



Celebration of  
**Romani Resistance in Europe**

Craiova University  
Aula Facultății de Mecanică  
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**REGARD**  
is a European project of the  
CERV Programme - Remembrance  
(Citizens, Equality, Rights and Values)  
*Grant Agreement 101091312*





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CERV  
Citizens,  
Equality,  
Rights  
and Values  
Programme

EUROPEAN REMEMBRANCE

#CALL  
#OtherEUFunding

The European Union finances transnational projects aimed at promoting European culture and its democratic values, and at consolidating a common and inclusive memory of its troubled history, against all forms of totalitarianism and discrimination.





## Europe against racism and discrimination

- Europe has too often been the scene of wars (and continue to be so) and of totalitarisms
- We know these things from history books, but in these books too often a piece of history is missing: the history of the Roma and their sacrifice and contribution to liberation from Nazi-fascism
- Instead, what we know about Roma are the stereotypes and prejudices that continue to be a source of discrimination and social exclusion





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## Consortium

The REGARD project partners are an Italian institute of social research and three Roma associations:

*CNR-IRPPS (Italia)*

*Thèm Romanò (Italia)*

*SRRH «Kali Sara» (Croazia)*

*Asociatia Centrul de Cultura al Romilor Dolj (Romania)*





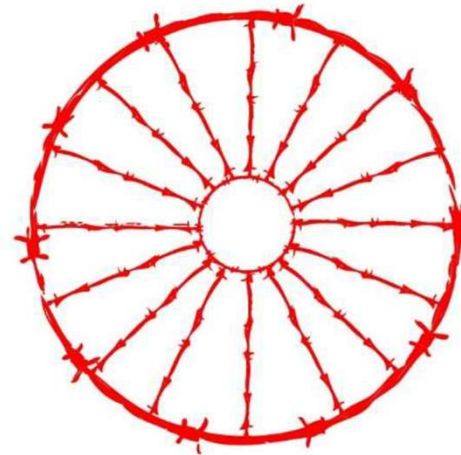
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## Aims of the project

REGARD was born during a previous project and it aims to:

- **Commemorate the Samudaripen, the nazifascist genocide of Roma (at least 500,000 death),**
- **Celebrate the Roma Resistance in Europe and the Roma history and culture**

around the major romaní calendar dates and four activities



*The symbols*





## Six dates

- **16 May:** Romani Resistance Day in Europe
- **2 August:** Roma Genocide Remembrance Day
- **5 October:** Anniversary of the Monument on Samudaripen in Lanciano
- **5 November:** Romani Language Day
- **27 January:** Holocaust Remembrance Day
- **8 April:** International Romani Day





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**Bronislawa Wajs, known as Papiusza,  
Polish poetess and partisan**

## The Activities

- 1) Survey on Samudaripen
- 2) Training with adolescents
- 3) Partecpatory process with civil society
- 4) Cultural events such as concerts, conferences, exhibitions, etc.





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## Theoretical background of the project

So as there is the **forgotten Roma genocide**, there is also a **forgotten Roma Resistance**.

The project follows a novel approach: instead of treating Roma as a passive object of nazi-fascist persecution, according to ERIAC we consider them as protagonists of the European history in the process of democracy-building after the totalitarianism time and the WWII.

We are here for shedding light on Roma contributions to national and European struggles for **DEMOCRACY, JUSTICE and INDIPENDENCE**



**"I leoni del Brenta Solini"**  
(Partisan brigade of Italian Sinti)





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## Romani Resistance: Why MAY 16th?

On the evening of May 16, 1944, in the Auschwitz-Birkenau concentration camp, SS guards armed with machine guns surrounded the area of the camp designated for Roma and Sinti prisoners. Their intent was to round up the nearly 4,400 prisoners there and send them to the gas chambers. But when the guards approached the area, they were met with armed resistance from the Roma inmates.

On 2 August 1944, after having worsened the living conditions of the Roma and transferred some of them to other camps, the Zigeuner-lager B II was liquidated: 2,897 Roma were exterminated in only one night.





## The forgotten Romani Resistance

**Samudaripen** - that means 'all death' - is a central event in the history of Roma in Europe. Remembering this genocide is a central reference for the work of associations that tend to promote Roma culture, as **ERIAC**, and for our Project, **REGARD**

**Michel Foucault:** *"Where there is power there is Resistance, a multiplicity of points of resistance"* but ROMA one was forgotten.





