

Roma Portraits in History

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

Edited by Elena Marushiakova
and Vesselin Popov



Roma Portraits in History

Elena Marushiakova, Vesselin Popov (Eds.)

Roma Portraits in History

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



BRILL
SCHÖNINGH

The open access of this volume is possible thanks to funding from the European Research Council for the Project RomaInterbellum. Roma Civic Emancipation between the Two World Wars, ERC-Advanced Grant no.69466, hosted by University of St Andrews.



This is an open access title distributed under the terms of the CC-BY-NC-ND 4.0 License, which permits any non-commercial use, distribution, and reproduction in any medium, provided no alterations are made and the original author(s) and source are credited.

Further information and the complete license text can be found at <https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/4.0/>

The terms of the CC license apply only to the original material. The use of material from other sources (indicated by a reference) such as diagrams, illustrations, photos and text samples may require further permission from the respective copyright holder.

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.30965/9783657705191>

Bibliographic information published by the Deutsche Nationalbibliothek

The Deutsche Nationalbibliothek lists this publication in the Deutsche Nationalbibliografie; detailed bibliographic data available online: <http://dnb.d-nb.de>

© 2022 by the Editors and Authors. Published by Brill Schöningh, an imprint of the Brill Group (Koninklijke Brill NV, Leiden, The Netherlands; Brill USA Inc., Boston MA, USA; Brill Asia Pte Ltd, Singapore; Brill Deutschland GmbH, Paderborn, Germany, Brill Österreich GmbH, Vienna, Austria) Koninklijke Brill NV incorporates the imprints Brill, Brill Nijhoff, Brill Hotei, Brill Schöningh, Brill Fink, Brill mentis, Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, Böhlau, Verlag Antike and V&R unipress.

www.schoeningh.de

Brill Schöningh reserves the right to protect the publication against unauthorized use and to authorize dissemination by means of offprints, legitimate photocopies, microform editions, reprints, translations, and secondary information sources, such as abstracting and indexing services including databases. Requests for commercial re-use, use of parts of the publication, and/or translations must be addressed to Brill Schöningh.

Cover image: Poster by Nina Kazakova, “Чюрдяса фэлдыдко джиибэн, ласа пхув э заласапэ гавитконэ хулаибнаса” (Let Us Leave the Nomadic Life, to Take a Land, and Begin to Cultivate the Land). Courtesy of Valdemar Kalinin.

Cover design: Celine van Hoek, Leiden
Production: Brill Deutschland GmbH, Paderborn

ISBN 978-3-506-70519-8 (hardback)
ISBN 978-3-657-70519-1 (e-book)

Contents

Acknowledgement	XI
Foreword	1
Introduction: The Roots	11
Austro-Hungarian Empire	11
Ottoman Empire	19
Russian Empire	28
Chapter 1. Bulgaria	33
Introduction	33
Atanas Dimitrov	36
Shakir Pashov	45
Sliven's Communists	77
<i>Nikola Kochev</i>	78
<i>Nikola Terzobaliev</i>	81
<i>Gospodin Kolev</i>	89
Conclusion	92
Chapter 2. Turkey	99
Mustafa Mehmet: One of Those Tobacco Workers	99
<i>Introduction</i>	99
<i>What Happened in Salonica?</i>	101
<i>Family Background and Childhood</i>	104
<i>Work Experience and Early-Politicisation</i>	106
<i>Journey to the USSR</i>	108
<i>Again, in Turkey</i>	109
<i>Re-exploration of an Extraordinary Life</i>	112
Chapter 3. Yugoslavia	115
Activism and Civic Participation	115
<i>Introduction</i>	115
<i>From Pre-Modern Leadership to Civic Representation</i>	117
<i>National Heroes Becoming a Source of Pride and Representation</i>	129
<i>The New Elite</i>	135
<i>Roma Contributions to National Establishments</i>	140
<i>Roma Women</i>	143
<i>Conclusion</i>	145

Svetozar Simić	146
<i>Introduction</i>	146
<i>Biography and Life-Path</i>	147
<i>Groundbreaking Activities in the Field of Writing and Publishing</i>	154
<i>Organisational Leadership</i>	160
<i>Conclusion</i>	164
Chapter 4. Romania	167
Introduction	167
Lazăr Naftanailă	171
Calinic I. Popp Șerboianu	179
Gheorghe A. Lăzurică	197
Gheorghe Niculescu	212
Constantin S. Nicolăescu-Ploșor	225
Roma Activist Women	242
<i>Florica Constantinescu</i>	243
<i>Marta Lăzurică</i>	246
Conclusion	250
Chapter 5. Hungary	253
Károly Bura – Gypsy First Violinist. From the Coffee Houses to Visions of a Gypsy Museum	253
<i>Introduction</i>	253
<i>Czinka Panna's Descendent</i>	253
<i>Married into the Radics Dynasty</i>	255
<i>Patron at Home and Hero at the Frontlines</i>	256
<i>Police Raid at Dawn</i>	258
<i>The Foundation of the Bihari Music School</i>	260
<i>"Lord Rothermere Holds Our Banner High"</i>	264
<i>Hungarian Festival of Song</i>	266
<i>Embezzlement, Document Theft, Leadership Renewal</i>	268
<i>Anthem or Waltz</i>	270
<i>"Baroraj" or the Gypsy Pasha</i>	272
<i>The Hungarian Regent, the Italian Duce, the Pope in Rome, the American President</i>	274
<i>A Gaping Hole in the Wall</i>	275
<i>Strikers and Strike Breakers</i>	276
<i>He Suddenly Clasped at His Heart</i>	279
<i>Conclusion</i>	280

Chapter 6. Czechoslovakia	283
The Daniel and Kýr Families from the Strážnice Area and their Attempts to Improve the Position of Moravian and Slovak Roma to Benefit Czechoslovakia	283
Introduction	283
Jan Daniel	287
František Kýr	307
Conclusion	318
 Chapter 7. Poland	 327
Matejasz Kwiek (ca. 1887–1937). A “Baron” and “Leader of the Gypsy Nation” in Interbellum Poland	327
<i>Introduction</i>	327
<i>Profile</i>	329
<i>Activity</i>	331
<i>Tragic Death</i>	341
<i>Funeral</i>	342
<i>Conclusion</i>	344
 Chapter 8. Latvia	 345
Jānis Leimanis and the Beginnings of Latvian Roma Activism	345
<i>Introduction</i>	345
<i>Jānis Leimanis – a Member of the Community</i>	346
<i>The Rise and Decline of the Friend of Gypsies Society</i>	348
<i>Choir and Folklore Collection – Appropriating Cultural Patterns of the Majority</i>	350
<i>“The Pastor” – the Religious Activism of Leimanis</i>	353
<i>Land and Work for the Roma</i>	355
<i>Conclusion</i>	356
 Chapter 9. Finland	 359
Introduction	359
Ferdinand Nikkinen	363
Aleksander Åkerlund	372
Ida Blomerus	380
Sofia Schwartz	387
Antti Palm	391
Conclusion	394

Chapter 10. USSR	399
Introduction	399
Ivan Rom-Lebedev	405
Andrey Taranov	427
Mikhail Bezlyudskiy	449
Georgiy Lebedev	470
Ilya and Trofim Gerasimovs	485
<i>Ilya Yakovlevich Gerasimov</i>	485
<i>Trofim Gerasimov</i>	496
Ivan Tokmakov	508
Nikolay Pankov	529
Alexander German	554
Roma Activist Women	575
<i>Nina Dudarova</i>	576
<i>Olga Pankova</i>	582
Conclusion	591
 Chapter 11. USA	 607
Steve Kaslov	607
 Chapter 12. Spain	 619
Helios Gómez (1905–1956). Activism, Resistance, and Struggles of a Left-Wing Gitano Artist	619
<i>Introduction</i>	619
<i>Helios: The Militant</i>	620
<i>Helios: The Gypsy and the Artist</i>	628
 Conclusion	 635
 Illustrations	 649
 Dictionary	 669
Abbreviations and Soviet Neologisms	669
<i>Bulgaria</i>	669
<i>Czechoslovakia</i>	669
<i>Romania</i>	669
<i>USSR</i>	669
 References	 672
Archives	672
<i>Belarus</i>	672

<i>Bulgaria</i>	672
<i>Czechoslovakia</i>	672
<i>Finland</i>	673
<i>Latvia</i>	673
<i>Poland</i>	673
<i>Romania</i>	673
<i>Russian Federation</i>	674
<i>Turkey</i>	675
<i>Ukraine</i>	675
<i>United Kingdom</i>	675
<i>USA</i>	675
<i>Yugoslavia</i>	675
Media	676
<i>Austro-Hungarian Empire</i>	676
<i>Bulgaria</i>	676
<i>Czechoslovakia</i>	678
<i>Finland</i>	678
<i>France</i>	680
<i>Germany</i>	680
<i>Hungary</i>	680
<i>Latvia</i>	686
<i>Luxembourg</i>	686
<i>Ottoman Empire</i>	686
<i>Poland</i>	687
<i>Romania</i>	690
<i>Spain</i>	694
<i>Switzerland</i>	694
<i>Turkey</i>	694
<i>Ukraine</i>	694
<i>United Kingdom</i>	694
<i>USA</i>	694
<i>USSR</i>	695
<i>Yugoslavia</i>	698
Bibliography	703
List of Illustrations	741
Complete List of the Authors	744
List of Authors	749

Acknowledgement

This book is written and published as a part of the research project *RomaInterbellum: Roma Civic Emancipation between the Two World Wars* which has received funding from the European Research Council (ERC) under the European Union's Horizon 2020 Research and Innovation Programme (Grant Agreement No. 694656). It reflects only the authors' view and the agency is not responsible for any use that may be made of the information it contains.

The realisation of the book became possible thanks to the joint efforts of the project team from the University of St Andrews, Scotland, UK, headed by Principal Investigator Elena Marushiakova, Senior Research fellow Vesselin Popov, and Post-Doctoral Fellow Researchers Sofiya Zahova and Raluca Bianca Roman.

Numerous colleagues from different countries also were directly involved in the preparation of this book as authors of individual parts: Alicja Gontarek (Department of Social History and Education at Marie Curie-Skłodowska University in Lublin, Poland); Ieva Tihovska (Institute of Literature, Folklore and Art of the University of Latvia); Tamás Hajnáczy (Károli Gáspár University of the Reformed Church in Hungary); Petre Matei (Elie Wiesel National Institute for the Study of the Holocaust in Romania); Ion Duminița (Centre of Ethnology at Institute of Cultural Heritage, Moldova); Dragoljub Acković (MP at National Assembly of Serbia & Roma Museum, Belgrade); Egemen Yilgür (Faculty of Arts and Sciences, Anthropology Department, Yeditepe University, Turkey); Viktor Shapoval (Moscow City University, Russian Federation); Plamena Slavova (Institute of Ethnology and Folklore Studies with Ethnographic Museum at Bulgarian Academy of Sciences); Risto Blomster (Finnish Literature Society & Finnish Cultural Foundation); Lada Viková (University of Pardubice, Czech Republic); Dušan Slačka (Museum of Romani Culture in Brno, Czech Republic); Carmen Quesada (Florida Atlantic University, USA) and James Deutsch (Smithsonian Center for Folklife and Cultural Heritage, Washington D.C., USA).

We would like to thank all who contributed so that this book became reality. Many people from different countries of Central, South-Eastern and Eastern Europe supported us directly or indirectly in the preparation and writing of this book, too numerous to be listed. Our gratitude goes to all colleagues and friends who supported us in our work, and the staff of the archives, libraries, and museums we visited, who are too numerous to list. However, we would like to mention especially our gratitude to the late Nikolay Bessonov and his daughter Valeria Yanyшева, as well as Valdemar Kalinin, who allowed us to work in their personal archives and use all the necessary materials.

Elena Marushiakova and Vesselin Popov

Foreword

Elena Marushiakova and Vesselin Popov

This book is the third in a series published as part of the project *RomaInterbellum*. Along with the previous two books already published, *Roma Voices in History: A Source Book. Roma Civic Emancipation in Central, South-Eastern and Eastern Europe from the 19th Century until World War II* (Marushiakova & Popov, 2021b) and *Romani Literature and Press in Central, South-Eastern and Eastern Europe from the 19th Century until World War II* (Roman et al., 2021c), it forms a complete kind of triptych. The present book, *Roma Portraits in History: Roma Civic Emancipation Elite in Central, South-Eastern and Eastern Europe from the 19th Century until World War II*, is the last of this triptych and represents a type of conclusion to the work on a common research topic. Together with the previous two books, it is the result of an evidence-based study, which is built to a great extent on the same historical sources; therefore, it is inevitable that there will be some repetitions (either as sources or as their interpretations) with the other two. The most important difference between them is the chosen approach in presenting the history of Roma civic emancipation, which is based on the belief that history can be better understood and appreciated when it is presented through the individuals who constructed and realised it through their ideas, and to a large extent are its creators.

In order for this book to be understood and perceived properly, it is necessary to briefly repeat the basic starting points, the leading methodological approaches, and the key concepts employed.

One of the key issues in Romani Studies concerns 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/or as victims. In the past, beginning with the emergence of Romani Studies as a specific field of study 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 (Grellmann, 1787). 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, as well as their visions about the future of their communities, are neglected. The main goal of our approach 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 and architects of their own future (an issue that continues to be especially relevant today).

In the whole history of Romani (and formerly of Gypsy) Studies, perhaps the most serious research problem is the specific kind of ‘Roma-centrism’ (and formerly ‘Gypsy-centrism’) that puts Roma (and formerly so-called Gypsies) 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. The interpretation of the world (both historically and in present times) through 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 a kind of academic ghetto. All the negatives, yet again, are at the expense of both the Roma themselves and of Romani Studies.

In historical studies of Roma, the emphasis has thus far been on the anti-Gypsy politics, and much less attention has been paid to its implementation (or not) and the results obtained from it, even if these results contradict the declared intentions (or even lead to the opposite results). A typical example in this regard is the famous (and still often quoted) book by Zoltan Barany, according to whom in the so-called epoch of socialism in the countries of the region of Central, South-Eastern and Eastern Europe, the state not only defines the marginal group through the lenses of dominant social norms, religion, ethnic identity, and economic and occupational status but also uses this definition to isolate the Roma population to a social, cultural and economic periphery (Barany, 2002, pp. 49–64). If we accept that it is true, then here is controversy. The whole policy of the communist regimes in the region was just in the opposite direction – to take out Roma from the social and cultural periphery, and to include them in the new socialist life, even if this was done for their immediate (or withdrawn in the more distant perspective) assimilation in the composition of the respective ethno-nation (Marushiakova & Popov, 2008b). Here the most important question is what history needs to study – the used political phraseology or real history? To us, equally important are both sides of the historical process – the aims and the results of certain political actions targeting Roma.

The most significant is to reveal the perspective of the Roma themselves and their responses to existing social and political realities. It is the combination of the two views (of the authorities and of the Roma) that reveals the versatility and different dimensions of the actual historical process. The avoidance of above mentioned 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, and for the source-based conclusions made, 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, 2016e, 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, 2016e, 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 discourse makes it possible not to enter into discussions about the historical and contemporary dimensions of Roma identity (see van Baar, 2011; van Baar & Kóczé, 2020) and to leave them in the background. Whether this identity will be referred to as ‘intersectionality’ (Kóczé & Popa, 2009; Smith & Greenfields, 2011), ‘hybridity’ (Silverman, 2012), ‘superdiversity’ (Tremlett, 2014), ‘political identity’ (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 are “un peuple sans patrie” (Stewart, 1991, pp. 39–52), or “citizens of the world and nowhere” (Acton & Gheorghe, 2001, pp. 54–70), or, as is especially popular in recent years in the spirit of James Scott (2009), as a people who master “the art of not being governed”, i.e. who stand (or at least tries to stand) outside society. In fact, this does not correspond to the existing realities, at least for Roma 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 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 migrations from Central and South-Eastern Europe to West. 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 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 and understood.

It is on the very basis of this distinction between the two main dimensions of Roma identity that the key concept that defines the basic notion 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 social fields (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, 2015a, 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, unions, 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. In this line are included not only civic organisations and political parties but also many other diverse forms of public life that do not directly relate to the core topic: such as, for example, professional associations, mutual aid, charity, cultural and sports associations, so-called 'new' (Evangelical) church communities, etc., which are built on an ethnic basis. Moreover, under the common denominator of Roma civic emancipation is included even the participation of some Roma activists in the communist movement. The communist idea is perceived by them as an opportunity for radical change in society and, therefore, also of the place of the Roma community in it.

However, put in a more general historical context, all these forms of the 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. 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.

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 works of Miroslav Hroch (1985; 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 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 into diverse wings (Hroch, 1985; 2005).

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), it included 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 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.

The main goal of this book is to present the processes described above through portraits of leading representatives of the new Roma civic elite, i.e. of the people whose visions and activities initiated the movement for Roma civic emancipation. This approach is not so new for historians but is lacking in respect of Roma in the above-mentioned historical period. Thus, the leading idea here is to present the history of the Roma civic emancipation movement in the region of Central, South-Eastern and Eastern Europe from the 19th Century until World War II through the biographies of prominent Roma activists and visionaries in this region, revealing their activities during the respective historical period. From the point of view of Miroslav Hroch's concept, these are the people who bring out the first two phases of the process of nation-building in the modern era; they are the emerging new national elite that formulates new national ideas and outlines own visions for future development. It is the emerging new Roma leaders who formulate these new ideas about the problems of the present and the future of their community and who present them publicly, while at the same time promoting them among the Roma community itself (and in the case of the USSR, even by participating in their implementation through state policy instruments). Thus, by presenting the portraits of these leading Roma activists, a complete gallery of Roma civic emancipation will be formed, which will reveal the whole variety of processes taking place in this field. In the Conclusion, on the basis of the presented portraits, an entangled picture of the movement for Roma civic emancipation is offered, and the general dimensions and leading directions of this movement are presented, taking into account the diversity of individuals' approaches and its specific directions, which do not harm its integrity.

To achieve the goal set in this book, a new methodological approach is used, namely the critical rethinking of the historical sources used so far, cross-checking – with the original sources – quotations that have been passing from one book to another in order to correct errors in the reading and interpretation, as well as attracting of new, unknown (or little known) sources. A significant part of the historical sources on which this volume is based has already been published and commented in the previous book prepared in the framework of *RomaInterbellum* project too and their full original text can be read there (Marushiakova & Popov, 2021b). These sources, as well as the newly discovered and added here, for the most part, have not yet entered into scientific circulation or in some cases, they have been used only in publications in local languages, which de facto make them inaccessible to the global academic world.

* * *

In order for this book to be properly perceived and understood, it is necessary to begin by making once again 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 text, on which basis the entire composition is established.

The two key terms used in the authors' 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 'Ἀθηγγανοί' (Byzantine Empire, Greece), 'Kıbtî' and 'Çingene' (Ottoman Empire, Turkey), 'Цигани' (Serbia, Bulgaria, Yugoslavia), 'Țigani' (Romania), 'Zigeuner' (Austro-Hungarian Empire, Austria), 'Cigányok' (Hungary), 'Cikáni' and 'Cigáni' (Czechoslovakia), 'Cyganie' (Poland), 'Цыгане' (Russian Empire, USSR, Russian Federation), 'Čigonai' (Lithuania), 'Čigāni' (Latvia), 'Mustlased' (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'.

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 from a contemporary perspective (see e.g. Dunajeva, 2021a, pp. 65–78). The Roma activists themselves, at that time, except in the rare 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.

As very accurately noticed by Angéla Kóczé (2020), "Roma' is a politically constructed identity used as a category to capture various ethnic groups". The use of the term as a summarising notion began in the 1970s after the International Romani Union came into being (Marushiakova & Popov, 2018b). Its "officialization" started in the late 1990s and in the 21st century, it was imposed as a politically correct term (except for some individual

countries). From the political sphere, it gradually transits into academia (though not all over the line). 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 (Ibid., pp. 385–418), and the academic discourse, in which this designation is used as an ethnic category (Marushiakova & Popov, 2016e, 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 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 most of its territory, geographically speaking, is located in Asia) and Finland (which, until 1917, was part of the Russian Empire). Some other countries in the region (such as Austria, Albania, Lithuania, Estonia) are absent, for a simple reason, because there is no written evidence (or, at least, evidence have not yet been found) for the process of Roma civic emancipation.

The book also includes two portraits that break the established spatial frames, which has its own explanation. In the case of Steve Kaslov (probably his native name was Stefan Kozlovskiy), it is about an emigrant from the Russian Empire who transferred his accumulated social experience to the United States. This gives sufficient grounds for his activities in the field of Roma civic emancipation to be considered as part of the general processes taking place at that time, although realised in another national context. The case of Helios Gomez is a little different. Although he was not a representative of community with self-appellation Roma but of Spanish Gitanos, who call themselves Calé, he, along with his civic activities in Spain, also expressed visions for the unity of his community with Roma in the USSR and gives the policy of the Soviet state as an example to follow. Gomez used the generic name 'Gypsies' (in original 'Gitanos') and his case represents the emergence of global, transnational dimensions of the processes of Roma civic emancipation.

The chronological scope of the book is not determined by specific dates either, but according to respective historical eras. In our initial intentions, the chronological limit of our work was between the 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. 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 outbreak of 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.

In the composition of the book, the text is divided into chapters and subchapters. The division by chapters is according to the individual countries in the region because it is precisely the national borders that set the framework for the processes of Roma civic emancipation. As will be seen, the concept of the Roma as a transnational community during the studied period appeared only sporadically and was perceived rather as a desired potential opportunity. The individual chapters are in most cases divided into subchapters devoted to individuals; in other instances, one chapter (or subchapter) combines portraits of two or more personalities.

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 in individual countries. Naturally, the size of the chapters also depends on the array of discovered source materials. As expected, and for obvious reasons, the longest chapters appeared to be Bulgaria, Romania, and especially the Soviet Union.

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.

Italics also indicate words and phrases that are in the Romani or other languages. The words and expressions in the Romani and other languages are maintained as in the original followed by translation in round brackets. Italics in some instances are used to designate the names or titles, e.g. of organisations, Roma groups, newspapers, *kolkhoses*, literary works, etc.

In the authors' texts the self-appellation of the community is used, namely, the term 'Roma' (except in the case of Spain for obvious reason), 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 few exceptions from this principle are the combination terms, such as 'Romani language', 'Romani literature' and 'Romani Studies', because they have already made a lasting entry in the academic language.

The names of the personalities 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 detached, 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.

The omitted parts or abbreviations, which are eliminated in the English translation of quotations are indicated with square brackets []. A similar approach is used when further clarification is needed to better understand the meaning of individual words or phrases.

In many places in the 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. Because often these abbreviations and neologisms are incomprehensible even in the modern Russian language, a special Dictionary has been included. This Dictionary also includes other commonly used abbreviations in countries throughout the region.

For maintaining 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.

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 is 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/>).

Introduction: The Roots

Elena Marushiakova and Vesselin Popov

The processes of nation-building in the region of Central, South-Eastern and Eastern Europe constitute some of the main characteristics of the modern era in the three great empires in the region – Austro-Hungarian, Ottoman, and Russian Empires. These processes, agreeing with Johann Gottfried Herder's concept on modern nationalism, include, as a basic feature, the creation and validation of own national history, language, and literature, which implies a particular increased interest in the nation's origin, historical past, native language, traditional culture, and folklore. On this basis emerged civic organisations and political movements seeking to establish national institutions and, ultimately, own state. The civic emancipation of Roma de facto replicates in its form, albeit more slowly and to a much lesser extent, the general processes of nation-building in the region and outline, albeit fragmentarily, some of the basic directions of their development which are yet to be advanced throughout the region in the coming historical eras (a process that continues to the present day).

The known historical sources about the origin and the very first manifestations of the movement for Roma civic emancipation in the conditions of the three great multinational empires are relatively scarce. For this reason, it is not possible to present the portraits of all the ancestors of this movement, in most cases, even in a very sketchy form. Nevertheless, these first Roma visionaries about whom we have at least some data must be presented here because namely, they were the ones who started the processes of civic emancipation of the Gypsies (as Roma were called at the time) in the region of Central, South-Eastern, and Eastern Europe.

Austro-Hungarian Empire

The first public manifestation of Roma's aspirations for civic emancipation in the Habsburg Empire dates back to 1850. According to a local press, the Gypsies in Neudörfel (then within Hungary, today in Burgenland, Austria) decided to send a deputation to the Kaiser to deliver *Petition um nationale Gleichberechtigung* (Petition for National Equality), which asks Gypsies to receive rights equal to other nationalities in the empire (Schwicker, 1883, p. 72). The emergence of such aspirations could be understood given the general socio-political context. During the Revolutions of 1848, which marked the beginning of modern nationalism in Europe, a powerful wave of individual nationalities arose in the Habsburg Empire, demanding various changes in their political status, and the Gypsies did not stay away from it. Unfortunately, the names of the initiators of this petition remained unknown.

The next step in this direction is reflected in a short notice in the Hungarian press from 1865, repeated also in the Austrian press. Here, for the first time, the name of the protagonists are mentioned. These are: Janos Kaldaras, located in Bihar (today Bihor county in Romania), in the vicinity of Szunyogd (today Şuiug), a temporary Gypsy 'Vajda', and his companion Sava Mihaly from the same city. They applied to the Hungarian Royal Office for a separate territorial-administrative unit ('Cigány-Vajdasag' in Hungarian, 'Zigeuner-Wojwodina' in German) to be established (*Fővárosi Lapok*, 1865, p. 622; *Klagenfurter Zeitung*, 1865, p. 719). The used term 'Vajda' in *Fővárosi Lapok* is the hungarianised form of the term 'Voivode' (or 'Voievod', 'Vojvoda', 'Wojewoda'), which is a historical Slavic term for a military commander and was often used in Central, Eastern and South-Eastern Europe during the Middle Ages, and became also a designation of a governor of a territorial-administrative unit, designated respectively as 'Voivodina'.

The request for the creation of 'Gypsy Voivodina' expresses the desire to gain public and political recognition of the Gypsy community as equal to all nationalities in the empire. The processes of national revival in the Habsburg Empire 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 manifestation of irony in this note, in the sense that even Gypsies had 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 it, which is understandable given the general public disdain of the Gypsies.

There is another important conclusion that could be made by looking at this case. 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 led 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 groups 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 between the Roma groups, as its main constituent units (Marušiakova, 1988; Marushiakova & Popov, 1997; 2016e), this case 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, and second, that community identity begins to dominate over group identity (at least in the public space). In fact, that is the true beginning of the Roma civil emancipation.

The idea of political representation of the Gypsy community does not appear in a completely empty place. During the Hungarian Revolution of 1848, Nikola Mihailo (born 1810), a nomad Gypsy from Banat, joined the Revolutionary Army and was recognised by the provisional Hungarian authorities 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).

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 chief of the Gypsies recognised by the authorities is from the island Corfu (at the time part of the Venetian Republic) during the second half of the 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 (fake or not) 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); *Çeribaşı* 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, 1998, 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. In this historical context, the case of Nikola Mihailo Mali is rather a continuation of this practice in the modern era (within three countries, on two continents), while the case of the two Gypsy leaders, Janos Kaldaras and Sava Mihaly, also representatives of the community's traditional elite, is quite different. They now want not only to represent their community to the authorities but also to give their community as a whole a new social dimension through a new political status equal to that of other nationalities in the empire.

Despite the failure of the first attempt, the old Gypsy elite continues its attempts to fit into the social realities of the new age. In 1888 in the European press (*Le Temps*, *Daily*

News) appeared information that “an old Gypsy named Raphael” from Hungary has addressed a request to the Emperor Francis-Joseph, in which he begs to proclaim him King of the Gypsies because he can prove his direct descent from “King Pharaoh”; he 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., 1889, pp. 305–306).

In Raphael's request, two main points deserve special attention. Firstly, that is the expressed 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, and there are no data about Gypsy supporting their policy. In the end, despite achieving sedentarisation of many, this policy has turned out to be generally unsuccessful, and the travelling way of life of another part of the Gypsies in the Austro-Hungarian Empire continued. In the new societal and economical conditions of the modern era, however, separate representatives of the Roma elite (in this case, Raphael, of whom nothing else is known) reached a new vision for the future of their community and the need of its social integration. According to him, a necessary condition for the success of such integration was 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 first half of the 20th century also in other countries of Central, South-Eastern and Eastern Europe (Marushiakova & Popov, 2020c, pp. 265–276).

Secondly, the proposal to include Gypsies in the army is also of interest. 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 they were forcibly 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. As will be discussed later more than once, in most of the countries in the region, participation in the army is of particular importance for Roma civic emancipation, because it demonstrates that they fulfil their civic duties as part of the societies in which they live.

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 (Paul Bataillard) 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 (Gjorgjević, 1903, pp. 82–83; 1934, pp. 26–32; Ђорђевић, 1933, Vol. 7, pp. 122–133; Petrović, 1940, p. 112; Marushiakova & Popov, 1994, pp. 23–30; 1995, pp. 26–27), and also elsewhere in Central and Eastern Europe (see e.g. Добровольский,

1908, pp. 4, 53). 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).

Raphael's request also is a phenomenon of another character comparing with the old "Gypsy Kings" and is a product of the modern epoch and the time of the birth of modern nationalism. There is no historical data on what has been the result of his request. However, it could be easily assumed that it has not been taken seriously or 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.

Sometimes it can be read that "most non-intellectual Roma do not seem to care where their ancestors came from" (Stewart, 1997, p. 28). However, which is evidenced in the whole cycle of Egyptian etiologiical legends mentioned above, the "non-intellectual Roma" also were interested in their history. The case of Raphael (who can hardly be considered "intellectual") clearly shows that this interest not only exists but even could be instrumentalized by the old Roma leadership in attempts to find their place as a public representative of the community in the modern era. Along with the attempts of the old, traditional elite to find their place in the new social realities, in the Austro-Hungarian Empire, and more precisely in then Hungary, a new, completely different Gypsy civic elite, whose representatives already may be considered "intellectual Roma", gradually began to form.

Interest in own language and history is one of the main characteristics of this new civic elite. The first Gypsy-Hungarian glossary was made already around 1790 in the Calvinist College in Kolozsvár (Cluj-Napoca), with the involvement of Mihály Vistai Farkas, a student of the theology of Gypsy origin (Orsós, 2015). The main drive in the process for the creation and the publication of the Dictionary and Grammar of Romani language (Joseph, 1888) 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 one of the founding members of the Gypsy Lore Society (Zaloaga, 2014). In his work on the preparation of the Dictionary and Grammar, Archduke Joseph attracted to his team several educated Roma, among whom should be noted in particular János Ipolysági Balogh (1802–1876), József Boldizsár (1825–1878), and Ferenc Nagyvidai Sztojka (1855–1929), who, besides their work as native speakers and language editors, produced also the translations in Romani language and original author's literature (Orsós, 2015).

Among this small group of pioneers of the development of the Romani language and Romani literature, special attention deserves Ferenc Nagyvidai Sztojka (1855–1929).

Ferenc Sztojka was born in a family of nomadic Gypsies. His father, József Sztojka was proud to be a child of the Big Vajda Pál Sztojka and his mother was Borbála Kozák. His parents abandoned the nomadic life in 1849 and settled in Uszód, then belonging to the

county of Pest-Pilis-Solt (now Bács-Kiskun county). Their son, Ferenc Sztojka, was born on March 12, 1855. He graduated from high school. From 1875 he attended military school and was inaugurated as a non-commissioned officer in the army. During the occupation of Bosnia, he served in the 38th Infantry Regiment as a third-year lieutenant. There he started to write his poems and published them initially in local newspapers in Gradasacz (today Gradačac, Tuzla canton), later also in other mainstream newspapers in the capital city. Ferenc Sztojka married on March 22, 1899, at the age of 44 in Uszód. His wife was Mária Lakatos, eleven years younger than him. Mária Lakatos was from a horse dealer and a copper-smith Gypsy family of Mihály Lakatos. The civic occupation of Ferenc Sztojka was a seal maker, however, for the last third of his life, he farmed a small estate and was a horse dealer (Hegedűs, 2017).

Ferenc Sztojka's Gypsy name was Fardi. It is not clear where from and when he received his middle name Nagyidai, with which he signed most of his texts. The name Nagyidai comes from the village Nagy Ida (today Velká Ida in Slovakia). It could be supposed that he took the name from this place which was legendary for Gypsies. About the occupation and abandonment of the castle of Nagy Ida in times of internecine strives in medieval Hungary and the role of these events for Gypsies he repeatedly wrote in his work. The most productive time for his literature work was connected to his collaboration with Archduke Joseph. After the Palatine's death in 1905, he was forgotten and there are no pieces of evidence of him continuing to write. Ferenc Nagyidai Sztojka had died in Uszód in 1929 due to a final weakening of his age (Ibid.).

It is not clear exactly how and when Ferenc Sztojka and Archduke Joseph became acquainted, but numerous letters they exchanged in the 1880s are preserved and published (Rézműves, 2003, pp. 23–43). Ferenc Sztojka's cooperation with the Palatine leads even to releasing him from the army to be able to devote time to prepare the data and for editing the Gypsy-Hungarian dictionary (Sztojka, 2007), and compiling his own literary texts (poems, two historical dramas). Among the literary work of Ferenc Nagyidai Sztojka the epic poem, *The Wanderings of the Gypsies* (Nagyidai Sztojka, 1886), should be specially noted. This poem created a new historical myth for the birth and the early history of the Gypsies. The poem reflects on the arrival of the Gypsies in the Hungarian lands in the time of Attila the Hun (5th century). According to the poem, the Gypsies used to have their 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 occupations (pot making, horse-trading, commerce, metalwork, masonry and carpentry), spread around various Hungarian regions, while some others settled permanently (Orsós, 2015). 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. The example of Ferenc Nagyidai Sztojka shows that he is already going further from myths and legends towards the attempt of creation of history,

as he does not look on his own community as an 'exotic other' but attempts to formulate the Gypsies' own narrative.

The emergence of the movement for Roma civic emancipation was indeed initiated by a relatively small circle of Roma new civic elite, as is the case described in the Austro-Hungarian Empire. This is similar as a model to the creation of new modern nations in the region, where it was the elite, which despite being relatively small in number, was able to create national concepts that became at the next stage (Phase B), subsequently adopted by the masses (Hroch, 1985; 2005).

An interesting aspect of this process of development of Roma civic emancipation here 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 cigány imádságok a melyly mind a két magyar hazában levő cigány 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 (Petőfiana, 1878, p. 20). In this context, it became clear why the Association of Hungarian Gypsy Musicians was created (see below) and why the organisation received public support, which can be linked with the special place that Hungarian Gypsy music held as an integral part of the Hungarian national culture (Sárosi, 1971).

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, on the other hand, and at the same time, hold 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.

In the conditions of the Austro-Hungarian Empire was born also a new, previously unknown in Central Europe, social phenomenon – a professional association of Gypsy musicians. This turned out to be a lengthy process, started already in the late 19th century, with the final legalisation of *Magyar Cigányzenészek Egyesülete* (Association of Hungarian Gypsy Musicians), led by Béla Radics, that took place only in 1908 (Marushiakova & Popov, 2021b, p. 8). The Association of Hungarian Gypsy Musicians published two journals, the *Hungarian Musicians' Journal. Gypsy Musicians' Bulletin* (Magyar Zenészek Lapja, 1901) and *Gypsy Musicians' Journal. A Social Periodical Encompassing the Interests*

of *Gypsy Musical Society* (Magyar Czigányzenészek Lapja, 1908–1910) (Roman et al., 2021c, pp. 133–144). The Association of Hungarian Gypsy Musicians continued to develop in independent Hungary after the end of the First World War. What is important here are the national dimensions of the association, in which the Gypsy identity is incorporated as an integral, albeit ethnically distinct, part of the Hungarian civic national identity. In this way, a line of development of the Roma civic emancipation movement was formed, and it became the leading one throughout the region during the interwar period. When multinational empires fall apart and new nation-states appeared, this movement was reshaped within the civic nations of which the Roma are a part.

Subsequent and additional reshaping of the Roma civic emancipation movement within individual nation-states happened only in the 1960s and 1970s when its international dimensions began to develop. In the framework of the current internationalisation of this movement, attempts started to rewrite the history of Roma civic emancipation retrospectively in order to underline the worldwide unity of Roma and to characterise Roma as a ‘nation without a state’ (Marushiakova & Popov, 2005). For this, a search for the roots of these international dimensions in earlier historical epochs is needed. A typical example in this direction is the case of the so-called “International Gypsy Congress” of 1879 in Kisfalú (probably the village of Malá vieska located 8 km north of the city of Košice in Slovakia), which today is included in the history of Roma activism (Hancock, 2002, p. 114). As has already been revealed in detail elsewhere, in this case, it is about a clear media mystification that appears in the Austro-Hungarian Empire and was multiplied by the world press (Marushiakova & Popov, 2021b, pp. 3–5). ‘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 presented in the press have been accepted without reservations, including by researchers, not only during that period but even nowadays. The doubts about the veracity of the alleged International Gypsy Congress (Klímová-Alexander, 2002, p. 108; 2005a, pp. 158–159) are usually not taken into consideration and it continues to be accepted as a historical fact in many publications even though, in this case, it is a doubtless mystification and a tendentious misinterpretation in many contemporary publications.

Under the Austro-Hungarian Empire, another phenomenon emerged, present in Roma activism throughout the region of Central, South-Eastern and 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 even 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 Gypsies in the Austro-Hungarian Empire. This support (combined with 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.

Ottoman Empire

The beginnings and the first steps of the movement for Roma civic emancipation during the modern era in the Ottoman Empire are characterised by an interesting specificity. This movement takes different forms and directions, conditioned by the specific situation in different regions of this multinational empire. In some cases, the processes of Roma civic emancipation are 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 Roma Muslims).

The reasons for this division can be found in the overall situation in the Ottoman Empire and the place of the Roma in its socio-political structure. So, the so-called Gypsies, whose official name in Ottoman-Turkish was *Kıptı* (i.e. Copts – the native Egyptians) or *Çingene*, were full-fledged subjects of the Sultan (i.e. citizens of the Empire) and have had civil rights since the 15th century, unlike the Gypsies in Central and Western Europe, who achieved this social status much later (Marushiakova and Popov, 2001). However, 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 – orthodox (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.

Chronologically, the first line of development is directly related to the name of Iliya Naumchev. To understand the significance of his personality for the Roma civic emancipation, a few words must be said in advance about the general historical context in which, through his activities, he set the beginning of the Roma civic emancipation in the Ottoman Empire.

At the beginning of the 19th century, the Ottoman Empire entered a long and severe period of crisis, which ended with its disappearance from the historical scene (formally in 1923). During this period, national ideologies were born among the conquered peoples of the Balkans and, accordingly, the struggles for liberation and the creation of their own nation-states began (Serbia, Greece). At the same time, the Bulgarian National Revival began, which developed according to the well-known models – the creation of its own,

national history, the formation of a national language, which started to be taught in the mass-created Bulgarian schools, etc. At the same time, the struggles for church independence and the creation of their own national church began (a phenomenon characteristic of all Eastern Orthodox peoples in the region). These struggles were directed against the Ecumenical Patriarchate of Constantinople (Istanbul), which under the Ottoman system was recognised as both the spiritual and secular head of all the Orthodox subjects of the Empire (except those Orthodox under the spiritual care of the Patriarchs of Antioch, Jerusalem and Alexandria). Its Greek church elite, which were called 'Phanariotes', from the name of the neighbourhood Phanar (modern Fener) in Istanbul, where the court of the Patriarchate of Constantinople resided and rich Greek merchants lived who influenced the Ottoman administration was accused of not allowing other Orthodox nations in the Ottoman empire, as in the case of Bulgarians, to have religious independence. The centre of these church struggles was the capital of the empire, Istanbul, where many Bulgarians lived at that time.

In 1867 in the Bulgarian newspaper *Macedonia*, printed in Istanbul, was published a reader's *Letter to the Editor*, which was signed with the pseudonym 'One Egyptian' (Македония, 1867, p. 3; full text see in Marushiakova & Попов, 1995, pp. 39–42; 2021b, pp. 9–15). At that time in the Balkans, the name *Egyptians* (Γυφτοι, Египци, Гюнци, Гюнми, etc. in the various Balkan languages) designated 'Gypsies', which referred to their official name *Kipti* (meaning Copts, in sense of Egyptians) in the Ottoman Empire (Marushiakova & Попов, 2001), which in turn originates from *Αιγύπτιος* (Egyptians), used since Byzantine times (Soulis, 1961). This *Letter to the Editor* of the *Macedonia* newspaper Petko R. Slaveykov constituted a direct reaction to his article entitled *The Gypsies*, published in *Gayda* newspaper in 1866 (Гайда, 1866, pp. 256–258), which actually inspired the author of the Letter to write it. In this article, the leading discourse is the origin and history of the Gypsies in the Balkans, where, according to its author, they migrated from Egypt; moreover, the Gypsies were said to be those who bring to the "wild" Greeks the benefits of civilization, as evidenced by the borrowings from their language in Greek (Ibid.). The "evidence" of the origin and history of the Gypsies presented in this article is undoubtedly extravagant, and very far from the achievements of European science at the time. The 'Egyptian' hypothesis about the origin of the Gypsies, especially popular in the Middle Ages, was long overdue in the history of science at that time, but in the Balkans, it unexpectedly found its new life. The reasons for this are rather socio-political – this was the height of the struggle for independence of the Bulgarian church against the Greeks, and the humiliation of Greek's ancient history was part of the arguments in this struggle, in which Petko R. Slaveykov himself was one of the leading figures. In this context, the author of the *Letter to the Editor* uses Slaveykov's article as a starting point for presenting the contemporary problems faced by his community, namely the need for religious emancipation of the Gypsies, which for him was an integral (and important) part of their overall civic emancipation.

The *Letter to the Editor* from 'One Egyptian' is directed against the Greeks because, according to the author, they are to blame for the plight of Egyptians and are a major obstacle to their civic development. In particular, the letter opposes the overall management of the Orthodox Church in the conditions of the Ottoman Empire by the Greek church elite, because of whom the Gypsies suffer like other Balkan nations. The author of the letter argues that this policy is detrimental to all nations, but most severely affects the 'Egyptians' (i.e. Gypsies), who are not allowed into the Orthodox Church. With many quotations from Holy Scripture, the author of the letter argues that the Greeks have no reason for such an attitude towards the 'Egyptians' because Christianity does not divide different peoples into the "chosen by God" and the "unpleasant to God", and all people are equal before God, including the 'Egyptians' who are also entitled to have their own "spiritual education", because "There is neither Jew nor Greek, slave nor free, male or female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus (3 Galatians; 28)". Referring to Slaveykov's article, he writes that 'the Egyptians' historically, in their motherland Egypt, had "reached a high degree of education", and when they settled in Greece, they brought to the local population their "eternal arts and alphabet", and because of their glorious past they, as an ancient people, have right to have religious worship in their own language (Македония, 1867, p. 3).

This letter can be properly understood only in the context of the social and political movement of Bulgarians during this period in an effort to have their 'own' Bulgarian 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 civil equality. The author feels the disparaging (in the best case) 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. That is why in its text, he does not limit himself to substantiating the right to religious equality of his community but also outlines the more distant goals and the next necessary steps for its overall civil emancipation, and namely, to "make a society and take care of education" (Ibid).

The content of the *Letter to the Editor* confirms what we know from other historical sources, that in the Ottoman Empire the Roma Christians were integrated into the social structure with their own social and civil status, which was very similar to the status of other Christian nations' subjects of the Empire (Marushiakova & Popov, 2001). As a result, the development of the Roma, 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 Roma community in the Balkans in the 19th century

reached a new stage in the development of their nationality consciousness. This new stage is characterised by exiting the 'internal' traditional frames of their community in order to search for 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 Roma – they, like other Balkan nations, are searching actively for proof of a 'glorious' historical past, and are aiming for the creation of a new national historical mythology that will serve as support and argument in the struggles for their civic emancipation as a separate community, equal to other Balkan nations. As a whole, the logic of Roma 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 ("create a society"). Whether these ideas were altogether realistic and to what extent they resonated with the Gypsies themselves in view of their situation in the Balkans at the time is another question. However, the emergence of such ideas, shaped as a clearly defined vision for the future development of the community and presented in the public space, is a fact that cannot be ignored.

In our quest to find biographical information about 'One Egyptian' we were able to discover some hints in the materials published by a famous folklorist from the end of the 19th century, Marko K. Tsepenkov. In his description of the development and changes of the social life of the Gypsies in the town of Prilep (now in the Republic of North Macedonia), he wrote:

The reason behind all this is a Gypsy called Iliya Naumchev, a barber. This Naumchev, to him went more educated people in his barber shop and day by day he advanced and accepted his ethnicity and he was not ashamed to call himself an 'Egyptian', because, as he explained, the name came from Egypt. This Iliya hoped very much for a priest of Gypsy ethnicity. Many years have passed, but he still desired to have this rank among them [...]. 2–3 years ago, he succeeded to become himself a priest in the Holy Exarchate. (Цепенков, 1898, pp. 180–181).

A sufficient dose of confidence may suggest that this Iliya Naumchev is the 'One Egyptian', who wrote the letter to the editor of the *Macedonia* newspaper. The exact dates of his birth and death are unknown. It could be estimated that he was born around the middle of the 19th century in Prilep. For many years, he worked as a barber while at the same time being actively working among his community for the uplifting of their civil consciousness.

The dream expressed by Ilya Naumchev in his *Letter to the Editor* of the newspaper *Macedonia* failed to materialise, and the independent Gypsy Orthodox Church to which he appealed was never created. This dream remained at the stage of a vision for future development because there were no objective conditions for its realisation, and in the first place, there was a lack of a sufficient number of educated Roma elite among Roma

Christians to prepare the masses and lead the struggle in this direction. The fight of Bulgarians for an independent Bulgarian Orthodox Church was more successful and, as a result, in 1870 the Bulgarian Exarchate was created with Decree (*Firman*) of Sultan Abdulaziz. It granted the right to establish an autonomous Bulgarian Exarchate for these dioceses, wherein at least two-thirds of Orthodox Christians were willing to join it. 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), in the town of Prilep more than two-thirds of the inhabitants of the city, including local Gypsies, declared their wish to belong to the Bulgarian Exarchate (Кънчов, 1901, p. 124), which is the impact of Iliya Naumchev's enlightenment activities among them. This has been a great surprise to the contemporaries (in large part, Gypsies in the Ottoman Empire were Muslim at the time).

In the new conditions, in 1885, Iliya Naumchev saw his hope "for a priest of Gypsy ethnicity" (Цепенков, 1898, pp. 180–181) fulfilled, as he received the post of an Orthodox priest in the Bulgarian Exarchate. This is not a retreat from the idea of Gypsy Orthodox Church, but a new stage in its development, when the first stage (church independence from the Greek Patriarchate) had already passed and Iliya Naumchev got a legal opportunity to work as a priest among his brothers. However, this was accompanied by some problems in his confirmation to the post (probably due to the unusualness of the case because of Naumchev's ethnicity) by the head of the Bulgarian Church (Exarch Joseph I), who requested the explicit consent of the Bulgarian municipality in Prilep and the parishes of the future priest, but in the end, the issue was resolved positively (Кирил, 1969, p. 611).

The latest historical evidence about Iliya Naumchev is from 1900 when he continued to be a priest in the Bulgarian Orthodox Church in his native town of Prilep (Кънчов 1900, p. 124). Unfortunately, his further fate after the adoption of the priesthood is not yet known.

The presented materials, no matter how few they are, allow us to speak about Iliya Naumchev as one of the first visionaries of Roma civic emancipation on a global scale (Marushiakova and Popov, 2017a, pp. 33–38). Along with this, his *Letter to the Editor* in the *Macedonia* newspaper Naumchev is also connected to another line of development of these processes, that goes through the ethnically based professional organisations (guilds) of the Gypsies.

Describing existing guilds in the town of Prilep, Marko K. Tsepenkov noted the existence of separate Gypsy guilds (of blacksmiths, violinists and porters) with their respective Patron Saints' holidays St. Athanasius and St. Anthony. He explicitly notes that their creation was under the influence of Iliya Naumchev (Цепенков, 1898, p. 180). In the Balkans, as the Patron Saint of blacksmiths by Gypsies and by the Christian majority as well is honoured St. Athanasius, that is why in Prilep the Patron feast of the local Bulgarian guild of blacksmiths was also on the day of St. Athanasius (18th January), while

the guild of “Gypsy blacksmiths” and the guilds of “fiddlers and porters” (a separate one) venerated St. Antonius, which is on the 17th January (Ibid., p. 181), i.e. a demarcation of the guilds on ethnic lines was clearly visible also in this case.

During the Middle Ages in Western and Central Europe, the Gypsies were not allowed to participate in the existing guilds system and were also forbidden to create their own ones. The situation in South-Eastern Europe is quite different, in the context of the Ottoman Empire, where the local Gypsies fitted seamlessly into the Ottoman *esnaf* (guild) system. The existence of ethnically distinct Gypsy guilds in the Ottoman Empire has been known since the first half of the 17th century (Marushiakova & Popov, 2016b). The ethnicisation of the guilds in the Ottoman Empire in the 19th century was already different and was directly related to general processes of ethnicisation in the Empire and were part of the national movements of the Balkan peoples during this period, which also encompassed the Gypsies. The Gypsy *esnaf*'s organisations do not disappear with the end of the Ottoman Empire and were preserved (in more or less modified forms) in the new independent states on the Balkans (Ibid.). In the new condition, the *esnafs* transformed and modernised but continued to occupy an important place in the life of the community and its position in the society, and acquired new and broader social dimensions and functions, becoming part of the processes of development of Roma civic emancipation (Marushiakova & Popov, 2021b, p. 134).

Among Muslim Roma in the Balkans, another line of development of the processes of Roma civic emancipation emerged. The first signals in this direction, showing a desire to get out of ‘Gypsy stigma’ and the existence of civic identity, at least among some Roma Muslims, were in the early 20th century. In 1906, residents of the Pınarlık *mahala* (an ethnic neighbourhood in the Ottoman empire) in Xanthi (now Greece) and their muhtar (representative of the mayor for the Gypsy neighbourhood, appointed by the municipal authorities) sent a petition in 1906 to the Office of Edirne vilayet (province). In this petition, they ask that the population be registered as *Muslims* and not as *Kıbtî* (i.e. Copts, meaning Egyptians, which was the old name of the Gypsies in the Ottoman Empire, restored into census terminology in 1905) because they adore “the dignity of Islam” (Marushiakova & Popov, 2021b, pp. 19–20). A petition with the same request was sent in 1909 by the inhabitants of Şabaniye mahala in Eleftheroupoli (today in Greece) to the newly elected parliament of the Ottoman Empire (Yıldır, 2018, pp. 291–292). It is interesting to note that, at that time, 1,250 Turks, 1,100 Greeks and 1,200 Gypsies lived in the whole city (КЪНЧОВ, 1900, p. 200), i.e. the proportion of Roma there was unusually high throughout the history of the Ottoman Empire. No less interesting is the fact that the very discussion of this petition in parliament was presented in *The Jewish Morning Journal*, published in New York as an “appeal by Gypsies to the Turkish Parliament for equal rights.” (Black, 1914, p. 3; see also Der Morgen Zshurnal / The Jewish Morning Journal, 1909, p. 4).

Unlike Roma Christians, who fitted into the context of the national revival of their neighbouring Balkan Christian people, Muslim Roma remained in the general discourse of the social development of the Muslim population of the Ottoman Empire. This

development led to the establishment of Turkey as a nation-state in the early 20th century (officially in 1923) starting with the so-called Young Turk Revolution (1908) and was characterised 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 (e.g. the Arabs, Albanians, etc.) as well. In this context, the Muslim Gypsies (or at least some of their representatives) too were trying to find ways for civic emancipation of their community in the new conditions.

The development of the processes of civic emancipation among Muslim Gypsies in the Ottoman Empire is closely connected with the name of Emin Resa, who published the newspaper *Laço* ('Good' in Romani language) in Edirne (today in Turkey) in 1910 (Bourgeois, 1910, pp. 326–329; Marushiakova & Popov, 2021a, pp. 28–33). The title heading of the newspaper *Laço* defined it already in its first number as a “Humorous newspaper published for the moment once a week, serving the interests of the fatherland and the Ottoman nation”. In addition, the header 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) were “obviously allusion to the recent Turkish freedom”, and in fact was a reference to the Young Turk Revolution which proclaimed new equality of separate nationalities, including Gypsies, freedom for expression of their identity, language and culture and created euphoria in visions for their future.

In the second issue, one can find a special explanation “Half of the net proceeds from the sale of this number will be paid for the subscription for the national fleet” (Ibid.), and in this way, the newspaper demonstrated publicly the civic national consciousness among the Gypsies in the Ottoman Empire. The newspaper gives also a short dictionary of the Romani language (Ibid., pp. 328–329), which shows that this national (Ottoman) civic identity does not conflict with the ethnic identity of the community.

The newspaper also contains illustrations of a Gypsy blacksmith and of a tent in the background (Ibid.), i.e. a national symbol (a characteristic of nascent nations) appears graphically. The transition of images of artefacts 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, on three poster-invitation for the *Kakava* holiday, published in the same city, in 1934, 1966 and 1948, the same drawing appears, in which in the foreground are clearly demarcated 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 and Popov, 2016b, pp. 80–81). The holiday *Kakava* itself (*Kakava* means literally ‘cauldron’ in Romanes) is actually the “Roma version” of a holiday with old historical roots among all Balkan peoples, which is celebrated among Christian peoples on the day of St George and is named after him (*Gergyovden*, *Gjurgjevdan*, etc.), and from

the Muslims, it is celebrated under the name *Hıdırlez* (the day of Muslim saints Hıdır and İlyaz); among the Roma, it acquired distinctly ethnic characteristics of their greatest national holiday (Marushiakova & Popov, 2007, pp. 33–50; 2016c, p. 47).

At least half of the pages of the newspaper are devoted to humorous dialogues of two characters, Latcho (a Rom) and Mitcho (a Non-Rom). Most probably this is a kind of reproduction through other expressive forms of plots from the then-popular shadow theatre, with the main character Karagöz (And, 1975; Sennur, 2004). According to Evliya Çelebi, Karagöz had been a real personality, he had been born in Kırklareli, while his father had been ‘a poor Gypsy’ (*fukara-i-kıbtîyan*) (Çelebi, 1967, pp. 20–23); according to others authors, Karagöz is a Turkish Gypsy who was taken as a soldier (Menzel, 1941, p. 56), who described himself as a Gypsy and in dialogue with Haği Ejvad explicitly said that he will never give up his “Gypsiness” (Prokosch, 2002, pp. 103–129). Karagöz himself sometimes came on stage with a greeting “Zombornos keros” in “Gypsy language” and performed a blacksmith’s trade (Jacob, 1925, p. 109), i.e. also here, as well as in the mentioned example above of the importance of the blacksmith’s trade for the Gypsies, it is mentioned as a symbolic sign of their ethnicity. Today a monument of Karagöz has been raised in the town of Kırklareli in Eastern Thrace (in the region of Edirne) where Kakava is proclaimed as an official city holiday, and where a legend is commonly told among the local Roma today that Karagöz had been born in the nearby small town of Demirköy (Marushiakova and Popov, 2007, p. 43).

Unfortunately, nothing more is known about Emin Resa; it is only palpable that if he was able to publish a newspaper, this means he received a relatively good education. And more importantly, this was not an extraordinary exception in its time, because publishing a newspaper implies the existence of a possible audience, i.e. of a certain number of Gypsies who will be able to read it. The presence of certain strata of Muslim Gypsies in the Ottoman Empire, which possessed at least an initial level of literacy it should not cause surprise. The Muslim Gypsies in the Ottoman Empire were entitled to use the educational Islamic institutions. As an example in this regard, we can quote the request from 1693 to the court in Sarajevo, from Gypsy baker Selim, a son of Osman, who explicitly wrote: “[I] send my children to the religious school to learn the Koran along with the rest of the children” (Marushiakova and Popov, 2001, p. 39). Something more, after the Russo-Turkish War of 1877–78, as part of the attempt to modernise the Ottoman state, Sultan Abdul Hamid II pursued a policy at uniting all Muslims in the empire. An own network of primary schools (*mekatib-i iptidaiye*) and industrial high schools (*medaris-i sanai*) was created aimed at the Muslim population where Ottoman Turkish was used as a medium of instruction. An additional reason was concern about schools opened by protestant missions and fear of their possible impact on Gypsies. In frames of this aim, special measures were developed and implemented to ensure that the Gypsies learned their Muslim religion in a proper way (Ümit, 2014, p. 33); as a result, several Gypsy schools were established in the Balkans (Dingeç, 2021, pp. 95–108). In this sense, the presence of a

sufficient number of literate Roma in Edirne to whom the *Laço* newspaper was directed is undisputed.

A statement that some of the profits from the *Laço* newspaper will be donated to the Navy was not just a gesture aimed at ensuring the authorities' favourable treatment of the newspaper and its readers. Gypsies 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 centre Kırklareli in Eastern Thrace (Marushiakova and Popov, 2001, pp. 26–27). Gradually, over the centuries (and especially after the 17th century), Gypsies, for the most part, dropped out of joining the army; however, in the early 19th century, as part of Ottoman Empire reform efforts, the old Ottoman army was replaced by a regular army and general military conscription. Only non-Muslims and Gypsies, regardless of their religion, who were required to pay a special army tax (*bedel-i askerii*), were exempt from military service (Ulusoy, 2013, p. 50). This was perceived by many Muslim Gypsies as a restriction of their civil rights and placing them at a disadvantageous position. Evidence of this can be found in the numerous petitions from settled Muslim Gypsies preserved in the Ottoman archives, in which they demand to be allowed to serve in the army. One of the most known such petitions is addressed to the *wāli* (governor) of Edirne in 1870. Finally, in 1873 this restriction for serving in the army of Muslim Gypsies was lifted (Ibid., pp. 55–57).

It is not clear how long the *Laço* newspaper continued to be published but we can suppose that its existence was only short-lived (there is information about only two published issues). However, we can assume that it had an impact on the Roma in Edirne and left its traces among them. The reason for such assumption can be found in the language and the graphic symbolism used in the *Laço*, which is also present later in the state of Turkey in the above-mentioned posters for the celebration of the Kakava holiday published in Edirne in 1934, 1948 and 1966 (Şanlıer, 2018). It turns out that the presence of written communications, which included individual words or sections in the Romani language, and which were presented publicly in different forms, was nothing unusual for Roma living in Edirne at that time. These posters ceased to be produced in the last decades of the 20th century and nowadays the celebration of the Kakava holiday in Edirne by local Roma has been transformed into a major city holiday and even a major tourist attraction for the city (Marushiakova and Popov 2007: 41–42).

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 Gypsies and Muslim Gypsies) 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 disappeared relatively quickly and in Turkey remained only Roma Muslims (the Roma Christians in their majority left Turkey in population exchange after the Treaty of Lausanne of 1923). In other words,

the development of the process of Roma civic emancipation was preserved and further developed already in the new conditions of the nation-state. Similar processes were also taking place among Roma Christians in the newly independent Balkan national states, where for Roma Muslims the significance of the religious difference gradually decreased and was replaced with aspirations for ethnic unity.

Russian Empire

Unlike the Austro-Hungarian and Ottoman empires, in the Russian Empire, the first steps of the Roma civic emancipation movement were severely limited and virtually absent. In fact, the only known exception so far is Ignatyi Antonenko. This case reveals the emergence of a new, hitherto unseen, direction in the development of this movement, which is yet to manifest itself during the interwar period. In particular, before reaching a certain degree of social integration of the Roma community (or at least parts of it) in the Russian Empire, it found its expression in the inclusion of some of its representatives in the social and political struggles.

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 Sorotchinsk Uprising (December 1905 – January 1906). After the brutal suppression by the authorities of the uprising, with the help of Cossack troops, with many casualties (killed and wounded people), and shocked by the atrocities committed, the famous Russian writer, publicist and public figure, closely linked to the revolutionary movement, Vladimir Korolenko, published a journalistic investigation entitled *The Sorochynsk's Tragedy* (Короленко, 1907, pp. 172–205). The uprising itself was organised by Nikolay Pyzhov, at that time an 18-year-old campaigner of the Social Democratic Party, who later published his memoirs on the event (Пыжов, 1929; 1930), in which he briefly mentions Ignatyi Antonenko's participation in it.

The main (in fact the only complete) historical source about Ignatyi Antonenko is his memoirs about the Sorochinsk uprising, published in the Gypsy journal *Nevo drom* (New Way) in 1931 (Нэво дром, 1931с, pp. 12–15; Marushiakova and Popov, 2021a, pp. 21–23). These memoirs were written in Romani; however, the original text is not preserved. The text for publication was edited by Mikhail Bezlyudskiy, and published in the dialect of *Ruska Roma*, which was considered to be the standard Romani language at that time (a literary language created in the USSR). Judging by Antonenko's last name and the brief data from his text about his family, he was a representative of the Roma group of *Sery*, living in Ukraine and Southern Russia. At that time (early 20th century) most *Sery* in Ukraine led a sedentary or semi-nomadic (with permanent residence and short

wanderings) way of life. 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, and his birthplace is unknown. From the published memoirs of Antonenko, it can be seen that in 1901 in the city of Poltava (today in Ukraine) his father introduced him to the writer Korolenko, who supported their family. In Antonenko words: “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” (Нэво дром, 1931с, р. 12). Soon after that, his family moved to the village of Sorochyntsi (today Velyki Sorochyntsi in the Myrhorod district, Poltava region, Ukraine, the birthplace of the famous Russian writer Nikolay Gogol).

About his participation in the Sorochinsk uprising Ignaty Antonenko wrote:

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. (Ibid., pp. 13–14).

After the cruel suppression of the uprising, Antonenko was arrested, spent about a year in prison in Kharkiv, but was acquitted at trial (Ibid., р. 15), and Korolenko bailed five peasants arrested after extinguishing the uprising, one of them being Antonenko, for whom he paid an amount of one thousand rubles (Кривинская, 1961, р. 65). Unfortunately, there is no more information about his life after 1931 (when his memoirs were written), as well as about the year of his death.

The limited manifestations of aspirations for Roma civic emancipation in the Russian Empire are primarily due to the unique place of the Gypsies, who were not at the lowest levels of the social structure at all. Firstly, as 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’ [literally ‘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, р. 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) even registered at the lower levels in the ‘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 fulfil their tax obligations as members of certain estates (a task at which successes were negligible) (Marushiakova and Popov, 2008a).

It should also be underlined that in addition to the old, traditional Gypsy elite, which is preserved among the itinerant Gypsies (the predominant part of the Gypsies in the empire), a new, different community elite was born and developed in the Russian Empire. It is about the so-called musical elite. The beginning of the processes of settlement of Gypsies in the big cities of the Russian Empire was closely related to the famous 'Gypsy choirs'. The first such mixed (men and women) choir was created by Count Alexei Orlov in 1775, in his estate at Pushkino, near Moscow. The conductor was Ivan Sokolov (succeeded by his nephew Ilya Sokolov), and at the beginning of the 19th century, the choir members were freed from serfdom and moved to live and work in Moscow. Count Orlov's Gypsy choir was very successful amidst the Russian aristocracy. Other similar choirs were created and many generations of famous Gypsy musicians grew up. Gypsy musicians began to move mostly to the two metropolitans (St Petersburg and Moscow), and other big cities and became registered in urban estates. After several generations, Gypsy musicians and actors became a special social stratum and created famous artistic dynasties with high social position and standing. Gypsy musicians regularly met the highest circles in the Russian Empire – the aristocracy, rich merchants, famous poets, writers, musicians, etc. (Щербанова, 1984; Деметер et al., 2000). The public positions and the public image of the Gypsy musical elite in the Russian Empire are also evidenced by the fact that many cases of mixed marriages into high society, e.g. well-known cases are of Gypsy girls marrying Prince Golytsin (GARF, f. 109, op. 3 A. d. 2769), Feodor Tolstoy (a close relative of the famous writer Lev Tolstoy), the brother of the same writer Sergei Tolstoy, Prince F. Masalskiy, Prince G. Wittgenstein, the millionaire from the Ural Nechaev (Байров, 1996, pp. 19–25), and others. Already in 1833 George Borrow noticed this unique social position of the Gypsy music elite:

Those who have been accustomed to consider these people [the Gypsies – authors' note] 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 et al., 1911, p. 61).

Given the unique social position of the Gypsy musical elite in the Russian Empire, it is clear why the ideas of Roma civic emancipation did not find a place in its circles. This elite was closely associated with high society in tsarist Russia; moreover, part of it, after the October Revolution and the Civil War, flowed into the midst of the so-called white emigration to France and China (Marushiakova & Popov, 2004; 2019). Another part of it remained in the USSR and became part of the new, Soviet Gypsy elite.

In more general terms, we cannot help but notice that the processes of Roma civic emancipation in the three multinational empires (Austro-Hungarian, Ottoman and Russian) 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 (e.g. Hungarian, Bulgarian) to which the Roma became attached, 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). This situation would change significantly in the coming historical eras in the conditions of the newly created ethnonational states.

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 and 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 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's search for their place in modern society.

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

Bulgaria

Introduction

Elena Marushiakova and Vesselin Popov

After the war between the Russian and Ottoman Empires in 1877–1878, the subsequent San Stefano Peace Treaty, the Berlin Congress and adoption of the Constitution in April 1879 in the city of Tarnovo, a new Bulgarian State was created. The Roma in Bulgaria, until then for centuries subjects of the Ottoman Empire, became Bulgarian citizens and found themselves included in new social and political realities, to which they had to adapt and find their place in them.

In the conditions of the new Bulgarian state, the Roma were not initially organised as a community and were looking for ways to achieve civic emancipation as individuals. The case of Atanas Dimitrov, presented in the first part of this chapter, is specific and, to some extent, even unique. At first glance, this case is not part of the process of Roma civic emancipation. Seen from the distance of time and in a broader historical context, however, the example of Atanas Dimitrov still has its place in the history of the Roma and their civic emancipation in the region of Central, South-Eastern and Eastern Europe.

The emergence of an organised Roma civic movement is directly related (more precisely, even provoked) by the deprivation of large parts of the Roma in Bulgaria of their legitimate civil rights in the early twentieth century. The so-called Tarnovo Constitution from 1879 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 circa two decades later, on the 3rd of May 1901, a *Law for the Amendment of the Electoral Law* was debated and voted by the 11th National Assembly (at 61st Extraordinary session). The amendment was proposed by the government, headed by Petko Karavelov, which came to power as a coalition between the Democratic Party and the Progressive-Liberal Party. 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 (at that time the majority of Gypsies in Bulgaria) were deprived of voting rights, as well as nomadic Gypsies (more exactly, those without administrative residence registration). Following this parliamentary discussion, despite the objections raised, the law was voted almost unanimously, with 90 votes for

out of 96 present (Стенографски дневници, 1901, pp. 1922–1923). 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 reaction of the Gypsies, however, surprised Bulgarian society. Immediately after the adoption of the amendment to the Electoral law, an improvised Gypsy conference was 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 the adopted amendments, in which they were supported by Dr. Marko Markov, an ethnic Bulgarian, a lawyer and famous (and eccentric) public figure at that time. Dr. Marko Markov 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).

The idea of the need for the civic emancipation of Roma and their struggle for equal citizenship 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* of the Gypsy mahala in Sofia, and Ali Bilyalov, his assistant (a second *muhtar*). Initially, they drew up a petition demanding equal rights for Gypsies with the remaining Bulgarian citizens. The petition was presented to the Chairman of the National Assembly, and as there was no answer to make it more convincing, a decision was taken for holding a Gypsy congress (Вечерна поща, 1905a, p. 2).

The Congress took place in the San Stefano restaurant in the centre of Sofia on the 19th of December 1905 (see the published materials in Marushiakova & Popov, 2021b, pp. 33–69). Dr. Marko Markov chaired the session of the Congress, which elected him as chair. The leadership also included Ali Bilyalov from Sofia, Ali Mutishev from Plovdiv, Iliya Uzunov, Ali Mola, Riste Mustafa, Evtim Ikononov, and others, was elected (Вечерна поща, 1905b, p. 2). A telegram was sent with the decisions of the Congress to the Prince Ferdinand of Bulgaria (Ibid.), and the Congress’ petition for the revoking of the amendments in the electoral law, denying Gypsies of election rights, was submitted on the Parliament Deputy Chairman Dobri Petkov (Вечерна поща, 1905c, p. 2).

The development of civic consciousness among the Roma 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 press and the Bulgarian public opinion as a whole, point to something quite clear – the entirely legitimate citizenship demands of Gypsies were not only 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

Gypsy Congress and there was no reaction by the Bulgarian Parliament or to the telegram sent to the Palace. Dr. Marko Markov himself was subject to constant ridicule, and he was given the sobriquet ‘The Gypsy King’ (Каназирски-Верин, 1946, p. 79). Eventually, he could no longer endure this and left the capital Sofia and settled in the city of Ruse (Mui Shuko, 1916, p. 138), where he died in 1939.

In the new national context of the independent Bulgarian state, some other forms of the public life of the community, inherited from the Ottoman Empire, were preserved and developed. Gypsy guilds (*esnaf*) had also experienced changes under the new conditions, and they changed their forms and social functions (Marushiakova & Popov, 2016b). This is not just about their legitimation under the conditions of the independent Bulgarian State, e.g. the transformation of the old Porter’s *Esnaf* in Lom into professional 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), and the *First Sofia Flower-selling Association ‘Badeshte’* (Future) headed by Ali Asanov, founded in Sofia in 1909 (Ibid.). Something more, another phenomenon was ushered – the creation of officially registered public organisations that should defend the social positions of Roma in Bulgarian society as an ethnic community.

The first historical source in this direction is the *Statute of the Egyptian Nation in the Town of Vidin* (Устав, 1910; see also Marushiakova & Popov, 2021b, pp. 69–76). This historical document designates Roma as *Egiptyani* (‘Egyptians’ in Bulgarian), which directly correlates with *Kipti* (i.e., Copts, as in Ottoman empire), and with the Congress in 1901. The organisation in Vidin is a significant step forward in the development of organisational forms in the process of Roma civic emancipation in Bulgaria (Marushiakova & Popov, 2017a, pp. 42–46). The Statute describes already known practices for the selection of a *muhtar*, his assistant, and his councillors. ‘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 neighbourhoods in the cities, also during the new independent Bulgarian State, for example in Sofia, where Ramadan Ali has held this post for almost two decades, since 1888 when has been elected unanimously (by 230 votes) by the Gypsies in the Gypsy mahala as their leader (DA Sofia, f. 1 K, op. 2, a.e. 1848, l. 1–15). However, in addition to the already established matters in the Statute, there were also several new and meaningful points. The first thing to note here is the name itself – this already was not just about a Gypsy mahala but instead about the whole of the ‘Egyptian Nationality’ in the city and the region. 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. From its side, the governing bodies (the muhtar and 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. Together with this, according to Art 10, 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). The prime mover of the organisation in Vidin was the Constituent Commission, whose chairman was Gyulish Mustafa (designated as 'reserve sergeant', i.e., in past he was on permanent service in the Bulgarian army); his deputy was marked with two names, Ahmed Neyazimov and Tako Munov (Усрав, 1910). The Statute introduced also ethnic symbols – Art 19 describes the stamp of the organisation in which centre is depicted 'St George' on a horseback with a spear in his hand stuck in a crocodile (Ibid.). The *Statute of the Egyptian Nation in the Town of Vidin* is the only known historical evidence for the existence of this first Roma organisation in Vidin. It can be assumed that the organisation existed for only a relatively short period of time; soon after its establishment, a period of hostilities and conflicts began in the Balkans, which included two Balkan Wars (1912–1913) and the First World War, with many Roma men being mobilised as part of the Bulgarian army and its military operations, and the organisation likely ceased to exist (in any case, no other historical evidence of its activities are preserved).

The transition of the Roma civic movement after the First World War has been carried out by the younger generation, after the local authorities abandoned the old practice of electing Gypsy representatives and started to appoint directly mayoral deputies, who had far more limited functions. This eventually pushed Roma to seek other means of securing their own representation in society.

It was at this very moment that the figure of Shakir Pashov appeared, whose activity gave new dimensions to the processes of Roma civic emancipation, to whom the second part of this chapter is devoted. His overall public activity in the period between the two world wars marked the beginning of a new stage in the development of the movement for Roma civic emancipation in Bulgaria and reflects the searches in different directions of the best way for the Roma in Bulgaria.

The third part of this chapter combines the portraits of Nikola Kochev, Nikola Terzobaliev and Gospodin Kolev, who are representatives of three generations of Roma communists from the city of Sliven. All of them see the development of the Roma civic emancipation by solving the common social and political problems in the composition of the Bulgarian nation and present another vision for achieving an equal position of the Roma in the Bulgarian society.

Atanas Dimitrov

Elena Marushiakova, Vesselin Popov and Plamena Stoyanova

The life story of Atanas Dimitrov (1874–1916) is a vivid example of how some individuals from the Roma community manage to break the centuries-old social stereotypes and gain social realisation even in conditions that are not only unfavourable but, in practice, almost excluding such a possibility. Both in the past and today, the case that a Gypsy

from a poor mountain village in the Balkans could become a philosophy doctor at an elite university in Germany in the late 19th century has often caused mistrust or at least bewilderment. It turns out, however, that this really happened, as incredible as it may seem at first glance. The preserved historical information about him is relatively little and fragmentary, but sufficient to allow us to present, albeit very briefly, this man of a unique destiny for a Rom of that time.

Atanas Dimitrov was born on January 18, 1874, in the village of Gradets, located near Kotel, in the region of Sliven (Димитров, 1934, pp. 129–130). Noteworthy is also that another famous Gypsy was born in the same village: Mustafa Shibil (killed in 1856), a legendary highwayman in the times of the Ottoman Empire (for more details cf. Marushiakova & Popov, 2001, pp. 48–52).

Atanas Dimitrov's father, Dimitar Valkov Mislyagov, was a "Bulgarian Gypsy" (i.e. an Orthodox Christian) and earned his living as a horseshoe-maker (Димитров, 1934, p. 130). Some authors write his surname as Mislyakov (Нунев, 2008, p. 10), which is the most common variant of this surname, common among Bulgarians and Roma in the region. Atanas Dimitrov's family lived for generations in the village, inhabited at that time mainly by Bulgarians (today this village has a predominantly Roma population).

Atanas Dimitrov completed his primary education in his native village. His teacher at the time in the village school wrote:

The then headteacher there, Hristo V. Dimitrov, a native of the same village, noticed the mental abilities of the Gypsy Atanas, so he supplied him with textbooks, protected him from the jokes of his classmates, who often teased him about his nationality, helped him with redesigned clothes and often with food at home on holidays. [...] To be able to study in a warm place, he was allowed to work in the head teacher's office in the afternoon. (Димитров, 1934, p. 130).

The headteacher at the school in Gradets, Hristo V. Dimitrov, was confident in the abilities of Atanas Dimitrov, and at his own expense sent him to study at the high school in Sliven. At the high school, Atanas Dimitrov impressed the director Kozhukharov, who personally reviewed his notebooks and written works. The teachers also appreciated him and halfway through the year, he was awarded a state scholarship (Ibid., pp. 130–131).

Atanas Dimitrov was also supported by Iliya D. Gudev, a native of the village of Gradets, from a rich family and a famous philanthropist, at that time a school inspector, later director of the high school and mayor of Sliven (Юбилеят, 1937). The letters that Atanas Dimitrov wrote to Iliya Gudev over the years are preserved. For years he began his letters to Iliya Gudev with the address "Dear Patron". In a letter from Jena in 1894, he wrote:

Rare are the people who help with heart. I was happy to have grown up between you and the Teacher Hristo [Dimitrov], to have achieved this. As a sign of deep gratitude, I am sending you my portrait – let it remind you of the one whose eyes you opened [...]

Eternally grateful, Atanas. (DA Sliven, f. 386 K, op. 2, a.e. 108, l. 1).

In 1893 Atanas Dimitrov graduated with honours from high school in Sliven. On the recommendation of the High School Teachers' Council, the Ministry of Education granted him a state scholarship to study philosophy at the University of Jena in Germany.

The choice of the University of Jena was not accidental. In this German university, where Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel, Johann Gottlieb Fichte, Friedrich Wilhelm Joseph Schelling, Johann Christoph Friedrich (von) Schiller, etc. taught, and where the young Karl Marx defended his doctoral dissertation, studied at the end of the 19th and the beginning of the 20th century many of the prominent intellectuals, founders of the new Bulgarian academia (Няголова, 2012).

Atanas Dimitrov's life as a student was not easy at all. As he wrote in his letters to Iliya Gudev, "the scholarship is not sufficient in any way" (DA Sliven, f. 386 K, op. 2, a.e. 108, l. 1), and it was paid with delays, so he had many debts awaiting to be paid. Due to limited financial opportunities, he was not able to return to Bulgaria during the holidays for five years. In 1894, there was an earthquake in the region of Kotel and he learned about it from the German press. His native village was heavily damaged, everything was destroyed, and his mother was ill (Ibid., l. 2). Atanas Dimitrov worried a lot about his family; the following year some of his relatives (including his sister) died, his mother continued to be ill and sent him letters that she wanted to see him (Ibid., l. 2–4). He did not have the financial means to return to Bulgaria and visit his relatives, so he wrote a letter to his teacher Hristo Dimitrov, asking him "to tell my mother that it is not possible for me to come", and "to comfort her somehow with a little optimism" (Ibid., l. 4).

Atanas Dimitrov's relations with the other students from Bulgaria were also not very good. After a student seminar, during which a discussion arose, he got into an argument with his Bulgarian colleague, about which he self-critically remarked: "I, of course, am not completely innocent" (Ibid.), i.e. subsequently considered that he had reacted too sharply. He was, as he described himself, "hot-tempered" for which he has his own explanation:

By the way, I have been used to this kind of quarrel. In no class in Sliven have I been without enemies and enviers. (Ibid.)

Interesting is the explanation that Atanas Dimitrov gives for his complete devotion to learning – he defines himself as "taken out of the mud and now enjoying the fruits of science in renowned Germany" (Ibid.). He writes about himself:

My life has been full of troubles and I have found solace only in academia. Hated, despised, envied by others, I have tried to keep the presence of mind. (Ibid.)

Throughout his stay in Germany, Atanas Dimitrov worked tirelessly for the successful completion of his education and his development as a scholar. Moreover, he had to make up for some gaps in his high school education (e.g., to learn Greek and Latin, which he

did not study in Bulgaria, and which was mandatory for German universities at that time). His work schedule, described in detail in his letters to Iliya Gudev, is impressive – he got up very early every morning, walked a little, and from 7 am to 8 pm worked for 11 hours a day, with only three short breaks (Ibid.). This exhausting work had an impact on his health. He often visited a doctor who was adamant that he was too exhausted and needed a break:

I went to the doctor at the clinic to prescribe something. I go to him often. After examining me, I sang the old song again – he had said this before – that after such tiring work, I needed to change the climate either to go to Bulgaria or Switzerland or at least to some baths for at least 1–2 months. Personally, the work does not tire me, but still, the words of the doctor must be taken into account. (Ibid., l. 1).

Despite the health problems, due to lack of funds and especially due to his excessive commitment, Atanas Dimitrov, during his entire five-year stay in Germany, only once managed to go for a short vacation in a village near Jena (Ibid.).

Another important circumstance should be noted here. In addition to his studies at the university and the preparation of his doctoral dissertation, Atanas Dimitrov had taken on another additional work, which required a lot of time and effort. It concerned the translation into German of the novel by Ivan Vazov *Under the Yoke*.

A few more words need to be said about this novel and its author. Ivan Vazov, called in Bulgaria “the patriarch of Bulgarian literature”, and especially his novel *Under the Yoke*, occupies a special and important place not only in the history of Bulgarian national literature (this is, in fact, the first Bulgarian novel) but also in the overall history of the formation and the development of the Bulgarian nation during the modern era.

First published in 1889–1890, this novel, and the ideas embedded in it, despite its undoubtedly outdated form and means of expression (including even the obsolete vocabulary used, which makes it difficult to understand in the literal sense by modern generations), continue to be particularly relevant in Bulgaria today. The novel *Under the Yoke*, depicting the struggles of the Bulgarian people to reject the rule of the Ottoman Empire and the creation of the new Bulgarian nation-state, became an extremely important symbol of the reviving Bulgarian nation (according to the interpretation of Bulgarian national historiography) and continues to perform the same public functions nowadays.

In this context, it becomes clear that the German translation of Ivan Vazov’s novel *Under the Yoke* for Atanas Dimitrov (as well as for all his contemporaries) was not just a routine publishing activity, but had a much broader social and cultural dimension. The young Bulgarian nation, which received its official recognition after the establishment of the new Bulgarian state, sought its reception in Europe and the world, and one of the ways to do this was to acquaint and promote to European readers its history and its contemporary cultural achievements, one of which was the novel itself. In this sense, the translation of Ivan Vazov’s novel *Under the Yoke* in key European languages was a very

appropriate form for achieving this aim. Atanas Dimitrov himself, as can be seen from his letters, saw his efforts to translate the novel as a fulfilment of his patriotic duty, which reveals the dimensions of his civic national identity.

All this explains, why after arriving in Jena, along with adapting to the new conditions and studying at the university, Atanas Dimitrov had begun to actively work on the translation of the novel *Under the Yoke* into German. This means that he not only saw his stay in Germany as an opportunity to get to know and join the values of European civilization but, at the same time, he wanted to show Europe the historical and cultural merits of the young Bulgarian nation. It is not entirely clear exactly when he began work on the translation of the novel. In any case, in 1895, as can be seen from his letters, he was already quite advanced with the translation, which was completed (at least in its original form) in 1896 or, as he wrote, in 1898, “the novel I translated with the permission of Vazov 2 years ago with [the help of] my landlady” (Ibid., l. 506). Atanas Dimitrov actually received permission to translate the novel only after the translation had been completed, through a friend from Jena, who met Ivan Vazov and told him that Atanas Dimitrov was translating his novel into German. Ivan Vazov was very interested in both the translation and Atanas Dimitrov himself and the possibilities for his future academic career after his return to Bulgaria, and by the mediation of his friend he gave him practical advice in this direction (Ibid.).

Atanas Dimitrov himself had no experience with publishing and no contacts with publishing houses in Germany, so Ivan Vazov’s novel *Under the Yoke* in his translation, which he constantly refined over the years, was published only two years after his death (Wasoff, 1918; for more details on the publication of the novel, see Савов, 2000; Петков, 2020).

In 1898, after five years of hard work and many deprivations, Atanas Dimitrov successfully completed his education and defended his doctoral dissertation *Psychologischen Grundlagen Der Ethik J. G. Fichte’s: Aus ihrem Gesamtcharakter Entwickelt* (Psychological foundations of J. G. Fichte’s Ethics: Developed from Its Overall Character) with a very high assessment (*magna cum laude*) at the University of Jena (Dimitroff, 1898; Димитров, 2003–2005).

Atanas Dimitrov’s dissertation is dedicated “with gratitude to my patrons and friends Mr Hristo V. Dimitrov and Mr Iliya D. Gudev” (Dimitroff, 1898, p. 3). And as Atanas Dimitrov himself wrote in a letter to Iliya Gudev: “Yes I dedicated it to you and Mr Dimitrov, dictated to me my feeling of deep gratitude” (DA Sliven, f. 386 K, op. 2, a.e. 108, l. 22).

Atanas Dimitrov was experiencing very hard his return to Bulgaria and his clash with Bulgarian realities. After repaying all his loans and debts to his landlords for the rented accommodation, it turns out that he had no means to return to his homeland; therefore, he again turned to his patron Iliya Gudev, who granted him a loan of BGN 150 for this purpose (Ibid., p. 5). In another letter to him, he described very emotionally his departure from Germany and the emotions he was experiencing at the time:

The parting with dear Germany, from landlords with whom I spent 5 years, from comrades – Germans, from dear teachers, and others, was difficult for me. Instead of the joy of returning to my homeland, I felt only sadness and pity. [...] One Social Democrat watched me kneeling in tears and kissing the German border soil [...]. Finally, he comes to me and drags me to the train for Vienna – only then do I come to my senses. [...] From Vienna to Sofia, I remained in my first state again – apathy to everything around me, even more so to the signs that show that nothing special [good] awaits me in Sofia. My forewarning did not deceive me. (Ibid., l. 22).

After arriving in Bulgaria, Atanas Dimitrov remained for some time in Sofia, where he toured state institutions and awaited his employment. Although in one of his letters to Iliya Gudev he wrote “I do not want much, I do not seek to occupy high positions [...], I only want peace [...] to serve the king and the fatherland” (Ibid.), he had a strong desire for an academic career and hoped to get a job at the Higher School (Sofia University). However, it turned out that this was not so easy because, in addition to a number of bureaucratic requirements (appearing in state exams, the presence of publications in Bulgarian learned journals, etc.), the appointments of civil service were influenced by other factors:

The whole administration in Sofia made a bad impression on me, at every step – only politics and disgrace, both among the bureaucrats and among the enlighteners, and moved by all this [...], I had the desire to get out of the walls of these bureaucratic buildings immediately. [...] On the one hand, morally killed and shaken by the impression, on the other hand, the unknown makes me wait for my appointment. (Ibid.).

In Sofia, Atanas Dimitrov managed to arrange an appointment with Ivan Vazov who, at that time, was Minister of Public Education. Ivan Vazov took the problems of Atanas Dimitrov to heart, but proved powerless to help him due to the existing administrative norms, and gave him pragmatic advice – to accept a temporary appointment as a teacher in Sofia or the countryside, and gradually settle his assignation at the university (Ibid.). Atanas Dimitrov was disappointed with this prospect (apparently his expectations for a quick academic career were higher), but he was forced by circumstances to accept his appointment as a teacher of psychology, logic and German at the high school in the Danubian city of Ruse.

Atanas Dimitrov's stay in Ruse and his adaptation to the Bulgarian realities turned out to be a difficult period in his life. His letters to Iliya Gudev contain numerous complaints about a number of problems, including a lack of sufficient funds. Apparently nervous about the situation in which he found himself, he sharply broke off relations with his benefactors Hristo Dimitrov and Iliya Gudev and restored the friendship after about a year as a result of a long correspondence and long clarifications of the misunderstandings. In the end, the good relations were restored, and for the rest of his life, Atanas Dimitrov treated them with great respect and thanked them for the help they had given him over the years. Moreover, when in 1912 Iliya Gudev had problems with unpaid

loans, Atanas Dimitrov, through his well-known lawyers, provided him with legal advice for their solution (Ibid., l. 12).

New problems also arose for Atanas Dimitrov, this time with the military institutions, which insisted that he complete his regular military service for one year, although due to his official position he should be released from this obligation. Criminal case 1104/1901 was filed against him in the Sliven District Court (Ibid., l. 9). Eventually, after lengthy bureaucratic procedures, the case was dropped.

Gradually, however, Atanas Dimitrov's problems began to be solved. In 1901, he moved as a teacher to the high school in Gabrovo (the first Bulgarian modern school, established in 1835, in the conditions of the Ottoman Empire). There, he became actively involved in the social and cultural life of the city and gave a few public lectures. One of these public lectures, *Psychology of Temperaments*, given on the literary-musical morning of December 15, 1902, was published as an article in two issues of the journal *Мисъл* (Thought) (Димитров, 1903a).

This period of Atanas Dimitrov's life was especially fruitful. Within a few years, he published a series of articles (some of them with sequels in several issues of the same journal) and reviews on various topics (Димитров, 1901; 1902ab; 1903ab; 1904ab; 1905; 1906). Through these articles, he not only met the formal requirements for the position of university lecturer but, at the same time, made him known in the public space. The titles of the articles and reviews published by Atanas Dimitrov are indicative because they reveal the wide range of his multifaceted scholarly interests: *The Distribution of Sciences According to Prof. Wundt* (Димитров, 1901); *The System of Natural Sciences (According to Wundt)* (Димитров, 1902a); *Nationalism: A Note* (Димитров, 1902b); *Psychology of Temperaments* (Димитров, 1903a); *Suggestion and Hypnosis* (Димитров, 1903b); *Why We Like Maxim Gorky* (Димитров, 1904a); *"Nietzsche's Philosophy as a Cultural Problem" by P. Narkolov* (Димитров, 1904b); *Friedrich Schiller: On the Occasion of the Centenary of His Death* (Димитров, 1905); *The Pedagogues and the University* (Димитров, 1906).

It is interesting to note that most of these articles were published in the journal *Мисъл* (Thought), subtitled 'Journal of Science, Literature and Criticism' with editor-in-chief Krastyo Krastev, which established itself in the public space as a forum for pro-European humanities and fiction during this period. It should be borne in mind that the literary circle *Thought*, which published this journal, was in a state of sharp conflict with Ivan Vazov, whom they considered "outdated" and inconsistent with modern developments in European thought. However, this did not turn out to be an obstacle for Atanas Dimitrov to continue his work on editing the translation of Vazov's novel *Under the Yoke*.

After a short period during which he worked as a school inspector in Sliven (Димитров, 1934, p. 131), Atanas Dimitrov won a competition for a lecturer in German at Sofia University, where he began working on February 1, 1904 (Алманах, 1940, p. 163). However, his problems did not end there. On January 3, 1907, a group of students organised a demonstration against the Bulgarian prince Ferdinand and booed him at the official opening of the National Theatre. The next day, the Council of Ministers issued a decree closing

the university and dismissing all professors, associate professors and lecturers, and thus Atanas Dimitrov was again unemployed for more than a year. These events had a wide public response, and after the new government came to power in January 1908, the dismissed university professors were reinstated in their old jobs, and the university began to function normally.

From 1908 until he died in 1916, Atanas Dimitrov taught German at Sofia University. During this period he also published many articles and reviews, but more with pedagogical issues, mainly in the journal *Училищен преглед* (School Review), published by the Ministry of Education (Савов, 2002). He continued to keep in touch with his old friends from Sliven, Hristo Dimitrov and Iliya Gudev, as well as with his relatives in Gradets and tried to help his native village to make a better road to it (DA Sliven, f. 386 K, op. 2, ae 108, l. 20). He died young, at only 42 years old, after a heart attack in Sofia, on January 20, 1916 (Алманах, 1940, p. 163; Няголова, 2012, p. 13).

In his will, Atanas Dimitrov donated his personal library to the Sofia University Library, containing more than 400 volumes, mainly books in German, purchased during his stay in Jena (Димитров, 1934, p. 131).

In our plan of interest, undoubtedly the most interesting question is whether and how the ideas of Roma civic emancipation are present in the life and work of Atanas Dimitrov. At first glance, the answer to this question is unambiguous – in the preserved texts written by Atanas Dimitrov (this includes both his published articles and his correspondence), the “Gypsy topic” is not present anywhere. Perhaps the only exception that can be interpreted as indirect evidence in this regard is a postcard sent in 1913 to an unknown relative (daughter?) of Iliya Gudev (DA Sliven, f. 386 K, op. 2, a.e. 108), which depicts Esmeralda (the famous heroine of the novel *Notre-Dame de Paris* by Victor Hugo). Based on all this, many people would conclude that Atanas Dimitrov was ashamed of his Gypsy origin and did not want Bulgarian society to know about it, and therefore stayed away from the problems of Roma civic emancipation.

However, the situation is much more complex and ambiguous, because, as witnessed by the famous Bulgarian philosopher Dimitar Mihalchev, who was a student and then a colleague of Atanas Dimitrov, and who knew him very well, Atanas Dimitrov did not hide his Gypsy origin at all (Михалчев, 1939, p. 213). It would be much more accurate to say that Atanas Dimitrov did not problematise his Gypsy origin, and did not look at it as an explanation (and justification) for all his life problems and failures. For him, this origin is something given that does not need to be discussed, especially in personal correspondence with his two patrons Hristo Dimitrov and Iliya Gudev, who knew very well about the problems arising from this origin, and it was they who helped him overcome much of these problems.

In fact, for Atanas Dimitrov, the issue of identity is solved precisely in the context of the dichotomy ‘society – community’, which has been discussed many times so far. For him, the civic national identity is unconditionally the leading one (cf. above, “I only want to serve the king and the fatherland”), and his community identity remains relevant

in the family environment and does not need to be demonstrated publicly (a model which continues to be relevant not only in Bulgaria but in many other places in Central, South-Eastern and Eastern Europe).

Atanas Dimitrov's views in this regard are revealed in one of his first published articles, dedicated specifically to the issue of nationalism (Димитров, 1902b, pp. 484–487), about which a few more words should be said. In this article, he, in modern scientific language, opposes the primordial understanding of the nation since its inception and affirms the new, constructivist understanding of the modern European civic nation. He begins his analysis with examples that show that the names of some European countries (and the respective nations) do not correspond to the historical origin of their population (e.g. France, Prussia, etc.). He then cites numerous examples of celebrities who have acquired symbolic significance for various European nations, although, in fact, they are of a different, “foreign” ethnic origin (as the most famous example in this regard he quotes Napoleon Bonaparte), and emphasised, in particular, that in many cases these individuals have been bigger patriots and have contributed more to the development of the civic nations to which they belonged than their “native” representatives. In this circle of the representatives of other ethnic communities who were included in European civic nations, he also included the Jews; in the same way, as part of this pattern, can be interpreted the Gypsies as well, as a similar type of historically diasporic nation living without its own state. Particularly indicative of Atanas Dimitrov's views (which he apparently adhered to in his life) is the conclusion of this article: “The idea that the foreign element has the greatest influence on the development of a nation seems like a genius paradox, but in all this, it has the advantage that it provokes in man thoughts of a universal nature and dulls the weapons of narrow-minded nationalists.” (Ibid., p. 487).

Based on the views of Atanas Dimitrov on civic national identity presented in this way, another, different and nuanced answer can already be given to the question of his attitude to the problem of Roma civic emancipation. For him, the solution to this problem is the full integration of the Roma into the respective civic nation in the countries where they have lived for centuries, i.e. the civic national identity in his case is in a dominant position over community ethnic identity, without, however, even a hint found that this should lead to the destruction of the latter and to complete ethnic assimilation.

As unexpected as it may seem, thanks to these views, which determined his entire life destiny, Atanas Dimitrov had a significant impact on the fate of the Roma in Bulgaria at a critical moment for them. It is about the time of the Second World War, in which Bulgaria was an ally of Nazi Germany, which pursued a policy of genocide against the Gypsies in the occupied territories and expected a similar policy from its allies. In the Bulgarian public space and respectively in the state policy in the 1930s practically entirely absent was the racist “Gypsy discourse”, so common in other countries at that time. The ideas of racial hygiene reached Bulgaria too but failed to influence Bulgarian academia and society. Even when the issue of the Roma was raised in this context, the reaction was unequivocal. As a reaction to a public lecture on racial hygiene held by Prof. Dr. Stefan

Konsulov in which Gypsies were pointed as an example of “inferior” race, one of the most respected and influential philosophers in Bulgaria, Dimitar Mihalchev, wrote a special article *Racism under the Protection of Biology* (Михалчев, 1939), in which he exposes the ideology and policy of racial hygiene, including concerning Gypsies. As an important argument on the issue of the Gypsies, he first pointed to the example of Atanas Dimitrov, his professor and colleague at Sofia University who, with his life and academic career, has shown that in the presence of appropriate social and cultural conditions Gypsies can be equipollent and equal citizens of Bulgaria (Ibid., p. 213). Prof Mihalchev, in his article, categorically rejected the racist approach to the Gypsies and, after that, this topic was no longer discussed by Bulgarian society. Bulgarian public opinion turned out to be one of the important factors that predetermined the state policy towards the Gypsies during the Second World War, and despite a number of restrictive and discriminatory measures against them, the question of their racial inequality and annihilation was not raised at all (Marushiakova & Попов, 1997, pp. 31–33). In this way, Atanas Dimitrov, even after his death, gave his additional contribution to the salvation of his community, which, together with what he had achieved throughout his life, provided him with a lasting place in the general history of Roma civic emancipation.

The life and work of Atanas Dimitrov did not disappear from the memory of his native community, it was re-discovered by the family of Roma intellectuals – Todorka (Dora) Decheva and Yordan Savov from Sliven (Дечева, 1983; Савов, 2000; 2002) and even his dissertation was translated in Bulgarian and appeared in a Roma journal, published by their son Savcho Savchev (Димитров, 2003–2005). Dimitrov became an affirmed role model for young Roma generation in the public space (Нунев, 2008; Чапразов, 2014).

Shakir Pashov

Elena Marushiakova and Vesselin Попов

The history of the Roma movement for civic emancipation in Bulgaria is inextricably linked with the name of Shakir Pashov (1898–1981). To present his personality and his overall public and political activity over the years, in addition to the usual historical sources stored in archives, we have also used his rich personal archive preserved by his successors (ASR, f. Шакир Пашов), as well as memories about him, preserved in the oral history of the community. Among the variety of historical sources, the place of the manuscript entitled *History of the Gypsies in Bulgaria and Europe: “Roma”* (Пашов, 1957), should be especially noted. Much of this manuscript is based on the author’s memories of events in which he was a major participant. Although not credible in some specific details and its interpretations, in many other respects the memoirs of Shakir Pashov are an indispensable and even a unique source. They offer a perspective on the historical processes ‘from within’, which may be somewhat distorted by the vicissitudes of the time.

In this case, there is a historical narrative, reflecting the spirit of the era and presenting the vicissitudes of the historical destiny of the author and of the Roma community as a whole, of which he is the leading representative.

Shakir Mahmudov Pashov was born on October 20, 1898 (ASR, f. Шакир Пашов) in the village of Gorna Banya (today a district of Sofia). Often in various documents from the 1920s and 1930s, his surname is written also as Pashev, including by himself. This is not a mistake, but two different forms (Pashev and Pashov) of the formation of a family name from the personal name Pashi, a common name at that time among the Gypsies in Sofia (in Bulgaria among Gypsies and ethnic Bulgarians as well, the family name if often formed from the forename of the grandfather, following patronymic principals). He belongs to the Roma group of Erlii, who have lived for centuries in Sofia and the surrounding villages (their first documented presence there is from the 15th century – see Marushiakova & Popov, 2001, p. 21). Probably, he came from a family of hereditary blacksmiths and ironsmiths, and throughout his life, he subsisted mainly on ironwork, and these skills have helped him many times in difficult times of his life.

Shakir Pashov received a relatively good education, especially considering that at that time the majority of Gypsies were illiterate or with very basic education. In the last decades of the 19th century, there was a Turkish school in Sofia with more than 100 Gypsy children, five of whom were even sent by the Islamic religious community to Istanbul to continue their education (Пашов, 1957, p. 80). In 1905 the Turkish school ceased to exist, and Gypsy children began to enter Bulgarian schools. After completing his primary education, Shakir Pashov graduated from a vocational school for railway workers. His father worked for many years on the construction of railways in the new Bulgarian state (Ibid., p. 30), i.e. it can be said that Shakir Pashov was a hereditary proletarian.

In 1915, Bulgaria entered the First World War on the side of the Central Powers, and Shakir Pashov was mobilised and sent to the front in Macedonia. His participation in the war should be especially noted because this turned out to be a factor of crucial importance for his further public activity in the field of Roma civic emancipation. Shakir Pashov himself was well aware of this, so in the Preface to his manuscript, he included a poetic account of the time when he fought at the front with his comrades – eight other Gypsies from Sofia. After a heavy battle, they had a long conversation about the need to “organise our Gypsy minority”. In the course of this conversation, he promised that “if I return home alive and well [sic! – authors note; cf. the widespread stereotype that Gypsies/Roma do not have a homeland], I would write the history of the Gypsies in such a way it will be retold by the generations”; and the Foreword ends with the words “I have fulfilled my duty” (Ibid., pp. 5–6).

The essence of the changes in the civic consciousness of the Gypsies in Bulgaria as a result of the participation in the First World War 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 especially the language of

the Gypsies in 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 [the main respondent of B. Gilliat-Smith, from whom he recorded language and folklore materials – authors note], generation represented a different “culture”, a culture which had been stabilised for a long time. The Sofia Gypsy “hammal” [porter] 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 proletarians 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).

After Bulgaria's withdrawal from the First World War in 1918, Shakir Pashov returned home from the front. He was the leading initiator of the creation of *Sofia Common Muslim Educational-Cultural Mutual Aid Organisation 'Istikbal – Future'*, which was officially registered on August 2, 1919 (SCA, f. 1 B, op. 8, a.e. 596, l. 69; Marushiakova & Popov, 2021b, pp. 79–83). According to the founding statute of the organisation, Shakir Pashov was its secretary, and the chairman was Yusuf Mehmedov. This is understandable given the traditional norms in the community, where the elderly were the most respected, and Shakir Pashov was 21 years old (i.e. he had just reached the age of majority according to the legal norms of the time). In this way a specific dualism was established in the organisation – the honorary chairman speaks mainly among his community and works on its internal problems, while the young and educated secretary takes over the contacts and works with the society, in particular with the state and municipal institutions.

The appearance of *Sofia Common Muslim Educational-Cultural Mutual Aid Organisation 'Istikbal – Future'* 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 had been built on the basis of existing institutions, inherited from the previous historical epochs and preserved and developed in the new conditions, these forms were now changed according to the rules and the requirements of the new historical realities and were 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 have been an ethnically defined segment of the society. The involvement of the Gypsies in the wars, along with all other Bulgarian citizens, developed and strengthened their sense of belonging to the Bulgarian civic nation. The new realities after the war, when they again became “second class citizens”, pushed them towards an organised struggle to change the position of their community in the society, which Shakir Pashov repeatedly underlined. Thus, it turned out that the involvement of the Gypsies

in the Bulgarian army (for more detail see Иванова & Кръстев, 2014) not only led to the strengthening of their national civic identity but also towards the development of the processes of the Roma civic emancipation.

When studying this new, extremely important stage in the development of Roma civic emancipation, one must consider a characteristic feature of the source base. The memoirs of Shakir Pashov, which are one of the main sources for this period, need constant further verification through comparison with other sources dealing with the described events. These memoirs were written in the 1950s (dated 1957) under conditions of communist rule. Logically, he strived for his memoirs to be in tune with the new, ideological reading of history. Without doing so, he would not have hoped that his manuscript could be published. For these reasons in his memoirs, he edited part of his activities, for example he does not mention anywhere the foundation of the Organisation '*Istikbal – Future*' which was created at his initiative and in which he was the leading figure years-long.

As one can learn from the archival documents (SCA, f. 1 Б, op. 8, a.e. 596, l. 69), the *Sofia Common Muslim Educational-Cultural Mutual Aid Organisation 'Istikbal – Future'* was defined as 'Muslim' and although the membership was open to all Bulgarian citizens (Art. 4) its primary purpose was "to organise the Muslims in one common organisation which helps the poor in times of illnesses, accidents, death and others" (Art. 2). At first glance organisation *Istikbal* could be characterised, at least according to its Statute, as a typical Muslim charitable organisation. At the same time, from this Statute became clear that the organisation originated from already existing professional organisations and charitable associations (Art. 8), including in addition to the old forms of community life also new elements of civic activities, such as "To fight for their moral, material and educational-cultural upbringing" (Art. 2). And something more, despite the Statute does not mention the word 'Gypsies' even once and it explicitly emphasises that it is "strictly non-partisan" (Art. 6), at the same time it envisaged facilitating the contacts of the members of the organisation with the official administration (чл. 26). This means that the new organisation had ambitions not only to solve the problems within the community (Art. 27), but also to function as its representative within the Bulgarian society, i.e. to develop (among other things) also as a modern civic organisation.

The most important goal of the Organisation *Istikbal* even noted in its Statute, and especially evident by its subsequent actions, was for Gypsies to get involved with the Muslim Religious Community in Sofia in the management of Islamic properties. 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 (and accordingly to take part in the disposal of these properties) has its historical roots. As early as 1895, in the new Bulgarian state, Provisional Rules for the Election of the Boards of Trustees of Muslim Municipalities were adopted, in which it was explicitly stated that "Gypsies cannot be voters, nor can they be elected because, according to the rules of

Sheriat they do not take any participation in the management of Muslim religious affairs” (Вълков, 2020, p. 349).

The circumstances that led to the creation of the *Istikbal* become clear if the processes are viewed in this Muslim religious (and property) context. In the same 1919, immediately before its establishment, the Bulgarian state adopted a new *Statute for the Spiritual Organisation and Governing of Muslims in the Kingdom of Bulgaria*. This Statute gives the management of the Waqfs (Muslim religious properties) to the elected boards of Muslim religious communities, and at the same time gives voting rights to those Gypsies “who have permanent residence and are literate in Bulgarian and Turkish” (Вълков, 2020, p. 349). The direct consequence of these legal changes is clearly stated in the Statute of the *Istikbal* Organisation itself, which asserts as a particularly important goal the desire “to give new life to the Muslim religious community” (Article 25).

Although, according to its goals and objectives stated in its Statute, *Istikbal* was formally a Muslim charitable organisation without clearly expressed ethnic dimensions, in practice in its activities over the years (it existed until the Second World War) were directed at Roma civic emancipation and the struggle for participation in the governance of Muslim religious communities and their property can be interpreted precisely in this discourse.

According to the memoirs of 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 from Bulgarian Agrarian People’s Union (BZNS). In addition to Shakir Pashov himself, this delegation includes the Chairman of *Istikbal*, Yusuf Mehmedov, as well as Yusein Bilalov (in some documents and publications, the name is also spelt as Bilyalov), Rashid Mehmedov, Redzheb Yuseinov, Muto Bilalov and Bilal Osmanov (Пашов, 1957, p. 101). 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 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, pp. 101–102). In the debates in the Bulgarian Parliament regarding this correction of the Electoral Law Prime Minister 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 wars (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 residence, i.e. nomads.

The reasons why Shakir Pashov apparently “omits” to mention the early stages of the existence and activities of Organisation *Istikbal* are clear. As already said above, Shakir Pashov did not want to relate his past with this organisation in the first years after its existence, during which its religious characteristics dominated. On the other hand, the struggles for “civil and political rights of the Gypsy minority” (Пашов, 1957, p. 101) in the 1920s he assigns to the Society *Egipet* (‘Egypt’), which was linked with the Communist Party.

According to Shakir Pashov’s memoirs, the Society *Egypt* was founded in 1919, after he returned from the front. Its members were “a major part of the Gypsy intelligentsia and all progressive youth” (it means to say it was attached to the communist ideas). The aim 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” (Пашов, 1957, p. 99). It is difficult to answer unequivocally the question of whether this Gypsy organisation really existed. On the one hand, no other historical evidence has been found to confirm its legal registration, but on the other hand, society could indeed have existed without taking any steps for such registration. In any case, the popularity of communist ideas among part of the Gypsies in Sofia at that time was unquestionable, and many Gypsy youths were actively involved in political struggles.

Shakir Pashov himself at this time was actively involved in the communist movement. He was a member of the Communist Party (at that time named the Bulgarian Workers’ Social-Democratic Party – narrow socialists) since 1918 (ASR, f. Шакир Пашов). A few months after the establishment of the Society *Egypt*, its members decided to join the newly transformed Bulgarian Communist Party (BKP). The merging of the 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 Pashov, Yusein Bilalov, Mancho Shakirov, Mustafa Saydiev, Demir Yasharov, Mancho Arifov, Ali Yasharov and Ramcho Shakirov. Very soon after its creation, the Society already includes more than 50 members (Пашов, 1957, pp. 99–100). In 1920 the Society made its own flag, which was kept in the home of Yusein Bilalov, and with which it participated in the festive demonstrations on May 1. The Society organised in 1924 the mass participation of Gypsies (including Gypsy women dressed in their traditional suit, the shalwars) in the mourning procession at the funeral of Dimitar Blagoev, the founder of the socialist (later communist) movement in Bulgaria, and laid wreaths at his grave (Ibid., p. 100).

The available historical data do not allow a definite answer to the question of whether the Society *Egypt* really existed. Such an association was not officially registered anywhere (which does not mean that it really did not exist), but there is also no other historical evidence of its existence than the memories of Shakir Pashov (Пашов, 1957, p. 99–100). However, Shakir Pashov himself, in another autobiographical document written in 1946, claimed that the young communists in the Gypsy neighbourhood had their

own flag – “red, under the name Napredak (Forward)”, without mentioning the Society Egypt (CSA, f. 1 Б, оп. 6, а.е. 235, l. 6).

At the end of 1919, Shakir Pashov, who at that time was working as a railway worker in the Bulgarian State Railways, became actively involved in the Transport Strike organised by the BKP, for which he was fired (НОВ ПЪТ, 1974, pp. 1–2). In 1922 Shakir Pashov was elected a delegate to the Fourth Congress of the BKP, which was held in Sofia at the Theatre *Renaissance* and was attended by many guests from abroad, including Clara Zetkin as a representative of the International Communist movement (ASR, f. Шакир Пашов, а.е. Автобиография).

On June 9, 1923, a military coup was carried out, as a result of which the BZNS government was overthrown, and its leader and Prime Minister Aleksandar Stamboliyski was assassinated. In the autumn of the same year, on the instructions of the Comintern, the so-called September Uprising broke out, organised by the BKP and the left of the BZNS. Shakir Pashov was wanted by the police and fled to the city of Kyustendil, where he worked as a plumber on the construction of public buildings, leaving his wife and three young children in Sofia without a livelihood, and returned to Sofia only after the brutal suppression of the uprising (ASR, f. Шакир Пашов, а.е. Автобиография).

It should be noted, however, that in some cases Shakir Pashov deliberately “decorated” this Autobiography (written in the late 1960s or 1970s) with additional details that highlighted his leading position in the communist movement. Such is for example his claim that in the parliamentary elections held in 1924 he was elected a Member of Parliament from the United Front (a political coalition between the BKP and the left-wing of the BZNS) (Ibid.), which cannot be true because in 1924 no parliamentary elections were held.

On April 16, 1925, the Military Organisation of the BKP organised an assassination attempt in which the Cathedral of Sveta Nedelya and there were many casualties among the ruling elite. Authorities responded with massive brutal repressions against their political opponents and hundreds of BKP and BZNS activists were killed, as well as some prominent left-wing intellectual. Shakir Pashov was arrested immediately after the attack and spent several months in various police stations and military barracks. After his release, he continued to be monitored by the police, his house was repeatedly searched, and he decided to emigrate from the country. He crossed the border illegally with Turkey, where he made his living various types of unskilled labour in Istanbul and Izmir and did not return to Bulgaria until 1929 (Ibid.).

However, the Organisation *Istikbal* did not cease its activities after the emigration of Shakir Pashov. By participating in the elections for the leadership of Sofia’s Muslim 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 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 early as 1923–24, the Chief Mufti (the

religious leader of the Muslims in Bulgaria) Suleiman Faik repeatedly pleaded with the Bulgarian authorities not to allow Gypsies in the elections into the boards of trustees of Muslim municipalities, using various arguments. According to him, the Gypsy population is “far behind culturally”, professes Islam only ostensibly, but in fact “continues to live with the beliefs of primitive man. He claimed that Gypsies are “deprived of any culture” and “unfit for any creative work”, so “with their negligence and disregard for religious canons and dogmas they lose the right to be guardians of other Muslims and the handing over of waqfs and Lord-pleasing establishments is clearly inadmissible”. He stressed that Gypsies were numerically smaller than Turks, but were concentrated in important Muslim centres such as the cities of Sofia, Plovdiv, Vidin, and Stara Zagora, where they constituted a majority, and if they are eligible to run in the board elections, they “would win the most important Muslim [religious] communities ... and thus would ruin these properties in the shortest possible time” (ВЪЛКОВ, 2020, p. 349).

In 1925 (before Shakir Pashov’s emigrated from Bulgaria) elections were held for a board of trustees of the school, maintained by the Muslim religious community in Sofia, at which a school board consisting of Muslim Gypsies was elected; chairman became Rashid Mehmedov, vice president Redzheb Yuseinov, secretary Shakir Pashev, and members Mustafa Enkekov, Malik Omerov. This board of trustees has been approved by the Sofia Municipality, but the Muslim religious community, which must provide guarantees for it, refuses to do it (ПАШОВ, 1957, pp. 102–103). In an effort to take control of the school (and other Islamic properties), the Gypsies from Sofia overcame various obstacles, even some of them were able to show official documents issued by Sofia municipality that they are Muslims and ethnic Turks (i.e. they were ready to publicly declare another ethnic identity), but encounter opposition from the leadership of the Sofia’s Muslim community (Ibid.).

These struggles resulted in a file created by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Religious Denominations in 1926, and a lawsuit against the Ministry of Justice for refusal to hold elections for a mosque board of trustees in 1927 (РОМАНО ЕСИ, 1946a, p. 2). In response to these aspirations of Muslim Gypsies to participate in Muslim religious boards, after a discussion at the first national congress of the Turks in Bulgaria, held from October 31 to November 3, 1929, in Sofia, it was decided that “Muslim Gypsies cannot participate in elections” for trustees of religious communities because these “purely Turkish national possessions” are inherited from the ancestors of the Turks (Şimşir, 1988, pp. 89–90), i.e. the religious communities themselves manifested themselves as a religious institution, uniting the Turkish minority in Bulgaria and excluding other Muslims (in this case, the Gypsies in particular).

In this situation, after his return to Bulgaria, Shakir Pashov resumed the active work of the Organisation *Istikbal*. According to his memoirs, this happened on the 7th of May 1929, when “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 Yusuf Mehmedov and Secretary Shakir

Pashev, and Member – Yusein Bilalov” (Пашов, 1957, p. 103). In fact, however, it was not the creation of a new organisation, but a renewal of the old one, preserving not only the name and the governing body but also its seal, which (as will be discussed later) was used until the end of 1930.

As seen, the new generation in the 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 Gypsy guild's (*esnaf*) associations (and preserved their 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). Overall, 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.

In the same year, another Gypsy organisation was founded, the Society *Vzaimopomosht* (Mutual Aid), chaired by Rashid Mehmedov, which also included some of the *londzhi*. In addition to these two large organisations, the Gypsies in Sofia had professional guilds of blacksmiths, tinsmiths, small traders (junk-dealers), which (at least according to Shakir Pashov) were also members of *Istikbal*, as well as the youth cultural and educational association *Naangle* (Forward) and the sports association *Egypt*. In 1930, the two major Gypsy organisations, along with all others, merged under a common name, *Istikbal* (Future). The new (actually old, but with a new format) organisation was headed by Shakir Pashev, two vice-chairmen (Redzheb Yuseinov and Rashid Mehmedov), two secretaries (Ahmed Sotirov and Ramcho Shakirov), and members Yusein Bilalov, Emin Eminov, Raycho Kochev, and others (Ibid.).

In the 1930s, the *Istikbal* Organisation, already headed by Shakir Pashov, developed its activities in the two main directions set at its inception, which, although quite conditional, can be defined as religious and civic, as these two lines of development were constantly intertwined and complement each other over the years.

Religious activities were not very successful. The struggle for the admission of the Gypsies into the management of the Muslim community and, respectively, of its religious properties, continued. On behalf of the Muslim Gypsies in Sofia, a lawsuit was filed against the prosecutor of the Sofia District Court in 1930 for non-compliance with legal provisions, which finally failed after the case reached the Supreme Administrative Court. It is indicative, that in the whole article of Hyusein Bilalov, in which these struggles are described (Романо еси, 1946a, p. 2), the word 'Gypsies' is not mentioned even once, i.e. in the strifes for inclusion into Islamic boards (and property), the noting of ethnic identity is omitted.

However, the activities of the Organisation *Istikbal* were by no means limited only to the struggle for a place for the Gypsies in the Islamic religious community. A poster printed in 1930 on behalf of the *Sofia Common Muslim Educational-Cultural Mutual Aid Organisation 'Istikbal – Future'* that 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. 625–62506). The poster is dated March 6, 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" (Ibid.). 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 declared itself a representative of the Roma community in the public space, and thus became a political subject in their struggles for civic emancipation.

In his Autobiography, Shakir Pashov described how, after returning from Turkey, he became a member of the Workers' Party (a legal political structure established in 1927 of the Bulgarian Communist Party (BKP), banned in 1924) and formed a "Gypsy Party group". In 1931 he became "chairman of the Gypsy Cultural and Educational organisation in Bulgaria", founded the "first Gypsy newspaper in Bulgaria" *Terbie* (Upbringing), which "fought for the cultural and educational uprising of political consciousness of our tobacco workers in Bulgaria" (ASR, f. Шакир Пашов, а.е. Автобиография). However, the real course of events, which is reflected in other historical sources, shows a more or less different picture. The newspaper *Terbie*, which would be an invaluable source in that direction, 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 1932 (or 1933) and 1934 (last is No. 7 from May 6, 1934) with a total of 7 issues, with print-run 1,500. In No. 2 from February 27, is noted that the editor-in-chief is Sh[akir] M. Pashev, and the newspaper is a publication of the *Mohammedan National Educational and Cultural Organisation*; from issue No. 6 the newspaper became a publication of the *Common Mohammedan National Cultural and Educational Union in Bulgaria*, and the editorial committee included Shakir Mahmudov Pashev (editor-in-chief), Asen Gotov and Demir Yasharov (Иванчев, 1966, Vol. 2, p. 398; see also Marinov, 2021, pp. 51–56). In his Autobiography, Shakir Pashov writes neutrally “the Gypsy Cultural and Educational Organisation” without giving the exact names of the organisations he really has in mind – *Sofia Common Muslim Educational-Cultural Mutual Aid Organisation ‘Istikbal – Future’*, *Mohammedan National Educational and Cultural Organisation*, and *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’ (*Mohammedan*) and all activities in religious direction. However, when he writes about the 1930s, he nevertheless marks his ties with *Istikbal* as in the name of *Istikbal* the ties with Islam are not so visible.

To put it in brackets, the newspaper *Terbie* was not the first Gypsy newspaper in Bulgaria. In the 1920s and 1930s the following newspapers were published: *Светилник* (Candlestick), *Bulletin of the Gypsies 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), and *Известия на Циганската евангелска мисия* (Bulletin of the Gypsy Evangelical Mission). The first of them was published in the town of Lom in 1927, and the other two in Sofia in 1932–1933, and their editor-in-chief was Pastor Petar Minkov (Иванчев, Vol. 1, 1962, p. 363; Vol. 2, 1966, p. 264; Vol. 3, 1969, p. 6; see also Marinov, 2021, pp. 37–51). All of them are related to the entry and spread of the so-called new (Evangelical) churches among the Gypsies in Bulgaria at that time (for more detail see Славкова, 2007), which had a relatively limited scope and themes.

About the contents of the newspaper *Terbie*, we can judge, apart from Shakir Pashov’s memoirs, from only two other independent historical sources. One of them is the already quoted article by (H)Yusein Bilalov “From the life of the Sofia Muslim confessional municipality – Sofia” (Романо еси, 1946a, p. 2), which is actually a reprint of the article first published in the newspaper *Terbie* and in which the emphasis is on the struggle for participation in the management of the Islamic religious community (and its properties). The second source is the article *Gypsies and the Gypsy Question* by Nayden Sheytanov, an amateur researcher of Gypsies, published in the central press (Мир, 1934, p. 3). As pointed by Sheytanov, the newspaper *Terbie* 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. At the same time, however, the newspaper 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 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, and which is already dominant in the manuscript of Shakir Pashov himself. The newspaper *Terbie* covers the strategic plans and concrete actions aimed at moving the Roma civic emancipation movement to a new, national level. Indicative in this respect is the call to the Sofia Gypsies “to self-organise as soon as possible in order to give pace to the whole of Bulgaria, so that [...] we have representatives of our interests” (Ibid.), which can be interpreted as a desire for political representation of the Gypsy community. The newspaper reflects the specific attempts in this direction, such as the organisation of a “*чѣдоп* (fair)” in the village of Dolna Kremena, Vratsa region, as well as the effect of these activities, reflected in letters from cities of Sliven, Vratsa, the village of Galiche, etc. (Ibid.).

New moments in the development of the civic consciousness of the Gypsies were also the 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 in 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.” (Ibid.).

