

THE IMPORTANCE OF REMEMBRANCE

“OUR ASHES WERE MINGLED IN THE OVENS”

ROMANI PROVERB

GABI MUNTEAN
Pavee Point Traveller and Roma Centre

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I AM PROUD TO BE A ROMA WOMAN, MOTHER, WIFE AND ACTIVIST.

Roma people passed through slavery, the Holocaust, starvation and injustice. It is important for people to recognize what has happened to the Roma community. It is important for the generation coming after me to know what has happened to our people and to not allow this to happen again. It is important to live in solidarity with others and to have the courage to say we are the Roma.

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THE TERM 'ROMA' IS AN UMBRELLA TERM THAT REFERS TO PEOPLE WHO IDENTIFY AS ROMA, SINTI, KALE AND RELATED GROUPS IN EUROPE, INCLUDING TRAVELLERS.

Roma Holocaust
The Forgotten Holocaust
Discrimination - Even In Death
Memorial Day, 2nd August

PORRAJMOS
THE DEVOURING

Under the rule of Nazi Germany, Roma and Sinti were persecuted, detained and executed as part of the Holocaust. They were murdered in extermination camps and died of hunger and disease in forced labour and concentration camps.

The Nazi genocide of Roma and Sinti during the Holocaust is known as the Porrajmos, which translates to 'the devouring'.

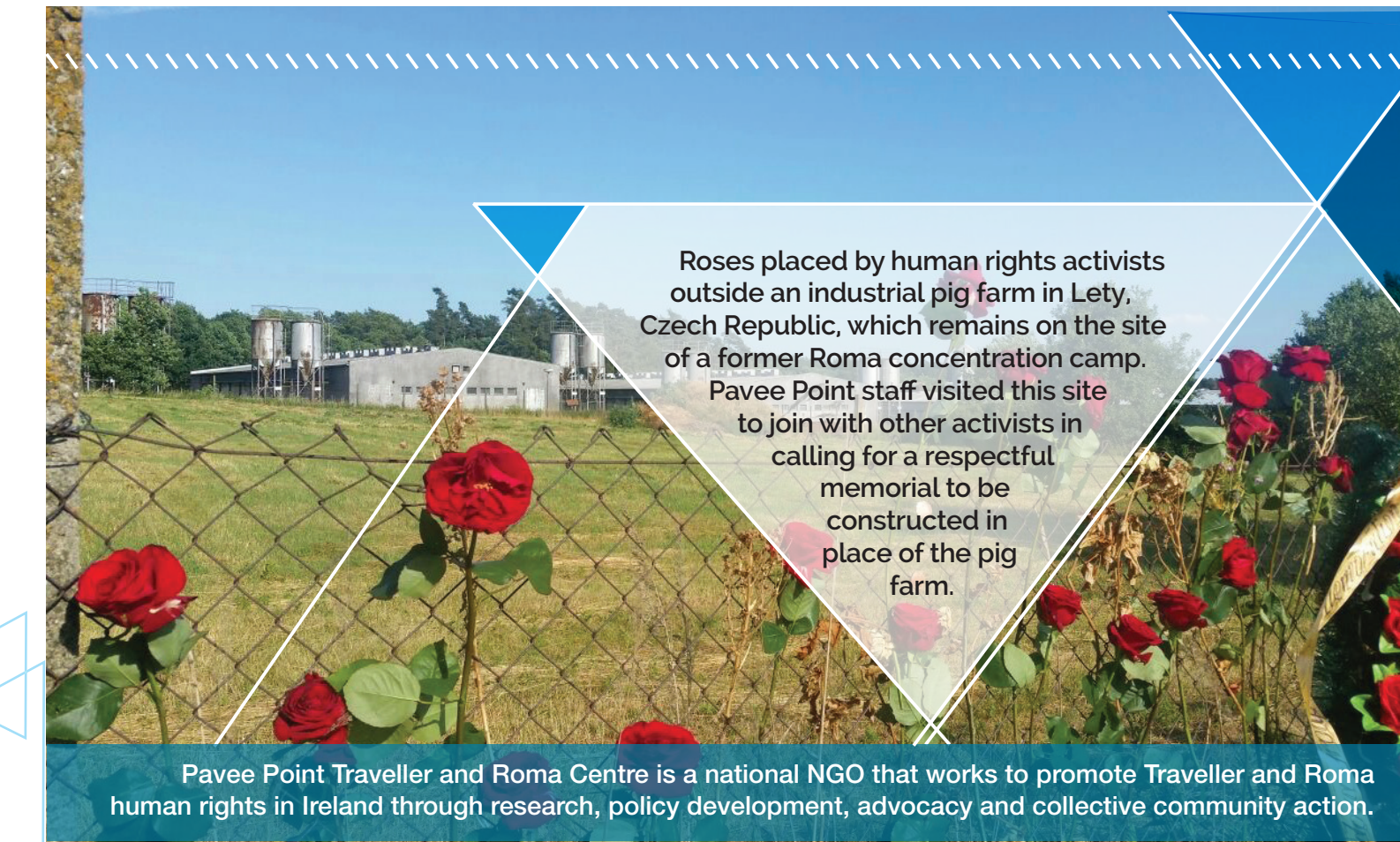
An estimated 500,000 Roma and Sinti were murdered during the Holocaust - victims of racist persecution by the German Nazis and their fascist allies. At least another 500,000 were displaced, dispossessed, or had their identity papers lost or destroyed.

