

The Roma genocide in Latvia (1941 – 1945)



The booklet includes information from the NGO Roma Culture Centre, articles by Ieva Garda-Rozenberga and Kaspars Zellis “Atceroties genocīdu: romu iznīcināšana nacistu okupācijas laikā” (“Remembering genocide: extermination of Roma during Nazi occupation”) in the Journal of the Institute of Latvian History (2015, No.2), by Vents Dubrovskis “Ar atstumtības sajūtu...” (“With a sense of exclusion...”) in “Neatkarīgās Tukuma Ziņas” (08.05.2008), by Uldis Neiburgs “Traģēdija ar ieilgušu noklusējumu: Latvijas čigānu (romu) liktenis Otrā pasaules kara laikā” (“A Tragedy with prolonged concealment: The fate of Latvian Gypsies (Roma) during World War II”) in “Mājas viesis” (09.09.2015), by Antra Grūbe “Romu glābējs Talsos” (“Saviour of Roma in Talsi”) in “Latvijas Avīze” (09.09.2014).

Photographs from the *Latvian State Historical Archive, Latvian State Archive, German Federal Archives, Roberts Svižeņecs.*

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Cover painting “Last sunset” by Kārlis Rudevičs, 1996.
Design: Sava Grāmata, 2017



Kultūras ministrija



This project / material is co-financed within the framework of the Rights, Equality and Citizenship Programme of the European Union

The present material has been developed under the project "The Latvian Roma platform I: dialogue, cooperation and involvement" No. JUST/2015/RDIS/AG/NRP2/8793 with the financial support of the European Union Rights, Equality and Citizenship Programme 2014-2020. The Ministry of Culture of the Republic of Latvia is responsible for the contents of the material. It does not reflect the opinion of the European Commission.

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Kārlis Rudevičs

Lake Valgums

(ballade)

Even winds stop next to Lake Valgums;
They perch in pines and howl and cry:
Not the water but the blood of Gypsies blazes
In this lake – calling towards the sky.

Here on May the fifth, in forty two
Tukums' Gypsies were driven
In this pine forest shot down like dogs -
If only one of the five hundred has been left alive!

And the screams of their innocent hearts
Even today one can hear
that nocturnal birds shrieking in dark nights
Are embodied by spirits of the dead.

But it seems that the beastly evil of fascism
Here in Latvia is deleted by barons -
From crucifix or from gravestones
Here - in this forsaken place – not a trace can be found.

Only winds howl eerily at nights
And pines shed tears of resin
That gleam with drops of blood in sunset rays
And bird's of darkness shadow settles

Over the lake, where spirits of Roma wander

For Valgums...



The Roma genocide in Latvia (1941 – 1945)

Word “**Samudaripen**” means “mass destruction” in the Romani language, describing the Roma genocide conducted by the Nazi Germany during World War II.

During the Nazi and fascist regime in Europe, persecution, extermination and deportations based on ethnic origin were mostly aimed at Jews and Roma (Gypsies). The ideology of German national socialism concerning division of people by race identified that Jews and Roma belong to an inferior race, harming the harmonious development of the pure Aryal race, therefore they had to be exterminated. Based on information provided by eyewitnesses, about two million Roma were tortured and killed during World War II.

About 70,000 Roma were killed in the Auschwitz camp during World War II. On 2 August, 1944, 2,897 Roma children, women and men were taken to gas chambers. Since 1997 in some European countries this day has been marked as the Roma Genocide Remembrance Day (*Samudaripen* or *Porrajmos* in Romani), when the Roma victims who suffered from the Nazi re-

gime are remembered across the world.

70% of all Roma killed during World War II were shot to death during the German occupation of Latvia in 1941-1942. **All representatives of the Roma nation suffered, there was no family that had no relative killed or tortured to death in a concentration camp.**

According to the information provided by the Roma Cultural Centre, stories of eyewitnesses suggest that there were about 8,000 Roma genocide victims during World War II. Meanwhile, the murder of 3,000 Roma has been verified by documents and materials of criminal cases. Numbers vary because at the time many Roma people did not have identification documents, while others held documents with a different nationality written in them. For the same reason, the population census data about the number of Roma in Latvia are not accurate either - in 1935 there were 3,840 Roma people registered in all Latvian regions and the city of Riga, while, in fact, the real number could be twice as large.