According to Nayden Sheytanov, the newspaper *Terbie* cooperated with the “Romanian and Hungarian Gypsies” (Ibid.). In fact, from today’s point of view, we cannot be sure whether such cooperation 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.

In his memoirs, Shakir Pashov devoted much space to the newspaper *Terbie* and to the important role it played for “upbringing and cultural-educational uplifting of the Gypsy population in Bulgaria” (Пашов, 1957, p. 104), and also, viewed more generally, to raise the civic consciousness and civic national identity of the Gypsies. In his words, “the newspaper *Terbie* raised truly the national and patriotic feeling of the Gypsy minority, but it did not fight convincingly against its chauvinistic feelings [...] [and] was working towards an enlightening patriotism but it did stand against uneducated fanaticism and chauvinism” (Ibid., pp. 109–110). The newspaper was distributed throughout the country, as for that purpose, many people were organised in Vratsa, Lom, Oryahovo, Plevna, Plovdiv, Kyustendil, Stara Zagora, Ruse, Shumen, Burgas, Pernik, Sliven and in many villages (Ibid., p. 104).

The first step for the organisation of the Gypsies in the country and for the actual creation of a national Gypsy civil organisation was the Conference, which took place

near the Mezdra Station, on May 7, 1932. The Conference was held thanks to the initiative of the Gypsy organisation in Vratsa. The organisers of the Conference were Nikola Palashev and Sando Ibrov. Delegates from the whole Vratsa region, including from the villages, Montana, Oryahovo and the villages around it, Byala Slatina, Pleven, Lom, and Cherven Bryag were presented here. The Sofia delegation was headed by Shakir Pashov, and also included Emin Eminov, Naydo Yasharov and Ali Yasharov. According to Shakir Pashov at the conference it was decided that all Gypsies in Bulgaria should be led by the common Organisation *Istikbal*, and its newspaper *Terbie* “would penetrate as an enlightening beam to the last hut of the entire Gypsy minority in Bulgaria” (Ibid.).

In his memoirs, Shakir Pashov consciously linked all activities in the field of Roma emancipation in the early 1930s with the Organisation *Istikbal*, including the publication of the newspaper *Terbie*. In fact, however, the leading organisation in these processes was the new organisation already established in 1931 and led by him, which in various sources is called *Mohammedan National Educational and Cultural Organisation* (Иванчев, 1966, Vol. 2, p. 398) or *Common Mohammedan National Cultural and Educational Union* (Мир, 1934, p. 3). No documents about its registration have thus far been discovered, but in 1933 this organisation was reformatted and attempted to be registered, but in 1933 this organisation was reformatted and tried to register, which is something he also “failed” to mention in his memoirs. The Minutes from the meeting for the establishment of the organisation bearing the name *Common Mohammedan-Gypsy National Cultural-Educational and Mutual Aid Union in Bulgaria* has been preserved. From the Minutes it became clear that on December 25, 1933, in Sofia a Constituent Assembly was held with Chair Ramcho Shakirov, Vice-Chair Demir Yasharov, and Secretary Slavi Iliev, at which the Board of Directors of the new organisation was elected with members Shakir M. Pashev (living at that time on 80 Konstantin Velichkov Street), Rashid Mehmedov, Bilyal Osmanov, Slavi Iliev and Mehmed Skenderov, and as Substitute Members – Ramcho Shakirov and Mladen Spasov. The management board elected the President of the Union – Shakir M. Pashev, Secretary of the Union – Slave Iliev, and Treasurer of the Union – Mehmed Skenderov. Control Commission, Enlightenment Council, and Religious Council were also elected (CSA, f. 264, op. 2, a.e. 8413, l. 27–28; Marushiakova & Popov, 2021b, pp. 86–93).

At this Constituent Assembly, the Statute of the *Common Mohammedan-Gypsy National Cultural-Educational and Mutual Aid Union in Bulgaria* was discussed and adopted. 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*. It is the name itself that explicitly emphasised that it was a union of the Gypsies in Bulgaria, i.e. it already had the ambition to work on a national scale along with separate sub-divisions in the country and to be representative of the whole community. This was explicitly stated at the beginning of the Statute, in the chapter about the purpose of the Union: “to organise all Gypsies (Mohammedans and others) in their national belonging in Bulgaria”, and “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. 1), as well as

to work “for the cultivation of civil virtues in the motherland – Bulgaria” (Art. 2). The new Union had ambitions to unite all existing forms of Gypsy organisations (civic, mutual aid, sport, etc. including the professional associations), without infringing on their independence (Art. 3). Moreover, the Union even left 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 remained 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.

An interesting point in the Statute of the Union is the possibility, “if the laws permit, the opening of the private schools” (Art. 2). It can be assumed that this article envisaged a successful completion of the long struggle for the Gypsies to gain control over the Islamic religious community in Sofia and its properties because according to the then legal norms only religious communities have the right to open their own private schools, i.e. such an outcome would make it possible to establish its private Gypsy school.

It is worth noting that the new Union declared as its patron saint's day the day of St. Gheorghe (although almost all of its founders were Muslims), which continued the tendency set in the organisation in the city of Vidin (see above) to create its own ethno-national symbols, which (given the dichotomy ‘community – society’) was not in contradiction with the civic national identity clearly expressed in the Statute itself. In April 1934, *the Common Mohammedan-Gypsy National Cultural-Educational and Mutual Aid Union in Bulgaria* submitted the necessary documents for official registration in the Ministry of Internal Affairs and National Health, which was then a legal requirement (CSA, f. 264, op. 2, a.e. 8413, l. 1). Following a military coup on May 19, 1934, a new government headed by Kimon Georgiev came to power. It banned the existence of all political parties and organisations, and therefore stopped their newspapers. Because of that, Shakir Pashov wrote a new letter to the Ministry of Internal Affairs and National Health, emphasising that the *Common Mohammedan-Gypsy National Cultural-Educational and Mutual Aid Union in Bulgaria* unites legally registered organisations such as *Blacksmiths' Society*, *Tinsmiths' Society*, *Society Egypt*, *Organisation Istikbal*, *Mutual Aid Society*, and it is an organisation without any party allegiance, therefore he asks the Statute of the new organisation to be approved and it to be officially legalised (Ibid., l. 14). The Ministry sent the Union's documents to the Department of Religions with the request for an opinion. The Department returned a resolution: “this Statute NOT TO BE AFFIRMED because the Gypsy Muslims in our country are organised through foreign influence” (Ibid., l. 14), thus finally the registration of the *Common Mohammedan-Gypsy National Cultural-Educational and Mutual Aid Union in Bulgaria* was rejected (Ibid., l. 2).

As can be seen from these materials, the reason for the refusal to register the Union was not because it is ‘Gypsy’ one, but because it is ‘Muslim’, and that is why it can be

used as a channel of “foreign influence” (foreign in this case means Turkish – authors note). It is maybe paradoxically, but the same argument was used by Nayden Sheytanov in his aforementioned article, in which he explicitly warned the “competent and responsible” (i.e. the authorities) that the *Common Mohammedan National Cultural-Educational Union in Bulgaria* was intended as a centre to which the Gypsies should be attracted in order to create a “common front” of the Muslims in Bulgaria (Мър, 1934, p. 3). Nayden Sheytanov’s interpretation is in fact used as a reason for the rejecting the application for registration of the Union by the authorities, although the statute of the new Union introduced the term ‘Gypsy’ and its goals have been extended compared to the Statute of the First Union, going now far beyond the religious dimensions of the organisation. The historical irony is that Sheytanov used this insinuation to call the authorities to pay more serious attention to the Gypsies and their problems while the result turned out to be the opposite. The inclusion of the Gypsies in the general anti-Muslim (actually anti-Turkish) discourse of the state policy was not something new for Bulgaria. In fact, this approach is characteristic of the entire history of the new Bulgarian state, and its most striking manifestation is the so-called “Process of Revival” in the 1980s, when the Communist regime forced all Muslims, including the Gypsies to change their Muslim (Turko-Arabic) to Christian (Bulgarian) names not because they were Gypsies but because they were Muslims (in fact, the name change for Gypsies began as soon as the 1960s).

In his memoirs, Shakir Pashov wrote that after the coup of May 19, 1934, the organisation *Istikbal* was banned by the authorities and ceased its activities (Пашов, 1957, p. 118; Неве ромá, 1957f, p. 4). In this case, he was referring to the refusal to register the *Common Mohammedan-Gypsy National Cultural-Educational and Mutual Aid Union in Bulgaria* (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 the organisation not only continued to exist after 1934 but even wrote formal letters to the local and national authorities on the organisation’s letterhead and used its stamp, even one of them (published above) was addressed to the Police Department itself. Probably because of these contacts, which could be interpreted by his detractors as cooperation with the authorities, he preferred to present his activities in the second half of the 1930s without mentioning the allegedly “closed” organisation. Despite this, in his memoirs he praised the activities of the organisation, explicitly noting that “The *Istikbal* organisation played the role of an official institution the only one representing the Gypsy minority before the legitimate authorities in Sofia” (Пашов, 1957, p. 105), and he described precisely the time for which he claims that it was forbidden.

In 1934 Shakir Pashov worked as a machine mechanic in the municipal technical workshop but because he participated in the strike organised by the Workers’ Party, he was fired on January 1, 1935 (ASR, f. Шакир Пашов, а.е. Автобиография). After his dismissal, he made a living from his small ironwork workshop, which was located in the area of Positano Street. At that time, he lived with his family in the largest Gypsy mahala in Sofia at that time, known as *Konyovitsa* and *Tatarli*, located on one side of Klementina

Boulevard (today's Alexander Stamboliyski Boulevard), on the other side of which was the Jewish mahala; in 1943 (or 1944) the family moved to the so-called *Boyana* mahala (or *Brick Factory* mahala), located around today's Gotse Delchev Boulevard. During this period (1934–1944) Shakir Pashov actively worked among his community. In his memoirs, he paid special attention to the struggles of Organisation *Istikbal* against some traditional customs of the Gypsies in Sofia, even one chapter of his manuscript is entitled *Habits, Customs and the Fight against the Harmful Ones* (ПАШОВ, 1957, pp. 111–115). In this chapter, he was referring especially to the customs and rituals connected to the paying of the bride price, the circumcision of boys, wearing shalwars by the women, all which Shakir Pashov 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 regarding opposing, for instance, the Muslim cultural elements during funerals, which (at least at that time) followed strongly Muslim traditions (including the obligatory presence of an Islamic cleric). The apparent need for support the community in organising funerals is reflected in the Statutes of the Gypsy organisations *Istikbal*, *Common Mohammedan-Gypsy National Cultural-Educational and Mutual Aid Union in Bulgaria*, and it also was one of the reasons for the establishment of other organisations, as for example the *Gypsy Cultural-Educational and Posthumously-Charitable Association 'Butlaches'* (Virtue) in 1939 (CSA, f. 264, op. 5, a.e. 1109, l. 3–5). Moreover, Shakir Pashov himself mentioned in his memoirs as an important moment in the activities of the Organisation *Istikbal* the ownership of a funeral car, as well as that it helped poor Gypsy families in need to cover the funeral expenses (ПАШОВ, 1957, p. 105). So, it is logical to assume that Shakir Pashov actually assessed the customs and rituals mentioned by him as “harmful”, i.e. appearing as an obstacle to the development of the community, as well as to its successful social integration and civic emancipation, and therefore fought against them.

As could be clearly seen here, the whole development of the Organisation *Istikbal* during the interwar period oscillated constantly between ethnic and religious, with the latter in Bulgaria being directly linked and often replaced by another (Turkish) ethnic identity. In any case, regardless of the specific variant, these ethnic and religious identities 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*, newspaper *Terbie*) as well as in Romani language (*Naangle*, *Butlaches*). The identity negotiation is especially clear in the Gypsy activists' struggle against the shalwars described above. On the one hand, this was a struggle for the establishment of the Bulgarian civic national identity in the public space, by denying these Gypsy traditions, which were interpreted as Turkish; on the other hand, as Shakir Pashov himself wrote that the shalwars remained as a ‘museum value’ (ПАШОВ,

1957, p. 115) and as a Gypsy national symbolism, which was 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 shalwars (ASR, f. Фотографии), a fact which can be seen in the many preserved photos from that time.

Another important event in the second half of the 1930s, to which Shakir Pashov paid special attention in his memoirs, was the organisation of a Gypsy Ball, held at the City Casino, located in the centre of Sofia. It featured art scenes from *The Thousand and One Nights*, authored by himself, the director was Emin Eminov, and ballet master Hyusein A. Bilalov. The Gypsy ball was widely attended, was very well received by the audience, and was widely covered by the press in Bulgaria (Пашов, 1957, p. 120), and abroad. 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 also took part in the Ball (Observer, 1937). The singer Keva, who sung in the popular cabaret *At Keva's*, located in the then Gypsy neighbourhood, which at that time was frequently visited by capital's bohemians, and according to rumours, also even by members of the royal family (Тенев, 1997, pp. 225–227, 233–235). She also recorded several gramophone records in the 1930s, including songs in Bulgarian and Romani language (Димов, 2005).

At the Gypsy Ball, the Bulgarian Tsar Boris III was also invited, but while he did not personally attend it, he had sent an envelope containing money for the poor Gypsies (ASR, f. Шакир Пашов). For obvious reasons, Shakir Pashov himself does not mention anything about this in his manuscript. In the memoirs, he also made a small factual error. According to him, the Gypsy Ball happened on March 3 (national holiday of Bulgaria) in 1938 (Пашов, 1957, p. 120; Неве ромá, 1957f, p. 4), but in fact, the ball was in 1937, as evidenced by the many materials, published by the Bulgarian and foreign press.

In his memoirs, Shakir Pashov described how on March 6, 1938, the Gypsy neighbourhood was locked by the authorities due to press publications about the spreading of typhus among the Gypsies. On his initiative, a committee was elected, which demanded that the authorities end the blockade and even insisted on receiving compensations from the state for the lost wages of those who were prevented from going to work (Пашов, 1957, pp. 118–119). However, he “failed” to write that on this occasion the Organisation Istikbal issued a public declaration, *A Clarification in Relation to the Appearance in the Newspaper Dnevnik (Diary) of False and Inaccurate Information about the Occurrence of the Disease Typhus among the Gypsies* on 16 March 1938 (DA Sofia, f. 1 K, op. 4, a.e. 531, l. 5). It is clear from this declaration that these manipulations through the press in the public space were not accidental, but were part of an organised campaign that has been going on for years (Ibid.), and it included also a series of complaints from the surrounding Bulgarian population from 1937–1938 to various institutions against allegedly illegal settlement of Gypsies, violation of public order, poor sanitation, etc. (DA Sofia, f. 1 K, op. 4, a.e. 531). The purpose of this campaign is very transparent – to evict the Gypsies

from the Gypsy neighbourhoods Konyovitsa, Tatarli and Batalova vodenitsa, into then-emerging new Gypsy neighbourhood Fakulteta (at that time in the outskirts of the city), and to buy their plots for little money. That is why Istikbal's declaration ends with an appeal to the Bulgarian authorities:

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. (Ibid., l. 5).

In 1937, the Gypsy theme also attracted public attention on another occasion. In the yellow press appears an article entitled *Gypsies Will Organise* which reports that two young Gypsies, Ahmed Seizov and Petar Ivanov, were touring the country and trying (without much success) to organise Gypsies into a union to be a member of the International Gypsy Union based in Hungary (Празднични вести, 1937, p. 2). The Bulgarian police investigated the case but failed to find persons with such names; also the leadership of the Organisation *Istikbal* confirmed that such persons were unknown in the Gypsy community (CSA, f. 370, op. 6, a.e. 745, l. 1, 3). Nor was there anything known about the existence at this time of any International Gypsy Union (neither in Hungary nor anywhere in the world), so it is likely this may have been a journalistic hoax.

The last written statement of the Organisation *Istikbal*, for which historical evidence is preserved, is an official letter to the Police Directorate dated July 18, 1939, signed by Shakir Pashov and stamped with the seal of the organisation. It is significant that in this letter, the Gypsy organisation discerned clearly between their obligations towards their community and the expectations of the state for active policy towards them as part of the society, and explicitly emphasised that state intervention was crucial for the future of their people. This letter calls on the police to “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”, and “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” (DA Sofia, f. 1 K, op. 4, a.e. 683, l. 93).

There is no reliable historical evidence of Shakir Pashov's political and civic activities during the Second World War when Bulgaria was an ally of Nazi Germany (although Bulgaria did not send its army to the Eastern Front), but partisan units were formed in the country and an armed struggle led by the Communist Party developed. According to Shakir Pashov himself, during this period he was actively involved in the anti-fascist resistance, and his iron workshop, located at that time at 28 Serdika Street (in the centre of Sofia), was used as a place of communication through which they transmitted illegal materials and weapons (ASR, f. Шакир Пашов, а.е. Автобиография). However, there is

no other historical evidence for these allegations, nor for the plan for a conference of the Gypsy minority prepared by him (with the approval of the illegal communist activists with whom he is in constant contact) to be held on September 5–6, 1944 (Ibid.).

At the beginning of September 1944, the political situation in Bulgaria changed radically. At that time, the Soviet army had already reached the Bulgarian border, and on September 5 the USSR declared war to Bulgaria; and on September 9 a new government led by the Fatherland Front (a political coalition dominated by the Communist Party) came to power. According to Shakir Pashov, the very next day he, together with several other Gypsy activists, appeared before the new authorities, from whom they received an order to establish a Gypsy organisation at the Fatherland Front; such an organisation was created, and it was headed by Shakir Pashov himself (Ibid.). There is also no other historical evidence for these events, and it seems highly unlikely that only a few hours after taking power, the creation of a Gypsy organisation was a matter of importance for the communist leadership. What is certain however is that Shakir Pashov in the first days after September 9 started to serve the new government and organised mass public events with the participation of Gypsies. Two photographs have been preserved, in all probability from September 1944 (ASR, f. Фотографии), which reflects these events. The first of them shows a rally of Sofia citizens in support of the new government, as in the first line are festively dressed Gypsy women who put up a poster with the inscription “Long live the Fatherland Front. Death to fascism. Gypsy mahala Sofia” (Ibid.). Another photo shows the manifestation of Gypsies in Sofia, in front of the Bulgarian Parliament where women are dressed in festive “traditional” costumes (wearing shalwars) and wear posters with the words “Down with Racial Differences”, and the same poster as described above (Ibid.). 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 manifestation (Галерия “Лоранъ”, 2014).

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. On March 6, 1945, i.e. even before the end of the war, in Sofia, at 18 Tatarli Street, a *United Common-Cultural and Educational Organisation of the Gypsy Minorities ‘Ekipe’* (‘Unity’ in Romani language) was established. The creation of the new organisation was announced as the restoration of the old, “disbanded organisation Istikbal” (Пашов, 1957, p. 121), i.e. the continuity of the two organisations is emphasised.

At this constituent assembly, the Statute of the old/new Gypsy organisation was presented and its leadership was elected, which includes: chairman – Shakir Pashev, vice-chairmen – Raycho Kochev and Bilal Osmanov, secretary – Tair Selimov, cashier – Demir Rustemov, and members – Emin Eminov, Hyusein A. Bilalov, Sulyo Metkov, Resho Demirov, Ramcho Totev, Demcho Blagoev, Naido Yasharov, Asan Osmanov (Palyacho), Asan Somanov, Ismail Shakirov, Shakir Meshchanov, Ali Mehmedov, Izet Salchov and Tseko Nikolov (Ibid., p. 121–122).

According to the Statute (CSA, f. 1 B, op. 8, a.e. 596, l. 50–52; Marushiakova & Popov, 2021b, pp. 103–110), the organisation set itself the following tasks: a) To fight against fascism, the anti-Gypsyism 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 Gypsies their spiritual, social and economic culture; f) To uplift economically the all Gypsy stratum 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. The organisation has a national scope and a complex hierarchical structure and includes local organisations. It is explicitly emphasised that “eligible members could be any Gypsy at the age of 18 and above, regardless of sex and social status” and “all Gypsies with Mohammedan and Christian Orthodox religions without any differentiation being made” (Art. 2), it means it should unite the whole Gypsy community and be its public representative.

An intriguing point in the Statute of the Organisation *Ekiye* was the emergence of ideas about the future development of the Gypsies as an ethno-nation, i.e. a transformation into a nation-state (even if this was vaguely worded and presented as a matter of the uncertain future).

The Statute repeatedly emphasised 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). At that time, nowhere in the world has there been a ‘World Gypsy Organisation’ so, it remains unclear how Shakir Pashov and 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. Another possibility is that they were informed about the ideas for creating a Gypsy state, launched publicly by the so-called “Gypsy Kings” from the “Kwiek dynasty” in Poland, which were widely covered in the world media in the 1930s (see Marushiakova & Popov, 2021b, pp. 599–650).

In any case, one of the main national symbols of the future Gypsy state, the national flag, was already present in the Statute of the organisation (Art. 59). Its description, however, is not very clear (“The flag of the organisation is red with two white fields and with a triangle in the middle”), as its symbolism is not clear. May 7 was declared a holiday of the organisation. In his memoirs, Shakir Pashov explained that the celebration of this date began in 1934 when Gypsies laid a wreath at the grave of Redzheb Yuseinov, longtime

vice-president of the Organisation *Istikbal*, and since then it has become a tradition for Gypsies in Sofia to celebrate this date (Пашов, 1957, p. 105). However, he failed to announce that May 7 was the first day after the day of St Gheorghe, to whom all Gypsies in Sofia (mostly Muslims) visit the cemetery to honour their deceased relatives. The fact that the day of St Gheorghe was not explicitly mentioned in the Statute, but only the date of May 7 was declared a holiday of the organisation, reflects the unwillingness to publicly demonstrate religious connections in the new conditions of a communist rule.

The creation of the Gypsy organisation took place with the blessing of the new government. In 1945, the Central Committee of the Bulgarian Workers' Party (Communists) discussed and adopted a series of reports on individual national minorities. The report on the Gypsy minority considers it necessary to establish an organisation of Gypsies that will "facilitate educational, cultural ... and political struggle" among them (CSA, f. 1 Б, оп. 25, а.е. 71, р. 5; Стоянова, 2017, р. 40). However, this does not mean that the organisation was a communist party creation because the same report explicitly states that "the initiative to organise the Gypsies comes from themselves" and emphasises that "our comrades communists believe that through such an organisation they will be able to keep the Gypsies under their influence" (Ibid.). The documents of the organisation were probably not checked by the authorities (or were not paid attention to), which explains the presence in the Statute of the idea of a Gypsy nation-state. The Statute of the *Ekiye* itself was to be adopted at the Second National Conference, the date of which has not been set (Art. 61). However, no such conference was held, and "at a meeting" in 1946 it was decided to extend the mandate of the organisation's leadership, "to emphasise the trust that this committee enjoyed in the Gypsy environment" (Пашов, 1957, p. 123). At this meeting, it was also decided to start publishing the newspaper *Романо еси* (Gypsy Voice), as Shakir Pashov was elected editor-in-chief of the newspaper, and Sulyo Metkov, Tair Selimov, Mustafa Aliev (later known as Manush Romanov), Hyusein Bilyalov and others were elected members of the editorial board (Ibid.).

The Statutes of the Organisation *Ekiye*, at least formally, present it as non-political, and not tied to any political forces. However, Shakir Pashov himself, who re-established his membership in the hitherto illegal Communist Party, after September 9, 1944, repeatedly emphasised in his memoirs that under his leadership *Ekiye* actively supported the state policy pursued by the government of the Fatherland Front. With state support, the newspaper *Romano esi* began to be published, as the first issue was published on February 25, 1946. The newspaper was announced as a body of the *United Cultural and Educational Organisation of the Gypsy Minority in Bulgaria*, and its editor-in-chief was Shakir Pashov. In the newspaper is noted that the Statute of the organisation has been approved by the Minister of Interior Anton Yugov, and the permission for its publishing has been given by the Minister of Propaganda Dimo Kazasov (Романо еси, 1946с, р. 2). The introductory article is the speech of Yusein Bilyalov, presented on Radio Sofia on January 14 on the occasion of *Vasili* (the day of St Basil), "a national holiday of the Gypsies", which is, in fact, a political proclamation on behalf of the organisation. It describes the hard life of

Gypsies in the past, the struggles of their organisation (referring to *Istikbal*, whose name is not mentioned) for their civil rights and welcomes the civil liberties and social equality brought to them by the government of the Fatherland Front. Indicative of the spirit of the time is the end of the article:

Long live the Fatherland Front! Long live the founder of the Fatherland Front Georgi Dimitrov! Long live the allied peoples of the USSR, the United States and England! Long live the brave patriotic Fatherland's Front Army! Long live the People's Republic of Yugoslavia and Marshal Tito! Long live the Leader of the Soviet people, Generalissimo Stalin! *Baxtalo tumaro Vasili!* – Congratulations to St. Basil! (Романо еси, 1946b, p. 1).

Active agitation in support of the Fatherland Front government continued to be a leading line in all subsequent issues of the *Romano esi* newspaper. Meanwhile, the Communist Party continued to strengthen its power in the country, and parliamentary elections were scheduled for October 1946, at which a Grand National Assembly was to be prepared and a new constitution of Bulgaria was to be adopted. On August 4, 1946, an extended conference of the Gypsy organisation was held, which included “all chairmen representing various professional associations” (CSA, f. 1 Б, op. 6, a.e. 235, l. 5). In the minutes the organisation was designated as the *United Organisation of the Gypsy Minority for the Fight against Fascism and Racism*. There is no information whether such a renaming took place (most probably not), and the newspaper *Romano esi* continued to be published until 1948 as a body of the *United Cultural and Educational Organisation of the Gypsy Minority in Bulgaria*, as both the new and old name in different combinations were used. The document with the decision of the conference was 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. 4) as its founding year.

At this conference, a decision was made emphasising that the Fatherland Front was “the only defender of national minorities” and that the conference, therefore, proposed a representative of the Roma community in the Grand National Assembly from the lists of the Fatherland Front. For the appointment of such a representative, a choice was made by secret ballot between three proposals, as Shakir Pashev received 7 votes from 14 delegates, Tair Selimov and Hussein Bilyalov received 3 votes each, and one ballot was declared invalid (Ibid.). It is noteworthy that the minutes of the conference was signed by 15 people, and in addition to the participants in the conference, all of whom have Muslim names (Gypsies' names in Sofia at the time were also of this form), and only one signature is with a Christian name (B. Naydenov). This gives reason to assume that a representative of the Fatherland Front was present, and its conduct (most likely on the initiative of the Gypsies themselves) was agreed in advance. The proposal of the conference was discussed at the District Committee of the Communist Party. According to the materials from this discussion, Shakir Pashov's Party past is not as flawless and heroic as he himself presents it, e.g. it is said that after his two arrests (in 1923 and 1925) “he became somewhat frightened”, or in 1931, when he was offered to join the list of the Workers' Party

as the Gypsy minority representative in the 1931 municipal elections, “he promised to cooperate, but subsequently became frightened” (Ibid., l. 9). However, the conclusion of the District Committee was: “if it comes to electing a candidate from among the Gypsy minority, there is no one more suitable than him”, and “from his inclusion in the Grand National Assembly as an MP, the Party will only benefit because this will raise the Party in the eyes of the Gypsy minority and ... will take root firmly [there]” (Ibid., l. 9–10).

In the elections for the Grand National Assembly, Shakir Pashov was placed at the bottom of the electoral lists and failed to become an MP. The mistake was quickly rectified, and three months after the elections, on February 28, 1947, this issue was discussed at a meeting of the highest collective Party body, the Politburo of the Central Committee of the Bulgarian Workers' Party (Communists) as a second point on the agenda (usually the items are ranked in order of importance). The decision of the Politburo on this issue reads:

2. Comrade Dimitar Ganev [who has been appointed ambassador to Romania – authors note] to resign as an MP. To propose to the comrades Grigor Vrabchenski and Hristina Bradinska who follow in the list after him to give up, so that comrade Shakir Pashev (a Gypsy) can enter the Grand National Assembly. (CSA, f. 1Б, op. 6, a.e. 235, l. 1).

The comrades in question palpably accepted the proposal (a possible refusal would mean the end of their Party career), and Shakir Pashov became a regular member of the Grand National Assembly, which, at the end of the same year, adopted the new Constitution of the People's Republic of Bulgaria (the so-called Dimitrov Constitution). As an MP he developed a vigorous activity for the development of the Gypsy movement. In this regard, he used the support (and administrative resources) of the ruling political coalition of the Fatherland Front (de facto of the Communist Party). In 1947 the National Committee of the Fatherland Front (NS OF) issued Circular No. 18, which ordered: “cultural and educational societies of the Gypsy minority to be formed in all district and city centres with the full assistance of the district and city committees of the Fatherland Front” (Романо еси, 1947d, p. 2). Shakir Pashov himself has great merit for the establishment of these societies, which are structural subdivisions of the *United Cultural and Educational Organisation of the Gypsy Minority in Bulgaria*, “he constantly travels around the most remote parts of the country, to lift the spirits of the Gypsy minority and on the spot to get acquainted with the needs of our compatriots, who feel great joy from his presence among them” (Романо еси, 1948c, p. 1). For about a year, more than 90 Gypsy organisations had been established in the country (SCA, f. 1 Б, op. 8, a.e. 596, l. 61); even in some places, e.g. in Shumen, two Gypsy organisations were established, one of which was named *Gypsy Cultural and Educational Organisation* ‘[Shakir] Pashov’ (Демирова, 2017, pp. 70–72).

Along with the work on establishing and strengthening local Gypsy organisations in the country, Shakir Pashov was sent as an MP to help solve problems among the Gypsy population. Such was the case in Ruse, where tensions arose over the non-admission of Gypsies to the management of the properties of the religious Muslim community

by local Turks (ASR, f. Шакир Пашов, а.е. Автобиография) – a problem well known to Shakir Pashov since the 1920s and 1930s. Another problematic case, for the solution of which his trip together with another local MP was necessary, was to the village of Golintsi (today the Mladenovo neighbourhood in the town of Lom) (Ibid.). The details of this case are not known, but in all probability, the problems were related to the local Gypsies, who established their own Gypsy Baptist Church in the 1920s (Славкова, 2007, pp. 78–81; Marushiakova & Popov, 2021b, pp. 152–153).

The leading line in the activity of Shakir Pashov and the leadership of the organisation at that time was strengthening the unity of the Gypsy community, regardless of its internal heterogeneity. Already in the first issue of the newspaper *Romano esi*, the festive speech on the occasion of the Gypsy holiday on the day of St Basil notes:

There are still bad manifestations and irregularities in our organisational life in the relations between Christian Gypsies and Muslim Gypsies, but we hope that the power of the Fatherland Front will help us to overcome some old understandings, to remove the obstacles created by reactionaries in our circles, and to work for the cultural uplift of the Gypsies and the success of Fatherland Front Bulgaria. (Романо еси, 1946b, p. 1).

At the same time, the newspaper calls on “those our compatriots who hide under the name of Bulgarians or Turks to take off their masks and join our organisation to raise it to a higher level, because they are Gypsies by blood, they should not hide but respond to the invitation of our organisation, because they are responsible to their conscience” (Романо еси, 1947a, p. 1).

The only exception to this leading discourse is the attitude towards the Gypsy nomads:

There are Gypsies among us who we despise and who are to be despised, and those are the nomadic Gypsies (wanderers) who have no settled permanent residence [and] who lie exclusively on the backs of their wives, who in turn are engaged in divination, divination, theft. That is why it is time for our country to deal with this issue as soon as possible and to take timely measures to limit the vagrancy (wanderings) and those [of them] wishing to settle to be allocated with land and be involved in useful community service. (Романо еси, 1946d, p. 2).

This attitude towards Gypsy nomads should not come as a surprise. In the process of Roma civic emancipation in the period between the two world wars, throughout the region of Central, South-Eastern and Eastern Europe, the new Roma civic elite has a similar attitude to the problem of Gypsy nomadism; and even more, for several decades the Gypsy activists in the USSR called on the Soviet state to sedentarise the Gypsy nomads (Marushiakova & Popov, 2020c, pp. 265–276). Ultimately, this idea found its realisation through the Decree of the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet of the USSR from 1956, which was followed over the years by more or less similar measures in all countries in the region of the so-called socialist camp (Marushiakova & Popov, 2008b).

As an MP, Shakir Pashov also put a lot of effort into the development of education, social and cultural life in the Gypsy neighbourhoods. In 1947 he managed to get special funding of over 3 million leva for the construction of a school in the mahala 'Fakulteta', and he personally took the first steps for the construction of the new building (ASR, f. Шакир Пашов, а.е. Автобиография), in which in the same year was opened the First Gypsy School, named after the famous Soviet pedagogue Anton Makarenko (AK, f. 13, op. 1, a.e. 759, l. 145; Стоянова, 2017, pp. 157–158). The adjective 'Gypsy' indicates that it educates Gypsy children but according to its program it offered mainstream education and common curricula. In the following years such 'Gypsy schools' began to open in different places in the country – Varna, Berkovitsa, Sliven, Kyustendil, Lom, etc. (AK, f. 13, op. 1, a.e. 759, l. 145). In the same way, Gypsy *chitalishta* (Cultural Reading Clubs, kind of community houses) began to be established in the neighbourhoods, where various forms of social and cultural life developed – clubs for political education, literacy courses for adults, music and dance theatre groups, etc. (Стоянова, 2017, pp. 204–205). In Sofia, in 1946 the Sports Association *Naangle* (Forward) was established with its own football team. A photo of Shakir Pashov with the team has been preserved (ASR, f. Фотографии).

At that time, there was a serious debate among Gypsy activists, for which there is almost no historical evidence. An undated photograph has been preserved showing six Gypsy young men holding a large poster with the inscription *Gypsy Alphabet*. The images of the letters in this alphabet are obviously original works of its creators, the names of five of which are written on the photo itself: Tseko, Kune, Sulio, Yashko and Yashar (ASR, f. Фотографии). We were able to identify with certainty only two of them, namely Sulyo Metkov and Yashar Malikov, and the rest remained unknown.

In 1947, a short announcement was made in the pages of the *Romano esi* newspaper that the "draft of the Gypsy alphabet" would be published in the next issue of the newspaper and that grammar and dictionary of the Gypsy language are currently being developed (Романо еси, 1947с, p. 2). In the same issue of the newspaper was published the polemical article by Nikola Terzobaliev from Sliven, entitled *Is it Necessary to Have a Minority Organisation of Gypsies* (Романо еси, 1947b, pp. 1–2), according to which "some of our compatriots claim that if we do not have a Gypsy alphabet, for what use is this [Gypsy] organisation for us" (and for Terzobaliev himself "script is not our goal").

In the next issue of the newspaper, however, there is not a word on the subject of the Gypsy alphabet. It can be assumed with a high degree of probability that the idea of creating a written language for the Gypsies did not find support from the authorities supervising the organisation.

Shakir Pashov was especially proud of his role in the creation of the Gypsy Theatre, to which he devoted a lot of space in his memories. The theatre was created by uniting several music-, dance- and theatre-groups existed at different neighbourhood *chitalishta* in Sofia in 1947 (ASR, f. Шакир Пашов, а.е. Автобиография). The creation of the theatre took place after the direct intervention of the party and state leader Georgi Dimitrov, with whom they have an old friendship:

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 [...], 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. (Ibid.).

Shakir Pashov visited Georgi Dimitrov in his office and proposed to him to create a Gypsy theatre on the model of the famous Gypsy Theatre *Romen* in Moscow, about which the newspaper *Romano esi* published a large article (Романо еси, 1946e, p. 1). Georgi Dimitrov was immediately ignited by this idea and ordered an additional 2 million leva to be included in the budget, with which the *Central Gypsy Theatre 'Roma'* was established with director Shakir Pashov (Ibid.). Under his direction, the theatre presented in Sofia in the spring of 1948 its first production, the play *Gypsy Rhapsody* by the Bulgarian writer Alexander Gerginov.

The premiere play *Gypsy Rhapsody* was a free dramatic interpretation of Alexander Pushkin's famous poem *Gypsies*, combined with many Gypsy songs and dances (from today's point of view, the play would probably be accused of exoticising the Gypsies). As a side note, its screenwriter Alexander Gerginov is known for being the first Bulgarian writer to turn his work into a successful business (Бенбачат, 2016, pp. 18–26), and his novel *The Girl from the Gypsy Cabaret* (a typical boulevard reading) has undergone several editions and is perhaps a book with the highest print-run in Bulgarian literature until 1944 (Ibid.).

After its establishment, the *Central Gypsy Theatre 'Roma'* performed with great success for two months in the capital, and then, in the summer of the same year, it went on tour around the country and visited various cities (Plovdiv, Stara Zagora, Yambol, Sliven, Burgas, Shumen, Tolbuhin (now Dobrich) and Varna, and everywhere was greeted enthusiastically by the local audience (Пашов, 1957, pp. 127–128). Despite the successful tour, due to unresolved financial issues, Shakir Pashov had to give his watch and a golden ring in a pawnshop in the city of Varna to be able to buy train tickets so that the artists and musicians can go home (SCA, f. 1 Б, оп. 8, а.е. 596, л. 37; Дром дромендар, 1998, p. 3). According to some testimonies (Дром дромендар, 1998, p. 3), at that time Shakir Pashov wrote the theatre-play *The White Gypsy Woman*, but it has not been discovered so far. Also, according to the memoirs of his contemporaries and his heirs he wrote poems, which are also not discovered yet.

The successes achieved by Shakir Pashov in the field of Roma civic emancipation, however, are accompanied by a side effect that can be understood in the spirit of the times, given the specific historical context. In the second half of the 1940s in the USSR already

dominated the so-called cult of personality of Stalin, and similar cults of the respective party leaders were created in the countries of Central and South-Eastern Europe, where the local communist parties came to power. It is natural, that these processes continue to develop at a lower level, and accordingly in the circles of Gypsy activism appeared a cult of personality of Shakir Pashov. This is most clearly seen in the pages of the newspaper *Romano esi*, of which he is the editor-in-chief, texts (usually solemn words and congratulations on various festive occasions) written by Shakir Pashov himself (Романо еси, 1948b), or materials dedicated to his personality such as “Leader and Teacher” of the Gypsies, who will “outline the path of our Nation” (Романо еси, 1948a, p. 2). There were even created poems in his honour, one of which ends with words:

Long live Stalin, Tito, Dimitrov,
And the Comrade [Shakir] M[ahmudov] Pashov! (Романо еси, 1948d, p. 4).

This poem became a basis for a widely known literary (and historical) mystification. In one of his books, the famous Bulgarian poet, satirist and dissident Radoy Ralin (pseudonym of Dimitar Stoyanov, 1922–2004) published a poem written by him, the authorship of which he attributed to Shakir Pashov (Ралин, 1987, pp. 125–126). The text of Radoy Ralin’s poem is interwoven with separate fragments of two naive poetic texts dedicated to Shakir Pashov with authors Sadak Ismailov and Aliya Ismailov (passage from which is quoted above) from the village of Popitsa, district of Byala Slatina (Ibid.) What were Radoy Ralin’s motives for this blatant falsification can only be guessed at, but it caused a serious blow to Shakir Pashov’s public image. Moreover, nowadays this text continues to be actively used for mocking not only Shakir Pashov but also Gypsies in general (see, for example, 168 часа, 2016), i.e. its public effect remains the same.

In 1948 there was an acute crisis in the Gypsy movement. The first signs of its maturation appeared in the previous year when the article of Nikola Terzobaliev from Sliven was published in the newspaper *Romano esi* with the indicative title *Is It Necessary to Have a Minority Organisation of Gypsies*, from which it is clear that among Gypsy activists there are serious controversies, not so much over whether there should be such an organisation, but rather what kind it should be (Романо еси, 1947b, pp. 1–2).

The existing contradictions among the Gypsy activists were reflected in the results of the National Conference of the *Common Cultural and Educational Organisation of the Gypsy Minority in Bulgaria*, held on May 2, 1948. This conference confirmed the organisation’s commitment to the policy of the Fatherland Front, which at that time had already turned from a political coalition into a mass public organisation led by the Communist Party. However, the close connection with the Fatherland Front had unexpected consequences both for the Gypsy organisation and for Shakir Pashov himself. An Initiative Committee headed by Mustafa Aliyev was elected at the National Conference, which should lead the activities of the Gypsy minority until the First Congress of the organisation (Пашов, 1957, p. 124). This change was obviously planned in advance, as can be

guessed from the fact that in the issue of the newspaper *Romano esi*, published on the eve of the conference (Романо еси, an. 3, No. 10, 30.04. 1948), to the editor Shakir Pashov was added the editorial board of Mustafa Aliyev, Tair Selimov and Sulyo Metkov. At the conference, it was also decided that the Theatre *Roma* will be placed under the direct control of the Minority Committee of the National Council of Fatherland Front (SCA, f. 1 B, op. 8, a.e. 596, l. 63). In this way, a specific dual power was formed in the Gypsy movement, as the two sides (Shakir Pashov and the Initiative Committee) engaged in a fierce struggle against each other. This struggle included sending statements to various institutions with accusations against opponents and the corresponding rebuttals, which led to a financial audit of the Theatre *Roma*, where the management was repeatedly changed and eventually taken over by Shakir Pashov's opponents), as well as a comprehensive financial audit, and in some cases, even led to physical blows (Ibid., l. 40; AK, f. 13, op. 1, a.e. 774, l. 26–27).

The specific reason for most of the mutual accusations is related to the financial and artistic problems of the Theatre *Roma*, but this is only the specific inducement behind the much more serious differences in visions for the present and future of the Gypsy movement. According to the inspection by the National Council of Fatherland Front, there were two currents in the Gypsy organisation, one of which was headed by Shakir Pashov, and “the other current was led by young communists who ruthlessly and unsystematically criticised his actions” (SCA, f. 1 B, op. 8, a.e. 596, l. 62). These “young communists”, coming out on behalf of the Primary Party Organisation ‘Saliko’ of the Bulgarian Communist Party, III district – Gypsy Minority – Sofia, in a statement to the Regional Committee of the Party, with a copy to the Central Committee of the Party, accused Shakir Pashov that he spreads among the Gypsies the “chauvinistic dirty slander”, that the new management of the theatre had “handed it over to the Bulgarians” (ibid.). The statement against Shakir Pashov was in fact signed by the Secretary of the Party Organisation ‘Saliko’, uniting the Gypsy Communists in Sofia, Tair Selimov, as well as by the members of its leadership Lyubomir Aliyev (former Mustafa Aliyev, future Manush Romanov), Sulyo Metkov, Angel Blagoev and A. Osmanov (Ibid., l. 41). The Gypsy Primary Party Organisation was named after Saliko Yasharov, a member of the Workers’ Youth Union (a Communist Party youth organisation), who died at the front during the Second World War (when Bulgaria fought as an ally of the USSR against the German army in Yugoslavia and Hungary).

The accusations against Shakir Pashov were an integral part of the materials related to the two “warring groups” in the Gypsy organisation, and on its basis, the State Security began an active investigation of Shakir Pashov giving him for this purpose the pseudonym ‘Durak’ (Fool in Russian) (AK, f. 13, op. 1, a.e. 774, l. 27–28). In the course of this investigation, other allegations were added to his file. The most serious of these was that an inspection of the materials at the former police directorate revealed that in 1930, after his return from Turkey, he had signed a declaration of cooperation with the police, and during the Second World War he had assisted the authorities in the forced labour mobilisation of Gypsies from Sofia, indicating to them which Gypsies to be mobilised (CSA, f. 2124 K, op.1, a.e. 108107, l. 2). At the same time, he was accused of leading the

Muslim organisation *Istikbal*, which was declared to serve the interests of Turkey, as well as organising the Gypsies to giving homage at the coffin of Tsar Boris III at his death in 1943 (AK, f. 13, op. 1, a.e. 774, l. 27). A special place among the accusations against Shakir Pashov was given to his actions as leader of the Gypsy organisation after 1945 and a Member of Parliament when he actively pursued a “nationalist policy among the Gypsy minority” (CSA, f. 2124 K, op.1, a.e. 108107, l. 2). In addition to the accusations against Shakir Pashov, it was added that as an MP he issued state secrets and handed them over to Nikola Petkov’s supporters (leader of the opposition against the government of the Fatherland Front, hanged in 1947), for which claim no specific supporting materials were given (CSA, f. 2124 K, op.1, a.e. 108107, l. 2).

Shakir Pashov’s attempts to defend himself and change the course of events were unsuccessful. He sent statements to various institutions (SCA, f. 1 Б, op. 8, a.e. 596), while at the same time trying to secure the support of the Roma community – according to the State Security data, he sent over 160 letters to the Gypsy organisations in the country (AK, f. 13, op. 1, a.e. 774, l. 30). However, these efforts proved futile. In the autumn of 1949, the City Committee of the Bulgarian Communist Party excluded Shakir Pashov from the party (CSA, f. 1 Б, op. 8, a.e. 596, l. 1; Стоянова, 2017, p. 400). In the parliamentary elections held on December 18, 1949, Shakir Pashov was not included in the candidate lists, and Petko Kostov Yankov from Sliven entered the National Assembly as a representative of the Gypsies (Personal communication with Gospodin Kolev, March 14, 2004). The subsequent changes in the leadership of the Gypsy organisation Shakir Pashov describes as follows:

Dissatisfied members of the minority were found, and unfortunately, young ones, claiming to have a larger culture, who undermined the general enthusiasm and planted a bomb under the feet of this activity to destroy everything that has been created with so much effort so far. In year 1950, July month, at the insistence of these dissatisfied young people, to avoid a split in our circles, the Sofia organisation and the Central Committee of all [local] organisations were ceded to the dissatisfied young people. The same, of course, happened with the Theatre *Roma*. (Пашов, 1957, p. 131).

The historical sources interpreted the course of events very differently. On April 7, 1950, the Central Directorate of the *Cultural and Educational Organisation of the Gypsy Minority in Bulgaria* decided:

The leadership of the Gypsy minority punishes Shakir Pashov by removing him from the post of chairman of the Cultural and Educational Organisation of the Gypsy Minority in Bulgaria for his anti-people activity before September 9, 1944, as a police officer, and for destructive activity after that date and excludes him from the rank of the organisation forever. (AK, f. 13, op. 1, a.e. 774, l. 30).

This decision was publicly announced on the front page of the newspaper *Nevo drom* (New Way) with editor-in-chief Lyubomir Aliyev, that succeeded the newspaper *Romano esi* as the organisation’s publication; together with this announcement, it was also

declared that comrade Nikola Petrov Terzobaliev from the town of Sliven has been elected as the new chairman of the Gypsy organisation (Нево дром, 1950, p. 1). On April 15, 1950, was held a general assembly of the Gypsy National Chitalishte named after September 9, chaired by Lyubomir Aliyev, at which Shakir Pashov's activity was exposed as "harmful" for the Gypsy minority (Ibid.).

The future of the *Common Cultural and Educational Organisation of the Gypsy Minority in Bulgaria* after the removal of Shakir Pashov is an unhappy one. The end of the organisation was embodied in the recommendations given by the representative of the National Council of Fatherland Front of the Republic of Bulgaria in results of the inspection of the Theatre *Roma* in 1948. These recommendations proposed a complete structural change in the organisation – to transform the Central Initiative Committee into a Minority Commission of the National Council of the Fatherland Front, "to be instructed and led directly by the National Council of the Fatherland Front"; to proceed in the same way with the district and city structures of the organisation; Theatre *Roma* to also come under the direct authority of the Minority Commission and the National Council of Fatherland Front (CSA, f. 1 Б, op. 8, a.e. 596, l. 62–63). The "young communists" also contributed to the reformatting (and de facto liquidation) of the Gypsy organisation according to these lines, which is most clearly seen in an extensive report written by Tair Selimov from 1950, at that time already an instructor at the National Council of Fatherland Front, which almost literally repeats these recommendations (AK, f. 13, op. 1, a.e. 759, l. 147–148). The natural result was there – the local Gypsy organisations merged as sections into the Fatherland Front, which ceased to be differentiated as "Gypsy", but only as territorial.

This ultimately led to the cessation of the existence of the Gypsy organisation itself. The latest issue of her newspaper *Nevo drom* is the one in which the announcement of the removal of Shakir Pashov as head of the Gypsy organisation was published. The fate of the Gypsy theatre was similar. By Decision № 389 of November 25, 1949, the Secretariat of the Central Committee of the Bulgarian Communist Party proposed that the Central Gypsy Theatre *Roma* remain in existence (there was also a proposal to disband it), but now with the status of a "semi-professional" theatre included in the system of the neighbourhood chitalishta (at that time separated by ethnicity) (CSA, f. 1 Б, op. 8, a.e. 596, l. 1–2). Thus, the theatre was transferred to the Gypsy National Chitalishte "September 9" (the date of the so-called Socialist Revolution in Bulgaria) in Sofia, and in the early 1950s it gradually ceased to exist, and its director Lyubomir Aliyev returned to his old name (Mustafa) and began working as a director in the Turkish theatres in Haskovo and Kardzhali.

Shakir Pashov was put under constant surveillance by the State Security (AK, f. 13, op. 1, a.e. 759), and on September 10, 1951, he was interned into the concentration camp (officially 'Labour-Educational Camp') on Belene island in Danube river (CSA, f. 2124 K, op. 1, a.e. 108107, l. 2). Despite the difficult conditions, he managed to survive thanks to his ironwork skills – according to the memories of his family, he was assigned to take care of the maintenance of the work tools used by the prisoners. According to Shakir Pashov's

file at the Ministry of the Interior, the investigation of his case on co-operation with the police was terminated, and on August 10, 1953, he was released but not rehabilitated (CSA, f. 2124 K, op. 1, a.e. 108107, l. 1–4).

After his return to Sofia, Shakir Pashov focused his main efforts on the preparation of his book *История на циганите в България и Европа: “Рома”* (History of the Gypsies in Bulgaria and Europe: “Roma”) (Пашов, 1957). The manuscript of this book dates from 1957. It is interesting to note that in the title of the manuscript for the first time in Bulgaria the self-appellation of the community, ‘Roma’ is brought to the fore, although the text itself adheres to the use of the common at that time term ‘цигани’ (Gypsies). He pinned great hopes on this book as an opportunity to receive political rehabilitation for his overall activities in the field of the Gypsy movement. Hence his attempts to give such an interpretation of the history of this movement (even at the cost of withholding some facts) that it would be positively assessed by the ruling communist regime, which has been mentioned more than once above.

Shakir Pashov sent his book for evaluation and approval to the Central Committee of the Bulgarian Communist Party, but the manuscript was not published and sank into the party archives. However, Shakir Pashov still received partial rehabilitation. He started working at the Gypsy National Chitalishte ‘The September 9’, chaired by Tair Selimov at the time (Неве ромá, 1957a, pp. 1–2). There he, in 1956, organised the amateur art and music group “Roma”, led by Yashar Malikov (Pashov, 1957, p. 133), i.e. restored in some form the Gypsy theatre. In the same year, he was included in the editorial board of the new newspaper, *Неве ромá* (New Gypsies), which started publishing the following year, as a body of the Gypsy National Chitalishte ‘The September 9’ (Ibid., p. 137). Separate parts of his book have been published in the newspaper (Неве ромá, 1957c, p. 4; 1957f, p. 4). In the Brick Factory neighbourhood (or Boyana mahala), where he lived, Shakir Pashov organised the Sports Sector “Roma” (Неве ромá, 1957d, p. 4). He organised also Gypsy musical artistic evening in cinema Petar Beron and a large meeting of young Gypsy activists was held in the Gypsy Chitalishte, at which Shakir Pashov recounted memories of the early stages of the Gypsy movement, and then all participants laid a wreath at the Mausoleum of Georgi Dimitrov (Неве ромá, 1957e, p. 1).

Soon, however, serious problems arose again for Shakir Pashov. An article by Demir Shankov from Lom, a medical student in Sofia, was published in the newspaper *Неве ромá*, with the title “Do we need an organisation now?”. The newspaper’s editorial board proposed to discuss it by the Gypsies on the ground and that to comment the raised issue (Неве ромá, 1957b, p. 1–2). After several issues, at the end of 1957, the newspaper published the report delivered by Demir Shankov at the meeting “in connection with the resumption of the Gypsy cultural and educational organisation” (Неве ромá, 1957g, p. 1). Apparently, this event was not coordinated with the institutions and approved by them, because the relevant sanctions followed. The newspaper *Неве ромá* stopped to be published, and from then on there was no mention of a Gypsy organisation anywhere.

In connection with this case, after receiving a letter from the Central Committee of the Bulgarian Communist Party, the Ministry of Interior started again an investigating of Shakir Pashov. In 1959 the work on the case was terminated and his file was finally closed (CSA, f. 2124 K, op. 1, a.e. 108107). However, he and his wife were expelled from Sofia and sent to live in the village of Rogozina, in Dobrudzha without right to move to another place.

Shakir Pashov and his wife lived in the village of Rogozina for three years (1959–1962). A photograph of their stay there has been preserved, showing that they live in a small, poor house, apparently in difficult conditions. According to the memories of Shakir Pashov's heirs, during this stay, he was greatly helped by his good command of the Turkish language and his iron skills. He began making beds with iron springs, which he sold to local ethnic Turks, who paid him with gold coins, and the family returned to Sofia with significant savings.

After Shakir Pashov returned to Sofia, he retired. In the late 1960s, the Gypsy mahala Boyana (neighbourhood Brick Factory) was liquidated due to the expansion of Sofia and the construction of new residential complexes, its inhabitants were compensated with new apartments, and Shakir Pashov moved to live in the new built residential area "Druzhba".

At his new residence Shakir Pashov continued to be socially active and for many years was chairman of a local Fatherland Front organisation (ASR, f. Шакир Пашов, a.e. Автобиография). At the same time, he fought for his party's rehabilitation. In 1967 Shakir Pashov's membership in the Bulgarian Communist Party was restored (ASR, f. Шакир Пашов). However, in the book *The Gypsy Population in Bulgaria on the Path of Socialism* (one of the authors of which is Tair Selimov Tairov), published in 1968, his name is not mentioned at all (Генюв et al., 1968). For the first time in the public space again, his name appears in an article dedicated to him, published in 1974 in the newspaper *Nov pat* (Gypsy newspaper, published by the National Council of Fatherland Front) (Нов път, 1974). In 1976, Shakir Pashov received the title of *Active Fighter against Fascism and Capitalism*, which gave him the right to so-called 'personal people's pension' and many other social privileges.

Shakir Pashov died on October 5, 1981, shortly before his 83rd birthday. There were no media reports about his death, and according to the memories of his relatives, only his relatives and a small number of close friends were present at his funeral; in front of his grave, Manush Romanov (Mustafa/Lyubomir Aliyev) publicly asked for forgiveness from the dead man. However, the report of Gospodin Kolev, an instructor in the Central Committee of the Bulgarian Communist Party, reveals another picture of Shakir Pashov's funeral. About 130–150 Gypsies from all neighbourhoods of Sofia were present. In the ritual hall, a representative of the BKP neighbourhood organisation, where the deceased was a member, delivered a speech emphasising his merits in the fight against fascism and capitalism and for the happiness and prosperity of all his proletarian brothers, without mentioning his ethnic origin. In his speech, Mustafa Aliyev called the deceased "Our

Father” and stressed that his life as a communist – a fighter for the happiness of the people – would be an example for the living and that his work would live. Before the body was laid in the grave, a ritual was performed according to the dogmas of Islam – washing the corpse of the deceased, and at the grave, a *hodja* (imam) performed the appropriate prayer. Tair (already re-named to Tihomir) Tairov also spoke at the grave, outlining the activities of Shakir Pashov as the founder of the progressive movement of the Gypsies in Bulgaria and emphasising that throughout his life he was faithful to the work of the Bulgarian Communist Party and worked actively for the happiness and prosperity of all Bulgarian people (CSA, f. 16, op. 89, a.e. 139, l. 44–45).

One year after Shakir Pashov’s death, a memorial obituary was published (according to the customs in South-Eastern Europe, such obituaries are displayed in public places). The obituary depicts a drawing of Shakir Pashov with clear symbolism – he is depicted sitting behind a desk, with a pipe in mouth, behind him a bookshelf, on the desk in front of him a telephone, the manuscripts of four newspapers (Тербие, Романо еси, Неве дром и Неве ромá), and the inscription “History of the Gypsies”. The obituary does not indicate on whose behalf it was issued, which is something very unusual, and this mystery remains unsolved to this day. The text on it is as follows:

November 5, 1982, marks one year since the death of SHAKIR MAHMUDOV PASHOV. Let everyone remember the organiser of the Gypsy cultural and educational organisation in Bulgaria, the creator of the newspaper Romano esi. For the founder of the Central Gypsy Theatre *Roma*. For the communist-anti-fascist and fighter against capitalism and fascism. For the first Gypsy MP in the Grand National Assembly. For the man with the big heart. A bow! (ASR, f. Шакир Пашов).

Shakir Pashov lived a long and eventful life, going through many vicissitudes and even oscillating in different directions. Invariably remains only the leading pillar in his social and political activity – the work for his community, the striving to direct it and lead it to a comprehensive and all-encompassing civic emancipation.

Sliven’s Communists

Plamena Stoyanova

In Bulgaria, the Socialist Movement, which would eventually become the Communist Movement, emerged in 1891 at the time of the founding of the Bulgarian Social-Democratic Party (BSDP). In 1894, after the union of the two different wings of the movement, the party was renamed to Bulgarian Workers’ Social-Democratic Party (BRSDP). In 1930, the party split in two, thus forming the ‘Narrow Socialists’ (the future communists) and the ‘Broad Socialists’. In 1919, the BRSDP (narrow socialists) was re-named as the Bulgarian Communist Party (BKP) and it became closely connected to the International

Communist Movement (Comintern) dominated by the USSR. In 1924, the party was once again re-named as Bulgarian Working Party (communists), and, finally, in 1954, it went back to its old name of BKP.

One of the centres of the socialist/communist movement in Bulgaria was the city of Sliven. This was the city where, in 1836, the Bulgarian Dobri Zhelyazkov founded the first textile factory in the Ottoman Empire. The factory marked the beginning of the textile industry in the Balkans and gave sustenance to generations of Sliven families. From the very beginning, the majority of the hired workers were Gypsies who had neither land nor sustainable crafts, and who, unlike the majority of Bulgarians, were used to working as hired labourers. In 1890, in the already independent Bulgarian state, the number of textile factories grew to 12 (CSA, f. 1 Б, No. 2005, l. 19), and many Gypsy workers continued to work there. That working environment proved to be fertile soil for the penetration of socialist (and later communist) ideas.

In 1900, the 7th congress of the BRSDP took place in Sliven, with the participation of prominent socialists, like Dimitar Blagoev (leader of the Party), Yanko Sakazov, Georgi Kirkov, and others. After the opening rally, the party supporters organised a march that crossed the town, including the Gypsy mahala, which was not accidental, and was a sign of the influence the BRSDP had among the Gypsy proletariat. At the parliamentary election in 1901, the first and only deputy seat that went to the BRSDP was that of Georgi Kirkov, who was elected in Sliven with the support of the Gypsy voters (Ibid., l. 38). In the next elections, in 1902, the BRSDP received two deputy seats in Sliven, one of which again went to Georgi Kirkov (Ibid., l. 56). During the socialist period in Bulgaria, the Gypsy neighbourhood, through which he had solemnly passed in 1900 with the 7th BRSDP congress march, was named after him.

The importance of the Gypsy votes for the parliamentary election results in Sliven was underlined by Dimitar Blagoev in his correspondence with Georgi Kirkov:

I am very pleased with the fact that the party had won over the majority of the proletariat in Sliven, who are ready to support the party candidates. I was particularly impressed with that part in your letter, in which you recount the attitude towards our party of the working-class voters from the Gypsy area of Sliven (which attitude, I understand, is not accidental). This is especially interesting given the fact that almost everywhere else the Gypsy population is considered an indisputable and constant 'dowry' of the government party (Дечева, 2000, p. 44).

Nikola Kochev

Nikola Kochev (1873–1923) was one of the first supporters of socialist ideas among the Gypsies in Sliven. He was born in the village of Ichera, nearby Sliven, in the family of ironmongers. His mother died while giving birth to him and, for the first 2–3 years of his life, he was raised by his aunt. Later, his family moved to Sliven, to the so-called Mangâr mahala. He grew up very studious and graduated from 4th grade with good marks. At the age of 13, he started working in the *Kalovs' Brothers* Factory, where he worked as a weaver

for the next 25 years. He impressed both his co-workers and his neighbours with his energetic personality, and he quickly gained the respect of leading union activists working in the same factory. Nikola Kochev became a member of the first local Social Democratic group from its very inception (DA Sliven, f. 241 Б, l. 1). In the fall of 1894, he participated in the founding of the first working-class club in Sliven, which contributed significantly to the spreading of the socialist ideas there (Дечева, 2000, p. 43). Four years later, in 1898, he helped the foundation and led the working-class club *Consciousness*, whose goal was to fight for the “immediate concerns of the workers in the Sliven factories” (DA Sliven, f. 241 Б, l. 1).

In 1903, the Sliven textile workers went on a big strike. In the socialist club, the workers discussed and formulated their demands that included: raising the wages, abolishing all fines and salary cuts, no work during holidays, timely payments, etc. The working-class club helped with the gathering of aid for the families of the striking workers, as well as with the tracking of the strike-breakers, and one of the most active in this was Nikola Kochev. As his contemporaries noted:

I would like to emphasise the fact that Nikola Kochev was most conscientious in his work. He would always bring the most accurate evidence. He would place himself in the bushes above the Jewish mill way before sunrise – further than the current mill Hadzhi Dimitar, where he would track who of the workers went to work, and if anybody tried to do so, he would take immediate measures and would convince him not to go to work (CSA, f. 1 Б, No. 2005, l. 71).

According to his contemporaries, Nikola Kochev was charismatic and consistent in his convictions. He created his own circle of supporters in the Gypsy neighbourhood and tried relentlessly to spread the ideas of socialism among his fellow citizens. At that time, another Gypsy man, Dimitar Champarov, was his friend and close comrade-in-arms. However, after the splitting of the BRSDP in 1903, Nikola Kochev took the side of Dimitar Blagoev (Narrow Socialists), and Dimitar Champarov joined Yanko Sakazov (Broad Socialists). This ideological discrepancy between the two men, determined the end of their friendship, as according to Nikola Kochev: “A worker who is not on the side of our party is an enemy of our fight and a supporter of the *chorbadzhis* (bosses, the rich ones, i.e. bourgeois)” (DA Sliven, f. 241 Б, l. 1).

Nikola Kochev was one of the initiators of the founding of the textile workers’ union in 1904, which was joined from the very beginning by a significant number of Gypsies. Among those were Dimitar Tsandev, Dimitar Kratsov, Georgi Palev, Dimitar Rukov, Petko Terzobaliev, Vasil Stambolov, and others (Дечева, 2000, p. 43). In those days, the Gypsies accounted for about 80% of the workers in the Sliven factories, which prompted Georgi Kirkov and other party functionaries to pay special attention to their work with them. In 1904, for example, Nikola Kochev oversaw 17 active members of the BRSDP (Narrow Socialists) in the Gypsy neighbourhood of Sliven (Ibid.). When a professional textile workers’ union with headquarters in Sliven was organised under the aegis of BRSDP

(Narrow Socialists), he became a permanent and active member alongside other Gypsy workers, like Todor Keleshev, Petar Keleshev, and others (DA Sliven, f. 879, op. 2, a.e. 2, l. 3). As a union member he was elected multiple times to act as a delegate of the textile workers union in Sliven at the general union congresses held in Gabrovo, Sofia, Plovdiv, Shumen, Varna, and other places around the country (DA Sliven, f. 241 B, l. 2).

However, Nikola Kochev did not limit his activities to the textile workers union and the strike committees only. In 1911, the BRSDP (narrow socialists) won 8 mandates in the local elections and gained an important role in the local municipal self-government, thus marking the beginning of the so-called Sliven commune (1912–1923), which (following those in Dryanovo and Samokov) was one of the first city municipalities governed by socialists/communists (Лазарова, 2008, p. 279). In the 1915 elections the party won 13 mandates and a majority in the municipal council (consisting of 20 members.)

The Sliven commune participated in the governing of the municipality for a total of 11 consecutive years – a period that encompassed the two Balkan Wars (1912–1913) and the First World War (1914–1918). During all that time Nikola Kochev held the position of a city councillor and thus became the first representative of the Gypsy minority to participate in the governing of the city (DA Sliven, f. 241 B, l. 2). The Sliven commune became a unifying centre for the workers' movement and party activities and initiatives. It prepared and implemented a municipal management program, which included socially-oriented activities like the opening of free canteens, daycare centers and summer camps for socially disadvantaged kids, as well as evening schools for the workers, medical care, improvement and sanitisation of the working neighbourhoods, etc. (Лазарова, 2008, p. 279), which were also aimed at the Gypsy population of Sliven.

At the end of the First World War the social and economic situation in Bulgaria was tense. Food was scarce despite the introduction of food coupons while, at the same time, some factories stopped working, which increased unemployment. This all led to the so-called 'women's riots' in various cities around the country, organised (or at least supported) by the socialist movement. On May 17, 1918, the demands for bread and the return of the men from the war front escalated in Sliven. Active participants were members of the workers' union, and the only victims killed were two young Gypsies – Peyu Dimitrov Yonkov (who became known in history under the name of Peyo Dachev), and Tyana Malakova (known also as Tyana Neva). According to preserved records, this happened when Peyo Dachev, at that time 18-year-old textile worker, led the protesters from the northern Gypsy neighbourhood (the so-called Upper mahala). They started their march at 9 in the morning and joined the general workers' protest in the centre of Sliven. The female workers from the Gypsy neighbourhood were among the active participants in the unrest. Among them were Nevyana Georgieva, Slava Petkova, Ivanka Kurteva, and others (Дечева, 2000, p. 47). The demonstrators, armed with stones and wooden sticks, smashed the windows of storefronts and wealthy houses. In meantime, the army and gendarmerie gathered downtown received an order to fire at the protestors, and as a result, Peyo Dachev was shot. Tyana Neva, who tried to administer first aid to him was

also killed. The tensions escalated, but eventually, the uprising was put down (Дечева, 2000, p. 46). After the bloody suppression of the protests, the building of the first textile factory (the one founded by Dobri Zhelyazkov), which had been turned into a prison in 1904, housed for the first time, female political prisoners, and thus men and women, as well as criminal and political prisoners were mixed together.

Nikola Kochev was not arrested during those events. The following year (1919), he participated in the big transportation strike of the railway workers, which spread across the entire country, and which was organised by the General Trade Union, that was under the aegis of the newly named Bulgarian Communist Party. Nikola Kochev was remembered as one of the first Gypsies in Sliven who became dedicated to the socialist idea. This is how he was described by some of his contemporaries:

Gifted with natural intelligence, modest, incredibly honest and conscientious, he won admiration and respect. His stooping figure and dark-skinned, rough face did not conceal the radiance of his soul and his truly kind heart. His dedication to the fight for workers' liberation was remarkable. He worked impeccably both in the party organisation and in the textile union. He worked tirelessly among his people – the Gypsy minority – for their cultural uplift. He suffered a lot because they – his compatriots – found it difficult to succumb to true culture (according to his words). His speeches at the party and union meetings were well thought out, and his suggestions well-argued (CSA, f. 1 B, No. 2005, l. 88).

Those memoirs were written in the typical declamatory style of heroic chronicles characteristic of the so-called socialist epoch, but it seems that Nikola Kochev was really respected and valued by his comrades-in-arms as well as by the Gypsies. When he died in 1923, his vigil was held not in his home, but in the Communist Party's club, and his sending off was a numerous mourning procession led by the party flag. As a sign of respect to him, during the time of socialism, the city of Sliven named after him a street in the Gypsy neighbourhood *Georgi Kirkov*, the neighbourhood's chitalishte, a neighbourhood kindergarten, as well as the Sliven's Gypsy song and dance ensemble (Ibid., l. 89). His name was given also to the other Gypsy neighbourhood, popularly known as the Lower mahala. Following the end of the communist regime in Bulgaria, the names were removed, nevertheless, the Roma from Sliven still refer to the neighbourhood as Nikola Kochev

Nikola Terzobaliev

Nikola Terzobaliev (1903–1981) was a prominent representative of the second generation of the Sliven socialists/communists. He was the son of one of the first Gypsy socialists – Petar Terzobaliev, a close associate of Nikola Kochev, and grew up in the atmosphere of strikes and socialist ideas. Like many other children from poor families, he started working in the Iliya G. Kalov's Factory from the age of 12 (or 13 according to other accounts) in order to help financially support his family while his father was mobilised at the front during the First World War (DA Sliven, f. 879, op. 1, a.e. 9, l. 1), and because of that, he managed to graduate only from third grade (Романо еси, 1946f, p. 1). His childhood was

cut short, his self-education, familiarity with socialist ideas and the influence of Nikola Kochev and Nikola Kokalov, who worked in the same factory as him, turned him into one of the prominent Gypsy activists in Sliven.

His youth coincided with the time of the October Revolution in Russia and the rapid growth of the communist movement in the city of Sliven. The workers' club *Hristo Botev* quickly became too small for all the followers of those socialist ideas, which necessitated the setting up of party organisations in the various city neighbourhoods. In 1919 his father, Petar Terzobaliev, was elected secretary of the BKP in the Gypsy neighbourhood, and his son Nikola became secretary of the youth Party organisation (Дечева, 2000, p. 47). In 1921 Nikola Terzobaliev was sent to study for three months at the political school in Sofia, which, according to him, had a great influence on his political development.

Nikola Terzobaliev was extremely active in the workers' political struggles led by the BKP, and he created his own circle of young like-minded Gypsies. Some of them can be seen in a group photo with him taken in 1921 – G. Nedev, Mikhail Christov, At. Vasilev, M. Golemanov, Petar Todorov, Dimitar Vasilev, Veliko Nikolov, Kostadin Marinov, Vasko Glavchev (DA Sliven, f. 879, op. 1, a.e 27, l. 4). Most of them actively joined him in the big textile workers' strike of 1922 – one of the many strikes in his life.

At the beginning of 1920, the world had already passed through a lot of radical changes. The communist movement in Bulgaria was already well developed and it had a good number of followers. Contact was established between the Comintern and the Bulgarian communists fighting for a proletarian revolution and a radical change in society. In the autumn of 1923, the so-called September uprising, organised by BKP and the left-wing of BZNS, was brutally suppressed and followed by numerous arrests. The repressions did not bypass Sliven either, although the city failed to revolt. However, there had been preliminary preparations for armed actions, and the city's Gypsies had taken an active part in them. Fifty-six rifles, six boxes of ammunition and eleven bombs were distributed to those in charge in the Gypsy Upper mahala, and five, armed battle groups were organised. At that time, Nikola Terzobaliev, who was a member of the party's regional leadership, was already the party secretary in the Gypsy neighbourhood, and his father Petar Terzobaliev, Nedyu Chakarov and Vasil Matsarov were also members of the BKP Regional Committee. A plan was prepared for the uprising, and it was expected to begin on the night of 22 September, but the arranged password for the beginning of the uprising was not given, and so it did not start (Дечева, 2000, p. 47). According to Terzobaliev this was due to the inaction of the city committee and the earlier arrests of party leaders (DA Sliven, f. 879, op. 1, a.e. 9, l. 2). After the start of the uprising in a few other cities around the country, around 150 people were arrested in Sliven. Among them, there were a lot of Gypsies, some of whom were convicted under military law (Дечева, 2000, p. 47).

Among those arrested were father and son Terzobaliev, who were taken to different places of interrogation. This is what Nikola Terzobaliev remembered about those events:

My dad was [taken] – to the 6th artillery regiment, and I was taken to the First Police station. Thanks to general [Vladimir] Zaimov, those taken to the artillery regiment were not subjected to harassment, torture, or killings. In the police station where the young people were, the police inspector [...], using a piece of wood and a wheel spoke, was hitting us at random. And so he hit me like that in my left knee, as a result of which I was sent to be treated at a hospital. Because of the powerful strike, the bone was cracked, my knee swelled, and I was left with a damaged knee for life. (DA Sliven, f. 879, op.1, a.e. 9, l. 2–3).

This was one of the many arrests in the life of Nikola Terzobaliev, whose health as a consequence would suffer seriously from the beatings incurred during police detentions. After his release in 1924, he was made secretary of the Local Committee of the BKP and was appointed head of a combat unit (Ibid., l. 3). The goal was for the BKP to be rebuilt illegally since it had been outlawed after the September events of 1923. The combat group of the Gypsy neighbourhood included 4 Gypsies – Georgi Zhelyazkov, Dimitar Kochev, Todor Bukhurov, and Peyo Khudov, as well as two Bulgarians living in the area. Nikola Terzobaliev was in charge of them as well as of the entire party organisation in the Gypsy neighbourhood (Дечева, 2000, p. 49).

The radicalisation of the BKP led to the assault in the church of the Holy Nedelya on April 16, 1925. In response, the government introduced new and increasingly more cruel repressions against the communists around the country. Nikola Terzobaliev was arrested on May 6, 1925, and kept in interrogation for 20 days, during which time he was subjected to cruel torture (DA Sliven, f. 879, op. 1, a.e. 9, l. 3). There are preserved accounts of his contemporaries that describe his serious physical condition as a result of those beatings (DA Sliven, f. 879, op. 1, a.e. 2, l. 2–4). Nikola Terzobaliev was sentenced to 12 years and a half in prison and a fine of 250,000 Bulgarian leva. Two years later he was released following a general amnesty, but he continued to be monitored by the authorities (DA Sliven, f. 879, op. 1, a.e. 9, l. 3–13).

After his release from prison at the beginning of 1927 Nikola Terzobaliev became a trustee of the newspaper *Единство* (Unity), a publication of the Independent Workers' Professional Unions (NRPS), because of which he was arrested again and interrogated. That same year he was hired at the *Merino* Factory and became actively engaged in the trade union activities of the textile workers. He participated in the leadership of the new organisation NRPS, which had been created in place of the old General Workers' Union, banned alongside the BKP in 1924 under the newly adopted Law for the Protection of the State. In order to have a legal form of political representation, the Workers' Party (RP) and the Workers' Youth Union (RMS) were created on the initiative of the illegal BKP. At that time, the communist ideas already had a wider influence among the Gypsies, as evidenced by a preserved photograph from that time of young Gypsies, members of the RMS, among whom we could identify several Gypsy women, namely Todorka Doncheva, Stefaniya Panayotova, Sotira Doncheva, Ruzha Kurteva, Sotira Pencheva, and Siyka Petrova, we well as Gypsy men – Kurti Dechev, Todor Russhev (RIM Sliven, No. 1437).

As it becomes clear from this photo, quite a few women were members of the Gypsy organisation of the RMS. That is, in that environment, the Gypsy women (at least in Sliven) confidently embarked on the path of their civic (and at the same time community) emancipation. This development was completely natural since women's equality was one of the fundamental principles of the proletarian socialist/communist movement, and in Sliven, the Gypsy women (at least the ones in the Upper mahala) were predominantly textile workers; many of them for generations. The strong female presence in the (pro-)communist movement is confirmed in another similar photo from 1928, also of young Gypsies, members of the RMS, in which can be seen Zakhariya Vachev, Kurteza Ruscheva, Mikhail Golemanov, Yordan Stambolov, Zhechka Chaknakova, Radi Salimanov, Nedka Stambolova, Vessa Raycheva, Decho Kurtev, Ivanka Decheva, and Shtilyana Zakharieva (RIM Sliven, No. 1440).

It has to be pointed out that the active participation in the political struggles did not exhaust all the dimensions of the movement for civic emancipation of the Roma in Sliven. In this case, there was a rather harmonious combination of those different dimensions, the participation in political struggles being only one of them, i.e. they were important, and in many cases may be the leading, but far from the only one, forms of expression of the Roma civic emancipation movement (see the Foreword for more details). Therefore, it was not accidental, but rather natural, that the same people (including Nikola Terzobaliev himself) found themselves involved in socio-political struggles, as well as in a number of other public initiatives aimed at the development of the Gypsy community and the establishment of its equal civil position. Typical examples in this regard were the establishment of the Gypsy Theater and the Gypsy Chitalishte in Sliven in the 1920s. A photograph with the inscription "Founders of the 1st Gypsy Theater Troupe, Sliven" has been preserved, dated March 2, 1927 (ASR, f. Господин Колев). Thus, the Gypsy Theater in Sliven was one of the first in the world, along with the Gypsy theatre groups in Uzhgorod, Košice and Strážnice in Czechoslovakia and the State Gypsy Theater *Romen* in Moscow (see Marushiakova & Popov, 2021b). There are 25 people in that photo, of which 15 are men and 10 women, and on its back-side are listed some of their names – "Petar Vasilev, Kolinata (Nikola), [Dimitar] Kratsov, Ivan Kratsov (director), Yordan Chorapchiyata (director), Armanzov" (ASR, f. Господин Колев). It has obviously been an amateur troupe working closely with the Gypsy Chitalishte, which was very active over the years – it used to organise literary and musical social events (Сливенска поща, 1930, p. 2) and it occasionally held theatrical performances, e.g. the plays *Prodigal Son* (Сливенска поща, 1932, p. 2), *Ruined Life* (Изток, 1941, p. 4), *Golgotha* (Циганите, 1992, p. 7), *The Nail in the Lock*, and others (DA Sliven, f. 157, op. 1, a.e. 11, l. 11).

The exact date of the establishment of the Gypsy Chitalishte in the Upper mahala is not entirely clear. In any case, a photo of its leaders from 1928 (perhaps it was created that year) is preserved, in which can be seen Petar Tanev (Takyoolu), Dimitar Budakov (Baraka), Decho Kurtev (Papazolu), Kuzman Mikhalev, Krastyo Vachev, Vasil Stambolov, Vasil Gachev, Yordan Kolev (Koloolu), Dimitar Zanzalov (Zanzala) (Отвътре / Andral /

Inside, 2000, p. 11). On another photo, made one year later, in 1929, the management of the Gypsy Chitalishte had already been completely changed and it now included Nikola Terzobaliev, Todor Keleshev, Georgi Armanzov, Tasho Chakmakov, Mihail Kumanov, Mihail Zanzalov, Vasil Chakmakov, Atanas Vasilev, Dimitar Kochev, Gancho Vasilev and Todor Ruskiev (Отвътре / Andral / Inside, 2001, p. 96). It becomes clear that the leadership of the Gypsy Chitalishte had been taken over by the (pro)communist Gypsies, thus becoming not only the centre of public life in the neighbourhood, but also of the communist movement.

In the late 1920s, all through the 1930s, and at the beginning of the 1940s, Nikola Terzobaliev remained actively involved in the communist movement in various forms. In 1929, he was a member of the strike committee for the great textile workers' strike, along with other Gypsies, like Mikhail Golemanov, Dimitar Milenkov, Zafir Ivanov, and others (Дечева, 2000, p. 51).

After the strike, members of the strike committee were banned from working in Sliven, and Nikola Terzobaliev, at that time a father of three, was sent by the party to work for the Central Committee of the NRPS in Sofia. There he was arrested several times and was given the warning to leave the capital city until the authorities finally deported him back to Sliven (DA Sliven, f. 879, op. 1, a.e. 9, l. 8).

After returning to his home city, Nikola Terzobaliev took an active part in the Workers' Party's election campaign for the 1931 parliamentary elections, in which, with the help of Gypsy votes, its candidate, Sabi Dimitrov, was elected MP. Terzobaliev himself was arrested several times on various charges, and it was not until 1934 that he finally managed to find a job at the *Merino* Factory, in a position that was too demanding for his compromised health. Only two months later, workers at the *Andonov and Mikhailov* Factory, where most workers were Gypsies, went on strike demanding increased wages. The protesters were supported by workers from other factories in the city, who also stopped working. Just the Gypsies participating in that strike numbered 850 people (Дечева, 2000, p. 51). For them, the strike committee raised aid and funds to open a strike kitchen, which provided hot meals for the families of the strikers in the Upper mahala (DA Sliven, f. 879, op.1, a.e. 27, l. 7).

In 1934, a new military coup d' état was carried out, organised by the Political circle *Zveno* (Link) headed by Kimon Georgiev. All political parties and related public organisations were banned, and as a result, the Workers' Party and the NRPS were outlawed. This forced the communist movement to look for new ways of conducting mass work.

According to local press publications, in February 1939, through the efforts of the previously established consumer cooperative in the Gypsy Quarter, chaired by Yanko Dimitrov and having as secretary Todor Keleshev (a longtime activist of the communist movement), a Gypsy Chitalishte, called *Knyaz Simeon Tarnovski*, was established (Изток, 1939, p. 4). That was not a new chitalishte, but a revival of the old one, which, we can assume, had been closed down by the authorities after the military coup d' état in 1934. The new old chitalishte adopted the name of the heir to the throne, Prince Simeon

Tarnovski (born in 1937), Tsar Simeon II from 1943 to 1946, and as a historical curiosity, the Prime Minister of Bulgaria from 2001 to 2005. However, this naming was done simply to deceive the authorities, while the chitalishte continued to be the centre of the communist movement in the Gypsy mahala.

The political situation in Bulgaria at that time had already changed radically. In 1938, the illegal BKP merged with the RP under the name Bulgarian Workers' Party (Communists). In March 1941, Bulgaria joined the Tripartite Pact, and in December of the same year declared war on the United States and Great Britain, thus joining the Second World War on the side of Nazi Germany. After the German attack on the USSR on June 22, 1941, the illegal BRP (Communists) adopted a course of armed combat, and in 1942, on its initiative, a political coalition the Fatherland Front (OF), dominated by the Communist Party, was formed.

In this situation, the names of the most active workers' organisers and strikers, including Nikola Terzobaliev, were well known to all the factory managers in Sliven, and it was becoming increasingly difficult for them to find work because the owners did not want problematic workers. At the end of 1941, Nikola Terzobaliev gave a speech to the workers in the factory where he worked, prompted by the refusal of the management of the factory to give the workers the three meters' free-of-charge fabric due to them. The situation got tense and he was arrested, but the workers surrounded the police station and demanded his release. Nikola Terzobaliev was released but was soon interned for 10 months in Sveti Vrach (now Sandanski). During the period between 1941 and 1943, he was interned in three different places around the country: in Sveti Vrach in 1941; in the village of Gigen, Nikopol region, in 1943; and in the village of Atiya, Burgas region, in 1944 (DA Sliven, f. 879, op.1, a.e. 9, l. 12–13).

During his short stay in Sliven in 1942, Nikola Terzobaliev joined the Gypsy proletariat in the city in a campaign that deserves a mention. In January 1941, Bulgaria, which was already closely associated with Nazi Germany, adopted a Law for the Protection of the Nation. According to this new law, written under the strong influence of racial laws in Germany, all the discriminatory measures, prohibitions, and restrictions provided were directed solely against Jews, while the Gypsies were not mentioned at all. However, other similar legal and administrative provisions were adopted with regard to the Gypsies in various spheres of their lives.

The discriminatory attitude towards the Gypsies working in industrial enterprises was expressed in the ordinance, according to which they, as not "Bulgarian-born", (i.e. non-ethnic Bulgarians), were deprived of the right to receive child allowances (*Държавен вестник*, 1942, p. 4). On this occasion, a group of Gypsies working in the textile factories in Sliven submitted a petition to the local Municipal Council, "asking them to edit the family books [of the municipality] and their ID cards by changing their nationality from Gypsy to Bulgarian, so as not to be deprived of their child allowances, commissioned food rations, and others" (DA Sliven, f. 46 K, op. 1, a.e. 41, l. 33). The municipality considered the case and concluded that "it could not take a decision on the application in

question and could not fulfil their requests" (Ibid., l. 51). Following that response, factory workers in Sliven sent several collective petitions to the Minister of Interior and Public Health (DA Sliven, f. 925, op. 7, a.e. 120, l. 1), to the Directorate of Labour through the Labour Inspectorate (Ibid, l. 5), to the Mayor of Sliven (Ibid, p. 4), to the Minister of War, and to the Commander of the Third Balkan Division (Ibid, l. 8–10) (Ibid, l. 8–10), where many of the signatories were army reserve soldiers. Those appeals to various institutions were sent continuously, but to no avail, until the end of 1943. They included requests for a fair solution to the Gypsy situation and the removal of the information about the Gypsy origin from the ID cards of Gypsies, thus helping them avoid the restrictions to which they were subjected (Ibid., l. 2). As Nikola Terzobaliev was interned most of the time during those campaigns, he managed to join only one of them (the petition to the Minister of War); but it is significant to note that he was the first one to sign it (Ibid., p. 8).

On August 16, 1944 Nikola Terzobaliev was released from his internment and returned to Sliven. On August 26, 1944, under the influence of the Soviet Army's offensive in the Balkans, the BRP (Communists) called for an armed uprising to "overthrow the monarcho-fascist dictatorship". After the USSR declared war on Bulgaria on September 5, in fulfilment of its allied obligations, the occupation of settlements across the country by partisan detachments and combat groups began, as well as the attacks on prisons in various cities and the release of political prisoners. Early in the morning of September 9, 1944, military units in Sofia overthrew the government and a new government of the OF was announced, which marked the beginning of the establishment of the communist regime in Bulgaria.

On the eve of these events, Nikola Terzobaliev was given the task of organising the Sliven communists and freeing the political prisoners in the city (DA Sliven, f. 879, op.1, a.e. 9, l. 14), which was accomplished in September 1944, without any resistance from the guards, who retreated from the shouts of the assembled crowd of people addressed by Terzobaliev. He also organised the transportation of former prisoners to their native places with the order "to act boldly, resolutely fending off any enemy attempts to prevent the course of the revolution". The driver of the special train transporting those prisoners was his son Petar (Ibid., l. 16).

After the establishment of the new government, Nikola Terzobaliev became a member of the District Committee of the OF in Sliven and one of its plenipotentiaries, who were to head the old administrative services. He was also entrusted with the management of the District Committee of the Textile Workers' Union, whose activities during this period were concentrated in "strengthening the discipline" in more than 20 enterprises in Sliven, still privately owned but operating under the control of the OF. In 1947, all those enterprises were nationalised with Nikola Terzobaliev taking an active part in the preparation and implementation of that nationalisation.

At that time Nikola Terzobaliev was involved, in addition to his other public and political duties, in the activities of the *United Common-Cultural and Educational Organisation of the Gypsy Minorities 'Ekipe'* (Unity), established in 1945 and headed by Shakir Pashov

(see above). In 1946, his name appeared for the first time in the organisation's newspaper, *Romano esi* (Gypsy Voice), where an essay was published about him with the title *From the Life of a Bulgarian Gypsy in Sliven*, presenting his work over the years as a prominent workers' leader and a communist activist (Романо еси, 1946f, p. 1). In addition, a short article by Terzobaliev himself was published in the same issue of the newspaper, emphasising the importance of the September 9, 1944 coup, which he described as a "people's social revolution" that "destroyed forever [...] the economic chains that had bound all our people". After noting that "our Gypsy minority had taken an equal part in that revolutionary struggle", Terzobaliev drew attention to the fact that the Gypsies in Bulgaria had been "on the verge of total physical extermination, as had happened with our compatriots in Romania, Germany and Yugoslavia". On the basis of that, he came to the conclusion that "we [the Gypsies – author's note] received double liberation" (in other words, both as an integral part of the Bulgarian society and as a separate minority community within the Bulgarian nation), and that is why the Gypsies must work for the strengthening of the new OF government, with which "we will guarantee our full freedom" (Романо еси, 1946h, p. 1).

In 1947, a new article by Nikola Terzobaliev was published with the provocative title *Is It Necessary for the Gypsies to Have Their Own Minority Organisation?* (Романо еси, 1947b, pp. 1–2). It becomes clear from this article that, although he was not directly involved in the activities of the Gypsy organisation, Terzobaliev was well acquainted with the ongoing debates among Gypsy activists about the need for it and its future. As stated in the article, some of the activists believed that under the Fatherland Front government, the new Constitution (which was then being discussed and later adopted in December 1947) would guarantee the equality of all Bulgarian citizens, regardless of their nationality, race or religion, and therefore such an organisation would no longer be needed. Others agreed that since the Gypsies did not have a written alphabet, such an organisation was not needed. According to yet others, however, there should be more separate minority organisations and "Bulgarian Gypsies [the term denoting Orthodox Christian Gypsies – author's note] should not mix with Turkish and *Golite* [the Naked] Gypsies" (Ibid., p. 1). The latter opinion was apparently popular among the Gypsy activists in Sliven, who generally lived in the Upper Quarter, whose residents distanced themselves from the 'Turkish' and 'naked' (in the sense of highly marginalised) Gypsies living in the Lower mahala (now Nadezhda district).

It should be noted that, according to Terzobaliev, the existence of a Gypsy organisation was necessary before September 9, 1944, "when we grouped our forces around the newspaper *Terbie* (Education)" (Ibid.). It turns out that at the time (in the early 1930s) when he was heavily involved in the political struggles in Sliven, he was also well informed about Shakir Pashov's attempts in Sofia to create a national Gypsy organisation, i.e. for him, the movement for Roma civic emancipation had two dimensions (ethnic and societal). In this sense is his main conclusion in an article about the need for the existence of a Gypsy organisation in the new political reality, which on the one hand would work

for the social and cultural uplifting of all Gypsies, and on the other would support the government of the OF and would work for the uplifting of “our republic” (Ibid., p. 2).

By an ominous irony of fate, despite those views, due to his communist convictions, forcing him to strictly observe party discipline and to fulfil the tasks set by the Party, Nikola Terzobaliev became the man through whom the ruling Bulgarian Communist Party liquidated the Gypsy organisation. As a result of internal struggles and constant complaints to the highest party and state institutions (see above), following a decision by the government authorities on April 7, 1950, the Central Directorate of the *Cultural and Educational Organisation of the Gypsy Minority in Bulgaria* decided to remove Shakir Pashov from the post of chairman of the organisation and to elect on his place Nikola Terzobaliev (Нево дром, 1950, p. 1), who, up until then had never taken a public stand on what was happening in the Gypsy organisation. This was, in fact, the end of that organisation, and following the Instructions of the National Council of the OF (AK, f. 13, op. 1, a.e. 759, l. 147–148), the local sections of the Gypsy organisation were transformed to territorial sections of the OF, which was no longer a leading political organisation, but a mass public organisation under the supervision of the BKP, thus in this way the organisation ceased to exist.

Until his death in 1981, Nikola Terzobaliev remained associated with the trade union movement, although during that period he also held a number of other senior positions at the district and national levels of the Party and in the state administration, for which he received numerous awards and distinctions. In 1975, he wrote his memoirs, in which the Gypsy theme was left in the background and included in the leading discourse – the struggles of the Sliven proletariat under the leadership of the Communist Party (DA Sliven, f. 879, op. 1, a.e. 9, l. 1–18). Whether this was the result of deliberate self-censorship or it had been imposed by the authorities is a question that will probably never be answered.

Gospodin Kolev

Gospodin Kolev (1923–2011) was born on January 20, 1921, in Sliven, in a family of peers of textile workers. He was a representative of the third generation of Gypsy communists in Sliven and, unlike the activists of the previous rank, he managed to get a good education, graduating from the local high school in 1942. This was no longer a notable exception for the Gypsies from the Upper mahala, where the textile workers lived. A photograph of young Gypsies, members of the RMS from 1941, is preserved (DA Sliven, f. 879, op. 1, a.e. 27, l. 7), in which, in addition to Gospodin Kolev, 15 young people can be seen, 6 of whom are in school uniforms, which shows that they were students at the local high school.

As a high school student, Gospodin Kolev was fascinated with communist ideas and became a member of the RMS, a youth organisation of the Bulgarian Workers' Party (Communists), which at that time had embarked on a path of armed struggle. Here is what Gospodin Kolev himself remembers about that time:

I was then a member of the RMS. I was a student in high school, and we created an RMS organisation consisting of 15–20 people. And we held illegal meetings. We used the chitalishte [in the Gypsy mahala]. However, in 1942 I was arrested as a communist. There was a campaign [of the RMS] and 12 of us from my high school got arrested – including me and three people from our neighbourhood, from the community house – activists. The next year, one or two more people from the neighbourhood, members of the chitalishte, were arrested, and in 1942 the chitalishte was closed. They [the authorities – authors' note] realised that it had become a nest – a centre where party politics was made and reproduced [...] This is how I participated in this chitalishte: we read books, listened to lectures, invited lecturers; we did as much as we could; we ourselves needed education and in turn gave education to the less enlightened. Difficult years ... (Personal communication with Gospodin Kolev, February 20, 2010).

As can be seen, there is again a combination of the work of the Gypsies, chitalishte's activists (including Gospodin Kolev himself) for the development of their ethnic community with simultaneous active participation in the socio-political struggles of the Bulgarian communists

The participation of Gospodin Kolev in the so-called Anti-fascist resistance, organised by the Communist Party during the Second World War, in which Bulgaria was an ally of Nazi Germany, included being a member of an illegal youth group of the RMS with a mixed composition, in which Bulgarian and Gypsy youth worked together and supported the activities of the Party. In 1942, the core of the group consisted of five Gypsies and two Bulgarians. Gospodin Kolev and Gospodin Stefanov had just graduated from high school when, together with their fellow workers – Petko Kostov, Kiril Savov, Kiril Kratsov, Lozan Prodanov and Shtilyan Skubarev – were arrested by the police and sentenced to eight and a half years in prison under the Law for the Protection of the State (Дечева, 2000, p. 52). The arrested were brought before the court and their sentences for illegal political activity were pronounced on June 10, 1942. There is a police photo of the convicts (RIM Sliven, No. 3398), who were first sent to the prison in Sliven, and then to the prison in Varna, from which they were eventually released on September 8, 1944, after the capture of the prison by a mass demonstration organised by the Communists, shortly before the entry of Soviet troops into the city.

Those were not the only Gypsies from Sliven convicted of participating in the illegal communist struggle. During the Second World War, there were more than twenty Gypsies those who were political prisoners in the city (Геюв et al., 1968, p. 19).

After September 9, 1944, with the coming to power of the government of the OF, dominated by the Communist Party, Gospodin Kolev became a member of the County Committee of the RMS, then of the District Committee of the RMS and, from 1946 until the end of 1947, he was secretary of the City Committee of the RMS in Sliven. This marked the beginning of his long political career. He was one of the first Gypsies in Bulgaria to receive higher education. In his words, this is what he said about his life during those years:

After September 9, [1944], I was a member of the RMS District Committee. I was a full-time worker. There I was in charge of the working youth. Later, in 1946, I became secretary of the City Committee of the RMS. Sliven [is] a city [...] [with] many textile workers and I was in charge of the textile factories. [...] And I worked there until 1947. And one day they called me to the District Committee of the Party – me and 4–5 other people – and told us that we should become officers. I told them that I had no intention of becoming an officer and that I wanted to become a teacher one day. No! The party needs new people and you need to learn! (Personal communication with Gospodin Kolev, February 20, 2010; Стоянова, 2017, p. 405).

From the end of 1947 to March 1958, Gospodin Kolev was a political officer in the Bulgarian People's Army, while simultaneously graduating extramural from the Military-Political Academy, and then from the Faculty of Law at Sofia University *Kliment Ohridski*. During his service in the army, he reached the rank of lieutenant colonel and held a number of responsible positions – head of the Personnel Department at the Ministry of National Defense, head of the Propaganda and Agitation Department in the Army Air Forces, and others (Колев, 2003). From March 1958 to March 1990 Gospodin Kolev was an instructor in the TsK BKP, where he was responsible for the work of the BKP with the Gypsy population. He describes the beginning of this important stage of his life as follows:

And [in] 1958 I was summoned to the Central Committee [of the BKP]. They called me and told me: “Comrade Kolev, we want to appoint you at the Central Committee of the Party, to be responsible for the work with the Gypsies. We have such a department – *Minorities* – for Turks, Armenians, Jews and Gypsies”. I told them that I did not know the Gypsy community well: “I am a Gypsy, but there are several categories and layers, I know very little”. But they told me, “But we too know very little”. And from 1958 to 1990 I was there ... (Personal communication with Gospodin Kolev, February 20, 2010; Стоянова, 2017, pp. 405–406).

The work of Gospodin Kolev in the TsK BKP and his participation in the policies towards the Gypsy population in Bulgaria could be the subject of an independent study, but it goes beyond the chronological framework of this edition. Throughout his life, including after the collapse of the communist regime in Bulgaria in 1989, Gospodin Kolev remained a staunch supporter of communist ideas. In the last years of his life, he wrote two memoirs – *A Gypsy in the Central Committee of the Bulgarian Communist Party: Experiences, Ordeal, Reflections* (Колев, 2003) and *The Bulgarian Communist Party and the Gypsies in the Period 1944–1989* (Колев, 2010).

Gospodin Kolev died in 2011 in Sofia.

* * *

The history of the Gypsy socialists/communists in Sliven reflects in its focus a long path passed by generations of the Gypsy textile workers in the city. This story would not have been possible without the specific, historically determined socio-economic situation in

Sliven, which led to the creation of a Gypsy toiling community in the city. The Gypsy proletariat in Sliven at the end of the 19th century and the first half of the 20th century felt an urgent need to protect not only its social and economic rights but also the civil equality of its community.

The Gypsy workers recognised in the Bulgarian Socialist / Communist Party and its satellite trade unions a suitable platform for them, through which they hoped to determine their own destiny. The ideas of civic equality and a better life offered by that ideological platform not only directly corresponded to their own desires, but also offered an innovative progressive approach to solving the social problems of their community, and ultimately to their civic emancipation through a radical reorganisation of society, of which they were an integral part.

The three main activists presented here in this chapter – Nikola Kochev, Nikola Terzobaliev and Gospodin Kolev – were representatives of three generations of Gypsy textile workers, who sincerely believed in their causes and were (at least to some extent) idealists, and every one of them paid a price for the life choices they made. They followed the example of their Party colleagues, learned from everyone, built on the experience gained and, each of them in his time, further expanded the ideas for the development of their community, oriented to essentially similar goals. They were not alone in their socio-political activities and were surrounded by numerous supporters (both Gypsies and Bulgarians). And although only a few names stand out among them, they all together created the history of the Gypsy communists from the city of Sliven.

Conclusion

Elena Marushiakova and Vesselin Popov

The portraits presented here illuminate important aspects of the overall movement for Roma civic emancipation in Bulgaria during the studied period but do not exhaust all its dimensions. As it became clear, this movement underwent a long and complex path of development and here we will say a few additional words about some other aspects and forms of manifestation in its development (and, at the very least, mention a few more names of Roma, who were active in the process, about whom there are not sufficient data available to draft their individual portraits).

Starting from local professional associations and incorporating various other forms of civic organisations – religious (Muslim), mutual aid, charitable, etc. – the Roma movement for civic emancipation gradually reached their merger into one common organisation already in the interwar period. This merger, however, led 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 had already a national dimension (at

least by design) and a new, ideological standing, i.e., it was transformed into a completely different type of civic organisation.

During this ideological evolution, not only the religious division of the Gypsies in Bulgaria had to be overcome, but a process had also begun in order to surmount their intrinsic heterogeneity as a community. More generally, the main divide of Roma communities in Bulgaria for centuries went 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, 2015a, pp. 27–33), the percentage of Muslim Gypsies was even higher (in all cases more than three-quarters). Another important divide – among settled and nomadic Roma – is present neither in the Portraits nor in documents, as the latter were at that time excluded from the processes of civic emancipation.

The Roma civic emancipation movement began 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 included the attempts to legalise the partial internal self-government and the representativeness to the authorities (e.g. 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 Mutual Aid Organisation 'Istikbal – Future'*) and the solving of issues which were related to 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 that 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 its 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 and Educational Organisation of the Gypsy Minorities in Bulgaria 'Ekipe' (Unity) his day is already an 'organisation holiday'. The choice of the 'Gypsy feast day' was particularly appropriate because de facto (despite its various names) it is common to both Gypsy Muslims (the majority) and Gypsy Christians. The holiday was 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 (Marushiakova & Popov, 2007, pp. 33–50).

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. 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 incorporated, adapted and perceived as their 'owns' forms and elements of the culture of their surrounding population in the region, in many cases, preserved those forms and elements that have already disappeared among majority population (Marushiakova & Popov, 2016c, pp. 35–64).

Domination of ethnicity over religiosity can be noted, however curious it may seem, even with religious institutions, as in the described cases of Gypsies' struggles to take over in Muslim communities. The situation is very similar also with those Roma who became members of the so-called 'new' (in a sense different from traditional Eastern Orthodoxy) evangelical churches.

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). After his death, however, ferment and conflict broke out in the Gypsy church (Циганска, 1926). 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, with a separate page in Romani, entitled *Романо алав* (Gypsy word), 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). 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. With the collective effort of all Roma believers, a new church building was built and officially opened in 1930 (Славкова, 2007, p. 84). In the early 1930s, Pastor Petar Minkov left for the capital Sofia. At that point, the Rom Georgi Stefanov, who received training in Austria, and his successor Aleksandar Toshev, who received his training in Germany, were ordained consecutively as pastors of the church in Golintsi (Ibid., p. 88).

By the initiative of Petar Minkov, the Committee *Gypsy Evangelical Mission* was established in Sofia, on October 17, 1932, 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, 1932; 1937) and two collections of Gospel Songs – *Романе гиля е Девлеске* (Romani Songs for Lord) (1936) and *Романе Сомнал Гиля* (Romani Holy Song) (1936). Only the second publication has been preserved, from which it is clear that these are translations into Romani language 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 бианине* (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), *Спаситело 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. 264, 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 Marushiakova & Попов, 2021b, p. 429).

All this development towards the ethnicisation of religious institutions is not some unique specificity, which is found only among Roma 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 *Istikbal*), emerged (at least as a pursuit goal) as a representative of the entire community, and, as a result, it desired 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 organisation 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 was present only abstractly, as a desirable opportunity in the indefinitely distant future, while all efforts were 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 and political parties.

Such is the case of the involvement of Roma in the communist movement. This is not a process that is typical only for Bulgaria, similar processes take place in other countries in the region of Central, South-Eastern and Eastern Europe (see Marushiakova & Popov, 2021b). The participation of Roma in the communist movement is not a historical paradox, but rather a regularity, because it is another alternative in the processes of Roma civic emancipation and in the struggle to achieve societal equality. The case presented here concerning the Roma textile workers in Sliven, as well as the connection (although not fully clarified and consistent over the years) of Shakir Pashov with the communist movement are not the only manifestations in this direction.

The political situation in the first half of the 1920s in Bulgaria was characterised by intensification and even fierceness of political struggles, and this reflected on the Gypsies too. The left-wing BZNS, 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, 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 the fall of 1923 which was organised by the BKP and by the left-wing of the BZNS. Seven Gypsies were killed in the

attack on army barracks in Lom (Романо еси, 1946g, 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).

Roma from different regions of the country were also participants in the partisan movement organised by the Communist Party during the Second World War, in which Bulgaria was an ally of Nazi Germany. Such were, for example, Osman Bilalov and Sashko Germanov from Shumen (DA Shumen, f. 1119, op. 1, a.e. 11, l. 1; Демирова, 2017, p. 40), Trayko Dzhevelev from Lom, Petko Kanchev from Pleven region, etc. Some Roma 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 this armed resistance, Roma 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) – 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 Roma, participants in this resistance 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 entire Gypsy community, but they are nevertheless an important phenomenon that deserves special mention. No 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, who was shot dead on the street in Sofia by police during a demonstration organised by the Communist Party in 1919 (Пашов, 1957, p. 39; Нева рома, 1957e, p. 2). Following the changes in 1989, during “a time of democracy”, this plaque was removed because it was considered as a legacy of Communism.

Viewed from the perspective of the Roma civic emancipation movement, the involvement of Roma 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

Roma community through the participation of the community's representatives in mainstream political activities based on Roma' 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 that is a result of the achieved level of social integration of Roma in this historical period.

A separate option in the development of the processes of Roma civic emancipation is the case of Atanas Dimitrov. This case should not be considered as a special exception. Chronologically, his portrait is the earliest one among those presented here, but similar cases of Roma who have managed to reach some public positions (although not as high) have undoubtedly been quite a lot in later periods too, and not only in Bulgaria, but and in other countries in the region of Central, South-Eastern and Eastern Europe (see Marushiakova & Popov, 2021b). In this way, the beginning of a tendency was set, the emergence of the stratum of, we may call them, crypto-Roma, with more or less high social positions, who preserved their community identity in a family-related environment without demonstrating it publicly. This tendency continued to develop over time, and is especially relevant today, in the context of growing anti-Gypsy public attitudes throughout the region, although, for understandable reasons, it remains outside of academic research.

Turkey

Egemen Yulgür

Mustafa Mehmet: One of Those Tobacco Workers

Introduction

In this collection's foreword, Elena Marushiakova and Vesselin Popov indicate the two dimensions of Roma existence as 'community', explicitly different ethnic groups from the surrounding population and 'society', the integral ethnic elements of the nation-states of which they are citizens (Marushiakova & Popov, 2016e, p. 15; Marushiakova & Popov, 2021b, p. XXIII), relying on an updated non-evolutionary version of the old conceptual duality of *Gemeinschaft-Gesellschaft* (Tönnies, 1887). For the authors, Roma civic emancipation refers to the attempts to achieve a congruous balance between both. That is a constant fight, for equal status to Roma ethnic identity and Roma's obtaining all the relevant citizenship rights. Therefore, emancipation is not assimilation (Marushiakova & Popov, 2021b, p. XXIV). In this respect, one may see Roma's active participation, as individuals or groups to national politics or struggles for improving economic conditions as a clear manifestation of their progress in the emancipation process. The tobacco workers' story is a perfect example of participation in a nation-wide, or even international, competition between rival political camps, beyond the immediate necessities of ethnic communities. The contemporary left-wing movements promising equal status for each ethnicity was attractive for them and, as a part of that struggle, the tobacco workers demanded all the available rights for Turkish citizens and better life opportunities.

This portrait is a humble attempt to exhibit Mustafa Mehmet personality, or Mustafa, Mehmet's son. His life was the primary source of inspiration for *Tütünçülerin Tarihi* (The History of Tobacco Workers) (Özçelik, 2003), a ground-breaking study, including his memoir, some of his transcribed speeches and a bundle of precious archival documents. The tobacco workers constituted a circle of diverse individuals and families who shared a broadly similar history of migration from Greece, mainly the former Salonica (today Thessaloniki in Greece) province of the Ottoman Empire and served for the early formation of unions and leftist politics in early Republican Turkey. Roma were noticeable in the circle, and thus, many outsiders identified the whole community as the Gypsy Tobacco Workers and, more recently, the Roma Tobacco Workers.

The etiquette Gypsy Tobacco Workers had been a scandalous brand for long. The anti-communist author Aclan Sayılğan, who himself was a former-leftists overemphasised the ethnic composition of the group as an indicator of how the Communist Party of Turkey failed to convince pure-blood Turkish workers:

I never met an originally Turkish worker among cadres of the Communist Party in 1951–52. Such a failure of the communist movement enduring for 35–40 years resulted from Turkish workers' common sense and strong personality. Turkish workers are nationalist and loyal to their religion (Sayılğan, 1969, p. 21). [...]

The group of Gypsies whom the members of the secret communist party call 'our worker friends' are just insignificant elements in terms of both quantity and quality. Those illiterate people are only a hireable segment of each society (Ibid., p. 25).

Leftist intellectuals also named the group and its members as such, but many did not express that publicly, as indicated by Vedat Türkali, one of those old leftists and a reputable novelist whose works are also of interest as they document the early history of Turkish left:

I was in jail with tobacco workers for years. They are the workers who came from Drama and Kavala. How do people call them nowadays, Roma! At that time, one could not say that to their faces. I could. I have not seen any problem with that. I would be proud to be a Gypsy. (Sancak et al., 2010).

Mihri Belli, one of the most prominent leftist intellectuals, influential until he died in 2011 once gave an epic speech in which he expressed his appreciation towards his Roma comrades, or the tobacco workers:

The noblest of all nations is Roma. One has to be proud of being one of them. Because the Roma nation has not built a state, they have not practised genocides for state-building like other nations. Their hands are clean, not bloody. (Belli, 2005, p. 47).

However, Belli himself did not employ the ethnic term, Roma or Gypsy (Çingene or Kibî in Turkish), the terms reflecting outsiders' point of view for Roma or somehow related populations such as Abdals, Dom, Lom, or Tahtacis (Yilgür, 2018; Çakılcı, 2019), when he wrote about the tobacco workers before the 2000s, but more neutral phrases like *göçmen* (immigrant) (Belli, 1975, p. 39). Nevertheless, when the term Roma came to be perceived a more polite and acceptable way of identifying the same community since the last decade of the second millennium, Belli adopted the name for the public representation of the tobacco workers (Belli, 2005), along with others who testified for their role in local politics, without censuring the most visible ethnic element constituting the group (Suda, 2004, p. 85). The funeral speech of Zehra Kosova by Sevim Belli, Mihri Belli's wife and comrade, in 2001, is one of the earliest manifestations of the shift in the public discourses regarding the tobacco workers:

A life of ninety-one years, spent on the struggles dedicated to the working-class's grand purpose, 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. [...]

There were five or ten persons from 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 properly deal with prison conditions. (Belli, 2011).

Tütünçülerin Tarihi's publication was a landmark for recognising how significant a role they played in the recent history of Turkish politics. Although the memoirs of Zehra Kosova (1996) and İdris Erdiñç (Akgül, 1996) preceded *Tütünçülerin Tarihi* it was far more comprehensive than the formers and provided readers with a more specific representation of the whole circle. Its publication generated curiosity among young intellectuals and revived the memories of old witnesses. Thenafter, the tobacco workers have become more visible in the leftist intellectuals' narratives regarding the history of the Turkish left, and a range of scholarly studies on the topic followed each other (Vardağlı, 2009, 2011; Nacar, 2014, 2019; Yilgür, 2015, 2016).

Here, as far as they survived my cross-check, I refer to many of the details, already published in *Tütünçülerin Tarihi*, characterising Mustafa Mehmet's life story. I juxtapose them with the memoirs of other prominent figures in the circle and Turkish left, archival documents such as court files and newspaper news. His file in the Russian archives (TÜSTAV, Folder 495, List 266, File 198), including correspondences of the Soviet authorities and Turkish communist party representatives and some autobiographical notes written by Mustafa Mehmet, was the most important of all, insofar as it provides a multiplicity of perspectives regarding his personality and struggle. I excluded some details seemingly doubtful and preferred to compose a relatively reliable but straightforward narrative instead of a more picturesque but less trustworthy one.

Mustafa Mehmet's story is mostly representative of the whole circle, whose members played an undeniable role in the early formation of Turkish left as the primary organisers of labour units and were responsible for the many aspects of party logistics (Yilgür, 2016). They contributed to the legitimisation of union movements and leftist politics on the grassroots level in the early Republican era and were still influential even in the 1960s when a new left was born from among the former's ruins. Mustafa Mehmet's life trajectory is related to the long-lasting experience in wage employment, resulting from a specific history, from the Salonica province of the Ottoman Empire to Turkey. Therefore, the first step to comprehend his personality is to answer the question of what happened in Salonica?

What Happened in Salonica?

Salonica, and partly the Edirne provinces, were among the crucial tobacco production and export centres of the Ottoman Empire (Vardağlı, 2011, p. 49; Dumont, 2013, p. 28). Extraordinarily high labour demand levels in this area necessitated participation of all the local ethnicities to the workforce. According to the contemporary records reflecting

approximate figures (Glavinof, 2013[1910]), there were 6,000 tobacco workers in Xanthi (Sezen, 2017, p. 381), 5,000 in Drama (Sezen, 2017, p. 229), and 16,000 in Kavala (Ibid., p. 438) in 1910. As a port town, Kavala was the centre of semi-processed tobacco leaves' export, collected from the agricultural areas in Drama or Serres to the purchasers in Alexandria, Dresden, Odessa, New York, or Trieste (Vardağlı, 2011, p. 106). According to Nacar, who shares similar figures relying on archival sources (Nacar, 2014, p. 536), tobacco workers constituted a significant portion of overall population fluctuating between 40% and 60% in Kavala and approximately one-third in Xanthi in the 1910s. Such a dense concentration of labour in both tobacco agriculture and warehouses, where workers prepared tobacco leaves for export rose the tension between the sides of working relations and triggered an unprecedented development in union organisations and leftist-politics among workers (Vardağlı, 2011; Haupt & Dumont, 2013; Nacar, 2019), which included Roma, along with Greek and Jewish locals (Yilgür, 2015). A Western observer who visited Kavala describes the situation in detail in 1888:

Of all the workers in the tobacco factories of Cavalla none offer so interesting a study as the gipsies. Numbers of these vagabond inhabitants of the Balkans have congregated here in the hopes of work, and now that work seems definite, many of them have converted their tents and their wigwams into tiny stone houses with a view to a permanent residence. (The Home of Turkish Tobacco, 1888, p. 192).

The infamous clichés, such as being “false Mussulmans, false Christians”, were serving to spoil the name of Roma there, as everywhere. However, that was not preventing their over-employment in the sector as their inclusion was necessary to sustain the work:

Wretched though these gipsies are, the tobacco merchants of Cavalla would be hard set to know how to get on without them, for there is more work in them than in all the other nationalities put together, and every encouragement is given to them to build their small houses and become permanent residents in the place. (The Home, 1888, p. 194).

The Roma workers became a part of the same working-class with Jewish, Greek and ethnic Turks and experienced a process blurring ethnic and social boundaries. Hence, mixed marriages came to be less exceptional; endogamy was less severe a rule, and the new settlements they founded were gradually becoming partly Gypsy and partly hybrid working-class neighbourhoods:

There is yet another class in Turkey, and the one most common at Cavalla, and they are known as the sedentary gipsies, who settle on the outskirts of busy town, and populate, as they are rapidly doing now at Cavalla, a village of their own. They sometimes intermarry with Greeks and Turks, and the result of their intercourse with civilization is that the sedentary gipsy is the greatest rogue in the Levant. (Ibid., p. 193).

The working-class of Salonica province, a significant portion of which were tobacco workers was a highly active political agent (Quataert, 2002, p. 208). Its members were a part of the strike wave that took place following the 1908 revolution (Güzel, 1996, p. 41), which replaced absolutist form of government with constitutional monarchy (Temo, 2000[1939]; Kansu, 1997; Ahmad, 2004; Hanioglu, 2008). They formed their unions as a part of the Socialist Federation, which was itself a product of the relatively liberal environment in the post-revolutionary period (Hadar, 2007, pp. 128–129). Although the Jewish tobacco workers who were the most politicised of the local labour force were leading the federation, it was a multi-ethnic and multi-religious organisation (Quataert, 2002, pp. 210–211). According to Kivılcımlı (1978, p. 11), Haupt (2013, p. 14), and Dumond (2013, p. 25), Muslims were the latest of those included by the extensive politicisation process, although they had been a part of the labour force for long and already well-experienced on labour organisations (Glavinof, 2013[1910], p. 66; Vardağlı, 2009, pp. 86–87; Nacar, 2011; Yıldırım, 2013, p. 219). Testimony of one of the tobacco workers, Sepetci (basket-maker) Mehmed, enlightens how Greek and Jewish workers inspired their Muslim colleagues to politicise their everyday struggle:

We learned from the Greek workers how to protect the workers' rights. Vasil was the first union leader we knew. They organised the factory we worked in. I remember the first time he came. He was a swarthy young man, pug-nosed, sulky. He called the boss. The boss was not there. His son came. He was an arrogant bourgeois who humiliated workers. Vasil started to speak. We were listening to him carefully. The son of the boss looked away. Vasil held his jaw and turned him back. He said: "Look at me when I speak." This kind of behaviour and the tone of his voice made him putty in his hands. As workers, we saw with great excitement how a conscious worker speaks with the boss's son. (Belli, 1999, pp. 347–349).

In the post-1908 era, worker clubs served as fruitful grounds for the politicisation of tobacco workers along with other segments of the labour (Starr, 1945; Aktsoglou, 1997; Haupt & Dumont, 2013; Hadar, 2007). There are mentions of the role of such institutions in the circle's most prominent representatives' testimonies. For example, İdris Erdiñç's mother, Hatice, who worked as a tobacco worker for almost twelve years was one of the administrative cadres of tobacco workers' club in Kavala (Aydemir, 2000, p. 111). İdris Erdiñç says:

The woman [his mother] is a tobacco worker, coming from the production. They underwent the club in Kavala. They threw [tobacco] bales into the sea, so familiar with the action as well. (Akgül, 1996, pp. 26–27).

Zehra Kosova's family members were also among the red club attendees in Kavala (Cumhuriyet Dergi, 2011, p. 16). According to her testimonies, the red club was not the only worker organisation in the region, although influential:

[...] two clubs emerged in our region. Unlike a real union, those were not like real unions, but those clubs served as social solidarity funds for workers living in those regions. The yellow club belonged to conservatives, fascists. The red club belonged to socialists. My family were attending the red club. (Kosova, 2011, p. 17).

In short, Roma and the other ethnicities in the region experienced an extensive politicisation that would be an intrinsic element of their culture for long. The tobacco workers brought that culture to the young Turkish Republic when many of the region's Muslims gradually left Greece (Yilgür, 2015), primarily following the Turk-Greek Population Exchange in 1923–24. That historical event caused the deterritorialisation of more than one million Orthodox individuals (Hirschon, 2004a), and between 350000 (Keyder, 2004, p. 43; Hirschon, 2004b, p. 15) and 500,000 (Goularas, 2012, p. 131) Muslims' arrival in the Turkish Republic, including Roma (Kolukıncı, 2006; Yilgür, 2015, 2016; Gürboğa, 2016).

Family Background and Childhood

Mustafa Mehmet was one of those Balkanians who left their lands during the dissolution of the Ottoman Empire. His parents and four older brothers migrated Biga, Çanakkale (Sezen, 2017, p. 118), from Serres, Greece in the 1910s (Özçelik, 2003, p. 9), earlier than the many of the tobacco workers for whom the Turkish-Greece Population Exchange in 1923–24 was a milestone.

Serres was a sub-province in Salonica (Sezen, 2017, p. 689). According to the statistics of 1875, its role in tobacco production was relatively weaker than the regional stars, namely Drama and Kavala, but still significant (Report, 1877, p. 886). In the Ottoman yearbook of Salonica, dated 1907, Serres was counted among the producers of tobacco exported over Kavala port (Salname-i Vilayet-i Selanik, 1907, p. 426). Besides, there were a variety of goods exported, from cotton to fruit (Yeats, 1887, p. 205), in Serres (Centre), which was primarily an agricultural region:

Serres, a considerable city, occupies its centre, and hundreds of villages, surrounded by orchards, rice, and cotton fields are scattered over it. Looked at from the heights of the Rhodope, this plain assumes the appearance of a huge garden city. (Reclus, 1876, p. 107).

According to his memoir, the family's departure from Serres resulted from the Balkan Wars (1912–1913) (Özçelik, 2003, p. 55). Since the Russo-Turkish War of 1877–78, each defeat of the Ottoman armies in the region triggered migration waves of Muslim masses through Ottoman Turkey and resulted in another re-composition of local demographics. The ethnic composition of those refugees was diverse that many Pomaks and Roma along with ethnic Turks settled in Ottoman Rumelia and Anatolia (Karpas, 1985, p. 75; Halaçoğlu, 1995; İpek, 1999; Yilgür, 2020, pp. 4–8). When the portion of Gypsies exceeded tolerable levels, the ruling party, Committee of Union and Progress, adopted a new attitude about their presence among the newcomers and intended to prevent that by introducing exclusive regulations (Dündar, 2002, pp. 127–128).

How Mustafa Mehmet described his family's ethnic origin in different times reflects a high level of flexibility; a Gypsy in 1935 in the second year of his stay in the USSR (TÜSTAV, Fond. 495, List 266, File 198, pp. 34–38), the son of a Gypsy father and a Turkish mother in 1939, December 10 (Ibid., pp. 20–23), and a Turk one year before his departure in 1941. However, his Russian and Turkish comrades were consistently calling him a Gypsy (Ibid., pp. 16–17, 24–25, 27). His father, Mehmet (Ibid., pp. 20–23), was a shoe-repairer until the Ottoman army conscripted him in 1914 and lost his life in the front, Çanakkale, just before Mustafa's birth (Özçelik, 2003, p. 9), in 1915 (Ibid., p. 23). His mother, Ümmü (1951 TKP Tevkifatı, 2000, p. 8), oscillated between wage-employment in tobacco warehouses (TÜSTAV, Fond 495, List 266, File 198, p. 19) and low-income informal activities, such as laundry for wealthy families (Özçelik, 2003, p. 9). All his brothers were married and had children; except the oldest, a shoe-repairer, all were tobacco workers (Ibid.).

