TEODORA JABLONSKAITĖ
(Lithuania, August 3, 1914 - Panevėžys, Lithuania, February 9, 1980)

Teodora Jablonskaitė, also referred to in some documents as Dora Jablonskaja, was born in 1914 in Lithuania. Her family was based in Panevėžys region and engaged in various activities in the surrounding areas. Jablonskaitė's parents owned a horse-drawn carriage which allowed them to travel in search of economic opportunities. Her father was a horse trader, working in different villages, while her mother took care of the household and occasionally read tarot cards[1].

January 1943, Jablonskaitė and her family were **arrested in their home in Panevėžys and taken to Pravieniškės Concentration Camp**. Her mother and aunt were killed there in April 1943[2]. After some time, Jablonskaitė was **relocated** from Pravieniškės to several unspecified l**abour camps across France** and was eventually transferred to a concentration camp in Germany.

Teodora Jablonskaitė in 1960.
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Both before her arrest and during her imprisonment in Pravieniškės forced labour camp, Jablonskaitė's acts of selfless bravery **saved children from the Nazis by hiding them**. Based on the available information, Jablonskaitė likely **saved both Roma and non-Roma children**, since she began her heroic activities before Lithuanian Roma were subjected to heavy Nazi persecution in early 1943.

Her daughter, Grafinė Jablonskaitė, remembers, "My mother rescued children who were not her own, she would take them in, sometimes even forge documents proving that they were her children, thus saving their lives. When Roma travel, they always carry big pillows with them. My mother would put a tiny child inside of a pillow and pass by the Nazis; this is how

1 Beinortienė, Vida, Daiva Tumasonytė, ed. 2016. Panevėžio romų kančių keliai 1941–1945 m. [Exploring the Untold Suffering of the Roma of Panevėžys: 1941–1945]. Panevėžys: Komunikacijos centras "Kalba. Knyga. Kūryba". P. 24

2 Ibid, p. 23

she would **save their lives**."[3]

While in Pravieniškės Concentration Camp, Jablonskaitė risked her life to save young children, who, along with the elderly, were regularly exterminated by the Nazi soldiers because they were unable to work.

Although the fate of the children rescued by Jablonskaitė remains largely unknown, we now know of one instance where a child rescued by her from Nazis survived into adulthood. Steponas Arlavičius, also known as Gadžioro (born in 1940 and died in 1987 in Lithuania), survived the Pravieniškės concentration camp thanks to Jablonskaitė hiding him, as a toddler, in a feather pillow[4].

After the Second World War, Jablonskaitė returned to Lithuania and tried to adopt the daughter of her sister, who was killed in Pravieniškės. Sadly, the local authorities in Soviet-occupied Lithuania did not permit it[5]. Jablonskaitė died in 1980 in Panevėžys. She is buried in Panevėžys Christ the King Cathedral Cemetery with her husband, Jurgis Orlovskis, and their two sons[6].

The memory of Jablonskaitė mother, Anastazija Jablonskienė-Bagdonavičiūtė, who was killed in Pravieniškės camp in 1943, was honoured by installing a Stolperstein, a commemorative brass plaque, in the pavement of the street where she lived (J. Tilvyčio str. 1, Panevėžys)[7]. **Jablonskaitė's life story, however, has not been commemorated**.

Sources and further information

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3. Platūkytė, Domantė. 2019. "Nutylėtas genocidas palietė kiekvieną romą: iš 18 vienos šeimos vaikų išgyveno tik vienas" [Untold genocide affected every Roma: from the family of 18 children only one survived]. https://www.lrt.lt/naujienos/lietuvoje/2/1062115/nutyletas-genocidas-paliete-kiekviena-roma-is-18-vienos-seimos-vaiku-isgyveno-tik-vienas?fbclid=IwAR3XWGAQNn16PYZjs6NR-LiTYVxR1OH9DDhUVzz0lw9UB_Dez7nQ7mxXqJ0
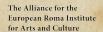
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3 Platūkytė, Domantė. 2019. "Nutylėtas genocidas palietė kiekvieną romą: iš 18 vienos šeimos vaikų išgyveno tik vienas." Accessed March 2, 2020. https://www.lrt.lt/naujienos/lietuvoje/2/1062115/nutyletas-genocidas-paliete-kiekviena-roma-is-18-vienos-seimos-vaiku-isgyveno-tik-vienas?fbclid=IwAR3XWGAQNn16PYZjs6NR-LiTYVxR1OH9DDhUVzz0lw9UB_Dez7nQ7mxXqJ0

4 Nanook journalist collective, 2019. Podcast "Juodojo paukščio žinia: romų genocidas Lietuvoje [A Message from the Black Bird: Roma genocide in Lithuania]." Accessed March 2, 2020. https://nanook.lt/podcast/juodojo-paukscio-zinia-romu-genocidas-lietuvoje/

5 Beinortienė, Tumasonytė, p. 44

6 I bid, p. 46

7 Lietuvos žmogaus teisių centras, n.d. "Atminimo akmenys. Anastazija Jablonskienė-Bagdonavičiūtė." Accessed March 9, 2020. https://manoteises.lt/atminimo-akmenys/panevezys/anastazija-jablonskiene-bagdonaviciute/