Roma Voices in History

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Elena Marushiakova, Vesselin Popov (Eds.)

Roma Voices in History

A Sourcebook

Roma Civic Emancipation in Central, South-Eastern and Eastern Europe from the 19th Century until World War II

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Elena Marushiakova and Vesselin Popov

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Introduction

The book we are bringing to the reader's attention is a type of historical chrestomathy concerning the processes of Roma civic emancipation before the Second World War in the region of Central, South-Eastern, and Eastern Europe. It presents key historical sources, accompanied by notes and comments. This format may seem somewhat unusual in the context of the contemporary rapid development of the multidisciplinary scientific field, popularly known as Romani Studies: that is, the study of the Roma, a term which seems to have replaced that of Gypsies, the latter being an English translation of the diverse designations for this community, in different languages. We nevertheless chose this format, given the urgent need to introduce into academic circulation the original sources on the Roma in as many original languages as available. The sources presented in this book were selected in order to illustrate the early development of Roma civic emancipation. The volume is intended as an aid to studying and researching the subject. We also hope that our book may find its way into universities and secondary schools as a textbook.

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The main purpose of this book is to propose a new approach and to lay the foundations for a new reading of Roma history. When talking about Roma history, one often hears complaints about the lack of written sources. However, the opposite is true. The preserved sources are numerous but, at the same time, under-researched. The main issue is in the two predetermined discourses in which Roma history has been (and continues to be) articulated by researchers: namely, by approaching the Roma as a threat and problem and/or as victims. In the past, beginning with the emergence of Romani Studies as a specific field of study (Grellmann, 1787), the so-called Gypsies have been researched mainly from the point of view of solving the problems they were seen to pose to the modern state. In the aftermath of the Second World War, the paradigm gradually shifted and has often set the focus primarily on Roma's grim historical experience, as well as on the various repressive state policies that fostered it.

However, both discourses, though radically opposite, are united in their attitude to the Roma themselves, who are viewed as passive objects of these policies rather than as active creators of their own history. In this way, the scholars are not trying to discover sources written by Roma at all and thus the Roma point of view is de facto absent, and the reaction of the Roma themselves (or lack thereof) to the policies implemented towards them, as well as their visions about the future of their communities, are neglected. Therefore, one of the main goals of this book is to propose a new research paradigm through which the Roma in their *longue durée* history became political subject as creators of their own destiny (an issue that continues to be especially relevant today).

We think that the time has come for Roma voices in history be heard and this is the main reason for choosing the title of this book. In our attempts to introduce and popularise this new approach to the history of the Roma, in which they are perceived and presented as architects of their own lives and future, we have often encountered, even in

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academia, many long-standing prejudices, which further motivated us to continue our work in the chosen direction.

Some years ago we corresponded with a colleague, one of the creators of the impressive series *Discourses of Collective Identity in Central and Southeast Europe 1770-1945* of Central European University Press, which presents the most important texts that triggered and shaped the processes of nation-building in the region of Central and South-Eastern Europe. He could not comprehend our question as to why Roma authored texts were omitted from this selection. For him, the Roma were (and continued to be, even after our conversation) completely different from other peoples in the region – that is, a socially marginalized community that is not capable to create its national vision, nor to formulate and publicly present its political ideas. In the end, this book series succeed in "bringing together and making accessible basic texts of the respective national tradition" and to "challenge to the self-centered and 'isolationist' historical narrative" (Ersoy et al., 2010, p. 1), but Roma remained excluded from it, yet again.

This widespread prejudice about the inequality of the Roma with the other European nations alongside which they have lived together for centuries continues to occur today. In fact, even some scholars who deal especially with Roma history presume: "Due to the marginal historical situation of Roma groups, there are few sources about Roma and even fewer written by Roma themselves" (Majtényi & Majtényi, 2016, p. 3). We can recently observe some progress in this regard, but it often takes a strange direction. After one of our public lectures devoted to the Roma civic emancipation movement in the period between the two World Wars, illustrated with a number of written sources collected in archives across the region, and in Roma publications, a colleague commented that there was nothing in the archives about the history of the Roma that deserves attention; if there was any material, they were a matter for the police, and they presented the Roma only as violators of the law. This is obviously a brilliant example of a confirmation bias, which comes as no surprise in a context in which Gypsy (now Roma) stigma is both historically and socio-economically omnipresent, as well as scientifically justified. So, in the description of a research project, it can be read that "the documents related to the Roma past, available in archives, are about them but never by them" (sic! – authors note), and that presented research done in this direction "combines oral history research with anthropology, ethnology, sociology, and media studies" (The Untold Story, 2019).

Sometimes it can be read also that history is irrelevant to Gypsies themselves (Okely, 1983, pp. 1-27; Mróz & Mirga, 1994, pp. 27-32), or "for them, identity is constructed and constantly remade in the present in relations with significant others, not something inherited from the past" (Stewart, 1997, p. 28), and that: "They have no fixed history. They have no story to tell about their origins. [...] They have no shrines, no anthems." (Scott, 2009, p. 235). Historical consciousness among the Roma is not an offspring of the modern age, which is the age of nationalism, and, accordingly, the time of the creation of national history. In the pre-modern era, this historical consciousness was expressed in folklore forms, mostly through legends about the origin of the community, offering at the folklore level answers to key questions from their historical past and present, e.g. 'How the Lord

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created the Gypsies', 'Why Gypsies are dispersed through all world', 'Why don't Gypsies have their own state?', 'Why don't Gypsies have their own church?', 'Why don't Gypsies have their own alphabet?', etc. (Marushiakova & Popov, 1994; 1995). In the modern era, some Roma representatives already lay the foundations of their national historical narrative, and this process continues to develop to this day, including cases in which it takes quasi-historical forms.

The best answer to such categorical (and completely unfounded) claims about the lack of evidence of Roma history, written by the Roma themselves, lack of shrines, anthems, etc. is the current chrestomathy. Most of the materials included in this volume are original texts written by Roma; for the rest of the material, Roma authorship is secondary, the views of Roma are presented through their public messages and interviews in the press, or through official documents of state institutions, in the preparation of which Roma were actively involved. And this is only a small part of the historical sources available – with more time and with the involvement of a larger team, at least a few more such collections could easily be prepared.

In this book we are referring primarily to the materials that are known to us and which represent only the tip of the iceberg; how much and what kind of historical sources still remain undiscovered in archives and libraries worldwide and which have not been put into academic circulation, hardly anyone can determine. Just one example in this regard: a total of 22 (sic!) Gypsy/Roma newspapers and journals have thus far been discovered in the region of Central, South-Eastern and Eastern Europe during the period from the beginning of the 20th century until the Second World War (see Annex II), not all have been preserved until today or been found yet. The newspapers *Известия на циганската евангелска мисия* (Bulletin of Gypsy Evangelical Mission) and *Тербие* (Upbringing) disappeared from all Bulgarian libraries and archives. In Russia we were able to discover only one issue of the Romani language newspaper *Сталинцо* (Stalinist), published in the 1930s in the city of Mineralnye Vody, in the USSR. This issue is No. 137 (i.e. 136 issues were published previously), but how many issues have since been released is not yet known. The vast majority of the archives in the North Caucasus region were destroyed during the Second World War, including all issues of the three Roma-language newspapers – *Сталинцо*, *Пало большевистско колхозо* (About the Bolshevik's kolkhoz), the title of the third newspaper, mentioned in sources (GARF, f. P 3316, op. 28, d. 794, l. 31; Совещание, 1936, pp. 61-72), is unknown; as have all the documents concerning the Gypsy Kolkhozes which existed in this region, and those concerning the National Gypsy Village Council in Kangly village, in the region of Mineralnye Vody. We can only hope that some of these materials may still be found in the future, within private archives.

Some archives and libraries were destroyed during the Second World War elsewhere too, most notably in the USSR and Poland. Much more, however, escaped this fate; and what is still stored there about the history of the Roma is impossible to guess, even approximately. Our experience nevertheless shows that along with well-kept and fully accessible archives, there are still archives that have never even been catalogued or are not catalogued in an accessible way. At times, even information found in published

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catalogues or card catalogues may be misleading or incorrect, or some sources may be misplaced in the wrong folders. Moreover, numerous archives have only just begun their digitization, which makes their fond temporary inaccessible for the researcher.

Returning to the question of oral history, we would like to emphasise that we do not in any way deny or underestimate its importance. Moreover, about two decades ago, we prepared and published six volumes of materials on folklore and oral history of Roma in the Balkans (Marushiakova & Popov, 1994; 1995; 1997a; 1998). For us, the oral history of the Roma can (and should!) be an extremely important source, but it is necessary that this history is not opposed to classical historical knowledge, but combined with it. The two methodological approaches are, in fact, intended to serve as a constant complementarity and verification of the results obtained (it is interesting to note that the authors of the project cited above envisage interdisciplinary collaboration with many other sciences, but not with history!). That is precisely why in this compilation of historical sources our aspiration is, wherever possible, in the comments to the individual parts, to carry out precisely such a combination of the two approaches. Over the course of more than three decades, during our fieldwork in the countries of Central, South-Eastern and Eastern Europe, we have collected a wealth of material from Roma oral history, enabling us to pursue this complex approach (at least where possible, which is not always the case because of the specifics of Roma historical memory).

Another important issue related to the available historical sources from a particular period of time is the possibility of supplementing and enriching these testimonies with the preserved written memories of direct participants in these events. Here, however, a more general problem related to the specificity of historical knowledge as a whole comes to the fore, namely the significance and value of the memoirs of active participants in given historical events, which were written sometime after these events. In such a situation, the historical realities described will inevitably be subjected to editing and even self-censorship caused by the distance in time and, in our case, caused also by the new social realities of the time in which these memoirs were written. Such editing is conditioned by a number of factors, including a rethinking of the events which consequently leads to their modification, often driven by the desire to create a certain historical narrative (in our case, it is Roma historical narrative). What exactly this narrative will eventually be, depends on a variety of factors, and each case is unique. However, it is imperative that any such source is critically analysed from this point of view and verified by comparing it with other historical evidence (archival documents, the press, etc.).

Combining materials derived from a variety of historical sources is of particular importance in seeking to answer another, no less important question: a methodological question of principle, concerning the relationship between the history of legal and administrative acts on the one hand, and actual history, on the other. We refer here to the fact that, in many cases, as shown below, adopting specific legislative rules and their actual implementation are more or less in serious discrepancy (e.g. the existence of a decree prohibiting nomadic way of life does not mean a termination of the wandering). By referring to legislation we should not forget the different existing realities

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in individual countries, for instance, as reflected in the famous sayings of Russian satirist Mikhail Saltykov-Shchedrin: "The enormous strictness of the laws is compensated by the non-bindingness of their implementation". According to a well-known aphorism, one thing is to want something, another is to be able to do it, and third and fourth is to accomplish it. This principle applies, to a greater or lesser extent, to the whole of human history, including a number of historical events presented in this book (see, for example, Chapter 2 about the complete discrepancy between the legislative settlement and the real situation in the case of the Gypsy nomadism in Bulgaria).

Unfortunately, in historical studies of Roma, the emphasis has thus far been on the anti-Gypsy legislation, and much less attention has been paid to its implementation (or not) and the results obtained from it. To us, equally important are both sides of the historical process – the aims and the results of certain political actions targeting Roma. Most significant is also to reveal the perspective of the Roma themselves and their responses to existing social and political realities. It is the combination of these two views (of the authorities and of the Roma) that reveals the versatility and different dimensions of the actual historical process. This is the reason why, in the comments to the published sources, we seek a critical assessment of the subsequent actual results of the state political acts directed towards Roma (at least where appropriate data from oral history or other sources is available).

In analysing the processes of Roma civic emancipation, it is thus a fundamental principle to put them in line with the general historical context, and especially to take into account the societal position of the Roma within specific historical realities. This is indispensable, because in the whole history of Romani (and formerly of Gypsy) Studies, perhaps the most serious research problem is the specific 'Roma-centrism' that puts Roma in the centre of the research attention and leads towards neglecting their surrounding realities. By such an approach, Roma are practically transformed into a kind of a centre of the world, around which all human history revolves, which is obviously not true. To clarify this, we will give only one example in this regard. Not too long ago, we were asked if it is true that during the times of the Communist Regimes in Central, South-Eastern and Eastern Europe it was forbidden for Roma to travel abroad. Of course, a short answer to this is 'yes'. However, such an answer could be interpreted as noting to specific discriminative measures only towards Gypsies. Yet, moving beyond the frames of 'Roma-centrism' the full answer would be that there was no legal or administrative act in any of the countries in the region which prohibited Gypsies (which was the official name of the community at the time) from travelling abroad. However, this was true not only for Gypsies, but for all citizens, and Gypsies were in no way demarcated from them. In practice, however, the situation was fundamentally different. Again, this applied not only for Gypsies but for all citizens of the countries of the region. In other words, while travelling abroad was not, in fact, forbidden, numerous obstacles and different kinds of requirements virtually deprived socialist countries' citizens of this opportunity. The existence of a negligible percentage of exceptions (both Roma and non-Roma) does not change this reality. The interpretation of the world (both historically and in present times) through

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the 'Roma-centric prism' practically stigmatises the community yet again, transforming the Roma into something different from all other peoples, and discrediting Romani Studies by sending them into "splendid isolation" (Willems, 1997, p. 306) of academic ghetto. All the negatives, yet again, are at the expense of both the Roma themselves and of Romani Studies.

The avoidance of these pitfalls is only possible if a new, different starting point is sought for a comprehensive historical analysis. Such a starting point, for all our analysis of the historical sources presented in the following pages, and for the conclusions, is in our firm belief that Roma exist concomitantly in different dimensions. For us, it is an undoubted fact, that they are not an outcast social phenomenon, a hermetically isolated and self-sufficient social and cultural system; but they have always existed at one and the same time in at least two main dimensions (Marushiakova & Popov, 2016a, p. 15). This fundamental principle is based on the juxtaposition between 'community' and 'society'; the distinction 'community – society' is used here with altered content cleared from its evolutionary hierarchy (Tönnies, 1887) and, in our understanding, it concerns the relations between two simultaneously existing typological phenomena intertwined in one inseparable unity. In this case, 'community' refers to the Roma as an ethnic formation that is clearly distinguished from its surrounding population, and 'society' refers to the Roma as ethnically based integral parts of the respective nation-states of which they are citizens. These two main dimensions may, in short, be called 'ethnicity' and 'civic nationality' (Marushiakova & Popov, 2016a, p. 15).

This distinction between the different dimensions in which Roma exist is directly reflected in their multidimensional, structurally hierarchical, and contextually publicly demonstrated identity (Ibid.). It means that in different contexts, in different life situations, one of the dimensions of this identity (and not only of the two main ones) turns out to be the leading one and comes to the fore. This could be the group, family, class, gender, or any other identity. And, most importantly, these dimensions do not oppose each other nor are they mutually exclusive. On the contrary, they are in a constant (albeit historically and situationally variable) balance. This approach enables us not to enter into a discussion about the historical and contemporary dimensions of Roma identity (see van Baar, 2011a; van Baar & Kóczé, 2020). Whether this identity will be referred to as 'intersectionality' (Kocze & Popa, 2009), 'hybridity' (Silverman, 2012), 'superdiversity' (Tremlett, 2014, pp. 830-848) 'political' (McGarry, 2014), or with some other current term is not that important, because it does not change its essence.

One can often read that Roma in the regions of Central, South-Eastern and Eastern Europe are "un peuple sans patrie" (Stewart, 1991, pp. 39-52), or "citizens of the world and nowhere" (Acton & Gheorghe, 2001, pp. 54-70). This however doesn't reflect the realities of the Roma life in the regions of Central, South-Eastern, and Eastern Europe. Their homelands, for centuries, have been the countries where they live, and we know that their civic national identity is kept even in conditions of migration, at least among the first generations (Marushiakova & Popov, 2018a, pp. 88-100). However, it is worth emphasising that, whether intentionally or not, it is precisely this dimension, namely the civic

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national identity of the Roma, that receives the least attention from the vast majority of researchers.

This is particularly visible in what is presently perhaps the most attractive subfield of Romani Studies, research of Roma migration from Eastern to Western Europe. The vast majority of researchers there do not cover the real social dimensions of these migrations, thus neglecting that they are part of the mass national flows of cross-border labour mobility within the European Union, and prefer to focus only on the most visible part of the iceberg – Roma migration as a separate community (most often on Roma beggars from Romania) (Ibid).

The reasons for this approach are many and varied, and here is not the place for it to be analysed. Therefore we will only note that in the era of modern nation-states, without acknowledging the existence of a civic national identity, as a separate dimension in the complex multi-dimensional structure of Roma identities, the very processes of the emergence and development of the Roma civic emancipation movement cannot be explained or understood.

It is on the very basis of this distinction between the two main dimensions of Roma identity that defines the basic concept used in the preparation of this book was derived. This notion is Roma civic emancipation, which can be synthesised as a movement to achieve a harmonious balance between the two main dimensions of the existence of Roma (community and society), which finds its expression in their respective identities, and which is acceptable both for the Roma themselves and for the macro-society. The Roma movement for civic emancipation is a constant struggle to achieve the equal civic status of the Roma as an ethnic community and as individual citizens with their rights in all fields of all social life (political, religious, educational, economic, cultural, etc.).

Roma civic emancipation should not, in any case, be mistaken or replaced with a process of voluntary ethnic assimilation of the Roma community in the composition of the majority in the countries in which they live, nor in the composition of other national minorities. For centuries, such processes have been going on continuously, both on a personal or family basis (e.g. in cases of ethnically-mixed marriages), as well as for whole sections of the community in cases of so-called preferred ethnic identity (Marushiakova & Popov, 2015, pp. 26-54). In the case of Roma civic emancipation, however, these processes move in the opposite direction, and the goal is not the self-liquidation of the community. On the contrary, the goal is preservation and development of Roma precisely as an ethnic community within their respective civic nations, combined with struggles for civic equality with the means and measures of the respective period and state (e.g. setting up organisations, union, societies, schools, press publications, plans for work among the Roma, etc.).

On this fundamental objective is based a broader understanding of the overall dimensions of Roma civic emancipation, which is reflected in the selection of historical sources included in this book. At first glance, source-materials that appear not to be directly related to its core topic are also included in our chrestomathy: such as, for example, the ethnically-based professional associations, mutual, charitable, cultural,

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and sports societies, or so-called 'New (Evangelical) Gypsy churches', or even the participation of Roma in the communist movement which was perceived as an opportunity for a radical change of the society, and accordingly of the Roma's place in it. However, put in a more general historical context, these forms of social, political or religious organisation of an ethnic community, to one degree or another, in one form or another, ultimately fit into the general flow of the movement for Roma civic emancipation, and this is precisely the reason for their inclusion in the general content of the book. It should be especially emphasised that, here, Roma civic emancipation is perceived as part of a global social process of re-arrangement of group solidarities, expressed in the national building process, which is a product of modernity (Todorova, 2005), in the context of the entangled history of Central, South-Eastern and Eastern Europe.

Taking into account all these circumstances, the leading approach in presenting the published materials in this volume is to give priority to historical sources concerning the established Roma civil society organisations and their activities in the field of Roma civic emancipation, because they are the key tool for the formation of the public voice of the Roma community. In fact, it is the new civil society organisations that are the leading ones on meso-level and are the platform on which the negotiation takes place both between the internal divisions within the community itself and between the community as a whole and the majority society. Besides, as already mentioned, this key line also includes other historical evidence that reveals the multidimensionality of the general process of Roma civic emancipation, such as the participation of Roma in the common political, religious and cultural life of their respective civic nations, an integral part of which they are. Accordingly, in the comments that accompany these published historical sources, their critical analysis is made and the individual constituent fragments of the entire Roma history are contextualised.

This book also uses other key concepts that need further clarification – elite, visionary, and activism/activist. In clarifying these notions, and especially the overall dimensions of the processes of formation and development of Roma civic emancipation, we, similarly to Eric Hobsbawm, are benefiting from the fundamental work of Miroslav Hroch (2005), "which opened the new era in the analysis of the composition of national liberation movements" (Hobsbawm, 1990, p. 4).

According to Miroslav Hroch, this process comprises three chronological phases:

Phase A: Activists strive to lay the foundation for a national identity; they research the cultural, linguistic, social and historical attributes of a non-dominant group in order to raise awareness of the common traits and unity of the community;

Phase B: A new range of activists emerges, who seeks to win over as many of their ethnic group as possible to the project of creating a future nation; an active process of propaganda and the agitation of these national ideas among their ethnic community begins;

Phase C: The majority of the population forms a mass movement; a full social movement with its own program comes into being and the movement differentiates in diverse wings (Hroch, 2005).

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Of course, each of the national movements in the region has its historical specificities, but there are many common traits. At the beginning of the movement for Roma civic emancipation (similarly to other nationalities) is a relatively limited circle of the Roma community representatives. They are those who formulate the aims and tasks of this movement, and accordingly, at a later stage, they take over its leadership and carry on their shoulders its basic and main activities. This is the new, civic elite of the community, which is already working in new, social dimensions, and differs significantly from the old traditional Roma elite, whose functions were limited mainly within their own small part of the community (which, however, does not preclude the transformation of some of its representatives into new roles and with new functions, making them part of the new civic elite). Within this new civic elite, Roma visionaries and activists are being elevated, and the distinction between them is based on the criterion 'strategy – tactics'. The first are those who draw the overall, far-reaching perspectives for the development of the community in the new social realities; the latter are the ones that determine the specific, immediate goals and tasks of the civic emancipation movement of the Roma. Of course, this distinction is abstract and speculative and, in practice, in real life, there is no strict boundary between these two categories, and the same people can combine both functions.

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An important aspect of fulfilling the main aim of this book is the critical re-reading of primary historical sources and their interpretation thus far, as the modern academic community very often uncritically uses second-hand reading, which leads to endless repetitions of inaccuracies and even errors. In today's fast-paced world, the vast majority of writers seem to trust whatever has already been published, especially if such publications are freely available online. Comparatively rare are the cases where authors still find it necessary to refer to original historical sources, with an eye to read them critically, and rethink their meaning and implications. With this volume, for the first time, an entangled perspective on the Roma in the entire region is brought to the readers' attention. This approach requires archival work in numerous countries, and hence in multiple languages, which includes also Romani language. We believe that this approach enables us to cover in detail the processes of Roma civic emancipation throughout the region. Ultimately, this approach also facilitates outlining general directions and trends in the course of Roma emancipation.

Adopting this approach meant we had to scale a number of challenges, both of a more general, methodological nature, and of a more specific, research-wise, character. Following this path entails the need to overcome some enduring academic prejudices concerning research on the Roma. For this reason, it is necessary to begin by clarifying the reasons behind the preparation and publication of this book. By presenting the main challenges of our approach, we will, in fact, outline the specific aims and tasks of this volume, as well as the questions to which some answers will later be proposed.

During the 1980s, a young and provocative German scholar, Kirsten Martins-Heuss (1983), shocked the academic public with her pronouncement that 'Gypsy Studies'

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(*Zigeunerforschung*) is "a science of the plagiarist" (Ibid., p. 8). Despite the fact that many controversial issues are present in Martins-Heuss' book, this proposition is undeservedly forgotten today. In fact, she raised, perhaps for the first time, a number of important questions that continue to be relevant for the field of Romani Studies to this day. Most importantly, her ironic characterization of the field still remains valid.

It is not possible, within this introduction, to list all the cases in which an assertion is repeatedly considered and presented as historical fact, even when it is clearly an error in the reading and interpreting of historical sources. Even more common in academia, especially when it comes to the use of press quotations, numerous mystifications are accepted as irrefutable historical facts, often without any attempts at verification. Perhaps the most common falsification of this type is the famous poster for the sale of Gypsy slaves in Wallachia from 1852 (Ungureanu, 2019), which has repeatedly been cited as historical evidence or as an illustration in dozens of books and hundreds (if not thousands) of websites and media publications. Of course, the disclosure of this particular counterfeit does not preclude the existence of slavery of Gypsies in Wallachia and Moldova, but the fact of reprinting already proven fake items remains. This indicates that this practice can hardly be expected to cease soon.

While later in the book we will repeatedly refer to many different cases of this and similar kind, here we will limit ourselves to only one curious example in this regard (Duminica, 2019). In 1933, the Romanian Roma activist Gheorghe A. Lazărescu-Lăzurică wrote in an article published in the *Adevărul* newspaper that in Czechoslovakia a Gypsy man graduated from a university with a degree in philosophy, and was publishing a "Gypsy-language" periodical which had as many as 1,000 subscribers in Hungary, Poland, Czechoslovakia, and few also in Italy, Germany and Romania (Adevărul Literar şi Artistic, 1933a, p. 3). A few years later, the famous historian Gheorghe Potra wrote in his book that in Czechoslovakia, near Prague, a local Gypsy, Dr. Antoch Slatin, employed as a professor in the Department of Philosophy, had managed to publish a newspaper in the Gypsy language. The title of the alleged newspaper was *Afrintea Bulache*, declaring to have more than 5,000 subscribers (Potra, 1939, p. 124). In Czechoslovakia, however, no one ever heard about the existence of such a Roma activist, nor about such a newspaper. The motives of Gheorghe A. Lazărescu-Lăzurică (whose wife was a Roma woman from Czechoslovakia) for this hoax are understandable – in this way he wanted to raise the public image of Roma in Romanian society and to raise the self-esteem of Roma in general. It is worth noting, however, that Gheorghe Potra not only repeated uncritically the newspaper information but he did something more and developed the plot further. He added the name of the newspaper and the name of the Czech Rom in question, raised (compared to the initial newspaper's publication) his educational level and public position, and significantly inflated the circulation of the newspaper. As for the name of this newspaper, *Afrintea Bulache*, it was translated by Potra into Romanian as '*Propășirea noastră*' (Our Blossoming). In fact, it is probably a misspelled Romani language expression '*avri te bulache*', which can be freely translated into English with the idiom 'kiss my ass'. It is clear that Potra fell victim to the specific joke of a Roma activist (probably

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Gheorghe A. Lazărescu-Lăzurică himself, with whom he actively cooperated at the time), as he did not have a command of the Romani language.

It is quite puzzling that to this day the majority of researchers in the field of Romani Studies do not consider it necessary to master Romani language. On the other hand, it is hard to imagine a successful scholar of German studies who does not know the German language or a researcher in the field of Russian studies with no knowledge of the Russian language. However, most researchers in Romani Studies do not know the Romani language. Even among those who probe into Romani literature, those who master Romani language are still an exception to the rule. Especially for scholars working on Roma history, not knowing (and not using) the Roma language can lead to the exclusion of many important historical sources. In our case, this is of particular importance with regard to the early USSR, where in the 1920s and 1930s more than 250 (sic!) books were published in the Romani language, many of them original texts written by Roma authors. In addition, for almost five years, two Roma journals were published, as well as two newspapers, all in the Romani language. All of this vast range of source materials, revealing precisely the Roma view on the historical realities of this period, remains virtually unused by the researchers of Roma history in the USSR (Друц & Гесслер, 1990; Crowe, 1994; Деметр et al., 2000; Lemon, 2000; O'Keeffe, 2013).

Thus, as presented above, once put into scientific circulation, such historical 'fake news' are reproduced from book to book. Sometimes this happens even after the lack of historical evidence that could verify the quoted data has already been revealed. Such is the case with the supposed international Gypsy congresses in Bad Cannstatt in 1871 and Kisfalu in 1879 (for more details see Chapter 1). We have now reached a point when, especially nowadays, it is rare that anyone will doubt their veracity. Repeated are not only the 'fake news' but also one-sided and thus misleading information, inferences based on limited sources, misinterpretations, or simply conclusions rooted in misunderstandings. Much of this is implicated, from one side, by a comparatively low number of history scholars doing proper archival research in the past. On the other side, we need to take into account also the difficulties faced when accessing archives and libraries in numerous countries. Especially within the so-called socialist bloc, the possibility of doing archival research was severely restricted. Limited availability of archival source base caused usage of secondary literature instead. These circumstances made unavoidable the situation in which the same or similar mistakes passed from book to book. Nowadays we are coming to the point when the verification of past mistakes is not only needed but also feasible. After the end of the Cold War and especially now, in the time of appearance of numerous seminal works on different aspects of the history of the former Soviet camp and in the time of, what has been called the 'archival revolution' (for its ambiguous assessment, see Raleigh, 2002, pp. 16-24; Plamper, 2003, pp. 57-69), the gathering of new sources, verification of past mistakes and misinterpretation needs to become a must also in Romani Studies. During our work on gathering source base for this book we also encountered the need to change some of our own previous interpretations and conclusions.

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Errors, mistakes, and 'fake news' are most easily included in monographs that have the ambition of summarising and synthesising what has thus far been achieved in the field of Romani Studies. At this point, we limit ourselves to presenting two examples that reveal the mechanisms of their emergence and multiplication. Both examples are taken from an ambitious book, recently published in two versions (Matras, 2014; 2015), one intended for the academic community and the second one for the general public. These books encompass Roma history, language, politics, and culture worldwide, in past and present, within numerous disciplinary fields. We do not, by any means, want to deny the usefulness of such books. However, it is arguably impossible for a single author to be a linguist, a historian, an ethnographer, an anthropologist, a political scientist, etc. at the same time and, therefore, it is understandable that one would find many mistakes in such a comprehensive work.

We can illustrate this by looking at a chapter discussing medieval sources on Roma in the Balkans. Within it, a short sentence is found: "in 1378 groups of Agoupti or Gupti are described as living in a number of Bulgarian villages" (Matras, 2014, p. 130; 2015, p. 160). In the background of this categorical statement is the so-called Rila Charter issued by the Chancellery of Bulgarian Tsar Ivan Shishman, listing the settlements and lands he donated to the Rila Monastery. However, this does not refer to "Agoupti or Gupti" people. Only among the listed localities in the Rila Mountains is the term 'Agoupovi kleti' (Агоуповы клѣ́ти) mentioned. On this basis, the famous Czech historian of Bulgaria and the Balkans Konstantin Jireček (1854-1918) made an assumption that it was about the misspelling of the term 'Egyptians' (γύφτος), which sometimes, along with the name 'Athigani' (αθίγγανοι), denoted the ancestors of today's Roma in Byzantine sources (Иречек, 1899, 2, p. 307, Note 29). Later on, this interpretation was uncritically repeated in a number of other publications (see e.g. Kenrick & Puxon, 1972, p. 15; Fraser, 1992, p. 57; Gilsenbach, 1994, p. 39; Crowe, 1994, p. 2; Kenrick, 2007, p. 21). However, this interpretation cannot be accepted, given that the term 'Агоуповы клѣ́ти' refers not to a permanent settlement, but to the summer sheep encampment located high in the mountains, which were used for transhumance pastoralism and which belonged to a person with the name of 'Agoup' (the etymology of the name is unclear). In the Old Bulgarian language adjectives are formed with the suffixes '-ov, -ova, -ovo, -ovi' when the original noun is a person's name, and with the suffix '-ski, -ska, -sko' when the original noun is the name of locality, country, people, etc., i.e. if it was Egypt or Egyptians, the grammatical form should be different. Moreover, in the Bulgarian medieval literature at that time the very name Egypt (and Egyptians, respectively) was used repeatedly, and it is unfeasible to claim that such a misspelling crept into a royal charter. As for the conclusion concerning their "living in a number of Bulgarian villages", we cannot even venture a guess as to where this assertion comes from.

In the same book (in both its versions), one can find another claim that has little to do with the historical reality on the ground. According to it, "the Bulgarian authorities began to implement a programme of settling nomadic Gypsies in 1953; segregated Roma quarters were set up in dozens of Bulgarian cities and villages" (Matras, 2014, p. 190; 2015, p. 233). This statement is based on information obtained from the Radio Free Europe

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and from human rights organisations active during the Cold War (see Crowe, 1994, p. 22 and cited literature) which, given the general historical context of the era, can hardly be considered the most reliable sources. In the Bulgarian archives, however, there is no documentary evidence of the implementation of such a program; and it seems unlikely that the relevant documents had been destroyed, as there was no need to do this at the time. On the other hand, a huge amount of sources (decrees, reports, etc.) concerning the Gypsy sedentarisation of 1958 (sic!) is preserved in the archives, and this is confirmed by the oral testimonies of former nomads. The written sources, as well as these memoirs, confirm that a ban was issued by authorities to settle the former nomads within existing Gypsy neighbourhoods, while the ordinance was to offer them houses dispersed within numerous villages and to avoid the establishment of compact and segregated settlements (Marushiakova & Popov, 2007a, pp. 144-145). As one can see from the above quote, it is not only the date that is mistaken, but it wrongly suggests that Gypsy neighbourhoods appeared during the time of communism while the evidences of their existence already in Ottoman times (cf. Marushiakova & Popov, 2001) are neglected.

As said above, the same or similar mistakes can be found in numerous earlier publications as well. Their authors, however, wrote before the fall of the Iron Curtain and before the archives in the countries of the former socialist bloc became freely accessible. And, perhaps equally important, before the new forms of information technologies became available. Nowadays the work has become easier and a large part of the problems in accessing information no longer exist. Numerous archives now offer digital catalogues, some items are digitised and available on-line. For example, the original text of the Rila Charter has not only been published at least a dozen times but is even accessible on Wikipedia, and also the issue of sedentarisation of nomadic Gypsies is reflected in several articles and monographs. At the same time, with the availability of new research possibilities and information, the work became also more difficult: writing history now requires not only reading a few books and writing another one on their bases; a good historian should necessarily verify the sources and not trust uncritically the texts of authors who have worked in past, often under completely different conditions and on the basis of much less available information.

Multiple repetitions of errors that have been passed from book to book are not only due to ignorance of primary historical sources but to no less extent because of their malicious interpretation. We will limit ourselves just to one specific example in this regard. In dozens of academic publications, the Decree of Empress Elisabeth from 1759 is mentioned, according to which supposedly the Gypsies were completely denied access (sic!) to St Petersburg, the capital of the Russian Empire, and that the ban was in effect until 1917 (see cf. Crowe, 1994, p. 154). The text of the Decree, however, is very clear – this prohibition applies only to Gypsy nomads, and this does not mean that the Gypsies who are not nomads are forbidden to live in the city. Since the 19th century, many Gypsies (mainly engaged in music and dance, as well as horse-trading) have legally lived in St Petersburg. It was exactly in St Petersburg where the first Gypsy theatre and music troupe, headed by N. I. Shishkin, was created and, in 1888, the first Gypsy operetta *Children of Forests and*

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Fields was staged, which includes songs and lyrics in the Romani language (Бауров, 1996, pp. 22-23; Бессонов, 2002a, pp. 806-808).

To put an end to the existing practice of endless repetitions, which often go on for decades, of the once made mistakes and misinterpretations, the time has come to engage in a whole new, critical reading of historical sources and of the previous academic texts in order to eliminate mistakes and perverse or tendentious interpretations of data. The very chosen structure of this volume is subordinated to the performance of this task. Firstly, the historical sources are published. These are followed by their explanation in Notes, and in Comments, by their interpretation in the general historical context, on which basis the Conclusions are also made. We consider the commonly used opposite approach unsatisfactory: namely, of first pre-setting a particular discourse and even formulating the theses, for which the appropriate historical sources are to be selected (and, even if there are no such sources, the existing ones are interpreted according to the chosen theses). Such an approach already proved its shortcomings, examples about which will be discussed more than once in the comments on the specific cases and the conclusions.

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In order for this book to be properly perceived and understood, it is necessary to begin by making some clarifications on the used terminology, as well as on its spatial and chronological parameters. At the same time, it is also necessary to explain its format - the principles we have used for presenting the various texts (historical sources, notes, and comments) that are included in it.

The two key terms used in the sources and the author's texts are 'Roma' and 'Gypsies'. There is no need to pay attention here to the public debate surrounding the use of these terms, in which two discourses (political and academic) are wrongly mixed; this debate is closely correlated with the development of contemporary Roma activism and is under the decisive influence of current political structures at international (mainly European) and national levels (Marushiakova & Popov, 2018b, pp. 385-418). In this case, we take a pragmatic approach and consider it sufficient to briefly explain the principles underlying the use of the two key terms in this book.

The guiding principle that defines the use of the term 'Gypsies' is historical. Since the Middle Ages, Roma communities have lived in the region of Central, South-Eastern and Eastern Europe, and were denoted by the surrounding population with different names. Such denominations are 'Αθιγγανοι' (Byzantine Empire, Greece), 'Kıbti' and 'Çingene' (Ottoman Empire, Turkey), 'Цигани' (Serbia, Bulgaria, Yugoslavia), 'Ţigani' (Romania), 'Zigeuner' (Austro-Hungarian Empire, Austria), 'Cigányok' (Hungary), 'Cikáni' and 'Cigáni' (Czechoslovakia), 'Cyganie' (Poland), 'Цыгане' (Russian Empire, USSR, Russian Federation), 'Čigonai' (Lithuania), 'Čigāni' (Latvia), 'Mustalased' (Estonia), 'Mustalaiset' (Finland), etc. Over time, and especially after the First World War, when the old empires collapsed and new ethnic-nation-states emerged in the region, some of these names turned into official terms and became political denominations of the Roma communities in their respective countries. All these denominations are usually translated into English (today's language of the global academia) with the ethnonym 'Gypsies'.

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From our point of view, however, this is not an adequate translation; the word 'Gypsies', in the English-speaking world, including in the scholarly jargon, is used to signify diverse nomadic communities regardless of their ethnic origins and identity (Hancock, 2010, pp. 95-96). However, we also use the term 'Gypsies' to refer to all these communities throughout the period of history in question (from the mid-19th century to the Second World War), for several reasons. Despite the inappropriateness of the term, it (and all its equivalents in local languages) was used at that time; modifying them in historical sources would mean de facto rewriting and falsifying history (including the published historical sources), from a contemporary perspective. The Roma activists themselves, at that time, except in the cases when writing in the Romani language, also used these terms, and in the struggles for the civic emancipation of their community they proceeded from precisely this official discourse set out in their respective countries. Without adequately reflecting this discourse, one could not understand the first attempts to change it through the insistence (especially in Romania) on replacing the designation 'Gypsies' with 'Roma', which began during this period. In addition, in some cases, the 'Gypsies' category also includes non-Roma communities, who either do not identify themselves as Roma or are not Roma by origin (*Dom* and *Lom* in the South Caucasus region, the so-called *Lyuli* or *Jugi* in Central Asia, etc.). In the translation of such local terms into English, we use the word Gypsies as umbrella designation, simply because a more adequate term does not yet exist.

The designation 'Roma' is, however, used in the notes and comments. They are written from the contemporary point of view, wherein the movement for Roma civic emancipation is considered globally, and as a movement that is still evolving today.

Fortunately, there is no major discrepancy between the political discourse, in which 'Roma' in many cases (mostly within the framework of European institutions) is used as the umbrella label for a particular political category (Marushiakova & Popov, 2018b, pp. 385-418), and the academic discourse, in which this designation is used as an ethnic category (Marushiakova & Popov, 2016a, pp. 7-34). This is because the historical area in which Roma have lived since the Middle Ages is precisely Central, South-Eastern and Eastern Europe, and from which, during the modern era (from the 19th century to the present-day), they have re-settled around the world. The few cases where there are discrepancies in the context of this discourse are noted and discussed in comments, but this does not change the principles of the use of the two key terms ('Gypsies' and 'Roma').

The spatial scope of the study presented in this book is fixed as the region of Central, South-Eastern and Eastern Europe, but this definition is not based on purely geographical but on historical and geopolitical criteria. Until the early 20th century, these were the lands of the three great Empires (the Austro-Hungarian, Ottoman, and Russian), where after the disintegration of the Empires numerous new nation-states emerged. This is actually the region where, at that time, the processes of Roma civic emancipation emerged and developed. From this perspective, it becomes clear why the book includes Turkey (although the majority of its territory, geographically speaking, is located in Asia) and Finland (which, until 1917, was part of the Russian Empire), while some other countries

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in the region are excluded (such as Albania, Lithuania, Estonia), where there is no written evidence (or, at least, evidence have not yet been found) for the process of Roma civic emancipation.

The chronological scope of the book is not determined by specific dates either, but according to respective historical eras. In the original proposal, the chronological limit of our work was intended to be Two World Wars. However, based on existing and newly discovered historical sources, and because of the purpose of the study itself, it appeared necessary to go beyond this range. In order to better explore and explain the processes of Roma civic emancipation, it was needed to start at the roots, and the first manifestations of Roma civic emancipation took us further back in time. The earlier time limit of the study can, though to some extent conditional, be set in the mid-19th century. This was the time (especially after the revolutions of 1848) when modern nationalism rapidly developed and this was also in this context that the processes of Roma civic emancipation began to take root. The end caesura of our focus is the Second World War, which fundamentally changed the worldwide social and political order and, respectively, also influenced the processes of Roma emancipation. The end of the Second World War marks the beginning of a new, quite different, historical era.

This upper limit is also not precisely chronologically fixed due to a number of circumstances. Different countries became involved in the war at different times, and in some of them, the processes of Roma civic emancipation continued to evolve for some time also under these new conditions. In addition, some of the materials presented (the memories of participants in the events, for example) are of a later date, even when they describe the events of the interwar period.

The vast majority of these materials are published for the first time, and many of them have never been used before for academic purposes. Only a small part of these materials have already been published, mainly in Romania (Nastasă & Varga, 2001), but here they are presented also in English translation and are analysed in a broader historical context.

In the composition of this volume, the leading approach is to give unconditional priority to the historical sources themselves, so each chapter begins with the text of the source in the original language followed by an English translation. For better orientation, the source texts are grouped according to the countries, thematically, and chronologically, which is reflected in the content through the titles of the individual chapters and subchapters. The presentation of the historical sources in this book is by no means an end in itself and thus does not exhaust its content, much less its aims. Therefore, all source-materials are accompanied by notes and comments. The notes provide brief explanations that help to better understand the content of these historical sources and unknown realities. Here we limited ourselves to the explanation of the most important and unknown terms, personalities, and realities, trying to avoid a situation when each item is explained, as this would turn the book in some kind of lexicon of the time and region. The comments offer a synthesised analysis of these sources.

The published materials are divided into chapters by individual countries in the region because it is precisely the national borders that set the framework for the processes of

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Roma civic emancipation. As will be seen from these materials themselves, rather as a desired potential opportunity, the concept of the Roma as a transnational community during the studied period appeared only sporadically. Within individual countries, historical sources are grouped according to separate topics, ordered chronologically. The notes follow each of the published historical sources, while the relevant comments are based on each source or on the group of sources devoted to one topic. In cases, where we consider it necessary, at the end of the relevant chapters, summarising or additional comments are made by the editors of the chrestomathy. There, the essence of the processes of Roma civic emancipation in the respective country is summarised, context analyses are made, and the editors' explanation and/or interpretations are offered.

The individual chapters are of different lengths, which is directly dependent on the scale of activities aimed at Roma emancipation, as well as on the presence of Roma activists who have left a written legacy. Naturally, the size of the Chapters also depends on the array of discovered source materials in individual countries. As expected, and for obvious reasons, the longest chapters appeared to be Bulgaria, Romania, and especially the Soviet Union.

In the Conclusion section, the final discussion and an entangled picture of the movement for Roma emancipation in the region are offered.

It should be emphasised that, from the outset, it was our unconditional principle that historical sources should be published in their original language and then translated into English. In doing so, we proceeded from the principle that even the best translation does not convey all nuances of the original and that a number of researchers will want to have access to the original texts. At the same time, the authentic texts of Roma political and social visionaries are a part of the cultural and historical heritage that should be preserved and demonstrated through their original language.

Another principle that we adhered to (with few exceptions) was that the translations were made by the researchers for whom this source language is native, and then the English language editing was made, in order to ensure maximum adequacy. This adequacy means not only the purely linguistic accuracy of the translation but also the need for a very good knowledge of the historical context and the realities in which these sources were created.

In the original texts published in the local languages of the countries of the region, we are using their modern orthography (except for Ottoman Turkish, which is not used anymore, thus Ottoman orthography is preserved). When presenting the texts of historical sources, the style of the original language is preserved, even when this may appear more or less outdated, may sound archaic and, in some cases (as with the new language in the early USSR), even unusual. The most common neologisms of the Soviet 'Newspeak', as well as the widely used abbreviations in the early USSR (especially in the official documentation), are explained separately in the Dictionary.

Some of the terms used, which do not have an adequate English translation, are left in the original language and are in italics when used for the first time, and explained in the

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notes. The same goes for the terms of territorial-administrative units in the USSR. During the first years of the Soviet state, the old territorial-administrative units of the Russian Empire (e.g. *guberniya, uezd, volost*, etc.) were used. In the 1920s, a constant process of creating new Soviet terminology for such units began. This process was extremely complex and was not based on clear determined principles or uniform legal and administrative acts, but according to specific cases. In addition to all this, the statuses (sometimes also the boundaries) of the individual units often changed, and the hierarchy between the lower units varied. In the 1920s and 1930s in the USSR one could find the following territorial-administrative units: Republic (Union and Autonomous), *Kray, Oblast* (variant Autonomous *Oblast*), *Okrug* (variant National *Okrug*), *Rayon* (variant National Rayon), *Selsoviet* (variant National *Selsoviet*).

Italics also indicate words and phrases that are in the Romani language when inserted into a comprehensive text that is in another language. Italics are preserved also in cases whenever used in original texts.

The words and sentences in the Romani language are maintained as in the original. In the English translations of the texts, however, they are transcribed with diacritics, which is more or less the consensus way for transcription most often used in Romani Studies. In the English language texts also the self-appellation of the community is used, namely the term 'Roma', which is by now the one most commonly used within the public sphere. This term is not, however, used in its original grammatical forms but instead, it is adapted to English grammar. We have done so because we consider it acceptable to introduce foreign words into English, but we do not consider it appropriate to impose foreign grammar into one or another language. The only exceptions from this principle are the combination terms 'Romani language', 'Romani literature', and 'Romani Studies' because they have already made a lasting entry in the academic language.

Corrections of printing mistakes and added punctuation marks are not specifically noted. In the English translation, the names are given in the usual order – name, father's name (if any), surname, although in the original spelling in some languages (Russian, Hungarian, for example) there is an inversion of this order (i.e. surname, first name, in Russian also father's name).

Quotations in the text are marked in two ways – by clearly separated paragraphs or double quotation marks ("/") when they are part of a sentence. Single quotation marks ('/') stand for the individual terms used in the different texts.

Where abbreviations and acronyms are used in published texts, additions are made, which are enclosed in square brackets [], and which are eliminated in the English translation. A similar approach is used when further clarification is needed to better understand the meaning of individual words or phrases. The sign [...] also indicates redundancies made in texts that are not relevant to the main content of those historical sources: for example, repetitions (in the same document or other texts published here), deviations from the main content, unnecessary details, certain general legal and administrative rules or procedures in the Statutes of organisations, etc.

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In many places in the source texts, and especially those of the USSR, for the names of the institutions their abbreviations and neologisms, originated on this basis, have been used. They convey the spirit of the era as they were part of the new language policy in the early USSR, so we have kept them in the texts and used them also in the notes and comments. Because often these abbreviations and neologisms are incomprehensible even in the modern Russian language, a special 'Dictionary of Abbreviations and Neologisms' has been included.

In order to maintain a form of language equality, all archival and media sources, and bibliographic data, including references to the text, are displayed in the language and alphabet of the original. Books (as well as newspapers and journals) in Romani language are placed in a separate Appendix. To avoid duplication, bibliographic sources in the Romani language are included only there. The respective references in the text are given according to this Appendix.

Separate references are made to the archival and media (newspapers and popular journals) sources, according to their respective rules. In some cases, however, especially in private archives, the bibliographical data are not organised in the standard way and often the individual documents lack a designation, thus only the folder's name or archival subdivision is available. In other cases all bibliographical data are available but the page numbers of individual documents are missing or are invisible for the researcher when documents are offered for review only in digitalised form.

The Scripture quotations in English translation for this edition are taken from English Standard Version (https://biblehub.com/).

We hope that the chosen way of presenting the texts and bibliographic data will not make it difficult for the readers of this book but, on the contrary, will make it more useful for those who will rely on it in their future research.

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We hope that bringing this chrestomathy to the reader's attention will not be an endpoint, but a new beginning. We also hope that it will become a kind of prolegomena, and the basis for the further development of studies in Roma history, not only grounded in the sources presented but considering them from a new perspective and using a whole new unbiased and balanced approach to their history. This new approach to the history of the Roma must take into account the different dimensions of their identity in the modern era and the general historical context, in order that Roma history is presented as an integral and inseparable part of the common European history, over the centuries.

This book raises a number of issues that may be a subject of debate. Therefore, the book does not, by any means, claim to offer the ultimate truth; if nothing else, because no one has yet been able to find the answer to the eternal question, "What is truth?" (John 18: 38). However, this does not mean that truth should not be constantly sought and gradually revealed, and that is precisely the meaning of academic knowledge.

Elena Marushiakova and Vesselin Popov

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CHAPTER 1

The Genesis of the Roma Emancipation

1.1 The Austro-Hungarian Empire

1.1.1 *The Gypsy Voivodina*

1.1.1.1 János Kaldarás and Mihaly Szava

Kaldarás János, ki magát Biharban, Szunyogd környékén ideiglenes cigany vajdának, társával, Szava Mihaly szunyogdi lakossal együtt egy folyamodványt nyújtottak a magyar kir. udv. kancelláriához, melyben egy cigány-vajdasag fölállitásaért esedeznek. Csak a cigányok voltak még hátra, hogy ök is külön autonomiát sürgessenek.

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Janos Kaldaras, located in Bihar [1], in the vicinity of Szunyogd [2], a temporary Gypsy Voivode, and his companion Sava Mihaly from Szunyogd, have applied to the [Hungarian] Royal Office for a Gypsy Voivodina [3] to be established [4]. There now remained only Gypsies who would call for their own autonomy [5].

Notes

1. Today, Bihor County in Romania.
2. Today, Suiug in Romania.
3. In Hungarian original, the term 'Vajdasag' has been used. It refers to term 'Vajda', which is the hungarianised form of the term 'Voivode'. Today, the designation 'vajda' has become popular in the Romani language in Central Europe and it refers to the leader/representative of a certain Roma community.
4. 'Vajdasag' (Voivodina) here is used in the sense of a separate territorial-administrative unit. 'Voivode' (Voievod, Vojvoda, Wojewoda) is a Slavic term for a military commander in Central, Eastern and South-Eastern Europe during the Middle Ages, or a governor of a territorial unit.
5. It means to say that all nationalities have already asked for their autonomies while the Gypsies have been the last.

Source: [No Author]. (1865). [No Title]. *Fővárosi Lapok*, 1865, July 19, p. 622.
Prepared for publication by Elena Marushiakova and Vesselin Popov.

1.1.1.2 The two Gypsy Chieftains

Zwei Zigeunerhäuptlinge aus dem Bihàrer Komitate haben in neuster Zeit ein Besuch bei der ungarishen Hofkanzlei eingereicht, worin sie für sich und ihre Stammesgenossen um Errichtung einer geografisch abgegrenzten "Zigeuner-Wojwodina" in Ungarn bitten. Das wäre eine nagelneue politisch – historische Individualität.

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Two Gypsy chieftains from the Bihor County [1] have recently paid a visit to the Hungarian Royal Office asking for the establishment for themselves and their tribesmen of a

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geographically separate "Gypsy-Voivodina" in Hungary. That would be a brand new political-historical unit.

Notes

1. The original uses the term 'Komitat' was to refer to the territorial-administrative units at that time.

Source: [No Author]. (1865). [No Title]. *Klagenfurter Zeitung*, 1865, August 8, p. 719.
Prepared for publication by Elena Marushiakova and Vesselin Popov.

Comments

The presented materials reveal the aspirations of Janos Kaldaras and Sava Mihaly to gain public and political recognition of the Gypsy community by establishing a separate territorial-administrative unit (Voivodina) within the Habsburg Empire. The emergence of such aspirations could be understood given the general socio-political context. After the Revolutions of 1848, which marked the beginning of modern nationalism in Europe, for two decades the then Habsburg Empire was constantly shaken by the attempts of individual nationalities to gain some form of political autonomy. These processes reached their pinnacle in 1867 when the Empire was forced to "ethnicise" and transform itself into a dual Austro-Hungarian Empire while their continued development, and because of the context of World War I, led to its collapse in 1918. This influence of the general social context has been even noted by the unknown author of the publication in newspaper *Fővárosi Lapok*, who explicitly noted that the Gypsies were the last nationality in the Empire that expressed their wish for autonomy. There is a certain irony in this note (in the sense that even (sic!) Gypsies have already sought autonomy), which allows us to guess what the result of their representatives' public address to the authorities was, although no historical evidence for this could yet be found. It can be argued with great confidence that the authorities did not pay any attention to them, which is understandable given the general public disdain of the Gypsies.

The very idea of political representation of the Gypsy community does not appear in a completely random place. During the Hungarian Revolution of 1848, Nikola Mihailo (born 1810), a nomad Gypsy from Banat, joined of the Revolutionary Army and was recognised by the provisional Hungarian authorities as the 'Voivode of the Gypsies', while the Gypsies from Banat themselves declared him to be their 'King' and called him Nikola Mihailo Mali. After the defeat of the Hungarian Revolution, he emigrated to Smederevo (Serbia) and from there to Cleveland (USA) where he again declared himself as 'King of the Gypsies' and where he died in 1910 (Pavlović, 1969; Acković, 2012, pp. 144-145).

There is another important conclusion that could be made by looking at the published materials. As it has been explicitly noted in *Fővárosi Lapok*, Janos Kaldaras is located around Szunyogd, while Sava Mihaly is from Szunyogd. In other words, the former lead a nomadic way of life while the latter lived a sedentary one. That is probably the first historical evidence of an active collaboration between Roma leading different ways of life in the name of a common idea for the whole community. Keeping in mind the internal heterogeneity of the Roma community and the complex relationships (in many cases not

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accepting, rejecting and even sharp oppositions) between the Roma groups, as its main constituent units (Marušiakova, 1988; Marushiakova & Popov, 1997b; 2016a), this unique case (for the time being), may be explained by the desire of the community to reach another dimension and become an integral (and, most of all, equal) part of the society. For this aim to be achieved, a necessary condition was needed: first and foremost, that the community be united and overcome its internal oppositions due to its heterogeneity (a process that cannot be regarded as complete to this day). In fact, that is the true beginning of the Roma civic emancipation.

Elena Marushiakova and Vesselin Popov

1.1.2 *The Gypsy Congress in Kisfalu*

1.1.2.1 The Gypsy Congress

Ein Zigeunerkongress

Eine sonderbare Synode fand, wie die "Kaschauer Ztg." berichtet, in Kis-falu statt. Sie wurde nämlich von den oberungarischen Zigeunern abgehalten, welche an diesem Tage von Nah und Fern zur Besprechung "der gemeinsamen Interessen" zusammenströmten. Bei solchen Gelegenheiten finden, wie das erwähnte Blatt weiter berichtet, in der Regel zahlreiche Eheschließungen in Zigeunervolke statt.

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A Gypsy Congress

A strange Synod took place in Kisfalu [1], as the *Kaschauer Ztg*. reported, it was held by the Upper Hungarian Gypsies, who converged on this day coming from close by and from far away to sweep up "the common interests". On such occasions, as the aforementioned newspaper further reported, usually many marriages take part among the Gypsies.

Notes

1. The name itself, 'Kisfalu', in Hungarian means a small village. This is most probably the village Malá vieska (a 'small village' in Slovak) located 8 km north from the city of Košice in Slovakia. Today it is a part of village Družstevná pri Hornáde.

Source: [No Author]. (1879). [No Title]. *Epoche*, 1879, September 13, p. 3.
Prepared for publication by Elena Marushiakova and Vesselin Popov.

1.1.2.2 The Gypsy Day

Der Zigeunertag

Bei der in Kis-Falu behufs Besprechung gemeinsamer Interessen stattfindenden Versammlung oberungarischer Zigeuner dürften folgende als die ersten und wichtigsten Punkte verhandelt werden:

1. Förderung der frühzeitigen Unterrichtes der Kinder beiderlei Geschlechtes im Betteln. 2. Gründliche Unterweisung der Weiber im Wahrsagen aus den Händen.

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3. Erledigung der Frage: Wie kann man am Sichersten was mitgehen lassen, ohne erwischt zu werden? 4. Erwirkung des activen und passiven Wahlrechtes für den ungarischen Reichstag, behufs Einflußnahme bei Ausarbeitung eines mit möglichster Berücksichtigung unbeirrten Freizügigkeitsrechtes zu erlassenden neuen Vagabundengesetzes.

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The Gypsy Day

At the gathering of Gypsies in Kisfalu for the purpose of discussing common interests, the following should be negotiated as the first and most important ones:

1. Promote the early education of children of both sexes in begging. 2. Thorough training of women in fortune-telling from the hands. 3. Completing the question: how can one most safely let something go without being caught? 4. Obtaining the active and passive right to vote for the Hungarian Parliament, for the purpose of influence in the preparation of a new vagrancy law to be issued with the greatest possible consideration of the free movement of persons.

Source: [No Author]. (1879). [No Title]. *Kikeriki. Humoristisches Volksblatt*, 1879, September 18, p. 2.
Prepared for publication by Elena Marushiakova and Vesselin Popov.

1.1.2.3 The Times Newspaper

The Gipsy Congress

The *Pester Lloyd* reports that a congress of Hungarian gipsies was held in the early days of September at the village of Kisfalu, near Kaschau [1], but no details of the proceedings had as yet come to light. A principal subject of deliberation was known to be "the consideration of the common interests of gipsies everywhere". So far as is known only one such "common interests" had been discussed. It is well known that at such gatherings "hearth alliances" are contracted among many of the parties present. On the present occasion, there was a lively debate on this point, but with what result has not transpired.

Notes

1. Today Košice in Slovakia.

Source: [No Author]. (1879). Gipsy Congress. *The Times*, 1879, September 29, p. 7.
Prepared for publication by Elena Marushiakova, Vesselin Popov and Aleksandar Marinov.

Comments

The case with the so-called Gypsy Congress which was allegedly held in 1879 in Kisfalu is a typical example of media mystification, perpetuated from one newspaper to another, even reaching *The Times* newspaper in London which, at the time, had been regarded as the most authoritative newspaper in the world. From here, the 'Gypsy Congress' in Kisfalu becomes a 'real' event that is also included in academic literature (Hancock, 2002, p. 114). Verification of the sources has shown that the notice, which has been identified

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as original, allegedly published in *Kaschauer Zeitung*, does not in fact exist. This means that *The Times* newspaper has also played its part in this sensationalisation because no notice regarding a Gypsy Congress in Kisfalu has been published in the *Pester Lloyd* either.

The notices for the nominally passed (or upcoming) World Gypsy Congresses are not a rarity during that era. The first demystified case is from 1871 when the *Stuttgartner Zeitung* played a trick announcing that a Gypsy parliament would be held in Bad Cannstatt, in Germany; in January 1872, *The Times* in London published a notice about this parliament, as did the *Evening Standard* a month later. These notices have been used as a basis for the construction of the new Roma national historical narrative. The "International Congress in Darmstadt", was proclaimed to mark "the birth of the modern pan-Romani movement", underlining that it was attended by delegates from Germany, Spain, Italy and Russia (Puxon, 1975; quoted in Klímová-Alexander, 2005, p. 159). Later, however, the origin of this notice in a joke in the context of the annual Würtemburg Festival has been revealed (Hancock, 2002, p. 114; Klímová-Alexander, 2002, p. 108; 2005a, pp. 158-159; Kenrick, 2007, p. 38).

'The Gypsy theme' itself was a very curious one for readers at the time, because of the stereotypical public images of the Gypsies and because the messages for a forthcoming unification of all Gypsies of the world (which was the aim of the represented imaginary events) guarantees the attraction of a great readership. Much more interesting is, however, the fact that all these doubtful notices in the press have been accepted without reservations, including by researchers, not only during that period but even nowadays. The already mentioned doubts about the veracity of the International Gypsy Congress during 1879 in Kisfalu (Klímová-Alexander, 2002, p. 108; 2005a, pp. 158-159) are usually not taken into consideration. After all, at the base of the above-described mystification lies something real – it reflected in the newspapers the occurrence of an annual meeting of "Upper Hungarian" (i.e. mainly from the lands of today's Slovakia) Gypsies. At this meeting, marriages were being arranged as well as other important matters for the society, which was a traditional practice among a number of nomadic Gypsy groups who met at a number of different places in Central and especially in South-Eastern Europe. The reports in *Epoche* and *The Times* newspapers ironically hint that the "common interests" of the Gypsies are connected only with "hearth alliances" and weddings but no one paid attention to this so far.

Elena Marushiakova and Vesselin Popov

1.1.3 *The Letter of Raphael to Emperor Francis-Joseph*

Hungarian Gypsy offering to prove that he descends from "King Pharaoh"

The French newspaper, *Le Temps*, contained in its number of the 10th September 1888, under the head "Autriche-Hongrie", the following paragraph, which I re-translate into English:

"A correspondent from Vienna to the *Daily News* says that an old Gypsy named Raphael has addressed a request to the Emperor Francis-Joseph, in which he begs him to proclaim him King of the Gypsies because he can prove his direct descent from 'King Pharaoh'. The

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subscriber of the address promises on his part to put an end to the vagrant habits of the Gypsies, and so enable them to furnish good soldiers to the Austrian army." [...].

P. B. [1]

Source: P. B. [Paul Bataillard]. (1889). Hungarian Gypsy offering to prove that he descends from "King Pharaoh". *Journal of the Gypsy Lore Society*, 1 (5): 305-306.
Prepared for publication by Elena Marushiakova and Vesselin Popov.

Notes

1. In all likelihood, the author of this text, signed with the initials P. B., is Paul Bataillard.

Comments

The existence of the so-called Gypsy Kings (or Barons, Dukes, Counts, Lords, Captains, Voivodes, etc.) is a well-known phenomenon since the very arrival of the Gypsies in Europe and it has been widely spread in many countries and regions across the continent during the Middle Ages. The first historical record about a recognised, by the authorities, chief of the Gypsies is from the island Corfu (at the time part of the Venetian Republic) during the second half of 14th century (Soulis, 1961, pp. 157-158). The 1423 Safe-Conduct is well-known, issued by the Sigismund, Holy Roman Emperor at Spiš Castle (today in Slovakia), to Ladislaus, the Voivode of the Gypsies, as well as a number of other similar Safe-Conduct letters in Western Europe during the same period (Fraser, 1992; Kenrick, 2007), with which some sovereign rights of the Gypsy leaders over the respective Gypsy community and their independence from other local authorities have been confirmed. Subsequently, to these rights were added obligations wherein these leaders had to collect taxes and charges for the monarchs. These Gypsy leaders and representatives to the authorities have been referred to in various ways, for example, *Król* (King) in Poland and the Grand Duchy of Lithuania during 17th-18th centuries (*Daniłowicz*, 1824, pp. 98-100; Каманин, 1916, pp. 109-128; Ficowski, 1985, pp. 32-59; Mróz, 2001, pp. 188-219); *Ataman* in Ukraine (as part of the Russian Empire) in 18th century (Плохинский, 1890, pp. 95-117; Беліков, 2002, pp. 64-72); *Çeribaşi* in the Ottoman Empire from 16th-19th centuries (Marushiakova & Popov, 2001, pp. 39-41); *Knez* or *Kmet* in the 19th century in Serbia (Ђорђевић, 1924, pp. 122-23); *Jude/Juge, Vataf, Bulibasha* in Wallachia and Moldavia (Achim, 2004, pp. 61-65), etc.

All these "Gypsy Kings" have been officially recognised and/or assigned by the authorities; they have been a product of the Middle Ages and reflect the inclusion of the Gypsies in the already-existing social relations during the era of feudalism (including also during its fall). Raphael's request, however, is a phenomenon of another character, a product of the modern epoch and the time of the birth of modern nationalism. There are no historical data on what has been the result of the request of "an old Gypsy named Raphael" to the Emperor Franz Joseph I. However, it could be easily assumed that the request has not been taken seriously or that it has received no attention. That could be thoroughly explained keeping in mind the common societal positions towards the Gypsies at the time, characterised with disregard of these people perceived as being of lower social status and not comparable with the rest of the "civilised" European nations.

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In the presented material, there are two main points that deserve special attention. Firstly, that is the will to end the Gypsies' travelling way of life. Since about a century before, the situation had been radically opposite – Empress Maria Theresa and Emperor Josef have pursued a consistent policy regarding the Gypsies, one of its main pillars being the forced sedentarisation of the Gypsy nomads. Understandably, in the end, this policy has turned to be generally unsuccessful and the travelling way of life of part of the Gypsies in the Austro-Hungarian Empire continued. In the new societal conditions of the modern era, however, separate representatives of the Roma elite (in this case, Raphael, of whom nothing else is known) obviously reached a new vision for the future of their community and for the need of its social integration. According to him, a necessary condition for the success of such integration is the seizing of the travelling lifestyle. That is no historical curiosity, as it would be understood later since similar processes would subsequently take place among Roma elites (in the 20th century) in other countries of Central and Eastern Europe.

Secondly, the proposal to include Gypsies in the army is of interest. On the one hand, engaging Gypsies in the army can reasonably be seen as a manifestation of repressions, especially when it is committed violently (during the Middle Ages, in Western Europe there are many cases when Gypsies were forcibly and violently recruited in the military). In this case, however, the inclusion of the Gypsies in the army could be understood as a means of achieving an equal societal position, i.e. turning the military service of the Gypsies into their civil responsibility, similarly to everyone else, is seen as a sign of them becoming rightful citizens.

Also interesting is Raphael's reference to "King Pharaoh", to which he describes himself as his heir. The explanation for this is in the popularity among the Gypsies at the time of the idea concerning the Egyptian origin of the community. As the author of the published text writes, the name *Faraonépek* (People of Pharaoh) was popular in Hungary at the time. The very character of 'King Pharaoh', as the narrative about 'The Lost Kingdom' (most often Egypt) of the Gypsies has been widespread in the folklore legends with biblical motives among the Roma (Christian and Muslim) in the Balkans in the 19th and 20th centuries (Ђорђевић, 1933, Vol. 7, pp. 122-133; Gjorgjević, 1934, pp. 26-32; Petrović, 1940, p. 112; Marushiakova & Popov, 1994, pp. 23-30), and also elsewhere in Central and Eastern Europe (see e.g. Добровольский, 1908, pp. 4, 53). One can find references to various motives and narratives about Pharaoh and Egypt in almost all chapters in this book. So, this reference in Raphael's address to Emperor Franz Joseph I is not at all accidental, and in the general context of the letter reflects the beginnings of the process of creating a new, national, historical narrative (a process characteristic at that time for all emerging nations in the region).

In fact, the actual beginning of these processes could be discovered in the work of a Hungarian Rom, namely Ferenc Sztojka Nagy-idai (1855-1929) and specifically in his epic poem *A cigányok vándorlása* (The Wanderings of the Gypsies), which created a new historical myth for the birth and the early history of the Gypsies (Nagy-idai Sztojka, 1886). The poem reflects on the arrival of the Gypsies in the Hungarian lands in the time of

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Attila the Hun (5th century). According to the poem, the Gypsies used to have their own fortress which even Attila was not able to take over. However, soon after that, great starvation spread and that is the stated reason why some of them began to travel, to separate into nine tribes, which practised different professions (pot making, horse-trading, commerce, metalwork, masonry and carpentry), spread around various Hungarian regions, while some others settled permanently. Sztojka well ahead of his time does not look on the 'exotic other', but attempts to formulate the Gypsies' own narrative as a Roma author (Orsós, 2015).

Elena Marushiakova and Vesselin Popov

1.1.4 *An Association of Gypsies*

Stowarzyszenie cyganów

W Budapeszcie zamierzają utworzyć cyganie wielkie stowarzyszenie, do którego będą należały wszystkie muzyki cygańskie. Na czele stowarzyszenia stanie pracownik pióra, który ma wydawać czasopismo. Redaktor ten otrzyma tytuł: "krajowy wajda cygański".

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An Association of Gypsies

In Budapest, the Gypsies intend to create a great association, to which all Gypsy music will belong. At the head of the association will be a pen worker who is to publish a magazine. This editor will receive the title: "National Gypsy Vajda" [1].

Notes

1. Hungarian term, i.e. Voivode.

Source: [No Author]. (1890). Stowarzyszenie cyganów. *Gwiazdka Cieszyńska*, 1890, September 6, p. 362.
Prepared for publication by Elena Marushiakova and Vesselin Popov.

Comments

This is the first historical evidence of the emergence in Central Europe, in the conditions of the Austro-Hungarian Empire, of a new, previously unknown there, social phenomenon – a professional association of Gypsy musicians. This turned out to be a lengthy process and the final legalisation of *Magyar Cigányzenészek Egyesülete* (Association of Hungarian Gypsy Musicians), led by Béla Radics, that took place only in 1908. The Association published the Journal *Magyar Cigányzenészek Lapja* (Journal of Hungarian Gypsy Musicians) in the period between 1908-1910.

During the Middle Ages in Western and Central Europe, Gypsies were not allowed to participate in the existing guilds system and were also forbidden to create their own. The situation in South-Eastern Europe is quite different, in the context of the Ottoman Empire, where local Gypsies fitted seamlessly into the Ottoman *esnaf* (guild) system (see below).

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1.2 The Ottoman Empire

1.2.1 *A Letter to the Editor of the Macedonia Newspaper*

Прилеп, 3 юний 1867 година.

Г-не Редакторе на "Македония"!

Всички знаят защо най укорният помежду всички християнски населения е Егъпският народ, и той, според управлението на верата ни от фанариотите, не се приемват точно в[ъв] всичките тайнства на православната вера. Но на това коя е причината, по-долу ке видите. Сега, ако прашат некои некого от фенерлиите що се и как се, готов е обикновенния от них отговор ке чуеш: че са управители на вярата, за което те само имат право, и последователи на Апостолите Христови. Но ако вземеш да [ги] изпиташ за нихните работи без друго ке ги найдеш самите гонители и разрушители на верата и на правилата й, и възползвайки се от кроткостта, простодушието и чистата красота на иноплеменниците, [те] употребяват за средство на нихното лукавство и интриги вярата, за да съзлечувает векът и го държат в ярем и робство, уничтожувайки сичките правдини, които са дадени от самаго Господа Нашего Исуса Христа, на сичките долу под небето, които повервуваших в него и се кръстят в името му. "Елици во Христа крестистеса во Христа облекостеса" (Галат., гл. 3, 27). Тия кажуват грамогласно, че всички народи, които изповедуват православната вера, требва непременно да са подчинени под духовната власт на гърците, и нема никой никакво право да има свое духовно началство, за кое[то] толку прения се сториха и уще и до днес се правят с Българите, които си бараят справедливо правдините, които им се дават не само от самите Апостолски правила, правейки повече от едно колку-що се изискува за един предмет число вишегласие, и даже и тия, що преди време си имаха. А гърците постоянствуват в упоритостта си и кажуваят, без да се помислят в кой век живеят, че благоволно бидейки по дух святому, те да просвещават народите, право имали и да ги стрижат (владеят). За чудо! Как не се посрамуват, кога изкажуваят и печатно едни такива безсловестности, когато и най-простите знаят, че в Апостолите Христови, които биха определени за да просветят народите с Христова вяра, ни имаше ни един Еллин, и по това ясно се вижда, що не било на Еллините по благоволение духу святому да просвещават народите? Па ако да бяха биле, како те ще кажуваят, само те приятни Богу, а всички други подозрени и ничтожни, то защо чрез Дух Светий говорят Апостолите всичките езици и не само Еллинския, и да проповедуваят както що сам Исус им заръчва – "Шедше во мир вес проповедите Евангелие всей твари." (Мар., гл. 16, 15), а не само на Еллините. Сега, като виждаме, че Еллините нито са биле избрани по благоволение [на] Светия Дух да просвещават народите, ни па са биле самите те приятни, угодни Богу [...], то защо, ако са биле истински подражатели на Христовите правила, да кажуват, че те имат право да началствуват над всичките православни народи и да са нихните интриги иим потъпкуваят правдинето и [да ги] държат как за свои роби, или срамотно да го речем, как свое имане (хайване)?.

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От тука нека забележи човек, в колко бедно състояние се намира Великата Черква. Но това не е нищо за друзите народи като Българите и пр. според нас Егупците, които достигнахме до една най жалостна степен низости и да не можеме никога да се одързостиме да изправиме едно помежду нас образование, отчаяни бидейки от управлението на църквата, кои ни доказаха и съборно, че не сме приятни Богу. Коя е причината що един Егуптянин служит същевременно на два и на три вероизповедания? То без друго е що бидейки той християнин и видувайки що в[ъв] всичките тайнства не е прият, а най-вече и това що се подозрева от другите християни, то прибегнува и към друго вероизпоедание, чувайки си обаче и първобитното си. И така разтурени бидейки Егьупците, и кой в трънe, кой в глог, и в едно ужасно отчаяние не могат да направят общество и да се погрижат за едно образование. Това истото ке го найдеш и [в] Българите; но благодарение на обстоятелството, че те дочуваха (довардиха) и що беха друзы за них, а па инакви за нас. Това истото го видохме и в[ъв вестник] "Гайда" от бр. 15 от год. III, къде докажувайки за нашето прозхождение, че сме порода от старите Египтенци, за кое живо докажуваят не само нашето преимущество и способности, но и самият ни език, и самата дочувана и до днес произвиска "Егупци", а от друзы "атиняни-атнингани", а цигани, велит, че Св.Григ[орий] Омиритски ни возбранил свещенодействието. Това е що нам ни отхвърлило в отчаяние и ни направило така как що сме днеска, как можало така да бедят вера полухристиянин и полунехристиянин, или в кое правило [да] го найде Неговото Светейшество, та кажува, че Егупците били съвършенно неприятни Богу? Ако Негово Светейшество се основавал че Егуптянците по причина, че мъчиле някогаш Израелтяните га били грешни и не те приемват в християнската вера точно закона, не може ли да видят що велит [Евангелието,] 2 Коринт., гл. 5, 17 – "Аще кто во Христу нова тварь: древняя мимоидоша, се быша вся нова". Защото ако не беше така, то трябваше и самите Юдеи и даже Апостолите да бъдат подозрителни кога всекога почти се показваха противници [на] Бога, за кое[то] много пъти беха под наказание, и освен това и самите пратени от Бога пророци избиха, най-после и възлюбленият Негов Син на кръста распнаха. Но "Бог слезе да спаси грешните" (1 Тим., гл. 1, 15). [...].

Но как[вото] що било, или от незнание или от някакви особени капризи и вражда, що хранел Негово Светейшество на Егюпците, та от яда да си отмъсти им забранил свещенодействието, то защо последователите Апостолски да го отхвърлят, виждувайки, че работата е що принадлежит дивяците – идопоклонници да вероваят, не уще с по-голяма деятелност го потвердваят? Не те ке се извинат що не могат едно влакно да изменят от това, що им се оставиле св.Отцы; на това ке им дадем правото, ако да са истински подражатели апостолски; но освен що не е работата апостолска, найпаче противоположна, виждаме че всичко що е в полза на гърците, макар от кого да е измислено и указано, го прибират и не го припущаят, а все що не е за в полза них, сиреч що е противоположано на нихните високи идеи и дават различност на всичките народности в християнската вяра, макар да е от самаго Исуса Хр[иста] и от Апостолите узаконено, кат[то] що велит – "Несте Юдеи,

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ни Еллини, несте ни раб, ни свободен, несте мужеский пол, ни женский, вси бо ви единно есте в Христе Исусе" (Галат., гл. 3, 28) – не го признават и се чинат глухи като [че] не го знаят; и други много [примери], за които не ми е речта [сега] да ги изследовам.

Сега да питаме: коя е целта на гърците, що не дават на другите народности вероизповедни права и ги унищожуваят енергически? Колко[то] за другите народности, как[то] например Българите и пр., не само немам толкова способности, за да издирвам очевидното на гърците интригуване, за което е толкоз пъти вече доказано, но и това що предмет на моето говорение е друг. Аз сакам да докажем за Егюпците, за които никой до днес ни е обърнал внимание, нито па някой от нас се е съвестил да са об[о]зри къде се нахождат, коя е причината що толко[з] са потурнати вероизповедно, от кое[то] произхождало после и нравственото [ни] боледуване. Доказано е, защо пред[и] 1800 [години] пр. Р. Хр. живееха в днешната Еллада народ Еллински, толко[з] див и свиреп, живящ в гори, колиби и пещери, хранещ се с[ъс] землени корени и някои прости диви растения, що не знаеше ни ба, ни итру.

В това истото време, кога[то] Еллините бяха дебелаци, и по нашему – пасеха трева, Егюпците бяха стигнали до една висока степен [на] образованост, [но] направиха някои смущения в Египет. От кое[то] недоволствуваха няколко хилядно число [хора и] се преселиха в Еллада. Там, в Еллада, донесоха заедно с всичките си изкуства и писменност, но и Еллините – дивите, с неуморните старания на Егюптенците да ги просвещават, възлязоха в един ред да се поизпитомяват и така постепенно сродявайки се ся с просветените им гости, които се заселиха в Атина [Атика], къде се направи от предводител Кекрепс [и] главний град Атен [Атина], от което приеха после името Атиняни, Ацингани, [и] достигнаха колко-годе съвършенно според другите народи, живеещи в то[в]а време, степен [на] образованости. И така по [това] време разпространи ся просвещението по другите страни, за кое[то] гордите днес гърци кажуват, че те са просветители на Вселена[та]. Имайки си прочие на ум, гърците кога да е, бавно или бързо, трябва да разбере светът, че не от них се [е] разпространило просвещението, с което да се гордеят, ако някак останат остатки от Египтянците, които от после пострадаха [от] едно опасно изменение в политическият им живот, като се разпространиха по Вселена[та], които възползувайки се от обстоятелствата да не се поопулат, и после с нихното нравствено събудование, се докаже [на] мира, що Еллините лъжат с това що кажат, че те просветили Европа, ами Егюпците, както що самите них просветиха, това подбуди Еллините, да нападнат Егюпците вероизповедно до толку, щото омразни бидейки на секого, да се [х]вълят в отчаяние и се изгубят съвсем от земното кълбо, за да не пречат в очите на Еллините, за което и сполучиха. Тяхна е причината щото Св. Омиритский възбранил на Египтияните свещенодействието. Как не се засрамват гърците да крескат по всета Европа, че по причина, те що били причина да се просвети Европа, трябва да имат европейците за свои благодетели [гърците] и да им спомогнат в случай [на] нужности, а те – Гърците, на своите благодетели и просветители не само що не им спомагат в бъедното им състояние, но още и ги погазуват. Нека

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се позачервенеят малко и нека онемеят! Ако сакат да се гордеят пред Европа, че те са им просветители, нека дойдат първо да се приклонят и припаднат пред нозете наши, за да си припознаят своите просветители, и си изпълнят длъжността си, с което да покажуват перв пример на другите, че тогай имат право в исканията си.

Един Егюптиянин

∵

Prilep, June 3, 1867.

Mr. Editor of Macedonia!

Everyone knows why the Egyptian people are most reproached among all Christian peoples and they, according to the way the Phanariots [1] govern our faith do not change exactly in all mysteries of the Orthodox faith. But what the reason for that is you will see later. Now, if you ask someone of the Phanariots who they are and how they became such, you will hear the usual response, that they are governors of the faith and only they have the right to it and followers of the Apostles of Christ they are. But if you set to examine them about their affairs without others, you will find the very persecutors and destroyers of the faith and its rules making use of the gentleness, simplicity and pure beauty of the other tribes, they use faith as a means of their wile and intrigue in order to stop time and keep it in a harness and slavery destroying all righteousness which was given from Our God Jesus Christ to everyone down under Heaven who believes in Him and is baptised in His name. "for as many of you as were baptised into Christ have put on Christ" (Galatians 3: 27). They say loudly that all peoples of the Orthodox faith must be under the spiritual power of the Greeks and no one has the right to have their own spiritual masters, for which so many wrongs have been done and are still being done today with the Bulgarians, who protect their rights justly, which rights are given to them not only from the Apostle's rules but also some rights which they had before. And the Greeks persist in their stubbornness and say without thinking about the century they live in, that being in the grace of the Holy Spirit they had the right to enlighten the peoples and rob them openly. How are they not ashamed when they say and print such unspeakable things, when even the most simple people know that among the Apostles of Christ whose task was to enlighten the peoples in the faith of Christ there was no Hellene – and this clearly shows that it was not up to the Hellenes to enlighten the peoples with the grace of the Holy Spirit. But if only they were, as they will say, pleasant to God, and all others suspicious and unworthy, why is it then that the Apostles speak all languages through the Holy Spirit and not only the Hellenic and preach as Jesus told them: "Go into all the world and proclaim the gospel to the whole creation." (Mark 16: 15), and not only to the Hellenes. Now when we see that the Greeks were neither chosen with the grace of the Holy Spirit to enlighten the peoples, nor were only they likable and pleasing to God [...], why if they are true followers of the rules of Christ, they say that they have the right to govern all Orthodox peoples and interpret rightly their intrigues and they would them keep as their slaves or say it shamefully – as their property (livestock)?

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Let one see here how poor the situation of the Great Church is. But this is nothing for the other peoples like the Bulgarians and for example the Egyptians, that we have come to such a pitiful contemptibility so we can never gather courage and make our own education, since we are desperate from the rule of the Church which has shown us from its councils that we are not pleasing to God. What is the reason for an Egyptian to obey two and three faiths at the same time? It is because he, being a Christian and seeing that he is not allowed into all the mysteries, and mostly that he is suspected by the other Christians, resorts to another faith and yet preserves the primary one. And thus, the Egyptians being dispersed and being out of the frying pan and into the fire, and being in terrible despair, they cannot make a society and take care of education. You will find the same thing among the Bulgarians, but owing to the circumstances that they have preserved themselves as Christians and that they had friends among them, and none with us. That same thing we saw in *Gayda* in number 15 [2] from the year III, where proving our origin, that we are a breed of the old Egyptians, which it is proven lived not only by our advantage and abilities but by our very language, and the appellation "Egyptians" which we still hear today and from others "Athenians-Antinganians", a Tsigani, and some say that St Gregory of Omirits forbade officiation. This is what has driven us to despair and made us the way we are now, how could we be semi-Christian and semi non-Christian in faith, or in which rule should His Holiness find it to say that the Egyptians were completely unpleasing to God? If His Holiness had based his evidence on the fact that the Egyptians once tortured the Israelis [3] who sinned and did not accept the Christian faith, could he not see what said The Gospel "Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation: The old has passed away; behold, the new has come!" (2 Corinthians 5: 17). Because if it were not so, then the Judeans and the Apostles should have been under suspicion when almost always they were adversaries to God, for which they were punished many times and besides, they killed the very prophets sent by God and finally crucified His beloved son. "Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners" (1 Timothy 1: 15). [...]

But whichever way it happened, either from ignorance or from some peculiar whims and hostility that His Holiness felt for the Egyptians, and in his anger to punish them he forbade officiation, so why should the followers of the Apostles reject it seeing that it belongs to the savages – idolaters believing, do they not confirm it with yet more activity? Yes, they will apologise that they cannot change a fibre from what we have left them; we will give them this right, even if they are true followers of the Apostles, and not only this is not the duty of the Apostles but is exactly the opposite, we see that it will all be in benefit to the Greeks regardless of who invented it and ordained it, they take it and do not let go, and all which is not in their benefit, that is which contradicts their lofty ideas and distinguishes all peoples in the Christian faith, though it was made legitimate by Jesus Christ himself and the Apostles who said – "There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is no male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus" (Galatians 3: 28) – they do not recognise it and pretend to be deaf as if they do not know it; and many other examples about which I am not speaking now to research them.

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Now let us see which is the purpose of the Greeks that they do not give rights to the other faiths and destroy them vigorously? As far as the other nationalities, as for example the Bulgarians and others, I not only do not have the abilities to seek the obvious interest of the Greeks which has been proved so many times, but the topic of my speaking is different. I want to prove about the Egyptians, to whom no one still pays attention, nor has someone among us been conscientiously thinking of where they are, what is the reason that their faith is lost, where our moral sickness comes from. It has been proved that 1800 years B.C. there lived in present Hellas a people so wild and ferocious, living in woods, huts and caves, feeding on earth roots and simple wild plants, who did not know anything.

At that same time when the Greeks were oafs and as we say were grazing grass [i.e. they are dumb – authors note], the Egyptians had reached a high degree of education, but they did some disturbances in Egypt. From which some thousand people were displeased and moved to Hellas. There, in Hellas, they brought together with them their eternal arts and alphabet, and also the wild Hellenes – with the tireless attempts of the Egyptians to educate them – acquired a more tamed order and gradually relating to their educated visitors who settled in Attica, where they made Cecrops the leader and main town Athens, from where they took the name Athenians, Atsigani, and reached a more or less perfect degree of education compared to the other peoples, living at that time. And thus, at that time, the enlightenment spread to the other countries, for which the proud Greeks today say that they are the enlighteners of the Universe. Actually the Greeks, keeping in mind that sometimes, slowly or quickly, the world has to understand that enlightenment they are proud of did not spread from them, if somehow remnants from Egyptians who later suffered from a dangerous change in their political life by spreading over the Universe, who using the circumstances, do not loiter and then with their moral awakening it is proved to the world that the Hellenes are lying in saying that they have enlightened Europe, but the Egyptians who enlightened them this incited the Hellenes to attack the faith of the Egyptians so much that being hateful to everyone they would sink in despair and vanish from the globe not to interfere in the eyes of the Hellenes, for which they have succeeded. Theirs is the reason that St Omirits forbade the Egyptians to officiate. How are the Greeks not ashamed to shout to all peoples that they were the reason for enlightening Europe, and the Europeans should have for their benefactors the Greeks and help them in case of need, and they, the Greeks, will not help their benefactors and enlighteners in their poor situation but will also trample on them. May they blush a little and may they lose their tongues! If they want to be proud before Europe that they are enlighteners, let them first bow and prostrate themselves at our feet, to recognise their enlighteners and do their duty with which to show a prime example for the others, and then they would have the right to ask.

One Egyptian

Notes

1. 'Phanariotes' – from the name of the neighbourhood Phanar (modern Fener) in Istanbul, where the Court of the Patriarch of the Eastern Orthodox Church resided and rich Greek merchants

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lived who influenced the Ottoman administration. It was used with a derogatory connotation for the Greek clergy and their followers (Greeks and Bulgarian) during the struggle for independence of the Bulgarian Orthodox Church from the Eastern Orthodox Church in the 1850s and 1860s.
2. A mistake of the author of the letter – it is meant here issue No. 17 of *Gayda* Newspaper, where Petko R. Slaveykov's article was published (Гайда, 1866, pp. 256-258).
3. The reference here is to the popular legends between the Gypsies in Bulgaria about the hatred between Gypsies and Jews, which is rooted in as early as Biblical times. According to these legends, based on the biblical story of Moses and the escape of the Jews from Egypt, Jews were the cause of the death of Gypsy King – Pharaoh and the collapse of the Gypsy Kingdom, i.e. Gypsies consider themselves descendants of the ancient Egyptians (Marushiakova & Popov, 1994; 1995).

Source: Един Егюптиянин. (1867). [Писмо до редактора]. *Македония*, 1867, July 8, p. 3.
Published also in: Marushiakova & Popov, 1995, pp. 39-42.
Prepared for publication by Elka Mincheva.

Comments

This letter can be properly understood only in the context of the social movement of Bulgarians during this period against the Eastern Orthodox Church, perceived as the 'Greek Church', in an effort to have their 'own', independent national Bulgarian Orthodox Church. The newspaper *Macedonia*, where the 'Letter to the Editor' was published, was the main speaker on this movement, and its editor in chief, Petko R. Slaveykov, was one of its leaders. For the author of the letter, 'One Egyptian', and similarly for the Bulgarian national revivalists, these 'church' struggles were religious only as a form, but in fact, they were a movement for the protection of the fundamental right of every nation to religious and civil equality respectively. The author feels the disparaging attitude of the macro-society towards Gypsies and suffers from restrictions imposed on his people by the Christian (and in general the religious) institutions of that time. In his letter, he shows the injustice of such an attitude both in terms of the essence of the Christian religion and in terms of the historical fate of individual nations. In defence of his theses about the 'historical right' of the 'Egyptians' to 'make a society and take care of education,' he uses the historical knowledge accessible to him. This is the article entitled 'Циганите' (The Gypsies) written by Petko R. Slaveykov, published in *Gayda* newspaper in 1866, which actually inspired him to write his letter to the editor.

The content of the 'Letter to the Editor' confirms once again what we know from other historical sources. In the Ottoman Empire, the Gypsies were integrated into the social fabric with their own social and civil status, which was very similar to the status of other nations' subjects of the Empire. At the time of the Ottoman Empire, the distinction between Roma and current Balkan Egyptians did not exist: they were one community, called in the Ottoman Empire *Kıbti* (from the word 'Copts' in the sense of Egyptians) or *Çingene*. In the 'Letter to the Editor' the author uses the term *Егюпци* (Egyptians in Bulgarian), responding to an article entitled *Циганите* (Bulgarian term for this community). These designations are encompassed into the English umbrella term 'Gypsies'.

So, the Gypsies in the Ottoman Empire who were full-fledged subjects of the Sultan have had civil rights since the 15th century, unlike the Gypsies in Central and Western

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Europe who achieved this social status much later (Marushiakova & Popov, 2001). As a result, the development of the Gypsies, at least on the level of ideas, was very similar to the development of the other Balkan nations among whom they lived. The letter shows that at least some members of the Gypsy community in the Balkans already in the 19th century reached a new stage in the development of their community consciousness. This new stage is characterised by exiting the 'internal' traditional frames of the community and seeking an equal place in the new 'external' socio-cultural realities, according to the norms and values that predominate. It is the Balkan context that determines the shape of this new public appearance of Gypsies – they, like other Balkan nations, are searching actively for proof of a 'glorious' historical past. They are questing for the creation of a new national historical narrative that will serve as support and argument in the struggles for their civic emancipation as separate but equal to other Balkan nations' communities.

As a whole the logic of Gypsies in Ottoman Empire in the Balkans development, as seen in the 'Letter to the Editor' is a repetition of the pattern of development of the other Balkan nations in the 19th century in all its segments – the creation of their own system of education, their own church with services in their own language, and eventually, without especially mentioning it, the implied perspective of their own state ('make a society'). Whether these ideas were altogether realistic and to what extent they resonated with the Gypsies themselves, in the view of their situation in the Balkans at the time is another question. However, the emergence of such ideas is a fact which cannot be ignored.

The question remains – who was the author of the 'Letter to the Editor'; who was the person who signs as 'One Egyptian'? The author impresses with his literature style and especially with his high level of literacy. From numerous references to theological literature and to the publications in the periodical press, it is palpable that the 'One Egyptian' was well educated for his time and particularly in relation to his peers. For a long time, he stayed anonymous, but the answer to this question is already known (see the published sources below) – he is Iliya Naumchev from the town of Prilep (today in the Republic of North Macedonia). It is worthwhile to discuss him further.

The exact dates of his birth and death are unknown. It could be estimated that he was born in the 1850s in Prilep. For many years, he has worked as a barber while at the same time he has been actively involved with his fellows for the uplifting of their civil consciousness (see below).

During the plebiscite conducted in 1873, when the Orthodox population in certain areas of Macedonia had to choose to which church they should belong to (i.e. Greek or Bulgarian), Gypsies in Prilep (where Iliya Naumchev has been involved) and Bitola (where the Bulgarian municipality opened an initial school in the Gypsy neighbourhood), voted to join the Bulgarian Orthodox Church (Кънчов, 1901, p. 124). This has been a great surprise to the contemporaries (in large part, Gypsies in the Ottoman Empire were Muslim at the time). Iliya Naumchev himself was ordained a priest to the Bulgarian Exarchate based in Istanbul in 1885 (at that time Prilep was still part of the Ottoman Empire), but his confirmation by Exarch Josef was accompanied by some problems. The proposal to ordain him a priest was sent by the Bulgarian municipality in Prilep, to which

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the Exarch insisted on indicating the parish in which he would serve, as well as having the consent of the parishioners, and of all members of the Prilep Municipality (Кирил, 1969, p. 611). Such a requirement generally did not apply to all such proposals and perhaps has been due to the unusual nature of the case (a Gypsy to become an Orthodox clergyman). Although unusual, the case is not unique – the presence of Gypsy monks has been reflected in documents dating as early as the 16th century in the Ottoman Empire (Marushiakova & Popov, 2001, p. 35). Apparently, the Prilep Municipality has fulfilled all the requirements, Iliya Naumchev has been ordained a priest and continued to work actively among the Gypsies. The last historical source that mentioned about him is from the end of the 19th century (Кънчов, 1900, p. 124).

Elena Marushiakova and Vesselin Popov

1.2.2 *The Guild Holy Days*

Еснафските празници

[...] Ето списък на празниците, които служат разните еснафи в Прилеп: 1. [...]. 21. Ковачкият – 18 януари, Свети Атанаси; 22. Ковачкият-цигански – 17 януари, Свети Антони; 23. Цигулари и хамали – 17 януари, Свети Антони.

[Note] 2. Тези цигански еснафи от скоро време приеха еснафска служба, както другите българи. Причината за това е един циганин, Илия Наумчев, бръснар. Този Илия Наумчев, като беше бръснар, ходеха при него по-свестни хора в бръснарницата, и от ден на ден се развии и позна народността [си], и не се срамуваше да се казва егюптин, понеже името егюптин го били взели, според него, от Египет. Този Илия имаше голямо желание да има от циганската народност свещеник. Много години минаха, а той все желаеше този чин да има у тях и непрестано работеше помежду циганите да ги поправи от пиянство и от всичките им лоши поведения. След като придоби влияние между циганите, убеди ги да служат трите еснафа Свети Антония. Преди 2-3 години сполучи сам да стане свещеник при Св. Екзархия в Цариград.

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The Guild Holidays

[...] Here is a list of the holidays that the various guilds celebrate in Prilep: 1. [...]. 21. The one of the Blacksmiths – 18 January, St Athanasius; 22. Gypsy Blacksmiths – 17 January, St Anthony [1]; 23. Violinists and Porters – 17 January, St Anthony [2].

[Note] 2. These Gypsy guilds soon adopted the guild service, as do other Bulgarians. The reason for this is a Gypsy, Iliya Naumchev, a barber. This Iliya Naumchev, being a barber, was visited in his barber-shop by more diligent people, and day by day he developed and got to know his nationality, and he was not ashamed to say he is Gypsy, i.e. Egyptian, because the name Gypsy was taken, according to him, from Egypt. This person Iliya, had a great desire to have a priest from the Gypsy nationality. Many years passed, and he always wanted to have this rank, and he worked constantly among the Gypsies in order

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to keep them away from drunkenness and all their bad behaviour. After he gained influence among the Gypsies, he persuaded them all the three guilds to honour as their patron Saint St Anthony. 2-3 years ago, he succeeded in becoming a priest at the Holy Exarchy in Constantinople [3].

Notes

1. Gypsies in Bulgaria, as well as ethnic Bulgarians, celebrate as patron Saint of the Blacksmiths St Athanasius, i.e. in this case there was a shift of celebration of the Gypsy guilds holy day with one day after the traditional day (which remains as a holiday for the ethnic Bulgarian Blacksmiths).
2. It is noteworthy that the three Gypsy guilds have one common patron saint's day, which is unusual because the rule is that each guild has its own patron saint. In this way, the leading one is the ethnic criterion, not the professional one, and so there is one day that is a holiday for all Gypsies.
3. The ecclesiastical struggles ended with the establishment of a Bulgarian Exarchate, independent of the Eastern Orthodox Church. It was established with the special firman of Sultan Abdülaziz in 1870.

Source: Цепенков, М. К. (1898). Обичаи от Прилеп. In *Сборник за народни умотворения, наука и книжнина*. Книга 15. София: Министерство на народното просвещение, pp. 180-181. Prepared for publication by Elena Marushiakova and Vesselin Popov.

Comments

As already stated above, in the Ottoman Empire the Gypsies were, to say it with modern social and political terminology, full-fledged citizens. A typical example in this respect is the participation of Gypsies in the overall system of the 'esnaf', which is Ottoman Turkish term for 'guild', with the same meaning of powerful professional association for mutual aid, who controlled the practice of their craft in a particular town. Formally the Ottoman Empire regulated legally the activities of the guilds only in 1773, but the historical data (e.g. the list of esnafs in Istanbul, made on the orders of Sultan Murad IV (1623-1640)) shows that many Gypsies living in Istanbul, were members of different guilds already in previous century (Çelebi, 1967, pp. 207-336).

The ethnicization of the guilds in the Ottoman Empire in 19th century was directly related to general processes of ethnicization in the Empire and esnafs were part of the national movements of the Balkan peoples during this period. The first information about the participation of Gypsies in the existing esnafs dates back to the 18th century (Marushiakova & Popov, 2016b, pp. 76-89). The Gypsy esnaf's organisations do not disappear with the end of the Ottoman Empire, and they continue to exist also in the newly independent states in the Balkans that arose during the 19th century after the breakdown of the Ottoman Empire. In the new conditions the esnafs transformed and modernised but continued to occupy an important place in the life of the community and determined its position in the society. Moreover, in particular in Bulgaria, the old forms of the Gypsy guilds acquired new and broader social dimensions and functions (see Chapter 3).

Elena Marushiakova and Vesselin Popov

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1.2.3 *The Petition from Xanthi*

داخلیه مکتبی قلمی
اوراق نومروسی ۳۷۹ ۱۲ مسودی اسمی بنده [...] (?) تسویدی تاریخی ۱۷ کانون ثانی سنه ۳۲۱
ادرنه ولایتی وکالت جلیله سنه
بنده ۱۷(?)... بنده ۱۷(?)... بنده(?)...] [...] تاریخ تبییض عربی ۱٤ذی الجه سنه۳۲۳ رومی ۲٦ کانون ثانی سنه ۳۲۱

أباً عن جد شرف اسلام الله مشرف و احکام جلیلهٔ اسلام الله [مشرف] عامل اولدقلری حالده تحریر نفوس
قومیسیونلرنجه قبطی تعبیریله قید اولندقلرندن و حالبوکه قبطی لقبی [...] هندستاندن نشأت ایدن بر فرقه یه
علم الوب کندولرینك فرقهٔ مذکوره یه انتسابلری تاریخًا مثبت بلنمدیغندن بحثله [قبطی] تعبیرٔ مذکور قالدیرلمق
صورتیله قیدلرینك اجراسی استدعاسنه و بعض افاداته دائر اسکچه قصبه سنك پرنارلق محله سی مختار و هیئت اختیاریه سیله
اهالیدن طقسان طقوز کشینك مهرینی حاوی عدلیه و مذاهب نظارت جلیله سینه کوندریلوب تودیع ایدلمش عرضحال لفًا سوی عالیٔ داوریلرینه اسبال قلندی بو بابده اجراسی مقتضی معامله ۲۹ آغستوس سنه ۳۲۱
تاریخلو تحریرات عاجیزی ایله بیلدیرلمش الوب انجاق ۱۲ و ۱۵ نسان سنه ۳۱۸ و ۸ مایس سنه ۳۱۹ تاریخلرنده
عموم صره سنده تبلیغ ایدلدیکی وجهله بویله بر چوق مهری حاوی اوراق و محضر تنظیم وترتیبیله کوندرلمسنه میدان ویرلمامسی لازم کله جکیندن خلاف تبلیغات معامله دن توقی ایدلمسیچون ایجاب ایدنلر
از سر نو وصایا ایفاسنه همم علیهٔ دستوریلری درکار بیورلمق بابنده

∴

Internal Affairs, Corresponding Secretary Office, Document No. 379 12.
Who prepared the draft of this document Slave (2) ...(?) [1]. Draft Date January 30, 1906.
To the Office of Edirne Province.
Slave ...(?) 17 Slave ...(?) 17 Slave ...(?) ...(?).
The Date of Preparation of the Fair Copy February 8, 1906 [2].

To the attention of the great governor: The attached petition is addressed to the high Ministry of Justice and Religions with the seals of ninety-nine individuals from among the inhabitants and the muhtar [3] and the board of aldermen of Pırnarlık neighbourhood

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in Xanthi [4]. That is about some explanations and the appliers' demand not to be registered as *Kıbti*. The petitioners argue that the census commissions registered them as *Kıbti*, although the dignity of Islam has dignified them, and they have conformed to the great canons of Islam for generations, and the term *Kıbti* indicates a group of people originating from India to whom their belonging is not a historical fact [5]. I have already declared the required action in this context with my letters dated September 11, 1905. On the other hand, as announced among the other issues on April 25 and 28, 1902 and May 21, 1903, prevention of preparation and delivery of such documents and petitions with many seals is necessary, and for the avoidance of such illicit transactions, the great governor has to soon re-advice the ones whoever needed.

Notes

1. In the translation of the original text, the Ottoman-Turkish dictionary by Devellioğlu (2013) and Kubbealtı dictionary by Ayverdi (2016) was used for the reading of individual words in the document. During the translation, the main intention adopted was the reflection of whatever present on the document to increase the practical functionality of the act for reader. The reader can recognise the indecipherable or uncertain writings on the document as they are emphasised by a question mark and thus reinvestigate the original document.
2. The original term is بنده (bende), which was an expression written by the Ottoman bureaucrats above their signs on the official documents, as a manifestation of their respect and dedication to the superiors (Pakalın, 1971, p. 202).
3. In the 19th century, the Ottoman state introduced a new administrative body on the base of *mahalle* (neighbourhood): primary and secondary *muhtars* (muḫtār-ı evvel, muḫtār-ı s̱ānī), initially in Istanbul and then in other regions, and in order to manage population movements, assigned muhtars to prepare *ᶜilm ü ḫaber*, a document including personal data on the residents who demand *murūr tezkiresi*, a permission document for free travelling (Çadırcı, 1970; Alada, 2008, pp. 183-185). In Christian neighbourhoods (and also in Gypsy neighbourhoods), a *kahya* superintendent and a *muhtar* were responsible for the mentioned tasks (Karpat, 2002, p. 257).
4. Xanthi (İskeçe or Eskice in Turkish) is today in Northern Greece, was located in Edirne Vilayet during the late-Ottoman period (Akbayar, 2001, p. 81; Sezen, 2006, p. 253).
5. The sentence is underlined in original.

Source: DAB: DH.MKT.628.64.18.2.
Prepared for publication by Egemen Yılgür.

Comments

The petition mentioned in the document above proves that the inhabitants of Pırnarlık (or Pırnalık) neighbourhood in Xanthi, which, even today, is reputed to have a high concentration of Gypsies (Aarbakke, 2000, p. 94) as early as 1905 were aware of the theories on the Indian origin of Gypsies. Ottoman elites whose former imagination of Gypsies was a blending of two descriptive discourses, travelling family groups with an uncertain origin (Yılgür, 2018a, pp. 276-277), or a cursed descent of Egyptians (Ulusoy, 2013, pp. 248), gradually imported that "new" (from 18th century) Western account of Gypsies and thus the Indian origin could be mentioned in the 19th century Ottoman texts (Vefik Paşa, 1876, p. 486; Mithat Efendi, 2009, p. 10; Sâmi, 2015, p. 517). The document proves that this awareness was never confined to the Ottoman intellectuals or ruling elites at

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the beginning of the last century, but included the ordinary subjects of the Empire or, moreover, the ones who themselves were denominated as *Kıbti*.

In the last half of the 19th century, the Ottoman ruling elites revised their policy regarding Gypsies, whom the state registered as *Kıbti* for hundreds of years and levied a specific tax of fixed amount and exempted even the Muslims from conscription (Ginio, 2004; Ulusoy, 2011; Çelik, 2013). A short while before the Russo-Turkish War of 1877-78, the state cancelled the exemption of Muslim *Ḳibṭī*s from the conscription and their liability to pay a specific fixed-tax (Paspati, 1888, p. 4; Yüksel, 2009, pp. 84-87; Ulusoy, 2011, p. 131; Yılgür, 2018a, pp. 267-302). In the 1880s, the state abandoned the policy of *Kıbti*s special registration and registered them among the other Muslims. However, in 1905, the category of Muslim *Kıbti* was re-introduced into the census terminology and this decision triggered their reactions (Yüksel, 2009, pp. 84-87; Yılgür, 2018b). The expression of their discontent of the old policy's renewal by sending petitions to the authorities was not exceptional. Emphasis on self-loyalty to the Islamic principles, or the state was constant in these appeals as is in the above example. What makes significant the mentioned case is the incorporation of recent historical theories by the inhabitants of Pırnarlık into the discourse utilised to reject any link between themselves and the *Kıbtî*s of the assumed original descent, whom the Ottoman intellectuals and the state at least partly came to conceive of as a people that are the survivals of an ancient migration from India, instead of an aggregation of non-pastoral and mobile family groups; or cursed Egyptians. Moreover, the petition exemplifies an attitude, which has been prevalent among them to deny exonyms such as *Kıbti* or 'Gypsies' as well as adopting more prestigious religious (Muslim) or ethnic (Turkish) identities (Marushiakova & Popov, 1999, pp. 81-89; 2015, pp. 26-54).

Egemen Yılgür

1.3 The Russian Empire

1.3.1 *The Sorochyntsi Uprising*

И[гнатий] Н. Антоненко

Ракирибэн ваш 1905 бэрш

Дрэ 1901 бэрш мэ пирдал пэскирэстэ дадэстэ удыкхьёмпэ дрэ форо Полтава писателёса В[ладимир] Г. Короленко. Дрэ одова же бэрш миро дад мыя, семья амари джиндя дрэван чёрорэс и амэнгэ бут помогискирэлас ловэнца писателё. […]

Адай мандэ залыджияпэ писателеса бари дружба. Ангил сарэстыр ёв высыклякирдя ман лылварипнаскэ (тэ гинэс, тэ чинэс), а отэнчя дро 1902 бэрш лыя тэ дэл мангэ ваш распространениё социал-деморатическа прокламацыи.

Ёв адякэ мангэ ракирдя, коли дэлас прокламацыи:

– Окэ мэ дава тукэ запхэндлэ (запрешшёна) лылорэ, савэнца банго тэявэс прэ стрэга. Никонэскэ на дэ лэн дро васта, а тольки чюрдэ пиро кхэра, тэло удэра.

Мэ кэравас адякэ, сыр ракирлас В. Г. [Короленко].

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Екхвар мэ шукар прогиндём екх прокламацыя и отэнчя пхэндём писателескэ:

– Ах, коли-бы адава тэ додужакираспэ сыгыдыр. […]

Мэ прилыём дрэ годы советы писателёс и лыём лэстыр нэви пачка прокламацыи, гыём лэнца пирдал набут дывэса дро гав Ковалёвка. […] Сыго захачия крестьянско восстаниё дрэ Ковалёвка и Карловка. Восставша розмардэ и роспхагирдэ рангирэ фелатиня. Бичядэ одорик ваш усмирениё драгунэн, ёнэ зачингирнас гаджен жыко мулыпэн чюпненца. […]

Дрэ угыём дро Белгородо, Курско губ. Семья мири пиригыя дро гав барэ Сорочинцы. […]

Мэ адалэ прокламацыи росчюрдавас дро Сорочинцы. Дро начяло 1905 б[эрш], коли дро Сорочинцы лыя тэ откэрпэ подпольно буты машкир кружкэндэ гаджендыр и мэ лыём тэ прилав учястиё дро адая буты. Коли же дро ноябрё 1905 б[эрш] дрэ амаро гав создыяпэ гаджендыр союзо, то мэ сомас выкэдымэ екхэса уполномоченнонэса адалэс союзос и учястиё прилавас дро заседании активос дро выкэрибэн программа, сави отэнчя – дро концо ноябрё исыс бичяды дро газеты и исыс напечятано.

Ангил восстаниё дрэ амаро гав и дро само востаниё мэ сомас дрэ одова кружко, саво правиндя сарэ бутяса восстаниёс. […]

Мэ пробестём бутыр бэршестыр и сомас про сэндо кхэтанэ ваврэ товаришшенца, сэндындя Харьковско судебно палата.

Сэндо ман оправдындя.

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Ignatiy N. Antonenko [1]

Speech about 1905

In 1901, through my father, I met in the city of Poltava with the writer Vladimir G. Korolenko [2]. In the same year, my father died, our family lived very poorly and the writer helped us a lot with money. […]

Here I had a great friendship with the writer. First of all, he taught me literacy (read, write), and then in 1902 he began to give me social-democratic proclamations for distribution.

He told me so when he proclaimed:

– Here I give you the prohibited (forbidden) leaflets with which it is necessary to be on guard. Do not give them into someone's hands, but just throw them near houses, under the door.

I did as V. G. Korolenko told.

Once I have carefully read a proclamation and then told the writer:

– Ah, if only this happens sooner, I cannot wait for this. […]

I kept in mind the advice of the writer and took from him a new packet of proclamations, went with them a few days later to the village of Kovalevka [3]. […] A peasant uprising quickly erupted in the villages of Kovalevka and Karlovka [4]. The rebels broke and

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ruined the estates of the noblemen. Sent there to pacify them, the dragons have slaughtered the peasants to death with whips. […]

After that, I went to Belgorod, Kursk governorate. My family moved to the village of Big Sorochyntsi. […]

I threw those proclamations [also] in the village of Sorochyntsi [5]. In early 1905, when the revolutionary activity began to arise among the circles of peasants in Sorochyntsi, I began to take part in this activity. When in November 1905 a peasant union arose in our village, I was elected as one of the commissioners of this union and took part in the meetings of its leaders, in the development of the program, which was then sent to newspapers and printed at the end of November.

Before the uprising in our village and during the uprising itself, I was in the circle which ruled all the activities of the uprising. […] [6].

I stayed in jail for more than a year and was at the trial together with other comrades, the Kharkiv Court of Justice judged us.

The court acquitted me.

Notes

1.The text was submitted for publication in the journal *Nevo Drom* by Nikolay N. Pyzhov, head of Sorochyntsi Uprising, author of books with memories of the uprising (Пыжов, 1929; 1930). The translation into the Romani language was done by Mikhail Bezlyudskiy.
2. Vladimir Korolenko (1853-1921) was a famous Russian writer, journalist, publicist and public figure, closely linked to the revolutionary movement in Tsarist Russia.
3. Today Kovalivka – a village in Poltava rayon, Poltava oblast, Ukraine.
4. Today Karlivka – a city in Poltava oblast, Ukraine.
5. Sorochyntsi (today Velyki Sorochyntsi) – a village in the Myrhorod region, Poltava region, Ukraine, the birthplace of the famous Russian writer Nikolay V. Gogol.
6. Long sections of the text have been omitted, including a description of the Sorochyntsi Uprising in 1905 (for more details see below) and of the active participation of Ignatiy N. Antonenko in it.

Source: Антоненко, И. Н. (1931a). Ракирибэн ваш 1905 бэрш. *Нэво дром*, An. 2, No. 3, pp. 12-15.
Prepared for publication by Elena Marushiakova and Vesselin Popov.
Translated by Viktor Shapoval.

Comments

Reaching a certain degree of social integration of the Roma community (or parts of it) in the Russian Empire found its expression in the inclusion of some of its representatives in the social and political struggles. The fact that this occurred in Ukraine is, to a certain extent, natural in terms of the internal heterogeneity of the community, which is reflected in the varying degrees and varied forms of social integration of its individual divisions and parts. At that time, in Ukraine lived mainly Roma from the *Servi* group. Some of the internal divisions of the *Servi* continued to lead an active nomadic way of life in the early 20th century, both in Ukraine and in Russia (nowadays they often define themselves as *Voronezhskye Servi*, but, rather than just the region of Voronezh, they live in a much wider area). In Ukraine itself, large parts of *Servi* live in villages (a few families per village), many

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of whom have almost entirely lost their language, and their mother tongue is Ukrainian. Their traditional occupation is blacksmithing (and along with this, they are often musicians), and are generally relatively well-integrated among their fellow villagers.

The beginning of the 20th century in the Russian Empire was a time of sharp aggravation of socio-political struggles, which is reflected in the First Russian Revolution (1905-1907). The main organisers of this revolution were the parties of the far left – the Socialist-Revolutionaries (the so-called Esers), the Social Democrats (the so-called Bolsheviks and Mensheviks) and the anarchists. Part of this revolution was the Sorochynsk Uprising (December 1905 – January 1906), which became widely known thanks to the activities and publications of the writer Vladimir Korolenko. The uprising itself was organised by the already mentioned Nikolay Pyzhov, at that time an 18-year-old campaigner of the Social Democratic Party. After the brutal suppression of the uprising by the authorities with the help of Cossack troops, with many casualties (killed and wounded people), and shocked by the atrocities committed, Vladimir Korolenko published his journalistic investigation, entitled *The Sorochynsk's Tragedy* (Короленко, 1907, pp. 172-205).

Very little is known about Ignatiy Antonenko. In the studies devoted to the uprising, the name of Ignatiy Antonenko could be found, but without much details about him. For example, it is described how the writer Korolenko bailed five peasants arrested after extinguishing the uprising, one of them being Antonenko, for whom he paid an amount of one thousand rubles. After the release of the arrested, the writer brought them to his place, fed them, and gave them money (Кривинская, 1961, p. 65).

The main (in fact the only complete) historical source about Antonenko is the above-published text from 1931. The text is accompanied by a photograph on which he appears to be about 50 years old, i.e. it can be assumed, with approximation, that he was born around the year 1880. Both his birthplace and the date of his death, as well as more details about his life, remain unknown.

Summarising Comments

The materials presented in this Chapter highlight the starting points of the civic emancipation processes of the Roma in the Austro-Hungarian, Ottoman and Russian Empire. Although relatively small and fragmented, they outline some of the basic directions of their development which are yet to be developed throughout the region of Central, South-Eastern and Eastern Europe in the coming historical eras (including the present day). Moreover, at the same time there have been processes that took place in the same direction among other peoples of these Empires.

The civic emancipation of the Roma de facto replicates in its form, albeit more slowly and to a much lesser extent, the processes of nation-building in the region. These processes, based on Johann Gottfried Herder's concept on modern nationalism, include, as a basic feature, the creation of their own national history and literature, which implies a particular increased interest in the origin, historical past, native language and traditional folklore. These are also present, as we will show below, in some of Roma representatives

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in the Habsburg Empire (or since 1867, the Austro-Hungarian Empire) since the late 18th and especially in the 19th century, and in late Ottoman Empire.

The first Gypsy-Hungarian glossary was made around 1790 in the Calvinist College in Kolozsvár (Cluj-Napoca), with the involvement of Mihály Vistai Farkas, a student of theology of Gypsy origin. In the 19th century, János Ipolysági Balogh (1802-1876), Ferenc Sztojka Nagy-idai (1855-1929), and József Boldizsár (1825-1878), besides their work as native-speakers and language editors of the Dictionary and Grammar of Romani language (Joseph, 1888), produced also the translations in Romani language and original author's literature (Orsós, 2015). In this context, the place of Ferenc Sztojka Nagy-idai and his dictionary of Romani language (Sztojka, 2007), and literary texts (poems, two historical dramas), and especially the already mentioned epic poem, *The Wanderings of the Gypsies*, should be noted. This poem clearly highlights the interest in the origins and early history of the Gypsies, which is fully in tune with the increased interest in these topics at the dawn of early modern nationalism throughout the region. Sometimes it can be read that "most non intellectual Rom do not seem to care where their ancestors came from" (Stewart, 1997, p. 28). The emergence of the movement for Roma civic emancipation indeed was initiated by a relatively small circle of the Roma elite, as is the case described in the Austro-Hungarian Empire. This is however similar (at least as a model) to the creation of new modern nations in the region, where it was the elites who created national concepts that became subsequently adopted by the masses (Hroch, 2005). During more than three decades of fieldwork in the whole region of Central, South-Eastern and Eastern Europe, however, we have encountered only very few Roma who have no interest in where their ancestors come from. In fact, one can say, the interest in the origin of their community and their history is characteristic for the Roma (intellectuals and non-intellectuals alike) in modern time as a whole (Marushiakova & Popov 2016a, pp. 16-17).

The main drive in the process for the creation and the publication of the Dictionary and Grammar of Romani language appears to have been one of the members of the Habsburg Dynasty, Archduke Joseph Carl Ludwig von Habsburg (1833-1905), Palatine of Hungary, who at the same time was also one of the founding members of the Gypsy Lore Society, an active member of the Society and its sponsor (Zaloaga, 2014). An interesting aspect of this process of development of Romani language and literature is the clear connection with the development of the Hungarian national idea at that time. As a military musician, János Ipolysági Balogh was an active participant in 1848 in the Hungarian Revolutionary Army and published, in 1850, translations of prayers in the Romani language in a booklet with the highly revealing name *Legelső czigány imádságok a melly mind a két magyar hazában levő czigány nemzet számára* (Very first Gypsy prayers, which are for both nations in the Hungarian home) (Orsós, 2015). József Boldizsár was also a military musician and participant in the Hungarian Army in 1848, translated into Romani language poems of the Hungarian national hero, the poet Sándor Petőfi, and was buried with military honours as a hero of the Revolution (Petöfiana XXV, 1878:20). In this context, even the creation of the Association of Hungarian Gypsy Musicians and the public support that the organisation received can be linked with the special place

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that Hungarian Gypsy music held as an integral part of the Hungarian national culture (Sárosi, 1971, see Chapter 7).

There is no collision in the phenomenon described, but there is a typical manifestation of the multidimensional identity of Hungarian Gypsies in the era of the formation of civic nations, which on the one hand have an ethnic identity as Gypsies while, at the same time, holding a Hungarian civic national identity. Under the Austro-Hungarian Empire, the acceptance by the Roma of the national identity of the surrounding population reflects their desire for social integration in some of the emerging nations, (in the cases described above, into the Hungarian nation). An expression of this is also evidenced through the participation of Roma in the Czechoslovak Legion during the First World War (Viková, 2018ab), which apparently reflects their desire for integration into the Czech nation. At the same time, similar processes took place among the Gypsies in the Ottoman Empire where some of their representatives became involved in the Bulgarian national movement (see Chapter 2).

Under the Austro-Hungarian Empire, another phenomenon emerged, present in Roma activism throughout the region of Eastern Europe in the following historical eras. It concerns the dialogue (in this case, rather, attempts for a dialogue) of representatives of the Gypsies with the states in which they lived. The desire to engage in this dialogue as representatives of their own communities, expressing their own interests (as they see it) reflects the beliefs of the Roma activists that community problems could be resolved by the authorities (who, for example, should give autonomy to the Gypsies). The Gypsies tried to enter this dialogue from the premise of unequal positions and, therefore, it should be of no surprise that neither the state institutions nor Emperor Franz Josef I himself cared to answer at all.

More specific is the case of Archduke Joseph, who, with his activity and the support he gave to the Gypsy activists, actually helped to initiate the processes of civic emancipation of the Roma in the Austro-Hungarian Empire. This support (de facto financial dependence), however, was limited in scope and did not go beyond its own aims and interests – a problem that continues to have its contemporary dimensions in present-day Roma activism.

The processes of nascent and development of the movement for Roma civic emancipation in the conditions of the Ottoman Empire can only be properly understood and explained if placed in the general context of the era. Also, they used to enjoy relevant civil rights since 15th century, unlike their counterparts in Central and Western Europe who attained such position in society much later.

It is worth mentioning here a specific example of the civil status of the Gypsies in the Ottoman Empire – a case from Bosnia where Selim, the son of Osman, a baker, in 1693 appeared at the court in Sarajevo with the request to be exempt from the payment of the poll-tax (*Jizya*) 'as an infidel'. In the request, he stated:

> I am the son of a Muslim and I am a Muslim. I live in the Muslim quarter, and along with my co-residents, I pay the tithe when I can manage it. Moreover, along with the Muslims I pray

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> five times a day and send my children to the religious school to learn the Quran along with the rest of the children. I work on my baking orders, and my lawful wife avoids strangers. (Зиројевић, 1981, p. 240).

With his request, he enclosed his wedding certificate and a circular letter from the Sultan, dealing with the payment of taxes by Muslims. According to the final decision of the court, the claimant was exempt from the payment of poll-tax (Ibid.). This example once again confirms that many of the problems in the Ottoman Empire stem not from existing laws but from their practical application, but one way or another, the presence of civil consciousness among the Gypsies in the Empire (or at least in part of them) is beyond doubt.

There is a specificity of the movement for Roma civic emancipation, which takes different forms and directions, conditioned by the particular situation in different regions of this multinational Empire. In some cases, this movement is closely linked to the national liberation struggles of the Balkan Orthodox peoples (among Roma Christians), and in other cases, it is part of the general development of Ottoman society (among Muslim Gypsies). The reasons for this division are in the overall situation in the Ottoman Empire and the place of the Gypsies in its socio-political structure. The population in the Ottoman Empire was not in equal social positions, as the main division was into two basic categories, distinguished according to the religion – true-believers (Muslim) and infidels (non-Muslims). Gypsies, who were separated by ethnicity in Ottoman law (a relatively rare phenomenon for this Empire), according to their religion (Muslims or Christians) fall into both categories, which in turn predetermines the development of Roma civic emancipation in two main directions and along with this it flows in different forms.

In the Ottoman Empire, as well as in the Austro-Hungarian Empire, the processes of Roma civic emancipation among Christian Gypsies actually repeat (both in basic lines and even in some details) the analogous processes of new nation-building which developed also among other nations with whom they cohabitated the multinational Empires. The specifics of the nation-building process among Roma is firstly in fact, that these processes started to develop later comparing with their neighbouring population; and secondly, that they were relatively more limited in size – as the numbers of Roma visionaries were low (in fact, in the Ottoman Empire, names only of two of them are known – Iliya Naumchev and Emin Resa), as well as the number of constituencies reached by their active propaganda.

In general, in the Ottoman Empire, the civic emancipation of the Roma Christians was closely linked to the development of national movements of other Balkan nations and their national liberation struggles. So, during the First Serbian Uprising (1804-1813), one Gypsy Vojvoda was a member of the Assembly of the Rebel Elders, and on some places, many Gypsies actively participated in the rebel troops, e.g. Janko from Požarevac was a *bimbaša* (military rank, officer commanding thousand soldiers), the two brothers, Mujo (killed in battle in 1807) and Alija Plavić (beared the title *bulyubasha* / *bulibaša*) from Valjevo, and others (Стојанчевић, 1992, pp. 25-26). During the Greek War of Independence

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(1821-29), six Gypsies participated in Alexander Ypsilantis's squad. Judging by their names (Georgi Bukata, Vasily Tsyganin, Vasily Stefan, Ivan Georgiev), most of them originated from Bulgarian lands (Тодоров, 1973, pp. 434-44, 450). Some Gypsies from Sliven (brothers Yordan and Georgi Hadzhikostov, Yordan Ruschev, Dimitar Mandov) joined Bulgarian volunteer army units and auxiliary parts, and they participate in the Russo-Turkish war of 1877-78 for the liberation of Bulgaria (Генов et al., 1968, pp. 9-10). One of these volunteers, Kanyu Dermensky, in 1944, welcomed Soviet troops at Central Square of the city of Sliven (Работническо дело, 1975, p. 3).

However, the full picture was not so unambiguous and relations between Gypsies and other Balkan nations that were Orthodox Christians (Greeks, Serbs, and Bulgarians) were more complicated. Majority of the Gypsies in the Ottoman Empire were Muslim (Marushiakova & Popov, 2001, p. 46) and, as such, especially in severe times of national struggles, they were perceived as "enemies" by the Christian populations. During the so-called April uprising of Bulgarians in 1876 in the liberated city of Koprivshtitsa rebels slaughtered the entire male Gypsy population – about 40 people (Ibid., p. 58). During the two Balkan Wars, many Gypsies participated in the Serbian army (see Chapter 3), and also in the Bulgarian army (Иванова & Кръстев, 2014, pp. 160-230). However, in the course of the war parts of the Bulgarian army performed in the Vasilevo village region (present-day in Republic Northern Macedonia) the mass murder of about 30 Gypsies (Коларов, 2001, pp. 100-103).

The processes of Roma civic emancipation in the Ottoman Empire were not one-sided and straightforward. Many Muslim Gypsies became actively involved in the suppression of the uprisings of the Balkan peoples and in the Russo-Turkish Wars on the side of the Ottoman Empire, i.e. presenting themselves as loyal subjects of the Empire. The Xanthi petition is particularly revealing in this regard. It shows the development of processes dating back centuries, in which parts of the Gypsies in the Empire who sought to escape from the ethnic dimensions of the community, differentiated themselves from other Gypsies, and tried to fit into the general (and ethnically neutral) category of 'Muslims'. On the one hand, these are processes that speak about the birth of civic awareness and the pursuit of better social integration. On the other hand, this leads (due to the overlapping of religious and ethnic identity) to the adoption of a preferred ethnic (in this case Turkish) identity, or even to the creation of a new, non-Roma identity. These are specific processes in which the pursuit of civic emancipation of the community and escape from 'Gypsy stigma' leads to the disappearance of an ethnic community as such and to its transformation into a new community that constructs 'its' own, novel history (e.g. the Balkan Egyptians, Ashkali, Millet, etc.). Such processes in some communities go on for generations and, to this day, they continue to be relevant in the Balkans (Marushiakova & Popov, 2015, pp. 26-54).

Nevertheless, among Muslim Gypsies in the Ottoman Empire, another civic emancipation tendency emerged. Unlike Roma Christians, who fit into the context of the national revival of their neighbouring Balkan Christian people, they remain in the general discourse of the social development of the Muslim population of the Empire. This

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development led to the establishment of Turkey as a nation-state in early 20th century (officially in 1923) starting with the so-called Young Turk Revolution (1908) and was characterized by a break with the Ottoman heritage and the replacement of Ottoman identity (closely linked to Muslim religious identity) with Turkish national identity. These common processes in the Empire referred to other Muslim communities that established detached national identities (e.g. the Arabs, Kurds, Albanians, etc.) as well. In this context, the Muslim Roma (or at least some of their representatives) too were trying to find ways for the civic emancipation of their community in the new conditions.

We can see an expression of these aspirations is the emergence of the newspaper *Laço*. It can be described as the first newspaper written by the Roma without any support from "external" factors (such as religious or state institutions) and their respective attempts to influence Roma communities.

Extremely little is known about the *Laço* newspaper. In fact, the only sure source about this newspaper is one short article by Henri Bourgeois (1910, pp. 326-329; see more details about this newspaper in Marushiakova & Popov, 2021). The newspaper *Laço* ('Good' in Romani language) was published in Edirne (today in Turkey) by Emin Resa (Bourgeois, 1910, p. 326). The two issues of the newspaper about which some information is available are dated 6 and 12 Şubat, 1235; according to the Islamic calendar Rumi used at that time, this means February 19th and February 25th, 1910 (Koloğlu, 1995, pp. 61-62). The newspaper *Laço* is characterised in the title heading as a "humorous newspaper", that is "serving the interests of the fatherland and the Ottoman nation". In addition, the header of the first issue gives the following two lines "Be blessed a thousand times, O day that you rise with light and love! There is no longer any hostility, tyranny, or exit", which according to Bourgeois (1910, p. 327) was "obviously an allusion to the recent Turkish freedom", and in fact, it was a reference to the Young Turk revolution which proclaimed new equality of separate nationalities, including Roma, and freedom for free expression of their identity, language and culture and created euphoria in visions for their future.

The newspaper underlines through its title and short dictionary of the Romani language (Ibid.) that national (Ottoman) civic identity does not conflict with the ethnic identity of the community. The newspaper also contains Gypsy national symbols (something which is characteristic of nascent nations), namely graphic illustrations of a blacksmith with a tent in the background (Ibid.). The transition of images of artifacts from everyday life in the field of national symbolism is a common phenomenon among numerous nationalities in many parts of the world. Especially in Edirne, where the newspaper *Laço* was published, also on all of the poster-invitationя for Kakava holiday (see Chapter 5 for details), the similar drawing appears, with images of smithing tong, anvil, spade and 'cezve' (a Turkish coffee pot) (Şanlıer, 2018); the same objects (as well as other objects used by Blacksmiths or made by them) can be seen depicted on the preserved flags of the Gypsy guilds in the Balkans, the oldest of which is from 1849, from Prizren, in Kosovo (Marushiakova & Popov, 2016, pp. 80-81).

Unfortunately, nothing more is known about the publisher of the newspaper *Laço* (and probably its chief editor) Emin Resa; it is only palpable that if he was able to publish a

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newspaper, this means he received a relatively good education. And more importantly, apparently, he was not an extraordinary exception among Muslim Gypsies in its time, because publishing a newspaper implies the existence of possible educated users, i.e. certain strata of Muslim Gypsies in the Ottoman Empire, which possessed at least an initial level of literacy. In the 19th century, after the Russo-Turkish War of 1877-78, as part of the attempt to modernize the Ottoman state, Sultan Abdul Hamid II pursued a policy of pan-Islamism aimed at uniting all Muslims in the empire. In frames of it, a network of primary schools (*mekatib-i iptidaiye*) and industrial high schools (*medaris-i sanai*) with Islamic curriculum and Ottoman Turkish as a medium of instruction (Ümit, 2014, p. 33) was developed. One of the targets of this policy were Gypsies, who had to learn their Muslim religion properly. In order not to lose the Muslim population in the neighbouring countries, recently separated from the Empire, the opening of such schools was also carried out in Bulgaria, Serbia, Montenegro, Greece, and Romania (Ulsoy, 2013, pp. 94-98). Gypsies who were recruited in the army were also provided with some kind of basic education.

In the second issue the civic national consciousness among the Roma in the Ottoman Empire is repeatedly declared: "Half of the net proceeds from the sale of this number will be paid for subscription for the national fleet" (Bourgeois, 1910, p. 327). This is not just an empty gesture aimed at ensuring the authorities' favorable treatment of the newspaper and its readersGypsies had their place in the military structure of the early Ottoman Empire, and even in the 16th century, there was a special non-territorial military-administrative unit, the so-called *Gypsy sancak* with center Kırklareli in Eastern Thrace (Marushiakova & Popov, 2001, pp. 26-27). In the early 19th century as part of the Ottoman Empire reforms the old Ottoman army was replaced by a regular army and general military conscription. From military service were exempted only the non-Muslims and Gypsies, regardless of their religion, and were had to pay a special army tax (*bedel-i askeri*) (Ulusoy, 2013, pp. 50).

This was perceived by many Muslim Gypsies as a restriction of their rights and placing them at a disadvantageous position. Evidence of this is numerous petitions from settled Muslim Gypsies that are preserved in Ottoman archives, with pleads to be allowed to serve in the army. One of the most known such petition is addressed to the *wāli* (governor) of Edirne in 1870. Finally, in 1873 the restriction for serving in the army of Muslim Gypsies was lifted (Ibid., pp. 55-57).

The emergence of the movement for the comprehensive civic emancipation of Roma in the Ottoman Empire is a general historical process. The fact that in the first stages this development took place 'on two tracks' (Christian Roma and Muslim Roma) does not cancel its unity and the commonality of the pursued goals. Moreover, after the disintegration of the Ottoman Empire, already in the conditions of the new nation-states, after the First World War, this internal distinction relatively quickly disappeared. In Turkey remained only Roma Muslims (the Roma Christians in their majority left Turkey in population exchange after the Lausanne agreement in 1923 – see Chapter 4). In the independent Balkan states the significance of the religious difference between Gypsies decreased

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and was replaced with struggles for ethnic unity (cf. more details about this development in Bulgaria in Chapter 2).

The example from the Russian Empire reveals the roots of another important trend in the development of the movement for Roma civic emancipation, which was to unfold in the next historical period. It is about the inclusion of Gypsies in the general socio-political struggles, which means that Gypsies' individual representatives start to perceive themselves as an integral part of the general class structure of the society in which they lived and, as a result, they became actively engaged in the fight for the defense of relevant class interests. Viewed in terms of the dichotomy 'community – society', in this case the social (estate-class) dimensions take a dominant position over the community (ethnic) ones. This does not automatically lead to the complete exclusion of the community dimension (i.e. to the pursuit of ethnic assimilation), but to the transformation of it into other social dimensions. This was exactly the dimension in which they searched for ways to solve problems of their own communities. This was a trend that, in many cases (and especially, but not only, in the USSR) could occupy a leading position in the Roma civic emancipation movement throughout the next historical (interwar) period (cf especially the Chapters 2, 5, 12).

This direction in the Roma civic emancipation movement is neither solely nor even determining the overall development of these processes. Nevertheless, it must be taken into account if we are to capture the diversity of this movement and to analyze the main directions and trends in their overall development across the region.

In more general terms, we cannot help but notice that the processes of Roma civic emancipation in the three multinational empires discussed above were the result of efforts of individual representatives of the Roma community, who received no inspiration as ideas, nor financial and other material and technical support from the other national movements. On the contrary, these national movements (Hungarian, Serbian, Bulgarian, etc.) to which the Roma became attached to, tended to incorporate the Roma and to use them in the pursuit of their own goals, rather than to develop the national ideas of the Roma. This, however, did not create any contradictions among them (which is logical in cases of a common enemy). As can be seen later, this situation would change significantly in the coming historical eras in the conditions of the newly created ethnonational states in Central and South-Eastern Europe.

Despite the limited number of Roma visionaries in the Austro-Hungarian and Ottoman Empires, however, they nevertheless succeeded in generating ideas that would continue to develop later on and, overall, remain relevant to this day. These are, for example, an increased interest in the origin and history of their own community, as well as in its language and ethnocultural traditions and folklore; striving for the development of education in the Romani language, for achieving equal citizenship as an ethnic community, for the creation of national autonomy, and even the possibility of creating its own country. A separate issue is that this development remained mainly in the first chronological phase of nation-building, according to the already mentioned concept of Miroslav Hroch (2005), and the second stage (propaganda and the agitation of these national ideas

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among their ethnic community) covered only a limited circle of the community. The case of the Russian Empire, although at first glance does seem to be a direction leading away from the development of these processes, is in fact an integral part of them. This direction of development enriches the common palette and gives new dimensions to the processes of Roma search of their place in modern society.

The palette of cases presented clearly demonstrates that the groundwork for the processes of Roma civic emancipation has already been established before the interwar years.

Elena Marushiakova and Vesselin Popov

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CHAPTER 2

Bulgaria

2.1 The Struggle for Suffrage

2.1.1 *The Congress of the Gypsies in Bulgaria*

Конгрес на циганите в България
Жертви на българската демокрация – Циганите и Берлинският конгрес –
Предварително събиране в цирк "България"

Карл Маркс бе казал отдавна, че руската революция ще бъде начало на най-великото гражданско движение в Европа, но той не е подозирал какво крупно участие ще вземат в него циганите. Със своята метода на социалистически материализъм той не би могъл да открие тия съкровенни чувства на гражданственост, които са се криели в романтическата душа на циганите, и които трябваше да избухнат днес с една внушителна тържественост, която ще предизвика удивление на народите и ще увеличи грижите на Европа. Колкото до нас, българите, днешната манифестация е двойно важна: първо, защото бе изнесена наяве една вопиюща неправда, извършена от нашата демокрация върху едно антично племе; и второ, защото се установи от самите жертви, че сме нарушили с хладно съзнание една от свещенните клаузи на Берлинския договор. Нека България да благодари на високия такт и на политическата мъдрост на циганите, че не повдигнаха своя въпрос, дорде траеше морската демонстрация, защото в този случай щяхме да видим международна ескадра пред Варна и Бургас. Но докато дипломатическата опасност е отстранена досега, нравственият наш престиж пред Европа е вече силно накърнен: защото всички цивилизовани хора, които мислят, че в нашата материалистическа епоха и в нашето монотонно съществуване, циганите представляват поезията на волния и безгрижен живот, и идеализма на фантазията, няма да ни простят, че сме се показали спрямо тях най-безсърдечни и несправедливи.

Жестокостта била извършена на повече от три години. През режима на г.г. Данев [и] Каравелов, циганите били лишени от своите избирателни права. Мина се времето и циганите мълчаха. Но за политическите престъпления нямаше давност. Те чакали, щото обществената съвест в България да се възмути и да им върне отнетите права, но, като видели, че техните надежди остават пусти, те се решили да почнат борба със собствени сили. Д-р Марко К. Марков, известният софийски адвокат, който между многобройните си начинания – като картеля му с разни милионери в Америка и планът му за един тръст на адвокатската професия – намира свободно време да воюва за великите хуманитарни принципи за всички угнетени във

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вселената, смилил се към гражданската скръб на циганите; постави се на това чело и го повежда сега на една борба, която обещава да прибави един драматически епизод към всеобщата история на народа, воюващ за своето право.

Д-р Марков – трибун на циганите

Още от рано вчера ярки афиши, залепени на улиците, каняха гражданите да отидат на циганското събиране в цирк "България". Към три часа преди обяд циганите бяха насядали вече във втората галерия. В залата беше тъмно. Вееше някакъв дъх на мухъл и пустота. Но скоро физиономията на насъбралите се съживи. Д-р Марков се яви на една маса и със звънък глас, с едно широко движение на ръката, с която сякаш отваряше нови хоризонти, се отправи към присъствующите: "Господа, цигани!" ...

Това обръщение предизвика сензация у циганите. Те се погледнаха някак очудено, заклатиха глава със знаменателен вид и приближиха се към оратора с дълбок интерес.

Той продължи:

"Славно коптско племе, дошло в тия земи в неизвестни времена ..."

Циганите зинаха с огромните си уста и бяха онемели от удивление.

Той поде:

"Граждани на свободна България!

Но вие не сте вече пълноправни граждани, защото вашите права са отнети ... Затова именно сме се събрали днес ... Ний не сме дошли тук с някакви субективни чувства (циганите: вярно-о-о!), а с повелитите норми на основния закон и на международното право (сенсации у циганите, жестикулации на одобрение). Вашето право е осветено от Сан-Стефанския договор, който няма да чета тук (викове: не, чети го!) и от чл. 7 на Берлинския трактат (вярнооо!). Но се намериха в България управници, които да посегнат на Конституцията и на договора. Това бе в режима на демократите и прогресивно-либералите. O tempora, o mores! (движение у циганите). О, ирония! Вземи едно шише, напълни го с оцет и му тури етикет – шампанско! Това е нашата демокрация (ръкоплескания у циганите, викове: вярнооо!). Но вие знаете френската пословица: la plus belle fille du monde ne peut donner que ce qu'elle a.

Това е тъй, но ние ще се борим. Това са нашите свещенни права, наш жизнен интерес. Латинската пословица казва: primo vivere, deinde philosophari (вярнооо! При всяка чужда пословица циганите изпадат в екстаз). Ние няма да се молим. Ние ще искаме това, което е наше.

Анланда сиври синек саздър – Анламаяна даул да зурна аздър (при тази турска пословица циганите ликуват. Те разбраха!). Нека се надяваме главно на себе си, защото ариф олан пиляф йер (викове: браво!).

Ораторът свърши посред една шумна овация на циганите. След това станаха някои разисквания, при които циганите изказаха енергически своите симпатии към г. д-р Маркова. Към 5 [часа] събранието се разпусна. Навън видях участвующите:

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това бяха циганите, които срещаме ежедневно в София като хамали, но с някаква особена тържественост на лице и някак сияющи в своето съзнание, че вършат подвиг. Те тръгнаха към циганската махала в пъстри и оживени редове, и [София] по улица "Мария Луиза" имаше физиономия на един град в навечерието на една революция.

Интервю с "корейския император"

На излизане към мене се приближи един едър циганин, със сипаничево лице и с малки гуреливи очи, и като отвори ризата си, показа могъщи гърди, обрасли с бурен от коса и се провикна:

– Видиш, господин, до какво дередже сме дошли! Ето, само за една чест живеем, а правителството ни взема и то.

Други, около него, дърти цигани с рошави бради, млади момчета, пригласяха.

– Само за една чест, господин!

Един се приближи и ми посочи уволнителен билет:

– Гледи, господин, ето билет. Служил съм в Четвърти артилерийски полк. То не е шега работа, четвърти на Н[егово] Ц[арско] Височество.

Циганите ме заобиколиха с викове и жестикулации. Всички ревяха на едно. Но затече се един циганин с чалма на главата, с остра, четинеста брада, почна[ла] да се белее, с нещо омъдрено, важно и повелително със своето бронзово лице, в което лъщяха обезпокоително огромни хитри очи; другите се оттеглиха почитателно.

– Аз ще ти кажа, господин!

– Кой сте вие? – попитах аз.

– Корейский император, – отговори той просто и добави: – Така ме наричат, ама аз съм мухтара Рамадан.

– Е добре, какво искате?

– Искаме граждански права. Ний всичкото платим, данок платим, войната ходим, а гражданското права не дава. Срамота за циганите. Не може да се търпим вече. За едно чест живеем, господин!

Решително, това е една лозунга: циганите живеят за една чест! България им я отнема.

В кафенето на Али Билялов

Стигнахме в циганската махала. Цялата тя е тревога. На вратите стояха жените и разпитваха с жив интерес. Някои от циганите им отговарят, други ги блъскат: очевидно феминизмът още не е разпространен у тях. Едно заведение, доста чистичко, но пълно с пушек; пред тезгяха една циганка, наконтена с кожух от морав атлаз и ярка забрадка. Това е кафенето на Али Билялов, втори мухтар. Донесоха ни кафе в огромни филджани. Али Билялов е млад, висок циганин, с обръснато симпатично лице и добри маниери. Той е пътувал много и знае няколко езици. Той ми дава обяснение за циганското движение. Циганите са решили да направят конгрес. Пратили са писма до двайсетина града в България. Делегатите ще пристигнат в София на

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14-и този месец. Те ще пратят една депутация при княза начело с д-р Марков, и една депутация до Народното събрание.

– Само за една чест – казах аз.

– Да, господин, само за едното чест.

И многобройни могъщи гърла повтаряха в общ вик:

– За едното чест!

С[имеон] Радев

∵

A Congress of the Gypsies in Bulgaria
Victims of the Bulgarian democracy – Gypsies and the Berlin Congress –
Preliminary Meeting in Circus *Bulgaria*

Karl Marx has long ago said that the Russian Revolution will be the beginning of the greatest civil movement in Europe, however, he has not suspected the eminent participation of the Gypsies in it. With his method of socialistic materialism, he would not have been able to discover such dear feelings of wide popularity and general recognition hiding in the romantic soul of the Gypsies and which ought to have exploded today with an impressive ceremony which would incite the astonishment of nations and which would increase the preoccupation of Europe. As for us, the Bulgarians, today's manifestation is doubly important: firstly, because into the open came out a glaring injustice done by our democracy on an ancient tribe; and secondly, because it was recognised by the victims themselves that we have violated, with an indifferent conscience, one of the holy clauses of the Treaty of Berlin. Let Bulgaria give thanks to the high tact and the political wisdom of the Gypsies that they did not raise their matter while the naval demonstration was taking place [1] as in such a case we would have seen the international squadron in Varna and Burgas. However, while the political danger is until now ousted, our moral prestige before Europe is already majorly hurt: because all civilised people who think that in our material era and in our monotonic existence, the Gypsies represent the poetry of the independent and carefree life, and the idealism of the fantasy, they will not forgive us for having been most-heartless and unfair with them.

The cruelty has been done for more than three years. In the administration of Mr. Danev and Karavelov, Gypsies have been deprived from their rights to suffrage [2]. Time has passed and the Gypsies stayed silent. However, political injustice was unacceptable. They have been waiting for the civil consciousness of Bulgaria to stir and to give them back the rights they have been deprived from, however, when they saw their hopes have stayed barren, they decided to take their struggle in their own hands. Dr Marko K. Markov, the famous lawyer from Sofia, who among his many initiatives – such as his cartel with various millionaires in America and his plan for a Trust of the profession of the lawyer – does not have spare time to fight for the great humanitarian principles for all of those in the world who are oppressed, he got saddened by the civil sorrows of the Gypsies; he took

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the lead and now he leads Gypsies towards a struggle which promises to add a dramatic episode to the general history of the nation fighting for its right. […]

Dr Markov – Tribune of the Gypsies

Since early morning yesterday, flyers, hanging by the streets, were inviting residents to attend the Meeting of the Gypsies in Circus *Bulgaria* [3]. At around three o'clock before noon Gypsies have already been seated in the Second Gallery. In the Hall it was dark. There was a draft of some kind, smelling of mould and emptiness. However, soon the countenances of those gathered lightened up. Dr Markov appeared in a table and with a clear voice, with a wide movement of his hand, which as if made new horizons, addressed those who were present: "Gentlemen, Gypsies!"…

Such form of address stirred a sensation among the Gypsies. They curiously looked at each other, shook heads knowingly and neared the orator with a deep interest.

He continued:

"Honorary Copts' [4] tribe who has arrived in these lands in times unknown …"

The Gypsies gaped with their big mouths and were speechless with astonishment.

He started:

"Citizens of free Bulgaria!

But you are no longer full citizens since your rights were stripped … That is namely why we have gathered today … We have not come here with whatever subjective feelings (the Gypsies: Correct-t-t!) but with the orderly norms of the Common Law and of the International Law (sensations among the Gypsies, gesticulations of approval). Your right is blessed by the Treaty of San Stefano which I will not read here (shouts: no, read it!) and by Art. 7 of the Treaty of Berlin (Correct-t-t!). However, in Bulgaria there could be found rulers who could disrespect the Constitution and the Treaty. That was during the rule of the democrats and the progressive-liberals. *O tempora, o mores!* [5] (movements among the Gypsies). Oh, irony! Take a bottle, fill it in with vinegar and put a label – Champaigne! That is our democracy (applause from the Gypsies, shouts: Correct-t-t!). But you know the French saying: *la plus belle fille du monde ne peut donner que ce qu'elle a* [6].

That is so, but we will fight. These are our sacred rights, our vital interests. The Latin proverb says: *primo vivere, deinde philosophari* [7] (Correct-t-t! With each foreign saying, the Gypsies fall into ecstasies). We shall not beg. We shall ask for that which is ours.

Anlanda sivri sinek sandur – Anlamayana daul da zurna azdur [8] (with this Turkish proverb the Gypsies rejoice. They understood!). Let us count mainly on ourselves because *arif olan pilaf ier* [9] (shouts: Bravo!).

The orator finished in the middle of a loud cheering by the Gypsies. After that, some discussions took place among which Gypsies expressed energetically their sympathies towards Dr Markov. At around 5 o'clock, the meeting was over. Outside, I saw the participants: these were the Gypsies that we come across on a daily basis in Sofia working as porters, however, today with a special festivity on their faces which somehow radiated in their awareness as if they are doing a heroic deed. They headed towards the Gypsy

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mahala [10] in colourful and lively rolls, and Sofia, on Maria Luiza street, resembled a town before the wake of a revolution.

Interview with the Korean Emperor

On my way out, I was approached by a burly Gypsy with a pock-marked face and with small bleary eyes and when he opened his shirt, he showed powerful chest, full with thick hair and he cried out:

– Do you see, Mister, where we have reached to! There you go, we live for the sake of honour but the government takes even that.

Others, besides him, old Gypsies with dishevelled beards, young boys, chimed in.

– Mister, only for the sake of honour!

One of them came closer and he pointed a discharge ticket:

– Look, Mister, here's the ticket. I have served in the Fourth Artillery Regiment. This is no joke, the Fourth of His Royal Highness.

The Gypsies gathered around me with shouts and gesticulations. All of them cried out in one. However, one Gypsy, wearing a headscarf came quickly, with a spiky, sparse, silvering beard, with something wise, important and imposing with his bronze face in which shined worryingly big, cunning eyes; the rest of the people stepped aside respectfully.

– I will tell you, Mister!

– Who are you, I asked.

– A Korean Emperor, – he simply said and added: – That is how they call me but I am the *Muhtar* [11] Ramadan.

– So well, what do you want?

– We ask for civil rights. We pay for everything, pay taxes, we go to wars, however, they don't give us citizens' rights. That's a shame for the Gypsies. We cannot stand it anymore. We live for the sake of honour, Mister!

Certainly, that's a slogan: The Gypsies live for the sake of honour! Bulgaria takes it away from them …

In the Café of Ali Bilyalov

We arrived in the Gypsy *mahala* [12]. The whole of it is under alarm. At the doors stood women and they were asking questions with real curiosity. Some of the Gypsies gave them answers while others pushed them away: seemingly, feminism is still not spread among them. One place, quite clean but filled with smoke; at the counter was standing a Gypsy woman, clad in a purple, satin coat and a colourful headscarf. That is the Café of Ali Bilyalov, a second *Muhtar*. They brought us coffee in big *fildzhani* [13]. Ali Bilyalov is a young, tall, Gypsy man with a shaven, pleasant face and good manners. He is well-travelled and knows several languages. He gives me an explanation about the Gypsy movement. The Gypsies have decided to organise a Congress. They have sent letters to about twenty towns in Bulgaria. The Delegates will be arriving in Sofia on the 14th of this month. They will send a delegation to the Royal Prince headed by Dr Markov and another delegation to the National Assembly.

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– Only for the sake of an honour. – I said.
– Yes, Mister, only for the sake of honour.
And many vociferous throats repeated in one voice:
– For the sake of an honour! [14]

Simeon Radev [15]

Notes

1. Here are meant the strained relations between the Great Powers and the Ottoman Empire that led to demonstrative naval maneuvers in the Aegean Sea in November 1905.
2. This concerns the government of Petko Karavelov and Stoyan Danev which emerged as a result of a coalition between the Democratic Party and the Progressive-Liberal Party (20.02.1901-22.12.1901); they adopted amendments to the Election Law that deprived Gypsy Muslims as well as nomadic Gypsies of voting rights (see below for more details).
3. The building of Circus *Bulgaria*, and later of the Theatre *Salza i smyah* (Tear and Laughter), was located on Maria Louiza Boulevard, near the site of today's *Hali* in Sofia.
4. In the administrative documents of the Ottoman Empire, Gypsies were often referred to as Kıpti (i.e. Copts, in the sense of the Egyptians). For centuries in the Balkans, Gypsies have been believed to originate from Egypt, a belief which can be found even today in the variety of folklore narratives (see more details in Chapter I).
5. Oh, the times! Oh, the customs! (from Latin).
6. The best girl in the world cannot give more than she already has (French idiom).
7. Act now, think later (from Latin).
8. For the one who understands, even the mosquito is a *saz* (musical instrument), for the one who does not understand, both the drum and the *zurna* are not enough (Turkish proverb). The meaning here is that the one who is able to understand will get the point even if they have little information, while the one who is not able will not get it regardless of what is done.
9. One who is respectful and well-mannered will eat pilaf (Turkish proverb), i.e. will earn the respect of people.
10. This refers to the so-called old mahala in Sofia. The Gypsy mahala at that time was located in the area of today's Kozloduy Street, between *Lavov Most* (Lion Bridge) and the Central Station in Sofia, on both sides of the road called *Lomsko shose* (Lom Highway). The term 'mahala' is a legacy of the Ottoman Empire, when it was used to designate separate ethnic neighbourhoods in the town districts. During the times of the independent Bulgarian State, the term continued to be used while gradually it referred mainly to the Gypsy (or other nationalities) neighbourhoods in towns and villages.
11. 'Muhtar' is an administrative term used in the Ottoman Empire in the sense of a leader/chieftain chosen by the inhabitants and endorsed by the authorities of a village or a town district. This practice continued, especially for the Gypsy mahalas in the cities also during the new independent Bulgarian State, unlike in the villages (where mayors were elected at local elections) and in the town districts.
12. This concerns the so-called *stara mahala* (old neighbourhood) which was populated by most of the Gypsies who were living in Sofia at the time.
13. 'Fildzhan' (Turkish) – a special type of coffee cup.
14. The phrase is in broken Bulgarian.
15. Simeon Radev (1879-1967) was a Bulgarian well-known journalist, publicist, diplomat and politician, at that time editor-in-chief of the Newspaper *Vecherna Poshta* (Evening Mail).

Source: Радев, С. (1905a). Конгрес на циганите в България. *Вечерна поща*, 1905, December 14, p. 2.
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2.1.2 *The Gypsy Congress*

Цигански конгрес
Делегатите на конгреса – Ежедневен цигански вестник на френски и български – Исканията на циганите

Според уверенията на учредителя на циганския конгрес г. д-р Марко К. Марков във висшите дипломатически и политически кръгове както у нас, така и в странство – има голяма зантересованост към конгреса на циганите. Конгресът щял да бъде много по-сериозен, отколкото се мисли. Господин Марков бе тъй любезен да ни даде следните сведения по конгреса: очакват се да пристигнат делегати от главните центрове на Княжеството, в което има повече "копти" (цигани), за да извоюват конституционно отнетите им права.

Освен конгреса, циганите възнамеряват да издават един сериозен ежедневен вестник на френски и на български. На конгреса, който ще се състои тия дни, ще се държат стенографски дневници и същият още ден ще се отпечатват във вестника. Името на вестника ще бъде "Човешки права". Конгресът ще бъде тия дни и на него ще може всякой български гражданин да си изкаже мнението, каквото и да било то, по циганския коптски въпрос. Циганите казват:

"Ние не се молим. Ние искаме права, гарантирани нам от Берлинския договор и Конституцията – стара и нова. Всеки здравомислещ и свободолюбив български гражданин требва да ни съчуствува. В тази земя сме се родили и от свободни хора през 1901 г. обърнаха ни на парии. Училищен данък плащаме – училище нямаме. Обвиняват ни, че сме били некултурен народ. От где ще ни дойде културата? Дайте ни училища, възвърнете ни политическите права и тогава съдете за нас! И нашите съграждани, българите, бяха некултурен народ, но благодарение на училищата, днес вече започват да претендират за културност, а щом нашите избирателски права са отнети, то ние приличаме на хора без права – на роби. А българската конституция гласи, че робът щом премине границите на българското княжество, става свободен човек. Нашето дело трябва да успее, защото ние сме прави, а правият човек е всякога силен и с него мъчно могат да се борят."

Вярваме, че читателите сами ще оценят великата международна значимост на горните изявления.

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The Gypsy Congress
The Delegates of the Congress – A Daily Gypsy Newspaper in French and Bulgarian – The Demands of the Gypsies

In the opinion of the founder of the Gypsy Congress, Dr. Marko K. Markov, among the high diplomatic and political circles, both here and abroad, there is a huge interest in

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the Congress of the Gypsies. The Congress would be much more serious than originally thought. Mr. Markov was so kind to give us the following news relating to the Congress: it is expected Delegates from the major centres of the Principality to attend, which has more 'Copts' (Gypsies), so that they could regain, constitutionally, their stripped rights.

Besides the Congress, Gypsies intend to issue a major Daily Newspaper in French and in Bulgarian. The Congress, which will take place these coming days, will have stenographer records and in the very same day they will be published in the Newspaper. The name of the Newspaper would be "Human Rights". The Congress will take place these days and each Bulgarian citizen will be allowed to express their opinions, no matter what it is, with regard to the Gypsy Copts question. The Gypsies say – "We do not beg. We want the rights, guaranteed to us by the Treaty of Berlin and the Constitution – the Old and the New ones. Each sound-minded and freedom-loving Bulgarian citizen ought to empathise with us. We were born on this land and of free people, in 1901 they turned us into pariahs. We pay school-tax – but we do not have a school. They blame us for being an uncultured nation. Where will our culture come from? Give us schools, give us back our political rights and then judge us! And our fellow-citizens, the Bulgarians, were an uncultured nation but thanks to the schools today, they already begin to lay calms towards culture and while our voting rights are repressed, we resemble a people who have no rights – slaves. The Bulgarian Constitution claims that once a slave crosses the borders of the Bulgarian Principality they become free. Our case must succeed because we are right and the people who are right are always strong and nobody can fight with them."

We believe that the readers will appreciate by themselves the great international significance of the above statements.

Source: [No Author]. (1905b). Цигански конгрес. *Вечерна поща*, 1905, December 15, p. 3.
Prepared for publication by Elka Mincheva, Elena Marushiakova and Vesselin Popov.
Translated by Aleksandar Marinov.

2.1.3 *The Gypsy Congress in Sofia*

Циганският конгрес в София

Утре, неделя, в два часа подир обяд, в салона на "Сан-Стефано" се отваря "коптски" (цигански) конгрес, в който ще държат речи по отнетите им граждански и политически права.

Пристигнали са от 40 до 50 души делегати от всички по-големи градове на Княжеството. Циганите са издали манифест към партиите да ги подкрепят с легална борба за извоюване на техните права.

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The Gypsy Congress in Sofia

Tomorrow, Sunday, at 2 o'clock in the afternoon, in the Hall 'San-Stefano' will take place the "Copts" (Gypsy) Congress which will hold talks regarding their stripped civil and political rights.

Around 40 to 50 people, Delegates have arrived from the major towns of the Principality. Gypsies have issued a Manifesto to the political parties so that they could support them legally and that they could gain their rights back.

Source: [No Author]. (1905c). Циганският конгрес в София. *Вечерна поща*, 1905, December 15, p. 3. Prepared for publication by Elka Mincheva, Elena Marushiakova and Vesselin Popov. Translated by Aleksandar Marinov.

2.1.4 *The Gypsy Congress – The First Meeting*

Цигански конгрес [– Първо заседание]
Отваряне на конгреса – Речите на циганите и циганския трибун –
Телеграмите до княза

Към два часа след обяд в салона на локала "Сан-Стефано" бе заета от малобройна публика, в която имаше най-отбрано общество – адвокати, инжинери, доктори, чиновници, народни представители и пр. Всички с нетърпение очакват пристигането на делегатите – цигани. В два и половина часа около 40-50 цигани, представители на коптското население в Княжеството, цветът на циганите от цяла България, начело с техния генерален пълномощник д-р Марко К. Марков, се явиха. При влизането им публиката радостно се раздвижи, направи място на делегатите да сядат и ги посрещно с продължителни ръкоплескания. […]

Качи се на трибуната кметът на столичните цигани Рамадан Алилов. Бурни ръкоплескания на делегати и на публика за господин кмета – мургав, едър, с шарена чалма на главата, с широк пояс през кръста и гайтанлия сетре на гола снага – направи три пъти ниски теманета и се обърна към делегатите на цигански език:

"Аллах ярдем еунъ! Добре дошли! Знаете ли, за какво сме се събрали тук? Ние имахме право да си избираме дорде бил Каравеловия, той го изгуби … И ние служи данък, плащаме за войник … Трябва имаме право … (ръкоплескане … гласове: Вярно …)."

След г. кмета, трибуната зае помощник-кмета – Али Билялов, интелигентен, симпатичен циганин, с европейски дрехи, с голям червен пояс и високи, лъскави чизми. Направи три теманета и с ясен глас се обърна към делегатите на цигански:

"Братя, цигани! Да помолим господин д-р Марков, да направи он, каквото бехме си [решили], да станем … Да сме сос права и да сме си свободни … (ръкоплескания)."

След това стана пловдивският делегат Али Мутишев. След като се обърна към събранието с думите "Яшасънъ княз Фердинанд", прочете своята доста дълга реч на турски, от която даваме следните извадки:

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"Нашето събрание тук свидетелствува за свободата и справедливостта в България. Тук всеки има право да говори само за това, което сме се събрали. Между копти и цигани има разлика. Коптите са тези, които са дошли от Египет, а цигани – най-долния слой от обществото. В Египет коптите заемат участие в управлението, защото са добили образование. Затова коптите в България трябва да се старят да добият образование. Коптите в България в градовете упражняват различни занаяти, минават за мюсюлмани. Според закона, лишаваха се от избирателни права циганите, т.е. онези копти, които нямаха редовни средства за живеене. Обаче по партизански причини, които властта иска да има на страната си избиратели, дава им името турци, а когато иска да ги отстрани – провъзгласява ги за цигани. Понеже това е несправедливо, ние искаме правата си, защото и като мюсюлмани – изпълняваме всички обряди на религията, и като граждани – всички задължения към държавата. Според турския вестник "Икдам", когато стана преброяването в Турция – циганите бидоха причислени към турската народност, а в България – за да могат турците да разполагат с джамиите и вакуфиите, искат да отстранят от ислямството циганите."

След това той направи някои славословия за България, княза и правителството. При всеки пасаж от речта си, той даваше обяснения на циганите. Речта му бе изслушана с най-голямо внимание от циганите при нови, бурни ръкоплескания.

Появи се генералния цигански пълномощник господин д-р Марко К. Марков с няколко грамадни томове книги под мишница, слага ги на трибуната, изглежда важно и весело събранието, и почна:

"Господа! Аз благодаря на циганите за доверието им към мене, да ме натоварят с ръководните техни политически борби за отстояване на човешките им права, защото циганите са хора. Нека господа делегатите да изберат за мои подпредседатели: Али Мутишев, Али Билялов, Илия Узунов, Али Молла, Ристе Мустафа, Икономов (гласове: Приемаме!); за касиер Ибрахим Исмаилов, деловодител Иван Параскевов."

Иван Параскевов: "Благодаря на коптското население, че ме избра в бюрото си. С отнемане на политическите и гражданските права на циганското население е нанесено петно на нашата страна, което плътно ще се мъчим да измием. От душа и сърце ще работим, докато видим овенчано и добито това право ..."

Д-р Марко Марков (ръкоплескания):

– Почитаемо събрание! Ще проверим първо имената на делегатите (проверяват ги). [...]

Господа, цигани!

Вие сте събрани тук, за да извоювате своите така брутално отнети права. Всички се отзоваха благоприятно на нашата справедлива кауза. Само партийните вестници нищо не казаха. Те чакат да научат от берлинските вестници, че в София имало цигански конгрес. Партийните вестници по скоро ще пишат за балната фуста на госпожа Драдафулова, за шапката й, за чепиците й, а за нашата циганска кауза – нищо не пишат! Циганското племе до вечни времена ще бъде признателно

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на вестник "Вечерна поща", който единствен се застъпи за циганските интереси. Най-много благодарности дължим на господина Симеон Радев. Той и сега е тука (обръща се към г-н Симеон Радев, който съзре в редовете измежду многобройната публика).

Господин Радев, обичате ли да помогнете и вие в тази работа? (Общ смех. Г-н Радев е обладан от неудържим смех). Аз съм длъжен да изкажа на господина Радева искрената и сърдечна благодарност на онеправданото коптско племе. Той ни направи отрадно впечатление с много близкото до сърдцето си вземане на въпроса на тези български парии (смех и ръкоплескания). Аз моля от името на циганското население в България г-на Радева да продължава и да не се стряска, да защитава тази кауза (ръкоплескания и общ смях). [...]

Аз получих многобройни поздравителни телеграми от разни градове (чете ги).

Видин: "... И пари да изпратим, делегата не може да стигне, защото късно приехме писмото ..." (смех).

Силистра: "По повод статията във 'Веч[ерна] поща', днес събрани цигани в Силистра на брой 200 души решихме и избрахме за делегат г-н Марков."

На тези всички телеграми е отговорно желанието на тези истински приятели на онеправданите цигани, конгресът да трае три дни.

Варна: "Да ви запозная с моята фамилия Юрдан Атанасов. Аз съм по народопис циганин. Свършил съм трети к[лас] и съм бариерчик."

Те, циганите, господа, така са се предали на въпроса, че ще дадат права на другите, които са се ползували с просвещението, "денят се познава от сутринта", те ще научат нас българите, как да вършим своята работа. [...]

Има две мнения за произхождението на циганите: едното е, че те са от Индия, едно от арийските племена; друго е – че те са египтяни или копти, затова в Македония ги наричат "гюпци". Този народ е обърнал внимание на съвременните учени [...], тях възпяват много от съвременните поети, особено унгарските и руските, защото поетите намират в циганския живот нещо по-добро, отколкото в нашия живот. Те са дошли на Балканския полуостров в 870 г., преди 11 века, във времето на император Никифор Византийски.

Езикът им благодарение на средата, в която живеят, е претърпял известни влияния и днес има 13 наречия. Има такива цигани, че едните като говорят [на своето наречие] – не се разбират с другите [цигани, които говорят на друго наречие]. [...]

От граждански и политически права се лишават у нас само с присъда влязла в законна сила, а П[етко] Каравелов лиши от законни права циганите за цели поколения, с шарлатански аргументи; защо да лишават от права само цигани-нехристияни. Защо? Заслуга ли е, че човек се е родил българин; престъпно ли е, че се е родил циганин, майка му го е родила такъв ... А дали се моля на икона или на някоя красива мома – то е моя работа ... (смех). Тука няма ratio legis (ръкоплескания).

Като отиде някой наш министър при някой чужд дипломат, то дипломатът ще каже – той няма да го каже, защото дипломатите са лисици, та повече с мълчание

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приказват – но има право да каже "Дайте свобода на вашите цигани, че тогаз елате да дадем и на вас [нашето] доверие ..."

Циганите данък плащат, пък не им дават училища. Защо? След Французката революция карлеме гелмезлер позор е да вземаме парите на циганите, а да не им даваме училища. Les dots les gens изискват всички да вземат участие в държавните работи, но анлаяна сиври синек саздъръ, анлама анламаяна даулта зурна аздъръ (смех).

Понеже, господа, сме си малко цигане, ще ми позволите да запаля цигара, да пуша, да си приказвам ... (ръкоплескания).

"Замъчила се планината и родила мишка" ... Така е нашата работа: не вървят изборите, защото циганите си продавали гласа ... А бе, аланкоолу! Хвани го за ухото и го дай под съд ... И гърци, и евреи, и всички български граждани си продават гласа. Къде е тука логиката? – Oleum sersemicum! (ръкоплескания).

Петко Каравелов [каза], че циганите били нисша раса. Ой ана асана, а'м че ние кога станахме висша раса? Гледате ме, така облечен в европейски дрехи, ама дедо ми ходеше с потури; аз говоря и пиша 13 езика, а пък дедо ми салким не знаеше нито един език (смех). Да ме извините вие, че циганите са нисша раса. Циганите са дали хора на науката ... Произхождението на П[етко] Каравелов е от каракачаните – циганин е! (ръкоплескания). Имаме министри, шефове на гари, генерали в нашата армия, на които произхождението е циганско, и те са достигнали да носят еполетите си. При Сливница е паднал един офицер – поручик Кочов, циганин. Но серсемин е бил той, защото се е бил, а не е бегал; а сега да отнемат правата на неговите сънародници.

Нашите [политически] партии не се застъпиха за циганите знаете ли защо? А? Да ви кажа ли? (гласове: Кажи де?) Ще ви кажа: защо са патриоти (прави знакове из въздуха, лови нещо и пъха ръцете си в джобовете – смех). Защото има безусловни фондове за зор, заман ичим, но в тия фондове има и цигански пари ариф улан ани-асан (ръкоплескания). Лишиха циганите от избирателни права, за да ни тръгнат работите по мед и масло и ние цъфнахме, та не вързахме. А сега по-свободни ли са изборите – бош лаф; Бог да те прости, бай Петко Каравелов, уважавам те, ала с ваше позволение ще му препиша пак на Oleum sersemicum (смех). Знаете ли вие, че писателят Васил Стоянов, който в революционното време учреди Българското книжовно дружество, е от циганско произхождение. Той е от Жеравна. А ми знаете как свирят жеравненските гайдарджии! – те са майстори в музиката и това показва, че от тях ще излезе нещо. Какво искате повече от тях? Да изнамерят нова Америка ли? Ама бъркали на изборите – краставици за зелен хайвер ... Ама били чергари и скитали, та да не им дават права нукаре жамата ... (смех). За болшинството от XI Об[икновенно] Н[ародно] събрание ще предпиша Oleum sersemicum. Крали циганите, та да не им дават права; това говорят нашите управници. А бе, таранкоолу, "Не е луд Кольо, че изял пет зелника, а е луд, който му ги дава." Серсеми сме ние, българите: а бе хей, серсемоглу, серсем, който краде – хвани го за ухото – та в затвора, ой анасане ... (смех). Казват, че "честните" хора били истински вагабонти, има и

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честни хора, но те са по кюшетата. Така сигурно за мене говорят някои в "Червен рак" – "а бе остави го там – сакънтията, той е луд." – Е добре бе, джанъм, ходих три пъти в Болницата и докторът ми каза – "Ти, ако влезеш, мене ще изкараш луд. Не те ща" (смех), е? Крив ли съм аз?

Ще ви кажа нещо … Тука нали всички сме мъже, нека да си говориме по-свободно … Жени няма ли? (Гласове: Няма!) Е, ще ви кажа сега една история … Един, някой си Х. – да не ви го казвам, вие си го знаете, направил едно таквозинкана преступление – хванали го; направил нещо … чуруклия. Кой го е направил – пак Х. (ръкоплескания, гласове: Верно) Е, защо не дават училища на циганите? Та те не са ли хора: сиздеджам, бизде бадла джанмол? Че на хора, които скитат не се дават права, че и на наш'те цигани. Но: comparison n'est pas raison (гласове: вярнооо).

Свършвам, господа. А ми, ако се изселят, да кажем, циганите, кой ще калайдисва тенджурите по селата? Кой ще прави хамалък в столицата? (гласове: вярно). Циганите, господа, са производителен народ и ние сме длъжни да им възстановим отнетите права … (ръкоплескания)."

Илия Узунов: "Честит бях, да бъда избран за подпредседател на циганското племе. Ние се грижим да върнем отнетите права на циганите" (ръкоплескания). […]

Д-р Марков: "Понеже нашият конгрес е от политически характер, молим ви да приемем следующата резолюция:

1. Телеграма до Н[егово] Ц[арско] В[исочество] – София:

"Делегатите на коптското население от България се събраха днес на първи коптски конгрес в София с цел – да извоюват и получат обратно своите потъпкани права в 1901 г., въпреки постановленията на Берлинския договор, въпреки постановленията на Конституцията, имат надежда, че В[аше] Ц[арско] В[исочество] под чието ръководство г.г министри управляват Княжеството, ще благоволите и обърнете внимание на господин Министър-председателя да направи нужното в Нар[одното] събрание, за да ни се възстановят човешките права. Ние даваме войници, плащаме всички тегоби и какво? – изключение не се прави за задълженията ни, а права нямаме никакви. Желали бихме да се учим – училища нямаме. Исканията ни са законни и ние се надяваме, че В[аше] Ц[арско] В[исочество] ще употреби влиянието си, за да не живеем като парии в свободна и конституционна България. Да живее Н[егово] Ц[арско] В[исочество]!"

2. Телеграма до господина Добровича – началник на княжеската канцелария – Дворецът:

"Първият цигански конгрес реши единодушно, да помоли Н[егово] Ц[арско] В[исочество] да благоволи да приеме петчленна депутация, за да изложи на Господаря устно законните искания на циганското население в България. Молим за отговор."

3. Да се изпрати една депеша на предсеателя на Нар[одното] събрание:

"Благоволете, Г-н Председателю, да ни отговорите, ще можете ли да ни приемете утре, като делегати на Първия цигански конгрес, за да изложим пред вас едно свое законно искане."

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Заседанието се вдига утре в два часа, макар да е работен ден. Заповядайте всички, защото въпросът не е само цигански, а общочовешки (браво!).

∵

The Gypsy Congress – The First Meeting
The opening of the Congress – The speeches of the Gypsies and the Gypsy Tribune – Telegrams to the Royal Prince

At around 2 o'clock in the afternoon, in the public house 'San-Stefano', there was a small crowd, composed from members of the most distinguished communities – lawyers, engineers, doctors, office clerks, Deputies to the National Assembly and others. All of them eagerly await the arrival of the Delegates – Gypsies. At around half past two, there appeared around 40-50 Gypsies, representatives of the Copts population in the Principality, the essence of the Gypsies all across Bulgaria, headed by their general representative Dr. Marko K. Markov. With their arrival, the crowd stirred happily, made space to seat the Delegates and welcomed them with a continuous applause. […]

On the tribune came up the Mayor of the Gypsies from the Capital [1], Ramadan Alilov. There were energetic rounds of applause from Delegates and from the public for Mr. Mayor – swarthy, stout, with a colourful turban on his head, a wide waist-band around his back and on naked body jacket with plaits – made three low bows and turned towards the Delegates in Gypsy language [2]:

"*Allah yardem eun!* [3] Welcome! Do you know why have we gathered here? We used to have the right to vote up until Karavelov appeared; he took our rights away … And we serve taxes, pay for the soldiers … We ought to have right … (applause … voices: Correct …)."

After Mr. Mayor, the tribune was taken by the Deputy-Mayor – Ali Bilyalov, intelligent, amiable Gypsy, with European clothes, wearing a big, red waistband and tall, shiny boots. He made three low bows and with a clear voice addressed the Delegates in Gypsy:

"Brothers, Gypsies! Let's ask Mr. Markov to do what we have originally wanted to become … To have rights and to be free … (applause)."

Then, came up the Delegate Ali Mutishev from Plovdiv. He addressed everyone with the words "*Yashasun Royal Prince Ferdinand*" [4] and then he read his long speech in Turkish from which we give the following excerpts:

"Our meeting here signifies the freedom and the justice in Bulgaria. Here, everyone has the right to speak only about the subject for which we have gathered. There is a difference between Copts and Gypsies. Copts are those who have come from Egypt while the Gypsies – the lowest segment of the society. In Egypt, the Copts take part in the government because they have acquired education. That is why, the Copts ought to strive to acquire education in Bulgaria. In Bulgaria, Copts exercise different trades in the towns, and they pass as Muslims. According to the law, the Gypsies were deprived from their rights to suffrage, in other words, those Copts who did not have regular means to

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live by. However, due political reasons, that the political administration wants to have access to votes at its disposal, it assigns them the name Turks while when it wants to oust them – proclaims them as Gypsies. As this is unfair, we ask for our rights because also as Muslims – we observe all the rites of the religion while as citizens – all our obligations to the country. According to the Turkish Newspaper *Ikdam* [5], when the Census in Turkey took place – the Gypsies were counted as part of the Turkish nation, while in Bulgaria – so that Turks could have Mosques and Waqfs [6] at their disposal, they want to eliminate Gypsies from the Islam community."

Then, he gave several eulogies for Bulgaria, the Royal Prince and the Government. With each passage, he gave explanation to the Gypsies. His speech was listened out intently by the Gypsies and then followed by new, energetic applauses.

There appears the General Representative, Mr. Dr. Marko Markov carrying a few heavy books under his arms; he puts them on the tribune, looks around importantly and merrily towards the crowd and begins:

"Gentlemen! I give thanks to the Gypsies for trusting me and for burdening me with their political struggles which insist for their human rights because Gypsies are humans. Let the Delegates elect as my deputies: Ali Mutishev, Ali Bilyalov, Iliya Uzunov, Ali Molla, Riste Mustafa, Ikonomov (voices: we accept!); for cashier Ibrahim Ismailov, secretary – Ivan Paraskevov."

Ivan Paraskevov: "I thank the Copts' nation for electing me in their bureau. Stripping the political and civil rights of the Gypsy population leaves a stain in our country which we will unceasingly struggle to get rid of it. We will work with our souls and hearts until we witness the gaining of this dear right …"

Dr. Marko Markov (applause):

– Dear Assembly! We shall firstly check the names of the Delegates (they check them). […]

– Gentlemen, Gypsies!

You have gathered here to gain back your brutally stripped rights. Everyone was in favour of our just cause. It was only the Party's newspapers that did not say anything. They are waiting to learn from the Berlin's newspapers that there has been a Gypsy Congress in Sofia. More likely, the Party's newspapers will write about the ballroom dress of Ms. Dradafulova, about her hat and her shoes while for our, Gypsy, cause – they do not write anything. The Gypsy tribe will be forever thankful to the Newspaper *Vecherna Poshta* (Evening Mail) which solely sided with the Gypsy's interests. We owe many thanks to Mr. Simeon Radev. He is also here now (he turns towards Mr. Simeon Radev, who he saw somewhere in the rolls among the heavy crowd).

Mr. Radev, would you like to also help in this affair? (Laughter among everyone. Mr. Radev is obsessed with uncontrollable laughter). I am obliged to express the sincere and cordial thanks to Mr. Radev on behalf of the unjustified Copts' tribe. He made us a pleasant impression with his cordial appreciation of the matter of these Bulgarian pariahs (laughter and applause). I ask, on behalf of the Gypsy population in Bulgaria, Mr. Radev to continue this cause and not to be startled (applause and total laughter). […]

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I received many greeting telegrams from various towns (he reads them out).

Vidin: "… Even if we send money, the Delegate cannot reach because we received the letter too late …" (laughter).

Silistra: "Regarding the article in *Vecherna Poshta* (Evening Mail), the gathered Gypsies in Silistra today, numbering 200, we decided and elected as a Delegate – Mr. Markov."

To all of these telegrams, it is sensible for the requests of these true friends of the wronged Gypsies, the Congress to last for three days.

Varna: "Let me introduce you to my family Yurdan Atanasov. By nationality, I am a Gypsy. I have attended school for three years and I work as a barrier-man."

They, the Gypsies, gentlemen, are so dedicated to this matter that they will allow others who have been enlightened, "the day is known by the morning" [7], they will teach us, Bulgarians, how to do our jobs. […]

There are two theories about the descent of the Gypsies: the first one is that they are from India, one of the Arian tribes; the other is that they are Egyptians or Copts and that is why in Macedonia they are called *Gyuptsi*. This people has drawn the attention of today's scholars […], and many contemporary poets were inspired through them, especially the Hungarian and the Russian ones, as the poets find something better in the life of the Gypsies compared to ours. They have arrived at the Balkan Peninsula in 870 AD, before 11 centuries, during the reign of Imperator Nikephoros [8].

Their language, due to the places they Gypsies occupy, has undergone through several influences and today there are 13 dialects. There are Gypsies that some speak their own dialect – they do not understand other Gypsies who speak another dialect. […]

Those who do not have civil and political rights in this country are those who have been legally convicted, however, Petko Karavelov deprived the Gypsies from having legal rights, which lasted generations on, by giving charlatan arguments; why should they deprive from their rights only non-Christian Gypsies. Why? Is it a merit that somebody has been born a Bulgarian; is it a crime he has been born as a Gypsy, his mother gave birth to him so … Whether I pray to an icon or to a beautiful lady – that is my own business … (laughter). There is no *ratio legis* [9] here (applauses).

When one of our Ministers visits a foreign Diplomat, the Diplomat will say – in fact he will not say anything, because the diplomats are cunning like foxes, they communicate more through silence – however, he has the right to say "Give freedom to your Gypsies and then you can come so that we can give you our trust too …"

Gypsies pay taxes but they don't give them schools. Why? After the French Revolution, *karleme gelmezler* [10] it is a shame to take money from Gypsies and at the same time not to give them schools. *Les dots les gens* [11] require all to take part in state jobs, however, *anlayana sivri sinek sazduru, anlama anlamayana daulta zurna azduru* [12] (laughter).

Since, gentlemen, we all here are some kind Gypsies, you will allow me to light a cigarette, to smoke, and to speak … (applause).

The mountain made an effort and it gave birth to a mouse [13] … Our matter is similar: elections are not good because Gypsies supposedly sell their votes … Hey, *alankoolu!* [14]

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Grab him by his ear and bring him to court … Greeks, Jews and all Bulgarian citizens alike sell their votes. Where is the logic here? – *Oleum sersemicum!* [15] (applause).

Petko Karavelov say, that the Gypsies were an inferior race. *Oi ana asana* [16], well, by the way when did we become a superior race? You see me so, clad in European clothes, however, my granddad walked about wearing full-bottomed breeches; I speak and write 13 languages, but in the end my granddad didn't know even one. (laughter). May you excuse me for Gypsies being supposedly an inferior race. Gypsies have given scholars to the world … By origin Petko Karavelov is Sarakatsani – he is a Gypsy! [17] (applause). We have Ministers who are of Gypsy origin, Chiefs of train stations, Generals in our Army whose origins are Gypsy and they have deserved to carry their epaulettes. An Officer died at Slivnitsa [18] – Lieutenant Kochov, a Gypsy. However, he has been silly for having fought and not ran away; now they are taking away the rights of his compatriots.

Our political parties have not taken the side of the Gypsies do you know why? Ah? Should I tell you? (voices: Do tell us?) I will tell you: because they are patriots (he makes signs in the air, catches something and puts his hands in his pockets – laughter). Why are there unconditional funds just in case, *zor, zaman achim* [19], however, in these funds there are Gypsy money too *arif ulan aniasan* [20] (applause). They deprived the Gypsies from rights to suffrage, so that our affairs should prosper and so we blossomed. And are elections more free now – *bosh laf* [21]; May God forgive you, Petko Karavelov, I do respect you, however, with your permission I shall again prescribe to him *Oleum sersemicum* (laughter). Are you aware that Vasil Stoyanov [22], who during the time of the Revolution founded the Bulgarian Literary Society, is of Gypsy origins? He is from Zheravna. Well, you do know how the bagpipers from Zheravna play! – they are maestros in music and that shows that something good will come out of them. What else do you want from them? To discover a new America? Well, they say [Gypsies] make mistakes during elections – [a saying] "cucumbers for green caviar" [23] … But [they say Gypsies] were nomads and wanderers, and that is why they don't give them rights "*nukare zhamata*" [24] … (laughter). For the majority of the XI National Assembly, I shall prescribe *Oleum sersemicum*. [They say] the Gypsies stole and that is why they do not give them rights; that is what our leaders speak about. Hey, *tarankoolu* [25], "It is not Kolyo who is insane for having eaten five *zelniks* [26] but the one who has given them to him". We, the Bulgarians, are naïve: hey you, *sersemoglu, sersem* [27], that one who steals – catch him by his ear – and send him in jail, *ai anasane* [28] … (laughter). They say of the "honest" people to be the true villians; there are truly honest people, however, are hiding. Probably, that is what they say about me in *Cherven Rak* (Red Crab) [29] – "Leave him there – *Sakantiyata* [30] he is insane." – Fair enough, *dzhanum* [31], I went trice to the hospital and the doctor told me – "If you come in here, you are going to be the one proclaiming me as insane. I do not want you" (laughter). Well? Am I wrong?

I shall tell you something … We are all men here, let's talk more openly … Are there no women? (Voices: There are none!) Well, I will tell you now a story … Someone, called X. – even if I don't tell you who he is, you know him, has made a sort of a crime – they caught him; he has done something … *churukliya* [32]. Who has done it – again X. (applause,

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voices: True). Well, why don't they give schools to the Gypsies? Are they not human beings: *sizdedzham, bizde badla dzhanmol?* [33] Since people who are wandering are not given rights, so [they do the same] to our Gypsies as well. But: *comparison n'est pas raison* [34] (voices: that's right-t-t).

I am concluding, gentlemen. If, for example, the Gypsies move out from these lands completely, who will mend the pots in the villages? Who will be the porters in the Capital? (voices: That's right). Gypsies, gentlemen, are a productive nation and we are obliged to re-establish their stripped rights …" (applause).

Iliya Uzunov: "I am honoured for being elected as a vice-chair of the Gypsy tribe. We make sure to give back the stripped rights of the Gypsies." (applause). […]

Dr Markov:

– Since our Congress has a political character, we ask for the approval of the following Resolution:

1. A Telegram to High Royal Highness – Sofia:

"The Delegates of the Copts population in Bulgaria have gathered today in the First Copts Congress in Sofia with the aim – to gain and get back their repressed rights in 1901, ignoring the ordinances of the Treaty of Berlin and the ordinances of the Constitution; they have the hope that Your Highness, under whose management Ministers govern the Principality, you will be so kind and bring the attention of the Prime Minister to make what is necessary in the National Assembly so that our human rights are restored. We provide soldiers, we pay all our duties and so what? – there are no exceptions made for our duties, however, we have no rights. We would like to study – schools we do not have. Our demands are lawful and we hope that Your Royal Highness will use his influence so that we do not live as pariahs in a free and constitutional Bulgaria. Long live His Royal Highness!"

2. A telegram to Mr. Dobrovich – Head of Office of the Principality – The Palace:

"The first Gypsy Congress decided unilaterally to ask His Royal Highness to be so kind and to accept a Delegation of five members which would present verbally to the Master the wishes of the Gypsy tribe in Bulgaria. We ask for an answer."

3. To send a telegram to the Chair of the National Assembly:

"Condescend, Mr. Chair, to give us an answer, will you be able to accept us tomorrow, as delegates of the First Gypsy Congress, so that we present to you one of our lawful requests."

The meeting is scheduled for tomorrow at 2 o'clock, even though it is a workday. You are all welcome as this matter concerns not only Gypsies but all humans (Bravo!).

Notes

1. It means the *Muhtar* of the so-called old Gypsy Mahala in Sofia.
2. Here (as below), it is explicitly emphasised that some of the speeches in the congress were in the Gypsy language. However, the question arises as to what extend the reporter covering the congress has been able in such cases to understand what it was being talked about, and why they conveyed these statements in broken Bulgarian.
3. Here, and several times bellow, the phrases in broken Turkish which the journalist perceived as incomprehensible for the readers are repeated in Bulgarian.

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4. Long live Prince Ferdinand! (Turkish). At that time, the head of the Principality of Bulgaria is Prince Ferdinand I of Bulgaria.
5. The newspaper *Ikdam* (Effort), founded in 1894 and published in Istanbul, has been the most popular newspaper of the time in the Ottoman Empire.
6. 'Waqf' is a charitable endowment under Islamic law, which typically involves a building, plot of land or other assets for Muslim religious or charitable purposes.
7. A Bulgarian proverb which says that the morning can tell what the day will be like.
8. It refers here to the Byzantine Emperor Nikephoros I (802-811) who died in the battle during his march against the Bulgarian State. There has been a legend, already reflected by Petko R. Slaveykov (Славейков, 1866, p. 3), that the Gypsies were the blacksmiths who coated the Emperor's skulls with gold and silver and made from it a cup with which the Bulgarian Khan Krum drank toast in the feasts he organised. This legend has been preserved among the Roma in Bulgaria to this day.
9. The meaning of the law (Latin).
10. An incomprehensible phrase.
11. Fr. (confused): Les lois de gens – People's laws
12. See above, 2.1.1., note 8.
13. The mountain made an effort and it gave birth to a mouse – a Bulgarian proverb which means that huge efforts have been put while the result is insignificant.
14. A contemptuous address from the Turkish *yalan* 'lie' and *oğlu* 'son', i.e. son of a liar.
15. *Oleum sersemicum!* The speaker's pun (Dr. Marko Markov), a combination between the Latin *oleum* and the Turkish *sersem* and could be translated as 'balm for fools'.
16. Turk. (confused): Oi anlasana – O, understand. Cf. 20, 28 below.
17. The confusing of the Sarakatsani (Greek-speaking pastoral population in the Balkans) with the Gypsies is a common occurrence, which can be encountered to this day. Also ascribing a Gypsy origin to celebrities is a fairly common practice in the Balkans. The number of famous Bulgarians who, on various occasions (most often to be offended or humiliated), have been attributed by their contemporaries to an alleged Gypsy origin, is too high, among them Todor Zhivkov, who was General Secretary of the Bulgarian Communist Party and was the de-facto leader of the People's Republic of Bulgaria from 1956 until 1989 and this even includes some contemporary Bulgarian politicians. However, in other cases ascribing Gypsy origin to famous personalities by Roma themselves is with a positive meaning and nowadays the number of such renowned personalities with alleged Roma origin is constantly increasing.
18. It refers to the Battle of Slivnitsa on November 17-19, 1885 during the Serbo-Bulgarian War.
19. During difficult times (Turkish).
20. An incomprehensible phrase.
21. Fudge/empty words (Turkish).
22. Vassil D. Stoyanov (1839-1910) is a public known, educated figure, one of the founders of the Bulgarian Literary Society in Braila (Romania) in 1869, which eventually grew in 1911 into the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences. There is nothing to suggest about his "Gypsy" descent.
23. A Bulgarian idiom meaning to lie to somebody.
24. An incomprehensible phrase.
25. Bulgarianised form of 'alankoolu' (see above note 14).
26. Traditional Bulgarian cabbage pie.
27. Son of a fool, a fool (Turkish).
28. An incomprehensible phrase.
29. A popular locale in Sofia at the time.
30. The 'Sakantiya' (from the Turkish 'sakın'– do not) is the public nickname of Dr Marko Markov. In this case, it was used in the sense of 'trouble-maker'.
31. A 'soul', 'heart' (Turkish), in this case may be understood as 'dear'.
32. Literally 'rotten' (Turkish), in the sense that he has committed immoral acts.

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33. Something like "you, guys, we have souls too" (Turk.).
34. Comparisons are misleading (French).

Source: [No Author]. (1905d). Цигански конгрес. *Вечерна поща*, 1905, December 20, p. 2. Prepared for publication by Elka Mincheva, Elena Marushiakova and Vesselin Popov. Translated by Aleksandar Marinov.

2.1.5 *The Gypsy Congress – The Second Meeting*

Цигански конгрес – Второ заседание

Циганите, с прости турски облекла, с фесове и чалми, заели местата си в салона на "Сан-Стефано". Те с дълбоко внимание изслушват всички оратори. Облаци дим се носят над главите им от запушени лули и чибуци, но нито шум, нито глъч, нито думичка издават те, когато на трибуната говори някой. Те с голямо смирение изслушват всички убедени, че вършат нещо свято, че се борят за брутално отнетото им право. Циганите, които в обикновенния живот минават за кавгаджии, сега в техния първи конгрес са тъй тихи – до богобоязливост.

Председателят на конгреса, генералният цигански пълномощник, д-р Марко К. Марков, поканва интелигенцията на събранието да се изкаже по циганския въпрос. Никой от присъствуващите не поисква да се нагърби с дебатирането на този толкова важен цигански въпрос.

Тогава стана най-интелигентния от циганите Мустафа Рабан – редактор на вестник "Ферат" и на турски каза една реч, с която покани циганите да издават един цигански орган (вестник), списуван на български и на френски. Циганските делегати обаче отхвърлиха това предложение. Д-р М[арко] К. Марков каза още една реч в защита на циганската кауза. След него Али Билялов се обърна към делегатите цигани с една кратка реч на български:

"Братя, цигани!

Ние треба защити наше право. Ние ходи войник и треба има право на избор циганско население. Ние има циганин офицер, бил се на Сливница за българско насление, требва и нази права да избираме. Ние даваме войник, а нямаме училища …" (гласове: Вярнооо).

След това се избра депутация от д-р М[арко] К. Марков, Али Билялов, Р. Мустафов, И[лия] Узунов, Али Мустафов, Али Махмудов, Хасан Алиев, Ибрахим Исмаилов, Емил Юмеров и Еф. Икономов, които него пред обед се представиха на председателите на Народното събрание и са поднесли молбата си за изменение на чл. 2 от Избирателния закон, като съдържащ противозаконно разпореждане – "циганите не-християни да нямат избирателни права."

Подпредседателят г-н Добри Петков казал, че ще сезира Народното събрание по празниците по този въпрос. След това депутацията с файтони отива при кореспондента на вестник "Times" г-н Баучър, живущ в хотел "България", за дето е поместил една статия във вестник "Times" за циганския въпрос. Понеже г-н Баучър отсъствувал от хотела и циганите не носели със себе си визитните си

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картички, викнали хотелиера и на него изказали високата си благодарност, която дължели към Баучера. След това дойдоха в нашата редакция да изкажат своята благодарност.

След закриването на конгреса вчера, циганите са поздравили телеграфически княза по случай Н[овата] година.

Днес конгресистите са получили телеграма от Двореца, с която им благодарят за поздравленията.

Циганите делегати се разотидоха по домовете си.

∵

The Gypsy Congress – The Second Meeting

The Gypsies, clad in simple Turkish clothes, wearing fez caps and turbans, take their places in the Hall of *San-Stefano*. They listen attentively to all speakers. Clouds of fumes move above their heads which comes from the smoking pipes and chibouks, however, they make no noise nor clamour, they don't speak even a word when somebody speaks from the tribune. With great humility, they listen to everyone and they are convinced that they do something sacred, that they fight for their brutally stolen right. The Gypsies, who ordinarily are considered as quarrelsome, now in their first Congress are quiet – even pious.

The Chair of the Congress, the Chief Gypsy Executive, Dr. Marko Markov, invites the intelligentsia of the meeting to say a word on the Gypsy question. Nobody who is among the present wants to be burdened with the discussion of this so important Gypsy matter.

Then, the most intelligent among the Gypsies, Mustafa Raban, stood up – the editor of Newspaper *Ferat* [1] who gave a speech in Turkish which invited the Gypsies to publish a Gypsy publication (newspaper) in Bulgarian and French. The Gypsy Delegates, however, declined that suggestion. Dr. Marko K. Markov gave also another speech in defence of the Gypsy cause. After that, Ali Bilyalov turned towards the Gypsy Delegates with a short speech in Bulgarian:

"Brothers, Gypsies

We ought to defend our right. We serve as soldiers and the Gypsy population ought to have voting rights. We have a Gypsy Officer who fought at Slivnitsa for the Bulgarian nation; we too ought to have voting rights. We provide soldiers, however, we do not have schools [2] …" (voices: Correct).

After that, a Deputation was chosen, composed by Dr. Marko K. Markov, Ali Bilyalov, Riste Mustafov, Ilya Uzunov, Ali Mustafov, Ali Mahmudov, Hasan Aliev, Ibrahim Ismailov, Emil Yumerov and Ef[tim] Ikonomov, and was presented before noon to the Members of the National Assembly and it submitted an application for the modification of Art. 2 of the Suffrage Law, which contains the unlawful ordinance – "Non-Christian Gypsies should not have the right to suffrage."

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The Vice Chair, Mr. Dobri Petkov [3] has said that he will censure the National Assembly during the holidays regarding this matter. After that, the Delegation heads off with phaetons to the Correspondent of *Times* Magazine Mr. Bourchier [4], living in Hotel *Bulgaria*. Since Mr. Bourchier was away from his hotel and as the Gypsies did not bring their business cards with them, they called to speak with the hotel Manager and to him they expressed their high gratitude which they owed to Bourchier. Then, they came to our Editing Office to express their appreciation.

After the Congress was closed yesterday, the Gypsies have sent their greetings through a telegram to the Royal Prince regarding New Year.

Today, the Congressmen received a telegram from the Palace which thanked them for their greetings.

The Gypsies went away to their homes.

Notes

1. In all likelihood, here it is meant Mustafa Ragap, editor-in-chief of Newspaper *Feryat* (Scream), published in Sofia in 1905-1906 by an immigrant Young Turks organisation (Иванчев, 1969, Vol. 3, p. 43; Ялъмов, 1998, p. 57).
2. The speech of Ali Bilyalov is presented in a very broken Bulgarian language.
3. Dobri Petkov (1860-1932) was a Bulgarian public figure and politician, at that time deputy Chairman of the Bulgarian National Assembly.
4. Here, it refers to the famous journalist James David Bourchier (1850-1920) who has been a long-time Balkan correspondent for the Newspaper *Times* and lived in Bulgaria (1894-1915).

Source: [No Author]. (1905e). Цигански конгрес. *Вечерна поща*, 1905, December 21, p. 2.
Prepared for publication by Elka Mincheva, Elena Marushiakova and Vesselin Popov.
Translated by Aleksandar Marinov.

2.1.6 *A Telegram from the Gypsies to the Royal Prince*

Телеграма на циганите до княза

На 19 т[ози] м[есец] бюрото на циганския конгрес изпрати следната телеграма по случай Григорианската Нова година:

"До Н[егово] Ц[арско] В[исочество] Фердинанд I – Княз Български.

В[аше] Ц[арско] В[исочество], любими ни Господарю, делегатите на цялото българско коптско циганско население на събрание на конгреса в столицата за издействуване възстановлението на политическите избирателни права на коптското население ви поздравяваме по случай Новата ви година. Чест ни е да поднесем пред стъпките на Ваше Царско Височество израз на най-сърдечните честитявания и поздравления, като молителствуваме пред Всевишнаго Бога, да ви дарува дълголетно щастие и благоденствувано царуване, вам и на В[аше] Ц[арско] В[исочество] Престонаследника – княз Борис Търновски, и на цялата ви Династия, за славата на България и за преуспяване на милото ни Отечество.

Най-верни и искренни предани поданници на Ваше Царско Височество.

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Представители на коптското население в България."

Следват подписите на 50 делегати от Циганския конгрес.

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A Telegram from the Gypsies to the Royal Prince

On the 19th of this month, the Office of the Gypsy Congress sent the following telegram on occasion of the Gregorian New Year [1]:

"To His Royal Highness Ferdinand I – Bulgarian Royal Prince.

Your Royal Highness, our favourite Master, the Delegates of the whole Bulgarian Copts Gypsy population having gathered in a meeting in the Capital for the purpose of regaining the Copts' political rights to suffrage, we send you greetings with regard to the New Year. It is our honour to offer to Your Royal Highness a gesture of most-cordial congratulations and greetings as we beg the Almighty God to grand you many years of joy and a blessed reign, to you and to Royal Highness the Heir – Royal Prince Boris Turnovski, and to your whole Dynasty, for the glory of Bulgaria and for the prosperity of our beloved Homeland.

Most loyal and sincerely dedicated citizens of Your Royal Highness.

Representatives of the Copts population of Bulgaria."

Following are the signatures of 50 Delegates of the Gypsy Congress.

Note

1. Bulgaria changed its official Julian Calendar (the so-called 'old style') with the Gregorian Calendar (the so-called 'new style') in 1916, but the Bulgarian Orthodox Church continued to use the Julian Calendar until 1968. The Roma in Bulgaria however prefer to use old style calendar until nowadays, and the date of 14 January is considered the 'Gypsy New Year'.

Source: [No Author]. (1905f). Телеграма на циганите до княза. *Вечерна поща*, 1905, December 22, p. 3.
Prepared for publication by Elka Mincheva, Elena Marushiakova and Vesselin Popov.
Translated by Aleksandar Marinov.

2.1.7 *The Gypsy Movement*

Циганско движение

Софийският адвокат г-н д-р М[арко] К. Марков, председател на Първия коптски конгрес, след празниците ще държи публични речи в Ихтиман, Т[атар] Пазарджик и Пловдив по циганския въпрос. Коптското движение се усилва и д-р Марков всеки ден получава насърчителни писма от влиятелни и интелигентни цигани. Американският писател и кореспондент г-н Алберт Сонкисен също така се заинтересувал от коптското движение и тая сутрин, придружен от д-р Марков посетил циганите в новата махала.

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The Gypsy Movement

The lawyer from Sofia, Mr. Dr. M. K. Markov, Chair of the First Copts Congress, after the holidays will give public speeches in Ihtiman, Tatar Pazardzhik and Plovdiv regarding the Gypsy question. The Copts movement is gaining momentum and Dr. Markov receives daily encouraging letters from influential and intelligent Gypsies. The American writer and Correspondent Mr. Albert Sankisen [1] was also interested in the Copts Movement and this morning, accompanied by Dr. Markov, he visited the Gypsies in the New Mahala [2].

Notes

1. This refers to Albert Sonnichsen (1878-1931), an American journalist who, in 1906, joined the Bulgarian armed detachments in Macedonia (at that time part of the Ottoman Empire).
2. The gradual displacement of the so-called old mahala farther from the center of Sofia began after 1888, in the locality of Konyovitsa, where the city meadow was then located. In 1905-1907, the so-called new mahala (*Konyovitsa* and *Tatarli*) was already formed and gradually grew in the following years while the old mahala disappeared (Marushiakova & Popov, 2007a, pp. 128-129).

Source: [No Author]. (1905g). Циганско движение. *Вечерна поща*, 1905, December 25, p. 3.
Prepared for publication by Elka Mincheva, Elena Marushiakova and Vesselin Popov.
Translated by Aleksandar Marinov.

2.1.8 *Dr. Marko Markov in Plovdiv*

[Д-р Марко Марков в Пловдив]

Циганските права се е заел да защитава д-р М. Марков, който събира и цигански конгрес в София. Миналата седмица той държа реч у [Театър] "Люксембург" пред много цигани в Пловдив. Не желаем да влизаме във въпроса дали е време и е полезно да се възстановят правата на циганите, но ще кажем тук, че доколкото ние видяхме и чухме, види ни се като подигравка на конституцията по правата да се защитават тез, с този начин. Види ни се чист фарс!

∵

Dr. Marko Markov in Plovdiv

The affair of defending the Gypsy rights was taken by Dr. M. Markov who also organises a Gypsy Congress in Sofia. Last week, he gave a speech in Theatre *Luxemburg* [1] in front of many Gypsies in Plovdiv. We are not willing to discuss the matter whether it is the right time or if it is beneficial the rights of the Gypsies to be given back, however, we will say here that as far as we could see and hear, it appears to us as a mockery to the Constitution that these people's rights are defended and in that a fashion. It appears to us as a pure farce!

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Source: [No Author]. (1906). [No Title]. *Зорница*, 1906, January 12, p. 3.
Prepared for publication by Elka Mincheva, Elena Marushiakova and Vesselin Popov.
Translated by Aleksandar Marinov.

2.1.9 *The Gypsy Meeting in Varna*

Цигански събор в град Варна

Г-н Ф-в ни пише от Варна:

Неумолимият Марко К. Марков, нарицаем още "Сакънтията", в своя прочут поход против потъпкваните права на циганите, или коптите, [реши] незабавно да посети града ни. С обявления, по дълги, отколкото неразделният му другар бастуна "Конституцията", той канеше гражданите от името на "вашите братя по рождение" (sic.) да покажат доблест и съдействие, като почетат с присъствието си събора. Види се, по здравословни причини, съборът не можа да стане в някои от градските салони, та се откри на стъгдата пред старата болница. Заседанието почна с циганска точност: на часа три, вместо в един и половина, както беше обявено. Това закъснение циганите – облечени в пъстри дрехи – доброволно понесоха, защото по тая причина се възползуваха от сиромашкото лято и пушейки страстно своите лули, размениха си сладки приказки за щастливо бъдеще ... Най сетне чуха се гласове "Идат, идат!". Генералният коптски щаб начело с М[арко] Марков, с бавни стъпки пристигнаха на мястото, поздравявани с темане от циганите. Веднага М[арко] Марков се покачи на масата, определена за трибуна, и – с калпак на главата – след като хвърли внушителни погледи на всички страни, започна да развива своя лекция по общественото, международното и българското конституционно право в свръзка с циганския въпрос. От съдържанието по обявлението за събора се знаеше предварително – нали хубавия ден се познава от сутринта? – че речта на М. Марков ще бъде свободна от сакънтия, че тя ще представлява изобилно словоизлияние, окичено с бисери от народната циганска словесност ...

"Господа граждани, – провикна се ораторът – преди пет години едно велико престъпление се изърши над коптското население в Княжеството. За срам и позор на съвременното човечество, отне се най-свещенното им право – избирателното! Прокламацията на о Бозе почившия Цар Освободител, Берлинският договор, българската конституция ... Време е, трябва час по-скоро с общи сили да измием това петно, хвърлено върху политическата чест на мила и хубава България!" ...

Тогава зимното слънце, което срамежливо криеше лицето си зад облаците, усмихнато погледно и освети гъстите и сключени вежди на късия борец за отнетите права на циганите. Коптите, макар да не разбираха думите, пак със зяпнали уста слушаха самозвания защитник, който в продължение на повече от един час, поддържаше напрегнатото им внимание с възклицателни изрази и поговорки; последните му думи бяха придружени с гръмогласния им поздрав: "Яша, яша, бин, яша!"

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По реда си говори по турски, доста увлекателно, интелигентният коптянин Мустафа Рагеб-бей, а подир него взе думата Еф. Икономов, който – между другото – каза, че велика Русия е проляла кръвта на своите мили синове за свободата не само на нас – българите, а и за всички други народности, живущи в Княжеството. Ив. Корчев, общинският билиотекар, кротко, но ясно доказа неверността на Икономовото твърдение, още [повече], че циганите са недостойни за избирателно право, понеже през Освободителната война се биха против освободителите си и че в бъдеще пак няма да бъдат верни български граждани.

Съдържателните речи на Станчо Ж. Мутафов и Ан. Чифутов, които отговаряха на М. Марков и с-ие, раздразниха духовете на присъствующите копти, щото едвам можа да се избегне сбиването, с което оплакващите копти, пред очите на своя leader-а, щяха да докажат, че действително още не са зрели за свобода – че мъдра е мерката, взета преди няколко години от правителството, което отне от циганите избирателното им право. Около часа шест циганският събор гласува да се изпрати телеграма до Н[егово] Ц[арско] В[исочество] Княза от името на варненските копти и "другите жители на град Варна". От своя страна гражданите не от коптски произход, присътвующи на събора от любопитство, по предложение на Ф. Христов, взеха решение с телеграма до Княза да съобщят че първата телеграма не изказва желанието на варненските жители, освен на циганите. Очаквайки по-добър прием другаде, М. Марков засега се утешава, разумява се с туй, че поне мъчнотията му за пари поолекна, защото той благоволил да приеме, научава се, скромната сума от 20 000 лева (цяла министерска заплата, без никакви удръжки) за възнаграждение на труда си по възстановяване потъпканото право на коптите. Без съмнение циганите в България са предоволни от своя смел вожд, който се води от поучението: audacem fortuna juvat! – просто преведено значи: бъди нахален, не се бой! Обаче тесната дейност на М[арко] Марков възмущава две съсловия в Княжеството: свещеническото и военното, които също не се ползуват от избирателното право. Не по-малко негодуват македоно-одринчаните. Вече чухме неколцина от последните да разсъждават така: законът не позволява да се избира бащата, но по външността си Марко К. Марков, он же доктор на някакво си Право, личи да е българин; следователно ако целта му с шумната дейност по циганския въпрос е чиста от съблазни мира сего, т.е. намерението му не е [за] лична него[ва] облага, защо – бе, брате – негова милост, сакънтията, не се завземе да ги приложат в Македония и Одринско правата, предвидени в Берлинския договор (за чието изпълнение толкова милее!), или поне да се възстановят отнетите на тамошното население [права], с които се ползваше до скоро време, например да избира съдебни заседатели? Наистина може много нещо да се каже върху поривите, що са накарали М. Марков да плаче върху чуждия гроб. Засега ще му припомним любимия съвет, който той дава на слушателите си, а именно: аннмаяна сиври синекъ сазъ дърь, аннмаяна даулъ да зурла азъ дърь ...

Ф-в

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A Gypsy Meeting in the city of Varna

Mr. F-v writes to us from Varna:

The unrelenting Marko K. Markov, also known as the *Sakantiya*, in his famous crusade against the infringed rights of the Gypsies, or the *Copts*, should promptly visit our town. With flyers, longer than his inseparable friend, the walking stick the "Constitution" [1], he was inviting all citizens on behalf of "your brothers *by birth*" (sic.) to show valour and to cooperate by giving respect to the meeting with their presence. It is apparent, that due to health concerns, the meeting cannot take place in one of the Halls in the town, so it took place at the square in front of the old hospital. The meeting began with Gypsy accuracy: at 3 o'clock, instead of half past one as it was originally planned. The delay was happily endured by the Gypsies – clad in colourful clothes, as in this way they took advantage of the warm weather and while passionately smoking their pipes, they exchanged pleasant words about the prosperous future … In the end, voices were heard "They come, they come!". The General Staff of the Copts, headed by Marko Markov, came with their slow pace while they were greeted with short bows by the Gypsies. Promptly, Marko Markov climbed on the table, fixed to serve as a tribune, and – wearing a cap on his head – after throwing imposing glances at all sides, he began to deliver his own lecture on the theme of the society, the international and Bulgarian constitutional law regarding the Gypsy matter. By the contents in the notice about the meeting it was known in advance – a beautiful day is known from the morning, isn't it? – that the speech of M. Markov will be free of *sakantiya* and that it will be an abundant verbiage accompanied with pearls from the Gypsy national speech …

"Gentlemen, citizens, – the speaker shouted out – five years ago, a grave crime was made on the Copts population in the Principality. Shame and disgrace of modern humankind as their most sacred right was taken away – the suffrage. The proclamation of the deceased Tsar the Liberator, God rest his soul [2], the Treaty of Berlin, the Bulgarian Constitution … It is time, urgently, with common efforts, we ought to clear up that stain which rests on the political honour of our dear and beautiful Bulgaria!" …

Then, the winter sun which was hiding shyly its face behind the clouds peaked with a smile and illuminated the thick and joined eyebrows of the short fighter for the sake of the stolen rights of the Gypsies. The Copts, even though they did not understand his words, gazed with their mouths open the self-proclaimed defender who for more than an hour kept their tense attentions with the expressions of saying and proverbs; his last words were accompanied with their loud greeting: *Yasha, yasha, bin, yasha!* [3].

As scheduled, the intelligent Copt, Mustafa Rageb-bey fascinatingly spoke in Turkish and after him spoke Ef. Ikonomov who – by the way – said that Great Russia has spared the blood of her dear sons soldiers for the sake of the freedom of not only us, Bulgarians, but also all other nationalities who live in the Principality. Ivan Korchev, the Chief Librarian of the district, proved gently but clearly the wrong statement of Ikonomov and

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added that Gypsies are unworthy of the right to suffrage because during the Liberation War they fought against their Liberators and that they will again be unfaithful Bulgarian citizens in the future.

The meaningful speeches of Stancho Zh. Mutafov and An. Chifutov, who were responding to M. Markov and the rest, irritated the spirits of the present Copts as it was hardly possible to avoid a fight with which the complaining Copts, in the mere presence of their leader [4], were going to prove that truly they are not yet ready for freedom – that the government's measure which took away from the Gypsies their rights to suffrage several years ago was wise indeed. At around 6 o'clock, the Gypsy Assembly voted to send a telegram to His Royal Highness, the Prince on behalf of the Copts from Varna and "the other citizens of the city of Varna". On the other hand, those citizens of non-Copts origin who were present at the meeting out of curiosity, as suggested by F. Hristov, took the decision to announce to the Royal Prince with a telegram that the first telegram does not represent the wants of the residents of Varna but only these of the Gypsies. Hoping for a better reception somewhere else, M. Markov seeks to console himself for the time being. It has been learnt that since his need of money has been slightly eased as he *has been so kind* to accept the sum of 20,000 leva (the whole salary of a government minister without any deductions) as a remuneration for his efforts in regaining the infringed rights of the Copts. Undoubtedly, Gypsies in Bulgaria are more than satisfied with their brave leader who goes by the teaching: *audacem fortuna juvat!* [5] – translated in simple words this means: be insolent, do not be afraid! The peculiar business of Marko Markov, nevertheless, rouses the indignation of two estates of people in the Principality: the clergy and the military who also do not have the right to suffrage. Neither less is the resentment of the people of Macedonia and the Edirne region either. We have already heard from the latter to deliberate in the following way: the law does not allow the father to be chosen, however, by his appearance, Marko K. Markov, a Doctor in whatever law, seems to be a Bulgarian; therefore, if his aim around the sensational Gypsy affair is sincere, in other words, his intent is not for his own benefits, why – Oh, brother – his honour, the *Sakantiya*, does not endeavour to apply this in Macedonia and the region of Odrin, as envisaged in the Bulgarian Constitution (for which he so dearly cares for!), or simply to give these rights to suffrage to those who live there and who until recently used to have rights for example to elect Members of the Judiciary? Truly, many things may be said for the reasons that have made M. Markov to shed tears on some else's grave. For now, we shall remind him about a favourite advice which he himself gives to his listeners and namely: *annmayana sivri sinek saz dur, annmayana daul da zurla az dur* [6] ...

Notes

1. According to his contemporaries, Dr. Marko Markov had been widely known to the Bulgarian society for his long cane which bore the big inscription 'Constitution' (Каназирски-Верин, 1947, p. 79). In this way, he had penetrated the socio-political morals at a time when canes were often the last argument in political struggles.
2. It refers here to the Russian Emperor Alexander II the Liberator, called 'Tsar, the Liberator' which in Russia refers to his reform for the emancipation of serfs, but in Bulgaria, it points the

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so-called Liberation War (1877-78) between the Russian and Ottoman Empires, which resulted in Bulgaria becoming an independent state.
3. Long live, long live, long live thousands of times (Turkish).
4. In the text, 'leader' is written in English which gives it a mocking sense.
5. Fortune favours the bold (Latin).
6. See 2.1.1, note 8. For the one who understands, even the mosquito is a *saz* (musical instrument), for the one who does not understand, both the drum and the *zurna* are not enough (Turkish proverb).

Source: Ф-в. (1906). Цигански събор в град Варна. *Вечерна поща*, 1906, January 28, p. 2.
Note: This is the second newspaper bearing the same title with editor-in-chief Stoyan Shangov.
Prepared for publication by Elka Mincheva, Elena Marushiakova and Vesselin Popov.
Translated by Aleksandar Marinov.

2.1.10 *A Gypsy Protest*

Цигански протест

В Министерството на външните работи – Церибашията иска аудиенция

Циганите в Царството са се силно разтревожили. Те отново ще повдигат въпроса за отнетите им граждански права. В по-големите градове вече те са взели своите решения. Същото са сторили и софийските цигани, които с циганията си развалят цялата работа.

Вместо да чакат общото решение на циганската партия, се явяват вчера в Министерството на външните работи и манифестирали вчера чрез особена врява своите искания пред министър Паприков. Коридорите на Външното министерство добили параден изглед: едно голямо число представители на фараонското племе смиреномудрено чака да ги приеме министърът на аудиенция. Разсилните вместо да поканят в чакалната зала тия фараонови дворяни, почнали да ги тласкат и пъдят.

Вдига се ужасна врява:

– Господин разсилено, сакаме го на правото! – се звери церибашията на един от разсилните.

– Министъро, министъро! Бащице … сакън, ааа …

В два [часа] министър-разсилните изтласкаха депутацията, която тръгна да търси по-голяма порта …

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A Gypsy Protest

In the Ministry of External Affairs. – The Mayor Asks for an Audience

Gypsies in the Kingdom are quite worried. They will again raise the question regarding their deprived civil rights. In the major towns, they have already made up their minds. The same have also done the Gypsies from Sofia who in their Gypsy way ruin the whole affair.

Instead of waiting for the general decision of the Gypsy Party, they appeared yesterday in the Ministry of External Affairs and manifested, by kicking up a racket, their demands to the Minister Paprikov [1]. The corridors of the Ministry of External Affairs began to

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resemble a parade: a big number of the representatives of the Pharaoh's tribe [2] waited with humility to be seen by the Minister. The ushers, instead of inviting these Pharaoh's noblemen in the waiting room, began to push and chase them.

A horrible uproar is being raised:

– Mister usher, we're asking for a right! – the *Tseribashi* [3] irritatingly says to one of the ushers.

– Minster, Minister! Father … *sakan* [4], aaa …

At around 2 o'clock the ushers pushed the Delegation out, which in return began to look for a bigger gate …

Notes

1. Stefan Paprikov (1858-1920), was a well-known Bulgarian politician, at that time Minister of Foreign Affairs.
2. Pharaoh tribe – in almost all chapters there is reference to the link between Gypsies and Pharaoh.
3. 'Tseribashi' misspelled 'Cheri-bashi' (Turkish). In the Ottoman Empire, the term used to refer to the leaders of nomadic Gypsy groups who were designated by the authorities and were responsible for paying the taxes. In the independent Bulgarian State, this term acquired the meaning of 'a leader of the Gypsies' in the Gypsy mahalas in towns.
3. Do not (Turkish).

Source: [No Author]. (1908). Цигански протест. *Вечерна поща*, 1908, November 26, p. 3.
Prepared for publication by Elka Mincheva, Elena Marushiakova and Vesselin Popov.
Translated by Aleksandar Marinov.

Comments

The published above block of materials reveals the emergence and first steps in organising the Gypsy civil rights movement in Bulgaria. Moreover, considered on a global scale, this is the first event of this character in the history of the Gypsies.

After the disintegration of the Ottoman Empire and the establishment of new ethnonational states in the Balkans, the aspirations of Roma, now as citizens of the newly established states, for civic emancipation were further boosted. As a result of the war between the Russian and the Ottoman Empires in 1877-1878, the subsequent San Stefano Peace Treaty, the Berlin Congress, and the adoption of the Constitution (known as the Tarnovo Constitution) in April 1879 in the city of Tarnovo, a new Bulgarian State was created. The Tarnovo Constitution promulgated citizenship and equality for all inhabitants of the country (i.e. including Gypsies) – Art. 57 "All Bulgarian subjects are equal before the law", and Art. 86 "Voters are all Bulgarian subjects above 21, who have civil rights and political rights" (Конституция 1945). At least from a legislative point of view, all Bulgarian citizens were declared equal, but only about two decades later, it becomes clear that the new state did not perceive all citizens as equal (especially Gypsies), and this was also reflected in the legislation.

On the 3rd of May 1901, a law for the amendment of the Election Law was debated and voted by the 11th National Assembly (at 61st extraordinary session). The amendment was

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proposed by the Government, headed by Petko Karavelov (till December 1901) and after that by Stoyan Danev, which came into power as a coalition between the Democratic Party and the Progressive-Liberal Party and is known in Bulgarian history as a progressive one. According to the provisions of this law, Item 2 under Art. 4 and Art. 7 "Who is banned from voting" a text ran as follows: "In that number the Gypsies non-Christians, as well as all those Gypsies without any fixed abode" (Държавен вестник, 1901, p. 3). In this way, Muslim Gypsies were deprived of voting rights (at that time the majority of Gypsies in Bulgaria), as well as nomadic Gypsies (more exactly, those without administrative registration). As it became clear from the discussion in the parliament, the reason for proposing this amendment was the general practice of 'vote-buying' of Gypsy votes at elections, and the perception of Gypsies as people with "low-culture" and with an "aversion to work". The proposal was that the right to vote should remain only for those Gypsies who "do not differ from Bulgarians", which was considered as the defining sign of integration. This was followed by a heated discussion about where in the country "undercover Gypsies" were living.

The debates and the very inclusion of the cited amendments to the election law are the clearest indications for the reluctance of the Bulgarian political elite to accept Gypsies as an integral part of Bulgarian society and of the Bulgarian nation. During the continuous debates on the passing of this amendment (in the presence of the Prime Minister Petko Karavelov and all Bulgarian political leaders at the time), only a handful left-wing deputies (e.g. Yanko Zabunov from Bulgarian Agrarian Peoples Union, Todor Vlaikov from the governing Democratic Party) spoke against such discriminatory and anti-constitutional limitations of the rights of the Gypsies (Стенографски дневници, 1901, pp. 258-260). The discussion lasted for about an hour, and in its final speech Prime Minister Petko Karavelov put forward the final argument in defense of the proposed legislative draft:

> A few words more I will say for clarification. [...] We do not need voters from a nation with low culture. If they leave the country, they will do very well for us. If a USA nation does not allow such a thing for the Chinese people, then we will do well too if we remove the Gypsies who are not capable of any work. (Ibid., p. 259).

The comparison with the USA was decisive. The law was voted almost unanimously, with 90 votes for out of 96 present (Ibid., p. 260). Only the representatives of the left-wing political parties voted against, including the Bulgarian Workers Social-Democratic Party (the future Communist Party). The new law for the amendment of the Election Law immediately came into force by Decree No 271 of Prince Ferdinand I (Държавен вестник, 1901, p. 3).

The mere adoption of these amendments to the Election Law clearly demonstrates the reluctance of the Bulgarian political class (and of the Bulgarian society as a whole) to accept the Gypsies as an integral and, above all, equal part of the Bulgarian civil nation. The reaction of the Gypsies, however, surprised Bulgarian society. Immediately after the adoption of the amendment to the electoral law, an improvised Gypsy conference was

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held in 1901 in Vidin where the protest against the limitation in the electoral rights of Gypsies was voiced (Marushiakova & Popov, 1997, p. 29). Even more surprising was that Gypsies commenced a real campaign rejecting of the adopted amendments. They were supported in this by Dr. Marko Markov, an ethnic Bulgarian, a lawyer and famous and eccentric public figure at that time. He was born in Tulcea (now in Romania), studied at Robert College in Istanbul, and continued with law studies at the Universities of Bern and Zürich. Subsequently, he defended his doctoral thesis at the University of Liege. In the 1880s he was one of the forerunners of the future communist movement in Bulgaria (Стоянов, 1966, pp. 213-220). According to the memoirs of his contemporaries, he was exceptionally educated, knew many languages, and was correspondent of many West European newspapers (Каназирски-Верин, 1946, p. 79).

The idea of the need for the civic emancipation of Roma and their struggle for equal civil rights should not be considered to have been brought in "from the outside" by non-Roma. Along with Dr. Marko Markov, other leaders of the protest initiative were Gypsy men – Ramadan Ali, a *Muhtar* (representative of the Mayor for the Gypsy mahala, appointed by the municipal authorities) in the Sofia and Ali Bilyalov, his assistant (second *Muhtar*). Ramadan Ali has held this post for almost two decades, since 1888, when he used to be a deputy of the former *Muhtar*, Ibrahim Mustafov, and has been elected unanimously (by 230 votes) by the Gypsies in the mahala as their leader (DA Sofia, f. 1 K, op. 2, a.e. 1848, l. 1-15). The statements of the Gypsies themselves during the congress (as well as those quoted in the press before) make it clear that they are well aware of what has been going on and Ramadan Ali appears to be not the original initiator but because of his better education, he was the main public speaker of their ideas.

In the newspapers, the Congress in Sofia was referred to as 'Tsiganski' ('Gypsy' in Bulgarian), while the organisers themselves spoke of it as a 'Coptic' congress, and the speakers called themselves 'Copts' and 'Coptic population'. This is easy to understand, considering the dominant idea in the Bulgarian society (among Roma as well) at that time that Gypsies have originated in Egypt and are descendants of the ancient Copts, which is directly related to the most commonly used designation of Gypsies as 'Kıpti' (i.e. Copts) in the official records from the Ottoman Empire (Marushiakova & Popov, 2001, p. 19). The congress itself was attended by "40 to 50 delegates" who came from "all major cities of the Principality" (in fact, apart from the participants from Sofia, there was present only a delegation from Plovdiv). The organisers had previously sent letters to about 20 cities and small towns in Bulgaria but during the congress, some supporting telegrams were sent by Gypsies from other cities too (Vidin, Silistra, Varna) who had learned from the newspapers about the congress (i.e. among the Gypsies in Bulgaria there were already people who follow the print). Among the delegates, judging by their names, there were not only Muslims but also Christians who did not happen to bear the brunt of the amendments to the Election Law, i.e. the congress has been founded not on a religious but on a common ethnic basis. It is significant also that there were more than once references about Gypsy soldiers, which, however, do not apply to Muslim Gypsies because under the legislation at that time, Muslims were released from military service. All this

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makes it clear that there had been already an idea of a unified community and for the existence of common problems and goals, at least among its elite. It is not clear, however, whether among the delegates there have been representatives of nomadic Gypsies. Most likely, this was not the case because in the debates they had not been mentioned even once. This sense of unity of the community is seemingly not yet comprehensive and the process is not complete.

The messages that were being conveyed during the Congress, as well as the main arguments which sought to defend these ideas, have been clearly formulated and they reflect the main goals pursued by the Gypsy elite at the time. In fact, there is one general goal – to achieve full social equality for the Gypsies, which, at least in theory, has been guaranteed to them as citizens of Bulgaria – while the specific goals are to repeal the discriminatory amendments to the Election Law.

The arguments for the need for this repeal are also clear – these amendments violate the Constitution, Gypsies fulfill their civic obligations (they pay taxes and serve in the army), and therefore they must enjoy full civil rights, like all other Bulgarian subjects. In this way, it becomes clear that the Gypsies in Bulgaria, along with their community ethnic identity, already have a civic consciousness and a civil national identity which serves as the foundation for their struggle for civic emancipation. It is natural that the emergence of these ideas takes place precisely in the Balkans, where Gypsies have lived for centuries, many of them permanently settled. Under the Ottoman Empire, the Gypsies were integrated into the society of the time. That is why the violation of the status established in the new Bulgarian state and the restriction of their civil rights is perceived so painful and provokes the convening of the Congress in response.

In his speech, the delegate from Plovdiv, Ali Mutishev, makes a not-so-clear attempt to distinguish between 'Copts' and 'Gypsies' – in his opinion, there is a difference between the two, and later on, he goes on to say that Gypsies are poor Copts. This statement also raises issues that have had an impact on the Roma movement in Bulgaria for decades and continue to be relevant today. It is about the so-called 'turcheene' (the public demonstration of a Turkish ethnic identity) of large sections of Turkish-speaking Muslim Gypsies, as well as the prohibition of Gypsies (even if they declare themselves publicly to be 'Turks') to manage Islamic properties, including in the cases when there are no 'real' (i.e. ethnic) Turks in a certain place (about the development of this problem over the years and its impact on the process of civic emancipation of the Roma see below).

In this context, interesting is the reaction of Turks in Bulgarian and in particular of their civil and political elite. When discriminatory restrictions on Muslim Gypsies were adopted in 1901 in the amendments to the Electoral Law, none of the Turkish deputies spoke or voted against. Two years later, in 1903, these same 12 Turkish deputies, however, petitioned for the return of the voting rights of Muslim Gypsies (Ulusoy, 2013, p. 99). During the congress in Sofia in 1905, materials in support of the demands of the Gypsies appeared in the Turkish newspaper *Tuna* (Danube), published in Ruse (Ibid., p. 100). The following year, Mustafa Ragıp (his surname is transcribed in the Bulgarian press also as Raban, Ragap, Rageb), a journalist from the Turkish newspaper *Feryat*, undertook together

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with Dr. Marko Markov and Eftim Ikonomov tour of the country. They visited Plovdiv, Haskovo, Burgas, Aytos, Varna, Dobrich), where they organised public presentations of the Muslim Gypsies' demands for the return of their rights to vote (Ibid., p. 101). In the letter from Varna published here, Mustafa Ragıp Efendi is described as an "intelligent Copt". He was an active member of the *Ittihad Terakki Party* (the so-called Young Turks), and was called by his contemporaries *Kartallı Çingene Mustafa* (the Gypsy Eagle Mustafa).

The development of civic consciousness among the Gypsies in Bulgaria is only one side of the process of their social integration. However, in order to successfully end this long process, a move in the same direction from the other side is also necessary, i.e. Bulgarian society to be open towards Gypsies and towards their aspirations for equal status within the Bulgarian nation. In the case of the violated civil rights of the Gypsies, the reaction of politicians, the media and the Bulgarian public opinion as a whole, point to something quite clear – the entirely legitimate citizenship demands of Gypsies are not simply rejected and not taken seriously at all but also ridiculed. That is why there was no response from state institutions (National Assembly and the Prince) to the petition approved by the Congress and there was no reaction by the Bulgarian Parliament or to the telegram sent to the Palace.

The main (and in fact the only) discourse which the printed press reflects concerning the Congress itself is the irony, and the tune has been set within the first article on the topic, by Simeon Radev himself, a famous public figure, publicist and editor-in-chief of one of the most popular newspapers at the time, *Vecherna Poshta* (Evening Mail). He begins his article with a fictional quote by Karl Marx (who had died more than two decades before the Russian Revolution in 1905) and about the role of the Gypsies in the world revolution, and the international dimension of the forthcoming congress in Sofia.

Within this ironic discourse, there remains the whole further reflection of the congress itself, including even the deliberate presentation of the speeches of Gypsies participating in it in a quite corrupted Bulgarian language. To the personal calls of Dr. Marko Markov to Simeon Radev to help the Gypsies in their struggles to regain their stripped civil rights, the latter responded with "irresistible laughter".

This discourse continues to remain the same even later, in the attempts of Dr. Marko Markov to organise a public campaign in the country in support of the demands of the congress. Only in Varna, was the reaction of the public opinion a little different, and along with the mocking tone of the article which presents his visit to the city, the reasons for this attitude were revealed. For the Bulgarian society at that time, the main problem in the construction of the new nation was the fate of the Bulgarian population in Macedonia and region of Edirne, while the situation of the Gypsies in the country was not perceived as a problem at all and, therefore, it was not worth paying attention to. Even if there were violations of the Constitution, it should not be assumed that its norms should apply to the Gypsies because they do not deserve it (i.e. Gypsies are not perceived by the Bulgarian society as equal citizens).

In fact, this public reaction is a typical illustration of the Bulgarian (and in general, the Balkan) attitude towards the Gypsies. In the public consciousness, the view of the Gypsies

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as part of the Bulgarian nation is permanently established, but with its special place within the categorical-axiological terms. Gypsies continue to be perceived as a collective unity, with a certain categorial status, but now with new axiological dimensions – in the eyes of the Bulgarian masses, Gypsies are unequal citizens. Moreover, this inequality is of a different order as compared to the attitude towards other ethnic communities – even though all others are 'foreign' and some are even 'enemies', they are still comparable as a category to the Bulgarians. Gypsies, on the other hand, are a community of another kind that is known *a priori* to be inferior and not comparable to the Bulgarians. Insofar as Gypsies are subjected to any value assessments at all, the opinion towards them is often rather disparaging (at least, as far as they know "their own place" in the Bulgarian society and do not seek to escape from it). That is why the civic aspirations of the Gypsies remain without seriously considering and nobody care to discuss whether or not their constitutional rights to vote are truly violated.

The roots of this attitude towards the Gypsies are laid in the so-called traditional culture of the Bulgarians, formed in the pre-modern era, during the Ottoman Empire. Gypsies have their place in the common models of the world and have been an integral part of the society of that time, they fulfill certain and necessary social functions but their place is not particularly enviable. They were never equal, never perceived as a community with the same value ranks equal to those of the Bulgarians, and Gypsies were always defined as 'lower'. The fact that they were involved in many life situations and even in ethnically charged Bulgarian rituals, or that several times a year there is an exchange of sacral food, these inequalities were never eliminated in the inter-ethnic relations between the Gypsies and their surrounding population in the Balkans. The best illustration of this initial inequality could be found in Simeon Radev's memoirs about his childhood in the town of Resen (today in the Republic of Northern Macedonia):

> There were some wealthy people among the Gypsies. The Zizovtsi family lived not far from us. At Easter, we sent them red eggs; on St George's Day, we used to receive from them a piece of roast lamb. This put my mother in great difficulty. We the kids didn't want to eat meat sent by Gypsies. My mother used to say that it was a shame and a sin to throw it to the dogs (Радев, 1994, pp. 222-223).

The attitudes of the public opinion in Bulgaria towards Dr. Marko Markov was indicative of this – he was subject to constant ridicule, or at the best refined irony, and he was given the sobriquet 'The Gypsy King'. The press expressed doubts about his mental state, which forced him in 1908 to call Krastyo Stanchev, the editor of the *Kambana* newspaper, to a duel (the duel did not take place) (Каназирски-Верин, 1946, p. 79). Eventually, Dr. Marko Markov could no longer endure this and left the capital Sofia to settle in Ruse. In 1915, Andreas Scott Macfie (Mui Shuko) met him there and described him in his famous book *With Gypsies in Bulgaria* (Mui Shuko, 1916, p. 138). After the First World War, Dr. Marko Markov withdrew from active public affairs and died in Ruse in 1939.

Unfortunately, despite our best efforts, we have not been able to find the Manifesto which has been issued and linked with the civil struggle seeking to restore the voting

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rights of the Gypsies, given by Dr. Markov to Andreas Scott Macfie (Ibid.). It remains to be hoped that it has not disappeared irrevocably as it would be an important source in understanding the first steps in the process of Roma civic emancipation.

Elena Marushiakova and Vesselin Popov

2.2 Local Organisations

2.2.1 *The Statute of the Egyptian Nationality in the Town of Vidin*

Устав на Египтянската народност в гр[ад] Видин

Глава I. § 1. Наименование, уредба, задача и седалище.

Чл. 1. По силата на стария обичай на гореспоменатата народност, в града Видин се установи реда за право-отношенията й в обществото и между себе.

Чл. 2. Правилата и разпоредбите по смисъла на настоящия устав се простират и за всичките Цигани в околията, без разлика на вероизповеданията им. Ако в съседните околийски центрове няма подобна групировка, това с право се отнася за целия окръг. Малските и селски церибаши (малебаши) по надлежност за сведения, съдействия и пр. се отнасят към градския общински мухтар.

§ 2. Състав, управление и способ.

Чл. 3. За спазване и изпълнение на наредбите се натоварва един главатар наречен "Мухтар", които се избира за неопределено време по жребие, измежду 9 души малски старейшини – първенци, определени с тайно гласуване (с билотинки) от имеющите граждански и политически права. Предпочитателно за избиратели и избираеми се допускат вписаните в общинските изборни списъци.

Чл. 4. Едновременно с провъзгласяването на мухтара, избира се и един за разпоредител – негов помощник, с явно гласуване, също и един за касиер, а другите 6 души остават за съветници. В съвета не може да влизат роднини от първа степен.

Чл. 5. При распределяване на длъжностите ако коцката (жребието) падне некому, който не желае да бъде мухтар, той може същевремено да упълномощи другиго измежду деветех души, без право на повращания. В случай пак че помощника не желае да поемне длъжността, мухтара има право сам да си избере такъв и вън от избраните членове.

Чл. 6. Когато некои от постоянния състав би искал да се откаже от длъжността за винаги, или иска отпуск за по дълго време, той трябва да заяви пред съвета с един месец напред, които може да одобри или не.

Чл. 7. Заседанията на съвета са закони когато присъствуват повече от половината членове, а въпросите се решават по вишегласие на присъствующите. За секо заседание се държи протокол, който се подписва от всичките участвующи. На съветниците длъжността е почетна, следователно за това те контролират действията на постоянния състав.

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Чл. 8. Съвета е върховно началство, той може да разрешава всякакви въпроси от частен и обществен характер. Всеки член от съвета има право да внася предложения и да прави запитвания касающи се за добрия вървеж на работите и във всяко време, когато намери за нужно, да покани членовете в комисия за да ревизират и прегледат сметките на касиера.

Чл. 9. Всяка година през месец май се произвежда избор за попълване на вакантните места в съвета, които може да станат: по причина на смърт; изселване от града; или от бламиране на някого за доказана нередовност.

Чл. 10. Права и длъжност на мухтаря е:

а) Да представлява групата пред органите на държавата, пред всички обществени учреждения, разни дружества и трети лица; б) Да свиква членовете от съвета на събиране, да определя дневния ред и да ръководи разискванията, така също да произвежда избори за разни длъжности и при равногласие има решающ глас; в) Да пази общите морални и материялни интереси на сънародниците си, да ги закрепва и да иска законна защита по отделно и въобще за всички, като уравнява произлезлите распри между тях; г) Да буди гражданско съзнание в хората си, като се старае сам или задружно, да се прокарват всички мерки и наредби, които са необходими за по-сносен и порядъчен техен човешки живот; д) Да се грижи за намиране работа на бедните, и в случай на нужда да им указва първа помощ, като се старае още да развие у тях почитание, съчувствие и послушност; е) Да следи за доброто умствено, здравословно и обществено възпитание на не възрастните, за да могат сами с достойнство и пълно умение да защитяват своите интереси и да погодяват помежду си възникналите недоразумения; ж) Да бди за строгото изпълнение на всички законни разпореждания и да проучва способността на хората си, като взема пред вид в разни случаи, кои с какво и на кого с какво може да се помогне; з) Да изпълнява той всички длъжности и разпореждания, които му се налагат от законите в страната, предадени по канален ред лично, или писмено; и) Да дава незабавно по въпроси, касающи се за хора от народността му, точни сведения на всички държавни, народни и обществени учреждения и да изпълнява бързо техните разпореждания; и к) Да резолира и подписва всички писма и документи, да надзирава архивата, имотите, за добрия ред въобще и да съхранява при себе си задружническия печат.

Чл. 11. В отсъствие на мухтаря, помощника стъпва в неговата длъжност и се ползува с неговите права, сам отговаря за всичко което стане по неговата заповед и разпореждания. Той води писмените работи, за които е отговорен лично като началник на канцеларията и води следните книги: 1) Поименен списък на възрастните мъже; 2) Книга за общите движими и недвижими имоти; 3) Книга за протоколните решения и постановления; 4) Входящи дневник; 4) Исходящи дневник; 5) Разносна книга; и 5) Справочна книга за разни бележки.

Чл. 12. Длъжност и права на касиера са: да се грижи за редовното събиране на сумите от разни постъпления; и да изплаща; по заповед на мухтаря до 10 лева: по

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разпореждание на постоянния състав по 50 лева; а повече по решение на целия съвет. Той води тези сметководни книги: квитанционната и приходо-разходната.

Чл. 13. Касиера отговаря за поверените му ценни вещи и за доброто положение на сметките. Той е длъжен да вписва на време точно сумите, които постъпват на приход и които се изразходват, срещу които взема нужните разписки.

Чл. 14. Касиера може да държи на разположение свободни суми само до 100 лева, всички други суми внася в държавните парични учреждения, на текущи сметки от името на настоятелството. Ако даде гаранция каквато определи съвета, той може да държи при себе си всички суми.

Чл. 15. Когато касиера би заминал от града за няколко време, или по други причини не стои на работата си за да бъде намерен, той трябва да възложи длъжността си на друг член от съвета, или да остави предвидената в горния член сума за удоволетворение на нужди, които не може да търпят отлагания.

Глава II. § 3. Приход и разход.

Чл. 16. Приход: а) от доброволни пожертвувания и завещания; б) от глоби за разводи и незаконни живеяния; в) от лихви за даваните в заем пари; г) от наем на общите имоти; и д) от непредвидени случаи.

Чл. 17. Разход: а) за канцеларски разноски; б) за възнаграждение на служащи; в) за годишния празник; г) за разни помощи; и д) за благотворителни цели.

Глава III. § 4. Годишен народен празник.

Чл. 18. За годишен празник – покровител е определен "Тергьов-ден", в който се наумява събитието от миналите времена. Той се празнува тържествено от всички мъже, жени и деца.

§ 5. Печат и длъжностен знак.

Чл. 19. За доказателство и потвърждение на всека писмена бумага, до когото и където и да е, ще се скрепва с подписа на мухтара и печата, който е кръгообразен със следующия подпис по края "Християнско мухтарство, г. Видин", и в средата му ще се изобразява "Св. Георги" на кон, с копие в ръката, забито в крокодил, и зад гърбът му на коня царската дъщеря – мома, която била обречена на жертва на обожаваното в Египет животно и спасена от него, както и народа, запазен от суеверие.

Чл. 20. За отличие (за разпознание) мухтара ще носи на гърдите си елипсовиден металически знак, с следующия надпис от горе: "Християнски мухтар", а от доле "в гр. Видин", и в средата ще има изобразено око със слънчеви лъчи, което ще напомня надзорната длъжност, наблюдателност и пр.

§6. Задружен имот.

Чл. 21. Задружните имоти били те движими или недвижими, ще се управляват – наглеждат и изпълняват по ред прокаран в настоящия устав. Начина на употреблението и целите ще се определя от съвета.

§ 7. Общи наредби.

Чл. 22. Освен указаните книжа, ако по естество на работата се изискват и други, съвета ще трябва да ги набави като ги провърви, номерира, подпечати и завери с

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подписи от членовете. По всяка работа ще се издават правила и наредби, и отчети за положение на работите, както и решенията на съвета, мухтара ще ги разгласява писмено, или устно чрез хора, за знание, спазване и изпълнение.

Чл. 23. За трудът си постоянния състав ще получава годишно възнаграждение, според състоянието на всяко семейство, обаче то не може да бъде повече от 1 лев на глава за възрастните, от която сума мухтара ще заема половината, а втората половина ще се дели по равно между касиера и заместника. Всички такси за прихода от разните услуги, и суми за разхода, ще се определят от съвета.

§ 8. Последствия от неизпълнение на устава.

Чл. 24. За незачитане на разпоредбите по отношение на настоящия устав, нарушителите ще се глобяват в размер: от постоянния състав до 5 лева; а от съвета до 10 лева, и в краен случай за непокорните няма да се правят никакви постъпки, за помирение, закрила, помагане и пр. Бъде ли нарушението от длъжностно лице то ще се отстрани и може да бъде дадено под съд.

§ 9. Последни разпореждания.

Чл. 25. Всички наредби и разпореждания, по настоящия устав, ще се тълкуват и прилагат с изменения и допълнения, съобразно със законите в страната. И ако по некои причини устава съвсем се отмени, всичките имоти придобити чрез него ще се предадат на градската община.

Забележка: Преписи от протоколите по изборите, и за други промени на лицата от управителния съвет, ще се представят на общинското управление за знание.

Учредителна комисия.

Председател: Гюлиш Мустафа (Запасен подофицер).

Деловодител: Ахемд А. Неязимов (Тако Мунов).

Членове: Ашим Сеферов, Александр Танов, Ахмед А. Руянов, Нацо Конов, Байро Негрушев, Махмуд Мустафов, Шериф Тоташов, Манчо Мингюшев, Дервиш Байрамов, Вейсел Ранов, Шабан Дервишов, Цоко Петров, Шишко Ахмед Алиев, Георги Монов, Асан Ахмедов, Паци Чульов, Мусо Бузов, Ванко Шанов, Х. Усеин Абединов.

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The Statute of the Egyptian Nationality in the Town of Vidin

Chapter I. § 1. Name, Regulation, Tasks and Headquarters.

Art. 1. In respect of the old custom of the aforementioned nationality, in the town of Vidin, the order has been determined regarding its rightful relationships in the society and within itself.

Art. 2. The rules and regulations based on this Statute reach also all the Gypsies [1] in the district regardless of their faith. Provided there are no similar organisations in the neighbouring districts, rightfully, this also concerns the whole constituency. If the

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neighbourgoods' and small villages' *Tseribashi* (*Malebashi*) [2] would need information, help, etc., they should refer to the *Muhtar* of the township.

§ 2. Constitution, Management and Tools.

Art. 3. For the proper implementation of the regulations is responsible a headman, called '*Muhtar*' who is elected for undefined period of time, via the casting of a lot among 9 persons, neighbourhood elders – the leaders determined via a secret ballot by those who have civil and political rights. Preferably, those allowed to vote and to be elected should be registered in the council voting lists [3].

Art. 4. Simultaneously, with the announcement of the *Muhtar*, another person is elected as his Dispensator – who is his assistant, elected via open voting, as well as one Cashier, while the rest of the 6 persons would remain to serve as Councillors. First-degree relatives are not allowed to serve the Council.

Art. 5. In the process of distributing the posts, if the ballot falls on someone who does not want to serve as a *Muhtar*, he could in the same time authorise someone else among the nine Councillors, without right of withdrawal. In the case that his assistant is not willing to take that position, the *Muhtar* has the right to appoint himself such a person including someone who is not among the elected Members.

Art. 6. If a permanent Member would like to quit his seat forever, or if he asks for a leave for a longer period of time, then he would have to make an application to the Council one month in advance which in turn would approve it or not.

Art. 7. The sessions of the Council are legitimate provided more than half of its Members are present while the decisions are taken based on the majority of votes of those who are present. Minutes are taken for each session and are signed by all who participate. The duties of the Councillors are honorary and therefore they control the actions of the permanent Council.

Art. 8. The Council is a supreme body and it can take decisions on all kinds of matters of both private and public character. Each Council Member has the right to submit motions as well as to make enquiries relating to the proper development of the works of the organisation and they can, at any time, when they consider it necessary, invite the Council Members to revise and review the accounts of the Cashier.

Art. 9. The vacant seats of the Council are being elected yearly in the month of May which could be opened due to: death, moving out of town, or the redundancy of someone because of a proven misconduct.

Art. 10. Rights and duties of the *Muhtar*:

a) To represent the group in front of the state's authorities, all public organisations, other associations and third parties; b) To convene Council Members, to determine the agenda and to lead discussions; also to organise elections for various positions and when there are equal votes, his opinion is decisive; c) To protect the common moral and material interests of their compatriots, to support them and to advocate for the legal protection of individuals and of everyone and resolves the formed disagreements between them; d) To awake civil consciousness among the people making everything possible, himself or together with the group, for the implementation of all the measures or ordinances that

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are necessary for their more acceptable and respectable human life; e) To work toward finding work for the poor people and when in need to provide first aid making efforts to develop among them feeling of respect, compassion and obedience; f) To keep an eye for the good intellectual, healthy and civil up-bringing of the non-adults so that they could themselves, with dignity and fully enabled protect their interests and settle misunderstandings arisen between themselves; g) To be vigilant for the strict implementation of all legal regulations and to inquire about the abilities of his people, while at certain cases he takes into consideration who and with what, and to whom and with what, would offer assistance; h) To carry out all duties and orders which are assigned to him by the law of the State, either passed on to him in person or in writing; i) To provide promptly exact information regarding matters relating to the people of his nationality to all State, national and community organisations and to quickly execute their orders; and j) To oversee and sign all letters and documents, to oversee the archive, the real estates and be in charge in general for the good order, as well as to keep the stamp of the organisation;

Art. 11. When the *Muhtar* is absent, his Assistant steps in his position and enjoys the same rights; he is also to be solely responsible for everything that may take place due to his orders and dispositions. He keeps the written documents for which he is personally responsible as Head of Office and maintains the following books: 1) A List with the names of adult males; 2) A Book of the common movable property and real estate; 3) A Book with Report decisions and ordinances; 4) A Diary with received mails; 5) A Diary with sent mails; 6) A Record Book with expenses; and 7) A Reference Book with various notes.

Art. 12. The duties and rights of the Cashier are: to diligently collect the money from various sources; and to pay: up to 10 leva for orders made by the *Muhtar*; to 50 leva for orders made by the Permanent Council; and for more money by the decision of the whole Council. He maintains the following account books: one Book with Receipts and one with the Income and Expenses.

Art. 13. The Cashier is responsible for the entrusted to him valuables and for the good condition of the accounts. He is responsible to keep a good record and reference in a timely fashion the sums which come in as income and go out as expenses for which he has to keep receipts.

Art. 14. The Cashier may keep available sums up to 100 leva, all other sums he has to deposit in the state financial institutions in current accounts in the name of the Board of Trustees. If he gives a guarantee which is determined by the Council, he may keep all the sums by himself.

Art. 15. When the cashier is out of town for a certain period of time, or for some other reason he is not available and could not be found, he has to allocate his job to another Member of the Council or to leave the sum foreseen in above article for the satisfaction of needs which could not bear postponement.

Chapter II. § 3. Income and Expenses.

Art. 16. Income: a) from voluntary donations and bequests; b) from fines for divorces and unlawful cohabitations; c) from the interests of lend money; d) from the rent of the common estates; and e) from unforeseen circumstances.

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Art. 17. Expenses: a) expenses for stationary; b) for the remuneration of staff; c) for the annual holiday; d) for other subventions; and e) for charity purposes.

Chapter III. § 4. Annual National Holiday.

Art. 18. For the Annual Holiday – as patron is determined *Gergyov-den* (St George's Day) which is being referred to events from the old times [4]. It is officially celebrated by all men, women and children.

§ 5. Stamp and Official Sign.

Art. 19. For the sake of proof and for the confirmation of each written document, sent regardless to whom and where, they will be accompanied by the signature of the *Muhtar* and the stamp which is circular with the following writing along the edge 'Coptic Muhtarship, town Vidin' and in its centre will be depicted 'St George' on a horseback with a spear in his hand, point stuck in a crocodile [5] and behind his back there is the King's daughter – a maiden which has been doomed to be sacrificed to the venerated in Egypt animal and rescued by him in the same way as the people were saved from paganism.

Art. 20. So, that the *Muhtar* is visually recognised, he will wear on his chest an oval metallic sign with the following writing at the top: 'Coptic Muhtar' while at the bottom 'in town of Vidin', and in its centre, there will be an eye with sunrays which will remind the supervisory position, attentiveness, and others.

§ 6. Common Property.

Art. 21. The common properties, regardless if they are movable or immovable, will be managed, supervised and executed by the regulations agreed by the current Statute. The ways of management and the aims will be determined by the Council.

§ 7. Common Regulations.

Art. 22. Besides the mentioned documents, if due to the course of work there arises the need for other documents, the Council would have to supply them by organising them, assigning numbers, stamping them and authorising them with the signs of the Members. Rules and regulations will be issued for each task, report on the work done, as well as the decisions of the Council, will be announced in writing by the *Muhtar* or orally via other people so that they are known, respected and carried out.

Art. 23. For their work, Permanent Staff will be remunerated annually according to the conditions of each family, however, it cannot be more than 1 lev per person for adults; half of this sum will go towards the *Muhtar* while the other half will be equally shared between the Cashier and the Deputy. The taxes for the income from the various services, as well as for the sums of expenses, will be determined by the Council.

§ 8. Consequences from Non-Compliance of the Statute.

Art. 24. For ignoring the regulations regarding this Statute, violators will be fined: from the Permanent Staff. up to 5 leva; while from the Council, up to 10 leva, and as a last resort for the disobedient no actions will be made towards reconciliation, protection, support and etc. If the violation is made by a Member of Staff, he will be ousted and may be sent to court.

§ 9. Final Regulations.

Art. 25. All orders and regulations in this Statute will be interpreted and applied with modifications and additions according to the laws of the Country. And if for whatever

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reasons the Statute is thoroughly cancelled, all acquired properties will be handed over to the Town Council.
Note: Transcript from the Minutes of the elections and regarding other changes of the persons in the Executive Council will be presented to the Town Council for their knowledge.

Constituent Commission.
Chair: Gyulish Mustafa (Reserve Sergeant).
Clerk: Ahmed A. Neyazimov (Tako Munov).
Members: Ashim Seferov, Aleksandr Tanov, Ahmed A. Ruyanov, Natso Konov, Bairo Negrushev, Mahmud Mustafov, Sheriff Totashov, Mancho Mingyushev, Dervish Bairamov, Veisel Ranov, Shaban Dervishov, Tsoko Petrov, Shishko Ahmed Aliev, Georgi Monov, Asan Ahmedov, Patsi Chulyov, Muso Buzov, Vanko Shanov, H. Usein Abedinov.

Notes

1. Here *копти* (Copts) and *ц̆игани* (Tsigani), both terms meaning Gypsies, are used as synonyms.
2. Here 'Tseribashi' (see above) and 'Malebashi' are used as synonyms, i.e. head of *Mala* (*Mahala*).
3. Here, it refers to the registered voters for municipal elections.
4. St George's Day is a traditional holiday with old historical roots among all Balkan peoples, including the Muslims where it is celebrated in its Islamic version of *Hıdırlez* (the day of Muslim saints Hıdır and Ilyaz); over time, it was preserved mainly by the Gypsies under different names (*Gergyovden/Djurdjevdan/Hederlezi/Erdelezi*) and it became their biggest holiday, acquiring distinctly Gypsy ethnic characteristics (for more detail, see Marushiakova & Popov, 2007b, pp. 33-50; 2016c, p. 47).
5. According to traditional folklore legend, widely spread among the Balkan Christian peoples (including Christain Gypsies), St George kills a Slavic dragon (*змей*), not a crocodile. The exchange of the Slavic dragon with the crocodile, as it could be seen by the Statute, was deliberate in order to emphasise the connection of the 'Copts' (Gypsies) with Egypt. The stamp of the Coptic Muhtarship also depicts a crocodile, not a dragon, while behind St George, on a horse, is seated the king's daughter – an image that is missing from the iconography of Orthodox Christianity, where the daughter of the king stands on the side (in the cases influenced by folklore legends and where she has been depicted).

Source: [No Author.] (1910). *Устав на Египтянската народност в гр. Видин*. Видин: Божинов и Конев.
Prepared for publication by Elena Marushiakova and Vesselin Popov.
Translated by Aleksandar Marinov.

Comments

The presented Statute is a significant step forward in the development of organisational forms in the process of Roma civic emancipation in Bulgaria. At first reading, it describes already known practices for the selection of a *Muhtar*, his assistant and his councillors and these forms had already existed elsewhere in the country, e.g. in Sofia (DA Sofia, f. 1 K, op. 2, a.e. 1848, l. 1-15). There are also some additions to the procedure that are unique and even curious, such as the selection of a *Muhtar* by casing a lot among the already elected councillors – a practice that is unknown in Gypsy traditions, and possibly introduced in order to avoid disputes and internal divisions in the community under 'regular' elections (conducted by voting).

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However, in addition to the known things in the Statute, there are also a number of new and meaningful points. The first thing to note here is the name itself – this already is not just about a Gypsy *mahala* but instead about the whole of the 'Egyptian Nationality'. This means that the Gypsies are represented in it as a collective entity on an ethnic basis, which promotes, under the rules of the Statute, their representatives, who in turn communicate with the authorities on behalf of the community. Starting with Art. 1, as the main function of the Statute it is stated that it must, "In respect of the old custom" (that is, in accordance with the norms which remained since the time of the Ottoman Empire), establish and regulate not only "its rightful relationships in the society'" (i.e. the public positions and attitudes of the Gypsies in the new realities), but also "among themselves" (i.e. within the community itself, which is certainly a new moment in its development). Moreover, in Art. 2 it is explicitly highlighted that the rules and regulations of the Statute concern "all the Gypsies in the district" and if there are no other alternative formations, it applies to the whole constituency. There is an obvious desire for the new organisation to be set up on a large scale and to include the whole "Nationality" in the region, organised on a hierarchical, vertical structure in which the leaders (*Tseribashi*) of individual urban Gypsy neighbourhoods and rural Gypsy communities are expected to co-ordinate their activities with '*Muhtar* of the township'. However, for its part, the *Muhtar* shares its power functions with those of the Supreme Council, which is a 'supreme body' (i.e. the original formula of parliamentary democracy and the separation of authorities are obvious). In doing so, the governing bodies (the *Muhtar* and the Supreme Council) assume certain responsibilities and obligations, e.g. to protect the 'common moral and material interests of their compatriots', to protect them from the authorities, to solve internal problems in the community, etc.

An interesting question has been raised for voters who are 'preferred' to be included in the lists of registered voters for municipal elections (i.e. voting is allowed even if they were not registered). At first glance, this requirement is discriminatory against Muslim Gypsies who, at least under the amendments to the Election Law of 1901 (see above), cannot be voters. However, the actual situation is clearly different from the legal norms because, as the names of the founders themselves show, most of them are Muslims (including Gyulish Mustafa – the Chairman of the Constituent Commission). It would be illogical for them to set such a criterion themselves if they were indeed deprived of suffrage, i.e. it is clear that the requirements of the law do not always apply in reality (at least in the local municipal elections).

It is interesting to note here that the Muslim Gypsies of Vidin, in particular, were among the first to be subjected to forced conversion of their religion in the new Bulgarian State – during the period 1878-1888, 1,435 Muslims were baptised in the diocese of Vidin (Елдъров, 2001, p. 597). Such forced conversions from Islam to Orthodox Christianity have been sporadically applied also elsewhere in the country throughout the interwar period (see below), as well as in the next historical era (the so-called era of socialism, when there was only the forced change of the names from Muslim to Christian, without religious baptising). In addition, there has been a 'natural' (i.e. without state coercion) transition from

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Islam to Orthodox Christianity among many Gypsies from different regions of the country (e.g. in the capital Sofia). Nevertheless, Muslim Gypsies (some of them with Christian names) represent the majority of the Roma population of modern Bulgaria.

As far as the presented Statute, it is impressive that some of its specific formulations sound extremely up-to-date, as if they were written by our contemporaries, for example, Art. 10 which shows that one of its main goals is to "awake civil consciousness among the people" (namely the civic, i.e. their position as an equal part of the Bulgarian society and the Bulgarian civil nation).

As could be seen from the Statute, in it the terms 'Tsigani' (Gypsies) and 'Egyptyani' (Egyptians) are used synonymously and are interchangeable. Certain is, however, their preference for the name 'Egyptians' and this is not only because it signifies their Egyptian origin (based mainly on the Holy Scripture) – so well-known and spread in Bulgaria, but also because it would be much more prestigious for them and their social status – so that they would be recognised by the society as the heirs of an ancient civilisation and of high culture. That also explains why in the Statute so much attention has been paid to the stamp with its iconography, revealing their connections with Ancient Egypt (and emphasising their connections with Christianity through the image of St George). What is present is one of the signs of processes in the emerging nations in Central and South-Eastern Europe when the basic origin national narratives are being created, and they are reproduced at the artistic-pictorial level which bears symbolic significance (i.e. a new ethnonational symbolism is created).

Through the very idea of printing it as a small book, the Statute of the Egyptian Nationality in Vidin shows that its creators sought to widely emphasise, in social practice, their ideas about the relations between the Gypsies on the one hand, and the state and municipal institutions, on the other. Unfortunately, (at least at this stage) there is a lack of more historical information on how things have developed in Vidin since then. With regard to the practice of appointing representatives by the municipal authorities in the Gypsy mahalas, promoted by the communities themselves, history shows that this relationship over time has been dominated by the City mayor and the municipality who have acquired complete dominance. While in the first decades of the existence of the new Bulgarian State this practice of Gypsies electing their own representatives to the authorities continued, as part of the legacy of the Ottoman times (i.e. as some initial forms of internal national autonomy), in the 1920s and the 1930s, City Mayors were already able to directly appoint their deputies in the Gypsy mahalas without holding any internal elections.

This development is clearly visible, for example, in the materials from the town of Ferdinand (today Montana). There, after the election of a 'Cheribashi' in 1927, in response to the Gypsies' request, the municipal council adopted a special decision according to which the appointment of a 'mayoral deputy' (*кметски наместник* in Bulgarian, the new term introduced for the 'Cheribashi') of their neighbourhood of a 'person from the mahala, and Mohammedan faith', should be done only following the mahala's representatives' recommendation (DA Montana, f. 3 K, op. 1, a.e. 25, l. 61). Despite this decision, over the next two years, the City Mayor fired three 'mayoral deputies' (the used official

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term) and appointed new ones in their place (DA Montana, f. 79 K, op. 1, a.e. 32, l. 15; a.e. 34, l. 20; a.e. 35, l. 30). In this way, the institution of mayoral deputies became hostage to political strife (each new authority appoints their own deputies), a situation that still continues to this day.

Elena Marushiakova and Vesselin Popov

2.3 National Organisations

2.3.1 *The Statute of the Organisation 'Istikbal – Future'*

Утвърждавам. Министерство на вътрешните работи и народното здраве.
№ 14300 от 2.VIII.1919 година.
Препис от устава.

Устав
на Софийската общо мюсюлманско просветно-културно
взаимоспомагателна организация "Истикбал – Бъдеще"

1. Седалище на организацията е Ст[олицата] София.

2. Цел на организацията – да организира мюсюлманите в една обща организация, която помага на бедните при болести, нещастие, случаи [на] смърт и пр., да се бори за морално, материално [и] просветно-културно издигане.

3. Същата чрез беседи, сказки, да открива курсове и пр. за която цел ги издържа един ходжа (поп) и една була, които са необходими при религиозния ни обичай. Издръжката е от членски внос 5 лв. месечно, от утра, вечеринки и увеселения и от разни дарения.

4. Членове се приемат всички български граждани навършили 20 г., които три месеца са неизбираеми [на ръководни длъжности], считани от деня на приемането им.

5. Събрания се свикват всеки месец, а общите в три месеца.

6. Организацията е строго безпартийна и при събрания забранява каквито и да са политически въпроси.

7. Всички се подчиняват на нарежданията на настоятелството и неподчинени[те] се наказват, а тези, които нанасят обида на началството или на организацията, ще се преследват съгласно закона в страната ни.

8. Организацията има под свое владение движими и недвижими имоти, които ги владееха досега професионалните сдружения, които влизат в организацията. От всички имущества погребални[те] прибори се ползват само [от] членовете на същата, а не-членове ще плащат една определена такса в общата каса.

[9.] Длъжност на председателя е да се грижи за добрия ход на всички организационни работи, при меншество има наравен глас.

10. Когато председателя отсътствува, замества се от един от [членовете на настоятелството], който носи отговорност.

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11. Секретаря води всички книжа и се подчинява на председателя.

12. Касиера се грижи за членски внос и съхранява в касата не повече от 1 000 лева, а останалите внася в някоя банка на името на организацията.

13. Съветниците влизат в съвещание с председателя и образуват управителен съвет.

14. Контролната комисия контролира делата на настоятелството и книжата на секретаря и касиера, щом като намери нередности, [тя] може да отстрани от длъжност провинения и свика събрание, където дава отчет за делата на провинилия се.

15. Настоятелството се избира с мандат за една година. То може да се бламира, когато 1/3 си подадат оставките или когато се провини в нещо, и то в общо събрание.

16. Организацията има печат със същото название.

17. Организацията има канцелария, която ще се използва и за събрания и след като се увеличи капитала на същата, може да закупи или застрои собствен дом, където ще се настанят бедни и недъгави вдовици и сираци, също и изпаднали мюсюлмани от цяла България.

18. [Организацията] всяка година ще раздава помощи на бедните по случай байряма, а зимно време дърва, кюмюр и пр.

19. [Организацията] ще ходатайства там, където трябва да се отпуснат кредити на мюсюлманите, които да ги употребят за направа на жилищата си удобни за по-хигиеничният живот според нивелацията на града.

20. При смъртен случай [организацията] отпуща известна сума за погребението, като го придружава до вечния му дом.

21. Членове, не платили три месеца членския си внос, се изключват от членство, като му се отнемат всички права.

22. Клоновете [на организацията] се управляват от представител – от по един делегат, произхождащ от средата на членовете от клона, като се ползват с всички права като делегат и член на настоятелството на организацията и предава решението на организацията на членовете от клона, на което решение се подчиняват всички членове.

23. Членовете могат да преизбират свои делегат, когато той се провини на нещо и вместо него се изпраща новоизбрания, придружен с пълномощно.

24. Да се застъпват всички интереси на членовете при болести. Изпраща се безплатна лекарска помощ, дава безплатна адвокатска защита и съвети.

25. [Организацията] ще ходатайства пред Главното Мюфтийство да искат да се даде нов живот на Мюсюлманската Вероизповедна община, която се управлява от Софийския мюфтия без закон и устав.

26. Организацията помага на административните власти и пр.

27. [Организацията] ще помирява членовете си, [при] които [има] препирания и пр.

28. В случай на ликвидация, имуществата се предават на настоятелството на вероизповедната община.

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Председател: (п[одпис]) Ю[суф] Мехмедов.
Секретар: (п[одпис]) Шакир М. Пашев.
Вярно с оригинала. Секретар: … [подпис].
Управително тяло на организацията: … [нечетивни подписи на 7 души].

∵

I affirm [1]. Ministry of Internal Affairs and National Health.
No. 14300, from August 2, 1919.
Statute Transcript.

The Statute
of the Sofia's Common Muslim Educational and Cultural
Mutual Aid Organisation 'Istikbal – Future'

1. Headquarters of the organisation is the Capital Sofia.

2. The aim of the organisation – to organise the Muslims in one common organisation which helps the poor in times of illnesses, accidents, death, and others and to fight for their moral, material and educational, and cultural upbringing.

3. [These aims] the aforementioned [organisation achieves], through talks and lectures, organizes classes etc. It supports a *Hodzha* [2] (Orthodox Priest) and a *Bula* [3] which are needed in our religious custom. Support comes from membership fees, 5 levs per month, from morning and evening parties, entertainments and from various donations.

4. Members could be all Bulgarian citizens at the age of 20 and above who should not be elected [on lead managing positions] for three months from the day of their acceptance for membership.

5. Meetings are held each month while the General meetings are held every three months.

6. The organisation is strictly non-partisan and in its meetings, it forbids the discussions of any political matters.

7. Everyone should obey the orders of the Board of Trustees and those who do not obey the rules will be persecuted and those who insult the Leadership or the Organisation will be persecuted according to the law of our country.

8. The Organisation owns movable and immovable properties, owned till now by professional associations which join the Organisation. Among all property, burial utensils should be used by members only while non-members will pay a pre-determined fee at the common cash register.

9. The job of the Chair is to take care for the proper execution of all tasks of the Organisation, when there is a minority, the Chair has an equal vote.

10. When the Chair is absent, he is superseded by one of the Board of trustees [4] who bears responsibility.

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11. The Secretary maintains all paperwork and is subjected to the Chair.

12. The Treasurer takes care of the membership fees and keeps in the safe no more than 1,000 levs while the rest of the money he deposits in a bank on the Organisation's account.

13. The Councillors hold consultation with the Chair and form the Board of Directors.

14. The Control Commission controls the actions of the Board of Trustees as well as the accounting books of the Secretary and the Treasurer; as soon as it finds irregularities, it can lay off the accused and call for a meeting which gives an account about their deeds.

15. The Board of Trustees is elected with a mandate of a year. The Board of Trustees can be censured when a 1/3rd of the Members hand in their resignations or when it is accused of wrongdoing while in a General Meeting.

16. The Organisation has a Stamp with the same name.

17. The Organisation has an office which will be used also for the purpose of meetings and when the organisation's capital increases, it could buy or build their own home which will host poor and disabled widows and orphans, and also dejected Muslims from all across Bulgaria.

18. The Organisation will give aid yearly to the poor for *Bayram* [5] and in the winter time – wood, coal, etc.

19. The Organisation will advocate favourably for the release of credit loans to the Muslims, at the places where appropriate, which would be used for the building of their homes, appropriate for a more hygienic way of life in accordance to the levelling of the town.

20. At times of death, [the organisation] gives out a certain amount of money for the purpose of the burial and the organisation accompanies the departed to their eternal home.

21. Members, who have not paid their dues for three months, will be excluded from membership and all their rights will be revoked.

22. Branches of the Organisation will be managed by a Representative – a Delegate who is a Member from the branch and who has all the powers as a Delegate and as a Member of the Board of Trustees; the representative passes the decisions of the Organisation to the branch members and they should respect them.

23. Members can re-elect their Delegate when accused of something and in his stead is sent the newly elected one with a power of attorney.

24. To argue on behalf of all the interests of its Members at times of illnesses. It sends free medical help, gives free attorney defence and advice.

25. The Organisation will intercede with the office of the Main Mufti asking for a new life for the Muslim Religious Parish which is governed [now] by the Mufti from Sofia unlawfully and without a statute.

26. The Organisation helps the state authorities and others.

27. The Organisation will make peace between its Members who have arguments, etc.

28. In the case of liquidation, the real estate will be transferred to the Board of Trustees of the Religious Parish.

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Chair: (Signature) … Yusein Mehmedov.
Secretary: (Signature) … Shakir M. [6] Pashev.
True with the original, Secretary: … [Signature].
Management Body of the Organisation: … [Illegible signatures of 7 people].

Notes

1. The resolution, "I affirm" of the Minister of Internal Affairs and National Health means that the Statute of the organisation is approved by the authorities and that it is already registered with the law.
2. 'Hodzha' is the term used in Bulgaria for Imam; in this case is meant not the Imam in a certain mosque but a chosen person from the mahala who performs a number of functions as an Islamic cleric during certain customs (first and foremost at funerals). Such forms of Folk Islam are widespread among Gypsies in Bulgaria, including today.
3. 'Bula' is the term used to refer to the woman-assistant of the 'Hodzha' in Folk Islam who takes over some of the Hodzha's functions among the women. This form is also widespread among Gypsies in Bulgaria, in some cases even there may be only 'Hodzhakinya' (Imam-Woman).
4. In the original, it is 'one of the Chairs' which is an obvious mistake.
5. Muslims in the Balkans (including Muslim Gypsies) celebrated two big religious holidays under the name 'Bayram' – *Kurban-Bayram* (Eid al-Adha or Eid Qurban) and Sheker-Bayram (Eid al-Fitr or Ramadan Bayram).
6. In the original, it is 'Shakir N. Pashev' which is a typo – Shakir Pashov's second (patronymic) name is 'Mahmudov'. He himself spells his family name in many documents as 'Pashev' and that is the case here.

Source: SCA, f. 1Б, op. 8, a.e. 596, l. 69.
Prepared for publication by Elena Marushiakova and Vesselin Popov.
Translated by Aleksandar Marinov.

2.3.2 *The Minutes of the General Constitutive Meeting of the Mohammedan-Gypsy Union*

Протокол
на общото Учредително събрание от 25 декемврий 1933
година на Общия мохамедано-цигански национален културно-
просветен и взаимоспомагателен съюз в България

Днес, 25 декември 1933 година, в ст[олицата] София, ръководящето общото учредително събрание на гореказания съюз в състав: Председател: Рамчо Шакиров, подпредседател Демир Яшаров и секретар Слави Илиев, състави настоящия учредителен съюз протокол за следното:

I. Одобри се съставения в три екземпляра устав на Общия мохамедано-цигански национален културно-просветен и взаимоспомагателен съюз в България, като се възложи на избрания управителен съвет да го представи на Почитаемото Министерство на Вътрешните Работи и Народното Здраве в ст[олицата] София, за надлежно утвърждение.

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II. С мандат до първия съюзен конгрес избраха се следните управителни тела:

Управителен съвет:

1/ Шакир М. Пашев, от София, ул. "К[онстантин] Величков" No. 80; 2/ Рашид Мехмедов, от София, ул. "Одоровци" No. 45; 3/ Билял Османов, от София, ул. "Три уши" No. 145; 4/ Слави Илиев, от София, ул. К[онстантин] Величков, No. 134; 5/ Мехмед Скендеров, от София, ул. "Татарли" No. 56.

Запасни членове на Управителния съвет:

1/ Рамчо Шакиров, от София, ул. "Индже войвода" No. 43; 2/ Младен Спасов, от София, ул. "Индже войвода" No. 43.

Управителния съвет след конституирането си избра:

Председател на съюза – Шакир М. Пашев, Секретар на Съюза – Славе Илиев, и Касиер на съюза – Мехмед Скендеров.

Контролна комисия:

1/ Асен Османов, от София, ул. "К[онстантин] Величков" No. 127; 2/ Сали Билялов, от София, ул. "К[онстантин] Величков" No. 98; 3/ Найде Яшаров, от София, ул. "Татарли" No. 16.

Просветен съвет:

1/ Ахмед Сотиров, от София, ул. "Индже войвода" No. 71; 2/ Благой Сотиров, от София, ул. "Доктор Калинков" No. 25; 3/ Яшар Сираков, от София, ул. "Татарли" No. 155; 4/ Асан Рустемов, от София, ул. "Татарли" No. 94 и 5/ Васил Димитров, от София, квартал "Безжичен телеграф".

Религиозен съвет:

1/ Кочо Такев, от София, ул. "Индже войвода" No. 29; 2/ Али Яшаров, от София, ул. "К[онстантин] Величков" No. 104; 3/ Мато Асанов, от София, ул, "Татарли" No. 11; 4/ Калея Доков, от София, ул. "Татарли" No. 45; 5/ Мустафа Сеидимов, от София, ул. "Климентина" No. 196; 6/ Монге Ахмедов, от София, ул. "Татарли" No. 52; 7/ Мустафа Фенузов, от София, ул. "Татарли" No. 29; 8/ Банго Талев, от София, ул. "Константин Величков" No. ... и 9/ Демир Салиев, от София, ул. "К[онстантин] [В]еличков" No. 76.

Ст[олицата] София, 25 декември 1933 г.
Бюро на общото учредително събрание на съюза:
Председател: ...: [подпис], Подпредседател: ... [подпис], Секретар: ... [подпис].

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The Minutes
of the General Constitutive Meeting on 25 December 1933 of the Common Mohammedan-Gypsy National Cultural-Educational and Mutual Aid Union in Bulgaria

Today, 25 December 1933 in the Capital Sofia, the managing constitutive meeting of the aforementioned Union in composition: Chair Ramcho Shakirov, Vice Chair Demir

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Yasharov, and Secretary Slavi Iliev, constituted the present Constitutive Union Minutes with the following:

I. It approved the created Statute of the Common Mohammedan-Gypsy National Cultural-Educational and Mutual Aid Union in Bulgaria and it was delegated to the elected Board of Directors to present it to the Esteemed Ministry of Internal Affairs and National Health in the Capital Sofia in order to be dully approved.

II. With a mandate until the first Union Congress the following managing bodies were elected:

Board of Directors:

1/ Shakir M. Pashev, from Sofia, Konstantin Velichkov Str. No. 80; 2/ Rashid Mehmedov, from Sofia, Odorovtsi Str. No. 45; 3/ Bilyal Osmanov, from Sofia, Tri Ushi Str. No. 145; 4/ Slavi Iliev, from Sofia, Konstantin Velichkov Str. No. 134; 5/ Mehmed Skenderov, from Sofia, Tatarli Str. No. 56.

Substitute Members of the Board of Directors:

1/ Ramcho Shakirov, from Sofia, Indzhe Voyvoda Str. No. 43; 2/ Mladen Spasov from Sofia, Indzhe Voyvoda Str. No. 43.

After the Constitutive Meeting, the Board of Directors chose:

President of the Union – Shakir M. Pashev, Secretay of the Union – Slave Iliev, and Treasurer of the Union – Mehmed Skenderov.

Control Commission:

1/ Asen Osmanov, from Sofia, Konstantin Velichkov Str. No. 127; 2/ Sali Bilyalov, from Sofia, Konstantin Velichkov Str. No. 98; 3/ Nayde Yasharov, from Sofia, Tatarli Str. No. 16.

Enlightenment Council:

1/ Ahmed Sotirov, from Sofia, Indzhe Voyvoda Str. No. 71; 2/ Blagoy Sotirov, from Sofia, Doktor Kalinkov Str. No. 25; 3/ Yashar Sirakov, from Sofia, Tatarli Str. No. 155; 4/ Asan Rustemov, from Sofia, Tatarli Str. No. 94; and 5/ Vasil Dimitrov, from Sofia, Bezzhichen Telegraf neighbourhood.

Religious Council:

1/ Kocho Takev, from Sofia, Indzhe Voyvoda Str. No. 29; 2/ Ali Yasharov, from Sofia, Konstantin Velichkov Str. No. 104; 3/. Mato Asanov, from Sofia, Tatarli Str. No. 11; 4/ Kaleya Dokov, from Sofa, Tatarli Str. No. 45; 5/ Mustafa Seidimov, from Sofia, Klimentina Str. No. 196; 6/ Monge Ahmedov, from Sofia, Tatarli Str. No. 52; 7/ Mustafa Fezunov, from Sofia, Tatarli Str. No. 29; 8/ Bango Talev, from Sofia, Konstantin Velichkov Str. No. …; and 9/ Demir Saliev, from Sofia, Konstantin Velichkov Str. No. 76.

The Capital Sofia, 25 December 1933.
Bureau of the General Constitutive Meeting of the Union:
President: … [Signature], Vice President: … [Signature]. Secretary: … [Signature].

Source: CSA, f. 264, op. 2, a.e. 8413, l. 27-28.
Prepared for publication by Elena Marushiakova and Vesselin Popov.
Translated by Aleksandar Marinov.

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2.3.3 *The Statute of the Mohammedan-Gypsy Union*

Устав
на Общия мохамедано-циганско национален културно-просветен
и взаимоспомагателен съюз в България

Седалище на Съюза – ст[олицата] София.

Чл. 1. Цел на Съюза: да организира всички цигани (мохамедани и др[уги]) в националната им принадлежност в България за да създаде между им просветна, професионална и обща култура, а така също да оздрави на базата на законите в България религиозния им бит с ценни морални устои; да създаде организация за защита материалните и духовни интереси на тая нация в страната, а и взаимоспомагателен институт чрез самопомощ.

Чл. 2. Средства на съюза: [членски внос на] организациите към Съюза във всички населени пунктове на циганските малцинства, популярни беседи и курсове за просветно и професионално образование, здравно гражданско учене за култивиране граждански добродетели в майката отечество – България издигане висотата на религиозния бит на членовете си и при наличност на законни условия откриване на частни училища.

Чл. 3. Редовни членове на Съюза могат да бъдат всички наши сънародници в България и др[уги страни], числящи се към всички отделни сдружения, а и неорганизираните такива, но членуващи в професионалните си сдружения: ковашкото, калайджийското, кошничарското, джамбазкото, посредническо-джамбазкото, хамалското, музикантското и пр[очие], като отделните професионални сдружения или организации биват представени с по един делегат пред съюза с пълномощно от своето сдружение или организация.

За почетни членове в съюза се провъзгласяват всички дарители било то в наличност, в имоти или поддръжка на съюза в материали.

Чл. 4. Материални средства на съюза: [средствата], добити от редовен членски внос, определен по размер от Върховния съвет на съюза, заседаващ всяка година, от дарения, увеселения, забави, вечеринки, излети, глоби от съюзната управа над членуващите, от съюзни печатни издания или значки. [...]

Чл. 5. Права на членовете. Всички организирани членове на съюза са равноправни и участвуват с право на глас във всички събрания на съюза. Всеки член на съюза е длъжен безрезервно да се подчини на наредбите на управителния съвет, които не противоречат на настоящия устав, а и да работи за преуспяването на съюза, да записва нови членове и да пропагандира между националното ни малцинство за просветното, общокултурното и възпитателно назначение на съюза, изобщо да пропагандира целите на съюза.

Чл. 6. Организация на съюза. [...] Всяка провинциална организация влизаща в общия съюз избира и изпраща с редовно пълномощно свои делегати за конгреса. [...] Съюзния конгрес излъчва Висш съюзен съвет. Конгреса може да бъде посетен

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и от желаещи гости, но без права на избиратели и избираеми. Съюза ще действува за сдобиване с всички права по законите на страната, с които се ползват всички останали подобни съюзи.

Чл. 7. Съюзът има за цел още да създаде чрез своите членове и следните културни начинания: 1. Откриване на общо-просветни и професионални читалища; 2. Откриване национални частни училища в по-големите центрове; 3. Откриване регионални вероизповедни общини; 4. Да назначи учители специалисти, които първом чрез курсове да подготвят неграмотните в четмо и писмо, да отправят членуващите към добиване занаятчийско образование и професионални права, да канализират религиозния живот на същите, а въобще да ги подготвят като добри граждани на България.

Чл. 8. Задължения на членовете към съюза.

Всеки организиран в съюза член е длъжен да получава задължително официалния орган на съюза в България, както и да записва и други абонати за същият между неорганизираните.

Всеки такъв член е длъжен да носи при всички прояви на съюза специалната съюзна значка, както и да разпродава тези значки и между неорганизираните.

Организиран съюзен член, който не внася редовно членските си вноски в съюзната каса чрез касиера на сдружението си или направо в съюзната каса, се изключва като предварително се уведомява да се издължи в даден му срок.

Подлежи на изключване и онзи съюзен член, който не пази престижа на съюза, пропагандира противно на целите и средствата му идеи явно вредни за съюза или пък антидържавни такива.

Подлежат на изключване и цели сдружения, ако те след като изцяло членуват в Съюза вършат онова, което е казано в предшествующите алинеи.

Чл. 9. Управление и права на Върховния Съюзен съвет. Конгресът избира върховен съюзен съвет от кандидати на членуващите организации от цяла България, който в пълния си състав се събира само по решение с вишегласие на управителния съвет на съюза и то при много важни съюзни проблеми, които организацията на съюза наложи в течение на живота й. Върховния съюзен съвет може да бъде свикан само веднъж в годината.

Управителния пък съюзен съвет има следния състав: Председател, двама подпредседатели, секретар и касиер. Управителния съвет е постоянното управително тяло на съюза в течение на организационната година и в казания си състав се избира тоже от конгресните делегати, съвместно с делегатите за конгреса и на професионалните сдружения. [...] Изборите на: върховен съюзен съвет, на управителен съвет и на конгресно бюро става по реда, указан в настоящия член все с тайно гласоподаване. С бюлетината за управителен съвет се избира и контролна комисия от трима члена. [...]

Забележка I: Върховния съюзен съвет преди приключване на ежегодния конгрес задължително назначава из средата на явилите се редовни делегати на

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конгреса осемчленни комитети със задачи: а) културно-просветни; б) религиозни; в) благоустройственни. [...]

Забележка II. Културно-просветния комитет, като помощен орган на управителния съвет на съюза, се грижи и носи отговорност за всички начинания указани в целите на съюза; той учредява и увеселителните комисии при всяка организация, които развиват дейността за събирането и материалните средства на съюза от работата на разните: спортни, туристически, гимнастически, лекторски кръжоци, артистични трупи, музикални турнета, пласимент на печатните произведения, значки и пр.

Религиозният комитет, като помощен орган на управителния съвет на съюза, се грижи и носи орговорност за: Нравственото и религиозно издигане на членовете на съюза, верското им представителство и организация според вероизповеданието им, за преследване на незаконно живущите в брак и съдействува за узаконяването на такива случаи. Този комитет представлява едноверците членове на съюза пред респективните власти в страната при назначаване, уволняване и пр. всички верски служители на съответното религиозно място. Религиозния комитет е инстанция, която играе ролята на помирителен съд при всички семейни конфликти целящи разрушаването на създадено семейство. Този комитет е задължен да направи ведно с управителния съвет на съюза и всички постъпки за образуване на национална вероизповедна община, където в царството се има нужда от такива. [...] Религиозния комитет носи задължението да организира и цялата благотворителна дейност на съюза, както и онази дейност, която пази верските традиции: годежи, сватби, раждания, смърт, погребения и пр.

Благоустройствения комитет има следните задължения: да брани пред съответните власти в страната придобитите права на съюзните членове върху недвижими собствености: покрити или непокрити, като специално пък в градовете има назначението да бди за строежите на съюзните членове, ставащи общо-квартални, щото те да отговарят на всички закони в страната за да не се нарушава оседлостта на такивато членове. Същият комитет, независимо от властите в страната, е задължен да бди щото всеки съюзен или неорганизиран член на нацията да пази строго всички хигиенически взисквания в обществения живот; да ходатайствува пред респективните държавни и общинските власти за благоустрояването на кварталите, където живее оседло национално малцинство и въобще да ръководи всички инициативи от благоустройственно естество за нацията си.

Чл. 10. Структура на оказаните поделения.

Всяко национално сдружение от 20 и повече члена избира ежетригодно свое настоятелство в състав: Председател, подпредседател и секретар-касиер в годишното си събрание по висшегласие, като протокола за този избор се представлява подписан от изборното бюро на Управителния съвет на съюза в София за утвърждаване и публикуване в съюзния орган. [...]

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Чл. 11. Права и длъжности на членовете на управителния съвет на съюза вън от до тук казаните.

Управителния съвет издава наредби по организация живота на съюзът, които отпечатва в съюзния орган.

Само следните длъжности от управителния съвет са платени: Председател, секретар и касиер, а останалите са почетни. [...]

Чл. 12. Съюза наема помещение за канцелария, което може да се използва в София и за събрания, а след като стане материално мощен първата му задача е да си закупи и построи собствен дом като юридическа личност или на кооперативни начала, който да служи и за столично училище, столично читалище, хотел за настаняване на бедни съюзни членове, съюзен университет по всички занаяти за младото поколение, приют за инвалиди от войната, злополука, старост и недъгавост за нацията ни от цяла България.

Чл. 13. Една от големите благотворителни задачи на съюза е щото в определен ден на годината всички поделения на съюза да проведат деня на благотворителността на българския циганин за подпомагане на всички нуждаещи се бедни и малоимотни наши сънародници.

Чл. 14. В съюзната канцелария задължително се водят следните книжа: входящ и изходящ дневник, протоколна книга за всички институти на съюза според тоя устав, касова, квитанционна книга и други счетоводни книги. [...]

Чл. 15. Печата на същия съюз има кръгла форма с надпис: "Общ цигански национален културно-просветен и взаимоспомагателен съюз в България" със звезда в средата. [...]

Чл. 18. За незабавно отпочване взаимоспомагателната функция на съюза при същият е вече образувана "Взаимоспомагателна каса", книжата на която се водят от общия касиер на съюза с цели: подпомагане при поискване мотивирано и проучено бедни и нуждающи се внезапно съюзни членове чрез отпускане помощи за случаи на болест, безработица, смърт, злополука и пр.; формиране временно на помещения за приют на стари, недъгави и останали сами в живота сънародници или сънароднички, издръжка на бедни и способни деца за завършване прогимназия, гимназия, университет или професионални училища; погребение на разноски на съюза крайно беден циганин или циганка. В такива екстрени случаи съюзните органи ще прибягват и до единичните помощи на заможни членове.

Чл. 19. Патронния празник на съюза е Георгиов ден, [който се чествува] всяка година.

Чл. 20. Конгреса на съюза ще се състоява всяка година в денят на Освобождението на България и ще се предшествува от вечеринка, международна пропаганда и манифестация.

Чл. 21. Настоящия устав може да се измени и допълни в конгресите на съюза.

Същият се състави, прие и одобри в общото учредително събрание на основаният вече съюз, държано на 25 декемврий 1933 година в София. [...]

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От Общия мохамедано-цигански национален културно-просветен и взаимоспомагателен съюз в България,

Председател: … [подпис]. Секретар: … [подпис]. [Печат на организацията].

∵

The Statute
of the Common Mohammedan-Gypsy National Cultural-Educational and Mutual Aid Union

Headquarters of the Union – Capital Sofia.

Art. 1. Aims of the Union: to organise all Gypsies (Mohammedans and others) in their national belonging in Bulgaria in order to create among them educational, professional and common general culture, and also, based on the laws of Bulgaria, to recuperate their religious lives with valuable moral principles; to create an organisation for the preservation of the material and spiritual interests of this nation in the country, but also a mutual aid institute through self-help.

Art. 2. Resources of the Union: membership fees of organisations of the Union from all places inhabited by Gypsy minorities, public lectures and courses for enlightenment and professional education, health civil learning for the cultivation of civil virtues in the motherland – Bulgaria, uplifting of the religious way of life of their members, and, if the laws permit, opening of private schools.

Art. 3. Regular Members of the Union could be all our co-nationals in Bulgaria and other countries, who belong to all individual associations, but also those who do not belong to any, but are members of their professional associations: blacksmiths', tinsmiths', basket-makers', horse-dealers', the intermediary horse-dealers' [1], the porters', the musicians' and others, while the individual professional associations or organisations are represented in the Union by one Delegate who is authorised by their association or organisation.

As Honorary Members of the Union are proclaimed all donors regardless if they have contributed with cash, with real estate or with support for the Union in resources.

Art. 4. Material Resources of the Union: acquired money from regular membership fees, determined by the Supreme Council of the Union, which meets annually, from donations, parties, social events, picnics, fines by the Union's leadership on its members, from print publications and badges. […] [2]

Art. 5. Rights of the Members. All organised Members of the Union have equal rights and participate with the right to cast votes in all meetings of the Union. Each member of the Union is obliged to obey the ordinances of the Board of Directors which do not contradict to the current Statute but also to work towards the success of the Union, to enrol new members and to propagate among our national minority for their enlightenment, cultural and educational purpose of the Union, and in general to propagate the aims of the Union.

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Art. 6. The Organisation of the Union. [...] Each provincial organisation which is in the Common Union, should elect and send, with a regular authorisation letter, their Delegates to the Congress [...] The Congress of the Union determines a Supreme Union Council. The Congress may be attended also by willing guests who, however, do not have rights to cast votes or be elected. The Union will function for the acquisition of all rights in accordance with the laws of the country which are enjoyed by all of the other similar unions.

Art. 7. The Union will also aim to create, through its Members, the following cultural endeavours: 1) the opening of educational and professional community reading clubs; 2) the opening of national private schools in the larger towns; 3) the opening of regional religious parishes; 4) to appoint teachers-specialists who will initially via training teach the uneducated how to read and write, to direct the Members to acquire professional education and rights, to channel their religions lives and in general to help them prepare to become good citizens of Bulgaria.

Art. 8. Duties of the Union's Members.

Each Member of the Union is obliged to receive the official Publication of the Union in Bulgaria as well as to enrol new subscribers among non-members.

Each such member is obliged to wear the special Union badge at all events of the Union, as well as to sell those badges to the unorganised.

Members of the Union who do not pay regularly their fees via the treasurer at their own organisation or directly at the Union's treasurer's office, will be expelled from the Union while they will be notified in advance to pay off their duties in a given time period.

Also, that Member of the Union who does not guard the image of the Union, propagate against its aims and ideals, obviously harms the Union, or harms the country, will be also excluded.

Also, liable for exclusion will be whole associations provided they have been full members of the Union and that they do that which is mentioned in the above paragraphs.

Art. 9. Management and Rights of the Supreme Union Council. The Congress elects a Supreme Union Council from among the candidates of member organisations from all across Bulgaria which in its full make-up convenes only by a decision by a majority of the Union's Board of Directors, and only at utmost serious issues which the Union may identify during the course of its life. The Supreme Union Council may be convened only once per year.

On the other hand, the Union's Board of Directors has the following composition: a President, two Vice Presidents, a Secretary and a Treasurer. The Board of Directors is the permanent governing body of the Union during the organisational year. In its composition, it is being elected by the Congress Delegates, together with the Delegates for the Congress and Professional Associations. [...] The elections of the Supreme Union Council, the Board of Directors and of the Congress Bureau are done in accordance to the rules described in the current article via a secret ballot. A Control Commission composed of three members is also elected with the ballot-paper for the Board of Directors. [...]

Note I: The Supreme Union Council prior to the conclusion of the yearly Congress, by all means, appoints among the attending regular Delegates of the Congress 8-member

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Committees with the following tasks: a) Cultural and Educational; b) Religious; c) Public Works. […]

Note II: The Cultural and Educational Committee, being a subsidiary body of the Board of Directors of the Union, takes care and bears the responsibility for all endeavours described in the Aims of the Union; it organises also the Entertainment Commissions for each organisation which deals with the collection of material resources for the Union from the following activities: sports, tourist, gymnastic, lectures, artistic groups, musical tours, selling of published materials, badges etc.

The Religious Committee, as a subsidiary body of the Board of Directors, takes care and has the responsibility for: The moral and religious uplifting of the members of the Union, their religious representation and organisation according to their confessions, the punishment of those couples who live together illegally and it helps for the legalisation of such cases. The Committee represents the members of the Union from the same faith to the respective authorities in the country at the appointment, discharge, etc. of all religious staff at the respective religious place. The Religious Committee is an instance which plays the role of a conciliation board for all family conflicts which aim at destroying the established family. This Committee is obliged to create, together with the Board of Directors of the Union, everything necessary for the formation of a national religious community wherever in the Kingdom has the need for it. […] The Religious Committee also has the obligation to organise all charity activities of the Union, as well as those activities which preserve the religious traditions: engagements, weddings, birth celebrations, death, burials, etc.

The Committee of Public Works has the following duties: to protect the acquired rights of the Union Members from the respective authorities of the country in terms of real estate: built or not, while especially in the towns it has the role to be vigilant for the buildings of the Union's Members which are part of the wider neighbourhood in order that they are in line with the laws of the country, and that their sedentarisation is not disturbed. The same Committee, regardless of the authorities of the country, is obliged to see to it that each Union or non-Union Member of the nation strictly observes all hygienic requirements of the public life; to advocate at the respective state and council authorities for the development of the neighbourhoods where the national minority lives sedentary and to manage, on the whole, all public work initiatives for its own nation.

Art. 10. Structure of the mentioned units.

Each national association consisting of 20 or more members elects for three years their own board of trustees composed by: President, Vice President and a Secretary-Treasurer in its annual meeting elected by majority vote while the minutes for this meeting is presented and signed by the electoral bureau of the Board of Directors of the Union in Sofia which is to be confirmed and published in the Union's Publication. […]

Art. 11. Rights and Obligations of the Members of the Board of Directors of the Union besides the ones mentioned here.

The Board of Directors issues regulations on the organisation of the life of the union, and they become public via the Union's Publication.

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Only the following positions from the Board of Directors are paid: President, Secretary and Treasurer while the rest are honorary. […]

Art. 12. The union rents a place which is to serve as an office in Sofia also for the purpose of meetings and after the Union becomes financially better off, its first task would be to buy and build its own place, as a legal organisation or as a cooperation, which would serve also as a school in capital city, capital city *chitalishte* [3], a hotel which would accommodate poor Union Members, a Union University offering training in all kinds of crafts for the benefit of the youth, a hostel for the war invalids, accidents, old age and handicap for our nation from all across Bulgaria.

Art. 13. One of the Union's the main charitable tasks is, on a certain day of the year, all departments of the Union to observe a Day of Charity for the Bulgarian Gypsy in order to support all our poor and impoverished compatriots.

Art. 14. By all means, in the Council's office are kept the following books: an incoming and outgoing Register Book, a Minute Book for all of the institutions of the Union according to this Statute, a Receipt Book and other accounting books. […].

Art. 15. The Stamp of the Union has a circular form with the inscription: "Common Gypsy National Cultural-Educational and Mutual Aid Union" with a star in the middle [4]. […]

Art. 18. For the immediate start of the mutual aid function of the Union, a "Mutual Aid Loan Society" has been already established, whose books are kept by the general Treasurer of the Union with the aims: assistance at the request of motivated and proven poor and those in immediate need from among the Union Members, providing help at times of illness, unemployment, death, accident, etc.; the temporary formation of places for the accommodation of elderly, handicapped and those left alone in their life amongst our compatriots, the support of poor and capable children for their graduating from junior high schools, high schools, universities or professional colleges; burials with the support of the Union of very impoverished male and female Gypsies. At such extreme cases, the Union organs will resort also to the individual on-time help of well-to-do Members.

Art. 19. The Patron Holy-Day of the Union is St George's Day [5], to be celebrated each year.

Art. 20. The Congress of the Union will take place each year on Bulgarian Liberation Day [6], and will be observed with evening party, a cross-nationalities' propaganda and a manifestation.

Art. 21. This Statute may be amended and added to in the course of the Union's Congresses.

The Statute was created, accepted and approved by the General Constitutive Meeting of the already established Union which took place on 25 December 1933 in Sofia.

Of the Common Mohammedan-Gypsy National Cultural-Educational and Mutual Aid Union,

Director: … [Signature]. Secretary: … [Signature]. [Stamp of the Organisation].

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Notes

1. For what reason the societies of horse-dealers "and the intermediary horse-dealers" are divided it is not very clear. In fact, they refer to almost the same occupation (the horse-dealers are always intermediators). It is possible that there may have been two such associations in Sofia at that time.
2. Here and bellow the parts of administrative character which are identical to every legally approved Association statute of that time are omitted.
3. In Bulgaria, the system of the so-called *chitalishta* (Cultural Reading Clubs) has been widespread since the time of the Ottoman Empire. They carry out many and broader functions also as centers of cultural and social life in a certain settlement or in an urban neighbourhood.
4. In the text of the Statute (Art. 15), the inscription of the stamp bearing the name of the Union does not include the word 'Mohammedan', while the stamp itself, placed at the end of the document, lacks the word 'Gypsy'. Similarly, there are discrepancies between the texts found in the Statute and in the stamp itself and in reflecting the symbolism of the Union. The text of the Statute (Art. 15) states that the stamp has a star in its middle while the stamp itself has a crescent and a star in its centre (i.e. the typical Muslim symbolism also reflected in the national flag of neighbouring Turkey). It would be impossible to know whether these are unintentional errors or deliberately made omissions in the Statute.
5. It is interesting to note that in defining the holiday of the Union (Art. 19), the term 'Patron Holy-day' is used. It is the same term used in order to mark the annual celebrations of the patron saints of the various Esnafs (Guilds). Like in Vidin, as a Gypsy holiday was proclaimed St George's Day, i.e. this traditional holiday became already a national symbol for the Gypsies.
6. Linking the Union's Congress with the National Day of Bulgaria (the Day of Liberation, celebrated on the 3rd of March – the day on which the 1878 Treaty of San Stefano ended the Russo-Turkish War, referred to in Bulgaria as the 'Liberation War'). In this way, the Gypsies' belonging to the Bulgarian civic nation is explicitly emphasised.

Source: CSA, f. 264, op. 2, a.e. 8413, l. 7-12, 15-20, 21-26 (three copies).
Prepared for publication by Elena Marushiakova and Vesselin Popov.
Translated by Aleksandar Marinov.

2.3.4 *The Application from the Mohammedan-Gypsy Union* (*April*)

До Господина Министъра на Вътрешните Работи и Народното Здраве.
Ст[олицата] София.

Заявление
от Общия мохамедано-цигански национален, културно-просветен
и взаимоспомагателен Съюз в България

Със седалище София, ул. "Климентина" No. 194.
[Печат:] Вх. No. 9303, 17.IV.1934.

Уважаеми Господин Министре,

Чест ни е да представим на благосклонните Ви [очи за] по-нататъшни разпоредби в подведомствената Ви управа:

1. Учредителния протокол на съюза ни; и
2. Три екземпляра от устава на съюза ни,

с молба да бъде надлежно утвърден и регистриран казания ни съюз.

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Целите и задачите на същият са подробно изброени в устава ни; те не само не противоречат на който и да било закон в отечеството ни БЪЛГАРИЯ, но позволяваме си повторно да подчертаем, че имат за пряка задача да издигнат нашето национално малцинство до степен на първоразрядни граждани, на безупречни поданици на отечеството и родината ни, както и да освободят респективните власти над нас от много грижи за постигане на тези цели.

Дълбоко уверени в уважаването на настоящата ни молба, оставаме с отлични към Вас почитания.

Ст[олицата] София, ... април 1934 година.
Председател: ... [подпис на Шакир Пашев], [печат].
[
Върху текста на заявлението е написана ръкописна резолюция:

"Поради мотивите изложени в писмото на Мин[истреството] на В[ъншните] р[аботи] и изповеданията [1], вх. No. 17063/34 г., устава не се утвърждава и съюза не може да съществува като такъв. 16.VII.1934 ... [нечетивен подпис]."

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To the Minister of Internal Affairs and National Health.
The Capital Sofia.

Application
from the Common Mohammedan-Gypsy National Cultural-Educational
and Mutual Aid Union in Bulgaria

With headquarters Sofia, Klimentina Str. No.194.
[Stamp] Incoming Number: 9303. Received on: 17.04.1934.

Esteemed Mister Minister,

It is our honour to present to your benevolent attention for further edicts in your jurisdiction the following:

1. The Constitutive Assembly Minutes of our Union; and
2. Three copies of the Statute of our Union,

with a request our respective Union to be duly confirmed and registered.

The aims and the duties of the Union are listed in detail in our Statute; they not only do not contradict whichever law of our homeland BULGARIA, but also, we allow ourselves to highlight again, they have the immediate duty to raise our national minority to a level of first-class citizens and flawless subjects of our homeland and native land and also to ease our respective authorities from the many worries in satisfying these aims.

We are deeply convinced in the acceptance of this request and remain with the utmost respect towards you.

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The Capital Sofia, … April 1934 [1].
President: … [Signature of Shakir Pashev]. [Stamp].

Over the text of the application, a handwritten resolution is written:
Due to the reasons given in the letter of the Ministry of External Affairs and Religious Denominations [2], Incoming No. 17063/34, the Statute is not accredited and the Union cannot exist as such. 16.VII.34 … [Illegible Signature].

Notes

1. The exact date is missing. As it could be seen from the letter itself, it has been received on 17.04.1934.
2. See the letter below.

Source: CSA, f. 264, op. 2, a.e. 8413, l. 1.
Prepared for publication by Elena Marushiakova and Vesselin Popov.
Translated by Aleksandar Marinov.

2.3.5 *The Application from the Mohammedan-Gypsy Union* (*June*)

До Господина Министъра на Вътрешните работи и народното здраве.
Ст[олицата] София.

Заявление
от Общия мохамед[ано]-цигански национ[ален] култ[урно]-просветен
и взаимоспом[агателен] съюз в България

Седалище: ст[олицата] София, ул. Климентина No. 194.
[Печат:] Вх. No. 14031.
Получено на 9 юни 1934.

Уважаеми Господине Министре,

Известно е, че от дълги години функционират надлежно и законно утвърдени от съответното Министерство наши професионални организации и дружества като: Ковачкото [дружество], Калайджийското [дружество], Д[ружест]во "Египет", Организация "Истикбал", Взаимоспомагателно [дружество], които дружества и организации се събраха вкупом през м[иналата] 1933 год[ина и] образуваха горепоменатия Общ Мохамедано-Циган[ски] Национ[ален] Култ[урно]-просветен и Взаимоспом[агателен] съюз в България със седалище ст[олицата] София – организация безпартийна, целите и задачи на който съюз са подробно изброени в устава ни, които не противоречат на който и да било закон в отечеството ни.

Книжата: учредителния протокол и три екз[емпляра] от устава при [подаването на] заявлението се представиха в почитаемото Министерство през м. април за утвърждение, обаче до днес нямаме резултат.

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Понеже днес имаме управление, надпартийно управление, което управление цялата наша нация поздравява, си позволяваме да помолим, Господине Министре, да благоволите и ни утвърдите представените книжа.

Дълбоко уверени в уважаването на настоящата ни молба оставаме с отлично към Вас почитание.

Председател: … [подпис и печат].

∵

To: The Minister of Internal Affairs and National Health.
The Capital Sofia. [handwritten]

Application
From the Common Mohammedan-Gypsy National Cultural-Educational
and Mutual Aid Union in Bulgaria

Headquarters: Sofia, Klimentina Str. No. 194.
[Stamp:] Incoming No. 14031.
Received on 9 June 1934.

Dear Mr. Minister,

It is known that for many years appropriately and lawfully confirmed by the respective Ministry have functioned our professional organisations and associations such as: Blacksmiths' Society, Tinsmiths' Society, Society *Egypt*, Organisation *Istikbal*, Mutual Aid Society; these societies and organisations merged in the last year, 1933, and formed the above-mentioned Common Mohammedan-Gypsy National Cultural-Educational and Mutual Aid Union in Bulgaria with its headquarters, the Capital Sofia – an organisation without any party allegiance, whose aims and tasks are thoroughly listed in our Statute which does not contradict any law in our homeland.

The paperwork: Constituent Assembly Minutes and three copies of our Statute were presented to the respectful Ministry in the month of April to be approved, however, to present day we do not have a result.

Since today we have a governance, that stays over all parties [1], and which all our nation salutes, we allow ourselves to ask you, Mr. Minister, to be so kind and to approve the submitted paperwork.

We are truly certain you will respect our request and we leave you with all due respect.

Chair: … [Signature]. [Stamp].

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Notes

1. It refers to the Government of Kimon Georgiev which came into power after the military coup of May 19, 1934, which banned the political parties and introduced the non-partisan rule.

Source: CSA, f. 264, op. 2, a.e. 8413, l. 14.
Prepared for publication by Elena Marushiakova and Vesselin Popov.
Translated by Aleksandar Marinov.

2.3.6 *Opinion*

Поверително!
Министерство на Външните работи и на Изповеданията.
До Министерството на Вътрешните Работи и Народното Здраве, отдел Вероизповедания. Тук. No. 11646-53-V, 10.VII.1934 г., София.
[На] No. 8247/934 год.

Министерството повръща устава на мохамедано-циганския национален културно-просветен съюз с мнение, ДА НЕ СЕ УТВЪРЖДАВА тоя устав, понеже циганите-мюсулмани у нас се организират по външно внушение.

Главен Секретар: ..., Пълномощен Министър: ..., Началник Отдел: ... [подписи].

∵

Confidential!
Ministry of External Affairs and Religious Denominations.
To the Ministry of Internal Affairs and National Health, Department of Religious Denominations.
Here. No. 11646-53-V, 10 July 1934.
[In response to] No. 8247/1934.

The Ministry returns the Statute of the Mohammedan-Gypsy National Cultural-Educational Union with the opinion this Statute NOT TO BE AFFIRMED because the Gypsy Muslims in our country are organised through foreign influence.

Main Secretary: ..., Minister Plenipotiary: ..., Head of Department: ... [Signatures].

Source: CSA, f. 264, op. 2, a.e. 8413, l. 6.
Prepared for publication by Elena Marushiakova and Vesselin Popov.
Translated by Aleksandar Marinov.

2.3.7 *Acknowledgement*

Разписка

Долуподписаният Управителен Съвет на Общия Мохамедано-цигански Национален Културно[-]Просветно и Взаимоспомагателен Съюз в България със седалище ст[олицата] София, удостоверяваме с настоящето си, че ни се съобщи, чрез 10[-и]

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Полиц[ейски] Участък, съдържанието на Писмо No 10652 от 19.VII.т[ази].г[одина] на Министерство на В[ътрешните] Р[аботи] и Н[ародното] Здраве в смисъл, че устава ни няма да се утвърди от М[инистерст]вото и че Съюза не може да съществува като такъв.

Задължаваме се в срок от 30 дни да разтурим Съюза и свалим съюзната фирма.

Ст[олицата] София, 25.VII. 1934 год.

Управителен Съвет: ... [подписи].

∵

Acknowledgement

The undersigned Board of Directors of the Common Mohammedan-Gypsy National Cultural and Educational and Mutual Aid Union in Bulgaria with headqurters in the Capital Sofia, certifies with this that we were informed through the 10 Police Station of the contents of the Letter No 10652 from 19.VII. this year from the Ministry of Internal Affairs and National Health meaning that our statute will not be affirmed by the Ministry and that the Union cannot exist as such.

We are obliged, within 30 days, to dissolve the Union and to destroy the firm of the Union.

The Capital Sofia, 25.VII. 1934

Board of Directors: ... [Signatures].

Source: CSA, f. 264, op. 2, a.e. 8413, l. 2.
Prepared for publication by Elena Marushiakova and Vesselin Popov.
Translated by Aleksandar Marinov.

2.3.8 *A Letter to Police Directorate*

Софийска Общо Мюсюлманска Културно Просветна Взаимоспомагателна Организация "Истикбал". 18 юлий 1939 г., София.

До Господина Директора на Полицията, Тук.

[Печат]: Главна Дирекция на Народното здраве. 23 юли 1939. Дело № 31.

Господин Директоре,

Виждайки, че вместо да върви към напредък, циганското население, то от ден на ден отива към морален и материален упадък, поради което, с цел да го издигнем в културно, просветно, морално и религиозно отношение, основахме дружество на всички цигани в столицата, което има за задача да работи между последните за материалното им и духовно издигане, за да може да приближи отчасти живота им към тоя на останалото столично население, защото състоянието, в което се намират в настоящия момент не може и не бива повече да се търпи.

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За постигането на нашата цел, обаче е необходима пълна подкрепа от всички отговорни фактори в страната в кръга и рамките на съществуващите закони, защото без такава подкрепа осъществяването на нашата задача е невъзможно, особено за запазване морала между циганите.

Докато за издигането им в културно и просветно отношение е необходимо упорито да се работи ред години чрез изнасяне на сказки и реферати, както и откриване [на] вечерни курсове за възрастните, задачата ни да запазим морала между циганите е съвсем трудна и без подкрепата на властта е абсурд.

На първо време, обаче трябва да се вземат мерки за запазване на техния морал – най-ценната основа, върху която се гради семейното щастие и бъдещето на един народ.

За голямо съжаление, вместо поквара та и разврата да намаляват, те от ден на ден се увеличват и вземат застрашителни размери. Нещо обикновено е в късни часове през нощта да се движат пияни мъже и жени из улиците на квартала [1] и из затънтените места, където се вършат срамни деяния, вследствие на което се насаждат и най-опасните за човечеството болести, а в същото време много жени и деца заспиват гладни, защото всичко онова, което техният баща през деня е припечелил, през нощта изяжда и изпива, без да се върне в своя дом, където го чакат гладните жена и деца.

И вместо да се вземат строги мерки за изкореняването на това голямо зло, за съжаление семейните бирарии в квартала, които не са нищо друго, а типични кабарета [2] и гнезда на разврат – от едно се увеличиха на три и именно за увеличението на разврата са единствено най-голямата причина тези кабарета, където се вършат срамни работи и то често от деца под 14 годишна възраст, описанието на които е невъзможно, а най-жалкото е, че същите нощни заведения се посещават от много видни лица из центъра на града [3], които със своето държание дават лош пример на простото циганско население, като не липсват дори и побоища между въпросните видни лица.

Ако се ограничат пиянството и разврата между циганското население, наполовина поне ще се подобри неговото материално положение, за което от страна на властта не са необходими никакви средства, а само един по-строг контрол и вземане мерки за отстраняване особенно причините за увеличаване на разврата.

Ето защо, най-учтиво Ви молим, Господин Директоре, да наредите чрез подведомствените ви полицейски органи следното:

1. Да се вземат най-строги мерки срещу всички цигани и циганки, които скитат нощно време без всякаква работа из квартала, особено спрямо ония, които са в пияно състояние.

2. Да направите необходимото от Ваша страна за закриване на циганските кабарета – гнезда на разврата, които деморализират циганското население и действуват много зле върху възпитанието особено на младежта и децата от квартала.

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Уверени, че ще обърнете сериозно внимание на тези наши искания и ще направите всичко зависящо от Ваша страна, с което ще извършите и един акт на внимание към циганското население, което винаги е бивало и си остава от полза за държавата, ний оставаме към Вас с отлични почитания.

Секретар: … [Подпис] (Рашид Мехмедов), Председател: … [Подпис] (Шакир Пашов). [Печат].

∵

Sofia Common Muslim Cultural Educational Mutual Aid Organisation "Istikbal". 18 July 1939. Sofia.
To Mr. Director of Police, Here [Sofia].
[Stamp]: Directorate General of Public Health. 23 July 1939. Case No. 31.

Mr. Director,

Seeing that instead of moving forward, the Gypsy population goes to moral and material decline day by day, which is why, in order to raise it on cultural, educational, moral and religious aspect, we have founded a society for all Gypsies in the capital, tasked with working with the latter for their material and spiritual uplifting so that they can bring their lives closer to that of the rest of the capital's population, because the condition they are in now cannot and should no longer be tolerated.

However, in order to achieve our goal, full support is needed from all responsible factors in the country within the framework and within the existing laws, because without such support, the realisation of our task is impossible, especially in preserving the morality among the Gypsies.

While it takes years of hard work to raise them culturally and educationally by giving lectures and talks, as well as opening evening courses for the adults, our task to preserve the moral among the Gypsies is quite difficult and without the support of the authorities it would be absurd.

In the first place, however, care must be taken so that their morality is preserved – the most valuable foundation on which family happiness and the future of a nation are based.

For great disappointment, instead of the corruption and the immorality to decrease, they are increasing day by day, and they take alarming dimensions. It is something common in the late hours of the night, when drunken men and women to walk around through the streets of the neighbourhood [1] and out of the shabby places, where acts of shame are being committed, as a result of which the most dangerous diseases for humanity are planted, and at the same time many women and children fall asleep hungry, because all that their father has earned during the day goes in his food and drink in the night, without him returning to his home where his hungry wife and children are waiting for him.

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And instead of taking rigorous measures to eradicate this great evil, unfortunately, the family beer houses in the neighbourhood, which are nothing more than typical cabarets [2] and nests of immorality – have increased from one to three, and namely, for the increase of the immorality the sole and greatest reason are these cabarets, where shameful things are being done, and often by children under the age of 14, the description of which is impossible, while the saddest thing is that these night houses are visited by many prominent people from the centre of the city [3] who, with their behaviour, set a bad example for the ordinary Gypsy population, while fights are not uncommon between these eminent persons.

If the drunkenness and the immorality among the Gypsy population are limited, their material situation will improve at least by half, for which no resources would be needed by the authorities, but only tighter control and the taking of measures to especially eliminate the reasons for the increase of the immorality.

That is why, we kindly ask you, Mr. Director, to order, through your subordinate police authorities, the following:

1. Take the most stringent measures against all Gypsy men and Gypsy women who roam in the night without any reason in the neighbourhood, especially those who are in an intoxicated state.

2. Do what you need to do to close down the Gypsy cabarets – the nests of immorality that demoralise the Gypsy population and act very poorly for the upbringing, especially of the youth and of the children in the neighbourhood.

We are convinced that you will pay serious attention to these demands of ours and that you will do everything in your power, with which you will also offer an act of attention to the Gypsy population, which has always been and continues to be of benefit to the state, we remain with great respect.

Secretary: … [Signature] (Rashid Mehmedov), Chair: … [Signature] (Shakir Pashov). [Stamp].

Notes

1. It refers here to the Gypsy mahalas, *Konyovitsa* and *Tatarli*. They were located at the then outskirts of the city (around today's bullevard Aleksandar Stamboliyski and bulevard Konstantin Velichkov).
2. The most famous of these cabarets was *Pri Keva* (At Keva) where the popular singer of Gypsy songs Keva (originally from Vidin) used to sing. She had several phonograph records in the 1930s for the Record Company *Balkan*, which included the song *Telal Avel* (*She Comes from Below*), performed in the Romani language. This was the first record of such kind in Bulgaria.
3. The cabaret *Pri Keva* was especially popular and frequently visited by the bohemians in Sofia (Тенев, 1997, pp. 225-27). According to widespread urban rumors at the time, a frequent visitor to the cabaret was also Prince Cyril, brother of the Bulgarian King Boris III and, after his death, a regent of the Crown Prince Simeon II, sentenced to death by the People's Court in 1945.

Source: DA Sofia, f. 1 K, op. 4, a.e. 683, l. 93.
Prepared for publication by Elena Marushiakova and Vesselin Popov.
Translated by Aleksandar Marinov.

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2.3.9 *The Statute of the Organisation 'Ekipe'*

Устав
на Единната общо-културна просветна организация
на циганските малцинства в България "Екипе"

Глава I. Същност, цел, задачи и устройство.

Чл. 1. Единната циганска организация в България включва в себе си всички цигани, които принадлежат към всемирното циганско движение и са членове на някои от местните дружества на Единната циганска организация в страната, към която плащат членски внос.

Чл. 2. Единната циганска организация в България (ЕЦО) е легитимният представител на циганското движение в страната и пред Всемирната циганска организация. В нея членуват всички цигани навършили 18-годишна възраст индивидуално, без разлика на пол и социално положение. В нея членуват също така всички цигани от мохамеданска и православна християнска религия, без да се прави каквато и да е разлика.

Чл. 3. Единната циганска организация в България има следните свои задачи: а) Да се бори срещу фашизма и антициганизма и расовите предразсъдъци; б) Да издигне циганското народностно чувство и съзнание у българските цигани; в) Въвеждане на циганския език сред циганските народни маси, като говорим и писмен език; г) Запознаване българското циганско малцинство с циганската култура; д) Запознаване българското циганство с неговата духовна, социална и стопанска култура; е) Издигане икономически циганските слоеве в България; ж) Физическо закаляване на циганската младеж в България; з) Продуктивизиране на циганските маси; и) Закрепване и издигане на циганските институти в България; к) Осветляване българското обществено мнение по нуждите на циганското население; л) Да създаде стремеж у циганите за изграждане на едно национално огнище в своя земя.

Чл. 4. Органите на Единната циганска организация в България се определят от конференцията на ЕЦО и те са следните: а) Местни единни цигански дружества; б) Конференция на Единните цигански дружества в България; в) Висш организационен съвет (ВОС); г) Централен комитет (ЦК); д) Главна контролна комисия; е) Главно комисарство на цигански фонд за земеделска подготовка; ж) Висш организационен съд.

Чл. 5. Конференцията и настоящият устав определят функциите на всеки един от горните органи на ЕЦО и техните отношения помежду им. Конференцията е властна да създаде нови органи със специални задачи, ако това се изисква в даден момент.

Конференцията може да слее някои от функциите на тези органи в едно и да делегира някои от тях върху Централния комитет на ЕЦО.

Чл. 6. Централните органи на ЕЦО се избират от Конференцията съгласно глави … на настоящия устав.

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Чл. 7. ЕЦО се представлява пред властите, учрежденията и частни лица от избрания от Конференцията Централен комитет, респективно от председателя на същия или негов заместник заедно със секретаря или сам.

Чл. 8. В рамките на Единната циганска организация, отделните цигански дружества имат право да се организират отделно със свои управителни тела, със свои устави, непротиворечащи на устава на ЕЦО. Тези дружества могат да водят самостоятелен организационен живот.

Глава II. Местни единни цигански организации.

Чл. 9. Местни единни цигански дружества се образуват от най-малко 15 членове на ЕЦО, живущи в едно и също селище, навършили 18 години, които се подчиняват на настоящия устав и плащат редовно членския си внос.

Чл. 10. Всеки циганин, които отговаря на Чл. 9 има право да бъде член на дадено местно д[ружест]во. За целта той подава съответна декларация и ако настоятелството на местното д-во отхвърли молбата му, той има право да отнесе въпроса до първото общо събрание на местното д[ружест]во.

Чл. 11. Във всеки табор може да има само едно местно циганско д[ружест]во. Всяко местно циганско д[ружест]во има свой устав, непротиворечащ на настоящия. Уставът на местното циганско д[ружест]во се утвърждава от Централния комитет. [...]. Нови д[ружест]ва се приемат от ЦК и тяхното приемане се утвърждава от конференцията.

Чл. 12. Всяко местно единно д[ружест]во е автономно в границите на настоящия устав. То е длъжно да изпълнява решенията на върховните цигански институти и да се подчинява на тяхните нареждания. [...]

Чл. 13. Общите събрания са редовни и извънредни. Редовните общи събрания се свикват всеки 6 месеца за изслушване отчета на настоятелството и другите органи на дружеството. Извънредното общо събрание се свиква от настоятелството, когато то намери, че това е нужно, а така също и когато бъде поискано с писмена молба от една пета от членовете на д[ружест]вото, респективно една десета от членовете на местното дружество в София или по искане на Централния комитет на ЕЦО за разглеждане на спешни въпроси.

Чл. 14. Настоятелството на местното единно циганско дружество е върховния изпълнителен орган на същото. [...] Настоятелствата на местните цигански д[ружест]ва се утвърждават от Централния комитет. [...]

Чл. 17. Всяко местно д[ружест]во, респ. неговото настоятелство, всяка година представя на Централния к[омитет] на ЕЦО писмен отчет за дейността си през изтеклата организационна година.

Чл. 18. Членовете на ЦК, както и членовете на останалите централни институти на ЕЦО имат право да присъстват със съвещателен глас на заседанията на настоятелството на местното д[ружест]во.

Глава III. Права и задължения на членовете.

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Чл. 19. Всеки член на организацията има активно и пасивно избирателно право за всички изборни институти – местни и централни, стига да отговаря на следните условия: да е член на някое местно единно циганско д[ружест]во, да е платил членския си внос към същото и за избираемия да има едногодишно старшинство в организацията.

Чл. 20. Всеки член на организацията е длъжен да бъде записан в местното единно циганско д-во да се съобразява с настоящия устав, както и с устава на местното д-во, да плаща членския си внос, да спазва организационната дисциплина и да изпълнява нарежданията и решенията на местните и централни органи на ЕЦО в България.

Чл. 21. Конференцията на ЕЦО в България е върховен орган на същата. Решенията й са задължителни за всички местни единни цигански д[ружест]ва, за всеки член на организацията. Конференциите биват редовни и извънредни.

Чл. 22. Редовната конференция на организацията се свиква всеки 3 години и по възможност след всеки Всемирен цигански конгрес. [...]

Чл. 23. Редовните конференции на организацията изслушват, разискват и се произнасят по отчетите на всички избрани от предидущата конференция органи на ЕЦО. Тези органи са отговорни пред конференцията. Конференцията определя бъдещата дейност на организацията, приема бюджета на същата и избира също така и пет делегати за Всемирния цигански конгрес. Конференцията е властна да внесе изменения в настоящия устав, както и в правилника за произвеждане на изборите. [...]

Чл. 26. Всяко местно единно циганско дружество има право най-малко на двама делегати, независимо от броя на легитимираните при него членове. Местни дружества с повече от 100 редовни членове имат право по на един допълнителен делегат на всеки последующи сто членове или част от 100 редовни членове. Редовните членове на едно местно дружество се определят от броя на редовно отчетените от местните дружества към ЦК членове.

Чл. 27. В конференцията, освен редовно избраните делегати на местните дружества участват с права на редовни делегати: председателите на Централния комитет, всички останали членове на останалите институти участват в конференцията със съвещателен глас. При вземане становища по отчетите на Централните институти отговорните по тях лица нямат право на глас. [...]

Чл. 30. Заседанията на конференцията са публични, освен ако по даден въпрос самата конференция реши разискванията да стават при закрити врата. Заседанията се водят по правилник, изработен от самата конференция.

Глава V. Висш организационен съвет.

Чл. 31. Висшият организационен съвет се избира от конференцията и се състои от 35 души. Към него с равни права се предават по двама представители на Централния Комитет. Висшият организационен съвет се избира за три години. Членовете на ВОС могат да бъдат и с различни табори (селища). [...]

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Глава VI. Централен комитет.

Чл. 34. Централният комитет се избира от Конференцията или при особени случаи от Висшия организационен съвет. Той се състои от председателя, двама подпредседатели, двама секретари и касиери, осем съветници, всички живущи в един и същ град. Председателят на Централния комитет се посочва в самата конференция, а останалите длъжности се разпределят в първото заседание на Централния комитет. Председателят на ЦК е председател на единната циганска организация в България. [...]

Глава VII. Главна контролна комисия. [...]

Глава VIII. Висш организационен съд. [...]

Глава IX. Бюджет, счетоводство и контрол. [...]

Глава X. Дисциплинарни разпореждания. [...]

Глава XI. Печатен орган на организацията.

Чл. 47. Печатният орган на Единната циганска организация в България носи названието "Романо еси". Той се списва от редакционна колегия под ръководство на Централния комитет.

Чл. 48. Печатният орган на организацията е преди всичко информационен. Той дава сведения за обществено политически теми, както и за живота на организациите в България. [Вестникът трябва] да възпитава всички членове в чрез статии и дописки в отечественофронтовски дух, и да проповядва изграждането на социализма в България.

Чл. 49. Формата на вестника, цената и начина на издаването му се определят от Централния Комитет. [...] Органът се издържа от собствени приходи и от субсидии, предвидени в бюджета. [...]

Глава XII. Изборни институти и провеждане на избори. [...]

Глава XIII. Общи разпореждания на настоящия устав.

Чл. 58. [...] Печатът на Единната циганска организация в България е кръгъл със следния текст: "Единна циганска организация в България – Централен комитет-София", който текст се написва на български и цигански езици. Печатът на местните единни д[ружест]ва са подобни на ЦК.

Чл. 59. Празникът на организацията е 7 май. Знамето на организацията е червено с две бели полета в средата с триъгълник.

Чл. 60. Изменения в настоящия устав са допустими да се правят само от Конференцията на организацията, в чийто дневен ред изрично е предвидено това.

Чл. 61. Настоящият устав е приет от II редовна конференция на ЕЦО в България на ... в гр. София.

На II редовна конференция на ЕЦО в България на ... в гр. София, която прие и утвърди настоящият устав на организацията, участвуваха следните делегати, представителите на съответните местни единни цигански организации.

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The Statute of the United Common-Cultural Educational Organisation of the Gypsy Minorities in Bulgaria 'Ekipe' [Unity]

Chapter I. Nature, Aims, Tasks and Structure.

Art. 1. The United Gypsy Organisation in Bulgaria includes in itself all Gypsies who belong to the world Gypsy movement and are members of some of the local associations of the United Gypsy Organisation in the country to which they pay membership fee.

Art. 2. The United Gypsy Organisation in Bulgaria (UGO) is the legitimate representative of the Gypsy movement in the country and to the World Gypsy Organisation. Eligible members could be any Gypsy at the age of 18 and above, regardless of sex and social status. Members could be also all Gypsies with Mohammedan and Christian Orthodox religions without any differentiation being made.

Art. 3. The United Gypsy Organisation in Bulgaria has the following tasks: a) To fight against fascism, the anti-Tsiganism and racial prejudices; b) To raise the Gypsy nationality feeling and consciousness among the Bulgarian Gypsies; c) To introduce the Gypsy language among the Gypsy masses as oral and written language; d) To introduce the Bulgarian Gypsy minority to the Gypsy culture; e) To introduce to the Bulgarian Gypsy their spiritual, social and economic culture; f) To uplift economically the all Gypsy stratums in Bulgaria; g) To make physically fit the Gypsy youth in Bulgaria; h) To make the Gypsy masses productive; i) To consolidate and set up Gypsy institutes in Bulgaria; j) To enlighten the general Bulgarian opinion regarding the needs of the Gypsy population; k) To create a longing feeling among the Gypsies for the creation of a national hearth in their own land.

Art. 4. The bodies of the United Gypsy Organisation in Bulgaria are determined by the Conference of the UGO and they are the following: a) Local united Gypsy societies; b) Conference of the United Gypsy societies in Bulgaria; c) Supreme Organisational Council (SOC); d) Central Committee (CC); e) Main Control Commission; f) Main Commission of the Gypsy Fund for the Agricultural Preparation; g) Supreme Organisational Court.

Art. 5. The Conference as well as the current Statute determine the functions of each of the above-mentioned bodies of the UGO and their mutual relationships. The Conference has the power to create new bodies with specific tasks if that would be needed at a certain time.

The Conference could merge in one of the functions of these bodies and delegate some of their tasks to the Central Committee of the UGO.

Art. 6. The central bodies of the UGO are elected by the Conference in accordance with Chapters … [1] of the current Statute.

Art. 7. The UGO is being represented to the authorities, the state-institutions and private bodies by the Central Committee, which is selected by the Conference, respectively by the President of the Central Committee or his representative, together with the Secretary or by himself.

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Art. 8. Within the United Gypsy Organisation, the separate Gypsy societies have the right to organise separately with their own governing bodies and statutes that do not contradict to the Statute of the UGO. These societies can have independent organisational lives.

Chapter II. Local United Gypsy Organisations.

Art. 9. Local united Gypsy societies can be formed by at least 15 members of the UGO who live in the same place, are over 18 years of age, respect the current Statute and pay regularly their membership fees.

Art. 10. Each Gypsy, who fits into the description of Art. 9, has the right to be a member of a local society. For that purpose, he has to submit a relevant declaration and if the management of the local society rejects his request, he has the right to refer the matter to the first general meeting of the local society.

Art. 11. There could be only one local Gypsy society for each *tabor* [2]. Each local Gypsy society has their own statute which does not contradict to the current one. The statute of the local Gypsy society is confirmed by the Central Committee. […] New societies are accepted by the Central Committee and their acceptance is confirmed by the Conference.

Art. 12. Each local united society is autonomous within the framework of the current Statute. The local united society is obliged to obey the decisions of the supreme Gypsy institutions and their ordinances. […]

Art. 13. The General Meetings are regular and special. The regular General Meetings are convened every 6 months for hearing the report of the Board and the rest of the bodies of the society. The special General Meetings are convened by the Board when they find it as necessary and also when this is requested in writing by 1/5th of the members of the society; respectively, by 1/10th of the members of the local society in Sofia or by request of the Central Committee of the UGO in order to review emergency matters.

Art. 14. The Board of the local united Gypsy society is the Supreme Executive Body of the same. […] The Boards of the local Gypsy societies are confirmed by the Central Committee. […]

Art. 17. Each local society, respectively its Board, presents to the Central Committee of the UGO annually a written report for its activities for the past organisational year.

Art. 18. The members of the CC as well as the members of the other central institutions of the UGO have the right to be present and have the right to vote in the meetings of the Board of the local society.

Chapter III. Rights and Obligations of the Members.

Art. 19. Each member of the organisation has an active and passive voting right for each of the electoral institutions – local and central, as long as they satisfy the following conditions: to be a member of a local united Gypsy society, to have paid their membership fee and for the elected – to have a seniority [3] in the organisation for a year.

Art. 20. Each member of the organisation is obliged to be enrolled in the local united Gypsy society, to respect the current Statute, as well as the statute of the local society, to pay his/her membership fee, to respect the rules of the organisation and to carry out the orders and the decisions of the local and central bodies of the UGO in Bulgaria.

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Art. 21. The Conference of the UGO in Bulgaria is the supreme body of the organisation. Its decisions are compulsory for all local united Gypsy societies and for each member of the organisation. The conferences are regular and special.

Art. 22. The regular Conference of the organisation is convened every 3 years and if possible after each World Gypsy Congress. […]

Art. 23. The regular Conferences of the organisation listen to, discuss and give opinion about the reports of all previously elected bodies in the previous Conference of the UGO. These bodies are answerable to the Conference. The Conference determines the future activities of the organisation, approves its budget, and also elects five delegates for the World Gypsy Congress. The Conference has the power to make changes to the current Statute, as well as the Regulations for conducting the elections. […]

Art. 26. Each local united Gypsy society has the right to at least two delegates, regardless of the number of its legitimate members. Local societies with more than 100 regular members have the right to an additional delegate for every additional hundred members or part of 100 regular members. The regular members of a local society are determined by the number of those who have been regularly reported by the local societies to the Central Committee.

Art. 27. In the Conference, apart from the regularly elected delegates of the local society, with rights of regular delegates are the presidents of the Central Committee; all other members of the rest of the institutions take part in the Conference with a deliberate vote. When a point of view is taken into consideration regarding the reports of the Central institutions, the persons in charge do not have the right to vote. […]

Art. 30. The meetings of the Conference are open to the public, unless the Conference itself decides that discussions should take place behind closed doors. The meetings take place according to the regulations determined by the Conference itself.

Chapter V [4]. Supreme Organisational Council

Art. 31. The Supreme Organisational Council is elected by the Conference and is composed of 35 people. In it, with equal rights, are delegated two representatives from the Central Committee. The Supreme Organisational Council is elected for three years. The members of the SOC could also have different *tabors* (settlements). […]

Chapter VI. Central Committee

Art. 34. The Central Committee is elected by the Conference or in special cases by the Supreme Organisational Council. It is composed by a President, two vice-presidents, two secretaries and treasurers, eight councillors, all residing in the same town. The President of the Central Committee is indicated by the Conference itself while the rest of the duties are determined in the first meeting of the Central Committee. The President of the CC is a President of the United Gypsy Organisation in Bulgaria. […]

Chapter VII. Main Control Commission. […]

Chapter VIII. Supreme Organisational Court. […]

Chapter IX. Budget, Accounting and Control. […]

Chapter X. Disciplinary Orders […]

Chapter XI. Publication of the Organisation.

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Art. 47. The Publication of the United Gypsy Organisation in Bulgaria is newspaper, called *Romano esi* (Roma Voice). It is edited by an Editorial Board under the guidance of the Central Committee.

Art. 48. The organisation's Publication is primarily informative. It gives information on public and political issues as well as on the affairs of organisations in Bulgaria. The newspaper must educate all members via articles and reports in the spirit of the Fatherland Front [5] and advocate for the building of socialism in Bulgaria.

Art. 49. The format of the newspaper, the price and the manner of its publication are determined by the Central Committee. […] The newspaper is supported by its own revenues and by subsidies envisaged in the budget. […]

Chapter XII. Electoral Institutions and Holding of Elections. […]

Chapter XIII. General Orders of the Current Statute.

Art. 58. […] The stamp of the United Gypsy Organisation in Bulgaria is circular with the following text: 'United Gypsy Organisation in Bulgaria – Central Committee-Sofia' which is written in Bulgarian and in Gypsy languages. The stamps of the local united associations are similar to the CC.

Art. 59. The holiday of the organisation is May 7. The flag of the organisation is red with two white fields and with a triangle in the middle.

Art. 60. Amendments to this Statute may be made only by the Conference of the Organisation, whose agenda expressly provides for this.

Art. 61. This Statute was adopted by the Second Regular Conference of the UGO in Bulgaria on … [6] in Sofia.

On the Second Regular Conference of the UGO in Bulgaria on … in Sofia, which adopted and approved this Statute of the organisation, the following delegates took part, representatives of the respective local united Gypsy organisations [7].

Notes

1. An omission in the text, apparently it was envisaged to enter the numbering of the chapters later.
2. Here, as well as below (Art. 31), the term 'Tabor' is used in the sense of 'Settlement', which is rather strange because in Bulgaria as well as in the former USSR (with the exception of the Transcarpathian Region which was annexed to the USSR after the end of the Second World War), this term has always meant a specific Gypsy group who led a travelling way life. The mystery becomes even greater because the whole phrase is in fact a loan translation from the Russian language (in Bulgarian another preposition would be used); a satisfactory answer could not be offered here to explain it.
3. It is understood that they have already been elected to a management position in the organisation.
4. In the text, Chapter 4 is missing which is most probably a typo.
5. It is meant the overthrow of the Government on September 9, 1944, and the establishment of a Government of the Fatherland Front (a coalition dominated by the Communist Party) which radically altered the country's political course and which declared war on Germany.
6. Here and later below, the date is omitted and replaced with dots, i.e. the text of the Statute has been prepared in advance in order for it to be accepted, dated and signed in a complete (and unaltered) fashion. From the memoirs of Shakir Pashov (see below) it became clear that the statute was

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written after the 6th of March 1945 (i.e. before the end of WWII), when the constituent assembly of the new organisation was held (more precisely, the restoration of the old Organisation *Istikbal* under a new name) and was to be adopted at the National Conference of the new organisation. Such a National Conference was held only on the 2nd of May 1948, and in it, as could be seen from the manuscript of Shakir Pashov itself, this Statute has not been discussed and adopted at all; in fact, it remained illegitimate and never entered into force. This is understandable as the Bulgarian political situation in 1948 changed significantly and the Statute was no longer up-to-date or valid. 7. The signatures of the delegates are missing and it is natural because, as already stated, the Statute was never formally approved.

Source: CSA, f. 1 Б, op. 8, a.e. 596, l. 50-52.
Prepared for publication by Elena Marushiakova and Vesselin Popov.
Translated by Aleksandar Marinov.

2.3.10 *The Memoirs of Shakir Pashov* (*Part 1*)

Шакир М. Пашов

История на циганите в България и в Европа. "Рома"

[...]

Двадесет и трета глава

Просветно дело

Учениците-цигани пред освобождението и наскоро след него, та дори до 1905 година, учеха в София в турското училище, на което *моалим* /директор/ беше Осман Ефенди. Над стотина деца-циганчета са били ученици в това училище, от които пет са били изпратени да следват в Цариградския университет от турската вероизповедна община, като степендиянти. Те се казваха: Кочо Рамаданов, Малик Омеров, Садик Сефидов и Ибраим Коков.

През 1905 година, поради изселването на турското население от София и България, турските ученици намаляха и останаха главно децата на нашите сънародници и затова, членовете на новото турско настоятелство, озлобени закриха училището и нашите деца през 1906 година отидоха масово да учат в българските училища. [...]

През 1906 година бяха създадени цигански гимнастически дружества, които изпълняваха дневни и вечерни игри и организираха излети към Княжево и Враждебна.

Съобразно нашето обществено устройство и ние, както европейските малцинствени цигански групи, имахме един старейшина, който наричахме Мухтар (Черибашия), който представляваше циганското малцинство пред официалните власти. Черибашията се избираше доброволно и той следеше за строгото спазване на морала и реда между населението.

През 1919 година, след като се завърнаха от войната, циганите се събраха на събрание, в което ние вече имахме млади интелигентни хора, в едно бурно заседание смъкна споменатите старейшини (черибашии), като се създадоха по нов

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образец пет до седем-членни комитети, които представляваха циганско малцинство пред всички органи на властта и се грижеха за превъзпитанието на малцинството. Комитетите се състояха от председател, секретар и членове. Освен комитетите, съществуваха от много стари времена и дружества за подпомагане на социално слабите. Те се наричаха "лонжи". Последните продължиха своята работа. Те помагаха на крайно нуждаещи се приживе и при случай на смърт. Всяка "лонжа" наброяваше от 30 до 50 члена. Тя устройваше и излети до Княжево (Бале Ефендия, Бали Баба), и други места, където изнасяха музикални увеселения с народни хора и танци през целия ден. Ръководствата на "лонжите" се наричаха *Уста Баши* и *Егит Баши*.

През 1920 година циганската младеж замести тези "лонжи" с дружества, които се ръководеха също по нов модерен начин и образец. Ръководството им се състоеше от председател, подпредседател, секретар и членове на управителния съвет, а уставите им бяха утвърдени от Министерството на вътрешните работи. Тези комитети имаха същата задача, както и "лонжите" – да раздават помощи и да бдят за опазване на добрия морал. [...]

Двадесет и шеста глава
Борби за граждански и политически права

На едно събрание през 1921 година прогресивната младеж реши да се състави комитет, който да си постави за задача за даване на политически и граждански права на циганското малцинство. Въпреки постановленията на конституцията, Каравелов, недоволен от циганското малцинство заради това, че вместо да даде нему подкрепата си, то бе я дала на Радославов, отне избирателните права на циганите. Този явно противоконституционен акт на Каравелов бе посрещнат с болка от циганското малцинство, което смяташе, че Каравелов няма никакви основания да прави това.

Сега, след като много от младежите бяха взели участие във войната 1915-1918 година и след като мнозина от тях бяха оставили костите си по четиритех краища на Балканския полуостров, циганското малцинство смяташе, че има всички основания да претендира за равенство пред законите в страната. Министър-председател тогава бе Ал[ександър] Стамболийски.

Комитетът бе избран и в него влизаха: [Х]юсеин Билалов, Шакир Пашев, Рашид Мехмедов. Реджеб Юсеинов, Муто Билалов, Юсуф Мехмедов, Билал Османов.

Скоро след това така избраният комитет се яви пред министър-председателя Ал[ександър] Стамболийски, който внимателно изслуша исканията на комитета и след това обеща да бъдат дадени тези права. И той устоя на обещанието си. В първото заседание на следващото Народно събрание той внесе предложение за възстановяване избирателните права на циганите и подкрепен от комунистическите народни представители, законът бе приет.

През 1925 година циганското малцинство избра училищно настоятелство в състав: председател Рашид Мехмедов, подпредседател Реджеб Юсеинов и секретар

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Шакир Пашев, а членове: Мустафа Енкеков, Малик Омеров. Училищното настоятелство в горния състав бе утвърдено от Столичната община, но турската вероизповедна община следваше по закона да гарантира за училищното настоятелство, което тя отказа да стори. Циганите-мохамедани по това време водили борба да имат право на избор и то във вакъфското настоятелство. Но понеже устава на мюсулманската община изискваше да има 40 семейства, за да имат право циганите на избор, а понеже циганите не са имали толкова семейства, мюсулманската община се противопостави и в този случай. Това действие на мюсулманската община силно възбуди циганското малцинство. Тогава всички цигани се обединяват като един и успяват в скоро време да извадят удостоверения на повече от 40 семейства, че са мохамедани от Столичната община, и че са турци. Мюсулманската община, обаче, пак е упорствувала и не искала да признае представените удостоверения за достоверни. Борбата стига до Върховния административен съд, но и тук циганското малцинство изгубило, защото делото било решено в полза на мюсулманската вероизповедна община. И циганите си остават само с необорените документи, че са турци.

Преди едни избори Никола Мушанов назначи тричленна комисия в следния състав: Юсеин Папукчиев, председател; Хюсеин Билалов – секретар и Малик Еминов – член. След изборите, обаче, не се дава възможност на тази тричленна комисия да си заеме местата, понеже Шумков, частният секретар на Никола Мушанов, бил издал заповед поменатата тричленна комисия да не приема вакъвското настоятелство от старите й членове, като и сега малкото турци, които бяха останали, успеха да се наложат на болшинството.

Но и сега циганското малцинство не се е отчаяло, а се отдава на организационен живот и на 7 май 1929 година се основава първата организация на циганското малцинство в София, която обединява всички бивши дружества (лонжи) в организацията "Истикбал" (Бъдеще), която наброява значителната за онова време цифра 1 500 члена, с председател Юсуф Мехмедов и секретар Шакир Пашев, а член – Юсеин Билалов.

Същата година се основава и дружество "Взаимопомощ" с председател Рашид Мехмедов, в която членуваха част от дружествата на бившите лонжи. По този начин се създават в циганското малцинство две големи организации – "Истикбал" и "Взаимопомощ".

Освен тези две големи организации, циганите имаха и други професионални дружества на ковачи, калайджии, търговци, които членуваха в "Истикбал".

Съществуваха и младежки културно-просветни дружества с много прогресивни тенденции: "Наангле" (Напред) и спортното дружество "Египет".

През 1930 година прогресивната младеж обедини в едно двете големи организации на циганското малцинство под едно общо име "Истикбал" (Бъдеще), с председател Шакир Пашев, двама подпредседатели, а именно: Реджеб Юсеинов и Рашид Мехмедов и секретари: Ахмед Сотиров и Рамчо Шакиров, и членове: Ю[сеин] Билалов, Емин Еминов, Райчо Кочев и др.

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През 1931 година, по предложение на председателя на организацията Шакир Пашев, бе взето решение да се издава цигански вестник в България, който нарекоха "Тербие" (Възпитание). Негов пръв редактор бе Шакир Пашев. Вестникът бе разпространен из цялата страна. За тази цел бяха организирани много хора във Враца, Лом, Оряхово, Плевен, Пловдив, Кюстендил, Стара Загора, Русе, Шумен, Бургас, Перник, Сливен и в много села.

Задачата, както на общата организация "Истикбал", така и на вестника "Тербие" бяха презъзпитаването и културно-просветното издигане на циганското население в България.

На 7 май 1932 година се състоя първата циганска конференция в гара Мездра. Тази конференция се състоя, благодарение инициативата на циганската организация във Враца. Организатори на тази конференция бяха сънародниците ни Никола Палашев и Сандо Ибров. Присъствуваха делегати от цялата врачанска област, включително и от селата. Тук бяха представени Михайловград, Оряхово и селата около него, Бяла-Слатина, Плевен, Лом, Червен бряг и София. Софийската делегация се водеше от председателя на организацията "Истикбал" в София – Шакир Пашев и в нея влизаха още Емин Еминов, Найдо Яшаров и Али Яшаров. Конференцията се състоя до калето край Мездра и се взе решение всички цигани в България да се ръководят от общата организация "Истикбал". Реши се също органът на организацията "Истикбал" – вестник "Тербие", да проникне като просветителен лъч до последната колиба на цялото циганско малцинство в България.

На 7 май 1934 година се поднесе венеца на гроба на починалия заслужил деятел на организацията – Реджеб Юсеинов, който приживе бе щедро надарил училището и циганските деца. Той беше дълго време подпредседател на циганската организация. Роден е на 10 май 1879 година и почина на 30 декември 1933 година. Венецът бе положен и от името на ръководството на организацията й Шакир Пашев с кратко слово и секретаря Рамчо Шакиров и този ден – 7 май, стана традиция циганското малцинство да отива на поклонение на гроба на заслужилия цигански деятел Реджеб Юсеинов.

Културно-просветната организация "Истикбал" стана законен представител на циганското малцинство в цяла България. Поменатата организация водеше регистър за рожденията и смъртните случаи само за София. Организацията притежаваше собствена погребална кола. "Истикбал" издаваше служебни бележки за нашите сънародници, без които Софийската община не им издаваше нужните удостоверения. Организацията представляваше списък пред Софийската община за циганските бедни семейства и според този списък им се даваше съответната материална помощ.

С една дума организацията "Истикбал" играеше роля на официален институт, представляващ единствен циганското малцинство пред законните власти в София.

В[естник] "Тербие" пък играеше ролята на възпитател всред циганското малцинство. Неговата задача бе да издига културно-просветното равнище на циганите, да ратува за тяхното политико-обществено възпитание и да насочва циганското

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малцинство към прогресивните политически идеи, единствени които ратуваха за равенство на всички нации в държавата. Тази своя задача той изпълняваше с ревност и ентусиазъм и ръководството на вестника истински се радваше, когато разбереше, че вестникът действително подпомага издигането във всяко отношение на циганите. Хюсеин А. Билалов бе един от най-близките сътрудници на вестника и влизаше в редакционната колегия. Той бе истински ентусиазиран, обичаше вестника и с дейността си бе дясната ръка на неговия редактор Шакир Пашев. Те двамата, с дружни усилия, не жалейки време, сили и средства влагаха всичкото си умение и старание да подобрят все повече страниците на вестника, за да го направят жив, сочен и интересен за читателите му. Те знаеха, че един вестник може да стане настолен за читателите си, когато ратува за повишаване на техния материален бит и когато този вестник отразява мислите, желанията, стремежите и идеалите на своите читатели. И в това отношение те правеха всичко, за да задоволят всестранните изисквания на читателите си. Те също така бяха горди, защото в. "Тербие" бе първият вестник в Европа, който се издаваше, за да ратува за културно-просветното издигане на циганското малцинство. До създаването на в[естник] "Тербие", а и дълго след това, никъде в Европа не се издаваше вестник на циганските малцинства. Това бе една голяма придобивка за българските цигани и справедлива гордост на неговите инициатори, а особено за редакционното ръководство.

В своите колони вестникът отразяваше ежедневните грижи на циганското малцинство, той се занимаваше с всестранната и плодотворна работа на организацията "Истикбал", изнасяше живота на разните други цигански организации – тези на младежите, на спортните им клубове, на занаятчийските организации и предаваше всяко събитие, което се случваше в живота на циганското малцинство. Той поощряваше младите и ентусиазирани цигани да подобрят все повече своето културно-просветно издигане, ратуваше всеотдайно за всестранното превъзпитаване на циганското малцинство, зовеше го към прогресивна политико-обществена дейност, бореше се с предразсъдъците, вкостенелите и умиращи традиции и в това отношение той имаше неоспорни успехи. Той стоеше, например, начело в борбата за премахване на шалварите, като в това отношение подпомагаше решително борбата на самата организация "Истикбал". И когато виждаше плодовете на своята дейност, редакционната колегия се радваше, защото в нейните среди имаше разбирането, че без културно просветно издигане на циганското малцинство, без премахване на вредните закостенели предразсъдъци, суеверия и нрави, един народ не може да върви напред. Редакционната колегия схващаше, че циганското малцинство ще трябва преди всичко да се отърси от всички вредни предразсъдъци, да тръгне по един нов път на превъзпитание, да усвои новите прогресивни политико-обществени идеи – с една дума да тръгне в крак с всички културни народи.

В[естник] "Тербие" се издаваше на български език. [...] Вестник "Тербие" наистина повдигаше националното патриотично чувство на циганското малцинство, но се бореше решително и убедително против неговото шовинизиране. Вестникът

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ратуваше за един просветен патриотизъм, но се противопоставяше на непросветения фанатизъм и шовинизъм.

И в това отношение в. "Тербие" бе образец на един действително прогресивно демократичен орган, задачата на която бе да сее любов между хората, а не разединение. Той бе срещу братските унизителни войни – за мир и разбирателство между всички народи в света. Главен стимул на в[естник] "Тербие" бе любовта между хората, разбирателството между народите. Той бе решителен и непоколебим враг на омразата между хората и неразбирателството между народите. С тези основни лозунги, които бяха легнали в неговата програма, вестникът се посрещаше с радост от всички, и особено от циганското малцинство.

И затова неговият успех бе толкова голям.

Двадесет и седма глава
Нрави и обичаи, и борбата срещу вредните такива

До 1920 година циганите имаха обичаи във връзка с брака, които бяха явно вредни, често крайно обидни за момата и много вредни за създаването на истински щастливи цигански семейства. Това бе обичаят "Баба-ак", по силата на който момчето-жених и неговите родители трябваше да заплатят скъпо на бащата на булката, за да имат съгласието на момините родители за сключване на брака. Този вреден и крайно обиден обичай трябваше на всяка цена да бъде премахнат, защото той създаваше поводи за сключване на брак не по любов и взаимно влечение, а бракове, в които младият кандидат-жених при наддаване можеше да отклони момата от онзи, към когото тя чувствуваше влечение. Този "Баба-ак" (бащина заслуга) безспорно бе остатък от времената, когато се е търгувало със жените и когато те са били обикновена стока – така, както е бил и добитъкът например. Този вреден и отживял времето си обичай трябваше да бъде премахнат на всяка цена и срещу него въстанаха решително организацията "Истикбал", както и в[естник] "Тербие". Тази борба не бе лека, защото предубежденията и закостеливостта, особено на по-старите, не се побеждаваха така лесно. Със системна разяснителна работа, обаче, както в общи събрания, така и при домашни срещу и лични разговори, този обичай полека-лека бе премахнат, за да открие широко дверите към създаване на истинско щастливо циганско семейство.

С премахването на този обичай разводите в циганските семейства значително намаляха, защото браковете вече се създаваха не вече "по сметка", а по влечение. А да се укрепи основната клетка на всяка нация – семейството, това значи да се укрепи и самата нация. В това отношение борбата с оскърбителния обичай "Баба-ак" на организацията "Истикбал" и в[естник] "Тербие" ще трябва да бъде оценена правилно и справедливо и да им се признае, че те са извършили, макар и много трудно и при силно противодействие, една истинска национална победа в укрепването на циганското семейство. [...] С това борбата на организацията "Истикбал" и в[естник] "Тербие" добива значението на огромна национална придобивка.

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Свадбите някога траеха по четири дни (от вторник до петък). Този обичай, обаче, все повече се изоставяше поради новата стопанска конюктура, защото нищо не оправдаваше обичаят да се протакат сватбите по четири дни, да се пръскат за небивали тържества много средства, да се преуморяват в четиридневни веселби, както младоженците, така и техните близки, за да се стигне до там, че няколко дни след като се свърши сватбата, да се търсят пари за най-насъщните семейни и домашни нужди. Безсмислените разходи по тези сватби често лишаваха младите семейства от възможността да се обзаведат, за да имат в дома си условията на един що-годен човешки живот. Тази традиция, срещу която организацията водеше разяснителна работа, постепенно, по силата на самите обстоятелства, от ден на ден все повече отпадаше, за да се стигне днес до еднодневната сватба.

През време на сватбите на младоженците се носеха от техните близки подаръци, обикновено овни, вино, ракия. Този обичай и до днес съществува, само сега е преобразен, като на младите съпрузи се купуват за подаръци вече разни домашни потреби, като котли, тенджери, кани, гардероби, бюфети и пр. – неща, които изисква новия живот.

Обичайно е било също така булката да се гримира с бял крем, като по него се налепвали разни украшения, защото самият крем се е намазвал на дебел пласт, та да може да държи украшенията залепени на него. Някои гримьорки (телези[й]ки) са поставяли върху белия крем черти от друг цвят и специални пулчета.

Бракът на циганите-мохамедани се е извършвал в къщи от имамина (свещеника), а бракът на православните цигани се е извършвал в православната църква, без обаче да бъде гримирана булката. След венчавката, обаче, обичаите са същите, както и при циганите-мохамедани.

Когато в семейството е настъпвало някакво сериозно недоразумение, спорът е бил уреждан от специалния отдел при организацията "Истикбал". Този отдел се е наричал помирителен съвет на циганското малцинство. Той е успявал почти винаги да урежда спорните въпроси и да внася мир и успокоение в семейството. От тук явствува колко всестранна и плодотворна е била дейността на организацията "Истикбал".

Когато говорим за дейността на организацията, ще трябва да отбележим огромната работа, която вършеше в нея Хюсеин А. Билалов. Той бе секретар на организацията и се грижеше за нейната всестранна дейност. [..] Той водеше регистрите на организацията и издаваше бележките, които по-горе упоменахме и без които Столичната община не издаваше на циганите никакви удостоверения.

Организацията "Истикбал" имаше всяка седмица конференция на всяка група по отделно, на които се изнасяха беседи за превъзпитанието на циганското малцинство и за неговото културно и политико-обществено издигане. В тези конференции се водеше и системната борба против шалварите, които в скоро време бяха премахнати от циганското малцинство. Освен това, организацията "Истикбал" устройваше [...]

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Друг обичай, съществуващ между циганите, е така наречения "сюнет" – обрязване. Младите момчета, като навършат известна възраст, се обрязват при специална тържествена обстановка, която почти се приближава до тази, която съществува при сватбите. Обрязването се извършва от специално подготвен за целта бръснар.

Организацията "Истикбал" водеше всестранна дейност. В своята разяснителна работа тя успя да премахне много ненужни, а често дори и вредни и скъпи обичаи.

По настояване на организацията "Истикбал" премахна се гримирането при сватбите на младоженката, премахна се също така "Баба-ака". Сватбите пък станаха по-скромни. Това са придобивки, които, ако се прецени вредата от всичките тези обичаи, ще се разберат и значението им.

Шалварите престанаха да бъдат всекидневна носия на циганките, а останаха като музейна ценност и се обличат само при специални случаи, когато трябва да се подчертае националният характер на някое тържество. [...]

Двадесет и девета глава
Цигански културен дом в София

През 1906 година Столичната община подари на циганското малцинство двеста квадратни метра място за постройка на обществено-културен дом на циганите в София.