Mustafa was the smallest of five children in his family. When the family came to Istanbul and settled in Kasımpaşa, he was an infant of forty days (Ibid.). There have been different Roma groups, inhabiting Kasımpaşa, whose presence was documented by Romani studies pioneer Alexander Paspatis (1870, p. 11), as well as working-class families of various origins. Novelist and one of the most prominent Istanbul authors, Osman Cemal Kaygılı (Yeni Gün, 1931, p. 9) described Roma inhabiting the locality. Those settled around Sakızağacı, the peak of Hacıhüsrev were traditionally animal and fabric dealers. Some of the women begging with their children on Pera streets were the members of that community. According to their testimonies referred in a 19th-century archival document, they had migrated from Bursa and Adapazarı (DAB, Fond DH.MKT, File 1486.84.1.1.). Another group inhabited in the Kasımpaşa dockyard's vicinity and had relatively better housing and living conditions. Their experience in wage-employment lasting a few centuries increases their importance for our study. The account of Eremya Çelebi Kömürçiyani, a 17th-century Armenian author, sheds light on the initial stages of the settlement and its inhabitants: "Gypsy blacksmiths staying in tents in the vicinity manufacture necessary things for the dockyard" (Kömürçiyani, 1988, p. 34). Similarly, the early 19th-century Ottoman population registries indicate the same craft as its inhabitants' subsistence (DAB, Fond NFS.d, File 214, pp. 20–22 and DAB Fond, NFS.d, File 222, pp. 22–25). Mustafa Mehmet grew up in such an environment. He was still staying in Hacıhüsrev (one of the most famous Gypsy settlements in Kasımpaşa, Istanbul, with a significant concentration of tobacco workers) according to the court files of arrest campaigns targeting the communist party in 1948 (İleri, 2003, p. 138) and 1951 (1951 TKP Tevkifatı, 2000, p. 8).

He left primary school in Kasımpaşa due to the financial deficits (Özçelik, 2003, p. 9). There was nothing unusual in that as the education accessibility for the social category he belonged was still limited. Nevertheless, there were alternatives for socialisation and informal training for the tobacco workers and work itself was the most prominent of them all. According to his account, he was ten years old when, for the first time, employed in the tobacco company of Stenko, who himself was a Russian immigrant in Perşembe Pazarı, Karaköy (Özçelik, 2003, p. 9). It seems like Stenko was one of the most resilient

tobacco traders and his warehouse in Ortaköy, Beşiktaş would employ many tobacco workers in the early republican era (Kurun, 1938, p. 5; Özçelik, 2003, p. 10). In the years of the Great Depression, which brought mass unemployment and destabilised agricultural production and gradually pave the way for the rise of state-owned enterprises (Pamuk, 2015, pp. 185–188), he could hardly find a job in a luggage factory on a minimal salary and barely turned back to the tobacco industry after re-opening of workshops in 1931 (Özçelik, 2003, p. 9).

Work Experience and Early-Politicisation

Work in tobacco warehouses was seasonal (Vardağlı, 2011, p. 104; Nacar, 2011; 2919). They were piling tobacco leaves in warehouses following pre-defined procedural steps, thus processing them for transportation to cigar factories in Turkey or abroad. According to company owners' demand, working days were significantly flexible, lasting from seven am to eight pm. After the four-five months of the warm season were over, the regular annual work activity decreased for tobacco workers. They migrated to rural areas to work in tobacco agriculture every November. Landowners were covering all the costs of those journeys by making workers liable to pay back after work. Since it was hard to collect more tobacco than necessary for handling their debt, they often received no payment. Although never profitable, being in villages in winter was wisest, as they could stay in relatively warmer rural houses and feed their families. However, as three or four families shared a single room in villages, and access to healthcare was just a dream, many lost their family members. When the agricultural season ended, they were again obliged to seek debt for the costs of turning back and renting a new house in the city (Özçelik, 2003, pp. 15–16; Kosova, 2011, p. 50). Mustafa experienced similar conditions when he and one of his older brothers worked in a farm in Bursa, whose foreman was unsatisfied with his performance and seriously beat him in 1930 (Özçelik, 2003, p. 16).

For Mustafa, politicisation was a natural result of early socialisation in family and everyday life experience in tobacco workshops. Young apprentices at the bottom of the work hierarchy needed to wait for days for employment in front of the companies (Ibid., p. 9). Therefore, the most-disadvantaged segment of the tobacco industry's labour force was also the angriest of them all. Fights between dissatisfied and disappointed young workers and supervisors, supported by the employees under their direct control, or their gang were never rare. When things went out of control, law enforcement would be there to suppress impatient workers' anger and brutally punish them in notorious Voyvoda Police Station, whenever needed. Violence was a palpable element of everyday life. However, tobacco-workers were not just the desperate victims of such cruelty, but also actors actively practising violence on foremen when possible as a persuasive instrument: "It was not likely to be employed without fighting" (Ibid., pp. 9–10):

Foremen who handed us over to the police station would usually be beaten at night. So, there was an order for that. The police beat us, and we beat foremen. However, they had, of

course, some bodyguards. We had our beaters as well. For example, İdris Erdiñç, he was our beater, strong enough. (Ibid., p. 24).

Young workers and those experienced were allies against forepersons and company owners. The existing work organisation in the tobacco industry pre-conditioned apprentices' presence in large numbers, and experienced workers rarely hesitated to unleash quarrels when bosses fired one. Therefore, apprentices and competent employees could act as one party when others challenged their shared interests. Mustafa had initially conceived all those as a spontaneous explosion of his angry teammates until he noticed working-class heroes behind the scenes. There were some 'conscientious' elders advising workers what and how to do:

Boz Mehmet, Congo Ali, İbiş, my older brother Halil İbrahim (Cemil), Hulusi, Topal Yunus, Dede Ramazan, Mehmedaki, Selanikli Remzi, Mavro Mustafa, Mümin Kızılyıldız ... Those elders were leading the struggle in tobacco companies. There were no unions yet, so they met in coffeehouses to evaluate issues such as the defence of workers' rights against forepersons and bosses, improvement of wages, and re-employment of fired [workers]. They were themselves being fired and beaten by police but remaining active in the struggle. We the youth were learning how to defend our rights, what should we do from them. (Ibid., pp. 9–10).

During 1932, a group of experienced workers, engaged in the Communist Party of Turkey (TKP), disseminated some leaflets, secretly published by the party, demanding eight hours working day and better working conditions: "The struggle for the eight hours working day had already been achieved 150 years ago. In America, in Europe. See what happened; we were still struggling for the same 150 years later than that" (Ibid., p. 25). The leaflet titled "Labour Law" summarises the Communist Party's demands for improving working life and having that would be clear evidence of engagement with the party (Tuncay, 1992, pp. 303–305). That was a milestone for both politicised tobacco workers and Mustafa himself. When his older brother, Halil İbrahim (Cemil), dropped his identification documents along with the leaflets, law enforcement quickly traced all his teammates and arrested them. The court sentenced them to "four years" [3 years and four months (Cumhuriyet, 1933b, p. 2)], and thus left behind a significant gap, which those youngsters, including Mustafa, would fulfil. Then, Mustafa would be more active as one of the representatives of tobacco workers and favour the prestige of even the smallest achievements (Özçelik, 2003, p. 11).

Halil İbrahim (Cemil) was released in the amnesty of 1933. Unfortunately, due to the mistreatment he experienced in police and prison, he was no longer a healthy person and died after a two-year struggle for recovery (Ibid., p. 15; Cumhuriyet, 1933b, p. 2). However, such dramatic results did not stun tobacco workers. They had already become familiar with violence, the state's proactive interventions, and custody was almost a seasonal experience for those convicted communists. The police were picking them up before each May Day to keep in control until the danger was over, as they were the usual

suspects for the organisation of possible demonstrations (Kosova, 1996, p. 75; Özçelik, 2003, p. 15). The newspaper news also documented that pre-emptive policy: “The fifty-two of the workers, whose intention had been detected to distribute leaflets and to create an uproar, have already been arrested” (Cumhuriyet, 1933a, pp. 1–2).

After such a period of harsh struggles and painful encounters with the state apparatus, the younger generation of the tobacco workers obtained a significant prestige in the movement and the party intended to assign them some further tasks. Mustafa Mehmet and Zehra Kosova, another prominent representative of the same generation, officially affiliated to the party at the beginning of 1934 and then received an extraordinary invitation from the party administration, which only a few of the tobacco workers could hope to get (TÜSTAV, Fond 495, List 266, File 198, p. 15; Özçelik, 2003, p. 27; Kosova, 2011, p. 65).

Journey to the USSR

At the beginning of 1934, the party ordered Mustafa Mehmet to visit the USSR for education (Özçelik, 2003, p. 27; TÜSTAV, Fond. 495, List 266, File 198, p. 15):

One of our friends came and told me: “Mustafa, [...], you are going to get training.” “What training,” I asked. He said: “You are going to go to the Soviet Union.” Then I said: “OK.” The beginning of 1934, I mean the beginning of June. “You are going to depart with a female friend.” Then I was indeed satisfied with that. That was an award for me, and I immediately accepted. (Özçelik, 2003, p. 27).

After a risky and uncomfortable journey, he was in Moscow in 1934, July and registered to KUTV, welcoming workers from different world countries for a Marxist training (Özçelik, 2003, pp. 28–29). KUTV (Коммунистический университет трудящихся Востока / The Communist University for the Toilers of the East) had been founded in Moscow in 1921 as an educational institution for the training of young communist as well-equipped revolutionary cadres in their native languages (Ashby, 2014; Ravandi-Fadai, 2015; Meyer, 2018). Along with workers, there were many intellectuals among those accepted to the institution such as Nazım Hikmet, a Turkish poet and legendary figure for Turkish left (Akbulut, 2002; Meyer, 2018). In KUTV, Mustafa Mehmet and the others from Turkey, for instance, young Zehra Kosova (Kosova, 1996, p. 67), were relatively disadvantageous as there were not any textbooks written in Anatolian Turkish, but Azerbaijani. Therefore, they first needed to learn that language, which was different to theirs in small nuances (Özçelik, 2003, pp. 29–30).

His training at KUTV coincided with the civil war in Spain. He was among the volunteers for joining the ranks of Republicans and, therefore, got military training for some time. However, the administration preferred them to stay and continue their two-year education (Ibid., p. 36–37). Finally, the whole process was completed in 1936 (TÜSTAV, Fond 495, List 266, File 198, p. 15).

The primary objective of training in KUTV was to raise skilful cadres for the local communist movements. Hence, both TKP and Russian authorities agreed that he would

be more beneficial in the Turkish communist party and turn back to Turkey. Although his comrade, Zehra Kosova, with whom he had arrived in Moscow, left the USSR in 1937 (Kosova, 2011, p. 84), Mustafa Mehmed had to stay more for some unspecified technical problems (TÜSTAV, Fond 495, List 266, File 198, p. 16–17), and worked in factories in the USSR (Özçelik, 2003, p. 37). The local authorities first sent him to a textile factory at Rasskazovo station by the Paveletskiy railway, and then to another one in Fergana at the end of 1936 (TÜSTAV, Fond 495, List 266, File 198, pp. 17, 36). While he was working in Fergana, Uzbekistan, he affiliated to a theatre group in the factory club, acted in many plays, and staged *Gypsies* four or five times (Özçelik, 2003, p. 38). *Gypsies* was originally a Pushkin poem that the Moscow Gypsy Theatre *Romen*, founded in 1931 (Seton, 1935, p. 66; Lemon, 2013), dramatised and incorporated into their repertoires (Seton, 1935, p. 71; Malnick, 1959, p. 81). Before the Second World War, the theatre had visited in Central Asia (Radzinsky, 1945) and, thus, it is fair to assume that their performances might have been inspirational for the factory's theatre society.

In 1938, NKVD (People's Commissariat for Internal Affairs), the most effective state apparatus against supposed opponents in the late 1930s (Kenez, 2006, p. 104; Sakwa, 2005, p. 203), arrested Mustafa Mehmet on a suspicion, and he remained in the Fergana prison for six months, and then respectively in Tashkent, Yalangach camp and Namangan Prison for eight months (TÜSTAV, Fond 495, List 266, File 198, p. 18). After his release in 1939 April, he continued to work in the same factory (Özçelik, 2003, pp. 41–42; TÜSTAV, Fond 495, List 266, File 198, p. 17). As the officials in Fergana lost his passport, he went to Moscow to acquire a new one and then stayed there for some time (TÜSTAV, Fond 495, List 266, File 198, p. 17).

During his stay in the USSR, he married a Russian woman, Nina Vasilyevna Podchelimoova and had a daughter. Unfortunately, his former life's call would oblige him to leave them behind and move back to Turkey (TÜSTAV, Fond 495, List 266, File 198, pp. 20–23).

Again, in Turkey

In 1940, Şefik Hüsnü (Ferdî), one of most influential TKP leaders (Akbulut, 2010; Atılgan, 2020), wrote to his Russian comrades to demand Mustafa Mehmet back into Turkey:

Petko (Mustafa Mamu). A Gypsy, he was born in 1915, a tobacco worker. He affiliated to TKP in 1934 and went to THE USSR for training at the party's recommendation in the same year. After he graduated from KUTV, he could not be sent to the country due to technical difficulties. He is dependent on the section's aid for subsistence. Petko has to be sent to his homeland where he would be useful for the party. (TÜSTAV, Fond 495, List 266, File 198, p. 16).

Şefik Hüsnü had been abroad for approximately ten years, until 1939 (Akbulut, 2010, p. 113; Atılgan, 2020, p. 23), and trying to retrieve those old comrades. Finally, an extraordinary stage of Mustafa Mehmet's life was about to end. However, his journey to Turkey would be another adventure. He went to Turkey via Batum, on June 5, in 1941 (TÜSTAV,

Fond 495, List 266, File 198, p. 15). Although he passed the border without severe issues, villagers found him and his friends suspicious due to their accent, which was more or less reminiscent of Azerbaijani and delivered to Borçka police, where he was seriously beaten. However, Mustafa Mehmet somehow convinced them that he was just an AWOL. After release, he went to Istanbul, started to work in a tobacco warehouse for some time, before surrendering to the army for conscription in September 1941 and serving as a soldier until 1945 (Özçelik, 2003, pp. 44–47).

While Mustafa Mehmet was working in a tobacco warehouse in 1946, Şefik Hüsnü founded a legal organisation, the Turkey Socialist Labourers and Peasants' Party to take advantage of the relatively liberal new legislations (İleri, 2003, pp. 106, 276; Resmi Gazete, 1946, pp. 10729–10730) introduced after the Second World War. The new law allowed the establishment of working-class associations and triggered a significant development in this respect (Güzel, 1996, p. 147; Çelik, 2010; Koçak, 2014, p. 99). The tobacco workers contributed to the formation of party's local branches, particularly in Istanbul (Berktaş, 1999, p. 99) and founded İstanbul Tobacco Workers Union in the same period (Kosova, 1996, p. 137; Özçelik, 2003, pp. 106–107). They were also highly active in the achievement of logistic tasks regarding the confederation of İstanbul Unions (Anadol, 1989, p. 6; Koçak, 2014). However, the government soon banned the party and related work organisations in 1946, December 16 (Sayılğan, 2009, p. 232). Mustafa Mehmet was among the party staff and arrested after its closure and sentenced to three years (Akşam, 1948, p. 4; İleri, 2003, p. 21; Özçelik, 2003, p. 48). For him, the arrest campaign in the period was a turning point for the history of tobacco workers:

All the experienced cadres of tobacco workers, including me, were arrested. Those we had hidden from the police with a high level of secrecy were detected. Hence, tobacco workers were damaged to a high degree. Because they lost their leaders, it would be fair to say that tobacco workers could not have organised since then. (Özçelik, 2003, p. 49).

İdris Erdinç also confirms that the arrests in this period seriously weakened the tobacco workers and the party in general (Akgül, 1996, p. 126). Following that, there would be another legal attack against the communist party in 1951 and Mustafa be arrested again in February 1952, remained in the Harbiye Prison for a total of 22 months with some breaks and then, expelled to Bilecik Söğüt for six months and 20 days (1951 TKP Tevkifatı, 2000, pp. 56–57; Özçelik, 2003, pp. 51–52, 62). Before he departed for Söğüt, police unexpectedly detained him from his house. On 1955, September 6–7, mobs attacked non-Muslim inhabitants' homes and workplaces in Istanbul on the rumours that Atatürk's house in Salonica was bombed (Kuyucu, 2005). The government tried to disguise the riot, often depicted as a state-led pogrom against city's Greek minority (Dosdoğru, 1993), as a communist provocation and arrested many of those convicted or reputable communists soon, including Mustafa, although he had been at home throughout the two-days and once again stayed in Harbiye Prison for approximately five months (Dosdoğru, 1993, pp. 35–36; Özçelik, 2003, pp. 51–52).

The new constitution introduced after the Coup, on May 27, 1960, was undoubtedly a crucial moment in Turkish history. It regulated social rights from a broader perspective and counted welfare among the Turkish state's primary qualities (Kaboğlu, 2010, p. 43). Moreover, the state recognised the union foundation and membership as an unrestricted right for both workers and officials (Kaboğlu, 2010, p. 51). The new Trade Union Law, no: 274 and the Law of Collective Bargaining, Strike, and Lockout, no: 275 created a more suitable ground for labour organisation (Şenocak & Kılıçoğlu, 2011, p. 165). Under such circumstances, a group of trade unionist founded the Workers Party of Turkey (TİP), which would soon be one of most influential dynamics of leftist opposition in Turkey (Aybar, 1988, pp. 197–198; Mumcu, 1993; Sargın, 2001; Ünsal, 2002) and play a significant role in the spread of left-wing ideas among the new generations, more than ever.

Ironically, the tobacco workers were no longer a political circle in this period. The re-organisation of the tobacco industry and mechanisation since the mid-1930s made qualification less essential and the tobacco workers, for whom employment in tobacco industry had been a family occupation for decades, replaceable (Berktaş, 1999, p. 258; Kosova, 2011, pp. 62–63; Özçelik, 2003, pp. 18–19). As their density in warehouses was gradually reduced, they lost their power to raise new cadres from among the young workers and became marginalised (Yıldır, 2020, p. 115). However, they were still respectful figures in their neighbourhoods and served as local organisers to the popularity of TİP in locations with a significant Roma concentration such as Kasımpaşa and Beşiktaş:

They were still handy for TİP in Beşiktaş, Ortaköy, Kasımpaşa regions. Even while sitting at coffeehouses, they shared helpful instructions. They worked much for the organisations led by Vecdi and Sevinç [Özgüner] in Kasımpaşa. [...] And again, in Kasımpaşa, in Ortaköy, there was Conga Ali, Mustafa Toprak, a Yeşilçam actor as well [Yeşilçam, a street in İstanbul, where actors hang on, identical with Turkish cinema – author note]. They brought people around them by propagating TİP, as much as possible. (Kundakçı, 2005, p. 135).

Morris Gabbay, who was actively working for TİP's Beyoğlu [a district including Kasımpaşa] branch, in the election campaigns, clearly depicted their role in the local party activities:

After the Second World War, working opportunities in tobacco shrined, and most workers shifted to different sectors. Many of the friends working with me in the district board were the children and grandchildren of those workers. They knew how to act in an organisation due to the memories they had heard from the elders. As I was too busy at the party headquarters, I left the daily tasks in their responsibility and chaired the board meetings once a week. On Sunday mornings, we met in the place known as the coffee-house of tobacco workers, toured around the Golden Horn with the members and arranged chat meetings at coffee-houses. (Gabbay, 2013, pp. 188–189).

Their success was undeniable. In İstanbul, TİP received 5.8 % of the votes (12 Ekim 1969, 1970, p. 600) in the parliamentary general election held in 1969 while the same rate was 12 % in Hacıhüsrev, and in the ballots, 181 and 182, respectively 35% and 38% (Ibid.,

pp. 614–615). İbrahim Cihan Şenoğuz, who was TİP representative in one of those ballots, testified those extraordinary results:

In the 1969 election, I was a board member in a ballot in Beyoğlu district, on behalf of TİP. In the poll, I was responsible, in Kasımpaşa, and in the neighbouring one (one of the ballots in Hacıhüsrev Neighbourhood) TİP was the first party. TİP was very influential in some parts of Kasımpaşa. We may say that influence lasted since the 1920s. (Babalık, 2005, p. 519).

In the late 1960s, latent contradictions arose, and sharp divisions occurred within the Turkish left, and throughout the 1970s, the conflict between rival leftist fractions was sometimes harsher than the left and right-wing extremists. In this process, Mihri Belli was one of the most prominent leaders of one camp, National Democratic Revolution (Milli Demokratik Devrim) (İleri, 1976a) and succeeded to attract individuals from the old circle of the tobacco workers (Yilgür, 2016). When he founded a new party, The Labourers Party of Turkey (TEP), Mustafa Mehmet was already there. He was one of the founders and elected to the party board in 1975 (İleri, 1976b, p. 1979) and would be one of the suspects when a lawsuit filed for the party's closure in 1976 (Ibid., pp. 1142–1148).

Re-exploration of an Extraordinary Life

In the 1980s, Mustafa was by no means enthusiastic about being visible although he had once been one of the critical figures among the tobacco workers. He refused to talk to Atilla Akar, who was interviewing old leftists for a book study amid the 1980s (Akar, 1989, p. 108). Such a low-profile attitude did not promise him to be Tütüncülerin Tarihi's protagonist when the book was posthumously published in 2003. TÜSTAV, the publisher, collected his memoir, transcriptions of his interviews and speeches that he gave in the late 1980s before he died in 1991, March (As the details about his death were publicly unknown, I referred to the following sources to detect the exact time: The Istanbul Metropolitan Municipality Graveyard Records, <https://www.turkiye.gov.tr/istanbul-buyuksehir-belediyesi-mezar-yeri-sorgulama>; Interview with Saygı Yağmurdereli, 2014, January 12; Interview with Erden Akbulut, 2021, January 28). No doubt, that wise decision converted his image, which had already been faint even in the minds of his old friends, into something that would remain vivid for a long time.

Now, he is seen as almost identical with those tobacco workers, a circle, whose presence itself proves how remarkable the history experienced by the diverse ethnicities of Salonica province was, in the late 19th and early 20th-centuries. High labour demand attracted masses to the tobacco production centres such as Drama, Kavala, Xanthi, Serres. Roma were among them, and the long-lasting wage-employment in tobacco agriculture and warehouses blurred the boundaries between them and non-Gypsies and gradually became hybrid agglomerations. They joined labour activism and early leftist movements and internalised relevant sensibilities and dispositions as a part of their culture. Between the Balkan Wars of 1912–13 and Turk-Greek Population Exchange of 1923–24, they

brought that into Turkey and reproduced and spread in tobacco warehouses or fields. They fed the Turkish left with new human resources and their logistic contributions to early Republican leftist political organisations.

Believing in the Communist promise of equality among all suppressed people, the only identity they declared in Turkey was that of the leftist worker. However, their Roma heritage or the Roma element in the circle was too conspicuous to be overlooked by outsiders. Therefore, both their comrades and opponents of the Turkish left called them Gypsy tobacco workers. Mustafa Mehmet was one of those tobacco workers.

Yugoslavia

Activism and Civic Participation

Sofiya Zahova

Introduction

The Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes was created at the end of the First World War as a territory to unite the former lands of the Kingdom of Serbia, the Kingdom of Montenegro, and territories of the Austro-Hungarian Empire (Vojvodina and the briefly existing provisional state of Slovenes, Croats, and Serbs). Interwar Yugoslavia was thus a multi-ethnic state with a population of twelve million and was ruled by the Serbian dynasty of Karadjordjević. In 1929, King Alexander I, also known as the Unifier, renamed the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes as the Kingdom of Yugoslavia and introduced a personal dictatorship. For convenience, the term 'Yugoslavia' will be used hereafter as the name of the kingdom throughout the interwar period, spanning 1918–1941.

Following dramatic economic and demographic losses in the Balkan Wars (1912–1913) and in First World War (1914–1918), this period saw developments in all fields in terms of modernisation, industrialisation, urbanisation and demographic growth, which transformed Yugoslavia into a modern state comparable to its contemporaries (Čalić, 2013). Institutional nation-building processes were expanding, among them policies to raise the literacy and educational level of the population as well as to establish cultural and national institutions in all fields of public life. With the renaming of the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes as the Kingdom of Yugoslavia in 1929, certain policies in the fields of education and culture were designed in order to reinforce a Yugoslav identity (Gligorijević, 1986; Wachtel, 1998; Torch, 2010). In Yugoslavia, the 1930s was a period in which there was a general policy line and public discourse for building a kingdom-wide network of organisations, particularly youth clubs related to various sporting, cultural and educational activities, and this was connected to a general strategy of building a Yugoslav identity among the younger generation (Žutić, 1991). Policies related to guaranteeing certain rights of ethno-national communities were designed for those citizens whose mother state was outside of the kingdom's borders, such as Germans, Hungarians, and Romanians (Janjetović, 2005, pp. 70–82).

Although all numerical estimations are uncertain, varying between 70,000 (Kočović, 1990, p. 131) and 250,000 (Đurić, 1987, p. 67), the number of Roma, in the context of a territory with such a sizable population, undoubtedly represented an insignificant proportion of the population. Roma cultural, political and civic initiatives during the

interwar period were not related to direct measures initiated on behalf of the Yugoslav state. However, this does not mean such measures were lacking. There were such activities, and they were all led by Roma personalities who themselves initiated endeavours and were searching for public recognition for a specific Roma cause or Roma community. Roma individuals, as citizens of Yugoslavia, initiated and led undertakings in various public fields ranging from religious community activities to participation in political parties, as well as national identity building in the field of culture. The means were thus diverse, but the unifying element was the Roma's quest for public recognition as citizens with full rights, and for their status as a community equal to all others within the wider Yugoslavian society. No less important as a unifying element was that they were led by Roma individuals who acted, and were perceived, as leaders and representatives of the Roma.

This chapter aims to draw a collective portrait of the Yugoslav Roma activism and civic participation of the time by providing a typology of these endeavours, depending on the public field in which they had been developed and the stance/positionality of the Roma individuals who led them. This will be done by presenting important Roma personalities along with the activities they led and their significance for the community or for creating visions for the Roma within Yugoslavia. This collective portrait is not comprehensive in terms of encompassing and presenting all the individuals who contributed to voicing the rights and status of Roma within Yugoslavia, and who were widely considered to be public representatives of the Gypsies. Nevertheless, it aims to be comprehensive in terms of covering all of the forms of activism and types of leadership that were developed, depending on the nature of the activities and the field in which they appeared.

The chapter is based on primary sources, including original documents of the time, such as media materials and reports, secondary sources and publications based on oral history. As far as the archival sources are concerned, as has already been pointed out in the few examples of research on Roma in the interwar period (Acković, 2001, 2010, 2014, 2017a; Vojak, 2004, 2013; Marushiakova & Popov, 2021b, pp. 180–250), the official archives of the period are scarce and do not reflect the dynamic developments within Roma activism. A rare example of archival preservation and valuable secondary source materials can be found in the various publications by Dragoljub Acković (2001, 2010, 2014, 2017ab, 2019ab, 2020; Ацковић, 2000, 2009) and in his personal archive (LADA), that formed the fundament for the activities of the Museum of Roma Culture in Belgrade. Archives of the personalities mentioned here either never existed or were not preserved. In some cases, local memory has retained some facts and narratives, but these narratives have been also influenced by contemporary secondary sources and media discourse. The Archives of Yugoslavia, in which archival materials of the time are generally kept, did not contain much relevant material, while the archive of the Ministry of Interior was inaccessible due to digitalisation. In other cases, local or regional archives had no relevant material as a result of turbulent times and destroyed archives (the archives in Sarajevo, for instance, are believed to have been destroyed by the fire at the national library during

the 1990s conflicts). In addition, the obstacles to travel and institutional access caused by the COVID-19 pandemic prevented us from visiting locations in an attempt to find sources among the local communities or local archives. Thus, for some of the personalities presented, biographical data is missing and reconstruction of their activities and life paths are made on the basis of media coverage of the period and secondary sources. Even though my research has faced a lot of challenges related to the preservation of Roma heritage, I hope that this chapter will contribute to an endeavour to maintain and put into historical context the activities of selected individuals who proved to be visionaries. My hypothesis is that (many) other individuals might have developed activities in these public fields, and hopefully traces of, and materials about, their activities will be discovered in the future.

From Pre-Modern Leadership to Civic Representation

The most widespread pattern of activism and engagement of the time was among personalities involved in Roma community leadership related to the ethno-cultural, religious, and traditional structures and practices among Roma. At the beginning of the twentieth century and during the interwar period, this leadership underwent transformation in the spirit of the new social realities, and these personalities had a new take that transformed and advanced their leadership role from its pre-modern mode to civic participation and representation.

Such examples were observed among Roma who held the position of *kmet*. *Kmet* (pl. *kmetovi*) was an administrative term for an alderman responsible for communities or territories with the obligation to represent and collect taxes. In the case of the Serbian lands, the position was widespread during the Ottoman rule and had analogies in other areas in Europe. It was preserved among the Gypsies in the nineteenth century with the titles *knez* or *kmet* (Ђорђевић, 1924, pp. 123–124). This institution continued to exist in the Serbian Yugoslav territories of the interwar period and, in the Gypsy context, a *kmet* was a salaried man appointed by the municipality who would have administrative functions for the respective community.

Marinko Savić was a tradesman holding the position of Gypsy *kmet* for a continuous period of over six years, up to 1926, for the whole area of Belgrade. Savić's activities are illustrative of the struggle among the Roma population for civic participation and emancipation. He initiated the building of a monument erected by "Serbian Gypsy Youth to its Heroes [who] perished and died from 1912 to 1918". The monument is made of stone in the form of an obelisk, on the front face of which is written the aforementioned dedication followed by the names of the Gypsy heroes (reportedly 54, but the current state of the monument does not allow clear reading of the names). On the left side of the monument, another inscription (probably added a bit later as the style of the plate and inscription lettering is different) informs us that it was erected "Under the initiative of Marinko Savić, *kmet* of the Gypsies in Belgrade". The Serbian Army had many victories during the Balkan Wars and the First World War, which corresponded to huge losses of

soldiers participating (Čalić, 2013, pp. 84–89). War veterans (those who survived the war and returned after their service in the army) and heroes (those who showed bravery or lost their lives) were part of the Serbian national narrative and commemorative practices after the war. Both invalids and veterans held respected positions and were considered heroes in the public discourse of Serbian society in the 1920s. Many Roma, as citizens of Serbia, enlisted in the Serbian Army and took part in its operations (Đurić, 2006, p. 80; Acković, 2017b; Šarenac, 2020). In this general societal context, Marinko Savić initiated the monument of commemoration at the community level. Undoubtedly, with this initiative, he was seeking recognition of the Gypsy citizens' participation in events towards the realisation of Serbian national ideas, but he was also aiming to strengthen the major national narratives at a community level. In a moment when throughout Serbian territories local and central authorities were building state-funded monuments of commemoration, Savić was working to strengthen the nation-building narrative at the level of the local Roma community. Apart from the fallen soldiers' names, there were also names of benefactors of the Club of the Belgrade Serbian Gypsies, also presided over by Savić (see below). The title of benefactors was awarded to those who donated 200 dinars. These two plates and inscriptions were probably the first to be incorporated at the time of the erection of the monument and were presented in the 1920s, while others were added to the monument in the decade afterwards.

During the period of Savić's leadership, this commemoration was intertwined with a traditional community celebration that was an important identity marker for the Roma community, the celebration of *Tetkica Bibija* (Auntie Bibija). In the 1920s, he hosted the public annual celebration of Bibija and invited journalists to report it (Acković, 2004; Marushiakova & Popov, 2021b, pp. 183–197). Among Roma in Belgrade and in Central Serbia, *Tetkica Bibija* is celebrated as an uncanonised Gypsy saint who protects Roma children from dreadful diseases and secures health for them and their families. The name contains both the Serbian (*Tetkica*, in diminutive) and Romani language (*Bibija*) language terms 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 children (Попов, 1996). Among Serbian Roma, it has developed and been perceived as a specific Roma custom – the Aunt thus presented as a black Gypsy woman in narratives and in iconography (Petrović, 1937; Acković, 2004, 2010).

The celebration of Bibija in the modern Serbian state before the First World War and during the interwar period in Yugoslavia consequently became a marker of Roma identity for both Roma and the majority society (Marushiakova & Popov, 2021b, pp. 183–197). The monument initiated by Savić was built and installed in Čbura, the Belgrade neighbourhood with the most Roma inhabitants at that time. The choice of location – in the local community's place for the worshipping of Bibija – shows Savić's vision that the community was to be recognised as a separate unit of citizens bonded by their own Roma

community identity within a larger social context and national commemoration narrative. We may presume that his idea was that the intertwining of community celebration and national commemoration for Roma soldiers would stimulate the equal and inter-related development of community-society identity. This act was a kind of educating of the lay members of the Roma community into the commemorative practices and national narrative of the time. Commemorative practices at the monument were taking place during the Day of Bibija celebration (not on the national commemoration days, for instance) and Christian priests were invited at the ceremony to perform the ritual accompanying every religious ceremony as well as to lead prayer for the peace of the souls of those who had died during the war (Политика, 1926, p. 7; Време, 1926b, p. 5). Savić also contributed to establishing another modern element in the Roma community's life in the cultural context (of Belgrade) – namely organising Gypsy banquets or concerts in the hotels' restaurants of the city. In September 1924 a Gypsy party was organised by Savić with a classical concert, opera singing and folklore music for the Roma community reported in a vivid poetical material showing both the erudition and stereotypes of the famous Serbian journalist and poet of Jewish background Stanislav Vinaver (Време, 1924, p. 5). During his patriotic speech that stressed also Roma participation in the wars, Marinko Savić announced a fundraising campaign for the widow and three children of Jovan Djordjević Kusatlija, a diseased war veteran (Ibid.). Since the second half of 1920s, the community started organising Gypsy ball on the evenings of the celebration of Bibija in the well-known hotels of the time where musical performances and competitions for the most beautiful Gypsy woman took place, which is indicative of another transformation of the more traditional custom in an urban environment (Време, 1926a, p. 5; Правда, 1937a, p. 8). These activities were taking place under Savić's (and other Roma who held the same position) leadership and they confirm that beyond his *kmet* functions, he worked for the establishment and public recognition of both the ethnic (Roma) and national (Serbian, Yugoslavian) identity of the Roma citizens.

After the local elections in 1926, Marinko Savić was dismissed as Gypsy *kmet* and Mihajlo Stefanović was appointed to the position, an act that provoked protest among residents of the two neighbourhoods of Belgrade with the most numerous Roma population, as reported in the national media:

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. Mihajlo Stefanović the Chicken Man, the man who sells chickens at the Big Market.

This change of the Gypsy *kmet* provoked revolt among the Čubura Gypsies. The former Gypsy officer with his followers formed the new club of the Serbian Gypsies and 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, there were 5 to 6 representatives of the democrats, who were preparing a major political surprise.

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 Mihajlo 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 [the Mayor of Belgrade] Mr. Kumanudi 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.

The publication reported that the assembly closed with a resolution:

1. The Belgrade Gypsies protest against the work of the current municipal authorities and against the self-appointed Gypsy *kmet* Mr. Mihajlo 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 Mihajlo 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. (Време, 1926c, p. 9; Marushiakova & Popov, 2011b, pp. 221–225).

The protest, as a reaction to Marinko Savić's dismissal, reveals his popularity and support among the Roma residents of Belgrade. Even though one of the main initiators of the rally was Savić himself, the publicly stated demands were not for his rehabilitation, but for the right of the Roma to decide for themselves who would represent them through a direct vote for such a person. This event, taking place in 1926, was unprecedented in at least two respects. Firstly, this was the first public gathering of Roma citizens in which Roma collectively demanded representation and participation at local governmental level. Secondly, Savić himself stated that according to his vision, the administrative function for the Gypsies should be related to leading a 'Gypsy policy'.

Despite the threats of a rally with 200 to 300 men demonstrating in front of the municipality on the matter of Mihajlo Stefanović becoming a *kmet*, he was appointed, and some of his activities as the holder of the position were reported in the media in the 1920s (Време, 1926a, p. 5; Време, 1927a, p. 5; Правда, 1928, p. 5). Marinko Savić, however, continued his activities in the late 1920s and 1930s as President of the Club of the Belgrade Serbian Gypsies (*Клуб београдских српских Цигана*), also known as the Club of the Serbian Gypsies (*Клуб српских Цигана*). According to the newspaper article quoted above, the club was established by Savić as a means for mobilising and representing the Roma citizens after losing his formal administrative position. Under Savić, the club was essentially maintaining all the initiatives he had set up for the celebration of Bibija and commemoration at the monument. It is possible that the club was formally registered, as, later in the article, its president and secretary are mentioned. There are, however, no documents, such as statute or registration papers, to prove its formal establishment as a juridical entity, so the hypothesis that it was an informal organisation gathering active and established citizens of the Belgrade Gypsy community engaged in community leadership around Savić is most likely.

In the 1930s, Marinko Savić, along with Djordje Stanković, headed the Humanitarian, Cultural and Educational Association of the Yugoslavian Gypsies in Belgrade (*Хумано, културно и просветно удружење југословенских Цигана у Београду*), another upgrade of his organisational activism in unison with the new realities in the kingdom. The name of the organisation referenced Yugoslav rather than Serbian Gypsies – again demonstrating Savić’s strategic wish to align his activities with the new (Yugoslav) nation-building discourse, when policies in the fields of education and culture related to reinforcing the so-called integral Yugoslavianhood (Troch, 2010) were introduced. Savić had probably decided to rename the organisation, with the reference to Yugoslavia, in light of this new societal framework (Време, 1931ab). Among the limited records of the activities of the club is a telegram sent by it in 1934, on the occasion of the death of Alexander I the Unifier, “To His Royal Highness King Peter II” (Правда, 1934, p. 8; Marushiakova & Popov, 2021b, pp. 194–195). Savić also published a short material entitled “To our brothers” in the last issue of the newspaper *Romano lil* published in 1935 in Belgrade. Relying on his authority as a respected and known public figure among the Roma in Belgrade, he welcomed the appearance of the media and asked Roma to be an active audience and buy the newspaper:

To our brothers.

On the day of our celebration *Bibijako dje* I came across a copy of “Romano lil”. My whole being was happy when I saw that we Gypsies have our own newspaper too. The work of our youth, who put itself the goal of enlightening the Gypsy part [of the society], deserves appraisal.

Brothers, it is not an easy thing to start a newspaper for illiterate people as ourselves. Many of our brothers do not comprehend the meaning of this newspaper, so they don’t buy it. That is why I ask *all my friends* to buy “Romano lil” so that the only newspaper of ours in Yugoslavia could sustain itself.

Te *aven maj savore saste t(h)aj baxtale*: (let all of you my [people] be healthy and lucky)

With brother’s greeting,

Marinko Savić.

Ex-alderman of the Belgrade Gypsies. (*Romano lil*, 1935r, p. 2).

Another close ally of Savić who developed civic activities in this period was Janačko Stojanović Čukur. He was a Rom from the community living near Banovo Park in Belgrade and, apart from being a music band leader, is mentioned as a leader of the Gypsies supporting the Democratic Party, probably because he was leading a branch of the party in his own neighbourhood. His first known public activity is as a spokesman at the protest in 1926 after the dismissal of Savić. At the meeting, Stojanović declared that as an act of protest against the newly appointed administration of the Belgrade mayor (who was from the Democratic Party), he would become a member of the Radical Party (the two parties being the main political players in that period, with the Radical Party beginning to dominate political life):

- 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. [...]
- I am not the only one who publicly 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. (Време, 1926с, р. 9; Marushiakova & Popov, 2021b, pp. 221–225).

This statement shows that as leader of the community, Stojanović demonstrated his own agency and leadership, and was neither a blind follower nor a deliverer of passive political voters. In the 1920s and 1930s, Stojanović held the position of Secretary of the First Serbian Gypsy Association (*zadruga*) for Mutual Support in Sickness and Death (*Прва Српско-Циганска Задруга за узajмно помаганje у болести и смрти*), an association active in the interwar period, which was most probably based on an earlier form of community organisation. We can also presuppose that the founders of the organisation were also craftsman and small traders who were acquainted with professional forms of guild organisations, such as *esnaf* (in the past) and *zadruga* (since the end of the nineteenth century, cf. Ilijić, 1999). However, in the interwar period, such an organisation was modelled according to the then popular and similar types of associations for mutual support in sickness and death, which were emerging across Serbia and Yugoslavia. According to a preserved copy of a membership card of the *zadruga*, its goals were:

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*, the day of the young St. Nikola on May 8, according to the Julian calendar. (LADA, f. First Serbian Gypsy Zadruga; Marushiakova & Popov, 2021b, pp. 182–183).

Stojanović was Secretary of the *zadruga* during its most active period of public engagement. The structure was formalised, membership cards were issued, membership fees were collected, land for building a house for celebrating Bibija along with a cultural house was obtained, and Roma in difficult situations were helped. Even though the data is scarce and only a few media reports about the annual assemblies are available (Време, 1931a, p. 9), we can suppose that Stojanović had a leading role in all these processes.

Zadruga's president was Zdravko Milosavljević, and Djordje (Djole) Stanković was vice president; both were traders. On the 1931 annual assembly of the association, presided over by Stojanović, in a tavern of Čubura street, a decision was made to build a House of culture and civilisation for the Yugoslav Gypsies, where the annual celebrations of the association would be held:

The Assembly was opened by Janačko 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 Executives 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 the House of culture and civilisation of the Yugoslav Gypsies. This idea was met with jubilation. (Ibid.)

Under Stojanović's leadership, the more traditional form of organisation and of celebrations (in the open field) were 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 (Димић, 1997, pp. 213–218). Following the pattern of similar Yugoslav civil society organisations in the same period, the *zadruga* members bought land in the Roma neighbourhood in order to build the house, which demonstrates the commitment of its leaders to institutionalise the organisation's public space. It is also proof that the Roma involved in the activities of the association were well off, as buying land needed considerable investment. The land purchase would remain the only example of such a sizeable and property-related charitable act by Roma within Yugoslav territory. The property, which hosts both a small chapel to Bibija and the monument to Roma heroes, is preserved to this day 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 a different nature. The property was confiscated by the state in the late 1940s, but was given for the use of the Rom Association of Belgrade (*Друштво "Ром" – Београд*) in the late 1960s (Acković, 2001, p. 34). At the time of writing (early 2021), there are attempts at a new seizure by the local government in Belgrade (BBC Srbija, 2020), which have provoked protests and petitions among the Belgrade Roma.

There are also data that allow us to conclude that the organisation under Stojanović's leadership was well-off, active and respected by the Belgrade authorities. The *zadruga* was represented at the Assembly of the Belgrade Local Government in 1931 on the occasion of celebrating King Alexander Karadjordjević's decade of ruling (Београдске обштинске новине, 1931, p. 1102).

The activities of Janačko Stojanović are an example of leadership for emancipation and integration in the social realities of the state in a moment of transformation. The transformation at the community level was related to activities that built on and extended traditional forms of community organisation and gatherings of the Roma but reshaped them in accordance with the contemporary civic realities within the macro-society. The other transformation in the context of which Janačko Stojanović's activities should be interpreted is the societal (Yugoslav) context – the late 1920s and early 1930s was a time when Yugoslav identity was reinforced and structures were created nationwide to

contribute to ‘elevating the cultural level’ of the population. Thus, as secretary of the First Serbian Gypsy Association for Mutual Support in Sickness and Death, he mainstreamed the activities of the organisation by planning the house for culture and civilisation as well as by various charitable activities.

Another Belgrade Roma leader of this type was Hristofor Jovanović (appearing in media also as Hristovoje Jovanović), referred to as former Belgrade Gypsy chieftain (*starešina*), and a municipal clerk (Правда, 1937b, p. 18) – probably meaning that he was paid for functions related to the Roma in Belgrade, and president of the Association of Belgrade Gypsies Worshippers of Bibija (Теткика) (Удружење београдских Цигана свечара Бибије (Теткице)), established in Belgrade in 1935 (Ацковић, 2000, pp. 97–110; Marushiakova & Popov, 2021b, pp. 197–204). Jovanović should also have been a collaborator of both Savić and Stojanović, as the preserved transcript of the main part of the Association’s Statute demonstrates that it united, inherited and advanced the assets, strategies and visions of the formal and informal associations led by the previously mentioned leaders. Similarly to the pattern of the other community organisations, the style of arrangement of the association shows how a traditional community celebration important for the Belgrade Roma community identity becomes the foundation for an entity of a purely civic nature, as demonstrated by the organisation’s statute:

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. (LADA, f. Удружење београдских Цигана свечара Бибије).

As president, Jovanović was the figure responsible for representation “before the authorities and in public” who had to “manage public affairs and administer communal assets”, “take a particular care for increasing the social assets through membership fees, organisation of concerts, parties, party dinners”, “take care of the means for building a public house” and facilitate communication between members (Ibid.). Jovanović, as president of the association gave a speech on the occasion of Bibija celebration in 1937:

We Gypsies and more precisely those of us who belong to the orthodox religion, who believe and respect God, who are devoted to our King, gentlemen, in the same way we also do believe and respect our holy Bibija Auntie. (Време, 1937, p. 9).

The leadership of Jovanović among the Belgrade Roma community thus contributed to completing the civic nature of the organisation. It should be noted that even though the name of the association was indeed devoted to the ‘Gypsy Saint’ Tetka Bibija, none

of the major goals and activities were related to religious celebrations or other traditional ethno-culture elements but were related to civic engagement and representation of the Roma community. Building on the assets of the other leaders' initiatives, the organisation presided over by Jovanović received the property bought by the Belgrade Roma *zadruga* located at 59 Gospodar Vučić Street and worth 20,000 dinars (LADA, f. Удружење београдских Цигана свечара Бибије). According to media reports from the annual meeting of the association in 1937, which was presided over by Jovanović, this was also the first organisation to be engaged systematically in a programme and concrete activities for securing financial support for its members in case of sickness and death, along with starting the construction project for the chapel and a space for celebrating the Day of Bibija (Правда, 1937с, р. 18; Ацковић, 2000, р. 101). Probably at the time of Jovanović's leadership, the monument to Gypsy youth mentioned above was moved to the property of the association and the names of its board members, led by Jovanović, were carved there. From this inscription, we can identify the main collaborators of Hristofor Jovanović in the association:

Vice President Djoka P. Simić, blacksmith, Secretary Jovan 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).

While Marinko Savić, Janačko Stojanović and Hristofor Jovanović were leaders among the Belgrade Roma, less is known about community leadership in other parts of Yugoslavia and among Roma Muslims. We can, however, speculate that similar activities of transformation of traditional community leadership and activities into civic forms to create a collective representation for the Roma community in question had developed in many other locations. Some municipalities in the Danube Banovina where Roma were living or settling as part of the state-managed pattern of the so-called colonisation of certain regions, have probably also appointed Gypsy *kmet* or *knez*. Such function of *knez* in Veliki Bečkerek (today Zrenjanin) in Banat region was held by Miša Radu who was salaried from the municipality for his obligations related to the Gypsies in the municipality after their settlement and obtaining land in the 1920s (Правда, 1933а, р. 11). However, after the agrarian reform was discontinued, some of the land was nationalised which was discontented by the Gypsies in Veliki Bečkerek. Under the leadership of Miša Radu they raised voices in public demanding their land back for agriculture. As no effect was achieved at local level the Roma were planning to raise the issue with the central authorities in Belgrade (Ibid.; Der Bund, 1933, p. 7), but the effect of these actions is unknown.

When compared to the Eastern parts of Yugoslavia, Croatian Roma were not that active in civil life and self-organising activities which, according to Danijel Vojak, reflected their

marginal position in the Croatian society (2013, p. 126) as many of them were still leading a nomadic way of life. It is noteworthy, however, that namely among nomadic or semi-nomadic groups' representatives, voices were raised for obtaining land, engagement in agriculture and building houses. The Gypsy *kapetan* (chieftain) Štefan Nikolić, whose large family had settled in Žitnjak (now Zagreb's neighbourhood) and had started building houses there, spoke about building a "Gypsy town" to gather and build houses for all Nikolićs spread around the country under his leadership (Zagrebački list, 1941, p. 7). These ideas should also be connected with the general discourse in Croatian territories on the "colonization of Gypsies", i.e. settling them in municipalities and providing land for agriculture in an attempt to "civilize" them (Jutarnji list, 1938b, p. 14) and "solving the Gypsies issue" (see details in Vojak, 2013, pp. 102–107). In the late 1930s the Ministry of Agriculture sent questionnaire to the municipalities requesting their opinion on the settlement of Gypsies and apparently some municipalities had done so (Jutarnji list, 1938a, p. 12; 1938c, p. 13; Vojak, 2013, 127–128), even though in many places Gypsies were pushed beyond the borders of the locality, as for instance in Križ municipality where the Gypsies who already inhabited the municipality were evicted, an operation for which the local council has even voted a considerable amount (Jutarnji list, 1939, p. 13). The central action for providing land for the Gypsies was welcomed by Roma groups who were until recently leading a (semi)nomadic life and namely among such groups activism in this direction was reported. Delegation of Roma from Sveta Klara municipality (where in 1940 were registered 292 Roma living in 45 households, Vojak 2013, p. 106) went for a meeting with the regional authorities in April 1940 requesting land in order to start agricultural work:

The Gypsies request land

Today at the regional authority arrived a bigger delegation of Gypsies, who represent the Gypsy settlement in Sveta Klara, Sesvet and other nearby places. Gypsies request that land is distributed to them, to be able to settle and live from the agriculture of land. They were directed to the department of village agriculture that will deal with the colonisation of Gypsies.

The Gypsy issue becomes current in the whole Banovina of Croatia and it is being thought on radical solution of the settlement of Gypsies, since the court processes of villagers against Gypsies because of stealing or other criminal acts were growing. The Gypsies declared that they themselves got tired of the nomadic life, since they do not dare stealing, by begging they get nothing already, so they are left with no other choice than get serious work. They request by all means to be colonised, to be able to peacefully and in decent way work the land. (Zagrebački list, 1940a, p. 10).

In the territories of Danube Banovina and in Savska Banovina there were also many old-settled Gypsies who lived a way of life similar to the other inhabitant of the places they lived and had the same social standing (Hrvatski list, 1940, p. 8). In some places Roma even became the richest personalities in the region as for instance Triva Nikolić from the village of Laćarak village (in Vojvodina, Danube Banovina) who made fortune as a farmer and horse-trader. Owning impressive size of land and money, Nikolić actually was the richest man in his own village (Hrvatska straža, 1940, p. 4; Novosti, 1940c, p. 14).

There were also Roma Muslim organisations led exclusively by Roma individuals. In Niš, Southern Serbia, where most of the Roma were Muslims, were established several associations in the 1920s and early 1930s. The Niš Muhammadan Singing Society “Accord” (*Нишка мухамеданска певачка дружина “Слога”*) was established in the spring of 1925 with goals covering the whole spectrum of cultural and civic activities to unite, represent and support those who were members: to care about the folk music; to defend the interests of its members and to support them in case of unemployment and sickness, and to support the publications of brochures that educate the members morally; to establish a library and choir orchestra; to support meetings and lecturers that enlighten and inform the members so they can be trained in a modern manner; to support the members, when possible, in upgrading their professional practice (AJ, f. 14, fasc. 61, br. 179, s. 225). The organisation was presided by Rasim Rušitović (who would later be in the leadership of another organisation, see below), the vice-president was Bajram Destanović, Tasim Nemetović was secretary, Šefket Alijević – treasurer. The Governing Board comprised of Sajin Zekić, Emينو Ramić, Ramadan Destanović and Medo Kašić, while Alija Kurtić, Faik Osmanović, Seka Rušitović and Mamut Kurtić were members of the Supervisory Board (AJ, f. 14, fasc. 61, br. 179, s. 229–230).

On October 15, 1929 was established the Association of All Muslims, Living in the Stock Market [neighbourhood] in Niš (*Удружење свих муслимана, живећих у Нишу на Сточном тргу*) with the aim to support its members when they or their family members pass away by organising a funeral following the Muslim custom. Murat Šanović was president and Memet Alisić – vice-president, both K. Avdić and A. Asanović were treasurers. There was a five-member Governing Board and a five-member Supervisory Board presided by Mustafa Agušević with vice-president Alija Osmanović (AJ, f. 14, fasc. 61, br. 179, s. 322–330). With a similar aim – to support its members when they or their family members pass away – was set up the Niš Muslim Association for Mutual Support in Case of Death (*Нишко муслиманско друштво за међусобно помагање у случају смрти*) on December 26, 1931, in the Roma neighbourhood Čair-male with the sole aim to support its members when they or their family members pass away. The declared area of operation was the town of Niš and its founding members were three – Usin Usinović, Rasim Rušitović, and V. Agušević. The association's funds were collected from membership fees, donations and balls' organisation and in case of dissolution its funds had to be donated to the waqf's administration in Niš, which was supposed to use the funds for charitable activities (AJ, f. 14, fasc. 61, br. 184, s. 47–52). In 1932 the football club *Gajret* (Zeal) was founded (Jašić, 2001, p. 25). According to the local memory of the Roma community, *Gajret* entirely comprised Roma, although it was not officially stated that it had an ethnic character. Speaking about the network of Muslim associations named *Gajret* – initially started in Bosnia in 1903 (Banac, 1988, p. 366) and spread throughout Yugoslavia during the interwar period, becoming particularly active under 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). The case of the sporting association *Crescent* (*Полумесяц*) from Leskovac (again, in the region of Southern Serbia) is similar. It was established by Muslim Roma in 1926 and was later transformed to incorporate, in the 1930s, more cultural activities, of a representative nature for the local Roma. Thus, in these territories, the Muslim organisations from this time onward could have been established by Serbian/Yugoslav Gypsies and have been working for the mobilisation of the Muslim Gypsy community in a manner similar to processes among Muslim Gypsy organisations in Bulgaria (cf. Marushiakova & Popov, 2015ab; 2021b, 69–140). Recent research has pointed out names of leading Roma among the Niš community who held the position of *kmet* in the interwar period (Jašić, 2001, p. 24–25) – Jašar Jašarević called Rnza and Arif Eminović (for Čerge-mali), Salija (Peciko) and Hamdija Demirović (for Čair-mali), Trajko Latifović (Beograd-mali), Gane Zekić (Rabadži-mali) – but their civic activities remain unknown.

Similar processes under the leadership of Roma were developing among Roma Muslims in other regions of Yugoslavia during the interwar period, such as, for instance, in the territories of Kosovo and Macedonia, newly incorporated into the kingdom. Apart from religious structures, we should also mention the *esnaf* structure that originated in the professional guilds of the Ottoman Empire. In the nineteenth century, in the context of national movements among the people of the region, these were formed along ethnic lines and thus Gypsy *esnafs* were established. Marushiakova and Popov have discussed several flags from the territories of interwar Yugoslavia – one in Resen, Macedonia and two in Prizren, Kosovo. One of the Prizren flags has been dated to the interwar period, when it was used not only in connection to its given occupation and its craftsmen, but as a representation of the whole Gypsy community in the city, i.e. as a manifestation of ethnic identity in the public space (Marushiakova & Popov, 2016b). While the use of these flags as a public representation of the Roma community as a whole had probably first taken place in the interwar years, it is noteworthy that these flags are preserved and in use to the present day.

The *estaf* organisations were also transformed in the new social and economic realities in Yugoslavia, for instance in associations, unions and chambers, and included Roma citizens from the respective field of occupation. Apparently, a significant number of Roma professional occupations' sections were members of both the Chamber of Commerce and Industry and the Chamber of Crafts in Skopje. Reportedly 90% of all 700 members occupied in carrying and transport of goods in trade related activities were of Gypsy origin (Бреме, 1936f, p. 9). That is why the headquarters of one of the two candidates for Head of the Chapter of Commerce and Industry, Dime Nastić, had decided to publish leaflets campaigning in the Romani language among the members who were to vote on November 23, 1936. As this might well have been the first ever leaflet agitating in democratic elections in the Romani language, it is worth quoting its text in the original (note that spelling and punctuation of the original have also been kept):

Амалален Ромален!

Тај са амаро диве кога требала теда амаро гласо. Бут ињен гођавер амен џанаја коте [т]е гласиња.

Саре ка гласиња ко ДИМЕ НАСТИЋ,

натребела те дара никастар натребела те хавен машкартуменде натребела техавен околу солела лове. Амен наињем ловенђе амен ињем правинањем аме родаја те овел шукар.

Адалеске те гласина е ДИМЕ НАСТИЋЕСКЕ. Амен сар ка гласиња е Диме Нاستићеске оф амен кадикер.

НЕК ОВЕЛ САСТО О ДИМЕ НАСТИЋ,

Roma Friends!

Tomorrow is our day, we have to give our voice. We are very clever, we know whom to vote.

All will vote for DIME NASTIĆ,

You should not be afraid of nobody, you should not fight with each other, you should not argue around who takes money. We are not [giving support] for money, we are for rights, we seek for betterment.

That's why [you have] to vote for DIME NASTIĆ. We will all vote for Dime Nastić, he will take care of us.

LONG LIVE DIME NASTIĆ. (Ibid.).

Roma from the guild organisations of people involved in transport and carrying of goods have publicly declared the support for Dime Nastić and he was voted for Head of the Chamber of Commerce and Industry with 8 members from his own list becoming members of the governing council while only 3 members from the competing candidates' list were elected into the council (Ibid.). The campaign and its results demonstrate that guild organisations of Roma continued to have a strong position in the respective field. The expression of collective identity and ethnic representation for these professional organisations sustained in the modern economic and social realities and was further developed and upgraded in this context.

National Heroes Becoming a Source of Pride and Representation

The commemoration of the sacrifice of the soldiers and other participants in the Balkan Wars and the First World War had a central place in the public life and identity of the Serbian nation. On the one hand, the new kingdom had to deal with the past war and its consequences – the Principality of Serbia alone, for instance, had 1,200,000 people, almost 30 per cent of its population, affected, with 400,000 killed, 150,000 injured, 114,000 war invalids and a great financial debt (Čalić, 2013, pp. 86–89). On the other hand, Serbia's victories and new territories led to the establishment of the biggest state formation in South-Eastern Europe. These facts formed the base for one of the major grand narratives in the newly created kingdom, in which the memory of the wars that assured victory and united the nation had a central place. The veterans and invalids of these wars had a respected position and were considered heroes in the public discourse of Serbian society during the post-war years (Newman, 2015).

Numerous Roma/Gypsies, as citizens of the Kingdom of Serbia at that time, took part in various divisions of the Serbian Army in these wars. The Belgrade monument devoted to 'Serbian Gypsy Youth to Its Heroes [Who] Perished and Died from 1912 to 1918' contained the names of 54 Gypsy heroes who perished during the war, mostly only those from the local communities (thus the number is not representative for the whole of Yugoslavia or even for Belgrade). The monument's creation seems to be a unique self-initiative of the Belgrade Roma demonstrating their belonging to the commemoration and national-identity practices of the state.

It is also remarkable that some of the Roma individuals who had participated in the army and who received awards for their participation and bravery had gained a leadership position among the Roma community and were a source of pride and representation in their status as war heroes. They were largely perceived as representative figures at both the community and society level, and today the memory of some of them has been reinforced in the context of the centennial marking of the end of the First World War in various publications and other activities, such as exhibitions curated by Dragoljub Acković and hosted by major Serbian institutions (Acković, 2017b).

Marko Vasiljević was a Rom from Pašovo Brdo in Belgrade who fought in the Balkan Wars and the First World War. He was a military unit (*četa*) ordinate in one of the Timok divisions of the Serbian Army in the First World War. He was awarded Order of the Star of Karadjordje, Serbia's highest civilian and military decoration, for his bravery in the so-called Battle of Kalubara or the Kosmaj-Varovnička Battle, on Varovnica peak near Mladenovac (Romano lil, 1935n, p. 2). The battle was of key strategical importance for the Serbian Army, marking its first big victory against the Austro-Hungarian Army. It took place on 7 and 8 December 1914 when the occupied Serbian Army managed to maintain the defence despite the numerous fatalities. He also was awarded other medals for achievements in the war, as visible in a picture of him published in the *Romano lil* newspaper (Ibid.), but they are not mentioned in written form; thus, the Karadjordje Star was probably his highest award. As a war hero, in the interwar period, Vasiljević became a figure of great notoriety and a source of pride among the Belgrade Roma community. Roma activists and leaders who were speaking publicly were always underlining Vasiljević's heroism that contributed to the Serbian national ideal of that time, and who was an example of the Roma's inseparability from the Serbian nation (Време, 1931b, p. 9).

The regard in which Marko Vasiljević was held by the community is also attested by the fact that he acted as a celebration host (*domaćin slave*) at the publicly organised Day of Bibija in 1926, when commemoration at the monument took place, with minutes of silence to honour the souls of the deceased soldiers (Политика, 1926, p. 7). An article about Vasiljević, *Our Uncle Marko*, was published in the third issue of the newspaper *Romano lil / Циганске новине* (Romano lil, 1935n, p. 2), presenting his memories about the battle for which he was awarded the Karadjordje Star. The title of the article in itself points to the fact that Marko was respected (in the Balkan context 'uncle' is used among both Roma and non-Roma for any elder male member of the community to show

admiration) and considered as a representative for 'us', i.e. the Gypsies, as a collective. Here are Vasiljević's precise recollections of the battle, recorded by Svetozar Simić for the Roma newspaper in 1935:

Ala mudarden len, ali dzuklen – but I killed, [them] came the dogs. I fought at: Ada Ciganlija, Banovo brdo, Čukarica, Zaklopače, Varo[v]nice where I was awarded with Karadjordje Star medal. I fought at many places. Fighting was not a problem for me, but hunger was pain. One bread for six soldiers, either eat it or look at it. I was an ordinary of a četa. While talking right now, I also remember another compatriot of mine Mila Paunovića, who died during our post together on guard. Humans' heads fell like shafts. You wade through them, you sleep while leaning on them, even though these are corpses, nothing bothers [you]. I have a lot to tell you, children, endlessly and until you want and whenever you want; let me tell you how I was awarded. Throughout the whole night I was in a battle. The next day [there were] dead people, mutilated, wounded, it was horrible to watch.

The battle continued until 5 in the morning. Around midnight the commander would tell me: "Marko, go and have a half-eye watch on where the enemy is." I informed him afterwards that they are many, that they are close. My commander would again say: "Marko, go for Christ's sake, to the Battalion Commander and tell him that I said to send us back up." I would go, I said. I would die, I would fall in battle, only for the sake of our mothers, wives, children and sisters! I went but the commander did not give us backing. I came back slowly, crawling and hiding, Stuttering and screaming. The whistling of scoops and pick-axe could be heard quite well. The enemies were preparing for battle. They had just surrounded us. I did not have time to report, instead I just grabbed the rifle of a soldier who was closest to me. I fired and I screamed: don't move! – Frontwards! I even don't remember what exactly I screamed. *This [action] of mine had an effect.* They were running as if they were headless. Afterwards my commander brought me to the [battalion] commander who awarded me with the *Karadjordje star*. (Ibid.).

This is the longest record of recollections currently known by a Serbian Army hero of Roma origin about his participation in these wars. Otherwise, records and narratives about Roma in the army are found in the memoirs of their contemporaries. These narratives, however, were influenced by the general manner of stereotyping and viewing the Gypsies in the public discourse as cunning characters (Šarenac, 2020). Memoirs about other Roma heroes were kept in the local memory of the Roma community and the majority Serbian community as well. One example is Ahmed Ademović, trumpeter of the First Serbian Army, who played a key role in the Battle of Kumanovo on 24 October 1912, for which he was awarded The Order of Karadjordje Star. Later, he took part in the Second Balkan War and in the First World War and was awarded other medals, including the Medal for Loyalty to the Fatherland known as the Commemorative Medal (awarded for the withdrawal of the Serbian Army through Albania) and possibly other awards for bravery (Acković, 2017b).

Amed Ametović, a.k.a. Ahmed Ademović, was born in 1871 in the Roma settlement of Podvorce in Leskovac, Southern Serbia. Even though in some secondary literature publications are mentioned two trumpeters from Leskovac who behaved heroically during the wars performing the same acts – Amed Ametović and Ahmed Ademović, recent research

on archival primary sources done by the local researcher from Leskovac Vladimir Amžić (Jugress, 2019) proved undoubtedly that in fact it is the same personality that wrongly appears with different family name, Ademović (as the first name is just differently spelled). This is proven by the fact that only the name of Amed Ametović is recorded in all written documents, including the Order 11123 of King Peter I. for awarding the Karadjordje Start medal for bravery as well as media materials reported by a local journalist from Leskovac in 1936 (Време, 1936c, p. 7; 1936d, p. 9) and the gravestone of Ametović that is preserved until today. This misunderstanding probably is rooted in the fact that in the memoirs of some war participants this personality appears as Ahmed Ademović (Влаховић, 1989, pp. 85), while the story is of Amed Ametović. This led to interpretations that there is a second individual, both Rom and a trumpeter, from Leskovac who was recognised as a war hero. Nevertheless, the comparison of the photos of Amed Ametović and Ahmed Ademović, as well as the quoted research on documents related to the life of Amed, show that this is, in fact, the same person and, these are simply misspellings or other variants of his name.

In his 30s Amed was drafted into the army, where he served as a trumpeter and became a central hero in a number of Serbian military legends after the war. The Battle of Kumanovo was referred to as the 'Meeting in Battle' (23–24 October 1912) by war historians. On the first day, the Serbian Army suffered significant losses, and the second day started in much the same manner. According to the existing narrative, which is based on secondary sources, Ametović is said to have managed to move to the other side of the battlefield unnoticed, and then placed the fez of a deceased Turkish soldier on his head. From this side of the battlefield, he played the Turkish Army's trumpet call for retreat, after which the troops descended into complete chaos. As there was fog and the line of the front was very wide, the sound of that trumpet signalling retreat was the moment the battle was won – the first great victory of the Serbian military during the First Balkan War (Acković, 2017b, pp. 16–19). Acković does not doubt the truth of the story, while Šarenac states that it cannot be established what the award was given to A(h)med for, and that the story is rather a myth that mirrors the peacetime stereotypes of the storytellers about the Gypsies in general (Šarenac, 2020, p. 279). The closest version to Amet's own narrative can be considered the article from a local journalist signed as "N.V." who probably talked to him to prepare the material: "as a brave soldier in the wars, Amed has gained a sub-lieutenant rank. And after the battles of Kapetanova česma, above Krupanj, in 1914, Amed has awarded the highest war decoration – Karadjordje Start with Swords" (Време, 1936c, p. 7). From the point of view of becoming a community and national hero, the details behind Ametović receiving this award are not that important.

We could affirm that the trumpeter of Leskovac A(h)med Ametović was the only Roma soldier who, as early as the interwar period, was presented in the national media as a hero from the wars and whose Gypsy ethnicity and heroism were discussed as an unknown, curious and very important story: "an extremely popular person in Leskovac and outside of Leskovac, among those who remember the particular struggle from the past wars"

(Ibid.). Like Vasilijević in Belgrade, Ametović became a source of pride for the local community of Leskovac, Roma and non-Roma alike. The local journalists were reporting that “The only Gypsy who wears Karadjordje Star lives in Leskovac” (Ibid.). The publication provoked interest among the readers, and Amet received 500 dinars from an anonymous donor from Caribrod who felt pride because of this heroism and invited him to join the association of those who were awarded Karadjordje Star (Breme, 1936d, p. 9).

In the late 1930s, Ahmed was a janitor at the municipality of Leskovac. During the Second World War occupation, in 1941, the Germans executed his sons Redza and Rama in the Arab’s Valley, on the outskirts of Leskovac, together with over 300 Roma from Leskovac (Acković, 2017b, p. 19). Ahmed Ametović died in 1963. The memory of his national heroism left a mark on the Roma community, that still remembers him as behaving and looking “like a soldier to the end of his days” (Espresso, 2019). Media materials about Ademović would eventually be published in the Serbian media (Blic, 2016; Espresso, 2019; Jugpress, 2019), and even a novel concerning his participation in the war (which had two editions because of the great interest) and a drama, both written by the Leskovac author Saša Stojanović – Čarli (Stojanović, 2018). A street in the city of Belgrade was also named after Ademović. Due to his appearance in a number of Serbian-language contemporary secondary sources, his name was also included in an international Roma activism publication, in which he is presented as an example of resistance (Agüero & Jiménez, 2020, pp. 71–75). We can probably expect more international attention from this perspective in the near future considering the growing discourse on Roma resistance in recent years in both academic and activists’ writings (cf. Nirenberg, 2016; Mirga-Kruszelnicka & Dunajeva, 2020).

Another First World War participant to become a hero was Rustem Sejdić. Born in 1872 in Jablanica near Leskovac, he achieved several awards, among which were the Albanian Commemoration Order and the Order of Karadjordje Star. Rustem was in the First Company of the 3rd Battalion of the Moravska Division, where he had served as a sergeant and trumpeter. He was a ‘signal officer’ responsible for announcing different manoeuvres that the army had to perform. The Order of Karadjordje Star with Swords was awarded to him for his actions on the night of 29–30 October 1916, when his unit was tasked with halting the enemy, advancing from Kajmakčalan. He had reportedly signalled for the critical attack and played false trumpet signals in order to spread confusion (Telegraf, 2018; Šarenac, 2020, 279–280). Another act of heroism was related to his actions while on the Thessaloniki front, according to his contemporaries:

In the rainy night, during a heavy storm, Ilija Ilic, Vuksan Strugoprutić and Rustem Sejdić went to the Bulgarian trenches themselves. They cut the barbed wire in several places, carefully, as the thunder struck, so that the sound of the pliers would not be heard by the enemy guards, and then they started to execute a plan that was as insane as it was brave.

On the following day, the three of them received a medal, personally from the Regent Alexander Karadjordjević and the French commander Franchet d’Espèrey. This is how the trumpet entered into legend, long before Rustem’s descendants continued to keep it as the

instrument of the highest value and historical importance. Nowadays, the trumpet is synonymous with joy and happiness, while in the past its sound was reminiscent of blood, fighting and pride. (Acković, 2017b, pp. 27).

Even though numerous Roma participated in the wars, only a few names are still known. For example, Memet Abdijević from Žitni Potok village near the Southern Serbian town of Prokuplje, Žika Djordjević from Ripanj, the following Roma from Niš: lieutenant Čamil Jašarević, sergeants Faik Asanović, Serafetin Jašić and Rašid Kuritić. The Albanian Commemoration Medal was also awarded to the famous Roma violinist from Belgrade, Anta Grujić, as well as to another dozen local Roma. The names of the other 54 Roma from Belgrade and the area were engraved on the monument that was erected to the victims of the First World War (see above), but the names are hardly visible after more than a century and lack of maintenance. It is logical to assume that such fighters existed in other places as well, but nearly nothing is known about them.

Some other soldiers' names and stories appeared in the memoirs of Serbian soldiers or war participants and thus have to be interpreted in the context of the writer's/narrator's positionality, as discussed by Danilo Šarenac (2020). Similarly, many Roma were part of the Croatian war units that were part of the Austro-Hungarian Army in the First World War (Vojak, 2015), but no records recounting their narratives and experiences are preserved. Their participation on the side of the Austro-Hungarian Army, which was the enemy's army from the perspective of the Serbian and Yugoslav national narratives, would presuppose that such personalities would hardly be perceived as community and society heroes in the interwar period in Yugoslavia.

The pattern of remembrance of Roma heroes and important Roma individuals who participated in national wars or social and political struggles has also been preserved in later periods in Yugoslav territories. This phenomenon is also common for all Roma movements in other countries, such as Bulgaria, the Czech Republic and the USSR (Marushiakova & Popov, 2021b, pp. 172, 598, 1016). Many Roma participated in the anti-fascist movement in Yugoslavia by joining the so-called National Liberation Struggle (the National Liberation Army and Partisan Detachments of Yugoslavia also known as Yugoslav Partisans, or the National Liberation Army) (Đurić, 2006, pp. 70–80; Vojak, 2020b). On the property fence, where Bibija is annually celebrated, just a few meters from the monument of Serbian Gypsy youth who fell during the Balkan and First World War, a plate stands to memorise the Roma participants in the Second World War. An example of Roma remembered as anti-fascist heroes today is Slobodan Berberski – Lale (1919–1989), who would later become a Roma movement leader within Yugoslavia and the international movement (Acković, 2019a). Those Roma who received awards for their participation are a particular source of pride. The only known Roma recipient of the Order of the People's Hero, the highest distinction for participation in the national liberation struggle, which was awarded to a total of 1,323 people in Socialist Yugoslavia, was Stevan Djodjević – Novak (1919–1943) (Писари, 2018, p. 26–27). Miodrag Jovanović from the First Battalion was awarded the Medal for Courage for his bravery (Vojak, 2020b, p. 52). Iba Amedović

(1920–1945) from Niš was awarded the Commemorative Medal of the Partisans of 1941 and a Roma cultural club was named after him in 1948 (Jasić, 2001, pp. 25–26). A more recent example on Yugoslav territories is the Roma who participated in the so-called Homeland War (Domovinski rat, 1991–1995) as part of the Croatian Army (Marinić, 2019), a narrative that should be interpreted within the context of the identity building and national narrative of Croatian independence. Thus, the participation of Roma in struggles for national causes in all periods would be contextualised and understood as a source of pride for the Roma within the very national framework.

The New Elite

Roma individuals appeared to also undertake essentially new and previously non-existing forms of representation of the Roma in Yugoslavia that would directly correspond to and be embedded into the social and political realities of the time. In many cases, the activities of the individuals were local and were related to concrete endeavours and initiatives, which does not diminish their importance for the development of Roma activism.

One remarkable example is the initiative of Čedomir Nikolić, a Rom musician, known for building the so-called ‘Gypsy Church’ in the Privlaka region of Vukovar, today in Eastern Croatia. Nikolić was born in 1867 and had allegedly earned a lot of money as a musical bandleader, travelling around different locations for entertaining. Being without children and heirs, he and his wife Mara decided to invest their earnings and savings in building an Orthodox church in their native village, which would eventually earn notoriety as the “Gypsy Church in Privlaka” in the interwar period. The church officially belonged to the Orthodox parish of Vinkovac (Vojak, 2013, p. 184; Acković, 2014, pp. 205–208). Apart from the personal agency of Nikolić, it is not coincidental that the idea about a church for Gypsies appeared in this region. At the beginning of the twentieth century, it belonged to the Austro-Hungarian Empire and was inhabited by a mixed Croatian and Serbian population. In the context of nation-building projects and movements among these communities, Orthodoxy was equated with the Serb identity while Catholicism was equated with the Croat identity. Endeavours were also made among the Roma towards having their own religious space and services, which would be designated to the Roma people and reflect their identity, similar to the other ethno-religious communities in the region. Such endeavours were not unique for this period and space, having been observed previously among educated individuals of Gypsy origin in the Ottoman Empire as early as the late nineteenth century, with statements that Gypsies needed to have church services and education in their own language, like all other Balkan nations (Marushiakova & Popov, 2021b, pp. 9–17).

Building the church began in the first decade of the twentieth century and finished on the eve of the First World War in 1914. Nikolić had problems with the Austro-Hungarian authorities, who saw the building of a new Orthodox temple as Great-Serbian propaganda (Правда, 1938, p. 9). Upon completion of the building, a plate engraved with golden letters was put on the entrance gate stating: “This Memorial Has Been erected

by Čedomir Nikolić to the Glory of God and to the Benefit of Humanity in the Year 1914". Large Roma gatherings were organised annually on the *slava* day of the church – the day of the saints after whom the church was named. In this case, it was *Petrovdan* or the day of St Peter and St Paul, celebrated on 29 July, with Roma from across the country attending. According to statements by the Belgrade Rom Tanasije Jovanović, recorded in the 1930s during the Gypsy church celebration in Privlaka, this church symbolised the Gypsies' political and religious independence, which had existed in the past but was lost, pointing out the legend of the Gypsy church of early Christian times that was made from cheese and thus gradually eaten by Roma (Ibid.).

Čedomir Nikolić passed away at the age of 58 on November 25, 1923 and was buried in the church. His grave's inscription states: "Here Rest the Čedomir Nikolić and Mara Nikolić Who Established This Church" (Breme, 1938, p. 8). Mara Nikolić continued to maintain the church and her husband's endeavours. At one of the annual gatherings on the day of the church celebration, in the summer of 1938, a service was organised in the Romani language, at which the local Orthodox priest, Lazar Stanimirović, read Romani-language passages from the new Romani translation of the Gospel of Luke (Ibid.). It was reported that Roma musical bands from across Yugoslavia, as well as Gypsies who originated from the region, were present. This was the first ever reported service in Romani language, probably just a few months after the appearance of the translation by the Bosnian Croat linguist Rade Uhlik. In November 1938, on the initiative of the Orthodox parish in Mirkovci (Eastern Croatia today), this Romani version of the Gospel of Luke was distributed among the Gypsies in Novi Jankovci (Hrvatski branik, 1938, p. 4).

A few years later, in 1940, in Sveta Klara (now a neighbourhood of Zagreb), in the region of Central Croatia, a big Catholic sermon in the Romani language was organised on the day of St Juraj (known as George's Day of Spring or *Gjurgjevo*) gathering a few hundred Roma from Sveta Klara and Odra and the nearby villages, who all lived settled way of life and were agricultural workers for themselves or for other landowners (Novosti, 1940a, p. 13; Zagrebački list, 1940b, p. 8). The sermon was initiated by the municipal and church authorities (Novosti, 1940b, p. 10; Obzor, 1940, p. 4), while the celebration after the church sermon was held in Malo Selo in Odra (Jutarnji list, 1940, p. 13). This day was purposefully chosen and widely announced by the local organisers, as this festivity was considered an important marker of identity by both Roma and the majority population. The aim was to gather not only Roma families from Sveta Klara who were numerous and inhabiting the area since long time, but also from other locations and have a service for the Gypsy believers separately, as equal to the other believers. The sermon was led by the priest Antun Medven from Križ, who was a Romani language speaker and an amateur collector of folklore and linguistic materials (Hrvatski novosti, 1940, p. 114; Vojak, 2005, pp. 117–20; 2013, p. 180), who was regularly meeting Roma to integrate them in the church life and who had been preaching in Romani language in his own parish (Večer, 1940b, p. 5). During his talk at the St Juraj ceremony, Medven invited the Gypsies to follow the good Christian rules and stressed that the Catholic Church treats the Gypsies the same

way as all other people (Novosti, 1940a, p. 13). His speech in Romani language, produced a great effect among the Roma audience who were touched by it (Večer, 1940a, p. 4). Parts of the handwritten speech were even photographed and published in the daily press in Zagreb:

Adjes si timaro baro sveco thaj tume avile te ruqjin tume. Me želiv tumenge te del Sveto Deloro bach thaj sastipe.

Today is your big Saint's celebration and you came to pray. I wish the Holy God to give you luck and health. (Novosti, 1940b, p. 10)

Mange si zurate drago, so dašti te dikhal tu men and e khangeri. Tume avile orde kai adjes si tu maro baro sveco sveto Gjurdjevo. Me avilem te mothav tumenge vareso romanes ...

I am very happy that I have the opportunity to see you in the church. You came here because today is your big celebration St Gjurdjevo. I came to tell you something in Romani language. (Večer, 1940b, p. 5)

The Roma from this location were apparently also active citizens who reportedly took part in the religious community life of the Catholic parish as demonstrated by the church archives (Vojak, 2013, pp. 178–183). Representatives of the same Roma community inhabiting Odra and Sveta Klara were requesting land for agriculture earlier the same year (Zagrebački list, 1940a, p. 10; see detailed above).

These two examples of church services for Roma populations are different only in terms of the regions and denominations within which they were organised – Orthodox in Privlaka and Catholic in Sveta Klara. Nevertheless, they had the same aim – to demonstrate that Roma believers were equal to the other local population by providing them with separate church services in the Romani language, which reflected the demands of the Roma community itself for recognition and representation. The organisers and priests of both events underlined the fact that “the church considers Gypsies equal to the other people” and that “Gypsies deserve to hear the words of Christ in their own language” (Zagrebački list, 1940b, p. 8).

It was also logical that the new elite of Roma with elevated economic and social status would search for recognition and rights of representation not only as voters but also as participants in political parties and lists. Even though some authors claim that Roma were deprived of the right to vote until 1888, Gypsy citizens of Yugoslavia were, in fact, never deprived of their right for political participation. In earlier periods, such as from 1870–1903, 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 wandering Gypsies (*skitajući se cigani*) as one of the categories of citizens who are thus 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).

The Roma in Belgrade, a populous group, seemed to be active, but we could also expect that in many locations where Roma were living at that time, similar processes were taking place. The Belgrade Gypsies aimed to take part in the political life of both major parties dominating the political landscape at local and national level – the People’s Radical Party and the Democratic Party. A document shows that the Democratic Party had a Gypsy section in Belgrade, which was probably formally set up within the party structure, and on 8 March 1923, it directed a request to the Central Committee of the Democratic Party for funding of planned activities (LADA). A month earlier, on 15th February 1923, The Governing Board of the Democratic Party of Belgrade organised a “big democratic party” in the premises of hotel *Slavija* with the aim to gather funds for propagating the democratic ideas among the Gypsies (Застава, 1923, p. 3). On the other hand, as demonstrated by the newspaper article above, Belgrade Gypsies were also negotiating their support 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). Therefore, the Belgrade Gypsies were actively striving for political participation in the mainstream national parties, but from the stance of their ethnic community.

Dragoljub Lukić, a musician, restaurant leaser and one of the informal leaders of the Belgrade Roma community, appeared in 1923 in the local candidate lists for MPs of the People’s Radical Party, led by Aleksa Žujović. According to a media report, his priority was related to dealing with the problems of Gypsy folk musicians who met competitors in musical orchestras coming to the country:

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, oppressing the Gypsy folk music. The Gypsies, without a sign of hesitation, almost embraced their future deputy. (Време, 1925, p. 5)

Even though this endeavour was unsuccessful, Lukić appeared in the local electoral lists of the People’s Radical Party in 1927 as a candidate for Kolubara District and got 6,800 votes, only 32 votes below the threshold for entry (Правда, 1933b, p. 11). In 1933 he presented himself as a member of the Subcommittee of the Yugoslavian Workers’ Union (*Jugoslovenska radnička zajednica*) and as Vice-president of the Central Board of the Association of Musicians in Yugoslavia (Ibid.). Lukić was perceived as a political spokesman on behalf of the Gypsies, was publicly known as the ‘Gypsy deputy’, and organised campaigns defending the collective interests of the Roma (Marushiakova & Popov, 2021b, p. 221). One of these campaigns involved petitions to stop the demolition of one of the Belgrade neighbourhoods with sizeable Roma population, Jatagan mala (i.e. ‘mahala’), which was constantly being threatened with destruction as the dwellings were illegally built barracks (Правда, 1933b, p. 11).

More successful were the attempts for the political participation of Roma in the city of Niš and at the local elections of 1925, when Mamut Memedović and Tasin Mamutović were elected local MPs in the Niš municipal council (Jašić, 2001, p. 25; LAOB). Niš had several Roma neighbourhoods and Roma there were well capable of dealing with trades and craftwork of different kinds, making music for a living and also working in the burgeoning factories in the process of industrialisation. At the elections of 1925, Dragiša Cvetković was running for his third mandate as mayor of Niš, a city in which some of the local traders and restaurant owners were Roma. Roma interests in emancipation through political participation and representation might have been met in Dragiša Cvetković's programme for reforms, as he was largely known as an advocate for the solving of social issues, the minimum wages of workers, collective contracts, etc. Cvetković had probably identified Roma voters as important, as he also visited one of the old Roma neighbourhoods in the centre of Niš, Čerge-mala (Jašić, 2001, p. 84). Some oral narratives and historical interpretations among the Roma are that Cvetković, who was of Tsintsari (Aromanian) origin on his mother's side (for which he was called 'Dragiša the Gypsy' by political opponents who wanted to insult him), also had sympathies for other ethnic groups and minorities.

The 1920s saw the appearance of 'Gypsy parties' and 'Gypsy lists' at different elections held before 1929 (Marushiakova & Popov, 2021b, pp. 225–29). The so-called Poor People's Party was founded by a Serbian teacher, Čedomir Mihajlović, in August 1927, before the parliamentary elections on 11 September that year, and apparently aimed to represent wide social groups of citizens, and particularly Gypsy citizens. It addressed specifically the injustices towards Gypsies concerning political, social and national identity issues, particularly the economic situation of the Gypsies and recognition of the significant Gypsy participation in the Serbian Army during the Balkan Wars and the First World War:

The party has [the aim] to organise 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 their own party and their representatives in parliament.

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. (Време, 1927b, p. 3).

It is not surprising that the news made it not only to the Serbian media but was also internationally newsworthy (Дило, 1927, p. 3; *Jeversches Wochenblatt*, 1927, p. 3). Furthermore, the party included Gypsies, mostly war invalids, in deputy positions and one in a leading position in its electoral list, which was notable in itself:

Čeda Matijević, invalid, 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. (Време, 1927с, p. 8).

The party presentation as a Gypsy one is not coincidental – it voiced the widely-spread opinion of the Serbian Gypsy citizens for social struggle and identification with the national ideal and civil society causes of the Serbian nation. For the same elections and in the same location, the Roma neighbourhood of Valjevo, “Neša, a Gypsy from Divlje Brdo” had also registered on an electoral list for the parliamentary elections (Ibid.), but no other information has been found in relation to this political endeavour. The young generation of Valjevo Roma were also active in the public life as in 1936 they had an organisation with 20 members engaged in staging the theatre play *Gypsy Love* (Време, 1936b, p. 7).

We can assume that such local initiatives were also taking place in other regions of the Serbian territories of the kingdom for local or parliamentary elections during the 1920s, when Roma were struggling for social and political recognition (Marushiakova & Popov, 2021b, pp. 231–235); however, the individuals leading these political endeavours are unknown. The political environment changed with the Royal Dictatorship of 1929; after this, Roma activism was only possible and was taking place primarily in the field of civic engagement through social and cultural activities.

Roma Contributions to National Establishments

Institutionalisation and representation were not only developing in the political arena or through the networks of political structure. National policies were implemented through the state institutions in all public fields. The interwar period was the formative time for the modern national institutions that would instrumentalise the process of nation-building and cultural representation (Wachtel, 1998, pp. 67–127; Димић, 1997). The musical scene and its institutionalisation in the interwar period were related to the wide dissemination of mechanically produced records, the development of the entertainment industry, an increase in the number and popularisation of places for entertainment in the urban environment, the development of the workers' rights movement and the establishment of unions to represent workers in the context of the newly introduced legislation relating to work and social matters. Against this background, a new Roma elite emerged within the structures of circles involved in the entertainment industry, and particularly in the process of the professionalisation of musical bands as well as the rights of their members (cf. Весић & Пено, 2017).

The role of Gypsy music in Serbia and Serbian culture has already been discussed for earlier periods and with a view of the traditional culture in Serbia (Ђорђевић, 1933, Vol. 7). Gypsy music was popular and widespread to the extent that a musician in a restaurant band was assumed to be a Gypsy, as most of the bands operating in Belgrade did

indeed comprise Gypsy musicians (Думнић, 2013). In the interwar period, the figure and leadership of Anta Grujić is of particular importance for the institutionalisation of the general musical scene and for regulations of the rights of musicians, bands and singers in Yugoslavia. Anta Grujić was born in 1896 to a Roma family in Belgrade and was one of the best-known public figures of his day. He was a war veteran and presented Serbian folk music nation-wide in the main cities of the Yugoslavian region as well as abroad. He was a founding member of The Union of Folk Musicians (*Савез народних музиканата*), Central Association of Musicians (*Централно удружење музиканата*), Association of Female Musicians (*Удружење женских музиканата*) (Време, 1936е, р. 12). During the late 1920 and early 1930s, he was at the forefront of the recently established (1928) Association of Musicians, Chaplains, Tamburitza Players, Female Musicians and Singers (*Удружење музиканата, капелница, тамбурашица, свирачица и певачица*), after leading a faction within the organisation that aimed to establish the rights of women and particularly of singers (many of whom were of Roma origin) in musical bands. As a member of the executive board of the association, he initiated a couple of important decisions and actions. In order to “raise the musical level of members”, the organisation submitted to the Art Department of the Ministry of Education “Rules for taking exams for musicians who want to become leaders of music chapels, of gypsy, of tamburitza and others” (*Правилник о полагању испита музиканата који желе да постану вође музичких капела, циганских, тамбурашких и других*, Весић & Пено, 2017, pp. 166–167). The Rules were approved on February 14, 1931, by an order of the Minister of Education, and a three-member commission was appointed to implement the exams. According to the Rules, a diploma had to be obtained, and following a confirmation by the Ministry of Education, a work certificate/licence would be issued. This certificate would be a condition for signing contracts with the owners of cafés, restaurants, hotels and other public places. The condition for taking the exam was musical literacy: “reading and understanding notes, knowledge of instruments and the ability of the candidate to be able to arrange certain pieces for the ensemble of his chapel” (§ 2). In the practical part of the test, the respondents were expected to play the required pieces, tune their instruments independently and meet the criterion of general musicality, whatever that meant. In addition to the membership card, the candidates attached several different pieces of evidence about their previous professional work, along with a list of all pieces they performed with their ensemble. The commission was to be satisfied at a high artistic level, and a considerable sum of money was to be set aside for the fees of the president and the other two members. All those who did not have proof of professional status would be denied work permits (§ 8) (Ibid.).

The Rules were reported by Grujić and Branko Riznić to the Ministry of Education and approved in February; following this, they were published in the Official Gazette of the Kingdom of Yugoslavia on (Ibid.). The Rules were in fact a mechanism for the professionalisation and regulation of workers’ rights and were especially directed toward musical groups in restaurants and taverns. They were not enthusiastically accepted by all

musicians, especially not by the former leader of the association and by some regional musicians (who had to travel to Belgrade for having the test and obtaining the certificate). Even though the association did not mention that it was an entity representing Gypsy musicians, the media reports and letters against it refer to it as an association of Gypsy musicians. Some protest letters received by the Ministry included accusations related to the fact that 'Gypsy music' and Gypsy musicians and bands were gaining equal status to musicians who were schooled academically. The Belgrade headquarters led by Grujić was accused of favouring Gypsy music, obviously hinting at the leadership and members of the association. A press article from 1933 reporting on the annual assembly of the organisation refers to 8,000 members (Бечић & Пено, 2017, p. 117).

Similarly to the leaders of the associations of the Hungarian Gypsy Musicians (Hajnáczky, 2019; 2000), the activities of Anta Grujić had the overall aim of regulating and professionalising (Gypsy) musical performers in places for entertaining; thus, even though they were not directly related to actions for the engagement or representation of the Roma community, it was an important part of the social struggle for labour rights of Roma musicians as individual citizens and professionals in the music field, and thus aimed at representing the interests of Gypsy musicians, as well as recognising their status.

Anta Grujić also contributed to the institutionalisation of Roma music and Gypsy orchestras as part of the popular and radio-based music scene, which was supposed to present 'the national character'. During the interwar period, significant airtime on Radio Beograd (established in 1924) was dedicated to folk music played on the basis of written or telephone requests from listeners. The first radio ensembles for performing folk music were formed by Gypsy musicians: a larger band was co-led by Jovan Stojanović and Anta Grujić, while a trio of guitarists was led by Sima Begović (Думнић, 2013, p. 85). Anta Grujić played a leading role in the so-called 'Gypsy radio orchestra' that was later renamed the 'Folk radio orchestra'. Live emissions were also organised when the radio directly aired from the best places of entertainment in the Kingdom and all of bands were led by Gypsy musicians (Sandor Radu was leading the musicians in *Potrošačka zadruga*, Predrag Gračanin in *Amerikanac*, Stevica Nikolić at the tavern at Topčider park, the famous *Dva jelena* tavern with the orchestra of Dušan Popaz, etc.), and some of the first records would be also in the Romani language. The songs and compositions performed varied from traditional music, particularly the so-called *sevdalinke* (or *Sevdah* music, a folk genre originating from Bosnia but popular throughout Yugoslavia) to original compositions by Roma. Even though at the time of its creation in the interwar period the music of Gypsy orchestras was criticised as being too ornamented or not 'authentic', this very musical production would lay the foundation what today would be called *izvorna narodna muzika* (original/authentic folk music) and would be considered part of the nationally representative folk culture.

Roma were also part of the structures of many other national institutions. As already pointed out, Roma were in service in the army as rankers or musicians for all states in which they were citizens in South-Eastern Europe (Иванова & Кръстев, 2014; Vojak,

2015; 2020a; Šarenac, 2020). Roma were also members of the nationwide network of state-controlled *Sokol* (Falcon) Associations, formed on the basis of an earlier form of organisation, which were established in 1929 with the aim “to raise physically healthy, morally strong and nationally conscious citizens of the Kingdom of Yugoslavia” (Žutić, 1991, p. 13). The only member for whom a memory and picture are preserved is Diljaver Asanović from Niš, who was a member of Sokol (*sokolarac*) in the early 1930s. Likewise, even though they were few, there were Roma clerks in official administration, with examples including Muharem Alijević from Niš (Jašić, 2001, p. 29), who was an official of the registry book at the municipality of Niš, and Svetozar Simić, who was working in the administration of the court in Kopljare.

Roma Women

The institutionalisation of the modern music scene of a popular character was also related to Roma female personalities who were considered and treated as celebrities of their time and were representatives of the Serbian popular music scene in both Yugoslavia and abroad. Singers were primarily female, and many were of Roma origin. The need to protect their interests led to a separatist movement in the nationwide association of musicians (mentioned above) and to the creation of the Association of Women's Musicians (Беснић & Пећо, 2017, pp. 164–172). The preserved documentation shows that the period (the early 1930s) in which it was co-presided over by Draga Paparo (a singer of Roma background; see below) and Anta Grujić was quite an active one, with attempts to organise activities not only in Belgrade and Serbia but also within Yugoslavia as a whole. It is worth noting that the association was not only representing the interests of singers, but of female musicians generally, as there were also women playing instruments within orchestras. One example is the sisters from Niš, Fevzija Jašarević, a violin player, and Refija Jašarević, a clavier player (Jašić, 2001, pp. 94, 103), who performed in orchestras and ensembles in Niš restaurants.

Roma women singers, in fact, similarly to the Roma musicians discussed above, contributed to the creation of the urban music and folk music of the interwar period that would become a part of the national popular culture. Its building during the interwar period was related to the institutionalisation of nationwide canons in all fields, to the mass culture access through institutions and places for entertainment as well as through electronic distribution (radio broadcast in this period). The most famous signer and personality of that time was Sofka Nikolić (1907–1982). Starting her career from her native Bijeljina, Sarajevo and Mostar in Bosnia, she moved to Belgrade with the Gypsy orchestra of her husband Paja Nikolić, becoming the first major music star of her time in the country, with over 55 records and several hits that became Serbian folk music classics. Nikolić's career included live performances from restaurants that were recorded or broadcast live via the national radio, performances in major European capitals (Sofia, Berlin, Praha, Vienna, Paris) and records in major European capitals and in the US. Sofka Nikolić's musical adaptations of folk songs, poems and original compositions attracted a large

number of fans and, being a real celebrity, her moves were followed with interest by the public. She was praised by major cultural players of that time (including Branislav Nušić, Aleksa Šantić, etc.) and collaborated with European stars of the period like Josephine Baker (Време, 1929, p. 9; Dimov, 2012, pp. 318–219).

Nikolić, along with other Roma female singers like Dokica Tomić, were called ‘modern Koštana’, as the name Koštana appeared to be a sort of a benchmark for every famous female singer of Gypsy origin. This refers to the main character from the drama of the same name written by one of the most famous Serbian novelists of the time, Borisav-Bora Stanković. The drama is set in the native town of the writer, Vranje, against the background of the oriental customs in the Southern Serbian town (Златановић, 2009). It tells the story a young Gypsy woman whose performances and singing are so magnificent and hypnotic that they beguile the audience and have a seductive effect on men. She is destined to marry but not for love. The drama was staged many times after its first performance in 1900 and would eventually become the most staged Serbian drama. The character of the protagonist, Koštana, is believed to be based on or inspired by the life-story of the Gypsy singer Malika Eminović (1870–1946), nicknamed Koštana – a beauty, singer and dancer who performed in the second half of the nineteenth century in Vranjska Banja, reputedly even attracting a visit by King Alexander I (Istorijski Zabavnik, 2020; Blic, 2008). The interwar period, when the national literary canon was built, gave a new impetus for works describing the life of the nineteenth century, and the drama was published as a separate book in 1924. After this publication, Malika Eminović, with the help of a lawyer, started a campaign to recognise her rights for the contribution of creating the character of Koštana and consequently the works related to it. On 16 July 1926, she wrote a letter to the relevant department at the Ministry of Education with her claims:

Koštana, a Picture from the life in Vranje, written by Mr. Bora Stanković has shown, to this day, moral and material success, which goes exclusively to the benefit of the box office of all theatres and Mr. Stanković, writer.

Since my personality (and primarily my name) was engaged [in the work] as well as my past, on the basis of which material was collected and my personal statement was recorded and written by Mr. Stanković and Mrs. Draga Spasić, an actress. Rehearsal was performed at my place and with me several times, at a time when everyone is working and earning for a crust of bread for their children; at that time, I left work several times thinking [that I’m working] on a humanistic thing?

Mr. Bora Stanković and Mrs. Spasić promised me “Golden Hills” and that I, like them, would receive a certain fee from the theatre if the work was accepted; it was accepted a long time ago but all I have left from them is the memory of “A dead letter on a paper [is a] shouting voice in the desert”.

I do consider my sense of gratitude to the writer and the theatres for all they have done to immortalise me, even incompletely [i.e. incorrectly], but nevertheless my poverty drove me to demand that they help me proportionately from the material benefits that Mr. writer and all theatres get.

If I hadn’t met the writer and explained the events of my life, I claim and emphasise that this piece “Koštana” wouldn’t even exist.

Otherwise, I will use state laws to obtain my right. (AJ, f. 66, op. 134, fasc. 638).

The Ministry received the letter in August 1926, and it was re-directed to the writer Borisav Stanković, with a decision of the head of a department at the Ministry. Apparently, Malika's demands were not met at this point and she further continued with a civil law court case for recognition of her rights, which received public attention (Bpeme, 1926d, p. 5). As no written records were available, we can just suppose that the case was for rights to profit from her name, likeness, image or persona. It is known that she lost the case and no profits made by the drama were received by her. While this case is not directly related to civic engagement addressing issues of public concerns for the Roma, it is very telling that a Roma woman was searching for her individual rights, which she believed were infringed according to the civil laws.

Conclusion

There are two distinguished but certainly intertwined features in the portrait of Roma activism and public engagement. The first feature is related to activism on a community level when Roma worked for representation of the community's collective interests. In this case, Roma, individually and often in association with other Roma individuals, formed a kind of new social class of well-off citizens in interwar Yugoslavia, and were undertaking activities to mobilise more Roma and to equalise the status of the community with all others by different means – building a 'Gypsy church' and monument, establishing organisations and commemoration practices of societal importance for the Gypsies, setting up a Gypsy party or political lists, etc. These activities were local and even though they depended on personal agency, they were possible because of the social, political and cultural context of the period. They were targeted at contributing to Roma community advancement and identity, and due to their dependence on personal agency and the turbulent times during and after the Second World War, most of them faded away and were not maintained among the community. Nevertheless, aside from being noticed by the national media of the time, some were preserved at the level of community memory.

On the other hand, Roma personalities were part of the institutionalisation of Yugoslav (or Serbian) memory, culture, politics and civil life and influenced the establishment of concrete cultural phenomena that would become, or would be perceived to be, essentially national (Serbian or Yugoslav). With this, Roma individuals in fact contributed to and were embodied in the process of 'invention of traditions' (Hobsbawm, 1992) and to the establishment of national culture and national traditions. The clearest case is the institutionalisation of popular city music in the era of modern technologies and reproduction for the masses, when the majority of orchestras comprised and were led by Roma/Gypsies and the major female popular singers were Roma. They not only participated in building the popular national music tradition, but also represented it abroad. In interwar Yugoslavia, their creative works and versions of other popular songs were perceived as a new form of the nation's culture, with a popular appeal that would reach and unite the masses. In these cases, the Roma's contribution to society and societal phenomena was prevailing (note, however, that this does not mean that Roma were hiding

their Roma identity or that the national culture was renounced by Roma). In the interwar period, the reception/presentation of Roma in these cases in public was as Serbian and Yugoslav, and today this heritage is perceived as ‘typical’, ‘authentic’, ‘pure’ and ‘old’ music that embodies and represents *the* national culture.

Both of these tendencies, which are just conditionally separated, will be observed in later periods, up to the present day. They demonstrate the inseparability of the community=society dimension in the activities of Roma activists and of Roma public figures in general. Most of the Roma personalities were famous in both their local community and among a wider public. Even though the community=society level was valid in their activities, it was the community that mattered for most of the personalities and activists taking initiatives as Roma representatives described in this period. An essentially new form of publicity would appear with the educated Roma, who would be schooled at higher education and university levels and would form their visions in the interwar period. For them, the society dimension would be of great importance and their ambitions would be to address and represent not only their own community, but all Roma in the Yugoslav society of the time, nationally and even internationally, as demonstrated by the life path of Svetozar Simić, discussed in the next part of this chapter.

Svetozar Simić

Dragoljub Acković and Sofiya Zahova

Introduction

Beginning his activities during the interwar period, Svetozar Simić (1913–1979) was the first Roma activist in Yugoslavia to represent an essentially new type of leadership among the Roma community. While building on and recognising other forms of community leadership and mobilisation such as those discussed above, he went on to initiate and carry out activities with means that corresponded to the new social realities. Unlike other leading Roma personalities, who developed their activism at a rather regional or even own-community level and whose visions were shaped in the period before the Second World War, Svetozar Simić was the first whose education, mindset and visions were fundamentally Yugoslavian in terms of formation and manifestation. The interwar period was linked to an intensive period of urbanisation, efforts for increasing the educational level of the population, and policies in the fields of education and culture related to reinforcing the so-called integral Yugoslavianhood (Gligorijević, 1986; Димић, 1997, pp. 260–268; Troch, 2010) as an overarching national identity for the multi-ethnic population. Shaped in this context, Simić’s own ideas and activities were to a great extent, on the one hand, an expression of the goal of identity building for the Roma in the Kingdom, addressing all Roma/Gypsies; on the other hand, was the goal of representing them in

Yugoslav society. Thus, Simić can rightfully be regarded as the first Yugoslav Roma leader, setting an example for the later Roma leadership in the second or socialist Yugoslavia (Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, 1945–1992).

The activities developed by Svetozar Simić for less than a decade in the 1930s covered all fields of public life and included writing and publishing, setting up and leading a civic organisation, popularisation of Roma issues and Roma civic activities through publicity in the press (mainstream and Roma), and collaboration with Roma community leaders and experts involved in research on the Roma (Acković, 2020; Zahova, 2020). After the Second World War, even though not actively involved in the Roma movement on an organisational level, he followed and supported it as an individual, maintaining correspondence and contacts with personalities and entities in the field of Roma issues.

This section presents a portrait of Svetozar Simić, starting with a chronological account of his life-path, based on preserved documents as well as on family memories and narratives, followed by two parts focused on aspects of his activities and accomplishments that provide additional detail to the portrait in terms of Roma activism and leadership, and which are based mainly on publications and writings by or about Simić. A large part of the materials derives from the partially preserved personal archive of Svetozar Simić, currently kept at the Archive of Roma Culture Museum in Belgrade, and the personal archive of Dragoljub Acković (LADA, f. Svetozar Simić). The references below to documents about Simić and to unpublished materials are from this archive.

Biography and Life-Path

Svetozar Simić was born on May 13, 1913, in the village of Kopljare near Arandjelovac in Central Serbia, the third and youngest child of Roma parents. His father Stevan Simić and grandfather Vasa Simić were comparatively well-established citizens who owned houses and land and were involved in agriculture in the area of their village. According to a certificate issued to Simić by the local administration in Kopljare on January 31, 1943, and confirmed by the Ministry of Justice in July 1943, Simić's family and ancestors had been living a settled way of life and had lived on the territory of the Arandjelovac municipality even before 1850 (LADA, f. Svetozar Simić, Уверење). Svetozar graduated from primary school in his village and at the age of 11 enrolled in the secondary school in the municipal town of Arandjelovac. His mother passed away when he was at a young age. At some point in the 1920s he went to live in Belgrade with his father (his sister and brother already had their own families), a move in unison with the intensive process of urbanisation in the capital, which received individual families of Roma and non-Roma alike seeking better opportunities in the city (Acković, 2017a). The family settled in Jatagan mala, an illegal neighbourhood that developed as an effect of the growing Belgrade population after the First World War, where many Gypsies built their barrack-like houses (Бујовић, 1993, p. 62) and where his father had a workshop (Време, 1936a, p. 5). Simić continued his high school education in the Fourth Male Gymnasium in Belgrade (where, according

to Simić, six Roma men had been studying between 1929–1939; see details in Политика, 1939b, p. 9). Sometime in the early 1930s he met Alexander Petrović, a physician originally from Požarevac, who, as an employee in the Institute of Hygiene in Belgrade, was interested in studying Gypsy communities in Serbia (Петровић, 1937), publishing on the subject in the *Journal of the Gypsy Lore Society* (see Third Series, Vols. 14–19). Petrović had implemented his research with the help of Simić, who acted as both his informant and collaborator. The results of this collaborative research were published in three studies: *About the Marriage among Our Gypsies* (Петровић & Симић, 1934a), *About Religion among Our Gypsies* (Петровић & Симић, 1934b) and *Theft among Gypsies* (Петровић & Симић, 1934c), issued either as supplements to larger periodicals or as separate booklets. The first booklet was probably the foundation for one of Petrović's *Contributions to the Study of Serbian Gypsies* published in the *Journal of the Gypsy Lore Society*, although Petrović appears as the sole author of the article (Petrović, 1936).

In the spring of 1935, Simić started as editor, publisher, manager and main contributor of *Romano lil* (in Romani language, 'Roma Newspaper') / *Циганске новине* (in Serbian, 'Gypsy Newspaper'), a four-page monthly newspaper that was issued in three editions: March, April and May. The editorial office was in the private house rented by his father in Jatagan mala III, raw 24 and the accountancy was personally handled by Simić, as shown by the preserved accountancy papers of the journal (LADA, f. Simić, *Romano lil*). In this endeavour, Petrović was also a collaborator and supporter, authoring several pieces in all editions of the newspaper (*Romano lil*, 1935a, 1935j, 1935p) and also providing funds for the printing costs of the three editions (Jopson, 1936, pp. 86–89; LADA, f. Simić, intervju sa Ankom Simićem). The newspaper ceased publication after the third issue mainly due to financial difficulties and the unsustainability of the effort, as Simić himself writes in the third editorial of *Romano lil*:

[...] 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. We survive from issue to issue always in a hope that our work will not be in vain. (*Romano lil*, 1935m, p. 1)

There are also indications that Simić might have stopped editing and publishing the newspaper because he was discouraged by the lack of interest among the local Roma community and the negativity of the Belgrade Roma towards the venture. In an interview from the 1990s for the Romani Edition of Radio Belgrade, his widow Anka Simić stated that the reason for ceasing publication was because:

[...] the Belgrade Gypsies did not allow him to go further with it. Because he embarrassed [them]. They wanted to beat him. The fourth issue was supposed to be printed, but they had come to the printing house and stopped everything. I heard this from my husband but have not seen this. They called my husband a villager. (LADA, f. Simić, intervju sa Ankom Simićem)

Similar information is also found in the editorial by Svetozar Simić in the last issue of *Romano lil*, in which he shares that the Gypsies in Belgrade refused to buy the newspaper as, according to them, it only disgraced them (*Romano lil*, 1935l, p. 1). In these materials he also wrote that the news was spread among the Gypsies in Jatagan mala and Čubura (the neighbourhoods with the largest Roma population) that the editor had enormously enriched himself. We should not exclude the hypothesis that apart from financial difficulties, the key reason for the paper's failure was resistance among the local Roma (some of whom had been living in the city for generations and considered themselves established citizens of the capital) towards the endeavours of the young newcomer, who was only in his early 20s and who had originated from a country village.

During the first half of the 1930s, Simić had written an autobiography called *Циганин* (Gypsy). The manuscript was sent to the mainstream Belgrade publishing house *Privreda*, which rejected it with a short standard letter dated 5 February 1935 (LADA, f. Simić, Rukopise Simića). The manuscript is not preserved except for its handwritten cover. It had probably become the foundation for a second novel (or novelette) manuscript named *Циганска крв* (Gypsy Blood), on which Simić was reportedly still working in 1936, with the intention of submitting it to another mainstream publisher and causing a "literary sensation" (*Време*, 1936a, p. 5). Even though this novel would also be unpublished, some parts of it are preserved in both handwritten and typed form (LADA, f. Simić, Rukopise Simića). The novel written by Simić and announced to be published was big news and even reported in Luxembourg's German language newspaper (*Escher Tageblatt*, 1936, p. 10). In the same period, Simić worked on a Serbian–Gypsy dictionary and grammar (*Време*, 1936a, p. 5).

In the autumn of 1935, Simić enrolled as a regular student at both the Law Faculty and the Economic Faculty of the University of Belgrade but continuing only at the Law Faculty after his second year. According to unconfirmed data, during his university studies he was an occasional contributor to the daily newspaper *Vreme* (Acković, 2020, p. 3). On the eve of the Second World War, he was at the final stage of his studies and had only two exams before graduation.

In 1938, Simić married Anka, who was seven years his junior and a high school graduate. She, like Simić, had come from a settled Roma family from the villages near Arandjelovac. According to Anka's memories, she met Simić in her own village during a visit he made, with her grandfather introducing them to each other (LADA, f. Simić, intervju sa Ankom Simićem). Their first son, Stevan, was born before the Second World War. In 1936, Simić served in the Yugoslav army as a ranker (*Време*, 1936a, p. 5) and at the beginning of the Second World War he was mobilised in the military reserve force as a second lieutenant (LADA, f. Simić, Vojna legitimacija).

During 1938–1939, Simić was the founder and president of the first Yugoslav-wide Roma organisation, the Educational Club of the Yugoslav Gypsy Youth (*Просветни клуб југословенске циганске омладине*), which existed for this short period just before the start of the Second World War (see below).

During the war, Simić was taken captive and imprisoned in a German war camp for officers (the so-called Oflag or Offizierslager) located in Osnabrück, where he spent two years. In the summer of 1943, the camp's authorities released him because he had tuberculosis. According to Dragobljub Acković, who draws his conclusions on the basis of oral history interviews with the Roma about their experiences during the Second World War, Simić did not in fact have the disease, but his family followed an already established pattern of bribing, with a substantial sum, camp authorities/health workers to document that a prisoner was very sick and advise his release. This practice was something common among the families of other camp prisoners. Simić seemed to have used his time in the German camp well, compiling (probably on the foundation of the already existing *Romani – Serbian Dictionary*), a *Romani – Serbian – German Dictionary* with a Grammar that was handwritten on a large notebook bearing, in a couple of places, the official stamp of the camp (Acković, 2014, pp. 282–287; 2020, pp. 81–117), which may support the hypothesis that Simić did not work on it in secret and had probably even consulted his supervisors/inmates regarding German vocabulary. Being released from the German camp brought other problems related to Simić's Roma origin. This was the period of the Wehrmacht occupation and military government in Serbian territories, which meant that there were regulations against Gypsies in effect. Many Gypsies were either put in camps or simply shot dead (Acković, 1996; Đurić & Miletić, 2008; Ацковић, 2009; Pissari, 2014). To avoid being deprived of his full rights, Simić had requested, and received, from the local authorities a certificate stating that he was an honest and settled citizen belonging to a well-respected family, that he worked as a court officer in the regional court in Kavadar, and that for these reasons it was “proposed that the decree on Jews and Gypsies not be applied to him and his family” (LADA, f. Svetozar Simić, Уверење). In the autumn of 1943, Simić joined the partisan anti-fascist movement, in which he served until the liberation of Yugoslav territories.

After 1946, Svetozar Simić finished his studies at the Law Faculty and parallel to this he assisted in laying the foundations of the new Yugoslav regime in the regions of Arandjelovac and Mladenovac, where he already had administrative experience. In 1949, he returned to Belgrade and in 1950 he was employed as a secretary at Radio Centre Serbia, the predecessor of Radio and Television Serbia (RTS). The same year, 1950, he also opened his attorney office and maintained his practice until the mid-1970s, when he retired. According to his own testimonies, within his practice, he never charged clients of Roma background. In the 1960s and 1970s, his practice and home were located in an apartment in central Belgrade at Njegoševa street 82, in the area of Čubura (today, Vračar municipality), where traditionally many Roma had been living (Vučković, 1993, pp. 62–63; Вуксановић-Маџура & Маџура, 2015). Simić also supported and promoted young Roma who, following his own professional path, were striving to affirm themselves in the field of law, such as the female student Ivana who studied law at the University of Belgrade and whom he introduced to the visiting Indian Chaman Lal (1962, p. 3). Even though Simić was more devoted to his professional career, he maintained his involvement in

Roma issues as an individual and in his free time sought materials on Roma outside of Yugoslavia; for instance, in 1952, he corresponded with Dora Yates, then President of the Gypsy Lore Society, with the ethnomusicologist Barbara Lattimer (LADA, f. Simić, Korespondencija), with the editorial office of the Bulgarian Roma newspaper *Нов път* (New Way) in the late 1950s (Ibid.), with Donald Kenrick on behalf of the Institute for Roma Research and Documentation in 1975 (Ibid.), and with his long-term acquaintance Rade Uhlik, a Bosnian linguist with a long-standing commitment in the field of Romani language and publications (Acković, 2019b). In the interwar period, Uhlik published Roma folk poetry (Uhlik, 1937), a Gurbet Romani translation of the *Gospel of Luke* (Uhlik, 1938) and Roma tales in manuscript (Uhlik, 1940), and actively continued publishing afterwards in the field of Romani linguistics (Uhlik, 1947), Roma folklore and folk poetry (Ухлик & Радичевић, 1957). The preserved correspondence between them (LADA, f. Simić, Korespondencija) is an interesting example of Romani-language epistolary writing. One of the few preserved letters by Simić starts with:

Prahla phuraneja, Reslo čo lil baxtalo. / Čo lil sas mande guglo. / Čiro lil reslo kaj mor ilo. / Te aves maj baxtalo thaj but breš đuvdo.

My old brother, / Your letter has been well received. / Your letter was dear to me. / Your letter touched my heart. / Let you be happy and long-living. (LADA, f. Simić, Korespondencija, Simićevo pismo Uhliku, 06.09.1973).

The letter continues in Serbian as it was typed by Simić's daughter in law, who is Serbian.

Simić and Uhlik maintained a long-term correspondence and collaboration that continued throughout Simić's lifetime. This included letters with updates and exchanges of ideas, and the sending of materials, manuscripts and published books. Uhlik had made a microfilm copy of an article in the *Journal of the Gypsy Lore Society* from 1936 (Jopson, 1936) about the publication of the *Romano lil* newspaper that was not known to Simić even though it was published during his years of collaboration with Alexander Petrović, who should have received it. The short piece in question was largely based on information provided by Petrović about the publication of the newspaper in which he himself is presented as editor and main force behind the endeavour. In a letter to the Gypsy Lore Society leadership, Alexander Petrović writes the following about the *Romano lil* newspaper in a letter to R. A. Scott Macfie dated May 12, 1935:

I edit it and publish it together with a Gypsy student. But none of the Gypsies buys it. I had the idea to assemble as many as possible literate Gypsies around it, but it seems it won't be a success. I keep a diary of the history of the paper. All my experience in connection with it, will be a very good contribution to the study of the Gypsy psychology. (UL GLSA, GLS A1-35, GLS I-XLIII).

Considering the established and undisputable fact that it was Simić who was founder and main figure working on the newspaper (as proved by archival materials and the oral

memory of the community), with Petrović having the role of supporter and contributor (authoring only 3 out of over 25 published pieces in *Romano lil*), we must conclude that this was a deliberate falsification and misrepresentation by Petrović. He was apparently neither a fair nor transparent collaborator of Simić. As Uhlik himself points out in the letter to Simić, “it seems to me an unfairness has been done to you, as a little is said about you, your name is not even mentioned directly, although I am sure you had the lion’s share in this deed” (LADA, f. Simić, Pismo Uhluka Simiću).

Overall, when compared to his vigorous engagement and activism from the interwar period, Simić’s participation in the post-war Roma movement in Yugoslavia seems like a drawing back or estrangement. There were, however, several very logical and even trivial reasons for this. In contrast to his younger years, Simić had a family to take care of and provide for – his wife, who was a home-maker, and his two sons Stevan and Srboljub. He also had to take into account his profession, which required impartiality. Simić himself reflects on this in a letter to Rade Uhlik from the 1970s:

I could not even join the Rom Association as I am not a member of the [Communist] party and it seems to me that they [the association] have been quite compromised. I heard that they took a lot of money from the community [the local municipality], but it was all used irrationally. I was just afraid to work with them [Rom Association] because something could always be planted on me, and my profession is such that I should always answer even when I’m not guilty. This is one of the important reasons why I did not dedicate myself to the idea that I wanted as a child, and there were times when I was starving and doing something in this direction. At least you have known that since before the war when Dr Aleksandar Petrović was alive, and you had started even before the two of us.

Time has torn us apart and separated us, and apart from that, because of the struggle for life and survival, when a person has a family, there is no possibility to do other jobs. (LADA, f. Simić, Korespondencija, Simićevo pismo Uhluku, 06.09.1973).

Simić continued his activism on behalf of the Roma, but in a personal capacity. Even though he was present at the founding meeting of the above-mentioned Association ‘Rom’ in Belgrade in 1969, he was not among the speakers at the assembly (Оснивачка скупштина, 1969). There was not, in fact, a requirement for Communist Party membership and this had never been an obstacle for joining the organisation, as the association had lay members who were not necessarily affiliated with the party. Simić might have referred to membership in the leading body, the Executive Board, for which a party membership was surely necessary, as only Communist Party members were considered trustworthy for such positions. Being a strong leader with his own vision and track record of activism over decades, Simić had probably hardly imagined himself as an ordinary member of this organisation. According to some of his contemporaries and people who knew him, he had a rather strong and stubborn personality and seemed to be the kind of leader who could be called a lone operator rather than a team-worker. Even though he was never invited to be on the Executive Board of the Rom Association, presided over by Slobodan Lale Berberski (1919–1989), a former partisan and functionary in the Central

Committee of the Communist Party, his activities and the example established with the *Romano lil* newspaper were remembered. Berberski himself mentioned the need to revive the publication in his opening speech at the Association 'Rom' Founding Assembly (Берберски, 1969, p. 51).

During the same period, on the eve of the Yugoslav census implementation, probably in 1969, Simić wrote a letter to the Director of the Yugoslav Institute for Statistics with a proposal to establish and lead a team of educated Roma to perform, under his supervision, an accurate census among the Gypsy population. The letter is preserved in both handwritten and typed form but is undated. It starts with Simić's presentation, in which he first outlines his achievements from the interwar period:

I'm a Gypsy by nationality, and already as a high school student before the war I have edited a Gypsy newspaper *Romano lil* and I was dealing with Gypsy studies, which I do also today. My wish is to leave something to my tribesmen [people], to contribute to science, and to describe the psychology of the Gypsies.

