memory war resulted in a serious nationalist backlash and expressions of racism, such as

top Czech politicians referring to Roma as ‘unadaptables’.⁴¹ At the same time, as this memory war and subsequent developments received a lot of international attention, this mnemonic conflict focusing on Roma genocide demonstrated that ‘the sites of the past have become the shrines of the present plight of the Roma—of the need for recognition, restitution, retribution and revival’.⁴² This is because the conflict over the removal of the farm in Lety revealed the strength of anti-Roma feelings in the Czech Republic and triggered discussions about their current plight.

Attention to the plight of Roma in Europe is not new. It has been addressed by various programs developed by the Council of Europe and the EU since the 1980s.⁴³ The early programs centered on educational outcomes. Beginning in 1993 (the Copenhagen European Council), the EU started focusing on the protection of minorities as a condition to enter the EU for aspiring Central and Eastern European states. The Council of the European Union Directive 2000/43/EC, which required equal treatment of all people irrespective of racial and ethnic origin, and was binding for EU member states, was an important breakthrough in the fight against racism. In 2011, the EU adopted the European Platform versus Poverty and Social Exclusion, which was an initiative to reduce the number of Europeans living below national poverty lines and to ensure that economic growth is followed by social inclusion. The result of this strategy was the EU Framework for National Roma Integration Strategies adopted by the Commission, which encouraged European governments to assign funding for Roma inclusion. Although this framework was not binding and lacked specific measures, it was described as representing ‘the most comprehensive, robust, and best-equipped institutionalized Roma-specific policy to date’.⁴⁴ The representatives of non-governmental institutions argued that it represented a ‘turning point for Roma communities in Europe’,⁴⁵ and it became an important instrument that helped EU member states to develop plans to improve the socio-economic integration of Roma.

To foster inclusion, the EU Roma Framework started supporting the memorialization of the Roma genocide. In 2016, to ensure the social inclusion of Roma, the EU Council noted the importance of the need to recognize the Roma genocide.⁴⁶ During the same year, the European Commission recognized the importance of the EU Memorial Day of Roma Genocide and the importance of fighting against anti-Roma

prejudice, which was a victory in the fight against anti-gypsyism, understood as a specific type of racism fueled by hate and stereotypes.⁴⁷ Furthermore, around the same time the European Commission started sponsoring projects that focused on the remembrance of the Roma genocide. Thus, the EU became a major institution that started providing material support for commemorative projects and remembrance initiatives linked to the Roma genocide.⁴⁸ Therefore, the EU, which is partly responsible for creation of a transnational memory about the Roma genocide, can be described as a memory agent of the Roma genocide.

However, EU measures to fight prejudice against Roma did not produce the desired results; thus, the EU Roma Framework was updated in 2020 ('EU Roma Strategic Framework for Equality, Inclusion and Participation for 2020-2030'). In the new document, the relationship between the remembrance of the Roma genocide and the norms of inclusion was made clear. This commission document quoted a statement released prior to Roma Holocaust Remembrance Day in 2020, inviting all member states to fully commit to the new EU Roma Strategic Framework 'for equality, inclusion and participation to bring social fairness and more equality in all senses of the word'.⁴⁹ The document stated: 'As a prerequisite for the fight against antigypsyism, the minimum standards set on the criminalisation of hate speech, and the denial, condoning or trivialisation of the Holocaust need to be fully and correctly transposed into the legislation of Member States'.⁵⁰ Thus, the new EU Roma Framework explicitly linked the Roma genocide experience to the Holocaust, which can be described as a collective European memory. In addition, this document strengthened the emerging international norms linking the remembrance of the Roma genocide to inclusion and socio-economic equality.

The Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) can also be described as a memory agent of the Roma genocide. Currently the OSCE provides resources for governments regarding the teaching of the Roma genocide and its commemoration. The OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR) actively participates in international commemorations of the Roma genocide, linking the 'lessons of the past' to current expressions of racism and antigypsyism.⁵¹ The OSCE commitment to the commemoration of the Roma genocide can be traced to 2003, when the Action Plan

on Improving the Situation of Roma and Sinti within the OSCE Area included the following recommendation: ‘Include Roma history and culture in educational texts, with particular consideration given to the experience of Roma and Sinti people during the Holocaust’.⁵²

Other memory agents of the Roma genocide at the international level include the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance (IHRA) and the Council of Europe. Since 2007, the IHRA Committee on the Genocide of the Roma has attempted to increase the commitment of the 31 states that are IHRA members to the remembrance of the Roma genocide. Like the OSCE, the IHRA Committee tries to highlight the link between the history of persecution (associated with the genocide) and today’s discrimination still experienced by Roma. To fight stereotyping and to emphasize the resilience of Roma, it tries to focus on Roma resistance during the Holocaust, rather than victimhood.⁵³ Within the Council of Europe, the European Youth Foundation and European Youth Centres pay attention to the commemoration of the Roma genocide as they promote human rights education. In addition, there is no shortage of non-governmental organizations, such as Amnesty International or the European Roma Information Office (ERIO), that are committed to human rights (including fighting prejudice and discrimination against Roma). Although their activities do not exclusively focus on the commemoration of the Roma genocide, they participate in some commemorative activities and work on increasing awareness about the Roma genocide.⁵⁴ In this way, they strengthen international norms by linking the commemoration of the Roma genocide to the current human rights agenda and by establishing a crucial link between international initiatives and local actors.