Този подарък въодушеви много цялото циганско малцинство в София за по-бързото построяване на обществено-културния цигански дом. Запретнаха се всички в работа и кой с каквото можеше помагаше, за да бъде изграден дома. И наистина, благодарение на тези усилия културно-обществения дом бе изграден на ул. "Найчо Цанов" 175 със средствата, усилията и труда изключително само на циганите.

Впоследствие организацията "Истикбал" поддържаше в този дом 5-6 бездомни стари цигани до 1934 година. През месец юни 1934 година с писмена заповед бе разтурена организацията "Истикбал" и органа й в[естник] "Тербие" бе спрян. Същото стана и с всички политически партии в България.

На 6 март 1936 година циганският квартал бе блокиран от санитарните власти, защото бяхме наклеветени, че между циганите върлувала епидемия, което впоследствие се указа, че е било лъжа. Макар че блокираната махала бе подържана с храна от санитарните власти, това никак не се хареса на циганите и те избраха комитет, който да издействува вдигането на блокадата. В състава на комитета влизали: Шакир Пашев, Ахмед Сотиров, Хюсеин А. Билалов, Емин Еминов, Райчо Кочев, Шакир Местамов, Исмаил Шакиров (Толио), Яшар Мустафов, Найдо Яшаров, Асан Османов, Муто Билалов, Асан Османов и др., които след дълги преговори, успяха да уредят благоприятно въпросът и блокадата бе вдигната.

Комитетът също тъй уреди и обезщетяването на онези цигани, които поради блокадата, бяха загубили надниците си. Държавата им плати загубената надница.

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Тридесета глава
Първият цигански бал в София

На 3 март 1938 година, циганското малцинство устрои в Градското казино първият цигански бал в София с ориенталски цигански музикални номера и сцени от "Хиляда и една нощ". Софийското гражданство, което масово посети този пръв по рода си цигански бал, продължително акламира всички номера от прекрасната програма и се удивляваше на дарбите на циганските артисти и музиканти.

Българските вестници не останаха глухи към тази наша първа културна проява и излязоха с възторжени статии и бележки за бала, като написаха извънредно ласкави похвали, както за артистите, така и за музикантите.

Автор на художествените пиеси и сцени от "Хиляда и една нощ" бе Шакир Пашев, режисьор Емин Еминов, а балет-майстор – Хюсеин А. Билалов.

С този пръв цигански бал се тури началото на театралните прояви на циганското малцинство. Той бе нашата първа и макар много плаха стъпка към културно проявление, в което ние вече можем да изтъкнем дарованията, на които са способни циганите.

Посрещнати така ласкаво от софийската публика и преса, ние добихме кураж, за да продължим тази традиция, на която сега туряме началото и която, за наша радост и гордост, излезе твърде сполучлива.

Тридесет и първа глава
Възстановяване на Софийската циганска организация

През 1945 година, след като народните свободи бяха възстановени, циганското малцинство, по инициатива на разтурената организация "Истикбал", свика на 6 март голямо събрание на ул. "Татарли" 18. Това събрание се е смятало като учредително такова, на което единодушно се е решило да бъде възстановена организацията на малцинството, за да се продължи превъзпитанието на последното.

На това събрание единодушно е било избрано следното ръководство на организацията: Председател – Шакир Пашев, Подпредседатели – Райчо Кочев и Билал Османов, Касиер – Демир Рустемов, Секретар – Таир Селимов, Членове: Емин Еминов, Хюсеин А. Билалов, Сульо Метков, Решо Демиров, Рамчо Тотев, Демчо Благоев, Найдо Яшаров, Асан Османов (Палячо), Асан Соманов, Исмаил Шакиров, Шакир Мещанов, Али Мехмедов, Изет Салчов, Цеко Николов.

В организацията бяха приобщени около 3 000 члена. Ръководството създаде във всички квартали организации в които редовно се провеждаха събрания и конференции. Задачата на тези събрания бе да работи все по-упорито за всестранното културно-просветно и политико-обществено издигане на циганското малцинство.

След народната победа от 9 септември 1944 година, както за българския народ, така и за циганското малцинство се откриха нови светли хоризонти на пълно

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политическа, културна и национална свобода. Циганското малцинство ентусиазирано поздрави народната победа, защото тя отвори за него до тогава здраво заключените двери на свободата. С победата на 9 септември се премахна дискриминацията, която буржоазно-фашистките правителства бяха установили до тогава за циганското малцинство. Пред циганското малцинство се откри широкият друм за културно-просветната работа и то не закъсня да я използува всестранно. Из цялата страна бяха създадени самодейни художествено-музикални колективи, които навсякъде бяха посрещнати с голям интерес, всеобщо одобрение и възторг.

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Shakir M. Pashov
The History of the Gypsies in Bulgaria and in Europe. "Roma"

[…]

Chapter 23
Educational Work

The Gypsy students, before the liberation and soon after that, even up to 1905, used to study in Sofia in the Turkish school whose *Moalim* (principal) used to be Osman Efendi. More than a hundred Gypsy pupils used to study in this school, five of which were sent to study in the University of Istanbul [1] by the Turkish Religious Council, as scholarship holders. Their names were: Kocho Ramadanov, Malik Omerov, Sadik Sefidov and Ibrahim Kokov.

In 1905, due to the expulsion of the Turkish population from Sofia and Bulgaria, the number of Turkish students decreased and who have left were mainly the children of our Gypsy compatriots, and that is why the embittered members of the new Turkish Board of Trustees closed down the school and our children in 1906 went to study in great numbers in the Bulgarian schools. […]

In 1906, Gypsy gymnastic societies were created which organised day and night exercises and also used to organise outings to Knyazhevo and Vrazhdebna [2].

According to our social order and we, also like the European minority Gypsy groups, used to have a leader, which we used to call *Muhtar* (*Cheribashia*), who used to represent the Gypsy minority in front of the official authorities. The *Cheribashia* was elected voluntarily and he used to ensure for the strict observance of the moral and the order among the population.

In 1919, after they came back from the war, Gypsies gathered together in a meeting in which we already had young, intelligent people, in a stormy meeting the aforementioned Elders (*Cheribashii*) were taken down and were created, according to a new model, Committees with five to seven members which represented the Gypsy minority in front of all organs of the authorities and cared after the re-education of the minority. The committees were composed by a president, a secretary and members. Besides the

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committees, since old times there used to be also associations for the support of the socially poor. They were called *londzhi* [3]. The latter continued their work. They helped those who are most in need while alive and at times of death. Each *londzha* was composed between 30 and 50 members. They used to organise outings in Knyazhevo (Bale Efendiya, Bali Baba) [4] and other places, where they organised musical parties with national *horo* [5] dances and dance throughout the day. The leaders of the *londzhi* were called *Usta Bashi* [6] and *Egit Bashi* [7].

In 1920 the Gypsy youth substituted these *londzhi* with associations, which were managed also by a new, modern way and model. Their management was composed by a president, vice-president, secretary and members of the managing board, while their statutes were approved by the Ministry of the Internal Affairs. These Committees had the same task, like the *londzhi* – to give out aid and to be vigilant for good moral. […]

Chapter 26
Struggles for Civil and Political Rights

At a meeting in 1921 the progressive youth decided to set up a committee with the task to grant political and civic rights to the Gypsy minority. Despite the constitutional provisions, Karavelov [8], dissatisfied with the Gypsy minority because instead of supporting him, they had given their support to Radoslavov [9], he had taken away the Gypsy's electoral rights [10]. This apparently unconstitutional act of Karavelov was affront with pain by the Gypsy minority, which considered that Karavelov had no reason to do so.

Now that many of the youths took part in the 1915-1918 war and many left their bones across the Balkan Peninsula, the Gypsy minority felt that there was every reason to claim equality before the laws of the country. The Prime Minister then was Aleksandar Stamboliyski [11].

The Committee was elected and included: [H]yusein Balilov, Shakir Pashev, Rashid Mehmedov, Redzheb Yuseinov, Muto Bilalov, Yusuf Mehmedov, Bilal Osmanov.

Shortly after that, the selected Committee appeared before Prime Minister Aleksandar Stamboliyski, who listened intently to the Committee's requests and then promised these rights to be granted. And kept his promise. At the first meeting of the next National Assembly, he submitted a proposal for the restoration of the voting rights of the Gypsies and supported by the Communist MPs, the law was passed [12].

In 1925, the Gypsy minority chose a school board of trustees, consisting of: President Rashid Mehmedov, Vice-president Redzheb Yuseinov and Secretary Shakir Pashev; members: Mustafa Enkekov, Malik Omerov. The school board of trustees in the upper composition was approved by the Capital City Hall, but the Turkish religious community was supposed to guarantee for the school board, which it refused to do. The Mohammedan Gypsies at that time fought to have a right to be elected in the Waqf Board of Trustees. But since the statute of the Muslim community required 40 families, in order for the Gypsies to have the right to elect, and since the Gypsies did not have [registered] that many families, the Muslim community also opposed this. This action by the Muslim community

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has greatly aroused the Gypsy minority. Then all Gypsies united as one and soon succeed in obtaining certificates from more than 40 families that they are Mohammedans from the Capital's City Hall and that they are Turks. The Muslim community, however, has still persisted and did not want to acknowledge the presented certificates as credible. The struggle reached the Supreme Administrative Court, but here again the Gypsy minority lost as the case was decided in favour of the Muslim religious community. And the Gypsies were left with only the undisputed documents that they are Turks.

Before some elections [13], Nikola Mushanov [14] appointed a three-membered commission in the following composition: Yusein Papukchiev – president; Hyusein Bilalov – secretary, and Malik Eminov – member. After the elections, however, there was no chance for this commission to take their places because Shumkov, the private secretary of Nikola Mushanov had issued an order the aforementioned three-member commission not to take over the responsibility of the Waqf's Board of Trustees from the old members; same as now, the few Turks that remained, managed to prevail over the majority.

And yet, the Gypsy minority has not despaired, but has instead dedicated itself to an organisational life and on May 7, 1929, the first organisation of the Gypsy minority in Sofia was founded, which unites all former societies (*londzhi*) in the Organisation *Istikbal*, which had the significant, for that time, figure of 1,500 members, with President Yusuph Mehmedov and Secretary Shakir Pashev, and Member – [H]Yusein Bilalov.

That same year, Association *Vzaimopomosht* (Mutual Aid) was founded, with the President Rashid Mehmedov, in which members were part of associations of the former *londzhi*. Thus, the Gypsy minority created two large organisations – *Istikbal* and *Vzaimopomosht* (Mutual Aid).

Besides these two large organisations, the Gypsies also had other professional associations of blacksmiths, tinsmiths, traders who were members of *Istikbal*.

There were also youth cultural and educational societies with very progressive trends: *Naangle* (Forward) and the Sport Society *Egypt*.

In 1930, the progressive youth united in one of the two large organisations of the Gypsy minority under the common name *Istikbal* (Future), with President Shakir Pashev, two Vice-Presidents, namely: Redzheb Yuseinov and Rashid Mehmedov and Secretary: Ahmed Sotirov and Ramcho Shakirov, and members: Yusein Bialov, Emin Eminov, Raycho Kochev and others.

In 1931, on the proposal of the President of the organisation, Shakir Pashev, it was decided to issue a Gypsy newspaper in Bulgaria which they called *Terbie* (Upbringing) [15]. His first editor was Shakir Pashev. The newspaper was distributed throughout the country. For that purpose, many people were organised in Vratsa, Lom, Oryahovo, Pleven, Plovdiv, Kyustendil, Stara Zagora, Ruse, Shumen, Burgas, Pernik, Sliven and in many villages.

The task of both the common Organisation *Istikbal* and the newspaper *Terbie* was the upbringing and cultural-educational uplifting of the Gypsy population in Bulgaria.

On May 7, 1932, the first Gypsy Conference took place at Mezdra Station. This Conference was held thanks to the initiative of the Gypsy organisation in Vratsa. Organisers of the Conference were our compatriots Nikola Palashev and Sando Ibrov.

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Delegates from the whole Vratsa region, including from the villages, were present. Mihailovgrad [16], Oryahovo and the villages around it, Byala Slatina, Pleven, Lom, Cherven Bryag and Sofia were also presented here. The Sofia delegation was headed by the President of Organisation *Iskikbal* in Sofia – Shakir Pashev, and also included Emin Eminov, Naydo Yasharov and Ali Yasharov. The conference took place near the Mezdra Station and it was decided that all Gypsies in Bulgaria should be led by the common Organisation *Istikbal*. It was also decided that the publication of the Oganisation *Istikbal*, the newspaper *Terbie* would penetrate as an enlightening beam to the last hut of the entire Gypsy minority in Bulgaria.

On May 7, 1934, the wreath was placed at the tomb of the deceased honoured activist of the organisation, Redzheb Yuseinov, who while alive had generously contributed for the School and the Gypsy children. He was for a long time a Vice-President of the Gypsy organisation. He was born on 10 May 1879 and died on December 30, 1933. The wreath was also put on behalf of the leadership of the Organisation by Shakir Pashev, accompanied with a short speech and by Secretary Ramcho Shakirov, and on that day – May 7th became a tradition for the Gypsy minority [17] to pay tribute at the grave of the deserving Gypsy activist, Redzheb Yuseinov.

The Cultural-Educational Organisation *Istikbal* became a legal representative of the Gypsy minority in entire Bulgaria. The said Organisation kept a register for the births and deaths only for Sofia. The Organisation had its own funeral car. *Istikbal* issued official notices for our compatriots, without which the Sofia municipality did not issue the necessary certificates. The Organisation used to present a list for the Gypsy poor families to the Sofia municipality, and according to this list, they were given the appropriate material assistance.

In short, the Organisation *Istikbal* played the role of the only official institution representing the Gypsy minority before the legal authorities in Sofia.

The newspaper *Terbie*, on the other hand, played the role of a mentor for the Gypsy minority. Its task was to raise the cultural-educational level of the Gypsies, to work towards their political-civil education and to direct the Gypsy minority towards progressive political ideas – the only ones that pledged towards equality of all nations in the country. That was executed with passion and enthusiasm and the leadership of the newspaper was truly happy when they found out that the newspaper in fact helps the Gypsy uplifting in all aspects. Hyusein A. Bilalov [18] was one of the closest associates in the newspaper and he was in the editorial board. He was really enthusiastic, he loved the newspaper and with his work he was the right arm of the editor of the newspaper, Shakir Pashev. Both of them, with mutual effort, wasting no time, power and money, put all their abilities in order to improve as much as possible the pages of the newspaper and in order to make it engaging, luscious and interesting for its readers. They were aware that a newspaper could become attractive for the reader when it advocates for their material well-being as well as when the newspaper reflects their thoughts, desires, aims and ideals. And in that respect, they made anything possible in order to satisfy the numerous requirements of their readers. Also, they were proud because the newspaper *Terbie* was the

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first newspaper in Europe [19] to be issued in order to work for the cultural-educational uplifting of the Gypsy minority. Up until the creation of the newspaper *Terbie* and long after that, nowhere in Europe there was a newspaper for the Gypsy minorities. That was a huge advantage for the Bulgarian Gypsies and a fair proudness of its initiators and especially for the Editorial Board.

In its columns, the newspaper used to reflect the everyday concerns of the Gypsy minority, it used to deal with the all-rounded and fruitful work of Organisation *Istikbal*, reflected the realities of the other Gypsy organisations – those of the youth, of their sports clubs, of the professional organisations and communicated all events which took place in the lives of the Gypsy minority. It encouraged the youth and enthusiastic Gypsies to improve as much as possible their cultural-educational uplifting, it was working tirelessly towards for the all-rounded re-education of the Gypsy minority, it encouraged it towards progressive political-civil activities, it fought against prejudices and the rigid and dying traditions and in that respect, it used to have uncontested success. For example, it was on the forefront in the fight to get rid of the salwars [20], and in that respect, it helped the struggles of the Organisation *Istikbal*. And when it became used to see the fruits of its activities, the Editorial Board was happy because there was the agreement that without cultural and educational uplifting of the Gypsy minority, without the getting rid of the harmful, rigid prejudices, superstitions and norms, a nation cannot progress. The editorial board was aware that the Gypsy minority before anything else would have to rid themselves from all harmful prejudices, to take a new route towards re-education, to perceive the new progressive political-civil ideas – in a word, to be in synchronisation with all other cultured nations.

The newspaper *Terbie* was issued in Bulgarian language. […] The newspaper *Terbie* raised truly the national and patriotic feeling of the Gypsy minority but it did not fight convincingly against its chauvinistic feelings. The newspaper was working towards an enlightening patriotism but it did stand against uneducated fanaticism and chauvinism.

In that aspect, too, the newspaper *Terbie* was an etalon of one truly progressive democratic organ whose task was to spread love between people and not separation between them. It was against the brotherly humiliating wars – it was for peace and understanding between all nations in the world. The main stimulus of the newspaper *Terbie* was the love between people and the understanding between the nations. It was a steady and firm enemy of the hatred between people and the misunderstanding between the nations. With these main slogans, which were lying in its framework, the newspaper was welcomed with joy by all and especially by the Gypsy minority.

That is why its success was so huge.

Chapter 27
Habits, Customs and the Fight against the Harmful Ones

Up until 1920 the Gypsies used to have customs related to marriage which were harmful, often really offensive for the girl and very harmful for the creation of truly happy

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Gypsy families. That was the custom *Baba-hak* [21], according to which the boy to get married and his parents had to pay expensive to the father of the girl so that they get the consent of the parents of the girl so that the marriage does happen. This harmful and utterly offensive custom had to be eliminated by all means as it gave reasons for marriages to be entered not by love and mutual desires but marriages in which the young bridegroom could persuade a girl not to marry the one she has true feelings by offering her more. This *Baba-hak* (father's merit) was undoubtedly a remnant of the times when it was traded with women and when they were ordinary commodity – just as the cattle were, for example. This harmful and old-fashioned custom had to be abolished at all costs, and Organisation *Istikbal* as well as the newspaper *Terbie*, resolutely resounded against it. This struggle was not easy, for the biases and the stubbornness, especially of the elderly, were not so easy to overcome. With systematic explanatory work, however, both in general meetings and in domestic and personal conversations, this custom was slowly abolished to find the wide gates for the creation of a truly happy Gypsy family.

With the abolition of this custom, divorces in Gypsy families have greatly diminished, because marriages have already been created not "by interest", but by attraction. And to strengthen the basic unit of every nation – the family, that means to strengthen the nation itself. In this respect, the fight of the Organisation *Istikbal* and the newspaper *Terbie* against the abusive *Baba-hak* custom will have to be judged correctly and fairly and to be acknowledged that the Organisation and the Newspaper have achieved a true national victory in the strengthening of the Gypsy – even though this has been difficult and in the face of a strong opposition. [...] With this, the struggle of the Organisation *Istikbal* and of the newspaper *Terbie* gained the significance of a huge national benefit.

Weddings once lasted for four days (from Tuesday to Friday). This custom, however, was increasingly abandoned because of the new economic situation because nothing justified the custom weddings to last for four days, to waste a lot of means for rare celebrations, for both the newlyweds and their relatives to get very tired celebrating for four days, and to get to the situation that a few days after the wedding is over, they seek money for their most urgent family and domestic needs. The unimaginable costs of these weddings often deprived young families of the opportunity to furnish their places so that they have in their homes the conditions of a more or less normal human life. This tradition, against which the Organisation was conducting an explanatory work, gradually, by virtue of the circumstances itself, was becoming increasingly obsolete every day to reach today's one-day wedding.

During the weddings of the newlyweds, there were gifts from their close-relatives, usually rams, wine, *rakiya* [22]. This custom still exists today, but now it is transformed, as for the young spouses are bought as gifts various kinds of household goods such as cauldrons, pots, jugs, wardrobes, buffets, etc. – things that the new life requires.

It was also common for the bride to put on makeup – white cream, sticking on also various ornaments because the cream itself was smeared on a thick layer so that she could hold the decorations glued to it. Some makeup artists (*teleziyki*) used to apply on the white cream other colours and special *pulcheta* [23].

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The marriages of the Gypsy-Mohammedans were carried out at home by the *Imam* (Priest), and the marriage of the Orthodox Gypsies was carried out in the Orthodox Church without the bride, however, putting makeup. After the wedding, nevertheless, the customs are the same as with the Mohammedan Gypsies.

When there was a serious misunderstanding in the family, the dispute was settled by the special department of the Organisation *Istikbal*. This department was called the Conciliation Council of the Gypsy Minority. It has almost always managed to settle the controversial issues and to bring peace and reassurance to the family. From here we can see how comprehensive and fruitful the Organisation *Istikbal* was.

When we talk about the activities of the organisation, we have to note the huge work that Hyussein A. Bilalov did in it. He was the secretary of the organisation and took care of its comprehensive activities. [..] He kept the registers of the organisation and issued the notes we mentioned above and without which the Sofia Municipality did not issue any certificates to the Gypsies.

The Organisation *Istikbal* had a weekly conference of each group separately, where talks were held about the re-education of the Gypsy minority and its cultural and political-social rise. These conferences also led to the systematic struggle against the salwars, which were soon removed from the Gypsy minority. Besides, the Organisation *Istikbal* organised … [24].

Another custom existing among the Gypsies is the so-called *Syunet* – circumcision. The young boys, when they reach a certain age, are circumcised in a special solemn setting that resembles very much that of weddings. Circumcision is performed by a barber who has been specially trained [25].

The Organisation *Istikbal* had a comprehensive activity. In its work, it has managed to eliminate many unnecessary and often even harmful and expensive customs.

At the insistence of the Organisation *Istikbal*, the makeup at the bride's marriage was abolished, and *Baba-hak* was also removed. Weddings became more modest. We would understand the significance of these gains, if the harm of all these customs was assessed.

Salwars have ceased to be a daily costume for the female Gypsies but have remained as a valuable asset and are only dressed on special occasions when the national character of a celebration has to be emphasised. […]

Chapter 29
The Gypsy Cultural House in Sofia

In 1906 Sofia municipality granted the Gypsy minority two hundred square meters of space for building a Public Cultural House of the Gypsies in Sofia.

This gift inspired the entire Gypsy minority in Sofia for the faster construction of the Public Cultural Gypsy House. Everybody got busy at work and whoever helped with whatever they could in the building of the House. Indeed, thanks to these efforts, the Cultural Social House was built on Naycho Tsanov Str. 175 exclusively with the resources,

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efforts and labour of the Gypsies. Subsequently, the Organisation *Istikbal* kept 5-6 homeless old Gypsies in this House until 1934.

In June 1934, the Organisation *Istikbal* was suspended by a written order and its publiction, the newspaper *Terbie* was interrupted. The same thing happened also with all political parties in Bulgaria.

On March 6, 1936, the Gypsy neighbourhood was closed off by the Sanitary Authorities because they were accused of having an epidemic among the Gypsies, which was later said to have been a lie. Although the blocked neighbourhood was maintained with food by the Sanitary Authorities, this all did not appeal to the Gypsies, and they chose a Committee in order to lift the blockade. Members of the Committee included: Shakir Pashev, Ahmed Sotirov, Hyusein A. Bilalov, Emin Eminov, Raicho Kochev, Shakir Mestamov, Ismail Shakirov (Tolio), Yashar Mustafov, Naydo Yasharov, Asan Osmanov, Muto Bilalov, Asan Osmanov and others who after long negotiations managed to favourably settle the issue and the blockade was lifted.

The Committee also arranged for the compensation of those Gypsies who, due to the blockade, had lost their wages. The state paid them their lost wages.

Chapter 30
The First Gypsy Ball in Sofia

On March 3, 1938, the Gypsy minority set up the first Gypsy ball in Sofia with oriental Gypsy musical performances and scenes from *One Thousand and One Nights* at the City Casino. Citizens from Sofia who have visited the first of its kind Gypsy ball, have been continuously acclaiming all the performances from the superb programme and were amazed by the gifted Gypsy artists and musicians.

The Bulgarian newspapers did not miss this first cultural event and they came out with enthusiastic articles and comments about the Ball, writing extraordinary praises for both the artists and the musicians.

The author of the artistic plays and scenes from *One Thousand and One Nights* was Shakir Pashev, director was Emin Eminov, and ballet master – Hyusein A. Bilalov.

This first Gypsy Ball set the beginning of the theatrical manifestations of the Gypsy minority. It was our first, even though a very timid, step towards a cultural manifestation in which we can point out the talents of the Gypsies.

So gladly met by the audience and the press in Sofia, we have gained the courage to continue this tradition, where we now set the beginning and which, for our joy and pride, has turned out to be so successful [26].

Chapter 31
The Revival of the Gypsy Organisation

In 1945, after the freedoms of the people were restored, the Gypsy minority, by the initiative of the dissolved Organisation *Istikbal*, convened a large meeting on 6 March at

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Tatarli Street 18. This meeting was considered as a constitutive where it was unanimously decided the Organisation of the Gypsy minority to be restored in order to continue the re-education of the latter.

At this meeting, the following leadership of the organisation was unanimously chosen: President – Shakir Pashev, Vice Presidents – Raycho Kochev and Bilal Osmanov, Treasurer – Demir Rustemov, Secretary – Tair Selimov; Members: Emin Eminov, Hyusein A. Bilalov, Sulyo Metkov, Resho Demirov, Ramcho Totev, Demcho Blagoev, Naydo Yasharov, Asan Osmanov (Palyacho), Asan Somanov, Ismail Shakirov, Shakir Meshtanov, Ali Mehmedov, Izet Salchov, Tseko Nikolov.

About 3,000 members were involved in the Organisation. The Board of Directors established organisations in all neighbourhoods where meetings and conferences were held regularly. The task of these meetings was to work more and more persistently for the all-rounded cultural-educational and political-social rise of the Gypsy minority.

After the People's victory of 9 September 1944 [27], both for the Bulgarian people and the Gypsy minority new light horizons of full political, cultural and national freedom were opened. The Gypsy minority enthusiastically congratulated the People's victory because it opened to them the until then tightly locked doors of freedom. With the 9th September victory, the discrimination that the bourgeois-fascist governments had previously established for the Gypsy minority was abolished. The wide route for cultural and educational work was opened to the Gypsy minority, who did not hesitate to use it fully. Amateur artistic and musical groups have been created all over the country which were welcomed everywhere with great interest, general approval and enthusiasm.

Notes

1. It is not entirely clear what the author means by 'The University of Istanbul' (in the original, the Bulgarian designation of the city is used – 'Tsarigrad'). At that time (late 19th and early 20th century), no university existed in Istanbul (except Robert College); perhaps it may be referring to the Islamic Theological School which in 1933 transformed into Istanbul University.
2. Knyazhevo and Vrazhdebna were at the time villages near Sofia; today they are neighbourhoods of Sofia.
3. The name 'londzha' (singular, 'londzhi' plural form) comes from *lonca* (Turkish). It was used by the former *esnafs* (guilds) in the Ottoman Empire which used to have so-called Big Londzha (General Assembly) and Small Londzha (Board of Directors).
4. It refers to the *Türbe* (Mausoleum) of the 16th-century Muslim Saint Bali Efendi. Under the name 'Ali Baba', he is still referred by the Gypsies in Sofia who, on the 2 August (the day of St Elijah in the so-called old style, i.e. according to the Julian Calendar), visit the *Türbe* (located in the courtyard of St Elijah Church) in Knyazhevo (Marushiakova & Popov, 1997, p. 138).
5. 'Horo' is a circle group dance in the Balkans.
6. 'Usta Bashi' (from Turkish) is also an *esnaf* terminology – that is how was called the leader of a certain guild.
7. 'Egit Bashi' (from Turkish) – Head Master.
8. It refers here to Petko Karavelov (1843-1903), who was a well-known Bulgarian politician, leader of the Democratic Party.
9. Vasil Radoslavov (1854-1929) was a prominent Bulgarian politician and a leader of the Liberal Party. In this case are meant the parliamentary elections in 1900 during which he was the Minister

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of Interior. According to the electoral practice in Bulgaria at the time, Gypsy votes were considered as "dowry" of the ruling parties.
10. See above (Part 1).
11. Aleksandar Stamboliyski (1879-1923) was a prominent Bulgarian politician, leader of the Bulgarian Agrarian National Union, and the Prime Minister of Bulgaria at the time (1919-1923).
12. Here, Shakir Pashov does not accurately reflect what has happened (see Comments).
13. This refers to the Parliamentary elections held in 1931.
14. Nikola Mushanov (1872-1951) was a prominent Bulgarian politician of the Democratic Party and a Prime Minister of Bulgaria (1931-34).
15. The newspaper *Terbie*, regrettably, has not been preserved in the Bulgarian libraries and it is not known whether there are somewhere any stored copies of it. According to known data, the newspaper was published between February 27, 1933 and May 6, 1934, with a total of 7 issues; the editorial committee included Shakir Mahmudov Pashev (editor-in-chief), Asen Gotov and Demir Yasharov; the newspaper was a publication of the Mohammedan National Educational and Cultural Organisation, and from issue No. 6 it became a publication of the Common Mohammedan National Cultural and Educational Union in Bulgaria (Иванчев, 1966, Vol. 2, p. 398).
16. Today, the town of Montana.
17. In fact, visits to the cemetery one day after the celebration of St George's Day is an old tradition of the Gypsies which is preserved to this day.
18. Hyusein Bilalov was the son of Ali Bilyalov, the second (assistant) *Muhtar* of the Gypsies in Sofia at the beginning of the 20th century (about whom we already wrote, see above).
19. The newspaper *Terbie* is not the first Gypsy newspaper – neither in Europe, nor in the world, and not even in Bulgaria (see below). Shakir Pashov may not have been aware of the existence of such publications in other countries, however, he certainly knew about the publication of newspapers of the Evangelical Gypsies in Bulgaria. As a Deputy Member of the Bulgarian Parliament in 1947, he visited the village of Golintsi (today, a neighbourhood of the town of Lom) and according to the oral history of the community there, he helped to preserve the existence of the local Gypsy Evangelical church (see below). In this case, there is an evident case of self-censorship in order not to speak publicly about the presence of Evangelical Gypsies at a time when religiousity was not perceived positively by the authorities (the manuscript is dated 1957).
20. In the original, the word 'feredzhe' has been spelled out but later scratched out. That is how the special head veil for Muslim women (Hijab) is referred to in Bulgaria. There is no historical records or recollections of Gypsy women in Sofia ever wearing *feredzhe*.
21. The term 'Baba-hak' (from Turkish) for the Gypsies in the Balkans refers to the traditional bride price paid by the bridegroom's family to the family of the girl in arranged marriages.
22. 'Rakiya' (from Turkish *Rakı*), is a strong alcoholic drink which is quite popular in the Balkans.
23. A diminutive form of 'Pul' (Turkish) – small metallic shiny circles that embellish the clothing of women worn on holiday occasions. The case describes the special makeup of the bride's face which used to be common in various Muslim communities in the Balkans. Today, it is no longer an observed practice by the Roma (replaced only with festive makeup) but it is preserved in places by the so-called Pomaks (Bulgarian Muslims) in the Rhodope Mountains (in Bulgaria), as well as by the Gorani in Kosovo.
24. An omission in the text.
25. The practice of circumcision (from the Turkish *Sünnet*) was preserved by the Gypsies in Sofia until the 1970s; there is a preserved photo of the festive procession of the boys (riding horses) to be circumcised in the neighbhourhood *Fakulteta* in Sofia (ASR, f. Михаил Георгиев).
26. As Shakir Pashov writes elsewhere in his memoirs, at the Ball the Bulgarian Tsar Boris III was also invited. While he did not personally attend it, he had sent an envelope containing money for the poor Gypsies (ASR, f. Шакир Пашов). However, he made a small mistake in his memoirs, because the Gypsy Ball was not in 1938 (Неве рома, 1957a, p. 4), but in 1937, and was widely

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covered by the foreign press. From the descriptions in it, it is clear that the Gypsy Ball was opened by a mixed choir, which performed the Bulgarian national anthem, followed by traditional Gypsy songs; the dancer Anushka and the famous Gypsy singer Keva took part in the Ball (Observer, 1937). As pointed in the notes above (p. 102), the singer Keva was very popular at that time, and according to rumours, the cabaret *At Keva*, located in the then Gypsy neighbourhood, was visited even by members of the royal family (Тенев, 1997, pp. 225-227); she also recorded several gramophone records in the 1930s, including songs in Bulgarian and Romani (Димов, 2005).
27. There is a preserved photo, dated September 9, 1944, which presents a rally of the Gypsies from Sofia in support of the new government (ASR, f. Фотографии). Another photo, also from the autumn of 1944, shows the official manifestation of Gypsies in Sofia, demonstrating in front of the Bulgarian Parliament where women are dressed in festive 'traditional' costumes (wearing salwars) and wear posters with the words "Stop Racial Differences", "Long Live the Fatherland Front", "Death to Fascism" (Ibid.). It is interesting to note that this Gypsy manifestation is also reflected in a painting by the famous Bulgarian artist Vasil Evtimov (1900-1986), dated 1944, i.e. it was painted immediately after the demonstration.

Source: Пашов, Шакир М. (1957). *История на циганите в България и Европа. "Рома"*. София, pp. 80-82, 101-122. Manuscript. In ASR, f. Шакир Пашов, а.е. Книга.
Prepared for publication by Elena Marushiakova and Vesselin Popov.
Translated by Aleksandar Marinov.

Comments

The materials included in this section reveal a transition to a new, extremely important stage in the development of Roma civic emancipation. During this stage, the main aspiration of the community was to win and establish its equal position in society. While the previous forms of the realisation of Roma emancipation were built on the basis of existing institutions, inherited from the previous historical epochs and preserved and developed in the new conditions (e.g. the case of the *Muhtar*), these forms are now changed according to the rules and the requirements of the new historical realities and are therefore filled with new contents.

The main reason for this development is contextual; namely, the overall and significant changes in the socio-political realities after the end of the First World War, which inevitably affected the Gypsies, who are an ethnically defined segment of the society. The essence of these changes was captured quite precisely by Bernard Gilliat-Smith (writing also under the pseudonym Petulengro) who, before the War, was in diplomatic service in Sofia. His words, although addressing the generation of his main informant Pashi Suljoff from Sofia, reflect the entire essence of the changes that occurred in their lives after the War:

> This [...] was due, I think, to the effects of the First Great War. Pashi Suljoff's generation represented a different "culture", a culture which had been stabilized for a long time. The Sofia Gypsy "hammal" was – a Sofia Gypsy "hammal." He did not aspire to be anything else. He was therefore psychologically, spiritually, at peace with himself. [...] Not so the post-war generation [...] who could be reckoned as belonging to the proletars of the Bulgarian metropolis. The younger members of the colony were therefore already inoculated with a class hatred which was quite foreign to Pashi Suljoff's generation. [...] To feel "a class apart", despised by the Bulgars who were, *de facto*, their "Herrenvolk", was pain and grief to them. (Gilliat-Smith, 1945, pp. 18-19).

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Similarly, Shakir Pashov's memoirs begin precisely from the time he spoke while in the trenches with his fellow men about the need to "organize our Gypsy minority" (Пашов, 1957, p. 5). The involvement of the Gypsies in the wars (the two Balkan Wars and the First World War), along with all other Bulgarian citizens, develops and strengthens their sense of belonging to the Bulgarian civic nation. The new realities after the War, when they again become "second class citizens", pushes them towards an organised struggle to change the position of their community in the society, which Shakir Pashov explicitly underlines (see above). Thus, it turns out that the involvement of the Gypsies in the Bulgarian army (for more detail see Иванова & Кръстев, 2014) not only leads to the strengthening of their national civic identity but also towards the development of the processes of the Roma civic emancipation. This is not a specific Bulgarian phenomenon, but a general pattern, and similar processes in one form or another also occur in other countries in the region.

The establishment of the first Gypsy civic organisation, and to a large extent the entire Gypsy civic movement during the interwar period, is linked with the name of Shakir Pashov (often in documents, he also spells his family name as Pashev). Nevertheless, as already stated in the Introduction, and as any source of such character, his memoirs (Пашов, 1957), which are one of the main sources for this period, need further verification through comparison with other sources dealing with the described events. These memoirs were written in the 1950s (dated 1957) after his political career ended. In them, Pashov strives for his memoirs to be in tune with the new, ideological reading of history which leads to the creation of a new historical narrative. If not for anything else (e.g. fears of new repressions, aspirations for political rehabilitation, etc.), without doing so, he would not have hoped that his manuscript could be published (after all, despite his best efforts, the manuscript was never approved for printing).

Shakir Mahmudov Pashov was born on October 20, 1898, (Ковачева, 2003, p. 13), in the village of Gorna Banya (today a neighbourhood in Sofia). He graduated from a technical school for railway workers and took part in the First World War, where he was injured several times. After his return from the front in 1919, he started working for the Bulgarian State Railways (ASR, f. Шакир Пашов). In his memoirs, he does not mention anywhere the foundation of the *Sofia's Common Muslim Educational-Cultural Mutual Aid Organisation 'Istikbal – Future'* which he created at his own initiative, but the "struggles for civil and political rights" (Пашов, 1957, p. 101) he assigns to the Society *Egipet* (Egypt), which was linked with the Communist Party (for the case with this association, see below) and which obviously sounds better in the context of the communist rule.

According to Shakir Pashov, the first public appearance of the new Gypsy civic movement was the 1921 meeting of the 'progressive youth' (it means to say it was attached to the communist ideas) which elected a delegation and managed to meet with Prime Minister Aleksandar Stamboliyski. At this meeting, the delegation raised the issue of the stripping of voting rights for the Gypsies in 1901, which remained in force despite the adopted amendments to the 1919 Election Law, according to which voting was mandatory for all Bulgarian citizens (Държавен вестник, 1919, p. 1). Prime Minister Stamboliyski promised to restore their voting rights and, according to the words of Shakir Pashov, at

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the next session of the National Assembly, he tabled a "proposal for the restoration of the voting rights of the Gypsies and supported by the Communist MPs, the law was passed" (Пашов, 1957, p. 101). The debates in the Bulgarian Parliament regarding this correction of the Electoral Law are indicative. Prime Minister Aleksandar Stamboliyski in response to a remark made by the opposition justified the voting rights of Gypsies with their participation in the Bulgarian army during the two Balkan wars and the First World War (Дневник, 1923). Finally, the Electoral law was changed and the electoral right of Muslim Gypsies was restored. What remained was only the ban on voting for those Gypsies who did not have a permanent domicile, i.e. nomads.

The reasons why Shakir Pashov apparently 'omits' to mention the early stages of the existence and activities of Organisation *Istikbal* become clear from the published documents. It is natural that in his memoirs, written at a time when the struggle to limit the role of the religion (and especially Islam) is an important element of the state policy, Shakir Pashov does not want to relate his past with this organisation. However, when he writes about the 1930s, he nevertheless marks his ties with *Istikbal*. He is doing so that he could silence his involvement with the establishment and the activities of the *Common Mohammedan-Gypsy National Cultural-Educational and Mutual Aid Union in Bulgaria* (see below) as in the name of *Istikbal* the ties with Islam are not so visible.

In fact, however, in its full name, the Organisation *Istikbal* is defined as 'Muslim' and although the membership is open to all Bulgarian citizens (Art. 4) its primary purpose is defined as "to organise the Muslims in one common organisation" (Art. 2). It is significant that its Statute does not mention the word 'Gypsies' even once and it explicitly emphasises that it is "strictly non-partisan" (Art. 6). As a whole, Organisation *Istikbal* could be characterised, at least according to its Statute, as a typical Muslim charitable organisation which bears only a few elements of modern civic activities (e.g. struggle for 'educational-cultural upbringing'). The most important goal of the Organisation, even noted in its Statute (Art. 25), and especially evident by its subsequent actions, is Gypsies to get involved with the Muslim Religious Community in Sofia. At that time there were only a small number of ethnic Turks but they did not allow the inclusion of Gypsies in it.

This struggle for Gypsy participation in Muslim faith communities also has its historical roots. In spite of the rights given by the state to sedentary Muslim Gypsies (Кънев, 1998, pp. 72-73; Нягулов, 2012, pp. 564-703) their participation in these religious communities was strongly contested and even denied by the Turkish population. After a discussion at the first national congress of the Turks in Bulgaria, held from October 31 to November 3, 1929 in Sofia, there was the following decision on this issue:

> 'Muslim Gypsies cannot participate in elections' for trustees of religious communities 'because of their low cultural level', and because these 'purely Turkish national possessions' are inherited from the ancestors of the Turks. (Şimşir, 1988, pp. 89-90).

Although this decision had no legal force, it still influenced the exclusion of some Muslim Roma from Muslim communities. By participating in the elections for the leadership of

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Sofia's religious community, and in particular of the Waqf Board of Trustees, the Gypsies from Sofia hoped that they would be able to "take it over" from within and that the Organisation *Istikbal* would assume its functions (Art. 25). In this way, Gypsies were hoping to get the chance to control and use Muslims' real estate (waqf estates) in order to solve the problems of their own community. As it could be seen from Shakir Pashov memoirs, in this struggle they overcame various obstacles, even some of them were able to show official documents that they are ethnic 'Turks' (i.e. they were ready to publicly declare another ethnic identity), but encounter opposition from ethnic Turks. More details about the struggles of the Gypsies in Sofia for the leadership of the Muslim religious community we learn from an article published in the newspaper *Terbie* written by Hyusein Bilalov, one of Shakir Pashov's associates in 1933, and reprinted after the end of World War II in the newspaper *Romano Esi* (Gypsy Voice) (Романо еси, 1946, p. 2). These struggles began in the early 20th century and went through various vicissitudes: writing complaints to various state and municipal authorities, which resulted in a file created by Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Religious Denominations in 1926; a lawsuit against The Ministry of Justice for refusal to hold elections for a mosque board of trustees in 1927; a lawsuit against the prosecutor of the Sofia District Court in 1930, etc. (Ibid.). In the end, after the case reached the Supreme Administrative Court, it failed. It is indicative, that in the whole article of Hyussein Bilalov the word 'Gypsies' is not mentioned even once, i.e. in the struggles for inclusion into Islamic boards (and property), noticing of ethnic identity is omitted.

The activities of Organisation *Istikbal* managed to exert their influence in other cities as well. The case of the establishment in the town of Shumen of the *Muslim Charitable Association 'Cemiyet-i Hayriyye'* ('Mutual Aid Society' in Turkish) is especially illustrative. The Statute of this organisation was approved by the Ministry of Internal Affairs and Public Health on April 13, 1929, and it was legally re-registered on September 20, 1934 (DA Shumen, f. 1605, op. 1, a.e. 29, l. 1-14). In the Statute, like the Statute of the Organisation *Istikbal*, no reference is made to Gypsies at all. The two Statutes in fact do not differ significantly, but among the founding members of the Association in Shumen are Gypsy Muslims, some of them later become activists in the Gypsy civic organisations (Демирова, 2017, pp. 38-39). Whether this is a local unit of the national Turkish organisation of the same name (Стоянов, 2012, pp. 531) or an attempt to create a separate, Gypsy clone of that organisation, is difficult to assess.

What has been said above, however, does not mean at all that the memoirs of Shakir Pashov should not be used as a historical source. On the contrary, although not credible in some specific details and in its interpretations, in many other respects they are an indispensable and even a unique source. Most importantly, they offer a perspective on the historical processes 'from within', from the point of view of the Gypsy community. This particular perspective may be somewhat distorted by the vicissitudes of the time, but it is nevertheless an authentic and, in many cases, an irreplaceable source.

It becomes clear from Shakir Pashov's recollections that the transition of the Gypsy civic movement after the First World War has been carried out by the younger generation which, through elections, replaces the old Muhtars (or 'Cheribashi') with new civic

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committees that would have to assume their functions. As elsewhere in the country (see above), the local authorities, however, were abandoning the old practice of electing Gypsy representatives and started to appoint directly mayoral deputies who had far more limited functions. This eventually pushed Gypsies to seek other forms to secure their own representation in the municipality and the state.

The new generation in the Gypsy civic movement relied on the already existing, older forms of community organisation in the Gypsy neighbourhoods, namely on the so-called *Londzhi*. The *Londzhi* have originated on the basis of the guild's (esnaf) associations (and preserved the esnaf terminology); they have lost their former professional bases but retained the functions of mutual aid. Organisation *Istikbal* tried to take on some of their functions, in particular the charitable work and the support of members in emergency situations (especially in funerals which involved many expenses) but this was not enough for the community. That is why some of the *Londzhi* began to function as charitable civic associations and sought formal registration (how many of them managed to do so is difficult to say). On the whole, the institutions of the *Londzhi* have proved to be extremely sustainable over the years, although their activities have been restricted by the Communist regime. In Sofia, they continue to exist to this day while their activity is already entirely controlled by women.

The Organisation *Istikbal* had the ambition to also include in its organisation the professional Gypsy associations (Esnafs) (Art. 8). Gypsy Esnafs themselves had also experienced changes under the new conditions and they changed their forms and social functions. This is not just about their legitimation under the conditions of the independent Bulgarian State which required their registration as professional associations, e.g. the transformation of the old Porter's Esnaf in Lom into association in 1896 (Тахир, 2018), but also about the creation of new associations, such as *Porter's Association 'Trud'* (Labour), founded in Kyustendil in 1901 (the flag of the Association is still preserved), the *First Sofia Flower-selling Association 'Badeshte'* (Future) headed by Ali Asanov, founded in Sofia in 1909 (Тахир, 2018), etc. In the capital Sofia alone, in 1932 there were 26 Gypsy professional associations (Бръзицов, 1970), and new ones continued to be created, such as the *First Mohammedan Youth Basket-making Aid Association* headed by Idriz Yasharov Demirov, founded in 1938 (CSA, f. 264 K, op. 4, a.e. 506, l. 3-4), and *Sofia Branch Craftsmanship Tinsmith Association* which became in 1939 the *Sofia United Axesmith-Horseshoe-Tinsmith Association* (CSA, f. 264 K, op. 5, a.e. 515, l. 1-2). New associations were founded also elsewhere in the country, for example, the *Tinsmith Craftsmanship Association* in Veliko Tarnovo in 1938 (CSA, f. 264 K, op. 2, a.e. 5204, l. 2-3). Some of these professional associations continued to exist for some time after WWII, e.g. *The Basket-weaving and Ragmen Association*, headed by Yordan Yasharov, and the *Tinsmith and Blacksmith Association*, headed by Demir Rustemov and Murad Bilyalov, took part in the festive event on May 1, 1950, in Sofia (Nevo Drom, 1950, p. 2).

At the same time, there were attempts to expand the activities of local professional associations on a national level which was evidenced by the national meeting of the Association of the Gypsy Musicians (many of them military musicians) in Sofia in 1920

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(ASR, f. Людмила Живкова). More interesting, however, is the other direction of development in which Gypsy professional associations began to merge into Gypsy civic organisations and began to fulfil new public functions (Marushiakova & Popov, 2017b), as is the case with the inclusion of several professional Gypsy associations in Sofia in the newly-created *Mohammedan National Educational and Cultural Organisation*, which grew into the *Common Mohammedan-Gypsy National Cultural-Educational and Mutual Aid Union in Bulgaria*.

The transition to this new stage in the development of the Roma civic emancipation movement is again linked with the name of Shakir Pashov. After returning from his temporary emigration to Turkey (1925-1929, for more details, see below), in the period between 1929 and 1933 he led the transition of Organisation *Istikbal* from a charitable Muslim one (as it was, at least according to its status) to a Gypsy civic one.

A poster printed in 1930 on behalf of the *Sofia's Common Muslim Educational and Cultural Mutual Aid Organisation 'Istikbal – Future'* was titled "Moods and Truths. To the attention of our State, the Sofia Municipal Administration, and the Society" illustrates this change (DA Sofia, f. 1 K, op. 2, a.e. 831, l. 625-625об). The poster is dated March 6th, 1930, and was prepared on the occasion of numerous publications in the press, about the upcoming displacement of the inhabitants of the Gypsy neighbourhood in Sofia (80-100 families). In response to this 'lawlessness', the organisation states that the Gypsy neighbourhood could not be considered a "nest of infectious diseases" (as it is called by the press) because "no one resident of the neighbourhood is registered in Sofia hospitals"; that "morally … we are the strictness" and in the "Morality" department of the Police Directorate among the registered prostitutes "there is not a single Gypsy woman"; that maintaining street cleanliness is an obligation of the city authorities, which they do not fulfil due to "criminal negligence". The poster also notes that the people from the neighbourhood (i.e. Gypsies) make their living from "skilled labour" of "blacksmiths, basket makers, livestock dealers, musicians, porters, shoemakers, etc.", which is of use for all inhabitants of Sofia. Furthermore, it underlines especially that "we, as equal citizens of our equally dear for everybody homeland Bulgaria, took a valiant and proven courageous part in the wars [the two Balkan Wars and the First World War – authors' note.], in which Bulgaria fought and, on an equal footing, we all made dear sacrifices". The organisation quotes the paragraph from the Constitution: "all Bulgarian citizens are equal before the laws of our country", and "property rights are inviolable". A request is made to form a joint commission with representatives of the residents of the neighbourhood to determine the illegally settled communities coming there from the countryside of "comb-makers, sieve makers, beggars, and others".

The text of the poster uses both terms, 'Muslims' and 'Gypsies' (with the predominance of the former), but without opposing them, i.e. in this way, for the first time, the Organisation *Istikbal* de facto publicly declared itself a representative of the Gypsies and thus became a political subject in their struggles for civic emancipation.

Under the leadership of Shakir Pashov, the Organisation *Istikbal* along with a number of mutual-aid, charitable, and professional associations, as well as *Londzhi*, came together to form the *Common Mohammedan-Gypsy National Cultural-Educational and Mutual Aid*

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Union in Bulgaria, which attempted to get officially registered in 1934 but was denied. This refusal fits in the context of the overall aspirations of the new authorities, after the coup of May 19, 1934, to control the public and political life of the country, while the specific reason for the refusal was not a particular attitude against the Gypsies but rather a fear of Turkey's influence on them. Such concerns existed in the public space at the time and even included the development of a conspiracy scenario that through the new Union was part of the preparation to build a united front of the Muslims in Bulgaria (Мир, 1934, p. 3).

In the Statute of the new organisation, there are a number of new and important elements as compared with the Statute of the Organisation *Istikbal*. First, it is the very name itself which explicitly emphasises that it is a union of the Gypsies in Bulgaria, i.e. it already has the ambition to work on a national scale along with separate sub-divisions in the country and to be representative of all Gypsies, including the already existing Gypsy organisations, without infringing on their independence (Art. 3). These ambitions of the Union are not without reason, as in the 1932 conference in Mezdra, representatives of Gypsies from different towns and villages (mainly from the north-west of the country) decided to unite under a common national organisation.

Moreover, the Union even leaves its door open to take on an international dimension, allowing it to be joined by "our co-nationals" from other countries (Art. 3). Of course, this possibility remains at an abstract level, but it still refers to the beginning of the establishment of a Gypsy trans-border identity (or at least the presence of such a desire is indicated).

The tasks that the Union set for itself go far beyond those of *Istikbal*, and by its very design, it was, to a much greater extent, a modern Gypsy civic organisation which should work in three main directions – cultural-educational, religious and urban development – in which they intended to use a full range of diverse activities. It is difficult to examine exactly what has been done in practice to accomplish these tasks. Unfortunately, the print of the Union, the newspaper *Terbie* (Upbringing), which would be an invaluable source in that direction, is not preserved, but from published analysis of its articles by Nayden Sheytanov (Мир, 1934, p. 3), the main accents of the activities of the Union become clear and as well as most of its ideological platform. As pointed by Sheytanov the newspaper devotes a great deal of space to the struggles of Muslim Gypsies for access to the government of Islamic religious communities and property, and in this field, their ethnic identity is left behind. Also the Art. 2 of the Union's Statute envisaged "if the laws permit, the opening of private schools". As only religious communities were entitled to open private schools, this article reflects the hope for victory in this contest.

Sheytanov explicitly warns the authorities that the Union intends to be a center to attract Gypsies and create a "common front" of Muslims in Bulgaria (ibid.). At the same time, the newspaper *Terbie* publicly presented the new 'national' concept about the Gypsy community. It constantly used the terms "our nation", "our national movement", "our national consciousness", i.e. Gypsies recognise themselves as a nationality, "descendants of the great King Pharaoh", and it appeals to its fellow men: "Do not neglect your family, your faith, your traditions", "You must proudly call yourself a Gypsy!" (Ibid.). As

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can be seen, the Roma historical narrative at that time continued to be dominated by the "Egyptian version" about their origin, which began to give way to the "Indian version" only in the 1950s, after the knowledge about it reached them and under the influence of the first wave of Indian films shown in Bulgaria.

According to Nayden Sheytanov, newspaper *Terbie* cooperates with the "Romanian and Hungarian Gypsies" (Ibid.). In fact, from today's point of view, we can not be sure whether such cooperations actually took place or whether this was a mere propaganda ploy. Nevertheless, it shows that there was a clear consciousness of a cross-border unity of the Gypsy community. This idea continued to evolve, and in a few years' time, an article entitled "Gypsies Will Organise" appears in the yellow press (Празднични вести, 1937, p. 2). The article reports that two young Gypsies, Ahmed Seizov and Petar Ivanov, were touring the country and trying (without much success) to organize Gypsies into a union to be a member of the International Gypsy Union based in Hungary (Ibid.). The Bulgarian police investigated the case but failed to find persons with such names; also the leadership of the Organisation *Istikbal* confirms that such persons are unknown in the Gypsy community (CSA, f. 370, op. 6, a.e. 745, l. 1, 3). Nor is there anything known about the existence at this time of any International Gypsy Union (neither in Hungary nor anywhere in the world), it is likely this may have been a journalistic hoax.

New moments in the development of the civic consciousness of the Gypsies were also the call for political representation "to organise ourselves [...] to have representatives of our interests" (Мир, 1934, p. 3), and calls to the Bulgarian State to start an active policy for the social integration of the Gypsies. The main argument in that direction were the realities in other countries around the world: "Why Gypsies in Turkey are not in such a low stage as we in Bulgaria? [...] In Europe, especially Austria, Hungary, Romania, Poland [...] and in Soviet Russia, there were legislators there, and they created a series of laws to assist [the Gypsies], both materially and cultural-educational" (Мир, 1934, p. 3).

In his memoirs, Shakir Pashov pays much attention to the tremendous impact of the newspaper *Terbie* (which he, for the reasons explained above, proclaims as a publication of Organisation *Istikbal*) on the Gypsies in the country. It is difficult to judge how strong this impact has been, but at least according to the newspaper's heading, it print-run was 1,500 copies (a relatively good number for its time) and, according to Shakir Pashov, in its distribution "many people were organised in Vratsa, Lom, Oryahovo, Pleven, Plovdiv, Kyustendil, Stara Zagora, Ruse, Shumen, Burgas, Pernik, Sliven and in many villages" (Пашов, 1957, p. 118). In the newspaper *Terbie* were published letters from various places of the country – Vratsa, Sliven, the village of Galiche (Vratsa Province), including a letter from the village of Dolna Kremena (Vratsa Province) about a 'big gathering' (Мир, 1934, p. 3). Thus, despite its limited time of publishing (less than two years), its impact should in no way be underestimated.

The closure of the newspaper *Terbie*, together with the refusal to register the *Common Mohammedan-Gypsy National Cultural-Educational and Mutual Aid Union in Bulgaria*, are a direct consequence of the Decree-Law of June 13, 1934, with which the new Government of Kimon Georgiev, which came to power with a military coup on May 19,

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1934, banned the existence of all political organisations and therefore stopped their prints. This is not exactly the case, however, with the dissolution of Organisation *Istikbal* about which Shakir Pashov writes in his memoirs (Пашов, 1957, p. 118). In this case, he is referring to the refusal to register the Union (about which, as already stated, he does not mention a single word in his memoirs). In any case, there are a number of documentary pieces of evidence suggesting that *Istikbal* not only continued to exist after 1934 but even wrote formal letters on the organisation's letterhead and used its stamp, with one of them (published above) addressed to the Police Department itself.

It is significant that in this letter, the Gypsy activists discern clearly between their obligations towards their community and the expectations of the state for active policy towards them as part of the society. They explicitly emphasise that state intervention is crucial for the future of their people.

Another official letter of Organisation *Istikbal* is a public declaration, *A Clarification in Relation to the Appearance in the Newspaper Dnevnik* [*Diary*] *of Falose and Inaccurate Information about the Occurrence of the Disease Typhus among the Gypsies* on 16 March 1938, which says:

> This, in our view, is unworthy and unjust because it inflames the passions and creates resentment which is necessary for no-one. Instead of us being supported, instead of us being taught something good so that we are good Bulgarian citizens, we are treated like this. We are Bulgarian citizens, with Bulgarian spirit, we have left the bones of our fathers and brothers on the battlefields in the two wars and today we are ready to sacrifice for the benefit of our homeland Bulgaria in which we were born, we live and enjoy all freedoms. (DA Sofia, f. 1 K, op. 4, a.e. 531, l. 5).

In his memoirs, Shakir Pashov pays special attention to the struggles of Organisation *Istikbal* against some traditional customs of the Gypsies in Sofia – the paying of ransom-money for the girl at weddings, the circumcision of boys, wearing salwars by the women – all of which he describes as harmful to the Gypsies. It is hard not to notice, however, that these customs are linked (including in the eyes of the surrounding population) with Muslim traditions and clearly the emphasis and efforts of the organisation in this regard were influenced by the spirit of the time in which the memoirs were written. However, this was not the main approach of the author because not a single concern has been raised with regard to opposing, for instance, the Muslim cultural elements during funerals, in which (at least at that time) there were many strong Muslim traditions (including the obligatory presence of an Islamic cleric). The apparent need for support of the community in organising funerals is reflected in the published statutes of Gypsy organisations (see above), as well as in the establishment of other organisations with similar purposes, as for example the *Gypsy Cultural-Educational and Posthumously-Charitable Association 'Butlaches'* (*Virtue*) in 1939 (CSA, f. 264K, op. 5, a.e. 1109, l. 3-5). In fact, as will be discussed later, the situation with the development of Gypsy organisations in Yugoslavia is very similar in this respect.

As could be clearly seen, the whole development of Organisation *Istikbal* during the interwar period oscillated constantly between ethnic and religious, with the latter in

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Bulgaria being directly linked and often replaced by another (Turkish) ethnic identity. In any case, regardless of the specific variant, these were superimposed on the Bulgarian civic national identity. This multidimensionality of identities is reflected in the names of the organisations – most of them in Bulgarian, and much less include Turkish words (*Istikbal, Dzhamiet – Hairlie*, and newspaper *Terbie*) as well as in Romani language (*Romni, Naangle, Butlaches*). The identity negotiation is especially clear in the Gypsy activists' struggle against the shalwars described above. On the one hand, this is a struggle for the establishment of the Bulgarian civic national identity in the public space, by denying these Gypsy traditions, which are interpreted as Turkish; on the other hand, as Shakir Pashov himself writes, the salwars remain as a 'museum value' and as a Gypsy national symbolism, which is demonstrated publicly only on certain special occasions: for example, at the festive demonstrations until circa the 1960s, the Gypsies from Sofia would pass in front of the officials' tribune dressed in festive salwars, a fact which can be seen in the many preserved photos from that time (ASR).

The complex relationships between the different identities (ethnic, religious, and national) continued to be relevant for the Gypsies in Bulgaria in the subsequent historical periods, including nowadays. Especially for the Gypsies in Sofia, who at the time were the leaders in the process of civic emancipation of the community, the choice was ultimately unambiguous – for them, the ideas of considering the Gypsies as a separate nationality dominated strongly – finding their logical culmination in the Statute of *The United Common-Cultural Educational Organisation of the Gypsy Minorities in Bulgaria 'Ekipe'* (Unity) which declares itself as a direct successor of Organisation *Istikbal*.

The organisation *Ekipe* was established two months before the end of the Second World War, under new social and political conditions that were reflected in its Statutes (Art. 48). Much more attention, however, has been paid to the ideas about the future development of the Gypsies as a nationality, albeit frequently emphasised as a cross-border nationality. Moreover, the text repeatedly emphasises the commitment of its activities to the "World Gypsy Movement", the "World Gypsy Organisation" and the "World Gypsy Congresses" (Art. 1, 2, 22, 23), and, ultimately, as a distant perspective, the creation of an independent Gypsy state – "To create an aspiration in the Gypsies to build a national hearth in their own land" (Art. 3). When this will happen is not determined, but in any case, one of the main national symbols, the national flag (though not very clearly described, as well as with unclear symbolism), is already present (Art. 59). At that time, nowhere in the world has there been a 'World Gypsy Organisation' so, it remains a mystery how the Gypsy activists came up with these ideas, which occupied leading positions in the ideological platform of the new organisation. One possibility here is to have a representation of what is desired as a reality, in the hope of activating the mechanism of 'fulfilling prophecy', and it is quite likely that we have an analogy here with the ideas from the world of Zionism which were especially popular at the time.

Generally speaking, the development of the ideas of civic emancipation of the Gypsies from 1878 to 1945 proceeded in different directions, but remained within the same umbrella, despite the fact that they could take on quite various and specific dimensions.

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The end of the Second World War marked the beginning of a new historical era in which, under the influence of new social and political realities, the basic ideas and ways of realisation of Roma civic emancipation began to radically change.

Elena Marushiakova and Vesselin Popov

2.4 Evangelical Churches

2.4.1 *The Gypsy Evangelical Baptist Church*

Делото на циганската Евангелска Баптийска църква в село Голинци

Благодарение на Бога защото по многото своя милост и неизказаната си любов възроди и нас циганите като най-последен народ, щото и нашето племе да приеме. Хвала чест и благодарение. Слава Богу и получихме входа на този благодат даде ни Господ църква увеличи числото ни 41 члена верующи. Тази е единствената църква състояща се от цигани и [те] съставляват Циганска[та] Евангелийска Баптийска църква.

Тази църква се намира на един северен край на България два километра от град Лом на източната страна село Голинци.

Църквата ни беше прочута и зарадва целия запад: Германия, Англия и Америка.

Но! уви: печален, печален ден! ден на скръб, ден на пепел и вретище. Сатана успя да влезе в трима братя Авесаломци, които искаха да вземат първите места на църквата – Председателство, Секретарство и Касиерство – които места не са ги получили по редовен избор. Същите братя недоволни, задето не бяха избрани в църковното настоятелство, надхвърлиха се против избраното настоятелство с груби и различни думи чрез които се произведоха караници, побоища, [и се стигна] до голямо безобразие в църквата, гдето се черкуваме. Същите трима братя, с молив и книга ходеха от къща в къща за да прелъгват простодушните братя, и ги записват в списъците си, които списъци представиха на Ломския пастир, и с тези имена желаят да станат клон на Ломската църква.

Пастира Трифон Димитров, насърчен от това за да използува случая и да бъде големец на две църкви, наел се сериозно да защити виновната страна, които братя са опорочени в следното:

1-вия псува на Бога брадата, също на умрелите млякото и мъртвите кокали.

2-рия цяла нощ е бил на пир с една блудница в кръчмата, участвувал в една светска сватба, като носел с един бял котел ракия и музиката свири след него демократически марш.

3-тия брат, се е кръстил в реката Лом за 5 кила ракия, както Исав за паница леща: продаде себе си.

4-тия брат два месеца като бяха на работа по селата, е спал между момите езичници, като е бил съветван от единия брат да не спи между светските моми, и той въпреки съвещанието, пак е спал, с което е направил съблазън.

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5-тия брат се е залюбил с една мома като вдовец, с което е извършил неща срамотни, същия е затварял в заведението си да блудствуват двамата блудници.

6-тия брат е кръстил малкото си дете в православната църква, играл на новата година цяла нощ комар, също и през целия ден.

7-мия брат купува и продава свине в неделен ден, в неделен ден пътува в селата за търговия.

За всичко гореспоменато ние сме изключили трима от тези братя, от които бр[ат] Трифон Димитров се е наел да ги подържа, понеже му се е обещаха да станат клон на Ломската църква.

На 31 Януари т[ази] г[одина] ломския пастир Трифон Димитров с няколко братя ломчани е дошъл в църквата ни без да влиза в споразумение с настоятелството, заел Амвона и почна да съди, по въпроса на проповедничеството: кои са били за и кои не. Председателя го попита – заседание ли ще имаме или помирително събрание? А Трифон Димитров му каза заседание. Тогава председателя му рече, ако имаме заседание, нека секретарят да си заеме мястото, да земе бележки, и изключените да напускат заседанието и да се прочетат протоколите от миналите заседания.

Но той без да обърне внимание на това, рече: няма нужда, и продължава, освен това не ни даваше редовно думата, а на онези, които той поддържава, само те говорят, и ние като явно видяхме, че той подържава тяхната страна, а нас не слуша, и затова стана голям шум и препирня.

След това секретарят му рече: Драги брате, нашата църква е самостоятелна, плюс това църквата не ви е повикала да ни заседавате и съдите. Преди всичко вие не сте компетентното лице на нашата църква, и още повече вие нарушавате реда на Ба[птистката] църква, като позволявате на изключените да присъстват в заседанието ни. Ние сме църква самостоятелна, и вие сте църква, ако сме ние клон на вашата църква, тогава вие имате право да ни заседавате.

Бр[ат] Трифон Димитров казва: Вярно, че вие сте църква, но ние ще Ви наложиме и вие ще приемете.

На 07.II. бр[ат] Трифон е отслужил Господня вечера и даде [да присъствуват] на изключените членове, за да покаже с това, че не признава църквата ни.

На 11.II. дойде госпожица Берта и Петър Минков нарочно за бр[атята] Цигани, но Трифон с противната страна доведоха сестрата в методистката църква. И след като свършиха, върнаха се и започнаха да ни подиграват, видяхте ли че бр[ат]Трифон не ви признава за църква.

На 23.II. пристигнаха братята от съюза в гр[ад] Лом където били посрещнати от неколко братя цигани и ломчани, и на 24 същия м[есец] изпратиха един брат от Лом да ни повика, и ние се отзовахме на поканата и отидохме в Лом. След проповедта откриха примирителното събрание, като ни заявиха че брат Грабоин е председател, бр[ат] Райчев подпредседател, бр[ат] Георги Чомонев съветник, и Трифон Димитров секретар; даде се на гласуване [и] прие се единодушно, след това братята

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от съюза ни посочиха две имена и ни заявиха, [че] в отговор на тия писма сме дошли, които писма нема нужда да ви ги прочетат.

Постъпихме на работа, ние помислихме, че съюза ще ни попита от начало кои и какви са причините да ни доведат до такова положение, но! за жалост съвсем обратното, дадоха въпроса кой какво има да каже. Един брат от противната страна се опита да обвини настоятелството и страната, каза: аз чух че брат Геор[ги] Ер[инкин] е казал, че ще раздели църквата и други; бр[ат] Еринкин за свое оправдание каза: който ме е чул, нека вземе Библията в ръката си и [да] се направи [потвърждение]; същия брат побледне, защото знае, че тази отговорност е по-голяма от клетва, [и] веднага промени думите (и рече: той е казал да раздели пейките); [т.е.] хвана се, че е лъжец.

След дълго разискване ние посочихме горепоменатите лица, които са били опорочени в различни видове престъпления.

Претседателят на комисията бр[ат] Грабаин е казал: зашо не ги исключите, ето ние сме [ги] изключили и вие не признавате нашето църковно изключване.

Заседанието се закри и се отложи за след обяд.

СЛЕД ОБЯД. Без много разискване даде се на гласуване кои са за клон и кои не. Сега се разбра вече като бял ден, ние се чудихме защо жените от противната страна бяха си оставили бебенцета[та си] на улицата и всички отидоха в ломската църква да заседават. За тях е било казано по-рано всички да присъстват, ние не бяхме съгласни с тяхното решение да гласуваме, защото нашите жени и някои от братята не бяха присъствали [и] понеже знаем, че настоятелството, което съставлява църквата, може и без 4-5 членове да се примирим; и тъй даде се на гласуване получи се 19 гласа – ние не бяхме съгласни, но! Димитров шепна на председателя на ухото и той се изправи да ни брои против желанието, и получи се 15 гласа.

Председателя ни заяви, че ние требва да се подчиним на болшинството (да станем клон).

Ние казахме, [че] които искат да бъдат клон, нека си останат, а ние ще си останем самостоятелна църква, като с това ние очаквахме окончателното решение.

Всичко това се извърши за един ден, на 25-и. 26-и, 27-и [и] 28-и бяха свободни [за] комисията освен вечерни молитвени събрания:

На 1.III., понеделник, излязоха братята в с[ело] Голинци, събраха ни всички освен жените и почнаха да ни прочетат протокола.

Не питат има ли бележки по протокола, за това не става въпрос, един брат поиска думата, и рече: правим бележки на протокола ви, за дето нема нищо което да сме писали, че вие сте изпитали всичките причини подробно, за да намерите виновната страна, и второ че не сте ни прегледали протоколите; председателя на циг[анската] църква поиска думата и рече: Нито една църква няма право да ни прегледа протоколните ни книги, освен съюза. Вие нищо не сте сторили подобно нещо, като че не ни признавате за църква. След това комисията ни каза, че ако не се примирим да станем клон, ще ни публикуват в сп[исание] "Евангелист", че не съществува циганска църква и че никоя църква няма да ни услужи. Същия ден Трифон Димитров

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поискал протоколната книга, членската книга, входяща[та] и изходяща[та] книга, Църковните ключове и ги отнесе в Лом, подобно [на писаното в Светото писание] (4 Царете 24: 12-15).

Той попълни своята цел както Ахав за Навутеовото лозе, жално и печално е засега положението с църквата, Боже мой, кой и от де му се даде тази власт да обяви 20 души членове заедно с църковното настоятелство [за] нелегални.

Така също и Съюза не обърнаха ни най малко внимание на всичко гореизложено, коя беше причината не знаеме, имаме обаче едно забележително, че Димитров от време на време шепнеше на председателя на ухото и той действаше по негова диктовка, за сега църковното ни положение е следното: 18 членове, които са клон на Ломската църква и изключени 3-ма. Под предложение на Димитров [да] се черкуват в общото ни заведение, което заехме под наем; освен това тия братя, които желаеха за първенство, получиха целта си, а ние останалите 20 чл[ена] заедно с настоятелството се черкуваме в отделно заведение.

Всичко гореизложено подкрепяме с подписите си саморъчно:

Петко Миленков – Председател, Георги Г. Василев – Секретар, Богдан Марков – Касиер, Георги П. Еринкин, Петко Димитров, Петър Аврамов, Петър Калицев, Яко Петров, Шанко Николчов, Бузи Миленков, Иванчо Кирков, Илия Богданов, Найден Аврамов, Илия Алексов, Ката Петрова, Бонка Г. Василева, Миша Маркова, Йордана Петкова, Ана Якова, Ивана Богданова.

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The Case of the Gypsy Evangelical Baptist Church in the Village of Golintsi

Praise be to God because by His mercy and many thoughts and His immense love, He revived us, the Gypsies, as the last people, in order to be accepted from our tribe. Praise, honor and thanks. Thank God we have received this grace, God has given us a Church and increased our number to 41 believing members. This is the only church consisting of Gypsies and they constitute the Gypsy Evangelical Baptist Church.

This church is located on a northern end of Bulgaria, two kilometers from the town of Lom on the eastern side of the village of Golintsi [1].

Our church was renowned and gave joy to the whole West: Germany, England and America.

But! alas: sad, sad day! day of grief, day of ashes and abhorrence. Satan succeeded in entering three Absalom brothers [2] who wanted to take the first places of the church – the Presidency, the Secretariat and the Treasury – places which they have not received by regular elections. The same brothers who were unhappy for not having been elected to the Church Board of Trustees, stood up against the chosen Board with harsh and different words through which quarrels were struck, thrashings causing great disgrace in the church where we are being christened. The same three brothers, with a pencil and a paper, walked from house to house to deceive the simple-minded brothers and recorded

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them on their lists, which they presented to the Lom's Pastor, and with these names they wished to become a branch of the Lom's Church.

The Pastor, Trifon Dimitrov, who has been encouraged by this to use the case and be the leader of two churches, has earnestly endeavoured to defend the guilty party while the brethren are accused of the following:

The 1st swears by God's beard, also by the milk of the dead and the dead bones.

The 2nd has been drinking all night long with a harlot in the pub, took part in a secular wedding while carrying *rakiya* with a white boiler, and the orchestra has been following him playing the democratic march.

The 3th brother was baptized in the river Lom for 5 kilograms of *rakiya*, like Esau for a bowl of lentil stew [3]: he sold himself.

The 4th brother, while working for two months in the villages, slept with the pagan girls, who had been advised by one of the brothers not to sleep among the worldly girls, and he, despite the advice, slept again with them, with whom he had fallen into temptation.

The 5th brother, being a widower, got into an affair with a young girl with whom he has done shameful things; the same used to close down his premises so that the couple of libertines fornicates.

The 6th brother has christened his little child in the Orthodox Church, has been gambling during the New Year's Eve all night long, also throughout the day.

The 7th brother, buys and sells pigs on a Sunday, on a Sunday he travels to trade in the villages.

For everything mentioned above, we have excluded three of these brothers, whom brother Trifon Dimitrov has endeavoured to support because they have promised him to become a branch of the Church in Lom.

On January 31st this year, the Pastor from Lom, Trifon Dimitrov, along with several brothers from Lom, came to our church without looking for the agreement of the Board of Trustees, took the pulpit and began to judge on the question of preachers: who was agreed to and who was not. The President asked him – would we have a regular meeting or a conciliation meeting? Trifon Dimitrov told him a meeting. Then, the Chairman told him, if we have a meeting, let the Secretary take his place, take notes, and the excluded may leave the meeting and we read the minutes of past meetings.

But not paying attention to this, he said, there is no need and went on talking; besides, he often did not let us speak, but those that he supports, only they spoke, and when we obviously saw that he takes their side while he does not listen to us, there was great noise and strife.

After that, the Secretary said to him: Dear brother, our church is independent, plus the Church did not call you to hold a meeting nor to judge. After all, you are not a competent person of our Church and more importantly you are breaking the rule of the Baptist church allowing the excluded to attend our meeting. We are an independent church, and you are a church as well, if we were a branch of your church, then you would have the right to hold meetings.

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Br[other] Trifon Dimitrov said: It is true that you are a church but we will enforce obedience over you and you will accept.

On 07. II. br[other] Trifon gave the Lord's Supper and he [allowed to be present] the excluded members in order to show that he does now recognise our Church.

On 11. II. Miss Berta came and Petar Minkov for the sake of the Gypsy brothers, however, Trifon along with the adverse side took the sister to the Methodist Church. When they were over, they came back and began to make fun, did you see that brother Trifon does not accept your church.

On 23. II. the brothers from the Union arrived in the town of Lom where they were welcomed by several Gypsy brothers and people from Lom and on the 24th of the same month they sent one of our brothers from Lom to call us over and we accepted the invitation and went in Lom. After the sermon, they opened the conciliatory meeting by declaring to us that brother Graboin is a Chairman, brother Raychev a Vice-Chairman, brother Georgi Chomonev an Advisor, and Trifon Dimitrov a Secretary; it was proposed for voting [and] it was accepted unanimously, and after that brothers from the Union pointed to us two names and declared that they have gathered here in relation to these letters which were not necessary to be read out loud.

We began working and we thought that the Union will ask us from the start which and what were the reasons for us to be brought to this situation, however! unfortunately, quite the opposite, they asked everybody what they have to say. One of the brothers from the adverse side tried to put the blame on the Board of Trustees and he said, I heard that brother Georgi Erinkin has said that he will separate the Church and others; brother Erinkin, in his own justification said: whoever has heard me say this, let them take the Bible in their hand and make [a confirmation]; the same brother became pale because he knows that this responsibility is greater than an oath, he changed his words immediately (and said: he has said to separate the benches)[i.e.] it turned out to be a liar.

After a long discussion, we pointed toward the persons mentioned above who have been vitiated in various types of crimes.

The Chairman of the Commission, brother Grabain has said: why don't you exclude them, here, we have excluded them and you do not recognise our church's exclusion.

The meeting was closed and was postponed for the afternoon.

AFTERNOON. Without much discussion, it was brought up for voting who was in favour for a branch and who was against. Now, it became clear as day, we were wondering why the women from the adverse side have left their babies on the street and everyone went in the Church in Lom to [attend] the meeting. They were told earlier that everyone should be present, we did not agree with their decision to vote because our women and some of the brothers were not present [and] because we know that the Board of Trustees of the Church can [sit] even without 4-5 members, we can reconcile; and so, it was brought up for voting [and] it 19 votes turned out – we were against it but! Dimitrov was whispering to the Chairman's ear and he stood up to count [our votes] against our wishes and it turned out to be 15 votes.

The Chairman stated to us that we ought to obey the majority (to become a branch).

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We said, whoever wants to be a branch, let them be, while we will stay an independent church after which we were expecting the final decision.

All of this took place in one day on the 25th. The 26th, 27th, and 28th were free days [for] the Commission, besides evening prayer meetings:

On March 1, Monday, the brothers came out in the village of Golintsi, they gathered all of us together except for the women and began reading the report to us.

They did not ask us whether there are notes on the report, it is not about that; one of the brothers asked to speak and said: We make a note on your report because there is nothing from what we wrote that you have listed to all the reasons in detail, so that you could find the guilty party, and secondly that you have not reviewed our Minutes books; the Chairman of the Gypsy Church asked to speak and said: No church has the right to review our Minutes books besides the Union. You have not done anything like this, as if you do not recognise us as a church.

After that, the Commission told us that if we do not accept to become a branch, they will mention us in the *Evangelist* magazine [4], saying that there does not exist a Gypsy Church and that no church will be at our service. On the same day, Trifon Dimitrov asked for the Minutes Book, the Membership Book, the Incoming and Outgoing books, the Keys from the Church and took them in Lom, just [as it has been written in the Holy Scripture] (4 Kings 24: 12-15).

He fulfilled his aim just like Ahab for the Naboth's vineyard [5]; for now the situation in the Church is sad and lamentable; God willing, who and from where were they given authority to proclaim 20 persons members along with the Board of Trustees of the Church as illegal.

Equally, the Union [6] did not pay any attention whatsoever to everything mentioned above; what the reasons for this was, we don't know; we have, however, one remark that Dimitrov was whispering from time to time to the ear of the Chairman and that he was acting on his instructions; for now, our church situation is as follows: 18 members who are a branch of the church in Lom and 3 are excluded. As proposed by Dimitrov, they gather together in the common amenity that we rented; besides, these brothers who aimed to be leaders got what they wanted while the rest of us, 20 members together with the Board of Trustees, gather together for church services in a separate amenity.

All of the above-mentioned we supplement with our own signatures:

Petko Milenkov – Chairman, Georgi G. Vasilev – Secretary, Bogdan Markov – Cashier, Georgi P. Erinkin, Petko Dimitrov, Petar Avramov, Petar Kalitsev, Yako Petrov, Shanko Nikolchov, Buzi Milenkov, Ivancho Kirkov, Iliya Bogdanov, Nayden Avramov, Iliya Aleksov, Kata Petrova, Bonka G. Vasileva, Misha Markova, Yordana Petkova, Ana Yakova, Ivana Bogdanova.

Notes

1. The former village of Golintsi is now called *Mladenovo* and is a neighbourhood in the town of Lom.
2. A reference towards the Holy Scripture (2 Samuel 13).

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3. A reference towards the Holy Scripture (Genesis 25: 31-34).
4. Here it refers to the newspaper *Evangelist*, a publication of the Evangelical Baptist Union in Bulgaria; it was issued in the period 1920-1938.
5. A reference to the Holy Scripture (1 Kings 21: 18-19).
6. Here it refers to the Union of Evangelical Baptist Churches under the auspices of which the Gypsy Church in the village of Golintsi also was.

Source: [No Author]. (1926). *Циганска Евангелска Баптийска Църква, с. Голинци*. Лом: Алфа.
Prepared for publication by Elena Marushiakova and Vesselin Popov.
Translated by Aleksandar Marinov.

2.4.2 *The Gospel for All*

Евангелието за всички

Евангелистът Марко повествува, че нашият Господ Исус Христос, след възкресението си, се явил на своите ученици и им казал: "Идете на всичкия свят и проповядвайте евангелието на всяка твар" (Марко 16: 15). И ние знаем, че апостолите с голяма ревност, започнаха осъществяването на тази Господня заповед. От тогава до днес всеки ден ни носи славни подвизи в голямото мисионерско поле и крачка след крачка се извоюват нови страни, нови племена и народи за царството на Христа.

В този велик поход на Божиите чада в света, едно скромно място е отредено за евангелската работа между циганите в България. Ние се радваме, че с Божията помощ, можем да сторим нещо за тези забравени от хората, но мили на Бога, създания.

Започваме изданието на малкото вестниче "Светилник" с молитва към Бога, щото то действително да бъде един истински светилник за пръскане светлина всред непрегледния мрак, който обгръща циганското племе в България. С това ние изпълняваме и един дълг към нашите братя човеци – цигани, което ни прави двойно по-радостни и силни да посрещнем мъчнотиите и несгодите на една подобна работа.

Вярваме, че в това трудно дело ще бъдем подкрепени от молитвите на всички, които любят Господа Исуса Христа.

С тази надежда и уповаване в Бога, ние ви поднасяме първият брой на в[естник] "Светилник".

Редакцията

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The Gospel for All

The Evangelist Mark narrates that our Lord Jesus Christ, after His resurrection, appeared to his pupils and said to them: "Go into all the world and proclaim the gospel to the whole creation" (Mark 16: 15). And we know that the Apostles, with great zeal, began to execute the Lord's order. Since then, every day brings us glorious feats in the great missionary field, and step by step, new countries, new tribes and peoples are won in the kingdom of Christ.

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In this great march of God's children in the world, a modest place is dedicated to the evangelical work among the Gypsies in Bulgaria. We are glad that with God's help we can do something for those forgotten by the people, but creatures dear in God's eyes.

We start the publication of the small newspaper *Svetilnik* (Candlestick) with a prayer to God. That it really should be a real candlelight for spreading light amidst the obscure darkness that surrounds the Gypsy tribe in Bulgaria. By doing so, we also fulfil a duty to our brothers Humans – Gypsies, which makes us doubly joyful and strong to face the hardships and difficulties of such a job.

We believe that in this difficult task we will be supported by the prayers of all who love the Lord Jesus Christ.

With this hope and trust in God, we present you the first issue of the newspaper *Svetilnik*.

The Editorial Board

Source: Редакцията. (1927a). Евангелието за всички. *Светилник*, 1927, January 15, p. 1.
Prepared for publication by Elena Marushiakova and Vesselin Popov.
Translated by Aleksandar Marinov.

2.4.3 *The Stolen Gospel*

Краденото Евангелие

Нито една книга не е имала такова велико влияние върху нравственото преобразование на човечеството и личността, както Евангелието. Всичките поети, философи и литератори, колкото и велики да са били в тоя свят не са могли да съчинят книга, която да има такава благодатна сила да възпитава и обновява човеците, както евангелието.

То е влияело [на] хората при различни случаи на живота.

Наскоро един брат циганин, между другото разказа как причината за неговото обръщане станало едно Евангелие, което бил откраднал от един евангелист.

Как станало това?

Тоя брат е циганин. Баща му работил при един българин (евангелист) в селото. Привечер, брата циганин, тогава голям "панта", отива у дома на евангелиста, открадва една хубава, подвързана книга, и.... за да не го хванат, когато слагал кукулашки в торбата си, за да ги носи в домът си, между тях сложил и евангелието, което той още не знаел каква книга е. Той скрил в чувала така внимателно откраднатата книга, щото никой не могъл да го хване, нито даже да си помисли нещо.

Циганина отива със кукулашките в къщата си, изсипва ги и заедно с тях изсипва и Евангелието. Взима и го отнася на един друг циганин, който също живеял доста светски живот.

Почнали двамата циганина да четат краденото евангелие.

Чели го ден, два, три, седмица, две, три, до като най сетне Господ започнал да работи в техните сърца. Един ден, единия от тях, при когото крадеца занесъл

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евангелието се обръща към Бога и намира мир и спасение на душата си. След няколко време и крадеца получил уверението, че Бог е изгладил престъпленията му.

Но не стига това. Та, под влиянието на евангелието, започнали да проповядват и на други. Направили си малко амвонче, носели го от къща в къща, както евреите носели скинията и проповядвали спасение чрез кръвта Исусова и на другите свои съплеменници.

Така продължавали за дълго време. Днес вследствие тая крадена света книга, повече от 60 души има в това село, които са оставили своите стари наклонности и грехове и се радват на великото изкупително Дело на Спасителя. От тия 60 души, 20 са българи, а останалите 40 човека са от циганското племе.

Ето каква сила има Евангелието дори тогава, когато се намират хора да го крадат или да се снабдят с него по нечестен начин.

Евангелието наистина е "Божия сила за спасение на всеки, който върви към него".

Днес това село почти всеки знае какво е извършило и какво може да извърши едно евангелие даже тогава, когато то е откраднато!

Няма нищо скрито, което да не се открие.

Божието слово е като барут или като някоя друга сила, която не може да се укрие.

Тя, на своето време, ще избухне и ще даде плод за живота вечен.

Когато ми разправят тая чудна история аз често си шепна в душата, като гледам на масата си 5-тях Библии.

Защо не дойдат крадци да ги откраднат, та след време да чуя още няколко подобни истории.

Да приятели, Евангелието, и само то разполага с тая чудна сила да превъзпитава и спасява и най-отчаяния и закоравял грешник, защото е Божие Слово, което както "двуостров меч прониква до ставите и издирва намеренията сърдечни".

П[асто]р Тр[ифон] Димитров [3]

∵

The Stolen Gospel [1]

No book has had such a great influence on the moral transformation of mankind and personality as the Gospel. All poets, philosophers, and literary writers, no matter how great they have been in this world, have been able to compose a book that has such a graceful power to nurture and renew men as the Gospel.

It has been influencing the people at various occasions in their lives.

Recently, a Gypsy brother [2], incidentally, tells the reason for his conversion was a Gospel which he had stolen from an Evangelist.

How did this happen?

This brother is a Gypsy. His father worked with a Bulgarian (Evangelist) in the village. At dusk, the Gypsy brother, then a big "vagabond", goes to the Evangelist's house, steals a

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nice, bound book, and.... so, that they could not catch him while putting corn cobs in his sack to carry them to his home, he put between them the Gospel which he still did not know what kind of book it was. He hid in his sack the stolen book so carefully that no one could catch him, or even think of anything.

The Gypsy goes along with the corn cobs in his house, pours them out and the Gospel along with them. He grabs the Gospel and takes it to another Gypsy [3] who also lived a fairly secular life.

The two Gypsies began to read the stolen Gospel.

They read it for a day, two, three, week, two, three, until at last God started working in their hearts. One day, one of them, whom the thief carried the Gospel to, turns to God and finds peace and salvation of his soul. After a while, the thief also was assured that God had forgiven his crimes.

But that was not enough. Thus, under the influence of the Gospel, they began to preach to others. They made a little pulpit, carried it from house to house, as the Jews wore the tabernacle and preached salvation through the blood of Jesus and to their other tribesmen.

So they continued for a long time. Nowadays, as a result of this stolen holy book, there are more than 60 people in this village who have left their old tendencies and sins and enjoy the great Redemptive Work of the Saviour. Out of these 60 people, 20 are Bulgarians and the other 40 are from the Gypsy tribe.

Such is the power of the Gospel even when there are people who steal it or get it in dishonest ways.

The Gospel is indeed "the power of God unto salvation to everyone that believeth."

Today, almost everyone knows in this village what the Gospel has done and what it can do even when it was stolen!

There is nothing hidden that cannot be found.

The word of God is like a gunpowder, or like other forces, that cannot be hidden.

It will, in its time, explode and bear fruit for eternal life.

When they tell about this marvelous story, I often whisper in my soul, while looking at my table with five Bibles.

Why do not thieves come to steal them, and after a while I hear a few more similar stories.

Yes, friends, it is the Gospel, and it alone has this wonderful power to re-educate and save even the most despicable and hardened sinner because it is the Word of God, which as a "two-edged sword is piercing both joints and marrow, and able to judge the thoughts and intentions of the heart".

Pastor Trifon Dimitrov

Notes

1. This article has been published earlier by Pastor Trifon Dimitrov (Евангелист, 1924, p. 2). Whether and to which extent the presented story is based on real events is difficult to judge but in any case, today it is part of the oral history of the Roma in Lom and the region (Славкова, 2007, pp. 77-79).

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2. According to some sources, the name of this brother is Bogdan Markov (or Bogdan Markov Selimov), while according to other, newer sources, his name is Todor (Ibid.).
3. According to one of the versions of this legendary event, this has been Petar Punchev from Golintsi, the first Gypsy to preach the new religion (Ibid.). According to other versions, these were the brothers Todor and Georgi Erinkini from the same village (Славкова, 2007, pp. 77).

Source: Димитров, Т. (1927b). Краденото Евангелие. *Светилник*. 1927, January 15, pp. 1-2.
Prepared for publication by Elena Marushiakova and Vesselin Popov.
Translated by Aleksandar Marinov.

2.4.4 *News*

Известия

Този брой от "Светилник" изпращаме до наши приятели и познати, като вярваме, че ще обичат да го получават. Онези от тях, които не желаят да получават "Светилник", се умоляват да го изпратят обратно в редакцията, като запазят екземпляра чист.

Циган[ското] Женско Мисионерско Д[ружест]во в с[ело] Голинци е дало новогодишна вечеринка. За тази вечеринка сестрите бяха подарили разни предмети, които се разпродадоха с успех. Приход 708 лв. Това д[ружест]во развива много полезна работа между циганките в махалата. Молете се за работата на тези усърдни работнички.

∵

News

We send this number of the newspaper *Svetilnik* to our friends and acquaintances believing they would like to receive it. Those who do not wish to receive *Svetilnik* are asked to send it back to the editors and keep the copy clean [1].

The Gypsy Women Missionary Association in the village of Golintsi [2] hosted a party on New Year's Eve. For this event, the sisters had gifted a variety of items that sold out with success. Income 708 lv. This Association does very useful work among the Gypsy women in the *mahala*. Pray for the work of these diligent female workers.

Notes

1. From here one of the methods of the Evangelical propaganda among the Gypsies becomes clear, which essentially relies on the existence of educated people among them.
2. A picture of the female participants of the Association was published in the newspaper *Evangelist* (Евангелист, 1927, p. 5). The name of the organisation there, however, reads *Gypsy Women's Christian Association 'Romni'* ('romni' is 'woman' or 'wife' in Romani language).

Source: [No Author]. (1927c). Известия. *Светилник*. 1927, January 15, p. 2.
Prepared for publication by Elena Marushiakova and Vesselin Popov.
Translated by Aleksandar Marinov

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Comments

In the first decades of the 20th century, an important phenomenon in South-Eastern Europe (and especially in Bulgaria) was the emergence of different types of Evangelical denominations among the Gypsies which were different from their traditional religions (Islam and Orthodox Christianity). Similar processes were taking place in the West, after the Second World War, and hence this whole movement was generally referred to as Pentecostal which in the East, however, is not at all accurate or adequate. Pentecostalism here is only one of them and at the same time, it was not the first nor was it the most widespread among the diverse new Evangelical denominations.

The exact date of the arrival of the Evangelical denominations among the Gypsies in Bulgaria is difficult to indicate but in all likelihood, this has been in the first decade of the 20th century, in the period between 1905 and 1910 (Славкова, 2007, pp. 78-79). In any case, it is certain that the first Gypsy preacher was Petar Punchev (1882-1924) from the village of Golintsi, who preached and performed services in the Romani language in a rented room used as a prayer home. At that time, besides Petar Punchev, there were other Gypsy preachers who worked in other places in the country – the towns of Ferdinand (today, Montana), Pernik as well as other places (Ibid.). Since 1921, the religious community in Golintsi received the status of a branch of the Baptist Church in Lom, and on November 11, 1923, during a ceremony in Lom, Petar Punchev was officially ordained as Pastor which legitimised the first Gypsy Baptist Church (Ibid., p. 81).

The events described in the published text took place after Petar Punchev passed away, which led to the conflicts related to the leadership of the Church in Golintsi. This reflects the desire of most Gypsies in the church community to preserve its distinct ethnic character. These controversies came to an end with the election of the Bulgarian Petar Minkov as Pastor of the church on June 13, 1926 (Евангелист, 1926, pp. 48-49). He was received well by the Gypsies; he delivered sermons in the Romani language and preserved the ethnic character of the Church in Golintsi. Pastor Minkov had been active in various areas and has carried out several Evangelistic missions in the region (Славкова, 2007, p. 82). Under his editorship, the newspaper *Svetilnik* (Candlestick) was published in 1927, and two Gospel songs in Romani language were compiled and published – *Романе Свято гили* (Roma Holy Song) (1929) and *Романе Свети гиля* (Roma Holy Songs) (1933). These two editions are combined in the series *Романе лила* (Roma books); we succeed to discover yet only the second book (ASR, f. Лиляна Ковачева), which consists of original poems by an unknown author, in all probability a Rom.

The Gypsy Woman Christian Association *Romni* and the Christian Youth Association, which was headed by Todor Marinov, were also established: the former most likely in 1926, and the latter in 1929. Moreover, with the collective effort of all Gypsy believers, a new church building was built and officially opened in 1930 (Славкова, 2007, pp. 84).

In the early 1930s, Pastor Petar Minkov left for the capital Sofia. At that point, the Gypsies Georgi Stefanov, who received training in Austria, and his successor Aleksandar

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Toshev, who received his training in Germany, were ordained consecutively as pastors of the church in Golintsi.

By the initiative of Petar Minkov, in Sofia on October 17, 1932, the Committee Gypsy Evangelical Mission was established but the leadership of this group did not include any Gypsies (CSA, f. 264, op. 2, a.e. 9385, l. 7-8). According to the Statute of this Mission, its primary purpose was "to spread the Christian morality and to promote the spiritual, cultural and moral uplifting of the Gypsy people" (Ibid., l. 11). The Mission carried out various activities which included the publication of the *Bulletin of the Gipsies Mission in Bulgaria* (1932), the newspaper *Известия на Циганската Евангелска Мисия* [Bulletin of the Gypsy Evangelical Mission] (1933), the translations in Romani language of the Gospels of John and Matthew (Сомнал Евангелие, 1932ab) and two collections of Gospel Songs – *Романе гиля е Девлеске* (Romani Songs for Lord) (1936a) and *Романе Сомнал Гиля* (Romani Holy Song) (1936b). Only the second publication has been preserved, from which it is clear that these are translations into Romani of well-known Protestant hymns.

The Committee Gypsy Evangelical Mission also prepared a series of Christian-themed propaganda brochures in the Romani language *Барре придобивке* (Large Gains), *Дуваре бианипе* (Born Twice), *О Дел вакярда* (The Lord Said), *О дром ухтавдо* (The High Road), *Саво пересарла Библия* (What the Bible Tells), *Спасител ащал безаханен* (The Saviour Remained Unharmed), *Спасително светоско* (The Saviour of the World), *Щар безспорне факте* (Four Indisputable Facts), which were issued by the Scripture Gift Mission in London. However, so far we have not succeeded in discovering them. In 1937, the Common Charitable Association for the Building of a Community House and the help of Poor Families of the Baptised Gypsies was founded, named "Father Paisiy", in the village Vasilovtsi, Lom District (CSA, f. 264K, op. 6, a.e. 1461).

The activities of the Gypsy Mission were not limited to Bulgaria. A mission of evangelisation was carried out in Romania in 1934, which also included Gypsies (see Chapter 6).

The increased activity of the Gypsy Mission among the Gypsies provoked a backlash from the Bulgarian Orthodox Church and from the Bulgarian State. On May 26, 1933, the Committee Gypsy Evangelical Mission submitted its organisation's documents to the Ministry of Internal Affairs and National Health for approval, in which was specifically indicated that the organisation is under the honorary patronage of US Ambassador, Henry W. Shumaker (CSA, f. 264, op. 2, a.e. 9385, l. 5a). The Ministry in turn sent the documents for an opinion to the Holy Synod of the Bulgarian Orthodox Church (Ibid., l. 5). Shortly before that, the Gypsy Mission had sent a letter to the District Chief of Vidin requesting permission to open a 'prayer hall' in the town, to be used for the education and the conversion of local Gypsies. On this regard, the Metropolitan of Vidin, Neofit, sent to the Holy Synod a letter of May 23, 1934, in which he wrote:

> [...] We are surprised by the fact that the Protestant propaganda has devised some kind of "Gypsy Evangelical mission" so that it [could] sneak in everywhere among the Bulgarian Orthodox people in order to undermine its spiritual unity and to corrupt it. [...] We are surprised by the fact that this Gypsy mission was allegedly under the auspices of the American

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> Plenipotentiary Minister, Mr. Shumaker! ... We do not accept that a political representative of great power can be given to the service of reckless propaganda and to openly patronise it. [...] First of all, the Gypsies of Vidin are not American but Bulgarian subjects; second, these Gypsies, in their great majority are Christians; thirdly, the homes of the Mohammedan Gypsies are among the homes of the Christian Gypsies; fourth, the Orthodox Christian mission has been working for a long time with them and has so far succeeded [without making much noise], without irritating the Mohammedans in the town, attracting to the church a large Gypsy majority. [...] The purpose of the Gypsy Evangelical Mission in Sofia is clear [...], it wants to justify the large subsidies that America sends [...] so that they could spend carelessly the dollars that were sent [...]. (Ibid., l. 3-4).

Following this letter, the Holy Synod, in its letter to the Ministry of Internal Affairs and Public Health of August 4, 1934, expressed the view that "this Statute of the Committee of the Gypsy Evangelical Mission in Sofia should not be affirmed because the goals of the mission are purely proselytizing" and that "in Bulgaria, foreign religious propagandas cannot have missions but only the Holy Orthodox Church" (Ibid., l. 2).

To put it in brackets, the conversions of Gypsy Muslims by the Bulgarian Orthodox Church were not always done in 'silence', and in all such cases, they were used by the more or less open support of the Bulgarian State. Moreover, the first such 'voluntary' attraction to Orthodoxy and, accordingly, baptizing with new, Christian names, was done even during the April Uprising of 1876 against Ottoman Empire (Стоянов, 1887, Vol. 2), i.e. before the creation of the new Bulgarian state.

Mass conversions to Christianity were performed irregularly and in certain regions throughout the whole historical period (1878-1944), e.g. in the period from 1878-1888 in the region of Vidin (Елдъров, 2001, pp. 597). During the Balkan Wars (1912-1913), in the newly liberated regions of the Rhodopes and Western Thrace, with the assistance of the army and the new administration, the Bulgarian Church began the mass conversion of Bulgarian Muslims – the Pomaks. This violent mass Christianisation mostly did not include Gypsies while the leadership of the Bulgarian Orthodox Church presented Islam as a 'Gypsy religion', therefore indecorous of decent people (Ibid., p. 616). However, there were some cases (e.g. in the village of Chepelare, on June 1, 1913) when such mass conversions included Gypsies too (Георгиев & Трифонов, 1995, p. 367). Subsequently, in 1915, the Bulgarian State dropped the processes of forceful baptism of Bulgarian Muslims but this did not include Gypsies at all.

After the coup d'etat of May 19, 1934, the Bulgaria State commenced an active one-nation state policy. This policy also included the sporadic campaigns for the conversion and respectively re-naming of Gypsy Muslims, which was however one of its least important objectives. From 1933 to 1939, the Synod of the Bulgarian Orthodox Church dealt with Gypsy Muslims at a dozen meetings. The campaign for their conversions was not strict or consistent. For example, in 1938, in the Dioceses of Vidin and Vratsa, there were about 500 baptised Gypsies (Елдъров, 2001, p. 631) while at the same time, according to the oral history of the community, there were conversions in that period also in other places of the country – the regions of Vidin, Lom, Montana, Vratsa, Byala Slatina, Veliko Tarnovo,

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Dupnitsa and elsewhere. These conversions increased during the Second World War and although they were declared as "voluntary", in many cases they were caused by various forms of pressure (see below). There were such baptisms in the regions of Veliko Tarnovo during the period 1937-1944 (DA Veliko Tarnovo. 61, 62), Vratsa during the periods 1934-1935, 1937-1938 and 1942-44 (DA Vratsa, f. 391, op. 1, a.e. 1-4; f. 437 K, op. 1, a.e. 1; f. 484 K, op. 1, a.e. 18, 27, 38, 42, 44), Sliven in the period 1940-1944 (DA Sliven, f. 44 K, op. 1, a.e. 11, 43), Pazardzhik in 1942 (Църковен вестник, 1942, pp. 321-322), Sofia in 1942 (Подкрепа, 1990, p. 8), and elsewhere. Although the procedure designated for baptisms with special circular letter No. 373 of January 21, 1943, by the Holy Synod (Църковен вестник, 1943, p. 49) was bureaucratised and synchronised with ordinances of the Law on Amendment and Supplement to the Law on Persons (Държавен вестник, 1943, pp. 1-2), according to which such renaming had to be done in court. In practice, however, according to testimonies of the oral history, this was not observed with regard to the Gypsies and baptisms and renaming were done without any procedural problems.

The topic of baptizing Gypsy Muslims is important also from another point of view. It reveals complex relationships and even contradictions between documentary sources, later date memoirs, and oral history evidence. Describing the baptism of Gypsies in Sofia on January 19, 1942 (on Epiphany according the so-called to the old calendar style), the famous Roma activist Manush Romanov (Mustafa Aliyev) wrote about a police blockade of the Gypsy neighbourhood, fire trucks chasing Gypsies with jets of water toward the church (Подкрепа, 1990, p. 8). In the oral history of the Gypsies in Sofia, it is consistently repeated that at that time only a part of the Gypsies was converted and this happened voluntarily, because of the distribution among the converts of additional food coupons ("they converted per kilogram of sugar"). In the state documentation, this baptism is only recorded as an event, without any explanation. What the truth actually was, is hard to guess.

Returning to the topic of Gypsy Evangelism, it should be noted that during the Communist Regime, the religious activities (especially of various Protestant denominations) were severely restricted by the State (including by repressive measures). In spite of this, the Evangelical movement among the Gypsies did not disappear but it even expanded significantly and encompassed a number of new regions, even incorporating new Evangelical denominations (the Pentecostal Church being the first place). The Baptist Church in Golintsi continued to exist throughout this period and even in the Gypsy neighbourhoods of some localities (e.g. Yambol, Kazanlak, Pernik, Kyustendil, Sofia, etc.) emerged illegal Evangelical communities (Славкова, 2007, pp. 91-95).

After 1989 and the changes that followed, there has been a real explosion of the spread of various Evangelical denominations and branches among the Roma, such as the Adventist Church, Methodist, Pentecostal, Bulgarian Church of God, etc. At the same time, these processes quickly acquired distinct ethnic characteristics. Many Gypsy/Roma churches (both terms are used) were created in the mahalas and even it is a common occurrence for several such churches to exist at the same time and in one and the same mahala. The Gypsy Evangelical movement thus spread throughout the country, including

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among Turkish-speaking communities with a preferred Turkish ethnic identity which, in some cases, leads to a return to the Roma identity (Ibid., pp. 96-102). The stress in the pastoral discourse on new Roma, who through conversion receive a new right to a new life trajectory and a new history is an excellent nourishing platform for the formation of the emancipation movement. Moreover, Gypsy/Roma churches immediately appear at the level of organisations and tend to expand across the regions (cf. Podolinská, 2015, pp. 480-552; 2017, pp. 146-180). There is also a new phenomenon – kindled civic and political activities of Evangelical Roma in the new social conditions while many of them creating their own organisations and/or are actively involved in political affairs. All this shows that, after all, the development of the Gypsy/Roma Evangelical movement leads to the prevalence of ethnicity in the complex balance with religiousity, and ultimately, to its transformation into a specific component of the processes of Roma civic emancipation.

Elena Marushiakova and Vesselin Popov

2.5 Socio-Political Struggles

2.5.1 *The Memoirs of Shakir Pashov* (*Part 2*)

Шакир М. Пашов

История на циганите в България и в Европа. "Рома"

[...]

Глава 25

Основането на Д[ружест]во "Египет" и вливането му в Комунистическата партия

През 1919 година в София бива основано дружество "Египет". В него са членували голямата част от циганската интелигенция и всичката прогресивна младеж. Задачата на дружеството бе да издига в културно-просветно отношение, както членовете на дружеството, така също и самото циганско малцинство и най-вече – да работи за политико-обществеността осъзнаване на циганското малцинство. В това отношение трябваше да се работи кръвтовски, тъй като изостаналостта в всяко отношение на циганите бе общепризнат факт. С голям ентусиазъм инициаторите на дружеството са се запретнали за работа. Чрез сказки, лични разговори, екскурзии, забави и пр. се целеше да се подтикне циганското малцинство към по-културен живот. И в това отношение е било направено много.

Няколко месеца само след формиране на дружество "Египет", по решение на общо събрание, при голям ентусиазъм и повдигнато политическо съзнание, членовете взеха решение да се влее дружеството в Комунистическата партия (тесни социалисти). За деня на сливането бе решено да се състои тържествено събрание, на което бяха поканени и дойдоха секретаря на трети район – др[угаря] Вълчо Иванов, адвоката др. Александър Ламбрев и други. Вливането на дружество "Египет" [в] Партията е било извършено при най-тържествена обстановка в клуба

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на самото дружество на ул. "Татарли" 51. При сливането, ръководството на дружеството се е състояло от следните девет члена: Асен Тотев, Шакир Пашев, Юсеин Билалов, Манчо Шакиров, Мустава Сайдиев, Демир Яшаров, Манчо Арифов, Али Яшаров и Рамчо Шакиров. Последните трима понастоящем са вече покойници.

Дружеството е наброявало в първоначалния си състав около 50 члена.

През 1920 година дружеството, вляло се вече изцяло в Комунистическата партия, се снабдява и със знаме от червено-винен цвят, което се е съхранявало от клуба на ул. "Татарли" 25, минава през София и отива до районния клуб на Партията, който тогава е бил на ул. "Цар Симеон", където тогавашният млад железничар Шакир Пашев е произнесъл съответна реч.

Начело с същото това знаме дружеството участвува в първомайската манифестация, като преминава през целия град.

Когато на 7 май 1924 година почина основоположника на комунизма в България – дядо Димитър Благоев, болшинството от циганското малцинство участвува на погребението на любимия водач на работническото движение у нас. А цигани-тютюноработници са носели и поднесли грамадни венци от живи цветя, които положили върху гроба на незабравимия и любим дядо Благоев.

Всички участвуващи в погребението цигани и циганки са били облечени в национални цигански дрехи – шалвари.

∵

Shakir M. Pashov
The History of the Gypsies in Bulgaria and in Europe. "Roma"

[…]

Chapter 25
The Setting Up of the Society *Egypt* and its Merging with the Communist Party

Society *Egypt* was founded in 1919 in Sofia. A major part of the Gypsy intelligentsia and all progressive youth were members of the society. The task of the society was to culturally and educationally raise its members, and also the Gypsy minority itself, and, most of all – to work for the political-civic awakening of the Gypsy minority. In that aspect, it was required to work extremely hard because the backwardness, in any aspect, of the Gypsies was a generally acknowledged fact. With great enthusiasm, the society's initiators got ready for work. Through lectures, personal conversations, excursions, entertainments and others, the aim was to persuade the Gypsy minority to a more cultural life. And much has been done in this respect, too.

A few months after the formation of Society *Egypt*, following a decision of the General Assembly, with great enthusiasm and raised political consciousness, the members took the liberty to infuse the society into the Communist Party (Narrow Socialists) [1]. On the day of the inflowing it was decided to hold a gala gathering, to which the

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secretary of the third district was invited – the comrade Valcho Ivanov [2], the attorney Dr Alexander Lambrev, and others. The merging of Society *Egypt* into the Party was carried out in a most celebrated setting in the Club of the Society at 51 Tatarli Street. At the merger, the management of the Society consisted of the following nine members: Asen Totev, Shakir Pashev, Yusein Bilalov, Mancho Shakirov, Mustava Saydiev, Demir Yasharov, Mancho Arifov, Ali Yasharov and Ramcho Shakirov. The last three are now deceased.

The Society, in its initial composition, was composed of about 50 members.

In 1920, the Society, which was now fully incorporated into the Communist Party, was supplied with a wine-red flag that was kept by the club on Tatarli Street 25, passing through Sofia and going to the regional club of the Party, which was then on Tsar Simeon Street, where the then young railwayman Shakir Pashev gave a speech.

Headed by the same flag, the Society participated in the May Day manifestation, passing through the whole city.

When the founder of Communism in Bulgaria – Grandpa Dimitar Blagoev [3] – died on May 7, 1924, the majority of the Gypsy minority participated in the funeral of the beloved leader of the workers' movement in Bulgaria. Gypsy tobacco-workers wore and handed over giant wreaths of living flowers that they laid on the grave of the unforgettable and beloved Grandpa Blagoev.

All Gypsies in the funeral were dressed in national Gypsy clothes – *salwars*.

Notes

1. The Bulgarian Communist Party, up to 1919, was called the Bulgarian Social Democratic Workers' Party (Narrow Socialists).
2. Valcho Ivanov (1880-1925) was a prominent functionary of the Bulgarian Communist Party; he was killed by the police in 1925.
3. Dimitar Blagoev (1856-1924) was a Bulgarian political leader, the founder of Bulgarian socialism and of the first social democratic party in the Balkans (Bulgarian Social Democratic Party) in 1891.

Source: Пашов, Шакир М. (1957). *История на циганите в България и Европа. "Рома"*. София, pp. 99-100. Manuscript. In ASR, f. Шакир Пашов.
Prepared for publication by Elena Marushiakova and Vesselin Popov.
Translated by Aleksandar Marinov.

2.5.2 *The Autobiography by Shakir Pashov*

[Шакир Пашов]

[Автобиография]

[...] В едно събрание, проведено в Театър "Ренесанс" (сега [кино] "Георги Димитров"), нашата партийна група взе решение да дадем една скромна сума за клуба на партията [на площада до] "Лъвов мост", който беше опожарен от буржоазната власт. Партийната група взема участие в конгреса, който се проведе в Театър "Ренесанс",

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където бях делегат през 1922 год[ина]. В него конгрес участваха и международни дейци на комунистическото движение, като Клара Цеткин и др[уги].

През 1923 година в септемврийските събития бях потърсен от агенти и полицията, но аз реших да избягам в Кюстендил, където се включих в строежа на Популярната банка като арматурист железар, а бях оставил жена и три деца без никакви средства. След потушаването на възстанието и свършването на банката се върнах в София и наново се включих в работа, като се срещнах с Вълчо Иванов и почнахме нелегална работа и възстановихме [партийните] групи. За заслугите и борбата ми през 1924 година в образувания единен фронт между комунисти и земеделци, Вълчо Иванов постави моята кандидатура в изборите за народни представители и аз бях избран за такъв от БКП [Българска комунистическа партия].

На 15 април 1925 година за атентата в Св. Неделя бях отново арестуван в участъка, после в 6-и полк, после Дирекцията на полицията и училище "[Константин] Фотинов", където престоях цели три месеци. Поради непрекъснатото ми преследване и обиски в къщи от полицаи и агенти аз реших да емигрирам в Турция, за което решение взех съгласието на другарите, адвоката Александър Ламбрев, Никола Милев и Ангел Бояджията, които ми казаха "стига да успеш, заминавай, защото положението е лошо и ти стана известен на полицията, като народен представител". След завръщането ми от Турция през 1929 година отново постъпих в редовете на БРП [Българската Работническа партия]. След възстановяването на партийната група, която го нарече от другарите Асен Бояджиев, Александър Наумов, Петко Стоев и други, "партийна циганска група", [членовете на] партийната група вземат най-редовно активно участие във всички акци на Партията и във всички избори бяхме посочени като първенци на III-и район. През 1931 година се включих и станах председател на циганската културно-просветна организация в България, а по-късно основавам първия цигански вестник в България "Тербие" (Възпитание), който вестник ратуваше за културно-просветно издигане и политическо съзнание на нашите тютюневи работници в България. През 1933 година бях включен в ръководството на Софийската партийна организация на БРП [със седалище на ул.] "Позитано" No. 7.

След разтурянето на Партията [през] 1934 година ме включиха в нелегална дейност, която се провеждаше от др. Иван Дюлгеров, Васил Гарванов, Иван Рахов и други партийни отговорници. От тях получавах материали за вестника "Тербие" (Възпитание), нелегално издаван, подпомагах със събиране [на] средства за политзатворниците чрез разпространение на марки, които получавах от другарите Гологанов и Езекиев, [както и от] партийния секретар Иван Дюлгеров. Участвах в курса на партията, с предложение на др. Георги Димитров във всички акци и изборни борби, [и] съм се отчитал най-редовно. Преди 09.09.1944 година като групов машинен шлосер в общинската техническа работилница през 1934 година бях уволнен на 01.01.1935 година поради стачката, която се водеше от партията, и цяла зима бях без работа. От 1920 година до 1944 година вземах участие във всички

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акции на партията, [бях] арестуван, [за]държан с месеци, [но] аз останах верен на партията. [...]

През 1923 година в изборите на народни представители е кандидат и другаря Георги Димитров, който посети урните на III-та районна избирателна секция в училище "Васил Левски" на улица "Димитър Петков" и за миг опозиционната шайка се хвърли върху него с юмруци, но нашата партийна група, която беше там като агитатори, веднага се нахвърли и отървахме от ръцете им др[утаря] Димитров, като дойдоха и други другари. Изпратихме ги до трамвая и той ми каза: "Шакир, един ден, като дойдем на власт, ти ще бъдеш най-голям човек, а пък на мен от гарата до двореца ще постелят килим", и ето, дойде славната дата 09.09.1944 година и се сбъдна, аз станах народен представител във Великото Народно събрание, закърмен с идеите на Партията, защото целият ми живот премина в борби за тържествуването на марксическите идеи и антифашистката ми дейност от 1919 година и е до днес [така]. [...]

Подпис ... . С другарска почит: ... (Шакир Пашов).
Автобиографията давам от 1919 година до днес.

∵

Shakir Pashov

The Autobiography [1]

[...] [2]. In a meeting, held at the Theatre *Renesans* (Renaissance) (now Cinema *Georgi Dimitrov*), our party group decided to give a modest sum to the party club [on the square next to] *Lavov most* (Lion's Bridge) which was burnt by the bourgeois power. The party group took part in the congress that took place at the Theatre Renesans where I was a delegate in 1922. In the congress, there were also international figures of the Communist movement, such as Clara Zetkin and others.

In 1923, during the September events, I was sought by agents and by the police but I decided to escape to Kyustendil where I got involved in the construction of the Popular Bank as an ironworker, and I left my wife and three children without any funds. After the suppression of the uprising and finishing the construction of the bank, I returned to Sofia and I got back to work and met Valcho Ivanov and we started illegal work and restored the party groups. Because of my merits and my struggles in 1924, in the creation of a united front among Communists and Bulgarian Agrarian National Union, Valcho Ivanov put my candidacy forward in the elections for MPs and I was elected as one by the BCP [Bulgarian Communist Party] [3].

On April 15, 1925, regarding the assassination at the Cathedral Sveta Nedelya, I was arrested again in the police station, then in the 6th regiment, then by the Police Directorate and in the School *Konstantin Fotinov*, where I stayed for three months.

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Because of my constant persecution and house searches by police officers and agents I decided to emigrate to Turkey and for this action I took the consent of the comrades, the lawyer Aleksandar Lambrev, Nikola Milev and Angel Boyadzhiyata who told me "as long as you are able to, leave because the situation is bad and you already are known to the police as a Member of Parliament". After my return from Turkey in 1929, I again joined the ranks of the Bulgarian Workers' Party [4]. After the restoration of the party group, which was named by the comrades Asen Boyadzhiev, Aleksandar Naumov, Petko Stoev and others as the "Party Gypsy Group", the members of the party group took very regularly active participation in all of the activities of the Party and in all elections, and we were identified as champions of the 3rd Region. In 1931, I joined and became Chairman of the Gypsy Cultural-Educational Organisation in Bulgaria [5] and later I founded the first Gypsy newspaper in Bulgaria, *Terbie* (Upbringing), which advocated for the cultural and educational uplifting and for the political consciousness of our tobacco workers in Bulgaria. In 1933, I was included in the leadership of the Sofia Party Organisation of the Bulgarian Workers' Party [6] with headquarters on Pozitano Street 7.

After the dissolution of the Party in 1934, I was involved in an illegal activity which was carried out by the comrades Ivan Dyulgerov, Vasil Garvanov, Ivan Rahov and other party leaders. By them, I received materials for the newspaper *Terbie* (Upbringing), illegally published [7], and I helped in raising funds for the political prisoners by distributing stamps which I received from the comrades Gologanov and Ezekiev, as well as from the Party Secretary Ivan Dyulgerov. I participated in the direction of the party, upon the suggestion of the comrade Georgi Dimitrov, in all actions and in electoral struggles, and I gave reports most regularly. Prior to September 9, 1944, as a group machine mechanic in the municipal technical workshop in 1934, I was fired on January 1, 1935 due to a [participation in] strike which was led by the Party and I was without a job for the whole winter. From 1920 until 1944, I took part in all of the party's actions, I was arrested, kept for months, but I remained loyal to the party. […]

In 1923, during the elections for members of parliament, a candidate was also Comrade Georgi Dimitrov who visited the ballot boxes of the 3rd District Polling Station at the School *Vasil Levski*, on Dimitar Petkov Street and in a moment, the opposition group attacked him with fists, but our party group, which was there as agitators, immediately attacked and we took Comrade Dimitrov out of their hands as other comrades also came. We accompanied them to the tram and he said to me, "Shakir, one day, when we come to power, you will be the greatest man, and for me, from the train station to the palace they will lay a carpet" and here, the glorious date came September 9, 1944, and this came true, I became a Member of the Grand National Assembly, nourished by the ideas of the Party, because my whole life was spent fighting for the victory of Marxist ideas and in anti-fascist activities since 1919, and it is so today. […]

Signature… . With comradely respect: … (Shakir Pashov).
My Autobiography is from 1919 to this day.

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Notes

1. The Autobiography is not dated. It could be assumed that it was written in 1967 when Shakir Pashov submitted his documents for receiving his so-called 'personal people's pension' as participant of the anti-fascist resistance. It may also have been written later, in 1976, when he applied to receive the title Active Fighter Against Fascism and Capitalism, a title he was granted and which brought him various privileges.
2. The first page of the Autobiography is missing.
3. There were no parliamentary elections in 1924. Perhaps, Shakir Pashov may have in mind the local elections in Sofia on May 4, 1924, but in this regards no other information has been found.
4. The Workers' Party was established in 1927 as a legal version of the prohibited Bulgarian Communist Party.
5. Here, Shakir Pashov writes neutrally "the Gypsy Cultural-Educational Organisation" without giving the exact names of the organisations he really has in mind – the *Sofia's Common Muslim Educational and Cultural Mutual Aid Organisation 'Istikbal – Future'* and the *Common Mohammedan-Gypsy National Cultural-Educational and Mutual Aid Union in Bulgaria*. This omission of the exact names was obviously made deliberately – in order not to mention their definition as 'Muslim' and 'Mohammedan'.
6. There is no other historical evidence to support the participation of Shakir Pashov in the City leadership of the Bulgarian Workers' Party; on the contrary, Shakir Pashov's various biographical references make no mention of this (ASR, f. Шакир Пашов).
7. There is no other historical evidence that newspaper *Terbie* was published illegally. The actual purpose of this notice is to suggest that the newspaper has been propagating communist ideas.

Source: ASR, f. Шакир Пашов.
Prepared for publication by Elena Marushiakova, Vesselin Popov and Lilyana Kovacheva.
Translated by Aleksandar Marinov.

2.5.3 *The Memory of Vasil Chakmakov*

Спомен

И тази година българският народ ще посрещне тържествено своя най-голям празник Девети септември. На 09.09.1944 г. под ръководството на БКП с решаваща помощ на Съв[етската] армия работническата класа в съюз с трудещите се селяни и народната интелигенция осъществиха деветосептемврийската социалистическа революция и поеха съдбата на страната в собствените си ръце. Изминаха 40 години от този паметен ден, през който нашата родина възкачи 40 стъпала на възход и всестранен подем. Една малка, изостанла в миналото и изтощена от войните България се превърна в силно развита индустриално-аграрна страна с модерна промишленост, с уедрено и механизирано селско стопанство, с неимоверно нараснали национални, духовни и културни ценности, със завиден международен авторитет. Деветосептемврийската социалистическа революция е най-великото събитие в многовековната история на българския народ.

Победоносен край на мъжествени борби на пролетариата и другите трудещи, тя се извисява по своето социално-класово съдържание – Пролетариата, който в създадените благоприятни вътрешни и международни условия поведе Народните маси на последния и решителен щурм.

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В тази подготовка и нашето население от кв[артал] "[Георги] Кирков", сега "Н[икола] Кочев", не беше безучастно. Още в 1918 година в бунта на жените масово се стекоха на площада с плакати "Искаме хляб, върнете мъжете ни от фронта" дадохме първите жертви Пею Дачев и Теня Недева, арестувани бяха и изпратени в затвора: Иван Стефанов, Стефан Селята, Йордан Големанов, Васил Будаков Минчоолу като политически дейци. Септемврийското въстание през 1923 год., първото антифашистко въстание в света и най ярката проява на нашия народ, след първата световна война, ръководено от БКП, което [е] преломен момент в нейната болшевизация и генерална репетиция за победоносното въстание през 1944 год. Това героично въстание е голяма революционна школа на трудящите се в това число и на Комунистите от кв[артал] "[Георги] Кирков", сега "Н[икола] Кочев". В пролетарския Сливен организационната и военна подготовка на въстанието започна по-рано от август 1923 г. БКП постави началото на нелегална организация. За инструкции и указание беше определена къщата на Деко Тенев с партиен секретар отговорник Петър Терзобалиев, тогавашен глашатай на сливенската община. От доставеното оръжие: пушки, картечници, пистолети бяха раздадени и на нашите комунисти от квартала, а именно: Теню Деков, Петър Бобушков, Георги Желязков, Димитър Руков, Недю Вичев, Нади Урумов, Недялко Кръстев, Недю Чакъров, Недялко Куртев, Димитър Селята, Илия Худов, Йордан Колев, Петър Терзобалиев, Петко Терзобалиев, Кръстю Вачев, Никола Чакмака, Киро Господинов, Тодор Брошков, Йордан Цандев, Тодор Бохуров, Димитър Кръцов, Курти Кръцов, Михал Бончев, Димитър Цандев, Тодор Деков и др. Неоценима бе помощта на Младежите: Захари Вачев, Михал Големанов, Ташо и Васил Николови. Разпределени бяха на три квартири, а именно в къщите на Петър Бабушков, Димитър Кръцов, който укриваше Г[еорги] Кирков при идването му в Сливен, и Теню Деков.

Въстанието не се вдигна, фашистите започват своето отмъщение, почват масови арести на комунистите, някои от които бяха изпратени в казармата. Тодор Бохуров, Илия Худов, Георги Желязков, Недялко Куртев, жестоко бити и изпратени в затвора. Останалите бяха закарани в дола на Бармук баир[,] бити с прикладите на пушките със счупени крака и ръце, окървавени, докарани всред мегдана в махалата. Караха да влизат в клозетни ями, да вадят оръжието, което укриваха. Въпреки жестоките и варварските побоища не сломи духът на другарите, героичното Септемврийско въстание се осъществи.

Историята на гражданите от кв[артал] "[Георги] Кирков", сега "Н[икола] Кочев" е твърде дълга. Тя ни показва много и разнообразни събития из техния живот изпъстрен с много страдания. Тия хора в този квартал бързо се нагодили с местните условия. Представата за тези граждани някога е била, че са бездомници, окъсани, дрипави, без занятие, в една къщичка магаре, дърва, покъщнина, сутрин с мотичка на гърба чакат повикване за копане. Други с магаре натоварено с дърва [и] чакат по цели дни да продадат и изхранят семействата. Битовите им условия – вечер с кандилца и фитил, потопен в мас. При сватби взимаха пари с лихва, при условия

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ще ги върнат от жътва. Водата беше оскъдна. Имаше само три чешми, до Миленков, Стефан Панайотов Каварджиков, и Гюр Чешма носеха с кобилици бакъри кофи на рамене. И наистина в далечните времена е бил такъв облика, но в нашата ера – в ерата на социалистическото общество, картината е съвсем друга. [От] занятията преобладават железарство, дърварство и работа в текстилната промишленост.

Историческите документи, а и живата история – участниците в политическия живот в нашата страна, че това население в политическо отношение не са изоставали никога, рамо до рамо с българите са водили борба и стачки ръководени от БКП. Още от създаването на партията в нейните редове са включени голям брой активни членове – между които са текстилните работници: Н[икола] Кочев, Петър Терзобалиев, Никола Чакмаков, като двамата – Кочев, Чакмаков са в музея в Лайпциг в [Германската Демократична Република] (ГДР) по записките на Г[еорги] Димитров. Петър Бобушков, Димитър Руков, Васил Стамболов, Никола Кокала касиер [в] бившата фабрика Калеви, Димитър Кръцов, Георги Палев, Тодор Гачев, Стефан Гачев, Васил Станков, Недю Чакъров и др. Безспорно челно място се отрежда на Н[икола] Кочев. Имена, много имена са в списъка на партията, които не само че не посрамиха, но и издигнаха честта на квартала. И в разгънатия строй на бойните партийни единици Кочев беше кумира на гражданите комунисти в този квартал. Неговите последователи в лицето на Ник[ола] Терзобалиев, Димитър Кочев, Захари Вачев, Ташо и Васил Чакмакови, Атанас Василов, Михал Големанов, Тодор Дончев, Петър Такев, Иван Станчев, Петър Тодоров Кокев, Велико Николов, Андон Чакъров, Дечо Куртев, Петър Ганушев, Ради Стамболов, и десетки още не опетниха имена на партията. Същите бяха ядрото на Младежкото дружество на [Работническия младежки съюз] (РМС) в квартала, участници в съборите, организирани от БКП и спартакисти (юнаци) в клуба "Хр[исто] Ботев", на сегашното място на централния супер.

След завършване на войната движението нарастна, Партията се преименува [на] БКП [...]. Партията укрепна революционно. Тогава се откриха квартални партийни организации и такива комсомолски, защото градския клуб "Хр[исто] Ботев" не можеше да задоволи и осигури организационен живот на партията и масовите организации. Такава беше основаната и в нашия квартал "Георги Кирков". За секретар на младежкото дружество беше избран Никола Терзобалиев, [и] дейността [на дружеството], която [той] ръководеше, помогна да израсне и беше изпратен на тримесечна партийна школа в София, където беше приет и за член на партията през 1921 г.

След атентата 16 май 1925 година Монархофашисткото правителство предприе такава распра с комунистите от цялата страна , която по жестокост беше равна на септемврийските. Във връзка с априлските събития бяха арестувани др. Георги Желязков, Никола Терзобалиев, Захари Вачев, Ташо и Васил Чакмакови, Недялко Куртев и др. обвинени във военни организационни т.н петорки съдени по ЗЗД [Закона за защита на държавата].

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След освобождението им духът и желанието за работа в Комсомола не угасна. Младежта, която надброяваше над 100 души включени в гимнастически упражнения, образуване на младежка музика с ръководител Васил Гачев.

Не малък дял имат другарите в анти-фашистката борба. Младежите, през 1939 год. т.н група "Седморката" др. Йордан Русчев, Йордан Ганев, Никола Кочев, Господин Рускиев, Русчо Денев, Иван Костов, Петко Костов, Кирил Савов, Кирил Кръцов със секретар Господин Колев. Последните четирима бяха заловени от полицията за разпространение на нелегални позиви, бяха жестоко бити и съдени по ЗЗД [Закона за защита на държавата]. През нелегалния период 1940-1941-1942г. бяха интернирани в Концлагерите др. Никола Терзобалиев, Кръстю Големанов, Васил Мандев, Сотир Панайотов, Дечо Тодоров. Цялата тази мрежа през нелегалния период се ръководеше от Н. Терзобалиев като партиен секретар. В нашия квартал намираха убежища нелегални дейци от ЦК на партията, в домът на къщата укриваха др. Пиронкови, Георги Цанков, в къщата на Йордан Панаиотов, шура на Терзобалиев, др. Райко Дамянов и Никола Чернев. Чести срещи с Иван Лилов и др.

Не малка дейност разви и продължава да развива кварталното ни читалище. Дълбоките икономически, социални и политически промени, които са разтърсвали живота на народа и в това число и на квартала не са били в състояние да загасят този светилник, неговата дългогодишна дейност за нас е радост. Основателите на читалището застават: Никола Терзобалиев, Стефан Панайотов, Стоян Атанасов, Дечо Куртев, Ганчо Василев, Васил Чакмаков, Захари Вачев, Михал и Кръстю Големанови, Иван Кръцов, Йордан Василев Чорапчиев. Наистина то става център на духовния живот в квартала до това време кипежът, който не прекъсва и до сега. Театрални представления, сказки, обсъждания, литературни вечери. От програмите започват, музикално, театрално изкуство. Играха се пиесите "Разбит живот", "Голгота", "Гвоздеят в ключалката", по-късно "Цигани" по Пушкин и др. Вземаха активно участие Иван Кръцов, Йордан Чорапчиев, Радка Чакмакова, Сотир Апостолов и др. [...].

м. VIII.1984 г.
Васил Чакмаков.
ул. Преслав 15, Сливен.

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The Memory

This year the Bulgarian nation will again solemnly celebrate their greatest feast of 9th of September. On September 9, 1944, under the leadership of the Bulgarian Communist Party, with the determining help of the Soviet Army, the working class in the union with the labouring peasants and the national intelligentsia, accomplished the 9th of September

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Socialist Revolution and took over the destiny of the country in their own hands. Forty years have passed since this memorable day during which our homeland climbed 40 steps on the rise and a general upsurge. Small, underdeveloped in the past and exhausted by the wars, Bulgaria has become a highly developed, industrial-agrarian country, with modern industry, with a consolidated and mechanised agriculture, with incredibly grown national, spiritual and cultural values, with enviable international authority.

The 9th of September Socialist Revolution is the greatest event in the centuries-old history of the Bulgarian people. A victorious end to the courageous struggles of the proletariat and of the other working people, it rises because of its social-class content – the Proletariat, which due to the favourable domestic and international conditions, led the People's Masses to the last and decisive assault.

In this preparation, our population in the neighbourhood *Georgi Kirkov*, now called *Nikola Kochev* [1], was not impartial. Already in 1918, in the rebellion of the women, they came to the square in their masses and holding placards "We want bread, bring our men back from the front"; we gave our first victims Peyu Dachev and Tenya Nedeva [2]; arrested and sent to jail were: Ivan Stefanov, Stefa Selyata, Yordan Golemanov, Vasil Budakov Minchoolu as political activists. The September Uprising of 1923 [3], the first anti-fascist uprising in the world, and the most distinguished deed of our nation, after the First World War, led by the BCP; which was a crucial moment in its Bolshevisation and the general rehearsal for the triumphant uprising of 1944. This heroic revolt is a great revolutionary school for the working people, including for the communists from the neighbourhood *Georgi Kirkov*, now called *Nikola Kochev*. In the proletarian town Sliven, the organisation and the military preparations for the uprising began earlier, before August 1923. The BCP initiated establishing an illegal organisation. For the purpose of instructions and directions, the house of Deko Tenev was selected; the Secretary of the Party was Petar Terzobaliev, then herald of the Municipality of Sliven. From the supplied weaponry: rifles, machine guns, and pistols were distributed also to our Communists from the neighbourhood and namely: Tenyu Dekov, Petar Bobushkov, Georgi Zhelyazkov, Dimitar Rukov, Nedyu Vichev, Nadi Urumov, Nedyalko Krastev, Nedyu Chakarov, Nedyalko Kurtev, Dimitar Selyata, Iliya Khudov, Yordan Kolev, Petar Terzobaliev, Petko Terzobaliev, Krastyo Vachev, Nikola Chakmaka, Kiro Gospodinov, Todor Broshkov, Yordan Tsandev, Todor Bohurov, Dimitar Kratsov, Kurti Kratsov, Mihal Bonchev, Dimitar Tsandev, Todor Dekov and others. Invaluable was the help of the young people: Zahari Vachev, Mihal Golemanov, Tasho and Vasil Nikolovi. They were spread out between three places and namely in the house of Petar Babushkov, Dimitar Kratsov, who was hiding Georgi Kirkov [4] in his arrival in Sliven, and Tenyu Dekov.

The uprising did not happen; the Fascists began their revenge; the arrest of Communists in their masses began, some of whom were sent to the army barracks. Todor Buhurov, Iliya Hudov, Georgi Zhelyazkov, Nedyalko Kurtev were brutally beaten and sent to jail. All the rest were taken to the place of *Barmuk Bair* – beaten up with rifles' ends, with broken legs and arms, covered in blood, brought in the middle of the neighbourhood. They were made to get into squatting-type closets' pits and to take out the weapons they have been

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hiding. Despite the cruel and barbaric beatings, the spirts of the comrades were not broken and the heroic September Uprising took place.

The history of the citizens from the neighbourhood *Georgi Kirkov*, now called *Nikola Kochev*, is quite long. It shows us many various events from their lives, filled with so much suffering. The people from this neighbourhood quickly adjusted to the local conditions. Once, the perception about these citizens was that they are homeless, torn, ragged, without any professions, in a little house [were] a donkey, wood, some house belongings, in the morning [people were] waiting, with a hoe in their backs, to be called for work. Others, with a wood-loaded donkey, wait for days to sell the woods in order to feed their families. Their living standards – in the evening they use small float lights with their candle wicks dipped in fat. For weddings, they borrowed money with interest, on the condition they will return when harvest comes. The water was scarce. There were only three taps, next to Milenkov, to Stefan Panayotov Kavardzhikov and the *Gyur Cheshma*; mares carrying cauldrons and buckets on their shoulders. And truly, in the old times, such was the countenance, but in our era – in the era of a socialist society, the picture is quite different. Predominant occupations are iron-smithery, woodcutting and work in the textile industry.

The historical documents and also the living history – the participants of the political life in our country prove that this population, with regard to politics, has never been lagging behind; side by side with the Bulgarians have been fighting and participating in strikes led by the BCP. Since the founding of the Party, in its ranks have been included a great number of active members – among which are the workers in the textile factories: Nikola Kochev, Petar Terzobaliev, Nikola Chakmakov, as both – Kochev and Chakmakov are present in the museum in Leipzig, in the German Democratic Republic, according to the notes of Georgi Dimitrov [5]. Petar Bobushkov, Dimitar Rukov, Vasil Stambolov, Nikola Kokala, Treasurer in the former Factory Kalevi, Dimitar Kratsov, Goergi Talev, Todor Gachev, Stefan Gachev, Vasil Stankov, Nedyu Chakarov and others. Undoubtedly, the foremost place is given to N. Kochev. Names, many names are there in the list of the Party who not only did not blemish the honour of the neighbourhood, but they raised it. And in the stretched line of the combat party units, Kochev was the idol of the Communist citizens in this neighbourhood. His followers, including Nikola Terzobaliev, Dimitar Kochev, Zahari Vachev, Tasho and Vasil Chakmakovi, Atanas Vasilov, Mihal Golemanov, Todor Donchev, Petar Takev, Ivan Stanchev, Petar Todorov Kokev, Veliko Nikolov, Andon Chakarov, Decho Kurtev, Petar Ganushev, Radi Stambolov, and a dozen more spotless party names. The same were the core of the Youth Association of RMS (Revolutionary Youth Union), participants in the conventions organised by the BCP and *Spartakists* (*Younatsi*) [6] in the Club *Hristo Botev*, the current place of the central supermarket.

After the war ended, the movement increased and the Party was renamed to BCP [...]. The Party gathered revolutionary strength. Then, in the neighbourhood Party-organisations and *Komsomol* organisations were founded, because the town-club *Hristo Botev* was not able to satisfy and provide an organisational life of the Party and the mass organisations. Such was also the organisation found in our neighbourhood *Georgi*

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Kirkov. For a Secretary of the Youth Association was elected Nikola Terzobaliev whose activities helped him to grow and thus he was sent for three months in a Party training in Sofia where he was accepted as a Member of the Party in 1921.

After the assault of May 16, 1935, the Monarch-fascist Government launched such an altercation with the Communists from around the country which in its severity was equal to that of the September events. With regard to the April events, arrested were the comrades: Georgi Zhelyazkov, Nikola Terzobaliev, Zahari Vachev, Tasho and Vasil Chakmakovi, Nedyalko Kurtev and others; they were accused of military-organisational [crimes], the so-called *Petorki* (group of five persons), [and] sued under the Law for the Protection of the State [7].

After their release, the spirit and the willingness for work in the *Komsomol* did not go out. The youth, which numbered over 100 people, took part in gymnastic exercises and created music for the youth, led by Vasil Gachev.

The share of the comrades in the anti-fascist struggle was not insignificant. The youth, in 1939, the so-called *Sedmorkata* (*the Seven*), comrades Yordan Ruschev, Yordan Ganev, Nikola Kochev, Gospodin Ruskiev, Ruscho Denev, Ivan Kostov, Petko Kostov, Kiril Savov, Kiril Kratsov, along with the Secretary, Gospodin Kolev. The last four were caught by the Police for the spreading of illegal appeals and were severely beaten and judged according to the Law for the Protection of the State. During the illegal period 1940-1941-1942, interned in the concentration camps were the comrades Nikola Terzobaliev, Krastyo Golemanov, Vasil Mandev, Sotir Panayotov, Decho Todorov. This whole network in the illegal period was led by Nikola Terzobaliev in his capacity as the Secretary of the Party. In our neighbourhood, illegal functionaries from the Central Committee of Communist Party found refuge; in the house hid the comrades Pironkovi, Georgi Tsankov, in the house of Yordan Panayotov, the brother-in-law of Terzobaliev, comrades Rayko Damyanov and Nikola Chernev; common were the meetings with Ivan Lilov and others.

Not insignificant was, and continue to be, the activities of our neighbourhood's *chitalishte* [8]. For our joy, the great economic, social and political changes which have shaken the lives of the people, including that in the neighbourhood, were not able to put off this light, and the *chitalishte*'s many years of activities. The founders of the cultural reading club are: Nikola Terzobaliev, Stefan Panayotov, Stoyan Atanasov, Decho Kurtev, Gancho Vasilev, Vasil Chakmakov, Zahari Vachev, Mikhal and Krastyo Golemanovi, Ivan Kratsov, Yordan Vasilev Chorapchiev. Truly, the club became a centre for the spiritual life in the neighbourhood whose impetus does not cease even today. Theatre performances [9], lectures, discussions, literature evenings. From the programmes, there emerge musical and theatrical art. The plays that were played were *Shattered Life, Golgotha, The Nail in the Door Lock*, later *Gypsies* by Alexander Pushkin, and others. Active roles were taken by Ivan Kratsov, Yordan Chorapchiev, Radka Chakmakova, Sotir Apostolov, and others. […]

August, 1984.
Vasil Chakmakov.
15 Preslav Street, Sliven.

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Notes

1. It refers here to the so-called *Gorna Mahala* (Upper Neighbourhood), located in the old part of the town, populated by Gypsy Christians most of whom worked in textile factories.
2. According to other sources, the killed Gypsy woman was Mariela Nedeva Karamalakova (Генов et al., 1968, p. 17).
3. The September Uprising which broke out in the fall of 1923, was organised by the Bulgarian Communist Party against the Government of Aleksandar Tsankov which came to power with the military coup on the 9th of June, 1923, overthrowing the Government of Aleksandar Stamboliyski (Bulgarian Agrarian National Union).
4. Georgi Kirkov (1867-1919) was one of the founders and the leaders of the Bulgarian Social Democratic Workers' Party (Narrow Socialists) and was repeatedly elected as a Member of the Bulgarian Parliament; as trade union leader, he visited Sliven many times.
5. Georgi Dimitrov (1882-1949) was a longtime leader of the Bulgarian Communist Party, an activist of the international communist movement, he was accused in the Leipzig Process (1933), he was a Secretary General of the Comintern (1935-1943) and Prime Minister of Bulgaria (1946-49).
6. It refers to the youth gymnastic associations which were under the influence of the Communist Party, called *Spartakisti* (named after Spartacus) which in order to be distinguished from the widespread analogous youth athletic associations were called *Younatsi* (brave fellows).
7. The Law for the Protection of the State is a special harsh criminal law, passed in 1924 by the Government of Aleksandar Tsankov, which aimed to punish its political opponents.
8. This case refers to the *chitalishte* opened in so called Gorna Mahala (Upper Neighbourhood) in 1928 (Andral, 2000, p. 11; 2001, p. 96). From February 1939 it is called *Knyaz Simeon Tarnovski* (Prince Simeon Turnovski), named after the Bulgarian heir to the throne (Изток, 1939, p. 1).
9. A photo with the caption 'Founders of the 1st Gypsy Theater Group. Sliven. 24.03.1927' is preserved (ASR, f. Господин Колев). On the back of the photo there are written the names of the founders (12 men and 10 women), and as theater directors (in the sense of leaders), are mentioned Ivan Kratsov and Yordan Chorapchiyata. It has obviously been an amateur troupe which has been very active over the years – it used to organise literary and musical social events (Сливенска поща, 1930, p. 2) and it occasionally did theatrical performances, e.g. the plays *Prodigal Son* (Сливенска поща, 1932, p. 2) and *Ruined Life* (Изток, 1941, p. 4).

Source: DA Sliven, f. 157, op. 1, a.e. 11, l. 1-21.
Prepared for publication by Elena Marushiakova, Vesselin Popov, Lyudmila Zhivkova and Plamena Stoyanova.
Translated by Aleksandar Marinov.

Comments

The texts published here, written by Shakir Pashov, offer a new interpretation and even a new factology of the events that are described above concerning the Gypsy organisations and their activities. This new reading of history, from the distance of time, and subjected to the new dominant ideology, poses serious problems in verifying the described events.

In the first place, the case of the Society *Egypt* (including the question of whether it existed at all) and its activities during the period 1919-1924 (a time when the Bulgarian Communist Party was banned under the Law for the Protection of the State) remains unclear. In any case, apart from Shakir Pashov's memoirs, in the historical sources, there is no other evidence of its existence and it has not been officially registered anywhere. The fact that a few years later (the late 1920s and early 1930s) it is mentioned again in the above-published materials does not change things much because, as it became clear

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from the presented materials, it is only a sports association. Nevertheless, the existence of the Egyptian Society is still taken for granted in academic literature (Мизов, 2006, pp. 220-221; Нягулов, 2008, p. 34).

This does not mean that Shakir Pashov's materials should not be taken as reliable historical sources. The participation of many of the Gypsy youth in the social and political struggles and their involvement with the Communist movement is beyond doubt and whether it took place in that particular fashion (through Society *Egipet*) is already a secondary issue of our interest in this discourse. In this sense, we have no reason to doubt the truth of the events described by Shakir Pashov as a whole even if there are reasonable doubts about some of their specific details (especially with regard to his personal involvement, which is clearly exaggerated).

A few words about Shakir Pashov himself are needed, a man who has been referred to repeatedly, and whose life experience reflects the vicissitudes of different historical eras. Under the conditions of the Communist Regime, established after September 9, 1944, Shakir Pashov was the first Gypsy who became a Member of the Bulgarian Parliament. As the result of a special decision of the Politburo of the Bulgarian Workers' Party (Communists) of February 28, 1947, he became a regular deputy (replacing another resigned deputy) in the Grand National Assembly (CSA, f. 1 B, op. 6, a.e. 235, l. 4) which, at the end of the same year, adopted the new Constitution of the People's Republic of Bulgaria (the so-called Dimitrov Constitution). It is interesting to note that the proposal-recommendation for Shakir Pashov to become a Member of Parliament was made on behalf of the 'General Organisation of the Gypsy Minority for Fighting Fascism and Racism'. The recommendation letter is stamped with a seal with the inscription 'All-Gypsy Cultural Organisation – Sofia' and depicts a five-pointed star, under which is written '1945' (Ibid., l. 5), its founding year. An organisation with such a name is not mentioned in other historical sources and, in all probability, this refers to the Organisation *Ekipe* which, in this case, used another name and symbol, more suitable to the time.

Shakir Pashov was also the editor-in-chief of the newspaper *Romano esi* (Romani Voice) and a chair of the Gypsy Musical-Artistic Theatre *Roma* (ASR, f. Шакир Пашов). He was quite popular among the Gypsy population, as evidenced by one of the poems of Aliya Ismailov, which ends with the verse:

> Long live Stalin, Tito, Dimitrov,
> And the Comrade [Shakir] M[ahmudov] Pashov! (Романо еси, 1948, p. 4).

On April 7, 1949, the Central Directorate of the Cultural-Educational Organisation of the Gypsy Minority in Bulgaria excluded Shakir Pashov for a "manifested anti-national activity before September 9, 1944, as a collaborator of the Police and for manifested, after this date, corrupting activity" (AMVR, f. 13, op. 1, a.e. 774, l. 30). In 1951, he was interned into the concentration labour camp (officially called 'Labour-Educational Camp') on the Island Belene where he remained between September 10, 1951, and August 10, 1953 (CSA, f. 2124 K, op. 1, a.e. 108107, l. 1-2).

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Shakir Pashov was officially rehabilitated in 1956 but in 1959 he was again exiled for three years in the village of Rogozina, in Dobrudzha (ASR, f. Шакир Пашов). He was finally rehabilitated in the 1960s and he began receiving his so-called people's pension and, in 1976, he received the title Active Fighter Against Fascism and Capitalism. Shakir Pashov died on October 5, 1981, in Sofia, as an Honorary Pensioner (ASR, f. Шакир Пашов).

Coming back to the participation of Roma in Bulgaria's socio-political struggles, it is only natural that Gypsy activists join precisely the left-wing political movements because the latter expresses the interests of the poor and the oppressed social classes, to which the Gypsies belong as a community. Such processes take place not only in Sofia, where the social stratification is relatively strong but also elsewhere in the country. It turns out that the inclusion of Gypsies in the socio-political struggles is differentiated according to the degree and forms of their social integration which is related to their place of residence, based on the differentiation between town-village, or the urban and the rural. In these socio-political struggles, the Gypsies had their first casualties during the events in the period between 1923-1925.

The political situation in the first half of the 1920s was troubled. The left-wing Government of the Bulgarian Agrarian National Union, led by Aleksandar Stamboliyski, implemented an agrarian reform thanks to which many Gypsies who were living in the countryside received their own land. After the military coup organised by the Military League, which took place on June 9, 1923, Gypsies became involved in the armed resistance of the Bulgarian peasants in defence of the legitimate government. As a result of the suppression of the resistance, the Gypsies Asan Lalchov from the village of Dragor, Ali Durakov and Muto Asanov from the village of Karabunar, Pazardzhik District, were killed (Генов et al., 1968, pp. 22-24). Gypsies from North-Western Bulgaria joined also the September Uprising in 1923 which was organised by the Bulgarian Communist Party and by the left-wing of the Bulgarian Agrarian National Union. Seven Gypsies were killed in the attack on army barracks in Lom (Романо еси, 1946, p. 2). During the suppression of the uprising, the Gypsies Shinko Kalishev, and Biryam Aliyev from the village of Milin Bryag, Yusein Abdulov from Berkovitsa, Mecho Demov Gyulov from the village of Yalovo, Nano Banov Munov from the village of Doktor Yosifovo, Dervish Bayramov from the village of Archar, Veli and Kurto Mangovi Seferovi from the village of Gradishnitsa were killed (Генов et al., 1968, p. 20).

A special place in the history of Gypsy participation in the socio-political life of Bulgaria is the town of Sliven. This case is unique not only for Bulgaria but also for the history of Gypsies around the world. In fact, as incredible as that may sound (especially for readers from the West), the Gypsies from Sliven appear to be the first factory proletariat in the Balkans. When, in 1836, during the Ottoman Empire, the Bulgarian Dobri Zhelyazkov created the first modern textile factory in the Balkans, a major part of employees there were Gypsies (ethnic Bulgarians preferred to be small artisans and farmers and avoided working as hired labourers). Under the conditions of the new Bulgarian State, many new factories opened in Sliven and the town became a centre of the textile industry in Bulgaria.

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At the beginning of the 20th century, 80 per cent of the textile workers in Sliven were Gypsies (Генов et al., p. 1968, p. 16), and by the end of the Second World War, this figure had fallen slightly to 60 per cent (NA BAN – IEFEM, No. 295 II).

Due to their class position, the Gypsies in Sliven became a natural target for the propaganda of the ideas of the Bulgarian Workers' Social Democratic Party (which later grew into the Communist Party). At the 9th Congress of the Party in 1902, 2,447 Party members were counted, among them 6 Gypsies (Генов et al., 1968, p. 16; Колев, 1985, pp. 11-12). Two years later, in 1904, only in Sliven, there were 17 Gypsies reported as members of the Bulgarian Workers' Social Democratic Party (Narrow Socialists), which in 1919 was renamed to Bulgarian Communist Party, and which in the same year won the Municipal Elections in Sliven, as a result of which the so-called Sliven Commune emerged and among the Municipal Councillors was a Gypsy, namely the party activist Nikola Kochev (Ibid.). In 1929 Gypsy textile workers set up their own food cooperative, which lasted for two years; it was restored in 1932, one of its main functions being to support the families of striking workers (Horváthová, 1964, p. 94, Note 83). The active participation of the Gypsies from Sliven in the political struggles led by the Communist Party continued throughout the whole period until the end of the Second World War, which is reflected in detail in the manuscript published above.

Gypsies from different regions of the country were also participants in the partisan movement organised by the Bulgarian Communist Party during the Second World War, in which Bulgaria was an ally of Nazi Germany, e.g. Osman Bilalov and Sashko Germanov from Shumen (DA Shumen, f. 1119, op. 1, a.e. 11, l. 1; Демирова, 2017, p. 40), Trayko Dzhevelekov from Lom, Petko Kanchev from Pleven region, etc. Bulgarian Gypsies were also involved in the partisan units in other countries, such as Dimitar Nemtsov from Sliven who, as a soldier in the Occupation Corps in Yugoslavia, deserted and joined the local partisans (Генов et al., 1968, pp. 24-25) and Ivan M. Stoyanov in occupied Macedonia. In the anti-fascist movement, the Gypsies also gave victims, such as the partisan Yusein Kamenov from the village of Gorna Kremena, Vratsa District, who was killed in 1944; the *yataks* (partisan's helper, from Turkish) – Velichka Drumcheva from the village of Radetski, Gabrovo region, Mustafa Yovchev from the village of Ledenika, Vratsa region, and Yusein Mutov Musov from the village of Varbitsa, Vratsa region, were also killed in that movement. When Bulgaria declared war on Germany after 1944, dozens of Gypsies also joined as volunteers. From Sliven alone, eight young people left for the front, three of whom died (Ibid, p. 20). The exact numbers of Gypsies, participants in the anti-fascist movement during the Second World War are difficult to ascertain, some of them were partisans, others were *yataks*, and a third group were political prisoners. In any case, during the so-called Era of Socialism, at least a few dozens of them received the title called Active Fighter Against Fascism and Capitalism which offered them a number of social privileges; only from the town of Sliven holders of this title are 22 persons (20 men и 2 women).

In general, the number of Gypsies who have actively participated in the anti-fascist resistance in Bulgaria is relatively small. They represent only a small proportion of the

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entire Gypsy community but they are nevertheless an important phenomenon that deserves special mention. Not less curious is the question of the contemporary reading of their involvement which shows how difficult it is to achieve a consensus between the different historical discourses which try to assess the past. During the so-called Era of Socialism, a commemorative plaque was put in honour of Ibra[h]im Kerimov, a member of the Workers' Youth Union (a youth unit of the Communist Party), who was shot dead on the street by police in Sofia at a communist demonstration in 1919. Following the changes in 1989, during a time of democracy, this plaque was removed because it was considered as a legacy of repudiated Communism.

Viewed from the perspective of the Roma civic emancipation movement, the involvement of Gypsies in social and political struggles appears to be one of the main directions that this movement takes. There is a search for a new way to solve the problems of the Gypsy community through the participation of the community's representatives in mainstream political activities based on Gypsies' class consciousness and their self-perception as a unit of the general social structure of the civic nation which they are an integral part of. This is not a historical curiosity but a legitimate development which is a result of the achieved level of social integration.

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Summarising Comments

When analysing the development of the Roma civic emancipation movement in Bulgaria during the period under review (from the creation of the new Bulgarian State until the Second World War), it is imperative that this movement is placed in the general social and political context of the time. This would mean taking into account the public policy (or lack of it which is also a kind of policy of negligence) towards the Gypsies and, more generally, the attitude of the macro society towards them on the whole. In this regard, laconic, but quite accurate in his overall assessment, is the already mentioned Bernard Gilliat-Smith who wrote at the beginning of the 20th century:

> Bulgarians, the lords of the land, might be expected to know something more concerning the Gypsies, who are, after all, in Bulgaria, numerically no negligible quantity. Such is, however, not the case. To them, every Gypsy man is just a gypsy, a dirty scoundrel, while every Gypsy woman is the fitting subject for some soak joke. At best some lawyer may give you a belated copy of a futile by-law, which never interested anyone save perhaps its author, and has remained a dead letter since its unfortunate birth. I would add, that the Bulgarians' ignorance on this subject is only surpassed by their inability to understand that there is anything in it worth learning. (Gilliat-Smith, 1915-1916, p. 2).

The text above explains why, in the end, the Bulgarian society as a whole, on the grassroots and (especially) on the national-political levels, pays so little (or in many cases, almost no) attention to the Gypsies. A particularly illustrative example in this regard is the perceived problem with the travelling lifestyle of Gypsies (which was a major issue in Central Europe at the time and continues to be relevant in some Western countries today).

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In fact, from a legal point of view, there is no problem here (or more precisely, there should be no problem at all). As early as 1886, "nomadism throughout the Bulgarian Principality is forbidden" according to Art. 7 of the Urban Municipalities Act (Държавен вестник, 1886a, p. 2) and Art. 8 of the Rural Municipalities Act (Държавен вестник, 1886b, p. 3). The laws are unambiguous, they make no exceptions, and the "current nomads are obliged to settle down within the boundaries of the municipalities" (Ibid., 1886ab). In spite of this, the amendments of the already mentioned Election Law of 1901 explicitly refer to "Gypsies without any fixed abode" (Държавен вестник, 1901, p. 2), i.e. it refers not just to persons without any fixed abode but explicitly to travelling Gypsies which is de facto legalising the existence of Gypsy nomadism. This restriction of voting of nomadic Gypsies is also retained in the subsequent amendments in 1919 to the Election Law (Държавен вестник, 1919, p. 1) which became removed only in 1937 with the Ordinance-law on the Election of Members of Parliament for Ordinary National Assembly (Държавен вестник, 1937, pp. 138-145).

Although outlawing nomadism has existed as a legal rule, it has almost never been put into practice. Only a few cases are known when it was observed, e.g. in 1906 the Mayor of the Municipality of Aytos forbade the travelling of Gypsies within the Municipality (DA Burgas, f. 102 K, op. 1, a.e. 116, l. 89-90). However, there is no information on whether this Municipal Ordinance was really applied. In 1927, with a Circular of the Police Directorate, all the Municipal Directors and the District Police Inspectors were reminded that 'nomadism throughout the Kingdom is forbidden' and it was ordered that those who were not Bulgarian subjects should be extradited abroad (DA Sofia, f. 170 K, op. 1, a.e. 1, l. 2). In the Sofia District, this Circular was forwarded to the Chiefs of Districts who respectively related the message to the mayors of villages demanding that "in future, there should be no Gypsy-travellers in the region" (Ibid., l. 3). What the actual results of these bans have been become clear from another Circular of the Police Directorate, dated November 24, 1931, which reiterates that "nomadism in our country is forbidden" and it states: "For 45 years these legal decrees have been in force and almost no one observes them! [...] A sad fact!" (Ibid., l. 3).

In 1934, a new *Ordinance-Law for Rural Municipalities* was issued in which it was again explicitly stated that "nomadism is forbidden" (Държавен вестник, 1934, p. 1633-1642). The consequence of this Ordinance, were the following Circulars from the District Governor of the Sofia District of 1936 and 1938, which again reminded the legal norms with regard to Gypsy-nomads (DA Sofia, f. 170 K, op. 1, a.e. 1, l. 21, 25) but apparently, the results remained the same (i.e. there was a lack of any results whatsoever). In the meantime, on November 26, 1937, a Bill was submitted for discussion to the Bulgarian Parliament 'For the Abolition of the Wandering of Gypsy-Nomads' (CSA, f. 190 K, op. 3, a.e. 114, l. 7-8), prepared by the Ministry of Internal Affairs and National Health. The motion has been discussed in the Parliamentary Committee, revised several times, evaluated by external experts, etc., and after almost four years (1941, June 28) it was deemed as "wholly outdated" (CSA, f. 190 K, op. 3, a.e. 114, l. 48) and thus it was not tabled in the Plenary Hall at all.

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At the same time, the Bulgarian state continued its attempts to force the local authorities in the villages (at that time, more than 80% of the population of Bulgaria lived in villages) to comply with the existing legal norms prohibiting Gypsy nomadism. In 1938-39, the Ministry of the Interior and Public Health sent letters to the district police departments, which accordingly sent circulars to the district police stations (DA Kyustendil, f. 35 K, op. 1, a.e. 21; f. 35 K, op. 1, a.e. 150). These circulars reiterated that there was a ban on vagrancy and begging under the Rural Municipal Police Act of 1905, and specified the specific paragraphs that village mayors and police officers must apply to Gypsy nomads. However, there is no evidence that these circulars were executed. Memories from the oral history of former nomadic Gypsies explain the mechanism by which Gypsies avoided these prohibitions. This mechanism was extremely simple and applied everywhere in a similar manner – when Gypsy nomads arrived in any village, the first thing they had to do was give a bribe to the local authorities, who no longer created problems for them. All this once again confirms what has already been said: namely, that actual history cannot (and should not) be reduced to a study of existing legal norms, and it is no less important to understand how they have been applied in everyday life. Or as was the case with the bans on wandering of the Gypsies in the whole history of the new Bulgarian state (until its final ban in 1958), how they were not applied in the first place.

It is worth noting that among the numerous activities of the Roma civic emancipation movement throughout the period, the topic of nomadism is not present at all. This could easily be understood because Gypsy-nomads were a relatively small proportion of the overall Gypsy population while the Roma movement was entirely a matter of settled, and relatively better socially integrated, Gypsies. The only exception to this were the non-Roma missionaries of Evangelical churches who posed a fundamentally important question, namely, whether Gypsies should be forced to settle down in one place or they could become good Christians without breaking their traditions linked with wandering (Християнски приятел, 1939, p. 7). Notably, in this case, the article in question was a translation from German, i.e. this was yet another demonstration of the Orientalist approach in transferring of foreign experiences and offering solutions that are inappropriate and do not apply in other places. The Gypsy pastors themselves clearly preferred to work among their sedentary fellows (or at least there is no historical evidence to suggest that they have tried to work also among Gypsy nomads).

The level of social integration of Gypsies from which the development of their civil emancipation movement sprang, at least in the Balkans, suggests that there was at least some, even quite primary, level of literacy and writing culture in the community (or at least among its leaders). Of course, there were cases of attracting non-Roma in various ways and under various forms, to assist Roma with contacts with the State and with local institutions and to represent the community's aspirations to the macro-society. Moreover, in some cases, these non-Roma individuals even took the leading positions in this movement (e.g. Dr. Marko Markov and Pastor Petar Minkov). But even in these cases, including even when the original initiative and ideas come 'from outside' the community (e.g. Communist ideas or Evangelism), there must be a certain critical minimum of societal

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literacy within the community itself so that Roma could appreciate their unequal social and civic position, and in order for a movement that seeks a change to emerge.

Naturally, the Roma elite which brought forward the leading ideas for the development of the community and for changing Roma's place in society was relatively small (or even quite small). However, this could be said for any (or at least almost any) community (national, social, class, religious, cultural, artistic, etc.) elite in their initial stages of inception and development. And it could not be otherwise, especially considering the educational level and the social position of the Gypsies in the new Bulgarian State. In 1905, only 3.9 per cent of Gypsies could read and write (Girard, 1932, p. 43); in 1910, there were 4,1191 Gypsies who were literate (3.43 percent of all Gypsies); in 1920-5,917 (or 6.01 per cent); in 1926-11,106 (8.21 per cent) (Статистически годишник, 1931, pp. 42-43, 463). There is no data in this regard in the later years but in any case, according to the 1946 Census, over 81 per cent of Gypsies over the age of 16 were illiterate (Резултати, 1970, Vol. 2, pp. 17-22); in other words, they never went to school. During the period under review, the Bulgarian State did not take any measures in this regard, although according to the legislative norms, at least the primary (four years of) education was compulsory for all children. On the contrary, even in the rare occasions where individual representatives of educational institutions at the local level were concerned about the education of Gypsy children, they did not find the necessary support from national institutions. Such was the case in the town of Kyustendil in 1930 when a check revealed that out of 153 children in the Gypsy mahala who should be enrolled in compulsory education, only 35 children remained in school in their 1st and 2nd grades, and 33 pupils were enrolled in 3rd and 4th grades (DA Kyustendil, f. 177, op. 1, a.e. 48, l. 156-201), i.e. less than half.

Against this background, the presence of Gypsies with higher education was scarce and these would be very rare exceptions. Unique, not only for Bulgaria but on a global scale, is the case of Atanas Dimitrov (according to some unconfirmed data his family name is Mislyakov while according to other it is Valkov). He was born on January 18, 1874, in the village of Gradets, encouraged and financially supported by his teacher, he graduated from High School in Sliven in 1893 and continued pursuing higher education at the University of Jena in Germany where, in 1898, he defended his Doctoral thesis on *Die psychologischen Grundlagen der Ethik J. G. Fichte's, aus ihrem Gesamtcharakter entwickelt* [the Psychological Foundations of Ethics by J. G. Fichte developed according to its general character] (Dimitroff, 1898). When he returned to Bulgaria, he worked as a German language teacher at the High Schools in Ruse and Gabrovo, and since 1904, he was employed as a full-time lecturer in German at the Faculty of History and Philology in Sofia University *St Kliment Ohridski*. He has published several articles in leading philosophical journals, and he is one of the founders of modern psychology in Bulgaria. Atanas Dimitrov died in Sofia on the 20th of January, 1916 and according to the recollections of his contemporaries, throughout his life, he never hid his Gypsy origin (Михалчев, 1939, p. 213; Алманах, 1940, p. 163; Нягулова, 2012, pp. 12-13).

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The case of Ivan Kirilov is somewhat similar but much more obscure. He was born on the 21st of May, 1876 in Elena. His family was extremely poor, but with a scholarship from the municipality, he graduated from a pedagogical school in Silistra. He then worked as a teacher, and with the help of his fellow citizen, the famous writer Petko Yu. Todorov, went to study law – initially in Toulouse, then in Freiburg (Switzerland). After graduation, he worked as a judge in various places in the country. He died on the 26th of December, 1936 in Sofia. Ivan Kirilov is the author of more than 40 books in various genres – poems, short stories, short stories, dramas, comedies, short stories, novels, biographical essays, etc. It has been rumored in literary circles for many years that Ivan Kirilov once shared with writer Anton Strashimirov that he is of Gypsy origin (Михалчев, 1939, p. 213; Пенчева, 2012) but there is no other direct historical evidence to support this statement.

Another important issue, however, comes to the fore here. In cases when members of the Roma community manage to be successful as individuals in the general society, they do not necessarily become leaders of their communities, even though they do not hide their heritage (far more common, including today, are the opposite examples). It turns out that the new Roma elite was formed by those activists who did not live apart from their community and were an integral part of it (typical in this regard is the case of Shakir Pashov). As for Atanas Dimitrov today, even in his home village, there are no memories about him in the oral history of the local community.

Overall, the movement for Roma civic emancipation in Bulgaria during the studied period undergoes a long and complex path of development. Starting from local professional associations and incorporating various other forms of civic organisations – religious (Muslim), mutual aid, charitable, etc. – it gradually reaches their merger into one common organisation. This merger, however, leads not only to the mechanical unification of the goals and functions of the former types of organisations but to the promoting of a new type of organisation which has already a national dimension (at least by design) and a new, ideological standing, i.e. it transformed into a completely different type of civic organisation.

During this ideological evolution, not only the religious division of the Gypsies in Bulgaria was overcome, but also their intrinsic heterogeneity as a community. More generally, the main divide goes along the lines of religion. Bulgaria's population Census conducted in 1934 registered 80,532 people with 'Gypsy-speaking language' whose differentiation according to their religion is as follows: Muslims were 67,103 persons, Eastern Orthodox – 13,323 people, Protestants – 69 people, and other religious – 37 people (Преброяване на населението, 1939, pp. 22-29). Provided that in Bulgaria at that time a large portion of Gypsies were Turkish-speaking (Marushiakova & Popov, 2015, pp. 27-33), the percentage of Muslim Gypsies was even higher (in all cases more than three-quarters).

The Roma civic emancipation movement begins its civic (and at the same time de facto political) activity as a struggle for the voting rights of Gypsy Muslims (the Gypsy Congress in Sofia) and includes the attempts to legalise the partial internal

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self-government and the representativeness to the authorities (Coptic Muhtarship in Vidin), the aspirations of Muslims to be involved in the management of Islamic municipalities and properties (e.g. the Sofia Common Muslim Educational-Cultural Cooperative Organisation 'Istikbal – Future') and the solving of issues which are related with their everyday lives and their employment (professional, mutual aid/cooperative, charitable, cultural and educational associations).

Ultimately, all this development, whereby the ethnic unity of the community prevailed over its religious division, led to the creation of a national organisation which was inclusive of all Gypsies in the country regardless of their religion and place of residence. Especially revealing in this respect is the case with the day of St George (Gergyovden or Hederlezi in his Christian or Muslim version respectively). The image of St George attends the seal of the Coptic Muhtarship in the town Vidin; at the Mutual Aid Union, he is the union's 'patron saint' (a legacy of professional associations); and at the United Common-Cultural Educational Organisation of the Gypsy Minorities in Bulgaria 'Ekipe' his day is already an 'organisation holiday'. The fact that in the latter case the day of St George is not explicitly mentioned, but only the date of May 7 (one day after the traditional holiday) reflects the unwillingness to publicly demonstrate religious connections or relations in the new conditions of the communist regime. However, this does not negate the existing continuity of the nascent and evolving national symbolism (a direct analogue in this respect are the existing national holidays of the other peoples of the Balkans). From this point of view, the choice of the 'Gypsy feast' is particularly appropriate because de facto (despite its various names) it is common to both Gypsy Muslims (the majority) and Gypsy Christians. The holiday is named after the Christian religious calendar because Orthodoxy became the official religion in Bulgaria at that time, i.e. the embeddedness of the Gypsies within the Bulgarian civic nation is emphasised. The fact that the same holiday is solemnly celebrated by all other Balkan peoples is not an issue at all, because each of these peoples (including the Gypsies) perceived it as their 'own' ethnic holiday.

The place of traditional holidays for all peoples living in the Central, South-Eastern and Eastern European region in the era of modern nationalism is of particular importance. As already stated, one of the main pillars of this nationalism in the spirit of Herder is the folk traditions, including the holidays, which are perceived in this sense. The question here is not whether and to what extent a tradition is unique and ethnically specific, but much more important is how it is perceived by its bearers. In this sense, Roma are no exception, and 'traditions' (whatever that may involve), and in particular holidays, are especially important as an expression of the 'National Spirit' (Herder's 'Volksgeist'). It is for this reason that, in the course of historical development, Roma, whose ethnic culture very much incorporates adapted and perceived as their 'owns' forms and elements of the culture of their surrounding population in the region, in many cases, preserve those forms and elements that have already disappeared among majority population (Marushiakova & Popov, 2016c, pp. 35-64).

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Domination of ethnicity over religiosity can be noted, however curious it may seem, even with religious institutions – as in the above described cases of Gypsies' struggles to take over in Muslim communities and by entering new Evangelical churches among the Roma (Gypsy Baptist Church). However, this is not some unique specificity, which is found only among Gypsies in Bulgaria. For Eastern Orthodox peoples, religion is subjected to modern nationalism, it is one of the pivots of the nation-state, and the church must necessarily be 'national' (cf. recent events in today's Ukraine).

The new type of national civic organisations, which took shape in the 1930s (the Mutual Aid Union and the *Ekipe*), emerges (at least as a pursuit goal) as a representative of the entire community, and as a result, it desires to be a partner of state and local institutions to solve community problems. In general, the main objective of the new type of national civic organisations was the overall civic emancipation of the community which would involve the achievement of an equal social standing and social integration of the Gypsy community, which would thus be an integral part of the Bulgarian civic nation. However, this does not mean that their purpose was to obliterate the Gypsies as a separate ethnic community or their ethnic assimilation. Even in a religious system such as Christianity, which places in its creed the lack of differentiation of peoples before God, Gypsies wanted, in the spirit of Balkan Eastern Orthodox nationalism, to have their own, Gypsy Evangelical Church. Not only that, but there were also indications (e.g. in the Statute of the *Ekipe*) that, at least as a vision in the distant future, there were ideas for the further development in that direction, including the creation of their nation-state (to what extent these perspectives were realistic would be a completely different question).

However, the vision of one's own Gypsy state presents only abstractly, as a desirable opportunity in the indefinitely distant future, while all efforts are focused on the problems of the present and the foreseeable future. Nowhere in the development of the ideas of the Roma civic emancipation during the historical period in question, however, could be discerned ideas that propose a separation of the Gypsies from the macro-society or the opposition between the two. On the contrary, the desire seems to be for the Roma community to integrate into society and to find the right (and most of all, fair) balance between their community and the macro-society, within which they are perceived as an ethnically different but inseparable part of the Bulgarian civil nation. This is true even when, at first glance, it seems that the ethnic dimensions are not taken into account at all while the leading ideas revolve around the struggle of the social classes (the case of the involvement of Gypsies in the Communist Movement).

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CHAPTER 3

Yugoslavia

3.1 Organisations

3.1.1 *The First Serbian Gypsy Zadruga for Mutual Aid in Sickness and Death*

3.1.1.1 The Gypsy Movement

Покрет Цигана

Једна од најинтересантнијих забава у овој сезони била је без сумње циганска забава у "Касини".

Још 1890 год. основана је у Београду Прва Српска Циганска Задруга. Циљ Задруге је просвећивање чланова и међусобно помагање. Од свога оснивања већ је показала лепе резултате. Задруга је сад узела на себе дужност, да сазове велики цигански земаљски збор, на коме ће се изабрати централна управа са три функције: социјална, национално-културна и хумана. Даље, у свакоме округу ће се образовати окружне управе. Ово удружење имаће главни циљ да упути сваког члана на рад.

Да би се све то постигло потребан је фонд, уплата улога итд. У циљу тога приређена је и ова забава. Београђани су се слабо одазвали, приход је био свега 15 000, али што се тиче самог извођења концертног дела, организовања забаве, реда итд. то се мора похвалити.

∵

The Gypsy Movement

One of the most interesting parties that was organised this season was, without any doubt, the one that Gypsies organised in *Kasina* [1].

Back in 1890, the *First Serbian Gypsy Zadruga* [2] was established in Belgrade. The aim of this organisation was to provide education as well as mutual assistance to its members. Since its foundation this society achieved very fine results. The Society now took upon itself the duty to organise a big Gypsy meeting, at which to elect a central board which will have three functions: a social one, a national-cultural and a humanistic one. Furthermore, in each county local branches will be organised. This association will be having the main aim to instruct each member to work.

In order to achieve all this a fund is necessary, as well as balance payments etc. For this purpose, this party has been organised. The Belgrade citizens however did not attend in great numbers, consequently, the profit was only 15 000, but we have to praise all the

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things concerning the concert performance itself, the party's organisation, as well as the order, etc.

Notes

1. *Kasina* is one of the oldest hotels in Belgrade, built in 1856, and especially popular and prestigious during the interwar years.
2. Historically speaking, the Slavic word *zadruga* has been used to refer to a type of rural community organisation uniting the extended family and its common property, herds and income. The traditional form of *zadruga* started to decline after the mid 19th century, but the term continued to be used for formally established entities at the end of 19th century and beginning of 20th century. The *zadrugas* of that type were equivalents of cooperatives formed to unite agricultural workers from certain regions, craftsmen and small-traders from the same field of specialisation, often replacing the *esnaf* (guild organisation) system. They had economic and agricultural character, and had to work in various forms for the support of its members, often by selling its members' production or giving out credits to them.

Source: [No author]. (1922). Покрет Цигана. *Правда*, An. 18, No. 33, 1922, February 4, p. 3.
Prepared for publication by Danilo Šarenac and Sofiya Zahova.

3.1.1.2 The Membership Card

Прва Српско-Циганска Задруга за узајмно помаганье у болести и смрти

Чланска карта

[...]

Извод из правила.

Члан 5. Циль Задруге.

Циљ Задруге је да својим члановима обезбеђује:

1. Помоћ у случају болести, укопишцу и посмртницу.

2. Да временом оснује книжњицу и друштвену читаоницу која ће бити от общти користи друшственим члановима.

3. Да сваке године осмог маја по ст. кл. приређује парастос умрлим члановима, добротворама, утемељачима, почастним и редовним.

4. Да сваке године слави своју славу младог св. Николе 8. маја по ст. кл.

Члан 6.

Чланови су Задруге редовни, ванредни, помажући, утемељачи и почасни.

Члан 7.

Редовни члан може бити сваки грађанин који има особине члана 6. закона и који живи у Београду без разлике пола, вере и народности.

Редовни члан не сме бити при ступању у чланство млађи от 15 и старји от 69 година. Удате жене и малолетници преко 15 година могу такође и без нарочна одобрења њихових мужева односно родитеља или старатеља постати чланови друштва.

Ако би за жену муж а за малолетнике нихови родитељи или старатељи били противили онда се могају из чланства избрисати.

Члан 12.

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а) Ванредни су чланове задруге добротворе кад положе једном за свагда 500 динара.

б) темељачи кад положе једном за свагда 300 динара.

в) Помажући кад положе годишње унапред 120 динара.

г) Почасни кад својим радом или услугама допринесу користе друштву, њих бира годишња скупштина.

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The First Serbian-Gypsy *Zadruga* for Mutual Aid in Sickness and Death
The Membership Card

[…] [1]

An Extract from the rules

Article 5. Goal of the *Zadruga*.

The goal of the *Zadruga* is to provide its members with:

1. Help in case of illness, burial and death.

2. In the future to set up a bookstore and a social reading room that will be of general use for the association's members.

3. Every year, on May 8th, according to the Julian calendar, to organise a memorial service for deceased members, benefactors, founders, honourable and regular members.

4. Every year to celebrate its *slava* [2], the day of the young St Nikola on May 8 [3], according to the Julian calendar.

Article 6.

Members of the *Zadruga* are regular, extraordinary, assisting, founding and honourable.

Article 7.

A regular member can be any citizen who has the characteristics of the article 6 of the law and who lives in Belgrade regardless of gender, religion and nationality.

At the time of joining the association, the regular member should not be younger than the age of 15 and older than 69. Married women and minors over 15 years of age can also become members without the special approval of their husbands, respectively parents or guardians.

If the woman's husband, or the minor's parents or guardians would oppose to the membership, then they can be deleted as members. […]

Article 12.

a) Extraordinary members of the *Zadruga* are those who deposit at once 500 dinars.

b) Founding members are those that deposit at once 300 dinars.

c) Assisting members are those that deposit annually in advance 120 dinars.

d) Honourable members are those who contribute in favour of the association with their work or society with their work or services, and they are elected by the annual assembly.

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Notes

1. The columns indicating years and months, the rows recording the payment of membership dues, as well as the columns for the chairman's and the accountant's signature, have been omitted.
2. *Slava* is a Patron saint day performed annually on a day of a Saint considered a protector (of a family, a community or a church parish) that is usually the biggest gathering for the respective unit.
3. The *Mladi Sveti Nikola* (Young St Nikola) or *Letnji Sveti Nikola* (Summerly St Nikola) is considered, among other things, protector of sick people, helpless children and the poor. On the day of the saint usually all similar associations were celebrating their *slava*.

Source: LADA. Прва Српско-Циганска Задруга за узајмно помаганье у болести и смрти. Чланска карта. 1928.
Prepared for publication by Dragoljub Acković and Sofiya Zahova.

3.1.1.3 Celebration on Saint Bibija

Св. Бибија се неће више прослављати на отвореном пољу

Ових дана Прва српска циганска задруга за међусобно помагање у болести и смрти одржаће годишњу скупштину и поднети извештаје о досадашњем раду.

Управа ће предложити скупштини веће реформе. Да би Задруга могла и даље да постоји решено је да се предложи измена правила. У случају смрти, породици умрлог члана додељиваће се 1,500 динара на име помоћи, а у случјау болести 5 динара дневно. Месечни улог износиће 12 динара. Предложиће се и подизање дома Св. Бибије. У овај дом сместиће се сви изнемогли чланови.

Управа је даље решила да се традиционални празник Св. Бибије не прославља више на отвореном пољу. На друшственом имању код Господарског пута, више Котеж Неимара, подићи ће се капела која ће служити стално за све црквене обреде. Управа ће се ових дан обратити радним друштвима за помоћ. Чим се сакупи потребна сума приступиће се радовима.

О свима овим намерама управе решавано је јуче у кафани код "Српске царевине" али како није дошао довољан број чланова, решења ће се донети на идућој скупштини која ће се одржати после Ускрса.

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Saint Bibija will no longer be celebrated in the open field

These days, the First Serbian Gypsy *Zadruga* for mutual aid in sickness and death will hold the annual assembly and submit report on the work to date.

The Governing Board will propose major reforms to the assembly. In order for the *Zadruga* to continue its existence in the future, it was decided to propose an amendment to the rules. In the event of death, the family of the deceased member will be given 1,500 dinars as aid, and in case of illness – 5 dinars per day. The monthly fee will amount to

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12 dinars. Building of a Saint Bibija home will also be suggested. All the members in difficult situation will be accommodated in this home.

The Governing Board further decided that the traditional celebration of Saint Bibija shall not be celebrated anymore in the open field. On the association's estate by the Gospodarski put, or rather at Kotež Neimara, a chapel will be built that will be permanently in use for all church rituals. The Governing Board will turn to business companies for assistance in the coming days. As soon as the necessary amount is collected, works will begin.

All these intentions of the Governing Board were determined yesterday at the *Srpska carevina kafana* [1], but as there were not enough members, the solutions will be passed at the next general assembly to be held after Easter.

Notes

1. *Kafana* (pl. *kafane*) is a term used in South-Eastern Europe to signify a type of local bistro or tavern where men gather to drink alcoholic beverages and coffee, along with some food, and discuss social and political matters. *Kafana* is thus an important place for social gatherings of the local communities where discussions of various nature take place.

Source: [No author]. (1931a). Св. Бибија се неће више прослављати на отвореном пољу. *Време*, An. 11, No. 3331, 1931, April 7, p. 9.
Prepared for publication by Sofiya Zahova.

3.1.1.4 The Belgrade Gypsies Are Building a House of Culture and Civilisation
Једна тековина за коју је требало много труда
Београдски цигани подижу Дом културе и цивилизације

Јуче пре подне у кафани "Српска Царевина" у Чубурској улици број 12 одржана је прва годишња скупштина Прве циганске задруге, која је основана у Београду још 1910. Скупштина је била одлично посећена. Показало се са колико су љубави цигани приступили овој задрузи, која има хумани циљ, узајамно помагање својих чланова у случају болести и смрти.

Скупштину је отворио Јанаћко Стојановић, пошто се претседник Задруге г. Здравко Милосављевић моментално не налази у Београду. На предлог г. Стојановића упућени су поздравни телеграми Њ. В. Краљу и Претседнику владе. После тога, прочитани су извештаји управног и надзорног одбора. Финансијско стање Задруге је врло добро. Г. Ђоле Станковић, трговац и претседник надзорног одбора, одржао је дужи говор о даљем раду Задруге и позвао њене чланове да подигну Дом културе и цивилизације југословенских цигана у Београду. Предлог је примљен са великим одушевљењем.

Г. Станковић је, између осталог, рекао:

– За нас цигане један такав дом, у коме би се издржавала деца немоћних родитеља, а затим упућивала у школу, или на занате, много значи јер многи родитељи не могу да издржавају своју децу. Место да буду корисни чланови друштва, таква деца, обично, постају криминални типови. Тај дом биће репрезентација културе и цивилизације

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циганског елемента. За његово подизање имамо довољно материјалне могућности. У Југославији има преко 500,000 цигана, а то значи да нас нема мало.

Нас цигана у Београду такође има доста. Жалимо што до данас у нашу средину није дошао ниједан интелектуалац да нам одржи какво предавање о социјалном питању, да нас просвети, да нас упути, на добар пут.

Ми цигани смо пре свега велике патриоте. Узмимо за пример само нашег члана Задруге Марка Васиљевића, који је добио у рату Карађорђеву звезду са мачевима и још друга одличија за велику храброст и пожртвовање. Пре рата, 1906. и 1907, ми цигани смо исто тако песмом и свирком ширили националну свест код наше поробљене браће у Јужној Србији. У Скопљу нарочито. Данас постоји Друштво за заштиту животиња, Друштво за старање у слободу пуштеним осуђеницима и још многа друга друштва, па зашто да не постоји и Дом културе и цивилизације југословенских цигана у Београду.

Господа интелектуалци требали би мало да се позабаве и са нашим социјалним питањем. На Чубури има око 3,000 цигана. После рата, неки цигани школују своју децу. Тако, Јован, син Алексе Стојановића, студира права у Београду, а Бошко, син Жике Станковића, студира експортну академију у Бечу.

На крају је изабрана нова управа. За председника Задруге поново је изабран Здравко Милосављевић. Нова управа приступиће одмах радовима за подизању Дома културе и цивилизације југословенских цигана у Београду.

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An accomplishment that required a lot of efforts.
The Belgrade Gypsies are building a House of culture and civilisation

Yesterday before noon in the *Srpska carevina kafana* in Čubura Street, number 12 the first annual assembly of the First Gypsy *Zadruga*, founded in Belgrade as early as 1910, took place. The Assembly was very well attended. It became clear with how much affection have the Gypsies founded this society, which has a philanthropic aim, for mutual help to all of its members in case of sickness of death.

The Assembly was opened by Janaćko Stojanović, as the Society's president, Mr. Zdravko Milosavljević, was away from Belgrade at that moment. Following the proposal of Mr. Stojanović complementary telegrams were read in the honour of His Highness the King and the Prime Minister. After that, the reports submitted by the Executive's and the Supervisory boards were read, the financial situation is very good. Mr. Djole Stanković, trader and Vice president of the Supervisory Board held a long speech concerning the planned activities of the Society and he invited the members to build House of culture and civilisation of the Yugoslav Gypsies. This idea was met with jubilation.

Among other things, Mr. Stanković said the following:

– One such house, for us, the Gypsies, where children of the helpless parents would be kept, and then sent to school, or to some craftsmen's shops, this would mean a lot, as

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their parents cannot support them. Instead of becoming useful members of society, such children usually become criminals. This house would represent the culture and civilisation of the Gypsy element. We have sufficient resources for building such a house. There are 500,000 Gypsies in Yugoslavia [1], and this means that we are not few in numbers.

We Gypsies are also numerous here in Belgrade. I regret that not a single intellectual has come to our community to give us a lecture about the social question, to enlighten us, to advise us how to move in a right direction.

We, the Gypsies, before anything else, we are good patriots. Let's take, for example, the member of our Society, Marko Vasiljević, who got his Karadjordje Star with swords in the war, together with two more medals for his great courage and sacrifice [2]. Before the war, in 1906 and 1907 we, the Gypsies, spread our national conscience with song and music among our enslaved brothers in Southern Serbia [3]. In Skopje especially. Today, there is a Society for the protection of animals, a Society for caring for former captives who were released from prisons and many other associations, so why there shouldn't be, also, a House of culture and civilisation.

The intellectuals-gentlemen should also consider a bit our social issue. In Čubura there are around 3,000 Gypsies [4]. After the war, some Gypsies managed to send their children to school. For example, Jovan, the son of Aleksa Stojanović, studies law in Belgrade, while Boško, the son of Žika Stanković, studies at the Export academy in Vienna.

At the end the new management was elected. For president, they re-elected Zdravko Milosavljević. The new management will immediately start working for the the construction of the House of culture and civilisation of the Yugoslav Gypsies in Belgrade.

Notes

1. This highly exaggerated figure is not based on any concrete data, but is rather used as a rhetorical strategy of the speaker to claim rights comparable to the size of a half a million population. There were two population censuses in the interwar period, 1921 and 1931 (Grupković, 1988), and during none of them was collected data that could be directly related to the Gypsy/Roma. The general state policy regarding the population's identity, especially at the end of the 1920s and 1930s, was to reinforce a common national – Yugoslav – identity among the citizens. There are researchers who quote various numbers, based mainly on ethnographic data. According to Tatomir Vukanović the number of Gypsies in the Serbian territories of the Kingdom of Yugoslavia in 1921 was 34,919 (Vukanović, 1983, p. 121). According to Rajko Djurić Roma in interwar Yugoslavia numbered to 250,000 (Đurić, 1987, p. 67).
2. Karadjordje star medal was established in January, 1904 by King Peter I Karadjordjević to mark the 100th anniversary of the First Serbian Uprising. The medal has been considered to be among the highest Serbian decorations. The Karadjordje star with swords was a military variation of this decoration introduced in May 1915.
3. This refers to the activities of the Serbian Chetnik organisation and the Serbian revolutionary organisation in Southern Serbia and Kosovo (called Old Serbia territories) and Macedonia, that were still under Ottoman rule at that time. From July 1905 to July 1907, the Kingdom of Serbia took over the two organisations' activities in these territories and sent funds, equipment and apparatus needed, including musical bands to tour among the population.
4. The same as the above number referring to Gypsies in Yugoslavia, the quoted number of 3,000 Gypsies in Čubura is not based on any data. This might be a rhetorically exaggerated figure or an approximate estimation of the speaker based on his observations. The total Belgrade population

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as of 1931 was 239,000, and even though Gypsies in Belgrade were not living only in Čubura and the neighbourhood itself was inhabited by various ethnic communities, it might be presupposed that the number is not significantly overstated.

Source: [No author]. (1931b). Једна тековина за коју је требало много труда. Београдски цигани подижу Дом културе и цивилизације. *Време*, An. 11, No. 3353, 1931, May 5, p. 9.
Prepared for publication by Danilo Šarenac.
Notes 1, 3 and 4 written by Sofiya Zahova.

Comments

The Roma cultural, political, and civil initiatives during the interwar period were not measures initiated on behalf of the Yugoslav state. This however does not mean that there were no such activities. The selected documents present an interesting and diverse spectrum of activities, all based on grass-roots initiatives and self-organising efforts of Roma in formal (in accordance with the general legislative regulations) or informal activities. They also present initiatives showing Roma's endeavour for public recognition as citizens with full rights, as well as for their positioning as a community equal to all others by establishing civil associations.

Despite its brevity, the article *The Gypsy Movement* presents an interesting account of how the Serbian and the Yugoslav press regarded the creation of Roma's societies and organisations. The press would usually write about these activities in an affirmative or neutral tone. However, often, certain prejudices could be detected. In this case, the journalist underlined the lack of interest in the party among the wider population of Belgrade. The more interesting information in the publication is the mentioning that the Serbian Gypsy *Zadruga* was founded in 1890. Indeed, in the 1890s numerous *Zadrugas for Mutual Aid in Sickness and Death* were found all over the Serbian Kingdom. These types of associations were popular as organisations founded with the aim of promoting savings and support within the agricultural domain (Ilijić, 1999). As no conclusive evidences have thus far been found to confirm that Serbian Gypsy *Zadruga* operated formally in Serbia at the end of the 19th century, we may presuppose that a form of *zadruga*, or another form of self-organisation, did exist among the Belgrade Gypsies in that period, even if as an informal entity. The term *zadruga* might thus have been used as equivalent to community self-organisation or informal structure of support within the local community. The future tense of the sentence reporting plans also points to the fact that the entity was in the process of being established more formally. Regardless of the formal or informal nature of the *zadruga*, the most important fact here is that Roma were organising themselves on the base of their ethnicity and with the aim to collect funds and provide support to the Gypsy members of the *zadruga*. Similar to other Yugoslav entities of this type, the Roma have envisaged three functions for the Governing Board of the *zadruga*: social, national-cultural and humanitarian. The *zadruga* was certainly formalised at the end of the 19th or beginning of the 20th century, since at the start of February 1909 its Governing Board published several announcements about a forthcoming annual assembly, planned for the 9th of March of the same year. These announcements featured a very detailed

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programme published on the advertisement pages of *Pravda*, one of the major newspapers of the period. Publishing in a mainstream media announcement page was common practice only among rather wealthy and well-organised associations of this type and, thus, we can conclude that the *zadruga* has already been established at that time.

The 1928 Membership card of the *First Serbian-Gypsy Zadruga for Mutual Aid in Sickness and Death* presents an original document of the organisation. The Extract from the rules shows that the *Zadruga* was modelled according to what was then popular among similar types of associations for mutual support in sickness and death, which were emerging across Serbia and Yugoslavia. Its name points out that these citizens have used a civil type of initiative to set up a Serbian Gypsy organisation. We can also presuppose that the founders of the organisation where also craftsmen and small-traders who were acquainted with professional forms of guilt organisation, such as *esnaf* (in the past) and *zadruga* (since the end of the 19 century), and have decided to use this form for the establishment of a Serbian Gypsy organisation in order to mobilise Gypsy and other citizens sharing similar values. Although in the 19th century these organisations were not usually formed on an ethnic principle, a process of separation of guilds along ethnic lines started, along with the development of national movements among the Balkan nations. For instance, there are several known Gypsy guild organisations in the Balkan states at the end of the 19th century (Marushiakova & Popov, 2016b) and it would be rather logical that Belgrade Gypsies had established similar organisations, in addition to using the legal form of *zadruga* to unite as a community of citizens and to represent themselves, in accordance with the existing legislation. The Serbian Gypsy *Zadruga* rules include common standards for this type of associations: Regulation of membership, the establishment of rules for support and reading room for the membership community for them to gather and discuss, and organising the association's annual event on the day of which all similar organisations for mutual support were gathering. Noteworthy is the organisation's inclusiveness – any citizen regardless of gender, faith and nationality could be a member. The association even had a special article foreseeing women's and minors' (above the age of 15) membership. This points to the fact that the association had a somewhat contemporary (for the period in question) standards for participation, and gender equality which shows that the leadership of the Belgrade Gypsy community was aiming at building an association fitting to the up-to-date standard for civic participation. Along with the written records, a photograph documenting an official gathering of the members of the *Zadruga* has been preserved (IAB-1165). The photograph presents 36 Roma men and one boy in festive costumes. The handwritten Serbian text under the picture states: "Memory from the 22th May, 1929. *Slava* [celebration] of the First Serbian Gypsy *Zadruga*" (IAB-1165). This visual documentation matches the presented above membership card's information that each year in May should be celebrated the *slava* of the association.

There is other data that let us conclude that the organisation was well off, active, and respected by the Belgrade authorities. For instance, the *Zadruga* was represented at the Assembly of the Belgrade Local Government on the occasion of celebrating King Alexander Karadjordjević's decade of ruling in 1931 (Београдске општинске новине,

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1931, p. 1102). It also had apparently enough capital as it had bought land for securing a place for the traditional culture rituals of the Belgrade Roma community, on the one hand, and for creating a house with social and educational functions according to the spirit of the time in Yugoslavia, on the other hand. Although such a house has not been built in the interwar period, the ideas of the *Zadruga* leadership were fully fitting into the new societal realities of the time.

The preparation and organisation of the annual assembly of the same First Serbian-Gypsy *Zadruga* for mutual support in sickness and death was reported in two publications: in the *Vreme* newspaper of April and May 1931, as well as in a short report, based on the article presented above, in a newspaper published in Czechoslovakia (*Neues Pressburger Tagblatt*, 1932, p. 5). The first talks about the Governing Board preparations and intentions for the forthcoming annual assembly reported as the first of the *zadruga* in 1931 (although it was established in the late 1920s), while the second document reports extensively about the annual assembly implementation. This text presents an interesting source for studying the efforts of the Serbian and Yugoslav Roma to emancipate and integrate themselves in the Yugoslav mainstream culture. As was the case with so many other Roma interwar initiatives, the Yugoslav context proves to be inspiring in this sense. The phrase "culture and civilisation" presented one of the dominant slogans in the Yugoslav society as a whole, especially within the borders of the former Kingdom of Serbia. This was part of a wider narrative where it was understood that all efforts concerning "national liberation and unification" had been successfully achieved and that now the new state should work to catch up with other European countries in terms of developing its culture and modernising itself (Dimić, 1996, Vol. 1, pp. 213-218). Thus, it was very natural that the traditional celebration of Bibija in the open field to be transformed and modernised into a chapel for church rituals and a House of culture and civilisation, in the spirit of the new political and social realities. Following the pattern of similar Yugoslav civil society organisations from the same period, the *zadruga* members had bought land in the Roma neighbourhood in order to build the house, which demonstrates the commitment of its leaders to create the organisation's public space for collective action and shared interest.

The functioning of this Roma association had all the characteristics of any civil society entity in interwar Yugoslavia: paying homage to the authorities, respecting the decisions of the Directors' Board and the Supervisory Board, and focus on the wartime merits. Namely, as seen in one of the texts, the Roma representatives insisted on their role in the war efforts of the Serbian Kingdom from 1912 until 1918. Their stress on the propaganda activities in Macedonia prior to the Balkan Wars is also very telling. Propaganda was, in this case, carried out through concerts and tours rather than in the more common ways, such as through opening schools or sending military units. Through this, the association's leadership sends a clear message about Gypsies as great patriots who are an integral part of the country's national mission and should be seen as an integral part of the Serbian and Yugoslav 'brothers'.

The topic of the poor Gypsy children's education as a civilisational project was also an important aspect of the text. The negative social consequences of being poor and

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uneducated were made (such as criminality), in order to claim the importance of such a house to host and educate Gypsy children from poor families from all over Yugoslavia. To strengthen the claim and showcase that the process of education had already started, positive examples of educated Roma were presented.

Another important message coming from the Board was the idea that all Gypsies in Yugoslavia should be seen as a whole, with common interests and demands, and to be organised together in order to strengthen their development within Yugoslavia. The leadership's stress on the unity of all Gypsies in Yugoslavia by referring to an extremely exaggerated number of half a million, on the background of a total of 13,934,038 people in the Kingdom according to the 1931 census (Grupković, 1988), was used to argue the need for a common public representation in a Yugoslav-wide context.

Danilo Šarenac and Sofiya Zahova

3.1.2 *The Club of the Belgrade Serbian Gypsies*

3.1.2.1 The Day of Aunt Bibija

Тетка Бибијин дан

Јуче су београдски Цигани свечано прославили своју Тетка Бибију

Да је неки необавештени Београђанин јуче од 10 до 11 сати са неке узвишице посматрао Чубурски Поток и утрине око њега, сигурно би помислио да се све живо са Чубуре и око Чубуре сели на другу страну потока, тамо негде на Пашино Брдо или Вождовац. Гомила жена и деце, погурених баба и несташних шипарица примицале су сатима преко потока са великим корпама у рукама са зеленим гранама па чак и са барјацима. Свако је носио што му је изгледало кориснije или лепше, али нико није био без малог земљаног бардака пуног ракије.

То су Цигани славили свој највећи празник Бибију. Сав онај народ слегао се на један тесан плац више Чубурског Потока. Насред тога малога плаца, између новоозиданих кућа налази се споменик изгинулим Циганима за време балканског и европског рата. На њему је урезано 54 имена славно палих бораца и још толико имена добротвора "Клуба београдских српских Цигана".

Мало виш споменика је један стари крст са иконом и неким одавно зарђалим записом на плеху. Око крста и око споменика запаљено је толико воштаних свећа колико можда ни о највећем празнику не изгори у двема београдским црквама. Густи пламенови дима од воска који гори, помешани са димом и мирисом тамјана, дизали су се унаоколо и мешали са мирисом ракије, пржене рибе и сарме од киселог купуса. Јер свака циганска породица, пре него што је пошла на свечаност, сматрала је за своју свету дужност да спреми једну велику погачу, ђувеч од рибе и пун велики лонац пребранца или посне сарме. И како је ко стизао простирао је пешкире по земљи и ређао по њима своје лонце, шерпење и погаче. Кашика, тањира и осталих излишних ствари било је врло мало. Сарме су, изгледа, најслађе кад се ваде прстима из лонца.

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Један достојанствени Цига, који је сигурно био наредник за време рата, покупио је читав батаљон Циганчића од годину дана до петнаест година. Било их је у најразноврснијим тоалетама, почевши од оних голишавих и босоногих па до неких у ковачким шубарама и официрским шапкама, које покривају целе уши и пола носа. Све је њих постројио поред једнога плота и наредио им да, по команди, за све време свечаности вичу:

Бибиаку состипе!

Танамаро состипе!

Чевренго состипе!

То отприлике значи: у здравље тетка Бибије, у здравље свих Цигана, у здравље деце.

И Циганчићи су викали како само они могу и знају. Од њихове дреке орио се Чубурски Поток. С времена на време давано им је "вољно" пет минута па су онда поново настављали.

Најзад после једанаест сати наишао је свештеник. Стао је испред иконе, намакао епитрахиљ и спремио се да изврши црквени обред.

Али на њега као да нико није обраћао пажњу. Ђувечи са рибом и бардаци клековаче много су више привлачили пажњу. Муку је мучио "одбор" да заведе ред:

– Оставите бре те флаше, да се молимо Богу за Бибију! – преклињао је један стари Цига, а један мало млађи у жакету, стао крај њега, раширио руке и као да некога пита:

– Да брате, ја говорим, говорим ама коме говорим! Што бре не скинете капе, греота бре!

Пошто је молитва завршена у највећој галами, и пошто је домаћин Марко Васиљевић пресекао са свештеником огроман колач, који је мерио бар један метар у пречнику, подигао је у вис једну половину он, а другу будући домаћин.

– Бибиаку состипе! – загрмело је тада са свију страна и све је навалило к њима.

– Немојте бре да отимљете! бранили су се они и дизали комаће колача што су могли више. После много мука успели су да се прогурају до једног угла и да одатле деле свакоме по једно мало парче.

Док су они делили колач свештеник је крај споменика одржао помен палим борцима. На крају помена свештеник је одржао пригодан говор, па су за њим говорили Маринко Савић, претседник циганског клуба, и Пера Вујанац, секретар.

Нису Цигани увек прослављали своју Бибију на ономе ускоме простору. Некада се она прослављала на великим утринама око Чубурског потока, али кад су сопственици почели да им пребацују због тога они су скупили нешто пара па су купили онај плац. Ту су пренели и споменик и запис, који су некад били у Чубурском потоку.

Празник Бибију Цигани славе од једне године, нико не зна баш које, кад су били још муслимани и кад је међу њима владала колера. Тада су били изашли у поље под једно дрво да се моле Богу да их спасе колере. И заиста, опака болест, која је дотле беснела и покосила многу децу и одрасле, после тога је престала да бесни. И од тада Цигани сваке године истога дана иду у поље и моле Бога да их више никад не снађе слична несрећа.

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The Day of Aunt Bibija

Yesterday the Belgrade Gypsies solemnly celebrated their Aunt Bibija [1]

Had yesterday, from 10 am to 11 am, some uninformed resident of Belgrade observed the Creek of Čubura and its surrounding from a high place, he would have probably thought that all the living creatures from Čubura [2] and its surroundings have moved to the other side of the stream, somewhere at Pašino Brdo or at Voždovac [3]. A crowd of women and children, battered impetuous grandmothers and restless infants were crawling for hours over creeks with large baskets in their hands, with green branches, and even with barjaks [4]. Everyone carried what looked more useful or more beautiful to him, but no one was without a little ceramic drinking pot full of *rakija*.

These Gypsies celebrated their biggest festivity Bibija. All the people settled on a tight area over the Creek of Čubura.

In the midst of this small area, among the newly built houses there is a monument devoted to the Gypsies who perished during the Balkan and the European war. There are 54 names of gloriously fallen fighters on it and the same number of names of the benefactors of the Club of Belgrade Serbian Gypsies [5].

A little higher on the monument lies an old cross with an icon and some long ago scorched record on the brass. Around the cross and around the monument are burned many wax candles, probably even more than those burnt in the two Belgrade churches during the greatest holiday. The dense strands of smoke from wax burning, mixed with smoke and smell of incense, were lifted up and mixed with the smell of *rakija*, fried fish and *sarme* [6] made of sour cabbage. As, prior going to the ceremony, every Gypsy family considered that it is their holy duty to prepare a big *pogača* [7], fish stew and a big pot full of beans of lenten *sarme*. And whoever came, spread around towels on the ground and arranged their pots, trays and *pogači* over them. There were very little spoons, plates and other unnecessary things. *Sarme* seem to be the yummiest when brought out with fingers from the pot.

A dignified *Ciga* [8], who has certainly been a sergeant during the war, gathered a whole battalion of small Gypsies, ranging from one-year up to fifteen-years olds. They were dressed in various clothes, starting with those naked and barefoot, and ending with some in blacksmiths' winter hats and officers' hats, covering all the ears and half of the nose. He lined all of them up next to one platoon and ordered them to shout, following a command, throughout the whole celebration:

Bibiaku sostipe!

Tanamaro sostipe!

Čevrengo sostipe!

This roughly means: for Aunt Bibija's health, for the health of all Gypsies, for the children's health.

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And the little Gypsy kids shouted as much as they can and know. The Creek of Čubura turned upside down from the howls. From time to time they were given "at ease" for five minutes, and then they continued.

Finally, after eleven o'clock, a priest arrived. He stood in front of the icon, jumped into the epitrachelion and prepared to perform a church ritual [9].

But no one paid attention to him. The fish stew and the glasses with slum brandy were much more attractive. The "team" had a hard time establishing order:

– Leave those bottles and let's pray to God for Bibija! – one old *Ciga* begged, while a younger one, dressed in a jacket, stood beside him and spread his arms in a gesture of questioning:

– Yes, brother, I am speaking, I am speaking, but whom am I speaking to! Hey, why don't you take your hats off, that's a sin!

Because the prayer was finished in the biggest hustle, and also because the host Marko Vasiljević [10], together with the priest cut a huge kolač that measured at least one meter in diameter, then he raised to a height one half of it, while the other [half was raised] by the future host.

– Bibiaku sostipe! – [people] stormed from all sides and all rushed towards them.

– Hey, do not plunder! they defended themselves and raised the pieces of kolač as high as they could. After a lot of hard time, they managed to retreat to one corner from which they started giving a bit of a small piece to everyone.

While they were sharing the kolač, the priest served memorial service to the fallen fighters at the monument. At the end of the service, the priest gave an apposite speech, and after him speeches were given by Marinko Savić, President of the Gypsy Club, and Pera Vujanać, Secretary.

Gypsies have not always celebrated their Bibija on that narrow area. In the past she was celebrated on the big meadows around the Creek of Čubura, but when the owners began to intimidate them because of that, they had collected some money and they had bought that land. They had also moved the monument and the record [11] that were once at the Creek of Čubura.

Gypsies have been celebrating the feast of Bibija since a certain year, but no one remembers which exactly, when they were still Muslims and cholera was raging among them. At that moment they went into a field under a tree to pray to God for saving them from cholera. And indeed, the obdurate disease that had been storming until then and had slaughtered many children and adults, ceased to rage afterwards. And since then, Gypsies go to the field the same day every year, and pray to God to never be hit again by a similar disaster.

Notes

1. Among Gypsies in Belgrade and in Central Serbia *Tetkica Bibija* (Auntie Bibija) is celebrated as an uncanonised Gypsy Saint that protects Roma children from dreadful diseases and secures health for them and their families. An oral folklore narrative in various versions explains how Bibija cured and

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helped Gypsy children during a plague epidemic. The name consists of both the Serbian (*Tetkica*, in diminutive) and Romani language (*Bibija*) term for the word Auntie, a substitute name for the Plague/Cholera. In the folklore and calendar customs of many communities in South Eastern Europe, the Day of the Aunt (or the Day of the Plague) is celebrated with different components and prohibitions that have to secure protection from diseases, especially for the children (Popov, 1996). Among Serbian Roma it has developed and perceived as a specific Romani custom, the Aunt thus presented as a black Gypsy woman in narratives and in iconography (Acković, 2004; 2010; Petrović, 1937).
2. Čubura was an area that immerged at the outskirts of the quickly growing Belgrade at the end of 19th and beginning of 20th centuries. In the interwar period, it was populated by a large number of Gypsies. Curiously enough, one of the versions for the origin of the area's name, that is most popular among Belgrade inhabitants, is that it was derived from the Romani language *učo bure* – a high barrel that was used as a bank to hold the creek (Вуксановић-Мацура & Мацура, 2015ab).
3. Also areas of Belgrade in which Roma were living in the interwar period.
4. *Barjak* is a type of flag used for ceremonial processes on important celebrations, in this case on the day of Bibija.
5. Most probably, the Club in question was an informal organisation gathering active and established citizens of the Belgrade Gypsy community. It is also possible that the Club was formally registered as later in the article the Club's President and Secretary are mentioned. There are however no documents, as Statute or registration documents of the Club, to prove its formal establishment as a juridical entity.
6. *Sarmi* (plural form of *sarma*) is everyday and festive dish made of (sour) cabbage or grape leaves stuffed with rice and minced meat, that has a non-meat version mentioned here.
7. *Pogača* or *kolač* is a festive round loaf of bread that is an indispensable to many celebrations.
8. *Ciga* is the diminutive form of the Serbian word Ciganin which means a Gypsy man, and is used here as a personal name of a character that is considered typical for the respective community, usually having ironical and mocking connotations.
9. The presence of a priest performing a church ritual does not mean that the celebration of Bibija was part of the official Orthodox church calendar. A widespread practice among Orthodox believers until today is to have a priest performing a ritual and blessing an area of importance for a community of believers or for an individual family (including a new house or starting a new business for instance). At any kind of *slava* the presence of a priest is obligatory.
10. Marko Vasiljević was a Rom from Belgrade who was awarded an Order of *Karadjordje Star* for his participation in the Serbian army during the First World War. An article about him was published also in the Roma interwar newspaper *Romano lil* (Симић, 1935d, p. 2).
11. *Zapis*, literary meaning 'a record' or 'a mark'; is a term used for a tree that functions as a sanctuary for the community. The tree of Bibija is a wild peach and when big enough an altar could be carved in it where candles are lighted.

Source: [No author]. (1926). Тетка Бибијин дан. Јуче су београдски Цигани свечано прославили своју Тетка Бибију. *Политика*, An. 22, No. 44, 1926, March 3, p. 7.
Prepared for publication by Sofiya Zahova.

3.1.2.2 A Telegram to King Peter II

Хумано, културно и просветно удружење југословенских Цигана у Београду

Његовом Краљевском Височанству Петру II.

Дубоко потресено од бола на вест о смрти нашег милог и љубљеног Витешког Краља Александра Првог Ујединитеља, Удружење југословенских Цигана у име

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свих Цигана у Југославији изјављује најдубље саучешће у болу и жалости и уверење одане поданичке љубави. – представници Ђорђе Станковић, Маринко Савић.

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The Humane, Cultural and Educational Society of the Yugoslav Gypsies in Belgrade

To His Royal Highness King Peter II.

Deeply shaken from the pain caused by the news about the death of our dear and beloved Chivalry King Alexander First the Unifier, the Society of Yugoslav Gypsies in the name of all Gypsies in Yugoslavia expresses its deepest condolences in pain and sorrow and assurance of the loyal subjects' love – representatives Djordje Stanković and Marinko Savić.

Notes

1. Alexander I (16 December 1888-9 October 1934) of the Karadjodjević Serbian dynasty, served as a prince regent of the Kingdom of Serbia from 1914 and later became King of Yugoslavia from 1921 to 1934 (prior to 1929 the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes). He was assassinated during an official state visit in Marseille, France, by Vlado Chernozemski, a member of the Internal Macedonian Revolutionary Organisation (IMRO), who at that time was part of an Ustaša group preparing the assassination.

Source: [No author]. (1934). Хумано, културно и просветно удружење југословенских Цигана у Београду. *Правда*, An. 30, No. 10759, 1934, October 16, p. 8.
Prepared for publication by Danilo Šarenac.
Note by Sofiya Zahova.

Comments

Activities of the Club of the Belgrade Serbian Gypsies (*Клуб београдских српских Цигана*) were reported in media, although no documents related to a formal organisation under this name have been found so far. Most probably, the Club in question was an informal organisation gathering active and established citizens of the Belgrade Gypsy community engaged in community leadership around the Gypsy *kmet* of the time, Marinko Savić, and as such organised the celebration and building of the monument. It is also possible that the Club was formally registered as the Club's President and Secretary are mentioned here and in other media articles. Regardless of its formal or informal status, the mentioning of such a Club and its activities in relation to the Gypsy community organisation and stressing the importance of the Roma citizens' contribution to the national army is an important sign for the citizen's activities and visions of the Belgrade Roma seeking public recognition as part of the wider society in the Kingdom.

Many Gypsies, as citizens of the Kingdom of Serbia at that time, participated in various divisions of the Serbian army and were mentioned in memoir of their contemporaries (Šarenac, 2020). Some of them were later awarded Order of Karadjordje star for their participation in the army as for example Ahmet Ademović from Leskovac, under

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whose name was named also a street in Belgrade at the end of 20 c., and Marko Vasiljević from Belgrade, who is mentioned later in the document (Acković, 2017b). The memory about the war and the soldiers who lost their lives in it or fought in the army played an important role in the public field of the newly created Kingdom after the First World War (Newman, 2015). The creation of the monument built among the Roma houses of Čubura devoted to the Gypsies who perished during the Balkan and the European war is a unique self-initiative of the Belgrade Roma demonstrating their belonging to the commemoration and national-identity practices of the state.

The monument is made of stone in the form of an obelisk on the front side of which is written 'Serbian Gypsy Youth to its Heroes [who] perished and died from 1912 to 1918' followed by the names of the Gypsy heroes (the current state of the monument does not allow clear reading of the names). On the back side of the monument on a stone with the same design and style of the inscription are written the following names as benefactors: Veselin Marinković, Stevan Mihajlović, Ilija Stojanović, president of the society, Aleksa Rančić, tradesman, Petar Simić, Toma Pavlović, Hristina Stojanović, Panta Tadić, tradesman, Pera Vujanac, Žika Djordjević, Radojko Stojanović, *kmet* of the Belgrade Gypsies, Josif Dajić, stonecutter, followed by names of 25 members of the Governing Board, the first one of which is Hristofor Jovanović, who appears in other materials as President of the Association of Belgrade Gypsies Worshippers of Bibija (see below 3.1.3.2).

According to a plate on the left side of the monument, that was probably added a bit later (as the style of the plate and inscription letter is different), it was erected 'Under the initiative of Marinko Savić, *kmet* of the Gypsies in Belgrade'. On the same plate are also inscribed the names of the first benefactors (*dobrotvori*) and on the first place are Belgrade municipality and Marinko Savić, which means that the building of the monument was supported by the Belgrade local authorities either directly or indirectly. They were followed by 16 other names (Živ. Pravdić, Bož. Maksimović, Krst. Miletić, Iv. Miličević, Deca Al. Rančića kaf, Mil. Baltić, Jak. Čelebanović, Per. Jovanović, D. Z. Bojić, Zdr. Milosvljević, Vuč. Simić, Jov. Simić, Rad. Gavrilović, Maks. Rešić, Mid. Svetanović, Pet. Glišić) which, judging by the style of inscription, were most probably carved at the same time. The right side of the monument contains a plate on which is written 'Association of Belgrade Gypsies Worshippers of Bibija' established on 15 May 1935 Belgrade, along with the names of the Governing Board members (given below in 3.1.3.). Thus, it seems that all Belgrade Roma organisations and leaders of the time aimed at leaving a record on the monument.

It is unknown when exactly after the war the monument was built, but from the material and the style of inscriptions, it is clear that the left and right side stone plates were added later to the original monument. It is preserved until today and is currently located in the yard of 59 Gospodar Vučić street on the land bought by the Belgrade Gypsies for hosting Roma community activities of different nature (discussed above). Today both the celebration and the monument continue to be of great importance for the Belgrade Roma community.

At the same time, the choice of monument's location – in the local sanctuary place for community celebrations where Bibija is worshipped – and the names of the heroes fallen

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in the war, along with the name of established citizens, e.g. these who donate for the club more than 200 dinars (Petrović, 1937, p. 127), shows the importance of the identity of the community as a separate unit of citizens' bond by their own Roma community identity within a larger social context and national commemoration narrative. Thus, in this public space are intertwined commemorating practices of importance for both the ethnic (Roma) and national (Serbian, Yugoslavian) identity of the Roma citizens.

The Club of the Belgrade Gypsies continued to be active in other commemorative practices related to the Yugoslav national belonging, as for instance the assassination of the King Alexander which was a significant moment in the history of the Kingdom. Apart from the enormous significance of this event for the internal development of Yugoslavia, the ceremony surrounding his funeral became an important political and social phenomenon. Thousands of telegrams poured into the court in October 1934 while masses awaited the train carrying the dead king on his way through the country. The Yugoslav Roma took part in this process expressing their grief in a published telegram. It seems that the event was of such significance for the Roma community, that even half a year after the assassination the first issue of the first Roma newspaper in Yugoslavia, *Romano Lil* has an article 'Our people mourn their King' (Симић, 1935b, p. 3). The Belgrade Gypsy Club telegram can be seen as a sincere emotion but also as a step in the process of integration of the Yugoslav Roma in the South Slav society and in the body of the Yugoslav nation. Being part of the official politics of sorrow can also be seen as an expression of loyalty and belonging, especially as the telegram was addressed to the future ruler, prince Peter II.

Danilo Šarenac and Sofiya Zahova

3.1.3 *The Association of the Belgrade Gypsies Worshippers of Bibija* (*Tetkica*)

3.1.3.1 The Statute of Association of Belgrade Gypsies Worshippers of Bibija (Tetkica)

[Устав Удружење београдских Цигана свечара Бибије (Теткице)]

[...] Члан 5. Удружење има хуман карактер, а у свом раду неће се руководити политичким и другим партијским обзирима.

Члан 6. На дан славе овог Удружења одржаваће се помен свима умрлим оснивачима, добротворима, утемељивачима, помагачима и редовним члановима Удружења, као и свима ратницима палим у ратовима за ослобођење и уједињење нашег народа.

Члан 7. Застава Удружења је: од платна величине 1,20 ц 1м плаве боје са иконама и то са десне стране Св. Никола и са леве Чудотворне Бибије (Теткице).

Члан 8. Циљ Удружења:

1) Да ради на упознавању, зближавању и помагању њених чланова;

2) Да оснивањем нових и потпомагањем већ постојећих културних и социјалних установа, доприноси подизању културног нивоа свих чланова;

3) Да у Београду прихвата даровите ђаке и омладинце, нарочито ратну сирочад и да им у границама материјалне могућности олакшава смештај у циљу школовања, изучавања заната;

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4) Да ради на остваривању материјалних средстава за подизање свога дома у Београду.

Члан 9. Средства за постигнуће циљева удружења јесу чланови улози, добровољни прилози, приходи са забава, концерата, другарских вечери, поклони и завештања. […]

Члан 11. Редован члан Удружења може постати свако лице (оба пола) који живе у Београду, помажући чланови утемељивачи и добротвори Удружења може бити свако лице.

Члан 12. Редовни и помажући чланови на име чланског улога, плаћају 24 динара годишње односно 2 динара месечно. Утемељивачи дају једном за свагда 100 динара, а добротвори 50 динара. Добротвор[н]и и утемељивачки улози могу бити отплаћени и у ратама.

Члан 13. При упису у чланство Удружења, на име уписнине сваки члан плаћа једном за свагда 5 динара.

Члан 14. Редовни и помажући чланови губе право на чланство ако не плате улоге за три месеца. Они могу поново бити примљени у чланство када буду дужни улог измирили.

Члан 15. Деца која би Удружењу какво завештање или поклон учинила, постају добротвори или утемељивачи према вредности поклона или завештаја. […]

Члан 24. Дужност је Управног одбора:

1. Да преко председника односно потпредседника, секретара и благајника представља Удружење пред властима и у јавности и да у име Удружење прима обавезе и стиче права за Удружење.
2. Да управља друштвеним пословима и рукује друштвеном имовином.
3. Да нарочито води бригу о повећању друштвене имовине путем чланских улога, приређивањем концерата, забава, другарских вечери.
4. Да се стара о средствима за подизање друштвеног дома.
5. Да ради у духу правила, друштвених циљева и да извршује скупштинске одлуке.
6. Примењује пригодне састанке ради међусобног упознавања чланова. […]

Члан 33. Имовину Удружења чине:

1) Чланови улози и уписи;
2) Приходи од забаве, концерата, другарских вечери, поклона и завештања.

Члан 34. Садашње Бибијино (Теткицино) имање, које се налази у Војводе Степином предграђу Господар Вучића бр. 59, у вредности динара 20.000, – које су купили београдски цигани и уступили удружењу на руковање и чување и с тим да се ово имање не може задуживати за ма које обавезе удружења, већ оно има остати у наслеђе будућим млађим циганским генерацијама, једино Управни одбор може продајом и куповином увеличавати ово имање преносећи га са једног места на друго сем после скупштинске одлуке.

Члан 35. У овај фонд уносити од својих редовних и ванредних прихода 50% за увеличавање имања, за подизање софре, ограде око имања, итд. […]

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Члан 37. Ако Удружење ма из ког разлога престане да функционише његова ће се имовина предати на чување Државној Хипотекарној банци, где ће стајати док се поново не оснује удружење под истим именом и са истим циљем. Ако се ово удружење не би основало ни у року од 5 година од када је прво престало да функционише, сва ће се имовина продати комисији са задатком да подиже споменик Бибије-Теткице.

Члан 38. Одлука скупштине чланова Удружења о престанку истог, пуноважна је ако се број чланова удружења смањи на 20 чланова или ако за ово буде гласало више од једне половине редовних чланова Удружења. Ова се правила могу мењати и допуњавати само на редовној или ванредној скупштини. За измену правила мора гласати две трећине присутних чланова.

Члан 39. Ова правила одобрена су на оснивачкој скупштини 6. априла 1935. године, а ступају на снагу кад их надлежна власт потврди.

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The Statute of Association
of Belgrade Gypsies Worshippers of Bibija (Tetkica)

[…] Article 5. The Association has a humanitarian character, and it shall not be guided by political or other party views in its work.

Article 6. On the *slava* day of this Association, a service shall be held in the memory of all deceased initiators, benefactors, founders, assistants and regular members of the Association, as well as to all soldiers fallen in the wars for the liberation and unification of our people [1].

Article 7. The flag of the Association is: a linen size 1.20 x 1m in blue colour with icons, and on the right side Sv. Nikola and on the left side of the Miraculous Bibija (Auntie).

Article 8. The goals of the Association:
1) To work for the consociating, socialisation and help of its members;
2) To contribute to raising the cultural level of all its members by establishing new and supporting already existing cultural and social institutions;
3) In Belgrade, to accept gifted kids and young people, especially war orphans, and to facilitate their accommodation, within the range of its material possibilities, with the aim of education and study of crafts;
4) To work on the realisation of material means for maintaining its house in Belgrade.

Article 9. The funds for achieving the objectives of the association are formed by membership contributions, voluntary contributions, income from entertainment, concerts, friends' evening parties, gifts and endowments. […]

Article 11. Any person (of both sexes) who lives in Belgrade can be a regular member of the Association, assisting members, founding members and benefactors of the Association can be any person.

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Article 12. As part of their membership share, regular and assisting members shall pay 24 dinars per year or 2 dinars per month. The founders shall give once 100 dinars, while the benefactors shall give 50 dinars. Charities and founding fees can be paid also in instalments.

Article 13. Upon registering as Association member, every member shall pay once 5 dinars in the form of a registration fee.

Article 14. Regular and assisting members lose the right to a membership if they do not pay for three months. They can be re-admitted into the membership when they settle their due fees.

Article 15. Children who have made any kind of a commitment or a gift to the Association, become benefactors or founders according to the value of the gift or the commitment. [...]

Article 24. A duty of the Governing Board is:

1. To represent the Association, e.g. by the President, the Vice-President, the Secretary and the Treasurer, before the authorities and in public, as well as to take over obligations and acquire rights on behalf of the Association.
2. To manage public affairs and administer communal assets.
3. To take a particular care for increasing the social assets through membership fees, organisation of concerts, parties, party dinners.
4. To take care of the means for building a public house.
5. To work according to the rules, social goals and to implement the [Association's] assembly parliamentary decisions.
6. To organise apposite meetings in order to facilitate the interpersonal meetings of the members. [...]

Article 33. The property of the Association consists of:

1) Membership fees and admission fees;
2) Income from entertainment, concerts, party evenings, gifts and endowments.

Article 34. The present estate of Bibija (of Auntie) Association, located in the suburb Vojvoda Stepa, 59, Gospodar Vučić street [2], is worth 20,000 dinars, – that was bought by the Belgrade Gypsies and handed over to the association for management and taking care, under the condition that this property cannot be indebted in relation to any obligation of the Association, but it has to remain in as inheritance for the future younger generation of the Gypsies. The Governing Board can only increase the real estate by selling and buying, transferring it from one location to another only after a General Assembly's decision.

Article 35. Out of its regular and extraordinary income, this Fund shall invest 50% for increasing of the property, for building banquet tables, the fence around the property, etc. [...]

Article 37. If the Association ceases to operate for whatever reason, its property shall be transferred to the State Mortgage Bank, where it shall be kept until the association is re-established under the same name and with the same goal. If this association is not

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re-established within 5 years from the time of its ceasing, all the assets shall be sold to the commission with the task to raise a monument of Bibija-Auntie.

Article 38. A decision of the Association members to terminate it is valid if the number of members of the association is reduced to 20 members or if more than one half of the regular members of the Association vote in favour of this. These rules can be amended only at a regular or extraordinary assembly. Two thirds of the present members must vote in order to change the rules.

Article 39. These rules were approved at the Founding Assembly on April 6, 1935, and enter into force once confirmed by the competent authority.

Notes

1. The text refers here to the Balkan wars and to the First World War, after which the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes was established to be renamed in 1929 as the Kingdom of Yugoslavia. By 'our people' the Statute meant all people living in the Kingdom of Yugoslavia and demonstrated the belonging of the organisation to the nation and participation in the national identity memorial practices.
2. This was the land bought by the First Serbian Gypsy *Zadruga* for mutual support in sickness and death of the 1920s. The property was confiscated after the Second World War and never returned to the Association despite the numerous attempts for restitution under article 37 of the rules above that foresee that the re-established association as heir of the property.

Source: LADA. Препис Устава Удружење београдских Цигана свечара Бибије (Теткице). Prepared for publication by Dragoljub Acković and Sofiya Zahova.

3.1.3.2 The Belgrade Gypsies Held Their Assembly

Јуче су београдски цигани одржали своју врло живу скупштину

Било је препирања, пребацивања, свађе, али се ипак све лепо свршило

Београдски Цигани скупили су се јуче у кафани "Струга" на Чубури. Требало је расправљати о положају Цигана окупљених у престоници, а учлањених у једно циганско удружење у Београду. Оно има звучно име "Удружење београдских Цигана, свечара Бибија теткице".

То су сви они многобројни становници Чубуре и Чубурског Потока који се једном годишње и свечано прославе своју заједничку и омиљену светитељку – теткицу Бибију. И да би се та свечаност боље одржала, а да би се Цигани боље помогли основано је и нарочито удружење.

Јучерашња скупштина коју је отворио претседник г. Христифор Јовановић била је доста бурна. Нарочито после извештаја који је прочитао вршилац дужности секретара г. Миша Халдерон. У том извештају се каже да је Управа подигла нарочити трем да би се омогућила прослава теткице Бибије и по ружном времену. То је уједно основано за евентуалну капелицу која би се ту подигла.

Са подизањем тог трема сви су се сложили само се појединим члановима није допало што је ту потрошена цела друштвена имовина од 5000 динара, тако да сад Удружење има свега 170 динара у каси.

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И због других ствари су се чланови бунили. Зашто је управа давала из друштвене касе за трамвај члановима. Зар тих динар-два нису они могли да плате сами.

И због тога су држани дуги говори. Темпераментно и звучно говорници су доказивали да они не могу да даду ни динар-два из свога џепа док су други на против тврдили да се може да ради мало и из идеализма.

У задимљеној кафани педесетину црнопурастих чланова пажљиво су пратили дискусији. Циганке, кошчате и постарије такође су учествовале у раду. Нарочито кад је требало да се виче. А сваки говорник је бурно поздрављан са "живео" па нападао он или бранио рад управе.

Расположење је покварио само један пијани гост, који се умешао и ометао рад скупштине. Он је пошто-пото хтео да одржи говор па кад му то нису дали, задовољио се да излагање сваког говорника потврди са "га ја си" (тако је).

Још једну важну ствар је Удружење имало да реши: питање давања посмртнине. Одлучено је да породица сваког члана кад овај умре, добије од Удружења 500 динара посмртнине.

– А не ко досад, кад умре неко наш, а ми код бакалина или овде онде па да просјачимо по кило ракије или пола киле шећера, рекао је претседник.

Говорници, који су говорили поводом извештаја, трудили су се да дискусија добије бољи тон, али су на крају додали:

– Да прошћавате, ми можда нисмо тако много писмени. Ми смо сиромашни људи који хоће да живу...

Било је и смеја. Један говорник је тврдио да управа нема памет, а да су према својој памети ипак доста урадили. Он никако није могао да опрости што су њега напали да би се његов ауторитет дисквалификовао, такорећи омаловажавао ...

Пошто су говори били сувише темпераментни изгледало је да ће доћи и до сукоба. После се, међутим, видело да чланови Удружења београдских Цигана, свечара Бибија теткице "нису тако страшни" као што се праве док говоре о извештајима управе. Све се лепо свршило. Изабрана је опет стара управа (Христифор Јовановић претседник, Миша Калдерон секретар, а Мијајло Стевановић благајник).

И сви су сложно опет викнули "Живели". Све у славу тетка Бибије.

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Yesterday the Belgrade Gypsies held their very lively assembly
There was arguing, shifts, quarrels, but everything ended up nicely

Belgrade Gypsies gathered yesterday in "Struga" [1] *kafana* on Čubura. There was a necessity to discuss the situation of the Gypsies gathered in the capital, and members of a Gypsy Association in Belgrade. It has the resonant name "Association of Belgrade Gypsies, worshipers of Bibija Auntie".

These are all the numerous inhabitants of Čubura and Čuburski Potok, who solemnly celebrate once a year their common and favourite saint – Bibija. A special association

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was formed in order to hold a better ceremony, as well as in order to help the Gypsies in a better way.

Yesterday's assembly, opened by the President Mr. Hristofor Jovanović, was quite turbulent. Especially after the report that was read by the acting secretary Mr. Miša Halderon. The report says that the Governing Board had built up a special porch to allow the celebration of auntie Bibija even in bad weather. It will be at the same time the base for a chapel that would eventually rise there.

Everyone has agreed with the raising of the porch, but only individual members did not like the fact that the entire Association's property of 5000 dinars was spent, so now the Association has only 170 dinars in cash.

Members complained also because of other things. Why did the Governing Board give out money from the Association's cash for tram transport to members. Were they not able to pay these couple of dinars for themselves.

And for that reason long talks were held. The speakers argued temperedly and audibly that they could not give a dinar or two out of their pockets while others argued the opposite – that this could be done to some extend out of idealism.

In the smoky *kafana*, fifty black-skinned members carefully followed the discussion. Bony and grown-old Gypsy women also took part in the process. Particularly when there was a need to shout. And every speaker was vigorously greeted by 'long live' regardless if he attacked or defended the work of the Governing Board.

The spirit was spoiled only by a drunken guest, who interfered and muddled the work of the assembly. He, after all, wanted to hold a speech, so when he was not allowed to, he was satisfied only with confirming the talk of each speaker by saying 'ga ja si' (that's right).

The Association had to solve another important thing: the issue of giving a support on the occasion of death. It was decided that the family of every member will receive from the Association 500 dinars support upon his death.

– And not like until now, when some of our people dies, and we go to the grocer's or here and there, and we beg for a kilo of *rakija* or half a kilo of sugar, said the president.

The speakers, who spoke on the occasion of the report, tried to get the discussion in a better tone, but finally they added:

– Excuse us, we might not be so literate. We are poor people who want to live …

There was also laughing. One speaker claimed that the Governing Board has no brain, and that, considering their brain, they have still done a lot. He could not at all forgive them for having attacked him in order to disqualify, in other words to underestimate, his authority …

Since the speeches were too temperamental, it seemed that conflict would appear. Afterwards, however, it became clear that the members of the Association of Belgrade Gypsies, Worshipers of Bibija Auntie "are not so scary" as they perform while speaking about the Governing Board's report. It all ended nicely. The old Governing Board was re-elected (Hristifor Jovanović president, Miša Halderon secretary, and Mijajlo Stevanović treasurer).

And they all shouted again, "Cheers." All in the glory of Aunt Bibija.

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Notes

1. *Struga kafana* was one of the symbols of Čubura neighbourhood, famous as the Gypsy *kafana* and its musicians.

Source: [No author]. (1937). Јуче су београдски цигани одржали своју врло живу скупштину. Било је препирања, пребацивања, свађе, али се ипак све лепо свршило. *Правда*, An. 33, No. 11710, 1937, May 27, p. 18.
Prepared for publication by Sofiya Zahova.

Comments

The preserved transcript of the main part of the Statute of Association of Belgrade Gypsies Worshippers of Bibija (Tetkica), established in 1935, has united, inherited, and advanced the assets, strategies, and visions of all earlier formal and informal associations presented above. The establishment and way of arrangement of the Association show how a traditional community celebration important for the Belgrade Roma identity, becomes the fundament for a civil society organisation. In this way, we see the development of this community in unison with the new social realities.

Similar to other humanitarian associations in Yugoslavia, it was declared a non-party humanitarian character and support for all Belgrade Gypsies for 'raising the cultural level', a common slogan of the time for all cultural organisations. Following in the footsteps of the First Serbian Gypsy *Zadruga* and the Club of the Belgrade Serbian Gypsies, a special emphasis was put on maintaining the house of the association and educational support for gifted children and young people.

With the renaming of the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes into the Kingdom of Yugoslavia in 1929, certain policies in the field of education and culture were designed in order to reinforce a Yugoslav identity as one of the responses to activities on the Kingdom's territories (Gligorijević, 1986; Dimić, Vol. 1, 1996). The period of the 1930s in Yugoslavia was related to a general discourse and policies for building a Kingdom-wide network of youth clubs related to various sport, cultural and educational activities, and was connected to a general strategy of building a Yugoslav identity among the new generations (Žutić, 1991). Elevation of the general educational status was one of the strategies present in the Yugoslav public discourse. The special stress on Gypsy youth and the future generation in the status of the organisation shows that the Belgrade community activists were shaping policies in the spirit of the Yugoslav time and context, and at the same time planning a future educated Roma leadership. Thus, this organisation allowed even children to be members of the association under certain conditions.

It's noteworthy that the Statute foresaw what should be done with its property and assets in case of organisational seizure and closure so that they could be kept for the future Belgrade Roma generations. It mentions also a sizeable estimate of the organisational property which points to the fact the members and founders of the organisation were part of the entrepreneurial citizens of Belgrade of good standing. According to Dargoljub Acković, Governing Board members were President Hristifor Jovanović, former Belgrade Gypsy chief (*starešina*), Vice President Djoka P. Simić, Blacksmith, Secretary Jovan

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Milosavljević, locksmith, treasurer Milorad Vasić, musician, and the following were members of the association: Stevan Djordjević, greengrocer, Dušan Simić, accordion player, Vojislav Vasić, driver, Djurdje Marković, musician, Djura Djordjević, musician, Vucko Simić, renter, Vujica Balić, locksmith, Radoslav Stojanović, renter, Marko D. Vasiljević, greengrocer, Živojin Simić, musician, Lazar Stojanović, musician, Milan Nikolić, musician, Petar Bimbasić, petty-trader, Radojko Stojaković (Acković, 2010, p. 110).

The property of the Association mentioned in the Statute was confiscated by the Yugoslav state in 1946. In 1981 it was given to Association Rom – Belgrade to serve as premises of the organisation, but the ownership of the property has never been restored to a Belgrade youth association as stipulated in the Statute itself. Until today Association Rom – Belgrade is located there and the annual Bibija celebrations take place there too. The attempts of the Belgrade Roma community leadership to get ownership of the property continue until today, including petitions (to the local and central government), and even establishment of a new association under the same name – Association of Belgrade Gypsies, worshipers of Bibija Auntie – in 2018.

The media article from 1937 provides information about an annual assembly of the Association of Belgrade Gypsies, worshipers of Bibija Auntie. It showed that the association was implementing its concrete programme for securing financial support for its members in case of sickness and death, as well as self-organising the Roma citizens of Čubura neighbourhood for landscaping activities to improve the conditions the for celebration of the Day of Bibija.

The presented discussion demonstrates that the organisation was trying to formally manage solidarity and support along ethnic lines for the Roma from Čubura, and was transparently organised. The report that women were also present and participated in the discussions is proof of the civil organisation's inclusiveness.

We can presume that the three organisations discussed above were somehow interrelated, and maybe chronologically following each other or simultaneously existing under different leadership. The form of *zadruga* was in unison of the time at the end of the 19 and beginning of the 20 century, while the association and the club were fitting better into the socio-political realities and also into the legislative regulations for civic organisations of the late 1920s and in the early 1930s. Regardless of their formal arrangement, they were all civil initiatives undertaken by Roma intertwined and built upon traditional community celebrations important for the identity of the Belgrade Roma community.

Sofiya Zahova

3.1.4 *An Educational Club of the Yugoslav Gypsy Youth*

Необичан догађај у обојеном народу. Београдски цигански клуб пред великим задатком … Може ли от Цигана нешто да буде?

Наука вели да су Цигани чистокрвни аријевци и индоевропљани, као и најнапреднији народи Европе.

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Племенита циганска раса

Цигани, наравно, не знају каквој племенитој раси припадају, али је под циганском чергом увек тињала свест у супериорности циганске расе. Циганин и човек су на циганском језику синоними. "Ром" је Циганин, али истовремено значи и човек. Сви други народи за Цигане су "гаџе", – онако исто као што су за старе Јелине сви други народи били "варвари". Пошто је "Ром" човек, значи да "гаџе" ни су људи. По циганском предању, Цигани су изабран народ, њих је небо прве створило, а циганski цар Фираун био је први цар на свету, цар над царенима.

Хоће ли немачки пример изазвати и у другим земљама мере против Цигана?

Као да су предвиђали да ће циганско питање доћи на ред, београдски Цигани на Јатаган-мале и Маринкове Баре основали су пре месец и по дана свој културни клуб, са великим задатком цивилизовања Цигана. И пошто се велико дело не може да створи без потпоре штампе – затражили су потпору "Политике".

"Задатак клуба: да окупља све циганске омладнице и да помаже њихов напредак на просветном и културном пољу; да омогући школовање сиромашнима, да се бори против криминалитета и просјачења, да се бори да свако циганско дете има свој занат. Клуб ће постизавати своје циљеве *путем власти*, одржавањем стручних и поучних предавања, оснивањем своје читаонице ..."

Цигани и власт

Оно *путем власти* замолио нас је да подвучемо претседник клуба г. Симић, Циганин, студент права и судски званичник. Своју лојалност према властима истичу београски Цигани сваком приликом. Тако пре неколико година у једној београдској кафаници одржали су своју скупштину Цигани-музиканти. Са скупштине је упућен поздравни телеграм и – члану и писарима кварта.

– Зашто, бре, и писарима? приметно је један кафански гост.

– Да виду да нисмо антинационални! ... објаснио је претседник, иначе угледан београдски музикант.

Поштују власт, али су несносни када је сами репрезентирају ("Кад Циганину падне секира у меду не уме да се снађе").

Пре ратова учио је школе један Циганин. Свирао је, иначе, у друштву "Суа" где је било више професора Универзитета. Они су му ишли на руку да заврши права, радознале да виде шта ће да изпадне от Циганина. Отишао је у полициску струку, а чак постављен за среског начелника у Свилајнцу. И прво што је као начелник учинио било је да – похапси све местне Цигане! Направио се урнебес, депутација грађана допутовала у Београд да се жали, и – њега су брзо отпустили на службе... Сама циганска предања кажу: кад је Фираун постао цар, прво је обесио свога оца, да пакаже како је страшан ...

"Ми, престонички Цигани! ..."

Циганski клуб има три отсека – просветни, музички и спортски. У правилама дословно стој: "Просветни отсек имаће за циљ да учи писмености неписмене, а ко

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је већ писмен да га просвети и култивише. Музички отсек имаће за циљ да негује и усвршава музичку способност својих чланова ...”

Чланове управе клуба, у којој поред омладинаца има и људе средњих година, музиканти су или занатлија, а неки имају и по који разред гимназије. Они нам кажу:

– Ми, престонички Цигани треба да знамо више него они на селу и ови наши стари који су овде. Ми смо Цигани, ми от тога не избегавамо, – из ове се коже у другу не може. Али ми хоћемо да створимо добре, културне и поштене Цигане ...

За аналфабетски течај пријавило се досад осамнаест Цигана. Основаће се, кажу, и позоришна дружина. Сада прикупљају фолклорни материјал за први комад из циганског живота, који ће се звати “Венчање око врбе”. За здравствено просвећивање Централни хигијенски завод обећао је да ће клубу ставити на расположење предаваче са пројекционим апаратом и филмовима. Нарочито ће се повести борба против сифилиса, кога међу београдским Циганима има у изобиљу.

Ставио им се на расположење један предавач, који ће у клубу одржати нис предавања о религији. На томе пољу има да се међу Циганима много ради. Формално, они припадају религије средине у којој живе, али је њихова стварна религија – религија примитивног човека, заснована на страху и вери у срећу.

Цигани, например, немају уопште специјалну реч за Бога. “О Дел” у циганском језику може да има и значење Бога, али та реч значи и небо, и облак, и све оно што је над нама ...

Немају специјалну реч ни за душу. Реч ђи (у другим крајевима “ођи”, или “вођи”) означава све оно што је смештено у средини. Она може да значи срце, али значи и – срце от лубенице, срце от краставца, и безброј других ствари ...

(Ово су последње сензације науке о Циганима.)

Клуб намерава да преведе Јеванђеље на цигански језик. Истина, Јеванђелско друштво недавно је издало на циганском Јеванђеље по Луци, превод нашег најбољег познаваоца циганског језика професора г. Ухлика из Приједора. Али београдски Цигани веле да га не разумеју, јер је писан на дијалекту босанских Цигана; треба додати да је г. Ухлик у своме преводу морао да употреби кованице за апстрактне појмове које Цигани немају.

Шта да се мисли о свима тим плановима? Је ли то само лепа жеља?

Нико неће порећи да Цигане треба научити редовним занимањима.

Имају ли Цигани диспозиције за културу?

Не може се порећи ни потреба музичке секције клуба. Данас се тражи нотално свирање, и Цигани сневају о музичким нотама, ма да им је “цигански прст” досад сметао да постигну у томе погледу веће успехе. Циганка се данас поноси својим дететом које је научило ноте:

– А, дете моје нотално! ... тена му она.

Али мало ће њих поверовати у способности Цигана за једну вишу духовну културу. Ко је видео отличног ђака Циганина?

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Оснивачи клуба имају, наравно, повољно мишљење о себи и својим сународницима. Указају на људе који су свршили високе школе и које крију своје циганско порекло.

– Ми смо свесни да треба нешто да оставимо омладини која иза нас долази и да отклонимо проклетство са нас Цигана, које сви сматрају за последње и најгоре људе ... вели нам претседник клуба г. Симић.

Покушајмо, уосталом, да будемо логични. Нису ли Цигани индоевропљани, као и ми? У физичком и духовном погледу не разликују се от других индоевропљана. Значи да имају и њихове способности.

Ма да су и једни и други индоевропљани, Скандинавци су културно далеко одмакли от Албанаца, јер су живели у бољим приликама.

А какве су биле прилике Цигана? Вечити номади, скитачи, одувек третирани као нечиста, презрена каста лопова, варалаца, разбојника и свакојаких других преступника, вечито гоњени, нескључени за сваког духовног додира са својом културнијом средином, – они нису могли да што науче и такве прилике нису могле погодовати развитку способности за културнија схватања. Ма да се код нас поступало са Циганима нешто боље но у другим земљама ("Ако су и Цигани, – душу носе" кажу наши сељаци), Србин је увек сматрао Циганина нижим от себе. Држава није чинила ништа за цивилизовање Цигана, а мали број Цигана који је продро у школу, био је увек "Цига", то јест предмет изругивања.

Треба резликовати чергаре от Цигана који су стално настањени у селима и варошима. Чергари готово немају стално место становања, нити изгледа да имају за то смисла; њихов морал је у сукобу са нашим моралом и они немају осећања за оно што се може и што се не може. Најгори су руски Цигани и Цигани који овамо прелазе из Мађарске. Морално понашање Цигана настањених у селима и градовима околина контролише, и они воде рачуна о поштењу.

"Бунапарта" и "Африка, бато!"

Не смемо, ипак заборавити да су се дедови и прадедови и најуглађенијих београских Цигана-свирача родили под чергом. Да би се циганско духовно биће прилагодило вишој духовној култури, потребно је да прођу генерације прекаљене радом и истрајношћу.

Предавачи у београдском Циганском клубу мораће, зато, да поступају обазриво, ако желе да им Цигани посећају предавања и без новчане награде. Предавања не смеју бити академска, не сме бити теоретисања и просвећености, културе и хришћанским врлинама. Никаквог система не може бити. За неку нарочиту ерудицију Цигани нису још сазрели. Треба се ограничити на конкретни ствари, служити си примерима из самог циганског живота.

Рецепт за предавања у Циганском клубу могао би се назрети из једног разговора који је водио претседник г. Симић са једним старијим Циганином, који, наравно, гледа скептично на овај цигански покрет.

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– Код нас Цигана – почео је г. Симић – често се помиње Наполеон Бонапарта. Па још не кажете Бонапарта, него Бунапарта. “А бре, каки си, дигао си нос ко Бунапарта, нећеш да говориш с мене!” А да нас човек пита ко је тај Бунапарта, не би умео ниједан да одговори. Дођите у Циганski клуб, па ћете о њему да чујете ...

Тај метод зачикивања могао би, можда, да успе код Цигана, који имају обичај да причају, о стварима које не разумеју. Ево једног Циганина који је досадио свима својом Африком:

– Африка, бато! ... има он обичај да каже.

Наравно, нема он појма шта је Африка, и предавач, указујући на њега, могао би да постави овакво питање циганском аудиторијуму:

– Е, браћо, ви сте чули за Африку! А шта је то Африка?

Циганski клуб на послу

Засад, Циганski клуб држи седнице, има одобрена правила, печат, унијач, мало хартије и 165.20 динара “на приплоду” у Поштанској штедионици. И има једног пријатеља који се обавезао да ће им давати месечно по 100 динара, због чега неки Цигани (нису у управи) кажу за њега да је “дило”, то јест будала.

Сад им треба књига и ормана за књиге (макар из телалнице), а сад су пука сиротиња. Што је најважније, треба им локал, јер гости циганске кафане “Струга”, где је сада смештен њихов клуб, не дају мира члановима управе кад држе седницу, пошто немају појма шта значи једна културна акција. Клубу су потребне пријатељи који имају пара. Али чланови управе неће нипошто да изгледа као да они “бију циганску жицу”. Пронашли су начин да то не изгледа као прошња, која им је, веле, одвратна. Пријатељи Цигана могу се уписати за добротворе, помагаче и утемељаче клуба и добиће за узврат чак и дипломе, како обећавају чланови управе. Утемељач се постаје са 100 динара, добротвор са 50, а помагач са свега 20 динара.

Откако је Цигана на свету, културне акције међу њима свакако није било. Је ли претседник клуба г. Симић циганski месија? Боже сачувај. Школован и вредан Циганин, он не личи на каквог месију, а други оснивачи клуба на то још мање личе. Жели ли се да оснује специјална циганска култура? Ни то није случај. За то, уосталом, нити је било нити има услова данас. Цигани немају заједнички језик, не везује их заједничка религија, а растурени су и не постоји велика концентрација Цигана на једноме месту. Без тога се не може створити специјална култура. Њихове су амбиције, кажу скромне: теже да се бар у варошима развију у добре и културне Цигане, како би се могле стопити са својом средином.

Ђ. Н.

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An unusual event among the dark-skinned people.
The Belgrade Gypsy Club facing a big task … Could the Gypsies achieve anything?

Science says that Gypsies are pure-blooded Aryans and Indo-Europeans as the most advanced peoples of Europe.

The Noble Gypsy race

Gypsies, of course, do not know what kind of noble race they belong to, but under the Gypsy tent there has always been a consciousness about the superiority of the Gypsy race. Gypsy and man are synonymous in the Gypsy language. 'Rom' is a Gypsy, but at the same time means a man. All other people for Gypsies are '*gadže*' [1], the same way as for the ancient Hellenic people all other people were 'barbarians'. Since 'Rom' is a man, this means that '*gadže*' are not people. According to the Gypsy legend, the Gypsies are chosen people, they were the one created first by heaven, and the Gypsy Kind Firaun [2] was the first King in the World, a Kind of all Kings.

Will the German example lead to measures against the Gypsies in other countries as well?

The Belgrade Gypsies at Jatagan-mala [3] and Marinkova Bara [4] founded their cultural club a month and a half ago, with the great task of civilising the Gypsies, as if they had predicted that the Gypsy question would be brough to the agenda. And since a great deed could not be made without the support of the press – they asked the newspaper *Politika* for support.

The authorities have approved the rules of the club that is called Educational Club of the Yugoslav Gypsy Youth. Apart from central offices in Belgrade, branches of the club are foreseen in other bigger places. The rules state:

"The task of the club: to gather all Gypsy young people and to help their advancement in the educational and cultural field; to enable the education of the poor, to fight crime and begging, to struggle for every Gypsy child to obtain a craft. The club will achieve its goals *with the help of the authorities*, by holding professional and instructive lectures, by establishing its own reading room …"

Gypsies and authorities

The phrase *with the help of the authorities* was underlined by us upon the request of the president of the club Mr. Simić, Gypsy, a law student and a court official. Their loyalty to the authorities is emphasised by the Belgrade Gypsies on every occasion. So, a few years ago, the Gypsy Musicians had held their Assembly [5]. The Assembly sent a complimentary telegram to both the local parliament member and the office staff of the neighbourhood management.

– Hey, but why also the office clerks? a *kafana* guest has noticeably marked.

– To make them see that we are not anti-national [6]! … explained the President, otherwise a respected Belgrade musician.

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They respect the authorities' power, but are undurable when they represent it themselves ("When the ax of the Gypsy drops in honey, he does not know how to cope" [7]).

Before the wars, a Gypsy was going to school. He had played, in fact, in the association 'Sua' where there were a lot of University professors. They offered him to graduate in law, curious to see what would come out of the Gypsy. He specialised in the field of police profession, and he got even appointed as a regional police chief in Svilajnac. And the first thing he did as a chief was – to arrest all the local Gypsies! He provoked a commotion, a group of citizens' representatives came to Belgrade to complain, and – he was quickly fired from his job … The Gypsy legends themselves say: when Firaun became a king, he hung his father to demonstrate how dreadful he is …

"We, the Capital's Gypsies! …"

The Gypsy club has three sections – educational, musical and sports. In the rules is literally stated: "The educational section will aim to teach literacy to the illiterate, and whoever is already literate will be educated and cultivated by the Club. The musical section will aim to nurture and enhance the musical skills of its members …"

The club's management members, in which, besides young people, there are middle-aged people, who are either musicians or craftsmen, and some also have graduated from high school. They tell us:

– We, the Capital's Gypsies, are supposed to know more than those in the countryside, as well as our old people who are here. We are Gypsies, and we do not avoid it, – it is not possible to transform from this skin to another. But we are going to create good, cultural and honest Gypsies …

Eighteen Gypsies have applied for the course for illiterate people. It is said that a theater group is going to be founded as well. Now they are collecting folklore material for its first piece from the Gypsy life, which will be called *A Wedding at the Willow*. For the sake of health education, the Central Hygiene Institute promised to make available to the club lecturers with projection technique and films [8]. Particular attention will be paid to the fight against syphilis, which is in a plenitude among the Belgrade Gypsies.

A lecturer has been assigned to them with the aim to hold a series of lectures about religion in the club. There is a lot to do among the Gypsies in regards to this. Formally, they belong to the religion of the environment in which they live, but their real religion is the religion of the primitive man, based on fear and faith in destiny.

Gypsies, for example, have no special word for God at all. 'O Del' in the Gypsy language can mean God as well, but that word also means sky, as well as cloud, and all that is above us …

They don't have a special word for a soul either. The word '*dji*' (in other regions 'odji' or 'vodji') means all that is placed in the middle. It can mean a heart, but also means – the heart of a watermellon, heart of a cucumbmer, and millions of other things …

(These are the last sensations from the science about Gypsies.)

The club intends to translate the Gospel into Gypsy language. Indeed, the Bible Society recently has published the Gypsy Gospel of Luke, a translation of our best Gypsy

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language expert professor Mr. Uhlik from Prijedor [9]. But the Belgrade Gypsies say they do not understand it, for it has been written in the Bosnian Gypsy dialect; It should have been added that in his translation Mr. Uhlik had to use coined words for abstract concepts that the Gypsies do not have.

What to think about all these plans? Is it just a beautiful wish?

No one will deny that Gypsies should be trained for regular occupations.

Do the Gypsies have disposal for culture?

The need for the music section existence can not be denied either. Today, playing the notes is required, and Gypsies dream about the music notes, although the "Gypsy finger" has so far been an obstacle for them to achieve greater success in this regard. Today, a Gypsy woman is proud of her child who has learned the notes:

– Oh, my child knows how to play the notes! … descants she.

But they will be just a few of them to believe in the Gypsy's ability for a higher spiritual culture. Who has ever seen an excellent Gypsy student?

The founders of the club have, of course, a favourable opinion about themselves and their compatriots' Gypsies. They point to people who have graduated from high schools and who are hiding their Gypsy origin.

– We are aware that we need to leave something to the youth that is coming after us and eliminate the spell over us, the Gypsies, who are considered by all to be the lowest and worst people … tells us the President of the club Mr. Simić.

Let's try, after all, to be logical. Aren't all the Gypsies Indo-Europeans, just like us? In terms of physical and spiritual characteristics, they do not differ from the other Indo-European people. This means they also have their abilities.

Even though both are Indo-European people, Scandinavians are culturally far from the Albanians, because they have lived in better conditions.

But what were the opportunities of the Gypsies? Mainly nomads, wanderers, always treated as impure, despised cast of thieves, cheaters, bandits and all other offenders, eternally driven away, excluded from any kind of spiritual relation with their cultural environment, – they could not learn anything and such conditions could not facilitate the development of ability for the cultural concept. Even though here the Gypsies have been treated somewhat better than in other countries ("Even if they are Gypsies – they also have a soul", say our peasants), the Serb has always considered the Gypsy to be of a lower position than himself. The state did nothing to civilise the Gypsies, and a small number of Gypsies who succeeded to enter school was always "Ciga", that is, an object of mockery.

It is necessary to distinguish between nomadic Gypsies [10] and Gypsies who are permanently inhabiting villages and towns. The nomadic Gypsies do not have a permanent place of residence, nor do they seem to have a sense for it; their moral is in conflict with our morals and they have no sense for what can and can not be done. The worst are the Russian Gypsies and Gypsies who are coming here crossing the border from Hungary. The environment controls the moral behavior of the Gypsy inhabitants in the villages and cities, and they take care of being honest.

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"Bunaparta" and "Africa, bro!"

We must not forget, however, that even the grandfathers and the great-grandfathers of the most representable Belgrade Gypsy-musicians were born under a tent. To adapt to a higher spiritual culture, the Gypsy spiritual being needs generations to pass through work and persistence.

Lecturers at the Belgrade Gypsy Club will have to behave cautiously if they want Gypsy students to attend lectures even without cash awards. The lectures should not be academic, there should be no theorising and enlightenment, culture and Christian virtues. No system could be applied. Gypsies have not yet matured for a particular erudition. Lectures should be limited to concrete things, using examples from the Gypsy life itself.

The recipe for lectures at the Gypsy Club could be seen from a conversation that the president of the club Mr. Simić had with an older Gypsy who, of course, looks skeptical towards this Gypsy movement.

– Among us, the Gypsies – started Mr. Simić – Napoleon Bonaparte is often mentioned. Furthermore, we do not say Bonaparte, but Bunaparta. "Hey you, look at you, you raised up your nose as Bunaparta, you don't want to talk to me!" And if a man asks us who that Bunaparta is, no one would be able to answer. Come to the Gypsy Club, and you'll hear about him [Bunaparta] …

This mockery method might, perhaps, succeed among the Gypsies, who have the habit of talking, about things they do not understand. Here is a Gypsy who has bored all with his talking about Africa:

– Africa, bro! … he has the habit of saying.

Of course, he does not know what Africa is, and the lecturer, pointing to him, could ask the Gypsy auditory the following question:

– Well, brothers, you have heard about Africa! And what is Africa?

The Gypsy Club is busy

For the time being, the Gypsy Club held a meeting session, has approved rules, a seal, an emblem, a few documents and 165.20 dinars "for growing" in the Postal Savings Bank. And there is one friend who has committed to give them a monthly fee of 100 dinars, which is why some Gypsies (not in the Governing Board) say about him that he is a "dilo", that is, a fool.

Now they need books and bookshelves for books (even from ruined places), and now they just have nothing. Most importantly, they need a club, as the guests of the Gypsy *kafana Struga*, where their club is currently located, do not provide peace to the members of the Board when they hold a meeting, because they have no idea what a cultural activity means. The club needs friends who have money. The members of the Board, however, do not like at all to look as if they are "pulling the Gypsy wire". They have found a way to not look like a begging, which is, they say, disgusting to them. Friends of the Gypsies can sign up for benefactors, helpers and founders of the club and in return they will even receive diplomas, as promised by the members of the Governing Board. One

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can become a founding member with 100 dinars, a benefactor with 50, and a helper with only 20 dinars.

Since the Gypsies have existed in the world, there has certainly not been any cultural activity among them. Is the president of the club Mr. Simić a Gypsy Messiah? God forbid. An educated and hardworking Gypsy man, he does not look like any kind of messiah, and the other founders of the club are even less like that. Is the intention to create a special Gypsy culture? It's not the case either. For that, after all, there have not been conditions neither in the past nor today. Gypsies do not have a common language, they are not bound by a common religion, they are dispersed and there is no big concentration of Gypsies in one place. Without this, a special culture could not be created. According to them, their ambitions are modest: they aim at the development, at least in the towns, of good and cultural Gypsies so that they could melt with their environments.

Đ. N.

Notes

1. *Gadže* (plural form of *gadžo*) is a term in Romani language used for designating all non-Roma people.
2. Throughout the Roma in Balkans there are numerous legends about a Gypsy King whose name was Pharaoh (Phiraun, Pharun, etc.). See more details in Chapter I.
3. *Jatagan-male* is one of the Belgrade neighbourhoods that developed as an effect of the growing Belgrade population after the First World War, where many people, including Gypsies, started building their houses.
4. *Marinkova Bara* is another neighbourhood with a majority of Roma inhabitants that appeared in interwar Belgrade as an effect of the growing population in the city.
5. The association in question is most probably the Association of Serbian Gypsies worshipers of Auntie Bibija, as their assembly in 1937 was reported to take place in Struga *kafana* as well (see 1.9 above).
6. The terms anti-national (*anti-nacionalni*) in the period was often used to describe activities that are against the Yugoslav state and Yugoslav identity.
7. The Serbian idiomatic expression and a popular saying 'pala je sekira u med', literary meaning 'the axe fell in honey', is used to indicate a great chance that comes unexpected, a surprising stroke of luck.
8. We can presuppose that Simić as President of the Club was cooperating with Aleksandar Petrović, a researcher at the Institute for Hygiene and author of several studies on Gypsies in Serbia (including in co-authorship with Simić himself), one of them devoted to venereal diseases (Петровић, 1937). The discourse on racial hygiene was present also in interwar Yugoslavia.
9. The translation in question is *O devlikano ramope e Sumnale Lukahtar* nakhadino pe romani chib katar Rade Uhlik sikamno (Gospel of Saint Luke translated into Romani language by Rade Uhlik a researcher) (Uhlik, 1938). Rade Uhlik (1899-1991) was a linguist and one of the few researchers interested in studying the Roma in Yugoslavia throughout 20th century. He was born to a Bosnian Croat family, and graduated in German studies (from universities in Vienna, Pecs and Belgrade). Uhlik has actively collected oral traditions and studied the Romani Bosnian dialects creating a Romani language dictionary and numerous collections that were later published, while some remain unpublished. His first Romani language collection of traditional folklore, Roma songs, was published in 1937 (Uhlik, 1937).
10. The word used is *čergari.*

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Source: Н[иколић], Ђ. (1939). Необичан догађај у обојеном народу. Београдски цигански клуб пред великим задатком … Може ли от Цигана нешто да буде? *Политика*, An. 35, No. 4, 1939, January 4, p. 10.
Prepared for publication by Sofiya Zahova.

Comments

While the Belgrade Gypsy Club and the First Serbian Gypsy Zadruga for mutual support in sickness and death of the 1920s, as well as the Association of the Belgrade Gypsies worshipers of Tetkica Bibija of 1935, seem to be of the same nature (organisations of the local Belgrade Roma community) and probably run by the same people, at the end of 1938 or in the very first days of 1939 the first nation-wide (at least in terms of ideology and concept) Roma organisation *Prosvetni klub jugoslovenske ciganske omladine* (Educational Club of the Yugoslav Gypsy Youth) was established in Belgrade, gathering young generation of Roma of different background – belonging to different Roma groups, with various religion and mother language. No original documents presenting the Statute or administration of the organisation were found so far, and only two articles published in *Politika* daily newspaper remain as the documents of the time witnessing the establishment and the activities of the Club. The club was modelled similarly to other Yugoslav-wide youth organisations, so its primary goal was gathering Roma youth for their further education and enlightening. There were several types of activities typical for youth organisations of that time that were developing in Yugoslavia as part of the Kingdom's politics of identity – sport activities, cultural activities, including amateur arts, and the so-called analphabetic streams (*analafabetski tečaj*) that were supposed to fight illiteracy among large groups by basic literacy lessons and by public lectures on topics such as health, hygiene, history, etc. These activities were also part of the Club's programme and in this respect, the Club was following a general youth organisations' pattern to organise the Gypsy youth in activities such as literacy classes, theatres, religious lectures, etc.

The article seems to be based on an extensive talk with the Club's leadership, mainly its President Svetozar Simić (1913-1979), as there are many references to information about Roma that the author had probably obtained during this talk. Noteworthy are the general reflections on the current European developments, such as the Nazi racial policies and the fact that Roma are Indo-Europeans who might not have achieved the highest results because of the conditions in which they are living. The Club's leadership positions its visions about the Roma in a general context, referring to historical, linguistic, religious, and folklore data, including legends and beliefs about the origin of the Roma.

The Club's Board was comprised of Gypsies, based in the capital of the Kingdom. They see themselves as leaders, as being on the forefront, as being more cultural and educated and who would lead the advancement of all Yugoslav Gypsies by creating branches all over the country. Their views also reflect various internal divisions between the Gypsy community, such as dialectical and group differences, especially when it comes to the division between Gypsies leading a settled way of life (presented as more advanced) and

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the nomadic ones (presented in a pejorative light). This discourse was common also for other Gypsy organisations in Europe during the interwar period (Marushiakova & Popov, 2020). Despite these differences, it is clear that the aim of the Club was to work for all Gypsies within Yugoslavia with the ultimate aim not to create a special Gypsy culture, but to lead to the 'development, at least in the towns, of good and cultural Gypsies so that they could melt with their environments'. In other words, to make the Gypsies citizens equal to all others in the Kingdom. This was the first explicit statement foreseeing a unity for all Gypsies, regardless of group and other divisions, under the leadership of the educated Roma individuals and, thus, is a sign for the development of a Yugoslav-wide Roma movement for unity at another level.

The Board of the Club of Yugoslav Gypsy Youth underlined its loyalty towards the government, stressing that Belgrade Gypsies had always acted with the help of the authorities and were not anti-national. This statement was, on the one hand, related to the general context of the time, when a supranational Yugoslav identity was promoted as opposed to separatism and nationalism among other communities. It thus should be interpreted in the context of the Yugoslav state efforts in the fields of culture, civil organisations, and religious activities, both centrally and locally, to strengthen Yugoslav identity especially among the youth, counteracting activities labelled as nationalist and anti-Yugoslav (for instance of Croatian nationalism).

A short German daily press article reporting on the initiative reveals information that was not reported in the Yugoslav newspapers, namely that the Club's members had sent telegrams to the King and the Prime Minister in which they declared their loyalty as good citizens who would work for the Yugoslav fatherland (Jeversches Wochenblatt, 1938, p. 10). It is worth quoting a passage from this newspaper material, which reveals the new stage reached in the development of the Roma community on its way to civic emancipation:

> The young Gypsies [...] have also made a program for their lives, that is very different from the one that is traditional for the Gypsies, which consists of permanent vagabonding. And although they do not completely give up the violin and the guitar, because the Gypsy cannot live without music, from now on their instruments must be a book and a newspaper in order to raise their educational status. (Ibid.).

According to research done by Dragoljub Acković (Acković, 2009, p. 60), the Club might have been affiliated to and funded by *Jugoslovenska radikalna zajednica* (Yugoslav Radical Union, founded by Milan Stojadinović in 1935, then Prime Minister of Yugoslavia), the main political movement in the country until 1939. This form of self-organisation of Belgrade Roma was of a short span, lasting until the beginning of the Second World War, but was the first sign of a Yugoslav-wide Roma movement.

All these civil society organisations' accomplishments were led by Belgrade Roma and took place in the Kingdom capital, Belgrade, where all Yugoslav institutions were located and where the Kingdom's policies were designed. Many of the plans and visions never materialised and this fact was probably linked to the arrival of the world economic crisis

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in Yugoslavia and later the Second World War. But the presence of these ideas in the public space and on the level of formal and informal organisations' programming showed that groups of Belgrade Roma citizens were actively working for the advancement of the Roma/Gypsies as people within the Yugoslav national or/and local context. These organisations were often continuing, intertwined with, and based on traditional forms of community gatherings, that were appropriated into new forms of civil organisations for the Roma/Gypsies, comparable to other Yugoslav organisations of the same period.

The Roma usually organised their assemblies in *kafanas* indicating that they were also following the usual steps in launching a political initiative. *Kafanas*, pubs, and beer cellars were a dominant meeting point of all political activists in Serbia in the 19th and well into the 20th century. Simultaneously, in this way, the Belgrade Roma testified that they were part of the social life in the country.

All four organisations discussed were based in Belgrade. It is, of course, natural that Belgrade Gypsies, being based in the Kingdom's capital, i.e. at the forefront of the socio-political arena where policies were coined, positioned themselves as an elite that should represent all Gypsies in the state and come up with leadership ideas and strategies for the development of the whole community within Yugoslavia. It should be noted however that these organisations were not the only examples of Roma community initiatives of civil nature in interwar Yugoslavia. There also were Roma local initiatives active in the cultural, social, or religious life at the local level. Such examples are the initiative for the building of so-called 'Gypsy Church' after the First World War in Privlaka (the region of Vukovar, today in Eastern Croatia) with donations from the Rom Čedomir Nikolić where in 1938 the priest Lazar Staminirović had read in front of Roma audience from the Vukovar-Srijem region the newly translated Gospel of Luke (Acković, 2014, pp. 205-208). The news about Čedomir Nikolić's initiative and reading of the Bible's texts in Romani in the church of Privlaka has been in nation-wide Yugoslav daily media (Комски, 1938, p. 9; Рајчевић, 1938, p. 8). The news has apparently made it internationally as short material about the initiative was reported also in the Ukrainian newspaper *Dilo*, published in Poland (Діло, 1938, p. 6).

In Niš, Southern Serbia, in 1928 was established the Gypsy Singing Society *Sloga* (Accord), and in 1932 was founded the football club *Gajret* (Zeal) (Jašić, 2001, p. 25) that according to the local memory of the Roma community was entirely comprised of Roma, although it was not officially stated that it had an ethnic character. Speaking about the network of associations named *Gajret*, initially started in Bosnia in 1903 (Banac, 1988, p. 366) and spread throughout Yugoslavia during the interwar period that became particularly active under the state control in the 1920s and early 1930s (Giomi, 2019, pp. 45-47), we have to point out that it is highly probable that many *Gajret* branches in the territories of Central and Southern Serbia were in fact set up and managed by Muslim Gypsies. In 1862 and 1867 Muslims had to leave the territories of the Principality of Serbia and only Muslim Gypsies who exclusively declared as such were allowed to stay (Clayer & Bougarel, 2017, pp. 27-28). Thus, in these territories, the Muslim organisations from this time on could have been set up by Serbian/Yugoslav Gypsies and in fact working for the

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mobilisation of the Muslim Gypsy community (similarly to processes among Muslim Gypsy organisations in Bulgaria, see for details Chapter 2). Further research is needed to confirm this hypothesis.

This also brings us to a reflection on the sources about the activities of the Roma organisations in interwar Yugoslavia. The materials preserved in the official Archive of Yugoslavia are scarce or more precisely lacking even though at least two of the organisations were formally registered (Association of Belgrade Gypsies, worshipers of Bibija Auntie and Educational Club of Yugoslav Gypsy Youth) and, thus, must have been submitting some documents to the respective authorities. Although in theory the documents of all civil, religious, cultural, and sports associations of the interwar period should have been preserved in the Archive of Yugoslavia, the archival research there showed that in practice only documents of nation-wide and state-sponsored associations have been kept. We might suggest that the Roma organisations' documents, along with other, considered less important associations' papers, were either not archived or did not survive turbulent times. In the local memory of the Belgrade Roma, narratives about these organisations have been preserved, but these narratives have been also influenced by contemporary secondary sources and media discourse. Thus, we were able to find more information about the Belgrade Gypsies organisations' activities and initiatives in the national media of the time, particularly daily press, than in the official archives of Yugoslavia which were comprehensively reviewed (AJ-37; AJ-63; AJ-66; AJ-69; AJ-74; AJ-334). Although the tone of the articles reporting on these activities is often written in a mocking and ironic manner, they so far appeared to be the main source documenting the Roma civil organisation's activities.

Danilo Šarenac and Sofiya Zahova

3.2 Civil rights and political participation

3.2.1 *The Gypsies Want Their Representative in the Parliament*

Буран цигански збор код "Три Кључа"
Цигани хоће свог представника у Скупштини

Бесумње најинтересантнији и најбучнији политички збор у Београду одржан је прекјуче пре подне у кафани код Три кључа. На њему је било присутно неколико стотина цигана из околине Београда и збор је имао специјално цигански карактер. Није била у питању партијска боја циганских насеобина, јер су сви цигани београдског округа по традицији радикали, али, због подвојености радикалних листа у београдском округу, морало је доћи до подвојености међу циганима.

Г. Пера Јовановић-Комита, који истиче независну листу против званичног кандидата г. Алексе Жујовића, пронашао је врло духовит начин, да би придобио за себе гласачку војску цигана. Он је узео као кандидата на својој листи циганина свирача Драгољуба Лукића. Овај факат силно је дејстовао на цигане и њима је пукло пред

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очима, да је до сада међу посланицима Народне Скупштине СХС било и Цинцара, и Турака, и Мађара, и Немаца, само још није било цигана и ако цигани представљају не само доста многобројан елеменат у нашој земљи, него и културан фактор, без кога би пропала култура наше националне музике. У редовима наших цигана настало је комешање: одбацише препукла ћемана и промукле трубе и бацише се у политичку борбу. Будући народни посланик свирач Драгољуб развио је међу својом браћом најживљу агитацију, обећавајући да ће одмах, тек што дође у Скупштину, издати обзнану о протеривању из земље свих страних свирачких капела и оркестара, који су преплавили земљу, потискујући циганску народну музику. Цигани се умало нису поколебали и пришли свом будућем представнику. Али онда, би им жао Алексе, јер је према њима увек био добар. Да се међу циганима не би изгубила једнодушност, сазвао је јуче Коста Маринковић цигански збор код Три кључа.

– Драгољуб Лукић нас је издао – говорио је Маринковић, отварајући збор. – он је пришао дисиденту Пери Комити због тога што је добио 7 000 динара.

– Ово је деловало на цигане као гром из ведра неба.

А нама није дао ни марјаша! Нека дели паре, нека дели! Драла се цела сала.

– Нема ту и примити паре и бити Народни посланик! Или нека нам да паре, па нека буде посланик или да задржи паре а ми да будемо посланици!

Кад се ларма донекле стишала, Маринковић је продужио:

– Наш Алекса Жујовић био нам је увек као прави отац и брат и ми смо увек за њега гласали. Не ваља му само то, што се није сетио да и нас кандидује на својој листи. Ипак, не смемо да га издамо као Јуда за 7000 динара. Него, још овог пута сви ћемо да гласамо за њега, а на идућим изборима, тражимо нашег кандидата. Ако Алекса на то не пристане, а ми ћемо изнети нашу засебну листу, јер да се не заборави нас у београдском округу има 6,000.

Несрећа је натерала Драгољуба Лукића да баш у том моменту упадне у кафану, у намери да се брани. Револтирани цигани направише паклену дреку, шчепаше га ко за руке ко за ноге и избацише га напоље као лопту. Тиме је завршен цигански политички збор. Драгољуб Лукић, устајући са калдрме, пребројавао је да ли су му сва ребра на месту. Алекса Жујовић обезбедио је себи циганске гласове, а наш парламент на другим наредним изборима имаће част да прими првог циганског посланика у своју средину.

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A Tempestuous Gypsy Assembly at the *Three Keys*
The Gypsies want their representative in the Parliament

Without any doubt the most interesting and the noisiest political assembly recently held in Belgrade took place the day before yesterday, in the morning, in the *kafana The Three Keys*. A few hundred Gypsies from Belgrade's suburbs attended this assembly which had a unique Gypsy character. The issue at stake was not the party colour of the

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Gypsy settlements, because all Gypsies from the Belgrade County traditionally vote for the Radicals, however, due to the existing differences between the various electoral lists within the Radical party in the Belgrade County, the split within the Belgrade Gypsies came to be an inevitable result.

Mr. Pera Jovanović-Komita [1], who stands for the independent candidates' lists against the official candidate Mr. Aleksa Žujović [2] has found a very humoresque manner of how to win over the voting army of the Gypsies. Namely, he placed the name of the Gypsy musician, Dragoljub Lukić, on his list. This made an immense impression on the Gypsies and they suddenly clearly realised [3], that until now among the Deputies of the National Assembly of the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes, there were Tsintsari [4] and Turks [5] and Hungarians and Germans, but there were no Gypsies, even though the Gypsies represent not only a very numerous element in our country, but also a cultural one as well, without whom the culture of our national music would collapse. This provoked commotion in the ranks of our Gypsies: they have discarded their worn violins and hoarse trumpets and they lanced themselves into a political struggle. The future MP, the musician Dragoljub developed the most agile propaganda among his brothers by promising that his first move, upon being elected, would be to issue a decree, expelling from the country all foreign orchestras, which have overwhelmed our country and have thrusted out the Gypsy folk music. The Gypsies, without a sign hesitation, almost embraced their future deputy. But then, they felt sorry for Aleksa, as he was always nice to them. In order to save the unity of the Gypsies Kosta Marinković organised a Gypsy rally yesterday in the *kafana The Three Keys*.

– Dragoljub Lukić betrayed us – said Marinković. He works now with Pera Komita because he got 7000 dinars from him.

This news struck the Gypsy audience as a lighting coming from a clear blue sky.

– And he didn't give us a dime. He should have shared the money! He should share! – The whole *kafana* shouted.

– You can't have the money and be a National MP! Either he gives us the money and then becomes MP or he keeps his money but lets us become MPs!

When the noise settled down a bit, Marinković continued:

– Our Aleksa Žujović has always been as a true father and a brother to us and we all voted for him. His only mistake was that he did not remember to place any of us on his electoral list. Despite this, we should not betray him like Judas, for some 7000 dinars. On the contrary, this is the last time we will vote for him, but on the next elections we will ask to have our own candidate. If Aleksa rejects this proposal of ours, we will create our own independent list, because no one should forget that there are 6000 of us in the Belgrade County.

A misfortune set of circumstances brought Dragoljub Lukić at this exact moment into the *kafana*, as he came with the intention to defend himself. The agitated Gypsies made a hellish noise, they grabbed him, some by his hands, others grabbed his legs and they threw him out like a ball. This is how the Gypsies' political assembly ended. Dragoljub Lukić, while trying to stand up from the pavement simultaneously checked if all of his ribs were in their place. Aleksa Žujović secured the Gypsy votes for himself, and on the next elections our parliament will have the honour to welcome the first Gypsy MP into its ranks.

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Notes

1. Pera Jovanović with the nickname *Komita* (the *Komitadji* meaning irregular fighter) was a prominent member of the People's Radical Party. He was present in the Serbian political life before 1914. His electoral base included residents of the Belgrade suburbs such as the Kosmaj area. His nickname was probably related to his political activism across the Ottoman border before the Balkan War as he appeared with this nickname already in 1914.
2. Aleksa Žujović (1866-1951) was one of the most important figures of the People's Radical Party in the interwar years. He was a long-term president of all the Belgrade branches of this political organisation. His electoral base also included suburbs such as Kosmaj. He was the only national MP who volunteered to participate in the First Balkan War thus rejecting his discretion right not to participate in the immediate war efforts.
3. Dragoljub Lukić was remembered as one of the self-appointed leaders of the Belgrade Roma throughout the interwar years. After the failed attempt to become the Roma candidate at the Belgrade local elections in 1925 he managed to participate in the local election in 1927, this time in Kolubara County. Namely, this time he got 6800 votes and lacked only 32 votes to be elected. He also played an important role in the protests organised in relation to the city council's decision to demolish one of the Belgrade's famous Roma slums, the Jatagan mala, in 1933. His main profession was a restaurant leaser and he was well known in Belgrade for this activity. On several occasions the press referred to him as a *Gypsy deputy* as he continued, unsuccessfully, to be the first Roma elected to the Yugoslav parliament. Despite his lack of education and political experience he managed to formulate, quite clearly, the link between the lack of Roma's representatives in the National assembly and the daily mistreatment of this minority. In 1934 he was arrested as he participated in a bar fight in his own restaurant.
4. Tsintsari: known also as Aromanians, an ethnic group living in the Balkans, mostly in Northern and Central Greece, Albania and North Macedonia.
5. 'Turci' (Turks) is used here as the equivalent of Muslims. The article refers to Yugoslav citizens who are Slavic speakers and who inhabited the Kingdom territories that historically were under Ottoman rule. In the context of South-Eastern Europe where religious and ethno-national belonging have been often equalised, Turkish was used to signify Islam religion, while Serbian was used to signify Orthodox Christian.

Source: [No author]. (1925). Буран цигански збор код "Три Кључа". Цигани хоће свог представника у Скупштини. *Време*, An. 5, No. 1106, 1925, January 17, p. 5.
Prepared for publication by Danilo Šarenac.

3.2.2 *The Protest Rally of the Belgrade Gypsies*

Протесни збор београдских цигана код "Чубуре"
против новог циганског кмета у Општини

Цигани су саставили резолуцију
и прете да приреде циганске демонстрације пред Општином

Цигански кмет у београдској Општини је личност са нарочитим положајем. Цигански кмет нема веза са партијама. Он је као нека врста представника на страном двору, само с том изменом што прима плату на општинској благајни. Са политичким партијама и листама нема везе. Њега, на предлог циганске нахије са Чубуре, поставља Општински Суд, да заступа интересе и представља жеље

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свих чубурских Цигана. За тај свој труд води се на платном списку као државни службеник.

Већ 6 и по година ту дужност, на опште задовољство свих Чубураца, вршио је г. Маринко Савић. Прошла и претпрошла општинска управа нису га дирале, све док није дошла нова општинска управа која је г. Маринка просто отпустила и на његово место поставила г. Михајла Стефановића Пилићара, продавца пилића на Великој пијаци.

Ова промена циганског кмета изазвала је револт код чубурских Цигана. Бивши ципански кмет са својим присталицама основао је нови Клуб српских Цигана и јуче поподне заказали су протестни збор у кафани Чубура.

На збор је дошло преко сто Цигана, представника Чубураца, Јатаганмалаца и свих музиканата престонице. Поред радикала било је и 5 до 6 представника демократских Цигана, који су спремали велико политичко изненађење.

Први је узео реч г. Маринко Савић, председник новог клуба и бивши ципански кмет. Истакавши своје заслуге на том пољу за 6 и по година г. Маринко пита збор:

– А да ли тај Михаило Пилићар има кога од вас, браћо, уза се?

– Никога, никога! Проламају се бројни узвици из примашких грла, пређени штимовањем једне виолине, која већ одриче послушност.

– Ако је г. Куманудију Михајло потребан, нека га узме за шефа кабинета, па нека води пилићарску, а не циганску политику – завршава г. Маринко праћен бурним одобравањем.

Затим узима реч досадашњи вођа Цигана демократа, Јаначко Стојановић Чукур, примаш код Боровог Парка. Он тражи да сви Цигани заједно устану не против Михаила, него против председника, који таквог човека представља за циганског кмета.

Завршава говор речима:

– До данас сам био јак и агилан демократа. Ножевима сам се борио против своје браће Цигана радикала. Али, данас ја дајем изјаву, да прелазим у радикалну странку и као такав радићу исто као и за демократску.

Бура одушевљених поздравила је Јаначка.

– Браво Чукуру, браво, живео! – викали су раздражени Чубурци.

– Нисам само ја дао изјаву да прелазим у радикале, већ ево потпис још 23 друга и члана моје партије, завршава Јаначко, што изазива нова одобравања.

Г. Ђока Станковић, извесник, истиче деликатан положај циганског кмета, који долази у везу са министрима и председницима, те вели:

– Ми имамо међу нама људи школованих, са музичким школама и факултетима, и они могу да нас достојно представљају, а не један пилићар.

На крају даје такође и изјаву да он са свим својим присталицама прелази из демократске странке у радикалску.

То исто изављује и Милан Томић, примаш код Славије, који вели:

– Ја као довољно начитан и друштвено васпитан, нећу да ме представља један пилићар у овој вароши, где сам познат као добро писмен и добар музичар. Због тога постајем присталица радикалне странке. Између нас има можда 5-6 неписмених, и

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онда не треба да нас неписмени човек представља. Треба да се просветимо сви, јер је ово двадесети век.

Без инцидента, осим протеста једног јатаганског Циганина, који није могао да добије реч и који је због тога претио расцепом Јатаганмалаца, Цигани су се разишли. Нарочити одбор саставио је своју резолуцију.

Резолуција

1. Београдски Цигани улажу протест противу рада данашње општинске управе и самовласног избора за кмета циганског г. Михаила Стефановића, пилићара.

2. Пошто на избор циганског кмета имају искључиво право само београдски Цигани, и пошто исти треба и мора да буде изабран вољом и већином беогрдаских Цигана.

3. То одбор једногласно усваја, да се уложи најенергичнији протест противу таквог поступка и да се поништи избор за кмета Михаила Стефановића, и да избор изврше београдски Цигани, који ће у својој средини наћи достојног човека, који ће их репрезентовати.

Нарочит одбор предаће ову резолуцију председнику Општине, а ако то не буде имало дејства, Клуб Српских Цигана спрема се да организује циганску поворку од 200 до 300 људи која ће пред Општином приредити демонстрације.

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The Protest rally of the Belgrade Gypsies at *Čubura*
against the newly appointed Gypsy *kmet* in the Municipality

The Gypsies have put together a Resolution
and threaten to organise Gypsy demonstration in front of the Municipality

The Gypsy *kmet* [1] in the Belgrade Municipality is a person who holds a very special position. The Gypsy officer has no links with political parties. He is somewhat of a representative on a foreign court, with the exception that he receives his pay salary from the Municipality. He has no connections with the political parties nor electoral lists. He is appointed, following the recommendation of the Gypsy community from Čubura, by the Municipal Court, so that the *kmet* represents the interests and desires of all among the Gypsies of Čubura. He receives a salary from the Municipality for his efforts as a state servant.

Already for some six and a half years this duty has been carried out by Mr. Marinko Savić, to the general delight of all Čubura residents. The last municipal management as well as the one before this one did not replace him, however, the new municipal management fired him and employed Mr. Mihailo Stefanović the Chicken Man, the man who sells chickens at the Big Market.

This change of the Gypsy *kmet* provoked a revolt among the Čubura Gypsies. The former Gypsy officers with his followers formed the new club of the Serbian Gypsies and

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they have organised yesterday in the afternoon a rally in the "Čubura" *kafana*. More than one hundred Gypsies came to this rally, representatives of Čubura, Jatagan-mala and all of the musicians of the capital. Apart from the members of the radicals [2], there were 5 to 6 representatives of the democrats, who were preparing a major political surprise [3].

The first one to speak was Mr. Marinko Savić the President of the new club and the former Gypsy *kmet*. Stressing his merits in the field of his duties during the last six and a half years, Mr. Marinko asks the assembly:

And, is anyone among you supporting this Mihailo the Chicken Man?

– No one, no one! Numerous cries could be heard from musician band leaders' throats followed by the tuning of one violin which was already showing signs of disobedience.

If Mr. Kumanudi [4] needs him, let him have him as his cabinet chef, so let him lead a chicken and not the Gypsy policy – ended Mr. Marinko followed by energetic applauding.

Then the word was given to the current leader of the Gypsy democrats, Janačko Stojanović Čukur, a musician band leader, near Borovo Park. He asked that all the Gypsies raise their voices together not against Mihailo, but against the president, who placed such a man as a Gypsy *kmet*.

He ended his speech with the words:

– Until today I was a strong and agile democrat. I fought with knives against my Gypsy brothers who were radicals. But today, I announce, I am transferring to the Radical Party and as such I will work as I did for the Democratic Party.

Janačko was greeted with a tempest of joy.

– Well done Čukur, well done, long live! – shouted the exasperated people of Čubura.

– I am not the only one who publically announces that I am transferring to the radicals, here is the signature of 23 of my fellows and members of my party, ended Janačko, provoking new acclamation.

Mr. Djoka Stanković, a delegate, stressed the sensitive position of the Gypsy *kmet*, as this man communicates with ministers and presidents, then he said:

– We have among us educated people, who finished music schools and faculties, and they can honourably represent us, and not someone who is a chicken man.

At the end, he also gave the statement that he, with all of his supporters, will transfer from the Radical Party to the Democratic Party.

The same was said by Milan Tomić, the [music] band leader at the Slavija Square, who said:

– As a well-read and socially educated man, I do not wish to be represented by a chicken man in this town, where I am also well known as a literate person and as a good musician. This is why I am becoming a member of the Radical Party. Here among us, there are perhaps 5-6 illiterate people, and now we are supposed to be represented by an illiterate man. We should all become enlightened, as this is the twentieth century.

Without any incidents, except the protest made by a Gypsy man from the Jatagan-mala, who was not allowed to speak and because of this he threatened to initiate a split and take away the men of Jatagan-mala from this rally, the Gypsies dispersed. The special committee made its own resolution.

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A Resolution

1. The Belgrade Gypsies protest against the work of the current municipal authorities and against the self-appointed Gypsy *kmet* Mr. Mihailo Stefanović, the Chicken seller.

2. As only the Belgrade Gypsies have the exclusive right to elect the Gypsy *kmet* and as this officer must be elected respecting the will of the majority of the Belgrade Gypsies.

3. The board unanimously agreed, to send the most energetic protest against such an action and to abolish the election for *kmet* of Mihailo Stefanović, and asks the election to be performed by the Belgrade Gypsies, who will manage to find a decent man among them, who will represent them.

A special board will give this resolution to the Municipality's president and if this does not provoke actions, The Club of the Serbian Gypsies will start up a Gypsy rally with 200 to 300 men who will organise a demonstration in front of the Municipality.

Notes

1. *Kmet* (pl. *kmetovi*) is an administrative term for an alderman responsible for communities or administrative territories that originated from the Ottoman times. This institution was preserved in the Yugoslav territories and in this case Gypsy *kmet* was a salaried man appointed by the municipality who would have administrative functions for the Gypsy community (see also Chapter 2).
2. The members of the People's Radical Party.
3. The members of the Yugoslav Democratic Party.
4. Kosta Kumanudi (1874-1962) is a Serbian and Yugoslav politician, member of the Democratic Party and from 1933 a member of the Yugoslav National Party. During his political life he performed several very important duties in Belgrade, but also in Yugoslavia. From 1926 until 1929 he was the mayor of Belgrade, remembered for his significant contribution to the city's modernisation. Later on he was a finance minister of the Kingdom.

Source: [No author]. (1926). Протесни збор београдских цигана код "Чубуре" против новог циганског кмета у Општини. Цигани су саставили резолуцију и прете да приреде циганске демонстрације пред Општином. *Време*, An. 6, No. 1692, 1926, September 5, p. 9.
Prepared for publication by Danilo Šarenac and Sofiya Zahova.

3.2.3 *Political Party Participation*

3.2.3.1 The Gypsy Party is Being Set up

Оснива се циганска партија, која ће покренути свој орган "Голаћ"
Кандидати су пристали да им се одсече језик, ако као посланици не буду испунили обећања

Ваљево, 16. Августа.
Сасвим изненада Ваљевци су доживели једну сензацију. Г. Светомир Михајловић, учитељ из Дрена, срез посавски, користећи се незадовољством присталица разних странака и економском бедом, развио је акцију на оснивању једне нове странке. Странка има класно и политички да организује најсиромашније и најнеобезбеђеније народне слојеве. Интересантно је да ће се акција нарочито удвостручити међу Циганима, који још нигде нису политички организовани. Према уверавању

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г. Михајловића, Цигани треба да се класно организују, јер је то елемент социјално запостављен и сурово експлоатисан от разних политичких странака. Стога они треба да имају своју странку и своје представнике у парламенту. Ова ће се групација звати сиротињска странка.

Г. Михајловић са неколицином својих пријатеља покренуће одмах у Београду свој лист, који ће се звати *Голаћ*, орган сиротињске странке. Овај наслов листу дат је као успомена на голаће Зеке Буљубаше. Интересантно је да већ и програм пројектован и пароле ће се ускоро лансирати у народ путем штампе и јавних зборова.

Али није све у томе. Странка се неће задовољити само са тежњама локалног карактера. Напротив, г. Михајловић ће још сада развити преко штампе и својих зборова акцију у целој Краљевини, јер свуда има много незадовољних елемената, бескућника, сиротиње, а пре свега Цигана.

Ваљевском првостепеном суду данас је већ предата листа сиротињске странке, чији је носилац г. Светомир Михајловић, а сресски кандидати: за срез посавски Чеда Матијевић инвалид, заменик Миливоје Васић Циганин-инвалид; за срез тамнавски Милорад Марковић Циганин-економ, заменик Михајло Радосављевић инвалид-Циганин; за срез подгорски и ваљевски Илија Митровић, чији је заменик такође један Циганин.

Г. Михајловић је добио позиве из више округа да приступи организовању сиротињске странке. Агитатори путују пешке од села до села. У овој агитацији често је долазило до дирљивих сцена. У једној циганској махали Циганке су просто вриштале, сузних очију од радости, грлиле г. Михајловића, називајући га сиротињском мајком.

Интересантно је да су, према тврђењу г. Михајловића, посланички кандидати већ сада дали обавезу својим гласачима да ће за случају да не буду свој мандат вршили како треба и своја обећања испунили, дати да им се одсече језик.

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A Gypsy party is being set up, which will launch its party newspaper *Golać* [1]
The candidates agreed to cut their tongues if they don't fulfil their promises as MPs

Valjevo, August 16.

To their big surprise, the inhabitants of Valjevo experienced a sensation. Mr. Svetomir Mihajlović [2], a teacher from Dren, Posavina district, taking advantage of the dissatisfaction among supporters of various parties and the economic misery, developed an action for the formation of a new party. The party has [the aim] to organize the poorest and most deprived, in terms of class and politically, people's strata. Interestingly, the action will particularly expand among Gypsies, who are not yet politically organised. According to Mr. Mihajlović, Gypsies should be organised class-wise, because this element is socially neglected and cruelly exploited by various political parties. Therefore, they should have

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their own party and their representatives in parliament. This formation is going to be called the Poor People's Party.

Mr. Mihajlović with a few friends will immediately launch their own newspaper in Belgrade, which is going to be called *Golać*, as an organ of the Poor People's Party. This title of the newspaper is given in memory of *golaći* of Zeka Buljubaša [3]. It is interesting that the program has already been designed and slogans will soon be disseminated to the people through the press and at public meetings.

But that's not all. The party is not going to be satisfied only with aspirations of a local character. On the contrary, Mr. Mihajlović is going right now to develop action across the Kingdom through the press and at their meetings, as there are many dissatisfied social elements everywhere, homeless people, poor people, and above all Gypsies.

Today to the Valjevo Court of First Instance has already been handed over the electoral list of the Poor People's Party, led by Mr. Svetomir Mihajlović, and districts' candidates: Čeda Matijević, invalid [4], for the Posavina district, deputy Milivoje Vasić, Gypsy-invalid; for the Tamnavski district Milorad Marković, Gypsy household manager, deputy Mihajlo Radosavljević, invalid-Gypsy; for the district of Podgorica and Valjevo Ilija Mitrović, whose deputy is also a Gypsy.

Mr. Mihajlović has received requests from many districts to join the founding of the Poor People's Party. Campaigners travel on foot from village to village. Often touching scenes took place during these campaigns. In one Gypsy *mahala*, Gypsy women were just screaming, teary-eyed with joy, they hugged Mr. Mihajlović, calling him 'the mother of the poor'.

Interestingly, according to Mr. Mihajlović, the MP candidates have already given a promise to their voters that in case they do not implement their mandate properly and do not fulfil their promises, they will have their tongues cut off.

Notes

1. *Golać* literally means 'the son of a naked man' used as a term for a very poor or homeless people.
2. From the source published above that was undersigned by the founder of the party, it is clear that his name was Čedomir Mihailović, not Svetomir Mihajlović. Probably this mistake was due to a misunderstanding by the local correspondent of the newspaper.
3. Zeka Buljubaša is the nickname of Jovan Gligorijević (ca. 1785-1813), one of the Serbian military leaders during the First Serbian Uprising (1804-1813). Among other things, he was famous for forming a military group (*četa*) of men called *Goli Sinovi* (Naked Sons) or *Golaći* who, contrary to their name, were known as richly dressed and armed. The reference to one of the revolutionary heroes comes to underline the identification of the new party with the Serbian national idea, and to equalisation of the war invalids of the Balkan and First World War with the heroes of the First Serbian Uprising.
4. The word invalid in the interwar period usually referred to those army soldiers who survived the Balkan and First World War.

Source: [No author]. (1927a). Оснива се циганска партија, која ће покренути свој орган "Голаћ". Кандидати су пристали да им се одсече језик, ако као посланици не буду испунили обећања. *Време*, An. 7, No. 2031, 1927, August 17, p. 3.
Prepared for publication by Sofiya Zahova.

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3.2.3.2 The Gypsy Electoral List in Valjevo District

"Циганска листа у ваљевском округу"
Изјава г. Чеде Михаиловића

Уредништво је примило ово писмо:

"Ваш дописник из Ваљева јавио вам је као сензациону новост да сам основао Циганску партију! Мени је познато да је овдашњи адвокат г. Кајле Јефтић покушао саставити циганску листу а као носилац је требао бити неки Неша Циганин из Дивљег Брда. Ја сам пак образовао партију сиромашних, имена: странка народне већине, уверен да нас досадашњи богати посланици никада неће умети заступати јер нас томе искуство учи; а што смо Цигане – инвалиде узели за заменике то је само једна правда, јер их у ваљевској области има много, а нису били нигде заступљени ни као кметови, међутим раме уз раме су се борили за нашу општу ствар и своје српство су посведочили на Куманову. Брегалници и Добром Пољу па ипак фес се виђа на министарској столици а о њима нигде ни помена нема.

Молим вас да се горње као исправка одштампа у наредном броју и остајем с поштовањем стари претплатник."

Чедомир Михаиловић

18. августа 1927.
Ваљево.

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The "Gypsy Electoral List in Valjevo District"
A Statement by Mr. Čeda Mihailović

The Editorial Office received the following letter:

"Your correspondent from Valjevo informed you as a sensational news [1] that I had founded a Gypsy Party! I know that a lawyer here, Mr. Kajle Jeftić, tried to put together a Gypsy electoral list and as a leader was supposed to be a certain Neša the Gypsy from Divlje Brdo [2]. I, however, have formed a party of the poor people, with the name: Party of the people's masses, convinced that the rich MPs [that we had] so far do not know how to represent us, as experience teaches us that; and the fact that we took Gypsies – [war] invalids, as deputies [3], is not only a justice, because despite that there are many of them in the Valjevo region, they have not been represented anywhere as *kmets*, however, they fought side by side for our common cause and testified their Serbness in Kumanovo [4]. Bregalnica and Dobro Polje [5] are still seen from the ministerial chair, but there is no mention of them at all.

Please print the above as a correction in the next issue and I remain with respect, an old subscriber."

Čedomir Mihailović

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August 18, 1927.
Valjevo.

Notes

1. Čedomir Mihailović wrote his statement as a reaction to the article published in *Vreme* newspaper on 17 Agust 1927 that has been published above in 3.2.3.1.
2. Divlje Brdo was and still is the Roma neighbourhood of Valjevo.
3. The author refers to the information that the deputy candidates in the party's electoral list were all Gypsy war invalids as it is clear from the source provided in 3.2.3.1.
4. The battle of Kumanovo (23-24 October 1912), that finished with a victory of the Serbian troops over the Ottoman army, was one of the major battles of the First Balkan War with a key importance for the realisation of the Serbian national idea and for the inclusion in the Kingdom of Serbian territories of the Kosovo Vilayet.
5. Both battles are related to Serbian army victories over the Bulgarian army, in the Second Balkan War (Bregalnica, 30 June – 9 July 1913) and in the First World War (Dobro polje, 15-18 September 1918) respectively. Similarly to the reference to Kumanovo, these are made to underline the importance of the army soldiers and veterans for the realisation of the Serbian national idea for the unification of Serbian territories.

Source: Михаиловић, Ч. (1927b). Циганска листа у ваљевском округу. Изјава г. Чеде Михаиловића. *Време*, An. 7, No. 2035, 1927, August 21, p. 8.
Prepared for publication by Dragoljub Acković and Sofiya Zahova.

3.2.4 *The Višegrad Gypsies Have Built a House of Education*

Вишеградски Цигани подигли су просветни дом
Јапан-мала на Дрини

Вишеград, 4. Октобар.

Град на Дрини који је живо претстављен у нашој књижевности кроз приповетке Ива Андрића, има свакако најинтересантнију од свих циганских мала. Цигански кварт у Вишеграду доживео је у последње време изванредне реформе. Цигани су предузели на широкој основи акцију за просвећивање свих циганчића, а у овај план ушле су и старе циганке, врачарке, котларке и просјакиње. "Нећемо да будемо оно што смо некад били", то је парола Јапан Мале, како се зове цигански кварт у Вишеграду.

До пре кратког времена, Цигани су у овом лепом граду живели у старом и бедном насељу Мезалин. Међутим, приликом једне кампање око градске општине Мезалин се представио као фактор првог реда. "Помагаћемо ону општину која почне да изграђује хигијенске станове за Цигане". Ово је био захтев вишеградских Цигана и како они претстављају јак кадар гласача за општинску самоуправу, о њиховим захтевима почело се водити рачуна. На периферији вишеграда почело је да ниче ново насеље. Изграђиване су куће за Цигане. Када је требало решити питање имена нове мале, Цигани су усвојили предлог свога церибаше – Јапан Мала да је зовемо!

– Јер наши су стари стигли у Вишеград право из Јапана ...

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Одиста вишеградски Цигани верују да њихова лоза има корен негде у Јапану. И тако је цигански кварт добио своје егзотично име. Старо име је једино сачувано у просветном друштву вишеградских Цигана. Оно се зове Мезалин. Ово друштво приређује предавања са циљем да Јапан Мала стече што више корисних знања. Предавачи су, врло често, сами Цигани, а као гости у "Мезалин" долазе многи интелектуалци из Вишеграда. Вишеградски цигански кварт сигурно је једини код нас који сву децу шаље у школу.

"Још мало па ћемо ми имати своје адвокате, учитеље и лекаре ...". То је највећи идеал Јапан Мале. Због ових њених настојања вишеградски Цигани уживају велике симпатије целокупног грађанства. И највећи балови, на којима се сакупља цео град, то су забаве Јапан Мале на Дрини.

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The Višegrad Gypsies have built a House of Education
Japan-mala on Drina

Višegrad, October 4.

The town on the Drina river which has been so vividly portrayed in our literature through the short stories of Ivo Andrić [1], is for sure one of the most interesting out of all Gypsy neighbourhood. The Gypsy quarter in Višegrad lately went through an extraordinary transformation. The Gypsies have undertaken a wide action in order to enlighten all Gypsy children, and this plan includes also old Gypsy women, the fortune-tellers, coppersmiths and beggars. "We don't want to be what we once were", this is the slogan of the Japan-mala, which is the name used for the Gypsy neighbourhood in Višegrad.

Until very recently, the Gypsies lived in this beautiful town in the old and miserable dump quarter Mezalin. However, during one campaign for the town's elections Mezalin became an issue of the outmost importance. "We will support those authorities which start to build proper flats for the Gypsies." This was the demand repeated by the town's numerous Gypsies and, as they present a strong voting machine for the local government, their desires had to be taken into account. As a result, the new loggings were built at the outskirts. Houses were built for the Gypsies. When the name of the new neighbourhood had to be settled the Gypsies accepted the proposition of their leader – let's call it the Japan-mala!

– Because our ancestors came straight from Japan ...

Indeed, the Višegrad Gypsies believe that their people originate somewhere from Japan. And this is how the Gypsy dwellings got their exotic name. The old name has only been preserved as part of the educational society of the Višegrad Gypsies. The name is "Mezalin". This society organises lectures with the aim that Japan-mala residents acquire as much useful knowledge as possible. The lecturers are very often, Gypsies themselves, and as guests many intellectuals from Višegrad also visit "Mezalin". The Višegrad Gypsy quarter is for sure the only one among us where all children are sent to school.

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"In a short time, we will have our lawyers, teachers and doctors …". This is the greatest ideal of Japan-mala. Because of such tendencies the Gypsies of Višegrad enjoy great sympathies from the entire town's population. And the greatest parties, where the entire town appears, are the ones organised in the Japan-mala on the Drina River.

Notes

1. Ivo Andrić (1892-1975), the famous Serbian and Yugoslav writer, who made Višegrad and its inhabitants a main topic in several of his short stories and novels. In 1961 he won the Nobel Prize for literature for his novel about Višegrad and its residents throughout history (The Bridge on the Drina).

Source: [No author]. (1939). Вишеградски Цигани подигли су просветни дом. Јапан-мала на Дрини. *Време*, An. 19, No. 6360, 1939, October 7, p. 14.
Prepared for publication by Danilo Šarenac.

Comments

The five documents present important sources of information for understanding the Roma endeavours for political participation and influencing the decision-making processes on the national (Serbian, Yugoslav) level as well as on the municipal level in the capital (Belgrade) and in the country (the town of Višegrad and Valjevo district).

The first article offers a very insightful look into the life of the Belgrade Roma population. It has become part of and has been influenced by the vibrant political events and a vivid political scene of the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes. Observing how political parties of Serbs and Croats bitterly fought within the Assembly as well as on the streets and witnessing how numerous national minorities of the South Slavs' Kingdom took care of their own identity and political interests, the Yugoslav Roma slowly developed their own consciousness concerning the importance of self-organisation. The Yugoslav multiethnic and multi-confessional context proves to be a stimulating environment for the development of the Roma social and political organisations. This was connected to the wish to position Gypsies as equal to other ethnic communities in the Yugoslav Kingdom who had their political representatives in the Yugoslav Parliament. The journalist, indirectly, posed the question of the links between the Serbian and the Roma culture, stressing the place of music as an inextricable link between the two cultures.

The political life within the Serbian space of the Kingdom was mostly dominated by the People's Radical Party, but at times the Yugoslav Democratic Party, widely known only as Democratic Party, managed to severely challenge the Radicals' electoral dominance (Gligorijević, 1979). There are indications that the Belgrade Gypsies aimed to take part in the political life of both major parties dominating the political landscape at the local and national level. There is a document kept at the Personal Archive of Dragoljub Acković demonstrating that the Democratic Party had a Gypsy section in Belgrade, that was probably formally set up within the Party structure, and on March 8, 1923, it directed a request to the Central Committee of the Democratic Party for funding of planned activities (LADA). On the other hand, as demonstrated by the newspaper article above

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(see 3.2.1.), Belgrade Gypsies were negotiating their support also for the People's Radical Party. It is interesting to note that there are indications that the same party was also providing some funding for activities of the Belgrade Gypsy organisations in the 1930s (Acković, 2001). These documents show that Belgrade Gypsies were actively striving for political participation in the mainstream national parties, but from the stance of their ethnic community. At the same time, they also demonstrated their own agency and were neither blind followers nor passive political voters.

One of the examples of the Yugoslav Democratic Party winning was the local elections in Belgrade in 1926 when the People's Radical Party was defeated, and consequently, the local government was changed. The article reporting about the Gypsy protest assembly against the new local government after it appointed a new Gypsy *kmet* is an important source for understanding the participation of the Belgrade Gypsies in the local politics as citizens and as Gypsy community's representative. The role of the Gypsy *kmet* dated back to Ottoman times and was preserved during the years of 1830s when the Serbs managed to reach internal autonomy. Consequently, the history of this institution illustrates very nicely the intertwining of the struggle led by the Serbs and the Gypsy population alike for political representation and participation. Marinko Savić was a tradesman and Gypsy leader in the 1920s who had led the Belgrade Gypsy Club (see the relevant materials in Part 3.1. Organisations) and was apparently one of the most active citizens organising and representing Belgrade Gypsies in the public life of the society. As such he was also appointed as Gypsy *kmet* for the whole area of Belgrade.

In the organised assembly, we see a classical example of mobilised citizens in actions against local government decision with the typical patterns of civil protest: Protest assembly in a public space where they show their disagreement; Speeches expressing the main points of their disagreement, disapproval, or opposition and Resolution to the authorities that summarises their complains and demands.

Roma's strong numerical presence in Belgrade neighbourhood Čubura offered them the opportunity to influence the elections' outcomes. The raised demands show that Roma were aware of their rights for political participation and wanted to elect directly their representative before his appointment. The discussion also shows that Roma, as political subjects, were discussing a political affiliation depending on the interest of the Roma community, and providing support for a party that would serve Roma's interests. Roma proved to be active citizens as political party members and were expressing publicly their views on political decisions. The impressive number of rally attendees also shows the potential for the Roma citizens' mobilisation. It is important to underline that this type of public activities and demonstrations were halted in 1929 because of the introduction of King Alexander dictatorship (Dobrivojević, 2006).

As in other similar cases, the article shows that Roma's elite, led by those who were educated or those who already managed to gain significant political experience, was trying to take steps forward. This means that issues of literacy, education, and personal reputation were constantly stressed as something which should be of the utmost importance for the Serbian and the Yugoslav Roma.

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While the previous sources demonstrate the declared intentions of the Belgrade Roma community elite for political participation, the two articles about a Gypsy party and a Gypsy electoral list in Valjevo and the region of Western Serbia (see 3.2.3.1. and 3.2.3.2.) are unique because they point to the fact that Gypsies were among the founders and MPs candidates of at least one political party and formed at least one electoral list that was led by a Gypsy man and was probably entirely comprised by Gypsies. Although the news was only shortly reported in Yugoslav media, its extraordinariness provoked the interest of foreign media and was reported abroad (e.g. Діло, 1927, p. 3; Jeversches Wochenblatt, 1927, p. 3).

The so-called Poor People's Party was founded by a Serbian teacher in August 1927, before the forthcoming Parliamentary elections on 11 September the same year, and apparently aimed to represent wide social groups of citizens. It however addressed specifically the injustices towards the Gypsies concerning political and national identity issues, particularly the recognition of the large Gypsy participation in the Serbian armies during the Balkan Wars and the First World War. Furthermore, the party included Gypsies, mostly war invalids at deputy positions and one at a leading position in its electoral list. The party presentation as a Gypsy one is not coincidental – it voiced the widely-spread opinion of the Serbian Gypsy citizens for identification with the national ideal and civil society causes of the Serbian nation. Gypsies, as citizens of the Kingdom of Serbia at that time, took part in various divisions of the Serbian army in wars of the early 20 century. Some of them like Ahmed Ademović, a trumpeter of the First Serbian Army, who played a key role in the Battle of Kumanovo on 24 October 1912, and later took part in the Second Balkan War and in the First World War, and the First World War participants Rustem Sejdić and Marko Vasiljević (Симић, 1935d, p. 2; P. L., 2018), were awarded the highest orders for their heroic participation (Order of Karadjordje). These Serbian Roma war heroes became a source of pride in the local memory of the respective Roma communities and among Roma activists who were seeking recognition of the Gypsy citizens' participation for realisation of the Serbian national ideas (Acković, 2017b). The war veterans and invalids of the Balkan Wars and the First World War had a very respected position and were considered heroes in the public discourse of the Serbian society in the 1920s. With this step for political participation in the Parliamentary elections of 1927, the Roma community representatives aimed at direct political participation demonstrating not only their belonging to the commemoration and national-identity practices of the state (see more about this in the comments to 3.1.2. Club of the Belgrade Serbian Gypsies), but also their ambitions for direct political participation. A very interesting is the information that the Gypsies from the Roma neighbourhood of Valjevo, Divlje Brdo, had also registered an electoral list for the Parliamentary elections, but no other information has been found in relation to this political endeavour.

We can assume that such local initiatives were taking place also in other regions of the Serbian territories of the Kingdom for the local or Parliamentary elections during the 1920s, at least until the political environment changed with the Royal Dictatorship

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of 1929 and with the reforms after the renaming of the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats, and Slovenes to the Kingdom of Yugoslavia.

The article about the Višegrad Roma community development and their requests as Yugoslav citizens is another example of reporting regional Roma related activities in the national press, bringing news about a Gypsy community organisation and self-mobilisation in an area other than Belgrade. The local Gypsies were declaring their political support for those who would ensure solving their housing problems and apparently have succeeded in this demand. Another priority of the Roma community, as reported in the article, was the education of the Roma and their future generation which they saw as a way for having their own elite in the most respected professions.

As a matter of fact, Gypsy citizens of Yugoslavia have never been deprived of their right for political participation. Only in earlier periods, namely from 1870 to 1903, in the Kingdom of Serbia nomadic Gypsies were not eligible to vote. According to article 17 of the Act on Election of Members of Parliament of 10 October, 1870 only Serbian citizens with taxable property and income could vote. Article 18 of the act clarifies that wandering Gypsies (*skitajući se cigani*) is one of the categories of citizens who are deprived of the right to vote. With the adoption of the 1903 Constitution, all Gypsies with Serbian citizenship were eligible to vote (Стојанчевић, 1992, pp. 26-27). In some cases, Gypsy citizens appeared to have more political rights that other ethnic communities. Such was the case with the Constitutional Assembly elections that were held in the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats, and Slovenes on 28 November 1920. According to the 1920 Law on the Election of MPs to the Constituent Assembly right to vote was stipulated for people of Slavic origin residing in the country regardless of their citizenship (Kosnica & Protega, 2019, p. 142). It deprived of voting rights citizens of minority background such as Jews, Hungarians, and Germans, who, despite being citizens of the state, were excluded from the electoral lists because of their non-Slavic origin (Banac, 1988, p. 361; Janjetović, 2012, p. 69). Some other communities, however, were not specifically excluded from the electoral lists as Albanians and Muslims (Kosnica & Protega, 2019: pp. 142-143). Apparently, Gypsies too had not lost their political voting rights, as a local German-language newspaper published in Osijek reported that "Gypsies have more political rights than Germans and Jews" (Die Drau, 1920 p. 1).

Reporting the successful transformation of the Roma living conditions is also very important as the news is related to Bosnia which was one of the least developed areas of the Kingdom of Yugoslavia. This reformation of the Roma way of life shows how the lively political environment in the Kingdom contributed positively to Roma's emancipation. It is important to stress that this press article presents a typical approach to the topic of Roma's modernisation. Contrary to the negative inscriptions related to the alleged or real criminality of the Roma, the press wrote very affirmatively about any improvement in the Roma way of living, especially if this was initiated by the Roma themselves. The article brings also a contribution to the topic concerning the origin of the Roma, offering in this case a very exotic possibility narrated to the journalist by the Višegrad Roma.

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The materials are essential highlights into the trajectory of the Roma movement for equal rights and political participation of the Roma in Belgrade and locally, in Yugoslavia. The material about Višegrad Gypsies is one of the rare cases of reporting local community activities for emancipation and claiming equal rights. It can be presumed that similar processes were going on among other local Roma communities during the same period, but remained unnoticed by the media. Such activities were probably taking place among Muslim Gypsies managing Muslim organisations in Southern and Eastern Serbia, but further research on the local level is needed to shed light on these developments.

It is important to stress the fact that the numbers of the Belgrade Roma were considerable and had to be taken into account during the electoral campaigning. The discussions also shed light on the fact that Roma were raising the issue for their direct political participation in the political life as Members of Parliament or as citizens who influence the appointment of local officials. All this demonstrates that Roma were aware of their political rights as voting subjects and as citizens. As such, they were demanding the advancement of the Roma community and negotiating their support for those candidates who would move forward their requests. These demands were made publicly on behalf of a Roma collective in the local or the Yugoslav context and showed that through these demands Roma themselves were working for the mobilisation and advancement of their community within the respective area.

Danilo Šarenac and Sofiya Zahova

3.3 Visions and Activism

3.3.1 *Our First Word*

Наша прва реч

Мало је наше браће који би били потпуно задовољни својом судбином. Неки от нас, који су сиромашни кукају што ништа намају; други пак от наше браће, који су нешта стекле и који боље живе боје се да кажу чије су крви. Стиде се свога цигански имена. Зашто је то *гуглален пр*(*х*)*алален* (слатка браћо), тако?

Почнимо са првима. Зашто је већина наше браће сиромашна? Зато што се нису умели довољно да се снађу у борби за опстанак. Живот је очајна битка, побеђује онај, који је јачи и вештији. Да би данас човек могао да заради кору хлеба себи и својој деци, мора да испуни у најмању руку барем два услова: да је писмен и да има у рукама неко стално занимање. Како та два питања стоје код нас, гуглален пр(х)алален, јесмо ли ми сви писмени? Нисмо. Има ли сваки от нас по један занат у рукама? Нема. Нећемо от нас самих да кријемо, наши смо па се знамо, чак и они који раде неки занат често га и знају рђаво и раде рђаво. Узимамо, на пример, наше музиканте. Цео нам свет признаје да смо музикални народ; да за музику имамо и дара и способности. Па ипак знају ли сви наши музиканти ноте? Незнају. Оно истина и по

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слуху се може доста лепо свирати, али је са нотама сигурније. Музиканти без нота исто је што и човек који није писмен. Колико ли је великих дарова, великих наших талената зачамело, пропало само зато, што нису имали музичку школу. Зар наши ковачи раде све оне послове, које би оне могли радити? И колико је њих међу нама који су некад нешто учили, па нису завршили? Много се от нас само зато пати, што није писмен и што нема бар неки занат у рукама.

Па добро, што сиротиња није задовољна с својом животом, још се и може разумети. Ко нема не може бити ни задовољан. А зашто онда, гуглален пр(х)лален, да се стиде своје браће, свога имена, своје крви наша богатија браћа? И зато смо, драга браћо, понешто сами криви, а понешто и нисмо.

Сви Цигани нису и не могу бити криви ако се неко от њих огреши пред законом, а новине место да кажу: тај и тај, по имену и презимену, учинио је то и то, крупним масним словима доносе: Цигани су украли ... Цигани су преварили ... Цагини су убили ... Цигани су осакатили ... ослепили ... *Цигани ... Цигани ... Цигани* ... Као да на свету нема ниједног преступног дела у коме није и по неки Циганин умешан. У историји људској још није било таквог примера да се на цео народ товари оно што је можда учинио појединац, из тога народа. И никад не могу сви Цигани да одговарају за дела и недела појединих Цигана.

Свакога дана читамо из новина о америчким гангстерима. То су људи који краду малу децу и уцењивају родитеље; отимају, варају, пљачкају, и убијају миран свет. Писци криминалних романа и историја тако лепо и тољико детајлно описују гангстере и њихов живот, да би човек који не уме зрело да мисли, посумњао, дали се сваки други човек у Америци не бави тим отимачким, гангстерским пословима. Али још ни једне новине не написаше место: гангстери су одвели децу и уценили родитеље; гангстери убише, отеше. – Американци су одвеле децу, Американци уценише, убише, отеше. Зашто новине то не чине? Зато што знају: да Американаца има око 130 милиона, а гангстера само шака јада. И зато што су Американци по своме образовању и начину живота, по својој култури међу првима у свету, а гангстери само једна мала група друштвене олоши. Ако Американци тај велики просвећени и богати народ не одговора за своје отпатке, зашто се нама малим, непросвећеним и сви сиромашним Циганима натура одговорност за неке своје?

Али ако ми нисмо ништа криви за оно што новине пишу, ми се морамо добро размислити о једној другој беди, која нам се товари на врат. Многи *гаџе* (не-цигани) мисле да је Циганин и просјак једно те исто. Међутим то није.

Има две врсте прошње. Прва је: кад човек остане без посла, гладан је, гладна су му деца. Ако му држава или обштина, као грађанину ове земље не изађе у сусрет, онда такоме човеку остаје само два излаза, ако не жели умрети от глади: или да замоли за парче хлеба или да га краде. Замолити за парче хлеба ни вера нити пак закон не забрањују. Кажњева се само онај који туђе украде. Друга је врста просјачења, кад човек место да запне па да ради иде и на разне начине измамљује од поштених и побожних људи новац за хлеб. Против такве врсте прошње смо ми сви Цигани, колико нас има. Ми се против тога боримо и борићемо се. И сматрамо да је једини

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лек томе злу и срамоти, ако свако наше дете буде посећивало школу а по свршетку школе одмах почело да учи неки занат или неку вештину. Човек који почне из детињства да ради, привиква к њему и после никад не може седети без посла.

Зато смо и покренули наш лист. Њиме желимо да отворимо очи нашој браћи и да им покажемо, да је наш први и најглавнији задатак да сву нашу децу дамо у школи, да постану писмена, и да их одмах после свршене школе дамо да науче неки занат или вештину. Ко може и жели више нека децу даде трговину или на школе. И нека се наша деца тамо код добрих мајстора и учитеља науче како треба поштено зарађивати парче хлеба. Сетимо се само оних наших пословица о лештинама и готованима.

Али се знање не добија само у школи. Тек после, кад ђак сврши школу, тек онда почиње да се умно развија и да се учи како треба познавати и свет и људе у њему. Наш ће лист све учинити да нашем брату помогне у његовом културноме, а то ће рећи, умноме и материјалноме побољшању. – С једне стране ми ћемо давати готова знања и савете а с друге указиваћемо на путеве којима се до њих долази.

За сад ће наш лист излазити само по једанпут месечно у овако маломе формату. От наше браће, Цигана, као и от њихових пријатеља Срба зависиће даља судбина нашега листа као и то, да ли ће се његов обим увећати или не.

∵

Our First Word

There are few of our brothers who would be completely satisfied with their destiny. Some of us, who are poor, are complaining that they have nothing; others, also from our brothers, who have acquired something and who live better, are afraid to say which blood they have. They are ashamed of the Gypsy name. Why is it so, *guglalen pr*(*h*)*alalen* (sweet brothers)? [1]

Let's start with the first ones. Why are the majority of our brothers poor? Because they did not manage well enough to cope with the struggle for survival. Life is a desperate battle, the winner is the one who is stronger and better skilled. In order for a person to be able to earn a slice of bread for himself and his children, he should fulfil at least two conditions: to be literate and to have a permanent occupation in his hands. How do we stand with these two questions, guglalen pr(h)alalen, are we all literate? We are not. Does each of us have a craft in his hands? He does not. We are not going to hide it from ourselves, as we are our people and we know ourselves, even those who practice a craft often know it badly and they perform it badly. Take, for example, our musicians. The whole world recognises that we are a people of music; that we have both a gift and a skill for music. Still, do all our musicians read the notes? They do not. Indeed, you can play pretty well by hearing, but it is safer with the notes. Musicians without notes are the same as a man who is illiterate. How many great gifts, great talents of ours, have appeared and failed only because they have not graduated a musical school. Are our blacksmiths doing all

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those jobs that they potentially could do? And how many are those among us who once have studied something, but have not finished? Many of us suffer just because they are not literate and they do not have at least some craft in the hands.

Well, the fact that the poor people are not happy with their life, is still understandable. The one who does not have, could not be satisfied either. But then why, *guglalen pr(h)lalen* our richer brothers are ashamed of their own brothers, of their own name, their own blood? And for this, dear brothers, we are guilty ourselves, and at the same time we are not.

All Gypsies are not and cannot be guilty if some of them breaks the law, and the newspapers instead of saying: this and that, by name and surname, did this and that, they report in large bulky letters: Gypsies have stolen … Gypsies have cheated … Gypsies have killed … Gypsies have mutilated … have blinded … *Gypsies … Gypsies … Gypsies …* As if there is not a single criminal act in the world in which a Gypsy guy has not been involved. In human history, there has not yet been such a case in which something done by an individual belonging to a given people is attributed to all the people. And all Gypsies could never answer for the deeds and idleness of individual Gypsies.

Every day we read in the newspapers about the American gangsters. These are people who steal young children and blackmail their parents; They hijack, cheat, steal, and kill the peaceful world. Writers of criminal novels and stories so beautifully and thoroughly describe the gangsters and their lives, so that a person who does not know how to think maturely, would doubt whether every other person in America does not deal with this kind of kidnapping gangster affairs. But yet, not a single newspaper has written instead: gangsters have taken children and blackmailed their parents; the gangsters killed, stole. – Americans have taken the children away, Americans have blackmailed, have murdered, have stolen. Why are the newspapers not doing this? Because they know that: Americans number around 130 million, but the gangsters are just a handful of people. And because the Americans are among the first in the world in terms of their education and lifestyle, as well as their culture, while the gangsters are only one small group of social scum. If the Americans, this great, enlightened and wealthy people, are not responsible for their scum, why upon us, the small, unenlightened and poor Gypsies, is imposed responsibility for some of our kind?

But if we are not blamed for what the newspapers write, we must think carefully about another misfortune that bursts upon our neck. Many *gadže* (non-Gypsy) think that a Gypsy and a beggar are the same thing. However, this is not the case.

There are two types of begging. The first is: when a man loses his job, he is hungry, his children are hungry. If the state or the municipality does not help him as a citizen of this country, then only two exits are left to such a man if he does not want to die of starvation: either ask for a piece of bread or steal it. Asking for a piece of bread is forbidden neither by religion, nor by law. Only the one who steals from the others is punished. The second one is the kind of begging, when a person, instead of working, goes around and in various ways, lures money from honest and pious people for bread. We, all the Gypsies, whatever number we are, are against such kind of begging. We are fighting and will be fighting

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against it. And we think that the only remedy for this evil and shame is that every one of our children is attending a school, and after the end of the school [the child] starts immediately to learn some craft or some skill. A man who starts working since childhood, gets used to it, and can never sit without work afterwards.

That's why we have launched our newspaper. With it we want to open our brothers' eyes and show them that it is our first and foremost task to send our children to school, in order to become literate, and to let them learn some craft or skill right after graduation. Whoever could afford and wishes more, let them give the children to learn trade or to attend schools. And let our children with good masters and teachers learn there how to fairly earn a piece of bread. Remember those proverbs of ours about the lazy guys and suckers.

But knowledge is not obtained only at school. Only afterwards, when the student graduates school, only then the student begins to develop mentally and to learn how to recognise the world and the people in it. Our newspaper will do all in order to give our brother a helping hand in his cultural, and this means, a mental and material improvement. – On the one hand, we will give ready-made knowledge and statements, and on the other hand, we will show the paths that lead to them.

For the time being, our newspaper will only appear once per month in this small format. From our brothers, Gypsies, as well as from their friends, the Serbs, depends the future fate of our newspaper, as well as whether it will increase its volume or not.

Notes

1. This is a Romani language phrase which literary translation (sweet brothers) means dear, beloved brothers. The phrase, that is otherwise used among Roma communities in everyday speech, aims to bring authenticity and to show affection towards the Romani reading audience addressed in the article.

Source: [Симић, С.] (1935a). Наша прва реч. *Romano lil. Циганске новине*, An. 1, No. 1, Март 1935, p. 1.
Prepared for publication by Sofiya Zahova.

3.3.2 *Romano Lil*

"Romano Lil"

Изгледа, да је за наш лист чуо цео свет. Ми смо до сада добили писма из: Шведске, Норвешке, Немачке, Мађарске, и Пољске. Енглеска Рајтерова агенција саопштила је о његовом изласку свој енглеској читалачкој публици. Не знамо чему се има благодарити за тако велику популарност првог циганског листа у Југославији. Да ли због тога што нас цео свет сматра за толико јадне и мизерне, да чак и појава једног овако малог листића, као што је овај наш, за њих већ сензација! Ако погледамо на број оних, који купују наш лист и ту ћемо видети, да је нај већи број наших читалаца и претплатника из редова *гађе*, (нецигана) и то интелектуалаца. Људи са највишом културом интересују се за лист народа на врло ниском културном ступњу! То је већ успех за наша прва два броја. Само што за нас то још није доста. За нас је много

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важније друго једно питање! За кога смо ми покренули наш лист и за кога ми пишемо?

Овакав лист као што је наш могао би се уређивати на два начина: у њему би се могло писати *о* Циганима и у њему би се могло писати *за* Цигане. Кад би ми писали само о Циганима морали би мало више рачуна повести о разним укусима наше *гађованске* (нециганске) читалачке публике. Без разних "звезда" разуме се црних и циганских и нихових слика наш лист, тешко да би опстао. Али макар колика да су наше црне лепотице и љупке и лепе и привлачне, ипак ми о њима не мислимо писати. *Наш је лист покренут с тиме да би писао о Циганима али разуме се, за Цигане*. А сад да видимо, какав је успех лист постигао код наше браће Цигана.

Прави и највећи успех имао је наш власник и отговорни уредник г. Симић. Чим је изашао први број нашег листа, одмах се по Јатаган мали и Чубури пронела вест међу Циганима, да се г. Симић страшно обогатио. Кад год би се међу Циганима појавио жене и деца би говорили: *кава си кај бићинел новине* (то је онај што продаје новине). Код нашега простога света продавати новине и писати у новинама једно је. Пошто је г. Симић још врло млад, тек му је двадесет друга година, а још није жењен, очеви и мајке који су имали кћери за удају почели су слати г. Симићу наводаџије.

С друге стране, садаржина нашега листа наилазила је код наше браће и наших сестара само на одобравање. Ми не само да смо се интересовали шта појединци од наше браће мисле о нашем листу пошто је он већ изишао из штампе, него смо све веће чланке, особито "Нашу прву реч" читали и објашњавали појединцима или чак и читавим групама и у рукопису. Е, али то још не значи да су наша браћа куповала у довољноме броју наш лист!

Огромна је већина наше браће, о женама нашим сестрама, и да не говоримо – неписмена. Разуме се, да на њихову потпору наш лист не може рачунати. Остала, писмена мањина, с малим изузетком уопште ништа не чита. А кад чита интересује се разним сензацијама, ка што су то: убиство, крађе, свађе, суђења итд. Није ретко да по неко од наше браће не рекне г. Симићу: "Читао бих твој лист кад би некога нападао и грдио, овако немам шта у њему да читам". Младеж има своје интересе. Једна млада циганчица говори г. Симићу: "Сликај ме, нек се и моја слика шета по целој Јевропи. Ако не можеш, кажи бар моје име, нек' се зна". Њој је 17 година. Друга моли: "Вереник ме је оставио, вратио ми је прстен. Пиши да би ме неко потражио, даћу ти и слику моју". Многи уопште и не желе да се о Циганима ма шта пише. Они говоре: "Те Циганске новине само нас брукају."

Међутим, нас све то ни мало не изненађује. Ми смо наш народ и пре знали. И свесни смо били за кога покрећемо овај лист. Нешто се мора отпочети, нешто се мора учинити да би се наш народ пробудио из вековног дремања, али шта?

Интересантан је покушај у томе правцу учинио један други члан наше редакције г. Милић. Он је скупљао у своме дворишту групе од 15 до 20 људи и жена разнога узраста и читао им је наш лист од почетка па до краја. После сваког прочитаног чланка он им је још и својим речима на *романе* (на циганском језику) објашњавао оно што им је прочитао. Затим су отпочињала питања која су се зазвијала у читаве

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дискусије. Кад би се могло наћи више таквих људи као што је г. Милић ми би још јаче могли да заинтересујемо за наш лист наше људе. Не треба заборавити да наш лист има да изврши једну културну мисију првог реда. Од интересовања к појединим песмицама и причама штампаним на њима познатом језику, наши људи прелазе на озбиљније ствари, прелазе на наш живот уопште. Питање побољшања нашега начина живота је већим делом у нашим сопственим рукама. Мало више економије у кући, више реда и чистоће: мало мање посећивање кафана, мање картања, мање пијанчења; и што је најглавније више писмености, више обраћати пажњу на нашу децу и њихово спремање за будући живот па ћемо већ много и много боље живети. Дали ћемо ми моћи на тај начин да убедимо нашу браћу и сестре у томе, колико је важно да свако наше дете сврши основну школу и научи неки занат показаће будућност. Г. Милић, који је један от оснивача нашег листа и његов *ћирво* – кум, (он га је крстио, наденуо му је име), по занимању је занатлија.

Па ипак и поред славе нашег властника, да је већ постао милионер, финансијска страна нашег листа је јако малена. Она никад није ни била сјајна. Наш је основни капитал био свега *75 динара*. Толико је стајала хартија за први број. О штампању се постарао један наш велики пријатељ, иначе Србин и веома популарна и уважена личност у Београду. Ми живимо од броја до броја све у нади да нам труд неће бити у залудан и да ће напослетку и наша браћа увидети да један динар месечно за њих није ништа, особито кад се тај издатак сравни са месечним издацима које они чини за – ракију.

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"Romano Lil"

It seems that the whole world has heard about our newspaper. So far, we have received letters from: Sweden, Norway, Germany, Hungary, and Poland. The English Reuters agency has announced about its release to its English reading audience [1]. We do not know to what we owe such a great popularity of the first Gypsy newspaper in Yugoslavia. Is it because the whole world considers us so wretched and miserable that even the emergence of such a small newspaper, like ours, is already a sensation for them! If we look at the number of those who are buying our newspaper, here as well we will see that the greatest number of our readers and subscribers are from the ranks of *gadže* (non-Gypsies) [2], and furthermore intellectuals. People of the highest culture are interested in a newspaper of people at a very low cultural level! This is already a success for our first two issues. But the problem is that this is not enough for us. Another question is more important for us! For whom have we launched our newspaper and for whom do we write?

A newspaper such as ours could be edited in two ways: it could be written *about* Gypsies and in it could be written *for* Gypsies. If we were to write only about Gypsies, we would have to take a bit into account the various tastes of our *gadžo* (non-Gypsy) readership. Without a variety of "stars", e.g. black and Gypsy, and their respective pictures, our

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newspaper would hardly survive. No matter how good-looking, attractive and adorable our black beauties are, we still do not mean to write about them. *Our newspaper was launched in order to write about Gypsies, but of course, for Gypsies*. And now let's see what success has achieved our newspaper among our brothers, the Gypsies.

Our owner and editor in chief has had the first and biggest success. Straight after printing the first issue of our newspaper, news has spread among the Gypsies across Jatagan Male and Čubura, that Mr. Simić has enormously enriched himself. Whenever he showed up among Gypsies, women and children would say: *kava si kaj bićinel novine* [that's the one who sells newspapers]. In the simple world of ours, to sell newspapers and to write in the newspaper is the same thing. Since Mr. Simić is still very young, only twenty-two years old, but he is not yet married, the fathers and mothers who had daughters for marriage started sending to Mr. Simić matchmakers.

On the other hand, the contents of our newspaper has been received only with approval among our brothers and our sisters. We have been interested not only in what individuals from our brothers think about our newspaper since it has been already published, but we have read and explained to individuals and even to entire groups all bigger articles, even in manuscript version. Well, this however does not mean that our brothers have bought enough copies of our newspaper!

The vast majority of our brothers, and not to mention women, our sisters, – are illiterate. Understandably, our newspaper cannot count on their support. The other, literate minority, with little exception, does not read anything at all. And when reading, they are interested in various sensations, such as murder, theft, quarrels, trials, etc. It's not rare to hear someone telling to Mr. Simić: "I'd read your newspaper if you are attacking and disgracing someone, as it is not the case I don't have what to read in it". The youth has its own interests. A young Gypsy maiden tells Mr. Simić: "Take a photo of me, let a picture of mine go across all over Europe. If this is not possible, at least write my name, let it be known." She is 17-year old. Another one talks: "My fiance has left me, he gave me back the ring. Write so that someone would ask for my hand in marriage, I'll give you a picture of mine as well." Many do not even want anything about Gypsies to be written at all. They say: "That Gypsy newspaper is just disgracing us." However, this does not surprise us at all. We knew our people from before. And we were aware of whom we are running this newspaper for. Something must be started, something has to be done to make our people wake up from an eternal slumber, but what?

An interesting attempt was made in that direction by another member of our editorial team, Mr. Milić [3]. He collected in his backyard a group of 15 to 20 men and women of different ages and read to them the newspaper from the beginning to the end. After every article he read, he explained to them in his own words in *Romane* (in Gypsy language) what he had read to them. Then started the questions that grew up into entire discussions. If we could find more people like Mr. Milić, we could even get a greater interest in our newspaper among our people. We should not forget that our newspaper has to fulfil a cultural first-order mission. From the interest in certain poems and stories printed on a language spoken by them, our people are turning to more serious things, to our life in

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general. The question of improving our way of life is largely in our own hands. A little more economy in the house, higher order and cleanliness: a little less visit to the *kafana*, less card-playing, less drunkenness; and most of all, more literacy, paying more attention to our children and their preparation for the future life, we will live better and better. The future will show, if we would be able to convince our brothers and sisters how important it is for each of our children to complete elementary school and learn some crafts. Mr. Milić, who is one of the founders of our newspaper and its *ćirvo* [4] – a godfather (he baptised it, gave its name), is a craftsman by profession.

Nevertheless, despite the fame of our newspaper's owner, that he has already become a millionaire, the financial side of our newspaper is very low. It has never been great. Our basic capital was only 75 *dinars*. That was the cost for the paper for the first issue. One of our great friends, otherwise a Serb and a very popular and respected person in Belgrade, took care of the printing [5]. We survive from issue to issue always in a hope that our work will not be in vain and that finally our brothers will see that one dinar per month is nothing for them, especially when this expenditure is compared to the monthly expenses they make for *rakija*.

Notes

1. Reuters correspondent has been quoted in English media reporting about Gypsies in Belgrade and Yugoslavia in the 1930s and it might well be that he also reported the curious fact about *Romano lil* newspaper. English media indeed published short information about the Belgrade Gypsy Newspaper and its Roma editor, for example the article "The First Gypsy Newspaper. Printed in 2 Languages" in *The Telegraph* of May 18, 1936. *Neues Pressburger Tagblatt* (1935, p. 5), published in Czechoslovakia, also reported about *Romano lil* in the article "A New Gypsy Newspaper".
2. The most frequently used term the non-Roma in the Serbian language articles of *Romano lil* is the Roma word proper, namely *gadže*, provided in its Romani original followed by a Serbian language translation. In this way, the newspaper legitimises its positioning as Roma/Gypsy newspaper that represent the Roma point of view and conceptualisation and also introduces the Roma concept to the non-Roma audiences. Rarely in use is the word non-Gypsies (не-цигани) on its own.
3. Mr. Milić authored two articles in *Romano lil*: *Наше гостопримство* (Our hospitality) in issue 2 (pp. 3-4), and *Наша "интелигенција" и "аристократија"* (Our "intelligentsia" and "aristocracy") in issue 3 (p. 2). He was a craftsman, according to information from the same article and probably from Jatagan-male where Svetozar Simić was also living.
4. The Romani word *ćirvo* means godfather. It's interesting to note that Simić choose to use the Romani term here, probably to stress the importance of the role and function of the godfather and godfathering institution in the socio-normative culture of the Roma and non-Roma communities in the region. The godfather status is related to roles and gestures of respect that go beyond the name-giving or baptising, and are maintained throughout the years.
5. The name of this person is not explicitly mentioned here, but most probably Simić was referring to Aleksandar Petrović, one of the main newspaper contributors and probably a member of the editorial team of the newspaper. Petrović was a physician interested in Roma communities as an employee in the Institute of Hygiene in Belgrade who has done research work among Roma, published articles in Yugoslav journals and in the *Journal of the Gypsy Lore Society* in the second half of the 1930s (see Third Series, Vol. 14 through Vol. 19) and was in correspondence with the leadership of the Gypsy Lore Society sending the two first copies of *Romano lil* to them.

Source: [Симић, С.] (1935c). "Romano Lil". *Romano lil. Циганске новине*, An. 1, No. 3, 1935, May 31, p. 1. Prepared for publication by Sofiya Zahova.

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3.3.3 *Midday Pictures of Our First Gypsy Journalist*

Подневне слике првог циганског новинара код нас у Карађорђевом парку
Бивши уредник "Циганских новина" написао је роман из
живота својих саплеменика

У јатаганмалској чарљи, у које је било уредништво "Циганских новина", само уредников отац. Посред, необријан, са типичним црним изруженим прстима. По занимању истовремено свирач, ковач и земљорадник. Ово треће због неколико хектара земље која је у Аранђеловцу.

Покушај једне ретке публикације за нашу средину пропао је заједно са пуштањем трећег броја "Циганске новине" у продају.

Студент права, Светозар Симић, направио је од очевок стана радионице уредништво. У ова поднева, која без снега не личе на предбожићна, уредник се не налази код куће. То је његов отац објаснио једном покретом и једним одговором. Црна саката и прљава деца, посматрала су га босонога и кроз криве прозоре овог јатаганмалског многољудног двориштa. Она су уосталом сва таква. Пуна деце (обично болесне) и блата.

Отац даје обавештења о сину уреднику са усхићењем:

– Чита у Карађорђевом парку. Познаје се по униформе, служи војску.

Једини посетилац парка, лежеран, у униформи. Између голих стабала на једној клупи редов-ђак, са мачевима испод врата, будући циганski вођа, већ интелектуалац и бивши уредник необичних београдских новина.

Отсуство проводи у парку са та бацима предмета који се уче на правном факултету и чита их уколико му мисао не однесе нови рад који обећава.

Онда "Циганске новине" није снашла смрт и оне нису само покушај најзанимљивији у нашој журналистици. Светозар Симић, син црних родитеља, осећао је колико му се сурово наметала разлика сбог боје његовог лика, кроз четири разреда основне школе и кроз целу гимназију. Па се тако продубљивао један револт, који је у првом реду руководио на кампању за одбрану личности и част његових саплеменика.

Из средње школе донео је на универзитет то више него као одлучност. И у том психолошком кругу родила се код њега мисао о издавању новина. Симић је већ писао (са успехом) нешто као прве своје утиске из циганског живота и то је као повољан услов било одлучујуће да се појаве његове новине.

На његовом матерњем језику "Романо лил". У целом овом циганском листу само те две циганске речи. Остале све српски и ћирилицом.

Ова занимљива појава примљена је као оригиналност у јавности. Иза јединственог наслова, који карактерише цео програм листа нису се назирали прави мотиви.

– Ово није било само један ексцентричан покушај, ради пикантности у библиографским балансима ...

Намера једног од редких циганских интелектуалаца била је да разголити неправичност осуде његових саплеменика који су често идентификовани у маси

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са страшним криминалним поступцима. Стога ће да настави ону намеру студент права Светозар Симић по изласку из војске, са појачаном активношћу и проширеним делокругом. У његовом плану је да окупи око себе школоване Цигане. Или да он приђе њима. Тако удруженима било би омогућено да раде на побољшавању услова за васпитање својих саплеменика.

Издавајући прошлога лета лист Симић је добио серију писама чија је садаржина и чији су захтеви већ третирали ову редакцију у радионици и спаваћој соби уредниковог оца, као пресбиро за све информације о Циганима.

Ако нови покушај издавања "Циганских новина" не буде имао успеха, син ће се искључиво посветити литератури, кроз коју је већ загрозио управи Пен-клуба, наговештавајући могућност да ће његов један члан у Београду бити црн. Зато он ће црпсти материјал из своје непосредне близине, из циганског чартља и циганске свакидашњице, у коју нико непосредније није гледао от њега.

Поред те такозване чисте литературе, кроз коју би он, као син тамне расе, говорио о њеном темпераменту, скитнишству и невероватној снази да се живи под најнеизвестнијим условима, Симић ће радити и на прикупљању грађе преко које би могао до се упозна сав тај наш црни свет и његов језик.

Он је већ израдио српско-циганску граматику. Обећава, уколико то буде могућио, и један српско-цигански речник. Све то више као документ једног, за наше прилике, егзотичног света и језика, него као потребу за сав онај црни свет из Мељака и Даросаве.

Светозар Симић у униформи редова-ђака није једини од својих саплеменика који служи војску. Али он је један от оних ретких, можда усамљен, који на јаки свога шињела носи украштене мачеве као знак школованих људи у редовској униформи. Због тога му се истина није десио још ниједан малер, али то није искључено да се догоди. Официри у пролазу врло су изненађени његовим црним лицем и овим мачевима, предпостављајући, свакако, под својим првим утиском да је то парадокс.

Будући вођа својих саплеменика (бар јатаганмалских) оспособљава се за један позив радом који је примеран.

Млади Симић има већ написан роман пун рељефних слика циганског живота, назван сбог својих јунака "Циганин". Обећава, кад изиђе из војске, да ће се роман под овим називом појавити у књижарским излозима. Нема сумње, најзанимљивија оригиналност литературне пијаце.

Дојчило Митровић

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Midday pictures of our first Gypsy journalist in Karadjorjde's park
The former editor of the *Gypsy Newspaper* wrote a novel based on the life of his people [1]

In the neighbourhood of *Jatagan male*, where the editorial office of the *Gypsy Newspaper* was located, was only the editor's father. Simple, unshaven, with typical black stale

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fingers. He is a musician, a blacksmith and a farmer at the same time. The third one due to a couple of hectare land in Arandjelovac [2].

The attempt of a rare publication for our environment had collapsed with the release of the third issue of the *Gypsy Newspaper* on the market.

Svetozar Simić, a law student, had transformed his father's apartment workshop into an editorial office [3]. The editor is not at home during that noon, which does not look like a pre-Christmas without snow [4]. This was explained by his father in one motion and with one answer. Black, lame and dirty children were watching him barefoot and through the awry windows of this crowded yard in Jatagan-male. They are after all the same. Full of children (usually sick) and mud.

The father gives information about his son, the editor, with excitement:

– He reads in the Karadjordje park. He is recognisable by his uniform, serves in the army.

He is the only visitor in the park, casual, in uniform. Between the bare trees on one bench, a ranker, with swords under the neck, a future Gypsy leader, already an intellectual and former editor in chief of an unusual Belgrade newspaper.

The lack of fun in the park is carried out with those subjects that are being taught at the law school faculty, and he reads them if his thought is not taken away by a new promising endeavour.

Furthermore, the *Gypsy newspaper* was not hit by death, and it's not just the most interesting attempt in our journalism. Svetozar Simić, the son of black parents, felt how severely the difference was imposed to him because of the colour of his face, throughout the four grades of elementary school, and throughout the entire high school period. In this way a revolt has been awakened in him, that in the first place has guided a campaign in defense of the personality and the honour of his people.

He took this from high school to university, more as a determination. And in this psychological circle an idea for the publishing of a newspaper was born in him. Simić had already written (with success) something like his first impressions about the Gypsy life, and this, as a favourable condition, was decisive for his newspaper to appear.

In his native language, "Romano Lil". These are the only Gypsy words in the whole the *Gypsy newspaper*. All others in Serbian and in Cyrillic [5].

This interesting phenomenon has been received as something genuine in the public space. Beyond the title itself, which features the entire program of the newspaper, the real motives were not obvious.

– This was not just an eccentric attempt, for the sake of piquancy in the bibliographic balances …

The intention of one of the few Gypsy intellectuals was to divulge the reality of condemnation of his people, who were often equated in mass with terrible criminal acts. The law student Svetozar Simić will continue this endeavour after leaving the army, with stronger action and an expanded scope. His plan is to gather around him educated Gypsies. Or that he approaches them. Being associated in this way, would enable them to work towards improving the conditions for educating their people.

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While publishing the newspaper last summer, Simić received a series of letters whose contents and requests had already been treating that editorial office in the workshop and bedroom of the editor's father as a press-office for all kinds of information about the Gypsies.

If the new attempt to publish the *Gypsy Newspaper* would not achieve success, the son will devote himself exclusively to literature, by which he already threatened the Pen Club's Board, pointing out the possibility that one of their members in Belgrade would be black. That is why he will collect material from his immediate vicinity, from the Gypsy community and Gypsy everyday life, at which nobody looked more closely than him.

Along with this so-called pure literature, through which he, as the son of a dark race, would speak about its temperament, wandering and incredible power to live under the most uncertain conditions, Simić will also work on collecting material through which all that black world of ours and its languages could be known.

He has already completed a Serbian-Gypsy grammar. He promises, if this would be possible, to create a Serbian-Gypsy dictionary [6]. All these would rather be documents of an exotic world and language for our conditions, than a need of all that black world from Meljak and Darosava [7].

Svetozar Simić is not the only one among his people who serves in an army uniform. But he is one of the few, perhaps the isolated case, who wears on his coat steeped swords as a sign of educated people in a ranker uniform. For this reason, indeed, troubles did not appear thus far, but it's not impossible that it happens. The officers passing by are very surprised by his black face and these swords, assuming, certainly, under their first impression, that this is a paradox.

The future leader of his people (at least those from Jatagan-male) is capable of making an appeal through a work that is an example.

The young Simić has already written a novel full of vivid pictures of the Gypsy life, named "Gypsy" because of the fate of its characters [8]. He promises that a novel under this title will appear in bookshops when he leaves the army. There is no doubt, that it will be the most interesting original creation of the literary market.

Dojćilo Mitrović

Notes

1. The original phrase translated here and further in the text as 'his people', is *njegovih saplemenika* literary 'his co-tribesmen', suggesting the underdevelopment and the specific of the Gypsies as a tribe. The English connotations of the word tribe, however, might be misleading and that is why 'his people' was chosen.
2. Simić's family was originally from a village near Arandjelovac and in the early 1930s moved to Belgrade.
3. During its short existence, the Editorial office was indeed located in the private home of the Simić family, Jatagan mala III, raw 24.
4. The article was released on the January 5, just before Orthodox Christmas Celebrations (according to the Old Style or Julian calendar).
5. This information is actually not correct. Despite the fact that the majority of materials were in Serbian, Romani language was present in the newspaper in different forms, for instance Romani

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phrases and words embodied in the Serbian text, or folklore materials as texts of songs and tales entirely in Romani with Cyrillic script. In both cases Romani was followed by Serbian translation. A material without Romani language presence was actually quite rare.
6. Simić indeed had compiled a dictionary, grammatical notes, novel(s) and memoir essays, but none of them have thus far been published.
7. Both Meljak and Darosava are villages in Central Serbia with significant number of Gypsies living there. The point of the author is that the Gypsy-layman would hardly benefit from the publications.
8. Simić had sent the manuscript to the Belgrade publishing house *Privreda* and got the manuscript back along with a standard rejection letter from the publisher dated 5 February 1935. Only the cover of the novel's manuscript has remained of this unpublished novel and is preserved in the Personal Archive of Dragoljub Acković (LADA).

Source: Митровић, Д. (1936). Подневне слике првог циганског новинара код нас у Карађорђевом парку. Бивши уредник "Циганских новина" написао је роман из живота својих саплеменика. *Време*, An. 16, No. 5024, 1936, January 5, p. 5.
Prepared for publication by Sofiya Zahova.

Comments

Romano lil (Roma paper) / *Ciganske novine* (Gypsy newspaper) was the first and only Roma-led journalistic endeavour in interwar Yugoslavia (Acković, 1994). The first two documents are newspaper editorials (see 3.3.1. and 3.3.2.) and could be read as programme statement and visions for the Roma as a community of citizens of the activist and newspaper editor Sverozar Simić, addressed to both Roma and non-Roma audience in the public space. Simić was born in 1913 to a Roma family in Kopljare, a village near Arandjelovac in Central Serbia. After graduating from high school in Arandjelovac, he moved to Jatagan ma(ha)le. He continued his studies in Belgrade, becoming a law student in 1935. In the 1930s Simić co-authored with Aleksandar Petrović, an employee at the Institute for Hygiene who was researching Gypsies in Serbia, three studies published as separate brochures in Serbian: *About the marriage among our Gypsies* (Петровић & Симић, 1934a), *About the religion of our Gypsies* (Петровић & Симић, 1934b), *The theft among Gypsies* (Петровић & Симић, 1934c). Throughout his lifetime he also worked on Romani grammar, vocabulary, writing down customs, and legends. He was one of the main young figures and activists in the civil activities among the Belgrade Gypsies during the interwar period. He was the founder and president of the Educational Club of Yugoslav Gypsy Youth that existed shortly before the start of the Second World War (see above). Simić was the main brain power in creating *Romano lil* and he was the editor, manager, and main author in the newspaper. The monthly four-page edition had only three issues released between March and May 1935. Reportedly, the print run of the first two issues was 1000 copies, while the third and last one was printed in 5 000 copies (Jopson, 1936, p. 87).

Reading these pieces as visionary programmes, shedding light on both problems and their solving for a desired future of the Roma, we can see essentially three main points, or priority areas, in which Roma had to concentrate. They are all related to the Roma children or the future generations among the Roma community. They are also interconnected

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and are in a sort of consequent relation. Firstly, it was said that Roma had to take care of the schooling their children. Secondly, this had to be followed by professional training, securing an occupation, and regular works. In addition to this, Roma had to 'elevate culturally' by gaining experience and knowledge about the world and the people and this was to be achieved by the engagement of the experienced, educated, and active Roma from the older generations. What is interesting to point out is the fact that these visions for the desired development of the Roma community are not related to demands from the state, political or government measures, but to demands towards the Roma themselves (*The question of improving our way of life is largely in our own hands*). This could be seen as meaning that the state had already secured the Roma as citizens with access to education and professional realisation, as well as with means for cultural elevation, and it is thus a question of Roma's own agency, initiative, and self-organisation to achieve their better future through using the already exiting mechanism in their environment. This is an important point in regards to the visions for Roma social inclusion of the time as well as in comparison with the more recent discourses on these issues (Zahova, 2020).

Drawing a vision for Roma and their opportunities for a better future, and in relation to the need for Roma agency in achieving a better life for the Roma as a collective, some parts of Simić's articles also engage with a critique from within the community and disapproving some actions, views, and habits among the Roma that were seen as preventing them from reaching prosperity and – to use the words of the newspaper, which was the discourse of the time in Yugoslavia – 'elevate to another cultural level'. There are two common themes in this respect that appear in more than one issue of the newspaper. The main critique, observed in the editorial articles by Simić, is to the Roma community itself for not paying enough attention to the schooling and professional skills of their children and the lack of interest in Roma civic activism. Simić is particularly critical of those Roma who are literate and educated, as they are the ones who are supposed to take an active engagement concerning their own community.

Simić also engages with a critique of the macro-society and mainly its misconceptions about the Roma which were prevalent in the public discourse. He addresses in his programme articles two of the most common and widespread misconceptions about the Gypsies (present in all historical periods and geographical areas), namely those concerning Gypsy criminality and Gypsy begging. Simić challenges the wrong perceptions of begging as a Gypsy cultural practice by providing an explanation related to the social circumstances in which every person can find himself. Indirectly, he hints towards the fact that if the social infrastructure of a state cannot provide for its citizens finding themselves in a difficult situation, then begging is just a survival strategy. Furthermore, Simić criticises begging as a practice misused as an occupation replacing proper forms of work. He ends with a clear message that begging as an occupation is unacceptable for 'all Gypsies', who are against it and will fight it.

Another interesting feature of representing and addressing Roma in the programme articles is the special emphasis on both genders – Simić often writes *our brothers and sisters*. This points towards the equality of female and male personalities in the Roma

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collective as presented by Simić. He even speaks about the specific problems of 'our sisters', meaning Roma women, when talking about the lack of literacy. Thus, in Simić's writings of the 1930s, Roma women were viewed as equal to men and not as subordinated or right-less individuals, a concept that apparently was wide-spread among the Roma civil society of the time, as all organisations of the Belgrade Gypsies were also inclusive towards women (see Part 3.1. Organisations).

The third document (3.3.3.) is a typical example of a portrait or interview-style article in terms of form and style of narration, featuring the journalistic and publishing activities of Svetozar Simić which in a way complements the two programme articles from *Romano lil* and provides additions to his visions as a Roma leader and activist presenting Roma in the public space. The most important statements made there by Simić are related to his wider strategic aims and visions, in which his publishing activities are tools for their implementation. Firstly, the newspaper aims at mobilising the educated Roma and creating a Roma elite to work for the further advancement of the community. In this way, Simić had hoped to gather other activists of Gypsy background and create an association. In fact, this was something which later, actually happened, in 1939, when the Educational Club of the Yugoslav Gypsy Youth was presided by Simić himself (see above).

The other side of Simić publishing activities was related to compiling a Serbian-Gypsy grammar and Serbian-Gypsy dictionary. In this respect, we may say that the Roma leader was following a well-known pattern for the ethno-national states in Eastern and Central Europe region, developed in 19th and beginning of the 20th century, after the Herderian model for national emancipation: namely, through the collection and publishing of materials representing the folkloristic and linguistic heritage of the respective peoples. The plans for creating and publishing the dictionary and grammar should be seen as a way to represent the Roma people's linguistic heritage in the public space, and thus legitimise the Romani language and culture as equal to the other languages and cultures in the Yugoslav Kingdom. The novel written by Simić and announced to be published was a big news and even reported in the Luxembourg's German language newspaper (Escher Tageblatt, 1936, p. 10) a month after the article in *Vreme* newspaper presented above. Svetozar Simić is the author of at least two novels in manuscript form, which makes him one of the first Roma novelists not only in Yugoslavia, but also globally. Only few pages are preserved from the novels, but their content demonstrates that these works should also be seen as a public narrative about the Gypsy life, one that would supposedly represent an authentic picture and narrative by an insider. Thus, the literary activities of Svetozar Simić should be seen as an inseparable part of his activism for Roma civic emancipation.

