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Research article

Selective interpretation and eclectic human heritage in Lithuania

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Abstract

This paper examines recent controversy in Lithuania surrounding 20th century wartime tragedy with particular emphasis on contrasting the commemoration of the mass extermination of the Jewish community and the suffering of Lithuanian Partisans during Soviet Occupation. Comments are made on the consequences of authorities eschewing research into these areas and the consequent implications for the modern human and tourism heritage offering that currently exists within the country. The paper postulates through analyses of two case studies that recent tragedy in Lithuania is a newly fashioned "taboo" for authorities and locals. Analysis suggests that there are dichotomous representations of tragedy inherent in two of Lithuania's high profile "dark" tourist attractions. The paper builds on previous literature examining the phenomenon of "dark tourism". The conclusion postulates the need for an open and transparent historical perspective on interpretation and education. These are primary considerations in promoting collective future acceptance of the country's past



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Keywords

Lithuania; Vilnius; Dark tourism; Vilna Gaon Jewish State Museum; KGB Museum of Genocide Victims; Selective interpretation

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