Local Manifestations of Transnational Memory: The Beginning of the Commemoration of the Roma Genocide in Lithuania

According to Lithuanian historians who have researched the Roma genocide, because of a lack of historical evidence it is difficult to determine the exact number of Lithuanian Roma who were killed during World War II. Currently, the consensus seems to be that approximately 500 Roma were killed.⁵⁵ According to Arūnas Bubnys, who was the first Lithuanian historian to research the Roma genocide

during World War II, ‘the exact number of the Roma killed in Lithuania during the years of Nazi occupation is not known. It is possible to guess that the number of those killed is not more than 100-150’.⁵⁶ Vytautas Toleikis, who contributed significantly to the knowledge about Lithuania’s Roma genocide by interviewing 28 survivors in 1998-99, also downplayed the extent of the Roma genocide in Lithuania: ‘It can be concluded relying on the surviving data and testimony provided by the interviewees, that the genocide against Roma people in Lithuania has not been as ruthless as in the countries mentioned earlier [such as Germany, Czechoslovakia, and Poland]. In all probability this has been predetermined by several factors: 1) a relatively small proportion of Roma population [in the country]; 2) in the 20s a large proportion of Lithuanian Roma people began to lead a settled way of life; 3) according to the hierarchy of enemies drawn up by Nazis, there were more ‘serious’ enemies in Lithuania: Communists and their collaborators who did not manage to retreat to the parts of Soviet Union, and, of course, the Lithuanian Jews’.⁵⁷ However, in his study Toleikis admits that ‘every third [Roma] perished’ in Lithuania. In addition to those who were murdered, it is estimated that 1,000 were deported from Lithuania to concentration camps, labor camps and prisons. It is extremely difficult to determine the location of these camps and prisons from the oral testimonies, although it is believed that Lithuania’s Roma were deported to concentration camps in France and Germany.⁵⁸ It is possible that some Lithuanian Roma were deported to Auschwitz; however, this location is not mentioned in the songs of Lithuania’s Roma, and the archive with the names of the prisoners was destroyed by the Nazis.⁵⁹

Research about the Roma genocide has been impeded by the lack of written sources, such as reports, orders and memoirs. According to Toleikis, there is only a handful of documents—Gestapo orders and Einsatzgruppen reports, in which the number of the Roma victims is combined with ‘asocial or criminal elements’.⁶⁰ The Conclusions of the International Commission for the Evaluation of the Crimes of the Nazi and Soviet Occupation Regimes in Lithuania (created in 1998 to address the painful legacies of the two regimes) point out that mostly the persecution of Roma in Lithuania took place after the mass shootings of Jews had already taken place (that is, in 1942). However, some Roma were shot in villages near the German border during the first weeks of the war, when killings of Jews were taking place

simultaneously.⁶¹ Although the Nazi regime bore the primary responsibility for the murder of Roma, the Lithuanian auxiliary police actively participated in the killings by arresting Roma, imprisoning them and escorting them to be killed. The Roma who were to be deported were first detained for a short time in police detention camps and prisons; then sent to the Pravieniškės labor camp, from which they were sent to concentration camps in Germany and France. Most Roma lost their lives in Pravieniškės, although some (approximately 100) were killed in Paneriai (a prominent place of memory where thousands of Jews were murdered).⁶²

The intense trauma of Roma experiences during the genocide emerge from testimonies recorded by Aušra Simoniukštytė, Vida Beinortienė and Daiva Tumasonytė, the authors of a book containing Roma life stories,⁶³ the historian Vytautas Toleikis and the US Holocaust Memorial Museum. According to Simoniukštytė, oral testimonies provide contradicting data about the experiences of the Roma during the genocide; however, based on her research, every single Roma family with whom she communicated suffered losses during the Holocaust.⁶⁴ Beinortienė recorded many traumatic stories, including those of Roma women who told her that the Nazis asked them to disown their children. If the Roma women agreed, they would be allowed to live, and their children would be shot.⁶⁵

Based on his work with testimonies, Toleikis concludes that Pravieniškės labor camp was mentioned by all of the respondents whom he interviewed and therefore could be seen as ‘a potential symbol of the Holocaust against the Lithuanian Roma people.’⁶⁶ When describing Pravieniškės, the respondents mentioned exhausting work, poor conditions, and food shortages.⁶⁷ Pravieniškės as a major place of suffering features prominently in the testimonies recorded by the USHMM in 1998. The survivors told about many Roma who were kept in Pravieniškės as well as their deaths there. Zofija Sinkevičienė from Panevėžys (born in 1925) remembered the road to death:

In January 1943 they started to push us out of our homes. Our entire family as well as other Roma. But the Jews were already all shot. With children, pregnant women... We were put into a ghetto. Then Catholic priests came to us. They let us go to confession. We went to confession, took communion. They baptized our children. Those who lived together—were married right

there. The priests may have known that they were taking us to be shot. After that they pushed us out of the ghetto. We went to Pravieniškės. After that they mistreated us badly, those Germans. They beat us with ‘bananas’ [police batons]. And they tortured us badly. They were saying: ‘*Zigeuner kaputt*’ [Destroy the gypsies].⁶⁸

Ona Arlauskienė from Simnas (born in 1926) lost all of her family—her parents, her sisters, her brothers as well as her three-month old son. In her oral testimony, she bemoans the loss of her brother’s and sister’s children:

Small children... My brother had four children, all boys. These were the children—oh my, like dolls. Very smart children. What were they guilty of to be killed? In Pravieniškės they took all children, all old people, the disabled and shot them. They destroyed such a family! Let Perkūnas [an ancient Lithuanian pagan god] strike them; let them not see any good. When they brought children—well, what, there was a horrible scream. Crying, screaming—this is all. You could not say anything. They shot and killed them. Just be silent, because you could face the same fate. All you could do is lower your head and hide. Let Perkūnas kill them! They took five children from my oldest sister. My oldest sister lived in Tytuvėnai. They took away five of her children. They were older. And they shot them in Pravieniškės.⁶⁹

Aleksas Aleksandravičius (born in 1919 in Šiluva) remembers:

They took us to Pravieniškės; there were many Roma there. Two barracks were full. We used to go to the woods and carry one-meter long logs on our shoulders. We heard shots nearby. But we did not pay much attention to them—oh well, someone is shooting. Only later we understood, that our family was shot there. As soon as we were back, my mother-in-law asked: ‘oh, where are my children, where are my children... And there was this tall pine tree. [This officer] took [her children] to that pine tree, took out his gun—here are your children—and shot them when everyone could see this. Children were killed; parents-in-law were killed. Everyone who was older perished. I had an uncle—my father’s brother, he had a family—all perished. There were many young people as well. Women were pregnant; many of them. They were all killed.’⁷⁰

Delving into Roma life stories about the genocide enabled Aušra Simoniukštytė to conclude the following: ‘Based on these stories, a truly troubling impression about the extent of Roma persecution during the war in Lithuania emerges. I think that it is possible to argue persuasively that the Roma ethnic group was one of the most victimized groups during the war and in this way one of the most ‘forgotten’ Lithuanian communities’.⁷¹ Simoniukštytė noted that her interviewees tended to focus on current problems, such as the lack of food in their homes, and tended not to present their experiences of persecution during World War II in ‘a dramatic way.’ Unlike the Lithuanian trauma stories that focus on the deportations under Stalin, the Roma did not feel that their suffering had a special meaning. (In Lithuanian trauma stories, suffering in the places of deportation is often presented as a special sacrifice for a greater good, even a type of patriotism.) Their current suffering colored their interpretations of the genocide.⁷²

Until recently, the Roma genocide in Lithuania could be described as ‘forgotten’. The first works briefly addressing the Roma genocide appeared only in the late 1990s-early 2000s.⁷³ The publication of these works coincided with Lithuania’s interest in joining transatlantic international organizations, including the EU, which required respect for minority rights. During this time, there was an increased interest, both academic and political, in the status of Roma in Lithuania. Lithuanian scholars and activists published analyses of the ways Roma were represented in the mass media, the status of their integration into the Lithuanian society, a survey of problems important to Roma, and even authentic Roma folklore.⁷⁴ International norms supporting Roma rights, including the commemoration of the Roma genocide, were slowly penetrating Lithuania, which was aspiring to join the EU.

According to Svetlana Novopolskaja, Director of the Romų Visuomenės Centras (Roma Community Center), a non-governmental organization, the Lithuanian Roma community started to commemorate the Roma genocide around 2003. ‘We were looking for various places to memorialize [this traumatic event]. Eventually, we decided on Paneriai [a place of mass killings during the Holocaust, which is a prominent place of memory of Lithuania’s Jewish community]. We thought that there were definitely Roma who were murdered there. We only had stories, no testimonies. But later it became clear

that Roma were killed in Paneriai'.⁷⁵ Pravieniškės, a place where most Lithuanian Roma were killed, was also suggested as a place for memorial by the Lithuanian Genocide Research and Resistance Center, a government-supported institution.⁷⁶ However, the Roma community rejected this suggestion because there is currently a prison located in Pravieniškės, and the Roma community did not want this memory place to be linked to 'criminality,' as it may have reinforced a common stereotype of Roma as criminals.⁷⁷

The recording of testimonies about the Roma genocide took place in 2004-5. The International Organization for Migration was active in Lithuania in 2001, and they were able to provide the Lithuanian Roma community with preliminary lists of people who survived the Holocaust. This helped Svetlana's organization to identify these people and collect their testimonies.

According to Novopolskaja, her organization (established in 2001) was able to find photographs of the Porrajmos and record the stories of those who survived it. Their main desire was to make sure that the Roma children know their past. Collaboration with several partners—the Department of National Minorities under the Government of Lithuania, the Genocide and Resistance Research Centre of Lithuania, and the Human Rights Coalition—was essential during these endeavors. One of the major goals of the Roma Community Center is to collect information about Roma history. Novopolskaja argues that cooperation with other Roma organizations, international organizations and participation in transnational events dedicated to remembrance of the Holocaust have influenced the ways in which the Lithuanian Roma created their commemorative culture of the Roma genocide. 'Without the intervention by international organizations, we would still probably visit that place [Paneriai]; however, we would probably not have the same commemorative day.'⁷⁸

However, Novopolskaja feels that the broader society in Lithuania has rejected the Roma as a group and has been indifferent to the traumatic history of the Roma: 'Let's face it: society does not accept us. All public opinion polls suggest that there is ongoing discrimination against Roma. This is partly the reason why it is difficult to accept our history'.⁷⁹ In the words of Svetlana, there is not a single sentence in Lithuania's history textbooks about the Roma genocide. 'The whole concept of teaching history must change,' asserts Novopolskaja. 'Currently the educational programs have been revised to incorporate

teaching about the Jewish Holocaust. However, there is not a word about the Roma genocide.’ Regular actions by the Roma Community Center to commemorate the Roma genocide publicly and gain acceptance of the Roma have received some support from Lithuania’s governmental organizations, including the Lithuanian Department for National Minorities and the Lithuanian Genocide and Resistance Research Centre.

Lithuania’s desire to join the EU was one of the major reasons why its government developed a national Roma Integration Program for 2000-04 (adopted in 2000). The text of the document explicitly addressed this foreign policy goal: ‘Lithuania’s desire to faster integrate into the European political, economic and security structures, maintain cooperation in various areas and more actively participate in the activities of international organizations encourages [us] to address the Roma integration into society faster’.⁸⁰ The European Union and the Council of Europe are specifically listed as major influences in this program. One of the main goals of the program was to introduce Lithuanian society to Roma culture and history and promote tolerance. Commemoration of the Roma genocide was not specifically listed in this program. There were several subsequent programs on Roma integration (for 2008-2010, 2012-14, and 2015-2020). All of them mentioned the importance of developing tolerance toward Roma in Lithuanian society and acknowledged the influence of the EU. The 2008-2010 Program linked the development of tolerance to learning about Roma culture and history by mandating the inclusion of topics on Roma culture and history in public schools.⁸¹