In our society all nations and nationalities are respected [but] that is not the case in other countries in the world. Now there are even printed schoolbooks in Romanian, Hungarian, etc. [...]

Since a census of the population is forthcoming in 1970 and now preparations are undergoing for it, I'm coming forward with the proposal THAT I WOULD LIKE, WITH A TEAM, TO PERSONALLY IMPLEMENT THIS CENSUS IN THE ENTIRE TERRITORY OF YUGOSLAVIA WITH THE SUPPORT, AGREEMENT AND FUNDING OF THIS INSTITUTION, and the statistical data would be more correct and more real than what has been done so far, not only for the Gypsies but also for the other peoples in Yugoslavia. The number of the Gypsies would by all means affect the number of the other peoples [hinting at the fact that Gypsies declare other identity at censuses – author note]. [...]

With this census I don't want to establish a Gypsy state. I would like to know how many exactly the Gypsies in Yugoslavia are, so the responsible authorities [can] approach them and solve their problems, as their problems are not only problems of the Gypsies but also problems of the society. If the society wishes to solve the problems, it has to know how many they are exactly, what do they do, what are their professions, where do they come from, how many of them are literate, [how many are] illiterate, what economic goods do they have, how many of them are employed, how many are unemployed. Why some do not want to work even though the possibility to work and be paid is offered to them.

It would also be possible to confirm what is the number of those who are members of social organisations, how many have participated in the war on the side of National Liberation Struggle, how many have disappeared, how many were victims of the war.

If this proposal is accepted, all categories that are needed in view of the data would be a subject to an additional agreement and arrangement.

I find incorrect and even unfair the opinion that the census is implemented for the whole population and that Gypsies should not be separate from the others, because all peoples and nations have their own specific problems, habits, and their own life that should not be underestimated and that a special team of Gypsies would implement this task honestly and this would benefit science, but also the society itself. (LADA, f. Simić, Korespondencija).

This letter demonstrates that Simić's engagement on Roma issues and general visions neither decreased nor ceased. On the contrary, his engagement continued in a manner

consistent with the visions he had formed and declared during the interwar years and was modified in unison with the new social realities of the late 1960s and 1970s in Yugoslavia. It should be interpreted in its interrelation with the development of the Yugoslav Roma movement at that time, when the Roma activists were building the network of organisations under the name ‘Rom’ Association and advocating for the establishment of a separate category in the Yugoslav census and the use of ‘Rom’ as the name of the community (Acković, 2001).

Simić’s continuing involvement with Roma issues after the Second World War is demonstrated by the fact that he had never ceased any contacts with lay or educated Roma, or with researchers and interested people from abroad. He also continued his writings in the forms of memoirs and essays in his spare time. In the 1970s, and especially after his retirement in 1974, Simić had more time to devote himself to writing and to Roma activism. He wrote an essayistic report *Nešto o Ciganima* (Something about the Gypsies) for the 1975 symposium on Roma organised by the Serbian Academy of Arts and Culture, which was delivered but not subsequently published (LADA, f. Simić, Rukopise Simića). During that period, Simić also wished for a possible visit to India for linguistic research, which he elaborated upon in a letter to Rade Uhlik from 1973. The text of the letter demonstrates that his main aim at the end of his life was that “Something accurate and valid for all times should be written and left to ordinary Gypsies, because day by day everything is lost and forgotten” (LADA, f. Simić, Korespondencija). Probably his last literary work was an autobiographical novel based on his own life; it was not finished, but the typed pages are still preserved. Simić passed away on 1 November 1979 in Belgrade at the age of 66.

Groundbreaking Activities in the Field of Writing and Publishing

In the spring of 1935, Simić started as editor and publisher of, and main contributor to, *Romano lil. Циганске новине*, a monthly newspaper that was issued in Romani and Serbian, both in Cyrillic scripts, and lasted three editions. The archive of *Romano lil* as well as a review of the published newspaper material shows that the texts were written primarily by Simić himself – 18 out of 25 published pieces were either Simić’s original works or pieces edited/prepared for publication by Simić. In the first issue, these are: the articles *Our First Word* (Romano lil, 1935a), *Our Antie-Bibija* (Romano lil, 1935b), *Our People Mourn Their King* (Romano lil, 1935c), the feuilleton *Ominous Note* (Romano lil, 1935h), one anecdote, a tale (Romano lil, 1935f) and a song (Romano lil, 1935g), and an ethnographic questionnaire (Romano lil, 1935e). In the second issue, Simić’s materials are the editorial article *To Our Readers* (Romano lil, 1935i) and the short story *Have You Been Born Before, You Would Have Married Twice As Well* (Romano lil, 1935l). The third and last issue contained his articles *Romano lil*, *Our Uncle Marko* (Romano lil, 1935n), *Landlord’s Wedding at Čubura* (Romano lil, 1935o), the feuilleton *Zira* (Romano lil, 1935t), a short comment about begging (Romano lil, 1935q), a Roma tale and a song (Romano lil, 1935s). Comprehensive description and analysis of the content of these works as pieces of literature has been done elsewhere (Zahova, 2021b, pp. 79–87).

Although Simić himself never elaborated on the choice of title for the newspaper, we can clearly see a resemblance with the first Serbian newspapers published outside or in the Serbian lands *Сербскија новини* (1791–1792, Vienna) and *Новине сербске изъ царствующега града Виенне* (1813, Vienna), *Новине србске* (1843, Kragujevac/Belgrade) – all meaning ‘Serbian newspaper’ (Крестић, 1980; Subotić, 1998). These editions were the first ever print media closely interrelated with the ideas of a Serbian national revival and their popularisation among the Serbian elite. Thus, by naming the newspaper following this formula, Simić demonstrated that his goal was to implement the same mission – to evoke a raising of Roma community consciousness as a public phenomenon through publishing linguistic and cultural content with which they could identify with. It followed the model of national press developed by the surrounding (Serbian) nation but applied to the Roma community that had to be engaged, united and represented by the newspaper. This conclusion is not only based on interpretation of *Romano lil*'s name and form, but also on its content, as demonstrated by the words of Simić:

We should not forget that our newspaper has to fulfil a cultural first-order mission. From the interest in certain poems and stories printed in a language spoken by them, our people are turning to more serious things, to our life in general. The question of improving our way of life is largely in our own hands. (*Romano lil*, 1935a, p. 1)

The newspaper was written and published mainly in the Serbian language, but there was hardly a piece in which the Romani language was not present. To flag Roma identity, the newspaper name was in the Romani language and Romani was often used in phrases quoted in articles or when folklore texts in Romani (followed by Serbian translations) were published. Language has been one of the most important markers of identity in the context of Central and Eastern Europe, in which language policies have been closely interrelated with nationalist movements (Kamusella, 2018). Demonstration of Roma identity in texts that are written in another language is often carried out by the use of Romani language words and sentences in publications, especially when it comes to expressions and terms considered of key importance for the community and its ethno-culture (Zahova, 2019). Simić elaborates on the reading audience and stresses that this was a newspaper for both a Roma and non-Roma public. The editor viewed the publication as a counterpoint to the image of Roma exotic beauties published in other mainstream media:

A newspaper such as ours could be edited in two ways: it could be written *about* Gypsies and [...] 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 *gadjo* (non-Gypsy) readership. Without a variety of ‘stars’, e.g. black and Gypsy, and their respective pictures, our 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 the Gypsies, but of course, for the Gypsies.* (*Romano lil*, 1935a, p. 1).

In his journalistic writings, Simić preferred the so-called opinion article genre, which bears comparison with the early stages of every periodical that has been created as part

of movements for national emancipation, in which the main focus is on polemics related to the culture, identity and emancipation of the community and the means for their development or achievement. The opinion articles were mostly written by Simić and reflected his ideas, guidelines and programme statements about the Roma in general. The opening editorial in the first issue, *Our First Word* (Ibid.), addresses two big issues related to different strata of the Roma community. The first issue is the question of why so many Roma are poor and the answer is related to the lack of education, despite practical skills in many crafts, and efforts that need to be made by the community to improve the educational level. The second issue is related to the fact that many educated and well-off Roma are distancing themselves from the community because of mainstream misconceptions about the Roma as thieves and criminals, deeply grounded in the public discourse and maintained by the media. Simić declares that the newspaper will continually address these matters:

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 [a] 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 [it can] in order to give our brother a helping hand in his cultural [improvement], 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. (Ibid.).

In his last published editorial, *Romano lil*, Simić reflects on the successes and challenges that the newspaper had faced during its short existence. He informs readers about the international success, saying, for instance, that the “English Reuters agency has announced about its release to its English reading audience” (*Romano lil*, 1935l, p. 1). The English media had indeed published brief information about the Belgrade Gypsy newspaper and its Roma editor, for example, the article *The First Gypsy Newspaper* (*The Telegraph*, 1936). A German language article in *Bremer Zeitung* (1935) also wrote about the *Gypsy Newspaper from Belgrade* that was reportedly linked to the demands of nomadic Gypsies to settle and be given land, which might have been an interpretation of the *Romano lil*'s narratives pleading for ceasing of nomadism and bad habits like begging (*Romano lil*, 1935q, p. 3).

A substantial part of the newspaper's materials prepared by Simić were devoted to Roma ethno-culture and folklore. They were two types: first, text that presented and discussed community customs and celebrations related to important identity markers of the community; and second, text that recorded Roma folklore in the form of songs, short stories, tales or anecdotes in the Romani language, followed by Serbian translation. Simić

prepared and translated all Romani-language materials. His activities in this respect repeat another pattern of national mobilisation spread in Eastern European countries. The collecting and publishing of folklore materials and language records in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries was developed after the Herderian model for national emancipation through the collection and publishing of a wide range of folklore materials, dictionaries, narratives about customs, and traditional songs representing the national spirit (Wilson, 2006). The legends, short stories, songs and oral history materials published by Simić should be interpreted in this discourse – they embody his aim to (re)present Roma folklore as part of the Roma people's culture. The motivation for such works was clearly articulated by Simić himself, who stated “certain poems and stories printed on a language spoken by them, our people are turning to more serious things, to our life in general” (Romano lil, 1935l, p. 1).

A similar function of identity building and representation had Simić's pieces about historical events from the point of view of the Roma community's memory and perspective. One example of this is the material *From the History of the Belgrade Gypsies*, probably narrated to Simić as an oral history, later published and signed with the name of the narrator, Jovan-Jovanče Milosavljević, in the second issue (Romano lil, 1935k, pp. 2–3). It contained a vivid and informative account of dynamic community development – including numbers of families, groups, settlements and community leaders – from the Serbian principality under Prince Mihailo Obrenović (1839) until the First Balkan War (1912). While the focus of this article is on the development of the community against the general background of Serbian history, in his article *Our Uncle Marko*, Simić elaborates on the contribution and role of Roma individuals as part of the Serbian army during the First World War (Romano lil, 1935n, p. 2).

In the fictional pieces (three feuilletons) within the pages of the newspaper, Simić demonstrated, typical for the genre, critical and satirical style, documenting and elaborating on stories heard, witnessed or experienced by the author himself. Worth noting is the last piece, *Zira*, in which Simić narrates his own story of being involved in an engagement affair without his will (mentioned in his editorial *Romano lil* as well: Romano lil, 1935m, p. 1). The main hero, the author himself, is the victim of this arrangement and tries to argue against it, finally running away on the pretext of having writing obligations in *Romano lil* (Romano lil, 1935t, p. 4).

Simić's writings have another ground-breaking role, namely in laying the foundations of the novel genre not only in Yugoslavia, but also globally (Zahova, 2021a, p. 18; 2021b, pp. 87–90). After his autobiographical manuscript *Gypsy* (not preserved), he had produced a novel or novelette entitled *Gypsy Blood* (*Циганска крв* in the original). The main hero in the piece is a talented and very young Gypsy musician, Marko, who lives with his three-generation family in a room in Jatagan mala in Belgrade. In the preserved text, we can see a motif similar to one of the feuilletons discussed above, *Zira*, in which the young Simić is invited to the family home by the young woman's father and offered a marriage. Living in the poor neighbourhood of Jatagan mala is picturesquely described and the

third-person voice and the manner of narrating transmit the feeling of a fictionalised story based on real life events.

His last literary work was the autobiographical novel most probably entitled *Rodio sam se za inat* (I Was Born out of Spite). Even though the piece is either unfinished or no longer extant in full, from the preserved pages of the first part of the work (Acković, 2020, pp. 26–44), we can confidently define it as a masterwork with a complex structure in which there are several storylines. It is a multi-layered piece in which the main character's story and thoughts on his own life and the Roma life in general intersect with the narrator's voice and reflections that seem to bring more analytical reflections and also critical commentary. The preserved pages present a coming-of-age novel in which the leading story is the life-account of the main character, which is then intertwined with the present-time storyline in which he meets the lawyer, and their own relationship develops. The reader soon realises that this, in fact, is an account of Simić's own life story and his own statements through the personage of the lay-Rom Marko. The novel thus reaches a point where the old Simić, at the end of his life and from a distance of years, meets and interacts with his own reflection as a young man. The novel contains all the elements and motifs of Simić's earlier works or writings – literature and non-fiction alike – mentioned above. It can thus be rightfully called the oeuvre of Simić and we can only express our regret that it has not been published thus far.

A theatre play script on the topic of Roma destiny during the Second World War (Acković, 2020, pp. 56–61), found in Simić's archive, has been attributed to him, but it was written by Spasoje Mitrović, who probably wanted to consult with Simić about it.

Simić's writing accomplishments extend also to contributions to research, and for this reason, he has been named the first Romani Studies researcher of Roma background in Yugoslavia (Acković, 2014, p. 282; 2020). His first research endeavours were realised in collaboration with Alexander Petrović and were related to data collection through ethnographic questionnaires and reflections on his own dialect and observations on his community's culture. Probably the first result of this collaboration is the text *About Faith of Our Gypsies* (*О вери наших Цигана*) (Петровић & Симић, 1934a), which can be classified as a contribution to Romani socio-linguistics. The text seems to be based on linguistic data and its contextualisation in regard to Roma culture. Using Simić's own dialect, the text presents the Romani original of words for God (*Дел*) and soul (*ђу*), followed by reflection on how they mirror Roma cultural concepts. The other publications, *Theft among Gypsies* (*Крађа код Цигана*) (Петровић & Симић, 1934b) and *About the Marriage among Our Gypsies* (*О браку код наших Цигана*) (Петровић & Симић, 1934c) are based on field research among several Gypsy communities, and Simić's data was collected among his own family and neighbours in the village of Kopljare. The first presents interesting ethnographic observations about the concept of theft among settled Roma and provides insights into the practices of curses and oaths among Simić's own group in the Romani language. In the case of the third publication, about marriages, the field research team was enlarged by one member, Pera Jovanović from Arandjelovac, Rom and a law student

in Belgrade. Apart from ethnographic questionnaires, the research included quantitative data that demonstrates early marriage patterns and widespread patterns of both short-term marriages and multiple marriages among the researched communities. The publication finishes with a negative assessment on these practices, a view that corresponds to Simić's later publicistic and literary texts also criticising these practices (see the feuilleton *Zira* and the *Gypsy Blood* novelette):

Even though these studies are the first attempt of this type, they can be of interest not only for sociologists but for the field of law studies. Something in this respect has to be done in order at least a bit to strengthen the marriage among our Gypsies. Furthermore, also because among them a process of creating a new generation that wishes to elevate culturally their own tribe [people]. A proof of this are the two collaborators of the studies [Svetozar Simić and Pera Jovanović] one of whom signs this study. (Петровић & Симић, 1934c, p. 7).

Those publications are signed “Dr Alexander Petrović and Svetozar Simić, High School graduate”, and in the texts Simić is presented as “a Gypsy man by nationality” (Петровић & Симић, 1934b, p. 1; Петровић & Симић, 1934c, p. 3) to underline that he is a community insider.

Simić had a long-term interest in Romani language documentation and description, on which he started to work in the mid-1930s. Preserved are his *Romani – Serbian Dictionary* (29 pages) as well as a *Romani – Serbian – German Dictionary* of 63 handwritten pages. He also worked on various grammatical texts, one of them entitled *Sar te vačarav Romani chhib* (How to Speak the Romani Language). There are no studies in Romani linguistics by him but from other sources, in publications (Политика, 1939a, p. 10) or private correspondence (LADA, f. Simić, Korespondencija, Simićevo pismo Uhliku, 06.09.1973), we know that he was very critical of the creation of neologisms for words that do not exist in the Romani language; it was a practice that he found artificial, and thought was wrongly applied by Rade Uhlik. In the interwar period, Simić also declared plans for translations of the *Bible* in the dialect of Roma spoken in Central Serbia (as opposed to the Bosnian Gurbet translations already done by Uhlik; see Uhlik, 1938), but these were not realised.

Simić's correspondence from the 1950s and 1960s demonstrates that he continued doing research in his free time, and his main challenge in this endeavour was the lack of sources from other countries or about Gypsies in general to provide a comparative perspective. He had apparently approached individuals or entities in the hope of obtaining linguistic and ethnographical publications, but most replied with polite apologies for not being able to send such materials and invited Simić to submit texts about Serbian Gypsies for publication (LADA, f. Simić, Korespondencija).

Simić's last text of a popular research nature is the five-page ‘Something about Gypsies’, written for the first academic symposium on Roma issues organised at the Serbian Academy of Sciences and Arts in 1975 (Acković, 2020, pp. 54–59). This text is a general overview of the situation of the Serbian Gypsies in history and at that present

time, finishing with Simić's analysis and ideas about educated Gypsies and the work that has to be done among the Roma, ideas communicating essentially the same messages that he had espoused in the interwar period.

Spread over four decades and an impressive variety of genres – journalistic writings, fiction, folklore publication, research and Romani language documentation – all texts written by Simić are strategically thought out in terms of content and the style of depiction, with the aim to create a narrative about the Gypsies as a people united by common culture and history (Zahova, 2021b, pp. 79–87). These publications also replicate the pattern of all European movements for community/national mobilisation through publicity of the ideas, among both a Roma and non-Roma audience, that Roma are a single community with its own rich culture and history, that the members of this community need to be more educated and engaged and to self-organise, along with the need to fight against majority misconceptions about Roma/Gypsies. We see the main point for Roma emancipation that continued to shape the narratives of Roma activism in texts and activities in later periods up to the present (Marushiakova & Popov, 2020b).

Organisational Leadership

From the mid-1930s onwards, in both his writings for *Romano lil* and his interviews in the mainstream press, Simić communicated and propagated the idea of bringing together educated Roma, often referred to as intellectuals (*интелектуалци*), in order to unite efforts, i.e. mobilise them, for the betterment of their own community. Simić had probably observed the earlier existing organisations among the Belgrade Roma community (Ацковић, 2000; Marushiakova & Popov, 2021b, pp. 180–218). A draft manuscript by him, prepared for *Romano lil* or for another publication, as the handwritten pages are signed “Svetozar Simić, editor in chief of *Romano lil*” (thus most probably authored in 1935), mentions his idea to establish a Gypsy organisation as a continuation of the First Serbian Gypsy Association for Mutual Support in Sickness and Death, the first Roma organisation established in Serbia (Marushiakova & Popov, 2021b, pp. 180–195). In this manuscript, Simić wrote:

When this *zadruga* was dissolved I met two intellectuals from our environment [i.e. Roma]. One of them was selfish and a boaster. As we discussed about the conditions of our people, we decided to try to renew the former *zadruga* or to establish a new one. My part was to elaborate rules and to print them. I did all of this, of course with the help of legal advisers. [...] These Rules were something like:

‘Every child to finish primary school, our children to become literate and to get them immediately after school graduation [and] give them for some craft training or to send them to good masters and trainers to teach them the notes. These children who are talented for school should be sent to continue their education so that they can get [a] university degree. Apart from that, the association should make efforts to support the education and training of the poor children.’

They [the two intellectuals with whom Simić collaborated] agreed on this and we also agreed that the name of the association will be ‘Educational Association of the Yugoslav Gypsies’. (Acković, 2020, pp. 61–62).

The idea for the association was not realised, however, and the reason for this, according to Simić's narrative, was that the unnamed bragger from the group wanted to become an MP, with the motive that the association would be poor and only after some political power was gained could funds be secured for such activities. This led to the withdrawal of Simić and the third collaborator from the initiative, with a hope that the cultural club could be established sometime in the future (Ibid.). Nevertheless, all the goals of the association as outlined in the text above were published in his first editorial *Our First Word* as a mission statement of the newly launched newspaper (Romano lil, 1935a, p. 1). At the very beginning of 1936, Simić shared publicly, in an interview/conversation that became the basis of a one-page-long portrait, his ideas about mobilising educated and successful Roma who would eventually work in united efforts for the betterment of their own community in a more organised and formal arrangement:

The intention of one of the few Gypsy intellectuals was to divulge the reality of condemnation of his people, who were often equated en masse 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. (Време, 1936a, p. 5).

Simić's aspiration for establishment of the organisation described above materialised only at the very end of 1938, when he became the founder and president of the first Yugoslav-wide Gypsy organisation, the *Educational Club of Yugoslav Gypsy Youth*. We can presuppose that Simić himself had already, as a law student, prepared the status of the organisation and its documents, even though they are not preserved in his archive nor in the archives of the institutions of that time (AJ, ф. 66). The Club's establishment was reported during the first days of 1939 in the daily *Politika* (Политика, 1939a, p. 10) in the form of an interview with the organisation's leadership presented with pictures, with large quotes from Svetozar Simić as its leader and spokesman. According to the quoted statute of the organisation:

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. (Ibid.).

The phrase '*with the help of the authorities*' was underlined to the reporting journalist upon the request of Simić, presenting him as "a Gypsy, a law student and a court official", as he wanted to demonstrate loyalty to the authorities on behalf of the Belgrade Gypsies, which he also said was to have a continuation in the practices of other Gypsy organisations. This statement by Simić 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. In this context, all Yugoslav organisations, regardless of their profile, were supposed to spread Yugoslav identity, especially among the youth, counteracting activities labelled as nationalist and anti-Yugoslav (for instance, Croatian nationalism). Additionally, it might be a declaration of the alignment that the Club established by Simić had with the Yugoslav Radical Union (*Jugoslovenska radikalna zajednica* – JRZ), the main political formation during the period 1935–1939, led by Milan Stojadinović, at that time Prime Minister of Yugoslavia. According to research by Dragoljub Acković (Ацковић, 2009, p. 60), the Club's affiliation to the Yugoslav Radical Union is very likely, as it had received a green light for organisational activities and also a media space for promoting its activities, and even funding. Simić might have been a member of the youth fraction of the Yugoslav Radical Union and, as such, declared loyalty to the authorities.

In the same media material, another appeal by Simić for the support and mobilisation of educated Roma was published:

The club appeals to Gypsy friends. It especially appeals to the Gypsies to whom God has given something and to the Gypsies-intellectuals. There are more of them than you might think. Mr. Simić tells us about six people who went through the fourth men's grammar school in Belgrade since 1929, as did he. Some graduated from university. (Политика, 1939b, p. 9).

In Simić's view, it was the youth that were in greatest need for support, as "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" (Политика, 1939a, p. 10). The Gypsy Youth's Club reportedly had three sections: educational, musical and sports. According to Simić, the foremost priority was the educational section, which "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" (Ibid.). Courses for illiterate people were immediately planned and even took place shortly after the organisation's establishment (Политика, 1939b, p. 9). Popular lectures were also planned with wide public outreach including lectures on public health, a topic that had also, in the spirit of the time, been presented in the pages of *Romano lil* a few years earlier (Romano lil, 1935d, 1935j). The lectures were also evidence of the continuing cooperation between Simić and Alexander Petrović, who was an employee at the Institute of Hygiene, an institution mentioned as organiser and supporter of the public health lectures (Политика, 1939b, p. 9).

Similarly, to the visions and strategic planning of *Romano lil*, Simić had also planned activities related to culture, arts and folklore. Under his leadership, the association worked on "collecting folklore material for its first piece from the Gypsy life, which will be called *A Wedding at the Willow*" (Политика, 1939a, p. 10), a piece that, considering by the title, would probably have described the practice of underaged marriages that could not be performed in church and were thus organised around a willow tree. Judging from

some of Simić's texts, such as the feuilleton *Zira* and the unpublished manuscript *Gypsy Blood*, both being tales of a successful Roma man becoming an object of engagement affairs or even married against his will, his idea was probably to criticise the practice by its dramatisation and staging for the Roma youth.

In his interviews for the Serbian and Yugoslav public in the mainstream press, Simić stated that creating a separate Gypsy culture was not in unison with his visions, and neither should the organisation's activities be branded as anti-national (i.e. anti-Yugoslavian). According to him as leader of the organisation, without denouncing or hiding their particularities and identity, the aim of the organisation would be to work for what we would call today 'integration without assimilation':

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. (Ibid.).

During its short existence, the Educational Club of Yugoslav Gypsy Youth, presided over by Simić, organised literacy courses and a fundraising party to collect funds for securing educational space for schooling with the necessary facilities. External factors related to the beginning of the Second World War and Simić's mobilisation in the army led to the Club's cessation. On the one hand, Simić, as the central figure in the endeavour, built the concept of the organisation in a manner resembling Roma organisations previously existing in Belgrade: the First Serbian Gypsy Association for Mutual Support in Sickness and Death (*Прва Српско-Циганска Задруга за узajмно помаганье у болести и смрти*), active in the 1920s and 1930s, which was most probably based on an earlier form of community organisation, whose goals were to provide its members with help and support on various occasions; the Club of the Belgrade Serbian Gypsies (*Клуб београдских српских Цигана*), claiming rights for political representation and participation in decision-making bodies at the local and national level, and the Association of Belgrade Gypsies Worshippers of 'Bibija' (*Удружење београдских Цигана свечара Бибије*), established in 1935, whose goals included raising the cultural level of all its members by establishing new cultural and social institutions, accepting gifted kids and young people with the aim of education and the study of crafts (Marushiakova & Popov, 2021b, pp. 180–195). The Educational Club of the Yugoslav Gypsy Youth, presided over by Simić, was registered and organised assemblies in the place where the Belgrade Gypsy Club held their activities (Struga tavern in the Čubura neighbourhood). The Club thus united, inherited and advanced the assets, strategies and visions of all earlier formal and informal associations, but brought them to a new level that fitted the existing social and political realities. Namely, it was set up with plans for potential branches planned all over Yugoslavia and was modelled similarly to other Yugoslav-wide youth organisations. This design, in its essence, was in unions of the youth organisations (Žutić, 1991) that developed in

Yugoslavia as part of the Kingdom's politics of identity – sport activities, cultural activities, including amateur arts, and the so-called analphabetic streams that were supposed to fight illiteracy among large groups through basic literacy lessons and public lectures on topics such as health, hygiene and history.

The organisation might have been somehow revived after the Second World War. *Politika* newspaper reported about activities of an association working for literacy and training of the Gypsies – the Gypsy Cultural-Educational Association, established in 1945 by Jovan Jovanović, a judge. The discourse and visions are very similar to those propagated by Simić in his activities in the interwar period, even though his name is not mentioned in the material. The leaders of the organisation state that “It is our duty to start from here in Belgrade, where there are the most aware Gypsies, conscious workers, craftsmen and intellectuals” (Политика, 1947). Jovan Jovanović studied together with Simić at the Law Faculty and was one of the board members of the earlier organisation, the Education Club of Yugoslav Gypsy Youth.

Conclusion

The writings and organisational activities of Svetozar Simić stand for two distinct yet inseparable sides of his personal missionary platform for the development of the Roma community. They both present different means in the public field for transmitting the same messages related to his concept for a better future for the Roma in Yugoslavia. The essence of these messages is related to an overarching goal: mobilisation of the elite and further widening their work within the community. The life-path and achievements of Simić himself are an example and embodiment of his own leadership ideas as a Roma activist. The means were multi-directional and can be grouped in several streams.

First and foremost, Simić strived for the mobilisation of educated Roma and intellectuals in order to form a leadership of the Roma people, to engage in both public work (i.e. in the wider society) and in the community itself. The literate elite could influence the opinions of both the general public and Roma. In this respect, it would be interesting to point out that Simić was very critical towards his own community – the Roma intellectuals or Roma in general (Zahova, 2020): the former for lack of civic engagement and the latter for not thinking about their children's prosperity (thus for their own future). He had the spirit of a leader who wanted to enlighten Roma on certain topics in order ‘to elevate them to another cultural level’.

Secondly (yet in extension and interrelation with the previous point), through the textual narratives and through the civil organisation's activities, Simić aimed at creating a Roma collective (re)presentation. The underlining idea was again to serve both the community (which had to start perceiving itself as united and equal to others) and the society (which had to be acquainted with Roma self-representation through means that were mainstream, public and civil). A clear example of this is the overall discourse of the public speeches by Simić, who would refer to a Roma collective through first-person plural (*we, our, e.g. we, the Gypsies; our people; our brothers, our dear brothers and sisters, our*

children, our people, our brothers). This way of public representation suggests the creation of an 'imagined' Roma community in the sense of Benedict Anderson (2006), a collective comprised of all who are Roma/Gypsies and who have to differentiate from the others. This discourse, which Simić applied systematically in his writings and public statements as a Roma activist, is a clear example of the birth of a concept for a national community. Furthermore, even though most of the literary works by Simić did not make it to the public (remaining in manuscript form), their analysis shows that all their elements and motifs contribute to the narratives for self-representation: they bear a generalisation character speaking about the Gypsies/Roma as a whole; they engage with incorrect majority perceptions about the Gypsies and injustice towards the community throughout history and on an everyday basis; they are also embedded with reflections on traditional community narratives on the origins, history and culture of the Roma. The unpublished prose works of Simić should also be considered as his own identity politics platforms and activism in literary form. Essentially, these works are another means for communicating the goals of the movement for Roma emancipation and achieving equal status with all other people by creating Roma literature and Roma publications.

Collecting and publishing of folklore materials and linguistic data accomplished by community leaders was an important element in the processes for ethno-national mobilisation and emancipation of all communities in Central and Eastern Europe (Sugar, 1995), along with leadership in the formation of a national community at the so-called 'phase A' in the process of national revival (Hroch, 1985, pp. 22–24), and this was one direction of Simić's work as well. As a researcher – in ethnographic papers and linguistic works – he also worked for community equalisation and representation. However, it should be pointed that in this case Simić was adopting the third-person plural, i.e. writing about Gypsies as 'them' and 'they', to demonstrate scientific distance from the object of study and thus signal the impartiality of the work.

Therefore, Simić's life-path and activities related to Roma activism had a two-fold standpoint in which the community–society dimensions (Marushiakova & Popov, 2016, p. 15) were inseparably intertwined. In the first place, these activities addressed the Roma/Gypsies, were directed towards them and intended their advancement and mobilisation. At the same time, they were aimed at representing them as a united community in the Yugoslav society, voicing their needs and providing information on them as a people. This makes Svetozar Simić the first Roma leader in Yugoslavia to create a narrative and representation of the Roma/Gypsies as an 'imagined community' (Anderson, 2006), a tendency to be later developed by Roma activities in Yugoslavia and beyond.

Simić was the only Roma activist who was committed to Roma issues for the period of both the first (interwar) and the second (socialist) Yugoslavia, and even though his work in the field of Roma activism during the interwar period is already established in history, with several groundbreaking and pioneering elements (*Romano lil* newspaper, the first Yugoslav Roma organisation, the first literature prose works and also research work by a person of Roma background), it should be underlined that all the activities and writings

by Simić after the Second World War embodied the principles and aims that were outlined and followed by him during the interwar period, and were their extension in the new social and institutional realities. The main difference between his interwar and post-war activities is that the latter were not taking place publicly and thus were rather invisible to society; yet they were not less of a contribution nor less engaged in fulfilling the mission of Simić's life regarding Roma emancipation.

Romania

Introduction

Petre Matei, Raluca Bianca Roman and Ion Duminica

The movement for Roma civic emancipation in interwar Romania can be described as one of the most active Roma/Gypsy movements in Central, South-Eastern and Eastern Europe, in terms of the number of Roma organisations that were set up, the number of Roma-led publications that would be published and in terms of the number of Roma leaders and activists that would emerge within the midst of the movement. The goals and aims of the Roma movement in Romania were connected with the broader social and historical context of the country in the aftermath of the First World War, wherein the overarching goal was the shaping of a unified Romanian identity, in a context of a newly multi-ethnic country.

Most importantly, the historical context of interwar Romania was, much like that of other countries in the region, connected to attempts at creating a common Romanian identity. Following the First World War, the Kingdom of Romania incorporated several important regions, including Transylvania, Bukovina, Bessarabia, and parts of Banat, Crişana, and Maramureş, which almost doubled the territory and population of the country. In this context, the desire to create a homogeneous Romanian state was countered by the everyday realities of the time, a country which now comprised numerous multi-ethnic and multicultural communities (for more on this general context, please see works by Livezeanu, 1995; Bucur, 2002; Korkut, 2006; Radu & Schmitt, 2017; Bejan, 2019). The end of the First World War also brought with it the agrarian and electoral reforms, which offered land and right to vote to Romanian citizens.

The changes brought about by the war also opened new opportunities for Roma, even if this meant, oftentimes, the loss of traditions and their integration in the general mass of the Romanian population. This is evident from the Romanian census of 1930, which recorded a significantly lower number of Roma than the previous estimates at the end of the 19th century: 262,501 people of Roma ethnicity, representing 1.5% of the country's population; 84.5% of them living in the rural areas (Achim, 1998, pp. 145–147). The new democratic context set up after 1918 offered ethnic minorities in Romania the opportunity to be active in organisations and associations with an economic, cultural, political character, set up on ethnic basis. This contributed to a modernisation of the Roma organisations, visible also in the attempts to organise socially, culturally, and politically.

For example, the signing of King Ferdinand I of Romania, on the November 14, 1918, of a Decree-law concerning electoral reform put an end to the censitary voting system and introduced instead the universal vote for male citizens over the age of 21. In other words, adult Roma men (over the age of 21) entered in the possession of an electoral capital and many different political fractions would become interested in it (for more on this, see Matei, 2010, pp. 159–160). The emergence of Roma leaders can thus also be explained by the fact that they were encouraged to enter discussion with Romanian political leaders. Furthermore, as discussed elsewhere (Matei, 2010), knowing that they now had the capacity to influence a significant number of votes, Roma leaders quickly learned to behave accordingly.

As such, the support of the Roma community served a political benefit, and was sought after also by authorities, who believed that the Roma movement could potentially contribute to the solving of broader societal problems. This was also connected to a broader need to gain the political support of Roma to counteract the other ethnic minority groups. In this context, new possibilities of collaborating with different political parties emerged, as well as collaboration with the police or the Romanian Orthodox Church. In turn, modern Roma leaders expressed loyalty towards Romanians, Church and King. They proved willing to help in the process of Romaniasation of the Hungarianised Roma, the enabling of the Romanian authorities' control over nomadic Gypsies, the conversion of the non-Orthodox Roma to Orthodoxy; the attraction of Roma voters on the part of Romanians in the multiethnic areas, etc. Thus, in order to understand the specifics of these manifestations of Roma civic emancipation, one must take account of the context of the era, wherein a collaboration with Romanian authorities existed and, within which, the latter were willing to help, at least to some extent and at least under certain conditions (Matei, 2010).

Unsurprisingly, the Roma elite adopted a discourse which did not contradict Romanian authorities, or even the Romanian public opinion, but shaped itself according to them. As discussed elsewhere (Ibid, 2010, pp. 159–161), a process of modernising the forms of Roma organisation would unfold. For example, new, modern forms of organisations were set up which would co-exist with traditional ones (i.e., characterising specifically the nomadic Roma). Gradually, the former would not only spread their influence across the country but express an aim to represent all Roma in Romania. Furthermore, these new forms of Roma organisation would move beyond looking after the interests of specific categories of Roma. For example, even the unifying efforts of *lăutari* (or Roma musicians), while taking place across the country, targeted only the interests of a specific professional category, and did not represent the interests of the entire Roma community (Ibid.).

The crucial moment for the birth of the Roma civic emancipation movement of all Roma in Romania would be April 1933 when, at the initiative of one of the prominent leaders among Roma – Calinic I. Popp Șerboianu – *Asociația Generală a Țiganilor din România* (The General Association of Gypsies in Romania, or AGȚR) was founded (Ibid.,

p. 160). The latter, alongside *Uniunea Generală a Romilor din Romania* (The General Union of Roma in Romania, or UGRR), led by Gheorghe A. Lăzurică and, later, *Asociația Uniunea Generală a Romilor din România* (The Association General Union of Roma in Romania, or AUGRR), led by Gheorghe Niculescu, are the best-known Roma organisations from interwar Romania, with AUGRR also proving to be the most influential in the long run. Noteworthy here is that AUGRR derived from UGRR, after Lăzurică was forced to resign in May 1934. Unlike UGRR, however, AUGRR (led by Niculescu), would gain legal entity status in November 1934 (for more on this, see Niculescu's portrait, in this chapter). As will be evident from the portraits presented in this chapter, these organisations were connected and often fed off each other and the dynamics of the Roma movement itself could be also visible from the struggle for legitimacy which would develop among Roma leaders at the time and, most importantly, between the leaders of the different organisations.

As discussed elsewhere (Roman, 2021b, p. 95; see also Matei, 2012), it is noteworthy that the first Roma organisation was the Neorustic Brotherhood (in Romanian, *Înfrățirea Neorustică*), which was set up in 1926, in Făgăraș, and led by Lazăr Naftanailă, but its influence remained limited geographically to the region of Transylvania. Likewise, other regional organisations would also be set up across the country, with different degrees of influence. For instance, an Oltenia circle of AGȚR would be formed in 1933, led by Marin Simion. Also important in connection to the Oltenia circle of AGȚR was the role of a Romanian Roma academic, C. S. Nicolăescu-Ploșor, who intended to set up a Roma House/Museum and a Roma Library. The regional dynamics were also made visible in some of the regional Roma newspapers which would eventually be published: for example, in *Neamul Țigănesc* – published in Făgăraș (whose editor was Lazăr Naftanailă) and in *Foaia Poporului Romesc* – published in Rupea.

It is worth noting that the Roma community in interwar Romania, especially when compared to other minorities in the country at the time (such as the German, Hungarian, or the Jewish minority) presented itself as a heterogeneous group, lacking a linguistic, religious, national cohesion. This also meant that potential members were difficult to organise, being part of diverse Roma groups, some no longer speaking the language of their parents, and others no longer assuming their Roma origin. From the point of view of organising dispersed communities and creating a shared sense of Roma belonging, this created inevitable challenges for Roma leaders of the time.

It was in this context that new Roma leaders emerged, including those mentioned above, whose visions for the future of the Roma community proved complex and sometimes conflicting. Their ideas and goals would be disseminated in various forms: from the organisation of small and large group gatherings and publications in mainstream media to the establishment of Roma organisations' own newspapers. In fact, the activity of Roma leaders and Roma organisations during the interwar period is evident in the existence of six Roma led newspapers, which would become the main means of

disseminating the aims and goals of the civic emancipation movement in the country: *Glasul Romilor* (The Voice of the Roma), *Timpul* (The Time), *Țara Noastră* (Our Country) – Special Edition for Roma in Romania, *O Rom* (The Roma), *Neamul Țigănesc* (The Gypsy Nation) and *Foaiă poporului romesc* (Paper of the Roma people). At the same time, this movement was driven by key individuals, who would become pivotal in the shaping of the movement in the country, all fighting for the representation of the Roma community in Romania.

All these dynamics and shifts will be explored throughout the portraits presented in this chapter. However, what can undoubtedly be seen, even from a necessarily brief look at the historical, social and political contexts which shaped the Roma civic emancipation movement in interwar Romania, is that this process was both complex and connected to the broader historical context at the time. At the same time, some key elements are worth mentioning, such as the struggle for legitimacy among Roma leaders, the tensions between the centre (i.e., Bucharest) and the country's key regions (primarily Transylvania and Oltenia), the best means of mobilising and attracting the Roma individuals to join the Roma movement and the need to collaborate with different state authorities. As such, the Roma portraits selected for the purpose of this chapter help contour these broader dynamics, relationships and shifts in the Roma civic emancipation movement itself.

Therefore, in the individual portraits authored by Petre Matei and Raluca Bianca Roman, this chapter will outline, based on available archival and media materials (including, but not limited to, the Roma periodicals mentioned above), some of the key protagonists of the Roma movement in the country during the interwar period: specifically, Lazăr Naftanailă, Calinic I. Popp Șerboianu, Gheorghe A. Lăzurică, Gheorghe Niculescu and Constantin Nicolăescu-Plopșor. These portraits are by no means exhaustive. In fact, as will be evident throughout this chapter, other individuals have also played a role in the Roma civic emancipation movement in Romania. For instance, Apostol Matei's name often comes up in the work of Roma organisations in Romania, including as the first Vice-President of the General Union of Roma in Romania, when G. A. Lăzurică was still its president. Marin I. Simion, on the other hand, was the leader of the Oltenia section of the Roma movement, and a self-titled "voievod" of Roma in Oltenia, while Aurel Th. Manolescu-Dolj was the editor of the Roma newspaper *Timpul* , published in Craiova. Nevertheless, in the absence of extended information on most of these individuals, the selection of the portraits presented in this chapter helps us contour the key dynamics, movements, alliances and conflicts occurring within the Roma civic emancipation movement of the interwar period, while nevertheless leaving the space open for further analysis and research to be conducted on the matter in the future.

Alongside this, in a section authored by Ion Duminica, the role of women within the Roma civic emancipation movement in Romania will be explored through the fragmentary portraits (based on available materials from the interwar Romanian press) of two Roma women: Florica Constantinescu and Marta Lăzurică. While little is known about the role of Roma women in the shaping of the Roma movement in the country, snippets

of their presence and influence within different organisations can be found both in the articles written within Roma periodicals of the time and in archival materials pertaining to the establishment of Roma organisations; and the role of women within them. Through the available material, therefore, fragmentary portraits of the work and role of Roma women within the Roma emancipation movement can be introduced, with further research undoubtedly necessary in the future.

Lazăr Naftanailă

Petre Matei

Lazăr Naftanailă (August 13, 1893–1968 ?) was the person who established, in 1926, the first ‘modern’ Roma organisation in Romania. Unlike older forms of Roma organisations (especially self-help societies, spatially limited to a locality or to certain socio-professional categories), his *Înfrățirea Neorustică* (Neorustic Brotherhood) had well-defined statutes, benefited from the status of legal entity and, in addition, had an ethnic agenda. The association focused on cultural and civic demands and aimed to contribute to the improvement of the lives of the Roma, regardless of their group origin or socio-professional category. In addition to this, their manner of acting differed from that of earlier associations, and, over the years, they organised a series of cultural and artistic events in numerous towns in Southern Transylvania. Moreover, between 1934 and 1935, the association even published three issues of the newspaper *Neamul Țigănesc* (The Gypsy Nation), before AUGRR, the largest Roma organisation based in Bucharest, managed to publish its own Roma newspaper.

All this is even more impressive if we take into account the fact that Lazăr Naftanailă was neither a rich Roma businessman, nor an intellectual from a large city with numerous connections, but, rather, a simple person from Calbor, a small commune in Southern Transylvania. Later, with the emergence of the central movement in Bucharest, in 1933, Naftanailă collaborated with those organisations, but ended up being used and replaced with more flexible and docile local leaders.

Lazăr Naftanailă was born in Calbor on August 13, 1893. His father, a certain Georgie Năftănăilă, worked as a blacksmith and was originally from the commune of Ileni (located about 15 km from Calbor) where he still resided in 1878. By 1880, he had already settled in Calbor, where he lived at No. 256. Officially married to Ana Naftanailă (born Gula), he had, between 1880 and 1893, six children, the last one, Lazăr Naftanailă, being born on August 13, 1893.

Lazăr Naftanailă most likely only attended elementary school in Calbor. After the war, he benefited from the agrarian reform, and received land. His wealth consisted of a two-room house, a barn, a garden, a vineyard and a few cattle. In addition, he increased his income by working as a cobbler.

As for his family life, on October 25, 1920, at the age of 27, Naftanailă married Maria Luca Ciurar. Ciurar was, originally, from the commune of Cincu Mic. With Naftanailă being Orthodox, the ceremony took place in the Orthodox church in Calbor. He later remarried Ana (born Micu) with whom he had three sons: Pompiliu (born in 1926), Titus (1932) and Horia (1934). In 1947, Lazăr Naftanailă divorced Ana and married a woman by the name of Sofia with whom he was married until 1968 when he passed away (Cârstea, 2017, pp. 7–10).

Although it hosted the first modern Roma organisation in Romania, the commune of Calbor had only a small number of Roma (5–6 families, mostly blacksmiths) (Cârstea, 2017, pp. 6, 14). The rest of the population, up to 672 inhabitants, according to the 1930 census, was composed of ethnic Romanians, mostly Orthodox, with a minority of Greek Catholic Romanians (Pâra, 2011, p. 59).

In Calbor there were several forms of association that could serve Naftanailă as a model for organising Gypsies. These varied from the informal to the more modern ones (with statutes legalised in court and having legal entity, or recognition). The first category included the four *zecii* (neighbourhoods or self-help societies), each with an approximately equal number of families. These forms of organisation allowed for certain communal activities to be carried out on their territory (such as the maintenance of roads and fountains etc.), provided mutual aid, especially at funerals, but nevertheless proved flexible, facilitating, in the early twentieth century, also the collection of taxes for the local church. These self-help societies were run by *vornici* and had their own flags. However, they did not have written statutes, were not legalised in court, and their origin in Calbor remains uncertain (inspired either by the nearby Saxon *Nachbarschaften* or by the many Calborans who had worked in the USA and returned home to Calbor) (Ibid., 2011, pp. 85, 225–227).

More 'modern' (namely, with statutes which were legalised in court) were the cultural or religious societies in the commune. The first, founded in 1914, was *The Society of Young Orthodox Romanians in the Parish of Calbor* (set up for moral and religious improvement, such as church attendance, avoidance of alcohol, swearing and card games etc.) followed, in 1918, by the *Fund for Poor Schoolchildren and Apprentices* and, in 1924, by the *Society for Lecture and Songs in Calbor* (encouraging literacy among its members, the establishment of a choir, of a popular library etc.). In addition to these, in 1934, in Calbor, there were a few other societies such as *Reuniunea femeilor ortodoxe* (Orthodox Women's Reunion), *Casa Culturală* (Cultural House) and *Oastea Domnului* (the Lord's Army) (Ibid., 2011, pp. 112–116).

This was the local context in which Lazăr Naftanailă established his association, the Neorustic Brotherhood, recognised as a legal entity by the Făgăraş Court on May 1, 1926. However, Naftanailă was not the only one organising the Roma in the period. Close to Calbor there existed various other Roma self-help societies. In the town of Făgăraş, for example, there was a funeral society (with president, cashier, and committee) and so there was a similar society in Șercaia established in 1924 (Chelcea, 1944, p. 170).

Unlike those earlier informal, spatially limited associations, with rather narrow agenda and limited to the self-help of their members (funeral aid societies), the Neorustic Brotherhood was the first modern ethnic organisation of Roma in Romania. It thus transcended the focus placed on the self-help of its members and achieved to improve the lives of the Roma, in general (i.e. regardless of their category or group, whether they were Boyash, nomadic or sedentary Roma etc.).

In addition to promoting the religious and moral education of its members, the association paid close attention to cultural and civic demands (“to promote the development of the religious, cultural and civic life of its members and to curb the vice of drunkenness”) (Pâra, 2011, p. 116). Accordingly, the association was not striking in the number of its members (which were few and mostly related to one another, and recruited especially from the blacksmiths in Calbor), but in the fact that, being the first association to assume a Gypsy ethnic identity, its manifestations were unique.

Once the association was created, its flag was baptised in a meeting with several priests in attendance and, over the years, various cultural and artistic events were organised not only in Calbor but in numerous other localities in Southern Transylvania. They were not far away from Calbor. For example, less than 10 km away were the localities of Boholț, Băile Rodbav, Cincșor, Făgăraș; between 10–20 km were Cincu, Viștea, Olteț, Merghindeal; and between 20 and 40 km were Bruuiu, Șercaia, Hălmeag, Jibert, Rupea. Alba Iulia (located approximately 140 km from Calbor) was the furthest locality from Calbor where the Neorustic Brotherhood organised events (Neamul Țigănesc, 1934b, p. 2). Those events took place in the form of conferences, speeches, exhortations to the Roma, theatrical performances. Depending on weather conditions and the number of participants, the organisers could rent halls in different localities. The Calbor associates acted as improvised actors. For example, at the event organised in Rupea, one of the actors was Volga Ioan, a horseshoe blacksmith who lived at number 43, in Calbor, and the enthusiastic audience demanded the replay (Neamul Țigănesc, 1934b, p. 2). Such gatherings impressed also with the fact that they made use of a language everybody (including the Romanian audience and notable individuals invited to assist) could understand and sympathise with (conferences, but also patriotic plays).

In September 1934, Naftanailă wrote in retrospect that:

With my society I started to gather the Roma and through parties, balls, theaters, conferences to contribute to their culture and education. We have helped to eliminate alcoholism and other bad habits such as lack of literacy, illegitimate marriages and others. [...] My association organised shows in Făgăraș, Cincul, Cohalm, Jibert, Șercaia, Viștea, Olteț, Boholț, Cincșor, Bruuiu, Merghindeal, Hălmeag, Băile Rodbav. It was played the theatrical piece *The Scouts*, an episode from the battles of Mărășești. [...] We will continue to arrange such productions with theatrical plays, recitations and choirs in the future so that we can rise together to the level of other nations. (Neamul Țigănesc, 1934d, p. 2).

The ideas which animated Naftanailă are clear from the appeal he addressed to “all the Gypsies from Transylvania”, published in February 1934 in the first issue of the newspaper *Neamul Țigănesc*. In order to receive help, they first had to help themselves, which involved developing a sense of unity and pride in their shared ethnic identity:

Who is to protect our rights to life if we do not complain! Who is to help us if we don't help one another! [...] The first step we must take in society, if we want to impose respect and esteem, is not to be ashamed that we are Gypsies! [...] Our pride transforms our mindset and that of the world around us. (*Neamul Țigănesc*, 1934a, p. 1).

Pride had to replace shame, it was argued, which was said to be obtainable in several ways: practising well-rated professions, increased care for health and hygiene, the sedentarisation of nomads, who were also to attend school and church and do military service. He made similar recommendations to the Boyash who, in addition, were urged to:

[...] have a council house in each village, where those who can read and write should read, and others should listen. They have to keep in touch with our society, sending us letters about their sorrows and problems. (*Ibid.*, 1934a, p. 1).

As for the sedentary Gypsies, he urged them not to forget the poor and needy and to make efforts so that their children attend:

[...] higher schools, so that we can prove that the Gypsy nation is trustworthy and that its best sons are not at all inferior to the sons of other nations. [...] Famous doctors, lawyers, officers, engineers, teachers and artists, who honor their profession, came from such families. (*Ibid.*).

In the spring of 1933, AGȚR was established in Bucharest as the first association that aimed to represent all Gypsies in the country. At that time, AGȚR was led by Calinic I. Popp Șerboianu and had G. A. Lăzurică as its General Secretary. Naftanailă was one of the first Gypsies adhering to the newly established AGȚR (already in May 1933) (*Cuvântul*, 1933a, p. 4).

Later, in the fall of 1933, when G. A. Lăzurică left AGȚR and founded his UGRR, Naftanailă preferred, for a while, to remain loyal to Șerboianu. On October 15, 1933, Naftanailă was in Bucharest, where he participated in a meeting organised by Șerboianu, and spoke as the “president of the Gypsies in Făgăraș” (*Dimineața*, 1933b, p. 5).

However, shortly thereafter, he seems to have changed sides, adhering to Lăzurică's movement. In the documents submitted by Lăzurică to the court in November 1933 for UGRR to be recognised as a legal personality, several leaders were named both in Bucharest and in the countryside as leaders of branches, including Lazăr Naftanailă. According to the UGRR statutes, those presidents of branches were also members of the central committee of the UGRR (*Nastasă & Varga*, 2001, doc. 38, pp. 117–125).

Immediately after the establishment of the central organisations in Bucharest (1933–spring 1934), Naftanailă had a certain advantage over them. Although they claimed to represent all the Roma in the country, those organisations were, in fact, based almost exclusively on Bucharest. Most events organised by AGȚR and UGRR took place in Bucharest or in the immediate vicinity of the capital city.

Therefore, those central organisations (especially AGȚR and UGRR) wanted to extend their influence and activity outside Bucharest. To achieve that, they needed first to identify Roma associates in the province and Lazăr Naftanailă seemed perfect. He had already proved that he could organise the Roma, establishing the first organisation in the country with legal personality and organising events those in Bucharest could only announce. In addition, in February 1934, he already published the first issue of *Neamul Țigănesc* (nine months before the publication, in November 1934, of the first issue of *Glasul Romilor*, the first Roma newspaper ever published by an organisation in Bucharest).

All these allowed Naftanailă much room for maneuver, as he could negotiate a better position within the emerging central organisations. On March 2, 1934, an agreement was signed between Lazăr Naftanailă and UGRR, led by G. A. Lăzurică. Basically, in exchange for his affiliation to the UGRR, Naftanailă was recognised as the president of the Roma in Transylvania. In this capacity, he could continue his work to organise the Transylvanian Roma, proposing presidents for County branches which then UGRR was to ratify. The minutes agreed between the UGRR central committee and Naftanailă was signed by the latter as ‘President of Soc[iety] *Înfrățirea Neorustică* and of the Roma Organisation in Transylvanian Counties’ (*Neamul Țigănesc*, 1934e, p. 3).

Afterwards, his position began to erode. The central organisations started to extend their influence also in Transylvania, first by Lăzurică (starting with the spring of 1934) and then by Gh. Niculescu (since the autumn of 1934). Hence, they no longer required Naftanailă’s help, who was, by then, seen merely as the leader of a small, peripheral organisation, without the influence he claimed to have among the Transylvanian Roma. In this context, other Roma from Transylvania were seen to be better positioned to become partners of the central organisations: local officials such as C. Brașoveanu, the architect Andrei Zima, wealthier merchants, etc. In addition, unlike Naftanailă, those new potential leaders could not claim that they had organised the Roma in the past and, therefore, neither could they claim higher positions within the central organisations. From a central perspective, one could better negotiate with them than with Naftanailă.

However, in the summer of 1934, Naftanailă did not seem to have become aware of this. On the contrary, against the background of the disputes between G. A. Lăzurică and Gh. Niculescu, Naftanailă thought that he identified a new favourable moment to claim even more than just the title of leader of the Transylvanian organisations. More precisely, he demanded to be recognised as Vice-President of a central organisation. The occasion deemed appropriate to request this was the great assembly of the Roma in Sibiu on September 9, 1934. This was to be attended also by the leadership of AUGRR, from

Bucharest, with Gh. Niculescu (*Neamul Țigănesc*, 1934c, p.1). However, what occurred in Sibiu was one of the largest Roma gatherings in interwar Romania, with about 3,000 participants, including various Roma leaders (such as the AUGRR leadership, Roma leaders from different counties and regions such as Sibiu, Brașov, Târnava Mare, Făgăraș, Dolj, Prahova, etc.). In essence, given the magnitude of the event, Naftanailă's claim to have established the first Roma organisation in Romania was not necessarily a winning argument. Being one of the many leaders who gave more or less similar speeches in Sibiu (with topics such as the emancipation of the Roma people, equal rights, loyalty to the dynasty, etc.), Naftanailă just got lost in the crowds (Nastasă & Varga, 2001, doc. 57, pp. 155–156). A few weeks later, Lăzurică, Gh. Niculescu's competitor, declared Naftanailă a traitor (as did the other leaders present in Sibiu, in the company of Gh. Niculescu) (*Ibid.*, doc. 65, pp. 164–168). But he was wrong. In fact, Naftanailă did not become a supporter of Gh. Niculescu and, in the autumn of 1934, he even refused to answer the letters sent to him by the latter (*Glasul Romilor*, 1934e, p. 3).

From this point on, Naftanailă's position would continue to weaken both in relation to the central leadership of AUGRR and to the regional leadership in Transylvania. In fact, other Transylvanian Roma leaders were also dissatisfied with the AUGRR leadership but, instead of ignoring it, as Naftanailă did, they chose to act and negotiate. On February 2, 1935, several leaders of the Transylvanian Roma met in Sibiu and decided to act together against the AUGRR leadership, which was accused of neglecting the interests of the Transylvanian Roma. In need of allies, they showed Naftanailă a certain deference, and Andrei Zima, a Roma leader from Blaj, recognised Naftanailă as the first Vice-President, authorising him to act for the further organisation of the Roma.

We do not know how Naftanailă reacted to this offer but based on his ego and initial expectations, he probably perceived it as an insult. What is certain is that, in mid-March 1935, the other Transylvanian leaders went to Bucharest where they negotiated with the AUGRR leadership. As a result, both parts recognised their positions: the AUGRR leadership was no longer disputed, while the local leaders received a certain representation in the AUGRR central committee, a position Naftanailă once also wanted for himself.

A few weeks later, Gh. Niculescu wrote to Naftanailă that he had appointed Andrei Zima from Blaj as the president of the Transylvanian Roma, A. Zurilă from Sibiu as the organising president, and C. Brașoveanu as the Vice-President of Transylvanian Roma. The position assigned to Naftanailă was only that of leader of the Roma in Făgăraș (*Neamul Țigănesc*, 1935a, p. 2). Compared to what had been offered to him earlier, his new position was clearly inferior.

It was getting worse, however. Now there were competitors even for that position, or so it would appear from the April 1935 issue of the newspaper *Neamul Țigănesc*. In short, Naftanailă accused Zurilă, the newly appointed organising president of Transylvania, of fuelling the ambitions of a certain Dodos, a musician from Făgăraș, to replace Naftanailă as leader of the Roma in the County of Făgăraș. More precisely, Naftanailă feared that the

AUGRR wanted to use the congress they were to hold in Făgăraş, until then Naftanailă's undisputed fief, as a pretext to replace him. Consequently, he asked his followers to support him further:

Roma brothers! After fierce battles for 9 years for our awakening, I see today how invited and uninvited persons seek to mislead you so that they become the leaders of this County. Of course, today, after I personally organised and reawakened all the Roma from the County of Făgăraş, [...] the last-minute profiteers come to take the lead of our movement. [...] At their congress in Făgăraş, don't forget to shout to hear me speak or you will be ashamed. Propagate from person to person, from village to village, to defend our rights. (Neamul Țigănesc, 1935d, p. 4).

Another argument invoked by Naftanailă to convince the Roma of his merits was that, until 1935, he had established several local branches in the County (Făgăraş, Gherdeal, Cincu, Șoarș, Grid, Cobor, Bruuiu, Șercaia, Șinca Veche, Ticușu Vechi, Perșani, Șomartin, Bărcuț). (Neamul Țigănesc, 1935b, p. 2). Later, Naftanailă tried to organise other rallies meant to prove that the Roma from Făgăraş were behind him and did not support his rivals. For example, in June 1935, a meeting of the Neorustic Brotherhood society took place in the town of Făgăraş, attended by approximately 1,000 people. The speakers demanded the exemption of musicians from taxes, land, rights for nomads and, very importantly, Naftanailă was proclaimed as the leader of all Roma in the entire County of Făgăraş (Curentul, 1935, p. 8). However, the police report prepared on this occasion was aware of the local disputes between Roma, as it stated that the association represented only a part of the Roma in Făgăraş (Nastasă & Varga, 2001, doc. 86, p. 195). A year later, on June 29, 1936, Naftanailă tried to hold a new meeting in Făgăraş, but without similar success (Cuvântul Făgărașului, 1936, p. 1). Most likely, AUGRR had, in the meantime, managed to double the leading position of the Făgăraş Roma by imposing the more malleable musician Iuliu Dodos.

Despite this, Naftanailă's activity over a long period of time, prior to the emergence of AUGRR, ensured him a certain visibility both in the local press and public opinion, which continued to see him as the real representative of the Roma in the Făgăraş County. This attracted the attention of local politicians, interested in Roma votes. This became visible in 1937, when several elections took place. In June 1937, the Făgăraş press reported that Ilie Floașiu, a Romanian MP from Sibiu and the president of the PNC (National Christian Party, or *Partidul Național Creștin*) organisations in Transylvania, was negotiating with Naftanailă (Gazeta Făgărașului, 1937a, p. 5; 1937b, p. 2). PNC was not the only party at local level interested in the Roma votes. Several other parties competed to obtain their support. In parallel, in the summer of 1937, G. A. Lăzurică and Calinic I. Popp Șerboianu tried to bring together some local leaders from the country. One of them was Naftanailă, who was repeatedly declared as one of their oldest and best friends and collaborators (Țara Noastră, 1937b, p. 4; 1937k, p. 6).

Later, the news about Naftanailă and his association became rarer. In 1939, the sociologist Ion Chelcea had a discussion with him:

Talking to one of their regional leaders, Năftanăilă, you immediately notice their aspirations. He speaks in a radical way, or at least tries to. He would like to see a well-organised Roma nation. But the Boyash hardly respond to this call. The same goes for the nomads. At the moment (1939) they have assemblies, president and controller. Now they are, as they say, “organised”. Consolidation is expected, but, as I say, not everyone answers [positively] to the call. To the question that the Boyash don’t speak the Gypsy language and would not accept to be put in the same pot with the others, Naftăilă shrugs his shoulders. (Chelcea, 1944, p. 170).

In 1939, AUGRR claimed to have 8,002 members in the County of Făgăraş, organised in 9 sub-centres (Potra, 1939, p. 125). Even if we were to accept this number, not all of them had been organised by Naftanailă. Although more visible, his organisational efforts were doubled in the second half of the 1930s by other Roma leaders, such as Dodos or Grigoraş Nucu.

Naftanailă had an ambivalent attitude towards ethnonyms, preferring the terms ‘Neorustic’ and ‘Gypsy’ to ‘Roma’, the latter being perceived as inspired by the central organisations from Bucharest after 1933–1934. In fact, the newspaper of the association was called *Neamul Țigănesc* (The Gypsy Nation). The name ‘Neorustic’ meant ‘new peasant’ and was the echo of the late eighteenth-century Habsburg policy of assimilating the Gypsies. Although an exonym, the term was used in Transylvania to designate the Gypsies and did not have the same negative connotation as ‘Gypsy’. Therefore, to a certain extent, it started to be used for self-designation, as evidenced in the case of Naftanailă’s association. However, as its use was geographically limited to Transylvania, the term was not intelligible in the rest of the country and central organisations, starting with 1933, preferred the term ‘Roma’ (Matei, 2012, p. 56–57).

Interestingly, the newspaper *Neamul Țigănesc* appeared in 1934–1935, relatively late, only 8–9 years after the establishment of the Neorustic Brotherhood. Most likely, Naftanailă needed it as means to promote himself and his organisation in the face of an increasingly strong competition for Roma leadership. In addition to general articles on the Roma movement and activities, the newspaper also reflected Naftanailă’s personal agenda. In fact, issues 2 and 3 appeared at a time when Naftanailă had to mobilise the support of the Făgăraş Roma. These are the September 8, 1934 issue (a day before the meeting in Sibiu, when the Neorustic Brotherhood wanted to address the issue of Naftanailă’s representation in the central committee) and the April 1935 issue (when Naftanailă asked the Roma to support him against his rival Dodos during the congress in Făgăraş).

Unlike other leaders from Bucharest coming to Transylvania (such as Lăzurică and, later, Gh. Niculescu) who tried to convert local Roma to the Orthodox Church, Naftanailă was aware that the Transylvanian Roma were divided between the two “Romanian” (be they Orthodox or Uniate) confessions. Therefore, although Orthodox, Naftanailă knew

he depended on the support he could obtain from both denominations and tried to avoid any Orthodox proselytism that could have alienated the sympathies of the Uniates for his movement.

The Roma uprising movement started within the church because the Roma are, first of all, Christians and within the church they always found relief for their soul estranged by all. In Transylvania, Roma belong to the believers of both ancestral churches, Orthodox and Uniate, and the church leaders starting with His Holiness Patriarch Miron Cristea and his Holiness Metropolitan of the Uniate Church look on our uprising movement with joy and blessings. In the organising activities he carried out, Mr. Lazăr Naftanailă benefitted from the goodwill of all the priests who took part in the Roma meetings and blessed the beginnings of the work carried out by the communal organisations. (Neamul Țigănesc, 1935c, p. 3).

The Neorustic Brotherhood continued to exist after the war but only on paper, and for a short period. In the autumn of 1944, the Făgăraș Gendarmerie Legion recorded, among other societies and associations in the county, also the Neorustic Brotherhood, with Lazăr Naftanailă as president and Silvestru Gula as Secretary. The association had 17 members. Thus far, no documents have been identified to see if and to what extent Naftanailă's organisation continued to function after 1945. However, in late 1948-early 1949, the communist regime abolished even the central organisations in Bucharest, with the result that the Roma were no longer recognised as an ethnic minority until the end of the communist regime in 1989. Lazăr Naftanailă died in Făgăraș in 1968, aged 75, and was buried in Calbor Cemetery (Cârstea, 2017, pp. 18–20).

Calinic I. Popp Șerboianu

Petre Matei

An Orthodox theologian and prolific publicist, Calinic I. Popp Șerboianu (October 16, 1883–February 16, 1941) was also the initiator of the first national Gypsy movement in Romania. In the spring of 1933, he created the *Asociația Generală a Țiganilor din România* – AGȚR (General Association of Gypsies in Romania), the first organisation that aspired to represent all Gypsies in Romania, regardless of their subgroup, language or dialect, profession and religion. Thus, his Association went far beyond the previous socio-professional boundaries of previous Gypsy organisations (which usually limited themselves to representing only Gypsies from rather small geographical areas or members of a particular profession, such as musicians). Șerboianu was a surprisingly complex figure, quite difficult to frame: a graduate of Orthodox Theology, later a monk and even an archimandrite, he manifested himself vocally and critically within the Orthodox Church, thus sabotaging his promising theological career; he later secretly converted to Catholicism and was defrocked by the Orthodox Church. In the 1930s, he officiated

religious services at the Crematorium in Bucharest, a practice condemned at the time not only by the Romanian Orthodox Church (through the synodal decisions of 1928 and 1933), but also by the Catholic Church. Intelligent and capable of speaking several foreign languages, he spent a few years abroad, including in France and the USA and authored numerous articles and books. Şerboianu was also interested in Gypsies, whose language he had learned since childhood, and about whom he had written a book in 1930 (Popp Şerboianu, 1930). Three years later, he tried to organise them, claiming that he was himself a Gypsy. Despite the fact that the AGȚR he created in the spring of 1933 was broken up only a few months later by ambitious dissidents, it represented a model for all the other Roma Associations and Unions which, in effect, would copy its program. Abandoned by most collaborators in the fall of 1933, accused of trying to convert Gypsies to Catholicism, Şerboianu managed to return to the forefront only in 1937, competing with other Roma organisations and publishing a weekly Roma edition of the nationalistic and antisemitic newspaper *Țara Noastră*.

Constantin I. Popescu-Şerboianu (his secular name) was born on October 16, 1883, in the commune of Şerboieni in Argeş County, only 5 kilometres away from the town of Costeşti (a reason the for later confusion concerning his birthplace). Also called Slobozia-Goleşti, the commune had, at the end of the 19th century, 826 inhabitants, two churches, and a school (Lahovari et al., 1902, p. 515). The alternative toponym Slobozia-Goleşti suggests an important Gypsy population originating from the former Gypsy slaves of the important Goleşcu boyar family. However, given the widespread phenomenon of underrepresentation of Gypsies, their actual number cannot be established. For example, according to the 1930 census, out of the 1309 inhabitants of the commune, only 4 declared themselves Gypsies, the rest declaring themselves Romanians (Manuilă, 1938, p. 24). It is very probable, however, that Şerboianu learned the Romani language in his own native commune from his Gypsy neighbours. Şerboianu's family ethnic background was Romanian, not Roma – as sometimes claimed – and practising Orthodox, counting several generations of priests. In fact, Ioan Şerboianu, his father, served as a priest in their native commune (Monitorul Oficial, 1916, p. 10771).

The future initiator of the Gypsy movement attended the Faculty of Orthodox Theology in Bucharest, from which he graduated in 1909 with a bachelor's thesis titled "Ten Sunday Sermons starting with the Sunday of the Publican and Pharisee to the Easter Sunday", published in 1909 (Ştrempele, 1989, p. 1000).

Young, intelligent, and active, Şerboianu seemed to enjoy a successful career. Starting in November 16, 1909, he was appointed deacon of the Romanian Chapel in Paris and remained in this position until July 1910 when, following disagreements with his superior in Paris, he was recalled to Bucharest. This was not necessarily a demotion because he was placed in the daily service of the Church of the Holy Metropolitan (Pocitan, 1940, pp. 146–147) and advanced to the rank of Hierodeacon, a position in which he appeared

in March 1911, officiating religious services, in the presence of senior Orthodox officials such as the Metropolitan-Primate.

The spring of 1911, however, was the turning point in his priestly career. The young hierodeacon got involved in a conflict at the top of the Romanian Orthodox Church between the Metropolitan-Primate Atanasie Mironescu, until then a protector of Șerboianu, and Safirin, the bishop of Roman. The conflict was provoked by the approval, in March 1909, of the law of the Superior Church Consistory, which allowed the state greater control over the church administration. Tensions arose at the top of the Church, with the Metropolitan-Primate supporting the law, and the bishop of Roman attacking and reproaching the Metropolitan-Primate, stating that the latter had supported the law in exchange for the position of Metropolitan-Primate (to which he had just been appointed, in February 1909). Subsequently, the Metropolitan-Primate was accused of plagiarism, immoral life, heresy etc. The conflict worsened, splitting clergy, the Faculty of Theology, students, political life, press, and public opinion. The Metropolitan's opponents demanded that the Synod verify the accusations brought against him. On May 12, 1911, also Calinic Șerboianu rallied against the Metropolitan, submitting a petition to the Holy Synod requesting for a verification of those accusations (*Adevărul*, 1911, p. 3). Șerboianu suffered the first reprisals almost immediately. In the meeting of the Synod on May 16, presided over by the Metropolitan Primate himself, Șerboianu was criticised for false statements and for his behaviour in France. Consequently, the Synod voted to remove Șerboianu from office, and the Ministry of Cults was informed of this decision (*Monitorul Oficial*, 1911, p. 1561).

Finally, given the aggravation of the conflict, the Holy Synod of the Orthodox Church decided, on May 20, 1911, to try both the Metropolitan and the Bishop. The trial lasted a month, with dozens of witnesses, changes of testimony, lawyers, press etc. On June 24, 1911, the Holy Synod acquitted the Metropolitan-Primate and, by unanimous vote, deposed his opponent from the dignity of bishop for rebellion. However, in order to restore peace within the Church, the government exerted pressure for the Metropolitan-Primate to resign (which took place on June 28, 1911) (Beu, 2011, pp. 259–269). Șerboianu's involvement in this conflict against the Metropolitan-Primate exposed him, attracting the hostility of some important people of the Church. From that moment onwards, his career, until then ascending, began to suffer failures, and he obtained only temporary positions within the Church.

In 1913, he was delegated to Cadrilater (Southern Dobruđa), a territory taken over from Bulgaria during the last Balkan War, and in 1914, he tried to enroll in a doctorate at the Faculty of Theology in Bucharest, but his application was rejected. Between 1914 and 1918, he managed to work as a priest at the church of Sf. Ilie Kalinderu in Bucharest, but he was eventually removed from this position under the pressure of the influential Archimandrite Iuliu Scriban (Cernăianu, 1920, p. 378).

In December 1918, Calinic Șerboianu was mobilised in the Romanian army as a priest with the rank of lieutenant in the 1st Roșiori Brigade of the 1st Cavalry Division (Popescu, 1940, p. 140), located at that time in Bessarabia (until then a province of the Russian Empire, but between 1918 and 1940 part of Greater Romania). In November 1918, the 1st Cavalry Division entered Hotin County, whose russified population was hostile to the new regime. As the Romanian regime wanted to win the sympathy of the locals, among other things, the Division provided material support to the peasants, organised canteens, cultural events, courses for adults in communes, etc. Șerboianu proved helpful here. In January 1919, he already founded an adult school in Lipcani where the locals learned to write and speak the Romanian language, receiving notions about the history of Romania. Also in Lipcani, Șerboianu set up a Section of the Cultural League that contacted the Central in Bucharest (Schina, 1938, pp. 46–47). Șerboianu continued to serve in the Romanian army until 1920 (at the beginning of the year he was in Hungary, within the Romanian occupation troops) (Popp Șerboianu, 1930, p. 37).

Once demobilised, Șerboianu was again forced to resort to various expedients. For example, between 1920 and 1921, he taught French, Greek and Latin at the Seminary and High School of Curtea de Argeș. Between 1922 and 1925, his fate seemed again to improve as the Orthodox Church sent him to the USA to do Orthodox missionary work (probably to stop the conversion of the Romanian Orthodox diaspora to other denominations). Once back home, he again had difficulties in making ends meet. Between 1925 and 1927, he served as a priest in Beiu commune and was, for several months, missionary inspector of the Buzău Diocese and taught philosophy at the Ismail Seminary, then spent some time in several monasteries in Oltenia (Stănișoara and Cozia), and between 1927 and 1928, he was editor-in-chief of the newspaper *Cultura Poporului* (Culture of the People), where he wrote mostly religious articles.

Very important was the period between 1928 and 1931, when he made a series of trips abroad, to Italy and France. In fact, during this period, in Paris, he converted to Catholicism and published, in 1930, his book *Les Tsiganes* (The Gypsies) (Popp Șerboianu, 1930). The book was mentioned at the time in many international journals, but often only briefly, without being the subject of actual reviews. In Romania, the few mentions of the book were rather critical. For example, the famous historian Nicolae Iorga criticised Șerboianu for poor historical interpretation, misquotations, use of sources from languages he did not speak (Iorga, 1931, p. 142). The lack of method and rigour, the mixture of legends, folklore, vocabulary and grammar were also criticised (P., 1934, pp. 68–69; Pașca, 1934, pp. 411–13; Iorga, 1934, p. 287). Nothing in the book, however, hinted towards Șerboianu being a future organiser or concerned with the emancipation and rescue of the Gypsies.

Although Șerboianu claimed, in his book, to be a professor at the Uniate College (Greek Catholic) in Blaj, he did not, in fact, hold this position. Returning to Romania, Șerboianu hid his conversion to Catholicism and between 1931 and January 1933, he served as abbot at the Orthodox Monastery in Crasna, Gorj County. In December 1932, the newspaper

Universul noted that Șerboianu, following the publication of his book on Gypsies, was proclaimed an honorary member of the Gypsy Lore Society in London (*Universul*, 1932, p. 5). Shortly afterwards, this news was approvingly reproduced by *Biserica Ortodoxă Română* (the official journal of the Orthodox Church), unaware of his Catholic conversion. However, independently of it, at the end of January 1933, Șerboianu was tried by a local ecclesiastical tribunal attached to the Bishopric of Râmnicu and Noul Severin (*Glasul Romilor*, 1937d, pp. 2–3). He lost his ecclesiastical rank as abbot and was excluded from the Diocese of Râmnicu and Noul Severin. The document did not mention the reason, but most likely it was his conversion to Catholicism (for which he was constantly and quite explicitly attacked since the fall of 1933) and not the homosexuality (as claimed in 1937 by Gh. Niculescu, a rival Roma leader, who was sentenced to suspended imprisonment for this slander).

Shortly thereafter, Șerboianu left Oltenia for Bucharest where, only three months later, he appeared as the initiator of the AGȚR, the first Gypsy association, designed to represent all Gypsies in Romania, regardless of subgroup, dialect or denomination. The reasons why Șerboianu assumed this role remain unclear. It is not at all certain that at the end of January 1933, when demoted by the ecclesiastical tribunal, he thought of organising the Gypsies. Most likely there was a conjuncture that led Șerboianu to this initiative in the coming months. We list several favorable factors: 1) the older interest in Gypsies, increased by the publication of his book and his recognition as a “scholar of the Gypsies”; 2) his conversion to Catholicism and the model offered by Social Catholicism in France; 3) the organisational precedents of the Gypsies, reflected in the press of the time; and obviously, 4) his demotion from the humble church position as abbot he had in a small, rural monastery, far away from Bucharest.

Although Șerboianu was a Romanian, he came from a locality with an important Gypsy presence and his interest in Gypsies was obvious as he learnt their language and wrote about them. Paradoxical, but despite his initial prejudices, the publication of the book contributed to a slow change in his attitude toward Gypsies. He started to be known and recognised as an authority on Gypsies. For a man like Șerboianu, otherwise deprived of the recognition of his merits, forced to resort to various expedients, that recognition must have meant a lot. The fact that the Gypsy Lore Society, described in December 1932 by *Universul*, Romania’s largest daily newspaper, as “the society of London scholars who studied Gypsies” had contacted him, and he had become a member of GLS must have fed his ego and increased his interest in Gypsies. In September 1933, a few months after Șerboianu’s started the AGȚR, a police report on Șerboianu estimated that GLS inspired him to organise the Gypsies (Nastasă & Varga, 2001, doc. 21, pp. 94–99). It is hard to believe that GLS encouraged these new forms of organising and modernising Gypsies, given that, at the time, some GLS members tended, on the contrary, to believe that these movements affected the true identity of Gypsies (tradition, nomadism etc). GLS only increased his general interest in Gypsies.

Șerboianu's conversion to Catholicism and the fact that he had recently witnessed manifestations of social Catholicism in France, interested also in the integration of minorities, may have played a role in Șerboianu's new approach to Gypsies too. Beyond those factors acting slowly, other elements acted directly and immediately.

These were the dismissal of Șerboianu from the position of abbot of a small Orthodox monastery and the fact that the organisational precedents of Gypsies which were reflected in international and Romanian press. While in Bucharest, Șerboianu was able to catch up with various news, including those regarding the Gypsies, such as the April 9, 1933 article in *Adevărul literar și artistic* where a certain G. A. Lăzurică wrote "Gypsy literature" (*Adevărul literar și artistic*, 1933a, pp. 5–6).

The idea of organising the Gypsies appeared, most likely, following Șerboianu meeting with G. A. Lăzurică, his future collaborator and rival. Lăzurică's article from April 9, 1933, promised to contain "Gypsy literature". As Șerboianu was interested in obtaining samples of Roma language and folklore (an older and constant preoccupation for Șerboianu), he contacted Lăzurică. In another article from May 1933, in which Lăzurică recounted the meeting, Șerboianu was not described as a Gypsy, but as a person interested in Gypsies. That discussion exceeded the folklore subject and lasted a few hours (see more on this, including segments of the review, in Lăzurică's portrait in *Adevărul literar și artistic*, 1933b, p. 8).

This consequence-rich meeting took place immediately after April 9th, 1933. Very quickly, only a few days later, news appeared in the press about the establishment in Bucharest of a General Association of Gypsies led by Archimandrite Calinic I. Popp Șerboianu (as President) and the publicist George A. Lăzurică (as Vice-President). The newly established association wanted to organise a large gathering of all the Gypsies and to publish a newspaper written in the Gypsy language. They intended to organise in Bucharest Gypsy cultural events with music, dances, readings of Gypsy literature, conferences on the history, customs and life of Gypsies. Despite the ambitious program, most likely the 'General' Association included only a few people at the time. In fact, it still did not have a headquarters, the Gypsies being invited to send the adhesions to Lăzurică's address (*Universul*, 1933a, p. 6).

In the following weeks there was a rapprochement with *Junimea Muzicală* (Musical Youth), a socio-professional association of the Gypsy musicians in Bucharest founded already in 1927. The committee was to receive the adhesions, to collect the registration fees and to draft the statutes of the association in order to request the recognition of the association as a legal person. As a sign of the gradual institutionalisation, the Association finally had a headquarters that was the same as that of *Junimea Muzicală* (147 Vultur Street), and the correspondence no longer had to be sent as before to Lăzurică's private address.

During the summer of 1933, the Gypsy Association enjoyed a certain attention and even the goodwill of the press, which generally saw the emancipation of the Gypsies

as necessary and welcome, likely to help improve their situation. However, it should be noted that, at the time, the press did not consider Șerboianu as an ethnic Gypsy either. Instead, he was seen as a cleric of the dominant church (imposing respect) whose efforts to organise the Gypsies deserved to be looked upon with encouragement:

Perhaps the slander against the unsettled nation would have continued for a long time, if people in love with the qualities of the Gypsy people had not started an interesting struggle to regenerate the Gypsies. Notable personalities from the music world joined it. Why should the word "Gypsy" be uttered with shame and mockery? [...] But the flag of the revival was raised by a clergyman, by Archimandrite Calinic Popp Șerboianu. [...] The movement that started in our country aims to raise those who do not hide their origin to the dignity of other citizens. It is a mistake that the name "Gypsy" is ridiculed or whispered. That the defects often exceed the qualities, the fault is largely due to their difficult means of subsistence. Forming an association that fights with enthusiasm for their moral upliftment, these born musicians will have a better fate. (*Ilustrațiunea Română*, 1933a, p. 14).

Instead of explicitly denying the 'defects' of the Gypsies, Șerboianu adopted the more pragmatic approach of dismantling them by putting them into a wider context. There were 'defects' but they were not immanent to the Gypsies, but explainable due to the deprivations and the hard life they led and continue to lead. These people must, therefore, be helped to have a better fate and Șerboianu seemed to be convinced that the best way to get there was to organise the Gypsies.

As can be seen, Șerboianu's perspective changed considerably in the three years since his book. In 1933, Șerboianu assumed the role of mediating between the Gypsies and the majority (whose prejudices and stereotypes towards the Gypsies he was aware of as one who had shared them). As an example, on May 17, 1933, Șerboianu published an emotional article about the Gypsy children, dismantling the stereotypes of his readership. Invoking religious reasons as well, he encouraged the readers to offer help to the Gypsies and their children:

This is the Gypsy child from whom everybody's eyes turn away with disgust; who grows up like a weed on deserted places and out of others' rubbish; who does not know Jesus, neither His morals, nor the charity He commanded; who loves all and believes them to be his brethren, but who, like Joseph of the Bible, is cast into the grave and sold by his own brethren whom he has served for centuries in faith and does not question their love. Have pity on this nobody's child and think about him [...] Descend into the swamps and huts in which he lives, where tuberculosis along with other deadly diseases wreak frightening havoc and only then you will realise how many things we have to do for our children with another color for whom they are not guilty. They need advice; a comforting hand; a help; a father and a mother, who, though many still have them, do not know how to give them in due time the spiritual nourishment which all mankind is thirsty for. The church must come down to the huts; the school should value only the smartness; charity needs to be blind, as well as justice. Don't be disgusted! Stick your lips to the foreheads of these little black ones and only then you will you have the right to call yourselves good Christians and Romanians. They are ours! They want to live with us; to overcome with us; to die with us! (*Universul*, 1933b, p. 9).

Șerboianu and his supporters started to organise, convening small meetings in the suburbs of Bucharest. The meetings took place especially on Sundays, were informal, did not require authorisations, and the small number of participants did not attract the attention of the press. However, it is very likely that these meetings contributed to the realisation of an AGȚR program which consisted of two components: 1) cultural (establishment of schools, museums, libraries, publications, cultural centers, scholarships for deserving students) and 2) social (free legal and medical assistance, colonisation of the nomadic Gypsies, elimination of crimes and begging, etc.).

Things changed from the end of August 1933, when the Gypsy gatherings from different suburbs of Bucharest began to have a much greater visibility. While before, the interest of the press was relatively low, everything changed with the spread of the sensational news that the first congress of Gypsies would soon take place in Bucharest with delegates from all over the country coming to elect a supreme leader (Tempo!, 1933a, p. 1). Moreover, on the occasion of the congress, some Romanian personalities would have finally revealed their Gypsy origins. Besides, more than 30,000 Gypsies, many of them intellectuals, officers, artists, etc were said to have already joined the movement. The news was finally sensational enough to draw the attention of the press and the public to the Gypsy movement. The press started to interview Archimandrite Șerboianu and to send reporters to document those gatherings. To give just one example:

Recently, this derided people were awakened to a human conscience as a consequence of the praiseworthy action of Archimandrite Calinic Popp Șerboianu, who set up a General Association of Gypsies in Romania, based in Vultur Street no. 147. The association will soon become a legal entity. [...] Yesterday I saw the kind-hearted Archimandrite Calinic Popp Șerboianu, president of the General Association of Gypsies in Romania. I warmly congratulated him for the beautiful human action he undertakes and asked him for clarification on the purpose of the Association. (Tempo!, 1933a, p. 1).

We reproduce in extenso Șerboianu's answer, because it contains the AGȚR program (which was to be copied by the other Roma associations and unions):

We set up the Association to show everyone that our Gypsy people do not deserve and no longer want to live their lives humiliated and despised, ignored by other people, the archimandrite tells us. Through our action we aim to achieve the following: The publication of a newspaper, the establishment of evening classes for adults, a Gypsy popular university, the establishment of libraries and school museums, kindergartens. Publication of books for enlightenment, in the field of health protection; for leading a good life, the history of the Gypsy people and others. Educational lectures, music, gathering our old songs and all kinds of fairy tales; dance schools for our dances etc., the establishment of scholarships in the country and abroad for deserving students, the establishment of all kinds of workshops for the trades suitable to the nature of our nation and bazaars throughout the country for the sale of various products, the establishment of traveling schools for nomadic Gypsies and their membership in the Association, the establishment of athenaeums, cinemas and cultural centers, helping poor students with books, clothes and food. Social assistance – Schools,

the establishment of a legal assistance for the defense of all those involved in lawsuits. Free medical care for patients and their health checks at home. Free help for all religious needs. The establishment of a large community centre where every poor Gypsy, homeless or not from here, can sleep and eat until he finds a job, the establishment of popular canteens in all the poor neighbourhoods of the Capital and other cities of the country. Establishment of a Gypsy hospital; medical dispensaries for women who gave birth; nursing homes for the disabled; mutual aid societies in the event of death, marriage, damage and the commencement of trade or other occupations; offices for employment; folk baths, school camps, shelters for small children. Land allotment – The council of elders. Perseverance, in all legal ways at the City Hall and other authorities to give us land around the Capital and in every town and village in the country where to build standard houses for the homeless, payable in 20–30 years. The insistence on colonizing [settling down] all nomadic Gypsies, giving them the necessary land in different parts of the country, as the Association is taking full responsibility for their settling down and improvement, eradicating theft and begging. The Association will ensure that any work (agricultural or other) is no longer speculated and will itself make collective agreements according to the laws of the country, supervising compliance with the obligations of both parties, living conditions and hygiene, etc. The organisation in guilds of all categories of workers and their recognition as craftsmen, with the corresponding rights, at the General House of Social Insurance. Establishment of County courts and a Supreme Court to resolve issues related to weddings, divorce, funerals and all kinds of crimes that would dishonor our nation and will be tried by the Council of Elders, led by the respective *vatafi* and according to our tradition. The women are, by right, part of the Association and will be used in all cultural and social assistance works. Those able to read have the same rights as men and can admitted to the Council of Elders, according to the rules to be established. (*Tempo!* 1933a, p. 1).

This increasing visibility attracted the attention of the Police, but also of the Orthodox Church. The Police began to inquire about the association and its agenda. On September 1, 1933, a few days after the meetings held by Șerboianu in the poor suburbs of Bucharest, the Police drew up a report. Only 300–400 Gypsies had joined the Association, most of them from Bucharest and neighbouring counties, but the AGȚR leaders' desire to advertise, coupled with the sensational need of the press, increased their number to 30,000 members. AGȚR was not yet formalised as the members paid only voluntary registration fees between 5–20 lei (until then, only about 2000 lei had been collected in total). The intention of the AGȚR at that time was to raise sufficient funds for the publication of the AGȚR statutes so that, on September 15, 1933, the members of the directory committee could go to the Tribunal to request the recognition of the AGȚR as a legal entity. Questioned by the Police, Șerboianu declared that it was difficult to make propaganda among Gypsies, as the sedentary were too poor, and the nomads, although rich, were reluctant to accept the idea of being organised (Nastasă & Varga, 2001, doc. 21, pp. 94–99). The report noted that, although he perfectly spoke the Gypsy language, Șerboianu himself was not a Gypsy, but only claimed this to gain the trust of the Gypsies and determine them to join the association. Another thing that attracted the attention of the Police was Șerboianu's job as an archimandrite, his position within the Church. When asked, Șerboianu answered evasively that the title of archimandrite was an honorary one,

without saying who granted it to him. The Police insisted and addressed the Chancellery of the Patriarchate, which, at that time, still did not seem to be aware of Şerboianu's real situation (the earlier conversion to Catholicism and even the withdrawal of the title of archimandrite from February 1, 1933):

On whether Father Şerboianu is an archimandrite or not, requesting relations with the Chancellery of the Holy Patriarchy, we were told that he was not "consecrated" in this rank within the Archdiocese of Bucharest, but that he might have been consecrated by the Diocese of Argeş or of the New Severin. Archimandrite Şerboianu, being asked about this, answered evasively, that "the archimandrite" does not constitute a priestly degree requiring a new consecration, but is an honorary degree, without specifying who granted it to him. (Ibid., doc. 21, pp. 94–99).

The Police were becoming suspicious. Şerboianu organised meetings and congresses, but he did not have a clear biography, had come to Bucharest only a few months earlier, had no stable address (as he lived in rent) and his professional situation was unclear. The police continued their investigation while the Central Committee of AGȚR continued its organising activities, and on October 2, 1933, they submitted to the court the statutes and documents, requesting the recognition of the AGȚR as a legal entity (Ibid., doc. 32, pp. 112–113). Most likely at the end of August 1933 the Romanian Orthodox Church in Bucharest learned that Şerboianu was no longer Orthodox due to the information provided by Lăzurică, one of Şerboianu's former close collaborators. Then, the Church did its own internal checks.

After the split from Lăzurică (for more on this, see also Lăzurică's portrait in this chapter) Şerboianu tried to undermine Lăzurică's congress, organised with the financial aid of the Orthodox Church. Initially, he announced that there would be no Gypsy congress on October 8 or that the respective assembly was organised by dubious people. Shortly afterwards, however, realizing that Lăzurică's assembly would still take place, Şerboianu changed his tactics and tried to divert it, by announcing his own large Gypsy assembly on the same day of October 8, 1933 (Cuvântul, 1933b, p. 6.). Unlike Lăzurică's assembly, accused of political and religious machinations, Şerboianu's would have paid attention only to the Gypsies' needs: "We do not fight for politics or for the church, but for our needs, to drive away the darkness and injustice in which we have lived for centuries; beware of those who promise you all the goodness of the earth in order to deceive you and then will give you the sword and religion" (Nastasă & Varga, 2001, doc. 25, pp. 103–104).

Unfortunately for him, Şerboianu had failed to ask the police for a permit, and his meeting announced for October 8 was banned. Faced with the accomplished fact, Şerboianu announced the postponement of the meeting by a week, for October 15:

At the same time, [the Association of Gypsies in Romania], under the presidency of Archimandrite C. Pop-Şerboianu, convened a meeting in the Ionică Pandele Hall in Teiul Doamnei Street (Tei), to prove that the Gypsies remain loyal to the old association. Several hundred Gypsies had gathered in the street, but the assembly could not be held because

the proper authorisation had not been obtained in advance. Father Pop-Șerboianu spoke in the street to the crowd and announced a new meeting for next Sunday, in the same place. (Dimineața, 1933a, p. 5).

That was a missed opportunity. The large number (hundreds) of Gypsies coming to Șerboianu's gathering, was comparable, if not higher, with that of the Roma coming to Lăzurică's gathering. Between the two rival associations there was still a certain balance which shortly thereafter was lost in favor of Lăzurică's UGRR. The fact that, on the same day, Lăzurică's supporters were able to freely meet showed an imbalance between the two movements. Gypsies/Roma were able to see which organisation was more viable, enjoying the legitimising support of authorities. In terms of visibility, Lăzurică stole the show and the press wrote exclusively about him and his assembly. Being the first, he satisfied the readers' need for sensation. By comparison, Șerboianu was left in the shadows. Lăzurică continued the campaign to denigrate Șerboianu and for this he also made use of the older church rulings against Șerboianu. For example, on October 8, he told his partisans that "the Gypsies were misled by the priest Calinic Șerboianu and reads documents showing that the said priest was expelled from the Diocese of Râmnicu, where he was abbot at the Crasna monastery, and that he also lost the rank of archimandrite" (Cuvântul, 1933c, p.2).

After October 8, Lăzurică wanted to make sure that Șerboianu's room for maneuver shrinks even more. In parallel with his public actions, Lăzurică addressed the authorities. Immediately after the congress, on October 9, 1933, Lăzurică addressed the Police, accusing Șerboianu of being an impostor. To support his position, Lăzurică invoked the Orthodox Church support for his own movement:

For this reason, the Holy Patriarch recognised me as the leader of the Roma and even intervened in an address to you, to authorise the congress I had organised for October 8, so you approved the holding of this congress and the assembly applauded you for your gesture. In my action to emancipate my fellow people, in the cultural, social and spiritual field, I am considered by the Patriarch of Romania and the Central Church Council as a missionary among the Roma people, protecting them from any conspiracy or subversive attempts by people hostile to our morals and the Orthodox Church. (Nastasă & Varga, 2001, doc. 29, pp. 108–109).

As for Șerboianu, he was declared an impostor, and his movement was delegitimised by the accusation that he initiated it only to pursue hidden goals such as the Catholicisation of Gypsies:

This priest is neither an archimandrite, as he claims, nor has he the moral quality to become the leader of the Roma, for the following reasons: I accuse him of being an enemy of our Orthodox Church by selling himself to the Catholic Church, to which he promised to attract the Gypsies to this religion in exchange for a subsidy and other material insurance. [...] The diocese of Vâlcea demoted him from the rank of archimandrite on February 1, 1933, expelled him from the leadership of the Crasna Monastery and excluded him from the ranks of this

diocese for serious deviations from morals and his teachings as an Orthodox priest. The Patriarch and the Central Church Council consider him an excommunicated, disturbing and dangerous element, having evidence of his subversive action and acts of immorality. (Ibid., doc. 29, pp. 108–109).

Interestingly, Lăzurică could make use of some internal documents of the Orthodox Church such as the ruling of February 1, 1933. Another proof of the cooperation between Lăzurică and the Church at the time can be seen in the fact that Lăzurică asked the prefect of the Capital Police to appeal to the Church for checking his accusations: “If you don’t believe my accusations, I am authorised to encourage you to address the Central Church Council of the Romanian Patriarchate [...] to confirm my words” (Ibid.). Given all that, Lăzurică asked the Capital Police to forbid the assembly announced by Şerboianu for October 15, 1933:

This priest announces in the media that he will hold the assembly at any cost on October 15. [...] For this reason, I respectfully ask you to not authorise the Sunday assembly, organised by Father Calinic Şerboianu [who] is trying to disturb and plot against our church and state. He can be asked to prove [...] what his situation is, what he lives on, where he lives, where he serves and if he is currently an official servant of our church. He is not even a Gypsy! (Ibid.).

Such interventions are likely to have had the expected effect. Although Şerboianu had addressed the Police for the authorisation of the new assembly, he had not yet received it until October 14, a day before it was supposed to occur. Obviously, this could affect the organisation of the assembly. On October 14, Şerboianu addressed the Ministry of the Interior:

Please arrange for us to be given the authorisation for a meeting of the members of the General Association of Gypsies in Romania, to be held on Sunday, October 15. C.Y, 9 a.m., in the <Ionică Pandele> hall in 48 Teiul Doamnei Street (Tei), where we will discuss the purpose, statutes and program of the Association. I mention that on Sunday, October 8, C.Y. we wanted to hold a meeting there, but we were stopped by the police because we didn’t know we needed an authorisation. I also made a request to the Police, but we have been constantly postponed until today. We want people from the State Security to be sent to listen to everything that is being said. (Ibid., doc. 33, p. 113).

In fact, a favourable opinion had already been given within the Police of the Capital on 13 October 1933 on the grounds that such an assembly would be useful for the Gypsies to be clarified also regarding the aims of the AGȚR:

[...] the Gypsies are not yet fully clear on the purpose of the Association and are hesitant to join one of the two presidents, claiming these positions without a prior general meeting of the founding members and without finalizing the legal forms. Therefore, as some of the Gypsies will meet on Sunday, October 15, to clarify, we are of the opinion that it should be approved.. (Ibid., doc. 32, pp. 112–113).

However, the Police of the Capital gave the formal approval very late, only on October 14, when it was also communicated to Șerboianu. The late answer can probably be explained by Șerboianu's very last minute intervention directly at the Ministry (Ibid., doc. 34, p. 114).

On October 15, 1933, Șerboianu could finally organise the respective assembly in which also Lazăr Naftanailă, the leader of the Gypsies from Făgăraș, participated. Șerboianu's assembly did not enjoy the attention of the press as it used to happen before. The press recorded the event only briefly. While Lăzurică and his supporters claimed that the breakup of Șerboianu was due to his intention to convert the Gypsies to Catholicism and that Șerboianu was not a Gypsy, Șerboianu's adherents claimed that Lăzurică, on the contrary, initiated the breakup to exploit the Roma for political purposes:

There are also some bad people, serving different politicians, who seek to deceive our nation; [...] These wicked people shamelessly accuse our Association and the energetic priest who leads us of all kinds of insults and slanders. (Ibid., doc. 25, p. 103).

More precisely, Lăzurică was accused of trying to have the Gypsies become members of Octavian Goga's National Agrarian Party, thus securing a deputy mandate and communal councilor positions in Bucharest for his main collaborators (Ibid., doc. 30, p. 110). On the accusations that Șerboianu was not a Gypsy, he started to publicly assume that he was in fact a Gypsy:

The good God wanted that at the time He found fit to send us a savior in the person of the Archimandrite priest Calinic I. Popp Șerboianu, of Gypsy origin, who understands the sufferings of his people, does not abandon them but wants to guide them on the road of civilisation, of pure aspirations that are protected from the poison of base politics so that the name [Gypsy] will be spoken with respect, and not with contempt". (Ibid., doc. 25, p. 103–104).

Besides, Șerboianu's partisans responded similarly, by accusing Lăzurică of not being a Gypsy (Cuvântul, 1933d, p. 2). In parallel, at the request of AGȚR to obtain the quality of legal person, the consulted authorities tended to be reserved. Thus, on November 5, 1933, a note from DGP appreciated that Șerboianu, the president of AGȚR:

[...] does not have a permanent residence and, from the information collected and reported to this Directorate, has nothing to do with the clergy, although he unfairly claims to be an archimandrite, he is not of Gypsy origin but only pretends to be in order to achieve the proposed goals; [...] Although the aims of the association are quite beautiful and well-grounded, its initiator and leader Calinic I. Popp Șerboianu, having the situation shown above, and besides having the tendency to convert the Gypsies to the Uniate Church, we suggest a refusal of the required favorable opinion for this association to become a legal person. (Nastasă & Varga, 2001, doc. 36, pp. 116–117).

Within a month, Șerboianu lost the leadership of the Gypsy movement in favour of a more skillful G. A. Lăzurică. He was deserted by numerous collaborators, including Gh.

Lache, the General Secretary of AGȚR, who followed Lăzurică. The same happened with the few leaders of the Gypsies in the province already active in AGȚR. For example, Lazăr Naftanailă from Făgăraș attended the meeting of October 15, 1933 as an ally of Șerboianu, but a few weeks later he too was among Lăzurică's supporters. One should not overestimate the support offered to Șerboianu by the so-called Oltenia Circle of AGȚR (around Marin I. Simion and Aurel Manolescu-Dolj). This was superficial and lasted a short time (until the spring-summer of 1934, when they also formalised their transition to other central organisations).

Left by his supporters and without resources, Șerboianu had to reorient himself. The solution he found was the Crematorium in Bucharest. The cremationist movement in Romania had reported some success, despite opposition from the Romanian Orthodox Church. For example, the number of those cremated in Bucharest tended to increase: 1928 – 262, 1929 – 274, 1930 – 270, 1931 – 360, 1932 – 468, 1933 – 602, 1934 – 580, 1935 – 480, 1936 – 364, 1937 – 581 persons (Biserica Ortodoxă Română, 1933, p. 494; Rotar, 2014, p. 518) The Holy Synod of the Romanian Orthodox Church decided on June 15, 1928 to forbid any kind of religious service for those who were cremated and repeated this ban in September 1933 as it ruled that the Orthodox priests violating this ban would be barred from any priestly activity and be severely sanctioned within the Church (Biserica Ortodoxă Română, 1934, p. 561). Despite interdictions (or maybe exactly because of them) Șerboianu became a supporter of cremation, writing articles where he invoked biblical arguments in its support. Besides, in February 1935, for the first time in a Romanian crematorium, Șerboianu conducted a religious service for a person cremated (*Tempo!* 1935, p. 1). Others followed in the years to come. This shocked the Orthodox clergymen and many others. Articles were published asking for urgent measures to be taken against the priest who dared to disrespect the decision of the Holy Synod of the Orthodox Church.

His involvement in the Gypsy movement went into standby. However, even if AGȚR no longer functioned effectively, the appeal launched by Șerboianu in August 1933 continued to serve as a model and inspiration. For example, in the summer of 1934, the Roma of Sibiu launched a call for the organisation, on September 9, 1934, in Sibiu of a large gathering of Roma. They copied most of Șerboianu's appeal and, as a sign that they were not too concerned about the disputes of the Roma leaders in Bucharest, they mentioned all of them (Calinic I. Popp Șerboianu, G. A. Lăzurică and Gh. Niculescu) as presidents of UGRR (Nastasă & Varga, 2001, doc. 55, pp. 152–153 and doc. 73, pp. 177–178). On August 6, 1934, Lăzurică asked the Patriarchate to intervene so that the Police would investigate “those who signed and disseminated the attached manifesto, which includes as president of the Union the alleged Archimandrite Calinic I. Popp Șerboianu, because the Union denies having any knowledge of these signatures or any connection with this person.” (Ibid., doc. 54, p. 151–152).

In addition, Lăzurică, who was in conflict with the Niculescu brothers, also asked the Patriarchate to withdraw the missionary cards granted to them. As a result, on September 7, 1934, the Patriarchate conformed and asked the Police for explanations

regarding the respective manifestos (Ibid., doc. 54, pp. 151–152). In reality, there was no rapprochement between the three associations: 1) AGȚR (Șerboianu), UGRR (Lăzurică) and AUGRR (Gh. Niculescu). Their leaders hated one another, but Lăzurică was disliked more, by both Șerboianu (who could not forgive his betrayal in the fall of 1933), and Gh. Niculescu (who, although he had forced Lăzurică in May 1934 to resign, continued to feel threatened by Lăzurică's competition). Lăzurică tried to approach Șerboianu again, but was refused. In September 1934, eager to take revenge, Șerboianu sent a letter with compromising documents about Lăzurică to the Niculescu brothers. Lăzurică did not leave it unanswered and a few weeks later, in Rădăuți, launched manifestos in which he considered the other Roma leaders to be traitors (including brothers Niculescu and Calinic Șerboianu, the latter being described as “the infamous leader Calinic Șerboianu, former priest, now defrocked for deeds unworthy of a church servant”. (Ibid., doc. 65, pp. 164–168).

As for the Niculescu brothers, they attacked both Șerboianu and Lăzurică. For example, on March 3, 1935, at a meeting with the Roma in the city of Ploiești, Gh Niculescu said that Lăzurică was a swindler and was removed, “because in union with priest Șerboianu from the Patriarchate, now fired, he had written a letter to the Pope in Rome, that one million Roma are converting to Catholicism, even though they are baptised Orthodox”. (Ibid., doc. 78, p. 182).

On March 26, 1935, a year and a half after the application was submitted, AGȚR finally received the status of legal person (Țara Noastră, 1937a, p. 4). Once this status was obtained, Șerboianu was likely to believe he still had chances to reorganise the Roma. A few days later, on March 31, 1935, a meeting of the Roma took place in Caracal, at which one of the speakers read to those present a manifesto “received from Archimandrite Șerboianu showing the duty of each member to society”. (Nastasă & Varga, 2001, doc. 79, pp. 184). The recognition of AGȚR as a legal person in March 1935 was too little, too late as the other Roma associations were already firmly established. An April 1935 report by the Police, which reviewed the efforts to organise the Roma, considered that “Archimandrite Șerboianu, being abandoned by those who gave him their support up to a point, is no longer active and due to the influence of the Patriarchate – in favour of Lăzurică – he was excluded from this movement” (Ibid., doc. 80, p. 188). AGȚR did not matter anymore. Practically, during this period, Șerboianu's main activity no longer concerned the Roma movement, but the cremationist one.

Later, starting with the summer of 1937, for a few months, Șerboianu once again managed to become active in the Roma movement, that time in alliance with Lăzurică, his older collaborator and rival. The common enemy was AUGRR, the stronger rival organisation led by the Niculescu brothers and supported by the PNL (the ruling party), and the Orthodox Church. As Șerboianu and Lăzurică did not have sufficient material resources to support their organisation, they had to identify partners willing to offer help. The context became favourable in 1937, a year with several rounds of elections. Lăzurică and Șerboianu allied with the opposition National-Christian Party (PNC), led by Octavian

Goga and A. C. Cuza. Goga and Cuza provided Șerboianu and Lăzurică with the newspaper *Țara Noastră* (which appeared during the summer of 1937 in a special weekly edition for the Roma), promised places on the electoral lists and, obviously, expected in return the Roma votes.

During this period, Șerboianu published in the Roma edition of *Țara Noastră* numerous articles, covering various themes (mostly religious, but also political, medical, literary, Roma folklore collected from informants of various subgroups). He justified the collaboration with the PNC by the need to get some support because the previous collaborations with other parties had not led to anything, as they did not respect the promises made to the Roma. Like Lăzurică, Șerboianu borrowed the nationalist and anti-Semitic rhetoric from the PNC. They argued that the Roma are not a treacherous minority, like the others, but rather a group loyal to the Romanians:

For five years we have struggled to realise our program, appealing to all the competent forums and to all the representatives of the political parties, without being listened to. The political parties we addressed asked for our votes and promised us that they would help us achieve our goals only after the Roma would give them their votes [...] But after they were given the votes, this [national liberal] party closed its doors to us [...] We realised that without the support of a Romanian party, benevolent towards the social and civic purpose of the Roma in Romania, we cannot achieve the desires of our fellow human beings. We addressed the National-Christian Party, which you lead. And you convinced yourselves that the Roma in Romania value more than the minorities that hate this country, because the Roma are assimilated to the Romanian element, they are Christians, modest citizens, who, despite having certain defects – surpassed by the prevailing qualities – that can be removed in time through a patient education. [...] We will not allow 125,000 Roma voters to be at the discretion of parties that buy votes with money and brandy, which deceive our fellows with empty promises. [...] We will give deadly blows to our opponents and we will succeed in making the Roma worthy fighters who will shout: – Romania for the Romanians! (*Țara Noastră*, 1937h, p. 1).

In 1937, Șerboianu presented himself as the president of AGȚR (which had acquired legal personality in 1935) and obviously raised claims to the leadership of the Roma, accusing the rival leaders of AUGRR of using the Roma movement in order to get rich, swindling the Roma. The Niculescu brothers and their partisans replied in their newspaper *Glasul Romilor* from July 25, 1937, by accusing Șerboianu and Lăzurică of not being Roma and consequently of being interested only in exploiting them: “two ridiculous nullities who claim to be the mentors of the Roma people [...] in conflict with honor and morals and who have nothing in common with the Roma people, whose sons they’re not” (*Glasul Romilor*, 1937b, p. 2). As for Șerboianu, he was attacked not so much for his intention to convert the Roma, but for his alleged homosexuality:

A squinted, red-bearded individual, who, protected by his monastic robe and appearances, indulges in the most degrading vice, messing with men, often with young boys, whom he seduces by perverting them to satisfy his sadistic desires. This male bitch gives himself the

pompous title of: Archimandrite Calinic I. Popp-Șerboianu, abbot of the monastery, a title he no longer has since 1933, when he lost it precisely because of the sinfulness in which he indulged in the monastery. (*Glasul Romilor*, 1937d, pp. 2–4).

Șerboianu and Lăzurică decided to sue the Niculescu brothers for slander and addressed the prosecutor's office. More precisely, Șerboianu wrote:

[...] they permitted themselves to publish false statements against me, concerning my private life, my professional activity and my personal honor, which, if true, would expose me to criminal or disciplinary prosecution, or to public contempt. [...] In the same newspaper *Glasul Romilor*, they insult me that I am blind, poor, red-bearded, and even if they were true, I am not responsible for these defects". (*Țara Noastră*, 1937i, p. 2).

Subsequently, in March 1938, the court sentenced the two Niculescu brothers to one month of correctional imprisonment with the suspension of their sentence (*Cuvântul*, 1938, p. 13). At that time, however, Șerboianu could not take advantage of his favourable decision because he was no longer active in the Roma movement.

Șerboianu provided most of the articles published on the religious page of the Roma edition of *Țara Noastră*. These were usually Sunday sermons each containing also a small fragment dedicated to the Roma. For example, in the sermon "Healing of a paralytic [at Bethesda]" from July 25, 1937, Șerboianu wrote:

My Roma brothers! [...] If you have sinned until now, do not despair: God forgive all your sins, if you are sorry for what you have done hitherto; if you repent every day and if you decide to change your behavior and become a new man, as if you were born today. [...] When you feel weakened by sin, hated by people, and forsaken by friends, pray unceasingly to God, and you will see how power from above descends to you; how you feel differently and how you take courage and love for the real life. Remember: if you are in great danger or forsaken by all people, pray only to God; ask for the help from our Lord Jesus and He will immediately descend into your soul; he will strengthen you and be your best friend. (*Țara Noastră*, 1937f, p. 4).

The sermons were accompanied by small Romani translations of the biblical passages inspiring that sermon. Except for the short passages addressed to the Roma, the respective sermons were very similar in style to the articles published by Șerboianu in 1927–1928, in *Cultura Poporului*. Most likely, many of them were recycled and adapted. Apart from such relatively neutral sermons, Șerboianu and Lăzurică also signed articles favourable to the Catholic Church and critical of the Romanian Orthodox Church. At first, they tried to save appearances, dodging Niculescu's questions regarding political and religious sympathies. They answered clearly about their political sympathies:

We have found it appropriate today, when there is a struggle between Romanians and Christians against the Judeo-Communists, that the policy that we must do is Nationalist-Christian without becoming party members. So, we sympathise with the National-Christian Party."

However, to the question “What is their faith: Orthodox or Catholic?” they answered evasively only with: “Our faith is truly Christian, more Christian than that of the pagan Niculești. (Țara Noastră, 1937j, p. 5).

The effort required to publish the Roma edition of *Țara Noastră* was considerable, apparently exceeding the financial possibilities of both Șerboianu and Lăzurică. Already on July 25, 1937, they declared that the first two issues cost them 20,000 lei in just two weeks. They demanded support from Roma readers to subscribe to the newspaper, thus supporting its appearance (Țara Noastră, 1937g, p. 2).

In September 1937, the last issue of the Roma edition of *Țara Noastră* appeared. Thereafter, little is known about Șerboianu’s role within the Roma movement. Unlike Lăzurică who remained involved in the PNC electoral campaign in the fall and winter 1937/1938, organising meetings with the Roma from Vlașca and Craiova, launching new anti-Semitic tirades etc, nothing similar is recorded about Șerboianu. In February 1938, King Carol II of Romania dismissed the government led by Octavian Goga, and a restrictive Constitution was soon issued. The parties were disbanded, as were many politically affiliated organisations. Given the recent involvement in the PNC’s election campaign, Șerboianu’s organisation was affected by these bans (unlike the organisation of the Niculescu brothers, which continued to function). At the beginning of March 1938, the newspaper *Timpul* of the Roma from Craiova announced a collaboration with Lăzurică and Șerboianu, but this did not materialise either, as this newspaper also ceased to exist shortly after (*Timpul*, 1938b, p. 1). Șerboianu’s involvement with the Roma was discontinued. For the few years left until he passed away, Șerboianu continued to work at the Crematorium.

Șerboianu died in February 1941 (most probably February 16th, 1941), at the age of 58, and was buried on the 19th of February in the Bellu cemetery in Bucharest. His burial (and not his cremation, as he had preached until then) was perceived by some Orthodox clergymen as a blow to the cremation partisans:

It is good that at least on his deathbed he had some conscience, to be buried in a Christian manner. [...]. Whether God will forgive him or not, only God knows, but we are glad that the members of the crematorium received a fatal blow, by having Calinic Șerboianu buried at the cemetery. [...] The moral foundation was crushed for the partisans of the crematorium as their most important members refuse to be cremated after death” (*Glasul Monahilor*, 1941, p. 4).

In 1948, however, his remains were exhumed and cremated (Bezviconi, 1972, p. 80).

Șerboianu was rediscovered only after 1989. The fall of communism in Romania determined several changes that allowed his rediscovery: 1) the Roma were recognised as an ethnic minority and began to re-organise; 2) the state gave up the anticlerical attitude manifested by the communist regime; 3) The Orthodox Church was confronted with an increasing conversion of Roma (until then predominantly Orthodox) to neo-Protestant

denominations. Therefore, various actors (Roma, Orthodox Church, cremationists) in need for precedents, began to refer to Șerboianu. In doing so, they tend, however, to reduce his complex personality to the elements that suit each specific agenda.

For example, in recent years the Cremation Society *Amurgul* (The Dawn) began to appreciate Șerboianu for his involvement during the 1930s in favor of cremation. Under the auspices of this association, some articles by Șerboianu in favour of cremation were recently republished, a Facebook page with Șerboianu's name was created that keeps posting, among other things, excerpts from his articles. His involvement in the Roma movement is mentioned in passing, but his conversion to Catholicism is treated superficially, arguing that, in fact, he remained Orthodox. Given that, in recent years, there has been a growing interest in cremation, the tendency is to attribute to Șerboianu the intention to reduce the so-called venality of the Orthodox priests (accused of being interested in maintaining burial as opposed to cremation only to ensure various benefits due to the performance of religious services regarding the body and burial) (Adevărul, 2017).

The Romanian Orthodox Church has recently tried to get closer to the Roma Orthodox believers. The Romanian Orthodox Church's efforts derive from its need to defend itself from recent attacks arguing that the Church had benefited from Gypsy slavery in the Middle Ages, as well as to diminish the impact of more recent conversions of Roma Orthodox believers to other (mostly neo-Protestant) denominations. As to the discourse of the Orthodox Church, Șerboianu appears mainly as an Orthodox priest, organiser of the Roma, one of the personalities of the Orthodox Church who were involved in improving the condition of the Roma. His conversion to Catholicism, cremationist beliefs and even his defrocking within the Orthodox Church are not usually mentioned.

The Roma movement does not and probably will not pay special attention to Șerboianu. There are several reasons for it: the current Roma identity discourse emphasises the Holocaust, not the interwar Roma movement, Șerboianu was not a Roma, but a Romanian, he preferred the ethnonym 'Gypsy' over 'Roma' and, in 1937, he wrote anti-Semitic articles.

Gheorghe A. Lăzurică

Raluca Bianca Roman

Gheorghe A. Lăzurică (1892 – ?), also known as Gheorghe A. Lăzăreanu-Lăzurică, George Lăzurică, Lăzărescu-Lăzurică or Lăzărică, was a key promoter of the Roma civic emancipation process in Romania during the interwar period. Alongside archimandrite Calinic I. Popp Șerboianu, he first became active in one of the earliest Roma organisations in the country, the General Association of Gypsies in Romania (*Asociația Generală a Țiganilor din România* – AGȚR), established in 1933. As both portraits highlight, the relationship between Lăzurică and Șerboianu would, in fact, contour many of Lăzurică's

views and actions, both in conjunction and in conflict with the latter. While an initial collaborator of Șerboianu, and active in the setting up of AGȚR, Lăzurică would soon break from the latter to set up the General Union of Roma in Romania (*Uniunea Generală a Romilor din România* – UGRR), only to rejoin him later in a renewed AGȚR. These shifts and moves across organisations, as well as the fluctuating alliances (political and otherwise) he would create during his activism career, emphasise the ways in which Lăzurică sought to promote his views concerning Roma civic emancipation by seeking partnership with different actors and institutions in the country, which he saw as aiding his cause. Lăzurică was also one of the key Roma activists in the country to plead for the changing of the name *țigani* (Gypsies) to that of Roma, both in official documents and everyday practice, as well as for the sedentarisation of nomadic Gypsies. Furthermore, especially during his work within the UGRR, he supported and advocated the conversion of Roma to Orthodoxism, becoming a missionary of the Orthodox Church. While little is known about his biographical data, his work during the interwar period, his publications in key Roma newspapers of the time (such as *Țimpul*, *Țara Noastră*), as well as his articles published in mainstream Romanian newspapers (such as *Adevărul literar și artistic*), offer sufficient information to paint his overall portrait, illustrating his contribution to the overall Roma movement in the country during the 1930s.

Though exact information on his birth date and early life remains limited at this stage, G. A. Lăzurică is thought to have been born in 1892 (Williams, 2007, p. 23). He was a graduate of the Higher School of Commerce and, before his work in the field of Roma emancipation, he worked in the storage of wood, in partnership with his brother. While he was presented as coming from a family of *lăutari* (Gypsy musicians) in some mentions from the foreign press (Le Journal, 1936, p. 4), there is little to no information about this in other sources. Likewise, while some international press sources also seem to have presented him as a poet (Belfast Telegraph, 1936; Glas naroda, 1936, p. 3), it is unclear to what extent Lăzurică actually published any poetry. None of the poems published in Roma newspapers of the interwar period can, however, be attributed to Lăzurică. What is clear is that Lăzurică published sporadically, especially during the interwar period of time, which included not only Roma periodicals of the time but Romanian mainstream newspapers as well. From 1933 onwards, for instance, he wrote several reviews and articles in the Romanian national press, including *Adevărul literar și artistic* (Literary and Artistic Truth) (1933a, 1933b). One of the reviews published included, as we shall see later, Calinic I. Popp Șerboianu's book *Les Tsiganes* (1930), which also describes the first meeting between the two activists of the interwar Roma movement. He was also a contributor to two Roma newspapers during the interwar period, *Țara Noastră* (Our country, Bucharest) and *Țimpul* (The Time, Craiova) and his name appeared in several newspapers from outside Romania, including in one poem from Bessarabia, which appears to have been dedicated to him (*Viața Basarabiei*, 1935, p. 24). This points to the fact that Lăzurică's name reached beyond the borders of the country, even if often as a curiosity or as a means of information dissemination about Roma in Romania.

In terms of his work for the process of Roma civic emancipation in the country, most notably, G. A. Lăzurică cooperated with Șerboianu towards the establishment of AGȚR, in April 1933, of which he was a General Secretary. The relationship Lăzurică would forge with Șerboianu is especially relevant here in highlighting some key aspects of Lăzurică's work and career as part of the Roma civic emancipation movement, and an emphasis is placed on the shifts between the two. In fact, the moves from collaboration to conflict, to reconciliation, also reflect the overall tensional context within which relationships between leaders of the Roma movement during interwar Romania were played out and how visions for the future of the Roma community were presented. It is unsurprising thus that, for instance, the programme of the UGRR would mirror almost exactly that initially laid out by AGȚR, of which Lăzurică had been a part of (in collaboration with Șerboianu).

An interesting aspect to explore, in this context, is Lăzurică's first contact and collaboration with Șerboianu, one which would jumpstart the founding of the AGȚR, with Popp Șerboianu as President and Lăzurică as Secretary, as well as the gradual erosion of their relationship. Information on this matter is sparse, but snippets of Lăzurică and Șerboianu's first meeting can be found, for instance, in a review of Șerboianu's book, published in the *Adevărul literar și artistic*, in 1933. Given its significance both to the shaping of the movement itself and the content which points to the different views concerning the Roma population in the country, below is a translation of key segments from the aforementioned article:

My letter and the short story signed by me and published in the "Adevarul Literar" of April 9th C[urrent] Y[ear], captured the attention of the archimandrite Calinic I. Pop Șerboianu, 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 – Ethnographique – Linguistique – 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 "Dimineața", which in the issue of December 11, 1929, expressed interest in the work of Archimandrite Calinic Șerboianu, the Romanian press did not pay any attention to it. [...]