Sofiya Zahova

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CHAPTER 4

Greece

4.1 The Rental Agreement

Αριθμός 1496, χίλια τετρακόσια ενενήκοντα έξ.
Ενοικιαστικόν (δραχ. 1.468:80).

Εν Σέρραις και εις την οικία του Μεχμέτ Χιλμή εν η έχω το γραφείον μου, σήμερον την τρίτην (3) του μηνός Δεκεμβρίου του χιλιοστού ενιακοσιοστούδεκάτου πέμπτου (1915) έτους, ημέραν Πέμπτην ενώπιον εμού του Συμβολαιογράφου Σερρών Κωνσταντίνου Ιω. Τριανταφυλλοπούλου, εδρεύοντος ενταύθα και επί παρουσία των μαρτύρων Κωνσταντίνου Κυρίτση φοιτητού της Νομικής και Αριστοτέλους Γορτσίδου δικηγορικού υπαλλήλου κατοίκων Σερρών γνωστών μοι, πολιτών Ελλήνων και μη εξαιρετέων ενεφανίσθησαν οι γνωστοί μοι και μη εξαιρετέοι Νάνους Βασιλείου γεωργός κάτοικος Αλημπέκιοϊ των Σερρών και Ευφροσύνη Αγγέλου υποδιδασκάλισα κάτοικος Σερρών ως αντιπρόσωπος του ενταύθα επιθεωρητού των Σχολείων της περιφερείας των Σερρών δυνάμει του συνημμένου ώδε υπ' αριθμόν χίλια δέκα πέντε (1015) ενεστώτος έτους εγγράφου αυτού εγγράφοντος και τούτον ως αντιπρόσωπον του Υπουργού των Εκκλησιαστικών και της Δημοσίας εκπαιδεύσεως δυνάμει του υπ' αριθμόν τριάκοντα επτά χιλιάδας τριάκοντα έξ (37036) από Τρίτης (3) Οκτωβρίου ενεστώτος έτους διαταγής του αυτού Υπουργείου, ο πρώτος αγνοών την Ελληνικών ομιλών δε την Τουρκικήν δι' ό προσελθών μετά του διερμηνέως της εκλογής και εμπιστοσύνης του Γεωργίου Καλαϊτζη δικηγορικού υπαλλήλου κατοίκου Σερρών γνωστού μοι και μη εξαιρετέου, γνωρίζοντος εκτός της Ελληνικής και την Τουρκικήν, όν ωρκίσαμεν επί του ιερού ευαγγελίου κατά τας διατάξεις της Πολιτικής Δικονομίας ότι θα κάμη πιστήν διερμήνευσιν των θελήσεων και διομολογήσεών του Ελληνιστί προς με, τους μάρτυρας και την μεθ' ης συμβάλλ[ονται];, ακριβή δε μετάφραση του περιεχομένου του παρόντος εις την Τουρκικήν και συνωμολόγησαν τα εξής, ότι γενομένης μειοδοτικής δημοπρασίας δια την μίσθωσιν ιδιωτικού οικήματος όπως τούτο χρησιμεύση ως διδακτήριον του εν Αλιμπέκιοϊ των Σερρών νηπιαγωγείου σχολείου ανεδείχθη κατά ταύτην τελευταίος μειοδότης ο συμβαλλόμενος Νάνους Βασιλείου προσενεγκών την οικίαν του διόροφον κειμένην εντός του χωρίου Αλιμπέκιοϊ, [την]; ακριβώς περιγραφομένην εν τοις πρακτικοίς της δημοπρασίας. Εγκριθείσης δε της δημοπρασίας ταύτης διά της άνω ρηθείσης υπ' αριθμόν τριάκοντα επτά χιλιάδας τριάκοντα έξ (37036) εγκριτικής διαταγής του υπουργείου της Δημοσίας εκπαιδεύσεως, ο συμβαλλόμενος Νάνους Βασιλείου εκμισθοί προς το Δημόσιον την ειρημένην οικίαν διά τον εκτεθέντα σκοπόν υπό τους εξής όρους και συμφωνίας.

1. Επί της μισθουμένης οικίας δέον ν' ανοιχθώσιν υπό του εκμισθωτού κατά την βορειοδυτικήν πλευράν της μεγαλειτέρας αιθούσης δύο παράθυρα μεγέθους ενός μέτρου και ογδοήκοντα εκατοστών και πλάτους ενός μέτρου έκαστον.

2. Να κλεισθή ο παραπλεύρως του δωματίου ευρισκόμενος απόπατος εν τω άνω ορόφω και να ανεγερθώσι δύο έτεροι εκτός του κτιρίου.

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3. Προς μίσθωσιν παρέχεται ολόκληρος η οικία μετά του κλίβανου εκτός του μαγαζίου.

4. Η διάρκεια της μισθώσεως ορίζεται τετραετής, αρχομένη από της παραλαβής του μισθίου ήτοι από της Τρίτης (3) Σεπτεμβρίου ενεστώτος έτους.

5. Το μίσθωμα ορίζεται το προσενεχθέν υπό του εκμισθωτού κατά την δημοπρασίαν εις δραχμάς τριάκοντα και λεπτά εξήκοντα (30:60) κατά μήνα, πληρωτέον κατά τριμηνίαν και εις το τέλος εκάστης δυνάμει εντάλματος του αρμοδίου Νομάρχου.

6. Ο υπουργός μετά πρότασιν της οικείας επί της μισθώσεως επιτροπής, προκαλουμένων υπό του αρμοδίου επιθεωρητού δύναται να λύση μονομερώς την μίσθωσιν: α) εάν ο ιδιοκτήτης δεν επανορθοί τας εκ της συνήθους χρήσεως του μισθίου επιγενομένας βλάβας; β) εάν το Δημόσιον αποκτήση ίδιον οίκημα ή προσενεχθή αυτώ δωρεάν χρήσις καταλλήλου οικήματος δια τον υπόλοιπον χρόνον ή καταργηθή το σχολείον δι' ο εμισθώθη το οίκημα; γ) εάν αυξηθή ο αριθμός των μαθητών ή μεταβληθή το είδος του σχολείου ούτως ώστε να μην είνε επαρκές το οίκημα δια τα νέας ανάγκας του σχολείου; δ) εάν ένεκα τυχαίου γεγονότος καταστή αχρησιμοποίητον το οίκημα, η δε επανόρθωσις αυτού δεν είνε δυνατή προ της παρελεύσεως μηνός.

Ταύτα συνημολόγησαν και συναπεδέχθησαν οι συμβαλλόμενοι και συνετάχθη το παρόν όπερ αναγνωσθέν ευκρινώς και μεγαλοφώνως εις επήκοον πάντων μεταγλωττισθέν και βεβαιωθέν υπογράφεται παρ όλων και εμού, πλην του εκμισθωτού ομολογήσαντος άγνοιαν γραμμάτων.

Η συμβαλλομένη: Ευφροσύνη Αγγέλου.
Οι μάρτυρες: Κ. Κυρίτστης;; Αρισ. Γορτσίδης.
Ο διευρμηνεύς: Γ. Καλαϊτζης.
Ο συμβολαιογράφος Σερρών: Κ. Τριανταφυλλόπουλος.

∵

Number 1946, one thousand four hundred ninety-six.
Rental agreement (drachmas 1,468.80).

In the city of Serres my office is located in Mehmet Hilmi's house. Today, on Thursday the 3rd December 1915 presented before me – the Notary of Serres Mr. Konstantinos Io. Triantafyllopoulos, and in the presence of witnesses Mr. Kontantinos Kiritsis law student, Mr. Aristotelis Gortsidis law firm secretary – both of them Greek citizens and residents of Serres, Mr. Nanous Vassileiou, farmer, resident of the village Alibekioy [1] in Serres district and Miss/Mrs. Efrossini Aggelou, teacher [2], resident of Serres. The latter is acting as a representative of the School Inspector of the district of Serres according to the attached document bearing the number 1015 of this year. After the same document, School Inspector is also acting as a representative of the Ministry of Religious Affairs and Public Education under the 37036 Ministerial act issued on the 3rd October of this year. All the above-mentioned persons are of sound mind and legal age. Since Mr. Nanous Vassileiou does not speak Greek but Turkish, he is accompanied by a translator of his trust, Mr. Georgios Kalantzis which I know in person and he is of sound mind and legal age. He is a law firm secretary, resident of Serres, speaking Turkish besides Greek. He took

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the oath on the Holy Bible according to the rules of Civil Procedure. He will accurately translate the intent of Mr. Nanous Vassileiou and the discussions in Greek and the content of the rental agreement in Turkish. The parties agreed on the following: The invitation to tender for the rental of a private dwelling in order to be used as a nursery school in Alibekioy was won by Mr. Nanous Vassileiou who offered for the tenancy his two-story building in Alibekioy as described in the tendering procedure. Based on the validation of the present auction between Mr. Nanous Vassileiou and the State as imposed by the order no. 37036 of the Ministry of Public Education, the owner rents out the property for the uses described within the present rental agreement.

1. On the northwest wall of the biggest room the renter is going to open two windows of 1.8 m length and 1m width each.

2. The lavatory located beside the room of the second floor is going to terminate its use, while two new ones are going to be built outside the premises.

3. The rental agreement includes the oven as well but excludes the shop.

4. It is a four-year contract and as a starting date is set the September 3, 1915.

5. The price of the rent, as offered by the owner during the auction, is set for 30.60 drachmas per month. It is going to be paid regularly by the end of every three-months period due to a payment order issued by the local Prefect.

6. The Minister has the right to unilaterally cancel the rental agreement after any proposal raised by the inspector of the intimate renting committee in the following cases: a. The owner does not repair any damages done during the use of the building; b. The State obtains its own building for the described use or obtains by donation its own building for the remaining rental period or abolishes the certain school; c. The number of pupils will rise or the structure of the school will alter, so that the building would not be sufficient to meet the new needs of the school; d. Due to unforeseeable circumstance, the building is non-functioning and the restoration works will extend the period of one month.

The present rental agreement has been read clear and loud in front of all parties and it was agreed upon and accepted by them. It has been translated, validated and signed by everybody and me except the owner who is stated to be illiterate.

Party: Miss/Mrs. Efrosini Aggelou.
Witnesses: Mr. K. Kiritsis; Mr. Aris Gortsidis.
The translator: Mr. Y. Kalaitzis.
The notary of Serres: Mr. K. Triantafyllopoulos.

Notes

1. Alibekioy (today Aghios Athanassios) was a Roma settlement just outside of the town of Serres in today's Greek Eastern Macedonia. Roma residents of Alibekioy were sedentary Roma and the large majority of them were Christian. At least the Christians were Romani speaking. Nowadays it is located in the outskirts of the city of Serres in the regional unit of Serres and the official name is Aghios Athanassios.
2. 'Ὑποδιδασκάλισα' in Greek, a term which is related to a less qualified teacher.

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Source: ΓΑΚ – ΑΝΣ. Αρχείο τέως συμβολαιογράφου Σερρών Κ. Τριανταφυλλόπουλου.ΑΒΕ: 229, ΑΕΕ: Συμβ. 2.1, κουτί 2, αρ. συμβ. 1496.
Prepared for publication by Lambros Baltsiotis and Vassilis Koutsoukos.
Special thanks to Giannis Tsarouhas from the Archive of Serres for locating this document.

Comments

The document is a leasing transaction between the Greek state and a resident of Alibekioy. The leased house would be used as a nursery school.

This document is related to the early attempts of the Greek state to include certain Roma communities of *New Lands*, today's Northern Greece, in the educational system, and the positive response of these communities. The so called *New Lands* were annexed to Greece after the Balkan Wars of 1912-1913. The Greek-Bulgarian dispute on the area pursued beyond the end of the War and the main argument clash was related to the language, ethnicity and national identity of the Christian population. We support the idea that the Greek State, even before the Balkan Wars, implemented a concrete education policy towards the Christian Roma communities of the district of Serres. All these numerous communities, or at least their vast majority, were sedentary and most of them Romani speaking. Many communities were landless farmers, i.e. farm labourers attached to the *çiftliks* (from Turkish, large agricultural property) of the area. Thus, it is no surprise that the Roma owner of the building lists "farmer" as his occupation. The importance of these sedentary communities was obvious for the population balance between Greece and Bulgaria, as their number was high in this area and their settlements were visible and 'countable' in the war of figures between the two nationalisms. On the other hand, these communities, which in the most part, are of the most integrated in Greece, responded to this education policy before and after the Balkan Wars. In fact, although the education was supported by the Greek state and her agents in the area, the communities welcomed and advocated the implementation of this policy. It can be argued with reasonable certainty that the communities have opted for their participation in education.

The education apparently contributed to developing a feeling of belonging to the Greek state among Gypsies. Indirect evidence for this can be seen from a vaguely accurate "List of the towns and villages of the Serres prefecture presenting their ethnological composition" (not signed and not dated), conducted in the year 1923. In two villages, there is a remark that "Those referred to as Greeks are Gypsies but of [Greek] national conscience" (ΙΑΥΕ, ΚτΕ, 1923, φάκελος 3, υποφάκελος 2).

The document discussed here is about the first nursery school in a Roma settlement identified so far in Greece (see Κουτζακιώτης, n.d.), established on the initiative of the local Roma community. This initiative coincided with the state interest in providing classes which, at least, would teach the Greek language to the younger generations in order to strengthen the pro-Greek religious and educational affiliation of the population. So, the Greek Authorities for the school year 1905-1906, financed elementary schools in Dolna/Bayrakli/Kato Djumaya (Herakleia), Ernikioy (Pontismeno), Alibekioy and Bayraktar (Flambouro), although most probably they failed to open them at the last two

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settlements (Ibid.). In the town of Djumaya a specific school for Roma pupils operated in the year 1905-1906. According to the relevant document in this school year enrolled *"30 Roma children in their* [*specific*] *school which has been established this year"* (IAYE, KY, 1906, φάκελος 80, υποφάκελος 1). In the village of Banitsa (today's Symvoli), a Greek school operated at least during the school year 1903-1904 and Roma pupils were likely enrolled in the school of Ernikioy during the same period (Ζάχος, 2013, p. 180).

Some years later, during the school year 1911-1912 (IAYE, KY, 1912, φάκελος 122, υποφάκελος 5), an elementary school operated in the village of Doxombos (today's Myrkinos) with 10 pupils (a church is also listed even in this small settlement), one more in the mixed village of Zdraviki (today's Draviskos) with 25 pupils and finally one in the then probably mixed village of Yenikioy (Novoselo) (today's Neohori) with 12 pupils. In another document, for the year 1911-1912 are recorded salaries for "one teacher-priest" in Bayraktar and Alibekioy and for "one [female] teacher" in Zdraviki, Doxombos and Alibekioy and "one [male] teacher" in Zdraviki. It is argued that an elementary school was operating in the village of Bayraktar in the year 1911 and a year before in the village of Georgoulas (Zachos, 2006, pp. 271-272), a settlement that was the population feeder of Bayraktar. In the settlement of Bayraktar a pre-primary school class was established for the year 1913-1914 (Ζάχος, 2018, p. 263). As seen in general, nursery schools were operating among Roma in a certain number of non-Greek speaking Christian villages of *New Lands* even before their annexation to Greece.

Another important observation is related to the *langue véhiculaire* of the Roma of Alibekioy: The Alibekioy Christian 'farmer', according to the document has to hire a translator as he ignores Greek and speaks Turkish. At the eve of Balkan Wars, Serres was a town with almost half the population being Christian and more than 80 per cent of the later was Greek speaking. However, it seems that even the prominent Roma were ignoring the Greek language, at least in this very settlement.

A third observation has to do with the economic situation of the community: The Roma is renting a two-storey house, which shows that at least certain families were not living in extreme poverty.

Lambros Baltsiotis and Vassilis Koutsoukos

4.2 The Struggle in the Village

Η πάλη στο χωριό

Οι αγρότες Μπαϊρακτάρη Νιγρίτας με την ομαδική τους
αντίσταση υπερασπίζουν το ψωμί των παιδιών τους

Τα χωράφια της Βάλτας ανήκουν στον Γεωργικό Συνεταιρισμό της Νιγρίτας. Καλλιεργούνταν δε από γύφτους του χωριού Μπαϊρακτάρ εδώ και έξη χρόνια, επειδή στην προσωρινή διανομή δεν

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τους είχαν δώσει συμπληρωμένο τον κλήρο, αλλά τους είπαν να καλλιεργήσουν και τα χωριά της Βάλτας.

Τα χωράφια αυτά μέχρι πέρυσι τα πλημμύριζε ο Στρυμώνας και αντί για ωφέλεια είχαν ζημιά οι γύφτοι. Τώρα με τα παραγωγικά έργα που θα μπορούσαν να τα σπείρουν, τους τα παίρνει ο συνεταιρισμός, αλλά προτού τους τα πάρει κατώρθωσε να τους διαγράψει απ' τον συνεταιρισμό με τη δικαιολογία ότι είναι χρεωμένοι κι' έτσι τους αφίνουν τώρα χωρίς χωράφια.

Οι χωριάτες μπρός στην κατάσταση αυτή και βλέποντας πως είνε καταδικασμένοι να πεθάνουν απ' την πείνα αν δεν κινηθούν, έκαναν συλλαλητήριο κι' αποφάσισαν να μη επιτρέψουν με κανένα τρόπο να τους πάρουν τα χωράφια. Εν τω μεταξύ έφθασε το συνεργείο διανομής. Όλοι τότε οι συγκεντρωμένοι του χωριού εμπόδισαν το συνεργείο, λέγοντας τους πως δεν θα σας αφήσουμε να πάρετε το ψωμί των παιδιών μας. Όταν ένας του συνεργείου τους είπε: μα σας αφήσαμε 200 στρέμματα (χέρσα). Τότε όλοι επιτεθήκανε κατά του συνεργείου και πετούσαν εναντίον του ότι εύρισκαν μπροστά τους, μερικούς δε απ' αυτούς τους ξυλοκόπησαν. Όλη την ημέρα περιφρουρούσαν το χωριό τους. Το βράδυ δε ήρθε δύναμη χωροφυλακής απ' τη Νιγρίτα. Μπροστά όμως στην επαναστατικότητα των εργατών δεν μπόρεσαν να κάνουν τίποτε. Τη νύχτα, αφού ενισχύθηκαν και μ' άλλους χωροφύλακες [τους] συνέλαβαν.

Μόλις έμαθαν οι αγρότες τα τρομοκρατικά αυτά μέτρα, ξανασυγκεντρώθηκαν κι' αποφάσισαν να κάνουν κάθοδο στην Νομαρχία. Στας δυό δέ μετά τα μεσάνυχτα ξεκίνησαν για τη Νομαρχία.

Οι φτωχοί χωριάτες του Μπαϊρακτάρ Νιγρίτας θα πρέπει να βγάλουν μια επιτροπή αγώνος απ' τους πιο θαρραλέους αγρότες κι' επί κεφαλής τους ν' αγωνιστούν με διαμαρτυρίες, συγκεντρώσεις και καθόδους στις Αρχές: για χωράφια και καλλιεργητικά εργαλεία στους φτωχούς αγρότες, για κατάργηση των χρεών κλπ.

Ανταποκριτής.
Νιγρίτα, 24/11/33.

∵

The Struggle in the Village

Farmers of the Bayraktar in Nigrita [1] with their mass resistance fight for the bread of their children

The Agricultural Cooperation of Nigrita owns the plots in the Valta area. They have been cultivated by the Gypsies of the village of Bayraktar for the last six years. During the temporal land distribution, they had not received full plots but the [settlement and rehabilitation authorities] advised them to cultivate plots from the villages of the Valta area.

Since last year these plots had been flooded by the Strimonas river [2], creating loss and not profit for the Gypsies [farmers]. Due to the latest drainage works they could have planted them but instead the Cooperation is withdrawing the plots under their use [confiscates them]. Before that, the Cooperation had crossed their names from its members' list and removed their plots, under the excuse that they have been in debt.

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Under these developments, the farmers would be sentenced to hunger if they would not fight back. So, a rally was organised and they decided to fight against the loss of their plots/properties. At the same time, the Agency administering the plot distribution process visited the area. The group of villagers in present deterred the works of the agency stating "we are not going to let you take the bread of our children". When a member of the agency replied "thus, we granted to you already 200 stremmata [3] of fallow land", the farmers attacked them; some of them were beaten. The farmers kept patrolling their village for the rest of the day. During early night, police forces from Nigrita arrived, but the rebellious attitude of the land workers did not leave them any space to react. Before midnight a reinforcement unit turned up and arrested the workers.

Soon after the farmers were informed about the terroristic measures taken [on behalf of the state authorities] they decided to march towards the Prefecture [building]. At 02.00 am they launched their march towards the Prefecture.

The poor villagers of the Bayraktar in Nigrita must decide on a fight committee consisting of the braver farmers. The persons in charge must fight with demonstrations, rallies and marches against the Authorities, demanding: plots, agricultural tools for the poor farmers, debt cancellation/remission etc.

Correspondent.
Nigritia, November 24, 1933.

Notes

1. The area is located in the southern part of nowadays district of Serres in Eastern Greek Macedonia, near the town of Nigrita. The village of Bayraktar is nowadays named Flambouro. The settlement was inhabited exclusively by Romani speaking sedentary Roma, the large majority of them being Christian.
2. The river has its sources in Vitosha mountain in Bulgaria and flows to the Aegean Sea in Greece. Its Bulgarian name is Struma. The bed of the river has been artificially reshaped since the early 20th century.
3. The *stremma* or *stremmata* (in plural) is a traditional Greek unit of area, now redefined to equal exactly 1,000 square meters or 0.1 hectare (0.24710 acre). The total area of 200 stremmata is equal to 20 hectares (49.42 acre).

Source: [No Author]. (1933). Η πάλη στο χωριό. Οι αγρότες Μπαϊρακτάρη Νιγρίτας με την ομαδική τους αντίσταση υπερασπίζουν το ψωμί των παιδιών τους. *Ο νέος Ριζοσπάστης*, Περίοδος Α, Χρόνος Γ, αρ. φύλλου 803, 1933, November 24, p. 4.
Prepared for publication by Lambros Baltsiotis and Vassilis Koutsoukos.

Comments

Flambouro is a well-integrated Roma community speaking a South Balkan Romani dialect, as most of the local Romani speaking Roma communities in the district of Serres (Παπακώστας, 2013; Ζάχος, 2005; 2013). A Greek school was operating at least from the school year 1911-1912, although there is an indication that education in Greek was provided from the year 1906 and a kind of nursery school was active in the school year 1913-1914 (cf. 1.).

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This document is connected to three major issues:

a) It marks the first evidence in Greece which associates a Roma community with the struggle for land, or in general is the first evidence of a radicalised Roma community;

b) It is a further indication that land distribution on a discriminatory basis affected sedentary Roma communities, as this was also the case in the Romani speaking Roma community of Bayrakli/Dolna/Kato Dzhoumaya (now days Herakleia) in the Northern Part of Serres district;

c) It calls into question the findings according to which Flambouro's Roma community has established links with the communists and the left-wing parties due to accidental causes. According to the dominant narration a left-wing movement appeared in the village after the residence of some communist activists in the village, living there as internally displaced persons (Ζάχος, 2005). Displacement of communists and left-wing activists was rather common in Greece from the Interwar period up to 1974 and the collapse of the "Colonels' Dictatorship".

Additionally, it raises topics for further research concerning the involvement of the Greek Communist Party with some sedentary Roma communities during the Interwar period. Roma are not mentioned in the texts of the Communist Party during the Interwar period or during the 1940s between the discriminated or distinct ethnic or national groups residing in Greece. However, the above article, and at least one more in *Rizospastis* newspaper, are indications that a possible contact between the Communist Party and certain sedentary Roma urban and rural communities might had been the case. The second article reflects on the ethnic communities of Gypsies and Vlachs, and also more generally on the refugees. As *Refugees* are mentioned the Greek Orthodox groups that arrived from the Ottoman Empire/Turkey to Greece from 1913 until the mid-1920s and were included in the Greek Turkish population exchange after the Lausanne Agreement of January 1923. So, under the title *No water and electricity supply: Urban settlements in Naoussa. Refugees, Gypsies, Vlachs, Rizospastis* is making reference to the living conditions of the rundown neighbourhood of Aghios Yeorghios in Naoussa:

> This neighbourhood is inhabited by Gypsies [...] every house hosts approximately 5-12 persons [...] Electric supply is not provided [...] two WCs are used by 500 persons. There are two public water tabs [...] the [Christian Orthodox] Church which owns the houses demands the rents [from the inhabitants] without any restoration works done on its behalf [...].

Under the subtitle 'Minorities' the article concludes that "Refugees, Gypsies and Vlachs ought to fight and solve their neighbourhoods' problems [...]" (Νέος Ριζοσπάστης, 1933).

Naoussa was a Greek-speaking town in today's Central Greek Macedonia. The Roma community of Naoussa is nevertheless Slavic-speaking and still inhabits the same neighbourhood. Their dialect is closely related to that spoken in those neighbouring rural settlements that are Slavic-speaking. Greek speakers used to identify the language in the Interwar period mostly as 'Bulgarian'. The document quoted above shows the acceptance

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of the Gypsies on behalf of the Communist Party as a minority specific group facing discrimination from the Greek Authorities. The document also raises one more topic for further research: In many towns in Northern, and to a lesser extent Central Greece, in the neighbourhoods usually called *Gyftika* the poorest strata of Greek Refugees were cohabiting with Christian or/and Muslim Roma. Many of these refugee communities were radicalised and supported the Communist Party, as was the case of the Refugees tobacco industry workers in Eastern Macedonia. We might assume that the Roma residing in the same neighbourhoods, quite probably engaged in the same professions, were influenced by their colleagues in radicalisation. An effective research is encountering problems as significant parts of these communities are assimilated or deny their Roma background.

We note that the newspaper uses the term *Gyftos* (plural *Gyftoi*) for the communities, instead of the more official *Athigganos/Tsigganos* (pl. *Athigganoi/Tsigganoi*). The adoption of this very term might not be related though with its targeted legitimization or the self-identification of the communities in Northern Greece, where the more official term *Athigganos/Tsigganos*is is perceived as pejorative by communities and connected to non-sedentary Roma. The use of a vernacular language variety by the newspaper is by far the most obvious explanation for the adopted term by the newspaper.

Lambros Baltsiotis and Vassilis Koutsoukos

4.3 The Statute of the Panhellenic Cultural Association of the Greek Gypsies

29428. [αναγνώρισης]; 11806/1939] (ιδιόγραφα).
Π. αρ. Μητρ [ώου]. 4943/ [19]39 (ιδιόγραφα).
[αναγνώρισης]; 11806/1939] (ιδιόγραφα).

Αριθ. 1. ΚΑΤΑΣΤΑΤΙΚΟΝ
Του Πανελληνίου Μορφωτικού Συλλόγου Ελλήνων Αθιγγάνων

Κεφάλαιον Α. Τίτλος-Έδρα-Σκοπός.

ΆΡΘΡΟΝ 1ον.Συνιστάται εν Αθήναις Σύλλογος μετ' Αλληλοβοηθητικού Ταμείου υπό τον τίτλον 'ΠΑΝΕΛΛΗΝΙΟΣ ΜΟΡΦΩΤΙΚΟΣ ΣΥΛΛΟΓΟΣ ΕΛΛΗΝΩΝ ΑΘΙΓΓΑΝΩΝ' με έδραν τας Αθήνας.

α) Η μελέτη, και προαγωγή των οικονομικών συμφερόντων των μελών αυτού.

β) Η ηθική και πνευματική εξύψωσις των μελών αυτού, μετ' αδελφικής και ειλικρινούς συνεργασίας.

γ) Η διοργάνωσις νυκτερινών σχολών, διαλέξεων, εκδρομών, ψυχαγωγικών συναυλιών και παν άλλο μέτρον προς ανάπτυξιν των μελών.

δ) Η ίδρυσις Ταμείου Αλληλοβοηθείας προς παροχήν εις τα μέλη ιατρικής περιθάλψεως [,] φαρμάκων, χρηματικού επιδόματος.

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ε) Συμμετοχή όλων των μελών εις τας Εθνικάς εορτάς της πατρίδος μας Ελλάδος ας οργανώνει η Εθνική Κυβέρνησις, δωρεαί προς την Εθνικήν Βασιλικήν Αεροπορίαν, ως και υπέρ παντός Εθνικού σκοπού.

ΆΡΘΡΟΝ 2ον. Μέλη του Συλλόγου δύνανται να εγγραφώσιν άπαντες οι εν Ελλάδι Αθίγγανοι και τα μέλη των οικογενειών των μηδέ των συζύγων των αποκλειομένων επί καταβολή δραχμών μεν 25 δια δικαίωμα εγγραφής[,] δρχ. δε 10 μηνιαίως.

ΆΡΘΡΟΝ 3ον. Μέλη γίνονται δεκτά τηρουμένων το [ορθώς: των] εις το άρθρον 2 προβλεπομένων, κατόπιν αποφάσεως του Διοικητικού Συμβουλίου.

ΆΡΘΡΟΝ 4ον. Παν μέλος όπερ καθυστερεί επί τρεις μήνας τας μηνιαίας συνδρομάς αποκλείεται του Συλλόγου και δεν έχει το δικαίωμα του εκλέγειν και εκλέγεσθαι [...].

ΆΡΘΡΟΝ 26ον. Άμα τη ισχύση του παρόντος καταστατικού ιδρύεται και Ταμείον Αλληλοβοηθείας συμφώνως τω άρθρω του παρόντος, ούτινος η λειτουργία και οι πόροι κανονίζονται ως εξής.

α) Οι πόροι του Ταμείου Αλληλοβοηθείας έσονται οι αυτοί μετά του Ταμείου του Συλλόγου συμφώνως τω άρθρω 2.

β) Σκοπός του Ταμείου είναι η παροχή φαρμάκων μέχρι 500 δρχ. και η παροχή χρηματικών βοηθημάτων προς παθόντας συναδέλφους, το ποσόν δε κανονίζεται υπό του Διοικ. Συμβουλίου πάντοτε όμως τη εγκρίσει της Συνελεύσεως.

γ) Την διαχείρισιν του Ταμείου Αλληλοβοηθείας έχει το Προεδρείον του Συλλόγου το οποίον τηρεί βιβλία προς τούτο.

ΆΡΘΡΟΝ 27ον. Ο Σύλλογος έχει ιδίαν σημαίαν με την εικόνα της Αγίας Σοφίας εις το μέσον φέρουσαν δε το τίτλον του Συλλόγου. Εορτάζει δε ωρισμένην ημέραν ήτις θα ορισθή δι' αποφάσεως του Διοικ. Συμβουλίου.

ΆΡΘΡΟΝ 28ον. Το παρόν καταστατικόν συγκείμενον εξ είκοσι και οκτώ άρθρων εψηφίσθη κατ' άρθρον και σύνολον κατά την πρώτην Γεν. Συνέλευσιν του Συλλόγου γενομένην την 28ην Ιουνίου 1939.

Εν Αθήναις τη 28η Ιουνίου 1939.

Ο Πρόεδρος Ο Γεν. Γραμματεύς.
Ν. Σιδέρης (ιδιόγραφα) Ι [;] Μπ[α;ρ;ζ;]ίδης (ιδιόγραφα).

[σφραγίδα του σωματείου: τίτλος και εικόνα χειραψίας].

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29428. [recognition]? 11806/1939 (handwritten).
Register No. 4943/ 1939 (handwritten).

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No. 1. Statute
of the Panhellenic Cultural Association of the Greek Gypsies

Chapter A. Title-Registered place of the Association-Objectives.

Article 1. Establishment in Athens of an Association including a Solidarity Fund under the title 'Panhellenic Cultural Association of Greek Gypsies', and Athens as the registered place of the Association.

[Objectives]:

a) The study and promotion of the economic interests of its members;

b) The moral and spiritual progress of the members with cooperation in good faith and fraternity;

c) The organisation of night classes, lectures, excursions, recreational concerts and any action in order to facilitate the development of the members;

d) The establishment of a Solidarity Fund in order to provide members with medical care, pharmaceutical services, financial benefit;

e) Participation of all the members in the National Holidays of our homeland Greece, being organised by the National Government, donations to the National Royal Air Forces and to any national purpose.

Article 2. May become members of the Association all Gypsies residing in Greece and the members of their families, the spouses not excluded, paying the amount of 25 drachmas for the membership and of 10 drachmas monthly.

Article 3. Members shall be admitted, in compliance of the provisions of article 2, after a decision of the Administrative Board.

Article 4. Every member who is late with the monthly payments for three months is being excluded from the Association and is deprived from the right to vote and stand in the elections. […].

Article 26. By entering into force of this statute a Solidarity Fund is established according to the provisions of this article:

a) Fund resources will be identical with those of the Association's Fund, according to article 2;

b) The objective of the [Solidarity] Fund is the provision of medicines up to 500 drachmas and the provision of financial aid to colleagues in need. The amount of the sum [of the financial aid] is determined after obtaining the consent of the Assembly of the members;

c) The programming and the management of the Solidarity Fund operates by the Bureau of the Association, which has the obligation to keep records.

Article 27. The Association has a specific flag. The design in the middle of the flag represents Saint Sophia and on the flag is written the title of the Association. The celebration day of the Association will be designated by the decision of the Bureau.

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Article 28. This statute, consisting of 28 articles, adopted in all its articles and its entirety at the first General Assembly of the Association which took place the 28th of June, 1939.

The President: Mr.N. Sideris [handwritten].
The Secretary General: Mr. I [?] Mp[a?r?z?]ides [handwritten].

[Stamp of the Association: Title and handshake motif].

Source: ΠΑ – ΓΑ: ΚΑΤΑΣΤΑΤΙΚΟΝ. Του Πανελληνίου Μορφωτικού Συλλόγου Ελλήνων Αθιγγάνων. Prepared for publication by Lambros Baltsiotis and Vassilis Koutsoukos.

Comments

There is little and scattered documented evidence of the Roma presence in Athens over the course of the 19th and early 20th centuries. In the 1920s, during the Greek-Turkish exchange of populations, several Greek-Orthodox Roma groups arrived from Ottoman Empire/Turkey and settled in Greece. Parts of these groups settled in Athens. They were originating mostly from Istanbul, Izmir and other cities of Western Turkey and they spoke Vlax Romani. These Roma groups of Athens were initially settled in Petralona district near the center of Athens and after Second World War gradually moved to Aghia Varvara town in west Attica. Today they consist one of the most integrated Romani speaking communities of Roma in Greece (cf. Παυλή & Σιδέρη, 1990)

The Association was established prior to their settlement in Aghia Varvara, thus the registered place of the association is Athens. Undoubtedly, this is the first Roma Association in Greece, at least having an official status. There are several interesting points in the articles of the statute related to the views of the Roma elites of this certain community. Between the objects of the association we highlight the following: a) the establishment of night classes and b) "Participation of all the members in the National Holidays of our homeland Greece, being organised by the National Government, donations to the National Royal Air Forces and to any national purpose". In fact, we do not know if any night classes were ever organised by the Association or the state aimed at the Roma community in Athens, although they were rather common in some areas of northern Greece inhabited by communities with other languages than Greek as their mother tongue. We underline the reference of Greece as "our homeland" and the inclusion of the participation in the National Holidays and the "national" donations as one of the objectives of the Association. There are also two more points of significance at the title of the Association: The adoption of the term 'Greek Gypsies' and the 'Panhellenic' dimension of the Association. The term 'Greek Gypsies' was not in use at that time and quite probably this is the first document in which we meet this term, as other known references are coming from documents after Second World War. The Association according to the statute addresses all Roma communities in Greece. This mention holds specific symbolic

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importance as it goes beyond the prospect of a typical local association, although there is no evidence that the association ever attracted members from other Roma communities. Manolis Rantis however strongly supports that during the 1940s and the 1950s the Association was highly active and overrode its regional nature (Ράντης, 2008, pp. 189-198).

The religious symbol of the flag might have a certain significance as it underlines the religious community of the Greeks. We did not conduct any research concerning the common symbols on association flags of that era though; therefore, the above observation has to be placed in context.

The "Objectives" of the association show that at least the elites of this community were eager to adopt a Greek identity and demonstrate their loyalty to the state. The political sense of the association cannot be disputed, but it is difficult to assess if there was also a latent effort to create a political tool.

Lambros Baltsiotis and Vassilis Koutsoukos

Additional Comments

The case of the Statute of the Panhellenic Cultural Association of the Greek Gypsies of June 28, 1939, reveals another example of a multiplication of a historical mistake that once introduced into scientific circulation, continues to be repeated from book to book. The creation of this organisation was mentioned for the first time in the comprehensive publication of the Council of Europe, entitled *Gypsies and Travelers* (Liégeois, 1987, p. 166). There, one can also find a note that this organisation was set up by two Gypsy women (Ibid.). According to the memories of Jean-Pierre Liégeois himself, this information was received by him from the late Evangelos Marselos, and today it is not possible to establish from what historical sources Marselos himself had obtained it. We can only suppose that in the backdrop of this information may stand some unregistered accounts from oral history. In any case, since its first publication, this information has been repeatedly referenced in numerous other publications (e.g. Hancock, 2002, p. 118; Klímová-Alexander, 2005a, p. 190-191), including in the next two editions of the Council of Europe (Liégeois, 1994, p. 166; 2007, p. 2009). More recently, authors have been paying attention to the fact that two anonymous Gypsy women (in contemporary terms referred to as 'two Romani women') were mentioned as initiators of the organisation. While specifying that this information was "based on uncertain and speculative, secondary sources", these authors have stated that, from that moment, even the beginning of Roma women's civic movement was implanted (Kóczé, 2019b).

However, the Statute of the Panhellenic Cultural Association of Greek Gypsies, published here, clearly indicates that there were no women in the organisation's leadership (all the signatories of the Statute have male names). There is thus no reason to link the date of the beginning of the Roma women civic emancipation movement to this Greek organisation, and until new discoveries are made, we need to accept the data showing that they emerged in Bulgaria and Romania (see the relevant chapters in this book).

Elena Marushiakova and Vesselin Popov

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CHAPTER 5

Turkey

5.1 Petitions

5.1.1 *A Telegram from Gypsies from Drama*

تلغراف
مخزجي: در عليه
نومروسی: ۲۸٤۹
انقره اعمار و اسكان مديريت عموميه سی جانب عاليسنه
معروضاتمزدر افندم: بزلر درامادن هجرت ايدن اتوزبر عائله دن مركب قبطی طائفه سيز ديكر مسلمان مهاجرلر كبی زراعتله اشتغال اتميوب نزديمزده كی چاديرلرله اقامتمزی تامين ايدن و بتون درامه ليلرجه مشهور اولديغی وجهله حيوان جانبازلغيله تامين معيشت ايدرز .بناً عليه مصارفات كامله كديمزه عائد اولمق اوزره ترجيحا چتالجه ويا ادرنه طرفلرنده اسكانمزه مساعده بيورلمسی ضمننده اشبو استدعامزی با تلغراف مقام ساميلرينه تقديم ايلر جواب الطافيه اتيان انتظارده يز افندم.

استانبول مسافرخانه سنده مقيم
۱۲ نومرو وثيقه صاحبلری

⁘

Telegram.
To: Deraliyye [1].
Number: 2849.
To the Dignitary Office of Ankara General Directorate of Reconstruction and Settlement.

It is our request. We are the Kıbti taife [2], composed of thirty-one households who migrated from Drama. Unlike the other Muslim immigrants who work the land, we live in tents with us and earn our living by animal dealing as it is popularly known by all people of Drama. For this reason, provided that we cover all the expenses associated with our transfer, we hereby submit to your attention our request by telegram to be allowed to settle in preferably environs of either Çatalca or Edirne. We hope and await your kind reply in due course.

Residents of the Istanbul Guest House, Owners of Certificate Number: 31.

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Notes

1. Deralliye was the Sublime Port, Bâb-ı Âlî, bureaucratic center in Istanbul.
2. Kıbti Taife: 'Copt' or 'native Egyptian' in Arabic and Ottoman Turkish. For women 'Kıbtiyye' was used. In Ottoman texts the communal identity was embodied by terms such as 'Taife-i Kıbtiye' or 'Kıbti zümresi' (Çelik, 2008, p. 186; 2018, p. 249). While in state documents the term 'Kıbti' was used, in the everyday language 'Çingene' or 'Çingâne' (Gypsies) were used (see also Chapter 1).

Source: TCCDA GM, Fon No. 272 0 0 11, Kutu 17, Dosya No. 76, Sıra No. 12.
Prepared for publication by Nurşen Gürboğa.
The archival documents in riq'a handwriting are typed by Gülsüm Gülsev Şanver.

5.1.2 *A Telegram from Gypsies from Kavala*

تلغرافنامه
مخرجی : صامسون
نومروسی : ١٩٧٦

غازی پاشا حضرتلرنه
صورتي اعمار و اسکان وکالت جلیله سنه

بزلر قواله مهاجرلرندن اولوب بالعموم کیسه مزدن ویره رك طقوز یوز نفوسی میاننده صامسونه کلدك. بورا اسکان منطقه اره مزدن اللی خانه قدر بزلری هرنه سببله مبنی ایسه تفریق ایده رك توقاده سوق ایتمك و بر چوق زنکین همشهریلرمزی صامسونده یرلشدیرمك ایسته یور .بزلر سنه لرجه جبهه لرده عسکرلك ایتمش و وطن مملکت اوغرنده هر فداکارلیقدن
چکنمه مش و بو اغورده فقر و ضرورته دوچار اولمش زواللی لردنز .یالکز عدالت کورمك ایچون ولوای مری احمدی طوپلانمق اوزره انا طوپراغنه قاووشدق .وضعیتمز توقاده دکل صامسوندن بر ساعت مسافیه بیله حرکته مساعد دکلدر .قصورمز فقیرلك ایسه صامسونك اهمیت موقعیه و تجاریه سنك ویردیکی مساعده بزمده چالیشمغه عزمکارلغمز انجق مکافاتی بوراده تلافی ایده بلرز.
عینی زمانده ساحه و شهر اهالیسندن و توتونجی صنفیندن اولدیغمزدن داخل احراجه و هواسیله امتزاج ایدمه بز .امثالمزله عینی معامله یه تابع طوتولمق حصوصنده کی استرحاممز قبولی قبطی صنفی اضافه ایدیله رك رد اولنیور .جمهوریت فخیمه قانونلردن عدل و مساوات بکلر .هر حالده صامسونده اسکانمزه فرمان بیورلمسنی عرض و نیاز ایله رز.

في ١٦ / ١ / ٤٠
توقاده سوق اولنمق ایسته مین اللی حانه قواله
مهاجری نامنه حسن ، مصطفی ، حامش امین

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Telegram.
Point of Arrival: Samsun.
Number: 1976.
To His Highness Gazi Pasha.
A Copy to the Illustrious Ministry of Reconstruction and Settlement [1].

We, immigrants from Kavala, paid all our expenses out of our pocket and approximately nine hundred people arrived at Samsun. By separating fifty of our households among the immigrants for some reason beyond our knowledge, the settlement zone [2] in this area seeks to send us to Tokad and to settle a lot of wealthy fellow townsmen in Samsun. We are the nebbish who for years had served as soldiers on the front and did not hesitate to make all kinds of sacrifices for the sake of the fatherland and the country and we have fallen in poverty and need for this cause. We were united with our motherland, looking for ways to come together under the Muhammed's flag [3] and to seek justice. The conditions under which we live are not favorable to us to even travel to a distance of an hour away from Samsun, let alone to Tokad. Our perseverance to work hard is combined with the opportunities provided by the commercial and geographic importance that Samsun may offer us, if our poverty is found to be a defect.

At the same time, since we are a province community and an urban community and a tobacco worker community, we cannot adjust to its commercial and climatic conditions. Our request to be treated as equals with our fellows has been denied by attributing us as being from the Kıbti community. We expect equality and justice from the codes of the glorious republic and kindly request and submit issuing a firman [4] to our settlement in Samsun.

16/1/[13]40 [5].
Hasan, Mustafa, Hamiş Emin.
On behalf of fifty immigrant households from Kavala who do not want to be transferred to Tokad.

Notes

1. The petition has two identical copies in Turkish with slight differences. The differences are mostly spelling ones. Most probably the second copy was an edited one.
2. The settlement zone was called the local office of the Ministry of Settlement and Reconstruction in charge of the settlement of the exchanged immigrants.
3. Is meant the prophet Muhammad's flag, the flag of Islam, Muslim homeland.
4. An Imperial edict, command, order. The supplicants submitted their petition to the president Mustafa Kemal Pasha. They attributed Mustafa Kemal Pasha an authority belonging to the Ottoman sultan.
5. The date correspondents to 1924.

Source: TCCDA GM, Fon No. 272 0 0 11, Kutu 17, Dosya No. 73, Sıra No. 18.
Prepared for publication by Nurşen Gürboğa.
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Comments

The two petitions were penned on behalf of the groups of the exchanged Gypsy (Kıbti) immigrants who came to Turkey in the context of the 1923 Turkey Greece population exchange agreement. The population exchange convention was signed by Turkish and Greek delegations on January 30, 1923, within the context of the Lausanne peace talks. According to the convention, the Orthodox Greeks settled in Turkey and the Muslim citizens settled in Greece were decided to be exchanged, with the exception of Istanbul Greeks and Western Thrace Muslims (Arı, 1995, p. 1). Following the population exchange agreement, approximately 400,000 Muslim citizens of Greece and 1,200,000 Orthodox Greek citizens of Turkey were forced to leave their countries and to settle in their new lands. Since the main criteria in determining the exchanged population was religion, among them there were a variety of communities out of the main ethno-cultural population of the target country (Tsitselikis, 2005, p. 345). The Orthodox Christian Gypsies of Turkey and Muslim Gypsies of Greece were the exchanged groups out of the larger society in both countries as well (Gürboğa, 2016; Kolukırık, 2016ab). The Gypsy groups who submitted the petitions to the Turkish authorities were those who came to Turkey along with the thousands of immigrants from Greece.

The petitions are important documents in many respects. Although we do not know whether the Gypsy supplicants or a scrivener wrote the petitions, the petitions bear the authentic voices of the immigrant Gypsies. Until now, the Gypsy communities' history has been presented primarily on the basis of state-generated documents, penned by male state authorities in various positions and mostly showcasing the concerns and interests of the state itself (Çelik, 2018, pp. 249-251). In the archives, however, we were able to discover also authentic voices of the Gypsies. They are found mostly in court records and in various kind of petitions. Especially the petitions are invaluable documents directly reflecting the requests and complaints of the Gypsy communities or persons in their authentic voices.

There is no doubt that the petition system was one of the traditional and long-lasting channels of communication in the service of the subjects of the Ottoman Empire and early Republican Turkey which conveyed the concerns of the ruled into the purview of the local and central bureaucracy (Metinsoy, 2011; Akın, 2009). The Gypsy supplicants of the above petitions resorted to the well-established channel of communication to have the state authorities in charge of the settlement of the immigrants hear their requests and complaints. The practice of writing petitions to the state authorities by the Gypsy communities or individuals were very frequent rather than extraordinary. This indicates their appeal to the ordinary communication channels with the state authorities alike the other groups in the Empire. The wide spread usage of petitions as a mundane channel of communication questions the use of the concept of "marginality" by the scholars to identify the relations of the Gypsies to the state and the society as well (Çelik, 2018, pp. 253-254). The frequent use of the petition system also disproves that they rarely left traces of their voices behind. By contrast, as the petitions above exemplify, they skilfully follow certain discursive strategies to persuade the authorities in line with their requests

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and complaints. Certainly, petitions as one of the rich sources of the authentic voices of Gypsy communities and individuals provide the researchers with an opportunity to situate the Gypsies at the centre of research narratives with their authentic voices, who strove for the improvement of their conditions vis-a-vis the state they lived in.

The petitions penned by the Gypsies provide the researchers another opportunity: examining the interaction between ascription (i.e. self-definition) and description (i.e. definition by others) of identity while they were in contact with the state authorities. As the petitions above indicate the supplicants reformulated their Gypsy identity according to their practical needs and interests while communicating to the authorities. As the first petition shows, they sometimes accepted the Gypsy category as defined by the authorities, some other times refused it, as the second petition shows, and appealed to alternative ones, for instance citizenship identity or immigrant identity which were more beneficial than the Gypsy identity in the given context. As is known, the Gypsy communities had a multi-dimensional identity and they activated one or another to suit different conditions. Both petitions exemplify how Gypsy identity was malleable, reformulated and modified by the community members according to "the context of opportunity, constraints and power" (Eminov, 2007, p. 11). If there are more attractive alternatives, then individuals may take advantage of these alternatives by modifying, even changing, their demonstrated identity.

In both petitions the supplicants requested to determine their place of settlement by accepting or refusing a Gypsy identity. However, it was not the immigrants but the Ministry of Exchange, Reconstruction and Settlement that determined it. When the exchanged immigrants arrived in Turkey, their places of settlement were determined in accordance to their production skills and the geographic features of their regions of settlement back in Greece. Ethnic origin was also one of the determinants. The needy immigrants and the non-Turkish ones had to accept the place of settlement determined by the Ministry. Otherwise they were to be deported or deprived of immigrant rights. The aim of the government was to assimilate the non-Turkish Muslim immigrants into the Turkish culture by scattering them into the settlement locations where they were to become not more than 20 percent of the local community (30 Kanunusani, 1929, III (4) 110). Consequently, thousands of exchanged immigrants were settled in Aegean, Trace, Marmara, Black Sea, Central Anatolia and eastern Mediterranean regions of Turkey (Arı, 1995, pp. 52-54) according to the socio-economic, geographic and ethnic criteria.

In the first petition, the Gypsy supplicants wanted to be settled in the vicinity of Edirne and Çatalca located in Trace and in the second petition, the Gypsy supplicants wanted to stay in Samsun, located in the Black sea region rather than separated from the immigrant community with whom they came together and were send to Tokat, located in central Anatolia. Although the supplicants sought to determine their place of settlement, since they were non-Turkish elements as well as poor, they had no legal ground for their request, thus, had to persuade the authorities to settle where they desired.

The first petition is penned on behalf of a Gypsy group stationed temporarily in an Istanbul guest house, who defined themselves as 'Kıbti taifesi', or Gypsy community

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from Drama in Greece. The striking point in the petition is their emphasis on the 'difference' from the other immigrant groups rather than the 'similarity'. They differentiated themselves from the other Muslim immigrants who are working in agriculture and they underlined their Gypsy origin with an itinerant way of life without hesitancy or worry. Living in tents and dealing with horse trading was one of the 'Gypsy professions' which mostly occupied the lowest segment in the hierarchy of professions in the Ottoman and Turkish society (Çelik, 2003, pp. 174-176). Contrary to the stigmas and related prejudices, the supplicants boldly emphasised their profession and its connection to their Gypsy origin. Most probably the Gypsy identity in this circumstance was used to serve their socio-economic needs or provide them an opportunity to settle in Trace, historically inhabited by the Gypsy population. Instead of appealing to the other alternatives such as 'exchangee', 'immigrant', 'Muslim', 'Turkish', or 'being from Drama', they consciously chose Kıbti identity, to persuade the authorities to settle in Trace, more suitable to their profession. Their pragmatic use of Kıbti category was no exception. It was used in the same manner in past, when the military conscription was imposed on Muslim Gypsies in 1873. At the time, some of them penned a petition to resist the new law on the grounds that they were 'Kıbti' (Yılgür, 2018a, p. 280). Therefore, they could distance themselves from the new obligations from which previously they were exempted.

As a response to the request of the exchanged Gypsy group, the Ministry of Exchange, Reconstruction and Settlement sent a correspondence to the Istanbul office of the sixth directorate of the settlement and reconstruction zone to make all the necessary correspondences to the director of Thracian zone in order for the necessary actions to be taken in order that thirty-one households of Kıbti's be transferred to Edirne, so long as they meet their own expenses (TCCDA GM, Fon No. 272 0 0 11, Kutu 17, Dosya No. 76, Sıra No. 12). In other words, their request was approved by the Ministry. The outcome from this petition illustrates the contingent relations between the state and the Gypsy groups, which cannot be reduced to continual conflict and confrontation.

The second petition was penned by three men on behalf of the fifty immigrants from the Kavala city of Greece. They arrived at Samsun with a large group of immigrants from Kavala and did not want to separate from their fellow townsmen in Samsun and to be settled in Tokat. According to them, the reason for their separation from the rest and for sending to Tokat was due to them being labelled by the authorities as Kıbti. Their self-definition in the petition was in total contrast to the first petition examined above. Unlike the first petition within which Kıbti identity served their request to settle in a place suitable to their profession, in the second petition Kıbti identity appeared to be an obstacle to stay in a place where they could work as tobacco labourers. Hence while in the first petition the supplicants put an emphasis on their 'difference' from the agriculturalist immigrants on the basis of their Kıbti origin, the supplicants of the second petition put an emphasis on 'sameness' to the other exchanged immigrants and refused to be labelled as Kıbti which they assumed to be the reason of their discrimination.

The supplicants of the second petition defined themselves as immigrants from Kavala, hence they associated their origin with the name of their hometown in Greece rather

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than with an ethnic name. Appealing to the 'immigrant' category and the refusal of the 'Kıbti' name was not peculiar to the supplicants in question. Since the immigrant category provided the Gypsy communities a more prestigious position than the Kıbti identity, the immigrant Gypsies frequently appealed to the immigrant identity. For instance, the immigrant Muslim Gypsies who came to the Ottoman Empire from the lost territories during the 1877-1878 Ottoman Russian War, preferred the immigrant category. When the immigrants arrived in the Ottoman cities, they were registered under the title of 'immigrant'. By the 'immigrant' identity, the Gypsies received an opportunity to get rid of social and administrative discrimination and a chance of upward social mobility. They were allowed to settle in Muslim neighbourhoods so far as living Islamic moral codes as well. They also requested to change the names of their neighbourhoods having 'Kıbti' and related titles (Yılgür, 2018a, pp. 285-290).

As the supplicants of the petitions and other historical sources exemplify, the Muslim immigrant Gypsy communities appealed to one among several identity categories interchangeably, depending on which one was the most suitable to their immediate needs in the given conjuncture. However, the second petition's emphasis on their equal treatment by the authorities as their fellow immigrants, and their call for "equality" before law and "justice" in the name of the republic indicates the rise of a new identity category, the 'citizenship' identity. In fact, after the inclusion of Muslim Gypsies in the military conscription in 1873, the Muslim Gypsies were started to be registered in population censuses and registration books not as Gypsy but under the category of Muslim (Yılgür, 2018a, p. 284). The new registration practice was not implemented properly and upon the complaints of the Gypsies, the Gypsy category was removed for Muslim and Christian Gypsies in 1886 by a decision of the Council of State and they were decided to be registered under the title of the religious communities they belonged to. However, in the 1905-6 population censuses, the Gypsy category was brought back by an imperial decree. In the Ottoman parliament in 1909, the Gypsy category continued to be the subject of debate in the context of military conscription. Although some of the deputies advocated the removal of the Gypsy category on the ground that the Gypsies were Ottomans, others insisted on keeping the Gypsy category in military registrations (Ibid., pp. 290-292).

The appeal of the supplicants of the second petition to the citizenship identity by addressing justice, equality, rule of law in a republican regime can be situated in the struggle of the Gypsies for equal rights since the late 19th century. In the petition, they used a strategy to refuse stigmas attached to the Gypsies: such as statelessness, nominal religiosity, laziness, making easy money by emphasizing their patriotism, religiosity and zeal to work hard. Hence, as the patriots serving their countries on the fronts, as Muslims desiring to came together under the flag of Muhammad, as zealous to work hard they were deserving of an equal treatment to the other citizens. While negating Gypsy identity, they also negated all the stigmas associated with it, for the purpose of preventing discrimination. Most often, when the supplicants could not find a positive response to their requests or complaints at the local level, they wrote petitions to the

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highest authority, president Mustafa Kemal Pasha. However, when the highest authorities were involved into the evaluation of the petition, in this case the Ministry of Settlement, Reconstruction, they often called examination of the suitability of the request by the local authorities, who had already been the cause of the complaints. As a matter of fact, the local branch of the Ministry once again refused the demand on the ground that they were Kıbti from Kavala, the complaints were personal rather than communal and the decision to send them to Tokat was not based on ill-will but necessity (TCCDA GM, Fon No. 272 0 0 11, Kutu 17, Dosya No. 73, Sıra No: 18). This does not mean that the bureaucratic evaluation was univocal. There was a request among one official to look for the possibility of satisfying their request to stay in Samsun. However, upon the response from the local office of the ministry, it was decided to send the group to Tokat (Ibid.).

Nurşen Gürboğa

5.2 The Tobacco Workers

5.2.1 *Emin Atılal*

Konuştuğumuz herkes bir "Tütüncüler Grubu"ndan söz ediyordu. TKP'nin ender işçi örgütlenmelerinden biri olan bu grubun üyeleri kimlerdi o zaman? Ve en sonunda onlardan birini bir kahvede bulduk. 1951 TKP davası sanıkları arasında bulunan Emin Atılal, felç geçirdiği için sol kolu tutmuyor ve ancak kulaklıkla işitebiliyor. Kendisi 1924 Drama doğumlu, oldukça hoşsohbet bir insan.

Taa Yunanistan'dan Beri

"Bakın, Tütüncüler taa Yunanistan'dan beri işçi hareketlerinin içindedirler" diye başlıyor konuşmasına ve devam ediyor: "Onların Yunanistan işçi sınıfı mücadelesi içinde çok önemli bir yerleri vardır. Nitekim Türkiye'ye gelişlerinde de bu geleneği sürdürmüşlerdir. Ve bu yüzden işçi sınıfı davasına çok bağlı bir gruptur tütüncüler. Türkiye'de işçi sınıfı mücadelesini geliştirenler de onlardır. Yani bu mücadele içinde özel bir tarihi yerleri vardır. [...] Sendikalaşma ve grev atılımları, sosyalist harekete kadro yetiştirme, o zamanlar hep bu gruptan sağlanmıştır" diyor ve kendi ailesine geçiyor:

"Mesela ben, daha çocukluğumdan beri bilinçliyim. Çünkü bütün sülalem bu işlerin içinden gelme insanlardı. Nitekim ağabeyim İbrahim Atılal, Tütün İşçileri Sendikası kurucusu ve genel sekreteriydi. Kendisi 1946 TSEKP tevkifatında ve 1951 TKP davasında da vardır. Amcam Seyyit Ali Atılal da aşağı yukarı her tevkifatta var ve hepimizden de eskidir. Yani biz ailece bu mücadelenin içinde yer almış insanlarız."

Ve devam ediyor diğer "eski partili" tütüncüleri anlatmaya: "Muammer Tamkan, Yaşar Beyaztekke, Arif Nanak, Ahmet Taşkıran, Zehra Kosova, Mustafa Özçelik, bu arkadaşlar da bizdendir ve TKP davalarının sanığı durumundadırlar." Yeri gelmişken Mustafa Özçelik'in sağ olduğunu, defalarca aramama ve onca ısrarıma rağmen konuşmak istemediğini belirteyim. Onu da bu sayfalarda görmek beni mutlandıracaktı, ama olmadı.

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Nazım'ı denizaltı ile kaçırdık

Söz eski arkadaşlardan ve arkadaşlıklardan açılmıştı bir kez. Hep birileri yad ediliyordu. İşte tam o sırada, şimdi ölmüş bulunan Muammer Tamkan'ın ağabeyi söze giriyor: Ağabey Haydar Tamkan da eski TİP üyelerinden. Başlıyor anlatmaya: "Kardeşim Muammer Tamkan, 1951 TKP tevkifatında tam 2 ay müdüriyette kaldı. Çok dayak yedi, hatta bir ara kan kustu. Sonuçta iki yıl ceza aldı, bir defa da 10 ay Malatya'da sürgünlük. Müdüriyette ilginç bir de sorgusu vardır. Kardeşime, Nazım Hikmet'i nasıl kaçırdınız, diye soruyorlar. O da sıkışmış, bir yalan atayım da kurtulayım şu dayaktan diyor. Biz Ortaköy'deki deniz kıyısında kahvede oturuyorduk, Nazım da yanımızdaydı. Bir denizaltı yanaştı, biz de onu kamufle edip, denizaltıya bindirip kaçırdık, deyince bu sefer daha çok yer misin yemez misin?"

Tütüncüler "esmer vatandaş" oldukları için, haklarında çeşitli söylentiler çıkmış. Düğünlerde zurnayla Enternasyonal çaldıkları gibi, "Öyle bir şey duymadım, ama düğünlerde çalgı çalmaya giden arkadaşlarımız vardı aramızda" diyor Emin Atılal. Sonra yediği 5 yıl cezayı, sırasıyla Harbiye, Güvercinlik, Paşakapısı, Sultanahmet cezaevlerini, Aydın'ın Çine kasabasındaki sürgün günlerini anlatıyor. Ve hâlâ sosyalizme yürekten bağlı, şunları söylüyor: "65 yaşındayım, ümidimi hiç kırmadım. Hep sosyalizm gelecek diye yaşadım. Tabii artık yaşım bu işler için geçse de ben ölsem de olacak bu iş."

Emin Atılal da Tütüncüler Grubu'nun son temsilcilerinden. […]

∵

Whomever, we interview mentions 'The Group of Tobacco Workers'. Then, who were the members of this group, one of the rare labour organisations of TKP (The Communist Party of Turkey)? Finally, we found one of them in a coffee house: Emin Atılal, who was among the suspects of the 1951 TKP trial, whose left arm is disabled by a stroke and can only hear with a hearing aid. He was born in Drama in 1924, a well-spoken person.

Ever Since Greece

He starts saying 'Look, the tobacco workers have been a part of labour movements ever since they were in Greece' and continues: 'They have a crucial role in the struggle of Greek working class. Therefore, they maintained this tradition when they came to Turkey. Thus, they were a group highly dedicated to working-class ideals. They were the actual developers of working-class struggle. I mean they have had a particular historical place in this struggle. Union organisation, strike attempts, cadre training for socialist movement. […] They provided the human resource for all these tasks' and his family:

"For example, me. I have been conscious since I was a child. Because all of my extended family has been a part of these activities. My elder brother, İbrahim Atılal, was the founder and general secretary of the Union of Tobacco Workers. He was arrested in 1946 TSEKP (The Socialist Party of Labourers and Peasants of Turkey) and in 1951 TKP trials. My uncle Seyit was detained in almost all arrest campaigns and he was more experienced in these activities than all of us. So, we, as a family, have been a part of this struggle."

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He continues to talk about the 'old party member' tobacco workers: "Muammer Tamkan, Yaşar Beyaztekke, Arif Nanak, Ahmet Taşkıran, Zehra Kosova, Mustafa Özçelik [1], these friends were also a part of us, and they were suspects of the TKP trials." In speaking of which, Mustafa Özçelik is alive, although I called him many times and insisted, he did not want to talk. To see him in these pages would make me happier, but it did not happen.

We Escaped Nazim with a Submarine

We were talking about old friends and friendships. We mentioned many individuals. At that point, elder brother of Muammer Tamkan, who is no longer alive, cut in. His elder brother, Haydar Tamkan is also one of the old members of TIP (The Workers Party of Turkey). He starts to tell: "My brother, Muammer Tamkan, was arrested in a police station for two months. He was beaten too much. Moreover, he once spat blood. Finally, he was sentenced to two years, and he was once sent into exile to Malatya for ten months. He had experience of an interesting inquiry in the police. They ask my brother, 'How did you escape Nazım Hikmet?' [2]. He was under pressure and lied hoping to escape from the beating. He says: 'We were sitting in a coffee house around the seaside, near Ortaköy. We were together with Nazım. A submarine came, and we camouflaged and embarked him on the submarine, and thus, we escaped him. Then they beat us more than they did before.'"

As the tobacco workers are *esmer vatandaş* (dark-skinned citizens) [3], there have been some rumours about them, such as they were playing International with zurna. Emin Atılal says: "I did not hear such a thing, but we have some friends who go to weddings to play their instruments." Then he explains how he was sentenced to five years, his experiences in the prisons, respectively Harbiye, Güvercinlik, Paşakapısı, Sultanahmet, and his exile to Çine town in Aydın. He is still sincerely dedicated to socialism and says: "I am 65 years, I have never given up hope. I always live with the expectation to see the foundation of socialism. Surely, I am too old for these activities. It is nothing! It will happen even if I die."

Emin Atılal is also among the last representatives of the group of tobacco workers. […]

5.2.2 *Zehra Kosova*

Zehra Kosova'yı defalarca aramama rağmen, bir türlü bulamıyorum. Bir ara fenalaştığını duymuş ve neredeyse onu bulmaktan ümidimi kesmiştim ki, tarif üzerine evinin izini saptadım. Kasımpaşa'nın arka sokaklarında tek göz bir odada kalıyordu. Ve işte bir dönemin kadın militanlarından Zehra Kosova şimdi saçları beyazlaşmış, tonton bir teyze olarak duruyordu karşımda. Benim onu aradığımı duymuş, nereden duymuşsa, pek de konuşmaya istekli değildi başlangıçta. Kısa da olsa bir sohbet yapabildim kendisiyle …

O da "Tütüncüler Grubu"nda. 1914 Yunanistan, Kavala doğumlu. 17 yaşından beri sosyalist görüyor kendini, bugüne kadar birçok grevin örgütleyicileri arasında yer almış. 1946 ve 1948'de komünizm propagandası yapmaktan tutuklanmış. Ayrıca 1951 TKP davası sanıklarından, 14 ay tutuklu kalıyor, işkencede bacağı kırılıyor. …'nin (Çevirmenin notu: Söz

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konusu kişinin şahsi haklarının korunması adına ismi metinden çıkarılmıştır) hakkındaki itirafına rağmen, hiçbir şeyi kabul etmiyor. Nitekim Yalçın Küçük'ün "TKP Pişmanları" isimli çalışmasında adı, "TKP Direngenleri" arasında onur listesinde yer alıyor.

Kosova 1934'te Doğu Halkları Komünist Üniversitesine (KUTV) okumak üzere giden grup arasında yer alıyor. Orada kendi gibi sosyalist olan eşi İskender Kosova ile tanışıp evleniyor. Zehra Kosova'yı en son 1958'deki Hikmet Kıvılcımlı'nın Vatan Partisi (VP) örgütlenmesi içinde görüyoruz, bir tevkifat daha görüyor. Tütüncüleri ise şöyle anlatmakta: "Biz daha Yunanistan'da iken Yunanlı işçilerle dayanışma içerisinde olarak katılmıştık harekete. Türkiye'ye göç edince de bu bilincimizi koruduk. Biz oldukça kalabalık bir gruptuk ve en az yüzde yirmi beşimiz bilinçli durumdaydık. Aileler de çok aktifti. Diyebilirim ki, en militan kesim tütüncüler içinden çıkmıştır. Ve işçi sınıfını bir dönem adeta biz temsil ediyorduk." Kosova işçileri münevverlerden farklı görüyor, birliğe daha önem verdiklerini ve çelişmekten kaçındıklarını söylüyor.

Kadın bir militan olmanın farkını ve harekette bu ayrımın nasıl şekillendiğini soruyorum. O da "Pratikte böyle bir ayrımın olmadığını ve tüm militanların eşit koşullarda mücadele ettiklerini", hareketin ayrı bir kadın örgütlenmesi olmadığını da ekleyerek söylüyor.

Anılar, Anılar

O da birilerini anmadan edemiyor. TSEKP Beyoğlu ilçesinde çalıştığı arkadaşları Mustafa Arhavi, İbiş, Panayot ve Nubar'ı saygıyla anıyor. Ama en unutamadığı kişi, Topal Hasan diye bilinen Hasan Erim. Birden geçmişin hüzünlü yörelerine dalarak, gözleri yaşarıyor. "O çok sevdiğim, yakın bir dostumdu. Dinamit gibi, gayesine sadık, işçi sınıfının bir askeriydi. Yıllarca birlikte çalıştık. Tütüncüler içinde en ileri görüşlü ve meselelere vakıf bir arkadaştı. İş bulamadığım, parasız kaldığımda bana bir o yardım etmişti. 22,5 lira haftalık alır ve 5 lirasını bana verirdi. Tam bir dosttu."

Mimlenmiş bir militan olmak zor işti doğrusu. Nitekim Kosova'ya bu yüzden iş vermemişler, bulduğu işleri de polis engellemiş. Hatta, bir ara aç kalma tehlikesi yaşamış. Aylarca işsiz dolaşmış, "şikâyet sanılmasın ama bazı dostlar elini uzatmadılar" diyor. Kahve ikram ederken değiniyor bunlara. Ha, bir de anılarını yazıyormuş, kimbilir belki bir gün, daha etraflı okuruz.

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Although I attempted many times, I could once never reached Zehra Kosova [4]. While I heard that she was ill and almost stopped trying to find her, I detected the location of her house on a description. She was staying in a room in the backstreets of Kasımpaşa. So Zehra Kosova, one of the female militants of the era, was in front of me as a grey-haired, pretty, old woman. She somehow heard that I had been looking for her and she was not very enthusiastic to talk. Nevertheless, I could have a conversation with her, although it was short.

She is also one of the 'tobacco workers'. She was born in Kavala, Greece in 1914. She has assumed herself as a socialist since she was 17 years old, she has been among organizers

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of the many strikes. She has been arrested for communist propaganda in 1946 and 1948. Besides, she was among the suspects of 1951 TKP Trial, detained for 14 months; her leg was broken during the torture. Although XX [5] confessed her presence in the activities, she confessed nothing. Therefore, she has been added to the honour list, 'resisters of TKP' in the book, 'the Penitents of TKP' by Yalçın Küçük.

Kosova was among the ones who were sent for training to the Communist University of Eastern Peoples (KUTV) [6] in 1934. She met İskender Kosova there who was also a socialist like her and they married. We see her finally as a part of the organisation of the Homeland Party (Vatan Partisi) founded by Hikmet Kıvılcımlı [7], then she faced another arrest campaign. She introduces the tobacco workers: "Even in Greece, we participated in the movement in solidarity with Greek workers. After we migrated to Turkey, we maintained our consciousness. We were populous, and at least 25 % of us were conscious. The families were highly active. I can say the tobacco workers were the most militant ones. It was nearly us the representative of the working class for a period." Kosova distinguish workers from the intellectuals as the former prioritise unity and avoid from inner conflicts.

I ask her about the distinctiveness of being a female militant and how this distinction occurred in the movement. She says: "There was not such a distinction practically and all the militants struggled in equal conditions", and there was not a separate women section of the movement.

Memories, Memories

She could not hinder herself from mentioning persons. She remembers with respect her friends with whom she worked in the Beyoğlu branch of TSEKP, Mustafa Arhavi, İbiş, Panayot, and Nubar. The most unforgettable of them was Hasan Erim, known as Topal (cripple) Hasan. Immediately, she muses on wistful fields of the past, and her eyes fill with tears. "He was my beloved intimate friend. He was a soldier of working-class, dynamic and dedicated to his ideal. We worked for years. He was the most far-sighted of tobacco workers and had a grasp of the issues. He was the only one who helped me whenever I was unemployed and destitute. His weekly wage was 22,5 *lira*s and gave 5 of it to me. He was a real friend."

It was challenging to live as a stigmatised militant. Therefore, she could not find a job, and the police intervened whenever she succeeded. Moreover, she was once starving. She was unemployed for months. "I do not complain, but some friends did not help me". These are the things she mentioned while she provides coffee. Moreover, she is also writing her memoirs. Who knows, maybe one day, we can read them thoroughly.

Notes

1. Mustafa Özçelik. He was one of the most prominent figures among the tobacco workers. The collection of his memoirs and some essential documents testifying the role of Gypsy tobacco workers' in the Turkish left and union movements was published by the Social History Research Foundation of Turkey (TÜSTAV) in 2003 (Özçelik, 2003).

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2. The famous Turkish poet, Nazım Hikmet (1902-1963) was born in Thessaloniki. He went to Moscow for training in KUTV in 1921. After his turn to Turkey, the local police arrested him for a while. Although his acquittal of many charges concerning his poems, which reflected a strong sense of dedication to the leftist ideals, he was sentenced for his organisational activities in 1933 and 1937. In 1938, the police arrested him again for provoking the army and the navy to revolt and the court sentenced him to 28 years and four months. He was released with a general amnesty in 1950. However, although he was not liable legally, the state tried to conscript him to the army, and according to him, this was a severe threat. Then he left Istanbul in 1951 and went to Moscow (Hikmet, 2013; 1962).
3. *Esmer Vatandaş*. The literal translation of the idiom is 'dark-skinned citizen'. It is a semi-formal expression used to define communities popularly denominated as 'Kıbti' or 'Çingene' in the Republican era. Arayıcı (1999, p. 178) and Er (Türkiye, 1996) argue that the designation was given to "Gypsies" by the state in the 1950s. However, this hypothesis has not been convincingly proven yet.
4. Her dedication to leftist ideals and her ability to express them sincerely made Zehra Kosova an extraordinary female figure among tobacco workers and leftist cadres in general. An anecdote published by Zihni Anadol, a journalist, politician and author in his autobiographical work enlightens Kosova's role in the development of the leftist movements in the era.

The trade unions that were established right after 1946 fell under the Istanbul Union of Syndicates. A ruined bakery in Beşiktaş was chosen as the center for the union. However, the intellectual members of the party, most of whom were members of the country's elite, were unable to find financial resources to repair the building. Fortunately, this problem, which had stymied the intellectual elite of the party, was solved by the Gypsy tobacco workers. When the prominent tobacco workers gathered to evaluate this problem in Ortaköy, Zehra Kosova put down the child in her arms and said, "I found the solution". She presented her ring and earrings. "We will repair our trade union with these; we will retain our existence with these; we will show them who we are. I was starving and lacking water. However, I never used them, even in my worst days. I waited for the day. That day is today. I sacrifice them to our trade union." When her enthusiastic speech was communicated to the leader of the party, Şefik Hüsnü, he burst into tears (Yılgür, 2015, pp. 184-185).

5. The name was removed by the translator to save the personal rights of the mentioned person 6. KUTV. The correct translation of original designation 'Коммунистический университет трудящихся Востока' has to be 'the Communist University of the Toilers of the East'. KUTV was established as a specialised institution for the training of foreign citizens of eastern nationalities in 1921.
7. Hikmet Kıvılcımlı. He was a prominent leftist theoretician, politician, and a pivotal figure in the eyes of Gypsy tobacco workers as well (cf. Ağcabay, 2009).

Sources: Akar, A. 1989. *Bir Kuşağın Son Temsilcileri "Eski Tüfek" Sosyalistler*. İstanbul: İletişim, pp. 108-111. I acknowledge Tanıl Bora and İletişim Publishing for allowing us to re-print the above text.
Prepared for publication by Egemen Yılgür

Comments

The book by Atilla Akar is a collection of interviews with the prominent figures of the Turkish left. In the book title "Last Representatives of a Generation 'old rifle' Socialist" a Turkish local idiom *eski tüfek*, (old rifle), is used for designating the old and still dedicated Leftists of the Party Members. Two of them, Emin Atılal and Zehra Kosova were among the party cadres who created active organisations involving tobacco workers in the early Republican era. Their selection for the book is not a coincidence, but it reflects their popular image as dedicated socialists and worker leaders.

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Gypsy tobacco workers' political culture developed in Greece before the population exchange in 1923-24. They had learned many things from the more experienced Greek and Jewish workers. Emin Atılal seems to be aware of this interaction and emphasises his ancestors' role in the Greek working-class struggle. Moreover, the experience of political participation involving a few generations had shaped their culture on an everyday basis, and the transfer of this culture was initially occurring in their families, at least in many cases. Atılal had a chance to grow in interaction with his family members who had a particular role for the unionisation and political participation of the tobacco workers.

Along with the epic narratives about the organisation and struggle in tobacco factories, the family members' prison experiences told at home made the imprisonment as a threat for the state apparatus less shocking and less terrific, and moreover, almost familiar for the Gypsy tobacco workers. The same point was also raised by Zehra Kosova. She emphasises the presence of the tobacco workers in the union and leftist movements before the population exchange and their participation in politics as family units, which was a highly unique phenomenon for the Turkish left during the early Republican era.

Zehra Kosova was quite critical about some of the intellectual cadres of the leftist movement. She expressed her concerns about them emphasising the merits of workers. She believed that the workers had an attitude to prioritise unity and did not turn the inner conflicts to irreversible divisions. This expression implies a strong sense of inconvenience about the intellectual cadres as they could easily exaggerate differences and produce fractions. Her capability for being critical about the intellectuals, who occupied the higher posts in the official party hierarchy is also of interest in that she perceives Gypsy tobacco workers as an independent circle in the left instead of mere instruments that were being commanded by the educated cadres. The language used by the editor, Atilla Akar, implies that the Gypsy tobacco workers have also been conceived as a subgroup within the Turkish left by their non-Roma and non-worker comrades. Although they were able to transfer their political culture to their offsprings and generate strong community ties which were utilised in the party activities, and therefore constitute a group, it would be an exaggeration to conceive them as a hierarchical organisation themselves. They were more likely to be a diverse community of Gypsy tobacco workers whose familiarity with politics largely depended on the collective and individual experiences of a few generations.

It is not surprising to see that Kosova and Atılal were not enthusiastic to declare the presence of Gypsy individuals among tobacco workers in the interviews. Until recent times, Gypsy, particularly more integrated or assimilated ones, tended to hide their Gypsy identity if possible, along with the rejection of often perceived as pejorative exonyms such as 'Çingene' or 'Kıbti' in Turkey. In the interview with Emin Atılal, Akar refers to the popular rumour of playing International with *zurna*, a local musical instrument, which is an implication for the Gypsy origin of the tobacco workers and the use of the semi-formal, yet humiliating to a degree, expression *esmer vatandaş* to define them. There is no sign of Emin Atılal's rejection or acceptance of this claim in the interview. However,

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he refers to the factual basis of the above-mentioned rumour, namely that some of the tobacco workers were also playing instruments at weddings, as additional work.

Egemen Yılgür

5.2.3 *An Obituary for Zehra Kosova*

İşçi sınıfı davası uğruna mücadeleler ile geçen doksan bir yıllık bir ömür sona erdi. Zehra Kosova göçmen tütün işçileri çevresindendi. Büyük çoğunluğu Roman olan ve en çok horlanan, en gaddarca sömürülen emekçi kesiminden. Mübadil göçmen olarak Türkiye'ye gelen ve Anavatan bildikleri bu topraklarda daha da ilkel bir kapitalizmin çarklarının dişlilerine yakalananlardan. Sülalece tütün işçisi idi Zehra. Anası, babası Yunanistan'ın Kavala kentinde en bilinçli tütün işçilerinin çatısı altında toplandıkları Kızıl Kulübün üyesi idiler.

Kavala kentinin göbeğinde bir meydan var. Sol partiler mitinglerini o meydanda yapıyorlar. Adı "Tütün İşçileri Meydanı", (Platiya Kapnergaton). Meydanın ortasında bir anıt. Tunçtan iki erkek bir kadın heykeli. Anıtın tabanını oluşturan bloğu bir şerit gibi kuşatan gene tunçtan kabartma tütün yaprakları ve eller, eller. Az ötede mermer bir blok üzerinde sınıf savaşında şehit düşen tütün işçilerinin adları yazılı. Papadopulosların faşist cuntası o anıta dokunamadı. Meydanın adını değiştirmeye de cüret edemedi. Bu, tütün işçilerinin sınıf mücadelesinin Yunanistan tarihinde ne derin kökler saldığının bir kanıtıdır.

Birkaç yıl önce Kavala'da geçirdiğimiz iki hafta süresince hemen hemen her gün Mihri Belli ile birlikte o meydana gittik. Bu ziyaret yalnızca Yunan işçilerine değil bizim ülkemizin göçmen tütün işçilerine de saygının bir ifadesiydi. Çünkü o mücadeleye Türk, Pomak, Roman işçiler de Yunanlı kardeşleriyle omuz omuza katılmışlardı. Zehra Kosova böyle bir gelenekten geliyordu işte.

Göçmen tütün işçisinin öyküsünü yeni kuşaklar bilmelidirler. İbret dolu bir öyküdür o. Onlar, mübadil olarak Türkiye'ye gelirken çıkınları, sepetleriyle birlikte sosyalist bilinci de beraberlerinde getirmişlerdi. Bu bakımdan yerli işçilerden çok daha bilinçli, çok daha ileri durumdaydılar. Uzun yılar Kasımpaşa'nın, Ortaköy'ün tütün üretim merkezleri birer parti okulu idi. Bir yandan tütün işlerken bir yandan da okuyor tartışıyorlardı.

Zehra Kosova'nın yaşam öyküsünü burada ayrıntılı olarak anlatacak değiliz. Şu kadarını söylemekle yetinelim. Genç kızlık çağından bu yana, nerede bir illegal komünist örgütlenmesi olduysa Zehra abla saflarda yerini almıştır. Nerede sol nitelikte bir legal siyasi örgütlenme girişimi olduysa Zehra abla girişime katılmıştır. Tütün alanında olsun, başka üretim alanlarında örneğin tekstilde olsun sendikalaşma doğrultusunda nerede bir hareket olduysa Zehra abla oradaydı ve öncüydü. Zehra Kosova genellikle erkeklerin alanı sayılan bu alanda öncü kadınlarımızdandır. Giderek o alanda bir numaradır. DİSK Emek Ödülünü alan tek kişidir. Sendikacılık alanında antidemokratik koşullarda bir numara olabilmek inançlı, ciddi ve yiğit kişilik ister. Zehra Kosova'da bunların hepsi ve fazlası vardı. Defalarca tutuklandı, işkence gördü, yıllarca hapis yattı. Bağımlı kapitalizm koşullarında bir militanın kaderiydi onunki de.

Ben Zehra Kosova ile birlikte hapis yatmadım. 1951 tevkifatında o da tutuklanmıştı. Ama ben, Sansaryan Handa iki yıl süren tecritten sonra Harbiye Askeri Cezaevinde

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kadınlar koğuşuna getirildiğimde o 14 aylık bir tutukluluk süresinden sonra tahliye edilmiş bulunuyordu. Birlikte hapis yatmadık ama bu birbirimizi tanımamıza engel değildi. Kadınlar koğuşunda öteki mahpuslardan "Zehra abla" hakkında çok şeyler dinledim. Sevilen, sayılan bir arkadaş, bir yoldaştı Zehra Kosova.

Evet, tütün işçilerinin illegal komünist hareket içinde önemli bir yeri vardır. 1951-53 tevkifatını izleyen yargılamada da onlar kalabalık bir grup idiler. 160 küsur sanık içinde neredeyse 30, 35 tütün işçisi. Onlar egemenlerin itirafçılar yaratmak için çıkardıkları ceza indirimi yasasına itibar etmediler. Saflarımızı bölmek amacıyla, bir yandan tahkikat sürerken Türk Ceza Kanunun 141'inci maddesine nedamet getiren itirafçılar için bir Yedinci fıkra eklenmişti. Mahkemede sorgu sırasında "iddianamede hakkımda yazılanlar doğrudur. Ben partili idim. Ama bundan sonra bu işlerde yokum. Tahliyemi istiyorum" dedin mi, derhal tahliye ediliyordun. Daha çok mektep medrese görmüşler arasında bu fıkradan yararlanmayı kabul eden beş on kişi çıktı. Ama Roman tütün işçilerinden tek kişi çıkmadı. Aileleri yoksulluk içinde kıvranıyordu, ama onlar dişlerini sıktılar ve namuslarıyla uzun yıllar hapis yatmayı bildiler.

Bilindiği gibi, 1960'lardan bu yana, özellikle sosyalist ülkelerde yönetimin bürokratik bir nitelik edinmesi sonucu dünya ölçüsünde sosyalist harekette bölünmeler yaşandı. Bunun Türkiye'ye de yansıması kaçınılmazdı, nitekim öyle oldu. Ama Türkiye'nin göçmen tütün işçileri hiçbir zaman rotayı şaşırmadılar. Onlar Mustafa Suphilerin, Şefik Hüsnülerin, Reşat Fuatların yolundan şaşmadılar.

Zehra Kosova yoldaşımızın ölümüyle sosyalist hareketimizin acılarla dolu ama gene de coşkulu ve yükselen bir döneminin önemli bir tanığı, saygın bir temsilcisi saflarımızdan ayrılmış oluyor. Onun yaşamı mücadeleye adanmış, bu yüzden de anlamlı bir yaşamdı. Boşa gitmemiş bir yaşamdı. Ne mutlu ona.

26 Ağustos 2001.
Sevim Belli.

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A life of ninety-one years, which was spent on the struggles dedicated to the grand purpose of the working-class has ended. Zehra Kosova was from the circle of the immigrant tobacco workers; the group of labourers, the majority of which were Roma and who were most despised and exploited most brutally. She was one of them who came to Turkey as an exchangee [1] immigrant and was captured by the wheels of a more primitive form of capitalism in a territory where they believed to be their homeland. All of Zehra's family were tobacco workers, her mother and her father affiliated to the Red Club (*Kızıl Kulüp*) [2], an organisation involving the most conscientious tobacco workers in Kavala town in Greece.

There is a square in Kavala town centre, where leftist parties hold their meetings. Its name is the square of tobacco workers, (*Platiya Kapnergaton*) [3]. There is a monument in the middle of the square, bronze statues of two men and a woman. The blog on the bottom of the monument is surrounded by tobacco leaves out of bronze as well as hands.

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The names of tobacco workers who were martyred in the class struggle were inscribed on a marble blog a little beyond. The fascist junta of Papadopoulos cannot touch this monument. They cannot dare even to change the name of the square, which indicates how deeply the class struggle of tobacco workers was rooted in the history of Greece [4].

A few years ago, we, I and Mihri Belli, went to that square for almost every day during our two-week stay in Kavala. These visits were the manifestation of our respect, not only for the Greek workers but our countries' immigrant tobacco workers as well. Because, along with Greek workers, Turkish, Pomak, Roma workers participated in that struggle. Zehra Kosova was part of such a tradition.

New generations should learn the story of the immigrant tobacco worker. It is an exemplary story. They brought socialist consciousness along with their fardels and baskets when they came to Turkey as exchangees. Therefore, they were far more conscientious and far more progressive than the local workers. The tobacco manufacture centres in Kasımpaşa and Ortaköy were like party schools for many years. While they were processing tobacco, they were reading and discussing the issues as well.

We will not tell the whole life story of Zehra Kosova in detail here. Let us confine ourselves to a limited version: Since her maidenhood, Zehra Abla [5] became a part of any illegal communist organisations wherever that occurred. Zehra Abla supported all the attempts for the development of leftist legal organisations whenever that occurred. Wherever there was a movement for unionisation in tobacco or other areas of manufacture, for example, textile, Zehra Abla headed there. Zehra Kosova was among our female leaders in an area that has usually been assumed to be confined to men.

Furthermore, she was almost the first in this case. She is the only person who received the Confederation of Revolutionary Worker Unions (DİSK) Labour Award. It requires one to have a dedicated, dignified, and brave personality to be first as a union leader under anti-democratic conditions. Zehra Kosova had all these and more. She was arrested plenty of times, tortured, stayed in prison for years. What she lived was the destiny of a militant under the conditions of dependent capitalism.

I did not stay in prison with Zehra Kosova. She was also arrested in the 1951 campaign. However, when I was brought to the women's ward in Harbiye Military Prison after two-years of isolation at Sansaryan Han, she had already been released after a 14-month arrest. We did not stay together in prison, but this has never been an obstacle for us to know each other. I heard many things about her from the other prisoners in the women's ward. Zehra Kosova was a favourite, respectable friend, and a comrade.

Yes, the tobacco workers had an essential place in the illegal communist movement. They constituted a populous group in the investigations following the 1951-1952 arrest campaigns: Almost 30-35 tobacco workers among about 160 suspects. They did not prefer to benefit from the remission law, which was introduced by the sovereigns to create confessors. While the investigation was continuing, a seventh clause was added to the 141st article of Turkish Criminal Law for the confessors repented to divide us. During the court inquiry, if they said "the claims about me written in the accusation are true, I was once affiliated to the party. I will not be a part of these activities anymore. I demand to be

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released", then, the court immediately released them. There were five or ten persons from among whom the more educated ones accepted to benefit from this clause. However, there was no one from the Roma tobacco workers. Their families were suffering from poverty. However, they grit their teeth and found a way to deal with prison conditions in an upright manner.

As is known, since the 1960s, there has been some global divisions in the socialist movement as the administration in socialist countries got a more bureaucratic character. The occurrence of the same thing in Turkey was indispensable, and therefore, it happened. However, immigrant tobacco workers never lost their bearings. They became loyal to the path of the leaders such as Mustafa Suphi, Şefik Hüsnü, Reşat Fuat [6].

The death of our comrade, Zehra Kosova means the loss of a prominent witness to an era of our socialist movement, full of pains, but enthusiastic and rising as well. Her life was dedicated to the struggle and therefore, meaningful. How happy for her that she never wasted her life!

August 26, 2001.
Sevim Belli.

Notes

1. The term used is *Mübadil*, exchangee, this term is mainly used in the context of the Turk-Greek Population Exchange (Hirschon, 2004a, p. xii), in which Roma were also included. However, we are still far from providing accurate quantitative figures about their exact number. The recent studies provided pivotal cases exemplifying the presence of Roma among the Muslim exchangees (Kolukırık, 2006; Gürboğa, 2015; Yılgür, 2015; 2016).
2. There are mentions on the Red Club in the accounts of other immigrant tobacco workers as well (Yılgür, 2015, pp. 177-78). Clubs were crucial for self-organising of different ethnic and social groups in Thessaloniki and around (for a short development history of clubs and the related socialist organisations see Starr, 1947; Aktsoglou, 1997; Hadar, 2007; Haupt & Dumond, 2013).
3. The expression is quoted from the original text. It is rendered as Kapnergati's Square or the square of tobacco worker (Mentesidou, 2016, pp. 46).
4. The author might probably be misinformed about the history of the square. According to Angeloudi (Αγγελούδη, 2010, pp. 175 referred by Mentesidou, 2016, pp. 46), the square was given its name in 1986 and immediately after, the monument was placed there; much later than the collapse of the military rule in Greece in the 1970s (Clogg, 1997).
5. *Abla* means elder sister in Turkish. It has considerably been relevant to call Zehra Kosova as Zehra Abla among the leftists from different circles. The shared saying, which indicates Zehra Kosova's perception as a stable and consistent female figure, reflects a shared sense of intimacy with her as well.
6. Mustafa Suphi, Şefik Hüsnü, and Reşat Fuat were among the most prominent leaders of the late-Ottoman and early Republican socialist movement. They represent the early attempts to establish a tradition of orthodox Marxism in Turkey and, therefore, they have been respectable historical figures at least for a considerable portion of the Turkish left, including Belli (cf. their biographies in Aziz, 2009; Akbulut, 2010; Tosun, 2013).

Source: Belli, S. (2011). Sunu-Zehra Kosova Öldü. In Kosova, Z. *Ben İşçiyim*. İstanbul: Sarı Defter-Tüstav, pp. 11-13. I appreciate kindness and support of Erden Akbulut and TÜSTAV for letting us reprint the text above.
Prepared for publication by Egemen Yılgür.

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Comments

Zehra Kosova was among the most famous and the most respectable representatives of the immigrant tobacco workers. The publication of her memoir, *Ben İşçiyim* (I am Worker) carried her reputation among the leftist circles in Turkey to the broader public. The document above is the foreword of the book's second edition. It was Zehra Kosova's funeral speech presented by Sevim Belli, another female figure of the Turkish left, also respectable and prominent (cf. Belli, 1994). In Zehra Kosova's biography in the funeral speech, Sevim Belli intended to introduce the Roma tobacco workers as an entire community instead of a mere concentration. The speech was a well-structured presentation of the prevalent image of the Gypsy tobacco workers, which, before that, had been mostly invisible to the public. She somehow succeeded in dealing with the well-known difficulties of the Gypsy tobacco workers' public representation, which derived from the discrepancy between their self-identification and the external designation of the community. In the speech, she uses the term *Roman*, the Turkish counterpart of the original Roma word 'Rom'. In Turkey, the term became popular since the 1990s and a considerable portion of Turkish society has perceived it as a more polite way to describe communities whom they traditionally denominated as 'Çingene' (Gypsies). Along with many others, a famous novelist who was actively affiliated with the early leftist movements, Vedat Türkali reveals that this inconvenience about the external designation was also the case for the Gypsy tobacco workers (Demirel et al., 2010). Thus, Sevim Belli adopted the new and relatively more prestigious term to indicate the presence of a Roma element, the most visible and dominant one among the immigrant tobacco workers. Moreover, she tended to define the labour circle as the 'Roma tobacco workers', which was not an exaggeration, as the non-Roma individuals were extremely exceptional among them.

The points raised by Belli in the speech, such as Zehra Kosova's dedication to the leftist ideals, her possession of the skills required to be a union leader and her consistent attitude against the threat of torture or prison are integral elements constituting the positive image of immigrant tobacco workers in general. Although this heroic image has been prevalent among the leftist circles until today, one should not ignore the other accounts about the Roma tobacco workers: such as the narratives of a former leftist anti-communist author, Aclan Sayılgan. He conceives them as non-considerable elements which could be hired for little expense. According to Sayılgan, prison conditions were much comfortable than the Gypsy tobacco workers' own houses and, therefore, the latter showed a great eagerness to stay in prison (Sayılgan, 1969). Sayılgan attempted to create a contra-image against the epic image of the tobacco workers and tended to generate their exaggerated and one-sided presentation, which recalls the common prejudices and clichés about Roma and other related communities (Dom, Lom, Abdal, etc.) in Turkish society.

Nevertheless, a careful investigation of the files of the arrest campaign in 1951 reveals that there was indeed a considerable diversity in the level of dedication, political

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consciousness, or consistency among the individual workers. However, the same documents reveal the reliability of another point raised by Belli as well: There was nobody from among the tobacco workers who accepted to benefit from the remission law, despite the fact that this was a great chance for them to be released. Some of them confessed their role in the party activities during the frequently brutal police investigations or torture but mostly tended to reject their confessions in the court. Therefore, although individual Gypsy tobacco workers had different levels of political consciousness and dedication, it would not be legitimate to ignore their agency in the leftist politics, which provide a basis for the idealised image of the heroic tobacco worker.

Belli draws a multi-dimensional portrait of Zehra Kosova as a political figure. She was a union leader and a trustful cadre for illegal communist organisations and any attempts to establish leftist legal initiatives. As well as the whole speech, even this point is representative of all Roma tobacco workers, at least for the most politicised ones. The nucleus of the Turkish left in the period between WWI and WWII mostly constituted of Ottoman and Republican elites. In this manner, the presence of a group of workers who had politicised and got experienced in unions before the population exchange in Greece was an excellent chance for them. The leftist organisations tried to take advantage of their presence to reach the working-class masses, but also for the practice of everyday activities required by the development of any leftist organisations. However, this was also the chance for Roma tobacco workers to encounter prestigious elites or the most prominent intellectuals of the era under the roof of the same organisation, and this meant a socio-cultural interaction on both sides. The Gypsy tobacco workers combined the everyday experiences they gained in Greece and the influences of their interaction with the Turkish left as a part of their culture, and thus succeeded, to some degree, to transfer this culture to new generations. Belli emphasises the role of the tobacco manufacture centres as party schools in Kasımpaşa and Ortaköy, where there was a significant Romani population and a range of Gypsy neighbourhoods. Alongside production, the working hours was a period of interaction for the tobacco workers, an interaction that allowed the politicised workers to transfer their political culture and experiences to the younger generations.

Although in the funeral speech Belli emphasises the presence, or more accurately the dominance, of Gypsies among tobacco workers without any hesitation, it is not possible to find any mention of the ethnic origin of the Gypsy tobacco workers in the memoir itself. Zehra Kosova, like the many others, intended to keep this point untouched. Lack of any references to the Roma origin in the memoir overlaps with the lack of demonstrated ethnic consciousness among the majority of the Gypsy tobacco workers. Their preferred identity was the leftist worker, rather than of any ethnic or religious ones. It is possible to understand this attitude as either an intention for the individual emancipation from prejudices and ethnic discrimination or voluntary assimilation.

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5.3 Media Testimonials

5.3.1 *May Day*

1 Mayıs Eğlenceli Geçti.

Birkaç kişi amele arasında tahrikât yapmak istedilerse de yakalandılar.

1 Mayıs öteden beri her tarafta amele bayramı olarak kabul edilmiş bulunduğu için, İstanbul zabıtası komünist tahrikâtı ve propagandasını yapmak üzere bugünden istifade etmek isteyenlere karşı, her sene olduğu gibi dün de sıkı tertibat almıştır.

On beş gün evvelinden beri şehrimizin muhtelif yerlerinde, bilhassa amelenin mütekâsif bulunduğu mahallerde işçileri ve halkı komünistliğe tahrik edici bazı beyannameler bulunmuş, bunun üzerine zabıta tarafından tahkikat ve takibat icrasına başlanılmıştı.

Beyanname, dağıtmağa ve taşkınlık yapmaya teşebbüs edecekleri anlaşılan ameleden 52 kadarı nezaret altına alınmışlardı.

Buna rağmen evvelki gece sabaha karşı şehrin Şişli, Paşabahçe, Cibali ve Ortaköy gibi bazı yerlerinde beyannameler dağıtılmak istenmiş, bir, iki yere de bayrak asılmak teşebbüsünde bulunulmuştur. Fakat müteyakkız olan zabıta kuvvetleri bu beyannamelerle bayrakları ele geçirdikleri gibi müteşebbisleri de yakalamışlardır. Bunlardan başka evvelki gece sabaha karşı bir şahsın elindeki bir paketi Fatihte Gelenbevi mektebi civarındaki bir arsaya bırakmak istediği görülmüş, kendisi tevkif edilmiştir. Paketin içinde birçok beyannameler bulunmuştur.

Ufak kıt'ada ve matbu olan bu beyannameler, Cemiyeti Akvama, iş kanununa, Avrupa emperyalizmine ait komünist fikirlerini ihtiva etmekte, üstlerinde kırmızı orak çekiç işareti, altında (Türkiye komünist fırkası) ibaresi bulunmaktadır.

Kadıköyü'nde üç yere de bu beyannamelerden atılmış ve bunları atanlar da yakalanmıştır.

Kadıköy ile Gelenbevi mektebi civarında yakalananlardan birinin şehrimize yeni geldiği anlaşılmıştır.

Diğer bir ikisinin "Kıbti" oldukları da meydana çıkmıştır. Beyanname dağıtmak, bayrak asmak ve saire gibi şuçlardan dolayı zan altına alınanların yekûnu yirmiyi bulmaktadır.

Şuraya buraya asılmak istenen ve tutulan bayraklar kırmızı zemin üstüne beyaz yazı ile yazılmış "1 Mayıs amelenin mücadele günüdür" ibaresini muhtevidir.

Zabıta tarafından dün, amelenin usulsüz ve nizamsız bir şekilde toplanmalarına meydan verilmemiş, fabrika ve depolarda izinsiz ve şüpheli olarak vazifelerini terkeden bazı işçiler hakkında da tahkikata başlanmıştır.

Baharı tes'it

1 Mayıs öteden beri baharın başlangıcı sayılır. Dün birçok aileler bu münasebetle kırlarda gezmişler, eğlentiler tertip etmişlerdir. Sabahleyin erkenden çiçeklerle süslenen birçok otomobiller ve otobüsler kalabalık kafileleri Kâğıthane'ye, Hürriyeti Ebediye tepesi civarına, Boğaziçi'ne ve şehrin diğer mesirelerine götürmüşlerdir.

1 Mayıs gezintilerine çıkan aileler eski bir âdete tevfikan fazla miktarda süt içtiklerinden dün Beyoğlu'nda adeta bir süt buhranı olmuştur.

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Mayday was Full of Joy.

Although a few persons intended to provoke workers, they have been detained.

As the first day of May has been accepted as a Labour holiday, Istanbul police have taken strict security measures against the ones who intend to exploit May Day to make communist provocation and propaganda as it happens each year.

In the last 15 days, in different parts of our city, particularly the places with a dense labourer concentration, some leaflets provoking workers and people in a pro-communist manner have been found and therefore the police have initiated an investigation and prosecution.

The fifty-two of the workers whose intention had been detected to distribute leaflets and to create an uproar have already been arrested.

Nevertheless, there have been attempts to distribute the leaflets in different parts of the city such as Şişli, Paşabahçe, Cibali, and Ortaköy and in one or two places to display some flags. However, police forces that had already been on the alert found the leaflets and caught the offenders. Furthermore, a person trying to leave a package on the terrain around Gelenbevi School in Fatih has been arrested. There were many leaflets in the package.

The leaflets in small size and printed included communist ideas about the league of nations, labour law, and European imperialism; a red hammer and sickle and an inscription 'the Communist Party of Turkey' were located on their top and bottom, respectively.

These leaflets were also distributed in three places in Kadıköy, and their distributors have been arrested.

It is understood that one of the persons who has been arrested around Kadıköy and Gelenbevi was a newcomer to our city.

It is also detected that a few of them were 'Gypsies' [1]. The number of accused individuals with the distribution of leaflets, displaying flags, etc. was around twenty.

There was an inscription 'May Day is the Day of Workers' on the red background with white letters on the flags which was attempted to be displayed and was found.

Yesterday, the police did not allow the workers to gather illegally and irregularly, and an investigation has been initiated about the workers who left the factories and stores suspiciously, without permission.

Celebration of Spring

May Day has been accepted as the beginning of spring all along and therefore, many families went for a hike and had parties. Many cars and buses adorned with flowers carried populous groups to Kağıthane, places around Hürriyeti Ebediye Hill, Boğaziçi and the other mesîres [2] of the city.

As the families who went on May Day trips drunk too much milk, following an old tradition, a milk crisis almost occurred in Beyoğlu yesterday.

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Notes

1. The term used is 'Kıbti'.
2. Mesîre. A local term used for the resorts which were generally located in the country-side (Devellioğlu, 2013, p. 727). For a detailed description of mesîres in Ottoman and early Republican İstanbul see Abdülaziz Bey (1995, pp. 290-310) and Kaygılı (2009).

Source: [No Author]. (1933a). 1 Mayıs Eğlenceli Geçti, *Cumhuriyet*, An. 9, No. 3226, 1933, May 2, pp. 1-2.
Prepared for publication by Egemen Yılgür.

Comments

In the early republican period, the state was trying to limit the development of the far-left activists' organisation with preventive interventions. Members of leftist parties or unions were not too populous, and it was a simple attempt for the state to trace their movements, particularly of the ex-convict communists. It was also a common practice to arrest the famous leftists before May Day, including the most prominent representatives of the Roma tobacco workers. The majority of them were concentrated in a few districts such as Ortaköy or Hacıhüsrev in İstanbul, and thus, the arrest campaigns primarily targeted these settlements. One of the most important and famous personalities among Roma tobacco workers, Zehra Kosova realised the presence of the politicised workers in her neighbourhood when she witnessed the detention of her friends' husbands before each May Day (Kosova, 1996, p. 75).

The Gypsy tobacco workers were not enthusiastic to declare their Roma identity publicly. Nevertheless, their non-Roma comrades were aware of the tobacco workers' ethnic background and expressed this in in-group conversations. However, they also preferred not to emphasise it publicly. It was more likely that it was state of pro-state authors who underlined this issue and raised it as an objection against the Roma tobacco workers' reliability as political subjects. The narrative of Sayılgan (1969), a former leftist and one of the most consistent critics of the Communist Party of Turkey, exemplifies this intention the use of stereotypes against 'Gypsies' was done in order to discredit the Roma cadres of leftist organisations and the left itself. The news above indicates that the development of this discourse occurred in the early republican era: The anonymous writer of the news indicates the presence of 'Gypsies' among the detained ones in a specific paragraph.

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5.3.2 *The Trial of the Communists*

Komünistlerin Muhakemesi.

Geçen 1 Mayıs'ta komünistlik tahrikâtı yapmak ve bazı muzır beyannameler dağıtmağa teşebbüs etmek ve beyannameleri para ile tedarik edilen birtakım kimselerle dağıttırmaktan ve duvarlara yapıştırmaktan suçlu olanların dün sabah muhakemelerine İstanbul Ağır Ceza Mahkemesi'nde başlandı.

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Muhakemeleri gizli olarak yapılan bu suçlular arasında beyannameleri dağıtmağa ve yapıştırmağa memur bazı Çingeneler de vardı.

Komünistlik suçundan dün muhakeme edilenler: Mahmut oğlu Besim, İbiş oğlu İbiş, Salih oğlu Hulûsi, Mehmet oğlu Mustafa, Osman, Ramazan ve Mümin isminde yedi kişiden ibarettir.

∵

The trial of the communists.

The trial of the offenders who make communist provocation and attempt to distribute pernicious leaflets and hire people to distribute the leaflets and stick them to walls on last May Day has been initiated in Istanbul High Penal Court yesterday morning.

Among these criminals whose trial is conducted secretly are some "Gypsies" [1] who had been assigned to distribute and stick the leaflets.

The ones who are accused of being communist are seven people whose names are Mahmut, the son of Besim, İbiş, the son of İbiş, Salih, the son of Hulûsi, Mehmet, the son of Mustafa, Osman, Ramazan, and Mümin.

Notes

1. The term used in this case is 'Çingene' is an exonym used for Roma, and in many cases, for other related communities, such as Dom, Lom, Abdals, etc. (Yılgür, 2016, pp. 21-24). However, it is also, to a lesser degree, self-denomination of some exceptional individuals who see the adoption of the term the best way to weaken the ethnic discrimination such as the 'Çingene' (Gypsy) intellectual, Mustafa Aksu (2006).

Source: [No Author]. (1933b). Komünistlerin Muhakemesi. *Cumhuriyet*, Year 10, No. 3266, 1933, June 11, p. 2.
Prepared for publication by Egemen Yılgür.

Comments

The news above again points to the participation of Gypsies in the communist movement. At the same time, it exemplifies how the press combined the popular prejudices against 'Gypsies' and the fear and distrust against communists to discredit the leftist movements of the era. In the first passage, the anonymous author declares that the offenders hired some people to distribute the leaflets. Although it is uncertain who hired whom here, the author clarifies its argument in the subsequent passage. There were some Çingeneler (Gypsies) among the accused ones, and they were assigned to do the tasks mentioned above. It is not too difficult for the reader to combine the connotations of passages and extract the possible implication behind the text: Gypsies are not reliable to be dedicated activists of any movement and, therefore, they can only be the ordinary labourers who are hired by the evil communists behind the scene.

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5.4 Training in the USSR

5.4.1 *Remzi Salih Mustafa*

Тов. Горб.
Сов[ершено] секретно.
В. – срочно.
Н/В запрос от 8/III-35 г.

Иставридис Папа Константинович, – настоящая фамилия Ремзи М. [1], чл[ен] КП Турции, в [19]34 г. был послан в СССР на учебу. Решили до поступления на учебу дать ему немного практики на производстве. Направлен отделом кадров КУТВ на табачную фабрику в Ростове н/Д с указанием, что он не должен деконспирироваться. Документы у него на имя Иставридис – грека, а в самом деле он турецкий цыган.

Его вызвали в Ростовском отделе НКВД и там он продолжал конспирироваться, тем самим вел в заблуждение тамошних работников.

Черномордик

6260/3-7.
10/III [19]35 г.

∵

Top Secret.
Very Urgent.
To comrade Gorb.
Ref: Your letter dated March 8, 1935.

Papa Konstantinovich Istavridis whose real name is Remzi M., is a member of the Communist Party of Turkey (TKP). He was sent to USSR for training in 1934. It was decided to give him a chance to practice before he starts his education and sent to Rostov on Don Tobacco Factory on condition that he should not reveal himself. His official documents were issued with the name of Greek Istavridis, but in fact he is a Turkish Gypsy.

He was called to the Rostov branch of NKVD [2], and he continued to keep secrecy and in this way he misinformed the staff there.

Chenormordik

6269/3-7.
March 10, 1935.

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5.4.2 *The Opinion Report*

Gizli.
28.VII.[19]36.

Görüş raporu

İstavridis (Remzi Mustafa): 1908 Yunanistan doğumlu Çingen. Tütün işçisi. TKP'ye 1932'de girmiştir. Aynı yıl tutuklanmış ve 4 yıl hapse mahkûm olmuş, 1 ½ yıl yatmış ve 1934'te genel afla salıverilmiştir. Partisinin tavsiyesi üzerine okumak için 1934'te kaçak olarak SSCB'ne gelmiştir. Moskova'ya vardığında ülkesindeki parti çalışmaları ve tutukluluk sırasındaki tavrı hakkında birçok yanıltıcı ve yanlış bilgi verdiği ve ECCI'e sunmak üzere parti MK'nden aldığı mektubu kaybettiği için KUTV'a kabul edilmemiştir. İstavridis Rostov-Don Birinci Devlet Tütün Fabrikası'na işe gönderilmiştir ve halihazırda bu fabrikada çalışmaktadır. Fabrikadaki tutum ve tavrı iyidir. Daha sonra kendisi teknik engeller yüzünden ülkesine geri gönderilmemiştir.

İstavridis tarafımızca kendisinden yararlanabileceğimiz ülkesine geri gönderilmelidir.

Parti temsilcisi Ferdi … [İmza].
Kadro raportör yardimcisi Galcan … [İmza].

∵

Secretly KP Turkey.
July 28, 1936.

Opinion Report

Istavridis (Remzi Mustafa): He was born in Greece in 1908. A Gypsy. Tobacco worker. He became affiliated to the TKP in 1932. In the same year he was arrested and sentenced to 4 years, stayed in prison for one year and a half and was released with a general amnesty in 1934. He came to USSR illegally for training, on the recommendation of the Party. After his arrival in Moscow, he was not accepted to KUTV [3] because of some embellished and giving some deceptive information about his work in the party, and his attitude during his arrest, and losing a letter given to him by the Central Committee of the party for delivery to the Executive Committee of Komintern [4]. Istavridis has been sent to work in the Rostov-on-Don First State Tobacco Factory, and he still works there. His attitude in the factory is right. Subsequently he has not been sent to his country due to technical restrictions.

Istavridis has to be sent to a country where we can use him.

The Party representative Ferdi [5] … [Signature].
The vice-rapporteur Galcan … [Signature].

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5.4.3 *The Autobiography*

Афтобиография

Я родился 1908 город Драма, Греция. Имя мое Ремзи, отца Сали, отец рабочий табачник. Мать работница, табачник. Имя Гюлсюм Мустафа. Я уехал из Греции в Турцию 1922 г. (точно не помню). В Стамбуле работал рабочим таб[ачной] промышлености. Участвовал в Стамболе во всех забастовках. С начала 1933 был партийным и был выбран секретарем райноного комитета Касым паша г. Стамбул. Был арестован в 1933 г., осудили меня на 4 года, участвовал в голодовке. Был выселен в Анкару.

Сидел в тюрьме 1.5 года, была амнистия, выпустили меня. После тюрми был поставлен секретарем райноного комитета Касым паша (Стамбул). После того Центральный комитет Т. [К.] П. послал меня в область укрепить областный комитет. После этого ЦК П[артии] послал меня в СССР учиться. ЦК П[артии] дал мне письмо. Я отдал [это письмо] в НКВД, оттуда [я его получил] обратно, но дальше у меня украли это письмо. Когда [я] приехал в Коминтерн, сказал [что] я потерял письмо. Меня [в] школу не взяли, послали работать на производстве.

Ремзи (Иставридис).

∵

The Autobiography [6]

I was born in Drama, Greece, in 1908. My name is Remzi. My father's name is Sali. My father is a tobacco worker. My mother, Gülsüm Mustafa, is a tobacco worker as well. I went to Turkey from Greece in 1922 (I do not remember the exact time). I worked in the Tobacco industry in Istanbul. I participated in the strike in Istanbul. At the beginning of 1933, I became a party member. I was chosen as the secretary of the branch in Kasımpaşa, Istanbul. I was arrested in 1933 and sentenced to 4 years. I participated in the hunger strike. I was sent to Ankara.

I stayed in prison for one and a half year, an amnesty was granted, I was released. After the prison, I became the secretary in Kasımpaşa, Istanbul branch again. The Central Committee of the TKP sent me to Samsun to strengthen the city committee. Then, the Central Committee of the TKP sent me USSR for training and gave me a letter. I gave it to NKVD, and they gave it to me back. Then, the letter was stolen. When I came to Komintern, I said to them that I had lost the letter. Then, they did not accept me to the school, and I was sent to work in production.

Remzi (Istavridis).

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5.4.4 *References*

С[овершено] Секретно.

Ремзи Салих, он же Иставридис Папа Константинович, родился в 1908 г., в г. Драма, Греция, в семье рабочего-табачника. По национальности цыган. Подданный Турции. Образование низшее. Знает турецкий, греческий и русский языки. По профессии табачник. Член КП Турции с 1932 г. В 1922 г. переехал из Греции в г. Стамбул, Турция. [...] С марта 1939 г. по настоящее время работает мастером на табачной фабрике в г. Алма-Ата. В августе 1941 г. т. Ремзи обращался к представительству КП Турции при ИККИ с просьбой отправить его добровольцем на фронт.

Представитель КП Турции при ИККИ т. Марат характеризует т. Ремзи положительно.

Родственники: Отец рабочий; мать домохозяйка – до войны проживали в г. Самсун, Турция. Жена Иставридис – (Лощинина) Зинаида Никифоровна, русская, член ВЛКСМ.

Заключение: Тов. Ремзи Салих, он же Иставридис Папа Константинович, рожд. 1908 г. Цыган из Турции. Член КП Турции с 1932 г. Имеет опыт профсоюзной работы в стране. За революционную деятельность сидел 1 ½ в тюрьме. На работе в СССР проявил себя положительно.

Адрес: г. Алма-Ата, ул. Дунганчанская, д. 13, кв. 25.

Основание: Материалы личного дела.

Белов, Новик.
19 марта 1943 г.
(Пр. No. 148).

∵

Top Secret

Remzi Salih, who is known as Papa Konstantinovich Istavridis, was born as a member of a tobacco worker's family in Drama, Greece in 1908. His nationality is Gypsy. He is a Turkish citizen. He graduated from primary school. He can speak Turkish, Greek, and Russian. He is a tobacco worker. He has been a member of TKP since 1932. He went to Turkey from Greece in 1922. He worked in a tobacco factory there [...] [7]. He has worked in Alma Ata Tobacco Factory since 1939 March until now. He applied to the legation of TKP in ECCI to be sent to the front line voluntarily in 1941. Comrade Marat, who is the representative of TKP in ECCI, has positive impressions about him.

His relatives: His father is a worker. His mother is a housewife. They lived in city of Samsun, Turkey until the war. His wife – Zinaida Nikiforovna Loshchinina-Istavridis, is Russian. She is a member of the VLKSM [8].

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Conclusıon: Comrade Remzi Salih (known as Papa Konstantinovich Istavridis) was born in 1908. He is a Gypsy from Turkey. He has been a member of TKP since 1932. He gained experience in union activities in his country; stayed in prison on his revolutionary activities for one and a half years. Working in USSR he demonstrated himself positivelly.

Address: Alma-Ata, Dunganchanskaya Street. No. 13, Apt. 25.

Reason: Personal File Documents.

Belov … [Signature]. Novik … [Signature].
1943 March, 19. Protocol No. 148.

5.4.5 *The Questionnaire*

Примечание: Ответы на, все вопросы должны даваться вполне точно и подробно.
Секретно.

Анкета

Вопрос:	Ответ:
Какой КП командировал на учебу или кем послан?	ЦК КП Турции.
1. Псевдоним.	Папа.
2. Время и место рождения.	В Драме, 1908.
3. Точно указать сословие или происхождение.	Табачник-рабочий.
4. Ваша профессия или специальность и стаж.	Табачник – стаж 10 лет.
5. Национальность.	Турок.
6. Подданство.	Турецкое.
7. Семейное положение.	Женат. 1 дочка. Жена – табачница.
8. Имеет ли братьев, сестер, где они?	2 брата табачники; 1- в Самсуне, 1- в Стамбуле.
9. Точно указать чем занимаются родители и ближайщие родственники и источник их существования?	Родственники: рабочие-табачники.

∵

Remark: The questions have to be responded in detail and complete.
Secret.

The Questionnaire

Questions:	Answers:
Which communist party sent the respondent or who sent him?	The Central Committee of the Communist Party of Turkey.
1. Pseudonym.	Papa Istavridis.
2. Date of birth and birthplace.	1908, Drama.
3. Indicate exactly estate or origin.	Tobacco worker.

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4. Your occupation, specialisation, working period.	Tobacco worker, ten years.
5. Nationality.	Turk.
6. Citizenship.	Turkish.
7. Marital Status, members of the family.	Married, one daughter. My wife is a tobacco worker.
8. Do you have brothers or sisters? Where are they?	I have two brothers, one of whom is in Samsun, and the other one is in Istanbul.
9. The occupation, the source of living of parents and intimate relatives?	Relatives: tobacco workers.

Notes

1. There is an error in the original where it is written 'Remzi R.'.
2. NKVD (See Dictionary of Abbreviations and Neologisms in USSR).
3. KUTV (See Dictionary of Abbreviations and Neologisms in USSR).
4. Komintern (See Dictionary of Abbreviations and Neologisms in USSR).
5. Ferdi was the party name of Şefik Hüsnü (1887-1959). He was among the leading, but also the most controversial figures of the Turkish left, namely the Communist Party of Turkey (TKP). Thus, his testimonies on Roma tobacco workers deserve careful investigation. For a detailed biography, see Akbulut (2010).
6. Handwritten document, the original mistakes are preserved in order to keep the authenticity of the source.
7. Omitted is the repetition of data from the Autobiography.
8. VLKSM (See Dictionary of Abbreviations and Neologisms in the USSR).

Source: TÜSTAV, 495-26 6-73. Istavridis (Remzi Mustafa) Dosyası. I appreciate Erden Akbulut, for informing me about the above document and TÜSTAV for granting rights of publication, and Elena Marushiakova and Veselin Popov for comparing Turkish translations with Russian originals. Prepared for publication by Egemen Yılgür.

Comments

Remzi Mustafa was one of the Gypsy tobacco workers affiliated with the TKP and whom the party administration sent to the USSR for training. While the file enlightens his personal experiences in USSR during this period, it also sheds light on the life course of a Gypsy Communist in Turkey and the USSR. He was born in Drama, Greece, in 1908. Both of his parents were tobacco workers, and he resumed his family tradition, becoming a tobacco worker in Istanbul. His first experiences in factory based worker movements led him to an affiliation with the Communist Party of Turkey at the beginning of the 1930s. He was elected as the secretary of the Party's local branch in Kasımpaşa, a locality with a considerable Roma concentration and a working-class location in general. Along with the immigrant Gypsy tobacco workers there have been the settlements of various Roma sub-groups for a long time (Yılgür, 2018b). Like many other politicised tobacco workers, he was arrested and sentenced to 4 years and released with amnesty after one and a half year stay in prison. Then, the party sent him USSR for training along with the other most talented worker leaders. However, his failure to save the letter given by the local party

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authorities for delivery to the Russian officials caused his rejection by the KUTV, and the authorities assigned him as a worker in a local tobacco factory. He somehow succeeded to regain his image after almost seven years of work experience and demanded to be sent to the front line in 1941.

It is of interest that the complex nature of self and external identification of Roma tobacco workers emerges in the pages of the file. Although he was a Gypsy in the eyes of Soviet and TKP officials, his declared identity is Turkish. The discrepancy between the external and internal ways of identification exemplifies the identity changes and differentiation of the adopted identity from the traditional or attributed ones, a phenomenon which is also present nowadays (cf. Marushiakova & Popov, 1999, p. 85).

Egemen Yılgür

5.4.6 *Mustafa Mehmet* (*Alekber Ağaoğlu, Petko*)

Gizli.
TKP.

Sonuç

Petko (Mustafa Mamu). Çingene, 1915 doğumlu. Tütün işçisi. 1934'te TKP'ye girmiş ve aynı yıl partinin tavsiyesi üzerine okumak için illegal olarak SSCB'ne gelmiştir. KUTV'u bitirince teknik zorluklar nedeniyle ülkeye gönderilmemiş. Seksiyondan geçinmektedir. Petko tarafımızca yararlanılabileceği ülkesine gönderilmelidir.

Parti temsilcisi … (Ferdi).
Personel yardimci uzmani … (Galcan).

∵

Secret.
Communist Party of Turkey.

Conclusion

Petko (Mustafa Mamu). A Gypsy, was born in 1915. Tobacco worker. He affiliated to TKP in 1934, and he came to USSR for training at the recommendation of the party in the same year. After he graduated from KUTV, he was not sent to the country due to technical restrictions. He is dependent on the section's aid. Petko has to be sent to his country where we can take advantage of him.

Party representatıve … (Ferdi).
Personal deputy officer … (Galcan).

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5.4.7 *The Autobiography* (*1*)

Автобиография

Алипкер Ага Оглы рождения 1909 года, место рождения Турция г. Кара Бича национальности турок. Социальное положение отца сапожник, умер в 1914 г. в Вайне. Я сам рабочий. С 1925 г. табачник. Имею 2-х братьев в Турции и мать работает на табачной фабрике. В Турции, г. Истанбул учился два года в начальной школе на родном языке. После 2 года бросил учиться, потому что родители экономически были не в состоянии меня дальше учить.

В 1925 г. я поступил работать рабочим на табачную фабрику и работал до 1934 г. как рабочий.

В конце 1932 г. меня приняли в коммунистическую партию Турции. В начале 1934 г. меня послали на политическую учебу в СССР.

Я учился под руководством Коминтерна с 1934-1936 г. после окончания 2-х годичного курса я был послан на работу в Среднюю Азию в г. Ферган на текстильную фабрику в качестве пом. мастера по ремонтам машин. Проработал я 14 мес. на этой фабрике. Был арестован органами НКВД г. Ферганы 21.II.1938 г. Просидел 14 мес. освободился 2.IV.1939 г. с прекращением дела, т.е. за отсутствием фактов обвинения. и я был освобожден из тюрьми. Справка за № 2547.

НКВД г. Ферганы утерял мой паспорт и я приехал в Москву получить паспорт и жить в Москве.

В настоящее време состою на учете в Комнитерне член ТКП.

14.I.1940.
Алипкер.

Мой адрес: г. Москва, Тверский бул. 13, ком. 2.
Копия верна: … [неразборчивая подпись].
15.I.1940 г.

∵

The Autobiography

Alekber [1] Ağaoğlu born in 1909, birthplace is Kara Biga [2], nationality Turkish. My father's social situation is shoemaker [3], he died in 1914. I am a worker. I have been working as a tobacco worker since 1925. I have two brothers in Turkey, and my mother works in a tobacco factory. I got an education in my native language in a primary school. After two years, I dropped out, because my parents, financially, were not able to educate me.

I started to work in a tobacco factory in 1925 and worked until 1934.

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At the end of 1933, I have been accepted to the Communist Party of Turkey. At the beginning of 1934 I was sent to USSR for political training.

I have been educated under the supervision of Comintern between 1934-1936, and after I graduated from the two-year school, I have been sent to Central Asia, to work as the assistant of a machinery repairman in the textile factory in Fergana city. I worked there for 14 months. I have been arrested by the Fergana office of NVKD in 1938, February 21. I stayed in prison for 14 months. On the dismissal of the case, namely lack of crime element, I have been released in 1939, April 2. Certificate of release: No. 2547.

Fergana office of NKVD lost my passport, and I came to Moscow to get a new passport and live.

Currently I am already in Comintern as a member of TKP.

January 14, 1940.
Alipker.

My Address: Moscow, Tverskaya Street 13, Room 2.
Copy correct with original: … [Illegible signature].
15.01.1940.

5.4.8 *The Questionary Form*

Анкетный лист

Вопросы:	Ответы:
1. Фамилия, име, отчество (псевдоним). При перемене фамилии или имени и отчества указать старые и причины перемены.	Настоящая: Мустафа Мехмет. Петко Янко Иванович. Аликпер Ага Оглы.
2. Время и место рождения.	1914 года, Турция, г. Кара бичи. (это правильный год рожд[ения] 1914). 1909 г. Азербайджан, город Шанха (на этот г[од] выдан вид на ж[ительство]).
3. Сословие и соц. происхождение	Рабочий сапожник.
4. Образование	Учился 2 года в турецки народный школы. Учился 2 года в СССР, Москва, КУТВ, сектор А.
5. Какие знаете языки	Родной язык турецкий. Руский язык говорю и читаю слабо.
6. Ваша профессия	Текстильщик пом.-мастер.
7. Партийность	1934 года член Т.К.П. Турция. билет нет. […].

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22. Национальность	По отцу цыган, по матери турок. […].	
28. Родители	Отец	Мать
а) Фамилия, имя, отчество	Мехмет	Юммю
б) Время и место рождения	Греция, Юнанистан	Серес […].

∵

The Questionnaire [4]

Questions:	Answers:	
1. Surname, name, father's name (pseudonym).	Real name is Mustafa Mehmet.	
If there is any name change, the former names,	Yanko Ivanovich Petko.	
and the reasons for change have to be written.	Alekber Ağaoğlu.	
2. Birthplace and date of birth.	1914 (this is real date of birth [5]), Turkey, Kara Biga. 1909, Azerbaijan, Şanha (the residence permit for this year [6]).	
3. Estate and social origin.	Shoe-maker worker.	
4. Education.	Two years in a primary school in Turkey. Two years in the KUTV, Sector A.	
5. Which languages you know.	Mother tongue Turkish. I speak and read Russian little.	
6. Your occupation.	Textil worker, assistant master.	
7. Party membership.	1934 member of TKP. Party card – none. […].	
22. Nationality.	From father side Gypsy. From mother side Turkish. […]	
28. Parents:	Father	Mother
a) Surname, name, fathers' name.	Mehmet	Ümmü
b) Birthplace and date of birth.	Greece, Yunanistan	Serres […]

5.4.9 *Autobiography* (2)

Секретно.

Автобиография
Тов. Петко (псевд[оним]), Мустафа Мехмет

Родился в 1915 году в гор[оде] Бига. Отец был сапожник (ходил по городу и на ул[ице] чинил сапоги). По нац[иональности] цыган. До моего рождения отец

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умер. Мать жива, работает прачкой в Стамбуле. Есть два брата в Стамбуле – табачные рабочие. Один из братьев имел связь с коммунистами – распростр[анял] прокламации [...]

∵

Secret

The Autobiography [7]
Comrade Petko(Pseudonym), Mustafa Mehmet

I was born in Biga in 1915. My father was a shoe maker. (In the city, in the streets, he was repairing shoes.) I am of Gypsy nationality. My father died before I was born. My mother is alive, and working in Istanbul as a laundress [8]. I have two tobacco worker brothers in İstanbul. One brother was connected to communists – distributed leaflets [...]

5.4.10 *Reference*

Секретно

Справка

Аликпер Ага Оглы, [или] Мустафа Мехмед (он же Петко Янко Иванович) по одним данным турок, по другим цыган, 1914 г.р., родился в г. Бига (Турция), рабочий, табачник, член КП Турции с 1934 г. В СССР прибыл как политэмигрант в 1934 г.. С июля 1934 г. по июнь 1936 г. учился в КУТВе, после чего работал несколько месяцев на Аржанской текстильной фабрике им. Красной Армии на ст. Рассказово по Павелецкой ж.д. С декабря 1936 года работал в Фергане на текстильной фабрике им. Дзержинского. В феврале 1938 года был арестован органами НКВД, освобожден по прекращению дела. Снова работал в Фергане, проживал по Первомайской ул., д. 10, кв. 4. В 1940 г. работал в г. Иваново на Меланжевом комбинате. По сообщению т. Сухарева от 23. V. 41 г. Аликпер Ага Оглы получал пособие 250 руб. в мес.

На одном заявлении т. Подчелимовой (жена Аликпер) от 4.XII. 45 г. имеется запись, что Аликпер Ага Оглы выбыл из Москвы 5.VI.41 г.

По ходатайству т. Губляева, с 1.IV.[19]46 г. т. Подчелимовой было восстановлено пособие в суме 300 руб. в мес.

Нач. отдела помощи политэмигрантам Исполкома СОКК и КП СССР.
[Signature] ... (Суетинова).
17 марта 1951 г.

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Secret.

Reference

Alekber Ağaoğlu, [or] Mustafa Mehmet (known as Petko Yanko Ivanovich); according to some evidence, he is a Turk, according to others, Gypsy. He was born in Biga (Turkey) in 1914, a tobacco worker, a member of TKP since 1934. He came to USSR as a political immigrant in 1934. He was trained in KUTV from 1934 July to 1936 June and then, worked in Poveletski railway Rasskazovo station, Arzhansk Red Army Textile Factory. He started to work in Dzerzhinsky Textile Factory in Fergana in 1936, December. In February, 1938, he was arrested by NVKD, and released after the abatement. Then, he worked again in Fergana, stayed on Pervomayskaya Street 10, apt 4., In 1940 he worked at Melange factory in the city of Ivanovo. According to the testimony of comrade Sukharev dated May 23, 1941, Alekber Ağaoğlu got 250 rubles monetary aid.

In a petition of comrade Podchelimova (Alekber's wife), she writes that Alekber Ağaoğlu left Moscow on June 5, 1941.

At the recommendation of the comrade Gulyaev, Podchelimova started to get 300 rubles monthly as monetary aid again.

The Chair of the Department of Aid for Political Immigrants of the Executive Committee of Soviet Society of Red Cross and CP USSR.
[Signature] ... (Suetinova).
March 17, 1951.

Notes

1. The name Alekber in Russian original is 'Алипкер' (Alipker).
2. Kara Biga. It is a sub-district in Biga, Çanakkale (Sezen, 2006, p. 273). The place name is misspelled in Russian original as 'Кара Бича' (Kara Bicha). The case of Mustafa Mamu's family is exceptional among the Roma Tobacco Workers majority of whom were born in Greece and came to Turkey with the Turk-Greek Population Exchange in 1923-1924. However, he was born in Turkey before the population exchange, and his family had left Greece during the previous waves of migration.
3. Shoe-making or shoe-shining has been popular occupations of Roma in Turkey. After the change of work organisation, which decreased the demand for qualified workers in tobacco manufacture, many of the tobacco workers subsisted on this occupation (Yılgür, 2016).
4. Extract from the form. The answers are handwritten.
5. Note by another handwriting, probably added by a respective clerk.
6. Note by another handwriting, probably added by a respective clerk.
7. Extract from handwritten autobiography.
8. There was a mistake in the Turkish translation, which pointed as the occupation of Mustafa Mamu's mother a fortune-telling. I thank Elena Marushiakova and Vesselin Popov for checking all translations and corrections from Russian.

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Source: TÜSTAV, 495-266-198. Mustafa Mehmet (Alekber Ağaoğlu, Petko). Dosyası. I appreciate Erden Akbulut, for informing me about the above document and TÜSTAV for granting rights of publication.
Prepared for publication by Egemen Yılgür.

Comments

Mustafa Mamu was born into a tobacco worker family. He worked in a tobacco factory and affiliated with the Communist Party of Turkey in 1934. This trajectory which begins within the family and peaks with the party affiliation following a period of interaction and informal training in tobacco factories is not rare and is not limited exclusively to him. The culture, which was a combination of union leftist politics in Greece and the encounters with the local-left in Turkey, and which was the fundamental basis of a considerable tendency to participate in the activities mentioned above, surrounded the Gypsy tobacco workers. What they experienced when they started to work in tobacco factories reminded them of the stories told to them by their parents and grandparents. They were already familiar with what to do when they faced an over-exploitation or suppression in the factories. Thus, it was just a matter of time and personal capabilities for the individual tobacco workers to affiliate themselves with the party or other leftist organisations. The most-talented ones were involved in the party circle, and the party administration conceived a few of them reliable enough to send for training in USSR, such as was the case of Mustafa Mamu.

The evaluations of Mustafa Mamu concerning his ethnic background exemplifies the flexible nature of the self-identification of Roma individuals (cf. Marushiakova & Popov, 1999). Identity itself and the discourses utilized to justify the identity claim can shift under the influence of various factors. The documents in the file indicate the diversity of discourses on identity and origin adopted by Mustafa Mamu: A Turkish tobacco worker, son of a Gypsy father and a Turkish mother, and ultimately a Gypsy.

Although all the details provided by Mustafa Mamu at different times may be factual, he appears to prioritise different ones as to compose new discourses whenever the context changes. His mother might indeed have been a member of one of the more-assimilated Roma sub-groups who were less-enthusiastic about declaring their Roma origin. Thus, it becomes a matter of context in emphasising this point and in raising a Turkish identity claim for her, or to ignore this small detail and proudly adopt a pure Gypsy identity. While the former was logical in the early Republican Turkey where the state urged its citizens to support its policy to create an ethnically homogenous nation (Çağatay, 2002; Aslan, 2007; Ülker, 2007; Yeğen, 2007), the latter would seem attractive in USSR where the state recognised Gypsies as a 'nationality' (O'Keeffe, 2013; Marushiakova & Popov, 2017c).

Egemen Yılgür

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5.5 Kakava Day

Kakava

Mut Barolara.

Milleti necibeyi kıptıyanın yevmi mesu'dun mübareki olan 6 Mayıs [1]934 Sabahı Tuluyi şemsten bir saat on dakika üç saniye mukaddem edasına borçlu oldukları Bayram ayini davetiyesidir.

"Akanikas nanay panç akanikas nanay panç panç panç but panç inadına panç lambirdos kirlos sospas kirolos harmandan yana minçte kirolos."

Gerne sosti astardam. Akabinde dündü kobaki.
Marçi ürdüm dim kabukas. Akina kay akina kay.

Bak şu bahar mevsiminin bahtı olan zevk bize.
Halimi muhtasarca arz edersem işte size.
Ne kadar söylesem ancak o da binde birisidir.
Pekte çok söylemek olmaz derler elbet geveze.
Evvela dinle dili aradır sözümü ey gözüm.
Söylesem asla yalanı bil hakikattır sözüm.
Öyle bir gün ki yetiştik Hamdi bi hat eyleriz.
Sahibi gevni mekan etti ihsani bize.
İşte nevruzu Hızırda milletimiz Fahreder.
Kaffe'yi çergeyi neşinin gam-alamı gider.
Çoluk çocukları pür neş'e cemiyet kurup.
Fukara şakirtleriz hamdederiz halimize.
Yevmi mahsus muktezası her çadır ehli bugün.
Bir şu işret bir de kuzu mutlaka kebap eder.
Davul zurna bir takım saz şöyle emsali düğün.
Penbe zümbül raksederler didesin süze süze.
Bir sene çektiğimiz mihnet meşakkat zahmeti.
İşte bugün cümlemiz hatıralarından ref eder.
Gel bu mecliste şevk gör ihtiyar et zahmeti.
Her kızın çalkantısı revnak verir her göze.

6 Mayıs 6538.
Edirne ve Tevabii Umum Çeri Başılığı.

∵

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Kakava [1]

Highly Distinguished [***people***] [2]

The 6th of May is a holy and blessed day of the pure Kıbti people (nation). This is an invitation for a festive ritual that we must do on the 6th of May 1934 in the morning, just one hour, ten minutes and three seconds before sun rising …

"When it was about five o'clock, when it was about five o'clock, the new crop is born from the old field, like the way a new life is born" [3].

Everyone again got hold at the horo, the people returned from the fields [4].
I was afraid that someone in a bad mood would not let me join the horo [5]. *Now sway left, now sway right* [6].

For us it is a taste of the forthcoming spring season.
If I may explain to you shortly about my condition.
That is one in a thousand of the many talks of mine.
It is not good when people are talking and chatting too much.
Listen to me my lovely that my words are lovely.
Let me tell you that what I say is truth, not a lie.
What a day, on which we are eternally grateful because we are alive.
The Lord of cosmos gave us goods.
Here, our nation proudly coming together on the new day of Hızır
Grieves and pains leave all the tents and wanderers.
Children become united and join.
We are Fukara [7] and we are grateful for our condition.
It is a rule for the special day that every tent owner.
Must be drinking, cutting lamb and definitely kebap.
An exemplary celebration with davul-zurna and a band of instruments.
Pembe [8], Zümbül [9] belly dance with wishful.
One year we were in trouble, and bother.
All of us leaving them out of our memory.
Come and replace the trouble, get joining.
Every girl's movement gives us beautifulness, to everyone's eyes.

6th of May 6538 [10].
General Çeribaşı of Edirne and the province of Edirne.

Notes

1. *Kakava* is the name of the holiday in Romani language, coming from the word for cauldron, referring to a festive common meal.
2. The original text is in Turkish, with parts in the Romani language. The Romani language sentences are given in italic.

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3. Here, as well as in the next paragraph, the translation from the Romani language is very free and quite different from the literal translation, as it is mainly related to the meaning of the text. This is due to the fact that this type of folklore texts related to the traditional customs of the Balkan peoples (Christian and Muslim) are virtually incomprehensible when translated literally. This approach implies not only a good command of the Romani language (in this case also of Turkish because of the many loanwords) but also good knowledge of the traditional celebrations, customs and songs of the Balkan peoples (for more details see Marushiakova & Popov, 1997). For a more detailed explanation of the content and the meaning of the entire text, see below.
4. According to the traditional practices for the fertility among the Balkan peoples, women who participate in them must circumnavigate the fields early in the morning, to 'pick the dew'.
5. This refers to the joint *horo* (circle dance) of all participants in the celebration, before sitting at the common festive table and/or afterwards, which represents its completion.
6. This refers to certain dance steps (swings) characteristics for the traditional *horo* dances of the Balkan peoples.
7. Literally, the meaning of this term in Ottoman Turkish is poor man, pauper and was used as a byword for Gypsies.
8. A woman's name.
9. A woman's name.
10. It is not very clear where this date comes from. Supposedly it is an attempt to create a Roma calendar and it comes to say that the Kıbti calendar is more than six thousand-year-old.

Source: *Tarih ve Toplum*, Sayı 137, İletişim Yayınları, Mayıs 1995, Istanbul (back cover).
Prepared for publication by Sinan Şanlier, Elena Marushiakova and Vesselin Popov.
Translation from dialectal Ottoman Turkish by Sinan Şanlier. Translation of Romani words and Turkish loanwords in the Romani language text consulted with Mozes Heinschink.

Comments

The source presented above represents a text written on a poster, i.e. it is intended for public distribution in the city of Edirne (in Eastern Thrace, in the European part of Turkey). The text was written in two languages and was intended to be understood by the local Roma (who call themselves *Kıptı*). It is probable that, at the time, the Roma in Edirne were already bilingual (with two mother tongues); today, the situation is quite similar, with the predominance of the Turkish language, while the Romani language is preserved (to varying degrees) in the individual neighbourhoods of Edirne. It is interesting to note that the dialectal Ottoman Turkish, written in Latin (introduced in 1928) was used rather than the spoken Turkish language; this probably means that some of the local Gypsies had studied at a religious school where they had learned this language.

The text cannot be understood outside the specific ethnocultural context and in particular the celebration of the *Kakava* holiday by the Gypsies. *Kakava* ('cauldron' in Romani language) is the name of the Balkan holiday, called Hıdırellez in its Muslim version and St George's Day in its Christian version (see Marushiakova & Popov, 2007b, pp. 33-50; 2016c, p. 47). The term reflects on a symbolic level the common meal although, according to Balkan traditions, the main festive dish is roasted lamb, which is not cooked in a cauldron. On this day (in the Christian variants of the surrounding Bulgarian population) the young girls go before sunrise to the river, where they ritually wash and foretell their future; young married women tour the fields, naked from the waist down to "gather

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dew" (this is believed to ensure fertility and rich harvest); after the ritual activities, everyone gathers for a common meal, followed by a horo dance performed by all participants in the holiday.

Of course, in their 'own' version of the holiday celebration, Gypsies do not adhere strictly and in all details to the traditional festive structure of the Balkan peoples. In practice, they make a combination of various ritual and festive elements, as reflected in the text of the poster.

We decided to publish the text of this poster, primarily because it is one of the earliest sources that reflects the important functions of this Gypsy holiday. Perceived as 'one's own' holiday, it integrates the community and differentiates it from the 'others' (the rest of the population). Such functions of a holiday are not typical only for Gypsies in Turkey; as already seen above, in one form or another, they were discovered during this period by Gypsies (including their organisations) in other Balkan countries too (see Chapters 2 and 3). In this case, the very form of the public announcement of the holiday through a poster is indicative. Of course, Gypsies know very well when their holiday is. However, by publishing this information on a poster, they demonstrate to the surrounding population that they too have 'their' holidays, i.e. that they are people like everyone else. Including phrases in the Romani language demonstrates the possession of their own language and by highlighting the year 6538 it most probably aims to underline an ancient history. In this way, the community publicly legitimises its societal position as a specific ethnic and cultural community, which at the same time invites others to its holiday, thus emphasising that it is part of the society.

The poster also contains illustrations of a Gypsy blacksmith and his tools (smithing tong, anvil, spade, and 'cezve' – a Turkish coffee pot), and a tent in the background, i.e. a national symbols (a characteristic of nascent nations) appears graphically. The transition of images of artifacts from everyday life in the field of national symbolism is a common phenomenon among numerous nationalities in many parts of the world. The same objects (as well as other objects used by blacksmiths or made by them) can be seen depicted on the preserved flags of the Gypsy guilds in the Balkans, the oldest of which is from 1849, from Prizren, in Kosovo (Marushiakova & Popov, 2016b, pp. 80-81).

It is indicative that on subsequent similar posters announcing the public celebration of Hıdırellez, printed in Edirne in 1948 and 1966 (Şanlıer, 2018) the same graphic is repeated. There the text is more or less modified, but drawn traditional national symbolism is maintained unchanged over the years.

It is interesting to note the further development of the *Kakava* holiday in present-day Turkey. Nowadays, the holiday retains its Romani name, it continues to be known that it is a Gypsy holiday by origin, but the celebration of *Kakava* in Edirne is already a cultural landmark for the whole city, largely visited by locals and tourists. Moreover, in the neighbouring town of Kirklareli, *Kakava* has already been officially declared a celebration of the entire city, although many of its constituent elements have disappeared or have been substantially modified (for more details see Marushiakova & Popov, 2007b).

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This development of the attitude of the Roma in the Edirne region to the *Kakava* holiday, and more generally to the own ethnic traditions as a whole (regardless of what they perceive in each specific case as an 'own' tradition) can be differently interpreted. From a post-modern discourse, defined by the ideologeme of Antigypsyism, this is a clear case of the exoticisation of the Roma, which is a consequence of discriminatory (and colonial) attitudes towards them. From this point of view, however, it would be more accurate to speak about self-exoticism, because the Roma themselves built this public image and insisted on the development of such an attitude towards them.

This is not a paradox, but rather a historical regularity, because the Roma in Central, South-Eastern and Eastern Europe adhered to the discourse of modern nationalism, dominant as an ideology in the construction of ethnonational states in the whole region, and for which cultural traditions (including holidays) were among the most important manifestations of the 'folk spirit' (in Herder's terminology). That is why in all the capital cities of the region there were large national ethnographic museums, and all over the countries local museums and folklore ensembles were being created to preserve and demonstrate "authentic" (whatever that means) folk music and dance. In this way, by preserving and publicly displaying one's 'own' traditions (whether in their old or modernised forms), the Roma expressed their aspirations for an equal position among other peoples. The issue of folklorism among Roma as a process that includes invention, adaptation and public performance of tradition outside the original cultural context should not be overlooked. It comes to underline that this process is an important component of the Roma civic emancipation movement.

Elena Marushiakova and Vesselin Popov

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CHAPTER 6

Romania

6.1 First Steps

6.1.1 *A Manifesto of the Gypsies*

Un manifest al ţiganilor

Țiganii din Homorod au ținut o mare întrunire la care a[u] luat parte 700 până la 800 țigani, cari au dat în vileag următorul apel:

Rugăm pe frații noștri țigani din comitatul Târnavei mari a lua parte la marea adunare țigănească ce se va ține Joi în 16 Ianuarie st. n. în sala Schlosser din Cohalm, la ceasurile 9 înainte de amiazi.

Scopul adunărei noastre este de a spune lumii tot ceeace am suferit de sute de ani noi țiganii.

Vom alege un comitet țigănesc care va fi obligat a recurge la onoratul Comitet Național Român din Sibiiu și a ruga pe Onoratul Comitet Național Român a ne lua și pe noi țiganii sub scutul Domniei lor.

Vă rugăm, fraţilor de a lua parte în număr cât se poate de mare la prima noastră adunare țigănească de care adunare atârnă soarta tristei noastre vieți.

Fraţilor! Nu băgați în seamă nici o osteneală.

Toți țiganii din împrejurimile noastre să fie la această adunare, tineri și bătrâni.

Această adunare este autorizată de Consiliul Național Român din Cohalm.

Comitetul Aranjator, Tiganii din Homorod.

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A Manifesto of the Gypsies

The Gypsies from Homorod [1] held a large assembly of 700 to 800 Gypsies, who made the following appeal [2]:

We ask our Gypsy brothers in the county of Târnava Mare to take part in the great Gypsy assembly that will be held on Thursday, January 16 N[ew] S[tyle] [3] in the Schlosser Hall in Cohalm [4], at 9 o'clock in the morning.

The goal of our assembly is to tell the world everything what we, the Gypsies, have suffered for centuries.

We will elect a Gypsy committee that will be obliged to resort to the honourable Romanian National Committee in Sibiu [5] and ask the honourable Romanian National Committee to take us, the Gypsies, under their protection.

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We urge you, brothers, to take part as many as possible in our first Gypsy assembly, on which depends the fate of our sad life.

Brothers! Get over any trouble!

All the Gypsies in our surroundings, young and old, should come to this assembly.

This assembly is authorised by the Romanian National Council in Cohalm [6].

Preparatory Committee, Gypsies in Homorod.

Notes

1. Homorod – a town in Transylvania.
2. This article from the February 9, 1919 has made a confusion between cause and effect and wrongly presented the manifesto as being the result of an assembly in Homorod, a locality close to Rupea. In reality, the Preparatory Committee of the Gypsies in Homorod only drafted the Manifesto.
3. *St*[*il*] *n*[*ou*] or 'New Style' refers to the Gregorian calendar which replaced the Julian in Roman Catholic countries beginning in 1582. This change was implemented in Orthodox countries much later. Romania adopted new style dating for its civil calendar in 1919 when April 1st became April 14th, 1919. The Romanian Orthodox Church continued to use the Julian calendar until October 1924. Before the 1918 Union, various provinces which were to become part of Greater Romania had different calendars (Banat, Transylvania and Bukovina, already the Gregorian calendar while the Old Kingdom and Bessarabia used the Julian calendar). Hence, in 1919, in order to avoid any misunderstanding, the Roma organisers still had to specify the new style dating.
4. Due to its multi-ethnic population, the town had different names: Kőhalom (Hungarian), Rupea, Cohalm (Romanian), Reps, Räppes, Kuhalme (German) etc.
5. The organisers confused The Central Romanian National Council (*Consiliul Național Român Central*) with the Governing Council (*Consiliul Dirigent*). The former was a political body of the Romanians in Transylvania that announced and organised the convening of the Great National Assembly in Alba Iulia, which voted the resolution of the Union of Transylvania with the Romanian Kingdom, while the latter served as the provisory Transylvanian government until the final Union with the Romanian Kingdom (between December 2, 1918 – April 4, 1920). Besides, the latter institution was based in Sibiu and received the Resolution of the Gypsy assembly.
6. The local Romanian National Councils functioned under the leadership of the Central Romanian National Council and ceased their activity on the 6th of February 1919.

Source: [No Author]. (1919). Un manifest al ţiganilor. *Gazeta Poporului*, An 2. No. 6, 1919, February 9, p. 8.
Prepared for publication by Petre Matei.

Comments

The first Roma political manifestation was the Assembly held in Rupea on the January 16, 1919. It benefitted from a large presence of approximately 700-800 participants but remained largely a local event as it targeted only the Roma from one county (Târnava Mare). The Assembly formulated concrete demands: equal rights; settling the nomads; assistance for invalids and widows; land distribution and to be present in communal representation. These claims cannot be easily characterised as either 'social' or 'ethnic'. 'Social' requests as land distribution, nomads' sedentarisation and assistance can be seen also from the perspective of the equal treatment they claimed. Besides, they explicitly

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asked equal rights and communal representation. Moreover, by electing a committee, they went a step further from participative to representative. Shortly thereafter, the committee presented the Assembly resolution to the Transylvanian Governing Council (*Consiliul Dirigent*) in Sibiu which took action to address their requests. On January 27, 1919, the Secretary-General of the Governing Council mandated the prefect of Târnava Mare County to inform the Gypsy representatives on the envisioned measures: "Please notify the representatives *of the Gypsies* [deleted in original], George Molnar and George Critaoiu [in other documents, he appeared as Crițean], that: 1. All citizens will be equally entitled; Gypsies will not be treated differently; 2. Colonisation of nomads will be solved at a more appropriate time; 3. The invalids and their widows will be taken care in accordance with the invalids and widows of all citizens; 4. Minorities will also be represented in the communal representation; 5. Their demand for land redistribution was transposed to the Agricultural Department" (see Matei, 2010a, pp. 467-487; 2011, pp. 135-152; 2013, pp. 449-450).

Other Gypsy Assemblies followed in April 1919. On the whole, their manifestations evolved from: 1) the Assembly of the Gypsies from Târnava Mare county at Rupea on 16 January 1919 through; 2) the local Assemblies on 25-27 April 1919 held in several Transylvanian localities and counties to; 3) the National Gypsy Assembly of Dumbrăveni on April 27, 1919.

Circumstances were then propitious. Between 1916-1918, Romania had allied itself with the Entante and fought against the Central Powers. After the First World War, as part of the victorious alliance, Romania hoped to obtain the territories inhabited by Romanian majorities. Besides, on December 1st, 1918, The Romanian National Assembly in Alba Iulia had endorsed the Union of Transylvania to Romania. However, despite certain advantages, neither the Union nor the Transylvanian borders were yet settled and had to be first internationally acknowledged. The Paris Peace Conference (1919-1920) was to bring about the recognition of the new political and territorial realities. Until then, the Romanians could only hail the recognition of the Union by different ethnical groups whose support was well received and seen as a means of substantiating Greater Romania. Overall, representatives of different minorities held assemblies where they adhered to the Union while also claiming certain rights.

It was this need for legitimacy that fostered political action among the Gypsies. At a time when their support seemed to count, the Gypsy elites saw the opportunity and became politically alert. The rallying of the Gypsies occurred against the backdrop of evident affinity for the Transylvanian Romanians, with whom they shared the same (rural) habitat and the same "Romanian" denominations – Orthodox and Greek-Catholic. The relatively important number of Transylvanian Gypsies was capitalised on in the competition among the principal ethnic groups living in Transylvania: the Romanians, the Germans, and the Hungarians.

As the Gypsies were in no position to effectively press for these rights, but rather depended on the benevolence of the new administration, they were pleading instead

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with the Romanians by invoking their 'Romanianism'. To ensure that they would get their rights, the Roma had to be convincing and pragmatic. The demands formulated in the Assembly of Rupea, in the local assemblies of April, and eventually in the Gypsy National Assembly at Dumbrăveni (April 27, 1919) were similar in structure: a public demonstration of loyalty towards the Romanians and support for the Union, followed by demands for civil rights, equal treatment, and land.

Petre Matei

6.1.2 *Gypsy Assemblies*

a) The Gypsy Assembly of Ucea de Jos

Onorabilă Adunare Naţională Ţâgăniască în Ibaşfalău,
Onorată Şedinţă,

Noi supuși aparținători ai comunei Ucia de Josu, plasa Arpașiul de Josu, județul Făgăraș și jur, de relegiune gr[eco] or[ientali] și gr[eco] cat[olici] de profesiune zileri și neguțători.

Voim a ne depune următoarea rugare după cum urmează.

I. Prima dată din inimile no[a]stre dăm laudă bunului Dzeu și Maiestăți[i] sale Regelui nostru Ferdinand căci ni[-]au eliberatu din jugul barbarilor mag[h]iari. Trăiască Regele nostru Ferdinand. Trăiască onorabila nostră Regină Maria. Trăiască guvernul român. Trăiască România mare lângă care cerem alipirea no[a]stră cu trup și sufletu.

Totodată declarăm a ne supune la toate condițiile cerute din partea mai marilor noștri și a guvernului român, dând armată ca și până acum.

Tot odată

Rugând pe Iubitul nostru Rege și guvernul român a ne livida și nouă următoarele:

A avia drept egal cu națiunea română. Cia mai pauperă națiune suntem, dară în tot diauna ni[-]am dat sălinţa din cât am pututu și am împlinitu to[a]te cererile din partia guvernului și le vom împlini și de în'nainte. Noi drepturi la pădure n[-]am avutu, avere de pământ asemenia, cei mai puțini abia avem pământu propriu cât ni[-]am edificat un bordei (casă). Pe când fără acestea nu putem sta în naintea lipselor noastre.

Sperând că umilita no[a]stră rugare nu veti lua[-]o la ria considerare, rămânem cei mai plecați servi în puternicind pe membri noștri den credere a participa la marea adunare aranjată pe Duminica Tomi[i] în Ibașfalău.

Rămânem mai plecaţi servi,
Ucia de Josu, la 25 Aprilie 1919.
În faţa no[a]stră: Avram Milia, Ion Floca, Gheorghe Furdui.
La membri: Gheorghe Humagiu şi Adam Floca, Gheorghe Humagiu.

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The Honorable Gypsy National Assembly in Ibaşfalău [1],
Honourable Session,

We the subjects of the commune of Ucia de Jos and nearby, district Arpaşiul de Jos, county of Făgăraş, Gypsies of Greek-Orthodox [2] and Greek-Catholic faiths, by profession day labourers and tradesmen.

We want to address our request as follows:

First of all, from our hearts, we praise the Good Lord and His Majesty, our King Ferdinand [3] for freeing us from the yoke of the Hungarian barbarians [4]. Long live our King Ferdinand. Long live our honourable Queen Maria [5]. Long live the Romanian government. Long live the Greater Romania with which we ask for Union with body and soul.

At the same time, we declare we submit to all the conditions set by our superiors and the Romanian government, going to the army just as before.

At the same time

We ask our beloved King and the Romanian government to grant us the following:

To be equal in rights to the Romanian nation. Although the poorest nation, we have always done our best and fulfilled all the demands of the government and we will continue to do so. We have never had rights to forest or land property, most of us have barely enough land of their own to build a hovel (house). Without all these we will not be able to stand up to our needs.

Hoping that you will consider our humble demand, we remain the most faithful subjects and depute our trustworthy members to attend the great assembly decided on Saint Thomas Sunday [6] in Ibaşfalău.

Your faithful subjects,
Ucia de Josu, on April 25, 1919.
In front of us: Avram Milia, Ion Floca, Gheorghe Furdui.
Members: Gheorghe Humagiu and Adam Floca, Gheorghe Humagiu.

b) The Gypsy Assembly in Moşna

Protocol

Luat în adunarea generală a țiganilor greco-catolici și greco-orientali din comuna Moșna, plasa Mediaș, județul Târnava mare, ținută în 26 april 1919 fiind de față subscrișii:

Obiectul

Punct I. Alegerea celor 2 membri ca delegați ai adunării generale dela Elisabetopol ce se va ținea în 27 aprilie la Dumineca Tomei.

Adunarea cu aclamare denumește pe Nicolae Duca și Gerasim Samu ca delegați și representanți ai adunării generale a țiganilor din comuna Moșna.

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Punct II. Adunarea generală hotărăște alipirea cu drag la regatul României și îndrumă delegații a tâlmăci sentimentele lor de alipire la Regatul României mari.

Punct III. Adunarea generală a țiganilor din Moșna se roagă de conducătorii adunării din Elisabetopol să înainteze o rugare cătră Consiliul Dirigent din Sibiu să binevoiască a face dispoziții în grabă ca să capete țiganii din Moșna deocamdată în arendă în preț moderat dela atotstăpânitori sașii din comună, căci ei cer pe un jugăr de pământ 600 cor. /adecă șase sute coroane/ ba nici așa nu vreau să ne dee zicându-ne "mergeți acum la România să vă dee pământ".

Totodată

Se roagă adunarea generală cătră Consiliul Dirigent din Sibiu să binevoiască a lua în considerare, când se va în părți pământul și pe ei, fiindcă aceleași jertfe și aceleași miserii și neajunsuri am îndurat ca orișicare alții și același sânge am vărsat pentru causa mare a dreptății ca și celelalte popoare din țară, deci să fie împărtășiți de aceleași [indescifrabil] ca și celelalte popoare conlocuitoare cu ei din țară.

În comuna Moșna 70 familii de țigani nu au un petec de pământ și ne avându nici căpăta delaași nici pe bani.

Nemai având adunarea generală alte objecte de discutat ședința se închee.

Moșna la 26 aprilie 1919.

Vasile Tătar, adm[inistrator] par[ohial].

Stoica Rusu, Petru Șelariu, Ștefan Boldizgar, Nuțu Avram, Brezere Mihăilă, Motică Samu, [indescifrabil] Ion, [indescifrabil] Tudor, Ion Coscodariu, Lazăr [indescifrabil], Stoica Florea, Lazăr Boldi, George Bolcei, Rupa Stoica, Niculae Aldea, Boiaș Andronic, Ion Bolcei, Avram [indescifrabil], Susana Cercea, Fritzi [indescifrabil], Mateiu Samu,[indescifrabil] George, Ana [indescifrabil], Ion Moldovean, Ana Feisan [indescifrabil], Samu Niculae, Baldi Laurențiu, Stoica George, Nicolae Duca, Lazăr Moldoveanu, Gerasim Sasu, Pavel Moldovean.

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The Minutes

Taken in the general assembly of the Greek-Catholic and Greek-Oriental Gypsies from Moșna commune, Mediaș district, county of Târnava Mare, held on April 26, 1919, in the presence of the undersigned:

The object

Point I. The election of the 2 members as delegates to the Elisabetopol general assembly to be held on April 27th, on Saint Thomas Sunday.

The assembly chooses by acclamation Nicolae Duca and Gerasim Samu as delegates and representatives of the general assembly of the Gypsies in Moşna.

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Point II. The General Assembly dearly acknowledges the union with the Kingdom of Romania and advises its delegates to express their feelings of attachment to the Kingdom of Greater Romania.

Point III. The General Assembly of the Gypsies of Moşna asks the leaders of the Elisabetopol Assembly to address a request to the Governing Council in Sibiu to rapidly dispose that the Gypsies in Moșna will get land, for now on lease, at moderate prices, from the almighty Saxons of the commune, because they pretend 600 crowns [7] for a juger of land [8] (that is six hundred crowns), and even so they do not want to give us land and instead they say to us "go now to Romania to give you land".

At the same time

The General Assembly requests the Governing Council in Sibiu to take also them [the Gypsies] into account when land is redistributed, because we made the same sacrifices and endured the same miseries and difficulties as everybody else and the same blood we shed for the great cause of justice as all the other peoples of the country, so that they shall be shared the same [illegible] as all the other peoples coexisting with them in the country.

In the commune of Moşna 70 Gypsy families have no land of theirs and cannot obtain any from the Saxons even for money.

As the General Assembly has no other subjects to discuss, the meeting ends.

Moşna on April 26, 1919.

Vasile Tătar, parish administrator [9].

Stoica Rusu, Petru Şelariu, Ştefan Boldizgar, Nuţu Avram, Brezere Mihăilă, Motică Samu, [illegible] Ion, [illegible] Tudor, Ion Coscodariu, Lazăr [illegible], Stoica Florea, Lazăr Boldi, George Bolcei, Rupa Stoica, Niculae Aldea, Boiaş Andronic, Ion Bolcei, Avram [illegible], Susana Cercea, Fritzi [illegible], Mateiu Samu, [illegible] George, Ana [illegible] Ion Moldovean, Ana Feisan [illegible], Samu Niculae, Baldi Laurenţiu, Stoica George, Nicolae Duca, Lazăr Moldoveanu, Gerasim Sasu, Pavel Moldovean.

Source: ANIC, fond. Consiliul Dirigent. Administraţia judeţeană şi comunală, dos. 79/1919, f. 49-49v. Prepared for publication by Petre Matei.

Notes

1. Due to its multi-ethnic background, as in many other cases, this town had different names: Ibaşfalău, Dumbrăveni (Romanian), Elisabethstadt, Elisabetopol (German) and Erzsébetváros (Hungarian).
2. In original 'Greek-Oriental', it means here Christian Orthodox. In other documents, "Greek-Oriental" was used with the same meaning.
3. Ferdinand I (1865-1927) was King of Romania between 1914-1927. Although he was a member of the German imperial family of Hohenzollern, Romania fought in WWI against the Central Powers. At the end of the war, Romania included Bessarabia, Bukovina and Transylvania, and Ferdinand was crowned king of "Greater Romania".
4. On April 16, 1919, an open conflict had started between Hungarians and Romanians over Transylvania and continued in several phases (by May 1, 1919, the Romanians occupied the east

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bank of Tisza and in August 1919, Budapest). References to the "Hungarian barbarians" are to be seen against this backdrop.
5. Maria of Romania (1875-1938) was Queen of Romania between 1914-1927. Born into the British royal family, she married, in 1892, the Crown Prince Ferdinand of Romania. After the outbreak of World War I, she acted as a nurse in military hospitals, caring for wounded soldiers. She became immensely popular with the Romanian people.
6. The Octave Day of Easter.
7. The Krone or Korona (Romanian, *coroană*) was the official currency of the Austro-Hungarian Empire from 1892 until 1918.
8. *Iugăr* = old unit of area used in Transylvania, equivalent to 0.5775 ha.
9. Probably the same "parish administrator" drafted also the protocol (which bore the stamp of the local Greek-Catholic Church of Moșna).

Comments

Between the 25th-27th of April, the Gypsies' political efforts became more complex and their assemblies more representative. Although the Assembly in Rupea benefitted from hundreds of participants, it remained rather local (limited to the county of Târnava Mare). At the end of April, Gypsy assemblies took place in different Transylvanian localities from several counties. Local communities listed their desiderata and elected their own delegates for the National Gypsy Assembly in Dumbrăveni. Such assemblies were organised at Iclodul Mare (Solnoc-Dobâca County), Criş, Şeica Mare and Moşna (Târnava Mare County), Ucea de Jos (Făgăraş County), Tălmăcel and Avrig (Sibiu County), Velț and Dumbrăveni (Târnava Mică County). For each of the aforementioned localities, protocols or credentials were issued by the Gypsies assemblies or local authorities. We assume that there were four more Gypsy assemblies in the localities of Soroştin (Sibiu County), Apold, Copşa Mare and Şoala (Târnava Mare County), as we find the names of the Gypsy representatives from these localities in the nominal table with the participants in the Dumbrăveni General Assembly (April 27, 1919).

As we cannot reproduce in detail all the documents issued by the Gypsy assemblies (due both to lack of space and to their repetitive character), we limit ourselves to the most relevant documents issued by the assemblies in Ucea de Jos (April 25, 1919) and Moșna (April 26, 1919). A reason for selecting the protocol of Ucea de Jos is that both its structure and content are similar to the protocols issued by other assemblies (Tălmăcel, Avrig, Blăjel, Velţ and Dumbrăveni). This situation can be explained partly by the active role played by Gheorghe Humagiu, the representative of the Ucea de Jos assembly. He took the protocol from his own locality and used it as a model for other assemblies where he participated (Tălmăcel, Avrig, Blăjel, Velţ and Dumbrăveni). Given that most Gypsy participants were illiterate (their 'signatures' consisted mainly in thumbs impressions or in crosses next to their names), Humagiu drafted these claims as a "writer of name[s] and request". However, there were also assemblies whose demands bore a striking resemblance to others, even in the absence of Gheorghe Humagiu. Such similarities are probably due to the existence of some Gypsy leaders from different counties able to act in a concerted manner, agreeing on a pattern before the first assemblies were held. This initial draft served as a starting point, being proposed to the assemblies and approved.

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Slightly different was the situation in Moșna, where the assembly claimed immediate help. Here, the participants complained about the lack of land and, accusing the Saxons' refusal to lease them land at a reasonable price, they demanded that the Dumbrăveni assembly intervene with the Governing Council for granting land, initially leased and then redistributed for good. Because in many of these localities the Gypsies did not have their own land, their assemblies placed a great emphasis on land redistribution.

The documents issued by these assemblies followed largely the same pattern: adhering to the Union, the Roma claimed equal rights and land redistribution. At the same time, they declared themselves sedentary, economically useful and of Orthodox or Greek-Catholic faith (regarded then in Transylvania as Romanian denominations), manifested their loyalty to the Romanian royal family and to the Romanian government. While stressing their closeness to the Romanians, they distanced themselves from the Hungarians. The Roma assemblies took place during the military hostilities between Romanians and Hungarians for Transylvania. On the night of 15th-16th April 1919, the Hungarian military attacked the Romanian positions. The Romanians counter-attacked and within days they broke the Hungarian front, occupied several cities (Oradea, Salonta, Debrecen) and advanced to the Tisza River. By May 1st, 1919, the Romanians controlled the entire east bank of the Tisza River. Consequently, the Roma borrowed the anti-Hungarian phraseology from the Romanian media and used it in their protocols: the "Hungarian barbarians" or the "Hungarian yoke" appeared thus as a counter-balance to the Romanians (King, Queen, Government, etc.) presented as saviours.

Petre Matei

6.1.3 *The Memorandum from Dumbraveni*

Memoriu

Compus în adunarea Țiganilor români locuitori în părțile ardelene ale României Mari, ținută la April 27, 1919, în orașul Ibașfalău pe baza convocatorului publicat în ziaristica română și primit din partea acestei adunări, conform procesului verbal luat în această adunare, cu aprobarea autorităților politice competente.

Subsemnații, reprezentanți ai Țiganilor români transilvăneni ca urmașii înaintașilor noștrii cari de veacuri au locuit pe pământul Ardealului și laolaltă cu celelalte popoare și îndeosebit cu națiunea Româna au adus toate jertfele recerute pentru susținerea și înaintarea acestei țări și patria noastră iubită, îndemnați de dragostea noastră față de neamul românesc și față de noua noastră patrie România Mare, declarăm sărbătoreşte și pentru totdeauna, și totodată ne și rugăm cu supunere ca să ni se împlinească și nouă, celor oropsiți până acuma, dorințele noastre.

I. Atât noi cât și urmașii noștri să fim considerați ca cei mai supuși și credincioși fii și cetățeni ai României Mari, conform punctului I al hotărârii aduse în adunarea națională românească ținută la Alba Iulia la 18 Nov./1 Dec. 1918.

II. Ca fii și cetățeni ai marii Națiuni Române, nevoind și neputând fi considerați ca popor străin în țară străină, după cum am fost considerați de veacuri, ne rugăm:

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1. Să fim primiți în sânul marelui popor român nu numai cei cu limba, port și datine românești ci și ceilalți locuitori de origine țigănească care și-au pierdut acest caracter, aflători în toate ținuturile Ardealului, Banatului și părțile Țărei ungurești alipite acuma la România Mare.

2. De asemenea, ne rugăm ca de aci înainte, în toate actele oficiale românești, să nu se mai folosească pentru noi și următorii noștrii numirea (porecla) ca batjocură [țigan], ci aceasta, dacă nu se șterge cu totul chiar din uzul oficial, să se circumscrie cu o altă numire care se va afla de corespunzătoare.

3. Conform hotărârei p[unctului] III a Adunării Naționale Românești dela Alba Iulia, să fim și noi considerați întru toate egali în drepturi cât și în datorințe cu ceilalți români din România Mare, prin urmare să fim și noi și următorii noștri instruiți, administrați și judecați în limba și după legile românești. Să fim primiți la toate oficiile de stat și bisericești-culturale și nu ca până acum în Ungaria.

4. Conform legilor ce se vor aduce pentru împroprietărirea celor fără pământ să fim și noi și următorii noștri împărtășiți din pământul care se va împărți (arător/pășune/pădure) între cetățenii Români, vrednici pentru aceasta spre a putea avea și noi și următorii noștri vatra noastră și moșia care să ne lege pentru totdeauna de moșia românească pentru care și înaintașii noștri au muncit, pătimit și sângerat și pentru care și următorii noștri vor aduce toate jertfele ce li sa cere. Până la executarea acestei legi ne rugăm ca să fim luați în seamă și sub ocrotirea la exarendarea moșiilor (pășunat și arător) precum și la întreprinderile muncitorești-industriale.

III. Până la îndeplinirea acestor dorințe îndreptățite, legale, pentru liniștea și asigurarea noastră ne rugăm ca să fim și noi, Țiganii barem în Ardeal reprezentați în Marele Sfat Național Românesc prin trei reprezentanți aleși din această adunare a noastră și anume: 1. D-l Ionel Câmpeanu teolog [indescifrabil] și profesor, mijlocitorul și protectorul nostru binoevoitor care desi nu aparține poporului nostru țigănesc, s'a aratat vrednic de încrederea noastră și suntem convinși că și pe viitor ne va ajuta pana la împlinirea dreptelor noastre dorințe; 2, Gheorghe Humagiul locuitor din Ucea de Jos, jud. Făgăraș și 3 Gheorghe Crițean din Brașov.

Dat în Adunarea Națională a Țiganilor.
Președinte Gheorghe Humagiul.
Niculae Velțan, Notar.

∵

Memorandum

Presented by the assembly of the Romanian Gypsy inhabitants from the Transylvanian parts of Greater Romania, held on April 27, 1919 in the city of Ibaşfalău on the basis of the convocation published in the Romanian newspapers and received from this assembly, with the approval of the competent political authorities.

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The undersigned representatives of the Transylvanian Romanian Gypsies as descendants of our ancestors who have lived on the land of Transylvania for centuries and together with the other peoples and especially with the Romanian nation brought all the sacrifices for the support and advancement of this country and our beloved homeland, encouraged by our love for the Romanian people and for our new homeland, Greater Romania, we declare solemnly and forever, and at the same time we pray with obedience that the requests of ours, so far forsaken, will be too fulfilled,

I. Both we and our descendants shall be considered as the most loyal and faithful sons and citizens of Greater Romania, according to the first point of the resolution taken by the Romanian national assembly held in Alba Iulia on 18th November / 1st December 1918.

II. As sons and citizens of the great Romanian nation, unwilling and unable to be considered as foreign people in a foreign country, as we have been for centuries, we request:

1. To be accepted as part of the great Romanian people not only those with Romanian language, habits and customs, but also the other Gypsy inhabitants who have lost this character, living in all the regions of Transylvania, Banat and in other parts of Hungary, now attached to Greater Romania.

2. We also request that from now on all the official Romanian documents shall no longer use the derogatory appellation (nickname) of Gypsy for us and our descendants, and if this is not completely erased from the official use, it shall be replaced with another appellation deemed appropriate.

3. According to the third point of the Resolution of the Romanian National Assembly of Alba Iulia [1], to be treated as equal in rights and duties with the other Romanians within Greater Romania, thus to be ourselves and our descendants taught, administered and judged in the Romanian language and according to the Romanian laws. To have access to all state and confessional-cultural offices and not as it happened so far in Hungary.

4. According to the laws that will be passed for the land redistribution to the landless people, we and our descendants shall be shared also from the land that will be redistributed (arable land/pasture/forest) between the Romanian citizens worthy of it in order to have for ourselves and for our descendants our own hearth and estate that will forever link us to the Romanian land for which also our forefathers worked, suffered and bled, and for which our descendants will bring all the sacrifices they are to be asked for. Until this law is enforced, we request that we will be taken into consideration when the large estates (pasture and arable land), as well as the industrial enterprises, are leased.

III. Until the fulfilment of these justified, legitimate requests, for our own peace and reassurance, we ask, to be represented, at least the Gypsies in Transylvania, in the Great Romanian National Council [2] by three representatives elected in our Assembly, namely: 1. Mr. Ionel Câmpeanu theologian [illegible] and professor, our mediator and benevolent protector who, although not a Gypsy himself, proved to be worthy of our trust and we are convinced that he will continue to help us to the fulfilment of our legitimate requests; 2, Gheorghe Humagiu resident of Ucea de Jos, Făgăraș county and 3 Gheorghe Critean of Braşov.

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Presented in the National Assembly of the Gypsies.
Gheorghe Humagiu, President.
Niculae Velțan, Notary [3].

Notes

1. The third point of the Resolution referred to the fundamental principles proclaimed for the new state: national freedom, possibility to be instructed and administered in their own language, to be represented, equal rights, religious freedom, press freedom, radical land reform, etc.
2. The Great Romanian National Council (Marele Sfat Național Român), elected by the National Assembly on December 1st, 1918 had a legislative role until the final union with Romania.
3. 22 participants signed.

Source: ANIC, Colecţia Facsimile, f. 1322.
Prepared for publication by Petre Matei.

Comments

On the whole, 89 delegates of the Gypsies from 15 localities situated in five counties participated in the so-called National Gypsy Assembly held in Dumbraveni. 41 participants came from Dumbraveni, 12 from Velţ, 6 from Şoala and Moşna each, 3 participants from Şeica Mare, Copşa Mare, Avrig, Tălmăcel each, 2 from Apold, Ucea de Jos, Homorod, Cața and 1 participant from Iclodu Mare, Soros, Cris and Blăjel each. The Assembly elected its chairman (Gheorghe Humagiu from Ucea de Jos), the notary (Niculae Velteanu from Şeica Mare), a committee to verify the delegates' credentials, as well as a committee in charge of drafting the minutes and the resolutions. The latter committee made proposals that were then sanctioned by the assembly.

From the very beginning, the participants declared themselves as representatives of the Romanian Gypsies. The assembly insisted on stressing their closeness to the Romanians, but also on their long history in Transylvania and on the legitimacy of their requests.

The rights could be obtained only with the consent of the Romanians, whose sympathy had to be won. At that time, as a Gypsy movement was not self-sufficient, the imperative demand for rights would have been counterproductive. From this perspective, we should, we think, interpret such cautious and pragmatic formulations.

The Gypsies' adherence to the Union was presented as the first step on their way to becoming full-fledged citizens of Greater Romania. The Assembly called also for a similar treatment also for the other Gypsies who allegedly lost their "Romanian" features. Most likely, this mention meant the Hungarian Gypsies.

The Gypsy delegates knew the Alba Iulia resolution and referred to it in order to justify their demands. Interestingly enough, the Gypsies invoked point III of the Alba Iulia Assembly Resolution (the right of minorities to be taught, administered and judged in their own language), but surprisingly at first sight they opted openly for the Romanian language instead. This distinguishes them clearly from other ethnic groups in the same region with a greater degree of cultural autonomy who, in their attempts made in 1919 and later, insisted on obtaining the right to use their mother tongue. However, the Gypsy

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option for Romanian was perfectly valid back then. Given that many of them were linguistically assimilated (with Romanian or Hungarian mother tongue) or spoke different Gypsy dialects, it was the Romanian language that united them to a greater extent than a hypothetical Gypsy language could (as it was not yet possible to create and impose a standardised Gypsy language). Besides, what counted to this assembly was obviously also to win the goodwill of the Romanian administration and public opinion. They succeeded in this, as their option for the Romanian language was warmly appreciated in the Romanian press.

Another request was to have the derogatory appellation 'Gypsy' eliminated from the official use or at least replaced with another appellation deemed more convenient. However, it is interesting that the organisers did not think yet to use the ethnonym 'Roma' which started to be used publicly by the new organisations only years later (in 1933). In 1919, their events continued to be called Gypsy, e.g. 'The National Gypsy Assembly', etc.

An important demand concerned the land redistribution which, they motivated, would have strengthened their attachment to Romanians. Until the expected land reform, they were demanding more rapid land lease facilities.

They also asked to be granted free access to all public and religious offices. Finally, the last request was that three persons nominated by the Gypsy National Assembly were to be accepted as deputies within the Marele Sfat National (the provisory Parliament of Transylvania). These three persons were not included however in the provisory Parliament (which shortly thereafter ceased its activity).

Petre Matei

6.2 Professional Organisations

6.2.1 *The Gypsy Musicians Progress*

Ţiganii lăutari au un "Conservator"
Progresăm!

Ați auzit de conservatorul țiganilor lăutari? Este într-adevăr o revelație, pe care o prezentăm în cele ce urmează.

Seara târziu, întâmplarea te-a aruncat într'unul din restaurantele modeste ale Capitalei. Îți sorbi liniștit cafeaua și prin fumul de țigară întruchipezi calde imagini de vis. Tresări. Un bărbat cu chipul bronzat și vioara sub braț ți-a răsărit la câțiva pași. Se înclină. Pauza care urmează o socotește drept încuviințare si arcușul începe să alunece pe coarde lin, unduios, melancolic, îngăimând o poveste de iubire care nu mai poate reînvia decât pe note. Astfel trece cântărețul pribeag dela masă la masa și oamenii dornici încă de duioșie ascultă cu o frântură de religiozitate cântecul de dragoste, din poezia căruia se desprinde tot mai clar imaginea părinților și bunicilor noștri.

Dacă radio a apărut ca un factor puternic de concurență, tradiția nu poate fi înăbușită. Ani îndelungați încă ne vor mai suspina la ureche cântecele de inimă albastră. Dar de pe

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urma prăbușirilor ies veșnic forțe noui la iveală. Rasa care poartă beția melodiei în sânge nu vrea să piară și s'a așezat la munca. Fiii lăutarilor au astăzi un conservator al lor. Veți bănui poate că la mijloc e o simplă glumă.

Copiii și tineretul au început să învețe notele sub conducerea unui profesor și'n ochii lor negri, ca smoala citești pasiunea țelului urmărit cu înfierbântare.

– "La Viena, Budapesta și Londra sunt bande celebre de lăutari, plătiți regește. De ce să nu ne formăm și noi taraful nostru de pomină?"... mi s'a destăinuit, cu dinții strânși un muzicant.

Şi-am pornit nu fără curiozitate să vizitez şcoala răsărită ca din pământ, fără fonduri, fără subvenţii, fără local propriu, cu singura bază de statornicie: sufletul pus la înfăptuirea ideii.

La "Junimea Muzicală"

O încrucișare de drumuri cu numirea La pompă pe Dudești. Se vede că acum un deceniu sau două de aici își furnizau apă locuitorii de pe Raion, Foișor, Barbă Rasă si alte străzi împrejmuitoare. Azi în acest loc e o stație importantă de vehicule. Tramvaiele fac o curbă și cu vuet metalic, prelung, pornesc din nou spre centru. Firme de un comic sugestiv răsar: la "Gogoașa înfuriată", bodega "La doi minori" ...

Lângă farmacia din colț e o mică cafenea – locul de reuniune al lăutarilor de pe Dudești. Am intrat înăuntru. – Ochii negri plini de pătrundere m'au privit nu fără oarecare curiozitate. La mijloc o masă mare de biliard. Tachiștii și-au oprit o clipă jocul. Le-am cerut lămuriri despre școală. Cineva schițează un gest spre o încăpere de deasupra tavanului. O femeie grasă cu basma galbenă și gâtul împodobit cu salbă mă conduce acolo. E cucoana Sita, stăpâna localului.

Cum eșim în tindă ne isbește zdrăngănitul arcușurilor pe coarde. S'ar crede că o mare de viori s'au luat la întrecere și scoate in acelaș timp fiecare o notă diferită. Vocile copilărești pline de sonoritate și veselie măresc vacarmul. O liniște profundă însă își face loc cum pășim pragul umilei încăperi, fără altă mobilă decât tabla, scaunele și suporturile notelor. Profesorul încearcă să-mi releve pe cel mai bun elev. După cum băiatul ține arcușul simți pe artistul din el. Instrumentul geme, suspină, înalță un imn liniștei și notele se pierd pe nesimțite spre zări depărtate.

– Cum a luat ființă Junimea muzicală? întreb pe dascăl.

– Un muzicant de-al nostru, Nenea Fănică Niculescu, absolvent al conservatorului, văzând halul nenorocit în care trăiesc lăutarii de pe Dudești, s'a gândit să le vină în ajutor atât pe tărâm cultural cât și pentru ajutor la înmormântare, punând bazele unei societăți. Din cei de față fiecare a contribuit cu cât a putut și chiar în aceeaș seară ne-am prezentat bărbatului cucoanei Sița cu suma de 72 lei, ce reprezenta primul fond. Imediat am plănuit înființarea unei școli de muzică unde toți fiii de lăutari să învețe note, alăturând și o secție pentru tineret și lăutari mai în vârstă pentru perfecționarea diferitelor bucăți muzicale. Fondul Junimei Muzicale a prosperat și dela 72 lei cum am pornit la drum – a ajuns în 1932 la suma de 49.567. Președinte de onoare l-am proclamat pe d. Alfred Paximade, în urma ajutorului ce ni l-a adus.

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Poate că dascălul ar mai fi urmat cu destăinuirile dacă pe la ușă nu s'ar fi ivit fel de fel de chipuri curioase.

– Sunt cei bătrâni, cari învață și ei … Acum după amiază s'au adunat la ora de "ansamblu".

Cobor jos. In fundul cafenelei stau laolaltă tot felul de instrumente: viori, bas, țambal etc. Muzicanții vor să arate ce pot și tot sub conducerea profesorului atacă un marș. Șiragul notelor par strigăte de izbândă. Cu figuri aprinse și gesturi înfierbântate își continuă vijelios cântarea. La final s'a făcut o tăcere largă, plină parcă de un suflu de măreție. Bogăția sângelui își arătase puterea.

– Dacă scriți ceva despre noi … mi s'a adresat unul la plecare — să nu ne exagerați mizeria.

Ați servi atunci pe cei cari venind să ne angajeze ne aruncă în nas că murim de foame și nu ne vindem munca pe prețurile de nimic, pe care ni le oferă.

Margareta Nicolau

∵

The Gypsy musicians [1] have a "Conservatory"
Progress!

Have you heard of the Gypsy fiddlers' conservatoire? It is indeed a revelation, which we are going to present in what follows.

Late in the evening, you might find yourself in one of the modest restaurants of the Capital. You are peacefully sipping your coffee and through the cigarette smoke, you are day-dreaming, of warm, dreamlike images. You shudder. A man with a tanned face and a violin under his arm showed up just a few steps away from you. He leans. He takes the next pause as a nod and the bow begins to smoothly glide on the violin chords, telling of a love story that can come alive only in notes. Thus wanders the musician from table to table and the people still eager for tenderness are almost religiously listening to the song of love, from whose poetry the image of our parents and grandparents becomes clearer and clearer.

Although radio has emerged as a strong competitor [2], tradition cannot be stifled. Blue heart songs will be played into our ears many years from now. From crisis new energies incessantly surface. This race, having music in its blood, refuses to perish and is set to do something about it. Today, the fiddler's sons have their own conservatoire. You might think that this is nothing but a joke.

Children and youth began to learn the notes under the guidance of a teacher and in their eyes, black as night, you see the passion of the ardently pursued aim.

– "In Vienna, Budapest and London, there are famous bands of fiddlers who are royally paid. Why wouldn't we form our own band?" … a musician told me, with his teeth clenched.

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So, being curious, I went to see the school that appeared all of a sudden, without funds, without subsidies, without its own place; instead, the only basis for stability was the soul put into accomplishing this idea.

At "Junimea Muzicală" [3]

A crossroad by the name of *La pompă pe Dudeşti* [At the Pump on Dudeşti str]. One-two decades ago, this was probably the place providing water to the inhabitants of Raion, Foişor, Barbă Rasă and other surrounding streets. Today in this place there is an important public transport station. The tramways turn here with a long, metallic vet and start again towards downtown. Firms with funny names appear: at the *Gogoaşă înfuriată* (Angry Donut), bodega *Doi Minori* (Two Minors) …

Next to the corner pharmacy, there is a small café – the meeting place of the Dudeşti fiddlers. I walked in. Black, sharp eyes looked at me, not without curiosity. In the middle, a large pool table. The players stopped for a moment. I asked for clarification about the school. Someone makes a gesture toward a room above. A fat woman with a yellow shawl and a necklace leads me there. She is madam Sita, the mistress of the place.

As we get out to the porch, the rattle of arches on bows strikes us. As if a large number of violins compete and simultaneously produce a different note. Childish voices full of sonority and joy increase the turmoil. However, a deep silence followed as we crossed the threshold into the humble room, with no other furniture than the table, the seats and the music note stand. The teacher tries to show me the best student. As the boy holds the arch you can feel the future artist. The violin weeps, sighs, devotes a hymn to silence and the notes are lost in the distance.

– How did the Junimea muzicală appear? I ask the teacher.

– Seeing the musicians on Dudeşti [4] in dire straits, Fănică Niculescu, a musician of ours and a graduate of the Conservatory, decided to come to their aid, both culturally, but also for funeral assistance, setting up this organisation. From those present, everyone contributed as much as possible and on the very same evening we went to Sita's husband [5] with the sum of 72 lei, as the first fund. Immediately we planned to set up a music school where all the fiddlers' sons would learn the notes, and create a section for younger and older musicians to perfect their music. The *Junimea Muzicală* fund has flourished, and from 72 lei as we started – it reached 49,567 in 1932. For the help he gave us, we proclaimed Mr. Alfred Paximade [6] as our Honorary President.

The teacher was likely to keep confessing had not all sorts of curious faces appeared at the door.

– These are the adults, who also learn … Now, in the afternoon, they gather for the "ensemble" class.

I go downstairs. In the back of the café there are all kinds of instruments: violins, bass, dulcimer etc. The musicians want to prove what they can, and under the leadership of their teacher, they start playing a march. The notes sound like victories. With bright faces and exalted gestures, they continue playing. In the end, a deep silence, full of a breath of greatness. The richness of their blood had shown its strength.

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– If you write about us … one person told me as I was leaving – do not exaggerate our misery.

It will serve only those coming to hire us, throwing in our face that we die of hunger, but we will not sell our work on the very low prices they offer us.

Margareta Nicolau [7]

Notes

1. The original uses the term 'lăutari' – from 'lăuta' (lute). It is an old designation for musicians in the Romanian lands, which is adopted by Roma musicians and gradually becomes a (self)appellation of many of them (Marushiakova & Popov, 2013a, p. 77).
2. After the First World War, both radios and gramophones became more accessible to the public due to their decreasing prices. This turned them into a serious competitor for the Roma musicians. Their traditional customers (especially pubs' owners) began to renounce their services. However, despite the optimistic tone of this article, the situation did not improve and in 1937 a Roma activist wrote about the disappearance of the Roma musicians: "Those fiddlers who took overseas the fame of the Romanian songs. […] Nowadays one prefers the hits, the [gramophone] discs and foreign songs. […] Today, fox-trot, rumba, tango, carioca and other dances imported from blacks and red skins are preferred. The radio and the gramophones are now replacing the fiddlers' bands from the pubs. We are not against the progress, but we are simply making it clear that we, the Roma fiddlers, are starving, we will remain buried in the darkness of oblivion. And it's a shame. It is a pity because we have been the ones who for generations have kept all the folklore, folk music, Romanian ballads and the songs that made happy on wedding parties, feasts and so on the grandparents and great-grandparents of all those who now despise the fiddlers" (Țara Noastră, 1937e, p. 2).
3. *Junimea Muzicală* (Musical Youth), was recognised as a legal entity in 1927.
4. Dudești, neighbourhood in Bucharest, then home to a numerous Jewish and Roma population.
5. Sita's husband, a certain Constantin Urziceanu, was the owner of the café and cashier of Junimea. In 1933, he will become cashier for both Junimea and the new General Association of Gypsies in Romania.
6. The Roma organisations used to resort to different non-Roma personalities whom they declared honorary presidents for their support. Alfred Paximade was only one of them, but his case is interesting as he continued to serve as a honorary president also for other Roma organisations (as of October 1938).
7. Margareta Nicolau authored several articles on Roma. As gratitude, in October 1933, she was elected as the honorary president of the women section of the organisation run by G. A. Lăzurică.

Source: Nicolau, M. (1933a). Ţiganii lăutari au un "Conservator". Progresăm! *Realitatea Ilustrată*, An. 7, No. 323, 1933, April 6, pp. 11, 13.
Prepared for publication by Petre Matei.
Note 1 written by Elena Marushiakova and Vesselin Popov.

6.2.2 *The Founding of the General Association of Gypsies in Romania*

[Direcţia Generală a Poliţiei]. Secţia I-a.
1 septembrie 1933.

Referat

"Asociația Generală a Țiganilor din România" a luat ființă din inițiativa arhimandritului Calinic I. Popp Șerboianu, în luna aprilie a.c., când acesta, luând contact cu comitetul

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societății lăutarilor "Junimea Muzicală" (recunoscută persoană juridică prin sentința no. 18/1927, a Trib[unalului] Ilfov, Secția I, civ. cor., cu sediul în str. Vulturului no. 147), a hotărât formarea unui comitet provizoriu din membrii comitetului de conducere al Soc[ietății] "Junimea Muzicală", sub președenția sa, care să primească înscrierile în asociație, să încaseze taxele de înscriere și să redacteze statutele.

Sediul provizoriu al acestei asociații este tot în str. Vulturului no. 147, la cafeneaua lui Constantin Urziceanu, casierul Asociației și al Soc[ietății] "Junimea Muzicală".

Din membrii mai importanți ai comitetului provizoriu de conducere semnalăm pe: Iancu Panaitescu, președintele Societății "Junimea Muzicală", domiciliat în str. Labirint no. 189; M. Niculescu, str. Vulturului 113 și Șt. Salomea, din str. Trinității no. 70, ambii vice-președinți la aceeași societate, toți lăutari.

Scopul asociației a fost redat in extensor, în manifestele intitulate "Apel către toți țiganii din România", care s-au împărțit în propaganda făcută de arhimandritul Șerboianu în ziua de 27 august a.c., prin cartierele mărginașe ale Capitalei.

Punctele mai însemnate din acest program sunt: editarea unei gazete; înființarea de cursuri pentru adulți; înființarea de biblioteci, atenee, spitale, căminuri, cantine, a unei universități țigănești; colonizarea țiganilor nomazi etc.

În asociație nu s-au înscris până în prezent decât 3[00]-400 țigani, dintre care majoritatea sunt din București și din județele Sibiu, Vlașca și Teleorman.

Suma strânsă din taxele benevole, de înscriere – variind între 5-20 lei –, se ridică la circa 2,000 lei.

Dorința de reclamă a conducătorilor asociației, unită cu dorința de reportagii senzaționale a unor cotidiene din capitală, a făcut ca cei dintâi să declare numărul înscrișilor la câteva mii, iar ziarele să înregistreze câteva zeci de mii.

La 15 septembrie a.c., membrii comitetului de conducere al asociației se vor prezenta la Trib[unalul] Ilfov, spre a cere ca "Asociația Generală a Țiganilor din România" să fie recunoscută ca persoană juridică. Se speră că până la acea dată se vor putea strânge fonduri suficiente pentru tipărirea statutelor asociației.

În ceea ce privește "Congresul țiganilor", însuși arhimandritul Șerboianu afirmă că știrea este din domeniul fanteziei, ziarul care a publicat-o făcând aceasta din dorința de a avea un reportagiu de senzație.

Arhimandritul Calinic I. Popp Șerboianu, în etate de circa 50 ani, domiciliat în București, str. Turnu Roșu no. 11 (Șoseaua Crângași), este originar din Costești-Argeș. Licențiat al Facultății de Teologie din București, a slujit ca diacon la Capela Română din Paris în anii 1909-1911, după care venind în țară a fost numit paroh la Biserica Kalinderu din Capitală. Între anii 1923-1927 a fost plecat în America, de unde revenind în țară, rătăcește ca monah prin mănăstirile oltene, în special la Cozia și Stânișoara.

În anul 1929 pleacă la Paris, unde își tipărește lucrarea sa intitulată "Les Tsiganes" și care are ca subtitlu: "Histoire – Ethnographie – Linguistique – Grammaire – Dictionnaire", într-un volum de 397 pagini, în Editura Payot, Paris (lucrarea se găsește de vânzare la "Cartea Românească" și costă 280 lei).

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În urma publicării acestei cărți, este ales membru corespondent la "The Gypsy Lore Society" (Societatea londoneză pentru studiul vieții și istoriei țiganilor), care îi inspiră – pentru prima dată – ideea de a încerca organizarea țiganilor în România.

Propaganda pentru captarea a cât mai multor membri în asociație merge foarte greu, cu toate că arhimandritul Șerboianu vorbește perfect țigănească, iar ca să capete deplina încredere a țiganilor se dă drept țigan. Această greutate este datorită faptului că țiganii stabili – la care propaganda prinde – sunt săraci, iar nomazii, care sunt bogați, din cauza nestabilității lor, nu sunt susceptibili de a primi ideea de asociație.

Arhimandritul Șerboianu pretinde că a expus această idee de asociere a țiganilor și domnului ministru Gusti, care înțelegându-l, l-a încurajat, îndemnându-l să ducă la bun sfârșit acțiunea sa.

Asupra faptului dacă părintele Șerboianu este sau nu arhimandrit, cerând relațiuni la Cancelaria Sf. Patriarhii, ni s-a răspuns că nu a fost "sfințit" în acest rang în cuprinsul Arhiepiscopatului București, dar că – se poate – să fi fost sfințit de Episcopia de Argeș sau a Noului Severin.

Arhimandritul Șerboianu, fiind întrebat asupra acestui lucru, a răspuns evaziv, că "arhimandritul" nu constituie o treaptă preoțească care să necesite o nouă sfințire, ci este un grad onorific, neprecizând cine i l-a dat.

Comisar Șef, Dim. D. Gheorghiu [m. p.].

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[General Direction of the Police]. Section I.
September 1, 1933.

Report

The General Association of Gypsies in Romania was founded at the initiative of Archimandrite Calinic I. Popp Şerboianu in April this year, when he, by contacting the committee of the fiddlers' society *Junimea Muzicală* (Musical Youth), recognised as a legal entity by the decision no. 18/1927 of the Tribunal of Ilfov County, Section I, civ. corp., headquartered in 147, Vultur Street, decided to set up a provisional committee formed by the members of the management committee of *Junimea Muzicală* Society, under its chairmanship, that receives the enrollments in the association, collects the registration fees and drafts the statutes.

The provisional headquarters of this association is also on 147, Vultur Street, at the café of Constantin Urziceanu, the cashier of *Junimea Muzicală* Association and Society.

Among the most important members of the provisional management committee we mention: Iancu Panaitescu, president of the *Junimea Muzicală* Society, domiciled in 189, Labirint Street; M. Niculescu, 133, Vultur Street and Ştefan Salomeia, 70, Trinităţii Street, both vice-presidents of the same society, both fiddlers.

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The purposes of the association have been reproduced in large in the call titled *Appeal to All Gypsies in Romania*, which was distributed by Archimandrite Calinic I. Popp Şerboianu, on August 27, in the periphery neighbourhoods of the Capital.

The most important points in this program are: editing a gazette; setting up courses for adults; founding libraries, athenaeums, hospitals, dormitories, canteens, a Gypsy university; the colonisation of nomadic Gypsies, etc.

Until now, only 300-400 Gypsies have been enrolled in the association, most of them are in Bucharest and in the counties of Sibiu, Vlaşca and Teleorman.

The sum collected from the voluntary registration fees – varying between 5-20 Lei – amounts to about 2,000 Lei.

The desire of the association's leaders to advertise for them, together with the rush of some daily newspapers in the Capital for sensationalism, made them declare the number of the enrolled as being several thousand, and the newspapers speak of tens of thousands.

On September 15, the members of the association's management committee will appear before the Ilfov Tribunal to demand that the *General Association of Gypsies in Romania* be recognised as a legal entity. It is hoped that until that date sufficient funds will be raised to print the association's statute.

Regarding the "Congress of the Gypsies", Archimandrite Calinic I. Popp Şerboianu himself states that the news is in the field of fantasy, the newspaper that published it doing this in the desire to have a sensational reportage.

Archimandrite Calinic I. Popp Şerboianu, aged about 50 years, domiciled in Bucharest, 11, Turnu Roşu Street (Şoseaua Crângaşi), originated from Costeşti-Argeş. A graduate of the Faculty of Theology in Bucharest, served as deacon at the Romanian Chapel in Paris in 1909-1911, after which he returned to the country and was appointed a parish priest at the Kalinderu Church in the Capital. Between the years 1923 and 1927, he went to America and then returned to the country, wandering as a monk in monasteries in Oltenia, especially at Cozia and Stânişoara.

In 1929, he went to Paris, where he printed his work with the title *Les Tsiganes* that has the subtitle *Histoire - Ethnographie - Linguistique - Grammaire - Dictionnaire*, in a volume of 397 pages in the Payot Publishing House, Paris (the book is for sale at *Cartea Românească* Bookshop for 280 Lei).

Following the publication of this book, he was chosen as a correspondent member of the Gypsy Lore Society (a society in London for the study of the life and history of Gypsies), which inspired – for the first time – the idea of trying to organise the Gypsies in Romania.

The propaganda for gathering as many members as possible in the association goes very badly, although Archimandrite Calinic I. Popp Şerboianu speaks Romani language perfectly, and in order to obtain the full confidence of the Gypsies he presents himself as a Gypsy. This difficulty is due to the fact that the settled Gypsies – who are susceptible to propaganda – are poor, and nomads, who are rich, because of their instability are not susceptible to accept the idea of an association.

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Archimandrite Calinic I. Popp Serboianu claims to have exposed this idea of associating the Gypsies to Mr. Minister Gusti [1] as well, who accepting this idea encouraged him, urging him to complete his actions.

About the inquiry if Father Şerboianu is Archimandrite or not, we asked for relations at the Chancellery of the Holy Patriarchate, which answered that he was not ordinated in this rank in the Archdiocese of Bucharest, but that he may have been ordinated by the Bishopric of Argeş or by that of Noul Severin.

Archimandrite Calinic I. Popp Şerboianu, being questioned about this, replied elusively that the "Archimandrite" is not a priestly rank requiring a new ordination, but an honorary degree, not specifying who gave it.

Chief Commissioner, Dim. D. Gheorghiu.

Notes

1. Dimitrie Gusti (1880-1955), sociologist, philosopher, university professor, was Minister of Public Instruction, Cults and Arts in 1932 and 1933.

Source: ANIC, fond. Direcţia Generală a Poliţiei, dos. 34/1922-1938, f. 30-32.
Published in: Nastasă & Varga, 2001, doc. 21, pp. 94-96.
Prepared for publication by Viorel Achim.

Comments

There were several types of Roma organisations that co-existed. Traditional organisations (specific to a narrow segment) overlapped with increasingly modern organisations (initially restricted spatially or professionally). Such local organisations brought together the Roma with similar interests and/or professions. Already in the early 1920s, the Roma from Făgăraş had their own burial society. Similarly, in 1924, the Roma from Şercaia established their own society. In 1926, the society *Înfrăţirea Neorustică* (Neo-Rustic Brotherhood) in the village of Calbor, Făgăraş County, was founded by the Gypsy peasant Naftanailă Lazăr. This was an organisation for mutual aid. It was established and functioned according to the model of the neighbourhood associations (*Nachbarschaften*) of the Saxons in Transylvania and was concerned with the improvement of the economic and cultural level of the Gypsies.

An impulse for organisational modernisation was the need to adapt. The Gypsies' traditional trades and crafts had played an important role in the traditional Romanian economy but in the context of modernisation and industrialisation, some of their economic activities became obsolete. The industrial production competed or eliminated the products and services offered by Roma or in rural areas, there were also non-Roma craftsmen who tended to substitute them. These transformations led to efforts to identify solutions. One way was to organise. Gradually, their associations grew and became embedded within larger organisations. A special case in this phase of local organisation is that of the musicians' associations. Comparatively, they were better educated and had already a long tradition of organising themselves. After the First World War, confronted

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with difficulties due both to changing musical tastes and to the increasing use of radio and gramophones, the Roma musicians resorted to organisations to regulate competition or to determine the authorities not to issue authorisations to foreign musicians etc. The idea of joining in larger formations was gaining ground. Already in February 1933, the President of the Musicians' Union approached the local (Roma) musicians' associations in Braila and Moldova suggesting "an action throughout the country to organise the musicians to fight for dismantling the military orchestras and the diseurs singing in pubs" (see Nastasă & Varga, 2001, doc. 19, pp. 53). However, these unifying efforts continued to target only the interests of a narrow professional category of musicians that did not represent all Roma.

This changed in 1933, when the first associations claiming to represent all the Roma in the country started to appear: The General Association of Gypsies in Romania (1933), The General Union of Roma in Romania (1933), The Association of the General Union of Roma in Romania (1934). The first central organisation relied heavily on *Junimea Muzicală*, a local professional association of the Roma musicians from Bucharest. Created in 1927, *Junimea Muzicală* was one of the numerous local attempts to adapt by offering mutual help and training both to the younger and older generations of musicians. For Archimandrite Calinic I. Popp Șerboianu, *Junimea Muzicală* was a makeshift solution, which he used as a sort of a launching ramp. Archimandrite Calinic I. Popp Șerboianu had a high opinion of the musicians, whom he knew well organised. He wrote: "musicians are the elite class of Gypsies. They have in the cities where they live their own houses, a corporation, a club and a café" (see Popp Şerboianu, 1930, pp. 55).

In April 1933, Archimandrite Calinic I. Popp Șerboianu approached the committee of *Junimea Muzicală* and in May 1933 he formed the provisional committee of the future General Association of the Gypsies in Romania. This was constituted in the mould of *Junimea Muzicală*. Its president was Archimandrite Calinic I. Popp Șerboianu while other important members of the committee were recruited mainly from the president and vice-presidents of *Junimea Muzicală* (Iancu Panaitescu, M. Niculescu and St Salomea). Besides, just like as *Junimea Muzicală*, the new organisation continued to be hosted by the same café owned by Constantin Urziceanu who served as a cashier for both organisations. This committee was to receive the enrollments in the association, to collect the registration fees and to draft the statutes. The goals of this Association were reproduced in the *Appeal to All Gypsies of Romania* manifestos that were spread at the end of August in Bucharest and in Craiova (see below 6.3.2.).

Later, when other central organisations became more important and started to compete, *Junimea Muzicală* tended to diminish in influence, as its role was reduced again to its primarily professional character. The more important organisations run by G. A. Lăzurică or Gh. Niculescu had already better means at their disposal and different agendas. However, they continued to pay attention to the Roma musicians' plight, interceding with different authorities on their behalf.

Petre Matei

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6.3 National Organisations

6.3.1 *G. A. Lăzurică on Popp Șerboianu's Book*

"Les Tziganes". O carte interesantă despre ţigani

Sesizat de o scrisoare și o nuvelă semnată de mine și publicată in "Adevărul Literar" din 9 Aprilie a. c., P. S. S. Arhimandritul Calinic I. Pop Șerboianu, m'a onorat cu o vizită. Nu cunoșteam pe această cinstită persoană bisericească. Îi rețineam însă numele ca autor al unei valoroase lucrări scrisă în limba franceză, lucrare intitulată: "Les Tziganes. Histoire-Ethnograghique-Liguistique-Grammaire-Dictionnaire", editată de Librăria Payot din Paris.

Ca țigan, am cetit această lucrare despre care presa străină în unanimitate, a vorbit elogios. În afară de ziarul "Dimineața" care în numărul din 11 Decembrie 1929 s'a interesat de opera Arhimandritului Calinic Șerboianu, presa română nu s'a ocupat deloc.

Citez câteva ziare străine care au recenzat cartea "Les Tziganes": "Books Abroad" din Oklohama în numărul din 1 Iulie 1931; "Times Literary Suplement" din Londra, în numărul din 8 Ianuarie 1931; "Neue Pariser Zeitung", în numărul din 31 Decembrie 1930; "Revue de Paris" din 15 Iulie 1931, sub semnătura: J. Poirier; "Justificatif de la Revue de Sociologie" în numărul din Ianuarie-Martie 1931; "Journal de Geneve" din 17 Mai 1930; "Revue des questions scientifiques" din Ianuarie 1931, sub semnătura: F. Hulselmans; "Larousse Mensuel" din Aprilie 1931, sub semnătura: Albert Dauzat; "The American Historical Review" din Washington, în numărul din Aprilie 1931, precum și publicațiunile: "Revue generale des Sciences pures et appliquees"; "La Geographie"; "Argus de la Presse"; "Le Journal" și "Correspondant" care, sub semnătura d-lui A. Vincent, laudă mult cartea și face o comparație între ea și opera lui Pittard, autorul lucrării: "Les Tziganes de Balkans".

P. S. S. Arhimandritul Calinic I. Popp Șerboianu, țiganofil și deplin cunoscător al limbei, istoriei și datinelor țigănești, a crezut că adresându-mi-se va căpăta izvoare nouă de cimilituri, poezii și cântece țigănești. Mărturisesc că n'am putut să-i fiu prea mult de folos, pentru că minoritatea noastră țigănească s'a asimilat atât de mult cu populația autohtonă incât e pe cale să-și piardă și limba și obiceiurile. Ba, i-am adus chiar o mustrare pentrucă în cartea "Les Tziganes" a scris că în România trăesc numai 300.000 de țigani, când in realitate ei numără până la 800.000. Si autorul, roșind, mi-a răspuns:

– N'am voit să arăt că în România sunt cei mai mulți țigani din Europa ...

Dar lucrul acesta îl știe marele statistician A. Thesleff care, în lucrarea sa publicată la Helsingfors in anul 1901, sub auspiciile lui "Gipsy Lore Society" în oficialul "Report on the Gipsy Problem", constată că chiar la 1901 în România trăesc cei mai mulți țigani.

Ca țigan, sunt recunoscător P. S. S. Arhimandritului Calinic Șerboianu, pentru interesul ce-l poartă rasei oacheșe din Europa și pentru ocaziunea ce mi-a dat de a discuta cu d-sa două ore în limba țigănească cultă.

Păcat că editurile la care s'a adresat nu au căzut de acord să publice opera *Les Tziganes* în românește, căci, sunt sigur, volumele s'ar vinde și ar îmbogăți literatura română cu o lucrare foarte interesantă.

G. A. Lăzurică

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"Les Tziganes". An interesting book about Gypsies

My letter and the short story signed by me and published in the *Adeverul Literar* of April 9, Current Year [1], captured the attention of the Archimandrite Calinic I. Pop Șerboianu [2], who honoured me with a visit. I did not know this honourable church personality. But I remembered his name as the author of a valuable work written in French, entitled *Les Tziganes. Histoire – Ethnograghique – Liguistique – Grammaire – Dictionnaire*, published by Payot Publishing House in Paris.

As a Gypsy, I read this work about which the foreign press unanimously spoke apologetically. Apart from the newspaper *Dimineaţa*, which in the issue of December 11, 1929 expressed interest in the work of Archimandrite Calinic I. Popp Șerboianu, the Romanian press did not pay any attention to it.

I mention a few foreign newspapers that reviewed the book *Les Tziganes* [3]: *Books Abroad* in Oklahoma in the issue of July 1, 1931; *Times Literary Suplement* in London, in the issue of January 8, 1931, *Neue Pariser Zeitung* in the issue of December 31, 1930, *Revue de Paris* of July 15, 1931, under the signature: J. Poirier; Justificatif de la *Revue de Sociologie* in the January-March 1931 issue; *Journal de la Geneve* of May 17, 1930; *Revue des questions scientifiques* in January 1931, under the signature: F. Hulselmans; *Larousse Mensue*l in April 1931, under the signature: Albert Dauzat; The *American Historical Review* in Washington, in the April 1931 issue, as well as the publications: *Revue general des sciences pures et appliquees*; *Argus de la Presse*, *Le Journal* and *Correspondant* which, under the signature of A. Vincent, praise the book and compare it to Pittard's work, *Les Tziganes de Balkans* [5].

His Holiness, Archimandrite Calinic I. Popp Șerboianu, a sympathiser of Gypsies [6], with a perfect knowledge of the Gypsy language, history and customs, believed that by approaching me he would get new sources of Gypsy riddles, poems and songs [7]. I confess that I could not help him too much, because our Gypsy minority assimilated so much into the native population that it is about to lose its language and customs. I have even reproached him for writing in his book *Les Tziganes* that only 300,000 Gypsies live in Romania, while in reality they count up to 800,000. And the author, blushing, answered:

– I did not want to show that Romania has the most Gypsies in Europe …

But this was well-known to the great statistician A. Thesleff [8] who, in his work published in Helsingfors in 1901 under the auspices of the Gypsy Lore Society in the *Report on the Gypsy Problem*, found that already in 1901 most Gypsies lived in Romania.

As a Gypsy, I am grateful to his holiness Archimandrite Calinic Șerboianu for his interest in the Gypsies of Europe and for the occasion he gave me to discuss with him for two hours in High Gypsy language [9].

It is a pity that the [Romanian] publishing houses to which he addressed did not agree to publish the *Les Tziganes* in Romanian, for I am sure the volumes would sell and enrich the Romanian literature with a very interesting work.

G. A. Lăzurică [10]

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Notes

1. G. A. Lăzurică was referring to his own article *When the Watchmen were Guarding* (Adevărul Literar și Artistic, 1933a, pp. 5-6) where he wrote a letter to the newspaper's direction in which he declared himself a Gypsy and attached a short story about the arrival of Roma in Moldova: "I'm not ashamed to say that I am a Gypsy, just the way so many great musicians and industrialists from Hungary, Poland, Czechoslovakia and Italy [are not ashamed], who are of the same race as me. [...] We think about a more developed culture, to manifest ourselves in a different field than in music playing, day labouring or blacksmithing".
2. For biographical details on Archimandrite Calinic I. Popp Șerboianu (1882-1941) see below, in the Comments section.
3. G. A. Lăzurică, famous also for creating in October 1933 the first organisation in Romania using the term 'Roma', preferred to identify himself as a Gypsy until September 1933.
4. G. A. Lăzurică could not have known all these reviews unless mentioned to him by Calinic I. Popp Șerboianu. Most probably, this was the beginning of their partnership.
5. Eugène Pittard (1867-1962), a Swiss anthropologist who developed a strong interest in Roma. Here, G. A. Lăzurică was referring to Pittard's recent book (Pittard, 1932).
6. In April 1933, G. A. Lăzurică did not yet have any problems with Archimandrite Calinic I. Popp Șerboianu not being a Gypsy. Only later, in September-October 1933, when they became rivals, he attacked Popp Șerboianu as non-Roma and non-Orthodox.
7. Archimandrite Calinic I. Popp Șerboianu manifested an old and constant interest in such riddles and poems (some published already in his book from 1930).
8. Arthur Thesleff (1871-1920), a Finnish botanist and researcher of the Gypsies. He conducted researches in Finland, Sweden, Russia, Hungary and the Balkans.
9. 'Limba țigănească cultă' literally translates to 'cultivated Gypsy language'.
10. Lăzurică's name often appears in the source materials as either G. A. Lăzurică, Gheorghe A. Lăzărescu-Lăzurică, Gheorghe A. Lăzăreanu-Lăzurică, George Lăzărică, or even simply as G. A. L. in some of his authored articles. While all of these variants may appear in different source materials and were sometimes used interchangeably to refer to the same author, for simplicity purpose, in the comments and notes to our chosen sources, his name will be unified as G. A. Lăzurică. For further biographical details on G. A. Lăzurică (1882-1941) see below, in the Comments section.

Source: Lăzurică, G. A. (1933b). "Les Tziganes". O carte interesantă despre ţigani. *Adevărul Literar și Artistic*, 1933, May 21, p. 8.
Prepared for publication by Petre Matei.

Comments

"Les Tziganes". An Interesting Book on Gypsies is the second article published by G. A. Lăzurică in the journal *Adevărul literar și artistic*. It is important as it documents how the initiators of the Roma movement met. Lăzurică's coming out as a Gypsy (he declared himself a Gypsy and started writing "Gypsy literature") drew Archimandrite Calinic I. Șerboianu's attention who approached G. A. Lăzurică and the committee of *Junimea Muzicală*. On the May 3, 1933, a provisional committee of the future General Association of the Gypsies in Romania was constituted with I. Popp Șerboianu and G. A. Lăzurică as president and secretary, respectively.

Both I. Popp Șerboianu and G. A. Lăzurică played an important role in the interwar Roma movement, initially as partners (from April to August 1933), then as rivals (in September 1933, G. A. Lăzurică started his own General Union of Roma in Romania with the support of the Romanian Orthodox Church).

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The explanations later invoked by G. A. Lăzurică to sabotage Archimandrite Calinic I. Popp Șerboianu's association vary considerably. One should distinguish between pretenses and serious reasons. One pretext was that I. Popp Șerboianu used the term 'Gypsies' instead of 'Roma'. This cannot be the real reason as G. A. Lăzurică himself had used exclusively "Gypsy", he was proud of being a 'Gypsy', talked about 'Gypsies', etc. (for further details see Matei, 2012, pp. 57-62). Another pretext was that I. Popp Șerboianu was not of Gypsy descent. Again, this allegation is true, but we have to understand the context. When questioned by the Police, I. Popp Șerboianu declared that although he was not a Gypsy, he pretended to be one because he wanted thus to win the trust of the people he hoped to organise. At the first meeting with G. A. Lăzurică, I. Popp Șerboianu did not pretend to be more than a sympathiser of the Gypsies. Interestingly, not being a Gypsy himself did not jeopardise his position as a president (at least not in the beginning, and not in the eyes of Lăzurică, who continued to be his partner). Things changed in August-September 1933 when apart from G. A. Lăzurică's own ambitions, the argument that really mattered became visible: I. Popp Șerboianu, formerly an Orthodox Archimandrite, was suspected of having converted to the Greek-Catholic Church and thus of creating this Association in order to convert the Gypsies (most of them Orthodox) to Catholicism. Consequently, the Orthodox Church encouraged an Orthodox alternative: the General Union of the Roma in Romania, whose leader was G. A. Lăzurică. In this way, the Orthodox Church hoped not only to stop eventual conversions to Catholicism but also to expand its missionary work among the Gypsies belonging to other denominations, especially in Transylvania where many were Greek-Catholic. G. A. Lăzurică entered into an unequal partnership with the Orthodox Church. However, G. A. Lăzurică himself was interested in the subsidies and other forms of support he hoped to get from the Orthodox Church to develop his organisation outside Bucharest (for further details see Matei, 2010b, pp. 159-173).

Petre Matei

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In this source the following important individuals, initiators of the first Roma national organisations are mentioned:

1. Archimandrite Calinic I. Popp Șerboianu, was born on the 16th of October, 1883 at Şerboieni in Argeş County, in Southern Romania. His father was an Orthodox priest, and he stated that he had been the fifth generation of priests in his family. At the beginning of the 20th century, he became a student at the Faculty of Orthodox Theology in Bucharest, from which he graduated in 1909. In 1909, on November 16th, he was appointed deacon at the Romanian Orthodox Chapel in Paris, where he served until July 1910. He tried (but did not succeed) to pursue his doctoral studies at the Faculty of Orthodox Theology in Bucharest in 1914. Before the outbreak of the First World War, he wrote for the journal *Culture. A Journal for Church Singers in Romania*. After the war ended, he taught French, Greek and Latin at the Theological High School in *Curtea de Argeş*. In 1929, he began a

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longer journey for the purpose of his studies, which included Italy, Albania, Macedonia and France. In 1930, in Paris, he managed to publish his famous work dedicated to the Gypsies (Popp-Şerboianu, 1930). After his arrival from France (1931), he began to organise the Gypsies in Romania. Thus, in April 1933, he founded (without registering it legally) the General Association of Gypsies in Romania. (cf. Rotar, 2014, pp. 513-518).

2. G. A. Lăzurică (official name "Lăzărescu"; "Lăzurică" – a Romani nickname from his grandfather), of Gypsy origin, a graduate of the Higher School of Commerce, initially dealt with the storage of wood in partnership with his brother. Starting from 1933 – he was the author of some Roma historical novels, reviews, articles and reports in Romanian national newspapers: *Adevărul literar și artistic*; *Universul* and Roma newspapers: *Țara Noastră* (Bucharest); *Timpul* (Craiova). He lived in Bucharest city (at Sârbească street, No. 8), where he rented a single room, which was also the headquarters of the General Union of the Roma in Romania.

Ion Duminica

6.3.2 *An Appeal to All Gypsies in Romania*

[Before August 27, 1933].

Apel
Către toți țiganii din România

Frați Țigani,

Trăim de veacuri pe pământul ospitalier al țării românești, pe care-l iubim ca pe însuși trupul și sufletul nostru. Din neamul ROMILOR sau al țiganilor, cum ni se spune, n-au ieșit niciodată trădători și vânzători de țară; nu am făcut comploturi contra nici unei autorități de stat și nu am fraternizat cu nici un vrășmaș al neamului românesc.

Ne-am jertfit și noi pentru această Românie Mare; i-am dat oameni de seamă, pe care istoria-i amintește cu recunoștință și – după putință – ne'ndeplinim toate datoriile de cetățeni. Totuși, nici un alt neam nu este mai umilit, mai urgisit și disprețuit, mai nebăgat în seamă și amărât ca neamul nostru țigănesc.

Pentru a arăta lumii întregi că dorim o soartă mai bună și că nu merităm atâta dispreț, am luat inițiativa întemeierii unei Asociații Generale a Țiganilor din România, al cărei program – pe scurt – este următorul:

CULTURAL

1. Apariția unei gazete.

2. Înființarea cursurilor serale de adulți, în toată țara.

3. O universitate populară, țigănească.

4.Înființarea de biblioteci și muzee școlare, cum și unul național.

5. Înființarea grădinilor de copii mici, ca să nu mai hoinărească pe drumuri, când părinții sunt duși la lucru.

6. Publicarea de cărți pentru luminarea minților, în ceea ce privește apărarea sănătății, a bunului trai, istoria neamului țigănesc și altele.

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7. Conferințe educative, muzică, strângerea cântecelor noastre bătrânești și tot felul de povestiri; școli de dans pentru jocurile noastre etc.

8. Înființarea de burse în țară și străinătate pentru elevii merituoși.

9. Înființarea a tot felul de ateliere pentru meseriile potrivite firii neamului nostru și bazare în toată țara pentru desfacerea diverselor produse.

10. Înființarea de școli ambulante pentru țiganii nomazi și încadrarea lor în Asociație.

11. Înființarea de atenee, cinematografe și căminuri culturale etc.

12. Ajutorarea elevilor săraci cu cărți, haine și mâncare.

ASISTENȚA SOCIALĂ

1. Înființarea unei asistențe juridice, pentru apărarea tuturor împricinaților în procese.

2. Asistență medicală gratuită pentru bolnavi și cercetarea lor acasă.

3. Ajutor gratuit pentru toate nevoile religioase.

4. Înființarea unui mare cămin popular, unde fiecare țigan sărac, fără casă, ori străin de localitate, poate să doarmă și să mănânce până i se găsește de lucru.

5. Înființarea de cantine populare în toate cartierele sărace din Capitală și din celelalte orașe ale țării.

6. Înființarea unui spital al țiganilor; dispensarii medicale pentru lehuze; aziluri de bătrâni și invalizi; societăți de ajutor mutual reciproc, în caz de moarte, căsătorii, pagube și începere de negustorie sau alte meserii; oficii pentru procurarea de lucru, plasare și informațiuni; băi populare, colonii școlare, adăposturi pentru copii mici etc.

7. Stăruința, pe toate căile legale ca Primăria Capitalei și autoritățile în drept să ne dea terenuri în jurul Capitalei și în fiecare oraș și sat din țară și să construiască pe ele case-tip pentru cei fără locuință proprie și plătibile-n cursul a 20-30 de ani.

8. Stăruința de a coloniza pe toți țiganii nomazi, dându-li-se pământul necesar în diferitele părți ale țării, Asociația luându-și întreaga răspundere pentru statornicirea și buna lor îndreptare, stârpind furtul și cerșitoria.

[9.] Asociația va îngriji ca orice muncă agricolă sau de altă natură să nu mai fie speculată de cei interesați și va face ea însăși contracte colective, conform legilor țării, supraveghind respectarea obligațiunilor de ambele părți, condițiile de trai și higienă etc.

10. Organizarea în bresle a tuturor categoriilor de muncitori și recunoașterea lor ca meseriași, cu drepturile corespunzătoare, la Casa generală a Asigurărilor Sociale.

11. Înființare de tribunale județene și a unei Curți Supreme de judecată pentru rezolvarea chestiunilor privitoare la cununii, divorț, înmormântări și tot felul de infracțiuni ce ar necinsti neamul nostru și care vor fi judecate de Sfatul Bătrânilor, în frunte cu vătavii respectivi și potrivit tradiției noastre.

12. Femeile fac parte, de drept, din Asociație și vor fi folosite în toate operile culturale și de asistență socială. Cele cu știință de carte au aceleași drepturi ca și bărbații și vor putea fi admise și în Sfatul Bătrânilor, după normele ce se vor stabili.

13. Copiii de la 8 ani în sus și tinerii de ambele sexe până la 21 de ani vor avea o organizație separată, unde vor fi pregătiți și instruiți în toate problemele vieții.

14. Politica este cu desăvârșire interzisă pentru membrii Asociației și nu vor face decât politica intereselor noastre, indicată de Comitetul Suprem al Asociației.

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Cel ce s-ar abate de la indicațiunile Asociației va fi exclus din ea; va fi socotit ca lepădat de neamul nostru și nu i se va da nici un sprijin la vreme de nevoie.

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Acesta este, foarte pe scurt, programul nostru, care cheamă la nouă viață milionul de țigani-români ce trăiește pe pământul României.

Frați Țigani,

Grăbiți-vă de vă înscrieți imediat în Asociația generală, care este singurul sprijin al vieții noastre de astăzi și mâine.

Fiți solidari, unindu-vă în cugete și simțiri, căci nu trăim numai pentru noi, ci și pentru copiii noștri și pentru generațiile viitoare.

Cele 27 mii de înscrieri, sosite nouă până astăzi, din diferitele colțuri ale țării, sunt o dovadă și ne arată deplin marele entuziasm cu care a fost îmbrățișată ideea noastră.

Nu plecați urechea la cei ce voiesc să vă abată din drumul cel drept și să vă rătăcească, cu amenințări sau făgăduințe.

De-i veți asculta, să știți că vă va ajunge blestemul tuturor morților noștri, împușcați și spânzurați de nedreptățile veacurilor trecute, în multe țări din lume

De răspundeți însă cu drag la chemarea ce v-o facem, Dumnezeu să vă binecuvânteze pe voi, pe copiii voștri și casele voastre.

Comunicați în scris orice păsuri și nevoi aveți și trimiteți adeziunile de înscriere în Asociație, pe adresa:
Asociația Generală a Țiganilor din România, București IV – Str. Vultur no. 147.

Cu Dumnezeu înainte,
Președintele Asociației, Arhimandrit Calinic I. Popp Șerboianu.

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An Appeal
To all Gypsies in Romania

Gypsy Brothers,

We have lived for centuries in the hospitable land of the Romanian country, which we love as our own body and soul. From the nation of the ROMA or Gypsies, as we are called, there have never been traitors and betrayers of their country; we did not plot against any state authority and we did not fraternise with any enemy of the Romanian nation.

We also sacrificed ourselves for this Greater Romania; we gave to the country important people that history remembers with gratitude and – as far as possible – we have fulfiled all our citizens' obligations. However, no other nation is more humiliated, more accursed and despised, more ignored and bitter than our Gypsy nation.

In order to show the entire world that we do not deserve such contempt, we have taken the initiative to establish a General Association of Gypsies in Romania [1], whose program – in short – is the following:

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CULTURAL

1. The issuing of a gazette.

2. The establishing of adult evening classes throughout the country.

3. A popular university for Gypsies.

4. The establishing of school libraries and museums, as well as a national museum.

5. The establishment of kindergartens so that the children do not roam the roads when their parents are at work.

6. The publication of books for the enlightening of minds, for health protection, good living, the history of the Gypsy people and other [books].

7. Educational lectures, music, the gathering of our old songs and all sorts of stories; dance schools for our dances etc.

8. The establishment of scholarships in the country and abroad for meritorious students.

9. The establishment of all sorts of workshops for the trades appropriate to the nature of our nation and markets across the country for selling various products.

10. The establishment of ambulatory schools for nomadic Gypsies and their enrolment in the association.

11. The establishment of athenaeums, cinemas and cultural centres, etc.

12. Supporting the poor students with books, clothes and food.

SOCIAL ASSISTANCE

1. The establishing of legal assistance to protect all litigants.

2. Free medical assistance for sick people and their consult at home.

3. Free help for all religious needs.

4. The establishing of a large people's home, where every poor Gypsy, homeless or stranger from the locality can sleep and eat until he finds work.

5. The establishing of people's canteens in all poor neighbourhoods in the Capital and other cities of the country.

6. The establishing of a hospital for Gypsies; medical dispensaries for postpartum women; nursing homes for the elderly and the disabled; mutual aid societies in case of death, marriages, damages and opening of a trade or other crafts; offices for job placement and information; popular baths, school colonies, shelters for small children, etc.

7. The insistence, via all legal means, that the Capital City Hall and competent authorities provide us with land around the Capital and in every town and village in the country and build on them standard houses for those without their own dwelling, which would be payable over 20-30 years.

8. The insistence to colonise all nomadic Gypsies by giving them the necessary land in the various parts of the country, and the Association to take full responsibility for their settlement and their proper correction, cutting off the theft and begging.

[9.] The Association will ensure that any agricultural or other work is no longer speculated by those interested and will make collective contracts, in accordance with the laws of the country, supervising the compliance with obligations from both sides, living and hygiene conditions, etc.

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10. The organisation in guilds of all categories of workers and their recognition as tradesmen, with corresponding rights, at the General Office of Social Insurance.

11. The establishment of county courts and of a Supreme Court to resolve the matters concerning marriage, divorce, funeral, and all kinds of crimes that would dishonour our nation and which will be judged by the Elders Council headed by the respective *vătafi* [2] and according to our tradition.

12. The women are legally part of the Association and will be used in all cultural and social assistance work. The literate ones have the same rights as the men, and they can be admitted in the Elders Council, according to the norms that will be established.

13. Children aged 8 and older and youngsters of both sexes up to 21 years of age will have a separate organisation where they will be prepared and trained in all life issues.

14. Politics is completely forbidden to members of the Association and will only serve the politics of our interests, indicated by the Supreme Committee of the Association.

Whoever deviates from the Association's indications will be excluded from it; he will be reckoned as rejected by our nation, and no support will be given to it in times of need.

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This is very briefly our program, which calls for the new life the million Romanian Gypsies living on Romania's land [3].

Gypsy Brothers,

Hurry to join the General Association, which is the only support for our lives today and tomorrow.

Be solidary, united in your thoughts and feelings, because we live not only for ourselves but also for our children and for the future generations.

The 27 thousand enrolments to date from the different corners of the country [4] are proof and show us fully the great enthusiasm with which our idea has been embraced.

Do not leave your ear to those who want to turn you from the right path and to get you lost with threats or promises.

If you listen to them, you may know that the curse of all our dead shall be on you, of those shot and hanged by the iniquities of past ages, in many countries of the world

If you answer gladly to the call we are giving to you, God bless you, your children and your homes.

Communicate in writing any wishes and needs you have and submit your *membership adhésions* to the Association at:
The General Association of the Gypsies in Romania, Bucharest IV – 147, Vultur Street.

With God ahead,

The President of the Association, Archimandrite Calinic I. Popp Şerboianu.

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Notes

1. For the General Association of the Gypsies in Romania, see Achim, 2004, pp. 154 ff.; Achim, 2010, pp. 85-102; Matei, 2010b, pp. 161 ff.
2. In some parts of Romania, the leader of the traditional Gypsy local community was called *vătaf* (pl. *vătafi*).
3. Here, and also in other cases in the documents presented below, the figures concerning the number of Roma (Gypsies) in Romania vehiculated by the Roma organisations were exaggerated.
4. This figure is much exaggerated, at that moment the General Association of Gypsies in Romania having only a few hundred registered members. When it comes to the number of members, Roma organisations have always communicated aberrant figures.

Source: AND MB, fond. Prefectura Poliţiei Capitalei, dos. 123/1933, f. 4, 9, 103; ANIC, fond. Direcţia Generală a Poliţiei, dos. 34/1922, f. 30.
Published in: Scurtu,, 1999, pp. 180-182; Nastasă & Varga, 2001, doc. 21, pp. 96-99, annex.
Prepared for publication by Viorel Achim.

6.3.3 *A Call for a Meeting by the General Association of Gypsies in Romania*

[Septembrie 1933].
Asociaţia Generală a Ţiganilor din România Chemare.

Fraţi Ţigani,

De sute de ani, noi, ROMII sau ȚIGANII, cum ni se mai spune, îndurăm toate umilințele din partea tuturor; suntem urgisiți, disprețuiți, nebagați în seamă și amărâți, mai mult decât oricare neam ce trăiește pe pământul țării românești.

A vrut bunul Dumnezeu ca la vremea ce El a găsit de cuvință să ne trimită un mântuitor în persoana preotului arhimandit Calinic I. Popp Șerboianu, țigan de origină, și care înțelege durerile neamului său; nu se leapădă de el; vrea să-l îndrumeze pe drumul civilizației, al năzuințelor curate și ferite de otrava politicianismului josnic și să ajungă ca numele de "țigan" să fie rostit cu cinste, iar nu cu dispreț.

Acest preot este și un mare învățat, el a scris despre neamul nostru țigănesc cărți de valoare în limbile franceză, engleză și nemțească și stă în legătură cu toți țiganii din lume, care ne vor ajuta și pe noi la orice nevoie vom avea, căci ei sunt mai bogați decât ai noștri și mai cu știință de carte.

Frați Țigani,

Acest preot învățat a venit la noi cu ideea să înființăm o mare Asociație, în care să fie cuprinși toți țiganii din România, și ne-a spus că numai acolo unde este unire este și putere.

Ne-a înfățișat și un program al Asociației, care cuprinde lucruri mari pentru neamul nostru și care a fost publicat și prin diverse gazete.

Totuși, ca la orice bun început, s-au găsit și oameni răi, puși în slujba diferiților politicieni, care caută să amăgească neamul nostru; să ne împrăștieze prin neunire și să-i facă a crede că sunt mai multe asociații cu țigani și nu numai una. Acești oameni răi nu se

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sfiesc să arunce pe spatele Asociației noastre și a energicului preot ce ne conduce tot felul de insulte și calomnii, numai și numai ca să ne împiedice de la drumul bun pe care am apucat și să ne țină tot în starea de robie josnică, în care am trăit până acum.

Frați Țigani,

Nu dați ascultare nimănui decât Asociației Generale a Țiganilor din România, recunoscută în mod legal de tribunalele țării românești și condusă de învățatul preot arhimandrit Calinic I. Popp Șerboianu, în frunte cu un comitet, al cărui sediu central este în strada Vultur 147 și al cărei secretar general este dl. Lache Gheorghe, din strada Brașoveni (Tei) 48.

Vă chemăm deci la O MARE ADUNARE care se va ține Duminică, 8 Octombrie a.c., la orele 9 dimineața, în sala d-lui IONICĂ PALADE, din str. Teiu-Doamnei 48 (Tei), iar nu în sala "Ileana", din Câmpul Moșilor, cum s-a anunțat de unii.

Frați Țigani,

Veniți în număr cât se poate de mare, ca să arătăm tuturor că noi suntem uniți în cugete și simțiri și că nu mai voim să fim calul de bătaie al nimănui, acolo veți auzi pe cei mai de seamă oameni din neamul nostru, avocați, doctori, studenți etc., expunând programul nostru și sfătuindu-vă numai de bine.

Noi nu ne luptăm nici pentru politică, nici pentru biserică, ci pentru nevoile noastre, pentru izgonirea întunericului și a nedreptății în care trăim de veacuri, să nu vă amăgească cei care vă făgăduie toate bunătățile pământului și pe urmă vă dau sabia și urgia.

Unde este preotul, acolo este Dumnezeu, deci nu vă lăsați amăgiți de acei care vă cinstesc numai din buze, iar cu inima stau departe de voi.

Veniți în numele dreptății, al iubirii de neamul nostru și al nădejdii unor zile mai fericite, veniți Duminică, 8 Octombrie 1933, ora 9 dimineața, în sala d-lui IONICĂ PANDELE, Teiu-Doamnei 48 (Tei).

Cu Dumnezeu înainte și cu ochii atenți la dușmanii ce ne pândesc pe toate cărările ca să ne ție în robie și întuneric.

Asociația Generală a Țiganilor din România, cu sediul în București, str. Vultur 174, sect. IV.
Răspunzător: Arhim[andrit] C. I. Popp Șerboianu, str. Turnu Roșu, 11.

∴

[September 1933].
Call of General Association of the Gypsies in Romania [1].

Gypsy Brothers,

For hundreds of years, we, the ROMA or GYPSIES, as we are called, have endured all humiliation, from everyone else; we have been accused, despised, ignored and unhappy, more than any other nation living on the land of the Romanian country.

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The good God wanted to send us a saviour when the time was right, a saviour in the person of the priest Archimandrite Calinic I. Popp Şerboianu, of Gypsy origin, who understands the pains of his people; he doesn't deny them; he wants to guide them towards civilisation, towards pure aspiration that are protected from the poison of despicable politicism so that the name "Gypsy" will be spoken with honour, not with contempt.

This priest is also a great scholar, he has written about our Gypsy people valuable books in French, English and German [2], and he is in touch with all the Gypsies around the world, who will also help us with anything we shall need, because they are richer than our own and educated.

Gypsy Brothers,

This learned priest came to us with the idea of organising a large Association, in which all the Gypsies in Romania would be included, and told us that only where is love there is power.

He also presented a program of the Association, that envisages great things for our nation and that was published in various newspapers [3].

However, as in any good beginning, there are also bad people, employed by various politicians, who seek to deceive our nation; to scatter us through conflict and to make us think there are more Gypsy associations and not just one. These evil people do not hesitate to cast insults and slanders at our Association and at this energetic priest who leads us only to prevent us from the good road that we have begun to go and to keep us still in this state of despicable slavery in which we have lived so far [4].

Gypsy Brothers,

Do not listen to anybody other than the General Association of Gypsies in Romania, legally recognised by the courts of the Romania country [5] and led by the learned priest Archimandrite Calinic I. Popp Şerboianu, along with a committee whose headquarters are in 147, Vultur Street and whose general secretary is Mr. Lache Gheorghe, from 48, Braşoveni Street (Tei).

So we call you to a LARGE MEETING which will be held Sunday, October 8, this year, at 9 a.m., in Mr. IONICĂ PALADE's Hall (48, *Teiul Doamnei* Street), and not in "Ileana" Hall in Câmpul Moşilor, as some people announced [6].

Gypsy Brothers,

Come in as many numbers as possible to show everyone that we are united in our thoughts and feelings and that we no longer want to be the punching bag of anybody. There you will hear the most prominent people in our nation, lawyers, doctors and students etc., explaining our program and advising you for the better.

We neither fight for politics nor for church, but for our needs, to cast out the darkness and the injustice in which we have lived for centuries, to not be deceived by those who promise you all the good things of the earth and then give you the sword and the wrath.

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Where the priest is, there is also a God, so do not be deceived by those who honour you only by words and keep their hearts closed.

Come in the name of justice, of the love for our nation and of the hope for better days, come on Sunday, October 8, 1933, at 9 a.m., in IONICĂ PANDELE's Hall, 48, Teiu-Doamnei Street (Tei).

With God ahead and keep careful eyes on the enemies who are lurking on all our paths to keep us in captivity and in the dark.

The General Association of the Gypsies in Romania, with the headquarters în Bucharest, 174, Vultur Street, sector IV.
Responsible: Archimandrite C. I. Popp Şerboianu, 11, Turnu Roşu Street.

Notes

1. For the General Association of the Gypsies in Romania, see Achim, 2004, p. 154 sq.; Achim, 2010, pp. 85-102; Matei, 2010b, p. 161 ff.
2. Reference to some of the publications by Archimandrite Calinic I. Popp Şerboianu, most important being the book (1930).
3. See the previous source. At the time, press articles about the General Association of the Gypsies in Romania program appeared. *Timpul* newspaper in Craiova reproduced almost entirely the Appeal (Timpul, 1933a, pp. 1-2).
4. Reference to G. A. Lăzurică who in the meantime, left the General Association of Gypsies in Romania, whose general secretary he was, and set up another organisation called the General Union of Roma in Romania, which had a quasi-identical program to that of the General Association of the Gypsies in Romania.
5. The General Association of Gypsies in Romania, under Archimandrite Calinic I. Popp Şerboianu's leadership, failed to obtain the status of a legal entity. The 'legal recognition' that is spoken about here must refer to the authentication of the constitutive act in court.
6. G. A. Lăzurică, as president of the General Union of Roma in Romania, also announced a Roma meeting for October 8, 1933. About this meeting, see below. The announcement was likely to create confusion among the Roma.

Source: AND MB, fond. Prefectura Poliţiei Capitalei, dos. 123/1933, f. 10.
Published in: Nastasă & Varga, 2001, doc. 25, pp. 103-104.
Prepared for publication by Viorel Achim.

6.3.4 *A Call for Participation at a Roma Congress in Bucharest, October 8, 1933*

Uniunea Generală a Romilor din România

Frați Romi,

Ne adresăm vouă nu cu titulatura de "țigani", pentru că este o denumire false și batjocoritoare, ci pe numele nostru adevărat de "romi", adică oameni, iubitori de libertate, jocuri și muzică – un dar pe care vi l-a lăsat Dumnezeu. Acest lucru trebuia să-l știe acel preot care se intitulează "arhimandrit" și "președinte" al Asociației Generale a Țiganilor din România, titluri însușite fără drept și prin uzurpare, din care cauză a și fost izgonit din asociație și serviciile bisericești, fiind acuzat de catolicism și dușman al religiei noastre ortodoxe. E vorba de CALINIC ȘERBOIANU.

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Frați Romi,

Numărăm în țara românească aproape un milion de suflete, împrăștiate pe tot cuprinsul țării, la sate și la orașe, îndeplinind cu sfințenie toate îndatoririle de cetățeni, adică: plătim dări, facem armată, avem meserii bine definite, suntem asimilați elementului românesc, vorbind aceeași limbă și păstrând aceeași religie creștină-ortodoxă. Ba suntem păstrătorii cântecelor, jocurilor, baladelor și datinilor românești, ca niște harnici și pasionați cronicari și colecționari.

Suntem patrioți și dinastici, nu suntem trădători de țară, nu dezertăm de la datorie, nu pactizăm cu inamicii țării și nu ne lăsăm influențați de curente extremiste, care sunt dăunătoare statului român.

Acestea sunt calități care acopăr puținele noastre defecte și, recunoscându-le, trebuie să recunoască și concetățe cravings for wandering in the blood nii noștri că nu noi greșim mai mult în fața legilor.

Suntem totuși disprețuiți, huliți și considerați ca o paria a societății, fiind lipsiți de drepturi egale ca oameni și cetățeni.

Trăim în prezent sub apăsarea unui materialism feroce, iar criza economică și financiară noi o simțim mai mult.

Meseriile noastre sunt acaparate de străinii care ne concurează și ne azvârle în brațele șomajului.

E timpul ca să ne mișcăm, să ne organizăm și să ne manifestăm ca un organ puternic, având ca scop unic apărarea intereselor noastre sociale.

Nu intenționăm să constituim un nou partid politic, căci, din păcate, avem destule în țara românească și răsar ca ciupercile alte noi.

Vrem însă ca uniți într-un bloc să putem cere organelor conducătoare realizarea dezideratelor noastre drepte și legale, fără sacrificii mari și fără să dăuneze cu nimic țării noastre, înțelegând să luăm parte la necazuri, ca și la bucurii, alături de concetățenii noștri români.

Vrem să arătăm că în manifestațiile noastre nu ignorăm și scopul cultural și spiritual prin care să cucerim simpatia opiniei publice, a presei și a factorilor competenți, mai dovedind că la noi există mai puțină țigănie decât în manifestațiunile cotidiene și străine nouă.

De aceea vă chemăm stăruitor să participați la: PRIMUL MARE CONGRES AL ROMILOR, care va avea loc irevocabil în SALA ILEANA din Câmpul Moșilor, la București,

în ziua de 8 Octombrie a.c., la orele 10 dimineața.

Veniți la acest Congres în număr cât mai mare și cu curajul oamenilor care n-au nimic ce să-și impute, ca cetățeni dornici de o viață nouă, înfruntând vitregia vremurilor grele.

Lăutari, geambași, fierari, potcovari, meșteri lăcătuși, spoitori, rudari, văcsuitori, strângători de fiare, vânzători de ziare și haine vechi, hornari, mici comercianți și alți meseriași romi, veniți cu toții să ascultați pe reprezentanții voștri cei mai calificați, aleși din clasa intelectuală, ca: publiciști, avocați, profesori, medici și arhitecți, care vă vor arăta care sunt necazurile voastre, cine sunteți, ce vreți și ce puteți voi.

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Să nu lipsească nici o femeie intelectuală din neamul romilor, pentru ca ele să dea un imbold fraților, părinților și soților lor în marea luptă de emancipare ce se începe.

Facem un apel călduros către toți romii care au parvenit prin muncă și abnegație ca să nu-și renege neamul, ci să vie în mijlocul nostru, încurajându-ne, iubindu-ne, ca o chemare a sângelui. Nu ne dispensăm nici de prezența concetățenilor noștri români, invitându-i la congres ca observatori, pentru a vedea și auzi că nu depășim cu nimic de la programul nostru inițial: moral, social, cultural și spiritual.

Frați Romi,

Congresul nostru mai are un scop. El vă dă prilejul ca uniți într-un singur glas, într-o singură bătaie de inimă, să ne manifestăm pentru Țară, Rege și Patriarh; să salutăm presa românească ce a susținut și pe toți acei oameni de bine care ne-au încurajat și ajutat în lupta noastră.

Dumnezeu să ne binecuvânteze această luptă și să pedepsească pe trădătorii cauzei noastre

Rugăm ca toate comunicările şi adeziunile să se trimită pe adresa de mai jos:
Uniunea Generală a Romilor din România, cu sediul în București, strada Sârbească, 8.

Președinte, G. A. Lăzărescu-Lăzurică; Secretară, Florica Constantinescu.

∵

The General Union of the Roma in Romania

Roma Brothers,

We are addressing you not with the name "Gypsies", because this is a false and mocking name, but with our true name of "Roma", meaning people, lovers of freedom, dances and music – a gift that God has given you. This should have been known by the priest who calls himself "Archimandrite" and "President" of *the General Association of Gypsies in Romania* [1], titles obtained without right and by usurpation, for which he was expelled from the association and the church services, being accused of Catholicism and enemy of our Orthodox religion. It's about CALINIC ŞERBOIANU.

Roma Brothers,

We are almost a million souls scattered all over the country, in villages and towns, fulfilling completely all civic duties, that is, we pay taxes, we do the military service, we have well-defined trades, we are assimilated in the Romanian element, we speak the same language and preserve the same Christian-Orthodox religion. We are the keepers of the Romanian songs, dances, ballads and customs, as hardworking and passionate chroniclers and collectors.

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We are patriots and faithful to the [royal] dynasty, we are not country traitors, we do not desert our duty, we do not pact with the enemies of the country, and we do not let ourselves be influenced by extremist currents that are harmful to the Romanian state.

These are qualities that cover our few defects and, recognizing them, our fellow citizens have to admit that we are not more in the wrong with the laws than others.

We are, however, despised, blasphemed and regarded as the pariah of the society, being deprived of equal rights as men and citizens.

We are currently living under the pressure of fierce materialism, and the economic and financial crisis [2] affects us more [than others].

Our trades are captured by strangers [3] who compete us and thrust us into the arms of unemployment.

It is time for us to make a move, organise and manifest ourselves as a powerful organ, with the sole purpose of defending our social interests.

We do not intend to build a new political party, because, unfortunately, there are enough already and they multiply like mushrooms after the rain.

We want, however, to be united so that we would be able to ask the ruling organs for our righteous and legal desiderata, without great sacrifices and without harming our country, by understanding to take part in tribulations, as well as in joy, together with our Romanian fellow citizens.

We want to show that in our manifestations we do not ignore the cultural and spiritual purpose so that we can win the sympathy of the public, of the press and of the competent factors, proving that there is less *ţigănie* [4] by us than in the daily manifestations, which are alien to us.

That is why we urge you to participate in THE FIRST LARGE CONGRESS OF ROMA, which will take place irrevocably in ILEANA HALL in Câmpul Moşilor [5], in BUCHAREST, on October 8, current year, at 10 a.m.

Come to this Congress in the greatest possible number and with the courage of a person who has nothing to impute, as citizens eager for a new life, facing the brink of difficult times.

Fiddlers, horse dealers, blacksmiths, farriers, locksmiths, tinsmiths, Rudari, shoeblacks, scrap-iron collectors, newspapers and old clothes sellers, horns, small merchants and other Roma craftsmen, all come to listen to our most qualified representatives, chosen from the intellectual class: publicists, lawyers, teachers, doctors and architects, who will show you what our troubles are, who you are, what you want and what you can want.

Let there be no intellectual woman in the Roma nation that does not come so that they give an impetus to their brothers, their parents and their spouses to come too, in the great emancipation struggle that begins now.

We make a warm appeal to all Roma who have reached a good situation through work and abnegation not to deny their nation, but to come into our midst, encouraging us, loving us, as a call of the blood. Nor do we dispense with the presence of our Romanian

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fellow citizens, inviting them to the congress as observers, to see and hear that we do not go beyond our original moral, social, cultural and spiritual program.

Roma Brothers,

Our congress still has a purpose. It gives you the opportunity to unite in one voice, in one heartbeat, to manifest ourselves for the *Country, King and Patriarch*; to welcome the Romanian press and all those good men who have encouraged and helped us in our struggle.

God bless us in this fight and punish the traitors of our cause.

We ask that all communications and membership applications be sent to the address below:

The General Union of Roma in Romania [6] headquartered in Bucharest, 8, Sârbească Street.

President, G. A. Lăzărescu-Lăzurică; Secretary, Florica Constantinescu.

Notes

1. For the General Association of the Gypsies in Romania, see Achim, 2004, p. 154 ff.; Achim, 2010, pp. 85-102; Matei, 2010, pp. 161 ff.
2. Reference to the great economic crisis of 1929-1933, which seriously affected Romania.
3. The protection of the Romanian workers against immigrant workers was a widely discussed topic in the Romanian press and politics of the 1930s. It was also taken over by the Roma organisations and press, which explained the crisis through which some professions specific to the Roma passed through the competition of foreigners, little by market and technology evolution.
4. Here the Romanian word *ţigănie* is used as meaning 'scandal'.
5. A neighbourhood in Bucharest at that time.
6. For the General Union of the Roma in Romania, see Achim, 2004, p. 155 ff.; Achim, 2010, pp. 85-102; Matei, 2010b, p. 162 ff.

Source: AND MB, fond. Prefectura Poliţiei Capitalei, dosar 123/1933, f. 3; ANIC, fond. Direcţia Generală a Poliţiei, dos. 34/1932, f. 47.
Published in: Nastasă & Varga, 2001, doc 27, pp. 106-107.
Prepared for publication by Viorel Achim.

6.3.5 *The Congress of the Gypsies*

Congresul Țiganilor

Există tot felul de asociații, uniuni și societăți. Există o asociație a moașelor, o societate a învățătorilor fără slujbe, o uniune a contabililor și una a agenților sanitari. Nu e categorie de cetățeni, care să nu fie grupată într-o asociație. De ce nu ar avea și țiganii asociația lor? Or această asociație există și are sediul în strada Vultur nr. 147, unde ne-am prezentat președintelui. Nu mică ne-a fost surprinderea, când am văzut că președintele țiganilor este un arhimandrit, cu părul roșu cărunt, anume Părintele Calinic I. Pop Șerboianu ...

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Ce ne spune Preşedintele Ţiganilor

L-am întrebat pe Sfinţia-Sa, în ce scop a strâns pe ţigani în această asociaţie. Părintele Şerboianu ne-a declarat că dispreţul ce se arată pe nedrept acestui neam, a determinat pe Sfinţia-Sa să înceapă o acţiune pentru gruparea ţiganilor, în scopul de a obţine o serie de revendicări, de ordin cultural şi social.

– Care anume sunt aceste revendicări?

– În primul rând asigurarea instrucţiei şi educaţia masei ţigăneşti, apariţia unei gazete, înfiinţarea de cursuri serale, o universitate populară ţigănească, biblioteci, grădiniţe de copii, ş.a. Dorim să ţinem conferinţe educative, să strângem folclorul ţigănesc, să înfiinţăm ateliere, şcoli ambulante pentru nomazi, un cămin al ţiganilor, atenee, cinematografe, etc. În fine, să le dăm asistenţă juridică şi medicală gratuită, ajutor pentru nevoile religioase, cantine, un spital al ţiganior, oficii pentru procurarea de lucru, băi populare, colonii şcolare ...

Un alt deziderat al asociaţiei ţiganilor este colonizarea ţiganilor nomazi, dânduli-se pământul necesar în diferite părţi ale ţării, pentru statornicirea şi buna lor îndreptare, stârpindu-se furtul şi cerşetoria.

Vom vedea însă îndată cum primesc ţiganii aceste încercări de ridicare a neamului lor. Deasemeni un punct nevralgic este cererea de a se recunoaşte judecăţile şi sentinţele sfaturilor batrânilor, format din vătafii ţiganilor.

Programul ţigănesc este foarte înaintat; el oferă chiar drepturi de egalitate cu bărbaţii, femeilor cu ştiinţă de carte, şi le admite în sfatul bătrânilor.

Părintele Şerboianu subliniază că politica este cu desăvârşire interzisă membrilor asociaţiei.

Mijoacele de luptă

Aflăm că ar exista în România un milion de ţigani şi că ar fi înscrişi în asociaţie vre-o 30000. Nu ştiu întrucât aceste cifre sunt exacte. Un fapt interesant este însă că au dat adeziunea lor unele personalităţi de vază, medici, ofiţeri, profesori universitari, care nu-şi reneagă obârşia ţigănească. Arhimandritul Şerboianu ne arată apoi că mijloacele pentru realizarea acestor revendicări constau în primul rând în propaganda membrilor din comitet prin ţigănie, mici adunări locale pe cartiere, întruniri în diferite oraşe cu o populaţie ţigănească mai însemnată şi, în fine, pregătirea ţiganilor în vederea ţinerii unui mare congres general, care va avea loc în curând, fie la Ardeal la Miercurea Ciucului, regiune unde există un important centru ţigănesc, fie la Bucureştii-Noi.

– Dar cum faceţi ca ţiganii să afle de acţiunea asociaţiei, şi cum îi convocaţi la adunări?

– N-avem nevoie să tipărim invitaţii speciale. Svonul despre tot ceeace priveşte neamul ţigănesc se răspândeşte ca fulgerul prin ţigănie, dintr-un capăt la altul al ţării, ba trece şi hotarul, odată cu cetele nomade. E acelaş fenomen care se petrece în Africa, unde nu există nici telegraf, nici gazete, şi totuş sălbatecii află imediat tot ce se petrece şi ceeace îi interesează, de la sute de kilometri.

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Un turneu prin țigănie

Ca să ne convingem de seriozitatea acestei mișcări, am rugat unii membrii din comitetul asociației generale a țiganilor, să ne permită a-i însoți în propaganda ce fac prin cartierele țigănești. Astfel, am ajuns la marginea Bucureștilor, spre lacul Tei, pe o stradă plină de gunoaie, ca un maidan. Defilăm aici prin două rânduri de cazane de rufe, sub presiune, în care se fierbe "porumbelul fierbinte", cu care se alimentează Capitala. Uzina aceasta de porumbel fiert, e înconjurată de mici magazii, în care se depozitează tot felul de sdrențe și de gunoaie, pe care țiganii le vând fabricilor de hârtie, de zahăr etc. (Nu știți poate că la fabricarea zăharului slujesc oasele pe care țiganii le strâng în gropile periferice, unde cotigele primăriei aruncă gunoaiele Capitalei?...).

Îndată ce ne facem apariția, mari contingente de dănciuci, batalioane minuscule de asalt, în cămăși cafenii, – sau fără nici un fel de cămașe, – ne înconjoară. Câțiva țigani maturi ascultă predica părintelui, dar nu dau semne de prea mare entuziasm. Înainte de-a adera, ei trebuie să obțină consimțământul șefilor lor și al sfatului bătrânilor.

Adunarea din acest cartier este în adevăr originală; ea e formată dintr-o mână de țigani, câteva femei și un poșidic de draci negri, care ascultă cu cea mai mare seriozitate, apelul pe care arhimandritul Șerboianu îl citește. Foarte multă disciplină, și, când se produce un vag început de tumult, îndată unul dintre țigani, rostește solemn:

– Vă rog tăcere, aici nu e Parlament!

Adunarea nu are loc într-o sală, ci în curtea unui lăutar.

Lăutarii se plâng de concurența radiofoniei, iar gospodarii de origine faraonică, cer pavarea străzii lor:

– De cîte ori cerem să se paveze strada și să se curețe gunoaiele, primăria zice că, ce avem noi nevoie de curățenie, fiindcă suntem țigani și vom murdări la loc. Dar a încercat oare cineva să ne curețe și nouă strada, ca să vadă ce vom face pe urmă?

După cum am văzut, este necesară adeziunea șefilor țigăniei, pentru începerea acestei campanii de realizări și ținerea congresului general. Or, se pare că sunt unii șefi care nu au interesul ca țigănia să înceapă a fi emancipată. În adevăr, unii dintre acești șefi utilizează pe țigani ca pe niște robi, la triajul gunoaielor din gropile Capitalei și valorificarea acestui rebut. Acești șefi sunt antreprenorii unor astfel de afaceri de gunoaie, și probabil că ei cred că își vor pierde lucrătorii, atunci când vor fi emancipați. Să nu se creadă însă că pierderea ar fi mică pentru ei. Țiganii dintr-un anumit cartier ne spun că șeful lor a făcut mare avere, că este milionar de pe urma acestui negoț imund, și că sunt de pomină chefurile pe care le face acest nabab al gunoaielor. Nunta fetei sale a avut o strălucire extraordinară:

– "A fost și muzică militară!" ...

Un alt punct dificil, după câte ne spun țiganii, este intențiunea de stabilizare a nomazilor:

– Țiganul nomad are în sânge dorul de ducă, și chiar dacă l-ai lega în lanțuri, el va fugi. În schimb, cei care s-au așezat din tată în fiu, și au devenit, de pildă, proprietari la periferia Capitalei, pe aceia ar fi greu să-i mute cineva de la locul lor, chiar dacă li s-ar da terenuri de către Primărie în altă parte.

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În fine, mai trebuie să se pronunțe suprema jurisdicțiune țigănească, sfatul bătrânilor, și nu se știe dacă acest matur corp va încuvința congresul și acțiunea de civilizare a țiganilor …

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The Congress of the Gypsies

There are plenty of associations, unions and societies. The association of midwives, the society of teachers, the union of accountants, and one more of medical orderlies, and so on. There are no categories of citizens without of some kind of association. Why should there not exist the Association of the Gypsies as well?

Well, this association exists already. The office of the association is situated at the Vultur street, number 147 [in Bucharest city], where we introduced ourselves to the president [of this association]. You could imagine how surprised we were that the president turned out to be an Archimandrite with red grey hairs. His name is Father. Calinic I. Pop Șerboianu …

What the President of the Gypsies tell us

I asked His Holiness what was the scope in uniting Gypsies in the association? Father Șerboianu declared that it was the unjustified contempt to this people, demonstrated by the society, which encouraged him to try to group the Gypsies with the scope to put forward some cultural and social claims.

– What exactly are these claims?

– First of all, to offer the possibility for teaching and education for the Gypsies, establish a Gypsy newspaper, evening classes, a popular Gypsy University, libraries, kindergartens, etc. We want to organise educational conferences, to collect the Gypsy folklore, to establish workshops, schools on wheels for nomad, a hostel for Gypsies, an athenaeum, cinemas, etc. Finally, we want to provide free legal and medical assistance, to help in their religious needs, to establish canteens, a hospital for Gypsies, offices for employment opportunities, public baths, residential schools …

Another wish of the association is to settle the nomadic Gypsies, to give them necessary plots of land in different parts of our country with the purpose of their settlement and the improvement of their behaviour in positive direction, eliminating theft and begging.

We will soon see how the Gypsies welcome these attempts for the uplifting of their people. Moreover, the request to recognise the decisions of the counsels of elderly, formed by the Roma bailiffs, is a sore point too.

The Gypsy program is very advanced; it offers even the equal rights to literate women, and they are also allowed to join the counsels of the Gypsy bailiffs. Father Șerboianu stresses that political activity is strictly forbidden for members of the association.

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Means of struggle

We find out that one million Gypsies live in Romania and that about 30000 of them became members of the association. Though, I do not know if these numbers are exact. An interesting fact is that some officers, physicians, university professors, some well-known people that do not relinquish their Gypsy origin, joined the association.

Archimandrite Șerboianu shows us then that the means to achieve these goals first of all consist of propaganda among the Gypsies, of small local meetings in camps, of the association committee presentations in the cities with higher percentages of the Gypsy population. Finally, these measures should prepare the Gypsies for the Great General Congress [1] which will take place soon, either in Ardeal in Miercurea Ciuc, an important centre of the Gypsies, or in the București Noi [2].

– But how do you make sure that Gypsies know about the association, and how you convene them at meetings?

– We do not need to type special invitations. Rumours about anything that concerns the Gypsy people spread as lightning among them all over the country, and even cross borders with the nomadic camps. This is like in Africa where without any telegraph or newspapers the savages immediately find out what's going on and what is interesting for them, from hundreds of kilometres away.

A Journey through the Gypsy areas

To convince ourselves of the seriousness of this project we asked some members of the association committee to allow us to join them in their propaganda tours to the Gypsy camps. So, we have arrived to the Bucharest's suburbs at 'Tei lake', to a street full of garbage [3] like a 'maidan', i. e. garbage ramp. We are walking through the two lines of laundry boilers where, under the pressure the 'hot corncobs', the Romanian capital feeds itself. This factory of boiled corn is surrounded by small shops, where lots of rags and garbage are deposited, and which the Gypsies then sell to paper factories, sugar factories, etc. (you probably do not know that in the production of sugar are used the bones collected by the Gypsies in the dumps of the capital's suburbs?).

As soon as we arrive there, a lot of 'dănciuci' [4], i. e. Gypsy child beggars, tiny assault battalions in brown shirts, – or even without any shirts, – surround us immediately. A few adult Gypsies are listening to the priest but not with great enthusiasm. They have to receive the permission of their chiefs and of the council of elders to join the association. The meeting in this camp is really something original; it consists of a handful of Gypsies, a couple of women, and a great number of 'black devils' that listen with the greatest seriousness to the appeal read by the Archimandrite. The discipline is high; if a slight hubbub emerges, one of the Gypsies immediately speaks with a solemn voice:

– Please be quiet, this is not the Parliament!

The meeting does not take place in any hall, but right in the yard of a lăutar.

The lăutars complain about the competition of the radio, while the householders of "the pharaonic origin" ask for the paving of their streets:

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– How many times have we asked to pave the street and to remove the trash. The city administration answers us why we need cleanness, as we are Gypsies and we will immediately litter it again. But did anybody actually try to clean the street to see what we will do after?

As we saw, first of all the organisers need to make the Gypsies' chiefs become the members of the association to be able to start this campaign for holding the general congress. Though, it looks like some chiefs have no interest to start for the Gypsies to be emancipated. Actually, some of these chiefs treat the Gypsies like slaves, for the triage of garbage at the Capital City's dumps, and to profit from the surplus. These chiefs are the managers of the garbage business, so they probably are afraid to lose their workers if the Gypsies are emancipated. Do not think that this would be a small loss for them. The Gypsies from the camp tell us that their chief has made a great fortune, that he is a millionaire from this trade, and that the celebrations organised by this "King of garbage" are well known. His daughter's wedding had an extraordinary pomposity:

– "The military orchestra played at the wedding!" …

Another sore point, from what the Gypsies told us, is the intention to settle the nomads:

– The nomadic Gypsy has in the blood the craving for wandering, so even if you chained him he would run away. On the other hand, those who are settled from the generations and, for example, became householders in the capital's suburb, they would not want to leave their houses and occupations even if they were endowed with some plots of land in the other parts of the country.

Finally, the supreme jurisdiction of the Gypsies, the counsel of the elderly, still has to make its decision and it is not known if this 'mature body' will approve the congress and the action for the civilisation of the Gypsies …

Notes

1. The idea of organising a Congress of the Gypsies was not a fictional perspective for Archimandrite Calinic I. Popp Șerboianu; the importance of activities towards the preparation and organisation of a National or International Congress of the Gypsies, as well as the grandeur of these events, were perceived by him five years earlier. In 1928, he published a detailed report from the National and International Congresses of Romanian Intellectuals: Teachers (from primary schools) and Professors (from secondary schools), which were permanently financially humiliated by Romanian politicians (see Popp Șerboianu, 1928, p. 1).
2. The Congress of Romanian Roma (national Congress) took place on the 8th of October, 1933, in Bucharest (Ileana Hall), convened and chaired by G. A. Lăzurică (see above).
3. Actually, Roma communities were often based in specific locations in various peripheral districts of interbellum Bucharest. The inhabitants of Bucharest did not often know how life was lived in the peripheral slums; at the same time, it is attested that a lot of Roma citizens who lived on the outskirts of the city had not seen the central boulevard *Calea Victoriei* (see Realitatea Ilustrată, 1933d, pp. 18-19). The informal name of one of the most famous Romani urban neighbourhood in interwar Bucharest was 'Valea Plângerii' (The Valley of Sighs), which was divided into small sectors, where garbage and debris were deposited– and everything that the big city considered unnecessary. The main 'attraction' there was a monument made up of garbage with a height of 20-30 meters (see Ilustrațiunea Română, 1934b, p. 19).

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4. According to a version provided by Romanian historian Nicolae Iorga (1871-1940), the word 'Danci/Dănciuci', i.e. *Danciu*, is the diminutive from the princely name Dan I (Voivode of Walachia, 1383-1386). The first documentary attestation of Romanian Gypsies was at 1385, when those were indirectly mentioned as the submissive servants of the Wallachian ruler Dan I (see Iorga, 1939, p. 285).

Source: [A. B.] (1933b). Congresul Țiganilor. *Realitatea Ilustrată*, An. 7, No. 345, 1933, September 7, pp. 10-11.
Prepared for publication by Ion Duminica.

Comments

The published article analyses the process of starting the Roma Emancipation Movement in Romania, in 1933. It brought to the attention of the Romanian readers of the daily newspapers the existence of a Gypsy association in Bucharest city (on Vultur street, 147), whose president was Archimandrite Calinic I. Popp Șerboianu, alongside the Gypsy program and its relevant objectives: to establish a Gypsy newspaper, evening classes, schools on wheels for nomadic Gypsies, the foundation of a popular Gypsy University, libraries, kindergartens, a hostel, an athenaeum, a cinema, canteens, a hospital, offices of employment opportunities, public baths; to organise the educational conferences; to collect the Gypsy folklore; to provide free legal and medical assistance; to help in religion needs, etc. One of the modern issues in the Roma history can also be found in this very advanced program, which aimed among other things to provide even the equal rights for *literate women*, who would also be allowed to join the counsels of the Gypsy bailiffs.

Some of these objectives would be provided in the following years, by different actors. For example, during the interwar period (1934-1941), six Roma/Gypsy newspapers were published in Romania (see Annex II). But the main objective which was planned to be achieved in the nearer future was the organisation of a Great General Gypsy Congress. The need to convene the Congress of the Gypsies was promoted daily through small meetings in different peripheral parts of Bucharest city, where one could find temporary camps of Gypsy nomadic groups from all over Romania, as well as settled Gypsy inhabitants who lived in those urban neighbourhoods. In the article, between the lines, the challenges and issues which would be faced by the new literate leaders of the Romanian Gypsies are also exposed: such as the direct opposition to the process of Gypsy cultural emancipation from rich Roma leaders (called the "Kings of garbage"); the unknown final decision to be adopted by wise Roma elders, members of the Supreme Justice Romani courts; the problem of cultural emancipation through the voluntary settlement of nomadic illiterate Gypsies in a different part of Romania, which, it is said by the journalist, have had the "cravings for wandering in the blood" for centuries.

Ion Duminica

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6.3.6 *After the Congress of Roma*

After the Congress of "Romilor"

După congresul istoric din sala Ileana care a întrunit pentru întâia oară, țigani din toate unghiurile țării, hotărâți să lupte pentru o soartă mai bună în jurul unui singur "steag" – fruntașii mișcării au pornit în vizite protocolare. Astfel au vizitat redacțiile ziarelor și publicațiilor care au sprijinit dintr-un început dintr-o firească simpatie această categorie de "oameni necăjiți".

Așa ne-am pomenit și noi, cu președintele "Asociațiilor țiganilor din România", G. A. Lăzurică, însoțit de secretara generală și prezidenta secției feminine, – d-ra Florica Constantinescu.

Conducătorii mișcării țiganilor sunt oameni hotărâți să ducă o luptă dârză pentru redeșteptarea țiganilor și organizarea lor într-o mare și puternică asociație, pentru ca strânși uniți să dobândească o îmbunătățire a stării morale și materiale a acestei categorii de cetățeni. Lăzurică se ocupă de țigani – țigani de toate categoriile, iar d-ra Constantinescu de țigănci și de copiii lor.

– Avem și începuturi, ce e drept, destul de modeste, dar destul de lămurite pentru a învedera scopurile pe care le urmărim. Iată de pildă "prima grădiniță a copiilor de țigani", pe care am inaugurat-o de curând și care este un început de realizare. Nu vom lăsa copiii țiganilor noștri pe străzi și maidane, pradă murdăriei, bolilor și atâtor deprinderi rele.

– Dar în congres, ce ați discutat?

– Am pus mai întâi bazele "Asociației". Apoi am discutat atâtea nevoi care frământă lumea "noastră", umilă, nesocotită, batjocurită și totuși muncitoare, credincioasă și folositoare țării. Suntem aproape 900,000 țigani, cei mai mulți trăind din munca lor fără să supere pe cineva și cu atât mai puțin bugetul public: lingurari, fierari, meșteri-lăcătuși, spoitori, vânzători de ziare, lăutari, văscuitori de ghete, strângători de vase, hârtii, cârpe, fiare-vechi, florari, devotați ai atâtor îndeletniciri pe cât de umile, pe atât de onorabile. Țiganii sunt creștini ortodocși, dinastici, vorbesc limba românească și mai presus de toate sunt elemente de ordine; dovadă că în mijlocul lor nu prind curentele extremiste. Ei merită deplină solicitudine a cârmuitorilor care trebuie, cel puți de aci înainte, să-i trateze pe picior de egalitate cu ceilalți cetățeni cărora li se reclamă aceleași îndatoriri civice.

La congres, țiganii s-au plâns de diferite nevoi, privind criza prin care trec mai toate categoriile de muncitori. Criza i-a lovit și pe ei, destul de crud, în afară de unele împrejurări în care chiar îndeletnicirile lor au fost aproape suprimate.

Astfel radio și jaz-band-urile au lăsat aproape muritori de foame pe acei minunați lăutari pe care îi cunoașteți și dv.; cucoanele cu chetele și "florile de binefaceri" au desființat florăresele cântate de poeți și zugrăvite de pictori; astrologii, "prezicătorii" și atâți farseuri, – ghicitoarele cu ghiocul; industria mare și mijlocie, – îndeletnicirile atâtor fierari și meșteșugari pricepuți ...

– Și pentru toate acestea ați găsit soluții?

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– Am discutat și s-au emis felurite păreri. Cea mai bună a fost aceea ca și țiganii să-și strângă rândurile, pentru ca prin solidaritate să obțină mai mult decât ar putea avea, izolați … Poate că, așa uniți, dacă nu vor izbuti să facă altceva, să dobândească dreptul de a nu mai fi socotiți obiect de batjocură în școală, armată, societate. Țiganul este și el om ca toți ceilalți oameni, și cel puțin de acum încolo cere să fie tratat la fel ca ceilalți.

– Dar pe "romelele" dv. cum le veți organiza?

– În secțiune separată, pe centre și subcentre, în carul unui întreg program care tinde – ca și programul general al "Asociației" – la ridicarea morală, spirituală și materială a țigăncei noastre. Vom încerca să facem operă de educație, cultură și asistență mai întâi în mic, apoi cu ajutorul oamenilor de bine, în mare. "Cei mari" ne vor da desigur sprijinul, pentru că ceeace nădăjduim să facem nu este de cât un lucru bun și folositor.

∵

After the Congress of the "Roma" [1]

After the historical Congress in the Ileana Hall that had, for the first time, united the Gypsies from all over the country and made them decide to struggle for their better future under a common "flag", the leaders of this public association started doing protocol visits. Thereby they visited some publishers and newspapers' editors that from the very beginning had demonstrated their sympathy to this category of "troubled people".

That's the way we also found ourselves in front of the president of the Associations of the Gypsies of Romania, Mr. G. A. Lăzurică, accompanied by the Secretary General and the president of the Women's Branch of the association, Ms. Florica Constantinescu.

The leaders of the Gypsy movement are people determined to fight fearlessly for the revival of the Gypsies, and for their organisation in a large and powerful association as only united they can achieve the goal of empowerment of the moral and material state of this category of citizens.

Mr. Lăzurică deals with Gypsy men, with all categories of Gypsy men, while Ms. Constantinescu works with Gypsy women and their children.

– We already have some achievements, albeit modest but clear enough to highlight the purposes we are pursuing. For example, we have the "first Kindergarten of the Gypsy Children" which we have recently opened [2]. We will not let the children of our Gypsies remain on streets and squares to be prey to dirt, sickness and so many bad habits.

– And what have you discussed during the Congress? [3]

– First of all, we established the association. Next, we discussed so many needs that hurt "our" world, humble, reckless, mocked and yet hard-working, faithful and useful to the country. There are almost 900,000 Gypsies; the majority of them live off their labour without bothering anyone and even less so the public budget: *lingurari* (spoon-makers), *fierari* (blacksmiths), *meșteri-lăcătuși* (locksmiths), *spoitori* (tinsmiths), *vânzători de ziare* (newspapers'sellers), *lăutari* (traditional folk musicians), *văscuitori de ghete* (shoe cleaners), *strângători de vase* (junkmen that collected old crockery), *ragmen* – gatherers

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of paper, rags, and scrap metal, the *flower sellers*, as well as people devoted to many other occupations, as humble as they are honourable.

Gypsies are Orthodox Christians, royalists, Romanian speaking and, above all, are the elements of order, proven through the fact that among them you find no extremist movements. They deserve the utmost solicitude of the powers who must at least, from now on, treat them on equal footing with the other citizens who bear the same civil duties.

During the Congress, the Gypsies complained of various needs concerning the crisis through which all categories of workers are now passing. The crisis hit them too, and quite severe, besides some circumstances in which even their trades were almost suppressed. Thus, radio and jazz bands made *lăutari*, whom you also know, almost to die of hunger; Ladies from the high Romanian society (*cucoanele*) with fundraising and "flowers of charity" have abolished the flower-girls (*florăresele*) that were so much sung by poets and painted by painters; the astrologers, "soothsayers", and so many fraudsters did the same with fortune-telling by shells; the large and medium enterprises for a lot of smiths and other skilful artisans … [4].

– Have you found the solution for all these troubles?

– Well, we discussed it and suggested different opinions. The best proposal was that Gypsies have to close ranks because through solidarity they will get more than if they were isolated … Maybe in this way, united, even if they will not succeed with something else, they at least will achieve the right to not be treated as an object of mockery in the schools, in the army, as well as in the society in general [5]. The Gypsy is a man like all others, thus at least from now on he will be treated equally.

– And how you will organise your "Roma women'?

– We will do it in a separate section, in centres and sub-centres, which, like the general program of the Association, will be targeted towards the moral, spiritual, and material development of our Gypsy woman. We will try to organise an educational, cultural work [6], and supportive work, first on a small level and then, with the help of good men, on a larger level. The 'big men'will of course give us their support, because what we hope to achieve is nothing else but good and useful work for everybody.

Notes

1. The term 'Roma' was intensively promoted by the new Roma elite following the end of the Roma Congress after October 1933. At the same time, this word was not fully accepted by the Romanian public opinion. For this reason, it is often used in quotation marks. After 1933, the terms 'Țigani/Cingari' (Gypsies) had become a mockery for the new revived, illuminated Roma elite from Romania, because it was presumed to resemble their humiliated and inferior Indian origin (*cingari* = is considered the name of a lower-ranking social statute people living today in India). Thus, through the Roma newspapers published in Romania, for the culturalisation of the Roma and non-Roma population, the representatives of the new Roma elite started to promote the meanings of the names by which the Roma themselves wanted to be defined: *Manuș* = Man; *Kalo* = Black; *Sințo* = Ours Man; *Rom* = Male (see Glasul Romilor, 1941, p. 2).
2. Concerning more detailed information about daily working issues of the first Roma kindergarten in Romania, at Bucharest, *Teiul Doamnei* Street, see Ilustrațiunea Română, 1933b, pp. 4-5.

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3. For details about the official agenda, speakers, discussed issues, elected governing bodies, future purposes which would be supported through Romani solidarity after the first national Congress of Romanian Roma, see Nastasă & Varga, 2001, doc. 28; 31, pp. 107-108; 110-112.
4. Concerning the alarming disappearance of traditional Roma handicrafts which could no longer compete with the modern, technical and scientific progress, and other causes – which in their turn generated the poverty and misery of the Roma community, see Glasul Romilor, 1938c, p. 3.
5. In the interwar period, Roma people were often mocked and discriminated through Romanian popular fairy tales, which created for them the image of brain-hampered, illiterates, people left behind of society (see Cultura Poporului, 1928, p. 2).
6. The first major *Festival of Art and Culture of the Roma in Europe* was organised in Bucharest during two Sundays (18-25 March, 1934, in the "Omnia" Cinema Theater Hall; boulevard *Schitul Măgureanu*, No. 4). Following it, one can see three main activities included in the planned program for the first European/Romanian Festival of Art and Culture of the Roma: a) the Conference on the *Origin, History and Emigration of Roma in Europe*, held by Mr. G. A. Lăzurică (the Voivode of the Roma); b) the stage play in one act, *Rivalii* (Rivals), with the subject taken from the life on the front in which the patriotism and the spirit of humanity of the Roma soldier during the wartime was shown (the author of this original piece – Mr. Gal, a Roma publicist); c) the Gypsy theatrical wedding, accompanied by ancient Gypsy songs and dances, of Indian origin, as well as tasting traditional dishes and reflecting the Gypsy customs (see Năstasă & Varga, 2001, doc. 41, p. 127).

Source: [No Author]. (1933a). După congresul "Romilor". *Ilustrațiunea Română*, An. 5, No. 43, 1933, October 18, p. 9.
Prepared for publication by Ion Duminica.

Comments

After the Congress of the Roma, a new Roma elite emerged, ready to assert itself on the realm of promoting the Roma emancipation movement. This is a stage of promoting the positive image of Roma leaders, rather than offering concrete solutions to solving the Roma issues, which was quite mottled at that time. Firstly, the primary achievements recently obtained by Roma leaders from Romania were outlined: the unfolding of the first Roma Congress in Romania; the opening of the first kindergarten for Gypsy children in Bucharest city; the establishment of Women branch inside of Roma Association. On the secondary level, an amalgam of Roma issues specific to the various professional categories of the supposedly 900,000 Romanian Roma was exposed. The tendentious solution promoted by Roma leaders to solve these problems was related to the development of a strong solidarity between members of the Roma Association. Also, new Roma intellectuals were hoping for a financial support from the side of Roma 'Big bosses' and Roma 'Good men'. As subsequent events would show, this hope for financial support for the Roma emancipation movement was pragmatic or naive. For the time being, after the unfolding of the Roma Congress, in the interbellum Romanian society, two selected representatives of the new Roma intelligentsia (in accordance with gender equality criteria) started their protocol visits and propaganda of the social-cultural euphoria for the Roma revival.

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6.3.7 *The Statute and Regulations of the General Union of the Roma in Romania*

[November 16, 1933].
Uniunea Generală a Romilor din România.

Act Constitutiv

Se înființează în București "Uniunea Generală a Romilor din România", cu sediul provizoriu în strada Sârbească nr. 8, din inițiativa d-lui G. A. Lăzărescu-Lăzurică.

Scopul acestei Uniuni este: cultural, social și spiritual, înlăturând de la început orice substrat politic, și în această Uniune se încadrează orice cetățean rom, indiferent de profesia și activitatea sa publică.

Pentru ca să fie sprijinită cu simpatie de presă, de autoritățile publice și de opinia publică, în Uniunea Generală a Romilor din România vor putea intra ca membri de onoare și concetățeni români, pentru a ne cunoaște pășul, să ne aprecieze și să încurajeze acțiunea noastră de redeșteptare.

Și întrucât d-l G. A. Lăzărescu-Lăzurică, publicist, rom de origină, luptător devotat cauzei noastre, a desfășurat o vie activitate pentru binele neamului nostru, îi cunoaștem programul său, program expus și la Congresul Romilor de la 8 octombrie a.c., însușim acest program, ne solidarizăm cu dânsul, luptând pentru apărarea intereselor noastre de breslași și cetățeni modești ai țării, prin căi legale.

Acest program este arătat pe larg în statutul alăturat.

Existența legală a Uniunii se consideră de la data legalizării acestui act de către Tribunalul Ilfov și organele în drept.

Ne legăm să fim patrioți, dinastici și ortodocși, să luăm parte la bucuriile și necazurile țării noastre, respingând orice uneltiri viclene, dăunătoare statului și bisericii noastre.

Voim să dăm pildă că noi, romii, suntem cei mai dornici de o viață nouă, emancipându-ne printr-o intensă activitate culturală dusă prin atenee populare, șezători artistice, literatură originală și prin morală, adaptând tot ce este folositor cauzei noastre, pentru a nu mai fi considerați o paria a societății.

Țintim ca printr-o atitudine demnă, prin publicitate și intensă propagandă, să obișnuim pe concetățenii noștri români a nu ne mai denumi "țigani", ci "romi"– adevăratul nostru nume –, care înseamnă "om" iubitor de libertate.

Ne legăm să păstrăm din tată în fiu muzica, jocurile, datinile și cântecele populare românești, ca niște harnici cronicari.

Comitetul central de conducere a Uniunii este acela prevăzut în alăturatul tablou, valabil pe cinci ani, cu drept de prelungire pentru d-nii G. A. Lăzărescu-Lăzurică președinte și Nicolae Gh. Lache, ca secretar general.

Recunoaștem ca membri de onoare ai Uniunii pe următoarele persoane: I.P.S. Patriarh Dr. Miron Cristea, pe d-nii miniștri ai Muncii, Justiției și Școalelor, pe d-nii Șt. Brăiloiu, Pr. Const[antin] Dron, Aurel Crăciunescu, Adrian Maniu, Mihail Sevastos, Ion Teodoru, Margareta Nicolau, Dr. Ilie Rădulescu, Alex. F. Mihail, Pamfil Șeicaru,

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Nae Ionescu, Richard Franasovici, pe dl. Prim-preşedinte al Tribunalului Ilfov, pe dl. Prim-procuror al Tribunalului Ilfov, şi pe dl. Prefect al Poliţiei Capitalei.

Pe dl. Mihail Berceanu îl alegem ca preşedinte de onoare.

Făcut azi, 16 noiembrie 1933.

Preşedinte active … [signatures]: G. A. Lăzărescu-Lăzurică; Prim Vice-Preşedinte Apostol Matei; Vice-Preşedinte Ion Niculescu; Vice-Preşedinte Ion Paraschiv; Vice-Preşedinte Gheorghe V. Creangă; Secretar General Niculae Gh. Lache; Casier Central Nicolae Niculescu; ajutor Niculae Matei; Prim-cenzor Sotir I. Niculescu; Cenzor Gh. Niculae, Ion Costache, Ioniţă Gheorghe; Cenzor supleant Păun Nicolae, Efta N. Ion; Secretar de şedinţă Gheorghe Dumitru; Prim consilier Gheorghe G. Păun; Consilier Vasile Busuioc, Călin Niculae, Anghel Marin, Stoica Vasile, Ion Simion; Supleant consilier Marin Ionescu, Simion Marin, Gheorghe Niculescu; Membru în Comitet Stan Niculae, Costache N. Gheorghe, Radu Cristache, Gh. Niculescu, Tudor Gheorghe, Gheorghe Şerban, Constantin Gheorghe.

Redactor şi martor pentru identitate Avocat … [signature] Ilie Borugă, Strada Italiană 13, L.S.

Statutul şi Regulamentul Uniunei Generale a Romilor din România

Statut

Art. 1. Se înfiinţează în Bucureşti pe ziua de 16 noiembrie 1933, conform actului constitutiv, "Uniunea Generală a Romilor din România", cu sediul în strada Sârbească nr. 8, provizoriu.

Art. 2. Această Uniune este condusă de un comitet central ales pe termen de 5 ani, conform hotărârii luate la Congresul ţinut la 8 octombrie a.c. în Bucureşti, comitet compus din preşedintele activ, un prim vice-preşedinte, 2 vice-preşedinţi, un secretar general, un casier, un secretar de şedinţă, un prim cenzor, patru cenzori şi doi supleanţi, un prim-consilier, cinci consilieri şi doi supleanţi, un bibliotecar-arhivar şi 5 membri.

Art. 3. Uniunea va putea înfiinţa şi o secţiune feminină pentru educaţia şi sprijinirea roamelor, care se va conduce separat.

Scopul Uniunii

Art. 4. Scopul Uniunii este: cultural, social şi spiritual.

a) Pe terenul cultural, Uniunea va activa organizând şezători şi festivaluri artistice, membrii săi se vor manifesta pe ogorul literar, artistic şi muzical, pentru a arăta că posedă talente în aceste ramuri de activitate;

b) Pe terenul social, Uniunea va stărui pe lângă toţi oamenii de bine şi pe lângă toate forurile competente ca să realizeze următoarele deziderate:

Să obţie un teren în Bucureşti pe care să clădească o mare construcţie în care să funcţioneze o grădiniţă pentru copiii romi, un ateneu popular, o bibliotecă, un azil pentru

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lehuze, un contencios, un dispensar și un cămin pentru adăpostul romilor veniți temporar din provincie sau pentru cei urgisiți de soartă.

Să stăruie la organele în drept pentru a pune stavilă imigrației meseriașilor străini, care concurează pe meseriașii romi sau chiar români, în branșa zidăriei, salahoriei, hornăriei, potcovăriei și lăutăriei.

Să intervie în mod pașnic și pe căi legale la autorități pentru a fi indulgente cu florăresele, văxuitorii și negustorii ambulanți romi care voiesc să-și câștige o pâine în mod cinstit, fără a mări numărul șomerilor.

Să se stăruiască pentru nomazi ca să fie fixați pe terenuri mărginașe, la orașe sau la sate, astfel că nemaiumblând vagabonzi, nu vor mai putea să se dedea la furturi, necinstind neamul romilor, ca o paria a societății.

Să se încadreze toți lăutarii ca breslași, pentru ca plătind cotizații la Casa Centrală a Asigurărilor Muncitorești, ei să poată beneficia de ajutorare în caz de boală, de bătrânețe sau deces.

Să se fixeze de organele în drept două stațiuni de vară, climaterice și balneare, pentru copiii romi, care vor fi trimiși cu colonia la cură de aer, de soare sau nămol, fiind știut că acești copii dau numărul cel mai mare de decese, din cauza mizeriei în care trăiesc, fiind seceraţi de tuberculoză și alte maladii.

Să se întroneze o egalitate de tratament și față de romi, fără să se mai facă distincție de rasă, cu ironii și atitudini disprețuitoare, deoarece romii sunt și ei cetățeni cu îndatoriri de a plăti dări către stat, fac armată, sunt dinastici, asimilați elementului românesc, sunt ortodocși și repugnă orice curent subversiv sau extremist.

Să se intervină ca tinerii cu talent muzical remarcabil să fie primiți în Conservator, să li se dea și lor burse pentru a se perfecționa în străinătate.

Să fie ajutați doi reprezentanți ai romilor din România ca să participe la Congresul Internațional al Romilor, ce se va ține în Franța sau oriunde se va ține, și, în interesul statului român, doi membrii din comitetul Uniunei să obțină două permise gratuite pe C.F.R. ca să poată să viziteze orașele sau satele cu populație compactă de romi, spre a-i sfătui la ordine, morală și muncă cinstită.

După ce Uniunea va fi recunoscută persoană morală și juridică, membrii ei să poată beneficia de o reducere pe C.F.R., spre a putea veni în Capitală la procesiuni religioase, manifestări culturale și congrese.

[c)] Pe terenul spiritual: Toți membrii Uniunii să lupte pentru biserica noastră ortodoxă, disprețuind sectele ce încearcă să corupă sufletele noastre.

Să cerem Sf. Patriarhii ca să indice o biserică din Capitală unde romii se vor reculege în ziua de Sf. Maria (15 august), mergând în procesiune religioasă.

Să sfătuim pe nomazi ca să-și boteze copiii, ei să se căsătorească legitim și religios, formând o bază a familiei și societății.

Să dăm o lectură de cărți religioase, recomandând ca fiecare rom să aibe în casa sa o icoană, o biblie, unde vor găsi adevărul și-și vor primeni sufletele.

Art. 5. Având grija generațiilor de mâine, trebuie să ne îngrijim ca toți copiii noștri să învețe carte și meserii, pentru a înfrunta mai cu temei lupta grea a vieții.

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[Art. 6 lipsește]

Art. 7. În Uniune nu se admit ca membri decât romi, iar ca onorifici numai acei cetățeni care au dat dovadă că iubesc neamul romilor, ajutându-i moralicește și materialicește.

Art. 8. Orice membru care a suferit o condamnare definitivă și a executat-o, va fi exclus din Uniune.

Fondurile Uniunii

Art. 9. Fondurile Uniunii se vor compune din taxe de înscriere, cotizațiuni, donațiuni, subscripții, ajutoare și din venitul șezătorilor, serbărilor, balurilor și fructificarea fondurilor.

Art. 10. Toți membrii Uniunii sunt obligați la înscriere să verse suma de 10 lei o dată pentru totdeauna, precum și o cotizație săptămânală de 7 lei, sub luare de chitanță. [...]
Art. 12. Membrii Uniunii sunt de patru categorii: activi, fondatori, onorifici și aderenți. . [...]

Administrația Uniunii

Art. 14. Administrația Uniunii cade în sarcina întregului comitet central, sub controlul cenzorilor și sub directiva președintelui. [...]

Art. 17. În fața justiției și autorităților, Uniunea va fi reprezentată numai de președintele activ și de secretarul general și numai prin delegații speciale de prim-vice-președinte și vice-președinți. [...]

Retribuțiuni

Art. 20. Niciun membru din consiliu sau din comitetul executiv central nu va fi retribuit cu vreun salar pe termen de un an, în afară de președinte, vice-președinte, secretar general și casier și aceasta numai după ce Uniunea va avea fonduri fructificate. [...]

Drapelul și insigna

Art. 23. Drapelul Uniunii se compune din culorile naționale cu pajura țării, purtând în fiecare colț câte un semn distinct, reprezentând: o vioară, o nicovală, un compas și o mistrie cu ciocan, semne ale artei și meseriilor romilor din România.

Dispoziţiuni generale

Art. 24. Adunările ordinare se fac săptămânal sau lunar, iar cele extraordinare de două ori pe an și Congresul o dată pe an.

Art. 25. Aceste adunări se fac prin convocarea președintelui activ sau la cererea înscrisă a cel puțin 50 de membri aderenți, considerându-se adunări valabile numai acelea care numără jumătate plus unul din numărul total al membrilor aderenți din Capitală.

Art. 26. Insigna Uniunii va fi purtată numai de membrii cu cotizațiile la zi.

Art. 27. Fiecare membru este dator să desfășoare o intensă propagandă pentru dezvoltarea muncii, activând în cadrul programului ei.

Art. 28. La decesul unuia dintre membrii fondatori, activi sau aderenți cu cotizațiile la zi, ceilalți membrii sunt obligați să însoțească carul funebru și să facă gardă drapelului ce va fi trimis în acest scop.

Art. 29. Uniunea va înființa comitete și filialele în toate părțile țării.[...]

Art. 33. În limita fondurilor, Uniunea va putea acorda ajutoare oamenilor săraci pentru cazuri nenorocite, cu aprobarea membrilor de comitet. [...]

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Art. 35. Statutul de față reprezintă legea membrilor Uniunii și orice abateri de la dispoziţiunile sale atrage excluderea.

Art. 36. Toţi membrii sunt obligaţi să aibe o atitudine cuviincioasă faţă de preşedinte şi consiliu, contrariu vor fi excluşi din Uniune.

Art. 37. Sub nici o formă, nimeni nu va putea cere înlăturarea preşedintelui activ de la conducerea Uniunii atât timp cât dânsul îşi impune autoritatea sa de conducător şi reprezentant al nostru. [...]

Art. 39. Toţi membrii, indiferent de categoria lor, trebuie să asiste la adunările ordinare şi extraordinare într-o ţinută curată.

Art. 40. Se consideră renegat acel membru care lucrează contra intereselor Uniunii şi a semenilor săi. [...]

Regulament

Art. 1. Prin membrii fruntaşi din comitet se înţelege: preşedintele activ, secretarul general, casierul, prim-vice-preşedintele, vice-preşedinţii, consilierul referent, primul consilier şi primul cenzor.

Art. 6. La data publicării prezentului act constitutiv, cu statutul şi regulamentul lui, 1 martie 1934, neexistând nicio gestiune de controlat şi nimic de imputat [...].

Art. 8. Actualul comitet al Uniunii este compus din următoarele persoane: Preşedinte onorific, d. Mihail Berceanu, deputat, prim-ajutor de primar al municipiului Bucureşti; preşedinte activ, d. G. A. Lăzărescu-Lăzurică, publicist, misionar al Bisericii Române Ortodoxe şi Voievod al romilor din România; prim-vicepreşedinte, Apostol Matei, proprietar, constructor autorizat; vicepreşedinţi: Gh. V. Creangă, maestru fierar, proprietar, Gh. Niculescu, proprietar, comerciant; secretar general şi casier central, d. Nicolae Niculescu, comerciant, proprietar; Dumitru Gh. Oprea, proprietar şi comerciant, consilier referent; ajutor casier, Niculae Matei, proprietar, meşter zidar; bibliotecar-arhivar, Mihail Gh. Creangă, student; secretar de şedinţă, Ioan Dumitrescu, viorist; prim consilier, Vasile Stănescu-Bulgaru, şef de orchestră; prim censor, Vasile Stoica, pensionar şi proprietar; consilieri: G. G. Păun, Scarlat Niculae şi Dumitru Baban; cenzori: Apostol Stănescu, Nic. Gh. Alecu, Iordache Banu, Nic. Gh. Rugu şi I. Marin Griţoi; consilier referent, A. Ionescu, muzicant; membri în comitet: I. Păun, Gh. N. Costache, Păun Gheorghe, Stoica Niculae, D. Stoicescu, Tudor Gheorghe, Costică Florea, Gheorghe Anghel, Nica Nicolae, Ilie M. Ion, Manolide Ene, Oprea Marinescu, Voicu Ştefan, Matei Rădulescu, Alex. Mitoi.

Secţiunea Feminină

Preşedintă de onoare: d-na Margareta Nicolau, ziaristă; Preşedintă activă: d-şoara Petruţa Gr. Niculescu, artistă mezzo-soprană, absolventă a Conservatorului; Silvia Gr. Niculescu, pianistă, absolventă a Conservatorului; vice-preşedinte: Marta G. Lăzurică, corespondentă de limbi străine, secretară generală; Elvira Zâmbreşteanu şi Maria Nicolae Matei, membre în comitet; El. Nedelescu, consilieră; Dorina Constantinescu, consilieră referentă; Olimpia Tatoiu, pedagogă, secretară de şedinţă.

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La organizațiile din provincie: Gh. D. Bașno-Brăila, președinte al organizației jud[ețului] Brăila; Velțan Nicolae, președinte al organizației din Crișana; Naftanailă Lazăr, președinte al organizației din Ardeal; Gh. Romcescu, președinte al organizației județului Prahova; Ilie D. Săvulescu, președinte al organizației județului Mușcel; I. Niculescu-Gărăilă, președinte al organizației jud[ețului] Ilfov.

Acești președinți de filiale și regiuni, ca și ceilalți președinți de organizații județene, sunt de drept membri în comitetul central al Uniunii.

În comitetul central vor mai putea intra și alte persoane care se vor dovedi demne, muncitoare și devotate cauzei romilor.

Cererea de personalitate juridică a Uniunii s-a introdus la Trib[unalul] Ilfov, formând dosarul nr. 1001 din 1934, cu prim termen la 27.II.1934, Patriarhia Română intervenind la autoritățile în drept pentru a da aviz favorabil, deci în termen de maxim două luni această formalitate va fi îndeplinită, după care va urma cererea de recunoaștere și ca persoană morală prin Parlamentul Țării.

Comitetul va putea fi restrâns după acordarea personalității juridice, când nevoia va cere.

Tribunalul Ilfov, Secția Notariat

Proces-verbal nr. 32.620.

Anul 1933, luna Noiembrie 16.

Înaintea noastră, A. Balș, supleant, Tribunalul Ilfov, Secția de Notariat, asistat de d. grefier P. Veliciu s-au prezentat astăzi, 16 noiembrie 1933, în pretoriul Tribunalului, d-lor: G. A. Lăzărescu-Lăzurică, M. Apostol, I. Niculescu, I. Paraschiv, G. Creangă, N. Lache, M. Nicolae, S. Niculescu, G. Niculae, I. Costache, Gh. Ioniță, N. Păun, I. Efta, Dumitru Gheorghe, Gh. Păun, V. Busuioc, N. Călin, M. Anghel, V. Stoica, I. Simion, M. Ionescu, M. Simion, Gh. Niculescu, S. Niculae, Gh. Costache, R. Cristache, Gh. Niculae, Gh. Tudor, Gh. Șerban și C. Gheorghe.

Identitatea am constatat-o prin martorul I. Borugă, avocat din București, personal cunoscut nouă, care ne-a declarat că d-lor, sus-zișii, sunt cei semnați în acest act constitutiv, cerând părțile prin petiția înregistrată la nr. 32.304 autentificarea prezentului act în dublu exemplar, la care se alătură și statutele.

După ce am vizat ambele exemplare, am citit acest act din cuvânt în cuvânt, în auzul părților, care ne-au declarat că acest act este făcut cu consimțământul d-lor, și că unul din cele două exemplare este semnat de Simion Marin, Gh. Niculescu, Gh. Costache, Gh. Nicolae și Tudor Nicolae prin punere de deget, declarând că nu știu carte, iar de celelalte părți și martor prin proprii semnături. D. I. Borugă ne-a declarat că d-sa a scris și redactat actul după voința părților.

În urmă, Simion Marin, Gh. Niculescu, Gh. Costache, Gh. Nicolau și Tudor Nicolae au pus degetul în dreapta numelui lor, iar celelate părți și martor au subscris, în prezența noastră exemplarul ce se va păstra la dosar.

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Noi, luând act de declarațiunea părților, autentificăm prezentul act constitutiv al Uniunii Generale a Romilor din România, actul fiind scris pe coală de lei 27, anulat timbru mobil de lei 27, duplic. 27.

Președinte L.S … [signature indescifrabil]; Grefier … [signatures indescifrabil].

∵

[November 16, 1933].
The General Union of the Roma in Romania.

Constitutive Act

The General Union of the Roma in Romania is established in Bucharest, with its provisional headquarters in 8, Sârbească Street, at the initiative of Mr. G. A. Lăzărescu-Lăzurică [1].

The purpose of this Union is: cultural, social and spiritual, removing from the beginning any political substratum, and in this Union any Roma citizen can be included, irrespective of his profession and public activity.

In order to be supported with sympathy by the press and by public authorities and public opinion, in the General Union of Roma in Romania our Romanian country fellows can also be able to enter as honorary members, to know our agenda, to appreciate us and to encourage the action of our revival.

And since Mr. G. A. Lăzărescu-Lăzurică, a journalist of Roma origin, a fighter dedicated to our cause, carried out a living activity for the benefit of our people, we know his program, a program also exhibited at the Roma Congress on October 8, current year, we accept this program, we solidarise with him, struggling to defend our interests of guilders and modest citizens of the country by legal means.

This program is broadly shown in the attached statute.

The legal existence of the Union is considered as of the date of legalization of this act by the Ilfov County Tribunal and the bodies in law.

We are bound to be patriotic, loyal to the royal dynasty and Orthodox, to take part in the joys and tribulations of our country, rejecting any cunning schemes, damaging our state and our church.

We want to give an example that we, the Roma, are most eager for a new life, emancipating us through an intense cultural activity carried through popular athenaeums, artistic seatings, original literature and morality, adopting everything that is useful to our cause, so that they are no longer considered a social pariah.

We aim, through a dignified attitude, through publicity and intense propaganda, to get our Romanian fellow citizens accustomed to not calling us 'Gypsies', but 'Roma' – our true name – meaning 'man', lover of freedom.

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We are bound to keep from father to son, as hard-working chroniclers, the Romanian music, dances, customs and folk songs.

The central committee of the Union is the one presented in the table below, valid for the next five years, with a right of extension for Mrs. G. A. Lăzărescu-Lăzurică, president and Nicolae Gh. Lache as general secretary.

We recognise as honorary members [2] of the Union the following people: His Highness Patriarch Dr. Miron Cristea [3], the ministers of Labour, Justice and Schools [4], Mrs. Ştefan Brăiloiu, priest Constantin Dron, Aurel Crăciunescu, Adrian Maniu, Mihail Sevastos, Ion Teodoru, Margareta Nicolau, Dr. Ilie Rădulescu, Alexandru F. Mihail, Pamfil Şeicaru, Nae Ionescu, Richard Franasovici, First President of the Ilfov County Tribunal, First Prosecutor of the Ilfov County Tribunal, and the Prefect of the Capital Police.

We chose Mr. Mihail Berceanu [5] as a honorary president.

Written today, November 16, 1933.

Active president … [signatures]: G. A. Lăzărescu-Lăzurică; Prime vice-president Apostol Matei; Vice-president Ion Niculescu; Vice-president Ion Paraschiv; Vice-president Gheorghe V. Creangă; General secretary Niculae Gh. Lache; Central cashier Nicolae Niculescu; Assistant cashier Niculae Matei; Prime censor Sotir I. Niculescu; Censor Gh. Niculae, Ion Costache, Ioniţă Gheorghe; Alternate censor Păun Nicolae, Efta N. Ion; Meeting secretary Gheorghe Dumitru; First counsellor Gheorghe G. Păun; Counsellor Vasile Busuioc, Călin Niculae, Anghel Marin, Stoica Vasile, Ion Simion; Alternate counsellor Marin Ionescu, Simion Marin, Gheorghe Niculescu; Committee member Stan Niculae, Costache N. Gheorghe, Radu Cristache, Gh. Niculescu, Tudor Gheorghe, Gheorghe Şerban, Constantin Gheorghe.

Editor and witness for identity, Lawyer … [signature] Ilie Borugă 13, Italiană Street, L.S.

The Statute and Regulations of the General Union of Roma in Romania

Statute

Article 1. It is established in Bucharest, on November 16, 1933, according to the constitutive act, the General Union of the Roma in Romania, headquartered, provisionally, in 8, Sârbească Street.

Article 2. This Union is headed by a central committee elected for a term of five years, in accordance with the decision taken at the congress held on October 8, current year, in Bucharest, a committee consisting of an active president, a prime vice-president, 2 vice-presidents, a general secretary, a cashier, a meeting secretary, a prime censor, four censors and two alternate censors, a first counsellor, five counsellors and two alternate counsellors, a librarian-archivist and 5 members.

Article 3. The Union can set up a section for women for the education and support of Roma women, which will be led separately.

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The purpose of the Union

Article 4. The purpose of the Union is: cultural, social and spiritual.

a) In the cultural field, the Union will act by organizing artistic seatings and festivals, its mmbers will manifest themselves on the literary, artistic and musical fields to show that they have talents in these activity branches;

b) In the social field, the Union will insist on all honest people and all competent forums in order to achieve the following desiderata:

To obtain land in Bucharest to build a large building with a kindergarten for Roma children, a popular athenaeum, a library, a shelter for postpartum women, a legal office, a dispensary and a shelter for the Roma who come temporarily from the country or for those accursed by fate.

To insist on the organs in law to put an end to the immigration of foreign craftsmen, who compete with Roma or even Romanian craftsmen, in the branching of masonry, day labour, chimney sweep, farriery, and fiddler [6].

To intervene peacefully and in legal ways with the authorities so that they be indulgent with the Roma florist women, shoeblacks, and street vendors who want to earn a living without increasing the number of the unemployed.

To stand for the nomads so that they will be settled on the land on the outskirts of towns, or in villages, so that they, once they do not wander anymore, will no longer commit theft, dishonouring the Roma nation, as a pariah of society.

All fiddlers should be enrolled in guilds, for paying contributions to the Central Office of Workers Insurance, they can benefit of *relief* in case of *sickness*, old age or death.

The bodies in low should establish two summer resorts, climatic and balneary, for Roma children who will be sent in the camp for air, sun or mud baths, knowing that these children give the highest number of deaths because of the misery they live in, being overtaken by tuberculosis and other diseases.

Equal treatment for the Roma should also be enthroned, without any distinction of race, with ironies and despising attitudes, because the Roma are also citizens with obligations to pay taxes for the state, they do the military service, are faithful to the dynasty, they are assimilated to the Romanian element, are Orthodox and rebuke any subversive or extremist current.

To intervene so that young people with remarkable musical talent are admitted to the Conservatory and they receive scholarships abroad.

Two representatives of Roma from Romania should be supported to participate in the International Roma Congress to be held in France or where this will be held, and in the interest of the Romanian state two members of the Union's committee to obtain two travel permits on the railway, to be able to visit the towns or villages with a compact Roma population to advise them on order, morality and honest work.

Once the Union is recognised as a moral and legal entity, its members may benefit from a reduction on C.F.R. in order to be able to come to the Capital for religious processions, cultural events and congresses.

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[c)] On the spiritual field: All members of the Union should fight for our Orthodox Church, despising the sects that are trying to corrupt our souls.

Let us ask the Holy Patriarchate to point out a church in the Capital where the Roma will recoil on Saint Mary's Day (August 15), going into the religious procession.

Let us advise nomads to baptise their children, to conclude legal and religiously, forming a basis for family and society.

Let us encourage reading religious books, recommending that each Roma have in his house an icon, a Bible, where they will find the truth and renew their souls.

Article 5. Thinking about the generations of tomorrow, we must ensure that all our children be schooled and learn trades to face on the hard struggle of life.

[Article 6 is missing in original]

Article 7. As members of the Union only Roma are admitted and as honorary members only those citizens who proved that they love the Roma people by helping them morally and materially.

Article 8. Any member who has suffered a final conviction and has executed it shall be excluded from the Union.

Union's funds

Article 9. The Union funds will consist of registration fees, monthly fees, donations, subscriptions, aids, and income from seatings, celebrations, balls and fund fruition.

Article 10. All members of the Union when they enrol are obliged to pay a fee of 10 Lei once and for all, as well as a weekly fee of 7 Lei, and receive for them a receipt. […]

Article 12. The members of the Union are of four categories: active, founding, honorary and adherent. […]

Union's management

Article 14. The Union's management falls under the responsibility of the entire central committee under the control of the censors and under the direction of the president. […]

Article 17. In relation to the justice and authorities, the Union will be represented only by the active President and by the General Secretary and only by special delegates by the prime vice-president or the vice-presidents. […]

Remuneration

Article 20. No member of the council or the central executive committee shall be remunerated with any one-year salary except for the president, vice-presidents, general secretary and central cashier, and only after the Union will have fruited funds. […]

Flag and badge

Article 23. The Union flag is made up of the Romanian national colours with the coat of arms of the country, bearing in each corner a distinctive sign, representing: a violin, an anvil, a compass and a trowel with a hammer, signs of the art and professions of Roma in Romania.

General dispositions

Article 24. The ordinary meetings are held weekly or monthly, the extraordinary ones twice a year and the Congress once a year.

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Article 25. These meetings are held at the active president's convening or at the written request of at least fifty adherent members, and valid meetings are considered only those with a participation of half plus one of the total number of adherent members from the Capital.

Article 26. The Union badge shall be carried only by the members with the fee paid up to date.

Article 27. Each member is obliged to carry out intense propaganda for the development of work, activating within its program.

Article 28. At the death of one of the founding, active or adhering members with up-to-date fees, the other members are obliged to accompany the funeral carrier and to guard the flag that will be sent for this purpose.

Article 29. The Union shall establish committees and branches in all parts of the country. […]

Article 33. Within the fund limits, the Union can provide aids to the poor people for miserable cases with the approval of the committee members. […]

Article 35. This statute is the law of the Union's members and any deviations from its provisions entail exclusion.

Article 36. All members are bound to have a proper attitude towards the president and council, otherwise they will be excluded from the Union.

Article 37. Under no circumstances will anyone be able to demand the removal of the active president from the leadership of the Union as long as he imposes his authority as our leader and representative. […]

Article 39. All members, regardless of their category, must attend the ordinary and extraordinary meetings in a decent dress.

Article 40. The member who works against the interests of the Union and its peers is deemed to be a renegade. […]

The Regulations

Article 1. The leading members of the committee are the active president, the general secretary, the cashier, the first vice-president, the vice-presidents, the advisor counsellor, the first counsellor and the first censor. […]

Article 6. At the date of publication of this Constitutive Act, with its statute and regulations, March 1, 1934, there is no management to be controlled and nothing to be imputed […].

Article 7. The Women's Section will act within the Union's program and under the directive of the [Section's] president, in agreement with the active president of the Union, who has a decisive say.

Article 8. The current committee of the Union is composed of the following persons: Honorary President, Mr. Mihail Berceanu, deputy, first aid of mayor of the Bucharest City [7]; active president, Mr. G. A. Lăzărescu-Lăzurică, publicist, missionary of the Romanian Orthodox Church and Voivode of the Roma in Romania [8]; first vice-president, Mr. Apostol Matei, owner, authorised builder; vice-presidents, Mrs. Gh.

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V. Creangă, master blacksmith and owner; Gh. Niculescu, owner and merchant; general secretary and central cashier, Mr. Nicolae Niculescu, merchant, owner; Dumitru Gh. Oprea, owner and merchant, advisor counsellor; cashier assistant, Nicolae Matei, owner and master mason; librarian-archivist, Mihail Gh. Creangă, university student; meeting secretary, Ioan Dumitrescu, violinist; first counsellor, Vasile Stănescu-Bulgaru, head of orchestra; first censor, Vasile Stoica, retired and owner; counsellors: G.G. Păun, Scarlat Niculae and Dumitru Baban; censors: Apostol Stănescu, Nic. Gh. Alecu, Iordache Banu, Nic. Gh. Rugu and I. Marin Griţoi; advisor counsellor, A. Ionescu, musician; members of the committee: I. Păun, Gh. N. Costache, Păun Gheorghe, Stoica Niculae, D. Stoicescu, Tudor Gheorghe, Costică Florea, Gheorghe Anghel, Nica Nicolae, Ilie M. Ion, Manolide Ene, Oprea Marinescu, Voicu Ştefan, Matei Rădulescu and Alex. Mitoi.

The Women's section

Honorary President: Mrs. Margareta Nicolau, journalist; Active President: Miss. Petruţa Gr. Niculescu, mezzo-soprano artist, graduate of the Conservatory; Silvia Gr. Niculescu, pianist, graduate of the Conservatory; Vice-President: Marta G. Lăzurică, foreign language translator, General Secretary; Elvira Zâmbreşteanu and Maria Nicolae Matei, members of the committee; El. Nedelescu, counsellor; Dorina Constantinescu, advisor counsellor; Olimpia Tatoiu, educator, meeting secretary.

At organisations in the country: Gh. D. Başno-Brăila, president of Brăila county organisation; Velţan Nicolae, president of Crişana organisation; Naftanailă Lazăr, president of Transylvania organisation; Gh. Romcescu, president of Prahova county organisation; Ilie D. Săvulescu, president of Muşcel county organisation; I. Niculescu-Gărăilă, president of Ilfov county organisation.

These branch and region presidents, as well as the other presidents of county organisations, are rightfully members of the Union's central committee.

In the Central Committee may also enter other people who are considered worthy, hardworking and devoted to the cause of Roma.

The application for legal personality of the Union was filed with the Ilfov Trib[unal], forming the file no. 1001 from 1934, with the first term on 27.02.1934, the Romanian Patriarchate interfering with the lawful authorities to give favourable opinion, so within maximum two months this formality will be fulfilled, followed by the request for recognition as a moral person by the Parliament of the country.

The Committee may be reduced after granting the legal personality when the need so requires.

The Tribunal of Ilfov [county], Notarial Section

Minutes no. 32.620.
1933, November 16.

Before us, A. Balş, alternate [judge], Ilfov Tribunal, Notarial Section, assisted by Mr. registrar P. Veliciu, came today, November 16, 1933, in the Tribunal courtroom, Mrs.

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G. A. Lăzărescu-Lăzurică, M. Apostol, I. Niculescu, I. Paraschiv, G. Creangă, N. Lache, M. Nicolae, S. Niculescu, G. Niculae, I. Costache, Gh. Ioniţă, N. Păun, I. Efta, Dumitru Gheorghe, Gh. Păun, V. Busuioc, N. Călin, M. Anghel, V. Stoica, I. Simion, M. Ionescu, M. Simion, Gh. Niculescu, S. Niculae, Gh. Costache, R. Cristache, Gh. Niculae, Gh. Tudor, Gh. Şerban and C. Gheorghe.

Their identity has been proved by the witness I. Borugă, a lawyer in Bucharest, a person known to us, who declared that those mentioned above are the persons signed in this constitutive act, the parties asking by the petition registered under no. 32.304, the authentication of the present act in two copies, plus the statutes.

After checking both copies, we read this act word by word in the presence of the parties, that declares that this act is made with their consent, and one of these two copies is signed by Simion Marin, Gh. Niculescu, Gh. Costache, Gh. Nicolae, and Tudor Nicolae by putting the finger, they declaring that they are illiterate, and by the other parts and witness by their own signatures. Mr. I. Borugă declared that he wrote and drafted the act according to the will of the parties.

Finally, Simion Marin, Gh. Niculescu, Gh. Costache, Gh. Nicolau, and Tudor Niculau, as well as the other parts and the witness signed in our presence the copy that will be kept in file.

We, acknowledging the parties' declaration, authenticate the present constitutive act of the General Union of the Roma in Romania, the act being written on a sheet of 27 Lei, cancelled stamp of 27 Lei, duplication 27 [Lei].

President, L.S. … [signature *indecipherable*]; Registrar … [signature *indecipherable*].

Notes

1. G. A. Lăzurică, cooperated with Archimandrite Calinic I. Popp Şerboianu at the establishment of the General Association of Gypsies in Romania (April 1933), and was general secretary of the organisation. In September 1933, he left the General Association of Gypsies in Romania and set up the General Union of Roma in Romania. He was the general president of this organisation and at the same time he took the title of 'Voivode of Roma in Romania'. In 1934, he was taken down from the UGRR leadership by Gheorghe Niculescu. G. A. Lăzurică continued to play an important role in the Roma movement, working with different groups. In 1935 he founded the *Civic Organisation of Roma in Romania* (Organizaţia Cetăţenească a Romilor din România), whose president he was. He was honorary president of the association the *Revival of the Roma Men and Women in Romania* (Redeşteptarea Romilor şi Romniţelor din România). In 1937, in view of the parliamentary elections of that year, he collaborated with the National Christian Party, of fascist orientation. It was G. A. Lăzurică who called for the use of the term 'Roma' instead of 'Gypsy' and imposed it in his organisation's name.
2. In general, the honorary members of the General Union of the Roma in Romanian who appear on this list, as well as others who have obtained this quality later, were personalities of the time, some of them in the cultural and the media fields. Many of them had nationalist and right-wing political orientation.
3. Miron Cristea (1868-1939), theologian, patriarch of the Romanian Orthodox Church (1925-1939), Prime Minister of Romania (1 February 1938 – 6 March 1939). As early as 1933, the Romanian Patriarchate supported, including financially, the General Union of the Roma in Romania, which, through some of its leaders, made Orthodox missionary among the Roma (see Matei, 2010b).

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4. At that moment Minister of Labour, Health and Social Welfare was C. D. Dimitriu, Minister of Justice – Victor Antonescu and Minister of Instruction, Cults and Arts – Constantin Angelescu.
5. Mihail Berceanu (1882-1957), a university professor and a politician, has held various positions: deputy mayor of Bucharest, prefect of Ialomiţa county, under-secretary of state at the Ministry of Industry and Commerce, etc.
6. The protection of the Romanian workers against immigrant workers was a widely discussed topic in the Romanian press and politics of the 1930s. It was also taken over by the Roma organisations and press, which explained the crisis through which some professions specific to the Roma passed through the competition of foreigners, little by market and technology evolution.
7. According to the Report preserved in Police Archive about Association General Union of the Roma in Romanian the proposed and elected committee for 5 years was with different composition, including Honorary President Grigoraş Dinicu, and Honorary President Margareta Nicolau, and Acting President of Women's Section Florica Constantinescu (Nastasă & Varga, 2001, doc. 80, p. 187).
8. The title of 'Voivode of the Roma in Romania' taken by some Roma leaders in the 1930s was an invention by them. Until that time, the title of *voivode* was never used by the Gypsies in Wallachia and Moldavia and then in Romania. The heads of the local Gypsy communities, where they existed, were called *vătaf* (pl. *vătafi*), *bulibaş* (pl. *bulibaşi*) etc., but not a voivode, and a Gypsy leader at the level of the entire country or region did not exist. In the 1930s, G. A. Lăzurică and Gheorghe Niculescu, both presidents of the General Union of the Roma in Romania, proclaimed themselves 'Voivode of Roma in Romania'. Marin I. Simion, a head of the Association of the Gypsies of Oltenia, called himself the 'Voivode of the Gypsies of Oltenia'.

Source: AND MB, fond. Prefectura Poliţiei Capitalei, dos. 123/1933, f. 56-65.
Published in: Nastasă & Varga, 2001, doc. 38, pp. 117-125.
Prepared for publication by Viorel Achim.

6.3.8 *The Artistic and Cultural Festival of the Roma*

[Martie 1934].
Uniunea Generală a Romilor din România.

Frați Romi,
Concetățeni Români,

Uniunea Generală a Romilor din România, împlinind aproape 1 an de existență, în care timp a organizat pe romii din întreaga țară și a izbutit să realizeze lucruri modeste, dar frumoase până în prezent, pornește acum la o intensă manifestație artistico-culturală.

De aceea, s-a hotărât organizarea primului și unicului în România, și chiar în Europa, a unui MARE FESTIVAL ARTISTIC-CULTURAL, dat sub patronajul d-lui Gabriel Marinescu, Prefectul Municipiului București, cu următorul

Program:

1. Conferință despre "*Originea, istoria și emigrația romilor în Europa*", conferință ținută de dl. G. A. Lăzurică (Voievodul romilor).

2. *"Rivalii"*, piesă într-un act, cu subiect luat din viața de pe front, în care se arată patriotismul și spiritul de umanitate al soldatului rom în timp de război; piesă originală de dl. Gal, publicist rom.

3. *Defilare alegorică* a breslașilor romi.

4. *Quartet muzical*: pian, violoncel, vioară primă și secundă.

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5. *Voce*: mezzo-soprană și tenor, cu bucăți italiene și populare românești.

6. *O nuntă țigănească*, cu cântece și dansuri țigănești vechi, de origină indiană, precum și aspect de datini și obiceiuri țigănești.

Festivalul este organizat de dl. G. A. Lăzurică, președintele Uniunii Romilor, în folosul grădinițelor de copii romi. Programul se va executa numai de diletanți romi.

Suntem încredințați că semenii noștri romi, precum și concetățenii noștri români, ne vor sprijini, asistând la acest festival care are loc în Sala Teatrului Cinema "Omnia", din B-dul Schitul Măgureanu nr. 4.

Duminecile de la 18 și 25 martie c., ora 10 dim[ineața] precis.

Comitetul.

∵

[March 1934].
The General Union of the Roma in Romania.

Roma brothers,
Romanian fellow citizens,

The General Union of the Roma in Romania, having almost one year of existence, during which time it has organised the Roma from all over the country and managed to achieve modest but beautiful things until now, is now starting an intense artistic and cultural manifestation.

Therefore, it was decided to organise the first and only one in Romania, and even in Europe GREAT ARTISTIC AND CULTURAL FESTIVAL, Under the patronage of Mr. GABRIEL MARINESCU, Prefect of the Bucharest City, with the following

Program:

1. Conference on the *Origin, history and emigration of the Roma in Europe*, conference held by Mr. G. A. Lăzurică (Voivode of Roma).

2. *The Rivals,* theatre play in one act, with a subject taken from the life on the front, showing the patriotism and the spirit of humanity of the Roma soldier during the war; original play by Mr. Gal, a Roma publicist.

3. *Allegorical march* of Roma guilders.

4. *Musical quartet*: piano, cello, violin, first and second violin.

5. *Voce*: mezzo-soprano and tenor, with Italian pieces and Romanian pieces.

6. *A Gypsy wedding*, with old Gypsy songs and dances, of Indian origin, as well as aspects from the Gypsy customs and traditions.

The festival is organised by Mr. G. A. Lăzurică, president of the Union of Roma, for the benefit of the kindergartens of Roma children. The program will be executed only by Roma amateur artists.

We are confident that our Roma fellowmen, as well as our Romanian fellow citizens, will support us by attending this festival, which takes place at "Omnia" Cinema Theatre Hall, on 4, Schitu Măgureanu Blvd.

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Sunday, March 18 and March 25, current year, exactly at 10 a.m.
The Committee.

Source: AND MB, fond. Prefectura Poliţiei Capitalei, dos. 123/1933, f. 54.
Published in: Nastasă & Varga, 2001, doc. 41, p. 127.
Prepared for publication by Viorel Achim.

6.3.9 *The Roma from Romania Have Met*

Romii din România s-au întrunit

[…] trecută a avut loc, in parcul "Boreli" din calea Dudești, sfințirea dreapelului organizației din sectorul II Negru a Uniunii romilor din România. Festivitatea s-a deschis l-a ora 12, primul luând cuvântul domnul Tache Pantazescu, președintele culorii de negru. Domnia sa face un amplu expozeu al scopului urmărit de asociație. Domnul avocat Ilie Diaconu, președintele de onoare al Uniunii, ocupându-se de rosturile Uniunii, spune că aceasta urmărește ridicarea romilor din sărăcia și ignoranța în care se sbat. Se vor înființa școli, orfelinate și dispensare. Se va inființa o bancă cooperativă, unde romii să poată găsi cu ușurință împrumuturi la cazuri de nevoie. La ora 12 și jumătate sosește arhimandritul Ilie Scriban.

După slujba sfințirii drapelului, arhimandritul Scriban a ținut o scurtă alocațiune prin care îndeamnă poporul rom la unire.

Domnul Constantin Georgescu spune că vine în mijlocul romilor ca reprezentant al patriarhiei. Domnia sa dă citire apoi unei scrisori din partea părintelui C. Dron, prin care acesta își scuză lipsa și regretă că nu se află printre romi, fiind reținut la Sinaia.

Domnul avocat Petrovici, vorbește în numele domnului Tancu-Iași. Domnul Gheorghe Niculescu, președintele general al Uniunii, luând cuvântul, face o documentată expunere a năzuințelor urmărite de romi.

După aceea, încredințează drapelul președintelui sectorului II Negru, domnul Tache Pantazescu. Au mai luat cuvântul domnii Moti Cristea, președintele romilor din Târnava Mare; I. Grigore, vicepreședinte al organizației de Vlașca; Gh. Alecu, vice-președinte al Sectorului II Negru; Niku Gogu vorbește în numele romilor de la Buftea; Sbanghiu Al., domnișoara Nușa Costea, avocatul Șerbănescu și alții. Întrunirea a luat sfârșit la ora 2 după care a vut loc un banchet.

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The Roma from Romania have met

[…] the flag of the II Black Sector branch of the Union of the Roma of Romania [1] was consecrated in the "Boreli" Park, Dudești str., last … [2]. The celebration started at 12 noon with the speech of Mr. Tache Pantazescu, the President of Black Sector branch [3]. He makes a comprehensive presentation of the goals of the Association. Mr. Ilie Diaconu,

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a lawyer, the Honorary President of the Association, speaking about the joints of the Association, pointed out that its aim is to aid Roma to escape from their present experience of poverty and ignorance [4]. Schools, orphanages and dispensaries, as well as a cooperative bank where the Roma could easy receive the loans they need, will be set up.

The Archimandrite Ilie Scriban is coming at 12:30 noon. After he had consecrated the flag, he delivered a short speech, calling for the unification of the Roma [5].

Mr. Constantin Georgescu says that he comes in the midst of the Roma as a representative of the patriarchy. Then he read a letter of the Father. C. Dron; the last-mentioned apologises for his abscence and regrets that he is not among the Roma, being detained in Sinaia.

Mr. Petrovici, a lawyer, speaks on behalf of Mr. Trancu-Iasi. Mr. Gheorghe Niculescu, the President-in-Office of the Association [6], and in his speech makes a documented exposure concerning the aspirations pursued by the Roma.

Next, Mr. Tache Pantazescu entrusts the flag of the branch. Thereafter some other persons gave their speeches, such as: Mr. Moti Cristea, the President of the Roma of Târnava Mare county; Mr. I. Grigore, the Vice-President of the Vlașca branch; Mr. Gh. Alecu, the Vice-President of the II Black Sector branch; Mr. Niku Gogu spoke on behalf of the Roma community of Buftea; Mr. Sbanghiu Al., Mrs. Nușa Costea, Mr. Șerbănescu, a lawyer, et al [7]. The meeting had ended at 2pm with a banquet.

Notes

1. Association General Union of Roma from Romania was the first Roma organisation officially registered by Romanian authorities, under the presidency of the Gh. Niculescu, by the sentence nr. 117 issued through the Court of Ilfov at November 30, 1934. Central headquarter of the Association was in Bucharest city, street Sf. Anton, nr. 10 (see Năstasă & Varga, 2001, doc. 52, pp. 139-150).
2. A fragment of deleted text [...]. The author might have been writing 'last week' or 'last Sunday (or another day)', but there was a misprint that meant part of the text was missing in the published article.
3. During 1935, in Bucharest, four sectorial branches of the Association General Union of Roma from Romania were set up: I Yellow Sector branch; II Black Sector branch; III Blue Sector branch; IV Green Sector branch. The launch of their activity was done through a festive gathering at which the organisation's flag was sanctified. This article reproduces briefly the launch of one of the 60 branches of the Association General Union of Roma from Romania (II Black Sector branch, Bucharest), which took place after these were officially registered on 30.11.1934 (see Glasul Romilor, 1935, p. 2).
4. The tragedy of Roma living in misery, hunger, and cold were regularly addressed in interwar Romanian daily newspapers. Unfortunately, the authors only highlighted these issues through shocking pictures taken with the excluded Roma living at peripheral quarters, without providing any solutions to lessen their tragedy. At the same time, there was also a lack of will or actions initiated by the Romanian authorities in solving these Roma interbellum issues (see Realitatea Ilustrată, 1935a, p. 3).
5. The call for the unification refers more to the Roma leaders and less to the various Roma communities that were dispersed across the Romanian territory. After 1933, many intrigues and disputes between the three prominent Romanian Roma leaders were attested: Archimandrite Calinic I. Popp Șerboianu, G. A. Lăzurică and Gh. Niculescu. They blamed each other for their lack of dignity and faith, the rush for wealth and political power, wickedness and swindle (see Năstasă & Varga, 2001, doc. 56, pp. 153-154). At the same time, they mutually labelled each other as

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the self-proclaimed illiterate Voivode of the Roma, renegade of the Roma, etc. (see Țara Noastră, 1937a, p. 4).
6. Gheorghe Niculescu, president of the Association General Union of Roma from Romania, entrepreneur-retailer of flowers in Bucharest and counsellor at the Ministry of Labour and Council of the Shopkeepers (see Năstasă & Varga, 2001, doc. 80, pp.184-189).
7. The author of the article unfortunately presents only the names of those who spoke without specifying the content of the speeches.

Source: [No Author]. (1935b). Romii din România s-au întrunit. *Realitatea Ilustrată*, An. 9, No. 460, 1935, November 13, pp. 10-11.
Prepared for publication by Ion Duminica.

Comments

This source material is a report concerning a planned Roma gathering in Bucharest city, published in one of the most popular Romanian weekly magazines of the interwar period. After the official registration of the Association General Union of Roma from Romania on the November 30, 1934, in every published issue of their newspaper *Glasul Romilor* it was envisaged a publishing space for describing the events organised at these kinds of meetings. From the beginning, the emphasis was placed not on a comprehensive content of the event organised by the Roma elite but, rather, on the public image of the Roma leaders, through their eye-catching gala costumes. According to the personal views of some representatives of these new Romanian Roma elite, the fastest way for the integration of Roma leaders within the high society was to be done through the wearing of the gala costume in official meetings, and for the news of these events to be published in famous Romanian magazines. However, the ambitions of the new self-made Roma leader and businessman, the great fighter of the Roma people, Gh. Niculescu, had begun to increase, so the coverage of Roma events in the Roma newspaper managed by him, *Glasul Romilor*, became less interesting for Romanian journalists. Sometimes these local or regional events were artificially labelled in Roma and Romanian newspapers as "the Roma Congress which was ruled by Roma Voivode from Romania". However, no Roma organisation and no Roma leader were able to reproduce the magnitude of the Roma Congress in Romania in the same manner as G. A. Lăzurică had done on October 8, 1933. Nevertheless, despite their intrigues and mutual disputes, each of the three prominent Roma leaders, namely Archimandrite Calinic I. Popp Șerboianu (initiator of the movement), G. A. Lăzurică (organiser of the first Roma Congress) and Gh. Niculescu (who succeeded to officially register a Roma nationwide organisation) has an important mark in the Romanian interbellum history concerning the Roma emancipatory movement.

Ion Duminica

6.3.10 *Roma Brothers!*

Frați romi!

Ceasul emancipărei si redeșteptărei neamului Rom, a sunat. La anul 1854 marii bărbați de stat ai timpurilor, s'au gândit la îmbunătățirea soartei romilor, la scăparea lor din robie, și au înfăptuit marele act al "Desrobirei Romilor".

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De-atunci și până în prezent însă, nu s'a mai gândit nimeni la soarta noastră. Am fost lasați în voia soartei, la fel cum e o barcă pe voia valurilor furtunoase ale mărei, aruncată din val in val, din talaz in talaz, fără de nici un sprijin, fără de nici un ajutor, fără de nici o destinație.

De atunci au trecut zile multe, luni, anii; am îndurat toate intemperiile; am îndurat toate necazurile; am îndurat totul, cu voința si răbdarea de care suntem caracterizați, însă soarta noastră a rămas tot neschimbată.

Nu s'a gândit nimeni s'o amelioreze! Nu s'a gândit nimeni să ne scoată din întunerecul în care eram! Nu s'a gândit nimeni la o îmbunătățire a vieții noastre de toate zilele! Nu s'a gâsit nimeni până acum, să se scoboare în mijlocul nostru și să ne cerceteze nevoile și să ne dea sfatul lor. Am fost lăsați în umbra vremurilor și ne-am târît viața, fără de nici o directivă, fără de nici o speranță, fără de nici un ideal pentru îmbunătățirea situației noastre.

Frați Romi!

Ne-am făcut totdeauna datoria către Țară și Rege. Am fost și vom rămâne Dinastici și credincioși Tronului până la moarte.

Dintre frații nostri nu s'a găsit până acuma nici un trădător de țară. Am fost totdeauna buni cetățeni.

Merităm deci și noi o soartă mai bună. Meritam și noi ca să fim auziți de cei ce conduc destinele scumpei noastre țări, și să-și plece putin urechia și la doleanțele noastre drepte. Merităm să fim auziți și ajutați.

Frați Romi!

Dumnezeu care are în grija și in paza lui pe toți oamenii, a avut grije și de noi.

O mână de oameni, plini de încredere și cu o voința de fier, s'au ridicat în mijlocul nostru, și au pus bazele temeliei de mâine. Acești oameni au înțeles ca numai prin voința și muncă cinstită vor putea îndrepta situația în general a neamului nostru Rom. Acest manunchiu de oameni, sub conducerea vajnicului luptător al cauzei Romilor, Domnul Gheorghe Niculescu, președinte activ a pus bazele Uniunei generale a Romilor din România, cu sediul central în piața sf. Anton, 10, iar pe firmamentul Uniunei stă scris: "Emanciparea și redeșteptarea tuturor Romilor din România, pe tărâmul social, cultural, moral, economic și spiritual."

Trăiască Comitetul Uniunei generale a Romilor din Romania. Trăiasca președintele Central al Uniunei, Gheorghe Niculescu, luptătorul neobosit al cauzei Romilor din România.

N. Lengheschu-Cley

∵

Roma brothers!

The time for the emancipation and the revival of Roma has arrived. In 1854, the great statesmen of the time thought about improving the fate of the Roma, releasing them from bondage, and carrying out the great act of the "Release of Roma from slavery".

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From then until now, however, no one has thought of our fate. We were left in the will of fate, just as a boat is in the stormy waves of the sea, thrown from wave to wave, from the threshing floor to threshing floor, without support, without help, without a destination.

Since then, many days have passed, months, years; We have endured all types of weather; We have endured all sorrows; we have endured everything, with the will and patience we are characterised with, but our fate has remained unchanged. No one thought to improve it! Nobody thought of getting us out of the darkness we were in! No one has ever thought of an improvement in our everyday life! No one has ever joined within our midst to investigate our needs and give us their advice. We have been left in the shadow of times and we have lived our lives, without any directive, without hope, without any ideal to improve our situation.

Roma brothers!

We have always done our duty – to the Land and the King. We have been and will remain dynastic and faithful to the Throne, until death. Of our brethren, no traitor of the country has ever been found. We have always been good citizens. So we deserve a better fate. We also deserve to be heard by those who lead the destinies of our dear country and to lend their ears also to our rightful wishes. We deserve to be heard and helped.

Roma brothers!

God, who cares and protects all people, has also taken care of us. A handful of people, full of confidence and with an iron will, stood up from within our midst, and laid the grounds for tomorrow's foundation. These people understood that only by will and honest work would they be able to correct the general situation of our Roma people. This small group of people, under the leadership of the stark warrior for the Roma cause, Mr. Gheorghe Niculescu, the active president, laid the foundations of the General Union of Roma in Romania, headquartered in Sf. Anton, 10, and on the Union's stamp it is written: "The emancipation and reawakening of all Roma in Romania, on the social, cultural, moral, economic and spiritual ground".

Long live the Committee of the General Union of Roma in Romania.

Long live the Central President of the Union, Gheorghe Niculescu, the tireless warrior for the Roma cause in Romania.

N. Lengheschu-Cley

Source: Lenghescu-Cley, N. (1934a). Frați romi. *Glasul Romilor*, An. 1, No. 1, 1934, November 15, p. 1. Prepared for publication by Raluca Bianca Roman.

Comments

This front-page article was published in the first issue of the Roma periodical, *Glasul Romilor*, in November 1934. As it is, it constitutes the first manifesto of the Association General Union of the Roma in Romania, under the leadership of Gh. Niculescu. The article is an important source material as it is directly presented as a call for the 'emancipation and re-awakening' of the Roma people. Furthermore, the article talks about Roma's

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faithfulness to the Romanian state, calling them 'loyal and faithful servants to the Throne' and highlighting the commitment they have to Romania, as its citizens. All of these themes will re-appear recurrently throughout other issues of the newspaper, as well as within articles in other Roma periodicals of the time (such as *Timpul, O Rom, Neamul Țigănesc, Țara Noastră* and *Foaia Poporului Romesc*). The article further underlines and asks that Roma too deserve to be heard by the leaders of their 'beloved' country. The goal of the programme is to build the 'foundations for tomorrow' and its main aim stated to be the 'emancipation and re-awakening' of all Roma in Romania, on a social, moral, economic and spiritual level. All these issues would be explored throughout the subsequent issues of *Glasul Romilor*. Moreover, particular themes (such as that of Roma unity and loyalty to the country) would be recurrently underlined within other articles authored by N. Lenghescu-Cley. As an example of this, the author would publish, in the penultima issue of the newspaper, a march of the Roma (see below, Document 6.10.2.), which summarises and underlines, in effect, all the elements highlighted in this first article.

Raluca Bianca Roman

6.3.11 *Our Programme*

Programul nostrum

Domnul Gheorghe Niculescu, președintele activ, vorbește pe înțelesul tuturor Romilor, asupra idealului urmărit de Uniunea generala a Romilor din România:

"Scopul urmărit de noi zice d. Niculescu este numai și numai, a veni in ajutorul tuturor romilor săraci. Vom înființa grădinițe de copii, în toate orașele și comunele urbane, unde romii își vor putea trimite copii lor la învățătură în mod gratuit. Vom îngriji ca aceste grădinițe să fie înzestrate cu lemne în timpul ernei, să aibă o cantină pentru micii pensionari, care va funcționa tot în mod gratuit. Vom interveni la autorități și la oamenii de bine, a veni în ajutorul lor, cu hăinuțe, ghete, rufărie și alimente. Apoi vom inaugura cursurile de seară pentru Romii adulți și neștiutori de carte. Prin aceasta vom inaugura prima parte a programului nostru. Vom interveni cu energie pentru stârpirea vagabonzilor și a cerșetorilor, plasându-i pe toți pe la întreprinderi și fabrici și orice fel de servicii, făcând prin aceasta să dispara urâtul obicei ce-l aveau până în prezent- muncind in mod curat și cinstit. Vom creia cooperativele noastre de consum, de unde Romii își va putea procura cu bani puțini cele necesare. Vom creia cantine pentru Romii nevoiași, unde vor avea în mod gratuit hrana de toate zilele. Vom infiinta dispensare unde vor fi cautati toti cei suferinzi si vor avea medicamente gratuit. Vom înființa un birou de asistență socială și un birou de plasare cu legătură în toată țara pentru procurare de lucru. Vom creia o bancă a noastră proprie, de unde fiecare membru va avea cu putință contractarei de împrumuturi bănești. Vom creia fonduri de ajutor de boală și înmormântare, vom creia aziluri, unde bătrânii noștri Romii lipsiți de mijloace vor găsi un adapost, masă și îmbrăcăminte până la sfârșitul vieții lor. Vom creia ateneele noastre, unde cei talentați își vor

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putea desfășura activitatea artistică și culturală. Vom creia biblioteci de unde se vor putea adăpa la cunoștiințele mai înalte toți romii doritori de și înalța cunostiințele. Intr'un cuvânt vom îmbrătișa totul pentru ca soarta neamului nostru Rom, să se îmbunătățească, ca să putem sta alături de conaționalii noștrii fără să ne fie rușine, pentru că toți suntem fii ai acestei țări binecuvântate de Dumnezeu și cu toți ne-am făcut și ne facem datoria către Tron, Țară și Biserica creștină ortodoxă."

Red.

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Our programme

Mr. Gheorghe Niculescu, the active president, speaks in a way that all Roma understand, on the ideal pursued by the General Union of the Roma in Romania:

"The goal pursued by us is solely that of coming to the aid of all poor Roma. We will set up kindergartens in all towns and municipalities, where the Roma will be able to send their children for free education. We will make sure that these kindergartens are endowed with wood during the winter, have a small food canteen for retirees, which will also function free of charge. We will intervene with the authorities and the people of good-will, and encourage them to come to their aid, with clothes, boots, laundry and food. Then we will inaugurate evening classes for adult Roma and those who cannot read or write. Through this, the first part of our program will have been set up. We will intervene with energy to eradicate vagabonds and beggars, placing everyone in businesses and factories and any kind of service, thereby eliminating the ugly habit they have had so far – and instead of working in a clean and honest manner. We will create our consumer cooperatives, from which the Roma will be able to buy whatever they need with little money. We will create canteens for the needy Roma in need, where they will have free food every day. We will establish a medical dispensary where all sufferers will be looked after and will have access to free medicines. We will set up a social welfare office and a placement office with connections all over the country, in order to find work placements for people. We will create our own bank, where each member will have the possibility of borrowing money. We will create sickness and funeral aid funds, create shelters, where our elders, deprived of means, will find shelter, meals and clothing until the end of their lives. We will create our own athenaeums, where talented artists will be able to perform their artistic and cultural activities. We will create libraries from where all Roma willing to improve their knowledge will be able to have access to higher knowledge. In one word we will embrace everything so that the fate of our Roma people improves, so that we can sit beside our countrymen without being ashamed, because we are all sons of this God-blessed country and we have all done and continue to do our duty to the Throne, the Land, and the Orthodox Christian Church."

The Ed[editorial Board]

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Source: Niculescu, G. (1934b). Programul nostru. *Glasul Romilor*, An. 1, No.1, 1934, November 15, p. 1.
Prepared for publication by Raluca Bianca Roman.

Comments

The programme for the General Union of Roma in Romania, under the leadership of Gheorghe Niculescu, is laid out in the above article. Published in the first issue of *Glasul Romilor*, on the November 15, 1934, the purpose and outlook of the Union are introduced. As such, it is stated that the central aim of the Union is primarily to come to the aid of poor Roma. Some of the main prospects presented are also included within this short manifesto, as the following: the creation of kindergartens in all cities and urban dwellings, where Roma children can receive free education; food cantines for retirees and poor people; evening classed for Roma adults who cannot read or write; interventions to control vagabonds and beggars, setting them all up for work in factories, businesses and any type of work, and placing them into gainful employment; the creation of own consumption cooperatives, health centres and access to free medication; setting up a social work bureau and a job placement centre with connections across the country; the creation of own bank, from which all Roma members can borrow money; setting up funds in times of illness or death; the creation of own cultural centres and libraries.

Interestingly, this programme seems to be almost entirely mirroring the programme set out by the General Association of Gypsies in Romania, founded by Archimandrite Calinic I. Popp Șerboianu in September 1933 and having as its secretary G. A. Lăzurică. The latter's programme was also published in a Roma newspaper, called *Timpul* (published in Craiova by Aurel Th. Manolescu-Dolj), in an article titled 'De la Asociaţia Generala a Țiganilor din Romania din Craiova' (Timpul, 1933a, p. 1). This connects to the social dynamics between the two organisations' leaders. As such, G. A. Lăzurică, originally secretary of General Association of Gypsies in Romania, had quit the latter organisation and formed the General Union of Roma in Romania. However, G. A. Lăzurică was removed from the position of President by Gh. Niculescu, who assumed the new leadership, and managed to secure the organisation's legal recognition in November 1934. G. A. Lăzurică re-joined the General Association of Gypsies in Romania, later re-named the General Association of Roma in Romania (Achim, 1998, pp. 153-159).

These dynamics are important in order to understand the similarities in the demands and the programme of the two organisations. As such, the stated aim is to encompass all aspects that may lead to the improvement of Roma people's fates, with the purpose of standing proudly alongside their co-nationals, as sons (sic!) of their "God-blessed country", continuing to do their duty to the throne, country and the Christian Orthodox Church. For an example highlighting the importance of the Orthodox Church in the activities of Roma organisations during the interwar period, see the article written by Niculescu, N., under Religion (Glasul Romilor, 1937a, p. 3).

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6.3.12 *An Appeal to the Roma from 1936*

[Before October 4, 1936].
Asociaţia "Uniunea Generală a Romilor din România".
Persoană juridică. Sediul: Piaţa Sf. Anton, 10 Loco, Secţia I, Sectorul III Albastru.

Frați romi,
Duminică, 4 octombrie 1936, la orele 10 dimineața, va avea loc o mare

Adunare a romilor din sectorul III albastru

Ce se va ține în localul "Leonte" din str. Ferentari no. 91, unde vom avea prilejul să primim în mijlocul nostru pe cel mai mare fiu al neamului nostru rom, în persoana d-lui *Gh*[*eorghe*] *Niculescu*, președintele general și voievod al romilor din România, însoțit de Comitetul Central, împreună cu toți președinții și comitetele de sectoare respective ale Capitalei.

Este de datoria noastră, a tuturor romilor din Sectorul III Albastru, să fim la înălțimea datoriei și să primim cu toată dragostea și cinstea ce se cuvine acestor îndrumători ai neamului nostru.

Această adunare, având o importanță de care atârnă viața noastră de toate zilele, lăsați la o parte orice interese personale, orice fel de ambiții și cu mic cu mare, tânăr și bătrân, veniți să arătăm conducătorilor noștri că știm să ne facem datoria atunci când nevoia o cere. Să dăm dovadă că știm iarăși să ne respectăm șefii noștri, care luptă pe toate căile legale pentru a ne îmbunătăți soarta vitregă pe care am avut-o până astăzi.

Frați romi,

În aceste timpuri grele, când iarna bate la ușă, iubitul nostru președinte general, în dragostea ce o are pentru tot ce e de neam rom, s-a gândit la lipsurile pe care voi le îndurați și în de comun acord cu autoritatea respectivă a pus bazele unei *mari cooperative* care va cuprinde întreaga Capitală și județul Ilfov, înlesnindu-vă procurarea de alimente necesare vieții de toate zilele și tot ce e folositor pentru gospodărie, cumpărate pe preț cu mult mai ieftin, după cum se cumpără astăzi în comerț.

Tot președintele nostru general *Gh. Niculescu*, în mărinimia sa, s-a gândit că majoritatea dintre noi, în diferite ocazii ce se ivesc, având nevoie de numerar și neavând cine să-i dea a înființat și o Casă de Economie și Credit, unde frații romi vor putea face împrumuturi în condițiuni avantajoase și cu înlesniri de plată, precum și alte îmbunătățiri.

Vor mai lua cuvântul, pe lângă președinte general *Gh. Niculescu*, și alți oratori, care vor expune pe larg binefacerile cooperației și Casei de Economii și Credit a Romilor din întreaga țară.

Veniți dar cu toți, să ascultăm pe cei care, cu dragoste de frate, vin să ne îndrumeze și să ne conducă pe calea cea dreaptă la adevărata izbândă.

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Gh. Dragomir, Președintele secției I a Sect. III.
Păun Alexandru, Casier.
Teodor Alexandru, Vice-președinte.
Const. Drăghici, Secretar.

∵

[Before October 4, 1936].
The Association General Union of the Roma in Romania.
Legal person. Headquarters: 10, St. Anton Square, Loco Section I, Sector III Blue.

Roma brothers,
On Sunday, October 4, 1936, at 10 a.m., there will be a large

Meeting of the Roma in Sector III Blue

that will be held in *Leonte* hall in 91, Ferentari Street, where we will have the occasion to receive among us the greatest son of our Roma nation, in the person of Mr. *Gheorghe Niculescu*, general president and Voivode of the Roma in Romania, accompanied by the Central Committee, together with all the presidents and committees of the respective sectors of the Capital.

It is our duty, of all Roma in the Sector III Blue, to be at the height of our duty and to receive them with all the love and honour that is accountable to these guides of our nation.

This meeting having an importance that our everyday life hangs upon, leave aside any personal interests, any ambition, and small or big, young or old, come to show to our leaders that we know how to do our duty when it is required. Let us prove again that we know how to respect our leaders, who fight in all the legal ways to improve the cruel fate that we have had until today.

Roma brothers,

In these difficult times, when winter knocks on our door, our beloved general president, in the love he has for all that is of Roma nation, has thought about the shortcomings that you will endure and in agreement with that authority he laid the foundations of *a large cooperative* that will include the entire Capital and the Ilfov County, making it easier for you to buy the food you need for your everyday life and all that is useful for your household, bought at a much cheaper price, than it is nowadays sold in commerce [1].

Also, our general president, Gh. Niculescu, in his generosity, thought that most of us, on various occasions that are emerging, need cash and have no money, and founded a House of Savings and Credit, where Roma brothers can take out loans on advantageous terms and with better re-payment options, as well as other benefits.

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In addition to the General President *Gh. Niculescu*, other speakers will take the floor who will present the benefits of the cooperative and the House of Savings and Credit for the Roma from all the country.

Come, all of you, and listen to those who, with brotherly love, come to guide us and lead us on the right path to true success [2].

Gh. Dragomir, President of Section I of the Sector III.
Păun Alexandru, Cashier.
Teodor Alexandru, Vice-president.
Const. Drăghici, Secretary.

Notes

1. About the founding of consumer cooperatives and the establishment of a Roma bank to provide money loans, Gheorghe Niculescu wrote in the first issue of *Glasul Romilor* "Our Program" (Glasul Romilor, 1934b, pp. 1-2). On the usefulness of a Roma cooperative, an article was published by Ilie I. Diaconu, head of the General Union of the Roma in Romania, "The Purpose of the Cooperative of Roma" (Glasul Romilor, 1937b, p. 3).
2. The meeting was not held because only 30 members were gathered. The meeting was postponed and a committee was elected to find a location for the cooperative (ANIC, fond. Direcţia Generală a Poliţiei, dos. 34/1922, f. 169; Nastasă & Varga, 2001, doc. 109, pp. 217-218, part one).

Source: ANIC, fond. Direcţia Generală a Poliţiei, dos. 34/1932, f. 170.
Published in: Nastasă & Varga, 2001, doc. 109, pp. 217-218, partea a doua.
Prepared for publication by Viorel Achim.

6.3.13 *What We Ask for*

Ce solicităm

Programul atât de vast al asociației noastre, pentru a putea fi înfăptuit, cere o mulțime de mari sacrificii.

In parte aceste sacrificii le-am făcut și ne simțim în stare a le mai face și de aci înainte.

Sunt însă unele nevoi pe care cu toată bunăvoința pe care o avem, pentru un moment, nu le putem satisfice decât numai fiind ajutați.

Este adevărat că ori de câte ori am avut nevoie de sprijin moral, autoritățile cărora ne-am adresat ni l-au acordat fără precupețire.

Sprijin material nu am avut însă de la nimeni.

In rândurile cari urmează, vom arăta câteva din lucrurile ce noi dorim să le realizăm și vom ruga în mod respectuos pe conducătorii Țării, ca în caz că vor găsi bune aceste lucruri, să ne acorde ajutoarele ce vor crede de cuviință.

Pentru romii veniți din provincie cu anumite treburi, pentru bătrânii și orfanii romi și pentru cei nevoiași, Asociația dorește să clădească în București un cămin de adăpost. Acest cămin va mai cuprinde: un ateneu popular, o bibliotecă, un cabinet medical, un birou de contencios, o sală și un teren de educație fizică.

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Pentru clădirea acestui cămin, avem nevoie de un teren, cărămizi, grinzi, traverse de fier, uși, ferestre, etc.

Cum asociația nu poate suporta toate cheltuielile necesare, facem un călduros apel către autorități de a ne pune la dispoziție terenul necesar pentru ridicarea căminului.

Deasemenea rugăm Onor Primăria Municipiului și Primăriile de sectoare din București, ca să ne ofere în mod gratuit materialul rezultat din dărâmarea clădirilor pe bază de alinieri, exproprieri, etc. ... iar din carierele primăriilor, nisip și pietriș.

Dacă în cele scrise până în present am solicitat un sprijin material în cele de mai jos vom cere:

a) Să fim autorizați a înființa un birou de plasare pentru meseriași romi;

b) Primăriile orașelor să ceară d-lor arhitecți și ingineri să angajeze pentru lucrările Domniilor Lor și zidar, fierari, salahori, meșteri și lucrători romi;

c) In toate actele oficiale și cărțile didactice să nu se mai scrie "țigani" nume ce nu ne aparține și care are un sens batjocoritor și disprețuitor, ci "Romi"- denumire adevărată, – fiind cuvânt din limba sanscrită pe care o vorbim;

d) Să fim ajutați ca și până în present în toate manifestările noastre.

Acestea sunt o parte din nevoile noastre asupra cărora avem siguranța că vor privi conducătorii țării și ne vor acorda sprijinul.

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What we ask for

The vast program of our association demands many great sacrifices in order to be accomplished.

In part, we have already made these sacrifices and we feel able to do them also from now on.

But there are some needs that, with all the goodwill that we have, for the time being, can only be satisfied if we are helped.

It is true that whenever we needed moral support, the authorities we have addressed gave it to us without issues. We did not, however, receive any material support from anybody.

In the following lines, we will show some of the things that we want to do, and we will respectfully ask the rulers of the country that, in case they will find these suggestions good, they give us the help they see fit.

For the Roma coming from the provinces with certain affairs in the capital city, for the elderly and the orphans and for the needy, the Association wants to build a shelter home in Bucharest. This home will also include: a popular athenaeum, a library, a medical cabinet, a contentious office, a gym, and a sports ground.

To build this home, we need land, bricks, beams, iron sleepers, doors, windows, etc. As the association cannot bear all the necessary expenses, we are making a warm appeal to the authorities to provide us with the necessary land for raising the home.

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We also ask the City Hall and the sectorial city halls in Bucharest to offer us, free of charge, the materials resulting from the demolition of buildings on the basis of alignments, expropriations, etc … and from the city halls' quarters, sand and gravel.

If in what we have written until now we have asked for material support, in what follows we will ask:

a) To allow us to be authorised to set up a placement office for Roma workers;

b) For city halls to ask architects and engineers to employ within their works also Roma builders, blacksmiths, day labourers, craftsmen and Roma workers;

c) In all official documents and didactic books, the name 'țigani' should no longer be used, as it is a name that does not belong to us and that has a scornful and contemptuous meaning, but be replaced by 'Roma' – a true name, – being a Sanskrit word, the language that we speak. Continue to help us as before, in all of our activities.

These are some of the needs that we have the certainty our country's leaders will look upon and offer their support.

Source: Radu, N. (1938d). Ce solicităm. *Glasul Romilor*, An. 3, No. 11, 1938, June 8, p. 3.
Prepared for publication by Raluca Bianca Roman.

Comments

This article is important as it lays out some of the material and non-material aid requested at the time by the Association General Union of Roma in Romania from state authorities. All these demands also point to the more general claims laid out not only by the General Union of Roma in Romania (led by Gheorghe Niculescu) but also by the General Association of Roma in Romania (led by Archimandrite Calinic I. Popp Șerboianu and G. A. Lăzurică), in terms of social interventions desired in connection to the improvement in the social conditions and the shift in the economic status of Roma in the country. It thus reflects the interventionist rhetoric of social development as presented by all Roma leaders in interwar Romania, alongside the emphasis placed on the cultural preservation of Roma trades, folklore, artefacts (see the emphasis placed on the constitution of a Roma library and a Roma athenaeum).

The article discusses also the issue of labelling and labels, which was topic discussed also within other articles of the Roma periodicals during the interwar period (cf. Țara Noastră, 1937c, p. 1; Timpul, 1938a, p. 2; Foaia poporului romesc, 1935, p. 3). For a contrasting viewpoint, which takes pride in the term 'Țigan', see Neamul Țigănesc, 1934d, p. 3.

Raluca Bianca Roman

6.4 Regional Organisations

6.4.1 The *Police Report from Turnu Severin*

Copie după raportul Poliției orașului T[urnu] Severin nr. 453 din 13 august a.c. către Inspectoratul Regional de Poliție Craiova.

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Avem onoare a raporta că în ziua de 12 august a.c., în grădina Tomescu "Cărbunaru", pendinte de acest oraș, a avut loc o serbare câmpenească organizată de Uniunea Generală a Romilor din București, filiala Mehedinți, sub prezidența d-lui G. Niculescu, președinte activ al uniunii, și sub patronajul d-lui deputat M. Vorvoreanu.