The subsequent program (2012-14) mentions the Roma Holocaust for the first time, suggesting that the Ministry of Culture will collect information about the Roma genocide and publish a brochure. The commemoration of the Roma genocide is specifically addressed only in the 2015-2020 program (adopted in 2015, shortly before the resolution by the European parliament to commemorate the Roma genocide). When discussing the goals of ‘encouraging intercultural dialogue,’ ‘increasing the openness of Roma culture and societal tolerance,’ this program suggests that the Lithuanian parliament should make August 2 a national commemorative day to commemorate the victims of the Roma Holocaust. In addition, it mandates the teaching of Roma history and genocide in public schools.⁸²

Due to the lack of political will and uneven financing, the first three integration programs were described as ‘inconsistent’ by experts and activists who studied the progress of these programs.⁸³ Although the Lithuanian Seimas (parliament) added August 2 as a day commemorating the Roma genocide in 2019, the program still has not addressed multiple human rights issues experienced by Roma. These include discrimination in the workplace, lack of tolerance, and lack of access to quality healthcare and education. According to data collected by the Lithuanian Ethnic Studies Institute (since 2005), people in Lithuania have consistently identified Roma as the least liked group. According to the most recent data (from 2019), 63% of Lithuanians would not want to live in the same neighborhood as Roma.⁸⁴ This data demonstrates that antigypsyism remains a major problem in Lithuania, and despite the attempts of the government to address this problem, discriminatory attitudes have not changed.

Roma rights activists see the commemoration of the Roma genocide as one way to attract attention to the current issues faced by Roma in Lithuania.⁸⁵ The commemoration of the Roma genocide on August 2 has been taking place in Lithuania since around 2009.⁸⁶ This ceremony, which includes putting flowers at the Paneriai memorial, was organized by the leaders of Lithuania’s Roma community and the Department of National Minorities under the Government of the Republic of Lithuania⁸⁷ and was inspired by the international commemorations of the Roma genocide.⁸⁸ The Department of National Minorities has been described by Novopolskaja as a major ally and supporter in her work to promote Roma rights.⁸⁹ Commemorative ceremonies at the Paneriai memorial have usually involved speeches by the attendees and the placing of wreaths at the monument, which dates to the Soviet period and includes an inscription in Lithuanian and Russian that reads ‘for the victims of fascist terror.’ It does not identify who the victims of fascist terror were (Figure 1).

Prior to 2015, this public commemorative ceremony attracted a small number of people⁹⁰—mostly representatives of NGOs, some foreign guests and some government officials. Only in 2012 did this ceremony attract attention from the mass media. According to a media report, during a commemoration ceremony in 2012, there were representatives from the US embassy and a US servicewoman stationed in Lithuania. (The US embassy has traditionally supported events related to

Holocaust memory in Lithuania.) The only Lithuanian government representative present during the August 2 ceremony was Gražina Sluško from the Department of National Minorities. In her speech, she highlighted the importance of tolerance and the need to fight the ongoing discrimination against Roma. Josifas Tyčina, the President of Lithuania's Roma Association 'Čigonų laužas' (Roma fire), reprimanded the government officials who attended the commemoration ceremony in 2011 for their failure to fulfil a promise to sponsor a memorial plaque to commemorate the Roma genocide.⁹¹

Representatives from marginal right-wing political groups (the tautininkai, or nationalist party and Sajūdis, a right-leaning political movement) were present at the commemorative ceremony in 2012 as well. The Tautininkai argued that they share a belief in the importance of ethnic belonging with the Roma community.⁹² Sajūdis even issued a resolution in 2012, asking the Lithuanian government to recognize the Roma Holocaust and place memorial plaques at sites where Roma were killed.⁹³ The attention paid by these nationalist right wing groups to the Roma genocide can be partly explained by their resistance to the narrative about the uniqueness of the Jewish Holocaust, which was being promoted in Lithuania by international actors around that time.

By and large, the commemorative ceremonies in Paneriai (with the exception perhaps of the ceremony held in 2012) have been ignored by the Lithuanian media, which, according to Novopolskaja, continues to show indifference to the Roma genocide.⁹⁴ The ceremonies have not attracted much attention from Roma youth either who constitute the majority of Lithuania's Roma community. (According to Novopolskaja, the average age of the Roma community in Lithuania is 27 years.) The Roma youth are attracted by more personalized, engaging events that have a strong emotional appeal.⁹⁵ During the same year (2012), Lithuania's Roma community put wreaths into the Neris (a river that passes through Vilnius) and let them flow downstream. The wreaths were decorated with candles (Figures 2 and 3). This simple but memorable ritual attracted many young Roma.⁹⁶

In 2015, after the European Parliament's resolution, the commemorative activities of the Roma genocide in Lithuania underwent a significant change: another government institution—the Lithuanian Genocide Research and Resistance Centre (LGRRC)—became involved in commemorative activities and,

together with the Roma Community Centre, organized a commemorative public event in 2015.⁹⁷ This included the opening of an exhibition focusing on the Roma genocide in one of the halls of the Museum of the Occupations and Struggles for Freedom (known in the past as Lithuania's 'Genocide' Museum, with the focus on the repression and deportations under Stalin).⁹⁸ Based on a handful of remaining documents (archival records and family photographs), this exhibition documented the life of the Lithuanian Roma prior to World War II and their suffering during the war, including the people who were killed in Pravieniškės. The exhibition's opening ceremony included excerpts from video testimonies acquired from the US Holocaust Memorial Museum and a presentation by Ilja Lempertas, a Lithuanian Jewish historian who compared the Jewish Holocaust with the Roma genocide, arguing that unlike the Jewish Holocaust, the Roma genocide, which in his eyes was part of the Holocaust, is little known—not only in Lithuania, but also in the world.⁹⁹