His Holiness, Archimandrite Calinic I. Popp Șerboianu, a sympathiser of Gypsies, 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. 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 [...]

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.

It is a pity that the 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. (*Adevărul literar și artistic*, 1933b, p. 8).

This review was published just after the first meeting between the two leaders of the Roma movement and, potentially, prior to the official setting up of AGȚR. While there had been some organisational activities in mid-April 1933, immediately after the first meeting, nothing had yet been formal or official. The review reveals several elements concerning the relationship that would develop between these two key figures in the Roma emancipation movement in Romania. Firstly, Lăzurică points out to the limited interest the Romanian press had in the book published by Șerboianu. This is undoubtedly true, as one of the few reviews of the book was also a critical one (Iorga, 1934, pp. 68–69). Another point in the review also concerns the usage of the term ‘Gypsies’ instead of ‘Roma’. As mentioned above, Lăzurică would eventually plea for the usage of the latter as opposed to the former when referring to the Roma community in Romania and published several articles connecting his argument to alleged historical reasons (Timpul, 1937a, p. 1). Yet, at this point, it seems Lăzurică had not yet fully formed his view on this matter (or expressed it in this manner). Moreover, he had also published another article in the same newspaper, *Adevărul literar și artistic* (1933a, pp. 5–6), titled *When the Watchmen Guarded*, where he openly declared himself a ‘Gypsy’ and stated:

I’m not ashamed to say that I am a Gypsy, much like so many great musicians and industrialists from Hungary, Poland, Czechoslovakia and Italy, who are of the same race as me.” (Ibid., p. 5).

Furthermore, in the article above, Lăzurică appears grateful to Șerboianu for his interest expressed in ‘the Gypsies’. In other words, at this stage, in April 1933, G. A. Lăzurică did not yet have any problems with Șerboianu not being a ‘Gypsy’ or using the term ‘Gypsies’ in his work. In fact, on May 3, 1933, a provisional committee of the future General Association of the Gypsies in Romania was set up, having Șerboianu as president and G. A. Lăzurică as Secretary.

It was only a few months later, in September–October 1933, that Lăzurică began attacking Șerboianu for being a non-Roma, and gradually adopted the term ‘Roma’ in the publications he would put out. In September 1933, Lăzurică also started his own General Union of Roma in Romania with the support of the Romanian Orthodox Church and began attacking Șerboianu as being a traitor of the Orthodox church.

What is also relevant here is that, seemingly, during this first meeting between G. A. Lăzurică and Calinic I. Popp Șerboianu, some snippets of a possible future conflict could nevertheless be detected. This could be seen, for instance, in the different views regarding the number of Roma present in Romania. In the *Les Tsiganes*, Șerboianu included a total amount of 300,000 Gypsies which were said to be living in Romania

while Lăzurică reproached him, arguing that the number was much higher, estimated by him to be at around 800,000. In reply, Șerboianu admitted that he did not want to “advertise Romania” as the country in Europe that was most populated by Gypsies. Whether this slight disagreement was part of the conflict that would emerge, or just a small contrasting viewpoint, is not certain. However, what we do know is that the relationship between the two would soon shift from one of collaboration to one of active opposition. Once again, these dynamics are important as they also reflect the nature of the relationship between the different leaders of the Roma movement in the country during the interwar period, as well as reflecting the shifting political context of the time and the shifting loyalties embedded within it.

The actual initial break up between the two leaders of the Roma movement is also unclear, as the explanations given vary to different degrees: from Lăzurică rejecting the term ‘Gypsies’ as derogatory, to Lăzurică calling Șerboianu a non-Roma, to Lăzurică calling Șerboianu a traitor of the Orthodox faith and attempting to convert Roma to Catholicism. The first reason is quite unlikely given that, as mentioned above, Lăzurică himself had used exclusively ‘Gypsy’ prior to that moment, he argued to be proud of being a ‘Gypsy’, talked about ‘Gypsies’ in his writings until the founding of the UGRR (for further details see Matei, 2012, pp. 57–62). The second reasoning was the argument that Șerboianu was not a Gypsy. However, this was very unlikely to be the case as his ethnicity did not seem to be an issue at the start of the relationship between the two. In fact, Lăzurică was clearly aware of Șerboianu’s non-Roma background when the AGȚR was first formed, as can easily be noted also in the review published above. Moreover, Șerboianu’s non-Roma background did not prevent Șerboianu from acting as a president with Lăzurică as Secretary in the organisation they had formed and did not seem to pose any problems for Lăzurică at the time. In other words, Șerboianu’s non-Roma background did not seem to be an imposition or any form of impediment at the beginning of their partnership and it is highly unlikely for this to have later become the actual reason for their split. The third argument was that Popp Șerboianu, who had previously been an Orthodox archimandrite, was suspected of having converted to the Greek-Catholic Church. This is interesting to note both in terms of Lăzurică’s subsequent affiliations and actions and in terms of the importance (both symbolical and political) of the Orthodox Church within the country. The accusations thus arose that Șerboianu had formed AGȚR in order to convert Orthodox Gypsies (the majority of them were Orthodox by birth, much as the case of majority Romanians) to Catholicism. This latter reason might be the most likely one, as the previous ones seem to contradict Lăzurică’s earlier positions.

In fact, as it became clearer later, Lăzurică would be supported in his endeavours of establishing a new Roma organisation, the General Union of Roma in Romania, by the Orthodox Church, who wanted to prevent the conversion of Gypsies to Greek Catholicism, while also promoting a form of missionary work among Roma belonging to different faiths. In this way, the Orthodox Church hoped not only to stop an eventual conversion of Roma to Catholicism but actively promote conversion of Roma to Orthodoxism

(for further details see Matei, 2010, pp. 159–173). During the summer of 1933, Lăzurică's role within AGȚR seems to have diminished drastically as he was no longer mentioned among its leaders neither by press nor the police reports (Nastasă & Varga, 2001, doc. 21, pp. 94–96). Lăzurică would soon part with this association and set up the General Union of Roma in Romania (UGRR), of which he would become the general president. Lăzurică also took the title of 'Voivode of Roma in Romania' (i.e., leader of all Roma in Romania), through which he wanted to highlight his overall control and representation over Roma in the country. According to archival materials, during this time, G. A. Lăzurică lived in Bucharest city (Sârbească street, number 8), where he rented a single room, which would also become the main headquarters of the General Union of the Roma in Romania (Ibid., doc 29, p. 109).

The relationship between Lăzurică and Șerboianu most likely broke down because Lăzurică realised that Șerboianu was no longer an Orthodox archimandrite and, therefore, could not aid in his aims to attract both financial and other forms of support from what was arguably one of the strongest institutions in the country: the Orthodox Church. Once again, this is important to note given the context of the time and the ways in which the support of key institutions was instrumental for Lăzurică in order to achieve his aims and goals within the Roma civic emancipation movement. Arguments such as 'Roma' versus 'Gypsy', or the non-Roma origin of Șerboianu were very likely to have been mere justifications used later by Lăzurică to weaken Șerboianu's position or reputation and not, in effect, the actual cause of severance.

Lăzurică, in turn, would approach the Orthodox Church which he warned that the former archimandrite intended to use the organisation to convert the Gypsies (mostly Orthodox) to Catholicism. Lăzurică also seems to have had a good intuition because the Orthodox Church reacted quickly, appealing to Lăzurică as an Orthodox alternative. For instance, already on September 1, 1933, Lăzurică had a discussion with the members of the Central Church Council, where he asked for support to hold the UGRR congress: printing manifestos and statutes, etc. (Țara Noastră, 1937, pp. 3–4). A few weeks later, at the end of September 1933, Lăzurică became again visible when the press recorded the appearance of a General Union of Roma in Romania, a rival of AGȚR, which also organised meetings and committees in different districts of Bucharest and announced their own congress in Câmpul Moșilor, on October 8, 1933 (Tempo!, 1933b, p. 3)

As mentioned above, most of the UGRR program copied that of AGȚR (the only notable differences being the emphasis on 'Roma' instead of 'Gypsy' and the renewed attachment to the Orthodox Church, doubled by sustained attacks on Șerboianu). On the occasion of such gatherings, the Roma were advised "to expel from their midst any emissary of the priest Șerboianu, who is neither a Gypsy nor an archimandrite" (Tempo!, 1933c, p. 2). It is thus that the relationship between the two was not only central to the establishment of the first Roma organisation in the country but also instrumental in the shaping of Lăzurică's later actions and work within the UGRR.

Furthermore, in a very short period of time, the movement organised by Lăzurică proved a formidable competitor as he managed to get better resources and support than AGȚR. The Patriarchy helped Lăzurică morally, but also materially, by printing 5,000 manifestos announcing the Roma congress of October 8, 1933, and covering the rent of the hall. In addition, the Church intervened with the authorities to ensure that they would give the green light to Lăzurică's demonstrations while obstructing Șerboianu's actions. For example, on October 5, 1933, the Patriarchate recognised Lăzurică as president of the UGRR and recommended that the Police allow the Roma congress convened by Lăzurică.

As mentioned above, with the move from AGȚR to UGRR, the shift in Lăzurică's views concerning the usage of the term 'Roma' instead of 'Gypsies' also appear to have come centre stage. Lăzurică's views concerning the issue of labelling can also be seen as a pretext in his criticism of Șerboianu, as, from what can be seen above, Lăzurică had also used the term 'Gypsy' before and Șerboianu had also used the term 'Roma' in his appeal from August 27, 1933. Below is a reproduction of key segments from this overview of the UGRR and the preparations for a general congress, which reveal the aims and goals of the UGRR as well as the general lines by which the Roma movement led by Lăzurică (as well as, later, by Niculescu) would be shaped:

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*, 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 ȘERBOIANU.

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.

We are patriots and faithful to the dynasty, we are not traitors of country, 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. [...]

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. [...]

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 Moșilor, 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. [...]

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, headquartered in Bucharest, 8, Sârbească Street. President, G. A. Lăzurică-Lăzurică.

Secretary, Florica Constantinescu. (Nastasă & Varga, 2001, doc 27, pp. 106–107).

The above letter succinctly introduces not only the main line of criticism Lăzurică had brought towards his previous ally but, quite clearly, the general aims of the UGRR in presenting Roma as faithful Orthodox Christians, loyal to King and Country and full citizens of the national state. In fact, all of these characteristics would become part of the central motto within the Roma movement in the country. More specifically, the emphasis on being a loyal citizen (tax-paying ones, who had sacrificed themselves in the military service of the country and “assimilated” to the Romanian element) is relevant as these are the lines that would shape the overall Roma movement in the country. Likewise, the argument of not being a political (or minority) party was also crucial in the work of Roma intellectuals of the time, including that of Lăzurică, and would be reproduced by the subsequent president of the UGRR, Gheorghe Niculescu.

The congress mentioned above is also notable as it was advertised in several Romanian newspapers (*Tempo!*, 1933a, p. 1; 1933b, p. 3; 1933c, p. 2; *Universul*, 1933c, p. 2), as well as abroad, as being one of its kind among Roma/Gypsies in the world. In reality, this congress was smaller in nature than initially presented and organised with the aid of the Romanian Orthodox Church. The Congress of Romanian Roma (national Congress) took place on October 8, 1933, in Bucharest (Ileana Hall), convened and chaired by G. A. Lăzurică (Nastasă & Varga, doc 28, p.107). The October congress also adopted the Union’s program, aimed both at the social awakening of Roma in Romania and at the improvement of their overall social status with a focus on “cultural, social and spiritual aims”. Among the cultural aims were those of organising cultural events and artistic conferences. Among the spiritual aims, the focus was placed on the strengthening of the Orthodox identity among Roma compared to other faiths in the country (especially Greek Catholic and Catholic), with the goal of baptising children in the Orthodox faith, the encouragement of nomads to marry legally, etc. However, the most detailed ones were those in the realm of the ‘social’, wherein a series of measures were proposed, many of which copied those initially laid out in the program of AGȚR (Ibid., doc. 21, pp. 96–99). This is, again, unsurprising, especially given Lăzurică’s previous association with Șerboianu.

In short, the focus would be placed on collaboration with Romanian authorities to establish institutions for the Roma, including a kindergarten, cultural house, school,

library, maternity hospital, refuge centre for those newly arrives in the capital city, which would all be free of charge. In addition to this, it claimed to seek registering all Roma musicians as artisans, obtain permission for nomadic Gypsies to settle, obtain travel grants for Roma to attend international Roma meetings and conferences, etc. These all point to the means by which the program aimed to strengthen the Roma identity of its community while, at the same time, building on the nation-state institutions it mirrored, and collaborating with national authorities in this respect (Klímová-Alexander, 2005a, p. 170).

In what concerns the international aspect of the program and the potential for international collaboration, especially the focus placed on attending international congresses, it is worth noting that in November 1933, some authors and press materials point to the alleged organisation of a second international congress with delegates from several countries, including Poland, Bulgaria, Czechoslovakia, Hungary and Yugoslavia. However, such a congress never actually took place. In effect, the press coverage of the alleged “international” congress contributed to the construction of a myth of international collaboration when, in reality, the focus on the latter was not a priority for either the Union or other Roma organisations of the time (Ibid., p. 172).

However, despite succeeding in organising the first Roma congress of its type, in October 1933, and the efforts supported by the Orthodox church to convert and baptise Roma, Lăzurică was overthrown from the leadership of the UGRR a few months later, on May 30, by Gheorghe Niculescu, a flower salesman, who would go on to establish a new organisation, the AUGRR (The Association General Union of Roma in Romania). While their names are almost identical (the latter having the addition of the term ‘Association’ to its title) they are entirely distinct entities, with the AUGRR gaining legal recognition. The reasons for Lăzurică’s overthrow are still unclear. Among other things, one of the pretexts concerned Lăzurică’s Roma ethnicity. However, much as was the case of Șerboianu and Plopșor, the issue of ethnicity was a mere pretext, as the actual reasons for the overthrow were most likely the ambitions of individual leaders. Furthermore, though he allegedly resigned from his function (Nastasă & Varga, 2001 doc. 46, pp. 131–133; Williams, 2007, p. 23), this resignation was forced by the Niculescu brothers, who would become the leaders of the newly founded AUGRR.

Throughout his period working with UGRR, Lăzurică’s relationship with the Orthodox church is also worth noting. As mentioned above, the latter appears to have helped Lăzurică not only in organising the Congress (by providing financial support) but also in solidifying his position as a representative of Roma in the country. At the same time, the Orthodox church seems to have used Lăzurică as a means of reaching Roma communities across the country, with the purpose of converting non-Orthodox Roma to Orthodoxism. Lăzurică even gained a so-called ‘missionary card’ from the Orthodox church, which he used in his trips in Transylvania, in October 1934, and also helped in the process of baptism of Roma in that area. (Achim, 2004, p. 156; Matei, 2010, pp. 165–166, 169).

Following the departure from UGRR, Lăzurică remained active as a Roma leader in various forms. He continued to organise smaller scale meetings and rallies throughout 1934–1935 and began a quest for researching the Indian ancestry of Roma, which he would eventually publicise in the newspapers *Timpul* and *Țara Noastră*.

Furthermore, in 1935, after his departure from UGRR, there are several mentions of his name in the international press. Some of them point out, for instance, that he came in contact with Roma leaders from abroad (more specifically, England and US) for the purpose of organising an expedition to India, in order to trace back the origins of the Roma (Le Journal, 1934, p. 4; Slovenski narod, 1934, p. 5). News of this alleged planned expedition were spread across several international newspapers, in which Lăzurică's name also appeared. One such article appeared in the newspaper *Slovenski narod* (Slovenian People), titled "But would the Gypsies get their Palestine?". In it, the intended expedition was presented alongside the discussion of the so-called 'zgripti' as the ancestors of the Roma. Below is a translation of the above-mentioned article:

No one has yet been able to pinpoint the exact origin of the Gypsy race. The most widespread is the notion that gypsies originated in India. Only some Gypsies have managed to assimilate in such a way that they do not differ from other people neither in appearance nor in way of life. Most of the gypsies, however, are wandering all their lives around the world. Many countries, especially in Europe, are keenly interested in the Gypsy problem. Various attempts have already been made to prepare the gypsies to settle permanently. In particular, Romania made every effort to tie its Gypsies to the land, but all in vain. Gypsies consistently reject the efforts of civilised countries, they do not want to hear anything about permanently settling among civilised people.

Recently, various organisations seeking to improve the lives of Gypsies in England, Poland, Italy and America decided to send an expert commission to India, where, between the Indus and Ganges rivers, is the original homeland of the Gypsies. The delegation includes the American Frank Felow, the Romanian [sic] Jacob Kurky, the Gypsy Lăzurică and one Englishman and one Pole, who have not yet been named. The commission first goes to the province of Zgriptzi, where the cradle of the gypsy race is supposed to be. There [the Commission] meets the scholar prof. Valdi Kanjo, who speaks Sanskrit. Kanja is in the service of the city of Calcutta, but he was on holiday.

With his help, they hope to find in either Buddhist temples or Brahmanical monasteries sources that would explain the life of the ancient nomads of the said province. All that is known for the time being is that the gypsies emigrated to Europe and Egypt when they were expelled by the Mongol princes Tamerlan and Genghis Khan. The commission also visits the province of Malabor, where residents still speak a Gypsy-like language. The data collected by this commission will serve as the basis for extensive work in which the issue of Gypsies will be addressed from all sides. Not only the origin of the gypsies, but also their language, and history will be presented to us in a completely different light. Gypsy Lăzurică lives permanently in Bucharest as a leader of Gypsy bands. He recently told reporters: "You will see that the Gypsies will also find their Palestine. (Slovenski narod, 1934, p. 5).

It is worth highlighting that the above article contains several unfounded or unverified claims, which could not be found in the Romanian sources but are nevertheless

interesting as they reflect the depiction of the Romanian Roma leader outside the country. One, and perhaps the crucial one, is the idea of finding the origin of Roma/Gypsies, through the combined efforts of an international expedition. This somewhat seems to emphasise Lăzurică's interest for a potential international collaboration, which was not necessarily a common feature of the overall Roma movement in Romania. However, no such expedition took place and Romanian sources do not seem to point out to any such collaboration having taken place. The source of the information thus is unclear, but it reveals the ways in which news content was being reproduced from one publication to another, without clear verification. The second one, according to these sources, concerns the myth of Egyptian ancestry, which attributes to Lăzurică a claim that "the Gypsies as a people existed during the time when the pharaohs ruled over Egypt" (Glas Naroda, 1936, p. 3). However, in the articles Lăzurică actually published in the Romanian Roma press, which can be seen below, Lăzurică's emphasis on an Egyptian ancestry are more nuanced, where he places his emphasis primarily on India, and where he connects his emphasis on the history of the Roma with the focus placed on changing the terminology used to refer to those he previously named 'Gypsies'. The third one concerns the issue of 'motherland' or the idea of finding one's own Palestine which, in effect, brings with it the concept of establishing one's own nation state, an aspect which could also not be found in the articles Lăzurică authored or published in the Romanian Roma press. Nevertheless, such information seems to have been spread and reproduced in several foreign press articles, including one article published in the newspaper of Slovenes in America, *Glas Naroda*:

The Romanian Gypsy leader and poet Lăzurică is devoted to the idea of uniting his compatriots into a nation. The core of this nation is said to be the 500,000 to 700,000 Gypsies living today in Romania, the country with the largest number of this nomadic people in the world. Although Romanian Gypsies still live their free life today, there is a big change in their leadership. The old chiefs no longer stand at the head of their individual kin, but intellectuals. One of these gypsy intellectuals is George Lăzurică. He is said to be a well-known poet and journalist, and he intends to publish a Gypsy newspaper under the name "Neamul Romilor", which is going to be published this autumn. This paper is supposed to be the voice of all the Gypsies in the world and will urge them to be aware of their tribe again. According to Lăzurică, the Gypsies as a people existed during the time when the pharaohs ruled over Egypt. (Glas naroda, 1936, p. 3).

Once again, the article above contains several factual inaccuracies, specifically concerning claims attributed to Lăzurică himself which are difficult to verify when comparing this to his actual writings and his activities (for instance, among other things, he is mentioned as a poet). Furthermore, in some international articles there is also mention of Lăzurică's intent of publishing a newspaper titled *Neamul Romilor* (The Gypsy People), potentially mirroring or countering the newspaper *Glasul Romilor* which was successfully published by the AUGRR under the leadership of Gheorghe Niculescu. For instance, one issue of the *Belfast Telegraph*, from May 18, 1936, stated:

The first gipsy newspaper in the world would be published in Bukarest (Roumania), this summer.

George A. Lazurica, the Romany author and poet, will be its editor. The paper will be called "Neamul Romilor" (Romany People) and will be written in the gipsy language.

A strong race consciousness has lately become manifest among the 250,000 gipsies living in Roumania. Hardly a month elapses without some Romany Congress taking place in one part of the country or another. "Gipsies of the world unite" is the slogan of these assemblies, in which barefooted, swarthy delegates vehemently protest against motor-car importers, "who ruin the horse trade," or against jazz bands and wireless "which take away the bread from the mouths of gipsy musicians."

The picturesque, wandering, merry-go-lucky gipsy is gradually being replaced by a more politically minded and intellectual type. (Belfast Telegraph, 1936, no page number).

As can be seen from the above, international newspaper items such as these seem to comprise a mixture of information (sometimes factually unverified) and mystification concerning the Roma civic emancipation movement in the country, which also led to exaggeration and sensationalism, an aspect which is not unique to the Romanian case (see, for instance, Poland). Even the number of Roma/Gypsies living in the countries sometimes appeared as conflicting (500,000 to 700,000 Gypsies in one source, and 250,000 in another). At the same time, these items were imbued with almost nostalgic romanticised views and disparate representations of the shifting times, with arguments of the "picturesque, wandering, merry-go-lucky gipsy" as being gradually replaced in the process of modernisation by a new emerging Roma elite, one which is seen as being more politically minded and intellectually oriented. In reality, the Roma movement itself during this time seemed to have moved little beyond the leaders of the movement, including Lăzurică. Furthermore, the newspaper *Neamul Romilor* mentioned in several international press articles (quoted above) never fully materialised (as far as we know) and there is no evidence of its actual existence. Likewise, apart from some sporadic articles concerning Roma folklore, none of the Roma newspapers in Romania were published fully in Romani language, contrasting the alleged intention of publishing *Neamul Romilor* "in the gipsy language". This may have been the case because the audience of the newspapers seemed to have been both majority Romanian and Roma citizens and because it would potentially have contradicted Roma leaders' statements that Roma did not want to participate in so-called minority politics. Nevertheless, the very mention of the intention to establish the newspaper *Neamul Romilor* is important in showcasing the main outlets through which Roma leaders' ideas and intentions were being disseminated in the country. In fact, as will be detailed below, Lăzurică would soon re-join forces with Șerboianu and begin publishing sporadically in two new Roma newspapers: *Timpul* and *Țara Noastră*.

It is thus worth emphasising that, while interesting, the details presented throughout the international press of the time, which coincided with Lăzurică's departure from UGRR, during which little information can be found in the Romanian press, often seemed to offer incomplete or incorrect information. For instance, no such expedition to

India as the one related above seems to have taken place and the actual extent to which Lăzurică collaborated with international organisations remains unknown. Nevertheless, the recycled information appeared in several international news outlets, reflecting the ways in which Lăzurică's name (perhaps more than those of other leaders) seems to have been known outside the borders of the country, even if the news items presented mentioning him were more in the lines of a curiosity concerning international affairs (i.e. these articles often appeared in columns such as "news from abroad"). At the same time, albeit in different forms, Lăzurică's theories and suppositions, as well as his interest in the history of the Roma, would later be reflected in his own publications, most notably after his reconciliation with Șerboianu.

In this specific regard, perhaps the culmination of his historical theories concerning the origin of the Roma can be found in an article published in 1938, in the newspaper *Timpul*, and titled *Ce trebuie să știe Romii* (What Should the Roma Know). It is here where most of his ideas would find its space and readership, and it is here where they are most clearly reflected. Given the importance of this article in showcasing Lăzurică's overall approach, below are some of the key segments from it:

[...] 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-Germanic invading peoples who spoke a similar language, so they were related, there were also the wandering people, *Zgriptii*, the true ancestors of today's Roma. [...]

The *Zgriptii* did not want to live a sedentary life, nor to listen to the power and laws of the brahmins and the kings of India, nor to receive their religion. The *Zgriptii* 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 *Zgriptii* 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 brahmins. [...]

WHY WE CALL OURSELVES ROMA AND NOT ȚIGANI? [...]

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 "Ramajana", meaning the "conquering man", a hero in the Sanskrit mother literature, and there is even a heroic epic called Ramajana. From the word "athingan", by derivation, other European peoples have also adapted the name they give to us. [...]

CONCLUSIONS

We, *the Roma*, are of the Aryan race (Indo-Germanic). 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.

[...] 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 generals [...] 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. (Timpul, 1938a, p. 2).

The article above, published in 1938, is important as it reveals some of Lăzurică's crystallised views concerning both the origin of the Roma and his justification for the usage of the term 'Roma' instead of 'Gypsies' (or *țigani*). It is unclear when or how his views concerning the *zgrîpti* were formed and solidified. Yet, despite its clear mystification, the relevance of Lăzurică's theory lies both in the ways in which he had tried to create an origin story that would present Roma as a people with a long standing and prestigious history, as fighters and conquerors, rather than as subjects. Furthermore, Lăzurică used this theory as a means of arguing for the shift in the terminological usage referring to his community, which had started in 1933, after his initial split from Șerboianu and his work within the UGRR. At this stage, in 1938, he had already solidified his position for the shift of the term 'Gypsies' to 'Roma' and the discussion of history was also a means of highlighting his argument.

As an example of this, he compared the ways in which Romanians highlighted their connection to Dacians and the Romans in pinpointing the necessity of understanding and using one term over another:

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 'Nemți' 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? (Timpul, 1938a, p. 2).

As for his alliance with Șerboianu, while the exact context for the reconciliation remains unclear, what is known is that around the summer of 1937, Lăzurică and Șerboianu would rejoin forces. As Șerboianu's portrait also reveals, the relationship between the two leaders of the Roma movement in Romania had undoubtedly been turbulent. At the same

time, it would seem that the reconciliation may also have been brought up by their new common rival, represented this time by the AUGRR, led by Gheorghe Niculescu. The latter was undoubtedly the stronger and more influential one, being supported (financially and symbolically) not only by the Romanian Orthodox Church, as mentioned above, but also by the ruling party in the country at the time, the National Liberal Party (PNL). Thus, it was in 1937, an electoral year, that Lăzurică saw new opportunity and strength in collaborating with Șerboianu, wherein both became affiliated and supported by the opposition party, the National Christian Party (PNC), led by Octavian Goga and A. C. Cuza. In the same summer of 1937, the two political leaders also provided space for disseminating Lăzurică's ideas, within a special weekly edition of the newspaper *Țara Noastră*. These incentives were not, however, without their own demands, as Octavian Goga and A. C. Cuza would rely on the two leaders for their own support in gaining Roma votes for PNC.

It is in this context that one must understand the subsequent arguments borrowed by Lăzurică and Șerboianu in their articles published in the newspaper *Țara Noastră* and, more specifically, the highly nationalistic and often anti-Semitic rhetoric of their narrative. It is also thus that, alongside presenting Roma as loyal citizens of the state, as Christians and as entirely willful subjects to Crown and country, Roma were presented as *not* being a minority, a position which often contrasted with those of other minority groups in the country, such as the Jews, the Hungarians and the Bulgarians.

Due to financial restraints, and despite the support from Goga and Cuza, the newspaper *Țara Noastră* would only be published in five issues throughout the summer of 1937, with the last issue being released in September of the same year. Nevertheless, Lăzurică continued to be involved within the electoral campaign of the National Christian Party throughout the 1937/1938 season and carried on his work on behalf of the party, primarily by organising meetings encouraging Roma to vote for PNC, oftentimes connected and embedded with nationalistic and anti-Semitic content.

His activity after this point remains unclear and information about Lăzurică's fate in the post Second World War context is unknown. Nevertheless, Lăzurică had undoubtedly played a key role within the shaping of the Roma civic emancipation movement in inter-war Romania, both in terms of organising the Roma community itself and in terms of the political pragmatism he seemed to display in order to achieve his aims. He appeared to have been sensitive to the changing and fluctuating political climate of the time as well as to the important role played by the Romanian Orthodox Church in gaining legitimacy of representation as a Roma leader. It is thus that we must understand both his initial breakup with Șerboianu, and his later reconciliation, as well as his seemingly shifting political views. Throughout his time within the UGRR, he was also closely supported and connected to the Romanian Orthodox Church, acting as a mediator and as a central person in the conversion of non-Orthodox Roma to Orthodoxism. At the same time, with the split from UGRR (or, rather, his forced exit), he displayed critical views both of the Orthodox Church and the National Liberal Party, which were key supporters of the new

AUGRR, led by Gheorghe Niculescu. His subsequent reconciliation with Șerboianu, as well as his new political affiliation with the National Christian Party, his seemingly anti-semitic and nationalistic rhetoric, can thus be understood also as manifestations of the particular fluctuating position he had in relation to the overall Roma movement in the country, as well as his intention to solidify his legitimacy as a leader of the Roma community in Romania. Finally, while there remains only sporadic information about his family, his wife, Marta Lăzurică, would also occupy a role (albeit minor) in the Roma civic emancipation movement in the country, supporting her husband in many of his own activities. Her fragmentary portrait (also presented in this chapter) reveals some snippets of the Lăzurică family biography and the involvement of other members of the Lăzurică family in his political moves.

G. A. Lăzurică's importance as a key figure within the Roma civic emancipation movement in Romania during the interwar period can also be seen in the fact that his name and work appeared (even if sporadically) in several international newspapers. While the information presented in those news items is contestable in terms of context and factuality, they are nevertheless useful source material in pointing out the cross-border reach of some of the names within the Roma emancipation movement in the country, as well as the ways in which the latter was being represented within the international press. Through all this, G. A. Lăzurică constitutes a key figure within the Roma civic emancipation movement in Romania, and his name remains intrinsically connected to the shaping of Roma activism in the country.

Gheorghe Niculescu

Petre Matei

Gheorghe Niculescu (? – ?) was the president of the most important Roma association in Romania in the first half of the 20th century. A successful businessman, he founded *Asociația Uniunea Generală a Romilor din România* – AUGRR (Association General Union of Roma in Romania) in 1934, which published its own newspaper *Glasul Romilor* between 1934–1941. Compared to other Roma leaders, his involvement in the Roma movement (1933–1948) was by far the longest. During this period, Gh. Niculescu witnessed several changes of the political regime, each with its own challenges: 1) democracy (1933–1937); 2) royal dictatorship (1938–1940); 3) fascist and military dictatorship during WWII including here the Roma deportations to Transnistria, and 4) the communist regime, beginning with 1945.

Interestingly, little is known about him and his whereabouts, when and where he was born, what he did before embarking on the Roma movement in the fall of 1933 or what happened to him after his organisation was forbidden by the communist authorities. According to G. A. Lăzurică, one of Niculescu's collaborators, and a later rival of his, he was

born into a humble family of Roma smiths from the rural commune of Șerban Vodă close to Bucharest, and worked as an itinerant farrier under the name of Gheorghe R. Niculae. Later, both Gheorghe and his brother, Niculae R. Niculae, also an important figure in the interwar Roma movement, changed their names into Gheorghe and Niculae Niculescu (Țara Noastră, 1937m, p. 5). Gheorghe Niculescu became a successful merchant in the lucrative flower business. He had a flowershop *La doi trandafiri* (The Two Roses) situated in a good area of Bucharest (Piața Sf. Anton Nr. 10) and traded flowers both in retail and wholesale. Although illiterate, his business success was impressive and long-standing, which proves pragmatism and the capacity of surrounding himself with collaborators, qualities which would prove useful later.

Compared to other Roma leaders (Șerboianu and Lăzurică) he became involved in the Roma movement relatively late, in November 1933, as a committee member of UGRR led by G. A. Lăzurică, where he was accompanied by his brother, Niculae Niculescu. More precisely, on November 16, 1933, on the occasion of the registration of the UGRR statute at the Ilfov Tribunal, the two Niculescu brothers had already important positions within UGRR: Gh. Niculescu was one of the Vice-Presidents, while his brother, Niculae Niculescu, was General Cashier (Nastasă & Varga, 2001, doc. 38, p. 118). With the exception of Lăzurică, most of the members of the central committee were recruited from among Roma entrepreneurs and traders, businessmen, etc. Although later, out of the desire to minimise the role of the Niculescu brothers, Lăzurică declared that he had met the latter only in the spring of 1934, documents from mid-November prove an earlier involvement. Moreover, Lăzurică had met the Niculescu brothers long before and worked for them for about one year (writing their commercial correspondence). Their relationship was, therefore, more complex (Țara Noastră, 1937j, p. 5). Their co-operation can be probably explained by the need for material support felt by Lăzurică in the Roma organisation endeavour.

In the beginning, the Niculescu brothers kept a low profile. They did not appear in the press during the electoral campaign of December 1933 or during the electoral rallies organised by Lăzurică in favour of the National Liberal Party (PNL). And yet, the two began to stand out, playing an increasingly important role in the UGRR steering committee that made decisions on important issues. For example, on March 2, 1934, Lazăr Naftanailă from Calbor-Făgăraș, the president of the *Înfrățirea Neorustică* (Neorustic Brotherhood) society, signed an act of affiliation with the UGRR, which in exchange recognised him as the 'President of the Roma in the Transylvanian Counties'. The signatories from UGRR were only a few members of the central committee, namely: President Lăzurică, First Vice-President Apostol Matei, Vice-President Gh. Niculescu and his brother, Niculae Niculescu who, in addition to being the general cashier, was also the General Secretary (replacing Nicolae Gh. Lache who had held this position in mid-November 1933). (Neamul Țigănesc, 1934e, p. 3). In addition, the two Niculescu brothers insisted that Lăzurică (already recognised by the Orthodox Church as a missionary) obtain missionary cards for them as well (which he managed to do at the beginning of

1934). Very few members of the UGRR leadership benefited from these documents issued by the Orthodox Church.

Shortly thereafter, the relations between Lăzurică and Niculescu deteriorated to the point of rupture with the latter taking over the leadership of UGRR. As can also be seen from the portrait of Lăzurică, in this chapter, the reasons invoked by the two differ. Lăzurică claimed that the Niculescu brothers could not stand being subordinated to him, especially since they were richer, and once they obtained their missionary cards and gained more influence, started to undermine him. All culminated with death threats against Lăzurică who was forced to resign from his position of president of UGRR at the end of May 1934 (Țara Noastră, 1937l, p. 3–4).

The Niculescu brothers, on the other hand, claimed that Lăzurică had abused his presidency to get rich by selling positions as branch presidents. This allegedly outraged the Roma in the province who came to Bucharest to complain about it, contacted the Niculescu brothers (whose house informally hosted the UGRR headquarters) and obtained the resignation from Lăzurică (Glasul Romilor, 1937d, p. 2).

Most likely, both parties were right to some extent: the Niculescu brothers wanted the power and were looking for a pretext to replace Lăzurică, while the latter did sell some management positions in the new branches. Lăzurică might have resorted to it as he hardly had other incomes (he himself was poor, there were yet few members paying the membership fee and the financial help of the Orthodox Church proved insufficient). Actually, the fact that the two Niculescu brothers along with other Roma entrepreneurs were appointed to lead the UGRR may be explained by the same considerations: the financial potency needed for the functioning of the UGRR. On the other hand, even later, in 1937, Lăzurică had to condition the branch presidents' positions on certain financial contributions invoked to support the movement (Țara Noastră, 1937e, p. 2).

It is, therefore, quite likely that he did the same in 1934, causing dissatisfaction and constituting an ideal pretext for his replacement. That it was merely a pretext is proven by the fact that the Niculescu brothers seem to have prepared Lăzurică's resignation in advance, as they left nothing to chance. Lăzurică was forced to write in the resignation text that he was not a Roma. According to the UGRR statute, only Roma were entitled to become members (also leaders) of the Union (Nastasă & Varga, 2001, doc. 38, p. 120). By forcing Lăzurică to admit that, Niculescu managed to bypass the UGRR statute without having to convene other general meetings, etc.

Having Lăzurică's resignation, Niculescu immediately announced in the press that he was the new leader of UGRR. As for Lăzurică, the first thing he did was to get a forensic certificate for being assaulted, sued his aggressors and published in the press that he had reversed his resignation, claiming that the Niculescu brothers together with their supporters were expelled from UGRR (Ibid., doc. 48, p. 134; Adevărul literar și artistic, 1934, p. 3). In addition, following his interventions, he asked the Orthodox Church to withdraw the missionary cards granted a few months earlier.

A fierce fight began between the Niculescu brothers and Lăzurică, each trying to convince the Roma that they represented the legitimate leadership of UGRR and therefore of the Roma. Lăzurică went on the field again, organised meetings and UGRR branches in different counties and regions of the country, published articles, had the press write extensively about him and his actions.

Nothing like this happened in the case of the Niculescu brothers. They adopted a different strategy altogether which, although not spectacular in the first phase (summer of 1934), was proven more effective. First of all, Gh. Niculescu was very careful that his Roma Union become a legal entity, an aspect neglected by Lăzurică whose steps in this direction had repeatedly resulted in failures. Therefore, a new UGRR committee was set up with Gh. Niculescu as president and Nicolae Niculescu as First Vice-President and General Secretary, which, on August 11, 1934, submitted to the Ilfov Tribunal the constitutive act and the statutes of UGRR, requesting the recognition of the organisation as a legal person. On September 20 and 28, 1934, the Ministry of Labour and then of the Interior gave their approvals, and on November 30, 1934, the Niculescu brothers' association obtained the status of legal entity. They could keep the older name of *Uniunea Generală a Romilor din România* but had to add the more proper term 'Association' in front of it. Legally, 'Union' had a very strict meaning (group of associations) while "association" meant a group of persons.

In the end, Niculescu kept the brand of UGRR at a minimal cost. Neither Șerboianu nor Lăzurică had succeeded in this, the latter being repeatedly refused as some of the members of the UGRR committee had criminal records (Nastasă & Varga, 2001, doc. 40, p. 126–127). In fact, in the fall of 1934, the Police found that Lăzurică continued to falsely claim that the UGRR which was led by him had the quality of a legal person (Ibid., doc. 63, p. 162). At the same time, Niculescu made efforts to bring together various Roma leaders and organisations. In the summer of 1934, Marin I. Simion, the organiser of the Roma movement in Oltenia, sided with Gh. Niculescu and published (in September-October 1934) two issues of the newspaper *O Rom* that openly supported Gh. Niculescu.

At the end of the summer of 1934, Lăzurică had already exhausted his scarce resources (by leaving Bucharest for the organisation of the Roma in the country, he had lost his job). During this time, with little effort and intact resources, Niculescu had managed to attract leaders and branches. Moreover, he had already received the first approvals for obtaining the status of legal entity. This was very important. Once Niculescu's association achieved this status, Lăzurică's claims to lead UGRR proved unfounded. Lăzurică's organisation did not exist formally and legally. In conclusion, as noted by Gh. Niculescu and his supporters, they offered the only viable solution: "we ask the Roma not to listen to and waste their time with other pseudo societies, whose purpose is limited only to some people's ambitions, without a coordination of our common interests that must unite the Roma under the same flag" (*O Rom*, 1934c, p. 3).

This meant that the branches already established by Lăzurică could be convinced to switch to AUGRR. Basically, Niculescu took advantage of Lăzurică's ideas and work, taking over not only his organisation, program and branches, but also some ideas or even the name of the newspaper *Glasul Romilor*, announced by Lăzurică long before. (Nastasă & Varga, 2001, doc. 24, p. 101).

In addition, starting with the autumn of 1934, it was Niculescu's turn to participate in the great gatherings of the Roma from different locations (September 9, 1934, Sibiu; September 23, Sighișoara; October 9, Ploiești, etc.), some of which were impressive, with thousands of participants, and enjoyed the attention of the public and the press. These were not necessarily organised by Niculescu's AUGRR, but rather by local Roma organisations still autonomous or even independent of AUGRR. The participation of the AUGRR leadership in such events shows that, unlike Șerboianu and Lăzurică (who did not participate), the Niculescu brothers had managed to get closer to these local organisations. In addition, these large assemblies validated them as leaders at the national level, both in front of Roma and Romanian authorities (be they secular or religious, as in Ploiești, where Patriarch Miron Cristea also participated). Practically, even if Lăzurică continued to organise Roma gatherings in the fall of 1934 (Hunedoara, Rădăuți, Bucharest, etc.), compared to those assumed by Gh. Niculescu, Lăzurică's events were becoming less important (i.e. fewer participants, mainly in Bucharest or in the immediate vicinity of the Capital, as Lăzurică could no longer afford long-distance travels).

The AUGRR program did not differ from those announced by Șerboianu and Lăzurică in 1933 and 1934. It was taken over in full. For example, in the first issue of *Glasul Romilor*, the article *Our Program* mentioned, among other things, the establishment of kindergartens for Roma children in all urban localities, evening courses for the illiterate; the elimination of vagrancy and begging by finding work for Roma; setting up Roma consumer cooperatives and canteens, dispensaries, social assistance and employment offices; aid for AUGRR members, libraries, etc. (*Glasul Romilor*, 1934c, p. 1).

Although only few of these were achieved, unlike the other central organisations led by Șerboianu and Lăzurică, Niculescu's AUGRR did manage to function over a relatively long period (1934–1941), and had a relatively coherent organisational structure, with numerous branches in Romania. We know that in the late 1930s, AUGRR had managed to enter into partnerships with some medical clinics in Bucharest so that its members could benefit from medical consultations. These medical services were nevertheless most likely accessible only to the Roma in Bucharest. Similarly, at the AUGRR headquarters there was a library open to its members. Beyond Bucharest, it is possible that the success of AUGRR was mainly due to the self-help system promoted (part of the sums of money raised from membership fees having to return to the members as help for burial, birth etc). In addition, every year starting with 1935, on January 24 (the Romanian Union Day), AUGRR threw its charity ball meant to obtain funds that were to be used to assist its poor members. This aid (usually food, clothing, and firewood) was usually given on Christian holidays (Christmas and especially Easter) (*Universul*, 1935b, p. 21). Moreover,

at the AUGRR headquarters there was an office that took over the petitions from the branches and addressed different local and central authorities in order to find solutions (Glasul Romilor, 1934d, p. 2).

By the end of 1934, Gheorghe Niculescu had cumulated several advantages against his competitors: considerable financial resources, his own newspaper and an Association recognised as a legal entity. Besides, he participated in several large Roma gatherings, including in Ploiesti, which legitimised him and allowed for the rapprochement with the Orthodox Church. As a result, Niculescu felt strong enough to move to a new phase in the AUGRR consolidation. He started to systematically incorporate already existing organisations (including Şerboianu and Lăzurică's branches or even older organisations) by making use of persuasion (presenting the advantages deriving from affiliation to AUGRR), as well as of discouragement (through threats and interventions to the authorities to ban the manifestations of rival organisations).

Illustrative of this approach is the October 1934 gesture of Gh. Niculescu to ask the Police to ban the assembly organised by Lăzurică in Bucharest. Nonetheless, that intervention backfired as the Ministry requested the prohibition of any manifestation organised by both associations, including AUGRR (Nastasă & Varga, 2001, doc. 64, p. 163) (which was to be officially recognised as a legal person only at the end of November 1934). Once that legal status was granted, Niculescu continued with such interventions against Nicolae Gh. Lache, Apostol Matei, Aurel Manolescu-Dolj, Anton Zorilă, etc, arguing that his AUGRR was the only organisation entitled to represent the Roma.

The consolidation of AUGRR implied the formalisation of relations with the Roma in the province, conditional on a stricter control over local organisations. Therefore, already in January 1935, Niculescu began to appoint leaders of local and County branches (Universul 1935a, p. 5). The tone used by the AUGRR leadership was authoritative, the appointments came from top to bottom and did not necessarily take into account the experience and involvement of Roma leaders in the Roma movement, but the loyalty shown to the AUGRR leadership. In some places, there was a doubling of Roma organisations in counties and localities. Leaders who were suspected of not accepting the AUGRR leadership risked seeing themselves confronted with some local competitors implanted and supported by a central organisation that, unlike the others before, benefited from the recently granted legal status and used it aggressively.

In principle, where organisations were strong, or older than AUGRR, there was some opposition. In order to illustrate the personality and the authoritarian way in which Gh. Niculescu imposed himself, we describe three types of interactions with: 1) Ioan Vasilescu from Prahova County; 2) Lazăr Naftanailă from Făgăraş County; 3) Transylvanian leaders such as Constantin Braşoveanu, Anton Zorilă, Andrei Zima, Nicolae Velţeanu, etc.

The first example is that of Ioan Vasilescu from Prahova, active in the Roma movement since 1933, and leader of an energetic organisation. It is unclear why AUGRR decided to impose another leader in the person of Stelian Barbu as president of the Prahova branch, but Vasilescu was probably suspected of not being docile enough to the AUGRR

leadership. However, it was not easy for Stelian Barbu to impose himself, which is why he needed to be supported by AUGRR. On March 3, 1935, a meeting with about 200 Roma took place in Ploiești, which was attended also by Gh. Niculescu and other members of the central committee. In the end, they managed to impose Barbu through pressure and promises. More precisely, Gh. Niculescu told the Roma gathered in the assembly:

[...] that the Ploiești branch, starting from today, will be led by Mr. Stelian Barbu, who will take care of the fate of the poor Roma and will set up a kindergarten in that neighbourhood, for education. An asylum for the elderly will also be set up, an intervention will be made at the town hall so that in the future the Roma will be employed and be given help for the Easter holidays, so that the Roma will no longer be starving and begging on the street. As the Roma Association is a recognised legal entity, they must obey Mr. Stelian Barbu. He also said that he no longer paid attention to the former voivode Lăzurică, because he was a swindler. [...]

He also promised them for the next fall 100 wagons of firewood with 3,000 lei each. Mr. Stelian Barbu from Ploiești thanked the committee from Bucharest and the voivode Gh. Niculescu for the love they showed by coming to Ploiești. He thanked those present for the honor and confidence they had to elect him as a president, committing himself to fight for their cause. (Nastasă & Varga, 2001, doc. 78, pp. 182–183).

Later, Stelian Barbu managed to gradually gain more and more influence and, although Vasilescu continued to have supporters, their number decreased, and the local authorities began to perceive Vasilescu's organisation as "dissident" compared to the already stronger local branch of AUGRR led by Barbu.

A second example is that of Lazăr Naftanailă, leader of the Roma in Făgăraș, founder and president of the *Neorustic Brotherhood*, legal person since 1926, active organiser of Roma cultural-artistic events in several localities in Southern Transylvania (for more on him, see his own portrait in this chapter). In March 1934, he had been recognised by Lăzurică as the president of the Transylvanian Roma. Subsequently, as the process of organising the Transylvanian Roma intensified, with numerous assemblies and thousands of participants (organised by other Roma leaders), Naftanailă's position started to be disputed by various local, regional or central competitors. Hostile to the AUGRR leadership, Naftanailă ended up being competed locally, in Făgăraș, by a certain Dodos, supported by the AUGRR leadership (see also Naftanailă's portrait). There were two congresses organised in Făgăraș by competing factions in June 1935, at an interval of only a few days (Nastasă & Varga, 2001, doc. 86, p. 195). As in other cases, there was a doubling of the Roma leadership, reflecting local rivalries, and Naftanailă's influence on the Făgărașeni Roma diminished.

The third example is that of the Transylvanian Roma leaders: Brașoveanu, Zima, Zorilă, Velțeanu, etc. They also had a long history in the Roma movement as they were responsible for organising the great assembly in Sibiu on September 9, 1934. Besides, Velțeanu had been involved in the Roma assemblies in 1919 (Matei, 2013, pp. 453, 466, 468). In early February 1935, shortly after AUGRR's appointment of branch leaders, including those

in Transylvania, these leaders met and decided to act together against the actions of the centre in Bucharest which was accused of not taking into account the local interests (Nastasă & Varga, 2001, doc. 77, p. 181). Therefore, they went together to Bucharest where, in mid-March 1935, they negotiated with AUGRR. Gh. Niculescu managed to neutralise them by offering some apparently important positions (branch leaders, presidents of Transylvania, representative of Transylvania in the central committee of AUGRR). The positions were shared to please everyone and when needed, they were doubled. For example, Motti Costea, who was recognised as the “active president” (*preşedinte activ*) of Târnava Mare County, shared the attributions with Nicolae Velţeanu, also recognised as ‘Organising President’ (*preşedinte organizator*) of the same County. In exchange for this arrangement, the Transylvanian leaders recognised Gh. Niculescu as the leader of the Roma (who avoided thus the risk of a dissent). Gradually, the positions of these Transylvanian leaders proved to lack real power, as they were marginalised. In addition, Niculescu encouraged dissent and selected those who proved to be more loyal. Motti Costea gradually became the favorite of AUGRR, becoming appointed representative or president of the Transylvanian Roma, virtually invalidating the appointments of Zima, Braşoveanu, Velţeanu or Zorilă.

There was an interesting evolution of how the centre (Şerboianu’s AGȚR, Lăzurică’s UGRR, or Gh. Niculescu’s AUGRR) acted to organise the Roma in the province. Material resources played a very important role but neither Şerboianu nor Lăzurică had sufficient funds to leave Bucharest and effectively organise Roma in the country. Şerboianu’s AGȚR existed for too short a time to be successful (the Oltenian Branch was only nominally affiliated to Şerboianu’s movement). As for Lăzurică, who also lacked financial means, he tried to compensate by resorting to the Romanian Orthodox Church for help. This could be moral (priests’s support from localities with Roma communities, which is why he requested and received the issuance of missionary cards), but also material. As the financial support offered by the Church was insufficient, Lăzurică resorted to the sale of management positions in the newly created branches. The process was likely to compromise him, at least in the eyes of some Roma, weakening his position and ultimately leading to his resignation. In short, both Şerboianu and Lăzurică depended on others for organising the Roma beyond the boundaries of Bucharest.

Having a good financial situation, Gh. Niculescu had no such problems. As we can see from the above, he managed to attract the support of some leaders in the territory and weakened the base of others by creating local competitors subordinated to AUGRR. A new phase with a more pronounced organisation from top to bottom followed, where delegates were sent to organise the Roma rather than depending on local leaders.

These delegates coming from the centre, or even from the provinces they were to organise, were seen as being more reliable. This approach offered the advantage of creating alternatives, reducing the local leaders’ room for maneuver. By far, the most active was a certain Grigore Nucu, responsible for Banat and Transylvania. Capable of speaking to Roma in Romanes, Romanian, but also in Hungarian, he proved to be very efficient,

managing to create dozens of centers and sub-centers in many localities, affiliating them with AUGRR. His actions were visible not only in *Glasul Romilor*, but also in the central and local non-Roma press, in the police reports, as well as in the studies authored by Aurel Boia and Ion Chelcea. Through him, Gh. Niculescu could expand AUGRR in Transylvania despite lacking the support of Transylvanian leaders such as Brașoveanu, Zima, Zorilă, Velțeanu, Naftanailă, etc.

AUGRR's campaigns intensified at the end of the 1930s, culminating during the Carlist regime (1938–1940), when AUGRR announced that it had 450,000 registered members. Although this number is highly exaggerated, AUGRR was nevertheless the only Roma Union that managed to attract a large number of Roma, far more than AGȚR and UGRR.

As it grew stronger, AUGRR began to enjoy more attention from various authorities, be they the Orthodox Church, the Police, local authorities or politicians searching for votes. The premises for various collaborations appeared, which AUGRR also took advantage of. In general, AUGRR tried to find strong protectors whom it named honorary presidents and generally found them either in the person of the Patriarch, in various ministers of the PNL government, but also in senior police and gendarmerie officers etc. In some cases, the Roma were told who to vote for (the politicians from the ruling party), at other times, Gh. Niculescu did services to the law enforcement agencies etc.

The relation with the Orthodox Church proved very important for the AUGRR. In the beginning, Lăzurică had ascendancy over Niculescu. The Church had worked with Lăzurică, not with Niculescu who had received missionary cards only at the insistence of Lăzurică. In fact, in the summer of 1934, after his forced resignation, Lăzurică asked the Orthodox Church to withdraw the missionary cards from the Niculescu brothers, which the Church did (Nastasă & Varga, 2001, doc. 54, pp. 151–152). What saved Gh. Niculescu was the fact that, in the meantime, he had contributed to a collective baptism of Roma in Ploiești, on October 14, 1934, an event that had also enjoyed the presence of the Patriarch. When asked to hand over the missionary cards, it was therefore easy for him to demonstrate both organisational efficiency and loyalty to the Church. In addition, Niculescu was able to make use of some more compromising documents against Lăzurică (among which the complaint of a doctor from Satu Mare from which it appeared that Lăzurică was selling the positions of branch presidents and, very importantly, Șerboianu's letter denouncing Lăzurică's duplicitous attitude towards the Orthodox Church).

These documents must have impressed because starting with the fall of 1934, the Church focused exclusively on Gh. Niculescu's AUGRR. Over the years, the Union organised, together with the Church, numerous collective ceremonies (baptism, marriages) in Ploiești, Giurgiu, Bărbulești, Tinca etc, but also conversions (especially of Muslim Roma). These events enjoyed the presence not only of the AUGRR leadership, but also of the Church and of local politicians, attracting the support of the authorities (Matei, 2010, pp. 169–171). For example, in October 1934, the City Hall of Ploiești offered AUGRR two acres of land in order to help sedentarise the nomadic Roma baptised on October 14, 1934 (*Glasul Romilor*, 1934a, p. 1; 1934b, p. 3).

The year 1937 was particularly difficult for Gh. Niculescu and AUGRR as there were several rounds of elections. This contributed to the emergence of dissidents within AUGRR, which was amplified by the collaboration between Șerboianu and Lăzurică with the National Christian Party (PNC). Given the importance of the 1937 elections, all those who were credited with the potential to mobilise votes, including the Roma, were approached by various political parties with various promises. As AUGRR claimed to be apolitical, some local Roma leaders felt deprived of their freedom to negotiate and get involved with certain parties which made them relevant offers. As a result, some Roma leaders ignored Niculescu and entered negotiations with those political parties (such as Lazăr Naftanailă from Făgăraș with PNC, Aurel Manolescu from Dolj with PNT and later with PNC, and Anton Zorilă from Sibiu with PNT). Gh. Niculescu's reaction was to intervene with the authorities, claiming that only AUGRR was entitled to represent the Roma and demanding a ban on the actions of these local leaders. Another action he took was to sue them (*Glasul Romilor*, 1937a, p. 3).

In July 1937, in this already tumultuous context, the movement initiated by Șerboianu and Lăzurică appeared. They became formidable competitors for Niculescu as both had experience as Roma organisers. Besides, as allies of the National Christian Party (PNC), they could count on some material funds and on the trampoline represented by the newspaper *Țara Noastră* which, every Sunday, published a special edition for Roma. In addition, they tried to capitalise on the dissatisfaction accumulated in the meantime with the Niculescu brothers' discretionary way of leading AUGRR and the Roma community. Șerboianu and Lăzurică claimed that, at the beginning of July 1937, the leaders of the county branches, displeased with Niculescu's leadership, had allegedly met in Bucharest to dismiss Niculescu and the other members of the AUGRR central committee.

The news was nothing but an invention to cause confusion among AUGRR members in the territory (*Țara Noastră*, 1937c, p. 4). It was not very different from what Niculescu had done in May-June 1934 when he replaced Lăzurică. Șerboianu and Lăzurică also appealed to Gh. Niculescu's collaborators to abandon him, promising them that they would keep their leadership positions in the new organisation. (*Țara Noastră*, 1937d, p. 4). To these actions, Niculescu responded in several ways: he addressed the PNC leaders in an open letter asking them to withdraw the support offered to his rivals (*Glasul Romilor*, 1937c, p. 1), AUGRR denied the allegations that the Niculescu brothers had been fired, and organised Roma rallies in Bucharest in order to demonstrate the support Niculescu continued to enjoy. In addition, documents and letters were published in an attempt to compromise Lăzurică and Șerboianu accused of taking advantage of the Roma, although they were not Roma. More precisely, Lăzurică wanted to get rich and had political ambitions, while Șerboianu was accused of homosexuality, for which reason he had allegedly been demoted from the rank of archimandrite. (*Glasul Romilor*, 1937d, pp. 2-4). Șerboianu and Lăzurică sued the Niculescu brothers for slander (*Lumea Românească*, 1937a, p. 5), a gesture the latter immediately replicated (*Țara Noastră*, 1937i, p. 2).

As the elections approached, the Roma leaders started organising events to demonstrate to Roma and political parties that they were the true representatives of the Roma. After a series of events in Vlaşca County, Lăzurică intended to organise for November 8, 1937, in Craiova, a larger gathering of Roma in support of the PNC. In reply, on November 4, 1937, Niculescu addressed the Minister of Interior, requesting “to order the prohibition of this congress and to give orders to the prefect of Dolj County to have the mayors inform the Roma in their communes that there was no congress whatsoever” (Nastasă & Varga, 2001, doc. 126, pp. 238–239). Following these interventions by AUGRR, the prefect of Dolj County banned the congress on November 8, “for the reason that the statute of the organisation prohibits affiliation to political parties” (Ibid., doc. 127, p. 240).

Despite its own statements and statute, AUGRR was not politically neutral, but supported the ruling party, then PNL. It had done so both in 1935–1936, on the occasion of various intermediate elections, and it did even more so in 1937. In order to prove that he enjoyed a greater support than that of Şerboianu and Lăzurică, Gh. Niculescu addressed, on October 28, 1937, the prime minister Gh. Tătărescu (from PNL) asking for support for the organisation of a general congress of the Roma which was supposed to take place at the end of November, in Bucharest. Given the good relationship between PNL and AUGRR, the government initially agreed to this congress (reduced fees for train tickets and some financial aid). However, because of the unfavourable political evolution (Tătărescu government’s deposition on November 14 and reinvestment only on November 17), the Police disapproved of this event on November 16, 1937, and invoked the unclear political situation and the conflict between the Roma organisations which was referred to the Ilfov Prosecutor’s Office (Ibid., doc. 128, p. 241).

The AUGRR leadership was willing to collaborate further with PNL to which it offered the Roma votes. A few days before elections, news appeared in the press that AUGRR had decided to support PNL. On December 20, 1937, the newspapers announced, for example, that the Roma in Sibiu would receive financial “aid” to vote for the PNL lists, with hundreds of Roma storming the Sibiu County prefecture (Lumea Românească, 1937b, p. 5). Other branches of AUGRR also followed the line dictated by the center to vote PNL (Conştiinţa Naţională, 1937, p. 2).

Gh. Niculescu and his AUGRR went through a tense period between December 1937 and February 1938, when PNC formed the government. It was the same party that had concluded an electoral agreement with Niculescu’s rivals. Hence, Şerboianu and Lăzurică gained a new impetus, and some of Niculescu’s former supporters sided with Lăzurică and Şerboianu. For example, on February 2, 1938, a Roma assembly chaired by Lăzurică could be held in Craiova. It was the same place where at the beginning of November, during the PNL government, a similar gathering had been forbidden due to the local AUGRR branch. Now, the very same branch abandoned Niculescu (Nastasă & Varga, 2001, doc. 131, pp. 242–244).

Fortunately for Gh. Niculescu, the PNC government lasted less than two months, and the support received by Şerboianu and Lăzurică disappeared. Moreover, the new

authoritarian regime abolished the political parties, and, with them, the associations affiliated or seen as close to these parties. Șerboianu and Lăzurică's organisation was in this situation. Unlike them, AUGRR could claim that it was apolitical (according to its statute) (*Glasul Romilor*, 1938a, p. 4). Besides, although AUGRR had also been politically involved, it had done so in favour of the PNL (and many of the former PNL leaders had turned into leaders of the new Carlist regime). Since the spring of 1938, Șerboianu and Lăzurică posed no threat to Niculescu. Being rid of competitors, AUGRR developed a lot in the next two years. Its *Glasul Romilor* appeared twice a year (on Easter and the Day of the Royal Restoration, a sign of political opportunism, the AUGRR leaders showing their devotion to the King and the Dynasty). Moreover, when the King founded the National Renaissance Front (Romania's single party), Gh. Niculescu together with the AUGRR leadership became members of this Front, asking the Roma to do the same, probably in the hope that the authorities would be more sensitive to the wishes of the Roma (*Glasul Romilor*, 1939, pp. 3–4).

AUGRR continued its activity and made numerous interventions with the authorities to find solutions to the problems reported by its branches: manuals for Roma children, suspension of forced relocations, approval of cultural events, land allotment, firewood, reduced taxes for musicians (*Glasul Romilor*, 1940, p. 4), in addition to the older benefits such as legal and medical assistance for members in Bucharest. The charity balls and the actions to help the needy members continued. AUGRR even financed a group of twelve Roma dancers, recruited from its members, who were sent to Paris where they gave performances (*Glasul Romilor*, 1938b, p. 4).

Following the territorial losses in the summer of 1940, King Carol II was forced to abdicate in early September 1940. He was succeeded by his son, King Mihai, but the effective power was exercised by a coalition between the legionaries and General Ion Antonescu (September 1940–23 January 1941), followed by the military dictatorship of Antonescu (January 1941 – August 1944). During the legionary regime, the attitude towards the Roma became considerably radicalised, as the legionary press started to publish harsh articles against the Roma, where racial and eugenicist arguments were invoked.

The last issue of the newspaper *Glasul Romilor* appeared in April 1941, a few months after the suppression of the legionary rebellion and the elimination of the legionaries from the government. Gh. Niculescu responded with an article in which he tried to dismantle the recent accusations that Roma would represent a racial problem for Romanians. According to him, the possible laggings were not due to the genetic baggage, but to the ignorance of the real problems of the Roma. If action had been taken in time, that problem would have been long gone. In addition, the Roma were faithful to the Romanians:

They do not present, we believe, any danger to the security and sovereignty of the Romanian people. Whenever needed by the country, they were always side by side with the Romanian brothers and they did not desert when they had to defend their homeland, showing bravery in the battles that the Romanian people waged against those trying to conquer our

homeland. The Roma were not deserters, traitors, or spies, and where they were put to work, they worked without a murmur. [...] That they are lagging behind is not their fault. Should anyone had taken a closer look at these troubled people in the past, we can assure you that their fate would have changed a lot. (*Glasul Romilor*, 1941, p. 3).

After April 1941, there are few documents about the Roma movement during the war, as AUGRR suspended its activity. However, in September 1942, in the context of the deportation of sedentary Roma from Bucharest, Gheorghe Niculescu intervened with the authorities to stop the deportations. His interventions had no effect and the Roma deportations continued.

At the beginning of 1945, AUGRR resumed its activity under the leadership of Gh. Niculescu. Apart from a few objectives corresponding to the postwar period (such as material and moral help for the Roma victims of deportations and land allotment within the newly discussed agrarian reform), AUGRR's program was similar to that of the 1930s (Achim, 2010, p. 454).

The central leadership of AUGRR did not enjoy the trust of the new communist authorities. As a merchant, Gh. Niculescu was seen as a 'bourgeois' and in the 1930s, AUGRR had pursued PNL's policy. Gh. Niculescu reoriented himself, but not fast and convincing enough. Until 1937, AUGRR had supported the liberal government led by Gh. Tătărescu. After the war, the former prime minister broke away from PNL and founded the PNL – Tătărescu, which collaborated with the communists. One of Tătărescu's collaborators was a certain Petru Bejan who held the position of Minister of Industry and Commerce in the communist government. Bejan had been an older collaborator of the AUGRR in the late 1930s. By virtue of these relations, Gh. Niculescu addressed Petru Bejan on August 7, 1946, proposing a collaboration on the occasion of the parliamentary elections of November 19, 1946: Roma votes for having some Roma candidates on the PNL – Tătărescu lists. The communist authorities were dissatisfied and put pressure on AUGRR to give up this initiative (Achim, 2010, p. 454).

Basically, the political initiatives of the AUGRR leadership were discouraged by the communist authorities which, however, addressed the Roma directly. For example, in the same context of the November 1946 elections, the Bloc of Democratic Parties (the communist-led electoral alliance) addressed the Roma through special manifestos, using the formula 'Roma Brothers and Roma Sisters!'. Authorities avoided central leadership, but occasionally collaborated with some local Roma organisations. Subsequently, in the summer of 1947, the AUGRR leadership reoriented itself and began to cooperate intensely with the communist authorities, while many members of the committee became members of the communist or communist-led parties. Gh. Niculescu did the same, becoming a member of the National People's Party (*Partidul Național Popular*), an ally of the communists.

In the spring of 1948, on the occasion of the elections, the AUGRR Central Committee urged the Roma to vote for the Communist-led Popular Democracy Front, Roma leaders held electoral rallies in support of the communists, and Gh. Niculescu launched

a manifesto calling on the Roma where he presented himself as “comrade” Niculescu (DANIC, fond DGP, dos. 87/1943, f. 356–357).

In June 1948, several members disapproved by the authorities for their bourgeois origin were removed from the central committee. Gh. Niculescu continued to remain the president of AUGRR, but was seconded by a certain Petre Rădiță, a medical assistant, who became the new General Secretary of AUGRR (Achim, 2010, p. 456). In October 1948, a report by the Police on AUGRR, led by Gh. Niculescu and Petre Rădiță, appreciated it for being democratic and fighting for the inclusion of all Roma in trade unions and “democratic” parties (Ibid., f. 370).

Despite this collaboration between 1947–1948, the authorities decided on January 25, 1949, to abolish the AUGRR. Surprised, the Roma leaders tried to find a solution and created a new organisation, the People’s Union of Roma in Romania. Considered a bourgeois element and therefore compromised, Gh. Niculescu was excluded from the leadership of the new Union. The chairman of this initiative committee was Petre Rădiță, seconded by other Roma who had become members of the communist party and other communist-led parties. Despite the efforts of the new committee, the Union was not recognised by the communist regime, which resulted in the Roma being refused the status of an ethnic minority until 1989 (Achim, 2010, p. 457–460).

No details are known about the subsequent fate of Gh. Niculescu. After the fall of communism and the recognition of the Roma as an ethnic minority since 1989, a process of recovering some symbols began, including the interwar Roma movement. However, to date, it plays a minor role compared to the attention paid to slavery and deportation.

Constantin S. Nicolăescu-Plopșor

Raluca Bianca Roman

Constantin S. Nicolăescu-Plopșor (April 20, 1900 – May 30, 1968) was a well-known Romanian Roma historian, ethnologist, archaeologist, folklorist, anthropologist, who was crucial to the shaping of the Roma movement in Romania, primarily the Oltenia group of Roma activists in the country. Nicolăescu-Plopșor was an active and productive member of the Oltenia group of the Roma emancipation movement in interwar Romania, writing in the two regional Roma newspapers of the time (*O Rom* and *Timpul*), as well as producing two key manuscripts of Roma folklore – *Gypsy Songs* and *Gypsy Fairy Tales* (Nicolăescu-Plopșor, 1934ab). However, his role in the Roma emancipation movement was not limited to his literary productivity. In fact, his intentions and ideas of creating a Roma Museum, a Roma University and a Roma Library, though never materialised fully, were evocative aspects of the desire for creating a Roma national legacy, in the context of the Roma movement in the country during the interwar period, and illustrative of the drive to social emancipation among the Roma intellectuals in the country. These also

illustrate the ways in which the Roma movement in the country can be seen as being intrinsically tied to the shapes that national revival movements often take, wherein, as evoked by Miroslav Hroch (1985), a first phase comprises the attempts of a small group of Roma intellectuals to raise a sense national consciousness and national belonging among members of their communities, mainly by a focus placed on the history, folklore, and culture of the Roma. Through this, Plopşor's work towards achieving these goals are crucial in understanding the shape of the movement in the country. Furthermore, through his contributions to Roma folklore, Plopşor has left a marked legacy in the development of Roma literature in the country.

Interestingly, beyond the Roma topic, Plopşor has also made a significant impact on the history of Oltenia, being a vastly productive writer and scholar. Between 1946 and 1953 he was the director of the Museum of Oltenia, which he helped develop. Based on his long-standing scholarly work, in 1963, he received the title of 'Corresponding Member' from the Romanian Academy of Sciences, a highly prestigious position within the Romanian academic hierarchy. His multi-faceted work in history, folklore, ethnology, and archaeology has been vastly influential in the shaping of Romanian history, as well as in the work produced by the Oltenia circle of Roma intellectuals during the interwar period.

Coming from a mixed family (his father Roma/Gypsy and his mother Romanian), his background was not only complex but also relevant in the shaping of his career and life trajectory. This portrait will therefore highlight the main scholarly achievements made by C. S. Nicolăescu-Plopşor, which emphasise his overarching approach and the impact he has had on the shape of the Roma emancipation movement in the country, as well as on the broader fields of Romanian archaeology, history, and scholarship. His trajectory is both characteristic of regional scholars in Romania, who had reached the peak of their career within their discipline (in this case, archaeology) and an extraordinary one for a man coming from a Roma background. His work on issues of Roma folklore is both evocative of his interest in his community folklore and his general academic curiosity. While the focus will primarily be on the works connected to the shaping of the Roma emancipation movement in the country, introducing his broader impact on the Romanian academic world, as well as his background, are important in order to understand and contextualise his contribution to the Roma movement in Romania, as well as the overarching influence that some Roma scholars have had in the broader academic field in the country.

Constantin S. Nicolăescu-Plopşor was born in the village of Plopşor, the commune of Sălcuţa, Dolj County, on April 20, 1900. Not much is known about his Roma background and there are not sufficient academic sources to speculate in this direction. Even Dragomira Stanca, Constantin S. Nicolăescu-Plopşor's daughter, in her memoir, seems to bypass any mention of Plopşor's background. Nevertheless, both in academic texts (Achim, 1998, p. 152) and in mainstream newspaper articles retelling the family history, he is often mentioned as having a mixed-Roma background (Gazeta de Sud, 2014; Jurnalul.ro, 2009; Observatorul, 2012). Furthermore, it is important to point out that, thus far, most

of the materials available on Plopşor concern his broader academic trajectory and little is discussed about either his work on Roma folklore, Roma emancipation or his Roma background. This may underline the fact that his work on Roma and his contribution to the Roma movement in the country was largely overlooked by the mainstream academic community, in favour of his work in the field of archaeology.

In terms of his background, and the gradual shaping of his academic life and academic achievements, the few materials that are available seem to retell the 'story' of the Plopşor family, but with no historical sources (see *Gazeta de Sud*, 2014). Nevertheless, it is useful to underline that which some of these publications seem to emphasise. According to them, Plopşor was born into a mixed family (his mother was Romanian, his father Roma/Gypsy). His family background from his mother's side is the one that is best known, primarily through the ways in which both his family (namely, his daughter) and the available materials seem to underline a historical connection he is said to have had to key figures in Oltenian history (more on this below). Little else, however, is known (or written) about the Roma background of Plopşor. This could be due to several reasons, including the family's potential preference not to talk about it. Given that mixed marriages were the exception rather than the rule, the mother's marriage into a Gypsy family may have sparked controversy and a preference to keep that as silent as possible. It is perhaps also in this context that Plopşor's background is often emphasised in retellings of his life in an almost romanticised way as connected to the shaping of Oltenian history more broadly.

As an example of these forms of romanticisation, two online publications looking at Plopşor's general work (*Observatorul*, 2012) and the 'story' of the Plopşor family tells (*Gazeta de Sud*, 2014), highlight that his mother was the granddaughter of Dincă Schileru, a legendary figure within Oltenian history and, allegedly, the first Oltenian peasant to be part of the Romanian Parliament in one of the two ad-Hoc divans (legislative and consultative assemblies of Wallachia and Moldova, and vassals of the Ottoman Empire) in 1857, in Bucharest, which later led to the unification of Wallachia and Moldova in 1859, under the rule of Alexandru Ioan Cuza. The result of this unification was, in fact, the beginning of the formation of modern-day Romania. While this connection is likely to have been exaggerated and romanticised, it also helps in underlining how oral and life histories also bring in elements which aim to emphasise the importance of the person's background, often in connecting it to large figures (legendary or not) in the history of the region or country in question (in this case, a connection to the shaping of Oltenian history). Unfortunately, at the time of writing, no archival sources were found concerning this matter and the articles mentioned above also seem to have been written without historical references.

Nevertheless, these stories are interesting in themselves as they fit with the tendency for mystification of a person's historical background in the retelling of history, wherein particular key individuals of crucial importance are said to be part of a person's genealogy. Furthermore, what is underlined in these narrations is that Plopşor's great-grandfather was particularly influential in shaping the intellectual and educational life of

his own village, where he built the family mansion and helped build the local church and school. This, again, would undeniably showcase the ways in which the person's backstory influenced their life and work. While these connections were hard to verify with archival source materials, the schools and mansions which bear the Ploșor name are still standing and Ploșor's own influence in the area is indeed reflected also in the name of the local high school, which presently bear his name (Observatorul, 2012).

These notes concerning Ploșor's family background, albeit incomplete and fragmentary, are nevertheless important as Nicolăescu-Ploșor's background differed significantly from most Roma/Gypsy children at the time, having received schooling from an early age. Beyond the focus placed on a connection with legendary figures in the history of the region, what is clear, from historical sources, is that Ploșor finished both primary and secondary schools in Oltenia, the city of Craiova, where he developed a love for history. He went on to continue his university studies in Bucharest, at the Faculty of History, University of Bucharest, where he became a disciple of the Romanian historian Vasile Pârvan (Jurnalul.ro, 2009). After finishing his university studies, Ploșor returned to Oltenia, where he worked as a history teacher in the village of Plenița. Among other things, during his time as a history teacher he published a monograph of the village (Jurnalul.ro, 2009; Observatorul, 2012; Stanca, 2013).

Prior to his involvement within the Roma movement in Romania during the interwar period, his main focus and area of activity was archaeology, primarily focusing on his native region of Oltenia. In 1922, he thus became an honorary director of the Museum of Oltenia (i.e. associated director), and the head of the Archaeology and Folklore Section of the Museum. During the following years, and throughout his career, he would become a key researcher of the history of the region, with his work remaining influential to this day.

However, alongside his interest in archaeology was his interest in folklore (something typical for many local history scholars), which would influence also his visions concerning the establishment of a Roma library, later in his career. These activities were interconnected, as many of the poems, songs, fairy tales and stories he collected were gathered during his archaeological digs. As many of his friends I have talked to recollect, Ploșor had the habit of conducting extensive interviews and conversations with people in the villages where his archaeological work was conducted, which ultimately led to him gathering a vast amount of folkloristic material alongside his other work (Toma Rădulescu, personal communication, July 10, 2019). He was particularly interested in so-called elder songs (*cântece bătrânești*), poems, fables and other folklore materials, which he collected dilligently and collated in his various notes and diaries.

Throughout the interwar period (and beyond), Ploșor collected folklore, all from the region of Oltenia. In fact, Ploșor wrote and edited several special issues on the history of Oltenia. As such, he set up, edited and contributed to regional folklore volumes (such as *Suflet oltenesc, Oltenia*), published a regional-themed book collection, under the name of *Pământ și suflet oltenesc* (Oltenian Land and Spirit) and edited a cultural magazine,

Gând și slovă oltenească (Oltenian Thinking and Writing), famous within the field, especially during the interwar period. He also edited and published in the religious collection, *Măglăvit. Foae oficială a Comitetului Așezământului Evanghelic dela Măglăvit*. (Măglăvit, 1935).

Connected to his interest in collecting, preserving and publishing Romanian folklore, Ploșor dedicated a vast amount of time to collecting, publishing and preserving Romanian Roma/Gypsy folklore in its great variety. In fact, the two activities were not separated from each other, as the Roma folklore pieces he collected were gathered much in the same way in which he had done with the Romanian folklore: oftentimes during his work on archaeological sites and through conversations and interviews with the local communities. As far as is known, the Roma Songs and the Roma Fairy Tales published by Ploșor in various outlets had all been collected from Ursari Gypsies in Gaubaucea-Dolj (a County in Southern Romania, Oltenia) (Nicolăescu-Ploșor, 1934a, p. 30, 1934b, p. 32), an area where most of his other work had also been conducted. Ursari Gypsies in Oltenia were the predominant Roma group in the region at the time (and even today). Again, these collecting activities were always concomitant with his archaeological work and his collection of Romanian folklore materials more broadly, which once again highlights the ways in which Nicolăescu-Ploșor saw Roma folklore as part of Romanian folklore more broadly (or, better put, as the two being intertwined and intrinsically connected with each other). His far-reaching academic interest was also characteristic of the ways in which regional scholarship was being developed (i.e. looking at broad issues that connect to the history of the region, including materials pertaining to minority, in this case Roma, groups). Once again, Ploșor's academic trajectory, albeit quite typical for a local historian, appears to be unique in terms of the other Roma activists during the interwar period. He was an accomplished academic, interested in broader issues facing his region's history, culture and folklore (including, but not exclusively, Roma-focused).

It was also during the early 1930s, however, that Ploșor also became more clearly connected to the broader Roma movement in the country, which was aimed – both at the emancipation of the Roma community in the country and at the shaping of Roma literature, folklore, and history as crucial for the future of the Roma in Romania. While it is unclear if his earlier folklore collecting work was connected to the Roma movement developing across the country or whether it was based on his personal interest (and personal history) in the preservation of Roma folklore, the important thing to note is that in the 1930s Ploșor became most clearly involved with the social and political agendas of the Oltenia branch of the Roma civic emancipation movement in the country, often referred to as the Oltenian 'circle' of the Roma movement (Timpul 1934a, p. 4). He did so by allying himself with several other Oltenian intellectuals, Aurel Manolescu-Dolj (a journalist), N. St. Ionescu (a lawyer), Marin I. Simion (a poet), all from the city of Craiova. Together, they set up the first Roma organisation in Oltenia, called the regional circle of the Association General of the Gypsies in Oltenia (Achim, 1998, pp. 156–157).

Initially, as its title also suggests, this organisation was collaborating and connected to the central organisation run by Calinic I. Popp Șerboianu, and also called the General Association of Gypsies in Romania (the Oltenia branch) (*Timpul* 1934a, p. 4). Additionally, they collaborated with local and regional traditional Gypsy leaders, such as *bulibașa*. Together, during the interwar period these Oltenian Roma intellectuals contributed to the publication of two regional Roma newspapers: *Timpul* (The Time, from Romanian language) and *O Rom* (The Roma, from Romani language). While *Timpul* had not originally been a Roma-newspaper, but one focused on regional news and issues, its editor, Aurel Th. Manolescu-Dolj, gradually shifted the focus of the publication to a more clearly Gypsy/Roma focused one. For example, in the newspaper *Timpul*, published in Craiova 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). This shift in title/subtitle quite evidently shows the gradual raising awareness (and, of course, interest) of Aurel Th. Manolescu-Dolj of his Roma background while at the same time highlighting the gradual development of the Roma movement in Oltenia, to which Nicolăescu-Plopșor would also become connected.

C. S. Nicolăescu-Plopșor also published articles in the newspaper *O Rom* and his work was mentioned by the other Roma intellectuals in Craiova. One of the most important in this respect, and most clearly showcasing Plopșor's vision of the Roma emancipation movement, is an article evocatively titled "Roma house, school and church" (*O Rom*, 1934b, p. 1). The article is, in effect, a clear summary of the ways in which Plopșor saw and approached the cultural movement among the Roma, with a focus on setting up the *O Rom* Library. Given the importance of this article in showcasing Plopșor's position, below is a reproduction of the text in its entirety.

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 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, fairy tales, 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.

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 who 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 fairy tales, 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. C. S. Nicolaescu-Plopșor.

Editor of the *O Rom* Library. (O Rom, 1934b, p. 1).

There are several elements within this article which are worthy of noting, which connect to all three focuses mentioned directly by Plopșor:

1) The Roma House. This would have, in effect, be an interwar form of a Roma 'Institute', comprising a Roma Library, and ethnographic collection and anything related to the history of the Roma in the country. Undoubtedly, this initiative also reflects a clear manifestation for national revival and civic emancipation with the focus on the folklore, history and culture of their community in order to establish a sense of national belonging and national consciousness among their fellow members. The establishment of a Roma House would have also meant the existence of a tangible museum, where actual artefacts connected to Roma culture and traditions (i.e., folk-art) would have been preserved and displayed. Museums, especially national museums, have been pathways of strengthening and building national identity and, particularly in the 19th century and at the start of the 20th century, connected to the shaping of the symbols of the nations, wherein key characteristics of the 'nation' were preserved and displayed. The establishment of a Roma House (or Roma Museum), in this case, would undoubtedly follow the general model of the establishment of national museums in Eastern Europe, which were shaped on an understanding of folk tradition as an expression of the 'national spirit' (Volkgeist) (Marushiakova & Popov, 2016d, p. 173). The establishment of a Roma House, therefore, fits in with the overall practice of establishing national museums across the regions, where all elements displaying or showcasing the 'ethnic' spirit would be preserved. In fact, this intention was made quite clear in Plopșor's statement above: "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" (*O Rom*, 1934b, p. 1).

Again, undoubtedly, this would have been a great achievement during that period and reflected the visions of Plopşor and the Oltenia circle in this direction. As will be discussed later on, no such Roma House would eventually be founded, but the intentions evoked the path on which the Roma intellectuals in Oltenia during the interwar period saw the Roma emancipation movement embarking on. That said, one part of these intentions did eventually manifest in practice: namely, the establishment of the *O Rom* Library, and the publication of two bilingual books in Romani and Romanian languages (Nicolăescu-Plopşor, 1934a, 1934b). These developments will be discussed in more detail below.

2) The Roma Church. Especially in connection with the issue of church services in Romani language, which Plopşor often advocated on a grassroots level, the article states: "The Roma can and must necessarily have their own church in which their priests may serve and preach in their own language." (*O Rom*, 1934b, p. 1) This, in effect, also emphasised Plopşor's view of the necessity to establish cultural institutions for the Roma, which would operate and function in Romani language. Again, this reflects the elements which he saw as needed in the national revival process among the Roma in the country. Given the central importance occupied by the Orthodox Church within Romania (as well as within other countries in the region) and its connection to the expression of national belonging, the proposal for Roma to have their own church, with services in Romani language, was particularly important in revealing the emphasis placed on mother tongue services to be provided within national institutions, and as manifestations of the Roma nation as being equal to all other nations. According to one of his close friends, Plopşor even presided over church services in Romani language in his local Orthodox church in the village of Pleniţa (Toma Rădulescu, personal communication, July 10, 2019). If this was the case, he not only advocated this within the various manifestos for the Roma movement, but implemented it in everyday practice. In any case, the emphasis placed on the establishment of the Roma Church, much like that of a Roma House and a Roma School, illustrates the emphasis placed by Plopşor, and the Craiova circle (at the very least) on the means of creating and fostering the sense of national consciousness among the Roma, while also manifesting it as a form of Roma nation building, and emphasising their perception of Roma as a nation equal to all others.

3) The Roma School. This third focus point also connects to the previous one, as it also underlines the issue of mother tongue, this time in the sphere of education and schooling of Roma children. Here, it would seem that Plopşor was advocating for a separate school within which Roma teachers would teach Roma students in Romani language, using their own textbooks. This is particularly interesting and on first glance in contradiction to another focus of the Roma emancipation movement, especially in Bucharest, which underlined the importance of "assimilation" and sedentarisation, as means of emphasising the national identity (i.e. Romanian identity) of Roma in the country. Connectedly,

they often aimed to present Roma not as a minority, but as equal members of the Romanian society. The plea for the establishment of a Roma School, as well as a Roma church, could be understood as forms and manifestations of Roma nation building. However, in this case, it also underlines the complexity of the arguments embedded within the Roma emancipation movement in interwar Romania, wherein ideas of Roma national revival (and the development of community belonging consciousness) was combined with the ideas of Romanian national belonging (i.e. as members of the Romanian nation). This clearly illustrates that Roma activists and scholars, including Plopşor himself, acknowledged and emphasised that Roma were, at one and the same time, both members of their respective communities, and integral members of the majority societies they inhabited. The article above thus eloquently summarises and introduces all of these points.

The fact that Nicolăescu-Plopşor was invited to write in the newspaper *O Rom*, even if for a short time, showcases the important position he held among other Roma intellectuals in the region. As a Roma scholar, he was often praised for his education and held as an example of Roma reaching high levels of Romanian academic spheres. The situation, however, soon changed in terms of allegiances, with several of the Roma intellectuals in Oltenia each declaring themselves as leaders of the Roma in Oltenia, more specifically as the Roma 'Voievod' (Achiim, 1998, pp. 156–157). It was also around that time that Nicolăescu-Plopşor seems to have distanced himself from the latter group, though the process of this dissociation remains unclear.

While this dissociation was never addressed directly by Plopşor himself, we have several hints in this direction reflected in different issues of the newspaper *Timpul*. The content of the newspaper, for example, broadly moves away from praising the historian and archeologist for his efforts in supporting the Roma cause and publicising his works, including the *O Rom* Library and the two connected publications, *Ghilea Romane* (Gypsy Songs) and *Paramisea Romane* (Gypsy Fairy Tales) (Nicolăescu-Plopşor, 1934a, 1934b). This can be seen, for instance, in the issues 38–39 of the newspaper, where not only are the efforts of Nicolăescu-Plopşor to collect Roma folklore lauded but his connection to the *O Rom* Library are emphasised (Timpul, 1934a, p. 4; 1934b, p.2, 4).

For instance, in an article from June 10th 1934, issue 38–39, titled *From A.G.A.Ț* [i.e. AGȚR – author note] in *Craiova*, and which discusses the *O Rom* Library initiatives, it states: "The effort for this library was made entirely by our well-known C. S. Nicolaescu-Plopşor, the only literate from Oltenia who knows our Gypsy language and writing perfectly." (Timpul 1934a, p. 4).

Furthermore, on August 12, 1934, in issue number 42–43, in an article titled *O Rom* (*Țiganul*) [The Rom (The Gypsy)], the endeavour to establish the *O Rom* Library is discussed more in depth and Plopşor is mentioned in high esteem.

In order to promote the taste for literature among the Roma masses, we have shared our idea to the person who has lifted the flag of "*Roma emancipation*", Mr. Marin I. Simion, "*Voievod of Roma in Oltenia*", the person who swore sacrifice until death in order to uplift Roma to the level of human times.

Without waiting, the *“Voievod of Roma in Oltenia”* has immediately enabled the editing of the *O Rom* Library.

Immediately the editor of the library was also found, in the person of the well-known professor and literary man, Mr. Dr. C. S. Nicolăescu-Plopșor, the General Secretary of the Dolj “Georgist” organisation – the only one from the Romanian society writers who would be able to edit it in an admirable fashion.

Mr. Plopșor is considered a unique person, who perfectly knows the language, writing and all humanly customs of the Roma.

The moral success of this library has lived up to its expectations. Great honour to Mr. Dr. C. S. Nicolăescu-Plopșor, who has since then received an honorific title, passed from mouth to mouth, as: *“Vătaf of Roma”*.

From that moment onwards, his person has been written in the history of the Roma, because he is the first writer of modern Romania who has gained great success in the field of literature! His new writing has opened up to a great extent, the minds of the Roma, enabling them to open up, in the future, their taste for reading. (Timpul, 1934b, p. 2).

What is noticeable in the above is the fact that Plopșor is not introduced by the writers as a Roma/Gypsy, but as an educated man who knows the Gypsy language. In fact, from what we know, Plopșor never presented himself as a Roma/Gypsy. He is praised on several occasions as being one of “the first writer of modern Romania” and “the only one from the Romanian society writers” who would be able to edit the *O Rom* Library, as well as one of the first to be able to open up the taste for literature among the Roma. From this, and from a later crucial article, one can assume that the writers believed Plopșor to be a Romanian scholar who was interested in the Roma cause, and that he potentially introduced himself as a Romanian scholar to the Craiova circle. What was important was that a well-known intellectual from the region was interested and devoted to the Roma cause and had mapped out key strategies in the process of Roma nation building which would fit with the aims and goals of the broader Oltenia circle of Roma intellectuals.

However, not long after the above article was published, a shift could be noticed in the relationship between Plopșor and the leaders of the Oltenia circle of the General Association of Gypsies in Romania and, more specifically, the editor of the newspaper *Timpul*, Aurel Th. Manolescu-Dolj. This can be seen most clearly in an article from 1935, where the focus moves away from praise to criticism, calling Plopșor a “crook” and a “Gypsy”, the latter used as an insult. This change in attitude and relationship can be quite obviously seen in an article titled *Who is C. S. Nicolăescu-Plopșor? – The General Secretary of the Organ of the National Liberal Party in Dolj – An Ordinary Crook of the Political Life and an Ordinary Thief of the Literature Which He Published* (Timpul, 1935, p. 1). While the title itself evokes the shift, its content provides interesting elements which underline it. Below are key segments from it:

The Gypsy C. S. Nicolăescu, known as Plopșor, who under the mask of his hideous beard hides a cheek soured by the sweat that comes from the pores of his darkened skin, of Roma, whose origin he denies, being circled by the press who has begun to unmask his actions as a political crook, for fear that he will lose his “bone” – pardon me, his ost of “General

Secretary”, has begun to share “open letters”, published in the columns of a local paper of little importance. [...]

The *arșiolog*, collector of dead horse shoes, thinks that, through the letter published in “Jurnalul” and ending in an epigram will be able to continue to uphold his post as “Secretary” in the “Georgist” organisation in Dolj, given that from the one in Gorj he was excluded. [...]

We are surprised that this man Nicolăescu, known as Plopșor still benefits from the hospitality of “Jurnalul”! How come the leadership of this newspaper did not observe that the works of this Mr. Costica are not read, even by the most intimate friends of the author?

Doesn't everyone know that when we appealed to the “intelligence” of this “ursar” from Plopșor, to edit a library “O rom”- we were forced to cancel its publication because of how badly edited it was – motive for which almost all Roma revolted against?!

In vain does this “Rasputin” try to appear innocent in front of the public opinion.

Pressed by the door, this businessman of all political parties, is presently attacking Mr. Dr. M. Albu, the director of the “Mihai Bravu” sanatorium and Vice-President of the “Georgist” organisation in Dolj, who, for supporting a healthy idea, has launched a great weekly newspaper as never before seen in Oltenia and about which the “arșiolog” says that he has never heard.

The renegade from Plopsor, whom all the journals in town are unmasking as a Gypsy by origin holds, to our surprise the title of “General Secretary” of the “Georgist” organisation in Dolj, seeks to, through his attacks, which move away from the line set by Mr. George Bratianu – and thus compromising Mr. Gh. Cantacuzino, the head of the Dolj organisation, this sublime pillar of the “georgist” politics- blame Mr. Dr. Albu and classify him as a member of the “semitic” race.

This political crook makes up this untruths, thinking that they will find an echo in the public opinion. [...]

This is why, while the “arșiolog” Plopsor (who, we believe, actually comes from serbian lands) seeks to throw lies at our beloved onorific President, it is Plopsor himself who is being cleaned of all the honours we have “maybe” given him in the past. (Timpul, 1935, p. 1).

As one can clearly see from the segments presented above, the article is a clear rebuke and criticism of Plopșor, with whom the newspaper had previously been affiliated, from whom they clearly detach themselves and to who they now mockingly refer to as “arșiolog” (a mock derivativ from the Romanian term for archeologist). The article contains several themes which are of interest given the dynamics of the Roma movement during the interwar period, as well as the specifics of the Oltenian circle, including the volatile relationship between Roma leaders at the time, shifting political affiliations and shifting loyalties.

Perhaps the most important one for the emergence of the conflict is the fact that, it would seem, Plopsor had written an article in a local newspaper, where he called into question the background and actions Mr. Dr. Albu. The latter was not only the Vice-President of the PNL Brătianu in Dolj but was also the Honorific President of the Roma organisation in Dolj. The “Georgist” organisation in Dolf, mentioned several times throughout the newspaper, of which Plopșor was also a General Secretary, officially named the PNL Brătianu, was a right wing political party in Romania, formed from splitting from the national liberal one. Its founder was Gheorghe I. Brătianu, also mentioned in the article,

a Romanian historian and politician. Ploșșor actually stood as a candidate for the party in the 1934 elections for the Dolj County Council (Achim, 1998, p. 158). While previously supporting Ploșșor's candidacy, the editors of *Timpul* also appear to accuse Ploșșor in the article above of using the newspaper as a means of gaining public attention as part of his candidacy. All of these aspects are illustrated quite clearly in the segments above, while at the same time, emphasising the almost sudden split of Ploșșor from the broader Craiova circle of Roma activists, and the dynamics occurring on the ground in terms of political aspirations, affiliations and shifting relationships between Roma leaders in the region (but not only).

While, at this time, the article published by Ploșșor could not be located, some key points can be drawn from the attack against Ploșșor published in *Timpul*. According to it, Ploșșor allegedly made a reference to Mr. Dr. Albu as being of 'Semitic' race, which was seen by the editors of *Timpul* as an offence and a possible danger to the nationalistic position taken by members of the Craiova circle. This connected to the emphasis placed in *Timpul*, throughout, of Roma being full Romanian citizens, clearly distinguished from minorities in the country, of which they were not. Referring to the Jewish background of the Dr. would also have jeopardised the position taken by the PNL Brătianu at the time, which was nationalistic and focused on the rebuke of national minority demands.

This clearly shows the complicated nature of collaboration between main figures in Oltenia at the time, which was partially grounded in shifting political affiliations, as well as personal ambitions, animosities, jealousies and rivalry. In this way, the article above reflects the problematic issue of legitimacy of representation and the struggle for representative legitimacy manifested among Roma activists at the time. What is also interesting to note is that, apart from the mentioned newspaper article from *Jurnalul*, both according to the materials presently available, and to those who knew Ploșșor directly, Ploșșor never fully engaged in this strife and his dissociation was left as a silent matter (at least, publicly). The conflict or tension is even absent in the memoir of his daughter, Stanca Dragomira, whose book does not shy away from addressing the issues of politics and political struggles of her father (Stanca, 2013). There is, in fact, no mention of any of the other Roma leaders from Craiova in it. The reason for this absence is also unclear but it perhaps connects to Ploșșor's vast and diverse academic interests, and his broader academic pursuits, which would arguably have meant that he had little to gain from engaging in forms of rivalry and conflict within the Roma movement itself.

This may also be connected to the fact that, similarly to the lack of mention elsewhere, Dragomira Stanca does not seem to mention Ploșșor's Roma/Gypsy background in any form. In fact, some of Ploșșor's friends also seem to bypass this aspect of Ploșșor's life history (Toma Rădulescu, personal communication, July 10, 2019). And the few newspaper articles that do mention it, only do so in a passing manner (*Observatorul*, 2012). Whether this was a case of trying to hide this part of Ploșșor's history or background, as the *Timpul* article also seems to suggest, is unclear but this was certainly not an uncommon phenomenon among other educated Roma/Gypsies at the time (or their children),

a fact which was also mentioned in some of the articles published in Roma journals during the interwar period. However, these remain on the level of assumptions, as the information on this matter remains rather sparse.

With that being said, while the relationship between Plopşor and other Roma intellectuals in Oltenia may have been fluctuating, his actual interest in Roma history, folklore and literature was not. In fact, Plopşor carried on with his incentive to collect Roma-based materials throughout his career, even when his work no longer had a specific Roma-focus (such as in the post-interwar context). In other words, his collection of folklore would comprise both Roma-themes and non-Roma themes, throughout his career. Furthermore, while he did not create or lead a Roma organisation at the time and his focus was academically driven, he was nevertheless an important part of the broader movement during the interwar period. On the one hand, he was among those who pleaded for the replacement of the Romanian word *ţigan* with that of Roma. On the other hand, he emphasised the need to establish Roma own organisations and institutions, evocative of the spirit of national revival and the construction of Roma community identity by means of folklore collecting, education and focus on the promotion of the Romani language, thus illustrating how Roma intellectuals of the time contributed to the national revival of their community.

Likewise, as mentioned and hinted in the articles presented above, connected to his interest in folklore collection more broadly, and Roma folklore collection more specifically, C. S. Nicolăescu-Plopşor also aimed edit the *O Rom* Library, based in the city of Craiova. Once again, this connects to the needed elements for creating a sense of national consciousness among the Roma in the country, and clearly illustrates the first phase in the national revivalist and civic emancipatory movements discussed by Hroch (1985).

The initiative to establish a Roma library was, at the same time, connected to further other incentives of the key Roma organisations during the interwar period in Romania, which also point to the same process. While the idea was to publish a series of books connected to the topic, only two have been located so far: *Ghilea romane / Cântece ţigăneşti* and *Paramisea romane / Poveşti ţigăneşti*, both edited by Plopşor (Nicolăescu-Plopşor, 1934a, 1934b). They were both published in Craiova, in 1934, under the subtitle *Carte pentru limba și învățătura țigănească scoasă de 'Asociația Tiganilor din Oltenia'* (Book for the Gypsy Language and Teaching, Issued by the 'Association of Gypsies in Oltenia'). The subtitle of the book, *Book for the Gypsy Language and Teaching*, illustrates the ways in which the issue of education and mother tongue were key parts of the civic emancipation process in the country, as well as crucial in highlighting the issue of national belonging among the Roma. At the same time, it connected to the emphasis placed on the education of Roma in the country in the national spirit, wherein literacy was seen as pathway to social inclusion. Both the songs and the fairy tales had been collected, according to the inscriptions on the books, from Ursari Gypsies in Gaubucea-Dolj (a County in Southern Romania, in Oltenia), and written down by Plopşor himself (Timpul, 1934a, p. 2; Nicolăescu-Plopşor, 1934a, p. 32; 1934b, p. 30).

In addition to this, it is worth mentioning that several of the songs and fairy tales featured in the two books also featured in Oltenian folklore publications. Again, C. S. Nicolăescu-Plopșor is a key figure here. He has thus published several poems/songs/folklore pieces in regional ethnology/history journals (such as *Suflet oltenesc* and *Oltenia*). These publications contain both poems and songs which Plopșor would later include in the two books from the *O Rom* Library, and broader pieces from Romanian folklore, often from the region of Oltenia (Nicolăescu-Plopșor, 1923; 1927). These materials are useful and necessary as they point to the broader impact and influence of Plopșor has had not only in the Roma movement in Romania during the interwar period but in the shaping of Romanian folklore more broadly, as well as the ways in which he saw these activities as interconnected.

Finally, the National Archives of Romania, the Dolj County archival section in the city of Craiova, contain a fond titled C. S. Nicolăescu-Plopșor, which comprise a vast number of materials pertaining his historical and archaeological work. Within it, however, only some materials point to his Roma-focused work, more clearly to his interest in songs, poems and fairy tales. One example of this is an unpublished poem, unauthored but potentially transcribed or even authored by Plopșor himself, discovered in the archive and which is written in Romani language (DJAN Dolj, fond C. S. N. Plopșor, dos. 146/48). There was no translation of the material in the archival document, but the text itself (the translation of which was provided by Viktor Shapoval) highlights the perception Plopșor seems to have presented about role of Stalin in the social emancipation of Roma/Gypsies. Among other things, the poem states:

[...] Let's sing Roma!
 Let's sing!
 Let us sing
 The great word
 The white word
 The word of Stalin
 As Stalin lifted the burden
 From our shoulders
 Took sobbing far
 From us
 And wiped off
 The tears from our eyes [...] (DJAN Dolj, fond C. S. N. Plopșor, dos. 146/48).

Beyond the poem itself, it is unclear if the lack of materials on Roma folklore within the collection is due to the organisation of the archival material or the fact that Plopșor may have kept his Roma materials separate. The latter is, I believe, unlikely, as the document file contains also a rejection letter, dated June 5, 1952, from a Romanian newspaper *Viața Românească*, (Romanian Life), based in Bucharest, of a manuscript for the poem mentioned above, clearly connected to his Roma work. The letter reads:

Dear comrade,

Our poetry collective has read and discussed your poem: "Let us sing Roma, let us sing". Although interesting, we believe that it has not yet been able to fully capture concrete aspects from the life of the Roma, from their transformation process once they gain equal citizenship rights, or when they become members of farming collectives. A series of poems in this sense would interest us very much.

With comrade salutations,

For the poem section ... [illegible signature]. (DJAN Dolj, fond C. S. N. Ploșor, dos. 95/21).

Interestingly, on the back of the rejection letter, which was received in 1952, the following statement appears, written in green ink, in Romanian. I reproduce a translation of that statement here: "What could be more representative of the novel in the life of the Gypsies than their quest for freedom and rights and that Stalin is the one who gave it to them?" (Ibid.). There is no signature under that statement, but we can assume with some confidence that it belongs to Ploșor and that it quite evidently disagrees with the reasons given for the poem's rejection by the editors of *Viața Românească*. Given that the rejection letter was received in 1952, it is likely that the text was written much earlier than that, and the text sent for publication at a later date, when the praising of Stalin became possible.

While the *O Rom* Library seems to have never fully materialised beyond the two published books, mentioned above, there had been calls spread in the two regional newspapers, asking readers to send materials related to the culture of the Roma. One of this can be seen in the article published above, where Ploșor also introduces the intentions to establish a Roma House which, in effect, would take the form of a Roma Museum. It is uncertain if or how many of such materials had in fact been sent to the *O Rom* Library or to Ploșor himself.

One further note should also be made here. There are some hints and evidence about a potential third book/pamphlet/brochure (its content is actually unknown) with a Roma-theme, beyond *Ghilea romane* (Gypsy Songs) and *Paramisea romane* (Gypsy Fairy Tales) (Nicolăescu-Ploșor 1934a, 1934b). This evidence was found in the catalogue of the Library of the Romanian Academy, where a file with the title of an item under C. S. Nicolăescu-Ploșor can be located. The file seems to point to the existence of additional materials concerning Ploșor's work in collecting Roma/Gypsy folklore, as the title of the material is listed as *Snoave De-ale Țiganilor culese de ...* (Sayings of the Gypsies, Collected by ...). The brochure/book (it is unclear what it was) is stated in the catalogue to have 31 pages. However, when attempting to request the item, we were told by the archivists that the material had gone missing from the library in 1956. While the catalogue card was still in place at the time of our research in the library (summer of 2019), the item itself had been lost. None of the archivists could tell us why or how the material had gone missing, only that it had in fact been missing since 1956 (i.e., nearly seven decades). Nor were we able to locate the item in any of the other archives and

libraries consulted, either in Bucharest, Craiova, or Cluj-Napoca (another regional centre for many materials connected to the Roma movement during this period of time). We are thus uncertain both of how the item disappeared and its actual content. What can be assumed, however, is that the material might contain additional or connected Roma folklore materials in the shape of so-called *snoave*, mainly anecdotes or sayings, stated to belong to Gypsies. These could be the same as found in other published materials from Ploşor, or new ones. If there are additional copies of the book/brochure, which could be found in the future, that would mean an addition to the (thus far known) material which comprised the overall *O Rom* Library collection.

Furthermore, from discussions with surviving friends of Nicolăescu-Ploşor, as well as discussions with the current director of the Museum of Craiova, Florin Ridiche, Ploşor was certainly devoted to creating a larger ethnographic collection connected to Roma/Gypsies (Toma Rădulescu, personal communication, July 10, 2019; Florin Ridiche, personal communication, July 8, 2018). Once again, these intentions illustrate Ploşor's work towards the process of Roma nation-building, as an educated intellectual aiming to awaken members of his community to a shared sense of national belonging (Hroch, 1985).

At the time of writing, these never became an actual section of the Museum of Craiova, and most of his work there remained in the field of archaeology, history, and ethnology of the region. However, Toma Rădulescu, the former Head of the History-Archaeology Section of the Museum of Oltenia, and a close acquaintance of Ploşor, recounts of the many boxes of letters and papers that the latter had collected in his private residence in Pleniţa, which contain materials that combine his interest in general Romanian history to his interest in Roma folklore more specifically (Toma Rădulescu, personal communication, July 13, 2019). Moreover, according to Toma Rădulescu, a series of letters (with unknown content) seem to have gone missing. These are materials which are still worth exploring, as they may reveal more about the collecting work of Nicolăescu-Ploşor, as well as his continuing interest in Roma folklore and Roma history.

After the start of the Second World War, however, the situation in the country changed and Ploşor's attention had moved in other directions after being appointed as Director of the Museum of Oltenia, in 1946. He held this position until 1952. Furthermore, in 1963, he was made a corresponding member of the Romanian Academy, a highly distinguished position within the Romanian Academy, conferred on him based on his lifelong work in the field of archaeology. From 1966 until his death (1968), Ploşor was a professor and head of the History department at the University of Craiova (Observatorul, 2012).

It seems that, in his position as Director of the Museum, he chose not to continue his work (or not as visibly as before) in the field of Roma folklore by (perhaps) even adding to the Museum collections a Roma-themed section. The reasons for this, while unstated, can be assumed to lie in the fact that he wanted to establish himself as an academic scholar of the region (rather than a specialist of Roma folklore) and, especially in the aftermath of the Second World War, the focus on minority folklore may not have

been promoted by the new communist regime, which may have underlined Romanian folklore as a unified one. These, however, are merely assumptions which may need further research and exploration. Suffice to say that Ploșor would go on to become a leading historian and archaeologist of the area, publishing vastly on the topic and becoming a respected scholar within the region. And, while his interest in Roma may have been maintained throughout this time, there remain few other materials in the Ploșor fund at the National State Archive in Craiova concerning the work he had done as part of the *O Rom* Library or, even, his broader Roma folklore and poem collecting. His most prominent and influential work, and the one he is often known for within the broader academic literature in the country remained in the field of archaeology (primarily the archaeology of Oltenia), a field in which he became one of the most known scholars in Romania.

Ploșor passed away in 1968, at the age of 68. He is buried in Plenița, which was also his home during the last years of his life.

Throughout his life, Constantin S. Nicolăescu-Ploșor was a prolific author and scholar, writing far beyond the so-called 'Roma-theme'. In fact, he is most well known in the country for his contributions to the archaeology and history of Oltenia, rather than for his work devoted to the Roma civic emancipation movement. For example, a street bears his name in the city of Craiova (Obervatorul, 2012) and a Social Research Institute is named after him – *C. S. Nicolăescu-Ploșor Institute of Social-Humanistic Studies* (Institute for Research in Social Studies and Humanities) – set up by the University of Craiova and the Romanian Academy, which published its yearbook – *Institutul de Cercetari Socio-Umane 'C. S. Nicolăescu-Ploșor' al Academiei Române* ('C. S. Nicolăescu-Ploșor' Institute for Research in Social Studies and Humanities Yearbook). The latter institute also published a special issue of its annual publication in his honour (*Anuarul Institutului de Cercetări Socio-Umane 'C. S. Nicolăescu-Ploșor'*, 2000). Within this special issue the 'Roma' section constitutes but a short chapter (of only 3 pages!), pointing at once to his multi-faceted work and to the all-encompassing sphere of his broader scholarship (Pătrașcu, 2000, pp. 145–147) as well as to, perhaps, the lesser interest this particular theme may have sparked in the structure of that book.

It would seem that, apart from scholars interested in Roma issues, and despite Ploșor's commitment to the shaping of the Roma movement in the country during the interwar period, as well as his continued efforts in the collection of Roma folklore, his work on Roma remains but a footnote in his overall body of work, at least within the broader presentation of his work within mainstream history. Despite of this, Ploșor had a marked impact on the process of Roma civic emancipation during the interwar period in Romania, and his visions on establishing a Roma House/Museum, a Roma Library, a Roma Church, and a Roma School, need not be understated. At the same time, Ploșor's illustrious career as a historian, folklorist, ethnologist, archaeologist and his all-encompassing writings on these subjects nevertheless showcase the vast contribution that at least one author from the Roma movement during the interwar period has

had to the broader disciplinary fields in Romania. Once again, this highlights the ways in which Plopșor was not just a Roma literature author but actively engaged in shaping the academic field of the country.

Roma Activist Women

Ion Duminica

An integral part of the Roma civic emancipation movement in Romania was the underlining role of Roma women. This important aspect was raised already by the first association claiming to represent all the Roma in the country, The General Association of Gypsies in Romania (AGȚR). The association manifesto titled *Appeal to All Gypsies in Romania* (Scurtu, 1993, pp. 180–182; Nastasă & Varga, 2001, doc. 21, pp. 96–99; Marushiakova & Popov, 2021b, pp. 332–337), written by Calinic I. Popp Șerboianu, was distributed in 1933 in Bucharest and Craiova, and called for “a new life for the one million Romanian Gypsies who live on the territory of Romania” (Timpul, 1933, p. 2). Among the central points of this first national program aimed at the improvement of the social situation of all Roma in Romania, there are two points, 5 and 12, concerning Roma women issues.

Point 5 envisaged support for active Roma mothers in the educational process of their children of pre-school age through establishing childcare institutions: “the establishment of kindergartens so that the children do not roam the roads when their parents are at work (Ibid.). The place of women in the movement for Roma civic emancipation was not limited to their care. On the contrary, they (or, more precisely, some of them) received the opportunity not only to participate actively but also to take leadership positions in this movement. Point 12 provided a more general provision of equal rights for literate Roma women through favouring the means of solidarity involvement in the organisational activities of AGȚR. In contrast to the customary practice which excluded women from the Council of Elders and denied them from an active role in public negotiations, the new norm envisaged:

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 to the Elders Council, according to the norms that will be established. (Ibid.).

Following this, not only the General Association of Gypsies in Romania, led by Calinic I. Popp Șerboianu, but also other Roma organisations took into account Roma women's issues. The General Union of Roma in Romania, headed by Gheorghe A. Lazărescu-Lăzurică, included in Statute and Regulations of its Constitutive Act, in the chapter Regulations, article 7 setting up a ‘Women's Section’, which will act within the Union's program (Nastasă & Varga, 2001, doc. 38, pp. 117–125. Marushiakova & Popov, 2021b, pp. 365).

Just before the historical Congress of Roma in Romania, in the disseminated Call for Participation (signed by the Gheorghe A. Lazărescu-Lăzurică as president and Florica Constantinescu as Secretary), the General Union of Roma in Romania stressed on the active participation of Roma women:

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. (Nastasă & Varga, 2001, doc 27, pp. 106–107; Marushiakova & Popov, 2021b, pp. 343).

The purpose of this study is to scrutinise this attempt at empowering Roma women on the example of two female Roma activists. This will be done by looking at several historical sources, thus far unexplored and published in different interwar Romanian publications. Unfortunately, due to the lack of sufficient data, the presentation of these two Roma women's portraits only allows us to offer a fragmentary presentation of their life and work. The two portraits explored in the subsequent sections are those of Florica Constantinescu and Marta Lăzurică, both of whom were involved in the organisational activities of the Roma civic emancipation movement in Romania.

Florica Constantinescu

Alongside prominent leaders of the Roma civic emancipation movement in interwar Romania, such as Calinic I. Popp Șerboianu and Gheorghe A. Lazărescu-Lăzurică, Florica Constantinescu became the first embodiment of civic involvement of the Roma woman. She became the president of the women section (of the General Union of the Roma in Romania) and pleaded for a more decent way of living for Roma women and children.

Her biographic portrait is, at this stage, only in a fragmentary state, with potential for new discoveries and the valorisation of further archival sources in the future. Her exact biographical data are also, unfortunately, unknown. Presently, only some press articles are available, which offer some information concerning her activities. From the press, for example, we are able to learn about her abilities and initially optimistic aspirations.

From what it would appear, the women take an active part in the modern Roma movement in Romania. The leaders of the Roma movement in Romania, both Father Șerboianu and Mr. Lăzurică – accepted that they have equal rights to those of men. Those with knowledge of reading and writing will be, in the future, admitted in the Council of the Elders, presided by their respective *vătafi*, a council which, according to Gypsy customs, is a type of regional tribunal which judges Gypsies and takes decisions which often are of importance to them.

One of the modern champions of “Roma” in Romania is Miss Florica Constantinescu, a student who speaks “Romani”, meaning a perfect Gypsy language. She makes propaganda and calls for the awakening, especially among “Romnia”, meaning Gypsy women. Her intention is to set up a kindergarden for children. I saw her in the middle of some ragged looking Gypsy children, whose hands she brought together as if in prayer and who she was trying to teach Lord's Prayer.

– [...] I believe it is absolutely necessary that kindergardens be set up, no matter how modest, which could be shelters for children of working mothers who go to work [...] – [tells Miss Constantinescu]. (Realitatea Ilustrată, 1933, p. 23).

Florica Constantinescu, with the support of other activist Roma women and Roma leaders, realised one of the objectives of the General Association of the Gypsies in Romania, part of its social aim: the opening, in October 1933, of the first Kindergarten for Roma children in Romania, named *Patriarhul Miron Cristea* after the first Patriarch of the Romanian Orthodox Church. The Kindergarten was located in Bucharest, Teiul Doamnei Street, nr. 24. Details on this Roma kindergaten can be found in an article describing the problems the Roma were confronted with:

The worried parents of little “Roma”, who fill our mahalas, have reached the conclusion that they cannot indefinitely leave their offsprings to bathe in the mud of the streets, with vagabond dogs and loose pigs, all day long – until they come back in the evening from their work places, through their huts and tents. On the initiative of a more educated one among them, Gypsies held a counsel and made a collection of which fund would be destined to the establishment of a kindergarten exclusively for “Roma children”, in a place on *Teiul Doamnei* street. We faced with great joy the difficult journey to this far away place in Bucharest, only to see up close the first steps they make towards civilisation, these descendants of the pharaos and of noble Hindus from the banks of the Ganges. Here we found a classroom with twenty dark skinned girls, who learn: religion, hygiene, games, songs, and some even manage to read. After they come out in the courtyard, the children, in their freedom, once again become Gypsy children: yell, fight, swear at each other. Then, after the order received from their professor lady, they form a circle, take each other’s hands, submissive, moving around and singing, as beautifully and as sweetly as any other child in the world. (Ilustrațiunea Română, 1933c, pp. 4–5).

The need to educate a new generation of Roma, with a “moral, spiritual and material uplifting of our Gypsy woman” (Ilustrațiunea Română, 1933b, p. 9), resilience to the new challenges of the society devastated by the Great Economic Crisis of 1929–1933, was the central desiderata connected with the Roma civic emancipation movement in interwar Romania. The state of social-economic declassing of Roma in interwar Romania was the main impediment in affirming their Roma ethnicity; because of this, Roma leaders initiated the first actions connected to the aim of “diminishing the illiteracy of Roma children” (Ibid.) This is reflected in another mainstream article, where the role of Florica Constantinescu is underlined:

The leaders of the Gypsy movement in Romania are people determined to follow a strong fight for the reawakening of Gypsies and their organisation in a large and powerful association, so that united together they gain an improvement of the moral and material conditions of this category of citizens. Among them has risen also Miss Florica Constantinescu, the President of the Women Section. Roma women were organised in a separate Section, according to centres and subsentres, as part of a programme which seeks the moral, spiritual and material uplifting of our Gypsy woman.

– We will try to do a work of education, cultural and social assistance, first on a small scale, then, with the help of willing people, on a big scale. We have already begun, although modestly, but clearly in order to achieve the aims which we set up. Here is, for example, the “first kindergarden for Gypsy children”, which we have inaugurated recently and which is the start of that realisation. We will not leave our Gypsy children on the streets, pray to dirt, diseases and bad behaviours – says Miss Constantinescu. (Ibid.)

Unfortunately, this kindergarden was short-lived as the Roma organisers ran out of material resources. Except for a few articles praising this experiment, Romanian mainstream media tended to focus primarily on distressing images of Roma women and children:

Under the ravine, cut like a huge saw, several hundred picturesque households have sprung up, among which the more or less temporary settlements of the famous gypsies of the neighbourhood are mixed. Here is the “Groapa Floreasca” [Flourish Pit], known by the reputation of the inhabitants, fierce drunk and quick to hand, which we recommend to painters and social assistance. We are surrounded by a noisy army of children on all sides: dirty, weak and emaciated. This little world is everywhere: on fences, piles of garbage and on the street; she shakes happily in the cross misery in which she lives. One of them, with a frightening dirt, with a beginning of clothes that were white, which does not completely cover his body, eats watermelon, laughing happily. Next to him, a Gypsy girl with gorgeous eyes, diamond teeth, and a cheeky cheek, holds a smaller brother in her arms: a gypsy boy who was dripping like corn silk. On the edge of the lake, women knead the clay for houses. The men sit comfortably on the stone and look at them. They do not do anything. They eat, get drunk and pour on the children, mercilessly. The burden is borne by the women, who, by who knows what miracles of budgetary balance, maintain the big drone and a lot of children. “Groapa Floreasca”, the pit of deep suffering, remains for the happy who find what they eat every day, a remote and picturesque place, with Gypsies and dirty children. Here, however, above the picturesque place and the vividness of the colours, there is a deep human misery. (Ilustrațiunea Română, 1935, p. 7).

In the end, Florica Constantinescu’s aspirations were largely limited by the turbulent internal conflicts between Roma leaders, who had entered the struggle for “absolute power”. Florica Constantinescu, together with other Roma activist women, chose to be part of the General Union of Roma in Romania, led by Gheorghe A. Lazărescu-Lăzurică:

Sunday [October 8, 1933], the first Congress of Gypsies in Romania took place – a congress which was announced also through a manifest signed by Mr. G. A. Lăzurică, a publicist, the President of the General Union of Roma in Romania. The congress takes place in the “Ileana” Hall, on “Câmpul Moșilor” street, in Bucharest. Intellectual Gypsy women will be represented by the Committee of the Cultural Centre “Preot Constantin Dron”, led by Miss Florica Constantinescu and Miss Ketty Petrescu, who also lead the Kindergarden for Gypsy children “Patriarhul Miron Cristea”. (Tempo!, 1933d, p. 2).

The news reports, focusing primarily on presenting information connected with the first Congress of Roma in Romania (which was, among other things, a novel historical event in the contemporary history of Roma), also partially mention Roma activist women, who

were elected in different functions within the leadership of the General Union of Roma in Romania. Most prominent among them was Florica Constantinescu. She is described as: a “student who makes heartfelt propaganda for the awakening of Roma women” (within the General Association of Gypsies in Romania) and who became the “active president of the Women Section within the General Union of Roma in Romania”:

Roma in Romania, gathered today, October 8, 1933, at the first Congress organised by the “General Union of Roma in Romania” under the active presidency of Mr. Gheorghe A. Lazărescu-Lăzurică, to listen to the presentation of the speeches and take into account the legal means by which the desires in the fight for reawakening and equality can take place, and of equal citizen treatment from behalf of the competent forums— confirms the Central executive committee, elected today for 5 years: Grigoraş Dinicu, honorary president; G. A. Lazărescu-Lăzurică, active president; G. D. Başno and T. Marinescu, vicepresidents; P. Ciuciuan, referent; I. Gh. Ioaniţescu, General Secretary; P. Marinescu, I. Dumitrescu and Iordan Dinu, censori; Mrs. Margareta Nicolau, honorary president of the Women Section; Miss Florica Constantinescu, active president of the Women Section; Elena Negulescu, vicepresident of the Women Section; Kitty Petrescu, General Secretary of the Women Section, etc. We will continue to plead the competent forums to donate to the General Union of Roma in Romania a land on which they can build a large centre, in which a dispensary could be set up, a contentious service, a popular atheneum, a temporary shelter for Roma coming from the provinces, a children’s kindergarten, a hall for gathering and the lawful practice of the profession of *lăutar*. (Universul, 1933c, p. 2)

At this stage of research, no further information about the life circumstances of Florica Constantinescu are available. Despite of this, even from the limited available data, her name remains in the history of Roma as the first Roma woman to be elected in a leadership role within the Roma civic emancipation movement in interwar Romania, having her own agenda and vision on how to improve the conditions of the Roma in the country, and to reach civic equality.