Comprehensive studies of the Roma genocide in Latvia are complicated because of the lack of documents and materials. The documents left behind by the Nazi occupation power are fragmented, while the Latvian SSR Extraordinary Commission's materials and criminal cases of the people convicted by the Soviet security services reflect one-sided information and do not disclose the description and essence of these crimes.



In 2014, as a result of a study of archive materials by the Roma Cultural Centre, the Roma genocide or its attempt has been documented in all Latvian districts, except for Daugavpils, Ventspils, Talsi, Valka, Madona, Cēsis, Ilūkste, Jēkabpils, as well as the Riga region and city, where no proof of the Roma genocide has been found so far. The question of Riga's Roma is especially complicated because neither the German occupation documents, nor the Soviet criminal cases show factual evidence of extermination of the Roma in the Rumbula and Biķernieki tragedies. For example, the note on burials of Nazi victims list civilian burials in the forests of Biķernieki, Rumbula, Dreiliņi, Šķīrotava train station, Bižumuiža, the new and old Jewish cemetery, Salaspils concentration camp, Termiņciētums jail, Jugla train station, Strazdumuiža and the Matīsa cemetery, but the nationality of the victims has not been specified. However, memories of eyewitnesses reveal that Roma had been killed also in these places.

Several decrees and oral instructions about extermination of Roma issued by the Nazi authorities and officials were implemented in the occupied eastern lands, also in Latvia. The first such available document is a complex report about the situation in Ostland (Latvia) in September 1941, describing the general political, economic and ethnic situation in Latvia, including information about Roma. Ostland's Reichkommissar Hinrich



Image 1. Deportation of Roma and Sinti in Asperg, May 22, 1940; photo from the German Federal Archive

Lohse reported: *“I am confident that Gypsies should undergo a different order in our district. There are some sedentary Gypsies and others are itinerant. I am confident that these elements, being an alarming factor for the neighbourhood, should be placed in one concentration camp. I am confident that the measures proposed by me will prevent possible disorders.”*¹

The decree by Hinrich Lohse of December 4, 1941, described that the itinerant Roma should be treated like Jews because they pose several risks: 1) they are carrying contagious diseases, 2) they are untrustworthy elements that do not obey the local authority, do no useful work, spy for enemies.

The documents suggest **that persecution was especially aimed against the itinerant Roma**, but those Roma

¹ LVVA p-69 f., 1.A. Apr., 17 l., 188.lpp.

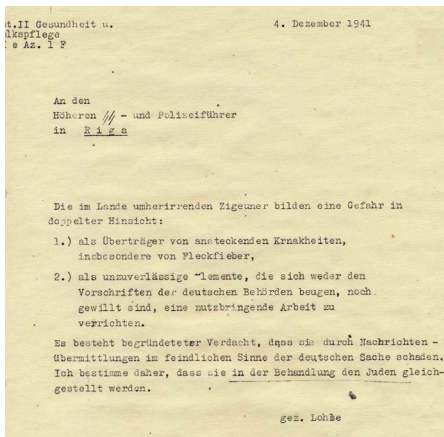
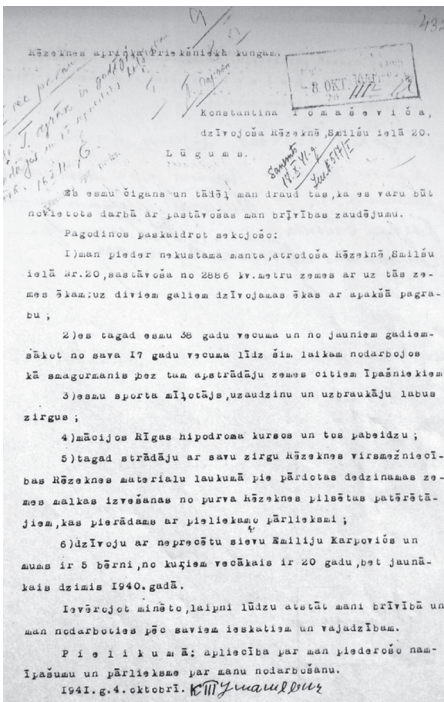