This ceremony revealed one of the prominent features of the emerging commemorative Roma genocide culture in Lithuania, or the attempt at a synthesis of two traumatic memories—the Jewish Holocaust and the Roma genocide. Prior to 2015, the two memories did not peacefully coexist, and there was competition between them. Some in Lithuania questioned whether the Roma did indeed have experiences like those of the Jews, and whether their experiences should be described by using the term 'Holocaust.' In the words of Faina Kukliansky, the leader of Lithuania's Jewish community, these were 'childish' arguments.¹⁰⁰ This comment suggests that the most promising way to address Holocaust memory is by treating it as a multidirectional memory without engaging in competition. In 2012, when speaking on August 2 in Paneriai, Lempertas outlined the contours of an emerging synthetic Holocaust memory that was supposed to encompass both the Jewish and the Roma genocides and incorporate international norms. Lempertas said: 'I came to argue one thing: There was no Jewish holocaust, there was no Roma holocaust. There was only one Holocaust. It started when before the war all powers of one state were mobilized to eliminate the members of other ethnic groups. Indeed, it is bad that in Lithuania nothing is known about the Roma holocaust. In the holocaust museums of the other countries, they talk about the Roma holocaust as well'.¹⁰¹

An 'upgrade' of commemorations of the Roma genocide in Lithuania that followed the EU parliament resolution on the commemoration of the Roma genocide suggests that the Roma experience during World War II in Lithuania has been increasingly acknowledged as a major trauma. The LGRRC decided to include the commemoration of the Roma genocide into the traumatic history of Lithuania, keeping it separate from the 'fighting and suffering' paradigm focusing on ethnic Lithuanian experiences of deportation and resistance that was established in the late eighties. In a sense, this decision was consistent with the views of those who argued that there were multiple genocides in the territory of Lithuania, not just the Jewish genocide (i.e., the Holocaust). Thus, the acknowledgement of the Roma genocide by the 'entrepreneurs of trauma' in Lithuania (specifically, the LGRRC and its subsidiary museum) did not present a major challenge to the established narrative about the 'Soviet genocide' in Lithuania.

Multidirectional Memory: The Holocaust as a Memory Template for the Remembrance of the Roma Genocide in Lithuania after 2015

After 2015, initiatives to commemorate the Roma genocide embraced multidirectional memory approaches, attempting to achieve a synthesis of the Jewish Holocaust and the Roma genocide. In 2016, the Lithuanian Centre for Human Rights (LCHR), a non-governmental organization, in cooperation with Lithuania's Jewish community initiated a project to install *Stolpersteine*, 'stepping stones,' to commemorate the victims of the Holocaust. This project got financial support from the Good Will foundation (a foundation that receives compensation from the Lithuanian government for the property of Jewish communities seized or destroyed during the war¹⁰²), the Erinnerung Verantwortung Zukunft (EVZ) Foundation, and the Goethe-Institut in Lithuania.¹⁰³ The LCHR made a conscious decision to include the Roma victims of the Holocaust, arguing that their Holocaust experience has not yet received adequate attention. Birutė Sabatauskaitė, the Director of LCHR, argued that this act of remembrance should help to better integrate Roma into Lithuanian society and see their history as part of Lithuania's

history.¹⁰⁴ This commemorative act included placing small commemorative plaques on a cobblestone street in Panevėžys where four Roma women lived before they were taken to camps during World War II.

Such synthetic memory is promoted by international actors, such as the EVZ foundation ‘Remembrance, Responsibility, Future’ based in Germany. Since 2017, this foundation has sponsored two major projects promoting cooperation between the Lithuanian Jewish and Lithuanian Roma communities. The first project, carried out in 2017 and 2018, was geared toward finding effective ways to fight antisemitism and antigypsyism. Leading NGOs in Lithuania were encouraged to come up with a set of recommendations to achieve these goals. Achieving official acknowledgement of the Roma genocide by the Lithuanian state was one of the major recommendations put forward by NGOs working on this project, and it was achieved in 2019.¹⁰⁵

According to Dovilė Rūkaitė, project manager for the Lithuanian Jewish community, international funding was essential for the Lithuanian Jewish community and the Lithuanian Roma community to come together to work on projects related to fighting discrimination and promoting the memory of the Roma genocide.¹⁰⁶ Numerous workshops with focus groups involving the two communities made the members of these communities learn more about each other’s history and memory. According to Rūkaitė, the participants of the workshops acknowledged their lack of knowledge about each other: ‘I knew it, but I did not know it. I lived next to them, but I did not know about them.’ She feels that encounters between the Lithuanian Jewish community and the Lithuanian Roma community expanded the concept of the Holocaust to include the Roma experience. Although such initiatives may have had little impact on society as a whole, they were transformative for the two communities.¹⁰⁷

The similarities between the traumas experienced by the Jewish and Roma communities have been highlighted in two high profile commemorative public events—*Samudaripen. Mergaitė iš vagono* (Samudaripen: The Girl from a Railcar), a musical play directed by Marius Jampolskis, and *Juodasis paukštis* (The Black Bird), a documentary film. *Samudaripen* included Roma performers and was described by Svetlana Novopolskaja as ‘our’ event—an event owned by Lithuania’s Roma.¹⁰⁸ In 2018,

the play was shown in three major Lithuanian cities (Vilnius, Šiauliai, and Panevėžys), and it was accompanied by an exhibition created by the Lithuanian Genocide and Resistance Research Center. The play featured a Roma family that was transported to a concentration camp in a railcar. On the next track, a Jewish family was being transported. During stops, a young Roma girl engaged in conversations with a Jewish boy. However, the play has a tragic ending. At some point, the Jewish boy is gone, and the Roma girl does not have anyone to talk to. In the end, the Roma family is gone as well. Only ashes remain.¹⁰⁹