Marta Lăzurică

Another active woman about whom some fragmentary information is available is Marta Lăzurică. There is almost no available data about her life course, either. We know only that she was, according to her own words, a “Czechoslovak Roma, who speaks five languages, a stenographer and a typist, working as a clerk” (see below). For this reason, we can only present her ‘indirect’ support of the Roma civic emancipation movement in interwar Romania as revealed in her own words and in the fragmentary information conveyed within the Romanian press.

In her own words, Marta Lăzurică, being the wife of Gheorghe A. Lazărescu-Lăzurică, “seconded him with hard work and dedication in all his activity as a fighter for the uplifting of Roma” (Timpul, 1938c, p. 2). At the same time, she was always close to the needs of the Roma community:

[...] visited the nomad camps, offering advice, help, a kind word; had an open door for all wives of *lăutari* (*musicians*), brickworkers, tinsmiths, bear-tamers, blacksmiths and nomads, without humiliating them with a single gesture of contempt. (Ibid.).

Marta Lăzurică represented an ideal portrait of the Roma woman in interwar Romania: “a faithful woman; a good housewife; a devoted woman; a woman employed in the field of work (as a functionary)” – who, alongside domestic work, had to support her life partner (husband): “encouraging him in any need that came his way, so that he did not give up and abandon his duty” (Ibid.). Alongside her image of a devoted wife, in her role as the General Secretary of the Women Section within the Association General Union of Roma in Romania (whose president was Gheorghe A. Lazărescu-Lăzurică) (Timpul, 1937b, p. 2) Marta Lăzurică has left a legacy of “civic-domestic” involvement of Roma women, so that the latter can “offer complete faith in their husbands and sons and, together, show solidarity, discipline and devotion for a new and decisive fight of the Roma people” (Timpul, 1938c, p. 2).

The sources explored for this purpose also includes the appeal “To Roma women”, written by Marta Lăzurică:

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* (*brickworkers*), *Spoitori* (*tinsmiths*), *Ursari* (*bear-tamers*), *Fierari* (*blacksmiths*) and nomads, 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 Roma People, 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 Women Section, 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! (Timpul, 1938c, p. 2).

The appeal made by Marta Lăzurică strengthens the involvement of Roma women in a new phase of the fight for equality in the Roma civic emancipation movement in Romania, through the solidary support of the social-political activities of their husbands, the Roma leaders. At the same time, this text of social guidance reveals some statements which reproduce, tangentially, the traditions which were dully followed and respected by members of the Roma community, namely:

1. The unilateral everyday care of Roma women concerning domestic work (without the involvement of other women/servants);
2. The inherent support of their husband in what concerns material matters (the occasional involvement in activities which would gain some money; the selling of jewellery, parts of the dowry or other items of value) and spiritual matters (contributing to alleviating the sadness in the house against all means: the woman is the soul of the house, with whose help the Roma man can overcome any obstacles);
3. The lack of shyness and disgust when it came to making home visits and the help offered to poor Roma families (i.e. Roma leaders should not dishonour the poverty of their kin and it was expected that they help those who found themselves in dire poverty);
4. Roma women could only welcome in their homes other Roma women (on the other hand, Roma men could go in the homes of their kin only in the presence of the head of the family, who, customarily, was a man).

At the same time, in her Appeal, she underlined the need for unity of all Roma, regardless of group belonging, pointing to keeping the door open without making any difference. Any Roma child, who would come to visit, needed to be honoured by the owners of the house with a small present (i.e. it was considered shameful to allow a Roma child leave empty-handed from the house they had just visited).

In her text, she organically drafted a model of the “ideal Roma woman”. However, despite the launch of her appeal, connected to and emphasising the indispensable role of Roma women in diverse social-political activities, Roma women’s image in the interwar Romanian society was nevertheless shaped by other types of news reports, meant primarily to accentuate the lower social status of members of Roma communities (including Roma women), and to degrade them:

The Prefecture of the Capital police took notice to the existence of a “begging school” which operates in Bucharest, at the periphery of the *Plumbuita* neighbourhood, on the Mrs. Ghica –Tei street? “The teachers” are a couple of individuals who practice this profession sui-generis. They have at their disposal a little cart, carried by a donkey, in which they put three Gypsies: one pretends to be blind in one eye, the other to be missing a hand and the third playing from a broken harmonica, songs of despair. For a few days, this procession roams the villages surrounding Bucharest and beg for the pity of their inhabitants.

From here comes also the flooding of the capital with the massive group of minor women, who pretend to be salespeople of “nothings”: corn on the cob, flowers, and other seasonal items – an army of prostitutes, carriers of germs and all kinds of microbes, contributing to the decimation of the miserable individuals, of the poor souls, who have the fatality of coming in contact with them. (*Revista Generală Ilustrată*, 1932, p. 2).

Such a stereotypical presentation, full of malicious fantasy did not disappear after the interwar period and, despite the efforts of women activists such as the Florica Constantinescu and Marta Lăzurică, whose portraits have been presented above, is persistent until present day.

* * *

In general, the interwar period determined the historic birth of a new type of emancipated Roma woman, fighting for her rights and conscious of her new role in society. Regretably, this new social mission was largely ignored both in the modern Romanian society and in the traditional sphere of the Roma community too. At the same time, the interwar Romanian press abundantly presented images and articles of gentle Romanian women, sensitive, pure, delicate, who had the fate of being “beautiful”, who had a “figure”, consumers of pleasures, preoccupied with fashion, interior decoration, art, gastronomie, the mastering of good manners, etc. (Parfentie, 2018, pp. 132–138). In an unfair social contrast, the same press highlights the exotic image of Roma women: “handsome”, “child bearing”, “witches”, “tricksters”, “saleswomen of nothings”, “beggars”, “rugged”, “prostitutes”, “unwashed”, amusing “illiterates” (*Realitatea Ilustrată*, 1935a, pp. 11–13).

This study has fragmentarily contoured two social portraits of Roma activist women, Florica Constantinescu and Marta Lăzurică, who were involved in the Roma civic emancipation movement in interwar Romania. Regretably, other personalities of Roma ethnicity from interwar Romania remain unexplored, and this is especially the case when it comes to Roma women (“those who can read and write”): such as Elena Negulescu, the vicepresident of the Women Section or Ketty Petrescu, the General Secretary of the Women Section from within the General Union of Roma in Romania. What is left is to continue to research and explore other (presently unknown) portraits of Roma women who had assumed a new role in the social life of the time and dedicated themselves, together with other Roma leaders, to the shaping of a new archetype of emancipated Roma, and who were: “educated, hard working, honest, faithful, opened to the

community, socially involved, solidary with the members of their family, proud of their people and their assumed ethnic identity – dignified citizens, well behaved and loyal to the state”. (O Rom, 1934a, p. 2).

Conclusion

Petre Matei and Raluca Bianca Roman

The portraits presented in this chapter help us offer an overall picture of the shapes and dynamics of the Roma civic emancipation movement in Romania during the interwar period, while also pinpointing to some general trends in the civic Roma emancipation movement occurring during the same period in other countries of Central, South-Eastern and Eastern Europe, and which vastly depended on the broader social, political and historical context of the region. All the individuals whose portraits have been presented throughout this chapter illustrate not only the ways in which a new Roma elite emerged during the shaping of a Roma movement in the country but, just as crucially, how these individuals acted and moulded their actions according to the social-political context of the Roma community in their country and the region.

As discussed in the introduction, Romania in the post-First World War context can be described as a country aiming to recreate its very identity, as the incorporation of new territories re-constituted Romania as a vastly multi-cultural and multi-ethnic nation. Minorities, in this context, faced diverse policies of integration, assimilation and incorporation in the overall Romanian nation. The Roma, and especially the Roma elite emerging during the post-war context, faced a particularly difficult choice in terms of the shape of the movement that would eventually emerge. The portraits of some of the key activists and actors within the Roma movement in the country help us reveal not only the role of individuals within the movement itself but, just as importantly, the ways in which the latter were embedded within a broader process of social mobilisation as it could take place within the interwar context.

The interwar Roma movement in Romania was, at the same time, one of the most productive in the region, with multiple organisations being set up (the most important ones being AGȚR, UGRR and AUGRR, the latter of which gained legal status in November 1934), the publication of six Roma-led newspapers, the organisation of meetings and congresses all across the country (some of them uniquely novel at the time, such as the congress from October 8, 1933) and the emergence of a politically-minded Roma intellectual elite. The newspapers were connected to the diverse organisations set up (for instance, the link between *Glăsuț Romilor* and AUGRR and that of *Țara Noastră* and AGȚR), regional dynamics and particularities also played a central role in the different issues and topics that would emerge. Connected to the latter, the case of

the Transylvanian and Oltenian Roma organisations and leaders reveal some of these dynamics, as the portraits of Lazăr Naftanailă and Constantin Nicolăescu-Ploşor (and, especially, the Oltenia charter of AGȚR) evoke.

The choice of the portraits presented in this chapter, while not offering an exhaustive overview of all the key players in the Roma civic emancipation movement in Romania (names such as those of Apostol Matei, Marin I. Simion and Aurel Th. Manolescu-Dolj are also worth a mention), was not by no means arbitrary. Most importantly, the source materials available for the ones presented here are the most detailed, while for others, only sporadic information was available at the time of writing. Nevertheless, the portraits explored above help reveal the tensions embedded within the Roma movement itself and the fight for representational legitimacy within the context of the era (see Șerboianu, Lăzurică and Niculescu), the regional tendencies and particularities (see Lazăr Naftanailă) as well as the desire to contribute to the national revival of the Roma, through a focus placed on literature, folklore and the creation of Roma-led and Roma-focused institutions (see C. S. Nicolăescu-Ploşor), in the lines of national revival movements occurring elsewhere. This also connects to the ways in which twentieth century Europe (and especially the region under discussion throughout this book) can be understood as the timeframe of national revivalisms, connected to the formation of new nation-states and nation-building processes (Hroch, 1985, pp. 25–30; Hobsbawm, 1990, pp. 11–12).

The work and role of those embedded within the Roma movement in interwar Romania can thus also be understood within this broader framework, wherein a small group of Roma intellectual elite emerged with the aim to bring out and shape a sense of national consciousness and national belonging among the diverse groups and members of their communities, oftentimes placing an emphasis on the history, culture, folklore, and language of the community. At the same time, their actions were embedded within the overall social and political climate of the country, wherein the support of key state institutions (including the Orthodox Church) and political allies (such as the ruling and opposition parties) was needed to achieve their aim. It is thus that the actions and goals of some of the leaders in the Roma movement, seemingly nationalistic and anti-Semitic in nature (see Lăzurică and Șerboianu), need to be seen within the context of the time, in which the Roma movement itself could not have survived or thrived without the support of important political actors (such as the National Christian Party) or state institutions, with their own incentives and goals.

Finally, while not much information is available about particular individuals, the role of women within the Roma civic emancipation movement was also noted, with some Roma organisations having also dedicated a Women Section within their structure (see UGRR, for instance), and directly aimed to address issues of concern for Roma women and children. Within it, two Roma women's names stood out, Florica Constantinescu and Marta Lăzurică. While the available data is limited and mainly concerns articles published within mainstream and Roma newspapers in Romania during the interwar period,

the fragmentary portraits of these two Roma women provide glimpses into the role of Roma women within the Roma movement, as well as the ways in which the Roma civic emancipation movement in interwar Romania had opened up the discussion about the shaping of the Roma women's role in the social wellbeing of their community and in the future of the Roma population in the country. Through all of this, the portraits explored throughout this chapter offer a more or less comprehensive picture of the Roma civic emancipation movement in the country, the role of particular individuals within it, and the ways in which the movement itself connects to the shaping of revivalist movements in the region and, especially, to the shaping of Roma movements across other countries of Central, South-Eastern and Eastern Europe during the interwar period of time.

Hungary

Tamás Hajnáczy

Károly Bura – Gypsy First Violinist. From the Coffee Houses to Visions of a Gypsy Museum

Introduction

The widespread consensus in both public thought and academia is that the Gypsy population of Hungary during the first half of the 20th century were simply tossed about helplessly by the tides of history. They are perceived as the passive subjects of public order and public health measures during the period with little influence on their own fates. The idea of an active Gypsy group, capable of self-organisation, ready to stand up for their cause and willing to act is something that has not yet been recognised. This is not a unique Hungarian phenomenon, but something found throughout Europe. The *Roma Interbellum: Roma Civic Emancipation between the Two World War*, project led by Prof. Elena Marushiakova made it a goal to shed light on and reveal the deeper truth about this period and to shake up the preconceptions. The research done through this international project have shown that in numerous European countries there were to a greater or lesser extent Gypsy organisations and movements which worked to advance the Gypsy cause for either all Gypsies or for a specific group. The research in Hungary examined the associations and newspapers founded by Gypsy musicians and have been published in Hungarian and English. Several years of research has shown the defining leaders of Hungarian Gypsy musician self-organisation were Béla Radics and Károly Bura, Gypsy first violinists. A great deficit of modern historical research remains the exclusion of investigations into the lives of Gypsy individuals, this study is an attempt to begin to fill that void and seeks to present the life and work of Károly Bura, Gypsy first violinist.

Czinka Panna's Descendent

Károly Bura (1881–1934) was born in Debrecen in 1881, the son of Gypsy musician József Bura (1828–1913) (Molnár, 1936, pp. 356–357). His father was a musician in many popular Gypsy orchestras, but it was the long years spent as a member of Miksa Hamza's band in Nagyvárád for which he was the most celebrated by audiences. József Bura was known not only as a musician but as a composer with many playing his songs during his lifetime and after his death (Sárosi, 2012, pp. 8–9). It was a custom in Gypsy musical society to compose songs dedicated to influential or prominent individuals in the hopes of some reward or better opportunities (Sárosi, 2004, p. 372). József Bura, in a display of great

confidence wrote a song dedicated to the heir to the Austrian-Hungarian Monarchy, Franz Ferdinand. The only reply to this musical tribute was a note in the German language from the Office of the Royal Court acknowledging that the song had been received. An article from the *Nagyvárad* *Napló* reported the musician's complaint after failing to receive the hoped-for rich reward as follows, "Why does the heir to the Hungarian throne, reply to a Hungarian man's Hungarian gift, a Hungarian song, in German?" (Sárosi, 2012, pp. 120–121).

József Bura taught his sons to play the violin at home and after they had grown and moved on to the stages of the coffee houses and restaurants, he accepted private students. In addition to the definitive influence of Károly Bura's father upon his life, there was the family legend that they were descendents of the legendary Panna Czinka (1711–1772), the first and most famous of the 18th century Gypsy first violinists. She led her band as the violinist, with her husband playing the bass and his brothers playing cimbalom and viola. She and her band became famous throughout Hungary and even travelled abroad to play. The reasons for all the various tales about her were no doubt due to her being a female band leader, a unique fact in itself at that time, this was accompanied by her great talent. She, at times, was described as a fiery, attractive Gypsy woman, at other times as a pock-marked goiter-stricken crone. There are descriptions of her stating that she dressed in men's clothing and constantly smoked a pipe with a short stem so as not to be in the way of her violin playing. She was said to spend the summer with her family living in a tent pitched next to her house and to join her husband sometimes in the forge hammering away at the anvil doing smith work (Kállai 2002, p. 328; Markó, 2006, pp. 1–2; Sárosi, 1971, pp. 65–66; Szíjjártó, 2002, p. 14).

All the conditions were given for Károly Bura and his brothers to become great Gypsy musicians, and amongst the brothers the second most notable was Sándor Bura (1895–1956), who also became a first violinist and had his own orchestra, though it was not rare for him to appear appear on stage as his older brother's second violinist (Horák, 2015, p. 97). Károly Bura first performed as a first violinist in 1897, in Nagyvárad, and soon won the adulation of audiences (Molnár, 1936, pp. 356–357), and then moved on, still young, to conquering further audiences. The songs he wrote to Franz Ferdinand, following his father's example, were acknowledged by heir to the throne through the Office of the Royal Court with not only a letter of thanks for the compositions, but the gift of gold tuning pegs decorated with the heir's monogram and the imperial crown. According to the *Nagyvárad* *Napló*, Károly Bura's joy was accompanied by his remark that "as a good Hungarian patriot he would have preferred the pegs to be decorated with the Hungarian crown" (Sárosi, 2004, pp. 408–409). In the following year Nagyvárad, following the example of Budapest and other rural cities (Sárosi, 2004, pp. 425–448), organised their own national Gypsy music concert in the Szigligeti Theatre. The event was dedicated to the memory of Pista Dankó who had died at the beginning of the year. The proceeds of the concerts were to go towards the erection of a statue of the late great Gypsy first violinist (Budapesti Hírlap, 1903, p. 10). Often only called the "Gypsy competition", the concert

was a musical competition to which noted Gypsy first violinists arrived from throughout the country, Antal Kóczé (Budapest), the Magyari brothers (Debrecen), Gyuszi Csikai (Kolozsvár), Józsi Farkas (Szolnok), “Béla Gypsy” (Hódmezővásárhely), Tóni Rácz (Gyula). The Gypsy first violinists from Nagyvárád participated in the competition organised in their town, amongst whom were Károly Bura, Miksa Hamza, Gyuszi Hamza, Laczi Pócsi, and Miklós Dula (Sárosi, 2004, p. 444). The several days of concerts ended with an awards ceremony, where amongst others Károly Bura was given a gold medal for the songs, *The Sun Is Setting, My Dove Has Been Taken from Me, Gypsy Life, It’s Not Always Good, I Wrote a Letter, The Wavy Balaton, The Water of the Maros Flows Quietly* (Sárosi, 2004, p. 442). The Gypsy first violinist not only won the hearts of the jury but also the students of the Nagyvárád Royal Catholic Legal Academy who also awarded him a gold cross bearing the coat of arms of the academy (Molnár, 1936, pp. 356–357).

Married into the Radics Dynasty

Károly Bura’s fame had grown beyond the boundaries of Nagyvárád and he received invitations from other cities (Molnár, 1936, pp. 356–357), and from 1906 onwards he was a regular performer in the nation’s capital city, Budapest (Pesti Hírlap, 1906, p. 9). It was there that he met his future wife, Annuska Radics, to whom he was engaged with much celebration in 1911 (Pesti Hírlap, 1911, p. 14), and whom he married the following year in the church of St Francis of Assisi in Bakáts square. The wedding was an occasion for all of Gypsy musical society and was a social sensation:

There was a feast for Hungarian music this week. The beautiful daughter, much thought of in society circles, of Béla Radics, first violinist, was married to Károly Bura, first violinist from Nagyvárád. The church in Bakáts square was filled to capacity with the most prominent society. Everyone watched in fascination the spectacle of the very colourful procession of the large wedding party. The Gypsy republic has its own aristocracy and such a Gypsy lord amongst the Gypsy society of Pest is Béla Radics (with a rank akin to Mihály Károlyi) The great figure of the opposing party (A sort of Steve Tisza position) is Béla Berkes, court musician. He and his band alone did not attend the wedding. Though there were Gypsy princes from as far as Paris. (Budapesti Hírlap, 1912, pp. 11–12).

Through this marriage Károly Bura had allied himself closely with the most defining Gypsy musical dynasty of the period. His father-in-law Béla Radics (1867–1930), and his wife’s grandfather Vilmos Radics had taken the first steps in the interest of establishing a Gypsy musicians’ organisation and a newspaper. Vilmos Radics and Pali Rácz had first proposed, towards the end of the 1880’s, that the Gypsy musicians found a self-help association. The initiative eventually failed due to the tensions between the Gypsy musicians themselves. Two decades later the now old Pali Rácz and Béla Radics founded the Hungarian Gypsy Musicians’ Association in 1908, an organisation representing Gypsy musicians in Budapest. The association began its work under the leadership of Béla Radics, and as the first step established the *Hungarian Gypsy Musicians’ Journal*. The editorial board wanted a colourful paper covering a wide scale of topics to reflect the wide

variety of interests of Gypsy musical society Over time more and more columns were created, and readers were given a sheet music supplement. In addition to this they wrote of the activities of the association and future plans, of work opportunities for Gypsy orchestras at home and abroad. There were announcements of competitions for Gypsy musicians and song competitions, and later on news of the progress of these competitions and their results. Poems, literary reflections, or excerpts from novels being written appeared in its columns, with most of the content being about Gypsy musicians. The editorial board had a separate column for horse racing, and a column to showcase the lives of former famous first violinists. On the back pages of the journal were the short news from Gypsy musical society and the advertisements of tailors, cobblers, dentists, and instrument makers. To establish the financial capital of the Hungarian Gypsy Musicians' Association and ensure its growth it organised the *Five Hundred Gypsy Concert* in the Folk Theatre (Népszínház). It closely monitored the operation of the Hungarian Gypsy Orchestras' Agency, and the moment it felt it was not properly representing the interests Gypsy musicians it boycotted its work. Béla Radics is accredited for plans for a national Gypsy musicians' pension association. The initiative of the president sought to solve the burning issue of the income for "too old" Gypsy musicians (Hajnáczky, 2020c). The lead article in the Hungarian Gypsy Musicians' Journal wrote of this that:

Nowadays, only young first violinists are sought across the country. The foreigner, before negotiating, asks for a portrait and if the first violinist is not a young man, he does not even enter into negotiations. Nowadays, age comes first and only then does art follow. The young first violinist can bow better, the contractors say, and thus when choosing performers put the old ones to the back. Apart from all this, it is a rare Gypsy musician who thinks about what will happen when he grows old. The Bohemian nature that resides in them only ever cares for the present and thinks little or nothing about the future. There are of course some who take care of their future livelihood well in advance, but at most it is one out of every hundred. So if they do not take care of themselves, they have to form an association that will take care of the elderly and those incapable of work, using small contributions. (Magyar Czigányzenészek Lapja, 1908, pp. 1–2).

The organisation and together with it the journal ceased to exist after a few years, nonetheless Béla Radics did not surrender his dream. The first world War did not help the Gypsies in their attempts to organise, but afterwards Radics Béla was able to found the Hungarian Gypsy Musicians' National Association (Hajnáczky, 2019b, 2020b).

Patron at Home and Hero at the Frontlines

The outbreak of the Great War had the Gypsies in Hungary appear in front of the draft boards along with everyone else. The Gypsy soldiers were often able to apply their trades in the army, working as camp smiths or butchers, or if they knew how to work with wood or how to weave baskets then in building or reinforcing battlements. There were Gypsy spies, scouts, hussars, storm troops and sailors. Gypsy musicians were placed in military bands or as regimental buglers or drummers. As the war ground to a stalemate there arose

military first violinists who formed Gypsy bands on the front. They were not exempt from casualties or capture and were decorated for their military service. Many were able afterwards to proudly display their badges for service, I and II class Silver Medals or Bronze Medal of Valour. Some rose in the ranks, to private first class, corporal, sergeant, staff sergeant or even master sergeant (Scholtz, 2018, pp. 30–77; Szakács, 2009, pp. 91–95).

The Great War was not the first time Károly Bura traded his elegant tuxedo for a soldier's uniform. In 1904, he did his compulsory military service and was enlisted for two months in the reserves (Sárosi, 2012, p. 27). The news of the outbreak of World War One found the Gypsy first violinist playing for a handsome sum at the Bristol Hotel in Warsaw. Amidst the great tensions he returned home immediately to Nagyvárád. There a story of his generosity spread and the *Pesti Hírlap* made it known nationwide. According to the anecdote a Gypsy musician from Nagyvárád was fighting at the front and lacking any income his large family was starving. One of his children walked the streets playing music in the hope of alms, but once Károly Bura saw him he immediately helped:

The evening past, this rascal stole close to the promenade. His violin wailed, and he played loud waltzes, but due to the light rain there was no business. Not until the famous Várád first violinist Károly Bura happened that way. The child complained to him with tears in his eyes that he would like to make a few pengő by playing and help his father, but the audience has no heart. The elegant, refined, first violinist smiled, removed his gloves, and took the worn violin, he wound the strings once or twice, then standing on the curb before the shining storefront dressed in fur he played without his hat. The lad held his hat. Charlie Bura played gorgeous melodies as if he were at a county ball and ladies with butterfly embroidered shoes were dancing to them. And the pedestrians all gathered to wonder and the crowns and tallér fell with a clatter into the hat. In an hour enough money had been collected for the family to live out half the winter in lordly style. (*Pesti Hírlap*, 1914, p. 17).

Károly Bura abandoned the security of the home country and joined the 37th Nagyvárád Infantry Regiment. The regiment began its military training and Károly Bura soon formed an orchestra from the drafted Gypsy musicians, for which the officers made him a sergeant. They officially named his band the “Imperial and Royal Gypsy Orchestra” and they played at the train station to welcome the new recruits or to encourage the troops on their way to the front. The Gypsy orchestra was dedicated to the commander of the armed forces Archduke Joseph of Habsburg-Lorraine (*Pesti Hírlap*, 1915, p. 12). The 37th Nagyvárád Infantry Regiment was soon deployed to the front, and Károly Bura received decorations on several occasions and rose to the rank of staff sergeant, and for his services the staff officers rewarded him a gold cigarette case. He was taken severely ill to the hospital in Arad in 1917, from where after recovering he returned home to Nagyvárád and resumed his previous active life (Sárosi, 2012, p. 157) He wrote a song for the new Hungarian king Károly IV entitled, the Coronation Memorial March, for which the ruler sent a note of thanks (Sárosi, 2012, p. 158). Furthermore, he headed the solidarity movement of the Gypsy musicians in Nagyvárád acting to protect their interests in the face of the coffee house proprietors during these troubled times. The various venues were

inviting Gypsy orchestras from outside the city and leaving the locals without a stage and thus earnings. They composed a declaration stating:

The Gypsy musicians of Nagyvárád ask their colleagues from outside town to not come to play in Nagyvárád. The Nagyvárád café proprietors want the contract with Gypsies from outside to force us to perform without pay. We have all been soldiers, who have served during the day and during the night to earn our bread for our families, we believe therefore that not one Gypsy in Hungary would stand to take the morsels from our mouths. (Sárosi, 2012, pp. 162–163).

No sooner had the local and the worldwide storms subsided and the hope that the life of the Gypsy first violinist would return to normal that outside Paris the Versailles peace treaties began to be signed. The Treaty of Trianon saw about two thirds of Hungary's population and territory ceded to the neighbouring nations. Romanian was given all of the 'Partium' (the name of the region between Transylvania and the Great Hungarian Plains), including Nagyvárád (Romanian name Oradea). This event was to affect Bura for the rest of his life. His popularity in the first half of the 1920's remained high, and he and his Gypsy orchestra even toured London (Sárosi, 2012, p. 181–182), while only playing in the most prestigious venues in Nagyvárád (Oradea), all the while trying to satisfy the audiences new tastes:

Károly Bura still plays in the Várád Royal Coffee House, and in the past years has even learnt a few Romanian pieces. Soldier songs, revolutionary marches and now Romanian songs are interspersed between Hungarian songs, to which he alone has a true and deep connection. He smiles to the left and to the right, though this smile is often faint, and the violin forgets itself and cries. For what does it cry, for what doesn't it, no need to explain. (Világ, 1924, p. 2).

Police Raid at Dawn

The relatively peaceful post wars years soon came to an end. In 1926, his wife Annuska Radics died at the age of thirty-two and was buried in the Kerepesi cemetery in Budapest by her loving husband still in the prime of his life (Magyarország, 1926, p. 8). Károly Bura visited his wife's grave every week and thought of moving to Budapest to be near her. In 1927, the Royal Hotel's restaurant made him an offer he could not refuse, and the Gypsy first violinist decided upon the move (Pesti Napló, 1927a, p. 7). However, according to one of the daily newspapers the Gypsy musicians in Budapest were far from happy at the arrival of the Gypsy first violinist from Nagyvárád (Oradea), as he meant further competition for them:

Unforeseen and severe barriers have risen before the arrival of Bura Károly and his band. The Pest Gypsy musicians' federation have expressed their most ardent protest against Károly Bura and his excellent band performing in Budapest. They would not accept arguments such as him proclaiming himself Hungarian in body and soul, the point being he is a Gypsy from Nagyvárád and Várád in not now Hungary. And a Gypsy from abroad should not make the earning conditions for those here more difficult. (Újság, 1927, p. 9).

In addition to the Gypsy musicians in the capital, Budapest, the Romanian authorities also tried to make Bura Károly's move to Budapest difficult. After the final decision had been made to leave Transylvania, a farewell evening was organised for him in the Szigligeti Theatre of Nagyvárad (Oradea). Warm speeches of praise were given by the former police prefect of the city and the head of the local Hungarian Party. After the addresses Bura and his orchestra gave a concert accompanied by well-known singers (Sárosi, 2012, pp. 228–229). The evening progressed without any incident and was a fond farewell, but next morning the police knocked on Károly Bura's door, an account of the incident was given by Bura to the *Pesti Napló*:

If you please, it was after the grand farewell evening, I went home at about one o'clock, but the police came for me in the morning. He said that the prefect wants to see me. György Bunescu, the prefect, is a good friend of mine, and we said good-bye on good terms. But József Horváth, the director of police, was there, and asked me, what exactly happened last night? I told him to ask the person he sent there to spy. And so, he learnt what he wanted to know. He recorded in the minutes in Romanian, that I am a Hungarian citizen, and that I provoked a disturbance and have deserted. They took my passport. They did the same thing to Ella Csigi, Kocsány and Marcus. They accused songstress Csigi that while singing she held a red bouquet of flowers in her hands, wore white stockings, and white shoes and a green dress. Next day they took all four of us to Kolozsvár. They put Ella Csigi's dress, shoes and bouquet on a military judge's, a major's, desk. The major read the minutes and examined the beautiful silk dress and said Ella Csigi, János Kocsány and István Marcus can leave, but I will have to stay. [...] They took my gold buttons, watch, money. They put it all into a safe. Me, they stuck in a damp, dark cell! I could hardly move inside. It smelt and I didn't dare sit on the bed. Luckily, towards the evening, the prison doctor heard I was there. He had me removed and allowed me to lie on the bed in the sick room. I spent the night there and waited for my friends to free me. But the friends did not appear, and a Romanian lawyer was the first to arrive. He asked me, 'Do I want to leave? Will you hand over ten thousand lei?' I shook my head. I told him I will leave here for free. The lawyer bargained with me and for five thousand lei he had me freed the next afternoon. (*Pesti Napló*, 1927a, p. 7).

Leaving the prison of the military tribunal in Kolozsvár (Romanian name Cluj-Napoca) was far from the last of the Gypsy first violinist's tribulations. Though the Romanian authorities let him leave they did not give him his passport, wallet, gold watch and the gold violin pegs he had received from Franz Ferdinand and he travelled for weeks back and forth to Kolozsvár (Cluj-Napoca) from Nagyvárad (Oradea) trying to gain their release. As soon as he was able to reclaim his valuables and papers, he bought a ticket on the first train to Budapest. However before ever reaching the new borders a Romanian policeman had him get off the train and took his passport stating he had orders to do so. The reason for the further police action against Bura Károly soon came to light, the Romanian authorities offered the Gypsy first violinist a deal, they would only let him cross the border if he did not sell his house but rather would forfeit it. Károly Bura accepted the very unfavourable arrangement and left the Partium for ever (*Pesti Napló*, 1927a, p. 7). The persecution of the Gypsy first violinist was well publicised, and he was presented as a hero and

martyr, the case was viewed as a “irrendent trial” (Brassói Lapok, 1927, p. 2; Magyarság, 1927, p. 4). Though fewer in number there were Transylvanian newspapers that seized on the occasion to criticise both the city leadership of Nagyvárad (Oradea) and the Gypsy first violinist. One author complained that though Hungarian artists are unable to perform in the theatres there was a farewell evening dedicated to this particular Gypsy musician. Károly Bura was accused of avarice and of feeling no solidarity with anyone else:

Let us now characterise the Master with a few words, who is known not only for his violin but his stinginess [...] Várad grew poor and beggerly, all the fat cats disappeared but the banks handled Károly Bura’s multi-million account, on which the interest alone would have been enough for him to live on. However, not only was he a speculating, selfish Gypsy, but he was also a heartless, bad man who looked down upon the rest of the Gypsies and who never helped one of his own race. (Ellenőr, 1927, p. 9).

Károly Bura soon established himself in Budapest, and together with his Gypsy orchestra performed at the restaurant of the Royal Hotel (Pesti Napló, 1927b, p. 11). He became part of the grand events of Gypsy musician society life, such as the erection of a statue to János Bihari in Budapest (Budapesti Hírlap, 1928, p. 8). At the Hungarian Ball in Munich, Germany, the guests danced to the music of the Gypsy first violinist broadcast over the radio waves (Kis Újság, 1928, p. 7). Newspapers declared him a sensation and wrote of the adulation he received from women, even spreading gossip of his love for the “negro primmadonna” Josephine Baker (Ellenőr, 1928, pp. 20–21). He gave interviews and his views were noted and respected (Színházi Élet, 1928, p. 26). The theatrical world made use of his talents and he and his Gypsy orchestra provided the music to the very popular comedy by Zsigmond Móricz *To the Lovely Lady’s Coach Driver* (Esti Kurír, 1929, p. 9). The play drew large crowds and ticket sales were high, but the honorarium for the Gypsy band leader and his orchestra did not arrive. Bura was not one to let this pass, and he sued the theatre (Új Nemzedék, 1929, p. 5). During the summer he performed in the noted hotels in Siófok on the Balaton (Újág, 1928, p. 34), and the crowds on the beach could hear his music broadcast by a Philips radio car (Budapesti Hírlap, 1929, p. 10). At the end of the summer season in 1928 the elite vacationers in Siófok awarded him a silver wreath (Magyar Cigányzenészek Lapja, 1930a, pp. 4–5). The following year they gave the Gypsy first violinist a silver palm bound with a gold bouquet as a sign of thanks. The tribute was given by the mayor of the town after a speech and farewell ceremony. In thanks Bura played the national anthem and the *You Are Beautiful, You Are Gorgeous Hungary* song (Magyarság, 1929d, p. 14).

The Foundation of the Bihari Music School

Károly Bura’s father-in-law Béla Radics had not relinquished his dream with the end of the Great War and began soon afterwards to establish the Hungarian Gypsy Musicians’ National Association. The noted Gypsy first violinist resigned the presidential chair after a few years but remained a defining figure in the organisation. The new association sought

to represent not only the capital cities Gypsy musicians but those in the countryside as well. The national association's statutes declared the primary goals to be, "the progress of financial, moral, intellectual interests", in addition to "disseminating and developing Hungarian Gypsy musical art" (Hajnáczky, 2019b, pp. 17–20). One of their very first steps was to launch the Hungarian Gypsy Musicians' Journal in 1924, which sought to provide Gypsy musical society with relevant news. Their publications provide insight into the work of the Hungarian Gypsy Musicians' operations, their future plans as written in the published articles, their various calls to action and the minutes of meetings. There was space for news of Gypsy musical society, funerals, weddings, anniversaries, balls, awards, domestic and foreign tours and performances and lawsuits. The journal published literature and history, including poems, novellas, briefs, and essays. The Hungarian Gypsy Musicians' Journal regularly wrote of and protested the sad state of Gypsy musical earnings and thus returned constantly to the topic of aid and job placement, in addition to the conflict with competitors in the musical arena, especially jazz musicians and dealt with the efforts to limit their operation (Hajnáczky, 2019a). The Hungarian Gypsy Musicians National Association waged a war, with the backing of the Ministry of the Interior, against schrammel bands and then foreign and local jazz bands. The Gypsy musicians were able on several occasions to have the ministry or the leadership of the capital city compose regulations in their favour and limit the activity of their main competition, the jazz musicians (Hajnáczky, 2019b, pp. 17–35). Furthermore, the association or its staff responded to the attacks on Gypsy musicians with an article (Bak, 2020, p. 107).

The Hungarian Gypsy Musicians National Association (Hajnáczky, 2019a, 2019b, 2020b) under the leadership of Béla Radics, as honorary president held elections in 1929, in order to fill the empty mandates. Károly Bura stood for election and aspired to the position of acting president. He promised a wide range of reforms, the reorganisation and consistent management of the association's finances, timely and much needed social advancements, and the necessity of formal training for the young generation of Gypsy musicians. The Gypsy musicians chose to give Bura their unanimous support and he was appointed the acting president of the association (Újság, 1929a, p. 8). One of the honorary presidents elected was the non-Gypsy János Ilovsky, member of the Budapest capital city municipal council, he was a great patron of Hungarian Gypsy music who, in the past, had used his influence numerous times to the benefit of the association (Magyar Cigányzenészek Lapja, 1929b, pp. 2–4). Following his election as the new association head, Bura Károly, wrote his presidential manifesto in which he detailed his activities to date and the plans he was committed to executing. The lead article was full of fire and enthusiasm and often times anger expressing his strong opinions in plain language:

Does it not justly offend our sensibilities that any old foreign musician, such as the negro, segregated in his own homeland, receives greater respect than the Hungarian Gypsy musician in his own homeland? The foreigners are welcome guests, in even the most elegant café-restaurants, while the Hungarian Gypsy musician sits at the back table? (Magyar Cigányzenészek Lapja, 1929a, p. 1).

The Gypsy first violinist made it the primary goal of the association to improve the economic, social, cultural and social situation of the Gypsy musicians now left by the wayside. We wrote of his reestablishment of the almost extinct Hungarian Gypsy Musicians' Journal and reinvigorated association life and created the Hungarian Gypsy Musicians' Syndicate within the framework of the association. He had formed plans for the Gypsy musicians to be enrolled in the national Social Security Institute, which would have meant state subsidised medical, pharmaceutical care and in old age some amount of financial support. He wanted to do a census of all the Gypsy musicians in Hungary and the areas that had been annexed after the Treaty of Trianon, so as to be able to take action in all of their interests:

We shall take a census of all the Gypsy musicians throughout Greater Hungary, and thus gathered in one camp fight for their well-being. We count on the kind cooperation of the authorities, for only with their help can we ensure our just requests. This survey of the Gypsy musicians will reveal our woes and complaints and there will be those who see this and listen to and remedy our requests. (*Magyar Cigányzenészek Lapja*, 1929a, p. 1).

He paid tribute to the Gypsies who had given their lives in the Great War, and whose sacrifice had been forgotten. He was committed to compiling their names in an album and publishing it in the pages of the journal. He saw the key to any future success as being musical education, in order to be able to stand their ground among the new musical trends and therefore proposed the foundation of a Gypsy music school:

We seek to provide the conditions for our cultural progress. To this end we shall shortly establish a musical school which shall serve to train the new generation, and we have received the promise that those excellent talents who graduate shall find a clear path to further education and the foreign stages of worldwide success. Only highly trained Gypsy musicians can reclaim all that the fashionable musical trends have taken from us and only Gypsy music can once again conjure up a new renaissance for Hungarian song and melody. (*Magyar Cigányzenészek Lapja*, 1929a, p. 1).

The dream of creating a music school inspired the entire association, and the newly formed Hungarian Gypsy Musician Orchestra Leaders Syndicate made it a declared goal in their defining proclamation:

[...] the goal of the syndicate in the nurturing of Hungarian folk music, its development and protection against invading foreign music. To this end the syndicate operates within the bosom of the Hungarian Gypsy Musicians' National Association and seeks to open a music school for the young musical generation, where they may receive a proper musical education. To establish further educational courses for the generation now employed in which the further perfection of complete orchestra performance may be achieved. (*Magyar Cigányzenészek Lapja*, 1929c, pp. 6–7).

The association's leadership first thought of turning to the Music Academy in order to begin Gypsy musical schooling, but this turned out to be a dead end. The institution

stated that they lacked the space, and the teachers' conditions were unacceptable. The next idea was for aspiring Gypsy musicians to enroll in existing music schools, though this concept was again proven to be unworkable. Though this plan would have meant the least financial burden for the association, the young Gypsy musicians would not have been trained in accordance with their Gypsy traditions. In addition, the further education of older Gypsy musicians would not have been possible, as the existing music schools in question were all for children (*Magyar Cigányzenészek Lapja*, 1929d, pp. 1–2).

Following the lack of progress with these unfeasible plans the Hungarian Gypsy Musicians' National Association began in earnest to establish its own music school, and news of this venture spread like wildfire. One daily paper conducted an interview with Károly Bura to learn of the activities of the Gypsy musicians. The president of the association used the opportunity to speak of his grand schemes, criticise jazz music, and complain about the press of his day:

I must first and foremost protest that the press all the more frequently portrays the Gypsy as some sort of second-class person. We are just as much tax paying citizens as anyone else, we likewise take care of our responsibilities, and so we have the same rights. Sadly, in public life there still is not the appropriate good faith towards Gypsies, we can still hear things such as wretches, delinquents (*rajkó, purdÉ*) etc. And this is truly insulting to us. (*Újság*, 1929b, p. 2).

The honorary president of the association János Ilovsky used his connections and won the support of several prestigious individuals in government office. Furthermore, he was able to convince the city leadership of Budapest, and the Hungarian Lyricists and Musical Composers and Musical Publishers Federation to support the initiative financially (*Magyar Cigányzenészek Lapja*, 1929f, pp. 1–2). The Association's efforts were crowned with success and in the September of 1929, the János Bihari music school opened its doors in Budapest. The Bihari Music School began its school year with one-hundred and sixty students and a teaching staff of sixteen, of which only one was of Gypsy origin (*Magyar Cigányzenészek Lapja*, 1929h, pp. 3–4). The new institution taught Gypsy children and adults alike for a modest tuition fee. The children received both theoretical and practical lessons with instruments, while the adults only learnt music theory. The young were given two hourly lessons a week, and the adults once a week, all in separate groups (*Magyar Cigányzenészek Lapja*, 1929e, p. 1). A part of music theory was the development of listening and rhythmic skills, practicing scales, solfeggio, a better understanding of chord theory (*Magyar Cigányzenészek Lapja*, 1929g, p. 8). The collection of tuition fees encountered problems only a few weeks into the life of the school, and so the school expelled the students who had fallen behind on their tuition. The operation of the Bihari Music School required a lot of effort on the part of the Hungarian Gypsy Musicians' National Association and almost caused its bankruptcy. The following year saw the postponement of the general meeting of the Association, so the funds set aside for the gathering could be given to the school to prop up its budget (*Hajnáczy*, 2019b, pp. 37–38).

“Lord Rothermere Holds Our Banner High”

Károly Bura's achievements as a Gypsy first violinist went beyond his musical success, and even the founding of the Bihari Music School for Gypsy musicians, and he became the leader of the revisionist movement within Gypsy musical society. We might surmise that his complex identity played a part, seeing his town of birth be torn from Hungary, being persecuted by the newly instated Romanian authorities, and the increasing impoverishment of Gypsy musical society as a result of the peace treaty of Trianon. He wrote:

While we lived in Greater Hungary our days were happy ones, our lives were easy, since Trianon the burden of hard economic times and the death of Hungarian social classes weighs on the fate of Hungarian Gypsies, and it is us Gypsies who feel it the most. And a further threat has appeared, jazz music, which has taken from us that little that economic strife had left. (Magyarság, 1929a, p. 7).

Károly Bura's commitment to this cause influenced the organisation he led and openly molded its profile. Though these aspects of Gypsy musical life were not without antecedents, the new leader had far from brought anything new with his patriotism or moved the association in a new direction. Following the peace treaty of Trianon Gypsy music became an integral part of irredentist ideology and were a part of revisionist efforts. Gypsy musicians were acclaimed as the protectors of Hungarian song, who stood in opposition to those foreign musical fashions labeled anti-patriotic (Hajnáczky, 2020a, 2020d; Zipernovszky, 2017). Previous leaders of the Hungarian Gypsy Musicians' National Association had previously attacked the treaty of Trianon and its consequences. An important moment was in 1927 when they organised a meeting in the interest of protecting Hungarian song, at which many irredentist and revisionist organisations were represented and who all unanimously assured the Gypsy musicians of their support. Organisations such as the Hungarian Women's National Federation which held a nationwide clothing drive for refugees from annexed territories. Its English and French language publications tried to call the attention of international public opinion to how the treaty of Trianon had affected Hungarians. And there was the Turul Federation, the Werbőczy Camaraderie Association and the Csaba Camaraderie Association, who represented college and university students, and claimed a nationalist and Christian foundation were fiercely revisionist and sometimes infamous for their anti-semitism and attacks on Hungarian Jewish students (Hajnáczky, 2020d, pp. 132–134).

In the early months of his leadership Károly Bura won the attention of the press with his letter on behalf of the Association to *Il Duce* himself, Benito Mussolini, thanking him for his solidarity with Hungarians (Magyarság, 1929c, p. 14). He also wrote to Lord Rothermere, Harold Harmsworth, 1st Viscount Rothermere and media magnate, who wrote in June of 1927, the article *Hungary's Place under the Sun* in his newspaper *Daily Mail*. In this article Lord Rothermere wrote of the necessity of the re-examination of the treaty of Trianon and argued for at least the partial return of territories that had been given away. The newspaper proprietor received many letters of thanks from Hungary

following his publication, and in later years several monuments were dedicated to him. Károly Bura wrote the following letter in the name of the Association to Lord Rothermere, both letters were published in the press of the day:

Right Honourable Lord,

On behalf of the newly formed Hungarian Gypsy Musicians' National Association and all Hungarian Gypsy musicians, we thank and greet your Lordship with deep admiration for your tireless work to help Hungarian justice towards victory. May Divine Providence give your Lordship unwavering strength of spirit so that your struggle may be successful, and our national hope will become a reality as soon as possible! We have been looted and down-trodden! Since then, the song on our violins has wept more sadly, and all the pain of our nation quivers from our strings. But we also know our duty. We are present in the territories torn from us and we remind our brothers with Hungarian songs that there will once again come another Hungarian feast day throughout the world! And we announce everywhere Hungarian Gypsy musicians travel, that Hungarian justice must conquer, as Divine justice is with us! Because Lord Rothermere holds our banner high!

In the name of the Hungarian Gypsy Musicians' National Association:

President Károly Bura. (Hajnóczky, 2020d, p. 136).

Dear Sir,

I received a document sent to me by the Hungarian Gypsy Musicians' National Association, from which I felt the sincerity of your sentiments. Hungary has the best means of propaganda in its Gypsy musicians. Thank you for your trust in the final victory of the Hungarian cause and I assure you of my great appreciation.

With utmost respect,

Rothermere. (Ibid.).

Károly Bura, from Nagyvárad was not satisfied with simply writing grand telegrams and receiving their enthusiastic thank you replies. He sought to have the Hungarian Gypsy Musicians' National Association more closely cooperate with the revisionist papers and organisations. The paper entitled the *Magyarság* organised a mass demonstration for its readers to which many religious and patriotic organisations dedicated their support and participation. Károly Bura contacted the newspaper and offered to attend the event with the Hungarian Gypsy Musicians' National Association and to play the Hungarian national anthem (Magyarság, 1929e, p. 9). The Social Associations' Federation, an umbrella organisation for many Christian and patriotic associations also planned a meeting, at which the Gypsy first violinist likewise offered to represent his association and to have them perform the nation's anthem (Magyar Jövő, 1929, p. 5; Magyarság, 1929b, p. 5). The relationships with both the newspaper and the federation went well and in the following year it was the Social Associations' Federation that organised the gala in the Music Academy celebrating Károly Bura's thirty years as a first violinist. It was a grand celebration with a sold-out audience and at which high ranking state representatives gave laudatory speeches and awarded the Hungarian audience's gift to Bura, a white Bikszeg master violin (Budapesti Hírlap, 1930a, p. 15, Újság, 1930a, p. 10). The leadership of the Social Association's Federation awarded Károly Bura a grand cross of merit for "the protection

of Hungarian song, and his most excellent patriotic spirited work" (Pesti Napló, 1930a, p. 20). The newspaper *Magyarság* wrote several articles praising the anniversary performance, describing its antecedents and post celebration reflections (Magyarság, 1930a, p. 10; 1930b, p. 19; 1930c, p. 16; 1930d, p. 12). Bura set his sights on the largest irredentist organisation, the Hungarian Revisionist League, founded for the purpose of unifying the various revisionist activities and associations in Hungary. It represented many hundreds of member organisations and sought to represent Hungarian revisionism in the foreign press through foreign language publications, detailing the injustices of the treaty of Trianon (Zeidler, 1997). Károly Bura requested the membership of the Hungarian Gypsy Musicians' Association in the Hungarian Revisionist League, and published his correspondence on the cover of the Hungarian Gypsy Musicians' Journal:

To the Esteemed Leadership of the Revisionist League!

On the ninth anniversary of the disgraceful peace treaty of Trianon the Hungarian Gypsy Musicians' National Association feels compelled to announce its joining, that is to say to respectfully request its admission to the Revisionist League. We acknowledge with great sincerity the enormous work that the Revisionist League does and feel its ever growing necessity. We would ensure the Leadership that the Revisionist League's meritorious efforts and noble work for us all are received with great understanding by every member of our association. We would once again express our great esteem and in closing respectfully again ask our admission, as we remain with patriotic respect,

Károly Bura, President.

Lilin, Secretary. (Ibid., p. 135).

Most honoured Leadership,

We received your enthusiastic letter on the 7th of this month, from which we learnt of your announcement of joining the Revisionist League. We would express our grateful recognition and thanks for your patriotic stance. It is with joy that we see Hungarian Gypsy musicians among our ranks in this struggle. The effect of this letter announcing your alliance was akin to your playing the Rákóczi march on your enchanted violins, always rousing and encouraging to every Hungarian heart.

Patriotic greetings: Dr. Endre Fall. (Ibid., p. 135).

Hungarian Festival of Song

A few years after losing his wife, in February of 1930, another death touched Károly Bura, that of his father-in-law Béla Radics. The loss shook all of Gypsy musical society, as they mourned not only one of their greatest musical talents, but the one they had to thank for the foundation of the Gypsy musicians' association (Hajnáczky, 2019b, 2020c). Béla Radics was buried among much pomp as crowds accompanied his funeral procession to the Fiumei street cemetery in Budapest. After the conclusion of the funeral rites Bura and the leadership of the Hungarian Gypsy Musicians' National Association decided they would raise the funds for a worthy grave marker above Béla Radics's final resting place. The costs of this expensive initiative were to be covered from income from a benefit concert (Prágai Magyar Hírlap, 1930, p. 12). After a few weeks the mission of

the planned event expanded to include financial support for the Bihari Music School, in addition to a grand tombstone (Magyarország, 1930, p. 2). The primary reason was the monetary burden the maintenance of the music school placed on the Association, but there was also the commonly held belief that it was Béla Radics who first thought of establishing a music school for Gypsy talent and who suggested it be named for János Bihari (Magyarság, 1930e, p. 12). The organisation of this large-scale concert event was assumed by János Ilovsky, the honorary president of the Association, Károly Bura was responsible for the program, together with Imre Magyari, another renowned Gypsy first violinist and Dr. Jenő Járosi the Association's legal counsel (Magyar Országos Tudósító, 1930a, p. 247). After long negotiations and careful preparations the concert program for the much awaited *Festival of Hungarian Song* was born. Well known Gypsy first violinists and one thousand Gypsy musicians were to be joined by popular artists from the Royal Hungarian Opera House, the National Theatre and the City Theatre. The grand scale event was planned for Ascension Thursday towards the end of May 1930. The venue was to be the sports field of the Ferencváros Football Club in order to accommodate the performers and the expected audience of thousands. The Association invited patrons from the highest levels of Hungarian society, representatives of state and government and as the chief patron Archduke Joseph of Habsburg-Lorraine (Magyar Cigányzenészek Lapja, 1930b, pp. 1–2). Regular news reports on the preparations and the many invitations sent abroad meant an apparent wide interest in the *Hungarian Festival of Song*. Tickets sold well not only in Budapest, but across the countryside, foreign ambassadors booked boxes in the tribune, and musical ensembles from abroad sought to participate (Magyarság, 1930e, p. 12; 1930f, p. 11.; Budapesti Hírlap, 1930b, p. 16). When the day of the concert arrived twenty-two thousand crowded onto the sports field, while another eight to ten thousand stood outside the grounds in the hopes of at least hearing the program (Magyar Országos Tudósító, 1930c, p. 261). The program was rich in theatrical moments and visual panache and the Magyar Országos Tudósító wrote the following description of the events, noting Károly Bura's premier role in the concert and the representation of irredentist desires:

Béla Radics's violin, sans strings, was brought in on a red silk cushion by a girl in Hungarian costume and accompanied by 8 further girls dressed in white. Two hajdú lead with Rákóczi's flag at the head of the procession, followed by 100 young girls who carried signs with the names of the Gypsy bands written on them. Károly Bura, Imre Magyari and Ferenc Dundus Horváth first violinists walked at the fore of the Gypsy musicians, who came in groups of one hundred upon the field. All the Gypsy musicians were dressed in tuxedos for this festive occasion and some of the groups were greeted with lively applause by the audience. During the procession the scouting orchestra played Bura's composition the Horthy March, performed for the first time before the public at large. The procession marched around the field and then assembled around the stage set up in the middle. On the stage was a bust of János Bihari, encircled by palms and other tropical plants, in front of the stage sat Laci Rác "no. 36, the king of song". [...] The Gypsy arranged themselves in a huge semicircle, 30 cimbalom, 80 bass awaited their masters, and more than one thousand instruments sounded

off at once. 14 trucks had brought the instruments onto the field. [...] Szeréna S. Fáz's words opened the festival, reciting the prologue composed for the occasion by János Ilovsky, chief organiser and the honorary president of the Gypsies musicians. [...] During this time the students from the Vas and Mester street Higher Commerce School moved into a formation around the field with small flags in their hand and outlined the borders of Greater Hungary and 63 girls in Hungarian costume arranged themselves about the field, holding in their hands the 63 coats of arms of the royal counties. Four live tableaux formed representing the irredentist statues on Liberty square, and Panni Halácsy, dressed in silver scaled armour, stood at the centre of the field personifying Hungaria. As the last words of the prologue concluded the Hungarian national anthem was played under the direction of Károly Bura, and the audience stood to attention to listen. Turning in the four directions of the globe tarogató players dressed in Rákóczi period clothing played the Rákóczi lament. [...] Károly Bura again took the stage to conduct the Kossuth song, afterwhich Laci Rác, Imre Magyar and then fourteen other first violinists lead the orchestra. Sixty Hungarian songs followed one after another, slow songs, court songs, and csárdás. Singing the Hungarian songs with the Gypsy accompaniment were artists, Izabella Nagy, Opera house member, Teréz Kőszegi, artist from the City Theatre, József Cselényi from the National Theatre and Imre Varga from the City theatre. The sun was setting when Laci Rác again took the stage and in closing the Gypsies played the Rákóczi march. (Magyar Országos Tudósító, 1930c, pp. 262–263).

Embezzlement, Document Theft, Leadership Renewal

The concert was an amazing success, the cashbox overflowed, and the audience's ovation seemed to continue forever, the press showered the event with glowing reviews and congratulatory telegrams flooded the offices of the Hungarian Gypsy Musicians' National Association (Magyar Országos Tudósító, 1930c, p. 262; Újság, 1930b, p. 9; Magyarság, 1930g, p. 7; Nemzeti Újság, 1930, p. 3; Új Nemzedék, 1930a, p. 4). Yet dark stormclouds loomed just above the life of the association and struck like lightning when Károly Bura wrote a scathing article in the Hungarian Gypsy Musicians' Journal accusing János Ilovsky of embezzlement:

I only became interested in this whole thing when I heard, contrary to many promises, that the Festival of Song had been unsuccessful, and despite my urging, I did not receive back the thousands that we had made available from our treasury, that of the association, to the general organisers. To this day we have not reclaimed these eight thousand pengős, the assets of the association, thus it is easy to understand that my faith in the results of the accounts have been shaken. (Magyar Cigányzenészek Lapja, 1930f, p. 2).

He went on to criticise Dr. Jenő Járosi, legal counsel for the association and considered the right hand of János Ilovsky, for accepting what Bura felt was an unnecessarily high honorarium, at a time when the association could hardly help poor Gypsy musicians in need with aid (Magyar Cigányzenészek Lapja, 1930f, p. 2). As part of Károly Bura's scandalous accusations the honorary president together with his supporters resigned their leadership positions (Magyar Hírlap, 1930a, p. 4), and Bura quickly sought to find new patrons and find a new honorary president. These new patrons were influential state officials who were on good terms with the Gypsy first violinist, Gyula Pekár, president

of the Petőfi Society, Ödön Lukács ministry advisor, Aladár Krüger member of parliament, lieutenant-colonel Sir Gyula Zámbery Gehér and Jenő Sándor ministry secretary (*Magyar Cigányzenészek Lapja*, 1930f, p. 2). As the position of association lawyer had become vacant Bura used the opportunity to hire legal counsel loyal to him and took on Sir Dr. Béla Varga.

The newly appointed attorney immediately went to work and launched a lawsuit against János Ilovsky on behalf of Béla Radics's heirs concerning the accounting of the *Festival of Song* (*Magyar Hírlap*, 1930a, p. 4), and with the help of Károly Bura published the accusations in the *Hungarian Gypsy Musicians' Journal*. Among the points cited was even the accusation that János Ilovsky had used the name and image of Béla Radics to publicise the event though the deceased's heirs protested against it. Furthermore, a film – with sound – had been made of the great concert without the permission of the descendants of the great first violinist (*Magyar Híradó*, 1930). The chief organiser was alleged to have understated the number of the audience present, the lawyer claiming the ten to twelve thousand noted in the documentation was false as there were at least twenty to twenty-two thousand tickets sold. Legal counsel accused Ilovsky with sloppy accounting saying the event's finances were in disarray and muddled, and that they had been accepted at a general meeting not summoned in accordance with the statutes and thus illegal. Finally, he charged that a not fillér of income had been given to either the Bihari Music School or for Béla Radics's grave monument, and that payment for the performing Gypsies had also been neglected and which then burdened the treasury of the cash-strapped association (*Magyar Cigányzenészek Lapja*, 1930e, pp. 3–5). The atmosphere of anger and distrust only grew with the disappearance of the bookkeeping from the offices of the association, and Károly Bura's making a report to the police for theft by parties unknown (*Magyar Cigányzenészek Lapja*, 1930c, p. 5; *Magyar Hírlap*, 1930a, p. 4). These dramatic and scandalous events divided the membership of the Hungarian Gypsy Musicians' National Association and tore the Gypsy musicians into two factions. One of the groups put their full trust in János Ilovsky and demanded Károly Bura's resignation, while the other camp rallied around Bura and accused the chief event organiser of embezzlement (*Magyar Cigányzenészek Lapja*, 1930d, pp. 6–7). Such a drastic difference of opinion made the convening of an extraordinary general meeting unavoidable. The meeting was planned for August 5, 1930, where a vote was to be taken as to the person of the president and those in official positions (*Új Nemzedék*, 1930b, p. 2). On the day preceding the electoral general meeting the Association's Budapest local group called a meeting to decide upon their delegate to the general meeting. Upon Károly Bura's entrance to the meeting room those opposing him shouted "Resign Bura!", and the president was hardly able to make himself heard in all the racket. Passion flared so high as to force the police captain delegated to conclude the meeting. However, after the Károly Bura's opponents had departed the remainder held a vote as to the persons of the delegates and not surprisingly all the delegates were from among Bura's supporters (*Magyar Oszágos Tudósító*, 1930d, p. 28; *Magyar Hírlap*, 1930b, p. 4; *Pesti Napló*, 1930b, p. 4).

Anthem or Waltz

The association's recently ejected legal counsel, Dr. Jenő Járosi, also attended the association's Budapest local group's meeting. The lawyer called the attention to those present, to a letter from the first secretary of the Transylvanian Hungarian Party, that in 1924, Károly Bura had written an anthem to the king of Romania. He decried this act as incompatible with his present office and a scandal and demanded Bura's immediate resignation. All the while members of the attending crowd shouted, "Off to Romania!!!" (Kis Újság, 1930, p. 6). Though the meeting was formally adjourned, Dr. Jenő Járosi had far from finished his smear campaign against the Gypsy first violinist. He authored a flyer that gave an account of Károly Bura's past and had this placed on the cimbalom in Budapest coffee houses and restaurants (Magyar Cigányzenészek Lapja, 1930d, pp. 6–7). The pamphlet brought up the accusation of Bura having composed a hymn to the Romanian king, and rejected the story of Bura having been persecuted by the Romanian authorities in Nagyvárad (Oradea):

Károly Bura, as we know, arrived in Budapest a few years ago from Nagyvárad, together with his siblings. He once composed a royal hymn for the unveiling of a statue of Ferdinand, king of Romania, which he dedicated to Queen Maria and the heir, the present ruler. He first played it in the grand salon of the Catholic Circle. The prefect at that time, upon Bura's request, presented Queen Maria with a decoratively bound copy of the hymn, who said thank you and listened to it. Bura performed the hymn during Ionel Brătianu's stay in Várad and on many festive occasions. These were all written of in the Nagyvárad newspaper, upon Bura's request. Bura arrived from Nagyvárad as a patriotic martyr, persecuted for Hungarian song. The truth though is that Bura left because of the economic conditions there. He never encountered any unpleasantness until the farewell evening, when a man from the securanica took exception to the farewell speech of the president of the Hungarian Party (something completely separate of Bura). Charges were made against the individual which came to a conclusion after the first interrogation. Bura was also interrogated, and an overly zealous detective took his lapel pin with the coat of arms, which was returned to him the next day and the entire case closed. (Új Nemzedék, 1930c, p. 7).

The question of the hymn to the king of Romania was on the agenda the following day, at an extraordinary general meeting, with police present for security, and the source of further heated arguments. Károly Bura denied having composed a hymn, claiming the composition was only a waltz for which he was not even paid (Magyar Hírlap, 1930c, p. 6). The association's new lawyer, an individual implicated and attacked in the press for a franc counterfeiting scandal (Magyar Országos Tudósító, 1930e, p. 39), spoke in defense of the president and striking the table declared: "It was only a waltz!, Just a little waltz! He was forced to do it." (Magyarság, 1930h, p. 6) The Pécs Gypsy musicians' delegate jumped up onto his chair and retorted, "And when we were under Serbian occupation? They told us, 'Jasem serbski!' But we stuck our chest 'Jasem magyarski! Motherf[...]!" (Magyarság, 1930h, p. 6). A loud representative of the opposition shouted again and again "He did it for the lei! Sandal footed composer!" (Friss Újság, 1930, p. 4). The angry crowd began

to chant "He wrote a march for sandaled feet!" (*Magyar Országos Tudósító*, 1930e, p. 39) "Off to Romania! Terrorist!" (*Friss Újság*, 1930, p. 4). Dr. Jenő Járosi again called upon Károly Bura to resign, and the opposing faction began to cheer János Ilovsky. The former honorary president asked to speak, but Bura denied him the floor and adjourned the general meeting, which the police captain present reinforced. The president left the meeting rushing through the crowd of delegates, nonetheless the general meeting continued and János Ilovsky was able to give his speech. He began by reading the letter from the directorship responsible for the management of the Ferencváros Sport Club's field, which stated that exactly 10963 spectators purchased tickets to the *Hungarian Festival of Song*. Furthermore, eight members of the association and state representatives entrusted with the auditing all found the accounts of the event to be in order. The former honorary president charged that the conflict was not really over the accuracy of the bookkeeping:

Károly Bura had his pride hurt and took exception to his name not being printed in larger letters than the other first violinist on the poster. The same Károly Bura who took that decoratively bound song to the police prefect in Nagyvárad, written for the unveiling of a statue of the Romanian king. (*Magyar Országos Tudósító*, 1930e, p. 40).

The twelve capital city and a dozen rural delegates voted confidence in János Ilovsky and agreed to have the Gypsy musicians withhold their membership dues while Károly Bura sat in the presidential chair. In addition, they respectfully asked the capital city's legal authorities' committee member to once again accept his nomination as the honorary president at the next general meeting. (*Magyar Országos Tudósító*, 1930e, p. 41).

The president of the Hungarian Gypsy Musicians' National Association did not take the accusations against him and the threats to his position passively. He tried to repel the attacks on different fronts. He immediately gave an interview to a daily paper, in which he tried to clear his name and deflect the accusations:

That's not that way it was at all. No. I'll tell you the truth. I sure will. But I have to start at the beginning. There where the treaty of Trianon found me. In Nagyvárad. What was I to do, one has to live, if we're there. You have to. That's why I had to become a Romanian citizen. And then what happens, Queen Maria comes to Nagyvárad. She's greeted with a big celebration. Of course. She's queen! They called on me, you play music, Károly, well then give it your all. What was I to do? I had to do something original. But what? That was the sticky point. Because I can't write Romanian music. It's not in my blood. Just like this modern jazz isn't. A Hungarian song was out of the question. What else could I have done? No. I composed a French waltz, a light waltz. It was quite short. Just enough. General Mosoiu gave the composition to the queen, the sheet music. The police prefect commanded me to play it. [...] This was all that happened. This is what they're blowing out of proportion, elaborating, and distorting, this is the great scandal. A waltz. [...] I wanted to come to Hungary. And there was a farewell evening in my honour there. I played Hungarian and kuruc songs and for this military tribunal, arrest, one month of disputes and delays, until finally I was able to come home. (*Az Est*, 1930, p. 11).

In his attempt to protect his honour Károly Bura used the Hungarian Gypsy Musicians' Journal too, and had it reprint the relevant article from the Nagyvárad Estilap, which mentions his composition as a waltz. Furthermore, statements from several well-respected Hungarian citizens of Nagyvárad (Oradea) appeared in the columns of the paper, including the head of the Hungarian Party's local branch and his predecessor, and a member of parliament. All the witnesses unreservedly confirmed the Gypsy first violinist's impeccable Hungarian identity and also stated that Dr. Jenő Járosi had been trying to dig up dirt on Károly Bura for months by writing to Nagyvárad (Oradea) (*Magyar Cigányzenészek Lapja*, 1930h, pp. 3–4).

“Baroraj” or the Gypsy Pasha

Dr. Jenő Járosi submitted an appeal (*Magyar Országos Tudósító*, 1930h, p. 47) to the Ministry of the Interior asking for assistance in ending the disruption in the Hungarian Gypsy Musicians' National Association. The Ministry delegated an official commissioner whose task was to convene a general meeting, which would hold valid elections and choose the person of president and the association officers. The conflict was further aggravated when János Ilovsky threatened to sue Károly Bura for slander (*Új Nemzedék*, 1930d, p. 3). In addition to this the head of the Pécs local group declared that not only would they not pay their membership dues but would break all ties with the central office for so long as Károly Bura was president (*Dunántúl*, 1930, p. 5). It seemed that Bura had lost all his backing, and so he visited the former honorary president at his home and presented him with two declarations. In one he begged for forgiveness for the slander and baseless accusations, and asked Járosi to again act as patron for the Gypsy musicians' cause. In the second he stated that he would resign his position and would do so at the general meeting convened by the official state commissioner (*Magyar Országos Tudósító*, 1930f, p. 144). The press seized upon the story, and after weeks of continuing to cover it announced that the so-called “Gypsy war” would come to an end with the resignation of the Gypsy first violinist, Károly Bura had fallen from grace (*Pesti Napló*, 1930c, p. 12). However, in a dramatic turn of events the very next day the papers had a radically different event to report. A few hours after submitting his declarations, Károly Bura sent a telegram to János Ilovsky in which he recanted his resignation (*Magyar Hírlap*, 1930d, p. 9). The Gypsy first violinist published his letter in the Hungarian Gypsy Musicians' Journal in which he added that he wishes to break all ties to János Ilovsky and his gang. Going further he denied ever having written such a declaration and explained that he only signed the paper due to his ill health:

Yesterday when you asked in the spirit of Christian straightforwardness for me to seek you out in order to settle the differences between the National Gypsy Musicians' Association and yourself, I was reluctant but nonetheless went to your flat. I have not played on the stage of public affairs with anything but my musical talent and my absolute Hungarian national will. It was in this spirit that I went to you, and though my renowned specialist advised me against anything that might agitate my heart I did as you wished in order to conduct

negotiations with you. It is amazing but after one day I feel that I am again in control of my nerves and I primarily have you to thank for this. I have you to thank because today when I received the declaration written by you and signed by me my nerves relaxed, and my heart beat relaxed and I can state that what I signed in a state of exhaustion and at the behest of my spirit dedicated to the public good, I must rescind. I must declare my signature void. (Magyar Cigányzenészek Lapja, 1930g, p. 2).

The official commissioner delegated by the Ministry of the Interior announced an extraordinary general meeting and called all the Gypsy musicians' delegates. The peaceful progress of the meeting was ensured by the police, in fact the district police chief and police inspector were present in person as well. Representatives of the press crowded into the back rows of the venue hungry for further sensational scandals in the "Gypsy war". The ministry commissioner first allowed Károly Bura to take the floor. He once again demanded that the chief organiser of the *Hungarian Festival of Song* account for the funds he had borrowed from the association. Next János Ilovsky was given the floor to present his defense, in which he explained how he had been slandered after the event and not given the opportunity to clear his name. To prove his point, he slammed a stack of briefs on the table, they were the festival's bookkeeping had had been visibly worn from the multiple times they had been audited. He asserted that the loan granted by the association had for months been deposited in the bank, in a savings account under Károly Bura's name. He concluded by expressing his outrage at this entire episode and of being accused by the Gypsy first violinist.

I rolled up my sleeves and worked for a month for the Gypsies – finished János Ilovsky, – and the hand I stretched forward in charity was stoned and battered with mud, even though on St. Stephen's Day we wanted to hold a second festival of song, at which all foreigners would have participated and in fact the second festival of song would have been a serious financial success in addition to being a moral success. (Magyar Országos Tudósító, 1930g, p. 56).

The crowds of Gypsy delegates responded to Ilovsky's words and shouted their own complaints at Bura, demanding his resignation and decrying his responsibility for the outbreak of the "Gypsy war":

All this was done so that if János Ilovsky left the association and would not be the "baroraj" (baro raj, literally big Lord in Roma language) among us, then Bura could be the Gypsy pasha. (Magyar Országos Tudósító, 1930g, p. 57).

The official commissioner responsible for the meeting ordered a vote of non-confidence in response to the presentations given. Those who continued to support Károly Bura were to write his name upon a piece of paper. Those who had withdrawn their support from him were to write the name of the new presidential candidate Marci Banda upon the paper. The vote was won by Marci Banda, by the solid margin of twenty-seven votes,

to the nineteen given to Károly Bura. Bura left the venue immediately after this vote and Marci Banda was proclaimed president of the Hungarian Gypsy Musicians' National Association. The new association head solemnly requested János Ilovszky return as honorary president and for Dr. Jenő Járosi to be legal counsel (*Magyar Országos Tudósító*, 1930g, pp. 56–57).

The dethroned former president was unwilling to accept his defeat and continued to attack his rivals in the association and to incite those Gypsy musicians faithful to him against them (*Magyar Cigányzenészek Lapja*, 1930i, pp. 1–2; 1930j, p. 2). After accepting the fact that he would be unable to regain his lost presidency he founded the Hungarian Gypsy Musician' National Patient Aid and Self-Help Association. This opposition organisation did not have official recognition by the Ministry of the Interior nor recognised statutes, but that did not prevent Károly Bura from hastily beginning to gather members. He made sweeping promises in an attempt to attract Gypsy musicians as members. For only a few pengő a month the new organisation promised to send five to ten pengő aid in case of illness, or “bandlessness”, and for a duration of eight weeks. After twenty years of membership Bura promised more than forty pengős a month, and for thirty-five years of membership almost two hundred and thirty pengő a month in pension. The Gypsy first violinist's initiative faded after a time as neither the ministry nor the Gypsy musicians gave him enough support (*Magyar Cigányzenészek Lapja*, 1930k, pp. 3–4; *Újság*, 1930c, p. 2).

The Hungarian Regent, the Italian Duce, the Pope in Rome, the American President

Károly Bura in his youth composed songs for the heir to the thrones of Austria and Hungary, Franz Ferdinand, and later king Charles IV, and later in life he continued this custom. During his premier years as president of the Hungarian Gypsy Musicians' National Association he composed songs for Miklós Horthy, the regent of Hungary and his wife, and often performed at the regal couple's garden parties. He wrote the *Horthy March* for the governor and for his wife the irredentist song *Message* (*Az Est*, 1930, p. 11; *Magyar Országos Tudósító*, 1930b, p. 98). Despite his fall from grace the Gypsy first violinist was all the more active in composing works for state and ecclesiastical dignitaries in hopes of gaining their attention and favour. It seems the tarnish suffered from his waltz for the Romanian king was no deterrent. He set his sights upon the highest of authorities, composing the *United States March*, called by some the *Hoover March* for President Herbert Hoover of the USA, and binding the sheet music in red silk and posting it overseas (*Pesti Napló*, 1930d, p. 7). After several months of waiting Károly Bura had to be satisfied with a short reply from a chief consul:

The Department of Foreign Affairs of the United States has instructed me to express the sincere thanks and recognition of the President for your kindness and for composing and sending *The United States March*, dedicated to the President. (*Budapesti Hírlap*, 1931a, p. 8).

This brief reply did not discourage Bura, and he had it framed and proudly displayed in a prominent place in his home (Pesti Napló, 1931, p. 18). Bura then proceeded to compose for those in power closer to home and composed for the Italian strong man, Benito Mussolini. There was a precedent in this case, for not so long ago he had written the “Italian-Hungarian Friendship March”, which became hit at home in Hungary (Budapesti Hírlap, 1931b, p. 12). Bura composed the *Marcia Mussolini* for Il Duce, which became known as the *Mussolini March* in Hungary and asked that he be allowed to perform it in person in Rome. Mussolini was appreciative of the gesture and communicated through the Italian foreign ministry that Bura may perform it at the anniversary celebrations organised in his honour (Budapesti Hírlap, 1932a, p. 11). Károly Bura saw the trip to Rome as an opportunity to seek an audience with the Pope, for whom he had also composed music. There was text written by Norbertine canon and poet László Mécs dedicated to the Pope that Bura put to music. The music to be sent to the Vatican was bound in white silk and included a Latin language translation of the prayer for the Pope, on its cover were inscribed the following words, “*Patri Sanctissimo Nostro Glorificissime Regnanti Papae Pio Summa catholica reverentia, Carolus Bura*” (Budapesti Hírlap, 1932b, p. 7; Tóth & Tusor, 2016, p. 225).

A Gaping Hole in the Wall

In the evenings of January of 1934, Károly Bura performed, entertained and charmed guests at an elegant restaurant in Buda. One evening though, at twilight, as he was returning home to prepare for the evening’s performance he was confronted by the most unpleasant of surprises. He turned the key to the well oiled and locked door of his large flat in Kőfaragó st 5, only a few corners from the National Museum, and could hardly believe his eyes (Nemzeti Újság, 1934a, p. 16). His home had been ransacked and robbed. After the initial shock came the other, a large gaping hole in one of the walls of his flat. The burglars had taken a thousand pengő’s worth of jewelry and two thousand pengő in cash (Erdélyi Lapok, 1934, p. 5). The police began a massive effort to find the perpetrators, and in a week captured the head of the band of thieves. When the detectives approached him on the street he simply said, “I see, you got me”. As the burglar said these words, he suddenly attacked the detectives, who were finally able to subdue him and take away the revolver he had under his coat. After long interrogations the hiding place of the jewellery and the identity of the other culprits was revealed, in addition to the method of entry and other previous crimes. There were four members of the gang, two trade apprentices, a cooper apprentice, and a furniture polisher. They targeted the homes and shops of the affluent which had an adjacent flat or store place for rent. They pretended to be prospective renters, and then late at night broke through the wall to gain access to the location in question, hidden from any prying eyes. This was how they had robbed the safe of Német and Lukács furriers, from which they had stolen almost five thousand pengő. They burgled the Masztig furriers using the same method, but not finding any

cash they took the expensive furs with them. And this was how they broke through and into Károly Bura's apartment, by renting the neighbouring flat and then breaking through the wall (Magyar Országos Tudósító, 1934a, p. 34; Keleti Újság, 1934, p. 11). Robbing the rich Gypsy first violinist promised to be a windfall but in the end was the downfall of the gang. The Budapest court handed out prison and jail sentences, depending on any previous crimes committed (8 Órai Újság, 1934, p. 6). The thieves implicated a Gypsy dancer in their statements, stating that she gave them the tip about the wealth to be found in Bura's home, something they planned to handsomely reward her for. The dancer was well known to the courts and had been convicted of theft and poaching (Magyar Országos Tudósító, 1934b, p. 157). She denied any involvement and the convicted thieves rescinded their statements, to which the judge simply declared: "How chivalrous you have become all of a sudden, protecting this woman" (Magyar Országos Tudósító, 1934b, p. 157). The accused woman was acquitted, as the judge did not find enough evidence to convict her:

There is a basis to suspect that this woman, with a checkered past, had some part in the break in committed against the Gypsy first violinist's flat. But honor amongst thieves has saved her, for lacking any evidence the court cannot but drop the charges against her. (Magyarország, 1934b, p. 16)

Strikers and Strike Breakers

No sooner had the burglar been caught and the stolen wares returned to the first violinist that Károly Bura found himself in another quagmire. All of the Budapest Gypsy musical society was in an uproar over the announcement by Hungarian Radio that Dr. Endre Spur, lawyer, retired judge, and music critic had been placed in charge of supervising the programs broadcasting Gypsy music. They gave Spur the task of deciding which songs the Gypsy orchestras would play, furthermore to oversee the quality of the performances and the style according to his criteria and expectations. The Gypsy musicians gave voice to their outrage immediately, calling the lawyer the "Gypsy censor", the "radio's voivode", or the "civilian voivode". A play on the Germanic name of Endre Spur soon became popular mocking his presumed knowledge, "Spur can't follow Gypsy music!" (the word Spur can mean trace, path or follow in German) (Pesti Napló, 1934a, p. 9). The Gypsies thought it unacceptable that a non-Gypsy decide upon their performances, one of them stating to the press that:

We've been playing songs for three hundred years and he comes and wants to teach us to play. Let him get up in front of the microphone if he can do better than us, we're the ones who've made made Hungarian folk music world famous. (Pesti Napló, 1934a, p. 9).

In another daily paper they asked Károly Bura his opinion about the row:

To tell the truth, we've proved our knowledge of how to play Hungarian song over centuries! What do we need a civil voivode for? They called us into the studio on Saturday to listen

to Spur. Well, we listened to him ... He said something like the songs we're playing now are gentlemanly songs, and not true Hungarian songs. He also said that an hour before our performance begins, we should go to the studio where he'll review what we want to play and in what style. (Új Nemzedék, 1934, p. 7).

Led by Imre Magyari the Gypsy musicians began a movement to protest the decision by Hungarian Radio. Despite the two opposing parties meeting to reach an agreement they left the bargaining table at even greater odds. Imre Magyari, disappointed at the failed talks with the Hungarian Radio, concluded any actions against them and distanced himself from any protests (Pesti Napló, 1934a, p. 9). Károly Bura saw an opportunity to once again stand at the fore of a Gypsy movement left without a leader and decided to take decisive action. He called a meeting of all the Gypsy first violinists at one of the coffee houses, where upon his initiative and upon the crowd's proclamation they founded the Budapest Gypsy Musicians' Association (Az Est, 1934a, p. 7). Károly Bura acting in the name of the new organisation gave an ultimatum to the leadership of the Hungarian Radio, in which he threatened a strike if their demands were not met:

Our position, that we are not willing to accept any change or newer understanding whatsoever of our musical understanding and performance has not changed. We are not willing to accept any conductor for our studio performance occasions or any similar activities, for this would in the end mean the stripping of the particular characteristics we have preserved for centuries and force upon us a performance mode foreign to our bodies and our souls and would not only darken them but also mean the complete destruction of the Hungarian treasury of song preserved by us through even the wildest periods of oppression. This decision of ours is firm we would rather resign radio broadcasts than be in the hands of an amateur and lose all fame and recognition over three hundred years for ourselves and the Hungarian nation. [...] In so much as the respected directorship insists on the advance submission of a fixed program and would give someone overseership, we would ask that the Hungarian Radio on behalf of respect for Hungarian Gypsy musicians and Hungarian song entrust this to a director with a Hungarian name, so that the Hungarian national character not suffer indignity. We would ask that you be so kind as to reply to our submitted appeal within three days, as we would like to consider as to whether we would further perform in front of the microphone or not if the planned adverse innovations are implemented. (Pesti Napló, 1934a, p. 9).

The proclamation sought not only to defend the honor of Gypsy musical society and Hungarian song but also express dissatisfaction with the honorarium paid by Hungarian Radio. Almost without exception the Gypsy orchestras got twenty pengő in payment for every coffee house broadcast, and for studio performances eighty pengő. It was only Imre Magyari and his band that got eighty pengő for their hospitality venue performances and one hundred and sixty for their radio studio performances. Citing this the Gypsy musicians demanded that the Hungarian Radio leadership give them all these fees, as they had to the exceptional Gypsy first violinists and his orchestra (Új Nemzedék, 1934, p. 7). Imre Magyari did not sign the ultimatum and told the press that the background to the

whole strike was Károly Bura and his admirers' jealousy of his high honorarium. Károly Bura accused his musical colleague that Magyari had secretly made a pact with the radio directorship and called the Gypsy musicians still willing to perform for the radio "back-water Gypsies" (*Magyar Hírlap*, 1934a, p. 6). A deep divide cut between the two Gypsy first violinists which again divided Gypsy musical society. The so-called "strike-breakers" gathered behind Imre Magyari and were willing to submit to the prescriptions of the Hungarian Radio, while behind Bura stood the "strikers" who rejected performing under the new conditions (*Az Est*, 1934a, p. 7).

The colleagues at the Hungarian Radio completely rejected the ultimatum of the Budapest Gypsy Musicians Association, stating that the organisation has no ministry of the interior recognition. They went on to say that they were far from frightened by any threat of a strike by Gypsy musicians, and in fact would find no difficulty in removing them from the program entirely (*Az Est*, 1934a, p. 7). They even went so far as to declare that there would be no compromise concerning their planned measures. Firstly, because the radio would no longer tolerate any inconsistencies in the quality of the performances given over the radio, secondly if their standards can be met by the artists of the Opera House and the Philharmonic Society then it can be expected of the Gypsy musicians just the same (*Pesti Napló*, 1934b, p. 10). The rejection and rebuke by the Hungarian Radio was answered by Károly Bura, who convened another meeting and called upon the Gypsy first violinists and orchestra members to strike. The effect was that only Imre Magyari and his orchestra did not boycott the radio performances (*Pesti Napló*, 1934c, p. 6). Bura became the strike leader and organised meetings where all could give voice to their rage and listen to his encouraging and fiery words. However, his failing health soon meant an end to any further grand plans as he was forced to take to his bed (*Kis Újság*, 1934a, p. 6; *Magyarság*, 1934a, p. 6; *Nemzeti Újság*, 1934b, p. 5). One of the daily papers visited the ailing Gypsy first violinist in his home, and he made the following bitter statement about the strike:

The whole Gypsy war began when my dear brother-in-law Imre Magyari entrapped us. This isn't all because of Spur. It's 'cause of the buckaroos! For years we played for twenty pengő on the radio. They can't want us to continue this. [...] They make fools of us! That's why we're here, to make fools of the dumb Gypsies? Really? What do they think of us? [...] 'Cause we're Gypsies, they think, shut up, you! A pox on all the fighting! We've no need of this Spur! (*Az Est*, 1934b, p. 7).

The Hungarian Radio put pressure on the striking Gypsy musicians by telling the coffee houses not to employ Gypsy musicians agitating against the radio. These were some of the reasons the disparate parties came to an agreement and the guns of the "Gypsy war" fell silent (Hajnáczy, 2019b, pp. 47–48).

He Suddenly Clapsed at His Heart

Károly Bura had complained of heart pains for years, some reports write of a ailing aortic aneurysm (Magyar Hírlap, 1934c, p. 5), while other sources write of a progressive cardiac arteriosclerosis (Pesti Napló, 1934d, p. 8). The Gypsy first violinist's family, friends and doctor had long worried about his health (Budapesti Hírlap, 1934b, p. 10). The first symptoms appeared when his wife died (Magyar Hírlap, 1934c, p. 5), and he even wrote of his heart problems in the Hungarian Gypsy Musicians' Journal after the scandals following the Hungarian festival of Song and his losing the presidency of the Association. The tensions accompanying the strike against the Hungarian Radio did not help his health, and he had to take to bed, but he recovered and continued to live his life with as much gusto as he had the previous decades. On June 1st, 1934, at five in the afternoon he was practicing with his orchestra in the garden terrace of a restaurant when he suddenly said "Lads, I don't feel so well", and suddenly clapsed his heart (Budapesti Hírlap, 1934a, p. 5; Kis Újság, 1934b, p. 6). He ended practice and went home, where he immediately telephoned his doctor. The doctor saw his condition as being critical and called for a taxi to take him to the Royal Hungarian Railway Hospital (Pesti Napló, 1934d, p. 8). The doctor on duty did all he could to stabilise Károly Bura's health, but all his attempts were in vain around eleven o'clock at night the Gypsy first violinist died (Budapesti Hírlap, 1934a, p. 5).

The following day the deceased Gypsy first violinist's younger brother Sandor Bura opened the will and found that there was not much wealth remaining. Prolonged illness had not only burdened his body but also his savings. The first sentences of Károly Bura's will asked that he be buried next to his wife and for the words "Annie, I'm here too" to be carved into the stone. Following this was what he bequeathed to his siblings. To Sandor he left his Amati violin, which according to family tradition was to always go to the oldest first violinist in the family. To Géza he left the gold violin tuning pegs he had received from Franz Ferdinand, and to László his jewelry and gold gift objects (Pesti Napló, 1934e, p. 6). In the last paragraph of his will he left his apartment and mementos for the purpose of establishing a museum:

My flat, in which I have collected the mementos of a lifetime I leave for the possible purpose of establishing a Gypsy Museum, for with my death I desire to serve the cause of Gypsy musical life, just as I have served only it all my life. (Pesti Napló, 1934e, p. 6).

In 1935, Sándor Bura gave his brother's legacy to the Historical Bureau of the Hungarian National Museum (Budapesti Hírlap, 1935, p. 9).

Obituaries filled the columns of the daily papers, and heaped praise upon the deceased. Károly Bura's burial took place on June 4th, and he was laid to rest in the Fiume street cemetery, with thousands of mourners in attendance. Order among the huge crowds

wanting to pay their respects was ensured by several hundred police (Prágai Magyar Hírlap, 1934, p. 8). His body lay in the most elegant of caskets upon the funeral bier and was surrounded by dozens of candles and a forest of funeral wreaths (Friss Újság, 1934, p. 6). The most decorative wreath came from his orchestra and the ribbon upon it had the words, "For our unforgettable first violinist" (Prágai Magyar Hírlap, 1934, p. 8). The director of the Hungarian Radio put aside the grievances of the past and personally laid a wreath at the foot of the catafalque. Next to the deceased was laid a velvet cushion with the decorations he had been awarded during the First World War (Magyar Hírlap, 1934b, p. 5). In the first row of mourners stood with heads bowed Károly Bura's brothers, Sándor, László and Géza, and all listened to the mourning songs performed by the Opera House choir (Újság, 1934, p. 5). The ceremony was led by Father Dr. Tivadar Vargyas, canon lawyer and parish priest of the inner-city Christ the King Church (Pesti Napló, 1934f, p. 11). Following the funeral rites at the bier his casket was placed on a funeral carriage and taken to his wife's grave, next to the final resting place of his former father-in-law, Béla Radics. Károly Bura had always wanted to be buried next to his wife (Magyar Muzsikaszó, 1934, p. 4). At the front of the burial procession a one-hundred-and-fifty-member Gypsy orchestra, led by the most prestigious Gypsy first violinists played the songs "The quivering silver leaf of the poplar has fallen" and "The body was put in the yard" (Pesti Hírlap, 1934, p. 9). The eulogy was given by a delegate of his former audience in Nagyvárad (Oradea) and the university's law students' representative, who said the following words:

Dear uncle Károly, I bid you farewell in the name of the university students, for whom you made the carnival evenings so beautiful. We, your friends, promise, here by your graveside, to not permit Hungarian song to be put in the grave with you, but in your spirit to fight for Hungarian song! (Magyarság, 1934b, p. 10).

Conclusion

The numerous steps and endeavours undertaken by Károly Bura and the Gypsy musicians' organisation call attention to the fact that the Gypsy musicians in Hungary were active players in the history of the period. Károly Bura was an activist and as the head of the Hungarian Gypsy Musicians' National Association fought for reforms and change, all of which were to further the interests of Gypsy society. He resurrected the Hungarian Gypsy Musicians Journal, founded the Bihari Music School, cooperated in the organisation of the gigantic charity event, the Festival of Hungarian Song. After his removal from the leadership of the Association he tried to found other Gypsy musician groups and led a strike against the Hungarian Radio, after they made conditions held to be unacceptable. In addition to representing Hungarian Gypsy musicians, he was a revisionist and had the Gypsy musicians' association join the Hungarin Revisionist League and sought cooperation with other irredentist organisations and newspapers. In the name of the association, he wrote a letter of thanks to Lord Rothermere for the Baron's support of the Hungarian cause. He was a visionary figure who dreamt of achievements

and created plans for Gypsy musicians at least a lifetime before they became popular demands in the course of the development of Gypsy national identity. Foremost was his desire that a Gypsy Museum be created and toward this aim he offered up his home and his momentos in his will. He wanted to preserve Gypsy history, namely that the names of the Gypsies who had died fighting in World War One be memorialised in an album. The life and career of the Gypsy first violinists and the activities of the organisation he headed illustrates how Gypsy music became part of the Hungarian national ideal, and part of irredentist ideology and revisionist efforts. In addition to his steps for strengthening Gypsy musical identity, he wished preserve and develop Gypsy musical culture and further its social integration.

Czechoslovakia

The Daniel and Kýr Families from the Strážnice Area and their Attempts to Improve the Position of Moravian and Slovak Roma to Benefit Czechoslovakia

Introduction

Dušan Slačka and Lada Viová

The interwar period brought enormous changes to the inhabitants of former Czechoslovakia. The war ended in 1918 and, in one part of what had been a multinational monarchy, a new, ethnically heterogeneous state arose instead (for more on this subject, see Marushiakova & Popov, 2021b, p. 593), composed in addition to Czechs and Slovaks of the German, Hungarian, Ruthenian and Polish minorities – and even the Jewish minority was officially recognised. Representatives of the Polish, German and Hungarian minorities frequently opposed the very existence of this state, which is not surprising. Interwar Czechoslovakia was distinguished (among other things) by the tension between democratic, liberal principles and an emphasis on the nation (most frequently defined ethnolinguistically in the Central European environment – in this case finding its manifestation in the idea of Czechoslovakism as the constitutionally-anchored state doctrine arranging for Czechs and Slovaks to combine into a single nation to form at least a theoretical majority in political terms) on the nation as a collective political actor (Baloun, 2020, pp. 255–256). The inhabitants of Bohemia, Moravia and Silesia (corresponding to the Czech Republic today), Slovakia (an independent state since 1993), and also Subcarpathian Russia (part of Ukraine today) took up various positions toward the establishment of the new state on that territory and toward its institutions, legislation and ideologies, whether explicit or implicit. The interwar period in Czechoslovakia (despite many serious problems, above all of an economic and social nature, in which it was necessary to deal with the aftermath of the war and to solve problems that were of an epidemic, medical nature as well as a military-strategic ones) also symbolises the postwar wave of developing political parties and the expansion of associations (which had already begun to develop strongly during the second half of the 19th century – see Lenderová et al., 2005, pp. 112–118) in which broad masses of the population became activated. People sought new self-determination in these activities, based on national, political, religious and various other identities and affiliations. The Roma population of the newly established state could hardly have avoided this dynamic.

In the following text, we are attempting to present the activities and fates of the representatives of two generations of active advocates for the civil emancipation of Roma in interwar Czechoslovakia, Jan Daniel (1895–1943) and František Kýr (1914–1985), both from the town of Strážnice and its immediate surroundings, located in Southern Moravia on the border with Slovakia. We preface their portraits with a brief introduction explaining why we have chosen these figures and describing the circumstances and environments that formed them. Further commentary on and contextualisation of these portraits is added in the concluding section.

According to qualified estimates, at the beginning of the First Czechoslovak Republic about 70,000 Roma were living in the newly created state, and by the time of its dissolution, there were about 110,000 (Nečas, 1994a, p. 11). According to statistical surveys, between 1922 and 1927 in Czechoslovakia a total of almost 52 000 persons considered to be “Gypsies” were meant to be living “as gypsies assigned to the territory”. In this period of time, in the category ‘gypsies’ the legislation included not only Roma but also other itinerant persons – in order to reflect this, we use the capital letter in the term Gypsies when it is clear that Roma are envisaged, while when it refers to a way of life the lower case is used. Despite these data being underestimated, these head counts of “gypsies” are, of course, important because they demonstrate the distribution of these inhabitants throughout all of what was then Czechoslovakia: the vast majority of them (49,000) lived in Slovakia; in Bohemia there were said to be just slightly more than 500 “gypsies”; almost 2,500 “gypsies” reportedly lived in Moravia and Silesia; and in Subcarpathian Russia, those included on the list were just people living on the road, 94 of whom were counted (Nečas, 1986, pp. 67–68). The vast majority of Roma living in Moravia lived settled lives and were the descendants of blacksmiths, horse traders and musicians who had come there from Slovakia (previously called Upper Hungary). The density of these Roma residences in the form of ‘camps’, ‘colonies’ and settlements on the outskirts of towns and villages or, as part of other developments, in the context of the Czech lands was above-average especially in the South-Eastern Moravia on the border with Slovakia with Roma living in more than 200 municipalities. Roma communities on both sides of the border were connected by family ties and a shared common dialect of Romani language (Pavelčík, 1999, pp. 183–197; Slačka, 2018, pp. 126–133). The figures we have chosen to profile here lived in and were active in that geographical area.

The interwar period did not just bring changes to the political and social settings for the situation of the economically, professionally, socially and otherwise significantly diversified communities of Czechoslovak Roma and Sinti, but it is also possible to follow the continuities and discontinuities of anti-Gypsy attitudes in society and among the administrative and security authorities at different levels, the most famous manifestation of which was Act No. 117/1927 *On Wandering Gypsies*. Through Act No. 117/1927, unified legislation entered the fragmented dynamics of the localised, particular and specific measures being taken by local authorities and attempted to enforce the highest possible degree of bureaucratic and police control. During Czechoslovakia’s entire existence, and

during the early existence of the Protectorate of Bohemia and Moravia, the approach taken by the security forces, local authorities, and other societal actors was characterised by the tension between the “racial” and the social definitions of the category of ‘gypsy’ and the different conditions and power dynamics in each area of the societally variegated state (Baloun, 2020). The categorisation of some inhabitants of Czechoslovakia as “gypsies” was stigmatising in any event, however, and within the framework of their legal position and of the policing, political and social practices then underway, many Czechoslovak Roma were forced into the position of second-class citizens (Donert, 2017, pp. 45–46).

During the first half of the 19th century, the Kýr family settled down in Strážnice and in the surrounding area, just as the Daniels settled in Petrov, the Kubíks settled in Kněždub and other municipalities, and the Ištvánss settled in Radějov. The surname Daniel was the most frequent among the Roma living in Moravia. Those so named had been settled by the aristocracy on the domain of Uherský Brod (a town roughly 30 km from Strážnice) at a time of draconian edicts against “gypsies” at the turn of the 17th and 18th centuries (Hanzal, 2004, pp. 65–86). According to research to date, the person with the surname Kýr who was for the first time recorded as residing in Strážnice, and who therefore is the founder of that family of Roma locally, was Václav Huťa *recte* Kýr (1801–1842) (MZA, f. E 67, k. 5482, p. 33; *Ibid.* k. 5830, sl. 179). The family of Pavel Daniel (1836–1871) then settled in Petrov in the mid-19th century (MZA, f. E 67, k. 5836, sl. 72), while the descendants of Bartoloměj Kubík (1801–1871) from Lipov settled in Kněždub, in Velká nad Veličkou and the surrounding area. All these families also reported their ancestors came from the place “v Uhrách” (in Hungary) at the time, which became Slovakia as of 1918. Although several generations of these families lived settled lives in South-Eastern Moravia, they stayed in touch with their relatives in Slovakia and were perpetually migrating across the border (e.g., for marriage purposes). It is exactly the proximity of these Moravian Roma settlements (the deprived ‘colonies’ near towns and villages) to Slovakia and the contacts they maintained for generations, as well as their family ties with them, that may have, it seems, influenced the direction taken by these Roma activists from Petrov and Strážnice.

In the Strážnice area, the Roma who were settled there responded in their activities to the awakened, ubiquitous feelings of nationhood and nationality manifesting as patriotism and solidarity with the idea of a common Czechoslovak nation or a delimitation in those terms. They also attempted to raise the standard of living not just for themselves, but also for their poorer relatives living in Slovakia. During these attempts, they balanced their Czechoslovak political identity with a Roma one defined by national parameters, perhaps influenced by the discourses on nationality in the society of the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy and the Czechoslovak Republic. Here too, perhaps, we can look for the basis of the evidently-awakening desires for the emancipation of their own people during a time when they were connected within a single state with the potential to improve their opportunities.

Choosing the Roma figures from the Strážnice area whom we will be presenting below in more detail was not an unequivocal matter for us and was determined above all by the number of sources collected (archival documents) and the responses to their interwar activities, chiefly those coming from surviving members of their communities and, in the case of the younger members, also thanks to responses in the newspapers. As representatives, they were able to present to the succeeding generations a model for a certain societal direction of the Roma population settled primarily in the regions of South-Eastern and Southern Moravia (and apparently Western Slovakia as well). In this paper, Jan Daniel (1895–1943) represents this activism and especially the visionary nature of the generation that had direct experience of the First World War, the opinions of whom were significantly formed by the Czechoslovak state then in the process of being established. František Kýr (born 1914) represents the next generation who grew up during the interwar period and carried the activities and ideas of the older generation forward, developing them and working with them in the specific political and societal environment of the communist dictatorship in Czechoslovakia during the decades after the Second World War.

We are aware that by making such a choice we have, to a significant degree, reproduced the existing asymmetry of the information published about the lives of the Roma communities in Moravia (and Silesia) on the territories of the Czech lands prior to the Second World War, an asymmetry that has been pointed out by Sadílková (2019, pp. 517–518). The undeniable advantage of the much more detailed elaboration of the situation of Roma on Moravian territory found in the work of historian Ctibor Nečas, to whom we owe a great deal, is the opportunity to continue the research performed to date, along with the fact that archival materials mapping the settled Roma population and preserved in the Moravian archives cannot be compared to the archival materials currently accessible in the Czech archives. These Moravian materials refer more frequently to an itinerant population, or sometimes to a settled one, but rather in terms of individual families or smaller communities where they did not create larger “colonies” that would have awakened the attention of the central authorities, so the research work poses more challenges; not so many lists of “assigned gypsies” have been preserved, nor have school reports – but on the other hand, what do predominate among the materials preserved there are court and police records.

Given that persecution and imprisonment in the Protectorate “Gypsy Camps” and the Nazi concentration camps was survived by just one-tenth of the prewar Roma population in the Czech lands, and given that those Roma prisoners who survived being transported to the concentration camps were predominantly able-bodied, younger ones (for more see Nečas 1994a; Kladivová 1994; Lewy, 2000; Kenrick & Puxon, 2009), we are representing, through our choice, both a victim of racial persecution in the person of Jan Daniel, and a survivor, František Kýr. After the war, Kýr was, therefore, able to carry on and actually did continue the activism begun during the interwar period, by means of which he aided with arranging for the continuity of the direction of the Roma activism that

had been awakened during the interwar period. It seems that the main movers behind the ethnic emancipation efforts of Roma on the territories of Bohemia and Moravia were, even during the postwar era, descendants of the originally-settled families from Southern and South-Eastern Moravia, above all, who were frequently strongly marked by the Holocaust – and not the Roma migrating into the Czech lands from Slovakia after the war, who were far more numerous (and who also joined the ongoing activism). Not just the František Kýr who was born in 1914 in Strážnice, but also Tomáš Holomek, born in Svatobořice in 1913 (Horváthová-Holomková, 1994; Holomek, 1999, pp. 129–132; Nečas, 2005, pp. 221–222); Antonín Daniel, born in Oslavany in 1913 (Nečas, 2005, pp. 222–223; Závodská, 2018), Josef Jelínek, born in Strážnice in 1919 (for more, see Sadílková & Závodská, 2022), Miroslav Holomek, who was born in 1925 in Svatobořice (Nečas, 2005, pp. 224–225) and others. They were all Roma whose views were formed by the conditions of the Moravian countryside during the First Republic and the activities already begun during the interwar period, especially in South-Eastern and Southern Moravia, and were able to continue them during the later period when establishing of the first Roma organisation was planned – the Union of Gypsies-Roma (*Svaz Cikánů-Romů*) (for more, see Sadílková et al., 2018). As to whether these people had formulated their vision for the emancipation of Roma during the interwar period, or whether they joined specific emancipatory activities, we do not yet have any concrete documentation, except for the literary and translation work of Antonín Daniel (Závodská, 2018; Daniel & Kubaník, 2018; Marushiakova & Popov, 2021b, p. 598).

Jan Daniel

Lada Viková

In this piece about Jan Daniel of Petrov, born May 27, 1895 (MZA v Brně, f. E 67, k. 5803, sl. 192) I endeavour to make visible one of the forgotten figures who was, in his day, certainly a greatly exceptional one – today we might call him a Roma activist who cared about the social advancement of Roma and did his best during the entire interwar period to act for their benefit. As can be seen from the only document written by him that has been preserved (or discovered so far), he considered improving the education of Roma children in the schools to be the instrument of this uplift, an education that was meant to inculcate them with Czechoslovak patriotism. Such changes, in his view, would then facilitate the participation of “gypsies” in the Czechoslovak Republic’s structures. His life was absolutely, fundamentally influenced by both World Wars: He was injured during the First World War and was left incapable of performing the kinds of jobs through which he had made his living before the war. During the Second World War he fell victim to the genocide perpetrated by the Nazis and was murdered in the Auschwitz II-Birkenau Concentration Camp.

In the Czechoslovak context, Daniel was apparently one of the first Roma to write about “his own people” as a “nation” when, in his request to the President, he repeatedly used the concept of the nation with reference to the Roma:

Stand up for our unfortunate nation [...] so one day the nation establishes itself in our beloved Czechoslovak homeland, [...] so the nation transforms its members into proper citizens of Czechoslovakia [...] our nation cannot remain so neglected, because [...] a great nation increases its numbers. (NA Praha, f. 371, karton 1474, čj. 76241/23; Marushiakova & Popov, 2021b, pp. 558–560).

In this letter dated May 24, 1923, and sent to the first Czechoslovak President, Tomáš G. Masaryk, Jan Daniel asks the state to pay more attention to the education of “Gypsy” children and proposes “the young generation of gypsies be taken away [...] and instructed strictly”, i.e. he practically makes a proposal for approaching this in a way that, from today’s perspective, is harsh and unacceptable, but assimilatory practices were frequently discussed at the time and, in some cases, also applied (Baloun, 2020). However, in this piece, I am concentrating above all on the ethno-emancipatory undertone of this letter, which is combined with Czechoslovak patriotic awareness when Daniel writes about his “beloved homeland”. He writes about himself as follows:

I am also a gypsy, but [...] I know what our Czechoslovak homeland is and what our ancestors suffered for her. I am a Czech, body and soul (Ibid).

He relates his vision of the future prosperity in the newly created state to his “own people”: “[...] so one day the nation establishes itself in our beloved Czechoslovak homeland and could say with pride ‘I am Czechoslovak!’” (Ibid.).

It is exactly these two components of Jan Daniel’s identity, clearly expressed in his letter to the President – the component of citizenship and the component of ethnicity – that represent the remarkable, unique documentation of the subject matter that apparently was being discussed or was simply present, not just in the Jan Daniel extended family in Petrov’s Roma community, but probably even more generally among Roma people at that time. The fact that such patriotic sentiment was one of the existing shared attitudes in the Daniel family is attested to by the fact that one of his cousins, also named Jan Daniel (born 1891), joined the Czechoslovak Legion during the First World War, which in practice became the future state’s first army. At the time of its greatest development, the Legion, especially those fighting in France, Italy and Russia, numbered as many as 110,000 soldiers and made a significant contribution to many military operations. During the war, they also aided with advocating for the idea of a Czechoslovak state, and after the state was founded, they fulfilled an important narrative and symbolic function. For the time being the cases are known of just 10 Roma men who participated in the Legionnaires’ movement (see VIKOVÁ, 2018a). Another such legionnaire from this same family was Daniel’s uncle (the husband of his aunt Marianna), Josef Pajer, who was not

of Roma origin – about which more will be said below. Two more of Daniel's peers and relatives, Martin Daniel (born 1896) and Martin Kýr (born 1896), both born and raised in Petrov, voluntarily joined the newly-created Slovácko Brigade after the First World War, a military corps of volunteers who were deployed from 1918–1919 to defend the borders of the newly-created state (see Lexa, 2018, pp. 20, 77). That corps was formed in Slovácko, i.e. the area of Southern Moravia on the border with Slovakia, but volunteers from all over the republic joined it, although most were from that particular area (not just from Moravia, but also from Slovakia). About 18 men from Petrov were in the corps. The experiences of the Roma legionnaires and other participants in the combat deployment of the Slovácko Brigade were present in Daniel's family and likely thereby influenced the ideas that he formulated just after the First World War in his letter to the President.

Ctibor Nečas was the first to point out the existence of Daniel's letter to the President (1994b, pp. 16–17; 2005, pp. 346–347) and, in his brief contextualisation of it, also said the letter was sent almost immediately from the Office of the President to the Ministry of Education and National Enlightenment, where it became the subject of further negotiations. According to Ctibor Nečas, it was because of this letter that steps were taken to investigate the state of education of “gypsy children”. The educational authorities of each province (or rather, their councils and departments) in Uzhhorod, Bratislava, Brno and Prague were meant to file reports about municipalities where school-aged Roma children were living. Jan Daniel's letter, therefore, yielded an effect: the central authorities dedicated systematic attention to the education of Roma children. Ctibor Nečas also emphasises another possible significance of the letter, that “the submitted suggestion became one of the impulses for opening up schools and classes, first in Uzhhorod and later elsewhere, to Roma pupils” (2005: 438), but this was a significant overstatement of the letter's importance. In Uzhhorod (which today is in Western Ukraine, but between the wars belonged as a part of Subcarpathian Russia to Czechoslovakia) a local school for “gypsies” was not built until 1927, through self-help, with the participation of the local Roma community, but proposals for improving the school care of “gypsy” children (and establishing this specific school soon afterwards) date back to 1922 (Baloun, 2020, pp. 155–158) and therefore preceded the letter sent to the President by Jan Daniel from Petrov on 24 May 1923. The creation of the Roma school at Uzhhorod was supported with a personal financial gift from President Tomáš G. Masaryk; however, this gift was not made based on Jan Daniel's letter, but as a response to a request sent in the name of the local Roma straight from Uzhhorod (for the wording of that letter, see Marushiakova & Popov, 2021b, p. 560–561). Both letters about the education of Roma children that were sent to the Office of the President are analysed by Pavel Baloun (*Ibid.*, p. 562–564). In his dissertation, Pavel Baloun demonstrates, among other things, that what was behind the central support for building the school was above all a complaint about local strife over who should finance establishing a school for “gypsies”, or rather, the unwillingness of the local assembly members in Uzhhorod to support the 1923 proposal for building a school. The necessity of building the school had already stimulated protests by parents

of children attending other local schools; that they did not want their children in the same schools as “gypsy” children (Baloun, 2020, pp. 155–171). Jan Daniel’s letter was filed *ad acta* along with a note: “Irrelevant, a gypsy school already exists and the education of gypsies, in general, is a subject of negotiations and reports from schools in Uzhhorod and Bratislava – 2 January 1928, Prague” (NA Praha, f. 371, karton 1474, čj. 76241/23, fol. 380). From this can be seen that the officials missed the main intention of the letter-writer, who hoped to galvanise improvements in the quality of care for Roma children generally so the Roma nation would advance toward a “proud Czechoslovak patriotism” (NA Praha, f. 371, karton 1474, čj. 76241/23; Marushiakova & Popov, 2021b, pp. 558–560). A few model schools and specialized classes were not enough to meet an aim formulated in such terms. Likewise, it is incomprehensible from today’s perspective that ministerial officials would have considered the establishing of a school hundreds of kilometres away to be a sufficient measure for addressing the situation in the education of Roma children from the Strážnice area described by Jan Daniel, or that authorities for Slovakia and Subcarpathian Russia would be entrusted with addressing the deficient education of those children instead of the authorities for Bohemia and Moravia. Jan Daniel apparently never discovered what reaction his initiative sparked, and chiefly, he most probably never noticed any visible improvement in the education of Roma children where he lived.

Be that as it may, Jan Daniel is not remembered by his contemporaries as the author of that letter, nor as a visionary in the area of educating Roma, but above all as an actor, the initiator of a Roma theatre company that he co-founded and, for a certain period, also co-directed, as well as having been a lyricist, musician and craftsman capable of making his own violins and composing songs – and last but not least, as a communist who, as an adherent to the communist ideology of advocating for the dispossessed “here and now”, was involved in political activities, including as spokesperson for his whole extended family. These activities of his are what I will attempt to further approximate and document.

The accumulation of other information about Jan Daniel has been encumbered by several factors. On the one hand, besides that one letter, just a few other written testaments composed during his life have been preserved from which we might discover something about him. In the memories of the interwar period that have been recorded – mostly from his relatives who managed to survive the Second World War – there are too just a few minor mentions of him. On the other hand, it is necessary to highlight that only one of these people was ever asked directly about the life and personality of Jan Daniel, so the memories of him that have been recorded are absolutely spontaneous. The only person who was directly asked about him was his namesake, Jan Daniel (born in Petrov in 1921 – hereinafter ‘Jan Daniel Jr.’). He has provided what is the most extensive written testimony about the Roma theatre company from the Strážnice area when, at the beginning of the 1970s, as its sole surviving member who directly participated in its work, he was systematically asked about the ensemble, its activities and its representatives, including the Jan Daniel born in 1895 (see MRK, MRK 430/2001). The other preserved recollections

of the surviving acquaintances and relatives of Jan Daniel concentrate above all on the time of his persecution during the Second World War and the difficult return to normal life after the war, where Jan Daniel is remembered rather randomly.

The second difficulty was correctly identifying who exactly is being mentioned in the memories that have been recorded because there was more than one Jan Daniel from Petrov (this applies to other representatives of these communities, in particular to František Kýr and Josef Kýr of Strážnice – see below). It would be necessary, therefore, to first identify which person of that name is being mentioned in which source. A small number of well-known written sources, for which it may not be immediately clear that this Jan Daniel is mentioned, have a parallel in visual sources, where we can assume and probably estimate that one of the violinists in a photograph from Pajer's book is just "our" Jan Daniel (see Illustrations, Fig. 9b). What served in this regard was a deeper understanding of the family ties within the communities of Roma in Petrov and Strážnice and the discovery of the history of how these Roma settlements first came about.

The location of Jan Daniel's birth and life was the municipality of Petrov, which is located on the road between the towns of Hodonín (14 km away) and Strážnice (2 km away), as well as being near the border between Moravia and Slovakia (3 km away) which during the interwar period represented the division between two administrative units within the framework of a shared state. The oldest record that has been found in the Petrov church registry of births, weddings and deaths to mention a Roma family dates from 1817 when the twins Vavřinec and Václav were born there. Their father was "Václav Hutia *recte* Kýr", born in 1801 in Hroznová Lhota (MZA, f. E 67, k. 5482, sl. 033), and he later settled in nearby Strážnice with his children and his second wife. It was exactly this Václav Huťa Kýr who became the establisher of the 'colony' of Roma on the outskirts of the town of Strážnice. It is likely that previously, various Roma blacksmithing families had visited the municipality of Petrov to offer their services there, gradually beginning to settle there for longer periods and then eventually for good. Among the first to settle in Petrov for a longer time was the family of Martin Ištvan and his wife Barbora, née Holomková. Their daughter Františka married the son of Václav Huťa Kýr, named Tomáš, and gave birth to three children as Františka Kýrová. Their residency there was recorded between 1850–1864 and it can be said that it was even replaced around 1864 by the family of Pavel Daniel, who married his wife Alžběta, the daughter of Václava Huťa Kýr and sister to Tomáš Kýr.

When Jan Daniel was born in 1895, the second generation of this extended family of Roma residing in Petrov was coming into the world, the descendants of Pavel Daniel (1836–1871, MZA, f. E 67, k. 5836, sl. 072) and his wife Marianna, née Kýrová (1835–1910) (MZA, f. E 67, k. 5790, sl. 26). The father of Jan Daniel was Tomáš Daniel (1856–1916), born in Petrov (MZA, f. E 67, k. 5802, sl. 44), and his mother was Alžběta, née Kubíková, originally from Kněždub (1858–1910 or later). According to the locations of the births of Tomáš and Alžběta Daniel, it is apparent that the young family moved around the Strážnice area in the beginning but gradually settled for good in Petrov. It seems other young Roma

families lived similarly and gradually also settled down, and not just in the Strážnice area. Both the family of the Kubíks and that of the Daniels can be considered local to Strážnice: the Daniel family could have been living there from as early as 1769 when the first Roma family was settled in Nová Lhota in the Strážnice district (see Hanzal, 2004, p. 87). Although the family of Pavel and Marianna Daniel did not permanently settle in Petrov immediately, from 1866 their children were only born there; Pavel Daniel, who died in Petrov in 1871 of consumption at the age of 35, became the establisher of the Daniel family by settling in Petrov for what were the last five years of his life.

Tomáš Kýr had settled in Petrov before then, and after his wife's death, he remarried Pavel Daniel's sister and moved to nearby Radějov, where he died in 1890. He therefore never returned to Petrov, and, thanks to the many descendants of the family of Marianna and Pavel Daniel, the Petrov Roma carried the predominant surname of Daniel. It thereby became a kind of rule, mentioned by Josef Jelínek (born Josef Kýr in 1919 in Strážnice) in his 1991 memoirs, that the Roma living in Strážnice were mostly from the Kýr family, the Roma in Hrubá Vrbka were the Kubíks, those in Tvarožná Lhota were the Heráks, those in Svatobořice were the Holomeks, but in Petrov (and also, e.g., in Hodonín, Lipov and Sobůlky), the Daniels were the predominant Roma families (Jelínek, 1991, pp. 29–32).

The locality where Roma settled in Petrov was set apart from the village and close to the Radějovka stream. Access to both the stream and the village was quite convenient for their way of life and occupation. They were blacksmiths working until they built their own dwellings without covered forges over open fires (for working conditions of both sedentary and travelling blacksmiths see Mann, 2018, pp. 59–81). In the 19th century, the roofs of the villagers' houses were frequently still made of shingles or even thatched. For that reason, the encampment of the Roma was established further away and in proximity to water, which could have been perceived as a certain preventive step against fire breaking out in the village.

Even in 1880, church records from Petrov testifying to baptisms of Roma children or marriage or death in Roma families have instead of listing a residential address (which customarily took the form of a municipality and the number of a house), the Roma were listed as living "in the open air". It is likely that at that time, Petrov's Roma families had not yet established permanent dwellings, or their habitation had not yet been officially recognized. From 1882, however, the location of the birthplace of Petrov's Roma children is recorded as Petrov, house number 0 (e.g. MZA, f. E 67, k. 5273, sl. 157), or as "Petrov 0 on the municipal meadows" (MZA, f. 67, k. 5273, sl. 192). There are also isolated cases of the designation "Petrov on the trails" (MZA, f. 67, k. 5273, sl. 219), the local name for pastures at the time (or rather, the location through which cattle were herded to pasture). In the records we can also trace the transformations in how each part of the municipality was named and deduce thereby that Roma families were able to build their homes on the meadow owned by the municipality: At first, these were likely to have been simple huts, and eventually, they would have been brick houses. It is apparent that during the census in 1900 there were already more single-family houses on the meadow, labelled

with the numbers 156 through 158, occupied by the families of the descendants of Pavel Daniel (SOKA Hodonín, f. OkÚ Hodonín, SČOP 1900). The house in which little Jan lived in those days was registered under number 158 as the “gypsy cottage by the creek near the road” (Ibid., č. domu 158). The settling of “several gypsy families” who “built brick cottages [...] behind the Petrov pub” is one of the few pieces of information about the erstwhile Roma settlement mentioned in a popularizing treatment of the history of the municipality of Petrov (Děkařová-Bělochová, 2012, p. 30). Gradually the surrounding area was transformed into plots sold off by the municipality for the building of single-family homes, because, as Josef Jelínek stated in his memoirs of Petrov (which included a mention of the Kýrs of Strážnice as a related group whom he recalled from the 1920s–1930s):

In Petrov “the Roma” [...] had their brick cottages on the ordinary street of the village. Some made their living basket-weaving and producing brooms, others by blacksmithing. They, too [= just like the Roma in Strážnice and other towns] enjoyed a good reputation among their fellow citizens. They were also religiously guided; their standard of living was below average. (Jelínek, 1991, p. 32).

In addition to the growing number of members in the family of Tomáš and Alžběta Daniel, to whom eight children were eventually born (Jan was the fifth to come into the world there), the family of Jan’s uncle František born in 1863 and his wife Marianna resided in dwellings on what had originally been the municipal meadow. Three daughters were also born there to Jan’s aunt Anna, and a son named Jan Daniel (Jan’s cousin, who would become the above-mentioned legionnaire) was born to his aunt Alžběta, but both women soon moved to live with their partners’ families. However, his grandmother, Marianna Danielová, still resided there with her youngest daughter born 1877, also named Marianna, registered under her mother’s maiden family name as Kýrová, since she was born six years after the death of her mother’s husband, Pavel Daniel. Her son Martin, born in 1895 while she was still unmarried, was also registered with the surname Kýr, and his seven children also bore that surname. He is the Martin who, as a patriot, voluntarily participated in the defence of the newly created state in 1918–1919 under the Slovácko Brigade.

Jan Daniel, born 1895, grew up in an extended family with many members and continued to live that way. As was the custom in those days (and not just among the Roma), an extended family kept the patrilocal tradition whereby a man, his wife and his children lived in the home of the man’s parents and other family members. However, little Jan may also have grown up with the son of his aunt, Marianna Kýrová (1877–1930), Martin Kýr, born 1896 as well as with another cousin, Martin Daniel, born 1896. Apparently, they could have attended school together. As can be seen from the letter written by Jan Daniel to the President of the Republic later in life, during his adolescence his family had not been able to afford to continue his education, so he worked from the age of 14, aided his family with making money, and therefore never accessed any higher education, which he regrets in his letter. When he was 19, the Great War broke out, in which

he fought, apparently returning from war with a certain injury, as he refers to himself as a war invalid. We do not know what kind of injury he sustained or whether any support was ever awarded to him.

The family was evidently in frequent contact with all their relatives. As Jan Daniel (born 1921) recalled:

Roma [in original *Romové* – author note] in Strážnice and Petrov made their living largely through blacksmithing. On holidays they paid each other visits, advised each other about jobs and gave each other aid. (MRK, MRK 430/2001).

The interesting detail that Jan Daniel Jr. used the term “Romové” (Roma) in Czech can be explained by the fact that he was a member and district level official in the Union of Roma-Gypsies at the time. Thanks to the Union the term Roma entered public discourse.

The Roma from Petrov certainly were not just maintaining contact with their relatives in Strážnice, but also in other villages: Kněždub, Hroznová Lhota, Tvarožná Lhota, Lipov, Hrubá Vrbka, Radějov and also in the town of Skalice, which was in Slovak territory and where, for example, Jan Daniel (born 1891) moved with his mother (for more, see Viková, 2018b). It was exactly in the town of Holíč, on Slovak territory (and just 13 km from Petrov) where Jan Daniel also found the woman who would become his wife: Just after the war ended, in 1919, in Petrov, he married Anna from Holíč, the daughter of Anna Malíková, who was the daughter of Michal Malík and Zuzana née Balážová (born 1891). Their witnesses were František Kubík – “a gypsy living in Kněždub at no. 292” and Adam Kýr, “a gypsy living in Strážnice at no. 745” (MZA, f. E 67, k. 5823, sl. 20). From these names of the witnesses in this record and many others, it is apparent the Roma families supported each other and maintained strong ties.