Image 2. Decree of December 4, 1941, by Ostland's Reichkommissar Hinrich Lohse; from the Latvian State Historical Archive



who had a permanent place of residence, had a job and were not involved in crimes were officially released from arrest and confiscation of property. There is a decree of December 24 1941, issued by the Valmiera district chief to three police departments to list all Roma – sedentary and itinerant.² Similar records were also made in other Latvian districts. **In order to save themselves, Roma reported to the police or local authority that they were not itinerant, had a home, and were working or ready to work in different jobs.** For example, in March 1942, 11 Roma sent an application to the commissioner general in Riga, explaining that they own houses, their children go to school, but they had lost the possibility to earn a living because their horses had been confiscated, nevertheless, they were ready to take on any job available in the city or in the neighbourhood. In reality, however, in several cases Roma suffered irrespective of their occupation, social status or other criteria. They were forbidden to live in cities and coastal areas, communicate in their native language, stay on the streets after 10 p.m.

There is documentary evidence of the extermination of Roma in several Latvian districts.

² LVVA 1423.Fonds, 1.Apr., 34.lieta, 37.lpp.

Image 3. K. Tomaševičs' application to Rēzekne district police chief about his place of residence and occupation. October 4, 1941; photo from the Latvian State Historical Archive

The first killings of Roma took place in August 1941 in the Baltinava county of Abrene district, in November in Liepāja, and in December in Namīķi forest, Ciecere county of Kuldīga district.

In Liepāja, November 1941, along with Jews, 173 Roma from Liepāja and Kuldīga districts were killed, and in December, 101 Roma, including women and children, were shot in Namīķi forest of Ciecere county.³ On this case the most comprehensive set of documents in German has been preserved, including so far the only Roma martyrology - a complete list of the Roma killed in November/December 1941, including victims' addresses, occupation, state of health. In Kalvene county 90 Roma, including children⁴ were killed in 1941/1942, but in June 1942, 19 itinerant Roma from Aizpute county were killed. Handwritten notes survive, saying that in spring 1942, 30 Roma were shot dead in Zolmežs.⁵

There is little evidence left about the Roma tragedy in Tukums in 1941 and 1942 - just the statement drafted by the Latvian SSR Extraordinary Commission in 1945 about the extermination of the county's local residents during the fascist occupation. The statement says that the concentration camps were established at the Tille and Vecmokas manors, and also that Roma were placed in these camps. Testimonies of

drivers about the transportation of Roma to the extermination place by Lake Valgums where about 1,500 victims, including Roma, were buried in 1942 are especially important. One of the drivers said that during one such campaign he had made 12 runs with 20 Roma people on each of them. Another driver remembers the transportation of 300 Roma to the place by Lake Valgums.

Kandava resident Ruta Kraukle remembers her mother's story about the tragedy: *"The shooting took place on May 7 or May 9, 1942. My mother Lidiņa was 14 years old and in summer she worked for a farmer. She survived just because before the tragedy the farmer's wife arrived and asked the girl to come to help wash dishes at her son's wedding; my mother stayed with the farmer, but her family was killed. Grandfather was working in a sawmill in Tukums - he was detained first, and in the evening the rest of the family was taken. My aunt (Anna, 19), was pregnant, but she was shot anyway. They were all innocent people who had done nothing wrong... Mum survived as the only one of six children - the others were shot... My mother's godfather had arrived from Liepāja, he told us that Gypsies and Jews were being killed in Liepāja; he came with two horses, hoping for rescue, but he was also held that night. Relatives said that the shooting took place somewhere by Lake Valgums. In order to save bullets, children were held by their feet, hit against pines and dropped into the pit. There were Gypsies who later ran*

³ LVVA p - 132. Fonds, 26. Apr., 15. lieta, 4.lpp.

⁴ LVA p - 132. Fonds, 26. Apr., 6. lieta, 2.,3.,5. lpp.