A început la orele 3 ½ p.m. și au luat parte circa 450-500 romi din Mehedinți.

Dl. Lenghescu N., membru în această uniune, vorbește în numele președintelui și în puține cuvinte arată însemnătatea înființării acestei uniuni și progresul pe care l-a făcut această uniune din anul 1933, data înființării, și până în prezent.

Dl. Marin Simion, președintele romilor din Oltenia, mulțumește d-lui deputat Marius Vorvoreanu pentru bunăvoința ce a avut-o de a veni și asista la aceste serbări. D-sa roagă pe dl. deputat ca atunci când va fi în parlament să-și aducă aminte și de acești nenorociți de romi, ca să fie împroprietăriți, asigurându-l pe dl. Vârvoreanu, ca și autoritățile, că de azi înainte toți romii din România se vor face oameni de treabă.

Roagă totodată pe dl. comandant al Legiunii de Jandarmi Mehedinți ca să dea voie tuturor romilor meseriași care umblă prin satele din județul Mehedinți să-și poată vinde marfa produsă de ei și să nu fie stingheriți de jandarmi.

Dl. deputat Marius Vorvoreanu mulțumește vorbitorilor, asigurându-i că va căuta pe cât va fi posibil spre a satisface drepturile romilor din județul Mehedinți, spunându-le totodată că se simte satisfăcut că vede în aceasta romii un popor de solidarizare, și are convingerea că în scurt timp ei își vor schimba ideile avute până în prezent.

Ca final a urmat o mică piesă de teatru și câteva recitări de poezii.

La ora 8 seara dl. deputat Vârvoreanu a părăsit satisfăcut grădina Tomescu și serbarea a luat sfârșit în liniște.

Șeful poliției ... (Băltăneanu).

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Copy of the report of the Police of Turnu Severin City No. 453 of August 13, 1934 to the Regional Inspectorate of the Police Craiova.

We have the honour to report that on August 12, this year, in the Tomescu "Cărbunaru" Garden, in this city, there was a field celebration, organised by the General Union of the Roma, from Bucharest, the Mehedinţi branch, under the presidency of Mr. G. Niculescu, active president of the Union, and under the patronage of Mr. M. Vorvoreanu [1].

It started at 3 ½ p.m. and about 450-500 Roma from Mehedinţi county took part.

Mr. Lenghescu N. [2], a member of this union, speaks on behalf of the president and in a few words shows the significance of the establishment of this union and the progress that this union has made since 1933, the date of its establishment, until now.

Mr. Marin Simion [3], the president of the Roma in Oltenia, thanks to Mr. Deputy Marius Vorvoreanu for his goodwill to come and attend these celebrations. He asks Mr. Deputy to remember these poor Roma when he is in Parliament, to be granted land,

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assuring Mr. Vorvoreanu, as well as the authorities, that from now on, all Roma in Romania will become good people.

He also asks Mr. commander of the Gendarmes Legion Mehedinţi, to allow all Roma tradesmen who walk through the villages of Mehedinţi County, to sell their merchandise and not to be embarrassed by the gendarmes [4].

Mr. Deputy Marius Vorvoreanu thanked the speakers, assuring them that he would seek as much as possible to satisfy the rights of the Roma in Mehedinţi County, while also telling them that he feels satisfied that he sees in this that Roma are a solitary people and is convinced that shortly they will change their ideas so far.

Finally, there was a short theatre play and a reciting of poems.

At 8 o'clock in the evening, Mr. Deputy Vorvoreanu left the "Tomescu" garden satisfied and the celebration ended quietly.

Chief of Police … [signature] (Băltăneanu).

Notes

1. The name of this person appears in the document as "Vârvoreanu." Marius Vorvoreanu (1886-1935) was a leader of the National Liberal Party, prefect of Mehedinţi County (1922-1926) and deputy of Mehedinţi in the Parliament. He was assassinated (most probably by legionaries) on October 24, 1935.
2. In the text it is mistakenly written 'Lenghescu I.' This, in fact, refers to Nicolae Lenghescu-Cley, a Romanian musician of Roma origin, collaborator of Gheorghe Niculescu and editor of the gazette *Glasul romilor*. He is the author of 'Roma Anthem' (Timpul, 1934d, p. 3) and of 'March of the Roma' (Glasul Romilor, 1940b, p. 3).
3. Marin I. Simion, poet and journalist, was one of the Roma leaders in Craiova. In 1933, he collaborated with Archimandrite Calinic I. Popp Şerboianu at the founding of the General Association of Gypsies in Romania. Together with other people, he created that year the Oltenia Regional Circle of General Association of Gypsies in Romania. The organisation in Oltenia, which later also had other names (e.g. the General Association of the Gypsies of Oltenia), was particularly active and changed its affiliation on several occasions, either to General Association of Gypsies in Romania or to the General Union of Roma in Romania, and sometimes it was independent.
4. In the 1930s, some restrictions were introduced on the movement of nomadic and semi-nomadic Roma through the country (an authorisation issued by the General Inspectorate of the Gendarmerie was necessary, and the number of days in which they could enter a commune was limited), but there were also abuses from the gendarmes. Some of the latter were denounced in the Roma press (cf. Timpul, 1934e, p. 4).

Source: ANIC, fond. Direcţia Generală a Poliţiei, dos. 34/1932, f. 80.
Published in: Nastasă & Varga, 2001, doc. 53, p. 150.
Prepared for publication by Viorel Achim.

6.4.2 *The Police Report from Şimian Island*

Copie după raportul nr. 1000/935, al Poliției Orașului T[urnu] Severin, către Inspectoratul Reg[ional] de Pol[iție] Craiova.

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Avem onoare a raporta că în ziua de 11 august a.c., orele 15 p.m., a avut loc pe plaja "Lido" din insula Șimian o serbare dată de "Uniunea Romilor din România", filiala Mehedinți, unde au luat parte circa 150 persoane, printre care 30-35 romi.

La această serbare a luat parte și d-l Simion Marin, președintele romilor din Oltenia, care a strâns romii într-o parte a insulei și a început să le vorbească următoarele:

Cu regret constat că romii de la Mehedinți nu sunt încă organizați; am să vin peste câteva zile să organizez fiecare sat. Noi, romii, avem o lege după care ne conducem; cel care nu respectă legea, nu are nici drepturi. Am voit ca să vă țiu o conferință referitoare la dreptul și rostul romilor în asociație; dar fiind numărul prea mic de romi, nu poate să o țină; însă să-l ascultați pe președintele vostru, d-l Paraschiv, care luptă în continuu pentru câștigarea drepturilor voastre.

Suntem organizați ca și C.F.R-iștii, preoții, învățătorii etc, de 700 ani trăim în România și am colaborat cu românii în toate împrejurările, cum a fost în război, și nu s-a găsit nici un rom care să trădeze țara.

Asociația luptă din punct de vedere cultural, economic și mai lucrează ca toți romii să capete dreptul la împroprietărire și de aceea se cere unirea, că numai atunci, când s-ar uni cei 1.250.000 romi, câți sunt în România, putem să ne reclamăm dreptul la viață.

Avem o domniță a romilor, Eleonora Belcineanu-Craiova, care este bogată și ajută foarte mult asociația și care actualmente se află în T[urnu]-Severin și a venit expre pentru serbare și aceasta numai pentru că ține mult la romi.

Asociația romilor este una din asociațiile care echivalează cu toate asociațiile.

Am cheltuit o jumătate milion până am obținut persoană juridică, din cauză că romii aveau numai caziere de furturi, crime; astăzi nu mai merge, trebuie să ne facem oameni de treabă.

Ca încheiere, vă rog să duceți vestea și să faceți propagandă că romii astăzi sunt egali în drepturi ca orice popor de pe pământ. O să facem un congres general pentru a ne cere dreptul la împroprietărire și totodată trebuie organizați și căldărarii.

Serbarea a luat sfârșit la ora 20, în liniște.

Șeful Poliției ... (Băltăneanu).

∵

Copy of the report no. 1000/935, of the Police of Turnu Severin City, to the Regional Inspectorate of the Police Craiova.

We have the honour to report that on August 11th, the current year 1935, at 3 p.m., a celebration given by the Union of the Roma in Romania, Mehedinţi branch, took place on the Lido beach in Şimian island, where about 150 people took part, among which 30-35 Roma.

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At this celebration Mr. Simion Marin, the president of the Roma in Oltenia, did also participate, who gathered the Roma in a part of the island and began to speak to them as follows:

I am sorry to note that the Roma in Mehedinţi county are not yet organised; I will come in a few days to organise each village. We, the Roma, have a law that guides us: the one who does not respect the law has no rights. I wanted to hold a lecture on the rights and purposes of the Roma in the association, but the very small number of Roma prevented him from keeping it; but listen to your president, Mr. Paraschiv, who is constantly fighting for your rights.

We are organised like the railway workers, the priests, the teachers [1], etc., we have lived in Romania for 700 years and we have collaborated with the Romanians under all circumstances, as in the war [2], and there has been no Rom to betray the country.

The association is struggling in the cultural and economic fields and is working to ensure that all Roma receive the right to own land property, and that is why unity is needed, because only when the 1,250,000 Roma, that are in Romania, are united can we claim the right to life.

We have a lady of the Roma, Eleonora Belcineanu [3] from Craiova, who is rich and helps very much the association and who is currently in Turnu Severin and has come for the celebration and this only because she loves the Roma.

The Roma association is one of the associations that can be compared with other associations in the country.

We spent half a million Lei before we obtained the legal status [4], because the Roma had only police filed with thefts, murders; today this is no longer working, we have to make ourselves into good people.

As a conclusion, please spread the news and make propaganda that the Roma today are equal in rights with any people on earth. We are going to organise a general congress in which we will ask to be granted land and at the same time the coppersmiths should also be organised.

The celebration ended at 20 o'clock, quietly.

Chief of Police … [signature] (Băltăneanu).

Notes

1. Reference to the very good organisation, with structures at the territorial and national level, which had workers from the Romanian Railways, the church people and the teaching staff.
2. Reference to Roma's participation in the Romanian army during the First World War.
3. The correct name is probably Elena Belcineanu, a rich woman from Craiova. In 1934, she was elected president of the Gypsy women of the General Association of Gypsies in Romania (Timpul, 1934b, p. 3).
4. The amount of 500,000 lei spent with the organisation's registration is an obvious exaggeration.

Source: ANIC, fond. Direcţia Generală a Poliţiei, dos. 34/1932, f. 142.
Published in: Nastasă & Varga, doc. 90, pp. 198-199.
Prepared for publication by Viorel Achim.

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6.4.3 *The Gypsy Life*

Viata țigănească

Mișcarea țigănească a luat o mare desvoltare în România, mai ales în Oltenia, cari a încăput pe mâna de fer a Starostelui Marin I. Simion – suprema nădejde de mâine a nației țigănești!

Țigan cu simțuri desvoltate î-și sacrifică timpul pentru ajungerea la apogeul nației țigănești. Lupta nu i-a fost în deșert, căci ca prin farmec a pus stăpânire pe rasa oacheșe din întreaga Oltenie, trecând prea cunoscutul și-n Muntenia, pe valea Dunării înspre T.Măgurele. Răslețele sălașuri de țigani nomazi, vin de peste văi și dealuri să-și vază stăpânul! ...

Nici cinci luni n-au trecut dela începere acestei lupte că iată- cum oamenii politici încep să apeleze la voturile lor ...

Mulți fruntași politici chiar le-a propus numeroase locuri, pe listele candidaților.

Dar cum "cerul Oltenia!" (sic) al Asociația Generala a Țiganilor din România nu are înscris în programul său un rol politic- totuși s-a căzut de acord, că n-ar strica, dacă ar susține ideia politică a unui oarecare partid. Deaceia, avându-se în vedere frumosul trecut al celui mai mare partid politics din țară și cari nu poate fi altul, decât acel al partidului naț. liberal- dăm mai mult ca sigur , că: sfătoșii vor cădea de acord, în sfatul ce are loc azi, să sprijine pe toată linia, candidații acestui partid.

In ceeace privește alegerile comunale, putem spune chiar depe acuma, că se va rezerva un loc de frunte unui membru din Asociație și cari fără îndoială va fi unul din cei mai vajnici luptători din Asociație și cari luptă la "complecta" emancipare a nației țigănești.

Aceasta avându-se în vedere, că ar fi cea mai nimerită persoană ce ar putea reprezenta "cercul Olteniei" și căruia i se datorește ăn cea mai mare parte bunul mers al Asociației. Propaganda ce a susținut-o prin toate județele Olteniei în mai puțin de 3-4 luni a avut un puternic ecou în rândurile țigănimei, cari s-au înregimentat cu zecile de mii în Asociația lor.

Sfătoșii vor aduce pentru azi un omagiu d-lui Manolescu-Dolj, declarândul membru de onoare în Asociația Generală a Țiganilor din România.

∵

The Gypsy life

The Gypsy movement has developed greatly in Romania, especially in Oltenia, in the iron hand of Starost [1] Marian I. Simion – the Gypsy nation's supreme hope of tomorrow!

A Gypsy with developed senses has devoted all his time to reach to the peak of the Gypsy nation. The struggle was not in vain, because, almost by miracle, he came to lead the handsome race from Oltenia, passing also in Muntenia [2], in the valley of the Danube towards T. Magurele [3]. The dispersed groups of nomadic Gypsies, are now coming over valleys and hills to see their master!...

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Not five months have passed since this fight has started that as politicians start to turn to their votes …

Many political leaders have even proposed to them numerous places on their [electoral] lists.

But given that "the Oltenia circle" [4] of A General Association of Gypsies in Romania in Romania does not have a political role in his program – it was nevertheless agreed that it would not hurt to support the political idea of a particular party. Therefore, having in mind the beautiful past of the largest political party in the country, which can be no other than the National Liberal Party – we are more than certain that: the counsellors will agree, in the advisory meeting that is going to take place today, to wholly support the candidates of this party.

As far as the communal elections are concerned, we can already say that a leading position will be reserved to a member of the Association, who will undoubtedly be one of the Association's most adamant fighters and who struggles to "complete" the emancipation of the Gypsy nation.

This being considered to be the most suitable person that could represent the "Oltenia Circle" and to whom the good progress of the Association is largely due. The propaganda that he sustained through all the counties of Oltenia, in less than 3-4 months, has had a strong echo among the ranks of the Gypsies who registered with their tens of thousands in their Association.

The counsellors will bring homage to Mr. Manolescu-Dolj [5] today, declaring him an honorary member of General Association of Gypsies in Romania.

Notes

1. Starost or starosta is a term (loan word from Slavic) referring to a community elder or a leader.
2. Both Muntenia and Oltenia are geographical regions in Romania.
3. A city in the Southern part of Oltenia, on the Danube, and at the border with Bulgaria.
4. In the text it is actually written 'cerul Oltenia', meaning Oltenia sky but this is most likely a misprint.
5. Aurel Th. Manolescu-Dolj was the chief editor of the newspaper *Timpul*, in which this article was published.

Source: [No Author]. (1933c). Viata țigănească. *Timpul*, An. 2, No. 19, 1933, December 16, p. 1.
Prepared for publication by Raluca Bianca Roman.

Comments

The above article is important as it talks broadly about the 'Gypsy movement in Romania', while nevertheless mentioning the regional developments it has taken in Oltenia and Muntenia. As such, it is stated here that the movement has been particularly developed in Oltenia, under the strong guidance of Marin Simion. His influence has been highlighted to the extent to which, the article writes, politicians have even become interested in the votes of Gypsies. The article highlights the connection between the Oltenia circle of the General Association of Gypsies in Romania and the National Liberal Party,

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therefore partially contradicting the statement that these associations have no political interest or goal. This is further emphasised when the article states that for the local communal elections there would be a place reserved for a member of the Association, a person seen as fighting for the 'full emancipation of the Gypsy nation'. While the article does not mention here the name of that person, it does end with a thank you note addressed to the chief editor of the newspaper *Timpul* who is declared an honorific member of the Association.

Raluca Bianca Roman

6.4.4 *The House, the School and the Church*

Casa, școala și biserica romilor

Mișcarea culturală a Romilor cu toate ironiile ce se îndreaptă în potriva ei, prinde teren pe zi ce trece devening din ce în ce mo realitate de netăgăduit.

Intr-adevăr, cine ar fi crezut până mai eri, că Romii vor fi în stare ca să se unească într-o asociație care să aibă astăzi reprezentanți în toată țara, să aibă o bibliotecă și un ziar.

Demnă de toată lauda, acestei mișcări trebue să i se mai adaoge și alte preocupări și anume:

1. CASA ROMILOR. Romii trebue să întemeeze o casă a lor, un muzeu în care să se strângă și să se păstreze totul ce este demn de păstrat pentru datoria și viața Romilor din România.

In biblioteca acestei case a Romilor, trebuesc colecționate toate documentele privitoare la trecutul lor, cum sunt de pildă: actele de vânzare a robilor Romi, legiurile făcute de domnii țării pentru ei, precum și toate studiile istorice, literare și filologice tipărite în țară și în străinătate, cu privire la aceasta.

In secțiunea etnografică se vor colecționa și expune pentru a fi văzute de vizitatori, tot ceace privește traiul Romilor, costumele și lucrurile eșite din mâna meșteșugarilor romi: fierari, ursari, ciurari, căldărari, etc.

In această cacă ve trebui neapărat să exite o mare arhivă muzicală. Toate cântecele țigănești să fie registrate la fonograf și depuse aci pentru studii.

Nu mai vorbesc de arhiva de folklor în care se vor colecționa toate cântecile, poveștile, credințele și superstițiile Romilor.

Pe temeiul acestora să se elaboreze o mare enciclopedie ilustrată a Romilor, în care să poată găsi oricine tot ceiace privește interesanta și impresionanta problema a Romilor care trebuesc cunoscuți din toate punctele de vedere: antropologic, istoric etnografic, folkloristic și filologic.

2. BISERICA ROMILOR, să nu se pară o glumă. Romii pot și trebue neapărat să-și aibă biserica lor, in care, să slujeasc, preoții lor, în limba lor.

3. ȘCOALA ROMILOR. Ce ar putea fi mai ușor de cât întemeerea a unei școale a Romilor în care dacăli Romi să predea după manuale scrise iarăși în limba lor.

Casa, biserica și școala Romilor nu mai pot aștepta amânare.

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Ele trebuesc înfăptuite cât mai curând. Solidaritatea și puterea de jerftă a Romilo, sunt o chezășie că în curând se va porni la lucru.

Pentru a nu întârzia o clipă, toți Romii din țară care țin la ridicarea culturală a neamului lor, sunt rugați a trimite tot ceace socotesc că interesează această chestiune pe adresa subsemnatului.

Deocamdată primim ori ce lucruri pentru întemeierea acestor trei așezăminte culturale ale Romilor, ca: costume, fotografii, cărți, culegeri de cântece și povești precum și ori ce sfaturi, si părei ăn ceiace privește întemeerea casei, bisericei și a școalei.

In numerile viitoare ale gazetei vom tipări răspunsurile și daniile primite și vom reveni pe larg asupra oricărei chestiunei în parte.

Dr. C. S. Nicolăescu-Plopșor.
Redactorul Bibliotecei O ROM.

∵

The House, School and the Church of the Roma

The cultural movement of the Roma, with all the ironies that come its way, catches ground every day, becoming more and more an undeniable reality. Indeed, who would have believed until now that the Roma would be able to join an association that presently has representatives all across the country, has its own library and a newspaper.

Worthy of all praise, several other focuses must be added to this movement, namely:

1. THE ROMA HOUSE. The Roma should set up their own house, a museum in which everything that is worthy of preservation about the duty and life of the Roma in Romania should be collected and preserved.

In the library of this Roma House, all the documents relating to their past should be collected, such as the sale of Romani slaves, the laws made by the princes of the country for them, as well as all historical, literary and philological studies printed in the country and in abroad.

In the ethnographic section, all matters regarding the Roma's living, the costumes and the work and products made from the hands of the Roma craftsmen: blacksmiths, bear-tamers, horse dealers, basket-makers, etc., will be collected and exhibited, so as to be seen by visitors. In this house, one should necessarily have a great musical archive.

All Gypsy songs should be recorded with the phonograph and submitted for study.

Not to mention the folklore archive where all the songs, stories, beliefs and superstitions of the Roma will be collected.

On the basis of these materials, a large illustrated encyclopaedia of the Roma will be made, in which everyone can find everything concerning the interesting and impressive Roma issue, which should be known from all points of view: anthropological, ethnographic, folkloristic and philological.

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2. THE ROMA CHURCH, not to be seen as a joke. The Roma can and must necessarily have their own church in which their priests may serve and preach in their own language.

3. THE SCHOOL OF ROMA. What could be easier than setting up a Roma school in which Roma teachers can teach textbooks written again in their own language.

The house, the church and the Roma school cannot wait postponement. They must be done as soon as possible. Roma solidarity and willingness to sacrifice themselves are a guarantee that soon the work will be done. In order not to have one moment's delay, all Roma in the country value the cultural uplifting of their people are asked to send everything they think might be of interest concerning this matter to the undersigned. For the time being, we will receive anything that can contribute to the founding of these three Roma cultural settlements, such as: costumes, photographs, books, song collections and collections of stories, as well as advice and guidance about the foundations of the house, the church and the school. In the future issues of the newspaper, we will print the answers and the received items, and we will revisit in large each issue.

Dr. Constantin S. Nicolăescu-Plopșor.
Editor of the O ROM Library.

Source: Nicolăescu-Plopșor, C. S. (1934). Casa, școala și biserica romilor. *O Rom*, An. I, No. 2, 1934, October 22, p. 1.
Prepared for publication by Raluca Bianca Roman.

Comments

This article is authored by C. S. Nicolăescu-Plopșor, a leading historian, ethnologist and archaeologist of the time, who, said to be of Roma descent himself. He has sought to organise and set up a Roma library called, *O Rom*, which ultimately published two key books in Romani language. His main interest was in collecting Roma folklore, mainly from the region of Oltenia.

He gradually affiliated himself with leading Roma intellectuals from the Oltenia circle, most prominently Marian I. Simion and Aurel Th. Manolescu-Dolj, and began publishing some of his materials in the two newspapers of the region, namely *Timpul* (led by Manolescu Dolj) and *O Rom* (director N. T. Ionescu and M. I. Simion). Interestingly, there seems to have been a rupture between C. S. Nicolăescu-Plopșor and Roma leaders from Oltenia, as reflected in the publications of *Timpul*. For example, in No.No. 38-39, the newspaper proudly advertises Nicolăescu-Plopșor's attempts to establish the *O Rom* Library. However, from issue 53 onwards, the newspaper seems to have turned against C. S. Nicolăescu-Plopșor, calling him at times a "Gypsy crook" and seizing to advertise his works.

The article selected above is, in effect, a summary of the plans laid out for the library *O Rom* and talks about the cultural movement among the Roma. It briefly mentions the existence of a Roma library, set up by C. S. Nicolăescu-Plopșor, and also titled *O Rom*, and highlights the need for further developments, among which: 1) Roma House; 2) Roma Church; 3) Roma school.

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All these suggested developments are formulated in close connection to Nicolăescu-Plopșor's broader aims to plead for teaching and church services to be held in Romani language as well as his aims to set up a Roma museum. In reality, no such museum was formed, but two bilingual books were published (in Romani and in Romanian), as part of the *O Rom* Library (Nicolăescu-Plopșor, 1934ab).

Raluca Bianca Roman

6.4.5 *The Neo-Rustic Brotherhood*

ROMÂNIA.
Cluj, la 24 iunie 1935.
Inspectoratul Regional de Poliție IV Cluj.
Serviciul Poliției de Siguranță.
No. 22.145/1935.

Domnule Director General,

Avem onoare a vă raporta că în parcul "Regina Maria" din Făgăraș a avut loc o adunare a societății *Înfrățirea Neorustică* (Neo-Rustic Brotherhood) din Calbor, județul Făgăraș, înființată de curând, în ziua de 18 iunie 1935.

Această societate este constituită din țiganii aflați în județul Făgăraș, însă numai o parte din ei, și are ca scop, după cum declară țiganul Naftanailă Lazăr, originar din comuna Calbor, președintele acestei societăți, lupta pentru revendicările țiganilor în vederea unui trai mai bun.

La orele 10 dimineața s-au adunat în Piața Unirii delegați din diferite comune din acel județ, de unde au plecat în frunte cu muzica în parcul "Regina Maria", unde s-a ținut întrunirea. La acest congres au luat parte 1000 persoane.

Au vorbit: Naftanailă Lazăr, Cincan Ioan, precum și săteanul Ioan Ganea, care în cuvântările lor au căutat să încurajeze pe țigani, dându-le speranță că lupta care o duc în prezent va da rezultate pozitive.

Inspector de poliție … [signature indescifrabil].
Șeful Serviciului … [signature] I. Stănilă.
Domniei-Sale, Domnului Director General al Poliției, Dir[ecția] Sig[uranței], București.

∴

ROMANIA.
Cluj, June 24, 1935.
Regional Inspectorate of Police IV Cluj.
Security Police Service.
No. 22.145/1935.

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Mr. General Director,

We have the honour to report that on June 18, 1935, in Queen Maria park in Făgăraş took place a meeting of the society *Înfrăţirea Neorustică* (Neo-Rustic Brotherhood) from Calbor, Făgăraş County, recently established [1].

This society is made up of the Gypsies in Făgăraş County, but only a part of them, and has the purpose, as the Gypsy Naftanailă Lazăr [2], from Calbor village, president of this society, declared, to fight for the Gypsies' claims for a better living.

At 10 a.m., delegates from various communes in that county gathered in Unirii Square, from where they went, headed by music, to Queen Maria Park, where the program here attached was carried out [3]. At this congress took part ca. 1,000 persons.

Those who spoke: Naftanailă Lazăr, Cincan Ioan, as well as the villager Ioan Ganea, who in their speeches tried to encourage the Gypsies, giving them hope that the struggle they are currently leading will yield positive results.

Police Inspector ... [*signature indecipherable*].
Chief of Service ... [signature] I. Stănilă.
To Mr. General Director of the Police, Security Police Direction, Bucharest.

Notes

1. In fact, the society *Înfrăţirea Neorustică* (Neo-Rustic Brotherhood) was founded already in 1926 by Naftanailă Lazăr, initially as a mutual aid organisation established according to the model of the neighbourhood associations (*Nachbarschaften*) of the Saxons in Transylvania (see above). In 1934-1935, the association published a newspaper entitled *Neamul Ţigănesc*.
2. Naftanailă Lazăr, president of the society *Înfrăţirea Neorustică*, was one of the most famous Roma leaders in Transylvania. Later, in the General Union of Roma in Romania he was the president of the Transylvanian Organisation [see below, part: National organisations].
3. The programme of the meeting of June 18, 1935 is not in the archive file.

Source: ANIC, fond. Direcţia Generală a Poliţiei, dos. 34/1922-1938, f. 136.
Published in: Nastasă & Varga, 2001, doc. 86, p. 195.
Prepared for publication by Viorel Achim.

6.4.6 *To all the Gypsies in Transylvania*

Către toți țiganii din Ardeal!

Fraților!

Trăim în vremuri grele. Viața tuturor națiunilor de pe globul pământesc s-a ușurat, numai noi, țiganii trăim mai greu. De soarta noastră nimeni nu se interesează, căci nimeni nu ne vede, nimeni nu ne aude și nimeni nu ne înțelege durerea și jalea. Cu-i ce-i pasă de un țigan, care-i lipsit? Cine aude vaetul lui și cine apleacă privirea la viața lui?

Toate popoarele din lume, au prieteni, toți străinii și păgânii au apărătorii lor, numai noi țiganii, trăim alungați și ocoliți de toți!

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Noi nu avem prieteni!

Noi nu avem ocrotitori!

Soarta noastră încă nu a mișcat inima nimănuia.

Fraților!

Cine să ne cunoască durerea noastră, dacă noi tăcem!

Cine să ne ocrotească drepturile noastre la viață, dacă nu ne plângem!

Cine să ne ajute, dacă noi nu ne ajutăm!

Priviți, în jurul vostru câtă nedreptate se face celui mai slab dintre noi și nici unul nu protestăm!

E timpul suprem, ca să ne desmeticim, din nepăsarea noastră și să începem să ne numărăm, să ne cunoaștem, să ne destăinuim durerile și nevoile și să ne apărăm. E timpul ca să nu trăim răsleți, fiecare în bordeiul său, ci să ne unim cu toții, punând toată grija nevoilor noastre în mâna celor mai buni dintre noi, cari să ne apere și să ne călăuzezscă spre o viață mai ușoară, spre un viitor mai frumos!

Care dintre noi vrea să fie ajutat? Cine poate trăi singur, fără ajutorul cuiva?

Corturarul? Lingurarul? Vătrarul? Muzicantul? Funționarul? Liberprofesionistul?

Toți, dar absolut toți sunt la fel de huliți în societate și chiar dacă un timp ni se uită originea, tot batjocoriți rămânem, căci noi ne rușinăm de originea noastră.

Primul pas pe care trebuie să îl facem noi în societate, dacă vrem să impunem respect și stimă, este să nu ne rușinăm, că suntem țigani! Fiecare dintre noi să rostească limpede și curat cuvântul mândru de țigan, ca un protest și o prevenire pentru toți, cari au gustul să glumeasvă (sic) cu noi, că nu nie rușine, că suntem țigani, ba mai mult suntem mândrii. Mândria noastră, transformă mentalitatea noastră și a lumei ce ne înconjoară.

In al doilea rând, trebuie cu tot dinadinsul, să împărtășim o meserie cinstită în societate, pe care s-o învățăm cu temei. Să ștergem cuvântul de cârpaciu de lângă numele nostru și să adăugăm că (sic) stăruința și străduința noastră cuvântul de meșter cinstit și corect.

In al treilea rând, fiecare dintre noi, să caute să pună preț cât mai mare pe sănătatea trupească și sufletească, Să nu mai umblăm murdari și rupți. Femeile noastre să înțeleasă odata, că apa e bună și pentru spălatul trupului, nu numai de băut! Hainele cât de rupte trebuie să fie spălate și câripite. Să se ferească fiecare de boli și bube urâte, căci aceste plăgi, nu strică numai frumusețea trupească, dar le moștenesc și urmașii lor și e păcat de moarte.

Țiganii lăeți, (corturari) să se oprească din pribegia lor și să înceapă o viață de oameni așezați. Copiii lor să urmeze școala și biserica. Feciorii lor, să se înroleze în armată, unde vor primi învățături bune și folositoare.

Țiganii băeși, să înceapă să se organizeze mai departe, timițând copiii la școală și cu toții, să meargă la biserică. Să nu mai bată drumul crâșmelor și judecăților, ci să trăiască liniștiți și cu frica lui Dumnezeu. In fiecare sat să aibă o casă de sfat, unde cei cari știu ceti și scrie, să citească, iar ceilalți să asculte. Să țină contactul cu societatea noastră, trimițându-ne scrisori despre durerile și păsurile lor.

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Țiganii de casă, cari sunt înstăriți și cu frumoase gospodării au datoria să nu uite de frații lor, cari zac în suferință. Aceștia să caute să-și dea copiii la școli mai înalte, ca să putem dovedi, că neamul țigănesc, este vrednic de toată încrederea și că fiii săi cei mai buni, cu nimic nu sunt mai pre jos de fiii altor neamuri. Acești țigani, să știe toată lumea, că și-au câștigat independența și stima, numai datorită muncei lor fără preget și stăruinței părinților lor, cari înfruntând greutățile începutului, au răsbit să-și creieze o viață mai bună. Din sânul acestor familii au eșit medici, avocați, ofițeri, ingineri, profesori și artiști renumiți, cari fac cinste breslei lor.

Toți aceștia sunt rugați, să nu-și renege origina lor, căci dacă ei să lapădă de noi, cine ne va mai înțelege și cine ne va mai ajuta în gândul nostru de redeșteptare.

Fraților,

Pentru triumful cauzei noastre, noi cei grupați în jurul "Înfrățirii neorustice", nu am cruțat nici bani, nici trudă ca să putem veni în jurul fraților noștrii țigani. Am organizat în nenumărate orașe și sate, elementele de progres, pe care le-am cercetat și ajutat. Am organizat serbări culturale pentru frații noștri țigani, la cari participau toți intelectualii români din localitate, admirând uimitoarele noastre progrese și manifestând, cu vie mulțumire pentru rezultatul sforțărilor noastre.

Cum noi nu sumtem oameni, cari să ne oprim la jumătatea drumului, facem prezentul apel, chemând la luptă pe toți frații noștri ori unde s-ar afla ei. Nu vom dezarma până când nu vom strânge în jurul ideii de neam țigănesc, pe toți frații noștri, pe care organizându-i culturalicește îi vom transforma în factori sociali activi, spre binele lor și al Țării.

Animați de aceste gânduri și încrezători în realizarea lor, pe cale religioasă și culturală, dorim tuturora sănătate.

"Înfrățirea neorustică".
Președ. Naftanailă Lazăr.

∵

To all the Gypsies in Transylvania!

Brothers!

We live in hard times. The lives of all the nations of the world have improved, only we, the Gypsies, live harsher lives. Nobody is interested in our fate, for no one sees us, no one hears us, and no one understands our pain and sorrow. Who cares about a Gypsy who does not have much? Who hears his cries, and who pays attention to him? All peoples in the world have friends, all foreigners and pagans have their defenders, only the Gypsies, are chased away and avoided by all.

We have no friends!

We have no protectors!

Our fate has not moved anyone's heart yet.

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Brothers!

Who can know our pain if we are silent!

Who can protect our rights to life if we do not cry!

Who can help us if we do not help ourselves!

Look around you, how much injustice is done to the weakest of us, and we do not protest!

It is high time to come to our senses, get out of our indifference and begin to count ourselves, to know each other, to tell each other our pains and needs and to defend ourselves. It is time for us not to live separated, each one in his own hut, but to join together, putting all our cares in the hands of the best of us, who will protect us and lead us to an easier life, to a more beautiful future!

Which one of us wants to be helped? Who can live alone without anybody else's help? The tent-maker? The spoon-maker? The builder? The musician? The functionary? The self-employed?

Every one of us, and I mean every one of us, is just as scorned in society and even if they may forget our origins, we still remain mocked, for we are ashamed of our origin.

The first step we have to do in society, if we want to impose respect and esteem, is not to be ashamed of being Gypsies! Each of us should speak plainly and clearly the proud word of 'Gypsy', as a protest and prevention for all who take pleasure in mocking us, that they are not ashamed to be Gypsies, but more, that we are proud of it. Our pride transforms our own mentality and that of the world that surrounds us.

Secondly, we must, of course, take part in honest work in society, and we must learn out trades thoroughly. Let's erase the word superficial from beside our name and add instead, with earnestness and hard-work, that of an honest and fair craftsman.

Thirdly, every one of us, must put more value on our bodily and spiritual health. Let us not walk dirty and dishevelled. Let our women understand once and for all, that water is also good for washing the body, not only for drinking! Ripped clothing should be washed and sown. Everyone should avoid illnesses and ugly tumours, for these plagues do not spoil only our bodily beauty, but our descendants will also inherit them and this is a deadly sin.

Tent Gypsies [1] should stop wandering and begin a life of settled people. Their children should attend school and the church. Their sons should join the army, where they will receive good and useful teachings.

Beash Gypsies [2] should continue organising themselves further, sending their children to schools and attending church. They should avoid the way of the bars and the courthouses, and live peacefully and with the fear of God. In every village there should be a council house, where those who can read and write should read and write, and the others can listen. They should keep in touch with our society by sending us letters about their pains and their worries.

House Gypsies [3] who are wealthy and have beautiful households have the duty not to forget their brothers who are in distress. They should seek to give their children to higher schools, so that we can prove that the Gypsy nation is worthy of all confidence

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and that its best sons are in no way inferior to the sons of other nations. These Gypsies, everyone should know, have earned their independence and their esteem, only because of their work and the perseverance of their parents, who have faced the hardships of the beginning and have thrown themselves into making a better life. From among these families there have been doctors, lawyers, officers, engineers, professors and famous artists who honour their trade. We ask all of them not to reject their origin, for if they forsake us, who will understand us and who will help us in our wishes for a re-awakening.

Brothers,

For the triumph of our cause, those of us grouped around the *Neo-Rustic Brotherhood* did not spare neither money nor labour to be able to come to the aid of our Gypsy brothers. We have organised in countless cities and villages the elements of progress that we have researched and contributed to. We organised cultural festivals for our Gypsy brothers, attended by all Romanian intellectuals in the locality, who admired our stunning progress and showed us gratitude for the outcome of our efforts. As we are not people to stop halfway, we make the present appeal, summoning all our brethren to come to our battle, wherever they are. We will not disarm until we have gathered around the idea of a Gypsy nation, all of our brothers, whom we will organise in a cultural way, and whom we will transform into active social factors, for their own sake and for that of the Country.

Animated by these thoughts and confident in their realisation, on a religious and cultural basis, we wish you best of health.

Neo-Rustic Brotherhood.
President Naftanailă Lazăr.

Notes

1. Originally, 'Lăeți' and 'Corturari' (from the term 'cort', meaning 'tent'), both designations used for nomadic Gypsies.
2. Originally, 'Țiganii băeși', wich is designation of a Romanian-speaking Gypsy group.
3. Originally, 'Țiganii de casă' with meaning 'House Gypsies'

Source: Lazăr, N. (1934a). Către toți țiganii din Ardeal! *Neamul Țigănesc*. An. 1, No. 1, 1934, February [no day], p. 1.
Prepared for publication by Raluca Bianca Roman.

Comments

The above one-page article is in fact a manifesto published by Naftanailă Lazăr, the President of the Neo-Rustic Brotherhood, from Făgăraș, and a call for unity among those referred to as 'țigani', to take matters into their own hands and request their rights by different means.

The author of the manifesto, who also happens to be the President of the *Neo-Rustic Brotherhood* (founded in 1926), states that the first step to this unity is not to be ashamed of their origin but to be proud to be 'țigani'. The idea of being proud of one's origin is

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exemplary here of the ways in which both Naftanailă Lazăr and other Roma leaders approached the issue of solidarisation and the attempt to create unity among diverse Roma communities. At the same time, the use by Naftanailă Lazăr of the term 'țigani' rather than Roma is also relevant here as this would become a distinguishing factor between the ways in which Naftanailă Lazăr approached the problem of labelling and the ways in which other Roma leaders began pleading for the use of the word 'Roma' instead of 'Țigan' in all official and popular publications. As can be seen from other articles connected to the theme of labelling, a gradual movement towards the adoption of 'Roma' over 'Țigan' was being promoted by Roma leaders during the 1930s. However, Naftanailă Lazăr maintained the opinion that pride in one's origin also meant pride in the continuing use of the term 'Țigan'.

The article presented above is also important as source material as it clearly and unequivocably emphasises the importance of developing and fostering a form of own self-consciousness and belonging. It does so by stating that pride in one's origin will transform not only people's own mentalities but also the mentality of the world surrounding them. Secondly, the article tackles the issue of honest and thorough work. Thirdly, the article also advocates the care of the body and the soul. Finally, it encourages different groups of 'țigani' to contribute to the cause of the movement.

All these elements are particularly important in order to understand the broader context of the demands laid out by the organisation led by Naftanailă Lazăr, alongside other Roma organisations during the interwar period: namely, the focus placed on the education of children, the emphasis placed on sedentarisation of nomadic groups, the underlining of the importance of the Church, and the necessity for developing a community-wide sense of pride in belonging and origin, all argued to be necessary in order to become full members of the nation-state and obtain a rightful place along with majority Romanians.

Raluca Bianca Roman

6.4.7 *Who Are We and What Do We Want?*

Cine suntem și ce vrem?

Numărăm un milion de suflete în țara românească. Luând ca pildă pe evrei, voim să ne organizăm într-o mare comunitate, ajutându-ne reciproc, formând o forță și aspirând la o viață mai demnă.

Nu suntem un partid politic și mai ales, o grupare minoritară. De aceia, respingem această acuzație și declarăm că pentru viitor nu mai voim să contăm ca o massă (sic) de manevră politică și nici ca niște manechine electorale. Dar pentrucă suntem cetățeni alegători, în viitoarele campanii electorale, vom da o deosebită atenție alegerilor pentru consiliile comunale și județene, pentrucă e vorba de gospodăria comunelor noastre. Și aci avem și noi un cuvânt de spus. Nu e drept ca într-un sat unde Romi sunt în majoritate să nu fie reprezentați în consiliul comunal. Nu e drept ca într-un județ unde romii pot da un aport de 10.000 de votanți să nu fie reprezentați în consiliile județene. Și dacă

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guvernul nu voește să țină seamă de acest lucru, ne vom abține din aceste viitoare alegeri, pentru ca ținând socoteala de numărul votanților din alegerile trecute, să putem calcula numărul real al voturilor ce ar fi putut da romii. Este o statistică ce ne interesează.

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Who are we and what do we want?

We number about one million souls in the Romanian country. Taking as example the Jews [1], we want to organise ourselves in a great community, helping each other, forming a force of our own and aspiring to a more dignified life. We are not a political party, and especially. we are not a minority group. Therefore, we reject this accusation and declare that, for the future, we no longer want to be counted on as a mass for political manoeuvre or as electoral mannequins. But because we are electoral citizens, in the upcoming electoral campaigns, we will pay special attention to the elections for the communal and county councils, because we are speaking here of the organisation of our own towns. And so we also have a word to say. It is not right that in a village where Roma form the majority there are not represented in the communal council. It is not right that in a county in which the Roma can give a contribution of 10,000 voters, they are not represented in the county councils. And if the government does not want to take this into account, we will refrain from these upcoming elections so that, given the number of voters from the previous elections, we can calculate the real number of votes that the Roma could have given. It's a statistic that interests us.

Notes

1. The connection and the contrasting example with the Jewish community in Romania was often made by Roma leaders for two reasons: 1) the potential for organising oneself would be built on the model of organisational strength of the Jewish community; 2) the desire to present themselves in contrast to the Jewish community, not as a minority and certainly not as a distinctive, dissident group (see also Matei, 2011a, pp. 27-40).

Source: [No Author]. (1934b). Cine suntem și ce vrem? *Neamul Țigănesc*, An. 1, No. 2, 1934, September 8, p. 2.
Prepared for publication by Raluca Bianca Roman

Comments

The article has the purpose of stating the aims of the organisation. As source material, it is also an important additional example of Naftanailă Lazăr and other Roma leaders at the time attempting to not present Roma as a minority group but, rather, as full electoral citizens of the country. In that sense, the organisation is said to not be a political party, neither a minority group and states that there will be no political minority manoeuvre coming from their midst, nor will they act as electoral puppets. Interestingly, however, the short entry ends by pointing out the upcoming elections and the attention that the

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leaders would pay in particular to local elections and campaigns. This is said to be especially important in the context in which, even in villages predominantly inhabited by Roma, there were no Roma elected within local councils.

Through this, the article constitutes another example of, on the one hand, the desire to not be perceived as a threatening minority, and, on the other, the importance of political matters and electoral campaigns for Roma leaders, even in the context in which these organisations are deemed to be apolitical.

Raluca Bianca Roman

6.4.8 *From Our Activity*

Din activitatea noastră

Primul meu gând se îndreaptă către frații Romi din județul Făgăraș pe care i-am organizat încă din anul 1926. Îmi permit ca să vă fac un mic istoric al nostru.

Noi, Țiganii am trăit izolați din cauza inculturei și persecuției altor popoare risipindu-se în toată Europa.

După cum spune istoria neamului nostru, la anul 1417 în Europa erau 400.000 țigani robi, iar 200.000 înfundați în cea mai neagră mizerie.

Nimeni nu s-a gândit să ridice starea acestui popor. Dar Domnul a zis și aceia că nu-i mai frumos în lumea aceasta decât a trăi ca frații împreună. Acest mare adevăr și învățătură m-a îndemnat ca Președintele al Societății "Înfrățirea Neorustică" din Calbor, Boholț si jur, ca să formez această Societate, recunoscută persoană juridica de Tribunalul Făgăraș cu decizia No. G. 393 din 1 Mai 1926.

În această calitate am inițiat cu societatea mea să adun pe Romi și prin petreceri, baluri, teatre, conferințe să contribui la cultura și educația lor.

Am contribuit la înlăturarea alcoolismului și altor obiceiuri rele ca lipsa de carte, căsătoriile nelegitime și altele.

Cutreerând aproape toate comunele din Ardeal am avut ocazia să văd zeci de copii care nu frecventează școala, ne interesându-se nimeni de ei.

Acești copii sunt ai lingurarilor ziși Băeși cari au un așezământ stabil apoi sunt Nomazii, care ar putea să se stabilească pe un loc să facă școala și armata tot in folosul statului nostru.

Societatea condusă de subsemnatul a dat producțiuni în Făgăraș, Cincul, Cohalm, Jibert, Șercaia, Vistea, Olteț, Boholâ, Cincsor, Bruia, Merghindeal, Halmeag, Băile Rodbav.

S-a jucat piesa *"Cercetașul"* episod din luptele de la Mărășești.

La aceste manifestări ale noastre au participat sute de persone dintre care și intelectuali ca Dl avocat M. Derlosea fost primar, Ioan Pica fost prefect, prof. Bentea, prof. Marinescu, ziarist, etc. care prin participarea Dlor ne-au ridicat curajul.

Acestora și tuturor care au contribuit la reușita manifestărilor noastre, le datorăm toată recunoștința pentru incurajarea pe care ne-au dat-o la sforțările noastre.

Vom continua și pentru viitor să aranjăm astfel de producțiuni cu piese de teatru, declamări și coruri ca să ne ridicam și noi alături de alte neamuri.

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From our activity

My first thought goes to the Roma [1] brothers in Făgăraş county, whom I have been organizing since 1926. I allow myself to give you a short history of ours.

We, the Gypsies, have lived isolated because of the lack of culture and the persecution of other peoples, being scattered throughout Europe.

As the history of our nation says, in 1417 there were 400,000 Gypsy slaves in Europe and 200,000 buried in the worst of miseries.

No one has ever thought of raising the state of this people. But the Lord also said that there is nothing more beautiful in this world than to live as brothers together. This great truth and teaching urged me as President of the Society of the Neo-Rustic Brotherhood in Calbor, Boholt and I swear to set up this Society, recognised as a legal person by the Făgăraş Tribunal with the decision No. 393 of 1 May 1926.

In this capacity, I initiated with my society to gather the Roma and through parties, balls, theaters, conferences to contribute to their culture and education.

We have helped to remove alcoholism and other bad habits such as illiteracy, illegitimate marriages, and others.

Travelling around almost all the communes in Transylvania, I had the opportunity to see tens of children who were not attending school, and we were not interested in them.

These children are of spoon-makers known as Baesi, who have a stable settlement, then there are the Nomads, who could settle in one place, go to school and the army for the benefit of our state.

The company led by the undersigned has organised productions in Făgăraş, Cincu, Cohalm, Jibert, Sercaia, Vistea, Olteţ, Boholâ, Cincsor, Bruia, Merghindeal, Halmeag and Rodbav [2]. The play 'The Scout' was performed, which features an episode from the battles of Marasesti [3].

At these events, hundreds of people participated, among whom intellectuals such as M. Derlosea, lawyer, former mayor, Ioan Pica, prefect, prof. Bentea, prof. Marinescu, journalist, etc. who, through their participation, raised our spirits.

To them and to all who have contributed to the success of our events, we owe all the gratitude for the encouragement they have given to us in our efforts.

We will continue to arrange such productions with theatre pieces, declamations and choirs in the future, so that we can also rise up with other peoples.

Notes

1. Naftanailă Lazăr uses interchangeably the term 'Roma' and 'Țigan' in his writing. This, once again, is worth mentioning as it connects to his broader view that both terms must be acknowledged with a sense of pride in one's history and origin.
2. Name of Romanian towns.
3. The Battle of Mărășești was a major battle during the First World War between the German Empire and the Kingdom of Romania, which took place on the Romanian Front. The front

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was located in Eastern Romania, in Vrancea region. The battle lasted from August 8th until September 3rd when the Central Powers suffered a strategic defeat.

Source: Lazăr, N. (1934c). Din activitatea noastră. *Neamul Țigănesc*, No. 8, 1934, September 8, p. 2. Prepared for publication by Raluca Bianca Roman.

Comments

This short article constitutes a brief summary of the activities and prospects of the Neo-Rustic Brotherhood. It taps into a historical perspective of Roma/Gypsies in Romania. There are no references or sources given for the numbers cited but the purpose is that of emphasising the marginalised status of these groups throughout history and the necessity to organise themselves in order to shift this historical dynamic. The purpose and activities of the organisation are seen to be primarily cultural but there is a clear emphasis placed, both within this article and others authored by Naftanailă Lazăr within the newspaper *Neamul Țigănesc*, on the topic of education of children, the removal of so-called 'bad habits' (e.g. alcoholism) and the officialising of marriages of cohabiting couples. This goes hand in hand with the educational outlooks of other Roma organisations, such as the General Union of Roma in Romania, and the connection made by the latter with the Orthodox church, including the baptism of children and adults and the religious officialisation of marriages.

Raluca Bianca Roman

6.4.9 The *Transylvanian Roma*

Romii Ardeleni

Trăind tot timpul stăpânirei maghiare sub influența steină și fiind siliți să se magiarizeze, o parte din romii ardeleni și în special cei din jud: Mureș, Ciuc, Odorhei, Trei scaune, Satul-Mare și Sălaj se dădeau până mai acum câtva timp de cetățenie română și de naționalitate maghiară.

Asociația noastră potrivit statutului său, dorind a face din ei buni cetățeni ai țării și slujitori credincioși ai M.S. Regelui și ai patriei a trimis în mijlocul lor delegați ai centrului.

Prin cuvântările ținute cu prilejul adunărilor ce au avut loc în acest scop, delegații noștrii au arătat că deoarece romii trăesc pe pământul României, sunt supuși aceleași legi și se bucură de aceleași drepturi și datorii, nu trebue să se mai considere minoritari, căci fiind asimilați elementului românesc sunt considerați români și ca cetățenie și ca naționalitate.

Mare parte din romii maghiarizați ne-au înțeles. Astăzi ei spun că sunt și de cetățenie și de naționalitate română.

Copiii lor, nu mai urmează cursurile școlilor minoritare.

Am oprit pe frații romi din județele mai sus amintite, precum și din alte județe din Ardeal de a mai participa la adunări și manifestațiuni tulburătoare de ordine și le-am cerut să nu mai treacă în rândul sectanților.

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Astăzi ne adresăm fraților Români, spunându-le:

Incurajați-ne, iubiți-ne și vedeți în noi pe singurii cetățeni cari au luat parte alături de voi, la necazurile și bucuriile acestei Țări. Veniți în mijlocul nostru să ne cunoașteți și să ne sprijiniți. Primim sfaturile și îndrumările voastre.

Dacă ne veți iubi voi frații români, munca pe care o vom depune de aci înainte în slujba românizării romilor maghiarizați, vom ști să o ducem la bun sfârșit, cu toate că ne vom lovi de ura și dușmănia minorităților.

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The Transylvanian Roma

Living in the time of the Hungarian rule, under the foreign influence and being forced to become Hungarianised, part of the Transylvanian Roma and especially the ones from Mureş, Ciuc, Odorhei, Three Chairs, Satu Mare and Sălaj, until some time ago, declared themselves as Romanian citizens and Hungarian nationality [1].

Our association, according to its statute, wanting to make out of them good citizens of the country and faithful servants of H.R.M. The king and of their homeland sent in their midst delegates of the centre. Through the speeches held on the occasion of the meetings that took place for this purpose, our delegates have shown that because the Roma live on Romanian land, they are subjected to the same laws and enjoy the same rights and duties, they should no longer consider themselves minorities, because, having been assimilated with the Romanian element, they are considered Romanian in both citizenship and nationality. Many of the Magyarised Roma have understood us. Today they say that they are Romanian both by citizenship and by nationality. Their children no longer attend minority schools [2]. We stopped the Roma brothers from the aforementioned counties, as well as from other counties in Transylvania, to participate in agitating assemblies and demonstrations, and asked them not to walk among the sectarians. Today we address our Romanian brothers, saying: Encourage us, love us, and you will see in us the only citizens who have taken part with you in all the tribulations and the joys of this country. Come within our midst to get to know us and support us. We receive your advice and guidance. If you will love us, our Romanian brothers, the work that we will put forward from now on for the 'Romanianisation' of the Magyarised Roma, we will bring to its fruition, even when we will be faced with the hatred and the enmity of the minorities.

Notes

1. For centuries, until the dissolution of the Austro-Hungarian Empire, the region of Transylvania has been under either the Kingdom of Hungary or the Austro-Hungarian Empire. It continues to be home to Hungarian speaking Roma groups.
2. Meaning schools with Hungarian language teaching.

Source: Stan, V. (1938e). Romii Ardeleni. *Glasul Romilor*, An. 3, No. 11, 1938, June 8, p. 4.
Prepared for publication by Raluca Bianca Roman.

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Comments

The article talks about Roma from Transylvania, and the actions embarked upon by the General Union of Roma in Romania for the purpose of 'Romanianising' the Hungarianised Roma. This is a particularly important article as a source material, given the ways in which the issue of 'minority' is being broached and approached by Roma leaders from the capital city during the interwar period. As such, from the actions adopted by the Union and the emphasis placed on a so-called nationalisation of hungarianised Roma within the historical region of Transylvania, one can also observe and understand the overall desire, especially as promoted by Roma leaders from the capital city, for Roma not to be seen as a minority, but as Romanian citizens with equal rights.

Furthermore, the article above reveals actual actions and plans constructed by members of the General Union of Roma in Romania to 'stop' Roma from particular counties in Transylvania (and especially the counties of Mureș, Ciuc, Odorhei, Satu Mare and Sălaj, where the proportion of the Hungarian minority was among the highest) from attending political meetings or meetings that may be deemed dissident or sectarian. The article presents them as "being forced to become Hungarianised" under foreign rule, who now as Roma living "on Romanian land" understood the need for being Romanianised. The Association clearly emphasises its desire to make Hungarised Roma into full citizens of the Romanian state, seen as possible only through the abandonment of any minority politics. As a consequence of the actions of the Union, it is said that Roma children from these areas were no longer taking Hungarian classes in school and that the Association's members were preventing Roma from Ardeal from taking part in any 'sectarian' or peace disturbing minority movements. All of these aspects are particularly illuminating of the overall desire of key Roma organisations during the interwar period to not be perceived as 'minority organisations'.

Raluca Bianca Roman

6.5 Naming

6.5.1 *Is the Word 'Gypsy' a Word of Mockery, or the Name for a Nation*

Este cuvântul țigan, cuvânt de batjocură sau nume de națiune

Se știe de noi toți, care trăim la țară, că numele de Țigan se dă la toți aceia cari, fie că din lenevie nu-și păstrează curățenie corpului, fie că din lipsă de mijloace umblă îmbrăcați zdrențăros. Aceasta, indiferent de națiunea din care respectivul face parte.

Pe lângă aceste două cazuri, în cari se dă cuiva numele de țigan, mai este un al treilea caz și anume: când cineva este lipsit de bună creștere și bun simț, ocupându-se cu minciuni și cu tot felul de lucruri cari le-aduc disprețul tuturor, acestora încă li se spun că sunt țigani.

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Deci, putem vedea din cele trei exemple, care e rostul cuvântului "țigan" și care se dă oricărui om, ce se poartă în condițiunile de mai sus, fie el Român, Sas, Ungur, Rom, etc.

Națiunea noastră a Romilor, din cauză că a fost veșnic în criză și foame, a rămas în întuneric din toate punctele de vedere, față de celelalte națiuni cu care au convieţuit.

Criza în care se aflau Romii și lipsa de lumină și cultură, au fost de natură să facă, ca din națiunea noastră să fie mai mulți din cei cari umblau murdari și zdrențăroși și se dedau la tot felul de minciuni și afaceri nedemne de un om, și astfel cuvântul de "țigan" a fost generalizat asupra întregei noastre națiuni, de altfel, fără niciun drept.

Iată deci, cari sunt cauzele pentru cari națiunei noastre i s-a dat numirea Țigani, cauze, pe care cu regret trebuie să recunoaștem că sunt adevărate.

Oare n-am putea înlătura aceste defecte, de cari națiunea noastră este cuprinsă?

Eu spun că, da! Și susțin aceasta, pentrucă nu există nici o piedecă sau greutate pe cari să nu le putem înlătura din calea noastră, spre binele și progresul națiunei noastre.

Un mijloc de îndreptare a relelor de cari suferim, este și scoaterea acestei prime foi populare a noastră.

Prin glasul acestei gazete, vom îndemna pe toți fiii neamului nostru, să caute a umbla cât se poate de curați, atât în ce privește corpul, cât și a hainelor cu cari se îmbracă.

Nimic nu-i mai ușor, ca fiecare să aibă deosebită grije să se spele în fiecare zi cu apa pe care Dumnezeu a lăsat-o din belșug pentru toți oamenii; iar în ce privesc hainele lor, fie ele cât de vechi și petecite, să avem întotdeauna grije să fie curate.

Curățenia trupească, curățenia hainelor și curățenia caselor în cari locuim, sunt cei trei stâlpi a-i sănătății noastre.

Pe lângă aceste trei griji, trebuie să căutăm a îndrepta și caracterul nostru. În locul minciunei, să-și facă loc adevărul și în locul înșelăciunii, cinstea. Făcând astfel, suntem siguri că și națiunea noastră va câștiga un loc cât de modest în mijlocul celorlalte națiuni, cari tind tot spre o mai perfectă civilizație.

Din cele relatate mai sus, reese în mod clar și precis că, cuvântul de "țigan" este numai o batjocură, căci națiunea țigănească nu există!

Despre națiunea noastră a Romilor, ne vom permite ca după ce vom fi în posesiunea tuturor datelor istorice, să scriem în numerele viitoare ale acestui ziar, despre originea și istoricul ei.

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Is the word 'Gypsy' a word of mockery, or the name for a nation

It is known to all of us, who live in the countryside, that the name of Gypsy is given to all those who, whether out of laziness they do not keep their body clean, or because of lack of means they are walking in raggedly dress. This, regardless of the nation in which the person belongs. In addition to these two cases where someone is given the name Gypsy, there is also a third case: when someone is deprived of a good upbringing and a

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good common sense, is dealing in lies and all sorts of things that bring them the scorn of all others; these people are still being called Gypsies. So, we can see from these three examples, what is the meaning of the word "gypsy", which is given to any man behaving under the above conditions, be it Romanian, Saxon, Hungarian, Rom, etc.

Our Roma nation, because it has eternally been in crisis and hunger, has remained in darkness from all points of view, compared to the other nations with which they have coexisted. The crisis in which the Roma were placed, and the lack of light and culture, led to a situation in which from within our own nation there were more of those who were dirty and ragged, and engaged in all sorts of lies and actions unworthy of man, and thus the word 'gypsy' was generalised to our entire nation, indeed, without any right.

So, here are the causes for which our nation has been given the name "Gypsies", causes which we regret to acknowledge are true.

Could we not remove these flaws that affect our nation?

I say that, yes, we can! And I support this, because there is no stumbling block or weight that we cannot remove from our path, for the good and the progress of our nation.

A means of redressing the evils from which we suffer is also the publishing of this first popular newsletter [1] of ours.

Through the voice of this gazette, we will encourage all the sons of our people to seek and walk as cleanly as possible in terms of both their bodies and the clothing they wear.

Nothing is easier than for everyone to take special care to wash every day with water that God has abundantly left for all people; and as far as their clothes are concerned, even when they are old and rugged looking, we always have to be careful to be clean.

The cleanliness of the body, the cleanliness of our clothes and the cleanliness of our homes are the three pillars of our health.

Besides these three concerns, we must also seek to correct our character. Instead of lie, to make space for the truth and in the place of deceit, honour. In doing so, we are sure that our nation will also gain a place, no matter how modest, among the other nations, who are also striving for a more perfect civilization.

From the above, it is clear and precise that the word "gypsy" is only a mockery, for the Gypsy nation does not exist!

About our Roma nation, we will allow ourselves, once we are in possession of all historical data, to write in the future numbers of this newspaper, about its origins and history.

Notes

1. *Foaia Poporului Romesc* is one of the six Roma newspapers published in Romania during the interwar period. It was published in Rupea (then part of Târnava Mare county, presently Brașov county). It was published in only one issue, on October 21, 1935, despite the fact that, from its content alone, there is a clear emphasis and desire to publish subsequent numbers. Its editorial committee comprised of: Gheorghe Frunzea (Director), Nicolae Duca (Editor) and Gheorghe Pesteanu (Secretary).

Source: Duca, N. (1935). Este cuvântul țigan, cuvânt de batjocură sau nume de națiune. *Foaia Poporului Romesc,* An. 1, No. 1, 1935, October 21, p. 3.
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6.5.2 *What Roma Should Know*

Ce trebuie să știe Romii

Cu 2000 ani înainte de Christos, niște popoare așa zice indo germane (ariene) care trăiau în partea nordică a Munților Himalaia (cei mai înalți munți de pe fața Pământului) și lângă bazinul fluviului Oxus, în Asia, au străbătut acei munți și au năvălit în India de azi, lovind alte popoare, împrăștiindu-le, nimicindu-le sau amestecându-se cu ele.

Printre acele popoare năvălitoare indo-germane, care vorbeau o limbă asemănătoare, deci se înrudeau, se găseau și *poporul zgripților*, strămoșii adevărați ai romilor de azi. Acest popor a ocupat în India ținutul Nordic dintre fluviile Indul și Gangel, unul din cele mai bogate ținuturi care cuprindea întinse păduri bogate în animale și pășuni, râuri și lacuri cu pește și arbori fructiferi ca smochini, portocali, lămâi, curmali, mandarini, banani, piersici. Un ținut binecuvântat de Dumnezeu.

Dar ca să ocupe acest bogat ținut, străbunii noștri zgriți au trebuit să înfrângă prin necurmate lupte un alt popor găsit acolo, pe Daxinsii, numiți și mâncători de carne vie", un popor crud, viteaz, renumit în făurirea armelor, topirea fierului, aramei și bronzului.

Trebuie să ne închipuim cât de bravi au fost zgripții, dacă au putut să ocupe ținutul Daxinsilor pe care i-a impus mai departe s-au i-au supus, contopindu-se cu ei și formând un nou popor.

Toate celelalte popoare venite cu zgripții au devenit sedentare, adică stătătoare, fixate locului, luând denumirea de popoare indiene, conduse de preoții brahmani care numeau regii și chiar le impuneau voința lor, împărțind supușii în caste (ranguri) și predicându-le o religie "brahmana" emanate din cultul unei trinități: Focul (Agnis); Aerul (Indra) și Soarele (Surduca). Aceste trei divinități se concentrau într-o singură divinitate: Marele Soare (Zeul cel Mare).

Zgripții n-au voit să trăiască nici sedentary, nici să asculte de puterea și legile brahmanilor și regilor indieni, nici să primească religia acestora. Zgripții trăiau o viață nomadă, umblând în ținutul dintre Indul și Gangel din loc în loc, crescând turme de capre, herghelii de cai, vânând prin păduri și pescuind prin râuri și lacuri. Dela capre se foloseau de lapte, carne și păr din care femeile lucrau corturi, îmbrăcăminte de corp. De cai se serveau la călărie și trasul carelor. Dela animale sălbatece vânate foloseau blănile de care se serveau ca îmbrăcăminte călduroasă și așternuturi. Fructe și pește găseau din belșug. Zgripții nu aveau nevoie de nimic. Își petreceau timpul liber cântând, jucând și făcând exerciții de luptă și călărie. De aceia disprețuiau și pe regii indieni și pe brahmani. Zgripții nu recunoșteau ca divinitate (zeu) decât Soarele. Pentrucă, spuneau ei, Soarele singur încălzește pământul, dă viață, încolțește sămânța și adduce poaia binefăcătoare.

Ca să își apere ținutul și independența lor, zgripții au purtat nenumărate lupte cu regii indieni, conduși de Voevozii (Răzii) Iundadel, Amaru și Vangel. Ei au luptat în contra stanizilor, afganilor, belucizilor, turchestanilor, apoi în contra perșilor. Au luptat și ca mercenari plătiți sau de bună voie în rândul trupelor indiene ale lui Porus și Toxil, împărați indieni, contra lui Darius Codomamil, regale perșilor și contra lui Alexandru Macedon. N-au luptat de dragul împăraților indieni ci pentru apărarea propriei lor libertăți.

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Zgripți au trait fericiți până la anul 1257, recunoscuți ca cei mai buni arcași și sulițari, ca cei mai buni călăreți. Ei otrăveau vârfurile sulițelor și săgeților cu venin de viperă și otravă de mătrăgună, își făureau singuri armele, carele și hamurile. Dresau câini care îi întovărășau în lupte și sfâșiau pe adversary. Ei au inventat instrumentele: țambalul, naiul, scripca și cobza. Tot ei au fost cei dintâi care au inventat potcoavele și șinele dela roțile carelor.

Dar viața lor fericită a luat sfârșit la 1257 când hoardele mongole ale marelui cuceritor Ginghishan, după ce cuceriseră întreaga Dhina (sic), Tibetul, Turchestanul, năvăleau și în India. Toate popoarele din India s-au supus de bună voie mongolilor, numai zgripții n-au voit să casă robi și au preferat să ia calea exodului (pribegi). Călări, în care, pe jos, au purces la drum lung, străbătând Belucistanul, Persia apoi despărțindu-se în trei grupe. O grupă s-a îndreptat spre Caucas intrând în Europa, la anul 1270 și poposind o vreme pe lângă gurile Volgei și Crimea. A doua grupă s-a îndreptat spre Marea de Marmara, la Dardanele, trecând în Europe cu voia grecilor bizantini, la anul 1290. A treia grupă s-a îndreptat spre sud-vest, străbătând pustiul nordic al Arabiei, Mesopotamia, Siria, Palestina și nimerind în Egipt, unde a poposit vreo treizeci de ani. Dar pentrucă în Egipt se înmulțeau ca șoarecii se dădeau la jafuri și dimpreună cu felahii (țăranii egipteni) provocau revolte, egiptenii i-au luat la goană cu forța armelor. Această grupă a pornit într-un nou exod, ținând malul de nord al Africei și cu ajutorul maurilor (arabilor) au trecut Gibraltarul, în Spania, la anul 1330. De aceia, spaniolii și portughezii, crezându-I egipteni adevărați le-a zis "gitani" (gitanos), iar englezii, când zgripții au nimerit mai târziu (1450) și în țara lor le-a zis "gypsys".

Zgripții din prima grupă, din cauza bătăliilor dintre tătari și cazaci (zaporojeni) s-au împrăștiat prin Rusia, alți au trecut în Germania, Polinia și Bohemia, apoi și în Moldova, la anul 1405, sub domnia lui Alexandru cel Bun.

Cei din grupa doua s-au împrăștiat în întreaga peninsulă Balcanică stabilindu-se în Grecia, Albania, Serbia, Bulgaria. La anul 1300 au trecut și în Muntenia, sub domnia lui Mihail I Basarab Întemeietorul.

Cu timpul, zgripții din toate grupele s-au împrăștiat în toate țările din Europa. La anul 1455, nu exista țară în Europa ca să nu aibe acești refugiați nomazi. În afară de țările ortodoxe: Rusia, Moldova, Muntenia, Serbia, Bulgaria și Grecia, zgripții n-au mai fost persecutați în celelalte țări de la anul 1455, căci Papa dela Roma a intervenit pentru ei, cerându-le însă ca să se boteze în religia creștin, lucru ce zgripții au și făcut, stabilindu-se, muncind, exercitând meseriile de fierari, potcovari, zidari, salahori, lăutari. Numai în țările ortodoxe au fost folosiți ca robi pe lângă curțile domnești, boerești și vetrele mănăstirești, stăpânii având drept de viață și de moarte asupra lor, putând să-I vândă prin târguri și oboare, ca pe vite, despărțiți de femeile și copii lor, dați ca danie prin acte dotale, uciși fără vină, chinuiți.

În principatele Române, au fost desrobiți în mod definitiv și formal, de *Domnitorul Alex. Ion Cuza* (sic), care la anul 1864 i-a declarat complect emancipați și împroprietăriți cu loturi de case.

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DE CE NE ZICEM ROMI ȘI NU ȚIGANI?

Când a doua grupă a ajuns la Dardanele și au fost lăsați să treacă în Europa, Grecii bizantini nu s-au putut înțelege cu străbunii noștri, necunoscându-le limba. Prentrucă Grecii au văzut pe străbunii noștri cu părul lățos, tuciurii, zdrențăroși și murdari, din cauza lungului drum pe care l-au străbătut, au fost denumiți "athingani", poreclă pe care grecii o dăduseră și unei secte religioase din Siria și Palestina, sectă care există și azi aceea a Copților și Maroniților. În grecește, cuvântul "athingan" înseamnă om murdar, ciumat, de care să nu te atingi. Străbunii noștri zgripții, nu înțelegeau sensul pejorativ al acestui cuvânt. Numai în urmă și-au dat seama de batjocura acestui nume dar era prea târziu ca să-l înlăture. Atunci ei și-au zis:

Bine zgripți cum ne numim noi, nu ni se spune. Dar nici noi între noi, nu ne vom zice athingani!

Și-au adus aminte că în limbal or indiană sanscrită la oameni se zice: Romi. Cuvântul "rom" are un înțeles mai larg: om superior, iubitor de libertate, de cântece și dansuri. Cuvântul Rom mai derivă și dela numele sanscrit "Ramajana", adică "omul cuceritor", erou în literatura sanscrită mama, tuturor literaturilor, există chiar o epopee eroică numită Ramajana.

Dela cuvântul "athingan", prin derivație au adaptat și alte popoare europene denumirea pe care ne-o dau. Astfel, popoarele slave ne zic ațigani; popoarele germane zigeuner; francezii les tziganes sau "Cohemienes"; italienii, cingali sau cingani; ungurii ciganiok; turcii, cenghenea.

Noi nu putem admite să ni se zică altfel decât *Romi,* prentrucă numai noi putem ști numele nostrum adevărat. Românii niciodată n-au admis să li se zică vlahi, valahi, deliormani, bogdanlâi, basarabi. Ei și-au zis întotdeauna *români*, urmași ai dacilor și romanilor. Germanii nu admit să li se zică *nemți* sau *teutoni.* Francezii nu mai admit să li se zică "*gali*". Ungurii nu admit să li se zică "*huni*" sau "*mongoli*". Englezii nu admit să li se zică "*saxoni*" sau "*normanzii*". Nici turcii nu admit să li se mai zică "*osmantâi*" sau "*saracini*". Cum să admitem noi o denumire false, streină jignitoare?

CONCLUZII

Noi, Romii, suntem din rasa ariană (indo-germană). Am trait pe vremuri liberi, stăpânind un ținut bogat și întins. Am avut conducători bravi sub care am purtat lupte victorioase cu nenumărate popoare. Noi n-am venit în Europa cu gând hain, ca năvălitori pentru cuceriri, ci forțați de împrejurări, de un tragic destin. În țările unde ne-am stabilit, ne-am asimilat cu elemental etnic (băștinaș). Nu trădăm țara, nu pactizăm cu inamicii, nu săpăm temelia ei.

Avem pretenția că folosim statului prin numărul nostru, prin meseriile noastre și prin talentul nostru muzical. Noi păstrăm baladele, cântecele, strigăturile și dansurile populare românești. Noi păstrăm obiceiurile și datinile românești ca: Vicleimul, Brezoaia, Colindul, Călușarul, Fedeleșul și Urarea cu buhaiul, Vasilca și Plugușorul. Din viorile noastre se aud romanțele și doinele românești, cântecele de dor și amor.

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Romii au clădit cetățile sub Ștefan cel Mare, Petru Rareș, Vlad Țepeș, Matei Basarab. Ei, alături de țăranii români, au muncit ogoarele, ca robi; romi culegeau aurul din râuri și munți, scoteau sarea și păcura din pământ.

Spre mândria noastră, Romii din România sunt din tâi care au ridicat steagul de redeșteptare al neamului lor, urmând mișcarea începută de cel ce scrie aceste rânduri, unicul care a cercetat scrierile vechi dela Herodot, tatăl istoricilor, până azi, hrisoavele mănăstirilor, documentele dela Academia Română și Arhivele Statului, ca să cunoasc (sic) istoria și origina (sic) poporului rom.

Noi, Romii, vorbim limba sanscrită, una din cele mai vechi și mai bogate limbi, din care se trag și limbile slave, germane, latine și greacă, după cum au dovedit filologii și țiganologi: Panini, Hașdeu, Pittard, Yatson, Gaster și Tesleff.

Numărăm în România 950.000 suflete. În întreaga lume numără, 16.000.000 romi. Din neamul nostrum s-au ridicat episcopi, miniștri, profesori, avocați, ingineri, ziariști și generali. Ștefan Răzvan, un domn al Moldovei a fost de origine romp, căci mai întâiu fusese haiman în oștile căzăcești și poloneze.

Haide Romilor, să ne ridicăm din întunerec, să ne luminăm printr-o acțiune culturală, socială și morală.

Urmați îndemnul meu, secondați-mă în lupta ce am pornit-o pentru voi.

G. A. Lăzurică

∵

What should the Roma know

Two thousand years before Christ, some so-called Indo-Germanic (Aryan) peoples living in the northern part of the Himalayas (the highest mountains on the face of the Earth) and next to the Oxus River Basin in Asia, have crossed those mountains and invaded today's India, coming across other peoples, scattering them, destroying them, or mingling with them.

Among those Indo-German invading peoples who spoke a similar language, so they were related, there were also the wandering people, *Zgripții* [1], the true ancestors of today's Roma. This people occupied in India the Nordic area of the Indus and Ganges rivers, one of the richest provinces with vast forests, rich in animals and pastures, rivers and lakes with fish and fruit trees such as figs, oranges, lemons, cucumbers, mandarins, bananas, peaches. A land blessed by God.

But in order to occupy this wealthy land, our *Zgripți* ancestors had to defeat through a continual struggle the other people found there, the Daxins, also called 'eaters of live flesh', a cruel, valiant people, famous in the making of weapons, smelting of iron, brass and bronze.

We have to imagine how stupid the scratches were, if they were able to occupy the land of the Daxins that they imposed upon them, subjected themselves to them, merging with themselves and forming a new people.

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All the other peoples who came with the *Zgripți* became sedentary, that is, settled, fixed to the place, taking the name of the Indian peoples, led by the brahman priests who named kings and even imposed their will, dividing the subjects into casts and preaching a 'brahman' religion emanating from the cult of a trinity: The Fire (Agnis); The Air (Indra) and the Sun (Surduca). These three deities were concentrated in one divinity: the Great Sun (the Great God).

The *Zgripți* did not want to live a sedentary life, nor to listen to the power and laws of the brahmans and the kings of India, nor to receive their religion. The *Zgripți* lived a nomadic life, walking in the land between the Indus and the Ganges from place to place, raising goat flocks, horses, hunting through the forests and fishing through rivers and lakes. From the goats they used milk, flesh and hair from which women worked tents and clothing for the body. Horses were used for horseback riding and horse racing. From hunted wild animals they used their fur to serve as warm clothing and bedding. Fruits and fish they found in abundance. The *Zgripți* did not need anything. They spent their spare time singing, dancing and training for fighting and riding. That is why they despised the Indian kings and brahmani. The *Zgripți* did not recognise as divinity (god) anything else other than the Sun. For, they said, the Sun alone warms the earth, gives life, sprouts the seed, and yields the fruitful rain.

In order to defend their land and independence, the *Zgripți* have had countless wars with the Indian kings, led by the Voivodes (Rangers) Iundadel, Amaru and Vangel. They fought against the *Stanizi* [2], the Afghans, the Belugaes, the Turks, and then the Persians. They fought as paid mercenaries or willingly among the Indian troops of Porus and Toxil, the Emperors of India, against Darius Codomamil, the king of the Persians, and Alexander of Macedon. They fought not for the sake of the Indian kings, but for defending their own freedom.

The *Zgripți* lived happily until 1257, recognised as the best archers and spearmen, as the best horsemen. They poisoned the tips of the spears and arrows with viper venom and belladonna poison, they made their own weapons, chariots and harnesses. They trained dogs that would join them in battles and tear their adversaries apart. They invented the following instruments: cimbalom, pan flute, fiddle and cobza [3].

They were also the first to invent the horseshoes and the rails from the horse-carriage wheels. But their happy life ended in 1257 when the Mongol hordes of the great conqueror Genghis Khan, after conquering China, Tibet, Turkestan, also invaded India. All the peoples of India voluntarily submitted to the Mongols, only the *Zgripți* did not want to become slaves and preferred to take the way of the exodus (wanderers).

Riding, in horse-carriages, on foot, they took a long journey, crossing the Baluchistan, Persia, then splitting into three groups. One group headed for the Caucasus, entering Europe in 1270, and for a while, settling beside the rivers Volga and Crimea. The second group headed for the Sea of Marmara at Dardanelles, passing into Europe, with the allowance of Byzantine Greeks, in 1290. The third group headed southwest, crossing the northern Arabian wilderness, Mesopotamia, Syria, Palestine and coming into Egypt, where they spent some thirty years. But because in Egypt they multiplied in like mice, were

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plundering and, together with the fellahs (the Egyptian peasants), they provoked riots, the Egyptians sent them away with the force of the army. This group embarked on a new exodus, keeping to the northern shore of Africa and, with the help of the Moors (Arabs), they passed Gibraltar into Spain in 1330. That is why the Spaniards and the Portuguese, believing them to be true Egyptians, called them "Gitans" (Gitanos), and the English, when the *Zgripți* arrived later into their country (1450) called them "Gypsys" [4].

The *Zgripți* from the first group, because of the battles between the Tartars and the Cossacks (Zaporozhian), dispersed throughout Russia, others passed into Germany, Poland and Bohemia, and then into Moldova, in 1405, under the reign of Alexander the Good.

Those in the second group were scattered throughout the Balkan Peninsula, settling in Greece, Albania, Serbia, Bulgaria. In 1300 they also passed into Muntenia, under the reign of Mihail I Basarab the Founder.

Over time, *Zgripți* from all the groups have spread all over Europe. In 1455, there was no country in Europe not to have these nomad as refugees. Besides the Orthodox countries: Russia, Moldova, Muntenia, Serbia, Bulgaria and Greece, since 1455 the *Zgripți* have not been persecuted in the other countries, for the Pope of Rome intervened on their behalf, but asked them to become baptised in the Christian religion, which the *Zgripți* have done, setting down, working, practicing the craftsmanships of blacksmiths, bricklayers, *salahori* (day labourers), *lăutari* (musicians). Only in the Orthodox countries were they used as slaves by the princely courts, the boyar courts and by monasteries, the owners having the right to life and death upon them, being able to sell them in fairs and markets, like cattle, separated from their women and their children, given as gifts through vague acts, killed without blame, tortured.

In the Romanian Principalities, they were liberated definitively and formally by Lord Alex. Ion Cuza who, in 1864, declared them to be fully emancipated and provided them with housing land.

WHY WE CALL OURSELVES ROMA AND NOT ȚIGANI?

When the second group arrived at Dardanelles and were allowed to pass into Europe, not knowing their language, the Byzantine Greeks could not understand our ancestors. Because the Greeks saw our ancestors as being with long hair, with ragged clothing and dirty, because of the long journey they had had, they were called "athingani", a nickname the Greeks had also given to a religious sect in Syria and Palestine, a sect that still exists today, that of the Copts and Maronites. In Greek, the word "athingan" means a dirty, pitiful man that you do not touch. Our old *Zgripți* did not understand the pejorative meaning of this word. When they realised the mockery of that word, it was too late to get rid of it. Then they said,

OK, *Zgripți,* as we call ourselves, we will not be called by others. But neither will we, amongst ourselves, call ourselves Athingans!

They remembered that in their Sanskrit Indian language, you call people as: Romi. The word "Rom" has a wider meaning: a superior man, a lover of freedom, of songs and dances. The Rom word also derives from the Sanskrit name of 'Ramayana', meaning the

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'conquering man', a hero in the Sanskrit mother literature, and there is even a heroic epic called Ramayana.

From the word 'athingan', by derivation, other European peoples have also adapted the name they give to us. Thus, the Slavic peoples call us Aţigani; the German peoples Zigeuner; the French les Tziganes or 'Cohemienes' [5]; Italians, Cingali or Cingans; the Hungarians Ciganiok; the Turks, the Cenghenea.

We cannot accept being called anything other than Roma, because only we can know our true name. Romanians have never accepted being called *Vlachs, Wallachians, Deliormans, Bogdanals, Basarabs*. They have always said they are Romanians, descendants of the Dacians and the Romans. The Germans do not accept being called *Nemţi* [6] or *Teutons*. The French no longer admit to being called *Gauls*. Hungarians do not admit to being called *Huns* or *Mongols*. The English do not admit to being called *Saxons* or *Normans*. Nor do the Turks admit to being called *Osmantâi* or *Saracini.* How then can we accept a false, insulting name?

CONCLUSIONS

We, *the Roma*, are of the Aryan race (Indo-German). We have lived freely in previous times, possessing a rich and wide land. We had brave leaders under whom we had victorious wars with countless peoples. We did not come to Europe with a treacherous thought, as invaders, but forced by circumstance, by a tragic destiny. In the countries where we have settled, we have become assimilated with the ethnic (native) element.

We do not betray the country, do not make pacts with its enemies, do not dig at its foundation. We believe we are of use to the state, through our sheer number, through our craft and our musical talent. We keep the ballads, the songs, the shouts and the popular Romanian dances. We keep the Romanian customs and traditions, such as: *Vicleimul, Brezoaia, Colindul, Căluşarul, Fedeleşul* and *Urarea* with *buhaiul, Vasilca* and *Plugşorul* [7]. From our violins come Romanian romances and poems, songs of longing and love.

The Roma built the cities under Stephen the Great, Petru Rareş, Vlad Ţepeş, Matei Basarab. They, along with the Romanian peasants, worked the fields, as slaves; the Roma gathered the gold from the rivers and mountains, they took the salt and the oil from the ground.

To our pride, the Roma in Romania are the first ones to have raised the flag of reawakening of their people, following the movement that was started by the one who writes these lines, the only one who has researched the old writings of Herodotus, the father of all historians, until today, researching the documents of the monasteries, the documents from the Romanian Academy and the State Archives, to know the history and origin of the Roma people. We, the Roma, speak the Sanskrit language, one of the oldest and richest languages, from which the Slavic languages, German, Latin and Greek also come, as evidenced by the philologists and gypsylorists: Panini, Hasdeu, Pittard, Yatson, Gaster and Tesleff.

We number 950,000 souls in Romania. In the entire world there are 16,000,000 Roma. From our nation came bishops, ministers, professors, lawyers, engineers, journalists and

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generals. Ştefan Răzvan, a ruler of Moldavia, was of Roma origin, for first he had been a *"haiman"* [8] in the Cossack and Polish armies.

Come Roma, let us rise from darkness, to illuminate ourselves through a cultural, social and moral action.

Follow my plea, support me in the fight that I started for you.

G. A. Lăzurică

Notes

1. The word *Zgripți* here refers to a population in India that, according to the author, were Roma's ancestors. It is based on a mystification which appeared in 1934 in the international press (Condrus, 1934, p. 4; Innsbrucker Nachrichten, 1934, p. 9; Luxemburger Wort, 1934, p. 5) according to which an international expedition would be organised by two of the biggest research institutions in America and England, in search for the place of the "origin of the Gypsy race", in a region called Zgripți, between the Ganges and the Indus rivers, and in this expedition, it was said Lazurica would take part. The only thing relevant in this publication is the name of Lazurica (G. A. Lăzurică). The most interesting part, in this case, is the quoted words of Lazurica: "You will see … we will find our Palestina" (Condrus, 1934, p. 4) i.e. here one can find the idea of forming an own Roma state. It is not clear who was the initiator of this mystification, Lăzurică himself, or the journalists.
2. The term *Stanizi* is a word with unclear meaning, referring to a people or community. Most probably it is elaborated from the designation of Cossack settlement – *stanitsa*.
3. *Cobza* is a multi-string musical instrument of the lute family, particularly popular, among others, within Romanian, Moldovan, and Ukrainian folk music.
4. All words as used in original text.
5. Here it is an obvious misprint, as it should be Bohemienes.
6. A Romanian term, a loan word from Slavic (meaning 'mute'), used to label Germans.
7. These are all names of traditional Romanian customs and rituals: *Vicleimul* (Christmas Folk performance), *Brezoaia* (Winter carnival), *Colindul* (Christmas carols), *Căluşarul* (Healing Ritual with men dance), *Fedeleşul* (Ritual wedding dance) and *Urarea* with *buhaiul*, *Vasilica* and *Plugşorul* (all three refere to New Years traditions and rituals).
8. *Haiman* – this is a possible misspelling of the political and military title *Hetman*, used in the Kingdom of Poland and the Grand Duchy of Lithuania, in Zaporozhian Host, by Zaporozhian Cossacs and others; in medieval Moldavia, *Hatman* is a boyar, member of Princely Council (*Divanul Domnesc*), endowed as the commander with the whole army. See: https://dexonline.ro/definitie/hatman.

Source: Lăzurică, G. (1938). Ce trebuie să știe Romii. *Timpul*, An. 7, No. 69, 1938, February 28, p. 2. Prepared for publication by Raluca Bianca Roman.

6.5.3 *Clarification*

Suntem mândri de cuvântul Țigan, pe care-l punem în fruntea ziarului nostrum.

Ceilalți conducători se rușinează azi că sunt țigani și caută să-și zică Romi.

Sub acest nume de Țigani suntem cunoscuți în toată Europa și așa vrem să ni se zică.

Admitem cuvântul de Rom, cum ni se zice în limba țigănească *"tu sam rom?"* dar nu ne lepădăm nici de cuvântul Țigan.

"Tu sam rom?" înseamnă "tu ești țigan?" iar *"Sar te nam rom" adevărat că sunt țigan!*

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We are proud of the word Țigan, which we place at the head of our newspaper.

The other leader are now ashamed of being Gypsies and are looking to call themselves Roma.

Under this name, that of Gypsies, we are known all over Europe and that is how we want to be known.

We accept the word Rom, as we are called in the Gypsy language 'Tu sam Rom?', but we do not deny the word Gypsy either.

"*Tu sam Rom*?" means "Are You a Gypsy?" And "*Sar te nam Rom", it is true that I am a Gypsy*!

Source: [No Author]. (1934d). [No Title]. *Neamul Țigănesc*, An. 1, No. 2, 1934, September 8, p. 3. Prepared for publication by Raluca Bianca Roman.

Comments

The three articles presented above, from three distinct Roma newspapers, constitute important examples of the ways in which the issue of labels and labelling was addressed by Roma activists and intellectuals during the interwar period in Romania. They each deal with the same topic, the use of Roma/Țigan in everyday speech, but from rather distinctive points of view. This appear to have been a major topic of debate in the Roma agendas of the time and, at times, a source of dispute between different leaders: such as Naftanailă Lazăr (the editor of *Neamul Țigănesc*), who preferred the term 'Țigan' over 'Roma', and others who gradually seemed to adopt the use of the term 'Roma' over 'Țigan'. Nevertheless, the emphasis seems to have been placed on a shift from the use of the word 'Țigan' to that of 'Roma'. This shift seems to have been produced in the early 1930s. A mention on the distinctions between the three articles above is worth making.

Firstly, and unlike similar thematic articles presented within other Roma newspapers (such as *Timpul* or *Țara Noastră*), which highlight the use of Roma as grounded within historical narratives and its connection to the Romani language (according to the authors, 'Roma' meaning "superior man" as compared to 'țigan' meaning "unclean, dirty"), in the first article presented above, in *Foaia Poporului Romesc*, the emphasis is placed on the overall derogatory and demeaning meaning of the term 'țigan'. Interestingly, here, the term is more closely connected to its understanding of physical uncleanliness, or unacceptable behaviour which, according to the author of the article, can be characteristic of any individual, from any nation, and independent of their ethnicity. Henceforth, the argument for abandoning the use of the term 'Țigan' in favour of the term 'Roma' is grounded here in the fact that the characteristics it points towards are not definitive of any ethnicity and in its connection to behaviours and attributes that are generalised to the Roma, "without any right". Such an approach is rather unusual for the studied region where the term Gypsy was always ethnically defined, unlike Western Europe, where it is often associated with a nomadic lifestyle. Here, however, the word 'Țigan' is perceived as a definition of marginal communities, characterised by a culture of poverty. This topic can also be found in present-day discussions in the field of Romani Studies (cf. Ladanyi and Szelenyi, 2006; Stewart, 2003).

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It is also worth noting the context within which these articles were written. In fact, as mentioned above, a gradual shift in the use of 'Roma' over 'Țigan' throughout the 1930s is also noticeable in most of the other Roma publications of the interwar period, including *Glasul Romilor, O Rom, Țara Noastră* and *Timpul.* For example, though implicitly rather than explicitly, the changing subtitle of the newspaper *Timpul* highlights quite clearly this shift. Published in Craiova, and edited by Aurel Th. Manolescu-Dolj, the subtitle of the newspaper gradually changes from, originally, *Independent Weekly Newspaper* to *The Newspaper of Gypsies in Romania* (starting from Issue no 24-25, 21 January 1934), to *The official paper of Roma in Romania* (starting from issue no 41, 29 July, 1934). The shift may have also been part of the shift in leadership of the organisation, with the joining of G. A. Lăzurică leading to the change of the use of 'Țigan' with that of 'Roma' (see Matei, 2012, pp. 13-73 for a detailed discussion on the use of 'Roma' or 'Țigan' during the interwar period, and after). One can thus observe a trajectory from the use of 'Țigan', to the concomitant use of both terms, and to 'Roma' being adopted as the preferred term within most Roma periodicals of the interwar period.

The most overarching argument for this transition can be seen in the second article presented above, authored by G. A. Lăzurică in the same newspaper *Timpul*. This is an extensive account not only of the ways in which G. A. Lăzurică was particularly interested in issues of history of the Roma, and tracing this history as a means of constructing a form of solidarity between Roma across the country at the time, but of the ways in which history exemplifies the problems identified by G. A. Lăzurică in the use of 'Țigan' over 'Roma'. According to the Roma leader, who introduces the readers to his interpretation of long account of the history of Roma in the world, the word 'țigan' does not belong to Roma and is a pejorative name given to them by "Europeans", meaning "unclean" or "dirty". The word "Roma", on the other hand, is said to mean "superior man". The article continues with a statement that Roma know how to choose their own name and compares this situation with the naming of Romanians. G. A. Lăzurică thus grounded the use of the term "Roma" in both linguistic and historical terms and pleads for a rejection of the use 'Țigan'. An approach that would gradually be adopted by almost all Roma newspapers of the era.

Nevertheless, there was one important exception to this apparent trend: namely the newspaper *Neamul Țigănesc*, published in Făgăraș, which not only maintained the use of the word 'Țigan' within its articles, but highlighted the need to take pride in the term that others found derogatory. Unlike other Roma leaders, Naftanailă Lazăr emphasised the fact that he is not "ashamed" of the word 'țigan', and does not see in it a potential threat to the social mobilisation of 'Gypsies' (6.1.6.) This position places both *Neamul Țigănesc* and Naftanailă Lazăr in stark contrast to the claims laid out by other Roma leaders and Roma newspapers during the interwar period. It also highlights the continuing importance of the labelling debate for Roma leaders themselves, which can be traced as early as the 1930s.

Raluca Bianca Roman

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To better perceive the issue of naming, we selected some examples of the explanation of the term 'Țigani', translated into English as 'Gypsies', as found in in the Romanian interwar publications:

A. *Țigani*, i. e. *Athingani*, a nickname from the Greeks which they had already given to a religious sect of Copts in Syria and Maronite in Palestine. In Greek, the word 'athingan' means dirty, cunning man that you should not touch. This name was argued to be given to them when, after a long journey made by the ancestors of the Roma, they first encountered the Byzantine Greeks, who saw them with long curly hair, ragged and dirty clothing (Timpul, 1938a, p. 2).

B. *Țigani*, i. e. *Cingar*/*Cengar*, Indian pariah *tzengar*, i. e. the most humiliated man which are situated at the lowest level of Indian society (Potra, 1939, p. 10).

C. *Țigani*, i. e. *Țigaie*, people with long and curly hair resembling the wool of Romanian sheep breed "țigaie" (Iorga, 1939, p. 285).

Ion Duminica

6.6 The Sedentarisation of the Gypsy Nomads

6.6.1 *The Colonisation of the Nomadic Gypsies*

Colonizarea țiganilor nomazi

În lupta ce s-a început pentru "emanciparea țiganilor" Asociația Generală a Țiganilor din România, cercul Oltenia, "sfătoșii" statului major al asociației- au pornit de curând o vie propagandă în rândul țiganilor lăeți- căutând pe toate căile posibile să-i puie la adăpostul scutului protector de a nu li se mai întâmpla pe viitor neajunsuri din partea diferitelor autorități.

Isbânda "sfătoșilor" s-a văzut în present pe deplin realizată căci însuși organele conducătoare ale legiunilor jandărmărești din jud. Dolj și Mehedinți, s-au arătat foarte serviabile față de reprezentanții asociației, promițându-le pentru viitor tot concursul, atunci când va fi nevoie.

Numai astfel se explică că membrii șatrelor țigănești, vin să se încorporeze în asociație și unde declară că nu mai întâmpină greutățile din trecut din partea jandarmilor.

Asociația urmărește ca atunci când va reuși să-I strângă pe toți în cercul ei, să ia suprema hotărâre, în ceeace privește colonizarea lor, stingând urâtul deci prin acestea, acel urât aspect care trezărește în mințile oamenilor, VIAȚA BARBARĂ.

Ne bucură mersul tinerii asociații; dar ne miră tot de-odată, dece celelalte autorități civile stau SURDOMUTE la această mișcare, care ar trebui să fie mult sprijinită moralicește și materialicește, pentru a i se da posibilitatea să activeze și mai intens – RIDICÂND PRIN ACEASTA PRESTIGIUL ȚĂRII ROMÂNEȘTI.

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The colonisation [1] of the nomadic Gypsies

In the struggle that began for the "emancipation of the Gypsies" from Oltenia Circle, the "counsellors" of the association's major state – have recently launched a propaganda among lăeți Gypsies – seeking in all possible manner to protect them so that they do not face any more shortcomings in the future from all the different authorities. The victory of the "counsellors" has now been fully realised because the very governing organs of the Gendarmerie legions in the Dolj and Mehedinţi counties have proved to be very responsive to the representatives of the association, promising them their support in the future, whenever it will be needed. We can only explain in this way that members of Gypsy camps come to join the association and say that they no longer face the grievances that they have faced from the gendarmerie in the past.

The association seeks to, once it manages to gather all of them around it, take the ultimate decision when it comes to their colonisation, leaving behind that ugly aspect which goes through the minds of people when they think of them, the BARBARIC LIFE.

We are happy with the work of the young association; but it nevertheless surprises us that other civilian authorities remain DEAF to this movement, which should be greatly supported, both morally and materially, so that it be able to continue to work even more intensively – AND THROUGH THIS LIFT UP ALSO THE PRESTIGE OF THE ROMANIAN COUNTRY.

Notes

1. Both here and elsewhere, whenever mentioned, the term 'colonisation' refers to the process of settlement and land allocation for nomadic groups.

Source: [No Author]. (1933b). Colonizarea țiganilor nomazi. *Timpul*, An. 2, No. 17, 1933, November 14, p. 1. Prepared for publication by Raluca Bianca Roman.

Comments

This unauthored article offers important information concerning the regional organisation and development of the General Association of Gypsies in Romania, as well as the interventionist work they engaged with in terms of the settlement of nomadic groups and in terms of providing mediation with, and gaining support from, local authorities, including the gendarmerie. This, as will be seen in the subsequent two articles, was a key point of debate and discussion for Roma elite during the interwar period in Romania.

Raluca Bianca Roman

6.6.2 *The Nomads Who Create Their Independent State*

Printre nomazi

Corturari care-și creiază un stat independent

Este o așezare originală, pitorească prin infinitele detalii, și în plus într-o perfectă coordonare cu spiritul monarhic al unei provincii. Autorii ei, au marele merit, că n-au declanșat

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nici o forță socială , n-au uzurpat nici un drept istoric și nu și-au însușit nici un apanaj străin, in afară de imaginația lor generoasă.

Cu un cuvânt, statul independent dela Porumbacul de jos, este absolut inofensivă și el poate fi în coordonanță cu principiile Vătafului. Un sever jurist găsește suficiente motive s-o înalțe până la viziunea lui Platon, întruchipată anarhotic pe plaiurile noastre.

Sensul real al statului dela Porumbacul rămâne însă legat de ceeace nomazii cred în puterea lor vitală. Oameni simpli și cu mai puține prejudecăți decât ierarhiile de cărturari ai orașelor, ei au implinit fracmentul de libertate ce li s-a dat cu fantezia lor și au creiat un "stat" cu un singur imperativ: astâmpărul unei pribegii de aproape un mileniu. Structura interesantei așezări a pornit deci dela criteriile cele mai firești li ca toate înfăptuirile sociale netimbrate de târguială, nomazii au creiat la Porumbac un stat, fără forme, dar cu un adânc conținut.

Un drum spre sat

Într-un autobuz care scârțâe din toate oasele, plec la 1 și jumătate către Porumbacu. Autobuzul este arhiplin, căci e zi de Vineri, târg mare la Fărăraș. Lume de tot felul. Printre nădrăgari, înțepați adeseori, se află doi membri marcanți ai statului dela Porumbacu, a căror importanță o definește câte un rând de paftale de aramă. Inalții demnitari iau loc în fundul autobuzului, traversând o notă discordantă de prejudecăți sociale și de rasă. Se simt oarecum stânjeniți căci până acum câteva luni, mijloacele de locomoțiune le-au fost interzise de depoziția oficială. [...]

Statul

Teritoriul geografic și etnic al statului, e situat la capătul apusean al Porumbacului de jos și se compune cam dintr-un jugăr de pământ. Din toate punctele de vedere, el a fost precis și cu grije delimintat, așa că nu se poate produce nici o confuzie între monarhia politică și administrativă a satului și sistemul de viață al "statului". În ceea ce privește istoria statului, ea este de dată recentă, fără eroi naționali și fără profitori în erarhia socială. Sumar, întemeierea ei se bizuie pe următoarele detalii:

– Câteva corturi nomade au cumpărat fâșia de pământ cu 50.000 Lei. Oficialitatea a pus tot felul de piedici. Astfel un reprezentant al bisericii s-a oprit la consideraţia că prin împământenirea dela Porumbacul i se poate da culturii noastre autohton, o infuzie din incertitudinea gândirii Indiene, ceea ce ar fi profund dăunător patrimoniului nostru național.

Incheerea contractului oscila intr-un moment dat, dar totusi s-a făcut. Singura consolare a demnitarilor satului constă în speranța că într-o zi nomazii se vor plictisi de popasul lor și își vor relua pribegia anonimă. In ziua aceea, satul va recăpăta unitatea monarhică și în plus terenul geografic al statului.

Coloniei i s-a dat apoi amploarea unui stat prin independența pe care și-o păstrează înritmul de viață cotidiană. E prima colonie de cortorari ajungă în posesiunea unui teritoriu în Ardeal după răsboiu și poate primi nomazi, care întemeiază un stat fără metamorfoza asimilării de către massa dominantă.

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Teritoriu noului stat este delimitat.

Acesta se compune dintr-un țarc de stână, suficient de rezistent pentru a opri invazia unei cirezi de vite.

Câțiva din stâlpii țarcului spre a căpăta o semnificație mai adâncă, au fost decorați în cele patru colțuri cu niște funduri de pălării mucigăite- amănunt care simbolizează pentru localnici una din lozincile Ligii Națiunilor: "pace și bună înțelegere printre popoare".

În această îngrăditură trăesc două duzini de suflete de opt corturi. In afara iluziei frontierelor, "statul" n-a mai adus nici o altă inovație în ritumul de viață al corturarilor.

Școala a fost suplinită cu ceeace pribegia și foamea aduc ca belșug de învățământ minții, religia se rezumă la evocarea naturii în virtutea vechilor percepte budiste, iar proprietatea privată lipsită de o noțiune concretă.

Pe drumul progresului, corturarii dela Porumbac, au rămas într-un brutal contrast de inadoptare, în schimb ele sunt cele mai apropiate ființe de îndrumarea firească a naturii.

"Statul" dela Porumbac păstrează un singur echivoc pe cale de a se lămuri și acesta. Anume corturarii au rămas încă instituția voevodatului care s-a dovedit a fi la început mai tare decât forța politică a statului. E drept că din amploarea lui s-a ciuntit enorm și adesea tineretul organizează răsmeriță împotriva voevodatului. Așa de pildă, dela înzghebarea statului încoace, șeful coloniei a rămas de trei ori în minoritate cu sfatul lui, iar prerogativele constituționale i-au fost reduse până la inexistență. [...]

In ce priveste indeletnicirile profesionale ale tribului ele sunt două: căldările și ghicitoria. Ambele sunt repartizate după sexe și după o chibzuită coordonare a uceniciei.

Meșteșugul de ghicitoare începe la 30 de ani, când femeia intră pe pragul maturității, după concepția parilor. Până atunci ea face școală și este supusă la exerciții profesionale după cele mai reale aptitudini de inteligență. [...]

Corturarii dela Porumbacu nu cred în ghioc, după cum un preot nu crede în miracolul unei cămăș slujită în altar.

Artiștii

De calitate mult mai superioară rămân însă căldările. Sunt maeștrii geniali, mai întâi prin manevrarea iscusită a cărbunarilor. Un astfel de căldărar bătrân utiliza doi tăciuni numai cu vârful unghiilor, topind la caloriile lor un chilogram de aramă masivă. Prins ca în ghiară de maimuță, un cărbune era așezat la capătul subțiat al aramei, iar al doilea pe muchea ei, căruia corturarul îi spunea mir. Cele zece unghii suplineau întreg atelierul de instrumente necesare unei asemenea lucrări, iar ciocanul era un fel de auxiliar, pentru cazul când arama se încăpățîna în refractarea ei.

Aceleași mâini se agitară apoi savant în fixarea incrustațiilor. Din câteva mișcări cu o bucată de cremene, tingirea capătă cel mai variat decor de herogrife antice, făcând ca un sugestiv obiect de artă populară [...]

Al. Marinescu

∵

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Among the nomads

Corturari who created an independent state

It is an original settlement, picturesque through its infinite details, and in addition to this, in perfect coordination with the monarchical spirit of a province. Her authors have the great merit that they have not triggered any social force, have not usurped any historical rights, and have not acquired any foreign favours apart from their generous imagination. In a word, the independent state of the Porumbacul de Jos [1] is absolutely harmless and it can be in coordination with the principles of the *Vataf*. A harsh jurist finds plenty of reasons to lift it up to Plato's vision, embodied anarchically in our lands. The real meaning of the state in Porumbac remains related to what nomads believe in their vital power. Simple and less prejudicial people than the hierarchies of the scribes from the cities, they have fulfilled the bit of freedom that was given to them with their own fantasy, and created a "state" with a single imperative: the settlement of a millennium of wandering. The structure of the interesting settlement started, therefore, from the most natural criteria and, like all the social achievements that are not imbued by the bargaining, the nomads created at Porumbac a state, without forms, but with a deep content.

A road to the village

On a bus that squeaks out of all its bones, I'm leaving at half-past one o'clock to Porumbacu. The bus is busy, because it's Friday, a day of a big fair at Fărăraş [2]. People of all kinds. Among the travellers, often poked at [3], are two distinguished members of the state of Porumbacu, whose importance is highlighted by a set of brass *paftas* [4]. These high dignitaries take a seat at the end of the bus, crossing a discordant note of social and racial prejudices. They feel somewhat embarrassed because until a few months ago, the means of locomotion were forbidden to them by official deposition. […]

The State

The geographic and ethnic territory of the state is located at the western end of the Porumbacul de Jos, and consists of a heap of earth. From all points of view, this has been precisely and carefully delineated, so there can be no confusion between the political and administrative monarchy of the village and the state's system of life. As far as the history of the state is concerned, it is recent, without national heroes and without profiteers in social hierarchy. In summary, its foundation is based on the following details:

– Some nomadic tents bought the land with 50,000 Lei. The official authority has put up all sorts of obstacles. Thus, a representative of the church stopped and considered that through the land-allocation of Porumbac an infusion of the uncertainty of Indian thought could potentially be given to our native culture, which would be profoundly harmful to our national patrimony.

The finalising of the contract was oscillating at one point, but it was finally done. The only consolation of the village dignitaries lies in the hope that one day the nomads will become bored with their rest and will resume their anonymous wandering. On that day,

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the village will regain its monarchic unity and, moreover, the geographic terrain of the state. The colony [5] was then given the size of a state by the independence it retains in its everyday life. It is the first colony of Kortorari [6] in Transylvania to come into the possession of a territory after a war and perhaps the first nomads to establish a state without the metamorphosis of assimilation within the dominant mass.

The territory of the new state is delimited. It consists of a sheep pen, sufficiently resistant to stop the invasion of a herd of cattle. Several of the pillars of the pen, in order to gain a deeper meaning, were decorated in the four corners with the bottom of some mouldy hats, which symbolised for the locals one of the slogans of the League of Nations: "peace and good understanding among peoples."

In this enclosure live two dozen souls of eight tents. Besides the illusion of borders, the "state" has not brought any further innovation into the rhythm of life of the Kortorari. The school has been replaced with what wandering and hunger brings as a wealth of teaching for the mind, religion is limited to the evocation of nature by virtue of old Buddhist perceptions, and private property lacks any concrete definition. On the way to progress, the Porumbac Kortorari have remained in a brutal contrast of non-adaptation, instead they are the closest beings to the natural guidance of nature.

The "State" of Porumbac keeps a single question mark which will soon be clarified as well. Namely, the Kortorari still have the Voivodeship institution [7], which proved to be stronger at first than the political force of the state. It is true that from its influence a lot has been removed and often the youth organise a fight against the voivodate [8]. For example, since the building of the state, the head of the colony has remained three times in the minority with his counsel, and his constitutional prerogatives were reduced to nonexistence. […]

As for the professional occupations of the tribe, these are two: the cauldrons and the fortune-telling. Both are broken down by gender and after a thoughtful coordination of apprenticeship.

The craft of fortune-telling begins at the age of 30, when the woman enters the threshold of maturity, after conception. Until then, she is in school and undergoes professional exercises following the most real of intelligence skills. […]

Porumbacu's Kortorari do not believe in fortune-telling, much like a priest does not believe in the miracle of a shirt used for serving in the altar.

The artists

Of much higher quality, however, are the cauldrons. They are genius masters, firstly by the skilful manoeuvring of coal. Such an old Kaldarar (Cauldron-maker) would use two pieces of charcoal only with the tip of his nails, melting at their heat a massive kilogram of brass. Caught like in a monkey's claws, a charcoal was placed at the thin end of the brass, and the second on its muzzle, which the Kortorari would call *mir*. The ten nails supported the entire workshop needed for such a work, and the hammer was a kind of auxiliary, for when the brass stubbornly refrained from being worked. The same hands

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agitate skilfully in the fixing of the inscriptions. With only a few movements, the cauldron gets the most varied ancient hieroglyphics decoration, making it a suggestive object of folk art. […]

Al. Marinescu

Notes

1. The name of the village in Sibiu county, Transylvania.
2. The name of a city in Transylvania.
3. The original word used is *înțepați*, which would translate as 'stung'. However, it is most likely that the meaning of the word be 'poked at'.
4. *Pafta* (from Turkish) decorated brass belts clasp, traditional metal art of the Balkan peoples.
5. *Colonie/kolonia* is a term used to designate a Gypsy settlement in Transylvania, Hungary and Slovakia, synonym of *țigania* (Romanian), *ciganytelep* (Hungarian), *osada* (Slovak).
6. Literally, the tent dwellers, term used as designation of nomadic Roma groups, in this case most probably it is about *Kelderari*.
7. Referring here to a traditional organisation of Roma around a voivode.
8. Voivodate would refer to an area governed by a voivode leader. However, in this context, it most likely means the fight organised by younger generations against the traditional leaders.

Source: Marinescu, Al. (1934e). Printre nomazi. Corturari care-și creiază un stat independent. *Neamul Țigănesc*, An. 1, No. 2, 1934, September 8, p. 4.
Prepared for publication by Raluca Bianca Roman

Comments

This is an extract from a long, descriptive article. Its importance as a source material lies mainly in the fact that it mentions the organisation of what is said to be an "independent state". In fact, the article makes reference to the settlement of a group of *Kortorari* (*Kelderari*) at the outskirts of a town Porumbacul de Jos. Nevertheless, the emphasis placed on the judicial independence of this so-called "state" is evocative, primarily in the ways in which it plays with the narrative of self-organisation among this community. The article itself has both romanticising and at times exoticising undertones, as well as a note of exaggerating the level of independence of the "state" it describes. In that sense, the concept of an "independent state" itself must be treated somewhat critically and sceptically. Nevertheless, as it provides ample description of this particular settlement, as well as the form of organisation within it, it constitutes an interesting analysis of what the process of sedentarisation entails in respect to nomadic groups at the time.

Raluca Bianca Roman

6.6.3 *The Colonisation of Nomads*

Colonizarea nomazilor

Printr-o măsură a autorităților țiganii nomazi cari dădeau meleagurilor noastre un aspect oriental vor fi siliți să trăiască de acum încolo la fel cu toți locuitorii: sub acoperiș …

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S-a dovedit că această categorie de oameni pitorești în aparență, au fost și au rămas, prin tradiție, refractari oricărui fel de viață care ar încerca să îî despartă de caracteristicile firii lor: vagabondajul, cu fatalele sale consecințe, mizeria și bolile ...

Cum mijloacele de trai ale țiganilor spre care îi îndrepta o fire specific orientală erau dintre cele mai ciudate, – începând cu jocurile urșilor, maimuțelor, ghicitul cu ghiocul și în palmă și sfârșind cu spoitul, cerșitul și furtișagul, – acum va trbui să se facă reeducarea acestor elemente nărăvite de o viață mizeră.

În coloniile de muncă, unde probabil vor fi trimiși cei mai mulți, ar fi de dorit ca această reeducare să se facă pe baze de înțelegere mai largă și mai omenească, iar nu prim intermediul unor oameni brutali și lipsiți de simțire și înțelegere.

În calitatea noastră de colaboratori ai acestei chestiuni, ne permitem ca Asociație de organizare și emancipare a romilor să ne dăm părerea cum această categorie de romi s-ar acomoda în organizarea gospodărească:

1. Cum acești nomazi, se îndeletnisec cu geambășia, alții cu căldărăria, lingurăria, pieptănăria, albirea, spoitul obiectelor de aramă, etc., locul cel mai nimerit – după noi- ar fi ca, colonizarea să se facă la periferie sau în formarea de comune suburbane pe lângă orașe, târguri și comune urbane unde ar avea posibilitatea să-și desfacă marfa fie prin cooperație, fie individual săptămânal în târguri sau la orașe și apoi cu timpul și cu bunăvoința și colaborarea tuturor- ca, acești copii ai nimănui, vor deveni cu timpul cetățeni conștienți, muncitori, și vor uita că a fost odată ca niciodată ...

Evoluția nu stă pe loc!

"Jurnalul"

∵

The colonisation of nomads

By a measure of the authorities, nomadic Gypsies, who gave our lands an oriental look, will be forced to live in the same way as all other inhabitants: under the roof ...

It has been shown that this category of people, picturesque in appearance, have been and have remained, through their tradition, reticent to any kind of life that would try to separate them from the characteristics of their nature: vagabondage, with its fatal consequences, misery and disease ...

Given that the livelihoods of these 'țigani', directed by a specific Oriental personality, were of the oddest kind, – beginning with the dances of bears, monkeys, guessing with the log and palm reading and ending with tinkering, begging and thieving, – the re-education of these elements forged by a miserable life will now have to be done.

In the labour colonies, where most of them are likely to be sent, it would be desirable for this re-education to be based on broader and more humane understandings rather than through the medium of brutal people, lacking empathy and understanding.

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In our capacity of collaborators to this issue, we allow ourselves that the Association for Roma organisation and emancipation expresses their opinion as to how this category of Roma could be accommodated within household organisations:

1. Given that these nomads' primary work is, for some, copper-making, for others cauldron-making, spoon-making, comb-making, the whitening and making of bronze objects, etc., the most suitable place – according to us – would be that the colonisation be done at the periphery or through the formation of suburban communes near cities, fairs and urban communities, where they would have the opportunity to sell their work weekly, either collaboratively or individually, in fairs or cities and then, with time and with the goodwill and collaboration of all, these children of nobody will become, with time, conscious citizens, workers, and they will forget that there was once upon a time …

Evolution does not stand still!

"The Newspaper"

Source: Tache. (1940a). Colonizarea nomazilor. *Glasul Romilor,* An. 6, No. 14, 1940, April [no day], p. 2.
Prepared for publication by Raluca Bianca Roman.

Comments

This article, published in April 1940 in one of the last issues of *Glasul Romilor*, constitutes another important example of one of the most central focus themes among Roma leaders during the interwar period in Romania: namely, the sedentarisation of nomadic Gypsies. Labelled, in all these articles as 'colonisation', the process refers, in reality, to the process of land allocation for nomadic groups in Romania. This and other articles show that the process of sedentarisation has been not only supported by Roma leaders but, in fact, encouraged, as the nomadic way of life was being perceived as irreconcilable with the idea of social integration, education, and progress.

Nevertheless, the article above also pleads for a "more humane" treatment by local authorities of the nomadic Gypsies, through a pleading for mutual understanding between the former and the latter. In this sense, the authors address the previous mistreatment of this community by authorities and advocate the possibility of allowing their means of earning a living to continue once settlement has taken place. As such, the emphasis placed on the settlement of these communities on "the periphery" needs to be understood within the context in which the practice of their traditional occupations may continue in collaboration with local communities, in fairs and market places. It is through this that the "transformation" of nomadic groups into "hard-working" citizens is seen possible and the demands of Roma leaders for the sedentarisation of nomadic groups can be fully understood.

Raluca Bianca Roman

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6.7 Religion

6.7.1 *God's Work among the Gypsies*

Pagina despre Ţigani: Lucrul Lui Dumnezeu printre ţigani

Cum s'a început acest lucru in Chişinău – noi deja am scris. In an[ul] 1930 a venit în Chişinău frat[ele] Mincov, misionar printe ţigani în Bulgaria, unde există deja casa de rugăciune ţigănească, şcoala duminicală şi cercul tineretului. De anul acesta s'a înfiinţat în Chişinău cercul de rugăciune care deja 4 ani se adună şi se roagă lui Dumnezeu, pentru trezirea spirituală a poporului ţigan. Afară de rugăciune cercul s'a stăruit a da şi ajutor bănesc misiunei printre ţigani în Bulgaria. Dumnezeu a auzit rugăciunile cercului şi în câteva locuri ţigani s'au pocăit. In an[ul] 1931 s'a început lucru Domnului printre ţigani în Arad. Iată ce scrie s[ora] Hester din Bucureşti: Primul lucru făcut printre ţigani a fost făcut de fratele Cocuţ in Arad. După trei ani de lucru, exista acum o biserică ţigănească in Arad cu membrii si Scoală Duminecală. Din această biserica a ieşti un tânăr care promite mult pentru viitorul lucrului si care acum studiază la Seminarului de băeţi din Bucureşti. Acesta este fratele Lingurar. Fratele Lingurar ne-a dat o dare de seama despre lucrul intre ţigani, pe care v'o trimit si Dvs:

Ţiganii şi Isus

In oraşul Arad, suburbia Sega, este un teritoriu locuit de ţigani. Starea vieţii lor si mai ales cea spirituală, a fost foarte tristă şi de nedescris. Iubirea lui Dumnezeu arătată în jertfa lui Isus a fost în măsură generală, necunoscută de ei. Vieaţa lor mergea din ce în ce în mai rău. Păcatul si immoralitatea îi stăpânea si o tristeţe ca de moarte se putea citi pe feţele lor. Ziarele erau pline de ravagiile si dificultăţile pe care le făceau oamenilor care trăiau in jurul lor. In acest timp trist, iată că apare Evanghelia lui Dumnezeu, care în chip minunat schimbă viaţa multora dintre ei, dintre care sunt şi eu, cel care scriu aceste rânduri. Lucrul s'a petrecut in modul următor: In anul 1931, două persoane de ţigani care erau membrii în biserica baptistă din suburbia Sega au judecat in felul următor- oare n'am putea noi sa deschidem o casă de rugăciune chiar pe teritoriul nostru?

Dându-şi seama de răspunderea ce o au in faţa lui Dumnezeu, au deschis în casa unuia dintre ei o adunare. La început au fost doar 3-4, mai târziu au fost nevoiţi sa închirieze o casa mai mare, de oarece poporul venea cu duiumul, aşa ca astăzi există în ţara noastră prima biserica baptistă ţigănească din România "Biserica Credinţa din Arad-Sega".

Lucrul lui Dumnezeu înaintează de minune dar nu numai în biserică ci chiar şi acolo unde auzeai înjurături, acuma auzi cântând slava lui Dumnezău. In decursul acestor trei ani s'au organizat două botezuri, adaugandu-se la cei doi fraţi încă douăzeci si opt. In anul acesta se aşteaptă un nou botez frumos. Majoritatea din aceştia sunt băieţi si fete, elevi ai Şcoalei Duminicale, deoarece trebuie sa spun ca s'a organizat o Şcoală Duminicala care astăzi are 8-10 clase cu învăţătorii lor din foştii membrii. Faptul petrecut în anul 1933 a impresionat foarte mult pe ascultători.

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A fost finele anului Școalei Duminicale. Fratele Cocuț care a lucrat în mijlocul lor, a examinat. Examenul a fost și moral și spiritual și în toate au reușit de minune. După un discurs al fratelui Cocuț urmat de cântarea "Cu blândețe și drag Isus ne chiamă", douăzeci și opt de elevi și-au mărturisit credința în Isus, predându-se lui. Nu pot descrie bucuria ce întrase în inimile tuturor. Toată biserica a izbucnit în plâns de la copil până la cel mai bătrân. Despre vieața acestor copii se pot spune multe. Părinții lor care erau necredincioși se purtau foarte rău cu ei. Erau bătuți și chinuiți fără milă, dar prin toate nimic nu i-a despărțit de Isus. Ba mai mult părinții lor au pășit pe urmele lor și mulți dintre ei probabil în anul acesta se vor boteza odată cu copii lor. Iată deci efectul binecuvântător pe care l-a avut Evanghelia asupra tuturor popoarelor. Dar sunt foarte mulți încă ce nu știu nimic despre această Veste Bună și trăesc încă încătușați în lanțurile păcatului și care cu orice preț trebuesc duși la Isus care a murit și pentru ei.

Fr. Lingurar

∵

A Page concerning the Gypsies: God's work among the Gypsies

We've already written about the start of the work in Chisinau [1]. In the year 1930 Brother Minkov came to Chisinau, a missionary among the Gypsies in Bulgaria, where a Gypsy prayer house, Sunday school, and youth group already exist [2]. This year the prayer group was founded in Chisinau which has already been meeting for the past four years to pray to God for the spiritual awakening of the Gypsy people. Apart from prayer, the group has laboured to provide financial aid to the mission among the Gypsies in Bulgaria. God heard the group's prayers and in a few places Gypsies repented. In the year 1931 God's work among the Gypsies began in Arad. Here is what sister Hester [3] from Bucharest writes: The first outreach to the Gypsies was done by Brother Cocut in Arad. After three years of work, a Gypsy church now exists in Arad with members and a Sunday school. From this church comes a young man who shows great promise for this work in the future and who now studies at the boys' seminary in Bucharest. He is Brother Lingurar. Brother Lingurar sent us an account about the work among the Gypsies, which I send along to you as well:

Jesus and the Gypsies

In the city of Arad [4], the suburban area of Sega, there is an area where Gypsies reside. The state of their lives, and especially the spiritual element, was very sad and without words. The love of God shown through the sacrifice of Jesus was in large part unknown to them. Their lives became increasingly worse. Sin and immorality governed them and a sadness unto death could be read on their faces. The newspapers were filled with the devastation and difficulties that they inflicted on those living around them. During this sad time, behold the Gospel of God appears, which changes the lives of many of them in a marvellous way, including me, the one writing these lines. This work occurred as follows: In the year 1931, two Gypsies who were members at the Baptist church in the Sega suburbs decided the following- couldn't we open a prayer house in our own neighbourhood?

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Realizing their calling before God, they opened a meeting place in one of their own houses. At first there were only 3-4, while later they needed to rent a larger house [5], as the people came in droves, as such today there exists in our country the first Gypsy Baptist Church in Romania "Faith Church in Arad-Sega" [6].

God's work progresses miraculously, not only in the church but even where you formerly heard curses today you hear singing for the glory of God. During these three years, two baptisms were organised, adding twenty-eight to the founding two brothers. This year a beautiful new baptism is anticipated. The majority of candidates are boys and girls from the Sunday school; I must mention the Sunday school that was organised has at present 8 to 10 classes, with teachers who were former pupils. The event that occurred in 1933 impressed many listeners.

It was the end of the Sunday school year. Brother Cocut, who worked in our midst led the examinations [5]. The exam was both moral and spiritual and they succeeded wonderfully. After a talk by Brother Cocut, followed by the song "Softly and Tenderly," twenty-eight students witnessed their faith in Jesus, giving themselves to him. I can't describe the joy that entered the hearts of all present. The whole church burst into tears from children to the elderly. Much can be said about the lives of these [students]. Their parents were unbelievers and treated them badly. They were beaten and tortured without mercy, but through it all nothing separated them from Jesus. More so, many of their parents followed in their steps and will likely receive baptism this year along with their children. Behold the blessed effect the Gospel has had on all nations. But there are many still who know nothing about this Good News and continue to live chained to sin and whom must be brought at any price to Jesus, who died for them as well.

Brother Lingurar

Notes

1. The article referenced is in a previous issue of *Svetilnic* not yet found.
2. Earl Hester was the director of the women's Baptist seminary 'James Memorial Training School' in Bucharest from 1930 to 1937 (Farul Creștin, 1937, pp. 5, 7).
3. Arad is a city located in southern Transylvania, near Romania's western border with Hungary.
4. The names of the two founding members are uncertain, but secondary sources list Ilie Roman, Pavel Lugas, Iosif Bogovici, Petru Ghiura and Anton Lingurar among the founders of 'Biserica Credința' who previously attended the Romanian Baptist Church in Arad (cf. Bunaciu, 2006).
5. For more details about Pastor Minkov and baptist propaganda among Gypsies in Bulgaria, see Chapter 2.
6. This pattern of the emergence of Gypsy churches in compact Gypsy settlements is widespread in South-Eastern Europe nowadays (cf. Славкова 2007).
7. The format and content of these exams is unclear. They may have been linked to catechism classes or to their religious instruction certificates, required by law to exempt them from Orthodox religious teaching in school. No other Baptist interwar articles mention Sunday school examinations.

Source: Fr. Lingurar. (1934). Pagina despre Țigani: Lucrul Lui Dumnezeu printre țigani. *Svetilnic*, No. 6-7, 1934, June – July, pp. 2-3.
This issue of the newspaper is preserved in AVF, Chișinău, Republic of Moldova.
Prepared for publication by Iemima Ploșcariu.

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Comments

The article, published in 1934 in the Bessarabian Baptist newspaper *Svetilnic* gives a valuable and, thus far, the only available published account of the First Gypsy Baptist Church in Romania from the perspective of a Roma member of the church. The author is thought to be Dumitru Lingurar, who studied at the Baptist seminary in Bucharest, later received a law degree, and served as a judge in Sannicoleaul Mare, a district in the Banat region of southwestern Romania. Brother Lingurar, as he identifies himself at the end of the article, links the improvement of the Gypsy community in Romania, and Arad in particular, with the growing Protestant (or neo-Protestant) religious movements.

The social and cultural context of the article is one of intense religious competition between the Romanian Orthodox Church and the so-called sectarians. The dominant social role of the Orthodox Church influenced the Romanian government to enact legislation restricting the activity of these groups. Nevertheless, the Baptist denomination was one of the largest of these religious groups in interwar Romania.

Though the surge of Roma Protestant and especially Pentecostal churches occurred with the Roma revival spread from France in the 1950s, this article points to early conversion of Roma to non-Greek Orthodox churches in Romania prior to World War II. It is evidence of a new stage in Gypsy identity formation through engagement with a minority religious group that lacked a history of Gypsy prejudice as was present in the Orthodox Church.

Lingurar identifies the Baptist faith with a superior moral and spiritual status. The call to repentance – *pocăință* – appears in the introduction by the editor of Svetilnic (likely Boris Bușilă), from which the moniker of *pocăiți* or repenters was given to Baptist, Brethren, and Pentecostal believers, and which was adopted as a self-identifying term by these believers (Bușilă, 1935, p.2). Lingurar does not use the term himself, but mentions a turn away from sin, immorality, cursing, and violence among the Gypsies in Arad-Sega once they had been exposed to the Good News – *Vestea Bună* – of the Bible. He does not identify negative characteristics specifically to the Gypsies, but points to the role of Bible teachings in prompting change and providing the Gypsy community, young people in particular, with avenues to advance socially through education.

The account reveals the initiative to start their own Protestant church, named *Credința* [Faith] was taken by the Baptist Gypsies in Arad. Ioan Cocuț, secretary of the Romanian Baptist Union (1937-1939) and editor of their newspaper *Farul Crestin* (1933-1939), is mentioned by Lingurar as taking an active part in the development of the Credința Church; however, the teachers of the Sunday school and the church founders were clearly from the Gypsy community. This spurred Romanian outreach and mission among the Gypsies in Bucharest and Alba-Iulia, among other places (Glasul Evangheliei, 1931, pp. 1-2; Farul Creștin, 1933, p. 12; 1936, p. 6; 1937b, p. 7). However, in these latter cities the role of Roma in leadership was lacking and no lasting Gypsy church was founded as in Arad.

Iemima Ploșcariu

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6.7.2 *The Priests and Our Movement*

Preoții și mișcarea noastră

Mișcarea de ridicare a Romilor, a pornit în cadrul bisericei și legiii strămoșești, căci Romii înainte de toate sunt creștini și la sânul bisericei și-au găsit întotdeauna alinarea sufletului lor pribegit de toți.

În Ardeal Romii fac parte dintre credincioșii ambelor biserici strămoșești, atât ortodoxă cât și unită, iar conducătorii bisericei în frunte cu I.P.S. Patriarhul Miron Cristea și I.P.S. Metropolit al Bisericei unite privesc cu bucurie și binecuvântează mișcarea noastră de ridicare.

In munca de organizare, pe care a desfășurat-o dl. Naftanailă Lazăr s-a bucurat de bunăvoința tuturor preoților, cari au luat parte le (sic) adunările Romilor binecuvântând începerea muncii organizațiilor comunale.

Dintre prea cinstiții preoți, cari ne-au dat tot concursul trebue să arătăm pe sf. sa preotul *Valeriu Crișan* dela Șercaia, un distins ziarist și propagator de cultură, care este și președinte de onoare al org. Romilor din Șercaia, apoi păr. Emil Boroș, preș. de onoare la Șinca veche Petru Florea, președ. de onoare la Tincușul vechiu, păr. Ioan Mihaiu la Bărcuț, păr. V. Modorcea la Grid, păr. Petru Târziu la Seliștat, păr. Emil Popa la Agnita, păr. Coanta la Cincul mare, un preot distins și harnic, care ne-a dat mare sprijin.

După cum se vede președintele nostru a cercetat și organizat și pe Romii din Agnita, după cum se dovedește prin adeverința data de păr. protopop Emil Păcală. La Mândra ne-a sprijinir (sic) păr. Ilarie Cocan, la Dealul frumos d. înv. E. Fleșcariu.

După cum merită pentru fapta lor acestor cinstiți slujitori ai altarelor le aducem laude și mulțumiri.

Naftanailă Lazăr

∴

The Priests and our movement

The Roma emancipation movement started within the church and the law of our forefathers, for the Roma are, above all, Christians and it is at the bosom of the church they have always found the relief of their soul, often forsaken by all others. In Transylvania, the Roma belong to both ancestral churches [1], both Orthodox and United [2], and the leaders of the church, with the leadership of I.P.S. Patriarch Miron Cristea and I.P.S. Metropolitan of the Catholic Church [3], look upon us with joy and bless our uplifting movement. In the organisation work, which Mr. Naftanailă Lazăr has been doing, he benefitted from the goodwill of all the priests who took part in the meetings of the Roma, who blessed the commencement of the work of the communal organisations.

Among the much honest priests, who gave us all their support, we have to name his holiness priest Valeriu Crişan of Șercaia, a distinguished journalist and propagator of

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culture, who is also honorary president of the org. of the Roma in Sercaia, then father Emil Boros, Pres. of Honor to Sinca veche, Petru Florea, presided. of honour to old Tincuş, father Ioan Mihaiu in Bărcuţ, father V. Modrid in Grid, father Petru Târziu at the Selistat, father Emil Popa at Agnita, father Coanta at Cincul Mare, a distinguished and diligent priest, who gave us great support. As we can see, our president has also researched and organised the Roma in Agnita, as is evidenced by the certificate given by father protopop Emil Pacala. At Mandra we were supported by father Ilarie Cocan, at Dealul Frumos by Mr. teacher E. Flescariu. As they deserve, for the deeds of these honest servants of the altars, we offer them praise and thanks.

Naftanailă Lazăr

Notes

1. Unlike other Roma organisations in Romania at the time, the Neo-Rustic Brotherhood seems to have developed close relations to both the Orthodox Church and the Romanian Greek Catholic Church, both regarded then in Transylvania as Romanian denominations (cf. above).
2. Romanian Greek Catholic Church is known also under designation Romanian Church United with Rome, from here the short designation in text is 'United'.
3. It refers again to the same Greek Catholic Church.

Source: Lazăr, N. (1935). Preoții și mișcarea noastră. *Neamul Țigănesc*, An. 2, No. 3, 1935, April [no day], p. 3.
Prepared for publication by Raluca Bianca Roman.

Comments

Similar to other Roma organisations during the interwar period, the Neo-Rustic Brotherhood seems to have put an emphasis on the close relationship between their movement and the help of Church authorities. As such the article refers to the role of the Orthodox church within the Roma movement, and the centrality of this connection. According to the author, the Roma movement has started in the midst of the Church. Unlike the General Union of Roma in Romania (based in Bucharest and led by Gheorghe Niculescu), which seemed to support exclusively the Orthodox church and, in turn, be supported by the latter, the above article also presents the particular situation of Roma living in the region of Transylvania. Here, as the author states, Roma belong to both the Orthodox and Greek Catholic Church, both of which have supported the movement. Therefore, the distinction between the two does not seem to be as strongly made as within the midst of the General Union of Roma in Romania (Matei, 2010b, pp. 159-173). In that sense also, several priests are mentioned as having been key supporters of the movement, though there is no mention made of the Church that each of them belongs to. This article is therefore important also in highlighting the different positions Roma organisations during the interwar period have had with respect to their relationship to the Orthodox Church as the only viable possibility.

Raluca Bianca Roman

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6.7.3 *The Orthodox Church and the Roma*

Din activitatea noastă misionara

"Prin credință nestrămutată în Sfânta Biserică Creștină Ortodoxă și sub înalta oblăduire a I.P.S. Patriarh Dr. Miron Cristea, pornim la muncă cinstit, pentru emanciparea oropsitului popor rom".

Potrivit punctelor din statut care prevăd propovăduirea învățăturilor Domnului Hristos am întreprins o vastă propagandă religioasă printre romii după tot cuprinsul României Mari.

In multe părți – unde condițiunile de trai au făcut ca romii să trăiască în mare promiscuitate și de unde deci nu putea fi vorba de nici un nivel spiritual cât de puțin ridicat-am fost întrebați: "noi cărui cult trebue să aparținem?", la care întrebare le-am răspuns deschis și din toată inima: "cinstiți pe Dumnezeu și urmați învățăturile Bisericii Creștine Ortodoxe, căci numai așa vă veti mântui sufletul". Am fost pretutindeni ascultați și actele pe cari le vom reda mai jos o dovedesc.

In comuna Tinca, jud. Bihor, într-o singură zi am botezat 324 romi, cari n-aveau nici-o credință și cari astăzi merg regulat la biserică.

"Unirea" din 3 Mai 1936, care apare la Timișoara scrie: "Romii din orașul nostru și împrejurimi s-au adunat în număr mare pentru a asculta glasul trimisului dela centru Nucu Grigore. Acest delegat a organizat romii din mai multe subcentre și a format și la Caransebeș un subcentru. S-au cetit statutele prin cari de acum înainte: 1) romii nu mai vor cerși cu vor trăi din muncă cinstită; 2) vor merge regulat la biserică; 3) se vor căsători legitim și nu vor mai trăi în concubinaj" (Vichentie Lupașcu).

La Turnu Severin au fost cununate 50 perechi și botezați 20 copii în religia creștină ortodoxă. Serviciul religios a fost oficiat chiar de P.S.S. Episcop Vartolomeu al Râmnicului, înconjurat de un sobor de preoți. Căsătoriții au primit câte-o icoană de argint, iar copii botezați îmbrăcămintea respective (Dimineața 14 V 936).

La Bărbulești-Ialomița, a avut loc o serbare școlară dată numai de copiii romi, cu scop de propagandă religioasă și culturală, la care au luat parte peste 1500 de romi (Tempo 2 VIII 936).

Tot la Bărbulești a avut loc în ziua de 19 Iulie, cununia a 100 perechi de romi, dintre cari mulți erau trecuți de 50 ani. Nași au fost d-ni miniștrii Aurelian Bentoiu și Popescu-Băleni, prefectul județului (Universul 22 VII 936).

La Timiș-Torontal s-a inaugurat o școală și au fost cununate 50 perechi de romi.

La această sărbătoare a luat parte si d-l dr. C. Angelescu, ministrul educației naționale.

La Satu-Mare au fost cununate de asemeni 100 perechi de romi, cari ne-au urmat sfatul de-a nu mai trăi în concubinaj.

Am putea enumăra încă multe cazuri. Ne oprim făcând un călduros apel la romii, cu cari n-am putut încă lua contact până acum, să fie uniți în jurul sfintei Biserici Creștine Ortodoxe, alături de frații noștri români. Acelaș apel îl facem și autorităților ca atunci când se vor mai făptui acte ca cele de mai sus să acorde romilor toată solicitudinea, ajutându-i astfel, să se ridice spiritual și moral și să fie buni cetățeni ai Țării.

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N. Niculescu.
Secretar general la centru și misionar al Sf. Patriarhii.

∵

About our missionary activity

"Through an unflinching faith in the Holy Orthodox Christian Church and under the protection of the I.P.S. Patriarch Dr. Miron Cristea, we start an honest work for the emancipation of the abandoned Roma people."

According to the points in the statutes which emphasise the preaching of the teachings of Christ, we have undertaken vast religious propaganda among Roma throughout Great Romania.

In many parts of the country – where living conditions have made the Roma to live in great promiscuity, and where there could be no talk of any whatsoever high spiritual level – we were asked, "which cult should we belong to?", to which question we answered openly and wholeheartedly: "Honour God and follow the teachings of the Orthodox Christian Church, for that is how you will save your soul." We have been listened to everywhere and the acts we are going to relay below prove it. In Tinca, Bihor County, in one day we baptised 324 Roma, who had no faith and who today regularly go to the church.

"Unirea" of 3 May 1936, which appears in Timişoara [1], reads: "The Roma in our town and its surroundings gathered in large numbers to listen to the voice of the envoy from the centre, Nucu Grigore's. This delegate organised Roma from several sub-centres and formed a sub-centre at Caransebes. They have read the statutes by which from now on: 1) the Roma will no longer beg but will make a living through honest work; 2) They will go to the church regularly; 3) They will legally marry and will not live in concubinage" (Vicentie Lupascu).

In Turnu Severin 50 couples were baptised and 20 children were baptised in the Orthodox Christian religion. The religious service was even officiated by P.S.S. Bishop Vartolomeu of Râmnic, surrounded by a group of priests. The married couples received a silver icon as a gift and the children baptised the respective garment (Dimineata [2], 14.05.1936).

In Barbulesti-Ialomita, a school celebration took place, given only by Roma children, with the purpose of religious and cultural propaganda, to which more than 1500 Roma took part (Tempo [3], 02.08.1936).

Also in Barbulesti, on July 19, the marriage of 100 Roma couples took place, many of whom were over 50 years old.

The godparents were minister Aurelian Bentoiu and Popescu-Băleni, prefect of the county (Universul [4], 08.1936).

A school was inaugurated in Timis-Torontal and 50 Roma couples were officially married. This celebration was attended by Dr. C. Angelescu, Minister of National Education.

At Satu-Mare, 100 Roma couples, who followed our advice not to live in concubinage, were also officially married.

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We could enumerate many more cases. We stop by making a warm appeal to the Roma, whom I have not yet been able to contact, to be united around the holy Orthodox Christian Church, together with our Romanian brothers. The same appeal we make to the authorities that, when actions similar to the ones mentioned above will take place again, they give the Roma all their solicitude, thus helping them to rise spiritually and morally and to be good citizens of the country.

N. Niculescu.
Secretary-General at the Centre and Missionary of the Patriarchate.

Notes

1. Local newspaper published in Romania. Title in the original language.
2. One of the most important mainstream newspapers published in Romania during the interwar period. Title in the original language.
3. Another mainstream newspaper published in Romania during the time.
4. Ibid.

Source: Niculescu, N. (1937a). Din activitatea noastă misionara. *Glasul Romilor*, An. 2, No. 3, 1937, March 15, p. 3.
Prepared for publication by Raluca Bianca Roman.

Comments

This article constitutes an important example of the role of the Orthodox Church in the organisation and in the activities of the General Union of Roma in Romania, led by Gh Niculescu. The connection between the Union and the Orthodox church can be made most evident in many of the activities that the latter has become involved with, and primarily in their focus of maintaining the loyalty of Roma with the Orthodox faith. The mentioning of mainstream Romanian newspapers in the article highlights the fact that the described activities have attracted a much broader attention than that limited to the publications of *Glasul Romilor*.

Raluca Bianca Roman

6.8 The National Civic Identity

6.8.1 *The Gypsies in Romania. Who Were They? Who Are They? What Do They Want to be?*

Țiganii din Romania
Cine au fost? Cine sunt? Ce vor sa fie?

Într-o serie de articole ce voi publica în această gazetă, voi căuta să arăt opiniei publice,- pe baza materialului strâns și a cercetărilor întreprinse- aspecte din trecutul acestui

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popor, precum și tendințele spre care caută să-i îndrepte conducătorii lor spre a se ajunge la scopul final: o stare morală și materială mai bună.

Aceste două deziderate nu pot fi ajunse decât numai constituing un singur front de luptă legală: Asocierea în societăți, asociațiuni și uniuni.

Lucrul nu va fi atât de greu de împlinit având în vedere situația specială pe care o au țiganii din România: ei nu snnt (sic), realmente, considerați ca o minoritate.

Nu au făcut, nici în trecut și nu fac nici în prezent politică minoritară.

Nu formează o minoritate politică sau religioasă. Sunt într-o situație, cum am spus, specială, și cu tendințe de asimilare benevolă în marea massă a poporului dominant.

Ceeace conducătorii lor cer, și ceeace vor și țiganii din România, este numai respectarea drepturilor lor cetățenești ce li se cuvine în calitatea lor de perfecți cetățeni loiali ai statului român, precum și o mai adâncă și înțeleaptă înțelegere a dreptului la o viață mai bună, spre a eși din situațiunea deplorabilă din care se sbat.

Atât și nimic mai mult! […]

N. G. Nicolăescu,
Secretar g-l al asociației generale din Oltenia.

∵

The Gypsies in Romania
Who were they? Who are they? What do they want to be?

In a series of articles that I will publish in this gazette, I will seek to show the public opinion, – on the basis of the collected material and the research undertaken – aspects of this people's past, as well as the tendencies towards which their rulers are trying to direct them, so that the ultimate goal is reached: a better moral and material state.

These two goals can only be achieved by constituting a single legal battlefront: the grouping in societies, associations and unions.

This will not be so difficult to accomplish, given the *special* situation of Gypsies in Romania: they are not, in reality, thought of as a minority.

They have not conducted, neither in the past, nor do they do in the present, any minority politics. They do not constitute a political or religious minority.

They are in a situation which, as I said before, is special, and with tendencies towards a voluntary assimilation in the great mass of the dominant people.

What their leaders ask for, and what the Gypsies in Romania want, is only that their citizenship rights are respected, in their capacity as perfect loyal citizens of the Romanian state, as well as a deeper and wiser understanding of their right to a better life, to get out of the deplorable situation they are in.

This and nothing more! […]

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N. G. Nicolăescu,
Secretary General of the Oltenia General Association.

Source: [Nicolăescu, N.] (1934a). Țiganii din Romania. Cine au fost? Cine sunt? Ce vor sa fie? *Timpul*, An. 3, No. 24-25, 1934, January 1, pp. 1, 4.
Prepared for publication by Raluca Bianca Roman.

Comments

The article, authored by N. Nicolăescu, the General Secretary of the General Association of Gypsies in Oltenia sets up a series of forthcoming articles said to be published in the newspaper *Timpul* on "the history of Gypsies", while emphasising the purpose towards which their leaders wish to lead them: forging a better moral and material state for them.

The article is interesting as it appears in the first issue of the newspaper that has as its subtitle *The Newspaper of Gypsies in Romania*. Prior to this the newspaper was titled simply *Timpul*, with its first issues also having the subtitle of *Independent Newspaper* and featuring primarily news of local interest. This issue, therefore, is the first one that can be stated to have fully adopted the Roma/Gypsy periodical stance. It is also one of the first to focus particularly on issues of history, while nevertheless emphasising the notion that "Gypsies in Romania have a special situation" because they are not, as the author presents it, a minority, nor have they ever made any form of minority 'politics'. Instead, they are said to have a 'special' situation, with a tendency towards wilful assimilation. This particular approach can be seen in other articles published within the same periodical, as well as across other Roma periodicals of the time.

Instead, rather than a form of minority politics, what the association is stated to want is the respect of their citizens' rights, as loyal subjects of the Romanian state, and a better understanding of their right for a better life.

The article then follows through with a historical discussion about the first attestations of Gypsies in Romania, in the 1300s and promises a continuation of the discussion to be followed through in forthcoming issues. It is worth noting that the historical series would continue in a subsequent issue of the newspaper but soon seems to have given way to other topics. It is also interesting to note that, at this time, the newspaper *Timpul* was still using the term Gypsy rather than Roma. Noteworthy is also the fact that the newspaper would move from the original subtitle of *Independent Newspaper* to that of *The newspaper of Gypsies in Romania* (Ziarul țiganilor din Romania), starting from Issue 24-25, 21 January 1934, to, later, *The official paper of Roma in Romania* (Oficiosul romilor din Romania), starting from Issue 41, 29 July 1934. The change in the newspaper's title thus also shows a gradual move from the use of 'Țigan' to that of 'Roma' within the newspaper's content.

While short, therefore, this article captures a particular moment within the transition of the newspaper from a newspaper of general information to one particularly preoccupied with the situation of the Roma and, secondly, it points towards the specific stance by which most Roma intellectuals of the time would stand: namely, that Roma need not

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be perceived as a minority group but as an integral part of the Romanian majority and as wilfully integrating (i.e. assimilating) within it.

Raluca Bianca Roman

6.8.2 *Faith, Country, King*

Prim articol de fond

S-au împlinit patru ani de zile dela înființarea celei dintâi Asociații generale a Țiganilor (Romilor) din România, cu scop cultural, economic, artistic și muzical, – al cărei statu îl vom publica în numerele viitoare.

Piedici, nespus de mari, ni s-au pus în cale, chiar de către aceia care dintâi erau chemați să ne sprijine în lupta de desrobire a neamului nostru rom, încătușat în cea mai neagră mizerie morală, materială și intelectuală.

Neînțeleși de unii, batjocoriți de alții, ne-am luptat cum am putut, atât eu- singurul poet din rândul romilor – cât și tovarășul rom G. A. Lăzurică, pe care nu l-a biruit nici intrigile, nici ademenirile și nici lașitatea unora dintre frații noștri.

După ce înălțasem cea dintâi făclie de lumină pe întinsul și întunecatul câmp al cimitirului de mizerie și neștiința a semenilor noștri romi, s-a ridicat din senin o mână trădătoare și ucigașă, în persoana potcovarului vânzător de flori, Gheorghe Niculescu din București, care a voit să stingă lumina ce-o răspândisem cu atâta trudă.

Acest rom nenorocit, care ni știe nici să scrie, îngâmfat și speculant, cu ajutorul unor înalte fețe bisericești, a înființat o a doua asociație numită Asociația "Uniunea generală a Romilor din România", numai ca să strice cea dintât asociație a noastră, iar prin titulatura ce-a dat uniunei sale (aproape la fel cu aceia a Asociației noastre) a vrut să producă o confuziune în mințile romilor din țară, nepregătiți pentru o luptă așa de mare.

S-a împotmolit însă în propriile sale fără de legi, căci jupuind fără milă pe romii nomazi; făcând tovărășie cu pușcăriașii; înșelând pe puținii săi membrii cu fel de fel de promisiuni ce nu se puteau îndeplini, a ajuns să fie părăsit de toți și astăzi nu mai are decât firma asociației și cinci membrii dintre rudeniile sale.

De oarece Asociația generală a Țiganilor (Romilor) din România, înființată de noi, în anul 1933 și recunoscută persoană juridică de Trib. Ilfov S. 1 prin sentința No. 42/1935, are un scop definit și fixat prin statutele sale dela care nu ne putem abate; știind că politica este absolut interzisă la adăpostul asociațiilor cu personalitate juridică și ar fi chiar imporal să înfrângem legile țării noastre prin astfel de abuzuri; văzând iarăși că și noi suntem cetățeni liberi; avem dreptul și datoria de a ne însuși anumite vederi politice și de a ni le exprima liberi și nesiliți d (sic) nimeni, am căutat supra-omul care să ne ajute, să ne îndrumeze cu sfaturile sale, să-și plece ochii și inima- la vreme de nevoie – către romii noștri mult necăjiți și amărâți de vitrega lor soartă.

Am bătut la toate ușile marilor oameni politici din țara aceasta cerând un pic de dreptate și atenție pentru sărmanii noștri Romi, dar … toate au rămas zăvorîte, ba câteodată am fost luați în bătae de joc, spunându-ni-se: – "Țiganul e tot țigan, oricât l-ai spăla, l-ai primeni și l-ai îngriji!".

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Noi n-am descurajat însă! Dumnezeu care de veacuri păstrează și miluiește oropsitul neam al Romilor, ne-a scos în cale pe cal mai ilustru fiu al Ardealului, pe marele nostru poet Octavian Goga, care, cu mărinime, ne-a deschis ușa; ne-a ascultat jalea; s-a cororât în iadul durerilor noastre și ca să stingă para de foc ce ne arde, ne-a pus la dispoziție gazeta sa "Țara Noastră", în care odată pe săptămână să ne spunem păsurile noastre; să trezim conștiințele adormite ale unora dintre frații noștri; să-i chemăm, la vreme de nevoie, să lupte alături de cei ce le vor binele; să-i deșteptăm spre o nouă viață curat românească și creștină; să-i facem să înțeleagă cine-i iubește și cine-i urăște; să răscolim adâncurile rasei noastre și să dăm României, ai cărei cetățeni supuși și credincioși suntem, cele mai curate valori dintre fiii noștri, care să se jertfească pentru ea în clipele supreme și să-i închine talentul și geniul lor, ca o contribuție de bună voie, la dorita ei propășire.

Octavian Goga! El este desrobitorul sufletesc al Ardealului; cântătorul nemuritor al suferințelor fraților săi de sub fost stăpânire maghiară; El, n-a uitat să proslăvească în poeziile sale și virtuțile poporului rom, cum și jalnica tragedie de a fi "copilul tuturor ș-al nimănui".

Cine altul ar fi fost în stare să înțeleagă durerile noastre dacă nu genialul poet Octavian Goga, acela care încă de mult a făcut unirea Ardealului cu vechiul Regat, trimițându-și jalea sa nemărginită acelui Olt care isvorăște din Ardeal, sărută munții și șesurile oltene și muntene și se pierde în Dunărea bătrână, care ne străjuiește de veacuri și care știe atât de multe?

Când, deci, ni se stinsese orice nădejde de mai bine, când ni se ridicase cruci de răstignire și ucigașii rânjeau batjocoritor, iată Providența ne trimite pe Octavian Goga, care de astăzi înainte va fi protectorul și sprijinitorul nostru în toate împrejurările.

El, fiul preotului din Rășinarii Ardealului, crescut lângă crucea și biserica creștină; ascultând doinele din fluer ale ciobanilor, înfrățiți cu cerul și pământul acestei țări; cântecele de dor și alean ale lăutarilor noștri; poveștile cu domni viteji și domnițe pioase. El este astăzi al nostru și al întregului neam românesc, căci pe steagul său de luptă stau scrise cele mai sfinte cuvinte: "CREDINTA, PATRIE, REGE – ROMÂNIA A ROMÂNILOR".

Noi suntem romi după chip dar sufletul ni-i curat românesc; Ne iubim țara care de veacuri ne hrănește și ne adopostește cu drag de mamă și nu uităm niciodată pe aceia ce impărtășesc durerile noastre.

Frați Romi!

Duceți vestea pretutindeni, mai ales voi Romii din Ardeal, că ilustrul poet și fost ministru al țării românești, Octavian Goga, este de azi înainte marele nostru protector, singurul care ne înțelege nevoile și ni le va satisface la vremea cuvenită.

Nu plecați urechea la spusele vrășmașilor săi care l-au vorbit de rău, numai și numai ca să vă desbine. Adunați-vă toți sub drapelul său, care pentru noi, Romii este singura mântuire. Iar atunci când țara vă va chema să vă rostiți părerile pentru cei mai buni chivernisitori ai gospodăriei românești, nu uitați că Octavian Goga a fost de dintâi om mare, care s-a coborât între noi să ne mânghâie, să ne ajute și să ne apere.

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Fiți binecuvântați de mine, preot din neamul rom, voi, care mă veți asculta și veți urma sfaturile date prin aceste rânduri și harul lui Dumnezeu să se coboare peste copiii, familiile și casele voaste, acum și întotdeauna.

Jurământul care l-am făcut înaintea sfântului altar, că mă voiu jerfi pentru Christos, care este "Calea, Adevărul și Viața", acelș jurământ îl fac și înaintea voastră, că mă voiu jertfi pentru voi, dacă veți asculta glasul meu și al tovarășului meu de luptă, publicistul Lăzurică, cu care zi și noapte nu gândesc decât la fericirea noastră.

CU DUMNEZEU ÎNAINTE ȘI CU CEL CE NE VOIEȘTE BINELE!

Aceasta să fie deviza noastră și cel din urmă gând al fiecăruia dintre noi.

Arhimandritul Calinic I. Popp Șerboianu.

∵

A first base article

Four years have passed since the establishment of the first General Association of Gypsies (Roma) in Romania, with a cultural, economic, artistic and musical purpose – whose statute we will publish in the future numbers. Excessive obstacles have come our way, even from those who were first called upon to support us in the struggle for the liberation of our Rom, trapped in the darkest moral, material, and intellectual misery. Misunderstood by some, mocked by others, we fought as we could, both myself – the only poet among the Roma – and the Roma comrade G. A. Lăzurică, who was not overcome either by intrigues, either by the lures or the cowardice of some of our brethren.

After we had raised the first flicker of light in the vastness and darkened field of the cemetery of misery and the ignorance of our Roma brethren, a treacherous and murderous hand emerged out of the blue, in the person of the flower shop-keeper, Gheorghe Niculescu from Bucharest, who wanted that the light we have spread with so much difficulty be extinguished. This miserable Rom, who knows neither to read nor write, proud and speculative, with the help of churchly faces, has set up a second association called "The Association *General Union of the Roma in Romania*", only to ruin our very own first association, and through the title he gave to this union (almost the same as that of our Association) wanted to confuse the minds of the Roma in the country, who were found unprepared for such a great struggle. But he stumbled into his own unlawfulness, because, by mercilessly scamming the nomadic Roma; by making companionship with prisoners; deceiving his few members with promises that could not be fulfilled, he has become deserted by all and today he has only the firm of the association and five members from his own family.

The General Gypsy (Roma) Association of Romania, founded by us, in 1933, and recognised as a legal entity by the Ilfov S. 1 Tribunal through sentence No. 42/1935, has a defined purpose and fixed in its statutes, from which we cannot deviate; knowing that

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political matters are absolutely forbidden by associations with legal personality, and it would even be immoral to break the laws of our country through such abuses; seeing again that we are also free citizens; we have the right and the duty to acquire certain political views and to express them freely and uncoerced by anybody, we have sought the super-man to help us, to guide us with his advice, to gaze upon and open his heart – in times of need – to our need Roma, who have been wretched by their troubled fate.

We have knocked all the doors of the great politicians in this country, asking for a bit of justice and attention for our poor Roma, but … their doors remained locked, and sometimes we were even mocked by them, by saying: "The Gypsy is a Gypsy, as much as you wash him, give to him and take care of him!" But we did not lose faith! God, who for centuries has kept and loved the orphaned Roma race, has brought to us the illustrious son of Transylvania, our great poet Octavian Goga, who, with kindness, has opened his door to us; he listened to our pleas; has lowered himself within the hell of our sorrows and, in order to burn off the fire that burns us, has made available to us his gazette "Țara Noastră", in which once a week we can express our pleas; we can awaken the sleeping consciousness of some of our brethren; call them, in times of need, to fight with those who want their wellbeing; to awaken them to a new, purely Romanian and Christian life [3]; to make them understand who loves them and who hates them; to search within the depths of our race and to give Romania, whose submissive and loyal citizens we are, the purest values of our children, who will sacrifice themselves for it in moments of need and offer their talent and genius as gift, as willing contribution, in a desire for its prosperity. Octavian Goga! He is the spiritual liberator of Transylvania; the immortal chanter of the sufferings of his brothers who lived under Hungarian domination; He has not forgotten to glorify in his poems also the virtues of the Roma people, as well as the pitiful tragedy of being the "child of all and of no one". Who else would have been able to understand our pains if not the brilliant poet Octavian Goga, the one who had long since made the union of Transylvania with the old Kingdom, sending his mourning to the Olt who descends from Transylvania, kisses the Oltenian mountains and plains and is lost in the old Danube, which has been guarding us for centuries and who knows so much? When any hope of ours had ceased to exist, when the crosses of our crucifixion had arisen, and the murderers were scorning, that is when the Providence sent us Octavian Goga, who today will be our protector and supporter in all circumstances.

He, the son of the priest from Transylvania's Rășinari, who grew up near the cross and the Christian church; listening to the flutes of the shepherds, twinned with the heavens and the earth of this land; the songs of the comfort of our lăutari musicians; the stories with courageous gentlemen and pious ladies. He is today one of us and of the entire Romanian nation, for on his battle flag are written the holiest words: "FAITH, COUNTRY, KING – ROMANIA OF ROMANIANS".

We are Roma by appearance, but our soul is purely Romanian; We love the land that for years has fed us and cared for us with the love of a mother, and we never forget those who share our struggles.

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Roma brothers!

Spread the news everywhere, especially you, Roma of Transylvania, that the poet and former minister of the Romanian state, Octavian Goga, is today our great protector, the only one who understands our needs and will satisfy them at the right time. Do not bend your ears to the words of his enemies who have spoken ill of him, only to create quarrels between yourselves. Gather everyone under his banner, which for us, the Roma, is the only salvation. And when the country will call upon you to say your opinions about the best leaders of the Romanian household, do not forget that Octavian Goga was the first great man, who descended among us to comfort us, to help us and to defend us. Be blessed by me, a priest from the Roma nation, those of you who will obey me, and follow the advice given in these lines, and the grace of God may descend upon your children, your families, and your homes, now and always. The oath that I took before the holy altar, that I will sacrifice myself for Christ, He who is the Way, the Truth and the Life, that oath also I also make to you, that I will sacrifice myself for you, if you will obey my voice and that of my fellow in this battle, the journalist Lăzurica, with whom day and night we think only of our happiness.

WITH GOD IN FRONT OF US AND WITH HIM WHO WANTS THE BEST FOR US!

This must be our motto and the very last thought for each of us.

Archimandrite Calinic I. Popp Serboianu.

Notes

1. The emphasis placed on the Christianity of Roma can be found across the articles of different Roma periodicals during the interwar period. Here, it is particularly important as the article is authored by C. I. Popp Șerboianu, an Archimandrite of the Orthodox Church who nevertheless was rejected by the latter as going against some of the teachings of the Church. When the split between C. I. Popp Șerboianu and G. A. Lăzurică occurred, part of the accusations brought by the latter to the former were also those of trying to steer Roma away from the Orthodox faith and convert them to Greek Catholicism (see also Matei 2010, pp. 159-173).

Source: Popp-Șerboianu, C. I. (1937b). Prim articol de fond. *Țara Noastră*. An. 1, No. 1, 1937, July 11, p. 1.
Prepared for publication by Raluca Bianca Roman

Comments

This first, front-page article of the special issue of *Țara Noastră*, is authored by Archimandrite Calinic I. Popp Șerboianu, the president of the General Association of Gypsies (Roma) in Romania. The article is, at first glance, an important illustration of the dynamics between the two key Roma organisations during the interwar period (namely, the General Association of Gypsies (Roma) in Romania and the Association-General Union of Roma in Romania), as well as a clear example of the political affiliation or the political sympathies of the General Association of Gypsies (Roma) in Romania and the National Christian Party.

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The article, for example, begins by talking about the background of the General Association of Gypsies (Roma) in Romania, founded in 1933, and states its general purposes: namely, cultural, social, artistic and musical. However, it then follows by a criticism of the rival organisation, led by G. Niculescu, who allegedly stole the idea of his own Union from the Association. This can also be seen in the documents and official sources available concerning the national organisations of Roma during the interwar period. The aim here is clearly to showcase the legitimacy of the General Association of Gypsies (Roma) in Romania over the Association-General Union of Roma in Romania (led by Niculescu), by emphasising the former's longer existence. This article therefore points to the feud existing between the two organisations, and the claim for legitimacy of representation of Roma in Romania.

What follows from then on is also a clear example of the Association's affiliation with the National Christian Party, led by Octavian Goga, through a long panegyric offered to the latter Romanian poet and politician. It was, in fact, under the aegis of Octavian Goga and *Țara Noastră*, that the Association was granted space to publish a special edition for Roma. In this way, it highlights the deeply complicated nature of political affiliations of the time, wherein the non-minority status promoted by Roma elite, and the apolitical stance they aimed to adopt, were clearly contradicted by the content of the newspaper articles.

The article finally emphasises the necessity to see Roma as Romanians, arguing that while "we are Roma by face, our soul is purely Romanian". Through this, the article aims to underline Roma allegiance to the motto "Faith, country, king – a Romania for Romanians", the motto of the National Christian Party, and therefore clearly affiliating the aims and goals of the General Association of Gypsies (Roma) in Romania to those of the nationalistic party.

Raluca Bianca Roman

6.8.3 *To Write in the Romani Language*

Să scriem în limba Romă

Intrucât romii din străinătate au luat cunoștință de ziarul nostru și cer ca să scriem o pagină și în limba romă, le vom satisface cererea.

In numărul viitor vom scrie o astfel de pagină destinată romilor din Polonia, Rusia, Cehoslovacia, Jugoslavia și Elveția.

Noi puteam scri în întregime acest ziar în limba romă, dar mulți semeni de ai noștri care n-o mai cunosc- probă că s-au asimilat complect elementului românesc- și că sunt foarte mulți români care vor să ne citească. Nici nu voim ca scriind numai în limba romă să se creadă că suntem minoritari sau că vrem să creiem o nouă minoritate.

Suntem prea buni români ca să ne pretăm la așa ceva.

Ne bucurăm că putem satisface într-o mică măsură pe semenii noștri din alte țări.

Este destul atât.

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To write in the Romani language

As Roma from abroad have gotten acquainted with our newspaper and have asked us to write a page in Romani language, we will meet their request.

In the future, we will write such a page for Roma in Poland, Russia, Czechoslovakia, Yugoslavia and Switzerland.

We could write this newspaper in Romani language in its entirety, but many of our brother who do not know the language anymore – evidence that they have been fully assimilated to the Romanian element – and there are also many Romanians who want to read us. We do not want to write in Romani only in order not to have people think that we are a minority or that we want to create a new minority.

We are too good Romanians to do such a thing.

We are glad that we satisfy in a small degree the requests of our brothers from other countries.

That's enough.

Notes

1. *Țara Noastră* was the newspaper publication of the National Christian Party, whose editor was Octavian Goga, a leading Romanian politician and poet. Archimandrite Calinic I. Popp Șerboianu and G. A. Lăzurică became affiliated and connected both with the National Christian Party and expressed admiration of Octavian Goga. The latter offered the two an outlet to publish their calls within the newspaper *Țara Noastră*, with a special issue dedicated for Roma. Five issues were published in total: the first issue was published on the 11th of July 1937, and issues 5-6 were published collectively on the 15th of September 1937. Most of the articles presented within the pages of this special Roma issue featured elegies to the National Christian Party and Octavian Goga, alongside expressed desires by the two Roma leaders for Roma not to be seen as a minority but as full citizens and members of Greater Romania.

Source: [No Author]. (1937c). Să scriem în limba Romă. *Țara Noastră*. An. I, No. 2, 1937, July 18, p. 2. Prepared for publication by Raluca Bianca Roman.

Comments

This short piece published in the second issue of the special Roma edition of the periodical *Țara Noastră* addresses the requests received by the editors from some readers from abroad to also write one page in Romani language. The editors state that this request would indeed be satisfied with the following issue. Nevertheless, the editors also state that, while the entire newsletter could have been written in Romani, many Roma no longer know the language and many Romanians may want to read it too. Most importantly, and crucially connected to the agenda of Archimandrite Calinic I. Popp Șerboianu and G. A. Lăzurică, in conjunction with the policies of the National Christian Party, under the aegis in which the publications were occurring, the stated reason for not writing entirely in Romani was also that they did not want to be considered a minority, or for others

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to think they want to create a minority. The phrase "We are too good Romanians to do this" is, therefore, also crucially important in its connection to the motto of the National Christian Party at the time, "A Romania for Romanians" and can be best understood within this context.

Raluca Bianca Roman

6.8.4 *Romania for the Romanians*

România a Românilor!

Aceasta este lozinca partidului Național-Creștin de sub conducerea D-lor A. C. CUZA și OCTAVIAN GOGA.

Vorbele deșarte, vorbele de dacă și cafenea, nu găsesc ecou în sufletele acestor arhangheli ai neamului românesc, înfrățiți cu pământul și suferințele acestei țări.

Tot cele ce spun ei, este slovă de evanghelie. Ei au dat avânt și entuziasm atâtor generații; ei nu predau naționalismul de pe carte, cum fac atâția politicieni, cari se bat cu pumnii în piept de dragul țăranilor și muncitorilor, mai ales înainte de alegeri, ci A. C. CUZA și OCTAVIAN GOGA își trag naționalismul din însă seva acestui pământ românesc, pe care-l văd însă plin de pălămidă și buruiana jidovească, de atâta amar de vreme.

Naționalismul lor este limpede ca lumina zilei; fără ascunzișuri, fără ură, fără interese imediate, aducătoare de noroc; fără ahtierea după ranguri și onoruri, ci numai pentru binele acestui popor românesc, care desi biroitor în afară, este biruit în insăși casa lui, de șerpii pe care i-a ncălzit la sân zeci și sute de ani.

Ei voiesc trezirea conștiințelor românești; voiesc să tragă o barieră între ceea ce este strein și tolerat și poporul de baștină, pe care se reazimă statul la vreme de nevoie; ei vor să alcătuiască adevărata istorie a poporului roman, stabilind că, numai acela poate fi socotit "român" pe lângă băștinași, care-n zilele de veselie ale acestui neam s-a-nveselit cu ei; a plâns cu ei în zilele de restriște și a murit pentru ei în zilele de grea cumpănă.

Iată dar, cât de cumpătat și adânc omenesc este naționalismul acestor doi oameni, care-ar putea fi rezumat în cuvintele mântuitorului Christos că: "Cine nu este cu mine, împotriva mea este!"

Dar ei sunt și BUNI CREȘTINI, iar creștinismul lor derive din însăși puritatea acestui nationalism, care te-ndeamnă , cum spunea Christos că: "Nu este bine să iai pâinea fiilor și s-o dai câinlor".

Ar fi ticălos și păgân părintele, care ar lăsa flămând pe propriul său copil, luându-i pâinea dela gură și dând-o celor streini.

Având însă prisos, poate FACE MILĂ și cu cei streini.

Mila aceasta însă nu trebuie socotită obligație sau slăbiciune și nici exploatată de streini, căci atunci ne aducem aminte de povestea românească cu ariciul care s-a umflat în gaura șarpelui ca să-l sugrume și- fără să vrem- reacționăm, ca să ne apărăm pielea noastră.

Partidul Național Creștin al d-nilor A. C. Cuza și Octavian Goga, cercetând trecutul îndepărtat al neamului românesc, a găsit că dintre toți streinii numai neamul romilor a

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fost acela care a luat parte desinteresata la bucuriile și suferințele acestei țări: s-a jertfit pentru ea și n-a trădat-o niciodată, cum au făcut mulți alți din neamul jidovesc.

Iată dar, Romilor, de ce ilustrul poet Octavian Goga ne-a deschis larg ușile; ne-a primit și îmbrățișat cu dragoste de frate!

Care alt partid a făcut aceasta pentru noi? Care alt om politic și de Stat ne-a auzit plângerile noastre?

Cine a stat de vorbă cu noi, fără ca să nu-I fie silă de culoarea feței noastre, de zdrențele și apucăturile rele ce avem noi, cari veșnic am trait din frimiturile și ciomăgelile altora și cărora nimeni nu ne-a dat nici o atenție?

Numei El, MARELE OCTAVIAN GOGA și cu cei ce-l înconjoară cu dragoste, ne-a primit ca pe frați adevărați. El ne-a înțeles suferințele și știe bine, că din toată ființa noastră, numai culoarea feței și câteva apucături rele, – streine neamului românesc, – numai acestea ne-au mai rămas.

Vor fi corijate însă printr-o neconstenită educație și prin ascultarea sfaturilor noastre, care nu vă vrem decât binele.

Octavian Goga este sfântul nostru, pe care trebue să-l venereze și să-l urmeze tot neamul Romilor.

Cine nu-l va asculta pe El sau pe noi, acela este vrăjmaș, atât al țării românești, cât și al Romilor, și nu are altceva de ales, decât să plece din această țară, care nu e țară de venetici și pripas, ci țară liberă și mândră de puterea ei.

Romii care vor lucre în altfel, vor fi socotiți ca jidanii, cari cu interesele sunt în România, iar cu gândul împotriva ei.

Țineți bine minte cele ce vă spun, ca un proroc: Cine nu este cu Octavian Goga și cu partidul Național Creștin, acel Rom este vrășmașul țării și neamului românesc; este jidovul negru și nu va avea altă soartă, decât soarta jidovului, veșnic rătăcitor și prigonit de cel din urmă om!

C. Mirmilo

∵

Romania for the Romanians!

This is the slogan of the National Christian Party under the leadership of A. C. CUZA and OCTAVIAN GOGA [1]. Vague words, coffee shop words, do not echo in the souls of these Romanian archangels, twinned with the earth and the sufferings of this country. Everything they say is a Gospel word. They have given boost and excitement to so many generations; they do not teach nationalism according to the book, as so many politicians do, who knock their fists on their chest for the sake of peasants and workers, especially before the elections, but A. C. CUZA and OCTAVIAN GOGA get their nationalism out of the core of this Romanian land, which nevertheless they see as being full of Jewish weed and Jewish thistles [2], for such a long time. Their nationalism is as clear as the light of the day; without hiding anything, without hatred, without immediate interests,

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that would bring them luck; without seeking rank and honour, but only for the sake of this Romanian people, who, although a conqueror on the outside, is overcome in its own home by the snakes he has brought up near its chest for hundreds of years. They want the awakening of the Romanian consciousness; they want to draw a boundary between that which is foreign and tolerated and the people native to the state, on which the state relies on in times of need; they want to write up the true history of the Romanian people, establishing that only he can be considered "Romanian", besides the natives, who in the days of joy of this nation has rejoiced with them; wept with them in the days of unrest, and died for them in the days of hardship.

See how thoughtful and deeply human is the nationalism of these two people, which could be summed up in the words of our Saviour Christ: "He who is not with me, is against me!"

But they are also GOOD CHRISTIANS, and their Christianity derives from the purity of this nationalism, which encourages that, as Christ has said: "It is not good to take the bread of the sons and give it to the dog". He who would starve his own child, by taking his bread from his mouth and giving it to the foreigners, would be a fool and a pagan father.

Having enough, though, he can take pity on the foreigners. This mercy is not to be considered as an obligation or weakness, nor to be exploited by the foreigners, because then, as we remember the Romanian story with the hedgehog that swelled in the snake's hole to smother it, and without reacting to protect their skin.

The Christian National Party of A. C. Cuza and Octavian Goga, researching the distant past of the Romanian nation, found that among all the foreigners only the Roma people were the ones who took part in the joy and suffering of this country: sacrificed for it and never betrayed it, as many other Jews have. This is why, dear Roma people, the illustrious poet Octavian Goga has opened us his doors, has received and embraced us with the love of a brother! Which other party did this for us? Which other political and state politicians have heard our complaints? Who has ever spoken to us, without being overwhelmed by the colour of our face, by the rags we wear and bad behaviour that we have, us who have always lived from other people's crumbs and mercy, and to whom no one has paid any attention? Only he, THE GREAT OCTAVIAN GOGA and those who surround him with love, received us as true brothers. He understands our sufferings and knows well that, from all our being, only the colour of our face and a few bad behaviours, – foreign to the Romanian people, – have left of that. These will, however, be changed through continuous education and by listening to our advice, us who only want your wellbeing. Octavian Goga is our saint, whom all the Roma must worship and follow. Whoever will not listen to him or us, is an enemy of both the Romanian country and of the Roma, and has no choice but to leave this country, which is not a country of foreigners and temporary dwellers, but a free country, which is proud of its power.

The Roma who will work in any other way will be considered as Jews, who have their interests in Romania, but in their thought are against it.

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Remember what I say to you as a prophet: He who is not with Octavian Goga and the Christian National Party, that Roma is the enemy of the Romanian country and nation; he is a black Jew and he will have no other fate than the fate of the Jew, eternally wandering and persecuted by the latter man!

C. Mirmilo

Notes

1. Both leading Romanian politicians and leaders of the National Christian Party in Romania during the interwar period. See previous source article as well.

Source: Mirmilo, C. (937f). Romania a Românilor! *Țara Noastră*. An. I, No. 3, 1937, July 25, p. 1. Prepared for publication by Raluca Bianca Roman.

Comments

This front-page article, authored by C. Mirmillo, constitutes, in essence, another eulogy brought to National Christian Party, led by Octavian Goga and Alexandru C. Cuza, to which the Association led by Archimandrite Calinic I. Popp Șerboianu and G. A. Lăzurică professes the support. It is also another evidence of the clear positioning in terms of policies and politics concerning minorities, to which neither Archimandrite Calinic I. Popp Șerboianu nor G. A. Lăzurică (nor, for that matter, other Roma leaders at the time), in either their own publications or public speeches, see the Roma as belonging. Instead, the emphasis is placed on showing support for the nationalist party and underlining the concept and motto of "Romanian for Romanians" to which Roma are also seen to belong. In the article itself, the aim, therefore, appears to be that of highlighting the commitment Roma have had to the cause of the country: never betraying it and always working for it.

The article thus continues with a clear support expressed in relation to the National Christian Party, stating strongly that those who position themselves against the National Christian Party position themselves against the country as a whole. Furthermore, the article strongly emphasises that those Roma who will not support Goga and Cuza will be considered enemies both of Romania and of Roma. Just as strongly, the article ends by stating that the Roma who will go against all this will be considered "as Jews", as having their interests in Romania but working against it. In this sense, the article can be seen as an example of highlighting three issues within the political climate of the time: 1) expressing a sense of 'Romanian-ness' by supporting one of the leading nationalist parties at the time, the National Christian Party; 2) challenging the idea that Roma are a 'minority' group, or seek to develop 'minority politics', by distancing themselves from other such communities (mainly the Jewish population, which were considered by the National Christian Party as a dangerous minority); 3) an affiliation of Roma leaders and Roma associations with different leading political parties of the era, hence challenging the claim of being 'apolitical' organisations.

Raluca Bianca Roman

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6.8.5 *What Should a Rom Do*

Ce trebuie să facă un Rom

1. Să nu-și ascundă originea lui de rom și să nu-i fie rușine de neamul său.
2. Cea mai mare grije și cea mai sfântă datorie pe care trebuie să aibă e să fie înscris în Asociație, atât el cât și toți ai lui.
3. Să ia parte la adunările care se anunță de către conducătorii lui.
4. Să nu plece urechea la spusele unora sau altore, fiindcă aceștia nu vor binele neamului.
5. Să fie cetățean demn, loial și cuminte al țării, respectând pe M.S. Regele, Familia Regală, Legile și Autoritățile Țării.
6. Să-și dea copiii la școală.
7. Să citească și să răspândească publicațiile oficiale ale asociației.
8. Să respecte pe bătrâni, frații și surorile lui.
9. Să-și achite regulat obligațiile către Asociație.
10. Să asculte și să respecte pe președintele general al Asociației, Dl. Gh. Niculescu, care luptă fără preget pentru ridicarea romilor.
11. Să-și respecte conducătorii și să îndeplinească instrucțiunile date de aceștia.
12. Să meargă regulat la biserică.
13. Să nu mai trăiască în concubinaj.
14. Să respecte pe reprezentanții Bisericii și ai Școalei.

∵

What should a Rom do

1. Not conceal his origin of Roma and to not be ashamed of his people.
2. The greatest care and the holiest duty he has is to be enrolled in the Association [1], both he and all of his own.
3. Take part in the meetings that are announced by his rulers.
4. Not bend his ear to the words of one or another, because these individuals do not want the good of his people.
5. Be a dignified, loyal and good citizen of the country, respecting H.M. the King, the Royal Family, the Laws and the Authorities of this country.
6. Send their children to school.
7. Read and disseminate the official publications of the association.
8. Respect his elders, brothers and sisters.
9. Regularly pay his obligations to the Association.
10. Obey and respect the General President of the Association, Mr. Gh Niculescu, who fought without hard for raising up the Roma.
11. Respect his leaders and to follow the instructions given by them.
12. Go to church regularly.

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13. Seize living in concubinage.
14. Respect the representatives of the Church and the School.

Notes

1. Reference is made here specifically to the Association General Union of Roma in Romania, led by Gheorghe Niculescu (rather than the competing organisation, led by Archimandrite Calinic Popp Șerboianu and, later, G. A. Lăzurică).

Source: [No Author]. (1938a). Ce trebuie să facă un Rom. *Glasul Romilor*, An. 3, No.No. 9-10, 1938, April 10, p. 3.
Prepared for publication by Raluca Bianca Roman.

Comments

This is an important, albeit short article, which clearly highlights in brief all the key claims and demands laid out by the leaders of the General Union of the Roma in Romania to its membership. Along these lines, some of the key criteria and actions that Roma are seen as 'obliged' to do are those of taking pride in their Roma heritage, proving their allegiance to the Union (through joining it, the payment of membership, attendance of meetings, respect for the authority of its leader, Gheorghe Niculescu, etc.), proving themselves loyal and obedient members of the state (by respecting laws and central institutions), proving their loyalty to the Church (through going to Church, baptising children, and respecting the leaders of the Orthodox Church), by respecting kin and elders.

As such, the themes of being proud of one's Roma belonging, most evidently emphasised in the focus on not hiding one's origin of Roma, are combined with the themes of national citizenship, loyalty to the state and the national Orthodox church. All these are predominantly featured in most Roma periodicals of the interwar period, even in the context in which the emphasis may be placed on allegiance shown to distinctive Roma organisations.

Raluca Bianca Roman

6.9 The Roma Women

6.9.1 *To the Roma Women*

Un cuvânt și din partea mea
Către femeile rome

Dragile mele surori,

Vă scrie soția lui Lăzurică, tovarășa lui de viață, de sbucium și de necazuri, care l-a secondat cu hărnicie și devotement în toată activitatea lui de luptător pentru ridicarea semenilor noștri romi.

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Sunt și eu romă cehoslovacă, cunoscătoare de cinci limbi, stenografă și dactilografă, muncind ca funcționară ca să ajut materialicește pe soțul meu. Și pe lângă slujba mea fac și gospodăria casei, fără servitoare la uşe, aşa cum se cere unei soții harnice și înțelepte. Știu că și voi, surorile mele rome, munciți alături de bărbații voștri, luați parte la necazurile și bucuriile lor, vă străduiți să duceți greul mai ușor. Voi sunteți acelea care printr-un cuvânt bun, printr-o mângâiere afectoasă, încurajați pe bărbații voștri să înfrunte amărăciunile vieței. Cunosc tot zbuciumul vostru, căci am fost în casele cele mai umile de romi, am vizitat șatrele nomazilor din corturi, dând un sfat, un ajutor, un cuvânt cald de mângăiere.

Am ținut ușa deschisă tuturor romelor soții de lăutari, zidari, spoitori, ursari, fierari și nomazi, fără să fac deosebire, fără să le umilesc cu un singur gest de dispreț. N-a intrat în casa mea un puiu de rom care să plece fără un bănuț, fără o fructă sau o jucărioară, admirând la ei voioșia, darul de a cânta și juca, acel gest de recunoștință pentru un mic cadou oferit.

Nu vă doresc decât – chiar trăind în sărăcie – să aveți soți iubitori, muncitori, cinstiți, aducători în casă, lipsiți de patimi, aşa cum este soțul meu căruia îi accord încrederea cea mai desăvârșită și îl secondez în acțiunea lui.

Mi-am vândut salba, covoarele și picturile- averea mea dotală- ca să-l ajut și să nu dea înapoi. Iar când scârbit, oboist, decepționat, că romii nu voiau să-l înțeleagă și să-l susțină în lupta lui, eu am fost aceia care l-am încurajat și l-am îmbărbătat, spunându-iș – Sa nu dezertezi dela datorie! Vom mânca fasole și cartofi, vom purta doi ani câte un costum de haine, vom suferi cea mai neagră mizerie, dar trebue să perseverezi! Dumnezeu ne va ajuta!

Și mă închinam noaptea la icoana Maicii Domnului, aprindeam candela, șoptind:

– Maică Prea Curată, nu ne părăsi pe noi, nu părăsi Poporul Rom, cel mai umilit și lipsit de ocrotire!

Iată, soțul meu pornește la muncă, se angajează într-o luptă nouă și hotărâtoare pentru neamul nostrum.

Fac un apel la voi, surorile mele rome, să îndemnați pe bărbații, feciorii și fetele voastre, ca să secondeze pe soțul meu, să dea dovadă că romii nu sunt oameni lipsiți de solidaritate, disciplină și devotement. Eu voiu veni mereu în mijlocul vostru, ori când și ori unde, ca să vă cunosc, să vă ascult și să vă îmbrățisez. În calitatea mea de secretară a secțiunilor feminine, pe lângă comitetul central din București, eu voiu fi aceia care va rezolva scrisorile voastre, plângerile voastre, răspunzându-vă neîntârziat.

Cu dragoste de soră și cu urări de bucurii!

Marta G. Lăzurică

∵

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A word also from me
To the Roma Women

My dearest sisters,

It is the wife of Lăzurică writing to you, his life companion, in struggles and troubles, who has followed him with diligence and dedication in all his activity as fighter for the uplifting of our Roma.

I am also a Czechoslovak Roma, who speaks five languages, a stenographer and a typist, working as a clerk to help my husband materially. Besides my job, I also do the household work, without having a maid at my door, just as it is asked of a wise and clever wife. I know that you, my Roma sisters, also work alongside your men, taking part in their tribulations and their joys, striving to make their burden easier. You are the ones who, through a good word, through an affectionate caress, encourage your men to face the bitterness of life. I know all your struggles, for I have been in the humblest of Roma homes, I have visited the tents of the nomads, giving advice, some help, a warm word of kindness. I kept the door open to all Roma wives of Lăutari (musicians), zidari, (builders), Spoitori (tin-smiths), Ursari (bear-tamers), fierari (blacksmiths) and nomads [1], without making any distinction between them, without humiliating them with a single gesture of contempt. There was no child in my house who would leave without a penny or without a fruit or a toy, admiring their cheerfulness, their gift of singing and playing, that gesture of gratitude they give for a small gift offered. My only wish for you is that- even when living in poverty – you have loving, hard-working, honest, procuring husbands, deprived of vices, as my husband is, to whom I give the utmost trust and I follow him in his actions. I sold my dowry, carpets and paintings-my wealth-to help him not give up. When he was disgusted, tired, depressed, that the Roma did not want to understand and support him in his struggle, I was the one who encouraged him and pushed him by saying: Do not desert from your duty! We will eat beans and potatoes, we will wear the same clothing for two years, we will suffer the worst misery, but you must persevere! God will help us!

And, at night, I would worship the icon of Our Lady Mary, lighting the candle, whispering:

– Holy Mother, do not desert us, do not forsake the People Rom, the most humiliated and unprotected of all!

Pay attention to how my husband has begun working, and engages in a new and decisive struggle for our people.

I make an appeal to you, my Roma sisters, to urge your husbands, your sons and your daughters to support my husband, to prove that the Roma are not a people who lack solidarity, discipline and devotion. I will always come within your midst, whenever and wherever you are, to meet you, to listen to you and to embrace you. In my role as secretary of the female sections, next to the Central Committee in Bucharest, I will be the one who will resolve your letters, your complaints, responding without delay.

With sisterly love and joyful wishes!

Marta G. Lăzurică

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Notes

1. These all are professionyms of different Roma groups, some of which became their ethnonyms (cf. Marushiakova & Popov, 2013a, pp. 61-81).

Source: Lăzurica, M. (1938b). Un cuvânt și din partea mea. Către femeile rome. *Timpul*, An. 7, No. 70, 1938, March 8, p. 2.
Prepared for publication by Raluca Bianca Roman.

Comments

This is an important source article from the time period, published in the very last issue of the newspaper *Timpul*, on the 8th of March 1938. Its importance lies in the fact that it is authored by Marta G. Lăzurică, the wife of G. A. Lăzurică, an important Roma leader and, at the time, part of the leadership of the General Association of Roma in Romania.

The article is written in the form of a letter addressed by Marta Lăzurică to female Roma readers. In it, M. Lăzurică presents herself as a Czechoslovakian Roma woman (unfortunately, no other data about her origin and early life are discovered yet), who speaks 5 languages and who supports her husband in all the efforts he has made in the fight for Roma people. The letter is, in essence, laid out as a plea to Roma women to encourage their husbands, sons and daughters to support G. A. Lăzurică and to "show that Roma are not people that lack solidarity, discipline and devotion".

Among other things, Marta Lăzurică was the secretary of the female section within the Central Committee (in Bucharest) of the General Association of Roma in Romania. The article, as such, is important as it highlights the role that women have also had within the Roma emancipation movement during interwar Romania.

Raluca Bianca Roman

6.9.2 *My Dearest Sisters*

Către romițe

Dragile mele surori,

Vă scrie o femeie din neamul vostru, una din puținele romițe care a putut să învețe carte mai multă ca să ajungă profesoară. În lupta pe care au început-o apostolii noștrii, Arhimandritul Șerboianu și literatul G. Lăzurică, pentru ridicarea poporului rom, mă alătur și eu.

De aceia vă scriu rândurile care urmează:

Încurajați pe soții și feciorii voștri să ia parte la mișcarea nouă, unică și frumoasă care are ca scop promovarea romilor în viața socială a statului românesc.

Este un moment istoric această mișcare. Voi, care împărțiți necazurile și bucuriile cu bărbații voștri, muncind alături de ei ca să faceți față greutăților vieții, sunteți cele mai în măsură să-i îndemnați la bine. Se vor bucura în viitor copii voștri.

In timpuri mai vechi, când străbunii noștri trăiau în India în mijlocul altor popoare care-I dușmăneau de moarte, femeile rome ajutau pe bărbații lor în războaie, pregătindu-le

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săgeți pentru arcuri, vârfuri de suliți, tolbe și arcane. Ingrijeau de care și turme de capre și herghelii de cai, îi îmbărbătau dându-le talismane.

Acum nu vi se cere atâtea sacrificii. Vi se cere numai ca inimile voastre să bată alături de bărbații noștri și să le spuneți: "Fiți demni, devotați, disciplinați și bravi în lupta care se dă pentru luminarea Poporului Rom".

Eu de cinci ani urmăresc mișcarea romilor și m-am convins că numai arhimandritul Șerboianu și Lăzurică sunt în măsură să ne arate drumul drept. Fiind văduvă, impun feciorilor mei să-i secondeze.

Cu urări de bine,

Elena Dănicel.

∵

To the Roma Women

My dearest sisters,

A woman from your own people writes to you, one of the few Roma women, who was able to learn school and become a teacher. In the struggle that our apostles Archimandrite Șerboianu and the literate G. Lăzurică started for the uplifting of the Roma people, I also join. For this reason, I write to you the following lines: Encourage your spouses to take part in the new, unique and beautiful movement that aims to advance Roma in the social life of the Romanian state. This is a historical moment. You, who share in the tribulations and joys with your husbands, working alongside them in coping with the difficulties of life, are best able to encourage them to do good. Your children will rejoice for this in the future.

In older times, when our ancestors lived in India in the midst of other peoples who wished them dead, the Roma women helped their men in the wars, preparing arrows for bows, spikes, spears, quivers and archers. They looked after the goat flocks and the hers of horses, encouraged them by giving them talismans.

You are no longer asked to make so many sacrifices. You are asked that your hearts beat alongside our men and tell them: "Be dignified, devoted, disciplined and brave in the fight that is taking place for the enlightenment of the Roma People".

I have been following the Roma movement for five years, and I am convinced that only Archimandrite Șerboianu and Lăzurică are able to show us the right way. Being a widow, I impose it upon my sons to support them.

With good wishes,

Elena Dănicel.

Source: Dănicel, E. (1937d). Către romițe. *Țara Noastră*. An. 1, No. 2, 1937, July 18, p. 1.
Prepared for publication by Raluca Bianca Roman

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Comments

Alongside another article published by Marta Lăzurică, presented above, this article, written by Elena Dănicel, is another important illustration of the presence of Roma women within the Roma emancipation movement during interwar Romania. It was published prior to the one written by Marta Lăzurică but, as a theme, they follow almost exactly the same lines: encouraging Roma women to support the efforts made by the Archimandrite Calinic I. Popp Șerboianu and by G. A. Lăzurică in the 'uplifting' of the Roma People. They are advised to do so by also encouraging their husbands to join in and support the movement.

Though apparently highlighting the 'supporting' position of Roma women to their husbands, this article, as well as the one written by Marta Lăzurică a year later, emphasise the fact that Roma women were not invisible or passive agents within the Roma movement during the interwar period but, rather, occupied a pivotal role in the struggle Roma leaders embarked upon in the mobilisation of both Roma men and women.

Raluca Bianca Roman

6.9.3 *The Women in the Roma Association*

Poporul enigmatic

Cine sunt țiganii, de unde vin și ce obiceiuri au?

[…] Femeile în Mișcarea "romilor".

După cât se pare femeile iau o parte activă la mișcare modernă a romilor din România. Atât părintele Șerboianu cât și d. Lăzurică – după cum mi-au spus – acceptă ca ele să aibă drepturi egale cu bărbații. Cele cu știință de carte vor fi admise pe viitor în sfatul bătrânilor, prezidate de vătafii respectivi, sfat care potrivit tradiției țigănești e un fel de tribunal regional care judecă pe țigani și ia hotărîri în multe împrejurări de importanță pentru dânșii.

Una dintre campioanele moderne ale "romilor" în România este d-ra Florica Constantinescu, studentă, care vorbește "romani", adică o țigănească perfectă. Ea face propagandă și cheamă la deșteptare, în special pe *romnia*, adică pe femeile țigance. Are intenția să inființeze și o grădiniță de copii. Am văzut-o în mijlocul unor țigănuși sdrențuiți, cărora le împreuna mâinile spre rugăciune și se căznea să-i învețe "Tatăl Nostru".

– "Dar văd și copii albi" – am observat.

– "Da … Românii uneori își părăsesc copiii … E ciudat!" – spuse d-ra Constantinescu. "Țiganii nu-și dăruiesc niciodată copiii. De altfel nici un român nu ar primi să crească un pui de țigan. Aici într-adevăr sunt și copii de români, părăsiți de părinții lor … Viața tuturor acestor părăsiți e foarte grea: am simțit-o și eu! – ne spune d-ra Constantinescu – o cunosc nu din auzite … am trăit-o …

"Mama pleacă de obicei la muncă, sau după treburile ei, ca să poată aduce seara pâine … Iar copiii cresc cum dă Dumnezeu pe lângă garduri, prin gunoaie sau între câinii din curtea modestelor locuințe ale romilor. Țiganii iubesc foarte mult câinii și copiii …

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Cât de sărac să fie țiganul, nu se sperie de numărul câinilor și al copiilor din vatra lui. Totuși cred că pentru copii trebuie făcut ceva mai mult decât pentru câini … Cred că e absolut necesar să se întemeieze grădinițe cât de modeste, care să fie adăposturi pentru copiii mamelor muncitoare ce pleacă la lucru …" […].

∵

The enigmatic people
Who are the Gypsies, where do they come from and what habits do they have?

[…] Women in "The Roma" Association.

As we can see, women participate actively in the modern processes of the consolidation of the Roma. Both Father Șerboianu and Mr. Lăzurică, as they have told me, accept that they will have equal rights with men. Educated women will enter the Council of Elders, presided by the vatafi [leaders], a council which, according to the Roma traditions, is a kind of regional tribunal, which judges the Gypsies and makes judgments in many circumstances of importance to them.

Ms. Florica Constantinescu, a student who speaks Romani language perfectly, is a modern "champion" of the Roma in Romania. She makes propaganda and calls especially the *romnia*, the Roma women, to a re-awakening. She is also planning to establish a kindergarten [1]. I saw her among the ragged Gypsy women while she tried to teach them the prayer 'Our Father'.

– "I see here some white children too" – I have noticed.

– "Yes, you are right. The Romanians sometimes abandon their children … It's strange!" – Ms. Constantinescu tells. "The Gypsies would never leave children. In fact, no Romanian would ever raise a Gypsy child. Indeed, here we also have some Romanian children here, abandoned by their parents … [20]. The life of all of these lost children is very hard. I felt it too! Ms. Constantinescu tells. I say it not from what I have heard … It is my own experience …

"The mother goes to her job or where she needs to go, to be able to bring a piece of bread in the evening … And children grow up as God allows, near fences, in some junkyard or among dogs in the modest courtyards of the Roma. Gypsies love very much dogs and children … No matter how poor a Gypsy is, he never would be afraid of the number of dogs and children near his fireplace … However, I think that children need more care than dogs … I believe that a kindergarten is absolutely needed; it will become a place where working women would leave their children …" […].

Notes

1. This is a short extract of an extensive article. Its author is Alexandru F. Mihail, a Romanian journalist, a loyal insider of the Roma movement: participant at the Congress of Roma (which was held in Bucharest city on the 8th of October 1933), being also elected as honorary member of the General Union of Romanian Roma.

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Source: Mihail, A. F. (1933c). Poporul enigmatic. Cine sunt țiganii, de unde vin și ce obiceiuri au? *Realitatea Ilustrată*, An. 7, No. 351, 1933, October 19, pp. 21-24.
Prepared for publication by Ion Duminica.

Comments

Another important example of the existence of Roma women activists during the interwar period. The article is illustrated with her photograph and inscription: "Miss Florica Constantinescu, the student, one of the highlighted agitators of the 'Roma' movement".

Ion Duminica

6.10 Poems & Songs

6.10.1 *To the Roma*

Către romi	To the Roma [1]
I. Frați romi din scumpa Românie,	I. Romani brothers from our beloved Romania,
Trăim pe acest pământ de mii de ani,	We have lived on this land for thousands of years,
Și ne-am făcut sublima datorie	And we have done our sublime duty
Apărând glia noastră de dușman.	Defending our home from its enemies.
II. Am mers cu toții la răsboi	II. We all went to war
Și am luptat cu disperare	And fought desperately
Oprind cu forțele din noi	Stopping with our own forces
Călcarea sfintelor hotare.	The transgression of our holy borders.
III. Din lupte mulți n-au mai venit	III. From battles many have not come.
Dar au murit cu bărbăție	But they died as men
Văzându-și visul împlinit	Seeing their dream come true
Adică:"Marea Românie".	That is, 'The Great Romania' [2].
IV. În România Mare cea mănoasă	IV. In Great Romania, the beautiful one
Azi toate drepturile avem	Today we have all the rights
Fiind asimilați în masa	Being assimilated in masses
D-un neam, cu care frați suntem.	Among a people with whom we are brothers.
V. Deși avem cu toți aceleași drepturi	V. Although we have all the same rights
In seamă noi nu am fost luați	We were not paid attention to
Fiind huliți ăn aste vremuri	Being laughed at in the past
Batjocoriți și desconsiderați.	Mocked and disdained.

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VI. Și pentru a îndrepta această stare
S-a înființat a noastre uniune
Având program de înălțare,
Emancipare și renume.

VI. And to make this state right
Our union has been established
Having a programme of growth
Emancipation and reputation.

VII. Și-acuma cei ce vreți respectu-n lume
Uniți să fiți și neîntârziat
Să vă înscrieți în Uniune
Apărând steagul cea fost ridicat.

And now those of you that want respect in the world
Unite together without delay
Join the Union
Defending the flag that was lifted.

Notes

1. A poem, written as a call for action and a manifestation of Roma love and sacrifice for their country.
2. The term 'Great Romania' refers to united Romania and the unification of Transylvania, Bessarabia, and Bukovina with the Romanian Kingdom in 1918.

Source: Dutan, V. (1938b). Către Romi. *Glasul Romilor*, An. 3, No. 9-10, 1938, April 21, p. 3.
Prepared for publication by Raluca Bianca Roman.

Comments

This poem constitutes one of the several examples that can be found within the Roma newspapers during interwar Romania, in which a call for unification is manifested and made explicit by its authors through the medium of poetry.

One of the central themes throughout these examples is, again, the loyalty Roma have demonstrated towards King and Country and the need to form a unified mass in order to achieve the social claims laid out by central organisations. As such, the above poem is a primary example of a case in which the contribution of Roma to the history of Romania is made explicit, and where Roma leaders highlight the long-term history of Roma in the country, focusing on their involvement in the fight for 'Great Romania' (the unification of Romanian principalities in 1918), and the sacrifices that Roma have made for their country. It also points to the 'assimilation' of Roma in Romania and the brotherhood that exists between compatriots.

The poem finally points to the fact that Roma have vastly been ignored until then and invites readers to unite and join the Union led by Gh Niculescu, the Association General Union of Roma in Romania. The call for joining the Union is made specifically in connection to the Association General Union of Roma in Romania (led by Niculescu), rather than the rival organisation at the time (namely, the General Association of Roma in Romania, led by Archimandrite Calinic I. Popp Șerboianu and G. A. Lăzurică). Thus, the poem is also a means of calling Roma to join this particular Union and can be seen as a means of highlighting the latter's legitimacy over other rival Roma organisations.

Raluca Bianca Roman

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6.10.2 *The March of the Roma*

Marșul romilor	The March of the Roma
Sosit-a ceasul desrobirei	The time for our emancipation has come
Și astăzi romi-s adunați	And today, Roma are unite
Sub steagul sfânt al mântuiri (bis)	Under the holy flag of salvation (bis)
Ce-n veci de el va fi legați!	To which they will forever be bound!
Refren: Credință Regelui jurăm	Refrain: We swear our loyalty to the King
Ca Țara să ne-o apărăm.	That we will defend our country.
Pe-ai noștri frați, părinți, surori.	Our brothers, parents, sisters.
De orice val asupritor,	From any conquering waves,
Cu toții mândrii noi să fim	We should all stand proud
Și pe strămoși să îi cinstim.	And our ancestors honour.
Sub scutul lui toți romii noștri,	Under its shield all of our Roma,
Legați prin sacru jurământ,	Bound by a sacred oath,
Napoi nici chiar în fața morți (bis).	Even before death they will not give up (bis).
Ei nu vor da pân la mormânt.	They will not give up until the grave.
Refren același.	The Refrain is the same.
Muzică și vers de N. Lenghescu.	Music and lyrics by N. Lenghescu.

Source: Lenghescu-Cley, N. (1940b). Marșul Romilor. *Glasul Romilor*, An. 6, No. 14, 1940, April [no day], p. 3.
Prepared for publication by Raluca Bianca Roman.

Comments

This is a prime example of a march song that showcases the pride Roma must take in their history, origin and ethnic belonging. Alongside this, and much like other Roma poems and songs published within the pages of this Roma periodical during the interwar period, the song clearly emphasises the loyalty and faithfulness Roma have pleaded to King and Country, as well as the fight that all Roma must undertake in their uniting under a common flag. Through this, the song may constitute perhaps one of the first examples of a Roma hymn, which brings together the notion of Roma solidarity with that of national loyalty.

Raluca Bianca Roman

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6.10.3 *Let's Sing Roma*

GHILABOS ĂL ROM GHILABOS	LET'S SING ROMA! LET'S SING!
GHILABOS ĂL ROM GHILABOS	Let's sing Roma! Let's sing!
ĂL ROM GHILABOS	Let's sing Roma!
GHILABOS	Let us sing
E DUMA LAȘI	The good word
E DUMA SICADI GOGHEAVALI	The word shown wise
E DUMA CATAR O CAM INCLEL	The word where the sun rises from
CATAR O MIȘTIMOS AVEL	Where the good comes from
ANDO VASDIMOS SOAVRĂNGO	From the uprising of all
ANDO GIUVINDIMOS AL MANUȘENGO	From the living of people
O VASDIMOS	The uprising
O GIUVINDIMOS	The living
ĂL CIORĂNGO	Of the poor
ĂL CIORĂ ĂL CIORĂNGO	Of the poorest of poor
ĂL ROM LA BUCHEACO	The Roma of work
MARDE	Have fought
TAI DUREARDE	And went far
ANDO PURANO VEACO	From the ancient age
PO DÁLGHIMOS	At longitude
PO BUHLIMOS	And latitude
LA PUVEACO	Of the Earth
PAL UȘT AMARE INCLEL	From our lips rises
HAI LULUGHIAL	And blooms
O ASAIMOS HAI E GHILI	The smile and the song
E GHILI I LAȘI	The good song
GHILABOAS ĂL ROM GHILABOAS	Let's sing Roma! Let's sing!
GHILABOAS	Let us sing
E DUMA BARI	The great word
E DUMA PARNI	The white word
E DUMA STALINOSCHI	The word of Stalin
STALINO CAI VAZDEAS	As Stalin lifted the burden
PAL DUME AMARE O PARIMOS	From our shoulders
DUREARDEA O ROIMOS	Took sobbing far
AMENDAR	From us
HAI COZLEAS	And wiped off
AMARO IACA ASFENDAR	The tears from our eyes

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VASDEAS O MARIMÓS	Let's raise a fight
E BOC O NANGHIMÓS	against the hunger, the bareness
HAI AMENGĂ PENDEA	And he did tell us
CADEA	This
I TUME MANUȘ SAN	You all are also human
ANDOA NASULIMOS HASTRAILEAN	By the evil delayed
MAREL E SÂVRI	The hammer beats
MAREL O GHI	The heartbeats
PRALICANI LA SÂVREAEA	Fraternally with the hammer
MAREL E SÂVRI	The hammer beats
PRALICANI LA ȘINDEALEAEA	Fraternally with the sickle
E SÂVRI TAI ȘINDEALI	The hammer and the sickle
CON ȘINDEAI CEAR I CĂRCHI	Which has cut the bitter grass
HANCASTI AVER LAȘI	Planted another good
GHILABOAS ĂL ROM GHILABOAS	Let's sing Roma! Let's sing!
GHILABOAS	Let us sing
ACANA ANDA AMENDE	Now for us
CĂBUT GHILABADEAM ANDA VRENDE	How much did we sing for others
ANDO MIȘTIMOS AVRENGO	For the good of others
ANDO MIȘTIMOS LE HULAENGO	For the good of the masters
LE RANGO, LE BARENGO, LE TAGARENGO.	The lords, the grandees, the kings
GHILABAL ĂL ROM GHILABAL	Sing Roma! Do sing!
AMARO ȚĂRDII GHILABAL	About our suffering sing
PE AMARE CIORDAI LE BAȘALDENGO	About our deprived Musicians
PE AMARE CIORDAI LEO GHESCĂ	About our stolen days
PE ĂL CIORDAI LEO GHESCĂ	About all stolen days
SOAVRA MANUȘENGO	From all people
LA BUCHIACO POA BUHLIMOS	Of work at latitude
POA DĂLGHIMOS	At longitude
LA PUVEACO	Of the Earth
GHILABOAS ĂL ROM GHILABOAS	Let's sing Roma! Let's sing!
GHILABOAS	Let us sing [1]

Notes

1. It is worth noting that in the original manuscript some words or letters had been crossed out and/or replaced, which shows that the text had undergone an editing process, either by the author or by the editor. In the above text, the edited version is given.

Source: AN Dolj, Fondul C. S. Nicolăescu-Plopsor.
Prepared for publication by Raluca Bianca Roman.
Translated from Romani language by Viktor Shapoval.

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Comments

This poem was discovered in the Constantin S. Nicolăescu-Plopșor fund of the National Archives, Dolj County, Romania. Neither the date nor the authorship of the poem is clearly stated. Most probably the author of the poem is C. S. Nicolăescu-Plopșor himself, given that the author's corrections are visible in the manuscript and the fond itself contains also a rejection letter addressed to him for the same poem, dated June 5, 1952, from the newspaper Viața Românească (Romanian Life). While the circumstances of the production and dissemination of this poem remain uncertain it is very likely it was written in Interwar time and a Romanian translation was offered for publication in 1952 when praising of Stalin became possible. The poem is an incredibly important source material as it focused on the rise of the Roma. Stalin is praised for granting the Roma dignity telling them "you are also human" and with whom hope is linked that he will "lift the burden from our shoulders" and will show the way to "a fight against the hunger, the bareness".

Raluca Bianca Roman

This is an extraordinary song, which presents a modernist, concise poetry with lack of a punctuation, and written in capital letters. At the same time, it can be seen as a prayer filled with biblical imagery.

Viktor Shapoval

Additional Comments

The development of the Roma civic emancipation movement in Romania during the interwar period has an impressive range and scope that cannot be compared to that of any other country in the region of Central, South-Eastern and Eastern Europe. The only other such case, not in scale but according to the results obtained, is that of the USSR, but there is a very significant difference there compared to Romania. Behind the movement for Roma civic emancipation in the USSR was the constant support of the powerful Soviet state, which de facto accomplished (or in some cases refused to accomplish), through its institutions, the ideas generated by the Gypsy activists. However, the situation is not quite the same in Romania, and despite repeated attempts by Roma activists to co-operate with various leading political parties, in the end, the Romanian state, without being hostile to the Roma movement as a whole, remained quite restrained to the constant calls of its activists to pursue an effective policy to address the many problems faced by Gypsies in the country.

An explanation for the situation in Romania can be found in terms of the high number of Roma living in the country. Romania was an undisputed champion in this regard during the interwar period and continues to be so today. We do not need to enter into the discussion concerning the controversy of demographic data obtained through statistical methodology, to argue that Romania had, and continues to have, the biggest number of Roma (both in absolute values and as a relative share) in Europe (which means also in the world). But there is also something else that is very important here. During the interwar period, the Roma community in Romania (unlike in other countries in the entire region)

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also appears to have had its elite, whose representatives managed to obtain a relatively good education and to acquire good (sometimes even impressive) public positions. As an example in this regard, we can point to Constantin S. Nicolăescu-Plopșor (1900-1968). He is not only a well-known Romanian historian, archeologist, physical anthropologist, ethnographer and folklorist, but he is also known as a children's writer. Furthermore, he was for many years the director of the Museum of Oltenia in the city of Craiova and, at the end of his life, he was even elected as a member of the Romanian Academy of Sciences (a case without a comparable precedent in the history of the Roma).

From the interwar period onwards, there have been endless disputes between Roma activists with mutual accusations of the others not being of Roma origin. In fact, these types of accusations concerning a non-Roma origin have been part and parcel of the struggle for supremacy and leadership in the Roma civic movement, and they are not a unique phenomenon in the history of Roma activism. As of today, these allegations would be very difficult to prove or disprove although for Archimandrite Calinic I. Popp Șerboianu these allegations, in particular, they seem to be justified. His entire life, his family history, his stays in different countries (USA, France, Albania), his tumultuous and multifaceted public activity, his commitment to causes that Romanian society regarded as a manifestation of extravagance (at best) – such as his ideas concerning cremation, etc. (for more, see Rotar, 2014, pp. 513-528) – gave, in one way or another, grounds for doubts concerning his Roma origin. In the end, these aspects do not matter, because these individuals act as activists of the Roma civic emancipation movement, i.e. in the function of leaders of the Roma community. There are many examples in world history where leading figures in national history are from another ethnic origin, and this is considered normal. Therefore, there is no reason to approach the history of the Roma differently and to exclude the activists about whose origin doubts were expressed.

The Near East Magazine from 12 June 1913, under a title *Gipsy bands in Roumania*, reported that in the city of Piatra Neamț a statue of Mihail Kogălniceanu, a nineteenth-century statesman, lawyer, historian and publicist, whose writings were influential in bringing an end to Gypsy slavery in the Principalities of Wallachia and Moldavia, was unveiled. The magazine gave the following description of Gypsies giving honour to Kogălniceanu:

> Two days after the unveiling ceremony a vast concourse of gipsies arrived at Piatra Neamtz and proceeded to the monument. Before the statue they placed a wreath of oak leaves and wild flowers, and then, to the weird accompaniment of a gipsy band, the whole party joined in a national dance round the statue of their liberator. (The Near East, 1913, p. 157).

This description is a clear journalistic mystification to attract readers through the exoticisation of a real event (the erecting of a statue in honour of Mihail Kogălniceanu) which finds no documentary evidence in Romania's historical sources. Without any verification, this notice was retold in the *Journal of the Gypsy Lore Society* (Scott Macfie, 1926, p. 192) and entered the Roma national historical narrative as one of the first public manifestations of Roma activism (Hancock, 2002, pp. 114-115).

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An especially important place in the creation of a Roma historical narrative have the attempts to trace the beginning of international Roma activism (or the emergence of the concept of Roma 'nation') in the manifestations of Gypsy/Roma activism in Romania during that time. A typical example in this regard are the allegations, which are not supported by any quotation of historical sources, that delegates from nine countries must have gathered in Bucharest at an international congress with the motto 'The United Gypsies of Europe' where they allegedly decided to set up Roma organisations in each country; and "in order to achieve an efficient coordination of the Roma from different states, they decided to set up a permanent commission composed of 30 members to prepare a second congress in Paris or elsewhere"(Puxon, 1979, pp. 291-292). There is no historical evidence of an international Roma congress, and there is no reason to believe that the Congress of the General Union of Roma in Romania, held on October 8, 1933, in Bucharest, (see the documents published in this chapter; cf. also Matei, 2020, pp. 305-315) was an international one. That is why references to an 'international congress' in academic text sound confusing: for example, "the Bucharest Congress, if [sic! – authors note] proven to be taken place, would be the first of its [international] kind" (Klímová-Alexander, 2005a, p. 195). History deals with real facts, confirmed by respective historical sources; alternative history is an attractive approach but can hardly be perceived as an academic discipline – rather, it is a completely different genre.

In the particular case of the 1933 Bucharest Congress organised by the General Union of Roma in Romania, the fact that its organisers have repeatedly stated in the press that Roma representatives from other countries will participate in it is not sufficient reason to consider this congress an international one. As there is no confirmation of such a presence of delegates from abroad, either in the congress' documentation or in the press coverages, there is no reason to interpret such presence as a real historical fact. Similarly, the Statute of the General Union of Roma in Romania, adopted at this congress, expressly states that "the Union flag is made up of the [Romanian] national colours with the coat of arms of the country, bearing in each corner a distinctive sign, representing: a violin, an anvil, a compass and a trowel with a hammer, signs of the art and professions of Roma in Romania", and this statute has already been published (Haley, 1934, p. 185). As can be seen from a photograph (Realitatea Ilustrată, 1935b, p. 10), the flag in front of which the new president of the General Union of Roma from Romania takes a solemn oath, is as decribed in the Statute. There are no other than nation-building grounds to claim that the colours of the modern International Roma flag (blue and green) were adopted by the Congress in 1933 (Hancock, 2002, p. 120). The only 'evidence' we could find for this claim was Grattan Puxon's description of the First Romani Congress that was conducted in 1971. Here, he quotes a statement made almost half a century after the event itself by a Roma leader who originated from Slovakia: "Dr. [Jan] Cibula adds his authority. It was, he says, such a flag that had been recognised by the pre-war Bucharest congress." (Puxon, 2019). However, the lack of any real historical evidence does not prevent the assertion that the blue and green flag, which is a symbol of the international Roma movement, was

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adopted at the Congress in Bucharest in 1933. This contention also became one of the fundamental mythologems in modern Roma national historical narrative.

The Roma activists in Romania (and especially Gheorghe A. Lazărescu-Lăzurică) have repeatedly made public statements in the press that they maintain a permanent relationship with Roma from other countries, that Roma representatives from abroad are coming, that their newspapers will publish materials on the Roma in Poland, Russia, Czechoslovakia, Yugoslavia and Switzerland, and even that they will participate in the International Roma Congress to be held in France. In this context, it becomes clear why the above-cited idea of "our own Palestine" (i.e. of own Roma state) has no further development in the activities of Roma organisations. In practice, everything was just public statements, and there is no evidence that such events and acts did in fact happen. This has shown that the play of the Roma activists in Romania by demonstrating imaginary international support for their activities in Romanian society was intended primarily for 'internal use'. In other words, in this case, there is an attempt to extract social capital from the inferiority complexes towards Europe that remain dominant in the countries of the whole region, and which seek internal public legitimacy by obtaining some appreciation from abroad. To put it inbrackets, this syndrome continues to dominate today. That is why one can see English language slogans at the forefront of every public event, and the biggest success is when the event is broadcast on CNN.

The main and most important goal of the whole Roma civic emancipation movement in Romania, as well as in other countries of the whole region, is above all the equal integration within the Romanian civic nation, and using the imaginary international dimensions of this process is only one of the methods to achieve success in this regard. That is why it is so often repeated in the materials of existing organisations (starting with A Manifesto of the Gypsies from 1919 and subsequent decisions of the local Gypsy assemblies) that Roma are Romanian citizens, that they are loyal to the Romanian state, serve in the Romanian army, etc. Moreover, when the press announced that Gypsies from many European countries would be present at the elections of a "Gypsy King" in Poland in 1937 (see Chapter 9), the General Secretariat of the General Union of Roma in Romania adopted a formal unambiguous decision at a special meeting, underlying that the Union will have no part in the Gypsy Polish King elections as they had nothing to do with Gypsies in other countries, and Romanian Roma's sole devotion and loyalty was only to the Romanian Crown (Glasul Romilor, 1937c, p. 4), i.e. in cases where a choice was required, civic national identity proved to be paramount and community ethnic identity remained in the background. Advancing in this direction, the leading Roma activists reach even an active cooperation with the extreme nationalist Romanian political parties and movements (Matei, 2011b, pp. 15-40). This explains the curiosity of the heading in one issue of the Roma newspaper *Timpul* decorated with swastikas (Timpul, An. 4, No.No. 67-68,). A swastika was the symbol of the National Christian Party, led by Octavian Goga, and the good relationships with this Party have been mentioned repeatedly in the published material. That is why in 1937, on the pages of the *Special edition for the Roma from Romania* the newspaper *Ţara Noastra*, the official of National Christian Party, Roma

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leaders appealed: "Gather all under his flag that for us Roma is the only salvation" (cf. Matei, 2011b, p. 33).

Despite the alliances of Roma activists with leading political forces, a few years later, during the Second World War, they were not afraid to stand up for their brethren. In November 1942, Gheorghe Niculescu, on behalf of the Asociația Românilor din România (Association of the Roma in Romania), sent a petition to King Mihai I asking the King to protect these Roma ('nomads' and sedentary with 'criminal records'), who were deported to Transnistria (ANIC, fond. Direcția Generală a Poliției, dos. 191, f. 12-14).

The pursuit of Roma integration in Romanian social realities, however, does not mean that Roma activists left behind the issue of the need to preserve and develop Roma ethnicity within its new social dimensions. On the contrary, as one can see, e.g. from the published text of Dr. Constantin S. Nicolăescu-Plopșor, it was explicitly emphasised that Roma strive for their ethnic church, strive to have their own school (with textbooks in their native language), their own museum, underlining the need of collecting and publishing Roma folklore, etc. In practice, almost all fundamental points in the creation of modern nations are present (i.e. the creation of own national institutions), with the exception of the ultimate goal to create their own state.

It is noteworthy that many activists and organisations include the collection and publication of Gypsy/Roma folklore as an important part of their program activities. In 1934, Marin I. Simion, calling himself 'Roma Voivod' (ie Roma leader) from Oltenia, organised the publication, on behalf of *Asociaţia Ţiganilor din Oltenia* (Association of the Gypsies of Oltenia), of the *O Rom Library* (see Timpul, 1934c, p. 2). In the same year, under the editorship of Constantin S. Nicolăescu-Plopșor (1934ab), two bilingual volumes (in Romani and Romanian languages) were published: *Ghilea Romane* (Roma Songs) and *Paramisea Romane* (Roma Fairy Tales). This interest in folklore can be explained by the general context of emerging national ideologies throughout the region, where folklore, in Johann Gottfried Herder's sense, is considered one of the most striking manifestations of the 'National Spirit' (Volksgeist). The Roma activists were aware of the existing dangers of the community's social integration process to lead to losing its language and customs; to complete ethnic assimilation. That is why they paid so much attention to those Roma who lost their Romani language and among whom they saw their future elite. It was exactly these Roma who were urged not to abandon their ethnicity and to encourage their children to complete higher education, while the expectation directed to the more traditional communities, and especially the nomads, were lower (see Part 6.1.6.).

Among the visions of Roma activists in Romania, we can see something not found in other countries in the region (except for Poland – see Chapter 9). This is the appeal for the "establishment of county courts and of a Supreme Court to resolve the matters concerning marriage, divorce, funeral, and all kinds of crimes that would dishonour our nation and which will be judged by the Elders Council headed by the respective vătaf" (see Part 6.3.2.). It appears that along with calls for modernisation, and for the sedentarisation of nomads, some Roma activists envisaged the preservation and further development of traditional potestary organisations, called most often Romani Kris, and

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commonly found among Roma nomads (Marushiakova & Popov, 2007, pp. 67-101). In this way, the incorporatio of Roma ethnocultural traditions into modern Roma civic organisations was promoted (how successful the realisation of this idea was and even whether in principle it was even possible are separate issues).

In general, Roma activists recognised the intrinsic heterogeneity of their community and accordingly proposed a differentiated approach (something which does not always occur in the processes of Roma civic emancipation) shaped according to its segments, distinguished both by the internal structure of the community and from the new social realities. In this plan, particularly important for the Roma activists was the issue of the nomadic way of life of large parts of the Gypsies in Romania at that time. In general, concerning nomads, Roma activists were unanimous in their position (which they expressed repeatedly): they should be sedentarised through special measures of the Romanian state, which must create the appropriate conditions for this to happen. Even special steps on way to sedentarisation were proposed, such as creating ambulatory schools (see Part 6.3.2.), schools on wheels for nomads (see Part 6.3.5), and the proper locations for the settlements of nomads were proposed to be "at the periphery or through the formation of suburban communes near cities, fairs and urban communities, where they would have the opportunity to sell their work weekly" (Glasul Romilor, 1940a, p. 2).

Seen from today's point of view, taking into account the results of the mass deportation of Gypsies (nomads in their majority) to Transnistria during the Second World War, of special interest are the proposals from Roma activists: "In the labour colonies, where most of them are likely to be sent, it would be desirable for this broader re-education based on broader and more humane understandings" (Ibid.).

During the interwar period, there has also been quite a serious debate in Romania about what the public name of the community should be – 'Gypsies' or 'Roma'. This debate is still relevant today in many countries (and especially in Romania itself)). Then, it was a debate among the Gypsy/Roma activists, while Romanian society as a whole remained rather indifferent and did not express a clear position on the issue. However, in the 1930s a certain breakthrough in this direction in the public space was found in some media. For example, the popular journal *Realitatea Ilustrată* used both designations equally and with the same meaning (although the latter is used more rarely).

The movement for Roma civic emancipation in Romania is characterised by strained relations, public debates and even scandals between individual leaders, which distinguished it from the situation in other countries in Central, South-Eastern and Eastern Europe, where such relations, where they existed, remained largely hidden within narrow, internal frames, and in general were unknown in the public domain. It should be emphasised that these strained relations are not due to fundamental differences in their visions regarding Roma civic emancipation (in this respect, there is a rather unity between them), but to a large extent a result of the individual ambitions of the individual leaders.

Elena Marushiakova and Vesselin Popov

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CHAPTER 7

Hungary

7.1 The Hungarian Gypsy Musician's National Association

7.1.1 *The Hungarian Gypsy Musician's National Association Modified Statute*

Magyar Cigányzenészek Országos Egyesülete módosított alapszabályai.
1923. augusztus 14.

I. Fejezet.

1.§. Az egyesület hivatalos címe: Magyar Cigányzenészek Országos Egyesülete. A pecsét körirata ugyanez. Székhelye Budapest.
2.§. Az egyesület hirdetményeit a leendő saját hivatalos lapban fogja közölni.
3.§. Az egyesület hivatalos nyelve: magyar.

II. Fejezet.

4.§. Az egyesület céljai:
a) b) hogy tagjainak anyagi, erkölcsi, szellemi érdekeit előmozdítsa, keresztény elvek szerint, törvényes alapon megvédelmezze. A tagoknak kölcsönös támogatása által jobb munkaviszonyok elérésére a megszerzett jogok megvédelmezése hazafias és keresztény elvi alapon, politikai és vallási viták kizárásával.
c) Korlátozza a magyar királyi Belügyminisztérium támogatásával a hivatatlanok, valamint a külföldről bejövő zenészeknek Magyarországon való működését,
d) Terjessze és fejlessze a magyar cigányzenész művészetet.
e) Rendes tagjai részére az egyesület anyagi helyzetéhez mérten később meghatározandó alapszabályokban fektetett nyugdíjalapot létesítsen, baleset és beteg esetére pedig szintén később közgyűlés által meghatározandó mértékben anyagi támogatást nyújtson. A temetést a rendes tagok és törvényes hozzátartozóinak az egyesület nyújt az alapszabályok értelmében.

III. Fejezet.

5.§. Eszközök: Ezen célok elérésére az Egyesület a következő eszközöket használja:
a) Közvetíti azt, hogy rendes tagjaik képességükhöz képest megfelelő álláshoz juthassanak s e célból állásközvetítő irodát tart fenn.
b) c) Nyugdíjalap.
d) Ünnepek és hangversenyek rendezése b) c) alatt felsorolt alap javára.
e) A helyi csoportok szervezése.

IV. Fejezet.

6.§. a) Magyarország területén csak olyan magyar cigányzenész működhet, aki rendes tagja az egyesületnek.
b) Az egyesület tagjai: tiszteletbeli, [...] választó és nem választható. Az egyesület által rendezendő hangversenyen tiszteletjegyet kap. Mindaddig tagja marad az egyesületnek,

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míg kilépését a rendes tagok részére megszabott határidőben írásban be nem jelenti és amíg az egyesület céljaival ellenkezésbe nem jut. […]

10.§. Rendes tag lehet minden feddhetetlen előéletű, hivatásos képzett magyar cigányzenész, aki életének 16-ik évét már betöltötte és akit a választmány a rendes tagok sorába felvesz. A rendes tag az egyesületnek közgyűlésein a szólás és szavazás jogával bír, választó és választható, indítványokat tehet, ha indítványát 8 nappal a közgyűlés előtt az elnökséghez írásban beadja. Joga van díjmentesen igénybe venni az egyesület állásközvetítő intézményét, az alapszabályokban meghatározott feltételek mellett igényt tarthat segélyre. Részesévé válik mindazon jogoknak, melyeket az egyesület tagjai számára alapszabályszerűen megszerez. Joga van oly esetben, midőn rendes tagságából kifolyólag jogaiban megsértve érzi magát, az egyesület választmányánál jogorvoslást keresni és ennek különösnek tartott határozatait a közgyűléshez fellebbezni. 30 rendes tagnak a tárgy megjelölése mellett beadott írásbeli kérelmére köteles az elnök rendkívüli közgyűlést egybehívni. Szerződésből keletkező jogsérelem esetén jogosult a tag a választmány határozata alapján az egyesület ingyenes jogsegélyét igénybe venni, ez a jog azonban csak kéthavi tagság után igényelhető 65 évet betöltött cigányzenész a rendes tagok sorába nem vehető fel.

11.§. Örökös tag az, aki az egyesületnek 30 éven át, megszakítás nélkül rendes tagja, vagy akit a közgyűlés a választmány javaslatára a rendes tagok sorából annak felvesz. Az örökös tag a tagsági díjak fizetése alól fel van mentve, azonban tagsági jogait élvezi. Munkaképtelen és állásnélküli magyar cigányzenészt, ha legalább 10 év óta egyesületi tag, a közgyűlés bizonyos időre, vagy egyszer s mindenkorra a fizetés alól felmenthet.

VI. Fejezet.

12.§. Rendes tag köteles az egyesület alapszabályait és az alapszabályokkal nem ellenkező határozatát pontosan betartani és az alábbi illetékeket pontosan befizetni.

a) Beíratási díj fejében egyszer s mindenkorra 1000 K.

b) Tagsági díj fejében minden hó l-én előzetesen 1000 K.

A rendes tag oly magatartást tartozik tanúsítani, hogy becsületére váljék szakmájának és az egyesület erkölcsi és anyagi céljaival ellenkezésbe ne jusson. A rendes tag, ha hosszabb ideig tartó katonai szolgálatra köteles bevonulni, annak tartama alatt az egyesület tagja marad ugyan, de tagdíj és más illeték fizetése alól felmentetik. Ugyanígy az egyesülettel szemben fennálló jogai is felfüggesztetnek. Ha azonban fizetési kötelezettségének katonai szolgálata alatt is eleget tesz, tagsági jogainak élvezetében marad.

13.§. A tagsági díjak és illetékeket az egyesület pénztárnokánál kell fizetni. Joga van az egyesületnek arra, hogy a hátralékos tagdíjakat és egyéb hátralékokat az általa kiállított hivatalos kimutatás alapján a tag munkaadójától, amennyiben a tag erre felhatalmazást ad és munkaadó hozzájárul, közvetlenül bekövetelhesse. Pontatlan kifizetés esetén jogában van az egyesületnek az, hogy a lejárt összegeket a késedelmes tagtól bírói úton is behajtsa. Mindennemű per esetére a tagok alávetik magukat az egyesület által szabadon választható királyi Járásbíróság illetékességének és sommás eljárásának.

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VII. Fejezet.

A tagság megszűnése

14.§. A tagság megszűnik, ha a tag: a) meghal, b) kilép, c) kizáratik.

A rendes tag csak a naptári év végével léphet ki, ha ebbeli szándékát legkésőbb ugyanezen év október hó 1-ig az egyesület elnökségénél írásban bejelenti. Az esetben, ha a tag külföldre kap szerződést és így köteles az egyesületi kötelezettségének eleget tenni és kiegyenlítése után bármikor egyesületi igazolvánnyal igazolhassa magát, bármikor a külföldi zenész szövetségeknél. Joga van a választmánynak azt a tagot, aki az egyesület alapszabályai ellen súlyosan vét, vagy aki a 12. pontban körülírt erkölcsi és anyagi kötelességeit nem teljesíti, különösen pedig aki a tagdíjjal és egyéb fizetési kötelezettségeivel több mint három havi hátralékban van, kizárni. A kizárási határozat az egyesület hivatalos újságjában közlendő és ellene a tag az értesítés kézhezvételéhez számított 15 napon belül a közgyűléshez fellebbezhet. A kizárás napjáig lejárt tagdíjakat a kizárt tag megfizetni köteles.

VIII. Fejezet.

Nyugdíjalap. Temetkezési segély

15.§. Az egyesület tagjai részére saját hatáskörében teljesen különálló nyugdíjalapot tart fenn, ezen alap javára adja az egyesület azt, ami a pártoló tagdíjakból, valamint az adományok, hangversenyek és ünnepélyek tiszta jövedelméből befolyik. A nyugdíjalapot az egyesület 5 évi működése után fogja részletesen kidolgozni, vagyis 1925-ben. Addig is a nyugdíjalap összegéről közgyűlésen pontosan elszámolással tartozik a vezetőség. A rendes tag vagy törvényes hozzátartozói elhalálozása esetén az egyesület egy évi tagság után köteles eltemettetéséről gondoskodni. Az egyesületnek joga van az esetben, ha a kiutalt temetkezési és betegsegélyek azon évben befolyt járulékok 75 %-át meghaladja, úgy a következő közgyűlésen a járulékokat megfelelően felemelni. Az az egyesületi tag, aki tagdíjaival vagy egyéb fizetési kötelezettségeivel több mint három havi hátralékban van, az egyesület semmi kedvezményére igényt nem tarthat. Az esetben, ha a tag betegsége miatt mulasztotta el a tagdíjainak vagy egyéb járulékainak befizetését és beigazolható, hogy a befizetéseket csak betegsége tartalma alatt nem fizette, joga van a választmánynak a hátralékok levonása mellett a temetkezési segélyt kiutalni.

IX. Fejezet.

Az egyesület szervezete

16.§. Az egyesület ügyeit az elnökség és a választmány intézi, melyet a közgyűlés évről-évre választ és amely a következő tagokból áll: egy elnök, két jegyző, két ellenőr, két számvizsgáló, tizennégy rendes választmányi tag és hat póttag. Az elnökségbe és a választmányba csak oly tagok választhatók, akik állandóan Budapesten laknak.

17.§. A tisztviselők hatásköre:

Az elnök a választmánnyal együtt vezeti az egyesület összes ügyeit, képviseli az egyesületet a hatóságokkal és a külvilággal szemben. Elnököl a választmányi üléseken és közgyűléseken, őrködik a tárgyalási rend felett, a szólásra jelentkezőknek a szót megadja,

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vagy indokolatlant megtagadja, attól, aki a tárgyalási rendet sérti, a szót megvonhatja. A pénztárt bármikor megvizsgálhatja, a tisztviselők működését ellenőrzi, 30 tag írásbeli indokolt kérésére rendkívüli közgyűlést hív egybe, ha pedig ezt indokolatlannak vagy szükségtelennek tartja, a kérelem észrevételével a választmány elé terjeszti és ennek határozata értelmében jár el.

A választmány határozata értelmében jogosult az egyesület pénztára terhére utalványozni, sürgős szükség esetén 20000 koronáig. Választmányi határozat nélkül utalványozhat, de köteles ezt a választmánynak legközelebbi ülésén bejelenteni. […]
a) Az alelnökök az elnök akadályoztatása esetén mindenben helyettesítik az elnököt. Nincsen azonban jogosítva pénzt utalványozni.
b) A titkár vezeti az egyesület ügykezelését és irodáját […]
c) A pénztáros kezeli az egyesület pénztárát, beszedi a tagdíjakat és egyéb bevételeket.–Rendes könyveket vezet az egyesület bevételeiről és kiadásairól […] Fizetéseket az egyesület pénztára terhére csak szabályszerű utalványozás alapján eszközölhet éspedig a költségelőirányzatban előre megállapított tételeken kívül csak a választmány határozata alapján, vagy az elnök által saját hatáskörében utalványozhat fizetéseket, illetve a beküldött iratok alapján a titkár által igazolt temetkezési és betegsegélyezési eseteket.
d) Az ellenőrök ellenőrzik a pénztár kezelését. Bármikor megvizsgálhatják a pénztárkönyvet és a pénztárkészletet, de havonként legalább egyszeri vizsgálatra kötelesek. […]

18.§. Az egyesület választmánya:

Az elnöksége, a tisztikar és a választmányi tagok összességéből áll, amelyek szavazati joggal bírnak. Vezeti az egyesület összes ügyeit, utalványozza alapszabály szerint a pénz kiadásokat, határoz a jelentkező tagok felvétele felett, joga van a felvétel előtt a felvételt kérő egyén erkölcsi megbízhatóságát vizsgálat tárgyává tenni. […]

19.§. A közgyűlés. Az egyesület közgyűlései: 1. rendes. 2. rendkívüliek.

Az egyesület minden év nagyhetében közgyűlést tart, melyet az elnök utasításához képest a titkár hív egybe és az erre vonatkozó hirdetményt 8 nappal előbb a hivatalos újságban közzétetetni. A közgyűlés határozatképességéhez általában 1/3-ad részének jelenléte szükséges. Az alapszabályok módosítása, az egyesület feloszlása és a vagyon hovafordítása tárgyában összehívott közgyűlésnek határozatképességéhez azonban a tagok 2/3-ad jelenléte […] A közgyűlés állapítja meg a választmány javaslatára az egyesület évi költségvetését és adja meg a számvizsgálók jelentése alapján a vezetőségnek a felmentést. […] Rendkívüli közgyűlést egybehívni az elnök van jogosítva, vagy a saját kezdeményezésére, vagy a választmány indítványára, vagy pedig 30 tag írásbeli indokolt kérelmére. A rendes közgyűlés határozatképességét, valamint a hatáskört megállapító szabályok a rendkívüli közgyűlésre is alkalmazandók.

A szavazás

20.§. Szavazni csak személyesen lehet. A közgyűlésen szavazó lapokkal titkosan szavaznak. E célból az elnök egy vagy több szavazatszedő bizottságot küld ki. A választmány ülésein a szavazás nyilvános. Négy szavazó kérelmére azonban titkos szavazás rendelendő el.

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X. Fejezet.

21.§. Általános határozatok:

a) Az egyesület levelezéseit a titkár írja alá. Az egyesület anyagi érdekeit érintő utalványok vagy átiratok az elnök által is aláírandók. A közgyűlés és a választmányi ülések jegyzőkönyveit az elnök, a titkár és két hitelesítő tag írja alá.

b) Minden pénzösszeg – kivéve a folyó kiadások fedezésére szükséges forgalmi tőkét, – mely 120000 K-nál nagyobb nem lehet, gyümölcsöztetőleg helyezendő el.

c) Az egyesületi ügyek intézése körül felmerülő összes kiadások az egyesület pénztárából folyósíttatnak.

d) Minden tag köteles lakása pontos címét és annak megváltoztatását az egyesület irodájának azonnal bejelenteni.

22.§. Az egyesület feloszlatását csak a belügyminiszter mondhatja ki. Amennyiben az egyesület a nemzeti és keresztény alapról letérne. Ha az egyesület feloszlik, vagyona a székesfőváros tanácsának adandó át, hogy az gyümölcsözőleg kezelje és az esetben, ha egy hasonló keresztény magyar cigányzenészek egyesülete alakul, akkor ezen új egyesületnek adja ki abból a célból, hogy ezen összeget a magyar cigányzenészek anyagi és erkölcsi céljainak előmozdítására használja, megjegyezvén, hogy ez az új egyesület is köteles ugyanezt az intézkedést alapszabályaiban felvenni. Ha azonban 15 éven belül ily irányú egyesület nem alakul, úgy a székesfőváros tanácsa a meglevő vagyonból zenészalapítványt létesítsen és ennek kamataiból évente minél több munkaképtelen magyar cigányzenész segélyben részesüljön.

A helyi csoportok

23.§. A választmány azokon a helyeken, ahol legalább 30 tag van, helyi csoportot alakít. A helyi csoport külön választ vezetőséget, mely 9 tag mellett áll: 1 elnök, 1 alelnök, 1 titkár, 1 pénztáros, 1 jegyző, 1 ellenőr, 3 választmányi tag és 2 póttag. A helyi csoport vezetősége a tagok számaránya szerint növekszik. A tisztikar azonban 15 tagnál többől nem állhat. Ha 30 tagnál kevesebb van, egy megbízottat választanak, hogy a központtal az érintkezést fenntartsa és a tagok dolgait intézze.

24.§. A helyi csoport ügyeit ennek vezetősége intézi, a központi választmány által elfogadott ügyrend értelmében. Ha valamely tisztviselő szabálytalanságot követ el, az elnök felfüggesztheti, esetleg újat választhat, tartozik ezt azonban a legközelebbi ülésen bejelenteni.

25.§. A helyi csoportok pénztárosai havonként kötelesek a központnak elszámolni a bevételekről és a kiadásokról. A számadást az ellenőrök átvizsgálják és ellenőrzik.

26.§. Központi választmánynak jogá- [...].

29.§. A helyi csoport tagdíjjövedelmük 80 %-át a központi pénztárnak havonta tartoznak beszolgáltatni, melyből a központ az összes kedvezményeket nyújtsa a tagoknak, nevezetesen a segélyeket. A fennmaradt 20 % az adományokból, mulatságokból befolyó összegek a helyi csoport jövedelmét képezik. Ebből fedezi a helyi csoport ügykezelési költségeit.

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XI. fejezet.

30.§. Azokban az esetekben, ha az egyesület az alapszabályokban előírt célját és eljárását be nem tartja, hatáskörét túllépi, államellenes működést fejt ki, a közbiztonság és a közrend ellen súlyos vétséget követ el, vagy a vagyoni érdekeit veszélyezteti, a m. kir. belügyminiszter ellene vizsgálatot rendelhet el, működésétől felfüggesztheti és végleg fel is oszlathatja.

Elfogadtatott a Magyar Cigányzenészek Országos Egyesületének 1923. augusztus hó 14-én megtartott közgyűlésén.

Rácz Zsiga sk., főtitkár; Füredy F. Fábián sk., h. elnök. (P. H.)
Szalay György sk., h. titkár; Lázár György sk., alelnök.
Hitelesítő tagok: Torma Gyula sk., Banyák Ferenc sk.
Szám: 147.173/1923. B. M. VIII.

M. kir. Belügyminiszter.

Látta m. kir. belügyminiszter azzal a megjegyzéssel, hogy a 27.§. Első részének helyes értelme a következő: A központi választmánynak jogában áll a helyi csoport feloszlatását kérni a m. kir. belügyminiszternél, ha a helyi csoport az egyesület céljaival ellentétes működést fejt ki s megszegi az alapszabályokat.

Budapest, 1923. évi szeptember hó 14-én.
A miniszter rendeletéből: Pánti s. k. min. Tanácsos (P. H.).

∴

The Hungarian Gypsy Musician's National Association's modified Statute.
August 14, 1923.

Chapter I.

1.§ The official name of the Association: The Hungarian Gypsy Musicians' National Association. The script encircling the seal is the same. Its seat, Budapest.

2.§ Announcements of the Association will be published in its future official journal [1].

3.§ The official language of the Association: Hungarian [2].

Chapter II.

4.§ The goals of the Association:
a) b) To promote the material, moral and intellectual interests of its members, all according to Christian principles, and provide legal protection for them. Through the reciprocal support of the members the attainment of better working conditions and protection of acquired rights, based on Christian principles, with the exclusion of political and religious debates.
c) To restrict, with the support of the Royal Hungarian Ministry of the Interior, the operation of uninvited musicians and those arriving from foreign lands.

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d) The promote and develop the art of Hungarian Gypsy musicians.
e) To provide for a retirement fund for its full members, according to the financial capacity of the Association and to be defined in future Statutes, furthermore in cases of accident and sickness for provision of financial support to be given, again to be decided at a future General Meeting. Burial is to be provided for full members and their legal next of kin by the Association according to the Statutes.

Chapter III.

5.§ Methods: To achieve these aims the Association shall make use of the following methods:
a) To promote the acquisition of employment for its full members as appropriate to their skills, and in this interest to maintain an employment agency.
b) c) Retirement fund
d) The organisation of celebrations and concerts for the fund mentioned in b) c).
e) The organisation of local groups.

Chapter IV.

6.§ a) Only those Hungarian Gypsy musicians may work within the territory of Hungary who are full members of the Association.
b) The members of the Association: honorary, [...] electable and non-electable. At concerts organised by the Association are to be provided complimentary tickets. Remains a member of the Association until written notice is given within the timeframe allotted for full members and until acting in opposition to the aims of the Association. [...]

10.§ Full members may be all professional and trained Hungarian Gypsy musicians, with a law-abiding past, having reached their 16th year, and who are accepted into the ranks of the full members by the board of directors. A full member has the right to speak and to vote at the Association's General Meetings, is an elector and electable, may make proposals if the proposal is submitted to the leadership, in writing, 8 days before the General Meeting. He has the right to use the employment agency of the Association free of charge, and according to the conditions in the Statutes may request aid. He becomes a recipient of all rights statutorily acquired for members of the Association. In such case as he feels that his rights as a full member have been injured he has the right to seek legal address at the board of directors and to appeal any rulings felt unusual at the General Meeting. The President is required to call an extraordinary General Meeting if 30 full members submit a written petition to do so and note the subject. Regarding any contractual legal injury, a full member has the right to turn to the Association's free legal aid as provided for by the board of directors, this right though may only be used after two months of membership. 65-year-old Gypsy musicians cannot be admitted among the ranks of full members.

11. § A lifetime member is one who has been a constant member of the Association for 30 years without interruption or one whom the General Meeting elevates from the ranks of the full members based on a proposal by the board of directors. The lifetime member is one who is exempt from payment of the membership dues, but who enjoys all the rights of membership. Any Hungarian Gypsy musician who is unable to work

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and unemployed, if he has been a member of the Association for at least 10 years, may be given exemption from membership dues for a certain time or for perpetuity by the General Meeting.

Chapter VI.

12. § Full members are required to completely abide by the Association's Statutes and those resolutions not in contradiction with the Statutes and to punctually pay the following dues.

a) A one-time registration fee of 1000 Crowns

b) A membership fee due the first of every month of 1000 Crowns

A full member is expected to behave in such a fashion as to bring honour to the profession and not to be in opposition to the Association's moral and material goals.

If a full member is required to enter military service for a longer period of time he remains a member of the Association, but is exempt from membership dues and other fees. Likewise, his existing rights as a member of the Association are suspended. If though he fulfils his payment obligations during his military service his membership rights remain his to exercise.

13. § The members' dues and fees are to be paid at the Association's Treasurer. The Association has the right to directly encash back membership dues and other back fees, as shown in official records, from the member's employer, if the member has given authorisation and with the cooperation of the employer. In the case of a delayed payment the Association has the right to resort to legal action to acquire funds past due from the tardy member.

In the case of all trials members submit themselves to the authority and to the summary procedures of the Royal District Court freely chosen by the Association.

Chapter VII.

The Cessation of Membership

14. § Membership ceases if the member: a) dies, b) leaves the Association, i) is shut out.

A full member may only leave the Association at the end of the calendar year, if he announces his intention to do so in writing to the Association's leadership, at the latest, the first of October of that year. In such case as the member is being contracted for work abroad and would so be responsible for his Association responsibilities, after payment he shall be able to identify himself with his Association identification, at any time, at the foreign musicians' union. The board of directors has the right to shut out any member who has seriously acted in contradiction to the Associations's Statutes, or who has not fulfilled the moral and financial responsibilities recorded in point 12, especially those who are behind in three or more months of membership dues and other financial commitments. The expulsion resolution is to be published in the official journal of the Association and within the 15 days following the publication the member may appeal to the General Meeting. The member is bound to pay the back-membership fees until the date of his expulsion.

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Chapter VIII.

Retirement Fund. Burial Aid

15. § The Association maintains a completely independent retirement fund under its own authority for its members. The Association contributes to this the net income from supporting membership fees, donations, concerts and celebrations. The details of the retirement fund will be formulated after five years of operation, that is to say in 1925. Until that time the amount of the retirement fund will be precisely accounted for by the leadership at the General Meeting. In the case of the death of a full member, having been preceded by one year of membership, or a legal next of kin, the Association is required to care for the burial. In such case as paid burial and illness aid exceeds 75% of that year's subsidies the Association has the right to appropriately raise the subsidies at the next General Meeting. Any Association member who is over three months behind in membership dues or other payments owed may have no recourse to any of the benefits of the Association. If the member has neglected to pay his membership dues or other fees as a result of illness, and this can be proven so, and has only neglected to do so during the duration of his illness, the board of directors has the right to allot funds for the burial after the deduction of the due fees.

Chapter IX.

The Organisation of the Association

16.§ The affairs of the Association are managed by the leadership and the board of directors, they are elected by the General Meeting on a yearly basis and are composed of the following members: a President, two notaries, two controllers, two auditors, fourteen full members as directors and six substitute members. Only permanent residents of Budapest can be elected members of the leadership and the board of directors.

17.§ The purview of the officials:

The President together with the board of directors direct all the affairs of the Association, represent the Association before the authorities and before the general public. He presides at the meetings of the board of directors and at the General Meetings, he guards decorum, giving say to those asking to speak and not giving say, or revoking permission to speak from those who disturb the decorum. He may examine the accounts at any time, and supervises the work of the officials, at the legitimate written request of 30 members he calls a General Meeting, if though he deems the request illegitimate or unnecessary he presents the petition of the request to the board of directors and acts according to their resolution.

In accordance with the resolution of the board of directors, he has the right to remit sums from the treasury in cases of grave necessity, to the amount of 20000 Crowns. He may remit without a resolution from the board of directors, but is required to announce this at the next meeting of the board. [...]

a) If in the case the president is impeded the vice-president substitutes for the President in all faculties. He does not though have the right to remit funds.

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b) The Secretary heads the Association's handling of affairs and office [...]
c) The Treasurer handles the Association's treasury, collects the membership dues and other revenues. He keeps orderly accounts of the Association's incomes and expenses [...] Salaries drawn from the treasury are to be done only through legal remittence, what is more, exceptions from the planned budget can only be made according to a resolution of the board of directors, or payments remitted by the President acting in his own right, and for cases of burial and illness aid accompanied by documents and certified by the Secretary.
b) The controllers monitor the handling of the treasury. They may at any time examine the bookkeeping and the accounts, but are required to do so at least once a month. [...]

18.§. The board of directors of the Association:

Is composed of all the leadership, the officers and the members of the board of directors having the right to vote. Is in charge of all of the Association's affairs, allows the payment of the expenses as per the statues, decides upon the acceptance of those applying for membership, has the right to conduct an examination of ethical accountability of one applying for membership. [...]

19.§. The General Meeting, The Association's General Meetings: 1. ordinary. 2. extraordinary.

The Association is to hold a General Meeting every year during Holy Week, the instruction to do so is given by the President and the Secretary calls the meeting together and makes an announcement to such effect 8 days before, through publication in the official journal. Quorum for the General Meeting is usually the presence of 1/3. A General Meeting convened for a change of the statues, the cessation of the Association and the allotment of the assets requires the presence of 2/3 of the members [...] The General Meeting decides upon the Association's yearly budget, based upon the proposal of the board of directors, and grants acquittal to the leadership based upon the auditor's report. [...] The President has the right call an extraordinary meeting, either on his own prerogative, or on the proposal of the board of directors, or upon a legitimate written petition of 30 members. The rules for quorum of an ordinary meeting in addition to those establishing its prerogative are to be used for the extraordinary General Meeting.

Voting

20. §. Voting may only take place in person. At the General Meeting voting takes place through secret ballot. In the interest of such the President dispatches one or more ballot collection committees. At the board of directors voting is open. Based upon the request of four voters a secret ballot may be instituted.

Chapter X.

21.§. General resolutions:
a) The correspondence of the Association is signed by the Secretary. Financial remittance or transcriptions concerning the Association are to be signed by the President as well. The minutes of the meetings of the General Meeting and the board of directors is to be signed by the President, the Secretary and two corroborating members.

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b) All monetary amounts – with the exception of necessary purchase capital to cover running costs – may not exceed 120000 Crowns, is to be invested for profit.
c) All expenses arising from the care for Association affairs are to be covered from the treasury of the Association.
d) Every member is required to give his exact address and to report any change in such to the office of the Association immediately.

22.§. The dissolution of the Association may only be made by the minister of the interior. If the Association were to abandon its national and Christian character. If the Association dissolves its property is to be given to the council of the national capital city to be handled profitably, and at such time that a similar Christian Hungarian Gypsy musicians' Association were to form to transfer this to the new Association, and thus for the puropose of this amount being used for the advancement of the financial and moral aims of Hungarian Gypsy musicians, noting that the new aAsociation is required to include this same stipulation in its own Statutes. If in the case that such an Association does not form, then the council of the national capital is to establish a foundation for musicians with the existing funds and from their interest to aid as many invalid Hungarian Gypsy musicians as possible.

Local Groups

23.§. In those areas where there are at least 30 members the board of directors is to create a local group. The local group is to independently elect a leadership of 9 members: 1 President, 1 Vice-President, 1 Secretary, 1 notary, 1 controller, 3 board members and two substitute members. The leadership of the local group grows in relation to the increase in members. The number of officers is not to exceed 15 members. If there are fewer than 30 members, they are to elect a representative to maintain contact with the central authority and to manage the affairs of the members.

24.§. The affairs of the local group are managed by this leadership according to the accepted agenda of the central board of directors. If one of the officials commits an irregularity the President may suspend him, may elect a replacement, though he must announce this at the following meeting.

25.§. The Treasurers of the local groups are required to account for their income and expenses on a monthly basis to the central authority. The accounting is examined and audited by the controllers.

26.§. The rights of the central board of directors: [...]

29.§. 80% of the income from local group's membership dues are to be transferred to the central treasury on a monthly basis, from this amount the central authority provides benefits for all the members, namely aid. The remaining 20%, the donations, income from festivities serve as the income for the local group. It covers the costs of handling the affairs of the local group.

Chapter XI.

30.§. In such cases as the Association does not follow the aims and procedures proscribed in the Statutes, oversteps its authority, acts against the state, commits a serious act

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against the public safety or public order or endangers its own assets the Royal Hungarian Minister for the Interior may order an inquiry, may suspend its working and may finally dissolve the Association.

Accepted at the 14 August, 1920, General Meeting of the Hungarian Gypsy Musicians' National Association.

Zsiga Rácz, first Secretary; Fábián F. Füredy F., Deputy President. [Stamp].
György Szalay, Vice-Secretary. György Lázár, Vice President.
Corroborating: Gyula Torma, Ferenc Banyák.
Number: 147.173/1923. B. M. VIII.

Royal Hungarian Minster of the Interior.

Seen by the Royal Hungarian Minister of the Interior with the note that the proper interpretation of the first part of 27. §. is the following: The central board of directors has the right to ask for the dissolution of a local group from the Royal Hungarian Minister of the Interior if the local group is acting in a way contradictory to the aims of the Association and violates the Statutes.

Budapest, September 14, in the year 1923.
From the decree of the minister: Pánti, ministerial counsellor. [Stamp].

Notes

1. The Hungarian Gypsy Musicians' National Association first published the Hungarian Gypsy Musicians' Journal in 1924, the last publication being in 1931.
2. The Gypsy musicians in Hungary spoke, almost without exception, Hungarian as their mother tongue, they perceived themselves on the highest level of the so-called Romungre Gypsies and clearly distinguished themselves from those Gypsies who spoke Vlax or Romanian dialects. The defining of the language of the organisation is not due to any pressure to assimilate from the Ministry of the Interior (Erdős, 1989, pp. 42-56).

Source: MNL BKML, IV. 1939. 15. This document was made available to me by the historian Pál Nagy, which he had published (Nagy, 2011, pp. 248-253).
Prepared for publication by Tamas Hajnáczky.

Comments

Following the 1918 dissolution of the Hungarian Folk Musicians' National Association (Sárosi, 2012, pp. 15; Hajnaczky, 2020ab) Gypsy musicians moved to the Folk Musicians' section of the National Hungarian Musicians' Federation from which they soon left in order to create their own organisation, the Hungarian Gypsy Musicians' National Association (Magyar Zenészek Lapja, 1926, p. 9; Pesti Hírlap, 1926, p. 9). During its early years, the newly formed Association was unable to achieve anything significant, though it did raise its voice in complaining about the sad financial state of Gypsy musicians (Pesti Hírlap, 1922, p. 12). The first substantive steps needed a few more years. The first

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portentous elections at a General Meeting were in March 1923, when the leadership decided upon the following resolution:

> The speaker stated that those with other employment, former actors stand at the head of certain orchestras and thus take the chance for breadwinning from Gypsies. These gentlemen could win their bread in other ways, but the Gypsy only has his violin for a living. Therefore, I turn to the leadership to the chief captainship to only grant work permits to the who are members of the Hungarian Gypsy Musicians' Association. (Pesti Napló, 1923, p. 2).

This proposal on the part of the Association went as far as the Minister of the Interior, where it received significant support. The Association amended its Statutes that August with, among other items, the following paragraph: "Only those Hungarian Gypsy musicians may work within the territory of Hungary who are full members of the Association".

The modified statues were approved the following month with decree number 147.173/1923 of the Ministry of the Interior. For the previously mentioned reasons the Gypsy musicians made plans at their following meeting to hold a torch-lit musical procession to greet Regent Miklós Horthy and to His Royal Highness Archduke Joseph to express their gratitude (Budapest Hírlap, 1923, p. 5). The newly published Statutes, in addition to the previously mentioned key paragraph, defined prescriptions for the aims, organisation and modes of working of the Hungarian Gypsy Musician's National Association, furthermore the rights and responsibilities of its members. A further step was the Association's goal to establish a future retirement fund for its members, in addition to aid in case of injury or illness and care for the funeral expenses of its members and their family. It stated as further tasks to assist in finding employment for its members and publish an official journal; there were to be celebrations, concerts to help partially finance the previously listed funds. The quoted lines reveal the significance of this source, as they provide a detailed image of the Association. Furthermore, these are the only Statutes from the early period of the Hungarian Gypsy Musicians's National Association which have come to light.

Tamas Hajnáczky

7.1.2 *The Meeting in Defense of Professional Rights*

Tízezer cigányzenész kenyere veszélyben
A paraszt és munkásbandák gyilkos konkurenciája
A cigányok országgyűlése

(Az Est tudósítójától). A magyarországi cigányzenészek tegnap este országos nagygyűlést tartottak, amelyen igen szomorú képet adtak különösen a vidéki cigányzenészek szomorú sorsáról és éhezéséről. A Magyar Cigányzenészek Országos Egyesületének elnöke, Kozák Gábor nyitotta meg az országos gyűlést, utána dr. Gábor Illés főtitkár ismertette az alapszabályok megváltoztatásáról szóló jelentést. Mivel csak olyan zenész működhetik az országban, akinek az egyesülettől engedélye van, indítványozta, hogy bár a magyar

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cigányzenének történeti múltja van, mégis vegyék fel a más jellegű zenészeket is, akiknek a zenélésen kívül más ipari stb. foglalkozásuk van.

Kiss József a debreceni helyi csoport titkára megdöbbenve veszi tudomásul ezt az indítványt, amelyet ha a közgyűlés elfogad, akkor a cigányzenészek hetven százaléka kenyér nélkül marad. Vannak fúvós zenekarok, amelyeknek tagjai házzal, földdel, szarvasmarha állománnyal bírnak, nincs tehát szükségük arra, hogy a keresetet a cigányzenészektől elvonják. Be kell már egyszer vallani azt, hogy a falukban éheznek a kartársaink!

Nyíracsádon harmincegy lakodalom volt eddig, amelyből ezek a szegény cigányok csak hármat muzsikáltak végig, a többieket a működvelő fúvós zenekarok szórakoztatták jóllehet, erre engedélyük nincs. Hangsúlyozza, hogy csak vizsgázott zenészeket szabad felvenni az egyesületbe, éppen ezért ezek a trombitákat recsegtető bandák nem közénk valók. Tiltakozik a felvétel ellen.

Klell István a győri csoport nevében csatlakozik Kiss indítványához. Az ilyen muzsikálást el kell tiltani és a kontárokat nem szabad az egyesület kötelékébe felvenni. A 64.598/1901. számú belügyminiszteri rendelet világosan kimondja, hogy csak azok muzsikálhatnak az országban, akiknek a Magyar Cigányzenészek Országos Egyesülete által kiállított működési engedélyük van.

Rácz János a debreceni helyi csoport alelnöke, szerint is ezek a vidéki alkalmi alakulatok nem zenélhetnek, mert kiveszik a kenyeret az éhező cigányzenészek szájából. Tiltakozik a kontárzenészek felvétele ellen.

Saáry Ákos a szolnoki csoport nevében kijelenti, hogy garmadával jöttek a jelentkezők, a hívatlanok, felvétetni magukat az egyesületbe. Ezeknek kilencven százaléka zenei analfabéta. A cigányzene Magyarországon nemzeti intézmény és kultúrmissziót szolgál, mást, mint cigányt, ebbe az egyesületbe felvenni nem lehet.

Dr. Szakács Albert mezőtúri titkár hangsúlyozza, hogy az egyesület tagja csak cigányzenész legyen.

Bíró János a gyulai titkár csodálkozásának ad kifejezést, hogy az Országos Magyar Zenészszövetség az ilyen falusi kontármuzsikusokból akarja a színházak részére a pótlást megadni. Zeneművészetileg ez képtelenség, miután ezek annyira távol állnak a zenétől, hogy még csak azt sem tudják, hogy az mi fán terem, eltekintve attól, hogy nagyon kevesen tudnak kottázni. Ilyen embereket akarnak beültetni a budapesti színházak zenekarába!

Rácz Gyula debreceni elnök hangsúlyozza hogy nagyon sok a panasz a nyomor miatt. A körzetben a paraszt fúvósbandák garázdálkodásai miatt kiszállott egy községbe, elment az ottani prímáshoz hogy megtudja a panaszokat. A 15.000 koronát kért kölcsön, hogy nekik egy darab kenyeret és szalonnát vásárolhasson. A lakása egy földes hideg szobából állott, a sarokban egy szalmazsákkal, amely az egész szoba berendezését képezte. A prímás gyermekei meztelenül járkáltak a szobában, ruhára, de egy darab zsákra sem tellett a prímásnak, hogy gyermekei testét vele betakarja. Ugyanakkor a paraszt fúvósbanda, holott nem volna szabad, muzsikál a községben, dúskál a jólétben, keresi a pénzt, jóllehet háza, földje, tehene, disznaja, csirkéje van. E kerület 597 tagja nevében tiltakozik az ilyen muzsikusok felvétele ellen.

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Lázár György hangsúlyozza, hogy az Országos Magyar Zenészszövetség a malacbandák patrónusa lett, ami annál érthetetlenebb, mert ez az egész egyesület azt hangsúlyozza, hogy ezekből a zenészekből veszi a pótlást a budapesti színházak és az Operaház részére. Jó étvágyat kívánunk az ilyen zenészek előadásaihoz. Az ilyen kenyérrontást meg kell akadályozni és nem engedhetjük meg azt, hogy a műkedvelők tízezer cigányzenész szájából vegye ki a kenyeret. Ha műkedvelő, akkor szórakoztassa odahaza a családját s ne akarjon hivatásos zenész lenni, akkor amikor úgyis megvan a rendes megélhetése.

Füredy Fábián adatokkal mutatja ki, hogy Csonka-Magyarország minden vidékén a cigányzenészek körében a legnagyobb nyomor van. Ennek a nyomornak az oka a kontárzenészek működése. Ha a helyzet így tart tovább, akkor tízezer, cigányzenész marad kenyér nélkül és akkor ezeknek az államnak kell kenyeret adni. Mi nem akarunk koldulni, mi tisztességesen akarjuk megkeresni kenyerünket. Menjünk fel a belügyminiszterhez, mondotta és a magyarországi cigányok nevében tiltakozzunk az ilyen abszurdumok ellen. Asztalos, lakatos, esztergályos, suszter, kisgazda és földműves muzsikál és veszi el a kenyeret, a megélhetést a hivatásos zenészek elől. Ne szégyelljük kimondani, hogy éhes a vidék és ez az éhes vidék tiltakozik a kontárok felvétele ellen. Nem tűrhetjük tovább a paraszt és munkásbandákat.

Kozák Gábor elnök szomorúan mutat rá arra, hogy a magyar cigányzenész, akinek ezeréves [6] múltja van, a mocsárba kerül az ilyen lehetetlen helyzet miatt. A cigányságot meg kell menteni a jövő részére, és erre itt van az utolsó óra.

Oláh Lajos ügyvezető alelnök hangsúlyozza, hogy a cigányzenészek jóléte kívánja azt, hogy a kontármuzsikusokat ne vegyék fel. Erre kell felhívni az Országos Magyar Zenészszövetséget is.

Több felszólalás utána a nagygyűlés úgy határozott, hogy a vidéki csoportok kiküldötteivel együtt küldöttségben jelenik meg a belügyminiszternél és átiratban megkeresi az Országos Magyar Zenészszövetséget, hogy tagjai sorába csak olyanokat vegyen fel, akiket előbb levizsgáztat.

∵

The bread winning of ten thousand Gypsy musicians is in danger
The lethal competition of peasant and working bands
The Gypsy parliament

From the reporter of the *Az Est* (The Evening). The Hungarian Gypsy musicians held their national meeting last evening. They painted a grave picture, especially of the sad fate and hunger of Gypsy musicians in the countryside. The President of the Hungarian Gypsy Musicians' National Association, Gábor Kozák [1] opened the meeting, after which Dr. Illés Gábor first Secretary reviewed the report on the change of the Statutes. As only those musicians can work in the country who have a permit from the Association, he proposed that though Hungarian Gypsy music has a great history they accept other types

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of musicians into their ranks, those who have other trades and employment in addition to their music.

József Kiss of the local group from Debrecen, is shocked to learn of this proposal, which, if passed by the General Meeting, will leave seventy percent of the General Meeting without bread winnings. There are wind orchestras whose members have a house, land, cattle and who therefore do not need to take income away from Gypsy musicians. We have to finally admit that our colleagues in villages are starving!

In Nyíracsád there were thirty weddings to date, at which the poor Gypsies only played three, the rest were entertained by amateur wind orchestras, though they had no permit to do so. He stressed that only musicians who have passed the exam are to be accepted into the Association, for this reason blaring trumpet bands do not belong among us. He protests against admittance.

István Klell in the name of the local group from Győr he seconds Kiss' proposal. Such music should be banned and these dilettantes should not be allowed to join the Association. Ministerial decree Number 64.598/1901 [2] clearly states that only those are allowed to perform music in the country who have a permit from the Hungarian Gypsy Musicians' National Association.

János Rácz, Vice-President of the local group from Debrecen, is of the opinion that these irregular rural bands should not be allowed to play as they take the bread out of the mouths of the starving Gypsy musicians. He objects to the admittance of dilettante musicians.

Ákos Saáry in the name of the group from Szolnok, complains that an armada of applicants and uninvited figures came to apply to the Association. Ninety percent of these are musically illiterate. Gypsy music in Hungary is a national institution and serves as a cultural mission, no one other than Gypsies can be admitted to this Association.

Dr. Albert Szakács, the Secretary of the Mezőtúr group, stresses that members of the Association only be Gypsy musicians.

János Bíró, the Secretary from Gyula, states his amazement that the National Hungarian Musicians' Federation [3] wants to supplement the theatres with such village dilettante musicians. From the point of view of musical arts this is an impossibility, as these people stand so far from music that they do not even know on which tree it grows, not to mention that very few of them can even read musical notes. These are the people they want to put into the orchestras of Budapest theatres!

Gyula Rácz, the President from Debrecen, stresses that many complain of misery. Because of complaints in his region of roaming peasant wind bands he visited a village and visited the first violinist there to learn firsthand. This poor man asked for 15000 crowns to buy a piece of bread and bacon. The house had an earthen floor and was one cold room with a straw matt in the corner and no other furniture. The children of the first violinist were naked as there was no money for clothes or even for some sackcloth to cover the bodies of his children. At the same time the peasants' wind band play in the town, though not permitted to do so, and are very wealthy, and making money, though

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they have homes, land, cows, pigs, chickens. In the name of the 597 members of the region he protests against the admittance of such musicians.

György Lázár stresses that the National Hungarian Musicians' Federation has become a patron of these pig bands, which is all the harder to understand because the whole Association stresses that replacements for the theatres and the Opera house in Budapest are to come from among these musicians. Well go on and enjoy the performances of these musicians! Bon Appetite! We have to stop this destruction of livelihoods and we cannot permit that these amateurs take the bread from the mouths of ten thousand Gypsy musicians. As for the amateur, let him entertain his family at home and forget about becoming a professional musician, when he already has a proper income.

Fábián Füredy [4] shows with data that in every region of Amputated-Hungary [5] there is the greatest of misery among Gypsy musicians. The cause of this misery is the work of the dilettante musicians. If this situation continues, then ten thousand Gypsy musicians will be without bread and then the they will have to be fed by the state. We do not want to beg, we want to respectably earn our bread. He said we should go to the Ministry of the Interior and in the name of Hungarian Gypsies protest against such absurdities. Music is being performed by carpenters, locksmiths, lathers, shoemakers, smallholders and farmers and they take the bread, the earnings, from the professional musicians. We should not be ashamed to say, that the countryside is hungry and the hungry countryside protests against the admittance of the dilettantes. We can no longer tolerate the peasant and worker bands.

Gábor Kozák, President, sadly points out that the Hungarian Gypsy musician, despite having a thousand year [6] history behind him, ends up in a swamp because of such impossible situations. Gypsies have to be saved for the future and this is the final hour to do so.

Lajos Oláh acting Vice-President, stressed that the welfare of the Gypsy musicians requires that dilettante musicians not be admitted. The attention of the National Hungarian Musicians Federation needs to be called to this.

After several remarks, the General Meeting resolved to appear before the Ministry of the Interior with representatives of rural groups, and in a document to turn to the National Hungarian Musicians Federation to only accept among its ranks members who have previously taken the examination.

Notes

1. Gábor Kozák (1885-1926) of Brassó (today Brașov in Romania) was a famous Gypsy first violinist at the forefront of the founding of the Hungarian Gypsy Musicians' National Association, and served as its President for years (Horák, 2015, p. 141).
2. In the press article the ministerial decree cited by the leader of the Győr group did not exist. It may be that he was thinking of the ministerial decree number 64.573/1901, which put the issue of work permits for musicians into the hands of the appropriate local police authority. It was decree number 147.173/1923 of the Minister of the Interior that tied the issuing of a musician's permit to membership in the Hungarian Gypsy Musician's National Association (Magyarországi Rendeletek Tára, 1901, pp. 489-494; Hajnáczky, 2018, p. 216-217).

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3. The National Hungarian Musicians Federation split from the Austrian-Hungarian Musicians' Federation in 1901, and was the one from which the Gypsy musicians split in 1918, in order to establish their own organisation, the Hungarian Gypsy Musician's National Association (Gerelyes, 1974, p. 22; Hajnáczky 2018, p. 216; Hajnáczky 2020ab).
4. Fabián Foszák of Füred (1885-?) was a famous Gypsy first violinist who also played a significant role in the founding of the Hungarian Gypsy Musicians' National Association, in which he was a member of the leadership, and where he was later elected as President of the Budapest local group (Horák, 2015, p. 117).
5. Hungary, as a defeated nation, signed the so-called Trianon Peace Treaty, as part of the Paris peace treaties ending World War One. It was signed in the Grand Trianon Palace of Versailles on June 4th 1920. Amongst other items the peace treaty ruled over the borders of Hungary and cut the area of the country from 282 thousand square kilometres to 93 thousand, while its population was decreased from 18.2 million to 7.6 million. More than 100 thousand square kilometres and 5.2 million people were given to Romania, 61 thousand square kilometres and 3.5 million people were given to Czechoslovakia. The Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes was given 20 thousand kilometres and 1.5 million inhabitants, even Austria received 4 thousand square kilometres and almost 300 thousand individuals. Poland got 589 square kilometres and 23.6 thousand inhabitants, and Italy received 21 thousand square kilometres and almost 50 thousand people (Romsics, 2005, pp. 145-147).
6. The first know sources for the appearance of Gypsies in Hungary and their settlement are from the 15th century (Nagy, 2004, pp. 7-29, cf. also Chapter 8).

Source: [No author]. (1925). Tízezer cigányzenész kenyere veszélyben. A paraszt és munkásbandák gyilkos konkurenciája. A cigányok országgyűlése. *Az Est*, An. 16, No. 17, 1925, January 22, p. 4.
Prepared for publication by Tamas Hajnáczky.

Comments

The remarks made at the January 1925 General Meeting of the Hungarian Gypsy Musicians' National Association very obviously illustrate that the amendment of the Statutes with the following paragraph far from solved the burning issues of a significant majority of the Gypsy musicians: "Only those Hungarian Gypsy musicians may work within the territory of Hungary who are full members of the Association" (Nagy, 2011, p. 248).

In the years following this modification the national chief of police issued a circular re-stipulating and reiterating that only those Gypsy musicians may perform who are members of the Hungarian Gypsy Musicians' National Association and that the support of this regulation is necessary on the part of the authorities. Furthermore, it ordered the competent authorities to pay special attention when issuing work permits and to in all cases check for the existence of membership identification issued by the Association (Gerelyes, 1974, pp. 268-269). The so-called peasant musicians continued to be significant competition for Gypsy musicians, as can be read from their criticisms in the minutes. In that period two types of peasant musicians can be differentiated; peasant bands who played mainly wind instrument and rarely string instruments and those musicians who played on instruments made at home (for example, horn, hurdy gurdy, flute, zither, harmonica). Peasant band members were full-fledged members of the local community being as they were farmers, landholders, and worked at the same tasks as their audience,

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while those who performed alone lived more on the peripheries of society (for example, day labourer, servant, beggar, village small tradesman). As the peasant bands were respected members of the given community, and as their main source of income was not playing music, they were not at the mercy of the audience and those participating in the celebration did not approach them with special requests for which they would pay, as they did with Gypsy musicians. There were Gypsy musicians who were paid to accompany a wealthy guest to the outhouse or to kneel in the street possibly to play lying down for those leaving. There were even more extreme instances such as when the Gypsy musicians were asked to climb a tree to play, or the first violinist was lowered into a well and asked to direct the orchestra from there (Sárosi, 1980, pp. 75-79, Ratkó, 2002, pp. 66-68). The article provides very important information on the living conditions of Gypsy musicians and some perspective as to how the leading Gypsy musicians felt about competing musicians. Of further interest in this source is that it is the first such known minutes to date of a meeting of the Hungarian Gypsy Musicians' National Association.

Tamas Hajnáczky

7.1.3 *The Extraordinary National Meeting with the Presence of Local Groups*

1926. november 9.

Felvétetett a Magyar Cigányzenészek Országos Egyesülete VIII. Kálvária tér 18. szám alatti helyiségében 1926. november 9.-én tartott rendkívüli közgyűlésről.

A vezetőség részéről jelen voltak: Kozák Gábor elnök, Rácz Zsiga és Berkes Miklós alelnökök, Orsolya Géza titkár, Forizs Sándor, Horváth Lajos, Gyallai Ferencz, Berki Mihály, Hédervári Ferencz, Jároka Pál, Füredi Fábián, Oláh Lajos, Horváth Vilmos, Kovács Mátyás, Farkas József, Horváth József, Berki János és a hatósági kiküldött.

A tagok részéről: Mészáros Kálmán, Korodi Pál, Baranyi Lajos, Rácz Béla, Rácz Kálmán, Kovács Lajos, Kuko Vince, Rácz József, Jároka István, Rácz Rudi, Müller István, Müller József, Jároka Pista, Német Gyula, Cirok Antal, Mágo Géza, Rigó Andor, Hosszu Ferencz, Horváth Géza, Kotai Aladár, Csonka János, Lakatos Béla, Babos Gyula, Balogh Ernő, Babos Miklós, Décsi Antal, Lakatos László, Csiki Lajos, Radics Béla, Rigó Jancsi, Balázs József, Bálint István, Rácz István, Lakatos Szerszámos József, Magda Ingnácz, Hagymás Toth Ernő, Kovács Béla, Sándor Viktor, Krancsina János, ifj. Vörös István, Blahári István, Kinofeszki Mihály, Ciroki Antal, Magyar Mihály, Jónás Gyula, Farkas Alajos, Lakatos István, Sándor Márton, Nyári Károly, Fecske János, Bokor Imre, Kökény Albert, Lakatos Árpád, Bangó Árpád, Gáspár János, Mészáros György, Boros Mihály, Mészáros Sándor, Bodrics János, Verebes Ferencz, Korodi János, Dombi János, Gáspár János, Döme János, Szendlay Albert, Losso Lajos, Cica Kálmán, Kovács Mátyás, Orsolya Károly, Bursi György, Megyaszai József, Horváth Károly, Beka József, pozsonyi Bertók Vilmos, Kovács János, Lakatos Béla, Anyalai Pál, Kantó Vilmos, Csipák Lajos, Kovács János, Gondi Zsiga, Bertok László, Turó Lipót, Bakos Gyula, Horváth Ferencz, Jároka Ferencz, Berki Károly, Horváth József.

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Kozák Gábor elnök megnyitja a közgyűlést. Üdvözli a megjelent tagokat és a vidéki helyi csoportok küldötteit. A közgyűlési jegyzőkönyv hitelesítésére tagokat kér fel. Ezután a következőket terjeszti elő.

Igen tisztelt közgyűlés a nagyméltóságú m. kir. belügyminiszter Úr 137.000/1926. számú rendelete következtében az alapszabályokon különböző módosításokat kellett eszközölni. E módosításokat az 1926. jún. 1-i közgyűlés teljességében elhatározta. Az egyesület vezetősége az alapszabály módosításokra egy bizottságot küldött ki, amely ezt el is készítette. Felkérem dr. Járosi Jenő ügyész urat, szíveskedjen a módosított alapszabályokat előterjeszteni.

Klell István a győri helyi csoport kiküldötte ajánlja, hogy az alapszabályok §-ként olvastassanak fel és hogy § felolvasása után biztosítva legyen a közgyűlés tagjainak részére az indítványozás és a felszólalási jog.

Közgyűlés Kell István indítványát elfogadja.

Dr. Járosi Jenő ügyész ismerteti az alapelveket, melyek alapján az alapszabályokat eszközlő bizottság a módosításokat elvégezte. Ezek után §-ként felolvassa az alapszabályokat, amelyeket a közgyűlés többek hozzászólása után elfogad, mire az elnök az alapszabály módosítást határozatilag elfogadottnak jelenti ki.

Kozák Gábor elnök a közgyűlési jegyzőkönyvet hitelesítő Saáry Ákos irodavezetőt és Járóka Pált kéri fel, hogy a felolvasott alapszabályokat aláírásukkal hitelesítsék. Majd felkéri Orsolya Géza titkár urat, hogy a jelentést terjessze a közgyűlés elé.

Orsolya Géza titkár. Tisztelt Közgyűlés! Nehéz helyzet elé állított titkári állásom azért, mert az elmúlt közgyűléstől a mostaniig alig múlt el 3-4 hó máris oly referádával kell szolgálnom, melyről csak egy jól ledolgozott év tapasztalatai után volnék képes teljesen kielégítő titkári jelentést bemutatni. Mégis iparkodom jelentésemet úgy alkotni, hogy a közgyűlést az irányban megnyugtathatom, hogy az elmúlt események után orsz. egyesületünk helyzete tetemesen javult, úgy erkölcsi, mint anyagi alapon, s hogy még a várt eredményekkel nem szolgálhatunk, annak oka a miniszteri rendelet kitolása és a cigányság zömének indolenciája, mely párját ritkítja a maga nemében, mert egyenesen azt tárja elénk, hogy a cigányság 70 %-a önmagának ellensége s ez alapon az összességnek is. Rövid óhajtok lenni és egyenesen rátérek a jelentésre, melynek elfogadását kéri a t. Közgyűléstől. 1926. júl. 1-től nov. 1-i orsz. központunkba beérkezett 612 ügydarab, melyből helyi viszonylatú volt 168 db. vidéki ügydb. 426, tehát több, mint fele vidéki ügyek. Nagyobb része ezen ügyeknek a hatóságoktól érkeztek a B. M. rend. vonatkoznak, melyek mind a legrövidebb határidőn belül 1-2 nap leforgása alatt lettek érdemlegesen elintézve, így az ügydarabokról magáról, annak értekezéséről, mikénti érdemleges elintézéséről és az elintézés továbbításáról pontos kimutatásokkal szolgálunk és bárkinek betekintést engedünk. Az ügydarabok száma amellett bizonyít, hogy az ügyforgalom tetemesen nagyobbodott, amellett az adminisztratív tisztviselők száma csökkent és a munkák nap-nap után elintéződtek, restanciánk nincs, miről az illetékes tisztviselők úgy jó magam is tanúskodom. Emelett még egyik adminisztrátorunk még ki is utazik és a helyi csoportoknál, hol arra szükség van, rendet csinál és új csoportokat alakít, így újabban megalakult helyi csoportjaink Baja, Gyöngyös, Mezőtúr, Túrkeve, Karcag, Kisújszállás, Hatvan, Salgótarján és

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számos csoport újból átszerveződött, mely ténykedések adminisztrátorunk munkásságát dicséri. A fennálló B. M. rendelet szerint 55 helyi csoportnak kellene lenni szab. kir. és r. t. városok területén. Központunknak ilyen csoportja csak 40 van, ezek közül csak 1151 tag teljesíti kötelességét. Helyi csoportjaink taglétszámai és befizető tagjai:

Budapesti taglétszám 2154, ebből csak 200 befizető tag szerepel.

1.	Baja	65	taggal	14	Befizető
2.	Békéscsaba	286	"	82	"
3.	Gyula	44	"	44	"
4.	Balassagyarmat	78	"	24	"
5.	Csongrád	31	"	21	"
6.	Cegléd	44	"	44	"
7.	Debrecen	901	"	52	"
8.	Győr	69	"	49	"
9.	Hatvan	40	"	40	"
10.	Hajdúböszörmény	42	"	11	"
11.	Hódmezővásárhely	127	"	85	"
12.	Karcag	42	"	42	"
13.	Kiskunfélegyháza	30	"	3	"
14.	Kisújszállás	30	"	30	"
15.	Kecskemét	130	"	6	"
16.	Makó	195	"	68	"
17.	Mezőtúr	54	"	44	"
18.	Nagykanizsa	51	"	28	"
19.	Pápa	89	"	1	"
20.	Pécs	85	"	85	"
21.	Salgótarján	46	"	46	"
22.	Sopron	48	"	21	"
23.	Szarvas	95	"	22	"
24.	Szentes	41	"	41	"
25.	Székesfehérvár	77	"	11	"
26.	Szolnok	120	"	110	"
27.	Törökszentmiklós	70	"	11	"
28.	Vác	71	"	60	"
29.	Veszprém	94	"	26	"
30.	Zalaegerszeg	88	"	20	"
	30 csoport	3123 tag helyett		1151 taggal	

Mindezekből megállapítható, hogy az aránylag kevés vidéki befizető tagjaink mégis elég summát fizettek be, egyben az is, hogy sok millió fog befolyni a miniszteri rendelet

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végrehajtásánál. Kimutattuk eddig az erkölcsi sikert az adminisztrációnk célirányos és törvényes lefektetésével és azok pontos és szakszerű végrehajtásával, bemutattuk ez által, hogy ¼ annyi taglétszámmal több jövedelmet mutatunk ki, mint valamikor ötször annyi taglétszámmal. Anyagi szaporulatunkról dr. Járosi Jenő fog referálni. Be kell jelentenem, hogy kb. 10-12 hátralékos temetkezési járulékot fizettünk ki és azonkívül új keletű, teljes csődben voltunk itt állottunk egy fillér nélkül, ma pedig 33 millió korona készpénzzel rendelkezünk.

A peres ügyekről Ügyész urunk fog beszámolni, úgyszintén a clubunk álláspontjáról is. Be kell még jelentenem, hogy két ízben voltunk deputációban a B. M.-ben egy ízben a pénzügyminisztériumban és kétszer az államrendőrségnél, mindenkor a cigányság érdekében, igaz, hogy mindenhol ígéretet kaptunk, de hogy mikor és hogyan lesznek ügyeink kezelve, az a jövő titka. A forgalmi adó eltörlése tárgyában maga az elnökünk járta ki az ügyet, hogy az eltöröltessék s érthetetlen itt ott még mindig panasz merül fel, hogy a zenészektől forgalmi adót szednek. Kérjük ez irányban panaszukat hozzám beterjeszteni, hogy ez irányban intézkedhessünk. Kiskorúak zenélése tárgyában bevárjuk a csoportoktól a kiskorúakra vonatkozó kérvényeket a hatósági bizonylatokkal egyetemben, mit egyszerre fogunk a Belügyminisztériumba felterjeszteni és annak elintézése után az illetékes hatóságokat értesíteni.

Statisztika a befolyt tagdíjakról
1926. július 1-től 1926. október 31-ig.

Budapestiektől	47.876.000. K
Vidékiektől	65.530.600. K
Összesen	113.406.600. K

Kiutalt temetkezési segélyekről
1926. július 1-től 1926. október 31-ig

Budapestieknek	10.750.000. K
Vidékieknek	8.032.000. K
Összesen	18.782.000. K

Rendkívüli segélyekről
1926. július 1-től 1926. október 31-ig

Budapestiek	570.000. K
Vidékiek	Ez irányban nem kerestek meg
Összesen	570.000. K

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Vagyoni kimutatásról dr. Járosi Jenő ügyész urunk fog referálni úgyszintén a jogsegély nyújtásról is. Kérem jelentésem elfogadását. Felolvasás után zajos helyeslés.

Rácz Zsiga alelnök a titkári jelentéssel kapcsolatosan előadja, hogy az egyesület szervezésében a legfontosabb változás, hogy a budapesti helyi csoport megalakul és az egyesületnek 1926. júl. hó 1-én megválasztott vezetősége külön fog működni a jövőben mint az országos egyesület vezetősége és a budapesti helyi csoport új vezetőséget választ magának. Szükséges ez a széttagoltság az érdemesebb működés végett. Eddig is eredményesen működött az egyesület a jövőben ez még inkább remélhető, mert eddig igen sok tag nem tett eleget kötelezettségének, de a jövőben remélhető, hogy ezek a tagok is kötelességtudóak lesznek. Remélhető ez annál is inkább, mert a belügyminiszter rendelete következtében a tagdíjfizetés mindenkinek kötelességévé tétetett. Ez a rendelet épp a cigányzenészek érdekében hozatott azért, hogy őket egy nagy egységbe tömörítse. Ez a rendelet nagy ereje és éne ezért, azok kik kötelezettségeinknek eleget nem tesznek nem csak a rendelet ellen, hanem saját maga ellen és az egész cigányság ellen cselekszik.

Kozák Gábor elnök felkéri dr. Járosi Jenő ügyészt, hogy ismertesse a zárszámadást.

dr. Járosi Jenő a zárszámadást számszerűen ismerteti és utána rámutat az egyesületnek az utóbbi időben folytatott eredményes működésére, melynek a látható következménye az, hogy a júl. 1-től egész a mai napig dacára annak, hogy a jövedelme a múltakhoz képest nem emelkedett és dacára ennek, hogy az egyesület minden hátralékos kötelességnek eleget nem tett ma több mint 30 millió korona készpénz áll rendelkezésünkre.

Közgyűlés a zárszámadást egyhangúlag elfogadja és a felmentvényt megadja.

Kovács József kaposvári csoport kiküldötte indítványozza, hogy a vezetőség hasson oda, hogy a belügyminiszter rendelete ne csak a törvényhatósági helyeken szabályozza a működési engedélyeket, hanem a községekben is, mert csak így lehet a rendeletet érvényesen végrehajtani.

Közgyűlés Kovács József indítványát magévá teszi […] a vezetőséget, hogy ily irányban lépjen érintkezésbe az illetékes hatóságokkal.

Kovács József indítványozza ezek után, hogy a vezetőség hasson oda, hogy a magyar zeneszerzők egyesülete zeneszerzői díjakat ne szedjen mert ez által a cigányság működését igen megnehezítik.

dr. Járosi Jenő ügyész szól hozzá az indítványhoz és kifejti, hogy a magyar zeneszerzők egyletének működésére szükség van, amennyiben ha az egylet nem léteznék a […] szerzői díjakat és így azok külföldre vándorolnának.

Kovács József dr. Járosi Jenő ügyész felvilágosítását tudomásul veszi.

Demeter Gyula váczi helyi csoport titkára beszédében bevilágít a múltba egyszóval az egyesület alakulásától a mai napig és arra a megállapításra jut, hogy az országos egyesületünk válságos helyzetét nem kizárólag a vezetőség felületessége okozta sommásabb részét az egyesület tagjai összeférhetetlenségükkel és nemtörődömségükkel és ezért intve inti a jelen vezetőséget, hogy könyörtelenül űzzék ki lelkeikből az összeférhetetlenséget, mert ez a szellem csak rombol és pusztít de építeni nem tud. Kéri a kartársakat szavainak megszívlelésére. Ezen szellemben lesz naggyá a magyar cigányság.

Elnök utasítására az ülés berekesztetett.

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Orsolya Géza, Titkár; Kozák Gábor, Elnök; Kovács Ilona, Jegyzőkönyvvezető; Saáry Ákos, Jároka Pál, Jegyzőkönyv hitelesítők

∴

November 9, 1926.

The following were accepted into the membership of the Hungarian Gypsy Musicians' National Association, at the address of 18 Kálvária square, district VIII on November 9, 1926, extraordinary meeting.

Members of the leadership present were President Gábor Kozák, Vice-Presidents Zsiga Rácz and Miklós Berkes, Secretary Géza Orsolya, Sándor Forizs, Lajos Horváth, Ferencz Gyallai, Mihály Berki, Ferencz Hédervári, Pál Jároka, Fábián Füredi, Lajos Oláh, Vilmos Horváth, Mátyás Kovács, József Farkas, József Horváth, János Berki and representatives of the authorities.

Members present: Kálmán Mészáros, Pál Korodi, Lajos Baranyi, Bála Rácz, Kálmán Rácz, Lajos Kovács, Vince Kuko, József Rácz, István Jároka, Rudi Rácz, István Müller, József Müller, Pista Jároka, Gyula Német, Antal Cirok, Géza Mágo, Andor Rigó, Ferencz Hosszu, Géza Horváth, Aladár Kotai, János Csonka, Béla Lakatos, Gyula Babos, Ernő Balogh, Miklós Babos, Antal Décsi, László Lakatos, Lajos Csiki, Béla Radics, Jancsi Rigó, József Balázs, István Bálint, István Rácz, József Lakatos Szerszámos, Ignácz Magda, Ernő Hagymás Toth, Béla Kovács, Viktor Sándor, János Krancsina. István Vörös, István Blahári, Mihály Kinofeszki, Antal Ciroki, Mihály Magyar, Gyula Jónás, Alajos Farkas, István Lakatos, Márton Sándor, Károly Nyári, János Fecske, Imre Bokor, Albert Kökény, Árpád Lakatos, Árpád Bangó, János Gáspár, György Mészáros, Mihály Boros, Sándor Mészáros, János Bodrics, Ferencz Verebes, János Korodi, János Dombi, János Gáspár, János Döme, Albert Szendlay, Lajos Losso, Kálmán Cica, Mátyás Kovács, Károly Orsolya, György Bursi, József Megyaszai, Károly Horváth, József Beka, Vilmos Bertók, János Kovács, Béla Lakatos, Pál Anyalai, Vilmos Kantó, Lajos Csipák, János Kovács, Zsiga Gondi, László Bertok, Lipót Turó, Gyula Bakos, Ferencz Horváth, Ferencz Jároka, Károly Berki, József Horváth.

Gábor Kozák, President, opened the meeting. He greeted those present and representatives of the local groups from the countryside. He asked for members to corroborate the minutes. Afterwards he proposed the following.

Most respected General Meeting, the right honourable royal Hungarian Minister of the Interior's decree number 137.000/1926 [1] resulted in various modifications having to be made to the Statutes. These modifications were decided upon at the 1st of June, 1926, General Meeting. The leadership of the Association entrusted a committee to complete the modifications of the Statutes, which it did. I ask that Dr. Jenő Járosi, counsellor, stand and to propose the modifications to the Statutes.

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István Klell, the representative of the Győr local group, suggests that the Statutes be read as § and after reading the § members of the General Meeting be ensured the right to propose and to speak.

The General Meeting accepts the proposal of István Klell.

Dr. Jenő Járosi, counsellor, presents the principles according to which the committee modifying Statutes made changes. After which he read the Statutes as a § which the General Meeting passed after several remarks, after which the President announces the changes to the Statutes as a passed resolution.

Gábor Kozák, President, asks the corroborating office manager Ákos Saáry and Pál Jároka to corroborate the Statutes, as read, with their signatures. He asks Secretary Géza Orsolya to present the report to the General Meeting.

Géza Orsolya, Secretary, Respected General Meeting, my job as Secretary has put me in a hard position because from the last General Meeting until the present one hardly 3-4 months have passed and I have to give as satisfactory report the likes of which I could only do after a well conducted year of experience as the Secretary. Nonetheless, I can assure the General Meeting that I worked to create my report in such a way and to state that after the previous events the situation of the national Association naturally improved both morally and financially, and though we do not have the expected results, as a result of the delay of the ministerial decree and the indolence of the majority of the Gypsies, who thus work to decimate their own, the report reveals 70% of the Gypsies to be their own enemy and thus of all the rest. I want to be brief and I will come directly to the report, the acceptance of which I ask from the respected General Meeting. From 1 July to November 1, 1926, 612 cases appeared at our central offices of which 168 were locally relevant and 426, the majority, more than half, rural affairs. The majority of these cases came from the authorities regarding the decree of the Ministry of Interior; they were all effectively dealt within the shortest possible time, in 1-2 days. Therefore, concerning the itemised cases themselves, the deliberations, how they were effectively dealt with, and how the resolutions were forwarded, we have precise accounts that may be viewed by anyone. The number of individual cases proves that the amount of administration has greatly increased while the number of administrative officers has decreased, nonetheless, the work gets done, day in and day out, without pause, to which the respective officials and myself can attest. In addition to all this, one of our administrators travels to local groups where necessary and creates order and more new groups. Thus, local groups have been created in Baja, Gyöngyös, Mezőtűr, Túrkeve, Karcag, Kisújszállás, Hatvan, Salgótarján and numerous groups have been reorganised, all thanks to the work of our administrator. The existent Ministry of the Interior decree states that there are to be 55 local groups in the free royal cities [2]. Our centre only has 40 of these with 1151 members working in them. The local group membership numbers and due paying members:

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The number of Budapest members is 2154, of these only 200 pay dues.

1.	Baja	65	members	14	due paying
2.	Békéscsaba	286	"	82	"
3.	Gyula	44	"	44	"
4.	Balassagyarmat	78	"	24	"
5.	Csongrád	31	"	21	"
6.	Cegléd	44	"	44	"
7.	Debrecen	901	"	52	"
8.	Győr	69	"	49	"
9.	Hatvan	40	"	40	"
10.	Hajdúböszörmény	42	"	11	"
11.	Hódmezővásárhely	127	"	85	"
12.	Karcag	42	"	42	"
13.	Kiskunfélegyháza	30	"	3	"
14.	Kisújszállás	30	"	30	"
15.	Kecskemét	130	"	6	"
16.	Makó	195	"	68	"
17.	Mezőtúr	54	"	44	"
18.	Nagykanizsa	51	"	28	"
19.	Pápa	89	"	1	"
20.	Pécs	85	"	85	"
21.	Salgótarján	46	"	46	"
22.	Sopron	48	"	21	"
23.	Szarvas	95	"	22	"
24.	Szentes	41	"	41	"
25.	Székesfehérvár	77	"	11	"
26.	Szolnok	120	"	110	"
27.	Törökszentmiklós	70	"	11	"
28.	Vác	71	"	60	"
29.	Veszprém	94	"	26	"
30.	Zalaegerszeg	88	"	20	"
	30 groups	in place of 3123 members		1151 members	

We may conclude from all this that the relatively few rural paying members, nonetheless, pay a sufficient amount and that several million will be paid upon the execution of the ministerial decree [3]. We have shown the moral success of the legal and efficient operation of our administration and our precise and professional executive work, and thus we have shown how with only 1/4 membership there is greater income than when there was five times the number of members. The growth of our income will be presented by Dr. Jenő Járosi. I have to report that we have paid for 10-12 funeral costs we owed, and

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in addition to that, we had just entered complete bankruptcy, without a penny. Today though we have 33 million in cash.

Concerning the lawsuits, the counsellor will give a report [4], likewise, concerning the position of our club [5]. I still have to report that we went twice in deputation to the Ministry of the Interior and once to the Ministry of Finance and twice to the state police, always as representatives of the Gypsy population, and though true we always received promises, when and how our cases will be resolved remains a mystery for the future. Our President himself pursued the case of having sales tax cancelled, but strangely here and there complaints arrive that sales tax is still collected from musicians. We ask that you to refer complaints of this sort to me that I may take measures. As concerns the musical performances of underage individuals, we are waiting for the petitions concerning the underaged from the local groups together with the warrant from the authorities. We shall present these to the Ministry of the Interior and after their settlement inform the affected authorities.

Statistics on income from membership dues
July 1, 1926 to October 31, 1926.

Budapest	47,876,000 Crowns
Countryside	65,530,600 Crowns
Total	113,406,600 Crowns

Funeral aid granted
July 1, 1926 to October 31, 1926.

Budapest	10,750,000 Crowns
Countryside	8,032,000 Crowns
Total	18,782,000 Crowns

Extraordinary aid
July 1, 1926 to October 31, 1926.

Budapest	570,000 Crowns
Countryside	No such request has come
Total	570,000 Crowns

Counsellor Dr. Jenő Járosi will refer to the asset accounts and also the provision for legal aid. I ask that my report be accepted. Loud approval after the report was read.

Zsiga Rácz, Vice President, in referring to the secretarial report stated that the most important change in the organisation of the Association was the formation of the Budapest

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local group and with the election of the leadership on the July 1, 1926, it will work independently from the leadership for the national Association as the Budapest local group will elect a new leadership for themselves. Such a separation is necessary in order to work more effectively. The Association has worked effectively to date and in the future, it can be even more hoped for, as many members have not fulfilled their responsibilities, but in the future, it can be hoped that these members too will be conscientious. It can be all the more hoped for as the decree of the minister of the interior made payment of membership dues a responsibility for all. This decree was made in the interest of the Gypsy musicians in order for them to be grouped together in a greater unit. The force and advantage of this decree lies in making it so that those who do not fulfil their responsibilities not only act against the decree but against themselves and against all the Gypsy populace.

Gábor Kozák, President, asks dr. Jenő Járosi to present the financial statement.

Dr. Jenő Járosi presents the numbers from the final financial statement and afterwards refers to the productive work of the Association in the recent past, the visible effect of which is the accumulation of more than 30 million crowns cash available between July 1 and today, despite no increase in income and despite paying for all debts owed by the Association.

The General Meeting accepted the final financial statement and granted acquittal.

József Kovács, representative of the Kaposvár local group, proposed that the leadership use its influence to see that the ministerial decree regulates work permits not only in areas under legal authority but in towns as well, as only then can the decree be effectively executed [6].

The General Meeting accepts the proposal of József Kovács [...] the leadership that they take such a measure and contact the competent authorities.

József Kovács next proposes that the leadership use its influence and that the Hungarian Composers' Association [7] not collect musical copyright royalties, as this quite encumbers the work of the Gypsies.

Dr. Jenő Járosi comments upon the proposal and explains that the work of the Hungarian composers' Association is necessary, for if it did not exist [...] the musical copyright royalties and thus these would move abroad.

József Kovács recognises the facts presented by Dr. Jenő Járosi.

Gyula Demeter Secretary of the local group from Vác, illuminates the past, that is to say from the formation of the Association to today and concludes that the crisis [8] in the Association was not only caused by the leadership, the greater part was because of the incompatibility and apathy of their membership. For this reason, he warns the present leadership to exile from their hearts any incompatibility, as such a spirit only destroys and lays waste and cannot build. He asks his colleagues to take to heart his words. It is in such a spirit that Hungarian Gypsies will be great.

The President orders the meeting closed.

Géza Orsolya, Secretary; Gábor Kozák, President; Ilona Kovács, rapporteur; Ákos Saáry, Pál Jároka, corroborated the minutes.

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Notes

1. The decree primarily stated that "reasons of public security and general law enforcement" made it imperative that cities with proper councils and cities with legislative authority allow only musicians with a permit to play. A working permit could only be given to musicians who were Hungarian citizens with no doubt as to their patriotism, were over eighteen years old and had proper musical knowledge. The local police authority issued the document, in contrast to the Ministry of the Interior of foreign musicians, noting it in their residence permit. The decree also stated that the work permit could only be issued to members of the National Hungarian Musicians' Association and the Hungarian Gypsy Musicians' National Association. If someone performed music without an official document, he could be punished with up to fifteen days' incarceration and a maximum fine of one million crowns. The decree did not include musicians who had a degree from the music academy and corporate, institutional or organisational orchestras (Belügyi Közlöny, 1926, pp. 445-447).
2. The minutes mistakenly write of and name free royal cities, as the effect of Ministry of the Interior circular decree number 137.000/1926 was for cities with legislative authority and cities with proper councils (Belügyi Közlöny, 1926, pp. 445-447). Furthermore, in the 1870's most of the royal free cities were reassigned cities with legislative authority, while agrarian cities and other less significant royal free cities were reassigned as cities with proper councils. A city with legislative authority had the same authority as a royal county and was headed by a count, a city council and legislative committee. Cities with proper councils belonged immediately under royal county authority. They were able to act independently managing their own internal affairs and the city council, led by a mayor, was the highest authority (Bán, 1989, pp. 137, 208).
3. The Hungarian Gypsy Musicians' National Association was able to count on a significant increase in income following the circular decree of the minister of the interior number 137.000/1926 as it mostly tied musical performances to working permits within cities with proper councils or cities with legislative authority. Gypsies only received working permits if they were members of the Hungarian Gypsy Musicians' National Association, a membership they could only hold if they paid their membership fees regularly (Belügyi Közlöny, 1926, pp. 445-447).
4. The counsellor for the Hungarian Gypsy Musicians' National Association recalled a year following these events as to how the lawsuits of the Association were and the impossible situation they were in:

> I took over the counselorship of the Association one year ago. Those times were definitely not rosy a year ago. A legion of lawsuits was in the works against the Association. These were serious lawsuits that constantly threatened to capsise the Association. The whole horrible truth about the purchase of the club and its consequences came to light in the past year. Kovács Interieur was suing us for 167,000,000 Crowns, Vilmos Ács for 32,000,000 Crowns, Exner for 16,000,000, Hevesi for 4,000,000 C, and Dr. Gábor Illés for 54,000,000 C, etc. etc. It took great effort and a lot of work to somehow cutback the amount. In part through agreements, in part through court victories. And so there are hardly any lawsuits against us at this time. (Magyar Cigányzenészek Lapja, 1927a, p. 1).

5. The Gypsy musicians' organisation created the Hungarian Gypsy Musicians' National Club in 1925, with the intention of promoting social life, for which they rented space. The year following its founding conflicts over the rent contracts brought the club affairs before the courts, these suits lasted until 1929 (MNLOL K-150-VII-5 1935/153 186/3777 cs., Esti Kurír, 1929, p. 4).
6. The territorial purvey of the Minister of the Interior's decree number 137.000/1926 was limited to the cities with proper councils and cities with legislative authority (Belügyi Közlöny, 1926, p. 445).

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7. The Hungarian Lyricists and Composers and Music Publishers Federation (1907-1952) dealt with primarily the collection of owed royalties and the lawsuits related to these, in addition to the representation of the interests of the members for whom, over time, it created a retirement and aid fund (Géra, 2007, pp. 11-132).
8. During the year an official audit revealed that the organisation's expenditures and those related to the scandal embroiled Hungarian Gypsy Musicians' Club not only consumed but exceeded the annual income. This led to the Association being placed under an official trustee. The Association was thus unable to fulfil the tasks set in the Statutes, such as providing funeral costs, leading to the growth of financial distress as members and local groups began to refuse to send their payments (Hajnáczky, 2018, p. 229).

Source: MNLOL, K-150-VII-5 1935/153 186/3777 cs.
Prepared for publication by Tamas Hajnáczky.

Comments

Noteworthy in the Minutes is the unique information we receive about the number of the local groups, in addition to the reception of the circular decree 137.000/1926. The publication of the resolution was an important milestone in the life of the organisation, as the lot of the Gypsy musicians in Hungary was not only detrimentally affected by the peasant bands but the growing popularity of jazz music. In the columns of national and local newspapers articles begin to complain of how Gypsy music is being tossed aside in favour of jazz, and thus increase impoverishment of the Gypsy musicians (Sárosi, 2012, pp. 189-205). The President of the Association expressed his quite negative opinion in one of these columns concerning the spread of jazz:

> This new music is scummy, wretched, marketplace clatter, miserable compositions, stolen from here and there, it's not meant for Hungarian Gypsies, it doesn't compliment his spirit, it's foreign and unpatriotic. [...] Not only I, but there is no one Gypsy musician in this country who does not hate this new music. It is a foreign spiritual wart. (Pesti Hírlap, 1926, p. 9).

The Association was active again and composed an interpolation to the minster of the interior in which it asked the authorities to protect their interests from the foreign jazz and Schrammel bands, demanding their expulsion from the country (8 Órai Újság, 1925, p. 11; Pesti Hírlap, 1924, p. 9). The interpolation from the Gypsy musicians to the Minister of the Interior did not go unanswered and the following year the ministry issued circular decree number 137.000/1926 concerning the official work permit for professional musicians, which in effect meant the expulsion of foreign musicians. The great value of this source is due to the relatively few documents from the Hungarian Gypsy Musicians' National Association's central offices surviving in the Hungarian National Archives, and the sources from the local groups of the Association are also rare (Pomogyi, 1995, pp. 172-178; Nagy, 2011, pp. 248-258; Kereskényiné Cseh, 2008, pp. 105-128; Hajnáczky, 2018, pp. 216-246). The Minutes published here, taken during the General Meeting, are the only original one surviving and its significance is the insight it gives into the workings of the early period of the organisation, a time about which most of the sources are from

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the media. Some of the later minutes are available because they were published in the Association's bulletin or the Hungarian Gypsy Musicians' Journal.

Tamas Hajnáczky

7.1.4 *The Battle against Jazz and for Protection of Hungarian Gypsy Music*

1927. augusztus-szeptember.

Harc a dzsessz ellen!

A Magyar Cigányzenészek Országos Egyesülete folyó évi szeptember hó 26-án több társadalmi testület részvételével értekezletet tartott, mely a dzsessz elleni küzdelemmel foglalkozott. Az értekezlet határozati javaslatot fogadott el, melyet felterjeszt az egyesület a nagyméltóságú Belügy-, Vallás- és Közoktatásügyi miniszter urakhoz.

A mindenképen impozáns gyűlés lefolyásáról az alábbi jegyzőkönyvben számolunk be:

Jegyzőkönyv

Felvétetett Budapesten 1927. szeptember 26-án, a Magyar Cigányzenészek Országos Egyesülete által a társadalmi testületek részvételével megtartott értekezleten.

Jelen voltak: Dr. Huszka Jenő min. tanácsos és fürjesi Klimkó István a Magyar Szövegírók, Zeneszerzők és Zeneműkiadók Szövetkezete képviseletében, Tobler János orsz. gyül. képviselő, Ágoston Gézáné a Magyar Asszonyok Nemzeti Szövetsége, Vécsey Éva a Katolikus Háziasszonyok, Csermely György és Markos Gyula az Országos Dalosszövetség, Nagy Sándor az Egyetemi és Főiskolai Turul Szövetség, Phillip László és Werbőczy Bajtársi Egyesület, Hary György és Steiner Lajos a Bethlen Gábor Kör képviseletében. A Magyar Cigányzenészek Országos Egyesülete részéről jelen voltak: Rácz Zsiga központi ügyv. alelnök, Dr. Járosi Jenő ügyész, Füredi F. Fábián a budapesti helyi csoport elnöke, Lillin József titkár, Berkes Miklós közp. alelnök, Gyallai Ferenc és Hédervári Ferenc, a budapesti helyi csoport alelnökei. A fentieken kívül még számos résztvevő.

Rácz Zsiga ügyv. alelnök: Igen tisztelt Hölgyek és Urak! Üdvözlöm Önöket, köszönöm, hogy hívó szavunkat meghallgatták és a nemes, hazafias cél érdekében ily számosan megjelentek. Értekezletünk célja, hogy a magyar zenét, a magyar nótát megvédjük egy mindjobban elhatalmasodó idegen zenei áramlattal szemben. Ezt a mozgalmat úgy szeretnék feltüntetni, mint a cigányság ökonómiai harcát. A valóság pedig az, hogy a cigányság szívéből kitörő érzés megnyilvánulása ez, mellyel a cigányság ismét jelét adja magyarságának, mely mellett minden körülmények között kitart. A magyar cigányság évszázadok óta osztozik a nemzet bujában, bánatában, megtanult vele sírni, nevetni. Most, amikor veszély fenyegeti a nemzet egyik kincsét, a magyar nótát, kötelességének tartja ennek megóvásáért síkraszállni. Ott tartunk ma már, hogy a családi életet is megmételyezi az erkölcsrontó, minden jobb érzést kiölő dzsessz muzsika, ma már a gyermekek is charlestont táncolnak. Minden magyarnak kötelessége ez ellen küzdeni kiölni a mételyt és újra belecsepegtetni a magyar szívekbe a magyar érzést. Ezt várják tőlünk elszakított

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testvéreink is, akikkel a leghatalmasabban kapcsol bennünket össze a magyar zene, a magyar nóta! Ezt nem engedjük elpusztítani, kivenni a kezünkből. Most pedig felkérem Lillin titkár urat a benyújtandó határozati javaslat ismertetésére.

Lillin József titkár: A Magyar Cigányzenészek Országos Egyesülete fájó szívvel látja azt, hogy a nemzeti muzsikát, mely századokon keresztül élt a magyar lelkekben nincs aki ápolja. A magyar cigányságot leszorítják ősi hivatásának teréről és teret engednek a nagy rombolásnak, mely a magyar érzéseket kitépi a szívekből. Nagyon szomorú dolog ez. Vigaszul csak az szolgál, hogy úgy látjuk nemcsak a magyar cigányzenészek érzik azt, hogy itt cselekedni kell, hanem a társadalomnak az a része is, amelyben még vannak nemes, szép és magyaros érzések, melyek érzik azt, hogy a nemzetet beteg, idegen férgek rágják ki akarva szívni a magyar vért, elsorvasztani a magyar kultúrát. A szavak órája elmúlt, itt már sürgősen kell cselekedni. Intézményesen kell védelmére kelni a magyar zenének és gátat vetni az erkölcstelen divathóbortnak. Most tisztelettel előterjesztem határozati javaslatunkat, melyben a nagyméltóságú Belügyminiszter úrhoz és a vallás- és közoktatásügyi miniszter úrhoz fordulunk azzal a kéréssel, hogy rendeletileg vessenek gátat a további rombolásnak:

Nagyméltóságú Miniszter Úr!
Kegyelmes Urunk!

A Magyar Cigányzenészek Országos Egyesülete az alulírott társadalmi testületek bevonásával és részvételével 1927. évi szeptember hó 26-án gyűlést tartott, amelynek határozatához képest a legmélyebb tisztelettel a következőket terjesztjük Nagyméltóságod színe elé.

A szerencsétlen kimenetelű világháború következtében Nagy-Magyarország majdnem minden értékét elvették vagy legalább is megcsonkították a győzők és az ellenségeink. Országunk területének egy nagy része, gazdasági-, ipari javainknak majdnem teljessége idegen kézre került. Kevés, nagyon kevés értékünk maradt meg. Azt mondhatnók, hogy nyelvünkön és zenénken kívül minden elveszett.

Amit a fegyver, az erőszak nem tudott elrabolni azt fenyegeti most veszély, azt akarja elsikkasztani tőlünk egy alattomos, tetszetős külszínben jelentkező ellenség: a nemzetközi divatzenének nevezett erkölcstelen áramlat. Bevonult hozzánk is, mint igen sok európai államba céltudatos rombolást okozó szárnyakon a dzsessz muzsika. Céltudatosan terjeszkedik ez a métely arra törekedve, hogy nemzeti erkölcsöket a nemzetköziség erkölcstelenségébe olvassza össze. Nemtelen céljának eszközéül felhasználja a háborús izgalmak által beteggé tett emberi gyöngeségeket, a mulatni-, tobzódni-, a felejteni vágyást, a gyönyörkeresést. Szomorúan kell megállapítani, hogy célját úgy, mint másutt, nálunk is ha nem is érte el, de erősen megközelítette. Ha visszapillantunk a társadalomnak és a társaságoknak háború előtti éveire és összehasonlítjuk azokat a jelen időkkel, szégyenletes érzés vesz rajtunk erőt: a háború előtti idők komolyan dolgozó becsületes munkát végző férfijaira egy nagy része helyébe minden komolyság nélküli, szaladgáló, munkát kerülő alakokat látunk, akik élnek élveznek máról holnapra, szerepet játszanak,

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hangadók, szórják a pénzt nem tudni miből, nem tudni honnan jöttek és hova tűnnek el. Így változnak át a férfiak. Na és a nők? Ha a háború előtt a Duna korzón végig ment volna egy nő térden felül érő szoknyában, mint ahogy ma százan és százan szaladgálnak ott, bizonyára elverték volna. Ha a béke években táncközben csak felényire oly érzékien táncoltak volna, mint ma, a legnagyobb botránkozással vezették volna ki az illetőt. Nem állítjuk azt, hogy ennek az erkölcsrombolásnak egyedüli és kizárólagos oka a dzsessz muzsika, de hogy kétségtelenül hozzájárul, azt külön bizonyítani fölösleges.

A békevilágban is mulattak az emberek, de milyen más mulatás volt az, mint a mai. A vendéglőkből, kávéházakból a magyar nóták bájos halk akkordjai csendülnek fel, nem zavarva, hanem inkább kellemesen érintve azokat, akik kívülről hallgatták, ma pedig lépten-nyomon a dzsessz beteges vonyítása, a dobok zörgése fertőzi meg a kávéházakat, az utak levegőjét- és a lelkeket.

Nagyméltóságos Miniszter Úr! Tudatában vagyunk annak, hogy a kérdés megoldása sok nehézséggel jár, mert nehéz – mint mondják – szembeszállni egy világáramlattal, különösen akkor, ha e szembeszállás, esetleg egyéni jogokat is csorbítana. Kérdezzük azonban szabad-e ezzel törődni, amikor a világáramlat – legyen – az kommunizmus vagy dzsessz zene – rombolásra törekszik és nem igazságos-e az egyéni jogfosztás akkor, ha ez az egyéni jog e rombolást előmozdítani akarja.

Ezek után ama tiszteletteljes kéréssel fordulunk Nagyméltóságodhoz méltóztassék a dzsessz-bendek a dzsessz muzsika interpretálói működését rendeletileg beszüntetni vagy amennyiben a teljes beszüntetés lehetetlen, úgy szigorú korlátok közé szorítani.

Az alábbiakban legyen szabad megjelölni azon módokat, amelyekkel a korlátozást keresztülvihetőnek tartjuk.

1. Minden olyan nyilvános helyiségben: kávéházakban, vendéglőkben, cukrászdákban, tánclokálokban stb., ahol dzsessz-bend működik kötelező cigányzenekarnak az alkalmazása is. A dzsessz-bendnek a cigányzenekarral felváltva egyenlő időközökben kell működni. Este 10 óra után azonban dzsessz-bend tekintettel arra, hogy működése az éjszaka, nyugalmát zavarná, egyáltalán nem működhet.

2. Minden nyilvános helyen, ahol műsoros előadásokat tartanak, pl. varietékben, kabarékban, orfeumokban a műsor 50%-ának magyar számokból kell állnia. Ez alatt nemcsak az értendő, hogy magyar szerzők műveiből, hanem hogy magyaros jellegű és tartalmú számokból.

3. Mindazon helyeken, ahol nyilvánosan táncolnak: mulatókban, nyilvános teadélutánokon, táncmulatságokon, bálokon, stb. a táncok 50%-ának magyar táncnak kell lenni. Amennyiben ily táncokhoz dzsessz-zene alkalmaztatik, úgy cigányzenekar alkalmazása is kötelező.

A 2. és a 3. pont esetében a műsorok, illetve táncrendek az engedély kiadása előtt az illetékes hatóságnak beszolgáltatandók és az engedély csak ezek megfelelő mivolta esetén adható ki. Az illetékes rendőrhatóság kiküldöttének feladata ellenőrizni, hogy a műsorokban és táncrendekben foglaltak betartassanak.

Ezen módokat bátorkodunk Nagyméltóságod figyelmébe ajánlani.

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Kérésünk támogatására még csak azt a legfontosabb és ezért utoljára hagyott érvet szabadjon felhozni, hogy a dzsessz-bend eltekintve erkölcsromboló hatásától az egyik legnagyobb kincsünktől igyekszik bennünket megfosztani, a magyar nótától. Mind kisebb és kisebb térre szorul a magyar nóta országot átfogó területe. Ma már nemcsak a nagy pesti nyilvános helyeken dívik a dzsessz-muzsika, hanem már a kis városokra, falukra is kiterjesztette hatását. Itt is már sok helyen a magyar csárdás helyett charlestont táncolnak, a magyar nóták helyett divatos tangóslágereket kezdenek énekelni.

A magyar nóta, a magyar zene a nemzeti kultúránknak egyik legerősebb oszlopa, egyik legnagyobb értéke. Elmondhatjuk, hogy bejárta a világot és mindenütt dicsőséget szerzett a magyar névnek.

Mi magyar cigányok, dacára annak, hogy a dzsessz nagyrészt kiverte a vonót a kezünkből és kivette a kenyeret a szánkból, hagyományainkhoz híven kitartottunk és ma is kitartunk nagy nemzeti kincsünk a magyar nóta mellett és bizalommal remélünk abban, hogy Nagyméltóságod a küzdelmünkben felénk nyújtja segítő kezét.

Ezek után bátorkodunk még Nagyméltóságod figyelmét felhívni arra, hogy a magyar Dalszövetség, mely országunknak egy szintén igen erős tényezője Nagyméltóságodhoz külön is fordul ezen ügyben kérvénnyel.

Mély tisztelettel:

Ezután ismerteti az Országos Magyar Dalszövetségnek Szeged, 1927. augusztus 15-én tartott díszközgyűlésen Zseny József által előterjesztett határozati javaslatot, melyet a díszközgyűlés el is fogadott. Eszerint a Dalszövetség mozgalmat indít a magyar dal- és zene nemzeti hivatásának megóvása érdekében a selejtes idegen dal- és zene áramlatok kiküszöbölésére és a szükséges kormányintézkedések kieszközlésére. Visszapillantást vet a javaslat a múltra, mely azt bizonyítja, hogy a magyar dal- és zene végigkísér bennünket Hun őseinktől ezer éven át. Most azonban a magyar dalnak és zenének virágdíszes fáját kezdi őrölni a szú, virágainak hímporát idegen lepkék mételyezik, a néger erotika, dal, zene és tánc. Fel kell rázni kábultságából a magyar társadalmat. Hivatkozik Széchenyire; arra intette a nemzetet, hogy ne engedjük magunkhoz férkőzni a külföldieskedést, hanem féltékenyen őrizzük meg ős magyar lelkiségünket, mert ha kivész belőlünk fajiságunk érzete, megtörik nemzeti erőnk. A magyar zenét épp úgy meg kell védeni az elnemzetlenítő idegen zenei hatásoktól, mint a magyar nyelvet, mert ikertestvérei ezek egymásnak, elválaszthatatlanok, egyik a másiknak pusztulását vonja maga után. A magyar zenét régi eredetiségében a cigány zenekarok tartották fenn, ezeket bátran nevezhetjük nemzeti-zenekaroknak, mert összetételükben, játékmodorukban a más nemzetbeli zenekaroktól teljesen elütnek s művészetüket a külföld is mindig nagyra becsülte. Wagner a jövő zenéjének a magyart nyilvánította, ha abban az irányban fejlődik és fejlesztik, amint Balla Miksa, Czinka Panna, Bihari, Lavotta, Csermák nyomán megindult. A magyar lelkiséget megmételyező és idegenből jött selejtes zenei áramlatokat ki kell küszöbölni, a dzsesszbendeket kormányrendelettel betiltani. A dalos egyesületek dalestélyein csupán magyar zeneműveket adjanak elő. Oly mulatságokon, ahol dzsesszben játszik, ne vegyünk részt, a dzsesszbendes kávéházakat és más helyiségeket ne látogassuk.

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Intézzen feliratot a díszközgyűlés a kormányhoz, hogy a magyar dal-és zene érdekében szükséges kormányrendeleti intézkedéseket sürgősen tegye meg.

Ezek után pedig felkérem a gyűlés igen tisztelt résztvevőit, szíveskedjenek javaslatunkhoz hozzászólni.

Tobler János országgyűlési képviselő: Tisztelt Uraim! Tiszta szívből üdvözlöm Önöket. Csatlakozom az előttem szóló azon megállapításához, hogy a magyar dal- és a magyar zene megvédésének kérdése nem a cigányság gazdasági kérdése. Ennél sokkal több, a magyar nemzet gyermekeinek lelki szükséglete. Erő, amit az osztrák zsarnokság is kénytelen volt felismerni, mert a szabadságharc után eltiltotta a tárogatót, a magyar hangszerek egyik legszebbikének használatát csupán azért, mert annak bűbájos hangja rezgésbe hozta a magyar szíveket és ébren tartotta a hazaszeretetet. Erre pedig ma is nagy, talán még nagyobb szükség van, mint a szabadságharc leverése után. Szükségünk van tehát a magyar dalra, mint a hazaszeretet ápolásának eszközére, mert hatásában minden másnál utolérhetetlenebb. Szent kötelességünk a magyar dal- és a magyar zene megvédése minden idegen áramlattal szemben. Szomorú, hogy ez az idegen áramlat pártfogásra talált nálunk. Különösen bántó ez most, amikor a nemes angol lord szava lázba hozta a magyar szíveket. Épp azért a magyar társadalomnak össze kell ez ellen fogni és megvédeni a magyar nemzeti zenét. Kijelentem, hogy pártom nevében és a magam részéről is csatlakozom a mozgalomhoz.

Ágoston Gézáné: A Magyar Asszonyok Nemzeti Szövetsége megbízásából bejelentem, hogy csatlakozunk a mozgalomhoz. Kívánjuk, hogy ennek sikere minél teljesebb legyen, hogy a magyar nemzeti érzést fakasztó magyar dal megvédessék az idegen áramlattal szemben.

Vécsey Éva: A Katholikus Háziasszonyok nevében bejelentem csatlakozásomat annál is inkább, mert mikor a magyar nótát védjük, védjük a családok tiszta erkölcseit is.

Dr. Huszka Jenő: A Magyar Szövegírók, Zeneszerzők Szövetkezete részéről csatlakozom a mozgalomhoz. Arra hívom fel az értekezlet figyelmét, hogy ne csak kormányintézkedésekre támaszkodjunk, hanem társadalmi mozgalmat is indítunk a magyar zene védelmére. Én mint a rádióbizottság tagja már régebben ily irányú működést fejtek ki. Különböző társadalmi testületek szívesen vesznek részt a küzdelemben.

Csermely György: Az Országos Magyar Dalosszövetség részéről a legteljesebb mértékben hozzájárulok a mozgalomhoz, amelyhez Szövetségünk mindig készséggel nyújt segédkezet.

Nagy Sándor: Az Egyetemi és Főiskolai Hallgatók Turul Szövetsége képviseletében kijelentem, hogy a 18.000 tagot számláló Szövetség a legteljesebb támogatást nyújtja.

Markos Gyula: Zseny József a Magyar Dalosszövetség elnöke megbízásából köszöntöm e szép magyar mozgalmat, mely irredenta célokat is szolgál. Zseny József velem együtt bármikor szívesen áll szolgálatára e mozgalomnak. Pár évvel ezelőtt megírtam a cigányság történetét és már ebben lefektettem, hogy a cigányság hathatós terjesztője és művelője a magyar zenének.

Forgács Ferenc: A Csaba bajtársi Egyesület megbízásából kijelentem, hogy csatlakozunk a nemes küzdelemhez.

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Hary György: A Bethlen Kör megbízásából örömmel csatlakozom a mozgalomhoz. Szomorúan látjuk, hogy a magyar társadalomhoz mindig hű és ragaszkodó cigányzenészséget teljesen cserbenhagyta. Mi a magunk részéről oda hatunk, hogy az megváltozzék, hogy újból magyar zene szóljon és újból a magyar tánc járja.

Phillip László: A Werbőczy Bajtársi Egyesület megbízásából üdvözlöm az értekezletet és biztosítom Önöket, hogy a nemes célt mi is teljes szívvel szolgáljuk. Vannak kik azt mondják, hogy e mozgalom a magyar cigányságnak csupán kenyérkereseti mozgalma. Mi tudjuk, hogy nem így van, de ha így volna is, erre a magyar cigányoknak joga van sokkal inkább, mint a beözönlő külföldieknek. A magyar földnek a fiai az elsők. Kijelentem, hogy egyesületem ünnepségein, összejövetelein dzsessz sohasem fog muzsikálni, csak a cigány. Indítványozom, hogy a cigányzenészek Egyesülete vidéken is csináljon propagandát a magyar muzsika mellett.

Dr. Járosi Jenő: Örömmel látom a nagy lelkesedést, mellyel mozgalmunkat a résztvevő társadalmi testületek fogadták és arra kérem az igen tisztelt itt megjelent képviselőiket, hogy a testületeikkel rokon testületekben is hassanak oda, hogy azok is csatlakozzanak mozgalmunkhoz. Mi a magunk részéről mindent elkövetünk a nemes cél érdekében és minden eszközzel küzdeni fogunk azért, hogy újból magyar nóta szóljon mindenütt.

Lillin József: A javaslatot az itt elhangzottakkal kibővítve elfogjuk juttatni az egyes testületekhez aláírás és pecséttel való ellátás végett. Ennek megtörténte után pedig átadjuk azt a Nagyméltóságú belügyminiszter és a vallás- és közoktatásügyi miniszter uraknak.

A gyűlés az indítványt nagy lelkesedéssel elfogadja.

Füredi Fábián: Hölgyeim és Uraim! Nekem jutott az a szép feladat, hogy megköszönjem azt a kedves és jóindulatú támogatást, melyben bennünket a magyar dal megvédése terén részesítettek. A magyar cigányság évszázadokon keresztül a magyar nemzethez forrott, együtt volt vele bújában, bánatában. A megszállott területek elszakított magyarsága nem a szaxofont várja és nem a dob fülhasogató lármáját, hanem a magyar cigányokat, hogy a magyar feltámadás idején velük sírhassák ki szívük bánatát. Budapesten 3000 cigányzenész van kenyér nélkül és néz eléje a tél szenvedéseinek, azért mi mégsem fogunk négerül muzsikálni hanem csak magyar dalt játszunk, mert mi magyarok vagyunk. Magyarországon sohasem volt szaxofon és bendzsó, hanem csak a magyar dal és amíg magyar cigány lesz, ez nem is fog kipusztulni. Éljen a magyar dal! Éljen a magyar nemzet! Az értekezletet bezárom.

Dr. Járosi Jenő, egyesületi ügyész.
Rácz Zsiga s. k., központi ügyv. Alelnök.
Lillin József, titkár.
Füredi Fábián, a bpesti. helyics. Enöke.

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August – September, 1927.

The Battle against jazz!

In this year, on the 26th of September the Hungarian Gypsy Musicians' National Association held a meeting together with several social organisations to deal with the battle against jazz music. The meeting accepted a resolution to be proposed to the right honourable Minister for Religion and Public Education.

The following minutes are an account of this very impressive gathering:

The Minutes

Recorded on 26th September 1927, in Budapest, at a meeting of the Hungarian Gypsy Musicians' National Association and social organisations.

Present were Dr. Jenő Huszka Jenő, ministerial counsellor, and István Klimkó of Fürjes, representing the Hungarian Lyricists, Composers and Music Publishers Cooperative [1], János Tobler János, parliamentary representative, Mrs Géza Ágoston, the Hungarian Women's National Federation [2], Éva Vécsey, the Catholic Houswives [3], György Csermely and Gyula Markos, the National Song Federation [4], Sándor Nagy, the University and College Turul Federation [5], László Phillip, the Werbőczy Brother in Arms Association [6], and György Hary and Lajos Steiner from the Bethlen Gábor Circle [7]. From the Hungarian Gypsy Musicians' National Association present were: Zsiga Rácz, the central acting Vice-President, Dr. Jenő Járosi Jenő, counsellor, Fábián F. Füredi, President of the Budapest local group, József Lillin, Secretary, Miklós Berkes central Vice-President, Ferenc Gyallai and Ferenc Hédervári, the Vice-Presidents of the Budapest local group. There were many other participants in addition to the ones listed above.

Zsiga Rácz, acting Vice-President: Most honoured Ladies and Gentlemen! Greetings and thank you for heeding our call, and in the interests of this noble and patriotic aim have come in such numbers. The goal of our meeting is to protect Hungarian music and Hungarian song against the rising deluge of foreign music. They would like to present this movement as the Gypsies' economic battle. The truth is though that this is the manifestation of the feelings surging from the heart of the Gypsies, another sign of the Hungarian identity of the Gypsies, to which it holds under all circumstances. The Gypsies of Hungary have shared in the nations woes and sorrows for centuries, and have learned to cry and laugh together. Now when danger threatens one of the national treasures, Hungarian song, we feel it is our duty to champion this cause. We are at the stage when family life is infected by moral corrupting and debasing jazz music, at this moment our children are dancing the Charleston. It is the responsibility of every Hungarian to do battle against this, to kill the infection and to again water Hungarian hearts with Hungarian emotion. This is what our torn away brethren expect of us, joined to us by the greatest

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means, Hungarian music, Hungarian song! We will not let this be destroyed, taken from our hands. I would now ask Secretary Lillin to present the proposal to be interpolated.

József Lillin, Secretary: The Hungarian Gypsy Musicians' National Association observes with a pained heart that there is no one to guard national music, that which has lived in Hungarian souls throughout the ages. Hungarian Gypsies are forced from the stages of their ancient vocation and room is made for great destruction, which tears the Hungarian spirit from hearts. This is a tragedy. The only consolation is that we see that not only Hungarian Gypsy Musicians feel that they must act now, but also those parts of society which still hold on to noble, beautiful and Hungarian sentiments, those who feel that the nation is sick and that foreign maggots gnaw at it, wanting to suck Hungarian blood, draining Hungarian culture. The time for words has past, the time for urgent action has come. We have to provide institutional protection for Hungarian music and to put a stop to this immoral fashion craze. I would with the greatest respect table our proposal in which we turn to the right honourable Minister of the Interior and the Minister for Religion and Public Education with the request to end any further destruction with a decree:

Right Honourable Minister,
Gracious Sir,

The Hungarian Gypsy Musicians' National Association, with the inclusion and participation of the undersigned social organisations, held a meeting on the 26th of September, 1927, at which a resolution was brought and which we present with the greatest of respect to the Right Honourable Sir.

As consequence of and unfortunate conclusion of the world war, almost all of the treasures of Greater Hungary were taken from her, or to say the least were mutilated by the victors and our enemies. Most of our country's area and almost all the economic and industrial resources were given into foreign hands [8]. Few, very few, resources remained. I may say that other than our language and our music all else was lost.

What weapons and violence could not steal from us are being threatened by danger. One which seeks to embezzle it from us, an enemy cunningly dressed in attractive garments: that is to say the immoral flow of international fashionable music. It was marched into our midst, as it has been in many European states, on the wings of destruction: jazz music. This infection spreads consciously and works to melt national morals with international immorality. It exploits human weakness, an illness of the tensions of the war, for its ignoble aims it exploits the desire to rollick, revel, forget and seek pleasure. I must sadly conclude that even if it has not yet achieved its aims, as elsewhere, it has come dangerously close. If we glance back at the years preceding the war and society and social circles at the time, and we compare them to the present day, we are gripped by shame, in place of honest hard working men, for the most part, are immature, restless, figures avoiding work, living from day to day, masquerading, wasting money – who know from where – we know not where they came from and where they disappear. Such is the change in men. And the women? Before the war if a woman had walked along the Danube promenade in

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a skirt no longer than her knees, as hundreds and hundreds rush about today, she most surely would have been beaten. If in the years of peace they would have danced only half as sensually as they dance today they would have shown the individual the door and with the utmost of scandal. We are not saying that the exclusive cause of this moral destruction is jazz music, but without a doubt it contributes to it, and to prove this is needless.

During the years of peace people also amused themselves, but how different that jollyness was compared to today. The charming quiet chords of Hungarian song rolled forth from the restaurants and coffee houses, not bothering those hearing it outside, in fact rather gracefully amusing them. Today at every turn the sick yowling of jazz, the clatter of drums infects the coffee houses, the air, and souls.

Right Honourable Minister, We know that the solution to this question is very difficult, as it is difficult – so they say – to go against global trends, especially if this opposition might injure individual rights. We ask though, can not some thought be given to this when the global trend – be it communism or jazz music – seeks destruction and is not curtailing of individual rights just if this individual right wants to promote this destruction.

After stating the above, we turn respectfully to your Right Honourable person to graciously decree an end to jazz bands and the work of those interpreting jazz music, or if its complete suspension is impossible then to place strict constrictions on it.

May we here below designate those methods we believe through which constrictions could be implemented:

1. In all public places where jazz bands operate, coffee houses, restaurants, patisseries, dance halls etc. the employment of Gypsy musicians be compulsory. Jazz bands are to take equal turns playing. In the evening after 10 o'clock jazz bands are not to play at all, in consideration of their disruption of the peace and the quiet of the night.

2. In all public places where varied performances are given, such as music halls, cabarets, vaudeville shows, 50% of the performances are to be Hungarian numbers. This does not only mean the works of Hungarian composers, but also Hungarian in their style and content.

3. In all places were the public may dance: dance halls, public tea afternoons, dance reveries, balls etc. 50% of the dances are to be Hungarian. If these dances employ jazz music the employment of a Gypsy orchestra is compulsory.

In the case of point 2 and 3, the program and the dance order are to be given to the competent authorities before the issuance of the permit, which can only be issued if they are acceptable. The emissary of the competent police authority is responsible for checking that what was recorded in the program and dance order is observed.

It is these methods that we are emboldened to offer to the attention of the Right Honourable Minister.

If we, in asking for support, may bring up the most important and thus last remaining reason, that in light of the morally corrupting effect of jazz bands it seeks to rob us of the Hungarian song. The area of Hungarian song occupies less and less space in the country. For today it is not only in the large public places of Pest that jazz music is in vogue, it has

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extended its influence over smaller cities and villages. There too, in many places, they dance the Charleston instead of the Hungarian csárdás, in place of Hungarian songs they are beginning to sing fashionable tango hits.

Hungarian song, Hungarian music is one of the strongest pillars of our national culture and one of its greatest treasures. We can say that it has travelled the world and has attained glory for Hungary everywhere.

We Hungarians Gypsies, despite having had the violin bow mostly dashed from our hands by jazz and having had the bread taken from our mouths, have remained true to our traditions and today to we remain steadfast to our national treasure, Hungarian song, and we hope and trust that the Rights Honourable Minister will reach out a helping hand towards us in our battle.

We would be so bold as to call the Right Honourable Minister's attention to the separate petition of the Hungarian Song Federation, a truly strong organisation in our country, to the Right Honourable Minister, concerning this case.

With deep respect:

In the proposed resolution of the Hungarian National Song Federation was tabled and accepted at their 15 August, 1927, celebratory General Meeting by József Zseny. It seems the Song Federation began a movement to protect the national vocation of Hungarian song and music, and the exclusion of fashionable, poor quality, foreign songs and music through the achievement of the necessary governmental measures. The proposal cites the past as proof that Hungarian song and music accompanies our history. From our Hun ancestors through one thousand years. Today though the flowering tree that is Hungarian song and music is gnawed at by a grub, the nectar of its flowers in sucked away by foreign moths, negro eroticism, songs, music and dance. Hungarian society must be shaken from its comatose sleep. Quoting Széchenyi [9], who warns the nation to not allow foreignness to insinuate itself, but to jealously protect our ancient Hungarian spirit, for if we lose our racial sense our national strength will break. Hungarian music needs to be as protected against the effects of unnationalising foreign music, as the Hungarian language does, for they are each others twins and indivisible, the destruction of one brings with it that of the other. Gypsy orchestras preserved Hungarian music in its ancient originality, and we may boldly call them national-orchestras, for their composition and way of playing are completely different than other orchestras within the nation and their artistry has always been appreciated abroad. Wagner declared Hungarian music to be the music of the future, if it continues to develop and be developed as it has under the direction of Miksa Balla [10], Panna Czinka [11], Bihari [12], Lavotta [13], Csermák [14]. Foreign originating flawed musical trends, that poison the Hungarian spirit, are to be excluded and jazz bands are to be forbidden by government decree. Evenings of song at musical societies should only be Hungarian music. We should not participate in revels where they play jazz music, and not visit coffee houses and other locales where they have jazz bands. The celebratory General Meeting would propose a script to the government that in the interests of Hungarian song and music urgent governmental measures should be taken.

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I now ask that the respected members of the meeting be so kind as to make their comments.

János Tobler, member of parliament: Dear Gentlemen! I heartily greet you all. I join the previous speaker in his conclusion that the interest of protecting Hungarian song and Hungarian music in not a question of Gypsy livelihood. It is much more, it is the spiritual need of the children of the Hungarian nation. It is strength, one the Austrian tyranny was forced to recognise when it banned the *tárogató* after the war of independence, one of the most beautiful Hungarian instruments, simply because its charming song inflamed Hungarian hearts and kept alive the love of country. We are in great need of this today too, maybe even more than after the crushing of the war of independence. We are in need therefore of the Hungarian song as an instrument for the nursing love of country, for its ability to do so is far beyond all else. It is our holy duty to protect Hungarian song in the face of all foreign trends. It is sad that this foreign trend found support among us. It is especially hurtful now when the words of a noble English lord have emboldened Hungarian hearts [15]. For this very reason, Hungarian society should unite against this and protect Hungarian national music. I announce in the name of my party and on behalf of myself that I join the movement.

Mrs. Géza Ágoston: On behalf of the Hungarian Women's National Federation I announce that we are joining the movement. We wish it achieves the most success and that Hungarian song, a thing which awakens the Hungarian national sentiment, be protected from foreign trends.

Éva Vécsey: In the name of the Catholic Housewives I announce our joining, even more so because when we protect the Hungarian song we protect the pure morals of families.

Dr. Jenő Huszka: On behalf of the Hungarian Lyricists and Composers Federation I join the movement. I would call the attention of the meeting to not only relying on governmental measures but also on beginning a social movement in the protection of Hungarian music. I, as a member of the radio committee, have previously worked for such aims. A variety of social organisations happily participate in this struggle.

György Csermely: On behalf of the National Hungarian Song Lyricists Federation I wholeheartedly join this movement, to which the Federation has always readily given help.

Sándor Nagy: Representing the University and College Students' *Turul* Federation I announce that our federation of 18,000 members gives its complete support.

Gyula Markos: Entrusted by József Zseny, the President of the Hungarian Song Federation, I greet this beautiful Hungarian movement, which serves revisionist goals. Both József Zseny and I are at the service of this movement at any time. A few years ago I wrote the history of the Gypsies and in that work, I made plain that the Gypsy population is an effective disseminator and developer of Hungarian music.

Ferenc Forgács: Entrusted by the *Csaba* Fraternal Association I announce that we join this noble struggle.

György Hary: Entrusted by the *Bethlen* Circle it is with joy that we join the movement. We are saddened to see how Gypsy musicality, always true and devoted to Hungarian

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society, has been let down. For our part, we are working to change that and again have Hungarian music played and Hungarian dances danced.

László Phillip: Entrusted by the *Werbőczy* Fraternal Association I greet the meeting and assure you, that we too will serve this noble aim with all our hearts. There are some who say this movement is only a movement to provide bread winnings for Hungarian Gypsies. We know this is not the way it is, and if even it were so Hungarian Gypsies have a far greater right to this than the foreigners streaming in. The sons of Hungarian soil come first. I announce that our Association will never allow jazz music to be played at its celebrations and gatherings, only Gypsy music. I propose that the Gypsy musicians's Association have propaganda in the countryside in favour of Hungarian music.

Dr. Jenő Járosi: It is a joy to see the great enthusiasm with which our movement has met among the participating social organisations and I ask the most respected representatives here present that they influence other likeminded bodies through their own organisations that they too join our movement. We will do everything in the interest of this noble aim and use all means to battle for the Hungarian song to be played everywhere.

József Lillin: The proposal, together with the comments made here will be sent to certain bodies for their signatures and seals. After this has happened we shall give it to the Right Honourable Minister of the Interior and the Minister for Education and Religion.

The meeting enthusiastically passes the proposal.

Fábián Füredi: Ladies and Gentlemen! I have been given the happy task of thanking you for your kind and good-willed support, which you have provided for our protection of Hungarian songs. Hungarian Gypsies have bonded with the Hungarian nation over the centuries in sadness and sorrow. The Hungarians torn away in the occupied areas are not waiting for the saxophone or the ear-splitting racket of the drums but for Hungarian Gypsies with whom they can cry out the sorrows of their hearts at the time of the Hungarian resurrection. There are 3000 Gypsy musicians in Budapest without earnings and thus face the suffering of the winter. Nonetheless, we will still not play negro music but only Hungarian songs, for we are Hungarian. There have never been saxophones and banjos in Hungary, only Hungarian song and as long as there are Hungarian Gypsies it will never die. Long live the Hungarian song! Long live the Hungarian nation! I declare the meeting adjourned.

Dr. Jenő Járosi, Association Councillor.
Zsiga Rácz, central acting Vice-President.
József Lillin.
Fábián Füredi, President of the Budapest local group.

Notes

1. The Hungarian Lyricists, Composers and Music Publishers Cooperative (1907-1952) dealt primarily with enforcement of royalties and related court cases, in addition to representing the interests of its members, for whom, after a time, it created a retirement and aid fund (Géra, 2007, pp. 11-132).

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2. The Hungarian Women's National Federation (1918-1946) was a nationwide organisation, based on patriotic and Christian principles, with more than five hundred rural groups. The federation organised clothing drives for refugees from the territories lost following the Trianon peace treaty, in addition to trying to inform international public opinion through English and French language publications of the injustice inflicted on Hungary. Furthermore, it conducted social and child protection activities as well as helping the employment of farm and village women and Sunday schools (Viczián, 2003, p. 257).
3. The Catholic Housewives' National Federation (1908-1941) was created to coordinate the interests and representation of Catholic women working at home, and had many faculties and institutions. Notable was its girls' protection service for which it maintained homes and its Railway Mission (Viczián, 2001, p. 351).
4. The National Hungarian Song Federation (1867-?) was originally named the National Hungarian Glee Club Association and coordinated several hundred amateur glee clubs, had national events and singing competitions. Following the Trianon peace treaty co-federations were born in the lost territories (e.g. Hungarian Song Federation of Romania). It promoted patriotic and revisionist songs in Hungary and in the federations outside the country. It should not be confused with the Workers' Song Federation which, because of the aforementioned, took pains to differentiate itself and sang internationalist and socialist workers' songs (Maróti & Révész, 1983, pp. 71-131).
5. The *Turul* Federation (1919-1945) was the Horthy periods' most common revisionist youth movement, based on patriotic and Christian principles, primarily composed of college and university students. It had over one hundred local groups and saw as its premier task the social assistance of its members. The Federation became infamous during this period for its anti-semitism, aggressive nationalism, university fights and protests (Kerepeszki, 2012, pp. 5-9).
6. The Werbőczy Brother in Arms Association (no data) was the co-organisation of the *Turul* Federation for law students and lawyers. The Association organised camps, events, sports programs and popularised volunteer work, though with time it tarnished itself with the exclusion and assault of students of Jewish origin (Ámán, 2016, pp. 5-18).
7. The Bethel Gábor Circle (1910-?) was a students' association for college and university students, with patriotic and Calvinist principles, and operating in numerous locations throughout Hungary. It conducted a variety of activities including Bible study meetings, academic and popular science presentations. Furthermore, it established student residences for poorer students, dealt with social issues and in places joined the settlement movement (Páll, 1993, pp. 100-103).
8. See 7.1.2., Note 5.
9. Széchenyi, István (1791-1860), Statesman and politician.
10. No data.
11. Panna Czinka (1711-1772), famous Gypsy female first violinist.
12. János Bihari (1764-1827), famous Gypsy first violinist.
13. János Lavotta (1764-1820), famous first violinist and composer.
14. Antal Csermák (1771-1822), famous first violinist.
15. Lord Rothermere [Sidney Harold Harmsworth (1868-1940)] wrote an article entitled "Hungary's place in the sun" in the British daily the Daily Mail. He reasoned in favour of a reexamination of the Trianon peace treaty and the return of a portion of the taken territories. Following the article's publication Lord Rothermere received numerous thank you notes from Hungary, where within a few years he had several monuments dedicated to him (Tarján, [n.d.]). According to one press report, Károly Bura, the President of the Hungarian Gypsy Musicians' National Association, addressed the following letter to Lord Rothermere:

> Most Honourable Lordship! In the name of the newly formed Hungarian Gypsy Musicians' National Association and all Hungarian Gypsy musicians it is with deep admiration that we greet you and welcome Your Lordship's tireless work with which you seek to help to victory the cause of justice for Hungary. May Divine Providence grant your Lordship persevering

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> spiritual strength for the struggle to be a success and and for our national hope to become a reality. We have been pillaged and torn! And since this the notes on our violins cry with greater sorrow and shake with all the pains of our nation. However, we know our duty. We are there in those regions, torn asunder, with Hungarian song, and with Hungarian songs we remind our brethren that there will once again be Hungarian feasts in this world! We take this message forth in the world wherever Hungarian Gypsy musicians plays, that the Hungarian truth must be victorious! For God's justice is with us! For Lord Rothermere holds our banner! In the name of the Hungarian Gypsy Musicians' National Association, Károly Bura, President. (Magyarság, 1929, p. 13).

Source: [No Author]. (1927b). Harc a dzsessz ellen! *Magyar Cigányzenészek Lapja*, An. 4, No. 8-9, 1927, September, p. 2-5.
Prepared for publication by Tamas Hajnáczky.

Comments

The amendment to the Statutes of the Hungarian Gypsy Musicians' National Association, in addition to the Ministry of the Interior circular decree 137.000/1926 restricting foreign jazz musicians, did not lead to an end of complaints from the Gypsy musicians as their earnings hardly increased. In fact, those elements of the press who took up their cause continued to pour forth more and more articles condemning jazz music and in an increasingly vitriolic style. One of the daily papers asked the honorary President of the Association, who gave vent to the seemingly unstoppable growing popularity of jazz music:

> I deeply regret that here in our Hungary, in the Hungarian capital, this alcoholic music has been able to so spread, it is so full of infectious bacteria. It is like an epidemic, like sickness, we can hardly wait for it to end [...] We ask the highest forums to take into account today's difficult and sorry state and come to the aid of Gypsy music caught in the vortex of this scourge. (Újság, 1927, p. 8).

In September of 1927, the Association called together several General Meetings, inviting other organisations, where they resolved to again appeal to the minister of the interior to forbid jazz bands spreading in Hungary. At this point, the Gypsy musicians sought not only to exclude foreign jazz bands already restricted by the decree but to thwart the workings of local jazz orchestras. The emissaries of the Association soon submitted the above points to the ministry, with which they immediately drew the ire of coffeehouse, hotel, restaurant and pub owners. These businessmen naturally wanted to serve the desires of their customers. This time though the interpolation of the Gypsy musicians did not find with a favourable reception in the Ministry of the Interior, and their situation became all the more desperate as opportunities for Gypsy musicians abroad narrowed. Austria, Romania, Czechoslovakia, Poland and Switzerland completely closed their doors before Hungarian Gypsy musicians. The Gypsy musicians' organisation was unable to turn to the National Hungarian Music Federation for mediation in its desire to ban jazz, as the federation also represented Hungarian jazz musicians. Therefore, they began to turn to other forums to help further their cause (Hajnáczky, 2018, pp. 230-233).

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The minutes published in the Hungarian Gypsy Musicians' Journal is the most significant of all as it reveals that the Gypsy musicians sought to work together with other social organisations in the interests of achieving their goals. Furthermore, the proposed resolution in the minutes shows how the Gypsy musicians imagined the restriction of domestic jazz orchestras.

Tamas Hajnáczky

7.2 The Restarting of the Gypsy Musicians' Society and the Journal

7.2.1 *Károly Bura*

Beköszöntő

1929. április.

Hosszú hallgatás után ismét megszólalnak a néma betűk s hivatalos lapunk hasábjain szeretettel köszöntik mindazokat, akik barátaink, akik velünk éreznek, vagy akiket közös célok és gazdasági érdekek fűznek hozzánk. A Magyar Cigányzenészek Országos Egyesülete nemrégen friss munkaerőkkel, új munkához, – az egész cigányzenész társadalom javát, boldogulását szolgáló tevékenységhez, – látott és ezen munkájában nem nélkülözheti a betű erejét sem. Ezért indítottuk újra útjára hivatalos közlönyünket, szolgálja ez is minden sorával, minden betűjével a mi nagy céljainkat.

Célunk: az elárvult, sorsára hagyott és az idők viharában teljesen tönkrement cigányzenész társadalom talpra állítása, gazdasági és szociális helyzetének javítása, kulturális és társadalmi előrehaladásának biztosítása. Új csapásokon, új célokért akarunk harcolni és hisszük is, hogy nem eredménytelenül.

Újjászerveztük mindenekelőtt elhanyagolt egyesületi életünket, hogy az egyesület teljes vértezettel állhasson sorompóba minden egyesületi érdekért, minden egyes tag jogos igényeiért. Új alapszabályokat készítettünk elő s ennek keretében rendezni fogjuk a tagok kötelezettségeit és jogait, – megvédjük érdekeit. A prímások, zenekarvezetők részére szindikátust alakítottunk, amely az Egyesület felügyelete mellett őrködni fog a szerződések tiszteletben tartása felett s vitás esetekben orvosolja a sérelmeket. Kiterjesztjük figyelmünket az impresszáriók működésére s a legszigorúbban őrködni fogunk, hogy ok nélküli változtatásokkal ne rázkódtassák meg az egyes zenekarok helyzetét és hogy a szerződésben foglaltakról minden egyes zenekari tag tudomással bírjon s tőle jogosulatlanul semmit el ne vonhassanak.

Első feladatink közé soroltuk a cigányzenészek beíratását a Társadalombiztosító Intézet kötelékébe, amelynek révén ingyen orvos és gyógyszer áll minden tag rendelkezésére és aggság vagy rokkantság esetére gondoskodás történik legszűkebb megélhetéséről. Gondoskodni kívánunk kulturális előhaladásunk előfeltételeiről is. E célból rövidesen felállítjuk az új generáció kiképzését szolgáló zeneiskolánkat s ígéretet kaptunk arra,

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hogy az innen kikerülő kiváló tehetségek megtalálják az utat a magasabb kiképzésre s a külföldi, világsikerek pódiumához. Csak a képzett cigánymuzsikus tudja visszaszerezni mindazt, amit a divatos zeneáramlatok tőlünk elvettek és csak ez a cigánymuzsika tudja visszavarázsolni majd a magyar dal és a magyar nóta reneszánszát.

Pótolni akarjuk emellett a múltnak több mulasztását is. Számba vesszük Nagy Magyarország valamennyi cigánymuzsikusát, hogy egy táborba tömörülve küzdhessen jólétéért. E tekintetben a hatóságok szíves közreműködésére is számíthatunk, mert csak ezáltal tudjuk bizonyítani jogos kérelmeinket. A cigánymuzsikusok katasztere feltárja majd bajainkat, sérelmeinket s lesz, aki ezt meglátja, kérésünket meghallgatja és orvosolja. Javítani akarunk társadalmi helyzetünkön is, mert hiszen valljuk be, hogy e téren elég sok pirulnivalónk akad.

Nem sérti-e joggal önérzetünket, hogy akármilyen, idegenből ideszakadt muzsikusnak, egy, – a hazájában is megkülönböztetett négernek például, több becsülete van, mint a magyar cigánymuzsikusnak a saját hazájában? Az idegenek szívesen látott vendége, bármely elegáns café-restaurantnak, míg a magyar cigánymuzsikusnak, hátul az asztalnál a helye? …

Ennek azonban mi vagyunk az okai és nekünk kell odahatni, hogy kellő iskolázottság, muzsikustudás, képzettség megnyissák előttünk a társadalmi korlátokat is. Azt hiszem nem tévedek, amikor azt állítom, hogy a cigány hősi halottakról például éppen elmaradottságunknál fogva nem esett eddig sehol sem szó, holott sok kitüntetés és sok sírdomb tud beszélni arról, hogy mi ott is becsülettel megállottuk a helyünket. Lapunk egyik feladata lesz az is, hogy a világháborúban részt vettek albumát és névsorát összeállítsa és ezzel önmagunknak állítsunk emléket, ha már a krónika nem szól rólunk.

Az új vezetőség tudatában van annak, hogy rengeteg akadállyal kell megküzdenie, de szívesen vállalja a küzdelmet, mert tudja, hogy a siker nem maradhat el. Beköszöntőnket vegyék a kartársak úgy, mint ígéretet a jövendőre s mint tökéletes munkakészséget a kitűzött célok megvalósítására. Lapunkat pedig fogadják szívesen, mert minden betűje a mi igazságainkért és a mi boldogulásunkért fog harcolni: a cigánymuzsikusok egyetemes nagy érdekeiért.

Írta: Bura Károly, a Magyar Cigányzenészek Országos Egyesületének elnöke.

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Introduction

April, 1929.

After a long silence, dumb letters will again speak within the column of our official journal and lovingly greet all those who are our friends and feel for us, or those who are tied to us through common aims and economic interests. The Hungarian Gypsy Musicians' National Association recently began a new task with renewed manpower – a task to serve

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the whole of Gypsy musician society and their prosperity – and this work cannot go without the power of the written word. For this reason, we restarted our official journal, may it serve our great goals with every line and every letter [1].

Our goal is the recovery of the orphaned and abandoned Gypsy musicians' society, ruined in the storm of time, to improve its economic and social situation and to ensure its cultural and societal progress. We want to battle in new venues and for new goals and we believe that it will not be without results.

We have before all else reorganised our neglected Associations life in order that the Association may stand fully armed as a unified front for all the Association's interests, for all its members' righteous claims. We have prepared new Statutes and within its parameters, we shall order the responsibilities [2] of the members and their rights – we shall protect their interests. We have created a syndicate for the first violinists and orchestra conductors, which, together with the Association, shall supervise the enforcement of contracts and in cases of conflict will resolve the disputes. We shall extend our attention to the work of the impresarios and shall take a very strict stance to ensure that no unjustified changes disturb the situation of a given orchestra and that the contents of a contract be known to every orchestra member and prevent the unjust subtraction of anything.

Amongst our first tasks we have listed the enrolment of the Gypsy musicians within the net of the Social Security Institution, through which free medical and pharmaceutical aid is available to all members, and in cases of advanced age or disability care will be given for basic necessities. We wish to care for the conditions for cultural progress too. To this aim we will soon establish a music school [3] to serve the training of the new generation. We have received a promise that the outstanding talents finishing here will find the path to higher training and the podiums of world success abroad. Only trained Gypsy musicians can regain all that fashionable musical trends have taken from us and only Gypsy music will be able to conjure up again a renaissance of Hungarian song and Hungarian tunes.

We would like to compensate for a few omissions of the past. We would like to account for all the Gypsy musicians of greater Hungary [4], so they may struggle for posterity as one community. In this regard, we can count on the kind cooperation of the authorities, only thus will we be able to ensure their rightful requests. This register of Gypsy musicians would reveal their problems, hurts, and there will be those who see this and will listen and will remedy it. We want to improve on their social status, for let us admit that in this area we have a lot to be ashamed of.

Does it not justly hurt our pride that any foreign musician surfacing here – such as the negroes segregated in their homeland – receive greater respect than the Hungarian Gypsy musician in his own homeland? The foreigner is a welcome guest in any elegant café or restaurant while the Hungarian Gypsy musician has to sit at table at the back of the room?…

We are the reason for all of this and we must act effectively, so that with sufficient education, musical knowledge and training social barriers shall open before us. I do not believe I am mistaken when I state that any mention of the Gypsy military dead has been

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neglected by us and not a word has been spoken of it, though many decorations and many grave mounds could testify that we stood our ground there too. One of the tasks of our journal will be to compile an album and list of names of those who participated in the world war and with this to erect our own monument if the chronicles do not speak of us.

The new leadership is conscious of the hoard of barriers it must conquer but it willingly accepts the struggle for it knows success must come. We ask the colleagues to happily accept our introduction as a promise for the future, for every letter will fight for our justice and our prosperity: the universal great concerns of Gypsy musicians.

Written by: Károly Bura,
President of the Hungarian Gypsy Musicians' National Assocition.

Notes

1. About the journals published by Hungarian Gypsy Musicians' National Associations see Annex II.
2. Since its beginnings the Hungarian Gypsy Musicians' National Association was continuously faced with the problem of the membership not paying their compulsory membership dues, and refusing to do so even when threatened with expulsion. This contributed, over time, to the withering of local groups and the dissolution of the Association in 1933. Behind the neglect in paying their membership dues was the daily problem that the majority of the Gypsy musicians lacked the funds for their daily needs and felt that they did not receive anything in return from the Association (Hajnáczky, 2018, pp. 216-246).
3. In 1929 the Hungarian Gypsy Musicians' National Association founded the Bihari music school in Budapest. Named after János Bihari (1764-1827), famous Gypsy first violinist, composer, the premier interpreter of Hungarian *verbunkos* music, performed in multiple countries, at court and coronation celebrations. According to some unsubstantiated reports from the period, Beethoven visited his performances in Vienna several times (Markó, 2006, pp. 5-7; Horák, 2015, pp. 89-91; Hanáczky, 2018, pp. 2016-246).
4. See 7.1.2., Note 5.

Source: Bura, K. (1929). Beköszöntő. *Magyar Cigányzenészek Lapja*, An. 6. No.No. 1-4, 1929, April, p. 1. Prepared for publication by Tamas Hajnáczky.