The Daniels never had children, and maybe that is why Jan Daniel was able to dedicate himself to activities that were quite innovative and meant to lead to lifting “his nation”. Apparently, before getting married he had spent his free time like an actor in the theatre. When, in 1923, he writes his letter to President Masaryk, he signs it as “Jan Daniel ... former member of a Moravian drama ensemble” (NA Praha, f. 371, karton 1474, čj. 76241/23). According to Jan Daniel Jr., this was a theatre in Brno, (MRK, MRK 430/2001), while Ctibor Nečas, without listing his source, even describes this as having been an external collaboration with the National Theater in Brno (Nečas, 1994b, p. 16). It is not known at what specific time he joined the activities of the Brno theatre: Daniel Jr. writes that he must have given up the activity “because of his soon-to-be wife” (MRK, MRK 430/2001), so his theatrical activity could have lasted until his wedding. Nečas, however, describes a sequence of events in which Daniel’s activity in the theatre had been underway even before the war and could also have been ended by his injuries (Nečas, 1994b, p. 16; source not listed). In any event, his experiences from that theatrical work were certainly taken advantage of during the interwar period when he co-founded a Roma theatre group.

A certain flair for drama can also be seen in his letter to the President, to whom he wrote four years after getting married, i.e. at the age of 28. In it, he uses some surprisingly

expressive phrases, such as “stand up for our unfortunate nation, which is despised and judged by everybody and even called animal”. When he writes in his letter that “I want to dedicate myself fully to the good of our beloved homeland and I would probably even sacrifice my life so this nation can be transformed into proper citizens of Czechoslovakia” (NA Praha, f. 371, karton 1474, čj. 76241/23) the words seem fatal, especially when we realise that racial discrimination cost him his life two decades later.

The main subject of his letter, though, is the issue of educating Roma children, and it is apparent that through his theatrical work, Jan Daniel had been pursuing also educational effects on the young people whom he wanted to give what they were not receiving enough of in the schools: a positive self-image, motivation to continue their education, etc. For that reason, let us try to look at the findings about the state of education of Roma children in the Strážnice area during the interwar period, as well as at the opportunities available to Roma children on their way to acquiring knowledge. The memoirs of the gifted Josef Kýr (born 1919, who later changed his surname to Jelínek) approximate this topic for us; among other things, he recalls his own school years in a submission he wrote for a competition that was organised by the Union of Anti-Fascist Fighters in the year 1980:

My first memory of school is my older sister brought me there. The other children stepped away from me and avoided me. The teacher arrived and began telling us where to sit, and even though I was smaller, he put me in the last bench. Well, his behavior hurt my feelings, but I guessed that somebody had to sit in the very back of the room. Then there was recess, and I heard my fellow pupils abusing me, calling me gypsy, etc. (Jelínek, 1980, p. 1).

Josef's classmates also provoked him into reacting, and he was corporally punished by the teacher for doing so. That forced him to concentrate just on the lessons while he was at school, but even in retirement he bitterly recalled never being recognised by his teacher:

I concentrated on my work, but despite the teacher very well knowing what I was capable of, I never got the grades I deserved – always a lower grade. It was not as if it did not matter to me, but what could I have done against the teacher who beat and threatened me? (Ibid.).

Josef Jelínek's memories of his strict and, from his perspective, unfair teacher exactly corresponds, overall, to the opinion held by the management of the municipal school in Strážnice as expressed in a 1935 report on instructing “gypsy children”, where we can identify quite a high level of burnout and a generalizing approach to Roma children encouraging this teacher to make use of “ruthless rigor”. Representatives of the school wrote the following in that report:

Overall, gypsy children are delayed in their mental development, sometimes by several years, their talents are weak, [...] their results are therefore weaker, they are barely educable [...] They are also not very diligent, the custom of living day by day is, it seems, inborn to all

gypsies. [...] Reforms might be possible to achieve at school and in their lives through ruthless rigor and supervision. (MZA, f. B22, k. 618, fol. 270–271).

Fortunately, school was not the only environment where little Josef was able to achieve recognition. As Josef Jelínek wrote, “the lesser peasants visited [his father’s] forge and told stories of their experiences from the First World War” (Ibid.) He liked listening to these stories and asked his father inquisitively about them. His father asked an acquaintance for advice about Josef’s interests, who then introduced the adolescent Josef to school inspector Leopold Nopp (1859–1937) (see Gronská, 2014), who was, among other things, the librarian in the chateau library. Years later, Jelínek recalled with gratitude his meetings with Leopold Nopp and his subsequent visits to the library, where he aided the librarian and did his best to learn about the origins of his “clan” (as he called the Roma):

I visited that library with the Inspector so frequently that he taught me how to read in “kurent” [old German style of writing]. Then he gave me a book and said I should read it very attentively and slowly, I recall that its content was about languages, clans, and was more or less mixed up with religions. Despite that, however, I learned a lot and was quite elated when the book explained that our ancestors brought the blacksmithing and metalworking arts with them to Europe, musical arts, and that the clan at that time was educated. (Jelínek, 1980, p. 2).

While we do not know whether Jan Daniel also knew Leopold Nopp, it is quite likely that he heard about him from his relatives in Strážnice, maybe even directly from Josef Kýr (later Jelínek). It is also very possible that Leopold Nopp was acquainted with the activity of Jan Daniel’s Roma theatre group (see below). It is just as probable that Jan Daniel learned about the difficulties of Roma children being pushed around while attending school. Whether he undertook any interventions we do not know, but he may have responded through involving younger members of Roma communities in theatrical activities (e.g. Jan Daniel Jr. or František Kýr – for more details, see below).

As is stated above, the areas where Jan Daniel made the greatest impression on those who remember him were the musical theatre activities for Roma in the Strážnice area and his involvement in the communist movement. He attempted, through both activities, to raise living standards and achieve certain social mobility for his “nation”.

To this day the question is unanswered as to who first came up with the idea of establishing a Roma theatre ensemble using the extended families of the Daniels and the Kýrs from Strážnice and its surroundings. Jan Daniel Jr. has described the birth of the theatre company in a letter to František Glacner, who authored a thesis on Roma theatre:

Among the Roma in Strážnice was a Rom (in original: “Mezi těmito Romy ve Strážnici byl jeden Rom”) named Josef Kýr, we called him Jožín [...] In Petrov there was a Rom named Jan Daniel, a member of a theater group in Brno. He had to leave the theatre because of his soon-to-be wife. These two Roma men agreed to bring the theatrical performances to life [...]. (MRK, MRK 430/2001).

In a letter written a year later he ascribes even more initiative to Jan Daniel, and also recalls other valuable information:

What I do know about Jožín is that he studied at the grammar school in Strážnice, I don't know the year of his birth, his father was a roofer and he worked as a labourer himself. He was introduced to the theatre by my uncle, Jan Daniel from Petrov who, as I said in my letter, had been performing with a theatre in Brno ... (MRK, MRK 430/2001).

Ctibor Nečas, following up on the thesis of František Glacner (1973) in his own research, is of the opinion that those responsible for the birth of the theatre company were the Jan Daniel born in 1895 and his peer, František Kýr of Strážnice (also born in 1895), and that after him the role of director was assumed in 1939 by “his son” Josef Kýr (born 1919) and then by his nephew, František Kýr (born 1914) (Nečas, 2009, p. 49). While for Jan Daniel of Petrov (born 1895) and František Kýr (born 1914) their identification is unambiguous, it is necessary to correct the Ctibor Nečas's statement when it comes to František Kýr, Sr. and his son Josef from Strážnice concerning their family ties. Jan Daniel Jr. writes that he does not know when Josef Kýr, called “Jožín”, was born, but it was he who was the first to attend grammar school, and his father, František Kýr, was a roofer (MRK, MRK 430/2001).

A father named František and a son named Josef were indeed behind the birth of the theatre company, as is confirmed by a newspaper article from 1940, according to which there were at first two ensembles – one was an “association for music and theatre” operating in Petrov and Sodoměřice, the other a “Choral Music Group” in Strážnice led by František Kýr, the blacksmith and musician who, in 1927, played with his band for the radio. A Josef Kýr (introduced as František's son) was then meant to be the director of this theatre company (České slovo, 1940, p. 2.). According to newspaper reports in 1942, at that time the main organiser of the theatre was František Kýr, who had been preceded in that role by his *cousin*, Josef Kýr (Národní střed, 1942, p. 3).

From our comparison of the persons named Josef Kýr and František Kýr, of whom there were several living in Strážnice at the beginning of the 1930s, it is possible, based on their families' “gypsy inventory” records, where the professions of the adults are also listed (SOkA Hodonín, f. AM St-2, i.č. 303), to discover that František Kýr (born 1895), while certainly an eminent figure in his own right, could not have been the establisher of the theatre company – he never had a son named Josef, just a son named Antonín, and the Josef Kýr born in 1919 was actually František's youngest brother. This Josef, whose memoirs of the interwar period are cited above, after the war became, under the name Josef Jelínek, probably the most famous representative of the community that had formerly lived in Strážnice (for more about him during the period after 1945 see Sadílková & Závodská, 2022). During the interwar period, however, he is not likely to have been engaged in the theatre, or rather, he never left any record of any such involvement, and above all, he certainly never attended grammar school. He writes about his journey to education (and about his fruitless attempt to acquire at least some learning) in his memoirs (more below). Based on the indications discovered and after comparing the “gypsy

inventory” records from different periods, it is apparent that the only roofer who was named František Kýr, and had a son named Josef, and is the establisher of a theatre company is the František Kýr born in 1880. “Jožín” is, therefore, his first-born son, Josef Kýr (born 1903) who is the only man corresponding to the description of somebody who attended grammar school, although, as Jan Daniel Jr. indicates, he was “expelled [...] for lack of money” (MRK, MRK 430/2001). When the younger director František Kýr (born 1914) speaks in a 1942 interview printed in the newspaper about his predecessor, Josef Kýr, as a *cousin* (Národní střed, 1942, p. 3), this is either a simplification or an outright error. In reality, the family tie was more distant (Josef’s father and František’s grandfather were first cousins, but a similarly complex aspect can also be found in the relationship between the mother of František and the mother of Josef, both of whom were born with the surnames of Danielová and came from Petrov). Jan Daniel Jr., of course, presents the family relationships correctly when he writes about the relationship between František Kýr Jr. and “Jožín” being one of brothers-in-law (MRK, MRK 430/2001), as František (born 1914) married Josef’s youngest sister Marie (born 1915) (see below).

In the matter of dating the activities of the theatre ensemble and its repertoire, Jan Daniel Jr. (born 1921) confirms in his statement that the company underwent two phases of existence and he himself experienced both its first phase (although not its absolute beginnings, of course) when, at the age of 15, he played “the old Rom Géza”, as well as its second phase. During that first phase the company is said to have performed the play *Cikánčina věštba* (Gypsy’s Prophecy), about which Jan Daniel Jr. writes as follows:

[...] it was written by Jožín and Jan [Daniel Sr. – author note] gave it its soul. Jan wrote several Roma songs for the production that were sung by the chorus in front of the theatre. That was how the first Roma theatre was born that performed in the district of Hodonín, Břeclav, Senica and Uherské Hradiště. (MRK, MRK 430/2001).

In 1973, his answer is augmented, on the one hand, by the information that he is the last living member of the ensemble that performed *Gypsy’s Prophecy*, i.e. the František Kýr born in 1914 apparently did not perform in that production, and on the other hand he primarily expands on his previous reply by providing other valuable details about the production:

Jožín Kýr and my Uncle Daniel adapted the play *Gypsy’s Prophecy* together. Daniel also arranged songs for the production, because he was a musician (he played the violin), there were three of them: *Veša veša zelenone*, *Báro bršnt márel*, *Anda Ruska ando báro*, in translation *Forests*, *Green Forests*, *War Rain is Falling* and *In Great Russia*. Daniel also rehearsed the play as an actor and did the musical arrangements. The play was produced for several years in the villages around Strážnice and Hodonín, and it was also staged in Slovakia.

The play was in three acts and, as mentioned before, featured music, and singing in Romani language, translated into Czech, [...] it was set in a forest, the costumes were adapted with our own resources, there wasn’t money for anything else. There were 15 people who worked in the theatre. [...] This play was performed from 1931–1937. (MRK, MRK 430/2001).

Jan Daniel Jr. dates this theatrical activity to the beginning of the 1930s and recalls two plays (besides *Gypsy's Prophecy* also *Matčin odkaz* (The Mother's Legacy). While we have no way of verifying this dating, it can be documented that apparently there were at least four theatre plays rehearsed, and maybe more. A brief mention of two of them is made in a newspaper article from December 1940 that gives a short description of the ensemble's repertoire and its successes – “the amateur Gypsy ensemble in Strážnice that performs pleasing pieces, operettas liked by the Gypsy guests and visitors” (Národní listy, 1940b, p. 4) – reporting that more than one play has been rehearsed, as well as the fact that they are accompanied by music and singing, and also that the ensemble is successful both among Roma and non-Roma. Furthermore, František Kýr (born 1914), in his interview from 1942, recalls his own beginnings with the group and recollects the name of the ensemble's first theatrical production and its plot:

Before that, we had been performing the drama *Hrob na pustě* (The Grave in the Desert). It was composed by my cousin Josef Kýr, who had been the director before me. A Gypsy violinist is performing at a chateau. The lady of the house falls in love with him, and they run away together. The Count, her husband, finds them. He shoots the Gypsy dead. Twenty years later, two men accidentally cross paths in the chateau park – one is the son of the Countess and the Gypsy, the other the son of the Count and Countess, and they clash. They are determined to fight each other to the death. However, at the very last moment, they realise that they are brothers, and they reconcile. (Národní střed, 1942, p. 3).

Another newspaper article from 1940 also mentions the play *Kam lidská vášeň spěje* (Where Human Passion Goes) (Národní listy, 1940a, p. 3) and an article from 1942 names the following three plays: *Cikánčina svatba* (The Gypsy's Wedding), *Hrob na poušti* (The Grave in the Desert) and *Kam vedou vášně* (Where Passions Lead), whose author was to be Josef Kýr (Lidové noviny, 1942, p. 4). The mentioned play *The Mother's Legacy* is described by František Kýr in the interview (Národní střed, 1942, p. 3; more about this play see below). Some names of plays are probably written in various distortions either due to an error of journalists or some of them had more similar names.

Based on the foregoing, I conclude that the ensemble was likely to have been created at the beginning of the 1930s and during its working to have rehearsed at least four productions, play *Cikánčina věštba* (Gypsy's Prophecy) and maybe somewhere is named as *Cikánčina svatba* (The Gypsy's Wedding), *Hrob na pustě* / *Hrob na poušti* (The Grave in the Desert), *Kam vedou vášně* / *Kam lidská vášeň spěje* (Where Passions Lead / Where Passion leads) and *Matčin odkaz* (The Mother's Legacy), although it is not apparent in what order they were written. We know these plays were accompanied by Roma songs, thanks to which the unnamed author of the article published about them in 1940 compared them to “operettas”. The entire ensemble involved about 14–15 people and was a mixed-gender group; eyewitnesses remember actress Marie Kýrová (born 1924, daughter of Jan Kýr born 1899) and Anička (Anna) Kýrová, an excellent singer who later died in a concentration camp (MRK, A 43/2003), and other ensemble members were also musicians.

Performances were staged not just in Strážnice, but also in the surrounding villages, and they even travelled to nearby villages located in Slovakia (see MRK, MRK 430/2001). Anežka Kloudová (MRK, A 43/2003), an audience member at that time, witnessed one of the performances that was held in Radějov, travelling five kilometres by wagon to see it. It can also be documented that an extended family of the surname Ištvan, who were Roma, lived in Radějov and that Marie Kýrová from Strážnice married into their family, so it was certainly one friendly to the Kýrs. We can assume (although of course, we do not have the background documentation needed to prove it) that the Roma theatre ensemble performed above all in the villages where Roma lived and where the organisers could count on a certain audience. Of course, it seems that when Romani language was used during the production, and it was likely used above all in the songs, the lyrics in Romani language were translated into Czech so non-Roma viewers would comprehend the play. What role was played by Jan Daniel, Sr. and what is meant by the statement that he “gave these plays their soul”, we can only guess. He was decidedly an eminent figure from a musical perspective, and in Josef Jelínek’s 1991 memoirs he is also recalled as a musician: “Jan Daniel dedicated himself considerably to music for violins, which he knew how to make all on his own” (Jelínek, 1991, p. 32). At the same time, based on the memories mentioned above, we can also introduce Jan Daniel here as a charismatic, significant figure who managed to inspire the younger generation to get involved with theatre. Given that Daniel represented the community during important negotiations, as will be described below, he was, in the eyes of his relatives, considered an authority figure by nature. We do not know whether he manufactured other things besides violins, but it is possible, as according to Ctibor Nečas, Jan Daniel (born 1895) is said to have made a living “through seasonal masonry and selling different *objets d’art*, including a manuscript of a dictionary and grammar of Romani language” (Nečas, 2009, p. 49; source not mentioned). No further information about these *objets d’art* or this manuscript (and who authored it) has been discovered yet.

To contextualise Jan Daniel’s letter to the President it is important to at least briefly mention another example of how Roma from the Strážnice area contacted the authorities in writing in an attempt to improve their social position. More than one example of such letters from the inhabitants of the “Gypsy colony” in Strážnice from the interwar period have been preserved, although the vast majority of those writing were asking for support as individuals or for the situation of their own family to be addressed. However, one of these letters has been preserved requesting attention on behalf of an entire local community. The author of that letter is the second likely founding member of the Roma theatre company, the František Kýr born in 1880 (by profession a roofer, as he included in his signature, and also a musician), and he also was considered an authority figure by nature and one of the “chiefs of the Gypsy colony”. He sent the letter to the municipal assembly in 1932:

Please, municipal assembly in Strážnice, we hope you will accede to our request. There are many of us Gypsies in Strážnice, so people are complaining that we are encroaching on their land, including their orchards and other things. We are asking whether you would spread us out in such a way that we would not have to reside together in one group so that the other people who have land and fruit trees there will not complain. For that reason, we would like to ask that our request be acceded to by the municipal assembly. (SOkA Hodonín, f. AM St-2, i.č. 303, fol. 169).

Although František Kýr's name is signed as the sole author of this letter, the request uses the plural as if it were written on behalf of the entire colony, so perhaps it expressed the intent of all its inhabitants. It seems that the motion to redistribute Roma residents among the different neighbourhoods of Strážnice was not considered by the municipal assembly and no documentation has been found of the town even planning on the future "diffusion" of the Roma settlement. However, during the 19th and the first half of the 20th century, it is possible to follow in the archived documents for the municipality of Strážnice an attempt to regulate Roma settlement in the town, on the one hand by screening the authorizations for residency of the inhabitants of the Roma settlement on Strážnice territory, on the other by refusing to issue confirmations of residency even to some who were demonstrably entitled to it, but who had settled in a different municipality (SOkA Hodonín, f. AM St-2, i.č. 303). For the authorities to limit the "immigration" of some members of the Kýr family into Strážnice, the local administration also made use of a statement by Adam Kýr, who was an authority for them, to a certain extent, on the historical memory of the local Roma community, as to which Kýrs were meant to belong to Strážnice. At the same time, the bureaucrats construed this as their "right" to make the living situations of those Roma residents precarious by referring to them, in their communications with other administrative units, as "the offspring of wandering Gypsies whom we are silently suffering" (SOkA Hodonín, f. AM St-2, i.č. 303, fol. 230). On the one hand, this documents that municipal assembly members acknowledged the opportunity for representatives of the Roma to participate, to a certain extent, in addressing their own situations, but on the other hand, the municipality kept the Roma in an insecure, marginalized position.

No reports have been preserved as to whether the representatives of the town even knew about the existence of the Roma theater or whether they were aware of the exceptional nature of these communal activities by Roma and their activities in their broader surroundings. The alleged record in the chronicle of Strážnice about the theatrical activity of local "Gypsies" that Jan Daniel Jr. references in his 1972 letter (MRK, MRK 430/2001) has not been preserved, apparently. The original chronicle written by the above-mentioned inspector who was aware of the history of the Roma and who aided a young Josef Kýr with discovering his origins, Leopold Nopp, was later rewritten (see SOkA Hodonín, f. AM St-2, i.č. 82, fol. 2). As far as Jan Daniel, it seems that he was not directly engaged in the negotiations between the Roma residents of Strážnice and the town, but he could have followed their attempts and supported them with his own advice.

Evidence has, however, been preserved of his engagement in the communist movement. In the Hodonín area, not just among the workers above all, but also among the dispossessed rural population, communist ideals spread right after First World War ended: poor workers saw a chance in them of securing a more dignified life for their families and their offspring (for the communist movement in the Hodonín area generally, see below). These ideals gradually spread into Roma families too. When this happened and who were the first representatives of Roma to identify with these ideals, we do not know, but the first impulses could likely have been brought to them after the year 1918 by legionnaires, or also by former prisoners of war returning from Russia. As has been mentioned above, in the family of Jan Daniel there were two such legionnaires: the already-mentioned cousin, also named Jan Daniel (born 1891), living during the interwar period in Hodonín, and the non-Roma man Josef Pajer (1886–1943) (Państwowe Muzeum Oświęcim-Brzezinka & Dokumentations- und Kulturzentrum Deutscher Sinti und Roma, 1993, p. 129), who in 1910 married, as a worker and son of a roofer, the newly-widowed Marianna Stoklasová (née Kýrová), who was Jan Daniel's aunt. Before the First World War, Josef Pajer had already been left-oriented, and when he was applying to the Legion, he listed himself as a Social Democrat (Legie 100, 2021); while we do not have any direct knowledge of his political activities during the interwar period, he is mentioned twice in Josef Jelínek's memoirs (after his first wife died, Josef Pajer married Josef Jelínek's sister), once to say Josef Pajer was a communist, and again to say that (apparently as early as 1942–1943) Josef Pajer, allegedly, hid Russian paratroopers in Josef Jelínek's home during the Second World War (Jelínek, 1991, p. 6). The involvement of Josef Pajer in the Czechoslovak Communist Party (KSČ) is also documented by the fact that his cousin, Pavel Pajer, was a municipal assembly member for the KSČ (SOKA Hodonín, f. AM St-2, i.č. 82, fol. 277, 317); that their fathers were brothers (MZA, f. E 67, k. 5256, sl. 169 and MZA, f. E 67, k. 5782, sl. 153). Jelínek writes about the hidden Russians when justifying his request for certification of his participation in the war effort per Act 255/1946, where he again mentions Josef Pajer's membership in the KSČ as well as his own brothers' party memberships:

I come from a family that is very poor and communist. My two brothers were in the KSČ, and my sister's husband was a legionnaire in Russia during the first war. [...] At the instruction of my brother-in-law [Josef Pajer – author note], I hid Soviet paratroopers whom I then transported to Slovakia. They were hidden in my home for almost three weeks with their radio transmitter. I never knew their names, because at the time I could not speak Russian, the only one who could, was my brother-in-law [J. Pajer], who frequently visited them in my home. (VÚA-VHA, f. 255/1946).

We do not know anything more about these events. In March 1943, Josef Pajer, his wife and their four children were transported to the Auschwitz II–Birkenau Concentration Camp, and according to the records all of them (probably gradually) died in what was called the “Gypsy Family Camp” there (Nečas, 1992, p. 101).

In addition to Pajer and Daniel, other members of these communities were KSČ members, above all in Josef Jelínek's family (see more below). Mentions of the fact that Roma people from Petrov and Strážnice espoused communist ideals can also be found in several applications for their certification as per Act No. 255/1946, i.e. from documents created after the Second World War (for more, see below). When exactly Jan Daniel joined the KSČ we do not know. We can assume that it may have been already at the beginning of the 1930s, because a record in the Chronicle in Petrov for 1931 mentions both the rich activities of the associations to which the inhabitants of Petrov belonged as well as the newly-created cell of the KSČ in the community and "dissatisfaction, unemployment and poverty" are mentioned among the factors leading to its birth (SOkA Hodonín, f. OÚ Petrov, i.č. 46, fol. 17).

The families with the Daniel surname who were settled in Petrov and the Kýrs in Strážnice never experienced the kinds of conflicts with representatives of towns and villages that were faced by the Roma settlers during the second half of the 19th and the first half of the 20th centuries in many communities throughout Bohemia and Moravia, whose domicile rights were not recognised and who were expelled from municipalities. How many Roma and how many municipalities these conflicts involved must be further researched; for the time being, just one case has been described in detail, that of the colony of Roma located between Kyjov and Svatobořice, where arguments with local authorities began in the year 1864 and lasted until 1940, the upshot of which was the relocation of Roma residents into 18 different villages (Horváthová-Holomková, 1994, pp. 8–13; Nečas, 2008, pp. 58–59). The colonies of Roma in Petrov and Strážnice belonged to those localities where, during the interwar period, the community of Roma increased its numbers. While in 1894 there were 16 individuals living in Petrov recorded in the registry of "Gypsies belonging to Moravia" (MZA Brno, f. B14, fascikl 7908, fol. 494), in 1910 there were 17 such individuals in a similar "inventory" made of the Roma in Petrov (MZA, f. A18, kart. 21, fol. 27) and during the census (according to the so-called Census Operations) a total of 19 individuals were residing in Petrov in the year 1921, in five homes occupied by Roma, while by the year 1930 six homes (nos. 286–292) were being occupied by a total of 31 persons living in seven households. Jan Daniel is not listed in the "inventory" from 1921, but his wife is, of course, and he is mentioned as a homeowner. In the year 1935, he is recorded with his wife Anna and with their ward, Marta Balážová, born 1927 in Holíč (living in Petrov since 1928) at house no. 290 (SOkA Hodonín, f. OÚ Hodonín, SČOP 1930).

As already mentioned above, Jan and Anna Daniel never had children of their own, but apparently, they raised little (one-year-old) Marta as if she were theirs. In his letter to the President, Daniel accents education on the one hand and, on the other, participation in the situation of the children of "his nation", mainly in Slovakia ("I see how those children are growing up in Slovakia ..."). It is, therefore, likely that the couple took in this girl, who had been living in cheerless conditions, maybe even as an orphan. It is possible

to interpret this action by Jan Daniel as confirmation of the intentions that he writes about in the letter, and above all as him acting on his words. While there are no memories from his contemporaries available to us that directly remember Jan Daniel speaking of his patriotism, it can be assumed that the attitudes he communicated in the letter were something he also experienced and by which he lived, i.e. that he behaved like a patriot. He endeavoured to uplift the Roma nation through his deeds, as is apparent from his interwar theatre work.

In the year 1943, there were 41 individuals inhabiting Roma dwellings in Petrov, about whom the Chronicle of Petrov mentions exactly that number and the families' surnames in association with their deportation to the concentration camp:

On 12 January all Jewish families were transported from the community, as follows: the five-member Hána family, the four-member Klein family, the two-member Rossenzweig family, the two-member Kohut family living in a unit in the home of Mr Armin Rossenzweig. [...] On 15 March all Gypsy families were transported away[:] five families named Daniel and two named Kýr. A total of 41 family members. (SOkA Hodonín, f. OÚ Petrov, i.č. 46, fol. 38).

In the book *Petrov* the image of the Roma transports is augmented by this description of the local inhabitants:

These people had lived peacefully among their neighbors out beyond the manor pub. When they were taken away, according to eyewitnesses, many citizens came out to say goodbye. People were weeping when they saw them get on the bus, even one young mother with an infant just a few months old in her arms. (Děkařová-Bělochová, 2012, pp. 54–55).

From survivors' testimonies, we know the Roma from Strážnice were first transported to Olomouc, where they were meant to wait for the next transport. The gendarme there, who was from Petrov, is said to have negotiated an opportunity for one or two representatives from each community to telephone their local authority so municipal representatives could come to speak up for them. It is exactly Jan Daniel who is said to have made such a phone call on behalf of Petrov's Roma, by which it is clear to see that he had the trust of those relatives who remained and that he may have also been able to take advantage of certain contacts among the local assembly members. Whether his phone calls were answered in Petrov and what he learned from them is unknown to us, none of the survivors has given testimony as to that. Unfortunately, as Roma survivors later testified, except for one (Hrubá Vrbka), none of the municipalities in the Strážnice area sent a vehicle to save their Roma residents (Jelínek, 1991, p. 6; for more details, see below).

A record in the Chronicle of Petrov about the end of the war also mentions the return of some Roma survivors. For the Jewish families it states that two individuals who were specifically saved returned after the war ended, and the Chronicle lists the date of their return and the names of both survivors, but those keeping the records just listed numbers for the Roma victims and those who were saved: "Of 41 members of the Gypsy families, just seven returned" (SOkA Hodonín, f. OÚ Petrov, i.č. 46, fol. 44).

Jan Daniel (born 1895) did not survive the concentration camp, but in addition to another seven individuals, his wife Anna Danielová survived and lived in Petrov even after returning from the concentration camp until her old age, working as an agricultural labourer. It is exactly she who gave testimony about the death of her husband when she requested certification of his participation in the anti-Nazi resistance. In the application dated 1 February 1969 she stated, (or had somebody write for her) the following:

In the year 1943, during the time of the German occupation, the Germans took all of us who were of Gypsy origin to the Auschwitz Concentration Camp, where we were imprisoned until the liberation in 1945. [...] I was taken there with my husband, who died in the concentration camp, he was killed by the Germans on 2 October 1943. (VHA-VÚA, f. 255/1946).

To urge authorities to accept her application she wrote the following in the years 1970 and 1971:

I am a widow of a national resistance participant who was a KSČ member and who was tortured during the time of the occupation (Ibid., 1970).

I was deported to Auschwitz Concentration Camp with my husband, who was a member of the committee of the KSČ (Ibid., 1971).

It seems as if she wanted to emphasise, through these statements, that the reason for their deportations was not necessarily just racial persecution, but that her husband could also have been considered inconvenient for his political activities.

That impression is also supported by the official confirmation attached to the application, which also mentions Jan Daniel joining the KSČ and was written in 1971 by a bureaucrat from the Local National Committee in Petrov. He wrote in his opinion of Anna Danielová the following:

Within the framework of the racial discrimination, like the other Gypsies, she was sent to Auschwitz Concentration Camp, and did not return from there until after the end of the Second World War. Her husband perished in the concentration camp. We know a communist cell was created in their home during the First Republic and the party met there during the time of its illegality. (Ibid., 20. 12. 1971).

As is mentioned above, references to those who were mostly people's loved ones having joined the KSČ during the interwar period were not unique in these applications. They appear above all in the applications made between the years 1948–1989, when it was possible to assume that such information would not harm the applicant but would, on the contrary, rather aid with receiving a positive response. By emphasising their left-wing convictions and anti-Nazi resistance, the applicants may simultaneously have been attempting to extricate themselves from the label of "gypsy/asocial" that was present in the documentation from those days and being used as the evidentiary material for these postwar certifications. Thanks to these applications, we are learning that Roma during the interwar period were, in some localities, comparatively active politically. Such

Communist Party membership is mentioned directly, e.g., by Josef Jelínek (e.g., SOkA Hodonín, ONV-H-945, fol. 87), although he writes elsewhere about joining the party right after the war and mentions his brother-in-law, brothers and his father as party members (see above). Jelínek's involvement with the anti-Nazi communist resistance is also testified to by his friend (who was also the younger brother of the František Kýr born in 1914), Karel Kýr (born 1919), who said he and Josef Jelínek destroyed German-language signs together at the beginning of the war and posted anti-Nazi communist fliers supplied to them by the brothers of Josef Jelínek. Roma survivors from nearby Radějov also reported after the war that the reason they had been imprisoned in the concentration camps was not necessarily just their "racial" origin, but exactly their Communist Party membership (see applications in the VÚA-VHA, f. 255/1946, e.g., the file on a Mr Martin born 1897, the letter from his daughter dated 1996 in that file, as well as the file of a Mr Jiří born 1902, who according to his son had been the local chair of the KSČ), and some other survivors from Strážnice claimed party membership, such as the younger brother of the František Kýr born in 1914, Mr Antonín (born 1925) and many others applying for certification as per Act No. 255/1946. In 1945, the widow of Martin Ištván of Radějov recalled that her husband's arrest was said to have happened "on the orders of Ing. Parsch, a Nazi who said to me: 'If he is an Ištvan, he is a communist and therefore must disappear.'" (SOkA Hodonín, f. ONV-H-953, fol. 45). We need to take into consideration that what contributed to this tragic end (the total murder of the Roma families in the Strážnice district and maybe in other villages where they were living integrated, settled lives too) was their active participation in the communist movement.

* * *

This portrait of Jan Daniel, the author of the letter to the President, is based above all on that single, one-page manuscript, which has been preserved to this day, on several official records, and on the mentions made of him by those who say they knew him, i.e. on mere fragments testifying to his life. Part of this contribution has been dedicated to his origins, attesting to the fact that the Daniels' relationship to the town of Petrov had been built up over generations, i.e. that they were a family who had been settled in one place and who created and kept firming up their ties to the locality and the people in it over several decades.

From the accumulated fragments it is apparent that in the case of Jan Daniel, he was an exceptional figure who managed, even in a hard situation – as a war invalid – to assert himself and reach out to others. His lifelong push was to uplift his own "unfortunate nation", he had a positive vision, and he also was concerned about how things would develop if the children of his nation did not access education. His ideas were of an arrangement that would be more just, in a society where Roma and their children might also be able to live more dignified lives and, through "proper education", achieve a proud patriotism, and he actively disseminated and promoted his ideas in "word and deed".

One level of his activism involved the area of negotiations or politics (what has been preserved is his letter to the President, mentions of his involvement in the activity of or the co-founding of a communist cell that was based, during the time of the party's illegality, in his own home), and another level is comprised of his activities as a caregiver (he and his wife took in a Roma girl), a nurturer of talent (he convinced youth to undertake theatrical activity and inspired them with his vision) and an artist (as an author/composer and performer in the first-ever Roma theatre company on Czechoslovak territory). Both his pro-Czechoslovak and pro-Roma tendencies manifested in his activism, and both – at least according to his letter – seem to be deeply rooted in his own experience. He began to build his pro-Roma activism during a situation when Roma were being conceived of, discussed and written about as a “rural scourge” or even the “gypsy nuisance”. Just as his authentic Czechoslovakism is displayed in his letter, so did it take actual form in his family ties (his wife and his ward came from communities in Slovakia) and he maintained contacts with Roma in Slovak villages (at least by travelling there to perform with his theatre ensemble).

Jan Daniel's activity may have been halted by Nazi injustice, and he himself, along with most of his family members, were subsequently murdered in the cruel conditions of a concentration camp, but his legacy and his memory lived on in the memories of surviving witnesses. For the future generations he was, is and can continue to be a symbol of the emancipatory vision striving to strengthen the civic and ethnic self-confidence of the youth of “his nation”. This is an example of a marriage between a majority and a minority identity (or rather a marriage of identities, Czech and Slovak – or Czechoslovak – and Roma) drawing from all the legacies and traditions available to him that – as has been demonstrated by the actions known to us – could be cultivated and nurtured in parallel. He contributed a vision of strengthening his national (minority) pride and his patriotism, which he experienced not as conflicting with each other, but in symbiosis with one another, balancing each other. In his life story, as we currently know it, three very important pillars are wedded together that are also present in Roma activism and the ethno-emancipatory movement later: An emphasis on education, political engagement (joining debates about public matters through political activity) and culture (its conservation and cultivation – music, songs, theatre).

František Kýr

Dušan Slačka

Involvement in amateur theatrical activities and specific attempts to improve the social situation of Roma communities on the border between Moravia and Slovakia can be documented from primary sources (although the latter phenomenon has so far just been documented for the postwar period) for the other figure whose life we are following here,

František Kýr (1914–1985) of Strážnice (hereinafter ‘František Kýr Jr.’). He is mentioned in the memories of witnesses – among the few from Strážnice who survived imprisonment in the concentration camps, Josef Jelínek (born in 1919 with the surname Kýr) mentions him (1991, p. 32); Jan Daniel Jr. mentions him as the director of the Roma theatrical group (MRK, MRK 430/2001); Anežka Kloudová mentions him also (MRK, A 43/2003). His activity in the theatrical ensemble was noticed by the Protectorate press in 1942 (see below). A larger amount of archival material has been preserved about his postwar activities and life, especially in the cadre file from the time of his service in the SNB (*Sbor národní bezpečnosti* /National Security Corps) from 1953 to 1955 (ABS, složka 2017/14) or in the documents about his activity in the post of secretary of the Regional Committee of the Union of Gypsies-Roma for the South Moravian Region at the beginning of the 1970s and as a member of the Commission of Former Concentration Camp Prisoners organised by the Central Committee of the Union (Slačka, 2015, pp. 111–112). In those materials too, however, it is also possible to find information about his life during the interwar period.

František Kýr Jr. was born in Strážnice on 24 October 1914 into the family of František Kýr, born 2 April 1887 in Strážnice (MZA, f. E 67, k. 5268, sl. 47) and Anna Kýrová, born 1 October 1892 in Petrov as Anna Danielová (MZA, f. E 67, k. 5273, sl. 176). Brief testimonies about this family have been preserved thanks to the recording of the memories of Bohumil Kýr, František Kýr Jr.’s younger brother, born 24 October 1921 (MRK, MRK 18/2004). The family had six children total, the oldest of whom was Martin, born 1911, the next oldest František Jr., followed by Karel, born 1919, then Bohumil, after whom was born their only sister, Růžena in 1924 and the youngest was Adam, born 1926, who was born after their father died. Their father, František Kýr, was, according to the testimony of Bohumil, an active member of the KSČ. His political inclinations were even said to have cost him his job as coachman on the estate of Count Magnis in Strážnice: “For many years he was a coachman on the estate of Count Magnis, but later he was let go for his activity and membership in the KSČ” (MRK, MRK 18/2004).

Some of František Kýr Jr.’s cadre materials dating from the time of his activity in the National Security Corps mention his father’s membership in the KSČ (as well as other information, for example, about the family’s social situation):

During the time of the First Republic, his family lived in the Colony in Strážnice (called the gypsy camp – [*cikánský tabor* in original – author note]) in bad conditions along with other families of that same origin, whereas the father of the individual being vetted [František Kýr Jr.] was unemployed and made a living just through occasional work, being on the one hand a person of gypsy origin [*cikánského původu*] and also a KSČ member. (ABS, složka 2017/14).

The detailed characteristics of the “gypsy camp” in Strážnice and its inhabitants during the interwar period are provided by Josef Jelínek, the native of Strážnice (see also above):

Among the Roma families from Strážnice, 50 % were half-breeds from unions with whites. In that town, in the registry book at the parish office, it is recorded that they settled there in

1834 and allegedly are said to have come from Slovakia. Almost all of them used the names and surname of Kýr, except for two families named Angr and one family called Klauda. They all built single-family homes out of bricks, both from fired bricks and their own homemade mud bricks. Most made a living through the blacksmith craft, some worked in construction. One was in the trades as a roofer, one was apprenticed as a shoemaker, another as a sculptor of stone. On the cultural side, they loved going to the movies and the theater. There were also musicians among them, folk song singers, and they also built up an amateur band that they performed with in the town [Strážnice], in Skalice, in Hodonín. Some women worked in the fields for Count Mágis, many, especially during the winter, sewed “Toledos” [type of embroidery] on commissions given them by Ms Janková, who was a businesswoman. Their standard of living was average, and there were times when it was below average. They were Roma who led impeccable lives, none were ever criminally prosecuted [...]. (Jelínek, 1991, pp. 28–30).

According to his own statements, from 1920 to 1927 František Kýr Jr. attended the elementary school in Petrov (i.e. at the same time Jan Daniel was writing his appeal to the President about the education of Roma children), and then attended one year of the burgher school in Strážnice (ABS, složka 2017/14). The contact of František Kýr Jr. with the Roma community in nearby Petrov where Jan Daniel was active as an authority figure, was certainly close and quite frequent – not only did he attend school there, but his mother was from there and his grandparents on her side lived there. According to information from the press in 1942 he played football for a sports club in Petrov (Národní střed, 1942, p. 3). We can, therefore, assume that in addition to other matters, the efforts and ideas of Jan Daniel could have been spread through these contacts, on the one hand by his culturally emancipatory endeavours (the theatre company) and on the other, his ideas about the social position of Roma communities in that part of Czechoslovakia. František Kýr Jr.’s burdensome social situation and loss of his father, however, forced him to become economically active at an early age:

[...] I went to learn to be a locksmith, but we lost our father that same year, so it was not possible for me to apprentice while in such poverty, when the eight members of our family did not have enough to eat, and for that reason, I had to go work for many building and regulatory firms, I would make some money and give it to mother, then that horrible unemployment happened and those food and clothing tickets for the unemployed, those were very hard times, and as a boy I attended a demonstration in Hodonín in 1928 where we demanded our bread ration and they arrested many of us, I managed to escape [...]. (ABS, složka 2017/14).

The mentions of František Kýr Jr.’s activity in the KSČ during the interwar period are inconsistent and likely to have been conditioned by the situation in which they were produced. We can consider it quite likely that his closeness to communist ideas was supported by the burdensome social situation of his family during the 1920s and 1930s, especially living in such proximity to Hodonín, which at the time was nicknamed “Red Kronstadt”, as it was a location of significant communist activity among the industrial workers in

the towns and among the paid agricultural workers in the countryside (Frolec et al., 1978, pp. 211–281). The presence of the communist ideas within the pauperised population from the Roma settlement in the suburb of Strážnice and the participation of some of the inhabitants in demonstrations demanding improvements be made to the unpleasant social situation in the 1920s and especially during the 1930s is confirmed by Josef Jelínek in his memoirs, a generational companion of František Jr. who would become his future co-worker on the Commission of Former Concentration Camp Prisoners established by the Central Committee of the Union of Gypsies-Roma (1969–1973):

They attended [the brothers of Josef Jelínek] the demonstrations in Hodonín, walking there early in the morning, the gendarmes apprehended them there and locked them up, they were arrested so frequently, they were even beaten. (NA, f. ÚV SPB, soutěž 2705; Sadílková & Závodská, 2022).

The cadre materials for František Kýr Jr. dating from the 1950s contain mentions that he also had been organised within the KSČ during the interwar period: “I am a never prosecuted or reprimanded member of our proletariat party during the previous capitalist era and then again after returning from the Auschwitz Concentration Camp in 1945 [...]” (ABS, složka 2017/14), but during the time of his activity in the National Security Corps, he gives different information about his interwar life:

I did not participate in either political life or public life, but I was organised in the athletic organisation *Red Star* [*Rudá hvězda*] in Strážnice, my activity consisted of my never finding any other people on my level, as a youth, just in the athletic workers’ *Red Star* Club. We would get together there and support each other. (ABS, složka 2017/14).

The cadre sources of information agree with each other the most on the point that František Kýr Jr. was a KSČ member starting in 1945 – he joined the party not long after returning from the Nazi concentration camps (ABS, složka 2017/14).

During the 1930s and at the beginning of the 1940s, František Kýr Jr. tried several manual labourers’ professions:

He did blacksmith jobs at home, later he collected animal skins. He also worked for a brief time on the sewers with the Doležal firm and later, when he married, he aided his wife’s father [František Kýr, Sr.] (born 1880), whose daughter was Marie Kýrová (born 1915) with roofing jobs, since his father-in-law was a roofer by trade. (ABS, složka 2017/14).

He spent 1936–1939 doing his basic military service at Hranice. In 1936 his son František was born (Memorial Book, p. 986) and his daughter Marie was born three years later (Ibid., p. 342).

The cadre materials from the 1950s about him as a member of the National Security Corps, including the questionnaires completed in his own hand and his work histories, contain no information about his activities in the group of Roma amateur actors during

the 1930s and 1940s. We will also not find any mention of these activities in the cadre report of the the police from Strážnice in the mid-1950s, where at the time he was known as a “gypsy” member of the National Security Corps, but we can anticipate the persistence of a certain awareness of his earlier activities and life:

He was not publicly active during the First Republic. He maintained contact mostly with the working class and with persons of Gypsy origin. He also maintained contact with athletes and was also a member of the DTJ [*Dělnická tělocvičná jednota* – Workers’ Physical Education Club]. However, he did not maintain any special contacts and was not organized politically in any political party. (ABS, složka 2017/14).

Mentions of his athletics activities during the interwar period are, on the other hand, frequent in these sources, and František Kýr Jr. worked as a football referee during the postwar period as well (ABS, složka 2017/14). The organised sport had been an integral component of the First Republic political and social life. In addition to the oldest, most widespread, nationally-focused *Sokol* (Falcon) Organisation (established in 1862) and the Catholically-oriented *Orel* (Eagle) Organisation (established in 1909), since 1897 there had also existed the DTJ associated with the Social Democrats – their Union of Workers’ Physical Education Clubs had competed since the 1920s with the Communist Party’s Federation of Workers’ Physical Education Clubs and later with the Federation of Proletarian Physical Education (Mucha, 1955; Waic, 2018, pp. 108–149). References to membership in left-wing sports organisations are found in the archival sources for František Kýr Jr. As with the subject of Roma membership in the interwar KSČ, the issue of Roma membership in left-wing sports organisations during the 1920s and 1930s has yet to be investigated by researchers. The situation in the case of Roma participation in football clubs is different, wherein village society the importance of active participation and even of establishing a football team in which athletic know-how and talent were at a premium over ethnicity or social class. This, for instance, did play a role in the integration process of the members of the Holomek family from the South Moravian village of Svatobořice, especially that of the man who would become Czechoslovakia’s first Roma lawyer, Tomáš Holomek (1911–1988), as has been emphasized by Jana Horváthová-Holomková (Holomková, 1989, pp. 89–90.). Unlike the Roma football teams established later by the Union of Gypsies-Roma (Slačka, 2015, p. 114) we do not have any information for the interwar period about the exclusively Roma athletic groups that existed in the Czech lands. The *Športový klub slovenských cigánov* (Athletics Club of Slovak Gypsies), dedicated to football and light athletics, was born during the interwar period in Košice (Jurová & Zupková, 2007; Marushiakova & Popov, 2021b, pp. 574–580). In the Moravian environment, at the very least, football was quite popular, and it seems that it functioned rather as a means for integrating into society than as an activity strengthening community awareness. In the case of sports organisations associated with left-wing politics, they could have boosted common political convictions and social solidarity. The proximity of different groups of socially marginalised inhabitants also was, I

believe, likely to have been a more immediate reason for the affinity of Roma from the Strážnice area with the interwar Communist Party than the internalisation of the anti-liberal, revolutionary communist ideology, but this hypothesis has to be verified through more research.

The only mention of amateur theatrical activity in the postwar cadre files on František Kýr Jr. is made inadvertently when, during interrogation, he describes the unusual circumstances of his induction for nighttime duty as a member of the National Security Corps, a mention that is made during the mid-1950s: “In Velká nad Veličkou I performed as an actor in a cultural theatre group.” (ABS, složka 2017/14).

A possible explanation of the absence of any information about his interwar activity among the Roma actors from Strážnice in the materials about František Kýr Jr. dating from the 1950s can be provided by the fact that at least some of his active work with the Roma amateurs under his leadership as director happened during the time of the Nazi occupation and the existence of the Protectorate of Bohemia and Moravia. Jan Daniel Jr. dates the beginning of the new incarnation of the theatrical activities among the Roma youth of Strážnice beneath the directorial baton of František Kýr Jr. as the year 1937, when the play *Matčin odkaz* (The Mother’s Legacy) was said to have premiered (MRK, MRK 430/2001). The Protectorate press, however, does not mention František Kýr Jr. as a director and organiser of theatrical activity among the Roma in the Strážnice area until 1942 (see below). Not presenting information about his amateur theatrical work in the columns labelled “activity during the occupation” on these personnel intake forms could, therefore, have been the consequence of a comprehensible self-censorship. The key to another possible explanation is described again by Jan Daniel Jr. when he wrote about the postwar activities of the amateur Roma theatre in that same region that he rehearsed the play *Návrat* (Return) together with a handful of Roma survivors of the Holocaust:

The play *Návrat* was set during the occupation, and the plot called for a cast of six. We performed it more than once, in the Hodonín district and in the Senica district [in Slovakia]. For lack of time and because of difficulties with the authorities, it was dropped from the repertoire. [...] We performed this play, as I already said, several times, from 1951–1965. (MRK, MRK 430/2001).

It is likely that František Kýr Jr. was involved in exactly such cultural activity after the war and this may even have been the “cultural group” organising the theatrical production mentioned by him above. If the amateur Roma ensemble attracted negative attention from the authorities during the 1950s and 1960s, there would not be many reasons to hope that admitting to such activities having been in operation from the late 1930s and start of the 1940s would have had any positive effect during the 1950s on a questionnaire filled for the party officials and for his employer.

A more or less authentic testimony from František Kýr Jr. about his involvement in the theatrical activities of Roma from Strážnice and its surrounding areas, apparently initiated by Jan Daniel at the close of the 1920s and taken up by a younger generation of amateurs at the end of the 1930s, has, however, been preserved for us on the pages

of the Protectorate press. The racially motivated persecution of the persons considered to be ‘Gypsies’ following the model of Nazi Germany and under its supervision begins to be applied in the Protectorate of Bohemia and Moravia in the summer of 1942. Up until that time, it is also possible to follow the broader continuity of anti-Roma attitudes in the bureaucracy and society itself (Baloun, 2020, pp. 259–261), including in a certain part of the Protectorate press carrying on the attitudes prevalent during the interwar Czechoslovak Republic. The most informative article about the person and work of František Kýr Jr. is headlined *Theater of the Gypsy Clan of the Kýrs*, published 24 May 1942 with the subtitle *In the Gypsy Settlement in Strážnice – A Successful Performance by the Gypsy Amateurs – A Gypsy has Authored a Drama – Interview with Gypsy Director František Kýr* (Národní střed, 1942, p. 3). It demonstrates that in the discourse of the media at that time there were definite moments during the history of the Protectorate of Bohemia and Moravia when the media were able, at least on a symbolic level, to conceive of some Roma, within the framework of an assimilatory discourse identifying a settled life with civilization, as belonging to the collective of the inhabitants of the Protectorate. The article begins by reminding readers that for two years the regulation banning living on the road has been in force in the Protectorate. That is followed by mentioning JUDr. Holomek (Tomáš Holomek, a native of the Roma settlement in Svatobořice and the first Roma law student in Czechoslovakia) (for more see the Conclusion), whose life story is evidently meant to prove to readers that these “swarthy children of far-away India, who arrived here centuries ago through their endless wanderings, have already proven that they are able to be proper human beings in the places where they have been settled for a longer time, after several decades” (Ibid.).

Further evidentiary material of this process is meant to be exactly these Roma thespians from Strážnice. What follows is a description, conceived of as a reportage, of what it is like to enter the colony of Roma living in the Strážnice suburbs. When the author of the article (V. Cigánek) asks the locals where František Kýr lives, he finds out there are “three” men of that name living there:

“We mean the director.”

“Aha, the football player! Come with us.”

František Kýr, director of the amateur theater company “Gypsy Youth” [*Cigánská omladina*], blacksmith by trade and a famous sportsman throughout the area, is summoned from another forge. A swarthy, 26-year-old lad with an intelligent face. When he hears we are coming there “from the papers” he leads us into the cottage that is his home. It’s the biggest house in the settlement, made of red brick. Beyond the windows there are flowers, and in the clean kitchen František Kýr’s mother is quickly fluttering around the stove, while his cute sister Růženka is messing about with laundry. (Národní střed, 1942, p. 3).

In May 1942, František Kýr Jr. was actually 27 years old. This can either be an error or mean that the piece was written long before it was published. The reporter asks about the theatre performance that had been produced at Easter in the ballroom of the Hotel *U černého orla* (At the black eagle). František Kýr Jr. answers:

A drama *The Mother's Legacy*. It's a drama from Gypsy life, a kind of "Gypsy Maryša". A mother has two sons, one of whom becomes a priest according to her wishes. He returns after many years to the community, as a priest. His erstwhile sweetheart has married his brother in the interim. However, she never stopped loving her first sweetheart, and a conflict develops from this, which culminates with her shooting her husband dead. [...] I dedicate myself exclusively to the direction. Basically, to all organisational matters of the enterprise. My brother and two girls from the settlement are playing the leads. There are nine actors in the cast, seven of whom are Kýrs. One actor, Kubík, is from Kněždub, and one is a Daniel [Jan Daniel Jr.] from Petrov. We are actually a Gypsy Youth Theatre. The oldest actor is 22, the youngest is 17. [...] Before this we performed the drama *The Grave on the Desert*. That was written by my cousin, Josef Kýr [nicknamed *Jožín*, born 1903, who was not a first cousin, but the brother-in-law of František Kýr Jr.] who was director before me. [...] However, if we were to be given a theatrical license, [...] we would tour different towns. We'd go to Prostějov, Zlín, Olomouc ... We could prove that we can really do something! (Národní střed, 1942, p. 3).

The article includes photographs of František Kýr Jr. and other members of his ensemble. The author then closes the piece after mentioning František Kýr Jr.'s enquiry as to whether he actually will write about him and his colleagues for the newspapers:

I absolutely, certainly will write about this. All people should know what the Gypsy Youth in Strážnice are doing. They should know that at the destination point of the *Gypsy bárodrom*, the long road, those 10,000 kilometres that the people of your tribe travelled from somewhere in the Indian mountains to our country, the Gypsy-settler is able to successfully set off on new life journey and is able to do so in such a way that deserved praise and recognition cannot be denied him. (Ibid.).

There are several interesting moments in this article concerning the context of the activism performed in society on behalf of the civil and ethnic emancipation of Roma. What is remarkable is especially the characteristics of the theatrical production of the *Mother's Legacy* being described as a kind of "Gypsy Maryša". The play *Maryša* was written by the brothers Alois and Vilém Mrštík in 1894 and premiered that year at the National Theater in Prague. It was considered the height of Czech realist drama and works with the motifs of unrequited love and social position determining the fates of members of rural society in the Moravian countryside. The play very quickly became a fixture of the amateur and professional theatre ensemble repertoire and, thanks to its focus on an environment of rural tradition, it is still considered to this day an embodiment of a certain essence of Czech culture in terms of theatre. František Kýr Jr. was inspired by this classic work when authoring what was likely his first script and directing his first production. In his brief sketch of the plot, we find just a few differences from the original, such as the fact that in the Roma version the clashing love rivals are also relatives, giving a different reason for the longtime absence of one of them (seminary studies instead of military service) and then the different method of murdering the unwanted husband (using a firearm instead of poison). Another interesting, different motif is the wish of the brothers' mother, which sets the entire plot in motion and is referenced in the title. This abstract of the plot allows us to speculate that this "Gypsy Maryša", as handled by Roma living in Strážnice and the

surrounding area, could well have been even more suspenseful, thanks to these innovations, and maybe even involving more action than the model it was based on, but at the same time, it was a story known to audiences in those days or one of which they would at least have been aware of. In addition to these adaptations, we can, based on Kýr's production being called the "Gypsy Maryša", assess that this subject matter, which was favoured and shared in the larger society, was amended and augmented with cultural elements typical of the Roma community – however, given the partial nature of the information, it is not possible to further specify what that "Gypsiness" consisted of. It is not likely to have consisted of a cheap confirmation of the audience's stereotypes about "G/gypsies", because František Kýr Jr.'s very motivation to undertake theatrical activity consisted of his desire to demonstrate that "we can really do something" and rather is a testament to an attempt not to reproduce the prejudices and stereotypes associated with "G/gypsies", but rather to offer their version of this familiar depiction of stories of love and tragedy commonly shared in society.

In Lada Víková's text about Jan Daniel above, there is a detailed overview of information about the repertoire of the plays and songs performed by the amateur Roma theatre company to entertain their audiences in Strážnice and the surrounding areas. At the time that he was active in the Union of Gypsies-Roma during the beginning of the 1970s, Jan Daniel Jr. emphasised, when describing the ensemble's dramatic and song repertoire, that the lyrics were in Romani language. Eyewitness Anežka Kloudová, who was not herself a member of the theatrical collective, recalled among her sketchy memories of the Roma actors from Strážnice that they also sang the Czech national anthem *Kde domov můj* (Where is My Homeland) in the context of their repertoire (MRK, A 43/2003). The theatre company, therefore, could have fulfilled other functions in addition to intra-community ones (see Conclusion below), namely, the function of declaring their belonging to the collective of the nation-state through these amateur productions of socially favoured theatre, augmented by songs that on the one hand presented their own cultural and ethnic originality, but on the other included songs featuring significant socio-political content.

That proverbial "*báro drom*" (long road) of the Roma from Strážnice and its surrounding communities did not have as its destination point the satisfied "new life" that the journalist V. Cigánek prophesied but was tragically impacted by the racially motivated persecution of persons considered to be "Gypsies". The measures of that persecution, consisting of the internment of several Roma families in 1942 in what was called "Gypsy Camp" ("Zigeunerlager" or "Cikánský tábor") at Hodonín u Kunštátu (camp designated for the Moravian territory), impacted the Roma community in Strážnice to just a limited extent at first, but the transports of the Protectorate's Roma to the Nazi concentration camps that began in March 1943 proved fatal to them. The Roma inhabitants of Strážnice, numbering roughly 100 persons, were sent on a first transport in March and a second transport at the beginning of May 1943 to the Auschwitz II-Birkenau Concentration and Extermination Camp (Nečas, 2005, pp. 136–137). It is an irony of fate that Roma from

Strážnice and the surrounding area, including the amateur performers, were interned at the *U Odstrčilů* Inn in Olomouc before their first transport, as it was likely to have been the venue that Jelínek referred to as the “old theatre” because of its ballroom, designated for holding cultural and social events. Testimony about that first transport from Josef Jelínek reveals that when the Roma were at the assembly point in Olomouc, representatives of the Roma from each village were allowed to contact municipal authorities to request that at least some Roma not be deported:

There [at the assembly point in Olomouc – author note] we were guarded by our gendarme, named Zezula, and he happened to come from Petrov, so he knew us all.

We were all waiting to see what would happen next, and after an hour a Gestapo member arrived wearing a leather coat, looked us over, and told gendarme Zezula that we did not belong where we were being sent and to tell us that we could telephone the town hall in Strážnice for the town to bring us back. My older brother František [the František Kýr born in 1895], my uncle who was a roofer [the František Kýr born in 1880] and Jan Daniel from Petrov [the Jan Daniel born in 1895, the author of the letter to the President] took off for the post office and telephoned the town halls, both Strážnice and Petrov, for them to bring us back because the Gestapo said we did not belong where we were being sent. The Gestapo said we could keep trying to reach them for just three days. When they came back from the telephone at the post office, they told us all that the mayor was supposedly not present and that none of the city council members had been at the town hall. They telephoned there each day to no avail. (Jelínek, 1991, p. 6).

According to the preserved archival materials, the mayor of Strážnice did attempt a significantly selective rescue of 31 Roma from the transport, but he sent notes asking for their release from the assembly point at a time when that was no longer possible, as everyone had already been transported to Auschwitz (Nečas, 2005, pp. 136–137).

František Kýr Jr., his wife, and their two children were among those being transported. The couple lived to see the liberation, but neither of their children survived their imprisonment in the concentration camp, just as most of the Roma from Strážnice did not. After the war ended another 15 survivors in addition to František Kýr Jr. and his wife returned to Strážnice from the concentration camps (Nečas, 2005, p. 137).

After the war František Kýr Jr. made a living as a laborer and technician working with animals, and from 1953–1955 he served in the National Security Corps in Veselí nad Moravou. From those days documents have been preserved about his active attempts to improve the social position of the Roma living on the border between Moravia and Slovakia, in which we can follow the continuation of the ideas and ideals of Jan Daniel (born 1895), updated to reflect the postwar political and social situation and by his experience of the racially motivated genocide during the war. On the one hand, there are the repeated requests that he be transferred to serve in the district of Skalica in Western Slovakia, where Kýr Jr. saw a greater need for “educational work among the Gypsies” (ABS, složka 2017/14), but on the other hand, what are even more apparent are the parallels in the emphasis on the education and situation of Roma in the nearby Slovak territory in

the musings both of Jan Daniel (born 1895) in the 1920s and in those of František Kýr Jr. sent 30 years later in a letter addressed to the Ministry of Social Care in November 1953:

Given the circumstances that the families of Gypsies still find themselves in today, I would propose, as one of their number, that the brothers and sisters who are making a living still today by leading an indecent life should be enlisted and also involved in building of our socialist order, I acknowledge that it may be much more difficult to do this with them than it would be with our brothers and sisters in Moravian Slovácko region and in the districts of Veselí and Hodonín, but it is necessary that I write to you and ask for your aid with these oppressed comrades, it is not nice to keep seeing these Gypsies walking around without any work, making a living through an indecent life, maybe even through prostitution in many cases, children not going to school, overall there is no housing, and the main thing is that it is not nice when they wander around in our towns without work, in a state of ugliness, out on the streets – I, who am writing this, am one of them, and I'm very often ashamed of my brothers and sisters, and not just when they are seen by the foreigners who visit our homeland. I am writing you this letter not just as a correspondent but as one of them who is involved in asking you to do this difficult work, today I'm a member of the National Security Corps and I would very much like to assist you and contribute to your work, I will close now by wishing you a great deal of success with your work and I thank you in advance on behalf of us all, Your Comrade, Junior Guardsman Kýr František [...]. (MZA, f. B 125, k. 29/II, i.č. 94, fol. 97).

This letter by František Kýr Jr. to the Ministry of Social Care is not dated, but the postal delivery stamp on it from the Labor Force Ministry gives the day of its receipt as November 22, 1953. The note on how this proposal was handled, dated 8 January 1954, reads as follows:

A personal conversation was held with Guardsman Kýr, the cases described are about Slovakia in particular. They say it is not good to have this proportion of so many persons of gypsy origin in Ostroh [town approximately 12 km from Strážnice]. An investigation will be undertaken on the scene. (Ibid).

Compared to the letter by Jan Daniel, the approach taken by František Kýr Jr. fits the context of the atmosphere of the building of socialism in Czechoslovakia at the beginning of the 1950s, as he pledges to actively involve himself in improving the Roma population's situation. The economic and social marginalisation of Roma in Western Slovakia even after the anti-Roma arrangements of the fascist Republic of Slovakia – which, however, were not always strictly or thoroughly executed on that territory, according to witness memories (Hübschmannová, 2005, pp. 589–592) – demonstrate continuity with the previous decades, and the interest among the activists from the Roma community of Strážnice in that marginalisation also remains.

The height of engagement of Roma from the Strážnice area targeting the improvement of the position of Roma within the framework of Czechoslovak society can doubtless be considered the existence of the above-mentioned Union of Gypsies-Roma at the time when František Kýr Jr. was appointed to the position of secretary of the Regional

Committee of the Union of Gypsies-Roma for the South Moravian Region and, along with Josef Jelínek, was active in the Commission of the Former Prisoners of Concentration Camps established by the Central Committee of the Union of Gypsies-Roma. Jan Daniel Jr. was active at the district level in the apparatus of the Union in Hodonín. Information about a similar notion of negotiation with leading political stakeholders about the dignified participation of Roma in what was going on in Czechoslovak society are documented by primary sources as soon as in the interwar period.

Conclusion

Dušan Slačka and Lada Viová

Through the portraits of these two figures, Jan Daniel and František Kýr, we have tried to demonstrate that in interwar Czechoslovakia there were attempts by Roma themselves to improve the position of their communities through official written correspondence with high political authorities. The documentation of these events just through such written sources may create the impression that such activities were random. However, their contextualisation within the framework of the indicated trajectories of the lives of these two representatives of the Roma side of these communications, which was quite at a disadvantage in terms of power relations, yields a certain potential for approximating the multilayered connections and dialogues underway between these Roma activists and visionaries of the emancipation of the Czechoslovak Roma, the communities of Roma themselves, and the larger society. This comprehensive web of relations outlined in our contributions, for example, through our probes of the community and family ties, residential histories, relationships toward left-wing politics and sports organisations – but especially, it seems, the activities of the musical theatre which were significantly unique – create space in which these solitary instances in the story of the emancipation of the Roma, documented currently by primary sources, perhaps become a bit more anchored and better comprehended.

The above-mentioned extended families of the Daniels and Kýrs (but also the Kubíks, Išt'vans, Heráks, Dychs and Malíks, whom we have not paid closer attention to here) settled in the Strážnice area above all as blacksmiths and made their living through blacksmithing for generations. Blacksmithing is usually mentioned as a profession of the Roma that was traditional and most rapidly led to the settling of groups who had previously traditionally travelled (Mann, 2018). Of course, it is certainly not without significance that both the founder of the Kýrs, Václav Kýr, and several of his descendants are, throughout the 19th century, registered or spoken of in oral histories as having also been soldiers. So, for instance, Václav Kýr's son Josef Kýr (1839–1884) (MZA, f. E 67, k. 5790, k. 5565, sl. 9) – who was, by the way, the father of the František Kýr born in 1880 who was behind the birth of the Roma theatre company – is written in the book of weddings in 1868 with an unusually long entry, as follows:

Josef Kyrr alias Hutia, gypsy of Strážnice, cavalry gunner of 12th Imperial and Royal Artillery Regiment of the baron from Vernier, on leave in Lipov, son of Václav Kyr (respectively Huta) gypsy from Strážnice and his wife, Kateřina Kyrr. (MZA, f. E 67, k. 5560, sl. 1).

It is quite likely that thanks to their service in the Army, these Roma soldiers acquired certain privileges, and above all the opportunity to settle in a specific municipality or town, and then were able to get the right of domicile there. The Josef Kyr mentioned here is then recorded in Lipov in the year 1870, i.e. two years later, as a “gypsy, soldier and householder in Lipov”, which means he was the owner of a cottage without practically any fields (MZA, f. E 67, k. 5552, sl. 195). Probably he, too, also performed blacksmithing as a craft, as his sons are also recorded as blacksmiths in different lists. For example, his son František Kyr, born in 1880, is listed in the inventory of the “Gypsies” from Strážnice – there are written seventeen people all of them with Romani origin – local to Strážnice in 1910 as a roofer and a blacksmith (MZA, f. A18, kart. 21, fol. 28). During the interwar period, their economic activities included blacksmithing, as was traditional, and also the performance of music, probably as a way to generate additional income, but above all day-to-day labour both in agriculture and on construction sites; the men accessed more permanent work or more financially advantageous professions only in exceptional cases (such as servicing the carriage for a manor, working as a knacker, as the already-mentioned roofer, or well-digger, or stonemason) (see SOkA Hodonín, f. AM St-2, i.č. 303). The gradual abandonment of crafts that were traditional in favour of day labouring seems to have been a process that was a more general phenomenon among Roma in Moravia (Nečas, 2002, p. 343–350), but in the area around Strážnice we find, in Jelínek’s memories, an interesting exception of local blacksmiths and Roma being involved in the supply network of the nearby brown coal mines during the 1930s (NA, f. ÚV SPB, soutěž 2705). It is also Josef Jelínek who, after returning from the concentration camp, stays faithful to his father’s craft, making a living for himself and his family – as a bureaucrat recorded – “through blacksmithing in the gypsy way in the colony” (SOkA Hodonín, f. AM St-2, i.č. 303, fol. 13). Thanks to this, in November 1946 he made it onto a list of persons for whom the town of Strážnice asked the “Office for the Protection of Labour in Hodonín” that “some gypsy inhabiting the gypsy colony here to be placed on the list and ranked as in a labour relationship before the colony is closed”, and for Josef Kyr it is noted that he “allegedly operates blacksmithing as a gypsy in the colony” (SOkA Hodonín, f. AM St-2, i.č. 303, fol. 15). The official record suggests that this blacksmithing was not considered a real profession, or rather not considered “honest work”, and that persons working this way were recommended to be “properly” employed. The blacksmith craft as tradition, therefore, survived among Roma from Strážnice even after the Second World War, only to soon expire. On the other hand, the involvement of Roma in the Army happens continually – both during the interwar period and even after the Second World War we find mentions about the Kyr’s in the archives as having attempted to be inducted into the Army. For example, in 1921 Martin Kyr (born in 1901) applied to be accepted to officer training school, as can be seen from a personal letter sent to the

mayor of Strážnice (who was also his former teacher) Mr Pištěk, written during his ongoing military training in Mukačevo. In that letter, he mentions he was chosen from among those who “know how to train”, that he graduated from the burgher school, and that as such he was recommended for officer school by his commander (SOkA Hodonín, f. AM St-2, i.č. 303, fol. 112). Antonín Kýr, born in 1919, also declared he had attempted to become a professional soldier (the portraits above of Jan Daniel and František Kýr allow us to suspect that compulsory military service was an ordinary part of the lives of Roma men in the Strážnice area) after he returned from the concentration camp in 1949 (VÚA-VHA, f. 255/1946). Several survivors became members of the security units after 1945 (called the police today) involving many similar features as the Army – requiring strict discipline and order, providing their members uniforms, and facilitating a predefined, professional career based on merit. The individual intentions of the Kýrs from Strážnice can also be comprehended as attempts to address their personal situations, as joining the Army could provide them greater opportunities for integrating into society, and at the same time a uniform could facilitate their extricating themselves from social exclusion and ridding themselves of the label of a “gypsy”. These tendencies, in the form of activity in non-military security units, also were displayed by one of the two figures introduced here, František Kýr Jr., but not until after 1945 (ABS, složka 2017/14). In addition to him, Jan Daniel (born in 1921) also served in the National Security Corps (ABS, složka 4342/21), as did Antonín Kýr (born in 1925) (ABS, složka 2025/25).

From the interwar period, we are able to follow and guess attempts to improve the education and social conditions of Roma to benefit society as a whole (by contacting leading political authorities of the state); amateur theatrical activity motivated, among other things, by an attempt to present an example of the positive involvement of Roma in social events and to refute the biases and clichés connected with “G/gypsies”; involvement in the activities of the KSČ, politically, as the political advocate in Czechoslovakia for those who were deprived, economically and socially; and involvement in physical education organisations connected to left-wing political structures and in sports activities in the lives of the protagonists we have selected, through rarely-preserved sources and testimonies.

The KSČ had been, since its creation in 1921, a significant political and social force in interwar Czechoslovakia generally and especially within the framework of the region where the figures whom we are following here used to live. The involvement of Roma in the Communist Party activities already during the interwar period is reiterated in the memories of the Roma from Petrov, Strážnice and the surrounding villages who managed to survive the Second World War. The participations in the demonstrations in Hodonín and distributing communist leaflets are pointed most frequently as the reason for their persecution during the Second World War. The connections of Roma to that communist-minded part of society certainly were of significant importance to their emancipatory vision and the specific activities are revealed to us by the representatives of these Roma communities.

Until now, the attention of researchers has concentrated rather on the post-1945 membership of Roma in the KSČ. The greater interest in the agency of Roma is associated with the existence of the first officially recognised organisation of Roma in the Czech lands is the reason for this, namely, the Union of Gypsies-Roma at the close of the 1960s and beginning of the 1970s (Lhotka, 2009; Pavelčíková, 1999; 2004) as well as in the earlier initiatives attempting to establish an organisation of Roma in postwar Czechoslovakia (Sadílková et al., 2018). However, an approach to research concentrating on the political/social agency of Roma in the interwar period has almost never been pursued, and we, therefore, are able to base this approach solely on the rare mentions presented, e.g., in eyewitness memories or the agenda of the official awarding of certifications to those participating in the fight against Nazism (per Act No. 255/1946, Coll.), which also included victims of wartime persecution, at first prisoners above all and then, after 2001, those who had to hide from persecution (for more on the preserved archival materials, see Závodská & Viková, 2016). Among the Roma requesting certification, there were members of the party who had joined officially in the postwar period (and members of other organisations such as the Revolutionary Trade Union Movement or the Anti-Fascist Fighters' Union) placing an emphasis on their relationship to the Communist Party during the interwar period (we base this on the preliminary findings of the ongoing analysis of the documents stored at the Central Military Archive-Military History Archive (VÚA-VHA) in Prague related to the "255/1946" applications that have not yet been published). Exceptional in this context in terms of detail is the testimony of the famous participant in the resistance during the Second World War, the Roma community member Josef Serinek (1900–1974), commented on in detail and published by Jan Tesař, especially given his critical perspective on the postwar behaviour of his colleagues from the anti-Nazi resistance, communists included (Serinek & Tesař, 2016, I, pp. 216, 332). His recollection of life in the Czechoslovak First Republic includes unique information about his collaboration (and at certain points, also his identification) with German communists working during the 1920s and 1930s on the border of North-Western Bohemia and German Saxony, in which he also speaks of his role as a communist cell organizer (Ibid., pp. 35–39). For the subject of this piece, it is not without interest that Serinek is also mentioning his own activity in negotiating with local authorities in an effort to arrange for Roma living on the road the opportunity to spend the night on municipal territories according to the above-mentioned law "on wandering gypsies". It is likely that his role as an activist and representative in contact with the authorities led him to reflect on the idea of Roma society and its possible activation:

At that time I was known among the people who were living on the road, I had negotiated on their behalf with the authorities, so they knew of me and followed me. In 1933 I wanted to organize a big convention of all the nations living on the road, they were going to come from the Czechoslovak Republic, Yugoslavia and several other states. I wanted them to agree that we would buy an island where those living on the road could settle without hindrance. In our republic there were more than 100 000 such people, I wanted to organize them, I saw

how it would aid them if we had an organisation. They were stupid, though, half of them disagreed with the idea, they did all try to get together, but the gendarmes broke it up and that was the end of it. It was going to be in Teplice and I was supposed to have been the representative for Czechoslovakia. (Ibid., p. 37).

We infer from his use of the word “nation” that Serinek had in mind the Roma whose livelihoods (more frequent in Bohemia than in Moravia) were associated with moving around a territory, and not just socially defined itinerants such as carnival workers (he uses the plural, which leads us to suspect awareness of the heterogeneity or dual identity within the framework of the community and the civil and national societies of the states mentioned); we also infer this from the international nature of the initiative and the declared aim of “settling without hindrance”. The context of a utopian vision of the future, with which Serinek had become familiar between the wars, can at the very least be assumed to apply to this idea of an island state of “nations living on the road”. Serinek’s memories are a unique example of a vision of an independent Roma state within the framework of the early history of the emancipation of the Roma (cf. Sadílková, 2019, pp. 173–186; Marushiakova & Popov, 2021b, p. 597).

Communist Party’s members during the interwar period in Czechoslovakia were also working with the motif of political and social solidarity with inhabitants of Roma origin around. For example, when discussing the law “on wandering gypsies” in the Chamber of Deputies in 1927, the communist MP József Gáti protested against the “reactionary” and discriminatory impact of the law and saw the possible future fate of the working class as analogous to the way in which the state was advancing policy toward “G/gypsies” at the time:

In today’s society, too, though, it would be a relief for us to have more schools instead of more jails, more teachers and fewer gendarmes, more opportunities for work, fewer laws about crimes. [...] The working class in the Czechoslovak police state, for the purpose of its self-defense, must also fight along a united front against the reactionary legislation of the bourgeois majority that aims to enslave the races and the working strata, for if they do not unite their forces, each worker will be subjected to the fate of the nomadic gypsies. (PSPČR, 1925–1929, 101. schůze, 14. 7. 1927).

In our contributions, we have focused on the situation of Roma in South-Eastern Moravia near the towns of Strážnice and Hodonín. The latter, as the economic centre and, for the communist movement, the centre of politics in the adjacent region, including the closest areas of Western Slovakia, entered into the symbolic landscape of the history of the KSČ as a location of demonstrations and strikes organised by the faction of the Czechoslovak Social Democratic Party that was left-radical (especially well-known was the strike there at the end of 1920), and as of 1921 there were other activities of the KSČ held there (Frolec et al., 1978, pp. 211–281). Exactly in that context, influenced during the 1920s and especially the 1930s by the significant economic and the social problems flowing from them, the

affinity for the KSČ was created among the figures whom we are presenting here. In addition to the above-mentioned members or sympathisers of the party, the older brothers of Josef Kýr (later named Jelínek) were also said to have been Communist Party members, František Kýr (1895–1943) and Jiří Kýr (1900–1943), and sometimes Josef Jelínek mentions his own father having been a communist, i.e. Martin Kýr (1869–1943). Josef Jelínek recalls his own active involvement in the DTJ, and also mentions that during his childhood men told stories of their wartime imprisonment and debated politics in his father's workplace:

The lesser peasants used to come to my father's forge and frequently told stories of their experiences from the First World War. My father also joined the storytelling while forging and I loved to listen to it. Among other things, they talked about rich people, about Count Mágis and others. When the other people left the forge, I asked my father why some people are rich and why we are poor, and not just the people I knew, but also those in captivity in the Soviet Union who had been spoken of during the storytelling at our forge. [...] In short, I was very curious about all of it. Father frequently used to tell me that the day would come when all people would be equal, but that right now this is what it's like and nothing can be done about it yet. (Jelínek, 1980, p. 1).

A certain kind of left-wing political thinking was seemingly present throughout the entire community. At the same time, we are aware that any insight into Czechoslovakian interwar life and the participation of Roma in politics inferred through the figures of Jan Daniel, František Kýr Jr. and their relatives is, however, necessarily limited, and its bigger complexity, especially as seen through sources from Slovakia, has been indicated by Marushiakova and Popov (2021b, p. 598).

If we focus on Czechoslovakia's interwar population of Roma from the perspective of the emphasis placed on education by Jan Daniel and František Kýr Jr., we find that it was exactly at that time that the first pupils of Roma origin managed to continue to the next level of education. An analysis of reports sent by schools from all over Moravia on children from the Roma community being educated and the state of their education in the 1934/1935 school year demonstrates that overall the children of Roma origin were below the statewide average in terms of the education they achieved, but the analysis simultaneously informs us, of course, about those children who managed to successfully complete primary school, some who even completed the burghers' school and advanced to apprenticeships and in exceptional cases, even to prepare for university at the grammar schools (Nečas, 2005, p. 213–227). Press at the time had dedicated its attention the story of the above-mentioned native of Svatobořice, Tomáš Holomek (1911–1988), who graduated from the grammar school in Kyjov in 1931, studied law at Charles University from 1932–1936, and had returned to finish his studies after the Second World War (Holomková, 1989, pp. 85–96). He later became a military prosecutor and was also active in the Union of Gypsies-Roma (1969–1973). In Slovakia, the newspapers during the interwar period wrote about Elena whose married surname would later be Lacková (1921–2003), who was a successful student already between the wars and began to dedicate herself to literary

works (Slovenská sloboda, 1940, p. 2; see also Mušinka, 2020, p. 23), and who after the war became one of the first Roma women to graduate from college on Czechoslovak territory, becoming famous as an author, above all for her book with original title *Narodila jsem se pod šťastnou hvězdou* (I Was Born Under a Lucky Star) (Lacková, 1997), published in English with the title *A False Dawn: My Life as a Gypsy Woman in Slovakia* (Lacková, 2000). In addition, other such successful students were the Daniel siblings from Oslavany: Antonín Daniel (1913–1996) graduated from grammar school and later after studying in teacher training college became an educator (see Závodská, 2018, p. 60), while his younger sister Anna Danielová (1921–1999) was the first female Roma graduate from the economic high school (Nečas, 2005, p. 223). Another native of Oslavany, Rudolf Daniel (1919–1969), also became a leading representative of the Roma community thanks to graduating from the Brno Conservatory and then working in the orchestra of the State Theater in Brno (Ibid.). Another grammar school student during the interwar period was the nephew of Tomáš Holomek, Miroslav Holomek (1925–1989), who in 1951 became a degreed engineer in the social sciences and later even a Doctor of Political and Social Sciences who was active during the preparation of the organisation of the Union of Gypsies-Roma and was elected its president.

Opportunities for advocacy and engagement are likely to have been specific to all the municipalities where bigger communities of Roma lived. Jana Poláková, in her report on research into, among other things, a comparison of the stories told by witnesses from the communities in Oslavany and those in Strážnice, arrives at the finding that Roma youth in Strážnice “limited themselves almost entirely to the primary school”, unlike the community in Oslavany, where, after the Second World War, more college graduates who were Roma began to appear (Poláková, 2002, p. 390). However, through our own probe we are discovering that in the community of Roma in Strážnice, individuals also attempted to attain higher educations. The first to attend grammar school was the Josef Kýr born in 1903, and it is possible that he was the first-ever Roma grammar school student on Czechoslovak territory: it is certain that he was enrolled there for the 1920/21 academic year (SOKA Hodonín, f. PG-St, i.č. 7959, fol. 6). However, he never completed his studies there for financial reasons, because his parents František Kýr (born 1880 in Strážnice) and Amálie (née Danielová, born in Petrov in 1883), had another six younger children and so could not afford to support their oldest son Josef during his studies. Anežka Kloudová (born 1925) followed in his footsteps, entering grammar school only to drop out three years later (MRK, A 43/2003). Evidently, Roma students there, too, were attempting to achieve higher education and therefore a better position in society, but due to a lack of finances, as well as inappropriate conditions for their studies, apparently (the cottages occupied by Roma in Strážnice were very small, several people lived in each room, so the students had no space in which to find the necessary quiet for studying) they did not manage to achieve this aim. Those who apprenticed were more successful, but that involved its own pitfalls. In 1935, contributing to the report on the education of “gypsy

children” in Strážnice, Jan Okénko, a representative of the local school, described one such arduous situation:

After completing their responsibilities with respect to school, they fall into their parents’ way of life. It is not that they are lacking in the will to live differently, but that they almost never find a foreman who would take on a gypsy lad as an apprentice. The guys learn blacksmithing from their fathers, therefore, of a primitive sort, they forge nails, hammers, hoes, axe blades, plow blades, etc., from old iron. In the entire colony there is just one trained roofer who does not get enough work because of where he lives, while two men are employed in the local enterprise for stonemasonry. There are eight independent fire pits in the colony. (MZA, f. B22, k. 618, fol. 268).

It is as if this report described the experience of Josef Kýr (later Jelínek), who recalled years later his big disappointment when in 1933, after three years at burghers’ school, he applied with his positive school report for a job with a master auto mechanic in Strážnice and was refused. Despite that, he did not give up and tried to apprentice with an auto mechanic in Zlín (about 50 km away from Strážnice and a developing, modern town), but he did not succeed there either (Jelínek, 1980, pp. 4–5). Maybe these difficulties with succeeding on the way to social integration through education might have led to the Roma in Petrov and Strážnice beginning to dedicate themselves to different activities that had previously not been customary.

The figures we have described are significant for their involvement in the activities of an amateur musical theatre company in the 1930s and 1940s (maybe even as early as the 1920s). In the context of the activities in Czechoslovakia by Roma in the theatre, there are two reasons these are unique: (1) acting, and especially puppetry, was rather the domain of the semi-settled Roma or those who lived fully on the road in the Czech lands (Glacner, 1973, pp. 27–32), not the domain of the settlers living on the Moravian-Slovakian border; (2) these activities begin, it seems, out of conviction and a need from the grassroots, and within the framework of historical knowledge about the Czechoslovak territory in those days, they are a unique analogue of the amateur Roma theatre in the eastern Slovak town of Košice that had its institutional base in the organisation called the *Spoločnosť pre štúdium a riešenie cigánskej otázky* (Society for the Study and Solution of the Gypsy Question) led by psychiatrist Jaroslav Stuchlík. We know almost nothing about the activities of the Košice Roma in the theatre run under the rubric of this organisation (Glacner, 1973, pp. 35–36.), and there is also just fragmentary information available about the activities of the association in Košice called *Lavutarisz* made up of musicians who were Roma and involved with the theatre (Jurová & Zupková, 2007; Marushiakova & Popov, 2021b, p. 583, 588).

We can ask what the inspiration and main motivation was for the members and organisers of the Roma theatre company in Strážnice to do their theatrical work. The most likely seems to be that they wanted to establish that Roma, too, could do something, i.e.

the theatre was meant to fulfil, in a certain sense, an ethno-emancipatory function and was meant to address the majority society. Another motivation could have been, above all in the first phase of the theatre company's existence, the nurturing of youth – teenagers performed in the company who could have been inculcated by the leaders with certain ideals, so we could speak of an educational-socialising function. From the position of the actors, the theatre company was above all a source of amusement, of recognition, and provided them with the experience of success. As Jan Daniel Jr. (born 1921), a former member of the ensemble, recalls that period:

Back then we greatly enjoyed the theatre group because we were just left to our own devices and enjoyed ourselves there. Every Saturday and Sunday we rode our bicycles, or two people per bicycle, to a village or a town that was several kilometres away [to perform]. The theatre group performed until 1941, when the Germans forbade us to do it. (MRK, MRK 430/2001).

His words testify to the enthusiasm and the strengthening of collective self-awareness that the members of the theatre ensemble received from performing together. The improvised methods of transporting themselves to perform for their audiences give an even stronger impression of their enthusiasm for creating their own theatrical productions. As we have documented above, it was through this theatrical work that the awareness in the community of the ethno-emancipation that was so needed was strengthened, but also their awareness of their solidarity with their native country was intensified, their solidarity with its cultural heritage, performed in their own interpretations of it – such as performing their analogue of the well-known Czech play *Maryša*, but then also, for example, singing the national anthem during the performance.

The patriotic sensibilities of the families who were Roma and living in Petrov, Strážnice, and their surroundings are testified to yet again through a memory of the common singing of the national anthem during a situation that was emotionally very tense – when most of the members of both communities were stuffed together into train wagons in March 1943 and the train took off in the direction of the Auschwitz Concentration Camp. They bade farewell to their native country by spontaneously singing the Czechoslovak national anthem:

The train took off with us on board, it all went quiet in the wagons, and then somebody, in the middle of that unfavorable silence, began singing “*Kde domov můj*” we all sang the anthem together. The SS man who was supervising us in the wagon shouted “*růhe-růhe*” [Silence, Silence!] at us so we would stop singing, but he did not silence us and we sang the anthem to the end. The children and the women were weeping because it was plain to see that something very evil awaited us. (Jelínek, 1991, p. 6).

Poland

Alicja Gontarek

Matejasz Kwiek (ca. 1887–1937). A “Baron” and “Leader of the Gypsy Nation” in Interbellum Poland

Introduction

The issues related to the activities of the Kwiek clan Gypsy “kings” is one of the best researched and developed questions concerning the life of the Roma in Poland during the interwar period. The history of the Roma elite of that period, which originated from the *Kelderash* (*Ketderasz*) group, has been described by the most outstanding Polish Romani studies scholar, Jerzy Ficowski. He judged them very harshly because of their cooperation with the police authorities, their constant struggle for domination, their greed, their resort to excessively brutal methods and their desire to please the Polish authorities (Ficowski, 1985, pp. 88–107; see also Bartosz, 2011, pp. 126–131).

Certainly, many of the negative behaviours of the Gypsy leaders that Jerzy Ficowski described can still be sustained. Now, however, 67 years after the publication of his first book, we find in the activities of the Kwieks many positive features, testifying to the multidirectional and multifaceted changes and transformations among the Gypsies living in Poland, leading them towards a broadly understood emancipation (see Gontarek, 2016, pp. 145–158; 2017, pp. 1–21).

As if in a lens, they are focused on in the biography of Matejasz (Mateyash) Kwiek, to whom only a few references have been devoted so far in the invaluable publications of Ficowski. Although Matejasz never proclaimed himself a king, he ranked among the strict and leading Gypsy elite of the interwar period alongside Michał the First (Michael I), Grzegorz the First (Gregory I), Dymitr Kwiek (Demetrius), Michał the Second Kwiek (Michael II), Wasyl Kwiek (Bazyli/Basil) and Janusz Kwiek (Janus). He took power over his kin in 1934, defeating at the same time the influential King Michał II Kwiek and King Bazyli Kwiek (Ficowski, 1989, pp. 30–37). He came to Poland from Spain and acted first as a baron, and then as a “leader of the Gypsy nation”. However, some sources mention that he came from Brazil, but this information is not true (Echo, 1935b, p. 4). Despite the many gaps in his biography, thanks to an in-depth enquiry and a different look at the previously known sources, it was possible to significantly broaden the knowledge of this undoubtedly outstanding Gypsy leader, who in the 1930s, when the Polish elite and society gradually began to spread more and more clearly dangerous nationalism, he tried to develop and reform Gypsy life in the political and social framework known and available to him.

The aforementioned sources consist exclusively of the press, which, when it comes to the history of the Roma, especially those living in Warsaw, is the basic and the only source material, which unfortunately cannot be confronted with archival documents. These limitations are primarily due to the enormous material damage suffered by Warsaw during the Warsaw Uprising in 1944, including archival resources dating back to the interwar period. Therefore, it is impossible to reconstruct on their basis the life of the Gypsies in the capital city, which the Kwiek family also chose as their main residence. We note a better state of preservation for archival material from the 19th century and earlier. These were located in a building which was not burnt down by the German occupants during the Warsaw Uprising.

Of course, for understandable reasons, the press resources should be treated with caution and a large measure of constructive criticism – it is known that the information from newspapers is not always reliable, often the journalists may be looking for sensationalism, there are sometimes (but not always) cases even of mystification. While being aware of this, we have taken care to ensure that the analysis of available sources is free of the interpretations of the Gypsy life in line with the spirit of the period. The focus has been solely on the informational content of these newspapers. Although the presented deficiencies of the information sources certainly do not put the historian in a comfortable position, it seems that an attempt at analysing the available material is the right solution, and certainly better than sinking into passivity, apathy and research passivity caused by historically imperfect source materials. For a very long time this has been the case, with the result that the history of the Gypsy elite has languished in the darkness of history and in obscurity. As a matter of fact, the present research into the biographies of the Kwieks is to some extent a continuation of those undertaken by Jerzy Ficowski, who relied on the interwar newspapers, being aware that they were the basic reservoir of information about the Kwiek phenomenon. However, the queries conducted by Jerzy Ficowski were not systematic, but rather point-by-point ones.

As far as the type of press used in this study is concerned, it should be emphasised that it belongs mainly to the genre of sensational magazines, and secondarily to the informational ones, published in Warsaw – including mainly the *Express Poranny* (Morning Express) newspaper. Bulletin magazines abound in much more biographical threads than political dailies, which results from the low social status of Gypsies in the eyes of Polish society. Probably in the conviction of the editorial elite they were more qualified for the popular press, as interesting and exotic “heroes”, than for serious news-political dailies. It soon turned out, however, that they had become a permanent part of the Warsaw life, mainly as a manifestation of the urban folklore of Warsaw in both the positive and negative sense of the word. However, regardless of the style they were being described in the interwar newspapers benevolent, unkind, sensational or any other, today, these press titles are the only unique, albeit not free from bias, sources that provide an insight into the life of the Warsaw Kwieks, known as Gypsy Kings. For this reason, we have to resign ourselves to the fact that no other sources exist.

Profile

Matejasz (Mateyash) Kwiek was born around 1887. Unfortunately, we do not know where. The scant accounts of his son Kazimierz show that, before he went to Spain, he was at the age of 18 in the Russian Empire. He spoke Russian well enough that, in the interbellum period, he communicated in it with Poles because he could not speak Polish. According to his son, in 1905 his father was unfortunately sent to settle in Siberia for four years and, in 1914, when the First World War broke out, he fought in the Gypsy legion, which was formed in Galicia in the Austrian-Hungarian partition (Express Poranny, 1937d, p. 7). However, historical research to date has not provided an answer to the question of whether such a legion composed of Roma even existed. Galicia, or the Kingdom of Galicia and Lodomeria, was one of the provinces of the Austro-Hungarian Empire since 1772. Poland did not exist on the map of Europe from the end of the 18th to 1918, and its territories were occupied by three partitioning states: the Russian Empire, the Kingdom of Prussia, which was then incorporated into the German Empire, and Austria (later Austria-Hungary) (see Cegielski & Kądziela, 1990; Konopczyński, 2010).

From the point of view of Matejasz's identity, his descent from the *Kalderash* group was of key importance for him, but above all, he emphasised his elite roots. This group, called *Kotlarz* (cauldron-maker) in the Polish version, arrived in Poland in the second half of the 19th century on the wave of the great Romani migration from the historical territories of Moldavia and Wallachia (Witkowski, 2020, pp. 111–112). In one of his belt interviews, Matejasz explained the meaning of the title he held. In it, he admitted that although he did not receive it officially from any authorities, it was only binding among Gypsies as an emphasis on his aristocratic origin from the Kwiek family (Ilustrowany Kuryer Codzienny, 1932c, p. 2). It is significant, however, that he, as well as the other Kwieks, never publicly raised the question of their ethnic belonging to a specific Romani group. This was probably because the surname Kwiek was automatically identified by the Gypsies with the elite of *Kelderash*, so they did not explain very obvious matters. In fact, the whole story of Gypsy Kings is story of one Gypsy group, namely the group of *Kelderash* (including their international contacts). There are actually no data which could indicate that in the story are included also Gypsies from other groups. Thus, the story of the Polish Gypsy Kings is a narrative of one Gypsy group and represents activities for emancipation of one group which self-declared itself to be representative of all Gypsies. For these reasons most probably they consciously did not speak that they are *Kelderash* because they prefer to speak in name of all Gypsies.

Many Kwieks, also the "strict royal elite", shared a common profession, which was their source of income, i.e. cauldron-making. It probably contributed to their domination over other Romani groups residing in Poland. We are talking about the manufacture of cauldron, pans and other vessels and objects (e.g. pipe coils, distiller instruments) as well as the maintenance of copper objects, called tinning or whitewashing. The profession of a cauldron maker turned out to be very necessary in an agricultural country like Poland because it required knowledge of metal processing, especially copper. Polish peasants

did not have it, often seeing magic and wizardry in the process of preparing Gypsy products, so they treated the nomadic *Kelderash* as valuable professionals and rewarded them well for their work. Also in cities, especially in dynamically emerging large industrial centres, the demand for their products in the second half of the 19th century was enormous. Therefore, these groups grew rich quickly, gaining considerable wealth. In Poland, until the outbreak of the Second World War, *Kelderash* were monopolists in their field, just like in other European countries. So, it is probably a large property, accumulated for generations, backed by social prestige, which led Kwieks to the very top of power in the interbellum period (Gierliński, 2012, pp. 3–4; Mokłowski, 1913, p. 64; Skuza, 2006, pp. 112–114).

Matejasz came from such a professional environment. Cauldron-making was his primary source of income – after arriving in Poland, he led a sedentary lifestyle, opening a cauldron plant. Initially, he lived and worked in the Wola district at ul. Prądyńskiego 41 (*Gazeta Wileńska*, 1937, p. 2; *Express Poranny*, 1937c, p. 4), and then in the Warsaw district of Włochy at ul. Sieradzka 3. First of all, he performed cauldron works for the army, and he specialized in whitewashing dishes with English tin and seaming metals with the latest techniques available at that time. Such commissioned works were performed, among others, in the barracks of the 59th infantry regiment in Inowrocław or in the artillery regiment stationed in the Sołacz district of Poznań (*Goniec Warszawski*, 1937b, p. 10; *Express Poranny*, 1931b, p. 184; *Ilustrowany Kurjer Codzienny*, 1932c, pp. 2–3). When he became the leader of Gypsies, he lived again in Wola at ul. Dworska 18, which was also located in that district (*Express Poranny*, 1937c, p. 4).

At Dworska Street, Matejasz and his closest family lived in three one-store brick buildings. In one of them, serving as a meeting room, there was a large room, lined with a red carpet, in the middle of which stood an iron stove to heat the room. There was also a phonograph and a silver samovar in the room. On the walls were decorated portraits and diplomas of Matejasz (confirming his title of baron and a letter from the Polish Flood Committee, for which he contributed PLN 50) as well as Polish flags. In this room, stylised as the inside of a tent, numerous meetings of Gypsies took place (*Express Poranny*, 1937b, p. 1).

Matejasz's identity also consisted of his strong identification with Spanish culture because, as aforementioned, he came to Poland from Spain (*Chwila*, 1935, p. 2; *Echo*, 1935b, p. 4; *Express Poranny*, 1937c, p. 1). He emphasised and manifested his Spanish origin very clearly, constantly keeping a photograph of General Francisco Franco and Queipo de Liano in his jacket. Apparently, he had the opportunity to meet the general personally when he, while still an officer, visited one of the restaurants in Madrid, where Matejasz played. Franco, in Matejasz's opinion, adored Gypsy music, often spoke with the members of the band and did not spare them generous donations (*Dzień Dobry*, 1937, p. 1).

We also know that he belonged to the Greek Catholic Church, like most Kwieks in Poland who were of the Greek Catholic or Orthodox faith. However, the author did not manage to find any other information or sources allowing elaboration of the question of the religious customs among the Kwieks (*Dobry Wieczór*, 1937f, p. 8; 1937d, p. 1).

Matejasz did not come to Poland alone but, rather, with his family, although it was not large: with his wife Julia who, as repeatedly emphasised in press reports, showed noticeable symptoms of mental illness or emotional disturbance due to tuberculosis, their three children (Kazimierz, Georginja and Irenka) and Matejasz's brothers (Włodzimierz, called Wadźko or Waszo and Eugeniusz) as well as his sister Nadia. His two cousins, Ryszard and Wadźko, also came to the country, although it should be noted that sometimes the press, when reporting on Matejasz's family life, mistook the names of the two above-mentioned people and mistakenly attributed to them degrees of kinship with Matejasz. And so, for example, Ryszard was once his son, once his cousin, and Włodzimierz was his cousin or son (*Express Poranny*, 1937c, p. 4; *Express Wieczorny Ilustrowany*, 1937, p. 4; *Światowid*, 1937, p. 13). It is noteworthy that the eldest son of Matejasz, the aforementioned Kazimierz, attended the Polish elementary school at ul. Karolkowa 56 (Czyste district). The second most important person after Matejasz in the family was his father-in-law – Mikołaj, who permanently resided in Pinsk (*Dobry Wieczór*, 1937e, p. 1).

Activity

Matejasz came to Poland as the alleged cousin of King Bazyli Kwiek in 1928 or 1929 at his invitation with the important mission of an “umpire” in the matter of the Gypsy leadership in Poland because the king was struggling with opposition, both internal and external, which weakened his power and so he needed help to consolidate his influence (*Express Poranny*, 1929, p. 6). In another, less popular version, he came to Poland not at the invitation of Basil, but at the telegraph call of a certain group of Gypsy aldermen who were concerned about the escalation of the conflict between Basil and Michał II. A particularly fierce rivalry between the supporters of the two kings took place throughout Małopolska and around Poznań, Toruń and the Mokotów district of Warsaw. However, debates on matters of importance to Gypsies after Matejasz's arrival took place only from 1930 in the restaurant “Po schodkach” (corner of Książęca Street and Trzech Krzyży Square). It was there that the final settlement of the two feuding kings, who agreed that Matejasz would play the role of a mediator (*Express Poranny*, 1930a, p. 6).

At this point, it is worth devoting a few words to the two kings mentioned, i.e. Basil and Michał. The former, as “a royal” Gypsy leader, became independent from Michał in the late 1920s; although in practice he had already acted as an independent leader in the earlier period. He rarely gave interviews, and if he did, he did not share information about his life. His wife was Sedra-Lubika called Sophia, who, according to newspaper reports, “studied” dance in Budapest and danced professionally in the ballet. It seems that Basil's influence was mainly in the eastern part of Poland, i.e. the Eastern Borderlands (*Kresy Wschodnie*) (now the territory of Belarus and Ukraine), especially Pinsk and its surroundings. In the west of the Polish lands, Michael had a stronger position. Basil attracted the attention of his majority surroundings with his traditional, sumptuous *Kelderash* costume and nomadic way of life – he lived exclusively in shatras (tents) in the suburban

encampments he established and never became, like Michał or Matejasz, a townsman (Wola Ludu, 1928, p. 297; Dobry Wieczór, 1937b, p. 8).

Michał's royal traditions, on the other hand, were longer – he was the son of Gregory the King, who, in Piastów near Warsaw, renounced the title of king in 1925, passing power to his son. This was the only case in the Second Republic of Poland of the succession of the Gypsy throne, thanks to which power remained in the closest family of the descending Kwiek. From the early 1930s, Michał's activities rapidly spread beyond the borders of Poland, also due to the competition from Basil, who in a way managed to push him out of the country. That is why in Polish sources he is rather known as a leader who tried to organise Gypsy life in neighbouring countries (Ilustrowany Kuryer Codzienny, 1925, p. 7; Ilustrowany Kuryer Codzienny, 1930a, p. 10; Ilustrowany Kuryer Codzienny, 1930b, p. 7; Ilustrowany Kuryer Codzienny, 1930c, p. 13; Ilustrowany Kuryer Codzienny, 1932d, p. 7).

Returning to Matejasz, before the aforementioned convention took place, upon his arrival in Poland he formally acted not only as a Spanish baron, but also as Basil's "adjutant". Its scope of power at that time can be compared to the instance of the executive will of the king. The function of adjutant at Basil's court required Matejasz to be very involved in disciplining Gypsies. Thus, before he began to decide on leadership, he had a difficult role to play, mainly in his direct interventions in the lives of individual caravans. Among other things, as part of function of adjutant, in 1929 he took part in a great undertaking, which was the registration of "Polish Gypsies". We are only talking about the subjects of Basil here, who did have Polish citizenship. This was because the aim of the action was to catch those Gypsies who did not have one, having entered the Polish lands illegally. They mainly came from: Romania, Greece and Hungary. At that time, activities aimed at controlling the number of Gypsies in Poland were also being carried out by the Polish authorities, so the activity of Matejasz and Basil perfectly matched them. The legal basis for this project was the Act of 1927 on the prohibition of vagrancy (Dziennik Ustaw, 1927, pp. 1285–1288; Express Poranny, 1929, p. 6).

When the counting action was over (we do not know its results), Matejasz, already in the role of an umpire, on the order of Basil, proceeded to organise a Gypsy congress, at which decisions were to be made as to who in the following years was to exercise power over Gypsies in the Polish state. At that time, he held the position of the "head of propaganda" with the title of "Polish Gypsies Baron", alternately – "The Baron of Gypsies of all Poland", which testified to his growing position (Express Poranny, 1930c, p. 60). Basil was struggling with double difficulties – on the one hand, his leadership was questioned by the aldermen over whom he had sovereignty, especially Andrzej Kwiek, who was expelled from Basil's court for an attempted rebellion, and, on the other hand, he was threatened by the aforementioned Michał Kwiek (Dziennik Kujawski, 1934, p. 6). The joint arrangements of Basil and Michał with Matejasz led to seeking the opinion of the aldermen by organising a great Gypsy convention in Łódź in huts hastily erected for this occasion at ul. Dworska 4. It was hoped that it could lead to new decisions (Express Poranny, 1937c, p. 4).

According to media reports, there were 600 aldermen at the convention in 1930, including from France, Lanko Bumbulesti, who watched over it, and there were no violent actions. The Hungarian alderman Bela Czerkeny was also present. Just before the session, Matejasz stayed at the Hotel Europejski, without entering any closer relations with any of the parties, thus maintaining his impartiality. Probably the total number of all mentioned participants is rather exaggerated (*Express Poranny*, 1930b, p. 6; *Express Poranny*, 1930c, p. 6).

Matejasz was also in charge of the safety of the event – during the session, among others, he took the knives and revolvers from village leaders. As a result of the election, Basil received an overwhelming number of votes, and Michał only 80. The organiser of the congress made a final decision, called “the judgment”. In the original wording, he gave to the press it read:

Basil Kwiek was proclaimed the rightful king of the Polish Gypsies, and Michał Kwiek would pay 25 ducats [the monetary unit in Poland was the zloty – author note] in penalties for usurping the royal title. Until the relations among Polish Gypsies are normalised, Michał II will have the right to call himself the king of Pomeranian Gypsies and he is obliged to keep all his camps camped in this district under a strict regime. After three months, Michał Kwiek will become an ordinary commune head with the right to rule in his own fleet. (*Express Poranny*, 1930d, p. 1).

In this way, Michael's authority was restricted to one geographical region, i.e. Pomerania.

Probably at that time, Matejasz was already a member of the Great Council of Gypsies at the court of Basil, which, a few days after Basil's election as king, issued a significant statement, the author of which, judging by subsequent actions, was probably Matejasz, appearing in the new role of “head of propaganda”. The communication concerned the postulate to break with vagrancy among the Gypsy population to, as argued, “gain a better opinion” among Poles and the issue of educating the future generations of young Gypsies in primary schools and universities (*Express Poranny*, 1930e, p. 6; *Gazeta Polska*, 1931, p. 144).

Matejasz tried to translate the slogan about a sedentary lifestyle into action. He was the main person from Gypsy environment who, in cooperation with the Polish authorities, tried to persuade Gypsies to a sedentary lifestyle. Between 1930 and 1932, he probably received land free of charge from the state for the Gypsy settlement action in the village of Bielcza near Krakow as well as in the villages near Stanisławów (now Ivano-Frankivsk, Ukraine) and near Łódź, but this initiative did not bring any results (*Echo*, 1932, p. 3). Unfortunately, information on this subject is very scarce and we do not know the details of these actions.

A year later, Matejasz played a similar role as a mediator and organiser, still associated with the court of Basil. This time, in 1931, the initiative to convene the congress in Gdańsk came from the defeated Michał Kwiek, who asked for fresh charges against Basil to be

considered, but no important changes took place, so the fierce competition between the two competitors continued (Ficowski, 1985, p. 93; Gontarek, 2017, p. 11)

Observing the clashes of both Gypsy leaders – Basil and Michał (Ilustrowany Kuryer Codzienny, 1931, p. 8) – Matejasz gradually matured to make the decision to become independent from the former. The attempt to do so was the arbitrary change of his aide to a new one from Rio de Janeiro. It took place in April 1931. The former Paweł Kwiek, or rather Alexander (aka Tshander) Minesco, called the “viceroy”, was due to alleged financial malpractice and various other offenses degraded and punished by Matejasz by taking away his firearms and the signs of his dignity. The punishment was carried out with the help of a police commissioner from the 21st police station, which was in the Włochy district (Warsaw), which turned out to be a painful experience for the punished (Express Poranny, 1931b, p. 184). The baron also sentenced Paweł to exile from Poland, ordering him to go to the island of Corfu (Greece), where he came from (Express Poranny, 1931d, p. 8). As reported in the press, the real reason for Paweł’s elimination, however, was Matejasz’s desire to seize power, which was prevented by his adjutant because he did not want to betray Basil, so he was eliminated (Express Poranny, 1931c, p. 6). On the other hand, we have information that Paweł actually abused his power to the detriment of Gypsy groups living in Łódź (Bałuty and Chojnice districts), which was also disclosed by the press a year later without any connection with Matejasz. Paweł remained in the country and continued to be Basil’s adjutant. His removal from the country was not possible as long as Basil had a strong influence in Poland; Minesco, moreover, represented one of the most prominent *Kelderash* families, so it was all the more difficult to get rid of him from the country (Ilustrowany Kuryer Codzienny, 1932a, p. 9; 1932b, p. 13).

In response to the arbitrariness of Matejasz, in the summer of 1931, Basil summoned the Gypsy elders, who decided to deprive him of power and take away titles that were defined as a sign of usurpation and considered fictitious. However, these disagreements soon ended, and a settlement was reached between the representatives of the Gypsy elite (Express Poranny, 1931c, p. 6). After an agreement, Matejasz appointed as his adjutant Stanisław Kwiek, who was about 50 and also came from Spain, but had been in Poland for several years, i.e. he had come to the country earlier than Matejasz. He ran a cauldron plant in Wawer, living in a single-family house. This person was the most trusted associate of Matejasz and the most important person immediately after him – he had the title of “adjutant” and “ambassador”, which meant that he could speak on behalf of the baron. To confirm his functions, Matejasz issued a certificate for him. In 1937, the press reported that Stanisław had committed suicide by drinking a quarter of a litre of hydrochloric acid used to bleach copper. It was a very mysterious death that could not be explained (Dobry Wieczór, 1937j, p. 2; Nowiny Codzienne, 1937, p. 4).

Matejasz, remaining loyal to Basil, since the conflict with that king, had clearly changed his style of action, more and more often meeting the Polish elite, talking about the backstage of Gypsy life. In 1932, on behalf of Basil, he led a verification campaign among the Kwieks aimed at separating those Gypsies who represented the “aristocracy” from the

others who, although they had such surnames, did not belong to an elite group. This action is a manifestation of the search for a way to improve the opinion of Gypsies themselves among the majority community by Gypsy leaders because Poles accused them of numerous thefts and fraud, which also cast a shadow on the elite itself. As he said:

There are too many families in Poland bearing our family name. There is no doubt that many of these families are wrongly in our lineage. Our family is an old Gypsy family [...] The Gypsy king comes from Kwiek. It is Basil Kwiek. [...] The family must take care of itself. (Ilustrowany Kuryer Codzienny, 1932c, p. 2)

In the early 1930s, however, Matejasz Kwiek did not fall into too distant self-criticism of the Gypsy community, explaining the complexity of the Gypsy world and the cause-and-effect relationships that led to social pathologies plaguing Gypsies. He was the first to substantially share with journalists his knowledge of social divisions among Gypsy groups. He informed that among Gypsies there was a monarchical “system” based on families, and then he expressed the belief that such leadership was the best for them (Express Poranny, 1931a, p. 8). According to his assessment, the Gypsy community was divided into two groups – the nobility and the people of the commune – *netoci*. With this term were designated the poorest and most despised Gypsies in Wallachia. On the other hand, in material terms, there was a stratification that divided it into five “classes”, i.e. five different types of Gypsy camps. The fourth and fifth classes in Poland represented the social lowlands. In addition, the above-mentioned divisions were overlapped with the issue of their nationality. According to Matejasz, Gypsies living in a given country or being permanently associated with it should be its loyal citizens, which also meant the obligation to serve in the army. This interview is very important because Matejasz affirmed in it the Gypsy life. He also defended the widespread fortune-telling among Gypsies, recognising that many of them were professionally prepared for this profession, among others by studying in Jerusalem. In response to the editor’s question about the equality of women, he stated that such a reform could not take place in the Gypsy community due to the well-established tradition of strong male power among Gypsies (Ilustrowany Kuryer Codzienny, 1932c, p. 2).

The most important initiative of Matejasz, which aimed at reforming the Gypsy life, was the establishment, in July or August 1933, of the *Association of Gypsies in Poland*. It was registered with the Warsaw County office (Powiat Starosty). The seat of the new organisation was in Pruszków (Warsaw County Office). Its president was Matejasz, and the management board and the audit committee were made up of a group of eight, including: Julia Kwiek (Matejasz’s wife), Waszo (Włodzimierz) Kwiek (brother), Sylwester Surgot and Ryszard Woźniak. The most important statutory tasks were mentioned in point 5 of the Association proclaiming the need to “moralise all Gypsies in Poland, both in private life and in relation to the state”. The president was obliged to tour all the rolling stock to “make the idea of the state, state life as well as the moral education of Gypsies aware”. Any

Gypsy and Gypsy woman with Polish citizenship could become a member. It was at the same time a programme aimed at the citizenship of Gypsies. All Polish citizens could also be actual members. The participation in the Association of Gypsies of "foreign nationality", i.e. those who did not have Polish citizenship, was treated differently. They could only have the status of supporting members with an advisory vote (*Gazeta Nadnotecka*, 1933, p. 4). The constantly recurring motif of separating Polish Gypsies, i.e. those having Polish citizenship from foreign Gypsies, was constantly recurring in the activities of the Kwieks, and served to reduce crime in Polish lands, whose habitat, according to the Kwiek, was among Gypsies who illegally crossed Polish borders (*Ilustrowany Kurjer Codzienny*, 1933d, p. 18).

Everyone who wanted to belong to the Association was obliged to submit a declaration and a photograph. As for the age criterion, membership was also possible in the case of minors after the age of eighteen, but without the right to hold any functions. The authorities of the newly established organisation were a congress of Gypsy mayors, instead of the general assembly of members. As Matejasz explained, this form corresponded better to the Gypsy tradition. The competences of the congress included: accepting the reports of the commune heads on the year-round activity of each rolling stock, discussing professional matters, and regulating the life of individual rolling stock, including "rolling stock approval", etc. The board was to be elected by the reeve for a period of four years. Like every association, it had an audit committee and a "court of honour". The press described this initiative as a "small Gypsy Constitution", praising it as moving towards modernising the social life of Gypsies in Poland, although it was also written that, out of 8 founding members, as many as 6 could not write. This initiative also aroused the interest of Polish social activists (*Gazeta Nadnotecka*, 1933, p. 4; *Kurjer Poranny*, 1933, p. 9).

In 1937, the Association was transformed into the *Union of Polish Gypsies, subordinate to the President of the Republic under the leadership of Matejasz Kwiek* (*Dobry Wieczór*, 1937g, p. 8). The new name referred to the Polish political organisation Camp of National Unification, established in February, which clearly and firmly supported all the actions of the government. Therefore, Matejasz was adapting to new political trends. Another manifestation of the professionalisation of his activities was the appointment by him of the official legal representative of the Union of Polish Gypsies in the person of the Warsaw attorney, Dr Roman Ciechanowski, whom Matejasz had great confidence in, among others because he was fluent in Portuguese and Spanish, which some Kwieks used to communicate on a daily basis (*Dobry Wieczór*, 1937f, p. 1).

On the occasion of the establishment of the Association, Matejasz returned to the issue of the extremely poor material conditions in which the Gypsy camps lived, which were deepened by the world crisis of 1929. It is difficult to define how he wanted to dissuade Gypsies from criminal acts, but it is worth emphasising that he thought about reforming activities by reviving the Association's activities in the social field (*Dzień Dobry*, 1934, p. 3). He also used personal authority for this purpose, visiting editorial offices,

and posting messages and appeals in cases of dishonest Gypsies. He even persuaded the injured to write letters to the address of his office, he searched for the perpetrators himself, sometimes he even posted photos of dishonest Gypsies, with their first names and surnames, demanding compensation for the victims for the dishonest Gypsies' misdeeds. He condemned dishonest Gypsy women to silence (*Express Mazowiecki*, 1934, p. 7; *Express Poranny*, 1934, p. 6; *Express Poranny*, 1936, p. 6).

The results of this activity were negligible. Matejasz had a sense of numerous limitations, so he decided to implement his further plans in complete independence from Basil, taking the role of the leader. It happened in the fall of 1934. On 14 November 1934, an international Gypsy convention took place in Warsaw, at which he was elected the leader of this minority in Poland. Unfortunately, we do not know what happened behind the scenes – only the results were known: Matejasz did not claim to be a king, but he was proclaimed “the commander of the Gypsy people”, which was a novelty for Gypsies. Not only did he resign from the royal title, but in a statement issued at the end of the congress, he stated:

In the name of the law, I cancel the current title of the king among the Gypsy people. I reserve the right that, if any Gypsies still use this title, it should be considered a lie, and he himself as an imitator. (*Express Poranny*, 1937c, p. 4).

It is noteworthy that, when changing the title, perhaps Matejasz was behind King Basil's resignation from the royal title in 1931. Basil then called himself “the first president of the Gypsy republic at that time”. The official reason for this decision was the willingness to modernise the titles they were using to reflect the spirit of the changing times (*Dzień Dobry*, 1931, p. 8).

Matejasz, wishing to modernise the life of Gypsies, took the leadership pattern from Polish political life. In the Second Polish Republic, in 1935, the power in the country was formally taken over by Marshal Edward Rydz-Śmigły, called the Commander-in-Chief, whose rule quickly acquired the character of nationalist authoritarianism. This type of power, due to its political system and model, was supported by the Polish Gypsy elite because, to some extent, it reflected the ideas of traditional Gypsy power, which were based on the rule of a strong hand. Therefore, they could be adapted and transferred to the Gypsy soil, especially since the rule of Rydz-Śmigły did not show aversion to Gypsies and did not persecute them as an ethnic minority. A significant expression of Matejasz's desire to belong in a modern way, in his understanding, to the interbellum political elite was that, at the exhibition of a prestigious stationery store in the centre of Warsaw, its owner, at the request of Matejasz, placed his business card next to the visiting tickets of Polish diplomats and politicians, with the title “leader of the Gypsy people” (*Kurjer Warszawski*, 1935, p. 6).

In general, Matejasz argued that the Gypsy minority did not have a state and, therefore, it should not organise itself within the monarchy. As he said, “we are subject to

the government of the President of the Republic of Poland". In addition, he pointed out that it was necessary to end dynastic disputes due to their negative public's perception. Matejasz promoted himself as a "leader" or president of the Main Board of the Gypsy Association (*Express Poranny*, 1937a, p. 6). As one of the perceptive editors noted, he symbolically preserved the image of the seven-armed crown on his business card (*Echo*, 1935a, p. 4).

He also developed other symbolism. The most important symbol of Matejasz's power was the "former Egyptian flag", which testified that he was convinced of the Egyptian origin of Gypsies (*Express Poranny*, 1937d, p. 7). Unfortunately, nothing is known about its colours, or the symbols depicted on it. On the other hand, on his coat of arms, there was an image of a pharaoh holding an insignia in his hand, and sometimes there was only a *heka* tiara (sceptre) with a *nekhakha* whip. They are exactly the same as in the representations of the images of the Egyptian pharaoh (*Express Poranny*, 1937c, p. 4).

Moreover, when Matejasz was elected leader, he announced:

I am planning many reforms. First of all, I would like to raise the standard of the moral life of Gypsies and make my brothers enjoy more respect and trust everywhere. I declare my ruthless fight against cheaters, charlatans and thieves". These plans referred to his activities in the Association he founded. (*Ilustrowany Kuryer Codzienny*, 1935c, p. 7).

The new title was completely revolutionary and, at the same time, did not cause ironic comments from the Polish side, as in the case of the aforementioned title of Basil, who proclaimed himself the president of the non-existent Gypsy republic. This change was also significant because Matejasz defined who he thought Gypsies were. His title said directly that they were, in his opinion, a nation. In the Second Polish Republic, neither the authorities nor the Polish elite dealt with defining the Gypsy community as a separate community, so it is all the more valuable that the representative of the Kwiek family proposed a national identity that was innovative at that time. To some extent, it alludes to the modern definition of the Roma as "a non-territorial nation" (Rövid, 2011, p. 13).

The various activities and the growing position of Matejasz turned out to be so great that they pushed the remaining leaders to the margins and so they had to fight to maintain their positions. Michał Kwiek had to deal with the competition with another competitor, namely with Mikita Kościniak from Sosnowiec and with Gustaw and Waso Kwiek. In the meantime, Michał Kwiek managed to recrown himself in Hajduki Wielkie (Silesia) as king with the title "Kwiek Rex", which did not bring him sympathy on the part of the Polish authorities or the Polish society. Moreover, some of Gypsies might not have understood the reasons why he was crowned again, seeing this act as a weakness rather than his strength (*Ilustrowany Kuryer Codzienny*, 1934b, p. 13; 1934c, p. 8; 1934e, p. 7; *Dobry Wieczór*, 1935, p. 2).

In April 1935, Basil's position was also weakened because his supporters switched to Matejasz's side. Their loss was so severe that Basil was forced to leave his Warsaw

headquarters at ul. Minska. As he lost his source of income, he soon received an enforcement order ordering him to vacate the occupied apartments. The bailiff also seized the movable property that was sold at auction (*Ilustrowany Kuryer Codzienny*, 1933a, p. 12; 1933b, p. 11; 1933c, p. 8; 1933e, p. 12; 1933f, p. 7; 1935e, p.10; 1935f, p. 11; 1936, p. 14).