## Ustasha Policies in Croatia against Roma

- In May 1942, Roma were deported to the Jasenovac concentration camp and killed. Roma were not recorded as individuals, as the Jews, but as "railway carriage"
- Result was the almost **complete genocidal eradication of the prewar Roma population**
- Roma were recognized as national minority only in 2002





## Romani Resistance in Croatia

- **Evading deportations**  
June 1942, Uljanik  
and then Habjanovici, Rajici, and Bobota
- **Resistance in camps**  
Roma resistance in June 1942 in the Jasenovac Camp
- **Roma in the partisans**  
Josip Joca Nikolic, Milan Radosavljevic, Stefan Nikolic,  
Janko and Tihomir Nikolic





## Romanian policies against Roma

- **Slavery (XIV-XIX CENTURY)**  
The case of Ioana Tinculeasa Rudareasa
- **The Ion Antonescu (1940 - 44)**  
Roma were deported "en masse". There are petitions by Roma deportees or their relatives, mainly written by Roma men serving Romanian Army, and addressed to Antonescu asking exempt from deportation or the repatriation of their family



## Romani Resistance in Romania

- **Escaping from Transnistrian camps**  
Lentica Dura's father example
- **Armed resistance**  
1942, a group of 50-60 Roma from Preajba village attacked the gendarmes who had arrested Petre Moearte, a Roma, in preparation for his deportation
- **Cultural Form of resistance in Transnistrian camps**  
Poems and songs born in the lagers are a form of Resistance





## Fascist Policies in Italy against Roma

- The first circular concerning Roma is dated **August 25<sup>th</sup> 1924**
- **Reject Roma and Sinti out of Italy: Circulars on February 19<sup>th</sup> 1926 and on August 8<sup>th</sup> 1926 and on May 14<sup>th</sup> 1930**
- **On 11 September 1940**, the Chief of Police signed for the internment of Roma and Sinti in specific camps (Agnone, Boiano, Tossicia)
- The Italian **Samudaripen** reached its peak between **1943 and 1945**. With the **Republic of Salò** there were deportations to the Nazi concentration camps as **Mauthausen and Dachau**







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## Romani Resistance in Italy

- **Amilcare Debar** called *Taro* or **Black Corsair**. He was comrade in arms of the future President of the Republic Sandro Pertini who personally gave him the *Diploma of Partisan Fighter* during a ceremony at the Quirinal
- **Leoni di Brenta Solini**: known only recently with the autobiographical book *Strada, patria sinta*, by **Giacomo Debar** known as *Gnugo*
- Many Abruzzo Roma and many Sinti of the **Satori** families, **Gabrieli** and **Reinhart** fought on the Abruzzo Apennines in the famous **Brigata Maiella**

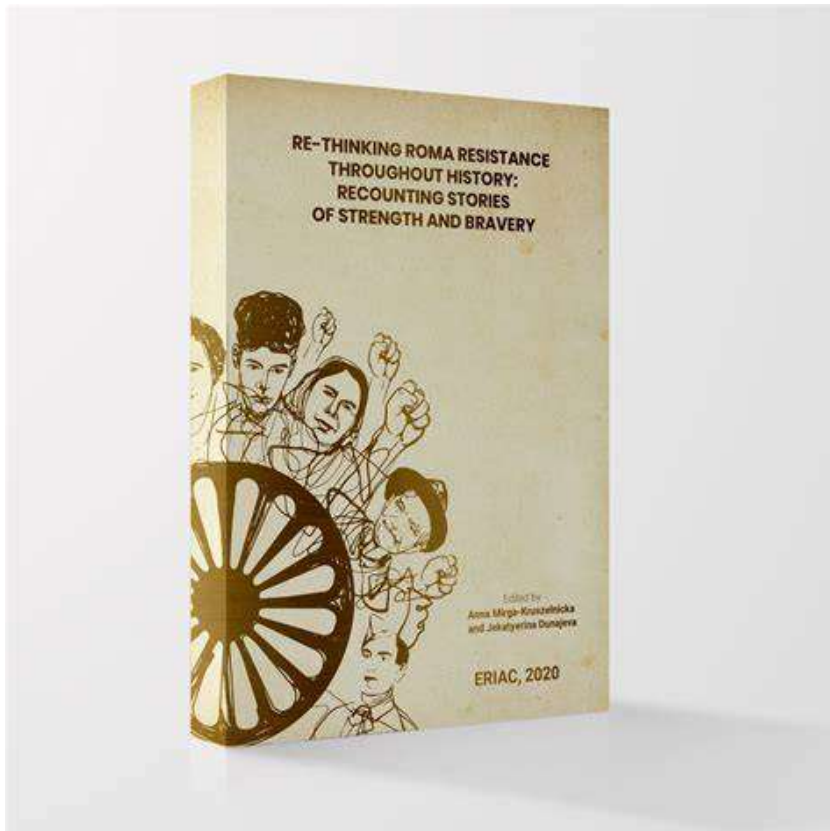


Amilcare Debar, partigiano Sinto italiano (1927-2010)



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## Concluding remarks



- After the WWII, both Samudaripen and Roma Resistance have been pushed to the margins of scientific research and other public interests, deemed of little significance for European history and memory.
- It will be necessary to wait many years before they timidly began to talk about it (first book of 1964) and to gradually lay bare this ugly story by sifting through the Nazi archives and those of the allied countries, and listening to the stories of the survivors.



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## Concluding remarks

- Today, with much delay, almost all the most important international organizations are aware of this topic (EU, CoE, ERIAC, IHRA, ...) also as a teaching and training tool to help overcome stereotypes and prejudices against Roma.
- Our aim is also to highlight the gaps existing in the various educational systems that still little deal with the Samudaripen and the Romani Resistance



Hungarian Roma boy, 1930s





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Thank you and greetings the Roma way:

But Baxt Ta Sastipe