⁵ LVA p - 132. Fonds, 26. Apr., 6. lieta, 84. lpp.



to the pit to see it – the pit was still moving for some three days as some people had been still alive there, but there were guards with dogs who did not allow to rescue anyone.”⁶

In 2003 representatives of the NGO Nevo Drom discovered the place by Lake Valgums where the bones of victims could still be found. The Prosecutor General's Office has launched a criminal case, which has not been completed yet.

There are documents available in the Latvian State Archive proving that on January 4-5 1942, almost all Roma of Rēzekne district were killed, but on January 6, 130 Roma from Ludza city were taken to Gabari forest in Zvirgzdene county and killed. The diary of typist Anna Družinska of Rēzekne jail has the following entry: “All Gypsies were taken away yesterday. At 10 a.m. several carts with people from Kaunata were brought. Beautiful girls, suntanned kids... Several hours later all of them – men, women, children – screaming, were forced into trucks and taken to Ačupāni hills. To be shot. What for?” **Rēzekne district police report on the situation on July 20, 1942, has information about killing of 311 local Roma.**⁷ The archives have information about 25 Roma arrested in Makašāni county and 20 Roma from Malta county, as well as 6 Roma killed in Andrupene

county, and 70 Roma in Viļāni county.

A Roma recalls the so-called Audriņi operation: “On the first Sunday of January in 1942, Audriņi men were shot dead in the square of Rēzekne Street. I did not see it myself. In the evening of that day Gypsies' home on Ludza Street was surrounded by armed men in uniforms speaking German and Latvian. The city's chief checked everyone on the list. Guards were also placed near our private house. My brother Nikolajs and I, our wives and mother fled through the back door to a Latvian we knew in Rēzna county. We learned that on the same evening all Gypsies from their homes were taken to Ludza Street, and on Monday morning they all were taken to Rēzekne jail and shot. Before killing, some of them were locked up in the jail's bath house. Also, I heard that the Gypsies from Kaunata county, the Tumaševics and Levickis, were taken to Rēzekne and later killed in Ančupāni hills. Only Konstantīns Levickis who lived in Malta survived. Later my wife was caught and killed, I escaped, I was caught then and locked up in Daugavpils fortress where I stayed until the Soviet troops came. Gypsies were not shot in Daugavpils district, therefore I survived. In total about 200 Gypsies were killed in Rēzekne. Rēzekne Gypsies who were not caught at once were searched for and in May 1942 they were killed in Ančupāni hills, including my relatives. I was the only one to survive.” According to eyewitnesses, the bodies of the killed Roma were dug up and burned in 1944. The job was done by the Jews

⁶ Vents Dubrovskis, „Ar atstumtības sajūtu...”, Neatkarīgās Tūkuma ziņas, May 8, 2008.

⁷ LVA 4112. Fonds.



from Salaspils who were murdered later.

Investigation documents of the Latvian SSR Extraordinary Commission show that on May 27-28, 1942, 280 Roma were arrested and shot dead in Ērmiķi pine forest, 13 kilometres away from Jelgava, including 56 adults, and the others were adolescents and children from the age of one week up to 16 years.⁸ There is also evidence that in the fall of 1943, 250 Roma jailed in Sērmuiža concentration camp were shot dead in a forest 10 kilometre away from Jelgava.

There is little in the way of documents and evidence left about the extermination of Valmiera Roma. About 50 Roma, mostly women and children, were placed in Valmiera jail and shot in the nearby forest.

Several investigation documents refer to Roma genocide, but do not name the date of executions and the number of victims.

The final decision on the fate of Roma were often made by local authority and police officials – some were literally implementing orders of the Nazi occupation regime about extermination of Roma based on their ethnic origin, no matter whether they sedentary or itinerant; **others, on the contrary, tried to save them.**

According to documents of the Latvian SSR Extraordinary Commission, the killings and conveying of Roma were carried out by local residents, poli-

⁸ LVVA p – 132.F, 30. Apr., 1.-3., 44., 45., 23.lpp.