Similarly, *Juodasis paukštis* (The black bird), the first documentary about the Roma genocide to be shown on Lithuanian state TV, also included metaphors and images usually associated with the traditional representation of the Jewish Holocaust, such as images of shoes and concentration camps. The film was directed by Rūta Sinkevičienė, a journalist who has dealt with difficult topics related to Roma experiences in the past. She was recruited by the Lithuanian Ministry of Culture to create a film only in 2019, when commemoration of the Roma genocide reached the government level. The documentary presented the story of the Roma genocide as a major trauma, highlighting the losses experienced by the local Roma community ('every third Roma died') and featuring individual testimonies from the US Holocaust Memorial Museum. Comparisons with Lithuania's Jewish community were made ('Roma, like the Jews, came to Lithuania around the same time—the sixteenth century; 'Roma, like Jews, were Lithuania's 'new others'''). According to the documentary, the Roma were imprisoned and tortured during World War II together with the Jews; however, 'we know a lot about the genocide experienced by the Jewish nation and almost nothing about the Roma genocide. Roma were in the same concentration camps.' The experience of genocide is described as 'an open wound' for Lithuania's Roma, and a young Roma woman who appears in the documentary expresses hope that with the recognition of the Roma genocide, 'hopefully, people will start looking at us differently.'¹¹⁰ It is difficult to gauge the impact of the film on the public at large; however, it was meant to attract a broad audience because it was shown on a national TV network.

These commemorative events have probably increased the awareness of Lithuanians about the Roma genocide. Undoubtedly, they are very important for both the Roma and Jewish communities, both

of whom seem to embrace multidirectional Holocaust memory. However, this emerging Roma genocide commemorative culture in Lithuania still cannot be described as an activist memory that could potentially transform prejudice toward Roma. According to Faina Kukliansky, the attitude toward the ‘other’ in Lithuania (and the ‘other’ still includes ethnic minorities) remains very cautious and reserved. In addition, there is a ‘culture of impunity’—many feel that they can still openly engage in discrimination against Roma.¹¹¹ Major social reforms, including reforms in education, would be needed to transform the culture of exclusion and discrimination, which is the goal of transnational Roma memory.

Conclusions

International actors, such as transnational Roma activist groups and international organizations, including the European Union, have been essential memory agents behind the creation of a transnational Roma genocide remembrance regime and the creation of emerging international norms supporting this regime. National governments in Europe, including Lithuania, have embraced these emerging international norms by announcing August 2 as a national commemorative day. In the case of Lithuania, this decision was made in 2019, and it can be attributed to domestic pressure by a coalition of NGOs defending human rights, including the Jewish and Roma communities, as well as the willingness of Lithuania to be a ‘good’ European by demonstrating a commitment to the emerging European norm of commemorating the Roma genocide.

Transnational Roma genocide memory culture can be described as an activist memory. Various memory entrepreneurs, especially NGOs, that foster Roma genocide memory link remembrance to human rights (specifically, the human rights abuses experienced by Roma communities) and the need to fight antigypsyism. The emerging Roma genocide memory regime in Lithuania also embraces this activist agenda. However, this memory regime is still very weak. Thus, currently it has not yet elicited any real changes in Lithuanian society where prejudice against Roma remains very strong. At the same time, the commemoration of the Roma genocide has inspired rethinking and even decolonization of the prevalent Holocaust narratives. The trauma related to the Roma Holocaust simply cannot be conceptualized as a

singular event (as portrayed in various Holocaust narratives prior to the introduction of stories about the Roma genocide) because this trauma persists in the present with the current experiences of severe marginalization and discrimination.

The emerging Roma memory regime in Lithuania has found a way to coexist with the local narrative about the Jewish Holocaust. The insertion of the stories about Roma suffering into the Holocaust narrative has helped to hybridize this narrative, turning it into a story about multiple traumas. The Jewish and Roma Holocaust narratives in Lithuania are not contesting for primacy. They are coexisting and interacting, thus creating a version of the multidirectional memory. The hybridization of the Jewish Holocaust narrative was significantly affected by international actors who promoted the inclusion of the experiences of Roma into the Jewish Holocaust narrative. Cooperation involving the Roma and Jewish communities in a coalition to promote human rights has facilitated the emergence of this hybrid Holocaust memory.

It appears that in the future the inclusion of Roma memory into the Jewish Holocaust narrative in Lithuania will continue to make this narrative move away from an event-based, individualistic orientation. Being sensitive to the Roma genocide story means acknowledging that the Holocaust affected multiple communities, not just individuals who were Jewish. This emerging memory signals a move away from an event-based conception of trauma towards a collective, hybrid trauma. The inclusion of stories about Roma suffering and the creation of new places of memory, such as a circle of stones in Paneriai (a place of commemoration of the Jewish Holocaust), may help to change Jewish Holocaust memory by making it more 'collective, spatial and material instead of individual, temporal and linguistic'.¹¹²

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Figure 1. Monument in Paneriai used by Roma for commemoration of genocide on August 2 ('For Victims of Fascist Terror')



Figure 2. A Wreath Used in 2012 Commemoration Ceremony.



Figure 3. 2012 Commemoration of Roma Genocide.