Comments

Károly Bura (1881-1934), Gypsy first violinist, proved to be one of the definitive actors in Gypsy music society during the interwar period. He married the daughter of the famous Gypsy first violinist Béla Radics in 1912, and thus came into close contact with the Budapest Gypsy music elite. A few years later his father-in-law was elected honorary President of the Hungarian Gypsy Musicians' National Association. Károly Bura's siblings were also famous Gypsy musicians, most notable among them being Sándor Bura, who served as the President of the Hungarian Gypsy Musicians' National Federation, established in 1935. The Gypsy first violinist moved to Budapest in 1928 from Nagyvárad (today Oradea), which had been lost to Rumania as party of the peace treaty of Trianon, and thus he frequently spoke up against the division of Hungary. In 1929, he was elected the President of the Hungarian Gypsy Musicians' National Association and was able to achieve for the

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Association much through an effective program. Nonetheless, his conflicts over authority with the honorary President of the Association led to his removal from the presidency. Together with his supporters he then created an opposing organisation under the name the *Hungarian Gypsy Musicians' National Patient Relief and Self-Help Association*. In 1934, he instigated a strike among Gypsy musicians against the Hungarian Radio for its lack of ensuring favourable conditions and the strikers created the Budapest Gypsy Musicians' Association. The Associations created by him did not seem to exist for very long and did not receive official approval from the Ministry of the Interior (Hajnáczky, 2018, pp. 216-242; Horák, 2015, pp. 97). The significance of this source lies in its conveying the presidential program of one of the interwar periods most significant Gypsy musicians, a first violinist responsible for initiating several Gypsy movements.

Tamas Hajnáczky

7.2.2 *The Bihari Gypsy Music School*

Miért kell a Bihari zeneiskola?

1931. augusztus 22.

A tudomány és a technika rohamos fejlődésének hatása alatt, minden téren megindult egy előre törő mindeneket átalakító folyamat. Ezzel kapcsolatban a művészet minden ágában és így a zeneművészetben is egy új irány megteremtésén fáradozik az emberi elme. Miért? Mert a régi utakon haladva már semmi újat nem tud alkotni. Azok akik nem néznek az események mélyére, mind ezt sem veszik észre.

Ennek a vajúdó kornak csak a nyomorúságát látják és érzik, de azt nem, hogy ebből a nyomorúságból fog megszületni a modern, a tisztultabb ember eszmekörének megfelelően egy új, egy szebb jövendő.

A különféle zenei áramlatok eme vajúdó és fejlődő korszakában a cigányság is súlyos válságba jutott. Pedig a cigányság jobb sorsra érdemes. Éppen azért nem szabad engednie, hogy a magyarság lelkületének semmiféleképpen sem megfelelő idegen zenei irányzatok leszorítsák őt a porondról. Ha a felszínen akar maradni, akkor neki is bele kell kapcsolódnia ebbe az általánosan megindított fejlődési folyamatba. Neki is új utakon, új célok felé kell törnie, mert különben lemarad a tovaszáguldó élet szekeréről és azt soha, de soha utol nem éri többé.

A cigányságnak a magyar nemzet történetében elvitathatatlanul nagy érdemei vannak. Nevezetesen az, hogy a magyar dalt a mai kor részére megmentette. Ha a magyar dalt a maga iskolázatlan, de a benne rejlő őserőnél fogva a magyar nemzet súlyos viszontagságainak közepette is a mai kor részére meg tudta menteni, akkor azt az eljövendő korszakok részére is meg fogja tudni tartani. De ez nem elég. A cigányságnak a magyar dalt a nagynevű Bihari, Boka, Czinka Panna szellemében és az ő útmutatásaik alapján meg kell nemesítenie. Még tovább kell mennünk: meg kell teremteni az igazi magyar klasszikus zenét és a magyar operát. Mert a cigányság a veleszületett és elvitathatatlan tehetségénél és rátermettségénél fogva erre egyenesen predesztinálva van. Ez az a cél,

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amely felé a cigányságnak haladnia kell, hogy a helyét megállhassa, egy a mainál még fejlettebb korszakban is. De ezt kellő felkészültség, intelligencia és tudás nélkül elérni nem lehet. Most már nem elég a veleszületett rátermettség és a magyar nótában rejlő őserő. A cigányság életében egy új fejezetnek kell kezdődnie, hogy a benne szunnyadó őserő segítségével a maga elé kitűzött helyes célokat elérhesse. A cigányságnak sokat kell tanulnia, mégpedig törhetetlen akaraterővel, kitartó szorgalommal, hogy magát teljesen kiművelhesse. A Magyar Cigányzenészek Országos Egyesületének vezetősége már évekkel ezelőtt látta, hogy a cigányság a mai viszonyok között csak úgy boldogulhat, ha tanul és magát szakszerűen képezteti. Éppen ezért két évvel azelőtt bölcs előrelátással életre hívta a cigányság egyik legújabb intézményét a „Bihari zeneiskolát". Tagadhatatlan tény, hogy az első években, voltak a zeneiskola körül bizonyos bajok, zökkenők. De minden kezdet nehézséggel jár. A cigányság vezetőiben akkor még nem volt meg a kellő gyakorlat ahhoz, amit egy minden tekintetben kifogástalanul működő zeneiskola vezetése igényel.

Azóta okulva a múlt hibáin ezeket a hiányokat sikerült részben kiküszöbölni. A Bihari zeneiskolát teljesen újjá szerveztük. Nincs ok többé a bizalmatlankodásra. A Bihari zeneiskola tanterve és szellemi irányítása garancia arra, hogy a Bihari zeneiskola ma már egy színvonalon áll bármely más magas tandíjakkal dolgozó zeneiskolával. E mellett úgy a tandíjak olcsósága, mint az iskola lefektetett láncmenete mindenben alkalmazkodik a cigányság életkörülményeihez és igényeihez.

Szülők! Hozzátok fordulunk! A cigányság jövője forog kockán. Írassátok be mielőbb és tanítassátok gyermekeiteket a Bihari zeneiskolába.

Ti pedig cigány ifjak! A cigányság szemefénye, a cigányság minden reménysége, a cigányság jövő generációjának letéteményesei, jertek! Jertek ide és itt kitartó szorgalommal és törhetetlen akaraterővel tanuljatok. Vértezzétek föl magatokat a tudás hatalmas fegyverével, hogy azután a cigányság zászlaját magasra emelve, még az elkövetkezendő korszakok sok évszázadán át hirdethessétek a cigányság zenei rátermettségét, a cigányság magasba törő zenei kultúráját, a cigányság sok évszázados dicsőségét.

Bálint János, a tanügyi szakosztály vezetője.

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Who does the Bihary School need?

August 22, 1931.

The influence of the rapid advance in science and technology is felt throughout all areas as a complete and all-encompassing process of change begins. In relation to this and in all branches of the arts, and thus the musical arts, the human mind seeks the creation of a new direction. Why? Because it has been unable to create anything new going down its old path. Those who do not look into the depths of events do not notice this.

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They only see the misery of this expectant period but not how a modern, a new, a brighter future will be born, more fit for purified human consciousness.

In this expectant and developing period of different musical trends, the Gypsy population has reached a serious crisis. The Gypsy population deserves a better fate. It should not be permitted that foreign musical trends, completely unfit for the Hungarian spirit, drive them off the stage. It they are to stay afloat then they too must join those general trends of progress that have begun. They too must breakout along new paths and have new goals or they will be left behind as the carriage of life rolls on, never to catch up with it again [1].

Gypsies have inarguably achieved great things throughout Hungarian history. Namely they have saved Hungarian song for the today's age. If it was able to save Hungarian song, with all its lack of education, but with the primal strength within it, amidst weighty adversities, then it will be able to do so for the ages to come. However, this is not enough! Gypsies must ennoble Hungarian song in the spirit of Bihari, Boka [2], Czinka Panna, and upon their examples. We must go further and create true Hungarian classical music and Hungarian opera. For Gypsies with their inborn and undisputed talent and aptitude are directly predestined for this. This is the aim towards which Gypsies must progress, in order to stand their ground, in a period more advanced than today. However, this cannot be achieved without the required preparation, intelligence, and knowledge. Natural born talent is no longer enough, nor is the primal strength of Hungarian song. A new chapter must begin in Gypsy life, and together with the help of the primal strength dormant within, it must achieve the proper goals it has set before it. Gypsies must learn a lot, what is more, with unbreakable willpower and persevering diligence, in order to fully educate themselves. The leadership of the Hungarian Gypsy Musicians' National Association saw years ago that Gypsies would only be able to prosper amongst todays conditions if they study and professionally train themselves. It was for this reason that two years ago, with great forethought, they called to life one of the newest Gypsy institutions, the "Bihari music school". It is an undeniable fact that in the first years there were some problems and bumps [3]. But all new beginnings have difficulties. Gypsy leaders at that time did not have the necessary experience required for the operation of an in all respects perfectly functioning music school.

Since then, having learnt from the mistakes of the past, these omissions have been avoided, in part. There is no longer a cause for mistrust. The curriculum and intellectual direction of the Bihari music school is a guarantee that the Bihari school today is on the level of any other working music school asking high tuition. And all this is achieved through the tuition is as inexpensive as it is, and all the links in the schools' operational chain accommodate Gypsy life conditions and needs.

Parents! We turn to you! The future for Gypsies is at stake. Enrol your children all the sooner and educate them at the Bihari music school.

And you Gypsy youth! The apple of Gypsy eyes, all hope for Gypsies, the trustees of the future Gypsy generations, come! Come here and with preserving diligence and

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unbreakable willpower learn. Arm yourselves with great weapons of knowledge so that in the future, raising the Gypsy banner high, for the coming ages, and through many centuries you may announce Gypsy musical talent, the excellence of Gypsy musical culture, and many centuries of Gypsy glory.

János Bálint, the head of educational affairs.

Notes

1. Despite the Hungarian Gypsy Musicians' National Association's several years-long assertive stances against jazz bands, there were occurrences when, in the interest of their own livelihood or to accommodate the desires of the restaurant owners and customers, some Gypsy orchestras played jazz music (Kállai, 2002, p. 77; Landauer, 2016, pp. 386-387). Nonetheless, the majority did not take advantage of this opportunity and thus it became unavoidable that the Association commits itself to take further steps in the interest of restricting the growing popularity of jazz music (Landauer, 2016, pp. 387-388; Magyarság, 1928, p. 8).
2. Károly Boka (1808-1860), famous Gypsy first violinist.
3. The payment of tuitions encountered difficulties a few months into the school year, and so those students accumulating tuition debts were dismissed from the school. The maintenance of the Bihari music school demanded significant effort from the Association. The following year the General Meeting had to be postponed in order that the amount designated for it be given to the institution. In 1930 the Association organised the Celebration of Hungarian Song in the capital on the Ferencváros Sports Club (FTC) football field, with most of the income intended for the school; it was a success with tens of thousands of tickets sold (Hajnáczky, 2018, pp. 234-235).

Source: Bálint, J. (1931). Miért kell a Bihari zeneiskola? *Magyar Cigányzenészek Lapja*, An. 8, No. 7-8, 1931, August 22, p. 1-2.
Prepared for publication by Tamas Hajnáczky.

Comments

The Hungarian Gypsy Musicians' National Association's newly elected President Károly Bura's 1929 introduction held that the training of Gypsy musicians was, amongst other issues, indispensable. He perceived this as a milestone in the battle against the spread of jazz. The leadership of the Association first tried to have the training of Gypsy musicians at the Music Academy, however they had to face rejection, the reasons given being the lack of space and the aversion of the teachers. Another possibility was for music schools to cooperate, but this was quickly rejected as they did not agree to talented Gypsy students taking party in general education alien to Gypsy musicians. Furthermore, they sought an opportunity where adult Gypsy musicians could continue their musical education, not possible at music schools that did not work with older more experienced musicians. After these unsuccessful attempts, they decided that the founding of an independent music school was necessary. Thanks mostly in part to the effective organisational work of János Illovszky, member of the capital city legal authorities' committee and honorary President of the Association, the Bihari Music School opened its doors in September of 1929. The intercession of such a high-ranking Budapest official helped the institution to find a location and financial credit. The first year saw one hundred and

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sixty individuals apply to the music school, having a teaching staff of sixteen, but only one of Gypsy decent. The Bihari music school ensured education for both adults and children for one or two hours a week. Courses on music theory and instruments were part of the curriculum and low tuition was asked for from the students. The following year the local group in Pápa created *Bihari Music School II* in their rural city where thirty students enrolled (Hajnáczky, 2018, pp. 234-235). The article that appeared in the Hungarian Gypsy Musicians' Journal is very important as it was penned by the head of the Bihari Music school's educational affairs. The author provides an insight into the thoughts and goals that lay behind the foundation of the music school and its operations.

Tamas Hajnáczky

7.2.3 *The Dispute about the Repertoire of Gypsy Musicians*

Cigánylázadás a rádió ellen

1934. február 28.

(Az Est tudósítójától.) Hétfőn délután a budapesti cigányprímások közös értekezletre jöttek össze Bura Károly vezetésével. Ezen az értekezleten elhatározták, hogy ultimátumot intéznek a rádió igazgatóságához, amelyben közlik, hogy sztrájkba lépnek, ha nem teljesítik követeléseiket. Álláspontjuk az, hogy zenei felfogásukat és előadásukat illetően semmiféle változtatást elfogadni nem akarnak és követelik, hogy dr. Spur Endre zenekritikust, a cigányzene újonnan szerződtetett referensét, távolítsák el állásából. A memorandumot megírták és benyújtották a rádiónak, ahol ma délelőtt vettek tudomást a cigánylázadásról.

Az Est munkatársa a cigányprímások ultimátuma ügyében kérdést intézett a rádióhoz. A magyar rádió álláspontja a következő:

– Ma reggel kaptuk meg a cigányok memorandumát. A rádiónak ebben az ügyben még kialakult álláspontja nem lehet, mert az igazgatóság nem tárgyalta az ügyet, ezért a cigányok álláspontja még egyoldalú. Tulajdonképpen nem is tartozik reánk ez az egész affér, mert a rádiónak egy újonnan megalakult egyesülettel nem is lehet dolga. Magyarországon a Magyar Cigányzenészek Országos Egyesülete intézi a cigányzenészek ügyét. Ennek az egyesületnek Magyari Imre az elnöke.

A tegnap megalakult egyesületnek (Budapesti Cigányzenészek Egyesülete) nincs is belügyminiszteri engedélye tehát, amit elhatároznak, minket nem érdekel. A rádió tovább halad azon az úton, amelyen eddig ment. A cigányzenészek között rendet akarnak teremteni és útmutatással kívántunk szolgálni műsorukkal kapcsolatban. Azt akarjuk, hogy ne csak a divatos slágereket játsszák, hanem a köztudatból kivesző magyar muzsikát is, a régi magyar nótákat. Miután ez a cigányprímások egy részének nem tetszik és egyre gyakrabban fordult elő, hogy az egyes zenekarok állandóan ugyanazt a nótát játszották, szükségünk volt valakire, aki rendszerbe foglalja a cigányzenekarok műsorát. Ezért bíztuk meg dr. Spur Endre nyugalmazott törvényszéki bírót, budapesti ügyvédet, a magyar nóták szakértőjét, a műsorok átnézésére. Ez a cigánylázadás egyáltalában nem érinti a mi

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műsorpolitikánkat. A sztrájkkal nem törődünk és addig, ameddig a zenekarok játszanak, semmi közünk az egészhez. Ezen a héten is több cigányzenekar hangversenyét tűztük a műsorra.

Ha ezek a zenekarok megtartják az előadást, akkor rendben van, ha pedig sztrájkolni fognak, akkor mi is tudni fogjuk, mit csináljunk. A közönség körében úgyis sok a panasz a túltengő cigányzene miatt és mi majd orvosolni fogjuk ezt a panaszt! A rádió hivatalos álláspontját egy a cigányzene kérdéséről szóló előadás keretében fogjuk elmondani a közönségnek a mikrofonon át, ezt az előadást azonban addig nem tarthatjuk meg, amíg főzeneigazgatónk, dr. Dohnányi Ernő meg nem gyógyul. Dohnányi jelenleg beteg, de ő maga is foglalkozni kíván a problémával. Ami pedig a cigány-sztrájk érdemi részét illeti, közölhetjük, hogy nem minden cigányprímás álláspontját képviseli a hozzánk eljuttatott memorandum; így Magyari Imre sem írta alá.

A memorandumot aláíró cigányprímások nevében Bura Károly így nyilatkozott:

– Három napi időt adunk a rádiónak, hogy fogadja el álláspontunkat. Azért várunk három napig, mert tudjuk, hogy a műsort nem lehet máról-holnapra megváltoztatni. Köztünk senki se teremtsen rendet. Mi úri nótákat játszunk, nem pedig modern muzsikát, minket ne tanítson senki. Hagyják meg a cigányokat régi sajátosságában, amelyeket évszázadokon keresztül megtartottunk. Mi elhatároztuk: amennyiben dr. Spur Endre a helyén marad és műsorunkba beleszól, nem játszunk a rádióban. Ha a rádióban mégis felhangzik a cigányzene, akkor azt csak kültelki cigányok fogják játszani, akiket húsz pengőért könnyen megkaphat a stúdió. Ami az Magyar Cigányzenészek Országos Egyesületét illeti, 18.000 pengőt temettem abba a szövetségbe, amely feloszlott. Nincs helyiségük sem, Magyari Imre pedig „összepaktált" Spurékkal, hozzá semmi közünk nincs.

A budapesti cigányzenészek a rádió kérdésben két pártra szakadtak. Az egyik párt vezetője Magyari Imre, aki hajlandó magát alávetni a rádió rendelkezéseinek. A másik párt Bura Károly vezetésével pedig inkább nem akar játszani a rádióban, semhogy felülbírálják és előzetesen megcenzúrázzák a műsorát.

∵

The Gypsy revolt against the radio

February 28, 1934.

(From an *Est* reporter) On Monday afternoon the Budapest Gypsy first violinists gathered for a common meeting, chaired by Károly Bura. At this meeting, they decided to send an ultimatum to the radio management, in which they stated that they will strike if their demands are not met. Their position is that they do not want to accept any change in their musical understanding and performances, and demand that music critic Dr. Endre Spur, the newly contracted Gypsy music rapporteur, be removed from his job. The memorandum was written and submitted to the radio, where this morning they acknowledged the Gypsy revolt.

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The reporter for *Est* asked the radio for a statement concerning the Gypsy first violinists' ultimatum.

The Hungarian Radio gave the following reply:

– This morning we received the Gypsy memorandum. The radio, at this point in time, has not formulated a position, management has yet to debate this case, at this point there is only the one side, the position of the Gypsies. Practically speaking this whole affair is not our competence, for the radio has no relations with a newly created Association. In Hungary, the Hungarian Gypsy Musicians' National Association conducts the affairs of Gypsy musicians [1]. The President of this Association is Imre Magyari.

The Association formed yesterday (Budapest Gypsy Musicians' Association) does not have a permit from the ministry of the interior, therefore what they have resolved remains irrelevant to us. The radio will continue along that path it has. They want to create order among Gypsy musicians and we wanted to help through providing programming direction. We wanted them to not only play fashionable hits, but Hungarian music and old Hungarian songs fading from memory. This did not meet with the approval of some of the Gypsy first violinists and it became increasingly common for some orchestras to play the same songs, thus we needed someone to bring order to the Gypsy music programming. For this reason, we entrusted Dr. Endre Spur, retired justice, lawyer, from Budapest, an expert in Hungarian song to review the programming [2]. This Gypsy revolt in no way affects our programming policy. We are not concerned with the strike, and as long as the orchestras continue to play it remains none of our business. This coming week contains the concerts of several Gypsy orchestras in our programming.

If these orchestras perform their concerts then all is right, if they are to strike then we too will know what to do. There are already, amongst listeners, many complaints of an overabundance of Gypsy music, and we shall remedy this complaint! The official position of the radio will be broadcast to listeners during a program on the question of Gypsy music. This program though cannot be done until out head musical director Dr. Ernő Dohnányi has not recovered. Dohnányi is presently ill but he himself wishes to deal with the problem. As concerns the substantive question of the Gypsy strikes, we can state that the memorandum submitted to us does not reflect the position of all Gypsy first violinists, thus it was not signed by Imre Magyari either.

Károly Bura gave this statement on behalf of the Gypsy first violinists who signed the memorandum:

– We give the radio three days to accept our position. We shall wait three days as an acknowledgement that programming cannot be changed from one day to the next. Let no one presume to put order amongst us. We play genteel songs and not modern music. Let no one presume to teach us! Leave the Gypsies to their ancient uniqueness, which they have preserved over centuries. We have resolved that if Dr. Endre Spur is to remain in place and interfere in the programming we shall not play in the radio. If Gypsy music is played on the radio, then it will only be played by some backwater Gypsies who the studio can buy for twenty pengő. As far as the Hungarian Gypsy Musicians' National Association

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is concerned, I buried 18,000 pengő in that organisation, which later dissolved [3]. They do not even have an office and Imre Magyari has "colluded" with Spur, we have nothing to do with him [4].

As pertains to the question of the radio, the Budapest Gypsies have split into two factions. The leader of one party is Imre Magyari, who is willing to submit to the injunctions of the radio. The other party is lead by Károly Bura would rather not play in the radio than have their programs overwritten and censored beforehand.

Notes

1. The press report is mistaken in stating that the Hungarian Gypsy Musicians' National Association manages the affairs of Gypsy musicians, as it was dissolved in 1933. The Association was established in 1918 and had lost much of its ability to represent anyone's interests by the early 1930s. It was plagued with internal conflicts, uncollectible membership dues and the dissolution of local groups and these factors all led to the death of the organisation. Officially Ministry of the Interior circular decree number 145/799/1933 stated that the Association and its local groups were dissolved with reference to the following:

> [...] local authorities responsible for supervision have established, in addition to the report of the Association's President [...] the Association has not operated in accordance with its Statutes for a longer period, it has no offices, the dispersion of the members and their lack of participation has resulted in the inability of a General Meeting declaring dissolution (Hajnáczky, 2018, p. 241),

2. Dr. Endre Spur made the following statement to a daily paper concerning his responsibility:

> I see my task as an intermediary between the Gypsy playing music before the microphone and the listeners. [...] I will conduct meetings and rehearsals with certain Gypsy orchestras, in order that the music sound all the better. [...] We do not want to literally educate the Gypsies, because the Gypsies know what they're doing. They know an enormous number of songs, but they only play a few of them. We noted that in the past years they only play the most recent Hungarian songs and we rarely heard songs, which, though compositions, are held by to be folk songs. (Sárosi, 2012, p. 337).

3. Károly Bura, President of the Association between 1929-1930, was forced to resign after angry internal conflicts, and together with his followers established the Hungarian *Musicians' National Self-help and Medical Care Association* (according to other sources the Hungarian Gypsy Musicians' National Medical Care and Self-help Association) (Hajnáczky, 2018, p. 239).
4. Concerning the tension between the two famous Gypsy first violinists, Imre Magyari stated that there was no other reason than that Károly Bura and his supporters cannot accept that the Hungarian Radio pays him more to play than them (Sárosi, 2012, pp. 336-337).

Source: [No Author]. (1934). Cigánylázadás a rádió ellen. *Az Est*, An. 25, No. 47, 1934, February 28, p. 7.
Prepared for publication by Tamas Hajnáczky.

Comments

The steps taken by the Gypsy musicians against the Hungarian Radio were not without precedent. Two years earlier the President of the Hungarian Gypsy Musicians' National

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Association, Imre Magyari, refused live coffee house performance, citing the dissatisfaction with the honorarium paid the Gypsy musicians for it. Furthermore, the Association threatened that they would not perform before a microphone until the radio raised their honorarium. The Hungarian Radio decided against raising the honorarium and eventually removed the Gypsy musicians from the programming and finally rejected any settlements of compromise (Magyarság, 1932a, p. 9; Magyarság, 1932b, p. 5). The Gypsy first violinists gathered again in February of 1934 under the leadership of Imre Magyari to seek a remedy for their injuries and to formulate their complaints and give those to the Hungarian Radio. They threatened to strike if their request were not granted by the leadership and to refuse studio and coffee house broadcasts. According to one of the daily papers, what stirred up the anger among the Gypsy musicians was that "Dr. Endre Spur, music critic – original occupation lawyer – was provided as a "voivode" to supervise the programmes played in the radio." (Sárosi, 2012, p. 334).

That very day the two opposing factions met, but were unable to reach a compromise, and Imre Magyari resigned the leadership of the movement and his place was taken by Károly Bura. Bura immediately established the Budapest Gypsy Musicians' Association and sent the mentioned ultimatum to the competent authorities in which he reemphasised the need for a raise in honorariums and again asked for the dismissal of Dr. Endre Spur (Sárosi, 2012, pp. 334-335). The value of this source is primarily the first-hand information concerning the Gypsy strike in the words of the two parties themselves, furthermore we gain an insight into the fault lines within Gypsy musician society, its dividedness, and how a new organisation – though not officially registered – was born.

Tamas Hajnáczky

7.3 The Hungarian Gypsy Musicians' National Federation

7.3.1 *The Hungarian Gypsy Musicians' National Federation Statute*

A Magyar Cigányzenészek Országos Szövetsége alapszabályai

I. Fejezet

1.§. A Szövetség címe: „Magyar Cigányzenészek Országos Szövetsége". A hivatalos pecsét körirata ugyanez.

A Szövetség székhelye: Budapest; működési területe: Magyarország. Hivatalos nyelve: magyar.

2.§. A Szövetség célja: a Magyarországon élő, magyar cigányzenészek tömörítése, szellemi, művészi és anyagi érdekeik védelmezése, a munkaviszonyok megjavítása, a magyar cigányzenészség hírnevéhez fűződő idegenforgalmi érdekek hathatósabb támogatása, a magyar dal ápolása, tagjainak hazafias és keresztény szellemű egységes irányítása – politikai és vallási kérdések kizárásával.

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3.§. A Szövetség a fent megjelölt cél érdekében irodát tart fenn, anyagi lehetőségeihez mérten könyvtárat létesít, zeneiskolát alapít, előadásokat, hangversenyeket rendez, a hazafias szellemű és általában a magyar nóták védelme érdekében a cigányzenélés rendjének országos és egyöntetű megállapítása iránt az illetékes hatóságok elé javaslatot terjeszt, ugyancsak a hatóság támogatásával és jóváhagyásával helyközvetítő irodát szervez és szigorú ellenőrzése mellett működésben tart: ennek révén a tagok elhelyezését megkönnyíti, a munkaadók és tagjai közötti egyezkedést elősegíti. Saját és tagjai védelmére állandó érintkezést tart fenn a minisztériumokkal, közigazgatási és egyéb hatóságokkal. Tagjai tájékoztatására és céljai propagálása érdekében hivatalos lapot ad ki. A gazdasági helyzet javulásával és anyagi lehetőségeihez mérten cigányzenész otthont létesít rendkívüli esetekben erre a célra közgyűlésileg kijelölt összegekből tagjait segélyezi.

II. Fejezet

A Szövetség tagjai

4.§. Alapító, pártoló, tiszteletbeli és rendes tagok, külföldiek a m. kir. belügyminiszter előzetes engedélyével.

5.§. Alapító tagok azok, akiket a Szövetség központi választmánya ilyen címen felvesz s akik egy összegben legalább 50 pengővel járulnak a Szövetség vagyonához.

6.§. Pártoló tagok azok, akiket a központi választmány ilyen címen felvesz és akik a belépés évében 10.- pengő tagdíjat egy összegben befizetnek.

7.§. Tiszteletbeli tagok azok, akiket a Szövetség közgyűlése a Szövetség, vagy a magyar cigányzenészség érdekében kifejtett működéséért, vagy támogatásért ilyen címen megtisztel és megválaszt.

8.§. Rendes tag lehet minden magyar cigányzenész, aki életének 18. évét betöltötte, feddhetetlen jellemű, hazafias, erkölcsös életet él s nem tagja valamely haza, vagy vallásellenes alakulatnak. Kiskorúak csak szülői, gyámi vagy törvényes képviselői beleegyezéssel vehetők fel a Szövetség tagjai sorába; iskolai fegyelem alatt állók nem lehetnek tagok. Kiskorúaknál a belépési nyilatkozatot a törvényes képviselőnek is láttamozni kell.

9.§. Rendes tagok belépésekor 1.- pengő felvételi díjat fizetnek, amelynek ellenében tagsági igazolványt kapnak. Tagsági díj egy évre 6.- pengő, amely a választmány által meghatározott módon, havonta 50 fillérjével is fizethető.

10.§. A Szövetségbe belépő tag kötelezettséget vállal arra, hogy az alapszabályok és az ügyrend, valamint a Szövetség szerveinek határozatait és rendelkezéseit betartja, a Szövetség céljait és érdekeit minden téren, tőle telhető módon előmozdítja.

11.§. A rendes tagok a Szövetség közgyűlésén és a csoportok ülésein egyenlő részvételi indítványozási és választási joggal bírnak, ha tagdíjaikkal 3 hónapot meg nem haladó hátralékban nincsenek. Választók és választhatók. Ugyanez áll a vidéki csoportok által az országos közgyűlésre küldendő megbízottakra is, akik csak a rendes tagokból választhatók, de akadályoztatás esetén magukat képviseltethetik.

12.§. Az alapító, pártoló és tiszteletbeli tagok az üléseken csak felszólalási és indítványozási joggal bírnak, de nem választók és nem választhatók; szavazási joggal egyáltalában nem bírnak, a Szövetség kedvezményeiben nem részesülnek.

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13.§. Minden rendes tagnak egyenlő igénye van a Szövetség összes kedvezményeire és előnyeire.

14.§. A rendes tagok tagsági igazolványt kapnak, amellyel szövetségi tagságukat a közigazgatási hatóságok előtt igazolhatják. A tagsági igazolvány másra át nem ruházható s mindennemű meghamisítása tilos. Akiről megállapítást nyert, hogy igazolványt hamisított, elveszti összes tagsági jogait s a tagok sorából kizáratik.

15.§. A tagdíj általában el nem engedhető s az egyszer befizetett tagdíj vissza nem adható, azonban a beteg, vagy katonaszolgálatot teljesítő, betegségük illetve szolgálati idejük alatt, továbbá 60. évet meghaladó zenészek, – akik tagsági kötelezettségeiknek legalább 20 éven át eleget tettek, – tagdíjat fizetni nem kötelesek.

16.§. Katonai szolgálat alatt a tag minden kötelezettsége alól fel van mentve, a Szövetség összes kedvezményeit azonban élvezi, úgy bevonulását, mint a katonai szolgálatból való kilépését Budapesten a központi választmánynál, vagy elnökségnél, vidéken a helyi csoport vezetőjénél 8 napon belül köteles bejelenteni.

17.§. Aki tagdíjat 6 hónapon keresztül nem fizeti, az elnökség egyszeri felszólítása után a tagok sorából a központi választmány által törölhető. A választmány azonban a tag indokolt kérelmére haladékot adhat.

Az a tag, aki becsületbe, jó erkölcsbe ütköző cselekményt követ el, akit közönséges bűntett miatt jogerősen elítéltek, vagy hazafiatlanul viselkedtek, aki az alapszabályok és az ügyrend ellen vét, aki vallás-, vagy hazaellenes alakulatokban, gyűléseken, tüntetéseken részt vesz, – különösen, ha azokban vezető szerepet visz, – vagy a Szövetség céljaival és működésével ellentétes irányú törekvést tanúsít a központi választmány által a tagok sorából azonnal kizárhatja. Az ilyen tag újólag csak akkor vehető fel, ha magaviselete által alapos javulásra adta tanújelét.

18.§. A félévi tagdíjjal, vagy egyéb fizetési kötelezettségekkel hátralékban levő tag a Szövetség kedvezményeire igényt nem tarthat.

19.§. Bármi okból törölt, illetve kizárt tag csak akkor vehető fel ismét tagnak, ha előbbeni és időközi tagdíj- és egyéb kötelezettségeinek eleget tett. Ezen kötelezettség alól a választmány indokolt esetben felmentvényt adhat. Jogában áll a központi választmánynak a tagdíjhátralékokból és egyéb fizetési kötelezettségekből eredő követelést bírói úton is behajtani, amely esetre a tagok alávetik magukat a Szövetség által választandó kir. járásbíróság hatáskörének és illetékességének.

20.§. A kizárási, vagy törlési határozat a kézbesítéstől számított 15 nap alatt a központi választmányhoz benyújtandó fellebbezéssel a közgyűléshez megfellebbezhető.

21.§. Az alapító, pártoló, valamint a rendes tagdíjakból befolyó jövedelmek, továbbá az esetleges adományok a Szövetség rendes bevételét képezik. Ezen összegek csakis a közgyűlés által jóváhagyott költségvetési célokra, valamint a választmányi határozattal megszavazott célokra fordíthatók. Olyan adományok, amelyek meghatározott célra folynak be, rendeltetésüktől eltérő célokra fel nem használhatóak.

22.§. A tagság megszűnik, ha a tag:

a) meghal,

b) kilép,

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c) a tagok sorából töröltetik, vagy
d) kizáratik.

A rendes tag csak a naptári év végével léphet ki, ha ebbeli szándékát, legkésőbb ugyanezen év október első napjáig a Szövetség elnökségénél írásban vagy szóbelileg bejelenti. Az esetben, ha a tag külföldre kap szerződést, a tagsági kötelezettségeit teljesíteni köteles, amellyel szemben a tag tagsági igazolványához mellékelt és kellő igazolással ellátott olyan nyelvű tagsági igazolást kap, mint amely ország területén működik. Az ilyen külön igazolás a tagot a külföldi zenészegyesületeknél és hatóságoknál igazolja.

III. Fejezet

23.§. A Szövetség ügyeit vezetik:
a) az országos közgyűlés,
b) a központi választmány,
c) az elnökség a tisztikarral,
d) vidéken a csoportok vezetői,
e) a közgyűlés által választott tisztviselők.

24.§. Az országos közgyűlés kétféle lehet: rendes évi és rendkívüli közgyűlés. Rendes országos közgyűlés minden év első évnegyedében tartandó. Ha ennek összehívásában a Szövetség központi vezetőségét valamely rendkívüli esemény akadályozza, erről jelentést tartozik tenni a közgyűlés előtt. A rendes közgyűlést azonban az év első felében minden esetben össze kell hívni.

Az országos közgyűlés tagjai az előző évi központi választmány és tisztikar tagjai, a helyi csoportok küldöttei és a tagok.

25.§. Vidéki csoport 50 tagig egy kiküldöttet választ, ezenfelül minden 100 rendes tag után még egy kiküldöttet választhat. A helyi csoportok elnökei a közgyűlésnek hivatalból tagjai. A kiküldöttek akadályoztatásuk esetén más csoporthoz tartozó tagokkal is képviseltethetik magukat, egy kiküldött azonban egy szavazatnál többet nem képviselhet.

26.§. Indítványok, interpellációk egy héttel a közgyűlés napja előtt a Szövetség központi elnökségéhez írásban bejelentendők. Később érkezett indítványok vagy interpellációk napirendre tűzése felett a közgyűlés dönt.

A közgyűlés meghívója a közgyűlés idejének, helyének és a napirend pontos feltűntetésével legalább 14 nappal előbb a Szövetség hivatalos lapjában ilyennek hiányában a Pesti Hírlapban közzéteendő. A közgyűlés összehívásáról a vidéki csoportok vezetősége írásban értesítendő. A csoportok viszont legalább 8 nappal az országos közgyűlés napja előtt taggyűlést tartanak, amelyen a közgyűlési kiküldötteket megválasztják.

27.§. A közgyűlés hatáskörébe tartozik:
a) az évi zárszámadások megvizsgálása és jóváhagyása, az ezzel kapcsolatos felmentvény megadása, a következő évi költségvetés tárgyalása és elfogadása, vagy visszautasítása;
b) az új tisztikar esetleg új díszelnökök, tiszteletbeli elnökök, a választmány, a számvizsgáló bizottság és a fontosabb központi tisztviselők megválasztása;
c) a tagdíjak nagyságának megállapítása; ami azonban változás esetén alapszabálymódosításnak tekintendő;
d) döntés az indítványok, interpellációk és fellebbezések felett;

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e) az alapszabályok esetleges megváltoztatása, a Szövetség jelentősebb elhatározásainak tárgyalása és megszavazása, a választmány hatáskörét meghaladó határozatok kimondása és a Szövetség feloszlatásának elhatározása.

28.§. A közgyűlés fontosabb dolgokban titkos szavazással, szótöbblettel dönt. Szavazategyenlőség esetén az elnök szava dönt, személyi kérdésekben sorshúzás.

Az országos közgyűlés akkor is határozatképes, ha azon a vidéki csoportok legalább 1/3-ad része képviselve van; ellenkező esetben 8-30 napon belül ugyanazon napirenddel új közgyűlés tartandó, amely már a megjelent képviseletek számára való tekintet nélkül határozatképes. Alapszabály módosítása, fúzió, vagy a Szövetség feloszlatása s vagyonának hovafordítása feletti döntés tárgyában az országos gyűlés akkor határozatképes, ha helyi csoportok 2/3-ad része képviselve van és a megjelentek 2/3-ad része a határozathoz hozzájárul. Határozatképtelenség esetén ily esetekben 8-30 napon belül új közgyűlés hívandó össze, mely tekintet nélkül a megjelentek számára határozatképes.

29.§. Rendkívüli közgyűlést az elnök:
a) a központi választmány határozatára,
b) a vidéki csoportok 1/4-ének,
c) a számvizsgáló bizottságnak írásban bejelentett kívánságára a bejelentéstől számított 30 napon belül köteles összehívni.

Úgy a rendes, mint a rendkívüli közgyűlésről jegyzőkönyv veendő fel, amelynek a közgyűlés fontosabb mozzanatait és összes határozatait tartalmaznia kell, a megjelent kiküldöttek felsorolása mellett. A jegyzőkönyvet az elnök, a jegyző és a közgyűlésen jelenlevő s az elnök által erre a célra felkért két tag hitelesíti.

30.§. A közgyűlés által választott tisztikar és a választmány megbízatása egy esztendőre szól. Tisztségekre csakis fővárosiak választhatók. A választmánynak csak nagykorúak lehetnek tagjai. A tisztikar tagjai hivatalból tagjai a választmánynak.

31.§. A választmány a tagok arányához képest alakítandó meg. Első ízben a 16 rendes és 8 póttag, a következő esztendőkben a taglétszámhoz képest: 500 tagon felül 20 rendes és 10 póttag. Ha az ekképpen megalakított választmány valamely tagjának tagsága bármi okból megszűnne, az elnök 14 napon belül a közgyűlési jegyzőkönyvben felsorolt póttagok közül az első helyen levő póttagot hívja be. A további pótlás is sorrend szerint történik s az elnök a póttagok behívásáról a választmánynak jelentést tesz.

A választmány jogai és kötelességei:
a) egybehívja és előkészíti a közgyűlést;
b) vidéki csoportokat alakít, illetve ezek alakulásához hozzájárul;
c) határoz a beíratási díjak esetleges elengedéséről;
d) a tagok jogait és érdekeit minden téren megvédelmezi;
e) helyközvetítő irodát létesít, annak vezetőjét megválasztja;
f) jóléti bizottságot választ a saját kebeléből, amely a jóléti, vagy segélyezési ügyekben javaslatokkal él;
g) alapszabályszerű intézményeket létesít;
h) a tagok felvétele, törlése és kizárása felett dönt;
i) utalványozza az alapszabályok és a közgyűlési határozatok szerinti kiadásokat;

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j) ellenőrzi a tisztviselők működését, a mulasztást elkövető tisztviselőt állásától indokolt esetben felfüggesztheti és helyét ideiglenesen betöltheti. Köteles azonban fellebbezés esetén az ügyet 30 napon belül rendkívüli közgyűlés elé terjeszteni;
k) alkalmazza a Szövetség ügykezeléséhez szükséges irodai személyzetet s a költségvetés keretében azok illetményeit megállapítja.

32.§. A központi választmány minden a közgyűlésnek fent nem tartott ügyekben felelősség mellett határoz, felelősséggel az országos közgyűlésnek tartozik. Választmányi határozatok szótöbbséggel hozandók. Szavazategyenlőség esetén az elnök szava dönt, személyi kérdésekben sorshúzás. A választmány határozatai a meghozatalt, illetve a közlést követő naptól számított 15 napon belül a közgyűléshez fellebbezhetők.

33.§. A választmány köteles havonta egy rendes ülést tartani. Rendkívüli ülést a választmányi tagok felének kérésére az elnök 8 napon belül köteles egybehívni. A választmány határozatképes, ha az ülésen a tisztikaron kívül a tagok 1/3 része jelen van.

A választmány üléséről a jegyző jegyzőkönyvet vezet, amit a következő ülésen fel kell olvasni s az esetleges észrevételek után az elnök, a jegyző és két választmányi tag aláírásával hitelesíteni kell.

A választmányi ülésekre az elnöknek jogában áll egyes esetekben nem tagokat is meghívni véleményadás végett. A meghívottak azonban csak felszólamlási és indítványozási jog illeti, de szavazati jog nem.

34.§. A Szövetség elnöksége áll:
a) szövetségi elnök,
b) központi ügyvezető elnök,
c) két alelnökből.

Az elnök a választmánnyal együtt vezeti a Szövetség összes ügyeit, képviseli a Szövetséget a hatóságokkal és a külvilággal szemben, az elnök hívja egybe az országos közgyűlést. Őrködik a tárgyalási rend felett s a szólásra jelentkezőknek a szót megadja, vagy indokolt esetben megragadja, aki a tárgyalás rendjét sérti, attól a szót megvonja. Az elnök írja alá a Szövetség iratait, ezen teendőjében azonban bármely elnökségi tag helyettesítheti. Az aláírásokhoz azonban szükséges a főtitkár, vagy helyettese, a titkár aláírása is. Ellenőrzi a Szövetség ügykezelését, a tisztviselők működését. A pénztárt bármikor megvizsgálhatja. Mindezen teendőiben az ügyvezető elnök, alelnökök, vagy főtitkár helyettesíthetik. A Szövetség ügykezelését, a pénztárt, számadásokat ellenőrzi.

A központi ügyvezető elnök helyettesíti az országos elnököt, ennek megbízásából, vagy akadályoztatása esetén. Irányítja a Szövetség ügymenetét s egyéb tevékenységét; sürgős esetekben választmányi határozat nélkül 20 pengőig rendkívüli kiadásokat utalványoz. Átiratokat, megkereséseket ír alá. Minden kiadást a közgyűlés vagy választmány által megszabott keretekben az ügyvezető elnök utal, minden nyugtát, számlát ellenjegyez: aláírása, vagy ellenjegyzés nélkül a pénztár fizetést nem teljesíthet. Betegség, vagy akadályoztatás esetén ezen jogok az általa kijelölt elnökségi tagot, vagy a főtitkárt illetik meg.

Az alelnökök az elnököt, vagy ügyvezető elnököt akadályoztatásuk esetén helyettesítik.

35.§. A főtitkár vezeti a Szövetség összes ügyeit és annak irodáját. Előadója a közgyűlésnek és választmánynak. A Szövetség érdekében álló akciókat kezdeményez és irányít,

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eljár a Szövetség és a tagok ügyeiben, a közgyűlés és választmány határozatait végrehajtja. A választmányi ülésen, vagy értekezleteken az elnökség akadályoztatása, vagy kívánsága esetén, elnököl, az összes iratokat, levelezést utalványozást, számlákat s kiadási tételeket az elnök, vagy helyettesének aláírása mellett ellen jegyzi. Szerkeszti a szövetség hivatalos lapját. Illetményét a Szövetség anyagi erejéhez és a főtitkári teendőkhöz mérten a választmány állapítja meg.

A titkár betegség, vagy akadályoztatás esetén helyettesíti a főtitkárt, egyebekben támogatja működésében. Illetményét a választmány határozza meg.

36.§. A főpénztáros kezeli a Szövetség pénztárát és erről pontosan bevételi és kiadási naplót vezet és az erre vonatkozó okmányokat megőrzi. Pénzt csak a választmány, vagy az elnök utalványozása alapján fizethet ki. A Szövetség vagyonáért teljes mértékben anyagilag és erkölcsileg felelős. Havonként zárszámadást köteles a választmány elé terjeszteni. A kézipénztárban a folyó kiadások fedezésére legfeljebb 100 pengő szükséges összeget tarthat s a fölösleget tartozik a választmány által megjelölt és a Pénzintézeti Központ kötelékébe tartozó pénzintézetnél elhelyezni és kamatoztatni. Az ellenőröknek és a számvizsgáló bizottság tagjainak köteles az ellenőrzéshez szükséges könyveket és okmányokat bármikor kiadni.

37.§. Az ellenőrök a pénztárt havonta vizsgálják és a pénztárossal együtt anyagilag egyetemlegesen felelősek.

38.§. A számvizsgáló bizottság a közgyűlés által választott 3 tagból áll, kiknek feladata a Szövetség vagyoni kezelésének felülvizsgálása. A számvizsgáló bizottság tagjainak megbízása egy évre szól, mely idő alatt egyéb tisztséget a Szövetség kebelében nem viselhetnek. Megbízásuk időtartama alatt a pénztárkezelést bármikor felülvizsgálhatják, a számadási év végével pedig az évi zárszámadás és az évi pénzkezelésre vonatkozó összes okmányokat, könyveket, naplókat és egyéb iratokat részletesen megvizsgálni és vizsgálataik eredményéről az évi közgyűlésnek, az esetleges évközi vizsgálataik eredményéről pedig a központi választmánynak az elnökség útján jelentést tenni kötelesek. Fontosabb esetekben a választmány által e célból összehívandó közgyűlésnek személyesen tesznek jelentést az esetleges szabálytalanságokról.

39.§. A közgyűlés által megválasztott elnökség, választmány és tisztikar megbízatása mindenkor egy évre szól. A tisztikar újjáalakítása rendes körülmények között az év elején tartandó rendes közgyűlésen ejtendő meg.

40.§. A Szövetség központi vezetősége a választmány jóváhagyásával azokon a helyeken, ahol legalább 20 állandó lakással rendelkező cigányzenész tagnak jelentkezik, helyi csoportot alakít. A helyi csoport külön választ magának vezetőséget; elnök, pénztáros, titkár és két ellenőrből és hat tagú választmányból, mely vezetőség a tagok számarányához képest növekedik. A helyi csoportok megalakulása és megszűnése az illetékes törvényhatóság első tisztviselőjének tudomásvétel végett bejelentendő. A tisztikar azonban 10 tisztviselőnél többből, a választmány 20 tagnál többől nem állhat. Ha valamely helyen 20 tagnál kevesebb van, ezek megbízottat választanak a maguk köréből, ki az érintkezést a központtal fenntartja és a tagok ügyeit intézi.

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A vezetőség intézi a helyi csoportok ügyeit, az alapszabályok és a központ által kiadott ügyrend értelmében, az összeköttetést fenntartja a központtal és annak utasításait végrehajtja. Ha valamely tisztviselő nem tesz eleget kötelességének, az elnök felfüggesztheti, miről a helyi csoport közgyűlésen jelentést tesz és esetleg új tisztviselőt választ helyébe.

41.§. A helyi csoportok a bevételüket a tagdíjakból visszamaradó 50 %-ból a beíratási díjakból, adományokból, ünnepélyek tiszta maradványaiból, havi külön járulékokból nyerik. Ezekből fedezi a helyi csoport a helyi ügykezelés költségeit.

Az év január első felében minden helyi csoport közgyűlést tart, amelyen megújítja a tisztikart. Összejövetelt azonban lehetőleg minél többet kell tartani, egyrészt az összetartozandóság érzésének emelése, másészt előadások tartása s a tagok művelése céljából.

A csoportok pénztárosainak 100-nál kevesebb tagú helyi csoportnál havonkint, 100 tagon felül levő helyi csoport pénztárosainak két hetenkint kell leszámolniok a Szövetség központi pénztárának, a bevételekről és kiadásokról. A számadást, mielőtt a csoportpénztáros azt a központi pénztárosnak beküldi, az ellenőrök átvizsgálják és ha a számadást rendben találják, a csoport elnökével együtt ellenjegyzik.

42.§. A Szövetség központi választmányának jogában áll a helyi csoport pénztárállományát és ügyvitelét bármikor, a kellő felhatalmazással ellátott kiküldött által megvizsgáltatni, mely esetben a vezetőség köteles minden ügykönyvet, úgyszintén a pénztárt megvizsgálás céljából átadni és a kellő felvilágosítást megadni.

A központi választmánynak joga van továbbá a helyi csoportoknak, ha a Szövetség céljaival ellenkezésbe jut, vagy kötelezettségeinek meg nem felel, az illetékes hatóságtól a helyi csoport működésének felfüggesztését, feloszlatását kérni s ellene esetleg a törvényes eljárást megindítani. A helyi csoport feloszlatása esetén a leltár szerinti vagyona és pénzkészlete ebben az esetben a Szövetség központja tulajdonába megy át.

43.§. A helyi csoport közgyűlésének és a választmány üléseinek összehívása, vezetése, határozatainak hozása, jegyzőkönyvének vezetése és hitelesítése, ugyanazon szabályok mellett történik, mint az országos közgyűlésé és a központi választmányé. A helyi csoport vezetősége köteles hetenként legalább egyszer hivatalos órát tartani s annak idejét és helyét a tagokkal közölni. Ezeken a hivatalos órákon a tagok tagsági díjaikat fizetik be és a munkaviszonyból felmerülő panaszaikat ismertetik s azokban kérhetik a Szövetség támogatását és közbelépését.

IV. Fejezet

44.§. Mindazok a Szövetség részéről hozott határozatok, melyek az alapszabályok módosítását, a Szövetség feloszlatását s ez esetben vagyonának hovafordítását célozzák, még foganatosításuk előtt a m. kir. Belügyminiszterhez előterjesztendők jóváhagyás céljából.

Egyebekben a Szövetség közgyűlése által elfogadott ügyrend az irányadó. Az ügykezelő szabályzat rendelkezései azonban az alapszabályok kereteit túl nem léphetik.

45.§. Azokban az esetekben, ha a Szövetség az alapszabályokban előírt célját és eljárást meg nem tartja, hatáskörét túllépi, amennyiben államellenes működést fejt ki, a közbiztonság, a közrend ellen súlyosan vétséget követ el, vagy a tagok vagyoni érdekeit

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veszélyeztetné, a m. kir. Belügyminiszter ellene vizsgálatot rendelhet el, működését felfüggesztheti és végleg fel is oszlathatja.

Budapest, 1935. november hó 15.
Magyar Cigányzenészek Országos Szövetsége:
Berkes Béla, országos elnök.
Bura Sándor, közp. ügyv. Elnök.
Mázor Béla, főtitkár.

Szám: 146985. Magyar királyi belügyminiszter. 1936/VII-a.

Látta a magyar királyi belügyminiszter az alábbi módosító, illetve kiegészítő megjegyzésekkel:

1. A szövetség tagjai helyközvetítésének módozataira vonatkozóan a 85.237/1928. K. M. számú rendeletnek megfelelően külön ügyrendet kell készíteni, amelyet jóváhagyása végett a Magyar Királyi Állami Munkaközvetítő Hivatalnak be kell mutatni. […]

Budapest, 1936. évi január hó 24-én.

P. H. A miniszter rendeletéből: Dr. Páskánd, miniszteri titkár.

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The Statutes of the Hungarian Gypsy Musicians' National Federation

Chapter I.

1.§. The name of the Federation: "Hungarian Gypsy Musicians' National Federation" The inscription encircling the official seal is the same.

The seat of the Federation: Budapest; its area of operation: Hungary. Official language: Hungarian [1].

2.§. The goals of the Federation: to congregate the Gypsy musicians living in Hungary, protect their intellectual, artistic and financial interests, improve their working conditions, to more effectively support the touristic interests related to the fame of Gypsy music, the nurturing of Hungarian song, the unified direction of their members in a patriotic and Christian spirit – the exclusion of political and religious matters.

3.§. In the interests of the above marked goals the Federation shall maintain an office, as per its financial situation it will establish a library, found a music school, organise presentations and concerts. In the interest of protecting patriotic spirited, and, in general, Hungarian songs, it will present a proposal to the competent authority concerning the nation-wide order and its unified establishment for Gypsy performances, likewise with the support of the authorities and their approval it shall organise and strictly supervise the operation of employment agencies: These will facilitate the employment of the members and help negotiations between employers and the members. In its own interests, and those of its members, it will remain in constant contact with the ministries,

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public administration and other authorities [2]. In the interest of informing its members and for propagating its goals it shall publish an official journal [3]. With the improvement of the economic situation, and according to its financial means, it shall found a Gypsy musicians' home and in extraordinary cases it shall use funds allotted by a General Meeting for this aim to aid its members.

Chapter II.

The Members of the Federation

4.§. Founding, supporting, honorary and regular members, foreign with the prior permission of the Royal Hungarian Minister of the Interior.

5.§. Founding members are those whom the central board of directors of the Federation accept under this title and who in one sum of 50 pengő contribute to the wealth of the Federation.

6.§. Supporting members are those whom the central board of directors accept under this title and who in the year of their entry pay 10 pengő membership dues in one sum.

7.§. Honorary members are those whom the General Meeting of the federation honour and elect with this title for their services or support rendered to the Federation or in the interests of Hungarian Gypsy musicality.

8.§. A regular member may be any Hungarian Gypsy musician who has entered his 18th year, of upstanding character, patriotic, lives a moral life and is not a member of any anti-patriotic or anti-religious corps. Underage individuals can only be accepted as members of the Federation with the assent of their parents or legal guardian, and those under school disciplinary action cannot be members. Amongst underage applicants the admittance statement must be witnessed by the legal representatives.

9.§. Regular members upon admittance must pay a 1 pengő admission fee for which they receive a membership card. Their annual membership fee is 6 pengő, which can be paid as per a resolution by the board of directors of 50 fillér a month.

10.§. Members admitted to the federation accept the responsibilities laid down in the Statutes and the procedures, and keep themselves to the resolutions and regulations of the Association, and do all in their power to advance the aims and interests of the Association wherever possible.

11.§. Regular members have equal participatory and electoral rights at the Association's General Meeting and at the groups' meetings, if they do not have more than three months outstanding membership dues. They are electors and electable. These are in effect for the representatives of the rural groups sent to National General Meetings, they can only be chosen from among the regular members, but if obstructed they may represent themselves.

12.§. Founding, supporting, and honorary members only have the right to speak and propose at meetings, they cannot elect and cannot be elected; they have no right to vote whatsoever, they do not enjoy the benefits of the Association.

13.§. All regular members have equal access to the all of the Associations benefits and privileges.

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14.§. Regular members have a membership card with which they are able to certify their Association membership before the authorities. The membership cared cannot be passed to another and all forms of its duplication are forbidden. Of those whom it can be proven that they falsified a membership card, loose all their membership rights and are excluded from the membership ranks.

15.§. Membership dues in general cannot be excused and once paid cannot be refunded, however those ill or completing their military service, during their period of illness or service, furthermore those musicians over the age of 60 – who have fulfilled their responsibilities for at least 20 years – are not required to pay membership dues.

16.§. During military service the member is exempt from all his responsibilities. Though he enjoys all the benefits of the Association. He is required to report his enlistment and discharge from military service within eight days in either Budapest at the central board of directors or the leadership or in the countryside to the head of the local group.

17.§. The member who fails to pay membership dues over a period of six months, after one admonishment by the leadership will be expelled from the ranks of the members by the central board of directors. The board of directors though may grant an extension if the member provides a justifiable request.

A member who commits an act contradicting honour, good morals, receiving a legally binding sentence, or behaves in an unpatriotic way, acts against the Statutes and the procedures, who participates in anti-patriotic corps, meetings, protests, – especially if he takes a leading role in those – or executes actions in contradiction to the Association's goals and operations can be immediately expelled from the ranks of the members by the central board of directors. Such a member can only be readmitted if his behaviour provides sound evidence of his improvement.

18.§. A member with a half year of outstanding membership dues or other debts owed can have no recourse to any of the Federations benefits.

19.§. A member excluded for any reason can only be admitted again as a member if he settled his outstanding and interim membership dues and any other debts owed. The board of directors may grant an exemption to these dues if justifiable. The central board of directors has the right to extract outstanding membership dues and other debts owed through the courts, and in such cases the members submit to the royal district court chosen by the Federation and its authority and competency.

20.§. The resolution of exclusion or exemption can be appealed to the General Meeting with an appeal given to the central board of directors within 15 days following its delivery.

21.§. Incoming funds from the founding, supporting, and regular membership dues, furthermore occasional donations compose the regular income of the Federation. These funds can only be used for budgetary goals approved by the General Meeting and those goals passed in resolution by the board of directors. Donations that arrive for a specific goal cannot be used for goals differing from the original purpose.

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22.§. Membership ends if the member:
a) dies,
b) leaves,
c) if excluded from the ranks of the members,
d) is expelled.

A regular member may only leave at the end of the calendar year and if he indicates his intention to do so at latest the first day of October of that year, in writing or verbally, addressed to the leadership. If in the case the member receives a contract from abroad he is responsible for his membership responsibilities, for which he shall receive a membership card in the language of the country he shall be working in, it is to be attached to his membership identification. Such an identification identifies the member to the foreign musicians' Associations and to the authorities.

Chapter III.

23.§. The affairs of the Federation are lead by:
a) the National General Meeting,
b) the central board of directors,
c) the officers of the leadership,
d) the leaders of the groups in the countryside,
e) officers elected by the general meeting.

24.§. There can be two types of National General Meetings: the ordinary annual and extraordinary General Meeting. The ordinary National General Meeting is to be held in the first quarter year of every year. If in the convocation of this the central leadership of the Federation is somehow obstructed by an extraordinary event, then it is to give report of this before the General Meeting. The ordinary General Meeting is to be convened in any eventualities in the first half of the year.

The members of the National General Meeting are the previous year's central board of directors, officers, the representatives of local groups and the members.

25.§. Every rural local group may elect one representative for up to fifty members, in excess of that number it may elect another representative for every regular 100 members. The heads of the local groups are by their office members of the General Meeting. If the representatives are incapacitated representation may be through members belonging to another group, though one representative may have no more than one vote.

26.§. Proposals, interpolations are to be submitted in writing to the central leadership of the Federation one week before the date of the General Meeting. The inclusion of proposals arriving late or interpolations to be included in the agenda are made by the General Meeting.

Invitations to the General Meeting including the exact time, location and agenda are published in the official journal of the Federation or lacking that the Pesti Hírlap at least 14 days previous. The leadership of the local groups is to be notified of the convocation of the General Meeting in writing. The groups are to hold a membership meeting at least 8 day before the National General Meeting at which they elect the representatives to the General Meeting.

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27.§. The purview of the General Meeting includes:
a) the examination and acceptance of the annual final accounts, and the granting of the related acquittal, debate of the following years budget and its acceptance or rejection.
b) the election of a new set of officers or a new celebratory President, honorary Presidents, the board of directors, the auditing committee and other important central officers;
c) the setting of the amount of the membership dues; the alteration of which is to be regarded as a modification of the Statutes.
d) decisions over proposals, interpolations and appeals;
e) the possible modification of the Statutes, the debate and voting of the more significant resolutions of the Federation, declarations on resolutions that exceed the authority of the board of directors and the resolution to dissolve the Federation.

28.§. The General Meeting decides on important matters through secret ballot, vocal majority. In case of a tied vote the word of the President decides, for questions concerning persons a draw.

The General Meeting has a quorum if at least 1/3 of the rural groups are represented, if not then a new General Meeting is to be called within 8-30 days with the same agenda, and which has a quorum regardless of the number of representatives present. Modification of the Statutes, fusion, or the dissolution of the Federation and decisions as to the allocation of its property can be made at a national meeting if 2/3 of the local groups are represented and 2/3 of those present accept the resolution. In case of a lack of quorum a new General Meeting is to be called within 8-30 days, and which has quorum regardless of the number of representatives present.

29.§. An extraordinary General Meeting must be called by the President:
a) on a decision made by the central board of directors;
b) 1/4 of the rural groups;
c) at the written request of the auditing committee and within 30 days of the request.

Minutes are to be taken of both the ordinary and extraordinary General Meeting which must record the more important items of the General Meeting and all the resolutions, in addition to listing representatives present. The minutes are corroborated by the President, the notary, and two members of the General Meeting asked by the President to do so.

30.§. The officers elected by the General Meeting and the board of directors have a mandate of one year. Officers may only be elected from the capital city. Only adults may be elected to the board of directors. The officers are officially members of the board of directors.

31.§. The board of directors is to be proportional to the number of members. In the beginning 16 regular members and 8 substitute members, in the following years, relative to the number of members: above 500 members 20 regular and 10 substitute. If one of the members of the board of directors, for any reason, losses his membership the President is to act within 14 days and to call upon the first substitute members as listed in the minutes of the General Meeting. Further replacements all follow the order of the list, of which the President reports to the board of directors.

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The rights and responsibilities of the board of directors:
a) convenes and prepares the General Meeting;
b) forms rural local groups, and approves such formations;
c) decides concerning possible remission of any application fees;
d) protects the rights and interest of the members at all levels;
e) forms an employment agency, and elects its leader;
f) elects a welfare committee from amongst its own members, which provides suggestions for welfare or aid cases;
g) creates foundational institutions;
h) decides covering the acceptance, cancelation and exclusion of members;
i) remits the expenses according to the Statutes and resolutions of the General Meeting;
j) supervises the working of the officers, in case of an omission by an officer he may, if warranted, suspend him from his job and temporarily replace him. In case of an appeal it is required to present the case before an extraordinary General Meeting within 30 days;
k) uses the necessary office staff of the Federation for the handling of its affairs and determines their renumeration with the framework of the budget.

32.§. The central board of directors makes responsible decisions in all affairs that are not reserved for the General Meeting […]

33.§. The board of directors is required to hold a regular meeting once month. An extraordinary meeting must be convened upon the request of half of the members of the board of directors by the President with 8 days. The board of directors has quorum if in addition to the officers 1/3 of the members are present.

The notary records minutes of the meeting of the board of directors, which are to be read at the following meeting and after any comments the President, the notary and two members of the board of directors are to corroborate it.

At meetings of the board of directors the President has the right, in certain cases, to invite non-members to give their opinions. The invitees though only have the right to speak and propose, they do not have the right to vote.

34.§. The leadership of the Federation is composed of:
a) the President of the federation,
b) the central acting President,
c) two Vice-Presidents.

The President and the board of directors lead together in all the affairs of the Federation, represent the Federation before the authorities and the public, the President convenes the National General Meeting. […] He supervises the handling of the Federation's affairs, the treasury and accounts.

The central acting President substitutes for the national President in cases where he has been thus entrusted or when incapacitated. […]

The Vice-Presidents substitute for the President or acting President in case of their incapacitation.

35.§. The chief Secretary heads all the affairs of the Federation and its office. […]

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36.§. The Chief Treasurer handles the treasury of the Federation and keeps precise accounts of the income and expenditures and archives all documents related to these. He can only pay out funds with the remittance of the board of directors or the President. He is both financially and morally completely responsible for the property of the Federation. […] He is required to make available at any time to the auditors and the members of the auditing committee the necessary bookkeeping and documents.

37.§. The auditors examine the treasury on a monthly basis and together with the Treasurer are financially and universally responsible. […]

39.§. The mandate of the leadership, the board of directors and officers is done through election by the General Meeting. Under regular circumstances, the re-establishment of the officers happens at the regular General Meeting at the beginning of the year.

40.§. The central leadership of the Federation, with the approval of the board of directors, is to create a local group in those places where at least 20 Gypsy musician members are permanent residents. The local group independently elects itself a leadership; leader, Treasurer, Secretary, and two auditors and a six members board of directors, the leadership is increasing proportionally to the number of members. The creation and dissolution of local groups are to be reported to the primary official of the competent legal authority. The number of officers cannot exceed 10 and the board of directors 20 individuals. If at some locations there are fewer than 20 members, they are to elect a representative from amongst themselves who maintains relations with the central office and manages the affairs of the members.

The leadership manages the affairs for the local group, and follows the Statutes and the procedures given by the central office, maintains relations with the central office and executes its directives. If an officer does not fulfil his responsibilities, the President may suspend him, a report is given at the General Meeting of the local group and a new officer may be elected in his place.

41.§. Local groups gain their income from 50% of the membership dues remaining with them, enrolment fees, donations, clear profit from celebrations, independent monthly subsidies. These funds are used to cover the local group's costs for handling local affairs.

In the first half of every January every local group is to convene a General Meeting, at which is re-establishes if officers. It is to hold gatherings all the more frequently, in part to support a feeling of community, in part for performances and the education of members. […]

42.§. The central board of directors for the Federation has the right to send a duly authorised delegate to examine the state of the treasury and management of a local group at any time; to this aim the leadership is required to provide all accounts and the treasury for examination and provide the needed explanation.

The central board of directors has the right to request from the competent authority the suspension or dissolution of a local group if it acts in opposition to the aims of the Federation, or does not meet its responsibilities, and if needed take legal action. In the case of the dissolution of a local group its inventory of wealth and funds become the property of the Federation.

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43.§. The local group's General Meeting, convening of board of director meetings, passing of resolutions, taking of minutes and their corroboration are done according regulations of the National General Meeting and the central board of directors. The leadership of the local group is required to be available for at least one hour a week and to communicate the time and location with the members. These official hours are for the members to pay their dues and to make known any complaints stemming from their work and for asking the Federation's support and intervention.

Chapter IV.

44.§. All resolutions passed by the Federation which relate to a change in the Statutes, the dissolution of the Federation and in such case the allocation of its wealth are to be submitted to the Royal Hungarian Ministry of the Interior before their execution.

In other cases, the management of affairs as accepted by the General Meeting is to be directive. The regulations for the handling of affairs though must not surpass the parameters of the Statutes.

45.§. In such cases when the Federation does not abide by the aims and regulations proscribed in the Statutes or oversteps these, in so far as it acts against the state, public security, public order it commits a serious infraction, or it endangers the material interests of the members the Royal Hungarian Ministry of the Interior may order an investigation, suspend its operation and finally dissolve it.

Budapest, November 15, 1935.
Hungarian Gypsy Musicians' Federation:
Béla Berkes, national President.
Sándor Bura, central acting President.
Béla Mázor, first Secretary.

Number: 146985. Royal Hungarian Ministry of the Interior. 1936/VII a

Seen by the royal Hungarian Minister of the Interior with the following amending and additional comments:

1. In relation to a modification of the placement of the members of the federation a separate set of procedures are to be prepared in accordance with decree number 85.237/1928. K. M. [4], the approval of which is to be given by the Royal Hungarian State Job Placement Office. […]

Budapest, January 24, 1936.
[Stamp]. By ministerial decree: Dr. Páskándy, ministerial Secretary.

Notes

1. See 7.1.1., Note 2.
2. In 1936, in the Statutes of the organisation, the Minister of the Interior suggested that he is planning the regulation of "the national and uniform order of Gypsy musical performance", and in the planning, he counts on the suggestions of the Federation. Despite a series of attempts by

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the Hungarian Gypsy Musicians' National Federation, a complex decree was never promulgated. According to the ceremonial President the problem was that the Ministry of the Interior did not believe the decree to be executable through the framework of the Federation:

> Amongst the new tasks, I would mention: the case of the national organising of Gypsy music performance. To be honest this is a task past due, I myself have urged its completion a lot, but we all have to see that the competent ministry cannot issue such a very significant and nationwide decree which regulates the procedure of its authorities until is has enough confidence that its execution can uninhibitedly happen through the petitioning federation. The settlement of this question is not then a question of goodwill, but of understandable caution. (Magyar Cigányzene, 1938a, p. 2).

The promulgation of the decree was to wait, but other plans and measures "lifting the moral and social standing of the Gypsy musicians" did come about. Above all else, there were the long talks the Federation conducted with those hospitality industry institutions who employed Gypsy musicians, in the interest of replacing the so-called "passing the plate" with respectable and uniform honorariums for orchestra members (Magyar Nemzet, 1938, p. 22). This was deemed necessary as Gypsy orchestras often competed against each other by proprietors for the most advantageous conditions for themselves (Magyar Cigányzene, 1938b, p. 3). Another area needing attention was the curbing of excesses of impresarios, and so the Hungarian Gypsy Musicians' Federation made a collective agreement with the Art Agents Association in 1938. This stipulated uniform contract types approved by both organisations to be used by the agent and the Gypsy musicians. The commission made by the agents were to be uniformly ten percent. Furthermore, they agreed that together they would work to stop "pirate-agents" and "amateur agents" operating outside of the Art Agents Association (Magyar Cigányzene, 1938c, pp. 4-5).
3. The Hungarian Gypsy Musicians' Federation started the journal titled *Magyar Cigányzene* (Hungarian Gypsy music) in 1938, of which only two issues were published.
4. The title of the decree: The co-decree number 85.237 of the year 1928 issued by the royal Hungarian minister for trade affairs and the royal Hungarian minister of the interior concerning the complex working of free public and private employment agency offices (Magyarországi Rendeletek Tára, 1928, 1929, pp. 622-624).

Source: FSEK, B 780/67.
Prepared for publication by Tamas Hajnáczky.

Comments

By the first half of the 1930s, the Hungarian Gypsy Musicians' National Association had lost its ability to effectively represent its interests. Internal conflicts, uncollectible membership dues, the closure of local groups signalled an end to the Association. Ministry of the Interior circular decree no. 145.799/1933 officially stated that dissolution of the Association and its local groups, stating the following:

> [...] the Association has been unable to operate according to its Statutes for a longer period of time, it has no offices, the members are scattered and inactive and thus a General Meeting is unable to resolve the dissolution of the Association. (Pomogyi, 1995, p. 177).

Following the issuing of the decree the various authorities dissolved the local groups, the majority of which had no assets or had not been in operation for several years

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(Hajnáczky, 2018, pp. 241-242). A year after the dissolution of the Association the Ministry of the Interior speculated on the creation of a new national Gypsy musicians' organisation with the support and approval of the ministry. This intention was officially announced in the resolution amending Ministry of the Interior decree no. 137.000/1926, in which it – lacking an Association – regulated the procedure for issuing work permits (Pest-Pilis-Solt-Kiskun Vármegye Hivatalos Lapja, 1935, p. 488). After the passage of almost a year the Gypsy musicians created the Hungarian Gypsy Musicians' National Federation (Az Est, 1935, p. 13), the Statutes of which were approved by the minster of the interior under no. 146.985/1936. VII. The acting President of the organisation stated the document was unanimously well-received among the Gypsy musicians, as it sought solutions to several of their struggles:

> The federation's Statutes, as approved by the ministry of the interior, have two significant regulations included by the ministry, which leads us to believe that the ministry will seek to regulate nationwide the musical performances of Gypsies and will rely on the interpolations of the Federation. In addition to this it seeks to maintain the official proscribed order for job placement and ensure this through distinct procedures. (Budapesti Hírlap, 1936, p. 10).

In addition to these measures the Statutes stated goals and in the interests of their achievement mandated the maintenance of an office, with the possibility of founding a library, music school, and home for Gypsy musicians, together with an employment agency and the settling of their legal parameters. Furthermore, the Federation initiated an official journal for the 'propagation of its goals' and to inform its members, in addition to organising performances and concerts. The Statutes denoted the responsibilities and rights of the members, the procedures for the organisation, its structure, tasks and competence and the procedures for a General Meeting. The significance of the source is in part for the in-depth insight it gives on the structure and procedures of Hungarian Gypsy Musicians' National Federation, and as the only Statute presently known from the period of the foundation of the Federation. The comparison of the Association and the Federation, their goals, structure and operation, are also made possible.

Tamas Hajnáczky

7.3.2 *The Five-hundred-year Jubilee*

Ötszáz éves jubileumokat ünneplik a magyar cigányzenészek
Meghívás a Magyar Városok Szövetségéhez

1937. április 15.

A magyar cigányzenészség az idén ünnepli meg Magyarországon történt letelepülése s itteni zenei működése kezdetének 500 éves jubileumát, amely alkalomból a hazai cigányzenészség érdekképviselete a Magyar Cigányzenészek Országos Szövetsége öt hónapig

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tartó, nagy ünnepségeket készít elő. A cigányzenészek szövetsége néhány nappal ezelőtt ünnepélyesen meghívta ünnepségeire a Magyar Városok Országos Szövetségét is.

A beküldött műsor szerint az ünnepségek április hó 25.-én kezdődnek a Margitszigeten, ahol a cigányzenészek az Országos Rákóczi Szövetséggel karöltve Bihari János hírneves cigányzenész, a „Magyar Orfeusz" szobránál emlékünnepélyt tartanak. A tulajdonképpeni ünnepségek azonban azzal az országos cigányzenés demonstrációval kezdődnek, amit Magyarország minden városában, minden községében egy napon: május 6-án délben tartanak.

Ez a zenés demonstráció igen szép és hazafias elgondolással a magyar cigányzenészség ünnepélyes hitvallása lesz az őt befogadó magyar haza iránt. A cigányzenészség ebben az órában ünnepi térzenét ad minden városban s térzene után szerenáddal tiszteli meg a városok, megyék, községek vezetőit, háláját kifejezve. A cigányzenészek szövetsége ez irányban már kérelmet intézett az ország valamennyi főispánjához és polgármesteréhez, hogy hála-demonstrációjának minél szebben kifejezést adhasson.

Az ünnepségek legkiemelkedőbb eseménye a Budapesten rendezett díszelőadás, amit május 8-án tartanak a Városi Színházban József főherceg díszvédnöksége, Hóman Bálint kultuszminiszter, Kozma Miklós vitéz belügyminiszter, a Magyar Távirati Iroda elnöke s Bornemissza Géza kereskedelmi miniszter fővédnöksége mellett. Erre az ünnepségre a cigányzenészség meghívta Magyarország kormányzóját, a kormányt, a diplomáciai testületeket s meghívta az ország polgármestereit is.

– Úgy érezzük, hogy a velünk ünneplő díszes előkelőségek soraiból nem hiányozhatnak a magyar városok illusztris vezetői sem, – (írják külön meghívásukban a szövetség vezetői) – akiknek elődeik, de most élő reprezentánsai is mindenkor szeretettel és megértéssel karolták fel a cigányzenészség sorsát és a magyar nóta ügyét …

Ezen a díszelőadáson a cigányzenészség a magyar nóta és a magyar cigányzene félezer éves fejlődési történetét mutatja be teljesen új beállítású színes, zenés, énekes revü-színpadi képekben és pedig a legkiválóbb magyar énekesnők, énekesek, 30 kitűnő budapesti cigányprímás és 200 tagú cigányzenekarral. A vezetőség gondoskodott arról, hogy a magyar városok vezetői részére megfelelő helyek biztosítva legyenek és ezt az ünnepi meghívón közölni fogja.

A díszelőadást június 6-án, a Baross szövetség budapesti seregszemléjén megismétlik, majd a júliusi hetekben kezdetét veszi az országos cigányzenész-verseny, a vidék rádiókapcsolásával. Augusztus hóban, Szent István hetében Budapesten csárdásversenyt rendeznek a cigányzenészek, akik ugyanekkor bemutatnak egy korhű cigánylakodalmat és keresztelőt is. Az ünnepségeket szeptemberben gypsiologiai világkongresszus zárja be, amelyen a világ cigánytudósai, kutatói és irodalmárai tartanak tudományos ankétot.

A cigányzenészség nagy megmozdulásával már a külföldi lapok is élénken foglalkoznak s a legtöbb európai rádió is kapcsolni fogja a díszelőadást.

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The Hungarian Gypsy musicians celebrate their five-hundred-year jubilee
An Invitation to the Hungarian Cities Federation

April 15, 1937.

This year the Hungarian Gypsy music society is celebrating the 500-year jubilee [1] of its settlement in Hungary and the beginnings of its musical life. On this occasion, the Hungarian Gypsy Musicians' National Federation, representing Gypsy musical society, shall organise five months of great celebrations. A few days ago the Gypsy musicians' federation also formally invited the Hungarian Cities National Federation to its celebration.

According to the sent program, the celebrations will begin on 25 April on Margit Island, where the Gypsy musicians, together with the National Rákóczi Federation [2] will hold a commemoration at the statue of the famous János Bihari [3], the "Hungarian Orpheus". The actual celebratory events will begin with a nationwide demonstration of Gypsy music, happening in every Hungarian city and town on one day, 6 May, at noon.

This musical demonstration shall be the beautiful and patriotic spirited celebratory profession of faith on the part of Hungarian Gypsy society towards the Hungarian homeland that has embraced them. At that hour Gypsy musicians will give a festive public performance in every city and pay their respects and give thanks to the leaders of the cities, counties, towns with a serenade. The Gypsy musicians' federation has already submitted a petition to all the nation's counts and mayors to allow for the nicest possible expression of thanks.

The premier event of these celebrations will be the gala performance given in Budapest on 8 May in the City's Theatre, under the honorary patronage of Archduke József, and the patronage of Bálint Hóman, culture minister, Sir [4] Miklós Kozma, minister of the interior, the President of the Hungarian Telegraphic Office and Géza Bornemissza minister for trade. The Gypsy musicians have invited the Regent of Hungary [5] to this celebration, the diplomatic corps and the nation's mayors.

– We feel that the illustrious leaders of Hungarian cities cannot be found missing from the ranks of the prominent dignitaries celebrating with us – (written separately in the invitation by the federation's leaders) – those whose predecessors, and whose living representatives have always lovingly and with understanding embraced the fate of Gypsy musicality and Hungarian song …

This gala performance will present the evolution and history of a half-millennium of Gypsy musicality, Hungarian song, and Hungarian Gypsy music, in a completely newly staged colourful, musical, singing theatrical review, with the greatest Hungarian singers, 30 of the most excellent Gypsy first violinists from Budapest and a 200 member Gypsy orchestra. The leadership has taken care to ensure appropriate seating for the leaders of the Hungarian cities and shall denote these on the invitation.

The gala performance will be repeated at the Budapest exhibition of the Baross Federation [6] on 6 June. In July, the national Gypsy musicians' competition [7] will begin, and be connected through radio to the countryside. In the month of August, during

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St. Stephen's week, there will be a csárdás competition in Budapest, organised by the Gypsy musicians, who will at this time present and also an authentic period Gypsy wedding and baptism. The celebrations will end with a world congress [8] on Gypsyology, at which Gypsy academics, researchers and literati will hold conference.

The foreign press has taken a keen interest in the great activity of Gypsy musical society and most European radio stations shall transmit the gala performance.

Notes

1. General thought at that time dated the appearance of Gypsies in Hungary to the decree granting asylum given by Sigismund of Luxembourg, in 1417. The five-hundred-year anniversary celebrated by the Gypsy musicians based itself, mistakenly, upon this date. It later was revealed that these letters of asylum were forgeries, though other reliable sources did record the Gypsies settling and travelling across Hungary in the first half of the 15th century (Nagy, 2004, pp. 7-29; Tóth, 2015, pp. 153-156; cf. also Chapter 8).
2. The National Rákóczi Federation (1926-?) was named after Ferenc Rákóczi II (1676-1735), prince of Transylvania, and sought to preserve his legacy, its primary goals being the strengthening of Hungarian national identity, in addition to protesting on behalf of the regions granted other countries by the treaty of Trianon (Kovács, 2005).
3. See, 7.2.1., Note 3.
4. The knightly title (*Vitéz*) was granted by Hungary's regent Miklós Horthy, and thus composed a knightly order. The honour was tied to military heroism, and those knighted received land, thus creating a mid-sized landholding class allied to the regent (Miklós, 2017, pp. 66-78).
5. Miklós Horthy of Nagybánya (1868-1957), regent of Hungary (1920-1944).
6. The Baross Federation (1919-1945), was an organisation representing the interests of Christian tradesmen and merchants, and distinguished itself from other such groups which had Jewish members. During the Second World War, it engaged in making the existence of Jewish tradesmen and merchants impossible. In the 1920s, it became a nationwide organisation, founding several rural groups and organising trade courses, and participating in the founding of factories, kindergartens and aid programs (Margittai, 2010, p. 89).
7. The Gypsy musicians' competition was called the "Gypsy music Olympics" and was planned within the auspices of the Federation to which they expected participants from the neighbouring countries and even distant continents (Sárosi, 2012, pp. 376-377).
8. The Gypsyology World Congress did not materialise (cf. below, 7.3.3).

Source: [No Author]. (1937). Ötszáz éves jubileumokat ünneplik a magyar cigányzenészek. Meghívás a Magyar Városok Szövetségéhez. *Városok Lapja*, An. 32, No. 8, 1937, April 15, p. 244. Prepared for publication by Tamas Hajnáczky.

Comments

The Hungarian Gypsy Musicians' National Federation had decided a year after its founding to worthily commemorate the five-hundredth anniversary of Gypsy settlement in Hungary with nationwide celebrations. It encouraged Gypsy musicians to unreservedly participate in the event:

> We call upon all of Hungarian Gypsy music society to begin the 500-year jubilee, on 6 May, Ascension Day, at 12 o'clock noon, by playing celebratory music in the main square of every Hungarian city and town. Following this to proceed to the residence of the leader of the city or town and give a celebratory serenade. (Nyírvidék, 1937a, p.2).

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The Federation also mentioned that they were to only play Hungarian songs, and to begin their performance in the public square with the national anthem and the serenade with the Hungarian Creed, and to close it with the Rákóczi march (Nyírvidék, 1937b, p. 2). The press devoted numerous articles to the coming Gypsy music jubilee celebrations (Sárosi, 2012, pp. 386-398). Notable among these was the Prágai Magyar Hírlap (Sárosi, 2012, p. 397), which published a twelve-part series on the history of Hungarian Gypsies. The daily papers reported on the many rural town events, where the Gypsies had begun to prepare for the anniversary (Békésmegyei Közlöny, 1937, p. 2; Békés, 1937, p. 3; Pécsi Napló, 1937a, p. 2; Pécsi Napló, 1937b, p. 4). There were nevertheless cities where the Gypsy musicians refused to perform. They cited the lack of pay for their performance, in addition to the factor of internal tensions amongst themselves (Nyírvidék, 1937a, p. 2) The anniversary's premier event was the gala performance given in the City's Theatre, which both Hungarian and foreign radios wanted to broadcast (Magyarság, 1937, p. 30). The significance of this press report is its comprehensive account of the jubilee celebrations, and the events in the capital city, as all the other sources only provide partial information about the various happenings.

Tamas Hajnáczky

7.3.3 *The World Congress on Gypsyology*

Gipsyológiai világkongresszus lesz Budapesten.

1937. július 7.

A Magyar Cigányzenészek Országos Szövetsége ebben az évben ünnepli a cigányok magyarországi letelepülésének ötszáz éves évfordulóját. Az ünnepi év legnagyobb eseménye a gipsyológiai világkongresszus lesz, amelyet szeptember 5-iki kezdettel rendeznek meg Budapesten. A kongresszus két hétig fog tartani és a világ minden részéből eljönnek a cigányokkal foglalkozó művészek, muzsikusok, festők, néprajzi és nyelvtudósok. Meghívót kapott többek között a sziámi király is, akiről köztudomású, hogy lelkes cigánykutató és egy ízben a Monte Carlóban muzsikáló Bura Sándor cigányprímásnak tolmácsa útján azt üzente: „mi testvérek vagyunk".

A világ minden tájáról eljönnek azok a cigányszármazású művészek is, akik világhírnevet szereztek maguknak. Boulanger, Párizs legnevesebb muzsikusa, aki híres zeneszerző is egyben, szintén itt lesz a cigányművészek között. Száz résztvevőre számítanak Angliából, ahol a cigánykutatás 120 éves múltra tekint vissza. 120 évvel ezelőtt alapították a Gypsy Lore Society nevű cigánykutató egyesületet. Jönnek az amerikai, indiai és japán érdeklődők is és természetesen, Európa összes államai is résztvesznek a kongresszuson, amelynek elnöke József királyi herceg lesz, a nagy cigánybarát királyi herceg fia, aki az első cigány-magyar szótárt összeállította.

Bura Sándor prímás, a kongresszus cigányelnöke a következőket mondta:

– A magyar cigányzenétől egyesek azt az érdemet is el akarták vitatni, hogy a magyar nótát fenntartotta és fejlesztette. Egyes tanárok hangoztatnak divatos jelszavakat a

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cigánymuzsika ellen és a cigányzenét a magyar nóta megrontójának és eltorzítójának állítják be. Ha ezt a valótlan álláspontot 500 év alatt a muzsikánkkal nem tudtuk megdönteni, megdönti a most tartandó világkonferencia, ahol a világ nagy tudósai és nagy művészei fognak hódolni a cigányművészetnek. Nemzeti szempontból is örvendetes és nagyjelentőségű a budapesti kongresszus, mert itt beigazolást fog nyerni, hogy a cigányok, akik 500 éve élnek a magyarság között, nem elnyomott kisebbségként éltek itt. 500 évvel ezelőtt egyes országokban a cigányon bárki népítéletet hajthatott végre, cigányt megölhettek, megcsonkíthattak, mert ezért büntetés nem járt. Ugyanakkor Magyarországon a magyar a cigányt nemcsak megtűrte, de megbecsülte és szerette is. A magyarság türelmének és a kisebbségek iránt való megértésének is ünnepe lesz a cigányok világkongresszusa.

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The World Congress on Gypsyology to be held in Budapest

July 7, 1937.

The Hungarian Gypsy Musicians' National Federation shall celebrate the five-hundredth anniversary of the settlement of Gypsies in Hungary. The year's greatest event shall be the Gypsyology world congress, to be held starting the 5th of September in Budapest. The congress will last for two weeks and those dealing with Gypsy art, music, painting, folklore, and linguistics are expected to attend from all parts of the world. Amongst others the King of Siam [1], known to be an enthusiastic Gypsy researcher, has been invited, and who wrote, through his interpreter, to Gypsy first violinist Sándor Bura [2], performing in Monte Carlo: "We are brothers".

Artists of Gypsy decent who have achieved world fame will come from all corners of the earth. Boulanger [3], Paris' best known musician, in addition to being a famous composer will also be among the Gypsy musicians. One hundred participants are expected to come from England, where Gypsy research looks back upon a 120-year past. An Association studying Gypsies named the Gypsy Lore Society [4] was founded 120 years ago. There shall be American, Indian and Japanese guests and naturally participants from all nations of Europe. The President of the Congress shall be Royal Prince József, the archduke is a great friend of the Gypsies [5], and son of the royal prince who complied the first Gypsy-Hungarian dictionary [6].

Sándor Bura, first violinist, the Gypsy President of the congress stated the following:

– There were those who would argue against the merits of Gypsy music in the preservation and development of Hungarian song. There are teachers who harp on fashionable slogans against Gypsy music and would have people believe Gypsy music ruined and twisted Hungarian song [7]. If the past 500 years of our music has not been enough to rebuke such an opinion then the upcoming world congress, at which the world's great academics and great artists shall pay their respects to Gypsy music, shall do so. The Budapest congress is to be lauded and shall be of great significance from a national

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perspective as it shall prove that Gypsies have lived among Hungarians for 500 years, not as an oppressed minority, as in other countries. 500 years ago, in certain countries anyone could commit any act of public retribution on Gypsies, could kill Gypsies, could mutilate them, and not be punished. In Hungary, however, Hungarians not only tolerated the Gypsies but honoured and loved them. This Gypsy world congress will be a celebration of the tolerance of Hungarians and their understanding of minorities.

Notes

1. Probably this is a reference to Prajadhipok (or Rama VII), the last King of Siam (1925-1932) and the first King of Thailand (1932-1935) who after the First World War received training at the *Écoles supérieures de guerre* in France.
2. As seen also from the previous section, Sándor Bura was a famous Gypsy first violinist and the acting President of the Hungarian Gypsy Musicians' Federation.
3. Nadia Boulanger (1887-1997), famous Parisian composer, conductor and music teacher.
4. At the time of the publication of this article the Association did not in fact look back upon a 120-year past, as the Gypsy Lore Society was founded in 1888.
5. Archduke Joseph Karl of Habsburg-Loraine (1833-1905), commander of the Royal Hungarian Military, provided support and funding for significant Gypsy research in Hungary. The journals *Ethnologische Mitteilungen aus Ungarn* and *Mitteilungen zur Zigeunerkunde* were published under his patronage. At his estate in Alcsút he tried to settle nomadic Gypsies and established a school for their children, though these initiatives were unsuccessful. He regularly corresponded with the leaders of the Gypsy Lore Society, and supported their publications financially, in addition to writing articles for them (Landauer, 2004, pp. 22-23; Soós, 2000, pp. 6-12). See also Chapter 1.
6. The article's mention of Archduke Joseph compiling a Gypsy-Hungarian dictionary is mistaken, possibly confusing authorship with his support of the publication of the following dictionaries; in 1885, Endre Györffy: "Magyar és czigány szótár. Czigányúl mondva vakeriben (Hungarian and Gypsy dictionary)", and in 1886, Ferenc Sztojka Nagy-idai: "Õ császári és magyar királyi fensége József fõherceg magyar- és czigány-nyelv gyök-szótára. Románé áláva. Iskolai és utazási használatra (His imperial and royal highness archduke Joseph's Hungarian and Gypsy root word dictionary, for school and travel use) supplemented and revised edition published in 1890. In addition to Czigán nyelvtan – Románo csibákero sziklaribe" (Gypsy grammar) in 1888, the first academic publication on Gypsy dialects in Hungary (Győrffy, 2011; Landauer, 2004, pp. 23-24; Soós, 2000, pp. 6-12). See also Chapter 1., Summarising comments.
7. The first heated debate concerning the relation between Hungarian folk music and Gypsy music followed the publication of Ferenc Liszt's 1861 volume *A czigányokról és a czigány zenéről Magyarországon* (Concerning Gypsies and Gypsy music in Hungary). The question reappeared in the inter-war years and the musical research and studies of composers Béla Bartók and Zoltán Kodály tried to clarify the issue. A critical article by Margit Prohács, the librarian of the College of Musical Arts in Budapest, in 1930, was published in the *Napkelet* journal. This study caused the Hungarian Gypsy Musicians' to pursue a lawsuit against the librarian, in addition to a reply article (Kéki, 1991, pp. 354-359).

Source: [No Author]. (1937). Gipsyológiai világkongresszus lesz Budapesten. *Budapesti Hírlap*, An. 47. No. 151, 1937, July 7, p. 2.
Prepared for publication by Tamas Hajnáczky.

Comments

The congress, which was to be a jubilee celebration of the five-hundredth anniversary, and be organised by the Hungarian Gypsy Musicians' Federation, did not finally materialise.

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The idea for the conference was first proposed by Dr. Endre Spur and a Dublin professor Walter Starkie. The academic had studied Gypsies in Hungary in 1929 and had returned in 1936, to gather further data for his work and to begin the organisation of a world congress. The plans were to invite presenters from over fifty countries. The press gave special emphasis to presenters coming from Great Britain where the Gypsy Lore Society operated as an academic Association studying Gypsies. The significance of this source is that it gives the most comprehensive image of the conference plans, something only touched upon by other articles. Especially notable is the insight it gives into the perspective of the organising acting President of the Federation concerning the congress.

Tamas Hajnáczky

Additional Comments

The presented materials reveal the multifaceted dimensions of the Roma civic emancipation movement in Hungary. At its forefront was the protection of the professional interests of Gypsy musicians, but this movement also had its strong ethnic and national dimensions. In this case, the cohesion between the two most important dimensions of their identity – as an ethnic community and as an integral part of the Hungarian civic nation – is very clear, and finds its expression in the constant emphasis on the notion "Hungarian Gypsy music". In fact, this designation was the central means of promoting their music in the country and around the world. Its promotion (and thus the perception from the macro-society) as being part of the Hungarian national music culture guaranteed its protection and support, which remained unchanged during all the vicissitudes in the history of the modern Hungarian state. Perhaps the most impressive evidence of this is the Budapest Gypsy Symphony Orchestra (also known as One Hundred Gypsy Violins), founded in 1985 at the funeral of the famous musician Sandor Jaroka, which still exists today.

There is a puzzling case in the development of the Roma civil emancipation movement in Hungary. According to some authors, in 1937, Mária László, as a journalist, had organised a protest in the village of Pand against anti-Gypsy discrimination, when she was arrested for incitement, lost her job and had to undergo imprisonment for a month and police surveillance for three years for demanding equal rights for Gypsies (Stewart, 2001, p. 76; Klímová-Alexander, 2005a, p. 167; Majtényi & Majtényi, 2016, p. 36; Kóczé, 2019). According to the unfortunate model of the Roma history research, the first author does not indicate the historical source on which this information is based, and the others then repeat it uncritically.

However, we have some doubts about the accuracy of this information. Mária László (1909-1989) is a well-known and praised Roma activist, who in 1957 founded the *Magyar Cigányok Kulturális Szövetsége* (Hungarian Gypsy Cultural Association). In 1937, she was only 18-year-old and it seems unlikely for her to have been a journalist and organiser of mass protests. Besides, Anna Lujza Szász, perhaps the only researcher to date who has worked extensively with materials from the personal archive of Mária László (six boxes, deposited in the Museum of Ethnography in Budapest), does not mention this

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particular aspect of László's biography in her dissertation (Szász, 2015). So it is quite possible that this case would be an example of a story created secondary (under the communist regime), which aimed to embellish the biography of Mária László. In any case, at this point, the case remains unclear and will remain so until historical evidence is discovered.

Concerning the attempts to organise a 'World Congress on Gypsyology', there is a coincidence of interests in this case between the leadership of the Hungarian Gypsy Musicians' Federation and the scholars from the Gypsy Lore Society. In the same year, two articles were published in the *Journal of the Gypsy Lore Society*, by Walter Starkie (1937) and Endre Spur (1937), proposing such a congress and highlighting the importance it would have for the study of Gypsies and their music. Of interest is the characteristic given by the Hungarian researcher to Gypsy musicians:

> These Gypsy fiddlers of yours are apparently professional musicians just as in other orchestras, no longer free Nomads of the road, but a settled people, a sort of "petit-bourgeois". [...] The Gypsy musician of the town doubtless does represent a higher class of the Romany people, earning his living by a kind of artistic work. (Spur, 1937, p. 106).

For its part, the leadership of the Hungarian Gypsy Musicians' Federation might have seen a good opportunity in holding such a Congress to publicise the organisation's activities and to reaffirm (through the authority of international academia) its high value and importance. There is no information as to why this Congress was not held.

During the interwar period, Gypsy musicians were widely popular not only in Hungary but throughout Europe. When the famous violinist Béla Radics died in 1930, his funeral was widely covered not only in the local but also in the European press. Some publications abroad even reported 150,000 people taking part in the mourning procession on the streets of Budapest (Jeversches Wochenblatt, 1930, p. 2); the figure is probably exaggerated, but it is still indicative enough.

Elena Marushiakova and Vesselin Popov

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CHAPTER 8

Czechoslovakia

8.1 Naming and Labeling of Roma

8.1.1 *A Letter to the State Attorney's Office in Uherské Hradiště*

Slavné státní zastupitelství!

Já podepsaný Libor Daniel dne 24. července 1893 v Bílovicích u Uh. Hradiště narozený cikán a kovář bydlel jsem od roku 1909 v Ludkovicích i se svou manželkou Josefou Danielovou i s našimi 6 dítkami zcela pokojně až do poslední doby, 6 let před tím byl jsem u vojska a ve válce a dle dovolenky náhradního praporu čs. pěšího pluku č. 3 11. náhr. rota, běžné číslo seznamu 212/11 vystavenou v Kroměříži dne 25. května 1920, byl jsem po dosažení vojenské hodnosti jako svobodník propuštěn od vojska domů na trvalou dovolenou.

Já podepsaný František Didy, dne 23. ledna 1896 narozený na Velkém Ořechově blíže Uh. Brodu, cikán a kovář v boudě v Hřivném Újezdě, bydlel jsem i se svou manželkou Františkou Didy a s našimi 7 dítkami již 8 let v naší boudě v Hřivném újezdě, když jsem byl před tím od roku 1915 sloužil u vojska a když mně byla od čs. domobraneckého okresního velitelství v Kroměříži pod běžným číslem seznamu 14542/20 vystavena dne 24. února 1921 dovolenka a já jsem byl demobilisován a propuštěn cestou superarbitrace na trvalou dovolenou jako pěšák 27. pěšího pluku.

Obě rodiny živily jsme se i se svými četnými dítkami poctivě buď kovářskou nebo nádenickou prací, až do poslední doby.

V neděli dne 29. května 1921 večer, když jsme již všichni i s našimi dítkami v našich leženích spali, přišli všichni obvinění, a ještě více jiných osob ozbrojených holemi a tyčemi, asi v 10 hodin večer k nám do našeho ležení v Ludkovicích a vyzvali nás, že se musíme z Ludkovic ihned v noci vystěhovat i s našimi dětmi.

Já, Libor Daniel, jsem pana starostu Antonína Novotného i ostatní pány obecní radní prosil, aby mne nechali v našem táboře přespat alespoň do rána i s našimi dětmi, ale 1. pan radní Jan Gavenda mně na to pravil, že jak v 5 minutách se neodstěhujeme z Ludkovic, že budeme ihned všichni zabiti. Na to tloukli všichni obvinění silnými koly, holemi a tyčemi do naší boudy, až tuto celou roztloukli, a naše děti strachem pojaté se rozutekly do blízkého lesa a nalezli jsme je až ráno v lese celé ustrašené, a my sami byli jsme od obviněných přinuceni v noci po 10 hodině ze své boudy v Ludkovicích pryč odejíti a přespali jsme také v lese sousední obce Hřivného Újezda.

Při tom měl p. obecní radní Josef Matouš též flintu a vystřelil z ní jednou, aby nás postrašil a vzbudil v nás důvodnou obavu a aby nás všichni obvinění přinutili své dosavadní bydliště opustiti a z Ludkovic pryč se odstěhovati.

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Škodu, kterou nám všichni obvinění obecní funkcionáři z Ludkovic roztlučením našich boud v Ludkovicích a na území Hřivného Újezda a roztrháním plátěných plachet nad těmito boudami způsobili, odhadujeme každou boudu i s plachtou alespoň na 500 Kč a tedy obě 2 boudy na 1000 Kč a připojujeme se jako poškození a soukromí účastníci s tímto odškodným k trestnímu řízení, budeme žádati přisouzení tohoto odškodného 1000 Kč od všech odsouzených pachatelů.

Za svědky uvádíme samy sebe a sice:

Libora Daniela, Josefu Danielovou, Františka Didy, a jeho manželku Františku Didy a pak Ferdinanda Heráka, cikána a nádeníka 19 ti letého a Cypriána Daniela, 17 ti letého cikána a nádeníka, všichni nyní bytem v Hřivném Újezdě blíže Uh. Brodu.

Uvádíme ještě, že jsme před tím ani od obce ani od obecního úřadu v Ludkovicích nedostali žádného písemného vyzvání, abychom se z této obce ihned vystěhovali, a nebyli jsme dosud od obecního úřadu obce Ludkovice právoplatně vypovězeni, k čemuž ostatně nepozůstává docela žádných důvodů, poněvadž se všichni poctivě živíme a chováme.

Zůstavujeme tomuto slavnému státnímu zastupitelství, aby shora subsumovalo pod příslušná ustanovení trestného zákona a my jen tvrdíme, že se všichni obvinění dopustili proti nám zločinu ve smyslu §§ 85. lit. ab, § 98 ab, a 99 tr. z. a očekáváme, že třeba jsme cikáni, zasloužíme jako vysloužilí vojínové také ochrany trestního zákona a povolaných k jeho hájení slavných úřadů.

Předkládajíce sub A/ plnomocenství našeho právního zástupce, prosíme tímto zástupcem uctivě:

Slavné státní zastupitelství rač v této věci proti všem obviněným zavésti trestní vyšetřování pro zločiny shora uvedené.

Náš právní zástupce Dr. Karel Večeřa, advokát v Uh. Brodě, plnou mocí vykázaný prosí, aby o případném hlavním přelíčení proti obviněným nařízeném byl uvědoměn.

V Uh. Brodě, dne 4. června 1921.

Libor Daniel, Josefa Danielová, František Didy, Františka Didy.

∵

Glorious Public Prosecution!

I, the undersigned Libor Daniel, born 24 July 1893 in Bílovice u Uherského Hradiště, a Gypsy and a smith, lived in Ludkovice since 1909 with my wife Josefa Danielová and our 6 children perfectly peacefully until recently, 6 years ago, I served in the army and in the war and, according to a furlough of the reserve batallion of the Czechoslovak infantry regiment no. 3, 11th reserve company, regular list number 212/11, issued in Kroměříž on 25 May 1920, I was, after progressing to the rank of lank corporal, discharged home from the army on permanent leave.

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I, the undersigned František Didy, born 23 January 1896 in Velký Ořechov, near Uherský Brod, a Gypsy and a smith, lived with my wife Františka Didy and our 7 children 8 years already in our shanty in Hřivný Újezd [1], before, from 1915, I served in the army and, when I was given a furlough by the territorial district command in Kroměříž under the regular list number 14542/20, issued 24 Feb 1921, I was demobilized and medically discharged on permanent leave as infantryman of the 27th regiment.

Until recently, both our families with our many children made living by doing honest smith or menial labour.

On Sunday, the evening of 29th May 1921, when we were all sleeping with our children in our camp, all the defendants came, and some more other people, armed with sticks and rods at around 10 pm to our camp in Ludkovice and called upon us to move out together with our children.

I, Libor Daniel begged Mr. Mayor Antonín Novotný and other gentlemen to let me sleep in our camp with our children at least until the morning, but Mr. First Councillor Jan Gavenda answered me that lest we move out from Ludkovice in 5 minutes, we shall all be killed at once. At that, they were banging on our shanty until they smashed it all to pieces, and our children, taken over by fear, scattered into the near woods and we found them only in the morning in the woods, terrified, and we ourselves were forced by the defendants to leave after 10 o'clock at night, to abandon our shanty in Ludkovice and we also stayed overnight in the woods, in the neighbouring village Hřivný Újezd.

During the time, Mr. Councillor Josef Matouš also had a rifle, from which he shot once to scare us and raise reasonable fear and to have all the defendants make us to leave our existing residence and move out from Ludkovice.

We estimate the damage, that the accused village officials of Ludkovice caused by smashing our shanties in Ludkovice and in the municipality of Hřivný Újezd and by tearing the canvas canopies over the shanties, to be at least 500 crowns for each shanty with a canopy, that is 1,000 crowns for both shanties, and we join as the aggrieved and private parties with the damages to the criminal prosecution, and we demand to award the damages of 1,000 crowns from all the defendants.

As witnesses we present ourselves, that is:

Libor Daniel, Josefa Danielová, František Didy, and his wife Františka Didy, and Ferdinand Herák, a 19-year-old Gypsy and a labourer, Cyprián Daniel, a 17-year-old Gypsy and a labourer, all living in Hřivný Újezd near Uherský Brod.

We further state that we had not been given, neither from the village neither from the municipality in Ludkovice, any written notice to immediately move out, and, until now, we have not been lawfully evicted by the municipality of Ludkovice, for which there is no reason whatsoever, for that matter, since we all work and behave dully.

We cede to the glorious Public Prosecution to subsume under the relevant provisions of the Penal Code, and we only claim that all the defendants have committed a crime against us according to Art. 85 ab Art. 98 ab, and Art. 99 of the Penal Code [2], and we,

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albeit Gypsies, expect to also deserve, as retired soldiers, the protection of the Penal Code and the glorious authorities which guard its defence.

Submitting under A/ the authorization of our attorney, we respectfully ask via our attorney:

Glorious Public Prosecution, please, launch a criminal investigation of the crimes mentioned hereinbefore.

Our attorney Dr. Karel Večeřa, attorney in Uherský Brod, with authorization, asks to be informed about any potential main proceedings against the defendants.

In Uherský Brod, 4 June 1921.
Libor Daniel, Josefa Danielová, František Didy, Františka Didy.

Notes

1. The name of the municipality was Hřivínův Újezd. It is located near Luhačovice, a Moravian spa town, and fell within the authority of Zlín District.
2. The Czechoslovak Republic adopted the Penal Code of the former Habsburg Monarchy. According to the Act No. 117/1852 On Crimes, Offences and Misdemeanours the Article No. 85 defined the malicious damage of the private property which could be punished by imprisonment ranging from at least six months to a maximum of ten years. The article No. 98 concerned the blackmailing and No. 99 defined threats.

Source: MZA, f. C 48 Krajský soud v Uherském Hradišti, II. Manipulace, inv. č. 2184, sign. Vr VIII 2146/21, obž. 1632, kart. 448.
Prepared for publication by Pavel Baloun.
Translated by Martin Babička.

8.1.2 *A Letter to the Provincial Office in Prague*

Zemský úřad v Praze

č. 24627. III 7 R 17.
Dne 30.V.1939.

Růžička Josef r. nar. 7. III. 1899 v Držkrajově, pol. okr. Milevsko, bytem, Nová Ves u Písku

Jmenovaný žádá zemský úřad v Praze, aby vyhověl jeho prosbě a neuvrhnul ho do cikánského života, v kterém již 11 let nežije.

Udávám, že ve 28. r. jsem narukoval k 11. pěš[ího] pl[uku] v Písku, kde jsem sloužil 14 měs. úplně bez trestu.

Ve 30 r. jsem se usadil v Čížové, kde jsem pracoval jakožto dělník ve velkostatku Jiřího K. z Lobkowicz, za denní mzdu deseti korun až do 32 roku, takže mě nebylo možno uživiti 5 člennou rodinu z čehož moje manželka byla nucena hledati obživu pro rodinu u dobrosrdečných lidí. Ve 33 r. jsem se uchytil jako sezonní dělník na státních silnicích technického oddělení v Písku, kde konám nejtěžší práce jako polevač asfaltu a kde jsou se mnou úplně spokojeni.

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Ještě jednou žádám laskavě zemský úřad, aby vzal zřetel na moji rodinu a zachránil ji od nebezpečí, které by povstalo vyhoštěním z obce Nová Ves-Čížová.

Jsem ženatý, mám 4 děti od 3 do 14 let, z nichž jedno chodí do 1 tř. druhé do 3 tř. obecné školy v Čížové a nejstarší do druhého ročníku mešťan. šk. v Písku, což jest mojí snahou vychovati z nich řádné občany a neuvrhovat je do cikánského prostředí v kterém nejsou vychovány.

Ještě jednou laskavě žádám zemský úřad, aby nehleděl na mou špatnou minulost a vzal zřetel, že ji chci napravit a žít jako pořádný občan. Co se týče zdejších občanů, nejsou proti mně nijak zaujati a každý se mnou vychází v dobrém přátelství. Uvádím, že ve zdejším zastupitelstvu jsou 3 osoby, které by mě chtěly vyštvat a kterým nezáleží na tom, jestli moje rodina bude zničena či ne. Jsem již zde 9 let, aniž bych měl hodinu trestu. Co se týče mé manželky, žádám zemský úřad, aby vzal ohled, že nic neudělala ze ziskuchtivosti, nýbrž z bídy.

Čímž slibuji zemskému úřadu, že se to vícekráte opakovati nebude. Co se týče četnické pátrací stanice v Písku, jsou se mnou úplně spokojeni a jsem-li bez práce vždy pro mě nějakou práci najdou a vždy mě napomínají, abych se již k cikánskému životu nevracel a živil se poctivou prací. Ubezpečuji zemský úřad, že se chci poctivou prací živit, jen když mě bude dána možnost, abych mohl dále pracovat a vést rodinu k pořádnému životu.

Ještě jednou žádám zemský úřad, aby vyslyšel moji prosbu a vyhověl mé žádosti, za což mnohokráte děkuji. S veškerou

Úctou,
Josef Růžička.

∵

The Provincial Office in Prague
no. 24627. III 7 R 17.
May 30, 1939.

Růžička Josef, born March 7, 1899 in Držkrajov, district Milevsko, resident of Nová Ves u Písku.

The named asks the Provincial Office in Prague to comply with his plea and not cast him into a Gypsy life, which he has not led for 11 years.

I state that, at 28, I enlisted to 11 Infantry Reg. in Písek, where I served 14 months without convictions.

At 30, I settled in Čížová, where I worked as a labourer at Jiří K. of Lobkowicz's [1] manor farm estate, for a daily wage of 10 crowns until 32 years of age, so I could not provide for a family of five, due to which my wife was forced to seek subsistence from kind-hearted people. At 33, I found employment as a seasonal worker at a state road

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maintenance unit in Písek, where I performed the hardest tasks as asphalt paver and where everyone was satisfied with me.

Once again, I kindly ask the Provincial Office to take into account my family and save it from the dangers that would arise from expulsion from the village of Nová Ves-Čížová.

I am married, I have 4 children from 3 to 14 years of age, one of whom attends the first grade, the other the third grade of the elementary school in Čížová and the oldest the second grade of a secondary school in Písek, which is thanks to my effort to raise them as proper citizens and not to cast them into a Gypsy environment, in which they are not brought up.

Once again, I kindly ask the Provincial Office to look away from my bad past and to consider that I want to rectify it and live as a good citizen. When it comes to local citizens, they are in no way prejudiced against me and everyone is on good terms with me. I state that there are 3 persons in the local government, that would like to chase me away and that do not care whether my family is destroyed or not. I have lived here for 9 years [2] without an hour of a sentence. Regarding my wife, I ask the Provincial Office to take into account that she has acted not from greed, but from poverty.

Thereby I promise the Provincial Office that it will never happen again. Regarding the Gendarmerie Search Station in Písek [3], everyone is fully satisfied with me, and when I lack work, they always find me some and always remind me not to return to the Gypsy way of life and to make an honest living. I can assure the Provincial Office, that I wish to make an honest living, the main thing is that I be given a chance to continue working and guiding my family towards a proper life.

Once again, I ask the Provincial Office to hear my plea and comply with my request, for which I thank you very much.

With utmost respect,
Josef Růžička.

Notes

1. Jiří Kristián Lobkowicz (1907-1932) was a member of the large noble Bohemian family who died in a car crash during car racing in 1932. Since 1932 the ownership of the manor farm estate in Čížová, a village in South Bohemia near the city of Písek, devolved upon Ludmila Lichtenstein (born Lobkowicz).
2. According to the former Habsburg legislation on the Domicile (*domovské právo* in Czech) which the Czechoslovak republic adapted every person who lived in a municipality for ten years and didn't present a burden for the local charity could obtain domicile in the municipality (Šmídek, 1904; Břeský, 1923).
3. Search stations of the Czechoslovak Gendarmerie were special institutions established in 1928 for combatting the so-called habitual criminals. Since the Czechoslovak Act No. 117/1927 On Wandering Gypsies the inhabitants who were labelled as "wandering Gypsies" were included to the newly established police register which was created by the Czechoslovak Gendarmerie and which conjoined the register of "habitual criminals". One of the tasks of search stations was to keep a record and fingerprints of "wandering Gypsies" in the region (Macek & Uhlíř, 1999, pp. 59-62). Albeit Josef and Vicencie Růžičkovi led a settled life in Čížová, they were labelled as "wandering Gypsies" and included into the police register.

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Source: SOkAP, f. Okresní úřad Písek, inv. č. 1351, sign. III 7 R, kart. 758.
Prepared for publication by Pavel Baloun.
Translated by Martin Babička.

Comments

These two documents are examples of how the inhabitants who were labelled as Gypsies in interwar Czechoslovakia defended themselves from the state authorities' persecution. Both families, were from the Moravian village of Ludkovice and Josef Růžička living in a village near South Bohemian town of Písek, took advantage of the possibility to make an appeal against actions of the respected local municipality. In their letters, these families claimed equal citizenship status. Furthermore, by hiring a lawyer on their behalf and writing their own appeal they acted as citizens. In this way, they contested the boundary between the notions of 'orderly citizens' as the proper citizen-subject of the nation state on one hand and 'Gypsies' as the embodiment of non-citizen, dangerous and ungovernable inhabitant on the other.

The first case concerns a period shortly after the end of the First World War, the so-called building of the Czechoslovak Republic when institutions and ideologies of the newly created nation state were being established. The period between 1918 and 1922 were tumultuous years during which the young liberal nation state was on the brink of a civil war and far from free from physical violence which was a means of achieving political goals (Frankl & Szabó, 2015; Konrád & Kučera, 2018; Kučera, 2016). In this context, the two families who lived at the outskirts of Ludkovice, a village in South-Eastern Moravia near a spa town Luhačovice, and were labelled as Gypsies testified that on May 29, 1921, they were attacked by a huge crowd of local inhabitants including municipal representatives and forced to flee the village (Document 1.1.). Based on their testimonies the state attorney's office launched an investigation. The members of the municipal government who were accused admitted that they went to the so-called Gypsy camp on May 21, 1921, because a week before they ordered the two families to move out of the village. The decision of the municipal government was made on the basis of popular accusations of those families of committing offences. The accused also admitted that they challenged the Gypsies to immediately leave the village. One of them confessed that he told Libor Daniel that if he won't move out, the citizens will help themselves and will give them a beating. The accused were at the same time denying that Gypsies' shelters were destroyed purposely by them or by the crowd. The mayor, for instance, stated that it just happened that somebody who he couldn't recognise jogged one shanty and after that the Gypsies dismantle their shanties and left the village. Others simply stated that the Gypsies dismantled their shelters and left the village.

The sole judge believed the statements of the accused, 'orderly citizens' and members of the municipal government. Firstly, the court adopted the narrative of the accused that due to the fact that Gypsies were suspected of committing crimes in the village the municipal council decided to move them out, and fixed a time limit to do so. Secondly, the court believed the statements of the accused that the Gypsies themselves dismantled

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their shelters and left the village on their own. Thirdly, the court also accepted the explanation of the accused that they were not making threats but actually only warned the Gypsies of the people's anger. And finally, the court also believed the accused in claiming that the Gypsies didn't belong to the village despite Libor Daniel having claimed that he lived in the village since 1909. The presence of the crowd at the scene was explained by the judge as normal, curious behaviour of citizens who wanted to witness the expulsion of the Gypsies which was their goal. The Gypsies' testimonies, however, were labelled as implausible because they allegedly only wanted to obtain money and also because "as a rule Gypsies are not truthful". Thus, despite the fact that the court stated that there is no doubt that the accused didn't act in proper manner, the accused were freed of all charges (MZA, f. C 48-II, Krajský soud v Uherském Hradišti).

The trial confirms the restrained attitude of the Czechoslovak judiciary in punishing the perpetrators of the acts of collective violence (Frankl & Szabó, 2015, pp. 94). The violence in this case represented an alternative means through which the villagers and their own political representatives sought to achieve their goal: to exclude Gypsies as dangerous foreigners from their community in order to secure the society of 'orderly' Czechoslovak citizens. Although the court admitted certain illegality of the actions of the perpetrators, the judge accepted the narrative of the accused which led him to blur the distinction between perpetrators and victims. The verdict also shows that the Czechoslovak state authorities were willing to suspend the universal liberal principles of the equality before the law in order to secure the public order (see Baloun, 2017; Illuzzi, 2014). Despite the Gypsies having claimed their belonging to the Czechoslovak society and also to the local community on the account of military service, settled lifestyle and decent jobs for more than ten years, their extraordinary effort was not successful. By dismissing their testimonies with reference to the popular notion of Gypsies, the court legitimized their exclusion from the equal position in the newly established nation state.

The second case took place in Čížová, a small rural village near South Bohemian town Písek. Between 1928 and 1930 an extended Gypsy family settled there. According to the state census from 1930 sixteen persons from the village were counted as Gypsies by the nationality. The author of the chronicle counted the Gypsies beside seasonal workers as temporary inhabitants (SOkAP, kronika obce Nové Vsi - Čížová, p. 51), even though they were permanently employed. The Gypsies lived in a wagon and a few wooden barracks they built for themselves at the outskirts of the village. The three-generation extended Gypsy family was deeply affected by the Czechoslovak law from 1927 On Wandering Gypsies. All family members received special Gypsy ID cards which embodied their status as second-class citizens (Donert, 2017, pp. 21-26). Furthermore, around 1930 three kids were taken away from one couple and put into Czech foster families in Písek (Baloun, 2018, pp. 195-200). Their parents were labelled as "workshy" and permanently expelled from the district. However, the second couple – Josef Růžička and Vincencie Růžičková and their kids – were regarded as "orderly", "decent" and "hard-working" Gypsies. Their respectability was based on their permanent employment and on the regular school attendance of their kids. But as Gypsies their status could be questioned at any time. For

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example, in 1931 the local gendarmerie stated that "some members, especially women, don't want to break the habit of begging in neighbouring villages in their spare time" (SOkAP, f. Okresní úřad Písek - presidiální spisy, kart. č. 5). This attested to the ways in which the local gendarmerie used the former Austro-Hungarian vagrancy laws (Wadauer, 2011) to police the movement of family members and their relationships with their neighbours.

The whole case started in 1937 when Vincencie Růžičková got arrested for attempting to steal a hen. Before the trial at the district court started the gendarmerie contacted the municipality of Čížová and revealed the intention to expel Vincencie as a "workshy individual" from the district. The municipality replied that Vincencie was pestering the local inhabitants by begging and committing petty thefts and her behaviour became intolerable. The municipality also noted that the family lived nearby a school and the presence of the Gypsies allegedly had bad influence on the local children (SOkAP, f. Okresní úřad Písek, kart. č. 758). The motivation for expulsion was to get rid of the whole family, who had lived in the village more than ten years, i.e. long enough to ask for domicile.

In 1938, the District Office in Písek decided to expel Vincencie from the region. But she wrote an appeal addressed to the Provincial Office in Prague in which she told her side of the story. She admitted committing a few petty thefts but pointed out that she committed them only because her children were hungry and only when her husband Josef Růžička was without work. She appealed to the higher authority that if she would be expelled from the district the whole family would follow and would return to nomadic way of life. In this statement, Vincencie exposed the tension inherent in the anti-Gypsy measures between implicit long-term assimilationist state goals and interests of local authorities to get their regions of inhabitants who were labelled as Gypsies (Zimmermann, 2000, p. 206). In 1939, after two years of investigation, the higher authority in Prague rejected the ruling and Vincencie could stay in Čížová.

But in the meantime, the municipal council initiated the same proceedings against her husband Josef Růžička. He was accused of having a criminal record (before he settled in Čížová), of Vincencie's criminal behaviour (begging) and of providing various nomadic individuals with shelter. The District Office approved the expulsion despite the local gendarmerie headquarters considering him to be an "orderly" Gypsy. Therefore, Josef Růžička had to address the higher authority in Prague as well (Document 1.2.). The letter was probably written by his daughter who attended a secondary school in Písek. In the letter, he stated that he lived in the village for nine years and performed all civic duties: had no criminal record since the time he moved in, led a settled life, had a permanent work, his children attended local schools and he served in the Czechoslovak army. Then, he undermined the municipality's effort by saying that he had a lot of friends in the village, and that only three members of the municipal council hated his family. He also pointed out that if he would be expelled the whole family would return to a nomadic lifestyle.

The unsettled case was eventually closed in 1940 and the family lived on in the village until 1943. Although the case ends in the period of the Protectorate Bohemia and Moravia it's clear that it started already in 1937 and the occupation of the Czech lands by

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Wehrmacht in March 1939 didn't change anything in regard to the domicile proceedings. This well-documented local case outlines the practice of a common form of Gypsies' persecution. It shows how local state authorities and municipalities utilized domicile proceedings and subsequent expulsions in order to get the regions rid of Gypsies, but at the same time the case illuminates the tensions between municipalities (and local state authorities) and central state authorities.

Both these cases illustrate how those who were labelled as Gypsies resisted the persecution and how they forged the claim for equal citizenship status as Gypsies yet 'orderly citizens'.

Pavel Baloun

8.2 Schooling of the Roma

8.2.1 *A Letter to the President Tomáš Garrigue Masaryk*

V Petrově dne 24/5 1923. P. T.
Váženému panu Presidentu Dr. Masarykovi.

Vážený pane President, neračte naši prosbu oslišet a zastaňte se nášeho nešťastného národa, který je každým opovrhován, posuzován a dokonce i zvířetem nazýván. Proto s největší svou jistotou obracíme se na Vás, neboť nemáme žádného, kdo by se o nás jen trochu zajímal, a obzvlaště těch malých dětí cikanských, které nemají žádné výchovy a jsou tělesně i duševně zakrnělé. A proč? Proto, že do školy choditi nemohou, nemají šatů, nemají ničeho. Otec nebo ta matka nic sama nemá, tak děti jsou ze školy odhozeny a žádný se oně nestará. Vidím to na Slovensku, jak ony děti rostou, otcové nebyli poučovani, nemají mravní ani žádné intelikence, tak se o děti své nestarají a nechavají je růsti jako dříví v lese. Prosím milého Pana Presidenta, by byla mladá generace cikanů odebrána a které hodí se do školy řádně a přísně vyučována. Které však se nehodí pro školu, ať po vystoupení školy nastoupí řemeslnické učení, by jednou národ ten se uplatnil v naší milené Čs. vlasti, by mohl říci a pochlubiti se. Já jsem Čechoslovák! Račte mi prominouti milý náš pane President, že jsem tak smělý a opovažuji se Vaši ctěnou osobu obtěžovat. Věřte mi, hledim budoucnosti v stříc, neboť i já jsem byl tak nešťastně vychován od rodičů svých, že nenechali mne studovat. Teť když jsem valečný invalida, chci se věnovat jen pro blaho naší milené vlasti a chtěl bych snad i život svůj obětovat, aby národ ten se změnil v řádné občany Čs.

Všechno jsem řádně probral a udělal si úsudek, že nemůže národ náš tak zanedbán zůstati, neboť před 10-15 lety bylo celkem 50 cikanů v okresu Strážnickem, nyní po 15 letech přes 200 stě a žádný při tom není ničím vyučen řemeselnikem. Prosim, na některé vesnici je jich třeba 30. práce není, nezaměstnanost je velká. Co mají dělat. Nebude li jim toulaní zapovězeno pak budou krásti, a děti jejich nebudou nic lepšího jich. Prosím, zde udal jsem, jak velice národ ten se množí: kolik bude jich za 50-100 let. A když zůstanou

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všichni bez řádného vyučovaní neb řemesla, co si s nimi obec neb městečko počne, jest věru věc tato hodna uvážení a děti těch je škoda. Neboť píše se v obzoru sociální péče, jaké děti si ve své vlasti vychováme, také nás budou obranovati před nepřáteli. Prosim tedy českou školu, českóu výchovu pro generaci cikánskou, ať můžeme říci, že udělán jest dobrý vlastenecký čin. Jsem též cikán, ale že jsem řádně od učitele svého vyučován, vým co je naše Čs. vlast a co se naši předkové natrpěli pro ni. Jsem Čech tělem i duší, a proto, že já jsem mohl toho dokázati, ať i oni jsou vlastenci.

Doufám, že ma žádost bude na zřetel vzata.
V Hluboké úctě, klaním se, Jan Daniel.
V Petrově čis 190.
Bývalý člen divadelní moravské činohry.

∵

In Petrov, 24.05.1923. P. T.
To His Excellency President Dr. Masaryk.

Dear Mr. President, please do not ignore our plea and stand up for our wretched nation, who is by each despised, judged, and even called a beast. Therefore, we turn to You with utmost confidence, for we have no one who would care about us in the slightest and, above all, about the little Gypsy children, who have no education and are physically and mentally retarded. And why? For they cannot go to school, have no clothes, nothing. Their fathers or mothers themselves have nothing, so children are excluded from school and no one takes care of them. I see it in Slovakia, how these children grow up, their fathers have not been taught, they have no morals or other intelligence, so they do not care for their children and they let them run wild. I beg Dear Mr. President that the young generation of Gypsies be taken and those fit for school be taught duly and strictly. Let the unfit for school, after finishing studies, enter vocational training, so that our nation be employed in our beloved motherland of Czechoslovakia, so they can proudly say: I am a Czechoslovak! Our Dear Mr. President, please excuse my audacity to dare bother Your honour. Believe me, I look towards the future, for I was, too, brought up so miserably by my parents, who did not send me to study. Now that I am a war invalid, I want to devote myself only to the welfare of our beloved motherland and I would perhaps even give my life for this nation to change into orderly citizens of Czechoslovakia.

I have discussed everything and made a judgement that our nation cannot remain so neglected, for 10 to 15 years ago there were 50 Gypsies in the district of Strážnice [1], now, after 15 years, there are over 200, none of whom has been trained to be a craftsman. Well, in some villages, there can be 30. There is no work, unemployment is big, what are they supposed to do? If they are not forbidden to wander, they will steal and their children will not be any better. Here, I stated how the nation multiplies; how many there will be in 50 to 100 years? And if they all end up with no proper education or craft, what will the

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village or town do, that is indeed something to consider, and the children are damaged. Because as the reviews in Social care [2] tell us, the children we raise are the ones to defend us from our enemies. I am also a Gypsy, but as I am properly taught by my teacher, I know what our Czechoslovak motherland is and what our ancestors have suffered for her. I am Czech body and soul, and because I could achieve it, let them also be patriots.

I hope that my request will be taken into consideration.
Humbly Yours Jan Daniel [3].
Petrov, No. 190.
Former member of a Moravian Theatre Company.

Notes

1. Strážnice, a city located in South-Eastern Moravia in the district of Hodonín, was one of several Moravian localities where the Gypsies lived since the end of the 18th century with the permission of the local nobility. In 1935 the local Gypsies lived in twenty houses at the outskirts of the village. According to the state censuses the number of Gypsies almost doubled during the interwar period: 53 in 1921 and 113 in 1941 (Nečas, 2005, pp. 133). However, it is unclear whether the increase was caused by newcomers or the high natality rate.
2. The *Social Care* (Sociální péče, in original language) was the tittle of a journal published by the Česká zemská komise pro péči o mládež (Czech Provincial Committee for Youth Care) between 1919 and 1922 which later became *Péče o mládež. Měsíčník pro veřejnou i soukromou sociální péči o mládež* (Youth Care. Monthly Journal for Public and Private Youth Care). Alongside the *Úchylná mládež* (Abnormal Youth), a more expert oriented Czech journal, the *Youth Care* covered the topic of the so-called "morally defective children" which often included the children of those inhabitants who were labelled as Gypsies. However, it remains unclear to which article Jan Daniel is referring in his letter.
3. Jan Daniel (1895-1943) was born and lived in Petrov, a village in South East Moravia. He collaborated externally with a drama company of the National Theater in Brno. His wife Anna came from Slovakia. During the Second World War, they were both transported to Auschwitz-Birkenau (Nečas, 1994, p. 16).

Pavel Baloun

Source: Národní archiv v Praze, f. Ministerstvo školství a národní osvěty (1918-1949), inv. č. 1622, sign. 13, cikánské školy 91, kart. 1474.
Prepared for publication by Pavel Baloun.
Translated by Martin Babička.

8.2.2 *A Letter to the President's Office*

Kabinetní kancelář pana presidenta republiky Československé v Praze.

Hlavní město Užhorod přistoupilo ku zřízení první cikánské školy v Republice, aby tímto způsobem povzneslo kulturní a mravní úroveň zaostalého a zanedbaného cikánského obyvatelstva.

Celá cikánská osada vítá tuto akci města Užhorodu s velikou radostí a zavázala se dobrovolně zhotoviti ku stavbě potřebné množství vepřovic a také pomáhati vydatně při stavbě samé, jelikož každý jednotlivec cítí, jaký veliký význam bude míti tato instituce

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pro budoucí kulturní a sociální vývoj zaostalého cikánského lidu. Cikánská mládež při nynějších poměrech z různých důvodů sociálního a mravního rázu nemůže navštěvovati stávající lidové školy a roste bez jakéhokoliv duševního rozvoje a naděje na dosažení úrovně lidského živobytí. Pouze zvláštní cikánská škola, přizpůsobená docela zvláštním poměrům života cikánského lidu a k duševním schopnostem cikánské mládeže, může vychovati z cikánské mládeže řádné občany státu a vhodné členy občanstvu.

Proto podepsaní obyvatelé cikánské osady v Užhorodě uctivě žádáme Vás přispěti na zřízení naší školy a pomoci městu Užhorodu a nám vystaviti školu, která by skutečně kladeným na ni účelům mohla zadost učiniti.

V Užhorodě, dne 17. září 1926.
[Otisky prstů 38 Romů z Užhorodu s ručně psanými nečitelnými jmény].

∵

[To:] The Cabinet Office of the President of the Czechoslovak Republic in Prague.

The capital of Užhorod came to establish the first Gypsy school in the Republic to hereby elevate the cultural and moral level of the backward and neglected Gypsy population.

The entire Gypsy settlement welcomes this move of the city of Užhorod with great pleasure and has committed itself to voluntarily [1] making the necessary amount of adobe bricks and also to helping substantially during the construction itself, as each individual feels the importance of this institution for the future cultural and social development of the backward Gypsy people. The Gypsy youth cannot, at present, for various reasons of social and moral nature, visit the current elementary schools, and thus they grow without any mental development and without hope to reach the level of human livelihood. Only a special Gypsy school, adapted to the rather special circumstances of the life of the Gypsy people and the mental abilities of the Gypsy youth, can raise the Gypsy youth into orderly citizens of the state and proper part of the citizenry.

Therefore, the signatory residents of the Gypsy settlement in Užhorod kindly ask you to contribute to the establishment of our school and to help the city of Užhorod and us build a school, that would truly comply with the placed demands.

In Užhorod, September 17, 1926.
[Fingerprints of 38 Roma from Užhorod with illegible handwritten names].

Notes

1. The voluntary action of the Roma participation remains in question. Josef Šimek, a Czech state official who was employed at the department of the Czechoslovak Ministry of Education in Subcarpathian Ruthenia and who came up with the idea of special classes for Gypsy children, used a different phrase in one of his articles on the so-called Gypsy school which he initiated. He admitted that in order to obtain the finances for building the school the local Gypsies had to be

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made to consider the school as their own making and, thus, the local state official 'forced' them to participate (Šimek, 1927, p. 136).

Source: AKPR, f. Kanceláře prezidenta republiky, H-Holdy, inv. č. 1838, sign. Hn 1489/28, kart. 3. Prepared for publication by Pavel Baloun and translated by Martin Babička.

Comments

Both documents deal with the topic of education and outline different ways how Gypsies could claim their own voice in the debates of the time on the so-called Gypsy question.

In the context of the Czech lands demands on a special education for Gypsy children comprised an important element of the so-called Gypsy question already at the turn of the 19th and 20th centuries. In the eyes of the participants in these debates, such as lawyers, judges, policemen, members of the gendarmerie, officials and representative of the local state authorities and municipalities, the demand for a special education for Gypsy children formed one area for a state intervention. Such intervention was supposed to secure Gypsies' assimilation as the desired form of their inclusion into modern society. The idea of a special education for Gypsy children stemmed from the Enlightenment ethic of improvement but went hand in hand with demands for new anti-Gypsy measures as a means for Gypsies exclusion; in this way, it wasn't always a contradiction to various "phantasies of internment" (Zahra, 2017).

Notions of a special education for Gypsy children got across after the First World War. The emphasis on the democratic, liberal and West-belonging character of the newly established Czechoslovak Republic provided the civilising discourse an important role in terms of a function of state institutions. Hence when the Czechoslovak Ministry of the Interior opened an inter-ministerial discussion on the so-called Gypsy question, in the 1920s, a special education for Gypsy children was perceived as part of the desired legislative solution. Especially in the context of the "East of the Republic", a term of that time, coined for East Slovakia and Subcarpathian Ruthenia for designation of an orientalised space with the alleged "backward" and ethnically mixed population (Holubec, 2014), assimilation formulated in the language of a civilising mission (see Comments Part 3) was perceived as the main goal of the state (Baloun, 2018).

Jan Daniel's letter (Document 2.1.) which was addressed to the first president of the Czechoslovak Republic, Tomáš Garrigue Masaryk, could be understood as a Romani voice that fits into the context of inter-ministerial debate. Jan Daniel calls for a state intervention and, in this way, agrees with a special education of Gypsy children. But whereas the experts and officials though of Gypsies as a specific population or a group of inhabitants, Jan Daniel repeatedly uses the term "nation". Therefore, he rather shifts the debate from the context of finding a legislative solution for a dangerous population to the question of their national education. In his notion, it is the Czech school and Czech education which will make Czechoslovak citizens and patriots out of the Gypsies. Thus, his letter was much more about national education rather than a civilising mission and it is clear for him that it will be successful because he presents himself as an example of that success.

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"I am Czech body and soul", he claims. In this way, Jan Daniel indeed contested some of the main assumptions, including the understanding of assimilation as a civilizing mission with experimental and processual character.

In the meantime, the Czechoslovak administration in Subcarpathian Ruthenia and especially officials from the Department of Education discussed the low rates of local Gypsies' school attendance. Since Subcarpathian Ruthenia was imagined as a part of the "East of the Republic" increasing the rate was understood as an important task of the civilising mission of the Czechoslovak Republic in the allegedly backward and underdeveloped region (see Comments Part 3). However, enforcing the school attendance of Gypsy children created tensions between local inhabitants who complained that their children had to attend the same classes as kids of Gypsies and the newly appointed Czechoslovak officials. In Uzhhorod (Ungvár/Užhorod), a capital of the Czechoslovak administration in Subcarpathian Ruthenia, such a conflict occurred in 1925 (Baloun, 2018). Then the Czech officials stated that the Gypsy children are not suited for "normal classes" and came up with an idea to establish a special class which would require a special building located at the outskirt of the city in the so-called Gypsy camp. After negotiations that took place in 1926 among the commissary of the city of Uzhhorod, local school inspectors, and representatives of the Department of the Ministry of Education in Carpathian Ruthenia – all Czechs – a decision was made to request the establishment of a special class for 52 Gypsy children (Šimek, 1927). In order to convince the superior authorities in Prague and obtain finance for their idea, they came up with a request for financial aid to the President's Office which was formulated in the name of the local Gypsies. The language of the letter (Document 2.2) significantly contrasts with Jan Daniel's words. Given the formulations and phrases which reflect the character of a civilising mission and the perception of Gypsy children as "abnormal" and unfit for the regular schools and education, it seems that it was drawn up by the Czech officials themselves and only later equipped with fingerprints of local Roma. That doesn't mean that the local Roma didn't care for the education of their children and, also, that they didn't agree with the establishment of a special class for their children. Rather the document outlines the limits of what could be understood as Gypsy voice.

After the financial matter had been settled, the Czechoslovak Ministry of Education issued an ordinance to formally establish a special class for Gypsy children affiliated to the Slovak elementary school in Uzhhorod. The hygiene invoked to separate Gypsy children from the normal school also played an important role in the layout of the new building. It consisted of one spacious classroom, one room for the teacher, and a washroom with a large bath. There, children were supposed to be washed almost every day before the beginning of school teaching whereas the main purpose of this practice lied in teaching Gypsies basic hygiene principles (See Document 3.4). Other adjustments, according to the different character attributed to Gypsy children, were made regarding the curriculum. Periods were shorter and a lesser amount of lessons was supplemented with specialised manual work (housework for girls and craft practice for boys) and music lessons, or more precisely violin, to prevent them from begging (Šimek, 1927; 1936).

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The special class for Gypsy children in Uzhhorod which was established in 1926 and functioned until 1938 represented a particular assimilationist practice in a small scale – even though several similar classes were established in other cities in the "East of the Republic" (Baloun, 2018). The institution which became a popular topic of Czech, as well as international media, should be understood in the broader context of the interwar policies of assimilation and emancipation and in the space between Swiss eugenic policy of taking away the children from the Yenish families (Meier, 2007) and the USSR schools for Gypsy children (O'Keefe, 2013, pp. 66-102, cf. also Chapter 12).

Pavel Baloun

8.3 Associations

8.3.1 *The Union of the Czechoslovak Gypsy Musicians*

Ministerstvo vnitra Republiky československé.
V Praze, 17.IX.1927.
Čís. 5661/1927. Opis – 6.

Spolek "Unie československých cigánských hudebníků pro Č.S.R. se sídlem v Košicích.
Utvoření. Přílohy:

Policejnímu ředitelství v Košicích

Ministerstvo vnitra nemůže schváliti stanovy spolku "Unie československých cigánských hudebníků pro R.Č.S." se sídlem v Košicích, poněvadž předložené stanovy nevyhovují spolčovacím předpisům v těchto směrech:

1. Ve stanovách nejsou uvedeny přesně všechny prostředky k dosažení účelu, jak o tom svědčí v § 4. stanov slova "všech zákonitých prostředků" a "zejména" a v bodě 13. zkratka "atd"

2. Ustanovení §u 4. bod 7. stanov, podle něhož bude spolek omezovati činnost nepovolaných jest nejasné, neboť ze stanov nelze seznat v čem má toto omezování náležeti.

3. Ustanovení §u 4. bod 12., §u 6. bod 4. stanov o "fondech" a "humánních fondech" jsou nejasná, poněvadž z nich nelze s určitostí seznati, o jaké fondy se jedná a jaký budou míti účel a právní povahu.

4. Z ustanovení §u 4. bod 9, 12, §u 13. bod 2 a §u 23 stanov, podle nichž spolek bude zřizovati "odbory" a "případné komité" nelze seznati právní povahu těchto odborů a komité, zda a které z nich budou totiž samostatné právní jednotky jako odštěpné spolky, či jde-li jen o vnitřní orgány spolkové, jaký budou míti účel, jak budou zařízeny a v čem se budou navzájem lišiti.

5. Ustanovení §u 6. bod 4. stanov, podle něhož členem přestává býti, kdo neplatí příspěvků do humánních fondů, pokud tyto jsou podle jednacích řádů pro členy povinné,

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nevyhovuje spolč. předpisům, podle nichž povinnosti členů musí býti ve stanovách přesně uvedeny.

6. Ustanovení §u 8. stanov o různých "společných výhodách" jest rovněž nejasné, poněvadž stanovy nemají bližších ustanovení o těchto společných výhodách.

7. Ve stanovách není přesně vymezen vzájemný obor působnosti valn. shromáždění a ústředního správního výboru, nebo podle §u 13. stanov rozhoduje valné shromáždění o veškerých záležitostech vyjímajíc přijímání členů, kdežto podle §u 17. stanov řídí ústřední správní výbor vnitřní a vnější záležitost, pokud nejsou vyhrazeny valnému shromáždění.

O tom buď jmenovaný spolek ihned na potvrzení vyrozuměn a přílohy oznámení mu vráceny s upozorněním, že jeden stejnopis stanov si ponechalo ministerstvo vnitra.

Za ministra: ...

Oddělení ministerstva vnitra v Bratislavě ke zprávě ze dne 18. ledna 1927, č. 51.450/26 na vědomí.

Za ministra: ...

∵

Ministry of the Interior of the Czechoslovak Republic.
In Prague, on September 17, 1927.
No. 5661/1927. Copy – 6th.

Society "Union of the Czechoslovak Gypsy Musicians of the Czechoslovak Republic" based in Košice.

Establishment. Attachments:

To the Police Directorate in Košice

The Ministry of the Interior cannot approve the Statutes of the society "Union of the Czechoslovak Gypsy Musicians of the Czechoslovak Republic", based in Košice, for the proposed Statutes do not comply with the regulations in these regards:

1. The Statutes do not state precisely all the means to achieve the purpose, as indicated in §4 of the Statutes, saying "all legal means" and "in particular" and in Art. 13 the abbreviation "etc".

2. Provisions of §4 Art. 7 of the Statutes, whereby the Society will restrict the activities of the unauthorized, is unclear because it is impossible to see in the Statutes what this restriction consists of.

3. Provisions of §4 Art. 12, § 6 Art. 4 of the Statutes on "funds" and "humanitarian funds" are unclear because it is not certain what kind of funds they are and what their purpose and legal nature will be.

4. From provisions of §4 Art. 9, 12, §13 Art. 2 and §23 of the Statutes, whereby the Society will establish "divisions" and "appropriate committees", the legal nature of these

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divisions and committees cannot be inferred, if and which of them will be independent legal entities as seceded societies, or whether they are internal bodies of the society, what purpose they will have and how they will be established and how they will differ from each other.

5. Provisions of §6 Art 4 of the Statutes, whereby one ceases to be a member, who does not pay contributions to humanitarian funds, if they are mandatory under the Rules of Procedure, the Society does not comply with the regulations, whereby the obligations of members must be specified in the Statutes.

6. Provisions of §8 of the Statutes on various "common advantages" are also unclear, since the Statutes do not have detailed provisions on these common advantages.

7. The Statutes do not clearly specify the mutual scope of authority of the General Assembly and the Central Administrative Committee, or under §13 of the Statutes, General Assembly decides all matters apart from the acceptance of members, whereas under §17 of the Statutes, Central Administrative Committee controls all internal and external affairs, if these are not assigned to General Assembly.

The stated Society shall be notified immediately of this and the attachments to the notice shall be returned, noting that one copy of the Statutes was retained by the Ministry of the Interior.

For the Minister: … [signature].

Ministry of the Interior Department in Bratislava to the report on 18 January 1927, no. 51.450/26 for information.

For the Minister: … [signature].

Source: SNA, f. Oddelenie Ministerstva vnútra v Bratislave (1927-1928), šk. 88.
Selected by Anna Jurová. Prepared for publication by Pavel Baloun.
Translated by Martin Babička.

8.3.2 *The Establishment of the Society for the Study of the Gypsy Question*

Zápisnica

Napísaná na ustavujúcom valnom shromaždení Spoločnosti pre štúdium cigánskej otázky v Košiciach, v prítomnosti podpísaných na prezenčnej listine dňa 27. novembra 1930.

Schôdzu viedol a jej predsedal pán Dr. Jaroslav Stuchlík.

Predseda vítajúc prítomných sdeľuje, že otázka založenia Spol. pre štúd. cig. otázky po stránke ideovej objasnená bola na zasadnutiach prípravného výboru a na schôdzach interesantov. Spolok konštituovať treba po stránke právnej. Prosí p. inšpektora Viktora Immerglücka, aby prečítal a vysvetlil stanovy.

Tajomník prípravného výboru inšp. V. Immerglück číta cieľ spoločnosti definovaný v stanovách. Je to hlavne poskytovanie bezplatnej lekárskej porady a ambulantného ošetrenia, podávanie právnej porady a bezplatné zastupovanie Cigánov, dozor nad čistotou

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osôb, ubikácie, sprostredkovanie kúpeľov, pomoc pri odstraňovaní bytovej núdze, podporovanie školopovinných detí a nadaných mladíkov pri štúdiach i pri sprostredkovaní miesta u živnostníkov, pestovanie športu, hudby, zahradníctva, hospodárstva, sprostredkovanie práce atď.

Rokovacou vecou spoločnosti je štátna reč, v záujme úspešného plnenia povinností a programu prípustné sú i iné reči v štáte užívané.

Spoločnosť je spolok sociálno-humanitno-osvetového rázu, zakladá sa v Košiciach a časom založí svoje odbočky aj v iných mestách republiky.

Po prečítaní ostatných bodov stanov, hlavne pokiaľ sa týkajú vnútornej organizácie, domáceho poriadku atď., zahajuje predseda o stanovách spoločnosti debatu.

K slovu prihlásil sa pán Krik, ktorý objasňuje svoje názory, snažiac sa nimi byť spoločnosti na prospech. Jeho rady vzaté sú na vedomie, tajomník Immerglück podotýka, že spoločnosť na prípravných schôdzach rady tieto si už osvojila a pojala ich do stanov i do pripravovaného programu najbližšej činnosti.

Po doplnení stanov prevedené boly voľby, pri ktorých jednohlasne vyvolení boli:

za predsedu Dr. Jaroslav Stuchlík, za podpredsedov Dr. Jaroslav Klíma a Martin Oríšek, za tajomníka Viktor Immerglück, za zapisovateľa Anton Prídavok, za pokladníka Augustín Hesek, za účtovníka Alex Venetianer, za členov výboru: Dr. Job Ungár, Dr. Turek, Dr. Elza Zipser, Josef Smrž, Dr. Ignác Herz, Melichar Zelený, Arpád Juhász, Vojtech Ilíš, Gezjza Lévai, Helena Helclová, Eugenia Ettlová, za náhradníkov: Anton Ružička, Vojtech Krik a Vojtech Horváth.

Ustavila sa i zdravotná sekcia a do tejto zvolení boli: za predsedu Dr. Jaroslav Klíma, Dr. Štrimpl za podpredsedu, za tajomníka Stefan Ungár, za účtovníka František Balla, do výboru Dr. V. Melchner, Dr. Dezider Friedmann, Dr. Alžběta Weisová, Dr. Strambergerová, Dr. Arnold Barna, Bartolomej Forgáč, za náhradníkov Dr. Andrej Timko, Maxmilián Holubka a Hana Dunová.

Do sekcie výchovno-zábavnej zvolení boli: za predsedu Martin Oríšek, za podpredsedu Bernard Obdržálek, za tajomníka Alexander Duba, za účtovníka Gustav Simko, do výboru: Dr. Jozef Martinka, Karol Novák, Otto Lauschmann, Mária Prídavková, Albína Kynčlová, Alžběta Konečná, N. Cvilinková, Mária Dudíková, N Michalková, N. Pospíšilová a Anna Mačuhová. Za náhradníkov: Alex. Onódy, Ilona Siváková a Irma Baloghová.

Do právnej sekcie zvolení boli: za predsedu Julius Lacko, za podpredsedu Dr. Andrej Prusák, za tajomníka Dr. Ján Slabej ml., do výboru: Dr. Maxmilián Elkán, Dr. N. Preis, Dr. N. Nógrady, Dr. Robert Kresi, Dr. M. Acél a Dr. Gejza Gádor.

Za tlačových referentov: pre slovenské časopisy zvolený bol Anton Prídavok, pre nemecké Otto Lauschmann a pre maďarské Arpád Juhász.

Prítomní funkciu prijali, neprítomní o prijatie budú požiadaní písomne.

Predsedníctvo podľa svojho uznania v najbližšom čase svolá ustavujúce výborové zasadnutie, ktoré vypracuje pracovný poriadok a hľadať bude zdroje pre príjmy.

Predseda ďakuje za dôveru prejavenú pri voľbách, ďakuje v mene všetkých zvolených a sľubuje, že vynasnažia sa pracovať pre dosiahnutie vyznačeného cieľa. Prosí o podporu všetkých členov i verejnosti.

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Tajomníkovi Immerglückovi za príkladné vedenie prípravných prác i na iniciativu pre toto podujatie ustavujúce shromaždenie vyslovuje zápisničné poďakovanie.

Na to bolo shromaždenie predsedom p. Drom Stuchlíkom zaklúčené.

Košice, 27. novembra 1931.

Ant[on] Prídavok, zapisovateľ: … [signature].

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The Minutes

Written at the constituent General Assembly of the Society for the Study of the Gypsy Question in Košice, in the presence of the signatories of the attendance sheet on 27 November 1930.

The meeting was led and chaired by Dr. Jaroslav Stuchlík [1].

President, welcoming the attending, states that the question of establishing Society for Study of Gypsy Question was clarified ideologically during the sessions of the preparatory committee and the meetings of the interested. The Society must be constituted by law. He asks Inspector Viktor Immerglück to read out and explain the Statutes.

Secretary of the Preparatory Committee Insp. V. Immerglück reads the Society's goal defined in the Statutes. Those are mainly the provision of free medical consultation and outpatient care, legal advice and free representation of Gypsies, supervision of personal hygiene, quarters, the arrangement of baths, assistance in the eradication of housing poverty, support for schoolchildren and gifted youngsters in studies and mediation of small business placements, the pursuit of sport, music, gardening, farming, employment, etc.

The working language of the Society is the official state language [2], for the successful fulfilment of duties and the programme, it is acceptable to use also the other languages used in the state.

The Society is an association of a socio-humanitarian-educational nature, founded in Košice, and, over time, it will establish its branches in other cities of the republic [3].

After reading the other articles of the Statutes, especially those concerning the internal organisation, the House Rules, etc., the President begins debate on the Statutes of the Company.

Mr. Krik claimed his turn, who clarified his views, trying to be beneficial for the Society. His advice is taken into account, Secretary Immerglück notes that the Society has already adopted that advice at the preparatory meetings and incorporated them into the Statutes and the forthcoming programme of the next activities as well.

After completion of the Statutes, elections were held, in which the following were elected unanimously:

President Dr. Jaroslav Stuchlík, Vice-Presidents Dr. Jaroslav Klíma [4] and Martin Oríšek, Secretary Viktor Immerglück, Keeper of Records Anton Prídavok, Treasurer

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Augustín Hesek, Accountant Alex Venetianer, Committee Members Dr. Job Ungár, Dr. Turek, Dr. Elza Zipser, Josef Smrž, Dr. Ignác Herz, Melichar Zelený, Arpád Juhász, Vojtech Ilíš, Gezjza Lévai, Helena Helclová, Eugenia Ettlová, Substitute Members Anton Ružička, Vojtech Krik and Vojtech Horváth.

Medical Section was established, wherein were elected: President Dr. Jaroslav Klíma, Vice-President Dr. Štrimpl [5], Secretary Stefan Ungár, Accountant František Balla, Committee Members Dr. V. Melchner, Dr. Dezider Friedmann, Dr. Alžběta Weisová, Dr. Strambergerová, Dr. Arnold Barna, Bartolomej Forgáč, Substitute Members Dr. Andrej Timko, Maxmilián Holubka and Hana Dunová.

To Education and Entertainment Section were elected: President Martin Oríšek, Vice-President Bernard Obdržálek, Secretary Alexander Duba, Accountant Gustav Simko, Committee Members Dr. Jozef Martinka, Karol Novák, Otto Lauschmann, Mária Prídavková, Albína Kynčlová, Alžběta Konečná, N. Cvilinková, Mária Dudíková, N. Michalková, N. Pospíšilová and Anna Mačuhová. Substitute Members: Alex. Onódy, Ilona Siváková and Irma Baloghová.

To Legal Section were elected: President Julius Lacko, Vice-President Dr. Andrej Prusák, Secretary Dr. Ján Slabej Jr, Committee Members Dr. Maxmilián Elkán, Dr. N. Preis, Dr. N. Nógrady, Dr. Robert Kresi, Dr. M. Acél and Dr. Gejza Gádor.

As Press Officers: for Slovak newspapers was elected Anton Prídavok, for German Otto Lauschmann and for Hungarian Arpád Juhász.

The present accepted the posts, the absent will be asked by post.

The Presidium, as it thinks fit, will shortly call a constituent committee meeting to draw up a work order and look for sources of income.

The President thanks for the trust manifested in the elections, thanks namely all the elected and promises to do their best to work towards the stated goal. He asks for support from all members and the public.

To Secretary Immerglück for an exemplary conduct of the preparatory work and for the initiative for this event, he expresses a note of thanks.

Afterwards, President Dr. Stuchlík ended the assembly.

Košice, November 27, 1931.

Ant[on] Prídavok, Keeper of Records: … [signature].

Notes

1. Jaroslav Stuchlík (1890-1967) was a Czech psychiatrist who studied in Zürich under Eugen Bleuler and in Vienna under Sigmund Freud. He published a lot of essays on psychoanalysis in Czech journals. After the First World War he became a senior doctor in the state hospital in Košice where he was employed until 1937.
2. The term 'state language' was an official denomination that included Czech and Slovak language.
3. No branches of the Society for Solving the Gypsy Question were ever established outside of Košice.
4. Jaroslav Klíma (1897-1942) was one of many Czech physicians who was sent to Slovakia after 1918. He was employed in the Maternity Hospital in Košice and later, in 1931, became the Chief

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Physician of the city of Košice. In the 1930s he left Košice for a study tour in the United States (John Hopkins School of Hygiene) and later became the head of one department of the State Institute for Public Health. He was executed by the Nazis in 1942.
5. Václav Štrimpl (1894-1942) was another Czech physician who specialized in bacteriology, immunology and epidemiology who was sent to Košice. He led the Department of Pathology at the Municipal Hospital in Košice.

Source: SNA, f. Krajinský úrad v Bratislave (1928-1939), C.1 Admin. odd. 1931, inv. č. 577, sign. KÚ-C.1-1931-8.1.2., šk. 885.
Prepared for publication by Pavel Baloun.
Translated by Martin Babička.

8.3.3 *The General Assembly of the Society*

Valné shromaždenie spoločnosti pre štúdium a riešenie cigánskej otázky.
O spoločnosť javí sa záujem aj v cudzine.

Košice, 25. januára. – Pred viac ako rokom založený bol v Košiciach spolok, který si vzal za úkol riešiť ožehavú otázku cigánsku, zušľachťovať túto dosiaľ neoprávnene opovrhovanú rasu a spraviť z cigánov riadnych a platných členov ľudskej spoločnosti. Tak vážna otázka žiada si, pravda, riešenia na vedeckom, psychologickom a pedagogickom podklade, a preto nová ustanovizeň bola založená ako vedecká spoločnosť. V tom smere boly naviazané styky nielen s domácimi, ale aj zahraničnými záujemcami, a podarilo sa skutočne vzbudiť záujem o riešenie tejto otázky nie tak u nás doma, ako viac za hranicami. Veď na pr. boly požiadané dva nejväčšie pražské kluby, Sparta a Slávia, aby darovaly pre športový krúžok cigánov starú lobtu. Jeden klub vôbec neodpovedal, druhý odpísal, že nič nemá. Napriek podobným ťažkostiam, účinkovala spoločnosť v Košiciach dosiaľ so značným zdarom a vykazuje už niekoľko úspechov.

Včera bolo valné shromaždenie spoločnosti – škoda len, že za malej účasti, na ktorom boly podané zprávy o práci v minulom období, a predostreté námety pre ďalšie účinkovanie. Spoločnosť číta teraz 89 členov.

Pri voľbách boli zvolení: za predsedu opäť primár dr. Jar. Stuchlík, za podpredsedov nám. starostu Jozef Smrž a dr. Ungár, za jednateľa inšp. Viktor Immerglück, za pokladníka Václav Šindelář, za zapisovateľa A[nton] Prídavok. Členmi výboru dr. Elkán, dr. Szilvay, riaditeľ Kalmán, Kryl, Bihár, Kynčlová, red. Pronerová, dr. Herz, Iléš, revizormi prof. Šomvársky a red. Janeček. Za predsedov jednotlivých komisií boli zvolení: zdravotnej primár dr. Strimpl, vedeckej primár dr. Stuchlík, výchovnej a zábavnej A[nton] Prídavok, propagačnej red. Štancl, hospodárskej Krpálek, právnej dr. Sommer.

K záveru bol prijatý návrh, aby poslaneckým kruhom bol predložený návrh na zmenu zákona o potulných cigánoch, najmä na zmenu ustanovenia, ktorým odberajú sa deti rodičom.

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General Assembly of the Society for the Study and Solution of the Gypsy Question. The Society aroused interest also abroad.

Košice, 25 January – More than a year ago, a society was established in Košice, which took on a task of addressing the thorny Gypsy question, refining this hitherto unjustified race and making Gypsies due and valid members of human society. Such a serious question asks, to tell the truth, solutions based on scientific, psychological and pedagogical grounds, and therefore the new institution was founded as a scientific society. In this respect, contacts have been established not only with domestic but also foreign interested parties, and we have indeed been able to arouse interest in solving this issue not so much at home as rather abroad. After all, two of the biggest Prague sports clubs for instance, Sparta and Slavia, were asked to donate an old ball for the Gypsy sports club [1]. One club did not answer at all, the other wrote they had nothing. In spite of such difficulties, the society has so far operated with significant success and is showing several achievements.

Yesterday, the general assembly of the society met – pity there was little attendance – at which reports on the operation from the last period were presented, as well as drafts of ideas for further activitity. The society now comprises 89 members.

In elections, elected were: for President, again Chief Physician Jar[oslav] Stuchlík, for Vice-Presidents Deputy Mayor Jozef Smrž and Dr. Ungár, for Secretary [Police] Inspector Viktor Immerglück, for Treasurer Václav Šindelář, for Keeper of Records A[nton] Prídavok. Committee members Dr. [Maxmilián] Elkán, Dr. Szilvay, Director Kalmán, Kryl, Bihár, [Albína] Kynčlová, editor Pronerová, Dr. [Ignác] Herz, Iléš, Auditors Prof Šomvársky and editor Janeček. For Chairmen of the individual committees were elected: Health – Chief Physician Strimpl, Scientific – Chief Physician Stuchlík, Education and Entertainment – A[nton] Prídavok, Press – editor Štancl, Economic – Krpálek, Legal – Dr. Sommer.

In conclusion, a motion was passed to propose to the members of the parliament an amendment to the law on wandering Gypsies, in particular to amend the provision by which children are taken from their parents [2].

Notes

1. It was the Sports Club of Slovak Gypsies 'Roma' in Košice [ŠKSC Roma Košice] which was established in 1930 and ceased to exist in 1935 (Fiľo, 2002).
2. It was the §12 of the Czechoslovak Act No. 117/1927 On Wandering Gypsies that allowed the local authorities to ask the respective court to take away children from the families of wandering Gypsies, in case they are unable to care for and upbringing them properly. Children were supposed to be placed in orderly families or educational institutions. Based on the current research we may say that this practice was used rather sporadically. The vast majority of these cases took place in Bohemia (Baloun, 2018, pp. 195-200).

Source: [No Author]. (1932a). Valné shromaždenie spoločnosti pre štúdium a riešenie cigánskej otázky. *Slovenský východ*, An. 14, No. 20, 1932, January 26, p. 3.
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8.3.4 *A Quarter-Hour with Chief Physician Stuchlík about the Gypsies*

č. Košice, 30. januára. – Cigánska otázka, jeden z vážnych problémov našej doby, bola založením Spoločnosti v Košiciach verejnosti priblížená; považovali sme preto za vhodné, získať niekoľko informácií od predsedu tejto Spoločnosti, primára dra Stuchlíka, ktorý na naše otázky odpovedal takto:

– Ako sa prejavila činnosť Spoločnosti od založenia?

– Účinkovania Spoločnosti a zamýšľaná práca nemohly sa uspokojive rozvinúť, nakoľko cigánska otázka nie je pre nikoho otázkou prestížnou, a nikto nevyhľadáva, ba ani nemôže vyhľadávať česť v práci pre rasu dosiaľ opovrhovanú. Keby sa jednalo o Slovákov, Rusínov, či hociktorý europský národ, našlo by sa pracovníkov nadostač, efektívna činnosť Spoločnosti musí však stroskotávať už na tom, že ide o cudziu rasu, a k tomu stojacu najnižšie hospodársky, kultúrne aj mravne.

Chceli sme na pr. usporiadať cigánsku akadémiu, na ktorej by boly predvedené ukázky cigánskeho folklóru, originálne pesničky, sobáš; všetko bolo pripravené, nebolo však odborníka, ktorý by priniesol tú obeť, že by preskúšal, či sú výkony dostatočné pre vystúpenie na verejnosť. Z dvoch úkolov Spoločnosti, širšieho, všeobecného a užšieho, rázu lokálneho, vydaril sa prvý. Najďalej došlo sa vo vedeckej činnosti. Boly naviazané styky s berlínskym profesorom Friedenthalom, Margaretou Jenschovou, ktorá študovala cigánsku otázku na Spiši, a pripravuje sošit piesní, porekadiel a zvykov; záujem javí sa aj v Rumunsku. Zdravotná komisia pripravolala kartotéku a súpis chorých cigánov, [z] rad lekárov prihlásil sa k spolupráci, ale odchodom dra Klímu z Košíc všetko zastalo. V komisii kultúrnej bola cenná najmä spolupráca pí Ettlovej a Kynčlovej. Skutočné pochopenia a záujem našla Spoločnosť u mestskej rady, a zvlášť u jej členov Smrža a Krpálka. Mestu boly predložené dva návrhy: na opatrovňu a na společenské miestnosti, kde by bol pre cigánov shromažďovací sál a kúpelna. Cigáni boli ochotní kúpelňu sami postaviť, mesto malo dať len materiál. Obidva návrhy boly akceptované, bola odhlasovaná aj patričná položka, k realizácii však nedošlo pre dočasné prekážky lokálneho rázu.

– Máte Spoločnosť pre riešenie cigánskej otázky. Je cigánska otázka vôbec riešiteľná?

– Tak riešiteľná, ako by si ju Europan na sto procentov predstavoval, nie. V cigánskej rase je niečo, čo je silnejšie, ako všetky dobré úmysly. Sú to následky nomadizmu, rasovej odlišnosti a cigán bude sa dotiaľ mstiť na spoločnosti svojím spôsobom – luhaním, krádežou a pod. – dokiaľ spoločnosť bude mať pre neho len opovrženie. Cigánska otázka je však vážnou otázkou štátnou, a musí sa riešiť najlepšie usidlovaním difuzným či ghetovým. Prvému dávam prednosť, predpokladá to však zasiahnutie štátnej moci a násilné sťahovanie. Pri tom ešte treba rátať s odporom vidiečanov v dedinách. Je však potrebné podať zdeptanému národu pomocnú ruku, zriadiť kolonizačný fond a za súčinnosti úradov usídlovať cigánov jednotlive – najvýhodnejšie by to bylo v Čechách – lebo jednotlivý cigán zdomácnel by medzi prevahou bielej rasy a behom troch generácií bolo by možné očekávať priaznivý výsledok.

– A je asimilácia vôbec možná?

– Každý asimilačný problém je riešiteľný len znivočením rasy. Medzi ľuďmi rasove blízkymi je asimilácia možná, u cigáňov pôjde asi ťažko, lebo v podvedomí obidvoch rás

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je priveľmi silná nenávisť. I keby sa asimilácia darila, dialo by sa to len v nejnižších triedach a prinieslo by to pre národ len nebezpečné výstrelky. Takáto biologická a národná asimilácia by ťažko išla, zato je možná asimilácia pozičná, hospodárska. Možno lokálne asimilovať agrarizáciou a urbaniazmom, výchovou cigáňov na sedliakov a remeselníkov, tri generácie nechať žiť v strede usadených obyvateľov a prispôsobovať ich takto k usadlému životu.

Činnosť Spoločnosti, ako vidíte, pohybuje sa dosiaľ viac len v myšlienkách a rozhovorech, ale to je nutný predpoklad k budúcej práci a činom.

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Košice, 30 January. – The Gypsy question, one of the serious problems of our time, was brought to the public by the establishment of the Society in Košice; we thus found it appropriate to obtain some information from the President of this Society, Chief Physician Stuchlík, who answered our questions as follows:

– What impact has the Society had since its establishment?

– The effect of the Society and the intended work could not develop satisfactorily, as the Gypsy question is not yet a prestigious one for anybody, and no one seeks, nor can seek, honour in working for a race so far despised. If they were Slovaks, Ruthenians, or any European nation, there would be workers enough, but an effective activity of the Society is seen to be wrecked by the sole fact that it is a foreign race and, on top of that, the lowest one economically, culturally and morally.

For example, we wanted to organize a Gypsy academy, where we would present examples of Gypsy folklore, original songs, a wedding; everything was ready, but there was no expert, who would bring the sacrifice of rehearsing whether the performances are satisfactory for performing in public. Out of two tasks of the Society, a broader, universal and a narrower, local one, the former was successful. The scientific activities have been furthered the most. We made connections with Berlin professor Friedenthal [1] and Margareta Jensch [2], who studied the Gypsy question in Spiš and is preparing a book of songs, adages and customs; there is an interest also in Romania. The Health Committee prepared card files and listing of ill Gypsies, a doctor agreed to collaborate, but with Dr. Klíma having left Košice everything has fallen behind. Collaboration of Mrs. Ettlová and Kynčlová in the Cultural Committee was particularly valuable. The City Council gave the Society true understanding and interest, especially their members Smrž and Krpálek. The City was presented with two proposals: foster care and common room, which would consist of an assembly hall and a bathroom. Gypsies were willing to build the bathroom themselves, the City was only supposed to provide material. Both the proposals were accepted, a due motion was passed, but they were not realised for temporary obstacles of a local nature.

– Yours is a Society for the Solution of the Gypsy Question. Does the Gypsy question actually have a solution?

– To the full extent as imagined by the Europeans, it is not. There is something stronger in the Gypsy race, which is stronger than any good intentions. That is the result of

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nomadism, race difference, and the Gypsy until today wreaks revenge on the society in his own way – lying, stealing, and so on – until the society continues to have only contempt for them. But the Gypsy question is a state question, and it has to be solved by diffusion or ghetto settlement. I prefer the former, which, however, presupposes an intervention of the state power and forced migration. At the same time, one should anticipate resistance of the villagers. Nevertheless, it is necessary to extend a helping hand, establish a colonization fund and, in collaboration with the authorities, settle the Gypsies individually – the most favourable would be Bohemia – for an individual Gypsy would domesticate among the majority of white race and, in three generations, a positive result could be expected.

– And is assimilation actually possible?

– The only solution of every assimilation problem is the destruction of race [3]. People racially close can be assimilated, Gypsies probably harder, because the subconsciousness of both the races contains a very strong hatred. Even if assimilation was successful, it would be possible only among the lowest classes and it would bring dangerous excesses for the nation. Such a biological and national assimilation would be difficult, yet assimilation that is positional or economic is possible. A local assimilation is possible by agrarization, urbanism, re-education of Gypsies into farmers and craftsmen, letting three generations live amidst a settled population and in that way adapting them to a settled life.

The Society's activities, as you can see, show so far rather only in thoughts and interviews, but that is a necessary prerequisite to future work and action.

Notes

1. Hans Wilhelm Carl Friedenthal (1870-1943) was an anthropologist and physiologist who taught at the University of Berlin. He was one of the premiere proponents of Darwinism among German anthropologists (Zimmermann, 2001, p. 214). Among others, he published a book under the tittle *Menschheitskunde* in 1927.
2. It is unclear who Margeret Jensch was and if she published the mentioned book.
3. Here, Stuchlík slightly opposed the opinion of Czech anthropologist František Štampach (1895-1969) who was regarded as the main expert on Gypsies in Czechoslovakia. Štampach argued for assimilation between members of the Czechoslovak nation and Gypsies which he understood in biological terms. Štampach also opposed the idea of establishing special schools for Gypsy children. According to him, such a practice would only lead to creating the Gypsy nation instead of desired assimilation (Štampach, 1929, pp. 48-49), i.e. dissolution of the alleged Gypsy difference.

Source: [No Author]. (1932b). Štvrť hodiny s primárom drom Stuchlíkom o cigánoch. *Slovenský východ*, An. 14, No. 25, 1932, January 31, p. 2.
Selected by Anna Jurová. Prepared for publication by Pavel Baloun.
Translated by Martin Babička.

8.3.5 *Social and Educational Activities of the State Police in Košice*

Minula už doba, keď polícia slúžila len istej čiastke obyvateľstva. Najlepším dôkazom toho, aký veľký je rozdiel medzi činnosťou polície bývalého starého režimu a polície nášho štátu, je sociálna a osvetová činnosť košickej polície, ktorá nekoná len to, čo jej

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nariaďujú platné zákony a nariadenia, ale pracuje aj vo voľnom čase k zdokonaleniu ľudstva. Po tejto stránke bolo vykonané už mnoho.

V Košiciach, kde je vyšej 3000 trvale usadených cigánov, až do nedávnej doby považovaných za príťaž mesta a ostatných obyvateľov, nebolo pre tieto čierne obyvatele vykonané nič. Nik nestaral sa o cigánov, že či navštevujú školy, ako žijú a bývajú a len pri voľbách boli veľmi dobrým materiálom pre protištátne živly. Košickí cigáni sú z väčšej čiastky hudobníkmi a rôznymi remeslníkmi, ako: kováči, kotlári, zámočníci, záhradníci a pod., a istá časť živí sa výnosom z obchodov (predaj citronov, pomerančov, česneku, chrenu a galanterným tovarom, ovšem v malom rozsahu). Majetnější cigáni obývajú aj svoje vlastné domky a ostatní pak v rôznych budách na periferii mesta. Celá jedna štvrť Košic obývaná výhradne len cigánmi, nazývá sa "Tábor". Táto štvrť založená bola začiatkom 15. storočia husitským vojskom. Ako v predu uvedené boli cigáni už do nedávna považovaní za ľud menejcenný a ku škode druhým a kultúrne pod úroveň človeka.

V roku 1928 založený bol v Košiciach spolok pod názvom "Spoločnosť pre štúdium a riešenie cigánskej otázky", ktorý veľmi účinne a s úspechom zasiahol do cigánskeho života. Zriadil opatrovňu pre cigánske deti, mliečnu akciu pre kojencov a matky, založil pevecký, hudobný a dramatický krúžok cigánskej mládeže. Práca táto vyžaduje veľmi mnoho voľného času a energie jednotlivcov a tiež finančných obeti ľudomilov. Na čele spoločnosti je primár štátnej nemocnice pán MUDr. Jaroslav Stuchlík, tajomníkom a dušou spolku obvodný inšpektor civilnej stráže Viktor Immerglück, ktorý dal podnet k založeniu uvedenej spoločnosti. Policejný oficiál Václav Šindelář je pokladníkom a aj ostatní funkcionári sú z rad policajného zamestnanectva. Ako v predu uvedená stará sa spoločnosť o kojence a školopovinné deti cigánske, po stránke mravnej, sociálnej a osvetovej, o zamestnanie pre deti škole odrastlé. Behom času nadobudnutou skúsenosťou prišlo sa k názoru, že takto nemôže byť zakončená práca, ktorá vyžiaduje toľko námahy a sebaobetovania, a preto bolo nútno sdružiť a pokiaľ možno udržať pohromade školou nepovinné cigánske deti, odrastlú mládež, ako aj dospelých.

Snaha, povzniesť cigánov na vyššiu mravnú a kultúrnu úroveň, vymaniť sa z maďarského smýšlania a vzbudiť pre nich smyseľ pre sbliženie s ostatnými ľudmi ako aj záujem o čistotu a telovýchovu, viedla k založeniu cigánskeho športového klubu v Košiciach. Založený, schválený a v československom sväzu footballovom riadne registrovaný klub nesie meno: "Športový klub slovenských cigánov "Roma" v Košiciach". Názov spolku "Roma" je vzatý z cigánskej reči, v ktorej značí slovo "človek", čo odpovedá zásadám, ktoré viedly k založeniu menovaného klubu, t. j. urobiť z cigána človeka ľudskej spoločnosti užitočného. V tomto športovom klube pokračuje sa v ďalšej všestrannej výchove započatej "Spoločnosťou pre štúdium a riešenie cigánske otázky v Košiciach".

Cigán svojou vrodenou povahou veľmi hravý a preto v našom športovom klubu cíti sa skutočne ako doma. U cigánov vrodená až sluhovská podmanenosť prispieva ku príkladnej disciplíne klubovej, čomu možno pripísať veľmi pekné úspechy, docielené behom necelého roku jestvovania klubu, jak vo footballe, tak aj v iných odvetviach športu. Footballová jedenáctka ŠKSC Roma v Košiciach má toľko nabídok k sohraniu priateľských footballových zápasov, že ani nemôže všetkým vyhoveť. Neobyčajný záujem

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o klub možno si vysvetliť tým, že náš klub je ako cigánsky riadne registrovaný až dosiaľ jedinečným na svete a tiež výsledky sohraných záposoch sú na tak krátku dobu veľmi prekvapujúce. Okrem Slovenska a Podkarpatskej Rusi javí sa záujem o klub aj v zahraničí. Medzi inými nabídkami od cudzích štátov dostal ŠKSC Roma Košice pozvanie k zájazdu do Baltických štátov a sice do Litvy, Lotyšska, Estonska a Finska k sohraniu 7 – sedmi – priateľských footballových zápasov. Pre toto tourneé su sjednané presné záväzky, a to v dobe od 20. júna do 15. júla 1933, nielen pre football, ale tiež pre usporiadanie 5 – päti – koncertov klubovou kapelou, lebo cigáni okrem footballu ovládzajú tiež výborne hudobné nástroje.

V dobe, kedy bol klub založený, nebolo vo verejnosti pre takúto prácu veľké porozumenie, takmer každý vysmieval sa a dokazoval funkcionárom, že cigán nedá sa nikdy vychovať a že zostane vždy len takým, akým od pradávna bol, to je cigánom. Dnes je už smyšlanie iné. Klub získal si nielen priateľstvo iných športových klubov, ale aj velké sympatie verejnosti a funkcionári uznanie za vykonanú prácu. Žurnalistika veľmi pochvaľne dokumentuje úspechy klubu.

Nutno zdôrazniť, že začiatky boly veľmi ťažké jak po stránke technickej, tak aj ostatných. Z prihlásivších sa hráčov nebol ani jeden športovcom, chýbaly akékoľvek finančné prostriedky, trenningové zápasy odbývajú sa na vzdialenom vojenskom cvičišti, alebo na drhovisku (klub nemá vlastného športového hriska), 39 registrovaných hráčov nezaplatilo až dosiaľ pre svoju nemajetnosť ani časť členských príspevkov a preca ŠKSC Roma bol jediným klubom vo Východoslovenskej župe footballovej, ktorý mal za rok 1932 zaplatené všetky poplatky bez akejkoľvek subvencie lebo inej verejnej podpory.

V zimných mesiacoch, keď športový odbor nevyvíjal činnosť, pracoval výbor kultúrny a zábavný tiež s veľmi pekným úspechom. Boly usporiadané dve prednášky a dva klubové plesy, ktoré všestranne sa vydarily. Na plesu prevedená bola voľba královny a dvoch královniček, a ako z obrázkov vidno, sú zvolené cigánky skutočne veľmi pekné. Napriek tomu, že mena ich sú spoločne, nie sú v príbuzenskom pomere.

Veľku zásluhu o klub získal si predseda klubu pán MUDr. Jaroslav Klíma, bývalý hlavný náčelný lékar mesta Košic, a jeho odchodom do štátneho zdravotného ústavu v Prahe stratili sme skutočného pracovníka a zastánca klubu. Jeho funkciu prevzal I. miestopredseda pán nadporučík Bažata, ktorý ako starý športový pracovník snaží sa pokial možno nahradiť neprítomného predsedu. Trennerom klubu je agilný športový pracovník známy internacional a bývalý hráč First Vienna pán Švejda, hlavný kancelársky ofic., prednosta ohlašovacieho oddelenia policajného riaditeľstva. Funkciu tajomníka a výpravčieho vykonáva od počiatku osvedčený pracovník Václav Čížek, obvodný inšpektor civilnej stráže bezpečnosti, ktorý svojou húževnatou pracou dokazuje, že v každom prostredí nechá sa s úspechom pracovať. Aj iné funkcie konajú zamestnanci policajného riaditeľstva. Účtovník pán František Macek, hlavný kanc. ofic., schraňuje organizačné imanie, pokladník pán okresný inšpektor Jozef Šimek teší sa z finančných úspechov, revizor účtov pán okresný inšpektor Emanuel Pompl nekoná len revíziu pokladny a knih, ale pracuje všestranne v prospech klubu. Zapisovateľ pán Jozef Vacek, obvodný inšpektor,

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ktorý ešte pred rokom nevedel, čo je život spolkový, snaží sa svojou pilnosťou dokázať, akú radosť pôsobí mu práca v športovom klubu.

ŠKSC Roma Košice má ku dnešnému dni okrem 39 registrovaných footballových hráčov a 6 athletov pre ľahkú athletiku výšej 100 členov činných a prispievajúcích, ktorí svojou prihláškou do klubu dokumentovali pochopenia o nútnosti sociálnej a osvetovej činnosti medzi cigánmi.

Veľmi pekné výsledky započatej práce potvrdzuje úradná štatistika, dľa ktorej zločinnosť medzi cigánmi v roku 1932 poklesla, i v prípadoch malých policajných priestupkoch, čo je už prvý veľký úspech vykonanej práce niekoľko jednotlivcov. Súčasne povzniesla sa u cigánov dôvera k československej verejnosti i k úradom. Záujom o cigánskou otázku sa pomocou a prostredníctvom športu, prednášok a rôznou osvetovou činnosťou stále zväčšuje a preto možno dúfať, že pomocou československej verejnosti a podporou štátnych a verejných úradov docieli sa toho, aby cigáni stali sa užitočnými občanmi nášho štátu. Nutno zdôrazniť, že ešte pred rokom nebolo možné jednotlivým funkcionárom v štátnej reči s cigánmi sa dorozumeť, dnes každý cigán športovec zná veľmi pekne slovensky. Preto už len po tejto stránke bolo vykonáno mnoho.

Do našich rad vítame každého organizačního pracovníka, ako aj tých, ktorí majú pochopenie pre socialnu a osvetovú činnosť medzi cigánmi. Prihlášky prijíma Václav Čížek, tajomník ČKSC Roma Košice, policajné riaditeľstvo.

∵

Gone is a time when police served only a certain segment of the population. The best proof of the great difference between the activities of the former police of the old regime and our state police is the social and educational activities of the Košice police, which do not perform only what is required by applicable laws and regulations, but also work in leisure time on the improvement of humanity. Much has been done in this respect.

In Košice, where there are 3,000 permanently settled Gypsies, until recently regarded as a burden to the city and other residents, nothing has been done for these black inhabitants. No one has cared about the Gypsies, whether they attend schools, how they live and reside, and only at election time they have been a very good material for anti-state elements. Košice Gypsies are, for the most part, musicians and various craftsmen, such as blacksmiths, cauldron-makers, locksmiths, gardeners, etc., and some live on business revenues (selling lemons, oranges, garlic, horseradish and haberdashery, but just to a small extent). The wealthier Gypsies also occupy their own houses, and the others live in different shanties on the outskirts of the city. One entire district of Košice, inhabited solely by Gypsies, is called "Tábor" [1]. This quarter was founded at the beginning of the 15th century by the Hussite army. As stated before, until recently, Gypsies were considered inferior people, to others' disadvantage and culturally beneath a man.

In 1928, an association called "Society for the Study and Solution of the Gypsy Question" was established in Košice, which has stepped in the Gypsy life with much effect and

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success. It set up a nursing home for Gypsy children, a milk action for infants and mothers, founded a choir, music and theatre club for Gypsy youth. This work requires a lot of free time and energy of individuals and also financial sacrifice of philanthropists. The head of the society is the state hospital senior doctor, MUDr. Jaroslav Stuchlík, secretary and soul of the society is district police [2] inspector Viktor Immerglück, who initiated the founding of the society. Police administrative official Václav Šindelář is a treasurer, and other functionaries are from the police ranks, too. As mentioned above, the society takes care of Gypsy infants and schoolchildren in moral, social and educational terms, and of the employment of young people. The experience acquired over time led to the conclusion that this could not be the end of the work requiring so much effort and self-sacrifice, and it was, therefore, necessary to unite and, if possible, keep together the out-of-school Gypsy children, grown-up youth, as well as the adults.

The effort to elevate the Gypsies to a higher moral and cultural level, to break them free from the Hungarian mindset and to arouse the sense of rapprochement with other people, as well as an interest in cleanliness and physical education, led to the establishment of a Gypsy sports club in Košice. Established, approved and in the Czechoslovak Football Union duly registered, the club bears the name: "Sports Club of Slovak Gypsies 'Roma' in Košice" [3]. The name of the club "Roma" is taken from the Gypsy language, in which it means "man", which corresponds to the principles that led to the establishment of the named club, i. e. make a Gypsy into a man useful to human society. This sports club continues in further comprehensive education commenced by the "Society for the Study and Solution of the Gypsy Question in Košice".

The Gypsy is by his innate nature very playful and therefore feels really at home in our sports club. Gypsies's congenital, almost servile, subjugation contributes to an exemplary club discipline, which attributes to very nice achievements, made in less than a year of the club's existence, both in football and in other sport disciplines. The football team SCSG Roma in Košice has so many offers to play friendly football matches that they cannot satisfy all. The extraordinary interest in the club can be explained by the fact that our club, as the only properly registered Gypsy one, is so far unique in the world and also the results of the played matches are very surprising in such a short time. Apart from Slovakia and Subcarpathian Ruthenia, there is an interest in the club from abroad, too. Among other offers from foreign countries, SCSG Roma Košice was invited to travel to the Baltic States, namely to Lithuania, Latvia, Estonia and Finland to play 7–seven–friendly football matches. Concrete commitments have been made for this tour, from 20 June to 15 July 1933, not only for football, but also for the organisation of 5–five –concerts by the club band, since Gypsies, apart from football, are great instrument players.

At the time the club was founded, there was no great public understanding for such work, almost everybody was ridiculing it and proving to the officials that a Gypsy could never be educated and that he would always remain just as he was, a Gypsy. The way of thinking today is different. The club won not only the friendship of other sports clubs, but also a great public sympathy, and functionaries won recognition for the work done. Journalism praisefully documents the club's achievements.

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It should be emphasised that the beginnings were very difficult in technical and other respects. None of the enrolled players was a sportsman, there were no funds, training matches took place at a remote military training ground, or at the market (the club lacks an own pitch), 39 enrolled players have not, until now, payed, due to their destitution, even a part of the member fees, yet SCSG Roma was the only club in the East Slovak football county, which payed all its dues for 1932 without any subsidies or other public support.

In the winter months, when the Sports Department did not operate, the Cultural and Entertainment Committee also worked with a great success. Two lectures and two club balls were organised, which were an overall success. At the ball, there was an election of the queen and two princesses, and as can be seen in the pictures, the elected Gypsy girls are truly beautiful. Although they share their names, they are not in a family relationship.

A great credit for the contribution to the club is claimed by its president, MUDr. Jaroslav Klíma, the former chief physician of the city of Košice, whose transfer to the state health institute in Prague meant for us a loss of a true worker and advocate of the club. His function was taken over by the First Vice-President, Lieutenant Bažata, who, as an old sports worker, tries to, if possible, substitute for the absent president. The club's coach is an agile sports worker, known internationally, and a former player of First Vienna, Mr. Švejda [4], chief administrative official, head of the reporting department of the police directorate. The function of secretary and dispatcher has been carried out since the beginning by a well-proven worker, Václav Čížek, a district police inspector, who, with his tenacious work, proves that one can work with success in every environment. Other positions are held by the employees of the police directorate. Accountant Mr. František Macek, chief administrative official, keeps organisational capital; treasurer, district inspector Jozef Šimek, enjoys financial success; account inspector, district inspector Emanuel Pompl, does not only review the cash register and books, but works generally in favour of the club. The keeper of records, Jozef Vacek, district inspector, who only a year ago did not know what community life is, is trying to prove, with his diligence, his joy of working in a sports club.

SCSG Roma Košice has, to this day, apart from 39 registered football players and 6 light athletes, more than 100 members active and contributing, whose application to the club evidences their understanding of the necessity of social and educational activities among Gypsies.

Very good results of the work commenced is corroborated by official statistics, according to which, in 1932, the crime among Gypsies decreased, including the cases of small police offences, which is already the first great success of the work achieved by a few individuals. At the same time, the confidence of the Gypsies in the Czechoslovak public and the authorities has risen. The interest in the Gypsy question is increasing with the help of and through sport, lectures and various educational activities, and therefore there is hope that with the help of the Czechoslovak public and the support of state and public authorities, Gypsies can become useful citizens of our state. It should be emphasised that, even a year ago, it was not possible for individual officials to communicate with the Gypsies in the official language, today, every Gypsy sportsman knows Slovak very well. Therefore, much has been done in this respect alone.

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We welcome every organisational worker in our ranks, as well as those who have an understanding of social and educational activities among Gypsies. Applications are accepted by Václav Čízek, secretary of SCSG Roma Košice, police directorate.

Notes

1.Tábor (Camp) was an official name of one quarter in Košice which was established probably during the 19th century. In 1900 almost three thousand inhabitants lived in Tábor whereas only 474 inhabitants of the whole city were counted as Gypsies in 1893 and not all of them lived in Tábor (Jurová, 2013, p. 30). The Gypsies, thus, clearly consisted only a very small part of the Tábor's inhabitants even in the interwar period. The author's statement that Tábor is inhabited "solely by Gypsies" shows how the city poor were ethnicised and racialised in the imagination of the Czechoslovak policemen.

2. The Czechoslovak police force consisted of the State Police which was located in bigger cities as well as the Gendarmerie charged with keeping public order in the countryside. In 1920 the Police Directorate of the State Police was established in Košice.

3. The Sports Club of Slovak Gypsies 'Roma' in Košice ceased to exist in March 1935 when the club was renamed to ŠK Sparta Košice after a series of crushing losses and attracted only non-Romani players (Fiľo, 2002, p. 54).

4. František Švejda came from a Czech family who lived in Vienna where he played soccer in various local football clubs. After 1919 when he moved to Slovakia, he helped establish several local football clubs such as ŠK Liptovský Sv. Mikuláš and ŠK Slávia Košice (Fiľo, 2002, p. 49).

Source: [No Author]. (1933). Sociálna a osvetová činnost košickej policie. *Československý detektiv*, An. 5, No. 8, 1933, June 1, pp. 38-39.
Prepared for publication by Pavel Baloun.
Translated by Martin Babička.

8.3.6 *A Letter to the City Council in Košice* (*1*)

Predmet: Lavutarisz kultúrny a sociálny spolok Cigánov na Slovensku so sídlom v Košicicach, prosba o prenajatie spolkovej miestnosti.

Mestskej rade v Košiciach

Predsednictvo v predmeteuvedeného spolku úctive prosí slávnu mestsku Radu, o pridelenej jednej spolkovej miestnosti v niektorej mestskej budove, pre spolkové účely.

Svoju prosbu dovolujeme si odôvodniť takto:

Spolok si vzal za úkol kultúrne vzdelavať a sociálne pomáhať Cigánom. V Košiciach, kde máme do 2000 Cigánov, ktorí žijú v tej najväčšej biede a ich detí sú bez obuvy a šat, chceme týmto aspoň čiastočne v ich biede pomahať a kultúrne ich vzdelávať. Z toho dôvodu zariadili sme do našeho programu rôzne poučné prednášky a kurzy/kurz Slovenčiny, kurzy ručných prác, atď./ avšak doteraz nemame svojej miestnosti, kde by sme sa mohli schádzať. Svoje schôdzky svolávame do hostincoch, čo vyzerá tak, ako by sme Cigánov priučovali ešte viac k pitiu alkoholu.

Iste, že slávna mestská Rada v Košiciach pochopí našu opravnenú požiadavku a najde pre nás v niektorom mestskom objekte vhodnú miestnosť, kde by sme mohli aspoň čiastočne našu ťažkú prácu započať, lebo nie sme ešte tak finančne situovaní, aby sme

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si mohli prenajať v súkromnom dome spolkové miestnosti a tiež žiaden majiteľ domu by nám vo svojom dome miestnosť neprenajal, poneváč sa najde ešte veľmi malo ľudí, ktorí by mali pre tak ťažku obetavú prácu pocho[nie] a pozerajú na Cigánov, ako by boli vyvrhlíci ľudskej spoločnosti. Keď sa však najdu jednotlivci idealistí, ktorí celý svoj volný čas obetujú spolkovým vecám, nemajú však možnosť, aby mohli i finančne podporovať ten spolok, nakoľko ich požitky alebo zárobok je tak malý, že nestačí ani pre ich rodinu.

Nemôžeme sa však lahostejne na to pozerať, keď v tak kultúrnom štáte ako je naša Československá republika, bolo na Slovensku 40.000 Cigánov vyradených z ľudskej spoločnosti a odkázaných len na seba. Tu by bolo už na čase, aby pre túto otázku bolo viac porozumenia zo strany úradov a tiež jednotlivcov, keď sa už osobne nechcu súčastniť tejto ťažkej práci, aby aspoň finančne a svojimi dobrými radami pomahali tým, ktorí sa pre túto prácu z lásky venujú.

Dufajuc, že slávna mestská Rada v Košiciach, láskave uzná našu opravnenú a súrnu požiadavku a najde pre nás vhodnú miestnosť. Za priaznivé vybavenie našej úctivej prosby už vopred ďakujeme a znamename sa

s výrazom dokonalej úcty:

v Košiciach, dňa 22. oktobra 1936.

Gabriel Kríž, t. č. Predseda: … [signaturre].

Elemír Sivák, za tajomnika: … [signature].

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Subject: Lavutarisz Cultural and Social Society of Gypsies in Slovakia based in Košice, pleading for renting a room for the community.

To the City Council of Košice

The Presidium of the aforesaid society asks with respect the glorious City Council to allocate one common room in one of the city buildings for the society's purposes.

Let us justify our request as follows:

The society took on the task of culturally educating and socially helping the Gypsies. In Košice, where we have up to 2,000 Gypsies [1], who live in the greatest poverty and their children have no shoes and clothes, we want to, at least partially, help them in their misery and educate them culturally. For this reason, we have included in our programme a variety of educational lectures and courses /courses in Slovak, handicraft courses etc./, but we do not yet have an own room, where we could meet. We call our meetings to pubs, which looks as if we were teaching Gypsies to drink even more alcohol.

We are sure that the glorious City Council of Košice will understand our rightful request and find us a suitable room in a city building, where we could at least partially begin our hard work, since we are not yet that well-off to be able to rent a common room in a private house and, also, no house owner would rent us a room in his house, since there is only very few people who would have understanding for such hard, selfless work,

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and they look at Gypsies as if they were outcasts of human society. However, when there appear idealist individuals, who sacrifice their entire free time to an association, they lack the opportunity to financially support the association, as their incomes or earnings are so small that they are not enough even for their family.

We cannot, however, stand idly by, when, in such a cultured state as our Czechoslovak Republic, there were 40,000 Gypsies [2] excluded from human society and thrown back on their own resources. It is high time that more understanding for this issue were provided by the authorities and individuals, too, once they do not want to participate in this difficult work, to at least help, financially and with their good advice, those, who are devoted to that work out of love.

We hope that the glorious City Council in Košice will kindly accept our rightful and urgent request and will find for us a suitable room. We thank in advance for an affirmative settlement of our kind request and we bid farewell

with an expression of utmost respect:

in Košice, on 22 October 1936.

Gabriel Kríž, at the time President: … [signature].

Elemír Sivák, in the name of the Secretary … [signature].

Notes

1. According to the state census in 1930 only 237 inhabitants of the city of Košice were counted as Gypsies by their nationality. Another 1347 Gypsies lived in the District Košice-Country (Sčítání lidu, p. 79). However, according to the special police census of Gypsies carried out in 1924 on the territory of the Czechoslovak Republic by the local police authorities 771 Gypsies lived in the city Košice and 2361 lived in the District Košice-Country (Nečas, 1989, p. 216).
2. According to the state census in 1930 only 31,100 inhabitants on the territory of the Province of Slovakia were Gypsies (Sčítání lidu, 1930, p. 79).

Source: AMK, f. Municipálne mesto Košice (1939-1944), inv. č. 104, šk. 8, sp. č. II. 22636/39.
Selected by Anna Jurová. Prepared for publication by Pavel Baloun.
Ttranslated by Martin Babička.

8.3.7 *A Letter to the City Council in Košice* (2)

Slávnej Mestskej Rade v Košiciach.

K tamojšiemu dožiadaniu číslo 30.6§1/IV m. rady/36 zo dňa 23. oktobra 1936 sdeľujeme toto:

bod 1. Spolok se nazýva: "Lavutarisz, kultúrny a sociálny spolok Cigánov na Slovensku so sídlom v Košiciach". Viď spolkové razitko.

bod 2. Cielom spolku je: pracovať medzi slovenskými cigáňmi na zvýšení mravnej kultúrnej a sociálnej úrovne života duševného i spoločenského. Pracovať k svornému spolupôsobeniu všetkých príslušníkov národa československého bez rozdielu vierovyznania a politického presvedčenia na poli kultúrnom, sociálnom i hospodárskom vzájomných predsudkov a prekážok súžitia. Poskytovať členom spolku v rôznych prípadoch žiadané rady a pomoci v smeru mravnom, kultúrnom, sociálnom, národohospodárskom

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a hmotne ich podporovať. Vychovávať dorast spolku vo smere mravnom a kultúrnom. Spolok je nepoliticky.

bod 3. Sídlom spolku sú Košice.

bod 4. Jedna dočasná miestnosť v rozmere 20 x 4 m na Moldavskej triede čís. 14 v hostinci p. Prestla.

bod 5. Doteraz 525 prihlasených členov.

bod 6. Nakolko nemáme len jeden exemplar stanov, odošleme dodatočne po odpisaní. Dovolujeme si podotknúť, že stanovy boly schválené Krajinským úradom v Bratislave pod číslom 201.213/8-1936 v mesaci júni 1936.

bod 7. Spolok okrem malých obrazov p. Prezidenta-Osvoboditela a p. Prezidenta dra E. Beneša v cene asi 15 Kč nemá žiadneho majetku.

bod 8. Členovia predsedníctva sú:

Predseda Gabriel Kríž, pol. obv. inšp.[policajný obvodný inšpektor], Karpatská ul. 38
I. m. predseda, Max Holub, Pišťalná ul. čís. 3
II. m. predseda, Alojz Horváth, Idanská ul. čís. 25
Predseda hudobného odboru, Jozef Pačay, pol. sudca
Zapisovatel, Elemir Sivák, Hodlarská ul. čís. 25
Pokladník, Koloman Pačanovský, štát. učiteľ, Mäsiarska 55
Miesto pokladník, Frant. Gábor, Bernolákov ául. 15 a
12 členov výboru a 2 revizori účtov.

bod 9. Spolok doteraz sa zaoberá organizovaním dalších členov, prevádza rôzne intervencie u úradoch v záujme svojho členstva, má v svojom programe usporiadavanie divadelných predstavení, kurzov slovenčiny, ručných prác, prednášok, ale nakoľko nemá žiadnych finančných prostriedkov ani len na najnutnejšie potreby, nemohol so svojou prácou započať.

Podotýkáme, že sme usporiadali dňa 27. oktobra u príležitosti národného sviatku slávnosť, na ktorej učinkovali okrem slávnostného rečnika, výlučne naší členovia a členky Cigáni, o ktorej posudok môže podať Osvetový sbor mesta Košic, nakoľko bol tam prítomný jeho zástupce a tiež zástupce policajného riaditeľstva.

bod 10. Nakoľko Cigáni nemali doteraz žiadnu svoju organizaciu, kde by bylo mohli si predniesť svoje ťažkosti a tiež ako iní ľudia sa i kultúrne vzdelávať, politické strany ich poznaly len pred volbami a lakaly ich všelijakými slubami, aby na ních hlasovali a keď bolo po voľbách a prišiel taký cigán do sekretariatu tej lebo onej strany, nikto sa ho nezastal, ba ešte bol aj vyhodeny von. Z týchto dôvodov si založili svoj vlastný spolok, aby si mohli sami vzájomne pomáhať.

Spolok však je ešte len v začiatkoch, lebo sa utvoril 5. júna 1936 a nemohol ešte žiadne divy ukázať, poneváč nema ani k tomu potrebných prostriedkov. Členovia spolku sú vo väčšine prípadoch bez zamestnania, takže nemôžu ani len členské príspevky riadne platiť. Podporu doteraz sme od nikoho žiadnu nedostali, nie je preto divu, že sa nemôžeme našej práci venovať tak, ako by sme chceli.

Dufajúc, že slávna Rada mesta Košíc našie opravnené dôvody láskave uzná a nám požiadovanú podporu udelí.

Znamename sa s výrazom dokonalej úcty:

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V Košiciach, 3. novembra 1936.
Za
Gabriel Kríž, t. č. Predeseda: … [signature].
Elemír Sivák, za tajomníka: … [signature].

∵

To the Glorious City Council in Košice.

On request No. 30.6 §1/IV C. Council/36 from October 23. 1936, we report the following:

1. The Society is called: "Lavutarisz, Cultural and Social Society of Gypsies in Slovakia Based in Košice". See the Society's stamp.

2. The aim of the Society is: to work among Slovak Gypsies for an increasement of the moral, cultural and social level of both mental and social life. To work towards coherent cooperation of all members of the Czechoslovak nation without distinction of religious and political beliefs in the field of cultural, social and economic prejudices and obstacles to coexistence. To provide the members of the Society with advice required in various cases in moral, cultural, social, economic regards and with material support. To educate the Society's youth morally and culturally. The Society is apolitical.

3. The Society is based in Košice.

4. One temporary room of 20 × 4 m on Moldavská street no. 14 in Mr. Prestl's pub.

5. 525 registered members up to now.

6. As we have only one specimen of the Statutes, we will send them subsequently after the reply. Please note that the Statutes were approved by the Regional Office in Bratislava under the No. 201.213 / 8-1936 in June 1936.

7. The Society, apart from small paintings of Mr. President-Liberator [1] and Mr. President Dr. E. Beneš in the price of about 15 crowns, has no property.

8. Members of the Presidium are:
President Gabriel Kríž, District Police Inspector, Karpatská st. 38
First Vice-President, Max Holub, Pišťalná st. no. 3
Second Vice-President, Alojz Horváth, Idanská ul. no. 25
Head of Music Department, Jozef Pačay, police judge
Keeper of Records, Elemir Sivák, Hodlarská st. no. 25
Treasurer, Kolomar Pacanovsky, state school teacher, Mäsiarska 55
Deputy Treasurer, Frant. Gábor, Bernoláková st. 15 and
12 Committee Members and 2 Auditors.

9. The Society has so far been involved in organizing other members, organizes various intercessions with the authorities in the interest of its membership, its programme contains the organisation of theatre performances, Slovak language courses, handiwork, lectures, but because it has no financial resources for the essentials alone, it could not start its work.

We add that, on 27 October at the occasion of the national holiday, we organised a celebration where, apart from the ceremonial speaker, only our Gypsy members performed,

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review of which can be supplied by the Educational Department of the City of Košice, as there was their representative, as well as a representative of the police directorate.

10. As the Gypsies have not yet had any organisation where they could present their difficulties and be educated culturally as other people, the political parties have taken them into consideration only before the elections and they would be attracting them with all sorts of promises to vote for them, and when it was after the elections and such a Gypsy would come to the secretariat of this or that party, no one would stand up for him, and he would be even thrown out. For these reasons, they have set up their own society to be able to help each other.

The Society is, however, still in the beginnings, since it was founded on 5 June 1936 and could not show any wonders yet, for it does not have the necessary resources. The members of the Society are in most cases unemployed, so they cannot even pay the membership fees properly. We have not received any support from anyone yet, so it is no wonder we cannot do our job the way we want it to be.

Hoping that the glorious City Council will kindly recognise our justified reasons and grant us the support we have requested.

With the expression of utmost respect,

In Košice, November 3, 1936.

On behalf of

Gabriel Kríž, at the time President: … [signature].

Elemír Sivák, as Secretary: … [signature].

Notes

1. 'President the Liberator' was a popular term used for the first Czechoslovak president Tomáš Garrigue Masaryk (1850-1937) who became a subject of a specific cult of personality which interconnected the former monarchist cult of the Habsburg emperor with new national and republican symbols and ideas of Czechoslovakia.

Source: AMK, f. Municipálne mesto Košice (1939-1944), inv. č. 104, šk. 8, sp. č. II. 22636/39.
Selected by Anna Jurová. Prepared for publication by Pavel Baloun.
Translated by Martin Babička.

8.3.8 *The Report on the Activities of the 'Lavutarisz' Society in Košice*

Policajné riaditeľstvo v Košiciach.

Stráž bezpečnosti.

Předmět: Hlásenie o činnosti spolku "Lavutarisz" v Košiciach.

Košice, dňa 3. decembra 1936.

Oznámenie – Hlásenie

K tamojšiemu dožiadaniu čís. 16753/36 prez. hlásim, že "Lavutarisz" kultúrny a sociálny spolok Cigánov na Slovensku so sídlom v Košiciach, bol dňa 5. júna 1936 riadne utvorený. Spolkové stanovy boly Krajinským úradom v Bratislave pod číslom 201.213/8-36 schválené.

V košickým okrese má v týchto dedinách svojích členov:

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Krásno na Hornádom 26 členov, Olčvár 15 členov, Rozhanovce 42 členov, Ťahanovce 34 členov, Kráľovce 12 členov, Ďurkov 10 členov.

Spolok za tak krátkou dobu nemohol sa ešte tak vyvijať, poneváč nemali sme k tomu potrebných prostriedkov finančných a iných. Prvá naša práca bola sdružovanie členov v spolku a nejväčší dôraz klademe na výchovu mládeže. V každej dedine, kde mame svojích členov, pôsobili sme na ních, aby všetké škulupovinné detí nechali riadne zapísať do škôl. To sa nám i čiastočne podarilo, ale keď prišlo hladnejšie počasie, detí nemohli sa riadne súčasnovať školného vyučovania, nakoľko sú holé a bosé.

Z toho dôvodu sme sa obratili s prosbou na okresný úrad v Košiciach, aby nám poskytol podporu na ošatenie týchto najchudobnejších cigánskych detí, ktorých rodičia nemajú ani len na najnutnejšiu životnú stravu, nie aby mohli svoje deti aspoň čiastočne ošatiť. Spolok do t. č. ešte nedostal na takéto účely žiadnej podpory, takže nemá možnosť previesť takuto ošacovaciu akciu chudobných cigánskych deti. Nežiadame podporu pre spolkové účely, ale nech okresný úrad prevede na ošacovaciu akciu priamo po okrese, aby sa cigánskym deťom dostalo aspoň čiastočného ošatenia.

Je samozrejme, že okresný úrad nemá vedomosť o tom, čo všetko predsednictvo spolku v prospech svojích členov podnika, lebo nemame možnosť každý náš krok hlásiť okresnému úradu. Konáme rôzne intervencie u úradoch, ako vybavovanie daňových záležitosti, hľadanie práci, pečovanie o nemocných a rôzne iné záležitosti. Ku pr[í]kl[adu]: V lete nám onemocnela naša členka v Rozhanovciach, ktorej sa neujal nikto, predsednictvo spolku bolo nútené vyslať svojho tajomníka s povozom Čsl. červeného kríža do Rozhanoviec, aby našu členku doviezol do štátnej nemocnice v Košiciach, čo sa i stalo. V Obci Krásno n/H porodila naša členka dieťa, v dome nemali ani čo do úst, predsednictvo zase bolo nútené zaslať potravné články pre rodinu. Myslím, že to všetko patrí ku sociálnej práci. Aby sme však mohli učinejšie pracovať v našom vytýčenom programe, k tomu sú zapotreby finančné prostriedky a ľudia-ideálisti, ktorý by sa tejto práce z lásky venovali. Okrem toho je treba väčšieho porozumenia a ochoty zo strany kompetentných úradov, k tak vážnej otázke ako je cigánska otázka na Slovensku.

Gabriel Kríž, t. č. predseda spolku: … [signature].

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Police Directorate in Košice.
Securty Patrol.
Subject: Report on the Activities of 'Lavutarisz' Society in Košice.
Košice, on December 3, 1936.

Notification – Report

On request no. 16753/36 pres., I report that "Lavutarisz" Cultural and Social Society of Gypsies in Slovakia, based in Košice, was duly established on 5 June 1936. Statutes of the Society were approved by the Regional Office in Bratislava under no. 201.212/8-36.

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It has members in the following villages of the Košice district:

Krásno na Hornádom 26 members, Olčvár 15 members, Rozhanovce 42 members, Ťahanovce 34 members, Kráľovce 12 members, Ďurkov 10 members [1].

The Society could have not developed so much in such a short time, because we did not have the necessary financial and other resources. Our first task was associating members in the Society, and we put the greatest emphasis on youth education. In every village where we have our members, we have been operating to have all the school children properly enrolled in schools. We were successful in part, but when the weather became colder, the children could not be properly taught, as they were bare and shoeless.

For this reason, we turned to the District Office in Košice to provide us with support for the clothing of these poorest Gypsy children, whose parents do not even have the most necessary diet, let alone be able to dress their children at least in part. The Society has not until now received any support for such purposes, so it does not have an option to perform such a clothing action for poor Gypsy children. We do not ask for support for the purposes of the Society but let the district office do the clothing action directly within the district to provide the Gypsy children at least with some clothing.

Obviously, the district office is not aware of everything Presidium of the Society does in favour of its members, because we do not have the opportunity to report our every step to the district office. We hold various intercessions with the authorities, such as handling tax affairs, finding employment, caring for the sick and various other tasks. E.g.: A member of ours in Rozhanovce fell ill in the summer, no one took care of her, Presidium had to send their secretary with a Czechoslovak Red Cross wagon to Rozhanovce to bring our member to the state hospital in Košice, which he did. In Krásno nad Hornádom, another member gave birth to a child, they had nothing to eat in the house, Presidium again had to send food aid to the family. I think this all is part of social work. However, in order to be able to work more effectively in our set program, there is a need for funds and people-idealists to pursue this work out of love. In addition, there is a need for greater understanding and willingness on the part of the competent authorities to address such a serious issue as the Gypsy question in Slovakia.

Gabriel Kríž, at the time President of the Society: … [signature].

Notes

1. All these villages were located in the vicinity of Košice. Krásno nad Hornádom and Ťahanovce later became part of the city and Olčvár became the municipality of Košické Oľšany.

Source: ŠAK, f. Okresný úrad v Košiciach (1923-1939), inv. č. 182, sign. 29359/1937, šk. 488.
Prepared for publication by Pavel Baloun.
Translated by Martin Babička.

8.3.9 *The Celebration of the 500th Anniversary of the Arrival of Gypsies in Slovakia*

Preplnené VSD. – Zahraniční novinári na oslave. Koncert vysielaný do Ameriky.

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Kultúrny a sociálny spolok Cigánov na Slovensku "Lavutarisz" so sídlom v Košiciach usporiadal vo stredu večer 2. marca v mestskom divadle pri príležitosti príchodu Cigánov na Slovensko jubilejnú slávnosť, ktorej hudobný a spevný program bol veľmi pestrý. Rozsiahla budova košického divadla bola doslova obecenstvom preplnená a obecenstvo prijalo účinkujúcich veľmi sympaticky. Na akadémii boli prítomní tiež predstavitelia mesta Košíc a úradov a zástupcovia rôznych spolkov a korporácií , ako i niekoľko zahraničných novinárov.

Úvodom k akadémii prehovoril Koloman Župnik, ktorý okrem iného zdôraznil, že v demokratickej Československej republike sa dáva našim Cigánom možnosť rozvoja vo všetkých odvetviach, pokiaľ sú schopní sa uplatniť. Búrku potlesku vyvolal monstrekoncert 101 cigánskych hudobníkov pod striedavým riadením troch primášov, ako vystúpenie cigánskych hudobníkov z Prešova, Veľkého Šariša a Gelnice. Taktiež vystúpenie 22 člennej detskej cigánskej hudby, žiakov cigánskej školy pod vedením učitela Pačenovského a malých cigánskych detí žiakov mestskej hudobnej školy v Košiciach bolo odmenené potleskom.

Na programe bola tiež divadelná hra zo života kočujúcich Cigánov "Cigánska svadba".

Po divadle bol vo veľkom sále hotela Schalkház usporiadaný tradičný cigánsky maškarný ples.

Košická odbočka československého rozhlasu vysielala zo štúdia v čase od 18.45 do 19.00 hod. priamo z Košíc cez Ženevu do Ameriky cigánsku hudbu 40člennej cigánskej kapely. Úvodom k tomuto prenosu prehovoril anglicky profesor Dikinsen z Košíc. Krátko po koncerte prišla do košického rozhlasu zpráva z Ameriky, že sa koncert v Amerike veľmi ľúbil a že jeho prenos bol bezvadný.

∵

Overcrowded Theatre. – Foreign journalists at the celebration. Concert broadcast to America.

On Wednesday evening 2 March in the Municipal Theatre, the Cultural and Social Society of Gypsies in Slovakia "Lavutarisz", based in Košice, organised a jubilee celebration on the occasion of the arrival of Gypsies in Slovakia [1], with a great variety of musical and singing programme. The vast building of the Košice Theatre was literally overcrowded with the audience, which was very congenial to the performers. Representatives of the city of Košice, state officers and representatives of various associations and corporations, as well as several foreign journalists, were also present at the Academy.

Koloman Župnik spoke at the beginning of the Academy, and he pointed out, among other things, that in the democratic Czechoslovak Republic, our Gypsies are given the opportunity to develop in all sectors, if they are able to find their use. The enormous concert of 101 Gypsy musicians was greeted with a storm of applause, under the alternate direction of three first fiddlers, in the performances by Gypsy musicians from Prešov, Veľký Šariš and Gelnica. Also, the performance of Gypsy children's music group of 20

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members, Gypsy school pupils under the guidance of teacher Pačenovský and small Gypsy pupils from the Municipal Music School in Košice was rewarded with applause.

The programme also included a theatre play from the life of the travelling Gypsies "Gypsy Wedding" [2].

After the theatre play, there was a traditional Gypsy costume ball in the Grand Hall of Hotel Schalkház [3].

The Košice branch of the Czechoslovak Radio broadcasted the Gypsy music of music band of 40 from the studio from 6.45 to 7.00 p.m. directly from Košice via Geneva to America. Professor Dikinsen from Košice provided an English introduction to the broadcast. Shortly after the concert, a message from America came to the radio in Košice that the concert was very popular there and that its transmission was perfect.

Notes

1. It seems that the celebration pointed to Paul Battailard's (1816-1894) periodisation of Gypsy migration to Europe. The year 1438 marked a historical turning point between the first and the second wave of Gypsies migration (Štampach, 1929, p. 6). Battailard's periodization was known to the Czechoslovak audience through the work of Czech anthropologist František Štampach (1895-1969) who published his dissertation thesis under the title *Cikáni v Československé republice* (Gypsies in the Czechoslovak Republic) in 1929 and was regarded as the main expert on the subject by policemen as well as other scientists.
2. Author as well as director of the theatre play was the president of the Society Gabriel Kríž, a local police inspector.
3. The Schalkház Hotel was one of the most luxurious hotels in Košice. It was named after its main investor Leopold Schalkház and built in 1873.

Source: [No Author]. (1938). Oslava 500. výročia príchodu Cigánov na Slovensko. *Novosti*, An. 20, No. 52, 1938, March 4, p. 2.
Selected by Anna Jurová. Prepared for publication by Pavel Baloun.
Translated by Martin Babička.

Comments

These nine sources document different Gypsy and Pro-Gypsy associations which were established during the interwar period in Czechoslovakia. The fact that all these associations were established in Košice is very symptomatic.

Košice (Kassa/Kaschau) was a large city with a population speaking mostly Hungarian, Slovak, German and Yiddish. The city was incorporated into the newly established Czechoslovak Republic in July 1919, after the defeat of *Magyarországi Tanácsköztársaság* (Hungarian Soviet Republic). Similar to the situation in Subcarpathian Ruthenia (Holubec, 2014) with new Czechoslovak administration came mainly Czech and partially Slovaks from Western Slovakia as chief officials, experts, policemen, teachers etc. In the growing city, with approximately fifty thousand inhabitants, more than thirty thousand were counted as Czechoslovaks in 1921 (Sáposová & Regináčová, 2014, p. 90) and more than seven thousand of them were born on the territory of Czech lands. In 1930 seventeen percent of the total population of Košice constituted solely Czechs (Ficeri, 2017, p. 29). The reason lied in the fact that Košice in the popular Czechoslovak imagination were part of the "East of

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the Republic" where the local Slovak and Ruthenian population suffered greatly under the former Hungarian rule. The politics of "Magyarisation" was blamed for social and economic underdevelopment of the region as well as the oppression of Slovak and Ruthenian national cultures. The role of Czechoslovak administration, thus, was formulated in terms of a broad civilising mission which was supposed to reconfigure the existent political, social, economic and cultural hierarchies in order to secure the national majority for Slovaks and Ruthenians as well as to uplift the whole region (Baloun, 2018; Holubec, 2014).

The language of a civilising mission was used not only by Czech and Slovak officials and experts, but also by various entrepreneurs and their professional organisations. In 1924 the Czechoslovak government in Prague received a resolution written by *Odborové sdružení hudebníků v Československé republice* (Professional Union of Czechoslovak Musicians) in which they complain about favouring Gypsy musicians by the local authorities. The Union emphasised that its members brought "musical progress" and aimed at uplifting Slovak level of education in music because in the period before Czechoslovak Republic Slovaks were "exploited" by the Hungarian regime as well as by "idle" Gypsies who allegedly enjoyed considerable privileges from Hungarians. In order to stop the "Gypsy ravaging" the Union demanded special measures to be taken by the state authorities against "defamation of music" (ŠAK, f. Košická župa, šk. č. 374). Here, the language of Czech civilising mission in the "East of the Republic" was supposed to legitimize the claim for restricting the undesirable competition. It was the long-standing tradition of Roma musicians in the city of Košice who formed an important part of local urban culture of coffeehouses and restaurants (Mann, 1999; Zaloagă, 2013) as undesired result of Magyarization, which the Union of Czechoslovak Musicians tried to undermine. Although the Union's complaint didn't compel the state authorities to restrict the competition, it probably influenced local Roma musicians who attempted to establish their own union of musician in 1927 (Document 3.1.). Their effort, however, was not successful because the Czechoslovak Ministry of Interior found the statutes of the proposed *Unie československých cigánských hudebníků pro Č.S.R.* (Union of the Czechoslovak Gypsy Musicians of the Czechoslovak Republic) in conflict with existent legislation. Beside the ministry's decision we don't know much about any other sources regarding this attempt. Who exactly was involved in establishing the organisation and what did they want to achieve are questions which still can't be answered yet.

An important impetus to establishing later associations which were aimed at Gypsies living in Košice was constituted by a court trial with the so-called Gypsy criminal band from Moldava nad Bodvou, a small town near Košice, which took place at the Regional Court in Košice in 1929. The case attracted national as well as international media since 1927 when several of nineteen Gypsies who were accused in the case confessed to cannibalism which they later denied (Kiseľ, 2008). Because the jury wanted to ascertain the sanity of the accused the court turned over to the local physicians. Jaroslav Stuchlík, a chief physician of the Department for Insane Persons at the State Hospital in Košice of Czech nationality, helped refute the alleged cannibalism. He also elaborated a more than one hundred pages long expert opinion on the accused in which he, on the one hand,

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confirmed the sanity of the accused and, on the other, presented them as "backward degenerates" and members of a different "race". Such a conclusion led the jury to consider an "inclination of Gypsy race to commit crimes, their repudiated position in society and in consequence their defiance" to be an important mitigating circumstance (ŠAK, f. Krajský Súd v Košiciach, šk. 171).

The involvement of the local chief physicians – Czech elite – in the trial brought the topic of the so-called Gypsy question to their attention. They started to debate the issue on the meetings of the local Association of Czechoslovak Physicians in Košice and were soon joined by other individuals (mainly Czech officials, especially employees of the Police Directorate in Košice) as well as local branches of Slovak national organisations such as the *Slovenská liga* (Slovak League) and *Matica slovenská* (the Slovak Matica) or religious organisations connected with the catholic diocese in Košice in the effort to establish the League for Cultural Uplifting of Gypsies in 1929 (Slovenský východ, 1930, p. 3; Zupková, 2007).

On November 27, 1930, a new organisation, called Society for the Study of the Gypsy Question, was established in Košice. It was comprised of the former League for Cultural Uplifting of Gypsies as well as new individuals who represented the local middle and upper class of different nationalities (Czech, Slovak, Hungarian, German, etc.). While physicians, policemen, officials, intellectuals etc. represented the core functionaries (see Document 3.2. and 3.3.) the attendance list shows that more than twenty musicians of Roma origin attended the general assembly of the Society as well as few Roma labourers (Slovak National Archives, Provincial Office in Bratislava). Half of them stated their address and profession in Hungarian which points to the fact that many Gypsies on the territory of the so-called East of the Republic were speaking Hungarian and considered themselves as Hungarian rather than Slovak or Czechoslovak. At least some of them stated the address inside the city quarter called Tábor (the Camp) where many of the city poor lived and which was often labelled as a Gypsy quarter despite the fact that Gypsies constituted only a small part of local population (Jurová, 2013, p. 30) and some of them, especially musicians, lived in different parts of the city.

The set goals of the Society show that although the main content was charitable activities such as medical and legal aid, these were accompanied by organizing cultural events as well as scientific interests and interventions in order to change circumstances in education and health. Such miscellaneous activities were framed in terms of a civilising mission: the "enhancement of the Gypsy race" and "turning Gypsies into orderly and useful members of human society" (see Document 3.3. and 3.4.). Thus, the general aim of the Society was assimilation of "backward" Gypsies into modern Czechoslovak society. Beside civilization, uplifting assimilation was also understood in terms of nationality. Emphasis on using the "state language" or freeing Gypsies "from the Hungarian mindset" reflected the fact that goals of this civilising mission lied in reshaping the former social, economic and cultural as well as national hierarchies (see Document 3.5.). Being "orderly and useful member of human society", thus, in the context of interwar Czechoslovakia meant being Czechoslovak by nationality.

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An interview with Jaroslav Stuchlík (Document 3.4) offers a unique insight into the ideas of the director of the Society. According to him assimilation was the desired "solution of the Gypsy question". His notion of assimilation, however, slightly differed from other Czechoslovak comtemporaries. For example, František Štampach, a Czech anthropologist who was regarded as the main expert on Gypsies in Czechoslovakia, argued for assimilation between members of the Czechoslovak nation and Gypsies which he understood in biological terms. Whereas in Štampach's notion the improvement of social and economic conditions of Gypsies implicitly devolved on the natural gradual process of racial mixing (Štampach, 1929, pp. 48-49), in Stuchlík's vision assimilation needed substantial state intervention and meant dispersion and resettlement of Gypsies organised by the state authorities in order to improve their social and economic conditions. Nonetheless they both perceived Gypsies as a specific "race" which wasn't connected with an ideal of racial purity but served as a marker of the "backwardness" of the population.

The most visible, frequent and documented activities of the Society were various cultural performances such as theatre plays and music performances which promoted a certain positive notion of Gypsy identity. Thus, even if the general goal was an assimilation, i.e. dissolution of the Gypsy difference, the Society created a space for local Roma to participate in developing cultural Gypsy identity. Although such identity grew up from the romantic stereotypes of Gypsies, it pushed the romantic images of Gypsy musicians further in order to contest the popular notion of Gypsies as people who represented humankind in purely biological sense (human animal). A competition of Gypsy musicians on the occasion of the 10th anniversary of the Czechoslovak Republic in 1928 shows that in Košice, the largest city of the so-called East of the Republic, Gypsies were seen as natural part of the population and even desired Czechoslovak citizens.

It is unclear when exactly the Society ceased to exist. Probably it was in the mid 1930s. Since manifold civil servants of Czech nationality who were sent to the "East of the Republic" in order to carry out the civilising mission were crucial initiators of the Society, it seems that their fluctuation was an important factor in the process (see Document 3.4.). One of the longer lasting activities of the Society was connected with the Sports Club of Slovak Gypsies 'Roma' in Košice which was established in March 1931 (Fiľo, 2002). It brought the local Roma popular entertainment. And despite the fact that the general goal of the organisation was formulated within the logic of Society's civilising mission the term Roma in the tittle points to subtle changes (see Document 3.5.). While at the beginning of the organisations in Košice Gypsies were seen almost exclusively as recipients of various charitable activities of the Society, some of the local Roma took a more active role within the organisations, especially in late 1930s.

In 1936 a new organisation was established: Lavutarisz, Cultural and Social Society of Gypsies in Slovakia, based in Košice. The term *Lavutaris*, which means musician in Romani language, went hand in hand with a shift in terms of who the organisation was supposed to represent. Instead of object, a mere passive recipient of a civilising mission, Gypsies became a subject to be represented in the public life. The gradual change was also articulated in the official goal of the organisation. Apart from a civilizational

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uplifting, Lavutarisz aimed at "coherent cooperation of all members of the Czechoslovak nation" (see Document 3.7.). Besides charitable aids for Roma school children, families or individuals, the organisation provided Slovak language courses and organised cultural events (see Documents 3.7.). The most important of them took place on March 2, 1938, on the occasion of the arrival of Gypsies in Slovakia (see Document 3.9). The organisers, thus, chose a date from the history which linked Gypsies to the Slovak national history in order to promote a cultural Gypsy/Roma identity within the framework of Czechoslovak nation. Given the general political situation in Czechoslovakia, the celebration could also be seen as a public manifestation of local Gypsies loyalty to the Czechoslovak Republic in the times of its crisis.

However, some of the local Gypsies identified themselves with Hungarian language and Hungarian nationality due to the strong local identity which Hungarian political parties forged after 1918 (Ficeri, 2017). According to the memories of a local social democrat of Hungarian nationality, when the city of Košice became a part of the Kingdom of Hungary after the First Vienna Award in 1938, a local Gypsy musician who joined Hungarian political parties already in 1930s, was appointed as a representative in the municipality (Szeghy-Gayer, 2018, p. 134).

Pavel Baloun

Additional Comments

The creation of the Czechoslovak Republic in 1918 entailed the incorporation of Roma who had hitherto lived in different historical regions into a new state. Czechia (medieval Bohemia) and Moravia were part of the Holy Roman Empire and, later, of Austria within the Dual Monarchy of the Austro-Hungarian Empire; Slovakia was part of the medieval Kingdom of Hungary and later of Hungary within Austria-Hungary. As Will Guy (1975, p. 204) very accurately points out, Czechoslovakia "straddles the frontiers of what may be termed the 'Western' and 'Eastern' areas of Roma development in Europe". The Roma (and a few Sinti), who lived in the Czech Republic and Moravia, were relatively less numerous, and for the most part led a nomadic lifestyle, similar to their counterparts in the West (excluding Spain); There were many more Roma living in Slovakia and Subcarpathian Ruthenia, and for the most part, they led a sedentary lifestyle similar to those in the Danube countries and the Balkans (Ibid.).

From this point of view, there are some interesting points in the development of the Roma civic emancipation movement in interwar Czechoslovakia. Generaly speaking, the differences between the detached parts of the Republic impacted the different paths Roma took towards civic equality: in the Czech lands and Moravia this implied obtaining a right of domicile and removing themselves from the list of nomads; in Slovakia and Subcarpathian Ruthenia this included establishing of civic organisation, obtaining professional rights and education, reaching as far as political participation and even the creation of their own football club, with participation in football tournaments abroad (Lithuania, Latvia, Estonia and Finland) and conducting their own Beauty Pageant. Of course, this is only a rough outline of the overall picture and, in practice, there were

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various nuances through which the processes of civic emancipation manifested themselves in individual cases.

What all Roma activists had in common was their emphasis on Roma's integration into the new civic nation, as an integral part of a complex process of nation-building within the Czechoslovak Republic. This process is very clearly expressed in Jan Daniel's letter to President Masaryk, published here, in which, in addition to calling on the Czechoslovak state to launch a proactive policy on the education of Gypsies, he explicitly emphasises "I am Czech body and soul". With this expression, he proves his belonging to the new civic nation; which does not contradict his Roma identity. On the contrary, these two most important dimensions of his identity are the basis of his aspirations for civic emancipation of the Roma.

We should note here, especially the contribution of Roma representatives to the very establishment of Czechoslovakia as a state. This concerns particularly the participation of Roma in the Czechoslovak Legion – volunteer armed forces fighting on the side of the Entente Powers during the First World War (Viková, 2018ab). While their numbers were not large, something else is more important in this regard – namely, that this participation is a piece of evidence for the emergence of a new dimension in the identity of the Roma living in the Czech and Slovak lands: a sense of belonging to the new emerging civic nation. In this way, the Roma community took its first steps in the movement for its civic emancipation by seeking new dimensions of its existence, as part of the society in the newly created state.

Another intriguing phenomenon is the extremely strong influence of public organisations in Czechoslovakia on the movement for Roma civic emancipation. Public organisations of this type (the forerunners of today's professional and even commercialised NGO sector) were present in other countries of the Central and South-Eastern Europe region at that time, but their interest in the Gypsies was quite insignificant (if present at all). The specific case of Czechoslovakia can be explained in the context of the common movement among the Czech intelligentsia, leading to the creation of new civic organisations aimed at supporting the development of the ethnically mixed (Slovaks, Hungarians, Ruthenians, and Gypsies) Eastern Slovakia and Subcarpathian Ruthenia, which were considered to be backward regions. It is significant that, according to this discourse, Gypsies were seen among the local population in these regions, as those who needed to be helped, while the Gypsies in the Czech Republic appeared not to be of interest for local civic organisations. This assistance to the local Gypsies was also linked with the struggle against their Hungarianisation. The Gypsies also demonstrated a national civic identity and loyalty to Czechoslovakia, as evident from a letter to the School Department of the Civil Administration of Subcarpathian Ruthenia dated September 16, 1926. This letter signed by Jánoš Bukó on behalf of the "inhabitants of the Gypsy settlement" in Uzhgorod asks for a "Czechoslovak language" curriculum in the Gypsy school (NA, f. Ministerstvo školství a národní osvěty, inv. č. 1624, sign. 13, k. 1480; Baloun, 2020, p. 166). In the press a march of Gypsies was announced in Košice to take place on October 28, 1931 (the day of the declaration of Czechoslovakia as an independent state) when Gypsies

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would lay a wreath at the monument to Milan Rastislav Štefánik (one of the founders of Czechoslovakia); a rally would be held in which the meaning of this day would be discussed in three languages (Slovak, Gypsy, and Hungarian); Gypsy musicians would perform the national anthem and La Marseillaise (symbol of revolutionary social change); then the Gypsies would go to the town hall, where they would hand over to the mayor of the town a memorandum demanding the opening of a Gypsy school (Lidové noviny, 1931, p. 7).

In Slovakia, similarly to neighbouring Hungary, the moving force in the emancipation movement was the Gypsy musicians (most often Hungarian speaking). The outcome and public resonance however cardinally differed. In contrast to the state support that received Hungarian Gypsy Musicians in Hungary, in Czechoslovakia, the Ministry of the Interior refused to approve the Statutes of the society *Union of the Czechoslovak Gypsy Musicians of the Czechoslovak Republic*. In Hungary Gypsy musicians were seen as part of the Hungarian national idea, keepers of Hungarian songs (cf. Chapter 7), in Slovakia they repeatedly struggled to demonstrate their loyalty to the new state. Even the celebration of the 500th Anniversary of the arrival of Gypsies in Hungary and respectively in Slovakia was presented as loyalty to the two countries in question.

An important aspect of the overall pursuits of Roma activists in Slovakia, as can be seen from the published materials, was the desire to create a Gypsy Theatre in Košice. For its creators, this theater should not only be a stage for public expression of Gypsies' artistic skills but should also perform much broader social functions, oriented both to the macro-society and its community. This vision was reflected even in the Western press, with special emphasis on their plans for the repertoire of the future theater. – "plays will be selected for their moral and educational merit rather than for their artistic ones" (Evening Standard, 1934).

Another Gypsy theatre was established also in the 1930s in Strážnice, Moravia. It was based on the singing troupe created by František Kýr (together with his cousin Josef Kýr and the already mentioned Jan Daniel), which grew later into the *Cikánská omladina* (Gypsy Youth), and travelled around the region, performing theatrical musical performances (Nečas, 1997a, pp. 59-60). In the 1930s, Josef Kýr together with Jan Daniel wrote a theatrical play consisting of three acts with music and singing, titled Gypsy Prophecy. It was performed between 1931 and 1937 in the surrounding cities of Hodonín, Břeclav, Senice, and Uherské Hradiště (Glacner, 1973, p. 38; Kočí, 2007, p. 34).

An important part of the process of assisting Gypsies was the creation of separated classes for Gypsy children, similar to the Gypsy School in Uzhhorod – in Klenovec, Dobšinná, Dvorce, Jablonov, Jánovce, Levoča, Levočské Lúky, Ľubica, Machalovce, Smižany, Veľbachy, Giraltovce, Košice, Medzilaborce, Podskalka, Humenné and Mukačevo (Baloun, 2020, pp. 177-178). These were often housed in separate buildings, outhouses or detached parts of municipal schools, thus becoming de facto "Gypsy Schools" (Horváthová, 1964, p. 168). According to the local press, Roma children who were enrolled in these "Gypsy Schools" most often did not continue their education and that was why wealthier Gypsies (mainly musicians) preferred to send their children to mainstream schools (Ibid.). It was

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precisely these schools that set the beginning of a debate (about the need for mainstream versus special education for Roma children), which continues to be relevant to this day, a debate which exacerbated especially during the processes of so-called desegregation of "Gypsy Schools" in Central and South-Eastern Europe in recent years, and to which there is still no definitive answer in practice (or rather there are different solutions implemented in European countries).

In connection with the education of Roma children in interwar Czechoslovakia, there is a mystification (whether and to what extent it was deliberately made is difficult to judge). In a very recent book you can read the following: "In 1927, the government of Czechoslovakia adopted a law that 'condemned the Roma as asocial citizens, limited their personal liberty, introduced Gypsy identity cards, and decreed that Romany children under 18 be placed in special institutions'." (Matache et al., 2020, p. 60-61). The quoted source of this information is Huub van Baar (2011, p. 162), who cites Zoltan Barany (2002, p. 99). Barany, for his part, quotes Ignacy-Marek Kaminski (1980, p. 161) and Vladimir Geceľovský (1992, pp. 79-90) as source for this information, while also making his own biased interpretation of the content of the Act No. 117/1927 On Wandering Gypsies. However, Kaminski's text does not refer to Gypsy children at all, and Geceľovský's text only states that the law provides for the possibility of taking them away from their parents. Checking the Act itself (Zákon, 1927) one can see that, in fact, only the text of Geceľovský is adequate, and all subsequent formulations are very far from the historical truth. Indeed, Article 12 of this Act provides for the possibility of taking away the children of those wandering Gypsy parents who do not care for them, following a court ordinance. However, this is only a potential possibility and was (and is) a norm recognised by modern law in most countries of the world, which is in no case equivalent to "decreed that Romani children under 18 be placed in special institutions". Of course, cases of abuse of the law cannot be ruled out and the application of the law to children who are not vulnerable. However, neither Barany nor all the others who are quoting him explain the relative share of the so-called "wandering Gypsies", i.e. those Roma (and some Sinti) who led a nomadic way of life in interwar Czechoslovakia which hardly exceeded 5-10% of total Roma population in the whole country (Marushiakova & Popov, 2016c, p. 39). It is inadmissible to make a rule out of an exception. For us, this example is particularly illustrative of the gravity of the problem and of the need to verify historical sources and their interpretations, a matter which we have also underlined at the beginning of this book.

The problem with Gypsies, who lead a nomadic lifestyle, was apparently perceived as extremely serious by the state authorities. According to press reports in 1935:

> The government is preparing a bill according to which every Gypsy who does not have a permanent residence and does not observe public order should be taken to a forced labour camp. This measure apparently comes mainly in response to numerous complaints received from Slovakia, where entire areas do not feel safe and suffer from terror. (Neues Pressburger Tagblatt, 1935, p. 7).

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This bill was not adopted, it is not even clear whether it was discussed as a proposal but it is clear that the idea of concentration camps for Gypsies at that time was already in the public domain (after adopting the Act of 25 June 1929 on the Establishment of Forced Labor Colonies, which however was not applied in practice).

In the light of the overall development of the Roma civic emancipation movement in interwar Czechoslovakia, attempts by Roma activists to give an international dimension to the Roma civic emancipation processes also became clear. In 1932, the Society for the Study of the Gypsy Question in Košice announced its intention to organise a special congress, to which delegates from abroad (France, Belgium, the Netherlands, Switzerland, and Germany) and prominent international specialists in the work for the "Gypsy question" would be invited (Slovenský východ, 1932c, p. 5). As another publication shows, the purpose of the congress was to convince the foreigners that they have been falsely informed by the Moldava nad Bodvou Gypsy process (see above) at what level the "Gypsy question" in the Republic was and to unite all those interested in this issue (Slovenský východ, 1932d, p. 2). It is obvious that such an initiative was impossible to conduct without the support of the state, which sought to present its activities in a positive light to the world. The congress, however, was not held and there is no indication as to what had impeded this.

Another, not entirely clarified attempt (or at least an idea) to create an international Gypsy organisation is described in the memoirs of Josef Serinek, according to whom, in 1933, he wanted:

> [...] to organize a large congress of nomadic nations, where they were to be nomadic from the Czechoslovak Republic, Yugoslavia, and some other states. I wanted them to agree to buy an island where the nomads could settle without hindrance. There are over a hundred thousand such people in our republic, I wanted to organize them, I saw that it would help those people if we had an organisation. But they were stupid, half of them disagreed, although they came together, but the gendarmes dispersed it and so it came to an end. It was supposed to be in Teplice, and I was supposed to be there as a representative for Czechoslovakia. (Serinek & Tesař, 2016, I, p. 37).

Of course, the idea of buying of a separate island (and it is explicitly emphasised that this should be done only by nomads from different countries) sounds quite naive and utopian. Nevertheless, this was one of the first visions for the need for an independent Gypsy state, which has its place in the history of Roma civic emancipation.

In interwar Czechoslovakia, a widespread practice in the countries of Central, South-Eastern and Eastern Europe today also began (at least at the level of ideas): namely, the inclusion of Roma representatives into political life and the governance of the countries through nomination (and their election) for MPs in national parliaments on the lists of mainstream political parties (following the accession of most of the countries in the region to the European Union, also into the European Parliament). According to a piece of evidence from 1929, based on a publication in the *Deutsche Allgemeine Zeitung*,

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a political movement, the *League Against Coupled Candidate Lists* (*Liga proti vázaným kandidátním listinám*), chaired by Jiří Stříbrný (a radical party with a nationalist leaning), included a local Gypsy, Jozka Nigil, as candidate in its electoral list for parliamentary elections in the Nové Zámky constituency (today in Slovakia) (Герман, 1931, pp. 16-17). The next documented step in this direction was the local elections in Košice in the spring of 1932, where the Gypsies formed their own separate list within a common list, uniting representatives of different parties and movements, dominated by the Republican Party of Farmers and Peasants, a leading political force in the interwar period (Neues Pressburger Tagblatt, 1932a, p. 4; 1932b, p. 7). The final stage in this process of seeking own Roma political representation was reached in the local elections in Nové Zámky in 1933, in which the "Gypsy Party" (this is the designation in the press) received 66 votes, which proved insufficient to have a representative in the local municipal council (Neues Pressburger Tagblatt, 1933, p. 3).

The inclusion of Roma in political struggles, through their participation in the communist movement in interwar Czechoslovakia as well as though their participation in the armed resistance against Nazi Germany, should also be noted. In this regard, among the more famous names are the already mentioned Josef Serinek – commander of a partisan detachment in the Czech Republic, the Slovak Roma Anton Facuna – in 1968 Chairman of Union of *Zväz Cigánov-Rómov na Slovensku* (Union of Gypsies-Roma in Slovakia), Ján Oraško (commander of a partisan detachment in Slovakia), the brothers Gustáv and Štefan Bučko, Ján Timi (Koro), Laco Petík, Tibor Gombár, Ján Tumi, Juraj Miker (militant in the International Brigades in the Spanish Civil War and participant in the 1st Czechoslovak Army Corps led by Ludvík Svoboda, formed in the USSR and included in the Red Army), František Klempar, and others (Hübschmannova, 2006, pp. 32-35; Lorenc, 2015).

In interwar Czechoslovakia, as in other countries of Central and South-Eastern Europe, the first steps of the activity of the evangelical churches among the Gypsies appeared. According to a press release in 1936 in the United Kingdom:

> A Czechoslovakian gipsy has qualified for entrance into the University of Prague. Anthony Daniel, a gipsy from Tisnov, in Moravia, has just been given a school-live certificate. He is the first gipsy Czechoslovakia ever to pass this qualifying examination. He studies eight years at the Tisnov secondary school, and whilst there translated the New Testament into the Romany language. At the university Daniel will study law. (Evening Standard, 1936).

In the same year, *Britska he averthemeskro kher vas mre Devleskro Lav* (the British and Foreign Bible Society) published a section of the New Covenant (Acts of the Apostles), translated in the Romani language by Antonín Daniel (O keriben, 1936), but there is no indication whether the publication was used for evangelical propaganda among the Gypsies in Czechoslovakia. Nevertheless, at the very least we know that such intentions existed.

Elena Marushiakova and Vesselin Popov

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CHAPTER 9

Poland

9.1 The Gypsy Kings

9.1.1 *King Jan Michałak-Michailescu*

Cygańska lista wyborcza

Warszawa, 11 stycznia. Wczoraj zgłosił się w sekretarjacie generalnego komisarza wyborczego p[ana] Cara "król" bandy cyganów Jan Michałak–Michailescu. Oświadczył on, że przychodzi w sprawie wyborów do parlamentu i deklaruje listę cygańską kandydatów do sejmu i senatu. Jako motyw tego bądź co bądź ciekawego wystąpienia podał "król" cyganów, że cyganie w Polsce są upośledzeni i prześladowani, tak dalece, iż tylko ich własni reprezentanci w izbach ustawodawczych mogą przeprowadzić uregulowanie spraw cygańskich. M[ichalak-Michailescu] i cyganie chcą przeprowadzenia reformy rolnej, aby osiąść już na stałe na ziemi i zacząć uczciwie pracować.

Sekretarz gen[neralny] Komisarza dr. Chechliński udzielił Michałakowi żądanych informacyj co do sposobu i terminu zgłaszania list kandydatów. Już wczoraj Michałak-Michailescu rozesłał wici do wszystkich obozów cygańskich, aby zebrać tysiąc podpisów, potrzebnych do złożenia listy. Podobno w całej Polsce koczuje 12 tysięcy cyganów. Agitacją wyborczą kierować będą starostowie band.

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Gypsy Electoral List

Warsaw, January 11. Yesterday, the "King" of a pack of Gypsies, Jan Michałak-Michailescu, reported to the secretariat of the General Election Commissioner, Mister Car. Michałak-Michailescu stated that he had come regarding the parliamentary elections and declared a list of Gypsy candidates for the Sejm and Senate. According to the "King" of the Gypsies, his decision stems from the fact that Gypsies in Poland are mistreated and persecuted to such an extent that only their own representatives in the legislative chambers can act to regulate the issues that involve their people. Michałak-Michailescu and the Gypsies want to implement a land reform in order to make permanent settlements and begin honest work.

The secretary of the General Commissioner Dr. Chechliński supplied Michałak with the requested information on the manner and date of submitting the lists of candidates. As early as yesterday, Michałak-Michailescu sent out messengers to all the Gypsy camps to collect the thousand signatures needed to submit the list. Apparently, there are 12,000

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Gypsies roaming all over Poland. The campaigning will be led by the Edlers of Gypsy packs.

Source: [No Author]. (1928). Cygańska lista wyborcza. *Ilustrowany Kuryer Codzienny*, An. 19, No. 13, 1928, January 13, p. 10.
Prepared for publication by Adam Bartosz and Natalia Gancarz.

9.1.2 *King Michał Kwiek in Krakow*

Jego Królewska Mość Władca Cyganów w Krakowie.
Wizyta w "Pałacu Prasy".

[...] wgłębiony w wygodny fotel w poczekalni "Pałacu Prasy", w eleganckim, europejskim garniturze Michał Kwiek, autentyczny władca polskich cyganów. Tylko niepokojący, egzotyczny profil, oraz lekko opalona cera, świadczą o cygańskim pochodzeniu. Oczy, jak dwa węgle rozżarzone, połyskujące dziwnym ogniem, oraz uśmiech odsłaniający zdrowe, białe, jak kreda, mocne zęby, przy falowaniu kruczych włosów, składają się na piękny typ wschodniej urody.

Dzieje życia "Jego Królewskiej Cygańskiej Mości" są historią, jakiej nie wymyśliłby o niepospolitej fantazji pisarz. Życie tyko może dyktować tak ciepłe karty historji człowieka. Coś, jak typ Gorkij'a, żywcem przeniesiony z jego przejmujących opowieści.

Michał Kwiek urodził się w gminie Bielcza, pow. brzeski, woj. krakowskie w r. 1878. Dziś Jego Królewska Wysokość liczy 52 lat. Wcale jednak jego zdrowa, surowa w swojej sile postać nie wskazuje na to. Dzieciństwo spędził na łonie natury, korzystając z pełnej swobody. Mając 18 lat, począł szukać jakiegoś praktycznego zajęcia. Wstąpił no praktykę do kotlarza. Odtąd żywa natura gnała go z miejsca na miejsce w poszukiwaniu za pracą.

Od kotlarza do Królewskiej Mości

Wyjechał do Niemiec, tam bawił jakiś czas, a następnie wyruszył do Francji. Z niekłamanym zachwytem opowiada o Paryżu. Metropolja świata z całym swym przepychem, żywnością, bogactwem zewnętrznym olśniła przyszłego władcę cyganów. W międzyczasie pojął żonę cygankę. Opuściwszy Francję, wyjeżdża do Anglji. Zagranica bardzo miłe zostawiła wrażenie w jego wspomnieniach. Nabywszy doświadczenia zagranicą, w chwili, kiedy dzienniki rozniosły po świecie wiadomość, że Polska powstała wolna, jako obywatel polski, wrócił do kraju. Podkreśla to z dumą. Odtąd zaczyna uwijać się wśród cyganów polskich, co przychodzi mu tem łatwiej, że ojciec jego Grzegorz piastował podówczas godność króla cyganów. Zdobywa coraz więcej sympatii i uznania wśród swoich. Aż 25 stycznia 1930 r. w Piastowie zostaje wybrany przez aklamację na króla cyganów polskich, jako król cyganów Michał II. Kwiek, gdyż poprzedni król Grzegorz, ojciec jego, złożył koronę z powodu podeszłego wieku.

Obecny król cygański posiada trzy córki, z których jedna 14-letnia uczęszcza do gimnazjum w Poznaniu; podobnie, jak i 17-letni syn. W Poznaniu znajduje się właściwa siedziba

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królewska. Tam, w kamienicach będących własnością Kwieka, znajdują się apartamenty, oraz centrala administracji.

Marzenia i rzeczywistość

Kwiek, chcąc ulżyć ciężkiej doli swej braci, zamierza urzeczywistnić swe bardzo ciekawe projekty, związane z organizacją przyszłego życia cyganów, których chce zachęcić do życia osiadłego. Jest to swego rodzaju rewolucja wprowadzona w dotychczasowy tryb koczowniczego bytowania cygańskiego. Mianowicie chce urządzić im warsztaty pracy, gdzieby razem zgromadzeni, mogli w sposób uczciwy, pracować na chleb. Jeden z tych warsztatów jest już w ruchu, mianowicie fabryka w Poznaniu, dająca zatrudnienie 550 cyganom. W dalszym ciągu zamierza Kwiek budować fabryki, a przy nich urządzone nowocześnie osiedla robotnicze, w których znajdą pomieszczenie pracownicy, oraz niezbędne instytucje oświatowe i kulturalne. Marzeniem Kwieka jest stworzenie szkoły powszechnej dla cyganów w Cieszynie i Sosnowcu, oraz gimnazjum w Poznaniu. Wszystkie szkoły oczywiście prowadzone w duchu polskim, z językiem wykładowym polskim. Szkoły te chce stworzyć i wybudować własnym kosztem dlatego, aby wychowankowie czuli się więcej swobodni i w atmosferze napoły rodzinnej.

Obecnie Kwiek bawi w Cieszynie, gdzie rejestruje cyganów z polecenia ministerstwa. Jak wynika z jego spisów, cyganie polscy liczą 14.000 głów. Podzieleni są na gminy, na czele których stoją wójtowie. W Poznaniu urzęduje trybunał cygański, złożony z trzech sędziów, prokuratora i króla, rozstrzygający wewnętrzne sprawy wśród cyganów. Sąd ten nakłada na winnych grzywny, które następnie idą do kasy wspólnej, służącej celom ogólnym. Trybunałowi przysługuje nawet prawo nakładania aresztu, nie więcej jednakże, niż na 4 dni. Wszelkie sprawy kryminalne oddają policji państwowej. Prócz sędziów, przy boku króla pracuje 5 wójtów, 5 policjantów cygańskich, oraz 4 sekretarzy, załatwiających korespondencję bieżącą.

Na przyszłość, jak zapewnia obecny władca cyganów, stosunki wśród cyganów poprawią się na lepsze i wszyscy będą pracować na odpowiednich stanowiskach, ku jak najpomyślniejszemu rozwojowi Polski, której obywatelami czują się wszyscy.

[Note]: Wywiad skończony. Król cyganów żegna się, połyskując prześlicznym pierścieniem z grubego kutego złota, toczonego w kształt wężów, z drogocennemi kamieniami, tym jedynym symbolem władzy królewskiej, odróżniającym go od eleganckiego skrzypka z modnej kawiarni.

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His Majesty the Ruler of Gypsies in Krakow [1].
Visit in the “Press Palace” [2].

[...] sinking into a comfortable armchair in the waiting room of the “Press Palace”, can be found Michał Kwiek in his elegant European suit, an authentic ruler of the Polish Gypsies.

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Only a disturbing, exotic profile, and slightly tanned skin, testify to his Gypsy origin. Eyes, like two glowing coals, shining with a strange fire, and a smile revealing healthy, white, chalk-like, strong teeth, with wavy raven hair, make up a beautiful type of eastern looks.

The history of "His Gypsy Majesty" is a story that would not be invented by a writer with an unusual fantasy. Only life can dictate such warm pages of human history. Something like Gorky type [3], word for word taken from his heart-breaking stories.

Michał Kwiek was born in Bielcza commune, Brzeski county, Krakow province in 1878 [4]. Today His Majesty is 52 years old. At the same time, however, his healthy, raw strength does not indicate that. He spent his childhood in the bosom of nature, enjoying full freedom. At the age of 18, he began to look for a practical occupation. He began an apprenticeship at the cauldron-maker. From then on, living nature rushed him from place to place in search of work.

From a cauldron-maker to the Royal Majesty

He left for Germany, he spent some time there, and then moved on to France. He talks about Paris with real admiration. The metropolis of the world with all its splendour, food, and external wealth dazzled the future ruler of the Gypsies. In the meantime, he took his wife – a Gypsy woman. After leaving France, he went to England. Foreign countries left a very good impression in his memories. Having acquired experience abroad, at a time when the dailies spread news around the world that Poland was free [5], as a Polish citizen, he returned to the country. He emphasises that fact with a pride. From then on, he begins to wander among Polish Gypsies, which was easier for him as his father Gregory at that time was the King of the Gypsies. He gains more and more sympathy and appreciation among his own. Until on 25th of January 1930, he was elected in Piastów [6] by acclamation as the King of the Polish Gypsies, as the King of Gypsies, Michał II. Kwiek, because the previous King Gregory, his father, resigned the crown because of his advanced age.

The current Gypsy King has three daughters, one of whom, a 14-year-old, attends the gymnasium in Poznan; same as his 17-year-old son. In Poznan, there is a proper royal residence. There, in the tenement houses owned by Kwiek, apartments and administration headquarters can be found.

Dreams and reality

Kwiek, wanting to alleviate the heavy burden of his brothers, intends to implement his very interesting projects related to the organisation of the future life of the Gypsies, whom he wants to encourage to a sedentary life. It is a kind of revolution introduced into the current mode of nomadic Gypsy existence. Namely, he wants to arrange for them workshops where, together, they can honestly work for bread. One of these workshops is already in motion, namely a factory in Poznan, giving employment to 550 Gypsies. Kwiek still intends to build factories, and with them, modern housing estates for workers where they will find their quarters, as well as the necessary educational and cultural institutions. Kwiek's dream is to create a general school for Gypsies in Cieszyn and Sosnowiec,

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and a gymnasium in Poznan. All schools, of course, are run in the Polish spirit, with the Polish language as the medium of instruction. He wants to create and built these schools with his own money, so that the pupils feel more relaxed and in a family atmosphere.

Currently, Kwiek resides in Cieszyn, where he registers Gypsies by order of the ministry. According to his census, Polish Gypsies number 14,000 persons. They are divided into municipalities, at the head of which are the heads of the camps. A Gypsy tribunal, consisting of three judges, a prosecutor and the King is in Poznan, and it decides on internal affairs among Gypsies. This court imposes fines on the guilty party, who then go to the common coffers, serving general purposes. The Tribunal even has the right to arrest, but no more than for four days. All criminal cases are handed over to the national police. In addition to the judges, 5 heads of the camps, 5 Gypsy policemen, and 4 secretaries, who deal with current correspondence, are working alongside the King.

For the future, as the current ruler of the Gypsies assures, relations among Gypsies will improve for the better and everyone will work in the right positions, towards the most prosperous development of Poland, whose citizens all of them feel.

[Note]: Interview finished. The King of the Gypsies is saying goodbye, shining with a lovely ring of thick forged gold, turned into the shape of serpents with precious stones, the only symbol of the King's power distinguishing him from the elegant violinist from the fashionable cafe.

Notes

1. Krakow was a formal capital of Poland until 1795. It is the second-largest city in Poland.
2. 'Press Palace' is a colloquial name of one of the most characteristic buildings located in the centre of Krakow; in the interwar period, it was the headquarters of the press corporation of Illustrated Daily Courier.
3. Maxim Gorky (1868-1936) was a Russian and Soviet writer and publicist, author of famous stories devoted to Gypsies.
4. In the second half of the 19th century, the territories encompassing the present-day Krakow province were under Austrian annexation in the Austria-Hungary state.
5. Poland disappeared from the map of Europe in 1795 as a result of the third partition. In 1918, after 123 years it regained its independence. The struggle for its borders lasted until 1923.
6. Piastow is a small town, until 1926 the city was called Utrata. Currently, it is part of the Warsaw agglomeration.

Source: [No Author]. (1930a). Jego Królewska Mość Władca Cyganów w Krakowie. *Ilustrowany Kuryer Codzienny*, An. 31, No. 259, 1930, September 25, p. 7.
Prepared for publication by Alicja Gontarek.

Comments

The article is one of the first to appear in the Polish press, which extensively presents the figure of Michał II Kwiek as the Polish Gypsy King, in which a journalist re-tells the interview conducted with him. It has a propaganda character, indicating the need for a reform among the Gypsies, the most important of which is the abandonment of nomadism. The text showed the King as a proud Polish citizen who knew the world, who in

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no way resembled the Gypsy nomads who lived in Poland. It is characteristic that even his biography, which evidently indicates that he led a nomadic way of life, is shown as a commendable stage of life in which he collected experience, not only professional, as a cauldron-maker, but also in life. Therefore, it is not directly said that he came from a nomadic group. The article suggests that especially his staying abroad, in France or England, significantly influenced the shaping of his worldview. This description should be understood as a direct postulate of the "Europeanisation" of the Gypsies, who should become similar to their compatriots from Western Europe.

An important element of propaganda is also the theme of patriotism. Kwiek's love for the homeland causes that in 1918, when Poland, after more than 100 years, was returned to the map of Europe – he also returns to this land and together with his father, who had remained in Poland, organise the life of Gypsies. It is significant that in this way Kwiek, through a journalist, reinforces his authority, pointing to the continuity of his power. It gives him a greater mandate to manage Gypsy affairs in Poland and to draw up a vision of the future of the Gypsies.

Undoubtedly, Kwiek himself wanted to be presented in that way. The key to the future of the Gypsies is his reformist projects (encouraging a sedentary lifestyle, professional productisation and education, and institutionalised cultural activities). Unfortunately, he did not achieve any plans of this type in Poland (no evidence that a factory and school was created), but the mere propaganda of this type of solution was of great importance in the way of shaping the vision of the future of the Gypsies. The journalists who talked with him created a convenient channel of articulation for him, and popularised his ideas. The sudden presence of Kwiek in the press is, after all, a specific manifestation of mutual education of the Gypsies and Poles. Thanks to it and thanks to the Kwieks, such as Michał II and the positive attitude of the Polish government to the Gypsy elites, Gypsies in Poland ceased to be a silent mass in the early 1930s, and began to participate within the mainstream social life, revealing their intentions and activities under slightly different names, but essentially similar or the same as the majority civilian organisational forms.

However, the progress and sanation of the Gypsy life in Poland were blocked by the realities in which Gypsies lived. For both Kwiek and the Polish party nomadism was a burden, so both sides – Polish and Gypsy – agreed that only far-reaching changes could improve their existence. This rhetoric, although it testified to far-sightedness, was not encased with any tools that could be used to carry out reforms, hence plans of this kind should be treated primarily as a record of the state of consciousness of the Gypsy and Polish elites about the direction in which Gypsy life should go in Poland.

Alicja Gontarek

9.1.3 *Chancellor Rudolf Kwiek*

Na marginesie cywilizacji. Z wizytą w obozie polskich cyganów na Marymoncie
Rozmowa z kanclerzem Rudolfem Kwiekiem, prezesem Wielkiej Rady Cygańskiej

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[...] Weszliśmy między barwny lud, i postanowiliśmy dowiedzieć się, co myślą sami o sobie.

Wieczór już zapadł, kiedy dotarliśmy do kwatery głównej władz cygańskich w Polsce, na Marymoncie. Będąc tu po raz pierwszy, nie mogliśmy domyślić się, gdzie tu może się mieścić tabór. Przy podmiejskiej uliczce stoją zwykłe domki parterowe, zamieszkałe przez ludność polską. Trzeba przedostać się na tyły jednego z nich, tam w kotlince widzimy szereg drewnianych klitek i płóciennych szatr. Dwa największe domki zajmują: król Bazyli Kwiek, oraz kanclerz bezpaństwowego narodu, prezes Wielkiej Rady Cygańskiej – Rudolf Kwiek. Król jest nieobecny w Warszawie – wyjechał na inspekcję. Mamy zamówioną audjencię u kanclerza.

Z mroku wyłania się postać młodej dziewczyny, z wielkiemi, mosiężnemi kolczykami w uszach, która czekała już, aby wskazać drogę. Wchodzimy do mieszkania kanclerza Rudolfa, który wita nas uprzejmie i z godnością. Niska izba zbudowanego z desek domku, ma w sobie coś z wnętrza koczowniczego, wschodniego namiotu. Pod ścianami leży pokotem na barwnych derach i pierzynach liczna progenitura dostojnika, od maleńkiego drobiazgu, aż do kilunastoletnich dorodnych cór. Ściany zdobne w zawieszone wachlarzowato pocztówki, fotografje i portery rodzinne. Na środku niziutki, okrągły stół, na którym małżonka Rudolfa Kwieka podejmuje nas herbatą i pączkami. Gospodarze, oraz kilku młodych cyganów zasiadają dookoła po turecku, dla nas przynoszą niziuteńkie stołeczki.

Tu, w tych niepozornych szałasach na dalekich przedmieściach Warszawy, zbiegają się nici rządów wiążących kilkanaście tysięcy cyganów, rozproszonych po całej Polsce, tu jest jedna z filji władzy międzynarodowego cygaństwa, sprawowanej na całym świecie przez królewski ród Kwieków, którego głową jest wielki "imperato", mieszkający we wspaniałych pałacach w Londynie, Janosz Kwiek.

Nasz rozmówca, mąż stanu i polityk, w ciągu swego żywota zjeździł cały świat i włada językami: polskim, serbskim, greckim, macedońskim, tureckim, bułgarskim, rosyjskim, gruzińskim, portugalskim (w narzeczu europejskim i brazylijskim), hiszpańskim, francuskim, rumuńskim, czechosłowackim, madziarskim, włoskim, trochę angielskim.

Na zapytanie, gdzie posiadł tak wielką ilość języków, mówi:

– A cóż "kochanie". Cały świat zjeździłem. Ojciec mój i króla, to był bardzo bogaty człowiek. Złoto łopatą można było przerzucać. To całe bogactwo zrabowali potem bolszewicy. Urodziłem się w Brzesku pod Krakowem. Jak doszedłem do lat, postanowiłem cały świat zwiedzić. Ojciec dał mi worek złota i pojechałem. Poznałem wtedy jak żyją wszystkie narody. I jak się powodzi naszej braci we wszystkich krajach. Rozmawiałem z królami i wójtami, z samym wielkim Janoszem. Teraz dążę do tego, do czego oni wszyscy, żeby zdobyć szczęście dla całego cygańskiego narodu.

Jak szczęście to wyobrażają sobie cyganie, do czego dążą i jaka jest ich obecna organizacja napiszemy jutro.

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At the fringe of the civilization. A visit to the Polish Gypsy camp in Marymont [1]
Conversation with Chancellor Rudolf Kwiek, president of the Great Council of Gypsies.

[…] We entered among the colourful people, and decided to find out what they think about themselves.

The evening has already fallen when we arrived at the headquarters of the Gypsy authorities in Poland, in Marymont. Being here for the first time, we could not figure out where the camp might be. In the suburban street stand ordinary ground-floor houses, inhabited by the Polish people. You have to get to the back of one of them, there in the valley we see a number of wooden cubicles and canvas caravans. The two largest cottages are occupied by: King Basil Kwiek, and the chancellor of a stateless nation, the president of the Great Gypsy Council – Rudolf Kwiek. The King is absent from Warsaw – he went to an inspection. We have ordered a chancellor's audition.

From the dark a figure of a young girl emerges, with huge, brass earrings, who have already been waiting to show us the way. We enter the apartment of chancellor Rudolf, who welcomes us kindly and with dignity. A small house built of wooden boards has something inside of a nomadic, eastern tent. Under the walls, there are numerous dignitaries on colourful rugs and eiderdowns, from a small thing, to a dozen or so year-old, fine-looking daughters. Walls decorated with fan-shaped postcards, photographs and family portraits. In the middle of a low place, the round table on which the wife of Rudolf Kwiek offers us tea and donuts. The hosts, and a few young Gypsies sit around with their legs crossed, for us they bring low stools.

Here, in these inconspicuous shacks in the distant suburbs of Warsaw, there are threads of government binding several thousand Gypsies scattered all over Poland, here is one of the branches of the power of international Gypsy themselves, held throughout the world by the royal family of Kwiek whose head is the great "imperator" living in the magnificent palaces in London, Janosz Kwiek.

Our interlocutor, statesman and politician, throughout his life travelled the whole world and speaks the following languages: Polish, Serbian, Greek, Macedonian, Turkish, Bulgarian, Russian, Georgian, Portuguese (in the European and Brazilian dialects), Spanish, French, Romanian, Czechoslovakian, Magyar, Italian and some English.

When asked where he learnt such a large number of languages, he says:

– Well, "darling." I travelled the whole world. My father and King, he was a very rich man. We could shovel the gold with a shovel. All the wealth was then robbed by the Bolsheviks [2]. I was born in Brzesko near Krakow. When I came to years, I decided to travel the whole world. My father gave me a sack of gold and I went. I learnt then how all nations live. And how our brothers in all countries prosper. I spoke with Kings and camp heads, with great Janosz himself. Now I am striving for what they all wanted, to get happiness for the entire Gypsy nation.

How luck is imagined by the Gypsies, what they are striving for and what their current organisation is, we will write tomorrow.

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Notes

1. Marymont – the name of the estate complex in the northern districts of Warsaw. From the end of the 19th century, a permanent Gypsy settlement flourished on Marymont.
2. Reference to Polish-Soviet War of 1919-1920.

Source: [No Author]. (1931a). Na marginesie cywilizacji. Z wizytą w obozie polskich cyganów na Marymoncie. *Gazeta Polska*, An. 3, No. 144, 1931, May 28, p. 8
Prepared for publication by Alicja Gontarek.

Comments

The report from the journalist's visit to the Gypsy camp of Basil Kwiek is one of the most interesting ones that appeared in the Polish press: the King's residence is described in detail, especially the interior, full signs of attachment to family history (family photographs and portraits). The King and his closest supporter, Rudolf Kwiek, belonged to this group of Gypsies, who even though declared their intention to abandon nomadism, continued partially to live in shacks and caravans, in a place where Gypsies had stopped for over 100 years. Together with their families, they were both immersed in nomadic culture, accepting at most temporary stops. At the same time, they were also modernised and integrated, and reflecting on their future. Undoubtedly, frequent trips abroad inclined comparisons of the live of Gypsies in different countries. It appeared that they wanted to introduce some changes in Poland. The system of organisation was subject to modernisation. Although the Kwieks used the archaic royal title, in the typically Polish Gypsy camp of Basil, Rudolf acted as the chancellor of the Great Council of Gypsies, which was associated with a certain type of modernisation, signalled even in the name. Although it is difficult to determine from the lack of sources what that body actually was, it is not without significance that Rudolf refers in the interview to supranational structures, with a supposedly official residency in London. Another symptom of changes setting the direction of activities is also the fact that in this short interview Rudolf Kwiek calls the Gypsies a nation. As part of this and not another concept, he thought about the need to improve the existence of Gypsies.

Alicja Gontarek

9.1.4 *The Gypsy Baron*

Prawdziwy "baron cygański"

Poznań, w sierpniu. [...]

W poznańskim oddziale "Ilustr[owany] Kur[yer] Codz[ienny]" zjawił się niezwykły gość. Wysoki, smukły mężczyzna. Na rękach pierścienie złote z wielkiemi koralami. Cera prawie bronzowa, czupryna czarna. Typowy cygan. Ale czyż cygan? Ubranie na nim miejskie, dobrze skrojone, na nogach modne, dziurkowane na wierzchu, żółte półbuty. Takich cyganów się nie widuje.

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A jednak to prawdziwy cygan. Co więcej – to członek królewskiego rodu, człowiek w swojem plemieniu prawie noszący tytuł "barona". Dowiedzieliśmy się o tem, gdy gość przedstawił się: "baron Matejasz Kwiek".

Przybył z interesem. Chodziło mu o zamieszczenie w "I.K.C." ogłoszenia, zawierającego wezwanie do wszystkich członków jego rodu, by się z dokumentami rodzinnemi do niego zgłosili. Treść ogłoszenia spowodowała wdanie się z gościem w rozmowę.

– Jakiż cel ma ogłoszenie, które pan chce zamieścić w "I.K.C."?

– Cel – odpowiada wcale dobrą polszczyzną p. Kwiek – jest taki: Zadużo jest wśród cyganów w Polsce rodzin, noszących nasze nazwisko rodowe. Nie ulega wątpliwości, że wiele z tych rodzin zalicza się do naszego rodu niesłusznie. Nasz ród jest starym rodem cygańskim. Stanowi on u cyganów arystokrację. Z Kwieków pochodzi król cygański. Jest nim Bazyli Kwiek, przebywający obecnie w Czechach. Ród musi dbać o siebie.

– Na pieczęci pańskiej, jaką pan zaopatrzył podpis na ogłoszeniu, jest po francusku wypisany tytuł barona cyganów na całą Europę. Czy został on zalegalizowany?

– Nie. Tytuł ten to tylko określenie arystokratyczności rodu. Wagę swoją ma on u nas, u cyganów.

– Więc organizacja społeczna u cyganów jest oparta ...? – rzucamy pytanie.

– Jest oparta na rodach. Właściwie nasze życie wewnętrzne jest zorganizowane monarchistycznie. Jest szlachta, po naszemu "move" i gmin – "netoci". W obozie władzę sprawuje wójt. Sądy sprawuje starszyzna pod przewodnictwem wójta. Wójtowie są podlegli baronom. Baronowie królowi. Jeśli np. ja jestem w obozie, to władza należy do mnie. Sprawują ją oczywiście przez wójta. Gdyby w obozie był król, władza należy do niego.

– Jakiż jest stosunek cyganów do państwa?

– Jesteśmy obywatelami Rzeczypospolitej tak, jak cyganie np. na Węgrzech, w Grecji, w Bułgarji, Hiszpanji, czy Czechach, są obywatelami tych państw. Niedawno, podczas zjazdu w Łodzi, odstawiliśmy kilkunastu naszych młodych ludzi do władz, aby odbyli służbę wojskową. Między innemi na tem właśnie tle, że ród nasz stoi jasno na stanowisku spełniania wszelkich obywatelskich wobec państwa obowiązków, a pokazało się, iż niektóre obozy, nawet noszące nasze nazwisko, inaczej na tę sprawę patrzą, wyłoniła się konieczność skontrolowania, czy te obozy noszą nazwisko nasze rodowe słusznie, czy niesłusznie.

– Obowiązki wobec państwa – odzywam się – to dużo. Ale jakże jest z obowiązkami wobec społeczeństwa? Przyzna pan, że opinja jaka maja cyganie, nie jest najlepsza. Żebranina, złodziejstwa ...

– Panowie muszą zrozumieć – oświadcza na to "baron" Kwiek – że cyganie, jacy są w Polsce, dzielą się na pięć klas.

Jeśli mowa o żebraninie, o złodziejstwie, to niech panowie wiedzą, że chodzi tu tylko o obozy czwartej i piątej klasy. Porządne obozy takiemi procederami się nie trudnią.

– A z czegoż żyją?

– Z pracy. Cyganie są dobrymi pracownikami. W Polsce to przeważnie kowale i kotlarze. Z tego żyją. A że roboty w jednem miejscu na długo niema, więc wędrują. Obecnie np. głównych robót dostarcza cyganom wojsko.

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– Jakich robót?

– Właśnie kotlarskich. A kotlarstwo – powiada p. Kwiek z dumą – to nie byle co. Żołnierzowi potrzebny jest na wojnie karabin, ale też potrzebny jest kocioł, aby w nim można mu było w kuchni polowej ugotować strawę.

– Pan także zajmuje się kotlarstwem?

– Oczywiście. Właśnie idę do pułku artylerji na Sołaczu, gdzie spodziewam się dostać robotę.

– Prawie wszystkie cyganki trudnią się procederem takim jak wróżbiarstwo ...

– No tak – odpowiada p. Kwiek – bawią się. To też forma zarobkowania. Ale muszę powiedzieć, że są u cyganów kobiety, specjalnie dla wróżbiarstwa kształcone. Kształcą się w Jerozolimie. Niech się panowie nie śmieją – dodał – mogę przyprowadzić cygankę, która z ręki wyczyta każdemu z panów wszystkie, najtajniejsze nawet myśli. Pewnie, nie każda cyganka, narzucająca się z wróżeniem, ma o wróżbiarstwie pojęcie. Ale są wróżki, przygotowane do tego.

– A życie religijne u was?

– Jesteśmy greko-katolikami. Dzieci chrzcimy w cerkwiach, na nabożeństwa chodzimy do cerkwi, o ile cerkiew jest tam, gdzie się obóz znajduje.

– A jakże z kształceniem dzieci?

– Jeżeli obóz zatrzymuje się gdzieś na dłużej, to chętnie byśmy dzieci posyłali do szkoły. Ale cyganie przecież wędrują. O normalnej nauce nie może więc być mowy. – Więc rosną analfabeci?

– Przeważnie. Są jednak cyganie, umiejący czytać. Ci uczą dzieci sami, oczywiście chłopców.

– A kobiety?

– Kobiety – odpowiada p. Kwiek z uśmiechem. – Czy im to potrzebne? Kobieta ma się zajmować dziećmi, ma dbać o rodzinę, ma więc dosyć zajęcia.

– Więc o równouprawnieniu kobiet u was niema mowy?

– Panie – to nie dla nas. Rządzić musi mężczyzna.

– No, a nie zdarza się, że kobieta czasem rządzi mężczyzna?

– Może się zdarzyć, ale my takiego za mężczyznę nie uważamy.

– Więc kobiet wcale nie cenicie?

– Przeciwnie. U nas, gdy się chłopak chce ożenić, musi za żonę jej ojcu zapłacić i to wcale ładną kwotę, 25, czasem 50 dukatów złotych.

– A cóż się dzieje, gdy np. mąż żonę porzuci?

– To się u nas prawie nie zdarza. Takiego sąd starszyzny uznaje za łajdaka. I taki nie ma co robić w obozie. Dla porządnego cygana on przestaje istnieć. Zresztą – traci pieniądze, jakie dał za żonę.

– A gdyby żona męża porzuciła?

– Czeka ją to samo, a nadto ojciec jej musi zwrócić mężowi dwa razy taką kwotę, jaką od niego za córkę otrzymał. Jednak takich porzuceń u nas prawie niema. Wogóle dziewczęta trzymane są ostro. Gdyby dziewczyna u nas złajdaczyła się, obcina się jej włosy. To jest napiętnowaniem jej. Z dziewczyną, której włosy obcięto, nikt się nie ożeni. W obozie,

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jeśli ma odwagę w nim zostać, toleruje się ją, ale jest ona tam jak piąte koło u wozu. Gdy panowie widzicie cygankę z krótkiemi włosami, wiedzcie, że to jest ulicznica.

– Ilyż jest ogółem cyganów w Polsce?

– Około 1,200 osób – odparł p[an] Kwiek. – Czechach będzie ze 400, mniej więcej tyle jest w Grecji, mniej jeszcze w Hiszpanji. Niewielka liczba jest też w Ameryce, mianowicie w Brazylji. Tam naczelnikiem ich jest mój brat.

Na tem zakończyliśmy rozmowę. "Baron" Kwiek spieszył się bowiem na Sołacz.

J. R.

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The Genuine "Gypsy Baron"

Poznań, in August. [...]

In the Poznań branch of *Ilustrowany Kuryer Codzienny* an unusual guest appeared. A tall, slender man. Golden rings with big beads on hands. Almost brown complexion, black hair. A typical Gypsy. But is he a Gypsy? He wears urban clothes, well-cut on the legs, fashionable, yellow shoes punched on top. You do not see such Gypsies!

And yet he is a real Gypsy. What is more – it is a member of the royal family, a man in his tribe almost bearing the title of "Baron". We learned about this when the guest introduced himself: "Baron Matejasz Kwiek".

He came with an interest. He meant to post in IKC [1] an announcement, containing a call to all members of his family, to contact him with family documents. The content of the announcement resulted in a conversation with the guest.

– What is the purpose of the announcement you want to include in IKC?

– The purpose – Mr. Kwiek responds with the good Polish language – is: Too many of the Gypsy families in Poland are bearing our family name. There is no doubt that many of these families wrongly fall into our family. Our family is an old Gypsy family. It is the aristocracy among Gypsies. The Gypsy King comes from Kwiek. It is Basil Kwiek, currently in the Czech Republic. The family must take care of themselves.

– On your seal, which you have provided with the signature on the announcement, there is in French the title of Gypsy Baron for the whole Europe. Has it been legalised?

– No. This title is only a term for family aristocracy. It has its weight with us, with Gypsies.

– So the social organisation of the Gypsies is based on ...? – we ask the question.

– It's based on families. In fact, our inner life is organised in a monarchic manner. There are nobles, in our language 'move' [2] and communes – 'netoci' [3]. The camp authority is held by the *wójt* [4]. The courts are exercised by elders led by the head of the camp. Heads of the camps answer to Barons. And Barons to the King. For example, if I am in a camp, then the authority belongs to me. They do it, of course, through the head of the camp. If there was a King in the camp, the authority belongs to him.

– What is the attitude of Gypsies towards the state?

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– We are citizens of the Republic of Poland, just like Gypsies in Hungary, Greece, Bulgaria, Spain or the Czech Republic are citizens of these countries. Recently, during the congress in Łódź, we left a dozen of our young people to the authorities to have military service. Among others in that regard, our family stands clearly in the position of fulfilling all civic duties towards the state, but it turned out that some camps, even those bearing our name, are looking at it differently, there is a need to inspect whether these camps bear the surnames of our ancestors rightly or wrongly.

– Duties to the state – I say – are a lot. But how is it with duties towards society? You will admit that the opinion regarding Gypsies is not the best. Beggars, thieves …

– You must understand – declares "Baron" Kwiek – that Gypsies, as they are in Poland, are divided into five classes.

If you are talking about begging, about thievery, I must let you know that these are only about the fourth and fifth class of camps. Good camps do not bother with such practices.

– And what do they live from?

– From work. Gypsies are good workers. In Poland, they are mostly blacksmiths and cauldron-makers. That is what they live from. And as work in one place is not for a long time, so they wander. Currently, for example, the main works are provided to the Gypsies by the army.

– What works?

– Cauldron-making. And cauldron-making – says Mr. Kwiek with pride – it's not just anything. A soldier needs a rifle for a war, but also a cauldron is needed so that he can cook a meal in the field kitchen.

– You are also involved in cauldron-making?

– Of course. I am just going to the artillery regiment on Sołacz [5], where I expect to get a job.

– Almost all Gypsy women are engaged in the practice of fortune-telling …

– Well, yes – says Mr. Kwiek – they play with that. It's also a form of making money. But I must say that there are Gypsy women specifically educated for fortune-telling. They are educated in Jerusalem. Please do not laugh – he added – I can bring a Gypsy woman who will read every, even the most secretive thoughts from your hands. Sure, not every Gypsy woman that is dealing with fortune-telling knows how to do that. But there are fortune-tellers, prepared for this.

– And what about your religious life?

– We are Greek-Catholics. We baptise children in Orthodox churches, go to the church for services, if the church is where the camp is.

– And how about the children's education?

– If the camp stops somewhere for longer, we would gladly send the children to school. But the Gypsies are wandering. They can forget about normal education.

– So the illiteracy grows?

– Mostly. There are, however, Gypsies who can read. They teach children themselves, of course, boys.

– And women?

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– Women – says Mr. Kwiek with a smile. – Do they really need it? A woman is supposed to take care of the children, she has to take care of the family, so she has enough to deal with.

– So there is no question about the equal rights of women?

– Sir – it's not for us. Man must rule.

– Well, does it not happen that a woman sometimes rules a man?

– It can happen, but we do not think of him as a man.

– So you do not value women at all?

– On the contrary. In our community when a boy wants to get married, he has to pay for a wife to her father, and that is quite an amount, 25, sometimes 50 gold ducats.

– And what happens when, for example, the husband leaves his wife?

– It almost does not happen with us. He is regarded by a court judgment as a bastard. And there is nothing to do in the camp for him. For a decent Gypsy, he ceases to exist. Anyway – he loses the money he gave for his wife.

– What if the husband's wife left?

– The same is waiting for her, moreover, her father must pay her husband twice the amount he received from him for his daughter. However, there are almost no such abandonments. In general, girls are kept closely. If a girl would lead a dissolute life, her hair would be cut off. This means stigmatising her. With a girl, whose hair was cut off, no one will get married. In the camp, if she has the courage to stay in it, she is tolerated, but she is there like the fifth wheel. When you see a Gypsy woman with short hair, you should know that she is a streetwalker.

– How many Gypsies are there in Poland in total?

– About 1,200 people [6] – said Mr. Kwiek. – There will be around 400 [7] in the Czech Republic, more or less the same in Greece, and slightly less in Spain. A small number is also in America, namely in Brazil. My brother is their leader there.

We have finished the conversation. "Baron" Kwiek was in a hurry to Sołacz.

J. R.

Notes

1. An acronym of *Ilustrowany Kuryer Codzienny* newspaper.
2. Illegible word, may be misheard by the journalist.
3. With this term were designated the poorest and most despised Gypsies in Wallachia (cf. Popp Serboianu, 1930, p. 51).
4. In Poland, this was a title of a hereditary head of town and is used until now as a title of elected head of rural commune. In this case, it is used as a title of the head of a Gypsy camp.
5. Sołacz is a district of the city of Poznan, located in its north-western part.
6. This is probably a typographical error and the number should be read 12,000 Gypsies. Otherwise, maybe the number is correct and "Baron Kwiek" may refer only to the Gypsies who belong to his, *Kelderari* community.
7. Probably here he is speaking only about his kin of Gypsies too.

Source: J. R. (1932b). Prawdziwy "baron cygański". *Ilustrowany Kuryer Codzienny*, r. 23, No. 229, 1932, August 19, pp. 2-3.
Prepared for publication by Alicja Gontarek.

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Comments

The published article is a very important source documenting the process of knowledge transfer about the life of Gypsies in Poland, which had been taking place since the early 1930s between the majority society (Poles) and the Gypsy elite. In the previous period, i.e. in the 1920s, neither side was interested in entering into close interaction. There were many reasons for this. The most important is the one related to political causes. Until the mid-1920s, the Polish government circles represented a nationalist tradition, reluctant of all national and ethnic minorities. They even tried to introduce in the Sejm an order to expel the Gypsy population from Polish lands (Gontarek, 2017a, p. 54). In 1926, when the power in the country was taken over by one of the founding fathers of the Polish state – Józef Piłsudski (1867-1935), the political climate for national minorities changed radically. When the new authorities and the largest pro-government party (Nonpartisan Bloc for Cooperation with the Government) have strengthened, from the beginning of the 1930s they began to build a broad coalition composed of representatives of various communities, including Gypsies (Gontarek, 2017b, p. 3). It was organised as part of a concept called "State consolidation", which included also national and ethnic minorities in the political and social life. There was even a plan for the Gypsies to issue their list for the parliamentary election (Ibid., pp. 5-6). For this initiative, the government was severely criticized and ridiculed by the opposition (Gontarek, 2017a, pp. 66-69). However, these voices were not taken into account and did not prevent further Polish-Gypsy collaboration. From 1926 to 1937/1938 Gypsies and Polish authorities cooperated on varied levels and areas (Gontarek, 2017b, pp. 1-21). As a result of the political changes, the so-called "National Consolidation", in the end of the 1930s the Gypsy elite, represented by Kwieks, which had been already formed by then, could not be active in the public forum because it was not allowed to enter it.

Let us turn our attention to some of the questions posed to Kwiek. In addition to the obvious ones, which aim to familiarise with the internal organisation, there are also those concerning the attitude of Gypsies to the state and women. Regarding the first issue, Kwiek puts a lot of emphasis on focusing on civic duties, including the duty of military service. The Gypsy leader is aware that citizenship creates obligations. Gypsies, like any other group, are also supposed to be subject to state – this declaration challenges all stereotypical ideas about Gypsies. The loyalist attitude of Kwiek to the ruling circles is underlined, which resulted from the fact that the Polish Gypsy leaders did not know other mechanisms of managing Gypsy life than those referring to the authority of the Polish government. This comes to help them to build a strong and centralised authority of own leadership, as an indispensable element of the internal consolidation of the Gypsy community.

Kwiek's words reveal also attitudes in the community towards women. This topic was very rarely discussed in Polish press apart of exoticising articles in the 1930s about the romances of "Gypsy princesses," who fled from camps and tried to live differently than before, with Poles, but the sensational dimension of this type of events was stressed above all. This phenomenon evoked opposition from Gypsy elders, who feared this will

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lead to disintegration of the community (Gontarek, 2017, p. 12). Kwiek, who wanted to reform Gypsy life, in this case supported the position of elders. It seems that modernisation and reorganisation of Gypsy life according to his vision was to take place without the participation of Gypsy women. Judging from published newspapers articles, in the interwar period the phenomenon of women leaving the community in a desire to become independent and self-standing was probably more and more frequent.

Alicja Gontarek

9.2 Rivalry among Kings

9.2.1 *New Elections*

Z pośród 80 tysięcy cyganów, którzy żyją jeszcze na świecie, blisko jedna trzecia zamieszkuje Polskę. Cyganie polscy mają zorganizowane własne życie społeczne, prawdziwą władzą jest dla nich tylko wybrany przez nich samych król, który zresztą nie ma swej godności dożywotnio, lecz wybierany jest na 5 lat. I oto w najbliższym czasie ma się właśnie odbyć nowa elekcja.

Już dzisiaj chodzą słuchy o gorączkowej propagandzie przedwyborczej. Wszyscy cyganie są zdania, że zbliżające się wybory będą miały specjalnie doniosłe znaczenie. Ostatnie lata były bardzo burzliwe w życiu polskich cyganów: rewolucje pałacowe, detronizacja i monarchowie konkurencyjni byli na porządku dziennym. Po nowej elekcji więc spodziewają się wyjaśnienia sytuacji.

Wasyl Kwiek, który jeszcze nie dawno rządził w Warszawie, na Marymoncie, nie pozyskał powszechne go uznania. Wybuchnęła nawet swe go czasu rewolucja pałacowa, ale król świadomy swej odpowiedzialności potrafił ją zgnieść. Usunięci dworacy przenieśli jednak walkę w szerokie masy. Powstały dwie partje: t[ak] zw[ana] legitymistów, broniących Wasyla Kwieka i zw[ana] partja porządku, agitująca za Andrzejem Kwiekiem, jednym z licznych krewnych króla Wasyla. Wielu przypuszcza, że już najbliższe wybory doprowadzą Andrzeja Kwieka do zdobycia tronu. Wasyl Kwiek grozi jednak, Andrzej drogą prawną nie zdobędzie tronu.

Dla uniknięcia więc bratobójczej walki, w którą niewątpliwie wmieszałaby się policja, musi być znalezione jeszcze trzecie wyjście z sytuacji. Zwolennikiem tego rozwiązania jest baron Matejas Kwiek. Zjawił on się w Polsce przysłany przez międzynarodwą organizację cyganów. Jego zadaniem jest pogodzenie dwuch zwaśnionych partyj. Dla spełnienia tego zadania ma on bardzo daleko idące możliwości, których użycie jest uwarunowane ostateczną koniecznością. W misji bar[on] Kwieka godny jest podkreślenia zwłaszcza fakt, że poddany jednego z królów cygańskich w Europie ma godzić dwóch powaśnionych pretendentów do tronu.

Baron zabrał się do dzieła z wielką energją. Zwołał nadzwyczajne zgromadzenie wszystkich dygnitarzy cygańskich z Polski, coś jakby wielki sejm cygański. Zebranie uchwaliło ustąpienie obu przeciwników. Następny kongres, zwołany do Łodzi wybrał na króla na nowe pięciolecie dawnego rewolucjonistę Andrzeja.

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Ale minęło pięć lat i cyganie stoją przed nowemi wyborami. Wasyl Kwiek jest znowu pretendentem do tronu i stara walka znowu rozgorzała. Obecnie partje są przekonane o zwycięstwie swego kandydata. Bar[on] Matejas Kwiek zjawił się więc znowu na widowni. Elegancki ten i światowy pan znowu gruntownie rozpatruje sprawę, ale stanowisko cygańskiego rozjemcy napawa go coraz większym sceptycyzmem.

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Of the 80,000 Gypsies who still live in the world, nearly a third live in Poland. Polish Gypsies have organised social life, the real authority for them is only the King chosen by themselves, who does not hold his office for life, but is elected for five years. And in the near future such a new election is about to take place.

There are already rumors about feverish pre-election propaganda. All Gypsies are of the opinion that the upcoming elections will be of particular importance. Recent years have been very turbulent in the life of Polish Gypsies: palace revolutions, a de-throning and competing monarchs were on a daily agenda. After the new election, they expect the situation to be made clear.

Wasyl Kwiek, who has recently ruled in Warsaw, in the Marymont district, failed to win widespread recognition. He even had a palace revolution aimed at himself, but the King, aware of his responsibility, was able to crush it. However, his courtiers who had been removed, moved the struggle to the broad masses. Two parties were formed: the [so called] legitimists, defending Wasyl Kwiek, and the [so called] party of order, backing Andrzej Kwiek, one of the relatives of King Wasyl. Many assume that the next election will result in Andrzej Kwiek ascending to the throne. However, Wasyl Kwiek is threatening that Andrzej will not win the throne in a legal course.

So, to avoid a fratricidal fight, in which the police would undoubtedly be involved, a third way out of the situation must be found. Baron Matejas Kwiek is a supporter of this solution. He was sent to Poland by an international organisation of Gypsies. His task is to reconcile the two feuding parties. To fulfill this task, he has very far-reaching possibilities, the use of which is conditioned by the ultimate necessity. In Baron Kwiek's mission it is worth emphasizing, in particular, that a subject to one of the Gypsy Kings in Europe is to reconcile two serious pretenders to the throne.

Baron set to work with great energy. He convened an extraordinary gathering of all Gypsy dignitaries from Poland, something like a great Gypsy *Sejm*. The meeting resolved to ask both opponents to step down. The next congress, which convened in Łódź, chose the old revolutionary Andrzej as the King for the new five-year term.

But five years have passed and the Gypsies are facing new elections. Wasyl Kwiek is again a contender for the throne, and the old struggle has started again. Currently, the parties are convinced of their candidate's victory. Baron Matejas Kwiek showed up again in the audience. This elegant and global man is considering the matter thoroughly again, but the position of the Gypsy peacekeeper makes him more and more skeptical.

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Source: [No Author]. (1934). Baron Matejas Kwiek rozsądza pretendentów do tronu cygańskiego. *Expres Zagłębia*, An. I9, No. 278, 1934, October 10, p. 2.
Prepared for publication by Adam Bartosz and Natalia Gancarz.

9.2.2 *The President of the Council of the Gypsies*

Z Równego donosi (SP): Niedawno temu ukazał się w "IKC" wywiad z wodzem cyganów "baronem" Matejaszem Kwiekiem, który zapowiedział wielkie reformy w życiu cyganów.

Jak się okazuje, wódz nie próżnuje. Z ramienia jego wyjechał po Polsce "prezes Rady cyganów", Józef Kwiek, który onegdaj zjawił się w oddziale "IKC" w Równem i opowiedział szerzej o swej akcji.

[...] Pan Józef Kwiek poszukuje specjalnie jednego uciążliwego dla cyganów rodaka, Michała Kwieka, który jest głównym organizatorem wielu kradzieży a ostatnio samozwańczo nazywa się królem cyganów i próbuje ich skomunizować. Nosi się nawet Michał Kwiek z planem wielkiego zjazdu w Stanisławowie, gdzie chce próbować objąć stanowisko "króla". Niebezpieczny Michał Kwiek organizował już i komunizował cyganów w Czechach i Rumunji.

Nasz rozmówca Józef Kwiek podjął się trudnej roli wyplenienia wśród cyganów złodziejstwa, a już specjalnie ściga samozwańca Michała. Następnie wyjedzie do Brazylji, aby odwiedzić tamtejszych rodaków.

Przy końcu zwierzył nam się, że cyganie są obecnie na drodze do zrealizowania swych marzeń o własnej ojczyźnie. Oto ich delegat wyjechał do Ligi Narodów, by starać się tam o część Afryki Południowej, gdzie by chcieli się osiedlić. Z początku noszono się z myślą założenia państwa na naszem Polesiu, ale na to trzeba by zbyt długo czekać i jak się wyraził, zbyt wielu kandydatów na to Polesie.

Na Wołyniu cyganów jest około 4 tys. w stosunku do cyganów całej Polski (15 tys.) jest liczbą znaczną.

Józef Kwiek jeździ ze swoją policją, przy pomocy której wyłapuje złodziejaszków.

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Reports from Rivne [1] (SP): Recently in "IKC" appeared an interview with the leader of the Gypsies – "Baron" Matejasz Kwiek, who announced great reforms in the life of Gypsies.

As it turns out, the leader has been busy. On his behalf, "the President of the Council of Gypsies", Józef Kwiek, who once appeared in the "IKC" branch in Rivne and talked more about his action.

[...]. Mr. Józef Kwiek is looking for one especially troublesome compatriot to the Gypsies, Michał Kwiek, who is the main organiser of many thefts, and recently he has self-proclaimed the King of the Gypsies and tries to introduce communism to them. Michał Kwiek even has plans for a big congress in Stanisławów where he wants to try to take the position of "King". Dangerous Michał Kwiek already organised and introduced communism to Gypsies in the Czech Republic and Romania.

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Our interlocutor Józef Kwiek took on the difficult role of eradication of the thievery among the Gypsies, and he is already chasing the pretender Michał. Then he will go to Brazil to visit his compatriots there.

At the end, he confided to us that the Gypsies are now on the way to realize their dreams of their own homeland. Here their delegate went to the League of Nations to seek for a part of South Africa, where they would like to settle down. At the beginning, he had an idea of establishing a state on our Polesie [3], but it would be too long to wait and, as he put it, there are too many candidates for this Polesie.

In Volhynia [4], there are about 4,000 Gypsies which, compared to Gypsies in Poland (15,000), is a significant number.

Józef Kwiek rides with his police, by means of which he catches thieves.

Notes

1. Rivne is a historic city in western Ukraine and the historical region of Volhynia. In the inter-war period Volhynia was a part of Poland.
3. Polesia is geographical and historical land currently located mainly in the territory of Belarus and Ukraine. In the interwar period, western Polesia with Brest on the Bug, Pinsk and Luninets belonged to Poland.
4. Volhynia is historical land; currently part of Ukraine. The text refers to the Volhynia region, which in the interwar period was part of the Polish state. The eastern part of Volhynia during this period remained with the USSR.

Source: [No Author]. (1935c). Silna ręka wodza cyganów. *Ilustrowany Kuryer Codzienny*, An. 26, No. 64, 1935, March 5, pp. 4-5.
Prepared for publication by Alicja Gontarek.

Comments

In the 1930s, the self-proclaimed Gypsy leaders from the Kwiek clan were also competing with each other. The article shows that in the 1930s they learned how to use accusation of crimes and anti-communist slogans popular in Poland to discredit their opponents.

These activities fit into the broader context of various activities of the Polish state police whose task was to discourage Gypsies from pursuing a nomadic lifestyle. They included: individual registration of Gypsies, registration of caravans and marches of Gypsy camps, surveys and inspections of camps, removal of illegal camps, ban on camping in cities, border zones and compulsory dactyloscopy as well as introducing bans on vagrancy and begging by local administrative authorities (Dziennik Ustaw, 1927; Na Posterunku, 1932, p. 708).

At the other end of Kwieks' activity were the slogans concerning the creation of a Gypsy state. It mainly concerned southern African areas, under the British administration. Attempts were also made to support a permanent settlement in Polesia, but as it became clear from the article these projects also failed. In a nutshell, the article perfectly, in a way, illustrates the goals and directions of the activities of the Kwieks in the 1930s.

Alicja Gontarek

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9.2.3 *The Leader of the Gypsy Nation*

"Wódz narodu cygańskiego", "Król" cyganów Mateusz Kwiek, którego nazwisko często widnieje w prasie, doszedł do przekonania, że nie powinien nazywać się już królem, albowiem władza monarsza w Polsce nie istnieje. Toteż na zjeździe w Warszawie wystosował orędzie do swoich poddanych, w którem zrzeka się tytułu króla, jako podlegający wraz z całem plemieniem cygańskiem rządowi Rzplitej polskiej – i odtąd zapowiada, że będzie nosił tylko tytuł "wodza narodu cygańskiego".

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The 'Leader of the Gypsy Nation', and 'King' of Gypsies Mateusz Kwiek, whose name often appears in the press, came to the conclusion that he should not be called a King, because a monarch power in Poland does not exist. Consequently, at the congress in Warsaw he sent a message to his subjects in which he renounces the title of King, as along with the tribe of the Gypsy people he is subject to the government of the Republic of Poland – and from that time he announces that he will only use the title of the 'Leader of the Gypsy Nation'.

Source: [No Author]. (1935b). Wódz narodu cygańskiego. *Ilustrowany Kuryer Codzienny*, An. 26, No. 45. 1935, February 14, p. 10.
Prepared for publication by Adam Bartosz and Natalia Gancarz.

9.2.4 *The Revolution in the Gypsy State*

Rewolucja w państwie Cyganów

[…] Władca cyganów, baron Matejasz Kwiek, okazał się nieoczekiwanie sprytnym i przewidującym politykiem i … dobrowolnie zrzekł się władzy królewskiej. Abdykował i już! Dowiedzieli się o tem na zjeździe cyganie w lutym w Warszawie.

Na tym zjeździe Matejasz Kwiek odczytał komunikat tej treści:

"Niniejszym komunikuję, iż na Zjeździe Cyganów, co miało miejsce w dniu 14 listopada 1934 roku, zostałem wybrany przez cyganów z Polski i innych państw, jako Wódz Narodu Cygańskiego, co potwierdzam protokółem. W imię prawa, jako Wódz Narodu Cygańskieg, baron Matejasz Kwiek, niniejszym komunikatem unieważniam dotychczasowy tytuł "króla" wśród Narodu Cygańskiego, ponieważ cyganie, jako naród nie posiadający własnego Państwa, nie mogą tworzyć monarchji królewskiej. Wszyscy więc zamieszkujący na terytorium Rzeczypospolitej Polskiej podlegamy rządowi Pana Prezydenta Rzeczypospolitej Polskiej. Nieustanne spory między cyganami o dynastję w narodzie koczowniczym stale narażają nas na ogromną krytykę.

Zastrzegam sobie, że o ile nadal ktokolwiek z cyganów używać będzie tytułu "króla", należy uważać to za kłamstwo, a jego samego za samozwańca. Wszelkie oszczerstwa rzucane pod mój adres należy uważać jedynie za akt zemsty.

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Warszawa, dnia 7. Lutego 1935 r.
Wódz Narodu Cygańskiego (podpis) Baron Matejasz Kwiek."

[…] "Król cyganów" przeszedł do historji. Jego miejsce zajął "wódz narodu cygańskiego" w postaci barona Matejasza Kwieka, wyposażonego w ubiór galowy, buławę, szarfę, sztandary cygańskie, pieczęć oficjalną i nowoczesne wizytówki z koroną baronowską, wydrukowane … złotemi literami.

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The Revolution in the Gypsy State

[…] The ruler of the Gypsies, Baron Matejasz Kwiek, turned out to be an unexpectedly clever and predictable politician and … voluntarily relinquished royal power. He abdicated and that's it! Gypsies learned about this at the congress in Warsaw in February.

At this meeting Matejasz Kwiek read this message:

"I hereby communicate that at the Congress of Gypsies, which took place on November 14, 1934, I was elected by the Gypsies from Poland and other countries, as the Leader of the Gypsy Nation, which I confirm by protocol. In the name of the law, as the Leader of the Gypsy Nation, Baron Matejasz Kwiek, this communication annuls the current title of "King" among the Gypsy Nation, because Gypsies, as a nation without their own state, cannot form a royal monarchy. All of us residing on the territory of the Republic of Poland are subject to the rule of the President of the Republic of Poland. The constant disputes between Gypsies about the dynasty in a nomadic nation constantly exposes us to huge criticism.

I reserve, however, that should any of the Gypsies still use the title of "King", it shall be considered a lie, and he shall be named a usurper. Any slander against me should be considered only as an act of revenge on his part.

Warsaw, February 7, 1935.
Leader of the Gypsy Nation (Signature) Baron Matejasz Kwiek."

[…] So the "King of the Gypsies" is no more. His place was taken by the "Leader of the Gypsy Nation" in the person of Baron Matejasz Kwiek, equipped with gala clothing, a baton, a sash, Gypsy banners, an official seal and modern business cards with the Baron crown, printed … in gold letters.

Source: [Lech]. (1935). Rewolucja w państwie Cyganów. *Ilustracja Polska*, An. 8, No. 9, 1935, March 3, pp. 192, 203.
Prepared for publication by Adam Bartosz and Natalia Gancarz.

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Comments

Members of the Kwiek family from the *Kelderari* group, who have lived in Poland since the mid-1920s, fought among themselves for the position of the 'King' of the Gypsies which they established. The Kwiek family started declaring themselves Kings and in the 1930s they even staged public coronations (see below). The ensuing Kings fought and accused their predecessors. There were times when two or more Kings from this family 'reigned' simultaneously. This and the previous newspaper articles reveal, that Matejasz Kwiek officially renounced this title on behalf of the future Kings announcing himself 'the leader of the Gypsy nation' underlining Gypsy loyalty to the Polish Republic. This was 'clever and a predictable' act, having in mind the competition among Roma Kings and the wave of Fascism-related sentiments in Poland, that widespread at that time.

After Matejasz Kwiek's death (see bellow), another Gypsy King Janusz Kwiek was crowned in the same year (Kurjer Wileński, 1937, p. 4).

Adam Bartosz and Natalia Gancarz

9.2.5 *The King's Funeral*

Co włożono do trumny króla cyganów?

Z Warszawy donosi (le): Warszawa w dalszym ciągu żyje jeszcze pod wrażeniem pogrzebu wodza cyganów Matejasza Kwieka. Pogrzeb odbył się przy udziale 7000 osób. Ponadto na ulicach, któremi podążał kondukt żałobny, gromadziły się nieprzejrzane tłumy, a na cmentarzu ludzie wdrapywali się nawet na drzewa, aby zobaczyć cygański pogrzeb.

Zwłoki Kwieka złożono do trumny sosnowej. Obok zwłok położono czarny melonik, puderniczkę, drobne monety, szklankę, rozpylacz z wodą kolońską, buteleczkę z perfumami i wieczne pióro. Poza tym włożono do trumny fotografię gen. Franco i gen. Queipo de Llano, które znaleziono po śmierci w ubraniu zmarłego. Pochodził on bowiem z Hiszpanii i za życia wyrażał życzenia, aby po śmierci przewieziono go do Hiszpanji, gdzie w Sewilli znajduje się jeden z nielicznych w Europie cmentarzy cygańskich.

Kwiek kochał bardzo Hiszpanję i wielbił gen. Franco. Podobno – jak twierdzą jego krewni – oddał cały swój majątek na cele powstania. Matejasz Kwiek miał znać osobiście gen. Franco. Gdy był młodszy jeszcze grywał w jednej z restauracyj madryckich, dokąd przychodził często młody jeszcze wówczas oficer armji hiszpańskiej Franco, będący wielkim zwolennikiem muzyki cygańskiej. Pogrzeb Kwieka wywołał wielkie zainteresowanie zagranicą. Do Warszawy przybyli fotoreporterzy wielkich pism zagranicznych, cały pogrzeb sfilmowano.

Rodzina zmarłego zachowała w czasie pogrzebu kamienny spokój, jedynie brat wodza bardzo rozpaczał. Kondukt pogrzebowy otwierało dwóch mężczyzn z chorągwiami, na pierwszej czerwonej widniał złoty napis: "Wolna, niezależna, mocarstwowa Polska". Na drugiej błękitnej widniały żółte litery, mówiące: "Zjednoczenie cyganów podlegających Panu Prezydentowi Rzeczypospolitej pod przewodnictwem wodza narodu cygańskiego barona Matejasza Kwieka." Poniżej widniała 7-pałkowa korona.

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Za trumną postępowały dwie córeczki zmarłego, jego żona, szła również Lola, mimowolna sprawczyni śmierci barona. Na trumnę rzucali ziemię jedynie cyganie.

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What was placed inside the coffin of the King of the Gypsies?

(le) reports from Warsaw: The inhabitants of Warsaw are still impressed by the funeral of the leader of the Gypsies, Matejasz Kwiek. The funeral was attended by 7,000 people. In addition, throngs of onlookers gathered along the streets to watch the funeral procession, and at the cemetery people even climbed trees to see the Gypsy burial.

Kwiek's body was placed in a pine coffin along with a black bowler hat, a powder box, small coins, a glass, a cologne spray, a bottle of perfumes and a fountain pen. In addition, photographs of General Franco and General Queipo de Llano that had been found in the deceased's clothes after his death were also put in his coffin. Matejasz Kwiek came from Spain and during his life he had expressed his wish that after his death he would be transported to Spain, where in Seville there is one of the few Gypsy cemeteries in Europe.

Kwiek adored Spain and worshiped General Franco. Apparently – as his relatives say – he gave all his assets for the purposes of the uprising. Allegedly Matejasz Kwiek knew General Franco personally. When he was younger, he used to play in one of Madrid's restaurants, which was frequented by young Franco, an army officer and a great supporter of Gypsy music. Kwiek's funeral arose great interest among foreign media. Photoreporters from famouse foreign magazines came to Warsaw and the whole funeral was filmed.

The family of the deceased kept stone calm during the funeral, only the Gypsy leader's brother showed his despair. Two men with banners opened the funeral procession. The first, red banner had a golden inscription: "Free, independent, superpower Poland". On the other, the blue one, there were yellow letters, saying: "The union of Gypsies subject to the President of the Republic under the leadership of the Gypsy baron Matejasz Kwiek." Below there was a 7-spike crown.

The coffin was followed by two daughters of the deceased, his wife, and Lola, who involuntarily had caused the baron's death. Only the Gypsies could throw a piece of soil on the coffin.

Source: [le]. (1937). Co włożono do trumny króla cyganów? *Ilustrowany Kuryer Codzienny*, An. 28, No. 90, 1937, Aprril 2, p. 11.
Prepared for publication by Adam Bartosz and Natalia Gancarz.

Comments

Matejasz Kwiek, who officially renounced this title on behalf of the future Kings (Ilustrowany Kuryer Codzienny, 1935b, p. 10) announcing himself "the leader of the Gypsy nation" was killed in an accident by a Gypsy woman in Warsaw in late April 1937.

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His funeral at the Warsaw Orthodox cemetery was a great event, gathering thousands of Gypsies and numerous journalists, eager for sensation. The items inside the grave of Matejasz Kwiek reveal his political sympathies and once again underline his adherence and loyalty to the Polish Republic.

Adam Bartosz and Natalia Gancarz

9.3 Coronations

9.3.1 *The Election of the Gypsy King in Warsaw*

Elekcja króla cygańskiego w Warszawie

W oczach naszych dokonał się akt wyboru władcy królestwa, najdziwniejszego chyba ze wszystkich królestw na świecie: bez ziemi, bez stolicy, bez zamków i pałaców, z poddanymi rozsianymi po drogach całej Europy. Królestwo trochę jak z bajki, trochę jak z operetki, jednem słowem, królestwo Cyganów.

Cyganie, wiadomo, dziś tu, jutro tam, tu zagrają, tam powróżą, kocioł wyklepią, zalutują, tu coś zciągną, tam wyżebrzą, ot, żeby jakoś żyć. Ale wreszcie powiedzieli sobie: dość tej włóczęgi, dość poniewierki, koczowania pod gołem niebem! Dosyć tej opinji nierobów i … cyganów! Chcemy mieć swoje państwo, chcemy króla, któryby nam to państwo jakoś urządził.

Jak tam dalej będzie z temi szerokiemi planami, niewiadomo. Na razie jest król, Najautentyczniejszy król w złotej koronie, z berłem w dłoni, ukoronowany uroczyście w ubiegłą niedzielę na Stadjonie Wojska Polskiego w Warszawie, w obecności kilku tysięcy widzów, sfilmowany, transmitowany przez radjo na cały świat.

Kandydatów do tronu było pięciu, wszyscy wywodzący się z rodziny polskich Cyganów Kwieków, z których też pochodził niedawno zmarły tragicznie baron cygański, Matjasz Kwiek. Wyboru dokonało trzydziestu senatorów cygańskich, wśród nich przedstawiciele Cyganów rumuńskich, węgierskich, portugalskich i hiszpańskich.

Widowisko jedyne w swoim rodzaju. Pośrodku stadjonu ustawiono duże podjum, przybrane purpurą i wstęgami różnokolorowych bibułek. Na razie królestwo cygańskie nie posiada jeszcze zdecydowanych barw na państwową flagę. Na podjum stanął tron, wypożyczony na ten cel z rekwizytorni teatralnej. Z uderzeniem godziny szóstej, wejściem dla zawodników, wkroczyli na arenę kandydaci na króla oraz senatorowie – wyborcy. Fraki, smoki, tużurki, cylindry, szapoklaki, białe gorsy, zdobne ryszkami, białe motylki. Publiczność bije brawo. Mistrz ceremonji o ognistych oczach i sprytnym wyrazie twarzy, w migdałowym garniturze, prosto z pod igły, rozdziera arkusz papieru na drobne kartki i rozdaje wyborcom. Po dłuższej chwili megafony obwieszczają wynik wyborów. Większością głosów zostaje wybrany Janusz Kwiek, okazały Cygan z krótką bródką, z zawodu, jak przystało na takie demokratyczne królestwo, kotlarz.

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Teraz następuje kulminacyjny punkt uroczystości. Na trybunę wchodzi, w kapach lśniących od złota, duchowieństwo prawosławne z protoprezbiterem na czele. Rozpoczynają się modły i śpiewy. Dwaj usłużni senatorowie narzucają królowi na ramiona płaszcz koronacyjny.

Protoprezbiter wkłada na skronie Janusza Kwieka królewską koronę i wręcza mu berło. Król w całym majestacie zasiada na tronie. Z dołu spoglądają ku niemu rozradowane dumnie czarne, błyszczące oczy. To oczy łądnej, młodej cyganki Rozy, drugiej żony króla Janusza pierwszego. Królowa trzyma na ręku małego, zamorusanego dzieciaka. "Następca tronu" – mówi Cyganka. Tron ma być dziedziczny, ale niewiadomo, jak to będzie. Król ma z pierwszej żony dwóch jeszcze, starszych synów.

Według programu koronacyjnego ma teraz zagrzmieć dwadzieścia jeden strzałów armatnich. Królestwo cygańskie, z musu najpacyfistyczniejsze państwo na świecie, nie rozporządza jednakże nawet najskromniejszym taborem wojennym. Poczciwe petardy spełniają wobec tego z pełną huku i dymu godnością to szczytne zadanie. Rozpoczyna się składanie darów i hołdów. Niedoszli królowie i senatorzy przyklękają na jedno kolano przed króle, składając przysięgę na wierność i posłuszeństwo, król każdemu podaje łaskawie rękę. Głośniki ryczą jakiegoś marsza weselnego, czy aby nie z "Lohengrina", publiczność bije brawo, król wygłasza swą pierwszą mowę tronową, mianuje z miejsca jednego z niedoszłych królów, Sergjusza Kwieka, swym adiutantem, zaś Aleksandra prezesem Cyganów i w uroczystym pochodzie obchodzi ku wielkiej uciesze publiczności całe boisko dokoła.

Pierwsza część uroczystości zakończona. Król już w swym zwykłym stroju udziela prasie wywiadu. Ze wszech stron wyciągają się kartki z prośbą o autografy. Słychać zapytania we wszystkich językach. Zjechali się przecież dziennikarze z całego niemal świata. Co to można w dzisiejszych czasach wiedzieć? Jak się tacy Cyganie zbiorą w jedną wielką gromadę, to nie żarty! Jest ich przecież, jak powiadają, ponoś sześć miljonów, a "za morzem" jeszcze osiemset tysięcy. Króla już mają, nadzieję na kawałek Abisynji też. Nie zawadzi zapisać się dobrze w pamięci władcy przyszłego Państwa Cygańskiego.

A tymczasem w garderobach stadjonu wre gorączkowy ruch. Stroi się młodzież cygańska do występów, mających uświetnić ten uroczysty dzień. Na trybunę wchodzi barwny tłum. Długie, szerokie spódnice, fantazyjne szale, czarne włosy zaplecione w cienkie warkocze, na małych rasowych stopach jedwabne pończochy i nowomodne sandałki. Chłopcy w czerwonych koszulach i kolorowych spodniach. Zapala się czerwone światło, mające imitować cygańskie ognisko i rozpoczynają się śpiewy. Płyną znane cygańskie romanse, pełne niewysłowionej melancholji dalekich, bezmiernych dróg, któremi chadzają od wieków Cyganie, pełne tej tęsknoty, która ich pędzi z miejsca na miejsce. Potem tańce niewyuczone, a jednak porywające. Trochę z czardasza, trochę z kozaka i trochę z "góralskiego". Wszystko na cześć króla! A starsze Cyganichy wmieszały się między publiczność. "Daj powróżyć piękna pani. A pojedziecie zagranicu. A dożyjecie siedemdziesiąt siedem roków. Daj panoczka powróżyć … powróżyć … powróżyć …".

Z. Ord

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We have witnessed an act of choosing the ruler of the kingdom, the strangest of all the kingdoms in the world: without land, without capital, without castles and palaces, with subjects scattered all over Europe. A kingdom a bit like a fairy tale, a bit like an operetta, to put it shortly, the kingdom of Gypsies.

Gypsies, it is generally known, have no permanent place to stay, today they are here, tomorrow they will be somewhere else. They will play some music, foretell you your future, repair your pots, solder things for you, get something from one place, beg somewhere else, just to get by. But finally, they have said to themselves: enough of this vagrant, miserable, nomadic life under the stars! We have had enough of being called lazy-bodies and … Gypsies! We want to have our own state we want a King who would provide for our needs.

How will they fare with their bold plans, I do not know. For now, there is the King, a genuine King in a golden crown, scepter in hand, crowned solemnly last Sunday at the Polish Army Stadium in Warsaw, in the presence of several thousand spectators, with the crowning ceremony filmed and reported by radio stations around the world.

There were five candidates for the throne, all from the family of Kwiek, Polish Gypsies from whom the late Gypsy leader, Matjasz Kwiek also came. The election was carried out by thirty Gypsy senators, including representatives of Romanian, Hungarian, Portuguese and Spanish Gypsies.

A unique spectacle. In the middle of the stadium, there was a huge podium, adorned with purple fabric and ribbons of multi-coloured papers. For now, the Gypsy kingdom does not yet have their own colours for the state flag. In the middle of the podium, there was a throne, borrowed for this purpose from the theater props. As the clock struck six, the candidates for the King and the senators – voters – entered the arena using the competitors' entrance. Tailcoats, tuxedos, frock coats, top hats, opera hats, white starched shirts and bowties. The audience applauds. The master of ceremonies with fiery eyes and a clever expression on his face, in an almond suit, straight from under the needle, tears a sheet of paper into small pieces and gives them away to the voters. After a while, the results of the election are announced. Janusz Kwiek, a prominent Gypsy with a short beard wins the majority of votes. As befits such a democratic kingdom, he is a tinker by profession.

Now the climax of the ceremony begins. Wearing copes shiny with gold, comes the Orthodox clergy led by the proto-priest. Prayers and singing begin. Two senators put a coronation mantle over his shoulders.

The proto-priest puts a royal crown on Janusz Kwiek's temples and places a scepter in his hand. The King sits on the throne in all his splendor. From the bottom, proud, black, shiny eyes look up to him. They are the eyes of a young Gypsy named Roza, the second wife of King Janusz I. The queen is holding a small, begrimed child. "The successor to the throne", says the Gypsy. The throne is to be hereditary, but nobody knows how it will be. The King has two older sons with his first wife.

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According to the coronation program, now it's time for twenty-one cannon shots. The Gypsy kingdom, this most peaceful country in the world, however, does not have even the most modest war gear. Consequently, ordinary firecrackers therefore fulfill this noble task with a full roar and smoke. The gift-giving ceremony and homage begins. The other candidates for the King and senators kneel down to one knee in front of the King, swearing the oath of loyalty and obedience. The King gives his hand to everyone. The loudspeakers roar a wedding march, maybe the one from "The Lohengrin"? The audience applauds, the King makes his first throne speech, appoints one of the other candidates, Sergjusz Kwiek, his adjutant, and appoints Aleksander as the chairman of the Gypsies. Then the grand procession make its way around the stadium in great solemnity.

The first part of the ceremony is over. The King, now in his usual outfit, gives an interview to the press. People hand him slips of paper asking for autographs. You can hear inquiries in all languages. Journalists from all over the world came down. What can you learn these days? It's no laughing matter when Gypsies gather in large numbers! There are, as they say, six million of them, and eight hundred thousand more overseas. They already have a King, and they hope to get a piece of Abyssinia too. Also, it does not hurt to write down this event well in the memory of the ruler of the future Gypsy State.

Meanwhile, in the dressing rooms of the stadium, one can observe a hectic movement. Gypsy youth are getting dressed in their fancy attire for performances to mark this festive day. A colourful crowd enters the grandstand. Long, wide skirts, fancy scarves, black braided hair, silk stockings and new-fashioned sandals on small feet. Boys in red shirts and colourful trousers. The red light is switched on to imitate the Gypsy fire and singing begins. There are well-known Gypsy romantic ballads, full of unspeakable melancholy of distant, endless roads that Gypsies have roamed for centuries. Songs full of this longing that makes them wander from place to place. Then the dances, unschooled and yet thrilling. A bit of Czardasz, a bit of Cossack and a bit of "Goral (Highlander)'s" dance. Everything in honor of the King! And the older Gypsy women got mixed up between the audience. "Let me tell you, a beautiful lady. You will go abroad. And you will live to see seventy-seven years. Give me your hand and I will foretell you your future … foretell … foretell …".

Z. Ord

Source: Z Ord. (1937). Elekcja króla cygańskiego w Warszawie. *Światowid*, An. 14, No. 28 (674), 1937, July 10, p. 4.
Prepared for publication by Adam Bartosz and Natalia Gancarz.

Comments

As mentioned before, Matejasz Kwiek officially renounced the King title on behalf of the future "Kings", announcing himself "the leader of the Gypsy nation". However, another candidate for the leader of Polish Gypsies, Janusz Kwiek, made his coronation a sensational event. The ceremony took place on July 4, 1937, at the Polish Army Stadium in

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Warsaw, with the participation of a few representatives of government elites, a crowd of journalists. The very act of coronation was performed by the Warsaw chief priest of the Orthodox Church, Terencjusz Teodorowicz. The ceremony had been advertised with posters, and the admission was ticketed. Officially, a dozen or so candidates had been nominated for the elections. Secret voting was held with the help of cards with the names of the King elect. The whole event described in detail in this article, had a theatrical setting: the throne and the crown were theater props, and elegant suits of the electoral committee came from a clothes rental company. The coronation was broadcast by the Polish radio and the reports from the ceremony included many local and national magazines. Janusz Kwiek was the last 'King' of the Gypsies. His fate during the Second World War remains unknown.

Adam Bartosz and Natalia Gancarz

9.3.2 *The Coronation of a Polish Gypsy King*

The Coronation of a Polish Gypsy King
Ignacy Soller, of Lwow

Seven years ago, in February 1930, with much pomp and circumstance, Michael Kwiek was elected 'King of the Gypsies' at Warsaw, and apparently was still holding his some, what precarious throne as the 'true' monarch in October 1932 (see JGLS (3), IX: 147-2488; X: 150-151; XI: 206-207). In March, 1937 the throne again became vacant through the death of 'King' Mateyas Kwiek [Reported by the Warsaw correspondent of the *Observer* for July 4, 1937, as 'Michael Kwiek, who for five years was the ruler of the Polish Gypsies' – Footnote], who at the age of forty-six was shot in a family feud. At his funeral on March 30, attended only by some thirty relatives, this King's riding-boots, razor, cap and scarlet *diklo* [1], were placed in the coffin.

There then arose five claimants to the throne: four of them Kwieks – Jerzy, Rudolf, Janus and Serge – and the fifth, Anton Cicerski, a Hungarian Gypsy cousin of the dead King. In Poland, there have been elections of Gypsy 'Kings' and 'Barons' on several previous occasions, and no one has paid very much attention to the battles among the rival candidates both before and after such events. But when the news was broadcast that, on this occasion, after his election the new King of the Gypsies would be crowned by the Metropolitan of the Orthodox Church, thousands of spectators flocked to the Army Stadium in Warsaw to attend the unusual ceremony.

The coronation took place at six o'clock in the evening, and official invitations to witness the ceremony (most of them written by Janus Kwiek himself) were sent to the chief Government authorities and representatives of the press and diplomatic circles at Warsaw.

In the middle of the camp was erected a throne decorated with banners of various colours, and near it stood the altar upon which lay a velvet pillow to hold the crown and sceptre and the coronation robes. The crown, made of gilded bronze, is said to have been

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designed by a famous Cracow artist, but the Coronation Chair and robes were borrowed from the Warsaw Opera House.

Suddenly there is a stir among the huge crowd of excited Tziganes, who for the first time for a thousand years are about to see their King crowned by the Church and recognised by the State. The five candidates, discarding their traditional costume, have arrived – and very strange they look in their evening dress coats, white ties and top hats. Following them come the thirty elders, whose votes will decide the election. Each in turn – among them Lazor, Alexander, Joska, Josof Sandulor, Josef Potako, Michael and Jean Wladyslaw from Budapest, Worso Karolare – solemnly places his vote in the golden urn. The Master of the Ceremonies calls through his megaphone for silence and the votes are counted. Janus Kwiek has been elected King. Mass is then celebrated by Archbishop Teodorvic assisted by ministers of the Orthodox Church. After the Mass the Bishop anoints the new King and places the crown on his head and the sceptre in his hand. The King bows humbly before the Bishop, who reverently kisses his hand, and the senators then place on his shoulders the royal robe decorated with fleurs-de-lis. In his address to the Throne the Bishop reminds the audience that their kingly tradition dates from prehistoric times and that now, after an interval of a thousand years, it has been revived. 'May the election of this King unite the Gypsy Race throughout the world and strengthen their social, moral, and family foundations. And may the Tziganes be true to the Polish Republic, which in giving permission for this coronation of a King of the Gypsies, has shown its regard for the whole race.'

King Janus then ascends his throne, and is supported on either side by the Gypsy senators who, one after another, do homage to their newly crowned monarch and, kneeling, take the oath of fidelity to him. At this moment, a salute of twenty-one guns is fired in honour of the Gypsy King.

Amid deafening cheers the King then rises from his throne and addresses his Gypsy subjects in Romani. In their election manifestos all the candidates had promised to preserve 'the true Gypsy tradition' and 'the honour of the Gypsy race', but King Janus, a fifty-two-year-old Tinner from Rembertowo, outvies them all in his declaration.

'First', he announced impressively, 'I will send a delegate to Mussolini, asking him to grant us a strip of territory in Abyssinia, for the settlement of the Gypsy race. Our people have had enough of wandering through the ages: the time now has come for our nomad life to cease. Let us but send our children to the Polish Schools to be educated, and we shall soon have our representative in the League of Nations.'

The King then leaves the stadium, and his departure is followed by traditional songs and dances among the thousands of his subjects who have come to see him crowned.

But alas for the schemes of Royalty! In less than a month after his coronation King Janus's right to the throne was disputed by Rudolf Kwiek, youngest of the rival candidates, who has now put himself at the head of the Polish Tzigane malcontents; while at Nitra, in Czechoslovakia, the Gypsies have passed a resolution refusing to acknowledge the sovereignty of a Polish Tinner.

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Note

1. A 'scarf' in Romani language.

Source: Soller, I. (1938). Coronation of a Polish Gypsy King. *Journal of the Gypsy Lore Society*, Third Series, 17 (2): 71-73.
Prepared for publication by Elena Marushiakova and Vesselin Popov.

Comment

This document is a detailed account of the coronation published in an academic journal. It included notice which gives the event international dimensions, mentioning that among the "five claimants to the throne" one was "a Hungarian Gypsy cousin of the dead King", and from the "thirty elders, whose votes will decide the election" were two who come from Budapest. It is obvious, however, that the international participants were from the same *Kelderari* community, which is proof not of the international character of the Kwieks Kingdom, but of the transnational existence of the *Kelderari* community.

Elena Marushiakova and Vesselin Popov

9.4 Attitudes of the Gypsies towards the Idea of Kingdom

9.4.1 *An Appeal to the Monarch's Heart from a Poor Provincial Gypsy*

Najjaśniejszy Panie, Korono Cygańska, ulituj się!
Apel do monarszego serca biednego cygana prowincjonalnego

Stosunki polityczne w obozie cygańskim w Polsce są bardzo skomplikowane. Przeciętnie uświadomiony obywatel wie, że pracowitym monarchą jest Bazyli Kwiek, że opiekunem narodu cygańskiego z ramienia "zagranicy" jest baron Matejasz Kwiek, że wreszcie istnieje cygański "samozwaniec" książę Michał Kwiek, który żadnych praw do korony rościć sobie nie może.

Skąd o tych zawikłanych sprawach wiedzieć mogą biedni cyganie prowincjonalni, do których z rzadka tylko dochodzą wieści z głównej rezydencji?

Wpadł nam w ręce interesujący list cygana Kazimierza Bielawskiego, zamieszkałego w Sopoćkiniach – do "Najjaśniejszego Pana Korony Cygańskiej w Polsce. Króla (?) Michała II-go".

List ten będący właściwie podaniem, brzmi jak następuje:

"Cygan Kazimierz Bielawski, syn Mateusza, urodzony na Litwie, obecnie zamieszkały w Sopockiniach, ulica Browarna, powiat augustowski, województwo białostockie, mający 86 lat.

Pokorna prośba.

Dowiedziałem się przypadkowo, iż my Cygani doczekaliśmy mieć prawowitego obrońcę i opiekuna nad losem cyganów w osobie Króla.

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Wobec powyższego ja, stary Cygan, i patriota losu Cyganów, składam najserdeczniejsze życzenia i życzę z łaski Boga jak najlepszego zdrowia i długowiecznego utrwalenia Korony Cygańskiej.

A więc Najjaśniejszy Królu, chciałbym ci złożyć swe życzenia naocznie, lecz nie pozwalają mi materialne zasoby na podróż.

Lecz mam nadzieję, że ja, biedny stary cygan, będę miał możność otrzymać zaopiekowanie się osobą moją z łaski Jego Królewskiej Mości, gdzie ginę z nędzy i bez opieki.

Przy tem nadmieniam, że pomimo mego wieku 86-letniego, jestem w zupełnem zdrowiu i chciałbym ci Mości Królu na stare lata wiernie służyć i umrzeć u twoich stóp.

To co miałem na myśli to opisałem i racz Najjaśniejszy Panie, nie odrzucać mej prośby, a mieć mnie na względzie jako szczerego i wiernego, lecz biednego cygana.

Padam do nóg i całuję nogi twe,

Kazimierz Bielawski (niepiśmienny, na jego żądanie podpisał A. Klicki)".

Jeśli ten staroświecki apel tak niefortunnie skierowany dojdzie do rąk Najjaśniejszego Pana, sędziwy cygan prowincjonalny niewątpliwie otrzyma zasłużoną pomoc pieniężną.

∵

Your Highness, Gypsy Crown, have mercy!
An appeal to the monarch's heart from a poor provincial Gypsy

Political relations in the Gypsy camp in Poland are very complicated. An average conscious citizen knows that the industrious monarch is Basyl Kwiek, that the guardian of the Gypsy nation on behalf of the "abroad" is Baron Matejasz Kwiek, and finally that there is a bohemian "self-proclaimed" prince Michael Kwiek, who cannot claim any rights to the crown.

How can the poor provincial Gypsies, who only rarely hear the news from the main palace, know about these complicated things?

An interesting letter from a Gypsy, Kazimierz Bielawski, who lives in Sopoćniki fell into our hands – to "His Highness, Gypsy Crown in Poland. King (?) Michał II".

This letter, which is actually an application, reads as follows:

"Gypsy Kazimierz Bielawski, son of Mateusz, born in Lithuania, currently residing in Sopoćkinie [1], Browarna street, Augustowsks county, Białostocks province, having 86 years old.

A humble request.

I accidentally found out that we, the Gypsies, have finally lived to see a legitimate protector and guardian over the fate of the Gypsies in the person of the King.

In view of the above, I, the old Gypsy, and the patriot [1] of the fate of the Gypsies, send my best wishes and I wish God's grace, the best health and long-lasting preservation of the Gypsy Crown.

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And so, the Brightest King, I would like to give you my wishes personally, but material resources do not allow me for the journey.

But I hope that I, poor old Gypsy, will be able to receive the protection of my person from the grace of Your Majesty, as I am dying of poverty and without care.

I would like to mention that despite my 86-year-old age, I am completely healthy and I would love to serve you and die at your feet for my old years.

What I meant was what I described, and please Lord, do not reject my request, and keep me in mind as a sincere and faithful but poor Gypsy.

I fall to my feet and kiss your legs,

Kazimierz Bielawski (illiterate, at his request signed by A. Klicki)".

If this old-fashioned appeal so misguidedly directed reaches the hands of His Majesty, the old provincial Gypsy will undoubtedly receive well-deserved financial help.

Notes

1. After the First World War the village of Sopoćkinie was located within the Polish state as the headquarters for the Wołłowiczowce municipality in Augustowski county (Northern Poland). Sopoćkinie belongs historically to the Suwałki Region. Nowadays the village is situated in Belarus.

Source: [No Author]. (1931). Najjaśniejszy Panie, Korono Cygańska, ulituj się! *Goniec Wielkopolski*, An. 55, No. 263, 1931, November 13, p. 4.
Prepared for publication by Alicja Gontarek.

Comments

The specificity of Polish sources that relate to the Gypsies in the interwar period is that they hardly reflect the postulates and problems of the Gypsy masses. The voice of the Kwieks, the great individualists, who became the leaders of Gypsy life in Poland, dominates, although their power was illusory.

The original source for this subject is the request of an old, poor Gypsy from the province, located in the north-eastern areas of Poland, who, having learned about the existence of a royal institution, sent an application for financial support to the King. Most likely, he was permanently settled – the north-eastern areas from which he came, served the Polish Gypsies as the so-called lair where they went for the winter, temporarily limiting travel. From such semi-nomadic groups, a part of the Gypsies has moved to a sedentary lifestyle.

His request confirms the fact that ordinary, provincial Gypsies, perhaps not all, in the early 1930s did not know that there was a royal institution in Poland, and that the activity of Kwiek had a large reach at that time. This Gypsy appealed to royal duties, desiring to be under the King's protective wings, which should be interpreted as a sign of full acceptance of this form of leadership in the life of Gypsies in Poland. In addition, the old-fashioned style of the writing begs attention, referring to the style of "subservient" applications written for the Russian Tsar, which also have their own meaning. The royal

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title is closely related to monarchism and not, for example, to chieftaincy or other form of power.

The request raises the most important issue for Gypsies in the early 1930s – the poverty, which had become a serious problem in the era of global economic crisis, having a huge impact on Poland. The newspapers reported this, noting that the number of impoverished camps and encampments had increased, as evidenced by the modest clothing of Gypsies and simple, unornamented carts. The number of criminal acts among nomads had also increased. The Kwieks were not interested in these problems. They rather cut themselves off from those who were at the lowest level of the Gypsy social hierarchy. There are no traces of their activity towards solving flaming social issues.

The poverty became more visible when in the second half of the 1930s an emigration wave from neighbouring countries came to Poland. The rise of nationalisms in Europe had pushed them to the margins, and the development of technology took away work. Nevertheless, it was in interwar Poland that they found a reasonably safe haven considering the developments in Europe in the second half of the 1930s.

Alicja Gontarek

9.4.2 *The Poznan Gypsies – Enemies of King Kwiek*

Poznańscy cyganie – wrogami króla Kwieka

Od kilkunastu dni panuje między cyganami w Polsce znaczne ożywienie. Wszędzie, gdzie tylko mieszkają i koczują cyganie, dotarły wici "króla cyganów" Michała Kwieka, który wezwał swoich poddanych do Równego na Wołyniu, na uroczystości koronacji.

Uroczystość ta odbyć się na za kilka dni. Jeżeli wierzyć doniesieniom, to pod Równem powstało już gwarne miasto z wozów i namiotów cygańskich. Na drogach obserwuje się teraz liczne wędrówki cyganów, zdążających na Wołyń.

W związku z koronacją w Równem zainteresowaliśmy się, czy też poznańscy cyganie wysyłają na tę uroczystość swoich delegatów. W Poznaniu – nie każdy o tem wie – mieszka stale siedem rodzin cygańskich, pochodzących z dwóch odrębnych szczepów. Jedna grupa żyje w podwórzu Barlebena (przy ul. Szyperskiej) i zajmuje się handlem końmi, a druga w domu przy ul. Wenecjańskiej 5. Głównym źródłem utrzymania drugiej grupy ma być muzyka.

Cyganie poznańscy są już silnie spolszczeni. Wielu z nich urodziło się w Poznaniu. Młodzi cyganie odbywają służbę w wojsku polskim, a dzieci cygańskie chodzą do polskiej szkoły powszechnej i uczą się razem z dziećmi obywateli poznańskich – języka polskiego i zasad religii katolickiej.

Zresztą religja jest u poznańskich cyganów podstawą rodziny. Chlubią się, że mają dzieci ślubne. Mieszkania swoje zdobią obrazami świętych, a do Matki Boskiej Częstochowskiej mają szczególne nabożeństwo.

– Czy jedzie kto z was na koronację "króla" Kwieka? – pytamy jednego z cyganów na podwórzu Barlebena.

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– Hm, król – odpowiada zapytany – głupszy ode mnie. – My nie zajmujemy się wyrabianiem patelni – podkreśla z dumą.

– Więc wasze zajęcie jako handlarzy koni jest godniejsze, niż "króla" Kwieka?

– A pewnie. My uczciwie zarabiamy na chleb – oświadczył cygan i wskazał na stajnię, pełną dobrze utrzymanych koni.

Cyganie w domu przy ul. Wenecjańskiej 5 mieszkają na poddaszu. Trzeba iść pionowemi, wykrzywionemi schodami. W klatce schodowej słychać grę na skrzypcach.

W domu są tylko kobiety, schludnie ubrane, gromada dzieci i wyrostek, wygrywający jakieś smętne melodie. Dorośli mężczyźni poszli na miasto muzyką zarabiać na chleb.

Gdy wspomnieliśmy o Kwieku, nie chciano z nami rozmawiać. Cyganie z ulicy Wenecjańskiej odnoszą się z zawiścią do "cygańskiego króla", który "bezprawnie" sięga po berło.

– Nie potrzebujemy króla! – mówią. – Polskim cyganom wystarczy Prezydent Polski.

Przy tej okazji dowiadujemy się, że dwa lata temu bawił "król" Kwiek w Poznaniu osobiście i starał się pozyskać głosy poznańskich cyganów dla swojej sprawy. Jego królewska mość Kwiek na próżno stracił trzy dni na pobyt w Poznaniu. Niczego nie uzyskał i wyjechał do innych miast czynić propagandę za swoją osobą.

– Kwiek może polować na koczowników i złodziei, a nie na porządnych ludzi! – oświadczyła dobitnie młoda cyganka, siedząca z robótką w ręku pod piecykiem.

– A co byłaby pani zrobiła, gdyby teraz sam Kwiek tu przyjechał?

– To samo, co panu mówię: zbiłabym go na kwaśne jabłko, ażeby mu się odechciało królewskiego panowania.

Jak się okazuje, poznańscy cyganie są wrogami "monarchii". Usposobienie ich jest nastawione raczej po republikańsku. Wobec tego nie jadą też na uroczystość koronacyjną do Równego.

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The Poznan Gypsies – Enemies of King Kwiek

For a dozen or so days there has been a significant revival among Gypsies in Poland. Everywhere, where only the Gypsies live and stay, a message arrived that the "King of Gypsies" Michał Kwiek invited his subjects to Rivne in Volhynia for the coronation ceremony.

The ceremony will take place in a few days. If we were to believe reports, at Rivne a bustling city of carts and Gypsy tents is already created. On the roads there are now numerous journeys of Gypsies heading for Volhynia.

In connection with the coronation in Rivne, we were interested in whether Poznan Gypsies would send their delegates to this ceremony. In Poznan – not everyone knows about it – there have always been seven Gypsy families, coming from two separate tribes. One group lives in the Barleben yard (at Szyperska Street) and deals in horse trading and the other in the house at Wenecjańska 5 Street [1]. The main source of income of the second group is music.

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The Poznan Gypsies are already highly polonized. Many of them were born in Poznan. Young Gypsies serve in the Polish army, and Gypsy children go to a Polish general school and learn together with the children of Poznan citizens – the Polish language and the principles of Catholic religion.

Besides, the religion is the foundation of the family among Poznan Gypsies. They pride themselves that none of their children has ever been born out of wedlock. They decorate their homes with paintings of saints, and they have a special devotion to Our Lady of Czestochowa [2].

– Is anyone of you going to the coronation of the "King" Kwiek'? – we ask one of the Gypsies in the Barleben yard.

– Well, the King – the respondent answers – is more stupid than me. – We do not make pans – he emphasises with pride.

– So your occupation as horse traders is more valuable than "King" Kwiek's?

– Definitely. We earn money honestly, said the Gypsy and pointed to the stable, full of well-kept horses.

Gypsies at home at Wenecjańska 5 Street live in the attic. You have to go upright, on crocked stairs. In the staircase you can hear the violin.

There are only women in the house, neatly dressed, a group of children and an adolescent, playing some melancholic melodies. Adult men went to the city to make a living.

When we mentioned Kwiek, they did not want to talk to us. Gypsies from Wenecjańska Street refer with envy to the "Gypsy King" who "unlawfully" reaches for the sceptre.

– We do not need a King! – they say. – Polish President [3] is enough for Polish Gypsies.

On this occasion, we find out that two years ago, "King" Kwiek stayed in Poznań, where he tried to win the votes of the Poznań gypsies for his cause.

His majesty Kwiek lost three days in vain by staying in Poznan. He did not get anything and went to other cities to do a propaganda for himself.

– Kwiek can hunt for nomads and thieves, not for decent people! – a Gypsy girl, sitting with the needle in hand under the stove, said emphatically.

– And what would you do if Kwiek himself came here?

– The same thing as I tell you: I would have marmalised him so that he would not feel like reigning anymore.

As it turns out, Poznan Gypsies are the enemies of the "monarchy". Their disposition is rather republican. Therefore, they do not go to the coronation ceremony to Rivne.

Notes

1. Both streets are located in the centre of Poznan, in the Old Town.
2. This is one of the cults of Mary, the mother of Christ, widespread in Poland since the end of the 19th century. It was founded on the basis of the miraculous painting found in the most important Polish Marian sanctuary in Jasna Góra in Czestochowa. Our Lady of Czestochowa is one of the most important cult for the community of Polska Roma.
3. In the years 1926-1939, the President of Poland was Ignacy Mościcki (1867-1946).

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Source: [No Author]. (1936). Poznańscy cyganie – wrogami króla Kwieka. *Orędownik: ilustrowane pismo narodowe i katolickie*, An. 66, No. 60, 1936, December 12, p. 8.
Prepared for publication by Alicja Gontarek.

Comments

In interwar Poland, the subject of settled Gypsies and their lives, and even more, their worldview, was very rarely discussed, thus the greater the value of the published article.

Lack of interest in this topic resulted from the fact that the phenomenon of Gypsy settlements, especially in cities, had an extremely limited scope in interwar Poland and was a barely noticeable spontaneous process of passing small groups of Gypsies from a nomadic to a sedentary way of life. Most settled Gypsies lived in villages and suburban areas. In the interwar period, statistics in this respect were carried out only by the state police, which, however, did not have full data, and from these circles, let us add, there were postulates aimed at carrying out a general census of Gypsies in Poland.

According to police data from the early 1930s, there were 7,000 Gypsies registered in Poland (Strzelecki, 1932, p. 708). Certainly, they were not just the settled ones, but rather the number of those who were counted. In the Poznan province, whose capital was the city of Poznan, there were only 279 Gypsies, but we do not know how many of them lived in this city centre.

The recurring motif in the press related to the description of the settled Gypsies is their distinct distance, or even their dislike, to nomadic groups, an ardent Catholic faith, far-reaching assimilation and polonisation. Settled Gypsies, according the interpretation of the press, did not create an organisation and did not integrate into their environment. Their new identity was built primarily on a sedentary lifestyle and on cutting off from a nomadic lifestyle, as a kind of achievement that testified about the advancement of civilization.

The attitude of Poznan Gypsies, and probably other similar groups, to King Kwiek and his initiative to organise the Gypsy Congress in Rivne illustrates that the royal institution and its way of acting were anachronistic, old-fashioned and grotesque for them. They did not want this kind of representation, rejecting, as it seems, the need to create it at all. Rather, they referred to the criterion of citizenship. They wanted to operate outside the organisational system proposed by Kwiek.

Alicja Gontarek

9.5 The International Activities of Gypsy Kings

9.5.1 *The Polish "King of Gypsies" Expelled from Czechoslovakia*

Polski "król cyganów" wydalony z Czechosłowacji

Znany w Polsce "król cyganów" Michał Kwiek, przyjechał ostatnio do Czechosłowacji celem spisania swych poddanych mieszkających w Czechosłowacji. Kwiek zamieszkał

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w Morawskiej Ostrawie i przyjmował liczne odwiedziny zastępców cyganów z krajów sąsiednich, j. Rumunji, Węgier, Jugosławii i z Bałkanu. Odwiedziny te niechętnie były widziane przez władze czechosłowackie, które odmówiły Kwiekowi prawa dalszego pobytu w Czechosłowacji, wobec czego wyjechał on do Hiszpanii i Portugalji, a następnie udać się ma do Brazylji.

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The Polish "King of Gypsies" expelled from Czechoslovakia

Known in Poland as the "King of Gypsies" Michał Kwiek, came to Czechoslovakia recently to make a census of his subjects living in Czechoslovakia. Kwiek stayed in Moravian Ostrava and received numerous visits from deputies of Gypsies from neighbouring countries, from Romania, Hungary, Yugoslavia and the Balkans. These visits were reluctantly seen by the Czechoslovak authorities, who refused Kwiek the right to stay in Czechoslovakia, so he went to Spain and Portugal, and then he travelled to Brazil.

Source: [No Author]. (1932a). Polski "król cyganów" wydalony z Czechosłowacji. *Ilustrowany Kuryer Codzienny*, An. 23I, No. 148, 1932, May 30, p. 10.
Prepared for publication by Alicja Gontarek.

Comments

Michał II Kwiek was the only Polish Gypsy King crowned in Poland, who had been known to have a group of supporters outside of Poland, although we do not know how large it was. The only source of knowledge on this subject in the light of the sources of Polish provenance is the press that reported about his journeys to the countries of southern Europe, looking more closely at trips to Czechoslovakia.

From reflections in the press (cf. Gontarek, 2017b, pp. 1-21) we can speculate that because Kwiek aimed to encompass under his authority Gypsies living mainly, except Poland, in three countries (Czechoslovakia, Romania and Hungary), the authorities withdrew their support for him as the King of the Polish Gypsies in the 1930s, seeing in his actions the danger resulting from the fact that his foreign activity escaped governmental control. One can suppose that the government's idea concerning the Gypsy case was such that it would create a strong Gypsy leadership in Poland that would be able to keep the Gypsy nomads in check and possibly change their habits. The system of government of Michał II Kwiek presented in the article promoted a settled lifestyle among Gypsies, education and professional productivization and that could be an explanation why the Polish government and pro-government press looked at him kindly and with curiosity, because his goals appeared convergent with government intentions. However, no support was given for creating supranational structures centered in the Polish state, even as primitive and vague as the royal institution represented by Kwiek.

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The article contains information that Kwiek's fame also reached Yugoslavia and the entire Balkans, which presuposes the scale of his activity, the ultimate goal of which was to create a state for the Gypsies.

The press coverage informs us about the unkind approach of the Czechoslovak authorities to Kwiek's visits in this country, but it should be noted that there is no criticism of him. One can even get the impression that this pro-government newspaper (as well as any other press related to the authorities) deliberately did not report the actual course of events related to this visit to Czechoslovakia, to not discredit the King and not reveal the backdrop of his stay.

According another press report, Kwiek had a coronation in the Czech Republic (Nowy Kurjer, 1934, p. 3) and he could do this because in Poland he was dethroned by Basyl Kwiek. His visit in those territories coincided with the resolution introduced by the Czechoslovak authorities, according to which all the Gypsies were obliged to enforce dactyloscopy (Nowy Kurjer, 1930, p. 7; 1934, p. 3). It provoked a violent opposition from Kwiek. For this reason, he was expelled from Czechoslovakia. When he again crossed the border illegally, he was arrested (Nowy Kurjer, 1934, p. 3). This short history of his resistance is a very important aspect of the activity of this Gypsy leader, showing his active fight against discrimination of Gypsies. No other Polish Gypsy King took the floor in this matter, nor did they object to the public fingerprinting, rightly perceiving it as a form of persecution of the Gypsy population.

Fingerprinting in the 1920s also came into force in Poland, but this action was not vigorously carried out (Misztal, 2008, pp. 63-71).

Alicja Gontarek

9.5.2 *The King of Gypsies Michał II Kwiek in Romania*

"Król" cyganów Michał II Kwiek z Poznania w Rumunji
Korespondencja własna "Ilustr. Kuryera Codz."
Czerniowce, w październiku

Rumunja dostąpiła nielada zaszczytu! – W jej granicach bawi obecnie *Czobazimos* (co znaczy "Jego Królewska Mość" w języku cygańskim) Michał II Kwiek. Król Michał II przybył do Czernowiec z okazji odbytego przed kilku dniami kongresu cygańskiego w Radowicach, w którym wzięło udział około sześć tysięcy Cyganów z Bukowiny oraz delegaci innych prowincyj.

Miałem sposobność zetknąć się osobiście w Konsulacie R. P. w Czerniowcach z "królem". Michał II to człowiek dziarski, barczysty, w wieku około 50 lat. Włada kilkoma językami.

Michał II Kwiek jest następcą swego ojca, Grzegorza, który z powodu swego podeszłego wieku (75 lat) abdykował. Cyganie obwołali Michała II w sali "Niespodzianki" w Piastowie pod Warszawą królem Cyganów.

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Król wyjmuje ze swego skórzanego portfelu dwa dokumenty i daje mi do przeglądnięcia. Jeden to zezwolenie władz polskich na odbycie elekcji, a drugi do dokument świadczący o jego wyborze, zaopatrzony w setki podpisów i odcisków palców.

Zaciekawiło mnie, jak król Michał sprawuje władze nad swoim niesfornym narodem. W odpowiedzi oświadczył król, że posiada obok siebie sztab, złożony z siedmiu "ministrów", na których czele stoi Rudolf Kwiek, kuzyn "króla". Posiada też swego "ministra spr. zagranicznych", którzy ma za zadanie komunikowanie się z organizacjami cygańskiemi różnych państw. W "rządzie" Michała II jest też i "minister pracy", którego zadaniem jest pośrednictwo pracy.

Czobazimos dba również o podniecenie oświaty wśród Cyganów.

Cyganie posiadają swoją szkołę początkową w Poznaniu, rezydencji króla. Przy tej sposobności nadmienię, że król Michał II jest kotlarzem z zawodu i posiada fabrykę kotłów w Poznaniu, gdzie pracuje około 450 pracowników-Cyganów. Dla dzieci tych pracowników właśnie założył tę szkołę. "Minister oświaty" Michała II ma poczynić kroki, ażeby uzyskać zezwolenie na otwarcie gimnazjum cygańskiego w Bukareszcie.

Na pytanie, dlaczego właśnie w Bukareszcie, otrzymałem odpowiedź:

– W Rumunji jest chyba najwięcej Cyganów. Dla łagodzenia sporów posiada król trzech sędziów i prokuratora, którego nazywa czasem "ministrem sprawiedliwości".

Jak mi powiedział, posiada również swoje więzienie. Karać może tylko jednak przestępstwa, nieobjęte kodeksem karnym.

– Jak wykonuje władzę nad cyganami, zamieszkałymi w innych państwach?

Na to pytanie odpowiedział "król", że w każdem państwie stoi na czele cyganów "wojewoda", bezpośrednio mu podległy.

– W końcu zapytałem, czy ruchu cygańskiego nie należy traktować jako tworzenia nowej mniejszości?

– Cyganie nie są kastą – odrzekł Czobazinos Michał II. – Cyganie są narodem, jak każdy inny. Moje zadanie widzę nie w tworzeniu nowej mniejszości, co przy silniejszym ruchu cygańskim pominąć się nie da, ale dążę do utworzenia państwa cygańskiego w Azji nad Gangesem, do której to ziemi mamy zresztą historyczne prawo. W tym też celu udaję się z Rumunji przez Ateny i Azję Mniejszą do Indyj. Po drodze będę, podobnie jak i w Rumunji, odwiedzał cyganów.

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"King" of Gypsies Michał II Kwiek from Poznan in Romania
Own correspondence *Ilustrowany Kuryer Codzienny*
Chernivtsi, in October

Romania was granted a great honour! – Its territory enjoys the presence of *Czobazimos* [1] (which means "His Majesty" in the Gypsy language) Michał II Kwiek. King Michał II

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came to Chernivtsi on the occasion of the Gypsy Congress in Radowice [2] that happened a few days ago, which was attended by about six thousand Gypsies from Bukovina as well as delegates from other provinces.

I had an opportunity to personally meet the "King" at the R. P. Consulate in Chernivtsi [3]. Michał II is a lively and broad-shouldered man who is around 50 years old. He speaks several languages.

Michał II Kwiek is the successor to his father, Grzegorz whom because of his advanced age (75 years old) abdicated. The Gypsies proclaimed Michał II the King of Gypsies in the hall of "Niespodzianka" in Piastów near Warsaw.

The King takes two documents out of his leather wallet and gives them to me to have a look. The first one is a permission of the Polish authorities to hold the election, and the second one is a document testifying to his election, supplied with hundreds of signatures and fingerprints [4].

I wondered how King Michał exercises authority over his unruly nation. In his response, the King declared that he has a staff composed of seven "ministers", the leader of which is Rudolf Kwiek, the "King's" cousin. He also has his own "minister of foreign affairs", who is tasked with communication with Gypsy organisations from various countries. In the "government" of Michał II there is also a "minister of labour", who is tasked with job mediation.

Czobazimos also deals with the improvement of education among Gypsies.

The Gypsies have their own initial school in Poznan, at the residence of the King. At this point I would like to mention that King Michał II is a cauldron-maker by profession and he owns a cauldron factory in Poznan, where around 450 Gypsies are employed. This school was set up for the children of those employees. Michał II's "Minister of education" is to take steps to obtain a permission to open a Gypsy gymnasium in Bucharest.

For the question, why in Bucharest, I was answered:

– The largest number of Gypsies is probably in Romania. To mitigate the disputes, the King has three judges and a prosecutor, who is sometimes referred to as the "minister of justice".

As he told me, he also has his prison. However, he can only punish crimes which are not covered by the penal code.

– How does he exercise power over Gypsies living in other countries?

To this question the "King" answered that in every country the leader of the Gypsies is a "voivode", directly subordinate to the King.

– Finally, I asked whether the Gypsy movement should be treated as a creation of new minority?

– Gypsies are not a caste – replied Czobazinos Michał II. – Gypsies are a nation, as any other. I do not see my task as creating a new minority, which with a stronger Gypsy movement cannot be omitted, but I strive for the creation of a Gypsy country in Asia near the Ganges, to which land we have historical rights. For this purpose, I am traveling from Romania through Athens and Asia Minor to India. On the way, I will visit Gypsies, just like in Romania.

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Notes

1. *Czobazimos* – illegible word, may be mishearded by the journalist.
2. Radowice was the Polish name of the Romanian city Rădăuţi.
3. The Consulate of the Republic of Poland in Chernivtsi from 1933 was headed by Marian Witosław Uzdowski (1890-?), who belonged to the circle of people closely related to Józef Piłsudski (1867-1935), the founder of the Polish state.
4. These documents were not discovered in the Polish archives yet.

Source: Kolbusz, S. (1934a). "Król" cyganów Michał II Kwiek z Poznania w Rumunji. *Ilustrowany Kuryer Codzienny*, An. 25, No. 291, 1934, October 20, p. 4.
Prepared for publication by Alicja Gontarek.

Comments

The published press coverage is an important record based on the participation of the Polish King Michał Kwiek in the Gypsy Congress, which took place in Radowice, Romania, where Gypsies sought to build a uniform, effective organisation. The event is one of many he attended, gaining knowledge and experience about the self-organisation of the Gypsy community, which he intended to transfer to Poland. However, he lost the support of the Polish government, the possibilities to do so were limited.

Observing intently the course of the meeting, he shared his plans with the Polish journalist, who was interviewing him, revealing his direction of thinking about the future of the Gypsies. He considered the crystallisation and formation of Gypsies as a new national minority as an inevitable stage, but at the same time a minimalist action. His declared personal goal was to support the aspirations to create their own state. It should be recognised, therefore, that this was a very modern postulate. He wanted to create it in India, probably guided by the knowledge of the origin of the Gypsies from these areas. Later, he became more involved with the vision of establishing Gypsy statehood in Africa.

Michał Kwiek's words about his far-sighted plans are a unique record, although very short, in which we can get to know almost *in extenso* the manner of the King's argumentation, not subjected to far-reaching journalistic processing.

Certainly, Kwiek wanted to modernise management of his rule and maybe to reproduce good Romanian Gypsy patterns, as evidenced by the presentation of the organisational structure of his power, divided into "ministries". However, he went much further in his plans. The progressive and innovative approach to the future of Gypsies in Europe shows that he propagated the ideas of primary and secondary education among Gypsies and professional productisation. Undoubtedly, he promoted the most modern solution among all Polish Gypsy Kings, not so much in the spirit of integration but a well-understood nationalism. His presence at the congress meant that he himself had entered the path of this consolidation, not joining Romanian Gypsies but trying to look for his own solutions, more as a representative of the Gypsy elite than the Polish Gypsy leader.

Alicja Gontarek

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9.5.3 *The Office of the Central Gypsy Organisation to be Established in Warsaw*

Biuro centr[alnej] organizacji Cyganów ma powstać w Warszawie

Nowoobrany król Cyganów Janusz Kwiek, nie zważając na protesty pewnego odłamu swych rodaków, którzy byli niezadowoleni z jego wyboru na króla, postępuje coraz bardziej po dyktatorsku. Do władz administracyjnych król Janusz składa liczne podania, które mają na celu ujęcie w karby władzy królewskiej rządów nad narodem.

Niedawno wpłynęło podanie króla Janusza, aby otrzymał on przywilej wyznaczania Cyganom miejsc na obozy. Wczoraj król Janusz złożył nowe podanie tym razem z prośbą o zezwolenie na otwarcie w Warszawie biura centralnej organizacji państwa Cyganów. Ma ono załatwić różne sprawy podwładnych króla Janusza, a między innymi ma zająć się również i rejestracją Cyganów nie tylko w Polsce, ale i w całej Europie.

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The office of the central Gypsy organisation to be established in Warsaw

The newly-elected King of the Gypsies Janusz Kwiek, despite the protests of a certain faction of his own folk who were dissatisfied with his choice as King, is acting more and more like a dictator. Janusz inundates the administrative authorities with numerous applications, which are aimed at making his royal power over his nation stricter and more formalized.

In his recent petition King Janusz requests to be granted the privilege of designating places for Gypsy camp sites. Yesterday, King Janusz submitted a new application, this time with a request for the permission to open an office of the central organisation of the Gypsy state in Warsaw. It is supposed to deal with various matters of Janusz's subordinates and, among other things, it is also supposed to deal with the registration of Gypsies not only in Poland but throughout Europe.

Source: [No Author]. (1937). Biuro centr[alnej] organizacji Cyganów ma powstać w Warszawie. *Mały Dziennik*, An. 3, No. 194, 1937, July 15, p. 5.
Prepared for publication by Adam Bartosz and Natalia Gancarz.

9.6 The Dream about Our Own State

9.6.1 *The Gypsies' Dreams about Their Own Country in Egypt*

Na marginesie cywilizacji
Marzenia polskich cyganów o własnym państwie w Egipcie

Na rozesłanej w szałasie macie, siedzi przed nami po turecku krępy, wąsaty cygan, Rudolf Kwiek. Pochodzi z królewskiego rodu, jest kanclerzem i prezesem Wielkiej Rady Cyganów Polskich.

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Zaczyna mówić o historii swego narodu, nieco naiwnej, nieco zmyślonej, która przechowuje się w podawanej z ust do ust legendzie.

– Wierzymy, że naród cygański niezawsze cierpiał poniewierkę i tułaczkę jak teraz. Cyganie panowali kiedyś nad światem. Należało do nich potężne państwo starożytne – Egipt. Faraon, to był nasz car najwyższy i władca. Dlatego w naszym herbie mamy kołpak Faraona, a pod nim młotek, kowadło i bat – godła naszego późniejszego tułaczego życia.

Dwóch wtedy było największych wodzów na świecie: Mojsiej żydowski i Faraon cygański. Oni wojowali ze sobą. Ale żydzi, taksamo wtedy jak i dziś mieli więcej oświaty od cyganów i zwyciężyli. To wszystko Biblja opisuje. Kiedy Mojsiej wyprowadzał żydów z Egiptu i musieli przejść przez Morze Czarne, a nie mieli okrętów, powiedział Dieł (Bóg) do Mojsieja: "Weź pan dwie pałeczki i uderz pan po morzu, a rozstąpi się." Żydzi przeszli suchą nogą, a cygańskie wojsko woda zalała. Część jednak ocalała, rozbiegła się po świecie i tuła do dziś dnia.

Ale już dość mają cyganie wędrówki. Chcemy powrócić do swojej ojczyzny i stworzyć własne państwo. Tak, jak żydzi dostali Palestynę, tak my chcemy, żeby nam przyznano Egipt, albo inny kraj w Afryce. Właśnie przed paroma miesiącami byłem w Afryce, żeby na miejscu zbadać możliwości kolonizacji cygańskiej.

– W Afryce koczuje trochę cyganów – mówi dalej kanclerz – i doskonale im się powodzi. Za pobielenie kotła murzyni płacą złotym piaskiem. Ale my chcemy osadzić cyganów na roli.

– A czy nie zatęsknią oni do dawnego życia?

– O, już dawno sprzykrzyła się nam włóczęga! Wszędzie przepędzają cygana, niema gdzie głowy złożyć.

– W jaki sposób dążą cyganie do zrealizowania idei własnego państwa?