Image 4. Roma mass extermination place by Lake Valgums in Tukums region; photo from Vents Dubrovskis' article "Ar atstumtības sajūtu..." ("With a sense of exclusion..." in Neatkarīgās Tukuma ziņas)

ce officers. For example, in spring 1942, F.Vicinskis and G.Vilhelms, residents of Gaiķi county of Kuldīga district, took part in the arrests of local Roma who were later shot in Saldus.⁹ J.Šteinbergs, a resident of Rencēni who in December 1941 volunteered for work in the police and was a guard in Valmiera concentration camp, took part in the shooting of 45 Roma.¹⁰ Among criminal cases, there are also trials against Tukums and Bauska civilians about participation in murders, including in convoy and guarding.¹¹

Historian Andrievs Ezergailis said that the Germans tried to have as little contact with the locals as possible,

⁹ LVA 1986. Fonds, 1. Apr. 2182. lieta, 177.-180.lpp.

¹⁰ LVA 1986. F., 1.Apr., 28446.lieta, 21., 22.lpp.

¹¹ LVA 1986. Fonds, 1. Apr., 1676. lieta; LVA 1986.F. 1. Apr., 44502., 2451.lieta – sk. kopijas.

therefore the decree to prepare the Jews or Roma for extermination has given to the chief of the district by phone.¹²

The Nazi formed special groups from local residents to use them in repressive measures against the Jews, Communists, Roma, etc. For example, the so-called Arājs Kommando, a paramilitary unit subordinated to the Nazi Security Service (SD), that took part in the Holocaust, including the Roma genocide in the Latvian territory, was set up in Riga in July 1941. 35-50 armed men of the Arājs Kommando used to go to the sites in blue buses. The Kommando's first repressive campaigns were held in Madona, Jēkabpils, Aizkraukle and Rēzekne in August 1941, then in Saldus, Tukums and Aizpute in October. There is a dramatic story that on the birthday of the German SD Rottenfuhrer's son, members of the Arājs Kommando decided to entertain themselves. A crate with 15 Roma children, aged 6-12, was brought, and the son could take a gun and shoot the children trying to escape the crate one by one. Every shot was greeted with applause, but if the shooter missed, the adults finished the job. Eventually all the children were killed.¹³

The tragedy of the Bauska Roma

¹² A.Ezergailis „Vācu laiki 1941-1945: atbrīvošana, brīvprātība, paš aizsardzība” (“German times 1941-1945: liberation, voluntarism, self-defense”), Jaunā Gaita, No.228, March 2002.

¹³ Dainis Krauklis (2016) Kad dzimtas dārzos ziedi plaukst (When blossoms bloom in family orchards). Rīga: SIA „Sava grāmata”.

has been studied in great detail thanks to the historian and head of the history department of Bauska museum, Aigars Urtāns. **In the criminal cases against participants in the Bauska Roma shooting and other materials of the Extraordinary Commission there are facts about the extermination of the Roma in Bauska district.** Decree No.18 issued by Bauska district and police chief Lieutenant Colonel A.Dzenītis, of November 1 1941, said: *“Gypsies are forbidden to arrive and reside in Bauska city, Vecumnieki, Iecava and Skaistkalne densely populated areas. All Gypsies residing in the above mentioned areas and their family members who do not have real estate properties there by November 30 this year have to move to and work in the countryside. Unemployed Gypsies and those avoiding work will be sent to work in concentration camps after the set date.”*¹⁴ According to the evidence of several eyewitnesses, in May 1942, all Roma of Bauska, around 250 adults and children, were taken to the Jaunmēmele manor in Skaistkalne county, and six days later were shot in the Jaunsaule county forest. A handwritten note records about 300 victims, and says that besides Bauska's shooter – Lieutenant Bērziņš, Bauska police chief assistant Burkovskis and Skaistkalne county deputy chief Siliņš, also “colleagues” from Jelgava arrived in a blue bus.¹⁵

Interrogation protocol of Nikolajs

¹⁴ Uldis Neiburgs. „Traģēdija ar ieilgušu noklusējumu”, Mājas Viesis, September 9, 2015.

¹⁵ LVA p – 132.F, 30. Apr., 9. lieta, 5.,6., 8.lpp.