Notes

- ¹ Central Council of German Sinti and Roma, 'European Holocaust Memorial Day for Sinti and Roma', par. 1.
- ² European Parliament, B8-0326/2015.
- ³ International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance, 'Roma Genocide', 3.
- ⁴ Ibid.
- ⁵ Weiss-Wendt, 'Introduction', 24.
- ⁶ International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance, 'Roma Genocide', iv.
- ⁷ Anna Mirga-Kruszelnicka and Elżbieta Mirga-Wójtowicz, 'The Roma Movement in Poland', section 'Transformation Period—Roma in Democratic Poland'.
- ⁸ Törnquist-Plewa, 'The Transnational Dynamics of Local Remembrance', 302.
- ⁹ Rothberg, *Multidirectional Memory*, 3.
- ¹⁰ Ibid., 18.
- ¹¹ E.g., Sužiedėlis and Liekis, 'Conflicting Memories'; Subotić, 'The Long Shadows of Vilna'; Cassidy *We Are Here*.
- ¹² Simoniukštytė, 'Lietuvos romai'; Toileikis, 'Lietuvos čigonai Antrojo pasaulinio karo metais'; Bubnys, *Vokiečių okupuota Lietuva (1941-1944)*, 227-229.
- ¹³ United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, 'Genocide of European Roma (Gypsies), 1939-1945', par. 2.
- ¹⁴ United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, 'Persecution of Roma (Gypsies) in Prewar Germany, 1933-1939', par. 6.
- ¹⁵ United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, 'Genocide of European Roma (Gypsies), 1939-1945', section 'Fate of Roma in German Occupied Areas of Europe', par. 2.
- ¹⁶ Ibid, section 'Number of Victims'.
- ¹⁷ Weiss-Wendt, 'Introduction', 1.
- ¹⁸ Levy and Sznajder, 'Memory Unbound'.
- ¹⁹ E.g., Lewy, *The Nazi Persecution of the Gypsies*.
- ²⁰ Weiss-Wendt, 'Introduction', 1.
- ²¹ Kapralski, 'The Aftermath of the Roma Genocide', 242.
- ²² Ibid., 248.
- ²³ Ibid, 233.
- ²⁴ Council of Europe, 'Germany—Recognition of the Roma Genocide' (non-official translation), 2 par.
- ²⁵ van Baar, 'The European Memory Problem Revisited', 272.
- ²⁶ Stauber and Vago, 'The Politics of Memory Jews and Roma Commemorate their Persecution', 130.
- ²⁷ Ibid., 123.
- ²⁸ Ibid., 127.
- ²⁹ Council of Europe, 'Germany—Recognition of the Roma Genocide' (non-official translation), par. 4.
- ³⁰ Commission on Security and Cooperation in Europe, 'Helsinki Commission Welcomes Unveiling of Berlin Memorial for Romani Genocide Victims', par. 5.
- ³¹ Kapralski, 'The Aftermath of the Roma Genocide', 235.
- ³² Hancock, review, 586.
- ³³ van Baar, 'The European Memory Problem Revisited', 272.
- ³⁴ Stauber and Vago, 'The Politics of Memory Jews and Roma Commemorate their Persecution', 127.
- ³⁵ Gosling, 'Czech Roma Reclaim Holocaust Site from Pig Farmers', par. 19.
- ³⁶ Stauber and Vago, 'The Politics of Memory Jews and Roma Commemorate their Persecution', 129.
- ³⁷ Gosling, 'Czech Roma Reclaim Holocaust Site from Pig Farmers', par. 6.
- ³⁸ Sobotka, 'Human Rights and Roma Policy Formation in the Czech Republic, Slovakia and Poland', 143.
- ³⁹ VPORH, 'Lety Genocide Exhibit Moves from Brussels to Prague, Causes Political Action,' par. 1.

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- ⁴⁰ van Baar, 'The European Memory Problem Revisited', 291.
- ⁴¹ Gosling, 'Czech Roma Reclaim Holocaust Site from Pig Farmers', par. 12.
- ⁴² Stauber and Vago, 'The Politics of Memory Jews and Roma Commemorate their Persecution', 130.
- ⁴³ Rostas and Ryder, 'EU Framework for National Roma Integration Strategies', 188.
- ⁴⁴ Mirga-Kruszelnicka, 'Revisiting the EU Roma Framework', 7.
- ⁴⁵ Ibid.
- ⁴⁶ Jutelytė, 'Transnational Patterns of Roma Genocide Commemoration in the EU', 22.
- ⁴⁷ Mirga-Kruszelnicka, 'Revisiting the EU Roma Framework', 8.
- ⁴⁸ Jutelytė, 'Transnational Patterns of Roma Genocide Commemoration in the EU', 23-24.
- ⁴⁹ President von der Leyen, quoted in the European Commission, 'EU Roma Strategic Framework for Equality, Inclusion and Participation for 2020-2030'.
- ⁵⁰ European Commission, 'EU Roma Strategic Framework for Equality, Inclusion and Participation for 2020-2030', 12.
- ⁵¹ OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights, 'OSCE/ODIHR Calls for Remembrance of and Education about Roma Genocide as Key to Avoiding Recurrent Past Atrocities', par. 3.
- ⁵² Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe Permanent Council, Decision No. 566, 10.
- ⁵³ International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance, 'Roma Genocide', 12.
- ⁵⁴ International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance, 'Roma Genocide', 16-27.
- ⁵⁵ International Commission for the Evaluation of the Nazi and Soviet Occupation Regimes in Lithuania, 'Lithuanian Roma during the Years of the Nazi Occupation'.
- ⁵⁶ Bubnys, *Vokiečių okupuota Lietuva (1941-1944)*, 229.
- ⁵⁷ Toileikis, '1941-44', 6.
- ⁵⁸ International Commission for the Evaluation of the Nazi and Soviet Occupation Regimes in Lithuania, 'Lithuanian Roma during the Years of the Nazi Occupation'.
- ⁵⁹ Toileikis, '1941-44', 4.
- ⁶⁰ Ibid., 3.
- ⁶¹ International Commission for the Evaluation of the Nazi and Soviet Occupation Regimes in Lithuania, 'Lithuanian Roma during the Years of the Nazi Occupation'.
- ⁶² International Commission for the Evaluation of the Nazi and Soviet Occupation Regimes in Lithuania, 'Lithuanian Roma during the Years of the Nazi Occupation'.
- ⁶³ Beinortienė and Tumasonytė. *Panevėžio romų kančių keliai 1941-1945 m. Exploring the Untold Suffering of the Roma People of Panevėžys: 1941-1945*.
- ⁶⁴ Platūkytė, 'Nutylėtas genocidas palietė kiekvieną romą', par. 3.
- ⁶⁵ Ibid, par. 17.
- ⁶⁶ Toileikis, '1941-44', 9.
- ⁶⁷ Ibid.
- ⁶⁸ *Juodasis paukštis* [The black bird].
- ⁶⁹ Ibid.
- ⁷⁰ Ibid.
- ⁷¹ Simoniukštytė, 'Lietuvos romai', 138.
- ⁷² Ibid., 143.
- ⁷³ E.g., Toileikis, 'Lietuvos čigonai Antrojo pasaulinio karo metais'; Bubnys, *Vokiečių okupuota Lietuva (1941-1944)*.
- ⁷⁴ Simoniukštytė, 'Lietuvos romai', 125.
- ⁷⁵ Interview with Svetlana Novopolskaja, September 21, 2020, online.
- ⁷⁶ Jutelytė, 'Lietuvos romų genocido atmintis kaip atminties kūrėjų veikimo laukas', 32.
- ⁷⁷ Ibid.
- ⁷⁸ Interview with Svetlana Novopolskaja, September 21, 2020, online.
- ⁷⁹ Ibid.
- ⁸⁰ Lietuvos Respublikos Vyriausybė, 'Dėl romų integracijos į Lietuvos visuomenę 2000-2004 metų programos', par. 3.