– Przede wszystkiem na całym świecie przeprowadzamy rejestrację cyganów. Teraz złożyłem podanie do Komisarjatu Rządu o pozwolenie przeprowadzenia rejestracji w Polsce. *Jeszcześmy* tej rzeczy nie przeprowadzili, ale, jak obliczamy znajdzie się w Polsce około 19 tys. naszych rodaków, a na całym świecie – ze 30 miljonów. Nie tak to łatwo przeprowadzić. Bo jak cygan pojedzie do lasu to i benk (djabeł) go nie znajdzie. Z tego samego powodu *mamy wielkie* kłopoty ze sprawowaniem władzy. Musimy stanowczo skupić cyganów na jedno miejsce. Ale nie mamy gdzie.

– Mówił pan o sprawowaniu władzy. Kto rządzi cyganami?

– Mamy organizację międzynarodową i krajową. Na szczycie tej władzy stoi król królów, wielki imperator Janosz Kwiek w Londynie. Rozsyła on rozkazy telegraficzne w różnych językach, przeważnie po hiszpańsku, do królów cygańskich we wszystkich krajach. W Polsce królem jest mój brat, Bazyli Kwiek. Sprawuje on władzę nad wszystkiemi rajbaro (wójtami), stojących na czele butrumów (taborów). Każdy rajbaro jest wybierany na rok przez swój butrom. Wójtowie tworzą Wielką Radę, której jestem prezesem. Prócz tego jest sąd z 12-tu sędziów-Krisban. Sąd ten sądzi sprawy cywilne. Kryminalne oddajemy sądom państwowym, bo jesteśmy lojalni wobec kraju, w którym mieszkamy. Rajbaro musi meldować królowi o każdorazowym dłuższym postoju w jakiejś miejscowości. Ale

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dużo jest takich co ukrywają. Teraz właśnie król pojechał ścigać dezerterów i opornych. W Bydgoszczy aresztował tego bandytę, Michała Kwieka.

– Czy wszyscy cyganie należą do jednego narodu, mają wspólny język i religję?

– *Religję mamy rozmaitą*. Język jest wszędzie jeden, ale różne narzecza.

– A czy jest jakieś piśmiennictwo?

– Pisma własnego jeszcze nie mamy. Dopiero teraz Janosz Kwiek chce wprowadzić własny alfabet, według pisma egipskiego, które odnaleziono w grobach faraonów.

– Jeszcze jedno, niedyskretne pytanie: z czego utrzymują się władze cygańskie?

– Królowie są bogaci, Janosz w Londynie najbogatszy i nas wspomaga. Teraz naprzykład przysłał pieniądze na budowę pałacu dla króla Bazylego. Pałac stanie na Bielanach. Ale chcemy wprowadzić podatki, np. po 25 zł. od ślubu.

Prosimy przyjechać do nas w święto.

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On the margins of civilisation
The Gypsies' dreams about their own country in Egypt

In front of us, on a mat spread in the shack squats a moustached Gypsy – Rudolf Kwiek. He comes from the Royal family, he is the Chancellor and president of the Great Council of Polish Gypsies.

He begins to talk about the history of his nation, a bit naïve, somewhat imaginary, which is kept in the legends passed from mouth to mouth.

– We believe that the Gypsy nation, much like now, has always suffered misery and wandering. Gypsies once ruled over the world. A powerful ancient state – Egypt, used to belong to them. Pharaoh, this was our supreme tsar and ruler. That is why in our coat of arms we have the cap of Pharaoh, and under it there is a hammer, anvil and whip – the emblem of our later wandering life.

There were two greatest leaders in the world back then: Jewish Moses and Gypsy Pharaoh [1]. They fought with each other. But Jews, just like today, had more education compared to Gypsies and won. This is all described in the Bible. When Moses was leading Jews out of Egypt and they had to cross the Black Sea [2], and they did not have ships, God said to Moses: "Take two sticks and hit the sea and it will part." The Jews went through on a dry ground, and the Gypsy army was flooded. Some, however, survived, they were scattered around the world and they wander to this day.

But they have had enough of Gypsy migration. We want to return to our homeland and create our own state. Just as the Jews got Palestine, we want us to be granted Egypt or another country in Africa. Just a few months ago I was in Africa to investigate on the ground the possibilities of Gypsy colonisation.

– In Africa, some Gypsies lead a nomadic life – the Chancellor continues – and they are doing well. For the whitening of the cauldron, black people pay with golden sand. But we want to settle Gypsies on the land.

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– Won't they miss their old life?

– Oh, we have been done with roaming for a long time! They chase away the Gypsies everywhere, no place to lay your head.

– How do Gypsies achieve the idea of their own country?

– First of all, we register Gypsies around the world. I have now applied to the Government Commission [3] for permission to conduct a registration in Poland. We have not carried this out yet, but as we calculate, in Poland there will be around 19,000 of our compatriots, and around the world – around 30 million. This is not an easy thing to do. Because if a Gypsy goes to the forest, then even a demon cannot find him. For the same reason, we have *great problems* with exercising power. We must definitely focus on getting the Gypsies in one place. But we do not have that place.

– You spoke about exercising power. Who rules the Gypsies?

– We have an international and a national organisation. At the top of this power there is the King of Kings, the great emperor Janosz Kwiek in London. He sends out telegraph orders in various languages, mostly in Spanish, to Gypsy Kings in all countries. In Poland, my brother, Basil Kwiek, is the King. He exercises power over all *rajbaro* (the *vojts*) [4], standing at the head of the *butrumi* (tabors) [5]. Each *rajbaro* is chosen for a year by its *butrum*. The heads of the camps form the Grand Council, of which I am the president. In addition, there is a court with 12 judges – *Krisbans* [6]. This court judge civil matters. We leave criminal prosecutions to state courts because we are loyal to the country in which we live. *Rajbaro* must report to the King every time he stops in a town. But there are many who hide themselves. Now the King has gone to chase the deserters and those who are stubborn. In the city of Bydgoszcz, he arrested this bandit, Michał Kwiek.

– Do all Gypsies belong to one nation, have a common language and religion?

– We have many religions. Language is one, but in different dialects.

– Is there any writing?

– We do not have our own writing yet. Only now Janosz Kwiek wants to introduce our own alphabet, according to the Egyptian writing, which were found in the graves of the pharaohs.

– One more, indiscreet question: How are the Gypsy authorities supported?

– Kings are rich, Janosz is the richest in London and he supports us. Now, for example, he sent money to build the palace for King Basil. The palace will be located in Bielany [7]. But we want to introduce taxes, for example 25 zlotys from a wedding.

Please come to us on the holiday.

Notes

1. The legends about the origin from Egypt and Gypsy King Pharaoh were widespread among Gypsies in all studied region since the Middle Ages. They are best preserved in Roma folklore in South-Eastern Europe (cf. Chapter 2 and 3).
2. Instead of the Black Sea should be the Red Sea.
3. Commissariat Government for the Capital City of Warsaw – in the interwar period a separate administrative unit dedicated to administering the capital city of Warsaw. The Government Commissioner was directly reporting to the Ministry of the Internal Affairs.

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4. From Romani language, *Raj* means a signor, *baro* big. The term here is used as designation of head of the camp.
5. From Romani language, *but* means many, *rum* is a phonetical version of the word Rom (Gypsy). The term here is used as a designation of the entity of nomadic camp members.
6. This is a reference the traditional Gypsy court, known as *Romani Kris*.
7. Bielany – the northern district of Warsaw.

Source: [No Author]. (1931b). Na marginesie cywilizacji. Marzenia polskich cyganów o własnym państwie w Egipcie. *Gazeta Polska*, An. 3, No. 145, 1931, May 29, p. 8.
Prepared for publication by Alicja Gontarek.

Comments

There are several points in this article. Although Kwiek's statements on the willingness to set up a state for Gypsies appear in the Polish press many times, in this case we have to deal with the rare arguments accompanying these plans. It is interesting because they were mentioned in an interview given by Kwiek himself. Based on his knowledge, he indicates the reasons for the state-building action. The basis of activities is the knowledge about the history of Gypsies, dating back to the biblical times, when, as Kwiek argues, they had their state in Egypt, competing as a powerful nation with Jews. Otherwise, it is the Jewish *casus*, i.e. their efforts in the interwar period for the national place in Palestine, which is a kind of inspiration for Kwiek. This is a very important topic in the context of Gypsy efforts for their homeland. This imitation shows a close observation of the Jews' actions by the Gypsy elite. The more important is that Poland was the largest centre of Jewish life in Europe in the interwar period. In addition, the search for their own state was induced by a reluctant attitude to traveling Gypsies, which was experienced by almost every one of them. The desire to find a home country was not dictated, however, by a literal understanding of the Egyptian legend – it could have been created in another African country, which is proof of some flexibility among the Gypsy elite.

The means to achieve this goal, as we learn from Kwiek, was the global registration of Gypsies, and it seemed to be a program for him at that time. Unfortunately, it has never been carried out in Poland. The Kwieks themselves did not know how many of them there were in Poland, nor were the Polish institutions – governmental or scientific – interested in this issue. The Polish party has never taken a similar action. Therefore, if the tool for achieving the long-term goal of a national dwelling place was the mentioned registration, Polish Gypsies were slipping away from the attempts of statistical calculations. In this context, surely the nomadic way of life has made the integration process more difficult, as Kwiek himself said in the interview. However, the fact of articulating such difficulties indicates that in the 1930s also Polish Gypsies entered the path to initial consolidation. Asking themselves questions about numbers and registration attempts indicate that the Gypsy elite was aware that this was one of the first steps to modernise.

Alicja Gontarek

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9.6.2 *The King of the Gypsies, Michał Kwiek, Asks for Land in Africa*
Król cyganów Michał Kwiek prosi o ziemię w Afryce

(z). Prasa angielska donosi, iż król cygański, Michał Kwiek, który – jak donosiliśmy – został wydalony z granic Czechosłowacji, przybył do Londynu, gdzie zwrócił się do rządu angielskiego z prośbą o prawo osiedlenia się 15 tys. rodzin cygańskich w Afryce.

Król cyganów przygotował w tym celu specjalną petycję, która zaopatrzona jest w kilka tysięcy podpisów cyganów.

Onegdaj wygłosił on w londyńskim Hyde Park propagandową mowę, w której omawiał szczegółowo życzenia cyganów i oświadczył, iż cyganie pragną na zawsze osiedlić się w Afryce.

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The King of Gypsies, Michał Kwiek, asks for land in Africa

(z). The English press reports that the Gypsy King, Michał Kwiek, who – as we reported – was expelled from Czechoslovakia, came to London where he asked the English government for the right to settle down 15 thousand Gypsy families in Africa.

The King of Gypsies has prepared a special petition for this purpose, which is provided with several thousand signatures of Gypsies.

Of yore, he gave a propaganda speech in London's Hyde Park, in which he discussed the wishes of the Gypsies in detail and declared that they want to settle down in Africa forever.

Source: [No Author]. (1934b). Król cyganów Michał Kwiek prosi o ziemię w Afryce. *Ilustrowany Kuryer Codzienny*, An. 25, No. 309, 1934b, November 7, p. 6.
Prepared for publication by Alicja Gontarek.

Comments

Efforts to create a Gypsy state in Africa belonged probably to the most popular slogans used by Gypsy Kings in Poland in the mid-1930s. Michał Kwiek, who popularized that, was followed by other leaders. They were so strong that they penetrated the Polish press, which reported the problem abundantly, referring to it, however sceptically, in terms of the dreams of the Gypsies that could not be fulfilled. On the other hand, the Poles understood these slogans, as did the Jews, having aspirations to create a Jewish state in Palestine.

Efforts to search for a new national residence were accompanied by numerous foreign arrivals of Gypsy leaders who tried to engage in talks with state dignitaries. Their effects were mediocre. The most active among Polish Gypsy leaders was Michał II Kwiek.

In the 1930s, in the context of the Polish Kwieks, two ideas emerged to create a Gypsy homeland – in South Africa, and, in the face of the failure of this concept, in North

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Africa, in the Abyssinia area, which was under Italian rule. The Kwieks announced in 1938 that they would turn to Benito Mussolini for permission for the Gypsy settlement in this area (Nowy Kurjer, 1938, p. 6). He points out that Michał II Kwiek presented the number of settlers (15,000) he wanted to bring to Africa. It seems that he thought about Polish Gypsies and his supporters who lived in Czechoslovakia, Hungary and Romania. Michał II Kwiek was therefore a regional Polish Gypsy leader who, on his own, without an agreement with other leaders, applied for a new country for Polish Gypsies. These activities, though not embedded in the realities of Europe of the 1930s, and which do not take into account the internal diversity of Gypsy communities and specificity and interests of individual groups, are of great importance for building the identity of the Gypsy minority in the interwar period. They are also an echo of the nationalist tendencies that emerged in Europe in the 1930s, which in the case of Gypsies and Jews turned out to be a positive phenomenon and accelerated the process of their maturing as nations.

Alicja Gontarek

Additional Comments

The case with the so-called Gypsy Kings in Poland differ more or less from other forms and pursued goals of the Roma civic emancipation movement in the countries of Central, South-Eastern and Eastern Europe during the interwar period. The very idea of Gypsy Kings is not new and unknown to Poland. It has its roots in the existing practice of the Middle Ages in the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, where in the 17th and 18th centuries there were more than two dozen 'elders of the Gypsies' (often titled 'King') designated by royal decrees. They were from Gypsy origin or non-Gypsies, bore some governmental functions (e.g. collection of taxes), had the right to execute internal self-government (i.e. to resolve controversial issues within the community), and represented respective Gypsy communities before the authorities (*Daniłowicz*, 1824, pp. 98-100; Каманин, 1916, pp. 109-128; Ficowski, 1985, pp. 32-59; Mróz, 2001, pp. 188-219).

The interesting thing about this case, however, is that this form (Gypsy Kings) was being taken over by representatives of the Gypsy community from the *Kelderari* group, which were new migrants to the Polish lands (at that time in the composition of the Russian Empire) from Romania and Transylvania and Banat (then in Austro-Hungarian Empire). This migration is likely to have taken place in the second half of 19th and early 20th centuries (before the First World War). The first Gypsy King mentioned in the published sources, Jan Michałak-Michałescu, bore a double (Polish and Romanian) surname, and the subsequent Kings are noted to have been born in Poland. In this way, new migrants adopted (more precisely, demonstrated in public space) forms of a community organisation that was well understood by the macro-community in which they sought to integrate successfully and fully. Moreover, this form was not completely alien to the *Kelderari* Gypsies, as it largely corresponds to forms of representation known to Gypsies in Central and South-Eastern Europe in the past (cf. Chapter 1). This tradition continues to this day, the most famous case being the Gypsy Kings of the Cioaba dynasty in Romania.

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We should emphasise that the Gypsy Kings in Poland were to a large extent a media phenomenon, which revealed to the public their visions about the desired future of the Gypsies in Poland. In fact, until now, no authentic texts have been discovered except invitations and programs of coronations, business cards, stamps, etc., i.e. all attributes intended for public presentation and display. All information about their visions, wishes, and intentions are known only from the press, which suggests that it should be approached critically, for two main reasons. On the one hand, the media sought, when presenting the Gypsy Kings, the sensations, curiosity for the audience, and always focused on the aforementioned, without attempting to analyse the reliability of the Gypsy Kings' statements. On the other hand, the Gypsy Kings themselves recognised this very well, and there was always a great deal of exaggeration in their public messages, presenting what was desired as reality, future intentions and hopes, etc. In fact, the Gypsy Kings in Poland were self-exoticizing themselves in their public appearances, in accordance with the prevailing mass social stereotypes, and this media strategy has proved to be extremely successful. Of course, such usage of media is inherent in every social and political movement in the modern age, which always has its media dimension, but in the case of the Gypsy Kings, this was particularly pronounced, and largely determined the overall phenomenon. As a consequence of this, press material relating to the Gypsy Kings in Poland must be approached very cautiously and critically, and it should always be borne in mind that the ideology of the Roma civic emancipation, expressed through the Kings' public messages, largely reflects desires and intentions, but not historical events that actually happened. When, for example, a Gypsy King stated that he would ask for land from Benito Mussolini for the establishment of his state in Abyssinia, this does not mean that he was indeed in Italy and made such a formal request; also, when another Gypsy King stated that 120,000 Gypsies in Bulgaria have acknowledged his authority and have already organised themselves in support of him (Venkov, 1938), this does not mean that any of the Gypsies in Bulgaria were aware of his existence at all.

A logical question is whether the Gypsy Kings in Poland took any real steps to promote their ideas among Gypsies (both in Poland and abroad, as their visions were not restricted within the country, but suggested the unification of Gypsies from different countries around the world) apart from participation in and organising of public events (and especially the coronation), press releases and interviews aimed primarily at the macro-society.

In the press releases of Gypsy Kings, one can also trace their similarly unsuccessful efforts for the transformation of their traditional organisation of dispersed wandering group of *Kelderari* to a modernised form of a united nation. Thus, in the published sources, we can see on the one side descriptions of the *Kelderari*'s traditional heads of nomadic camps within the institution of the so-called Gypsy court, along with the newly introduced institution of Kings, presidents, chancellors, and ministries. Almost all Gypsy Kings came from large extended families of the *Kelderari* group, from which individual members constantly compete with each other as to who is the true leader of the Gypsies in Poland. As it became clear even from the brief journalistic description published

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above, in this rivalry they tried to use their traditional conflict resolution institution, best known under the term *Romani Kris* (Marushiakova & Popov, 2007c, pp. 67-101), but did so in vain. The case presents a mixture of attempts for modernisation with a simultaneous attempt at the preservation and use of their traditional potestary institution. This approach appeared inadequate at the time and, thus, in the end unsuccessful.

Very little is known about the impact of the activities of the Gypsy Kings on local Gypsies, who had long been living on Polish lands, and which included two main groups, namely the nomadic or semi-nomadic *Polska Roma* and settled *Bergitka Roma*. The fact that in their speeches, the Gypsy Kings themselves have repeatedly emphasised that they have been recognised as such by all Gypsies in Poland, and therefore had the right to represent them and to speak on their behalf, proves nothing. The materials published here reveal two opposite ways of the reaction of local Gypsies, that belonged to the *Polska Roma* group (judging from the descriptions and their names, in the above published press articles), towards the *Kelderari* Kings, namely of welcome and support, and of total rejection. The latter option seems much more likely, and the former is rather an exception, due to the traditional distance between individual Gypsy groups, in this case intensified by relations between 'old' and 'new' Gypsies in Poland. There is no reason to believe that traditional relations in interwar Poland had changed dramatically in the direction of establishing a common Gypsy unity within the country as a result of the media popularity of the Gypsy Kings.

Various Gypsy Kings in interwar Poland have repeatedly emphasised in their public statements that their influence, as well as their plans, were not limited only within the country but had an international dimension. It is difficult to assess whether their international contacts were real or whether they were only proclaimed as such to the media in order to raise their international prestige, e.g. it was announced that representatives of the Romanian, Hungarian, Portuguese and Spanish Gypsies had participated in the election of a new Gypsy King in 1937 (see 9.3.1) and that there was a representative from France among the candidates for the throne (NDA, sign. 1-P-2312-4). Indeed, there is historical evidence (including published above) that some have attempted to expand their activities in Hungary (Nowy Kurjer, 1936, p. 4), Czechoslovakia (Ilustrowany Kuryer Codzienny, 1930b, p. 13; 1932a, p. 10), and Romania. These activities, however, were mostly confined in the frames of the *Kelderari* group members, and in general followed a pattern known from Poland: organisation of public events to arouse the interest of the press.

Particularly illustrative in this regard is the case in Chernivtsi (at that time in Romania, today in Ukraine), which is worth discussing. In early 1935, the press in Poland reported that Gypsy King Michał Kwiek intended to organise a major international Gypsy congress in Chernivtsi, where would be present representatives of Gypsies from 9 European countries, the US and 3 countries in South America, and also that a delegation of Romanian Gypsies led by Gheorghe Lăzăreanu-Lăzurică (Head of the General Union of Roma in Romania) would take part; the Congress would establish an International Union of Gypsies to defend the interests of Gypsies and deal with citizenship and passport matters (Ilustrowany Kuryer Codzienny, 1934a, p. 4; 1935a, p. 9). Accordingly, in Romania,

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a police report based on the press reports states that the Gypsy King Michał Kwiek of Poland intended to visit Chernivtsi, from where he planned to go to Bucharest, where "he intends to ask for an audience with the Soviet plenipotentiary representative [Mikhail] Ostrovskiy, to find out about the organisation of the Gypsy state in Soviet Russia, to effectuate a pan-Roma movement for the foundation of a Gypsy state in India, on the banks of the Ganges" (Nastasă & Varga, 2001, doc. 72, p. 177). In the end, it turns out that there is no evidence at all that anything of these impressive plans was actually implemented and in Romania itself the General Secretariat of the General Union of Roma in Romania adopted a decision that the Union will have no part in the Gypsy Polish King elections because Romanian Roma's sole devotion and loyalty was only to the Romanian Crown (see Chapter 6).

In their plans, which were widely covered by the media (not only in Poland but also in many other countries around the world), the Gypsy Kings promoted the idea of creating an independent Gypsy state. Its future location was sought on three continents – Asia (in India), Africa (indicated alternatives were: Egypt, Abyssinia, Eritrea, Somalia, Uganda, Namibia) and South America. The very emergence of this idea is not surprising in the context of the colonial aspiration of Poland and widely discussed plans in the public space (and especially in Poland itself) of international Zionism to create a Jewish state in Palestine. An interesting question that cannot be categorically answered is whether the Gypsy Kings themselves believed this to be realistic or whether they used this motive only to attract public attention in order to raise their own authority before the state authorities in Poland (in any case, the latter seems more likely).

The fact that, especially in their international activities (often only declared ones), they have always had in mind the opportunity that through this they could exert some influence on Polish authorities is beyond any doubt. The very first Gypsy who declared himself (or was declared by the press) as the Gypsy King, Jan Michałak-Michałescu, presented to the Government Commissioner Dr.Lyfovski address on behalf of the Polish Gypsies, in which they informed about the choice of their king, whose royal residence would be Żoliborz (now a district of Warsaw), and in the first place emphasised their loyalty to the Polish state (Die Drau, 1928, p. 3). Jan Michałak-Michałescu announced also in a letter to the General Election Committee in 1928 that he had prepared a Gypsy list to run for the Seim (Parliament) elections and the Senate, and appealed for a legal reform that would allow Gypsies to settle (Wielkopolska, 1928, p. 2). In fact, the need for the settlement of nomads and the constant emphasising on Roma as being full citizens of Poland, who should perform their civic duties, including serving in the army, are found in one form or another in all public messages of all Gypsy Kings and applicants for this position. The desire to secure the support of the main political leaders in Poland, including Józef K. Piłsudski himself (with some successes achieved in this regard), is also a constant theme. This indicates that the aforementioned approach was considered to be a way to achieve a position in the state power structures as representatives of the Gypsies.

What exactly was the balance between the domestic and international dimensions in the Gypsy Kings' visions of the future of the Gypsies is difficult to estimate from a

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present-day perspective. However, there was no real contradiction between these two dimensions, i.e. the Gypsy Kings used them both simultaneously or put in the forefront one dimension or another, depending on the specific condition of the moment. In some cases, they may even have pursued very pragmatic goals, such as in the case of King Michał's visit to Czechoslovakia in 1932 (see 9.5.1.). The following year, a group of Gypsy families (a total of about 200 people) led by King Michał with visas issued for three months tried to settle permanently in Czechoslovakia (the first time in Prague, the second time in Czech Silesia), but were deported by the authorities after the expiration of their allowed period of stay in the country. However, King Michał did not despair and, in 1934, announced that he would visit the "Gypsy School" in Uzhgorod to give gifts to the pupils, and for the teacher to award him the title of "Gypsy Baron", but "the King and his entourage" were again deported (Janas, 1994, pp. 64-65).

There are also reports in the press about the international contacts of "Gypsy Kings", which are not confirmed by other data and for which doubts remain about their authenticity. Such is e.g. the case of the report in the Hungarian newspaper *Órai Újság* about a "battle" between King Michał of Poland and Rajmund Laubinger of Moravia (who, judging by his name, was a Sinto) for the Eastern European Gypsy throne (Nečas, 1997b. p. 61). If in this case there is no journalistic mystification (which is very possible), then this message is an interesting evidence of the relations between the various Gypsy groups during the interwar period in Central Europe.

From all of the above, it is clear that despite the fact that the case of the Gypsy Kings in Poland, was a specific one, especially when compared to the processes in the Roma movement in other countries of Central, South-Eastern and Eastern Europe, some common traits could also be outlined.

As already discussed, the creation of any nation during the modern era in this region begins precisely with the formulation of basic ideas about its future development in the circles of its elite, and their propaganda among the masses (cf. Hroch, 2005). This is exactly what the Gypsy Kings in Poland were doing, using the media of the time in an extremely successful way, and there is no reason to withdraw their case from the general processes of Roma civic emancipation in the region.

Elena Marushiakova and Vesselin Popov

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CHAPTER 10

Latvia

10.1 The Gypsy Culture Promotion Society 'Friend of Gypsies'

10.1.1 *The Registration of the Society*

[Zīmogs] Protokols.
1932. g. marta mēn. 8. d., Rīgas apgabaltiesas reģistrācijas nodaļas sēdē šinī lietā neviens nebija ieradies. Sekretārs: [Paraksts].
Akts Nr. 81. 1932 g.
Rezolūcija. 7. martā 1932. g.

Latvijas Suverēnās Tautas vārdā Rīgas apgabaltiesas reģistrācijas nodaļa, sekojošā sastāvā:

Priekšsēdētājs: L. Bruemmers, Tiesneši: B. Stagaers, A. Jeremics, Ar sekretāru A. Ozoliņu.

Izklausījusi lūgumu reģistrēt "Čigānu kultūras veicināšanas beedrību "Čigānu draugs", – un ņemot vērā, ka iesniegtie statuti saskan ar likumu, pamatojoties uz lik. par biedr., savien. un polit. organiz. 11. p., NOSPRIEDA:

Reģistrēt Čigānu kulturas veicinašanas biedrību 'Čigānu draugs', saskaņā ar tā paša likuma 17. pantu.

... [trīs paraksti].

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[Stamp] Protocol.
No one was present at the meeting in this case on March 8, 1932, at the Registration Department of Riga District Court. Secretary: ... [Signature].
Act No. 81. 1932.
Resolution. March 7, 1932.

In the name of Latvia's Sovereign Nation Registration Department of Riga District Court, presented by:

Chairman: L. Bruemmers, Judges: B. Stagaers, A. Jeremics, Secretary: A. Ozoliņš.

After hearing the request to register the Gypsy Culture Promotion Society 'Friend of Gypsies' and given the fact that the submitted statutes match the law, based on Article 11 of the law of societies, unions and political organisations, it is DECIDED:

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To register the Gypsy Culture Promotion Society 'Friend of Gypsies', according to Article 17 of the same law.

... [Three signatures].

Source: LNA LVVA, 1536-14-69-9.
Prepared for publication by Ieva Tihovska.

Comments

The document presented is a resolution of the Riga District Court to register "Čigānu draugs" (Friend of Gypsies), a Gypsy Culture Promotion Society, following its request and verifying that its statutes correspond to the law. The resolution is dated March 7, 1932, but the protocol is dated March 8, 1932, which is hereafter the accepted date of founding to which the later documents refer. The Society is the first Latvian Roma Organisation.

Ieva Tihovska

10.1.2 *A Meeting of the Members of the Society*

Rīgas prefektūras priekšnieka Kungam.
Čigānu kultūras veicināšanas biedrības 'Čigānu Draugs'.
Rīgā, Pleskodāles ielā, Nr. 8.
[Zīmogs] Čigānu kultūras veicināšanas biedrība 'Čigānu draugs'.
4. augustā 1932. g. No. 1. Rīgas, Jūrmalā.

Ziņojums

Pagodinājos darīt Jums zināmu, ka 21. augustā 1932. g. notika pilna biedru sapulce, Rīgas Jūrm. Dubultos, Kurmāja, pie kam Jums paziņoju valdes sastāvu:
1) Jānis Leimanis, biedrības priekšsēdētais iedzīv. Rīgā Zasulaukā Pleskodāles ielā, Nr. 8.
2) Voldemars Paladž, priekšsēdētāja biedris, iedzīv. Saldū Skrundas ielā, Nr. 31.
3) Alberts Gindra, sekretars, iedzīv. Saldū, Upes iela Nr. 3.
4) Osvalds Čuka, kasieris, iedzīv. Saldū, Skrundas ielā, Nr. 15.
5) Līna Pelcis, mantzine un biedru zine, iedzīv. Caur Ozolpili Smārde, Vecsprostos.

Pie kam vel klāt paziņoju Jums revīzijas komisiju:
1) Kārlis Leimanis, revīzijas komisijas priekšsēdētais, iedzīv. Rīgā Pleskodales iela Nr. 8
2) Adams Burkevič, sekretaris, iedzīv. Rīgā Aniņmuižas ielā Nr. 30. dz. 2.
3) Ernests Jezdovskis, priekšsēdētāja biedris, iedzīv. Aniņmuižas ielā, Nr. 30.

Šeit klāt pielieku augšminētos, 3, biedrības statūtu norakstu eksemplarus, kas apstiprināti Rīgas apgabaltiesas reģistracijas nodaļā, 8. martā, 1932. g. zem Nr. 81.

Priekšsēdētājs: ... [paraksts] Jānis Leimanis.
[Zīmogs] Čigānu kultūras veicināšanas biedrība "Čigānu draugs"

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To Chairman of Riga Prefecture.
From the Gypsy Culture Promotion Society 'Friend of Gypsies'.
Riga, Pleskodāles Street, No. 8.
[Stamp] Gypsy Culture Promotion Society 'Friend of Gypsies'.
4 August 1932. No. 1. In Riga, Jurmala.

Report

I am honoured to inform you that a complete member meeting was held on August 21, 1932, at 'Kurmaja' Dubulti, in Jurmala. I also thereby inform about the board members:
1. Jānis Leimanis, Chairman of the society, living in Riga, Zasulauks, Pleskodāles Street, No. 8.
2. Voldemārs Paladž, assistant of the Chairman, living in Saldus, Skrundas Street, No. 31.
3. Alberts Gindra, secretary, living in Saldus, Upes Street, No. 3.
4. Osvalds Čuka, cashier, living in Saldus, Skrundas Street, No. 15.
5. Līna Pelcis, treasurer and membership manager, living in Smārde, Vecsprosti.

At the same time, I inform you about audit commission:
1. Kārlis Leimanis, Chairman of the audit, living in Riga, Pleskodāles Street, No. 8.
2. Adams Burkevič, secretary, living in Riga, Aniņmuižas Street No. 30, apt. 2.
3. Ernests Jezdovskis, Chairman assistant, living in Riga, Aniņmuižas Street, No. 30.

I enclose 3 copies of our society's statutes, approved by the Registration Department of Riga District Court on March 8, 1932, No. 81.

Chairman: … [Signature] Jānis Leimanis.
[Stamp] Gypsy Culture Promotion Society 'Friend of Gypsies'.

Source: LNA LVVA, 3724-1-3748-2.
Prepared for publication by Ieva Tihovska.

Comments

The document presents a Report to the prefect of Riga on the meeting of the members of the society *Čigānu draugs* on August 21, 1932. It contains a list of the board members and audit committee of the society and their places of residence. Four persons from the capital Riga as well as three persons from the town of Saldus (western Latvia) and one from a rural area near Smārde (Western Latvia) are mentioned as the representatives of the society. This document correlates to the next one, which shows the highly changing membership of the board over the next few years.

Ieva Tihovska

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10.1.3 *A Report to the Prefect of Riga on the Meeting of the Members of the Society*

Rīgas pilsētas prefekta kungam.
Čigānu kulturas veicināšanas b-bas 'Čigānu draugs'.
Valdes sēdeklis, Zīles ielā Nr. 1-1, Rīgā.
[Zīmogs] Čigānu kultūras veicināšanas biedrība "Čigānu draugs" 20. martā 1936. g. Nr. ...
Rīgā.

Ziņojums

Ar šo pagodinās Jums ziņot, ka 1. martā 1936. g. ar Jūsu atļauju notika pilna biedru sapulce, Zīles ielā 1 dz.1. Rīgā, pie kā Jums ziņo valdes sastāvu:
1. Jānis Leimanis biedrības priekšsēdētājs, dzīvo Zīles ielā Nr. 1-1, Rīgā.
2. Kārlis Leimanis b-bas sekretārs, dzīvo Zīles ielā Nr. 1-1 Rīgā.
3. Ernests Jezdovskijs b-bas priekšēdētāja biedrs, dzīvo Mežmaļu ielā Nr. 1 Rīgā.
4. Mārtiņš Martinovs Johans b-bas kasieris, dzīvo Čuguna ielā Nr. 27 Rīgā,
5. Elizabete Leimanis b-bas mantzinis, dzīvo dzīvo Zīles ielā Nr. 1-1 Rīgā.

Pie kā vēl ziņo b-bas Revizijas komisiju:
1. [Juris] Georgs Leimanis priekšsēdētājs, dzīvo Zīles ielā Nr. 1-1 Rīgā
2. Indriķ Krauklis, priekšsēdētāja biedrs dzīvo Zīles ielā Nr. 1-1 Rīgā
3. Anna Jezdovskijs sekretāre, dzīvo Mežmales ielā Nr. 1. Rīgā.

Priekšsēdētājs: ... [paraksts] J. Leimanis.
Sekretārs: ... [paraksts] K. Leimanis.
[Zīmogs] Čigānu kultūras veicināšanas biedrība 'Čigānu draugs'.

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To Mr. Prefect of Riga
From the Board of the Gypsy Culture Promotion Society 'Friend of Gypsies'.
Zīles Street 1-1, Riga.
[Stamp] Gypsy Culture Promotion Society 'Friend of Gypsies'.
March 20, 1936. In Riga.

Report

We are honoured to inform you that with your permission on March 1, 1936, we had a general members' meeting in Riga, Zīles Street 1, Apt. 1. The board members are:
1. Jānis Leimanis chairman, living at Zīles Street 1, Apt. 1, Riga.
2. Kārlis Leimanis secretary, living at Zīles Street 1, Apt. 1, Riga.
3. Ernests Jezdovskojs vice-chairman, living at Mežmaļu Street 1, Riga.
4. Mārtiņš Martinovs Johans cashier, living at Čuguna Street 27, Riga.
5. Elizabete Leimanis treasurer, living at Zīles Street 1-1, Riga.

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Also, informing about audit commission:
1. Juris Georgs Leimanis chairman, living at Zīles Street 1-1, Riga.
2. Indriķ Krauklis, vice-chairman, living at Zīles Street 1-1, Riga.
3. Anna Jezdovskijs secretary, living at Mežmales Street 1, Riga.

Chairman: … [Signature] J. Leimanis.
Secretary: … [Signature] K. Leimanis.
[Stamp] Gypsy Culture Promotion Society 'Friend of Gypsies'.

Source: LNA LVVA, 3724-1-3748-5.
Prepared for publication by Ieva Tihovska.

Comments

The above document contains a list of the board members and audit committee of the society and their places of residence. The document shows that the board and audit committee has changed considerably since 1932, which indicates a certain instability within the society. Only three persons, including the head Jānis Leimanis and his son Kārlis, have remained on the board. Five new members are mentioned in the document, including Leimanis' wife and other son Georgs, so in this year half of the board consists of Leimanis' family members. All the members are from the capital Riga; no other regions are represented, unlike in the previous document. Still, a newspaper article indicates that Leimanis has organised meetings with Roma in all the regions of Latvia (Ventas Balss, 1937, p. 3; Jaunākās Ziņas, 1937, p. 18).

Ieva Tihovska

10.1.4 *The Request to Dissolve the Society*

[Zīmogs] Iekšlietu ministrijas preses nodaļā Saņemts 16. mai 1936.
Ienākošo rakstu Nr. 8011.
Iekšlietu ministrijai.
Čigānu kultūras veicināšanas biedrības 'Čigānu draugs'.
Ventspils nodaļas biedru.

Lūgums

1936. gadā Ventspilī tika nodibināta Čigānu kultūras veicināšanas biedrības "Čigānu draugs" Ventspils nodaļa, kurā mēs apakšā parakstījušies Latvijas pilsoņi iestājāmies par biedriem. Par biedrības priekšnieku tika ievēlēts čigāns Jānis Leimanis, dzīv. Rīgā, Zīles ielā 1. dz. 1.

Minētais Leimanis vairākkārtīgi Ventspilī sapulcēs kā arī personīgās sarunās ar biedriem ir uzstājies ar runām, kurās solījis mums gādāt zemi, ko it kā dabūšot no Valdības izdalīšanai čigāniem, un prasījis no mums ziedot šim nolūkam naudu un pūles. Šī gada marta mēnesī viņš mums paskaidroja, ka zemes piešķiršanas jautājums esot jēmis mums labvēlīgu virzienu. Piešķirtā zeme atrodoties Ventspils stacijas tuvumā, 60 ha kopplatībā.

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Bet neskatoties uz ziedotu naudu un laiku Leimanis nekā nav panācis un izrādījās arī, ka viņa nozīmētais zemes gabals atrodas prīvātās rokās un par viņa izdalīšanu čigāniem nevar būt ne runas.

Tā biedrības priekšnieks Jānis Leimanis, izmantodams mūsu nezināšanu un uzticību mūs ir mānījis, prasīdams no mums veltīt nesasniedzamam mērķim naudu un pūles. Bez tā Leimanis mūs uzaicināja pūlēties, lai panāktu atsevišķu skolu nodibināšanu čigāniem un grāmatu izdošanu čigāņu valodā.

Skatoties uz visu aprādīto nevēlamies, ka Leimanis arī turpmāk uzstājas Valdību iestāžu un atklātības priekšā kā Čigānu pārstāvis, jo esam tanīs uzskatos un līdz mums arī visi Ventspils čigāni, ka

1. Čigānu biedrība mums Latvijā nav vajadzīga, jo esam kā loiāli pilsoņi apmierināti ar Latvijas Valdības gādību, kas gādā vienlīdzīgi visiem pilsoņiem.
2. Savus bērnus labprāt sūtām latviešu skolās, kur tie tiek izaudzināti par krietniem cilvēkiem un pilsoņiem.
3. Grāmatas čigānu valodā mums nav vajadzīgas, jo protam visi Latviešu valodu un Leimaņa izdotās grāmatas mums nav vajadzīgas un nav saprotamas.
4. Zemi mēs labprāt vēlētos, lai varētu izbeigt nepastāvīgo dzīves veidu un nodrošināt sev eksistenci, bet līdz ar to esam pārliecināti, ka pati Valdība to ātrāk mums gādās nekā Leimanis.

Jemot vērā augšā minēto mēs apakšā parakstījušies Čigānu kultūras veicināšanas biedrības "Čigānu draugs" Ventspils nodaļas biedri pagodināmies lūgt laipni Iekšlietu Ministriju ievadīt biedrības "Čigānu draugs" likvidāciju.

Ventspili. 1931. g. 12. martā.
[Zīmogs] Klāt zīmogmarkas par Ls 0.80.
[Paraksti] ... I. Krauč, J. Gindra, V. Jezdovskis, L. Putraševic, Stepka, N. Čičis, J. Stepans, A. Paučs, F. Stepans, A. Kleins. Ž. Kleins, J. Didžus, M. Stepans, [u. c.].

∵

[Stamp] Received at the Press Department of the Ministry of Internal Affairs on May 16, 1936.
Incoming document No. 8011.
To Ministry of Internal Affairs.
From Gypsy Culture Promotion Society 'Friend of Gypsies'.
Ventspils Department.

Request

The Ventspils Department of the Gypsy Culture Promotion Society 'Friend of Gypsies' was established in 1936 and we, the citizens of Latvia signed below, joined the society. Jānis Leimanis, living in Riga, Zīles iela 1-1, was elected as the chairman of the society.

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The above-mentioned Leimanis during his speeches in Ventspils and in personal conversations has promised to obtain land for us. Supposedly the government would give land for distribution, and he has asked to support the cause with our funds and efforts. In March this year, he informed that the land cause has taken a promising direction. There are 60 ha of land available near the station of Ventspils. Despite our efforts and expenses, we have not got any land, and the mentioned piece of land is private property and there is no way it could be given to Gypsies.

This is how the chairman Jānis Leimanis has misused our trust and ignorance, how he has cheated us while asking for our money and effort towards an unattainable goal. Besides that, Leimanis also encouraged us to try to establish separate Gypsy schools and to publish books in the Gypsy language.

For the above-mentioned reasons, we don't want Leimanis to represent the Gypsy community in public and in government decisions, because we and the rest of the Gypsies in Ventspils share these thoughts:

1. We don't need a Gypsy society because we are loyal to the government of Latvia that takes equal care of its citizens.

2. We gladly send our children to Latvian schools where they are educated as honest humans and citizens.

3. We don't need books in Gypsy language because we all understand Latvian and we don't need or understand the books published by Leimanis.

4. We would like to obtain land so that we can have a more stable livelihood and to better support our existence, but we consider that the government would provide that for us faster than Leimanis could.

Bearing in mind the above mentioned we – the members of Ventspils Department of the Gypsy Culture Promotion Society 'Friend of Gypsies' signed below – ask the Ministry of Internal Affairs to start the liquidation of the Society 'Friend of Gypsies'.

In Ventspils, March 12, 1936.
[Stamp]. Stamp postage value Ls 0. 80 included.
[Signatures] … I. Krauč, J. Gindra, V. Jezdovskis, L. Putraševic, Stepka, N. Čičis, J. Stepans, A. Paučs, F. Stepans, A. Kleins. Ž. Kleins, J. Didžus, M. Stepans, [etc.].

Source: LNA LVVA, 3724-1-3748-15; LNA LVVA, 3724-1-3748-16.
Prepared for publication by Ieva Tihovska.

Comments

The request of the members of the Ventspils Chapter of *Čigānu draugs*, dated March 12, 1936, to dissolve the Society. This comes soon after the chapter was founded. The request is addressed to the Ministry of the Interior and expresses a lack of confidence in the head of the society Jānis Leimanis and his activities: efforts to grant land ownership to Roma, communication with state institutions and the media, translation of literature into Romani language, a call to establish Gypsy schools. Newspapers indicate that, despite

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the expressed distrust in Leimanis' activities and leadership, he continued to organise meetings with Ventspils Gypsies in subsequent years with the aim to employ local Roma and encourage them to become a proper part of civic society (Ventas Balss, 1939, p. 1). Several other criticisms and opposition to Leimanis' leadership were published in the media, for example, the newspaper of the Latvian Communist Party *Cīņa* (The Struggle) wrote in 1940 that Leimanis wanted to gain at the expense of his brethren and live like a lord (Cīņa, 1940, p. 6). Even today I have met Roma who do not support what Leimanis did in the past. There could perhaps be specific emic reasons for such views.

This document dates to the time of authoritarian rule in Latvia, which was declared on May 15, 1934. A turn towards an ideology of mono-ethnic nationalism resulted in, among other things, greater control over the organisations of ethnic minorities; for example, a significant decrease in the number of ethnic minority schools was observable (Dribins, 2004, p. 59, see also Sibīrijas Cīņa, 1934, p. 3); however, this issue is awaiting more in-depth research. The Ventspils Gypsies statements contain some rhetoric of the new ideology of the state, for example, that a Gypsy Society is not needed because Roma are loyal to the state, which guarantees equal rights for everyone, and that Latvian written language and schooling is preferable over Romani language.

Ieva Tihovska

10.1.5 *A Report of the Prefecture of Riga on the State and Activities of the Society*
Dienesta ziņas

Čigānu kulturas vecināšanas b-ba "Čigānu draugs", kuras sēdeklis atrodās Rīgā, Zīles ielā Nr. 1, reģistrēta Rīgas Apgabaltiesā un darbojās no 8.III.1932. g. Biedrībā sastāv 83 biedri un biedri veicinātāji. No b-bas dibināšanas līdz šim noturētas 2. pilnas biedru sapulces 1932. g. un 1936. g. Bez tam, valdes sēdes: 1932. g. noturetas 7 reizes, 1933. g. 3 reizes, 1934. g. 1. reizi, 1935. g. 3. reizes un 1936. g. 4. reizes. Sarīkoti koncerti: 29. IV 33. g. Konzervatorijā, 20. V 33. g. Igauņu b-bas zālē, 3.VI.[19]33. g. Slokā, 10. un 11.VI.[19]33. g. Jelgavā, 6.VIII.[19]33. g. Brīvdabas muzejā un 20.VIII.[19]33. g. Svētes parkā.

Koncerti noslēgušies ar deficitu. Biedribā netiek vesta atsevišķa kases grāmata, kādēļ arī nav redzams vai b-bas kasē atrodas kādas naudas zumas vai nē. Sarīkoto koncertu norēķini nav apstiprināti no pilnas biedru sapulces un par sarīkotiem koncertiem nekas nav minēts valdes sēžu protokolos. Statutos paredzēts, ka pilnas biedru sapulces jāsasauc vienreiz gadā, kas nav ievērots. Tāpat paredzēts pilnā biedru sapulcē likt priekšā apstiprināšanai gada budžetu, arī tas nav darits, bet valde saimniekojusi pilnigi bez budžeta. Nekādi norēķini par biedru naudām un citiem ienākumiem un izdevumiem oficiāli nav vesti, aprobežojoties vienīgi ar dažām atzīmēm biedrības pr-ka personigā grāmatā. Pēc 1933. g. biedriba kulturēlā ziņā nekādu aktivitati nav izrādijuse, izjemot noturētas valdes sēdes un pēdējo pilno biedru sapulci. Cik novērots, viena daļa b-bas biedru ar b-bas darbibu nav apmierināti. Kulturas nešanai čigānu starpā, biedrībai līdz šim ir bijuši mazi panākumi.

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Biedrības valdes priekšsēdis ir Jānis Leimanis, locekļi: Ernests Jezdovskis, Johans Martinovs, Kārlis Leimanis un Elizabete Leimanis. Revīzijas komisijā Juris Leimanis un Fricis Jezdovskis. Valdes locekļi: Kārlis Leimanis ir valdes priekšsēža Jāņa Leimaņa dēls un Elizabete Leimanis – sieva. Tāpat revizijas komisijas loceklis Juris Leimanis ir Jāņa Leimaņa dēls. Pie šāda valdes locekļu un revizijas komisijas sastāva nav iedomājama b-bas kārtiga darbiba un objektivitate. Spriežot pēc pēdejo gadu darbibas, b-bas 'Čigānu draugs' pastāvēšanai ari uz priekšu nav nekādas nozīmes, jo tā redzamu aktivitati čigānu starpā, kulturas veicināšanas ziņā, nav ienesusi. Pretvalstiska darbiba kā no atsevišķiem biedriem, tā ari pašas biedrības nav novērota.

12. aug. 1936. g.
[Zīmogs]. Rīgas prokuratūras XII iec. uzraugs … [paraksts].

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Official Memo

The Gypsy Culture Promotion Society 'Friend of Gypsies', registered and in operation since March 8, 1932, is located at Zīles Street No. 1 in Riga and has 83 members and supporters. Since its formation, there have been two general meetings, in 1932 and 1936. Meanwhile, there have been multiple board meetings: 7 meetings in 1932, 3 meetings in 1933, 1 meeting in 1934, 3 meetings in 1935 and 4 meetings in 1936. There have been organised concerts on April 19, 1933, at the music conservatory, on May 20, 1933, at the hall of the Estonian Society, on June 3, 1933, in Sloka, on June 10 and 11, 1933, in Jelgava, on August 6, 1933, at the Open-Air Museum, and on August 20, 1933, in the park of Svēte.

Concerts have ended with a deficit. There was no separate cash journal within the society, as a result it is not clear whether the society has any money left. The organisational expenses have not been approved by the general meeting, and the concerts are not mentioned in the board meeting protocols. The statutes of the society declare that general meetings are to be held once a year, but this has not been done. Similarly, the yearly budget should be presented and approved at the general meeting, but this has not been done, and the board has operated without a budget. There are no official records of membership fees and other income or expenses, only a few remarks are found in the personal notes of the chairman.

There has not been any cultural activity since 1933, apart from board meetings and the last general meeting. It has been observed that a portion of the members are not satisfied with the functioning of the society. The society has not been successful in the promotion of the culture within the Gypsy community.

The chairman is Jānis Leimanis, Board Members are Ernests Jezdovskis, Johans Martinovs, Kārlis Leimanis and Elizabete Leimanis. The audit commission consists of

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Juris Leimanis and Fricis Jezdovskis. Board member Kārlis Leimanis is the son of the chairman Jānis Leimanis, and Elizabete Leimane is his wife. Juris Leimanis from the audit commission is the son of Jānis Leimanis. It is impossible to operate properly and objectively with such a make-up of the board and audit commission. Moreover, judging by the operations over the last few years, there is no sense for the existence of the society 'Friend of Gypsies' as they have not successfully promoted culture among the Gypsies. Anti-government activities have not been observed within the society or among its members.

August 12, 1936.
[Stamp]. Riga Office of the Prosecutor … [Signature].

Source: LNA LVVA, 3724-1-3748-10; LNA LVVA, 3724-1-3748-11.
Prepared for publication by Ieva Tihovska.

Comments

Report of the prefecture of Riga on the state and activities of the society, dated August 12, 1936. Informs that the society has 83 members, has held 20 meetings since 1932 and organised seven concerts in 1933. The report contains a critique on the monetary management of the society, its low level of activity after 1933 and the fact that the board contains several close relatives of Jānis Leimanis. The report concludes that, although it does not seem that the society has taken any anti-government action, there is no need for its existence and it can be dissolved.

Ieva Tihovska

10.1.6 *The Order of the Ministry of the Interior to Dissolve the Society*

1475. lēmums.

1937. g. 8. janvārī, saskaņā ar papildinājumu likumā par biedrību, savienību, politisku organizāciju slēgšanas, likvidācijas un reģistrēšanas kārtību izņēmuma stāvokļa laikā (Vald. Vēstn. 1934. g. 163. num.), uzdodu likvidēties čigānu kultūras veicināšanas biedrībai "Čigānu draugs".

Biedrība jālikvidē biedrības valdei 3 mēnešu laikā pēc šā lēmuma izsludināšanas "Valdības Vēstnesī".

[Paraksts] Iekšlietu ministra b.
[Paraksts] Administratīvā departamenta direktors.
"V.V.", Polit. pārv., Rīgas apg. tiesai, Rīgas pref. 2 noraksti.

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Decision No. 1475.

On 8 January 1937, in accordance with the addendum to the law on the registration, termination and liquidation of societies, unions and political organisations during exceptional circumstances (Official publisher *Valdības Vēstnesis*, No. 163, 1934), I order the Gypsy Culture Promotion Society 'Friend of Gypsies' to liquidate itself.

The society's board must liquidate the society within 3 months since the announcement of this decision in the official publisher *Valdības Vēstnesis* [1].

... [Signature] Minister of internal Affairs.
... [Signature] Director of the Administrative Department.
Valdības Vēstnesis, Political administration, Riga District court, Riga prefecture, 2 duplicates [2].

Notes

1.*Valdības Vēstnesis* (Government Herald) was the official publication of the Latvian government and its organs in which new laws, orders, regulations and other official documents were published.
2. The document is an official Order of the Ministry of the Interior, dated January 8, 1937, duly signed by respective officers.

Source: LNA LVVA, 3724-1-3748-7.
Prepared for publication by Ieva Tihovska.

10.1.7 *The Request to the Minister of the Interior Asking that the Society not be Dissolved*

[Zīmogs] Čigānu kultūras veicināšanas biedrība "Čigānu Draugs", 19. februārī 1937. g. No. 18, Rīga.
[Zīmogs] Iekšlietu ministrijas Preses un biedrību nodaļā saņemts, 19. feb. 1937.
Ienākušo rakstu Nr. 2379.
Iekšlietu ministra kungam.
Čigānu kultūras veicināšanas biedrība "Čigānu Draugs".
Līdaku iela Nr. 3, dz. 4., Rīgā.

Lūgums

Augsti god. Ministra kungs Jūs ļoti lūdz atcelt Čig. Kult. Veic. b-bas "Čigānu Draugs" likvidāciju, jo kultūras darbs ir mūsu neapzinīgai un tumšai tautai gaismas stars, kas pēc zinama laika parādīs savu neaprobežojamu vērtību.

Čigānu kult. veic. b-ba "Čigānu Draugs" ir reģistrēta Rīgas Apgabaltiesā reģistrācijas nodaļā 1932. g. 8. martā, Nr. 81.

1475 lēmumā uzdots čig. kult. veic. b-bai "Čigānu Draugs" 3 mēnešu laikā likvidēties sākot ar 8. janvāri š. g.

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Augš minētai b-bai ir sava valde un revīzijas komisija. Valdei ir 5 locekļi: priekšsēdētājs, sekretāris, kasieris, priekšsēdētāja biedris un mantzinis. Revīzijas komisijā 2 locekļi: priekšsēdētājs un sekretārs. Biedrībā ir 35 biedru.

Ļoti Jūs lūdz augsti god. Ministra kungs, augšminēto ņemt vērā un nogriezt no mums nāves ēnu, kas varētu iznīcināt mūsu gaismas staru, t. i. Čig. kult. veic. b-bu "Čigānu Draugs".

Paliekam cerībā.

Priekšsēdētājs: … [paraksts] J. Leimanis.
Sekretārs … [paraksts] K. Leimanis.
[Zīmogs] Čigānu kultūras veicināšanas biedrība "Čigānu draugs".

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[Stamp] Gypsy Culture Promotion Society 'Friend of Gypsies', 19 February 1937, No. 18, Riga.
[Stamp] Received at the Press and Society Department of the Ministry of Internal Affairs on February 19, 1937.
Incoming document No. 2379.
To Minister of Internal Affairs.
From the Gypsy Culture Promotion Society 'Friend of Gypsies', Līdaku Street 3, Apt. 4., Rīga.

Request

Dear Minister, we are asking to cancel the liquidation of the Gypsy Culture Promotion Society 'Friend of Gypsies' because cultural work is like a star of light for our ignorant and dark folk and it will show immense value and benefit after some time.

The Gypsy Culture Promotion Society 'Friend of Gypsies' is registered in the Registration Department of Riga District Court on March 8, 1932, document No. 81.

The decision No. 1475 requires liquidating the Gypsy Culture Promotion Society 'Friend of Gypsies' within 3 months since 8 January of this year.

The above-mentioned society has a board and audit commission. The board has five members: chairman, secretary, cashier, vice chairman and treasurer. The revision commission has two members: chairman and secretary. The society has 35 members.

Dear Minister, we kindly ask to regard the above mentioned and keep us out of the shadow of death that would destroy our only hope of light – the Gypsy Culture Promotion Society 'Friend of Gypsies'.

Staying hopeful,
Chairman: … [Signature] J. Leimanis.
Secretary … [Signature] K. Leimanis.
[Stamp] Gypsy Culture Promotion Society 'Friend of Gypsies'.

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Source: LNA LVVA, 3724-1-3748-28.
Prepared for publication by Ieva Tihovska.

Comments

This document is a follow-up reaction to the Order of the Ministry of the Interior from January 8, 1937, to dissolve the Gypsy Culture Promotion Society 'Friend of Gypsies'. It presents a request of Jānis Leimanis and Kārlis Leimanis (on behalf of the society) to the Minister of the Interior asking that the society not be dissolved, dated 19 February 1937. In their request, the representatives of the society urged the government to not halt the cultural activity of the society, because it is "a ray of light for our ignorant and dark folk" that will eventually prove its unlimited value. The document contains information on the membership of the society, which has decreased since August 1936 (Document No. 1.5) by more than half (to 35 members).

Ieva Tihovska

10.1.8 *Memo, Listing the Reasons for Dissolving the Society*

Dienesta atzīme

Čigānu kultūras veicināšanas biedrība 'Čigānu draugs' likvidēta tāpēc, ka visas biedrības amatpersonas ir tuvi radinieki, grāmatas nav vestas un nav skaidrības par tās mantas stāvokli.

Rīgas prefektūra /1936. gada 14. augusta raksts 25295/ konstatējusi, ka biedrība nekādu aktivitāti kultūras veicināšanā neizrāda un ka tās pastāvēšana nav nepieciešama. Lūgums atjaunot biedrību būtu noraidāms.

1937 g. 15. martā.
Darbvedis ... [paraksts].
[Atzīme ar roku un paraksts] Noraidīt, 15.III.[1937].

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Service Remark

The Gypsy Culture Promotion Society 'Friend of Gypsies' was liquidated because all officials of the society are close relatives, there is no book-keeping and there is no transparency of its property.

Riga Prefecture (Article No. 25295, August 14, 1936) has realised that the society is showing no efforts to promote the culture and there is no need for its existence. The request to renew the society should be dismissed.

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March 15, 1937.
Clerk … [Signature].
[handwritten remark] Dismiss, March 15, 1937.

Source: LNA LVVA, 3724-1-3748-22.
Prepared for publication by Ieva Tihovska.

Comments

Memo, dated March 15, 1937, listing the reasons for dissolving the society: the board members are close relatives, the monetary management is unclear, the society does not participate in activities of culture promotion. There is no clear information regarding the exact date of the liquidation of the society. The fact that the society is fully liquidated is published in a governmental newspaper on April 10, 1941 (Beierbahs, 1941).

Ieva Tihovska

10.2 Jānis Leimanis

10.2.1 *The Friend of the Latvian Gypsies*

Друг латвийских цыган
Евангелие на цыганском языке – "Фараоново племя"
Цыганская дуэль – "Ракло" – Цыгане и футбол.

Мелким шрифтом напечатанная заметка. Новое культурно-просветительное общество – "Друг цыган". Цыгане вольные птицы, кочевники, казалось бы, от сотворения мира – и культурно-просветительная работа, неразрывно связанная с мыслью о чем-то оседлом, постоянном? Странно.

Правление общества на Рижском взморье. Крохотный домик утопает в сугробах снега. Рядом Эдинбургская православная церковь: основатель общества "Друг цыган" Ян Лейман – церковный сторож. Типичный цыган, небольшого роста, с пышной вьющейся бородой. Говоря об основании общества, о цыганах, об их жизни, он воодушевляется, его светло-карие глаза горят светом подлинного энтузиазма.

– Я давно, очень давно об этом думаю. В первый раз мне довелось выступить в роли организатора цыган и защитника их интересов во время войны в 1915 году. Тогда их усиленно удаляли из района военных действий – считалось, что вместе с кочевниками-цыганами могли передвигаться шпионы. Их самих почти обвиняли в шпионаже. Прошение, поданное нами губернатору, не имело успеха. "Для цыгана везде готов и стол, и дом", – сказали нам.

– Это неверно. Правда, цыган кочует с места на место, но его кочевья ограничены известным районом. Он привязан к родине и верен ей больше, чем кто бы то ни было. И все же судьба загнала нас вместе с остальными беженцами далеко, в

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Ново-Николаевск. Русские гостеприимный народ. Нам было неплохо. Но все же родина тянула, и вот вернулись сюда.

– Я сам местный, уроженец Курляндии. Собственно, не могу назвать себя кочевником. Приблизительно с десятилетнего возраста живу оседлой жизнью. Тянуло к ученью, ходил в школу. К сожалению, не кончил, не позволили обстоятельства. Читал, старался пополнить образование, узнать как можно больше о судьбе своего народа. Вернувшись на родину, взялся за большую работу – перевел на цыганский язык Отче наш, Верую, еще несколько молитв и – главное – Евангелие от Иоанна. Было трудно. Цыганский язык беден. Не хватало слов. Я работал над этим 5 лет. Мою работу послали Британскому обществу, но вот до сих пор нет ответа.

Насколько я знаю, это – первая книга на цыганском языке. Большинство цыган вообще неграмотно. Где уж тут думать о своем алфавите, литературе. А жалко, очень жалко. Благодаря этому, происхождение цыган, их прошлое совершенно неизвестно.

– "Фараоново племя"? Да, нас так называют. Быть может, есть основание для этого. Кто знает? Я лично нахожу, что между цыганами и египтянами есть большое сходство, хотя бы в том, что для египтянина так же, как для цыгана, самое ценное была его лошадь и колесница. Лошадь – кормилица цыгана. Большинство цыган живут барышничеством и коновальством. Занимаются и другим. Есть кузнецы, медники. Женщины гадают. Просят милостыню. Трудно их осудить при их бедности.

К женщинам вообще у нас хорошо относятся. Куда лучше, чем у латышей. Только вот переступать им нельзя.

– Что переступать?

– А вот, если мужчина, сидит, вытянув ноги, не дай Бог, если через них женщина переступит. Мужчина тогда опоганится. Или еще через посуду, а того пуще через лошадиную сбрую. Никак нельзя. Не полагается.

Раньше цыгане лучше жили. На всех сверху вниз поглядывали. Цыган наденет что-нибудь новое и ходит козырем – сам чорт ему не брат. Настоящий цыган должен быт безстрашен, непобедим. На противника он никогда не нападает из-за угла. Ходить в драку с ножом, топором не цыганское дело. Это они уж у чужих переняли. Раньше единственным оружием цыгана был кнут. Кнутовище длинное, длиною в руку. Оба конца залиты свинцом. Хочет драться, вызывает противника по честному. Сам первый не бьет. Я в детстве еще видел такие бои. Цыгану, который умеет владеть кнутовищем, десять человек с ножами не страшны. Говорили мне, где-то подрался цыган с офицером. У цыгана кнут, у офицера сабля. Так что ж вы думаете. Цыган победил.

Есть среди цыган и оседлые. Вся беда в том, что цыгане, которым удается получить образование, выйти в люди, отрекаются от своего племени и не говорят даже, что они цыгане. Вот тут, в Опере, танцует цыганка. Кончила гимназию, говорят, была и в университете. А от нас совсем отстала. Да мало ли их.

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Я бы хотел объединить цыган. Связать их в одно целое. Вывести из того положения, в котором они теперь находятся. Только трудно. Сами же цыгане часто этого не хотят, чуждаются культуры. Надо мной смеются: “Хочешь быть цыганским королем”. Но мне ведь самому ничего не нужно. Мне важно, чтобы они духовно развились.

Нашли бы общий язык. Ведь теперь даже его нет. Вот мы, например, с литовскими, польскими, русскими цыганами сговоримся. А встретились во время беженства с австрийскими, так те совсем иначе говорят. Есть только одно слово, одинаковое для цыган всего мира. Спросите “Конту Ром?” (Ты цыган?). Если ответит “Ром”, – значит свой.

– Разве никто, кроме цыган не говорит по цыгански?

– Нет. Этого почти не бывает. Цыгане неохотно смешиваются с иноплеменниками. У нас даже свои, цыганские, дети называются иначе, чем чужие: дочь – чай, сын – чаво, чавалы – ребята, а чужие: дочь – ракле, сын – ракло.

Совершенно неожиданно выплывает на свет Божий происхождение южнорусской клички мелких мошенников и хулиганов, которых там называли “ракло”.

– Смешанные браки у цыган редки. Цыганка знает – если ушла к чужому, для своих, она уже отрезанный ломоть. Другое дело, если русская или латышка выходит замуж за цыгана. Ей в таборе всегда готово место. Значит, стоит уважения, если не побоялась уйти за мужем. Вот, например, у одного из основателей нашего общества Освальда Чука – мать латышка. Он сам из оседлых цыган, столярничает.

Наши основатели горячо относятся к делу. Всего нас пятеро. Я, Освальд Чука, моя племянница Лина Ева Пельц, Вальдис Палач – у него страшная фамилия, но он сам милейший человек. Между прочим, он единственный из нас, занимающийся исконным цыганским делом: торгует лошадьми. Пятый член нашего общества – Матвей Гиндра. Он много посодействовал основанию общества. Быть может, организаторский талант у него в крови. Его дед был известным цыганским старшиной. Сам он – секретарь пожарного общества в Салдусе. К тому же еще и футболист.

– Значит, спортивная секция в вашем обществе обезпечена?

Ян Лейман усмехается.

– Как же. Он уже мечтает создать цыганскую футбольную команду. Доживем, даст Бог, и до этого. Только бы начать. Внушить самим же цыганам доверие к нам, а там уж дело пойдет. Вот, сыновья подрастут – помогут. У меня их двое. Старшему, Кириллу – 20 лет, он учится в ремесленной школе при жел[езно]-дор[ожном] управлении. А младшему, Георгию, – 15. Скоро окончит основную школу. Его отдам в учительскую семинарию. Пусть будет и у цыган свой учитель.

“Друг цыган” провожает меня до дверей. Густые снежные хлопья засыпают скромную сторожку – “колыбель цыганской культуры”. Быть может, из нее когда-нибудь выйдут новые цыгане, сменившие “бубна звон, гитары стоны” на учительскую кафедру и футбольный мяч.

Ки-Ра

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[Фото]. Янъ Лейманъ, церковный сторожъ Эдинбургской православной церкви, основатель общества “Друг цыган”.
[Фото]. Ян Лейман, его жена Елизавета и младший сынъ Георгий.

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The Friend of the Latvian Gypsies
The Gospel in the Gypsy Language – “Tribe of Pharaohs” [1]
Gypsy Duel – “Raklo” – Gypsies and Football

A note typed in small print. New cultural and educational society “Friend of Gypsies”.

Gypsies, who, it seems, have been free spirits and nomads from the beginning of the world, and cultural and educational work, which is always inextricably entwined with a thought about something settled and steady? That’s odd.

The society’s Board of Directors is located at the Riga’s seaside. A tiny house is buried in snow. Alongside the house is Edinburgh Orthodox Church, where the society’s founder Jānis Leimanis is a guard [2]. He is a typical Gypsy, a man of small stature with a thick curly beard. When he speaks about founding the society, about Gypsies and their lives, he seems enthusiastic, his light-brown eyes light up.

– I have been thinking about it for quite some time. I got the chance to serve as an organizer and advocate of the Gypsy people’s needs during the war in 1915 for the first time. They were driven from the land due to military action – it was believed that spies could travel with nomadic Gypsies. They themselves were often accused of espionage. We petitioned the governor, but without success. “Gypsies can live well wherever they go”, we were told.

– It is not true. Gypsies roam from place to place but their wanders are limited to a certain area. They are attached to their homeland and more faithful to it than anybody in the world.
And yet, by a whim of fate, we with the rest of the refugees have ended up far away, in Novo-Nikolaevsk. Russians are hospitable people. We were fine. But nevertheless, we missed our home, so we came back here.

– I am a local myself, a native of Courland. Strictly speaking, I cannot call myself a nomad. I started living a sedentary life around the age of ten. I became drawn to studying, started going to school. Unfortunately, circumstances didn’t allow me to graduate. I read a lot, tried to replenish my knowledge, learn as much as possible about the history of my people. Having returned home, I got down to hard work – I have translated Our Father, The Symbol of Faith, a few more prayers and, most importantly, the Gospel of John into the Gypsy language. It was difficult. Gypsy language is poor. It lacks vocabulary. I’ve been working on this for 5 years. My work has been sent to the British [Bible] society, but so far there is no answer.

As far as I know, this is the first book in the Gypsy language. Most Gypsies are generally illiterate. Of course, they are not thinking about creating their own alphabet, writing

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their own literature, perish the thought. Such a pity. Due to this, the origin of the Gypsies, their past is completely unknown.

– "Tribe of Pharaohs"? Yes, people call us that. Perhaps there is a reason for this. Who knows? I personally find that there is a great similarity between Gypsies and Egyptians, at least in the fact that for an Egyptian as well as for a Gypsy his horse and chariot are the most valuable possessions. A Gypsy's horse is his meal ticket. Most Gypsies make a living as farriers and horse traders. Some pursue other options. There are blacksmiths, tinkers. Women earn by fortune-telling. Or begging. They are so poor, it is difficult to condemn them. We generally treat women well. Much better than Latvians. They are not allowed to step over, though.

– Step over what?

– You see, if a man is sitting with his legs outstretched, God forbid, a woman step over them. The man is going to be considered tainted. Or over kitchenware, or even worse – over a harness. No way. These things aren't supposed to happen.

Gypsies used to live better, they used to look down on everyone. A Gypsy would put on something new and strut around, he was a devil-may-care good-timer. A real Gypsy should be fearless, invincible. He would never stab somebody in the back. Getting in a fight with a knife or an axe is no work for a Gypsy. They have picked it up from outsiders. Gypsy's only weapon used to be a whip. Long as an arm, and both ends are filled with lead. If he wants to fight, he challenges his opponent like a gentleman. He would always allow the opponent to strike the first blow. I saw such duels when I was a boy. Ten men armed with knives are no threat to a Gypsy who knows how to handle a whip. Somebody told me, somewhere a Gypsy had a fight with an army officer. The Gypsy had a whip and the officer had a sword. So, what do you think happened next? The Gypsy won.

There are some sedentary Gypsies as well. The trouble is that Gypsies who manage to get an education and make their way in the world, they renounce their people and do not even mention that they are Gypsies. Right here, in the Opera, a Gypsy woman works as a dancer. They say she graduated from the gymnasium and studied in the university as well. However, she has lost touch with her people completely. Well, you will never know.

I would really like to unite all the Gypsies. Bind them together as a community. Help them find a way out. But it's difficult. Gypsies themselves often do not wish for this, they shun culture. They often laugh at me: "You just want to be a king of the Gypsies, don't you?" But I want nothing but to help them develop spiritually, help them create a language which could be a unifying tongue for all the Gypsies because they don't have it yet.

For example, we would understand Lithuanian, Polish and Russian Gypsies. But when we met up with Austrian Gypsies during the refuge, we couldn't understand a thing. There is only one word that Gypsies all over the world will understand. Ask: "Kontu Rom?" (Are you a Gypsy?). If he answers "Rom," that means he is one of us.

– Does no one except Gypsies speak Gypsy?

– No. This almost never happens. Gypsies are usually reluctant to mix with foreigners. We even have different words in our language for our own Gypsy children: daughter is *čhaj*, son is *čhavo*, *čhavaly* is kids, but outsider's daughter is *rakle*, outsider's son is *raklo*.

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Quite unexpectedly, the origins of the South Russian slang word for the petty frauds and hooligans 'raklo' is brought to light.

– Mixed marriages are rare. Every Gypsy woman knows – if she marries an outsider, she will be a severed branch for her people. But if a Russian or Latvian woman marries a Gypsy man that is a totally different story. She will always be welcome in the camp. She is worthy of respect if she is not afraid to go after her husband. Here, for example, one of the founders of our society, Oswald Chuka, has a Latvian mother. He is one of the sedentary Gypsies, works as a carpenter.

Our founders are very passionate about the cause. There are five of us. Me, Oswald Chuka, my niece Lina Eva Pelts, Valdis Palach [3] – he has a fearsome surname, but he himself is the sweetest man. By the way, he is the only one of us engaged in the age-old Gypsy trade: he sells horses. The fifth member of our society is Matvey Gindra. He has contributed a lot to the foundation of society. Perhaps organisational talent is in his blood. His grandfather was a famous Gypsy chief. Matvey Gindra works as a secretary of the fire society in Saldus. In addition, also a football player.

– So, the sports section in your society is ensured?

Leimanis grins.

– Of course. He is already dreaming about creating a Gypsy football team. If we live until then, God willing. We just have to get this going. We must win Gypsy people's confidence, and then the rest will go like clockwork. When my sons grow up, they will help us.

I have two of them. The eldest, Kirill, is 20 years old. He is studying at the industrial school under the Railway Authority. And the youngest, Georgiy, is 15. Soon he will graduate from middle school, and I will send him to the normal school. Let Gypsies have a teacher of their own.

The 'Friend of Gypsies' walks me to the door. Snow covers a modest lodge – "the cradle of the Gypsy culture". Perhaps, someday the new Gypsies will come out of it, the ones who will exchange the clank of the timbrel and the guitar's groan for the Department of Pedagogy or a football.

Ki-Ra

[Photo]. Jānis Leimanis, the guard at Edinburgh Orthodox Church, the founder of Society 'Friend of Gypsies'.
[Photo]. Jānis Leimanis, his wife Elizaveta and youngest son Georgiy [4].

Notes

1. 'Tribe of Pharaohs' – in the same way, Gypsies were designated also in other countries in the studied region.
2. The Church was located in a place historically known as Edinburgh, which is nowadays called Dzintari – a neighbourhood of the resort town of Jūrmala. It was called Edinburgh in honour of the wedding of Alexander II of Russia's daughter and Alfred, the Duke of Edinburgh.
3. Palach, from Russian 'палач' – hangman.
4. The article contains two photographs of Leimanis and his family.

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Source: Ки-Ра. (1932). Другъ латвійскихъ цыганъ. *Сегодня вечером*, An. 8, No. 61, 1932, March 16, p. 3.
Prepared for publication by Ieva Tihovska.

Comments

The interview with Jānis Leimanis, the head of the newly founded society, contains valuable information about his family, ideas and activities (organisation of Roma relocation during the First World War, translation of religious texts into Romani language) as well as about the language, customs and current state of Latvian Roma. Leimanis argues against the myth of "natural" Roma nomadism and expresses the wish to unite all the Roma and to encourage their cultural revival.

Ieva Tihovska

10.2.2 *The Gypsy Songs from the Bushes Come to Riga*

Kārlis Krūmājs

Čigānu dziesmas pārnāk no krūmiem uz Rīgu

Kāda labvēļa privātdzīvoklī Iekšrīgā čigānu kultūras biedrības 'Čigānu Draugs' nenogurstošais priekšnieks Jānis Leimanis savācis kopā savus izkaisītos tautasbrāļus, lai kopīgā darbā izveidotu īstu čigānu kori.

"Čigānu kori te bijuši daudz", viņš saka, "Bet viņos nebija neviena čigāna un tie nedziedāja nevienu čigānu dziesmu. Tās bija krievu dziesmas un tikai rets čigānu vārds pa starpām. Mēs gribam samācīties savas dziesmas un dejas un tad parādīt jums, ka mums, tāpat kā visām citām tautām, ir sava īpatnēja kultūra. Zināms, mēs esam panīkuši,"

Leimanis skumji piebilst, "Par mums radusies sliņķu un krāpnieku slava. Mēs jau paši pie tā bijām vainīgi, bet nu mēs gribam līst ārā no krūmiem uz dižā ceļa. Piepalīdzat mums! Mēs visi nebūt neesam tādi sliņķi un krāpnieki. Daudz jau sen atmetuši klejošanas paradumus un dzīvo savās mājās, strādā tāpat kā latvieši, un jaunā paaudze iet skolās un grib būt derīgi Latvijas pilsoņi."

Istabiņā sapulcējušies ap 30 čigāni – jaunā kora pamats. Brūnās sejas, dedzīgās acis, sarkanie lakatiņi ap galvām un krelles ap kakliem sievietēm piedod gleznainu eksotisku noskaņu šim korim, kas klausa Leimaņa mājienam. Leimanis tāds savas tautas darbinieks, kas no sava mērķa neatkāpās, kaut gan līdzekļu trūkuma dēļ kultūras biedrības labā jau pārdevis šo un to no savas nelielās mantas.

Nav viegli šos dabas bērnus savākt vienkopus. Viņi dzīvo izklaidus un pa lielākai daļai ļoti nabadzīgi. Braukt uz kora mēģinājumiem tramvajos un autobusos iznāk par dārgu. Atrasta cita izeja: noīrēts smagais važonis Ungaitis no Šampētera un tas atved un aizved šos dziedātājus. Bet dziedātāji nedzīvo no dziesmām vien, tāpēc pamatos jāliek praktisks aprēķins.

"Ja tādiem salasītiem viltus čigānu koriem netrūkst klausītāju, kāpēc lai mūsu īstajās čigānu dziesmās nenāktu klausīties?" saka Leimanis. "Vasaru te Rīgā reklamējās viens ārzemju čigānu koris. Es uzmeklēju vadoni, lai aprunātos un redzētu, kāda viņiem tā

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čigānu valoda. Visur jau nav vienāda. Mūsu tauta tā izklīdusi, ka es nezinu, kur tagad vairs runā īsti pareizi čigāniski. Es aizeju, bet tas kungs ne bī, ne bē čigāniski. Viņš saka: "Vai jūs apsolāt klusēt, tad es jums izstāstīšu, kas par lietu. Vēlāk jūs varat runāt, tikai tagad kādu laiku ne." Es apsolīju. Un viņš man pateica: "Mēs neesam nekādi ārzemnieki. Mums nav arī neviena īsta čigāna. Mēs tāpat šo to sagrabinājām un gribam maizīti nopelnīt." Kālab tad nu mēs – īsti čigāni nevarētu mēģināt savu maizīti nopelnīt ar godīgām čigānu dziesmām?!"

Varbūt tas izdosies, bet pagaidām brūnās skaistules ģitāru pavadībā skandina dziesmiņu:

Le tu man čavoro,
poskil me som čorori, –
keļi java barvali,
pirdal tuke dikhava ...

Tulkojumā tas skanētu apm. tā: "Ņem tu mani, zēn, kamēr esmu nabadzīga; kad es būšu bagāta, – pāri tev skatīšos."

Un dziedot brūno meiteņu acis deg tādās ugunīs, ka jāsaka: paldies Dievam, ka vēl viņas visas nav bagātas! Citādi nabaga zēniem būtu pavisam bēdīgi ap dūšu ...

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Kārlis Krūmājs
The Gypsy Songs from the Bushes Come to Riga

Somewhere in inner Riga in a supporter's private apartment the tireless chairman of Gypsy culture society 'Friend of Gypsies' Jānis Leimanis has gathered his dispersed folk in order to form a real Gypsy choir.

"There have been many Gypsy choirs," he is saying, "But there haven't been any Gypsies in them, nor Gypsy songs. Those have been Russian songs with few Gypsy words in between. We want to learn our own songs and dances, and then show you that we, the same way as all other cultures, have a unique culture."

"It is known that we're quite decadent," Leimanis admits sadly. "We're known as lazy and deceiving. That is our own fault, but now we want to get out of the bushes and on the honest road. Help us! Not all of us are loafers and cheaters. Many of us have dropped the vagabond customs and live in our own houses, many are working like Latvians do, and the new generation is attending schools because they want to be useful Latvian citizens."

Some thirty Gypsies – the core of the new choir – have gathered in the room. The brown faces and the fiery eyes, the red scarfs around heads and the beads on the necks of the women give an exotic charming look to the choir that follows the direction of Leimanis. He is such a cultural worker among his folk who does not give up on his mission even if he has had to sell a few of his belongings to financially support the culture society. It is not easy to gather these nature children together. They live dispersed and many of them are poor. It is too expensive to travel by bus to the choir rehearsals. But

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they have found an alternative and hired the driver Ungaitis from Šampēteris, who brings the singers to and from the rehearsals in his truck. As the singers do not live off of songs alone, they have to have a coherent plan.

"If the fake Gypsy choirs have lots of listeners, why would people not come to listen to real Gypsy songs?" says Leimanis. "In the summer there was an advertisement of a Gypsy choir from abroad. I reached out to the conductor to see what their language sounds like. The language differs. Our folk is so scattered that I don't know which is the true Gypsy language now. When I met the guy, he knew no Gypsy language at all. I promised to keep quiet for a while, and he told me his secret. He said: "We are not from abroad and we have no Gypsies either. We just pulled something together and want to earn some money." Why then couldn't we – real Gypsies – try to earn our daily bread with true Gypsy songs?!"

Maybe we will succeed, but for now the brown beauties are singing a song accompanied by the guitar:

Le tu man čavoro,
poskil me som čorori, –
keli java barvali,
pirdal tuke dikhava ...

The translation would be something along these lines: "Take me, boy, while I am poor; when I will be rich, I will look past you."

And while they are singing, the young women's eyes burn with such a flame that I have to say: "Thank the Lord they're not all rich yet. Otherwise the poor young men would feel rather pitiful."

Source: Krūmājs, K. Čigānu dziesmas pārnāk no krūmiem uz Rīgu. *Jaunākās Ziņas*, An. 22, No. 261, 1932, November 17, p. 20.
Prepared for publication by Ieva Tihovska.

Comments

The article gives an insight into the foundation of the 'Friend of Gypsies' society choir. The leader of the choir, Jānis Leimanis, tells that they want to compete with the fake but popular 'Gypsy choirs' and expresses the idea of the revival of Latvian Gypsy culture. The available sources suggest that the choir was the major activity of the society (Leimanis' activities did in fact reach a broader scope, but not all of them were associated with the society). The choir's style corresponds to the tradition of Latvian choirs – a cultural symbol of Latvian nationalism that reaches back to the middle of the 19th century and manifests in four-part a cappella singing. The arrangements for the choir were made by Latvian composers Jānis Kalniņš (1904-2000) and Ralfs Alunāns (1902-1978); Alunāns also became the second director of the choir (Tihovska, 2013). The article contains a photograph of the society's choir riding in a horse-drawn wagon to a rehearsal.

Ieva Tihovska

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Summarising Comments

The set of documents presented above gives an overview of the foundation, activities and early liquidation of the first Latvian Roma organisation, the Gypsy Culture Promotion Society 'Friend of Gypsies'. This was the only Latvian Romani society of the interwar period, and it came into existence thanks to the main Latvian Romani activist of that time, Jānis Leimanis (1886-1950), who worked within the organisation together with his family members and other Roma, mainly in the capital Riga and western Latvia.

Historically two linguistic Romani sub-groups have inhabited Latvia: *Lotfitka Roma* in Western and North-Eastern Latvia and *Xaladitka Roma* in the South-Eastern part of the country (Венцель & Черенков, 1976; Matras, 2002, pp. 5-13). The 1925 census shows 2,870 Roma in the country, and the next censuses show a gradual increase in the number: 3,217 in 1930 and 3,839 in 1935, when they reached 0.2% of the total population (Salnītis, 1939, p. 286), which, along with the actual numbers, may also indicate the increasing ethnic confidence of local Roma. Unofficial statistics published in newspapers show bigger numbers, up to 5,000 or 6,000 Roma (Jaunākās Ziņas, 1936, p. 20; Ventas Balss, 1937, p. 3).

Leimanis was a Rom from the western part of Latvia, where the linguistic sub-group of *Lotfitka Roma* has historically lived. He became settled in 1898 and received some education in the school of Kuldīga's Orthodox parish and the Aizpute District School. His organisational activities started in 1915, when he advocated for the needs of Roma during their relocation due to military action in the First World War. He is known also as a translator of religious texts into Romani language – Gospel of John (Leimanis, 1933) and Excerpts from the Catechism, Prayers and Spiritual Songs (Leimanis, 1936) – and a collector of folklore; his folklore collection contains 75 notebooks of parallel texts in Romani and Latvian (LFKDA), the conductor of the 'Friend of Gypsies' Society Choir, and an activist for Gypsies employment in Riga and Western Latvia (Latviešu konversācijas vārdnīca, 1935; Vīksna, 2005).

The selected documents are important sources of public Roma civic and cultural activities during the interwar period. Leimanis was a visionary who did much to activate and unite Latvian Roma. His activities went beyond the foundation and leading of the society 'Friend of Gypsies' – he also tried to help Roma survive the difficulties of the world wars, collected folklore, did Christian missionary work among Roma, organised work groups to involve Roma in regular employment, etc. He was not always supported by the local Roma, and the documents as well as other newspapers of that time and even contemporary Roma memories show some criticism of his activities. The controversies surrounding his activities is a topic for further research.

Ieva Tihovska

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CHAPTER 11

Finland

11.1 Naming

Wälttäkäämme nimeä ‘mustalainen’

Kiertolaisen tarkoitus on mikäli mahdollista wälttää niemeä ‘mustalainen!’. “Se koskee kuin pintolla leikattaisiin, kun kuulle mainittawam nimeä ‘mustalainen’”. Wälttäkäämme siis tuota wihattua nimeä!

Wälttäkäämme sen sijaan nimeä romani (huom! Ei romaani). Romanit nimittäwät itseänsä tällä nimellä. Tätä nimeä woimme känttää sitä paremmin, kun se on niin ikiwanhakin ka on merkitysjelkaan niin kaunis. Se johtun Sanskriitti-sanasta Dom, romani sansasta rom, f.o. imies, ihminen. Lähetyksemme nimi ‘Mustalaislähetys’ täytyy kuitenkin eri syistä jäädä entiselleen.

Paitse nimeä ‘romani’ woimme myöskin känttää nimeä ‘kaalo’ (musta, mustalainen). ‘Romanit’ on se puhdas, tahraamaton ja isiltä peritty isiwanha nimi, mutta ‘kaalo’ (moniko ‘kaale’, kaaleita) on se tahratty, saatu ja romanien olemustilaa kuwaawa nimi. Se wastaa nimeä ‘mustalainen’, ainoastaan silla eroistuttella, että kaalo nimen tunteminen ei koske kipeää romaneitä, kun mustalaisnimi sen sijaan koskee. Kun tahdomme saada sanaa ‘mustalainen’ wastaawan nimityksen romaneille, täyttätäämme sitten ‘kaalo’, muuten ‘romanit’.

Esimerkiksi laulukjä: “Mustalaiseks olen syntynyt” romanikiellellä ei ole käytetty romani nimeä, waan ‘kaalo’. Se ei ole mitään walitettawa asia romaniksi, sittä hän wäin wastoin on ylpeä, mutta sitä hän suree ja walittaa, että hän syntyi ‘mustalaiseksi’, ‘kaaloks’.

Toimitus aitoo Kiertolaisesta soittaa erritäin huolellisesti käyttää nimiä ‘romanit’ ja ‘kaalo’.

O[skari] J[alkio]

∵

Let us avoid the word ‘Mustalainen’ (Gypsy)

Kiertolainen’s [1] aim is to avoid the name ‘Mustalainen’ (Gypsy) [2] as far as it is possible. Roma people often say: “It hurts like cutting with a knife when you hear the name *Mustalainen*” [3]. So, let us avoid that hated name.

Let us use instead the name Romani (not romaani) [4]. Roma themselves use that name. We can use this name because it is very old and its meaning is so beautiful. Its

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origin is in the Sanskrit language 'dom' and in the Romani language, the word 'rom' means a man. We must still keep the name of our organisation 'Mustalaislähetys' [5], for various reasons.

Besides the name 'Romani' we can also use the name 'Kaalo' (Black, Mustalainen) [6]. 'Romani' is the clean, unstained name inherited from forefathers and is an ancient name, but 'Kaalo' (pl. Kaale, Kaaleita) is the stained name, which describes the appearance or state of being of Roma people. It means the same as 'Mustalainen', but the difference is that hearing the word 'Kaalo' does not hurt Roma as much as hearing the word 'Mustalainen'. So, if we want to find a corresponding name for 'Mustalainen', let us use the word 'Kaalo', otherwise let us use the word 'Romani' For instance, the song "I was born to be *Mustalainen*" was translated into Romani language 'Kaalo'. In it, it is not a shame to be born Romani, on the contrary one is proud of it, but one complains and is ashamed that they were born to be 'Mustalainen', 'Kaalo'. The editorial of *Kiertolainen* wants to use the names 'Romani' or 'Kaalo' very cautiously.

Oskari Jalkio

Notes

1. The term 'Kiertolainen' can, in this context, be approximately translated as 'traveller', though there is no identical term in English to fully capture the meaning of the original one. For this reason, the name will be maintained in its original Finnish form in all notes and commentaries. 'Kiertolainen' was also the title used by the Mustalaislähetys (The Gypsy Mission) in Finland for its main journal publication. It was preceded, in 1906, by a Christmas issue of the Mustalaislähetys, called 'Mailman kiertäjä' (World Traveller). Unlike the name of the organisation, which only changed its name in 1990, to Romano Missio, the name of the journal was shifted several times. For example, from 1949, its name changed to 'Vaeltajankansa' (The Wanderer People). Between 1956-1970 its name changed again to Kotitiellä (Home on the Road) and, finally, in 1971 it changed to its current name, 'Romano Boodos' (Roma News).
2. Similar to note above, the word 'Mustalainen' cannot be translated exactly into English, though an approximate translation would be Gypsy. In reality, 'Mustalainen' has more direct phenotypical connotations, as it refers to the colour of the skin: from the word 'musta', which means 'black' in Finnish. As such, a direct translation would be that of 'black-skinned'. For the purpose of maintaining the original terms, however, the word 'Mustalainen' will be maintained and used whenever the sources exemplify it.
3. The author of the article, Oskari Jalkio, did not specify who the quote is attributed to, nor does he make a mention of this in subsequent publications.
4. 'Romaani' would mean 'book novel' in Finnish. Jalkio was merely highlighting the distinction of the two meanings.
5. The reasons for maintaining the term 'Mustalaislähetys' were never specified.
6. Jalkio offered here a translation of the word 'kaalo' from Romani language, meaning 'black' (or 'musta' in Finnish). As such, the two words would mean the same thing, but Jalkio highlights the different meaning the words have for Roma people themselves.

Source: O. J. [Oskari Jalkio]. (1907a). Wälttäkäämme nimeä "mustalainen". *Kiertolainen*, No. 0, 1907, p. 5.
Prepared for publication by Raluca Bianca Roman.
Translation consultation Liisa Laukkanen.

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Comments

This article was written by Anders Oskari Jalkio (1882-1952, born Storbacka, and also known as Oskari Johnsson) in the first issue of the *Gypsy Mission's* (Mustalaislähetys) newspaper, *Kiertolainen*, in 1907. As source material, it constituted what may be the first written source in what concerns the pleading for the change of name in reference to the community in Finland, from 'Mustalainen', roughly translated as 'Gypsy', to 'Roma'.

Oskari Jalkio, though not a 'Gypsy' himself, was also the founder of Mustalaislähetys (*The Gypsy Mission*). He was born in 1882 in Teerijärvi, on the Eastern coast of Finland. His faith was shaped within the Free Church (Vapaakirkko), an Evangelical Protestant movement in Finland, of which part he was and within which he acted as a pastor and a speaker. In 1900, however, he joined the 'Evankeliset ystävät' (Evangelical Friends), a revivalist movement within the Free Church, founded by Axel Alfred Skutnabb. It was within this movement that Mustalaislahetys also took shape, as Jalkio remained a member of it until its death (Mäkinen, 2014, p. 44; Tervonen, 2012, p. 125; Viita, 1967, p. 25). Besides his role as a pastor, Jalkio was also an active author of books, including a book titled 'Romanenge ĝiilja – Romaanilauluja' (Roma Songs), published in 1939 (Jalkio, 1939), and a Finnish-Spanish dictionary, published in 1931, pacifist and promoter of vegetarianism (he even wrote a book in 1925, titled *The Basics of Vegetarianism*).

The 'Gypsy Mission' was founded in 1906 at Jalkio's initiative. The story goes that in 1902, he met a young Roma boy, who came to his house asking for food. Jalkio was, at the time, in preparation for his missionary trip to China and Japan and dismissed the boy in haste. When his plans to travel to China fell through in 1904, as he was not given a passport, Jalkio was reminded of the encounter with the boy, which had been lingering in his mind, and realised that his work need not be conducted in distant lands but could be done in his own country. Thus, it is said, he began his missionary work among the Kaale in Finland (Mäkinen, 2014, pp. 44-46; Tervonen, 2012, pp. 125; Viita, 1967, pp. 28-30).

Mustalaislähetys would become the first and most important organisation of the early 20th century with Roma/Kaale as their central focus. Its mission was both religious and social, with the founding of schools, orphanages, and Romani language courses across the country. For example, the first Roma School was organised in Viipuri (present-day Vyborg, in Russia), between 1905-1907 and had as one of its teacher a Roma woman under the name of Sofia Schwartz; the first Romani language course was organised in Seinajöki (Central-Western Finland) in 1906 and the first Roma children's home was organised in Sortavala (nowadays in Russia) between 1910-1918.

The work of the 'Gypsy Mission', therefore, seemed to combine a social and a religious dimension, the latter made mostly visible also in the organisation of religious meetings in various parts of the country, with (mainly) non-Kaale preachers (the notable exceptions of Antti Palm and Herman Korpp) and with Kaale mediators connecting the organisation to Kaale across the country. Most of the members of the board and the leaders of the organisation were thus, at the beginning of the 20th century, non-Kaale.

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There was one exception to this, the Viipuri branch of the organisation, which, in 1907, had a majority of its local board members Roma. This situation did not last for very long and the Roma membership of this charter gradually diminished over the years, with diminishing resources from the central organisation. Reasons for this shift are unclear, but a potential one may have been the disagreements between the religion-first approach of Jalkio and others, compared with the focus on social needs first and the higher autonomy of decisions asked for by the members of the Viipuri circle (Tervonen, 2012, pp. 128).

Besides its social and religious work, from 1906 the journal also published its own newspaper, *Kiertolainen*, where the article above was also published. Much like the article presented here, most articles in *Kiertolainen* were written by Jalkio, his wife Helmi, and members of the board or the leadership of the organisation. In addition, some recurrent Roma writers also featured on the pages of the newspaper (see below, for articles by Nikkinen, Hagert, and an anonymous 'Roma man'). Some of the key names are Antti Palm, Sofia Schwartz, Mandi Isberg, Karl Fr. Lindström, Herman Korpp, Otto and Ina Palmroth, who collaborated either as writers for *Kiertolainen* or, more broadly, as missionary workers within Mustalaislähetys. Nevertheless, articles by Roma within the pages of *Kiertolainen* were often sparse in between and shorter entries in comparison to the pages-long articles written by Jalkio and others. The other articles featured in *Kiertolainen* included "news" about Gypsies in Finland and other countries (later, especially in relation to the work of evangeliser Gypsy Smith in Britain, or news about Gypsies in Sweden and Norway), life stories of Gypsies (written by themselves or reproduced by Oskar Jalkio, his wife Helmi, or others), poems in both Romani and Finnish (often written and translated by Jalkio himself), small mini-articles by named or anonymised 'Roma girls' (named as *Romani tyttö*) about their life experiences, such as an article written by Mandi Isberg (Kiertolainen, 1913a, pp. 13-14), titled 'One Roma girl's life story', information about the work of Mustalaislähetys and events organised by the Mission, information about the organisation's financial and membership matters.

The article above, published in the first issue of the newspaper, is a reflection of Jalkio's focus on shifting both the narrative and the type of work to be conducted among Roma in the country. His pleading for the change of the name to be used within the pages of *Kiertolainen* is argued to be based on his interactions with Roma and their dislike of the term 'Mustalainen'. Thus far, it has been difficult to locate the background to Jalkio's interest in the name change or the first time he had discovered the term Roma as an alternative. While 'Romani' does appear in earlier Roma poems as used in reference to language, a self-appellation of Finnish Roma as 'Roma' was not evident prior to 1907. Instead, the term 'Kaale', which Jalkio also acknowledges, was the most common form of self-referencing in materials prior to 1907. Later poems and articles, including articles written by Roma authors in *Kiertolainen* (see below), would continue to use the term 'Roma' as the most common reference for themselves, alongside the terms 'Kaale' and, more rarely, 'Mustalainen' (the latter found mainly in songs and poems or in reference

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to 'Mustalaislähetys'). As far as we know thus far, this article may thus be a first moment of shift in the written usage of the term 'Roma' as a demanded alternative for the term 'Mustalainen'. The term Roma was also used by what was possibly the first Roma-led civic organisation in the country, founded in 1917 when, after the February Revolution in the former Russian Empire, nation-building processes among numerous nations rapidly developed. This was the Suomen Romanien Sivistysseura (Finnish Roma Civilisation Society) (Työmies 1917a, p. 5; Työmies 1917b, p.9; Työmies 1917c, p.6). According to Risto Blomster, who has conducted the archival research on this matter, its chairman was Ida Blomerus (also known as I. Cingardy-Ora and I. Cingardy-Ora Blomerus), a Kaale woman, and the society had its own board of trustees, twenty members, as well as its written rules (Risto Blomster, personal communication, 27.11.2020; Blomster and Roman, 2021b). While little more is known about its official registration, this undoubtedly constitutes an important moment in the process of Roma emancipation in the country.

Raluca Bianca Roman

11.2 To the Roma Young People

Romaninuorisolle

Suokaa anteeksi että uskallan esittää mielipiteeni siitä, miten voisimme kohottautua sivistyskansojen tasolle!

En tiedä, mistä syystä esi-isämme ovat joutuneet kylänkujia kulkemaan. Meidän päiviemme romanit ovat vanhemmiltaan saaneet kiertlelemisen perinnökseen. Yleensä romanit ovat sitkeitä isänperinnön säilyttajiä. Hyvät isänperinnön säilyttäjät! Tämä kuuluu ihanalta. Meihin nähden isänperinnön säilyttämistä ei voida ihannella. Sillä isämme ovat jättäneet perinnöksemme maantien ja paljon huonoja taipumuksia. Sen lisäksi on saamassamme perinössä hyvääkin, esimerkiksi oma kieli ja kansallisuus. Jos säilytämme vanhempiemme elintavat, jäävät varmasti jälkeläisemme samanlaiseen kurjuuteen kuin mekin, nimittäin toisten kansojen irvikuviksi ja halveksittaviksi. Isiemme sekä omiemme pahain tapaimme tähden olemme joutuneet toisten kansojen silmissä kovin halveksituiksi. Suuri taakka on harteillamme toisten kansojen kirous.

Kirouksemme postamiseksi täytyy meidän tuhlata niin sanottu isiemme perintö, täytyy jättää kiertolaisuus, alinomainen ihmisten pettäminen hevosvaihdossa, povaamisessa, y.m.s. Pyytäkäämme Jumalain voimaa, että voisimme jättää paheemme ja omaksua hyviä tapoja. Kiertelemisemme vaihtakaamme paikallan olemiseen, kerjjuun ruumiilliiseen työhön, pettämisen rehellisyyteen! Taikauskon jättäkäämme tyyten pois ja uskokaamme Jumalaan! Kun uskomme Jumalaan, niin voitamme kaikki, mikä hyvää on. Jokainen ehken huomaamme, että olemme monta rappua alempana niistä kansoisita, joiden keskuudessa kiertelemme. Olemme vähemmän kehittyneet aineellisen, henkisen, sekä hengellisen elämän puolelta. Vanhat romanit sanovat: "Kuka hullu rupeaa raakaa ruumiillista työtä tekemään noitten talonpikien tavalla! En minä ainakaan sitä

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tee." Sanokaamme niille heimolaisillemme, jotka työtä halveksivat: "Mistä olemme saaneet sen etuoikeuden, että toisten täytyy elättää meitä? Hyi sentääm! On häpeä terveiden ihmisten keujuulla henkeänsä elättää, pukea itsensä kamalan aistittomaan pukuun, joka herättää ihmisissä inhoa, ei vähääkään säälin tunnetta mokomiakin kummituksia kohtaan. Usein kuulee romaneitten huokaavan: Olis se sitten hyvä olla maailmassa, jos nuo gaajeet eivät tuntisi mustalaiseksi." On aivan turhaa huokailla. Siinä pettyvät ainakin ne, joilla on erikoisemmat vaatteet ja elintavat kuin muilla ihmisillä. Enemmistö romaninaisista ruukkaa röijyä, joka on samaa mallia maalaisten rusauman hatun kanssa. Hame on kovin tilava että siihen sopisi vaimo kokonaisine perheineen. Kangas on ehkem samaa, jota espanjalaiset käyttävät härkiä ärsyttäessään, kun tahtovat niitä huvitaisteluun. Eikös olisi hauskempi itsemmekin katsella itseämme, kun olisimme nykyajan aistikkaseen pukuun puetut.*

Meistä riipuu oma sekä jäjlkeläistemme onni. Älkäämme tuhlatko aikaa turhuuteen! Matkoillani kuulen ihmisten sanovan: "Romaneita on koetettu taivuttaa Jumalan tuntemiseen, mutta he ovat välinpitämättömia." Muutamat sanovat tarjonneensa koulusivistystä omilla kustannuksillaan romaneille, mutta sekin on hyljätty. Onpa se ikävä asia, että niin ymmärtämättomiä ovat muutamat olleet. Meille jos joku sanoisi: "Saat käydä koulua minun kustannuksellani", ottaisimme kai jokainen ilomielin trjouksen vastaan. Oi, jos Jumala johdattaisi minulle jonkun tarjoomaan niin suurta maallista onnea, että saisin käydä koulua, ottaisin kiitollisin sydämin vastaan niin hyvään tarjouksen.

Me, jotka muodostamme romaninuorison, katsokaamme elämää suuremmilla toiveilla! Älkämme tyytykö paljaaseen olemiseen ja siihen kurjuuteen, joka keskuudessamme vallitsee! Ryhtykäämme yksissä miehin pyrkimääm maailmassa parempiosaisiksi! Heitäkäämme kaikki se, joka sitoo meidät tuohon kurjuuteen! Kodittomuus on suurin elämän kirous, mikä maan päällä on olemassa. Koti pienikin voi tarjota suojaa maailman myrskyiltä. Minkähän eteen oikein eläneekin selllainen ihminen, joka itse maailmassa kiertää paikasta toiseen, tietämättä missä illalla yösijan saa. Kiertolaisperhe ei tunne ihannuutta, mikä vallitsee hyvän eteen työskentelevän ihmisen sydämessä.

Romanimme eivät pidä huolta huomispäivän toimeentulosta. He eivät kasvata lapsiaan nykyajan siveyteen,** eivät siis tunne velvollisuuttaan lapsiaankaan kohtaan. Käsitteeni mukaan sellaiset ihmiset, jotka eivät itse työskentele olemassaolonsa eteen, joutaisivat itsekin maailmasta pois. Älkäämme toki nuorina, ryhdikkäinä romanipokina ja tyttöinä tyykykö entisyyteemme! Pyrkikäämme siihen, että meillä jokaisella olisi kaikki kansallisoikeudet ja oma koti. Taistelu on elämää. Ihmiselämä on aivan kuollutta, jos siinä ei ole mitään pyrintää.

Taistelekaamme! Taistelekaamme niin, että saamme vastusajaimmekin tunnustuksen. Pyytäkäämme Jumalaa johtajaksemme! Hänen kauttaan saavutamme hyvän päämäärän.

Heimolaisenne Ferdinand Nikkinen

*. Olemme toista mieltä kirjoittajan kanssa, mitä romanien pukuun ja väreihhin tulee. Ne muodostavat hauskan vaihtelun jäykässä muodikkuudessamme. Ei ole ollenkaan syytä ruveta erikoisemmin seuraamaan aikamme luonnotonta muotihulluutta.

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**. Nykyajan siveys on mielestämme paljon huonompi vielä, kuin romanien onkaan. Siitä emme siis puolestamme kehoita romaninuorisoa ihailemaan. Seuratkaamme Kristuksen siveyttä!

∵

To the Young Roma [1] People

Forgive me, that I dare to tell my opinion of how we could rise to the level of the civilized people [2].

I do not know why our forefathers had to wander along the village roads. Roma of our time have inherited wandering from their parents. In general, Roma are persistent to keep their traditions. Good followers of traditions! It sounds lovely, but we should not admire these traditions, because our fathers have left many bad traditions to us. There are, naturally, also many good things – for instance, our own language and nationality. If we retain our parents' modes of life, our children will suffer from a similar misery and be despised by other people. Because of our bad habits, other nations despise us. This curse is a big burden on our shoulders.

To remove this curse, we must leave aside our forefathers' inheritance – give up wandering, deceiving people in the selling of horses and in future-telling also. Let us ask for God's power that we could leave our bad habits and learn good habits instead. We ought to leave wandering and live in one place. We ought to leave begging and start to work, to leave deceiving and to be honest. We ought to leave superstition and believe in God. As we believe in God, we'll win everything good.

We all know that we are many steps lower than those nations among which we live and wander. We are less advanced in a material, intellectual and spiritual meaning. Old Roma say: "Who is so foolish that does hard manual labour like those country men [3]?" Let us say to those Roma who despise work: "From where have we got such privilege that other people must support our living?" Ugh! It is a shame that young people earn their living by begging and dress senseless. Other people despise those dresses and do not feel compassion for such people. You often hear Roma sighing: "It would be nice to be in the world, if *gadžo* would not recognise that you are a Gypsy." Your sigh is in vain. You betray yourself, at least you, who has different clothes and different habits from others. Most of the Roma women wear a blouse [4], which is like rye pole in countryside. The skirt is so large that you could hide the whole family under it. The cloth is of same material as the Spanish use to irritate bulls. Would it not be nicer to look at ourselves in more modern and tasteful clothes? *

Our and our children's happiness depends on us. Let us not waste our time with vanity. I have heard people say: "We have tried to teach Roma to know God but they do not care." Let us take Jesus to our hearts. He also gives us civilization. I have heard that many Roma children have forsaken a good offer. People have promised to pay their education, but they have refused. If somebody offered this possibility to us, we would have accepted it with joy.

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We, who are a part of Roma youth, let us look at life with greater hopes. Let us not be content with misery. Let us strive for a better life. Let us throw away that which bind us to misery. Homelessness is the greatest curse in the world. A home – even a small one, can protect us from the storms of the world. For what lives a person, who does not know, where to sleep the following night? A wanderer does not know how lovely it is to work for a good life.

The Roma do not care for livelihood. They do not educate their children to be chaste** in the modern way. They do not know their duty to educate their children. In my opinion, people who do not work to earn their existence could go away from the world. As young straight Roma boys and girls let us not be satisfied with our past. Let us seek that we all would have the same national rights and our own home. The fight is life. Life is dead without goals. Let us fight that also our opponents witness it. Let us ask God to be our leader. Through Him we'll get a good goal.

Tribesman [5] Ferdinand Nikkinen

*. Editor says: We disagree as to dresses and colours. They are nice variation in our stiff fashion. It is not necessary to follow the fashion madness of our time [6].
**. The morality nowadays is worse than that of Roma people. We do not advise Roma youth to admire it. Let us follow Christ's morality [7].

Notes

1. Connecting this source with the previous one, it is noteworthy that Nikkinen uses the term 'Roma' rather than 'Mustalainen' or 'Kaale' in this article.
2. 'Civilised' is the direct translation from the Finnish word used by Nikkinen.
3. 'Talonpoika' was an often-used term to refer to peasants folk.
4. 'Röijy' is a unique term used to refer to the types of blouses worn by Roma women. It is still used nowadays.
5. From the term 'heimo', which means 'tribe' in Finnish. It is term often used by Roma to refer to one's 'own people'. See also a similar discussion concerning the use of the word 'tribe' when referring to 'one's people' in the Chapter 3.
6. It is noteworthy that the editors of *Kiertolainen* appear to openly disagree with some of Nikkinen's ideas. This would later become more evident in the subsequent events that would make Nikkinen an adamant critic of Mustalaislähetys, especially in the post-Second World War context.
7. Ibid.

Source: Nikkinen, F. (1913b). Romaninuorisolle. *Kiertolainen*, No. 7-9, 1913, p. 15.
Prepared for publication by Raluca Bianca Roman.
Translation consultation Liisa Laukkanen.

Comments

This article, published in a 1913 issue of *Kiertolainen*, is one of the few ones written by Ferdinand Nikkinen during his connection to Mustalaislähetys. The article highlights several issues which, on the one hand, emphasise Nikkinen's position with respect to the topics of 'wandering' and Roma 'traditions' and, on the other hand, pinpoint to the

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later topics of disagreement between Nikkinen and the leadership of Mustalaislähetys. In order to understand these issues, a short background on Ferdinand Nikkinen would be needed.

Ferdinand Nikkinen was born in 1894 in Heinävesi, to a relatively well-off Roma family. He was one of seven children. His family, unlike most Roma families at the time, did not travel and owned their own farm, most likely accumulated through Nikkinen's grandparents and parents' participation in the military service (Rekola, 2010a). Again, unlike other Roma children, Nikkinen also attended elementary school for four years, where his musical talent was allegedly discovered, and he continued his education by attending the Helsinki Musical College between 1915-1921. He made most of his living from his music and performed with various artists from the country (Ibid.).

When the Mustalaislähetys was founded, Nikkinen often joined in the mission's events, as a musical performer, as supporter and collaborator, but became a vehement critic of the organisation in the post-war context. The article above is one of the clearest evidences of his ideas and perspectives in what concerned matters of Roma social work in the country. In it, he addresses Roma youth (he was himself 19 years old at the time) and pleads for the sedentarisation (or the seizing of a wandering lifestyle) of the Roma in the country, the increased attention paid to education and the abandonment of some Roma traditions which he found an impediment for social integration (such as the clothing of the women, the telling of fortunes, etc.). The article, as such, fits within the mission statements of the Mustalaislähetys, which also promoted issues of sedentarisation and education of Roma youth. Nevertheless, as evident especially from the editor's notes to Nikkinen's article, there were some clear contradictions between Nikkinen and the Mustalaislähetys leadership visions for the social work conducted among Roma in the country. This is especially made manifest in the ways in which Nikkinen criticised the Roma women's traditional dress (whereas the editors praise it) and his invitation for Roma youth to align themselves with the majority morality of the time (whereas the editors emphasise the dangers of that 'morality' and invite the readers to fit their actions with the 'Christian morality' instead). These are interesting and revelatory diverging points between Nikkinen's vision and that of the Mustalaislähetys, which would become more prominent in the post-war context.

As such, after the Second World War, Nikkinen not only detached himself from Mustalaislähetys' activities but became a vehement critic of the latter and an ardent atheist. It is unclear when and how the change occurred, but it appears to have been crucial in Nikkinen's later actions. For example, in 1946, he wrote a letter to the Ministry of the Interior, in which he collected the signatures of 364 other Roma men, and in which he was criticising the Mustalaislähetys and highlighting that Roma should be more actively involved in the shaping of Gypsy policy in the country (Pulma, 2006, p. 166; Friman-Korpela, 2014). While the letter did not lead to any actions from the recipients, Nikkinen continued his efforts for a civic Roma movement and, in 1953, founded the first non-religious Roma organisation in the country, Romanengo Staggos (Romani Liitto/ Roma Association). While this organisation's life was short-lived, it nevertheless led to

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the foundation of the Finnish Gypsy Society (Suomen Mustalaisyhdistys) in 1967, which, under the present-name of Finnish Roma Society (Suomen Romani Yhdistys) continues to be one of the leading Roma organisations in the country, paralleling its activities to those of Romano Missio (the current name of the former Mustalaislähetys, with a present-day Roma leadership of its board).

As such, the above article is an important source material in connection to the processes of civic emancipation of Roma in Finland (both inter- and post-war), highlighting not only specific issues targeted by Mustalaislähetys (such as the housing of Gypsies and their education) but also the diverging points between the Mission and Nikkinen, who would become a key influence in the founding of some of the main non-religious Roma-led organisations in Finland: Romanengo Staggos and, later, Suomen Mustalaisyhdistys (see more Stenroos, 2019).

Finally, it is worth mentioning that in the same issue of *Kiertolainen* (1913), two other Roma-authored articles appeared. The first one worth mentioning is an article titled 'Roma girl's thoughts' (Kiertolainen, 1913a, pp. 13-14), authored by Mandi Isberg, who had also published previous life stories or experiences from her life as a Roma girl. A second one is an article titled 'My life story', authored by Karl Fr. Lindström and written at the request of the editors. In it, Lindström, a Roma man who often worked in close cooperation with Mustalaislähetys at the beginning of the 20th century talks about his experience of finding God in the late 1900s (Kiertolainen, 1913c, pp. 6-8).

11.3 The Gypsy Mission

11.3.1 *For the Roma Tribe*

Romaniheimon puolesta

Mustalaislähetys on vaikeampia tehtäviä, mitä voi kuvitella. Nimikirsittyjen keskuudessa eläesään näkee romani joka päivä kuollutta uskoa. Häneen juurtuu se käsitys, ettei uskonosta ole mitään hyvää. Kuitenkin on rakastava Vapahtaja kunastunut romanitkin, vaikka heille on rakkautta tositeossa osoitettu hyvin vähän.

Mustalaislähetystyötä on tehty maassamme vasta 23 vuotena. Ei ole nähty siitä niin suuria tuloksia kuin olisi toivottu. Vaikka eihän sitä voi suuria odottaakaan näin lyhyessä ajassa, kun otta huomioon työmaan vaikeuden ja työn pienuuden. Mustalaislähetys on tullut rakkaaksi vain muutamille henkilöille. Soisin voivani valaista sitä työtä oikealla tavalla.

Tämän kirjoittaja kuulu siihen heimoon, vaikkakaan ei elä siihen tapaan, kuin yleensä elävät siihen heimoon kuuluvat. Olen jo kolmannessa polvessa niitä, jotka eivät ole paljon kiertäneet. Isäni vanhemmat olivat talollisia ja isäni on vain vähän kiertänyt. Meidät on kasvatettu eri tavalla kuin toiset romanilapset. Kahdentoista vanhana jouduin Valkonauhan lastenkotiin. Äiti-vainaja kertoi saisastaneensa niin kovaa nivelreumatismia, ettei voinut jäseniään liikuttaa. Olin silloin vain vuoden ikäinen. Äiti ei saanut minua

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muuten luoksensa, kuin hampaillaan vetämällä mekon helmasta, hänen maatessaan latttialla. Silloin hänelle sanottiin eräänä yönä: ”Jos viskaat kortit tuleen, niin paranet.” Äiti nimittäin povasi siihen asti. Varmaan äitini sai voimia ylhäältä, koskapa hän seuravaana aamuna heitti korttinsa tuleen. Sen jälkeen hän parani ja eli vielä 8 vuotta. – Soisin, että jokaisen mustalaisnainen samoin heittäisi povaamisen pois, eikä tahallan valehtelisi muille ihmisille. Sillä onhan suuri synty valehdella. Pyydän myös ettei kenkään, joka tämän lukee antaisi povata itsellensä. Auttakaa heitä ennemmin muulla tavalla.

Jeesus käski saarnata evankeliumia ensin Jerusalemissa, sitten Juudeassa, Samariassa ja aina maailman ääriin. Tätä työtä tehdessä on unohdettu lähellä olevat pajanat. Jo on aika herätä korjaaman tätä laiminiyöntiä. Eikä mustalainen ole niin jäykkä omassa epäuskosaan kuin yleensä luullaan, jos vaan tositeossa osoitetaan häntä kohtaan rakkautta.

Toivoisin, että romanilähetystyö nousisi entistä virkeämpään toimintaan. Ei pidä masentua, jos on nähty vähän hedelmää. Kauanhan kesti Nooakin arkin rakentaminen. Jos alettaisiin ottaa romanien lapsia kasvatettavaksi, niin tulos olisi suurempi kuin ennen. Nouskaamme yhdessä tähän työhön! Ja jollet muuta voi, niin rukoile tämän heimon puolesta. Jumala on sen kuuleva.

Maria Hagert

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For the Roma Tribe

Gypsy Mission [1] is one of the most difficult tasks than you can imagine. Among Roma, who call themselves Christian, you can see “dead faith” every day. They feel that there is nothing good in religion. However, the loving Saviour has redeemed also Roma, though they have not really got much love.

Mustalaislähetys’ [2] work has been done for only 23 years. We have not seen as great results as we had wished for. You cannot expect great results during such a short time, taking into account the difficulties of the work and the small resources available. Gypsy mission has become loved only by a few people. I hope I could open this work in the right way.

The writer of this article belongs to the same tribe though does not live like the people of that tribe. I am one from the third generation who has not been wandering. We have been raised in different way as Roma children. At twelve years old I was put into the Children’s Home of Valkonauhaliitto [3]. My late mother said that she was so ill (joint rheumatism) that she could not move her body. I was only one year old. She could not get me to come to her in any other way than by drawing with her teeth from my dress while lying on the floor. Then someone said to her one night: “If you throw your playing cards into the fire and stop telling the future, you will be healed.” I think my mother got powers from up above, because next morning she threw her cards into fire. And she became well and lived 8 years more. I pray that every Roma woman would stop reading the future and

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stop lying, because it is a great sin to lie. And I also ask you, the reader, that you do not let the Roma women tell your future. You can help them in some other way.

Jesus ordered to preach the gospel first in Jerusalem and then in Judea, Samaria and to the end of the world. Doing this we have forgotten the pagans near us [4]. It is time to wake up and repair the situation. And the "Mustalainen" [5] is not so stiff in his unfaithfulness as one may generally think, if you show love to him.

I hope that Roma mission work [6] would become livelier. You ought not to be depressed if you see little fruit. It also took a long time for Noah to build the ark. If you could take Roma children to take care of them, you could see better results [7]. Let's do this work together. If you cannot do anything else, pray for this work. God will hear it.

Maria Hagert

Notes

1. The term 'Mustalaislähetys', in this context, could mean both the name of the organisation and the actual "Gypsy mission" done by the organisation. The author may have intended it to reflect this double meaning.
2. Here, the term 'Mustalaislähetystyö', refers specifically to the name of the organisation, which is why the original term was maintained in the translation.
3. The name of another Christian organisation, translated as the Finnish White Ribbon Union. It is a women's Christian organisation, founded in 1905, with its main focus being the support of families in need or those whose members suffer from substance abuse. The organisation continues its activities until present-day.
4. The direct translation from Finnish is 'pagans'.
5. Here, the author uses specifically the term 'Mustalainen' to highlight the distinction. In all other cases, the word Roma appears to be used, with the exception being the reference to the Gypsy Mission (Mustalaislähetys), as an organisation.
6. Unlike in previous mentions, here the term 'Romanilahetystyö' is used instead of 'Mustalaislähetystyö'. It is unclear if the terms are used interchangeably or if the final sentences are an intentional point that the author is trying to make through it.
7. The issue of taking away and raising Roma children by non-Roma families would become one of the most contentious and controversial aspects of the Mustalaislähetys in the post-war context.

Source: Hagert, M. (1929). Romaniheimon puolesta. *Kiertolainen*, No. 1, 1929, p. 8.
Prepared for publication by Raluca Bianca Roman.
Translation consultation Liisa Laukkanen.

Comments

The article presented above was written in one of the 1929 issues of *Kiertolainen*, by a Roma woman, with the name Maria Hagert. There is no clear information about the woman's background, apart from her own presentation as being the third generation of Roma that have become settled.

Though general in content, the article is relevant as source material on several accounts. Firstly, it is one of the several articles written by Roma women in the pages of *Kiertolainen*. Other known female Roma authors were Mandi Isberg (see previous comments) and Sofia Schwartz. The latter was also a prominent female figure within Mustalaislähetys, and a unique case as the first Roma female teacher of the first Roma

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school in the Karelian city of Vyborg (Rekola, 2010b). She wrote several letters and mini entries in the 1907 issues of *Kiertolainen*. One particularly interesting example of this is the one in which she recounts her 1906 travels to Ingria (in Saint Petersburg Governorate), and in which she embarks on a comparison between Roma in Finland to Ingrian Roma (Kiertolainen, 1907b, pp. 6-7). Alongside these female authors, were also multiple anonymised poems written by a 'Roma girl' (presented simply as Romanityttö) but which could also potentially be attributed to Mandi Isberg.

In that respect, the article above shows the involvement of both Roma men and Roma women in at least some of the activities of the Mustalaislähetys and their apparent agreement with some of the aims of the organisation (such as the issue of settlement of Roma, of children's education, etc.). Secondly, and connected to the latter point, the article is interesting given in its address to both Roma and non-Roma readers, and in which the focus is clearly paid to the issue of the religious and general education of Roma children, the abandonment of some traditional practices (such as fortune-telling by women) and the highlighting of the pitfalls and limitations of wandering. Through this, the article partly resembles that written by Ferdinand Nikkinen more than a decade earlier (see above), while also emphasises the partial agreement and involvement of some Roma members within the activities of the Mustalaislähetys at the time.

Raluca Bianca Roman

11.3.2 *The Gypsy Mission's Rules*

Mustalaislähetyksen r.y. säännät

1. Mustalailähetys r.y. on koko Suomen maata käsittävä yhdistys, jonka kotipaikka on Helsingin kaupunki.

2. Yhdistyksen tarkoitus on kristillisellä pohjalla toimia Suomen mustalaisen eli romanien henkisen ja aineellisen tilan parantamiseksi.

3. Tarkoituksensa saavuttamiseksi harjoittaa yhdistys yleistä lähetystoimintaa, toimeenoanee kokouksia ja lähetysiltamia myyjäisineen, julkaisee kirjallisuutta ja kirjallisuutta ja aikakauslehtiä, perustaa kouluja, lähetys- ja työkoteja ynnä kasvatuslaitoksia, hankkii työ, asuin- ja viljelyspaikkoja sekä avustaa kykynsä mukaan kaikin puolin jokaista hyödylliseksi ja toimeliaaksi kansaleiseksi pyrkivöö romania.

4. Jäseneksi pääsee jokainen nämä säännöt hyväksyvä Suomen kansalainen ilmoittautumalla ja suorittamalla jäsenmaksunaan vähintään viisi (5) Smk. Vuosittain tai kaksisataa (200) Smk. kerta kaikkiaan rahastonhoitajalle, jollekin johtokunnan jäsenelle tai muuten siihen valtuutetulle henkillölle. Erilään asuvilta jäseniltään on lähetys oikeutettu jäsenen kustannuksella, ellei jäsenyys jommaltakummalta puolelta ole irtisanottu edellisen kalenterivuoden kuluessa. Kuitti kuluvan vuoden jäsenmaksun suorituksesta on yhtä pätevä jäsenyyden todistus kuin jäsenkorttikin.

5. Eroava jäsen menettää yhdistykselle suorittamansa jäsenmaksut.

6. Yhdistyksen toimintaa sen hallistuksessa johtaa yhdeksän (9) henkinen johtokunta, jonka puheenjohtaka, sihteeri ja rahastonhoittaja muodostavat n.k. toimikunnan, joka

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päättää yhdistyksen juoksevista asioistam kuten koetoimijoiden valinnasta, raha-asiain ja kustannusliikkeen hoidosta, toimeenpanee, johtokunnan ja vuosikokouksen päätokset sekä huolehtii rekisteröimis- ja jäsenluettelo y.m. yhdistyslaissa määrätyistä tehtävistä.

7. Johtokunta, joka keskuudestaan valitsee puheenjohtajan ja varapuheenjohtajan, valvoo toimikunnan toimintaa, eroittaa yhdistyksen periaatteista luopuneet tahi muuten siveellisesti moitteelliset jäsenet, jotka kuitenkin voivat vedota vuosikokouksen ratkaisuun, suunnittelee yhdistyksen toimintaa, varojen hankintaa, sekä päättää suurempia aineellisia uhrauksia kysyvistä toimenpiteistä ja hyväksyy lopullisesti lähetyksen vakinaiset toimihenkilöt.

Vakinaiset johtokunnan kokouset pidetään aina joka helmikuun kuluessa ja ylimääräisiä kokousia, milloin toimikunta tai neljä muuta johtokunnan jäsentä sitä vaatii. Johtokunta kutsutaan kokoon kutsukorteilla ja on pääsösvaltainen, kun viisi jäsentä on saapuvilla.

8. Ensimmäinen johtokunta muodostetaan siten, että puheenjohtaja ja kaksi jäsentä valitaan vuodeksi, sihteeri ynnä kaksi jäsentä kahdeksi vuodeksi ja rahastonhoitaja sekä kaksi jäsentä kolmeksi vuodeksi. Näiden tultua erovuoroon, valitaan aina kolme jäsentä kolmeksi vuodeksi. Erovuorossa olevat voidaan valita uudelleen.

9. Rahastonhoitaja ja sihteeri jättävät päättyneen kalenterivuoden tilit viimeistään tammikuun 15 päivään mennessä tilintarkastajille, jotka kahden vikon kuluessa toimittavat tarkastuksen ja antavat lausuntonsa puheenjohtajalle.

10. Yhdistyksen ilmoitukset jäsenille julistetaan joko yhdistyksen omien julkaisuijen kautta tahi snanomalehdissä tahi kirjeellisesti.

11. Vuosikokous, jonka toimikunta kokoonkutsuu, pidetään pääsiäisen aikana Helsingissä, ellei edellinen vuosikokous nimenomaan ole toisin päätänyt.

12. Vuosikokouksessa:

a) Esitetään johtokunnan vuosikertomus ja päätetään siitä;

b) Luetaan tilintarkastajain lausunto ja päätetään titlivapauden myöntämisestä toimi-ja johtokunnalle;

c) Valitaan kolme johtokunnan jäsentä kolmeksi vuodeksi erovuorossa olevien sijaan ja kolme varajäsentä vuodeksi;

d) Valitaan kaksi tilintarkastakaa ja pöytäkirjantarkastajaa varamiehineen;

e) Päätetään johtokunnan esittämistä asioista; sekö;

f) Käsitellään muita kokoukselle mahdollisesti esitettyjä asioita, jotka vähintään kaksi kuukautta ennen vuosikokousta johtokunnalle kirjallisesti on ilmoitettu.

13. Asiat ratkaistaan kaikissa yhdistyksen kokouksissa yksinkertaisella äänten enemmistöllä, enemmistön vaatiessa sitä suljetuin lipuin. Jokainen jäsenmaksunsa suorittanut jäsen on äänioikeutettu. Päätokseksi jää enemmistön kannattama mielipide, mutta äänten tasan mentyä jää asia ratkaisematta.

14. Ratkaisemattomaksi jäänyt asia voidan ottaa uudestaan keskustelu- ja äänestyksenalaiseksi. Ellei se tässäkään tapauksessa saavuta enemmistön kannatusta, jääkoon asia lepäämään seuraavaan kokoukseen tai rauetkoon.

15. Yhdistyksen nimen kirjoittavat puheenjohtaja ja sihteeri. Mustalaislähetyksen Keskustoimiston nimen kirjoittaa sihteeri tai joku sihteerin valtuuttama henkilö.

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16. Mustalaislähetyksen Keskustoimisto, joka on sihteerin valvonnan alaisena, huolehti kustannusliikkeestä, lähetyksen kirjeenvaihdosta, jäsenmaksujen y.m. saatavien perimisestä ja yleensä yhdistyksen liikeyrityksistä.

17. Yhdistyksen jäsenillä on eri paikoilla maata oikeus liityä paikallisosastoiksi omine johtokuntineen, huolehtiakseen paikkakuntansa romaneista ja edistääkseen yleensä Mustalaisyhdistyksen toimintaa. Jäsenmaksut lankeavat keskusrahastoon, mutta osasto voi paikallistoimintansa edistämiseksi vuosikokoustensa päätösten mukaan jäsenilään kantaa erikoisen paikallisjäsenmaksun sekä muutenkin laissa hyväksytyin keinoin toimia varojen hankkimiseksi. Paikallisosasto toimii yhdistyksen keskusjohtokunnan alaisena, jolle se myös on tilivelvollinen.

18. Paikallisosasto pitää vuosikokouksensa lippiaisena tai viimeistään tammikuun 20 päivänä, kolloin luetaan vuosikertomus ja tilintarkastajain lausunto, sekä päätetään tilivapaudesta y.m., josta oikeaksi todistettu pöytäkirjanote ja tilisupiste lähetetään keskustoimistolle helmikuun 1 päivään mennessä.

19. Mustalaislähetys on oikeutettu lain sallimin keinoin hankkimaan varoja sekä vastaanottamaan lahjoja ja jälkisäädöksiä toimintansa edistämiseksi.

20. Tarkoitusta varten julkisesti johtokunnan kokoonkutsuma jäsenkokous tai vuosikokous voi muuttaa nämä säännöt tai lopettaa yhdistyksen toiminnan sekä päättää jälellä olevista varoista 2:ssa mainnitujen tarkoitusten hyväksi, jos kaksikolmattaosaa (2/3) osanottajista sitä puoltaa ja seuraava vähintään puolen vuoden kuluttua samalla tavalla kokoonkutsuttu jäsenkokous kahden kolmaosan (2/3) enemmisöllä sen vahvistaa.

Ylläolevat säännöt hyväksyttiin Mustalaislähetys-nimisen yhdistyksen perustavassa kokouksessa, Helsingissä joulukuun 5 p:nä 1920 ja Sosialihallituksen toimesta kuulutettiin rekisterilehdessä Nö 23, 1921.

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The Gypsy Mission's Rules

1. Mustalaislähetys r.y. is a nationwide association based in the City of Helsinki.

2. The purpose of the association is to work on a Christian basis to improve the spiritual and material condition of the Gypsies, namely Roma, in Finland.

3. To accomplish its purpose, the association engages in general missionary work, in having meetings and mission evenings with salesmen, publishes literature and literature and magazines, sets up schools, set up schools, dispatch and employment centers and educational establishments, obtain employment, housing and farming places, and assist in every way possible to help every Roma become a useful and active citizen.

4. Any Finnish citizen who accepts these rules can become a member by registering and paying at least five (5) Smk. annually or two hundred (200) Smk., once and for all, to the treasurer, to a member of the board of directors or to any other person authorized to do so. Members who are not resident shall be entitled to post at the expense of the member, unless membership has been terminated on either side during the preceding

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calendar year. A receipt for payment of the membership fee for the current year is valid as a membership certificate as a membership card.

5. The resigning member forfeits membership fees to the association.

6. The association is governed by nine (9) spiritual board members, chaired by its chairman, secretary and treasurer, from now on, the Executive Committee, which decides on the day-to-day affairs of the Association, such as the selection of probationers, the management of monetary and expense matters, the Executive Board, the conclusions of the Board and the Annual Meeting; the tasks prescribed by the Association's Act.

7. The board, which elects a chairman and vice-chairman from among its members, oversees the work of the board, dismisses or otherwise blatantly repudiates members of the association, who can nevertheless still appeal to the Annual General Meeting, plan the operation of the association, raise funds, and decide upon measures of greater material sacrifice, and finally approve the permanent members of the mission.

Regular Executive Board meetings are held every February and extraordinary meetings whenever the Board or four other Executive Board members so request. The Board of Directors is convened with invitation cards and is admissible with five members present.

8. The first governing board shall be constituted by the election of a chairman and two members for a year, a secretary plus two for two years and a treasurer and two for three years. Upon their removal, three members shall be elected for a term of three years. Those who resign can be re-elected.

9. The treasurer and the secretary shall, by 15 January at the latest, submit the accounts for the previous calendar year to the auditors, who shall forward the audit to the chairman within two weeks.

10. Notices to members of the association are published either through the association's own publishers or in the newspaper or in writing.

11. The Annual Meeting convened by the commission shall be held in Helsinki during Easter, unless the previous annual meeting has expressly decided otherwise.

12. At the Annual Meeting:

a) Present and decide on the annual report of the Governing Board;

b) Read the statement of the auditors and decide whether to grant discharge to the Board of Directors;

c) Elect three members of the Management Board for a term of three years instead of their term of office and three alternates for one year;

d) Elect two auditors with their deputies;

e) Decide on the matters proposed by the Governing Board; and

f) Address any other matters that may have been submitted to the meeting and reported to the Board in writing at least two months before the annual meeting.

13. Issues are resolved by a simple majority of votes at all meetings of the association, with a closed majority requesting a majority. Each member who has paid his/her contribution is entitled to vote. In the end, the majority opinion remains, but when the votes are equal, the matter remains unresolved.

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14. The unresolved issue can be taken up again for debate and vote. If it does not obtain the majority's support in this case either, the matter will be left to the next meeting, or it will fall.

15. In the name of the association will write the chairman and secretary. In the name of the Central Office of the Mustalaislähetys will write the secretary or someone authorized by the secretary.

16. Under the supervision of the secretary, the Central Office of the Mustalaislähetys Central Office takes care of the cost of travel, the correspondence of the mission, the payment of membership fees, etc. debt collection and general business associations.

17. Members of the association have the right in various parts of the country to join local branches with their own boards, to care for the Roma in their area, and to promote the activities of the Mustalaislähetys in general. Membership fees fall into the Central Fund, but in order to promote their local activities, the Department may, in accordance with the decisions of its annual meetings, charge its members a special local membership fee and otherwise take legal action to raise funds. The local branch is subordinate to the general board of the association and is accountable to it.

18. The local department shall hold its annual meeting on or before January 20th, with the annual report and the auditors' opinion being read, and where a decision on the financial year shall be taken, and a certified transcript and account statement shall be sent to the central office by February 1st.

19. Mustalaislähetys is entitled by law to raise funds and receive gifts and bequests to further its activities.

20. In the case the executive board have called the Members' Meeting for this purpose, or in the Annual Meeting, these association rules can be changed, or the association can be wholly terminated, in which case, they will decide also how the remaining funds will be utilized for the purpose mentioned in the article 2 if two thirds (2/3) of the members agreed and if confirmed after at least half a year with the votes of two thirds (2/3).

The above rules were approved at the founding meeting of the Mustalaislähetys, in Helsinki on December 5, 1920, and were announced by the Social Welfare Board in Register No. 23, 1921.

Source: [No Author]. (1927a). Mustalaislähetyksen r.y. säännöt. *Kiertolainen*, No. 2, 1927, pp. 23-24. Prepared for publication by Raluca Bianca Roman.

Comments

The above is a listing of the rules of the Mustalaislähetys (Gypsy Mission), which highlight both the practical and membership matters of the Association.

Though agreed upon in 1920, these rules were published in the 1927 issue of *Kiertolainen*.

This entry constitutes an important source material for three reasons. Firstly, the rules also highlight the organisation's key focus points: education, housing, and employment of

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Roma, with the stated aim of making them into 'useful and active citizens'. This approach appears to have underlined most of the early activities of the Mustalaislähetys, starting in the early 20th century and continuing into the post-war context. Secondly, there appears to be no membership of Roma mentioned within the rules. The rules clearly state, however, that anybody who pays the membership fees can be a member of the Association. Finally, an interesting point in the rules is the possibility of forming local branches with their own boards, which nevertheless have to be under the leadership of the Central Board. This is relevant here given the unique case of the Viipuri branch of Mustalaislähetys mentioned above, which, in 1907, appears to have been composed of a majority of Roma members. This was a short-lived distribution, however, and the Central Board appears to have disagreed with some of the ideas developed within the Viipuri circle (Tervonen, 2012, p. 128). Nevertheless, the possibility to form and develop local branches seems to have fostered also the incentive for local, de-centralised Roma leadership actions to take place, even in the context in which the final 'authority' lied with the central Executive Board of the Mustalaislähetys.

It is worth mentioning that, partially mirroring these rules, partially in opposition to them, were the Romanengo Staggos rules from, 1953, set up at the founding of the latter organisation, which was led by Ferdinand Nikkinen, and which was presenting itself as an alternative to the Mustalaislähetys.

Raluca Bianca Roman

11.3.3 *Suggestions*

Viiteitä

Tunnettua on, että ihminen vasta sitten, kun hän kehityksen kautta vapautui kahleistaan, oman itsensä orjuudesta, s.o. siirtyi pimeydestä valoon, hän alkoi pyrkiä eteenpäin ja ylöspain. Kun hän oppi sielullisia kykyjään käyttämään, alkoi hän raivata ja rakentaa ympärisöään, sekä muovailla olosuhteitaan suotuisammiksi, niin että hänen olisi mukavampi ja parempi olla ja elää.

Niinkauan kun ihmisen sisällinen, henkinen puoli ei ole saanut kasvatusta ja kehitystä, kun jumalaiset voimat hänessä vielä uinuvat, kun hän ei ajattele eikä käytä järkeään, niin niinkauan elämä hänelle tuntuu katkeralta ja useinkin se on vain toivotonta taistelua, kurjuudesta kurjuuteen kulkemista, pimeässä haparoimista. Näin on romaniheimokin laita.

Tietääkseni romaniheimon kohtalon korjaaminen Suomessa, johon tarkoitukseen valtiokin on jonkunverran varoja myöntänyt, on tähän saakka ollut pääasiallisesti muutamien asianharrastajien enimäkseen romanien hengellisen elämän herättämiseen. Tämän ohella on tehtyt kyllä yhteiskunnalistakin työtä, mutta voimien ja varojen vähyyden tähden ei niin suuria tuloksia ole saavutettu, kuin toivottavaa ja tarpeellista olisi.

Mikäli tiedän, kohdistuu nykyaikainen pakanalähetyskin enimmäkseen kasvatustyöhön: koulujen, kotien sekä kasvatuslaitosten perustamiseen. Heidän keskuuteensa

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lähetetyt henkilöt toimivat opettajina ja johtajina ainakin siksi, kn he saavat oppilaistaan kehitetyksi itselleen apulaisia.

Romanienkin suhteen täytyy meidän myöntää, että niin tärkeä, kuin hengellisen elämän herättäminen tuon kuljeksivan joukon yksilöissä onkin, niin yhtä tärkeä ajallisen elämän kannalta on heidän sosialisen eli yhteiskunnallisen tilansa parantaminen. Näistä tärkein mielestäni on kasvatus työhön sekä herätystyö siihen suuntaan, että he alkaisivat elää ihmisarvoa vastaavaa elämää.

Romani

∵

Suggestions

It is known that only when man is freed by evolution from his shackles, from his own slavery, when he will be moving from darkness to light, he will begin to move forward and upward. As he learned to use his soulful abilities, he began to clear and build his environment, and to shape his conditions to be more comfortable, better, and alive.

As long as the inner, spiritual aspect of man is not nurtured and developed, while the divine powers are still asleep, he is not thinking and using his mind, so long as he feels bitterness and often it is just a hopeless struggle, going from misery to misery. This is also the case with the Roma tribe.

As far as I know, the change of the fate of the Roma tribe in Finland, for which the state has granted some funds, has so far been mainly to revive the spiritual life of a few mostly devotees. Alongside this, there has been work done in society, but due to the lack of funds and resources, results have not been as great as desirable and necessary.

As far as I know, the modern missionary work among pagans is mostly focused on educational work: establishing schools, homes and educational institutions. The people who are sent to them act as teachers and leaders, at least for the sake of helping their students develop themselves into later becoming assistants.

As far as the Roma are concerned, we must recognise that, as important as reviving the spiritual life of individuals, just as important for temporal life is the improvement of their social condition and their position within society. The most important of these, in my opinion, is the upbringing children to work and the reviving the spiritual life of people in the direction of starting a life of dignity.

Romani [1]

Notes

1. 'Romani' is an adjective of word 'Rom'. In the Romani language, 'Romani' is adjective in feminine singular form.

Source: Romani. (1927b). Viiteitä. *Kiertolainen*, No. 2, 1927, p. 22.
Prepared for publication by Raluca Bianca Roman.

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Comments

The above article, whose authorship is anonymised (signed simply as 'Romani'), appeared in a 1927 issue of *Kiertolainen*, in a section reserved for entries from the readership. While offering a generalised perspective on the movement of people from what the author calls 'darkness' into 'light', through an analogy made with Roma, it offers an insight into the author's arguments for the focus to be placed on the upbringing of Roma children as a pathway to what she sees as an 'improvement of their social condition and their position within society'.

In fact, though making no specific or direct reference to Mustalaislähetys, the article once again summarises some of the key agendas and work of the Mustalaislähetys over the years: schooling and the establishment of children's homes. The author also highlights the partial support from the state and the ways in which lack of resources may have hindered the work done for Roma in the country.

What is especially interesting among the arguments made in the article above are its final two sentences, which highlight the author's perspective that besides the focus placed on a 'spiritual' revival, there should be a clear focus placed on the improvement of the general social situation of Roma in the country, alongside with their role and position within majority society, through an emphasis placed on the concept of 'work'.

Raluca Bianca Roman

Additional Comments

The case of Finland and the processes of Roma civic emancipation in this country deserve special attention from several points of view. The inhabitants of its territory, the Kaale, are a separate subdivision of the so-called Gypsies, clearly separated from the Roma, who populated the rest of the Russian Empire. The contact zone between Kaale and Roma was Karelia, as well as the capital St. Petersburg, where many Kaale lived (or temporarily earned a living). Relations between Kaale and Roma were generally good. There was even the beginning of a process of mixing between the two communities: for example, Nikolay Pankov's mother was a Finnish Gypsy (see Chapter 12), and to this day some families of Kaale in Finland have memories about Roma relatives in Russia.

Most of the first manifestations of the process of civic emancipation among Kaale began or were concentrated in Karelia: for example, the first Roma School, which functioned between 1905-1907, was located in Vyborg and the Finnish Gypsy Mission, founded at a Tampere meeting in 1905, had shifted its headquarter and main activities, between 1911 and 1917, from the Western city of Tampere to the city of Vyborg. It can be assumed that Oskari Jalkio's proposal to replace the name of the Kaale community with Roma (Romani as written in the sources above) was influenced by the self-designation of the 'other Gypsies' in this contact zone between Kaale and Roma.

The processes of civic emancipation among Kaale are closely linked to the processes of national emancipation in Finland itself. These processes began at a time when the country was still part of the Russian Empire, where it held a special position and enjoyed

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many rights of internal autonomy. At the first historic opportunity which appeared after the October Revolution, it separated as an independent state. The long years of living together in the Finnish territories have had an impact, and it is therefore only natural that the basic idea of the civic emancipation movement among Kaale was to seek their place as part of the broader society in the composition of the new Finnish civic nation.

Individual representatives among the Kaale chose another option in the development of their new civic identity through their inclusion in the Socialist and Communist movements, in which they seem to have recognised a possibility of not only class but also ethnic equality. Such is the case of Kalle Tähtelä (also known as Franzen). He was born on the 26th of May, 1891, in Leppävirta, in the Northern Savonia region of Finland. Kalle Tähtelä was an active journalist, writer, and poet. He was a devout socialist, and later among the fighters for the Socialist republic in Finland. After the failed revolt, he escaped to the USSR, where he joined the Red Naval Forces of the Baltic Sea, as a fighter pilot. During the Russian Civil War, his airplane was shut down near Petrograd on the 22nd of October 1919. He survived the crash and managed to escape overnight, but he was captured and executed two days later, on the 24th of October, 1919. His mutilated body was found after the retreat of the Whites and buried in the Common Tomb of the Revolutionary Heroes in St Petersburg (Tervonen, 2012, p. 131; Blomster & Roman, 2021a).

Elena Marushiakova and Vesselin Popov

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CHAPTER 12

The USSR

12.1 The Union of the Gypsies

12.1.1 *The Society for the Organisation of the Proletarian Backward Gypsy Masses*

Протокол No. 1.

Собрания членов учредителей Об[щест]ва по организации пролетарских отсталых цыганских масс гор. Москвы и Московской губернии от 10-го января 1924 г.

На собрании участвуют: 1/ Осипов Степан; 2/ Поляков Сергей; 3/ Лебедев Валентин; 4/ Панин Михаил; 5/ Голубеев Павел; 6/ Поляков Егор; 7/ Юровская Елизавета; 8/ Балашев Егор; 9/ Исаков Дмитрий; 10/ Д. Поляков.

Собрание избран президиум из 3-х лиц: Председателем т. Е. Поляков и т. Д. Исаков, секретарем – А. Поляков.

Слушали:

1. Об учреждении общества.

2. Заслушивание и утверждение Устава, предъявленного тов. Осиповым.

Постановили:

1. Все члены в количестве 10 человек, имеющих право решающего голоса, единогласно постановили учредить Общество по организации пролетарских отсталых цыганских масс.

2. Устав Общества считать приемлемым, который утвердить. Поручить т.т. Осипову и Полякову Сергею, которым поручается ходатайствовать перед соответствующими органами власти об утверждении устава.

Председатель – Е. А. Поляков. Тов. Председателя – Д. Исаков. Секретарь – [А.] Поляков.
Учредитель (подпись).

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Minutes No. 1.

From the meeting of the Founding Members of the Society for the Organisation of Proletarian Backward Gypsy Masses in the City of Moscow and Moscow Province, dated January 10, 1924.

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In the meeting participated: 1/ Stepan Osipov; 2/ Sergey Polyakov; 3/ Valentin Lebedev; 4/ Mikhail Panin; 5/ Pavel Golubeyev; 6/ Yegor Polyakov; 7/ Yelizaveta Yurovskaya; 8/ Yegor Balashev; 9/ Dmitriy Isakov; 10/ D. Polyakov.

The Assembly elected a presidium of 3 persons: Chairpersons Comrade E. Polyakov and Comrade D. Isakov, Secretary – A. Polyakov.

[Things] listened:

1. About the founding of the Society.

2. Hearing and approving the Statute, presented by the Comrade Osipov.

[Issues] decided:

1. All members, numbering 10 persons, having the right to cast decisive votes, have unanimously decided to establish the Society for the Organisation of Proletarian Backward [1] Gypsy Masses.

2. The Statute of the Society should be considered as acceptable and should be validated. It should be given to the Comrades Osipov and Sergey Polyakov, who are to intercede before the respective authorities for the approval of the Statute.

Chairman – E. A. Polyakov. Comrade of Chairman – D. Isakov. Secretary – A. Polyakov.
Founder – (Signature).

Notes

1. A 'backward' (or 'culturally backward') was a widely used stencil expression in the national politics of the early USSR. In this context, the term does not include offensive connotations, and on the contrary, it defines peoples who were oppressed in tsarist Russia, who were not given a possibility to fulfil their national awakening and for which the Soviet state itself must take special care in order to elevate them to the status of equal Soviet citizens.

Source: GARF, f. P 1235, op. 119, d. 9, l. 3.
Prepared for publication by Elena Marushiakova and Vesselin Popov.

12.1.2 *The Initiative Proletarian Group of the Gypsies*

В Административный Отдел Моссовета.
От общего собрания членов учредителей Общества и членов Профсоюза Цыган, 85 чел[овек].

Заявление

Настоящим Инициативная пролетарская группа цыган в числе 12 человек членов-учредителей Общества и 75 членов Профсоюза Всерабис 25-го января с/г. на общем собрании постановила на смерть т. ЛЕНИНА ответить организацией общества имени ЛЕНИНА и единогласно был принят устав Общества, каковой собрание просит Административный Отдел Моссовета утвердить, причем

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Общество будет согласно с тем, что если будут Отделом внесены какие-нибудь поправки изменений, добавления и прочие в Уставе.

Председатель – … ; Секретарь – … . 25.01.1924.

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To Administrative Department of Mossovet.
From the General Meeting of the Founding Members of the Society and Members of Professional Union of the Gypsies, 85 people.

Application

With the present, the Initiative Proletarian Group of Gypsies with 12 founding members of the Society and 75 members of the *Vserabis* Trade Union, on January 25, this year, at the General Assembly, decided to respond to the death of Comrade LENIN with the founding of a society named after LENIN and a Statute of the Society was unanimously accepted; the meeting asks the Administrative Department at the Moscow Council to confirm the Statute; at that the Society will accept if any suggested corrections of changes, amendments, etc. were to be made in the Statute.

Chairman – … ; Secretary – … . 25.01.1924.

Source: GARF, f. P 1235, op. 119, d. 9, l. 3.
Prepared for publication by Elena Marushiakova and Vesselin Popov.

12.1.3 *Draft Statute*

[Проекто-Устав]

Цели Общества

I. Организационная сторона.

[1.] Организация Общества имеет своей целью объединение отсталых пролетарских цыганских масс на территории Московской губернии в общество коллективного творчества труда.

а/ Члены-учредители Общества ведут агитацию среди цыган за вступление в общество через посылку своих уполномоченных в отдельные районы и письменно посредством воззваний, писем и проч.

2. Общество для поднятия культурно-просветительного политического уровня среди цыган полагает в основу открытие ряда школ по общеобразовательным предметам для детей и взрослых помимо школ ликвидации безграмотности, содержание которых берет на свой счет, но под контролем Наркомпроса.

а/ Открывает клубы, библиотеки и избы читальни, снабдив последние необходимой литературой и руководителями.

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3. Общество открывает опытные школы и мастерские по разным отраслям производства и искусства, а равно и подготовке членов О[бщест]ва к культурной обработке земли и ведению сельского хозяйства для перехода к оседлому образу жизни.

А. Общество распространяет свою деятельность в районе всей Московской губернии, правление которого находится в г. Москве.

а/ Членами общества могут быть все цыгане (не исключая и других национальностей) без различия пола, проживающие в районе его деятельности, за исключением лиц, предусмотренных … в Конституции РСФСР.

[б/] Правом избирать и быть избранными в органы управления и контроля Общества пользуются все члены Общества, имеющие право выбора в Советы.

в/ Желающие вступить в члены Общества вносят членский взнос, размер которого устанавливается Общим собранием (по одному рублю золотом единовременно).

В случае, если потребуется средства, О[бщест]во имеет право временно на необходимые нужды отчислить %% из заработка служащих-членов.

г/ Члены О[бщест]ва, уклонившиеся от уплаты членских взносов без уважительных причин, постановлением Общего Собрания считаются исключенными, а те члены, кои выбывают из предела Общества на не определенное время по своему желанию – считаются механически выбывшими.

д/ Каждому члену Общества выдается членская книжка за подписью Правления и его Президиума.

Б. Управление делами О[бщест]ва.

Управление Делами и руководство ими возлагается на Правление, которое избирается из 3-х лиц и 2-х кандидатов.

Правление избирается Общим собранием, в которое автоматически входят: Президиум из 3-х лиц – член РКП(б) Председатель, Заместит[ель] Председателя и Секретарь. Председатель член ВЦИК РКП. Вся работа ведется под *руководством* ВЦИКа.

В. Члены Правления Общества распределяют обязанности между собой следующим порядком:

Председатель ведет и отвечает за организационную и политическую работу среди цыган; Заместитель Общества; Секретарь канцелярии и денежной отчетности; III-й член культурно-просветительной; IV-й член Правления социальным обеспечением особых поручений Правления. […]

Е. Правление Общества ведет все дела и представляет его без особой на то доверенности, во всех делах и сношениях со всеми учреждениями и частными лицами. […]

Члены Правления, нарушившие свои обязанности отвечают совокупно.

Контрольный орган

Общее собрание для контроля работ Правления и его хозяйственной стороны избирает Ревизионную Комиссию из 3-х человек и 2-х кандидатов из лиц, не принадлежащих к Правлению и его служащих. […]

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Ж. Правление созывает очередное Общее собрание всех членов Общества по мере надобности не реже одного раза в месяц, на котором участвуют все члены Правления и Ревизионная Комиссия с одинаковыми правами и уполномочиями с членами Общества. […]

На собрании разрешаются все те вопросы, которые касаются Общества и его строительства в существующем законном порядке.

3. Общество способствует проведению в жизнь среди членов О[бществ]а и их семейств культурно-физического развития и военного обучения и следит за точным выполнением военных распоряжений Республики РСФСР.

4. Общество не преследует своих личных выгод, но заботится об улучшении быта членов Общества, путем открытия общественных столовых, ликвидации безработицы среди членов Общества и проч.

Для извлечения необходимых средств, кроме членских взносов, сумма от которых является недостаточной, чтобы осуществить и провести в жизни коммерческие органы, как-то: открытие коопераций, разных производственных мастерских и сел[ьско]-хоз[яйственных] предприятий, а равно устройство концертов, спектаклей, лекций и издание литературы.

ХОЗЯЙСТВЕННОЙ стороной ведает Член Правления под руководством и наблюдением всего Правления Общества. […]

Общество может быть закрыто при уклонении членов Общества и по постановлению Общего собрания членов Общества.

В случае закрытия Общества все имущество находящееся в пользовании последнего передается органам Советской власти по инвентарной книге, выделенным на это уполномоченным от Общего Собрания.

Означенный Устав Общество обязуется проводить в жизнь согласно существующих законоположений и распоряжений Советской Власти.

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[Draft Statute]

Objectives of the Society

I. Organisational aspect.

1. The Organisation of the Society has as its objective the unification of the backward proletarian Gypsy masses on the territory of Moscow Governorate into a society of collective creative labour.

a/ The founding members of the Society are campaigning among Gypsies for joining society by sending their authorised representatives in individual regions and by writing of appeals, letters, etc.

2. In order to raise the cultural-educational and political level of the Gypsies the society bases at its core the opening of a number of schools in general educational subjects for children and adults along with the schools for the liquidation of illiteracy, the maintenance of which it undertakes on its own account, but under the control of Narkompros.

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a) The Society Opens clubs, libraries and reading rooms, supplying the latter with the necessary literature and providing them with supervisors.

3. The Society opens experimental schools and craft workshops in various fields of production and art, and also for preparing the members of the Society for advanced land processing and agricultural work for the purpose of a transition to a sedentary lifestyle [1].

A. The Society exercises its activities in the area of the entire Moscow Governorate, whose directorate is located in the city of Moscow.

a/ Members of the Society may be all Gypsies (not excluding other nationalities), regardless of gender, living in the area of its activity, except those envisaged … in the Constitution of the RSFSR.

b/ The right to vote and to be elected in the management and control bodies of the Society are enjoyed by all members of the Society who have the right to vote for the Soviets (councils).

c/ Those willing to become members of the Society pay membership fee, the amount of which is established by the General Assembly (one gold Russian Ruble to be paid once). In the case when funds are needed, the Society has the right, temporarily, to deduct percentages from the wages of members of staff for the necessary needs.

d/ Members of the Society who have failed to pay their membership fees, without valid reasons, are considered excluded from the Society by a decision of the General Assembly while those members who leave the boundaries of the Society for unknown period of time on their own will, are considered as automatically excluded.

e/ Each member of the Society shall be issued a membership card signed by the Directorate and its Presidium.

B. Administering the Society.

The administration and governing are assigned to a Directorate, which is elected and it is composed by three persons and two candidates.

The Directorate is elected by the General Assembly, which automatically includes: a Presidium of three persons – a Chairperson, who has to be a member of the RKP(b) [2], a Vice-Chairperson, and a Secretary. The Chairperson ought to be a member of VTsIK of RKP(b) [3]. All the work of the Society is done under the guidance [4] of the VTsIK.

C. The Members of the Society's Directorate distribute their mutual duties between each other in the following fashion:

The Chairperson leads and is responsible for the organisational and the political works among the Gypsies; the Vice-Chairperson of Society [5]; the Secretary manages and is responsible for the office and the monetary reporting; the third member of the Directorate manages and is responsible for the cultural and educational activities; the fourth Member of the Directorate manages and is responsible for the social security and performs special orders from the Directorate. […]

F. The Directorate of the Society carries out all its work and represents it without any special power of attorney in [its areas] in all cases and in contacts with all institutions and private individuals. […]

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Members of the Directorate who have breached their duties have collective responsibility.

Supervisory Authority

The General Assembly for the Control of the Work of the Directorate and its economic party, elect an Audit Commission [composed] of three persons and two candidates from the persons who do not belong to the Directorate and its employees. […]

G. The Directorate convenes the next General Assembly of all members of the Society according to the degree of necessity, not less frequently than once a month, involving all members of the Directorate and Audit Commission with the same rights and powers as members of the Society. […]

All these issues concerning the Society and its building legal order are dealt at the Assembly according to the existing legal order.

3. The Society contributes to the conduct of cultural, physical and military training in the lives of its members and their families, and monitors the proper implementation of the military orders of the Republics of the RSFSR.

4. The Society does not pursue its own personal benefits, but takes care of improving the lives of the members of the Society by opening public canteens, the liquidation of the unemployment among the members of the Society, etc.

In order to obtain the necessary funds, besides the membership contributions, insufficient sums needed for the realisation and carrying out in life, there is a need for commercial activities such as: opening of cooperatives, various production workshops and agricultural enterprises, as well as organisation of concerts, performances, lectures and publications of literature.

THE ECONOMIC side of the Society is run by a member of Directorate under the direction and supervision of the Directorate of the Society as a whole. […]

The society may be closed down in case of non-fulfilment of the obligations by the members of the Society or by a decree of the General Assembly of the members of the Society.

In the event of the Society being closed down, all the property used by the Society shall be transferred to the Soviet authority through an inventory book, by a member who is specially authorised for this by the General Assembly.

The Society is obliged to conduct the presented Statute in accordance with the existing laws and regulations of the Soviet authority.

Notes

1. Here, for the first time, the idea arose that Gypsy nomads should settle down and start farming, a concept that had hitherto not found a place in Soviet national policy within the RSFSR (which was in fact leading the way in the whole of USSR). It is interesting to note, however, that despite the generally accepted practice, according to which management decisions were made at the top of the pyramid, i.e. by the central party and state authorities (which were united into one whole), and from there descended to the instances below (including to the individual Soviet republics), in some specific cases the initiatives may arise at the local level and precede the decisions of the center. Such was the case with the policy of land allocation of nomadic Gypsies with the intention to

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move them to a sedentary way of life. The attempt for the implementation of this idea arose initially in the Ukrainian SSR. This is confirmed by a series of similar notes, which are repeated almost literally in a number of local newspapers in 1924 in the Ukrainian SSR (Всероссийская кочегарка, 1924, p. 2; Голос праці, 1924, p. 4; Думка, 1924, p. 1; Красное знамя, 1924, p. 1; Луганская правда, 1924, p. 2; Робітниче-селянська правда, 1924, p. 3; Червоний степ, 1924, p. 2). In other words, these were reprints of an official text prepared by the central Ukrainian authorities. They announced that:

> [...]The Department of National Minorities under the Central Committee of the KP(b) of Ukraine, the Central Committee of the Natsmen recognised the undesirability of the existence of groups of Gypsy nomads in Ukraine. It is recognised that it is necessary to allocate special land plots in the Odesa, Yekaterinoslav, and Donetsk provinces to accommodate there Gypsy nomads. To discuss the question of methods of resettlement of nomadic groups, it was decided to convene a meeting of Gypsy elders. (Коммунист, 1924, p. 4).

Unfortunately, thus far no additional material has been found to make it clear whether the authorities have taken any specific measures to implement the decision (e.g. whether a "meeting of Gypsy elders" had taken place).

It seems not very likely that the authorities in Ukraine knew about this initiative of the Gypsy activists in Moscow. In all probability, the need for sedentarisation and for land allocation of the nomadic Gypsies was their own idea.

2. In the first version of this Draft Statute, the text stipulates not only a Chairperson but also a Vice-Chairperson and a Secretary to be members of the Communist Party, which is subsequently scrapped, i.e. this requirement remains valid only for a Chairperson. Apparently, there were not enough Communists among the members of the Association to form a governing body.

3. An Error of the authors of the Draft Statute. From an institutional point of view, the VTsIK is not a body of the RKP(b) but of the Soviet state.

4. The note about the guiding role of the VTsIK is handwritten in a special empty space. As can be seen from Minutes No. 3 of the Meetings of the initiative group of the founding members of the Gypsy proletarian society, on April 3, 1924 (GARF, f. P 1235, op. 119, d. 9, l. 8), S. Osipov submitted the Draft Statute to the TsIK USSR, where its rotating chairman Nariman Narimanov (1870-1925) introduced this amendment. It was adopted unanimously and entered in the text by hand. The draft statute lacks a date. Judging from Minutes No.3 we can suppose it was written in February/March 1924.

5. The functions of the Vice-Chairperson are not defined in the Draft Statute, by default he should assist the Chairperson in his activities and assume his responsibilities as necessary.

Source: GARF, f. P 1235, op. 119, d. 9, l. 4-6.
Prepared for publication by Elena Marushiakova and Vesselin Popov.

12.1.4 *The Minutes No. 4* (*Moscow*)

Протокол No. 4

24-го августа 1924 года

Собрания инициативной группы. Присутствовали: тов. тов. Осипов [С.], Поляков Е., Таранов, Поляков С., Лебедев И. и А. Поляков. Председатель: [А.] Таранов. Секретарь: А. Поляков.

Повестка дня: 1. О представлении в Совет Нац[ональных] мен[ьшинств] копии устава, анкет и других материалов по организации Цыганского Общества. 2. О назначении Молодежи в Рабочие и другие учебные заведения. 3. О помещении для Общества. 4. Текущие дела.

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Слушали:

1. О представлении в Совет Нацмен копии устава и других материалов (тов. Осипов).

А. Доклад Делегации о посещении Председателя Совета Нац[иональных] Мен[ьшинств] тов. Клингера, где было выяснено о том, что Инициативная группа по возможности должна быть меньше.

3. О помещении для Общества (И. Лебедев).

4. О названии Общества. Из беседы с товарищем Соловьевым выяснилось, что устав будет рассмотрен, но не утвержден, как не отвечающий духу времени.

Постановили:

1. Предлагается тов. И. Лебедеву и тов. Таранову систематизировать и предоставить копии материалов делегации для представления в Совет Нацмен.

А. Единогласно считать членов Инициативной Группы членами учредителями из 7-ми следующих т.т.: 1/ Осипов Степан Иванович; 2/ Поляков Сергей Егорович; 3/ Лебедев Иван Иванович; 4/ Поляков Егор Алексеевич; 5/ Таранов Андрей [Семенович]; 6/ Поляков Александр Егорович; 7/ Болашев [Иван Егорович], и 3 кандидата: 1/ Панин Михаил Васильевич; 2/ Тагарры Николай Андреевич; 3/ Михайлов Дмитрий Александрович, а следующих т.т., ранее состоявших членами учредителями считать выбывшими, в виду влития новых т.т. и сокращения Инициативной группы: 1/ Юревская Е[лизавета] В[ладимировна]; 2/ Голубеев П[авел] Е[горович]; 3/ Лебедев В[алентин] И[ванович]; 4/ Есаков Д[митрий] Л[арионович].

2. Поручить тов. Таранову составить и представить список назначенных т.т. Председателю Совета Нац. Мен[ьшинств] тов. Клингеру.

3. Ходатайствовать перед Председателем Совета Совета Нац[иональных] Мен[ьшинств] о предоставлении помещения Нац[ионального] Общества согласно заключения Инициативной Группы.

4. Просить Отдел Управления Моссовета изменить те детали устава, которые не отвечают духу времени.

Председатель: .... (Таранов); Секретарь: ... (Поляков).

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Minutes No 4

August 24, 1924

A meeting of the initiative group. Present were: comrades S. Osipov, E. Polyakov, Taranov, S. Polyakov, I. Lebedev and A. Polyakov. Chairman: A. Taranov. Secretary: A. Polyakov.

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Agenda:

1/ About the submission to the Council of National Minorities [1] of a copy of the Statute, inquiries and other materials related to the organisation of Gypsy Society.

2/ About the assignment of the Youth into Workers' and other educational institutions.

3/ About the premises of the Society.

4/ Ongoing tasks.

Listened:

1. About the submission to Council of National Minorities of a copy of the Statute and other materials (comrade S. Osipov).

A. Report from the delegation about the visit to the Chairman of the Council of National Minorities of comrade Klinger [2], where it was been clarified that the Initiative Group, if possible, should be smaller.

3. About the premises of the Society (I. Lebedev)

4. About the name of the Society. From the talk with comrade Solovyev [3], it became clear that the Statute would be examined, however, it would not be validated as it does not fit with the spirit of time.

Decided:

1. It is proposed that comrade I. Lebedev and comrade A. Taranov should systematise and submit copies of the materials of the Delegation in Council of National Minorities.

A. It has been unanimously agreed that the members of the Initiative Group [4] will be considered founding members from the following 7 comrades: 1) Stepan Ivanovich Osipov; 2) Sergey Egorovich Polyakov; 3) Ivan Ivanovich Lebedev; 4) Egor Alekseevich Polyakov; 5) Andrey Semenovich Taranov; 6) Aleksander Egorovich Polyakov; 7) Ivan Egorovich Bolashev, and 3 candidates: 1) Mikhail Vasilyevich Panin; 2) Nikolay Andreyevich Tagarry; 3) Dmitriy Aleksandrovich Mikhaylov, and the following comrades who had earlier been founding members should be considered as dropped out, considering the influx of new comrades and the cuts being made in the Initiative Group: 1) Yelizaveta Vladimirovna Yurevskaya; 2) Pavel Egorovich Golubeev; 3) Valentin Ivanovich Lebedev; 4) Dimitriy Larionovich Esakov.

2. To be ordered to comrade Taranov to compile and present the list with the named comrades to Chairman of Council of National Minorities, comrade Klinger.

3. Solicit Council of National Minorities for providing premises of National Society in accordance with the conclusions of the Initiative Group.

4. To ask the Department of Directorate of Moscow Council to amend these details from the Statute that do not fit the spirit of time.

Chairman: … (Taranov). Secretary: … (Polyakov).

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Notes

1. The Gypsy activists who prepared this document were obviously not well-versed in the Soviet institutions, so instead of the Department of Nationalities of the VTsIK, they wrote the Council of National Minorities, which is part of the Narkompros. In fact, as can be seen from the document itself, the delegation of the initiative group visited the Department of Nationalities of the VTsIK, where it met with its head, G. G. Klinger.
2. Gustav G. Klinger (1876-1937 or 1943) was a Soviet statesman and party leader, at that time Head of the Department of Nationalities of the VTsIK.
3. In the text, the family name Shneerson was originally written, with a handwritten correction to Solovyev.
4. The List of Members of the Initiative Group is attached to the Minutes (GARF, f. P 1235, op. 119, d. 9, l. 100б-11), 14 people in total (see below).

Source: GARF, f. P 1235, op. 119, d. 9, l. 9-90б.
Prepared for publication by Elena Marushiakova and Vesselin Popov.

12.1.5 *The Plenum of the Delegates of the Moscow Gypsies*

Протокол No. 1
делегатского Пленума московских цыган.
6-го августа 1925 г.

Присутствовало 45 делегатов.

Председатель Пленума – С. Поляков; Секретарь Пленума – И. Лебедев.

Повестка дня: 1. О Союзе и его задачах. 2. Выборы в Президиум Союза. 3. Выборы в Центральное правление Союза.

Слушали:

1. Доклад т. Таранова. 2. Выборы в Президиум Союза. 3. Выборы в Центральное Правление Союза.

Постановили:

1. Принять к сведению и приступить к работе по осуществлению задач Союза.

2. Единогласно [выбраны]: Председатель А. С. Таранов. [Заместителем С. Г. Полякова.] Секретарь И. И. Лебедев.

3. Единогласно выбраны: Масальский М., Ильинский Н., Беляков П., Шишкин А., Мерхоленко В., Шишков К., Панков Н., Поляков А., Шишкова О., Сивак, Маштаков М.

Председатель Пленума … [подпись] (С. Поляков).

Секретарь Пленума … [подпись] (И. Лебедев).

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Minutes No. 1
of the Plenum of Delegates of Moscow Gypsies.
6 August, 1925

There were 45 delegates present.

Chair of the Plenum – S. Polyakov; Plenum Secretary – I. Lebedev.

Agenda: 1. About the Union [1] and its tasks. 2. Elections to the Presidium of the Union 3. Elections to the Central Directorate of the Union.

Listened:

1. Report of comrade Taranov

2. Elections to the Presidium of Union. 3. Elections to the Central Directorate of Union.

Decided:

1. Take note of and begin work on the tasks of the Union.

2. Unanimously elected: Chairperson A. S. Taranov. Deputy S. G. Polyakov [2]. Secretary I. I. Lebedev.

3. Unanimously elected: M. Masalskiy, N. Ilinskiy, P. Belyakov, A. Shishkin, V. Merkholenko, K. Shishkov, N. Pankov, A. Polyakov, O. Shishkova, Sivak [3], M. Mashtakov.

Chair of the Plenum … [signature] (S. Polyakov).

Plenum Secretary – … [signature] (I. Lebedev).

Notes

1. Here for the first time appears the designation 'Union', without additional explanation. As can be seen from the Statutes published below, the Union is registered under the name 'Union of Gypsies, living on the territory of RSFSR'. All official Union documents (letterheads, letters to the institutions, etc.), as well as its seal, bear the designation 'All-Russian Union of Gypsies', which also we will use further.
2. The original text of the Minutes omits S. G. Polyakov, elected Deputy Chairperson, whose name is entered in an extract from the Minutes (GARF, f. P 393, op. 43A, d. 1763, l. 181).
3. Only the family name is written.

Source: GARF, f. P 393, op. 43A, d. 1763, l. 182.
Prepared for publication by Elena Marushiakova and Vesselin Popov.

12.1.6 *The Statute of the Union of Gypsies, Living on the Territory of RSFSR*

Копия.

Настоящий Устав утвержден Народным Комиссариатом Внутренних Дел. 23 июля 1925 г.

Зам[еститель] Наркомвнудел (подпись).

Нач[альник] Центр[ального] Адм[инистартивного] Упр[авления] (подпись).

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Устав
Союза цыган, проживающих на территории Р.С.Ф.С.Р.

I. Общие положения.

§ 1. На основании настоящего Устава учреждается Союз цыган, проживающих на територии РСФСР.

§ 2. Союз распространяет свою деятельность в пределах РСФСР.

§ 3. Центральное Правление Союза имеет место пребывания в гор. Москве.

§ 4. Союз имеет печать со своим наименованием.

II. Цель Союза.

§ 5. Союз имеет целью объединение и организацию цыганских трудящихся масс, проживающих на территории РСФСР, защиту их интересов, поднятие культурного уровня и организацию взаимопомощи.

III. Метод осуществления.

§ 6. Для осуществления указанных в § 5 целей Союз:

а) входит с ходатайством в соответствующие органы власти в тех случаях, когда необходимо содействие их для осуществления того или иного постановления Союза.

б) Открывает с соблюдением существующих правил вечернюю воскресную школу.

в) Устраивает клубы, библиотеки и национальные театры и студии.

г) Оказывает содействие цыганским трудящимся массам в организации касс взаимопомощи, кооперативов, сельско-хоз. артелей и коммун и производственных мастерских.

д) Издает на цыганском языке журналы, газеты, брошюры и учебники, ведет моральную борьбу с общественным злом среди своих членов.

е) Как-то: с пьянством, гаданьем, попрошайничеством, азартными играми, кочевничеством.

ж) Приобретает, отчуждает и арендует имущество, необходимое для целей Союза и заключает договора и сделки непосредственно отвечающие задачам Союза.

Примечание: Все поименованные в п. 6 полномочья осуществляются на основании действующих узаконений.

IV. Организация и состав Союза.

§ 7. Союз состоит из городских или волостных, уездных, районных и губернских или областных объединений.

§ 8. Основной и наименьшей ячейкой Союза являются его волостное или городское отделение и учреждение с количеством членов не менее 10 человек.

§ 9. Высшим органом управления Союза является Всероссийский Съезд. [...]

V. Состав Союза.

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§ 14. Членами Союза могут быть все цыгане, имеющие право избирать и быть избранными в Советы, проживающие на территории РСФСР достигшие 18-ти летнего возраста и признающие настоящий устав.

§ 15. Зачисление в члены производится Правлением Отделения с последующим утверждением на общем собрании Отделения.

§ 16. Выбытие из числа членов Союза может иметь место по личном заявлению выбываемого, или по постановлению двух третей наличного числа членов Отделения Союза по спискам, при чем исключение в последнем случае может иметь место только при наличии уголовно-наказуемого деяния.

Примечание: Члены Союза, не внесшие установленного членского взноса в течении 3-х месяцев, считаются выбывшими из состава Союза, но вступают вновь без нового утверждения по внесению членских взносов за истекшее время.

§ 17. Сведения о личном составе Союза представляются Союзом ежегодно в НКВД и о личном составе отделений Союза в тот губернский Административный Отдел, в котором зарегистрированы эти отделения Союза.

§ 18. Губернский Союз может быть организован при наличии не менее 10-ти чел. членов.

VI. Съезды Союза, Общие собрания Отделений и предметы их ведения.

§ 19. Не реже 1 раза в год по получении соответствующего разрешения от подлежащих органов власти, созывается Всероссийский Съезд. Место Съезда, порядок его созыва и срок определяются Центральным Правлением Союза. [...]

§ 26. Центральное Правление управляет всеми делами Союза.

§ 27. Средства Союза составляются: а) из членских взносов, размер коих устанавливается общим собранием отделений; б) пожертвований, и в) доходов от предприятий, устраиваемых Союзом в соответствии с его задачами.

VII. Ликвидация Союза.

§ 28. Союз может быть закрыт, как по распоряжению правительственных органов, так и по постановлению Общего собрания членов.

§ 29. В случае ликвидации Союза оставшееся имущество направляется по указанию Народного Комиссариата Внутренних Дел.

Настоящий Устав зарегистрирован в Административном Отделе Центр. Адм. Управления НКВД за № 68. 24 июля 1925 г.

Врид. Нач[альник] Адм[инистративного] Отд[ела] (подпись).

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Copy
This Statute is endorsed by NKVD. July 23, 1925.
Deputy National Commissioner of Internal Affairs (Signature).
Head of Central Administrative Directorate (signature).

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Statute
of the Union of Gypsies, living on the territory of RSFSR

I. General considerations.

§ 1. The Union of Gypsies, living on the territory of RSFSR, is established on the basis of this Statute.

§ 2. The Union extends its activities within the boundaries of RSFSR.

§ 3. The location of the Central Administration is in the city of Moscow.

§ 4. The Union has its own stamp bearing its name.

II. Aim of the Union.

§ 5. The Union aims at uniting and organising the Gypsy working masses, living on the territory of the RSFSR, protecting their interests, raising their cultural level, and organising mutual assistance.

III. Method of implementation.

§ 6. In order to implement the aims set out in point 5, the Union shall:

(a) Intercede with the relevant authorities in those cases where assistance is required in order to implement one or another decree of the Union.

b) In observance of the existing rules, it will open an evening Sunday school.

c) Organise clubs, libraries and national theatres and studios.

d) Provide support for the Gypsy working masses in organizing units for mutual assistance, cooperatives, agricultural artels, communes, and productions' workshops.

e) Publish in the Gypsy language magazines, newspapers, brochures and textbooks; conduct moral fight against the public evil among the Gypsies.

f) Such as: drunkenness, fortune-telling, begging, gambling, nomadism.

(g) Acquires, expropriates and leases a property required in order to meet the aims of the Union and concludes contracts and deals directly related to the tasks of the Union.

Note: All the powers referred to in point 6 are realised on the basis of the current legislation.

IV. Organisation and composition of the Union.

§ 7. The Union is made up of units on cities or *volost*, *uezd*, *rayon* and governorate (or *oblast*) level.

§ 8. The main and the smallest part of the Union are its *volost* or city units with a minimum of 10 members.

§ 9. The highest governing authority of the Union is the All-Russian Congress. […]

V. Composition of the Union.

§ 14. Members of the Union may be all Gypsies who have the right to elect and to be elected in the Councils, who live on the territory of the RSFSRs, who have turned the age of 18, and who recognise this Statute.

§ 15. The assignment to membership is made by the Management of the Department with subsequent approval of the General Assembly of the Department.

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§ 16. Members of the Union may leave on personal requests, or by a ruling two-thirds of the present number of members in the Department of the Union; the exclusion in the latter case may take place only in the case of a criminal-punishable act.

Note: Members of the Union who have not paid the determined membership fees for three months are deemed to have left the Union, however, they are reinstated in it again without a new confirmation after they have paid the fees for the expired time.

§ 17. Staff reports for members of the Union are presented annually by the Union to the NKVD and for the staff of the Union's departments in that Administrative Section where these Union Departments have been registered.

§ 18. An Union on *Governorate level* may be organised in the presence of no less than 10 members.

VI. Congresses of the Union, General Assemblies of Departments and the ways they take place.

§ 19. Not less than once a year, after receiving the relevant authorisation by the responsible authorities, the All-Russian Congress convened. The venue of the Congress, the order and the terms of the meeting are determined by the Central Directorate of the Union. [...]

§ 26. The Central Directorate manages all activities of the Union.

§ 27. The resources of the Union consist of: (a) membership fees, the amount of which is determined by the General Assemblies of the Departments; (b) donations; and (c) income from events organised by the Union in accordance with its tasks.

VII. Liquidation of the Union.

§ 28. The Union may be closed down both by order of the governmental bodies and by a decree of the General Assembly of the members.

§ 29. In the event of the liquidation of the Union, the remainder of his property shall be directed according to the direction of the National Commissioner for Internal Affairs.

This Statute is registered in the Administrative Division of the Central Administrative Directorate of NKVD under No. 68. July 24, 1925.
Temporary Head of the Administrative Department (Signature).

Source: GARF, f. A 259, op. 10б, d. 2253, l. 20-24.
Prepared for publication by Elena Marushiakova and Vesselin Popov.

12.1.7 *The Alphabet of the Gypsy Language*

[Бланк] Р.С.Ф.С.Р. Народный Комиссариат по Просвещению.
10.05.1927 г. № 63807.

Всероссийскому Союзу Цыган.
Б[ольшой] Черкасский пер[еулок], помещение 13.

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По вопросу:

Вопрос об алфавите для цыганского языка был проработан по поручению Главнауки Наркомпроса учеными специалистами и обсужден в Учено-Консультационном совещании в составе представителей Главнауки и Совнацмена, ученых специалистов и представителей Всероссийского Союза Цыган. Совещание единогласно высказалось за целесообразность принятия алфавита на основе русского шрифта по соображениям как научного, так и практического характера.

Принятий Совещанием алфавит имеет следующие начертания:
а, б, в, г, ґ (как в русском языке в слове “боги”), д, е, ё, ж, з, и, й, к, л, м, н, о, п, р, с, т, у, ф, х, ц, ч, дж (близкий русскому “ч”, с элементом “ж” вместо “ш”), ш, ь, ы, э, ю, я.

Сравнительно с русским алфавитом:

1. нет русского “щ”.

2. прибавлено “ґ” и “дж”.

Констатируя, что вышеприведенный алфавит выработан с участием специалистов и с привлечением научного Института Этнических Культур Народов Востока, Наркомпрос считает возможным рекомендовать его Цыганскому Союзу для проведения в жизнь.

Нарком по Просвещению … [подпись] (А. Луначарский).

Зам. Начальник Главнауки … [подпись]. Секретарь Управления … [подпись].

∵

[Letterhead] RSFSR People’s Commissariat for Education
10.05.1927, № 63807.

To: All-Russian Gypsy Union
Bolshoy Cherkaskiy alley, Premises 13.

On the issue:

The question of the alphabet for the Gypsy language was worked out on behalf of the Glavnauka Narkompros [1] by scholar experts and discussed at the Scientific-Consultative Meeting, consisting of representatives of the Glavnauka and the Sovnatsmen [2], scholar experts and representatives of the All-Russian Union of Gypsies [3]. The meeting unanimously supported the suitability of adopting an alphabet based on the Russian font for reasons of both a scientific and a practical nature.

The Alphabet adopted by the Meeting has the following form:
а, б, в, г, ґ (as in Russian in the word ‘боги’), д, е, ё, ж, з, и, й, к, л, м, н, о, п, р, с, т, у, ф, х, ц, ч, дж (close to Russian ‘ч’, with element of ‘ж’ instead of ‘ш’), ш, ь, ы, э, ю, я.

Compared to the Russian alphabet:

1. there is no Russian ‘щ’.

2. added ‘ґ’ и ‘дж’.

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Noting that the above alphabet was developed with the participation of experts and with the involvement of the academic Institute of Ethnic Cultures of the Peoples of the East, Narkompros considers it possible to recommend it to the Gypsy Union for implementation.

The People's Commissar for Education … [signature] (A. Lunacharskiy).

Deputy Head of Glavnauka … [signature]. Secretary if Directorate … [signature].

Notes

1. General Directorate of Scientific, Academic-Artistic and Museum Institutions (*Glavnauka*) at the People's Commissariat of Education of the RSFSR (*Narkompros*).
2. Central Council for the Education of National Minorities of the RSFSR (*Sovnatsmen*) at collegium (1925-29) of Narkompros.
3. The participants in this meeting accepted the proposals of the Committee for creation of the Gypsy language alphabet. Members of the Committee were Prof. Maxim V. Sergievsky from Moscow State University, his assistant Tatiana V. Wentzel, and as representatives of the All-Russian Union of Gypsies – Nikolay A. Pankov, Nina A. Dudarova and Nikolay Rogozhev (Друц & Гесслер, 1990, p. 295).

Source: LANB, f. Николай Панков; a copy of this Instruction is preserved also in OGMLT, f. 29, op. 1, d. 49, l. 33.
Prepared for publication by Elena Marushiakova and Vesselin Popov.

12.1.8 *An Appeal to Gypsy Inhabitants of RSFSR*

Чарорэ свэтостыр скхэдэнтипэ кхэтанэ!

Всеросийский Союз Цыган, проживающих на територии Р. С. Ф, С. Р.
К цыганскому населению Р.С.Ф.С.Р

Дэш бэрш палэ сарэ тыкнэ народы сыр: рома, киргизы, башкиры и ваврэ народы, савэ особенно сыс притасадэ кралиса и ранса, – пирдал бутяритко власть кэрна пэскиро джиибэн, сыр лэнгэ кэмалпэ.

Сарэ фэлдытка народы, окочевники кана лэнэ тэ бэшэнпэ пхув, тэзалэнпэ сельско хулаибнаса. Лэнгэ дэнэ сы пхув, енэ кэрдэ пескирэ гава, сэ гава киргизэндэ, башкирэндэ и сарэндэ кон еще на гара псирдя сыр балвал. Сы пэскирэ школы, каждо бэршэса кочевники бутыр и бутыр пириджяна на оседло джиибэн, дэ форья и гава, и галев, сыг лэн на удыкхэса и лэна только тэ разракирэн ваш лэнгэ сыр дэ сказки.

Оседла народы савэ залэнаспэ дэ форья мэлконэ бутяса пэ кхэр, кустари или соса нибудь таргискирнас, адяка же пириджяна пэ гавитко хулаибэн. Бутяритко, советско государство адасавэн манушэн зоралэс подрикирла, собы локхэдыр адасавэнгэ манушэнгэ сыс тэ залэспэ пэскиро рэндоса, собы сыс лэнгэ пэскиро вэнгло, пэскиро хулаибэн. Пашил адалэстэ советско государство зоралэс камэл сарэн манушэн, кон сы замардо и на сыклякирдо – тэ сыклякирэл. Сыкляибэ кэрла локхедыр джиибэн. Ваш адава откэрнапэ кана разна союзы, общества, комитеты

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и ваврэ штэты. Адасаво же штэтоса ваш романэ чавэнгэ сы Всероссийско Союзо Ромэн, саво еще кхарлапэ тыкнэ лавэса В. С. Ц. Адава Союзо кэрла буты ваш сарэ ромэнгэ, савэ дживэна и ладэна пиро Советско, Бутяритко Россия.

Кана еще рома дживэна одолэса, со зумавэна, драбакирна, дорэсэна пэ тарго кофоса или чорибнаса. Нэ каждо дэвэсэса романо джиибэн ячэла пхарэдыр и пхарэдыр. Пало зумаибэ и дра[ба]кирибэ, и штрафуют, и обкэдэна и марна. Пэ тарго пашил ромэнца тэрдо гадже лоляса повязка пэ васт, чачо может тэ явэл, со адэлэ гадже кэрна пэскири буты и нагараз шукар, нэ енэ, патянтэ ромалэ, сы сыр перва чириклэ, пало савэндэ явэна бут ваврэ барэ стаенца. Сарэ рома, – всажэ полэна кана, со ромэскэ нанэ гораз зоралы патин гаджестыр. Чорибэн грэн зоралэс зродэна и кокорэ гадже зоралэс холякирдэ сы пэ ромэндэ пало чорибэн грэн, и сыс на екхва, со гадже и марнас и хачкирнас на манушитко ромэн, напучен сы ли бангэ адэлэ рома дэ чорибэн грэн или на. Адава ракирла пало адава, со ром лэя гаджес пало джидо мас и ев дэла годлы.

Пашил адалэса рома дэ зима, дэ мразы дживэна сыр рува, дэ шилалэ и розмардэ, пхуранэ кхэра, савэ сы зачурдэнэ хуланса, би фрэнчтэнгирэ и бовэнгирэ.

Всероссийско союзо ромэн, саво сы, кэ лав тэ пхэнэс, скэдэна ромэндыр, тховэла сари пэскири зор, собы тэ кэрэс локхэдыр романо джиибэн, саво кана сы зоралэс пхаро. Романо Союзо мангья правительство, собы ев помог амэнгэ тэ роскэдэспэ, сыр фэдэдыр тэ [кэрэс] пирдал комиссия пашил комиссариато, савэстэ сы рэндо вашо пхувья.

Адая комисия кэрла учето романэнгэ, кон амэндыр закамэл тэ залэлпэ гавитконэ хулаибнаса, дэла адасавэнгэ ромэнгэ пхув и ловэ ко штар шэл состэ пэ хулаибэн.

Каждо семья, сави закамэл тэ обкэрэл пхув (тэ залэлпэ крестьянствовоса), может тэ подэл дэ пэскиро гавитко (земельно) отдело тэ подэл лыл ваш одова, со бы тэ лэс пхув дэ адава штэто, кай дживэла, или дэ вавир штэто, карик закамэн. Пхув дэлапэ би ловэнгиро, би ловэнгиро кэрлапэ и обмеро и ваврэ адасавэ бутя. Вашо форитконэнгэ ромэнгэ, Союзо кэрэла, артели, сыкляибнаскирэ мастерска, кай рома высыклена кэ сави нибудь буты. Ваш чавэнгэ, Союзо откэрла школы, сыклякирла кэ грамота и кэ ремесло, собы ёнэ, коли вибарьена, тэ перекэрэн амаро джиибэн фэдэдыр. Ухтылла амарэнгэ тыкно чавэнгэ тэ кхэлэс пэ гэра, пэ улицы пало ясвитка гаспря. Бут сы и тэрнэ чавэндыр, савэ камнэ бы вавир джиибэн, нэ темнота и одова со енэ нанэ сыклякирдэ ни кэ грамота, ни кэ ремесло – на дэла лэнгэ зор тэ пирикэрэс пэскиро джиибэн. Союзо ваш адасавэнгэ адякэ же откэрла школы.

Ромалэ и ромнялэ, союзо мангэла тэ прилэ сарэ деса амарэ лава и амари буты. Мэк ей авэла сарэнгэ, кици амэн сы, пэскирьяса, общенаса бутяса. Комиссия пиро землеустройство ромэн лэла тэ выбичавэл и тумэнгэ разна письменна вопросы пиро гавитка и форитка отделы. Чинэнте пэ лэндэ, со треби, и тумэнгэ пиро адалэ вопросники-анкеты лэна тэ дэн пхувья и ловэ. Форитка и сарэ, кон дживэла пэ екх штэто, бичавэнте пэскирэн тыкно чавэн дэ школы. Сыклен и кокорэ грамотакэ.

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Сыг выджяла букварё пэ амаро родно чиб. Рипирэнте, со грамотно мануш локхэс кэрла пэскиро джиибэн.

Только сыкляибнаса и ремеслоса и оседло джиибнаса газдаса пэс и тэрдеваса и психэса кэ псико ваврэ манушэнца, савэ кэрна советско государство.

САСТЫПЭН ТУМЭНГЭ.

Председатель Всероссийского Союза Цыган А. С. Таранов.
Члены Правления: Н. Панков, Н. Дударова, Д. Поляков.
Секретарь ВСЦ И. Лебедев.

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Пролетарии всех стран, соединяйтесь!

Всеросийский Союз Цыган, проживающих на территории Р. С. Ф, С. Р.
К цыганскому населению Р.С.Ф.С.Р.

Десять лет тому назад, благодаря Октябрьской Революции, все национальные меньшинства, угнетаемые царским правительством, получили право свободно строить свое благополучие.

Кочующие племена, с помощью Советской власти, начинают садиться на землю, занимаются сельским хозяйством. У них есть своя земля, свои хутора, деревни, села, свои школы. С каждым годом число кочевников уменьшается и скоро их совсем не будет.

Оседлые племена, ранее занимавшиеся кустарничеством, мелкой торговлей и посредничеством, также переходят на сельское хозяйство. Советская власть стремится улучшить жизнь раскрепощенных, малых народностей, дать им возможность свободно и спокойно трудиться, иметь свой угол, свое хозяйство. В первую очередь она старается просветить их, сделать грамотными, чтобы они смогли сами улучшить свою жизнь. Для этого организовываются Союзы, Общества, Комитеты и другие объединения.

Такой организацией для цыганской народности является Всероссийский Союз Цыган, который называется сокращенно В.С.Ц. Союз ведет работу среди бедного и безграмотного цыганского населения, проживающего и кочующего по Советской России.

До сих пор еще большинство цыган добывают себе пропитание гаданием, попрошайничеством, торговлей на конном рынке, а иногда и конокрадством. Но с каждым днем их положение становится все хуже и тяжелее. За гадание штрафуют. На конном рынке появились специалисты от государства, которым крестьяне больше доверяют, чем цыганам.

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Конокрадство строго преследуется, да и у самых крестьян оно вызывает озлобление и часто бывают убийства на этой почве. Кочевое население на зиму ютится в холодных и полуразрушенных домах без окон и печей.

Всероссийский Союз Цыган, Правление которого состоит из цыган, стремится помочь им и улучшить их тяжелое положение. По ходатайству Союза Цыган, Советским Правительством, при Переселенческом Отделе Народного Комиссариата Земледелия, создана специальная комиссия по переводу цыган на оседлость и наделение землей.

Эта комиссия берет на учет цыган, которые желают заниматься сельским хозяйством, дает им землю и денежную помощь в размере 400 рублей на каждое хозяйство.

Каждая семья цыган, желающая обрабатывать землю (заниматься крестьянством), может подать в свой местный земельный орган заявку и получить участок земли по месту своего нахождения, а если там свободной земли не найдется, то его могут переселить на свободную государственную землю, куда он захочет.

Земля дается бесплатно. Обмер участков, распределение участков производятся тоже бесплатно.

Для городского населения цыган Союз создает различные трудовые артели, учебно-производственные мастерские, где цыгане могут получить какую-нибудь трудовую специальность.

Для наших детей, которые сейчас по улицам пляшут за копейки или выпрашивают на хлеб, Союз открывает школы, обучает их грамоте, приучает к ремеслу, чтоб они могли в будущем перестроить нашу жизнь по новому, по лучшему.

Много есть и взрослых, которые хотели-бы жить по иному, да мешает им темнота, безграмотность. Для них Союз тоже открывает школы.

Так как цыгане разбросаны по всей России, то Союз, для того чтобы легче было вести работу среди них, объединяет цыган на местах в отделения Союза, которые и проводят в жизнь цели и задачи Союза среди членов своего отделения.

Товарищи цыгане! Союз призывает вас принять горячее участие в работе своего Союза.

Комиссия по землеустройству цыган будет присылать вам специальные анкеты на места, через местные органы. Заполняйте эти анкеты и вам будут, согласно этих анкет, отводиться участки земли и даваться денежные государственная помощь.

Городское, оседлое население цыган! Посылайте детей своих в школы! Обучайтесь сами грамоте! Скоро будет издана азбука на цыганском языке. Помните, что чем человек грамотнее, тем легче он может устроить свою жизнь.

Таким образом, постепенно переводя цыган на сельское хозяйство, изживая неграмотность, обучая их ремеслу, объединяя их в Отделения, Союз поднимет самосознание нашего отсталого народа и поставит его наравне с другими народами, которые участвуют в строительстве нашего Советского государства.

С товарищеским приветом.

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Председатель Всероссийского Союза Цыган А. С. Таранов. 1927.
Члены Правления: Н. Панков, Н. Дударова, Д. Поляков.
Секретарь ВСЦ И. Лебедев.
Главлит No. 88.089. Зак[аз] 1643. Тираж 2 000 экз[емпляров].

∵

Workers of the world, unite!

All-Russian Union of the Gypsies living on the territory of RSFSR
To Gypsy Inhabitants of RSFSR [1].

Ten years ago, thanks to the October Revolution, all national minorities [2] oppressed by the tsarist [3] government received the right to freely build their well-being.

The nomadic tribes, with the help of the Soviet authorities [4], begin to settle on the ground, engaged in agriculture [5]. They have their own steading, their own hamlets, villages, own schools. Every year the number of nomads decreases and soon there will be none at all [6].

The sedentary tribes, who previously were engaged in handicrafts, petty trade and were selling something, also started to engage in agriculture. Soviet power seeks to improve the lives of liberated, small nationalities, to give them the opportunity to work freely and calmly, to have their own corner to dwell, their own household. First of all, she tries to enlighten them, make them literate, so that they can improve their lives themselves. For this, Unions, Societies, Committees and other associations are organised. Such an organisation for the Gypsy people is the All-Russian Union of Gypsies, which is called abbreviated VSTs. The Union is working among the poor and illiterate [7] Gypsy population living and wandering around Soviet Russia.

Until now, the majority of Gypsies is still earning their living from fortune-telling, begging, trading horses on market, and sometimes from horse-stealing. But every day Romani life is getting worse and harder. For fortune-telling [8] is imposed fine [9]. Specialists from the state appeared on the horse market, whom peasants trust more than Gypsies [10]. Horse theft is strictly persecuted, and it causes the peasants themselves to feel hatred, and there are often killings on this basis [11]. Nomadic population, in winter, live [12] in cold and destroyed houses, which are without windows and stoves.

The All-Russian Union of Gypsies, whose Board consists of Gypsies, seeks to help them and improve their difficult situation [13]. At the request of the Union of Roma, the Soviet Government, under the Resettlement Department of the People's Commissariat for Agriculture, created a special commission for the transfer of Gypsies to sedentary life and allotment of land [14]. This commission register the Gypsies who wish to engage in agriculture, gives them land and cash assistance in the amount of 400 rubles per household.

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Every Gypsy family, who wish to cultivate the land (to engage in peasantry), may apply to their agricultural department and to obtain land either in the place where they live, or if there is no free land they could be resettled to another free state land, where they want.

Land is given free of charge. Measurement of plots and other procedures are also free of charge.

For the urban Gypsies, the Union of Gypsies creates working artels, training production workshops, where the Gypsies will be taught some worker's profession. For our children, who are now dancing on the streets for a penny or asking for bread, the Union opens schools, teaches them to read and write, teaches them occupation so that in the future they can rebuild our lives in a new, better way.

There are many adults, who want to live a different life, but are hindered by their darkness and lack of literacy. For them the Union also opens schools.

Since the Gypsies are scattered throughout the whole of Russia, the Union, in order to make it easier to carry the work among them, unites the Roma in the regions in the branches of the Union, which carry out the goals and objectives of the Union among the members of a local branch [15].

Comrades Gypsies! The Union calls on you to take an ardent part in the work of your Union [16].

The Gypsy Land Management Commission will send you special questionnaires through local authorities. Fill out these questionnaires and according to these questionnaires you will be allocated land plots and state financial assistance.

Urban settled Gypsies! Send your children to school! Teach yourselves literacy too! Soon to be published is an alphabet book of Romani language. Remember that the more literate a person, the easier it is for him to arrange his life.

Thus, gradually transferring Gypsies to agriculture, eradicating illiteracy, teaching them craft, uniting them into Departments, the Union will raise the self-awareness of our backward people and put them on an equal footing with other peoples who are involved in the construction of our Soviet state [17].

With comradely greetings [18].

Chairperson of All-Russian Union of Gypsies A. S. Taranov.
Members of the Board of Directors: N. Pankov, N. Dudarova, D. Polyakov.
Secretary of VSTs I. Lebedev.
Glavlit No. 88.089. Order 1643. run 2,000 issues.

Notes

1. The text is not a straightforward translation from one language to another, as there are two language versions (Romani and Russian) of the same text. For an easier understanding, the English translation is made from the Russian original. The famous slogan "Workers of the world, unite!" in Romani language version is translated as "The poors of the world, unite". Further differences in the text are outlined below.

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2. In the text in Romani language the term national minorities is clarified as: small people, such as the Roma, Kyrgyz, Bashkirs and other peoples.
3. In Romani language, the clarification 'and lords' is added.
4. The phrase "with the help of the Soviet authorities" was dropped from the Romani language text.
5. In the Romani language text, the following sentence is added: They are given with the land, they have built their own villages, there are the own villages of Kyrgyzs, Bashkirs and all peoples, who were just a short time ago wandering like a wind.
6. In the Romani language text: "soon they will not be seen, and [people] will narrate about them, like in fairy-tales".
7. The words "poor and illiterate" was dropped from the Romani language text.
8. The word "charms" is added in the text in Romani.
9. The phrase "are robed, and beaten" is added to the Romani language text.
10. This sentence is replaced in the Romani language text with following: "In the horse market, *gadže* with a red armband are standing close to Roma; it is possible indeed, that those *gadže* do their job not very well, but – believe, Roma – they are only first swallows, big flocks will follow them".
11. In the Romani language text the following was added: "and it happened not once, when *gadže* either murdered or severely burned Roma, without asking are they guilty in a horse theft or not. This suggests that the Gypsy took the *gadžo* for live meat, and he raises a cry."
12. In the Romani language text the following was added: "as wolves".
13. In the Romani language text, it was also added: "which is now very difficult".
14. In the Romani language text the sentence is changed to "The Union of Gypsies has asked the government to help us to understand what way is better for acting through the Commission, which is in the structure of the People's Commissariat of Agriculture".
15. This sentence was dropped from the Romani language text.
16. This is changed in the Romani language text to: "Roma men and women, the Union asks you to accept openheartedly our words and work. Let it be for everybody, as much as for us, and for our common work".
17. In the Romani language text: "Only education and profession, and sedentary life will help us to raise ourselves and to stand shoulder to shoulder with other peoples who are building our Soviet state."
18. The text in Romani language ended instead with the traditional greeting: "We wish YOU GOOD HEALTH".

Source: GARF, f. P 9550, op. 2, d. 2010, l. 1.
Prepared for publication by Elena Marushiakova, Vesselin Popov and Viktor Shapoval.

12.1.9 *Organising the Gypsy Union in Belarus*

Копия Союзу ВСЦ.

Протокол No. 2
Общего собрания граждан цыган,
состоявшегося в м[есте] Березино 19 августа 1926 года

Присутствовало 25 человек.

Под председательством Пасевича, члена Граховского и секретаря Крючкова, в присутствии секретаря Райкома КПБ т. Ипатова и секретаря Райкома ЛКСМБ т. Громова.

Повестка дня: 1. Цели Всесоюзного Союза Цыган и об организации Союза Цыган по местам. 2. Как вести работу среди цыган по организации Союза. 3. Текущие дела.

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Слушали:

1. Доклад уполномоченного по организации Союза Цыган по БССР тов. Граховского, о целях организации Союза Цыган.

Высказались:

Зьверович: Мы согласны сесть на оседлость и взяться за физический полезный труд тогда, когда мы получим материальную помощь от наших советских органов.

Пасевич: Высказанное т. Зьверовичем поддерживаем, мы просим от наших советских органов помочь нам матерьяльно сесть на оседлость и взяться за полезный физический труд, мы просим чтобы вели среди нас культурно-воспитательную работу, чтобы было предоставлено нам место в наши учебные заведения, как-то: семилетки, рабфаки, профшколы и т.д., чтобы нашу молодежь втягивали в производство к общественно-полезному труду и поэтому просим от наших советских органов в лице нашего уполномоченного по организации Союза цыган в Белоруссии, как можно скорее улучшить нашу экономическую жизнь. Мы цыгане желаем заняться полезным физическим трудом и культурно-просветительной работой.

Зьверович, Алексей: Мы, благодаря наших тяжелых условий, ведя кочевую бродячую жизнь, мы должны были воровать, гадать, попрошайничать, делать злоупотребления, добывая себе кусок хлеба. Мы такие же граждане советской республики, как остальные нацменьшинства, мы должны идти в ногу с нацменьшинствами за советскую власть. Мы просим советские органы посадить нас на оседлость, приучить нас полезному физическому труду, открыть на кредит на семена и сельско-хозяйственной инвентарь. Мы надеемся, что мы в недалеком будущем от наших советских органов получим то, что мной было указано.

Высказался секретарь Райкома КПБ т. Ипатов о национальном вопросе.

Высказался председатель Райисполкома т. Крючков, который охарактеризовал цыганский кочующий быт и к чему должны стремиться цыгане.

Постановили: Мы, собравшиеся цыгане, заслушав доклад уполномоченного Союза Цыган по организации Союза Цыган по БССР т. Граховского, просим советское правительство ускорить мероприятия в отношении нашей оседлости. Мы желаем заниматься общественно-полезным трудом и надеемся, что правительство нам поможет материально. Кроме того, просим уполномоченного по организации союза цыган передать Белорусскому правительству нашу благодарность за мероприятия по улучшению образа жизни путем земленаделения и друг.

Текущие дела:

Слушали: Об организации кассы взаимопомощи. Т. Граховский информировал о значении таковой.

Постановили: Все невступившие в кассу взаимопомощи вступить сейчас.

Председатель: … (Пасевич). Член … (Граховский). Секретарь … (Ключков).
Уполномоченный по работе среди цыган в БССР … (Граховский).

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Copy to the Union of VSTs.

Minutes No. 2
From the General Assembly of the Gypsy Citizens,
Held in the city of Berezino on August 19, 1926.

25 people were present.

Under the chairmanship of Pasevich, member Grakhovskiy and secretary Kryuchkov, in the presence of Secretary of Raykom KPB, comrade Ipatov, and Secretary of Raykom of LKSMB, comrade Gromov.

Agenda: 1. Goals of the VSTs and the organisation of a Union of Gypsies on the grassroots. 2. How to do the work with the Gypsies for establishing of the Union. 3. Ongoing tasks.

Listened:

1. A report by the plenipotentiary on the establishment of a Union of Gypsies in BSSR, on the tasks of organising the Union of Gypsies, comrade Grakhovskiy.

Speakers:

Z'verovich: We agree to move to a settled way of life and start dealing with physical labour that is useful for the society, when we receive material help from our Soviet authorities.

Pasevich: We second Comrade Z'verovich, we ask our Soviet authorities to help us materially in order to settle down and start dealing with physical labour that is useful for the society; we ask them to do among us cultural-educational work, we ask for the provision of places in our educational establishments, such as *semiletka, rabfaks*, professional school, etc.; in order that our youth becomes attracted to work that is useful for the society, we ask our Soviet authorities, through our plenipotentiary, for the organisation of the Union of Gypsies in BSSR, as quickly as possible, to improve our economic life. We, Gypsies, are willing to start to do physical labour that is useful for the society and culturally-educational work.

Z'verovich, Aleksey: In the past we, due to the hard conditions, leading a nomadic lifestyle, were forced to steal, tell fortunes, to do abuse in order to get a piece of bread. We are citizens of the Soviet Republic, just like the rest of the national minorities, we are obliged to keep up with national minorities in the name of the Soviet power. We ask the Soviet authorities to settle us down, teach us to do physical labour that is useful for the society, to give us a credit for seeds and agricultural equipment. We hope that in the near future we shall get from our Soviet authorities what I have identified.

The Secretary of the Raykom of KPB, Comrade Ipatov, spoke about the national question.

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The Chairman of the Regional Executive Committee, Comrade Kryuchkov, spoke and described the Gypsies' travelling lifestyle and revealed what Gypsies should be striving towards.

Decided: We, the gathered Gypsies, hearing the report of the Commissioner of the Union of the Gypsies on the matter for the organisation of Union of Gypsies in BSSR, comrade Grakhovskiy, we ask the Soviet Government to speed up the measures towards our sedentarisation. We want to engage in socially-useful work and we hope that the government will help us materially. In addition, we are asking the plenipotentiary for the organisation of the Union of Gypsies to convey to the Belarussian Government our gratitude for the arrangements seeking to improve the way of life through land allocation and others.

Ongoing tasks:

Listened: For the organising of a unit for mutual aid. Comrade Grakhovskiy informed about its relevance.

Decided: All who have not joined the loan society for mutual aid should join now.

Chairman: … (Pasevich). Member … (Grakhovskiy). Secretary … (Klyuchkov).
Authorised for work with the Gypsies in the BSSR … (Grakhovskiy).

Source: GARF, f. P 3316, op. 20, d. 653, l. 16-17.
Prepared for publication by Elena Marushiakova and Vesselin Popov.

12.1.10 *The Report by A. F. Grakhovskiy*

В Всероссийский Союз Цыган
Уполномоченный по работе среди цыган БССР т. Граховский А. Ф.

Доклад

1. Когда я приехал в Минск я предъявил свое полномочье, которое мне выдано Союзом Цыган РСФСР, вопрос был поставлен на заседания нацкомиссии при ВЦИКе БССР, где я выступил с докладом и информировал о Союзе Цыган РСФСР и уполномоченных каждой отдельной республики.

2. Нацкомиссия вынесла резолюцию, прежде чем приступить к работе, необходимо выяснить сколько находится цыган на территории БССР, а для этого необходимо связаться с окружными Нацкомиссиями, чтобы получить сведения.

3. Сведения окружные Нацкомиссии дают неточные. Почему. Потому что цыгане не пишут в документах, что они цыгане, а просто белоруссы, но все-таки получены сведения около 300 семей.

4. Из них оседлых почти нет, а квалифицированных работников также не много, как-то: медники, сапожники и шорники. Сельским хозяйством совсем не занимаются.

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5. Активистов очень мало, со всех полученных сведения нашлись начетыре человека. Следующие товарищи: 1. Адамов, В. В. – профессор ботаники. 2. Козловский, А[лександр] С. – слушатель военно-морского училища. 3. Туря, [Г. А.] – бухгальтер Наркомзема. 4. Козловский, И[ван] С. – городской житель. 5. Граховский, А. Ф. уполномоченный ВСЦ.

6. Из этих активистов создана инициативная группа по созданию Союза Цыган БССР.

7. Наркомземом отпущены для цыганских артелей 2 совхоза в среднем 500 десятин земли и жилые дома и постройки. В одном совхозе 10 десятин, а другом в среднем 5. Но самый главный вопрос о получении инвентаря для цыганских артелей живого и мертвого. На получение для цыганских оседлых семейств от Сельхозбанка есть предпосылки получить на каждую семью по 200 руб[лей].

8. Предполагается организовать коллектив металлистов в гор. Минск из 17 человек исключительно цыган, которые будут работать только на заказ. На организацию коллектива по смете требуется 2 770 р[ублей]. Но отпускают 500 руб[лей], а остальные деньги неизвестно, где взять. Я прошу Всероссийский Союз Цыган ходатайствовать перед высшими органами об оказании мне матерьяльной помощи в работе и дать указания о дальнейшей работе.

Уполномоченный по работе среди цыган БССР … (Граховский).

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To the All-Russian Union of the Gypsies.
Authorised to work among the Gypsies in the BSSR, Comrade A. F. Grakhovskiy.

Report

1. When I arrived in Minsk, I presented my letter of attorney which was issued to me by the Union of Gypsies in the RSFSR and the matter was brought in a meeting of the Commission for Nationalities at the VTsIK of BSSR, where I presented a report and informed about the Union of Gypsies in the RSFSR and about the authorised persons in each individual republic [1].

2. The Commission for Nationalities came out with a resolution that, before proceeding to work, it is necessary to clarify how many Gypsies are there in the territory of the BSSR and that is why we need to contact the Commissions for Nationalities of the districts in order to get information.

3. The Commission for Nationalities of the districts give inaccurate information because the Gypsies do not write in the papers that they are Gypsies but simply declare themselves to be Belarussians, but regardless of that, information has been received about 300 families.

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4. Among them, there are almost none who are settled while the skilled workers are very few, for example: coppersmiths, shoemakers and saddlers. They do not deal with agriculture at all.

5. There are very few activists; based on all available information four people were found. These are the following comrades: 1. V. V. Adamov – Professor of Botany. 2. Alexander S. Kozlovskiy – a student at the Military-Marine School. 3. G. A. Turya – an accountant at Narkomzem. 4. Ivan S. Kozlovskiy – urban citizen. 5. A. F. Grakhovskiy – plenipotentiary of the VSTs.

6. An initiative group for the establishment of a Union of Gypsies in the BSSR was established by these activists.

7. From Narkomzem are allocated to Gypsy artels in 2 sovkhozs, an average of 500 *desiatin* [2] of land, residential homes and farm buildings. In one of the sovkhozs there is an average of 10 desiatin per family, while in the other an average of 5. But the main question is that of receiving the inventory of the Gypsy artels [3], livestock and materials. There are opportunities each settled Gypsy family to receive from Selkhozbank 200 Rubles.

8. It is envisaged a metalworking collective to be organised in the city of Minsk, of 17 people, who are exclusively Gypsies who will work only by orders. According to preliminary estimates, a total of 2,770 Rubles is required for the organisation of the collective, however, only 500 are given, while it is not clear where the rest of the money will come from. I ask the All-Russian Union of the Gypsies to intercede with the bodies in order to provide material assistance for the purpose of organising and further work.

Plenipotentiary for work among the Gypsies in BSSR … (Grakhovskiy).

Notes

1. There are no reports that there were any other plenipotentiaries for the individual Soviet republics besides the BSSR and the USSR (see below).
2. A *desyatina* is a land measurement used in Russian Empire and early USSR. A dessiatin is approximately equivalent to 2.7 acres or 10,926.5 square metres.
3. Reference to agricultural *artels* (associations for joint cultivation of land).

Source: GARF, f. P 3316, op. 20, d. 653, l. 18-19.
Prepared for publication by Elena Marushiakova and Vesselin Popov.

12.1.11 *Minutes No. 1* (*Minsk*)

Протокол No. 1
заседания организационной группы по созданию Союза Цыган по Б.С.С.Р.
от 29.09.1926 г. в гор[оде] Минске

Присуствовали: 1. тов. Граховский, [А. Ф.] 2. т. Козловский, Иван [С]. 3. т. Адамов, [В. В.] 4. т. Туря, [Г. А.] 5. т. Козловский, Александр С.

Председателем Собрания избран тов. Граховский при секретаре тов. Туря.

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Повестка дня: Информация уполномоченного по организации Союза Цыган по БССР. Выборы организационной группы для создания Союза Цыган в Белоруссии. Текущие дела.

Слушали:

1. Информацию об организации Союза Цыган в РСФСР, а также ознакомление с устройством такого и с культурно-просветительными достижениями этого Союза. По этому вопросу тов. Туря высказался, что работа для создания Союза Цыган в Белоруссии невидимая, черная, кропотливая, но работа огромной важности, совершаемая перед нашими глазами: трудящимися руками закладывается фундамент нового союза в БССР. Цыганскую нацию, как сказочную спящую красавицу, пробудила от глубокого сна волшебница-революция, для объединения в один общий Союз в правоте своего дела.

2. О выборах. По этому вопросу тов. Граховский высказался, что среди цыган, проживающих в г. Минске, более выдающихся и культурно-просветительных он не знает, кроме предлагаемых следующих товарищей: Козловского, А. С., Адамова, В. В., Туря, Г. А., и Козловского, И. С., которые могли бы справиться с работой по союзной линии.

3. Текущие дела. Тов. Адамов высказался, что он не может принять участие в качества члена Союза лишь только потому, что он принадлежит к белорусской национальности, хотя мог бы быть полезен в деле издания словаря, грамматики и других культурно-просветит. отношениях. По этому вопросу т. Козловский дал свое следующее заключение: принимая во внимание, что в Белоруссии, в частности в г. Минске, культурные силы среди цыган отсутствуют, а т. Адамов великолепно знает быт, нравы, обычаи и цыганский язык, то считает необходимым ввести его в состав организационной группы, как одного из полезных работников среди цыган.

Постановили:

1. Целиком и полностью присоединяемся к Московскому Союзу Цыган [...] ему полное сочувствие [...] и уполномоченного т. Граховского просим ходатайствовать перед высшими органами Белоруссии об утверждении организационной группы для того, чтобы взяться за проведение в жизнь этого дела на территории Белоруссии.

2. Избрать в организационную группу тов[арищей]: Граховского, А. Ф., Козловского, А. С., Адамова, В. В., Туря, Г. А., и Козловского, И. С.

3. Ходатайствовать перед Белорусскими органами о допуске В. В. Адамова в организационную группу.

Настоящая инициативная группа вышеназванных цыган просит Белорусские советские органы о скорейшем утверждении этой группы, чтобы скорее приступить к планомерной намеченной своей работе.

Председатель ... (Граховский). Секретарь ...(Туря).

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Minutes No. 1
From the meeting of the organisational group for the establishment of Union of Gypsies in BSSR dated 29.09.1926 in the city of Minsk

Present: 1. Comrade Grakhovskiy, A. F. 2. Comrade Ivan S. Kozlovskiy. 3. Comrade V. V. Adamov. 4. The Comrade G. A. Turya. 5. Comrade Aleksander S. Kozlovskiy.

For Chairman of the Meeting is elected comrade Grakhovskiy along with Secretary, comrade Turya.

Agenda: 1. Information from plenipotentiary for the organisation of a Union of the Gypsies for the BSSR. 2. Election of an organisational group for the establishment of a Union of Gypsies in the BSSR. 3. Ongoing tasks.

Listened:

1. Information on the organisation of a Union of Gypsies in the RSFSR, as well as on the organisation and cultural-educational achievements of the Union. On this issue, comrade Turya said that the work of creating the Union of Gypsies in Belarus is invisible, black, painstaking, but it is a matter of great importance which is being done in front of our eyes: with working hands is laid the foundation of the new Union in the BSSR. The Gypsy nation, like Sleeping Beauty from the fairy tales, is awakened from its deep sleep by the fairy-revolution for unity in a common Union, united in the rightness of its work.

2. In relation to the elections. On this question, comrade Grakhovskiy said that among the Gypsies living in Minsk, he did not know, other persons, more prominent and appropriate from a cultural and educational aspect, apart from the proposed following comrades: A. S. Kozlovskiy, V. V. Adamov, G. A. Turya and I. S. Kozlovskiy, who could handle the matter related to the Union.

3. Ongoing tasks. Comrade Adamov said that he could not accept to take part in his capacity as Member of the Union only because he belongs to the Belarusian nationality, although he may be useful in the work around the issuing of a dictionary, grammar book, and in other cultural and educational matters. On this issue, comrade Kozlovskiy gave his next conclusion: given that in Belarussia, and in particular in the city of Minsk, cultural forces among the Gypsies are absent, and comrade Adamov magnificently knows the way of life, habits, customs and the language of the Gypsies, he considers it necessary to incorporate comrade Adamov as part of the organisational group as one of the useful people who work among the Gypsies.

Decided:

1. Fully and thoroughly join the Moscow Union of the Gypsies [...] [1] their full sympathy [...] [2] and ask the plenipotentiary comrade Grakhovskiy to intercede with the Belarusian authorities to endorse an organising group to take up to realise this task on the territory of Belarus.

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2. To include in the organisational group the comrades: A. F. Grakhovskiy, A. S. Kozlovskiy, V. V. Adamov, G. A. Turya and I. S. Kozlovskiy.

3. To ask the Belarusian authorities to admit V. V. Adamov in the organising group.

The current initiative group of the above-mentioned Gypsies, asks the Belarussian Soviet authorities for the quick establishment of this group, so that it can proceed faster to the planned implementation of its future work.

Chairman … (Grakhovskiy). Secretary … (Turya).

Notes

1. Illegible text.
2. Illegible text.

Source: GARF, f. P 3316, op. 20, d. 653, l. 20-21.
Prepared for publication by Elena Marushiakova and Vesselin Popov.

12.1.12 *Organising the Gypsy Union in the Ukraine*

г[ород] Глухов, 10 мая 1927 г.

Уважаемый Председатель Совета Национальностей!

Еще с 1924 года я просил СНК об организации Всероссийского Союза Цыган. 1925 годом мне прислал ВСЦ письмо в котором благодарит меня за участие в строительстве самого угнетенного народа цыган; 1926-м году я еду в Москву и получаю полномочие на У[краинскую] ССР. И вот сталкиваюсь со своими врагами в одном из округов (Глуховском) с 1) бывший поручик царской армии Т. Стрелец (Предокрисполкома) и 2) кавалерийский ротмистр Яковлев, который написал отношение ЦКНМ ВЦВК и меня без всякой причины без суда и следствия оттолкнули от своего народа и загнали в подполье. За что?

Я с первых дней революции работал, не был под судом, и пользуюсь правами голоса и пр. В данное время ко мне со всех концов Украины едут цыгане, но я не могу им помочь активно-официально, а больше помогаю подпольно. Всероссийский Союз Цыган также молчит (не смотря на то что они считали меня активным несменным работником ВСЦ).

Я прошу проверить мою работу т. к. я целое дело отослал Пред[седателю] ВСЦ тов[арищу] Таранову. При данных обстоятельствах когда не дают работать среди своей национальности, можно с ума сойти!

Ведь я и брат мой (окончивший Учительский институт в г. Глухове) являемся одними по образованию среди всего 1 000 000 населения цыган в СССР. Желаемо остановить бедствия сего народа. Хочем поставить этот народ в рамках строительства [оседлости], а нам не дают.

Цыгане Украины и части РСФСР знают нас и едут к нам, тогда как мы безсил[ьны].

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Я полагаю, что Всероссийский Союз Цыган Вам скажет обо мне свое мнение! И что с уходом от работы на Украине цыгане остались без пастуха – это факт.

Прошу пересмотреть этот вопрос, если для Вас дорога жизнь несчастных кочевников!

Адрес: г[ород] Глухов, бывш[ему] Уполномоченному ВСЦ по У[краинской] ССР Бизеву Н. Т.

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The town of Glukhov, 10.05.1927.

Honourable Chairman of the Council of Nationalities!

Since 1924 I have asked the SNK about the organisation of the All-Russian Union of Gypsies. In 1925, the VSTs sent me a letter in which it thanked me for participating in the construction of the most oppressed Gypsy nation; In 1926, I go to Moscow and receive proxy on the UkrSSR. And here I come across my enemies in one of the *okrug* [1] (Glukhovsky): 1) the former lieutenant of the tsarist army T. Strelets (Predokrispolkoma) [2]; and 2) the cavalry captain Yakovlev, who wrote an application to the TsKNM VTsVK and for no reason and without trial and investigation I was pushed away from my people and driven underground. For what?

From the first days of the revolution I worked, was never on trial and I have the right to vote, etc. At this time, Gypsies from all over Ukraine come to me, but I cannot help them actively, officially, and I help more in underground. The All-Russian Union of Gypsies is also silent (despite the fact that they considered me an active non-replaceable worker of the VSTs).

I ask you to check my work, since I sent the whole dossier to the Chairman of the VSTs comrade Taranov. Under these circumstances, when you are not allowed to work among your own people, you can lose your mind!

After all, I and my brother (who graduated from the Teaching Institute in the town of Glukhov [3]) are among the most educated people among the 1,000,000 Gypsies [4] inhabiting the USSR. It is desirable to stop the distress of this people. We want to put this people in the framework of construction of sedentarism but we are prevented from doing so.

The Gypsies of Ukraine and parts of the RSFSR know us and travel to us, while we are powerless. I believe that the All-Russian Union of Gypsies will tell its opinion about me! And with the departure from work in Ukraine, the Gypsies were left without a shepherd – this is a fact.

Please reconsider this question if the life of the unfortunate nomads is dear to you!

Address: Glukhov, ex-Plenipotentiary of the VSTs for the UkrSSR Bizev N. T.

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Notes

1. *Okrug* (district) – a unit of administrative-territorial division in the USSR. Introduced in the Ukrainian SSR from 1923 to 1930.
2. The Chairman of the District Executive Committee, the local executive agency.
3. Teacher's institute in Glukhov is a secondary school designed to train teachers for higher elementary schools. It was founded in 1874, and there were three departments – literary-historical, physical-mathematical and natural-geographical. The training was three years.
4. Of course, here the number of Gypsies in the USSR is greatly exaggerated. According to official data of the 1926 All-Union Census, 61,234 Gypsies lived in the USSR as a whole, 13,578 – in the territory of the Ukrainian SSR (Всесоюзная перепись, 1926).

Source: TsDAVO, f. 413, op. 1, spr. 346, ark. 108-109об.
Prepared for publication by Oleksandr Bielikov and Natalia Bielikova.

12.1.13 *The Protest of N. Biz-Labza*

г. Глухов, 10 мая 1927 г.

Высшему Совету Национальностей при ВЦИК СССР.

От: Бывшего уполномоченного по цыганским делам на Украине и бывшего командира партизанских частей, жив[ущего] в г. Глухове Бизь-Лабза Николая Тимофеевича.

Протест

1926 года, в полной и надлежащей мере начал функционировать, с разрешения Совета Народных комиссаров, Всероссийский Союз Цыган. Утвердивший его ЦИК оказал этому союзу материальную поддержку, как в организации, равно также и в рациональном стремлении к объединению самой угнетенной маленькой исторически-странной нации, поголовно безграмотной, самой некультурной, вечно бродячей, бездомной цыганской массы. Кажется только Советская власть может исцелять дух и род самых мелких и ничтожных народностей и что нет более благороднейшей ответственности в работе Советов, как превращение дикого наполовину уголовного, отсталого народа, веками обездоленного, в людей культурных, оседлых, имеющих свою родину, свой язык, свои обычаи, сохранив свой музыкально-поэтический характер, прогрессивно движущихся вперед с паразитической группы к культуре, к искусству, к труду и к социализму. Но я начинаю тревожно смотреть на вышеупомянутый Всероссийский Союз цыган, ибо он, мне кажется, стоит на точке замерзания и прежде чем бросать такое заключение, благоволите выслушать мой протест дальше.

Третий год существует ВСЦ, но не только на территории Украины, но и в РСФСР мы видим старую печальную картину жизни цыганской; также бродят и кочуют цыганские толпы, испытывая голод и холод, не пользуясь никакими правами, попадая под самосуд кулаков, под нападки административных органов, в особенности милиции.

Никаких вестей от ВСЦ цыганам не слышно, а переселение и оседлость ушла в область преданий и в конце концов эта горсть выродков Индии подлежит

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вымиранию в свободной стране, ибо среда и обстоятельства социализма все тесней обхватывают эту паразитическую горсть железным кольцом. Таким образом, в виду культурного роста масс СССР от каковых цыгане по своему социальному и низкому культурному уровню далеко отстали, источник существования приемами до революционного метода существования, кончился и необходим самый серьезный переворот жизни сего народа, необходима самая тяжелая операция – это оседлость не в распыленном, а в объединенном виде для более успешного культурного и трудового строительства среди цыган.

Предоставляя вам право судить о действительном положении сего народа, я как цыган, получивший среднее образование, могу присовокупить следующее: что тяжелее жизни нет ни в одной народности, каковой является жизнь цыгана в селе, здесь он живет как может жить овца среди быков!? Малейшее подозрение в «неблагонадежности», как сейчас же тюрьма, ссылка и проч.

К тому же нельзя отрицать в особенности мне, как командиру партизан на Украине, что роль кулаков – "горлохватов" в селе очень увеличилась, судя по методам сельских собраний, где кулаками просто ставится вопрос о высылке лиц, замеченных в мелких кражах и особая ненависть к цыганскому населению, над которым кулаки через посредство "бедных Иуд" совершают самосуд. И так в результате вечное скитание, вечная тюрьма или ссылка на остр[ова] "Соловки".

Вам известно, что источником существования цыган является барышничество, конечно, горький кусок хлеба, но все же имеет характер спекуляции и пр., а отсюда вывод – обложение, лишение прав голоса, лишение земельного пайка, равно также и участие в общественной деятельности. Когда получаешь газету "Правда" и читаешь, что постановлено выдать 500 руб[лей] семье цыгана с обязательной оседлостью, радуешься, но когда дело до действительности, то тут ни денег, ни земли, никакого совета, ни сведения о цыганском народе и ничего, и – вполне понятно, ибо нет из центра ни литературы, ни инструкций, ни директив.

Когда мне приходилось посещать таборы, то не было слов правды простой толковой беседы на тему оседлости.

На основании сего, от имени цыганских таборов, прошу Высший Совет Национальностей провести все мероприятия в жизнь, как в части переселения, а также содействия переходу на оседлость и протестую на бездействие Всероссийского Союза Цыган, который не оповещает таборы о своем существовании, не рассылает литературы, не дает через Высший Совет национальностей указаний Губисполкомам, УИКам и ОИКам относительно территории переселения, затягивает самое насущное дело – оседлости. Полагаю, что Высший Совет СССР ускорит все, для спасения вымирающей нации и воздействует на ВСЦ.

Проситель: Н. Бизь-Лабза.
г. Глухов, Украина, 25.I.1928 года.

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The town of Glukhov. May 10, 1927
To: The Supreme Council of VTsIK of the USSR
From: Former plenipotentiary of Gypsy Affairs in Ukraine and the former commander of the partisan detachments, inhabitant of the town of Glukhov, Nikolay Timofeevich Biz-Labza

Protest

In 1926, All-Russian Union of Gypsies began to function fully and properly, with the permission of the Council of People's Commissars. The TsIK that approved it provided this union with material support, as in the organisation, as well as in a rational desire to unite the most oppressed little historically strange nation, completely illiterate, the most uncultured, forever wandering, homeless Gypsy mass. It seems only the Soviet government can heal the spirit and kind of the smallest and most insignificant nationalities and that there is no more honourable responsibility in the work of the Soviets, as the transformation of a wild half-criminal, backward people, deprived since centuries, into cultural, sedentary people, having their homeland, their language, their customs, retaining their musical and poetic character progressively moving forward from the parasitic groups to culture, to art, to work and to socialism. But I'm starting to look anxiously at the aforementioned All-Russian Union of Gypsies, as it seems to me to be at the freezing point and before throwing such a conclusion, please listen to my protest further.

For the third year, the VSTs exists, but not only in the territory of Ukraine but also in the RSFSR, we see the old sad picture of the Gypsy life; Gypsy crowds continue to roam and to wander, experiencing hunger and cold, without using any rights, falling under the mob of the *kulaks*, under the attacks of administrative bodies, especially the police.

Gypsies do not receive news from the VSTs, and resettlement and sedentarisation have gone into the field of legends, and in the end, this handful of India's geeks is subject to extinction in a free country, because the environment and circumstances of socialism increasingly enclose this parasitic handful with an iron ring. Thus, in view of the cultural growth of the masses of the USSR, from which the Gypsies are far behind because of their low social and cultural level; they earn their living with methods from pre-revolutionary times which is over; and the most serious upheaval in the life of this people is necessary and the most difficult operation is needed – and namely the sedentarisation but not in a dispersed, but in a united form for a more successful cultural and working construction among Gypsies.

Giving you the right to judge the real situation of this people, I, as a Gypsy who received a secondary education, can add the following: that there is no harder life in any nationality, which is like the life of the Gypsy in a village, where he lives in the way a sheep would live among the bulls!? The slightest suspicion of "unreliability", and immediately follow a prison, exile, and so on.

In addition, it is impossible to deny especially for me, as the commander of the partisans in Ukraine [2], that the role of the kulaks – the "gorlokhvatov" [3] in the village has greatly increased, judging by the methods of village assemblies, where the kulaks simply

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raise the issue of expulsion of people who are seen in petty theft and a special hatred to the Gypsy population, over whom the kulaks through the "poor Judahs" [4] commit vigilantism. And so as a result is the eternal wandering, the eternal prison or deportation to the islands "Solovki" [5].

You know that horse-dealing is a source of Gypsy's living, of course, a bitter piece of bread, but still has the character of profiteering, etc., and hence the conclusion – taxation, deprivation of voting rights, deprivation of land rations, as well as of participation in social activities. When you get the newspaper *Pravda* [Truth] and read that it was decided to allocate 500 rubles to Gypsy family, who is obliged to settle, you are happy; but when it comes to reality, there is no money, no land, no advice, no information about the Gypsy people and nothing, and it is quite understandable, because there is no literature, no instructions, no directives from the centre.

When I had to attend camps, there were no truth words for a simple sensible conversation on the topic of sedentarisation.

On the basis of this, on behalf of the Gypsy camps, I ask the Supreme Soviet of Nationalities to carry out all the activities, both in terms of resettlement, as well as in facilitating the transition to sedentarisation, and I am protesting against the indolence of the All-Russian Union of Gypsies, which does not notify camps about its existence, does not distribute the literature, does not give instructions through the Supreme Council of Nationalities to the Gubispolkoms, UIKs [6] and OIKs [7] about the resettlement territory and cause delays of the most pressing matter, namely sedentarisation. I believe that the Supreme Soviet of the USSR will accelerate everything in order to save an endangered nation and influences the VSTs.

Petitioner: N. Biz-Labza.
The town of Glukhov, Ukraine, 25.01.1928.

Notes

1. In 1919-1920, in the course of the armed struggle between the Red Army, the White Guards, the troops of the Entente and the Ukrainian Directory on the territory of Ukraine, numerous partisan units, detachments appeared and acted.
2. *Gorlokhvat* – literally throat grabber, Ukrainian designation of people who are rudely seeking something, strive to achieve greater benefits for themselves, at others people's expense.
3. This is a reference to the poor villagers, who were in economic dependence from kulaks. At rural gatherings, during which decisions were made by a majority vote, the corrupted pauperised villagers supported decisions beneficial for well-off peasants.
4. Solovki – at that time the largest labour camp in USSR, which was located on the territory of the Solovetsky Islands in the White Sea, to which "unreliable" Soviet citizens were exiled in the 1920s-1930s.
5. The County (*uezd*) Executive Committee (1918-1923).
6. The District (*okrug*) Executive Committee. In 1923, as a result of administrative reform, the *uezds* and *volosts* were abolished, instead of which *okrugs* were introduced.

Source: TsDAVO, f. 413, op. 2, spr. 9, ark. 38-40.
Prepared for publication by Oleksandr Bielikov and Natalia Bielikova.

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Comments

The author of the two documents from Ukraine is Nikolay Timofeevich Bizev (pseudonym Biz-Labza). Little is known about him. He originated from a settled Roma family, lived in the town of Glukhov (Ukraine), received secondary education. Throughout the turbulent 1918 – 1920, he led one of the partisan detachments. From 1919 he was a member of the Communist Party (Bolsheviks). In 1920 Biz-Labza was excluded from the Party during the process of preregistration of Party members (TsDAVO, f. 413, op. 1, spr. 4, ark. 111), in the so-called *Чистка партийных рядов* (Purge of the ranks of the Communist Party) when reviews of members of the Communist Party were conducted by their fellows Party members and the security organs to get rid of elements of non-proletarian origin and other undesirables.

After Biz-Labza's expulsion from the Party, his occupation until 1926 was of a horse-dealer. In June 1926, N. T. Bizev arrived in Kharkiv with the certificate of a plenipotentiary of VSTs for Ukraine. There he made a report about the work of VSTs at the TsKNM VUTsVK. At his own request, he was sent to Konotop, Nezhinsky, and Glukhovsky districts with an aim to gather data about the Gypsy population there and prepared several memoranda based on the information collected. However, as early as September 30, 1926, with the decision of the TsKNM he was suspended from work with Gypsies in connection with allegations of trading with counterfeited money.

During 1926-1928 N. Bizev tried to fight for justice, defending his good name and the right to work with the Gypsy population – he wrote letters to the VSTs, GPU, TsIK of UkrSSR and USSR, to the Secretary of the TsK KP(b)U Lazar Kaganovich, to the chair of VUTsIK Grigoriy Petrovski and others. The charges against Bizev were, most likely, fabricated, because Bizev was not subjected to any criminal prosecution, and his name constantly appeared at the meetings of the TsKNM, which dealt with Gypsy issues. The basis of the planned measures to improve the situation with the Gypsies in the Ukrainian SSR was Bizev's proposal (Бєлікова & Бєліков, 2018, pp. 73-83).

The protest of 25.01.1928 was directed against the All-Russian Union of Gypsies, containing sharp criticism and accusations of inaction with belief that the central organs of the Soviet government will assist the transition of nomadic Gypsies to settled life and thereby finally will resolve the Gypsy issue.

Oleksandr Bielikov and Natalia Bielikova

12.1.14 *The First Memorandum*

[Бланк] Р.С.Ф.С.Р. Всероссийский Союз Цыган. 21 Декаб[ря] 1927 г. No. 863.
[Секретарю Центрального Исполнительного комитета тов. Енукидзе].
В Совет Национальностей ЦИК СССР.

[Докладная записка]

25-го Июля 1925 года НКВД был утвержден Всероссийский Союз Цыган, положивший начало борьбы за новую культуру среди нашего бродячего темного племени.

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Много трудов было положено инициаторами этого Союза на его организацию. Беспрерывная агитация среди Цыган, оформление самого устава и разная подготовительная работа, тянулась около трех лет.

Основным и самым обидным для нас фактором, тормозящим его организацию было недоверие к нам Советских и др[угих] органов, которые относились с иронией и недоверием к нашим начинаниям.

Мы конечно знали, что такой взгляд является наследством буржуазного строя, который приучил население смотреть на цыган, как на отпетых бродяг, от которых ничего нельзя ожидать хорошего, кроме воровства, нищенства и всяких других пороков.

Правда, цыгане своим образом жизни, заслужили такое отношение к себе, но не смотря в корень этого, невольно поднимается вопрос: "а можно ли обвинять цыган в том, что они теперь ведут такой образ жизни".

Цыганская народность на ряду с другими национальностями так-же была гонимая и преследуемая буржуазией. Царские законы являются достоверными документами, которые раскрывают жестокую истину о тяжелом положении цыган в царской России. Как "заботилось" царское правительство об отсталых и неграмотных русских цыган, то об этом свидетельствуют царские законы. [...]

О тяжелом положении цыганской народности при царизме можно написать очень много.

Октябрьская революция, раскрепостившая отсталые народности сказала, что только народ сам может устраивать и улучшать свою жизнь.

Для устройства и улучшения жизни цыган был организован Всероссийский Союз Цыган.

Правление его состоит из простых цыган, а не из царских генералов, которые решали насущные вопросы цыганской народности битьем и доносами полиции.

Как живут цыгане сейчас. Голод, грязь, нищета, холод постоянные спутники их жизни. Влекомые силой вековной привычки, бродят они с места на место, разными путями добывая себе на пропитание. Женщины с кучами грудных ребят, старики, молодежь при переездах без медицинской помощи являются невольными разсадниками разных заболеваний. Так например, школьное обследование показало, что среди детей цыган имеется большой процент заболеваемости туберкулезом, сифилисом и пороком сердца. Все это приводит к вымиранию и вырождению нашей национальности.

Но может-ли Советская Власть допустить такое безплодное гибельное существование почти полумиллионного племени, которое в силу своей неграмотности, замкнутости и темноты, не может само осознать необходимость перемены своего быта.

Кроме вышеизложенных причин, сохранение целой народности от вымирания, есть еще факт говорящий за необходимость неотложной работы среди цыган. Это несоответствие быта Цыган, с современными общественными принципами, где

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во главе стоит лозунг: “Кто не работает тот не ест”, и где право гражданина имеет только трудящийся человек. […]

Ныне существующий Всероссийский Союз Цыган [утвержденный был благодаря Вашей и т. Тэр-Ваганяна, поддержке], имеет цель объединить разбросанных по всему Союзу Цыган, поднять их культурный уровень (среди них 99% неграмотных – Ленин, Собр[ание] сочинений, Том 19), перевод на оседлый образ жизни и привлеч к сельско-хозяйственному труду.

За два года своего существования Союз стал известен не только цыганам, живущим в СССР, но и за границей, так например Союзом получен привет от польских, сербских и болгарских цыган. В одной из болгарских газет была помещена статья о нашем Союзе, в которой было отмечено, что Советская Власть на деле проводит свою национальную политику и что даже такой народ как цыгане имеют свой национальной Союз.

Сейчас каждый цыган чувствует себя членом определенной организации. Он начинает быть активным, он гордится своей книжкой члена Союза и морально чувствует себя равноправным гражданином Советской страны.

Вариант 1:
Приведя ряд тяжелых условий, Всероссийский Союз Цыган не в состоянии без поддержки авторитетных органов встать на твердый путь осуществления Союзом основных задач, как перевод Цыган на оседлость, для занятия сельским хозяйством, приобщение цыган-ремесленников и кустарей к организованному производству и политико-просветительная работа среди них.

Открытие цыганских школ, клубов, ликбезов, издания агитационной литературы для цыганской массы осуществляются с большими трудностями, так как недостаток отпускаемых средств не дает развернуть культурную обработку да и сами заинтересованные учреждения решают этот вопрос между прочим, не вникая с должным вниманием на этот первостепенный вопрос.

Второй вопрос неразрешимый Союзом без участия и содействия Советских учреждений – это посылка через Биржу Труда или создание артелей из беднейшего цыганского населения, которое с давных пор занимается кустарничеством, как медники, жестянники и другие ремесленники.

Но главным третьим вопросом является перевод цыган на землю, дабы дать возможность большинству цыган заняться сельским хозяйством, а не жить нищенским существованием.

Многие цыгане изъявили большое желание перехода на сельское хозяйство. В Союзе с каждым днем получается масса заявлений, приезжают из далеких районов СССР ходоки и умоляют оказать содействие в получении земли.

Всероссийский Союз Цыган провел большую работу путем агитации и разъяснений о переходе к общественному труду, но не смотря на постановление ЦИК и Совнаркома от 1 Октября 1926 года о содействии к переходу кочующих цыган на оседлость и на оделение их землей, однако как на местах, так и в центре указанное

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постановление во внимание не принимается, а потому многие цыгане кои обращались на местах за землею были лишены получения таковой, в результате – вся проводимая Союзом работа идет в пустую, а потому – при ЦИК СССР поставить на ближайшее заседание доклад о работе среди цыган с вызовом на такое представителя – Союза.

Вариант 2:
[…] Тов[арищ] Енукидзе, просим Вас обратить внимание соответствующих органов на неправильный шаг НЦ ЦК ВКП(б).

Союз – первую и единственную цыганскую организацию, пользующуюся громадным авторитетом среди цыган, закрывать нельзя, так как […] это будет большим ударом для цыган, начинающих понимать и ценить свою организацию и за его флагом строить свою новую жизнь. […]

Наверняка можно сказать, что с закрытием Союза дело возрождения цыган можно считать конченным, по крайней мере на несколько лет. Сейчас каждый цыган чувствует себя членом определенной организации. Он начинает быть активным, он гордится своей книжкой и морально чувствует себя полным гражданином Советской страны. С закрытием Союза, все это разом теряется и цыган остается выброшенным за борт жизни, всеми презираемым, бездомным бродягой. Комиссия – это уже не Союз. Цыган не признает никаких Комиссий, он любит, ценит только свое цыганское и совету только своего Союза он может последовать.

Для примера можно привести несколько фактов. Когда Губисполком и ЦСИ проводили учет цыганского населения, то цыгане заслышав о регистрации, форменным образом бежали в леса, всячески скрывая свою национальность. Результат учета плачевный. Союзом же, через своих уполномоченных, учет цыганского населения ведется успешно, и цыгане, заслышав о существований уполномоченного со штампом Союза, приходили сами на регистрацию. НКЗ были разосланы анкеты, учитывающие цыган, желающих перейти на оседлость. Цыгане боялись заполнять их и только лишь с помощью Союза эту работу удается выполнять. Таких фактов можно привести множество.

За свое существование Союзом, принимая во внимания тяжелые условия работы, было все таки проделано многое. […] Можно было бы сделать еще больше, если бы Советские и Партийные учреждения, к каким нам в процессе работы приходилось обращаться, относились посерьезней и внимательней к нашим запросам, а не с ихнеми усмешечками и недоверием, какими они нас оделяли.

На основания недоверия к нам, в Союз приклеплялись т.т., которые считали своей обязанностью не помогать нам в нашей работе, почувствовать себя хозяевами в нашем учреждении и кричать на нас как на прислугу. (Такие факты были с прикрепленным от Отд[ела] Нац[иональностей] ВЦИК). Не учтя наших особенностей они своим отношением к нам создали обидную для нас атмосферу и вносили вражду между нами и органами Правления. И конечно, работа этих прикрепленных, для которых работа в нашем Союзе являлась лишней нагрузкой и которым

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было наплевать на интересы Союза, приносила несомненный вред. А когда мы пробовали доказывать неправильность их работы в нашем Союзе они “обиженные” тем, что какие-то цыгане могут еще возражать ставят перед Партийными организациями вопрос о закрытии нашего Союза.

Мы со своей стороны считаем такое отношение к Союзу губительным и еще раз говорим, что только нам, наш Цыганский Союз дорог и только через свой Союз мы сможем сделать Цыган такими же гражданами, какими есть остальные национальности.

И лишать нас, цыган, этого права, строить благополучие своего темного, отсталого племени, которое засыпает Союз письмами с просьбой помочь им выбраться из полуголодного, полускотского существования, никто в Советской стране не может.

Наоборот, нам должны помочь в этой работе и широко пойти навстречу.

Просим Вас, тов. Енукидзе, позаботиться о нашем Союзе, не допустить его закрытия, а раз навсегда заставить соответствующие организации серьезно поставить вопрос о создании условий возможности выполнения нашей работы, приобщения цыган к Советской общественности.

Председатель Союза … [подпись] (Таранов).
Секретарь … [подпись] (И. Лебедев).

∵

[Letterhead] RSFSR. All Russian Union of Gypsies. 21 Decembre 1927. No. 863.
In the Soviet of Nationalities at VTsIK [1].
[To the Secretary of Secretary of Central Executive Committee com. Enukidze] [2].

The Memorandum

On 25 July 1925, the NKVD endorsed the All-Russian Union of Gypsies, which gave the beginning of the struggle for a new culture among our wandering dark tribe.

A lot of work has been put in by the initiators of this Union for its organisation. The continuous agitation among the Gypsies [3], the formalisation of the Statute itself and the diverse preparatory work lasted for about three years.

The main and most insulting factor for us, harassing the organisation, was the mistrust of the Soviet authorities and other institutions who treated us with irony and distrust of our endeavours.

We, of course, knew that such a view is an inheritance of the bourgeois society that has led the population to regard the Gypsies as irremediable vagrants of whom nothing good can be expected except stealing, begging, and all other vices.

Indeed, the Gypsies with their way of life have deserved such an attitude towards themselves, but without looking at the root of this attitude, the question arises unwittingly: “Can the Gypsies be accused of having such a lifestyle”.

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The Gypsy nationality, alongside other nationalities, has also been chastised and persecuted by the bourgeoisie. Tsarist laws appear to be credible documents that reveal the cruel truth about the plight of the Gypsies in Tsarist Russia. How did the Tsarist Government "care for" the backward and illiterate Russian Gypsies, the Tsarist laws testify this? […]

There is too much to write about the plight of the Gypsy nation during the Tsarism.

The October Revolution, which has liberated the backward nationalities, has said that only a people themselves can accommodate and improve their lives.

For the purpose of accommodating and improving the lives of the Gypsies, the All-Russian Union of Gypsies was organised.

The Union's Directorate consists of ordinary Gypsies, not royal generals, who have solved vital questions about the Gypsy nationality through beating and police reports.

How do the Gypsies live now? Hunger, dirt, poverty and cold are constant companions in their lives. Driven by the power of the centuries-old habit, they are wandering from place to place, in various ways they earn their living. Women with several young children, old men, youth – all without medical assistance while in their travels, become unwillingly breeding grounds of various diseases. For example, a medical screening in the schools has shown that among Gypsy children there is a great percentage of tuberculosis, syphilis and valvular heart disease [4]. All this leads to the extinction and the degeneration of our nationality.

But could the Soviet authority allow such fruitless, ruinous existence of a tribe amounting to almost half a million which, due to its illiteracy, isolation and lack of education, cannot realise by itself the need for change in its lifestyle?

Apart from the above-mentioned reasons related to the need to preserve the entire nationality from extinction, there is another fact that speaks about the need for urgent work among the Gypsies. This is the incompatibility of the lifestyle of the Gypsies and the contemporary societal principles that are headed by the slogan "Whoever does not work should not eat", and where the right to be a citizen can only be enjoyed by the working man.

Today's All-Russian Union of Gypsies, endorsed thanks to yours' and Comrade Ter-Vaganyan's [5] support [6], aims to unite the Gypsies who are spread throughout the whole Soviet Union, to elevate their cultural level (99% of them are illiterate – Lenin, Collected Works, Volume 19) [7], to lead them to a sedentary lifestyle and to attract them to agrarian labour.

For two years of its existence, the Gypsy Union has become renowned not only among Gypsies who live in the USSR but also beyond the Soviet borders; for example, the Union has received greetings from Polish, Serbian and Bulgarian Gypsies. In one of the Bulgarian newspapers, there is an article about our Union which noted that the Soviet Authority, in reality, conducts its national policy and that even such a nation, such as that of the Gypsies, have their own national union.

Now each Gypsy feels a member of a particular organisation. He becomes active, proud of their membership cards of the Union and morally they feel as equal citizens of the Soviet country.

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Version 1 [8]:
Going through a number of harsh conditions, it becomes clear that the All-Russian Union of Gypsies is not in a position, without the support of authorities, to stand firmly on the Union's path towards implementing its main tasks, such as sedentarising the Gypsies, so that they work in agriculture and the integration of Gypsy craftsmen and owners of small workshops into an organised production and the conducting of political-educational work among them.

The opening of Gypsy schools, clubs, likbezs (courses for abolishment of illiteracy), the publication of propaganda literature for Gypsy masses, is very difficult to realise as the shortage of available funds does not allow for the expanding of cultural work; also the other concerned institutions solve that issue as a last one among other things without paying the necessary attention for this paramount issue.

The second question, inextricable for the Gypsy Union, without the involvement and the assistance of the Soviet institutions – dispatching through the labour market or the creation of artels among the poorest Gypsy population, which has long been involved in small-scale production, such as coppersmiths, tinsmiths and other craftsmen.

But the main, third, question is the sedentarisation of Gypsies in order to enable great part of the Gypsies to engage in agriculture and not to live in poverty.

Many Gypsies have expressed great desires to transition to agriculture. In the Union of the Gypsies every day a number of claims are received, arriving *khodoks* [9] from distant areas of the USSR which ask for assistance in the process of obtaining land.

The All-Russian Union of Gypsies has done a great deal of work promoting and clarifying the transition to work that is useful for the society in spite of the decree of TsIK and the Sovnarkom of October 1, 1926 for the assistance of the transition of nomadic Gypsies towards their sedentarisation and of providing land for them; however, both on the local level and in the centre, the mentioned decree is not taken into consideration and that is why there are so many Gypsies who apply for land who have been deprived from receiving it and, as a result, all the work done by the Union has been in vain; and that is why – at the nearest meeting of TsIK of the USSR a report on the work with the Gypsies should be presented by inviting to this meeting a representative of the Union of Gypsies.

Version 2:
Comrade Yenukidze, we ask you to draw the attention of the relevant authorities to the wrong step of the NTs of Central Committee of the VKP(b) [10].

The Union is the first and only Gypsy organisation that enjoys enormous prestige among the Gypsies, it is impossible to close it down, because […] it will be a big blow for the Gypsies who begin to understand and value their organisation and build their new life behind its flag. […].

Surely we can say that with the closure of the Union, the cause for the revival of the Gypsies can be considered over for at least a few years. Now every Gypsy feels himself a member of a certain organisation. He begins to be active, he is proud of his membership card and morally feels himself a complete citizen of the Soviet country. With the

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closure of the Union, all this is at once lost and the Gypsies remain thrown overboard life, despised by all, a homeless tramp. The Commission is no longer the Union. The Gypsy does not recognise any Commission, they love, value only their own Gypsyness and he can follow only the advice of his Union.

For example, a few facts can be drawn from this. When the Provincial Executive Committee and the Central Statistical Institute conducted a registration of the Gypsy population, then the Gypsies, having heard about the registration, uniformly fled to the forests, hiding their nationality in every way. The census result is deplorable. The Union, through its representatives, carried out the registration of the Gypsy population successfully, and the Gypsies, having heard about the existence of the authorised representative with the stamp of the Union, came to the registration themselves. NKZ questionnaires were sent out for taking into account the Gypsies, who wish to switch to a settled way of life. The Gypsies were afraid to fill them, and only with the help of the Union did they manage to carry out this work. There are numerous such facts that can be pointed to.

For its existence, the Union, taking into account the difficult working conditions, still did a lot. […] We could have done even more if the Soviet and Party institutions, which we had to turn to during our work, were more serious and attentive to our requests, and not with their grins and distrust, which we were allotted. On the grounds of distrust towards us, comrades were attached to the Union [11], who considered it their duty not to help us in our work, to feel like masters in our institution they started screaming at us as they would at servants. (Such facts appeared with the attached person to the Department of Nationalities of the All-Russian Central Executive Committee). Not taking into account our characteristics, they created an offensive atmosphere with their attitude towards us and brought enmity between us and our Board. And of course, the work of these pinned ones, for whom work in our Union was an extra burden and which spit on the interest of the Union, brought undoubted harm. And when we tried to prove the incorrectness of their work in our Union, they were "offended" by the fact that some Gypsies could still object and raise in front of the Party organisations the question of closing our Union.

For our part, we consider such an attitude to the Union destructive and say once again that only to us, our Gypsy Union is dear and only through our Union can we make Gypsies citizens the same as other nationalities are.

And nobody in the Soviet country can deprive us, Gypsies, of this right, to build the well-being of our dark, backward tribe, which is bombarding the Union with letters asking us to help them get out of our half-starved, half-animal existence.

On the contrary, we should be helped in this work and broadly supported.

We ask you, comrade Enukidze, to take care of our Union, to prevent its closure, and once for all to force the relevant organisations to seriously raise the question of creating the conditions for the possibility of carrying out our work, to integrate the Gypsies to the Soviet society.

Chairman of the Union … [signature] (Taranov).
Secretary … [signature] (I. Lebedev).

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Notes

1. There are two versions with multiple copies of this memorandum preserved in the archives, that were sent to different addresses, e.g. to the Secretary of TsIK A. Enukidze (GARF, f. P 393, op. 43A, d. 1763; f. P 3316, op. 20, d. 653; f. P 3316, op. 20, d. 698, etc.), and to the Soviet of Nationalities at VTsIK (the published text here).
2. Avel S. Enukidze (1877-1937) was a famous communist activist and Soviet statesman, a close associate of Joseph V. Stalin, from 1922 to 1935 he was secretary of the TsIK USSR.
3. It is interesting to note that here and repeatedly in other places as well, the word 'Gypsies' is written in a capital-case, which is unusual for the Russian language.
4. The medical screening report to which the authors of the memorandum are referring is not known, these results raise doubts in some respects, e.g. the reported widespread of syphilis among Gypsy children is difficult to explain given the closed lifestyle of the Gypsy community at the time.
5. Vagarshak A. Ter-Vaganyan (1893-1936) was a well-known party activist, at that time he was a member of the Central Executive Committee.
6. This passage is missing from the version published here but is present in all others.
7. The authors of the memorandum wanted to emphasise and substantiate the importance of the Gypsy issue by using the authority of Vladimir Ilyich Lenin, but the quote is manipulative. The exact quote is quite different from the text: it is mentioning in an article about the national composition of students in the St Petersburg School District, where statistics are given about their mother tongue. Among all listed languages spoken is includes also Gypsy language, which is native only for 4 students (Ленин, 1925, p. 74).
8. Two versions of this Memorandum have been preserved, both with original signatures, and it is not possible to determine which of the two versions was sent as intended.
9. The term 'khodok' (ходок) is a legacy of the Russian Empire and is used also in the early USSR; at that time it designated elected representatives of a rural community who were delegated to visit the authorities and to petition for a decision, for clarification, etc.
10. It is unclear what the abbreviation NTs (НЦ) signifies.
11. These are the delegates of the ON VTsIK who were attached to the VSTs to oversee its activities.

Sources: GARF, f. P 3316, op. 19, d. 588, l. 72-74; f. P 393, op. 43 A, d. 1763.
Prepared for publication by Elena Marushiakova and Vesselin Popov.

12.1.15 *The Second Memorandum*

[Бланк]: РСФСР. Всесоюзный Союз Цыган. 18 февраля 1928 г.
Москва, Гостинный двор, Пом[ещение] 54.

В Совет Народных Комиссаров РСФСР.
Копии: 1) Секретариат ВКП(б) – тов. Сталину; 2) ВЦСПС – тов. Томскому; 3) ЦИК СССР – тов. Калинину, тов. Енукидзе; 4) Совет Национальностей; 5) Наркомпрос – тов. Луначарский; 6) Редакции "Правда" и "Известия ВЦИК".

Докладная записка

I. Три года мытарства, насмешек, издевательств, недоверия, невнимания, полупрезрительного отбрасывания, пока, благодаря тов[арищу] Енукидзе, удалось получить первый устав Всесоюзного Союза Цыган.

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Устав дан исключительно в целях культурно-просветительных. Но средств к этому не было отпущено, точно так же, как и из НЕДОВЕРИЯ к цыганам в устав не были включены пути и источники к изысканию и получению средств, необходимых для каких бы то не было целей.

II. Еще ЦЕЛЫЙ ГОД прошел в ходатайствах об изменении устава в смысле получения прав на изыскание средств к существованию самого Союза и для осуществления целей Союза. Для этого пришлось входить дважды в Малый Совнарком. В июле 1925 года был утвержден первый устав, в июле 1926 года был утвержден НКВД второй трафаретный устав. Но Малым Совнаркомом было предписано НКВД утвердить устав еще в октябре 1925 г., утверждение же последовало в июле 1926 года.

III. Уставы "ТАК БЫСТРО" проходили исключительно потому, что мы, цыгане, неотступно не давали покоя своими приставаниями и просьбами – ускорить утверждение. И так, устав утвержден по нашим настояниям и объяснениям, при нашем активном участии.

IV. БЕЗ НАШИХ ОБЪЯСНЕНИЙ, БЕЗ НАШЕГО УЧАСТИЯ, БЕЗ НАШЕГО ВЕДОМА, БЕЗ ПРОВЕРКИ НАШИХ ДЕЛ, БЕЗ ОЗНАКОМЛЕНИЯ С НАШИМ НАСТОЯЩИМ ПОЛОЖЕНИЕМ, ДАЖЕ БЕЗ ПРОСТОГО ЛЮБОПЫТСТВА: "ЧТО МЫ ДЕЛАЕМ И ЧТО ДУМАЕМ ДЕЛАТЬ" – НКВД 13-го февраля 1928 года постановил "ЛИКВИДИРОВАТЬ СОЮЗ ЦЫГАН, ПРОЖИВАЮЩИХ НА ТЕРРИТОРИЯХ РСФСР".

V. Через два дня, 15-го февраля, Административный Отдел НКВД, за подписью Клокотина "СРОЧНО" предписывает "НЕ ПОЗДНЕЕ" 21-го февраля выделить представителя цыган в Комиссию по ЛИКВИДАЦИИ ДЕЛ СОЮЗА ЦЫГАН; мало этого уже в "Красной Газете" было объявлено о ликвидации ВСЦ.

VI. Загадочная картина: ГДЕ и КТО был ДОКЛАДЧИКОМ ПО ЛИКВИДАЦИИ, когда НИКТО И НОСА НЕ ПОКАЗАЛ в Союзе цыган. Не из цыган ли гадальщиков на бобах.

VII. СВОЕВРЕМЕННОЕ ВНИМАНИЕ И УЧАСТЛИВОСТЬ К ДЕЛАМ СОЮЗА: "Создать Ликвидационную Комиссию с участием Наркомпроса и Отдела Национальностей. УРА, нас хотя и ликвидируя, НКВД хочет просвещать. Лучше поздно, чем никогда. (Когда мы бились над открытием цыганских школ и обивали пороги – представителя от Наркомпроса с нами не было). ДЛЯ ЦЫГАН ОН НУЖЕН ТОЛЬКО ДЛЯ ЛИКВИДАЦИИ. Наконец, браво, и цыган признали НАЦИОНАЛЬНОСТЬЮ.

VIII. Хороня Союз, хотя о покойниках принято или говорить хорошо, или ничего не говорить, НКВД все же попрекнул нас своими "благодеяниями".

1) "Исключительным вниманием" к Союзу. (Очевидно намек на ликвидацию, потому что к нашей работе внимание было исключено; может быть, впрочем, оно и потому и называется "исключительным".

2) "Содействием" в деле организации Союза (смотреть выше – темпы "утверждения" и "ликвидация" Союза).

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3) Попрекнули и “материальной помощью” (правда, не от ведомства НКВД). На все нужды цыганского народа 1,5 и 4 тысячи рублей по строго определенным статьям: сначала на трех платных сотрудников, всем вместе 285 рублей в месяц и по 30 рублей в месяц на остальные расходы, допуская их только, как канцелярские и разъездные; а затем, на двух платных сотрудников (сократив третьего), и те же 30 рублей в месяц, “БЕЗ СОКРАЩЕНИЯ”. Выдали не на руки, где Союзу Цыган такие большие деньги: не даром цыган мечтал – если бы я был царем, то украл бы сто рублей и удрал бы. Оплачивали работников и цыганскую канцелярию, только по сентябрь, а там прекращали выдачу – цыгане привыкли к подножному корму, а постоянно писать им не пристало.

4) Попрекнули, в целях изыскания средств, “ПРЕДСТАВЛЕНИЕМ ПРАВА ОРГАНИЗАЦИИ СЕЛЬСКО-ХОЗЯЙСТВЕННЫХ АРТЕЛЕЙ” (а земля пока не отведена), “КОММУН” (а за помещение цыгане должны платить, даже за жилплощадь по 9 рублей квадратная сажень, [потому что] “СВОБОДНАЯ ПРОФЕССИЯ”), [и] “ПРОИЗВОДСТВЕННЫХ МАСТЕРСКИХ” (цыганский капитал – нагота, подведенные от голода животы, неграмотность):

а) Эти льготы даны, кстати, не ведомством упрекающим.

б) Союз о них просил и их ценят.

Но нужно же когда нибудь подумать и “головой” и понять сложность и трудность использования и проведения в жизни этих льгот – “без копейки средств, без кредитов, в среде цыган, исторически не имеющих навыка в этих отраслях”.

И все же Союз, в течение столь недолгого времени создал очень многое, с чем следовало познакомиться раньше, чем ликвидировать Союз.

XI. Кроме “БЛАГОДЕЯНИЙ” в постановлении указаны и “ПРЕСТУПЛЕНИЯ СОЮЗА”:

1. Первое и главное: (НЕЛЬЗЯ НЕ ПРОЦИТИРОВАТЬ ЭТОГО ШЕДЕВРА): “СОЮЗ ЦЫГАН НЕ ТОЛЬКО НЕ СМОГ ПРИНЯТЬ КАКИЕ ЛИБО КОНКРЕТНЫЕ МЕРЫ В БОРЬБЕ С КОНСЕРВАТИВНЫМИ УКЛАДАМИ ЖИЗНИ ЦЫГАН (гаданием, попрошайничеством, азартными играми, пьянством, и прочими особенностями цыганского населения), ЧТО СОСТАВЛЯЛО ОСНОВНУЮ ЗАДАЧУ СОЮЗА.”.

а) ХОРОШЕНЬКИЙ “КОНСЕРВАТИВНЫЙ” УКЛАД и удивительно “ГЛУБОКОЕ” понимание КОНСЕРВАТИЗМА. До великолепия “ГОРДО” звучит “ЦЫГАН-КОНСЕРВАТОР”, не дать не взять “английские лорды”.

б) Тысячелетием гонений, нищеты и др. создались эти пороки и социальные болезни. А мы, Союз цыган, технически “ДВА ПЛАТНЫХ РАБОТНИКА” в один год – “не смогли принять конкретных мер” и болезни эти, к нашему Союза стыду, очевидно, по нашей “нерадивости” и доныне существуют.

2. “Союз оказался не в состоянии осуществить что либо в деле организации цыганских масс, привлечению их к участие в работе Союза”.

а) По всей необъятной территории СССР рассеяны кочующие цыганские массы. (Даже Центральное Статистическое Управление при могуществе средств и аппарата, не может их уловить). НА 30 РУБЛЕЙ КАНЦЕЛЯРСКИХ И РАЗЪЕЗДНЫХ В

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МЕСЯЦ, СОЮЗ, К УЖАСУ И ВОЗМУЩЕНИЮ СОСТАВИТЕЛЕЙ УКАЗА НЕ УЛОВИЛ ЦЫГАНСКИХ МАСС.

б) "Привлечь их к работе Союза": "БЕЗГРАМОТНЫХ" – к руководству культурно-просветительной работой", НИЩИХ, ГОЛОДНЫХ к сложному, бесплатному, ответственному труду по организации осуществления всех разнообразных и сложных задач Союза. МАЛО НАПИСАТЬ – НУЖНО, ТОВАРИЩИ, ПОНИМАТЬ СМЫСЛ СЛОВ, КОТОРЫЕ ОНИ ПИШУТ.

3. Преступление – не созыв Всероссийского съезда цыган (§§ 10,11, 12 и 19 устава), в течение первого года.

а) Средства на созыв и проведение Всероссийского Съезда.

б) Понимают ли они, что значит подготовить первый Всероссийский Съезд цыган, чтобы они приехали, со строго определенными мандатами, наказами, пожеланиями цыганских масс с мест и пр.

в) Понимают ли они всю сложность этой работы, этой подготовки, чтобы был настоящий Всероссийский съезд – выразитель воли и пожеланий всей народности, а не формальность и не фикция.

г) Знают ли они, что эту подготовку должны вести исключительно одни цыгане, так как цыганам все не верят, но и цыгане в массе, в свою очередь, тоже кроме цыган никому не верят.

д) Знают ли они, что эта подготовка должна вестись на цыганском языке. И, что за тысячелетия цыганский алфавит не был создан. И, что мы его теперь у них под носом создали.

е) Понимают ли они, что значит создать алфавит. Знают ли они, что академия наук, лучшими научными, превосходно, сравнительно оплачиваемыми силами, в течении долгого времени, создают и вырабатывают новые алфавиты. А мы голодные, нищие, учившиеся на медные гроши – ценной нашей собственной крови, пота и бессонных ночей, без академии, без денег, без поддержки за это время создали алфавит.

ж) Знают ли они, что впервые в истории и в мире, только у нас, в созданных нами Союзом, школах, повторяем ВПЕРВЫЕ, преподается цыганский язык. И они смеют говорить о нашем консерватизме, о нашей нежизненности ...

Пришли бы они к нам, когда мы мерзли в неотопленном помещении, но горели достижениями, каких им может быть никогда не иметь: радовались новой библиографической справке о цыганах и т.д., приходили в восторг, когда являлась новая цыганка учиться на вязальной машине, а новая цыганская, голодная семья направляла ребенка учиться в нашу школу.

А поинтересовались ли они познакомиться с нашей программой, выработанной и прорабатываемой нами и нашими сотрудниками, идейно и бескорыстно, сочувствующими обездоленным цыганским массам.

Постарались ли они узнать – сколько на это и времени и напряженного труда и мысли потрачено и вложено.

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Да, что говорить, ликвидаторы, не ушедшие в своем понимании цыганского вопроса и цыган от Елизаветы, дочери Петра Первого (указом запретившей цыганам на 50 верст подходить к столице). Откуда они явились, ходячие анахронизмы, когда отовсюду рядом с ними раздаются великие торжественные, бодрые жизненные слова, например постановление ЦИК ССР от 20-го Октября 1927 года:

ВМЕСТЕ С ТЕМ, ПОДТВЕРЖДАЯ ПРОВОЗГЛАШЕНИЕ ОКТЯБРЬСКОЙ РЕВОЛЮЦИЕЙ, ПРАВО КАЖДОГО НАРОДА НА САМОСТОЯТЕЛЬНОЕ, КУЛЬТУРНОЕ, НАЦИОНАЛЬНОЕ РАЗВИТИЕ, НАШЕДШЕЕ СВОЕ ВЫРАЖЕНИЕ В КОНСТИТУЦИИ СОЮЗА ССР, ЦЕНТРАЛЬНЫЙ ИСПОЛНИТЕЛЬНЫЙ КОМИТЕТ СОЮЗА ССР ЗАЯВЛЯЕТ, ЧТО И ВПРЕДЬ ДЕЛО РАЗВИТИЯ НАЦИОНАЛЬНОЙ КУЛЬТУРЫ ВСЕХ НАРОДОВ БУДЕТ ОБЕСПЕЧЕНО ВСЕЙ МОЩЬЮ И ПОДДЕРЖКОЙ СОЮЗА ССР.

... в соответствии со всем изложенным Центральный исполнительный комитет Союза ССР постановляет:

3. ПРОДОЛЖАТЬ С НЕОСЛАБЕВАЮЩЕЙ ЭНЕРГИЕЙ РАБОТУ ПО ДАЛЬНЕЙШЕМУ УСИЛЕННОМУ ПОДНЯТИЮ КУЛЬТУРНОГО УРОВНЯ КУЛЬТУРНО-ОТСТАЛЫХ НАРОДОВ.

XII. Далее в постановлении изложены преступления с чужого голоса, иного порядка:

Союз допустил задолженность:

а) Так пусть они ликвидируют весь Союз ССР потому что он выпускает займы, т.е. “допускает задолженность”, закроют всю госторговлю, т.к. она кредитуется, разгонят всю кооперацию, так как она должает ...

б) Без гроша ставились учебно-показательные, промысловые мастерские. Без гроша денег, без сырья. При полной технической безграмотности и неподготовленности цыган. И с Вашей точки зрения в Союзе не должно быть кредита, на Вашем языке “задолженность”. И НКВД вместо помощи, спешит закрыть и ликвидировать Союз, имеющий те высокие цели, о которых он сам пишет, за то, что он – “допустил задолженность”.

в) А знает ли он, что цыганский Союз за последнее время понизил задолженность с 23 до 12 тысяч рублей, урегулировав ее в главных частях и это в первый организационный год. Понимает ли он значение этого факта. Укажите хоть один трест, пользующийся колоссальной поддержкой, средствами, располагающий реальными объектами и пр., где бы в первый организационный год снижение задолженности достигло бы 50%.

Пусть они учатся азам экономики, жизни, производства и т.д.

СОЮЗ ЦЫГАН НЕ МОЖЕТ ПРИЗНАТЬ ПОСТАНОВЛЕНИЕ ОТ 13-ГО ФЕВРАЛЯ ПОСТАНОВЛЕНИЕМ НКВД. Это акт ЛЕГКОМЫСЛИЯ И НЕДОМЫСЛИЯ отдельных чиновников комиссариата, которые СЛУЧАЙНО и ПО ОШИБКЕ получили возможность решать и писать от имени НКВД.

Союз цыган просит Совнарком РСФСР указать НКВД, что ВСЦ единственную цыганскую организацию, пользующуюся громадным авторитетом среди цыган, закрывать нельзя, а что наоборот, нужно помочь СОЮЗУ, который один только во

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всем мире и первый раз в истории, работает в целях культурно-экономического, даже не возрождения, РОЖДЕНИЯ цыганского народа, и [эту] работу может предъявить и доказать. […]

Всероссийский Союз Цыган надеется, что СНК и ВЦИК РСФСР не допустят осуществиться возмутительному насилию над цыганской организацией, так как это явление идет вопреки всей конституцией и национальной политики СССР.

Учредители ВСЦ … [подписи] (Таранов, Лебедев, [неразборчиво]).

∵

[Letterhead] RSFSR. All-Russian Union of Gypsies. February 18, 1928.
Moscow, Gostinyi Dvor, Room 54.

To: The Council of the People's Commissars of RSFSR.
Copies: 1) To Secretariat of the VKP(b) – to comrade Stalin; 2) To VTsSPS – comrade Tomskiy; 3) To TsIK SSSR – comrade Kalinin, comrade Enukidze; 4) To Soviet of Nationalities; 5) To Narkompros – comrade Lunacharskiy; 6) To Editorial Office of the newspapers *Pravda* and *Izvestiya VTsIK*.

The Memorandum

I. Three years of ordeal, mockery, violence, recklessness, half-disdained rejection, before, thanks to comrade Enukidze, we were able to obtain the first statute of the All-Russian Union of Gypsies.

The Statute has been prepared exclusively for cultural-educational purposes. However, funds for that have not been allocated, exactly also because of LACK OF TRUST in the Gypsies, in the Statute there were not included the ways and the sources of finding and obtaining the funds needed for any purpose.

II. A WHOLE YEAR of soliciting has passed, amending the Statute in order to include the right to obtain resources for the existence of the Union itself and for the realisation of the objectives of the Union. That is why we had to turn twice to the Little Sovnarkom. In July 1925, the first statute was approved, and in July 1926 the second, cut and dried Statute was approved by the NKVD. However, even though the Little Sovnarkom has instructed the NKVD to approve the Statute as early as October 1925, the approval came only in July 1926.

III. The reason for the Statutes to be "SO SWIFTLY" passed was mainly because of the fact that we, the Gypsies, did not leave them in peace with our pestering – to speed up their approval. So, the Statute is approved by our insistence and explanations in our active participation.

IV. WITHOUT OUR EXPLANATIONS, WITHOUT OUR PARTICIPATION, WITHOUT OUR KNOWLEDGE, WITHOUT CHECKING OUR AFFAIRS, WITHOUT GETTING ACQUAINTED WITH OUR CIRCUMSTANCES, EVEN WITHOUT A MERE CURIOSITY: "WHAT DO WE DO AND WHAT DO WE INTEND TO DO", the

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NKVD on 13 February 1928 ruled "TO LIQUIDATE THE UNION OF THE GYPSIES LIVING IN THE TERRITORY OF THE RSFSR".

V. Two days later, on 15 February, the Administrative Department of the NKVD, signed by Klokotin, prescribed "URGENT" and "NO LATER" than 21 February, a representative of the Gypsies to be appointed in the Commission for LIQUIDATION OF UNION OF GYPSIES; moreover, in the *Krasnaya Gazeta* (Red Newspaper) it has already been announced about the liquidation of VSTs.

VI. A mysterious picture: WHEN and WHO has been the SPEAKER FOR THE LIQUIDATION PROCESS considering that NOBODY HAS TURNED UP IN THE GYPSY UNION. Has it been a Gypsy of any kind, perhaps telling fortunes on beans?

VII. THE TIMELY ATTENTION AND COMPASSION TO THE WORK OF THE UNION: "To be established a Liquidation Commission with the involvement of Narkompros and the Department of Nationalities. HURRAY, even if we are liquidated the NKVD wants to enlighten us. Better late than never. When we were fighting to open Gypsy schools and were scraping the thresholds of the institutions – no representative from Narkompros was with us. FOR THE GYPSIES, HE IS NEEDED ONLY FOR THE LIQUIDATION of the Union. Finally, bravo, the Gypsies were recognised as a NATIONALITY too.

VIII. Burying the Union of the Gypsies, even though it is customary at a burial to speak about the deceased either good or nothing, the NKVD nevertheless reproached us for its "beneficence".

1. "Exclusive attention" was paid to the Union – seemingly, a hint of the liquidation, because the NKVD's attention was excluded from our work; perhaps, by the way, that is why it is called "exclusive".

2. "Assistance" in the work of the organisation of the Union (see above about the speed of the "affirmation" and the "liquidation" of the Union).

3. We were reproached for receiving "material assistance" (indeed, not by the budget of NKVD). For all the needs of the Gypsy people 1.5 and 4,000 Rubles on strictly defined financial lines: initially for three paid associates all together 285 Rubles per month and 30 Rubles per month for the remaining costs, which covers only the Union's stationery needs and travel expenses; then, for two paid associates (reduced was the third one) – 30 Rubles per month, "WITHOUT REDUCTION". They did not give us the money by hand, how could it be possible to give such big sums to the Union of the Gypsies: no wonder that it is a tale, about a Gypsy who dreamed – if I were a king, I was going to steal a hundred Rubles and run away. They paid the working associates and for the activities in the office by the month of September only, and then they ceased to pay – the Gypsies are accustomed to live by grazing, while they are not entitled to write constantly.

4. They reproached us that in order for us to find funds, we have been "GRANTED WITH THE RIGHT TO ORGANISE AGRARIAN ARTELS" (but, no land has yet been given), "COMMUNES" (however, for renting the premises the Gypsies would have to pay themselves even for premises in flats – 9 Rubles per square *sazhen* [1] because their

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occupations are considered "FREE-LANCED JOBS"), and "WORKSHOPS" (but all the Gypsy capital is – naked, with bellies bloated out of hunger, illiterate).

a) These privileges are given to us, by the way, not by the institution of our accusers.

b) The Union has been asking for them and it appreciates them.

But sometimes, it is also necessary to think "with the heads" in order to perceive the complexity and the difficulty in using and enforcing this privileges – "without financial means, without any credits, among the Gypsies who historically lack experience in these branches."

Regardless, the Union, in such a short a time, has created a lot that the NKVD should have acquainted themselves with earlier, before liquidating the Union.

XI. Besides "BENEFICENCE" in the decree, there are also mentioned "THE CRIMES OF THE UNION":

1. The first and main one (THE QUOTE OF THIS MASTERPIECE CANNOT BE LEFT OUT): "THE UNION OF GYPSIES NOT ONLY FAILED TO TAKE ANY MEASURES IN THE FIGHT AGAINST THE CONSERVATIVE WAY OF LIFE OF THE GYPSIES (fortune-telling, begging, gambling, drunkenness and other peculiarities of the Gypsy population), WHICH IS THE MAIN TASK OF THE UNION."

a) A NICE "CONSERVATIVE" WAY OF LIFE and an amazingly "DEEP" understanding of CONSERVATISM. Splendidly, it PROUDLY states "A CONSERVATIVE GYPSIES", why don't we call them instead straightaway "English Lords."

b) It is due to the thousands of years of persecution, misery, and the like that these vices and social illnesses came about. While we, the Union of the Gypsies, technically "TWO PAID ASSOCIATES", for one year – "were not able to take concrete measures" and these illnesses, to the shame of us and our Union, obviously, because of our "negligence" continue to exist even today.

2. "The Union turned out to be unable to do anything in organising the Gypsy masses in order to attract them to participate in the works of the Union."

a) Throughout the vast territory of the USSR, the wandering Gypsy masses have been dispersed. Even the Central Statistical Management with its abundance of funds and administrative apparatus, cannot cover them. AT 30 RUBLES FOR OFFICE WORK AND TRAVEL EXPENSES PER MONTH, THE UNION, FOR THE HORROR AND INDIGNATION OF THE EDITORS OF THE DECREE, THE UNION DID NOT COVER THE GYPSY MASSES.

b) "To attract them for participation in the works of the Union": the ILLITERATE – should guide the cultural-educational activities; the POOR AND HUNGRY to do the complex, free, responsible work organising and implementing all of the various and complex tasks. IT IS NOT ENOUGH TO PUT IT INTO WRITING – DEAR COMRADES, THE MEANINGS OF THE WORDS THAT ARE BEING WRITTEN MUST BE UNDERSTOOD.

3. Crime – the All-Russian Congress of Gypsies (§§ 10, 11, 12 and 19 of the Statute) is not convened in the first year since its registration.

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a) Funds for convening and holding the All-Russian Congress have not been provided.

b) Do they understand what does it mean to prepare an All-Russian Congress of the Gypsies so that they could come, with strict mandates, orders, wishes gathered from the Gypsy masses on the ground, and so on?

c) Do they understand the whole complexity of this job, of this preparation, so that the All-Russian Congress is a true one – an expression of the will and the desires of the whole nation, not a formality or a fiction.

d) Are they aware that this preparation must be carried out exclusively by Gypsies, because not everybody trusts the Gypsies, but the Gypsies, in turn, in their own masses, also do not trust in anybody else but Gypsies only?

e) Are they aware that this preparation must be conducted in the Gypsy language? And that for millennia, Gypsy alphabet was not created. And that we have now created the alphabet under their noses.

f) Do they understand what it means to create an alphabet? Do they know that this is the Academy of Sciences, the best scientists, comparatively superbly paid forces who, for a long time they create and develop new alphabets. While we, the hungry, poor, who have studied living with petty money – with our own blood, sweat and sleepless nights, without the help of academies, without money, without support, in the meantime we have created our alphabet.

g) Do they know that for the first time in history and in the world, only here, the Gypsy schools were created by us, by the Union of Gypsies, we repeat, for the first time, the Gypsy language is being taught? And they dare talk about our conservatism, our lifeless spirit …

They should have come to us when we were freezing in the unheated room, but we were burning with the achievements we could never have had: we were enjoying each new bibliographic reference about the Gypsies, etc., we used to be delighted when a new Gypsy woman appeared in order to learn to work on a knitting machine and a new, Gypsy, hungry family, was sending their child to study at our school.

And did they make an effort to acquaint themselves with our programme, designed and worked by us and our associates, ideologically and unselfishly sympathetic to the lacking everything Gypsy masses?

Did they make an effort to find out – how much time, concerted effort and thoughts have been lost and invested?

What should we talk about; the liquidators who have not reached in their understandings of the Gypsy question and of the Gypsies farther from Elizabeth, the daughter of Peter the First (who banned the Gypsies from approaching 50 *versts* [2] in the Capital St Petersburg [3]). Where did they appear from? They are a walking anachronism. How it is possible now, when from everywhere, near to them, great, solemn, fresh, vital speeches were spread out; such as for example the Decree of the TsIK USSR of 20 October 1927:

TOGETHER WITH THAT, CONFIRMING THE PROCLAIMED RIGHT BY THE OCTOBER REVOLUTION, EACH NATION TO HAVE THE RIGHT OF THEIR OWN CULTURAL, NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT WHICH HAS FOUND ITS EXPRESSION

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IN THE SOVIET CONSTITUTION, THE CENTRAL EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE OF THE USSR STATES THAT IN THE FUTURE THE DEVELOPMENTAL WORK OF THE NATIONAL CULTURES OF ALL NATIONS WILL BE FUNDED WITH ALL POWER AND SUPPORT OF THE USSR

… and in accordance with everything said, the TsIK of the USSR decrees:

3. IT CONTINUES, WITH CEASLESS ENERGY, ITS WORK FOR THE FURTHER RAISING OF THE CULTURAL LEVELS OF THE CULTURALLY-BACKWARD NATIONS.

XII. Further on, in the Decree on the Liquidation of the VSTs, offences of a different order are presented, this time using a different tone:

1. The Union has allowed indebtedness.

a) Then let them, in turn, liquidate the whole USSR because it issues government loans, that is, "allows indebtedness," they should close down all state trade enterprises because they are being credited by the state; they should dissolve all cooperatives because they are debtors …

b) Without a penny, exemplary workshops for small-scale production were created. Without money, without raw materials; given the complete technical illiteracy and unpreparedness of the Gypsies. And according to your point of view, in the Union of Gypsies it was not supposed to exist without credit, in your language "indebtedness". And NKVD, instead of giving aid, is quick to liquidate and close down the Union which has these high goals, which it writes about itself and because it "has allowed indebtedness".

c) And does he know that the Gypsy Union has lately reduced its indebtedness from 23 to 14 thousand Rubles, regulating them in its main parts and also in its first year of existing? Does he understand the meaning of this fact? Show us at least one Trust that enjoys colossal support, means, having real estate assets, and so on, whose indebtedness, in its first year of operation, has reached at least 50%.

Let them learn the alphabet of economics, life, production, etc.

THE UNION OF GYPSIES CANNOT ACCEPT THE DECREE OF THE NKVD FROM 13 FEBRUARY. This act of FRIVOLITY and THOUGHTLESSNESS of individual officials from the Commissariat who accidentally and by mistake have been given the opportunity to decide and write on behalf of the NKVD.

The Union of the Gypsies asks Sovnarkom of RSFSR to point out to NKVD that the VSTs is the only Gypsy organisation that enjoys tremendous authority among the Gypsies; it should not be closed down but on the contrary, THE UNION ought to be helped as is the only one all over the world and for the first time in history it works for the cultural and economic, not even the revival, but THE BIRTH of the Gypsy people and this work can be done and proved. […]

The All-Russian Union of the Gypsies hopes that SNK and VTsiK of RSFSR will not allow the outrageous violence against the Gypsy organisation, as this phenomenon runs counter to the entire Constitution and national policy of the USSR.

Founding Members of VSTs … [signatures] (Taranov, Lebedev, [illegibly]).

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Notes

1. *Sazhen'* (сажень) – a unit of length in the Russian Empire and the early USSR, equal to 213.36 cm.
2. *Versta* (верста) – a unit of length in the Russian Empire and the early USSR, equal to 1.067 km.
3. Reference to Decree of Empress Elisabeth from 1759 (See Introduction).

Source: GARF, f. P 393, op. 43A, d. 1763, l. 102-108.
Prepared for publication by Elena Marushiakova and Vesselin Popov.

12.1.16 *Third Memorandum*

В Совет Национальностей при ЦИК СССР. Тов[арищу] Кульбишерову.
[Резолюция]: тов. Буткевичу. Прошу ознакомиться и доложить мне. 03.IV.1928 г. Кульбешеров.
От членов ВКП(б) и ВЛКСМ Цыган.

Докладная записка

Нам известно, как остро стоит вопрос о культурной работе среди национальных меньшинств. Особенно трудно его разрешение среди бродячего племени цыган с их таинственным происхождением, тяжелым историческим прошлым и необыкновенной способностью сохранять свою самобытность.

Почти поголовная неграмотность, полное отсутствие квалификацированых педагогов, бродячий образ жизни, следствием чего нищета и паразитическое существование, все это ставило работу среди цыган в наитягчайшие условия, по своей специфичности выделяло ее из ряда ей аналогичных работ.

Десять лет революции прошли незамеченными в истории цыганского народа и до сих пор цыганский вопрос остается вне сферы внимания Правительства и Общественности.

А между тем много есть серьезных, глубоких по содержанию, экономических и идеологических предпосылок, для того, чтобы уделить цыганскому вопросу соответствующее внимание.

Исторические данные о цыганах гласят о том, что цыгане имели когда-то свою культуру. Не желая быть рабами у завоевавшего их территорию царя, они бежали из Индии и с тех пор кочевничество стало их бытом.

Страницы дальнейшей истории этого свободного племени сплошь залиты кровью, которую они проливали в борьбе за свою независимость. Много времени прошло с тех пор и век за веком вкоренялось в них кочевничество, вызванное вечной травлей и гонениями "высоко-культурных" Европейских стран. [...]

По данным разных авторов, интересующихся цыганами, общее количество цыган на земном шаре, в прошлом столетии, колеблется от 1-го до 5-ти миллионов. В среднем 3 миллиона человек. Большая часть цыган приходится на Россию. Известный языковед Миклошич (1873) писал, что в России цыган до 1.500.000 ч. Конечно, эта сумма преувеличена.

ЦСУ [Центральному Статистическому Управлению] удалось учесть около 50.000 цыган, принимая во внимание с одной стороны, что бродячий быт цыган исключает

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возможность, хотя-бы приблизительного их учета, и с другой стороны, что цыгане по личным соображениям, скрывают свое происхождение, называя себя русскими, сербами, болгарами, румынами или греками.

По данным бывшего Всероссийского Союза Цыган общее количество цыган, находящихся в СССР, достигает 200.000 ч. Из них около 50.000 ч. оседлого образа жизни и около 150.000 ведут бродячую жизнь. В подавляющем своем большинстве кочевые цыгане не производители, а только лишь потребляющие. Существуя за счет окружающего их населения и взамен ничем его не компенсируя, они являются, как бы паразитам общества. [...]

Основным методом поднятия культурного и экономического состояния цыганских масс является перевод их на оседлость и привлечение к сельско-хозяйственному труду. В нашей стране сельское хозяйство требует коренной переорганизации. Переход к сельской кооперации, к товариществам, артелям и коммунам вопрос сегодняшнего дня.

В самом таборе, как бытовой организационной форме, у цыган имеется зачатки коммунизма и переходящих на сельское хозяйство цыган легко можно ввести в нужные формы сельско-хозяйственных объединений.

На этих началах землеустройство цыган может послужить полезным примером и для окружающего их крестьянства, плохо воспринимающего идею необходимости переорганизации своего хозяйства. [...] Необходимо так-же упомянуть, что среди кочевых цыган около 80% мелких кустарей (кузнецов, лудильщиков и т.п.), которые объединятся также и в производственные кооперации. Если мы говорим, что каждая вновь выстроенная фабрика или вновь организованный сельско-хозяйственный коллектив есть шаг к социализму, то землеустройство цыган – большое постижение в приближении к социализму.

Теперь перейдем к идеологическим предпосылкам, толкающим цыганский вопрос к его разрешению.

По социальному положению цыгане являются неимущим классом. Они представители беднейшей части нашего населения. Никогда, в продолжении всей своей истории, не были эксплоататорами и даже в своей среде не имели буржоазии. Наоборот, прошлое цыган полно насилия, издевательства, бесчинств полицейского произвола, травли и сжигания на кострах.

Наша конституция и политика национальных меньшинств гласит о самоопределении нации, о содействии культурно-экономическому развитию нацменьшинств.

В подтверждение этого ЦИК С.С.С.Р., в своем постановлении от 20.XI.1927 года говорит, ЧТО И ВПРЕДЬ ДЕЛО РАЗВИТИЯ НАЦИОНАЛЬНОЙ КУЛЬТУРЫ ВСЕХ НАРОДОВ, БУДЕТ ОБЕСПЕЧЕНО ВСЕЙ МОЩЬЮ И ПОДДЕРЖКОЙ СОЮЗА ССР.

Что не сделано для цыган.

Мало того, что они лишены государственной заботы, но это полуголодное нищенское племя лишено даже права гражданства, и за 10 лет Октябрьской Революции ни партийные органы, ни советские не сделали ничего реального для цыган.

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В то же время газеты, лозунги и вся общественность кричит о ликвидации беспризорности, для борьбы с каковой выделяются особые фонды, проводятся лотереи, ставятся концерты, собирается пожертвования и т.д., тогда как беспризорная, кочующая целая национальность находится вне всякого внимания и продолжает бродить незамеченной под носом у нашей общественности, тщетно взывая о помощи, о желании переменить свой антиобщественный быт.

И за ДЕСЯТЬ лет их голоса остаются гласом вопиющего в пустыне.

Вот, что пишут сами цыгане об этом:

Письмо от цыган Дорогобужского уезда: … Мы считаем себя равноправными членами Рабоче-Крестьянского Государства и решили перейти к оседлой жизни и трудовому землепользованию …

Из деревни Перховичи, Смоленской губ.: …. Просим наш родной Союз помочь нам кредитом, хоть 600 руб[лей] для поддержки хозяйства на более большой срок, дабы мы могли почувствовать себя и узнать наше КОЛЛЕКТИВНОЕ ХОЗЯЙСТВО и показать, что мы цыгане можем вести хозяйство также наравне с крестьянами …

От уполномоченного ВСЦ по Сев[ер]о-Кав[казскому] Краю: … Мною зарегистрировано 100 чел[овек] цыган румынских, сербских, желающих перейти на оседлое положение на предмет занятия садоводством, т.к. это их специальность …

От цыган Тульской губернии: … Мы цыгане-крестьяне желаем получить землю в запасном фонде Тульской губернии, ввиду того, что мы цыгане не имеем своей земли и по сие время нам приходится кочевать с места на место …

А вот письмо от цыганки, живущей в Черни, Тульской губ.: … Можно ли мне цыганке – гражданке получить на мое семейство земли. Десять лет, как живу вдовою, в эти годы, когда осталась вдовою, то я старалась спасти своих детей от воровства, от гадания и что-бы они не ходили по улицам, не плясали [за] копейку, а также и сама, чтоб не ходить, а работать на честный труд …

Такие письма Союз получал ежедневно с разных мест и они служат доказательством того, как выросло и растет самосознание цыганского народа.

Как же реагирует общественность на запросы цыган.

Прибегнем опять к письмам, как документам, отражающим и жизнь цыган на местах, и их положение среди нашей общественности.

Из письма к тов. Калинину: От цыган Смоленской губ[ернии], д[еревня] Клоково … Мы ничего не поймем и будем дикарями и опять останемся угнетенными, такими, как были раньше, а может быть и хуже, потому что больше и больше крестьянство стало смотреть на цыган с ненавистью, а именно Советская Власть совсем забыла про нас и защиты мы никакой не находим, нас бьют, колотят, увечат и никто за нас не заступится. Тов. Калинин помогите нам вытащить нас из лесу. Дайте нам жизнь. Уже десять лет Сов[етской] власти, пора подумать о цыганах …

От цыган Минской области: … Мы живем, как заблудившиеся волки, не знаем ничего и с нами считаются хуже, чем с собаками …

От цыган Псковской губернии: … И не знает Высшая Советская Власть об отношении местных властей к цыганам и их желанию к оседлости и попыткам заниматься

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сельским хозяйством, на каковые получаются только насмешки и издевательства. Мы семижды подавали заявления о наделении нас землей из запасного фонда и на каждое заявление получаем отказ и личные насмешки, после каковых опускаются руки, теряются все надежды и снова влачим жалкое существования ...

От цыган гор[ода] Кременчуг: ... Ведь у нас почти в каждом селе и деревне есть не мало цыган и между ними никакой работы не проводится и они тянутся в хвосте, забытие всеми гражданами. Но это же неправильно, пора провести кампанию более сплоченную ... [...]

Обобщая вышеизложенный материал необходимо отметить следующее:

Столетия и тысячелетия историй и культуры прошли мимо цыганского народа, не дав ему ничего, кроме страданий и оставив его обойденным пасынком в человечестве. Нищета, граничащая с постоянной угрозой голодной смерти. Бездомность всего народа, в смысле отсутствия собственной территории и жилого угла для отдельных его членов. Полное бесправие, в смысле отсутствия правовых норм, определяющих правовое положение всего народа и отдельных цыган, а так же отсутствие собственных органов защиты и потому непрерывные притеснения и гонения, насилия и самосуды над цыганами, вплоть до сжигания их на кострах, даже в наше время ... Беспросветная темнота в смысле культуры, просвещения и даже простой грамотности... Исторически отрицательное отношение к цыганскому народу власти и окружающей среды.

Проблески возможно лучшей жизни внесла Советская Власть своей политикой в национальных вопросах вообще и проявив, в частности, доброжелательство к цыганам, например, в декрете о землеустройстве.

Но фактически, реально, никаких улучшений в жизни цыганского народа не внесено, это объясняется: Во первых, той титанический борьбой, которую пришлось выдержать Советской Власти на фронте войн внешних и гражданских, на фронте экономических кризисов и катастроф, грандиозной работой по государственному и народному строительству и т.д. Во вторых, [в] безразличности к цыганскому вопросу общественности. В третьих, беспросветной темнотой цыганских масс.

Всероссийский Союз Цыган, ликвидирующийся в настоящее время был, как бы оазисом активности в пустыне общей пассивности к цыганским делам. Его работа, при малочисленности активных работников, при полном отсутствии средств, при отсутствии государственной поддержки, при общем недоверии к цыганам и, наоборот, недоверчивости цыган ко всему окружающему миру, от которого они, на протяжении всей истории, видели одни притеснения и гонения, была тяжелым мученичеством для горсти идейных работников и Всероссийский Союз Цыган не в силах был выполнить взятую на себя задачу культурно-экономического подъема цыганских масс и постановлением НКВД от 13/II - 1928 г. ВСЦ был закрыт.

Партийный и Комсомольский Актив цыган, веря в то, что Советская Власть, провозгласившая равенство всех народов, должна обратить внимание на недопустимое, ни с идеологической, ни с экономической стороны положение цыган и придти на помощь цыганам в деле их культурно-экономического возрождения,

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считает, что изложенные в настоящем докладе экономические и идеологические предпосылки, доказывающие необходимость культурной и просветительной и хозяйственной работы среди цыган, будут приняты Советским Правительством во внимание и актив цыган входит с ходатайством в Правительство о создании для цыган такой организации, которая могла бы:

I. Прорабатывать вопросы, волнующие цыганский народ, могла бы формулировать цыганские нужды и в центре и на местах перед соответствующими правительственными и партийными органами, которая была бы в состоянии и технически и материально придти на помощь пробуждающейся активности цыганских масс.

II. Могла бы провести национальную культурно-просветную работу, путем создания и в центре и на местах сети клубов, детских и школьных интернатов, яслей, учебных мастерских, издательств, театров и пр.

III. Могла бы помогать и, до известной степени, руководить переходом цыганских масс с кочевого образа жизни на оседлый.

IV. Могла бы иметь техническую и материальную возможность развить кооперативное жилстроительство, так как если повсеместно остро обстоит жилищный вопрос, то для цыганского народа он просто переходит в трагедию.

V. Могла бы содействовать созданию ряда кустарных ремесленных торгово-промышленных объединений, мастерских, небольших фабрик, путем субсидий, возвратных и безвозвратных ссуд, кредитов и налоговых льгот.

Со своей [стороны], мы члены ВКП(б) и ВЛКСМ цыган, предоставляя при сем проэкт положения Комитета содействия хозяйственному, культурному и земельному устройству цыган, проживающих на территории С.С.С.Р. считаем необходимым создание таковой организации как единственной, имеющей возможности разрешить цыганские вопросы в плоскости Советской политики национальных меньшинств.

Члены ВКП(б):	Таранов, чл. ВКП(б), № 0034775.
Члены ВЛКСМ:	Свистунова, чл. ВЛСКМ, № 31417.
	Бараневеце [?], чл. ВЛСКМ, № 15999.
	Мурачковская, чл. ВЛСКМ, № 10654.
	Грушина, член В.К.П.(б), № 0037719.
	Грушин А. А., член В.К.П.(б), № 003033, чл. ВЛКСМ № 7452.
	Лавина А. С., член В.К.П.(б), № 234.
	Лавина Д. С., член В.К.П.(б), № 0042673.

∵

In the Soviet of Nationalities at TsIK USSR. To comrade Kulbisherov.
[Resolution] To comrade Butkevich. I ask you to get acquainted and to report to me. 03.04.1928. Kulbesherov.

From the Gypsies, members of the VKP(b) and VLKSM.

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The Memorandum

We know how pertinent the issue of cultural work among national minorities is. It is particularly difficult to solve it among the wandering tribe of the Gypsies with their mysterious origins, a difficult historical past and their extraordinary ability to preserve their ethnic particularity.

Almost the entirety of the Gypsies being illiterate, the complete absence of qualified pedagogues, the wandering lifestyle, and as a consequence of this misery and the parasitic existence – all of these make the work with the Gypsies among the most difficult and in these factors distinguishes the Gypsies from a number of other similar cases.

Ten years after the Revolution have gone unnoticed in the history of the Gypsy people and until now, the Gypsy question remains outside the sphere of attention of the Government and the Society.

And by the way, there are many serious, deep in their meanings, economic and ideological premises so that the Gypsy question receives the necessary attention.

The historical data on the Gypsies suggests that Gypsies once had their own culture. Unwilling to be slaves to the king who has conquered their territory, they have escaped from India and since then nomadism has become their way of life.

The pages of the history of this free tribe that followed are completely flooded with the blood they have shed in the struggle for their independence. A long time has passed since then and with the passing centuries nomadism has thus become rooted in them, caused by the unending victimisation and persecution of the Gypsies in the "high-cultured" European countries. […]

According to the data of various authors interested in the Gypsies, their total amount in the world over the past century fluctuates from 1 to 5 million. That makes an average of 3 million people. A large part of the Gypsies are in Russia. The famous linguist Miklosich (1873) wrote that in Russia, the Gypsies are up to 1,500,000. Of course, this number is exaggerated.

The Central Statistical Administration has managed to report about 50,000 Gypsies, taking into account on the one hand, that the nomadic lifestyle of the Gypsies does not allow the possibility of at least an approximate count; and on the other hand, the Gypsies for personal reasons conceal their origins, naming themselves Russians, Serbs, Bulgarians, Romanians or Greeks. According to data from the former All-Russian Union of the Gypsies, the total amount of Gypsies in the USSR reaches 200,000 people. Of these, around 50,000 lead a sedentary lifestyle and about 150,000 lead a nomadic way of life [1]. In its majority, the nomadic Gypsies are not producers but only consumers. They exist at the expense of the surrounding population and, in return, without compensating for it, they appear to be as parasites of society. […]

The main method for raising the cultural and economic situation of the Gypsy masses is their transition to a settled way of life and their attraction to agricultural labour. In our country, agriculture requires a radical reorganisation. The transition towards rural cooperatives, associations, artels and communes is the matter of the day.

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The Gypsy tabor [2] itself, as a form of organisation of a way of life, the embryo of Communism, exists in the Gypsies and their transition towards agriculture could easily be introduced into the necessary forms of the agrarian unions. On this basis, the settlement of the Gypsies could serve as a useful example also to the peasants around them who do not easily accept the idea that there is a need of re-organising their agricultural economy. […] It is also necessary to note that among the wandering Gypsies around 80% of them are small producers (blacksmiths, tinsmiths, etc.), who could also be united in production cooperatives.

If we say that each newly-built factory or newly organised agrarian collective is a step towards socialism, then the land allocation for Gypsies is a great achievement on the road to getting closer to socialism.

We will now move on to the ideological preconditions that push the Gypsy issue towards its solution.

In their social status, the Gypsies are a class without property. They are representatives of the poorest part of our population. Never, for the duration of their whole history, have they been exploiters and have never even had bourgeoisie in their environment. On the contrary, the past of the Gypsies is full of violence, harassment, outrages of police arbitrariness, persecutions, and burnings on the stake.

Our Constitution and politics towards the national minorities promote the self-determination of the nations and the cooperation for the cultural and economic development of national minorities.

In confirmation of this, the TsIK USSR, in its Decree of 20 November 1927, declares that IN THE FUTURE TOO, THE DEED OF DEVELOPMENT OF THE NATIONAL CULTURES OF ALL NATIONS WILL BE ASSISTED WITH ALL THE POWER AND SUPPORT OF THE USSR.

Which has not been done for the Gypsies.

It is not enough that they are deprived of state care, but this half-starving, begging tribe is even devoid of the right of citizenship, and for 10 years after the October Revolution, neither Party nor the Soviet authorities have done anything real for the Gypsies.

At the same time, newspapers, slogans and the general society scream for the liquidation of homelessness, a struggle for which a considerable amount of funds are put aside, there are lotteries, concerts are being organised, charities are collected and so on; then, when the whole neglected, wandering nationality does not get any attention and continues to wander unnoticed under the nose of our society, in vain does it call for help in its desire to change its anti-social lifestyle.

And for TEN years their voices remain a voice screaming in the wilderness.

Here is what the Gypsies themselves write about.

A letter from the Dorogobuzhskiy Uezd: … We consider ourselves equal members of the Workers' and Peasant State and have decided to move towards a settled life, and labour land use …

From the village of Perkhovichi, Smolenskaya Governorate: … We ask our native Union to help us with a credit, at least 600 Rubles for the support of economy for a longer period

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of time so that we can feel better and to get to know better our collective economy, and in order to show that we, the Gypsies, can lead agriculture just like the peasants …

From the Plenipotentiary of the VSTs for the North-Caucasus Region: … I have been registered 100 persons, Romanian, Serbian Gypsies who are willing to transit towards sedentarisation and to deal with gardening as this is their speciality …

From the Gypsies from Tula Governorate: … We, the Gypsy-peasants, want to get land from the Reserve Fund of Tula Governorate, given that we the Gypsies do not have our own land and till now we had to wander from place to place …

And here is a letter from a Gypsy woman who lives in Cherni, Tula Governorate: … Could I, a Gypsy woman and citizen, get land for my family. It has been ten years since I became a widow, and in those years when I have been a widow, I have been trying to save my children from thefts, fortune-telling and not to roam the streets, not to dance for a kopeykas, but also myself, in order not to roam but to do an honest work …

The Union of the Gypsies has been receiving such letters daily from different places and they serve as evidence of how the Gypsy nation's self-consciousness has grown and how it continues to grow.

How does society react to the demands of the Gypsies?

We will again use the letters, as documents that reflect the lives of the Gypsies on the ground and their situation among our society.

From a letter to Comrade Kalinin: From the Gypsies from Smolensk Governorate, the village of Klokovo. … We will not understand anything and we will be savages, and we will still remain oppressed, such as we have been earlier and perhaps worse, because more and more peasants look at the Gypsies with hatred, and namely the Soviet Authority has completely forgotten about us and we do not find any protection; they beat us, hit us, cripple us and no one takes our side. Comrade Kalinin, help us get out of the woods. Give us life. For ten years now there is a Soviet Authority, it's time to think about the Gypsies …

From Gypsies from the Minsk Governorate: … We live like lost wolves, we do not know anything and they treat us worse than dogs …

From Gypsies from Pskov Governorate: … And the Supreme Soviet Authority is not aware of the attitudes of the local authorities towards the Gypsies and their desire to settle down and they attempt to deal with agriculture for which they receive only mockery and harassment. We have applied seven times to get dedicated land from the Reserve Fund and to each application we received denials and personal mockery and harassment after which we lost courage, lost all hope, and we again carry on with our miserable existence …

From Gypsies from the town of Kremenchuk: … Isn't it that there are in each village and small town many Gypsies and there is no work done with them; so, they trail behind, forgotten by all citizens. But this is not right, it is time to conduct a more cohesive campaign … […]

Summarising the above, it is necessary to note the following:

Centuries and millennia of history and culture have gone unnoticed by the Gypsy people, giving them nothing but suffering and leaving the Gypsies as a neglected orphan

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amongst humanity. Destitution that borders with a constant threat of starvation. Homelessness for the whole nation, meaning no home territory and a sweet corner dedicated as living space for its individual members. Complete injustice, in the sense of the absence of legal norms that define the legal situation of each nation and the individual Gypsies, as well as the absence of its own organs for protection and therefore constant burnings on fires, even in our times … Complete darkness in the sense of lack of culture, education, and even simple literacy. Historically negative attitudes towards the Gypsy people by the authorities and the surrounding population.

Glimpses of possibly a better life were brought by the Soviet Authority with its policy on national affairs in general, and showing in honesty, goodwill towards the Gypsies, for example in the field of land allocation.

But in reality, no improvements in the life of the Gypsy people have been made, and this is explained by the following reasons: First, this titanic struggle, which had to withstand the Soviet Authorities on the front of the external and civil wars, on the front of economic crises and catastrophes, given the spectacular work on the construction of the state, the nation and so on. Second, the indifference of the society towards the Gypsy issue. Third, the illiterate darkness of the Gypsy masses.

The All-Russian Union of Gypsies, currently being liquidated, seemed as if to serve as an oasis of the activity in a desert of total passivity towards Gypsy deeds. Its work, in the low number of active employees, in the complete absence of funds, in the absence of state support, in the general distrust of the Gypsies and, on the other hand, the mistrust of the Gypsies towards the whole world around them from which, throughout their history, they have experienced only tortures and persecutions, it was a hard work for the handful of ideological workers; and the All-Russian Union of the Gypsies did not have the power to fulfil its own task of cultural and economic uplifting of the Gypsy masses, and with the NKVD Decree of 13.02.1928 the All-Russian Union of the Gypsies was closed down.

The Party and Komsomol Activists of the Gypsies, believe that the Soviet Authorities, which proclaimed the equality of all peoples, should pay attention to the unacceptable, neither ideologically nor economically, situation of the Gypsies, and will help the Gypsies in the struggle for their cultural and economic revival. We believe that the economic and ideological prerequisites presented in this report, proving the necessity of cultural, educational and economic work among the Gypsies, will be taken into consideration by the Soviet Government and therefore the Gypsy actvists are turning with an intercession to the Government for the creation of such an organisation, which could:

I. Address the issues that are relevant to the Gypsy people, which could formulate the needs of the Gypsies, both in the centres and throughout the country, in front of the respective governmental and party organs, which would be able to serve both technically and materially the nascent activities of the Gypsy masses.

II. It could carry out national, cultural and educational work for the creation, both in centres and throughout the country, of a network of clubs, children's and boarding schools, nurseries, workshops, publishing houses, theatres and so on.

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III. It could help, and to a certain extent, lead the transition of the Gypsy masses from a nomadic way of life to a sedentary lifestyle.

IV. It could have the technical and material opportunities to develop the co-operative construction of housing, as the housing issue is all too acute for everybody, and for the Gypsy people it is simply tragic.

V. It could contribute to the creation of a number of trade and industrial associations of small producers and craftsmen, workshops and small factories by subsidies, repayable and non-refundable loans, credits and tax reliefs.

For our part, we, the Gypsies, members of the VKP(b) and VLKSM, providing a draft of proposal for a Committee for the Assistance of the Economic, Cultural and Land Allocations of the Gypsies Living in the Territory of USSR, we consider as necessary to establish such an organisation as the only one, which could be able to solve the Gypsy issues in line of the Soviet policy for national minorities.

Members of the VKP(b): … Taranov, member of the VKP(b), [Party Card] No. 0034775.
Members of the VLKSM: … Svistunova, member of VLKSM, [Komsomol Card] No. 31417.
Baranevetse, member of the VLKSM, [Komsomol Card] No. 15999.
Murachkovskaya, member of the VLKSM, [Komsomol Card] No.10654.
Grushina, member of the VKP(b), [Party Card] No. 0037719.
A. A. Grushin, Member of the VKP (b), No. 003033, member of VLKSM No 7452.
A. S. Lavina, member of the VKP (b), [Party Card] No 234.
D. S. Lavina, member of the VKP(b), [Party Card] No 0042673 [3].

Notes

1. The total number of Gypsies in the USSR is, according to the estimates of Gypsy activists, highly exaggerated, but otherwise, the estimate of the ratio between the nomadic (a quarter) and sedentary (three-quarters) Gypsies is impressively accurate.
2. *Tabor* (табор) is the name of a separate unit (of usually several related Gypsy families) in the Russian Empire and the USSR.
3. It is noteworthy that the last four names are not of Gypsies. They may have been attracted as party members to give further weight to the Memorandum.

Source: GARF, f. P 1235, op. 120, d. 27, l. 4-14.
Prepared for publication by Elena Marushiakova and Vesselin Popov.

Comments

The emergence of the All-Russian Union of Gypsies and its relatively rapid end can only be understood correctly if placed in the general socio-political context of the era (the 1920s). This was the time when the USSR was created (formally in 1922) and the first Constitution of the new state was adopted in 1924. A fundamental principle of USSR national policy at the time was to support the development of all nationalities inhabiting the former Empire. All nationalities were given the opportunity to create their own national structures at different territorial and/or administrative levels (soviet and

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autonomous republics, rayons, village councils, public organisations, schools, etc., and even individual labour production units). There are no set criteria as to which nationalities of what exactly national structures are entitled. Each case is decided individually, but in general, the leading line in national politics in the early USSR was its ideology of affirmative action with respect to individual nationalities, including Gypsies (Martin, 2001).

The All-Russian Union of Gypsies emerges in the midst of the so-called Gypsy music elite. It originated with the creation of the first Gypsy choirs at the end of the 18th century. After several generations, Gypsy musicians and performers with their families and relatives gradually formed a separate stratum, based mainly in the two metropolitans (St. Petersburg and Moscow), and became registered in urban estates of merchants and tradesmen and meschchane (*мещане*), the latter including mostly small producers. This Gypsy elite had relatively high social positions; its representatives were in constant interactions with the highest social and cultural strata – the highest aristocracy and the bourgeoisie, the most famous poets, writers, musicians, etc. This unique social position of the Gypsy music elite was noticed by George Borrow (a famous English writer of novels, travel books and Bible translator) who, in 1833, wrote: "Those who have been accustomed to consider these people as wandering barbarians, incapable of civilisation and unable to appreciate the blessings of a quiet and settled life, will be surprised at learning that many of those in Moscow inhabit large and handsome houses, appear abroad in elegant equipages, and if distinguishable from the genteel class of the Russians [are] only so by superior personal advantages and mental accomplishments". (Borrow, 1911).

The October Revolution and the creation of the Soviet state radically change the life and social position of the Gypsy music elite. One part left the country along with the so-called White emigration, and those who remained were looking for new ways of reaching achievements in the context of the Soviet realities.

After 1921, when the so-called war communism was replaced with the New Economic Policy (NEP) and a gradual recovery of the economy, social and cultural life started, also the Gypsy music ensembles (called Gypsy choirs, according to an established tradition) were revived. It was exactly in this environment, namely in the famous Gypsy choir of Yegor Polyakov in Moscow, where the beginning of an organised Gypsy movement in the USSR could be set.

It started with the creation of a Gypsy Communist cell in January 1923, headed by Ivan G. Lebedev (who later adopted the pseudonym Rom-Lebedev). Its members were Sergey Polyakov, Georgiy Lebedev, Dmitriy Mikhailov, and Karpetsky (GARF, f. A 259, op. 9б, d. 4233, l. 21; f. 3316, op. 17, d. 188, l. 1). The first public action of the young Gypsy Komsomol members was to organise a Gypsy group to participate in the 1st of May Parade on Red Square in the same year, raising the slogan "Gypsies of the world, unite!" (GARF, f. A 259, op. 9б, d. 4233, l. 21), which is a paraphrase of the famous slogan "Proletarians of the world, unite!" from The Communist Manifesto.

From the Minutes Nr.1 from 10th of January 1924 published above the names of the founders of the Initiative Group become clear: a total of 11 people, of which one woman. The group's main task was "the organisation of the proletarian backward Gypsy masses".

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This wording shows that the founders fit into the spirit of the era and the prevailing ideological norms of the time, and used its phraseology. It is interesting to note that among the founders is not included Ivan Lebedev, who appears in Union documents only in Minutes No.4 of 24th of August 1924, together with Andrey S. Taranov, who was inscribed as Chairman of the Initiative Group.

A list of the Initiative Group which is attached to this Minutes (GARF, f. P 1235, op. 119, d. 9, l. 10-11) allows for further analysis. In this list of 14 people, all with the exception of the first three (Stepan Osipov, Andrey Taranov, and Ivan Balashev), lived near Petrovskiy Park. This was the main settlement of the so-called choir Gypsies and ten people from this list wrote that they are "actors" by profession. As a "social status", they all define themselves as a "proletariat", which indicates that they had taken into account the new Soviet realities in which the most preferred social origin was the proletarian one (to what extent Gypsy artists can be considered proletarians is a separate question).

The case of Stepan Osipov is somehow obscure. He held leading positions in the first Union documents. The last mention of his name was in a statement of the Initiative Group to the Presidium of the SN of the VTsIK of 23.09.1924, which was signed by Stepan Osipov, but his name was scratched and in its place, the name of Andrey Taranov was written by hand (GARF, f. P 1235, op. 119, d. 10, l. 14). Judging by the List of the Initiative Group, Osipov had been a member of the VKP(b) since 1918, a participant in the Civil War, and his profession was 'Soviet service', i.e. managerial staff. It is unlikely that a Gypsy with such biographical details would stay away from the Gypsy movement, so it seems more likely that it was a non-Rom, attracted by the Union's founders, to demonstrate a leading party presence in it until a Rom Party member was found.

From the other members of the Initiative Group, members of the Party were Andrey Taranov and Ivan Balashev, the latter being the only one whose profession was that of a 'worker'. The other three from the Initiative Group were Komsomol members, namely I. Lebedev, S. Polyakov, and D. Mikhailov (GARF, f. P 1235, op. 119, d. 9, l. 10-11). The emergence of A. Taranov and I. Lebedev into leading positions in the new Union can be explained by the desire to strengthen the Party and Komsomol members' presence in the newly created Gypsy Union what was also a requirement of the Soviet apparatus.

One of the first things that the newly formed Union decided on 25.01.1924 (GARF, f. P 1235, op. 119, d. 10, l. 3) was to ask the party and Soviet institutions for approval and support for its legal registration. There is a need to clarify here the administrative procedures regarding the registration of the Gypsy Union. According to the legal norms of that time, this registration was performed by the NKVD of RSFSR. However, this was not the notorious NKVD of the 1930s, known as the main executor of mass repressions. In the 1920s, the 'sword of revolution', called upon to fight the enemies of the Soviet state, was the All-Russian Extraordinary Commission for Combating Counter-Revolution and Sabotage (VChK) created in 1917 and headed by Felix Dzerzhinsky, later renamed the State Political Directorate (GPU), and then in 1924 to the Joint State Political Directorate (OGPU) at the SNK USSR. The NKVD of the RSFSR at that time was assigned to take care of public order, which included control over public organisations to which VSTs also

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belonged. Indicative of the lack of special interest to the NKVD in the Gypsy Union is the fact that the case for registration is located in a folder between the cases of the Society for the Study of Russian Manor and Kazan Society of Beekeepers (GARF, f. P 393, op. 43 A, d. 1770).

The leading Party and Soviet institutions, however, have clearly expressed their support for the establishment of a Gypsy Union. In a letter to the NKVD of 30.05.1925 ON VTSIK defines this organisation as "extremely suitable" and asks to accelerate as much as possible the process of its registration (GARF, f. P 393, op. 43 A, d. 1763, l. 12). Particularly impressive is the letter on this occasion from the sub-section National Minorities, APO at TsK VKP(b) of 12.06.1925, part of it worth of quoting:

> In view of the fact that the Gypsies for the first time are trying to create a Soviet public organisation among themselves and so far we have not had any approach to them, I consider it proper to register their statute. We will follow their work and maybe we can find among them quite suitable elements for introducing their masses to a new life. (Ibid., l. 17).

As the letter shows, the top Party leadership itself is surprised by the initiative of Gypsies to engage in civic activities, and it is timidly hoping that the necessary staff will be found to run the new organisation in accordance with the Party line in order to integrate the Gypsies into the 'new life'. It is also revealing that the letter was signed by the Deputy Head of the Department, Semyon Dimanstein, who was one of the leading theorists of Soviet national politics during this period (see Martin, 2001).

The crucial role of Party institutions in building the structure of VSTs is beyond any doubt. A letter from the Moscow Committee of the VKP(b) dated 10.07.1925 to the NKVD agreed that the members of the VKP(b) and the VLKSM participating in the Initiative Group would be joining the new organisation, emphasizing that "Comrade Taranov was commissioned to lead the work in this union" (GARF, f. P 393, op. 43 A, d. 1763, l. 20-21). The logical consequence of this letter are the results of the Plenum of the Moscow Gypsies, held on August 6, 1925 (see Minutes No. 1, published above), where Andrey Taranov was elected Chair of the Union, Sergey Polyakov became Vice-President, and Ivan Lebedev – Secretary (members of the VLKSM).

After a long process of coordination between the institutions, the NKVD registered the VSTs on 23.07.1925. There are some significant differences between the Draft-Statute of January 1924 and the Registered Statute, which reflect the differences between the founders of the Union and the Soviet State in their views on the objectives and tasks of the Union. In the Society's Draft-Statute (society was a term used in defining the newly created organisation) from 1924, its primary purpose is:

> the unification of the backward proletarian Gypsy masses on the territory of Moscow Governorate into a society of collective creative labour.

In the Statute from 1925, however, the name of the organisation is already *the Union of Gypsies living on the territory of the RSFSR*, and its main purpose is

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> uniting and organising the Gypsy working masses, living on the territory of the RSFSR, protecting their interests, raising their cultural level, and organising mutual assistance.

There are also differences in the methods of implementation of the planned activities of the Union in both versions. According to the first version, the Society only conducts the main activities of the organisation, whereas, in the second version, it is displayed an opportunity that the Union intercedes with Soviet authorities for the implementation of its provisions, and it is explicitly stressed that "all work is done under the guidance of VTsIK".

The membership of the Union had grown rapidly since the registration of VSTs, and in 1927 and 1928 640 people were counted as its members (Вся Москва, 1927, p. 233; 1928, p. 211). In 1927 a check of the documentation of VSTs was conducted, which found that there were 674 filled membership questionaries, and of them 417 members were living in Moscow (GARF, f. P 1235, op. 140, d. 752, l. 3-4). Of the Union members, 80% were horse dealers in Moscow and 1% rural inhabitants; 19% were estrade artists; 5% were workers. Of these, however, only 82 people paid the membership dues, i.e. according to the rules only they can be considered full members of the Union (GARF, f. P 393, op. 43 A, d. 1763, l. 76).

Interestingly, in the VSTs membership cards on the cover page is written in Russian the slogan "Proletarians of all countries and oppressed peoples of the world, unite!" (a paraphrase of the famous slogan from The Communist Manifesto). Nevertheless, on the inside page of the card the same slogan is written in Romani language, but with quite different content: "Рома сарэ свэтостыр скэндэнтипэ кхэтане" (Roma of all world, unite!).

The Soviet state quickly provided VSTs official premises in the centre of Moscow and a salary for his three leaders. It is interesting to note that the first issue of the journal *Romany zorya* (Gypsy Dawn) presents a photo of the leadership of the VSTs, namely A. Taranov, I. Lebedev, S. Polyakov, and Nina Dudarova (Романы зоря, 1927, No. 1, p. 3). The latter, however, does not occupy a leading position in the Union, i.e. she is presented there in order to demonstrate the equal position of a Gypsy woman. Moreover, after the election of the Union Presidium by the end of the year, its composition had already changed and consisted of five members – A. Taranov, I. Lebedev, S. Polyakov, M. Bezlyudsky, N. Pankov – and three candidate-members – A. Polyakov, G. Lebedev, and a woman, Leontyeva (GARF, f. P 1235, op. 120, d. 27, l. 182).

An organisational department, a cultural department, an ethnographic academic section for the study of the language of the Gypsies, the management of training and production workshops were established at the Central Board of the VSTs. Plenipotentiaries of the Union for different districts of Moscow were also designated (Вся Москва, 1927, p. 233; 1928, p. 211). In addition, Plenipotentiaries were appointed to work in the different regions of the RSFSR too.

In 1927, there were five such Plenipotentiaries – for the North Caucasus Kray, Leningrad Governorate, Tula Governorate, and Pochepsky Uezd in the Bryansk oblast (GARF, f. P 393, op. 43 A, d. 1763, l. 173). Soon after, another Commissioner appeared – Ilya Gerasimov for

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Smolensk oblast (GARF, f. P 1235, op. 120, d. 27). Plenipotentiaries for other Soviet republics were also determined, particularly for Byelorussian SSR and Ukrainian SSR.

In Byelorussia, VSTs plenipotentiary Alexander Grakhovsky prepared the Statute of Union of Gypsies living in the territory of the BSSR (an adapted version of the Statute of VSTs) and presented it for registration before the Republican NKVD on 05.03.1927 (NARB, f. 34/133c, op. 1, d. 727, l. 1). The Statute, however, remained in the archives of the NKVD (Ibid., l. 2-7), without the new Union receiving the registration (in all probability, because of the interim liquidation of the VSTs).

The situation in Ukraine turns out to be more complicated because of the controversial status of the Plenipotentiary of VSTs for the USSR Nikolay Bizev.

At a meeting of the TsKNM VTsUIK of June 16, 1926, it was decided that the question of a possible organisation of the All-Ukrainian Union of Gypsies should be raised. Until the issue was clarified, Saveliy Yali and N. Bizev were tasked with developing a plan of work among Gypsies (NARB, f. 701, op. 1, d. 14, l. 35-35об). Shortly afterwards, an article by N. Bizev (Бизь-Либзи, 1926, p. 3) was published in the local press outlining the activities of the Soviet state and the VSTs for improving the situation of the Gypsies. On July 22, 1926, a new meeting of TsKNM was convened at the VTsUIK, stating that N. Bizev should not go beyond the powers granted to him by TsKNM, and VSTs was informed about the case (NARB, f. 701, op. 1, d. 14, l. 37-38). With this, activities towards the establishment of the Gypsy Union in Ukraine were exhausted, despite N. Bizev's protests to the central authorities in Moscow. This does not mean that the Ukrainian authorities distanced themselves from the problems of the Gypsies. On the contrary, they continued to work actively in this direction, especially for allocating land to those who wished to settle down.

Of interest is the question of whether the Soviet authorities and the Gypsy activists were thinking of unifying the Gypsy Unions existing in the RSFSR, the BSSR, and the USSR at that time into one common for the entire USSR, namely to create an All-Union Gypsy Union. There are no documented confirmations of the existence of such plans, but they cannot be ruled out; on the contrary, it is logical to assume that they existed, at least at the level of ideas. What is certain is that the authorities in the three Soviet republics have constantly exchanged information with each other about Gypsy politics and about the Gypsy unions, which is confirmed by the available archival materials preserved in Belarus (NARB, f. 6, op. 1, d. 1195; f. 701, op. 1, d. 14).

Immediately after its official registration, the VSTs became actively involved in the Soviet policy towards Gypsies. In September 1925 the Central Board of the VSTs appointed Ivan Lebedev as its representative in the ON VTsIK (GARF, f. P 1235, op. 120, d. 27); good relationships were also established with Narkompros and Narkomzem (GARF, f. P 3260, op. 6, d. 44).

In early 1926, the VSTs leadership adopted an ambitious Union Work Plan during the year, as well as a detailed Work Plan for its Cultural Department (GARF, f. P 1235, op. 120, d. 27). In these documents, Gypsy activists outlined their vision concerning the main lines of the state policy regarding Gypsies, including a number of specific ideas. It will not be an exaggeration to say that the main elements of this policy were proposed by the

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Gypsy leaders themselves and implemented by the Soviet institutions with the active participation of Gypsy activists.

At first glance, the co-operation between the VSTs and the Soviet state appeared to be successful and the right balance had been found in relations between the two countries. At the same time, however, the leadership of the VSTs was spending a great deal of time and making considerable efforts in another, additional direction – they tried to go ahead with the development of their own economic and commercial activity – which ultimately turned out to be fatal to the very existence of the Union.

One of the first actions taken by the Presidium of the VSTs after the registration of the Union Statute was the submission of an Application to the VTsIK dated 05.09.1925, which contained a request for an amendment of the just registered Statute. A new Draft Statute has been prepared with amendments that aimed at "giving the union the opportunity to organise production workshops and other enterprises" (GARF, f. A 259, op. 9б, d. 4233, l. 5), i.e. to develop their own economic activity.

This was the beginning of a huge official correspondence, which lasted nearly two and a half years, and which, apart from VSTs, included a number of Soviet leading institutions and their internal structures – VTsIK, TsIK, TsK VKP(b), SNK, NKVD, Moscow authorities, etc. The presentation of this whole epistolary saga could be done in several volumes. It can be said very briefly that some institutions supported the request for amendments to the Statute, others opposed them, and others changed their opinion several times (GARF, f. A 259, op. 9б, d. 4233; f. P 1235, op. 120, d. 27; f. A 259, op. 10б, d. 2253, 39 l.; f. P 393, op. 43 A, d. 1763). In turn, VSTs not only rapidly began to develop a number of economic activities through the so-called production workshops, but continued to make new requests to institutions, e.g. for providing tax benefits to commercial enterprises of the Gypsy Union, for permission to set up a mutual aid fund, to open a cinema, to run a theatrical lottery, etc. (GARF, f. P 1235, op. 120, d. 27; f. A 259, op. 10б, d. 1924; f. P 393, op. 43 A, d. 1763, 136 l.). The new version of the Statute of the VSTs was approved by the NKVD on Jule 15, 1926 (GARF, f. P 393, op. 43A, d. 1763, l. 111-116), and the development of economic and commercial activity by the Union had already been formally resolved. Nevertheless, the problems did not end here but, on the contrary, they widened and deepened further. At the end of the same year, a full audit of the activities of VSTs on behalf of ON VTsIK was executed (GARF, f. P 1235, op. 140, d. 498), followed in the subsequent year by new inspections made by the Moscow Workers and Peasants' Inspectorate (GARF, f. P 393, op. 43 A, d. 1763). The audit found numerous financial violations and even frauds, such as using fake stamps and letterheads with the misuse of the ON VTsIK abbreviature. By using these fake documents, and hiding behind the authority of the institution, loans and deficient materials were obtained, which were then sold on the private market for higher prices, not paying loan interests, non-payment of salaries and insurances, the default of contracts and many other profiteering activities, mainly performed by suspicious 'experts' employed by the VSTs (Ibid.). Because of all these violations, the Chairman of VSTs A. Taranov and Secretary I. Lebedev were sentenced to forced labour for a period of six months,

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but the sentence was not enforced, and A. Taranov also received a party punishment (GARF, f. P 1235, op. 140, d. 498, l. 7-8).

Individual Gypsy activists were also involved in this endless official correspondence, sending memos to different institutions about the problems existing in VSTs, for which they blamed its leaders. The most active in this regard being Mikhail Bezlyudskiy (while serving as an agent at the Moscow Criminal Investigation Department) and Trofim Gerasimov (GARF, f. P 1235, op. 120, d. 27; f. P 1235, op. 140, d. 498; f. P 393, op. 43 A, d. 1763).

Eventually, on May 3, 1927, a decision was made to liquidate the VSTs by APO at TsK VKP(b), but the action was subsequently repeatedly terminated (GARF, f. P 1235, op. 140, d. 498; f. P 1235, op. 140, d. 752). Solutions for continuing the operation of VSTs in other forms were sought, e.g. ON at VTsIK proposed to replace VSTs Chairman A. Taranov with M. Bezlyudskiy (GARF, f. P 1235, op. 140, d. 498). The VSTs, for their part, have made unsuccessful attempts to re-register by replacing the VSTs Presidium with the Board of Founders, which would register as a subsidiary of the VSTs the Society for the Attraction of Gypsies in Labour, which would take over the Union's economic activities (GARF, f. P 393, op. 43 A, d. 1763, 136; f. P 1235, op. 140, d. 498). Meanwhile, NKVD discussed whether to bring the leadership of VSTs to justice (GARF, f. P 393, op. 43 A, d. 1763).

This whole epic concludes with the NKVD Decree of 13th February 1928 to close down the Union of Gypsies living on the territory of the RSFSR. The main reason for its closure was that the Union not only failed to take any steps towards to fulfill its core tasks and was unable to do anything in its work to organise the Gypsy masses; it had also fostered indebtedness to government agencies, organisations and individuals (GARF, f. A 2306, op. 69, d. 1357, l. 9-906).

Both the Memorandums signed by the heads of VSTs, Andrey Taranov, and Ivan Lebedev, which are published above, constitute the last attempts to stop the liquidation of the Union (the first memorandum) and to create a new Gypsy organisation (the second one). But they did not lead to any changes in the decision made and no new Gypsy organisation was actually created. This may seem surprising, but the VSTs leaders were not subjected to any persecution. On the contrary, all of them received positions at the lowest levels of the Soviet nomenclature – especially in the national sections of various publishing houses and in the newly created Gypsy Theatre *Romen*.

An interesting question is the one concerning the reasons for the liquidation of VSTs and whether the allegations of wrongdoing in its activities were not, in fact, a mere pretence for its closure. In its Memorandum, the leadership of the VSTs does not deny any wrongdoing but tries to justify it by emphasizing the Union's need for funds for the development of its activities. The persuasiveness of these justifications and explanations is difficult to assess, but it is undoubtedly a fact that the VSTs did not, in practice, invest any funds earned from its economic and commercial activities for its activities as a public organisation.

Viewed in the discourse of anti-Gypsyism, the liquidation of the VSTs was a repressive measure of the Soviet debt against the Gypsies in the USSR and their activists. The analysis of historical material, however, offers a very different interpretation. The case here is not a change in the strategy of the Affirmative State Policy towards the Gypsies, but only

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a change of the tactics in its implementation. In fact, after the liquidation of the VSTs, the Soviet state took the Gypsy policy entirely in its own hands, and this is when its most impressive results were achieved.

In the late 1920s and early 1930s, Gypsy kolkhozes and artels were established, and Gypsy schools were opened (including a teacher training high school); Gypsy journals and newspapers were published; more than 250 books have been printed in the Romani language (textbooks and various other publications, including works by Gypsy poets, writers, and playwrights); the famous Gypsy Theatre Romen was created, as well as other Gypsy music and dance groups, etc.

Again, Gypsy activists did not stay away from the implementation of this state policy on Gypsies. On the contrary, they continued to be active participants in it. Ivan Tokmakov was attracted to work in ON VTsIK, and he became the central figure of Roma activism; through him, all Gypsy policies were implemented and controlled. In other words, Gypsy activism, and the movement for Roma civic emancipation in general, continued to develop, but in new forms.

Elena Marushiakova and Vesselin Popov

12.2 Publications

12.2.1 *The Gypsies Are Awaking*

Цыгане просыпаются

Вот уже скоро 8-м лет, как все национальные меньшинства, пользуясь правом, добытым пролетарской революцией, строят свою культуру и благополучие.

Но есть одна национальность, которой до сих пор не было уделено должного внимания, это – цыгане. Оборванные, темные, грязные, не видя ни в ком участия, бродят они с места на место, тяжелыми путями добывая себе средства к существованию.

Необходимо уяснить основные причины, вызвавшие такую обособленность этого народа. Являясь выходцами из северо-восточной части Индии, цыгане появились в Европе в 1645 году. Страницы истории их пребывания в Европе говорят о сплошной кровавой расправе, которой подвергались кочующее цыганские племена.

Началом исторической Голгофы цыган является Испания, где за черный цвет лица и [за то, что] умели бегло говорить на нескольких языках их тысячами сжигали на кострах инквизиции в угоду господствующей религии.

“Просвещенное” французское правительство издавало декреты, предписывавшие истребление цыган “огнем и мечем”.

По указу прусского короля предавался немедленной смерти каждый из цыган, вступивший на границу его государства.

В Австро-Венгрии цыгане были обращены в рабство и, работая в рудниках Моравии, на всю жизнь заковывались в цепи, как преступники. Примерам

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“культурных стран” последовала и царская Россия, в которой цыгане появилися в 1700 годах. Помещики изощрялись здесь в искусстве травли цыган собаками, а “христолюбивое” духовенство, не уступая испанской инквизиции, сжигало их на кострах, как еретиков и колдунов.

Ничего, следовательно, мудреного нет в том, что эти люди стали кочевать и замкнулись в своей среде.

Целыми столетиями вкоренилось в их быт кочевничество, а кочевой образ жизни, лишавший их возможности заниматься обычным трудом, заставлял попрошайничать, в крайнем же случае изыскивать средства хотя бы гаданьем, или даже воровством.

Октябрьская революция 1917 года мало отразилась на психологии цыган, внеся лишь существенные изменения в их материальное положение. Лишь только на 6-м году революции всеобщий рост самосознания масс, захвативший самые широкие отсталые слои, коснулся и небольшого количества рожденных революцией застрельщиков новой жизни среди цыганского племени.

Впервые, два года назад, была организована ячейка РЛКСМ цыган, несшая на себе всю тяжесть борьбы за новую жизнь. И уже [в] 1925 году утвержден всероссийский союз цыган, поставивший целью вовлечение цыганских масс в общественную жизнь и уничтожение фактического неравенства, в котором находится наша национальность среди других национальных меньшинств как в политическом, так и культурном, и экономическом отношениях. Впервые за сотни лет именно теперь для цыган настала пора развернуть свои силы, таланты и, как другие нации, проявить все свои дарования в труде и искусстве.

Цыгане просыпаются. Московские цыгане уже проснулись: они открывают всевозможные студии, объединяют все сознательное население цыган и задавшись целью вовлечь в него и всех темных братьев.

Надо помочь цыганам стать народом, равным во всех отношениях с другими народностями, населяющими СССР.

Председатель союза цыган [Андрей] Таранов.
Секретарь Союза [Иван] Лебедев.

∵

The Gypsies Are Awaking

It is already 8 years now that all national minorities, using the right gained by the proletarian revolution, are building their culture and well-being.

But there is one nationality, which until now has not been given due attention, these are Gypsies. Dangling, dark, dirty, not seeing empathy from anyone, they wander from place to place, earning their livelihood in hard ways.

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It is necessary to clarify the main reasons that caused this isolation of this people.

Being originally from the North-Eastern part of India, the Gypsies appeared in Europe in 1645 [1]. The pages of the history of their stay in Europe speak of the continuous massacre that plagued the Gypsy tribes.

The beginning of the historical Golgotha of Gypsies is in Spain, where for their black complexion and for being able to speak several languages fluently, thousands of them were burned at the inquisition bonfires to please the dominant religion.

The "enlightened" French government issued decrees ordering the extermination of Gypsies by "fire and sword."

According to the decree of the Prussian king, each of the Gypsies who entered the border of his state was sentenced to death immediately.

In Austria-Hungary, the Gypsies were enslaved and, working in the mines of Moravia, were chained for life, like criminals. Tsarist Russia followed examples of "cultural countries". The Gypsies there appeared in 1700. Landlords here excelled in the art to persecute Gypsies with baiting dogs, and the "Christ-loving" clergy, not yielding to the Spanish Inquisition, burned them at the bonfires as heretics and witches [2].

Therefore, there is nothing surprising in the fact that these people began to wander and become isolated in their midst.

For centuries, nomadism has rooted in their everyday lives, and the nomadic way of life, which deprived them of the opportunity to do normal work, forced them to beg, in the worst case, to find means at least by fortune-telling, or even theft.

The October Revolution of 1917 had little effect on the psychology of the Gypsies, making only significant changes in their economic situation. Only in the 6th year of the revolution, the overall growth of mass consciousness, which seized the widest backward sections, touched them a little too and the revolution also gave birth to the pioneers of a new life among the Gypsy tribe.

For the first time, two years ago, a Gypsy RLKSM cell was organised, bearing the brunt of the struggle for a new life. And already in 1925, the All-Russian Union of Gypsies was endorsed. Its aim was involving the Gypsy masses in public life and eliminating the actual inequality in which our nationality is located among other national minorities, both politically, culturally and economically. For the first time in hundreds of years, it is now time for the Gypsies to deploy their forces, talents and, like other nations, to display all their talents in work and art.

The Gypsies are awaking. Moscow Gypsies have already woken up: they open all kinds of studios, unite the entire conscious population of Gypsies and aim to draw into them also all the dark brothers.

Gypsies must be helped to become a people equal in all respects with other nationalities inhabiting the USSR.

Chairman of the Union of Gypsies [Andrey] Taranov.
Secretary of the Union [Ivan] Lebedev

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Notes

1. It is not clear what historical information about Gypsies the author is referring to. In any case, the emergence of Gypsies in Europe has been historically documented centuries earlier.
2. There is no historical record of the burning of Gypsies at the stake in Tsarist Russia.

Source: [Таранов, А. & Лебедев, И.] (1925). Цыгане просыпаются. *Известия ЦИК СССР*, An. 9, No. 207 (2540), 1925, September 11, p. 6.
Prepared for publication by Elena Marushiakova and Vesselin Popov.

12.2.2 *About the Work among the Gypsies*

О работе среди цыган

Вот уже скоро 8-м лет, как все национальные меньшинства, пользуясь правом, добытым пролетарской революцией, строят свою культуру и благополучие, стремясь встать наравне с революционным кадром страны.

Восемь лет тяжелой, бесперерывной борьбы с вековыми традициями, унаследованными от царского правительства, произвели большой перелом в жизни отсталых кочевых и полукочевых народов. С каждым годом растет самосознание отсталых народностей и в тех степях, где еще так недавно бродили племена кочевников, теперь выросли громадные земледельческие поселки. И там, где до сих пор не было ни одной школы сейчас уже открываются высшие учебные заведения – рабфаки и т.д.

Политический, культурный и хозяйственный рост общества, несомненно, влечет за собой рост его отдельных элементов. Но есть еще один элемент общества, еще одна национальность, которой до сих пор не было уделено должного внимания. Это – цыгане. [...] [1]

Сущность Советской власти, как Союза рабочих и крестьян всех национальностей, требует равного участия всех национальностей в строительстве хозяйства и государства. Цыгане своим бытом вносят некоторый излом в принцип нашего строительства, а потому, исходя с точки зрения национальной политики, в основе которой лежит: признание равенства и суверенности народов в деле устроения своей судьбы и оказания реальной помощи и в деле хозяйственного и культурного развития отсталых народов необходимо поддержать данную организацию в ее устремлениях, т.к. она является пока еще единственным проводником, могущим выравнять тот излом, вносящий такое несоответствие с национальной политикой Союза ССР.

... [подпись] (И[ван] Лебедев).

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About the work among the Gypsies

It is already 8 years now since all national minorities, using the right gained by the proletarian revolution, have been building their culture and well-being, striving to stand on a par with the country's revolutionary cadre.

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Eight years of hard, uninterrupted struggle with centuries-old traditions inherited from the tsarist government made a great turning point in the lives of backward nomadic and semi-nomadic peoples. Every year, the self-awareness of backward peoples is growing and in the steps where nomadic tribes roamed until recently, huge agricultural settlements have now grown. And where until now there has not been a single school, higher educational institutions are already opening up – rabfaks and so on.

The political, cultural and economic growth of society, of course, entails the growth of its individual elements. But there is another element of society, another nationality, which until now has not been given due attention. These are the Gypsies. […] [1]

The essence of Soviet rule, as a Union of workers and peasants of all nationalities, requires the equal participation of all nationalities in the construction of the economy and state.

Gypsies, by their way of life, make some break in the principle of our construction, and therefore, based on the point of view of the national policy, which is based on the recognition of the equality and sovereignty of peoples in the matter of arranging their destiny and providing real assistance also in the economic and cultural development of backward peoples, it is needed to support this organisation in its aspirations, as it is so far the only conductor capable of levelling out the kink that introduces such a discrepancy with the national policies of the USSR.

… [signature] (Ivan Lebedev) [2].

Notes

1. Here are omitted the passages which are literally repeated in the article published, namely parts about the inadmissibility in the conditions of USSR of Gypsies' distress, the persecution of Gypsies in Western Europe, the October Revolution and the emergence of the Union of Gypsies.
2. The text is not dated, but judging by its content and its place in the chronological ordering of the archival folder, it is likely to be from the autumn of 1925.

Source: GARF, f. P 1235, op. 120, d. 27, l. 183-184.
Prepared for publication by Elena Marushiakova and Vesselin Popov.

12.2.3 *About the Land for Romanyčhave*

А. С. Таранов

Вашо пхув романычявэнгэ

Насыклякирдэ рома сы расчюрдынэ пиро саро свэто тагаренса и ранса. Бут романычявэ и акана лыджяна чёроро и бибахтало джиибэн. На екх шэла бэрш притасадэ сы рома тагаренса и ранса и саро адава времё рома пролыджинэ пэскиро джиибэн пиро фэлды дэ чёрорибэн, бокх и шилалыпэ и чястэс куско маро приджяла тэ рэсэс налачеса дромэса, сыр: тэ вымангэс, тэ выхохавэс, тэ дылнякирэс и тэ чёрес. Нэ, бангэ ли дро адава рома? Логко-ли ромэнгэ тэ пирилыджяс адасаво джиибэн – тэ пролыджяс джиибэн дэ дром, дэ мэл, дэ шыл и дрэ мэлалэ шатры? Кицы ясва и

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дёскиро дукх пирилыджяна би састыпнаскирэнгэ (докторэнгэ) ромня колынытконэнца чаворэнца дэ барэ дрома? сарэ джинэн сыр поджяна тагари и рая кэ сарэ тыкнэ мануша (рома, киргизы, башкиры и ваврэ.

Кана взрипираса набутка оистория ваш ромэнгэ дэ Европа? Ёй сыкавэла, саво джиибэн сыс ромэскэ, сыр приявьяпэ тэ кэрэс пэскиро джиибэн. Трин шэл бэрш палэ дэ Моравия пиро тагарискиро лав каждонэ ромэс, кон закамэл тэ пириджял штэтостыр пэ вавир штэто, тэлэс и тэ умарэс убладяа. Адякэ же дэ адава ж моло тагари прусско Вильгельмо I издыя указо – сарэн чявэн и ромэн пхурыдыр 18 бэршэстыр, коли явэна дэ лэскири пхув, – тэ лэс и тэ ублавэс. Сыс и адасаво указо, собы рома тэ накхарэн пэс романэчявэнса, а Нэво-Венгерценса. Надэнас ромэнгэ тэ лэс пало ром романэчяен, а чяенгэ надэнас тэ джяс палором. Отлэнас тыкночявэн и пиридэнас лэн европейцэнгэ; сыс указы, пиро савэ надэнас тэ ракирес пэ пэскири родны чиб и кон проракирэла пэ романы чиб одолэс хачкирэнас прэ яг, гожонэн чяен вылыджянас прэ тарго и бикнэнас или же парувэнас прэ джюклэндэ, – ракирэнас со рома джинэнапэ бэнгэнца. Адякэ ваш амаро пхаро джиибэн можно тэ чинэс кицы ками.

Тагари и рая присыклякирдэ хэладэн и ваврэ чибэнгирэн манушэн тэ дыкхэн прэ ромэндэ сыр на прэ манушэндэ Рома сыс ачядэ пэ мэрибэ, – собы тэ хасёл романо корнё ...

Ромэнгэ надэнас тэ залэспэ ни савьяса бутяса. Насыс ромэстэ и пэскиро штэто.

Окэ катыр сы адава, со рома дживэна на бутяритконэ джиибнаса и чястэс джяна на чячюнэ дромэса, а хохаибнаса, драбакирибнаса и чёрибнаса. Нэ кай ромэнца обджянаспэ шукар, сыр манушэнса, одой ёнэ адасавэ же, сыр и ваврэ мануша. Адякэ сыс дэ Испания шэл дэша панч бэрш палэ. Одой ромэнгэ дынэ тэ ячавэс фэлдытко джиибэн и тэ пириджяс ко буты. Одой тогда пирьячнэ тэ тэсавэн ромэн и рома сарэ лынэ оправо касаво же сыр и ваврэ мануша испаниякэ. Нэ, адава сыс же ясвин дэ паны – кэжо дадывэс и дэ Испания и дэ ваврэ сарэ пхувья капиталистэнца (барэранса) рома сы притасадэ.

Только дэ Россия Осоветско власть тходя концо рангэ дэ лэнгиро рындо тэ тасавэс сарэ дуечибэнгирэн манушэн. Только Советско власть пригалыя пало ромэндэ адасаво же право, сыр и палэ гачканэ манушэндэ. Советско власть прикхарла сарэн кэ буты ваш пэскэ кэ буты тэ кэрэс Нэви Россия.

Бутяритко власть на обгыя амэн, ромэн, ёй дыя ромэнгэ адасавэ же правы, сыр и ваврэ чибэнгирэнгэ манушэнгэ. Нэ рома амарэ тёмна и на сыклякирдэ (На сыклякирдэн ромэн почти 99%). Амарэ рома на полэна, со дэла Советско власть ромэнгэ. Ешше бут ромэн лыджяна фэлдытко джиибэн. Адава джиибэн каждонэ дывэсостыр ячёла пхарыдыр. Дыкхэнте: пэ тарго государственна грэнгирэ кооперативы вытасавэна таргостыр понабут ромэн – кофарьен. Ромнэн пало драбакирибэн и зумаибэн, закэдэна и штрафуэт. Пэ фабрики и заводы рома на могискирна тэ кэрэн буты, – лэндэ нанэ квалификация, ёнэ сы на сыклякирдэ. Адава и кокорэ шукир полэна. Сожэ тэ кэрэс и сыр дурыдыр тэ дживэн ромэнгэ? Требинэ тэ тховэс

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оконцо адолэскэ, собы рома джиндлэ адякэ, сыр ваврэ мануша. Бутяритко власть надомэкэла, собы рома ячнэпэ дэ нишшёта, чёрорибэн и насыклякирибэн. Амэнгэ же требинэ кокорэнгэ тэ полэс, со сы пэстыр амаро маро и палсо лэс кхарна "локхо маро". Трэбинэ, собы ром перигыя пэ бутяритко джиибэн.

15 Мая бэрш одолэскэ палэ Центрально Исполнительно Комитеты (ЦИК) и Совето Народнонэн Комиссарэн тходя, собы пхувитка отделы лынэпэ тэ пиридэн, ромэнгэ, кон камэл лэндыр, пхув вашо осёдло джиибэн и гавитко хулаибэн.

Адалэ ромэнгэ дэнапэ сарэ льготы, сыр то: тэ переджяс пиро састурно железно дром, кредито (ловэ дэ длуго) пэ бут бэрш – оссуды пэ семяны; вэш и вавир инвентаре и ешше отмэкэнапэ ловэ штар шэл састэ пэ кажно семья пэ хулаибэн; злэна сарэ налоги пэ бут бэрш, налэна-тэ лэн дэ хэладэ, саро адава кэрлапэ ваш адава, собы ром-нэво хулай закэдыя дэ пэстэ зор. Ваш саро адава кэрды дэ Наркомземо Комиссия вашо пхувитко кэраибэн, савьятэ сы буты ваш адава сыр фэдыдыр тэ кэрэс романэчявэскэ джиибэн пэ гавитко пхув.

Адая комиссия кэрды ромэндыр союзостыр. Адая комиссия кана же пучела лылэнса сарэ штэты, кон ромэндыр камэл тэ лэл пхув вашо хулаибэн. Бут рома выбичявэна лыла ваше камаибэ тэ залэспэ гавитконэ хулаибнаса. Всероссийско Романо Союзо рикирла лав кэ сарэ рома, сыр кэ пэскирэ пшала тэ парувэс фэлдытко джиибэн пэ оседло, сыр кэрдэ уже рома хуторoскирэ дэ Сальско округо. Ёнэ перегынэ бэрш одолэскэ палэ пэ пхув. Кэрдэ пэскирэ кхэра, обзалыджинэпэ грэнса и сарэса со требинэ вашо хулаибэн. Адалэ рома чинэна дэ романо союзо лыл, кай ракирна сыр буткэрла ваш ромэнгэ бутяритко власть и мангэна пэскирэн пшалэн сарэн ромэн тэ кэрэн, сыр кэрдэ ёнэ. Бут ромэндыр думинэна а со ёнэ лэна тэ кэрэн пхувьяса, коли бут ромэндыр джинэн гавитко хулаибэн пиро шунаибэн (шундлэ ракирибэн, – окэ и саро). Кана амэ пучяса ромэн, кон дарэла тэ залэлпэ гавитконэ хулаибнаса, сыр же рома хуторостыр скэдынэпэ и кэрна буты дрэ гав? Кон же на патяла дрэ адава, со ром могискирла тэ кэрэл буты, одолэнгэ мэ пхэнава, со бутяритко власть джяла пэ помошшь ромэнгэ – ёй бичявэла агрономэн агрономы сыклякирна сыр треби тэ залэспэ пэ пхув. Коли рома авэна скэдэнэ кхэтанэ вашо буты, сыр рома хуторостыр, тогда налэна тэ дыкхэн пэ ромэндэ сыр пэ лишнбнэндэ, савэндыр нанэ нисави польза. Амэнгэ требинэ тэ кэрэс адякэ, собы амаро лав "романочяво" насыс кошыбнаскирэса лавэса, ваш со амэнгэ требинэ тэ ячес савэ нибудь бутяренса, амэнгэ требинэ тэ кэрєс буты кхэтанэ гадженса вашо социалистическо госурарство. Бутярискэ локхыдыр тэ борисос тёмнотаса и локхыдыр тэ сыклякирэс и тэ газдэс чяворэн. Только осёдлостяса амэ зласа мэлалыпэ пэстыр, саво сыс тходо пэ амэндэ барэранса.

Романо Союзо мангэла сарэн ромэн тэ чинэс лыла ваш адава: со надэла ромэскэ тэ ачявэс фэлдытко джиибэн, сыр тэ пириджяс пэ осёдлость. – Пэ сарэ лыла Романо Союзо лэла тэ дэл ответы.

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A. S. Taranov

About the Land for Romanyčhave [1]

Illiterate Roma have been scattered all over the world by kings and lords. Many Romanečhave still lead their poor and miserable lives. For several centuries, Roma people were oppressed by kings and lords; and all that time Roma spent their lives in the fields suffering from poverty, hunger and cold; and it is often necessary to get a piece of bread in illegal ways, such as: to beg, to get something by deceit and trick and to steal. But are the Roma guilty of that? Is it easy for Roma to endure such a life – to spend life on the road, in the mud, in the cold and in their dirty tents? How many tears and heartache do the Roma women with their nursing babies suffer on long roads without physicians (doctors)? Everyone knows how the Tsar and lords treat all small Nations (Roma, Kyrgyz, Bashkirs and others).

Now let's remember a little from the history of Roma in Europe? It teaches us what life was like for any Rom, how he had to live his life. Three hundred years ago, in Moravia, by a Royal order, every Roma person who wanted to move from one place to another was detained and executed on the gallows. Also in a similar case, king William I of Prussia issued a decree – all Roma boys and men – aged over 18 years, if they arrive on his land, were to be detained and hung. There was such a decree that Roma shouldn't call themselves Romanečhave, but new-Hungarians. Roma were not allowed to marry Roma girls, and Roma girls were not allowed to marry them. Small children were taken from and delivered them to the Europeans; there were the decrees which were not allowed to speak their native language, and those who spoke in the Romani language, were burned in the fire; beautiful Roma girls were taken to market and sold or exchanged for dogs, – it was said that Roma are acquainted with devils. Thus, about our hard life, you can write as much as necessary.

The Tsar and the lords taught Russians and people who spoke other languages to regard Roma as not human beings. Roma were given to the slaughter – to perish the Roma root …

Roma were not allowed to do any business. There was no place to call his own for a Rom.

Here is where the fact that Roma do not live working lives and often do not go by a legal way, but by deception, fortune-telling and theft comes from. But in places where Gypsies were treated as human beings, they were just as good as other people. This was the case in Spain, a hundred and fifty years ago. There Roma were allowed either to continue their nomadic life or go to work. The Roma were then no longer oppressed, and all Roma got the same right as the rest of the Spanish people. But, it was just one teardrop in the ocean – until today in Spain and in all other lands Roma are still oppressed by the capitalists (big masters).

Only in Russia, the Soviet government put an end to the lords in keeping up the oppression of all bilingual people. Only the Soviet authorities recognised Roma as having the same right as non-Roma people. The Soviet government calls on everyone to work for themselves, to work to create a New Russia.

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The workers' power has not bypassed us, Roma, it has given Roma the same rights as people who speak other languages. But our Roma are ignorant and illiterate (illiterate Roma are almost 99%). Our Roma do not understand what the Soviet government gives the Roma. Many more Roma are leading a nomadic life. This life is getting harder every day. Let's have a look: in the market, the state horse-trading cooperatives little by little push the Roma horsedealers out of the market. Roma women are detained and fined for divination and fortune-telling. In factories and plants Roma cannot work – they have no qualifications, they are uneducated. They themselves would also do well to understand it. What do Roma have to do and how can they continue their lives? It is necessary to put an end to that, and make the Roma live a life much like that of other people. The workers' power will not allow Roma to remain in the practice of begging, in poverty and in ignorance. We ourselves, Roma, have to understand what our bread really is and why it is called "easy bread". It is necessary that a Rom will transit to the worker's life.

On the 15th of May, a year ago, the TsIK and the SNK decided that the land departments should give land for settled life and agriculture to Roma – to those who wished to do so.

These Roma are given all the benefits, such as: moving by railway, credit (money in debt) for many years – loans for seeds; wood [2] and other equipment and even released money of 400 rubles for each family on the farm; removed all taxes for many years, not taking them as soldiers, all this is offered to Roma – the new owners – in order to help them gain strength. For all this, a Commission on land management was established in the Narkomzem, whose work concerns making the Romani life on rural land better.

This Commission is created from the Roma of the Union. This Commission is now requesting letters from all regional places where Roma want to get land for farming. Many Roma send their letters about their desire to practice agriculture. The all-Russian Roma Union appeals to all Roma, as their brothers, to change the nomadic life to a settled one, much like the Roma that have already settled on the khutor in the Salskiy Okrug [3]. They moved to land a year ago. They built their homes, got horses and all that is necessary for agriculture. These Roma wrote a letter to the Roma Union saying how much the workers' power is doing for Roma and asking all their Roma brothers to do the same as they did. Many of the Roma think of what they will do with the land, as many of the Roma do not know agriculture firsthand (they have heard of it in conversation – that's all). Now we ask Roma who are afraid to practice agriculture: how do the Roma from the khutor manage to gather and succeed to work in the village? To those who do not believe that the Rom can work, to them I will say that the workers' power goes to help the Roma – it sends agronomists; agronomists teach how to work on the land. When the Roma are gathered together for labour, like the Roma from the khutor, then they will look at the Roma as superfluous/unnecessary men, from whom there is no benefit. We need to make sure that our name romanočavo is not an abusive word, it is why we need to become some sort of workers, we need to work together with *gadže* for the socialist state. It is easier for the worker to fight the darkness and it is easier to teach and raise children. Only being sedentary will they be able to remove from themselves the filth that was thrown on us by the great lords.

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The Roma Union asks all Roma to write letters about what prevents Roma to give up nomadic life, and to move to a sedentary way of life. – All letters will be answered by the Roma Union.

Notes

1. The author used the term Roma along with word *Romanyčhave* (children of Roma) as designation of his own people. The latter term is used in the title of the article and later it reflects a nuance which underlines that Roma are a nation. It is worth noting here that this and similar variants of community designation could be found in Crimea (Marushiakova & Popov, 2004, p. 155), and also in other parts of the world (Piasere, 2019, pp. 85-118).
2. It means timber for housing and outbuildings.
3. Reference to the collective agricultural unit in the khutor Krikunovo (see later). *Khutor* is term used for designation of type of rural settlement, unit composed by several homesteads. In Cossaks land with this term refers to describe new settlements detached from stanitsas.