During the Nuremberg Trials, no mention was made of the genocide of Roma and Sinti.

The genocide of Roma people during the Holocaust wasn't formally recognised until 1982. Until then, the West German government denied that Roma were subjects of racially motivated persecution.

Roma Holocaust Memorial Day was first marked in 2009 in response to the lack of recognition and commemoration of Roma suffering during the Holocaust. Since then, one minute silence is observed at the Holocaust memorial stone in front of the Palais de l'Europe, Council of Europe in Strasbourg, and by Roma throughout Europe.

Today Roma continue to be subjected to racially motivated hate crime, violence, persecution, expulsion and discrimination.



Roses placed by human rights activists outside an industrial pig farm in Lety, Czech Republic, which remains on the site of a former Roma concentration camp. Pavee Point staff visited this site to join with other activists in calling for a respectful memorial to be constructed in place of the pig farm.

Pavee Point Traveller and Roma Centre is a national NGO that works to promote Traveller and Roma human rights in Ireland through research, policy development, advocacy and collective community action.

Thank you to our funder
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THE GENOCIDE OF ROMA AND SINTI DURING THE HOLOCAUST

“Rats, roaches and fleas are also natural occurrences, just like the Jews and Gypsies. All life is a struggle. Therefore, we must bit by bit, annihilate all of these vermin.”

German doctors association magazine, 1938.

Under the July 1933 sterilisation law, many Roma were sterilised against their will. As was the case for the Jewish, the outbreak of war in September 1939 radicalised the Nazi regime's policies towards Roma. Their 'resettlement' to the East and their mass murder closely parallel the systematic deportations and killings of the Jewish people.

By the summer of 1938, large numbers of German and Austrian Roma were rounded up and sent to concentration camps. They were forced to initially wear black triangular patches, which classified them as 'asocials'. Finally a brown triangle was used for Roma and the letter Z (Zigeuner) was put in front of the number tattooed onto each prisoner.

There was segregated provision even in extermination camps. In the extermination camp at Auschwitz II-Birkenau, section BIIc was known as the 'zigeunerlager', or 'Gypsy' camp. There were no Roma and Sinti survivors from Auschwitz concentration camp.

Under Antonescu's rule in Romania, it is estimated that over 25,000 Roma were deported to camps in Transnistria, a region in the Soviet Union occupied by Romanian and German forces. Food was scarce, medical care absent and prisoners were subjected to forced labour, starvation, disease and brutality. In 1944, when the camps were liberated just 11,000 Roma had survived.