Ķiselis, a worker of Bauska region's kolkhoz Svitene, from August 20 1958, by USSR secret service KGB: *"On July 1 1941, I volunteered to join Bauska police... In July 1942 Bauska police announced that all Gypsies should move to the Jaunsaule county manor. We collected about 70 Gypsies. In July I received an order from Bauska police chiefs Arvīds Upmalis and Dzenītis together with other B group's members to go to Jaunsaule county by bikes to guard the place of Gypsies shooting. It was in a forest near the Jaunsaule church. The pit was 8-10 meters long and 2 meters wide. At about 3 a.m. armed B group members arrived in a truck from Jelgava. The 70 Gypsies brought from the manor were shot by the people from Jelgava... The pit with the dead bodies was filled up by Bauska police officers... About 2 weeks later I received a decree from police chief Dzenītis to go to a shooting of Gypsies in Jelgava... The shooting took place in a forest near Svēte. The pit was 10 meters long and 2 meters wide. The first group of 50-70 Gypsies was brought in 3 cars. Jelgava's B group guarded them, but Bauska's B group headed by Sapatnieks did the shooting... The pit was filled up by Jelgava police officers."*¹⁶

Stories of saving Roma and their heroes

Roma survived in Talsi district cities, Talsi, Sabile, Ventpils and Kandava

¹⁶ LVA 1986.Fonds, 1. Apr., 43000. lieta, 1.Sējums, 25. - 26.lpp.



Image 5. Kārlis Krūmiņš with his wife and daughter in Riga, the 1930s; publicity photo

thanks to attempts of the local authorities. For example, Roma in Talsi were saved by the district chief Kārlis Krūmiņš (1895-1955).¹⁷ During the district's board meeting, revising the Nazi occupation decree in liquidation of Roma, Krūmiņš defended the local Roma, explaining that the workforce in necessary.

From the interrogation protocol of K.Krūmiņš: *"In Talsi district, about 7 kilometres from the city, by the Leprosarium, in June 1942 a mass grave was dug and prepared for shooting of Gypsies. The nation was alarmed; there were talks that*

¹⁷ Antra Grūbe, „Romu glābējs Talsos”, Latvijas Avīze, September 9, 2014.

Talsi Pilsnīca, 1946. g. 11. mēn.

33

№	Personas vārds	Adrese	1946. g.	1946. g.
1	1924.	...
2	1906.	...
3	1917.	...
4	1924.	...
5	1918.	...
6	1896.	...
7	1924.	...
8	1910.	...
9	1926.	...
10	1919.	...
11	1924.	...
12	1922.	...
13	1923.	...
14	1918.	...
15	1916.	...
16	1897.	...
17	1928. g.	...
18	1928. g.	...
19	194. g.	...
20	1919.	...
21	1928.	...
22	1928.	...

Image 6. A fragment of the application in defence of former Talsi district chief Kārlis Krūmiņš signed by Talsi and Ventspils Roma, 1946; photo from the Latvian State Archive

also the elderly people who are not able to work will be shot along with Gypsies. The situation was tense. I turned to Talsi district Kreislandwirt Ahlborn, saying that it is not sensible to shoot Gypsies, that many residents of Talsi district have gone into army and there is shortage of workforce. I described the concerns of the local residents and asked him to support my opinion. Ahlborn agreed that the workforce is necessary and we together spoke about with Redike, He agreed and went to Riga to meet the commissioner general who later announced that shooting of the Gypsies has been cancelled. Later the mass graves were filled up and the Gypsies remained alive.” **Thanks to such activity, some 200 Roma in Talsi district were saved.** One of the Talsi Roma, Juris Stepanš-Kraučs said: “We, the Roma living in the Talsi district remained alive and were not shot thanks to district’s chief Krūmiņš. Also in the later occupation years, Krūmiņš, despite the fascist persecutions against the Gypsies, was favourable to us, provided us with consumer goods that has not been in the plan of the German fascist authorities.” However, despite this evidence, Kārlis Krūmiņš was punished by the Soviet authority for collaboration with the Nazi regime.