Source: Таранов, А. С. (1927). Вашо пхув романычявэнгэ. *Романы зоря*, An. 1, No. 1, pp. 4-6.
Prepared for publication by Elena Marushiakova and Vesselin Popov.
Translated by Viktor Shapoval.

12.2.4 *What to Do with the Gypsies?*

Что делать с цыганами?

Немного цыганской истории

В продолжение тысячелетнего странствования цыгане были настоящими париями (бесправными, презираемыми). Их изгоняли из городов, запрещали им приобретать землю, обращали в рабство, воспрещали браки между собой, отбирали детей и передавали их на воспитание духовенству и даже не позволяли им говорить на родном языке.

Средневековая Европа подвергала цыган самым жестоким пыткам: сожжение на кострах, колесование, вырывание ноздрей и ряд всевозможных мук, изобретенных благочестивыми инквизиторами.

Это все было в далеком прошлом. Обратимся теперь к примеру наших дней. В 1927 году в Чехо-Словакии устроили суд над цыганами, заподозренными в … людоедстве. Хотя суд и не нашел никаких улик, однако осудил цыган, но уже за бродяжничество. А вот еще свежий пример в словацкой деревни Победим в сентябре прошлого года кулаки во главе с бургмистром предприняли “карательную экспедицию” против цыганского табора, заподозренного в конокрадстве. “Карательная экспедиция” истребила около 25 мужчин, женщин и детей, а в заключение подожгла со всех сторон табор.

Корни антицыганизма

Ненависть к цыганам переходит из рода в род. Их называют “проклятым племенем” Почему же создалось такое отношение к ним?

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Вернемся коротко к средневековью, когда цыгане впервые явились из Индии в Европу.

Легкий зароботок, добываемый гаданием, лечебой и театральными представлениями, не располагал цыган к труду. Переезды из одной местности в другую выработали у них еще и другие отличительные черты характера: непостоянство, лень и беспечность. Вот почему шаг за шагом остывало и радушное отношение к ним: ворожба и лечеба не помогали, гадание не оправдывалось, однообразные представления приелись.

Терпя постоянную нужду и голод, цыгане занялись попрошайничеством, надувательством и конокрадством. Тогда их стали ненавидеть и гнать повсюду.

В чем же обвиняют теперь цыган? Говорят по-старинке, что все они – конокрады и воры.

Но нельзя бросать огульные обвинения всей цыганской народности.

И если существщют таборы конокрадов, то имеются и таборы, состоящие из тружеников: медников, лудильщиков и кузнецов. Таборы барышников, торговцев лошадями сами не могут ужиться с таборами конокрадов, из за соседства с ними они часто меняют стоянки.

Угнетение и преследование цыган во все времена и всюду оттолкнули их от организованного населения, лишили тех преимуществ, которые имели люди оседлой культуры. И в результате, большая часть цыган даже в наших, советских условиях до сих пор не может выйти из того тупика, в который их загнала история.

Мероприятия советской власти

Октябрьская революция, освободившая все малые народности, поставила перед нами задачу – включить цыган в семью трудящихся, вовлечь их в производство и строительство социалистического общества.

Одним из мероприятий в этом направлении является землеустройство цыган. 20 февраля прошлого года было издано постановление ВЦИК и СНК РСФСР о наделении землей цыган переходящих к трудовому оседлому образу жизни.

Наркомземом разослана инструкция на места – земельными органам, которым вменяется в обязанность особые заботы уделять землеустройству цыган и оказывать им в этом всевозможное содействие.

Цыгане, устраивающееся в порядке расселения, получают ссуду и иные виды помощи от государства за счет сметы по землеустройству.

За последнее время в земельные органы поступает большое количество писем-заявлений и являются цыгане-ходоки. Это свидетельствует о большой тяге цыган к оседлому образу жизни.

По скудным газетным сообщениям из Ленинграда, Воронежа, Твери, Калуги, Смоленска, Читы и других городов можно отметить, что почти во всех районах СССР на выделеных земельных участках таборные цыгане уже строят сельские поселения. В Молдавской республике почти тысяча цыган перешла на

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оседлость. Отведенные крупные участки на Украине заселяются цыганами. Около Харькова, Запорожья, Мариуполя, Армавира и Витебска цыгане основали колхозы. Образцовое ведения хозяйства на цыганском хуторе в Северо-Кавказском крае говорит о том, что цыгане садятся на землю крепко и надолго.

Наблюдается тяга таборных цыган и к производству. На биржу труда являются цыгане с предложением рабочей силы. На заводах Москвы можно встретить квалифицированных рабочих и работниц из цыган. В Москве и в провинции организовываются производственные артели. Отметим большую заботу, которую уделяют цыганам горсоветы Симферополя и Самарканда. Благодаря им цыгане имеют школы на родном языке, ликбезы, красные уголки, производственные артели, кооперативные курсы и т.д. Между прочим в Симферополе цыгане во время перевыборов советов имели свой национальный избирательный участок.

Особые внимание уделяет цыганам комиссия по работе среди нацменьшинств Рогожско-Симоновского райкома в Москве. Благодаря ей за короткое время был основан цыганский клуб, где работает ряд кружков, открыты школа, ликбез, организованы звенья пионеров и т.п. Следовало бы Краснопресненскому райкому равняться по Рогожско-Симоновскому. Краснопресненский райком до сих пор не уделил этому должного внимания, несмотря на то, что в его районе проживает значительное количество русских, болгарских и румынских цыган, требующих культурной работы.

Отметим одно знаменательное явление: странствующий народ, не имевший до сих пор писаменность, обрел в 1927 году свой печатный орган-журнал на родном языке “Романы зоря”. Издание журнала на цыганском языке сплотило коллектив начинающих писателей из цыган, и уже имеется ряд произведений, являющихся началом подлинной цыганской художественной литературы.

Сучки и задоринки

Кочевые цыгане знают хорошо, что царизм и сменившая его керенщина не особенно интересовалась их нищенским положением и что советская власть по самой природе вспомнила обо всех обездоленных цыганах. Но мало того, что вспомнила: советская власть приняла ряд мер по улучшению их положения, по оздоровлению их быта.

Одна беда: на местах еще не отказались от дикого представления о цыганах и бессознательного враждебного отношения к ним, как это было в Софиевском районе, где кулаки, стремясь воспрепятствовать основанию цыганского колхоза, пытались пустить в ход дубинки против цыган (“Красное Запорожье”, 26 мая 1928 г.).

Цыган всюду преследует гнилой царский антицыганизм, несмотря на то, что имеются теперь факты, которые служат доказательством того, что цыгане становятся образцовыми хлеборобами и хорошими соседями. Так, в Сальском округе цыгане-хуторяне так сдружились с крестьянами ближних деревень, что породнились и помогают друг другу в обработке полей.

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Еще одна беда. Существует у цыган кочевой телеграф, служащий с давних времен ради самозащиты, для передачи от табора к табору самых разнообразных тревожных вестей. И если пронесется по таборам весть о грубом и даже невнимательном отношении местных органов к ходатайству цыган об отводе земли, то после не помогут никакие увещевания возобновить свои хлопоты.

Наблюдается еще и такое явление. Земельные органы, чтоб установить количество цыган, желающих перейти на оседлость, сговариваются с районной милицией, которая явившись в табор, административным порядком переписывает всех цыган. Недоверчивые цыгане тотчас после опроса откочевывают в другую губернию, опасаясь ареста. Пережиток таково недоверия цыган к “начальству” укоренился с царских времен.

Нужно принять все меры к тому, чтобы изжить эти недочеты и избавиться от дикой антицыганщины, зная, что на наших глазах целая народность, имеющая наравне с другими права на трудовую жизнь, отказывается навсегда от прошлого бродяжничества.

Институт уполномоченных и разъяснительная кампания

Следует широко повести разъяснительную работу среди цыган, объяснять им мероприятия советской власти. Эту работу надо возложить на избачей, заведующих домами крестьянина, агрономов и сельские ячейки. На постоялом дворе, в чайной, избе-читальне, сельсовете должен быть плакат на родном языке цыган, разъясняющий вопросы перехода их на оседлость. Нужны плакаты и для населения, чтобы не было ложного представления о народе, многовековое бродяжничество которого требует широкой помощи.

Помимо этого, ценным будет создание института уполномоченных.

В каждом более или менее крупном цыганском поселке было бы весьма целесообразно избирать из среды цыган уполномоченного, пользующегося доверием среди цыган. Таких уполномоченных необходимо снабжать инструкциями, справками и агитационной литературой. Кочевой телеграф быстро разнесет весть об организации уполномоченных, и цыгане охотно, без всякой боязни и недоверия, будут останавливаться у выборного цыгана, который на родном языке даст им совет, в затруднительном случае явится для них проводником и связующим звеном с местными учреждениями.

Наболевший вопрос – централизация

С учреждением института уполномоченных потребуется централизация их. Создание цыганского центра является наболевшим вопросом для кочевых и даже оседлых цыган. Можно было бы привести большое количество мелких вопросов, которые тормозят советизацию цыган и требуют срочного разрешения.

Бывший союз цыган, вследствие ряда неблагоприятных причин, должен был ликвидироваться: он не оправдал поставленных им перед собой целей и задач

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отчасти из-за отсутствия средств, отчасти из-за неумелой постановки массовой работы. Однако надо признать, что, несмотря на его несостоятельность, он являлся для цыган, обнадеживающим центром, как родной орган, цель которого – приобщить беспомощных цыган к новой жизни.

Отсутствие такого центра весьма заметно. Разнообразная переписка цыган распыляется по различным учреждениям. Не понимая особенностей кочевого народа, учреждения не глубоко подходят при разрешении возникающих вопросов и решают по-своему. Сговориться же по какому-либо бытовому явлению этим учреждениям не с кем, и получается, что один и тот же случай получает различное разрешение в однородных учреждениях.

Или вот. Издается журнал. Центроиздат не знает как его распределить. Запрашивает Наркомпрос, а Наркомпрос тоже не знает. И в результате цыгане живущие в Марьиной роще в Москве, только недавно узнали с наших слов, что имеются и журнал, и букварь и выпускаются книжки на цыганском языке. Для чего же тратятся средства, если вся продукция издательства лежит и пылится на складе?

Во многих местах раздаются голоса об открытии цыганских школ, организации артелей и ряде экономических и культурных начинаний, но местные учреждения, несмотря на заметки в провинциальной прессе, еле шевелятся или совершенно остаются глухи.

Невнимательное и небрежное отношение на местах, отсутствие центрального руководства самих цыган – все это тормозит проведение мероприятий советской власти, отталкивает цыган от оседлой жизни, и они ради пропитания, ради мало-мальски сносного существования возвращаться к таким средствам, как попрошайничество, конокрадство, ворожба, гадание и всевозможные надувательства.

Нужна широкая общественная и государственная помощь.

Проходить мимо цыганского вопроса нельзя. Пора соответствующим органам поставить немедленно во всей полноте цыганский вопрос, чтобы раз навсегда установить твердые организационные формы для выкорчевывания исторических корней жизни и быта цыган.

Г. Лебедев и А. Герман

От редакции. Редакция считает вполне своевременным широко поставить вопрос о жизни и быте цыган в СССР. Предложения тт. Лебедева и Герман далеко не исчерпывают всего возможного и в ряде случаев еще являются спорными (цыганский центр). Редакция обращается ко всем нацменработникам и к трудящимся цыганам высказаться по затронутым вопросам.

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What to Do with the Gypsies?

A bit of Gypsy history

Throughout the thousand-year wandering, the Gypsies were real pariahs (disenfranchised, despised). They were expelled from the cities, they were forbidden to acquire land, they were enslaved, they forbade marriages among them, they took away their children and passed them on to the clergy, and did not even allow them to speak their native language.

Medieval Europe subjected the Gypsies to the cruelest tortures: burning at the stake, wheeling, tearing out the nostrils and a number of all kinds of torments invented by the pious inquisitors.

It was all in the distant past. Let us turn now to the example of our days. In 1927, a trial was conducted in Czechoslovakia over Gypsies suspected of … cannibalism [1]. Although the court did not find any evidence, he condemned the Gypsies, but already for vagrancy. And here is a fresh example from the Slovak village of Pobedim in September, last year, when kulaks led by the mayor launched a "punitive expedition" against a Gypsy camp suspected of horse-stealing. The "Punitive Expedition" annihilated about 25 men, women and children, and finally burned the camp from all sides [2].

The roots of anti-Gypsyism

Hatred of the Gypsies passes from generation to generation. They are called the "damned tribe." Why was such an attitude be created towards them? Let us return briefly to the Middle Ages, when Gypsies first appeared from India to Europe. Light income, received from fortune-telling, healing and theatrical performances, did not push Gypsies to work. Moving from one locality to another they also developed other distinctive character traits: inconstancy, laziness and carelessness. That is why, step by step, the cordial attitude towards them was cooling down: magic and healing did not help, fortune-telling did not come true, uniform repetitions of performances became boring. Suffering constant need and hunger, the Gypsies engaged in begging, swindle and horse-stealing. Then they began to be hated and driven out from everywhere.

What are the Gypsies now accused of? They say in the old way that they are all horse thieves and thieves. But you can not throw such sweeping accusations over the entire Gypsy nation.

And if there are camps of horse thieves, then there are also camps consisting of workers: cupper-makers, tinkers and blacksmiths. The tabora of merchants, horse-dealers cannot get along with encampments of horse thieves, and because of the proximity to their camps, they often need to change their stoping sides.

The oppression and persecution of Gypsies in all times and everywhere pushed them away from the organised population, deprived them of the advantages that people of a settled culture had. And as a result, most of the Gypsies, even in our Soviet conditions, still cannot get out of the deadlock into which history has driven them.

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Actions of the Soviet government

The October Revolution, which liberated all small nationalities, set a task for us – to include Gypsies in the family of workers, to involve them in the production and construction of a socialist society.

One of the activities in this direction is solving the Gypsies' land issue. On February 20 last year, a decree was issued by the VTsIK and the SNK of the RSFSR on the allocation of land to Gypsies who are transitioning to a settled way of life.

Narkomzem sent an instruction to localities – to the land authorities, which are charged with the duty of giving special care to the land allocation for Gypsies and to provide them with all possible assistance.

Gypsies, in order to arrange settlement receive loans and other assistance from the state budget at the expense of land management.

Recently, a large number of application letters have come to the land authorities and are coming from the Gypsy *khodoki*. This indicates a great attraction of the Gypsies to a sedentary lifestyle.

According to scarce newspaper reports from Leningrad, Voronezh, Tver, Kaluga, Smolensk, Chita and other cities, it can be noted that in almost all areas of the USSR on the allocated land plots, the nomadic Gypsies are already building rural settlements [3]. In the Republic of Moldova [4], almost a thousand Gypsies became settled. Allocated large areas in Ukraine are populated by Gypsies. Near Kharkov, Zaporozhye, Mariupol, Armavir and Vitebsk, Gypsies founded kolkhozes [5]. An exemplary Gypsy agricultural hamlet in the North Caucasus region suggests that Gypsies settled on the ground firmly and permanently.

There is a craving of Tabor Gypsies for production. Gypsies with a supply of labour are on the labour exchange. At the factories in Moscow, you can meet skilled workers men and women from the Gypsies. Production artels are organised in Moscow and in the provinces. We should note the great care that the city councils of Simferopol and Samarkand devote to Gypsies. Thanks to them, Gypsies have schools in their native language, educational programs, red corners, artels, cooperative courses, etc. By the way, in Simferopol, Gypsies during the re-election of the soviets had their own national polling station.

Special attention is paid to the Gypsies by the commission for work among the national minorities of the Rogozh-Simonovsk Raykom in Moscow. Thanks to it, a Gypsy club was founded in a short time, with a number of workshops, a school, likbez, pioneer groups are organised, etc. Krasnopresnensky raykom should follow the example of the Rogozhsko-Simonovks. Krasnopresnensky raykom has not yet paid due attention to this, despite the fact that a significant number of Russian, Bulgarian and Romanian Gypsies [6] who require cultural work live in its district.

We note one significant phenomenon: the wandering people, who until now did not have a written language, founded in 1927 their own printed organ – a journal in their native language *Romany zorya*. The publication of the magazine in the Gypsy language rallied a team of aspiring Gypsy writers, and there are already a number of works that are the beginning of genuine Gypsy literature.

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Complications and problems

Nomadic Gypsies are well aware that the tsarist government and his successor Kerenshchina [7] are not particularly interested in their miserable situation, and that the Soviet power, because of its character, has thought about all the disadvantaged Gypsies. But not only that, the Soviet government took a number of measures to improve their situation, to improve their life.

One misfortune: the localities have not yet abandoned the wild perception of Gypsies and unconscious hostility towards them, as was the case in the Sofyevsky rayon, where the kulaks, trying to prevent the founding of the Gypsy kolkhoz, tried to use bludgeons against the Gypsies (Красное Запорожье, 1928, p. 3).

Gypsies everywhere are persecuted by rotten tsarist anti-Gypsyism, despite the fact that there is now evidence that proves that Gypsies become exemplary good growers and good neighbours. So, in the Salsky district, Gypsies from the khutor became so friendly with the peasants of neighbouring villages that they became related and help each other in cultivating the fields.

Another misfortune.

Gypsies have a nomadic telegraph, which has been serving since ancient times for the sake of self-defence, for transmitting from camp to camp a wide variety of troubling news. And if the news of the gross and even inattentive attitude of local authorities to the Gypsies' request for land allotment runs through the camps, then no exhortations will help further.

There is also such a thing. The land authorities, in order to establish the number of Gypsies who wish to settle down, collaborate with the district police, who, having appeared on the camp, administratively count all Roma. The incredulous Gypsies immediately after the poll migrate to another province, fearing arrest. A relic of such a distrust of the Gypsies towards the "authorities" has been rooted since imperial times.

We must take all measures to get rid of these shortcomings and get rid of the wild anti-Gypsyism, knowing that before our eyes a whole nation, which, along with others, has the right to toiling life, forever refuses the past vagrancy.

Institute of Plenipotentiaries and Explanatory Campaign.

Explanatory work among the Gypsies should be widely carried out, and the actions of the Soviet government should be explained to them. This work should be assigned to the heads of reading rooms, to the heads of the houses of the peasant, agronomists and rural units. There should be a poster in Gypsy mother tongue at the inn, in the tea house, in the reading room, at the village council, explaining the issues of their transition to a settled way of life. Posters are also needed for the population so that there is no false perception of a nation whose centuries-old vagrancy requires widespread assistance.

In addition, the creation of an institution of plenipotentiaries will be valuable.

In each more or less large Gypsy settlement, it would be very advisable to elect from among the Gypsies an authorised person who is trusted among Gypsies. Such authorised persons must be provided with instructions, informational leaflets and propaganda

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literature. The nomadic telegraph will quickly spread the word about the organisation of the plenipotentiaries, and the Gypsies will willingly, without any fear or mistrust, approach the elected Gypsy, who will give them advice in their native language, and in a difficult case they will be guided and a linked with local institutions.

A sore point – centralisation.

With the establishment of the institution of plenipotentiaries, its centralisation will be required. The creation of a Gypsy centre is a sore point for nomadic and even sedentary Gypsies. One could cite a large number of small issues that impede the sovietisation of Gypsies and require urgent resolution. The former union of Gypsies, due to a number of unfavourable reasons, had to be liquidated: it did not justify its goals and objectives, partly due to lack of funds, partly due to the inept staging of mass work. However, it must be admitted that, despite its failure, it was for the Gypsies an encouraging centre, as a native organ, whose goal was to introduce the helpless Gypsies to a new life.

The absence of such a centre is very noticeable. A diverse correspondence of Gypsies is sprayed across various institutions. Not understanding the features of the nomadic people, institutions are not deeply suited to resolve issues and decide in their own way. There is no one to talk about any domestic phenomenon with these institutions, and it turns out that the same case gets different permission in institutions of the same rank.

Or look. A journal is being published. The central publisher does not know how to distribute it. Asks Narkompros, but Narkompros also does not know. As a result, the Gypsies living in the Marina Roshcha in Moscow, only recently learned from our words, that there are journal and ABC and that books are produced in the Romani language. Why is the money spent if all the publishing house's products lie and gather dust in the warehouse?

In many places, voices are heard about the opening of Gypsy schools, the organisation of artels and a number of economic and cultural undertakings, but local institutions, despite notes in the provincial press, barely move or are completely deaf.

The inattentive and careless attitude on the ground, the lack of a central leadership of the Gypsies themselves – all this impedes the conduct of the activities of the Soviet government, pushes the Gypsies away from a settled life, and for the sake of food, for the sake of a bearable existence, they should return to such means as begging, horse-stealing, witchcraft, fortune-telling and all kinds of tricks. We need widespread public and state assistance.

It is impossible to pass by the Gypsy question. It is time for the relevant authorities to immediately raise the Gypsy question in its entirety in order to establish firm organisational forms for uprooting the historical roots of the economy and of the Gypsy mode of life.

G. Lebedev and A. German

From the journal. The journal considers it quite timely to raise widely the question of economy and the mode of life of Gypsies in the USSR. The proposals of comrades Lebedev and German are far from exhausting everything possible and in some cases are

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still controversial (Gypsy centre). The editors appeal to all natsmen-workers [8] and to toiling Gypsies and asks them to say their opinion on the raised questions.

Notes

1. It refers to the trial in Košice (then in Czechoslovakia), which began in 1924, in which 19 Gypsies were accused of cannibalism; the process had been going on for almost five years and in the end the defendants were acquitted.
2. It refers to the Anti-Gypsy pogrom in Pobedim (then in Czechoslovakia) on the 1st of October 1928, in which local Slovak villagers killed four adults and two children.
3. Hereinafter reference is to successes achieved by the Soviet state in land allocation and sedentarisation of Gypsies. However, their pointed achievements are rather exaggerated. Such processes did take place in fact, but the results obtained were quite modest.
4. It is referring to the Moldovan Autonomous Soviet Socialist Republic (MASSR), which was part of the Ukrainian SSR, which existed from 1924 to 1940.
5. The umbrella term 'kolkhoz' here (hereinafter) means any form of agricultural collective. In the 1920s, there were three such types of collective land cultivation, with some differences between them – *tovarishchestvo* (from *товарищ* – 'comrade', 'comradehood'), artel and communa; in the 1930s in the process of mass collectivization of agriculture there are only artels that begin to be called kolkhozes.
6. The mentioned Russian, Bulgarian and Romanian Gypsies, refers to internal group division of Roma people, as Russian Gypsies means *Ruska Roma* groups and Bulgarian and Romanian Gypsies means subgroups of the *Kelderari* group, which arrive through different routes to the Russian lands from Bulgaria and Romania.
6. Kerenshchina (*Керенщина*) – this term refers to the Russian Provisional government headed by Alexander Fyodorivich Kerensky being in power from February to October revolution 1917.
7. A 'natsmen-worker' (*нацменработник*) is a Soviet official working on the problems of national minorities.

Source: Лебедев, Г. & Герман, А. (1929). Что делать с цыганами? *Комсомольская правда*, An. 5, No. 209 (1296), 1929, September 11, p. 4.
Prepared for publication by Elena Marushiakova and Vesselin Popov.

12.2.5 *About the Political-Educational Work*

Г. Лебедево

Ваше полит-воспитааельно буты

Дрэ амари партия вчивэнапэ нэвэ тысенцы тэрнэн пролетариен. Адалэ тэрнэ Ленинцы бангэ тэґаздэн адалэ задачи, савэ тходя ангил пэстэ амари партия, амари строна.

Амари бида, – чиндя Ленино – сы дро адава, со амэ думинаса саро тэкэрас пэскирэ зорьяса.

Амэндэ баро наухтылыбэ; – наухтыла бутярен, а амэ наджинас сыр лэн тэлэс бутяритконэ и гавитконэ рядэндыр, а дрэ адалэ ряды ракхэнапэ бут таланты административна и организаторска.

Адякэ ракирдя Ленино пэскирэ партиякэ еньке дрэ пора, коли амэндэ насыс 5 бэршытко плано, кана дрэ пора 5 бэршытконэ планос партия адая задачя тховэла

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ангил пэстэ. Ваш адава собы тэпролыджяс адава плано ангил сарэстыр сы треби мануша и адасавэ мануша, савэ сы чячюнэс придынэ бутяритконэ классоскэ, савэ полэна кэ со лыджяла партия. Баро, сыр николи, ни дрэ сави строна, соцыалистическо строительство, баро колхозно фронто заухтылдя сарэ народности, сарэ учястки, адай заухтылдо и романо учястко. Рома бэшэна прэ пхув вчивэнапэ дрэ коммуны и колхозы, – ваврэ лавэнца тэ пхэнэс – организуются дрэ кхэтанэ коллективна гавитка хулаибэ; рома на джяна прэ екхджинытко розчюрдынэ гавитко хулаибэ, а адасаво коллективно хулаибэн ужэ поджяла ко соцыалистическо форма.

Паладава рома, савэ сы организована дро адасавэ кхэтанякирдэ хулаибэ, поджяна близко ко пролетариато и интересо пролетариатос кэрлапэ лэнгирэ интересоса. Адякэ жэ и дро форо забиянэлапэ и формируются романо пролетариато.

Чячё нашты тэпхэнэс со бут ромэн вчидэпэ дро заводско и фабрично производство, нэ ёнэ джяна дрэ коммуны, кооперация и артель и адава выльджяла ромэн про нэво коммунистическо дром, пшалакирла лэн гаджчканэ пролетариатоса.

Нэ треби тэнабистрэс, со машкир ромэндэ, сыр и гаджендэ сы барвалюки сы и чёрорэ; кулаки и чёрорэ, и, адава классово расслоениё машкир ромэндэ могискирла тэзарикирэл адава движениё и тэнасвалякирэл одолэ достижения савэ амэндэ исы дро обшшё романо строительство.

Николи еньке рома, сыр народо, надыкхнэ и напириджиндлэ адасавэ тасаибэ пэскирэ и гаджканэ кулакэндыр сыр адава, машкир гаджендэ сыс, а дрэ ваврэ пхувья сы и акана эксплоатацыя. Эксплоатацыяса кхарлапэ одова, коли екх мануш сы дрэ васта ваврэстэ и кэрла буты на ваш пэскэ, а ваш одолэскэ, конэстыр ёв лэла на одова, со лэскэ пригинэлапэ, а кицы лэскэ выдэлапэ хуласа. Так окэ адасави эксплоатацыя может тэ явэл машкир ромэндэ, машкир амэндэ нанэ бутярэн и ран, нэ сатаки и машкир амэндэ сы чёрорэ рома сы и барвалюки и нанэ пхарэс тэ удыкхэс сыр екх ром тасавэла ваврэс пэскирэ кисыкаса, – кай кисык одой и зор.

Адая зависимость сы дыкхны дрэ адава со чёрорипэ лыджялас про тарго напэскирэс грэс, а грэн, савэн дэлас барвало ром. Сы адая зависимость и дрэ барэ амэрэ таборы, кай еньке рикирнапэ пэскирэ бурмистры акана же эксплоатацыя прилэла ваврэ формы и адалэ формы эксплоататорэнгэ янэна кофо бутыдыр сыр адава сыс дро пхуранэ бэрша и лэнгиро скэмпима барьёла бутыдыр. Кулаки сарэ зорьяса прилэнапэ тэтасавэн романо гавитко бутяритко чёрорипэ. Амэ дыкхаса сыр рома вчивэнапэ дро пролетариатоскиро классо, нэ кхэтанэ адалэса дыкхаса сыр пхурано романо барвалыпэ и нэвэ фрэнта мануша барьякирна ряды кулакэн-эксплоататорэн.

Амэ ласа ваш о примеро романэ колхозы и сожэ амэ дыкхаса одой. Амэ дыкхаса сыр адалэ кулаки тасавэна чёрорипэ; скэдэнапэ трин-штар барвалэ семьи и тасавэна саро колхозо, саро закэдэна дро пэскирэ васта и кэрнапэ хуланца дрэ колхозо.

Адасавэ примеры сыр хулаибэн дрэ васта романэ кулакэн ракирна ваш адава, со романэ колхозы на бияндёна, налэна тэбарьён, а адалэ колхозы, савэ амэндэ

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исы ададывэс могискирна тэрозпэрэнпэ. Ваш адава, собы тэтховэс строительство романэ колхозэн прэ чячёпнытко дром, ангил сарэстыр треби тэбарьякирэс сознательность чёрорэн и середнякэн и сарэ зорьяса тэвылыджяс кулакос сыр классо.

Тов. Сталино ракирла: вылыджя кулакэн сыр классо и колхозно строительство лэла тэбарьел и тэзорьякирэлпэ.

Нэ соб тэподжяс кэ адая ликвидацыя кулакэн сыр тэподжяс кэ адава, собы тэ ґаздэс сознательность машкир чёрорипэ и тэмыкэс пиро чячепнытко дром строительство романэ колхозэн.

Ваш адава ангил сарэстыр треби мануша, организаторы, руководители. Адасавэ организаторэнца могискирна тэавэн романычявэ, савэ сы дрэ партия, савэ, пролыджяна партийна решения и бутякирна тэло лакиро руководство.

Паладава рома коммунисты и комсомольцы ангил сарэстыр, бангэ тэтховэн ангил пэстэ задачя тэпролыджян буты пиро скэдэибэн дрэ партия гавитконэ и форитконэ романэ-чявэн.

Нэво Ленинско наборо сы ударно, адава наборо банго тэзаухтылэл и романо бутяритко населениё и тэдэл ромэнгэ лачен манушэн-руководителен, савэ барьякирна романэ колхозы, фэдырякирна буты колхозэн, савэ исы и вылыджяна ромэн про нэво бутяритко дром. Баро проценто ромэн еньке на джинэл и наполэла одолэ задачи, савэ сы тэрдэ ангил амэндэ. Паладава буты пиро вовлечениё ромэн дрэ партия треби тэпролыджяс машкир ромэндэ, савэ сы спхандлэ одолэса или вавpэса производствоса, и ангил сарэстыр тэвытырдэс романо бутяритко тэрнынпэ, саво выбария дро революционна бэрша. Буты адая треби тэпролыджяс адякэ: Рома-коммунисты и комсомольцы бангэ тэ зракирэнпэ губкомэнца, райкомэнца, ваврэ партийнонэ и комсомольсконэ организацыенца собы, адалэ организации, дро штэты, кай сы бут ромэн, пролыджинэ полит-воспитательно буты машкир бутяритконэ ромэндэ и втырдынэ-бы лэн дрэ партия.

Тэпролыджяс адая бари задачя значит тэпролыджяс и обеспечить романэ народоскэ историческо задачя. Переходо кэ нэво джиибэн пэ нэвэ формы, савэ налэна выделять ромэн обшшёнэ бутяритконэ семьятыр, а на оборот пшалакирна лэс адалэ семьяса сарэ народэнгирэ пролетариатоса и нэвэ рома залэна адасаво-жэ штэто дрэ бутяритко семья сыр и ваврэ народности, савэ вджяна дро амаро союзо Советсконэ республикэн…

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G. Lebedevo

About the Political-Educational Work

New thousands of young proletarians are being enlisted in our party. These young Leninists must solve the tasks that our party and our country have set for themselves.

Our problem, – Lenin wrote – is that we think to do everything with our own strength.

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We have a great shortage – there are not enough workers, and we do not know, how to recruit them from the ranks of workers and peasants, and in these ranks, there are many administrative and organisational talents.

That is what Lenin said to his party at a time when we did not have a five-year plan, now, at the time of the five-year plan, the party sets itself this task. In order to carry out this plan, first of all, we need people, and people who are truly devoted to the working class, who understand where the party is going. Our Socialist construction is greater than ever in any country, the great front for organizing kolkhozes has seized all nationalities, all sectors, and the Romani sector is seized with it too. Roma become sedentary, enlist into communes and kolkhozes – in other words, organised in collective village economy; Roma won't take an individual scattered agricultural work; and this collective economy is heading close to the socialist form.

Therefore, the Roma, who are organised in such a collective work, come close to the proletariat and the proletariat interest became their interest. In the same way, the Roma proletariat is emerging and forming in the cities.

However, it is impossible to say that many Roma included in the plants and factories' work, however, they go to the communes, trading cooperation and artels, and it turns Roma to the new communist way, makes them brothers with the non-Roma proletariat.

But we must not forget that among the Roma, as among gadže (non-Gypsies), there are the rich, there are the poor; the kulaks [1] and the poor, and this class stratification among the Roma can slow down this movement and affect the achievements that we have in the General Roma construction.

Never before have the Roma, as a nation, seen and experienced such oppression from their own and from *gadže* kulaks, as it was among the gadže, and in other lands, there is even now exploitation. Exploitation is when one person is in the hands of another and does not work for himself, but for the one from whom he receives not what is owed to him, but as much as the owner will pay to him. So, such exploitation can be among the Roma, among us there are no workers and masters, but still among us there are poor Roma, there are also rich, and it is not difficult to see how one Rom oppresses another with his wallet – where the wallet is, there is strength.

This dependence is seen in the fact that poverty led to the market not their own horse, but horses, which are given by a rich Rom. There is this dependence and in our big camps where the *burmisters* [2] still rule, now exploitation takes other forms, and these forms bear to exploiters a larger profit than it was the case in former years, and their avarice also grows. Kulaks with all the power started to push rural working poor Roma. We see Roma come into the proletarian class, but at the same time, we see how the former Roma wealth and the new deceiving persons contribute to the growth of the ranks of the exploiting kulaks.

We will take for example the Roma kolkhozes, and what we see there. We see how these kulaks oppress the poor; three or four rich families gather and oppress the whole kolkhoz, take everything into their own hands and become owners in the kolkhoz.

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Such examples, when the farm is in the hands of the Romani kulaks, say that the Roma kolkhozes are not appearing, will not grow, and these kolkhozes, which we have today, can be destroyed. In order to turn the construction of Romani kolkhozes on the right path, first of all, it is necessary to increase the consciousness of the poor and the middle-class Roma and with all the force to withdraw the kulaks as a class.

Comrade Stalin orders the withdrawal of the kulaks as a class [3] and kolkhozes' construction will grow and become strong.

But in order to approach this elimination of kulaks, how to approach to raise consciousness among the poor and put on the right path the construction of the Roma kolkhozes?

To do this, first of all, we need people, organizers, leaders. Such organizers may be *Romanečhaven*, who are members of the party, who carry out party decisions and work under its leadership.

Therefore, Roma, Communists and Komsomol members should first of all set themselves the task of organizing rural and urban Roma.

The new Lenin Enrollment [4] is shock-working, this enrollment has to involve also the Roma working population and to give to Roma good leading persons who will increase the Roma kolkhozes, will improve work of the existing kolkhozes and will bring Roma to a new working way. A large percentage of Roma do not yet know and do not understand the tasks that face us. Therefore, work on the involvement of Roma in the party should be carried out among the Roma, who are associated with a particular productive work, and above all to involve the Roma working youth, who grew up in the revolutionary years. This work has to be done in the following way: Roma-Communists and Komsomol members must reach an agreement with gubkoms, raykoms, and other party and Komsomol organisations according to which these organisations in regional places where there are a lot of Roma, may carry out political-educational work among the working Roma and involve them in the party.

To carry out this big task means to conduct and to support the Roma nation in this historic task. This means the transition to a new life, to new forms that will not separate Roma from the common working family, but rather take them into brotherhood in this family of the proletariat of all nationalities, and the new Roma will take the same place in the working family as other nationalities that are part of our Union of Soviet republics …

Notes

1. In the 1920s and 1930s kulaks were declared major class enemies of the Soviet state in the conduct of Soviet policy in the village. In this case, this model is also transmitted to the Gypsies as a community, within which class contradictions are also "discovered".
2. *Burmistr* (from German Burgmeister) was a designation in Romani language referring to the heads of the Roma Moscow choirs in the first half of 19th century.
3. The main slogan of Soviet politics during the mass collectivization of agriculture in the 1920s and 1930s was to conduct the "liquidation of the kulaks as a class".
4. The Lenin Enrollment was an effort which started after the death of Lenin on 21st of January 1924 to enrol more members into the Communist Party and incite them to become active in party affairs.

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Source: Лебедево, Г. (1930a). Ваше полит-воспитааельно буты. *Романы зоря*, An. 3, No.No. 3-4, pp. 3-5.
Prepared for publication by Elena Marushiakova and Vesselin Popov.
Translated by Viktor Shapoval.

12.2.6 *Bonfires Go Out*

[Александр Германо]

Гаснут костры

Октябрьская революция освободившая все малые народности, поставила перед нами заботу: включить цыган в семью трудящихся, вовлечь их в строительство социалистического общества.

В январе 1923 г. в Москве была организована из цыган ячейка РКСМ. Ячейка повела работу по вовлечению цыганской молодежи в русло Октябрьских завоеваний. И в первый раз за 6 лет советской власти, в день Международного праздника труда 1 мая, с лозунгом "Цыгане-трудящиеся всех стран, соединяйтесь" – в кибитках, с детьми и стариками, молодежь выступила в демонстрации наряду с трудящимися других народностей. Этим выступлением цыгане показали свое стремление стать в организованные ряды раскрепощенных народностей.

Первой задачей ячейки цыганской молодежи было разъяснить массе вред и позор одурачивания населения гаданием, заниматься попрошайничеством, непродуктивность работы одиночек-кустарей (медников, кузнецов, слесарей и т.д.), которым для улучшения своего материального положения являлась необходимость объединиться в коллективные производства.

В январе месяце 1925 г. был ячейкой организован красный уголок в Петровском парке, который послужил началом для широкой культурно-просветительной работы.

Но массовая работа не могла ограничиваться только московскими цыганами, необходимо было повести работу по улучшению материального положения всех цыган, разбросанных по СССР, как кочующих так и оседлых, для чего надо было создать более мощный орган, могущий охватить самые отсталые слои цыганского народа, и 23 июля 1925 г. возник на добровольных началах Всероссийский союз цыган (ВСЦ), поставивший своей целью организацию цыганских масс, защиту их экономических, правовых интересов, поднятие культурного и политического уровня, борьбу с кочевничеством и перевод кочевников на сельское хозяйство и производство.

Весть о возникновении союза цыган проникла в кочующие таборы. С мест стали поступать письма, приезжать делегации в союз с просьбой о помощи и защите.

Австрийские, венгерские и сербские цыгане, перебравшиеся в СССР, выразили глубокую радость по поводу организации союза.

С поставленными широкими целями союз цыган едва ли мог сам справиться, вследствие неподготовленности к руководству самого цыганского ядра, а поэтому

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в феврале 1928 г. союз был вынужден ликвидироваться, и функции его отошли к соответствующим отделам Наркозема и Наркомпроса [Примечание 1].

Но, несмотря на слабую подготовку к массовой работе, союз цыган за время своего существования сумел бросить в цыганскую массу новое семя, которое расшевелило, заставило цыган призадуматься о дальнейшем своем положении. Было выпущено воззвание к цыганскому населению, изданы два плаката в красках, призывающие бросить кочевой образ жизни, и цыгане целыми таборами потянулись к оседлости.

В цыганских массах, особенно за последние годы, происходит брожение в лучшую сторону. Соприкасаясь с организованным населением, они невольно воспринимают новшества, которые немало вносят разлада внутри таборных семейств. Старики, твердо стоящие за традиционные кочевые обычаи, не могут согласиться с молодняком и требуют полного его повиновения. На почве неподчинения кочевым законам, ослушания или неуважения таборных вожаков – богатеев, случались драки и даже со смертными исходами.

Однако кочевой уклад жизни рушится. Меньше шлют старики проклятий оторвавшимся от кочевой жизни цыганам. Женщина – цыганка становится равноправной в таборе. Целые табора тянутся к оседлости.

Жалкое нищенское прозябание кочевых цыган вынуждает их призадуматься о дальнейшем своем существовании.

Занятие большинства цыган, покупка и продажа лошадей, перешло к конным заводам, которые дают гарантию на хорошую, здоровую лошадь, а поэтому большинство крестьян уклоняется от конной сделки с цыганами. В районах сплошной коллективизации барышничество сошло на нет. Введение паспортной системы для лошадей и строгая наказуемость за увод их вынуждает цыган бросить конокрадство. Гадание преследуется, да и само население в большинстве своем скептически уже относится к этому явному обману. С коллективизацией районов и рациональным использованием пустопорожних земельных участков уменьшились “беспризорные” полянки для стоянок таборов, да и трудности пропитания, в связи с брошенным с первых дней Октябрьской революции лозунгом: “Кто не работает, тот не ест”, – все это заставляет пренебречь кочевкой, да и нет смысла к кочеванию, если отсутствуют в СССР преследование и угнетение, которые принуждали в прошлом ради самосохранения бежать в поля и леса, следовательно отталкиваться от культурной жизни господствующих народов.

Современные условия для нацменьшинств СССР дают возможность советским цыганам бросить кочевой образ жизни, легко прикрепиться к земле и стать в ряды организованного населения.

Союзное правительство специальными декретами от 1 октября 1926 г. и 20 февраля 1928 г. обязало земельные органы наделять во внеочередном порядке цыган, желающих перейти к оседлому образу жизни и занятиям сельскохозяйственными промыслами, – землей из свободного земельного фонда, по местной трудовой норме, как для обработки, так и для устройства усадебной оседлости.

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Во всех случаях отвода цыганам земли для сельскохозяйственной обработки на них распространяются льготы, установленные для переселенцев. Землеустройство участков, отводимых переходящим к оседлости цыганам, производится за государственный счет.

По инструкции, изданной Наркомземом в июле 1928 г., земорганы обязаны незамедлительно удовлетворить коллективные ходатайства цыган о наделении землей для товарищеской общественной обработки.

Цыгане, образовывающие коллективы, наделяются землей предпочтительно перед другими гражданами, кроме военнослужащих, объединяющихся в товарищества.

Цыгане, желающие вести единоличное хозяйство, наделяются землей лишь по удовлетворении землей всех военнослужащих и граждан, желающих организовать коллективное хозяйство.

Если на месте нет свободных земель, цыгане могут получить землю из переселенческого фонда. В районах водворения переселенческие управления обязаны в неотложном порядке оказывать все виды содействия цыганам-переселенцам. [...].

В настоящее время тысячи трудящихся цыган объединены в колхозах. Со всех концов Союза тянутся кибитки к местам концентрации цыган.

Первый колхоз был создан в 1927 году в Витебском районе на земле бывшего помещика.

В то же время создан цыганский колхоз на Украине, в Софийском районе. Колхоз получил 196 с половиной гектаров из фонда раскулаченной земли. Создание цыганского колхоза вызвало живейший интерес окрестного населения.

Узнав об организации колхоза, цыгане Одесщины и других мест стали присылать в Софийский район своих ходоков, чтобы выяснить возможность вхождения в колхоз.

В 1928 г. из Армавирского округа на [реке] Терек переехал организованный цыганом Лебедевым цыганский конный завод, товарищество “Зоря Романэс” [Заря по цыгански] и колхоз по совместной обработке “Лебедевский”. Оба товарищества получили по 750 гектаров земли (хут[ор] Рождественский, близ станции Суворовской). Крайсоюз отпустил этим колхозам 120 тысяч рублей кредита. В обоих колхозах около 400 едоков.

Кон[ный] завод занимается выращиванием верховой кабардинской лошади. Уж в первый год было сдано военведу 27 кобылиц. Заготовлено сена 30 тысяч пудов, посеяли 162 гектара ярового посева и 471 гектар озими. В яровом клину посеяли овес, кукурузу, бахчи, сою, которую они впервые в жизни видят, и др.

Цыгане имеют “Фордзон”, сеялки, веялки, плуги и другие машины. Они решили бороться за высокие урожаи хлебов, за лучшее качество скота.

Там же на Северном Кавказе, в Вешенском районе создан цыганский колхоз “Красный шатер”, в котором насчитывается около 500 человек.

В колхозе “Нацмен”, Котельниковского района, объединены около ста цыганских семьей. Колхоз находится в отобранных кулацких домах. Цыгане быстро освоились

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с сельско-хозяйственною жизнью. Было време, над цыганами подшучивали казаки, но теперь прекратили, видя, как они отлично справились с плантацией и зерновыми посевами. Недавно активистку-комсомолку Полю Педанову колхоз командировал на курсы трактористов. Имеется ликпункт, куда ходят как молодые так и старые цыгане. Все женщины, в том числе 50-летняя мать Педановой, научились читать и писать. На окружной конференции женщин-колхозниц Педанова делала доклад о колхозной работе, отчитывалась в деятельности "Нацмена", излагала четкий поизводственный план подготовки к весенней кампании.

В Покровском районе, Оренбургского округа, на землях развалившейся лжекомуны, под вывеской которой скрывались сектанты, цыгане организовали колхоз с животноводческо-коневодческим уклоном. Вошло до тридцати семей. От полсотни семей, находящихся в разных районах СССР, были присланы заявления с просьбой принять их в колхоз.

Цыганский колхоз в Великолуцком округе принимал участие в конкурсе на лучшее проведение подготовки к весеннему севу.

Колхозное движение все больше и больше захватывает кочевых цыган. Колхозцентр еще не учел количества цыганских колхозов, но судя по письмам, присылаемым из разных районов в редакцию цыганского журнала, можно сказать, что цыганских колхозов насчитывается около полсотни.

Цыгане селятся и в городах. Горсоветы отводят участки земли для организации поселков и предоставляют кредиты на жил[ищное] строительство. В количестве 10-15 семейств создаются кооперативные жилищно-строительные товарищества. Так осели цыгане в Марьиной Роще (Москве), Харькове, Симферополе и других городах.

Наблюдается тяга таборных цыган к производству. На биржу труда являются цыгане с предложением рабочей силы. На фабриках и заводах Москвы, Харькова, Севастополя и других городов уже работают квалифицированные рабочие и работницы из цыган. В бригадное ученичество, как например в Брянске, привлекают и цыганскую молодежь. На Украине подростки размещаются среди кустарей.

В целях вовлечения цыган в производство и приобщения их к производственному труду, биржа труда принимает безработных цыган на учет, не требуя от них установленного стажа работы по найму.

Ранее осевшие в городах цыгане организовываются в различные производственные артели и мастерские.

В 1926 г. в Москве организовались производственные артели: мебельно-обивная, трикотажная, платочно-набивная, фасовочная (химическая), игрушечная, москательная и др. Основан в Москве первый цыганский завод – производство глауберовой соли. В Москве одна цыганская артель как "Цыгхимлабор" объединила свыше 150 человек, другая артель "Цыгпищепром" – 120 человек. В Самарканде кустарно-промысловый союз объедининм 30 мастеров-цыган и создал артель, которая производит решета и сита для "Азияхлеба".

Грамотность цыган находится на самом низком уровне.

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По последней переписи 1926 г. цыган в СССР – 61 215 человек [Примечание 2], 30 227 мужчин и 30 988 женщин, из них грамотных мужчин 3 418 и женщин 2 009. Очевидно большой процент грамотности падает на ничтожную численность оседлого населения.

В Самарканде по инициативе городского исполкома были приняты мероприятия по улучшению бытовых условий и поднятию культурного уровня оседлых цыган. Хорошо поставлена массовая работа в Псковском округе. Там, во время перехода цыган-кочевников на зимовье в села и деревни, была проведена культурно-просветительная работа: вовлечение их в избы-читальни, детей в школы, а взрослых в ликбезы. Своей активностью отличались цыгане в г. Острове. На первом общем собрании записалось в ликбезы 50 человек. В день освобождения от белых цыгане г. Острова приняли участие в демонстрации и выступали на митинге.

Дети цыган учатся в своих школах. Первая школа возникла осенью 1925 г., в Рогожско-Симоновском райное Москвы. В том же году была устроена в Москве детская площадка. В вузах и на рабфаках учатся таборные цыгане.

Есть у цыган свои клубы и красные уголки как например в Москве, Симферополе, Пскове, Смоленске и других городах.

Можно встретит цыган членов ВКП, ВЛКСМ, профсоюзов, Моссовета, МОПРа, Автодора и других организаций и учреждений.

Шатры и кочевка уходят в прошлое.

Гаснут костры …

Цыгане переключают свои силы на социалистическую стройку.

Раскрепощенная отсталая цыганская народность приближается к советской социалистической культуре, как равная среди равных.

XVI парт[ийный] съезд полным основанием отметил, что правильная ленинская политика ЦК привела к дальнейшему укреплению братского сотрудничества народов СССР на основе ленинской национальной политики.

[Примечание] 1. Вопрос о создании цыганского центра находится в порядке обсуждения. По сему поводу была статья Г[еоргия] Лебедева и Ал[ександра] Германа “Что делать с цыганами” в “Комсомольской правде” от 11 сент[ября] 1929 г. Ввиду спорности этого вопроса, по инициативе “Комсомольской правды” было устроено 7 окт[ября] 1929 г. в стенах редакции первое совещание с широким участием цыганских трудовых масс г. Москвы.

[Примечание] 2. Предполагают, что в пределах СССР цыган гораздо больше (свыше 200 000 чел[овек]), но едва ли можно было бы дать точную цифру их, так как они зачастую выдают себя то за молдован, то за румын, то за сербов. Причиной этому является страх, который исходит от дореволюционного времени, когда после регистрации цыгане подвергались преследованию. В Крыму цыгане магометане считают еще позорным называться “цыганом” и выдают себя за татар. В Закавказье же

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цыгане (армянские боша) называют себя армянами. В одной только Москве насчитывается до 4 000 цыган.

∵

[Alexander Germano]

Bonfires Go Out

The October Revolution, which liberated all small nationalities, set before us a task: to include Roma in the family of working people, to involve them in the construction of a socialist society.

In January 1923, the RKSM cell was organised from Gypsies in Moscow [1]. The cell led work to engage Roma youth in the mainstream of the October achievements. And for the first time in 6 years of Soviet rule, on the day of the International Labour Festival on May 1, with the slogan "Gypsies of the world, unite" – in wagons, with children and the elderly, youth spoke in demonstrations along with workers of other nationalities [2]. With this performance, the Gypsies showed their desire to join the organised ranks of liberated peoples.

The first task of the Gypsy youth cell was to explain to the masses the harm and disgrace of fooling the population with fortune-telling, to beg, the unproductive work of single handicraftsmen (coppersmiths, blacksmiths, locksmiths, etc.), who, in order to improve their material situation, need to unite in collective production.

In January 1925, a red corner was organised by the cell in Petrovsky Park, which served as the beginning of a wide cultural and educational work.

But mass work could not be limited only to Moscow Gypsies, it was necessary to carry out work for improving the economic situation of all Gypsies scattered throughout the USSR, both nomadic and settled, for which it was necessary to create a more powerful body that could reach the most backward sections of the Gypsy people, and on the 23rd of July 1925, the All-Russian Union of Gypsies (VSTs) appeared on a voluntary basis, with the goal of organizing the Gypsy masses, protecting their economic, legal interests, raising the cultural and political level, and combating nomadism and transfer of nomads to agriculture and industrial production.

The news of establishing the union of the Gypsies penetrated the nomad camps. Letters began to come from the countryside, delegations came to the union with a request for help and protection.

The Austrian, Hungarian and Serbian Gypsies who moved to the USSR [3] expressed deep joy over the organisation of the union.

Having set broad objectives, the Roma Union itself could hardly cope, due to lack of preparation for the management of its leaders, and so in February 1928 the union was forced to be liquidated, and its functions moved to the relevant departments and the Narkozem and Narkompros [Note 1].

But, despite the poor preparation for mass work, the Union of Gypsies during its existence managed to throw a new seed into the Gypsy mass, which stirred up, made the

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Gypsies think about their future situation. An appeal was issued to the Gypsy population, two posters in paints were issued calling for the abandonment of a nomadic way of life, and the Gypsies wholeheartedly were pulled to sedentarisation.

Among the Gypsy masses, especially in recent years, ongoing positive processes are taking place. In contact with the organised population, they involuntarily perceive innovations that make a lot of discord inside the tabor families. The old people, who are firmly behind the traditional nomadic customs, cannot agree with the young and demand their complete obedience. Because of disobedience to the nomadic laws, disobedience or disrespect for the tabor leaders – the rich, there were fights and even deaths.

However, the nomadic way of life is crumbling. The old people send fewer curses to Gypsies who have torn themselves off from the nomadic life. A Gypsy woman becomes equal in the camp. Whole camps gravitate towards sedentarisation.

The miserable beggarly living of nomadic Gypsies makes them think about their continuing existence.

The occupation of most Gypsies, the purchase and sale of horses, went to the stud farms, which give a guarantee for a good, healthy horse, and therefore most peasants shy away from equestrian deals with Gypsies. In areas of continuous collectivisation, horse-dealing came to nought. The introduction of the passport system for horses and strict punishment for horse-stealing forces Roma to avoid it. Fortune-telling is persecuted, and the population itself is already mostly sceptical in regards of this obvious deception. Collectivisation of areas and rational use of empty land decreased "ownerless spots" which were used before for encampments; and the difficulties of earning a living in that way, in connection with the slogan thrown up from the first days of the October Revolution: "Who does not work does not eat," all this makes the nomads neglect wandering; and there is no sense in the continuation of nomadism if there is no persecution and oppression in the USSR that forced them to do so in the past, for the sake of self-preservation, flee to the fields and forests, and therefore to be distanced from the cultural life of the dominant peoples. Modern conditions for the national minorities of the USSR enable Soviet Gypsies to abandon the nomadic way of life, easily attach themselves to the process of sedentarisation and join the ranks of the organised population.

The Union Government, by special decrees of October 1, 1926 and February 20, 1928 [4], obliged the land authorities to allocate land to the Gypsies, who want to switch to a settled lifestyle and engage in agricultural activities, as the land is allocated from a free land fund according to local labour standards, both for the processing and for the building of homestead settlements.

In all cases of the allocation of land for Gypsies for agricultural cultivation, the benefits established for resettled people will apply to them [5]. Land management of the plots allocated to Gypsies passing to a settled way of life is carried out at the state expense.

According to the instructions issued by the Narkomzem in July 1928, the agricultural authorities are obliged to immediately satisfy the collective applications of the Gypsies for land allotment for comradely societal land cultivation.

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Gypsies who form collectives, are endowed with land in preference to other citizens, except military personnel, who are united in a collective partnership.

Gypsies who want to run an individual, one-man agriculture are allocated with land only when all the military personnel and citizens who want to organize a collective economy are satisfied with the land.

If there is no free land on the spot, Gypsies can get land from the resettlement fund. In resettlement areas, resettlement departments are obliged to urgently provide all kinds of assistance to resettled Gypsies. […] [6].

Currently, thousands of Gypsy workers are united on kolkhozes. From all ends of the Union, tents are drawn to places with a concentration of Gypsies.

The first kolkhoz was created in 1927 in the Vitebsk region [7] on the land of a former landowner.

At the same time, a Gypsy kolkhoz was created in Ukraine, in the Sofiysk rayon [8]. The kolkhoz received 196 and a half hectares from the dispossessed from kulaks land fund. The creation of a Gypsy kolkhoz aroused the lively interest of the surrounding population.

Having learned about the organisation of the kolkhoz, the Gypsies of the Odessa region and other places began to send their khodoks to the Sofiysk rayon to find out the possibility to be enrolled in the kolkhoz.

In 1928, the Gypsy stud farm moved from the Armavir District on the river Terek, organised by Lebedev, the comrade collective *Zorya Romanes* (Dawn in Roma way) and kolkhoz named after Lebedev. Both comrade collectives received 750 hectares of land each (in khutor Rozhdestvensky, near Suvorovskaya station) [9]. The Regional Union of Cooperatives released 120 thousand rubles of credit to these kolkhozes. There are about 400 eaters on both kolkhozes.

The stud farm is breeding a Kabardian riding horses. Already in the first year, 27 mares were handed over to the military institution. Hay of 30 thousand pounds was harvested, 162 hectares of spring sowing and 471 hectares of winter crops were sown. In the spring wedge sowed oats, corn, melons, soybeans, which they see for the first time in their lives, etc.

Gypsies have Fordson [10], seeders, winders, ploughs and other machines. They decided to fight for high grain yields, for the best quality of livestock [11].

There, in the North Caucasus, in the Veshensky rayon, a Gypsy kolkhoz "Red Tent" [12] was created, in which there are about 500 people.

In the kolkhoz "Natsmen", Kotelnikovsky district [13], about a hundred Gypsy families are united. The kokhoz is located in expropriated kulak houses. Gypsies quickly got comfortable with agricultural life. It was time that the Cossacks made fun of the Gypsies, but now they have stopped, seeing how they coped well with the plantation and grain crops. Recently, the Komsomol activist Polya Pedanova was sent by the kolkhoz for tractor driver courses. There is a booth for the abolishment of illiteracy where both young and old Gypsies go to learn. All women, including the 50-year-old mother of Pedanova, learned

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to read and write. At the regional conference of women kokhoz workers, Pedanova made a report on kolkhoz work, reported on the activities of the "Natsmen", outlined a clear production plan for preparing for the spring campaign.

In the Pokrovsky rayon, the Orenburg okrug, on the lands of a crumbling false commune, under the guise of which sectarians were hiding, the Gypsies organised a kolkhoz with a livestock-horse breeding specialisation [14]. Up to thirty families have entered. From fifty families located in different regions of the USSR, applications were sent with a request to take them into the kolkhoz.

Gypsy kolkhoz in Velikiy Lutsk okrug [15] took part in the competition for the best preparation for spring sowing.

The kolkhoz movement attracts more and more nomadic Gypsies. The kolkhoz centre has not yet made a census of the number of Gypsy kolkhozes, but judging by the letters sent from different regions to the editorial office of the Gypsy journal, we can say that there are about fifty Gypsy kolkhozes.

Gypsies also settle in cities. City Councils allot plots of land for the organisation of settlements and provide loans for housing construction. In the amount of 10-15 families, cooperative housing partnerships are created. So the Gypsies settd in Maryina Roshcha (Moscow), Kharkov, Simferopol and other cities.

There is a craving for Tabor Gypsies for production. Gypsies offering their labour are on the labour exchange. The factories and plants in Moscow, Kharkov, Sevastopol and other cities already employ skilled Gypsy men and womenworkers. Gypsy youth are also attracted to brigade apprenticeships, such as in Bryansk. In Ukraine, teenagers are placed among artisans.

In order to involve Gypsies in production and bring them to production work, the labour exchange accepts unemployed Gypsies for registration, without requiring them to have established work experience.

Gypsies, previously settled in cities, are organised into various artels and workshops.

In 1926, production artels were organised in Moscow: for furniture and upholstery, knitted, handkerchief-stuffed, packing (chemical), toy, household chemicals, etc. The first Gypsy factory was founded in Moscow – for the production of glauber salt.

In Moscow, one Gypsy artel as "Tsygkhimlabor" united more than 150 people, another artel "Tsygpishcheprom" – 120 people [16]. In Samarkand, the artisanal union brought together 30 Gypsy masters and created an artel that produces cullenders and sieves for "Asian bread".

Roma literacy is at its lowest level.

According to the last census of 1926, there were 61,215 Gypsies in the USSR [Note 2], 30,227 men and 30,988 women, of whom 3,418 were literate men and 2,009 women. Obviously, a large percentage of literacy falls on an insignificant number of the settled population.

In Samarkand, on the initiative of the city executive committee, measures were taken to improve living conditions and raise the cultural level of settled Gypsies. The mass work in the Pskov okrug is well organised. There, during the settling of the Gypsy nomads in

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the hamlets and villages for the winter pass, cultural and educational work was carried out: involving them in the reading room, the children in schools, and adults in likbezes. Gypsies in the city of Ostrov could be distinguished by their activity. At the first general meeting, 50 people enrolled in likbezes. On the day of the liberation from the Whites [17], the Gypsies from Ostrov took part in a demonstration and spoke at a rally.

Gypsy children go to their own schools. The first school arose in the fall of 1925, in the Rogozh-Simonovsky district of Moscow. In the same year, a children's group was arranged in Moscow. In universities and rabfaks, the Tabor Gypsies are studying.

Gypsies have their own clubs and red corners [18] for example in Moscow, Simferopol, Pskov, Smolensk and other cities. One can meet Gypsies members of the VKP, the Komsomol, trade unions, the Moscow Soviet, MOPR [19], the Society for the Promotion of Motorism and the Improvement of Roads and other organisations and institutions.

Tents and wanderings are becoming a thing of the past.

Bonfires go out …

Gypsies are switching their forces towards socialist construction.

The liberated backward Gypsy people are approaching Soviet socialist culture as equal among equals.

The 16th Party Congress [20] justifiably noted that the correct Leninist policy of the Central Committee led to the further strengthening of fraternal cooperation among the peoples of the USSR on the basis of Leninist national policy.

[Note] 1. The issue of creating a Gypsy centre is under discussion. On this occasion, there was an article by Georgiy Lebedev and Alexander German titled "What to do with Gypsies" in "Komsomolskaya Pravda" (Komsomol's Truth), dated September 11, 1929. Due to the controversy of this issue, on the initiative of the "Komsomolskaya Pravda" on October 7th, 1929 was arranged in the journal office the first meeting with wide participation of the Gypsy working masses of Moscow [21].

[Note] 2. It is believed that within the Soviet Union the number of Gypsies is much larger (more than 200 000 people), but one could hardly give their exact number, as they often present themselves for Moldovans, or Romanians and Serbs. The reason for this is a fear, which comes from pre-revolutionary times when, after registration, Roma were persecuted [22]. In Crimea, the Muslim Gypsies still consider it shameful to be called a "Gypsy" and present themselves as Tatars. In Transcaucasia, Gypsies (Armenian *Bosha*) call themselves Armenians. In Moscow alone, there are up to 4,000 Gypsies.

Notes

1. This refers to the creation of a Komsomol *yacheyka* headed by Ivan Lebedev and Sergey Polyakov in 1923 among the participants in the Gypsy choir headed by Yegor Polyakov (see above).
2. The participation of a group of Gypsies in the solemn manifestation of 1st of May, 1923 made a great impression and was reflected even in the Western press (Kisch, 1977, p. 123).
3. This refers to the Gypsy groups of *Kelderari* and *Lovari*, who settled in the Russian Empire before the First World War but kept their passports of subjects of Austro-Hungary, Romania,

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Serbia, Grecce, etc. which made the travel around the country financially advantageous for them, because, as foreign subjects, they were exempt from a number of taxes and fees.
4. This refers to the Decree of TsIK USSR and SNK USSR from 01.10.1926 *On measures to facilitate the transition of nomadic Gypsies to a settled lifestyle* and Decree of VTsIK and SNK RSFSR from 20.06.1928 *On the allocating land for Gypsies who are transitioning to a sedentary working way of life.*
5. *Переселенцы* (Resettled people or Resettlers) – since the times of the Russian Empire, this was the designation of a special category of people who have been encouraged, through numerous privileges, to settle in economically undeveloped territories. This practice has been preserved and further developed in the early USSR; the inclusion of the Gypsies, who wish to settle, into this category means that in this way they are given the opportunity to enjoy all these privileges.
6. A passage is omitted here that almost literally repeats what was written above about the results of policy for encouraging the Gypsies to sedentarise and receive land (as already stated, these results are presented as very successful, although the realities are more modest).
7. Here, A. Germano relies on a press release (Беднота, 1927, p. 4) about the creation of an agricultural artel in the Vitebsk District, Belarussian SSR. According to some contemporary publications, the name of this kolkhoz is *New Life*, but no sources are cited (Калинин, 2005, p. 89). In the archives were not discovered evidence about this kolkhoz yet, so probably it survived only a short time.
8. Here, A. Germano quoted a press release (Экономическая жизнь, 1928, p. 4) about the creation of a Gypsy kolkhoz in the Sofievskiy rayon, Dnepropetrovsk oblast, Ukrainian SSR. In the archives evidence about this kolkhoz have not yet been discovered, so it is probable that it survived only a short time too.
9. Probably a typo. This should be read not as a railway station (станция), but as a *станица* – an administrative rural unit in the regions, populated by Cossacks, i.e. stanitsa Suvorovskaya in the Stavropol Kray.
10. It refers to Fordson, a brand name of tractors and trucks. The *Fordson-Putilovets* was a wheel tractor produced in the period between 1924-1932 in the factory *Красный Путиловец* (The Red Putilovets) in Leningrad, licensed by Ford.
11. The situation with this Gypsy kolkhoz was not without problems, so it was necessary to send Mikhail Bezlyudskiy from Moscow there in 1933 to become its chairman (see below).
12. There is no historical evidence about this kolkhoz other than A. Germano's texts, but on the other hand, the memory of it is preserved in oral history (Бессонов, 2011, p. 65), i.e. it actually existed, albeit for a relatively short time (until 1930).
13. Herein refers to the Gypsy kolkhoz *Natsmen Tsygan* (Gypsy Natsmen) in Kotelnikovsky rayon, Stalingrad oblast.
14. This refers to the *Novaya zarya* (New Dawn) Gypsy kolkhoz, which was disbanded in 1930 (GARF, f. P 1235, op. 123, d. 27, l. 239-242).
15. No other historical evidence about this kolkhoz has been discovered yet, other than A. Germano's texts.
16. The important-sounding titles, such as 'Tsygkhimlabor' (Gypsy Chemical Laboratory), 'Tsygkhimprom' (Gypsy Chemical Industry) and 'Tsygpishcheprom' (Gypsy Food Industry) should not mislead the reader; these were artels for unskilled labour (mainly women, many of them non-Gypsies) in which those who were involved as artels' workers, cut up and packed and re-packed basic household products (dyes, laundry detergents, salt, tea, coffee, etc.).
17. 'Whites' is a generic name for enemies of the Soviet power and 'the Reds' were called the Red Army and communist supporters during the Civil War (1917-1922).
18. *Krasnyy ugolok* (красный уголок) – literally 'little red corner', originally used for designation of a small worship place in Orthodox homes, in Soviet times this was a designation of space, most often a special room used for cultural and propaganda activities.

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19. *Международная организация помощи революционерам* (International Red Aid Service), known under abbreviation MOPR (МОПР) was an 'International Political Red Cross', organisation established in 1922 by the Komintern.
20. This is a reference to 16th Congress of VKP(b), that took place in Moscow from 26 June to 13 July 1930.
21. From the Minutes of the mentioned consultancy meeting (GARF, f. P 1235, op. 121, d. 31, l. 334-348) it can be seen that it was attended by representatives of various Soviet institutions and many Gypsy activists; discussed were numerous different issues that the Gypsies in the USSR were facing.
22. There is no doubt that the official Census of 1926 did not present the actual number of Gypsies in the USSR, but the explanation offered is rather naive and illogical, though ideologically justified. During the second half of the 19th century and the beginning of the 20th century, no legal or administrative acts specifically targeting the Gypsies were adopted in the Russian Empire, i.e. whether or not Gypsies would be subject to repression by state or local authorities was in no way related to how they were registered with the Census.

Source: Герман, А. В. (1931). *Цыгане вчера и сегодня*. Москва: Учпедгиз, pp. 44-53.
Prepared for publication by Elena Marushiakova and Vesselin Popov.

12.2.7 *War against anti-Gypsyism*

Марибэ антицыганизмоса

Тагарискири Россия сыр амэ джинас сыс тюрьмаса ваш тыкнэ нацыональностенгэ.

Тагарискири нацыонально политика сыс дрэ адава; собы тэ влыджяс холы машкир трудяшшёнэ нацыональностендэ, тэ рикирэс дро насыкляибэн.

Кхэтанэ адалэса сарэ трудяшшёнэ нацыональностендэ на сыс ни савэ политическа правы, лэн надомэкэнас тэ дживэн дрэ барэ форья (кэ примеро евреи и ваврэ), на домэкэнас кэ буты дрэ государственна учреждении.

Тагарискиро правительство розтходя пэскирэн руссконэн чиновникнэн дрэ нацыональна штэты.

Сари адая нацыональна политика лыджия кэ одова, собы тэ рикирэс дрэ пэскирэ васта отачнэ нацыональности, собы ёнэ на ґаздынэпэ прэ тагарискиро правительство. Адава треби сыс ваш буглы эксплоатацыя трудяшшёнэ нацыональностен, треби сыс тэ пролыджяс машкир лэндэ руссификацыя, ваврэ лавэнса ёнэ камнэ тэ кэрэн манушэн на руссконэ нацынальностендыр руссконэнца.

Тагарискиро правительство на приґалыя тыкнэ нацыональности пало манушэндэ и присыклякирдэ руссконэ манушэн тэ дыкхэн прэ тыкнэ нацыональностендэ прэ ромэндэ, евреендэ и ад. дурыдыр сыр на прэ манушэндэ.

Русска помешшики и буржуазия рикирдэ пэс хуланса пири сари Россия, кэ адава жэ присыклякирдэ сарэн тёмнонэн руссконэн манушэн тэ дыкхэн прэ ромэндэ сыр на прэ манушэндэ, а сыр прэ чёрэндэ. Буржуазия бандякирдя ромэн, со ёнэ на кэрна буты и лыджяна фэлдытко джиибэн и дживэна хохаибнаса чёрибнаса и ад. дурыдыр. Банги жэ дрэ адава, со кой савэ рома догынэ кэ адасаво джиибэн кокори жэ буржуазия, – ёй на домэкья ромэн тэ дживэс прэ екх штэто и тэ залэспэ бутяса.

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Адякэ жэ буржуазия отлыьджияпэ кэ сарэ трудяшшя нацыональности. Буржуазиякэ дрэ адава дрэван помогискирдэ рашая, школы и печять. Енэ пэскирьяса буржуазнонэ печятяса замакхнэ якха трудяшшёнэн, ракирдэ, со тагарискиро правительство заботисалыя ваш сарэ нацыональностенгэ.

Буржуазно печять прикхардя тэ шунэс тагарис. Ёй ракирдя, со тагари сы тходо дэвлэса, со треби тэ шунэс барвалэн и ад. дурыдыр и адай жэ зорьяса отлэлас само лачи пхув Башкирэндыр, Киргизэндыр, и ад. дур. и пиридэлас руссконэ помешшикэнгэ и кулакэнгэ. Взрипираса сыр тагарискиро правительство пэскирэнса хэладэнса тасадя одолэ нацыональности, савэ на камнэ тагарискиро тасаибэ и лыджинэ нацыонально освободительно марибэ: тагарискирэ хэладэ умарнас трудяшшёнэн, схачькирнас нацыональна гава.

Акана кажнонэс бэршэса уса тыкныдыр и тыкныдыр тэрдёла налылварэн ромэн, машкир лэндэ лыджялапэ дрэван бари культурно просветительно буты.

Трудяшшя рома зоралэс тэрдэ пало соцыалистическо строительство, бут машкир ромэндэ сы марибнытка, пролыджялапэ соцсоревнованиё и ад. дурыдыр. Прэ ромэндэ ужэ на дыкхэна сыр прэ чёрэндэ, бутяритко классо прилэла трудяшшёнэн ромэн пало пэскирэндэ пшалэндэ, машкир савэндэ тэрдэ екх задэибэна – тэ кэрэс соцыалистическо общество.

Акана коли бутитко классо и сарэ трудяшшя СССР пирикэрна пэскиро хулаибэ прэ соцыалистическо ладо, адава кэрибэ пролыджяла амэн кэ классово марибэ амарэнца врагэнца. Амарэ классова враги шукир полэна, со соцыалистическо строительство вытасавэла клас совонэ врагэн зорьятыр. Кажно амаро нэво колхозо, совхозо, машыно-тракторно станция сы мулыпэ ваш кулакоскэ. Акэ пало адава амарэ классова враги лыджяна амэнца марибэ, ёнэ камэн тэ зарикирэн амаро соцыалистическо строительство.

Собы тэ зарикирэс соцстроительство амарэ классова враги камэн тэ пролыджян нацыонально кошыбэ. Ёнэ пришунэнапэ кэ ракирибэна отдельнонэ партийнонэ членэн, савэ ракирна, со акана пригыя времё, коли на треби тэ лыджяс буты прэ нацыонально чиб. Сыр примеро прэ Украина, кай пролыджялапэ сари буты прэ украинско чиб, кай школы сыклёна прэ украинско чиб. Нэ сы мануша дрэ амари партия, савэ на камэн адава тэ пролыджяс. Адалэн манушэн амэ кхараса великорусконэ шовинистэнца. Адалэ коммунисты на полынэ чячюны ленинско нацыональна политика, акэ пал адава ёнэ змардэпэ чячюнэ дромэстыр. Ёнэ доракирдэпэ жыко адава, со пир лэнгиро треби тэ обпарусэв нацыональна области и республики школы и адякэ дурыдыр.

XVI партийно с'ездо тходя задыбэ тэ лыджяс марибэ адалэнса, кон лэла тэ лыджял адасави начячюны нацполитика.

Адасавэ начячюнэ ракирибэ помогискирла прэ васт амарэ классовонэ врагэнгэ, савэ лэна тэ лыджян адасаво ракирибэ машкир отачнэ манушэндэ. Сы адасавэ факты: дрэ Витебско районо, школьно сыкляибнаскиро ракирла гавитконэ манушэнгэ, со рома сы амарэ враги. Дрэ Сталинградско газета сыс наґара чиндло, со одой прэ тарго спекулянтка ракирдя, со хай ёй дыкхья, сыр рома улыджинэ тыкнэчяворэн

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кэ пэ и одой лэн чинэна прэ сапуни … Дро адава жэ бэрш дрэ Средне-Волжско крае прэ романэ колхозы русска кулаки лыджинэ нацыональна травля, ёнэ подракирдэ гавитконэ манушэн тэ на дэс ромэнгэ тэ правительство [?] […]

Ласа ваш примеро евреен. Тагари трудяшшёнэ евреенгэ на дэлас тэ дживэл дрэ барэ форья, а барвалэ джиндлэ и дрэван пашыл тагариса. Нацыональнонэ буржуазиятэ адякэ жэ сыр и русконэ помешшикэндэ, фабрикантэнгэ, заводчикэндэ сы екх – тэ заухтылэс дрэ пхэрды эксплоатацыя трудяшшёнэн и и бутыдыр тэ рикирэс лэн дро пэскирэ васта и тэ лыджяс машкир манушэндэ нацыональна рознь. Саро адава кэрдяпэ ваш адава, собы тэ отлыджяс трудяшшёнэн классовонэ марибнастыр, собы тэ на дэс трудяшшёнэ нацыональностенгэ тэ пшалякирэспэ машкир пэстэ. Дрэ адава сыс тагарискири нацыональна политика. И амэ джинас, адасавьяса нацыональнонэ политикаса тагарискиро правительство бут домардяпэ ваш пэстэ, бут разна нацыональности лыджинэ машкир пэстэ нацыональна марибэ. Адалэ нацыональности на дыкхнэ дрэ ваврэ нацыональности пэскирэн пшалэн, савэн адякэ жэ тасавэла буржуазия. Адякэ отлыджияпэ русско буржуазия кэ разна тыкнэ нацыональности и присыклякирдя русконэ бутитконэ манушэн тэ дыкхэс адякэ прэ разна нацыональности. Адава кхарлапэ великорусконэ шовинизмоса.

Октябрьско революцыя тходя трушыл прэ нацыонально рознь, прэ привилегии екхэ нацыональностя. Октябрьски революцыя дыя екх право сарэнгэ трудяшшён[эн]гэ, сави бы нацыональностяса ёнэ на сыс. Коммунистическо партия и советско власть дрэван бут помогискирдэ отачнэ нацыональностенгэ тэ ґаздэс лэнгиро джиибэн.

Амэ дыкхаса сыр ґаздэлапэ хулаибэ дрэ нацыональна штэты, кхэтанэ адалэса барьёла нацыонально культура.

Ласа кэ примеро ромэн. Дрэ тагарискирэ бэрша ромэнгэ пригыяпэ тэ лыджяс фэлдытко джиибэн, а акана советско власть и коммунистическо партия помогискирэла ромэнгэ тэ чюрдэс фэлдытко джиибэн и тэ залэспэ бутяса. Кажнонэса бэршэса трудяшшя рома бутыдыр чюрдэна фэлдытко джиибэн, джяна тэ кэрэн буты пиро фабрики, заводы, откэрнапэ романэ колхозы и адякэ дурыдыр.

Прэ XVI партийно с'ездо тов. Сталино ракирдя ваш нацыонально пучибэ, со акана дрэ СССР отачнэ нацыональности барьёна сыр дрэ хулаибэ, адякэ жэ и дрэ культура, со дрэ СССР тыкнэ нацыональности на чюрдэна и на отпхэнэнапэ нацыональнонэ признакэндыр. Барьёна дрэ нацыональна штэты хулаибэ и барьёла культура пиро форма нацыональна и пиро содержаниё социалистическо.

Октябрьско революция заухтылдя бут нацыональности налилварэн, бутэндэ нацыональстендэ, сыр кэ примеро ромэндэ, на сыс пэскирэ школы, печять и ад. дур.

Только советско власть дыя тэ откэрэл нацыональна школы, клубы лолэ вэнг[лы]. […]

Партия и советско власть зоралэс марэла адасавэн, савэ лыджяна холы прэ нацмено. Партия и советско власть шукир джинэл состыр кой савэ рома на ачядэ инке фэлдытко джиибэн и хохаибэн; партия джинэл, со дрэ адава банго тагарискиро

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правительствон. Партия и советско власть тходя задыбэн тэ вылыджяс ромэн прэ нэво бутяритко джиибэн, тэ утховэс ромэн дрэ бутяритко организованно семья, тэ ґаздэс культурно уровнё, тэ кэрэс ромэн активнонэ строителенса дрэ соцыалистическо строна. Нэ танго, со сы машкир комунистэндэ и беспартийнонэндэ мануша, савэ на полэна одова со ёнэ бангэ ты лыджян буты машкир ромэндэ. Ёнэ бангэ сыс тэ присыклякирэн лэн кэ буты. Нэ бут сы машкир коммунистэндэ и беспартийнонэндэ, савч лыджяна антицыганизмо.

Дрэ адава бэрш дрэ Тверь сыс откэрдо сэндо. Руссконэ бутярен, савэ лыджинэ антицыганизмо машкир бутярендэ сэндыскирдэ. Рэндо сыс дрэ адава, со дрэ форо Тверь бут прэ буты ромэн, буты лэндэ пхари. Енэ пролыджинэ мосто, рома на отачнэ руссконэ бутярендыр. Пиро пхурано слядо, саво ачядя тагарискиро строё, прэ ромэндэ дыкхнэ сыр дрэ тагарискиро строё, сыр на прэ манушэндэ, сарэ зорьяса камнэ тэ выдживэн ромэн бутятыр. Бутяри ром т. Пронино ракирдя прэ сэндо, со кхардэ лэн "калэ рома", "бэнганэ рома", "чёра" и ад. дурыдыр, ромэнгэ дэнас само пхари буты. Ромэнгэ отпхэндлэ дрэ фуражо, дрэ хабэ манушэнгэ; машкир лэндэ на пролыджяна культурно интернацыонально буты.

Адасаво отношение откэрдяпэ прэ сэндо. Пролетарско сэндо екхатыр стронатыр осэндыскирдя бангэ манушэн и ваврэ стронатыр адалэ сэндостыр вылыджинэ, со треби ромэнгэ тэ помогискирэс и тэ облогхирэс бутярикхо дром, тэ аздэс культурно уровнё, помогискирэс ромэнгэ тэ чюрдэс фэлдытка джиибэн.

Партия и советско власть лыджяла и лэла лыджял марибэ антицыганизмоса, ни сави привилегия нанэ екхакэ нацыональностякэ. Антицыганизмо кхэлла прэ васт амарэ классовонэ врагэнгэ.

А. Таранов

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War against anti-Gypsyism

Tsarist Russia, as we know, was a prison for small nationalities.

The Tsarist national policy was to bring hatred among the working nationalities, to keep them in illiteracy.

Along with that, all working nationalities had no political rights, they were not allowed to live in big cities (for example, Jews and others), were not allowed to work in state institutions.

The Tsarist government used to send the Russian officials into national regions.

All this national policy led to the aim to keep in their hands "backward" nationalities so that they did not rise up against the Tsarist government. For the broad exploitation of working nationalities, it was necessary to carry out among them a process of Russification, in other words, they wanted to make Russian people of those who were not of Russian nationality.

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The Tsarist government did not recognise small nationalities as human beings and accustomed Russian people not to look at small nationalities, at Roma, Jews as human beings.

Russian landowners and the bourgeoisie kept themselves as high masters throughout Russia, they taught all "ignorant" Russian people to look at the Roma – in the same way – not as human beings, but as thieves. The bourgeoisie accused the Roma that they do not do any work, but lead a nomadic life and earn their livelihood by fraud, theft and so on. The bourgeoisie itself is guilty of this situation, that some of Roma have led such a poor life, – the bourgeoisie did not allow the Roma to live in one place and to engage in some job [1].

The bourgeoisie treated all working nationalities in the same way. In this the bourgeoisie was helped to a large extent by priests, schools and the press. They, with the help of their press, were closing the eyes of the workers, saying that the Tsarist government takes care of all nationalities.

The bourgeois press called on people to obey the Tsar. She told that the Tsar is ordained by God, that it is necessary to obey the rich and so on, and at the same time, they took away the best lands of the Bashkirs, Kyrgyz, and so on, and gave them to Russian landowners and kulaks. Let us recall how the Tsarist government oppressed with the gendarmes those nationalities that did not want to bear the Tsarist oppression and they conducted a national liberation struggle: the Tsarist soldiers killed workers, burned national villages.

Now every year there are fewer and fewer illiterate Roma, there is a very large cultural and educational work taking place among them.

Working Roma are strongly standing for the socialist construction, there are many *udarniks* [2] among the Roma, the socialist competition is carried out and so on. The Roma are no longer considered thieves, the working class accepts the working Roma as their brothers, among whom there are the same goals – to build a socialist society.

Now, when the working class and all the workers of the USSR are rebuilding their economy in a socialist way, this work is leading us to a class struggle against our enemies. Our class enemies are well aware that socialist construction deprives those class enemies of power. Each of our new kolkhoz, sovkhoz, machine-tractor station is the death for a kulak. That's why our class enemies are fighting against us, they want to delay our socialist construction.

To delay social construction, our class enemies want to spread national discord. They listen to the conversations of some members of the party, who say that now is not the time when it is necessary to carry out work in the national language. As an example, in Ukraine, where all work is carried out in Ukrainian, where schools use Ukrainian. But there are people in our party who don't want to carry it out. We call such people Great Russian chauvinists [3]. These Communists did not understand the real Leninist national policy and because of this they lost the right path. Their talks get to the point in which, in their opinion, it is necessary to cancel national areas and republics, schools and so on.

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The XVI Communist Party Congress set the task of struggling against those who will run such kind of wrongful national policy.

Such negative talk becomes an aid in the hands of our class enemies, who will repeat that talk among the backward people. There are such facts: in the Vitebsk rayon a school teacher tells villagers that Roma are our enemies. In a Stalingrad's newspaper, they had recently written that there is a woman, a market profiteer, who told that she very likely saw how Roma steal little children and slaughtered them and turned them into soap [4] … In the current year, in the Middle Volga region, Russian kulaks had held a national persecution [against Roma kolkhozes], they had provoked the rural residents not to give Roma […] [5].

Take the Jews as an example. The Tsar did not allow working Jews to dwell in big cities, and the rich ones lived very close to the Tsar. The national bourgeoisie in the same way as Russian landowners, factory owners, plants owners, needs only one thing – to keep the workers in full exploitation, to hold them stronger in their hands and spread national discord among the people. All this was done in order to divert the workers from the class struggle, in order not to allow the working nationalities to be brothers among their own. This was the Tsarist national policy. And we know that the Tsarist government has achieved a lot for itself with such a national policy, many different nationalities fought among themselves. These nationalities did not consider other nationalities as their brothers, who were also oppressed by the bourgeoisie. This was the attitude of the Russian bourgeoisie toward different small nationalities, and the bourgeoisie taught Russian working people to look at different nationalities in the same way. This is called Great Russian chauvinism.

The October revolution put an end to national discord, to the privileges of certain nationalities. The October revolution gave an equal right to all workers, whatever nationality they belonged to. The Communist Party and the Soviet government helped the "backward" nationalities very much to raise their lives.

We see how the economy is growing in the national regions; along with this, the national culture is growing too.

Take, for example, the Roma. In the Tsarist years, the Roma had to lead a nomadic life, and now the Soviet power and the Communist party help the Roma to give up the nomadic life and to engage in work. Every year more Roma workers leave their nomadic life, go to work in plants, factories, to open Roma kolkhozes and so on.

At the XVI Party Congress comrade Stalin has reported on the national question, that now in the USSR backward nationalities are growing both in the economy and in culture, that in the USSR small nationalities do not give up their peculiar national signs, and will not. The economy is growing in the national regions, and the culture is growing in its national form, and its socialist content.

The October revolution found many nationalities illiterate, many nationalities, such as the Roma, did not have their own schools, press and so on.

Only the Soviet government allowed them to open national schools, clubs, red corners […] [6]. The party and the Soviet government severely punish those who spread

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hatred towards national minorities. The party and the Soviet government are well aware of the reasons why some Roma have not yet given up nomadic life and deception; the party knows that the Tsarist government is guilty of this. The party and the Soviet government set the task to bring Roma to a new working life, to introduce Roma into a working organised family, to raise their cultural level, to make Roma active builders in a socialist country. But it is a pity that among the Communists and non-party people there are those who do not understand that they should keep working among the Roma. They should help them to accustom themselves to work. But there are many among the Communists and non-party people who carry out anti-Gypsyism.

This year in Tver there was an open court. Russian workers, who had carried out anti-Gypsyism among workers, were condemned. It was the fact that in Tver there is a lot of working Roma, they used to work hard. They had constructed the bridge, and the Roma did not lag behind the Russian workers. Following the path, which was left after the Tsarist regime, Roma were considered, as under the Tsarist system, worse than other human beings, their colleagues using all their tricks wanting to drive Roma out from the working places. Working Roma, the comrade Pronin has told the court, were being called "black Roma", "damn Roma", "thieves" and so on, and the Roma were given the hardest work. The Roma were not supplied with food for their horses, food for people; there was no cultural and international work carried out among them.

This attitude was revealed at the trial. The proletarian court, on the one hand, condemned the guilty people; on the other hand, the conclusion of the court was also that it was necessary to help Roma and facilitate their way to the work, to raise their cultural level, to help Roma give up their nomadic life.

The Party and the Soviet power are fighting and will continue to fight against anti-Gypsyism; there are no privileges of any nationality. Anti-Gypsyism plays into the hands of our class enemies.

A. Taranov

Notes

1. It is not clear to what the author is referring in this statement – there have never been any prohibitions on Gypsies from settling in or working in the Russian Empire. Moreover, as has already been said, this is how the groups of *Kelderari* and *Lovari* settled in the Russian Empire in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, coming from Austria-Hungary, Romania, Serbia, Greece, etc.
2. *Ударник*, shortened from *Ударник коммунистического труда*, in Russian means – shock-worker of Communist labour. This was an official title of honour for exceptional workers. In original Romani language text the word is given as a newly forged word *марибнытко*.
3. One should not be surprised by the sharp words of the author – the fight against the so-called Great Russian chauvinism was a major trend in national politics in the early USSR (see Martin, 2001).
4. This refers to the trial in Stalingrad, where four people were accused of spreading anti-Gypsy rumors. This was categorised as anti-Soviet propaganda, and the accused were sentenced to between 2 and 3 years in prison (Борьба, 1931, p. 4).
5. Missing snippet of text when printing the journal.
6. Missing snippet of text when printing the journal.

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Translated by Viktor Shapoval.

12.2.8 *About the Work among the Roma*

Калыш

Ваш буты машкир ромэндэ

Екх само бари задачя совэтсконэ властя дрэ нацполитика сы дро адава, собы сыгыдыр тэ доджяс кэ учё культурно и хулаибнаскиро развитиё дрэ отачнэ нацыональна штэты. А ваш адава треби англыдыр сарэстыр тэ ґаздэс производительно зор дрэ нацыональна штэты, тэ ґаздэс производительно зор дрэ нацыональна штэты, тэ газдэс нацыонально промышленность и кофитко гавитко хулаибэ. Ваш адава, собы тэ ґаздэс хулаибэ дрэ нацыональна штэты, амари коммунистическо партия и советско власть дрэван бут кэрдя. Откэрдэ нэвэ фабрики, заводы, электростанции, саструнэ дрома, совхозы, колхозы и машынно-тракторна станции, – саро адава лыджяла кэ адава, со парувэлапэ джиибэ нацыональнонэ манушэс.

Панджбэршытко плано народнонэ хулаибэн откэрла дром ваш ґаздыпэ дрэ нацыональна штэты СССР. Кхэтанэ одолэса, со барьёла промышленность, барьёла нацыонально пролетариато, выкэдэла машкир пэстыр кадры, савэ лэна тэ пирикэрэн нацыональна штэты прэ социалистическо джиибэ.

Саро адава ракирла ваш адава, со пролыджялапэ баро ленинско лозунго ваш равноправиё нацыональностен. Отачнэ тыкнэ нацыональности, савэн подрикирла культурно пролетариато советсконэ союзос, екх пало екх барьёна кэ нэво джиибэ.

Кхэтанэ адалэса, со барьёла амаро хулаибэ – барьёла и нацыонально культура.

Расцвето дрэ нацыонально культура ґаздэла пролетарско диктатура и уса учедыр и учедыр ґаздэла кэ нэво джиибэ нэвэ миллионэн трудяшшёнэн манушэн СССР.

Тыкнэ народности дрэ условия пролетарскона диктатура лэна пэскири забистырды чиб, кэрна пэскири литература, искусство пиро “форма нацыонально и социалистическо пиро содержаниё”.

Саро адава са влыджялапэ бутыдыр и бутыдыр дро джиибэ и кэрла манушэн нэвэнца, савэ и прилэнапэ зоралэс палэ нацыональна культура.

Амэ пэскирьяса нацыональнонэ культураса лыджяса адая же екх задачя: тэ кэрэс нэвэн трудяшшёнэн манушэн, собы ёнэ тэ дживэн коммунистическонэ духоса собы тэ лыджян классово марибэ амарэ врагэнца, собы тэ кэрэс сыгыдыр социалистическо строительство.

Амари нацыонально художественно и музыкально культура банги тэ выкхарэл марибэ нацыональнонэ кулакоса, тэ кэрэл сарэ нацыональна кашукэ (глуха) вэнглы советсконэнца, банги тэ пхагирэл феодально-родово дикибэ, и тэ лыджял марибэ ваш раскрепошшениё джювлен – саро адава лыджяла прэ дром социалистическо строительство.

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Дро ададывэсытко этапо амэ зоралэс лыджяса марибэ пал соцыалистическо гавитко хулаибэ, пал сплошно коллективизацыя, пал марибэ кулакоса, савэн амэ бангэ тэ вычюрдэс сыр классо и ваш адава, собы учедыр тэ ґаздэс прэ нэво учипэ нацыонально культура отачнэн манушэн советсконэ союзос. И акэ прэ пэскирэ якха амэ дыкхаса сыр рома и ваврэ нацыональности савэндэ насыс пэскири книги дрэ тагарискирэ бэрша, акана высястякирэна пэскиро чиб, пэскиро лыл.

На треби тэ досыкавэс, со адалэ барэ достижения нацыональнонэ политика партии рикирна дрэван баро значениё ваш дуратуно культурно-политическо развитиё ромэн.

Сыр бы амарэ романэ кулаки тэ накамэн, собы тэнабарьёла романы культура, уса же чёрорэ и середняцка рома джяна пиро соцыалистическо дром и вычюрдэна кулакос сы классор.

Амаро задэибэ сы тэ лыджяс марибэ адалэнца, кон на камэл чячюны ленинско нацыонально политика и дро пэрво шэро тэ лыджяс марибэ великодержавнонэ шовинизмоса адякэ жэ и штэтытконэ национализмоса.

Треби тэ помогискирэс нацыональнонэ культуракэ, сави зорьякирла пролетарско диктатура и помогискирла тэ кэрэс соцыалистическо обшшество.

Амари обшшё ададывэсатуно задэибэ – тэ придэс бутыдыр вниманиё прэ культурно буты машкир ромэндэ би адалэскиро амэ на могискираса тэ дотрадэс адалэ нацыональности, савэ угынэ дур ангил.

На дыкхи прэ адава, со амари партия бут ракирдя ваш буты машкир тыкнэ неорганизованна нацыональности, нэ усаже лыджялапэ прэ штэто адава на пролыджялапэ адякэ, сыр адава треби. Особенно налыджялапэ ни сави буты машкир ромэндэ. Чячес машкир ромэндэ тэ лыджяс сави нибудь буты пхаро, нэ покицы амари задачя тэ присыклякирэс ромэн кэ обшшественно-полезно буты, собы тэ тховэс лэн дро екх бутитка семья и кхэтанэ тэ кэрэс соцыалистическо строительство, – амэ бангэ тэ пролыджяс буты и пролыджяса коли амэ сыр треби приласапэ. Треби только шукир тэ продуминэс и тэ выкэрэс плано сыр тэ лыджяс буты.

Ангил сарэстыр, собы тэ лыджяс культурно-политико-воспитательно буты машкир ромэндэ, треби тэ джинэс, кай рома дживэна и соса ёнэ залэнпэ.

Ромэн саро прэ саро дрэ советско союзо гинэлапэ бутыдыр дуй шэл тысенцы, ёнэ расчюрдынэ пиро саро СССР нэ исы барэ романэ гава, а адякэ жэ барэ семьенца дживэна дрэ форья. Одой логкхо бы тэ лыджяс машкир ромэндэ буты, нэ адава наджинэн ни Наркомпросо, ни штэтытка организацыи, со паш лэндэ дживэна рома и со ни сави буты машкир лэндэ на лыджялапэ.

Надыкхи про адава, со сы придыкхно дро панджбэрштыко плано ваш культурно буты машкир тыкнэ нацыональностендэ, исы правительственно постановлениё ваш всеобшшё сыклярибэ, нэ адава напролыджялпэ машкир ромэндэ.

Состыр адава адякэ?

Екхатыр стронатыр налыджялапэ буты машкир ромэндэ адякэ сыр треби одолэстыр, со нанэ нисаво статистическо учёто, кай дживэн рома, кицы лэн и соса

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ёнэ залэнапэ, дро адава бангэ Наркомпросо и статистическа органы. – Ваврятыр стронатыр бангэ кокорэ рома, ёнэ надэна ваш пэскэ тэ джинэс, собы машкир лэндэ тэ лыджян буты штэтытка организацыи.

Амэ джинас, со амаро соцыалистическо хулаибэ и культурно революция барьёла дрэ амари строна адалэстыр, со дро адава прилэна активно участиё кокорэ бутитка мануша.

Акэ коли тэ лэс адасавэ отачнэ нацыональности савэ атася чюрдынэ фэлдытка джиибэ, сыр киргизы, калмыки, башкиры, то прэ пэскирэ якха амэ дыкхаса сыр лэндэ барьёла пэскири культура и адава адалэстыр, со ёнэ дро адава кокорэ заинтересована.

Треби тэ пхэнэс, со сы достижения и машкир ромэндэ, если тэ лэс романэ школы, кай сыклёна прэ романы чиб, клубы, театры, печять, артели, колхозы и ваврэ организацыи, нэ адава инке набарэ достижэния, адасавэ достижэния авэнас бы барыдыр тунче (тогда), коли дро адава рэндо тэ явэн заинтересована сарэ сознательны романэ мануша.

Бутитконэ и сарэ трудяшшёнэ ромэнгэ треби тэ полэс, со коли амэ влыджяса обшшё-обязательно обучение прэ родно чиб, акана кажнонэ бэршэса уса бутыдыр и бутыдыр оформляются сыр нацыональности. Баро значениё ваш адава сы коли лыджялпэ буты прэ романы чиб.

Акэ коли тэ лэс примеро дрэ Москва лыджялапэ буты машкир ромэндэ прэ фабрики, заводы дро клубы, театро и дрэ школы прэ романо чиб.

Саро адава пролыджялапэ пиро чячюнэс, пиро ленинско нацыонально политика.

Те лыджяс буты машкир ромэндэ прэ романы чиб – адава обарвалякирла амари чиб, ґаздэла амаро культурно уровнё и ад. дурыдыр.

Треби зоралэс тэ лыджяс марибэ адалэ манушэнца, савэ ракирна, со на треби тэ ракирэс прэ скэдыибэ доклады, на треби тэ откэрэс ликбезы прэ романы чиб. Кон адякэ думинэла, со на треби тэ лыджяс буты прэ романы чиб, адава помогискирла амарэ классовонэ врагэнгэ.

Ваврэ рома состыр-то дарна тэ ракирэс прэ романы чиб прэ обшшё собраниё, ёнэ думинэна со лэн ваш адава лэна тэбандякирэн, нэ адава нанэ тагарискирэ бэрша. Тагарискири нацполитика лыджия кэ одова, собы тэ надомэкэс тыкнэ нацыональности тэ ракирэс и тэ сыклёс прэ пэскири родно чиб пало адава, собы ёнэ тэ явэн отачнэ нацыональностенца, собы тэ кэрэс зорьяса лэн русконэнца.

Только советско власть зоралэс заботисола ваш тыкнэ нацыональности. Барьёла соцыалистическо строительство и тховэла ангил амэндэ задэнбэ тэ откэрэс уса бутыдыр и бутыдыр культурна штубы, сыр школы, клубы, театры и ваврэ культурна организацыи.

А адякэ жэ пандж бэршытко плано, саво амэ пролыджяса дро штар бэрш помогискирла отачнэ нацыональностенгэ инке учедыр тэ ґаздэс нацыонально культура. Кхэтанэ одолэса, со барьёла соцыалистическо строительство и культурно революция – амарьякэ стронакэ треби тэ создэс пэскирэ пролетарсконэ

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квалифицырованнонэ бутярен би савэнгиро амэ на смогискираса тэ кэрас соцыалистическо обшшество.

Саро адава сыкавэла, со дро буты машкир ромэндэ амэ бангэ тэ тховас практичеса задэибэна. Адякэ жэ сыр тэ пролыджяс лэн дро джиибэн, треби тэ поракирас дро амаро журнало.

Пиро миро дыкхиибэ треби адасаво тэ тховэс задэибэ: покицы статистическо учёто ромэн на смогискирна тэ пролыджян советска организацыи, треби кокорэ ромэнгэ адалэскэ тэ помогискирэс. Сыр адава тэ кэрэс?

1. Треби, собы адалэ рома, савэ организованна дрэ колхозы, артели, клубы, школы и адякэ дурыдыр тэ выкэдэн лылварэн манушэн тэ розмарэн лэн пиро участки, кай дживэна рома и тэ пролыджян запись, соса ёнэ залэнапэ. Ваш адава, собы тэ пролыджяс запись амэ выкэраса спецыально анкета и пиро адая форма можно тэ пролыджяс адава учёто. Сарэ адалэ сведения тэ прибичявэс дрэ амари редакцыя, а редакцыя пэскирьятыр стронатыр кэрла саро, собы штэтытка организацыи тэ лыджян буты машкир ромэндэ.

2. Одой, кай дживэна рома сыр организованна адякэ и на организованна бангэ тэ доракирэнпэ штэтытконэ организацыенца – сыр сельсовето, рико или ячейка партии, собы ёнэ тэ лыджян культурно-просветительно буты машкирал ромэндэ – тэ откэрэн ваш ромэнгэ школы, лолэ вэнглы, тэлыджян ликбезо и адякэ дурыдыр. Дро адава случяё, коли отпхэнэнапэ адалэстыр штэтытка организацыи, рома ваш адава бангэ тэ чинэс лыл дро амари редакцыя.

3. Дадывэс амари задача тэ создэс романэ кадры – ваврэ лавэнца тэ создэс пэскирэн культурнонэн манушэн, савэ бы смогискирдэ руководить бутяса. Амэнгэ дро перво очередь треби пэскирэ сыкляибнаскирэ; ваш адава амэ смогискираса тэ кэрас романэ курсы. Ангил сарэстыр треби, собы кокорэ рома, савэ шукир джинэн лыл пиро примеро, кон окончил рабфако, семилетка и девятилетка и закамэн тэ джян прэ курсы ваш подготовка и пириподготовка сыкляибнаскирэн. Адава дрэван важно ваш буты ромэндэ. Курсы адалэ авэна дрэ Москва; адай ёнэ посыклёна чёна трин-штар и одой уже выджяна вполне лёчё учителенца савэ пролыджяна бари полезно буты машкир ромэндэ.

4. Сарэ романэ колхозы, артели и ваврэ организацыи бангэ тэ бичявэн тэ сыклён пэскирэн манушэн прэ разна курсы, собы одотхыр тэ выджян романэ руководители колхозэн, трактористы, агрономы, техники и адякэ дурыдыр. Штаты дрэ учебна заведения треби тэ домарэспэ дрэ штэтытка организацыи, адякэ жэ и пирдал Наркомпросо.

5. Треби тэ придэс баро политическо значениё ваш всеобшшё обучение. Треби тэ лыджяс ликвидацыя неграмотности машкир взрослонэндэ манушэндэ, бутыдыр обратить внимание прэ джювлендэ. Ваш ликвидацыя неграмотности треби тэ залэспэ кокорэ ромэнгэ, савэ шукир сы лылварэ. Ваш адава треби адалэ манушэнгэ, савэ камэн тэ лыджяс ликвидацыя неграмотности машкир ромэндэ тэ доракирэспэ штэтытконэ отделоса народно образование.

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6. Тэ пролыджяс учёто, сарэн культурнонэ манушэн, кон ёнэ и кай кэрна, – дрэван важно тэлэс прэ учето ромэн коммунистэн, комсомольцэн тэ пролыджяс адава адякэ – рома савэ дживэна дро адава или вавир районо, лэна прэ учёто адалэ ромэн, савэ дживэна дро екх районо, адякэ ваврэ рома лэна прэ учето дро пэскиро районо. Адава амэнгэ дэла возможность тэ спхандэспэ лэнца и тэ дэс лэнгэ пэскирэ сыкаибэна сави буты ёнэ лэна тэ лыджян и сыр тэ лыджян.

7. Особенно обратить вннманиё прэ джювлендэ, собы бутыдыр тэ влыджяс дро обшшественно буты ромнен, треби лэн роскрепостить пхарэ кхэрэскирэ бытостыр. Ваш адава треби организовать ваш тыкниньконэ чяворэнгэ детсадо, детясли, плошшядки и ад. дурыдыр.

Только адякэ амэ смогискираса тэ ґаздас буты машкир ромэндэ коли амэ сознательно и заинтересовано поджяса кэ адава.

Мэ думинава, со латхэнапэ рома, савэ откхарнапэ прэ адая статья и дэна пэскирэ предложения.

Калыш.

Редакциятыр: Лыл тов. Калышонэс печатынаса дискуссионно, редакцыя мангэла, кон гинэла амаро журнало, собы тэ пхэнэн пэскиро мнениё ваш адава затронуто пучебэн.

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About the work among the Roma

One of the greatest tasks of the Soviet government in national policy is to achieve high cultural and economic development in backward national regions more quickly. To do this, it is necessary first of all to raise the productive forces in the national regions; to raise the productive forces in the national regions means to raise the national industry and productive agriculture. In order to raise the economy in the national regions, our Communist Party and the Soviet government have done a lot. New factories, plants, electricity plants, railways, sovkhozes, kolkhozes and machine-tractor stations have been opened – all this leads to the fact that the life of members of small nationalities is changing.

The five-year plan of the national economy opens up the way for the rise in the national regions of the USSR. At the same time, the industry is growing, the national proletariat is growing, and in its environment, it is selecting persons who will begin to rebuild the national regions into a socialist way of life.

All this suggests that the great Lenin slogan of nationalities' equality is being carried out. Backward national minorities, which are supported by the cultural proletariat of the Soviet Union, one after the other will grow to a new life.

Along with the fact that our economy is growing, the national culture is growing too.

The flourishing of national culture raises the dictatorship of the proletariat [1] and raises many more millions of working people in the USSR to a new life.

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The small nations in conditions of proletarian dictatorship do return to their forgotten language, create its own literature and art "national in form and socialist in content" [2].

All this is introduced more and more into life and creates new people who engage firmly in the national culture.

We are carrying out the same task with our national culture: to create new people of labour, so that they live in the Communist spirit, so that they lead a class struggle against our enemies, so that the socialist construction will be faster.

Our national artistic and musical culture must determine us to fight with the national kulaks, to make all of the remotest national corners of our country sovietic, breaking the feudal-tribal savagery, and struggling for the emancipation of women – all this leads to the path of socialist construction.

At present stage, we are strongly fighting for a socialist agriculture, for a complete collectivisation, for the fight against the kulaks, which we must throw out as a class, and raise to a new height the national culture of the backward peoples of the Soviet Union. And now with our own eyes, we see how Roma and other nationalities who have not had their books in Tsarist times, now are healing their own language, their own literature.

There is no need to prove that these great achievements of the national policy of the party are very important for the further cultural and political development of the Roma. While our Roma kulaks do not like the development of Romani culture, the poor and middle peasants Roma take the socialist road and will kick the kulaks out as a class [3].

Our task is to fight against those who do not want to follow Lenin's real national policy and, first of all, to fight against great-power chauvinism, as well as local nationalism [4].

It is necessary to help the national culture, which strengthens the dictatorship of the proletariat and will help to build a socialist society.

Our common task today is to pay more attention to the cultural work among Roma, without which we will not be able to catch up with those nationalities that have gone far ahead.

Despite the fact that our party talked a lot about work among small unorganised nationalities, the work is nevertheless carried out in the regions, but it is not carried out as it should be. There is especially no work being carried out among the Roma. It is true that it is difficult to carry out any work among the Roma, but since our task is to accustom the Roma to a socially useful work in order to bring them into one working family and then together to conduct a socialist construction, we must carry out the work and will do it if we undertake it properly. It is only necessary to think well and develop a plan for how to carry out this work.

First of all, to carry out cultural, political and educational work among Roma, one needs to know where Roma live and what they do.

Only in the Soviet Union there are more than 200 000 Roma, scattered throughout the USSR, but there are large Roma villages, as well as large families living in cities. The work could easily be carried out among those Roma. However, neither Narkompros, nor the local organisations know that Roma dwell so close to them and that no work is being carried out among them.

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Despite the fact that the five-year plan for cultural work among small nationalities provides some objectives, and there is a government decree on universal learning, but this is not carried out among Roma.

On the one hand, the work among Roma is not carried out in a way that is necessary because there is no statistical record of where the Roma live, how many they are and what they do, the Narkompros and statistical organisations are guilty of this. – On the other hand, the Roma themselves are guilty, they do not inform authorities about themselves so that local organisations can work among them.

We know that our socialist economy and the cultural revolution are growing in our country because the working people themselves take an active part in it.

If we take such backward nationalities who gave up their nomadic life previously as the Kyrgyz, Kalmyks and Bashkirs, we can see with our own eyes how their culture is growing and it is because they are interested in it.

It must be said that there are achievements among the Roma, if we look at the Romani schools, where they study in the Romani language, clubs, theatres, press, artels, kolkhozes and other organisations, but these are still small achievements, such achievements would be more when all conscious people among the Roma would be interested in this matter.

Workers and all working Roma need to understand that when we introduce compulsory education in their native language every year the would become more and more shaped as a nationality. Of great importance for this is when the work is carried out in the Romani language.

Here, for example, in Moscow, we are working in the Romani language among the Roma in the plants, factories, clubs, the theatre and in schools.

All this is carried out truly according to Lenin's national policy.

If we work among Roma in the Romani language, it enriches our language, raises our cultural level and so on.

It is necessary to fight strongly against those who say that it is not necessary to make reports at meetings, it is not necessary to open *likbezes* in Romani language. Whoever thinks that it is not necessary to work on the Romani language, helps our class enemies.

Some Roma, for some reason, are afraid to speak the Romani language at the collective meeting, they think that because of this they will be accused, but we are not in the Tsarist years. Tsarist national policy led to prohibition, not allowing small nationalities to speak and learn their native language in a way that they remained backward nationalities and under enforced Russification.

Only the Soviet government takes good care of small nationalities. Growing socialist construction puts before us the task to open more cultural institutions, such as schools, clubs, theatres and other cultural organisations.

In addition to this, the five-year plan, which we implement in four years, helps backward nationalities to raise the national culture even higher. At the same time that the socialist construction and cultural revolution are growing, our country needs to create its proletarian skilled workers, without whom we will not be able to create a socialist society.

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All this shows that when working among the Roma, we must set practical objectives. About how to implement them, we need to talk in our journal.

In my opinion, the task should be set as follows: since the statistical accounting of Roma will not be able to be carried out by Soviet organisations, it is necessary that Roma themselves help. How to do it?

1. It is necessary that those Roma that are organised in kolkhozes, artels, clubs, schools and so on, choose literate people and distribute them to the areas where the Roma live and record what they do as a job. In order to carry out a census, we have elaborated a special form and on this form, one can hold this account. All this information should be sent to our editorial office, and the editorial office for its part will do everything to make the local organisations work among the Roma.

2. Where Roma live, both organised and unorganised, they should contact with local organisations – like the selsoviet, RIK or the party cell, so that they conduct cultural and educational work among the Roma: open schools for Roma, red corners, introduce likbezes and so on. In that case, if local organisations refuse to do so, Roma should write a letter to our editorial office.

3. Today our task is to create Roma cadres – in other words – to create cultural people who would be able to lead the work. We first need our teachers; to this end, we will be able to create Roma courses. First of all, it is necessary that the Roma themselves, who are well literate, for example, who graduated from rabfak, seven-year-school and nine-year-school, want to go to training and retraining courses for teachers. It is very important to work with Roma. These courses will be in Moscow; here they will study three or four months and from there we will become quite good teachers who will conduct a lot of useful work among the Roma.

4. All the Romani kolkhozes, artels and other organisations should send their members to study at different courses, so that the Romani chairs of kolkhozes, tractor drivers, agronomists, technicians and so on come out of them. Personal places for Roma in educational institutions should be provided by local organisations, as well as by the Narkompros.

5. There is a need to attach great political importance to general learning. It is necessary to eliminate illiteracy among adults and pay more attention to women. The elimination of illiteracy should be dealt with by the Roma, who are have a good literacy. To do this, these people who want to carry out the work on elimination of illiteracy among Roma need to contact the local Department of public education.

6. To keep a record of all cultural people, who they are and where they work – it is very important to take into account the Roma Communists, Komsomol members; to do so Roma who live in a particular area, put on record those Roma who live in one area, and other Roma will be registered in their rayon. This will give us an opportunity to contact them and for them to inform us about what work they will do and how to do it.

7. Especially needed is to pay attention to Romani women, to include them in the public activities, they need to be free from their hard home life conditions. For this, you need to arrange kindergarten, nurseries, playgrounds and so on, for young children.

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This is the only way we will be able to raise the work among the Roma, if we consciously and with interest approach it.

I think there will be Roma that will respond to this article and give their suggestions.

Kalysh

From the editors: The letter of comrade Kalysh is published in a discussion-like format, the editorial board asks all those who read our journal to express their opinion on this discussed issue.

Notes

1. The Dictatorship of the Proletariat is a key notion of Marxism. This term designates the form of government in the USSR until 22nd congress of the Communist Party of USSR (1961).
2. The concept of the flowering of cultures national in form and socialist in content under the dictatorship of the proletariat was approved at the 16th Congress of the VKP(b), held in Moscow from 26 June to 13 July 1930 (Сталин, 1949, Т. 12, p. 369).
3. Here, in the Roma discourse, the basic slogan of the mass collectivisation of agriculture that began in 1929 is repeated. A separate question is to what extent it is adequate and applicable to the Gypsies in view of existing realities (for more details see further in the text).
4. This is a reference to the Russian great-power chauvinism and local nationalism in the individual Soviet republics and autonomous regions, separated by national-territorial principle. The terms *Great Power Chauvinism* (*Russian chauvinism*) and *Local Nationalism* were defined by Stalin in 1923 at the 12th Congress of the VKP(b), as two main threats to the success of the party's nationalities policy.

Source: Калыш. (1931g). Ваш буты машкир ромэндэ. *Нэво дром*, An 2. No. 6, pp. 5-7.
Prepared for publication by Elena Marushiakova and Vesselin Popov.
Translated by Viktor Shapoval.

12.2.9 *About the Women's Day*

Ваш джювленгиро дывэс
(8 марта)

Ангил кралистэ мэ багавас дро рестораны ваш тхулэнгэ барвалэ гадженгэ, савэ пал мирэ гиля и кхэлыбэн чюрдэнас мангэ ловэ. Ёнэ на полэнас ман сыр мангэ адава сыс пхаро. Мэ сомас на бари и ваш мангэ тэ кэрав буты ратяса сыс дрэван пхаро, нэ адалэ тхулэ балыче на полэнас; ёнэ дыкхэнас прэ романэчятэ, сыр про развлечениё, мэ гужлы сомас тэкэрав саро адава, со закамэласпэ раскэ, а коли мэ на кэравас адава, со камэл о рай, то ман вытрадэнас аври э хоростыр. Акэ саво сыс джиибэн ангил кралистэ. Миро джиибэн дрэ бутяритко власть ачья вавир, ман гинэна адай сыр сарэ манушэн; акана мэ только ґалыём, кай сы чячюно джиибэн, а нанэ рабство. Мэ акана сыклёвава дрэ студия и авава чячюнэ артисткаса. Ман сыклякирна тэгинав тэкхэлав тэ башавав прэ башады. Мэ саро адава лава тэкэрав прэ сцэна, и на ваш э матэ рангэ, а ваш сарэ манушэнгэ. Мэ саро джиибэн миро думискирдём ваш адава, со мангэ дыя бутяренгири власть. Мангэ дрэван пхаро кэрлапэ коли амарэ

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студийцы зрипирна ваш пхурано джиибэн. Мэ выкхарава сарэн чяен и чявэн, собы сарэ сыр екх тэджян дрэ ґэрой барэнса.

Ученица Воинова-Масальско.

Джювлякано дывэс

Адава дывэс мэ на джинавас,
Коли дро хоро сомас мэ –
Мэ о гиля одой багавас,
Кхэлавас про ґэра одой.
Ман о гадже одой шунэнас –
Тхулэ пэрэнса сыс ёнэ,
Ловэ барэ ёнэ чюрдэнас,
Пало миро экхэлыбэ.
Явнэ дро форо о барэ,
Э-власть лынэ о бутярнэ ...
Бутыр дро хоро ман нанэ,
Дро романо театро мэ.

Студийка Воинова-Масальско.

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About the Women's Day
(March, the 8th)

Under the Tsar, I had sung in restaurants for fat-rich gadže, they threw money to me for my songs and dance. They did not understand me, how hard it was for me. I was very young and night performance was very exhausting; however, those fat pigs did not understand it; they looked at the Roma girl as an attraction, I was obliged to perform everything, whatever the gentleman would order, and if I had not done what the customer wishes, they would kick me out of the choir. Such bitter was our life under the Tsar. Now, under the workers' power, my life has changed, they respect me as well, as all people; now I have just realized where real life is, not slavery. I am currently studying in the theatre studio and I will be a true actress. I am taught to read, to dance and to play the musical instrument. I will perform all these things not for drunk rich men, but for all people. All my life I was thinking about what the workers' power gave me. It is very painful for me to remember the former life. I call all Roma girls and boys to go as one keeping up with the adults.

School girl Voinova-Masalsko.

Women's Day [1]

I didn't know about this day,
When I was in the choir –

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There I sang songs,
There I went out to dance.
Gadže were listening to my songs –
They were with thick bellies,
They threw me big money
For my dance.
There had been rich who ruled the city
Then the workers took the power …
I no longer work in the choir,
I am in the Roma theatre now.

Theatre studio's student Voinova-Masalsko [2].

Notes

1. The same poem, with minor editorial corrections, was also published in *Almanac of Roma Poets* (Альманах, 1931, p. 22).
2. Nothing is known about the author of these texts, P. Voinova-Massalskaya (this is the way her name is written in *Almanac of Roma Poets*).

Source: Воинова-Масальско. (1931b). Ваш джювленгиро дывэс (8 марта). *Нэво дром*, An. 2, No. 3, p. 21; Воинова-Масальско. (1931c). Джювлякано дывэс. *Нэво дром*, An. 2, No. 3, p. 21.
Prepared for publication by Elena Marushiakova, Vesselin Popov and Viktor Shapoval.
Translated by Viktor Shapoval.

12.2.10 *About the Woman*

О. Панкова

Ваш джювлякэ

Адасаво полэибэ, со джювлы, хай, только могискирла тэ явэл пашэ тыкнэчявэндэ – нанэ чячюно.

Адава сыс дэшуштар бэрш палэ, отэнчя коли ром гиндя пэс хуласа прэ ромнятэ.

Нэ Октябрьско революцыя тходя джювля псико дро псико муршэса.

Амэ джинас, со джювлы могискирла тэ залэл адасавэ жэ бутя сыр и мурш. И дыкхаса, со джювлы на отачела э муршэстыр. Хоть и ракирна, со джювлятэ бал длуго, нэ тыкны годы. А амэ пхэнаса со адава нанэ чячё.

Джювлы кхэтанэ муршэса могискирла тэ кэрэла нэво соцыалистическо обшшество и ёй банги адава тэ кэрэл.

Дро бут тыкнэ нацыоинальности, савэ сыс тасадэ жыко революцыя тагариса, джювлы на сыс мануш. Мурш ласа совсем на гиндяпэ.

Дром амарэ джювля – романэчя сыс тэло дэсто. Коли ёй инке сыс дро чяя прэ латэ хулай сыс дад. Покамьяпэ дадэскэ саво на яви чяво ёв отдэла чя пал лэстэ.

На гинэлапэ, камэл ёй пал лестэ тэ джял или на. И отэнчя хулай прэ латэ ужэ ром.

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Кицы ж ёй прилэла менькица пал пэскиро джиибэ. И дро мразо и дро хачькирдо лынаскиро дывэс эй тырдэлапэ торбаса пало псикэ, пашо фэнштры о маро мангэла. Авэла кхэрэ, а одой буты жыко кирло, о чявэ мэлалэ, обрискирдэ, тэ хан мангэна.

А о ром сыр банитэра пашло прэ порныца, а на так дро патря кхэлла. Хулай сы. Ёв жэ прэ латэ и годла дэла.

Запьела о ром. Ёй черори на джинэл сыр тэ псирэл паш лэстэ.

А ёв то прэ латэ нартынынпэ.

Про чянга ромня тховэла, о гиля тэ багал затховэла, марла.

Ёй гэрушка страхатыр издрала, а лав дарла тэ пхэнэл.

Нэ ромнялэ! Отгынэ одолэ бэрша, коли о ром сыс хулай.

Акана вавир рэндо. Акана хулан нанэ.

Октябрьско революцыя злыя лофо э ромэстыр.

Ром банго тэ явэл товаришшё ромнякэ.

Нэ треби тэ пхэнэс, со машкир амарэ ромэндэ сы инке адасавэ “мурша”.

Икне на догыя кэ годы сарэ ромненгэ, со ром нанэ хулай.

Адава пхурано кирныпэ нашты тэ домэкэс дро амаро нэво соцыалистическо джиибэ. Треби зоралэс тэ марэспэ пхураныпнаса. И адава марибэ банго тэ пролыджял тэрныпэ.

Прэ лэстэ пасёла адава задэибэ.

Ёв кэрла нэво джиибэ.

Ёв сыгыдыр сарэндыр и фэдыр сарэндыр адава кэрла.

Амаро комсомоло банго тэ джинэла и тэ пролыджял адава задэибэ.

Акана романычяй кэрла буты про производство, сыклёла. Лылварипэ откэрла якха замардэ джювлякэ.

Ёй акана дыкхэла бут миштыпэ. Ваш лакэ саро нэво.

Журналостыр “Нэво дром”: […]

Адава чинэла романычяй, сави сыклёла дрэ романо театро-студия. Джиибэ ромня парудяпэ акана, и ачья про бут миштэдыр. Акана сы чяворэнгирэ сады, дрэ савэ ромны прэ саро дывэс отлыджяла пэскирэ чяворэн. Одой пал лэндэ псирна. Ёнэ хана и пьена пиро мардэ. Ёнэ одой нанэ обрискирдэ и мэлалэ.

Дрэ Москва сы романо чяворэнгиро садо. Дрэ еня мардэ отлыджяла э дай чяворэс дрэ садо. Одой чяворо дро татыпэ и чяло.

Лынаскиро чяворытко садо уджяла пало форо тэ дживэл.

Кэ ёнэ моло дрэ курко дая тэ дада явэна тэ подыкхэн сыр ёнэ одой дживэна.

Окэ со чинэла екх дай:

“О кхам хачькирдо сыр яг, зорэлэс хачькирла э пхув, нанэ соса тэ дышынэс, дро муй, дро накх попэрла о пыло. Форытконэ шумостыр кхинёна о кана. На шукар сы лынаскиро дрэ Москва. Камэлапэ тэ уджяс карик на яви дро гав, кай сы зэлэна фэлды, рупови паны дрэ рэка и учё голубо болыбэн.

На обычно сы адава хачькирдо дывэс ваш ромэнгэ, савэ дживэна дро Пролетарско районо дрэ Москва. На екх дакиро ило марлапэ ададывэс радытыр. Прогыя екх чён

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сыр на дыкхнэ енэ пэскирэ калэякхэнгирэ чяворэн. Екх чён сыр романо чяворэнгиро садо угыя прэ дачя.

Ададывэс чяворэн удыкхэна, ададывэс дро чяворэнгиро садо сы приемно дывэс. Сыр дживэна ёнэ одой. Савэ ёнэ кэрдэпэ пал адава чён. Соса чяравэна лэн? Сыр обджянапэ лэнца? Саро адава крэнцынэлапэ дрэ шэрэ даен.

О поездо урняла сыр чирикло, прастана мамуй зэлэна фэлды, вэшорэ, тыкнинька дачна кхэрэрэ. Сыгыдыр … сыгыдыр … сыгыдыр … На могискирна тэ дужакирэн о дая. Кай жэ сы адая станцыя.

Паш мардо джяла о поездо. Нэ окэ ходо кэрдяпэ тише, о поездо подшяла кэ станцыя. Дро вагоно скэдэнапэ тэ сджян. Томилино. Дачно штэто, кай сы чяворэнгиро садо. Станцыятыр ромня джяна пиро буглы гаса. Дачи, дачи тыкнэ и барэ о сады и цвэты, шуко крепко фано. Ромня придыкхэнапэ кэ дачи, родэна романо чяворэнгиро садо.

– Энакэ, энакэ ёнэ – дыкхэнтэ.

Э дачя прэ сави про лоло похтан сы чиндло: “Романо чяворэнгиро садо”. Дачя тэрды сы дро баро садо. Сосны, брэзы оегли чюрдэна бари тень. Пашо кхэр тэрдэ сы тыкнинька скаминдорэ, пал савэ бэшлэ сы чяворэ.

Сарэ ёнэ сы дро лолэ трусики, о муёрэ, о трупо захачимэ. Лэндэ сы о хабэ.

Романы руководительница, лолэ дыкхлэса про шэро, дыкхэла сыр хана чяворэ. Нашты тэ выджяс скаминдэстыр, дужакирна чяворэ коли проджяла о хабэн.

Ваш дадэнгэ тэ даенгэ приготовиндло про скаминд о драб. Пьена ёнэ, дыкхэна прэ чяворэндэ, марлапэ лэндэ дро шэро – “и амарэ чяворэ сы сы прэ дачя, ваш лэнгэ сы чисто шуко фано, ваш лэнгэ сы о кхам, э чяр о цвэты”. Пучена руководительницатыр, со кэрна чяворэ, сыр хана, сыр пьена.

Прогыя о хабэн, чяворэ лынэ тэ сыкавэн даенгэ пэскири дачя. Дрэ штуба прэ ванта убладэ сы патриня, тэрдэ дро рядо набарэ пасиибнытка.

Прастана тыкнинька ґэрорья, джяна пал лэндэ о дая, придыкхэнапэ кэ саро, пришунэнапэ кэ чяворэнгирэ глося. Прастана о мардэ. Лынаскиро дывэс поджяла ко концо.

Бельвель закэрдя о дачи э брэзы, о сосны калэ дыкхлэса. Чявэ пасинэ, засутя шумно калы коммуна.

Угынэ о рома.

Дро вагоно розджянапэ ромнендэ о муя сабнастыр, дрэ якха тэрдэ сы дрэ зэлэно фано калэ шэрорэ тэ лолэ трусики.

Росчинэла о поездо кало фано, шуминэна о роты. Дрэ фэнштра дыкхэла таты лынаскири бельволь”.

Амэ бангэ тэ выбарьякирас нэвэ зоралэ манушэн. И амэ адава кэраса.

∵

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O. Pankova

About the Woman

Such a concept that the woman, so to say, can only take care of small children, – is wrong.

That was fourteen years ago when a man thought he owned his wife.

But the October revolution put the woman's shoulder by the man's shoulder.

We know that a woman can take any job a man can. And we see that the woman does not lag behind the man. They say that women have long hair but a small mind. And we say it's not true.

A woman, together with a man, can build a new socialist society, and she must do so.

In many small nations that were oppressed by the Tsar before the revolution, the woman was not a human being. The man did not reckon with her.

The way of our Roma women was under the whip. Until she was married, her master was her father. If the father liked some guy, he would give him the girl as a wife.

Nobody cares whether she wants to marry him or not. And then her husband is already her master.

How much suffering she endures in her life. In the cold and in the heat of the summer day she trudges with her bag over her shoulder, at windows, asking for bread. Coming home she has there a lot of works to do, the children dirty, ragged, asking for food.

And the husband either is lying on a feather bed like a panther and if not lying, he is playing cards. He is her master. He's even yelling at her.

If the husband starts to drink, she, the poor one, doesn't know how to please him.

And he has nothing but rudeness for her.

He makes his wife stand on knees, sing songs, beats her.

She, the poor thing, trembles with fear, and is afraid to utter a word.

But Roma sisters! Gone are the years when your husbands were your masters.

Now it is another order. Now there are no masters here.

The October revolution took the conceit of your husbands.

A husband has to be a comrade to his wife.

But I must say that among our Roma there are still such "heroes".

Not every Roma woman has reached the consciousness that her husband is not her master.

This former depravity should not be allowed into our new socialist life. It is necessary to fight the old days' customs. And this struggle should be carried out by young people.

It is her task.

Young people are building a new life.

They are the fastest and the best for it.

Our komsomol must realize and fulfil this task.

Now a Roma woman is doing work in the workplace, studying. Literacy opens the eyes of a formerly ignorant woman.

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She now sees a lot of good things. And everything is new for her.

From the journal *Nevo drom*: [...] [1].

This is written by a Roma girl who is studying at the Roma Theatre Studio. The life of a Roma woman has changed now and has become much better. Now there are kindergartens in which a Roma woman brings her children for the whole day. They're taken care of. They eat and drink by the hour. They're not ragged or dirty.

There is a Roma kindergarten in Moscow. At nine o'clock the mother takes the children to the garden. There, the child receives warmth and satiety.

In the summer, the kindergarten moves out of town.

Mothers and fathers visit them once a week to see how they live there.
This is what one mother writes:

"The sun is hot like fire, it strongly warms the ground, one cannot breathe, one's face, nose get the dust. The ears are tired from the city hustle. To spend the summer in Moscow is not good. Everyone wants to go somewhere in the village, where there are green fields, silver water in the river and the high blue sky.

Unusually hot is this day for the Roma who live in the Proletarian district of Moscow. Each mother's heart beats with joy today. One month has passed since they had seen their black-eyed children. One month, since the Roma kindergarten went to the country.

Today they will see their children, today is reception day in the kindergarten. How do they live? What have they become this month? What are they fed? How are they treated? This is all in a mother's head.

The train flies like a bird, runs past green fields, small forests, small country houses. Faster ... faster ... faster ... The mothers can't wait any longer. Where is the station?

The train moves for half an hour. But the course is quieter, the train approaches the station. They're getting out from the car. Tomilino [2]. The country place where the kindergarten is dwelling. From the station, Roma women walk in a wide street. Dachas, dachas, small and big gardens and flowers, strong dry air. Romani women look closely to the cottages, looking out for the Roma kindergarten.

– Here, here they are – look.

A cottage, over which a red cloth is laid, with the written sign "Romani kindergarten". The cottage is situated in a large garden. Pine, birch, spruce cast a great shadow. Near the house there are small tables at which the children sit.

They are all in the red panties, face and body are tanned. They are having lunch.

The Romani headmistress, with a red scarf on her head, is watching as the children eat. They can't leave the tables, the children are waiting for lunch to finish.

For fathers and mothers, there is a tea prepared on the table. They drink, look at the children, a thought beats in their heads – "and our children are at the dacha too, for them there is clean dry air, for them, there is the sun, grass, flowers". They ask the headmistress what the children do, how they eat, how they drink.

The dinner is finished, the children to show the cottage to their mothers. In the room, pictures are hanging off the wall, and small beds are standing in one row.

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Small legs run, mothers follow them, looking after everything, listening to the children's voices. Hours fly by. The summer day is coming to an end.

The evening comes, the cottages are closed with a black birch pine. Children lay down, the swarthy noisy community falls asleep.

The Roma leave.

In the car, Romani women's faces are lit with smiles, they can still picture the green air, their children's dark heads and red trousers.

The train runs through the dark air, the wheels rustle. The warm summer evening is seen through the windows."

We need to grow new strong people. And we will.

Notes

1. Here the article *About the Women's Day* (*March, the 8th*) from the journal *Nevo drom* (New Way) is included, the full text for which can be seen above. This is why we omitted it. An important note is that the text of P. Voinova-Massalsko is published by Olga Pankova with some editorial changes: in two places "worker's power" was replaced by "Soviet power"; "All people" has been changed to "working people, such as I am"; "Adults" has been replaced by "workers". The question is open whether these changes reflect some ideological reasons or are made on a purely stylistic base.
2. Tomlino is a countryside health resort, 25 km from Moscow. There the Roma children from *романо чяворэнгиро садо* (Gypsy kindergarten) spent their summer holidays.

Source: Панкова, О. (1932). *Комсомоло дрэ марибэ поло нэво джиибэ*. Москва: Тэрны гвардия, pp. 30-35.
Prepared for publication by Elena Marushiakova, Vesselin Popov and Viktor Shapoval.
Translated by Viktor Shapoval.

12.2.11 *The Gypsy Theatre*

Ник[олай] Панков

Цыганский театр – не национальный театр

Журнал "Народное творчество" статьею Эдв[арда] Шолока "Цыганский театр Ромэн", помещенной в No. 5, совершено правильно ставит вопрос о Цыганском театре "Ромэн", его репертуаре и его путях. Моя статья, как одного из работников цыганского культурного фронта, является откликом на статью тов[арища] Шолоха.

У цыганского театра есть одна из трудностей в главной своей области, в области обслуживания своего зрителя. Его зритель не сосредоточен в одном месте и находится главным образом на периферии, в колхозах и даже в таборах. Как же театр выходит из этих трудностей? Вместо того, чтобы охватить цыганского зрителя, театр ставит перед собою совершенно иную проблему, а именно применение себя в среде интернационального зрителя.

Но ознакомление братских народов [Советского] Союза с прошлым и настоящим цыганского народа, с его искусством и достижениями может, конечно, иметь место, но тем не менее это не может являться самоцелью. Цыганский театр в первую

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очередь должен стать культурным фактором своего народа. Но когда же у театра вместо постоянной связи со своим народом бывают лишь случайные встречи на каких нибудь парадах, то в этом случае театр, естественно, теряет свой национальный облик, вырождаясь в экзотический театр, привлекая зрителей больше главным образом песнями и плясками, вводимыми в спектакли без всякой органической связи, но яркими и выразительными сами по себе.

Если же говорить о познавательной ценности театра, то таковой также нет у театра, потому [ч]то театр грешит антинародными искажениями цыганского быта. Возьмем для примера пьесу "Жизнь на колесах", А[лександра] Германо, пользующуюся большим успехом среди интернационального зрителя. В погоне за экзотикой режиссура театра внесла сумбур: Какие цыганы фигурируют в пьесе, русские или зарубежные? По костюму – болгарские или румынские, так называемые "котлярья". Цыганы из табора вожака Вангара являются и медвежатниками, и лошадниками и лудильшиками, что совершенно не верно. В СССР и в дореволюционной России котлярья лошадничеством не занимались. На русских цыган не похожи, потому, что начиная с половины XIX в. так называемые "русские" цыганы вождей и диктаторов не имели. Создание разнородных элементов, принадлежащих различным группам, делает спектакль фальшивым.

Пьеса [Ивана] Ром-Лебедева "Дочь степей" претенциозно названа "музикальной" драмой. Перед зрителем – бытовая драма с любовной интригой. Кочующая цыганка, работающая в цыганском колхозе в качестве поденщицы (кстати, явление вообще странное), влюблена в бригадира Мотьку. Но чтобы покинуть постылого мужа и уйти с любимым, Ганка вынуждена рядиться в медвежью шкуру. Неужели, в наших условьях, женщина должна уйти от нелюбимого мужа не иначе как замаскированной. При этом инициативу и активное содействие автор предоставляет колхозной молодежи. Так ли это? Это конечно, профанация как чувства, так и нашей молодежи. Не будучи в силах прямо и смело заявить деспоту-мужу о своей любви к Мотьке, как это сделала бы современная и свободолюбивая цыганка, она вместе с тем, по воле автора, принимает более чем деятельное участие в общественной жизни колхоза. Это звучит фальшиво. (Поскольку автор дает жизнь колхоза – хотя и назвав пьесу "дочь степей" – это, несомненно, обязывает автора к правильному показу.). В пьесе нет столкновения общественных сил. Все сведено к личной драме, при чем весьма убогой. Образ Баурова, который по мнению автора должен явиться врагом колхозной жизни – притянут, и ни в какой мере не связан органически со всем развитием пьесы. В пьесе претендует на художественный образ в какой-то мере – Ганка, но мотивы, которые руководят автором Ром-Лебедевым на столько не оправданы, что образ Ганки является более чем на-половину недоношенным. Пьеса весьма примитивная, и далеко от отображения совхозной действительности.

"Свадьба в таборе" того же Ром-Лебедева также фальшива. И не случайно она названа "театральной" сказкой. Сказка, где девушка так свободно и так своевольно и своенравно выбирала бы себе жениха, подобно тому, как отец ее выбирает

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лошадь на ярмарке – не мыслима. (Остается еще “Вечер песни и пляски”, но это могло быть принято в первый год театра в качестве первого показа, а на на 3[-ем] году его существования.).

Этих беглых замечаний основных недостатков театра достаточно для того, чтобы сказать, что театр (далек от того пути, по которому должен идти современный национальный театр) [и] имеет много ошибок, мешающих ему стать настоящим национальным театром.

Театр, дающий лживые образы, театр, приносящий в жертву правду во имя театрализации, театр, не учитывающий нужда своего народа и не обслуживающий его – не нужен народу и не может именоваться национальным. Позволительно думать, что театр, искажающий правду и не умеющий показать верно свой народ, не нужен и для интернационального зрителя.

Цыганской массе необходим театр, она не откажется от существования театра; цыганы испокон веков связаны с музыкой, песней и пляской. Такие представители человечества как Державин, Пушкин, Толстой и многие другие преклонялись перед цыганским искусством. Цыганские хоры и оркестры даже в самые жуткие времена гонений и преследований против цыган в Европе оставались неприкосновенными. (Не потому ли что гонители так высоко ценили искусство?).

Цыганское искусство в нашем социалистическом строительстве должно быть использовано в деле воспитания цыганских масс. До сих пор театр это не сделал, и в этом вина падает всецело на руководство, проявившее свою несостоятельность.

Театр должен быть реорганизован. Театр должен обслуживать прежде всего свой народ. До сих пор театр ограничивался только поездками по крупным городам. Это была принципиальная ошибка. Театр должен обслуживать цыганскую массу зрителей.

Статья т. Шолока указывает на необходимость более частых выездов театра в цыганские колхозы. Считаем это безусловно правильным, надо, чтобы театр выделил из труппы стационара постоянную группу. Состав ее может меняться. Эта группа, имея в своем репертуаре полноценные пьесы, не связанная с громоздким оформлением сможет обслуживать цыганскую массу на периферии. Только при соблюдении этого непременного условия Театр “Ромэн” будет театром цыганского народа.

Вторая необходимая работа, которая лежит перед театром – это ликвидация остатков лженародности, которой до сих пор продолжает болеть театр.

Для того, чтобы добиться этого, театру необходимо более глубоко и внимательно изучать жизнь, и особенно жизнь своего народа.

Надо привлечь таких высококвалифицированных специалистов, хорошо знающих язык и быт цыган, как профессора Сергиевский, Баранников, Вентцель, и др., которые оказали-бы громадную услугу как в области организации в театре научно-исследовательской работы по фольклору, так и в области консультаций по быту, языку.

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Третья задача: надо пересмотреть репертуар театра. Привлечь настоящих драматургов для создания полноценного современного репертуара, обратить внимание на стиль собирания и особенно на обработку театром песенного материала.

Необходимо по-новому поставить в театре и учебно-воспитательную работу с актерами. Возглавить ее авторитетными людьми. Сейчас во главе учебной части стоит человек некомпетентный.

При театре необходимо создать семинар для подготовки инструкторов по обслуживанию цыганской художественной самодеятельности. И наконец надо создать при театре актив из цыганской интеллигенции.

Проведение в жизнь всех этих мероприятий выведет театр из того тупика, в котором он находится сейчас.

∴

Nikolay Pankov

The Gypsy Theatre is Not a National Theatre

The journal "Narodnoe tvorchestvo" [Folks Art] through Edward Sholok's article "The Gypsy Theatre Romen", published in No. 5, quite correctly raises the issue of the Gypsy Theatre *Romen*, its repertoire and its perspectives. My article, as one of the workers on the Gypsy cultural front, is a resonance of the article by Comrade Sholokh.

The Gypsy theatre has one of the difficulties in its main field, in the field of servicing its audience. Its spectators are not concentrated in one place and are mainly on the periphery, on kolkhozes and even in tabors. How does the theatre solve these difficulties? Instead of embracing the Gypsy audience, the theatre poses a completely different task, namely in approaching an international audience. While familiarisation of the fraternal peoples of the Soviet Union with the past and present of the Gypsy people, with their art and achievements, can, of course, take place, but nevertheless, this cannot be an end in itself. Gypsy Theatre must first become a cultural factor of its people. But when instead of a constant connection with its own people, the theatre has only occasional meetings at some parades, then in this case the theatre naturally loses its national appearance, degenerating into an exotic theatre, attracting the audience mainly with songs and dances introduced into the performances without any organic connection, that are however vivid and expressive.

If we talk about the cognitive value of the theatre, then the theatre also does not have it, because the theatre sins with anti-national distortions of Gypsy mode of life. Take, for example, the play "Life on Wheels," by Alexander Germano, which enjoys great success among an international audience. In pursuit of the exotics, the theatre's direction made a mess: Which Gypsies appear in the play, Russian or foreign? According to the costume – Bulgarian or Romanian, the so-called "Kotlyarya" [1]. Gypsies from the tabor of chief Vangar are bear-trainers, horse-dealers and tinsmiths, which is absolutely not realistic. In the USSR and in pre-revolutionary Russia, Kotlyarya did not engage in

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horse-dealing. They are not similar to Russian Gypsies, because since the middle of the 19th century the so-called "Russian" Gypsies did not have chiefs and dictators. Creating dissimilar elements belonging to different groups makes the performance fake.

Ivan Rom-Lebedev's play "The Daughter of the Steppes" is pretentiously called a "musical" drama. In front of the audience is a household drama with a love affair. A nomadic Gypsy woman working in a Gypsy kolkhoz as a day labourer (by the way, the phenomenon is generally strange), is in love with foreman Motka. But in order to leave her hateful husband and leave with her beloved, Ganka is forced to dress up in a bear's skin. Really, in our conditions, a woman should leave her unloved husband only as a masked one? At the same time, the author provides initiative and active assistance to kolkhoz youth.

Is it so? This, of course, is a profanation of both feelings and our youth. Not being able to directly and boldly declare to her despot husband her love for Motka, as a modern and freedom-loving Gypsy woman would do, she, at the same time, by the will of the author, takes more than an active part in the public life of the kolkhoz. This sounds fake. (As far as the author presents labourer life in kolkhoz – although calling the play "daughter of the steppes" – this undoubtedly obliges the author to show it correctly.) [2].

There is no clash of social forces in the play. Everything is reduced to personal drama, and it's very miserable. The character of Baurov, which, according to the author, should be an enemy of the kolkhoz life, is far-fetched, and in no way connected organically with the whole development of the play. In the play, an artistic image in some way is only the one of Ganka, but the motives that guide the author Rom-Lebedev are in such extent unjustified, that the image of Ganka is more than half-prematurely. The play is very primitive, and far from reflecting sovkhoz's reality.

The play "Wedding in the camp" of the same Rom-Lebedev is also fake. And it is no accident that it is called a "theatrical" fairy tale. A fairy tale where a girl so freely and so willfully and self-willed would choose a bridegroom, just like her father chooses a horse at a fair, is inconceivable. (There is still an "Evening of Songs and Dances", but this could be acceptable in the first year of the theatre as its first show, and not in the 3rd year of its existence.) [3].

These cursory remarks about the main shortcomings of the theatre are enough to illustrate that the theatre (is far from the path that the modern national theatre should follow) [4] and has many errors that prevent it from becoming a real national theatre.

A theatre that gives false images, a theatre that sacrifices the truth in the name of theatricalisation, a theatre that does not take into account the needs of its people and does not serve it, is not needed by the people and cannot be called a National one. It is permissible to think that a theatre that distorts the truth and does not know how to show its own people correctly is not needed for an international audience either.

The Gypsy masses need a theatre; they will not abandon the existence of a theatre; From time immemorial, Gypsies have been associated with music, song and dance. Representatives of humanity such as Derzhavin, Pushkin, Tolstoy and many others worshipped Gypsy art. Gypsy choirs and orchestras, even in the most terrible times of chasing

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away and persecution against Gypsies in Europe, remained untouched (Is it because the persecutors so highly valued art?) [5].

Gypsy art in our socialist construction should be used for the education of the Gypsy masses. Until now, the theatre has not done this, and the blame falls entirely on the leadership, which has shown its failure.

The theatre should be reorganised. The theatre should serve primarily its people. Until now, the theatre has been limited only to trips to major cities. It was a fundamental mistake. The theatre should serve the Gypsy masses.

Comrade Sholok's article indicates the need for more frequent theatre visits to Gypsy kolkhozes. We believe this is certainly correct, it is necessary that the theatre allocates a permanent group from the stationary troupe. Its composition may vary. This group, having in its repertoire full-fledged plays that are not associated with cumbersome design, will be able to serve the Gypsy masses on the periphery. Only by being subject to this indispensable condition, the Romen Theatre will be a theatre of the Gypsy people.

The second necessary work that lies in front of the theatre is the elimination of the remnants of national falsehood [6] that the theatre continues to suffer from.

In order to achieve this, the theatre needs to study life more deeply and attentively, and especially the life of its people.

It is necessary to attract such highly qualified specialists who are well aware of the language and life of the Gypsies, such as professors Sergievsky, Barannikov, Wentzel, and others, who would make a great service in the field of organising scholarly folklore research in the theatre and in the field of giving consultations on the way of life, language of Gypsies.

The third task: it is necessary to revise the repertoire of the theatre. To attract real playwriters to create a full-fledged modern repertoire, to pay attention to the style of the theatre's gathering and especially to its processing of the song materials.

It is necessary to re-create in the theatre educational work with the actors. It should be led by renowned people. Now at the head of the educational part is an incompetent person.

At the theatre, it is necessary to create a seminar for the training of instructors in servicing Gypsy amateur performances. And finally, it is needed to create an active group from the theatre from the Gypsy intelligentsia.

The implementation of all these events will lead the theatre out of the impasse in which it is now [7].

Notes

1. *Kotlyarya* (котлярья) is a self-designation used in Russia by and for the *Kelderari* Roma group. It is literally translation of the term Kelderari from Romanian in Russian language in meaning cauldron-makers.
2-5. The sentences in brackets are scratched in original, in their place there are handwritten additions that were intended to be included in the published text.
6. National falshood (*лженародность*) – a term from literature science used in that time. It designated admiration for elements coming from outside and contempt for one's own culture traits.

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This is combined with the glorification of one's own people, as the dignity of one's own people is presented in the way they are perceived from the outside.
7. The text is a manuscript of an article that was proposed for publication in a journal *Narodnoe tvorchestvo* (Folks art). It is accompanied by a handwritten review that has not been signed (RGALI, f. 673, op. 1, ed. khr. 454, l. 203), however from the archival description of the fund it is clear that its author is the famous theatrical critic Isaac L. Lubinski. The reviewer believes that the article should not be published for a number of reasons, the main ones being: The author's reasoning is superficial and too subjective; a previous issue of the journal has already published a positive review of the play *The Daughter of the Steppes*, and when publishing this article, the editorial will fall into contradiction; the author's critical remarks are insufficient for the accusations the theatre in National falsehood and the editorial board will be responsible for those accusations. Such accusation can only be made after a thorough assessment of the condition of the theatre, without which it cannot be blamed for such grave sins. In the end, Nikolay Pankov's article was not published.

Source: RGALI, f. 673, op. 1, ed. khr. 454, l. 104-110.
Prepared for publication by Elena Marushiakova and Vesselin Popov.

Comments

As the published material shows, in the 1920s and 1930s, the specific genre of Gypsy literature *publicistic* was born and developed. Under this term are covered social and political essays aimed at enlightening and educating the public, as well as opinion-based and advocacy journalism. Within this genre, Roma authors had the opportunity to bring topics important for the community (and also for the society) to public discussion, primarily those concerning the life and problems of the Gypsies in the USSR. The fact that these authors had the opportunity to publish their texts both in Russian, in the mainstream press (including in the most authoritative and popular publications), meaning they were accessible to the entire Soviet society, and in the Romani-language journals, meaning they were intended for the Gypsy community offered them new possibilities to promote their visions of the Gypsy community's present and future, as well as to act as opinion-makers.

Formally speaking, from the published texts, only Ivan Lebedev's piece was not intended for the general public (Roma and non-Roma); it was only for the 'internal use' of the Soviet nomenclature. However, in its ideas and style, it is not different from the materials published in the press, so there is no reason to detach it.

One cannot help but notice that in most of these texts the same (or at least similar in content) concepts and idioms are used, expressing the basic ideology of the Soviet reality, in regard to the different nationalities and the national policy of the Soviet state during this period. First of all, this is the definition of the Russian Empire as a 'people's prison' repeatedly used by Lenin, which implies that individual nationalities in the Empire were under the constant oppression of Tsarism. Hence, the constant emphasis on the role of the October Revolution and the Soviet state, which eliminated the old bourgeois system and opened up wide opportunities for oppressed peoples. Only in the Soviet state were these nationalities able to actively engage in the construction of a 'new life'. This

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includes, in addition to the main task of building socialism, also the development of the national identity, language, and culture of all individual nationalities.

Within this discourse, the Gypsy theme fits without any problems into the general ideological paradigm. Moreover, it is within these frameworks that the ideas of Roma civic emancipation are given the opportunity for its practical realisation because the Soviet state (at least in the early USSR) pursued a consistent affirmative policy in this direction. In this case, there is a coincidence (if not full, at least in basic lines) of the aims of the state policy and the vision of the Gypsy activists concerning what this politics should be, or in the words of the VSTs President Andrey Taranov: "Gypsies must be helped to become a people equal in all respects with other nationalities inhabiting the USSR" (see above). In pursuit of this common goal, the Roma activists highlight in their texts a number of specific issues of Roma civic emancipation. These problems are diverse, and there are several main points that focus on the attention of Gypsy publicists and which are clearly expressed in their texts.

The first is the question of land allocation to the Gypsies and attracting them to engaging in a societal-useful work. This process is closely linked to the sedentarisation of Gypsy nomads.

It is significant that the first article to open the first issue of the world's first Romani-language journal *Romany zorya* is devoted precisely to this topic, namely the article published above, written by Andrey Taranov *About the land for Romanyčhave*. This topic is a leading one in other publications by Gypsy activists in the central press, addressing the mainstream population. This is clearly evident from their titles, e.g. *From nomadism to sedentarisation* by Andrey Taranov (Известия ЦИК СССР, 1927, p. 6) or *Let us put aside the past nomadism: We will include Gypsies in the construction of socialism* (Комсомольская правда, 19329, p. 3).

Equally revealing is that the first official state document relating to Gypsies is the Decree of the TsIK and SNK USSR from 1926, October 1, *On measures to facilitate the transition of nomadic gypsies to a settled lifestyle* (Постановление, 1926). By the first Decree, Gypsies wishing to settle were entitled to receive agricultural land with priority over the rest of those wishing to do so, as well as the right to enjoy all the privileges enjoyed by the so-called *pereselentsy* (resettlers). The second Decree of the TsIK and SNK RSFSR from 1928, February 20, *On land allocation of Gypsies, who transit towards toiling settled way of life* (Постановление, 1928) not only confirmed those privileges but extends them further by assuming the costs of settling from the state budget. In this way, Gypsies are given the opportunity to enjoy privileges that were inaccessible to the vast majority of the population of the USSR.

Gypsy activists participated actively in the preparation and implementation of these founding documents of state policy concerning Gypsies. Representatives of VSTs participate in the specially created Commission for Land Management of Gypsy Workers under the Federal Committee on Land Affairs at the Presidium of VTsIK. Such representatives from 08.05.1926 are Andrey Taranov and Mikhail Bezlyudskiy, who by a decision of the

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Presidium of VSTs of 15.02.1927 was replaced by Sergey Polyakov (GARF, f. P 3260, op. 6, d. 44, l. 33-34).

The influence of Gypsy activists on state Gypsy politics can take other forms too, and it is worth noting the public impact of their articles in the central press. This effect is most evident in the case of the article by Georgiy Lebedev and Alexander German (see above), after whose publication the editorial board of *Komsomolskaya Pravda* convened a special extended meeting to discuss its ideas and messages, a meeting attended by representatives of various Soviet institutions, leading newspapers and many Gypsy activists (GARF, f. P 1235, op. 121, d. 31, l. 334-348).

Another major issue often found in the work of Gypsy activists is that of the internal class division in the community, and more specifically of the so-called kulaks. The very idea of a class divide among the Gypsies was a direct reflection of the dominant ideology and relevant public language in the USSR at that time, leading to attempts to define the class structure of the Gypsy community in the spirit of Marxism- Leninism. In the beginning, as seen from the Memorandum of 03.04.1928 published above, the concept was proposed in relation to the existence of the 'germ of communism' in the Gypsy camp, which made it easier for Gypsies to move to collective agriculture. Very soon after that, in the spirit of Stalin's thesis from the late 1920s on sharpening the class struggle in the process of strengthening the socialist state, the concept of the need to combat the so-called class enemy within the Gypsy community became evident. For such class enemies, united under the label kulaks were declared before all the leaders of Gypsy tabors (nomadic or settled in big cities) as well as the heads of former Gypsy choirs. In the kulaks, members of, the so-called Gypsy courts have also been included, designated as a traditional institution through which the exploited Gypsy masses are kept under control (GARF, f. P 1235, op. 123, d. 28, l. 194-199; f. P 1235, op. 123, d. 27, l. 197-221; f. 10035, op. 1, d. 74091, l. 188-205; RGAE, f. 5675, d. 142, l. 15-17; Римско, 1932, p. 12).

It is difficult to say when and by whom the idea of the existence of class enemies (kulaks) among Gypsies was first formulated, but in any case, the published article by Georgiy Lebedev is one of the first in this direction. It reflects the universal slogan "to destroy the kulak as a class" that was a leading one during the mass collectivisation of agriculture, which began in the late 1920s and lasted until the early 1930s. In addition to this article, a number of other articles with the same message have been published in the journal *Nevo drom* in Romani language. Such is, for example, the article with the revealing title *Дро колхозо нанэ штэто кулакоскэ* (There is no place for kulaks in the kolkhoz), signed with the initials MT (most likely Mikhail Bezlyudskiy), in which the chairman of the kolkhoz *Svoboda* (Freedom) in Kardimovo, in the Smolensk region, namely Yefrosiniya (Ruzya) Tumashevich and her father, are declared kulaks (Нэво дром, 1930a, pp. 9-10). In this key are also two notes signed by the author with the pseudonym *Feldytko* (Nomad). The first one under the title *To destroy the kulak as a class* the charges against the Tumashevich family are reiterated (Нэво дром, 1931d, p. 14). In the second one *Are there Roma kulaks in Moscow* the discovered 'kulaks' from the ranks of Moscow Gypsies were Yegor Polyakov

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(the head of the famous Gypsy choir), Mikhail Masaly'skiy, Yakov Vishnyakov and others (Нэво дром, 1931e, pp. 14-15). The topic of class enemies, the leaders of the Gypsy tabors, is widely reflected in both the newly created Gypsy literature and in the repertoire of the Theatre Romen, and even in cinema (in the Movie *The Last Camp* from 1935). Even the critical remarks (most likely written by Mikhail Bezlyudskiy) entitled *More close class attention at the theatrical front* written on the occasion of the theatre performances *Романо дром* (Gypsy Way) и *Гиля и кхэлыбэна Ромэн* (Songs and Dances of Gypsies) at Leningrad Ethnographic Theatre are within this key point (Нэво дром, 1932a, pp. 10-11).

Of course, in terms of historical and ethnographic realities, the idea of the existence of class stratification in the Gypsy community is completely untenable, and from today's point of view, it sounds more like an absurd joke. Seen in a historical context, however, this concept seems different in terms of specific time and place (early USSR). The civic emancipation of the community involved, first and foremost, an equal integration into the social realities among which they lived, and it is quite clear from this point of view that Gypsy activists used the language of the Soviet public discourse. For them, apart from the Soviet realities, there were no other alternatives, which means they needed to accept these realities as they were; therefore, the processes of Roma civic emancipation in the early USSR should accordingly be analysed from this point of view.

For the first time in the early USSR, however, some concepts emerged, which are particularly relevant today in connection to modern Roma activism and academia, namely the concept of anti-Gypsyism (Holler, 2014, pp. 84-85). This concept was firstly presented by Alexander German in 1928 in his article "Gypsies" (Безбожник, 1928, pp. 11-13), and was popularised by Alexander German and Georgiy Lebedev in 1929, and by Andrey Taranov in 1931, in the articles published above. In these all articles, the emphasis is primarily set on the overall policy of "rotten Tsarist anti-Gypsyism" in the Russian Empire, and this social phenomenon is defined as inherent for the epochs of feudalism and capitalism, which should no longer exist in the Soviet state. In both articles, however, there are carefully worded notes that make it clear that there are still some remnants of anti-Gypsyism in Soviet society. Anti-Gypsyism is explained as an insurmounted legacy of the old social order and against which it is necessary for the Soviet state to constantly fight.

They are expressed in the inattentive or neglectful attitude of the local authorities towards the Gypsies, spreading defamatory rumours, public expression of anti-Gypsy stereotypes, etc. Descriptions of specific examples of such attitudes, including police misconduct against Gypsies, are also contained in a number of documents prepared by VSTs and sent to various Soviet institutions (GARF, f. P 393, op. 43 A, d. 1763, l. 179-184; f. P 1235, op. 120, d. 27, l. 30-38; f. P 1235, op. 121, d. 31, l. 148). As a rule, the Soviet authorities responded quickly and effectively to such signals, as well as in cases of any manifestation of anti-Gypsyism by the majority population. The reason for such prompt action against any appearance of anti-Gypsyism was made because they were seen as a serious violation of the dominant ideology of proletarian internationalism and of Soviet legislation that did not permit discrimination on a national basis. For illustration, it is enough to list some titles of articles in the mainstream press, like e.g. *The Chauvinist Language – The*

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Language of the Class Enemy: Shameful Belching of Great-Power Chauvinism at the Smolensk Pedagogical Institute (Большевисткий молодньяк, 1931, p. 2). This article describes a case of bullying and allegations of theft of a Gypsy student by his colleagues. Some press headlines reflect cases when persons accused of anti-Gypsyism are brought to court, e.g. *This is where the enemy works: The ridiculous gossip of the chauvinists must be put to an end* (Борьба, 1931, p. 3) and the article *Provocateurs before the court. The myth of the abduction of children* (Борьба, 1931, p. 3) about the case in Stalingrad, described in the published article published here, *A War against anti-Gypsyism* by Andrey Taranov. In the same spirit are the articles: *Hit the great-power chauvinists hard. Culprits harassed Gypsy workers brought to justice* (Тверская правда, 1931a, p. 3), *Cut off the dirty paws of the chauvinists: The culprits of the persecution of Gypsy workers soon will be brought before the proletarian court* (Тверская правда, 1931b, p. 3), and *In response to the sortie of the chauvinists, the front of international education is being strengthened* (Тверская правда, 1931c, p. 3) about the sentencing of two workers to forced labour for one year because of the ethnic mockery of a Gypsy colleague. It is hardly necessary to clarify that 'chauvinists' should be understood as 'Great Russian chauvinists'. Therefore, one should not be surprised by the sharp words in the published texts of the Gypsy activists against the 'Great Russian chauvinists'. The fight against this still occurring phenomenon was a major trend in the national policy of the early USSR (see Martin, 2001). This, in turn, logically led to the emergence of the concept of anti-Gypsyism.

The Gypsy activists' campaign against anti-Gypsyism was not only restricted to the USSR but included regular information on the persecution of Gypsies abroad. This information was in close cohesion with the general Soviet propaganda discourse, which comprehensively presented to the Soviet society the class, race and ethnic oppressions in the "world of capital" and accordingly promoted the Soviet model of a non-class society, where the cruel and unjust race and ethnic treatment is annihilated. A classic example in this regard is the highly admired film *Circus* (1936), in which a woman who gave birth to a child with a black father is persecuted in the US but finds happiness in the USSR, where there is no racial issue.

In this context, materials prepared by Gypsy activists about anti-Gypsyism in the West are numerous (especially fruitful in this regard was Alexander Germano, who mastered a number of foreign languages and regularly monitored the Western press).

An example of this is the article *Сэндо линчя дрэ Чехословакия* (Lynch law in Czechoslovakia) describing the anti-Gypsy pogrom in Slovakia (the case in Pobedim village in 1928), and presenting the adopted anti-Gypsy law against nomadism (see Chapter 8). The article summarises: "The life of Roma in Czechoslovakia is the same as the life of Negroes in America and Jews in Tsarist Russia" (Нэво дром, 1931f, p. 22-23).

It should not be a surprise also that it was in the early USSR that the issue of replacing the public name of the community with its ethnonym was raised. The proposal for the official use of the name 'Roma' (in form of Indo-Rom) was made by a non-Rom, namely by Daniil Savvov, who was employed at the Narkompros. In an article published in the Romani language journal *Romany zorya* in 1930, he wrote: "You have your own

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name – 'Rom', the history tells that Roma come from India. It would be good to call yourselves 'Indo-Rom', but you call yourself 'tsygan' [Gypsy]." (Романы зоря, 1930b, p. 9). In the same issue of the journal was published a poem "A call from the kolkhoz" by Georgiy Lebedev who used the pseudonym Indo-Rom (Романы зоря, 1930c, p. 46). This proposal, however, finds little resonance among the Gypsy activists. They did not perceive the public denomination 'цыгане' (Gypsies) as of insulting, which is clearly seen from the article by Andrey Taranov *The Thirteenth Anniversary of October Revolution*, which states: "Tsarist Russia … called the Uzbeks 'Sarty', the Jews 'Zhidy', the Ukrainians 'Khokhly', the Gypsies [цыгане] – 'Pharaohs' and so on" (Нэво дром, 1930, p. 1), i.e. the insulting name for Roma was not the word цыгане, but the designation Pharaohs.

The only reverberation to the proposal for a new public community name ('Indo-Rom') reappears in the 1930s when at the time of funding the Theatre Romen possible variants of its title were discussed. Among the proposals, one can find also a version connected with the term 'Indo-Rom', such as *Indo-Romskiy* (or *Indo-Romenskiy*) Theatre, i.e. 'Indo-Roma Theatre' (Бессонов, 2013, p. 454). The term was also included in the sentence in which the founders of the theatre declared their 'full readiness to participate in the merciless cleaning of Indo-Romen Art' from the so-called *tsyganshchina* (O'Keeffe, 2013, p. 217). As for the term *tsyganshchina* (*цыганщина*), in this context, it does not have any negative connotations regarding the Gypsies as a community. The very concept of *tsyganshchina* came into widespread public use in the 1920s, and for a long time, there was a massive public campaign in the press against this phenomenon, which was considered to be degenerated by a bourgeoisie kind of Gypsy art (see Штейнпресс, 1934; Щербакова, 1984) and an inauthentic pseudo-art (cf. Lemon, 2000, p. 141). This campaign, however, was not aimed against Gypsy music in general, but specifically against the *tsyganshchina* phenomenon; in contrast to this phenomenon and in order to present the 'true' Gypsy art the Soviet state created the Gypsy Theatre Romen – cf. article with the indicative title *From a night pub to a proletarian theatre: Gypsies declare a fight against "tsyganshchina"* (Рабочий и искусство, 1930, p. 4).

In this discourse can be added, though quite conditionally, the title 'Rom', used by Vladimir Zorin (about him see below) for two of his books published in Ukrainian – a collection of short stories and novella (Зорін, 1932a; 1934). The first one was published twice (Зорін, 1932b), in a 20 000 (sic!) print-run, and was translated into Moldovan language (Zorin, 1933). In this case, however, the use of the name 'Roma' in the title is a literary technique, because in the text the designation 'Gypsies' is employed..

In the early USSR, for the first time, the Gypsy men and women activists also brought to the forefront the specific problem of the Gypsy woman as well as the issue of the need to achieve gender equality both within the wider society and within the community. In modern terms, this is also found in present-day discussions about the double discrimination faced by Roma women, which includes also the issue of domestic violence against women (see above in the text by Olga Pankova) and children (see the book translated in Romani language with the title " Why we should not beat our children" (Кулишэр-Бунцельман, 1932)). As one Gypsy male activist also writes, the Gypsy woman is a 'slave'

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and she must earn the living for the whole family, including her husband (Звезда, 1926, p. 2). That is why the Work Plan of VSTs for 1926 stated that one of the goals of the Union was the need to release women "from the yoke of family and man's supremacy'" so that they could have more time for socially useful work (GARF, f. 1235, op. 1, d. 27, l. 94).

Moreover, as it is clear from the manuscript by Nikolay Pankov published above, the performances of Theatre Romen (in the play *The Daughter of the Steppes* by Ivan Rom-Lebedev, premiered in 1935) proclaim the right of a Gypsy woman to leave her unloved man, whom she is married to without her consent from her parents. This reflects the idea of free love, which was widely promoted in the early USSR, especially by the famous Alexandra Kolontay. To put it in brackets, the lead character in the play, the famous actor Lyalya Chernaya (Nadezhda Kiseleva), soon after the premiere left her husband (Ivan Rom-Lebedev himself) and married Mikhail Yanshin (non-Gypsy, artistic director of Theatre Romen).

Specific is the case of the problems of the Gypsy woman in Central Asia, among the so-called Central Asian Gypsies, collectively referred to as Lyuli or Jugy; the designation is inaccurate because, in fact, it refers to a number of communities with different origins and identities (Marushiakova & Popov, 2016d). Public campaigns of Soviet power in Central Asia for the removal of the *paranjas*, used by 'Women of the East' to completely cover themselves, did not target Gypsy women (Northrop, 2004, p. 51); because it was rarely used by them. Instead, they wore a 'softer' form of veiling, with an uncovered face. That is why, along with the fight against *paranja* in Samarkand arises another movement for the liberation of Gypsy women – the fight against the begging bag. For the Gypsy women, it was a symbol of their unequal position in the community as with it they were obliged to feed their entire families. Female Gypsy activists Koromat Dzhalilova and Dzhumakikh Norbaeva were especially active in this regards and repeatedly took action to persuade women to burn their begging bags, and to go to work in local factories. Koromat Dzhalilova became a member of the VKP(b) and joined an agitation unit that travelled around the region and propagated the ideas of Soviet power; in one such public event, she was attacked and received seven knife strikes, but survived and died many years later as an honorary retiree in 1965 at the age of 79 (Назаров, 1969, p. 116).

Among other leading ideas developed in Gypsy publicistics, special attention deserves a text published as debatable (i.e. the editorial does not fully share the author's views) and signed with the alias Kalysh (it is not clear who is behind this pseudonym). This text raises the question of the use of the Romani language not only in education but also more broadly, in social life.

In direct correlation to this question is another case repeatedly discussed at the meetings with participation of Gypsies in Soviet institutions – to what extent Gypsy artels should be Gypsy-only by the composition or whether people of different nationalities can also work together (e.g. GARF, f. P 3316, op. 28, d. 794, l. 77-125). The prevailing view (both of representatives of the institutions and of the Gypsy activists themselves) was that there is nothing wrong with non-Gypsies working in Gypsy artels. On the contrary, in such cases, the results are better. However, it is important that non-Gypsies do not prevail because the

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Gypsy character of the artel would be lost. Speaking in more general terms, the joint opinion was that Gypsies should not be encapsulated as a community in all public areas.

The last document published above is the manuscript of Nikolay Pankov. It is interesting above all because in some respect it moves away from the official discourse in regard to the Theatre Romen adopted in both the Gypsy and the mainstream press. Within the framework of this official discourse, the Romen theatre plays have been welcomed from different perspectives: the unveiling of class struggles in the Gypsy community, underlining the importance of Soviet policy towards the Gypsies, and especially in the context of the fight against the tsyganshchina.

The author, Nikolay Pankov, agrees with all of this but criticised the Theatre Romen from another perspective. In his manuscript, he discussed the extent to which the theatre reflects the typical and authentic ethnographic characteristics of the Gypsy community, both as a whole and in individual details. Nowadays, it is possible that this approach would be considered by many authors in the field of Romani studies as essentialism or exoticism, or both. In fact, it represents a typical and legitimate ethnonational discourse (in this case a Gypsy discourse) about national art (in this case the theatre). This is very clear in the author's calls for the Gypsy Theatre to be on the first place an ethnic, national theatre, that will educate the Gypsy masses in this national spirit.

Looking at the published texts, it is clear that they reflect the basic visions for solving the problems of their people's present. There is no reason to think that here is a forced imposition from the 'outside' of concepts foreign and unacceptable to Gypsies. On the contrary, it is obvious, that all of such 'outside' ideas are rethought and re-conceptualised through the point of view of the community, and more specifically of its elite, which was the main generator of visions for its future.

Elena Marushiakova and Vesselin Popov

12.3 Letters

12.3.1 *A Letter from Khutor Krikunovo*

Приветственное письмо

27-го декабря 1926 г.

Дорогим товарищем Всероссийского Союза Цыган Ромэн от национального общества граждан группы ромэн хутора Крикунова.

Мы все группы ромэн приветствуем вас дорогие товарищи Всероссийского союза цыган, как Вы первые вступили в защиту нашей национальности цыган, где и организовали Союз, что мы и увидели. Дорогие товарищи, из Вашего письма, которое мы получили от 01.XII.1926 г. [мы поняли], что нам уже дорога при Советской власти открыта и наши первые товарищи цыгане находятся на местах, где и все вообще национальности, что и приветствуем только советскую власть товарищей коммунаров за правильное ведение порядка жизни в России.

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Теперь, дорогие товарищи, опишем мы Вам о первом вступлении нашей жизни на оседлость, т.к. мы проживали с давных пор в окружности Донской области, вступили с первых дней в ряды красных партизан в феврале мес[яце] 1918 г. и прослужили в Красной армии до окончания кровавой революции, возвратились домой, начали задумываться о жизни, т. к. Красная армия дала нам понять, что такое есть жизнь человека. Мы, как красноармейцы, стали съезжаться со всеми семействами по 3-4 семьи, в одно место, где проводили свои собрания часто о своей оседлости, жизни, ну, т. к. мы не так были знакомы в первое вступление на новую жизнь, темнота нас одолевала, не зная куда и как обратиться, но думая, что Советская власть, эта власть наша, и она пойдет всегда к нам навстречу, т. к. и у нас является сильная охота к общей жизни трудящихся граждан и мы с большим стремлением и желанием собрали свой сбор, избрали себе организатора, уполномочив его своим сбором, которым оказался избранным Крикунов, Александр Павлович, который и принял на себя обязанность с большой охотой организовать свой национальный хутор, стал убеждать всех тех, которые по своей темноте не сознавали еще лучшей оседлой жизни, когда нас организовалось не так большое количество: несколько семей, т.е. – граждан Крикуновых, Щербаковых и Лиманских, то и пошли слухи о цыганском хуторе, стали к нам прибывать со всех сторон цыгане с просьбой их приписать к оседлой жизни, начали мы обращаться к властям об отпуске участков под землеустройство. На нас было обращено внимание со стороны администрации, внимание слабое, требовали правильно данные документы, нам их было трудно достать, т. к. Вы сами знаете, какое на нас было раньше внимание, но все-таки, благодаря некоторым товарищам из администрации, давали нам наставления – куда обратится и как поступить. С большим трудом доставали правильные документы и толкались во все стороны, пока добились своей цели, что и произошел наш Сел[ьский] Округ о нашем желании на оседлость нашей жизни, где и разрешили нам строится на участке No. 23 при Верхне-Верхоловском совете на балке Куберле и где мы и остановились на жительство, заключив договор под землеустройство. С нас взяли за договор по рублю 53 коп[еек] с души.

Землеустройство у нас еще не проходило, мы еще на земле [не] устроены. В первое начало нас организовалось 20 дворов и где нам разрешили занимать землю с участка No. 23 – 700 десятин на 20 дворов, т.е. на 87 душ. А всего участка No. 23 находится 3 722 душ, которые находится под долгосрочной арендой, сняты на 12 лет. А к нам еще приписано 25 семей, т.е. 92 души и с каждым днем прибывает все новые граждане и просятся в наше общество, а нам РИК [Районный исполнительный комитет] зимовники не разрешает принимать без ведома района, но так мы еще не так развиты, не зная правил и заходим в тупик. Просим утвердить за нами весь участок No. 23, т. к. в нас большое желание организовать чисто-национальный хутор и к нам все больше и больше прибывают наши братья, но нам участка не утверждают и мы теперь в тупике, не зная принимать таковых [...] желательно было бы даже дать клич своим братьям кочевникам, а не отказывать, что мы просим Вас позаботиться о своих братьях, которые еще живут в темноте дикой жизни.

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Теперь дорогие товарищи пропишем мы Вам о своей жизни, как мы здесь живем. Группа наша состоит более бедняцкого населения сословия, как Вам наверно известно, что при нас то и у нас начали строиться с весны [19]26 года. Поставили себе 10 жилых помещений, находятся в тех помещениях по 3-4 семьи в одном помещении, а больше у нас сил не хватило, то и оставили до следующей весны, а нас 45 семей, т.е. 179 душ. Помощи нам нет и не знаем, куда обратиться за помощью, а своих сыл не хватает и не в силах землеустроиться, трудно, дрогие товарищи, приходится землеустроиваться в первое начало на новой жизни, но все-таки дорогие товарищи, как не трудно нам приходится, но думаем перенести все трудности и остаться на новой жизни, как гласит жить теперь советская власть и уверяем Вас товарищи, что покажем пример своим отсталым товарищам новой жизни. При помощи Вашего наставления надеемся на Вас дорогие товарищи, что Вы не забудете о нас, дадите нам совет и наставления в нашей новой жизни, которую мы так жаждем и сладостно принялись за нее.

Теперь пропишем Вам товарищи о своем богатстве, т.е. о живом и мертвом инвентаре. У нас имеются 15 лошадей, 7 коров, 2 быка, 2 верблюда и уже у некоторых есть куры, гуси, свиньи и т.д. это будет на всю нашу группу, т.е. 45 семей, а мертвый инвентарь есть, как Вам известно и самим, у кого есть лошадь, то и цыганская повозка, больше ничего нет, но думаем приобретать по мере возможности.

Еще сообщаем мы Вам, товарищ Таранов, что у нашей [группы] состоят Григорий и Василий Тарановы, [и] к будущей весне ожидаем ихнего приезда. Теперь сообщаем мы Вам, что письмо мы Ваше получили, за которое мы Вам очень и очень благодарны, с которого мы узнали, что у нас есть Союз Цыган и как мы были рады с трепетом его читали на общем Собрании. У каждого в груди зажигалась искра и прокатывалась по лицу слеза и мы видели снова, что у нас есть товарищи, которые не забывают о нас, до этого мы не знали ничего и о нас наверно никто не знал, то и просим Вас дорогие товарищи широко оповестить в газетах о нашей группе и дайте клич нашим братьям цыганам вступить им в оседлость, как мы и просим Вас о всем о том сообщите нам, будем ожидать совета с большим нетерпением.

С приветом к Вам товарищи Общество Граждан группы цыган хутора Крикунова и уполномоченный хутора группы цыган Крикунов, А. П.

Адрес наш: Донская область, Сальский округ, Сев[еро]-Кав[казский] Край, ст[анция] Двойная, Орловское почт[овое] отд[еление], В[ерхне]-Верхоломский сельсовет, хутор Крикунова, группа цыган, Крикунову, А. И.
27.XII.1926 г.
С подлинным верно … [подпись, печать Всероссийского Союз Цыган]

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A Welcome Letter

December 27, 1926

To the dear comrades from the All-Russian Union of Gypsies *Romen* [1] from the National Association of Citizens from the group Romen from the *khutor* Krikunovo.

We, all groups of Roma, welcome you dear friends from the All-Russian Union of Gypsies as the first who have stood up in defence of our Gypsy nationality and have organised the Union which we saw. Dear comrades, from Your letter which we received on 01.12.1926 we realised that, for us, the route is already opened by the Soviet Authority and that our first comrades, Gypsies, are at the same place as all nationalities, and that is why we solely welcome the comrades of the Soviet Authority of the Communards for the proper maintaining of the life order in Russia.

Now, dear comrades, we will describe for You [2] the first entrance in our life towards sedentarisation, because for a long time we have been living in the Don Region; from the early days, we joined the lines of the Red Partisans [3] in the month of February 1918 and served the Red Army until the end of the bloody Revolution; we returned home and began to ponder about life because the Red Army gave us the possibility to understand what human life is like. We, as members of the Red Army, started to gather together with our whole families in groups of 3-4 families in one place, where we conducted our meetings; we spoke often about our sedentarisation, about our life as we were not so much aware about our first steps into the new life; darkness enveloped us, we did not know where to look for help, however, we thought that the Soviet Authority, that is our Authority, will always welcome us because a strong desire appeared in us concerning the common life of the working citizens, and we with great aspiration and desire we organised our own gathering, chose an organiser, commissioned him through our gathering, those elected being Krikunov, Aleksandar Pavlovich who, with great drive, took up the responsibility to organise our national khutor and began to persuade all of those who, because of their darkness, have still not realised how much better the settled life is [4]. When we were not yet organised in such big numbers, we were several families, i.e. the citizens Krikunovi, Sherbakovi and Limansky, and rumours started to spread around about our Gypsy khutor; Gypsies from all around the country began to come over with requests to enrol them in the settled life, so we started to turn towards the authorities for allocating plots of land for land settlement. The administration paid attention to us, the attention was weak, they wanted that the documents be filled in properly and it was difficult for us to get them, because You know yourselves what was the attention we used to receive before; nevertheless, thanks to several comrades from the administration who gave us directions – where to go and what to do we were able to achieve this. With great struggles, we received the right documents and pushed everywhere until we reached our goal, so that in our village of Okrug our desire to settle down is well known; this is where they allowed us to settle in the plot No. 23 at the Verkhne-Verkholovskiy Council at the

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Kuberle *balka* [5] and where we permanently settled down to live with a contract for land settlement. For the contract, they charged us 1 Rouble and 53 Kopeyki per person.

The land settlement is not finalised, as we have still not settled down on the land. Initially, 20 yards were organised where they allowed us to occupy land from plot No 23 – 700 *desyatin* for 20 yards, i.e. for 87 people. While on the whole plot No. 23 there are 3,722 people who are renting long-term, fixed for 12 years. While there are 25 families who are listed in, i.e. 92 people and each day arrive new citizens and beg to be let in our association, the Rayon Executive Committee does not allow us to accept winterers without the knowledge of the rayon; however, because we are still not that advanced, we do not know the rules and enter into a deadlock. We are asking the whole plot No. 23 to be allocated to us as we have a great willingness to organise a pure nationalities' khutor and more and more of our brothers come to us, but the plot is not authorised for us and we are now in a deadlock, not being aware how to accept such […] [6]; it would even be good to invite our nomad brothers, and not to reject them, and that is why we ask You to take care of our own brothers who are still living in the darkness of the wildlife.

Now, dear comrades, we will describe to You our life, how we live here. Our group is composed of the poorer population and, as you may be aware, we began to settle since the spring of 1926 [7]. We built 10 residential premises for ourselves; in these premises, there one can find 3-4 families in one room, as we did not have enough strength to build more and that is why we left it for the next spring, and we are 45 families, i.e. 179 people. and we ensure you, comrades, that we will give an example of the new life to our underdeveloped comrades. With the help of your instructions, we count on you, dear comrades, that you will not forget about us, that you will give us advice and instructions in our new life, for which we are so thirsty and which we sweetly embarked on.

We will now, comrades, describe for You our wealth, i.e. our livestock and immovable inventory. We have 15 horses, 7 cows, 2 oxen, 2 camels [8] and some already have hens, ducks, pigs, etc., and that is all for our whole group, i.e. 45 families, while there is also immovable inventory, as it is well-known to You, whoever has a horse has a Gypsy carriage, nothing else; but we intend to get more, according to our possibilities.

Also, we also inform You, Comrade Taranov, that our group includes Grigoriy and Vasiliy Taranovs, and that in the next spring we expect their arrival. Now, we announce to You, that we received Your letter, for which we are very, very grateful, from which we learnt that we have a Union of the Gypsies, and how happy we were, we were reading it with such a thrill at our general Gathering. In each person's chest ignited a spark and there were tears rolling down on their face, and we saw again that we have comrades that do not forget about us; by then, we did not know anything about You and probably nobody knew anything about us, and that is why we ask You, dear comrades, to inform widely about our group in the newspapers and to invite our Gypsy brothers to settle down as we also ask You let us know about all of this; we will be eagerly looking forward to the advice.

With greetings to You, comrades, from the Association of the citizens from a group of Gypsies from khutor Krikunovo and the group of Gypsies commissioned by the khutor A. P. Krikunov.

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Our address: Donskaya Oblast, Salskiy Okrug, North-Caucasus Kray, Train Station Dvoynaya, Orlovsky Post office, Verne-Verkholomski Village Council, Khutor Krikunovo [9], group of Gypsies, to A. I. Krikunov.
27.12.1926.
True with the original … [signature, stamp of the All-Russian Union of the Gypsies] [10].

Notes

1. In this case, there is a duplication of the ethnonym 'Gypsies' and 'Roma' in Russian and Romani, the word Roma is used as an adjective.
2. Usage of Capital Letter in addressing somebody in letters is a rule in the Russian language. It is used as a form of polite treatment. We keep it also in the English translation because here it came to underline the respect of the writers of the recipients of the letter.
3. Red Partisans – irregular armed units involved in the Russian Civil War.
4. This is a very long sentence which in translation loses clarity and its core meaning. We intentionally kept here and bellow in translation the long phrases of the original in order to reflect the style of the authors.
5. *Balka* (балка) – the bed of a dried-up river.
6. Illegible text.
7. In some publications, the founding of khutor Krikunov is dated in the spring of 1925 (Друц & Гесслер, 1990, p. 287; O'Keeffe, 2013, p. 152).
8. The camels in some places in Southern Russia, in particular those in the regions adjacent to the settlements of Kalmyks, are used in agriculture.
9. Khutor Krikunovo does not exist today.
10. The published text is not an original letter from khutor Krikunovo, and his type-written copy was made by the administration of All-Russian Union of Gypsies.

Source: GARF, f. P 3316, op. 20, d. 653, l. 22-24.
Prepared for publication by Elena Marushiakova and Vesselin Popov.

12.3.2 *The Gypsy Cavalry Division*

[Бланк] С.С.С.Р. Народный Комиссариат по Военным и Морским делам.
Начальник Главного Управления Рабоче-Крестьянской Красной Армии.
30 августа 1927 г., No. 108901.

Председателю Всероссийского Союза Цыган тов[арищу] Таранову.
Москва, Старый Гостиный двор, Помещение 54.

Народный Комиссар по военным и морским делам т. Ворошилов приказал сообщить Вам, что он считает предложение б[ывшего] командира Красной Армии Н. М. Бизев о сформировании цыганской кавалерийской дивизии несостоятельным, так как ежегодный призывной контингент цыганского населения весьма мал для создания такого крупного войскового соединения, каким является дивизия.

Зам. Начальник Главного Управления Р.К.К.А. … [подпись].

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[Letterhead] USSR. People's Commissariat for Military and Naval Affairs.
Head of the Main Directorate of the R.K.K.A. (Workers' and Peasants' Red Army).
30 August 1927, No. 108901.

To the Chairman of the All-Russian Union of Gypsies, Comrade Taranov.
Moscow, Old Gostiny Dvor, Room 54.

The People's Commissar for Military and Naval Affairs, Comrade Voroshilov, ordered to inform you that he considers the proposal of the former Red Army commander N. M. Bizev to form a Gypsy cavalry division untenable, since the annual conscription contingent of the Gypsy population is too small to create such a large military force, that is the division.

Deputy Head of the Main Directorate R.K.K.A. … [signature].

Notes

1. About Nikolay Timofeevich Bizev (Biz-Labza), see above.
2. The letter written by N. T. Bizev was not found, but from the official response of the leadership of the Red Army (and on behalf of its higher institution), it became clear what its content was – a proposal to create a separate Gypsy cavalry division.

Source: GARF, f. P 1235, op. 121, d. 31, l. 278.
Prepared for publication by Elena Marushiakova and Vesselin Popov.

12.3.3 *A Letter to M. I. Kalinin*

Председателю Центрального Исполнительного Комитета Союза ССР
М. И. Калинину

От курсанта ВКСС имени т. Киселева А. С. – т. Герасимова И. Я.
Члена ВКП(б), по нац[иональности] цыгана.

В процессе практической работы инструктором нац[ионального] отдела Зап[адного] облисполкома при проведении работы по оседанию цыган, я убедился, что райисполкомы, сельсоветы и имеющиеся цыганские колхозы на местах не в состоянии удовлетворить требования кочующих и работающих на разной сезонной работе цыган, желающих перейти на оседлый образ жизни.

Вот примеры, подтверждающие вышесказанное.

Весной 1934 года в цыганский колхоз "Октябрь" (Зап[адная] обл[асть]) со стороны кочевников цыган было подано более 100 заявлений на предмет приема их в колхоз, который, исходя из расчета наличия земельной площади, принял только 9 семей, остальным отказал и они пошли на сезонные работы, часть продолжает жизнь по старому. Такое положение наблюдается и в других районах и областях.

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Сейчас идет массовое оседание цыган в колхозах и кроме того, они целыми таборами идут работать на разные сезонные стройки (г. Смоленск).

Летом 1934 года на территории г. Смоленска (Зап[адной] обл[асти]) находилось цыган-кочевников до 400 семей, которые помещались в поле, в палатках; работая на разных сезонных работах. Все они неграмотные.

Советы среди них не ведут культурно-воспитательной работы, не борются с укоренившимися в них пережитками. Дети этих цыган школьного возраста не охвачены школой, только в двух таборах таких детей насчитывается 30 чел.

С наступлением осенних холодов рабочие цыгане вынуждены будут бросить свою работу, так как в полевых палатках они не смогут продолжать свою жизнь и работу на стройке. Жилища им не подготовлены и т.д. В районах и с[ельских]/советах недостаточно уделяется внимание вопросу по оседанию кочующих цыган. Я считаю необходимым сейчас издавать среди цыган газету на родном языке, которая явится мобилизующим органом в деле перехода их с кочевого образа жизни на оседлый, к сожалению этого еще нет.

Крайне необходимо сейчас для цыган отвести административно-территориальную единицу, хотя-бы в виде небольшого района и снабдить этот нац[иональный] район соответствующими кадрами. Ведь среди нас, цыган – имеется много коммунистов, комсомольцев и кроме этого много цыган, учащихся в средних и высших учебных заведениях. Все эти кадры могут вполне обеспечить руководство на отведенной территории.

Мы имеем неплохие образцы существующих цыганских колхозов, а некоторые из них являются показательными в районе по проведению хоз. полит. кампаний, что подтверждают данные показатели цыганского колхоза "Октябрь" (прилагается).

Исходя от вышеизложенного, я прошу Вас поставить вопрос по оседанию цыган кочевников в разрезе выделения спец[иальной] цыганской территории в виде района и издание газеты на цыганском языке.

... [подпись] (Герасимов, И[лья] Я[ковлевич]).
9 Ноября 1934 года.
Москва, Лубянский проезд, 19.
ВКСС имени т. Киселева А.С.

∵

To the Chairman of the Central Executive Committee of USSR M. I. Kalinin.
From the cadet in VKSS named after comrade Kiselev [1] – comrade I. Ya. Gerasimov.
A member of VKP(b), a Gypsy by nationality.

In the process of doing practical work as an instructor in the National Department of Western Oblast Executive Committee, while conducting work concerning the

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sedentarisation of the Gypsies, I became convinced that the regional executive committees, village councils and the existing Gypsy kolkhozes in the localities are not in a position to satisfy the requirements of the Gypsies who are travelling and working various seasonal work, and who want to move to a sedentary way of life.

Here are examples that confirm the above-mentioned.

In the spring of 1934 in the Gypsy kolkhoz *October* (Western Oblast) there were more than 100 applications from the nomadic Gypsies for their acceptance in the kolkhoz which, based on the calculation on the available land plots, has accepted only 9 families while it has rejected the rest, so that they have gone to [do] seasonal work, while part of them continue to live their lives in the old-fashioned way. A similar situation is observed also in other rayons and oblasts.

Now, there is a mass sedentarisation of the Gypsies in the kolkhozes and, besides this, they go, in their whole tabors, to work on different seasonal construction sites (the city of Smolensk).

In the summer of 1934, on the territory of the town of Smolensk (Western Oblast), there were 400 families of nomad Gypsies nomad who were camping on the field, in tents, working different seasonal jobs. All of them are illiterate.

The Soviet institutions do not do cultural-educational work among them, they do not fight with their internalised remnants. The children of these Gypsies who are of school age are not included in schools; only in two tabors, the number of such children is 30.

With the arrival of the cold weather in the fall, the working Gypsies will be forced to abandon their work as they could not continue their lives living in tents on the fields and working on the construction sites. Housing has not been prepared for them etc. In the rayons and the village councils, there is insufficient attention paid to the question of the sedentarisation of the Gypsy nomads. I deem it appropriate now that a newspaper be issued in their native tongue which will be a mobilising organ in the work towards their transition towards a settled way of life. Unfortunately, however, this is still not the case.

Now, it is utterly necessary for an administrative-territorial unit to be allocated for the Gypsies, at least in the fashion of a small rayon, and this national rayon to be supported with the necessary cadres. In the end, among us, the Gypsies, there are many Communists, Komsomol members, in addition to this, there are many Gypsies who study in secondary schools and in high education. All these cadres could provide the management of the separate regions.

We do have not bad examples of the existing Gypsy kolkhozes and some of them appear to be exemplary in conducting economic and political campaigns in the rayon, which is confirmed by the indicators provided for the Gypsy kolkhoz *October* (they are attached).

Based on what was said above, I ask you to bring up the matter of the sedentarisation of the nomadic Gypsies, having in mind dedicating a special Gypsy territory in the form of a rayon, as well as issuing a Gypsy language newspaper.

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... [Signature] (Ilya Yakovlevich Gerasimov [2]).
9 November 1934.
Moscow, Lubyansky proyezd, 19.
VKSS named after comrade A. S. Kiselev

Notes

1. Sergei A. Kiselev (1879-1937) was a Soviet party and state figure, Secretary of VTsIK.
2. About Ilya Gerasimov see for more details below.

Source: GARF, f. P 1235, op. 123, d. 28, l. 368-369.
Prepared for publication by Elena Marushiakova and Vesselin Popov.

12.3.4 *A Petition from the Gypsy Nomads*

Копия
ВЦИК, Отдел Национальностей.
От табора кочующих цыган близ города Иваново.

Ходатайство

Мы – нацмены, цыгане, кочевники, не имеющие определенного местожительства и территории, желаем быть оседлыми, иметь определенное местожительство и собственную територию в виде цыг[анского] района. [Желаем] активно работать на социалистических полях и промишленности, и когда будет создан цыганский район, мы также будем работать в промишленности и сельском хозяйстве, как другие автономные области.

Мы, кочевники-цыгане осознали, что только социалистический труд дает право быть честным гражданином Советского Союза, а поэтому мы просим отвести нам местность всем нацмен-кочевникам цыганам поселки.

И свои районы наша молодежь желает иметь оседлость и также учебу и стать полезным работникам социалистического отечества.

Мы знаем, что наша кочевая жизнь ничего не дает нам хорошего. Просим Отдел Национальностей ВЦИК походатайствовать перед правительством об отводе территории для цыган.

К сему просители цыгане от имени табора в количестве 20 семей.

К сему подписи и ряда желающих неграмотных кочевников цыган иметь свою територию.

29 Июля 1935 г.
Копия верна: От[дел] Нац[иональностей] ВЦИК – Секретарь [...]. 3.VIII.[19]35 г.

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Copy [1]
[To] VTSIK, Department of Nationalities.
From tabor of nomadic Gypsies near the city of Ivanovo.

Petition

We – national minorities, Gypsies, nomads who do not have a specific residence and territory, wish to be sedentary, have a certain place of residence and our own territory in the form of a Gypsy rayon. We wish to work actively in the socialist fields and industry, and when the Gypsy rayon is created, we will also work in industry and agriculture, like other autonomous regions.

We, the nomadic Gypsies, have realised that only the socialist labour gives a right to be an honest citizen of the Soviet Union, and so we ask to be allocated a territory, to give settlements to all national minority – nomadic Gypsies.

And in our rayons, our youth wants to have settled areas and also study and become useful workers of the socialist fatherland.

We know that our nomadic life does not give us anything good.

We ask the Department of Nationalities of the VTsIK to intercede to the government for the allocation of the territory for the Roma.

To this, the Gypsy petitioners write on behalf of the camp amounting to 20 families.

To this signature are added also a number [2] of illiterate Gypsy nomads wishing to have their own territory.

29 July 1935 [3].
Copy true with original: IN VTsIK – Segretary … [*signature indecipherable*]. 3.08. [19]35 г.

Notes

1. The letter has two variants – a handwritten original and a typewritten copy with handwritten additions in places. The typewritten copy is published here because the original is written with many misspellings and is difficult to decipher.
2. In addition to the typed copy, 8 original signatures were placed in the original.
3. The date in the original is omitted in the typewritten copy.

Source: GARF, f. P 1235, op. 130, d. 5, l. 85-86.
Prepared for publication by Elena Marushiakova and Vesselin Popov.

12.3.5 *The Memorandum to Stalin from Trofim Gerasimov*

Дорогому вождю партии и рабочего класса – тов[арищу] СТАЛИНУ Иосифу Виссарионовичу.
От инженера Герасимова Трофима Яковлевича.

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Докладная записка

Три месяца тому назад меня мобилизовали по приказу тов[арища] Орджоникидзе на вагоностроительный завод им[ени] газеты “Правды” (Запорожье-Каменское, Днепропетровской области) на выполнение Вашего (сталинского) заказа по вагоностроению. Ясно, этот весьма важный заказ будет безоговорочно досрочно выполнен.

До этого времени я работал на автозаводе им[ени] Сталина (Вашего имени в Москве) по созданию автомашин. Здесь мы работали крепко под руководством нашей партии, мы сумели одолеть американскую технику и создать свою машину “ЗИС” 5-6 лучшую машину. Последнюю работу я выполнял по конструкции легковой машины ЗИС 101. Я работал с группой специалистов над блоком цилиндра.

Вот что дала мне партия большевиков, советская власть.

В настоящее время я не только специалист, но и член ВКП(б) с 1927 года.

Кто я раньше был?

Цыган-кочевник, странствовал с табором с места на место. После этого я батрачил три года, а потом комсомол, школа, партия и ответственная работа социалистической стройки, и в последнее время выполняю Ваш заказ, дорогой Иосиф Виссарионович, по вагоностроению.

Цыганская национальность была особенно гонима царским правительством, как и все раннее угнетенные народности цыгане не имели постоянного местожительства и переезжали с места на место со своими жалкими пожитками.

На каждом переулке можно было услышать не только “цыганская морда”, но и зачасто избивали, начиная от сельского старосты деревни и кончая всей жандармерией.

Только партия большевиков, которую Вы олицетворяете (руководите), дала равноправие каждой народности.

Благодаря Вашему, Иосиф Виссарионович, правильному руководству, как мировой вождь партии большевиков, цыганская народность выросла на основе национальной политики нашей партии большевиков. Немало цыганских колхозов по Советскому Союзу, и многие из этих колхозов не только середняцкие, но уже зажиточные (“Красный Октябрь”, “Ромоно джиетэн”, “Нево дрям”, “Лули чергэн” и многие другие). Например, в одной Западной области имеется восемь цыганских колхозов, имеются клубы и школа-семилетка, которая в этом учебном году будет десятилеткой. Имеются цыганские артели. Не говоря уже о других областях и республиках.

Недостаток этих всех колхозов заключается в том, что их площадь слишком мала и при всей возможности эти колхозы не в силах расшириться за счет других окружающих колхозов.

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Пример. Колхоз “Красный Октябрь”, организован в 1928 г. В 1930-1931 г. колхоз выполнил фин[ансовый] план на 200% (план 400 р[ублей], выполнено 800 р[ублей]), государственные заготовки выполнены на 100%.

В 1932 г. колхоз за весенний сев и уборочную кампанию был премирован громкоговорителем и денежной суммой 500 руб[лей]. В 1933 г. за сельско-хозяйственную выставку в районе премирован картофелекопалкой и денежной суммой 350 рублей. В 1934 г. план хлебосдачи и натуроплаты выполнил на 100% (дано 128 цен[тера], выполнено 128 цен[теров]).

В начале подготовки весенней посевной кампании цыганский колхоз заключил соцдоговор с соседным колхозом “Авангард”, на лучшее проведение весеннего сева и уборки.

В результате цыганский колхоз закончил весенний сев первым, взяв соревнующийся колхоз на буксир.

К 1935 г. цыганский колхоз ликвидировал полностью неграмотность. Вся школьная молодежь охвачена школьным образованием, начиная от начальной школы и кончая семилеткой. Помимо этого 18 студентов в Мединституте, 3 студента в Пединституте, 2 студента в ВКСХШ [Высшая коммунистическая сельскохозяйственная школа], 1 человек на курсах советского строительства ВЦИК. Помимо этого данный колхоз немало дал специалистов с высшим образованием стране, которые являются командирами на заводах, фабриках и на социалистических полях.

В колхозе имеется комсомольская ячейка в количестве 15 комсомольцев.

Дорогой Иосиф Виссарионович! Я не стану перечислять уйму достижений этого маленького колхоза, но скажу, что он делается таким, каким Вы говорили на съезде колхозников “колхозы должны быть большевистскими, а колхозники зажиточными”. Партия осуществляет великие проблемы, которой Вы руководите.

Цыганская народность на примере, на фактах убедилась, что наилучшая жизнь в колхозе, на заводах и фабриках. Следовательно, трудящиеся кочевые цыгане всеми силами стремятся бросить свой кочевой образ жизни. Например, в этот же колхоз “Красный Октябрь” весной 1934 г. было подано от 100 семейств заявление о их приеме, и колхоз из расчета земельной площади принял только 9 семей, а остальным отказал в приеме, т.к. колхоз не мог расширить свою площадь за счет окружающих колхозов. Остро ставился вопрос расширения площади земельной перед районной и областными организациями, но конкретного ничего не достигнуто. Такое же явление в каждом цыганском колхозе.

Другой пример. Весной за 1934 год около 800 семей цыган работали на всевозможных сезонных работах, располагаясь вокруг Смоленска в шатрах. Эти трудящиеся кочевники-цыгане не могли осесть, т.к. поздней осенью они вынуждены уехать, хотя последние настоятельно требовали, путем ходатайства, о предоставлении жилплощади, но и из этого ничего не сделали конкретно, т.к. организации к этому вопросу отнеслись бездушно и многочисленному населению цыганскому пришлось вести – продолжать кочевой образ жизни, вопреки своему желанию.

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Организация национальных колхозов, из трудящихся цыган за период 1933-34 г. и конечно за 1935 годы, явилась массовым явлением, причем усиленное наступление переход на оседлый образ жизни.

Со стороны не только районных, но и областных и республиканских организаций, я считаю что проявлена полная недооценка национальной политики нашей партии. Сотни имеются фактов, когда по сотне семей трудящихся цыган соединялись в одно, образовывая колхозы, выделив ходоков, которые ходили оббивали пороги не только в районные организации, но и в областные, проедали свои пожитки к зиме и в итоге ничего не добивались. За период 1933 и 1934 г. не мало ходоков приезжало в Москву в Наркомзем РСФСР и ставили эти ходоки перед Наркомом т. Лисицыным с жалобами и с просьбами о предоставлении цыганским колхозам земли, были ходоки из Центрально-Черноземной области, БССР, с Поволжского края, Воронежской области и ряд других областей.

Да и не только ходоки приезжали в Москву, но и цыгане приезжали целыми таборами, располагались вокруг Москвы и требовали у Наркомзема РСФСР земельной площади. Такое явление особо было обнаружено в 1933 году. В этом 1933 была переполнена Московская область таборами цыган. Это вполне понятно, ибо в это время была поголовная тяга-желание трудящихся крестьян вступить в колхозы. Цыганское население имело большое желание перейти на оседлый образ жизни и, не найдя на местах никакой не только помощи, но и не получив указания, цыганские таборы вынуждены были приехать в Москву с ходатайством в центральные земельные органы. Например. МОЗО не могло переселить цыган которые с весны с 1-го мая организовались в два колхоза. Из-за косности МОЗО, недооценки национального вопроса не была доведена работа до конца. Все было готово, но у МОЗО не было средств перевести этих колхозников в Ваневский район и два колхоза были вынуждены не добившись никаких результатов продолжать кочевой образ жизни.

Густое заполнение окраин Москвы и самого города цыганскими таборами, административные органы вынуждены были административно выселить цыган из Московской зоны. 1934 год тяга цыган перейти на оседлость еще больше увеличилась. 1935 г. эта тяга еще с большей силой нарастает, но конкретных результатов нет, организации цыганских колхозов.

Отдел Национальностей ВЦИКа по цыганскому вопросу конкретного ничего не имеет. Серьезно цыганским вопросом он еще не занялся, как это полагается на сегодняшний день. Правда, кое-что в Отделе Национальности ВЦИКа есть. Имеется инструктор, который ведет работу не только по цыганской народности, но и по другими национальностям – тов. Токмаков, член ВКП(б) с 1925 г., по национальности цыган. В общем, по моему, кроме выездов, знакомства и увязки кое-каких вопросов Отдел Национальности не имеет. Это доказано тем, что он не мог подействовать на МОЗО, чтобы оно два колхоза, которые в свое время были организованы, довели бы дело до конца. Это во-первых. Во вторых, ежегодная и ежедневная неувязка на местах, как было выше упомянуто, в отдельных республиках и областях в деле

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оседания цыган, что приводило, как мною уже приведено, к приезду ходоков и целых таборов в центральные органы Наркомзема. Мимо, по моему, Отдела Национальностей проходят вопросы динамического содержания стремления перехода цыган на оседлость. В этом деле, по моему, Отдел Национальностей не только не мог, воздействуя на местные оганизации, скорее осесть трудящимся цыганам на оседлость, но по моему, Отдел Национальностей ВЦИКа не имел эту зону деятельности.

Достижения Отдела национальностей ВЦИКа по цыганскому вопросу это – создать газету на цыганском языке, как это уже имеет Северо-Кавказский край. Эта газета явилась бы прямым, самым быстрейшим проводником социалистической стройки национальной цыганской культуры. Но президиум ВЦИКа не поставил, как это подобает, перед ЦК партии вопрос о разрешении выпуска своей национальной газеты. Газета была бы сигналом, рупором, прямым руслом связи между всеми цыганскими колхозами, артелями, клубами, цыганскими школами и благодаря чему все лучшие опыты лучших работ передавались бы друг другу, изживая все недостатки, не говоря уже о том, что колхозы, клубы, артели знали бы друг друга.

Вопрос с газетой тлеет (не разрешается) уже два года, в то время как она нужна еще часто, ежеминутно.

Еще весьма важный вопрос, это вопрос, о выделении цыганского района в начале, которой должен разрастись и превратиться в автономную цыганскую республику. По моему этот вопрос, настолько насущный на сегодня, что я лично не нахожу другого выхода, который бы послужил быстрее этого вопроса, построить национальную социалистическую республику. Вопрос на сегодня до крайнего предела назрел, о необходимости, о компактном заселении цыган.

По моему этот район целесообразно создать на Северном Кавказе, где уже имеется цыганский сельсовет.

В районе, где будут заселены цыгане можно вести во всех социалистических разрезах воспитание людей. Здесь конденсировать всю культуру с высоко колоритным содержанием. Имеющую нашу уже национальную литературу трудно распространить и она пылится на складах, а при компактном заселении, литература будет пущена в ход, в массы. Район будет сразу заселен и он разрастется в республику. Пример, который, я привел с колхозом “Октябрь”, достаточно ясно, говорит за то, что заселение-оседания трудящихся цыган очень велик. Имеющие колхозы с большим желанием поедут в отведенный район, и это даст возможность ликвидировать цыганские табора.

Есть ли у нас свои национальные кадры? Да, есть и в достаточном количестве, различных специальностей, эти кадры партийным процентом имеют удельный вес, так что и с этой точки зрения можно без всякого риска пойти на организацию цыганского района.

Этот вопрос обсуждается в Отделе Национальностей ВЦИКа, давно но он по моему теплится нерешительностью постановкой этого вопроса столь важного

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на повестку дня и ходатайствовать перед соответствующими организациями об отводе цыганского района.

Я над этим вопросом много думал и считаю, что в настоящее время он должен быть теперь разрешен. Многие товарищи этот вопрос думали ставить перед Отделом Национальностей с 1928 года, но я, и многие другие были не согласны, считая, что этот вопрос еще далеко не подготовлен, т.к. сама масса трудящихся цыган не чувствовала потребности к переходу на оседлый образ жизни. Это во-первых, а, во-вторых, из цыганской национальности не было достаточно количество кадров-сталинцев, которые бы под руководством партии выполнили возложенные функции партией.

В данное время эту функцию кадры из цыганской национальности под руководством партии выполняют и национальная цыганская социалистическая культура быстро с большевистскими темпами стала бы расти. На основе ликвидации цыганских таборов, была бы ликвидирована цыганская буржоазия и кулачество, которые эксплоатируют трудящихся цыган в таборах, где отсутствует партийное и советское око.

На сегодняшний день десятки тысяч людей, благодаря своей таборной жизни не являются помощниками выполнения нашего пятилетнего плана. Эта армия еще не прикладывает труда на наше общее дело, дело построения социализма.

При организации района, который с великой быстротой превратится в автономную цыганскую республику, эта армия трудящихся цыган станет прямым проводником социалистической стройки – нашей прямой и главной задачи.

Интересный факт. В конце 1934 г. был представитель английский в цыганском клубе, который говорил: “Я не ожидал, чтобы цыгане могли быть специалистами и вообще культурными людьми. Никто не поверит в Англии, чтобы у цыган была письменность, театр, техникум и т.д. У нас в Англии считают это дикое племя не способным проявлять культурное начало даже.”

Представитель на фактах был убежден, что партия большевиков предоставила права (равноправие) для каждой национальности, благодаря которым ранее отсталые народности за короткий промежуток времени культурно выросли, строя социалистическую национальную культуру.

Дорогой Иосиф Виссарионович! Я написал Вам докладную записку с тем расчетом, чтобы Вы столкнули это дело с мертвой точки. Мне кажется, что я не ошибаюсь в этих вопросах. Что я правильно подошел к разрешению последних. Ведь окончательное оседание цыганской народности имеет большое значение в мировом политическом разрезе, не говоря уже о том, что десятки тысяч людей вольются в нашу социалистическую страну, которые еще, к сожалению, странствуют с таборами по нашим полям или насиживают загородные свалки, ютясь около городов, не участвуя в нашей жизни.

А теперь я пару замечаний сообщу Вам относительно нашего завода, вернее о своем цехе. […]

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Вот на этом я и кончаю дорогой и любимый наш Иосиф Виссарионович. Извини, что быть может моя докладная записка была не по назначению, которая написана на скорую руку, за один прием, вернее за ночь. Но Вы меня поймете и все учтете.

С ком[мунистическом] приветом … [подпись] (Герасимов).

Адрес домашний: Запорожье – Каменское, Днепропетровской области, Арсеничева улица, дом № 74, кв. 26, Герасимову Т. Я.
Или: Запорожье – Каменское, Днепропетровской области, вагоностроительный завод им. Газеты "Правды", Кузнечный цех, Герасимову Трофиму Яковлевичу.

∵

To the Dear Leader of the Party and Workers' Class – Comrade Joseph Vissarionovich STALIN.
From Engineer Trofim Yakovlevich Gerasimov [1].

Memorandum

Three months ago, I was mobilised by the order of Comrade Ordzhonikidze in the Train carriage factory named after Newspaper *Pravda* (Zaporozhye-Kamenskoye, Dnipropetrovsk Oblast) for the fulfilment of Your (Stalin's) order about wagons-building. It is clear that such an important order be fulfilled without reservations and ahead of schedule.

Up until then, I was working in the Car Factory named after Stalin (Your name in Moscow) for the manufacturing of vehicles. There, we worked hard under the leadership of our Party and we managed to get the better of the American technology and to create our own better ZIS 5-6 [2] vehicle. My last work was on the structure of the ZIS 101 limousine car. I used to work with the specialist group in the cylinder block.

This is what the Bolshevik Party gave me, the Soviet Authority.

At the present moment, I am not only a specialist but, from 1927, also a member of VKP(b).

Who was I before?

A Gypsy nomad, I used to wander with the tabor from place to place. After that, I worked as an agricultural serf for three years and after that a Komsomol, school, Party and responsible worker on the socialist construction, while most recently I execute Your order, dear Joseph Vissarionovich, on wagon production.

The Gypsy nationality was especially persecuted by the Tsarist Government; like all ill-treated nationalities before, Gypsies did not have permanent addresses and moved from place to place with their miserable home property.

On each crossroad, it not only could be heard that 'Gypsies mug' but they often beat us, starting from the elected village elder and finishing with the whole gendarmerie.

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Only the Party of the Bolsheviks that you personify (lead) gave equal rights to each nation.

Thanks to Your, Joseph Vissarionovich, rightful leadership as a world leader of the Party of the Bolsheviks, the Gypsy nationality grew on the basis of the national policy of our Party of the Bolsheviks. Not few are the Gypsy kolkhozes around the Soviet Union and many of these kolkhozes are not only on a middle level but already they are well-off (*Krasnyy Oktyabr', Romono Dzhiyeten, Nevo Dryam, Luli Chergen* [3] and many more). For example, only in Western oblast, there are 8 kolkhozes, clubs and a school for the first seven grades which in this academic year will run until the 10th grade. There are Gypsy artels. And here I am not also speaking about the other oblasts and republics.

The shortcoming of all these kolkhozes includes the fact that their size is too small and taking into consideration all the possibilities, these kolkhozes are not able to be expanded at the expense of the other kolkhozes surrounding them.

Example. The kolkhoz *Krasnyy Oktyabr'* [Red October] was organised in 1928. In 1930-31, the kolkhoz has fulfilled its financial plan at 200% (planed 400 Rubles, achieved 800 Rubles), the state orders were done at 100%.

In 1932, the kolkhoz for the spring sowing and harvesting was awarded a loud-speaker and the sum of 500 Rubles. In 1933 for the agricultural exhibition in the region it was awarded a digger for potatoes and the sum of 35 Rubles. In 1933, for the agricultural exhibition in the rayon, it was awarded a potato digger and a monetary sum of 350 Rubles. In 1934 the plan for the submission of the wheat and the payment in kind was done at 100% (expected 128 quintals, achieved 128 quintals).

At the start of the preparation for the spring sowing campaign, the Gypsy kolkhoz made a socialist contract with the neighbouring kolkhoz *Avangard*, for the better performance of the spring sowing and harvesting.

As a result, the Gypsy kolkhoz finished the spring sowing first taking the competing kolkhoz in a tow.

Towards 1935, the Gypsy kolkhoz has entirely liquidated illiteracy. The whole school-age youth has been included in the school education starting from the elementary school and finishing with the seventh-grade school. Besides, there are 18 students in the Medical Institute, 3 students in the Pedagogical Institute, 2 students in the High Communist Agricultural School, 1 person is attending training on soviet construction at VTsIK. Besides, the named kolkhoz has given many specialists with post-graduate education who are commanders at the kolkhozes, factories and at the socialist fields.

In the kolkhoz, there is a Komsomol cell amounting to 15 Komsomol members.

Dear Joseph Vissarionovich! I will not begin to list the ton of achievements of this small kolkhoz but I will say that it turns out to be just as you said during the Congress of the Kolkhozes: "the kolkhozes need to be Bolshevik and the kolkhoz-workers well-off". The Party that you are leading is achieving great tasks.

The Gypsy nationality, in the background of this example, of the facts, was convinced that the best life is in the kolkhoz, at the plants and in the factories. Therefore, the toiling Gypsies aim with all their might to get rid of their nomadic way of life. For example, in

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the mentioned kolkhoz, *Krasnyy Oktyabr'*, in the spring of 1934, there were applications handed in by 100 families for their acceptance in the kolkhoz, and the kolkhoz, based on a calculation of the land area, has accepted only 9 families while rejecting the rest because the kolkhoz cannot increase its size at the expense of its surrounding kolkhozes. The matter of increasing the land area was seriously raised to the attention of the rayon and oblast organisations, however, nothing concrete has been achieved. The same phenomenon could be observed in each Gypsy kolkhoz.

Another example. In the spring of 1934, about 800 Gypsy families have done all kinds of seasonal work located in tents, around Smolensk. These toiling Gypsy nomads were not able to settle down because in the late autumn they had no choice but leave, even though they had been insisting, by means of intercession, to be provided with a living space but nothing concrete had been done about this either, because the organisations dealing with the matter have dealt with it heartlessly and the numerous Gypsy population had to continue with their travelling life-style regardless of their will.

The organisation of working Gypsies' national kolkhozes for the period 1933-34, and palpable in 1935, appears to be a mass phenomenon, supported by an increased transition towards a settled way of life.

On the part not only of the rayon but also of the oblast and republican organisations, I believe that there has been a misjudgement concerning the national policy of our Party. There are hundreds of cases in which hundreds of working Gypsy families unite, forming kolkhozes, determining *khodoks*, who would travel and knock on the doors not only of rayon organisations but also of the oblast ones, consuming by wintertime all of their food reserves but in the end, nothing has been achieved. For the period 1933 and 1934, no small number of khodoks arrived in Moscow, in the Narkomzem RSFSR. These khodoks brought their complaints and requests for the allocation of land to the Gypsy kolkhozes before the People's Commissar, Comrade Lisitsyn; there were khodoks from Central-Chernozem oblast, BSSR, Povolzhskiy region, Voronezhkaya Oblast, and a number of other oblasts.

And it was not only khodoks that arrived in Moscow but also whole Gypsy tabors, settled in tents around Moscow and which required land allocation from the Narkozem of the RSFSR. Such a phenomenon was observed especially in 1933. In 1933, the Moscow oblast was overcrowded with Gypsy tabors. This can be entirely understandable as at that time the aspiration – the willingness of the toiling Gypsies to join the kolkhozes – was massive. The Gypsy population had a great desire to move to a settled way of life and not finding any support, nor receiving any directions, the Gypsy tabors were forced to arrive in Moscow, with intercession to the central agricultural institutions. For instance, MOZO was unable to relocate the Gypsies who, since spring, 1st of May, have organised themselves in two kolkhozes. Due to the short sight of MOZO and the misjudgement of the national issue, the task was not brought to its fruition. Everything was ready but MOZO did not have the resources to move these kolkhoz workers to the Vanevskiy rayon, so the two kolkhozes were forced, having no results, to continue their travelling way of life.

Due to the dense population at the outskirts of Moscow and of Gypsy tabors in the city itself, the administrative organs were forced to administratively push the Gypsies out of

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the Moscow zone [4]. In 1934, the aspiration of the Gypsies to transit towards sedentarisation increased even more. In 1935, that aspiration grew even stronger, however, there are not concrete results, and there is no organisation of the Gypsy kolkhozes.

In the Department of Nationalities at VTsIK, there is nothing concrete regarding the Gypsy issue. It has not yet dealt with it seriously, in the manner in which it is needed these days. In truth, there is something at the Department of Nationalities at VTsIK. There is one instructor who works not only with the Gypsy nationality but also other nationalities – comrade Tokmakov, member of VKP(b) of 1925 [5], a Gypsy by nationality. On the whole, in my opinion, besides travels, meeting people and settling of certain issues, there is nothing else done in the Department of Nationalities. That is proved by the fact that it cannot influence MOZO so that the case with the two kolkhozes, that used to be organised before, cannot be brought to an end. That is the first. Secondly, as it was mentioned above, there is a yearly and daily absence of coordination in the field, in the separate republics and regions concerning the case for the sedentarisation of the Gypsies which led, as it was already known to me, to the arrival of *khodoki* and of whole tabors to the central institution of Narkozem. And, in my opinion, the issue of supporting the dynamic aspirations of Gypsies to sedentarise pass nearby the Department of Nationalities. Because of this, in my opinion, the Soviet of Nationalities is not only unable to influence the local organisations in helping the toiling Gypsies to promptly settle down, but in my opinion, the Department of Nationalities at VTsIK does not have this as its action zone.

An achievement of the Department of Nationalities regarding the Gypsy issue could be realised through [the release of] a newspaper in Gypsy language, as the one in the North-Caucasus Kray. This newspaper would be the fastest, direct vehicle of the socialist building of the national Gypsy culture. However, it can be assumed that the Presidium of VTsIK has not put forward to the Central Committee of the Party the question of issuing a national newspaper. The newspaper would be a signal, a megaphone, a direct watercourse for a connection between all Gypsy kolkhozes, artels, clubs, Gypsy schools and thanks to this, all of the best examples of good work would be shared from one to another, overcoming all shortcomings, not speaking about the fact that the kolkhozes, clubs, artels would get to know each other.

The issue about the Gypsy newspaper smoulders (has not been resolved) for two years already; and yet, such a newspaper is continuously needed, every waking minute.

Another rather important issue, is the initial detachment of a Gypsy rayon, which would have to grow and turn into an autonomous Gypsy republic. For me, this issue is so relevant today that I personally do not see any other way in which the building of a socialist republic by this nationality can be achieved. A present-day issue, which is now ripe enough and has developed to its limit, concerns the necessity of the compact settlement of the Gypsies.

In my opinion, it is appropriate to establish this rayon in the North Caucasus, where a Gypsy village council already exists.

In the rayon where the Gypsies would be settled, people's education could be conducted in all social dimensions. Condensed here will be the entirety of the highly vivid

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Gypsy culture. Our already existing national literature gets spread around with difficulty and it collects dust on the shelves. When there is a compact settlement, however, this literature will be put into action, among the masses. The rayon will be immediately populated and it will grow into a republic. The example that I brought forth, with the [*Krasnyi*] *Oktyabr'* kolkhoz, speaks quite clearly to the fact that the settlement of the toiling Gypsies is truly significant. The available kolkhozes would go to their designated rayon with great willingness and this will allow the Gypsy tabors to be liquidated.

Do we have our own national cadres? Yes, there are quite enough of them, and from different specialties; these cadres are also significant as percentage of the presence of Party members, which means that from this point of view also, a Gypsy rayon could be organised, without any risk.

This question has long been discussed at the Department of Nationalities at VTsIK; but, in my opinion, while it is so important to today's agenda, and while it is a further reason for the relevant organisations to allocate a Gypsy rayon, it has nevertheless been accompanied by indecisiveness whenever it has been raised.

I have been thinking about this matter for a long time and I believe that, given the current times, it must be resolved now. Many comrades have been debating to raise the issue with the Department of Nationalities since 1928, however, I and many others disagreed believing that this question was not yet ready because the Gypsy toiling mass itself has not felt the need to move towards a settled way of life. That was the first reason. The second being that from the Gypsy nationality there were not enough cadres which were supporters of Stalin, and who would carry out the assigned functions of the Party within its management.

Nowadays, cadres from the Gypsy nationality, under the leadership of the Party, have been fulfilling this function, and the national Gypsy socialist culture started growing quickly with Bolshevik temps. On the basis of the liquidation of the Gypsy tabors, the Gypsy bourgeoisie and the kulaks, which exploit the toiling Gypsies in the tabors where the Party and Soviet eye are absent would also be liquidated.

Nowadays, because of life in the tabor, tens of thousands of people, are not actually involved in the implementation of our five-year plan. This army still does not yet apply its labour for our common cause, namely the work for the building up of socialism.

With the organisation of the rayon which will, with enormous speed, turn into an autonomous republic, this army of toiling Gypsies will become a direct conduit for the construction of Socialism – our direct and main task.

An interesting fact. At the end of 1934, in the Gypsy Club there was an English representative who said: "I did not at all expect that Gypsies could be specialists and cultured people. No one in England will believe that the Gypsies have their own writing, a theatre, a higher school, etc. At home, in England, the people believe that this savage tribe is not even able to show a cultural beginning."

The representative was convinced, based on facts, that the Bolsheviks' Party had granted rights (equality) to each nationality, thanks to which the underdeveloped

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nationalities of before, in a short period of time, grew up culturally, building their socialist national culture.

Dear Joseph Vissarionovich! I have written to You a report note believing that you will move this case from the dead situation in which it finds itself now. It seems to me that I am not mistaken in these matters and that I have approached them correctly. Ultimately, the final settlement of the Gypsy Nation has great importance, of global, political dimensions, not to mention that dozens of people will flourish in our Socialist Country, who, unfortunately, are still wandering around with the tabors, still in our fields, or who are inhabiting the dumping grounds of the outskirts of cities, and not participating in our lives.

And now I will inform you about a few notes regarding our factory, more precisely about our workshop. […] [6].

This is where I end, our dear and beloved Joseph Vissarionovich. Forgive me if perhaps my memorandum has not been appropriate, having written it in a hurry, in one sitting, more precisely on one night. However, you will understand me and you will consider everything

With a Communist greeting … [signature] (Gerasimov).

Home address: Zaporozhye-Kamenskoye, Dnepropetrovsk Region, Arsenicheva street, Home № 74, Lodging 26, T. Ya. Gerasimov.
Or: Zaporozhye-Kamenskoye, Dnepropetrovsk Region, Vagon Plant named after Newspaper 'Pravda', Blacksmith's Workshop, Trofim Yakovlevich Gerasimov.

Notes

1. The date of the Memorandum is missing, but the handwritten resolution shows that the document was administratively processed in TsK VKP(b) on 18.07.1935.
2. ZIS is the abbreviation for *Завод имени Сталина*, factory named by Stalin. The ZIS-5 (ЗиС-5) was a 4x2 Soviet truck produced by Moscow ZIS factory from 1932 to 1948 (the first one was made at the end of 1930). ZIS-5 was the first Soviet motor vehicle to be exported. ZIS – 6 was Three-axle version. It was produced between 1934-1941.
3. It is interesting to note that all the Romani language names of Gypsy kolkhozes are printed with errors (*Ромоно джиетэн*, *Нево дрям*, *Лули чергэн*).
4. The deportation of Gypsies from Moscow, in 1933, will be discussed further below.
5. As seen from personal data card of Ivan Tokmakov prepared for All-Party Party Census of 1927, Ivan Tokmakov had been a member of the VKP(b) not since 1925, but since 1919 (RGASPI, f. 17, op. 9, d. 3642, l. 37-38). In the existing party hierarchy, the year of admission to the Party was a criterion of particular importance. This is a clear mistake on the part of Trofim Gerasimov, and it is not clear whether it was deliberately made or not.
6. The following is a long passage about the irregularities in the activity of the workshop and the factory where Trofim Gerasimov himself works, whereby all 'wreckers' are branded, emphasising their 'wrong' class origin. Such types of exposures to the authorities (essentially denunciations) were widely used at the time to justify mass repression against the so-called 'wreckers' (*вредители*) and 'enemies of the people' (*враги народа*). The so-called 'wrecking' was a crime specified in the criminal code of the early USSR.

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Source: GARF, f. P 3316, op. 64, d. 1637, l. 2-13.
Prepared for publication by Elena Marushiakova and Vesselin Popov.

12.3.6 *A Letter to Stalin from the Gypsy Children*

[В] ЦК ВКП(б) тов[арищу] Сталину.
От воспитаников цыг[анского] д[етского] дома и школы гор[ода] Смоленска Зап[адной] области.

Мы, воспитаники цыг[анского] д[етского] дома и школы передаем свой пролетарский пламенный привет, нашему мудрому и великому и лучшему воспитателю и вождю всего трудового народа тов[арищу] Сталину.

До организации Цыг[анского] д[етского] дома мы, воспитаники этого д[етского] дома, ранее находившиеся беспризора и ведшие кочевой образ жизни и с организацией цыг[анского] д[етского] дома, который организовался в 1928 году и переживал организационный период при котором была масса недостатков как-то: отсутствие педагогических кадров, воспитателей, недостаточно жил. площади, отсутствие помещений и дров для школы, пионер[ского] отряда и прочее. Но при ведении правильной Ленинско-Сталинской нац[иональной] политики под Вашим умелым руководством мы, ранее угнетенная, отсталая нация цыган, сейчас, пережив организационный период д[етского] дома имеем ряд достижений, а именно постоянный педагогический состав, квалифицированных воспитателей своей нации, имеем специально отстроенное здание для занятий, и воспитанники получают знания в объеме 7 классов, имеем пионерский отряд.

И по поручению всего коллектива воспитанников нашего дома выносим Вам тов. Сталин !!! сердечную большую благодарность за превращение нас в полезных, сознательных строителей бесклассового социалистического общества.
По поручению коллектива цыг[анского] д[етского] дома [и] шк[олы].

Учком [Училищный Комитет]: … [подписи] (Д. Камбович, Фоденков [?] Вл., Михолажина Л., Казимировская Наташа, Казимировский Александыр).
02.I.1936 г.

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To TsK VKP(b), Comrade Stalin.
From the graduates of the Gypsy children's home with school, the town of Smolensk, Western Oblast.

We, the graduates of the Gypsy children's home with school, express our proletarian ardent greetings to our wise and great, the best educator and leader of the whole proletarian working people, Comrade Stalin.

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Until the organisation of the Gypsy Children's Home, we, the alumni of this children's home, were without supervision and used to lead a nomadic lifestyle, and with the organisation of the Gypsy Children's Home, which was set up in 1928, and which experienced a period of organisation which was characterised with a ton of deficiencies, such as: absence of pedagogical cadres, educators, insufficient living area, absence of school premises and wood, Pioneer squad, etc. But, under the right Leninist-Stalinist national policy, under Your skilful leadership, we, the previously deprived, undeveloped nation of the Gypsies, after experiencing the organisational period of the Children's Home, now have a number of achievements, namely, permanent pedagogical staff, qualified educators from our Gypsy nation, we have a specially constructed building for classes, and the pupils gain knowledge in it until the 7th grade, we have a Pioneer squad.

On behalf of the entire staff of the alumni of our Home, we offer to you, Comrade Stalin !!!, a great heartfelt gratitude for turning us into useful, conscious builders of the classless socialist society.

On behalf of the collective of the Gypsy Children's Home with School.
The Student Committee: … [signatures] (D. Kambovich, Vl. Fodenkov [?], L. Mikholazhina, Natasha Kazimirovskaya, Aleksandyr Kazimirovskiy).
02.01.1936.

Source: GARF, f. P 3316, op. 28, d. 793, l. 132-133.
Prepared for publication by Elena Marushiakova and Vesselin Popov.

12.3.7 *A Letter to Stalin from the Delegates of the Western Oblast*

Великому учителю, гениальному вождю трудового народа всего мира.
Великому вождю нашей коммунистической партии ВКП(б).
Тов[арищу] Сталину!

От делегатов Западной области, первого союзного совещания по вопросу культурно-хоз[яйственного] обслуживанию трудящихся цыган всего союза.

Находясь на совещании где присутствуют делегаты от других областей Союза, цыганских колхозов и школ. Нам стало понятным, что благодаря правильной Ленинско-Сталинской нац[иональной] политики, часть из нашей нации, самой забитой, самой некультурной, угнетаемой в царское время, сейчас сумели включиться наравне со всеми трудящимися [Советского] Союза в строительство социализма и строят свою счастливую, радостную и зажиточную жизнь по новому.

Наша Западная область при помощи облисполкома, правильном руководстве обкома сумели наладить эту работу несравненно лучше, чем в других областях. Наши Цыганские колхозы Зап[адной] обл[асти] как напр. колхоз "Октябрь" ликвидировал бескоровность, имеет обобществленное стадо, все дети школьного

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возраста учатся в школах, а взрослое население молодежи на рабфаках и техникумах в кол[ичестве] 30 чел[овек].

Колхоз со стороны районных организаций премировался неоднократно и идет передовым по с[ел]/совету и району.

У нас есть цыг[анские] школы начальные и одна полу-средняя (7-летка), последняя из них является кузницей, где выковываются наши кадры. Отсюда ежегодно дети отправляются на учебу в рабфаки и техникумы.

Дорогой тов. Сталин!

У нас все же есть много недостатков тормозящих к быстрейшему переходу кочевого населения на оседлой образ жизни. Наши колхозы не могут расширяться за счет окружающих колхозов (недостаток зем[ельной] площади) в силу чего у нас еще приходится отказывать в приеме в колхоз многим кочевникам, так, что часть цыган еще кочуют и попрошайничают.

Просим от имени цыган отвести территорию хотя в виде района для компактного заселения трудящихся цыган.

Среди нас много есть цыган коммунистов, комсомольцев – учащаяся молодежь, много выросло кадров из цыган, которые могли-бы обеспечить руководство в данной территории.

Дорогой т[оварищ] Сталин! Мы желаем чтоб к концу II пятилетки не было б ни одной семьи вне трудовой жизни.

Делегаты совещания от Западной области:
Инструктор Зап. облика … (Герасимов И. Я.).
Директор н[ачальной] и [полу-]с[редней] ш[колы] и дет[ского] д[ома] … (Михалажин Н. П.)
Пред[седатель] к[олхо]за “Октябрь” … (Горбунов Р. И.)
4 января 1936 год.

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To the Great Teacher, the Genius Leader of the Working People from all Over the World,
To the Great Leader of our Communist Party VKP(b),
Comrade Stalin!

From the delegates of Western Oblast at the first union consultative meeting on the issue of cultural and economic service to the working Gypsies from the whole [Soviet] Union.

Being at a meeting attended by delegates from other areas of the [Soviet] Union from Gypsy kolkhozes and schools, we realised that thanks to the right Leninist-Stalinist national policy, part of our nation, the most forgotten, the most uncultured, oppressed during Tsarist's time, has now been able to join on an equal footing the workers of the

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[Soviet] Union in the construction of socialism and are building their happy, joyful and prosperous life in a new way.

Our Western Oblast, with the assistance of the oblispolkom, under the proper management of the obkom, managed to organise this work incomparably better than in other oblasts. Our Gypsy kolkhozes in the Western Oblast, such as, for example, kolkhoz *October*, has eliminated the absence of cows, it has a common public flock, all children of school age learn in schools, while the older people and the youth attend rabfaks and technical schools amounting to 30 people.

The kolkhoz has been rewarded many times by the regional organisations and is considered to be a leader in the village council and rayon.

We have Gypsy elementary schools and one half-secondary (7th-grade) school, the latter being a smithery where our cadres are formed. From here, half of the alumni are sent to study in rabfak and technical schools.

Dear Comrade Stalin!

There are still many shortcomings in us, slowing the rapid transition of the nomadic population to a sedentary lifestyle. Our kolkhozes cannot be expanded at the expense of the surrounding kolkhozes (due to a shortage of land), which is why we still have to refuse the admission into kolkhozes of many nomads so that a part of the Gypsies are still wandering and begging.

We are asking on behalf of the Gypsies to allocate a territory, at least in the form of a rayon, for the compact settlement of the toiling Gypsies.

Among us, there are many Communist Gypsies, Komsomol members, youth that study, [and] many cadres that have emerged from among the Gypsies which would be able to provide leadership in the given territory.

Dear comrade Stalin! We wish that at the end of the second five-year plan there would be no family who does not have a working life.

Delegates of the meeting from Western Oblast:
Instructor of the Western Oblast Executive Committee … [signature] (I. Ya. Gerasimov).
President of primary and half-secondary school and of the children's home … [signature] (N. P. Mikholazhin).
President of the *Kolkhoz October* … [signature] (R. I. Gorbunov).

January 4, 1936.

Source: GARF, f. P 3316, op. 28, d. 793, l. 13-130б.
Prepared for publication by Elena Marushiakova and Vesselin Popov.

12.3.8 *A Letter to Constitutional Commission*

В Конституционную Комиссию, [под руководством] Й. В. Сталина.
Копия: Совет Национальностей ЦИК СССР.
От инструктора Зап[адного] Облисполкома И. А. Герасимов.

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В Западной области имеется 4 цыганских колхоза, не плохо справляются со всеми хозяйственными работами. Колхоз “Октябрь” Смоленского района за отличную работу и за качественную сдачу зерна государству Наркомземом премирован грузовой автомашиной.

Нужно отметить, что цыганские колхозы не имеют возможности расширить свои земельные участки за счет окружающих коллхозов.

Много цыган – кочевников пытались вступить в члены колхозов, колхозники исходя из своих экономических местностей отказывают в приеме, вследствии чего идет медленный процесс перехода от кочевья на оседлый образ жизни. Трудоустройство их в городе зачастую тормозит отсутствие жилищной площади.

Несмотря на трудности в этом процессе Советские организации оказывают помощь по трудоустройству, много цыган работают на фабриках, заводах, в системе промкооперации, имеются три школы, одна из них неполно-средняя.

Все-же по области и до сего времени имеется 500 семей кочевого и полукочевого населения цыган, которые не занимаются общественно-полезным трудом.

При обсуждении проекта Сталинской конституциии СССР в цыганских колхозах и среди кочевого населения (в таборах) вызвало большую активность, цыгане во своих выступлениях приводили примеры прошлой и настоящей жизни.

Кочевое население просит Конституционную комиссию [под руководством] Й. В. СТАЛИНА и Правительство выделить один район в Союзе для компактного заселения цыган и оказать им помощь в трудоустройстве.

Сейчас особо большая тяга цыган к оседлости, [...] всюду между ними идет классовая борьба.

Считаю необходимым выделить один район в Союзе для развертывания там цыганских колхозов, сел. советов, оказать им помощь в трудоустройстве.

Цыганского населения по всеми Союзу соберется больше 100 тысяч, из них уже много есть коммунистов, комсомольцев, которые смогут оказать помощь партийным советским организациям в руководстве района.

[подпись] ... (Герасимов).
Гор[од] Смоленск, 12.X.1936 г.

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To Constitutional Commission, [under the leadership of] Joseph V. Stalin.
Copy: To Soviet of Nationalities of TsIK SSSR.
From the Instructor in the Western Oblispolkom, I. A. Gerasimov.

In the Western Oblast, there are 4 Gypsy kolkhozes, which deal quite well with all agricultural work. The kolkhoz *October* in the Smolensk Region was awarded by Narkomzem with a truck for excellent work and the qualitative submission of grain to the state.

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It must be noted that the Gypsy kolkhozes have no opportunity to expand their land plots at the expense of the surrounding kolkhozes.

Many nomadic Gypsies have tried to become members of the kolkhozes, but the kolkhoz workers, on the basis of their economic landscape, refused to accept them, as a result of which the process of transition from a travelling way of life to a sedentary lifestyle goes slowly. Their employment in the city is often hindered by the absence of housing space.

Despite the difficulties in this process, the Soviet organisations provide support in employment, many Gypsies work in factories, plants, in the system of industrial co-operatives, we have three schools, one of which is an incomplete secondary school [1].

Nevertheless, until now there are 500 families in the region, nomadic and half-nomadic Gypsy inhabitants, who are not engaged in socially useful labour.

The discussion of the Stalinist Constitution project of the USSR in the Gypsy kolkhozes and among the nomadic population (in the tabors) provoked great activity; in their speeches, the Gypsies brought examples from their past and present lives.

The nomadic population asks the Constitution's Commission, under the leadership of J. V. STALIN, and the Government to allocate a rayon in the Union for the compact settlement of the Gypsies and to provide them with support in getting employment.

There is now a particularly great attraction to sedentarisation, [...] there is a class struggle everywhere.

I consider it necessary to dedicate a rayon in the Soviet Union for the purpose of setting up Gypsy kolkhozes, village councils, to provide them with help in getting employment.

The Gypsy population of the whole Soviet Union will be as numerous as 100,000 people, of whom there are already many Communist and Komsomol members, who will be able to help the Party's Soviet authorities in the management of the rayon.

... [signature] (Gerasminov).

The town of Smolensk, 12.10.1936.

Notes

1. In the RSFSR, according to the "Regulation on a Unified Labour School" (1918), the 6th and 7th years of schooling in the 2nd level schooling belonged to incomplete secondary school. The official name "Incomplete secondary school" was introduced by the Decree of the SNK USSR and the TsK VKP(b) "On the structure of primary and secondary schools" (1934).

Source: GARF, f. P 1235, op. 123, d. 27, l. 141-141об.
Prepared for publication by Elena Marushiakova and Vesselin Popov.

12.3.9 *A Letter to Stalin by Nikolay Pankov*

Проэкт письма И. В. Сталину.

(Не послано. Послано во 2-ой редакции).

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В разрешении судьбы цыганского народа есть несколько тревожных моментов, которые меня как сына социалистического отечества и как цыгана, не могут не волновать и заставляют искать ответа на свои волнующие вопросы.

После долгого раздумья я, наконец, решил обратиться вот с этим письмом.

Цыган в СССР, по данным статистики 1926 г., числится 61 294 человека. Это кочевое, изолированное шатром племя, разбросанное небольшими кучками по всему союзу, обреченное царской политикой на вымирание вследствие гонений, нищеты и таких болезней, как туберкулез, рак и др. После столетий, окутанных жестокой легендой вокруг этого народа, как о племени неисправимом, как о каком-то отщепенце, являвшемся бедствием для тех мест, где появлялось это "порочное" племя, а в капиталистическом обществе и до сих пор, "пороки и злые наклонности" которого не в силах исправить ни гонение, ни пытки, ни казни, ни суровый закон, – здесь в СССР это "проклятое" и "неисправимое" племя было всколыхнуто идеями партии Ленина-Сталина, провозгласившей братство для всех обездоленных народов, оказавших помощь и поддержку преследуемым и эксплоатируемым. Цыганы – это голодные рты, не имевшие никакой экономики, не имевшие никакого своего пространства, жившие в большинстве случайностью, стали ломать шатры для того, что-бы перейти на оседлость и труд.

[1.] Примерно с 1927 года в разных местах стали создаваться цыганские колхозы, трудовые артели, стала зарождаться литература, имевшая своею целью оформить сознание и впитать идеи партии и советского государства; сделать из цыган сознательных творцов социализма; возникали культ-просветительные учреждения (клубы, школы, в 1930 г. возник в Москве театр).

К началу 1936 г. по Союзу насчитывалось "свыше" 40 цыганских колхозов, но эта цифра, мне кажется, не должна охватывать собою и половины народности; даже и в том случае, если допустить, что какая-то часть вовлечена в промышленность (чаще всего при новостройках в качестве транспортной силы), то все же какая-то часть (и не малая вероятно) на сегодня продолжает кочевать на прежних основаниях, и дело здесь, очевидно, не в нежелании цыган, а в том, что на трудоустройство нужны специальные средства и какой-то земельный фонд, ну и очевидно, потому что это племя не представляет компактной массы, а вкраплено незначительными кучками по всему союзу. Так незначительно или кустарно разрешается и их судьба, и это является одной из причин, что большая часть цыган в системе народного хозяйства является на сегодняшний день не плюсом, а минусом – это I-ое.

2. Между существующими колхозами, предприятиями и трудящимися цыганами нет никакой связи, и наша жизнь и с положительными и отрицательными сторонами ее остается внутри себя: хорошее может погибнуть, худое – дать пышный цвет! Приведу 1-2 примера:

а) В одном из цыганских колхозов были свободные жилые постройки, которые давали возможность колхозу доприселить некоторое количество цыган, но по распоряжению местных органов колхоз передал их на сторону. Колхозники не могли, из за отсутствия газеты, поднять этот вопрос на надлежащую высоту.

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б) Московский цыганский театр отмежевался от передовых трудящихся цыганских масс Москвы; цыганские массы театром никак не обслуживаются, он выродился в экзотический театр вместо того, чтобы стать орудием для воспитания цыганской народности;

в) Не единичны случаи, когда таборы, кочуя из одного места в другое в поисках возможности создать колхоз, натыкаются на разные объективные условия, как отсутствие в данном районе свободной земли или хозяйственных построек и т.д. … и здесь газета, имея связь с Наркомземом, Госпланом и пр., могла бы сыграть положительную роль в деле оседания цыган.

Организационное и воспитательное значение газеты огромно. Вл. Ильич [Ленин] говорил, что газета обучает жить и строить свое хозяйство. Отсутствие газеты сильно тормозит наше движение по приобщению к труду и укреплению нашей хозяйственной жизни.

Не раз поднимавшиеся голоса за создание цыганской газеты оставались голосами вопиющих в пустыне … "нужно будет подумать, какого ведомства или организации должна быть ваша газета" – таков примерно бывал всегда ответ.

3. Ни одно ведомство, на обязанности которого должно бы было быть выявление кадров и главное – выращивание их, этим вопросом не занималось и не занимается, а ведь кадры решают все! Ни одно ведомство не может сказать, что оно приготовило, вооружило работника-цыгана на его фронте. Цыганские кадры не использованы, а их деятельность, в виду знания ими языка и быта, должны были бы дать положительный эффект.

4. Школы. В Москве существовали три группы при русских школах, и постепенно закрывались. В этому году прекратила свое существование последняя группа. Дети распределены по русским школам. Но можно ли быть уверенным что школа, оперирующая в своей воспитательной работе примерами не из жизни (нрав, быт, обычаи), может иметь положительный успех?

Наши дни показывают нам, что цыганская молодежь с образованием в объеме неполной средней школы и средней школы могут дать лишь две места. Это – Смоленск, где имеется цыганская неполная средняя школа и Москва из своего цыганского педагогического училища; при чем, чтобы иметь контингент учащихся, Пед[агогическому] уч[или]щу пришлось пойти на создание двух подготовительных классов. Это обстоятельство говорит как будто за то, что нецыганские школы среди цыган, по совершенно объективным причинам, успеха не имели.

5. Литература. Издание литературы на цыганском языке прекращается. В издательстве словарей издавался цыганско-русский словарь; был набран, сверстан, прошел корректуры и после всех операций последовало распоряжение снять его с производства.

Существует народность, язык, зарождается хозяйственная жизнь, тяга к культуре, естественно возникает и интерес и потребность в знании этого народа и его языка по новому и у других народностей, соприкасающихся с ним, для примера: Педагог нецыган, обучающий цыганских детей, культурной, партийный

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работник, и т.д и т.п. Наконец и у культ[урного] раб[очего] цыгана м[ожет] б[ыть] потребность в словаре. Такой словарь есть один из моментов, служащих задачам интернационального воспитания.

Далее в Учпедгизе также совершенно прекращено издание цыганской учебн[ой] литературы. Учебники, бывшие в наборе разобраны или разбираются. Вполне можно согласиться при двуязычности народа, каким являются цыганы, с преподаванием всех дисциплин не на родном языке, но надо ли, должно ли при этом снимать учебники родного языка и литературы?

[6.] И наконец – последный вопрос – это выборы в Верховный совет. Ввиду разбросанности незначительными кучками, численность наша нигде очевидно не была достаточной, чтобы мы могли выдвинуть депутатов от своего народа.

II.1938. [Николай Панков].

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Draft letter to J. V. Stalin.
Unsent. Sent second edition.

In solving the fate of the Gypsy people, there are several alarming moments that I, as a son of the socialist fatherland and as a Gypsy, cannot help but worry about and which force me to search for an answer concerning these worrying questions.

After a long reflection, I finally decided to come forward with this letter.

The Gypsies in the USSR, according to the statistics from 1926, number 61,294. These are nomadic tribes, isolated in tents, dispersed throughout the Soviet Union in small groups, doomed by the Tsarist policy of extinction as a result of persecution, poverty, and such diseases as tuberculosis, cancer and others. After hundreds of years, wrapped with cruel legends about this people as an incorrigible tribe, as if they are some kind of a waste that is disastrous for those places where this "vicious" tribe has appeared, and in Capitalist societies until now, they are considered as people whose "vices and evil inclinations" are impossible to be corrected neither through persecutions, tortures, executions or harsh laws, – here in the USSR; this "damned" and "irredeemable" tribe was shaken by the ideas of Lenin-Stalin's Party proclaiming a fraternity for all the nations that are deprived of everything, providing help and support to the persecuted and exploited. Gypsies – these are hungry mouths, with no economy, no living space of their own, living, for the most part, by chance-, have begun to break down the tents in order to settle down and start to work.

1. For example, in 1927, Gypsy kolkhozes and labour artels began to be created in different places; literature begun to appear seeking to influence the minds of the Gypsies and to absorb the ideas of the Party and Soviet State; to make the Gypsies conscious creators of socialism; cultural and educational institutions emerged (clubs, schools, in 1930 a Moscow Gypsy Theatre was created).

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By the beginning of 1936, across the [whole Soviet] Union there were "more" than 40 Gypsy kolkhozes but it seems to me that this figure does not encompass even a half of the Gypsy nationality; even in this case, assuming that some part of the Gypsies is involved in industry (most often in new construction sites involved as a transport force), then some (and probably not a small) part nowadays continues in the old-fashion way, and the problem here is obviously not in the reluctance of the Gypsies but in the fact that for their employment special means and some land fund are needed; and it is obvious because this tribe is not a compact mass, but it is interspersed in small heaps throughout the Soviet Union. So, their fate is solved insignificantly or in small portions, and this is one of the reasons why a big part of the Gypsies in the national economic system nowadays appears to be not a plus but a minus – that is the first.

2. There is no connection between the existing kolkhozes, enterprises, and the working Gypsies, and our lives with their positive and negative aspects remain closed within itself: the good can perish and the bad flourish with lush colour! I will bring 1-2 examples:

a) In one of the Gypsy kolkhozes, there were free residential buildings that allowed the kolkhoz to settle down some more Gypsies, but at the disposal of the local authorities, the kolkhoz handed them aside. The kolkhoz workers could not, because of the absence of a newspaper, raise this issue at the necessary level.

b) The Moscow Gypsy Theatre detaches itself from the progressive toiling Gypsy masses of Moscow; the Theatre does not serve at all the Gypsy masses; it was transformed into an exotic theatre rather than becoming a weapon for the education of the Gypsy nation.

c) Not few are the cases when the tabors, wandering from one place to another in their search for an opportunity to create a kolkhoz, encounter various objective conditions such as the absence in a given region of free land or agricultural buildings, etc. … here too, the newspaper, having a connection with Narkozem, Gosplan, and others could play a positive role in the deed of sedentarisation of the Gypsies.

The organisational and educational importance of the newspaper is enormous. Vladimir Ilyich Lenin has said that the newspaper teaches how to live and to build one's own economy. The absence of a newspaper greatly slows our movement towards labour and the strengthening of our economic life.

Not once the voices for the creation of a Gypsy newspaper remain voices screaming in the desert … "it needs to be found out which department or organisation your newspaper is supposed to be linked to", such, for example, has always been the answer.

3. No one administration, the duty of which should be the discovering of the cadres and the main one – their cultivation, has dealt with and does not deal with it even now; but as known cadres are all important! [1] No administration could say that it has prepared, armed the Gypsy worker on this front. The Gypsy cadres are not used even when their activities, given their knowledge of the language and the lifestyle of the Gypsies, should have a positive effect.

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4. Schools. There were three groups in Moscow at the Russian schools, and they were gradually closing down. In this year, the last group ended its existence. The children are distributed across the Russian schools. But could we be confident that a school operating in its educational work with examples, not taken from life (morality, habits, customs), could be successful?

Our days show us that the Gypsy youth education, in half-secondary school and secondary school, can only be received in two places. That is Smolensk, where there is a Gypsy incomplete secondary school, and Moscow with its Pedagogical School; on top of that, in order to have a learning contingent, the Pedagogic School had to create two preparatory classes. This speaks to the fact that the non-Gypsy schools among the Gypsies, for perfectly external reasons, were not successful.

5. Literature. The publishing of literature in the Gypsy language has been terminated. The publishing house for dictionaries a Gypsy-Russian dictionary was being prepared: it was completed, the lay out was done, it went through corrections, and after all this there came an order that the dictionary be dropped from production [1].

There is a nationality, a language, a drive towards economic life and a culture is being born; naturally, an interest in, and a need for, knowledge about these Gypsy people and their language is also being born, in a new way, and also among other nationalities that interact with them, for instance: the non-Gypsy pedagogue educating Gypsy children, who is a cultured, party worker, etc. and so on. Finally, also the cultural working Gypsy may find use in the dictionary. The existence of such a dictionary is one of the moments serving the tasks of international up-bringing.

Furthermore, in Uchpedgiz, the publishing of Gypsy curriculum books has been completely terminated. The textbooks that have been selected to be printed were disassembled or are being disassembled. We can fully agree that because of the bilingualism of a people like the Gypsies, there can be teaching of all disciplines not in their native language, but should it be necessary to remove even the textbooks on the subject of mother tongue and literature?

6. And finally – one last question – concerns the elections for a Supreme Council. Keeping in mind the dispersal in small groups, our numbers would obviously be nowhere enough so that we could promote MPs from our people.

02.1938. [Nikolay Pankov].

Notes

1. Reference to the famous Stalin slogan "кадры решают все" (cadres are all-important).
2. The reference is to the Gypsy-Russian dictionary (Сергиевский & Баранников, 1938), whose editor was Nikolay Pankov. It is not clear whether Nikolay Pankov's letter influenced the decision to publish the dictionary, but it was published, albeit with a delay of almost three years.

Source: LANB, f. Николай Панков.
Prepared for publication by Elena Marushiakova and Vesselin Popov.

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Comments

The epistolary legacy of the early-Soviet Gypsies included numerous letters addressed to Soviet party and state institutions. Many of these letters (as well as many of the event speeches conducted by Soviet institutions) are on specific topics; they highlight successes and report on existing problems (this is the established pattern of all such presentations). The specific problems are mainly related to land management, Gypsy kolkhozes, and artels, housing problems, etc.

The letter published here by the residents of khutor Krikunovo (former nomads) was written two months after the issuing of the Decree of TsIK USSR and SNK USSR from 01.10.1926 *On measures to facilitate the transition of nomadic Gypsies to a settled lifestyle*. From the text of the letter, it is clear that the founders of khutor Krikunovo learned about this decree from a letter they received from the VSTs (which indicates that they already had an established relationship with the Union); and that the khutor was founded in the spring of the same year, around half a year before the Decree came into existence. This clearly pointed to the fact that there was an aspiration to move to a sedentary way of life before the Decree itself was issued.

This is perfectly understandable given the general situation in the USSR at that time when the country was devastated by the Civil War, and in many regions, the population dropped significantly. Under these conditions, a nomadic way of life became much more difficult, while there were many free uncultivated land areas and thus the work in agriculture proved to be a possible alternative for survival.

Chronologically the letter from khutor Krikunovo was not the first such letter written by Gypsies who asked for free land allocation for making a living from agriculture. As early as the summer of 1926, a letter was sent to the VSTs and to SN TsIK from the village of Gribani (no longer existing today), near Smolensk "On behalf of the 52 souls of the poorest people of the labour peasantry of Gypsy nationalities, who have been cultivating the land with their own labour for many decades". The letter was initiated by Trofim Gerasimov and the signatories Gypsies asked for help because, for three years, the local authorities repeatedly refused to give them land so they can create their own khutor (GARF, f. P 1235, op. 120, d. 27, l. 28-29). It should be noted that the settlement of the nomadic Gypsies in the Smolensk region began as early as the last decades of the 19th century, and their desire to receive their own land to cultivate is a completely logical consequence.

The letter from khutor Krikunovo entered into public circulation within the Soviet propaganda. Articles about him have been published in both Soviet officious – daily of VKP(b) *Pravda* (Орловец, 1927, p. 4) and also in the newsletter of the TsIK SSSR *Izvestiya* (Известия ЦИК СССР, 1928, p. 6). With his articles in Russian and in Romani language, Alexander German has also publicised khutor Krikunovo several times (Молодой Ленинец, 1928, p. 3; Крестьянская газета, 1928, p. 4; Романы зоря, 1929, pp. 7-10). Khutor Krikunovo thus became, within the public, an iconic symbol of nomadic Gypsies' ambition to settle down.

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At the very same khutor, however, things were not going so well. After the local authorities did not satisfy the demands of the Gypsy residents living there to obtain land, some of them left in 1929. In 1931, after several people from the khutor were accused of stealing horses, the process of settlement was finally abandoned (O'Keeffe, 2013, pp. 152, 286).

The second letter published here, from the repeatedly mentioned Nikolay Bizev (Biz-Labza), is a rather specific curiosity. From another perspective, however, it is an important testimony of the spirit of the era, as a time of great dreams and hopes, as well as grandiose plans, all of which were also reflected among Gypsy activists. From a present-day perspective, it is clear that it was entirely unrealistic to discuss the possibility of creating a Gypsy Cavalry Division (sic!); nevertheless, the letter apparently was taken very seriously by the Soviet institutions, and the reply was signed by a representative of the top party leadership of the Red Army.

Particularly indicative from the perspective of Gypsy activists' visions of the future of their community is one specific type of letters, namely the very popular genre of the time: the so-called 'Letter to the Leader'. This form of addressing the highest authorities was repeating the model of the *челобитная* (a specific kind of Supplication) from Medieval Russia, which was imposed in Soviet society after the pyramid of Communist rule was finally established. At the same time, it became clear to all who the real 'Supreme Leader' of the Soviet state was – namely, the Secretary General of Communist Party, Joseph Vissarionovich Stalin. Although from a formally legal point of view the head of the state was Mikhail Kalinin (the Chairman of the TsIK USSR), to whom many letters were also sent. Nevertheless, the latter were primarily taking the form of petitions for solving personal problems. The fact that Gypsy activists addressed their letters mainly to Stalin, and much less frequently to Kalinin, shows that they carefully assessed the situation in the governing structures, therefore, sought support and expected the intervention of the highest authorities.

The letters of Gypsy activists to Stalin are not from the standard and mass type of thousands of thank-you-letters such as "Thank you Comrade Stalin for our happy childhood" (the only discovered letter from this type is from the graduates of the Gypsy Orphanage with a school in the Western Oblast). In all other letters are placed existing problems of Gypsies and on their basis, specific requests and recommendations are made. The majority of the published above letters to the 'Supreme Leader' are united around two basic, related ideas about the state policy towards the Gypsies for which assistance was requested – the termination of the nomadic way of life and the creation of a Gypsy territorial-administrative unit (a rayon which, in the future, should develop into an okrug and even into an Autonomous Republic). The idea of Gypsy autonomy will be discussed more in-depth in the next section. Therefore, here we will focus only on the attitude of Gypsy activists towards the nomadic way of life, which was characteristic for the majority (about three fourths) of the Gypsy population of the USSR at that time.

Surprisingly it appears that the active side pleading for the sedentarisation of Gypsy nomads in the USSR was initially the Gypsy activists, and the Soviet state affirmed and

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realized these ideas (more or less successfully). As already pointed above, in January 1924, a meeting of the Initiative Proletarian Group of Gypsies was held, which decided to set up a Union of Gypsies, living on the territory of the Moscow governorate, which in the process of registration grew into a VSTs. In one of the very first letters to the Soviet institutions, namely to the Presidium of the SN of the VTsIK, in the Application dated 23.09.1924, the Initiative Group emphasised that the Group had set itself the task of "organisation the proletarian Gypsy masses and raising their cultural, educational and political level, and their transition to a settled way of life" (GARF, f. P 1235, op. 119, d. 10, l. 14; f. P 1235, op. 119, d. 10, l. 14).

A number of changes have taken place in the process of registration of the Gypsy Union between the Draft-Statute of January 1924 and the Registered Statute of 10.07.1925 regarding the issue of nomadic lifestyle Gypsies in both versions. It can be seen that the Gypsy activists were much more radical in their wish to see the Gypsy nomads settled. In their 1924 Draft-Statute, they brought the issue of nomadism to the fore as one of the main tasks of the organisation, and they spoke directly about the need for a "transition to a sedentary lifestyle" (GARF, f. P 1235, op. 119, d. 9, l. 4), while in the 1925 Statute, which was approved by the authorities, this problem becomes a back-up plan, and the wording is much softer and less engaging – "conduct the moral fight against the public evil among the Gypsies … such as: drunkenness, fortune-telling, begging, gambling, nomadism" (GARF, f. A 259, op. 10б, d. 2253, l. 21).

Almost immediately after the registration of VSTs, its leaders began taking active steps to change the Statute of the organisation (see above). The first of such requests were already accompanied by Motives for Application with a demand that the "inconsistencies of the clauses in the approved charter with the practical work of organising nomadic and sedentary Gypsy masses" be considered. It is underlined that one of the Union's most important tasks is "the fight against nomadism, poverty, and against all that remains of the tsarist inheritance" (GARF, f. A 259, op. 9б, d. 4233, l. 2). In the prepared new Draft Statute from 1926, proposed for approval by the institutions and for re-registration by the NKVD, Article II (Aims of the Union), § 1 it reads:

> The Union aims at uniting and organising the Gypsy working masses living on the territory of the RSFSR, protecting their economic and legal interests, raising the cultural level and organising mutual support and transfer nomads into the productive and agricultural way of life (GARF, f. A 259, op. 9б, d. 4233, l. 5).

In the version of the Statute approved by NKVD on July 15, 1926, however, the sentence 'transfer nomads into the productive and agricultural way of life' was removed. The problem with the nomadic way of life is mentioned in Article III (Method of Implementation), § 6 d, which reads:

> The Union […] conducts a moral struggle with the public evil among its members, such as: drunkenness, fortune-telling, begging, gambling, nomadism.

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This sentence in fact repeats the wording of the next version of the Statutes approved on 23.07.1925 (GARF, f. P 393, op. 43A, d. 1763, l. 112).

This attitude of the Soviet authorities to the demands of the VSTs for an active combating of the nomadic lifestyle of the Gypsies and for their sedentarisation was not accidental, as it is very clearly displayed in the following example. In 1927, the NKVD received a letter from local authorities of the Tver Governorate which contained complaints of "thefts and scams" carried out by Gypsy nomads and sought to limit the "activity of this parasitic element", i.e. it asked for administrative measures against the Gypsy nomadic way of life. NKVD's reply of September 20, 1927, was categorical and unambiguous:

> The Central Administrative Department of NKVD clarifies that compulsory restriction of the Roma nomadism is inadmissible as a matter of principle. The Soviet legislature does not know the measures you propose to combat the tribes that lead a nomadic way of life (GARF, f. P 393, op. 71, d. 6a, l. 2).

It sounds incredible but, in this case, the NKVD is the guardian of Soviet laws and opposes forced sedentarisation. In this spirit, in terms of combating nomadism for which the Gypsy activists also make appeals, in the end, they were only given the opportunity to lead a 'moral struggle' against nomadism.

Such a restrained position of the Soviet state to the calls for imposing the sedentarisation of nomadic Gypsies through administrative pressure is understandable given the specific socio-economic situation in the country. In the early USSR, the policy against nomadism, in general, was considered an extremely important task, which was a necessary condition for the transition to socialism (Зверяков, 1932). During the same period of time, the sedentarisation (or the placing under control, through the creation of permanent summer and winter settlements) of pastoral nomads in Central Asia and other regions was also done, along with that of the so-called Small Peoples of the North (Синицин, 2019). These nomadic communities, however, were seen as important from an economic point of view, as they provided (or could provide) the state with important animal products (meat, milk, fur, etc.). The same cannot be said about the nomadic Gypsies, who were not regarded as economically important for the Soviet state, and which allowed the issue of their sedentarisation to be left in the background and be drawn into an indefinite future (in this case – until 1956).

It is also interesting to note that none of the Gypsies' letters, although addressed personally to Stalin, come with a resolution written by him, as it was usual in other such cases. Thus, we have reason to believe that these letters did not reach Stalin at all but were forwarded by his secretariat directly to the appropriate institutions (about the way of official proceeding with the thousands of letters to Stalin, see Khlevniuk, 2015). The only exception to this is Nikolay Pankov's letter, which will be discussed below. This confirms, once again, that the Soviet institutions did not attach so much importance to the problems associated with the Gypsies, including the issue of the sedentarisation of the nomads. However, they were officially obliged to react to letters from citizens. As

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an example of such a response, the reaction to the letter of Trofim Gerasimov could be quoted. It was forwarded to both the TsK VKP(b) Department of Industry to investigate the case of the so-called 'wreckers' mentioned therein and to the SN TsIK, from where it eventually came to the ON VTsIK. In his reply of 29.08.1935, the Head of the Department, Nygmet Nurmakov, was adamant:

> A lot of work has been done in the field of arranging the Gypsy issues over the past 2-3 years; this work was done by the local Soviet and Party bodies under the daily control and leadership of the VTsIK without the participation of Gerasimov and others like him who limit their concern for Gypsies to annually write such notes. Settling the Gypsy issues is not an easy task, it does not require urgent measures, but persistent and patient work, in particular, work among the Gypsies, which we do all the time (GARF, f. P 3316, op. 64, d. 1637, l. 2).

The topic of the need to eradicate the nomadic lifestyle of the Gypsies, and the unavoidability for effective state action in this regard, is addressed in one form or another, not only in the letters of the Gypsy activists but also in the letters from the ordinary Gypsies on the ground. The letter published above, written by the Gypsies who wandered in the region of Ivanovo is not the only one. In another such letter dated August 10, 1935, sent to ON VTsIK by Gypsies who roamed the Udmurt ASSR, they strongly insisted:

> To combat the nomadism of Gypsies, it is necessary to expand the work of a broader and more decisive nature, as in the south, north, east, and west of our Union. (GARF, f. P 1235, op. 130, d. 5, l. 80-81).

Besides the letters to the top of the pyramid of Soviet power, Gypsy activists' fight against the nomadic lifestyle of Gypsies was also manifested in the public domain, through articles published in the national press. Indicative in this regard are the titles of these articles: *From nomadism to sedentarisation* (Известия ЦИК СССР, 1927, p. 6), *Cast aside the nomadic past: We will include Gypsies in the active construction of socialism* (Комсомольская правда, 1930, p. 3). Many similar articles in this regard have also been published in the Gypsy journals of *Romany zorya* and *Nevo drom*, as well as in the Romani-language newspapers, *Palo bolshevistsko kolkhozo* (About the Bolshevik's Kolkhoz) and *Stalintso* (Stalinist), which were distributed also among Gypsy nomads.

In the letter by Ilya Gerasimov to Mikhail Kalinin, published above, as one of the most important problems facing the Gypsies in the USSR is stated the need for the publishing of a newspaper in the Romani language, which should "be a mobilising body in their transition from a nomadic lifestyle to a settled one". In the 1930s, this question was repeatedly raised also by other Gypsy activists (especially by Ivan Tokmakov in his capacity as an official at ON VTsIK) before the Soviet institutions, citing the need for propaganda concerning the sedentarisation of nomadic Gypsies as one of the main tasks of such a newspaper (GARF, f. P 1235, op. 121, d. 31, l. 61; f. P 1235, op. 123, d. 28, l. 208; f. P 1235, op. 130, d. 5, l. 103). Although the institutions have expressed support for this idea (GARF, f. P 3316, op. 28, d. 793, l. 5, 51-52), in the end, it was not realised. Not the least reason for

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this was probably the lack of clarity in how this newspaper would be distributed among nomadic Gypsies as well as doubts about the effect such propaganda would have among an almost entirely illiterate audience.

The topic of the need for sedentarisation of the Gypsy nomads (and the associated with it establishment of a Gypsy national territorial-administrative unit) does not at all exhaust the content of the letters sent to higher state institutions. It is worth noting the so-called 'Signal letters' about problems with the implementation of state policy on Gypsies, often compounded by accusations against activists involved in the process. At least a dozen letters from this genre are preserved in the archives, among the most fruitful writer being Trofim Gerasimov and Mikhail Bezlyudskiy (GARF, f. P 393, op. 43 A, d. 1763; f. P 1235, op. 120, d. 27; f. P 1235, op. 123, d. 28). The addressees of these letters were most often ON VTsIK, as well as NKVD and OGPU. In the 1920s, the main target of the allegations was the leadership of the VSTs and, first of all, its secretary Ivan Lebedev, chairman Andrey Taranov and members of the 'Polyakov clan'. The authorities were called "The union should not be closed, but reorganised, cleared of weeds" (GARF, f. P 1235, op. 120, d. 27). However, the Soviet authorities preferred not to make unnecessary noise about the existing problems and did not take any repressive action against the leaders of the VSTs. The leadership of VSTs, however, tried to improve the situation, thus on 18.07.1927 they exclude from its ranks' "comrades Bezlyudskiy and Agva because of their dirty actions" and undermining the authority of the Union (GARF, f. P 393, op. 43 A, d. 1763, l. 77-78).

In the 1930s, a typical example of this genre is the letter from G. M. Andreev, a student at the Gypsy Pedagogical College in Moscow. The letter was entitled *On the shortcomings of the work with the Gypsy population* and was sent to the *Pravda* newspaper, an edition of the TsK VKP(b), from where on 21.04.1937 it was forwarded to ON VTsIK (GARF, f. P 1235, op. 130, d. 5). This letter, point by point, signalised in detail to the many existing shortcomings in the Gypsy kolkhozes, artels, schools, and even at the Theatre Romen, and calls for all the perpetrators to be "put to rights" by NKVD (Ibid.). Surprisingly, however, this letter, although written precisely in the midst of the so-called Great Purge, also did not lead to any action by the Soviet state against the accused (fortunately for them). This letter is also particularly interesting from a contemporary point of view because it raises some interesting questions that continue to be relevant today. This is for example the problem of the form of mother tongue education of Gypsy children, whether it should be the only language of instruction, or whether separate Gypsy-only schools are needed (Marushiakova & Popov, 2017c, pp. 48-59). He raised also issue of privileges and wrote: "to give less of all kinds of benefits […] which have just the opposite results as intended" (this topic is also today a hot subject of discussions among a number of Roma activists, who are disappointed by the results of pro-Roma European policies so far).

The last letter published here, that of Nikolay Pankov to Stalin, is different from the rest. It offers a relatively much more comprehensive and detailed program for the need to work on a solution to the problems faced by the Gypsies in the USSR, covering various fields. Along with the already familiar themes (such as the issue of nomadism, kolkhoz building, etc.), the emphasis is also placed on the development of the Romani language,

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education and culture, and even on the question of the need for political representation of the Gypsies in the highest state bodies (in the Supreme Soviet). Moreover, the letter de facto protests against the already started policy of closing down Gypsy schools and of suspending Romani language publications, which is distinctive compared to the other letters to Stalin. This letter should be viewed in the context of an already launched radical change within the national policy of the USSR, which put an end to the affirmative action policy.

Especially in the system of national schools first steps had been taken by the Decision of Orgburo of the TsK VKP(b) of 01.12.1937 concerning national schools, which proposed (i.e. assigned) to Narkompros the task "to reorganise these schools into Soviet schools of ordinary type" (RGASPI, f. 17, op. 114, d. 633, l. 4). Ironically, Nikolay Pankov wrote his letter in February 1938, about a month after the Orgburo of the TsK VKP(b) adopted the Decree *On the Reorganisation of National Schools* on January 24, 1938, i.e. at a time when the fate of these schools had already been decided.

To put it in brackets, the title of this Decree *On the Reorganisation of National Schools* in all previous publications (including ours) has been misrepresented as *About the liquidation of national schools and national school departments*, which changed the meaning of the sentence. This confusing repetition of past mistakes confirms once again the importance, and even the need, to verify the sources that are reproduced and move from book to book.

In this Decree, Gypsy schools are nowhere mentioned. It is noted that

> The practice … special national schools did enormous harm to the cause of proper education and training, fenced the children off from Soviet life, deprived them of the opportunity to join Soviet culture and science, blocked the path to further education in technical schools and higher schools" (RGASPI, f. 17, op. 114, d. 837, l. 100-101).

As such national schools are referred to the "German, Finnish, Polish, Latvian, English, Greek, Estonian, Ingrian, Veps, Chinese, etc." schools. (Ibid.).

For the first time, a mention of Gypsy schools appears only in the tables of the Report of the Narkompros of 08.07.1938 (Ibid., l. 108).

It is interesting to note that, in fact, we only have the manuscript of Nikolay Pankov's letter, in which it is noted that an edited version of it was sent to Stalin. However, this letter is not stored in the archives, unlike the hundreds (even thousands) of others that have been scattered across various Soviet institutions. According to the recollections of family members of Nikolay Pankov, months after the letter was sent, he lived in anxious expectation to be arrested, but nothing happened. Only three years later, he was visited by NKVD officials, who informed him that Comrade Stalin had become acquainted with his letter, but no further reaction from the authorities followed (Калинин, 2005, pp. 56-57). The Second World War began shortly after the turn in the national policy of the Soviet Union, and after the end of the war, the situation in the USSR was already quite different.

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In the new post-war realities, however, the practice of sending letters to the 'Great Leader' persisted among the generation of early-Soviet Gypsy activists, and they continued to exert their influence on Soviet policy toward the Gypsies, including on the question of the sedentarisation of nomads (Marushiakova & Popov, 2020a, pp. 265-276).

Elena Marushiakova and Vesselin Popov

12.4 Autonomy

12.4.1 *The Working Plan*

План работ
Всероссийского Союза Цыган на 1926-ой год.

По осуществление целей изложенных в пункте II, § 5-го [Устава] Всероссийского Союза Цыган, Президиум намечает следующий план работ. [...]

4. [...] 2/ Для сохранения вырождающихся национальных признаков цыганской массы и в виду их бытовых особенностей, Союз предлагает:

а/ Отвести в южном крае территорию для поселения цыган на которой (территории) и объединять все виды сельско-хозяйственных организаций, а также и самостоятельно желающих поселиться цыган. [...]

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The Working Plan
The All-Russian Union of Gypsies in 1926 [1]

To implement the objectives set out in paragraph II, § 5th of the Charter of VSTs, the Presidium of the Union outlines the following work plan. [...]

4. [...] 2/ in order to preserve the degenerating national characteristics of the Gypsy population and in view of the peculiarities of their way of life, the Union proposes:

a/ to allocate in a Southern region a territory for the settlement of Gypsies on which (territory) to unite all kinds of agricultural organisations, as well as the Gypsies who wish to settle independently. [...]

Notes

1. The document is not dated, but it is likely to date from the beginning of 1926 (chronologically, next document from the same archival folder is dated 02/02/1926)

Source: GARF, f. P 1235, op. 120, d. 27, l. 99-101.
Prepared for publication by Elena Marushiakova and Vesselin Popov.
Translated by Viktor Shapoval.

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12.4.2 *The Concise Report on Gypsies*

[Бланк]: РСФСР. Всероссийский Союз Цыган. 2 Марта 1926 г. № 98. г. Москва.
В Федеральный Комитет ВЦИКа.
[Резолюция]: В Переселенческий комитет. [подпись]. 6.III.[19]26.

Краткий доклад о цыганах

Являясь выходцами из северо-восточной части Индии, цыгане появились в Европе в 1645-ом году. Страницы их пребывания в Европе говорят нам о сплошных кровавых расправах, которым подвергались кочующие цыганские племена. Эти преследования продолжавшиеся целые столетия привели к вкоренению в них кочевничества, а с ним и к вкоренению быстрого изыскания средств из которых главными или вернее более подходящим, являлось попрошайничество, гадание и в крайнем случае воровство. В России они появились в 1700 годах, где и были встречены по примеру "культурных" стран, "огнем и мечем".

О всех проживающих в данное время в СССР цыган трудно дать точные сведения, так как ВСЦ не имеет своих статистических данных. Сведения, имеющиеся в Советских органах, неправильны, так как цыгане трудно поддаются учету в виду их непостоянного местонахождения. Судя по сведениям, которые имеет Союз через своих членов, то их по СССР насчитывается около 500,000. Сконцентрированы большей частью на юге и центральных губерниях, как-то: Курской, Костромской, Московской, Владимирской, Ярославской, Смоленской, Орловской и т.д., где они живут целыми деревнями.

Кочующих цыган около 75% – занимаются мелкими кустарничеством (кузнецы, лудильщики, шорники и т.д.). Оседлых – 25%, занимаются частью сельским хозяйством, фабр[ично]-завод[ским] трудом, посредничеством и торговлей лошадями. У всех цыган, как у оседлых, так и кочевых сильно развито воровство, гадание, знахарство и т.д. На этой почве между местным населением и ими наблюдается враждебные отношения. Не редко бывают случаи, когда цыгане располагаются где-либо в районах и местное население их гонит.

В союз пересылаются из редакции "Крестьянской газеты" письма, в которых крестьяне просят принять меры по отношению цыган, наносящих большой вред жителям.

В культурном отношении цыгане стоят на низшей ступени развития, имея в своей среде 96% неграмотных (Собр. соч. Ленина).

Организовавшийся в 1925 г. Всероссийский Союз Цыган ставит своей целью организацию этих отсталых масс, борьбу с кочевничеством, поднятие их культурного уровня, приобщение их к советской общественности и к трудовой жизни. Поднять их хозяйственный и культурной уровень можно только в том случае, если они будут сконцентрированы в одном месте, поэтому Президиум Всероссийского Союза Цыган просит федеральный комитет ВЦИКа выделить из гос-фондовой

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земли часть для поселения цыган, главным образом на юге, так-как цыгане народ южный, и оказать им государственную помощь построечным материалом, семенами, некоторым сельско-хозяйственным инвентарем и освободить на ряд лет от госналогов, пока они не обзаведутся своим хозяйством.

Только таким способом мы сумеем цыган сделать "людьми" и строителями нашего Советского Союза.

Председатель ВСЦ: … [подпись] (Таранов).
Секретарь: … [подпись] (Лебедев).

[рукопись] Адрес Союза Цыган: Петровский Парк, Красноармейская улица, Клуб имени тов. Лысицина, Цыганский уголок.

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[Letterhead]: RSFSR. All-Russian Union of Gypsies. 2 March 1926, No. 98. City of Moscow.
To the Federal Committee of TsIK [1]
[Resolution]: To the Resettlement's committee. [signature]. 06.01.1926

The Concise Report on Gypsies

Being migrants from the North-Eastern part of India, Gypsies appeared in Europe in 1645 [2]. The pages of their stay in Europe tell us about continuous bloody massacres to which nomadic Gypsies tribes were subjected. These persecutions, which lasted for centuries, led to the establishment of nomadism among the Gypsy people, and to rooting in them prompt efforts for making an earning, among which the main, or rather, the more suitable, were begging, fortunetelling and, in extreme cases, theft. In Russia, they appeared in 1700, where they were met, following the example of "cultural" countries, with "fire and sword".

It is difficult to give accurate information about all Gypsies living in the USSR at this time, as VSTs does not have its own statistical data. The information available in the Soviet administrative bodies is incorrect, as it is difficult to quantify the Gypsy population due to their non-permanent location. Judging by the information that the Union has collected through its members, there are about 500 000 Gypsies in the USSR. Gypsies are concentrated mostly in the South and Central governorates, such as Kursk, Kostroma, Moscow, Vladimir, Yaroslavl, Smolensk, Orel, etc., where they inhabit whole villages.

About 75% of Gypsies are nomadic, they are engaged in small handicrafts (blacksmiths, tinkers, saddlers, etc.). Settled are 25% and they are partly engaged in agriculture, work in plants and factories, are involved in mediation and horse trade. Among all Gypsies, both settled and nomadic, theft, fortunetelling, folk healing, etc. are strongly developed. On this basis, hostile relations are observed between the local population and the Gypsies. Not infrequently, there are cases when Gypsies have settled in some areas and the local population drove them away.

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The editorial office of the *Krestyanskaya Gazeta* [Peasant Newspaper] resends to the Union letters received, in which the peasants ask to take measures against the Gypsies, causing great harm to the inhabitants.

Culturally, the Gypsies are at the lowest level of development, with 96 per cent of them being illiterate (Lenin's collected works).

Organised in 1925, the All-Russian Union of Gypsies aims to organize these backward masses, to fight against nomadism, raising their cultural level, attach them to the Soviet public and working life. It is possible to raise their economic and cultural level only if they are concentrated in one place; that is why the Presidium of VSTs asks the Federal Committee of VTsIK to allocate part of the state land for the settlement of Gypsies, mainly in the South, as the Gypsies are people of the South origin, and to provide them with state assistance in the form of building materials, seeds, some agricultural equipment, and to free them from state taxes for some years until they acquire their own economy.

Only in this way, will we be able to make from the Gypsies "people" and builders of our Soviet Union.

The Chairman of the Union: … [signature] (Taranov).
Secretary: … [signature] (Lebedev).

[handwritten] Address of the Gypsies Union: Petrovskiy Park, Krasnoarmeyskaya str., Club named after comrade Lisitsyn, the Gypsy corner [3].

Notes

1. Federal Committee for Land Affairs at VTsIK.
2. It is unclear exactly what is meant by the date. In any case, there are many earlier historical accounts of the arrival of Gypsies in Europe.
3. 'Gypsy corner' can be understood as a Gypsy part of the club, which was probably named after Nikolai V. Lisitsyn (1891-1938), a Soviet party functionary, at that time a member of the presidium of the Central Control Commission.

Source: GARF, f. P 3260, op. 6, d. 44, l. 5-6.
Prepared for publication by Elena Marushiakova and Vesselin Popov.
Translated by Viktor Shapoval.

12.4.3 *The Report to the Federal Committee of TsIK*

[Бланк]: РСФСР. Всероссийский Союз Цыган. 1 Апрель 1926 г. No. 184. г. Москва.
В Федеральный комитет ВЦИКа.

В дополнение к раннее посланной Союзом Докладной записке от 02.III.1926 г. за № 98. Президиум Всероссийского Союза Цыган, сообщает о количество необходимой для поселении цыган земли и о желательной территории, для поселения.

1/ По вопросу о количестве семьей предполагаемых к поселению.

Президиумом предположенно поселить до 100,000 (сто тысяч) человек.

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2/ О желательной территории для поселения. По результатам опроса самых масс, наблюдается общее тяготение к Югу.

Президиумом намечены на предмет поселения цыган Северо-Кавказскую или Кубанскую область.

Председатель ВСЦ: … [подпись] (Таранов).
Секретарь: … [подпись] (Лебедев).

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[Letterhead]: RSFSR. All-Russian Union of Gypsies. April 1st, 1926, No. 184. City of Moscow. To the Federal Committee of TsIK.

In addition to the Memorandum Note No. 98 sent earlier by the Union of Gypsies on March 2, 1926, the Presidium of the VSTs reports about the amount of land necessary for the settlement of Gypsies and about the desirable territory for this settlement.

1/ On the question of the number of families expected to settle.

The Presidium is supposed to settle up to 100 000 (one hundred thousand) people.

2/ About desirable territory for settlement. According to the results of the survey of the masses, there is a common attraction of Gypsies to the South.

The Presidium determined for the settlement of Gypsies the North Caucasus or Kuban regions [1].

The Chairman of the Union: … [signature] (Taranov).
Secretary: … [signature] (Lebedev).

Note

1. North Caucasus – after multiple reforms and renamings, from June 2, 1924 this area was officially called North Caucasus kray. Kuban region at this time was a part of North Caucasus kray.

Source: GARF, f. P 3260, op. 6, d. 44, l. 4.
Prepared for publication by Elena Marushiakova and Vesselin Popov.
Translated by Viktor Shapoval.

12.4.4 *The Supporting Report*

Доклад

Всероссийский Союз Цыган обратился в Федеральный Комитет по земельному делу с ходатайством об оказании Союзу содействия в деле устройства на земле цыган в количестве *всего* до 100 000 человек *в течении ряда лет*.

Принимая во внимание, что согласно телефонограммы С[ельско]-Х[озяйственной] Секции Госплана РСФСР настоящий вопрос поставлен на повестку названой

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секции с вызовом представителя Федкомзема, полагал бы поддерживать указанное ходатайство с учетом опыта устройства на земле еврейского населения, давшего с 1923-24 г.г. вполне удовлетворительные результаты.

Консультант: … [подпись] (Воейков). 19.II.1926 г.

[Резолюция] Согласен делегировать Воейкова. 12.IV.1926. … [неразборчивая подпись].

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Report

The All-Russian Union of Gypsies applied to the Federal Committee on Land Affairs with a request to assist the Union in settling the Gypsies on the land in the amount of [1] *up to* 100,000 people *over the years* [2].

Taking into account that, according to the telephonogram from the Agricultural Section of the State Planning Committee of the RSFSR, this issue was put on the agenda of the said section with invitation of representative of Fedkomzem, I would consider supporting this request, taking into account the experience of the land arrangement of the Jewish population, which gave from 1923-1924 quite satisfactory results.

Consultant: … [signature] (Voeykov). 19.02.1926.

[Resolution] I agree to delegate Voeykov. 12.04.1926. … [*signature indecipherable*].

Notes

1. Handwritten supplement.
2. Handwritten supplement.

Source: GARF, f. P 3260, op. 6, d. 44, l. 8.
Prepared for publication by Elena Marushiakova and Vesselin Popov.
Translated by Viktor Shapoval.

12.4.5 *The Memorandum on Results*

Докладная записка
О результате проверки исполнения постановлений Президиума
ВЦИК от 01.IV.1932 г.
“О состоянии работы по обслуживанию трудящихся цыган”

[…] В заключение нужно сказать:

1. Тяга цыган к оседанию на землю упирается в отсутствие плана компактного заселения цыган, в слабом финансировании, и в связи с этим имеет место

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стихийное оседание мелкими группами на небольших массивах, где нет возможности дальнейшего доприсоединения кочевников цыган.

2. Разрешение вопроса об оседании цыган на землю на данной стадии развития этой работы упирается в выделении специального района для заселения цыган.

3. Компактность оседания цыган облегчит сосредоточить все силы и средства на определенный участок, где можно будет сконцентрировать материальные средства и культурную жизнь. […]

Практические предложения, изложены в проекте постановления.

Инструктор Отдела Национальностей ВЦИК: … (Токмаков).
[?] Февраля 1935 г.

∵

Memorandum
About the result of the control of implementation
of Decree of the Presidium of VTsIK of 01 April 1932
"On the Situation *with Work in the Services for Toiler Gypsies*"

[…] In conclusion, we must say:

1. The intention of Gypsies to settle on the ground is retained by the absence of a plan of compact settlement of Gypsies, by weak funding, and in this connection, there is a spontaneous settling of small groups in small areas where there is no possibility of further additional settlement of Gypsy nomads.

2. The solution to the issue of the settlement of Gypsies on the ground at this stage of work waits for the allocation of a special district for the settlement of Gypsies.

3. The compactness of the Gypsy settlement will make it easier to concentrate all forces and means on a certain area, where it will be possible to concentrate material means and cultural forces. […]

Practical proposals are set out in the draft of the resolution.

Instructor of ON VTsIK: … [signature] (Tokmakov).
[?] February, 1935.

Source: GARF, f. P 3316, op. 28, d. 793, l. 6-13.
Prepared for publication by Elena Marushiakova and Vesselin Popov.
Translated by Viktor Shapoval.

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12.4.6 *The Minutes of the Meeting at the Department of Nationalities at TsIK USSR*

Протокол
совещания при Совете Национальностей ЦИК СССР по вопросам трудоустройства кочующих трудящихся цыган и их культурно-хозяйственного обслуживания 4 и 5 января 1936 г.

Председательствовал – тов. Хацкевич А. И.

Присутствовали: от Украинского представительства т. Косиор; от Отдела Национальностей ВЦИК т. Такоев; от Нац. Комиссии Моссовета т. Крумина; от НКЗема СССР т. Цылько; от НКЗема РСФСР т. Воронин; от Всес[оюзного] Переселенческого Комитета т. Зубиетов; от Всекопромсвета т. Тагиев; от Гослитиздата т. Германо; от Книгоцентра т. Розенберг; от Центр[ального] Цыганского клуба т.т. Марин, Светлов; от Цыганского театра т.т. [М.] Гольдберг, Бланк, [И.] Лебедев, [И.] Сорочинский; от Цыганского педтехникума т.т. Модина, Хаитонов, Быстров; от Цыганской химпромартели т. Барановский; от Цыганской пищепромартели т.т. Грушина, Зверев; от Редакции газеты "Правда" т. Крен; от Редакции газеты "Известия" т. Розовский; от Редакции газеты "Труд" т. Антонов; от Редакции газеты "Закомпросвещение" т. Пауль; от ТАСС т. Жарковский; от Пред[седательства] Цыганского сельсовета Минераловодского р[айо]на Северо-Кавказского края т. Безлюдский; Пред. Цыганского колхоза "Новэ Джиибеэн", Булиховского сельсовета Городецк[ого] р[айо]на Горьк[овского] края т. Иванов Ф. Т.; [от] Пред[седательства] Цыганского колхоза "Нэви Бахт", Богдановского сельсовета Кинельск[ого] р[айо]на Куйбишев[ского] края т.т. Егоров, Жуковский; Пред[седатель] Колхоза "Октябрь" Михоношенского сельсовета Смоленского р[айо]на Западной области т. Горбунов; Зам[еститель] Директора завода-артели им[ени] Первой пятилетки Крупинск[ого] Сельсовета Павлово-Посадского р[айо]на Московской области т. Герасимова А. И.; Инструктор Орготдела Западного облисполкома т. Герасимов И. Я.; Директор цыганской школы семилетки Серебрянского сельсовета Смоленского р[айо]на Зап[адной] области т. Михолажин; Зав[едующего] Нац[иональном отделом Днепропетров. облисполкома т. Билявский; Зам[еститель] Зав[едующего] Секретариатом През[идиума ЦИК Союза ССР т. Акимов И. Ф.; Референт – консультант Секретариата Президиум ЦИК СССР т. Берин.

Слушали:

1. Вступительное слово тов. Хацкевича о *положении цыган*, целях и задачах совещания;

2. Доклады: а) о трудовом устройстве кочующих цыган в промыслах и сельском хозяйстве (докладчик тов. Такоев). б) о культурно-хозяйственном обслуживании цыган в СССР (докладчик тов. Берин).

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3. Высказались: т.т. Тагиев (Всекопромсовет), Воронин (НКЗем РСФСР), Зубиетов (Переселенч. К[оми]тет), Цылько (НКЗем СССР), Косиор (Украин[ское] Пред[ставитель]ство), Герасимов (Зап. облисполком), Безлюдский (предс[едатель] цыг[анского] сельсовета и колхоза Минераловодск[ого] р[айо]на), Бланк (цыг[анский] театр), Панков (цыганск[ий] литератор), Модина (цыг[анский] педтехникум), Барановский (Моск[овский] цыг[анский] химпром), Иванов (пред[седатель] Цыг[анского] колхоза Городецк[ого] р[айо]на Горьк[овского] Края), Жуковский (цыг[анский] колхоз Куйбиш[евского] Края), Егоров (цыг[анский] колхоз Куйбиш[евского] Края), Сорочинский (цыг[анский] театр), Грушина (Пищепромартель), Зверев (Пищепромартель), Билявский (Днепропетр[опетровский] обли[исполком]), Токмаков [ОН ВЦИК], Герасимов (артель Моск[овской] обл[асти]), Хацкевич [ВЦИК].

Постановили:

1. Доклады и вступительное слово принять к сведению.

2. Для разработки проекта конкретных мероприятий по дальнейшему трудоустройству кочующих цыган и культурно-хозяйственному обслуживанию [всех] цыган в СССР, образовать под председательством тов. Хацкевича комиссию в составе т.т. Цылько, Акимова И. Ф., Такоева, Берина, Абидовой, Ластовского, Косиора, Герасимова И. Я., Воронина, Тагиева, Зубиетова, Панкова, Сорочинского, Токмакова, Безлюдского, Иванова, Егорова, Грушинского, Марина, Германо, Розенберга, Харитонова, Модиной, Круминой и представителей НКФ (Народный Комиссариат Финансов) СССР и НКПроса РСФСР.

Срок работы комиссии – 2 декады.

Председатель – … [подпись] (А. Хацкевич).

Приложение к протоколу совещания при Совете Национальностей ЦИК СССР по вопросам трудоустройства кочующих цыган и их культурно-хозяйственного обслуживания от 04.I.1936 г.

Совещание
о трудоустройстве кочующих и культурно-хозяйственном
обслуживании всех трудящихся цыган в СССР

т. Хацкевич: В порядке дня сегодняшнего совещания вопрос о трудовом устройстве кочующих цыган и о культурно-хозяйственном обслуживании всех трудящихся цыган СССР.

В СССР по переписи 1926 г. насчитывалось 61.294 душ цыган, что составляет одну сотую процента к общему количеству населения СССР. Таким образом цыгане относятся к малочисленным народностям, населяющим наш Советский Союз, при чем относятся к самым забитым и отсталым в прошлом народностями. Именно поэтому мы должны проявить особую заботу о цыганах, как наиболее

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отсталых в прошлом. […] Октябрьская революция, пролетарский интернационализм, ленинско-сталинская национальная политика обязывают нас в отношении малых народностей, в частности цыган, проявлять большое внимание, […] Поэтому нужно принять целый ряд специальных мероприятий, чтобы поднять этот народ до уровня экономического и культурного подъема других передовых народов Советского Союза.

Общая всемирная история цыган самая дикая, самая кровавая, самая проклятая, пожалуй, из всех историй всех народов. Гонимое и презираемое, так называемое "фараоново племя" – цыгане притеснялись со стороны всяких религиозных буржоазно-капиталистических клик, которые заклеймили этот народ особой кличкой и всячески притесняли и даже физически истребляли цыганский народ. […] Цыгане по преимуществу кочующий народ; вследствие создавшихся особых исторических условий, цыгане очутились в исключительно тяжелом общественном и бытовом положении. Цыгане еще и до сих пор живут с остатками родового строя, с властью старейших. Отсталые в общественном, хозяйственном и в культурном отношении, а отсталых бьют, цыгане, как нацменьшинство, подвергались и до сих пор подвергаются в капиталистических странах самым диким преследованиям. […]

Совершено естественно, что при таких условиях жизни цыгане вынуждены были скрываться в лесах, оврагах, горных ущельях, пустынных местностях. Там они вели бродячий полудикий образ жизни, часто отвечая своим притеснителям и гонителям: разбоем, грабежом и воровством; цыгане занимались гаданьем, обманом, попрошайничеством, барышничеством лошадьми и т.п. Когда их обнаруживали и преследовали, они снимались и переезжали в другие места; скитались по всем странам, переезжая с места на место, цыгане жили на морозе, под открытым небом и в своих кибитках, землянках с детьми и больными стариками; вели в массе своей нищенскую жизнь и нередко голодали, питаясь кореньями и отбросами. Богатейшие из цыган со связями с полицией и торгаши – всячески эксплоатировали бедноту.

Вот вкратце положение цыган в прошлом. В целом ряде европейских и других буржуазных государств положение цыган осталось таким же и сейчас. Итак, история цыганского народа самая тяжелая, самая непроглядная из всех историй всех народов.

После Октябрьской революции, в Советской России трудящиеся цыгане, как и все трудящиеся всех национальностей, приобрели право на управление государством, приобрели право на труд. […] При неустанной заботе о национальностях, о нацменьшинствах вождя народов т. Сталина созданы все условия для перехода цыган к культурной трудовой жизни. Фабрики, заводы, сельское хозяйство – все это стало доступным для трудящихся цыган. Всем детям трудящихся цыган обеспечена возможность учиться. […] Впервые в истории цыган, при советской власти в СССР создана цыганская письменность, на цыганском языке издаются учебники, издавались журналы, газета и т.д. В различных местах организовано несколько десяток школ, где учатся дети трудящихся цыган; растут из цыганской молодежи свои

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писатели, поэты, литераторы, артисты. […] Создан цыганский театр, где работает исключительно цыганский коллектив. […] Всюду, где оседло живут цыгане, создаются очаги культуры – избы-читальни, клубы; так же мы имеем немало детских очагов – садов, ясель, площадок и т.д. […] Вырастают и воспитываются новые люди среди цыган, пролетарии, колхозники, активисты, молодежь, способная строить жизнь по новому – по указанию партии Ленина-Сталина. Таковы общие успехи работы среди цыган, вовлечения их в социалистическое строительство, обеспечивающие счастливую жизнь трудящимся.

Вместе с тем, мы имеем в этой работе немало недостатков. […] В 1925 г. по инициативе отдельных работников был создан Всероссийский союз цыган. Этот союз просуществовал до февраля месяца 1928 г. и ликвидировался, как не оправдавший своего назначения. Сейчас нет такого центра, который специально объединял бы работу среди цыган, и пожалуй, такой орган не нужен. Необходимо развивать работу по отраслям и территориям там, где живут и кочуют цыгане в смысле их скорейшего трудоустройства, поднятия и развития их экономической и культурно-бытовой жизни. С этой точки зрения необходимо приветствовать мероприятия Правительства СССР по созданию территориального цыганского района. […]

Такоев (Отдел Национальностей ВЦИК): […] Какие мероприятия необходимо наметить совещанию?

1) учесть общее количество цыган, населяющих СССР, потому что без этого не может быть планирования работы;

2) особо проработать вопрос о выделении района для цыган, ибо если они будут сконцентрованы на одной территории, легче поставить среди них работу. […]

Берин: […]

[Прения по докладам]:

Тагиев (Всекомпромсовет): […]

Воронин (НКЗем РСФСР): […] О выделении района для цыган, ибо на сегодняшней день осталось еще 6 590 неустроенных [семей]. Здесь называли цыганский край Западной Сибири. Мне кажется, что не обследовав участка, не зная его климатических условий, нельзя говорить о приемлимости или о неприемлимости участка. Судя по характеристике земельных органов Западно-Сибирского края, этот участок пригоден. Мысль о выделении района для компактного заселения цыганами – очень хорошая, ибо тогда цыгане могут вплотную приобщиться к социалистическому строительству.

Зубиетов (Всесоюзный переселенческий к[омите]т): Переселенческий комитет вносит следующие предложения по устройству цыган. […] Следовало бы подыскать участок для создания цыганского района. Когда встал вопрос о создании такого самостоятельного района, переселенческий комитет запросил ряд краев и областей относительно возможности выделения участка, на котором можно было бы организовать на поселение 30-35 тыс. цыган. Были запрошены Азово-Черноморский край, Северный Кавказ, Поволжье, Крым, Ураль, Западная Сибирь. Южные районы

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ответили, что свободной земли нет, Горьковский край ответил, что может предоставить около 70-80 тыс. га земель с большими капитальными вложениями. Омск ответил, что могут предоставить землю в районе Остяко-Вогульска и только Западная Сибирь ответила, что может предоставить два фонда. Мы поставили перед собой задачу изучить более подробно эти два участка, ибо без обследования трудно сказать, подходят они или нет. Между прочим, мы знаем, что определенное количество свободных земель имеется на Урале, в Сталинградском крае, в Куйбышевском, и не только земель, имеются дома, оставленные раскулаченными. Эти районы могут быть также использованы. […]

Цылько (НКЗем СССР): Если сравнивать с буржоазными странами, то в отношении устройства цыган у нас, в СССР, сделано много, но цифры, которые здесь названы, все-таки очень мизерны. Поэтому можно сказать, что работа только началась. Предложение о создании цыганского района я всецело поддерживаю, но в начале, по моему, следовало бы пойти по линии создания более мелких административно-хозяйственных единиц в составе существующих районов. Тогда цыгане имели бы свое представительство в райисполкоме, свои сельсоветы, свои школы, им была бы оказана специальная помощь. Цыгане, в силу их тяжелого прошлого, нуждаются еще в специальной защите интересов, о них нужно проявить особую заботу, что и предусмотрено рядом постановлений правительства. К сожалению, места не выполняют эти постановления, цыганам не предоставляются те льготы, которые должны быть им оказаны.

Предлагаемые в Западной Сибири фонды, судя по их составу (80% неудобной земли) не годятся. Цыганам надо предоставить как раз лучшие земли, потому что они впервые оседают. Им трудно сразу перейти на тяжелый физический труд. Поэтому надо найти такой земельный массив, который представлял бы лучшую землю и подходил бы цыганам по климатическим условиям. Мне кажется, что цыгане более склонны к животноводству, коневодству, свиноводству. Надо подыскать такой район, где можно было бы развивать эти отрасли. Есть прекрасные неиспользованные земли на Ставропольщине. […] Условия этого района по климату вполне подходят для цыган. Затем колоссальное количество неиспользованной земли – в Оренбургской степи. Минераловодский район – прекрасное место для цыган. Можно найти районы в Поволжье, в Куйбышевском крае.

Организационный вопрос – специальные ли цыганские колхозы создавать или вливать в местные колхозы. Если нет особых специфических причин, которые говорили бы о том, что цыганы не уживаются с русским населением, то с хозяйственной стороны было бы целесообразно создать смешанные колхозы, ибо цыгане – народ мастеровой, они хорошие кузнецы, лудильщики, хорошие коневоды. В каждом колхозе нужны такие люди. Если нельзя, то в порядке создания самостоятельных небольших административно-хозяйственных единиц можно было бы устроить цыган в районе Ставропольщини, в Оренбургских степях, Куйбышевском краю и частично в Минераловодском районе, придав их хозяйству специальный уклон, но ни в коем случае не переселять цыган в Сибирь. […]

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Затем очень многим местным работникам надо вправить мозги, когда они отказывают принять цыган там, где их можно устроить. Не плохо было бы в самом переселенческом комитете создать специальную ячейку по устройству цыган (голоса: совершено правильно).

Косиор (Украинск[ое] Пр[едставительст]во): До сих пор ни одна республика не придала достаточного значения вопросу устройства цыган, требующему особого внимания, особого подхода. Надо прямо сказать, что без специальных дополнительных средств эти мероприятия по устройству цыган не будут проведены. Может быть придется пойти на то, чтобы создать специальные ячейки в районах, где имеются большие группы цыган, ячейки, которые проявляли бы особую заботу о них. Основное – поднять общественное мнение вокруг этого вопроса, чтобы покончить с кочеванием цыган и их устроить по-социалистически.

Герасимов (инструктор Западного облисполкома, цыган): [...]. Мои предложения. На первых порах цыганские колхозы сливать с русскими нельзя. Когда цыганский колхоз окрепнет, тогда можно говорить об объединении с русским колхозом или с колхозом других национальностей.

Один из тормозов развития дальнейшей работы в нашей области – недостаток земельной площади. Нужно подумать об отводе территории для цыган хотя бы в виду маленького района. В нашей области найдется около 60 коммунистов и комсомольцев, которые сумеют при помощи партии и правительства обеспечить руководство районом.

Мне кажется полезным привлечь Комзет к работе среди цыган, ибо Комзет имеет большой опыт по переселению.

Безлюдский (Сев[ерный] Кавказ, цыган, до 1919 г. кочевал): Я работаю в цыганском колхозе "Трудовой цыган" Минераловодского района с 1926 г. и вместе с тем являюсь председателем [цыганского] сельсовета. [...]

О выделении района для цыган. Если у цыган будет своя территория, своя газета, работа пойдет совсем по другому. Самым подходящим районом для заселения цыган была бы Ставропольщина. Сейчас там много кочующих цыган, ибо в этом районе базары. [...]

О переселении в мой колхоз. Я могу взять 150-200 семей, но при одном условии – если будет оказана помощь в отношении окончания водопровода, строящегося ряд лет, и в части лесоматериалов.

Бланк (цыганский театр): [...]

т. Панков (цыганский литератор): Мы, общественники цыгане, являемся свидетелями чего нибудь нового каждый год в цыганской жизни – печать, школы, детские сады, техникум, театр, артели, колхозы, и наконец сегодня стоит вопрос о территории для цыган.

Рядом с этими положительными фактами у нас есть свои болезни во всех наших трудовых и культурных ячейках.

О положении театра. [...] Цыганский театр – если так можно выразиться – жемчужина цыганская. Этот театр пользуется колоссальным успехом и в Союзе

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СССР, и за рубежом, а между тем театр страдает от безрепертуарья. За последнее время нет новых пьес, а возможности создать новые пьесы безусловно есть. […]

О техникуме. В техникуме чрезвычайно много ненормальностей. Молодежь в техникуме абсолютно безнадзорна, предоставлена сама себе. […] Если бы не тов. Токмаков, у нас не было бы набора в техникум. […]

О цыганских колхозах. Тов. Безлюдский не рядовой цыган, он знает конституцию, он сумеет кому угодно на глотку встать, но есть колхозы, где Безлюдских нет, и там положение кошмарное. […]

Наконец, все народы собирают сокровищницу народного творчества, и только цыгане остаются за бортом – у нас не собираются ни песни, ни музыка (т. Хацкевич: Нас интересуют не цыганские мещанские романсы, а цыганское народное творчество – фольклор). […]

Основной причиной, что наши ячейки – производственные и культурные – слабо работают, является отсутствие руководства со стороны ведомств, куда входят эти ячейки. Затем нужно цыганские кадры, которые заняты в русском производстве, как-то втягивать и распределять по нашим ячейкам. Тогда работа пойдет по-другому.

т. Молина (Цыганский педтехникум): […]

т. Барановский (цыганская химпромартель): Я работаю в промысловой кооперации с 1927 г. Организованная нами первая московская промартель не только выросла в Цыгхимпром, но имеет и дочку – Пищепромартель. Все это мы создали собственными руками цыган.

Я сам до 13 лет был беспризорником. Партия и правительство воспитали из меня человека и я стал полезным членом общества. […] Предложение о выделении специального цыганского района совершено правильно. Если цыгане будут объединены на одной территории, легче будет проводить среди них работу (аплодисменты).

т. Иванов (пред[седатель] цыганского колхоза Городецкого района Горьковского края): До 15-и лет я вел бродячий образ жизни вместе с кочующими цыганами, являясь их воспитанником. […]

Если бы у цыган была своя территория, работа пошла бы по другому. Я от всей души и чистого сердца желаю, чтобы был национальный цыганский район (аплодисменты).

Жуковский: Я являюсь председателем сельсовета, совершено неграмотный. В русских сельсоветах и колхозах председатели грамотные и кроме того им в помощь дают еще парторга, а мне, совершено неграмотному, никакой помощи никто не оказывает. […] Мне говорят заставляй проводить массовую работу, но как проводить, когда мне самому надо учиться. […] Наши цыгане колхозники просят, чтобы несколько цыганских колхозов собрать в одно место с тем, чтобы иметь свой сельсовет, свои школы.

Егоров (с[ело] Нойбах, Куйбыш[евского] Края): Наша школа интернациональная, там учатся и русские, и украинцы, и мордвины, и другие национальности […]. Я же работаю и в школе, и являюсь парторгом трех колхозов. […] Я не могу сказать,

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хотя и внимательно к этому присматриваюсь, чтобы к цыганам было плохое отношение. Правда, в первое время были такие разговорчики, что из цыган ничего не выйдет, но сейчас такие разговоры больше не существуют, так как некоторые цыгане превзошли русских. […]

Сорочинский [(Цыганский Театр)]: Я в прошлом цыган-кочевник. В 1918 г. принимал участие в московском перевороте, потом был на Урале до 1921 г., затем учился, окончил техникум. Сейчас один год три месяца работаю в Цыганском театре, как оперный артист. […]

У нас директора меняются так часто, как в прошлом я менял лошадей. […] Актеры молодые, музыкальные, способные, но этого недостаточно. […] По моему, не нужно приглашать людей со стороны, а нужно заняться подготовкой имеющихся кадров. […]

Грушина (от Цыганской пищепромартели): […]

Зверев: […]

Белявский (Днепропетровск): […] Переводить цыган на оседлость мы начали с 1934 г. […] У нас 10 человек врачей и инженеров из цыган, это наш актив.

Нужно сказать, что мы несколько увлекаемся переселением. Цыгане не всегда хотят переселится, а хотят устраиваться на работу в том месте, где они живут. […] К этому вопросу нужно подходить осторожно. В моей практике сами цыгане не просят о переселении, а хотят устраиваться на завод. Совершенно необходимо сверху дать указания о помощи цыганам, работающим в промкооперации, в частности, в отношении жилья и в отношении прописки в городах цыганской молодежи, которую можно устроить на заводы.

Токмаков: […] Оседание среди цыган проходит медленно, цыгане перекочевывают из одного района в другой, но у них огромное желание осесть. Очень трудно бороться с классовым врагом, потому что цыганский кулак особенно завоалирован, простым глазом его трудно узнать, а он существует и больше всего среди кочующих. […]

Сложность вопроса заключается в том, что прежде всего нужно приучить цыган к процессам труда, для этого нужно увеличить отпускаемые средства. […]. Безусловно необходимо проводить оседание в каком то одном месте с тем, чтобы там можно было сосредоточить и наши силы и средства и тем самым улучшить и культурно-воспитательную, и хозяйственную работу среди цыган.

Кочевье сейчас совершено изменило свое направление. […] Кочевье больше всего имело место на юге, и меньше всего в Западной Сибири – так было раньше, но сейчас, в связи с тем, что земля стала колхозная, экономика кочевания вышиблена, а также в связи с паспортизацией, кочевье переносится туда, где свободнее, а именно в Западно-Сибирский край, Омскую область, Вост[очно]-Сибирск[ий] край, очень мало кибиток кочующих цыган можно встретить теперь в Сев[еро]-Кавказском и Азово-Черноморском краях. В кибитках кочевники живут в лесу, но в тоже время можно наблюдать, что кочевание происходит даже не на лошадях, а на машине,

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часто можно встретить цыгана в рабочей тележке, а не в кибитке, в этой рабочей тележке он разъезжает и работает по новостройкам.

Сейчас уже среди кочевников происходит процесс классового расслоения, часто можно слышать разговоры о том, что одни цыгане единоличники, а другие колхозники, они делятся на единоличников и колхозников уже во время кочевания и затем, когда встречаются с возможностью вступить в колхоз, часть из них оседает в колхозе. В значительной степени оседание цыган зависит от той поддержки, которую им окажут местные власти. […]

Газета, если бы ее удалось выпустить, сыграла бы колоссальную роль. Мы выпустили в Сев[еро]-Кавказском крае 3 газеты и они дали очень большой сдвиг. […]

Очень больной вопрос о кадрах. Люди решают все, а цыганские кадры очень малочисленны и распыленны. Между тем в русском районе работать много легче, чем в цыганском, с каждым из цыган приходится отдельно разговаривать; для того, чтобы чего нибудь от них добиться, приходится рассказывать всю истории человека. Когда будет выделен специальный район для цыган, нужно будет привлечь на работу среди цыган всех комсомольцев и коммунистов – цыган, работающих на русской работе. […]

Герасимов: […]

Хацкевич: […] Многие товарищи страстно говорили о недостатках в работе по трудоустройству и культурно-бытовому обслуживанию трудящихся цыган. Если бы все было хорошо в деле устройства цыган, если бы было все хорошо в культурно-просветительном и материально-бытовом положении, мы и совещания не устраивали бы. Мы созвали совещание именно потому, что в отношении культурного и бытового обслуживания трудящихся цыган имеется много недостатков. Но наряду с этим, когда мы говорим, что тысяча цыган работает на наших фабриках и заводах, тысяча семейств устроена в сорока с лишком колхозах и с кочевой жизни они перешли на оседлую трудовую жизнь, когда десятки и сотни молодых цыган стали врачами, педагогами, техниками и т.д. – это не может не радовать, тем более, что цыгане в прошлом была самой распыленной, самой загнанной национальностью. Несомненно, в отношении цыган при советской власти достигнуты большие успехи.

Не мало и недостатков. Недостатки прежде всего в том, что нам до сих пор не удалось изжить те пережитки и извращения, которые имели место в прошлом и остались до некоторой степени среди цыган, которые имеются и сейчас среди цыган во всех странах кроме Советского Союза, где обстановка коренным образом изменилась в отношении всех трудящихся националов, в том числе и цыган. В частности, эти пережитки оказывались в том, что цыгане занимались обманом. Но если в отдельных случаях цыгане и обманывали, то это не значит, что среди цыган не могут быть изжиты пережитки, привившие им условиями капитализма, гонениями, притеснениями и проч. Обвинять цыган за то, что они кочевали, это все равно обвинять евреев за то, что они жили в местечках. Вам, активистам цыганам

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нужно не теряться, не бояться трудностей, а всячески изживать эти пережитки. Мы должны принять все меры к тому, чтобы помочь цыганам устроить свою жизнь хозяйственно, материально и культурно. Условия для этого есть. Условия в нашем Союзе коренным образом изменились и с каждым днем улучшаются. Трудящиеся цыгане с первого дня Октябрьской революции получили полное право применять свой труд на любом поприще социалистического строительства, на заводах, различных промышленных предприятиях, в колхозах и т.д.

Изменились для цыган и условия кочевания. […] Кочевание цыган вызывалось бездомностью, жебрачеством, нищенством и отсюда, конечно, вытекал и обман, и всякие другие развращения среди цыган. Сейчас только группа кулаков-эксплоататоров, продолжавшая командовать своей семьей, стегать кнутом, хочет продолжать кочевание, выступает против оседания. Эти люди ошибаются, они не смогут уже удержать цыган от оседания. Сейчас положение всех национальностей в СССР не то, что было раньше. В советской деревне уже нет прежней забитости, дикости, обмана, беспросветности, воровства; колхозная масса – это уже культурная масса. Да и цыган-кочевников таких богатых, как были раньше, которые имели разукрашенные брички, запряженные в несколько пар лошадей, уже нет. Сейчас крестьян ворожбой и обманом не проведешь. В лучшем случае со стороны колхозников эти кочующие цыгане вызывают человеческое сострадание и им дается кое-что в виде жертв, но крестьяне говорят цыганам при этом: “хватить вам лодырничать, бесцельно мотаться, а беритесь за хозяйственный производственный труд”. Многие цыгане это уже понимают. Обстановка социалистического строительства зовет всех к труду по лозунгу “кто не работает, тот не ест”. Об этом должны знать все цыгане, особенно те, которые еще не перешли к производственному труду. Наша задача объяснить им это, твердо, по-большевистски рассказать об этом.

Относительно национального момента в этом вопросе. Некотрые товарищи говорили здесь о том, что цыганское предприятие должно быть исключительно цыганское, цыганский колхоз должен состоять сплошь из цыган. Если бы, тов. Барановский, мы с вами, ставили вопрос так, что Америка мол для американцев, а Россия для русских, тогда нам с вами было бы место не здесь. Если бы русский пролетариат, который завоевал власть, который освободил от капиталистического гнета все национальности, решил бы, что русских большинство и Россия должна быть только для русских, то нам с вами не было бы места, и не только нам с вами, но и украинцам на Украине, так как там русские составляют большинство. Мы должны помнить, что русский пролетариат, свергнув царизм, освободил от капиталистического ига все национальности и сейчас, на основе Ленинско-Сталинской национальной политики, у нас в Советском Союзе все нации равны, все нации суверенны и все мы имеем одинаковое право на активное участье в социалистическом строительстве, на труд. Практически фабрики, заводы, вся промышленность созданы русским пролетариатом, земля завоеванная русским пролетариатом и для русских крестьян, и для всех других национальностей. В этом заслуга русского пролетариата. Сейчас речь идет о том, чтобы вырвать цыган из той

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“ямы” прошлого, в которой в значительной части они находятся, вырвать для того, чтобы приобщить их к культурной жизни наравне с другими национальностями.

Если вы нам скажете, что с цыганами поступают несправедливо, вытесняют их с завода, из колхоза, мы будем реагировать, но если вы говорите, что производственное предприятие или колхоз должны быть исключительно для цыган, то это неправильно. […] Мы должны работать рука об руку, идти объединенно дорогой Ленина-Сталина по пути к построению бесклассового социалистического общества, по пути к комумнизму. […]

Постановление Президиума ВЦИК о создании специального цыганского района нужно приветствовать потому, что это облегчает обслуживание их на национальном языке и в хозяйственном и в культурно-бытовом смысле облегчает выращивание кадров. Это вообще хорошее правильное решение и нужно всячески помочь его скорейшему осуществлению. Я согласен с тов. Цылько, который указывает на район для цыган около Ставрополя, где есть условия к тому, чтобы развернуть работу среди цыган. Хватит места и здесь, нечего искать какие то районы в Сибири. Земельная перегрузка в Сталинградском крае, Азово-Черноморском, Северо-Кавказском и др. Кроме этого нужно устраивать цыган там, где они уже акклиматизировались. Например, если около Смоленска (Западная обл[асть]) партийными и советскими организациями созданы для цыган такие условия, что они не хотят оттуда уезжать, нужно их там и оставить. […] Очевидно, там имеются цыгане, которые еще не охвачены колхозом, и которые приезжают в колхоз для того, чтобы в него вступить. Организованные в колхозы цыгане зовут своим примером всех цыган к культурно трудовой жизни, но есть еще много кочующих цыган, которые хотят осесть в определенном месте. Что же, пусть оседают цыгане в определенном месте и потом будет цыганская автономная советская социалистическая республика.

Есть у нас еще и трудные моменты – это классовая борьба. Есть еще кулаки, извращенные старыми пережитками, есть еще подкулачники, имеются лодыри, жулики и др. подобный элемент, оставшиеся в наследство от капитализма. Мы должны бороться одинаково беспощадно и с кулаком, и с подкулачником, и жуликом и лодырем, подходя при этом осторожно к каждому в отдельности цыгану, не оскорблять цыгана, не говорить, что если он цыган, то обязательно плут и обманщик. Совершенно необходима большая работа воспитательного порядка среди трудящихся цыган. Дружбу народов, которая сейчас окрепла, нужно всячески развивать. […]

Вопросом подготовки кадров из цыган мы займемся специально. Не обязательно всех подготовлять на цыганском языке. В начальной школе занятия можно проводить на начальном [национальном] языке, но специальных высших учебных заведений для цыган создавать не нужно, они могут учиться и в русских, и в украинских вузах.

Т[оварищ] Безлюдский – активист-коммунист и писатель цыганский, он, видимо, не проходил университета до Октябрьской революции, я в этом уверен,

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но он и другие подобно ему товарищи, работая над собою в многом успели и стали крупными людьми не только среди цыган, но и для нашего общего дела социалистического строительства в СССР. Сейчас все национальности, в том числе и цыгане, имеет свободный доступ в любое учебное заведение. Но надо учиться и на работе, и многие из вас это делают. […]

Мне хотелось бы создать комиссию возможно более широкую с тем, чтобы мы глубоко проработали все вопросы. Дадим комиссии двухдекадный срок и затем заслушаем этот вопрос либо на Президиуме Совета Национальностей, либо на Президиуме ЦИК Союза СССР.

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Minutes
of the Meeting at the Department of Nationalities at TsIK USSR on the questions of the employment of toiling nomadic Gypsies and their cultural and economic services
January 4 and 5, 1936

Presided – comrade Alexander I. Khatskevich.

Presented: from the Ukrainian Representative Office comrade Kosior [1]; from Department of Nationalities VTsIK comrade Takoev; from Nationalities Committee of Mossovet comrade Krumina; from Narkomzem USSR comrade Tsyl'ko; from Narkomzem RSFSR comrade Voronin; from VPK comrade Zubietov; from Vsekopromsovet comrade Tagiev; from the Goslitizdat comrade A. Germano; from Knigocentr comrade Rosenberg; from Central Gypsy Club comrades Marin, Svetlov; from Gypsy Theatre comrades M. Goldberg, Blank, I. Lebedev, Sorochinskiy; from the Gypsy Pedagogical College comrades Modina, Kharitonov, Bystrov; from Tsygkhimpromartel comrade Baranovskiy; from Gypsy Pishchepromartel comrades Grushina, Zverev; from Editorial Office of newspaper *Pravda* comrade Kren; from the Editorial Office of the newspaper *Izvestiya* comrade Rozovskiy; from the Editorial Office of the newspaper *Trud* (Labour) comrade Antonov; from the Editorial Office of the newspaper *Za Kommunisticheskoe Prosveshchenie* (For the Communist Education) [2] comrade Paul; from the TASS comrade Zharkovskiy; from the Head of the Gypsy Village Council of Mineralnye Vody district of North-Caucasian kray comrade Bezlyudskiy; Head of the Gypsy kolkhoz *Nevo Džiiben* (New Life) in Butakhovskiy Village Council of Gorodetsk district of Gorky kray comrade F. T. Ivanov; Head of the Gypsy kolkhoz *Nevi Baxt* (New Happiness) in Bogdanovskiy Village Council of Kinelskiy district of Kuybyshev kray comrades Egorov, Zhukovskiy; Head of kolkhoz *Oktyabr'* (October) in Mikhonoshenskiy Village Council of Smolensk district of Western Oblast comrade Gorbunov; Deputy Director of factory-artel named after First Five Year Plan of Krupino Village Council of Pavlovo-Posadsk district of Moscow Oblast comrade A. I. Gerasimov; Instructor of Organisational Department of the Western oblispolkom comrade I. Ya. Gerasimov; Director of the Gypsy seven-year school in Serebryanskiy Village Council of Smolensk district of Western Oblast comrade Mikholazhin, Head of

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the National Department of Dnepropetrovsk oblispolkom comrade Bilyavskiy; Deputy Head of the Secretariat of Presidium of Tsik comrade I. F. Akimov; referent-consultant of the Secretariat of Presidium of TsIK comrade Berin [3].

[Things] listened:

1. Comrade Khatskevich's opening remarks on the *situation of Gypsies* [4], goals and objectives of the meeting;

2. Reports: (a) on the employment of nomadic Gypsies in trade and agriculture (presenter comrade Takoev); b) cultural-economic services for Gypsies in the USSR (presenter comrade Berin).

3. Commented: comrades Tagiev (Vsekopromsovet), Voronin (Narkomzem RSFSR), Zubietov (VPK), Tsyl'ko (Narkomzem USSR), Kosior (Ukrainian Representative Office), Gerasimov (Western oblispolkom), Bezlyudskyi (Head of the Gypsy Village Council and kolkhoz of Mineralnye vody district), Blank (Gypsy Theatre), N. A. Pankov (Gypsy Writer), Modina (Gypsy Pedagogical College), Baranowski (Moscow Tsygkhimprom), Ivanov (Head of the kolkhoz of Gorodets district of Gorky kray), Zhukovskiy (Gypsy kolkhoz, Kuybyshev kray), Egorov (Gypsy kolkhoz, Kuybyshev kray), Sorochinskiy (Gypsy Theatre), Grushina (Pishcheprom artel), Zverev (Pishcheprom artel), Bilyavskiy (Dnepropetrovsk Oblast), I. P. Tokmakov, Gerasimov (Artel in Moscow Oblast), A. I. Khatskevich.

Decided:

1. To take the reports and opening speeches into consideration.

2. To develop a project of specific measures for the further employment of nomadic Gypsies and cultural and economic services for all Gypsies in the USSR, to form, under the chairmanship of comrade Khatskevich, a Commission composed of comrades Tsyl'ko, I. F. Akimov, Takoev, Berin, Abidova, Lastovskiy, Kosior, I. Ya. Gerasimov, Voronin, Tagiev, Zubietov, Pankov, Sorochinskiy, Tokmakov, Buzlyudskiy, Ivanov, Egorov, Grushina, Marin, Germano, Rosenberg, Kharitonov, Modina, Krumina and representatives of Narkomfin and Narkompros.

The term of the Commission's work – 20 decades.

Chairman – … [signed] (A. Khatskevich).

Annex to the Minutes of the meeting at the Council of Nationalities VTsIK on the employment of nomadic Gypsies and their cultural and economic services from 04.01.1936.

Consultative Meeting on the employment of nomadic [Gypsies] and cultural and economic services for all toiling Gypsies in the Soviet Union.

Comrade Khatskevich: In the agenda of today's meeting the question of the job placement of nomadic Gypsies and cultural and economic services for all toiling Gypsies of the USSR is considered.

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In the USSR, according to the census of 1926, there were 61 294 Gypsy persons, which represents one-hundredth of a per cent of the total population of the USSR [5]. Thus, the Gypsies belong to the small in numbers minorities inhabiting our Soviet Union, and in the past, they belonged to the most oppressed and backward nationalities. That is exactly why we must take special care of the Gypsies as the most backward in the past. […] The October Revolution, proletarian internationalism, the Leninist-Stalinist national policy oblige us to respect nationalities small-in number, in particular the Gypsies, to show much attention. […] So we need to take a series of special measures to raise this nation to the level of economic and cultural development of other advanced peoples of the Soviet Union.

The general world history of Gypsies is the wildest, the bloodiest, perhaps, the most damned, of all the histories of all peoples. Despised and persecuted, so-called "Pharaoh's tribe" – the Gypsies were oppressed by various religious bourgeois-capitalist cliques, which branded these people particularly with a nickname and otherwise harassed and even physically exterminated the Gypsy people. […] Gypsies are mainly nomadic people; due to the special historical conditions, Gypsies have found themselves in an extremely difficult social and domestic situation. Gypsies still live with the remnants of the tribal system, in the power of tribal chiefs. They are socially, economically and culturally backward, and beaten as the backward people, the Gypsies, as a national minority, have been and are still being subjected to the most savage persecution in capitalist countries. […]

It is natural that under such life conditions the Gypsies were forced to hide in forests, ravines, mountain gorges, desert areas. There they led a semi-vagrant lifestyle, often responding to their oppressors and persecutors with robbery, stealing and theft; Gypsies were engaged in fortune-telling, cheating, begging, horse dealing, etc. When they were discovered and pursued, they were removed and moved to other places; they wandered in all countries, moving from place to place, Gypsies lived in the cold, under the open sky and in tents, mud huts with children and sick old persons; they led a miserable life and often starved, ate roots and garbage. The richest of the Gypsies with links to the police and the hucksters – in every way exploited the poor.

Here is briefly the situation of the Gypsies in the past. In a number of European and other bourgeois states, the situation of the Gypsies remains the same until today. Thus, the history of the Gypsy people is the most difficult, the most impenetrable of all the histories of all peoples.

After the October Revolution, in Soviet Russia, toiling Gypsies, like all workers of all nationalities, acquired the right to govern the state, acquired the right to work. […] With the tireless care of nationalities and ethnic minorities of the leader of the peoples, comrade Stalin, all conditions have been created for the transition of Gypsies to a cultural working life. Factories, plants, agriculture – everything has become available to toiling Gypsies. All children of toiling Gypsies have the opportunity to learn. […] For the first time in the history of the Gypsies, under Soviet authorities in the USSR, the Gypsies' written language is created, textbooks are published in the Gypsy language, journals have been published, newspaper, etc. In various places there are several dozen schools,

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where children of the toiling Gypsies learn; their own writers, poets, literature workers, artists grow out among Gypsy youth. […] The Gypsy theatre is created, run exclusively by Gypsies. […] Wherever settled Gypsies live, there cultural centers are also created – reading rooms, clubs; we also have a lot of children's centres – kindergartens, day nurseries, playgrounds, etc. […] New people grow and bring up among the Gypsies, proletarians, farmers, activists, young people who are able to build life in a new way – under the guidance of the party of Lenin and Stalin. These are the general successes in the work among the Gypsies, their involvement in socialist construction, ensuring a happy life for workers.

At the same time, we have many shortcomings in this work. […] In 1925, on the initiative of individual workers, the All-Russian Union of Gypsies was established. This Union existed until February, 1928 and was liquidated, as its appointment was not justified. Now there is no such centre, which would be especially devoted to working among the Gypsies, and perhaps such a body is not needed. It is necessary to develop work in the sectors and territories where Gypsies live and wander in order to soon achieve their employment, raising and developing their economic, cultural and everyday life. From this point of view, it is necessary to welcome the activities of the Government of the USSR to create a territorial Gypsy rayon [6]. […]

Takoev (Department of Nationalities VTsIK): […] What activities does the meeting need to outline?

(1) to take into account the total number of Gypsies living in the USSR, because there can be no work planning without it;

(2) to give special consideration to the allocation of a rayon for the Gypsies, because if they are concentrated on one territory, it is easier to conduct work among them. […]

Berin: […]

[Debate on the reports]:

Tagiev (Vsekopromsovet): […]

Voronin (NKZem RSFSR): […] On the allocation of the rayon for Gypsies, for today there are still 6,590 unsettled [families]. Some people talked about the Gypsy region in Western Siberia. It seems to me that without examining the area, without knowing its climatic conditions, it is impossible to talk about the acceptability or the unacceptability of the area. Judging by the characteristics sent by the land bodies of the West Siberian kray, this area is suitable. The idea of allocating a rayon for the compact settlement of Gypsies is very good because then the Gypsies can closely join the socialist construction.

Zubietov (VPK): The Resettlement Committee makes the following proposals on the arrangement of Gypsies. […] It would be necessary to find an area for the creation of a Gypsy rayon. When the question of creating such an independent rayon arose, the Resettlement Committee requested a number of Krays and Oblasts regarding the possibility of allocating an area on which it would be possible to organize a settlement of 30-35 thousand Gypsies. Requested were the Azov – Black Sea Kray, North Caucasus, the Volga region, the Crimea, the Urals, Western Siberia. The Southern regions replied that there is no free land, the Gorky Oblast replied that it can provide about 70-80 thousand hectares of land with large capital investments. Omsk replied that they can provide land

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in the area of the town of Ostyako-Vogulsk [7] and only Western Siberia replied that it can provide two land funds. We have set ourselves the task of studying these two sites in more detail because without a survey it is difficult to say whether they are suitable or not. By the way, we know that a certain amount of free land is available in the Ural, in Stalingrad Oblast, in Kuybyshev Oblast, and not only land, there are also houses left after "dekulakisation". These rayons can also be used. […]

Tsyl'ko (Narkomzem USSR): When compared with bourgeois countries, in respect of the arrangement of the Gypsies, in the Soviet Union, here in the USSR we have made a lot but the numbers that are mentioned here are still very miserable. Therefore, we can say that the work has just begun. I fully support the proposal to create a Gypsy Rayon, but in the beginning, in my opinion, we should go through the creation of smaller administrative and economic units within the existing districts. Then the Gypsies would have their representation in the district executive committee, their village councils, their schools, they would receive special assistance. Gypsies, due to their difficult past, still need special protection of their interests, they need to get special care, which is provided to them by a number of governmental regulations. Unfortunately, in localities the authorities do not comply with these decrees; Gypsies are not provided with the benefits that should be provided to them.

The land funds offered in Western Siberia, judging by their composition (80% of it is inconvenient land) are not suitable. Gypsies should be given the best land because it is the first time they settle. It is difficult for them to switch immediately to hard physical labour. Therefore, it is necessary to find such a land area, which would provide better land and would be suitable for Gypsies in climatic conditions. I think Gypsies are more inclined to animal husbandry, horse breeding, pig breeding. We need to find an area where they can develop these trades. There are very good unused lands in Stavropol area. […] The climate conditions of this region are quite suitable for Gypsies. Then a colossal amount of unused land – in the Orenburg steppe. Mineralovodsky district is a great place for Gypsies. You can find areas in the Volga region, in the Kuibyshev region.

Organisational question – whether to create special Gypsy kolkhozes or to insert them into local farms. If there are no specific reasons that would suggest that the Gypsies do not get along with the Russian population, then it would be advisable from an economic point of view to create mixed kolkhozes, for the Gypsies are a skilled people, they are good blacksmiths, tin-smiths, good horse breeders. Every kolkhoz needs such people. If it is not possible, then in the order of creating independent small administrative-economic units it would be possible to accommodate the Gypsies in the Stavropol region, in the Orenburg steppes, the Kuibyshev region and partly in the Mineralovodsky district, giving them a special target, but in no case should the Gypsies be resettled in Siberia. […]

Then a lot of regional workers have to straighten their brains out when they refuse to accept Gypsies where they can be arranged. It would not be bad to create a special cell on the arrangement of Gypsies in the Resettlement Committee (voice: done correctly).

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Kosior (Ukraine Representative Office): Until now, not a single republic has attached sufficient importance to the issue of the accommodation of Gypsies, which requires special attention, a special approach. It must be said bluntly that without special additional funds these measures for the accommodation of Gypsies will not be realised. It may be necessary to create special *yacheykas* in areas where there are large groups of Gypsies, *yacheykas* that would take special care of them. The main thing is to raise public opinion around this issue in order to end the nomadism of Gypsies and accommodate them in a socialist way.

Gerasimov (instructor of Western oblispolkom, a Gypsy): [...] [8]. My proposal. At first, Gypsy collective farms cannot be merged with Russian ones. When Gypsy collective farms get stronger, then we will be able to talk about uniting them with the Russian collective farm or with the collective farm of other nationalities.

One of the obstacles to the development of further work in our region is the lack of agricultural land area. We need to think of allocating the territory for the Gypsies at least in a form of the small rayon. In our oblast, about 60 Communists and Komsomol members could be found, who will be able, by the assistance of the Communist Party and the government, to provide the management of this rayon.

It seems useful to invite the Komzet for work among the Gypsies, as the Komzet has great experience in relocation [9].

Bezlyudskiy (North Caucasus, a Gypsy, until 1919 nomadic): I have been working in the Gypsy kolkhoz *Toiling Gypsy* [10] Mineralnye Vody district since 1926 [11], and at the same time I am the Head of the [Gypsy] Village Council [12]. [...] [13]

About allocation of the district for Gypsies. If Gypsies have their own territory, their own newspaper, the work will go very differently. The most suitable area for the settlement of Gypsies would be Stavropol area. Now there are a lot of wandering Gypsies because in this area there are big markets. [...]

About relocation to my kolkhoz. I can take 150-200 families, but on one condition – if assistance is provided with regard to finishing the plumbing of water pipes, which has been under construction for a number of years, and with timber.

Blank (Gypsy theatre): [...]

Comrade Pankov (Gypsy writer): We, Gypsy activists, are witnessing every year something new in the Gypsy life – the press, schools, kindergartens, [the Pedagogical] College, theatre, artels, kolkhozes, and finally today on the agenda is a question of the territory for Roma.

Besides these positive facts, we have our own diseases, in all our labour and cultural units.

On the situation with the theatre. [...] The Gypsy theatre – so to speak – is a Gypsy pearl. This theatre has tremendous success in the USSR and abroad, meanwhile, the theatre suffers from shortness of its repertoire. Recently, there are no new plays, and there are certainly opportunities to create new plays. [...]

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About the College. There are a lot of abnormalities in the College. Young people in the College are completely neglected, left by themselves. […] Without the help of comrade Tokmakov, we would not have a new cohort of students in the College. […]

About Gypsy kolkhozes. Comrade Bezlyudskiy is not an ordinary Gypsy, he knows the Constitution, he will be able to step up on anyone's throat (i.e. to convince anyone in a dispute), but there are kolkhozes where there are no such Bezlyudskiys, and there the situation is horrible. […]

Finally, all the peoples are collecting their treasures of folk creativity, and only Gypsies are left behind – we are collecting neither the [folk] songs nor music (comrade Khatskevich: We are not interested in petty-bourgeois Gypsy romances, only in the Gypsy folk art – folklore). […]

The main reason that our units – productive and cultural – work poorly is in the absence of leadership from the departments in which these units are included. That is why we need Gypsy personnel who are engaged in Russian production, to involve them in some way and to distribute them within our units. Then the work will go differently.

Comrade Modina (Gypsy Pedagogical College): […]

Comrade Baranowski (Tsygkhimpromartel): I have worked in the field of industrial cooperation since 1927. The first Moscow Industrial artel organised by us not only increased into *Tsygkhimprom*, but has a filial structure – *Pishchepromartel*. All this is what we have created with our own Gypsy hands.

I was a street kid myself until I was 13. The party and the government raised me as a human and I became a useful member of society. […] The proposal of allocating the special Gypsy Rayon is entirely correct. If Gypsies will be united on one territory, it will be easier to work among them (applause).

Comrade Ivanov (Head of Gypsy kolkhoz in Gorodetskiy district of Gorky kray): Until I was 15 years old, I led a wandering lifestyle with nomadic Roma, being their pupil. […] Had Gypsies their own territory, the work would have gone differently. I sincerely and wholeheartedly wish that a national Gypsy rayon existed (applause).

Zhukovskiy: I am the Chairman of the Village Council [14], I am fully illiterate. In the Russian village councils and kolkhozes, the chairmen are literate and in addition, they are helped by the Communist party organizer, and I, being fully illiterate, no one helps me. […] They tell me to force the people to carry out [cultural] mass work, but how to carry it out, when I myself need to study. […] Our Gypsies, kolkhoz workers, are pledging to gather in one place several Romani kolkhozes, in order to have their own Village Council, their schools.

Egorov (village Neubach, Kuybyshev Kray): Our school is international, and other nationalities are studying there: Russians, Ukrainians, Mordvins, […]. I'm working in the school, and I'm the Communist party organiser of the three kolkhozes. […] I cannot say, that there is a bad attitude towards Gypsies, although I look closely at this. However, at the beginning, there were such conversations that Gypsies are not of use at all, but now these conversations don't exist anymore since some Gypsies have surpassed the Russians in work. […]

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Sorochinskiy [(Gypsy theatre)]: In the past, I was a Gypsy-nomad. In 1918 I took part in the Moscow coup d'etat, then I worked in the Ural until 1921, then studied, graduated from College. Now, for one year and three months I have been working in the Gypsy theatre, as an Opera singer. […] Our Directors replace one another as often as I have changed horses in the past. […] Actors are young, capable in music, talented, but this is not enough. […] In my opinion, it is not necessary to invite people from outside, but it is necessary to train existing staff. […]

Grushina (from Gypsy Pishchepromartel): […].

Zverev: […].

Belyavskiy (Dnepropetrovsk): […] We started transferring Gypsies to a sedentary way of life in 1934. […] We have 10 physicians and engineers from among Gypsies, they are our activists. […]

I must say that we are somewhat addicted to resettlement. Gypsies do not always want to move, but they want to get a job in the place where they live. […] This issue should be approached with caution. In my practice, the Gypsies themselves do not ask for resettlement but want to get a job at the factory. It is absolutely necessary to issue an ordinance at high level on the aid to Gypsies who are working in industrial cooperation, in particular with regard to housing and in relation to registration in cities of Roma youth, who can be engaged in factories.

Tokmakov: […] Settling of Gypsies goes slowly, Gypsies wander from one district to another, but they have a great desire to settle. It is very difficult to fight against the class enemy because the Gypsy *kulak* is especially disguised, it is difficult to recognise him with an unaided eye, though he exists, most of all among the Gypsy nomads. […]

The complexity of the issue lies in the fact that first of all, it is necessary to accustom Gypsies to the processes of labour, for this it is necessary to increase the targeted funds […]. Of course, it is necessary to settle Gypsies in one place so that our forces and resources can be concentrated there and thus improve cultural, educational and economic work among Gypsies.

Today travelling has absolutely changed its direction. […] it most of all took place in the South, and least in Western Siberia – so it was before, but now, due to the circumstance that the land has come into kolkhozes possession, the economy of nomadism is kicked out, as well as in connection with the passportisation, nomadic routes are transferred to places, where it carried on more freely, namely in the West Siberian kray, Omsk region, East Siberian kray. Very few caravans of wandering Gypsies can presently be found in North Caucasus and Azov – Black Sea krays. In the caravans the nomads live in the forests, but at the same time it is possible to observe that nomadism is done not only on horseback but by car; you can often find a Gypsy in a working truck, not in the caravan, in the working truck he drives and works on the new constructions' places.

Now among the nomads there is a process of class stratification, one can often hear talks about the fact that some Gypsies are individual peasants, and other Gypsies are kolkhoz members, they are divided into individual peasants and kolkhoz adherents already during the nomadic period and then, when they meet with the opportunity to

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join the kolkhoz, some of them settle there. To a large extent, the sedentarisation of Gypsies depends on the support they will receive from local authorities. […]

The newspaper, if it could be released, would play a huge role. We released 3 newspapers in the North-Caucasus region and they gave a very big change. […]

A very sensitive issue is that about cadres. The people decide everything [15], but Gypsy cadres are very small in number and dispersed. Meanwhile, in a Russian rayon, the work is a lot easier than in Gypsy one; it is necessary to speak to each Gypsy individually; in order to get some reaction from him, we have to tell him the whole story of man. When the special Rayon will be allocated for Gypsies, it will be necessary to attract all the Gypsy Komsomol and Communist party members for the work among Gypsies, who are now doing Russian work. […]

Gerasimov: […][16].

Khatskevich: […] Many comrades spoke passionately about the shortcomings in the work on the employment and of the cultural and consumer services for toiling Gypsies. If everything was well in the case of the arrangement of Gypsies, if everything was well in the cultural, educational and material situation, we would not have arranged the meeting. We convened the meeting precisely because there are many shortcomings with regard to the cultural and consumer services for toiling Gypsies. But along with this, when we say that thousands of Gypsies work in our factories and plants, thousands of families are arranged in forty-odd kolkhozes and that they have moved from a nomadic life to a settled working life, when dozens and hundreds of young Gypsies became physicians, teachers, technicians, etc. – this cannot but make us rejoice, especially knowing that Gypsies in the past were the most dispersed, the most persecuted nationality. Without a doubt, the Gypsy people under the Soviet Authority has achieved great success.

The shortcomings are not few. The shortcomings are, first of all, that we have not yet been able to overcome the remnants and perversions that have occurred in the past and have remained to some extent among Gypsies, they still exist among Gypsies in all countries except the Soviet Union, where the situation has changed radically for all national workers, including Gypsies. In particular, these remnants found expression in the fact that Gypsies were engaged in deception. But though, in some cases, Gypsies cheated, it does not mean that these remnants cannot be liquidated among Gypsies; these remnants were adopted in the conditions of capitalism, persecution, oppression and so on. Blaming Gypsies for the fact that they are nomad, is like blaming the Jews for the fact that they lived in shtetls [17]. You, the Gypsy activists, must not to get discouraged, not to be afraid of difficulties, and in every way try to get rid of these remnants. We must use all means to help Gypsies to organise their lives economically, financially and culturally. There are conditions for this. Conditions in our Union have changed radically and are improving every day. Since the first day of the October Revolution, the toiling Gypsies have received the full right to apply their labour in any field of socialist construction, factories, various industrial enterprises, kolkhozes, etc.

The conditions of nomadism have also changed for Gypsies. […] The Gypsy nomadism was caused by homelessness, mendicity, begging, and hence, of course, stemmed

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deception and all sorts of other corruption among Gypsies. Now only the group of kulaks-exploiters, continue to command their families, whip them [18], wanting to continue nomadism, opposing the idea of settling. These people are wrong; they will not be able to keep Gypsies from settling. Now the position of all the nationalities in the Soviet Union is not what it used to be in the past. In the Soviet village, there are no longer the former downtroddenness, savagery, deceit, hopelessness, theft; the kolkhozes mass is already a cultural mass. And the Roma-nomads, as rich as they were before, who had decorated caravans, harnessed to several pairs of horses, no longer exist.

Now the peasants cannot be fooled with sorcery and deception. In the best case, these wandering Gypsies evoke human compassion on the part of the peasants, and they are given something in the form of a charity, but along with this the peasants say to Gypsies: "stop being lazy, roaming aimlessly, and start to engage in economically productive work". Many Gypsies are already aware of it. The situation of the socialist construction calls everyone to work according to the slogan "who does not work, he does not eat." This should be known to all Gypsies, especially those who have not yet moved to productive work. Our task is to firmly explain that to them, to tell them about it, in a Bolshevistic way.

On the national aspect of this question. Some comrades spoke here that a Gypsy enterprise should be an exclusive Gypsy enterprise, Gypsy kolkhoz should consist entirely of Gypsies. If we, comrade Baranovskiy, we and you together, posed the question in that way that America is supposedly for Americans, Russia for Russians, then we would be out of here. If the Russian proletariat, which has won power, which has freed all nationalities from capitalist oppression, had decided that there is the Russian majority here, and Russia has to be only for Russians, then there would be no place for us to be with you, and not only for us, but also for Ukrainians in Ukraine as the Russians also make the majority there. We must remember that the Russian proletariat, having overthrown Tsarism, liberated all nationalities from the capitalist yoke, and now, on the basis of Lenin-Stalin's national policy, in the Soviet Union all Nations are equal, all Nations are sovereign and we all have the same right to take an active part in the socialist construction, to work. Factories, plants, all industry are practically created by the Russian proletariat, the earth won by the Russian proletariat and for Russian peasants, and for all other nationalities. This is the merit of the Russian proletariat. Now the issue is about pulling Gypsies out of the "pits" of the past, which, in significant part, they are in; we have to pull out them in order to introduce them to the cultural life on an equal basis with other nationalities.

If you tell us either that Gypsies are being treated unfairly, or that they are being forced out of the factory, from the kolkhoz, we will react; but if you say that the productive enterprise or the kolkhoz should be exclusively for Gypsies, then this is wrong. […] we must work hand in hand, go together with the way of Lenin-Stalin on the way to building a classless socialist society, on the way to communism. […]

The decree of the Presidium of the VTsIK about creating a special Gypsy Rayon should be welcomed because it makes easier to service them in their national language and in economy, and in a cultural and community sense it facilitates the cultivation of the cadres. This is generally the right decision and we need to help in every way to implement

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it as soon as possible. I agree with comrade Tsyl'ko who indicates the area for Gypsies near Stavropol, where there are conditions to expand the work among Gypsies. There is enough space here as well, there is no reasons to look for some rayons in Siberia. There is land shortness in the Stalingrad kray, the Azov – Black Sea kray, North Caucasus kray, etc. It is reasonable to arrange [that] Gypsies [settle] where they have already been acclimatised. For example, if near Smolensk (the Western Oblast) the Communist party and Soviet organisations have created such conditions for Gypsies that they do not want to move, you need to leave them there. […] Obviously, there are Gypsies who are not yet encompassed by the kolkhozes, and who come to the kolkhoz to join it. Gypsies who are organised into kolkhozes serve as an example and call all Gypsies to join a cultural toiling life, but there are also many nomadic Gypsies who want to settle in a certain place. Well, let Gypsies settle in a designated place and then there will be a Gypsy Autonomous Soviet Socialist Republic.

We also still have difficult moments – it is a class struggle. There are still kulaks, perverted remnants of the old-time, there are still kulaks' agents, there are idlers, rogues and others elements inherited from capitalism. We must fight equally mercilessly with the kulaks, and their agents, and rogues and idlers, carefully approaching in the meantime each individual Gypsy, not to offend him, not to say that if he is a Gypsy, then he is definitely a cheater and a liar. It is absolutely necessary to conduct a lot of educational work among the toiling Gypsies. The friendship of peoples, which has now become stronger, must be developed in every way. […]

We will especially deal with the issue of training the Gypsy cadres. It is not necessary to prepare everyone in the Gypsy language. In primary school, the instruction can be conducted in the native language, but there is no need to create special higher education institutions for Gypsies, as they can study in Russian and Ukrainian universities.

Comrade Bezlyudskiy is a Communist, activist and Gypsy writer, he apparently did not pass any university before the October Revolution, I'm certain of it. But he, and others comrades like him working towards self-education have succeeded in many aspects and have become big people not only among Gypsies but also for our common task of the socialist construction in the USSR. Now all nationalities, including Gypsies, have free access to any educational institution. But you need to learn from work too, and many of you do it. […]

I would like to make the Commission as broad as possible so that we can work on all these issues in depth. We will give the Commission a two decades term and then put this question either to the Presidium of the Council of Nationalities or to the Presidium of the TsIK of the USSR.

Notes

1. It is unclear who was the representative of the Ukrainian SSR at the meeting. Stanislav Kosior (1889-1938) at that time was the First Secretary of the Communist Party of Ukraine. Two of his brothers (Joseph and Casimir) also held important positions in the Soviet state system and did not work at the Ukrainian Representative Office in Moscow, and the third brother Vladislav was

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in exile in Siberia at the time. The meeting was probably attended by the fifth brother Mikhail (1893-1937), but it is also possible that the representative of the Ukrainian Representative Office in Moscow was another relative or namesake.
2. In 1930-37 this was the title of *Uchitel'skaya gazeta* (Teachers' Newspaper).
3. T. Berin was a referent-consultant of the Secretariat of the Presidium of the TsIK of the USSR, preparing most of the official materials targeting the Gypsies, which were discussed in the Council of Nationalities of the TsIK of the USSR.
4. A handwritten addition.
5. In fact, the Census of 1926 counted 61 234 (not 61 294) Gypsy persons (Всесоюзная перепись населения, 1926); it is 0.04% (not 0.01%).
6. When the materials of the Meeting were published, this sentence was changed as follows: "It is necessary to welcome the measures of the Government of the RSFSR to create territorial Gypsy rayon for settlement by toiling Gypsies" (Совещание, 1936, p. 63). The change ('rayons' instead of 'rayon') reflects the contradictions between the positions of the VTsIK and the NKVD on the issue of Gypsy autonomy, which will be addressed below. In this case, it is indicative that the NKVD managed to impose this change in the speech of Alexander I. Khatskevich, who at that time was not only Secretary of the Council of Nationalities of the TsIK of the USSR, but also a member of the Editorial Board of the journal *Revolyutsiya i Natsionalnosti* (Revolution and Nationalities) where the materials of the Meeting were published.
7. Ostyako-Vogulsk, now Khanty-Mansiysk, an administrative centre of Khanty-Mansi Autonomous Okrug – Yugra.
8. In his presentation, Ilya Gerasimov describes in detail the successes achieved in the establishment of Gypsy kolkhozes and Gypsy schools in Western Oblast.
9. Komzet (*Committee for the Settlement of Toiling Jews on the Land* at Presidium of the VTsik) was established in 1924. The Committee actively worked on the creation of Jewish settlements in the Crimea and in many other regions of the USSR, and subsequently on the establishment of the Jewish Autonomous Oblast with the administrative centre in the town of Birobidzhan in the Far East in 1934.
10. Translation error – the Gypsy name of the collective farm 'Труд Ромэн' (*Trud Romen* in Russian should be translated as 'Цыганский труд' (Gypsy labour) and not as "Трудовой цыган" (Toiling Gypsy).
11. In his presentation, Mikhail Bezlyudskiy states that he has been the head of the Gypsy kolkhoz *Trud Romen* (Gypsy Labour) since 1926 (when the kolkhoz was created), while in fact he was sent by the Department of Nationalities at VTsIK to head the kolkhoz in 1933 (see below). There is probably a printing error in the minutes.
12. This refers to the Gypsy *selsoviet*, established in the village of Kangly, Mineralnovodsky region, in 1932 (see below).
13. In his presentation, Mikhail Bezlyudskiy spoke in detail about the problems which the Gypsy kolkhoz headed by him constantly encountered.
14. This is the village of Bogdanovka, Kinel' district, Kuybyshev (now Samara) Oblast. The interesting thing about this case is that an illiterate Gypsy was a chairman of the village soviet, whose inhabitants were predominantly not Gypsies but ethnic Russians.
15. "The Peoples Decide Everything" (Люди решают все) – a reference to the catchphrase "The Cadres Decide Everything" (Кадры решают всё), from the speech *On the State of Affairs in the USSR* of Joseph Stalin on May 4, 1935.
16. In his presentation, A. I. Gerasimov spoke in detail about the many different problems with which the metal-working artel where he worked was constantly confronted.
17. Here Alexander Khatskevich refers to 'shtetl' – small settlement with Jewish population in the areas demarcated by the 19th century Pale of Settlement in the Russian Empire, beyond which Jewish residency was mostly forbidden.

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18. The image of the Gypsy kulak who beats poor Gypsies with a whip was widespread in the propaganda of the time (in illustrations, posters, theatre and cinema). In this sense the whip became a symbol, in the first place of class oppression, but also of gender oppression, as e.g. in the story *Пхагирдо Дэсто* (The Broken Whip), published in the Romani language (Безлюдско, 1932, pp. 5-17).

Source: GARF, f. P 3316, op. 28, d. 794, l. 77-125.
The Minutes of the Meeting are published with some editorial corrections in the journal *Революция и национальности* (Revolution and Nationalities), a publication of the Department of Nationalities at TsIK USSR (Совещание, 1936, pp. 61-72).
Prepared for publication by Elena Marushiakova and Vesselin Popov.
Translated by Viktor Shapoval.

12.4.7 *The Draft Decree*

Проект

Постановление
Президиума Всероссийского Центрального Исполнительного Комитета

Заслушав доклад инструктора Отдела Национальностей ВЦИК т. Токмакова о результатах проверки исполнения Постановления Президиума ВЦИК от 1 апреля 1932 г. "О состоянии работы по обслуживанию трудящихся цыган", Президиум ВЦИК констатирует, что за последние 3 года работа среди трудящихся цыган несколько улучшилась. [...] Однако, в результате продолжающейся недооценки значения работы по обслуживанию трудящихся цыган со стороны наркоматов и ряда местных исполкомов и советов, Постановление Президиума ВЦИК от 1 апреля 1932 г. в значительной части не выполнено:

1) Наркомзем РСФСР не разработан конкретный план землеустройства трудящихся цыган для их компактного заселения; [...]

Считая, что дальнейшая работа по вовлечения трудящихся цыган в социалистическое строительство тормозится из-за отсутствия плана компактного оседания цыган в пределах одного района, Президиум ВЦИК постановляет:

1. Предложить СНК РСФСР поручить Госплану и Наркомзему РСФСР в месячный срок наметить один из районов в пределах РСФСР для компактного заселения его трудящимися цыганами, обеспечив это мероприятие соответствующими средствами для хозяйственного и социально-культурного строительства в районе. [...]

5. Просить ЦИК Союза ССР:

а) Организовать при Совете Национальностей ЦИК Союза ССР газету на цыганском языке; [...].

Председатель Всероссийского Центрального Исполнительного Комитета.
Секретарь Всероссийского Центрального Исполнительного Комитета.

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Draft [1]

Decree
of the Presidium of VTsIK

Having heard the report of the instructor of the Department of Nationalities VTsIK, comrade Tokmakov, on the results of the audit of the execution of the Decree of the Presidium of VTsIK of April 1, 1932 *On the Situation of Work in the Services for Toiler Gypsies*, the Presidium of VTsIK notes that over the last 3 years the work among toiling Gypsies has slightly improved. [...] However, as a result of the continuing underestimation of the importance of work on the services for toiling Gypsies by the People's Commissariats and a number of local executive committees and councils, the Decree of the Presidium of the CEC of April 1, 1932 has largely not been implemented:

1) Narkomzem RSFSR has not developed a specific plan for land allocation to toiling Gypsies for their compact sedentarisation; [...]

Considering that further work for the involvement of toiling Gypsies in the socialist construction is hampered by the absence of a plan for the compact settlement of Gypsies within the same region, the Presidium of VTsIK decides:

1. To propose to SNK of RSFSR to require from the Gosplan and Narkomzem within a month to outline one of the rayons within the Russian Federation, for the compact settlement of the toiling Gypsies, supplying this plan with appropriate funds for the economic and socio-cultural development in the area. [...]

5. To ask TsIK USSR:

a) To organise a newspaper in Gypsy language at the Department of Nationalities at TsIK USSR; [...].

Chairman of the All-Russian Central Executive Committee.

Secretary of the All-Russian Central Executive Committee [2].

Notes

1. The document is not dated, but judging by the arrangement of the materials in the archive folder, it was prepared in early 1936, shortly after the Consultative Meeting on the employment of nomadic [Gypsies] and cultural and economic services for all toiling Gypsies in the Soviet Union (see above).

2. This Decree of VTsIK was not accepted and remained only as a project, and instead the Decree of the Presidium of VTsIK USSR from 7th April 1936 "*On Measures on the employment of nomads and the improvement of economic and cultural services for toiler Gypsies*" was accepted (Постановление, 1936, p. 87). The proposal to create a newspaper in the Gypsy language, despite strong support from the Department of Nationalities at VTsIK, the Central Election Commission was not accepted. About other differences between the proposed and adopted decree see below in the Comments section.

Source: GARF, f. P 3316, op. 28, d. 793, l. 4-5.
Prepared for publication by Elena Marushiakova and Vesselin Popov.
Translated by Viktor Shapoval.

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12.4.8 *Heading the 'Workers Propose'* (1)

Рубрика "Трудящиеся предлагают".

Три предложения

[...] И третье наше предложение: создать в составе РСФСР или УССР Цыганскую автономную область, объединив разрозненные ныне цыганские колхозы. Благодаря созданию Цыганской автономной области у нас еще более успешно будет идти переход цыган на оседлое положение и культурное их возрождение.

Ю. Масленников, В. Смирнов, В. Плетнев.

Москва.

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Heading the 'Workers Propose' [1]

Three Proposals

[...] And our third proposal is to create a Gypsy Autonomous Oblast within the RSFSR or the Ukrainian SSR, uniting presently scattered Gypsy kolkhozes. Thanks to the creation of the Gypsies Autonomous Oblast, we will be even more successful in the transition of Gypsies to a settled status and their cultural revival.

Yu. Maslennikov, V. Smirnov, V. Pletnev [2].

Moscow.

Notes

1. This heading was introduced in the newspaper *Komsomolskaya Pravda* within the framework of the so-called nationwide discussion of the draft of the new Constitution of the USSR (adopted on 05.12.1936).
2. It is not clear who the authors of this proposal are, the names are not those of known Gypsy activists, and it is likely that these were ordinary Soviet citizens.

Source: Масленников, Ю. Смирнов, В., Плетнев, В. (1936a). Три предложения. *Комсомольская правда*, An. 7, No. 161 (3447), 1936, July 14, p. 2.
Prepared for publication by Elena Marushiakova, Vesselin Popov.
Translated by Viktor Shapoval.

12.4.9 *Heading the 'Workers Propose'* (2)

Рубрика "Трудящиеся предлагают".

Актив цыган Москвы при центральном цыганском клубе и уполномоченные вновь организуемого цыганского колхоза в Харькове обсудили предложение тт. Ю. Масленникова, В. Смирнова и В. Плетнева о создании цыганской автономной области (см. "Комсомольскую правду" от 14 июля с. г.). Цыганский актив г. Москвы это предложение поддерживает и считает, что:

1. Создание цыганской автономной области будет способствовать быстрейшему оседанию трудящихся цыган на определенной территории.

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2. Следовало бы издавать периодический печатный орган на цыганском языке, что способствовало бы культурному росту цыганского народа.

Следуют 27 подписей.