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- ⁸¹ Lietuvos Respublikos Vyriausybė, ‘Nutarimas dėl romų integracijos į Lietuvos visuomenę 2008-2010 metų programos patvirtinimo’, section ‘Švietimas’.
- ⁸² Lietuvos Respublikos Kultūros Ministras, ‘Įsakymas dėl romų integracijos į Lietuvos visuomenę 2015-2020 metų veiksmų plano patvirtinimo’, 22.
- ⁸³ Lietuvos žydų (litvakų) bendruomenė, ‘Rekomendacijos dėl veiksmų kovojant su antisemitizmu ir romafobija Lietuvoje, 2018 m.’, 63.
- ⁸⁴ Etninių tyrimų institutas, ‘Lietuvos Socialinių Tyrimų Centro Etninių Tyrimų Instituto užsakymu atliktos visuomenės nuostatų apklausos 2019 m. rezultatai’, 1.
- ⁸⁵ Interview with Svetlana Novopolskaja, September 21, 2020, online.
- ⁸⁶ *Lietuvos Aidas* (August 3, 2012) suggests 2007; see <http://www.aidas.lt/lt/istorija/article/5093-08-03-romu-holokausto-auku-atminimas-lietuvoje>. According to *Bernardinai.lt* (August 2, 2019), commemorative ceremonies have been taking place on August 2 since 2004: <https://www.bernardinai.lt/2019-08-02-rugpjucio-2-d-romu-genocido-atminimo-diena/>
- ⁸⁷ Lietuvos žydų (litvakų) bendruomenė, ‘Rekomendacijos dėl veiksmų kovojant su antisemitizmu ir romafobija Lietuvoje, 2018 m.’, 65.
- ⁸⁸ Jutelytė, ‘Lietuvos romų genocido atmintis kaip atminties kūrėjų veikimo laukas’, 35.
- ⁸⁹ Interview with Svetlana Novopolskaja, September 21, 2020, online.
- ⁹⁰ Ibid; interview with Faina Kukliansky, October 5, 2020, online.
- ⁹¹ Tumavičiūtė, ‘08 03 Romų Holokausto aukų atminimas Lietuvoje’.
- ⁹² Ibid., par. 11 and 12.
- ⁹³ Lietuvos Sąjūdžio Vilniaus skyriaus taryba, ‘Rezoliucija dėl čigonų/romų holokausto’.
- ⁹⁴ Interview with Svetlana Novopolskaja, September 21, 2020, online.
- ⁹⁵ Ibid.
- ⁹⁶ Ibid.
- ⁹⁷ When it was created in 1992, this organization was primarily focused on research on the deportations and repression experienced by ethnic Lithuanians under Stalin. In the late 1990s, it started including the study of the Holocaust into its activities. Recently it has been engaged in a series of memory conflicts over the memorialization of Generolas Vėtra, a controversial anti-Soviet fighter who was also engaged in the creation of ghettos.
- ⁹⁸ Most material presented in this museum deals with the suffering experienced by ethnic Lithuanians during World War II and its aftermath. There is only one exhibition hall about the Jewish Holocaust.
- ⁹⁹ Lietuvos gyventojų genocido ir rezistencijos tyrimo centras, ‘Tarptautinė romų holokausto aukų atminimo diena’, par. 3.
- ¹⁰⁰ Interview with Faina Kukliansky, October 5, 2020, online.
- ¹⁰¹ Tumavičiūtė, ‘08 03 Romų Holokausto aukų atminimas Lietuvoje’, par. 18.
- ¹⁰² Geros valios fondas, ‘Apie mus’.
- ¹⁰³ ‘Atminimo akmenys Panevėžyje primins apie romų persekiojimą’.
- ¹⁰⁴ Ibid, par. 4.
- ¹⁰⁵ Lietuvos žydų (litvakų) bendruomenė, ‘Rekomendacijos dėl veiksmų kovojant su antisemitizmu ir romafobija Lietuvoje, 2018 m.’, 104.
- ¹⁰⁶ Interview with Dovilė Rūkaitė, September 27, 2020, online.
- ¹⁰⁷ Ibid.
- ¹⁰⁸ Interview with Svetlana Novopolskaja, September 21, 2020, online.
- ¹⁰⁹ ‘Nemokamas Mariaus Jampolskio muzikinis spektaklis primins romų holokaustą’.
- ¹¹⁰ *Juodasis paukštis* [The black bird].
- ¹¹¹ Interview with Faina Kukliansky, October 5, 2020, online.
- ¹¹² Irene Visser quoting Michael Rothberg. See Visser, ‘Decolonizing Trauma Theory’, 253.