There was also a significant turn in the life of Sabile Roma. On September 13 1941, about 200 Roma were standing by a pit in the Svente pine forest,



Image 7. The empty pit in the Svente pine forest that had been dug for Roma; photo from Olga Aleksejeva’s article “Ebreji Sabilē 20. gs. pirmajā pusē” (“Jews in Sabile in the first half of the 20th century”)

waiting for their death. According to the stories, local Roma Kristaps Kleins was allowed to fulfil his last wish and sing a Romani song, and he tried to sing it for as long as possible, **when Sabile mayor Mārtiņš Bērziņš (1873-1968) arrived and stopped the planned shooting.**¹⁸ Even today there is still the empty grave as a scar on the land, reminding about the tragic events.

The Roma stories keep this event in the historical memory: *“Her grandfather was taken to the shooting. Others thought that there will be some job to be done, but her grandfather said – do you not feel where you are being taken – we will be shot. The cousin asked whether he can sing the last song before the shooting; and then they said: “Alright, sing! You can still sing your last song.” And then Bērziņš returned, he had been in Riga and received permission. It turned out that Gypsies were not shot like Jews, but it depended on the local authority. And then Bērziņš took a stand for Gypsies – he arrived on his motorbike and said: “Cancel, cancel the shooting!” So my cousin survived.”*

Thanks to this action, the local Roma stood up for Bērziņš when the Soviet authorities in 1949 wanted to deport him to Siberia as the enemy. Sabile Roma activists in gratitude for saving Roma have built a monument to Bērziņš 150 meters from the Abava River, saying “The Saviour of Sabile Gypsies from Death”. Also, a memo-

¹⁸ LVA 1986. Fonds, 1.Apr., 2358. lieta, 23., 206., 238. lpp. sk. kopiju.



Image 8. Memorial plaque for Mārtiņš Bērziņš on Kr.Barona Street in Sabile

rial plaque has been placed by Bērziņš's house in Sabile, saying that Sabile mayor Mārtiņš Bērziņš has worked there “who demonstrated his civic courage and saved the Sabile Gypsies community from extermination”.

Kārlis Krūmiņš, Mārtiņš Bērziņš and other saviours of Latvia's Roma have deserved that they are remembered.

Remembrance events for the Roma genocide victims

The European Parliament's resolution of April 15 2015, about the International Roma Day calls on all European Union member states to officially recognize the Roma genocide and other ways of persecution against Roma, such as deportation and arrests during World War II.

Even though lately information about the Roma genocide in 1941–1945, has been published more broadly, and there are calls to pay more attention to this sensitive issue, there is





Image 9. Normunds Rudevičs, the president of the International Romani Union at the opening of exhibition “Roma Holocaust in Latvia (1941-1945)” in Riga; photo by Roberts Svižņevs

no national memorial place established to remember victims of this tragedy. At present the NGO Roma Cultural Centre is actively working on this issue, implementing several local and international projects, studying archive materials, collecting people’s memories about the Roma genocide. For example, in 2015, the Academic Library of the University of Latvia displayed exhibition “The Roma Holocaust in Latvia (1941-1945)”.

Ieva Garda-Rozenberga and Kaspars Zellis, researchers of the Institute of Philosophy and Sociology of the University of Latvia, in their publication about extermination of Latvia’s Roma during the Nazi occupation regime call on Latvia’s society to support and demonstrate solidarity in learning about the Roma tragedy and call on the Latvian political and intellectual elite to promote research of the Roma geno-

cide and support development of the memorial for the tragedy victims and officially set a Remembrance day.¹⁹

In conclusion, we should cite Normunds Rudevičs, the president of the International Romani Union: *“There is no monument or memorial where the innocent war victims can be remembered whose only guilt was that they were born in Roma family. I hope that the Latvian state as the carrier of the idea on a united and consolidated state, and the Jewish nation who shared the bitter fate of persecution and extermination during World War II, will provide support and share experience in study of the Roma holocaust so that this tragedy is never forgotten and never repeated. So, may their souls rest in peace!”*

¹⁹ Garda-Rozenberga I., Zellis K., „Atceroties genocīdu: romu iznīcināšana nacistu okupācijas laikā”, Latvijas vēstures institūta žurnāls, nr.2., 2015., - 87.lpp.



A model of the memorial for Roma genocide victims initiated by the International Romani Humanitarian Fund;
photo by Roberts Svižņečs

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