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Heading the "Workers Propose"

The group of Moscow Gypsy activists at the Central Gypsy Club and the plenipotentiaries of the once again organised Gypsy kolkhoz in Kharkiv [1] discussed the proposal of comrades Yu. Maslennikov, V. Smirnov and V. Pletnev about the creation of the Gypsy Autonomous oblast (see *Komsomolskaya Pravda* of July 14, this year). The Gypsy activists of Moscow support this proposal and believe that:

1. The establishment of the Gypsy Autonomous Oblast will contribute to the rapid settlement of toiling Gypsies on the allocated territory.

2. A periodic printed organ should be issued in the Gypsy language, which would contribute to the cultural growth of the Gypsy people.

27 signatures follow.

Notes

1. Probably this refers to the newly-established Gypsy kolkhoz in Lozova railway station, Kharkiv oblast in Ukrainian SSR (GARF, f. P 1235, op. 123, d. 27, l. 210).

Source: [No Author]. (1936b). [Трудящиеся предлагают]. *Комсомольская правда*, An. 7, No. 170 (3456), 1936, July 24, p. 2.
Prepared for publication by Elena Marushiakova and Vesselin Popov.
Translated by Viktor Shapoval.

12.4.10 *About the Gypsy National Rayon*

Рубрика "Предложения"

О цыганском национальном районе

Герасимов (инструктор западного облисполкома). В Западной области имеются 4 цыганских колхоза. Много цыган работает на фабриках, заводах, в системе промкооперации.

Все же в области до сих пор имеется 500 семей цыган, ведущих кочевой и полукочевой образ жизни.

Среди кочевого населения сейчас замечается большая тяга к оседлости. При обсуждении проекта сталинской Конституции в цыганских колхозах и среди кочевого населения (в таборах) было много заявлений о том, чтобы просить правительство выделить один район в Союзе для заселения цыган.

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Heading 'Proposals' [1]

About the Gypsy National Rayon

Gerasimov (instructor of the Western Oblast Executive Committee). In the Western oblast, there are 4 Gypsies kolkhozes. Many Gypsies work in factories, plants, in the system of industrial cooperation.

Nevertheless, in the region there are still 500 families of Gypsies, leading a nomadic and semi-nomadic life.

Among the nomadic population a great craving for settled life can now be seen. When discussing the draft of Stalin's Constitution in the Gypsy kolkhozes and among the nomadic population (in tabors) there were many motions about asking the government to allocate one area in the Union for the settlement of the Gypsies.

Notes

1. This heading was also introduced in the framework of the so-called nationwide discussion of the draft of the new Constitution of the USSR.

Source: Герасимов, И. (1936). О цыганском национальном районе. *Известия ЦИК СССР*, An. 20, No. 241 (6098), 1936, October 16, p. 3.
Prepared for publication by Elena Marushiakova and Vesselin Popov.
Translated by Viktor Shapoval.

Comments

As can be seen from the published material in this part (12.4.), the idea of creating a Gypsy territorial-administrative unit first arose among Gypsy activists and they were its most ardent supporters. In fact, they were also the main driving force, having tried for years to engage the Soviet institutions in its fulfillment. The reasons for the emergence of this idea are easy to understand. It is apparent also why the very notion of a Gypsy territorial-administrative unit was considered one of the pillars on which the future of the Gypsies as a Soviet nationality must be built. In forging a new multinational state (i.e. the USSR), different nationalities received not only a right but also a real opportunity to create their very own national-territorial administrative units of a different order: namely, a national Union or Autonomous Republics and oblasts as higher-level autonomous administrative entities. At a lower administrative level were the national rayons and selsoviets (for sources and literature on the subject, see Кайкова, 2007). In this newly constructed national-administrative hierarchy of the 1920s, Gypsies were completely absent. Of course, they are by no means the only exception to this regard and, in this case, one cannot speak of any kind of discriminatory treatment specifically targeting them. A population census in the Russian Empire in 1895 recorded 140 peoples (Алфавитный список народов, 2005); at the USSR Census in 1926 their number was already over 160 (Всесоюзная перепись населения, 1926). However, the number of existing separate national territorial-administrative units was much smaller than that of the peoples.

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The reasons for the absence of Gypsies in this national-administrative hierarchy are the existing realities: in the USSR, they lived as a diaspora in vast territories, with the majority of them being nomads (about three-quarters); in cases in which they were settled, their relative share in individual settlements was always insignificant (hardly in any settlement exceeding even a few per cent).

In this situation, it is only natural for Gypsy activists to strive for equal treatment with other nationalities and to campaign for their own territorial-administrative unit. Equally important is the fact that the existence of such an administrative unit guaranteed the budget financing of their community-development activities, which, as seen above, was a major problem for Gypsy activism in the 1920s. At the same time, Gypsy activists were taking into account the existing realities, so their calls to the Soviet state for the creation of a Gypsy national rayon were directly linked to the need of sedentarisation of nomads, who would inhabit such a rayon. Resettlement of sedentary Gypsies was unrealistic, or at least difficult to accomplish, while the state-supported transfer of nomads on free territory and their settling there seemed much more realistic and easier to accomplish. This is actually the main reason for the repeated calls for sedentarisation of nomadic Gypsies, which was perceived by the activists as the first mandatory step needed in order to achieve the creation of a national Gypsy rayon. Moreover, Gypsy activists in the 1920s, united by the VSTs, had even already chosen the geographical location of this rayon, namely the southern part of Russia; as they carefully express it: "there is a general attraction to the South". The choice is not accidental. In southern Russia, one could find the most developed agricultural regions, with good climate conditions and comparatively more Gypsy nomads, could also be found there. As could be seen from the above-published document, the presidium of VSTs determined also the minimum number needed to establish a national Gypsy area, namely 100 000 people. The latter seems rather strange given the fact that the Census of 1926 reported a total of 61 234 Gypsies living throughout the USSR (Ibid.). However, VSTs, in its paperwork, repeatedly emphasised that this was not the real number of Gypsies, and proposed different figures – from 200,000 to a very fantastic 1,000,000 (see above).

Moreover, the heads of VSTs managed to persuade Soviet institutions in their assessments. Therefore, the Union's action plan set the number of 500 000 (in another version 600 000) Gypsies, and this was taken as a base in the planning of the activities (and in their requests for funding). Unfortunately for the VSTs, these figures were accepted not only in the planning but also in the auditing of the activities (GARF, f. P 393, op. 43 A, d. 1763, l. 7-8).

Attempts to achieve at least some result along the way of the establishment of a Gypsy territorial-administrative unit in the 1920s have been fruitless. The blame for this does not solely lie with the Soviet institutions, which, in principle, did not reject the idea itself, but rather were cautious and took no practical actions in this regard. The VSTs itself also focused its efforts in other areas, namely in its own economic activity. Ultimately, activities in this direction ended with the liquidation of the VSTs in 1928. Since then, Gypsy activists continued to work in other fields, mainly the preparation of

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teaching materials, the publication of Romani literature, etc., and this situation continued until the 1930s.

Things changed radically in 1932 when Ivan Tokmakov was appointed instructor at ON VTsIK. His position was one of the lowest in the department's hierarchy, but this does not appear to have been an obstacle in the significant advancement towards the realisation of the idea of a Gypsy national territorial-administrative unit. The decisive factor here was the possibility for a Gypsy activist not to stand outside the party-administrative system, but to act 'from within', as part of that system. This enabled him to use its resources and mechanisms, which significantly changed things.

The appointment of Ivan Tokmakov to the new post was followed by the issuing of the Decree of the Presidium of VTsIK from 01.IV.1932 on the status of work to service toiling Gypsies (GARF, f. P 1235, op. 130, d. 5, l. 38-39). This Decree marks the true beginning of the Soviet Union's purposeful and structured policy towards the Gypsies. Here, for the first time, the idea of creating a separate Gypsy national territorial-administrative unit has crept into the official texts, though carefully worded:

> 1. To propose to the NKzem of the RSFSR to develop and submit to the SNK of the RSFSR a concrete plan for the land management of Gypsy workers for their compact settlement … (Ibid.).

In the same year, 1932, the first concrete step in this direction took place. – A national Gypsy selsoviet was established in the village of Kangly, rayon Mineralnye vody, Stavropol Kray. In this way, Gypsies were ranked among the nationalities that had their own national territorial-administrative units. Dozens of other nationalities in the USSR have been deprived of this opportunity. In spite of the fact that this Gypsy unit was at the lowest possible administrative level, the very fact was already a significant achievement in the desired direction. As chairman of the new Gypsy selsoviet was appointed Mikhail Bezlyudskiy, who was specifically sent to this mission by ON VTsIK. Bezlyudskiy also became chairman of the restructured Gypsy kolkhoz *Trud Romen* (Gypsy Labour), which very soon became a model example of a successful Roma kolkhoz in the public space. At the beginning of 1935, Ivan Tokmakov prepared the above-published Memorandum, in which he substantiated the need for the establishment of a Gypsy territorial-administrative unit. He argued that its creation would accelerate and facilitate the settlement of nomads, and would enable them to concentrate in one place all the efforts and resources. This justification, formulated by Tokmakov, was key in all subsequent steps of the Soviet institutions in this direction; it was also the leading one in all letters sent by Gypsy activists to the highest Soviet institutions. And, more importantly, there is no hint in any of the case files that Tokmakov was performing the tasks assigned to him by his principals. On the contrary, it is clear that it was him who initiated the process in the frame of his office duties (GARF, f. P 3316, op. 28, d. 793; d. 794). So, in this case, there is every reason to speak of an initiative that came from the Gypsy elite, which received an understanding and support from the Soviet state.

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In fact, the event that had the strongest impact on Roma activists was the creation of a Jewish Autonomous Region within the RSFSR, located in the Far East, in an almost uninhabited region with no local Jewish population. It became clear that the Soviet state was able to initiate and create territorial-administrative units for diasporic nationalities who, de facto, had no common territory of settlement. This proved to be a model not only for Gypsies but also for other such nationalities, e.g. for Assyrians who also made steps in this direction (GARF, f. P 3316, op. 64, d. 1637).

The justification of the necessity to create a Gypsy national territorial-administrative unit was not only linked with the need to terminate the Gypsies' nomadic way of life. In a letter dated 08.10.1935 addressed to the ON VTsIK the Gypsy nomads in Udmurt Autonomous Soviet Socialist Republic outlined additional reasons why they believed they should have their own administrative unit:

> And also in order for the Gypsies to maintain their nationality, as such, [...] we ask to allocate a piece of land for the territory of the Gypsy republic, oblast, or, as a last resort, okrug (GARF, f. P 1235, op. 130, d. 5, l. 80-81).

These reasons are presented in a much more detailed form in the letter of G. M. Andreev, according to which, allocating an area for Gypsy settlement was a way to solve the numerous existing issues in regard to achieving the policy of the Soviet state towards Gypsies and, in particular, the problems of creation of organisational framework for Gypsy activism (GARF, f. P 1235, op. 130, d. 5).

Gypsy activists were well aware of the problems associated with the establishment of a Gypsy national territorial-administrative unit, so they offered more flexible and long-term actions. The first step would be the establishment of a Gypsy rayon which would grow into an oblast and even into a Republic. Some activists went as far as proposing deadlines for the implementation of these plans for the creation of a Gypsy national rayon, linked to the more general plans for the development of the USSR. So, for example, Ilya Gerasimov, instructor in the Oblispolkom of the Western Oblast with the center of Smolensk wrote:

> It is necessary to fulfill the political tasks of the second five-year plan – the construction of a classless socialist society, so that by the end of the second five-year plan [1937 – authors note] there will be not a single person outside a toiling settled life. (GARF, f. P 3316, op. 28, d. 794).

The same logic followed Soviet institutions, engaged with this process, and especially structures of the VTSIK and the TsIK. The main coordinator of this bureaucratic process, requiring coordination between different agencies, was Alexander Khatskevich, at that time Secretary of the SN TsIK. We will not go into all the details of the vastness of the file, but we will sketch the main points of the process. In 1935, a circular request was sent to the subjects of the RSFSR through the structures of the VPK at the SNK USSR with the question whether they were able to provide vacant land for the compact settlement of Gypsy nomads, for the purpose of sedentarisation (GARF, f. P 1235,

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op. 130, d. 5). The answers received were diverse. Some of the local authorities (e.g. North Caucasus kray, Azov-Black Sea kray, Crimean ASSR) were adamant that they have no vacant land. Others, on the contrary, offered such lands, e.g. Gorky kray, offered land in the Mari ASSR (which belonged to it at that time), or in Omsk region (where the land offered was in the Ostyako-Vogul district, today the Khanty-Mansi Autonomous Okrug). However, these proposals were considered inappropriate due to severe climatic conditions. West Siberian Territory bound the provision of vacant land in the Chisto-Ozerskiy rayon (today in the Altai Kray) with the need to receive additional budgetary investments (Ibid.). For his part, Ilya Gerasimov, using his administrative position, proposed the Western Oblast, justifying it with the presence in the area of an already prepared primary structure – Gypsy kolkhozes, schools and, most importantly, with the availability of prepared cadres, Communists and Komsomol members with respective education, who "can fully provide management of the allotted territory" (GARF, f. P 3316, op. 28, d. 794, l. 169-172). After discussing the received proposals, a commission was set up at the ON VTsIK, which included Ivan Tokmakov, whose task was to select

> rayons in which it would be expedient to concentrate the toiler nomadic Gypsy population for their transition to sedentary way of life (GARF, f. P 1235, op. 130, d. 5).

Ultimately, as most feasible was defined the proposal of the West Siberian kray. Narkomzem sent there a complex expedition to investigate several locations that were proposed by local authorities as suitable. These were in the present-day Altai Kray and the Kemerovo oblast – the Charyshskiy, Soloneshskiy, Altai, Kondomskiy, and Mrasso-Kondomskiy rayons (GARF, f. P 1235, op. 130, d. 9). The correspondence between the Narkomzem and the local authorities shows that definitive decision had not been reached and evasive expressions continued to be used, such as

> "the materials gathered during the research trips are insufficient", "due to the question being put in are too general … no fully grounded conclusions can be drawn", etc. (Ibid.).

Finally, with the Decree of the Presidium of the VTsIK on 12.10.1935 VPK was entitled to release funds for new research with the ordinance to "seek area for the settlement of toiling Gypsies in compact masses" (GARF, f. P 3316, op. 28, d. 793).

In such a situation, the Consultative Meeting of SN TsIK USSR was convened on 04-05.01.1936, the Minutes from which are published above. As seen from the speeches of the participants in the Conference they welcomed the decision to create a national Gypsy rayon but did not commit to determining its location, because different institutions had different preferences. In his concluding speech, Alexander Khatskevich listed various options, but his preference apparently was the North Caucasus kray, where ON VTsIK already delegated Mikhail Bezlyudskiy for the creation of the first Gypsy selsoviet and for the strengthening of the kolkhoz *Trud Romen* (Gypsy Labour), i.e. to lay the foundations for a future national Gypsy rayon.

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Although the decisions taken at the Meeting at the Department of Nationalities at TsIK USSR were not announced in the Soviet press, a few days after it being held, a brief announcement appeared in the Western press: "An autonomous gipsy republic is to be set up in the Soviet Union, where gipsies will be settled and develop their own culture. – Reuter". (Sunday Express, 1936, p. 2). In all likelihood, there was a press release for foreign correspondents accredited in the USSR, i.e. the Soviet state was preparing a propaganda campaign aimed for those abroad to show the achievements of Soviet national policy.

However, the processes in this direction were neither simple nor easy. Immediately after the Consultative Meeting, Ivan Tokmakov fulfilled its decision and prepared the Draft of the Decree of the Presidium of VTsIK, published above. Following his discussion at the SN TsIK Presidium Meeting on February 16, 1936, it was decided after some revision to submit it for approval (Постановление, 1936, pp. 89-91). During this time, Alexander Khatskevich actively lobbied the Soviet institutions for the urgent adoption of this Decree. In his a letter to the TsIK Chairman Mikhail Kalinin, with a copy to the SNK USSR, he proposed that the Decree be jointly adopted by the TsIK and the SNK, which would increase its importance and accelerate its implementation. He reasoned:

> It is of utmost importance to adopt this decree just at this time, when in the capitalist countries, the 'Big suffocate the Small', in order to emphasise this exceptional care of the great Soviet Union, the Lenin-Stalin Party in relation to the small and in the past the most backward nationalities such as the Gypsies. (GARF, f. P 1235, op. 123, d. 27, f. 10).

Despite the intercession of Khatskevich the SNK USSR preferred not to engage directly with the case and, on April 7, 1936 Presidium of the TsIK USSR adopted a Decree *On Measures on the employment of nomads and the improvement of economic and cultural services for toiler Gypsies* (О мероприятиях, 1936, p. 87). In this Decree, however, some important changes had been made compared to the original project. On the one hand, it included a number of affirmative measures to support the work of Gypsy kolkhozes and artels. On the other hand, the issue of the creation of a Gypsy national rayon had been moved to a backward position.

In the adopted Decree, instead of "one of the rayons within the RSFSR for compact settlement of toiler Gypsies" (as in the Draft, see 12.4.7.), another, much more open sentence was used:

> 4. Approving the actions of the VTsIK on the allocation of special rayons for the development of kolkhozes of settling Gypsies, instruct the All-Union Resettlement Committee to outline the appropriate locations for settlement by nomadic Gypsies who wish to move to a settled way of life within two months, ensuring that newly created Gypsy kolkhozes receive tax relief. (Ibid.).

At first glance, the change is insignificant (instead of one 'rayon' there is already an unspecified number of 'rayons'), but it is extremely important because it reflects the

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existing contradictions between the positions of TsIK and NKVD on the issue of Gypsy autonomy, which find their expression in the policy pursued in this direction.

In 1936, several more important events took place that had a strong impact on the establishment of a Gypsy national territorial-administrative unit. In the course of a nationwide discussion concerning the new Constitution of the USSR (the so-called Stalin Constitution, adopted on December 5, 1936) a proposal for the creation of a Gypsy autonomous oblast, published above, appeared in the press. The authors of this proposal cannot be identified (different hypotheses are possible in this regard), but Gypsy activists used the opportunity to express their support for the idea in public.

At that time, the head of NKVD became Nikolay Yezhov and the office was restructured, greatly expanding its functions, including assuming those of OGPU and of other administratiove structures. The All-Union Resettlement Committee was also transformed and, on July 22, 1936, it became the Resettlement Department of the NKVD. Thus, in the end, the task of creating a Gypsy autonomous unit became a task that had to be realised by the NKVD. This led to some significant discrepancies in the scale and pace of work, reflecting the different positions of the TsIK USSR and NKVD, which were not strategic, but tactical. The NKVD did not object in principle to the creation of such a unit, but adhered to a more realistic and pragmatic approach: to set smaller control figures for the number of sedentarised Gypsies, to create several Gypsy rayons in different places in order to approve the methodology, to see the results, etc. Once more, new regions for the settlement of Gypsies started to be discussed, e.g. Kuybyshev, Gorky, Kirov krays, etc., including even the Ukrainian and Byelorussian Soviet Republics (GARF, f. P 1235, op. 123, d. 27).

Formally speaking, the process of creating a Gypsy autonomy was led by TsIK USSR and VTsIK, which finds its expression in the repeated insistences of the ON VTsIK to speed up the process and "to instruct the NKVD Resettlement Division to determine the territory as soon as possible and practically begin to populate it with Gypsies who are travelling in the RSFSR" (GARF, f. P 1235, op. 130, d. 5). Despite the more cautious approach, the NKVD took its task seriously. With the help of its representatives, inspectors to the Resettlement Department, a wide range of activities were conducted in the countryside, including state inspections of the Gypsy kolkhozes, assisting the local authorities in their land allocation, etc. (RGAE, f. 5675, op. 1, d. 143; d. 144; d. 148; d. 149; d. 151; d. 152; d. 157). Attempts were even made (though unsuccessfully) to organise the creation of a new Gypsy selsoviet near the Gypsy kolkhoz, *Nevi baxt* (New Happiness) in Kuybyshev kray (RGAE, f. 5675, op. 1, d. 146). An important aspect of the work of the NKVD was the construction of new homes for the kolkhoz members, and for this purpose, they provided special trains with timber, cut in the camps of the GULAG (RGAE, f. 5675, op. 1, d. 147; d. 179), i.e. it comes down to the sinister historical irony of the NKVD was using GULAG's resources to build housing for the Gypsies.

A historical puzzle that has not yet been answered is also linked to the activities of the NKVD targeting Gypsies during this period. According to published material from the oral history of the Sikachev family in Moscow, in the winter of 1937, a large group of

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Gypsy nomads was deported to Siberia, from Moscow and its neighbouring regions. In Siberia, in the region of Taiga Station (today in Kemerovo Region), this group, together with deported Gypsies from other regions (a total of 340 families or about 1 800 people), established a Gypsy kolkhoz, headed by Alexander Sikachev (1909-1983) which by the end of the year broke down and the Gypsies shun away (Калинин, 2005, pp. 45-47). We have also heard variants of this story during our past fieldwork research in Ivanovo and Kiev.

At first glance, everything in this story seems highly plausible. However, research and searches both in the central archives in Moscow, from where Gypsies had supposedly been deported, and in regional archives in Western Siberia (Novosibirsk, Kemerovo, Tomsk), found no documentary evidence which could verify the whole story. It is difficult to judge, whether this is a case of secondary emerged quasi-history, or a reminiscence of the memory of real events, such as the deportation of Gypsies from Moscow in 1933 (for more details see below). The third option – that all documentation of the incident had been destroyed – seems the least likely. The question remains open until (possible) new evidence is found. Unconfirmed by any historical evidence is the claim made by a non-historian, about proposals to create a Gypsy autonomous region that "to be called Romanestan" (Lemon, 2000, p. 133; 2001, p. 228; Klímová-Alexander, 2005a, p. 164). It cannot be taken seriously as the term 'Romanestan' was never used in the documents and publications of the early USSR.

In the late 1930s, an extremely important and significant turning point took place in the overall national policy of the USSR. On December 1, 1937, the Organizing Bureau at the Central Committee of the TsK VKP(b) revised the question *On the liquidation of national rayons and selsoviets* and found it "inappropriate to continue the existence of both special national rayons and selsoviets" (RGASPI, f. 17, op. 114, d. 633, l. 3-4); the relevant decision of the Politburo at the TsK VKP(b) on this issue was adopted on December 17, 1937 (RGASPI, f. 17, op. 3, d. 1006, l. 39-40).

In this situation, the issue of the establishment of a national Gypsy territorial-administrative unit was eliminated, and all activities in this direction were discontinued. Soon after that, the Second World War began. After the war, in the new post-war realities, everyone forgot about the existence of a Gypsy selsoviet in the Kangly village. Ironically, this selsoviet was not officially closed until June 12, 1952 (!), when Gypsies no longer lived there (since the time of the war and German occupation) (GARF, f. A 385, op. 17, d. 2037).

As is clear from what has been presented above, the attempt to create a Gypsy Autonomous Republic in the USSR, initiated by Gypsy activists, ultimately failed. This failure, however, cannot be explained as a repressive measure of the Soviet state directed against the Gypsies, because all the factualities of the events show that the reasons for this end result were not the reluctance of the Soviet authorities to pursue this 'Gypsy dream'. On the contrary, the state actions in this regard were emphatically affirmative. The real reasons for this failure lie in the general historical, social and political context, within which the creation of Gypsy autonomy was a very minor element in the context of the general problems to be solved by the Soviet state during this period. Whether the failure of the plans to create a Gypsy autonomous republic was for the good or bad of the

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Roma in the USSR can no longer be judged today. Similarly, the question of how the creation of a 'Gypsy state' within the USSR would influence the movement for Roma civic emancipation on a global scale can also be only a subject of alternative history, which is already a completely different genre.

Elena Marushiakova and Vesselin Popov

12.5 (Auto)Biographies

12.5.1 *Andrey Taranov*

Здравствуйте, товарищ Саткевич!

Получил Ваше хорошее письмо, которое произвело на меня отрадное впечатление. Чувствуется, что писал письмо грамотный человек.

Пхенава чачипэ, мэ восхишен коли гинав тыро лыл прэ романы чиб. Мэ кердя буты дрэ романо редакция, бут джиндём манушен савэ сотрудничали дрэ романо журнало "Романы зоря" и "Нэво дром".

Шукар джинав Коля Панковонэс, саво бут лачипэ кердя Ваш романы литература. Джиндём Саша Германо, Миша Безлюдскона – мануш древан даровито и бут ваврэн. На адякэ машкир амендэ никон начиндя грамотно прэ романэ чиб, сыр ту, Коля.

Коля (прошу не обижайтесь, что я Вас так просто называю), я переписываюсь с Мишей Безлюдским, он мне писал про Вас. Недавно начал переписываться с будущим историком – Володей Иващенко, который сообщил про Вашу деятельность. Вот жду, когда Володя приедет ко мне, буду рад с ним познакомиться и побеседовать.

Очень рад, что наши начинания 20-30 годов продолжают развиваться. В этой большой работе, тов[арищ] Саткевич, ваша большая заслуга.

Вы сумели убедить местные органы в необходимости организации цыганской школы – интерната. Действительно организованная Вами школа является в настоящее время первой и единственной в СССР.

Я чувствую, что Вы на этом не остановитесь.

До [Второй мировой] войны, по делам службы, мне приходилось бывать в Белоруссии и в частности в Витебске, там тогда существовал цыганский дет[ский] интернат, заведующим был учитель-цыган, фамилии его я не помню, он толковый человек. Если Вы его знаете, прошу сообщите о нем, жив ли он, и чем он занимается.

Коротко сообщаю о себе: родился в 1896 году в семье цыган сэрвы, в прошлом Курской губернии, отец мой занимался кузнечным делом.

До 10 лет кочевал вместе с родителями, и благодаря моей матери (она была русская) [и] ее влиянием на отца, стали жить оседло.

В 1913 г. работал со старшим братом кузнецом вагоно-ремонтных ж[елезно]-д[орожных] мастерских ст[анции] Отрожка, Воронежской обл[асти]. В 1915 году был призван в Царскую армию, был на фронте. В феврале 1918 возвратился домой, а в

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апреле вместе с другими товарищами, в городе Короче участвовал в формировании кавалерийского дивизиона по борьбе с контрреволюцией и бандами.

В начале 1919 года наш дивизион кавалерийский вошел в состав 11 Кав[алерийской] Дивизии 1-ой Конной Армии С. М. Буденного, в составе которой принимал участие в боях за Касторное, Дебальцево, Ростов на Дону, против белогвардейцев деникинской армии.

В 1920 году участвовал в составе этой же дивизии на польском фронте Львовском направлении. Был ранен шашкой в правую руку, после чего стал инвалидом гражданской войны.

После возвращения из госпиталя продолжал служить в своем кав[алерийском] полку в качестве политрука эскадрона, участвовал в разгроме банд Махно, [Булак]-Балаховича, басмачества в Средней Азии.

В 1922 г. политотделом 11 Кавдивизии был направлен в г. Москву на учёбу в Коммунистический Университет трудящихся Востока (КУТВ). В 1925 г. по окончании КУТВа ЦК ВКП(б) оставил меня на организационной работе среди цыган. В конце 1925 г. Указом правительства был создан Всероссийский Союз цыган, где и работал председателем Союза до его ликвидации. В 1930 г. была создана цыганская редакция журнала "Романы зоря", а после "Нэво дром" при Центр[альном] издательстве народов СССР, работал ответственным редактором.

При моем непосредственном участии, вместе с Колей Панковым, был поднят перед Министерством просвещения вопрос о создании цыганской письменности.

В этом вопросе принимал участие нарком А. В. Луначарский.

Была создана комиссия по разработке основы шрифта. В комиссию входили: Панков Н. А., профессор Сергиевский Макс[им] В., Вентцель Татьяна В. (лингвист, работала в БСЭ), и [еще один] профессор МГУ (фамилии его не помню). В 1931 г. вместе с другими тов[арищами] организовывал цыганск[ий] театр и по совмест[ительству] был директором театра.

После ликвидации цыганской редакции в 1934 г. незначительное время работал в ЦК партии Киргизии, а затем директором табачного совхоза "Киргизия". В 1937 г., когда в правительстве возник вопрос о создании цыганского района, я был отозван из Киргизии в Москву и работал в Переселенческом Комитете при Совнархозе СССР в качестве уполномоченного по трудоустройству цыган.

Осуществлению, важного исторического значения, создания цыганского района, помещала война и .... *ваврэ рэнда*.

В 1944 году Министерство Пищевой промышленности направило меня в Молдавию, на работу в качестве директора табачного завода, который был разрушен немцами и приходилось его восстанавливать.

В 1948 году работал в Резинском райкоме партии Молдавии, затем работал зав[едующим] рай[онным] отделом соц[иального] обеспечения. С 1950 г. по состоянию здоровья не работаю, стал персональным пенсионером.

Да, чуть не упустил сообщить, что член КПСС я с 1922 года.

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Окэ саро. Чин мангэ лыла, буду очень рад. *Яв састыпэ и бахталэс.*

Привет вам от моей дочери Ляли и внуков Сережи и Андрюши. Посылаю свою фотокарточку, точно не помню когда фотографировался, приблизительно [19]29-30 годы. Память чертовски меня подводит, стал много забывать.

А. Таранов [подпись].
2.VIII.1964.

∴

Hello, comrade Satkevich! [1]

I received Your good letter, which made a pleasant impression on me. It felt as if the letter was written by an educated person.

I tell you sincerely, I admire you, reading your letter in Romani. I worked in the Romani editing field, I knew a lot of people, who collaborated on the Romani journals "Romany zorya" and "Nevo drom".

I know well Kolya Pankovo, who did a lot of good things for Romani literature. I new Sasha Germano, Misha Buzlyudsko – a very talented man, and many others. But none among us could write in Romani with as good a spelling as you do, Kolya [2].

Kolya (please do not feel offended of my informal way of addressing), I am corresponding with Misha Bezlyudskiy, he wrote to me about You. Recently I began to correspond with the future historian – Volodya Ivashchenko [3], who informed me about Your activity. Now I am waiting when Volodya will come to me, I will be glad to meet him personally and talk to him.

I am very glad that our initiatives of the 1920s and 1930s continue to develop. In this great work, comrade Satkevich, is your great merit.

You succeeded to convince the local authorities of the need to organize a Gypsy boarding school. Indeed, the school you have organised is now the first and only one in the USSR [4].

I feel like You're not going to stop there.

Before the Second World War, I had to visit Belarus on business and, in particular, in Vitebsk, where the boarding school for Gypsy children existed at that time, its head was a teacher, a Gypsy, whose surname I don't remember [5], he is an intelligent person. If You know him, please tell me if he is alive and what he does.

I tell you briefly about myself:

I was born in 1896 in a family of Gypsies Servi, in the former Kursk governorate, my father was engaged in blacksmithing.

Until I was 10 years of age I roamed together with parents, and thanks to my mother (she was a Russian), under her influence on my father, we have become settled.

In 1913 I worked with my older brother, as a blacksmith in the wagon-repair workshops at the railway station Otrozhka, Voronezh oblast. In 1915 I was enlisted into the Tsarist army and I was at the front. In February 1918, I returned back home and in April, along

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with other comrades, in the town of Korocha, I participated in the formation of the cavalry subdivision for combating counter-revolutionaries and bandits.

In early 1919, our cavalry subdivision became a part of 11th cavalry Division in the 1st Cavalry Army of Semyon M. Budyonny, and we took part in the battle for Kastornoye, Debaltsevo, Rostov-on-Don, against the white guards of Denikin's army.

In 1920 I participated in the same division's actions on the Polish front, heading in Lviv direction. I was wounded with a sword in my right hand, and then I became a disabled veteran of the Civil War.

After returning from the hospital I continued to serve in the same cavalry regiment as a political leader of the squadron, participated in the defeat of bandits of Nestor Makhno, Stanisław Bułak-Bałachowicz, Basmachi movement in Central Asia.

In 1922, the political Department of the 11th cavalry division sent me to Moscow to study at the Communist University of the Toilers of the East. In 1925, after graduation, I was sent by the TSK of the VKP(b) on the organisational work among the Gypsies. At the end of 1925, the All-Russian Union of Gypsies was created by a decree of the Government; and I worked as the Chairman of the Union before its liquidation. In 1930, the Gypsy edition of the magazine *Romany zorya* was created, and later *Nevo drom* at the Tsentrizdat, where I worked as an Executive Editor.

With my direct participation, together with Kolya Pankov, the question of the creation of Gypsy writing was raised before the Ministry of Education.

In this matter, Narkom Anatoliy V. Lunacharskiy took part.

A Commission was set up to develop the basis of the alphabet. The Committee included: Nikolay A. Pankov, professor Maxim V. Sergievskiy, Tatiana V. Wentzel (linguist, worked in the Great Soviet Encyclopedia), and another Professor of Moscow State University (I cannot remember his surname). In 1931 together with other comrades, I organised Gypsy Theatre and I was the Director of the theatre.

After the liquidation of the Gypsy editorial board in 1934 for a short time, I worked in the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Kyrgyzstan, and then as the Director of the tobacco sovkhoz *Kyrgyzstan*. In 1937, when the government raised the issue of creating a Gypsy rayon, I was recalled from Kyrgyzstan to Moscow and worked as the Plenipotentiary for the employment of Gypsies in the Resettlement Committee at the Sovnarkhoz USSR [6].

The process of the establishment of the Gypsy district, a plan of very important historical significance, failed because of the war and … *other things* [7].

In 1944, the Ministry of Food Industry sent me to Moldova to work as a Director of a tobacco factory, which was destroyed by the Germans in the wartime and had to be restored.

In 1948 I worked in Rezina district's Committee of Communist Party of Moldova, then I worked as a Head of the regional Department of social security. Since 1950 – because of health reasons – I have not been working anymore, being a personal pensioner [8].

Oh, I almost forgot to inform you that I am a member of the Communist party since 1922.

That is all. Write me letters, I will be very glad. *Leave with health and luck*.

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Greetings to you from my daughter, Lyalya, and grandchildren Sergey and Andrey. I send my photo, I do not remember exactly when I was photographed, in circa 1929-30. My memory is failing me terribly, I started to forget a lot.

A. Taranov [signature].
02.08.1964.

Notes

1. The published text is a letter sent on 02.08.1964 by Andrey Taranov to Nikolay Satkevich.
2. Text in Italics is written in Romani language.
3. The reference here is to Vladimir I. Ivashchenko – a graduate of history education, a teacher in Rostov-on-Don, author of a book on the history of Gypsies in the USSR (Иващенко, 2011).
4. This refers to the boarding school for Gypsy children organised by the local authorities in Irkutsk in 1963 following Nikolai Satkevich's suggestion, and run by him, which functioned until 1965.
5. The reference here is to Petr I. Mikholazhin (1908-1943) – director of the Gypsy School in Vitebsk (Belarusian SSR), killed as a soldier in the Soviet Army during the Second World War (Банк данных, 2019).
6. At that time, Sovnarkhozes no longer existed (closed in 1932); in fact, A. Taranov was, for a short time, attracted to the VPK at SNK USSR, in the summer of 1936 (РГАЭ, ф. 5675, оп. 1, д. 160, л. 4-5) and, from 1937 he worked as an inspector in the Resettlement Department of the NKVD (РГАЭ, ф. 5675, оп. 1, д. 179, л. 36-38).
7. The allusion "*vavre renda*" (other things) in Romani language is with hidden significance. In this case, that means Taranov wouldn't write about some important details in his letter.
8. The title 'personal pensioner' in the USSR means that its holder receives the so-called 'personal pension' (hierarchised at three levels – local, republican and union), which was given to retired persons for "exceptional contribution to the construction of the Soviet state". The holders of this title received individual pension supplements and several privileges in the field of communal services, health services, public transport, and even received special food bonuses on respective holidays. The name of Andrey Taranov is not present in the lists of pensioners of union and republican significance, i.e. his personal pension is at the lowest, local level.

Source: LANB, f. Николай Саткевич.
Prepared for publication by Elena Marushiakova and Vesselin Popov.
Translated by Viktor Shapoval.

12.5.2 *Nikolay Pankov*

Автобиография
Николая Александровича Панкова

Родился я в Петербурге (ныне Ленинград) 20 (7) мая 1895 г. в цыганской семье.

Род мой со стороны отца был оседлым уже более столетия. Мой прадед Михаил Архипович Панков обосновался в Новгороде и всю свою жизнь прожил там в Никольской слободе. Сын его (мой отец) перебрался в Петербург, где и проживал он и весь его род.

Род матери, Екатерины Ильиничны, урожденной Никканен, вел кочевой образ жизни (Швеция, Финляндия). Отец матери обосновался в Петербурге, кочуя лишь в летние месяцы под Петербургом и по чухонским и эстонским деревням.

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Отец мой, по обычаю большинства цыган того времени, был барышником, занимался куплей-продажей и меной лошадей; умер в 1913 году. Мать занята была лишь домом и детьми; умерла в 1952 г.

Я систематического образования не получил. После того, как я окончил начальную церковно-приходскую школу, куда попал самостоятельно, без помощи родителей, родители совершенно сериозно считали меня "ученым" человеком.

В 1910 г. я поступил работать "мальчиком" на Главный Телеграф и настойчиво занимался самообразованием, читая книги и нащупывая метод для освоения русского языка. На работу поступил я не в поисках средств к существованию, а в поисках иного пути жизни.

К 1912 г. я овладел русским языком настолько, что мог заниматься "интеллигентным" трудом и работал уже в конторе у одного из петербургских нотариусов.

К этому времени я был читателем в библиотеке на "три книги" (одна новая, две старых) и своим человеком среди мелких книготорговцев в книжной "толкучке", а также не пропускал ни одной публичной лекции. Вскоре создается почва для конфликта обеспокоенного отца с сыном, уходящим из-под власти традиций. Но в декабре 1913 года отец умер, а я продолжаю свой путь трудовой жизни и интеллектуального развития одиночки-самоучки.

После 1918 г. я работал в канцеляриях, и в школе педагогом, и в детском доме воспитателем (Ленинград).

После 1922 г., с переездом на жительство в Москву, я работал на заводах "Динамо" им. С. М. Кирова, Станкостроительном им. С. Орджоникидзе, Мотозаводе.

Подорвав здоровье и силы, я с 1942 года стал инвалидом труда 2-ой группы. Но после того, как прошел острый период болезни, чтобы продолжать работу, я отказался от 2-ой группы инвалидности, перешел на 3-ю группу и несколько лет до 1953 г. подвизался на положении ночного сторожа.

Наряду с работой на промышленных предприятиях, начиная с 1924-25 гг., в группе с культурными цыганами-партизанами (А. С. Таранов, И. П. Токмаков) стал работать среди цыган в целях привлечения кочующих цыган к труду, оседлости и культуре. (И[ван] П. Токмаков во время [Великой] Отечественной войны, имея под 60 лет, и все данные по положению и возрасту не участвовать в войне, отправился на фронт добровольцем и в 1942 г. погиб замученным в плену.)

Мною были созданы первые цыганские буквари для взрослых и детей и первые учебники по литературе. Рядом с составлением учебной литературы я занимался переводом на цыганский язык общественно-политической и русской классической литературы и был одним из создателей цыганской журналистики. В журнале "Романы зоря" (Цыганская заря), позже получившем название "Нэво дром" (Новый путь), появлялись мои очерки и стихи. Я же являлся в нем литературным редактором.

При создании цыганского педагогического техникума (потом училища) в Москве мне единодушно всем цыганским активом было предложено занять место

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преподавателя цыганского языка. В этом училище я работал с основания до закрытия (1933-1938 гг.).

Проф. М. В. Сергиевский и акад[емик] А. П. Баранников при издании в 1938 г. своего цыганско-русского словаря пригласили меня к участию в их коллективе в качество редактора.

При создании цыганской литературы я включился в работу по переводам, сознавая всю важность этого дела для языка, входящего в новую фазу своего развития. Переводы помогли мне узнать возможности своего родного языка и найти пути для создания своего литературного стиля. Переводы являются испытанием и неизбежным этапом у всех народов при их пробуждении к новой жизни. Я чувствовал также настоятельную необходимость ознакомить цыганский народ, хотя бы в переводах, с великой русской классической литературой и с работами классиков марксизма-ленинизма. Моя литературная и педагогическая работа получила признание со стороны цыганских масс и специалистов языковедов.

В 1930-х гг. Английское общество по изучению цыган, по рекомендации советского академика А. П. Баранникова, пригласило меня через ВОКС [Всесоюзное общество культурной связи с заграницей] вступить в члены этого общества.

В 1944 г. по рекомендации М. В. Сергиевского и С. С. Игнатова я был принят в члены Союза Советских Писателей.

∵

Autobiography of Nikolay Alexanderovich Pankov

I was born in St Petersburg (now Leningrad) on May 20 (7) [1], 1895 in a Gypsy family.

My clan from my father's side has been settled for more than a century. My great-grandfather Mikhail Arkhipovich Pankov has dwelled in Novgorod and spent his entire life there in Nikolskaya Sloboda. His son (my father) moved to St Petersburg, where he lived along all his relatives.

My mother's clan, Ekaterina Ilyinichna, nee Nikkanen, led a nomadic life (Sweden, Finland). My mother's father settled in St Petersburg, wandering only in the summer months near St Petersburg and in Finnic and Estonian villages.

My father, according to the custom of most Gypsies of that time, was a horse-dealer, engaged in the sale and exchange of horses; died in 1913. My mother was occupied only with the home and children, died in 1952.

I didn't get a systematic education. After I graduated from the primary parish school, where I got on my own, without the help of my parents, my parents absolutely considered me an "educated" person.

In 1910 I went to work as a "boy" at the Main Telegraph and persistently engaged in self-education, reading books and seeking for a method for developing my Russian language. I did not go to work in search of a livelihood but in search of a different way of life.

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By 1912, I had mastered the Russian language so much that I could do "intelligent" work and started to work in the office of one of the St Petersburg notaries.

By this time, I was a reader in the library for "three books" (one new, two old) and a familiar man among the small booksellers in the book "flea market", and did not miss a single public lecture. Soon the ground was created for the conflict of the concerned father with the son escaping from the power of traditions. But in December 1913 my father died, and I continued my path of working life and intellectual development of an individual autodidact.

After 1918 I worked in offices, and at a school as a teacher, and in an orphanage as a tutor (Leningrad).

After 1922, when I moved to Moscow, I worked at the *Dynamo* plant named after S. M. Kirov, and a Machine-tool plant named after S. Ordzhonikidze, Motor plant.

With undermining health and strength, in 1942 I became a disabled worker of the 2nd group. But after the acute phase of the disease, in order to continue work, I refused the 2nd group of disability, was moved to the 3rd group, and for some years after that, until 1953, I worked in the position of a night watchman.

Along with work at industrial enterprises, since 1924-1925, in the group with cultural Gypsy party activists (Andrey S. Taranov, Ivan P. Tokmakov) I began to work among Gypsies in order to attract nomadic Gypsies to work, settlement and culture. (Ivan P. Tokmakov, during the [Great] Patriotic War [2], being almost 60 years old, and having all the reasons of his status and age not to participate in the war, nevertheless, he went to the front as a volunteer and, in 1942, died after being tortured in captivity.)

I created the first Gypsy ABC books for adults and children and the first textbooks on literature [3]. Along with the preparation of educational literature, I was engaged in the translation into the Gypsy language of social-political and Russian classical literature [4] and was one of the founders of Gypsy journalism. My essays and poems appeared in the journal *Romany zorya* (Gypsy Dawn), later called *Nevo drom* (New Way). I was also the literary editor there [5].

When creating a Gypsy Pedagogical College (later a School) [6] in Moscow, I was unanimously invited by all the Gypsy activists to take the place of the Gypsy language teacher there. In this school, I worked from its foundation until its closing (1933-1938).

Professor Mikhail V. Sergievskiy, and Academician [7] Alexey P. Barannikov, when publishing his Gypsy-Russian dictionary in 1938, invited me to participate in their team as an editor [8].

During the creation of Gypsy literature, I became involved in the work of translation, aware of the importance of this process for the language entering a new phase of its development. Translations helped me to learn the possibilities of my native language and find ways to create my own literary style. Translations are a test and an inevitable stage for all peoples when they awaken to a new life. I also felt an urgent need to acquaint the Gypsy people, at least in translations, with the great Russian classical literature and with the works of the classics of Marxism-Leninism. My literary and pedagogical work has received recognition from Gypsy masses and professionals.

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In the 1930s, the English Gypsy Lore Society, on the recommendation of the Soviet Academician Alexey P. Barannikov, invited me through the All-Union Society for Cultural Relations with Foreign Countries to become a member of this society.

In 1944, on the recommendation of the Mikhail V. Sergievskiy and Sergey S. Ignatov [9] I was accepted as a member at the Union of Soviet Writers.

Notes

1. Both dates are according to Gregorian and Julian calendars.
2. Great Patriotic War is the term of designation for the Second World War in the Soviet Union.
3. Дударова, Н. А. & Панково, Н. А. (1928). *Нэво дром* (*букварё*). Москва: Центриздат. The list of publications of Nikolay Pankov see in Annex I – Romani Language Publications.
4. Three books by Alexander Pushkin, including the famous narrative poem *Gypsies* (*Roma*), are samples of Russian classical literature which were translated by Nikolay Pankov. Besides, he has translated at least 3 books by Vladimir Lenin and 6 books by Joseph Stalin, but sometimes social-political publications did not have their translator's name listed on the cover, i.e. it is quite possible that he was also a translator of other similar publications in the Romani language.
5. Formally, in the journal *Romany zorya* only the collective Editorial Board was listed; in the journal *Nevo drom* only Andrey Taranov was listed as Executive Editor. In 1932 Alexander German was listed as technical editor and then Alexey Svetlov. However, this does not mean that Nikolay Pankov did not actively participate in the editorial activity of the two journals.
6. There is an inaccurate representation of the names. Initially, in 1932, a Gypsy Department was created at the Pedagogical College of the Krasno Presnensky District named after Timiryazev, which in 1935-1936 transformed into an independent Gypsy Pedagogical College, which existed until 1938 (GARF, f. P 1235, op. 127, d. 8.).
7. Academician (академик) is the highest title in the academic hierarchy in the Soviet Union.
8. It reflected the book: Сергиевский, М. В. & Баранников, А. П. (1938). *Цыганско-русский словарь. Около 10 000 слов с приложением грамматики цыганского языка*. Москва: Государственное издательство иностранных и национальных словарей.
9. Sergey Sergeevich Ignatov (1887-1959) is a famous Soviet theatre and literary critic.

Source: LANB, f. Николай Саткевич.
Prepared for publication by Elena Marushiakova and Vesselin Popov.
Translated by Viktor Shapoval.

12.5.3 *Nina Dudarova*

[Автобиография]

Я родилась в Ленинграде в 1903 году. Моя мать – цыганка пела в цыганском хоре. Отца не помню. Когда мне было пять лет, мать вторично вышла замуж за русского, очень хорошего человека, который относился ко мне как к родной дочери.

Среднюю школу я закончила в 1919 г., педагогическое [образование] – работая в школе, в институте по повышению квалификации учителей. С 1925 года я живу в Москве. В 1925 году был организован Цыганский Союз, который возглавлял цыган, член [Коммунистической] партии А. С. Таранов. В программе культурно-просветительной работе, принятой цыганским союзом, стоял вопрос, об организации школ для цыганских детей в Москве. Наркомпрос и

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партийные организации, поддержали это начинание. Было решено открыть три школы в разных районах Москвы. Мне было поручено организовать школу в Рогожско-Симоновском районе. В 25[-ой] районной школе были отведены две классных комнаты. Я начала составлять список учеников, т.е. ходила по домам, баракам и уговаривала родителей отдать детей в школу. Говорила я с ними на родном языке. Они знали, что я цыганка и относились ко мне с полным доверием. Материальное положение цыган, за редким исключением, было очень тяжелое: детям не в чем было ходить в школу. Пришлось хлопотать о денежной помощи. В этом мы тоже получили поддержку; деньги были отпущены, я закупила одежду, обувь, учебные пособия и в октябре 1925 года школа была открыта. Учеников было около 30 человек. Первый – большой класс, второй – маленький. Мне дали в помощь – русскую учительницу, которая поработав 3 года, ушла, т. к. не знала языка, цыган с их особенностями, и ей было очень трудно работать.

По той же причине закрылись две школы в других районах. Русские учительницы не справились с работой, и ребята разбежались.

В нашей школе было уже четыре класса, и мне пришлось работать на две смены. Дети были живые, любознательные, но крайне недисциплинированные и шумливые. Меня это не пугало. Я знала психологию и особенность цыганских ребят. Знала, что для того, чтобы удержать их и заставить полюбить школу, надо много терпения, педагогической чуткости и выдержки. Занятия сначала велись на русском языке. Урокам я придавала большое значение и тщательно готовилась к ним, чтобы заинтересовать, заставить работать и удержать внимание детей. Постепенно работа налаживалась, дисциплина становилась лучше, ребята стали походить на школьников. Сразу была развернута работа среди родителей. Открытие цыганского клуба "Лолы чергэн" ("Красная звезда"), в котором я была членом правления, очень помогло. Я стала устраивать в клубе беседы на различные темы: педагогические, антирелигиозные, санитарные и др. Клуб выпускал стенгазету. На сцене выступал кружок самодеятельности, который тогда назывался "Синяя блуза", в нем участвовали школьники старших классов. В этих художественных выступлениях были и призыв к труду, к новой жизни, и порицания старого цыганского быта. Родители видели выступление школьников, видели как дети изменились, какой это организованный детский коллектив. Все это действовало на их идеологию, на их мировоззрение. Они стали понимать, что Советская власть зовет их к новой хорошей жизни. Большое внимание я уделяла художественному воспитанию детей. Водила их в театр, в кино, в Третьяковскую галерею. Ставила с ними инсценировки, пьесы, перекладывала свои стихи на музыку. Мои ребята участвовали во всех школьных утренниках. Нас приглашали в Колонный зал Дома Союзов, в Центральный Дом пионеров. Не помню точно в каком году, кажется в 1932 или 1933 наш шеф фабрика "Парижская коммуна", пригласила нас выступить на вечере, посвященном годовщине Октябрьской революции, с инсценировкой "Атася и ададывес" (Вчера и сегодня). Когда мы вошли в зал, то увидели в Президиуме Надежду

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Константиновну Крупскую. Она скоро уехала, плохо себя чувствовала, но начало нашего выступления посмотрела с большим интересом. На всесоюзном слете пионеров (у нас был свой пионерский отряд) ребята видели Максима Горького. Общение с другими детьми, учениками других национальных школ: татарами, армянами, айсорами, латышами, немцами и русскими, конечно, развивало цыганских ребят, воспитывало их в духе интернационализма. Росло новое советское поколение цыган.

Конечно, это было постигнуто не сразу. Были и срывы: мальчики иногда пропускали занятия в школе, потому что ходили на конную. Первое время; в дни религиозных праздников, отсутствовала половина класса. Приходили с невыученными уроками, так как дома "пинэ бравинта", сыс "кошибэн, марибэн" (пили водку, были скандалы и драки). Приходилось идти к родителям, убеждать их и стыдить. Должна сознаться, что я пользовалась большим уважением и даже любовью и взрослых, и детей, а это много значило. Встречая теперь своих бывших учеников, я слышу от них, какое большое значение имела школа для их будущего. Школа росла.

Был уже первый выпуск 4-ого класса. Некоторые пошли в ФЗУ [Фабрично-заводское училище], некоторые пошли учиться дальше. Каждый год был набор новых учеников. Школа крепко вошла в цыганский быт. Слух о нашей школе шел и за пределы Советского союза. К нам приезжали иностранные делегации, нас фотографировали, писали о школе в журналах и газетах. Хорошая статья была в журнале "Народный учитель"... Я получила письмо от одного профессора из Швеции. На конверте было написано: СССР – Москва. Единственной цыганской учительнице. И письмо дошло. Позже, когда были организованы цыганские колхозы, мне писали учителя колхозных цыганских школ Смоленской области, Северного Кавказа. Они спрашивали советов, помощи. В каждом номере журнала "Нэво дром" (Новый путь), я писала о школе, о наших достижениях и недостатках. Писали в журнале в детской страничке и давали свои рисунки мои ученики.

В 1927 году у нас вышел из печати первый цыганский букварь. Авторы: Панков Н. А. и я. Большую помощь нам оказал профессор Сергиевский М. В. и лингвист Венцель Т. В. Они принимали живое участие в создании цыганской литературы.

В 1933 году была выпущена моя грамматика для первого класса, потом мой учебник для взрослых, хрестоматия Панкова Н. А. и другие учебники, список которых я не буду перечислять... Занятия в школе можно было проводить и на родном языке, т. к. даже учебники по географии и естествознанию для IV класса были переведены на цыганский язык. Для изучения русского языка были отведены особые часы. Детскую цыганскую литературу издавал Нацсектор издательства "Молодая гвардия", где я была редактором. Моя жизнь была заполнена до предела: я вела все четыре класса в школе, писала учебники, стихи, статьи в журнал, редактировала, писала рецензии, была членом правления клуба, преподавала литературный цыганский язык в театре "Ромэн", да и не перечислить всего, что тогда делалось. Все мы тогда работали с большим подъемом, радостью, потому, что у нас на глазах рос наш забитый, отсталый народ. Цыгане становились равноправными гражданами

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нашей великой Родины. Многие работали на фабриках, заводах, артелях, создавались колхозы, школы, педтехникум, был детский сад, клуб, театр, книги. Только в нашей стране могли все это получить цыгане и сознание этого придавало нам силы и бодрость в работе. Школа существовала 13 лет. Совершенно неожиданно было в 1938 году распоряжение о закрытии всех национальных школ, клубов, детсадов, редакций, словом всего, что давало возможность расти культуре маленьких национальностей и цыган особенно, с их вековой отсталостью. Школа была закрыта. Многие ребята бросили учиться. Я перешла работать в русскую школу. Я также относилась с любовью к своему делу, потому что люблю свой работу и люблю детей, но самым радостным моим воспоминанием, всегда будут трудные годы моей работы в цыганской школе. Во время войны, когда школы в Москве были закрыты (1941 г.), я работала на заводе "Москабель", копала противотанковые рвы, работала в госпитале; имею даже медаль за оборону Москвы. Когда школы были открыты, я опять пошла учить детей. В 1949 году я была награждена в Кремле орденом "Знак почета".

Вот вся история моей жизни. Начатое нами дело еще не окончено. Нечего скрывать, что положение цыган и сейчас еще как темное пятно на светлом и радостном фоне нашего настоящего. Вы, наша смена, помните, что цыгане это тоже дети нашей великой Родины и жить они должны также, как все люди нашей страны, а не быть ее пасынками. Этого надо добиваться, но для этого надо много и упорно работать.

Н[ина] Дударова.

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[Autobiography]

I was born in Leningrad in 1903 [1]. My mother was a Gypsy singer who sang in the Gypsy choir. My father, I do not remember him. When I was five years old, my mother remarried a very good Russian man who treated me like his own daughter.

I graduated from high school in 1919, my teaching education was at the Institute for advanced training of teachers. I graduated from it while working in the school. Since 1925 I live in Moscow. In 1925 the Gypsy Union was organised, which was headed by a Gypsy, a member of the Communist Party Andrey S. Taranov. The program of cultural and educational work adopted by the Gypsy Union [2], stressed on the question about the organisation of schools for Gypsy children in Moscow. Narkompros and the Party organisations supported this initiative. It was decided to open three schools in different parts of Moscow. I was entrusted to organize the school in Rogozhsko-Simonovskiy district. In this district, in school No. 25, two classrooms were given to us [3]. I began to make a list of students, i.e. to visit the houses, barracks and persuaded parents to send their children to school. I spoke to them in our native language. They knew I was a Gypsy woman and they trusted me. The financial situation of the Gypsies, with a rare exception, was very

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difficult: the children had nothing to wear to go to school. I had to plead for financial help. In this we also received support; the money was released, I bought clothes, shoes, textbooks and in October 1925 the school was opened. There were about 30 pupils. The first class was a big one, the second group was a smaller one. I was given an assistant – a Russian teacher, who worked for 3 years, and then left, because she didn't know the language, the Gypsies with their peculiar features, and it was very difficult for her to work.

For the same reason, two schools in other districts were closed [4]. Russian teachers did not cope with the work and the children ran away.

In our school, there were already four classes and I had to work in two shifts. The children were lively, inquisitive, but extremely undisciplined and noisy. It didn't scare me. I knew the psychology and peculiar features of Gypsy pupils. I knew that in order to keep them and make them love school, you need a lot of patience, pedagogical sensitivity and endurance. Classes were first taught in Russian. I gave great importance to the lessons and carefully prepared for them in order to awake the interest of the pupils, make them work and keep the children's attention. Gradually the work got better, discipline got better, the pupils began looking like schoolchildren. At the same time the work among parents was developed. The opening of the Gypsy Club *Лолы чергэн* (Red Star), where I was a member of the Board, helped us a lot. I began to arrange the club talks on various topics: educational, anti-religious, concerning health, etc. Our club published a wall newspaper. The training course, which was then called *The Blue Blouse* [5], performed on the club stage; the older high school students took part in it. In these artistic performances, there was a call to work, to a new life, and disapproval of the old Gypsy way of life. Their parents saw the student performances, saw how children have changed, what is an organised children's team. All of this influenced the parents' ideology, their worldview. They began to understand that the Soviet authorities are calling them to a new good life. I paid much attention to the artistic education of the children. I took them to the theatre, to the cinema, to the Tretyakov Gallery. My pupils and I prepared the performances and the plays, I put my poems on music for them. My pupils participated in all schools' matinees. We were invited to the Hall of Columns, the Central House of Pioneers. I don't remember exactly what year, I think in 1932 or 1933, our patron, supporting factory *Paris Commune*, invited us to perform at the evening event dedicated to the October Revolution anniversary, where we staged *Атася и ададывес* (Yesterday and Today). When we entered the hall, we saw Nadezhda Konstantinovna Krupskaya [6] in the Presidium. She soon left, felt bad, but she watched the beginning of our performance with great interest. At the All-Union meeting of pioneers (we had our own pioneer squad) the pupils saw Maxim Gorky. Communication with other children, students of other national schools, Tatars, Armenians, Assyrians, Latvians, Germans and Russians, of course developed the Gypsy children, brought them up in the spirit of internationalism. A new Soviet generation of Gypsies grew up.

Of course, this was not immediately reached. There were also breakdowns: the boys sometimes missed classes at school because they went at the horse market. In the beginning, in the days of religious holidays, half of the class was missing. They sometimes

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came with unlearned lessons, because their adults at home were "drinking vodka", there were "scolding, fight" [7]. I had to go to the parents, convince them and shame them. I must confess that I was highly respected and even loved by both adults and children, and that did matter a lot. Meeting now my former students, I hear from them what a great importance the school had for their future. Our school grew.

The first graduation of the 4th class was successful. Some went to factory-plant schools, some went to study further. Every year there was a set of new pupils. Our school firmly entered the Gypsy way of life. The rumour about our school went beyond the Soviet Union. We were visited by foreign delegations, we were photographed, magazines and newspapers wrote about our school. A good article appeared in the magazine *Narodnyi uchitel'* (People's Teacher) … I received a letter from a Professor from Sweden. On the envelope, the address was written: The USSR – Moscow; To the only Gypsy teacher. And the letter was received. Later, when the Gypsy kolkhozes were organised, I was written to by teachers of the Gypsy kolkhoz's schools of the Smolensk region, the North Caucasus. They asked for advice, help. In each issue of the *Nevo drom* (New Way) journal, I wrote about the school, about our achievements and shortcomings. My pupils wrote and gave their drawings in the children's page in the journal.

In 1927, we have published the first Gypsy ABC book. Authors: Nikolay A. Pankov and I [8]. A great help to us was given by the professor Mikhail V. Sergievskiy and the linguist Tatyana V. Wenzel. They took part in the development of the Gypsy literature.

In 1933 my grammar for first grade was published, then my textbook for adults came, the Reader by Nikolay Pankov, and other school-books, I will not list each of them … [9]. The schooling could be done in the native language because even the textbooks in geography and natural science for the 4th grade were translated into the Gypsy language. Special hours were given for studying the Russian language. Children's Gypsy literature was published by the Nationalities Sector of the Publishing House *Molodaya Gvardiya* [Young Guard], where I was an editor. My life was filled to the limit: I led all four classes at school, wrote textbooks, poems, articles in a magazine, edited, wrote reviews, was a member of the club board, taught the literary Gypsy language in the Theatre *Romen*, and I can't list everything that was done then. Every one of us worked then with great enthusiasm, joy, because we have seen how our formerly persecuted and backward people were growing in front of us. Gypsies became equal citizens of our great Motherland. Many of them worked in factories, plants, artels, created kolkhozes, schools, the Pedagogical College; there were the kindergarten, the club, the theatre, the books. Only in our country Gypsies could get all this, and the understanding of this gave us strength and vigour in our work. The school existed for 13 years. Completely unexpected, in 1938, a decree was issued on the closure of all national schools, clubs, kindergartens, editing offices, in short everything that made the cultures of the ethnic minorities and especially of the Gypsies able to grow, with their centuries of former backwardness. Our school was closed. Many pupils quit learning. I went to work in a Russian school. I also loved my work, because I love teaching and I love children, but the most joyful part of my life, I will remember, always remained the difficult years of my work in the Gypsy school. During the war, when

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schools in Moscow were closed (1941), I worked at the plant *Moskabel* (Moscow cable), digging anti-tank ditches, worked in the hospital; even have the medal for the Defense of Moscow. When the schools were open, I went back to teach children. In 1949, I was awarded the Order of Honor in the Kremlin.

That's the whole story of my life. The mission we started is not over yet. It should not be hidden, that even now the situation of the Gypsies looks like a dark spot on the bright and joyful background of our present. You are our successors, remember that the Gypsies are also children of our great Motherland and they should live like all the people of our country, and not be her stepchildren. This must be achieved, but it needs a lot of hard work.

Nina Dudarova

Notes

1. There is some uncertainty about the year of Nina Dudarova's birth. Here it marks as such 1903, and in her VSTs' membership card is inscribed 1902.
2. The programs and plans of educational work among Gypsies were made by Narkompros with the active involvement of Gypsy activists (Комсомольская правда, 1930, p. 3; Романы зоря, 1930b, p. 7).
3. It was Gypsy Elementary School (with 57 students in 3 school classes), located at Bolshaya Kommunisticheskaya str., No. 6 (former Bolshaya Alekseevskaya; now Alexander Solzhenitsyn str.).
4. This information is not entirely clear. Two other Gypsy schools (near Petrovskiy park) were not closed; they had permanent addresses from 1926 till 1930-1931 (Вся Москва, 1926, p. 511; 1930, p. 203; 1931, p. 189).
5. The name 'The Blue Blouse' is very indictive. At that time this was the designation of the workers' proletariat.
6. Nadezhda Konstantinovna Krupskaya was the wife of Vladimir Lenin (widow by that date).
7. This part of the sentence: there was "drinking vodka", there were "scolding, fight" is written in Romani language and in Russian translation.
8. Дударова, Н. А. & Панково, Н. А. (1928). *Нэво дром* (*букварё*). Москва: Центриздат.
9. The list of publications of Nina Dudarova see in Annex I – Romani Language Publications.

Source: LANB, f. Николай Саткевич.
Prepared for publication by Elena Marushiakova and Vesselin Popov.
Translated by Viktor Shapoval.

12.5.4 *Mikhail Bezlyudskiy*

Моя Биография

Коротко о родителях

Родители мои вели кочевой образ жизни. Отец занимался торговлей лошадями, хотя сам никогда не имел больше одной клячи. Мать была профессиональной гадалкой. Она умела хорошо гадать на картах, умела делать из воска "чертиков" и хорошо ими пользовалась при гадании. Родители кочевали с табором в пределах Рязанской губернии.

Родился я 8 августа 1901 года в таборе, который был расположен своими шатрами на опушке леса в 12 верстах от уездного города Сапожек Рязанской губернии.

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Из своего детства хорошо помню себя в возрасте 10-11 лет. На зиму весь табор направлялся в уездный город Михайлов, где каждая семья имела определенную квартиру. Наша семья всегда зимовала в этом же городе в доме кузнеца Алексея Денисова. В зимние вечера сын кузнеца – Саша Денисов обучал меня азбуке (он учился в городской школе).

Здесь же я подружился с другим русским Колей Рогожевым, который учился в городской гимназии. Отец Коли – Александр Никитович Рогожев – имел у себя хорошую столярную мастерскую, в которой изготовлялись разные архангелы, иконы и прочие предметы для церквей.

Каждое лето мой отец вместе с матерью выезжал на годовые ярмарки торговать лошадьми, я же оставался без копейки денег дома. Хозяин Алексей Денисов и его жена очень жалели меня, но у самих было пятеро детей, и я зачастую ложился спать голодным. Поэтому я целыми днями торчал в столярной мастерской Александра Никитовича Рогожева, помогал подать ему нужную деталь, разводил столярный клей. Жена Александра Никитовича, а также его дочь часто сажали меня вместе с собой за стол обедать и наказывали, чтобы я обязательно приходил к ними ужинать. Но часто ходить к ним кушать я стеснялся. Я начал нищенствовать: каждое воскресение я уходил в город и обходил лавки торговцев мануфактурой и обувью просил “на хлеб” …

Однажды, узнав о том, что я нищенствую, Александр Никитович сказал мне:

– Мишутка, ты брось собирать милостыню. Приходи всегда, как захочешь кушать, к нам. Тебя надо куда-нибудь пристроить на работу. Погоди, я вот поговорю с хозяином булочной Овчинниковым. Может в булочную требуется мальчик …

Так благодаря Александру Никитовичу Рогожеву я начал работать в булочной Овчинникова. Отец не раз пытался сорвать меня с работы, но я не сдавался и продолжал работать.

В булочной сначала я выполнял разные работы, больше был на побегушках, колол дрова, убирал пекарню, а затем научился делать баранки, плюшки и даже “французские булки”. Не обходилось и без подзатыльников, получаемых от старшего пекаря Ерофеевича, которому часто я бегал в казенку за шкаликом (соткой) водки …

Родители мои перестали ругать меня за мою работу в булочной. Но однажды отец сказал мне:

– Цыгане смеются надо мной, что сына отдал в работники. Говорят, один сын и тот ни как у всех цыган. Стыдно мне в таборе.

Но я стоял на своем. Так я проработал в булочной Овчинникова три года. Но летом 1918 года мне пришлось бросить работу в булочной.

Хорошо помню, был базарный день. В середине дня вдруг в городе началась сильная стрельба. Я вышел из дома и направился в город. Около булочной Овчинникова я встретил своего хозяина-кузнеца Алексея Денисова с винтовкой в руках. Увидев меня он крикнул:

– Мишутка, марш домой! Радуйся, Мишутка, Революция пришла и в наш город. Жаль, что молод, взял бы Тебя с собой …

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Но осенью 1918 года в ряде сел и деревень Михайловского уезда кулачье организовали восстание против установившейся Советской власти. Кулацкое восстание было быстро подавлено.

В это время я выехал с отцом в табор, который был расположен в лесу под городом Сапожек.

Выезжая с отцом, я захватил с собой полмешка разных книг, которые я покупал на заработанные деньги. Здесь были книги о Еруслане Лазаревиче, Бове Королевиче, сочинения М. Горького, Салтыкова-Щедрина и другие.

Находясь в таборе, я целыми днями просиживал в лесу за чтением книг, а вечера проводил в близлежащей деревне в кругу русских ребят и девушек, пел под гармошку страдания, за что не раз получал от отца кнута.

– Ты скажи, – говорил мне отец, – чего тебя тянет к русским. Тебя уже пора женить, вот и выбирай себе в таборе невесту …

И вот однажды в наш табор приехал другой табор польских цыган. Вечерами у шатров горели большие костры. Молодежь обоих таборов буйно веселилась, а я убегал в деревню.

На следующий день, после очередной порки кнутом, отец сказал:

– Завтра пойдем сватать Настю. С ее родителями мы уже договорились. Они согласны отдать Настю за тебя замуж.

Когда отец запряг коня в легкие дрожки и выехал, мать сказала:

– Отец поехал за самогонкой.

Я выбежал из шатра. Забрался дальше от палаток в лес и лег на траву. В голове одна мысль сменяет другую, но я крепко представлял свое будущее: женившись, я должен научиться хорошо торговать лошадьми и заняться конокрадством. Не жить же с молодой женой на иждивении отца и выглядывать из сумки жены … А ведь я до 18-летнего возраста не разбирался в лошадях. Более того, я не мог по зубам лошади установить возраст лошади, а это большой позор для цыгана.

… У шатра моего будущего тестя большой костер. В шатре сидят пожилые цыгане и цыганки. На земле расстелен большой ковер. Здесь много бутылок самогона и разной закуски. У костра собралась молодежь, поют и пляшут.

В шатер позвали меня и невесту. Мы стоим рядом перед своими родителями, которые уже изрядно насамогонились.

– Так ты, Мишутка, стало быть согласен взять в жены Настю, – обращаясь ко мне, сказал отец Насти. – Ну, а мы не супротив этого. Ну, а ты, дочка, в согласии идешь за Мишутку замуж?

После некоторого молчания Настя тихо сказала:

– Тату, воля ваша, но я не согласна. За кого вы меня выдаете, ведь он не умеет ни торговать, ни воровать …Что ж своей сумкой буду его кормить.

Я был рад Насте за ее откровенность. Но я радовался преждевременно.

– Цыть! – вскричал отец Насти. – Мишутка еще молод, еще научится всему. Через неделю сыграем свадьбу, такое наше со сватами согласие.

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Не помню, как я вышел из шатра, долго бродил по лесу, а в голове было одно: бежать, надо бежать из табора.

Воспользовавшись сильным опьянением родителей, я вытащил из повозки сундучок, в котором хранились документы родителей и мое свидетельство о рождении, я быстро спрятал свое свидетельство в карман. Захватив кусок вареного мяса и кусок хлеба, выбежал из шатра, направился по большаку в уездный город Сапожек.

Уже рассветало когда я очутился на улице спящего города.

Проходя мимо трехэтажного кирпичного дома, на котором висела вывеска "Государственный банк", из будки показался милиционер. Увидев меня, милиционер спросил:

– Ей, цыганенок, чего так рано вышел на промысел.

Я подошел к нему и со слезами на глазах рассказал ему о себе все.

– Да ты успокойся, – по отечески говорил мне милиционер. – Вот сейчас сменюсь с дежурства, поведу тебя к нашему начальнику, он поможет тебе. А признаться, первый случай в моей жизни, когда цыган бежит от кочевья …

И вот я в кабинете начальника уездной милиции.

Внимательно выслушав меня, начальник, немного подумал, затем снял телефонную трубку, переговорил, а затем обращаясь ко мне, сказал:

– Какой нибудь документ-то у тебя есть с собой? Так, – проговорил он, рассматривая мое свидетельство о рождении. – Мой совет тебе, цыганенок, вступить в ряды Красной Армии добровольцем. Возраст у тебя подходит.

В этот же день военный комендант оформил документы. Мне выдали красноармейское обмундирование, искупался в бане, а вечером с воинским эшелоном направили меня в губернский город Рязань. Здесь меня определили в один из стрелковых батальонов.

Однажды дежурный по батальону вошел в казарму и сказал мне:

– Безлюдский, к тебе отец с матерью приехали.

Это известие было для меня как снег на голову.

Встреча была тяжелой. Мать плакала, а отец говорил сквозь слезы:

– Бросай Миша, эту службу. Я привез тебе паспорт иностранного подданного, новый костюм и сапоги. Поедем в табор, а на женитьбе твоей не будем настаивать, сам выберешь себе невесту …

Но как было ни тяжело, ехать в табор я отказался и заявил, что службу в Красной Армии не брошу.

В 1920 году наш батальон в составе 11-й армии направили на Кавказский фронт, где Красная Армия вела бои за освобождение Грузии. В боях за взятие города Батума участвовал и я в качестве конного разведчика.

В 1921 году меня направили на 13-е Бакинские пехотно-командные курсы Красных командиров, которые в мае месяце 1922 года я успешно окончил, получив звание Красного командира.

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По окончании курсов каждому выпускнику предоставлялся месячный отпуск. Но куда ехать мне? Где разыскать своих родителей? И я взял проездной литер до города Михайлов. Я не ошибся. В 20-ти верстах от города, в лесу, у реки Проня, я нашел табор. Здесь и состоялась встреча с родителями. К сожалению, полностью свой отпуск провести не смог. Меня тянуло обратно в г. Тифлис (здесь были наши курсы). Прожив с родителями в таборе две недели, я распрощался со всем табором. (Здесь я узнал, что девушка Настя вышла замуж за моего двоюродного брата Павлушу.)

Приехав в Тифлис, я тут же получил направление в штаб пограничных войск ЗакЧеКа [Закавказская Черезвычайная Комиссия], отсюда меня направили в одну из погранзастав на побережье Каспийского моря на должность помощника начальника погранзаставы.

Так, я с 1922 по 1925 год находился в погранвойсках на должности помощника начальника, а потом начальника погранзаставы.

В 1925 году штаб погранвойск ЗакЧеКа командировал меня в Москву в Высшую Пограничную школу ОГПУ, но проучившись в этой школе 10 месяцев, был демобилизован по состоянию здоровья.

После демобилизации я принимал активное участие в работе Всероссийского Союза Цыган, председателем которого был т[оварищ] Таранов А. С. С этого времени я начал писать на цыганском языке стихи, рассказы и повести.

В 1928 году, после окончания краткосрочных курсов педагогов МОНО отправило меня в открывшуюся в Марьиной роще цыганскую школу, а в 1930 году я перешел на работу в театр “Ромэн” в качестве актера.

В 1931 году я работал редактором нацотдела издательства ГИХЛ и Сельхозгиза по изданию художественной и сельскохозяйственной литературы на цыганском языке.

В июле 1933 г. Отдел Национальностей ВЦИК, где уполномоченным по работе среди цыган работал цыган Иван Петрович Токмаков, направил меня в Минводский район в качестве председателя цыганского колхоза “Труд Ромэн”, где я проработал до 1939 года, а затем был переведен на работу в Минводскую районную газету в качестве зав. сельхозотделом редакции и проработал здесь до 1941 года.

О цыганском колхозе “Труд Ромэн”

В 1929 году, в станице Суворовская, Минералводского района, Ставропольского края, был создан цыганский колхоз, который был назван “Труд Ромэн”. Организатором этого колхоза был цыган Лебедев Николай Иванович. В начале организации в колхозе состояло около 120 цыганских семейств, с преобладающим большинством цыган ранее проживающих в городах: Кропоткин, Краснодар, Майкоп, Армавир, Ростов-на-Дону.

В связи с тем, что в колхоз принимались цыгане без особого отбора, в числе колхозников очутились цыгане, которые раньше занимались аферами, карманщики и др. Поскольку со стороны председателя колхоза Лебедева Н. И. допускалось

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покровительство этой категории цыган, то впоследствии они оказали пагубное влияние на остальных цыган и, главным образом на цыганскую бедноту.

На организацию цыганского колхоза “Труд Ромэн” Советское Государство отпустило огромную сумму денежной ссуды для приобретения сельскохозяйственных машин, инвентаря, продуктивного и рабочего скота.

За колхозом было закреплено на вечно около двух тысяч гектаров удобной для земледелия земли и угодий. Однако, обработывалась эта земельная площадь недостаточно. Снимались низкие урожаи, а государственный план хлебопоставок из года в год не выполнялся.

На протяжении около трех лет председатель колхоза Лебедев Н. И., который был окружен недобросовестными цыганами-колхозниками, путем всяких махинаций получил из государственного банка большие сумы денег и расходовал их не по прямому назначению. Так, например, Лебедев Н. И. самолично выдавал деньги на устройство пышных свадеб, крестин и т.п. В результате отсутствия должного контроля со стороны районных организаций Лебедев Н. И. организовал при колхозе племенную коневодческую ферму, которая впоследствии превратилась в источник обогащения самого Лебедева Н. И. и его окружения. Делалось это так: Лебедев Н. И. снабжал соответствующими справками своих приближенных, выдавая им крупные суммы для поездки в крупные города для покупки лошадей якобы для конефермы. Лошади закупались и в вагонах отправлялись в другие города, где и продавались по спекулятивным ценам. Таким образом Лебедев Н. И. и его собутыльники наживали огромные суммы денег. Однако так продолжалось недолго. Цыганская беднота, работающая в колхозе, быстро разгадала физиономию своего председателя. Лебедев Н. И. и его приближенные были разоблачены в спекуляции цыганами-колхозниками, и конеферма была ликвидирована. Цыгане колхозники начали уходить из колхоза.

За свои антигосударственные действия Лебедев Н. И. был отдан под суд, но отделался условным осуждением. (На суде он делал упор на свою безграмотность.)

В последствие было установлено, что Лебедев Н. И. являлся до революции крупным кулаком, который в городе Армавире имел свою собственную почтовую контору, постоялые дворы и несколько жилых домов.

В июле 1933 года по командировке из Москвы я прибыл в распоряжение Северо-Кавказского КрайЗУ [Краевое Земельное Управление], которое направило меня в Минераловодский район в качестве председателя колхоза “Труд Ромэн”. Надо сказать, что этот колхоз произвел на меня удручающее впечатление. Колхозные поля и угодья были в бурьянах и сорняках. На молочно-товарной ферме стояло 7 голов истощенных коров, 11 голов лошадей, из которых 6 голов были молодняк. Из имеющихся когда то 138 жилых домов, для жилья были приспособлены только 11 домов. В колхозе в это время состояло лишь 11 семейств цыган, причем 7 семейств из них состояли из вдовушек-цыганок, мужья которых отбывали наказания в тюрьмах и лагерях. В колхозе не было продовольствия для колхозников, большая часть цыганских детей и женщин были опухшие от истощения.

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Посевная площадь колхоза составляла: озимой пшеницы 75 га, озимого ячменя 35 га, овса 30 га, кукурузы 40 га.

Сам я лично никогда не занимался сельским хозяйством и трудности, которые я встретил в колхозе, помогли мне преодолеть начальник политотдела Минводской МТС т[оварищ] Дмитриев, райком партии, райисполком и райЗО [Районный Земельный Отдел]. Колхозу была оказана немедленная помощь в продовольствии. Благодаря их практической помощи колхоз успешно убрал урожай.

Положение дел в колхозе заставило меня немедленно выехать в Крайисполком [Краевой Исполнительный Комитет], где мне была оказана всемерная помощь: были отпущены кредиты на приобретение всего необходимого. При содействии районных организаций было закуплено в колхозах и коммунах района: дойных коров 30 голов, рабочих лошадей 20 голов, рабочих волов 12 голов, было куплено также сельхозмашины и инвентарь.

Молва о том, что в колхозе "Труд Ромэн" работает председателем цыган, присланный из Москвы, быстро облетела цыганские таборы. Осенью 1933 году уже было принято в колхоз 17 семейств кочевых цыган. С помощью районных организаций были восстановлены жилые дома и каждая цыганская семья получила жилье.

В 1934 году я был избран председателем первого в мире цыганского сельского Совета. В этом же году в колхоз было принято еще 45 семейств кочевых цыган.

При колхозе была открыта начальная школа, занятия в которой вели цыганеучителя присланные из Москвы, на цыганском языке. Был открыт детский сад и детские ясли. Обслуживание детсада и детяслей осуществлялось колхозницами-цыганками.

В 1934 году в колхозе был выращен богатый урожай и план хлебопоставок был выполнен досрочно. В этом же году колхоз получил ссуду на приобретение дойных коров для каждой семьи колхозника.

В 1935 году я был вызван в Москву на совещание при Отделе Национальностей ВЦИК по вопросу трудоустройства кочевых цыган. На этом совещании я внес предложение сделать колхоз "Труд Ромэн" показательным колхозом для привлечения большего количества кочевых цыган.

И в 1936 году Правительство приняло решение о создании на территории цыганского сельского Совета в Минводском районе, на базе колхоза "Труд Ромэн", социалистического городка. В этом же году были составлены проекты этого поселка, а осенью того же года в адрес колхоза "Труд Ромэн" начали поступать эшелоны с круглым и пиленым лесом. Строительство соцгородка было поручено Переселенческому Отделу Ставропольского крайисполкома. Начали прибывать строители. Весной 1936 года были сложены первые фундаменты для 20 жилых одноквартирных домов.

Весть о строительстве соц[иалистического] городка в колхозе "Труд Ромэн" молнией облетела кочевых цыган, кочующих в пределах Краснодарского и Ставропольского краев, Ростовской и Грозненской областей. Цыганские таборы потянулись в колхозы.

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К сожалению, строительство соц[иалистического] городка было прекращено наркомом земледелия СССР в 1937 году. По указанию Переселенческого отдела Ставропольского крайисполкома весь лесоматериал был вывезен с территории колхоза “Труд Ромэн” в колхозы Минводского района.

Для меня это было ударом, и я на нервной почве слег, работать в колхозе я уже не мог. После трехмесячного лечения я обратился в Минводский райком партии с просьбой перевести меня на работу в Минводскую районную редакцию газеты “За стахановский труд” (до колхоза “Труд Ромэн” в Москве я занимался литературной работой, и работа в газете была мне хорошо знакома).

Таким образом, моей заветной мечте не удалось осуществиться.

Мне страстно хотелось, чтобы как можно больше кочевых цыган приобщилось к трудовой жизни, ради этой цели я не жалел своих сил и труда. Вместе с колхозниками-цыганами в первые дни моего приезда в этот колхоз переживал трудности. Благодаря Советской власти, которая сделала из меня, бывшего кочевого цыгана, гражданина страны, дала мне среднее образование – я стремился отдать все для своего цыганского народа.

В редакции газеты я работал зав[едующим] сельхозотделом и за успешную работу в газете был участником ВСХВ [Всесоюзная сельскохозяйственная выставка] в Москве в 1939 году.

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В 1941 году вместе с семьей переехал в Грозненскую область. Здесь Обком партии направил меня в Наурскую районную редакцию в качестве редактора райгазеты.

Примечание: В ряды ВКП (б) я вступил в Минводской редакции в 1941 году.

В качестве редактора Наурской райгазеты “Ленинский путь” я проработал до 1947 года. В 1947 году в Наурский район прибыла комиссия ЦК ВКП (б) по проверке постановления ЦК ВКП (б) “О сохранности колхозной собственности”.

Комиссия установила грубое нарушение этого Постановления руководством района. Были сняты с работы и исключены из партии все руководство района, в том числе и я. Некоторых из них отдали под суд, не избежал этой участи и я. А вся моя вина состояла в том, что в колхозах района я покупал продукты по дешевой, а не по базарной цене. Мне предъявили обвинение в покупке 15 кг муки, 2-х кг постного масла и 4-х кг мяса. Осужден я был нарсудом на 3 года.

Полностью свой срок я отбыл в сельскохозяйственной открытой колонии под городом Омск, где с первого же дня работал воспитателем среди заключенных, имел свободное хождение в город Омск.

В 1950 году возвратился к своей семье в станицу Наурскую. Большое спасибо первому секретарю райкома партии т[оварищу] Брызгалову, который помог мне поступить на работу в Наурский хлопкосовхоз в качестве секретаря дирекции совхоза.

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В 1952 году я переехал в Ростовскую область, во вновь создаваемый на целине Волго-Донской хлопкосовхоз, в котором я проработал в качестве инспектора по кадрам до 1956 года.

В 1956 году Ростовский-на-Дону трест совхозов направил меня на работу в г. Красный Сулин в Строительно-монтажное управление в качестве старшего инспектора отдела кадров. Здесь я проработал в этой должности до 1961 года, а затем перешел на пенсию по возрасту.

С июня 1964 года поступил на работу в завод железобетонных изделий в качестве вахтера на проходной, с окладом 40 рублей в месяц. Кроме того, получаю пенсию 30 рублей.

... [подпись] (М. Безлюдский).

16 августа 1964 года.
г. Красный Сулин, Ростовской области, Новосельский пер., 3.

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My Biography

Briefly about my parents
My parents led nomadic way of life. My father was a horse trader, though he never had more than one bad horse. Mother was a professional fortune-teller. She knew well how to tell fortunes using the cards, she knew how to make wax "devils" and used them well in divination [1]. My parents wandered with their tabor within the province of Ryazan.

I was born on August 8, 1901 in the tabor, which was located with all its tents on the edge of the forest in the 12 verst [2] from the district town of Sapozhek Ryazan province.

From my childhood, I remember myself well at the age of 10-11 years. For the winter, the whole tabor went to the district town of Mikhailov where each family had a certain rented flat. Our family always spent winters in the same town in the house of the blacksmith Alexey Denisov. During the winter evenings, the son of the blacksmith – Sasha Denisov taught me the alphabet (he studied in an urban school).

There, I made friends with another Russian Kolya Rogozhev, who studied at the city gymnasium. Kolya's father – Alexander Nikitovich Rogozhev – had a good carpenter's workshop in which various archangels, icons and other things for churches were made.

Every summer my father and my mother went to the annual horse fairs to trade horses, but I was left without a penny of money at home. Our host Alexey Denisov and his wife took pity on me, but they themselves had five children and I often went to bed hungry. So, I spent my days staying in the carpentry workshop of Alexander Nikitovich Rogozhev, assisted him by giving the necessary detail, preparing carpenter's glue. The wife of Alexander Nikitovich, as well as his daughter, often invited me at the table to dine with him and always told me to came for supper with them. But I felt ashamed to go eat with

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them too often. I started begging: every Sunday I went to the town and walked around the shops of fabric and shoe merchants and asked for "bread" …

One day, having found out that I was begging, Alexander Nikitovich told me:

– Mishutka, cut out your begging alms. Come to us every time you want to eat. You need to find some place to work. Wait, I'll talk to the owner of the bakery Ovchinnikov. Maybe the baker needs a boy …

So, thanks to Alexander Nikitovich Rogozhev, I started working in the bakery of Ovchinnikov. My father tried to pull me off my work more than once, but I did not give up and continued to work.

In the bakery, I first had some small works, more as a courier, and chopped wood, cleaned the bakery, and then I learned how to bake bagels, buns and even "French" baguettes. It was schooling not without cuffs, received from the older baker Erofeevich, and I often ran to buy a small bottle of vodka for him.

My parents stopped scolding me for my work in the bakery. But one day my father told me:

– Our Gypsies laugh at me for putting my son to work. They say, I only have one son and he is not like a real Gypsy. I'm ashamed in the tabor.

But I stood my ground. So, I worked in the bakery of Ovchinnikov for three years. But in the summer of 1918, I had to quit my job at the bakery.

I remember well, it was the market day. In the middle of the day suddenly a loud gunfire began in the town. I left the house and went to the city. Near the bakery of Ovchinnikov I met our host blacksmith Alexey Denisov with a rifle in his hands. Seeing me he shouted:

– Mishutka, go home! Rejoice, Mishutka, the Revolution has come to our town. It's a pity, you're young, I'd take You with me …

But in the autumn of 1918 in a number of villages of the Mikhailovskiy district, the kulaks organised a rebellion against the established Soviet power. Kulak uprising was quickly suppressed.

At this time, I left with my father in a tabor which was located in the forest near the town of Sapozhek.

When I left with my father, I took with me half a bag of different books that I bought for the money I earned. Here were books about Yeruslan Lazarevich, Bova Korolevich [3], the works of Maxim Gorky, M. Saltykov-Shchedrin, and others.

Being in the tabor, I spent all days sitting in the forest and reading books, and spent the evenings in a nearby village in the circle of Russian boys and girls, singing short songs on the accordion (so called "passions" [4]); for those visits, I have repeatedly received from my father hits of his whip.

– Tell me, son, – my father told me, – why are you attracted to the Russians. You are of marrying age, so choose a bride in the tabor for yourself …

And one day another tabor of Polish Gypsies [5] came to our tabor campsite. In the evenings, large fires burned near the tents. The youth of both tabors were having wild fun, but I was running away to the village.

The next day, after another whipping, my father said:

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– Tomorrow we will go to match Nastya to you. We've already made a deal with her parents. They agreed to give Nastya to marry you.

When my father harnessed a horse in a light carriage and left, my mother said:

– Your father went to buy *samogonka* [6].

I ran out of the tent. I went from the tents dipper into the forest and laid down on the grass. In my head, one thought replaced another, but I clearly imagined my future: married, I would have to learn how to trade horses and engage in horse stealing. I can't live with the young wife, fed either by my father's pocket or by my wife's begging … But being 18 years old, I had no experience in horse dealing. Moreover, I could not recognise the horse age by looking at its teeth, and that is a great shame for a Gypsy.

There was a big fire lit near my future father-in-law's tent. In the tent, elderly Gypsy men and women were sitting. There was a large carpet on the ground. There were a lot of bottles of *samogonka* and various snacks. Young people gathered around the fire, singing and dancing.

They called me and my bride in the tent. We stood in front of our parents, who were already quite drunk.

– So you, Mishutka, do you agree to marry Nastya, – turning to me, said Nastya's father. – Well, we're not against this. Well, and you, daughter, are you willingly going to marry Mishutka?

After some silence Nastya said quietly:

– Daddy, it is your will, but I do not agree. Whom do you choose for me, after all, he can neither trade nor steal … Well, I shall feed him from my bag [7].

I was glad hearing Nastya's frankness. But I rejoiced prematurely.

– Hush! – Nastya's father cried out. – Mishutka is still young, he will learn everything. In a week the wedding will take place, it is our decision with our matchmakers.

I do not remember how I came out of the tent, long wandered through the forest, and in my head was only one thing: to run, I must run from the tabor.

Because of the strong intoxication of my parents, I could search out a little chest, with my parents' documents and my birth certificate, found in our cart, and I quickly hid my certificate in my pocket. Taking a piece of boiled meat and a piece of bread, I ran out of the tent, went along the highway to the district town of Sapozhek.

It was dawn when I found myself on the street of the sleeping town.

I was passing by the three-storey brick house on which the sign "State Bank" hung, when the militsiya [8] man appeared from the booth. Seeing me, the militsiya man asked:

– Hey, Gypsy boy, why did you go stealing so early?

I went up to him and told him all about myself with tears in my eyes.

– Relax, – the militsiya man told me in a fatherly way. – Wait a bit, I'll finish my service time and I'll take you to our boss, he will help you. But I have to tell, it is the first time in my life when the Gypsy flees from wandering …

And here I am in the office of the district militsiya chief.

Having listened to me carefully, the chief thought for a while, then took the phone, talked with someone, and then returned to me, saying:

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– Do you have any kind of personal document with you? Well, – he said, examining my birth certificate. – My advice to you, Gypsy, is to join the Red Army as a volunteer. You're of proper age.

On the same day, the military commandant issued the documents. I was given a Red Army uniform, bathed in the bath, and in the evening with military train I was sent to the provincial city of Ryazan. Here I was assigned to one of the infantry battalions.

One day the battalion officer came into the barracks and told me:

– Bezlyudskiy, your mother and father came to you.

This news was as surprising as the snow falling on my head.

Our meeting was sad. My mother was crying, and father spoke through tears:

– Leave, Misha, that service. I brought you a passport of a foreign national, a new suit and boots. Let's go to the *tabor*, and we will not insist on your marriage anymore, you can choose your bride by yourself …

But, though it was very heavy, I refused to go to a tabor and declared that I won't leave my service in the Red Army.

In 1920, our battalion, as a part of the 11th army, was sent to the Caucasian front, where the Red Army fought for the liberation of Georgia [9]. I also participated in the battles for the capture of the city of Batum as a horse scout.

In 1921, I was sent to the 13th Baku infantry command courses of Red commanders, which I successfully graduated from in May 1922, having received the title of Red commander.

At the graduation from the courses, each graduate was given a month vacation. But where to go? Where to find my parents? And I took a travel letter to the town of Mikhailov. I was right. 20 verst from the town, in the forest, at the river Pronya, I found our tabor. This is where the meeting with my parents occurred. Unfortunately, I couldn't spend my whole vacation there. I wanted to come back to Tiflis [10] (our courses were here). Having lived with my parents in the camp for two weeks, I said goodbye to our whole tabor. (Here I learned that the girl Nastya was married to my cousin Pavlusha).

Arriving in Tiflis, I immediately received a referral to the headquarters of the border troops of Transcaucasian [11] ChK, from there I was sent to one of the border posts on the coast of the Caspian sea to the position of an assistant chief of the border post.

So, from 1922 to 1925 I was in the border troops in the position of an assistant chief, and then a chief of a border post.

In 1925, the headquarters of the border troops of Zakcheka sent me to Moscow to the Higher Border security school of the OGPU, but after studying at this school for 10 months, I was demobilised for health reasons.

After demobilisation, I actively participated in the work of the All-Russian Union of Gypsies, which was chaired by comrade Andrey S. Taranov. From that time, I began to write poems, stories and novels in the Gypsy language.

In 1928, after finishing short courses for teachers, MONO sent me to the Gypsy school opened in Maryina roshcha [12], and in 1930 I moved to work in the Theatre *Romen* as an actor.

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In 1931, I worked as an editor of the National Department of the Publishing house of GIKhL and Selkhozgiz for the publication of fiction and agricultural literature in the Gypsy language.

In July, 1933, the Department of Nationalities of the Central Executive Committee, where plenipotentiary for work among the Gypsies was Ivan Petrovich Tokmakov, sent me to Mineralnye Vody district as Head of the Gypsy kolkhoz *Trud Romen* (Gypsy Labour), where I worked until 1939, and then was transferred to work in Mineralnye Vody local newspaper as the head of the Agricultural Department of the Editorial Board and worked here until 1941 [13].

About the Gypsy kolkhoz *Trud Romen* (Gypsy Labour)

In 1929, in the stanitsa Suvorovskaya [14], Mineralnye Vody district, Stavropol kray, a Gypsy kolkhoz was created, it was named *Trud Romen*. The organizer of this kolkhoz was a Gypsy, Nikolay Ivanovich Lebedev. At the beginning of its creation, the kolkhoz consisted of about 120 Gypsy families, with the vast majority of Gypsies previously living in the cities: Kropotkin, Krasnodar, Maykop, Armavir, Rostov-on-Don.

Due to the fact that the kolkhoz accepted Gypsies without special selection, among the other kolkhoz members were accepted Gypsies who used to be engaged in scams, pickpockets, etc. Because the Head of the kolkhoz N. I. Lebedev provided protection for this category of Gypsies, later they had a negative influence on the rest of Gypsies and mainly on the poor Gypsies.

The Soviet State released a huge sum of financial loans for the organisation of the Gypsy kolkhoz *Trud Romen* in order to purchase agricultural machinery, equipment, productive and working cattle.

About two thousand hectares of land convenient for farming and agriculture were given to the kolkhoz for perpetuity. However, the cultivation of this land area was not sufficient. Poor harvests were gathered, and the state plan of grain deliveries was not realised from year to year.

For about three years, the Head of the kolkhoz N. I. Lebedev, who was surrounded by unscrupulous Gypsy kolkhoz members, using various deceptions, received from the State Bank large sums of money and spent them not for the proper purpose. So, for example, N. I. Lebedev has personally given money to organise magnificent weddings, christenings, etc. As the result of lack of proper monitoring by the district's organisations, N. I. Lebedev could organise in the kolkhoz a separate horse breeding farm, which later served as a source of the individual enrichment of N. I. Lebedev and his inner circle. This was done in the following way: N. I. Lebedev supplied some persons of his entourage with the relevant reference-papers, giving them large sums of money to travel to big cities in order to purchase horses, ostensibly for the horse farm. Horses were purchased, and were sent in wagons to the other cities, and sold at higher speculative prices. Thus, N. I. Lebedev and his partners in alcohol-drinking collected huge sums of money. However, this did not last long. The Gypsy poor mass, working on the farm, quickly disclosed the real face of their Head. N. I. Lebedev and his entourage were unmasked by Gypsy kolkhoz members

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as profiteers, and the horse farm was eliminated. The Gypsy kolkhoz members began to leave the kolkhoz.

N. I. Lebedev was prosecuted for his anti-government actions but got away on probation. (At the trial, he focused on his illiteracy).

Later it was discovered that, before the revolution, N. I. Lebedev was a big *kulak*, who had its own postal service, inns and several houses in the city of Armavir.

In July 1933, officially sent from Moscow, I arrived at the disposal of the North Caucasus kray's Land Directorate, which sent me to the Mineralnye Vody district as Head of the kolkhoz *Trud Romen*. I must say that this kolkhoz made a depressing impression on me. The kolkhoz fields and lands were covered with various weeds. On the dairy farm, there were only 7 exhausted cows, only 11 horses, among them 6 horses were too young for works. From the 138 residential houses available in the past, only 11 houses were prepared for dwelling. The kolkhoz at that time consisted of only 11 families of Gypsies, 7 of them included Gypsy widows, whose husbands were serving sentences in prisons and forced labour camps. The kolkhoz did not have food for the kolkhoz members, most of the Gypsy children and women were swollen from exhaustion.

Cereal fields area of the kolkhoz were: winter wheat 75 hectares, winter barley 35 hectares, oats 30 hectares, maize 40 hectares.

I have never personally worked in agriculture before, and the difficulties that I met on the kolkhoz were overcome by me with the help of the head of the political department of Mineralnye Vody's MTS comrade Dmitriev [15], the district's Party Committee, the district's Executive Committee and the district's Land Department. The kolkhoz was provided with immediate food supply. Thanks to their practical help the kolkhoz harvested successfully.

The state of works in the kolkhoz made me immediately go to the North Caucasus Kray's Executive Committee, where I was provided with all possible assistance: loans were issued for the purchase of everything necessary. With the assistance of district organisations, 30 dairy cows, 20 working horses, 12 working oxen were purchased in the kolkhoz and communes of the district, agricultural machinery and equipment were also bought.

The rumor that a Gypsy, sent from Moscow, works as the Head of the kolkhoz *Trud Romen* quickly flew around the Gypsy camps. In the autumn of 1933, 17 families of nomadic Gypsies were accepted to the kolkhoz. With the help of district organisations, houses were restored and each Gypsy family received housing.

In 1934, I was elected Head of the world's first Gypsy Village Council. In the same year, another 45 families of nomadic Gypsies were accepted to the kolkhoz.

At the kolkhoz, the elementary school was open, in which classes were conducted by Gypsy-teachers sent from Moscow, in the Gypsy language. A kindergarten and a nursery were opened too. The kindergarten and the nursery were served out by kolkhoz members, Gypsy women.

In 1934 the kolkhoz has collected a rich harvest, and the plan of grain deliveries was realised ahead of schedule. In the same year, the kolkhoz received a loan for the purchase of dairy cows for each family of the kolkhoz members.

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In 1935 I was invited to Moscow for a meeting at the ON VTsIK on the employment of nomadic Gypsies. At this meeting, I made a proposal to make the kolkhoz *Trud Romen* an Exemplary kolkhoz [16] to attract more nomadic Gypsies.

And in 1936, the Government adopted the decision about creation on the territory of the Gypsy Village Council in Mineralnye Vody district, on the basis of the kolkhoz *Trud Romen*, an exemplary socialist town [17]. In the same year, the projects of this settlement were designed, and in the fall of the same year trains with the round and sawn wood began to arrive to the kolkhoz *Trud Romen* [18]. The construction of the socialist town was ordered to Resettlement Department of the Stavropol Kray [19] Executive Committee. Builders began to arrive. In the spring of 1936 the foundations for the first 20 single-family houses were laid.

The news of the socialist town construction on the kolkhoz *Trud Romen* flew nomadic Gypsies roaming within the Kranodarsky kray and Stavropolsky kray, Rostov and Grozny regions. The Gypsy tabors moved to kolkhozes.

Unfortunately, the construction of the socialist town was stopped by the People's Commissar of Agriculture of the USSR in 1937 [20]. After the order of the Resettlement Department of the Executive Committee of Stavropol kray all wood was removed from the territory of the kolkhoz *Trud Romen* to the kolkhozes of Mineralnye Vody district.

For me it was a shock and, as I fell ill of nervous causes, I couldn't work in the kolkhoz. After a three-month long treatment, I went to Mineralnye Vody Party Committee with a request to transfer me to work in Mineralnye Vody regional newspaper *Za Stakhanovskiy trud* (For Stakhanovite Labour) [21] (before work in the kolkhoz *Trud Romen* I was engaged in Moscow in doing literary work and thus working with newspapers was also familiar to me).

Thus, my main dream could not be realised.

I wanted to help as many nomadic Gypsies as possible to join the working life, for this purpose I did not spare my efforts and labour. Together with the Gypsies in the kolkhoz in the first days of my arrival in this kolkhoz I overcame the existing difficulties. Thanks to the Soviet government, which made me, a former nomadic Gypsy, a citizen of the country, gave me a secondary education – I tried to give everything to my Gypsy people.

In the newspaper, I worked as head of the Agricultural Department and for the successful work I did in the newspaper I was entitled to take part as a member in the VSKhV [22] in Moscow in 1939.

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In 1941, together with my family, I moved to Grozny region. Here, the Regional Party Committee sent me to work as an editor in the Naurskaya district newspaper's Editorial Board.

Note: I became member of the VKP(b) in 1941, during the time when I was working in the Mineralnye Vody newspaper Editorial Board.

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As editor of Naurskaya newspaper *Leninskiy put'* [Lenin's path] I worked until 1947. In 1947, the Commission of the Central Committee of VKP(b) having the duty to verify the implementation of the decision of the VKP(b) *On the safety of the kolkhoz' property* arrived in the Naurskaya district.

The Commission found a big violation of this Decision by the district administration. All the leadership of the district, including me, were removed from work and excluded from the party. Some of them were put on trial, and I did not escape this fate. And all my fault was that I bought food products at cheaper, not at the market price, visiting kolkhozes of the district. I was accused of buying 15 kg of flour, 2 kg of vegetable oil and 4 kg of meat. I was convicted by the people's court for 3 years.

I served my full term in an agricultural open colony for people sentenced near the city of Omsk [23], where, from the first day, I worked as a teacher among prisoners and had a free regime for visiting the city of Omsk.

In 1950 I returned to my family in the village of Naurskaya. Many thanks to the first Secretary of the district party Committee comrade Bryzgalov, who helped me to get a job in the Naurskaya's cotton kolkhoz as a secretary of the kolkhoz' Directorate.

In 1952, I moved to the Rostov region, in the newly created on virgin lands Volga-Don cotton kolkhoz, where I worked as a staff inspector until 1956.

In 1956, the Rostov-on-Don trust of sovkhozs sent me to work in the town of Krasniy Sulin at the Construction and Installation Department as a senior inspector of the Staff Department. Here I worked in this position until 1961, and then moved into retirement.

Since June 1964 I entered the plant of reinforced concrete products as a watcher at the entrance, with a salary of 40 rubles per month. In addition, I receive a pension of 30 rubles.

... [signature] (M. Bezlyudskiy).

August 16, 1964.
Town of Krasniy Sulin, Rostov region, Novosel'skiy lane, No. 3.

Notes

1. Meaning the traditional trick to 'find' in a broken egg a 'little devil' or a 'small snake' which is used by Roma women fortune-tellers throughout the region of Central, Eastern and South-Eastern Europe (see e.g. Добровольский, 1908, pp. 65-66; Ficowski, 1985, pp. 219-230).
2. *Verst* is old Russian unit of length equal to 1.0668 km.
3. Yeruslan Lazarevich and Bova Korolevich are heroes in inexpensive books, a typical reading in the mass folk literature at this time.
4. This refers to the sub-division of the *Ruska Roma* that inhabited the territories of present-day Western Belarus, Lithuania and Eastern Poland.
5. *Stradaniya* (passions, suffering) is a musical-poetic genre of Russian folklore, a kind of a *Chastushki* (short humorous folk songs) of lyrical-comedic content.
6. *Samogon, samogonka* is a homemade strong alcoholic beverage.
7. 'To go with a bag' is a euphemism which refers to the practice of begging.

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8. *Militsiya* or *Narodnaya militsiya* was the name of the police forces in Russia, the Soviet Union and the Russian Federation (since 1917 until 2011).
9. It refers to the establishment of the Soviet power in Georgia, by military force.
10. Tiflis is the old (till 1936) official name of the city of Tbilisi.
11. The Transcaucasian Soviet Federative Socialist Republic existed from 1922 to 1936 and included Azerbaijan, Armenia and Georgia.
12. *Maryina roshcha* is an administrative district in North-Eastern part of the city of Moscow; in past this was one of the historical areas where in the mid-19th century were placed the famous Gypsy choirs and where were the homes of Gypsy musicians.
13. The manuscript is divided into two parts, which are here united into one; the part concerning the Gypsy kolkhoz *Trud Romen* (Gypsy Labour) was added to the location specified by author. Here the two parts are published together according to a chronological principle.
14. *Stanitsa* is the designation of a former Cossack settlement, the administrative centre of the district.
15. It is interesting to note that I. I. Dmitiriev is mentioned here, who in 1933, dared to inform the Soviet rulers about the catastrophic hunger consequences in the region (Трагедия, 2000, pp. 667-668). Apparently, the sending of Mikhail Bezlyudskiy there, exactly at this point in time, aimed at strengthening and developing the Gypsy kolkhoz *Trud Romen* because of the overall crisis situation, i.e. he was entrusted as a valuable Gypsy cadre.
16. The title "показательный" or "образцовый" (two synonyms meaning exemplary) in Soviet times was not only an honourable one, but led to a number of benefits and privileges.
17. The idea of building 'socialist towns' was introduced and discussed form the 1920s to May 1930 when the Politburo of the TsK VKP(b) rejected it. The idea reflected a search for the establishment of efficient and socialist living spaces, with communal housing, communal services, socialisation of the way of life, etc., especially for Siberia and the Far East, where new cities were to be built. In the archives no documents witnessing a government decision to create such a 'socialist town' based on the kolkhoz *Trud Romen* were found. Such an idea had also not been discussed at any meeting in the VTsIK concerning the activities aimed at creating a Gypsy national rayon or county, or in the perspective of the Gypsy Autonomous Republic (see above). This idea may have been present among the Gypsy activists or, more likely, Bezlyudskiy himself had hoped that would happen.
18. Here and below Bezlyudskiy confused some geographical names, often changed during his life: at the time he worked there, it was the North Caucasus kray(established in 1924, 3 times changed borders – later (since 13 March 1937) Ordzhonikidze's kray, later part of Krasnodarsky kray, and since 12 January 1943 Stavropolsky kray).
19. Trains with round and sawn wood, for the construction of houses and outbuildings, were sent as a priority to the Gypsy kolkhozes in the period 1936-37. The organisation of these deliveries was entrusted to the Resettlement Department of the NKVD, using the resources of the NKVD GULAG, i.e. the whole action was carried out within one department (for the deliveries in the region of the North Caucasus see:. РГАЭ, ф. 5675, оп. 1, д. 149).
20. No such decision is known to have been issued by the Ministry of Agriculture, and it seems unlikely that such a decision would have been made at this level, without coordination with the higher institutions (if there even was a decision taken to create such a 'socialist town' at all, a matter which remains controversial).
21. *Stakhanovit* labour refers to labour modelled after the Alexey Stakhanov (1906-1977) example. He was a miner who was known for producing more than it was required, by working harder and more efficient. His mining records gave birth to the Stakhanovit movement which intended to increase worker productivity and to demonstrate the superiority of the Soviet economic model.
22. All-Union Agriculture Exhibition (1935-39), later Exhibition of Achievements of National Economy (VDNKh).
23. In the former village of Ostashkovo, now part of the city of Omsk.

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Translated by Viktor Shapoval.

12.5.5 *Ilya Gerasimov*

[Биография]

[...] Четыре цыганских колхоза на Смоленщине организованы были цыганом Герасимовым Ильей Яковлевичем.

Родился он в 1898 году в Смоленской обл[асти]. Его отец в царское время вел кочевой образ жизни. В семье было 10 человек детей. Илья Яковлевич хорошо помнит песни и танцы в лесу у костра. До сих пор не забыл он как цыгане-барышники подделывали лошадям зубы, т.е. из старого коня делали молодого, из ленивого, заливая четвертинку водки через ноздри лошади, делали ее ретивой.

Отец Герасимова И. Я. говорил ему, что не выйдет из него путевого барышника. Совсем его сын не льнет к коням и ничего в них не понимает. Мать Ильи Яковлевича занималась гаданием и иногда брала его с собой. Три года он пас лошадей, принадлежащих жителям деревни.

В 1925 г. в этой деревне его избрали председателем крестьянской бедноты. Когда организовался Всероссийский Союз Цыган в Москве, ему было поручено организовать из кочевых цыган колхозы, совхозы. Союзом Цыган ему было выдано удостоверение как уполномоченому по организации колхозов по Смоленской и Брянской губерниям. Совместно с Михалажиным Николаем Павловичем и грамотной цыганкой Рузей Тумашевич был организован в Кореневщине Михновского сельсовета Смоленского района колхоз, которой вырос из 35 семей до 120.

После организации этого колхоза, без особых усилий были организованы колхозы:

1. В Кардымовском районе – 80 семей.
2. В Духовщинском районе – 65 семей.

В 1929 году был организован четвертый колхоз им[ени] Конституции в Александровском из 110 семей. В этом же году Герасимова И. Я. избрали председателем колхоза “Октябрь”. Колхоз состоял из 110 семей. В этом же году, в конце, Илью Яковлевича избрали председателем Михновского сельсовета. В 1932 году его направили учиться в Вяземскую одногодичную партийную школу. В 1933 году Смоленский Облисполком Герасимова И. Я. направил учиться дальше в Москву на двухгодичные [Высшие] курсы советского строительства при Президиуме ВЦИК и ЦИК СССР. После окончания курсов его направили на работу в Смоленский Облисполком инструктором Облисполкома. В 1944 году он переехал в Брянск, где работал зав[едующим] отделом Исполкома по хозяйственному и бытовому устройству эвакуированного населения. В 1961 году Герасимов Илья Яковлевич ушел на заслуженный отдых, с получением персональной республиканской пенсии.

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Не отдыхается человеку, который не мыслит жизни без труда. Илья Яковлевич Герасимов работает по сей день внештатным заведующим оргинструкторского отдела Советского района г. Брянска. До сих пор цыгане Смоленщины с большим уважением вспоминает Герасимова И. Я. как деятеля, любящего своих соплеменников. […]

[Николай Саткевич] [2]

∵

[Biography]

[…] Four Gypsy collective farms in the Smolensk region were organised by a Gypsy, Ilya Yakovlevich Gerasimov.

He was born in 1898 in the Smolensk oblast. His father led a nomadic way of life during tsarist times. There were 10 children in the family. Ilya Yakovlevich remembers songs and dances in the forest near the fire well. So far, he has not forgotten how Gypsies horse-dealers forged horses teeth, i.e. from an old horse, they made a young one, from a lazy one, pouring a quarter of vodka through the nostrils of a horse, made it zealous.

Ilya Yakovlevich Gerasimov's father told him that he won't be a good horse-dealer. Altogether, his son does not cling to horses and does not understand anything in them. Ilya Yakovlevich's mother was engaged in fortune-telling and sometimes took him with her. For three years he grazed horses belonging to the villagers.

In 1925, in this village [1] he was elected chairman of the peasant poor. When the All-Russian Gypsy Union was organised in Moscow, he was entrusted with organising kolkhozes and sovkhozes for nomadic Gypsies. The Union of Gypsies issued him a certificate as a plenipotentiary for the organisation of kolkhozes in the Smolensk and Bryansk governorates. Jointly with Nikolay Pavlovich Mikhalazhinym and the literate Gypsy women Ruzya Tumashevich he organised a kolkhoz in the village of Korenevschina at Mikhnovka village council in Smolensk rayon, which has grown from 35 families to 120.

After the organisation of this kolkhoz, the following kolkhozes were organised without much effort:

1. In Kardymovo rayon – 80 families.
2. In Dukhovshchina rayon – 65 families.

In 1929, the fourth [2] kolkhoz named after the *Constitution* was organised in Aleksandrovskoe [3] of 110 families [4]. In the same year, I. Y. Gerasimov was elected chairman of the kolkhoz named "October". The kolkhoz consisted of 110 families. In the same year, in the end, Ilya Yakovlevich was elected chairman of the Mikhnovka Village Council [5]. In 1932 he was sent to study at the Vyazemsky one-year party school. In 1933, the Smolensk Oblast Executive Committee sent I. Y. Gerasimov to Moscow to study further at two-year courses for Soviet construction at the Presidium of VTsIK and TsIK USSR. In 1944 he moved to Bryansk, where he worked as a head of the department of the Executive Committee for the economic and household services for the evacuated

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population. In 1961, Gerasimov Ilya Yakovlevich went on a well-deserved rest, receiving a personal republican pension [6].

But a person who cannot imagine a life without work cannot rest. Ilya Yakovlevich Gerasimov is still working on freelanced contract as head of the organisational department of the Sovetsky rayon of the city of Bryansk.

Until now, the Gypsies of the Smolensk region with great respect recall I. Y. Gerasimov as an activist, loving his fellow tribesmen. […]

[Николай Саткевич] [7]

Notes

1. It is not clear which village it is referred to, in all likelihood it is Korenevshchina (see below).
2. The name of the third kolkhoz is omitted.
3. Aleksandrovskoe in the Mikhnovka village council is the old name of the present-day village of Aleksandrovka. The village is known because of the tragic fate of local Gypsies: 176 of them were killed during the Nazi occupation on the 24th of April 1942.
4. The list of kolkhozes presented here is not only incomplete but not entirely accurate. This is explained by the fact that in the Western region (with the regional center of Smolensk) the Gypsy kolkhozes have repeatedly divided, dissolved, changed, etc. The following Gypsy collective farms are mentioned in the archives for the period of the 1930s: *Октября* (October), *Свобода* (Freedom), *Красный городок* (Little Red city), *Красномайск* (Red May), *Веселый* or *Веселый уголок* (Jolly or Jolly corner), *Сталинская конституция* (Stalin's Constitution) (GASO, f. P 2360, op. 1, sv. 181, d. 2068).
5. This village council is not defined as one of nationalities, which means that Ilya Gerasimov became chairman of a village council, populated mainly by Russians, where only a few Gypsies lived.
6. This means that Ilya Gerasimov has received the second type of personal pension (see above).
7. The text was written by Nikolay Satkevich in 1964 based on personal meetings and conversations with Ilya Gerasimov.

Source: LANB, f. Николай Саткевич.
Prepared for publication by Elena Marushiakova and Vesselin Popov.

12.5.6 *Alexander German*

Автобиография

Я, Герман Александр Вячеславович (литер. псевдоним Германо́), родился 26 мая 1893 г. по стар[ому] ст[илю], под г. Орлом, в селе Старцево-Лепешкино (по паспорту – гор[од] Орел). Зимой этого года, за три месяца до моего рождения, мой отец, рабочий-водопроводчик, работая на строительстве городской водокачки на Полесской пл[ощади], простудился и умирает от скоротечной чахотки. Безграмотная мать, оставшаяся в нужде, поступает работать на пивоваренный завод. Умерла также в Орле, в 1919 г., 69-ти лет. Из 12-ти детей я был самый младший. Выжило нас 5 человек, остальные умерли в детском возрасте. В молодости умерли два брата – фармацевт и художник-самоучка. Не остались в живых и сестры.

Благодаря помощи сестры, старшей меня на 23 года, я восьми лет поступил в 3-классн[ое] приходское училище, а с 1905 года учусь в 4-х клас[сном] городском

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училище, но окончить его не удалось: заболел я скарлатиной в тяжелой форме и осложнения болезни дают о себе знать до сих пор. Не окончив двух классов я готовлюсь экстерном на аптекарского ученика, но не выдержал экзамена за четыре класса гимназии. Благодаря поддержке второй сестры, вышедшей замуж за агронома, я поступаю в 4-й кл[асс] Коммерческого училища в Святошино, Киевск[ая] губ[ерния], которое кончил в 1915 г. и в этом году зачислен слушателем Киевск[ого] Коммерч[еского] Института. Из-за скудного заработка (был репетитором) пришлось в 1916 г. отказаться от Института. Вернувшись в Орел, я, освобожденный по болезни от военной службы, поступил дрогистом в Богоявленскую аптеку, в которой работал по декабрь 1917 года.

Излагать на досуге свои думки и наблюдения начал я в школьные годы. Писал миниатюры и короткие бытовые зарисовки, некоторые из них вошли в кн[игу] "Былые зарницы", Орел, 1921 г. Впервые выступил в печати в сентябре 1915 г. в сб[орнике] "Орловцы – жертвам войны". (Миниатюра "Червь грызет" и небольшой рассказ "Иван Талыго" имели положительный отзыв в местной прессе).

С февраля по октябрь 1918 г. работал счетоводом в Финансовом отделе Орлов[овского] Горисполкома, а с октября по декабрь инструктором Орловск[овского] Потребсоюза.

В январе 1919 г. был мобилизован в Красную Армию и направлен делопроизводителем в Отдел снабжения 4-й стрелк[овой] дивизии, затем назначен зав. вещевым складом. В сентябре переведен делопроизводителем в Ружпульпарк (Петроград), вскоре назначен заведующим этого парка. Во время пребывания в 4-й дивизии состоял членом Культурно-просветительной комиссии и по предложению военкома проводил собеседования и устраивал литературные вечера в красноарм[ейских] частях.

В ноябре того же 1919 г. работаю в Орловс[ком] Губвоенкоме помощником делопроизводителя и делопроизводителем Адм[инистративно]-Мобил[ьного] отдела, затем секретарем губвоенкома.

В мае же 1921 г., после демобилизации, я целиком отдаюсь литературной работе. Становлюсь постоянным сотрудником газеты "Известий Орловск[ого] Губкома РКП (б) и Губисполкома", в дальнейшем переименованной в "Красную Правду", "Земледелец и Рабочий" и "Орловскую Правду". Писал бытовые фельетоны, очерки и небольшие рассказы под псевдонимом "А. Полуднев" и "И. Тиновой". Принимал участие в литературных вечерах, в однодневных газетах, как "Маяк" (недели помощи школе), "Поволжье" (помощи голодающим Поволжья) и др. Принимал участие в собирании экспонатов только-что организованного Тургеневского музея в Орле. Собирал по школам творческие начинания учащихся и редактировал школьный худ[ожественно]-лит[ературный] журнал "Первоцвет" в изд[ательство] Орл[овского] Отделения Госиздата. Принимал инициативное участие в организации в Центр[альном] клубе и был руководителем первого рабоче-красноармейского литер[атурного] кружка в г. Орле, в который привлек около 40 человек.

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С мая по ноябрь 1921 г. работал зав. Театральной студией в клубе Орлов[ского] сельско-хозяйств[енного] баталиона и зав[едующим] Литературным отделом (ЛИТО) при Орлов[ском] ГУБОНО. С 17 июня временно замещал должность инспектора Клубного отделения Просветительного отдела Политуправления Орлов[ского] Воен[ного] Округа. 25 августа назначаюсь ГУБОНО в порядке совместительства отв[етственным] Секретарем Редколлегии Орлов[ского] Губиздата.

В феврале этого же 1921 г. в Орлов[ском] Городском театре, а затем Гарнизонном клубе, была включена в "Вечер политсатиры" одноактная пьеса "В некоем учреждении", которая благодаря положительной оценке была включена Губпрофсоветом в репертуар "недели профдвижения". За короткий период времени она, по сведениям ГУБОНО, ставилась около 300 раз в клубах Орлов[ской] губ[ернии], не учитывая Курск[ой] и др[угих] смежных губернии. Политтеатр Орлов[ского] Воен[ного] Округа выпустил ее отдельным изданием, за которым последовало 2-е издание Орлов[ского] Госиздата.

Одновременно шел драм[атический] эпизод "Заказчик" (из импер[иалистической] войны) в клубе при Сборно-пересылочном пункте и в красноармейских частях. Летом же ставились – миниатюра "Поэт мычания"(Сад Окрвоенкома) и двухакт[ная] пьеса "Не сон ли?" (Сад объединенного клуба пожарн[ой] организации), но обе последние пьески успеха не имели.

С ноября 1921 г. в ред[акции] газеты "Орлов[ская] Правда" заведовал отделом "По губернии" и сотрудничал в Губ. РОСТА, для которой написал сцену "Утро в редакции" для передачи информации с подмостков. В июне 1922 г., после двухмесячного перерыва по болезни, был назначен ответств[енным] выпускающим газ[еты] "Орлов[ской] Правды", совмещая должность зав[едующего] отделом "Крестьянская жизнь". 15 января 1924 г., по согласованию с ред[акцией] газеты перешел в издательство "Красная книга" (Орел) на должность отв[етственного] секретаря издательского отдела. 1 марта 1925 г. был освобожден ввиду перехода на выборную должность по проф[союзной] работе отв[етственным] секретарем Секции работников печати при Орлов[ском] Губпросе, где пробыл с 25 января по 24 сентября 1925 г. 1 октября 1925 г. снова был привлечен редакцией "Орловской Правды" на должность Завед[ующий] Местным отделом. 30 марта 1926 г., в момент переорганизации редакционного аппарата, я изъявил желание уволиться в связи с переездом в Москву.

Работая в "Орлов[ской] Правде", я сотрудничал в местной комсом[ольской] газете "Правда Молодежи", в котор[ой] поместил ряд рассказов. Они перепечатывались в воронежской газете "Комсомолец" и др[угих] молодеж[ных] провинц[иальных] газетах и вышли отдельным сборником "По новому" в моск[овском] из[дательст]ве "Молодая гвардия", в 1925 г. [...]

В последние годы пребывания моего в Орле состоял членом детской комиссии при из[дательст]ве "Красная книга" (вышла моя книжка для детей "Слушали-постановили", 1925) и принимал участие при этом же издательстве в разработке и

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составлении “Книги для чтения” для 1-го класса на основе местного материала; в 1922 г. явился инициатором и был членом редколлегии первого сборника пролетарских поэтов и писателей Орловского края; активно принимал участие и выступал со своими произведениями в Литературной секции Общества краеведения, в Тургеневском Литературном Обществе, в лит[ературной] группе “Яръ” при комсом[ольской] газете; участвовал в инициативной литгруппе “Чернозем” и редактировании журнала этой группы “Новый путь”, 1925 г.

В этот период являлся от редакции “Орлов[ской] Правды” делегатом на 1-й Губернский съезд рабселькоров; делегатом 2-ого Орл[овского] Губ[ернского] Совещания раб[очих], сельск[их] и воен[ных] корреспондентов “Орл[овской] Правды” и “Нашей деревни”; делегатом 7-ого Орлов[ского] Губ[ернского] Съезда Союза Рабпрос и делегатом Орлов[ской] Губ[ернской] конференции работников печати. Во всех случаях – с решающим голосом.

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В мае 1926 г. я, “периферийный классик”, не знавший суровой критики, отправился, полный радужных надежд, в Москву. В портфеле с десяток новых и заново переработанных рассказов, которые тотчас по приезде разнес по редакциям, где получил один ответ: “зайдите недельки через две”. Прошел установленный срок – и увы! – то не подходит по теме к журналу, то не к сезону, а то – вообще некудышная вещь. Один рассказ приняли, но напечатали через год (“Деревенский безбожник”). Земляки говорили: “Ну, Саша, подмазывай пятки и гайда по шпалам домой!” Обескуражило меня: нет денег и без пристанища. В поисках постоянной работы подрядился я заполнять бланки почтовых переводов для периодических изданий – по ½ копейки за штуку. Нашел на 20-й версте по Белор[усской] ж.д. (ныне “Бахавка”) комнатку и начал заполнять их по две-три сотни в сутки. Как-то и кто-то из москвичей предложил мне обратиться в Всерос[сийский] Союз Цыган, где нужны были культурщик и работник по организации издания на цыганском языке.

1 июня 1926 г. я был принят на редакцион[но]-издат[ельскую] работу в Цыганский союз. Этот период времени для бесписьменной народности был организационным во всех отношениях. Партия и правительство разработывали мероприятия в содействии перехода кочевых цыган на оседлость. Для разъяснительной работы необходима была литература на родном языке цыган, которые, испытавшие гнет и преследование в годы царизма и находившиеся еще во власти таборных кулаков, относились с недоверием к привлечению их к равноправному трудовому образу жизни. Необходимо было еще развенчать среди кочующих цыган доморощенные легенды буржоазного толка о их происхождении и истории, в которых воспевались их вечная изолированность и враждебность к ним окружающих их культурных народов.

Для организации цыганской письменности требовалось срочное создание алфавита и оформление основ грамматики. Из-за разбросанности статей о цыганах во

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многих журналах и газетах, забытых или мало кому известных, затруднялись изучение их экономики, быта, нравов, пережитков, верований и пр. Я задался целью собрать литературу о цыганах – по возможности всё, что было опубликовано в прошлом в русской печати. После трехлетней работы в библиотеке им[ени] Ленина Главнаука Наркомпроса РСФСР одобрила и выпустила в Центриздате, в 1930 г., мою "Библиографию о цыганах" (Указатель книг и статей с 1780 г. по 1930 г., с предислов[ием] проф. М. В. Сергиевского).

Наряду с собиранием и изучением печатных источников я предпринял собирание фольклора кочевников и изучение цыганского языка с голоса. Перевоплотившись в своеобразного "Алеко", я проводил неделями в таборе. Все это привело к тому, что я свободно овладел языком и стал писать стихи и прозу по-цыгански, разносторонне ознакомился с жизнью и чаяниями кочевых цыган и паразитизмом (цыганщиной) столичных хоровых цыган.

Я остановился на этом объяснении для того, чтобы не было в дальнейшем недоуменных вопросов: цыган или не цыган – я? Постиг язык (знаю северный и южный диалекты) и душу цыган потому, что иначе я бы не мог изобразительными средствами вести политико-просветительскую работу среди кочевников. Достиг ли я этой цели? – судить не мне по моим опубликованным работам.

23 августа 1926 г., на заседании редак[ционно]-издат[ельской] коллегии при Всерос[сийском] Союзе Цыган мне было поручено проработать вопрос о периодическом издании на цыг[анском] яз[ыке], а в октябре с назначением секретарем редакции поручилось мне оформить выпуск первого номера журнала "Романы зоря". Этот единственный в мире печатный орган цыган вышел в ноябре 1927 г., где помещен мой первый опыт на цыг[анском] яз[ыке] – рассказ "Руворо" ("Волчонок").

Одновременно с работой среди цыган я примкнул к литгруппе начинающих писателей "Рабочая Весна", где в сентябре 1928 г. избираюсь отв[етственным] Секретарем. В октябре этого же года был принят членом Всесоюз[ного] об[щест]ва пролет[арских] писателей "Кузница". [...] В феврале 1929 г. организовал цыганскую литер[атурную] группу "Роменгиро Лав" ("Слово цыган") и становлюсь ее секретарем – руководителем. В 1929-30 гг. прослушал методологию литературоведения, теоретическую поэтику, русскую литературу 19-го века и мастерскую прозы в организованных "Кузницей" Литературных мастерских, где между прочим, слушателями был выделен старостой. Зав[едующий] учебной частью был Ф. В. Гладков. Впервые с разоблачением сущности цыганщины выступил в ноябре 1929 г. на Диспуте "Цыганское искусство и борьба с цыганщиной" в Доме Искусств. О борьбе с цыганщиной в худож[ественной] литературе, музыке и в быту неоднократно выступал в Центр[альном] Цыганск[ом] Клубе "Лолы чергэн" ("Красная звезда"), членом которого состоял с 1927 г.

С 1928 г. выступаю в русской печати о цыганах. Статьи и очерки в "Комсом[ольской] Правде", в "Раб[очей] Газете", "Молодом Ленинце", "Крестьян[ской] газ[ете]", "Просвещении Национальностей", "Национальной книге", "Безбожнике", "Вокруг

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Света", и др. О моем очерке "Цыгане" в сборн[ике] "Наша жизнь" (изд. Федерации) Максим Горький дал отзыв: "интересно и ново" ("Журнал для всех" 1929, No. 12).

В декабре 1928 г. – присуждена премия на конкурсе журнала "Всемирный Следопыт" за рассказ "Бессчастные мирикля" – опубликован в этом журнале (1929, No. 1). В 1930 г. в издательстве "Недра" вышли "Цыганские рассказы", которые рекомендованы для библиотек в "Рекомендат[ельном] бюллетене" Наркомпроса, 1930, No. 34, и в Учпедгизе, в 1931 г. издан сбор[ник] очерков "Цыгане вчера и сегодня".

В 1930 г. и до весны 1931 вел культмассовую работу в промартели "Цыгпищепром". По август 1932 был ответств[енным] секретарем и по совместительству техническим редактором цыганск[ого] журнала "Нэво дром" ("Новый Путь") в изд[ательстве] Центриздата, затем Учпедгиза. С 1932 г. являюсь внешним редактором ГИХЛа, Учпедгиза, "Молодой Гвардии", Антирелигиозн[ого] из[дательст]ва, "Советского Законодательства", и рецензентом этих издательств и других – Детгиза, Профиздата, Сельхозгиза, Медгиза. Одновременно поступаю работать на штатную должность редактора Нацсектора Гослитиздата по выпуску художественной литературы на нац[иональных] языках, где пробыл с ноября 1934 г. по декабрь 1938 г.

В эти годы вышли отдельными изданиями на цыг[анском] яз[ыке] – "Нэво Джиибен" ("Новая жизнь"), очерки, Центриздат, 1929; "Атасятуно бурмистро" ("Вчерашний вождь"), рассказ, Центриздат 1930; "Лэс кхардэ рувэса и ваврэ роспхэныбэна" ("Его звали волком и другие рассказы"), ГИХЛ, 1933, "Джяна нэвэ рома" ("Идут новые цыгане"), Профиздат, 1933; "Серега Лагуно" (в соавторстве с цыг[анской] поэтессой О[льгой] Панковой), "Молодая Гвардия", 1933; "Ганка Чямба и ваврэ роспхэныбэна" ("Ганка Чамба и другие рассказы"), Гослитиздат, 1935.

По предложению актива московских цыган, в связи с борьбой с цыганщиной, мною написан ряд песен, которые положены на музыку, а также переведены с русского яз[ыка]: революционные и современные массовые песни для Центрального Цыганск[ого] Клуба, часть которых (15 названий) вошли в сб[орник] "Масова гиля" ("Массовые песни"), Музгиз, 1934. Переведен мною на цыганск[ий] яз[ык] "Интернационал" (в начале я пробовал переводить с цыг[анским] поэтом М. Безлюдским), помещ[енный] в сб[орник] "Пандж массова гиля" ("Пять массовых песен"), Музгиз, 1932. К 12-летию Красной Армии была напечатана моя песня на цыганск[ом] яз[ыке] в сб[орнике] "Красноармейские песни народов СССР", Музгиз, 1933. Писал тексты цыганских песен для Всерос[сийского] Гастр[ольно]-Концерт[ного] Объединения (трудовое соглашение от 14.I.1940).

Кстати, сообщу вкратце о моих поэтических опытах на цыганском языке. Стихи на русском языке я никогда не пробовал писать. Когда мною была написана музыкальная пьеса "Жизнь на колесах", потребовались тексты песен на цыганск[ом] яз[ыке]. Я предложил написать их цыганским поэтам, но они не удовлетворили режиссера-постановщика. (То же произошло и с поэтическими примерами в моей "Книге для чтения", для 1-го класса.) Испытав вначале трудности освоения поэтического языка цыган, я начал с 1931 писать стихи, а также переводить с русского языка классиков и современных поэтов. Стихи помещал в цыган[ском]. журнале "Нэво

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дром". Выходили они отдельными сборниками: "Лолэ яга" ("Красные огни"), Гихл, 1934; "Яв прэ стрэга" ("Будь на страже") "Молодая гвардия", 1934; "Гиля" ("Стихи"), Гослитиздат, 1935; "Роспхэныбэна дрэ гиля" ("Три поэмы"), Гослитиздат, 1937; "Нэвэ гиля" ("Новые стихи") и драм[атическая] пьеса в стихах), Гослитиздат, 1938. В 1939 перевел для театра "Ромэн" – "Моцарт и Сальери" и "Скупой рыцарь" А. Пушкина.

В русском переводе мои стихи печатали в сб[орнике] "Писатели СССР – Великому Октябрю", ГИХЛ, 1932; сб. "Сталинская Конституция в поэзии народов СССР", Гослитиздат, 1937; сб[орнике] "Ленин и Сталин в поэзии народов СССР", Гослитиздат, 1938; сб[орнике] "Сталин в творчестве народов СССР", Орел, 1939; в Московских газетах и журналах – "Вечерняя Москва", "Легкая индустрия", "Крестьянка", и др., в провинции – в Курской "Молодой Гвардии", "Орловск[ой] Правде", "Белгородской Правде" и др.

Вышли отдельными изданиями на русском яз[ыке] сб[орник] "Стихи и песни", Гослитиздат, 1937, и сб[орник] "Цыганские стихи", из[дательст]во Област[ого] Совета депутатов трудящихся, Орел 1941, под редакц[ией] Вас[илия] Казина, тираж которого при оккупации немецко-фашистск[их] полчищ был полностью ими уничтожен в орловской типографии "Труд".

С 1930 г. мои стихи (также рассказы, очерки, статьи и сказки) переводились на языки народов СССР и на иностранные: украинский, белорусский, армянский, татарский, еврейский, литовский; английский, французский, немецкий (в пер[еводе] Вайнерта); возможно и на другие языки, но не имею сведений.

В сентябре 1930 г. вместе с Ив[аном] Ром-Лебедевым (член ССП) и др[угими] была образована инициативная пятерка по организации цыганского театра, а в октябре этого года, как представитель редакции "Нэво дром" состоял членом Оргкомитета при наркомпросе по созданию Государст[венного] Цыган[ского] Театра-студии. 6 декабря выступал по докладу Ив[ана] Ром-Лебедева на диспуте "О путях [развития] индо-ромского искусства" в Тео-клубе.

21 декабря 1931 г. постановкой моей пьесы "Джиибэн прэ роты" ("Жизнь на колесах") открылся Московск[ий] Государств[еный] Цыганск[ий] театр "Ромэн". 5 сентября 1935 г. пьеса была показана на первом театральном фестивале, и как писала газ[ета] "Правда": "Пьеса "Жизнь на колесах" вызвала бурное одобрение зрительного зала". Прошла она в театре "Ромэн" свыше 1 200 раз, просуществовав на его подмостках до 1939 г. Вторая пьеса "Машкир яга" ("Между огней"), поставленная театром "Ромэн" 22 мая 1932 г., посвящалась гражданской войне. В другом – Московск[ом] Передвижном Цыганск[ом] Театре, была представлена осенью 1932 г. моя пьеса "Палага первая" о борьбе с классовым врагом – цыганским кулаком. Все эти пьесы изданы Центриздатом в сб[орнике] "Романо театро" ("Цыганский театр"), в 1932 г.

По договору с Радиокомитетом мною был сделан лит[ературно]-муз[ыкальный] монтаж "Цыганы", переданный по радио 24 апреля 1940 г. По центральному радиовещанию; 29 февраля того же года передавались "Стихи" в русском переводе, а 4 июля – мои "Цыганские сказки".

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Цыганские сказки, запись которых я начал с 1926 г., стал опубликовывать с 1928 г. в журн[алах] “Экран”, “Читатель и писатель”, “30 дней”, “Безбожник”, “Деревенский безбожник”, “Дружба народов” и др. В настоящее время подготовлен к печати сборник “Цыганские сказки” на 8 печ[атных] листов.

С момента возникновения цыганской письменности я был редактором почти всех отдельных изданий поэзии и прозы начинающих писателей, также и их переводов: А. Пушкина – “Цыганы”, “Капит[анская] дочка”, “Дубровский” и др., Л. Толстого, [М.] Горького, [А.] Чехова, [В.] Короленко, [П.] Мериме – “Кармэн”, и др., из советск[их] писателей – М. Шолохова, [В.] Ставского, [А.] Новикова-Прибоя, [В.] Бахметьева, [Н.] Ляшко, [Б.] Житкова и др. в издании Гослитиздата и Детгиза.

1931 мною были выявлены в Москве и провинции 12 начинающих цыганских поэтов и привлечены к участию в первом “Альманахе цыганских поэтов”, вып[ущенном] в Центриздате под моей редакцией. Также под моей редакцией вышел другой – “Цыганский альманах”, Гослитиздат, 1934.

Помимо художеств[енного] творчества мною было предпринято составление стабильных учебников для цыганских школ: За учебу, 1932; Грамотным детям, 1932; Вперед к работе, 1932; Учебник цыганского языка, 1934; Хрестоматия по литературе, 1934; Книга для чтения-1-я и 2-я части, 1932; Учебник цыганского языка, 1937 (2-е изд. переработанное); Книга для чтения – 1-я часть, 1937 (2-е изд[ание] переработанное) и др.

Кроме того, проредактировал или перевел ряд учебников и книг по разнообразным вопросам – обществ[енно]-политич[еским], сельско-хозяйств[енным], антирелигиоз[ным] и др[угую] литературу в издании Партиздата, Центриздата, Учпедгиза, Детгиза и проч.

Как представитель цыганской печати, в порядке общественной работы принимал активное участие по работе среди трудящихся цыган в Отделе Национальностей ВЦИК, Наркомпроса, Наркомзема, Всекопромсовета, Междуведомственной комиссии нацменьшинств при Моссовете по вопросам организации цыганских колхозов, кооперативно-промысловых артелей, школ, ликбезов и других мероприятий по трудоустройству кочевых цыган. Как член правления Центр[ального] цыг[анского] клуба “Лолы Чергэн” участвовал в библиотечн[ой] работе, в продвижении цыганской книги (в помощь Когизу), проводил правовые консультации по жилищно-бытовым и другим вопросам путем личного общения и переписки. Состоял членом художеств[енного] совета в театре “Ромэн”. В 1940 г. был избран секретарем бюро образованной в этом году цыганской секции при ССП.

В целях личного ознакомления на местах с состоянием и нуждами осевших на землю цыган и для проведения политико-просветительской работы среди них неоднократно выезжал на периферию: колхоз “Труд Ромэн”, Цыганского сельсовета, Минераловодческого района, колхозы “Октябрь” и “Свобода” Смоленской области, завод им. “1-й Пятилетки” Метизсоюза, Загорск, Москов[ской] обл[асти] (дер[евни] Крупино, Павлово-Посадское) и др.

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В Великую Отечественную войну, с первых дней до конца, являлся начальником Аварийно-восстановит[ельного] звена 33-го Домуправления Свердловского РОНД г. Москвы, неоднократно назначался ответств[енным] дежурным по президиуму Союза Совет[ских] Писателей, был командирован в июле 1941 г. на курсы по повышению знания комсостава МПВО по Свердловскому району, которые прошел в два месяца практически вплоть до ночных дежурств при курсах МПВО [Местная противовоздушная оборона].

Во время войны сотрудничал в Информбюро, написал цикл стихов об участии цыган в партизанских отрядах, выступал со стихами и сказками в красноармейских частях и госпиталях (Гучково, Люблино, Чухлинка и др. Московск. обл.). Весной 1942 г. работал в радиоцентре по обработке писем с фронтов Отечественной войны для передачи по радио. В июле этого года состоялся мой творческий вечер в фольклорной секции при ССП (Цыганские сказки). В 1943 г. проявился интерес к инвалидам войны, потерявшим зренье на поле боя. По предложению Всесоюз[ного] Об[щест]ва слепых я провел обследование и написал ряд очерков со слов слепых инвалидов для печати о системе Брайля (О незрячих инвалидах была небольшая статья "Возвращение к жизни" в газ[ете] "Москов[ский] Большевик", 20.X.1943 г.

Зимой 1942 г. работал над повестью "Записки русского воина" – от лица участника, студента горного института. (Работа осталась не законченной, написано 5 п. л.). Также осталась незаконченной рукопись в 12 п[ечатных] л[истов] "Цыгане в русской художественной литературе" (От Державина до Блока). В 1944 г. подготовил к печати "Основы цыганского языка", краткое пособие для обучения цыг[анскому] языку в элементарном изложении, 5 печ[атных] листов. Привел в систематический порядок "Дополнение к библиографии о цыганах" (изданной в 1930 г.), 6 печ[атных] листов.

В 1945 г. написал обзор "Фашизм и цыгане в Отечественную войну", 1 печ[атный] лист. В 1946 г. по заданию ВОКСа [Всесоюзное общество культурной связи с заграницей] выполнена работа совместно с Ив. Ром-Лебедевым – "Краткая история советских цыган", 3 п[ечатных] л[иста]. В 1947 г. по договору с Орл[овском] Областн[ом] Из[дательст]вом представлен в соавторстве с чл[еном] ССП В. Г. Черевковым сборник "Товарищ Иннокентий" (о И. Ф. Дубровинском) 3 ½ печ[атные] листа; к 800-летию г. Москвы по договору с театром "Ромэн" от 20. VII. 1947 г. написана "Краткая история Госуд[арственного] Цыганск[ого] театра", 1 ½ печ[атного] листа; по договоренности с ВОКСом выполнена для заграницы в дек. 1947 – янв. 1948 г. работа "Цыгане Советского Союза", 3 печ[атных] листа. В связи с 30-летием советской власти мною написана статья "Цыганский театр" для сб[орника] "Советский театр", 1 печ[атный] лист; в 1946 г. – для заграничной выставки "Советская книга", в соавторстве с В. Черевковым – "Лауреаты художествен[нной] литературы", сборн[ик] био-критических аннотаций, 8 печ[атных] листов. Все рукописи одобрены и приняты ВОКСом.

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В 1945-1948 годах начаты работы и до сих пор собираю материал по Орловскому краю в книгохранилищах и архивах г. Москвы – "История Орловской области", "К истории провинциальных зрелищ и местных интересов"; "Орел и Орловцы" – полу-беллетристические очерки. Вчерне закончил воспоминания о восстановительном периоде Орлов[ской] губернии – "из записной книжки местного писателя", около 5 печ[атных] листов. Для собирания материала выезжал в 1949-1950 г.г. в Орел, Мценск, Змиевка и др[угие] места Орловск[ой] области. В Орле 8.XII.1949 г. выступал со стихами в Орлов[ском] Областном Радиокомитете. Печатался в "Орловск[ой] Правде" в 1949-50 гг.

О моей работе за 1949-1951 г.г. при сем представляю творческий отчет в драмсекцию ССП.

В текущем году совместно с т.т. Захаркиным Ф. Д. и Чинёновым И. Н закончил "Очерки по истории Орлов[ской] партийной организации" (с 1890-х годов по 1917 г. включ[ительно]) по договору с Орловск[им] Обл[астным] Издательством, 25 печ[аатных] листов.

В настоящее время по договоренности с Госуд[арственным] Моск[овским] цыганским театром "Ромэн" пишу 3-х актную пьесу "Ланцов и прочие" (название условное).

О моем художественном творчестве развернутых критических статей не было. Это объясняется, пожалуй, отсутствием литературоведов, знающих цыганский яз[ык], за исключением проф[ессора]-лингвиста М. В. Сергиевского, который дал на страницах цыганского журнала вообще оценку о молодой цыганск[ой] художеств[еной] литературе. Краткие сведения о моей работе есть в Больш[ой] Сов[етской] Энциклопедии. В "Литер[атурном] обозрении", 1938 г., No. 3, обстоятельно написал о моем сб[орнике] "Стихи и песни" в рус[ском] переводе – К[орнелий] Зелинский. Писалось много о пьесе "Жизнь на колесах", особенно в местах, где гастролировал театр "Ромэн". Иностранная пресса уделяла внимание вскользь в связи с интересом к постановкам этого театра.

Состою членом профсоюза с 1918 г., в настоящее время при Гослитиздате.

В 1946-47 г.г. посещал лекторий, организованный Парторганизацией ССП и Советом Клуба писателей и прослушал циклы – стратегию и тактику большевистской партии, политику большевистской партии в области литературы и искусства и логику. В 1951-52 г.г., там же, в Клубе Литераторов, прослушал цикл по эстетике.

За последнее годы общественную работу веду при Домуправлении No. 34, и секретарем Комиссии Содействия укрупненных двух домов по Столешникову пер[еулку] утвержден президиумом Свердловск[ого] Райисполкома г. Москвы.

Вышеизложенное мною подтверждаю имеющимся при мне документами и публикациями в печати.

На территории врагов я никогда не был, связь с заграницей не имел и не имею, не примыкал к враждебным партиям и группировкам, родственников – врагов народа не имею, под судом и следствием не был и никогда не подвергался административным взысканиям.

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10 мая 1952 года, г. Москва.
... [подпись] (А. Германо).

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Autobiography

I, German Alexander Vyacheslavovich (pen name *Germanó*) [1] was born on the 26th of May 1893 (according to the Julian calendar), near the city of Orel, in the village of Startsevo-Lepeshkino (in the passport – in the city of Orel). In the winter of that year, three months before my birth, my father [2], a plumber working on the construction of a city water pump on Polesskaya square, caught a cold and died of fulminant phthisis. My illiterate mother [3], left in poverty, went to work at the brewery. She also died in Orel, in 1919, at the age of 69. I was the youngest of 12 children. We, 5 children, survived, the rest died in childhood. In their youth, two of my brothers died – a pharmacist and a self-taught artist. No sisters remained alive either.

Thanks to the help of my sister [4], who was 23 years older than me, being eight years old, I was enrolled in a three-grade parish school, and since 1905 I studied in the four-grade urban school, but it was not possible to finish it: I fell ill with scarlet fever in an aggravated form and the complications of the disease still make themselves felt. Without finishing two classes I studied externally as an apothecary student, but failed the exam for the four grades of the gymnasium. Thanks to the support of my second sister, who married an agronomist, I entered the 4th grade of the secondary Commercial school in Svyatoshino, Kiev governorate, from where I graduated in 1915 and, in the same year, I enrolled as a student in the Kiev Commercial Institute college. Because of the meagre earnings (I was a tutor) I had to abandon the Institute in 1916. Having returned to Orel, I was freed from military service due to illness, I entered as a druggist in the pharmacy at the Bogoyavlenskaya square, where I worked until December 1917.

I've started to express my thoughts and observations at leisure, being at school. I wrote miniatures and short everyday sketches, some of which were included in the book *Past Lightnings*, Orel, 1921. Firstly, my works appeared in print in September 1915 in the book *Orlov's inhabitants: to the victims of war*. (The miniature "The Worm gnaws" and the short story "Ivan Talygo" had a positive review in the local press.)

From February to October 1918, I worked as an accountant in the Financial Department of Orel Executive Committee and, from October to December 1918, I worked as an instructor at the Orel Consumer Union.

In January 1919, I was mobilised into the Red Army and sent as a clerk to the Supply Department of the 4th infantry division, then appointed as a head of a material storage. In September, I was transferred to the position of a clerk at the ammunition storage Ruzhpulpark (Petrograd) [5] and soon appointed as its head. During my service in the 4th division I was a member of the Cultural and Educational Commission and, at

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the suggestion of the military commissaire, I conducted interviews and arranged literary events in the Red Army units.

In November 1919, I worked in the Orel Provincial Military Committee as an assistant clerk and clerk at the Administration and Mobilisation Department, then as a Secretary of this committee.

In May 1921, after demobilisation, I devoted myself entirely to literary work. I become a permanent employee of the newspaper *Izvestiya Orlovskogo Gubkoma VKP(b) i Gubispolkoma* [News of Orel Gubkom RKP(b) and Gubispolkom], later renamed to *Krasnaya Pravda* [Red Truth], *Zemledelets i Rabochiy* [Peasant and Worker] and *Orlovskaya Pravda* [Orel's Truth]. I wrote the everyday life satires, essays and short stories under the pennames "A. Poludnev" and "I. Tinovoy". I took part in literary evening events, in one-day newspapers, like *Mayak* [Lighthouse] (weeks for help the schools), *Povolzhie* (of famine relief at the South Volga region), etc. I participated in collecting exhibits for the freshly organised I. Turgenev's Museum in Orel. I gathered creative works of school students and edited the school art and fiction magazine *Pervotsvet* [Primrose] for the Orel Department of Gosizdat. I proactively participated in the organisation and was the head of the first literary circle for workers and Red Army soldiers in the Center-club of the city of Orel, which attracted about 40 people.

From May to November 1921 I worked as head of the Studio Theatre at the Orel Agriculture battalion and as head of the Literary Department (LITO) in the Orel's GUBONO. Since June 17th, 1921, I temporarily replaced the position of inspector of the Club branch of the Educational Department of the Political Directorate of Orel Military District. On August 25th, I was appointed by GUBONO as a part-time Secretary of The Editorial Board of the Orel Provincial Publishing House.

In February 1921, my one-act play *V nekoem uchrezhdenii* [In a Certain Institution] was included in the Evening, as part of their political satire, and was shown in the Orel City Theatre, and then in the Garrison club; this play, thanks to a positive review, was included by the Governorate Trade Union into the repertoire of the Week of the professional movement. In a short period of time it, according to GUBONO, was shown about 300 times in clubs of the Orel Province, not counting Kursk and other neighbouring governorates. The political Theatre of Orel Military District had published my play as a separate edition and the 2nd edition followed soon in the Orel Provincial Publishing House.

At the same time, my dramatic episode *The Customer* (a case from the Imperialistic war) was shown in the club at the Mobilization and Dispatching point and in the Red Army units. In the summer a miniature *A Poet of Mooing* was shown (in the Garden of the Orel Provincial Military Committee) and a 2-act play *Not a dream* was shown (in the Garden of the United Club of Firemen Organisations), but the two last small plays were not successful.

From November of 1921 I was head of the Department 'In the Province' of the newspaper *Orlovskaya Pravda*. I had also a part-time job in the Orel Provincial Russian Telegraph Agency (ROSTA). I wrote for the agency a scene titled *One Morning in the Editor's Office*, intended for the open stage. In June 1922, after a two-month break due to illness, I was

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appointed to the position of an Executive Releasing Editor of the newspaper *Orlovskaya Pravda*, taking also the position of Head of its Department 'Peasant Life'. On January 15th, 1924, by the agreement of the editorship of the newspaper *Orlovskaya Pravda*, I moved to the Publishing House *Krasnaya kniga* [Red Book] (in the city of Orel) to take the position of Executive Secretary of its Publishing Department. On March 1st, 1925, I was released due to a transition to an elected position in the trade unions' structure: Executive Secretary of the Section of press workers in Orel, which I occupied from 25 January to 24 September 1925. From October 1st, 1925, I was again involved in editing of the newspaper *Orlovskaya Pravda* to the position of head of its Local department. On March 30, 1926, at the moment of re-organisation of the editorial staff, I expressed a desire to resign in connection with my move to Moscow.

Working in *Orel's Truth*, I collaborated in the local Komsomol newspaper *Pravda Molodezhi* (Truth of the Youth), and I put a number of my short stories there. They were reprinted in the Voronezh newspaper *Komsomolets* (A Member of Komsomol) and other youth provincial newspapers and published in a separate collection titled *In a New Way* in Moscow's publishing house *Molodaya Gvardiya* (Young Guard), in 1925. [...]

In the last years of my stay in Orel, I was a member of the Children's Commission at the publisher *Krasnaya kniga* (Red book), (my book for children *Listened – Decided*) and participated in the same publishing house in the development and preparation of *Books for Reading* for the 1st grade on the basis of local material; in 1922 I was the initiator and a member of the Editorial Board of the first volume of compiled works of proletarian poets and writers in the Orel region; I actively participated and recited my works for the public in the Literary Section of the Society of Local Lore, in Turgenev Literary Society, in the literary group *Yar* (Steep Shore) at the Komsomol newspaper, I participated in the initiative of the literary group "Black earth" and in the editing the magazine of its group, *Noviy put'* (New Way), 1925.

During this period, I was a delegate from the Editorial Board of the newspaper *Orlovskaya Pravda* to the 1st Orel Governorate Congress of worker correspondents; a delegate of the 2nd Orel Governorate Meeting of worker, peasant, military correspondents of the newspapers *Orlovskaya Pravda* and *Nasha derevnya* [Our Village]; a delegate of the 7th Orel Provincial Congress of the Educators' Union and a delegate of the Orel Governorate Conference of the press workers. In all cases, I had a decisive voice.

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In May 1926, I, a "provincial classic", who did not know the harsh criticism, went, full of bright hopes, to Moscow. In my portfolio, there were dozens of new and newly reworked stories, which, immediately after my arrival, I distributed among the publishers, and received one answer: "come back in a week or two". That term passed – and alas! something does not fit the theme of the journal, other does not fit to the season, and something else is generally worth nothing. One story was accepted but printed after a year (*Derevenskiy bezbozhnik* [The Village Atheist]). Countrymen said, "Well, Sasha, prepare

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your feet and head back home!" What discouraged me was the lack of money and shelter. In search of a permanent job, I was contracted to fill in the forms of postal orders for periodicals – 0.5 kopeikas for 1 form. I found a room to rent on the 20th mile from Belorusskiy railway station (now it calls Bakovka) and began to fill two or three hundred forms a day. Somehow, someone from the Muscovites suggested that I apply to the All-Russian Union of Gypsies, as they needed an organiser of cultural events and publications in the Gypsy language.

On June 1, 1926, I was appointed at the Gypsy Union for the job of editing and publishing. This period of time was organisational in all respects for the people without alphabet. The Communist Party and the Soviet Government developed measures to facilitate the transition of nomadic Gypsies to a settled way of life. In order to conduct explanatory work, it was necessary to have literature in the native language of the Gypsies, who had suffered oppression and persecution during the Tsarist years and were still in the power of the tabor's kulaks, and who treated with distrust the attempts to attract them into the working life under the conditions of equal rights. It was necessary to discredit among the wandering Gypsies homegrown legends made up by the bourgeoisie about the Gypsy origin and history, which praised their eternal isolation and hostility towards their neighbouring cultural peoples.

The task of organising the Gypsy writing required the urgent creation of an alphabet and the design of the basics of a grammar. Due to the dispersion of articles about Gypsies in many magazines and newspapers, forgotten or little known, it was difficult to study their economy, way of life, customs, remnants, beliefs, etc. I decided to collect literature about Gypsies, if possible, everything that was published in the past in the Russian press. After three years of work in the Lenin Library, the Glavnauka in Narkompros approved and published in the Tsentrizdat, in 1930, my *Bibliography of Gypsies* (Index of books and articles from 1780 to 1930, Preface by prof. M. V. Sergievskiy) [6].

Along with the collection and study of printed sources, I undertook a collection of nomadic folklore and a study of the Gypsy language orally (by means of voice). Having reincarnated in a kind of Aleko [7], I spent weeks in the *tabor*. All this has led to the fact that I have freely mastered the language and began to write poetry and prose like a Gypsy, versatile and familiarised with the life and hopes of nomadic Gypsies and with the parasitism (*tsyganshchina*) of the Gypsy choirs in the capital city.

I stopped at this explanation in order to avoid further questions: a non-Gypsy or a Gypsy? Who am I? I've learned the language (I know the Northern and Southern dialects) [8] and the soul of the Gypsies because otherwise I would not be able to conduct political and educational work among nomads by pictorial artistic means. Have I achieved this goal? – it is not my task to assess my own published works.

On August 23, 1926, at the meeting of the Editing-Publishing Board at the All-Russian Union of Gypsies I was entrusted to work on the question about a periodical publication in Gypsy language and, in October, after my appointment as a Secretary of the Editorial Board, I was ordered to prepare the first issue of the magazine *Romany zorya*. This is the

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world's first journal printed in the Gypsy language, it was released in November 1927, and contained my first experience in the Gypsy language – the story *Руворо* (A Small Wolf).

While working among the Gypsies, I joined a literature group of beginner writers *Rabochaya vesna* (Workers' Spring), where in September of 1928 I was elected an Executive Secretary. In October of the same year I was accepted as a member of the All-Union Society of the Proletarian Writers *Kuznitsa* (The Forge). […] In February 1929, I organised the Gypsy literature group *Romengiro Lav* (Word of Gypsies) and became its Secretary-Manager. In 1929-30 I've learned the methodology of literary studies, theoretical poetics, Russian literature of the 19th century and attended the prose workshop in the Literary Workshops organised by *Kuznitsa*, where, by the way, I was allocated by the praepostor of the students' collective. Head of the training department was F. V. Gladkov. For the first time, I have made the disclosure of the evil essence of *Tsyganshchina* in November 1929 at the Dispute 'Gypsy art and the fight against *Tsyganshchina*' in the House of Arts. I had many speeches on the fight against *Tsyganshchina* in the fiction literature, music and everyday life in the Central Gypsy Club *Loly Čergen* (Red Star), a member of which I was since 1927.

Since 1928 I wrote in the Russian press about Gypsies. Articles and essays in *Komsomolskaya Pravda* (Komsomol's Truth), in *Rabochaya Gazeta* (Workers' Newspaper), *Molodoy Leninets* (Young Leninist), *Krestyanskaya Gazeta* (Peasants' Newspaper), *Prosveshchenie Natsionalnostey* (Education of Nationalities), *Natsionalnaya Kniga* (National Book), *Bezbozhnik* (Atheist), Vokrug Sveta (Around the World), etc. Maxim Gorky expressed his opinion about my essay 'Gypsies' in the collective book *Nasha zhizn'* (Our life): 'interesting and new' (*Zhurnal dlya Vsekh* (Journal for All), 1929, No. 12).

In December 1928, I was awarded the prize in the contest of the magazine *Vsemirnyy Sledopit* (World's Pathfinder) for the story *Besschastnye miriklya* (Unlucky Necklace), published in this magazine (1929, No. 1). In 1930, the Publishing House *Nedra* (Subsoil) published my volume *Gypsy Stories*, which was recommended for libraries in the *Recommendation Bulletin* of the Narkompros (1930, No. 34); and Uchpedgiz, in 1931, published a collection of my essays *Gypsies Yesterday and Today*.

In 1930, and until the spring of 1931, I conducted cultural work in the manufactory artel *Cygpishcheprom*. Until August 1932, I was the Executive Secretary and part-time Technical Editor of the Gypsy Journal *Nevo drom* (New Way) in the publishing house Tsentrizdat, then Uchpedgiz. Since 1932, I was an external editor of GIKhL, Uchpedgiz, *Molodaya Gvardiya*, Antireligious Publisher, *Sovetskoe Zakonodatelstvo* (Soviet Legislation), as well as a reviewer for these publishers and other: Detgiz, Profizdat, Selkhozgiz, Medgiz. At the same time, I took a full-time position of editor in the National Sector of the Goslitizdat for the production of literature in the national languages, where I worked from November 1934 to December 1938.

In these years I published, as separate editions, the following materials in the Gypsy language: *Нэво джиибэн* (New Life), essays, Tsentrizdat, 1929; *Атасятуно бурмистро* (Yesterday's Leader), story, Tsentrizdat 1930; *Лэс кхардэ рувэса и ваврэ роспхэныбэна*

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(His Name Was Small Wolf and Other Stories), GIKhL, 1933; *Джяна нэвэ рома* (New Gypsies Coming), Profizdat, 1933; *Серёга Лагуно* (co-authored with the Gypsy poet Olga Pankova), Molodaya Gvardiya, 1933; *Ганка Чямба и ваврэ роспхэныбэна* (Ganka Chamba and Other Stories), Goslitizdat, 1935.

At the suggestion of the asset of the Moscow Gypsies, in connection with the fight against *Tsyganshchina*, I wrote a number of songs that are put to music, as well as translated from Russian revolutionary and modern mass songs for the Central Gypsy Club, part of which (15 titles) entered the songbook *Масова гиля* (Mass Songs), Muzgiz, 1934. I have translated the anthem *International* into the Gypsy language (at the beginning I tried to translate it with the poet M. Bezlyudskiy), it was published in the songbook *Пандж массова гиля* (Five mass songs), Muzgiz, 1932. To the 12th anniversary of the Red Army my song in Gypsy language was published in the songbook *Red Army Songs of the peoples of the USSR*, Muzgiz, 1933. I wrote song lyrics in the Gypsy language for the All-Russian Concert Tours Association (employment contract of January 14th, 1940).

By the way, I will report briefly about my poetic experiments in Gypsy language. I have never tried to write poetry in Russian. When I wrote the musical play *Life on wheels*, I needed lyrics in the Gypsy language. I offered to write them to Gypsy poets, but they did not satisfy the director-producer (It also happened with poetic examples in my *Книга для чтения* (Book for reading), for the 1st school grade). Having first experienced difficulties in mastering the poetic language of the Gypsies, I began in 1931 to write poetry, as well as to translate from Russian classics and modern poets. The poems were published in the Gypsy journal *Nevo drom*. They went out in separate collections: *Лолэ яга* (Red Lights), GIKhL, 1934; *Яв прэ стрэга* (Be on Guard), Molodaya Gvardiya, 1934; *Гиля* (Poems), Goslitizdat, 1935; *Роспхэныбэна дрэ гиля* (Three Poems) [9], Goslitizdat, 1937; *Нэвэ гиля* (*New Poems*) *and Theatre play in verses*, Goslitizdat, 1938. In 1939 I have translated for the Theatre Romen – *Mozart and Salieri* and *The Miserly Knight* by A. Pushkin.

The Russian translations of my poems were printed in the collection *Writers of the USSR: To the Great October*, GIKhL, 1932; collection of *Stalin's Constitution in the Poetry of the Peoples of the USSR*, Goslitizdat, 1937; collection *Lenin and Stalin in the Poetry of the Peoples of the USSR*, Goslitizdat, 1938; collection of *Stalin in the Art Works of the USSR Peoples*, Orel, 1939; in the Moscow newspapers and magazines – *Vechernyaya Moskva* [Evening Moscow], *Legkaya Industriya* [Light Industry], *Krestyanka* [Peasant Woman], etc., in the province media: Kursk's *Molodaya Gvardiya* [*The Youth Guard*], *Orelskaya Pravda* [*The Orel Truth*], *Belgorodskaya Pravda* [*The Belgorod Truth*], etc.

I published, in separate editions in Russian, my *Стихи и песни* (Poems and Songs), Goslitizdat, 1937, and a collection of *Цыганские стихи* (Gypsy Poems) in the Publishing house of the Regional Council of the Toilers' Deputies, Orel, 1941, whose editor was Vasiliy Kazin. All copies were completely destroyed in the time of the occupation by the German-Fascist hordes in the Orel Printing House *Trud* (Labour) [10].

Since 1930, my poems (as well as stories, essays, articles and fairy tales) were translated into the languages of the peoples of the USSR and foreign languages: Ukrainian,

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Belarusian, Armenian, Tatar, Jewish, Lithuanian, English, French, German (in the translation by E. B. G. Weinert); perhaps in other languages too, but I have no information.

In September 1930, along with Ivan Rom-Lebedev (a member of the Union of the Soviet Writers [11]), and others, I participated in the initiative group of five persons on the organisation of the Gypsy theatre, and in October of that same year, as a representative of the Editorial Board of *Nevo drom*, I was a member of the Organizing Committee of the Narkompros for the creation of the State Gypsy Theatre-studio. On December 6th (1930), I spoke on the report of I. Rom-Lebedev at the debate *On the Ways of Development of Indo-Roma Art* [12] in the Theo-club.

On December 21st, 1931, my play *Джиибэн прэ роты* (Life on Wheels) has opened the Moscow State Gypsy Theatre Romen. On September 5th, 1935, this play was shown at the first Theatre Festival, and, as the newspaper *Pravda* wrote: "The Play *Life on Wheels* caused a stormy approval of the audience". It was performed in the Theatre Romen over 1200 times, having existed on its stage until 1939. My second play, *Машкир яга* (Between the Fires), was staged by the Theatre Romen on May 22, 1932; it was devoted to the civil war. In the other Gypsy theatre – in the Mobile one [13], in the autumn of 1932 was presented my play *Палага первая* (Palaga the first). It is about the fight against the class enemy – the Gypsy kulak. All these plays were published by Tsentrizdat, *Teatro Romano* (Gypsy Theatre), in 1932.

Under the contract with the Radio Committee I wrote a literary-musical installation *Tsygany* (Gypsies), which was broadcast on April 24th, 1940, by the Radio; on February 29th of that year my *Poems*, in Russian translation, were published, and, on July 4th – my Gypsy Tales.

Gypsy tales, the recording of which I began in 1926, I started to publish in 1928 in the journals *Ekran* [Screen], *Chitatel' i pisatel'* [Reader and Writer], *30 dney* [30 days], *Bezbozhnik* [Atheist], *Derevenskiy bezbozhnik* [Village Atheist], *Druzhba narodov* [Friendship of Peoples], etc. Now I have prepared for publication a collection of *Gypsy Tales* for 8 printing sheets.

Since the first steps of the Gypsy writing, I was the editor of almost all the separate editions of poetry and prose of novice writers, as well as their translations: Pushkin – *Gypsies, The Daughter of the Commandant, Dubrovskiy*, etc., L. Tolstoy, M. Gorky, A. Chekhov, V. Korolenko, P. Mérimée – *Carmen*, etc., and the Soviet writers – Mikhail Sholokhov, V. Stavski, A. Novikov-Priboy, V. Bakhmetyev, N. Lyashko, B. Zhitkov and others in the Goslitizdat and Detgiz publishing houses.

In 1931, I discovered in Moscow and its provinces 12 novice Gypsy poets, whom I invited to participate in the first *Almanac of Gypsy Poets*, in Tsentrizdat, under my editorship. Also, I edited for publication the other *Gypsy Almanac*, Goslitizdat, 1934.

In addition to my work on fiction literature, I have undertaken the preparation of stable textbooks for Gypsy schools: *For Learning*, 1932; *To Literate Children*, 1932; *Forward to Work*, 1932; *Textbook of Gypsy Language*, 1934; *Readings on Literature*, 1934; *Book for Reading* – 1st and 2nd parts, 1932; *Textbook of Gypsy Language*, 1937 (2nd ed. revised); *Book for Reading* – 1st part, 1937 (2nd ed. revised), etc.

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In addition, I edited or translated a number of textbooks and books on various issues – social and political, agricultural, antireligious, and other books in the publications of Partizdat, Tsentrizdat, Uchpedgiz, Detgiz, and so on.

As a representative of the Gypsy media, I took an active part in public work among Gypsy workers in ON VTsIK, in Narkompros, in Narkomzem, in Vsekopromsovet, in the Interdepartmental Commission of National Minorities under the Moscow Council, on the organisation of Gypsy kolkhozes, cooperative-productive artels, schools, basic educational institutions and other measures for the employment of nomadic Gypsies. As a Board Member of the Central Gypsy Club *Loly Čergen*, I participated in the library events, in the promotion of the Gypsy books (helping Kogiz), conducted juridical consultations on housing and other issues through personal contact and correspondence. I was a member of the Artistic Council at the Gypsy Theatre. In 1940 I was elected Secretary of the Bureau of the freshly organised Gypsy section at SSP.

For personal acquaintance with the conditions and needs of the newly-settled Gypsies and for the purpose of conducting political-educational work among them, I travelled to the periphery: the kolkhoz *Trud Romen* (Gypsy Labour) in the Gypsy Village Council in Mineralnye Vody district; the kolkhozes *Octyabr'* (October) and *Svoboda* (Freedom) of the Smolensk region; the factory *Pervaya petiletka* (1st Five-year Plan) of Metizsoyuz, Zagorsk; Moscow region (villages Krupino, Pavlovo-Posadskoye), etc.

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In the Great Patriotic War, from the first day to the end, I was the head of the Emergency-restore unit of the 33rd House Management of Sverdlovskiy ROND (District's People's Guard Team) in Moscow, I was repeatedly appointed the responsible duty in the Presidium of Union Soviet Writers. In July 1941 I was sent on courses to improve knowledge of the commanding staff of MPVO (Moscow Antiaircraft Defense) in Sverdlovskiy district, which I passed in two months, practically fitting in my duty nights at the MPVO (Local Air Defense) courses.

During the war, I worked in the Information Bureau, wrote a cycle of poems about the participation of Gypsies in partisan teams, I was reading my poems and tales in the Red Army units and hospitals (Guchkovo, Lyublino, Chukhlinka, etc. in the Moscow region). In the spring of 1942, I worked in the radio centre for the processing of letters from the fronts of the Patriotic War for radio transmission. In July of that year my creative evening took place in the folklore section at the SSP (Gypsy Tales). In 1943, there was an interest in war invalids who lost their sight on the battlefield. At the suggestion of the All-Union Society for the Blind, I made a research and wrote a number of essays for media, based on the blind witnesses' words about the Braille system (my small article *Return to Life*, about blind persons, was published in the newspaper *Moskovskiy Bolshevik* (Moscow Bolshevist), October 20, 1943).

In the winter of 1942, I worked on the novel *Notes of the Russian Warrior* – which was told by a war participant, a student of the mining institute. (This work was left unfinished,

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5 printing sheets were written). My manuscript, featured in 12 printing sheets, *Цыгане в русской художественной литературе* (*От Державина до Блока*) (Gypsies in Russian Literature: From Derzhavin to Block) also remained unfinished. In 1944, I prepared for publication the *Основы цыганского языка* (Basics of the Gypsy Language), a short guide for teaching Gypsy language in the elementary presentation, 5 printing sheets. I put in a systematic order and an addition to the *Bibliography of Gypsies* (published in 1930), 6 printing sheets [14].

In 1945, I wrote a review of *Fascism and Gypsies during World War II*, 1 printing sheet. In 1946, at the order of VOKS, the other work was done together with Ivan Rom-Lebedev – *A Brief History of Soviet Gypsies*, 3 printing sheets. In 1947, under a contract with the Orel Regional Publishing House, I presented in co-authorship with the member of the SSP V. G. Cherevkov, the collection *Comrade Innokentiy* (about I. F. Dubrovinskiy), 3 ½ printing sheets; For the 800th anniversary of Moscow, under a contract with the Theatre Romen from July 20th, 1947, I have written *A Brief History of State Gypsy Theatre*, 1 ½ printing sheets; by agreement with VOKS, I prepared for abroad, between December 1947 – January 1948, the work *Gypsies of Soviet Union*, 3 printing sheets. On the occasion of the 30th anniversary of Soviet authority, I wrote an article *Gypsy Theatre* for the book *Soviet Theatre*, 1 printing sheet; in 1946 – for the foreign exhibition *Soviet Book*, I co-authored with V. Cherevkov – *Laureates in Fiction Literature*, a collection of biographical critical annotations, 8 printing sheets. All manuscripts were approved and accepted by VOKS [15].

Between 1945 and 1948, I began the work and still gather the material on the Orel region in the libraries and archives of Moscow – *History of Orel Region, On History of Provincial Shows and Local Interests*; City of Orel and its Inhabitants – half documentary, half fictional essays. I finished draft memoirs of the recovery period in the Orel governorate – *From the Notebook of Local Writer*, about 5 printing sheets. For the collection of material, between 1949-1950, I visited Orel, Mtsensk, Zmievka and other Orel region areas. In Orel, on December 8th, 1949, I read my poetry in the Orel Regional Radio Committee. I published some works in *Orlovskaya Pravda* in 1949-1950.

About my work for 1949-1951 herewith I present a creative report in the playwriters section of SSP.

This year, together with comrades F. D. Zakharkin and I. N. Chinenov I finished *Essays on History of Orel's Party Organisation* (from the 1890s to 1917 to 1917 included) under a contract with Orel Regional Publishers, 25 printing sheets.

Currently, by agreement with the State Moscow Gypsy Theatre Romen, I am writing a 3-act play *Lantsov and Others* (the title is tentative).

There were no detailed critical articles about my art work. This is perhaps due to the lack of literary scholars who know the Gypsy language, with the exception of professor-linguist M. V. Sergievskiy, who published, on the pages of the Gypsy magazine, a general assessment of the young Gypsy fiction literature. Brief information about my work was published in the Great Soviet Encyclopedia. In *Literaturnoe Obozrenie* (Literature Review), 1938 No. 3, K. Zelinskiy wrote in detail about my Russian translation book of

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Poems and Songs. The media has written more about the play *Life on Wheels*, especially in places where Theatre Romen toured. The foreign press paid some attention in connection with the interest manifested in the plays of this theatre.

I have been a member of the trade union since 1918, now at the Goslitizdat.

In 1946-47, I attended lecture courses organised by the Communist Party organisation of the SSP and the Council of the Writers Club and listened to the cycles of lectures – on the strategy and tactics of the Bolsheviks Party, the Bolsheviks policy in literature and art, and logic. In 1951-52, at the same location, in the Writers Club, I listened to a cycle of lectures on aesthetics.

In recent years, I lead social work at the House Management No. 34, and I am the Secretary of the Commission of Assistance in two enlarged houses on Stoleshnikov lane; in this function, I am approved by the Presidium of Sverdlovsk district's Executive Committee of Moscow.

I confirm the above with the documents available to me and publications in the press.

I have never been on the territory of the enemy, I have never had and do not have any connection abroad, I did not join hostile parties and groups, I have no relatives – enemies of the people, I was not under trial and investigation and was never subjected to administrative penalties.

May 10th, 1952. City of Moscow.

... [signature] (A. Germano).

Notes

1. Alexander Vyacheslavovich German (official name) uses his family name, written in the Romani language version, as a creative pen-name (Germanó).
2. In another, earlier autobiographical note "Briefly about myself" from 1934 (OGMLT, f. 29, op. 1, d. 1364, l. 1-4), more information is available on Alexander Germano's family. His father Vaclav Germann (in the Russian version Vyacheslav Vyacheslavovich German), was of Lutheran religion, born in Hořovice (at that time in the Austro-Hungarian Empire, today in the Czech Republic). As a young man he enrolled in a mechanic workshop where he trained as a locksmith. He often changed jobs, and so ended up in Russian Empire, where he settled permanently in Orel.
3. Alexander Germano's mother, Karolina German (her family name before marriage was Knoutek) was born in 1850 also in Hořovice and was Catholic. She died in 1919 at the age of 69.
4. The sister of Alexander Germano's was Anna German (her husband's surname was Hildenbrandt).
5. St Petersburg, founded in 1703, was renamed Petrograd in 1914, Leningrad in 1924, and since 1991 its original name has been restored.
6. Герман А. В. (1930). *Библиография о цыганах. Указатель книг и статей с 1780 г. по 1930 г.* Москва: Центриздат.
7. Aleko – the name of a hero in A. Pushkin's poem *Gypsies*; Aleko was a non-Gypsy who lived in a Gypsy tabor.
8. These are the so-called Northern (used by *Ruska Roma*) and Southern (used by *Servi*) dialects of Romani language (see Сергиевский & Баранников, 1938).
9. Alexander German translated the work *Роспхэныбэна дрэ гиля* as 'Three Poems'. A more correct translation will be 'Tales in Poems'.
10. Only two copies of this book (Германо, 1941) are saved in Russian State Library, one of them with pencil editorial notes, probably made by Alexander German.

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11. Ivan Rom-Lebedev had become a member of the Union of the Soviet Writers in 1944.
12. The first proposal for the name of the Gypsy Theatre Romen was 'Indo-Roma Theatre' (Бессонов, 2013, p. 454; cf. above), and this is probably the only case of the official use, for a short period of time, of the designation which includes the term 'Roma' instead of 'Gypsy' in Russian language, in the early USSR.
13. A Mobile Gypsy Theatre (or the Theatre of Small Genres) was created in 1930 and headed by Yevdokiya Orlova (Bessonov, 2016, p. 144).
14. This is reference to the unpublished manuscript: *Дополнение к библиографии о цыганах* (Additions to Bibliography on Gypsies),
15. It is not known why all these manuscripts were not published, although they were previously agreed upon and accepted.

Source: OGMLT, f. 29, op. 1, d. 156, l. 1-80б.
Prepared for publication by Elena Marushiakova and Vesselin Popov.
Translated by Viktor Shapoval.

12.5.7 *Ivan Tokmakov*

Н. А. Панков

Памяти Ивана Петровича Токмакова

Есть растения, семена которых развиваются в любой почве, куда бы их не закинула стихия. На культурной почве их, как сорное, выпалывают, на заброшенной – они одиноко цветут.

Подобно этим растениям и цыганская народность, покинувшая по не совсем еще ясным причинам свою родину – Индию, проявляет всюду свою жизнеспособность, но редко где бывает оставлена в покое и не подвергается жестокому выкорчевыванию.

Цыганы везде и всюду живут замкнутым племенем как бы с охранительной формулой на своем знамени: "Ром ромеса, гаджё гаджеса" (цыган цыганом, чужой всегда будет чужим). Она не давала посторонним проникнуть в шатер, но самого цыгана давила и мешала росту, как мешает росту ноги колодка-башмак китайской женщины. Впервые цыганы – объединенные между собою общностью языка и остатками своей духовной культуры, пусть еще не приведенной в стройную систему определенного мировоззрения – предстают в СССР как народность, где им оказывается всесторонняя помощь, для того чтобы войти в трудовую семью всех народов СССР.

Здесь впервые в истории появляется у цыган общественная мысль и общественная жизнь.

Только здесь в результате завоеваний революции, у цыган начал развиваться хрупкий росток стремления к братскому общению со всеми народами.

Правда, с некоторым опозданием, а именно с 1926 года, цыганы на основе оседлости и труда, медленно и подчас болезненно создают свою хозяйственную культурную и общественную жизнь.

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Одним из больших сторонников и страстных агитаторов среди цыган за жизнь на этих началах был Иван Петрович Токмаков.

И. П. Токмаков – цыган по отцу и матери – рос и складывался в рабочем поселке, в рабочей среде. Родители его рано погибли. Они жили в бывшем Екатеринбурге, куда цыганы в то время вряд ли попадали по доброй воле. В воспоминаниях своих он никогда не касался этого пункта. Должно быть ничего отрадного не было в воспоминаниях об этой поре. После смерти родителей он очутился на попечении своей старшей сестры Елены Петровны Токмаковой ставшей ему единственным оплотом.

Сестра его не имела никаких возможностей для продолжения кочевья – не было ни лошади, ни хозяина – цыгана и поэтому стала рабочей на водочном заводе, жила среди русских рабочих и это окружение оказывало влияние и на юношу Токмакова.

Шатры были вблизи него, но они стали чужды ему, и если что мешало и не позволяло ему совсем отойти от шатра, так это преследования и гонения выпадавшие на долю цыган и возмущавшие душу Ивана Петровича.

Грязь, неуютность шатра, невежество и темнота его обитателей отталкивали его. Досадно и смешно ему было их детское бахвальство своим довольством и благополучием, по существу жалким и убогим. Но яркость и динамичность он признавал за цыганами (он сам был ярким и динамичным) и не был к ним равнодушен.

Когда он подрос он не пошел в батраки к цыганам (как бы должно было быть в его положении – в положении безлошадного сироты) – плести чужим коням хвосты за кусок хлеба с попреками, а поступил на завод и стал котельщиком.

В 1918 году Ив. П. Токмаков вступил в большевистскую партию и был ее членом до конца своих дней. [* По рассказу его фронтового товарища, будучи в окружении и видя, что они будут взяты в плен, члены партии зарыли свои партбилеты в землю; Иван Петрович оставил его при себе.]

Ив. П. Токмаков явился в Москву, чтоб учиться в Свердловском Университете; в этом же году получил место инструктором в Отделе Национальностей ВЦИКа по работе среди цыган. Любопытно: самые незначительные события в цыганском мирке получают (правда чаще преувеличенное и искаженное) распространение по всему кочевью с быстротой радио, благодаря постоянному передвижению цыган. Так и тот факт, что цыган – партиец работает во ВЦИКе, без особого освещения его в печати, скоро стал общеизвестным фактом для цыган, а во ВЦИКе стали то и дело появляться цыганы-ходоки по самым разнородным вопросам, и имя Токмакова, как по его личным положительным качествам, так и в связи с его работою в этом высокоавторитетном учреждении, стало пользоваться среди цыган большим и заслуженным почетом.

Токмаков сейчас же принялся за организацию колхозов. Правда, и до него возникали колхозы, но это было нечто стихийное и по составу и по организации самих хозяйств; чаще всего эти колхозы после получения помощи или раздела урожая вскоре разваливались, оставляя по себе курьезную легенду. Токмаков всячески изучал каждого члена колхоза, выковывал актив в каждом колхозе, организовывал

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слеты и съезды, привлекал внимание к работе цыганских колхозов местных властей и общественности, и колхозы стали расти не только численно, но и качественно. В 1938 году по СССР насчитывалось уже 52 колхоза. Цыганские колхозы, как, например, в Смоленской области, на Северном Кавказе, стали занимать первые места в районах и областях как по организации хозяйств, так и по разнохарактерным соцсоревнованиям, и это было обусловлено горячим и беззаветным участием Ивана Петровича.

Конечно, численность цыганских колхозов незначительна по сравнению с количеством цыган, не вовлеченных в коллективный труд. Но это, как и неудачи в другом, мучительном и для него, и для всей передовой части цыган, вопросе – вопросе создания цыганской газеты и цыганского района – есть результат недопонимания на местах и подчас противодействия лиц, которые вопреки всей законности и своевременности для осуществления этих назревших вопросов, всячески противодействовали осуществлениию назревших желаний цыган. Лица препятствовавшие решению этих назревших вопросов, и которые позже были разоблачены как враги народа.

В конце концов все получило бы свое удовлетворение, если бы не бедствие постигшее нашу страну в 1941 году. фашисты тяжелой пятой пытались раздавить наш народ и его завоевания.

На защиту своего отечества поднялась все трудящиеся Союза. И цыгане – на протяжении всей истории нигде не получавшие справедливого решения своей судьбы и везде и всюду избегавшее военной службы и участия в войнах, прибегая к многочисленным способам симуляции и членовредительства, здесь широкой волной пошли в качестве рядовых и в качестве командного состава, по мобилизации и добровольно. Эта война не мало числит среди цыган истинных героев, самоотверженно несущих свою жизнь на борьбу с врагом. Ведь цыганы впервые после тысячелетнего скитальчества приобрели в СССР истинную родину. Здесь их колхозы, здесь школы, в которых они уже получили среднее и где они получают высшее образование. Поэтому эта война у цыган приняла характер кровного дела, и цыганы выступили в ней и как защитники, и как мстители за разоряемые цыг[анские] хозяйства, цыг[анские] культурные учреждения, за подло растерзанных родных – растерзанных за то, что они были коммунистами, комсомольцами или за то, что они цыганы.

Иван Петрович Токмаков с первых же дней [войны] вступает добровольцем в ряды Сов[етской] Армии. Для него не важно, что ему шел шестой десяток, что у него одышка, пошаливало сердце, наконец, что у него броня с завода, где он работал начальником цеха – страна в опасности, цыганские колхозы Смоленщины с их довольством под мерзкой пятой.

Разрушается юная и нежная, как молодая поросль, оседлость скитальца-народа, впервые вставшего на путь оседлости и труда, и он не мог усидеть в тылу. 15-го марта 1942 г. он был убит под Ельней. Война отняла у цыган человека, чье сердце жило и билось всецело вопросами цыганской народности.

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Сейчас, когда все наши молодые хозяйства, бывшие в зоне военных действий, разбиты и раздавлены, когда буквально все лучшее и передовое перевешано и уничтожено, а остатки снова, как прежде, развеяны по необъятным весям, когда нужно снова начинать все сызнова, смерть Токмакова ощущается острой болью.

Если в сильных и крупных народностях подобные утраты встречаются с горечью, то для нашей народности эта утрата катастрофична, и вырывается вопль проклятия за его смерть и за так много ненужных смертей. В анналах героев записаны [так-же] славные имена цыган как Вишняковы, Сельницкие, Ищенко и др.

[Примечание: Во время написания этих строк Н. А. Панков еще не знал подробности гибели И. П. Токмакова. Позже от одного из его товарищей по партизанскому отряду стало известно, что Токмаков попал в немецкий плен, организовал побег, партизанил, снова попал в плен и во время подготовки нового побега был кем-то выдан и замучен пытками. Умирая, он просил товарища разыскать в Москве его жену Лену и брата Колю. Брата у него не было, поэтому [его] жена решила, что он имел ввиду Николая Панкова.]

[Примечание]: Этот материал получен от Янины Степановны Панковой. Его записал Николай Александрович Панков.

… [подпись] (Н. Саткевич). 1964 г.

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N. A. Pankov.

In Memory of Ivan Petrovich Tokmakov

There are plants whose seeds develop in any soil, wherever they are thrown by fate. In the cultured soil, they, as a weed, are torn away, in the desert soil, they are blooming lonely. Like these plants, Gypsy people, who left their homeland – India, for not yet clear reasons, shows everywhere its vitality, but rarely is this people left alone and is not subjected to brutal uprooting.

The Gypsies everywhere used to live as a closed tribe, hidden under a protective formula on its banner: "*Rom Romesa, Gadžo Gadžesa*" (a Gypsy with the Gypsies, a foreigner will always be a foreigner) [1]. This motto did not allow outsiders to enter the tent, but the Gypsy himself was pressed with it and was not allowed to grow, much as the narrow shoe of a Chinese woman that does not allow the foot to grow. For the first time the Gypsies – united themselves through a common language and the remnants of their spiritual culture, even if not yet brought into a coherent worldview system – started to shape themselves as a nation in the USSR, where they have the full support to enter the working family of the peoples of the USSR.

Here, for the first time in history, Gypsies developed a social thought and social life.

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Only here, as a result of the conquests of the revolution, the Gypsies began to develop a fragile growth of the desire for fraternal communication with all peoples.

However, with some delay, namely since 1926, the Gypsies, based on their settlement and labour, slowly and sometimes painfully created their economic, cultural and social life.

One of the big supporters and passionate agitators among Gypsies, promoting life on these new principles, was Ivan Petrovich Tokmakov.

Ivan Petrovich Tokmakov – a son of Gypsy father and mother – grew up and developed in the workers' settlement, in the working environment. His parents died early. They lived in the former Yekaterinburg, where Gypsies at that time hardly got by their own choice [2].

In his memoirs, he never touched this point. There must have been nothing happy in the memory of that time. After the death of his parents, he found himself in the care of his older sister Elena Petrovna Tokmakova, who became his only stronghold.

His sister did not have any opportunities to continue the nomadic life – she had no horse, no Gypsy husband, and therefore she became a worker at the vodka factory, lived among Russian workers and this environment had an impact on the young Tokmakov.

The tents were close to him, but they became alien to him, and the only thing that did not allow him to completely leave and forget the tent, was the harassment and persecution awaiting Gypsies anywhere, which was an insult to the soul of Ivan Petrovich.

The dirt and uneasiness of the tent life, the ignorance and illiteracy of its inhabitants repelled him. Their childish bragging about their life satisfaction and well-being, basically miserable, and poor, was annoying and funny to him. But the brightness and dynamism of their lives, which he recognised among Gypsies (as he was bright and dynamic himself), did not leave him indifferent.

When he grew up he did not go to work as one hired by the Gypsies (as his position was supposed to be, being a horseless orphan) – to weave, with reproaches, someone's horse tails for a piece of bread, but instead he entered the factory and became a boilermaker.

In 1918 [3], I. P. Tokmakov joined the Bolshevic Party and was its member until the end of his days. [* According to the story of his front-line comrade, being surrounded and seeing that they will be taken prisoners, the party members buried their party membership identity cards in the ground; Ivan Petrovich left his card with him.] [4]

In 1932 [5] Ivan P. Tokmakov came to Moscow to study at Sverdlov University [6]; in the same year, he was appointed an instructor in ON TsIK, for work among Gypsies.

Curious: the most minor events in the Gypsy world get (though often exaggerated and distorted) spread throughout the camps with the speed of the radio, due to the constant movement of the Gypsies. And the fact that a Gypsy and a party member worked in the TsIK, without any information in the press, very soon became a well-known fact for Gypsies, and in the TsIK one began to see Gypsies coming – *khodoki* with the most diverse questions, and the name of Tokmakov, either for his personal good qualities, or in connection with his work in the highest institution, began to be used among the Gypsies in great and deserved esteem.

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Tokmakov instantly engaged in the organisation of kolkhozes. Indeed, there were Gypsy kolkhozes also before him, but it was something unplanned by their composition and organisation of households; most of these kolkhozes collapsed soon after obtaining financial help, or dividing the harvest, leaving only a curious legend after themselves. Tokmakov studied every member of the kolkhozes in every possible way, created a group of activists in every kolkhoz, organised meetings and congresses, drew attention to the work of the Gypsy kolkhozes from among local authorities and the wider society, and the kolkhozes began to grow not only quantitatively but also qualitatively. In 1938 in the Soviet Union there were 52 Gypsy kolkhozes [7]. Those kolkhozes, as, for example, in the Smolensk region, in the North Caucasus, began to reach the first places in the districts and regions both in the organisation of rural economy and in various socialist competitions, and this was due to the fervent and sacrificial participation of Ivan Petrovich.

Of course, the number of Gypsy kolkhozes is small, if compared to the number of Gypsies not involved in collective work. But this, as well as failures in other aspects, was painful for him, as well as for the whole active part of the Gypsies; the next painful issues were the creation of a Gypsy newspaper and a Gypsy rayon. Its lack of success was the result of misunderstanding in the regions and sometimes the result of a counteraction of persons who, contrary to all the legality and timeliness of the formulation of these urgent issues, strongly opposed their solution. Those who obstructed the solution of these urgent issues were later unmasked as enemies of the people [8].

In the end, everything would have been satisfied, had it not been for the disaster that hit our country. In 1941 the fascists tried to crush our people and their achievements, with heavy heel. All workers of the Union rose up to protect the Fatherland. The Gypsies, who during their entire history never received a fair resolution and who had previously run away from military service and participation in the war, using numerous means of simulation and self-mutilation, now came to enlist as privates and as officers in a massive wave, either mobilised or voluntarily. These many individuals among the Gypsies became the true heroes, selflessly sacrifying their lives to fight the enemy. After all, the Gypsies, for the first time after thousands of years of wandering, acquired a true homeland in the USSR. Here were their kolkhozes, their schools in which they already received secondary education and where they would receive higher education. So, for the Gypsies, this war had the character of a bloody fight to the death, and Gypsies took part in it as defenders and as the avengers for the ruining of the Gypsy farms, the Gypsy cultural institutions, for their meanly destroyed relatives, on account of being Communists, Komsomol members or just because they are Gypsies.

Ivan Petrovich Tokmakov, from the first days of the war, entered the ranks of a volunteer of the Red Army. It did not matter to him that he was in his sixties, that he had shortness of breath, that his heart was not fully healthy, or finally, that he had armour from the army [9], as he had worked as a head of department in the factory [10]. His Country was in danger, the Gypsy kolkhozes of Smolensk with their richness were under the enemy's occupation.

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Young and tender as a young grass, the sedentary nature of the wanderer, of the people who had chosen the path of settlement and labour, was being destroyed, and Tokmakov could not stay indifferent in his own safety. On March 15th, 1942, he was killed near Yelnya [11]. The war had taken away from the Gypsies the person whose heart lived and fought entirely for the issues of the Gypsy people.

Now, when all our young farms which were in the war zone, are broken and crushed, when literally all the best and foremost have been hanged and destroyed, and the remains again, as before, are scattered through the vast villages, when we need to start all over again from the very beginning, the death of Tokmakov is felt as a sharp pain.

If strong and large people perceive such losses with bitterness, for our nationality the loss of I. P. Tokmakov is catastrophic. We cannot hold back the cry of a curse because of his and so many other unnecessary deaths. In the annals of heroes are recorded also glorious names of Gypsies, such as those of the Vishnyakovs, Selnitsky, Ishchenko and others [12].

[Note: At the time of writing these lines, N. Pankov did not know the details of the death of I. P. Tokmakov. Later it became known, from one of his comrades in the military unit, that Tokmakov was taken prisoner by the Germans, that he arranged his escape, was captured again and, during the preparation of the new escape, was betrayed by someone and tortured [13]. Dying, he asked his friend to find his wife Lena and brother Kolya in Moscow. He didn't have any brother, so his wife thought he meant Nikolay Pankov.] [14]

[Note]: This material is obtained from Yanina Stepanovna Pankova. It was written by Nikolay Aleksandrovich Pankov.

... [signature] (N. Satkevich). 1964.

Notes

1. Literally translated "Gypsy with Gypsy, non-Gypsy with non-Gypsy".
2. Here Nikolay Pankov wants to say that perhaps the parents of Ivan Tokmakov were exiled to Siberia (criminal punishment in the Russian Empire). The residence in Yekaterinburg is, however, not enough as evidence. Of course, there were not few cases of Gypsies who, together with their families, were sent to exile in Siberia. In the second half of the 19th century, however, such places of exile were already regions far east of Ekaterinburg. Moreover, the Gypsy nomads at this time independently acquired new territories in Siberia and the Far East. We found even a curious historical testimony about Gypsies settled in the Bering Strait in the second half of the 19th century, as hired labourer to hunt seals, walruses, and whales (Бойцов, 1934, p. 137).
3. In his personal data Party form made for the All-Union Party Census of 1927, Ivan Tokmakov states that he had been a member of the VKP(b) since February, 1919 (RGASPI, f. 17, op. 9, d. 3642, l. 37-38).
4. This sentence is added during the transcription and editing of the text (АНБ, ф. Николай Панков), most likely by his daughter Lyubov (Lyuba) Pankova (1925-2019).
5. Three dots are left in the original to indicate that Nikolai Pankov was not sure exactly in which year Ivan Tokmakov came to Moscow (see below for details).
6. This refers to the Sverdlov Communist University in Moscow, which was a School for the preparation of cadres for the Soviet high nomenklatura, 1918-1937.

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7. The mantra of the existence of 52 Gypsy kolkhozes in the early USSR is repeated almost everywhere in contemporary academic literature. It is not clear where this figure comes from, however, it is sure that it entered mass scholar circulation after the first publication of passages from this text by Nikolay Pankov (Друц & Гесслер, 1990, p. 285).

To put it in brackets, it is hardly possible to give an accurate and clear answer to the question of how many Gypsy kolkhozes existed in the early USSR. For some of them, there are only mentions in the press; in other cases, there have been repeated changes of names, relocations to other settlements, divisions into separate parts, mixed nationalities kolkhozes, uncertain data, etc. In any case, in 1935-36, when the Soviet state paid serious attention to the Gypsy kolkhozes, their number in the numerous administrative reports varied between 20 and 30 (see e.g. GARF, f. P 3316, op. 28, d. 793, l. 6-8; f. P 1235, op. 130, d. 5). These reports usually lack information on Central Asian republics or they mention only Roma kolkhozes, not those of local Gypsies (collectively called Lyuli or Jugi). In general, the data for this region also varies greatly – in the public reports are mentioned as many as 18 Gypsy kolkhozes only in the Uzbek SSR (GARF, f. P 3316, op. 28, d. 794, p. 81) although, according to other sources, their number was much smaller throughout the whole of Central Asia.

8. The term 'Enemy of the People' was widely used in the early USSR as a designation for class or political opponents, enemies of the socialist construction. The victims of political repression in the 1920s and especially in the 1930s were known under this term. By using this designation here Nikolay Pankov points that almost all senior officials at the ON TsIK where Tokmakov worked were affected by these repressions (see bellow).

9. The phrase "armour from the army" refers to the practice of offering exemption from army services to special categories of persons, mostly those who worked in the field of defence industry and weapon production.

10. From this, it becomes clear that in 1941 Ivan Tokmakov no longer worked in the Soviet state apparatus. In all likelihood, he lost his seat in the ON VTsIK in 1938 (when the VTsIK was abolished in connection with the formation of the Supreme Soviet of the RSFSR) and was transferred to a lower rank in the Soviet party and state hierarchy.

11. There is no clarity about the exact place where Ivan Tokmakov died. In the military archives, he is noted as "traceless missing" on October 1st, 1941, in the Kaluga region (Книга памяти, 2019).

12. About the Gypsies in the USSR who died in the fight against fascism during the Second World War, see the seminal work of Nikolay Bessonov (Бессонов, 2000).

13. This note is added during the above mentioned transcribing and editing of the text.

14. According to Nikolay Pankov, Ivan Tokmakov died in the prison of a war camp near Yelnya (Smolensk region) and, according to other author (Калинин, 2005, p. 66), in a camp near Bobruisk (Mogilev region, Belarus). Taking into account the gaps and errors in the war documentations, either version may be inaccurate.

Source: LANB, f. Николай Саткевич.
Prepared for publication by Elena Marushiakova and Vesselin Popov.
Translated by Viktor Shapoval.
The text published here takes into account the available three earlier drafts, which are not dated, and also one later corrected version.

Comments

Most of the material published in this section comes from the personal archive of Nikolay Satkevich (LANB, f. Николай Саткевич) who, in the 1960s, collected biographical memories of (or about) leading Gypsy activists who were active in the Gypsy movement in the early USSR.

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The texts published here largely exhaust the background and the most important moments in the life of these activists. Naturally, those memories represent more or less subjective interpretations of the past, and the present history of Gypsy activism is seen through the perspective and the fate of their authors. However, when comparing the events described with the available historical documentation, it turns out that silencing or misinterpreting historical realities are relatively rare. The texts are set in the Autobiography model – a genre that was widely used in the USSR – but the authors themselves made wider deviations (to varying degrees) from the established pattern, offering more loose interpretations.

Andrey Taranov's autobiography presents in detail all the most important events of a turbulent life, full of vicissitudes. However, this was no exception to the era. About his life, some authors claim wrongly, that he was a "graduate of a state school in the Urals" (Lemon, 2000, p. 133), but no quotation is given, and this assertion contradicts Taranov's text (published above).

It is interesting to note that the Party sent Taranov for training in KUTV, where students were prepared to become national nomenklatura in their respective Soviet republics, and where foreign students were trained to fight for the establishment of communism in their countries. The subsequent Gypsy activists, such as Ivan Tokmakov and Ilya Gerasimov, were trained in other educational institutions, targeting the preparation of the mainstream Party nomenklatura. After graduating from the KUTV, Taranov was sent, with a Party order, to lead the emerging VSTs. Understandably, he pays little attention in his text to the work of the VSTs and the reasons for its liquidation, for which, being the organisation's chair, he was held responsible.

For the sake of truth, it should be noted that when analysing the large amount of available documentation, it becomes clear that in his capacity as Chairman of the VSTs Taranov was used more as a representative person, probably because he had no sufficient knowledge and managerial skills. The program and administrative documents were, in actuality, prepared mainly by Ivan Lebedev, and the economic activities were led by members of the Polyakov clan and the hired 'experts' (Gypsies and non-Gypsies). Of course, this does not take away from Taranov's responsibility as the head of the Union, for which he was repeatedly punished. Naturally, Taranov skips these moments in his recollections, including the fact that due to problems with the VSTs he received a party sanction – a severe reprimand inscribed in his personal file – which is a relatively mild punishment (GARF, f. P 393, op. 43 A, d. 1763, l. 227-228; f. P 1235, op. 140, d. 498, l. 7-8). Nevertheless, immediately after the liquidation of the Union, he took the lead of the Gypsy journals *Romany zorya* and *Nevo drom*.

In fact, more serious punishment for Taranov was when the Party sent him to do work in Kyrgyzstan in 1934 as part of the low-level nomenklatura, after ceasing the publication of the journal *Nevo drom* in an attempt to transform it into a newspaper (see above). During this time, he was removed from the activities of the Soviet institutions targeting the Gypsies, and he was not even invited to the extended SN TsIK USSR Meeting held on 04-05.01.1936.

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This punishment was relatively short-lived, and in 1937 he was returned to Moscow. Here, he received a new job, formally linked to the job placements of Gypsies. Here, again, there is an obscure moment: the Sovnarkhoz system was abolished in 1932, and the VPK was transformed in 1936 into the Resettlement Department of the NKVD. Thus, it is not entirely clear exactly where Taranov worked at that time. Perhaps it was his work in the NKVD that he did not want to speak about since at the time when he wrote his autobiography, in the 1960s, was the time of anti-Stalinist discourse in the USSR when NKVD became a symbol of Stalin's repression.

The dispatch of Taranov to Moldova immediately after its liberation from the German army shows that he still enjoyed the Party's confidence, though he remained in the low levels of the Soviet nomenklatura. There is little information about his fate in the new Moldavian USSR. According to data from oral history, for a short period of time, he was the director of a kolkhoz near the city of Rezina, but the local Moldovians began to write complaints to various institutions asking why was a Gypsy appointed as a director. In the end, he was replaced.

Andrey Taranov lived the rest of his life as a respected pensioner, who often met with pioneers, with whom he shared stories and recollections of his time. In the 1970s, a large essay was published about him in the local press, in which his life was presented as a role model (Цопа, 1978, pp. 14-22).

The autobiography of Nikolay Pankov, published here, was provided by his relatives to Nikolay Satkevich; and several other versions are preserved in his personal archive (LANB, f. Николай Панков). As the text shows, his life's destiny is quite different from that of other Gypsy activists of the time. To say it in modern terms – unlike them, his occupation was not of a 'Rom by profession', and the only exception was the period 1933-1938 when he worked as Romani language and literature teacher at the Gypsy Pedagogical College. After the end of the affirmative pro-Gypsy state policy in 1938, he remained socially active for the rest of his life (he died in 1959).

In 1953, after Stalin's death, Nikolay Pankov sent a letter to Petr Pospelov, Secretary of the TsK KPSS (Друц & Гесслер, 1990, pp. 304-305); in 1954 he sent a letter to the new First Secretary of the TsK KPSS Nikita Khrushchev (PAVK, f. Nikolay Pankov); the same year he sent a letter to Kliment Voroshilov, Chairman of the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet of the USSR (Ibid.); in 1955, together with Andrey Taranov he sent a letter to the TsK KPSS, to the Council of Ministers of the USSR and to the central Party publication, the *Pravda* newspaper (Иващенко, 1996, p. 43); on May 14, 1956 he sent a new letter to Nikita Khrushchev (Друц & Гесслер, 1990, pp. 304-305). In all these letters, Nikolay Pankov called for the resumption of the 1920s and 1930s state policy towards the Gypsies: in particular, he paid most attention to the policies of sedentarising the Gypsies, to re-open Gypsy schools, to resume the mass publication of literature in Romani language, etc.

Nikolay Pankov was the only Gypsy activist who, in the 1930s, together with other representatives of the Soviet academia, became a member of the Gypsy Lore Society, that was, and continues to be, a renowned and reputable scholarly organisation for Gypsy/Roma research. In general, he stands out among other Gypsy activists through a strong

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interest in Romani language, folklore, and literature. This interest did not leave him for the rest of his life. An incredible amount of diverse material was stored in his personal archive – academic publications, press articles, folklore and language recordings, etc. (LANB, f. Николай Панков). He maintained extensive correspondence on these topics with other activists and various scholars, including from abroad, such as Jan Kochanowski (known as Vania de Gila Kochanowski) and Milena Hübschmannova.

This correspondence continued to be conducted by his family, after his death: in 1974, Valery Sanarov (about him, see Марушиакова & Попов, 2016, pp. 87-91) asked his family for materials on his activities. Sanarov requested it on behalf of Grattan Puxon from the UK, who was preparing an article about the *Gypsies and the October Revolution* in which the description of the life and work of Nikolay Pankov should occupy an important place (LANB, f. Николай Панков).

It is worth saying a few words about Nikolay Pankov's family. His wife, Yanina (Yana) Stefanovna, was an ethnic Polish woman. They met in St Petersburg, at the famous Public Library, which they both frequently visited (LANB, f. Николай Панков). She was a faithful fellow of Nikolay Pankov throughout his life, and after his death, she continued to maintain and enrich his archive. She authored memoirs about him, which are preserved as an unfinished manuscript (Ibid.). His two daughters, Natalia (Natasha) and Lyubov (Lyuba) were also publicly active in the 1960s and 1970s. They collaborated with Nikolay Satkevich in his initiatives to engage the Soviet authorities in an active policy towards Gypsies (Ibid.). Lyubov Pankova (born 1925) defended her Ph.D. thesis and became the first Roma woman with a scientific degree (Candidate of Biological Sciences).

Very little is known about Nina Dudarova's biography other than the text presented here. In the preserved historical records of Gypsy activism in the early USSR, her name is mentioned only a few times as part of the leadership of VSTs. She is listed as one of the authors of the Appeal of VSTs to Gypsy population by 1927, published above. However, in the membership card of VSTs, Nina Dudarova's date of entry into the Union is written as October 12, 1926, and her membership card number is 167: i.e. she became a member of the Union at a relatively later stage in its creation. The overall impression from the available historical sources is that her position in the VSTs was rather demonstrative – in order to offer her as a public example (to both Gypsies and to the Soviet society) pointing to the equal position of a Gypsy woman.

However, this does not in any way mean that Nina Dudarova's place in the development of the processes of Roma civic emancipation in the early USSR should be underestimated. On the contrary, her active work should be especially emphasised: namely, her work as a teacher in the Gypsy schools in Moscow, and especially her published poetry and teaching materials (see Romani Publications in USSR), as well as her translations and editing of the Romani language texts.

Diametrically opposite is the case of Mikhail Bezlyudskiy, about whom a very large amount of additional material is preserved. His Autobiography itself is very comprehensive, including large sections, which are rather close to a literary form. However, he has concealed some things, a fact that became clear after cross-checking other historical

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sources. Such is, for example, the fact that during the period 1926-1927, he worked as an agent in the Moscow Criminal Investigation Department of the NKVD and, as such, he signed his Report Notes to the ON VTsIK and the Economic Department of the OGPU on the occurring violations of socialist legitimacy in the activities of the VSTs (GARF, f. P 393, op. 43 A, d. 1763; d. P 1235, op. 140, d. 498, l. 227-228).

Another interesting fact from the biography of Mikhail Bezlyudskiy, about which he is silent, was brought to our attention by our colleague Viktor Shapoval. As Bezlyudskiy himself writes in his article *My Literary Way* (Нэво дром, 1932c, pp. 22-23), the first poem he wrote was in 1929 in the corrective labour colony in Liazonovo (now a suburb of Moscow). Judging by his numerous publications in the prison newspaper *К трудовому общежитию* (To the Labour Dormitory), he was in prison during the period 1928-1929.

No information has been found on what grounds Mikhail Bezlyudskiy was convicted, but in any case, this did not in any way affect his career as a Gypsy activist. On the contrary, as discussed above, he enjoyed the particular confidence of the Soviet institutions that sent him, to a leadership position, to the Gypsy selsoviet and kolkhoz of the North Caucasus. However, after the descent of the Gypsy theme from the state agenda, and after the Second World War, his career path suffered a downfall and he ended at the lowest possible levels the Soviet nomenklatura.

Concerning the life of Ilya Gerasimov, there is also a rich documentary heritage in the Soviet archives – both in the state archives in Moscow and especially in Smolensk (the centre of the Western Oblast). In fact, he is the only prominent Gypsy activist in the early USSR who (beyond his training periods in Vyazma and Moscow) remained employed at the local (Oblast) level. In general, one can say that his career was successful, and he spent the rest of his life as a respected personal pensioner of Republican significance (i.e. of a medium level).

The available materials concerning Ilya Gerasimov make it clear that he was the most ardent supporter of the idea of a Gypsy national autonomous region, and was constantly trying to convince the Soviet state of the need for its realisation. He also persistently promoted the notion that it was the Western Oblast with the center of Smolensk that was the most appropriate place to create such a Gypsy autonomy, where its basis had already been set (i.e. Gypsy kolkhozes, Gypsy schools, presence of party and Komsomol Gypsy cadres, etc.).

The question of Ilya Gerasimov's connection with Trofim Gerasimov is an interesting one. It seems very likely that they were brothers since their family and father's name (Yakovlevich) coincide. Both are from the Smolensk region. However, since there are no other confirmations of this fact, the issue cannot yet be considered as resolved.

As for Trofim Gerasimov, his life path is also worthy of attention. Sent by the Party for training in Moscow in 1926-27 as a promising Gypsy activist, he had repeatedly criticised the activities of the VSTs, sending memos to the TsK VKP(b) and the NKVD (GARF, f. P 393, op. 43 A, d. 1763; f. P 1235, op. 120, d. 27). In 1932-33 he worked as an instructor at Kolkhozsoyuz of Western Oblast and in OblZU (GASO, f. P 2360, op. 1, sv. 181, d. 2067; f. P 2360, op. 1, sv. 130, d. 1482), In 1933, he left for Moscow and began to work as an

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inspector in MOZO on the organisation of Gypsy kolkhozes (GARF, f. P 1235, op. 123, d. 28, l. 143-146, 158-170, 189-196). However, there he also entered into conflicts with various soviet institutions. He accused them of paying insufficient attention to the problems of the Gypsies and circulated several memos in this sense to higher authorities (Ibid.). As is became clear from his letter to Stalin, published above, in 1935 he worked as an engineer in Vagon Plant in Zaporozhye-Kamenskoye, Dnepropetrovsk Region. Unfortunately, no other information is available about him after his transfer to work in Ukraine. His name was not found in the database of those repressed in the USSR or those who died during World War II, and his fate remains unknown.

The text presented here for Alexander German is one of many variants of Autobiographies he wrote in different periods of time. His personal archive, preserved in his hometown of Orel, contains a wealth of diverse material (OGMLT, f. 29). Especially impressive (and maybe even shocking) is his diary, which he wrote for four decades (from 1912 to 1952). In this diary, he has only recorded his literary activity over the years, and there are only two insignificant remarks of a personal character. All other societal events (the First World War, the October Revolution, the Civil War, the Second World War), and his two marriages, proved to him to be less significant than his literary work, which, it would appear, was the important thing in his life. This diary reveals Alexander German as a person who, from his schooling years, had a passionate dream of becoming a famous writer, and devoted his entire life to the realization of this adolescent dream.

Alexander German also edited his Autobiographies and public presentations according to the requirements of the time. For example, he has repeatedly said that during the Civil War, he claimed to have fought in the Civil War "almost on all fronts" (this standard phrase was repeated repeatedly), but in fact, he had served in the army as a clerk – initially in Petrograd (Saint Petersburg) as a clerk and head of the army warehouse, then in Orel as a clerk at local military establishments.

Despite claims found in literature that "Pan-Russian Romani Union", was "under the leadership of Alexader Geramanov" (Hancock, 1991a, p. 257; 1991b, p. 140) the archives lacks any evidence of ever being a member of the All Russian Union of Gypsies, though he was involved as its representative in many artistic councils and editorial boards. Generally speaking, in all his activities and in his work, he was not so much a generator and implementer of new ideas and policies, but a talented and extremely workable propagandist of the already defined ideas and policies.

In his literary work, Alexander German (spelled Germano in Romani language texts) constantly adhered to the societal requirements of the time: his first texts were written in the spirit of patriotic military literature; after the October Revolution, they were already in the mainstream of proletarian literature; and after starting to work in the field of Gypsy activism, his publications actually lay the foundations of Gypsy national literature in USSR. In this respect, his fruitfulness is impressive, and he worked in almost all literary fields – poetry, prose, dramaturgy, journalism, translation, editorial work, etc. (see Annex I). He also ran a literary group to train Gypsy authors, prepared two Gypsy poets' Almanacs (Ibid.), participated in various public committees, boards, councils

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and committees. In 1929, he organised a Gypsy Literary Group *Ромэнгиро лав* (Gypsy Word) and became its chair. He participated in the Initiative Group on the organisation of the Gypsy theatre, and he was the author of the first play *Джишбэн прэ роты* (Life on Wheels), presented on the stage of the newly created in 1931 Gypsy Theatre Romen; until the end of his life, he was a member of the Artistic Council of the theatre. From 1934 to 1938 he worked as an editor in the National Sector of the State Literary Publishing House (Гослитиздат) for the production of literature in national languages, and thus actually managed and coordinated all publishing activities in the field of Gypsy literature in USSR. So there is every reason to accept that the place of Alexander German in the history of Roma literature as a whole is indisputable, and he is de facto one of its main progenitors (Marushiakova & Popov, 2020b).

Undoubtedly the most intriguing question is the one about the ethnic origin and identity of Alexander German. Moreover, in this direction, there are various mystifications and free interpretations that introduce additional misconceptions on the subject.

His father's name was Václav German, he was from Czech origin, was born in Hořovice (today in the Czech Republic, near Prague). His mother, Karolina, with maiden surname Knoutek, was also from Hořovice. These are the testimonies of German himself and there is no other documentary evidence of these data. In any case, the searches in the metric books and the administration documentation in Hořovice of his father's names (according to German the original surname of the family was spelled 'Hermann') and his mother did not lead to any result and no documentary evidence of the birth and the existence of such persons during this historical period is indicated. There may be several explanations for this mystery – the loss of documents, inaccurate memories of German, even conscious mystification by German himself. The latter should not be ruled out because there are other similar examples in his CV, e.g. the claim that he was "a street child" for a few years, which is a romanticising mystification, following the example of Maxim Gorky's book *My Universities*; in fact, he had lived with his relatives, and as he mentions that his sisters took care of him, and even paid the cost of his education.

Generally speaking, nowadays, it is generally assumed by authors who wrote about A. German, that he was of mixed (Roma and non-Roma) origin, as his mother was a "Moravian Roma woman". According to Milena Hübschmannová:

> Although Germano was not brought up like a Rom and was a Roma only on his mother's side but his Roma identity was revived because of the prestige of the official task [..] (Hübschmannová, 2002, p. 80)

Nevertheless, for Milena Hübschmannová, Germano was a Roma writer in spite of his mixed origin and the fact that he learned the Romani language in adult age (Hübschmannová, 2002, pp. 79-81). Milena Hübschmannová emphasises the fact that Alexander German did not learn Romani in his family and thus indicates that a national writer may also become a person for whom the relevant national language is not his native one. It is not clear why the question of the mixed origins of Alexander German (for

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Hübschmannová is indisputable) is raised at all in this context since it is widely known that many Roma activists and writers (both in the past and nowadays) are of mixed origin (and some have doubts as to whether they are Roma at all). The very idea of questioning the affiliation of individuals with mixed backgrounds to Roma activism and/or Roma literature is absurd, because if this logic is accepted, then the whole Gypsy movement and the Gypsy literature in the early USSR could also be called into question, as both the President of the All-Russian Union of Gypsies, Andrey Taranov, and the Secretary of the Union Ivan Rom-Lebedev were Gypsies only from their fathers side, and the most famous star of Theatre Romen, Nadezhda Kiseleva (with artistic pseudonym Lyalya Chyornaya) had only one Gypsy grandmother (Bessonov, 2016, p. 146).

According to Brigid O'Keeffe, who also accepts, without any doubt or hesitancy, the Roma origin of Alexander Germano's mother, it was quite characteristic of him to play a game with his identities (Roma and non-Roma) depending on the social and political situation. She argued that in the early Soviet Union, when an active pro-Gypsy policy was being conducted, he emphasised his Roma origin and Roma identity, and when the leading paradigm of Soviet national politics changed, he demonstrated a Russian ethnic identity (O'Keeffe, 2013, pp. 239-254).

However, this interpretation is quite controversial because documentary evidence does not confirm the existence of such a game of identities. In several Autobiographies written by German himself, the first one written in 1925, and the last in 1952, he has consistently declared himself a 'Gypsy writer', but not a 'Gypsy', and the second does not follow automatically from the first. As for the passages written by Alexander German himself, which Brigid O'Keeffe accepts as evidence of his identity game, they are also unconvincing. In fact, he never wrote, anywhere (sic!), that he was of Gypsy origin or with a Gypsy identity. The only wordings that could be interpreted as a hint of such an origin of his mother was written in 1925, in Orel, when he wrote:

> My mother didn't like to be in one place, she loved to travel, and because of her, my father changed jobs, sold all home junk and travelled away without knowing what will happen. (OGMLT, f. 29, op. 1, d. 137, l. 2).

Firstly, if Alexander German wants to play with his origin, it is not clear why he should use such a complex metaphor instead of directly indicating his mother's Gypsy background. Secondly, much more important, there is no logical explanation for why this game was needed at all. This version of his autobiography was written in 1925, i.e. at that time when Alexander German did not think at all that he would become a 'Gypsy writer' (as stated above, he leaves for Moscow next year). And something more, no one at the time even imagined that there would ever be an affirmative pro-Gypsy policy of the Soviet state and that a Gypsy literature would emerge, i.e. such an identity game with Gypsy origin and identity was not needed. Much more logical is the explanation that here again there is a romanticising metaphor about love for travel, without it having ethnic dimensions.

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In the next few variants of the Autobiography of the 1920s and 1930s, i.e. just at the time when Alexander German established himself as a 'Gypsy writer', he never mentioned a single word about his mother's Romani background. On 16th of May 1928 in a letter to his friend, namely the writer Iosif Kallinikov, describes his first impressions from Gypsies:

> When I arrived in Moscow, I took up work among Gypsies. Do not think about "stealing horses". The Gypsies are not the same [as before]. Craving for culture, the desire to become settled, build Gypsy schools, clubs, organise Gypsy farms, etc. – this is what the current Gypsies are striving for. It's even becoming strange that a half-tramp Gypsy reaches into the ranks of an organised population. … In two years of studying the Gypsy people, I have gathered quite valuable material about Gypsies. (RGALI, f. 267, op. 2, d. 96, l. 1; Шаповал 2020: 332).

As can be seen from this quote here he is speaking as an outsider, stranger, and not as a member of the community.

In the Autobiography published here, Alexander German himself answers, in sufficient detail, the direct question: was he a non-Gypsy or a Gypsy? There was also no need for an identity game in 1952 either when he wrote this version of his Autobiography, which unambiguously answers the question of Alexander German's ethnic origin and identity. It is unclear what might press an author, who was widely known in the public domain as the most prominent 'Gypsy writer', to resort to such 'identity games', i.e. to pretend to be an ethnic Russian without being one. And to do so in documents that are not public, but for official use only (his autobiography was prepared for his personal dossier in the Union of Soviet Writers). The natural question here is what would have happened to Alexander German if he had written that he was a Gypsy, as did, for example, Ivan Rom-Lebedev in the same questionnaire (RGALI, f. 2928 op. 2, d. 246), which in no way disrupted his professional and public career (for several decades he has been the permanent artistic director of the Theatre Romen). Moreover, he formally adds to his family name Lebedev a first part (Rom), with which he wants to publicly emphasise his ethnic origin and his identity. Therefore, it is much simpler (and more logical) to assume that Alexander German expressed his real ethnic origin and identity, which, as it turns out, was no obstacle to him being 'the Gypsy writer', as he became publicly known throughout the USSR and on which his entire career is built. To say it in brief, there was nothing that could push him to play such complex games of identity within the Union of Soviet Writers, especially in this case when the dossier was prepared only for internal administrative documentation.

Discrepancies between the actual real-life internalised ethnic identity of certain individuals or communities, on the one hand, and the public ethnic label that is attached to them by the others, on the other hand, is not something unique and unusual in world history. In the case of Alexander German we do not see any reasons for an over-interpretation and for connecting the issue of his ethnic identity with the Soviet national policy. In fact, Alexander German's entire literature career is built on this very foundation. The circumstance that he was getting a job at the All-Russian Union of Gypsies should not be taken as something unusual. With the same success, he could turn to another nationality

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that was in dire need of well-trained staff to support the construction and development of their national identity and culture, which was the main trend of nationalities policy in the early USSR. At the time, it was a common practice in the USSR to hire the so-called professionals who were not only of different ethnicities, but even experts with 'foreign' class origin were accepted (including even in the Red Army command staff). Based on the same principle, many 'specialists' of other ethnic backgrounds were hired by the 'All-Russian Union of Gypsies', including Evgeniy P. Ivanov, who headed the 'Ethnographic and Scientific Section for the Study of the Gypsy Language' (Вся Москва, 1927, p. 233; Вся Москва, 1928, p. 211; Друц & Гесслер, 1990, pp. 294-295).

Chronologically, for the first time, the alleged 'Gypsy origin' of the Alexander German (in particular the determination of his mother as a "Moravian Gypsy Woman") appeared only in 1960, five years after his death, in the new edition of a collection of his novels and stories, published by his second wife, Maria Vardashko, in the Afterword written by Boris Turganov (Германо, 1960, p. 237); the same statement is repeated in the second edition of this book, in the Preface, written by Zinaida Sidelnikova (Германо, 1962, p. 3). There appears also for the first the patronymic surname of the mother of Alexander German, Vasilievna, which is quite strange (it is not clear what Czech name could be given this Russificated form). In 1964, the statement about her 'Gypsy origin' was made official in the entry on Alexander Germano, written by Edvard Sholok, in the *Concise Literary Encyclopedia* (Шолок, 1964, p. 138), and since then, it has become dominant to this day. Given that Alexander German professed his origin himself, there is no need to discuss it any further.

The emergence of allegations of the Gypsy origin of Alexander German's mother can be explained by the efforts of his widow, Maria Vardashko, to promote his work after his death (her archive is also included in the OGMLT's Alexander German Fund). For many years after Alexander German's death, she has been trying to persuade the Soviet institutions and publishers to print his multi-volumed collected works. In her letters to the Union of Soviet Writers and to various publishers, as well as in her articles and press interviews, she makes statements in the public domain that seek to present Alexander German's image in a favorable light, e.g. he was declared by her to be the creator of Gypsy alphabet (though in fact, he was involved in it), he is presented as an active participant, and almost a Civil War hero, who "fought on almost all fronts" (cf. above about the actual nature of his service in the Red Army), etc. An important part of this, marketing strategy (to put it in contemporary language) is the emphasis on its Gypsy origin. This is a widespread practice since the times of the Russian Empire (and continuing to present-day), where a re-discovery of 'Gypsy origin' among the artistic elite (quotation marks here are not accidental as there is usually no real basis for such claims) was often met because of Gypsies' exotic and romanticised public image.

The case with Alexander German is a relatively rare case of divergence between the origin and identity, on the one hand, and the national dimensions of someone's literary work, on the other hand, but it is not without any analogies in the history of world literature. It is enough to recall the case of Sandor Petöfi, the renowned Hungarian national

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poet, from Slavic origin (his father was Serbian, mother Slovak). This case clearly shows that the emergence of national literature does not necessarily need to always be co-related with the ethnic origin and identity of the particular author. The significance of an individual author for the development of national literature must always be judged based on their literary work, and especially in relation to its public dimensions, and public effect.

We know only very little about the life (and even about the death) of Ivan Tokmakov outside the text published here, despite his undoubtedly crucial position among Gypsy activists (especially concerning Soviet state policy towards the Gypsies). Additional information in this regard discloses his personal data form filled in for the All-Union Party Census of 1926, which is stored in the Party archive (RGASPI, f. 17, op. 9, d. 3642, l. 37-38). According to this form, Ivan Tokmakov was born in 1888. His birthplace is not specified – it could be both Ekaterinburg (as Pankov writes) and Kamyshlov, which is located nearby and where he spent his childhood and his young years. In Kamyshlov he studied for one year at a parochial school, and from the age of 8 became a wage labourer (starting a job at such a young age was not uncommon in the Russian Empire). Before the October Revolution, he worked for 6 years as *konopatchik* (a worker who is plugging cracks in the wooden surfaces).

After the revolution of 1918, the life and career of Ivan Tokmakov are a typical example of the social elevators created by the Soviet state for the proletariat. From March 1918 till November 1919 he works at Kamyshlov railway station arranging the railway track wood and as charcoal-burner. In November 1919 he became a member of the party and then a check man. He then completed a three-month training course at the local Soviet Party School and was promoted to a Party secretary of collective. In January 1924, he was sent for two and a half years to study at the Ural-Siberian Communist University in Yekaterinburg. After completing the study in 1926 he was promoted again and appointed Party secretary for the whole Ural Agricultural Machinery Plant in the city of Votkinsk (now in Udmurt, Republic of the Russian Federation).

Later he was sent for further training to Moscow, and in 1932 he was an aspirant (a designation of persons prepared for academic and teaching positions) at Sverdlov Communist University for senior Party leadership. Because of restructuring of the University the TsK VKP (b), Department for Agitation and Propaganda, directed him to work at ON VTsIK. This appointment was connected to "the planned reorganisation of the Gypsy journal *Nevo drom* into a newspaper" and ON VTsIK recommended Ivan Tokmakov for chairperson of the future newspaper (GARF, f. P 1235, op. 123, d. 27, l. 266). The reasons for this decision were complex. In his letter to the ON VTsIK from October 20, 1933, the editor-in-chief of the journal Andrey Taranov requested converting the journal into a Romani language newspaper, which would be published three times a month. He argued that, for this purpose, a larger editorial team (i.e. more people on the payroll) would be needed. Taranov justified his request with the bureaucratic problems encountered in the transition from the publishing house of Tsentrizdat to the National Department of Uchpedgiz (Ibid., l. 260-265). At the same time, a number of letters from Gypsy activists had been

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sent to Soviet institutions, with serious critical comments on the work of the journal. Among them was a letter by Mikhail Bezlyudskiy and Georgiy Lebedev indicating specific 'gross political mistakes' and concluding that the journal had largely failed to meet their task of 'organising the thoughts and class consciousness of the Gypsy working masses' (Ibid., l. 243-248).

In his new position, Ivan Tokmakov made considerable efforts to implement the decision to issue a Gypsy newspaper. He prepared and sent memoranda to various institutions (GARF, f. P 1235, op. 121, d. 31, l. 61), and repeatedly initiated decisions that recommended the publication of such a newspaper. He arranged a decision in this sense to be included in the Decree of Presidium of TsIK USSR from April 7, 1936, but it was dropped in the edited final version (Ibid. l. 47-50). The issue of the Gypsy newspaper continued to shift between the various institutions for years and, in the end, a final decision was never reached. In the meantime, the year 1938 arrived, when a turning point in the national policy of the USSR occurred, and the issue of a Romani language newspaper became obsolete.

The circumstances surrounding the death of Ivan Tokmakov are unclear, and we can rely only on information in the text prepared by Nikolay Pankov. Pankov probably relies on information obtained from Ivan Tokmakov's army fellows, but there is no other documentary evidence to prove the accuracy of the information provided. The Soviet Army archives contain only the following brief information about him: "Ivan Petrovich Tokmakov; year of birth 1898" (in fact Tokmakov was born in 1888; probably he himself specified a later date in order to be taken into the army – authors note); "date of death 10/01/1941"; "gone missing" (Книга памяти, 2019).

One cannot help but notice that in the materials gathered by Nikolay Satkevich, among the Gypsy activists from the interwar period presented, is absent the name of Ivan Rom-Lebedev (1903-1991). We can only guess why he was omitted. May be Rom-Lebedev himself did not want to provide material about himself and was unwilling to be associated with Satkevich's repeated attempts in the 1960s to restitute the Soviet state pro-active Gypsy politics from 1920s-1930s. In any case, Rom-Lebedev himself, towards the end of his life, published a memoir, *From the Gypsy choir to the theatre Romen* (Ром-Лебедев, 1990). This book contains a wealth of information about early Gypsy activism as well as the entire biography of its author.

Ivan Rom-Lebedev's book is interesting in various aspects, including even descriptions of the life of the Gypsy music elite before the October Revolution. He describes a two-storey mansion in Moscow, where he grew up, owned by his family, the servants they had (cook, maid, and concierge), and the guests who visited them – great princes, millionaires, and even Grigori Rasputin (Ром-Лебедев, 1990, pp. 94-95).

Rom-Lebedev's memoirs were written before the collapse of the USSR and, for understandable reasons, there are some silenced issues in it. He explains his departure to southern Russia in 1918 by means of romantic motives ("to see the sea"). He presents his participation in the General Denikin's Volunteer Army, then in the army of Baron Wrangel in the Crimea, as mobilisation by force, and his later inclusion in the Red Army

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as a conscious choice (Ром-Лебедев, 1990, pp. 143-144). Among Gypsies in Moscow, however, rumors had floated that the truth was quite different. Until today still, doubts remain as to what that truth actually was.

Already in the early stages of the development of Gypsy activism, Ivan Rom-Lebedev held leading positions in the leadership of the VSTs. He authored (or at least co-authored) all the key visionary texts of the time. After the abolition of the VSTs, however, he ceased all his activities in this field and started to work in the newly created Theatre Romen, where he held a leading artistic and leadership positions for the rest of his life. Of course, this particular life choice did not mean his exclusion from public life. In the 1930s, Rom-Lebedev actively participated as a representative of the Theatre Romen in a number of meetings and discussions with Soviet institutions on various issues concerning the Soviet policy toward the Gypsies. He also took part in discussions of the work of the Theatre Romen; e.g. at one such debate, in 1933, he was among the speakers who publicly crushed, in the spirit of the times, the so-called Lebedevshchina (from the name of Georgiy Lebedev, who was his colleague and friend from the Yegor Polyakov's choir), which came to signify "booze, domestic corruption and lack of discipline" (GARF, f. P 1235, op. 123, d. 28, l. 183-186).

After the Second World War, Ivan Rom-Lebedev organised (and was the first among the signatories) a collective letter to Stalin, calling for the restoration of the Soviet state's affirmative policy towards the Gypsies (GARF, f. P 7523, op. 17, d. 132 l. 124-127). This letter remained without any negative consequences for the signatories, and Ivan Rom-Lebedev himself continued to gain public fame at the Theatre Romen for the rest of his life.

The question of the relations between the Gypsy activists in the time of the early USSR is undoubtedly an interesting one. Quite natural in a demarcated system was that in Gypsy activism arose some internal contradictions and collisions.
As was already argued, some Gypsy activists (and especially Mikhail Bezlyudskiy and Trofim Gerasimov) sent numerous memoranda to Soviet institutions, filled with accusations towards other activists for making mistakes, being ineffective, and even for the incorrect implementation of the Soviet state's policy towards the Gypsies. Similar criticisms appeared, though less frequently, on the pages of Gypsy journals. In the 1920s, the subject of these criticisms was most often the leadership of VSTs (Andrey Taranov and Ivan Lebedev), as well as Gypsy activists in different regions, e.g. Ruzya (Yefrosinya) Tumashevich, from the *Svoboda* (Freedom) kolkhoz in Western Oblast (Нэво дром, 1930a, pp. 9-10).

However, the reason for the widespread distribution of this epistolary genre in Gypsy activism should not be considered to lie in personal or career motives (of course, we cannot exclude that there may have been also such cases). The main reasons for this phenomenon were the already existing diverse visions concerning the best ways and modes in which the policy of the Soviet state towards the Gypsies should be pursued, and the desire to help make this policy more effective, as well as to produce faster results, which would radically alter their lives. In this context, the relationship between Nikolay Pankov and Alexander German deserves special attention. When German presented his book *Gypsies*

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Yesterday and Today (Герман, 1931) to Pankov, he wrote a dedication: "To dear Nikolay Alexandrovich Pankov. My first experience about Gypsies is at your trial". Under the dedication, Pankov wrote with a pencil: "We need only marvel at our goodwill, which allowed such disgrace without any rebuke" (LANB, f. Николай Панков). In spite of everything, the relationship between the two remained good, and in many cases, they collaborated.

In fact, it should be noted here that, despite the mutual accusations (often quite grave), disagreements between Roma activists have never been made public, but were overall silenced in the name of the common goals pursued in favour to the Gypsy community. This is something that is very different from what happened during the same period of time in other countries in Central, Eastern and South-Eastern Europe (especially Romania and Poland).

The note quoted above can be interpreted in another discourse: from the point of view of the question of the origin and identity of Alexander German. It is clear from this note that "we" means 'we Gypsies', i.e. for Pankov (as well as for other activists) there was no doubt about the non-Gypsy origin and identity of German. This issue was, however, never raised publicly (or at least no evidence has been found to this effect). This makes it clear that the presence of non-Roma in the field of Gypsy activism was accepted without any problems, in the name of the goals pursued, and for the benefit of the community. This situation is also different from the reaction in similar (real or imagined) cases in the region of Central, South-Eastern and Eastern Europe at that time; moreover, it is also different from the situation in the field of Roma activism nowadays.

Elena Marushiakova and Vesselin Popov

Summarising Comments

To understand the development of the movement for Roma civic emancipation in the interwar period in the USSR, it is not enough to present and analyse the relations 'community – society' (Gypsy activism – Soviet state) placed in the whole social and political context. More than this is needed: namely, to consider the overall national policy of the Soviet state in the early USSR, and to reveal the comparative place of the Gypsies in this policy. In other words, it is necessary to answer the question about the specific dimensions of the policy towards Gypsies in the overall multinational discourse.

Historical data give immediate, unambiguous response. The stigmatisation of Gypsies and their differentiation from other nationalities in the USSR has never (sic!) existed – neither in theory nor in practice. On the contrary, as illustrated, in many cases Gypsies enjoyed more privileges than other nationalities. The fact that the Gypsies have not been able to establish their national administrative-territorial unit at a higher level than the village council was grounded in their diasporic settlements and the existence of a very high proportion of nomads. Moreover, dozens of other nationalities were in the same situation (i.e. lacking their own administrative-territorial unit) and quite a few others were even worse off (i.e. they did not even have a national selsoviet).

When talking about the Soviet national policy towards the Gypsies, the following important circumstance must be considered, which is usually not taken into account by

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researchers. The Gypsies in the early USSR were its equal citizens, and this also applied to the so-called foreign Gypsies (i.e. the holders of passports for foreign citizenship), who have been mentioned above more than once, and who, in practice were treated like other 'local' Gypsies. Thus, all Gypsies living in the USSR, in fact, enjoyed the same civil rights as other Soviet citizens and, as such, were subject to common state policies relating to all Soviet citizens. Only in addition to that, as representatives of a separate nationality, the Gypsies were subject to a special nationalities policy, which was also built on the same common soviet basis. In other words, in the early USSR, the special state policy towards the Gypsies was an inseparable part of the general nationalities policy during this historical period, which, according to the precise definition of Terry Martin (Martin, 2001), can be collectively called the policy of affirmative action.

Some authors make arbitrary interpretations, according to which the Gypsies in the early USSR had a position that distinguished them from other nationalities. The complete ignorance (or misunderstanding) of historical realities leads to such interpretations that are in the spirit of contemporary concepts and legal categories and this is what makes them inadequate and misleading in understanding historical realities. A typical example in this direction is the statement: "In 1925 the State classified Roma as a 'national minority', devoting special departments to Romani affairs within the National Minorities Sector of the Ministry of Culture" (Lemon, 2001, p. 228; 2000, p. 132-133). Analysing this text we can tolerate such a 'minor' mistake, as the one that disregards the fact that, in fact, in 1925, there were no ministries. They only appeared in 1946. Before that, the People's Commissariats (Narkomats) had similar functions. In 1925, the Ministry of the Culture did not exist at all, being established for the first time in the history of the USSR only in 1953. More importantly, in Narkompros (which included in its portfolio also cultural institutions and activities) there were no "special departments to Romani affairs" either in 1925 or throughout its whole existence. Another issue is the terminological one: even if such departments were created, they would be defined as *Gypsy* and not *Romani*. Otherwise, in principle (at least as it is accepted in historical science), such claims should be supported by a quotation of the relevant historical sources (which, for comprehensible reasons, is lacking in the statement above). In this case, however, we even have historical evidence for exactly the contrary – all historical sources clearly and unequivocally show that Gypsy activism in the early USSR throughout the period of its official existence was invariably supervised (and in fact led) by ON VTsIK.

The mistake here is due to the ignorance of historical realities, which leads to confusion and replacement of two different Soviet institutions. – ON VTsIK and SNK / Sovnarkom. With a Decree of SNK RSFSR from March 22, 1921, at Narkompros was established Council for the Education of the Peoples of the Non-Russian Language. With the liquidation of the Narkomnats, led by Stalin, by decree of the SNK RSFSR of October 5, 1925, the Council was transformed into the Central Council for the Education of the National Minorities of the RSFSR, which was often abbreviated as Sovnatsmen. Thus, the term 'national minority' began to be used in education, but the official term that

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continued to exist (including in the numerous forms and questionnaires that Soviet citizens were required to complete) remained 'nationality'.

The claim that there was a special department responsible for Gypsy issues is also not correct (Ibidem). And, moreover, in 1926 the Central Council for the Education of National Minorities of the RSFSR (Центральный Совет по просвещению национальных меньшинств РСФСР) in response to the intercession of the ON VTsIK to provide a permanent position for the responsible person for the education of Gypsies to a representative of VSTs, answered, that "even larger nationalities" (i.e. Gypsies were considered one of all nationalities in USSR – authors note) do not have their representatives in the Council, so the VSTs' request cannot be accepted and the Council will delegate the respective activity to someone from its staff (GARF, f. P 1235, op. 120, d. 27).

The problem, in this case, is in the inaccurate translation of the term 'национальность' as 'national minority' and not as 'nationality', as would be the correct form. However, the issue of translation is not only linguistic but concerns also the field of legal and political history. The early USSR was not built on the principles of the Versailles system. Just on the contrary, it was a multinational state, as stated in both the 1924 and the 1936 USSR Constitutions. Thus, there was no one leading nation and accordingly, there was no 'national minority' category. For this reason, the official names of the Soviet institutions were as follows: the Department of Nationalities at the VTsIK, the Council of Nationalities at the TsIK of the USSR, etc. Even the euphemism "senior brother", which was widely used after 1937 referring to the Russian people, was not present anywhere in the official jurisdiction of the Soviet state (Вдовин, 2010). The fact that the term (but not the legal category) national minority (*национальное меньшинство*) can be found in official records and public discourse (including as an acronym for the Council of Narkompros, mentioned above) does not attach any legal and political value to it, because its use does not mean the repealment of the basic legislative acts. In this sense, defining Gypsies in the USSR as a national minority is completely unjustified and leads to further mistakes, such as the statement: "In reality, the status of national minority has been withdrawn from the Gypsies in the Soviet Union in 1936 along with the associated schools, newspapers and even independent collective farms and workshop co-operatives" (Stewart, 2001, p. 74). It is not possible to withdraw something which was not attributed.The astonishing thing, in this case, is that this obvious absurdity continues to be repeated in scholarly publications to this day (Dunajeva, 2020, p. 107).

There is no point to pay special attention to the statement that following the logic of "Stalin's rather mechanistic model of what constituted a nation" Gypsies were considered "a 'social' and not an ethnic layer who needed to be drawn into the proletariat" (Stewart, 2001, p. 71). This interpretation (which is later repeated by several other authors) is based on an analysis of the post-war period in Eastern European countries, but the transfer of data from one historical epoch to another is methodologically unjustified. An overview of the overall Soviet policy on the Gypsies shows the apparent insolvency of such interpretation, which underlines the contradiction between two imaginary alternatives. These, in fact, are not alternatives, but manifestations of the two simultaneously existing basic dimensions (community and society) in the life of the Gypsies.

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In the same range is also the interpretation that Gypsies in the Soviet Union had a distinct status, inequitable to other nationalities because they did not meet Stalin's notorious definition of a nation. The statement "According to the Stalinist definition, Gypsies were no longer to be considered a national minority as they had no territory and no 'economic life'" (Klímová-Alexander, 2005a, p. 164) is unfounded and has no corroboration either as documentary evidence or in terms of actual political practice. If Stalin's definition of a nation was used as a basis in the design and implementation of nationalities policy in the early USSR, then it would be interesting to ask how many of the 150 nationalities at that time met the criteria to be considered as such and how the policy towards Gypsies differs from the policies towards other nationalities. In fact, reflections on which nationalities fit Stalin's definition of a nation and which did not, began after his death, and they were made in the markedly anti-Stalinist discourse that had been a leading party ideology in the USSR after the dismantling of Stalin's cult of personality in 1956.

We must note here that throughout the vast written heritage of Joseph Stalin, repeatedly published and reprinted, on a wide variety of topics, there is not a single word about Gypsies. There is neither any other historical evidence that he ever displayed any interest in Gypsies. Moreover, Stalin has not even once visited a performance of Theatre Romen, although he very often attended theatre performances in various other theatres in Moscow, and attended many times performances of plays he particularly liked (e.g. *The Turbin Brothers* of Mikhail Bulgakov).

Against this background, the following statement seems quite odd: "In 1928, Stalin's ascent to power lead [sic! – authors note] to the disbanding of the PRGU [meaning VSTs – authors note] … The Party and NKVD (later the KGB) took over the task of the PRGU". (Klímová-Alexander, 2005a, p. 164). The impression from this text is that, for Stalin, after he won the party-internal struggles in the VKP(b) in December 1927, which led to Trotsky's expulsion from the Party, one of the most important tasks was the closure of the VSTs. This is a typical example of a 'Roma-centrist' interpretation of history. As the materials published above show, after the dissolution of the VSTs, the policy concerning Gypsies continued to be coordinated by the ON VTsIK, the SN TsIK of the USSR, and it was not until 1936 that the NKVD undertook part of this task (especially in regard to the creation of a Gypsy national rayon).

A Roma-centrist approach to history in academic texts has its parallels in narratives of the community. Today, in the post-Soviet space, among Roma there are many widespread legends about how Stalin rejected a request of Hitler to give him the USSR's Gypsies. There are even published "memories" of how Stalin promised the famous Gypsy artist Lyalya Chernaya that he would make a Gypsy Republic in the USSR (Калинин, 2005, pp. 45-47). All these examples from oral history, however, represent a secondary construction of the community's quasi-history.

As already mentioned, the key concept used for the characterisation of Gypsies in the social fabric of the early USSR is *backward* (or *culturally backward*). This definition was used when referring to all peoples who were oppressed in Tsarist Russia, who were an object of special care of the Soviet state and for whom the nationalities policy was

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designed. Already in 1903 the famous ethnographer Lev Sternberg formulated the reason for including Gypsies in this category: "Gypsies to a large extent, and perhaps even completely, are victims of the historical injustice imposed on them by the surrounding nationalities" (Штернберг, 1903, pp. 304-308). In the early USSR, the authorities repeatedly determined the various privileges that disadvantaged nationalities should enjoy; de facto all nationalities in the USSR including the Gypsies, except the Russians, Ukrainians, Georgians, Armenians, Jews, and Germans, were considered "culturally backward" (Martin, 2001). Moreover, among all 'backward nationalities' a race ensued concerning which of them was more backward. This was expressed in the best way in the speech of Alexander Khatskevich at the Consultative Meeting of SN TsIK USSR that was convened on 04-05.01.1936: "That is why we must take special care of Gypsies as the most backward in the past" (GARF, f. P 3316, op. 28, d. 794, l. 77).

For the sake of truth, it should be noted that this characteristic of the past position of Gypsies is quite controversial (to put it mildly). Under the Russian Empire, Gypsies were not at the lowest levels of social structure at all. Firstly, as already Nikolay Stieber pointed out: "According to our legislation, the Gypsies are not singled out as a special tribe, nor as a special class, they are not even included anywhere in the composition of 'inorodtsy' (inorodtsy, meaning 'foreign-born people', was a special category-defining many subjugated peoples in the Russian Empire, with more or less limited civil rights – authors note)" (Штибер, 1895, p. 550). Secondly, in the complex structure of the Russian Empire, the majority of Gypsies in the 19th century (including nomads) were assigned to the categories of 'state peasants' and 'meshchane' (city dweller, small producers). In modern language, this can be expressed approximately as belonging to 'lower middle class' and 'upper lower class'. A relatively small number of Gypsies (the so-called musician elite in the big cities) even registered at the lower levels in the upper merchants' estate. The main problem for the authorities in the Russian Empire, which determined its overall policy towards the Gypsies, was how to get them to fulfill their tax obligations as members of certain estates (a task at which successes were negligible).

In early Soviet times, the social position of the Roma was not unambiguous and in many cases was determined by a particular context. In this regard, particularly noteworthy is the letter to Nikolay Pankov written by Lyuba Mikholazhina (who had graduated from the Gypsy Pedagogical College), who went to work in a local (non-Gypsy) school in the Chechen-Ingush Autonomous Soviet Socialist Republic. What makes this letter interesting are the thoughts of the newly-created Gypsy intelligentsia and their social positions within the Soviet realities:

> I strongly dislike those … who not only do not help their nation but also give it up. I managed to reach the level of the Russians and to prove that we do have abilities too. Now I am working in the Caucasus and not among my Gypsies. […] What made me come here is that I wanted to learn about the life of the Caucasian people. It is very difficult and dangerous to live here. For example, an inspector was murdered today up in the mountains on his way to our regional centre Vedeno. There are many such occurrences here: murders, robberies, raped girls thrown down from the high banks into the river. Going out in the yard at

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> night … is dangerous because somebody may hit you on the head with a stone. They [the local Chechens – authors note] hate the Russians and treat us as conquerors. They have no idea about the existence of Gypsies and think that I am Russian. (Друц & Гесслер, 1990, pp. 301-302)

It can look strange at first glance, but in some cases, Gypsies could be on the other side of the barricade, on the side of the 'invaders', seen in post-colonial discourse. This is not something unique in the history of the Gypsies: it would be enough to think of the Calon Gypsy slave traders of the 18th century in Brazil (Fotta, 2018).

To be able to properly understand the reasons that determine the place of the Gypsies in the common line of the nationalities policy of the Soviet state during the interwar period, different factors must be taken into account. First of all, these are demographic data, and more specifically, the number of Gypsies in the USSR at that time.

The population census in the USSR in 1926 reported 61,234 Gypsies (plus 31 'Bosha', i.e. *Lom*, who lived in the Caucasus, who were considered a separate nationality), of whom 12,823 lived in cities and 48,411 in villages (Всесоюзная перепись, 1926). The census recorded Gypsies according to their residence, and because at that time permanently settled Gypsies in villages were relatively little and only in some regions, it can be assumed that the majority of Roma registered as living in villages were nomads. The total population of the USSR was 146,637,530 people, i.e. Gypsies represented about 0.42 per cent of this population and therefore occupied 44th place in the ranking of nationalities in the USSR in their numbers.

The Census of the Population in the USSR in 1939 reported 88,242 Gypsies (Всесоюзная перепись, 1939). With a total number of the entire population of the USSR 170,557,093, Roma represented about 0.05% of it and placed in the 43rd place in the ranking of nationalities in the USSR by their size (i.e. the changes from the 1926 data were insignificant).

As discussed above, the VSTs' leadership in the 1920s disputed this data and claimed that the number of Gypsies was significantly higher, indicating different figures – most often around 500,000, also 600,000 and even 800,000 (GARF, f. P 393, op. 43 A, d. 1763, l. 80; f. A 259, op. 9б, d. 4233, l. 22; f. P 3316, op. 17, d. 188, l. 3). The activists pointed out two main arguments in this regard. The first was that in the Census many Gypsies self-identified as Romanians, Hungarians, Bulgarians, etc. because they had foreign passports. This is quite misleading because, in the Census, all foreign nationals were accounted for by their nationality, not by their ethnicity; and those Gypsies who were foreigners (mainly *Kelderari* and *Lovari*) could not be counted in the total number of Gypsies. The second argument for claiming higher numbers was that Gypsies could be covered by the Census because they were not domiciled. This argument is not convincing enough because Gypsy camps were usually on the outskirts of the settlements and thus were easily covered by census takers. Most probably not all Gypsies were covered by the census but they were hardly enough to significantly alter the total number. Besides, it should be borne in mind that, at that time, Gypsies as a whole were clearly distinguished from their surrounding

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population, not only in appearance but also in their traditional clothing (or some elements of it) used by the majority of them, and could hardly mislead the census takers, even if they wished to do so. Thus, even with the widest acceptance of all the inaccuracies and incompletions admitted in the Census of 1926 and 1939, the real share of Gypsies from the total population of the USSR in the interwar period could not exceed 0.1%.

Given the real number of Gypsies in the early USSR, one can also evaluate how effective the Soviet policy toward them actually was. The Soviet archives contain a wealth of information about Gypsies with arranged employment (in Gypsy kolkhozes and artels, as well as working in various fields of production), which cannot be analysed here, so we will give as an example only the summarised data obtained as a result of a special study organised by the ON VTsIK in 1936: of the 6,220 Gypsy families living in the USSR, 1,100 were organised in the Gypsy kolkhozes, and 1,020 worked in the Gypsy artels and production (GARF, f. P 1235, op. 130, d. 5). It is striking, however, that another study, conducted at almost the same time (1936-1937) and organised by the VPK, reported quite different data – 1,425 families in 45 Gypsy kolkhozes, out of a total of 9,047 Gypsy families (Платунов, 1976, p. 271). Comparing these data with others (e.g. the number of Gypsy families in individual kolkhozes), as well as with the total number of Gypsies in the USSR at that time, it is clear that the share of Gypsies not covered by Soviet politics (mostly nomads) was quite high.

In this situation, when Gypsies appear to be a very small proportion of the total population of the USSR and their economic importance to the Soviet state was even smaller, it is only natural that in the general context of Soviet policy during the interwar period the 'Gypsy issue' occupied quite an insignificant place. The USSR during this period solved extremely important internal and external political tasks, and the problems of the Gypsies were very far in the periphery of the state policy. In this context, it seems more than strange to claim that "the Bolsheviks viewed the Romani population of the Soviet Union with dread" (O'Keefe, 2019), especially given that it was a Party that was not afraid to oppose the entire "old world" in the name of his ideals (Slezkine, 2017). The real attitude to the Gypsy issue of the VKP (b) is most clearly shown by the fact that for the entire period of the early USSR this topic was not discussed even once at a meeting of the Politburo of TsK VKP(b), which was the highest Party and state authority, especially given that at that time the Politburo was discussing thousands of the most diverse (and insignificant, from today's point of view) issues. In fact, the Gypsies in the entire history of the USSR were mentioned only once (sic!) at such a high level. It was in 1956 when, at a meeting of the Presidium of the TsK KPSS (an analogue of the Politburo at that time), the issue of their sedentarisation was decided (Фурсенко, 2003, p. 161). Furthermore, as mentioned above, in the Decree *On the Reorganisation of National Schools* of the Orgburo of the TsK VKP(b) from 1938, which is an important starting point in the turn in Soviet national policy, the "German, Finnish, Polish, Latvian, English, Greek, Estonian, Ingrian, Veps, Chinese, etc." schools are explicitly mentioned, but not the Gypsy schools (about whose existence Narkompros reminisces about half a year later).

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The logical question here must be why the Soviet state paid so much attention to Gypsies and go to so much effort to integrate them into the "new life". The answer here is in two dimensions, which are not mutually exclusive but, on the contrary, mutually compatible.

On the one hand, Gypsies are by no means a particular exception to the general discourse of the leading Soviet national politics during this period. The declared basic principles of this policy were not just propaganda slogans without real coverage; and the number of established national territorial-administrative units at different levels in the early USSR (more specifically, until the turn in the 1930s) is impressive. In addition to the Union and Autonomous Republics and National Autonomous Okrugs and Oblasts, there were also national rayons (about 250 in 1933), and national selsoviets in 1933-1934 being 5,400 and over 19,000 in 1937; every tenth rayon in the country was national one and also every eighth to the ninth was selsoviet (Вдовин, 1992, pp. 36-37).

On the other hand, Gypsies, unlike many other nationalities with similar demographic and economic parameters, had some clear advantages in terms of being able to be used by the Soviet state for propaganda purposes, both at home and abroad. The proof of this are the dozens of articles in the central and local press in the USSR itself, and even more in various countries around the world. Some authors overestimated this propaganda aspect as the most important reason for the Soviet policy towards the Gypsies (Деметер et al., 2000, pp. 206-207). There is no reason for such interpretation because the attitude towards them was within the framework of the common nationalities policy during this period which was no different from the attitude towards all other nationalities. It is true, however, that the examples of changes in the lives of Gypsies in the USSR would have been much more comprehensible to the world, where Gypsies were known as a people, while only a very limited circle of people would have heard about the dozens of other nationalities in the USSR, even within the country, not to mention abroad. This propaganda effect should not be overestimated, because these articles, and especially those abroad, were either in the pro-communist press or rather attributed to the 'Curiosities' headings; this attitude was also valid in cases where other forms of mass propaganda are sought, e.g.in the distribution of the film The Last Gypsy Camp starring Lyalya Chernaya in the United States. Nevertheless, though limited, this effect was visible. Of course, in spite of this, hardly anyone in the Soviet leadership had hoped that the example of Gypsies in the Soviet Union will contribute substantially to the expected 'World Proletarian Revolution'.

In their work with the Gypsies, the Soviet institutions applied the policy model common for other relatively small and dispersed nationalities, which did not have territorial-administrative structures (except at the lowest level), and first and foremost the Assyrians. On the recommendation of the ON VTsIK, the Statute of the VSTs was prepared following the model of the Statute of the Koreans in the USSR (GARF, f. P 1235, op. 119, d. 10, l. 17). In many cases, the documentation of the Gypsy organisation is stored together with that of the Assyrian organisation in the record-keeping of Soviet institutions (GARF, f. P 3316, op. 64, d. 1637; NARB, f. 34/133c, op. 1, d. 727). In its activities already in the

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1920s, the leadership of the VSTs has repeatedly called on the Soviet institutions to deal with the Gypsies, taking into account the experience of working with the Soviet Jews. However, this does not appear as a realistic request. Jews at that time were the 7th largest nationality in the USSR (Всесоюзная перепись населения, 1926; 1939) and in determining the national policy towards them played many other important factors (including international ones), which were absent in the case of the Gypsies. Therefore, the aspirations of Gypsy activists to be treated by the Soviet state as a nationality of the same order as the Jews were doomed to failure.

In general, state policy towards the Gypsies in the early USSR was a composite and inseverable segment of the common national policy of affirmative action. We prefer to use this term, 'Affirmative Action Policy' (Martin, 2001), because to us it is more general and more relevant to the substance of the process than the term 'korenizatsiya' used in recent years. The term 'korenizatsiya' is a creation of the Soviet bureaucratic language and reflects only part of the process (the appointment of indigenous representatives at the Soviet authorities on the ground). And, more importantly, in the case of the Gypsies, affirmative action policy most accurately expresses the attitude of the Soviet state towards them, while the term 'korenizatsiya' in the case of Gypsies, is meaningless because they did not have an administrative apparatus to be 'korenised'. The use of this term in relation to the Gypsies is in itself ridiculous, as they can in no way be defined as an 'indigenous people', as historically relative new migrants in the Russian Empire.

The many historical sources available clearly show that in many cases Soviet-era Gypsy politics not only fitted organically into the mainstream of the Soviet common affirmative action but the Gypsies often even enjoyed some additional privileges compared to many other nationalities. It has already been said that many of the decrees of Soviet institutions repeatedly equated the status of the Gypsies who wish to settle with that of the so-called resettlers (a privilege that almost no other nationality enjoyed). The same attitude occurred also in other fields: the numbers of publications of fictional and educational literature in Romani language were more numerous than in the languages of many other nationalities; the remission of loans to Gypsy kolkhozes and artels was almost a regular practice. Moreover, strange as it may sound, the privileged attitude towards Gypsies is visible even in the sphere of political repression.

The very topic of Stalinist repressions towards the Gypsies deserves a separate study, in which these repressions must be placed in the general context of mass terror during this era to reveal to which extent they were ethnically motivated. To say it in other words, it is necessary to specify whether the Gypsies were repressed as members of a particular community or as 'ordinary' Soviet citizens. Here we will only briefly state that the Gypsy case is, if not unique to Soviet realities, at least one of the few exceptions. Unlike the general practice, when huge sections of the new national elites, created by the Soviet state, were annihilated during the repressions of the 1930s, Gypsy activists as a whole (with some controversial exceptions, which will be discussed below) did not fall victims to these reprisals. Only some of them received a surprisingly minor punishment, as for instance the already mentioned case of Andrey Taranov, who after two failures (as the

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head of the VSTs and of the journal *Nevo drom*) was punished by being sent to work for a short time to at a low-level nomenclature position in Kyrgyzstan.

We can consider the case of Georgiy Lebedev as one of the few exceptions in this regard, although the case is not entirely clear. Georgiy Lebedev was one of the founders of VSTs, after which he was appointed to a leadership position at the Theatre Romen, determined to exercise the 'political leadership' of the theatre (GARF, f. P 1235, op. 123, d. 28, l. 183). In 1933, on several public events repeatedly organised by the Moscow city authorities, severe political charges were raised towards him (Ibid., l. 98-99, 183-187). In the end, however, Georgiy Lebedev was convicted on charges of criminal nature, which led to a relatively light sentence. The widespread practice at that time was the opposite: to shape criminal offenses as political, which resulted in much more severe penalties. In addition to Georgiy Lebedev, a few more young actors of the theatre were sentenced with criminal offenses, but Theatre Romen continued to exist. A comparison with the fate of the Latvian State Theatre *Skatuve* in Moscow shows radically different results in a similar situation: in 1937 the theatre was closed down, the entire staff of the theatre arrested, 32 people were shot dead and the rest were sent to GULAG.

The lists of members of the VKP(b), victims of political repression in the 1930s, include the names of only two people who indicated their nationality as 'Gypsy'. The first of these was Grigoriy Lutsenko from Kiev (1906-1937), sent to the GULAG camps on charges of Trotskyism, where he was again convicted and shot. Lutsenko was a teacher of Marxism-Leninism and there is no information about him having any activity in the field of Gypsy activism. The second case, which is more complicated, is of Velya Pashun, who wrote under an alias Volodimir Zorin (born in 1904 in Bessarabia, shot dead in 1937 in Kharkiv), a participant in the Civil War, a member of the VKP(b) since 1919, graduated from a High Party school for leadership training, a journalist in the *Vesti* (News) newspaper, and a writer, author of several collections of short stories and stories about the Civil War. He is the author of an article on Gypsy-topic in the press (Зорін, 1927), as well as of the books titled *Rom*, mentioned above. The interesting question here, to which we have no logical answer, is why, despite this impressive (by Soviet standards of the time) biography and education, he was attracted neither to the VSTs nor to central Soviet institutions or local Ukrainian governments to work with Gypsies, especially given the apparent shortage of trained personnel in this area.

Unclear remains only the case of Averyan Voytsehovskiy from Leningrad, whom some authors pointed as a victim of political repression among Gypsy activists (Калинин, 2005, p. 38; Kenrick, 2007, p. 260-261). The lists of victims of political repression, however, lack a person with that name; it is possible for various reasons (e.g. a conviction for a criminal article, an error in documentation, loss of documents, etc.) that his name is not included in these lists.

There are other personalities involved in Gypsy activism whose fate is almost unknown. In April 1926, preparatory work began in Kazak ASSR (the official name at the time) for the establishment of the Gypsy kolkhoz 'Put' Stalina' (Stalin's Way) (GARF, f. P 1235, op. 123, d. 27, p. 63). In 1927, 27 nomadic groups united into the National kolkhoz

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in the Alma-Ata rayon (Ibid., l. 150; Платунов, 1976, pp. 265-266). This was, in fact, the first Gypsy kolkhoz in the USSR; it was established on the initiative of a "Gypsy Order Holder", A. I. Vishnevsky. He was a holder of the Order of the Red Banner (GARF, f. P 1235, op. 123, d. 27, l. 273-274), the highest Soviet order at the time, awarded to the heroes of the Civil War. Unfortunately, there is no more information about A. I. Vishnevsky and, when in 1931 the collective farm was moved to Kyrgyz ASSR, the sources already indicate as its chairman the "Comrade Tsibulsky (a Gypsy)", and the kolkhoz is already mixed, dominated by Russian families (Ibid.).

It is not possible to discuss the very topic of Stalinist repressions without mentioning the most often quoted case in this regard, especially after publications of the respective documents of NKVD (Поболь & Полян, 2005, pp. 49-50). This refers to the mass deportation of "foreign Gypsies" (this is the term used in the documentation) from the vicinity of Moscow, about which detailed description can be found in the archives of the NKVD. In the period from June 28 to July 9, 1932, 1,008 Gypsy families (or a total of 5,470 people) were sent to the city of Tomsk, in the then West Siberian region, with five special trains. The Gypsies had to be resettled there in separate Gypsy national settlements. The deportees took with them all their belongings, including 338 horses and 2 cows; on the way, they were provided with hot food, medical care, and fodder for the animals (GARF, F. P 9479. op. 1, d. 19, l. 7).

The deportation of "foreign Gypsies" (i.e. supposedly those Gypsies who had foreign passports) was not a special anti-Gypsy event, but part of the general action of the authorities to cleanse the capital from the so-called 'declassed elements' by virtue of the Resolution of the SNK USSR On the Organisation of Labour Settlements of the OGPU of April 20, 1933 (GARF, f. R 5446, op. 57, d. 24. pp. 2-12). The enlisting of the deported Gypsies to this category, however, was not made on an ethnic base, but in accordance with the existence of permanent registration and personal passports. Thus, it turns out that the real 'foreign Gypsies' (mainly *Kelderari*), who had lived in Moscow for a long time, and where they created their own artels, were not subject to deportation. However, Gypsies from different groups, who led a nomadic way of life, were (Бессонов, 2002b, pp. 2-3).

In the spring of 1933, numerous Gypsy camps moved in the vicinity of Moscow. This was a consequence of the adoption of the Decree of the TsIK and SNK USSR of 27.12.1932 on the Establishment of a Unified Passport System in the USSR and Mandatory Registration of Passports. As passports were issued only to limited categories of citizens, large numbers of Gypsies (without residences and nomadic) were deprived of the opportunity to obtain them. The situation was further complicated by the acute shortage of food products due to the mass collectivisation of agriculture, which led to the introduction of a card system in 1931, from which large sections of the population (including the majority of Gypsies) were excluded. At the same time, in 1932, the restriction for settlement in several cities was introduced, which included Moscow, Leningrad, Minsk, Kharkov, Kiev, as well as other large cities, which were privileged in the supply of food.

According to the OGPU documentation in the Western Siberian kray (GARF, f. П 3, op. 1, d. 540a, l. 51-53), from the spring of 1933 until August 7th of the same year, a total of

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119,426 "labour settlers" (this was the official term used at the time) were deported. The vast majority of these deportees were victims of the mass collectivisation of agriculture (the so-called *kulaks*). In addition to these, were those separated as special categories, such as 'recidivists' and 'declassed elements' (a total of 20,940 people) and Gypsies (a total of 5,651 people). The two separate categories of 'labour settlers' – 'recidivists' and 'declassified elements' on the one hand, and Gypsies, on the other hand – are clearly distinguished and do not overlap. The latter clarification is important because in some publications (e.g. Courtois et al., 1999) these two categories are not clearly distinguished when describing this deportation, which leaves the door open for interpretation.

The Gypsies deported from Moscow were lodged in the settlement designated for them, which no longer exists today. It was a village called Yevstigneevka, which was located in the former Pyshkino-Troitsky (now Pervomaisky) rayon of today's Tomsk region, on the banks of the river Chichka-Yul (За советскую науки, 1991, p. 3; Неволин, 2014, p. 54). Living conditions there were hard, local authorities failed to prepare accommodation, thus the new settlers lived in dugouts (several barracks were built later). The Gypsies were not very ethnically enthusiastic about their settlement, and because the regime was not particularly strict (or because of other reasons) the guards turned a blind eye to escapes and "already in the autumn of 1933, this contingent of labour settlers virtually ceased to exist since almost all the Gypsies fled; no indication was found in the documents of the measures taken to return them to the place of deportation" (Земсков, 2014: p. 87). Sneaking through the taiga and overcoming many difficulties along the way (many memories of this are preserved), the fugitives managed to reach the European parts of the USSR.

Another interesting issue that also deserves attention is the domestic and international dimensions of Gypsy activism during the interwar period. In particular, this includes the attitude of Gypsy activists, on the one hand, to the communities included in the category Gypsies (others than Roma) living in the Republics of the USSR, and, on the other hand, to Gypsies living abroad. In the first case, these are the *Lom* (referred to as *Bosha*) and the *Dom* (referred to as *Garachi*) living in the Caucasus, as well as the diverse communities living in Central Asia, referred to collectively as *Lyuli*. In general, Gypsy activists considered all these communities to be Gypsies, especially when they needed to underline high numbers of the Gypsy population in the USSR (Романы зоря, 1927, p. 34; GARF, f. P 3316, op. 28, d. 793) but, in fact, they carried out no activity among them. However, an important factor determining activities or lack thereof in this regard was the policy of the local authorities in the Republics to all these communities.

Series of documents including correspondence between the Secretariat of the Presidium of the USSR and the TsIKs in the respective Republics (RSFSR, Ukrainian SSR, Belarussian SSR, Transcaucasian SSR, Uzbek SSR, and Turkmen SSR) on the implementation of the Decree of TsIK and SNK USSR from October 1, 1926, *On measures to facilitate the transition of nomadic Gypsies to a settled way of life*, reveal striking details in this direction. On March 1, 1927, the Armenian USSR reported that the Gypsy nomads had obtained land in Novo-Mykolaivka, Chatkran, and Sagmosavan, but this is the only

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evidence of this sort. From here on, all three republics (Azerbaijan SSR, Armenian SSR, and Georgian SSR), united in Transcaucasian Socialist Federative Soviet Republic, as well as Turkmen SSR, responded to all questions from Moscow concerning the allocation of land to nomadic Gypsies who expressed a wish to be settled uniformly: in the Republic, there were no nomadic Gypsies who wanted to settle, no applications were received from Gypsies for land allocation, etc. Only more evasive was the response from the Uzbek SSR. The authorities there explained the specificity of the *Lyuli* and declared that they were working on moving with the matter (GARF, f. P 3316, op. 19, d. 588).

The situation in the Uzbek SSR and the newly established, in 1929, Tajik SSR, however, gradually changed, and Gypsy kolkhozes and artels started to be created (Назаров, 1969; Marushiakova & Popov, 2016d). Furthermore, even a local activist elite began to emerge, albeit in a relatively small number, comprising mainly the chairmen of the kolkhozes and artels, as well as individuals who have received higher public positions. Such was Mizrab Mahmudov from the Kokand region, a member of the TsIK of the USSR of Uzbekistan and the created *Governmental Committee for Land Allocation to Gypsies* (Назаров, 1969, pp. 120-121). However, there is no historical evidence of any attempts for contact and coordination between Gypsy activists in Moscow and those in Central Asia.

In practice, Gypsy activism in the USSR was confined mainly within the RSFSR, Ukrainian SSR, and Byelorussian SSR, in the frames of the large Roma community, and particularly among the subdivisions of *Ruska Roma* and *Servi* (possibly locally also *Vlaxi* from southern Russia and region along Volga river). Representatives of *Kelderari* and *Lovari* (often referred to as *Vlax Rom* by Western authors, which is not an adequate designation in the case of the USSR and the post-Soviet space, where this term is not used by members of these groups) were involved mainly in the creation of the Gypsy artels in cities, but their role in Gypsy activism during the interwar period was more or less ambiguous.

From a more global perspective, Gypsy activism in the early USSR was actually limited within the country. As mentioned above, already on the 1st of May Manifestation of 1923 on the Red Square, the Gypsy activists raised the slogan "Gypsies of the world, unite!"; the same text in Romani language (a paraphrase of the famous slogan of the Communist Manifesto) was written on the membership cards of the VSTs. In practice, however, nothing beyond these public messages, intended for internal use (within the USSR), happened. Of course, Gypsy activists were aware of the existence of their fellow ethnics abroad and published many materials about them both in Gypsy journals and in the central, mainstream press. However, these materials were not aimed at creating an international Gypsy movement but were presented in another (rather propagandistic) sense, and contained mainly examples of the persecution and tragic plight of the Gypsies under capitalism. Another topic reflected in the press was highlighting the influence of communist ideology on Gypsies abroad, such as the example of Gypsy musicians from Medzev (at that time part of Czechoslovakia), who were members of the local Communist Party, and refused to play music in the venues after learning about Lenin's death (Рабочая Москва, 1928, p. 2). According to the Soviet ideology and politics of that time, all nationalities issues (including the Gypsy problems) would be resolved in the

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way of the class struggle of the future world proletarian revolution, and Gypsy activists remained within this general ideological line; for them, the movement for civic emancipation was restricted within the society of which they were an integral part.

In this context, the attitude of the Soviet state to the manifestations of the Roma civic emancipation movement in foreign countries becomes understandable, because it was evaluated primarily from the point of view of the potential that this movement held for the class struggle. A large article entitled "Gypsies: Two Worlds, Two Systems" described the preparation of the Gypy Congress in Bucharest in 1933, highlighting the plight of the Gypsies in Romania, showing the changes in the life of the Gypsies in the USSR under the care of the Soviet state, and revealed the attempts of the bourgeoisie through their mercenaries, "one priest" (referring to Archimandrite Calinic Ion Popp Șerboianu) and "one journalist" (referring to Gheorghe A. Lazărescu-Lăzurică) to divert the Gypsies from their path towards the Proletarian Revolution, which alone can solve their problems; in the editorial, it was added a note that the police had dispersed the congress (Красная Бессарабия, 1933, pp. 19-22).

Gypsy activists in the USSR also wrote according to this discourse. An article in the journal *Nevo drom* exposed the 'kulaks' from the Gypsy artel in Moscow, who set up their criminal courts (referring to the traditional *Romani Kris*) and emphasised that the chairman of this 'court' is Toma (I. N. Mihai) and that the 'illegal' Gypsy King in Poland is from the same family (Нэво Дром, 1932b, p. 12): i.e. the suggestion was that the Gypsy Kings in Poland were also kulaks who exploited their working class fellows. In the case of the Gypsy King in Poland, the Soviet press reported about Gypsies in foreign countries but displayed a more reserved attitude, which, however, quickly turned negative. In 1934, an article was published in the central party organ, *Pravda* newspaper, announcing the coronation of "Gypsy King" Mikhail Kwiek I in Warsaw, which did not contain any evaluative comments (Pravda, 1934, p. 3). Only a year later, in 1935, during the trial of six members of a Gypsy artel in Moscow, one of the allegations against them was: "Through the Crowned King of the Polish Gypsies, the Kwiek's organisation had made contact with the 2nd Division of the Polish General Staff and conducted intelligence activities in the USSR at the request of the latter." (GARF, f. 10035, op. 1, d. 74091, l. 188). Thus, in the end, the Gypsy Kings in Poland were presented as enemies of the Soviet state – both according to class and geopolitical lines.

Seen in the general context of the affirmative action policy of the early USSR, it is clear that it facilitated the emergence and development of Gypsy activism. However, this process had its downsides too, because it presupposed the linking of Gypsy activism with the general leading tendencies in the development of the nationalities policy of the Soviet state, and hence its dependence on these trends. This was clearly evident in the case of the shift in Soviet national politics in the 1930s. The changes did not occur immediately; their first manifestations became visible already in 1932 within the processes of the so-called Ukrainisation (Martin, 2001) and became even clearer when the new Constitution of the USSR from 1936 omitted to mention national rayons and selsoviets (Вдовин, 2002). The endpoint was reached after the decisions on the reorganisation

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of the national schools in 1938 and the liquidation of the national rayons and selsoviets in 1939 (see above). Naturally, the shift in the general nationalities policy reflected also in the policy towards Gypsies and Gypsy activism.

In the Soviet policy regarding the Gypsies in the early USSR, five leading priorities can be distinguished, namely: 1. Encouragement and assistance to nomadic Gypsies to pass to a sedentary lifestyle and to create national Gypsy kolkhozes; 2. Establishment and development of national Gypsy artels; 3. Creation and development of national Gypsy education; 4.Creation and development of national Gypsy literature and art; 5. Creation of a national Gypsy elite.

This policy has been scrutinised many times as different authors offer own interpretation and assessment of its general characteristics (see e.g. Друц & Гесслер, 1990; Crowe, 1994; Деметр et al., 2000; Калинин, 2005; Иващенко, 2011; Бугай, 2012; O'Keeffe, 2013). Without entering into details, we need to notice that in all previous research, no attention is paid to a very important point, namely the fact that the special policy towards Gypsies was only of minor importance in the frames of the general Soviet civil policy of the state. In this sense, for the Gypsies in the early USSR (and beyond) there was not only one (the special Gypsy policy) but also other social elevators and roads for social realisation. Therefore it is very difficult to determine what exactly was the impact of the Soviet state policy on the Gypsies' lives in general. It was the two-dimensionality of the Soviet policy towards the Gypsies (as an integral part of Soviet society and as a separate nationality) that allowed the ordinary Gypsies to perceive the change of the overall paradigm in Soviet national politics in the second half of the 1930s without much upheaval (which was not the case of the activists). This change, which de facto puts an end to the overall national policy of affirmative action, was not a one-off act, but a process stretched over several years. It was not a radical and complete reversal, a number of the achievements of the previous nationalities policy have been preserved or modified according to the transformed realities and the initial stated aims were gradually realised (although sometimes in adjusted forms).

Sedentarisation of the Gypsy nomads was finalised two decades later (after the Decree of the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet of the USSR from 1956), although the former nomads mostly settled in the cities and only small parts of them became peasants. The Gypsies in the conditions of the so-called "real socialism", and even without national artels, eventually joined the "socially useful labour", and this was valid even in cases when this was done under not entirely legal forms because they satisfied certain social deficits (Marushiakova & Popov, 2003, pp. 289-310). Although through the forms and mechanisms of general (and not special) education in individual Gypsy schools, the illiteracy of the Gypsies in the USSR, as a whole, was eliminated. One can argue a lot about the advantages and disadvantages of general and special education for Gypsy children, but nowhere in the world did education in segregated schools (or classes) lead to better results comparting with the general mainstream education.

In fact, the only area in which the turn in nationalities policy reflected negatively was the development of the Romani language and Gypsy national literature. By 1938, a

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total of over 250 titles had been published in the Gypsy language (Русаков & Калинин, 2006, pp. 266-287; Shapoval, 2021); many of them (71 titles) are original works by Gypsy authors – fiction (32 titles), journalism (15 titles), textbooks and educational materials (24 titles), and the rest are translations into Romani of Russian and world literature, political and propaganda materials, practical manuals, popular publications, etc. This unique phenomenon in the history of the Gypsies was crossed out by the shift in nationalities policy. Sometimes in academic writings, preposterous statements can be met, such as "Romani literature and culture were unofficially banned" (Kozhanov & Makhotina, 2019), which simply do not fit the historical reality. Works by Roma authors were also published after the second World War until the collapse of the USSR in 1991, e.g. Alexander German's collection of selected short stories and short stories has been published in two editions (Германо, 1960; 1962). Even in some cases, Roma literature books have been published print runs that were incredibly numerous for their time (and even more so than present-day), for example, the collections of children's poems by Leksa Manush (Alexander Belugin) were published in 300,000 copies (Мануш, 1980; 1983), and the children's book *The Little Star: Gypsy Folklore Kid's Songs* (Мануш, 1976) were published in a circulation of 1,500,000 (sic!). Restrictions in the development of Roma literature in the USSR at that time were in another sphere – firstly, greatly reducing the number of publications of Roma authors (when compared with the period of the 1930s), and secondly, stopping publication in the Romani language, the only exception to this being the academic editions of Gypsy folklore (Кантя, 1970; Деметер & Деметер, 1981). So, we cannot say that the Roma literature of the early USSR ended in 1938; moreover, the collection of poems by Gypsy poets (Саткевич, 1974) includes works by authors of the 1930s as well as contemporary poets of the Roma, i.e. continuity in the development of Roma literature is undeniable. However, this development is no longer the same as in the early USSR; although new forms of Romani literature continue to emerge, it is no longer possible to speak about the development of the Romani language, which is a significant disadvantage in the development of any national literature as one of the main pillars of its national identity.

The situation with the Gypsy Theatre Romen after 1938 is somewhat similar, but at the same time quite different. It is commonly written that the Romani language was banned in the theatre's repertoire and replaced with Russian, but this is not the most precise wording. It is more accurate to say that the performances were in two languages – Russian (used in stage dialogues) and Romani (in numerous songs, as well as in individual words and expressions). On the one hand, this approach stops the development of the Romani language but, on the other hand, it makes theatre performances much more accessible to the general public, which in turn raises the public prestige of Gypsy art and Gypsies in general.

Moreover, the Theatre Romen (along with the dozens of Gypsy music and dance groups created over the years by its artistic models) became the main pillar around which the Gypsy identity in the USSR was preserved and upgraded and their ethnoculture developed (even today in the post-Soviet space Gypsy music and dance folklore is entirely built

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on its patterns). The research of the ideological basis and the pursued political aims of the Soviet state concerning the Theatre Romen (Lemon, 2000; O'Keefe, 2019) undoubtedly has its place in academic studies, but from today's point of view, these have all long been forgotten. What remains is the role and significance of Theatre Romen for the shaping and awareness of Gypsy identity. Whether this is an 'invented tradition' (Hobsbawm & Ranger, 1992), and based on a certain ideological basis, is irrelevant because for the Gypsies themselves this tradition is the only one that really exists; whether this tradition is a product of an exotic approach to the Gypsies is also irrelevant because, from this point of view, it can be said that in practice they have long been part of a process of self-exoticisation (the same process, to some extent, also occurs among many other nations). The most recent confirmation of the extremely strong influence of the phenomenon of Theatre Romen that continues today even outside the former USSR is the case of the Hajde Te Khelas Dance Contest, announced by the European Roma Institute for Arts and Culture in 2020. The video, sent by Broumov, from the Czech Republic, not only includes a popular song from Theatre Romen's repertoire but is made in the overall style of the theatre, with the corresponding 'traditional' patterns of Gypsy women's costumes and dances; many other participants also used women's costumes based on this model (ERIAC, 2020). The latter is not a surprise, because of this type of theatrical women's costumes is considered 'traditional' and used by Romani music and dance ensembles throughout the region of Central and Southeast Europe, including even among Roma Muslims (Marushiakova & Popov, 2016c, p. 53). This shows, once again, that real life always turns out to be stronger than any academic interpretations and assessments because, in the end, 'authentic' is exactly what the Roma themselves accept as such.

A turn in the USSR nationalities policy was, in fact, a predetermined end of Gypsy activism during the interwar period. After the Second World War, the Gypsy activists had made many unsuccessful attempts to restore the pre-war policy towards the Gypsies (concerning the letters to high-level Soviet leaders, see above). All these letters plead for a return to the active policy of affirmative action towards the Gypsies during the interwar period (and, accordingly, raising the social position of the Gypsy activists themselves). These letters had a substantial result, and it was very quick. On the 5th October 1956, the Decree of the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet of the USSR "On the Admission to Labour of the Gypsy Vagrants" was issued. But at first glance, it seems that Gypsy activists, after more than three decades, have finally been able to convince the Soviet state of the need to eradicate the nomadic way of life of the Gypsies. However, the ban on nomadism does not entail any other changes in the Gypsy policy. Thus, with one blow, the Soviet authorities deprived the Roma elite of its main argument (the need to fight the nomadic way of life), which they have constantly used in trying to convince the authorities of the need for pro-Gypsy policies.

The endpoint of all these attempts of the old Gypsy elite from the interwar period came with the letter of Nikolay Satkevich (graduate of the Gypsy Pedagogical College), entitled *Gypsy Problem in the Soviet Union*, written in 1964, to Anastas Mikoyan, President of the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet of the USSR (LANB, f. Николай Саткевич).

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In his letter, Satkevich described the entire Soviet state's experience of working with Gypsies and proposed the creation of special boarding schools where Gypsy children will be educated. The answer was quick and unambiguous: "The experience of creating a special class of Roma children … has not justified itself … Parents spoke in favor of educating their children in mainstream education schools by place of residence" (Ibid). Memories of contemporaries also confirm that Satkevich's attempts to establish a special Gypsy boarding school have been met with strong resistance by Roma women who accused him publicly of wanting to take away their children. This led to a situation in which the community rejected the ideas of its own elite and made this elite entirely meaningless because community representatives whose ideas are not supported by their community cannot be defined as an elite. In its place, a new, quite different Gypsy elite began to emerge, the predominant part of which is connected in one way or another with the Theatre Romen: i.e. this new elite, although without direct continuity with the old one, still builds on what was achieved in the early USSR.

As it is clear from all that has been said thus far, the attempts of the Gypsy elite formed in the 1920s and 1930s in the early USSR to become an active subject in the policy of the Soviet state regarding Gypsies, through an active dialogue with the state institutions, ultimately proved to be unsuccessful. This was because the two sides of this dialogue were from the very beginning in unequal positions, with one of them (the Soviet authorities) being the leading and determining one, and the other (the Gypsy elite) being placed in the former's dependence. Thus, in the end, Gypsy activism proved to be a loser in its relations with the Soviet state; however, whether the Gypsy community itself was a loser or a gainer, in this case, is a question that deserves another, separate study.

Elena Marushiakova and Vesselin Popov

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Conclusion

The historical materials presented in this book about the origin and development of Roma civic emancipation in the region of Central, South-Eastern and Eastern Europe in the period from the 19th century to the Second World War allow us to outline, at least in general terms, a relatively complete picture of the development of this process. Of course, there are still many white spots in this picture due to the lack (still) of sufficient data, but as one can see from all the source materials, this overall picture in the region is extremely diverse and heterogeneous while at the same time uniting in its leading features, trends, and aims. The available historical data are also very heterogeneous in the different countries of the region, and their availability (or preservation, or entry into academic circulation) depends on a variety of factors. Despite all these shortcomings of modern historical knowledge, it is clear that there is a common historical process that covers almost all of these countries during the interwar period. The lack of materials only from Estonia, Lithuania, and Albania is understandable by the objective circumstances in these countries – a relatively small number of Roma in them and the lack of Roma civic elite to start and lead the processes – as well as the overall socio-political context there, which does not create appropriate conditions for the development of these processes (especially in Albania).

The unity of the process of Roma civic emancipation in the countries of Central, South-Eastern and Eastern Europe is conditioned by the fact that it is an integral and inseparable part of the general development of modern nationalism throughout the region. From this point of view, its development during this period fits into the separate phases in the development of modern nationalism in the already mentioned several times concept of Miroslav Hroch (2005). From the published materials it is clear how the first phase of this process was realised among the Roma (creation of their own Roma national vision, albeit with more or less different versions under conditions of separate countries) as well as the second phase (dissemination and promotion of visionary ideas among the masses).

It is hard to assess the results of this second phase, not only due to the lack of sufficient data in this direction but also since it remains virtually incomplete due to the beginning of the Second World War. After the end of the war, however, the whole socio-political context changed throughout the region, and the movement for Roma civil society was already developing in a new, very different situation, and over the years with new main actors. In parentheses, the topic of continuity in Roma activism (including to this day) is very interesting, but it in itself deserves another, independent study.

The movement for Roma civic emancipation, despite its unity as an invariant, is practically realised in different ways, which can take on not only similar but also a wide variety of forms and, in many cases, it may even have more or less different content. Therefore, each comparative study must take into account the different social and political contexts

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shaping a particular country in the region. The emergence and development of the movement for Roma civic emancipation in different individual countries led to the formation of different models by which this movement developed, and which can be categorised according to different criteria.

According to their goals, which could be more specific or more general, the established civic organisations in the region could be oriented towards the protection of professional interests, to the preservation of certain cultural traditions, to the enhancement of the educational attainment of the community, to the achievement of specific political goals (most often the acquisition of equal civil rights), etc. The oldest are the professional associations on ethnic grounds, existing in South Eastern Europe since the time of the Ottoman Empire, which are transformed in various forms in the new conditions of the independent states in the region. Here belong also professional associations of Gypsy musicians nascent in the Kingdom of Hungary in frames of the dual monarchy of Austro-Hungaria. Chronologically followed the mutual aid associations (in some countries it is explicitly emphasised that they are an aid for diseases and funerals), which de facto worked within the community, which are a ubiquitous phenomenon in South-Eastern Europe, which, together with professional societies become the basis on which the new forms of civil society organisations grow and develop.

The most common organisational forms were civic associations and societies. This is not only one of the hallmarks of the modern era typical for new nation-states but also reveals the aspirations of the Roma communities to adopt new forms of social life. Adopting such organisational forms, however, was not an absolute prerequisite for the modernisation of Gypsy life and, in many cases, the old forms of community organisation could be used alongside these. In general, throughout the region, there was a strong desire on the part of the Roma to organise themselves in professional, educational, cultural, artistic, sports, etc. civic associations in an old or new model, or even (at least nominally) as structural units of religious institutions. It should be pointed out that the new and old models of community organisation were not mutually exclusive; civic organisations were in fact often intertwined with and based on traditional forms of community organisation, that were appropriated into the new socio-political context of the given country. In some cases, Gypsy associations, societies or unions would not even seek legal registration not to mention the specific case of the so-called Gypsy Kings who used quasi-traditional forms intended to have a public effect on the macro-society.

In many cases, but not necessarily in all, there was a link to external social factors (i.e. outside the community), most often political parties or religious institutions. Relations with governmental institutions in the respective countries where Roma resided could also be quite diverse. In most cases, the states' attitude to the new forms of Roma social life in the period between the two World Wars was rather dismissive. However, it could also be more or less hostile (e.g. in Bulgaria) or, on the contrary, encouraging (e.g. Hungary). An interesting case is that of the USSR, where Gypsy organisations were actually supported (but also controlled) by the state.

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Moreover, in the interwar period, apart from the relations with the state, two additional models concerning the type of relations between the community and society emerged, which represented two lines in the future development, and which are especially relevant today. The first one concerned the relations of the Roma civic emancipation movement with mainstream civil organisations (the case of Czechoslovakia), or, to use present-day terminology, with the non-governmental sector (which nowadays has become a specialised and professionalised economic field). The second line is the emergence of rather rudimentary forms of relations with religious denominations and in particular the creation of 'one's own', more or less independent, religious institutions (Finland, Latvia, Bulgaria, Yugoslavia, etc.). This line is nowadays becoming an integral part of the Roma civic emancipation movement. In the interwar period, in some cases, this may have even lead to the creation of their own religious structures (nowadays, these are represented by the Roma evangelical churches and heterodox Islamic orders), their own forms of ritual performances on traditional holidays common to the whole society, which already perform new functions (Yugoslavia, Turkey), or at least their own religious calendar (differentiation between the two calendar styles in Bulgaria).

Viewed more generally and in the longer term, it turns out that there were no simple, homogeneous patterns of development in what concerns processes of Roma civic emancipation. In the end, all forms and patterns were interconnected with one another; complementing each other; and in all alternatives, the ambition was to achieve a comprehensive all-nation coverage of the Roma community in the particular country, and to have civic functions of representation.

For purposes of our study most important is to understand not that which divides all the variants in what concerns the development of Roma civic emancipation, but that which unites them. All forms of the social organisations of the Roma community in the Interwar period (and even today) aimed to legitimise the representation of the community in its relations with society within the relevant civic nation. This is what finally constitutes the civic emancipation movement of the community as a whole, even in cases where the ultimate goal (at least as a vision) was to create a partial (Autonomous Republic in the USSR) or even a fully independent state (Gypsy Kings in Poland). A separate question remains concerning the degree to which this goal, or vision, was realistic or not.

Generally speaking, the movement for Roma civic emancipation was an effort to achieve a fair (from the perspective of the Roma community represented by its leaders) and a mutually acceptable balance in the community-society relationship. An initial and irreplaceable condition for Roma activists was the preservation of the community with its main ethnocultural characteristics within the general public framework; without this, the whole movement for Roma civic emancipation would lose its meaning. It is no coincidence that we emphasise that, in the end, for all Roma visionaries, the ultimate aim was always one concerning the future of the whole community. Otherwise, if the process of seeking a fair relationship with the surrounding population were to take place at the

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individual/family level or involved limited, relatively smaller or larger local or regional communities, the processes would inevitably lead to assimilation in the majority ethnic nation or into some other large national minority. Achieving end-to-end results from such voluntary assimilation (as well as attempts at forced assimilation, which are not considered here), was usually met with the opposition of the preferred ethnic nation or other national minority, so these processes were far from complete and irreversible (at least in the foreseeable terms), as evidenced by the various variants of their modern development (Marushiakova & Popov, 2015).

In the presented historical period, the processes of Roma civic emancipation remained restricted within individual countries, and the demand for balance in the community-society relationship was perceived in the confines of the relevant civic nations to which Roma in the countries of Central, South-Eastern and Eastern Europe belonged. At least on an abstract level, Roma activists were aware of the unity of their community on a transborder scale, but the presented cases of the public proclamation of the international dimension of these processes ultimately pursued "internal" goals, namely to raise the image and to emphasise the particular importance of the Roma civic emancipation among majorities in those respective countries. Therefore, it is natural that the real international dimensions of the Roma movement emerge only in the 1960s and 1970s when the movement began to break the boundaries of nation-states and to develop in the context of modern processes of globalisation and pan-European unity.

In this regard, it becomes clear why special attention is paid by Roma activists to the participation of Roma in the wars waged by the respective countries in the region. This is considered by them to be the most effective argument in their struggles for equal civil rights and for the civic emancipation of the community as a whole, so this argument, in one form or another, is found in almost all countries throughout the region. This inclusion of the Roma in the armies of the countries of the region may explain the seemingly absurd fact that the lists of prisoners of war after World War II in the Soviet Union included 383 Gypsies (Мухин, 2003, pp. 187-188), who were probably part of the military units of Romania, Hungary, and Slovakia (and perhaps other countries), fighting as allies of the German army on the Eastern Front.

When analyzing the processes of Roma civic emancipation in the countries of Central, South-Eastern and Eastern Europe during the interwar period, another important topic that should not be overlooked is that of the influence of communist ideology and the communist movement on these processes. However, this should not be placed under a common denominator with the influence and the state policy towards the Gypsies in the countries of the region after the Second World War, when communist regimes were established there. In this case, it is already a question of a new and completely different historical context; moreover, this policy is very diverse and sometimes even contradictory in individual countries of the so-called socialist camp (Marushiakova & Popov, 2008). In this case, too, one should not take into account the situation in the USSR, where communism is an official state ideology and, accordingly, Gypsy activists inscribe their visions in the general ideological discourse. At the same time, however, in a number

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of other countries in the region (in particular Turkey, Bulgaria, Romania, Czechoslovakia, Finland), where local communist parties are persecuted and banned by the authorities, several leading Roma activists are connected with the communist movement, and some of them are even active participants in it (this is especially clear in Turkey and Bulgaria).

All this should come as no surprise, because during the interwar period, communist ideas were especially popular on a global scale, including even among many leading intellectuals in the West. In this case, it is neither a coincidence nor a historical paradox, but rather a natural development of the movement for Roma civic emancipation. After it became clear that the authorities in the individual countries of the region completely ignored and neglected the ideas of Roma activists to achieve an equal position of their community in society and there was no prospect of this situation changing, many of them came to the idea that in order to realise their visions, the whole society must change in the first place, which will change the social position of the Gypsies as a whole. This should not be considered a renunciation of their Roma identity and the aspirations for the overall development of their community; in this case, these issues are left behind and the aspiration for a complete change of the society according to the class criteria comes to the fore. This is also a kind of manifestation of the new civic identity of Roma activists (similar to the case of the 'new' evangelical churches), so those forms of social activity may even acquire community dimensions. Thus, in the end, the participation of Roma in the communist movement (as well as in evangelical churches) fits organically into the general course of the Roma civic organisation, and this aspect should not be neglected in any case if we want to understand the overall dimensions of the process. As for the unique case of the USSR, the whole process of Roma civic emancipation there was built on the basis of communist ideology and functioned in the parameters outlined by it (and accordingly depended on the changes in it). The influence of communist ideology on the processes of Roma civic emancipation is part of a more general issue – that of the impact of "external" factors on the Roma community. This issue can also be viewed in its personified aspect – by looking at the relations between Roma and non-Roma. As is clear from the published materials, examples of non-Roma involved in the Roma civic emancipation movement are found in most of the countries in the region, e.g. Dr. Marko Markov and Pastor Petar Minkov in Bulgaria, Alexander Petrović in Yugoslavia, Oskari Jalkio in Finland, Alexander German in the USSR, the so-called Czech physicians in Czechoslovakia, etc. The influence of these individuals (as well as the social, political, or religious structures they represent in some cases) can in no way be sufficient ground to divide the Roma civic emancipation movement into "authentic" and "non-authentic" and to de facto create oppositions along these lines. Setting a divide between "authentic" (i.e. closed in frames of the community) and "non-authentic" (i.e. appearing under the influence of "external" factors) development would be equivalent to the exoticising approach of most researchers during this period, who divided Gypsies into "genuine" and not. Moreover, if this approach is adopted, all contemporary Roma activism can also be declared "inauthentic" because, despite its diversity, it overwhelmingly includes people and organisations that are in one way or another committed to various social factors

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outside the community. This approach cannot be justified primarily for methodological reasons, because the Roma, as has been mentioned many times, are not only a separate ethnic community but also an integral part of the macro-society in which they live and cannot but be affected by multiple various social factors; in fact, the movement for Roma civic emancipation itself does not take place within the community but is a societal phenomenon, and the results are expected to be realised within the framework of the larger society they inhabit.

Some authors have tried in vain to discover the international dimension of the movement for Roma civic emancipation before the Second World War. Because they could not find clear support in the archival sources, they have described supposed international connections with the added stipulation "whether mythical or real" (Klímová-Alexander, 2005a, p. 195). Such verbal equilibristics are not only unfounded but also completely unnecessary. The emergence of the Roma movement on the international stage and its real (i.e. not just on the level of ideas) transformation into an international movement for Roma civic emancipation began de facto (notwithstanding all public declarations in this regard before and after the Second World War) only with the International Romani Congress in London in 1971, and this is, in fact, the most important feature of this historic event, regardless of all the mythology that has been created around it nowadays (Marushiakova & Popov, 2019). Only then did the 'community – society' relations become further complicated and started to take on a new, international dimension, which substantially (but not fundamentally) changed the content and purpose of the whole movement for Roma civic emancipation, and which, accordingly, made the achievement of a balance in these relationships even more difficult.

The search for a common denominator in the study of the past and present of the Roma has led to the formation of several basic paradigms that have arisen in the link between academic knowledge and Roma activism today. Nowadays (we emphasise that we are speaking about today's state of the art, which is no guarantee that future developments in research will not be different), these discourses are based mostly (but not exclusively) on at least some key concepts that together or separately set the leading discourse, and mostly on the concepts of Resistance and Anti-Gypsyism.

We believe that the materials presented in this book reveal well enough the possibilities for interpretation and future research in each of these two leading discourses, as well as for their combination. Through the variety of materials presented, we have also tried to show that research in any discourse must always be placed in the relevant context. That means that the approach must be first and foremost particular, i.e. each study needs to be focused on a given country, in a given historical (or contemporary) period, without making generalisations and without applying the conclusions from a particular study beyond its boundaries. This approach does not, in any case, preclude comparisons and more general levels of research; on the contrary, it presupposes more general interpretations and conclusions, which, however, must be on a stable ground: namely, they must be based on specific studies, which in turn must be rooted in authentic historical sources and not on the author's interpretation of secondary material, which may be more or less controversial.

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The main problem that leads to the issues of overinterpretation, misunderstandings, misreading, etc., often discussed in the text, is, according to us, the aspiration of different authors to discover and impose a single, predetermined, 'correct' (i.e. all others are considered 'wrong') paradigm and, through it, to interpret and explain all facts. In this sense, the search for one "magic word" (whether Resistance, Anti-Gypsyism or any other) to explain the whole history, culture, social relations, etc. of the Roma, is doomed to failure (especially in an academic field such as Romani Studies, which unites many disciplines, each with its own methodology, terminology, etc.). Such aspiration has been proven wrong in every science, as it became obvious already in the 1920s after the seminal introduction of Niels Bohr's Principle of Complementarity in physics. In the social sciences and humanities, where the author's point of view is especially important, the principle of complementarity is of particular importance. In our case, attempts made so far to apply one leading discourse to encompass the whole historical diversity of the processes of Roma civic emancipation, often at the cost of multiple over-interpretations, have lead to conclusions that are more or less doubtful, and they may even contradict specific historical realities.

Throughout his work, one of the most popular contemporary authors, an American political scientist and anthropologist, James C. Scott, regularly mentions 'Gypsies', or 'Roma and Travelers', or 'Roma and Sinti' (he uses all these designations, obviously considering them synonymous) in the discourse of Resistance, as an example of people who master "the art of resistance" and "the art of not being governed" (Scott, 1985; 1998; 2009; 2013). Without reference to any examples or discussion of concrete cases, Scott considers them a typical example of a nation capable of eternal resistance to the attempts of the state to incorporate them into its social fabric. The corpus of texts published here and authored by Roma, however, reveals a very different, often opposite picture. In almost all of them, the main message of Roma visionaries to the state can be found. They requested from the state urgent and effective actions for the accomplishment of social integration and an equal position of their ethnic community in the mainstream society.

A separate issue is that in most cases these appeals remained without consequence; and where the affirmative policy towards the Gypsies was applied (the early USSR), the outcomes remained largely incomplete. If we accept James C. Scott's thesis that the Roma are indeed a specific community that master the art of not being governed, and if their entire history is fully subordinated to the ideologeme of resistance, then it would be logical to ask why they needed to strive for civic emancipation at all. To find a way out from this logical trap we need to rephrase the famous sentence of James C. Scott and confess that Roma indeed mastered the art of being governed i.e., they were not only living for centuries in the conditions of ethnic 'foreign' states but were able to turn them (at least to some extent) into 'their own'. The main driving force of the movement for Roma civic emancipation during the interwar period was the incompleteness of these processes of social integration of the Roma in the conditions of the formation of the new nation-states in the region.

Moreover, breaking the stigmatising framework imposed by James C. Scott on the Roma, whom he perceived as an isolated and closed community opposed to the world

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outside it, and taking into account the real social dimensions of their lives, allows for a much more adequate explanation of their history and present. From this point of view, it is clear that the struggle against Nazism/Fascism of the Roma during the Second World War cannot (and should not) be reduced only to the level of the community, but it is necessary to take into account its overall social dimensions. This means that it is not enough to illustrate this struggle mainly with the so-called Roma uprising in Auschwitz II – Birkenau concentration camp on May 16, 1944, the reality of which is even questioned by some historians (Kubica & Setkiewicz, 2018), but it is needed to note that this struggle has a much more impressive scale. The perception of the Roma as an integral part of the respective social structures of the civic nations in the region provides an opportunity for numerous examples of Roma participation in the partisan movement to be included as manifestations of their Resistance during WWII. This participation is not limited to the above cases from Bulgaria and Czechoslovakia (see Chapters 2 and 8, but we can note also the active participation of Roma in the communist anti-fascist resistance in Yugoslavia, the most famous examples of which are the partisan commanders Stevan Đorđević (with the partisan name Novak), who died in 1943, and declared a National Hero of Yugoslavia (Collection, 1957), and Slobodan Berberski (partisan name Lala), political commissar of a detachment in the First Šumadija Partisan Detachment (Stanković, 1983, p. 215), chairman of the First Roma Congress held in London in 1971. Special mention should also be made of the heroic participation of hundreds of Roma (men and women) in the Red Army (many of them as volunteers) and in the partisan detachments in the occupied territories of the USSR, to which the fundamental work of the late Nikolai Bessonov is dedicated (Бессонов, 2010), and which is hardly used in academia (perhaps because it is not published in English). The situation with the discourse of Anti-Gypsyism is similar. However, while the ideologeme of Resistance de facto transfers responsibility for their social non-integration to the Roma themselves, the concept of Anti-Gypsyism places this responsibility on the states in which they live. Following this logic, some authors conclude that Roma mobilisation in Czechoslovakia and Hungary in the Interwar period was hindered "owing to both to the lack of pivotal leaders and material resources and due to the anticipated resistance of local authorities" (Barany, 2002, p. 101). As the sources published in this book reveal, this statement is far from the truth, and as regards the authorities in Czechoslovakia and Hungary, they were rather supportive of Gypsy organisations and their activities (for example, in the creation and functioning of the so-called Gypsy schools in Czechoslovakia and the Gypsy music schools in Hungary, which would not have been possible without the support of central and local authorities; another question is whether this support could have been larger).

The discourse of Anti-Gypsyism is often in the backdrop of numerous academic texts, and even in cases when it is not a leading one, the presence of this discourse can lead to doubtful or wrong conclusions. The best illustration of this is the absurd final conclusion found in the works that Soviet policy assigns the Roma assimilation as a primary goal for the Theatre Romen (Lemon, 1996; 2000; 2001; 2002). It is logical to ask the question if indeed the purpose of Soviet policy towards the Gypsies was their assimilation, why

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it was necessary to go through such complex and completely illogical ways – the creation of a Gypsy theater (and subsequently, since the 1960s, also dozens of music and dance groups according to its model), supervising and editing its repertoire to represent "authentic" (according to the criteria adopted at the time) Gypsy art, extensive advertising in the media, supporting tours throughout the vast country, mass circulation of gramophone records with Gypsy music, etc. – and not to follow the path of the simplest and easiest solutions, as to the example of the Latvian State Theatre *Skatuve* in Moscow (see Chapter 12), or of the Moscow Jewish State Theatre, closed in 1949. Moreover, as already mentioned, it was the Theater Romen that proved to be a factor of special importance for the preservation and development of the Gypsy/Roma identity and ethnic culture not only in the former USSR but also elsewhere.

This discourse of Anti-Gypsyism also fails to explain another important aspect of the process of Roma civic emancipation. As already mentioned, this process aims to find a harmonious balance between the Roma community and the macro-society; however, this includes not only activities in the public sphere but also within the community itself. From this point of view, of particular interest is the struggle against one's own ethnocultural traditions, which are considered harmful, inconsistent with the new social realities, and which must cease to exist. A significant example in this direction is for example the struggle of Gypsy activists against arranged marriages. Proponents of the discourse of Anti-Gypsyism could try in the case of the USSR to explain this struggle with the stamp of the "assimilation" policy of the Soviet state and even to condemn it as violence against Roma ethnocultural traditions. However, this approach cannot in any way explain the similar processes in other countries in the region (Bulgaria, Serbia, Romania), which shows the inadequacy of this approach in the interpretation of some of the historical (and also contemporary) realities.

The situation with the struggle against Roma nomadism by Roma activists during the interwar period is very similar. From the very beginning of the academic interest in Western Europe on the so-called Gypsies (this cover term also refers to Roma in Central, South-Eastern and Eastern Europe) has presented their nomadic way of life as their most important and essential feature, a key pillar of their community identity. Measures for their sedentarisation most often (including nowadays) were perceived as a shackle in a chain of persecutions, and any policy of sedentarisation continuously been interpreted as an example of the crimes against their human, social and cultural rights. What has been missing, however, in these interpretations is the stance on the issue of nomadism as expressed by the Roma themselves and, more specifically, by the Roma activists who initiated the process of Roma civic emancipation.

As can be seen from the materials presented here, the situation in the whole region can be summarised and presented very briefly as follows: the countries of Central and South-Eastern Europe, which in the past were part of the Ottoman and Austro-Hungarian Empire, Roma activists, in general, did not pay special attention to the problem of Gypsy nomads; while in Romania and in countries that were formerly part of the Russian Empire, local activists pleaded with the authorities (USSR, Poland, Latvia), calling on

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them to sedentarise the Gypsy nomads (Marushiakova & Popov, 2020a, pp. 265-276), or agitate among their community to stop the nomadic way of life (Finland). Authorities in Romania, Poland, and Latvia ignore these calls for Roma activists while Soviet state considered sedentarisation necessity and support developments in this area through various preferences but without forcing the events and recourse to administrative and coercive measures, this is why the overall solution to the problem is postponed for the future (Ibid.). In other countries in the region, this problem was rather not given special attention, except Czechoslovakia and Hungary, where the regulation of nomadism was regulated by law and administrative acts, inherited from Austro-Hungarian times or transformed, but was not prohibited in general. This situation can be explained in a historical context. In the Ottoman Empire, as of the 15th century, the majority of Gypsies lived sedentary, and the share of nomads was steadily declining; in the Austro-Hungarian Empire after the special policy of Empress Maria Theresa and Emperor Joseph I in the late 18th and early 19th centuries also most of the Gypsies live sedentary and nomadic Roma were mostly coming from neighbouring countries.

Everything that has been said so far, confirms that the processes of emancipation of Roma in Central, South-Eastern and Eastern Europe begin and develop in the midst of permanently settled Gypsies, and the attitude of Roma activists towards Gypsy nomadism oscillates between neglect and the active work in order to initiate support for their sedentarisation by state authorities. And it is perfectly understandable – it is precisely the settled Roma who were able to achieve a higher degree of social integration than those who lead a nomadic way of life, and precisely in their midst were born the ideas for a Roma civic emancipation, for what the nomadic Roma are perceived as an obstacle.

Historically speaking, both ideologemes – of Resistance and Anti-Gypsyism – are not products of today, but of previous historical eras. The notion of a free Gypsy spirit, which cannot (and does not want to) live according to the norms of society, led to the era of 19th-century romanticism. If this is to be expressed in terms of a modern academic language, it can be said that the exoticisation of Gypsies/Roma through the discourse of Resistance is characteristic of the era of colonialism. As already mentioned, the concept of Anti-Gypsyism (not only on a state level but also that of structural Anti-Gypsyism) was born in the Soviet era and expressed a communist interpretation of Gypsy history. Nowadays, the main content of this discourse is preserved, and changes are mainly in the ideological background and in the terminology used and in the examples quoted.

Everything said above should in no way be interpreted as a total rejection of the discourses of Anti-Gypsyism and Resistance; on the contrary, they have been repeatedly used by us, in our previous works (Marushiakova & Popov, 2013b; 2017d) and we are convinced that they are needed. Nevertheless, as we argued above, these discourses should not be seen as absolute and the interpretation and explanation of the whole diversity and multidimensionality of Roma history should not be limited in their use. Neither Anti-Gypsyism, nor Resistance, nor their combination can be the magic key through

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which the whole history of the Roma can be explained because the real history is always much more complex and diverse than preconceived ideological and/or methodological frameworks, which historical diversity constantly breaks down and refutes. Attempts to adapt historical factology to the chosen thesis through misinterpretations, overinterpretations, or pre-selected approach, lead to situations in which, in principle, correct concepts are discredited by false evidence, and this applies to any preconceived discourse that is absolute and accepted as universal. In more general terms, and from a methodological point of view, one should not work with the 'or' principle but, rather, with the 'and' principle. This broadly means that historical (and contemporary) processes and phenomena should be explored from multiple perspectives, which should not be opposed to each other but combined according to the specifics of the particular cases, studied in the general context of entangled history, in which the Roma are an integral part of society.

We sincerely hope that the material presented in this book, which offers ample opportunity for different interpretations, will contribute to a better understanding of the need for such an approach and the need for a new, critical reading of Roma history and Roma activism.

This book can also have a social significance outside the narrow academic framework and in particular for contemporary Roma activism. As can be seen from the published materials, Roma visionaries from the interwar period had outlined in their texts the main problems facing the Roma community on its way to integration into the social realities of the modern age and, accordingly, offered their views on ways of solving those problems. There is no point in summarising and systematising the whole diversity of their views in this regard. It is enough to say that they have not missed anything significant and important which does not continue to be relevant today (with the exception, perhaps, of the recently popular post-modern LGBTQI theme).

In this sense, the history of the Roma civic emancipation before the Second World War could be the basis for a critical rethinking of permanent ongoing debates within contemporary Romani activism because, as Santayana's famous aphorism stated: "Those who cannot remember the past are condemned to repeat it".

Elena Marushiakova and Vesselin Popov

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Dictionary of Abbreviations and Neologisms in the USSR

Agitprop / APO. Department for Agitation and Propaganda at TsK VKP(b).
Artel. Producers' Cooperative.
BSSR. Byelorussian Soviet Socialist Republic.
ChK. Extraordinary Commission for Combating Counter-Revolution and Sabotage.
  VChK. All-Russian ChK at the SNK RSFSR.
Detgiz. State Publishing House for Children's Literature.
Fedkomzem. Federal Committee about Issues of Land at VTsIK.
Glavlit. General Directorate for Literature and Publishing.
Glavnauka. Central Administration for Scientific, Scholarly-Artistic, and Museum Institutions.
Gosizdat. State Publishing House.
Goslitizdat / GIKh. State Publishing House for Fiction Literature.
Gosplan. The State Planning Committee.
GPU. State Political Directorate at NKVD RSFSR.
Gubkom. Governorate Committee of VKP(b).
  Obkom. Oblast Committee of VKP(b).
  Raykom. Rayon Committee of VKP(b).
GUBONO. Governorate Department of Education.
GULAG. Main Directorate of Camps at NKVD.
Ispolkom. Executive Committee of Council of People's Deputies.
  Gubispolkom. Executive Committee of Governorate.
  Krayispolkom. Executive Committee of Kray.
  Oblispolkom / ObLIK. Executive Committee of Oblast.
  Rayispolkom / RIK. Executive Committee of Rayon.
Knigocentr. Soviet Iinstitution for Books and Journals Distribution.
Kogiz. Bookselling Association of State Publishers.
Kolkhoz. Collective Farm.
Kolkhozsoyuz. Union of Agricultural Collectives.
Komsomol. Young Communist League.
  RLKSM. Russian Lenin's Young Communist League (in 1922 renamed to VLKSM).
  VLKSM. All-Union Leninist Young Communist League.
Komzet. Committee for Settling Toiling Jews on the Land at Presidium of the VTsik.
Komintern. Communist International, known also as the Third International (1919-1943).
KP(b). Communist Party (Bolsheviks) of Ukraine.
Kulak. Literally 'fist'; this is how wealthy peasants, who put in economic dependence and exploited their fellow peasants, were called in the early USSR.
KPB. Communist Party of Byelorussia.
KUTV. Communist University of the Toilers of the East.
Likbez. Campaign of Eradication of Illiteracy in Soviet Union.
LKSMB. Leninist Communist Youth League of BSSR.
Medgiz. State Medical Publishing House.
MONO. Moscow City's Department for People's Education.
Mossovet. Moscow City Soviet of People's Deputies.
MOZO. Moscow Regional Agricultural Department.
MTS. Machine Tractor Station; a state enterprise for maintenance of agricultural machinery.
Narkomfin. People's Commissariat of Finances of USSR.
Narkomnats. People's Commissariat of Nationalities of the RSFSR.

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Narkompros. People's Commissariat of Education of the RSFSR.
Narkomzem / NKZem / NKZ. People's Commissariat of Agriculture of USSR.
Natsmen. Member of National Minority.
NKVD. People's Commissariat of Internal Affairs of RSFSR.
Ogiz. Unified State Publishing House.
OGPU. Joint State Political Directorate at SNK USSR.
Orgburo. Organisational Bureau of TsK VKP(b).
Partizdat. Publishing House for Political Literature at the TsK VKP(b).
Pioneer. Member of the All-Union Pioneer Organisation, mass youth organisation in the Soviet Union.
Politburo. Political Bureau of TsK VKP(b).
Profizdat. The Soviet Trade-unions Publishing House.
Pyatiletka. The five-year plans for the development of the national economy of the USSR.
Rabfak. Workers' Faculty; educational institution that prepared workers to higher education.
RKP(b). Russian Communist Party (Bolsheviks), from 1925 renamed VKP(b).
ROSTA. Russian Telegraph Agency.
RSFSR. Russian Soviet Federative Socialist Republic.
Selkhozbank. Agricultural Bank.
Selkhozgiz. State Publishing House of Agricultural Literature.
Selsoviet. Village council, local self-administration, a part of the Soviet system of administration.
Semiletka. Secondary school with seven years of education in the USSR.
SNK / Sovnarkom. Council of People's Commissars of the USSR (from 1922 of the RSFSR).
Little Sovnarkom. Standing Committee to SNK.
Sovnatsmen. Education Department of National Minorities at Narkompros (1918-1921); renamed Council for the Education of the Peoples of the Non-Russian Language (1921-1924); Central Council for the Education of National Minorities of the RSFSR (1925-1929); Committee for the Education of National Minorities of the RSFSR (1929-1934).
Sovnarkhoz. Soviet for National Economy.
SSP. Union of Soviet Writers.
TASS. Telegraph Agency of the Soviet Union.
Tsentrizdat. Publishing House of the SNK RSFSR.
TsK KPSS. Central Committee of Communist Party of USSR.
TsK VKP(b). Central Committee of All-Union Communist Party (Bolsheviks).
TsIK. Central Executive Committee of SSSR.
SN TsIK. Council of Nationalities at TsIK SSSR.
TsIK UkrSSR – Central Executive Committee of Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic.
Tsygkhimprom / Khimprom / Tsygkhimlabor. Gypsy artel for chemical products.
Tsygpishcheprom / Pishcheprom / Pishchepromartel. Gypsy artel for food products.
Uchpedgiz. State Pedagogical Publishing House of the Narkompros.
UkrSSR. Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic.
USSR. Union of Soviet Socialist Republics.
UzSSR. Uzbek Soviet Socialist Republic.
VKP(b). All-Union Communist Party (Bolsheviks).
VKSKhSH. Higher Communist Agricultural School.
VKSS. Higher Courses of Soviet Construction at the VTsIK.
VOKS. All-Union Society for Cultural Relations with Foreign Countries.
VPK. All-Union Resettlement Committee.
Vsekopromsovet. All-Union Council of the Industrial Cooperation.
Vserabis. All-Union Professional Union of Art Workers.
VTsIK. All-Russian Central Executive Committee.

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ON VTsIK. Department of Nationalities of VTsIK.
VSTs. All-Russian Union of Gypsies.
VTsSPS. All-Union Central Council of Professional Unions.
VUTsVK. All-Ukrainian Central Executive Committee.
TsKNM VUTsVK. Central Committee for National Minorities of VUTsVK.
Yacheyka. A primary (lowest) level in the organisational structure of VKP(b).
ZU. Agricultural management.
KrayZU. Regional (on Kray level) agricultural management.
OblZU. Regional (on Oblast level) agricultural management.
RayZU. Regional (on Rayon level) agricultural management.

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Belarus

NARB. Нацыянальны архіў Рэспублікі Беларусь [National Archive of Republic of Belarus]: f. 6, op. 1, d. 1195; f. 34/133c, op. 1, d. 727; f. 701, op. 1, d. 14.

Bulgaria

AMVR. Архив на Министерството на вътрешните работи [Archive of the Ministry of Interior]: f. 13, op. 1, a.e. 774.

ASR. Архив на Дружество за изследване на малцинствата *Студии Романи* [Archive of Minority Studies Society *Studii Romani*]: f. Господин Колев; f. Лиляна Ковачева; f. Людмила Живкова; f. Михаил Георгиев; f. Фотографии; f. Шакир Пашов.

CSA. Държавна агенция 'Архиви' – Централен държавен архив [Archives State Agency – Central State Archives]: f. 1Б, op. 8, a.e. 596; f. 264, op. 2, a.e. 8413; f. 1 В, op. 6, a.e. 235; f. 264 К, op. 4, a.e. 506; f. 264 К, op. 5, a.e. 515; f. 264 К, op. 2, a.e. 5204; f. 370, op. 6, a.e. 745; f. 264 К, op. 5, a.e. 1109; f. 264, op. 2, a.e. 9385; f. 264К, op. 6, a.e. 1461; f. 190 К, op. 3, a.e. 114; f. 2124 К, op. 1, a.e. 108107.

DA Veliko Tarnovo. Държавен архив – Велико Търново [State Archive – Veliko Tarnovo]: f. 74 К, op. 1, a.e. 61; f. 74 К, op. 1, a.e. 62.

DA Burgas. Държавен архив – Бургас [State Archive – Burgas]: f. 102 К, op. 1, a.e. 116

DA Kyustendil. Държавен архив – Кюстендил [State Archive – Kyustendil]: f. 35 К, op. 1, a.e. 21; f. 35 К, op. 1, a.e. 150; f. 177, op. 1, a.e. 48, l. 156-201.

DA Montana. Държавен архив – Монтана [State Archive – Montana]: f. 3 К, op. 1, a.e. 25; f. 79 К, op. 1, a.e. 32; f. 79 К, op. 1, a.e. 34; f. 79 К, op. 1, a.e. 35.

DA Shumen. Държавен архив – Шумен [State Archive – Shumen]: f. 1119, op. 1, a.e. 11; f. 1605, op. 1, a.e. 29.

DA Sliven. Държавен архив – Sliven [State Archive – Sliven]: f. 44 К, op. 1, a.e. 11; f. 44 К, op. 1, a.e. 43; f. 157, op. 1, a.e. 11.

DA Sofia. Държавен архив – София [State Archive – Sofia]: f. 1 К, op. 4, a.e. 683; f. 1 К, op. 2, a.e. 1848; f. 1 К, op. 4, a.e. 531; f. 170 К, op. 1, a.e. 1.

DA Vratsa. Държавен архив – Враца [State Archive – Vratsa]: f. 391, op. 1, a.e. 1- 4; f. 437 К, op. 1, a.e. 1; f. 484 К, op. 1, a.e. 18; 484 К, op. 1, a.e. 27; 484 К, op. 1, a.e. 38; 484 К, op. 1, a.e. 42; 484 К, op. 1, a.e. 44.

NA BAN – IEFEM. Научен архив на Българска академия на науките – Институт за етнология и фолклористика с Етнографски музей [Scientific Archive of Bulgarian Academy of Sciences – Institute of Ethnology and Folklore Studies with Ethnographic Museum]: No. 295 II.

Czech Republic

AKPR. Archiv Kanceláře prezidenta republiky [The Archive of the Presidents' Office]: f. Kanceláře prezidenta republiky, H-Holdy, inv. č. 1838, sign. Hn 1489/28, kart. 3.

MZA. Moravský zemský archiv v Brně [Moravian Land Archives in Brno]: f. C 48 Krajský soud v Uherském Hradišti, II. Manipulace, inv. č. 2184, sign. Vr VIII 2146/21, obž. 1632, kart. 448.

NA. Národní archiv v Praze [National Archives in Prague]: f. Ministerstvo školství a národní osvěty (1918-1949), inv. č. 1622, sign. 13, cikánské školy 91, kart. 1474.; invent. č. 1624, sign. 13, k. 1480, dopis Jánoše Bukó (16.09.1926).

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SOkAP. Státní okresní archiv Písek [State District Archive Písek]: SOkAP, f. Okresní úřad Písek, inv. č. 1351, sign. III 7 R, kart. 758; f, kronika obce Nové Vsi – Čížová, s. 51; f. Okresní úřad Písek – presidiální spisy, karton č. 57; f. Okresní úřad Písek, karton č. 758.

Greece

ΓΑΚ – ΑΝΣ. Γενικά Αρχεία του Κράτους – Αρχεία Νομού Σερρών. [General State Archives – Archives of Serres Prefecture]: Αρχείο τέως συμβολαιογράφου Σερρών Κ. Τριανταφυλλόπουλου. ΑΒΕ: 229, ΑΕΕ: Συμβ. 2.1, κουτί 2, αρ. συμβ. 1496.

ΙΑΥΕ – ΚτΕ. Ιστορικό Αρχείο του Υπουργείου Εξωτερικών (της Ελλάδας), Κοινωνία των Εθνών [Historical Archive of Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Greece, League of Nations]: 1923, φάκελος 3, υποφάκελος 2, Νομαρχία Σερρών.

ΙΑΥΕ – ΚΥ. Ιστορικό Αρχείο του Υπουργείου Εξωτερικών (της Ελλάδας), Κεντρική υπηρεσία [Historical Archive of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Greece, Central Service]: 1906, φάκελος 80, υποφάκελος 1; 1912, φάκελος 122, υποφάκελος 5.

ΠΑ – ΓΑ. Πρωτοδικείο Αθηνών, Γενικό Αρχείο. [First Instance Court of Athens, General Archive]: Αριθ. 1 ΚΑΤΑΣΤΑΤΙΚΟΝ. Του Πανελληνίου Μορφωτικού Συλλόγου Ελλήνων Αθιγγάνων.

Hungary

FSEK. Fővárosi Szabó Ervin Könyvtár [Ervin Szabó Metropolitan Library]: B 780/67.

MNL BKML. Magyar Nemzeti Levéltár Bács-Kiskun Megyei Levéltára [Hungarian National Archives – Bács-Kiskun County Archives]: IV. 1939. 15;

MNLOL. Magyar Nemzeti Levéltár Országos Levéltára [National Archives of Hungary]: K-150-VII-5 1935/153 186/3777 cs.

Latvia

LFKDA. Latviešu folkloras krātuves digitālais arhīvs. Jāņa Leimaņa čigānu folkloras vākums [Digital Archives of Latvian Folklore. Romani Folklore Collection of Jānis Leimanis].

LNA LVVA. Latvijas Nacionālo arhīvu – Latvijas Valsts Vēstures arhīvs [Latvian National Archives – Latvian State Historical Archives]: 3724-1-3748-2; 3724-1-3748-5; 3724-1-3748-7; 1536-14-69-9; 3724-1-3748-10; 3724-1-3748-11; 3724-1-3748-15; 3724-1-3748-16; 3724-1-3748-22; 3724-1-3748-28.

Poland

NDA. Narodowe Archiwum Cyfrowe [National Digital Archive]: Signature: 1-P-2312-4.

Republic of Moldova

APVF. Arhiva personală a lui Vasile Filat [Personal Archive of Vasile Filat]: *Svetilnic*.

Romania

AND MB. Arhivele Naţionale Direcţia – Municipiului Bucureşti [National Archives – Municipality of Bucharest]: fond. Prefectura Poliţiei Capitalei, dos. 123/1933, f. 4, 9, 103; dos. 123/1933, f. 10; dos. 123/1933, f. 3; dos. 123/1933, f. 54; dos. 123/1933, f. 56-65.

AN Dolj. Arhivele Nationale – jud. Dolj [National Archives – Dolj County]: fond. C. S. Nicolăescu-Plopșor.

ANIC. Arhivele Naţionale Istorice Centrale [Central National Historical Archives]: fond. Consiliul Dirigent. Administraţia judeţeană şi comunală, dos. 79/1919, f. 49-49v; Colecţia Facsimile, f. 1322; fond. Direcţia Generală a Poliţiei, dos. 34/1922-1938, f. 30-32; dos. 34/1922, f. 30; dos. 34/1922-1938, f. 136; dos. 34/1932, f. 47; dos. 34/1932, f. 80; dos. 34/1932, f. 142; dos. 34/1922, f. 169; dos. 191, f. 12-14.

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Russian Federation

GARF. Государственный архив Российской Федерации [State Archive of the Russian Federation]: f. A 259, op. 10б, d. 2253; f. A 259, op. 9б, d. 4233; f. A 259, op. 10б, d. 1924; f. A 385, op. 17, d. 2037; f. A 2306, op. 69, d. 1357; f. P 393, op. 43A, d. 1763; f. P 393, op. 43 A, d. 1770; f. P 393, op. 71, d. 6a; f. P 1235, op. 119, d. 9; f. P 1235, op. 119, d. 10; f. P 1235, op. 120, d. 27; f. P 1235, op. 121, d. 31; f. P 1235, op. 123, d. 27; f. P 1235, op. 123, d. 28; f. P 1235, op. 127, d. 8; f. P 1235, op. 130, d. 5; f. P 1235, op. 140, d. 498; f. P 1235, op. 140, d. 752; f. P 3316, op. 19, d. 588; f. P 3316, op. 20, d. 653; f. P 3316, op. 20, d. 698; f. P 3316, op. 28, d. 793; f. P 3316, op. 28, d. 794; f. P 3316, op. 64, d. 1637; f. P 3260, op. 6, d. 44; f. P 7523, op. 17, d. 132; f. P 9479. op. 1, d. 19; f. P 9550, op. 2, d. 2010; f. 3316, op. 17, d. 188; f. 1235, op. 1, d. 27, l. 94; f. П 3, op. 1, d. 540a; f. P 5446, op. 57, d. 24; f. 10035, op. 1, d. 74091.

GASO. Государственный архив Смоленской области [State Archive of Smolensk Oblast]: P 2360, op. 1, sv. 181, d. 2067; P 2360, op. 1, sv. 181, d. 2068; f. P 2360, op. 1, sv. 130, d. 1482.

LANB. Личный Архив Николая Бессонова [Personal Archive of Nikolay Bessonov]: f. Николай Панков; f. Николай Саткевич.

OGMLT. Орловский Государственный литературный музей Тургенева [Oryol State Literary Museum of Turgenev]: f. 29, op. 1, d. 137; f. 29, op. 1, d. 156; f. 29, op. 1, d. 1364.

RGAE. Российский государственный архив экономики [Russian State Archive of Economics]: f. 5675, op. 1, d. 142; f. 5675, op. 1, d. 143; f. 5675, op. 1, d. 144; f. 5675, op. 1, d. 146; f. 5675, op. 1, d. 147; f. 5675. op. 1, d. 148; f. 5675, op. 1, d. 149; f. 5675, op. 1, d. 151; f. 5675, op. 1, d. 152; f. 5675, op. 1, d. 157; f. 5675, op. 1, d. 179.

RGALI. Российский государственный архив литературы и искусства [Russian State Archive of Literature and Art]: f. 673, op. 1, ed. khr. 454.

RGASPI. Росийский государственный архив социально-политхической истории [Russian State Archive of Socio-Political History]: f. 17, op. 114, d. 633; f. 17, op. 114, d. 837; f. 17, op. 3, d. 1006; f. 17, op. 9, d. 3642.

Serbia

AJ. Архив Југославије [Archives of Yugoslavia]: ф. 37 Збирка Милана Стојадиновића; ф. 63 Министарство правде, верско одељеније, фасц. 114; ф. 66 Министарство просвете КЈ, фасц. 2215-2233, фасц. 2293-2297, фасц. 2323-2326, фасц. 2337, фасц. 2338, фасц. 2339, фасц. 2483, фасц. 2496, фасц. 2514, фасц. 2532, фасц. 2515-2522, фасц. 2365, фасц. 3256; ф. 69 Министарство вера Краљевине Срба, Хрвата и Словенаца 1919-1929 (1918-1933), фасц. 86, фасц. 104, фасц. 112-133, фасц. 136, фасц. 141, фасц. 142; ф. 74 Краљев Двор, фасц. 37, фасц. 39, фасц. 42, фасц. 43, фасц. 46, фасц. 75, фасц. 102, фасц. 103; ф. 334 Министарство иностраних послова, фасц. 277, фасц. 330, фасц. 336.

IAB. Историјски архив Београда [Historical Archive of Belgrade]: 1165 Zbirka fotografija.

LADA. Лични архив Драгољуба Ацковића [Personal Archive of Dragoljub Acković].

Slovakia

AMK. Archív mesta Košice [The Košice City Archives]: f. Municipálne mesto Košice (1939-1944), inv. č. 104, šk. 8, sp. č. II. 22636/39.

ŠAK. Štátný archív v Košiciach [State Archive in Košice]: f. Okresný úrad v Košiciach (1923-1939), inv. č. 182, sign. 29359/1937, šk. 488; f. Košická župa, šk. č. 374; f. Krajský Súd v Košiciach, šk. 171.

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Turkey

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UK

PAVK. Personal Archive of Valdemar Kalinin: f. Nikolay Pankov.

Ukraine

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Большевисткий молодньяк. (1931, February 14) Язык шовиниста – язык классового врага: позорные отрыжки великодержавного шовинизма в Смоленском пединституте.
Борьба. (1931, June 2). [No Author]. Провокаторы перед судом. Миф о хищение детей.
Борьба. (1931, May 24). [No Author]. Здесь орудует враг. Нелепым сплетням шовинистов нужно положить конец.
Всероссийская коочегарка. (1924, October 31). [No Author]. О бродячих цыганах.
Голос праці. (1924, November 2). [No Author]. Циган – до хліборобства.
Думка. (1924, November 2). [No Author]. Вопрос о наделении цыган землею.
За советскую науку. (1990, June 7). Барсагаев, П. Драма в тайге.
Звезда. (1926, August 14). Граховский, А. Работа среди цыган Белоруссии.
Известия ЦИК СССР. (1925). [Таранов, А. & Лебедев, И.] Цыгане просыпаются.
Известия ЦИК СССР. (1927, January 21). Таранов, А. От кочевки к оседлости.
Известия ЦИК СССР. (1928, April 4). Маллори, Д. Цыгане на земле.
Известия ЦИК СССР. (1936, October 16). Герасимов, И. О цыганском национальном районе.
Коммунист. (1924, November 1). [No Author]. ЦК Нацмен.
Красное знаме. (1924, November 2). [No Author]. О переходе цыган к оседлости.

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Крестьянская газета. (1928, October, 5). Герман, А. Цыганский хутор.

Луганская правда. (1924, November 2). [No Author]. Наделение землей цыган.

Молодой Ленинец. (1928, May 24). Герман, А. Цыгане земли хотят. Первый советский цыганский хутор.

Комсомольская правда. (1929, September 11). Лебедев, Г. & Герман, А. Что делать с цыганами?

Комсомольская правда. (1930, February 6). Саввов, Д. & Лебедев, Г. Отбросить в прошлое кочевья. Включим цыган в активное строительство социализма.

Комсомольская правда. (1936a, July 14). Масленников, Ю. Смирнов, В., Плетнев, В. Три предложения.

Комсомольская правда. (1936b, July 24). [No Author]. [Трудящиеся предлагают].

Красная Бессарабия. (1933, No. 11). Манолиу, А. Цыгане.

Красное Запорожье. (1928, May 26). [No Author]. Первый цыганский колхоз. От кочевья – к колхозу.

Крестьянская газета. (1928, October 5). Герман, А. Цыганский хутор.

Нэво дром. (1930a, An. 1, No. 4-5) М. Б. Дро колхозо нанэ штэто кулакоскэ.

Нэво дром. (1930b, An. 1, No. 4-5). Таранов, А. Дешу-трито Октябрьско бэрш.

Нэво дром. (1931a, An. 2, No. 3). Антоненко, И. Н. Ракирибэн ваш 1905 бэрш.

Нэво дром. (1931b, An. 2, No. 3). Воинова-Масальско. Ваш джювленгиро дывэс (8 марта).

Нэво дром. (1931c, An. 2, No. 3). Воинова-Масальско. Джювлякано дывэс.

Нэво дром, (1931d, An. 2, No. 3). Фэлдытко. Хаськираса кулакос сыр классо.

Нэво дром, (1931e, An. 2, No. 3). Фэлдытко. Исы ли рома кулаки дрэ Москва.

Нэво дром, (1931f, An. 2, No. 3). Замэк. Сэндо линчя дрэ Чехословакия.

Нэво дром. (1931g, An. 2, No. 6). Калыш. Ваш буты машкир ромэндэ.

Нэво дром. (1931h, An. 2, No.No. 9-10). Таранов, А. Марибэ антицыганизмоса.

Нэво дром, (1932a, An. 3, No. 5). Мих. Б. Бутыр классово придыкхибе прэ театрально фронто.

Нэво дром. (1932b, An. 3, No. 5). Римско, П. Баро рэндо. Чёрахано Михаёскиро сэндо.

Нэво дром (1932c, An. 3, No. 7). Безлюдско, М. Миро литературно дром.

Плуг і молот. (1926, July 6). Бизь-Либзи, Н. Організація циган.

Правда. (1927, October 2). Орловец, П. Цыганская коммуна.

Правда. (1934, October 1). [No Author]. Цыганский король Михаил I.

Рабочая Москва. (1928, January 21). Крейбах, К. Ленин и гусары Ракоцы.

Рабочий и искусство. (1930, September 5). Е. К. От ночного кабака к пролетарскому театру. Цыгане объявили борьбу против цыганщины.

Робітниче-сельянска правда. (1924, November 4). [No Author]. Наділ циган землею.

Романы зоря. (1927, An. 1, No. 1). Таранов, А. С. Вашо пхув романычявэнгэ.

Романи зоря. (1929, An. 2, No. 2). Герман, А. Пэрво советско романо хуторо.

Романы зоря. (1930a, An. 3, No.No. 3-4). Лебедево, Г. Ваше полит-воспитательно буты.

Романы зоря. (1930b, An. 3, No.No. 3-4). Саввов, Д. Рома и коллективизацыя.

Романы зоря. (1930c, An. 3, No. No. 3-4). Индо-Ром [Георгий Лебедев]. Кличё колхозостыр.

Тверская правда. (1931a, August 4). [No Author]. Крепко ударить по великодержавным шовинистам. Виновников травли рабочих-цыган привлечь к судебной ответственности.

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Тверская правда. (1931b, August 14). [No Author]. Отсечь грязные лапы шовинистам. Виновников травли рабочих-цыган на днях предстанут перед пролетарским судом.

Тверская правда. (1931c, August 29). [No Author]. В ответ на вылазку шовинистов крепить фронт интернационального воспитания.

Червонний степ. (1924, November 16). [No Author]. Земля цыганам.

Экономическая жизнь. (1928, May 26). [No Author]. Цыганский колхоз.

Yugoslavia

Die Drau. (1928, August 28). [No author]. Ein Zigeunerkönig.

Die Drau. (1920, October 12). [No author]. Die Deklassierten.

Escher Tageblatt (1936, February 8). [No Author]. Ein echter Zigeuner-Roman.

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Београдске општинске новине. (1931, September 1). [No Author]. Прослава десетогодишњице владавине Њ. В. Краља Југославије Александра I.

Време. (1925, January 17). [No author]. Буран циганског збор код "Три Кључа". Цигани хоће свог представника у Скупштини.

Време. (1926, September 5). [No author]. Протесни збор београдских цигана код "Чубуре" против новог циганског кмета у Општини. Цигани су саставили резолуцију и прете да приреде циганске демонстрације пред Општином.

Време. (1927a, August 17). [No author]. Оснива се циганска партија, која ће покренути свој орган "Голаћ". Кандидати су пристали да им се одсече језик, ако као посланици не буду испунили обећања.

Време. (1927b, August 21). Михаиловић, Ч. "Циганска листа у ваљевском округу". Изјава г. Чеде Михаиловића.

Време. (1931a, April 7). [No author]. Св. Бибија се неће више прослављати на отвореном пољу.

Време. (1931b, May 5). [No author]. Једна тековина за коју је требало много труда. Београдски цигани подижу Дом културе и цивилизације.

Време. (1936, January 5). Митровић, Д. Подневне слике првог циганског новинара код нас у Карађорђевом парку. Бивши уредник "Циганских новина" написао је роман из живота својих саплеменика.

Време. (1938, July 20). Рајчевић, В. У једном славонском селу први пут је читано Јеванђеље на циганском језику.

Време. (1939, October 7). [No author] Вишеградски Цигани подигли су просветни дом. Јапан-мала на Дрини.

Политика. (1926, March 3). [No author] Тетка Бибијин дан. Јуче су београдски Цигани свечано прославили своју Тетка Бибију.

Политика. (1931, April 11). Ђорђевић, Т. Р. Исправка једне историјске грешке.

Политика. (1939, January 4). Н[иколић], Ђ. Необичан догађај у обојеном народу. Београдски цигански клуб пред великим задатком … Може ли от Цигана нешто да буде?

Правда (Belgrade). (1922, February 4). [No author]. Покрет Цигана.

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Правда (Belgrade). (1934, October 16). [No author]. Хумано, културно и просветно удружење југословенских Цигана у Београду.

Правда (Belgrade). (1937, May 27). [No author] Јуче су београдски цигани одржали своју врло живу скупштину. Било је препирања, пребацивања, свађе, али се ипак све лепо свршило.

Правда. (1938, October 29). Комски, В. Једна циганска црква у нашој земљи у којој се Јеванђеље чита на циганском језику.

Циганске новине. Romano lil. (1935a, March). [Симић, С.] Наша прва реч.

Циганске новине. Romano lil. (1935b, March). [Симић, С.] Наши људи жале свога Краља.

Циганске новине. Romano lil. (1935c, May 31). [Симић, С.] "Romano Lil".

Циганске новине. Romano lil. (1935d, May 31). [Симић, С.] Наш чика Марко.

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ANNEX 1

Romani Language Publications

Austro-Hungarian Empire

Nagy-idai Sztojka, F. (1886). *Ő császári és magyar királyi fensége József főherceg magyar és cigány nyelvű gyökszótára. Románé álává. Iskolai és utazási használatra.* Kalocsa: Malatin.

Nagy-idai Sztojka, F. (1890). *Ő császári és magyar királyi fensége József főherceg magyar és czigány nyelv gyök-szótára. Románé álává. Egybekapcsolt négyrészletű javított és bővített 2. kiadás.* Paks: Rosenbaum.

Bulgaria

Gilliat-Smith, B. (1912). *E Devléskoro sfjato lil. E Ísus-Xristóskoro džiipé thai meribé e sfjatoné Lukéstar.* London: British and Foreign Bible Society.

[No Author]. (1929). *Романе Свято гили*. Лом: Българска евангелска баптистка църква.

[No Author]. (1932). *Сомнáл евáнгелие* (*кетапи*) (*лил*) *Матеятар.* Накаé дасиканéстар романé чибáте А. Атанасакиев. София: Американско Библейско дружество & Британско и чуждестранно Библейско дружество.

[No Author]. (1933). *Романе Свети гиля*. София: Съюз на българските евангелски баптистки църкви.

[No Author]. (1936a). *Романе гиля е Девлеске*. София: Циганска евангелска мисия.

[No Author]. (1936b). *Романе Сомнал гиля*. Наредил Йото Ат. Татарев. София: Циганска евангелска мисия.

[No Author]. (1937). *Сомнáл евáнгелие* (*кетапи*) *катаро Иоан*. Накаé дасиканéстар романé чибáте А. Атанасакиев. София: Американско Библейско дружество & Британско и чуждестранно Библейско дружество,

[No Author]. (No Data). *О Дел вакярда*. London: Scripture Gift Mission.

[No Author]. (No Data). *О дром ухтавдо*. London: Scripture Gift Mission.

[No Author]. (No Data). *Саво пересарла Библия*. London: Scripture Gift Mission.

[No Author]. (No Data). *Спасител ащал безаханен*. London: Scripture Gift Mission.

[No Author]. (No Data). *Спасително светоско*. London: Scripture Gift Mission.

[No Author]. (No Data). *Щар безспорне факте*. London: Scripture Gift Mission.

Note: Included are also titles printed abroad but prepared by authors from Bulgaria or designed for Gypsies in Bulgaria.

Czechoslovakia

[Antonín Daniel]. (1936). *O keriben pal e Devleskre bičhade. Romānes.* Praha: Britskā he averthemeskro kher vaš mre Devleskro Lav.

Estonia

Ariste, Paul. 1938. *Romenge Paramiši: Mustlaste muinasjutte. Kogunud ja eestikeelse kokkuvõttega varustanud P. Ariste.* Tartu: P. Arumaa.

Finland

Jalkio, O. (1939). *Romanenge ĝiilja. Romaanilauluja*. Jyväskylä: Nuorten todistus.

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Latvia

Leimanis, J. (1933). *Evangelīben māro raskīro Iisusko Hristoskīro Joannostir čhindlo*. Rīga: Britanijas un ārzemju bībeles biedrība.

Leimanis, J. (1936). *Katķisma gabali, lūgšanas un garīgas dziesmas čigānu valodā. Kaķismakīre šmati mangipena te Dalveskīre giļļa.* Rīga: Latvijas ev.–lut. baznīcas Iekšējā misija.

Romania

Nicolăescu-Plopşor, C. S. (1934) *Ghileà Romané.* (*Cântece Ţigăneşti*). Craiova: Victoria.

Nicolăescu-Plopşor, C. S. (1934) *Paramiseà Romané.* (*Poveşti Ţigăneşti*). Craiova: Victoria.

USSR

[No Author]. (Ed.) (1931). *Со и сыр силосовать*. Москва: Центриздат.

[No Author]. (1932). *Ваш организацыя бутен дро колхозы*. Москва: Сельколхозгизо.

[No Author]. (1932). *Зоркэдыр тэ ракхэс обшественно собственность*. Москва: ГИ Советское законодательство.

[No Author]. (1932). *Пандж массова гиля*. Пирилыджинэ А. Германо, М. Безлюдско, О. Панкова. Москва: Музгизо.

[No Author]. (1932). *Резолюцыя прэ XVII конференцыя ВКП*(*б*). Москва: Партиздат.

[No Author]. (1932). *Тэ зорьякирэс революцыонно законность*. Москва: ГИ Советское законодательство.

[No Author]. (1933). *Конституцыя* (*основно законо*) *РСФСР. Издыбэ официцыально*. Москва: ГИ Советское законодательство.

[No Author]. (1933). *Кэ сарэ крестьянэ-колхозникэ пиро Союзо ССР. Лав колхозникэнгиро-ударникэнгиро Пэрвонэ сарэсоюзнонэ сьездостыр*. Москва: Партиздато.

[No Author]. (1933). *Со дынэ колхозэ крестьянэнгэ? Колхозникэнгиро лыл тов. Сталиноскэ*. Москва: Партиздато.

[No Author]. (1933). *Уставо. Всесоюзно Ленинско Коммунистическо Союзо тэрныпэ*. Москва: ОГИЗ – Тэрны Гвардия.

[No Author]. (1934). *Ваш выкэдыбэ дрэ Советэ. 1934-1935 б.б*. Москва: ГИ Советско законодательство.

[No Author]. (1935). *Примерно уставо ваш гавитко-хулаибнытко артель*. Москва: Советско законодательство.

[No Author]. (1936). *Конституцыя* (*основно законо*) *ваш Советсконэ Соцыалистическонэ Республикэнгиро Союзо. Проекто*. Москва: ОГИЗ – Советско законодательство.

[No Author]. (1937). *Репка*. Москва: Детиздат ЦК ВЛКСМ.

[No Author]. (1937). *Положэниё пиро выкэдыбэна дрэ Верховно Совето РСФСР*. Москва: Юридическо издательство НКЮ Союзоскиро ССР.

[No Author]. (1938). *Положэниё пиро выкэдыбэна дрэ Верховно Совето РСФСР*. Москва: Юридическо издательство НКЮ Союзоскиро ССР.

Александрова, З. Н. (1935). *Амарэ ясли*. Москва: ОГИЗО – Детгизо.

Амосово, Н. К. (1931). *Парамыся ваш Иисусоскэ*. Москва: Центриздат.

Амосово, Н. К. (1932). *Марибэ палэ социализмо и религия*. Москва: ОГИЗ – ГАИЗ.

Амосово, Н. К. (1932). *Пало бидэвлытконэ чяворэндэ*. Москва: ОГИЗ – Тэрны гвардия.

Андреево, Б. Г. (1933). *Вешество дрэ природа и техника*. Москва: Издательство Наркомтяжпромо.

Анисимово, Н. И. (1934). *Почвакиро оббутякирибэ, уфэдырякирибэна тэ посево*. Москва: Гавитколхозгизо.

Артёмьево, А. А. (1932). *Пало раннё кхасосчиныбэ тэ дуй счиныбэна*. Москва: Гавитколхозгизо.

Баево, К. Л. (1936). *Кхамитка затмении*. Москва: ОГИЗО – ГАИЗО.

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Балог, И. & Геньдеш, И. (1931). *Венгерска рома*. Москва: Центриздат.
Баниге, Л. Ю. (1934). *Со банго тэ джинэл столяро-строителе*. Москва: Издательство Наркомтяжпромо.
Барто, А Л. (1933). *Пшалорэ*. Москва: ОГИЗ – Молодая гвардия (национальный сектор).
Барто, А. Л. & Барто, П. Н. (1936). *Чяёри годлытко*. Москва: Детиздат ЦК ВЛКСМ.
Барто, А. Л. & Барто, П. Н. (1936). *Чяёри мэлалы*. Москва: Детиздат ЦК ВЛКСМ.
Бахметьев, В. М. (1935). *Саструны чяр*. Москва: Гослитиздат.
Безлюдско М. Т. (1932). *Пхагирдо дэсто. Романэ роспхэныбэна*. Москва – Ленинград: ГИХЛ.
Безлюдско, М. Т. (1932). *Мишка Октябрёнко*. Москва: ОГИЗ – Тэрны гвардия.
Безлюдско, М. Т. (1932). *Со дыя советско власть романэчякэ*. Москва: Сельколхозгиз.
Безлюдско, М. Т. (1933). *Грай*. Москва: ОГИЗО – Тэрны гвардия.
Безлюдско, М. Т. (1933). *Нэво джиибэн. Гиля*. Москва: ОГИЗ – Тэрны гвардия.
Безлюдско, М. Т. (1933). *Пало колхозо чюрдаса лодыпэн*. Москва: Гавитко-хулаибнытко издательство.
Безлюдско, М. Т. (1933). *Псико ко псико*. Москва: ОГИЗ – Тэрны гвардия.
Безлюдско, М. Т. (1936). *Тэ дживэс камэлпэ. Роспхэныбэна*. Москва – Ленинград: Гослитиздат.
Безлюдско, М. Т. (1933). *Марибэ дошалэ ромэнца дро СССР*. Москва: ГИ Советстко законодательство.
Безлюдско, М. Т. (1933). *Со банго тэ джинэл бутитко ром ваш жужыпэн дрэ пэскиро быто*. Москва – Ленинград: Медгизо.
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* This book has been advertised many times and is offered as a premium to subscribers to journal Nevo Drom (i.e. it has been published), but it cannot be found in libraries.
Note: The bibliography of Romani language publications in the USSR was compiled by Viktor Shapoval.

Yugoslavia

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ANNEX 2

Gypsy/Roma Journals and Newspapers

Austro-Hungarian Empire

Journal *Magyar Zenészek Lapja. Cigányzenészek Közlönye* [Hungarian Musicians' Journal. Gypsy Musicians' Bulletin]. Edition of the Hungarian Gypsy Musicians' Association. Edited by Henrik Miskolczi and Elemér Márkus. Budapest. No. 1, July 15, 1901. In Hungarian.

Journal *Magyar Czigányzenészek Lapja. A magyar czigányzenészek érdekeit felölelő társadalmi folyóirat* [Hungarian Gypsy Musicians' Journal. A social periodical encompassing the interests of Hungarian Gypsy Musical Society]. Edition of Hungarian Gypsy Musicians' Association. Edited by Miksa Breyer, Lajos Hegedüs and Ferkó Vörös. Budapest. No. 1, May 1, 1908. 1908-1910 (no more data). In Hungarian.

Bulgaria

Newspaper *Светилник* [Candelabrum]. Newspaper of the Evangelical Baptist Mission among Gypsies in Bulgaria. Lom. Edited by pastor Petar Minkov. An. 1, No. 1, January 15, 1927. In Bulgarian. Supplement *Романо алав* (Roma Word) in Romani language.

Newspaper *Bulletin of the Gipsies Mission in Bulgaria: Народът, който се нуждае от просвета чрез Евангелието* [Bulletin of the Gypsies Mission in Bulgaria. A Nation that needs Enlightenment through the Gospel]. Sofia. No. 1, September, 1932. In Bulgarian.

Newspaper *Известия на Циганската евангелска мисия* [Bulletin of the Gypsy Evangelical Mission]. Sofia. No data for No.No. 1, 2; No. 3, June 3, 1933. In Bulgarian.

Newspaper *Тербие* [Upbringing]. Newspaper of the Mohammedan National Cultural and Educational Organisation. Edited by Sh. M. Pashev. From No. 6: Newspaper of the Common Mohammedan National Cultural and Educational Union in Bulgaria. Editorial Board: Shakir Makhmudov Pashev, Asen Gogov and Demir Yasharov. Sofia. No data for No.No. 1, 3, 4, 5; No. 2, February 27, 1933; No. 7, May 6, 1934. In Bulgarian.

Finland

Journal *Mailman kiertäjä* [World Traveller]. Journal of the Gypsy Mission. Editor: Oskari Jalkio. Tampere. Special Christmas Issue, 1906. In Finnish.

Journal *Kiertolainen* [Traveller]. Journal of the Gypsy Mission. Editor: Oskari Jalkio. Tampere and Helsinki. 1907-1929. 1907: 13 issues; 1908, 1909, 1910: 9 issues; 1911: 8 issues; 1912: 5 issues; 1913, 1914: 4 issues; 1915, 1920, 1923, 1925, 1927, 1929: 1 issue. In Finnish.

Hungary

Journal *Magyar Cigányzenészek Lapja. A Magyar Cigányzenészek Országos Egyesületének hivatalos szakközlönye* [Gypsy Musicians' Journal. The journal of the Hungarian Gypsy Musicians' National Association]. Edited by Jenő Járosi. Budapest. No. 1, 1924. 1924-1931 (no more data). In Hungarian.

Journal *Magyar Cigányzene. A Magyar Cigányzenészek Országos Szövetségének hivatalos lapja* [Journal Hungarian Gypsy Music. The official journal of the Hungarian Gypsy Musicians' National Federation]. Edited by Béla Mázor. Budapest. No. 1, August, 1938. In Hungarian.

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Ottoman Empire

Newspaper *Laço* [Good]. Humorous newspaper published for the moment once a week, serving the interests of the fatherland and the Ottoman nation. Edited by Emin Resa. Edirne. No.No. 1-2, February 19 and February 25, 1910. In Ottoman Turkish and Romani Languages.

Romania

Newspaper *Timpul* [The Time]. Newspaper of Gypsies in Romania / Newspaper of the Roma from Romania. From No. 1: Independent Weekly Newspaper. From No.No. 24-25: The Newspaper of Gypsies in Romania. From No. 41: The Official Paper of Roma in Romania. Director/Owner: Aurel Th. Manolescu-Dolj. Craiova. No.No. 1-71 (1932-1940). In Romanian.
Newspaper *Glasul Romilor* [The Voice of the Roma]. Newspaper of the General Roma Union of Romania. Director: Gheorghe Niculescu. Bucharest. No.No. 1-15 (1934-1941). In Romanian.
Newspaper *Neamul Țigănesc* [The Gypsy People]. Newspaper for the uplifting of Gypsies (Roma) and for information. Director/Editor: Naftanailă Lazăr. Calbor, Făgăraș County. No.No. 1-3 (1934-1935). In Romanian.
Newspaper *O Rom* [The Rom]. Newspaper for the Cultural Guiding and Social Claims of Roma in Romania. Directors: N. St. Ionescu and Marin I. Simion, Craiova. No.No. 1-2 (1934). In Romanian.
Newspaper *Foaia poporului romesc* [The Paper of the Roma People]. Cultural, Social and Economic Newspaper of Roma. Director: Gheorghe Frunzea. Rupea, Târnava-Mare County. No. 1 (1935). In Romanian.
Newspaper *Țara Noastră* [Our Country]. Special Weekly Newspaper for Roma in Romania. Editors: Archimandrite Calinic I. Popp Șerboianu and George A. Lăzurică. Bucharest, No.No. 1-6 (1937). In Romanian.

USSR

Journal *Романы зоря* [Gypsy Dawn]. Moscow. Editorial Board (no names) at the People's Commissariat for Education of the RSFSR. No. 1, November, 1927; No. 2, 1929; No. 3-4, August, 1930. In Romani language.
Journal *Нэво дром* [New Way]. Moscow: Tsentrizdat (Central Publishing House of the Peoples of the USSR) [An. 1, No. 1 – An. 1, No. 10]; Uchpedgizo (State Pedagogical Publishing House of the People's Commissariat of Education of the RSFSR) [An. 1, No. 11 – An. 3, No. 7]. Editorial Board: Executive Editor Andrey S. Taranov (from An. 3, No. 1 – Andreyo S. Taranovo) et al. An. 1: No. 1, August, 1930; No. 2, September, 1930; No. 3, October, 1930; No. 4-5, November – December, 1930. An. 2: No. 1, January, 1931; No. 2, February, 1931No. 3, March, 1931; No. 4-5, April – May, 1931; No. 6, June, 1931; No. 7, July, 1931; No. 8, August, 1931; No. 9-10, September – October, 1931; No. 11-12, November – December, 1931. An. 3: No. 1, January, 1932; No. 2-3, February – March, 1932; No. 4, April, 1932; No. 5, May, 1932; No. 6, June, 1932); No. 7, July, 1932. In Romani language.
Newspaper *Пало большевистско колхозо* [About the Bolshevik's Kolkhoz]. Mineralnye Vody. No. 1, May 24, 1934 (Editorial Board: [I.] Tokmakovo, [?] Yustoso, [M.] Bezlyudsko); No. 2, August 22, 1934 (Editorial Board: Yustoso, [N.] Pankovo, [M.] Bezlyudsko). In Romani language.
Newspaper *Сталинцо* [Stalinist]. Mineralnye Vody. No. 3 (137), October 5, 1935. Editorial Board: [I.] Tokmakovo, [?] Yustoso, [M.] Bezlyudsko. In Romani language.

Yugoslavia

Newspaper *Romano lil. Циганске новине* [Roma Newspaper (in Romani language). Gypsy Newspaper (in Serbian)]. Editor in cheif Svetozar Simić. Jatagan mala, Beograd. No. 1, March 1935; No. 2, 30 April 1935; No. 3, 31 May 1935. In Serbian with texts in Romani language.

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