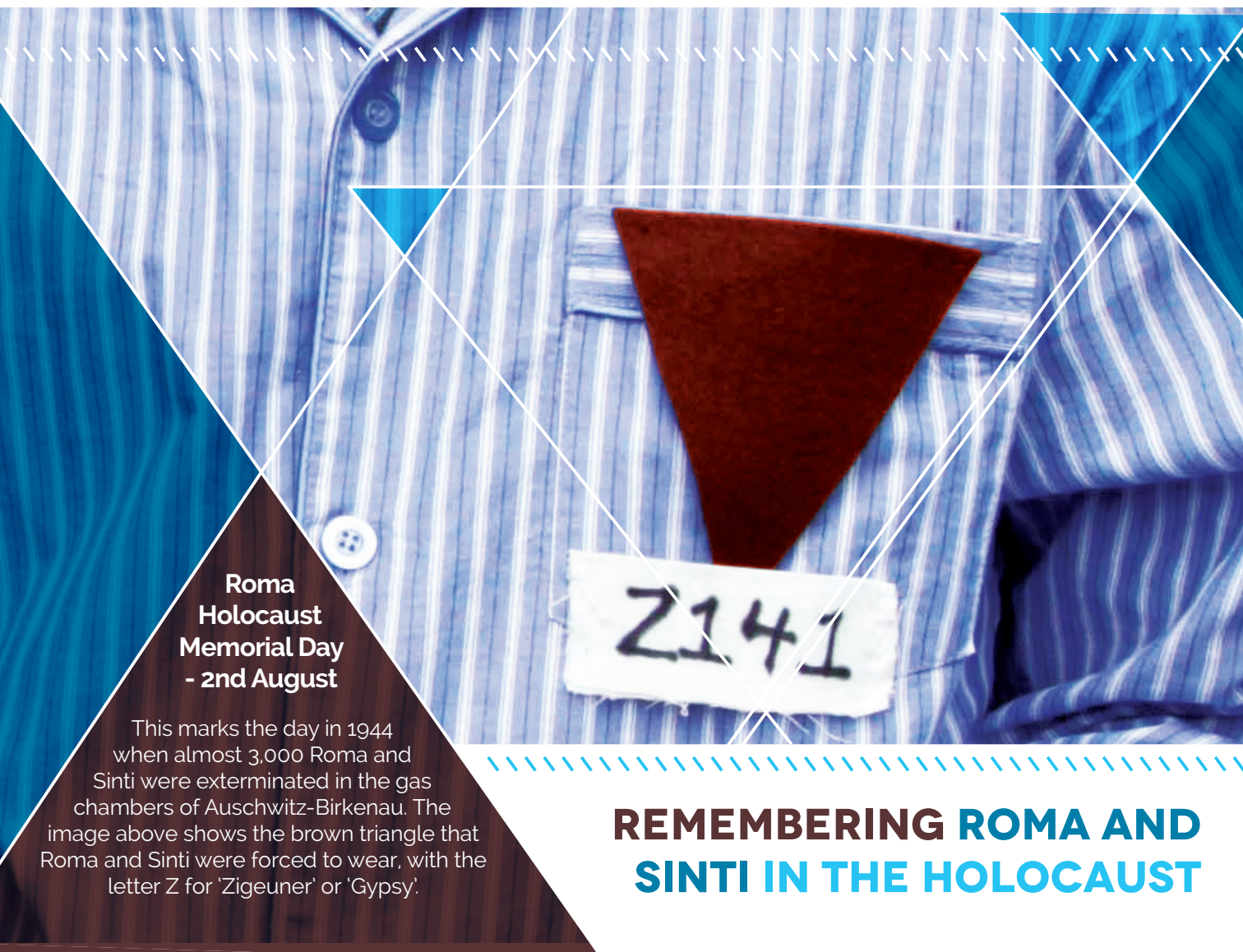
STELIAN CIUCIU

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CLOSE TO THIRTY ROMA FROM MY FAMILY WERE TRANSPORTED FROM ROMANIA TO TRANSNISTRIA.

The stories my father used to tell us are hard to talk about. Stories of dead children and adults lying in ditches, of people being beaten and raped, people dying from starvation or disease without a drop of hope, of people who had been shot for a piece of bread and of people who became monsters. When they returned from Transnistria there were only six people left from thirty which was a great loss.

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Roma Holocaust Memorial Day - 2nd August

This marks the day in 1944 when almost 3,000 Roma and Sinti were exterminated in the gas chambers of Auschwitz-Birkenau. The image above shows the brown triangle that Roma and Sinti were forced to wear, with the letter Z for 'Zigeuner' or 'Gypsy'.

REMEMBERING ROMA AND SINTI IN THE HOLOCAUST