Since Matejasz publicly questioned the legitimacy of using royal titles, the manner of public competition between Gypsy leaders had also changed. At that time, various kinds of reformist postulates relating to Gypsy life in Poland gained great importance. In the second half of the 1930s, Matejasz and his main, although weakened, competitor, Michał II Kwiek, turned out to be, despite their differences, representatives of this part of the Gypsy elite, which sought to achieve far-reaching reforms. There was a kind of creative competition between them for new demands and reforms of the Gypsy life. There were also differences. Matejasz declared his loyalty to the Polish state to a greater extent and addressed his visions primarily directly to Gypsies living in Poland. He wanted to raise their social status, he planned to abolish the tax on mounts, “democratise” Gypsies, and induce, at least partially, a sedentary lifestyle, but at the same time, he pointed to the need to maintain the Gypsy status quo in some spheres of life, although we do not know what exactly he had meant (Gontarek, 2017, pp. 13–16).

In the late 1930s, the new slogans, perhaps influenced by competitors, were joined by the issue of obtaining land in South Africa from the League of Nations for the purposes of Gypsy settlement. Characteristically, the press – following Matejasz – used the term “the Gypsy people” (*Express Wieczorny Ilustrowany*, 1935, p. 3).

The theme related to the rivalry between the leaders using slogans concerning the efforts to obtain a national seat for the Gypsies is important insofar as Michał was a particularly ardent advocate of it. In 1934, he brought it into the discussion of Gypsy life – as Polish newspapers reported, he sought permission from the British authorities to establish a Gypsy state on “one of the African islands”. He also considered setting up a Gypsy state in Asia on the banks of the Ganges, a land to which, he argued, “we have a historic right”. Of course, there was little chance of these demands being realised, but the very fact of raising such issues says a lot about the aspirations of the Gypsy elite in Poland (*Ilustrowany Kuryer Codzienny*, 1934d, p. 4; 1934f, p. 6; 1934a, p. 10; see also Adamczyk, 2014, pp. 25–26).

The subsoil for new state-forming slogans was the colonial propaganda, strongly present in the Second Republic of Poland. From 1930, when the Maritime and Colonial League (*Liga Morska i Kolonialna*) was founded, aspirations for Polish colonies were strongly aroused in society and convictions about Poland’s superpowers were strengthened. In reality, however, the narrative of colonies was a kind of pipe dream of Polish political leaders, attempts to build them on a small scale that ended in failure (Białas, 1983; Kowalski, 2010).

The strong imagination of the Gypsy leaders could also be aroused by the suffocating anti-Semitic campaign of the 1930s against the Jews, aimed at their being sent to

Madagascar, although this was more a project than a real action, nevertheless it reverberated in Polish society and throughout Europe. A climate conducive to discussions on the acquisition of land with a view to the organisation of a new state was also created in Poland by the Zionists, who strove to rebuild a Jewish state in Palestine. In the 1930s, the Polish government particularly supported the illegal emigration of Jews, the so-called *Aliyah Bet* (Patek, 2009; Trębacz, 2018). Therefore, it is not surprising that the *Kwieki* were also preoccupied with the idea of establishing their own state. Such plans could, after all, change the fate of the Gypsies forever, contributing to their complete emancipation and modernization, which was precisely what the Gypsy elite in Poland wanted. Unfortunately, no information has survived about, for example, how, according to them, the new Gypsy state would be governed and other such strictly political data.

So, as depicted, Michał was primarily preoccupied with big ideas. Moreover, he aimed at the creation of the Gypsy state, the elimination of nomadism, the internationalisation of the Gypsy issue as well as the Europeanisation of Gypsies. Its activity, however, took place mainly outside Poland. It is characteristic, however, that the king was very attached to the royal title and did not intend to give it up, which was confirmed by the coronation in Hajduki Wielkie. Almost all the intentions and ideas of both Matejasz and Michał remained in the sphere of postulate, without receiving state support, but are a testimony to the modernising and emancipating Gypsy elite (Gontarek, 2017, pp. 13–16).

It should also be emphasised that both leaders throughout the interbellum period strongly emphasised the fight against crime among the pauperised Gypsy population. In this respect, however, they did not have any help from the state. There were only ad hoc actions initiated jointly with the Polish police authorities. It seems that the programme of combating it was one of the most important undertakings for Matejasz, and if the Polish state were to help him in this, perhaps the tangible effects of such activity would appear. Without the support of the state, Matejasz had to resort to the traditional methods of disciplining Gypsies by his adjutants. In the late 1930s, Józef *Kwiek*, who held the title of baron, won his trust. He carried out court sentences on behalf of Matejasz, travelling all over the country. Matejasz punished the theft with 25 lashes, and for the more serious crime, he shaved his moustache and head, which was a great disgrace for the convicts. Of course, the punishments were of a two-stage character – first Gypsy, i.e. they were carried out by Matejasz and then the police, i.e. they were imposed on behalf of the Polish state under the Penal Code (*Express Wieczorny Ilustrowany*, 1935, p. 3; 1935a, p. 14; 1935b, p. 9; *Express Poranny*, 1937f, p. 7; *Ilustrowany Kuryer Codzienny*, 1935a, p. 14; *Ilustrowany Kuryer Codzienny*, 1935b, p. 9).

Moreover, Matejasz was much better than Michał at participating in the political life of the country, which made him more warmly perceived by Poles, and this strengthened his power. For example, when a well-known and famous Polish politician General Gustaw Orlicz-Dreszer died in a tragic accident, Matejasz offered his condolences to the widow and sent a copy of the letter to the Main Board of the Maritime and Colonial League, of

which Orlicz-Dreszner was president. He expressed his deepest sympathy on behalf of himself and on behalf of "Gypsies in the Republic of Poland", informing the widow that he had ordered a forty-day mourning period for the Gypsy people due to the death of the general. He signed a letter of condolence as follows: "Faithful citizens of Gypsies in the Republic of Poland" (Zielony Sztandar, 1936, p. 4).

He did a similar thing when Józef Piłsudski, the former Marshal of Poland, died. In May 1935, he took part in saying goodbye to the deceased. Then, he ordered a six-week mourning to apply to all Gypsy camps, and forbidding concerts, lively games, concluding marriages and organising weddings at that time (Ilustrowany Kuryer Codzienny, 1935g, p. 17).

Matejasz also started, in the second half of the 1930s, creating his image, using temporary political arguments regarding his most serious competitor, which was allowed by the Polish press. Therefore, he presented Michał Kwiek as a supporter of the monarchy, and at the same time a person who incited the Gypsy people in Poland and sowed discord among them. He also managed to promote him as an "outlaw" expelled from Czechoslovakia and Romania. He issued press releases about his fate and activities. Michał Kwiek was also accused by Matejasz of trying to inculcate communist ideas in Gypsies (Express Poranny, 1935, p. 6; Ilustrowany Kuryer Codzienny, 1935d, p. 4). These accusations were not consistent but were nevertheless significant from the point of view of Michał's reception by the majority society.

Tragic Death

The above actions of Matejasz were interrupted by his tragic death on 20 March 1937 – he died shot as a result of an unfortunate accident, but it was initially suspected of being a premeditated murder. According to the government press, which drew knowledge about the circumstances and causes of his death from the files of the investigation against people who could have caused Matejasz's death, the first suspect was Maria Marta Kwiek. She applied to Matejasz with her 15-year-old daughter Lola, asking him for permission for her daughter's marriage. The chief, however, did not agree to it, pointing to her too young age, which led to a quarrel and a struggle in the presence of members of the Kwiek family. At one point the woman, in the heat of a sharp discussion, jumped at Matejasz, probably trying to take a revolver from his pocket, and during the struggle a shot was fired, which unfortunately killed Kwiek. The woman was imprisoned, and Eugeniusz's brothers – Włodzimierz and one nicknamed "Grója" were also arrested. The first adjutant Stanisław had to remain under police supervision for being allegedly complicit in the tragedy. In the course of the investigation, all charges against Kwiek's family were dropped (Polska Zbrojna, 1937, p. 6).

This story has been discussed many times in the press, especially the sensational one. There were various versions of the circumstances of the death that cannot be believed; among others, pointing to the murderous instincts of the jealous wife of Kwiek. The

romance of the whole incident was emphasised with pleasure, pointing out Matejasz's alleged romance with the aforementioned Lola, i.e. Ilona, who was supposedly of great beauty. In another account explaining the cause of his death, Matejasz was said to love a "white woman from Warsaw" and committed suicide out of love for her. The most important article that spread the love themes all over Poland was the one published in *Express Poranny* entitled "The Romance of the Gypsy baron caused the shooting of Matejasz Kwiek" (1937c, p. 1; see also *Dobry Wieczór*, 1937f, p. 1; *Goniec Warszawski*, 1937a, p. 2).

Matejasz survived the gunshot and for a few days before he died, he was in hospital, fighting for his life. When he regained consciousness periodically, he insisted that he did not blame anyone, claiming that he had shot himself. This version, probably at his request, was published in the press by his legal adviser (5-ta rano, 1937, p. 4; *Dobry Wieczór*, 1937f, p. 1).

Funeral

Matejasz, despite the very good care provided by Dr A. Kahan – the head of the surgical department of the Jewish hospital in Czyste – died around 6 am on 25 March 1937 as a result of an extensive gunshot wound to his abdomen and blood contamination (*Dobry Wieczór*, 1937c, p. 1; *Głos Poranny*, 1937, p. 5, *Nasz Przegląd*, 1937, p. 14). He was buried in the Wola Cemetery in Warsaw, but his tombstone has not survived to this day. It is not in the digital databases of Polish cemeteries, including the Wola Cemetery.

Matejasz was buried in a tailcoat, striped trousers, high burned shoes "for a long journey into the afterlife", and a pipe, fountain pen and cane with a silver ferrule were put in the coffin – a symbol of Gypsy power. Next to them there was also a glass of golden ducats and a box with a decorative belt in it. In addition, the deceased was girded with a red-blue-white sash. Its white and red colours symbolised the sovereignty of the Polish state over Gypsies because this is the colour of the Polish flag, and blue was considered the traditional national Gypsy colour (*Dobry Wieczór*, 1937g, p. 8). Two flags were displayed in the conduit – one red with the words "Free, independent Poland" and the other blue with emblems referring to ancient Egyptian symbolism. In this case, there were the wings of the Phoenix as well as the baron's seven-club crown of Matejasz (*Express Poranny*, 1937e, p. 6). The funeral caught the attention of several foreign photojournalists and also attracted the interest of an unknown American film company that filmed it (*Republika*, 1937, p. 9). The reporting car of the Polish Radio also participated in it (*ABC*, 1937, p. 5).

Even while Matejasz was in the hospital, a discussion began among the Gypsies about who would receive the inheritance of the current leader. Matejasz's son, Kazimierz, was being prepared as the successor because it was his father's will. He had to deal with Bazyli Kwiek, who had many "Hungarian and Romanian Gypsies", i.e. *Kelderash* from Hungary and Romania, on his side, but he suddenly fell ill and did not take part in the competition. The most serious competitor turned out to be Janusz Kwiek, who lived in Milanówek near Warsaw (*Dobry Wieczór*, 1937a, p. 1; *Goniec Warszawski*, 1937e, p. 4).

Janusz is the most mysterious of all Gypsy kings because the circumstances of his sudden emergence as an influential leader are not known. Indeed, there is no indication that before 1937 his position was high enough for him to become a leading figure among the Gypsy elite. Like the other kings he was a cauldron-maker. The only information preserved in the press is that in 1935 he was a Gypsy head of commune (*wójt*) in the Warsaw district of Grochów and did not want to submit to Matejasz. In 1937, he already had his own seal with an image of a crown and the following text: "President of the Gypsy King Candidates Janus Kwiek in Poland". His sudden activity can only be explained by the fact that he entered into contacts with the Polish authorities, of which we know almost nothing and above all with the Gypsy *wójt*s, gaining their strong and clear support in the race for honours and power among the Gypsies (Dzień Dobry, 1935, p. 12; Gazeta Świąteczna, 1937, p. 3; Gonicz Warszawski, 1937c, p. 7). However, we do not know enough about the coronation itself to be able to decide based on the known sources what the reasons for him to become king were.

Although indeed at the coronation the votes fell for him, and in this respect no forgery was made, but, according to the deceased's family, he assumed power using dishonest methods, contrary to the initial joint arrangements, so that his father's inheritance was taken over by his son. Julia Kwiek was particularly critical of Janusz, accusing him of breaking the pre-coronation agreements and of having committed blackmail during the coronation in 1937, forcing its formal organiser, Rudolf, Matejasz's father-in-law, to submit. As Julia argued, Janusz threatened to discredit the entire undertaking before the Polish authorities, so he succumbed to the pressure of the usurper. Because of these events, Julia called Janusz a "garbage man", pointing to the genesis of his rule was a trick and a great deception. She also incited Gypsies to revolt against Janusz (Express Poranny, 1937g, p. 6). Continuing her husband's work, Julia also established a "Gypsy Investigation Office" to detect crimes among Gypsies, but this activity was not taken seriously. It seems that in this symbolic way she emphasised the main idea of her husband, who in such a way sought to raise the social status of Gypsies in Poland (Express Poranny, 1937h, p. 8). After the death of Matejasz, his father-in-law, Rudolf, was in the role of "dictator" (Gonicz Warszawski, 1937d, p. 6).

As for Rudolf, let us mention that in the face of his defeat in the contest for the throne, he considered himself not only a "dictator", but also as the "Prime Minister of the united Gypsy nation" (Dobry Wieczór, 1937h, p. 8; 1937i, p. 1). We know little about his activities in the inter-war period, because from 1937, that is, from the nationalist programme declaration of Colonel Adam Koc, head of the government supporting party *Obóz Zjednoczenia Narodowego* [Camp of the National Unity], a phase of overt discrimination against national minorities in Poland began, which in relation to Gypsies/Roma manifested itself in their marginalisation, combined with increased persecution of their nomadic way of life (Gontarek, 2020, pp. 2, 7). The fact that Rudolf was not respected either by the Gypsies themselves or by the Poles, because during the Second World War he collaborated with the German occupying forces, although in the post-war trial the

court exonerated him on the basis of the Roma testimony in his case. Today, on the basis of archival evidence, there is no doubt that he collaborated with the Germans on his own initiative (Kapralski, 2015, pp. 104–111).

Conclusion

Among all the Gypsy leaders of the interbellum period belonging to the Kwiek clan, Matejasz's actions were to the greatest extent rooted in Polish realities, both political and social. Matejasz was also characterised by a high degree of loyalty to the Polish state.

It seems that his two rivals – Basil and Michał II Kwiek – fell to opposite extremes. On the one hand, Basil represents the most traditional model of Gypsy life among all the leading Gypsy leaders, which was manifested in his clothes and way of life. He theoretically made many decisions towards the modernisation and citizenship of the Gypsy population. Nevertheless, in practice, these were empty declarations, as he was probably not convinced of them himself. It was possibly Matejasz who urged this king towards various kinds of reforms during his stay at his court. Basil also certainly deserves his biographical portrait. On the other hand, Michał acted, who postulated extremely bold actions, but at the same time being too idealistic, demanding the Gypsy state, desiring the Europeanisation of Gypsies and their integration, and categorically requiring the abandonment of the nomadic lifestyle. Against this background, Matejasz managed to do the most, especially by establishing the Association of Polish Gypsies, which could become the basis and seed for certain changes.

Although he failed to implement his plans on a large scale, it is not right to blame Matejasz himself. The key factors that inhibited the inclusion of Gypsies in the social and political life of the Polish state were the passivity and lack of real, not superficial, interest in the Gypsy issue on the part of the Polish authorities, and in the last three years of the existence of the Second Polish Republic, the spreading state nationalism. Certainly, Matejasz, like other Gypsy leaders in Poland, was a hostage of his time, so, like other minority groups, he adapted to the existing circumstances. As a representative of the Gypsy elite that was being formed and maturing in Poland at that time, he drew his models from the world around him, which was far from ideal. He was certainly one of the most outstanding personalities and deserved, with all his shortcomings, to be called the leading reformer of the Roma life in Poland as a person who, while wanting to integrate with the Polish elite, did not lose anything of his “Romanimos”.

Latvia

Ieva Tihovska

Jānis Leimanis and the Beginnings of Latvian Roma Activism

Introduction

In March 1932, the prominent Latvian newspaper *Сегодня Вечеромъ* (Tonight) published a long interview with a local Rom, a man named Jānis Leimanis who worked as the watchman at an Orthodox church. The reason for the interview was his newly founded Gypsy culture promotion Society *Čigānu draugs* (Friend of Gypsies), which was the first public Latvian Roma organisation. In the interview, Leimanis set out the current situation of local Roma and called for their mobilisation and unity even across linguistic borders:

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 Gypsy king, 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. [...] We just have to get this going. We must win Gypsy people's confidence, and then the rest will go like clockwork. (Сегодня Вечеромъ, 1932, p. 3).

Throughout the 1930s, Jānis Leimanis (1886–1950) was driven by the persistent urge to change the values and lifestyle of his fellow Roma. He wanted to unite them and to facilitate their inclusion into the mainstream society. He tried out several forms of activism: he founded the first Latvian Roma society, organised a choir and its performances, translated religious texts into Romani, was involved in missionary work, collected Roma folklore, and agitated for Roma engagement in regular work. At this time, the Roma were not yet active participants in social life of the mainstream society and were also not a part of the Latvian political agenda. Nor was Leimanis interested in political recognition and power – he was focused primarily on communication with Roma and tried to improve their living conditions.

Researchers of social movements have pointed to 'uncertainty' as a characteristic feature of all social movements (Ganz & McKenna, 2019, pp. 189–190). Uncertain settings emerge out of a series of different social and environmental contexts that can advance the rise of social movements – they can be "a new threat, a natural disaster, a critical dilemma, a consequential election, or a sudden opportunity" (Ibid.). Leimanis' activism can be seen as an emergent ethnic movement in a situation when uncertainties appear both inside and outside the community. His activities were unusual for Roma at that

time, and he needed to work hard to persuade and motivate Roma to become involved in his activities. The most active period of Leimanis' public work corresponds to political changes in Latvian history, with the early 1930s marking a turn towards strict nationalist politics best expressed by the slogan "Latvia for Latvians!" (Butulis, 2017). The status of ethnic Latvians was strengthened in politics, economics and culture, and this trend reached its peak after 1934, when an authoritarian regime was established in the country. The weakened state of ethnic minorities was the political context in which Leimanis tried to establish and maintain his organisation and searched for alternative ways to change the situation of the Roma. He introduced among Roma the "preexisting organisational structures" (Morris & Staggenborg, 2004, p. 173) and "common themes and resources" (Olzak, 2004, p. 682) that had been appropriated in the Latvian nationalist movement as well as in the well-networked activities of other ethnic minorities. Leimanis appropriated the cultural patterns that he saw around himself and presented the Roma as an integrated part of society. His imagined ideal were Roma who were not strangers to the society but instead equal citizens living similar lives – that is, Roma who went to school and work, served in the army, sang in choirs, participated in organisations, and went to church.

Leimanis' activities fit well in the broader context of Eastern European Roma activism in the interwar period (Klímová-Alexander, 2005a; Marushiakova & Popov, 2015b; 2020b; 2021b) even if we lack evidence that he might have known about Roma activities in other countries. In a study on contemporary Roma activism in Central Europe, Peter Vermeersch pointed to a significant feature of Roma activism in general:

Like many ethnic movements, the Romani movement [...] is complex and diffuse. It consists of both officially recognized and informal groupings, and it encloses organized as well as less organized associations. For this reason, the word "movement" has to be nuanced; it must not be understood as a clearly defined and bounded collection of officially recognized organizations, but as a conceptual term denoting the totality of activities carried out in the context of defending and cultivating a shared Romani identity. Moreover, the Romani movement is not monolithic but rather fragmented, and it is in constant flux. (Vermeersch, 2006, pp. 8–9).

The activism of Leimanis fully corresponds to this observation. His individual and informal activities were as important as his work in the first Latvian Roma organisation and his collaboration with non-Roma cultural, religious and economic institutions. All the facets of his activism served his goal of Roma civic inclusion in the dynamic Latvian society during the decade before the Second World War.

Jānis Leimanis – a Member of the Community

Jānis Leimanis originated from Courland, the western part of Latvia, where the majority of the Latvian Roma (*Lotfitka Roma*) lived. During Leimanis' active years, the Roma formed 0.1 – 0.2 percent of the total population of Latvia. The official number of Roma

registered by censuses grew from 1,942 persons in 1897 (more than half of them registered in Courland) to 3,839 persons in 1935. At the end of the 19th century most Latvian Roma lived in rural areas, but gradual sedentarisation and urbanisation took place in the first decades of the 20th century (Bērziņš, 2000, pp. 161–162; Greitjāne, 2003, p. 367). More than half of the Latvian Roma were involved in horse trading, with other common occupations being fortune-telling, begging, blacksmith and locksmith work, woodcarving, wickerwork, housekeeping, and farming (Leimanis 1939, pp. 9–12; Bērziņš, 2000, p. 163; Greitjāne, 2003, p. 367).

Leimanis was born on March 6, 1886, in Skrunda district. He was descended from the *Korore Miķeļi* (Blind Miķeļi) kinship group (Leimanis, 1939, p. 9). His nickname in the Roma community was Bernīš. During his childhood, he lived a nomadic life. He received schooling as far as material means allowed, attending the Orthodox parish school in Kuldīga and the Aizpute district school (*Latviešu konversācijas vārdnīca*, 1935, p. 22846). In an interview, Leimanis explained:

I myself am a local, 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 and 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. (Сегодня Вечеромъ, 1932, p. 3).

This same interview and a dictionary entry published in 1935 provide some bits of information about events in Leimanis' life in the early 20th century. During the First World War he organised the movement of Roma refugees:

I got my first chance to serve as an organizer and advocate of the Gypsy people's needs during the war in 1915. They were being driven from the country due to military action – it was believed that spies might travel with nomadic Gypsies. They themselves were often accused of espionage. We petitioned to the governor, but without success. [...] And yet, in a twist of fate, we ended up far away, in Novo-Nikolaevsk [contemporary Novosibirsk], along with the rest of the refugees. The Russians are hospitable people. We were fine. But we nevertheless missed our home, so we came back here. (Сегодня Вечеромъ, 1932, p. 3).

It is unknown where Leimanis resided in the 1920s after his return to Latvia, but his main activity in this decade was translating religious texts into Romani. Several workplaces are mentioned in association with Leimanis: in 1929–1930 he worked as a temporary staff member at a post office, in 1931–32 he was a watchman at the Orthodox church in Edinburgh (contemporary Dzintari, a part of the resort town of Jūrmala not far from Riga), in 1933–1934 and 1938 he was a temporary staff member at the Archives of Latvian Folklore in Riga (*Latviešu konversācijas vārdnīca*, 1935, p. 22847; Vīksna, 2005, p. 16). His activism did not guarantee him extra income; on the contrary, it is mentioned in the media that he invested his personal resources towards the common good (*Jaunākās Ziņas*, 1932, p. 20; *Aizkulises*, 1933b, p. 7).

Leimanis and his family were Holocaust survivors. As far as is known, they resided in Courland during and after the Second World War. The murder of Roma had ceased after the horrors of late 1941 and the first half of 1942, but this could begin again at any moment (Garda-Rozenberga & Zellis, 2015, p. 71). Newspapers from the second half of 1942 reported that Leimanis strived to ensure favorable treatment for the Roma by the Nazis – he organised Roma meetings and work groups in several places in Courland and collected 500 Reichsmarks as a Latvian Roma donation to the Nazi army (Talsu Vārds, 1942a, p. 3; 1942b, p. 3; Tukuma Ziņas, 1942a, p. 4; 1942b, p. 4). After the war, Leimanis lived in Courland till his death on October 9, 1950.

Leimanis was married to Elizabete Gindra, a Latvian Roma woman from Courland. Her grandfather Ernests Didžis (nicknamed Cunnis) was the chief Rom (*šēro rom*) of the *Kāle Pīre* (Black Feet) kinship group in Courland. Leimanis and Gindra had at least two adopted sons – the elder son, Kārlis, was Gindra's nephew, and the younger son, Juris, was Leimanis' nephew (Vīksna, 2005, p. 12). Juris Leimanis (nicknamed Heinis, 1916–1973) succeeded Jānis Leimanis' activism to some extent. He is known as the author of the docu-fiction book *Čigāni Latvijas mežos, mājās un tirgos* (Gypsies in Latvian Forests, Homes, and Markets, 1939, 2nd ed. 2005), and after the Second World War he moved from Riga to Courland and organised Roma ensembles in Kuldīga and Ventspils. Kārlis was less well known publicly. In his daughter's description, "My father was a simple man, working all his life, the family was big, seven children, I think, it was not easy" (*Facebook* correspondence with Rasma Gindra on July 28, 2020).

The Rise and Decline of the Friend of Gypsies Society

After his first organisational experience during the First World War, the 1930s were the socially most active period in Leimanis' life. He began uniting Roma and engaging them in civic activities with the foundation of the first Latvian Roma organisation, the Gypsy culture promotion Society *Čigānu draugs* (Friend of Gypsies). The collection of the Society's official documents at the Latvian State Historical Archives is not big; it mainly covers the foundation of the Society and the long process of its liquidation. The documents provide information about the changing situation of ethnic minorities in Latvia in the 1930s as well as the ambivalent attitude of other Roma towards Leimanis' activism.

The *Friend of Gypsies* Society was registered at the Riga regional court registration department on March 8, 1932. As defined in its statutes, the aim of the Society was "to promote the cultural activities of its members and folk, to raise spiritual development and to promote many-sided education" (LNA LVVA, 3724. f. 1. apr. 3748. lieta, 1. lp.). Of the diverse cultural activities envisioned in the statutes, the actual activities included the founding of the Society's choir in the autumn of 1932 and the organisation of the choir's performances in the spring and summer of 1933. Besides this main public activity, the Society had two general meetings – on August 21, 1932, and March 1, 1936 – and 18 board meetings between 1932 and 1936.

In regard to Leimanis' wish to unite the Roma, it is important to determine how big the community was that he managed to bring together; that is, what was the numerical, geographical, and social scope of his first steps towards initiating an ethnic movement. The available sources lead us to believe that gathering the Roma together and maintaining their membership was not an easy task. Some signs of instability and even resistance can be observed.

When the Society was founded, the board consisted of Roma from Courland, mainly from the town of Saldus. Valdemārs Paladžs (Saldus) was a horse trader, "the only one of us [founders of the Society – author note] engaged in the age-old Gypsy trade" (Сегодня Вечеромъ, 1932, p. 3); Alberts Gindra (Saldus) was the secretary of a fire brigade and a football player; Osvalds Čuka (Saldus) was a carpenter; and Lina Pelcis (Smārde), a niece of Leimanis' without a stated occupation, also served on the board. The audit committee consisted of Roma from Riga: Leimanis' son Kārlis, Ādams Burkevičs, and Ernests Jezdovskis. By the time the second general meeting took place in 1936, the board had changed considerably and consisted mostly of Leimanis' family members and several Roma from Riga. In addition to Leimanis himself, the board consisted of his son Kārlis, his wife Elizabete, the former audit committee member Ernests Jezdovskis, and Mārtiņš Martinovs. The audit committee then consisted of Leimanis' son Juris, Indriķis Krauklis (registered at the same address as Jānis Leimanis) and Anna Jezdovskis, supposedly a relative of Ernests Jezdovskis. These changes in the board presumably reflect the changing place of residence and social circle of Leimanis, but the growing involvement of his family members in the core of the organisation implies a narrowing of the social network loyal to him. Nevertheless, the number of the Society's members and supporters reached 83 in 1936 (LNA LVVA, 3724. f. 1. apr. 3748. lieta, 10. lp.).

One document that shows resistance to Leimanis' activities is a letter of request written by the Roma community in Ventspils (Courland) that was addressed to the Latvian Ministry of the Interior. It was written on March 12, 1936 and fits into the longer process of the liquidation of the Society that began that year. The letter states that a branch of the Society was founded in Ventspils in 1936 but the local members began to protest against Leimanis' activities. The main reason for the protests was Leimanis' failure to obtain land for the Ventspils Roma, by which he "has misused our trust and ignorance, and he has cheated us while asking for our money and effort towards an unattainable goal" (LNA LVVA, 3724. f. 1. apr. 3748. lieta, 15. lp.). Further in the letter, the Ventspils Roma stated that they did not want Leimanis to represent the Roma community in public and in government decisions. They doubted the need for a Roma organisation, Roma schools, and literature in Romani, which were supposedly all Leimanis' initiatives, but the Ventspils Roma declared that the government could take care of the Roma community better than Leimanis. The letter was signed by 29 persons.

Taking sides – that of the government over Leimanis – seems tendentious and reflects the changed political situation of ethnic minorities in Latvia. The situation began to

change already at the beginning of the 1930s. Politicians supporting the idea of a mono-ethnic state came to power after the government election in 1931, and this marked the beginning of the process to limit minority rights. When the authoritarian regime was established after the coup d'état on May 15, 1934, the political and economic power of ethnic minorities was diminished significantly, and many schools and other organisations of ethnic minorities were closed (Dribins, 2004, pp. 58–59; Apine, 2007, p. 21). This also included the order issued by the Ministry of the Interior to liquidate the *Friend of Gypsies Society* on January 8, 1937.

The years 1936 and 1937 show the struggle of Leimanis to maintain the Society. After the letter from the Ventspils Roma, the Riga Office of the Prosecutor prepared a report on the situation of the Society, which pointed to several shortcomings: the lack of the Society's cultural activity since 1933, the fact that a group of members were not satisfied with the functioning of the Society (this could be a reference to the letter from the Ventspils Roma), the lack of proper accountancy, and the doubt that the Society could operate objectively with Leimanis' own family members playing such a significant role on the board and audit committee. The report concluded that, even if the Society and its members were not engaged in any anti-government activities, "there is no point for the existence of the *Friend of Gypsies Society*, seeing as it has not successfully promoted culture among the Gypsies" (LNA LVVA, 3724. f. 1. apr. 3748. lieta, 11. lp.).

On January 8, 1937, the Ministry of the Interior issued an order to liquidate the Society within three months. The idealism and insistence of Leimanis can nevertheless be observed in this situation. He addressed a passionate appeal to the Minister of the Interior to revoke the order, pointing to the significance of the Society in the spiritual revival of the Roma community:

"Dear Minister, we are asking to cancel the liquidation of the *Friend of Gypsies culture promotion Society* because cultural work is like a ray of light for our ignorant and dark folk, and it will show immense value and benefit after some time. [...]"

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 *Friend of Gypsies culture promotion Society*" (LNA LVVA, 3724. f. 1. apr. 3748. lieta, 28. lp.).

Despite Leimanis' efforts, the Society ceased to exist. Yet more important is the fact that Leimanis' activism did not diminish and continued in various other forms. Even his activism among the rebellious Ventspils Roma community resumed a few years after their act of resistance.

Choir and Folklore Collection – Appropriating Cultural Patterns of the Majority

The first stage in the development of Leimanis' activism was characterised by his attempts to integrate the Roma in the majority society by imitating its most valued cultural activities, namely, choir singing and the collection of folklore. His attempts were encouraged and supported by the Latvian intelligentsia and cultural institutions, which were already quite experienced in building national identity and national cultural

capital. These activities by Leimanis are of great historical significance – the founding of the choir marks the beginning of public appearances by Latvian Roma on the Latvian musical scene, and his folklore collection is still an important source of Roma traditions, narratives, language, and personalities in the first half of the 20th century.

The first news of the newly founded Roma choir appeared in the media in November 1932. An article in the prominent newspaper *Jaunākās Ziņas* (Latest News) stated that the choir consisted of some thirty persons, they rehearsed “in a supporter’s apartment in central Riga”, and they arrived there in a hired cart because it was too expensive for them to travel by bus. In addition to such practical challenges, the article explained that Leimanis also struggled with the popular ‘Gypsy music’ scene that rarely involved real Roma:

There have been many Gypsy choirs [...] but there haven’t been any Gypsies in them, nor Gypsy songs. They are Russian songs with a few Gypsy words in between. We want to learn our own songs and dances, and then show you that we – like all other cultures – have a unique culture (*Jaunākās Ziņas*, 1932, p. 20).

Leimanis was referring to the ‘Gypsy music’ that was a part of the popular entertainment music scene at the time and often involved fake ‘Gypsy choirs’ or guest musicians from Russia. In the later 1920s and the 1930s, several such ‘Gypsy choirs’ performed in Latvia (Tihovska, 2013). They defined the idea of what ‘true Gypsy music’ is, and the choir formed by Leimanis had to face and fight this idea. An important factor was that unlike in countries such as Russia, Hungary, or Romania, public music-making was not a historical profession for Latvian Roma. The choir organised by Leimanis can be considered a debut for Latvian Roma musicians who hoped for a decent place and recognition in the ‘Gypsy music’ niche that had already been established by other musicians.

An important aspect of this debut was that Leimanis’ choir did not follow the established popular ‘Gypsy music’ style that was in such high demand at entertainment venues. Leimanis decided to adopt the a cappella choral singing style that was a prestigious part of Latvian national culture. To achieve this goal, two young Latvian composers – Jānis Kalniņš (1904–2000) and Ralfs Alunāns (1902–1978) – were involved in making four-part arrangements of Latvian Roma folksongs. Alunāns also took on the role of choir conductor, and the choir members re-learned their folksongs in these new arrangements. However, the temptation to take part in the popular ‘Gypsy music’ scene was still present – an article published in December 1932 reported that the Leimanis choir was endangered because a Latvian man in collaboration with a Roma woman had split off a part of the choir to organise separate performances at entertainment venues. Leimanis’ reaction was strong – performing at nightclubs “damages the morals of the Gypsies” and was not compatible with his goal of showing “true Gypsy art” (Lauku Darbs, 1932, p. 3).

The choir had its debut concert on April 29, 1933, at a prestigious venue – the Latvian Conservatory of Music. Six more concerts followed that spring and summer at the Estonian Society Hall, the Ethnographic Open-Air Museum of Latvia, and in several towns located

not far from Riga (LNA LVVA, 3724. f. 1. apr. 3748. lieta, 10. lp.). Three reviews were published in the media after the debut concert. The most positive review was written by the well-known Latvian music critic, Ernests Brusubārda, who evaluated the acculturation of the Roma in the field of Latvian choral singing. He praised the concordant and confident performance and highlighted the most vivacious songs, which best corresponded to his idea about Gypsy music: “If the choir does not grow weary, over time it will present livelier, more flexible tempos that will more convincingly express the carefree feeling of Gypsy music” (Jaunākās Ziņas, 1933, p. 7).

The other two reviewers strongly doubted the authenticity of the performance because it did not correspond to what they were accustomed to recognising as ‘Gypsy music’. The songs were criticised as being too “Latvian-like” and the use of scores as not compatible with the freedom of Gypsy music (Aizkulises, 1933a, p. 4). The great contrast between the popular ‘Gypsy music’ style and that of the Leimanis choir was particularly pronounced in the review by the pianist and critic Vsevolod Pastuhov:

Perhaps the songs performed by the choir of the *Friend of Gypsies* Society [...] are true Gypsy songs. To me, they seemed more like Latvian or Finnish folk songs. In any case, they were not like what I was used to thinking of as Gypsy music. [...] This freedom of rhythm, increased emotionality, throaty sounds, a certain Gypsy charm. There is no such thing in the Gypsy choir that performed at the Conservatory. They sing just like any beginner amateur choir of music lovers, in good conscience and ... somewhat frightened. For people who are used to hearing a completely different kind of Gypsy singing, it is very strange to listen to such ordinary choir singing from a choir dressed in Gypsy costumes and with Gypsy faces. (Сегодня, 1933, p. 4).

It can be seen from the reviews that the local Roma turned out to be hostages to well-established ideas about what authentic Gypsy music is. If they wished for commercial success, a better strategy would have been to follow the tradition of the popular ‘Gypsy music’ style. But Leimanis chose integration in the Latvian art music scene, performing at concert venues instead of restaurants and thereby raising the status of the Roma in cultured mainstream society.

Soon after organising the choir, Leimanis was invited to be a temporary staff member at the Archives of Latvian Folklore. His work in 1933–1934 and 1938 resulted in a large folklore collection of 75 notebooks (LFK 1389). His collaboration with the archives can be viewed as the most sustainable part of his activities – the collection is now digitised and available online (Jāņa Leimaņa čigāņu folkloras vākums, 1930s) and has already been used in research of the Latvian Roma by folklorist Māra Viksna (Viksna, 2005), ethnomusicologist Ieva Tihovska (Tihovska, 2017), and, currently, linguists Natalia Perkova, Anette Ross, and Kirill Kozhanov. In addition, four folktales have been published in a selection of European Roma folktales in Latvian (Brice, 1992). The collection consists of texts mainly in Romani with parallel translations into Latvian. Leimanis wrote down folklore

partly from his own memory and partly from his Roma contemporaries, mostly Roma from Courland and Riga. The collection is a rich corpus of Latvian Roma folklore, language, traditions, and individual histories stretching back to the 1880s–90s and contains legends, folktales, song texts, proverbs, and customs as well as lists of Roma nicknames and endangered Romani vocabulary. This collection is Leimanis' tribute to the values and traditions of the Roma community that he challenged to some extent in his other activities, which in turn encouraged changes in traditional Roma identity and lifestyle.

“The Pastor” – the Religious Activism of Leimanis

In trying to portray Leimanis, the main sources of information and interpretation have been archival documents and periodicals. Communication with the contemporary Roma community did not provide many new factual details, although it did provide one important clue about Leimanis' character and social image, namely, that among his descendants he is known as “the pastor” or “the one respected by clergymen”. Other forms that Leimanis' activism took seem to fade when considering the contemporary collective memory. And indeed, even if he began active missionary work only in 1934, after two years dedicated to the Society, the choir, and the collection of folklore, his religious interests had emerged much earlier. It is known that Leimanis was baptised in the Orthodox Church (Svētdienas Rīts, 1934, p. 343), attended an Orthodox school as a child, and was working as a watchman at an Orthodox church at the time he founded the Society. In the 1920s, after his return from Russia, he spent five years translating the Gospel of John and some prayers and other smaller religious texts into Romani. It is sometimes noted in periodicals that Leimanis translated the whole Bible, but there is no proof of this. Religious symbolism – an image of a cross – was also included in the seal of the *Friend of Gypsies Society*, which was otherwise not known for its religious activity. A significant turning point could be the year 1933, when Leimanis' translation of the Gospel of John was published by the British and Foreign Bible Society, which was known also for its missionary work among the Bulgarian, Czechoslovakian, and other Roma (Klímová-Alexander, 2005a, p. 168; Marushiakova & Popov, 2021b, p. 598). This publication could have stimulated the popularisation of the book among the Roma. Another probable explanation of why Leimanis switched from cultural activism within the frame of the Society to religious activities in 1934 is the fact that the authoritarian regime limited the educational and other organisations of ethnic minorities but not their religious organisations (Dribins, 2004, p. 60).

Missionary work was a constant part of Leimanis' life between 1934 and 1936. He collaborated with various religious leaders and organisations, seemingly taking every opportunity to address and enlighten his fellow Roma and to further the process of their inclusion in the Latvian society. *Svētdienas Rīts* (Sunday Morning), the newspaper of Latvia's Evangelical Lutheran congregations, provided evidence that Leimanis had gathered together the Roma community in informal outdoor settings in 1934:

Leimanis is generally taking care of the spiritual development of his fellow Roma. He finds them in the forests, gathers them together under the open sky, and holds services in the Romani language. He even wishes to establish a separate Romani congregation. (Svētdienas Rīts, 1934, p. 343).

In this same year, Leimanis was also noticed as one of the “pastors” at a sectarian preaching event organised by an eccentric “accordion Pole” who “presents God’s words to the participants through effective speeches, music, and songs” (Pēdējā Brīdī, 1934, p. 5).

In 1935 Leimanis continued to evangelise in different churches in Riga. In February, a Roma choir “under the leadership of the Gypsy spiritual striver and translator of a Gospel J. Leimanis” participated in an event at the *Temple of Salvation* run by the English-American Mission Society (*Angļu-Amerikas Misiones biedrība*), an organisation that is connected to the history of the Latvian Baptist Church (Pēdējā Brīdī, 1935, p. 10). In April, without mention of a connection to a particular religious institution, Leimanis organised services for three days in a row. A newspaper referred to him as “a Gypsy spiritual worker” and wrote that “Gypsy songs will be sung and J. Leimanis will explain his religious awakening activities with light paintings [photos]” (Jaunākās Ziņas, 1935, p. 10).

In at least 1935 and 1936 Leimanis was also involved in the Gypsy section of the Internal Mission of the Latvian Evangelical Lutheran Church. The Internal Mission evangelised and provided support to socially vulnerable groups and people who were unable to regularly attend church because of their personal circumstances or professional duties – orphans, blind and deaf people, persons with mental disorders, port and factory workers, people living on the outskirts of Riga, etc. In 1934 the Internal Mission opened a Gypsy mission as a separate branch of its activities. The Gypsy mission held baptisms, confirmations, marriage ceremonies, communions, and regular services in churches and Internal Mission church houses as well as in Roma homes. An employee of the Internal Mission named J. Hartmanis and the theology student V. Štelmahers visited the Roma daily at seven locations in Riga. Besides holding services, they taught religious songs and prayers as well as reading and writing and helped to settle legal matters such as registering children.

A newspaper article in 1935 stated that Leimanis encouraged and urged the Roma to take part in services organised by the Internal Mission (Svētdienas Rīts, 1935, p. 232). In 1936 the Internal Mission published *Catechism Excerpts, Prayers, and Spiritual Songs in the Gypsy Language*, translated by Leimanis. Several festive opening events followed. On February 22, an article titled *A Big Event in the Gypsy Congregation* was published in *Jaunākās Ziņas* (Latest News), one of Latvia’s most prominent newspapers. It contained a photograph showing a group of Roma sitting and holding the new publication in their hands and Leimanis standing in front of the group as a pastor (Jaunākās Ziņas, 1936, p. 20). We lack any other evidence proving the existence of an official Roma congregation. An overview of the activities of the Internal Mission published in 1939 stating that “the need to establish a special Gypsy congregation is ripe” (Freudenfelds, 1939, p. 57) also speaks against the existence of such a congregation.

Leimanis' subsequent religious activities are unclear until 1939, when he evangelised again in collaboration with the Methodist church in Ventspils and Jelgava. After his active missionary work in 1934–1936, he shifted his focus again in 1937 by turning to the issues of Roma civic engagement, employment, and land ownership.

Land and Work for the Roma

The year 1937 marked a new turn in Leimanis' thought and the course of his actions that was influenced by the dominant ideology of the authoritarian regime. The overall escalation of state power corresponded with his call for closer Roma cooperation with the state. After his unsuccessful struggle to save the *Friend of Gypsies* Society in the first part of 1937, he proceeded to organise meetings in a number of towns not only in his native Courland but also in the northeastern part of Latvia. At these meetings, he urged the Roma to become decent citizens and “to fulfill their obligations to the state more conscientiously” (Ventas Balss, 1937, p. 3), meaning first of all engaging in regular work but also education, not avoiding military service, and becoming involved in civic activities and organisations. One of his speeches was retold by the regional newspaper *Malienas Ziņas* (News from Maliena):

Gypsies should be decent people and should become like all the other citizens of the state. One only has to want it and strive for it; then it will be possible. Then Gypsies will not have to live as a mockery and burden to others, and they will be equally honorable citizens and decent men. [...] Particular attention should be paid to the raising of Gypsy youth by promoting the spread of education among them. Young Gypsies need to be better and more decent towards their parents; they must be raised as community-oriented people. Especially regarding the instilling of politeness, so that the younger generation can live the decent life of a citizen. Gypsies are also human beings and can do any job, earn and save, and become wealthier over time. [...] Gypsies need to become more organized and thereby integrate into the unity of the state. (Malienas Ziņas, 1937, p. 3).

One of Leimanis' activities at these meetings was to distribute questionnaires to the Roma that inquired of each of them what they “would like to do in the future to start a better life” (Ventas Balss, 1937, p. 3). The results showed that most Roma would like to cultivate the land. There is evidence of Leimanis' efforts to obtain land for the Roma in Riga and Ventspils, albeit apparently unsuccessfully. As mentioned in a previous section, the unsuccessful attempt to obtain land for the Roma of Ventspils in part led to their complaint written in 1936. The process resumed in 1939, when Leimanis visited the Ventspils Roma again and was delegated to inform the Latvian Ministry of Agriculture about their wish to own and cultivate land. After several months, Leimanis returned to Ventspils skeptical about the idea. There he told the Roma about his “bitter adventures in land affairs” in Riga (Ventas Balss, 1939, p. 3) – with the support of the Latvian president, around 100 hectares near Riga were allocated to the Roma for a small yearly payment, but as it turned out, no Roma family was ready to sign such a contract. Leimanis was especially ashamed about the fact that the only Rom who signed the contract changed his

mind soon after and appealed to an authority with the request to “free him of the land” (Ibid.). That led Leimanis to think more realistically about the agricultural option – he pointed out that the Roma lacked the livestock and inventory needed for such work. The request of the Ventspils Roma was nevertheless submitted to the Ministry of Agriculture and the local land surveyor for further consideration, but the opinion of Leimanis was that “until then, Gypsies can engage in other jobs” (Ibid.).

Leimanis' next activity took place in accordance with the government's attempts to solve the lack of manpower in the countryside and deal with people who avoided engaging in regular work. A new institution, the Work Center, was established for this purpose in May 1939 (Stranga, 2017). Leimanis became a mediator between the Work Center and the Roma. The Center's plan was to involve the Roma of Courland in agricultural, forestry, and land drainage work, and the task of Leimanis was to organise the Roma work groups. As announced by the media in the first part of 1940, the campaign was quite successful. Around 300 Roma from Courland were involved in forestry work; in Riga and larger towns they were employed by sawmills, smaller factories, and in the fuel procurement business, and Leimanis was planning to involve even more Roma in work groups in the coming months (Rīts, 1940a, p. 2; 1940b, p. 6).

Conclusion

For a long time, the study of social movements has been mainly focused on the structural aspects of those movements, and until recently the role of agency and leadership has been underestimated (Morris & Staggenborg, 2004, p. 171). The history of Latvian Roma activism in the 1930s confirms the crucial role that leadership plays in the emergence of an ethnic movement. In contrast to the vast research on large-scale movements, this case illuminates a small-scale process that initiates change in the self-image and social status of a minority group.

A key concept in the social movement theory is ‘struggle’, often paired with such issues as ethnic conflict, social inequality, and human rights, which presuppose the struggle of a suppressed group to acquire recognition and power in the mainstream society. Leimanis' main struggle was not with the mainstream society and its prejudices. Instead, he primarily addressed his own community – other Roma – and his struggle was about challenging and adapting their ideas, values, identity, and lifestyle to the new social realities. The collection of Roma folklore confirms that he honored the values and traditions of his community yet also called for some changes so that Roma could become equal members of society. His activities and statements show him as an unselfish person; he was not interested in achieving higher status for himself in mainstream society or in his own community. He was an idealist and a visionary who followed his own faith in a better life for the Roma, which, in his opinion, meant integration in the civic society. Sometimes he succeeded and was followed by the members of his community; at other times he was doubted and criticised by them. The Second World War and the subsequent Soviet

regime interrupted this emerging ethnic movement, which was revived only in the later 1980s, during the process of the restoration of Latvia's independence. Even if Leimanis' accomplishments lack historical continuity, the decade of his activism strongly contributed to the visibility of Latvian Roma in interwar Latvia.

Finland

Introduction

Risto Blomster and Raluca Bianca Roman

The process of Roma civic emancipation in Finland at the start of the 20th century offers an important means by which the broader processes of Roma emancipation in Central, South-Eastern and Eastern Europe during and before the interwar period can be understood. It is, once again, as across the region, a process which is undeniably embedded within the broader social and historical environment in which Roma have lived for centuries, and it cannot be understood outside of the political context of individual countries, as well as their connection to the broader geopolitical arena. In Finland, this process can be most clearly connected to the ways in which the country's political, social and historical context was being shaped in the early 1900s. The shifts from the early years of the 1900s were heavily influenced by the Fennomans movement of the late 19th century in the Grand Duchy of Finland, a movement which aimed to raise both Finnish language and Finnish culture to the status of national language and national culture (Barton, 2005). It was during this time that Finland itself was being transformed, as a country and as a society, and its relation to other nations (most specifically, Russia) was pivotal.

In this context, the portraits presented in this chapter reflect not only the ways in which Roma emancipation was being manifested among the Kaale (i.e. the Roma community in Finland, sometimes referred to as Finnish Gypsies in official documents of the time) but the ways in which the transformation of the 'nation' itself was reflected in the types of visions for the future imagined among key protagonists of the Roma movement in the country (i.e. the focus on sedentarisation, education and work). As such, the process of Roma civic emancipation in Finland unsurprisingly became connected, on the one hand, with the construction of 'Finnish' identity, in the context of a longer nation-building process. On the other hand, it would also seem that most of the actions for Roma mobilisation, inclusion and emancipation in Finland, as well as the key Roma individuals that were active in these processes (including, but not restricted to, those presented here), emerged and developed within the midst of a religious evangelical organisation, whose main goal was that of including the Roma in the country within the majority society, as part of one 'nation', while, at the same time, maintaining some of the cultural specificity of the Kaale community (such as dress, language, etc.). This reflects, to some extent, the fact that Kaale, much like other Roma/Gypsy communities elsewhere, lived their lives (and continue to do so) on at least two dimensions: as members of their own community and as an intrinsic part of the majority society they inhabit

(Marushiakova & Popov, 2016e, p. 15). For this reason, in order to better understand the connection between the portraits presented in this chapter, and the ways in which the Roma emancipation process in the country took its shape primarily within the midst of a religious (evangelical) organisation, some words are needed about Finland's socio-historical context at the start of the 20th century, as well as the rationale of bringing these particular individuals together.

First and foremost, Finland's politico-cultural climate in the early stages of the Finnish Roma Civil Rights movement were marked by the relationship between Finland and Russia: prior to Finland's independence on the December 6, 1917, the country was part of the Russian Empire, as a Grand Duchy. After gaining its independence, however, Finland would become a more clearly Western-oriented young republic of its own. The last decades of the Grand Duchy (and far beyond) were, therefore, coloured by shades of Finnish cultural nationalism, in the light of which the Kaale community – who had lived in Finland from the 1500s (at the time, estimated to be a couple thousand), were also seen as Finns.

In the Grand Duchy of Finland, especially in Karelia, contacts across the border to the East were close. As the documents of the Roma oral history collected in the 1930s and 1950s clearly show, Kaale market trips extended beyond St Petersburg to the other areas of Ingria, an area which today is located in the Leningrad Oblast surrounding Saint Petersburg in north-western Russia (SKSA, Matti Simolan kokoelma). Ingria had been inhabited by Finno-Ugric Vatics and Izhorians as well as by Finns. At the same time, St Petersburg appeared to be, according to oral history documents, a key magnet for interactions and connections between peoples. There, new contacts were made not only with Russians but with representatives of various other Roma/Gypsy groups (Ibid.). As a result of the First World War, and Finland's independence, the closure of borders to the East was, therefore, undeniably influential for the Kaale of Finland. After this period, the relationships and connections to St Petersburg diminished, and the focus of these connections moved to the West (more specifically, West of Finland) (for more see Leskinen, 1995, pp. 163–173; Blomster & Mikkola, 2018, pp. 37–64).

It was also in this context that the Gypsy Mission (*Mustalaislähetys*, from *mustalainen* – literally translated as 'black-skinned' from Finnish, but meaning 'Gypsy'; and *lähetys* – meaning 'mission' in Finnish), which had moved its activities from its original location in Tampere to the city of Vyborg (also known as Viipuri, in Finnish, during the interwar period of time), 150 km from St Petersburg, was operating in the 1910s. The obvious reason for the organisation's move was that, based on a survey by the Finnish Senate of the Gypsy population in the 1890s, a third of roughly 1,500 Roma in Finland lived in the parishes of Karelia. The Gypsy Mission was set up in 1906 (officially registered in 1907), at a Tampere meeting, and led by Oskari Jalkio (full name, Anders Oskari Jalkio, initially Storbacka and, until 1922, Johnsson), an evangelical pastor who would become the driving force behind its initial expansion and success. We do not have the space to go into

detail about the history of this organisation (more expansive accounts can be found in Viita, 1967; Pulma, 2006; Tervonen, 2010; 2012; Grönfors, 2012; Hedman, 2012; Thurfjell, 2013; Roman, 2016; 2020). However, what is crucial here is that, especially during its Vyborg period, not only a spiritual awakening, but an awakening to Roma civil rights, manifested itself among the Kaale members of the Gypsy Mission.

All the portraits selected for this chapter were involved in the 1910s activities of the Gypsy Mission: as a teacher at the Roma School, a working home manager, as preachers, and as performers at meetings and fundraising evenings. Their actions were commented on in a positive light in the newspapers of the time, sometimes even presented as the first time in history when 'Gypsies themselves have taken to driving their own cause' (Etelä-Suomi, 1912, p. 2). However, by 1914, dispersion began to occur among the Roma. The Gypsy Mission was in financial crisis and even its operating director, Oskari Jalkio, was working without financial compensation. In addition to this, the ideas of christianisation, assimilation and 'Finnishisation' of the Roma, promoted within the Gypsy Mission by Oskari Jalkio, together with the idea that the Roma culture, if it was even to be identified, did not offer appropriate conditions for living and were difficult for some Roma activists to accept. Some of the key Roma figures of the time thus moved away from and/or rejected the Gypsy Mission (as a whole, or temporarily), pursuing a different line for their community mobilisation, often by emphasising the cultural specificity of the Roma. In this context, the key element that ties the individuals portrayed in this chapter is, first and foremost, the central role played by the Gypsy Mission in influencing the beginning of the Roma emancipation movement in Finland. In other words, despite being (initially) a non-Roma led organisation, its influence on the overall shape of the broader Roma mobilisation movement in the country is not to be understated.

An additional element which connects the Finnish Roma portraits introduced in this book is also that all these individuals had originally come from small localities, especially Eastern Finland and Karelia, from where they often moved, after their studies or work, to larger cities. Ida Blomerus, Antti Palm and Aleksander Åkerlund, for example, had all been born in Karelia. Sofia Schwartz, although born in the parish of Kuivaniemi (located in Northern Ostrobothnia), had attended a teacher seminar in Sortavala, Karelia. Ferdinand Nikkinen was a native of Heinävesi, Southern Savonia. Among them, Ida Blomerus, Ferdinand Nikkinen and Aleksander Åkerlund moved to Helsinki, trained in music, and sought to promote Roma civil rights by combining it with their work as artists.

In terms of launching the civil rights movement, Helsinki was certainly a favourable option for networking in liberal artist circles. However, in terms of mobilising other Roma, it offered an obvious challenge: Helsinki, and the county of Uusimaa, was quite a poor area in terms of Roma settlement (i.e. the Kaale population there was relatively meagre, compared to Karelia, for example). As of now, there is no information on how the relatively large Roma population of other areas of Finland, such as Ostrobothnia,

Häme and Savonia, viewed the activities occurring within a small circle of Roma activists and artists in Helsinki.

The selection of these individual portraits is, thus, not arbitrary. While many of them have never become well-known figures in the written history of the Roma movement in the country (or, as is the case of Ida Blomerus and Aleksander Åkerlund, had been forgotten in the process), their work was always intrinsically connected to the issues of Roma social emancipation and social mobilisation. Furthermore, while some never even occupied a central role in either the Gypsy Mission or any other public sphere, they nevertheless constitute unique voices in the history of the movement in the country. Sofia Schwartz, for example, was one of the first female teachers at the start of the 20th century, and her advocacy of education and sedentarisation among the Finnish Kaale not only aligned with the aims and visions of the Gypsy Mission, but with those of other key Kaale figures of the time, such as Ferdinand Nikkinen and Antti Palm.

The life history of some individuals in this chapter also denotes the different affiliations and relationships that individual Kaale activists have had with the Gypsy Mission itself: from those who have shown their support throughout (such as Sofia Schwartz), to those denoting initial support while later becoming critics (Ferdinand Nikkinen) or, at the very least, temporarily distancing themselves from it (Aleksander Åkerlund). There are also those whose position remains partially ambiguous: such as Antti Palm, who had been part of a Roma-led charter of the Gypsy Mission in Vyborg, in 1907, or Ida Blomerus who, alongside her work in the Mission, was the leader of the *Suomen Romanien Sivistysseura* (Finnish Roma Civilisation Society), established in 1917, perhaps the first ever Roma-led organisation in Finland, as well as being involved in the first Gypsy Theatre (*Mustalaisteatteri*) in the country, which performed in 1917 and 1919. It is unclear if these latter endeavours took shape in opposition or in connection to the Mission. Nevertheless, what is clear is that individuals connected to the Gypsy Mission would also become key figures in the broader Roma movement in the country.

It is also worth noting that the inclusion of the portraits of Sofia Schwartz and Ida Blomerus emphasises that Roma women, far from being passive subjects, were key parts of the Roma movement occurring both within and outside the Gypsy Mission. In their different roles, they also shaped ideas of the future of the Roma community in the country, be it as teachers, performers or leaders of Roma organisations. Their inclusion is thus at once central and necessary in order to provide a wider framework through which Roma women's influence in the Roma civic emancipation movement in Finland can be understood.

Finally, we should underline that, while crucially important, these are by no means the only individuals that showcase the beginning of Roma civic emancipation in Finland. Even when indirectly, others have made their mark as well. Such an example is, for instance, Kalle Tähtelä, a writer, pilot and socialist revolutionary, coming from a mixed marriage (his father was Roma, his mother was a majority Finn), who passed away in 1919 and whose literary work showcases his broad socialist ideals, connected to the

struggles of marginalised communities. His life and work, while not often connected to the Roma movement in the country, nevertheless offers new lenses through which we can understand the very meaning of the term ‘Roma emancipation’. His life and work will, therefore, be briefly discussed in the conclusion to this chapter, as it emphasises the multidimensional and multifaceted manifestation of the different ‘visions for the future’ found among Roma writers, activists, elite and representatives in Finland at the start of the 20th century, while adding new shades to understanding the manifestations of Roma emancipation in the country.

The individuals whose lives and work are presented below are, therefore, manifestations of the myriad roles that Kaale have played both within and outside key institutions and organisations in the country at the start of the 20th century. In the future, the portraits of many others could relay a broader picture of the movement itself, as well as, perhaps, the connection of the Roma movement in Finland to Roma movements occurring in other countries. And, while it would seem that these individuals have been most active in the first decades of the 20th century, their influence and work have spanned well into the post-Second World War context, thus showcasing the ways in which ideas and visions of the future, among Roma activists, expand and (sometimes) change over time.

Ferdinand Nikkinen

Risto Blomster and Raluca Bianca Roman

Ferdinand Nikkinen (June 9, 1894–January 7, 1971) was one of the leading Roma activists of the 1950s–1960s and among the key activists that led to the creation of the first Roma-led civic organisation in Finland, *Romanengo Staggos* (established in 1953). By profession, he was a singer, music teacher and a violinist. Within the realm of activism and Roma emancipatory projects, he left a clear mark in the development of Roma organisations in the country, especially after the Second World War. His Roma-focused and activism work, however, had begun much earlier, before the interwar period, when he collaborated and worked closely with the Gypsy Mission (*Mustalaislähetys*), a Roma-focused Evangelical organisation founded by Oskari Jalkio in 1906. These beginnings are important as Nikkinen’s work as an activist and promoter of Roma civic emancipation ideas was crucial in shaping the larger social Roma movement that would develop in the country in the 1960s–1970s (for more on this, see Friman-Korpela, 2014; Stenroos, 2019).

Unlike most Kaale families, Nikkinen’s was a relatively wealthy one. He was born in 1894, in Heinävesi and was one of seven children. His father, Aleksanteri Nikkinen, was a majority Finn, and his mother, Heta Hagert, a Finnish Kaale. His family, also unlike most Kaale families at the time, did not travel but owned their own farm. The family’s wealth had most likely been gained through Nikkinen’s grandparents’ participation in the military service, records of which go back to the 18th century (a detailed account of this can

be found in Rekola, 2010a). Nikkinen had recollected that non-Roma (or members of the Finnish majority) had worked on their farm (Ibid.).

Again, unlike most other Roma children at the time, Nikkinen went through several levels of the educational system in the country. He, for instance, attended elementary school for four years. It was there that his musical talent was allegedly discovered, which led to him continuing his musical education. His interest in playing the violin was particularly important in this. As such, between 1915 and 1921, Nikkinen attended the Helsinki Music College, which would be a pivotal period in his formation as a musician (Dahlström, 1982, p. 453; Kotilainen, 2009, p. 74). For instance, alongside playing the violin, Nikkinen would also become an accomplished vocal singer (his vocal teacher was Axel von Kothern) and studied music composition (Rekola, 2010a).

Following his studies, after 1921, Nikkinen seems to have made most of his living from his music and performed with different artists from the country, in various venues and concert halls. According to Tuula Rekola (2010a), given that the so-called 'Gypsy music' was an extremely popular genre in Finland in the 1920s, especially in urban areas (see also Jalkanen, 1989, p. 204), Nikkinen became relatively successful by adopting this genre. He often sang in cafes, at events, and in a variety of venues across the country and made much of his living from his performances and his work as a music teacher. In many of his performances, he used the stage name 'Ferdinand Gaalo' (from the word *kaalo*, meaning 'black', in Finnish Romani) and it is stated that he played in almost all Finnish cities.

Ferdinand Nikkinen married Selma Salmiranta in 1915, but divorced in 1917 and remarried Fanni Laaksonen, with whom he had five children. In 1934, Nikkinen and Laaksonen separated, and in 1944, Ferdinand married Anna Laitinen, with whom he had two children (for more on this, see Rekola, 2010a). These events are important to note as, among Kaale, marriage (as an institution) is often not recognised or mentioned: that is, unlike among other Roma/Gypsy communities elsewhere, among Kaale, there presently is no public recognition of the union between a man and a woman within the institution of marriage (i.e. no celebration, wedding, etc.) (Viljanen, 1974; 1979; Mohamed-Salih, 1985). This connects to the so-called culture of 'modesty' among Kaale (which he sometimes criticised; see article below). Presently, this culture also includes the avoidance of any topics related to reproduction or sexuality, including marriage and birth. That is not to say that these events do not occur, but that they are not given any form of community recognition. These norms are often presented as 'traditions' of the Kaale community in Finland (Viljanen, 1974; 1979; 2011; 2012; Grönfors, 1977; 1986; 1997; Mohamed-Salih, 1985; Markkanen, 2003; Roman, 2016).

It is difficult to state with certainty when and how long these 'norms' have been in place and whether or not they manifested in the same way during the interwar period. Nevertheless, they are important here because Kaale 'modesty' and 'cultural norms' were also mentioned in an article Nikkinen wrote in 1913, for the Gypsy Mission's journal, *Kiertolainen* (Vagrant) (1913c, p. 15). Whether these refer to dress only (as an external manifestation of Kaale belonging) or to the ones pointed above, it is unclear. Nevertheless,

what both his trajectory and the arguments in his article point out is that Ferdinand Nikkinen's life course and life aspirations (or goals) were somewhat distinct to that of many other Kaale youth at the time and it also connects to his background of having been born in: 1) a mixed Kaale/Finnish family; 2) a family that did not fit the image of the majority of Finnish Kaale at the time (i.e. not travelling; owning their own farm; relatively wealthy in comparison to other families at the time).

As an adult, and especially during the interwar period, the Nikkinen family's earnings came primarily from Ferdinand Nikkinen's singing and musical career. The family also moved homes according to where the work would take them. It is important to note, however, that Nikkinen openly disagreed with 'travelling' as a lifestyle and thus these moves were based on the jobs that Ferdinand Nikkinen could get as a performer and not on the 'tradition' of wandering, which he had challenged in his first-known article (Kiertolainen, 1913c, p. 15). This position is discussed below, as it converged with the aims and goals of the Gypsy Mission, which saw sedentarisation as the pathway to social integration of the Roma in Finland.

Overall, the Nikkinen family life during the 1920s and the 1930s seemed to be relatively modest, given the lower income he was able to gain from singing and performing. In the 1920s–1930s especially, Finland was also going through a period of recession following the Finnish Civil War, which meant that people were less inclined to take up singing lessons (by then, Nikkinen had also become a music teacher). After the Second World War, however, Ferdinand Nikkinen continued both his musical career and gained further grounds in his work on Roma activism, which would make him into one of the pivotal figures of Roma mobilisation in the country.

In terms of Ferdinand Nikkinen's work concerning processes of Roma civic emancipation in Finland, one of the earliest manifestations of his interest in this work could be seen in his involvement with the activities of the Gypsy Mission. The organisation's aims were those of conducting social work among and with the Roma community in the country, with a focus placed on the education of Roma children, the sedentarisation of the Roma community in Finland and the evangelisation work among the Kaale. When the Gypsy Mission was founded in Tampere, 1906, by Oskari Jalkio, Nikkinen often joined in the mission's different events, either as musical performer, or as supporter and collaborator of the mission's activities, and he continued to do so for the following years (especially between 1911–1913) (Viita, 1967, pp. 71, 84). He would, for instance, play the violin and sing in the evangelising tent meetings of the Mission. He also published in the Mission's journal, *Kiertolainen*, and his name was sometimes mentioned in the journal's events calendars (Ibid.).

A notable article he wrote, mentioned above, was published in 1913, and remains a key testament to Nikkinen's views of the processes of Roma civic emancipation and inclusion within majority society at the time. While his article was primarily written as connected to the Mission's activities, some aspects within it point to Nikkinen's later divergent views concerning the Mission's agenda. The article is important in at least two aspects:

1) the convergence of Nikkinen's views with the aims of the Mission in terms of the focus placed on sedentarisation and education; 2) the divergence of his views in respect to the role of tradition and the notion of 'morality' among the Roma.

Below is a reproduction of some segments of the article, which are crucial and revelatory of Nikkinen's positions on some key aspects, many of which would continue into his later work as an activist in the 1960s (for the full text, including translation, see Roman, 2021b, pp. 680–681).

[...] 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. [...]

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. [...] (Kiertolainen, 1913c, p. 15).

The article is evocative of Nikkinen's views and opinions at the time. It especially emphasises his position concerning Roma mobilisation and emancipation in the country, prior to the start of the First World War. The fact that the article directly addresses Roma youth, rather than Roma in general, is not surprising. In fact, he was nineteen years old when the article was published. What is interesting is his continued emphasis on the issue of 'sedentarisation' (i.e. stopping the 'wandering' life), which he sees as a key pathway to Roma social integration in the country. He underlines this aspect several times, wherein he sees travelling as hindering the younger generations' chances of improving their lives.

Likewise, a similar emphasis is placed in other parts of the article (not quoted above) on the topic of children's (and adults') education, which Nikkinen sees as central to the improvement of the future of the Roma community in Finland. Thirdly, unlike the popular usage of the term 'Gypsies' at the time, which was often found in official and public discourse concerning the Kaale in the country, Nikkinen consistently uses the term 'Roma', which seems to have first been promoted by Oskari Jalkio in an article published as early as 1907 (Kiertolainen, 1907a, p. 5; for a full translation of the text, including notes and commentary, see Roman, 2020, pp. 367–376; 2021b, pp. 674–678). There, Jalkio advised readers of *Kiertolainen* to stop using the term 'Gypsies' (*mustalaiset*, in Finnish) in favour of the term 'Roma' (*Romani*, in Finnish), or that of the term 'Kaalo' (from

Finnish Romani language, literally translated as 'black'). From then on, the journal only used the term 'Gypsy' in its organisational title (Gypsy Mission) or in the reproduction of folklore texts, songs, poems, etc. In all matters concerning the social actions of the organisation, the term 'Roma' was used: for example, 'Roma School', 'Roma children's homes', etc. Ferdinand Nikkinen (as well as other Roma writers on the pages of *Kiertolainen*) also used the term 'Roma' to refer to themselves and to their community, using 'Gypsy' primarily when pointing out to elements of 'tradition' which, in their opinion, needed to change in order for the Roma community to achieve equal status in their society.

In other words, in these three key aspects, Nikkinen's views seem to converge with those of the Gypsy Mission at the time. In fact, the Gypsy Mission was fundamentally concerned with the issue of sedentarisation and oftentimes emphasised this in their publications and actions. Furthermore, the Gypsy Mission had set up several education-focused projects which directly targeted the Roma in the country. For instance, the Mission founded several schools, orphanages, and Roma language courses across the country: such as the first Roma School, which was organised in Vyborg, between 1905–1907; the first Romani course, which was organised in Seinäjoki (Central-Western Finland) in 1906; and the first Roma children's home, which was organised in Sortavala between 1910–1918. In this, Nikkinen's visions seemed to, at least partially, connect with the aims of the Mission.

At the same time, as previously discussed elsewhere (see Roman 2020; 2021a), the article also reveals some important contradictory elements, which could have potentially led to Nikkinen's move away from the Mission and, in fact, in his becoming one of the Mission's most vehement critics. For instance, in his discussion on traditions, Nikkinen seems to view some as hindering Roma's advancements towards social inclusion and upgrading in the country (he called this 'civilisation'). While he does emphasise the importance of 'nationality' and 'language', his views on other forms of 'tradition' (especially dress) were less positive. Yet, in two editorial notes to the article, the editors (quite possibly Oskari Jalkio himself) point out two elements of disagreement:

Editor says: We disagree as to dresses and colours. They are a nice variation in our stiff fashion. It is not necessary to follow the fashion madness of our time. [...] (*Kiertolainen*, 1913c, p. 15).

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. (*Ibid.*).

The first one clearly refers to the clothing of the Roma (women especially), which Nikkinen saw as being detrimental to the aim of becoming fully part of the majority. The editor, on the other hand, seems to value this distinction (perhaps even to the point of romanticising it), especially when comparing it to the fashion of the time. A similar point of view can be seen in the second editorial note, which points out a valuing of Kaale dress and norms; again, in contrast to that of the majority. While these two notes may appear

as mere contrasting opinions, they are especially interesting given Nikkinen's subsequent move away from the Mission.

Not much is known about Ferdinand Nikkinen's social activism work during the interwar period. In fact, after the above-mentioned article was published, there was little mention of his work on the pages of *Kiertolainen*. During this time, Nikkinen seems to have devoted most of his time on his musical career, a period in which he became a relatively successful singer, violinist, performer and teacher. Under the stage name of Ferdinand Gaalo, he sang with various other artists, including Finnish singer Mimmi Borg and immigrant musicians, such as Russian Nina Filimanskaja (in Russian, Filimanskaya) and Romanian Basil Bortenou (a well-known musician at the time, born in Iași, in 1878, and of Armenian descent) (Jalkanen, 1989, pp. 50–52). Ferdinand Gaalo was also a relatively common presence in café performances, which were particularly popular at the time (such as the Princess café in Helsinki). During the interwar period, his Roma-focused work prevailed in his professional field as he adopted the genre of 'Gypsy Music' in his performances (much like Aleksander Åkerlund, whose portrait can also be found in this chapter). Later, his work in the field of Roma activism widened further and seemed to come centre stage after the end of the Second World War.

Sometime in the 1920s, Nikkinen's criticism of the Mission began to unfold and solidify. The proof of this can be found in an article Nikkinen wrote in 1923, where he openly accuses Oskari Jalkio (named there as Mr. Oskari Johnsson) of using his social work on 'Gypsies' as a means to get more money from donors, even in the context in which, according to Nikkinen, Gypsies did not benefit much from this. He also criticises the multiple moves of the Mission's activities and headquarters (such as the move from Tampere, to Vyborg, and then to Helsinki), which Nikkinen saw not only confusing but detrimental to any type of 'social work'. Furthermore, he clearly believed that 'Gypsies' did not benefit much from this enterprise. Given the importance of this source material, below is a translation in full of Nikkinen's 1923 article, published in the newspaper *Suomen Sosialidemokraatti* (Finnish Social Democrat) and titled *To Gypsies and to the Friends of the Gypsy Mission*.

To Gypsies and to the friends of the Gypsy mission.

It is well known to many through the envoys of the Gypsy Mission that have toured the country that such a "mission" exists. But that's where that knowledge runs out almost everyone.

The secretary for this mission is Mr. Oskari Johnsson and his assistant is the preacher Skuttnabb.

Mr. Johnsson has been an active man in this mission, he has travelled across the country and held plenty of evening events with the help of a few wild Gypsies. Such an evening usually began with spiritual singing and prayer. This was followed by a romantic tragic presentation of the stages of Gypsy life that opened the hearts and purses of the listeners. The opening of the latter was therefore important, as the presenters announced that work homes, homes for the homeless, etc. had been set up. Gypsies had been educated in both vocational and educational schools.

This all sounded beautiful and promising, the future of the Gypsies looming in the minds of the listeners like the beginning of a millennial kingdom.

But when we look at the other side of the issue, the picture on the board changes quite a bit. These work and homeless homes have been as mobile as the Gypsies themselves. One week you can have such a home in Tampere, but the next week you can go to Vyborg to get it. And when you get to Vyborg, you may find out after very long inquiries that your “home” has moved to Helsinki. The same thing has happened with the head office. That too has been plagued by Gypsy blood too much.

As for otherwise a work home like this, it doesn't deserve its name. The undersigned has got acquainted with the work home at Katariinankatu 2 in Vyborg, for example, and has come to realise that even the Gypsies could not live with the workings that were followed there but had to start begging at the end of the work. As a result, work systems like this have resulted in “work” homes being left empty.

The signatory does not believe that there would be even one Gypsy in Finland who would have been “awakened” to start a permanent job because of the upbringing of these homes. Neither on such evenings nor in “work homes” aids the cause of the Gypsies. It requires different measures.

We have the best proof of this in Romania, where 20% of the population is Roma. Since 1837, efforts have been made to promote the livelihoods of Gypsies by handing them over land for cultivation. This work has then been continued for decades and with good results. The Gypsies have become a resident farming population who have educated their talented children, who have become doctors, professors, judges, journalists, even ministers.

Similarly, Gypsies in Hungary have been raised to their human rights, so that no more than 2% of the 280,000 Gypsies in that country are wandering. It would be time for us in Finland, too, to take some measures with regard to the Gypsy population other than their general contempt and the waste of state and private funds on the original work of some “mission”.

And finally, a word on behalf of our Gypsies about Mr. O. Johnsson.

Mr. Johnsson talks to Finns about the good help and gifts of Gypsies when it comes to getting money for a Roma mission. But when we Gypsies turn to him and his offices, he barks at us like owls, that we continue to learn nothing but swap horses. This is almost a robbery of Gypsies from a person who claims to work to raise and uplift them. You Finns, who are still wasting money on the mission of the Gypsies, know that we Gypsies do not benefit much from them and that the way they have been used so far does not help our cause at all.

For my Gypsy brothers and sisters,

Ferdinand Gaalo, singer. (Suomen Sosialidemokraatti, 1923, p. 7).

The article above is particularly important as this could be the first written source showcasing Nikkinen's change in position concerning the work of the Gypsy Mission, with which he had previously been affiliated. Its content reflects not only a clear criticism of Johnsson and the Gypsy Mission's social work agenda among 'Gypsies' but also requests the readers (i.e. the Finnish readers of the newspaper) to stop giving donations to this organisation. Furthermore, his discussion of the 'evenings' organised by the Mission is particularly striking as, in fact, Ferdinand Nikkinen had previously also been involved in some of them, as a singer and performer. Nevertheless, here he underlines the so-called romanticised way in which the lives of 'Gypsies' were being described by the Mission's employees, in order to “open the hearts and the purses” of the listeners (Suomen

Sosialidemokraatti, 1923, p. 7). Most strikingly, Nikkinen (or Gaalo, his artist name, which he used to sign the article), accuses Johnsson and other members of the Mission of even robbing the Gypsies by using the funds gained through donations in matters that do not aid the Roma cause. Nevertheless, with his personal financial distress, during the 1930s and the 1940s, Nikkinen himself sought and received direct financial support from the Gypsy Mission (RMA, Protocols of the Executive Board Meetings, September 3, 1932; September 25, 1940).

It is worth noting that Nikkinen's discussion of Romanian and Hungarian states' work among Roma is undoubtedly idealised in order to underline his argument. For example, while there were indeed some educated Roma in Romania in the 1920s, including doctors, lawyers and journalists – such as the case of C. S. Nicolăescu-Plopşor illustrates (for more on the latter, see Chapter 4, in this book, and also Roman, 2021b) – these were not necessarily the rule. And while the Roma emancipation movement in Romania indeed pleaded for similar themes (i.e. education, sedentarisation, etc.), and underlined the work of the Romanian state in this respect, there were many other issues that were not as idealised as Nikkinen portrayed them. It is also unclear where Nikkinen obtained his statistical information from. What is important here, however, is the way in which these examples were used in aid of Nikkinen's criticism of the Gypsy Mission and its leadership.

What is striking in this respect is that, after the Second World War, Ferdinand Nikkinen not only detached himself from Gypsy Mission's activities, aims and goals, but became a vehement critic of the organisation. Alongside this, it is worth noting that Nikkinen seems to have become a determined atheist in the post-Second World War context, which contrasts with the earlier position he seems to have had as a young man, especially noticeable in the article published in 1913:

[...] 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 [...]. (Kiertolainen, 1913c, p. 15).

Much like Nikkinen's views during the interwar period, especially those concerning issues of Roma mobilisation, activism and civic emancipation, it is unclear when and how his views on religion had changed. It is also unclear whether his change in religious beliefs were connected or influential in his later complete detachment from the work of the Gypsy Mission. As his son, Reima Nikkinen remembered, Nikkinen had always been interested in philosophy and, though never achieving university-level education, read widely in a variety of topics: including those pertaining to religion and spirituality. His move away from a Christian-faith to atheism was said to be connected to these wider interests (SKSA, SKSÄ 69.2012, Reima Nikkisen haastattelu 22.08.2012). Nevertheless, whether connected or not, the move and his wider interest in philosophy, spirituality and social movements appear to have been crucial in Nikkinen's later actions and in his

becoming a critic of the Mission he once supported (or, at the very least, the Mission he once collaborated with).

Alongside the above mentioned 1923 article, the clearest 'official' example of his vehement criticism emerged in 1946, when Ferdinand Nikkinen wrote a letter to the Ministry of the Interior, in which he had collected the signatures of 364 Roma men, and where he highlighted that Roma should be more actively involved in the shaping of Roma policy in the country (Pulma, 2006, p. 166; Friman-Korpela 2014; Roman, 2020; 2021a). In it, he also directly criticised the work of the Gypsy Mission (an organisation led by non-Roma Evangelicals), and the lack of Roma leadership within it, as well as the assimilationist approach of the Mission's activities concerning Kaale in the country (see also Stenroos, 2019).

While the letter seems to have gone entirely unheard and did not lead to any actual actions (i.e. there was no policy change of any sort), Nikkinen continued his efforts in the field of the civic Roma movement throughout his life and career as an activist. An example of this is the ways in which, in 1953, his work contributed to the foundation of one of the first (official) Roma-led organisation in the country, *Romanengo Staggos* (Romanien liitto / Roma Association). Worth mentioning, however, is that despite previous assumptions that Nikkinen was the founder of *Romanengo Staggos* (Stenroos, 2019; Roman 2020; 2021a), recent finds may show otherwise, or at least complicate the picture further. For instance, in a document from 1953 listing the board of trustees of the Association, Nikkinen's name does not appear at all (SKSA, Karl von Schoultzin kokoelma). The organisation was also only registered in 1954. It is also worth noting that the first Roma-led organisation in Finland may have come much earlier, in 1917, under the name of *Suomen Romanien Sivistysseura* (Finnish Roma Civilisation Society) and led by a Kaale woman under the name of Ida Blomerus (also known as Cingardy-Ora). More on this can be found in the portraits of Antti Palm and Ida Blomerus below.

Going back to *Romanengo Staggos*, as discussed elsewhere (Roman 2020; Roman 2021a), the the organisation itself did not last for long in that format. What it did do, however, was set the groundwork for the establishment, in 1967, of the Finnish Gypsy Association (*Suomen Mustalaisyhdistys*), by a group of Roma and non-Roma activists who had adopted some of the strategies that lay at the basis of the founding of *Romanengo Staggos*. Both Ferdinand Nikkinen, at the time 73 years old, and Reima Nikkinen, his son, were said to have been present at the founding meeting of the Finnish Gypsy Association. In fact, Reima Nikkinen himself would become a leading Roma activist in the country, following in his father's footsteps. The Finnish Gypsy Society continues to have its influence on Roma policymaking in the country, until the present-day and, under the changed name of Finnish Roma Association (*Suomen Romaniyhdistys*), it constitutes one of the leading Roma civic organisations in the country. As a whole, it appears to parallel and connect its activities to those of Romano Missio, the present-day name of the former Gypsy Mission (see also Roman 2020).

Alongside his activism work, Ferdinand Nikkinen also wrote a monograph on Roma. The book seems to be a compiled source and it contains general information on Roma (history, religion, culture), from a very broad perspective, and with only scattered reference. The origins of the direct citations are mentioned in the manuscript, although there are no references or bibliography. The book seems to be a collection of materials and information that Nikkinen had gathered on ‘Gypsies’ throughout his life. The title of the monograph is *Mustalaiskansa kristinuskon ristivedossa ja rotusyrjinnässä* (The Gypsy People between Christianity and Racial Discrimination). Ferdinand Nikkinen allegedly tried to have the book published, without any success. It can presently be found, as an unpublished and undated monograph, within the archive of the Finnish Literature Society, donated to the Society by Ferdinand Nikkinen’s son, Reima Nikkinen (SKSA, Ferdinand Nikkisen arkisto). Ferdinand Nikkinen passed away on January 7, 1971, at 76 years old, in Helsinki, where he is also buried.

Aleksander Åkerlund

Risto Blomster and Raluca Bianca Roman

Aleksander Åkerlund (March 4, 1893–December 1, 1944), and also known as Saska Chaaro and Alex Aulo, was a Finnish Roma musician and lecturer, who was active between the 1910s and the 1940s. Åkerlund combined his talents as a singer, violinist, actor and book editor to pursue Roma civil rights during his long and varied career, building on the idea of ‘Gypsy romanticism’ meets ‘Roma activism’. On the one hand, he exploited the popularity of so-called ‘Gypsy music’ – a Romani-related music played in a characteristic ‘Gypsy style’ and composed by non-Roma composers – for his cause and, on the other hand, he dismantled and renewed this image by combining with his art an active action in Romani affairs.

Much like Nikkinen, Åkerlund started his public work in the circles of the Roma-focused Evangelical organisation the Gypsy Mission, first selling newspapers then working as preacher, actor and musician, from 1911. After his years in the Gypsy Mission, Åkerlund was involved in the non-religious Roma civil rights movement in Finland of the time, which crystallised at the end of the 1910s in the activities of two key institutions: *Suomen Romanien Sivistysseura* (the Finnish Roma Civilisation Society), established in the spring of 1917 and *Suomen Mustalaisteatteri* (the Finnish Gypsy Theatre), which performed in 1917 and 1919. However, Åkerlund’s true career was that of an independent lecturer and violinist, without any commitment to associations or artist groups. Calling himself “the only Roma Enlightenment speaker in the Nordic countries”, Åkerlund and his non-Roma wife, dancer and reciter Tilda Åkerlund (who also used the forename Milda and the surnames Aulo, Jouni; 04.02.1894 – ?), organised, between 1914 and 1938, hundreds of Gypsy

evenings (*Mustalaisilta*), and later also Hungarian evenings (*Unkarilais-ilta*), all over Finland and Sweden, with music, dance and lectures on Roma issues and on the importance of art in civilising the Finnish nation.

Aleksander Åkerlund was born in the parish of Säkkijärvi (today Kondratyev/Kondratjevo), located next to the Karelian city of Vyborg, into a travelling Kaale family. In the 1890's in Säkkijärvi, there were about 90 registered Roma mainly from the Åkerlund kin (Helsingin Sanomat, 1944a, p. 3, Helsingin Sanomat, 1944b, p. 11; TA, K 9, 1895).

The transfer of the activities of the Gypsy Mission to Vyborg in 1911 had far-reaching goals concerning Kaale families in the country: education, employment, colonisation (i.e. sedentarisation) and christianisation. The Gypsy Mission planned special firewood production facilities as workplaces for men in Vyborg, and initial capital was needed: from 1912 to 1913, they organised groups of performers and the Senate of the Grand Duchy of Finland issued railway freehold tickets for them to perform in different parts of Finland. This action involved Kaale, too. Named are, for example Åkerlund himself, as well as Antti Palm, Ferdinand Nikkinen and Ida Blomerus (whose portraits can also be found in this chapter).

Åkerlund is known to have been in a fixed relationship with the Gypsy Mission and its executive manager, Oskar Johnsson (later Oskari Jalkio; 1882–1952). Many major and minor details suggest that Åkerlund's position in the Gypsy Mission and his importance to Jalkio was special. For instance, his necrology tells that he had received initial education in the Jalkio family, Oskari and Helmi. Further on, there are mentions of Åkerlund in the Gypsy Mission's *Kiertolainen* journal under the nicknames "our Saska" (probably from the Russian diminutive "Sashko" for Aleksandar) as well as "Caro". Åkerlund later used the "Chaaro" name as part of his artist name. As a side note, this nickname is thought to have been used also within the circles of the Mission, including by the Jalkios, but it is unclear what the exact meaning of the term, from Romani language, would be. Interpretations can also be drawn from Jalkio's writings that he contributed to Åkerlund becoming a prominent and influential continuator of his work, the "torch-bearer" of the Gypsy Mission (Kiertolainen, 1912a, p. 4; 1913b, p. 18; Helsingin Sanomat, 1944b, p. 11; Blomster & Roman, 2021, pp. 197–221).

There is no precise information as to why "torch-bearer" Åkerlund became slowly detached from the operations of the Gypsy Mission during the 1910s. There are hints that the reasons may have been, on the one hand, connected to a personal spiritual crisis and, on the other hand, connected to his opposition to assimilationist positions emphasised in the Gypsy Mission's early-stage activity. The separation may also have been partly the result of continued financial difficulties in the Gypsy Mission and even an outright inability to pay commissions to its employees. Some reasons can possibly be found in Oskari Jalkio's acrimonious writing in the *Maakansa* (Country People) newspaper (1914, p. 3) entitled "Beware of the Fraud!" (*Varokaa petosta!*). In it, Jalkio warned against a Gypsy youngster who, despite bans, did not stop performing and raising funds in the

name of the Gypsy Mission without permission. It remains unclear who the youngster Jalkio accused was, even though Jalkio's inscription fits temporally with Åkerlund's first detachments from the Gypsy Mission. At least from newspaper accounts of his own, Åkerlund had, coincidentally, over the course of 1914, just ended up in holding a series of appearances with speeches and music.

A good example of the concerts and presentations organised by Åkerlund at the time was the one held in the Rantasalmi Workers' House, of which the newspaper *Vapaus* (Freedom) wrote as follows. As can be seen in the written text, Åkerlund did not appear in this particular case as the representative of the Gypsy Mission, and performed as an independent artist, without Oskari Jalkio:

Gypsy youngster A. Åkerlund gave a presentation at the Rantasalmi Worker's House on 8. Day of this month. He presented his own tribe's ways of life and how it travels all around the world: exchanging, selling and buying, telling fortune, predicting and begging. This all they have as thousands of years of inheritance passed by generation to generation, and they have that so adapted in their blood, that few of his tribe can save themselves from these ways of life. He told that he himself, who has already has entrant to a better position, often gets to turn his eyes on the ground and shed tears for the reason that he was born dark and that the blond tribe still misunderstands him. The speaker hoped that blonds would evoke, his tribe from such a legacy of the hobo's life by spreading knowledge and enlightenment wherever they could be given.

Finally, he performed Gypsy violin tunes and Gypsy songs by singing. It can be also mentioned that the audience very moderately listened to Gypsy's performances. (*Vapaus*, 1914, p. 2).

The text is an interesting perspective on the emphasis of Åkerlund's speeches during the early stages of his career. Thus, here he seeks very empathetically to evoke compassion and even pity for 'Gypsies' and thereby arouse the desire to help. Also, four general points can be made of it: 1) Åkerlund's appearance took place on the premises of the local labour association's Workers' house, a practice which came to be common in the next stages of Åkerlund's career. Further on, meaningful is that 2) Åkerlund positioned himself as an "entrant to a better position" outside his "tribe", and 3) he firmly believed that the knowledge and enlightenment spread by non-Roma would improve the status of the Roma in the country. Also meaningful is the mention, that 4) Åkerlund was, already in 1914, at 24 years old, a noticeably good violin player. These themes were central to Åkerlund's future career as a free artist in Helsinki as well as his long career going into the late 1930s. That said, although his later presentations more widely talked about the history of the Roma, the same undertone that had already been expressed in this speech remained: civilisation efforts, namely education and integrating into majority society through work and housing.

It is also important to point out that Åkerlund's detachment from the Gypsy Mission and movement into left-wing circles favoured by Helsinki artists did not lead to a definitive separation from the Gypsy Mission and the values it represented. A clear indication

of this is the book *Features of the Life of Gypsies* (Piiroteitä mustalaisten elämästä, Aulo, 1934; for more information about the book, see Blomster & Roman, 2021) edited by Åkerlund, which included religious texts, such as religious poems and excerpts from the Holy Bible. It is also clear that, from the direction of the Gypsy Mission, the relationship would seem to have been open: the Gypsy Mission supported the “Mission’s former working man, musician Åkerlund” by donating to his wife, in 1926 (when, due to illness, he was in financial difficulties), 100 pieces of *Kiertolainen* to sell. And, just before the Second World War, when Oskari Jalkio returned to the Gypsy Mission’s governing bodies after his work abroad, in the Dominican Republic of Haiti (1931–1938), Jalkio joined the board as its chairperson, and Åkerlund’s name can be found in the list of board members (RMA, Protocosl of the Executive Board Meetings, November 12, 1926; Viita, 1967, pp. 121–122).

Even before settling in Helsinki, Åkerlund was an experienced performance violinist. He had started his studies most probably when living in Vyborg. Vyborg was an international and vibrant music city and the centre of entertainment life, where Russian Gypsy bands performed regularly. However, according to the known Gypsylogist Arthur Thesleff, the Finnish Roma’s own involvement in public music life in early 20th century Finland was extremely limited. A few local musicians were known by name and, in the parishes of South-West Finland, a Gypsy band comprised mainly of members of the Roos family performed, playing the dance music of the countryside (Finsk Tidskrift, 1922, pp. 307–318; Blomster, 2010). When moving to Helsinki in the late 1910s, Åkerlund became involved both with the Finnish Gypsy Theatre (1917 and 1919) and the Finnish Roma Civilisation Society (spring 1917). How this all happened is not clear down to the details. In this portrait, the Finnish Gypsy Theatre is explored in more detail, while in Ida Blomerus’s portrait more focus is placed on the Finnish Roma Civilisation Society.

The Finnish Gypsy Theatre (1917 and 1919) was a Helsinki-based troupe performing nationwide as a touring theatre, led by actress and recitation artist Helinä Svensson-Timari (1887–1953). The Theatre’s repertoire was in both years of its activity a stage adaptation of a romantic tragedy written by Swedish writer Victor Rydberg (1828–1895) on *Signoalla*. *Signoalla*, which was first published in Swedish in the Aurora calendar 1857 under the subtitle “romantic fairytale poem”, was translated into Finnish, by Finnish Novelist Juhani Aho (1861–1921; translation published in 1895). In the history of Finnish theatre and literature, the Finnish Gypsy Theatre and *Singoalla* resurfaced as a project of Helinä Svensson-Timari theatre project, or one of Elvira Willman-Eloranta’s unfinished effort to extend her own artist work’s audience: *Singoalla*’s preserved manuscript recounts the fact that it was envisaged as an opera (Seppälä, 2012, p. 35; Hyttinen, 2012, pp. 120, 123).

The stable staff composition of the troupe playing *Singoalla* included six people in 1917, of which two were Roma: Aleksander Åkerlund and Ida Blomerus, or Ida Cingardy-Ora, as it was printed in the year 1917 handout, who a couple of years before had performed two shows, *The Entry of Civilisation among the Gypsies* and *The Black Wrath (Musta viha)*, on the occasion of the Gypsy Mission. The theatre was planned to consist of Gypsy actors

alone; however, this goal had to be haggled throughout the theatre's operation: the other actors named in the handout of the play year 1917 were Toivo Kivihalme, Onni Puro, Helinä Svensson and Lidja Assik. Åkerlund's role was to play the role of Assim, the son of the Gypsy King, in this romantic tragedy between Signoalla and Erland, the son of the knight of the castle. Cingardy-Ora appeared as Assim's sister, Ciria (KA, Senaatin taloussosasto, F3 174/3, Eb 3439).

The connections behind the Theatre were multiple. The dramaturgy of the play was done by Elvira Willman-Eloranta, a leftist feminist and writer and founder of Touring Theatre of Labour People (Labour's Tour Theatre). The choreographies of the dances in the 1917 performances were done by either Hertta Idman (1890–1942), the pioneer of Finnish modern dance, or Bertha Corander (1864–1955), a choreographer at Swedish Theatre (*Svenska Teatern*) in Helsinki 1914–1916 and Apollo Theater 1916–1917, both mentioned in the sources (Uusi Suometar, 1913, p. 4; Lahti, 1917, p. 3; Seppälä, 2012, p. 35; Mikko. Olavi Seppälä 22 September 2020).

The societal nature of the Finnish Gypsy Theatre also manifested itself in several ways. It was articulated clearly in newspaper writings, as well as in the play itself. In one article published in *Työmies* (Working Man), one particular point was raised about the content of the play: “the ambivalence between the love between the Gypsy girl and the knight, the right of nature, and the schematic societal nature” (Työmies, 1917c, p. 5). Thus, the restrictions imposed by society and class on people's relations, the theme which was now raised together by the non-Roma artists and Roma in the early Roma rights movement, was included in the play itself as an unadjusted and tragically concluded love story between lovers from different backgrounds.

Of great interest is that, according to the remaining draft of the script of the play, Elvira Willman-Eloranta had preserved some scenes, in which emancipatory themes were featured. In one scene, Singoalla and her lover's mother find each other through the subordinate status of a woman, and Singoalla cries that out in her own words: “Blessed be the mother, wonderful, you are, as I am, an unsafe woman”. The insight into these breeds a bond of solidarity between them. Signoalla ends up handing over the “free flower of love”, a new-born baby which they called “Child of Sorrow”, as a foster daughter to her own grandmother (KA, Sigurd Wettenhovi-Aspan arkisto).

There were diverse critiques of the Finnish Gypsy Theatre's *Singoalla*. Without going deeper into this matter, it can be noted that in *Kiertolainen* a rather positive review of the Finnish Gypsy Theatre was presented, allegedly written by Oskari Jalkio (Kiertolainen, 1923, p. 11), pointing that Åkerlund and others had been coping with the “difficult task quite brilliantly”. It was also noted sarcastically with the hope that “even this one more worthy endeavour on the Roma side would remain pending as a counterbalance to any degrading trickery and camping vilification of the Roma tribe” (Ibid.).

In any case, the years as a Roma actor in Finland in Aleksander Åkerlund's career were boundary breaking. Reportedly never-before were the Roma themselves performing within the theatre in Finland, in the roles of Gypsies, or in any other roles for that matter.

For Åkerlund, the opportunity was not a once-in-a-lifetime one. During his career, he appeared as an actor in Gypsy roles at least in Joensuu Theatre's *Preciosa* (1922) based on *La Gitanilla* by Miguel de Cervantes (1613) and in the Lieksa's Workers' Theatre's play *Kylän heittiö* (1925) based on a play by the Hungarian writer Edvard Tóth (Falú rossza, Village Scamp, 1875) (Suur-Karjala, 1922, p. 3; Kansan Voima, 1925, p. 4).

Åkerlund's career as an independent campaigner for Roma issues began after the Finnish Gypsy Theatre ceased operations. That period, from the 1920s to the end of the 1930s, could be characterised as a time when Åkerlund transitioned into a professional artist-activist: Åkerlund organised hundreds of Gypsy evenings (*Mustalaisilta*), Propaganda evenings (*Propaganda-ilta*), and Hungarian evenings (*Unkarilais-ilta*), the latter of which was a popular musical topic in Finland in the 1920s, with presentations about Roma and performing as a violinist all over the country. Alongside the social aspect, the history and culture of Roma rose to be a key theme in his lectures, as well as comprising more general questions about the importance of art. It was still the time when the religious content of Åkerlund's lectures, noticeable during his Gypsy Mission period, was narrowed down, only to rise again, to some extent, in the 1930s.

Prior to this, however, he focused on his self-improvement as an artist: like Ferdinand Nikkinen some years before, Åkerlund applied to become a music student in Helsinki Music College (*Helsingin musiikkiopisto*, predecessor of the Sibelius Academy). According to the Sibelius Academy Archive's documents and the newspapers, during the year 1919, Åkerlund was studying subjects like singing, theory of music and violin playing with well-known violinists of the time Heikki Halonen, Elis Jurva and Arvo Hannikainen. Alongside his studies, Åkerlund was actively growing his repertoire as a violinist. For example, the 1925 concert programme was already fairly international: Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky (1840–1893) *Mustalaisromanssi* (Gypsy Romance), Riccardo Drigo's (1846–1930) *Serenade*, Jules Massenet's *Élégie* (1842–1912), N. R. Bakaleinikov's (1881–1957) *Ole armollinen* (Oh, Mercy), Enrico Toselli's (1883–1926) *Serenade*, Ernő Kondor's (1881–1951) *Vanha mustalainen* (Old Gypsy) and W. Prosofski's (1861–1917) *Réverie*. There were also two adaptations of Finnish composer Oskar Merikanto's (1868–1924) arrangements, a Finnish folk song *Voi äitiparka ja raukka* (Poor Mom) and Elemer Szentirmay's (1836–1908) *Mustalainen* (Gypsy) composed 1875. These combined the core of Åkerlund's repertoire for years thereafter (SAA, List of given lessons during semesters 1918–1920 in the Helsinki Musical College; Aamulehti, 1927, p. 4; SM, Alex Åkerlund's tour poster 1925).

With his new repertoire and lectures Åkerlund now headed on long performing trips to different parts of Finland, acquiring performance sessions through his own contacts, and through newspaper announcements. Below is a text published in the newspaper *Perä-Pohja* (a newspaper published in Perä-Pohja province) (Perä-Pohja, 1932, p. 3) describing important aspects of Åkerlund and his wife's, Milda Åkerlund-Aulo, organised evening in the Tornio region, in 1930. Åkerlund's wife had joined his tour in 1925:

Interesting Occasions in the Tornio Region

In the Tornio area, Mr. Axel Åkerlund-Aulo and his lady are currently holding interesting presentations and art sessions. The first of these occasions was yesterday at the Civic College of Peräpohjola and those will continue probably in schools and in other properties in the parishes of the valley of Tornio river. Mr. Åkerlund-Aulo presented the history his own nationality, Gypsies, their status in Finland and other European countries. The journals write about these presentation sessions include the following:

“When hearing of Mr. Åkerlund-Aulo’s factually exhaustive, interesting and descriptive speeches of his tribe’s hard fate under the centuries, the listener as if he awakens from his long-term slumber and begins to feel understanding and pitiful sympathy for the ideas of the person who performs the programme”.

The presentation gives you an excellent and clear picture of the fate of the Vagrant people wandering from place to place.

Except for the presentation, Mr. Åkerlund-Aulo plays also violin: Gypsy and Hungarian folk tunes as well as other playing numbers. He has studied his art under the guidance of qualified teachers and achieves an excellent technique, complemented by emotional sensitivity.

Mrs Milda Åkerlund-Aulo is mainly assisting as a reciter of poems. Her director in her art has been our well-known reciter Arvi Mansikka and Mrs Aulo’s interpretation of poems specially written by Petöfi are refined.

Yesterday’s audience at the People’s College was very pleased with what they heard. (Perä-Pohja, 1930, p. 3).

Two things can be read from the text above when comparing it with the 1914 presentation. 1) *Audience*. Broadly put, Åkerlund had now moved also into locations of other associations, restaurants, cafes, schools and even localities of universities – and to radio performances. 2) *Diverse content and Hungarian theme*. Interestingly, Åkerlund brought his own Roma background out as an international construction which was cleverly connected to Finnishness and ‘Finno-ugrianism’ via the Hungarian-Gypsy theme – a theme which, at the time, was fairly popular on the music scene in Finland. It is worth mentioning that there were also Hungarian and Romanian Gypsy orchestras and musicians visiting and performing in Finland throughout the 1920s and 1930s; for example, Banka Bista Gypsy Orchestra and Veres Károly Gypsy Orchestra and Mago Károly Gypsy Orchestra. Also, a long career on the Finnish music scene was achieved by the Romanian musician Basil Bourtenau, who also performed with Finnish Roma musicians, Ferdinand Nikkinen and Mimmi Deivali Zehai Borg (Deivali Zehai comes from the Romani language, *deuleski/deulali čaj*, and means The Daughter of the God of the Skies). Borg also performed under several other names, like Dinali Zchai-Borg (*dinali zchai*, meaning ‘silly girl’ in Romani language, thus Silly Borg’s girl) (Uusi Aura, 1923, p. 1; Helsingin Sanomat, 1925, p. 10; 1929, p. 3; Jalkanen, 2006, p. 106)

There is not much to say about how his fellow Roma took issue with the emphasis found in Aleksander Åkerlund’s lectures and playing. In the oral history of the Finnish Roma collected in the 1960s, Aleksander Åkerlund is remembered as a prominent violin player (TYKA, AK 2685/1973). Conversely, the reception of Åkerlund’s appearances as a

speaker, actor and musician was on average favoured in the newspapers by the non-Roma writers. Only to mention two: Nils Robert af Ursin (1854–1936), the first chairman of the Finnish Labour Party and the second one, whose name is not known but who signed with the pseudonym *Nuorisoseuralainen* (Member of the Finnish Youth Association, a youth movement established in 1881). Ursin, MP of the Social Democrats, wrote a speech encouraging Åkerlund and inspiring the public in the provincial newspaper *Hämeen Kansa* (Häme people) (1924, p. 3). In his writing, Ursin called for a financial support of the Roma according to Åkerlund's argument of "rising from their state of discount", as "the present society is, as with the Jewish people, to blame for their miserable social condition in large numbers". Åkerlund's activities might also be defended by arguments related to Finnish cultural nationalism. That happened when *Nuorisoseuralainen* compared Åkerlund to Väinämöinen, the wizard of the Finnish national epic, *Kalevala*, who, with his Finnish national instrument kantele, "lit a tune in our souls", the idea of the power of knowledge. Åkerlund appears in this depiction as a saviour figure of Roma, similar to the "dark Väinämöinen" (*Räisälän Sanomat*, 1927, p. 2).

No direct literary documentary or text written by Åkerlund himself could be found concerning the presentations Åkerlund made in connection with his public appearances. Also, so far, only one article has been found in Finnish newspapers, where Aleksander Åkerlund himself tells, in his own words, his thoughts on Roma life in Finland. In an interview from 1941, Åkerlund comments on the situation of the 1,000 Karelian Roma, who were evacuated to Finland from parishes transferred to the Soviet Union under the Moscow Peace Treaty of 1940 (a total 420,000 evacuees from the district). Åkerlund ends up presenting a series of measures that would allow the Roma, according to him, to settle, with "a sense of home and a joy of work". Below is a quote from the aforementioned:

It is sad that our enlightened country has 3,000 citizens, according to Gypsies, who are illiterate and unskilled. They will never be reached, or better said, will never become established citizens unless the state takes vigorous action against them. In Finland, the work of the Gypsies is currently at zero. Admittedly, the Gypsy Mission has been here for 20 years (after 40 years), but for the last 10 years it has been in recession. (*Helsingin Sanomat*, 1941, p. 9).

The realities proved to be much more challenging for Roma in Finland after the Second World War than Åkerlund had expected. Many of the evacuees across Finland ended in Southern Finland's cities and, in particular, in the suburbs of Helsinki. Finland gained its new 'Gypsy problem', an official statement which would become a key issue throughout the 1950s and again in the 1960s and led to the new rise of the Roma civil rights movement.

Aleksander Åkerlund died of pneumonia in Helsinki, on December 1, 1944, at the age of 51. In his final years, he had given up playing due to rheumatism and made a living as an itinerant art dealer, selling his wife Tilda Åkerlund's Lapland-themed paintings. However, the unknown author of the text on Åkerlund's tombstone had far-reaching

hopes. The text inscribed reads as follows: “Roma tribe Enlightening-lecturer Aleksander Åkerlund”. This indicates the hope that Åkerlund’s work on civic activism and enlightenment would be remembered (Pohjolan Sanomat, 1938, p. 3; Helsingin Sanomat, 1944a, p. 3; 1944b, p. 11).

The story of Aleksander Åkerlund, however, did not end up in the canon of Finnish Roma civil rights movement and there are only scattered references about his musical career in the writings on Roma history in Finland. In this respect, the gatekeepers of the source materials of the history and historiography of this issue had a significant role. That said, Åkerlund’s story raises the question about the frictional relationship between the non-Christian Roma civil rights movement and the Roma movement which operated on Christian grounds from the start of the 20th century. Thus, if a Roma civil rights activist represented alternative views to the hegemonic Roma elite, as Aleksander Åkerlund’s partially did knowledge about them may remain absent from the official writing of history, as well as from oral history.

Ida Blomerus

Risto Blomster and Raluca Bianca Roman

Born in Impilahti, Karelia, Ida Blomerus (June 16, 1890 – February 1953) was one of the central figures in the activities of the Finnish Gypsy Mission (*Suomen Mustalaislähetys*) in the first years of the 1910s. She was, among other things, the forewoman of the Roma Work-home established in Vyborg in 1913 and prominently involved in the performance and fundraising tours of 1912–1913 as a singer, speaker and reciter of her own poems. Among the other Roma who appeared with her included Tilda Ahlgren, Miss Lindberg, Ferdinand Nikkinen, Antti Palm and Aleksander Åkerlund.

While active in the Gypsy Mission, Blomerus awoke to the misery of the social and social status of Roma and later also became one of the key figures in the first hints of a Finnish Roma civil rights movement, in 1917. Blomerus had begun her independent career as a performing “Gypsy Singer” under the stage name Ida Cingardy-Ora in 1914 (also I. Cingardy; Cingardy comes from Romani language, meaning “quarrel-maker”). This led her, under the name of I. Cingardy Blomérus-Ora, into the circles of the two supposedly earliest institutions for Roma civil rights movement in Finland: *Suomen Romanien Sivistysseura* (Finnish Roma Civilisation Society), established in 1917 and *Suomen Mustalaisteatteri* (Finnish Gypsy Theatre), active in 1917 and 1919.

Perhaps due to her entrepreneurial heritage, and a folk college background, Ida Blomerus also established the registered business name *Office “Knowledge and Advice”*, in the spring of 1917. The Blomerus family history in Impilahti included her father’s entrepreneurship in the watch repairing industry, which was widely recognised even among non-Roma. According to newspaper reports, in the autumn of 1917, Blomerus’s company sold

and brokered residential shares and small firms in its business flat in central Helsinki. In Finland, at that time, women's entrepreneurship was not exactly exceptional. However, it was focused, unlike the Blomerus company, on "clothing, food and nurture" (Wuoksi, 1894, p. 2; Registeringstidning för varumärken, 1917, p. 1011; Vainio-Korhonen, 2002).

Ida Blomerus' short career moved into unfamiliarity. Despite of this, significant was the fact that the Finnish Roma Civilisation Society had in Ida Blomerus a female foreperson and chairperson – a fact that challenges the common notion that Roma women would have played a mostly passive role in the early stages of the Roma civil rights movement in Finland. Also, Blomerus' activities in the trade sector traditionally favoured by the Finnish Kaale on the terms of modern society show interestingly her quest for the construction of self-styled 'Gypsiness'. In that action, too, Ida Blomerus wanted to highlight her own background: according to the records of the trade register, Blomerus's registered business name *Office "Knowledge and advice"* was marked in the name of Ida Cingardy Blomérus-Ora – a name which Ida Blomerus had either chosen herself or had been given within circles where she was known as an artist and an advocate for Roma rights.

Ida Blomerus was born in Impilahti, in Karelia, on the northern shore of Lake Ladoga. It was only tens of miles from Impilahti to Sortavala, where Sofia Schwartz studied to become a teacher from 1907 to 1911 (see Schwartz's portrait, below). The distance to Vyborg – the city where the Gypsy Mission started its actions in 1911 – accrued some 200 kilometres. In the early 20th century, Impilahti had a large Roma population: based on a survey by the Finnish Senate of Gypsy population in the 1890s, out of 1500 Roma registered in Finland, Impilahti had 53 people enrolled. Under the name Blomerus, there were 33 people. (Karjalan Sanomat, 1912, p. 2; TA, K 9, 1895; Impilahti).

There is no information on how, and at what point, Blomerus got involved in the operation of the Gypsy Mission. She had attended the East Karelian Folk College in Impilahti. With certainty, however, it is known that she acted as a speaker of the Gypsy Mission, on several occasions in 1910. Along with the role of prominent speaker, other duties held by Blomerus in the Gypsy Mission included serving, in 1913, as the forewoman of a working home for men and women in Vyborg. As her working partner, she had the deacon Fabian Hintikainen and Helmi Johnsson, the wife of Oskari Jalkio, as the executive director (Harri Blomerus, personal communication, December 19, 2020; Kiertolainen, 1910, p. 6; Kiertolainen, 1913a, p. 16)

Like the time of Blomerus' accession to the Gypsy Mission, the time of her separation is also unclear. However, the beginning of her own appearance, first as reciter, then as singer without connections to the Gypsy Mission, is timed around 1914. Interestingly, in the same year her address information can be found in the Helsinki address and trade list, which lists her professional title as "music student". Blomerus, according to newspapers, had studied solo singing under the guidance of Finnish internationally renowned opera singer Aino Ackté (1876–1944) (Työmies, 1914, p. 2; Parikkalan Sanomat, 1915, p. 2; Helsingin ja ympäristön osote- ja ammattikalenteri, 1914, p. 64; Savolainen, 1916, p. 3).

It was also during these years, from 1914 to 1916, when Ida Blomerus became an active and known performing artist, as a “Gypsy singer”, using the artist name I. Cingardy-Ora after her marriage. Broadly put, Blomerus performed frequently, especially in Worker’s houses (i.e. houses of workers’ associations) in cities and parishes in eastern Finland. In her performances, Cingardy-Ora, emphasised internationalism in many ways. For example, her repertoire consisted of Roma songs from different countries, as well as small pieces by well-known Finnish and international composers and folk songs. The languages of the songs varied between Finnish, Swedish, Russian and Italian, as well as the Romani languages of different countries. Her most liked number was a song composed by Elemar Szenntirmay *Mustalainen* (Gypsy). According to the critical reviews published, Cingardy-Ora’s special purpose was also to draw the public attention “to her tribal Gypsies, to improve and elevate their status”. In the following prior notice published in *Savolainen* (1916, p. 3) many details on Cingardy-Ora’s artist character are stressed:

I. Cingardy-Ora’s Concert

Next Saturday will be a rare concert in the Casino ballroom, when the Gypsy singer, Mrs Cingardy-Ora, singing not only Finnish, Swedish and Russian language songs, but also Gypsy songs in various Gypsy dialects. The singer, who is one of the pupils of Mrs Achté, performs in Gypsy costume and has won the popularity of the public in the capital and elsewhere at her concerts and has received good reviews. We hope the audience will keep the concert in their minds and rush numerously to the Casino next Saturday to hear interesting and beautiful Gypsy songs. Mrs. Cingardy-Ora’s special purpose is also to draw the general public’s attention to her tribesmen, the Gypsies, to improve and uplift their status, for which the concert derives its quite peculiar purpose and charm. (*Savolainen*, 1916, p. 3).

In many ways, Ida Blomerus’ own artist-image as a Gypsy Singer, using the stage name I. Cingardy-Ora, brings to mind the activities of Aleksander Åkerlund and Ferdinand Nikkinen, described in above. Interestingly, for Åkerlund, it is also known that his first detachments from the Gypsy Mission are similarly linked, like those of Blomerus, to 1914. It is also known that the concrete connection between Blomerus and Åkerlund continued, after working in the Gypsy Mission, to be close during their acting in the Finnish Gypsy Theatre, in 1917 (for more on the theatre, see Åkerlund’s portrait). As mentioned above, the theatre performed a play, *Singoalla*, based on a book by Swedish writer Viktor Rydberg. In the play, Ida Blomerus and Aleksander Åkerlund played the adult children, Ciria and Assim, of the Gypsy King (*Vapaus*, 1914, p. 2).

However, while information remains limited, some important changes in the life of Ida Blomerus can be assumed: settling in Helsinki, starting a determined development of her own artistic career as a student of music, and speaking publicly about Roma rights. These points became intertwined in many ways with her work, especially during the year 1917. This is also connected to a little-known activity in the backdrop of the Finnish Gypsy Theatre: establishment of the Finnish Roma Civilisation Society in the early spring of

1917. It is worth mentioning a few words about this short-lived Society, and perhaps the first Roma/Gypsy organisations in Finland which was led by Ida Blomerus, a 27-year-old Finnish Roma woman.

According to the information compiled from newspapers and archives, the Finnish Roma Civilisation Society was founded in early 1917. So far, no information has been found on its registration. However, some facts can be deduced mainly based on the texts of Ida Blomerus (or I. Cingardy Blomérus-Ora, as she used to call herself at the time): the society had about 20 members who already had some experience in societal associations and a board of trustees and committees. Blomérus-Ora also announced that the idea for the creation of the Finnish Roma Civilisation Society and its rules were invented by herself (Työmies, 1917e, p. 6). The establishment of the Society, purposes, connections and forms of action can be found in an article published in *Työmies*, on May 13, 1917, just before the first tour of the Gypsy Theatre:

The Gypsies' enlightenment pursuits have been rekindled in recent times. For that purpose, the "Roma civilisation society" has been formed here in Helsinki, with the aim of making educational work free of religious purposes among Roma, s.o. Gypsies. A tour has been organised by this Society, which in the near future will be in the countryside to perform a stage adaptation of Viktor Rydberg's wonderful poetry narrative on Singoalla, which details the love between a Gypsy girl and a knight, the right of nature and the schematic the ambivalence between societal. It is presented by an entourage assembled from real Gypsies. Singoalla has been adapted for the stage by novelist Elvira Willman-Eloranta. The troupe performs Gypsy songs, violin playing and Gypsy dances in Singoalla's prologue. The entourage plays primarily in the Worker's houses and the first performance takes place at Högfors, 15. this month. (Työmies, 1917c, p. 5).

The article raises two points of interest concerning the Finnish Roma Civilisation Society: the affiliation with leftist and emancipatory actors and the Society's distancing from 'religious purposes'. Both the Society and the Theatre were linked in many ways with labour associations and the people involved in them. For example, Elvira Wilman-Eloranta, who was responsible for the script and dramatisation of *Singoalla*, was a well-known left-wing writer and a feminist with connections to the Touring Theatre of Labour People (*Työväen Kiertueteatteri*). Similarly, the Society's two fundraising evenings, organised in the spring 1917, were held at the premises of labour associations: the Railwaymen's Union (*Rautatieläisten liitto*) and the Swedish-speaking Labour association Friends of Work (*Arbetets Vännern*) (Työmies, 1917a, p. 3; Työmies, 1917b, p. 2; Hyttinen, 2012, p. 120).

Also crucial is the fact that the Society publicly remained disconnected from religiously-justified activities. This theme became the subject of an interesting debate published in *Työmies*, which opens up the context of Ida Cingardy Blomérus-Ora's and the *Society's* activities. The debate had two parties: the *Society's* chairwoman Blomérus-Ora, representing the non-religious and active line, and the group of Roma as a board of the directors of the Society, representing the religious and conservative line. A reply to the original

writing arrived in *Työmies* on 20 May 1917, where the group appearing as the Board of Directors decided that the Society would hereby be disconnected from the activities of the Finnish Gypsy Theatre.

Gypsies' enlightenment Hobbies

In the writing of *Työmies* no 127, we ask for a little clarification. The inscription showed that a travelling theatre, called *Gypsy Theatre*, the Finnish Roma Civilisation Society founded in Helsinki and its purpose goodbye, would have been set up by the director Helina Svensson-Timari.

Consequently, it is announced by the Board of Trustees of Finnish Roma Civilisation Society, that no theatre tour has been sent by our Society and that Finnish Roma Civilisation Society is not in connections with the so-called Gypsy Theatre Tour. Yes, our Society has an amusement committee, but it works locally here in Helsinki. In addition, we granted permission to our Acting Secretary Antti Palm of Vyborg to increase our amusement committee and to operate as a local Society in Vyborg.

On behalf of the Board of Trustees of Finnish Roma Civilisation Society. (*Työmies*, 1917d, p. 9).

Chairwoman Blomérus-Ora's response was published just two days later, on May 22, 1917. She accused this "family group that represented the Christian-conservative line in the Society" of being unwilling to promote the Society's explicit and enshrined purposes. Blomérus-Ora's partly ironic response may also reveal something about the author's personal character, a hint as to why she had the artist name "Cingardy" (i.e. quarrel-maker):

Gypsies' Enlightenment Hobbies

To explain the descriptive account published in Sunday's *Työmies*, representing the personal intrigues of the former Secretary of the *Finnish Roma Civilisation Society* and his relative council, is hereby informed as follows:

Primo: the purpose in accordance with the rules of the said civilisation society includes, as an essential part, the establishment of the Gypsy Theatre and the objectives of its activities; the theatre must be regarded as being sent by the said society (since the home stayed members of the society did not have the functionality and willingness required for mobilisation), the chairperson of the society is the publisher and actor of the theatre, on whose initiative and measure also the society and its rules are born; the society whose current secretary has been in theatre rehearsals travelling from Vyborg (although he could not be used in the planned role); the society, which substantial part of the membership body (1/3), constitutes the staff of the said theatre tour; who, at the same time, reportedly have all attended organisational activities in labour associations.

So that this family, representing the Christian-conservativeness in the society, would have done more wisely, in my opinion, than representing the "enlightenment pursuits" of our Gypsies, when representing their soapy solution for the treatment of gout, naturopathy and quackery – in the paid notification section of the journal.

I. Cingardy-Ora.

The chairperson of the S. R. S. (Finnish Roma Civilisation Society). (*Työmies*, 1917e, p. 6).

Two points in this reply by Ida Cingardy Blomérus-Ora still demand their own comment in this context: the relations between Roma families and the ‘Christian-conservativeness’ of the action. Presumably, both points were intended to influence the activities of the Finnish Roma Civilisation Society, on the one hand, as a motivating factor for its activities and, on the other, as a dispersing factor. Inter-family relations, or as Blomérus-Ora writes, “personal intrigues of the former secretary of the Finnish Roma Civilisation Society and his kinsmen” may refer to the form of blood feuding in the Finnish context, which is most commonly manifested today in a principle of avoiding encounters between families in conflict (Grönfors, 1977; Mohamed-Salih, 1985; Markkanen, 2003; Viljanen, 2012). So, it may be inevitable that there was at least a certain level of questioning of the so-called cultural reasons behind the dispersal of the board’s opinions.

In terms of the ‘Christian-conservativeness’ that Ida Cingardy Blomérus-Ora pretends, the gaze eventually turns to the Gypsy Mission. We can also bring up here another archival source signed by Blomérus-Ora that illuminates the context from this point of view. According to Blomérus-Ora’s and Helinä Svensson’s writings, when asking the Senate for free tickets for the use of the Finnish Gypsy Theatre (with no success), the disparity to the Gypsy Mission was similarly noticeable. The request published below was addressed to the Finance Department of the Senate of the Grand Duchy of Finland:

We, the undersigned, who have set up a summer tour called “Gypsy Theatre” to assist Finnish Gypsies in their studies, beg – referring to the civically neglected status of our Gypsies, as well as the fact that the government assisted with free travel tickets on railways religious conversion work carried out under the name of so-called Gypsy Mission, which we Gypsies have not yet come to appreciate, and have not more generally realised its blessing – humbly ask: that the Senate would be favourable to the Finnish Gypsies self-help company that we represent, and to grant the “Gypsy Theatre’s” six-person (6) stamp troupe starting today, free tickets for three months on the Finnish State Railways.

In Helsinki May 14th, 1917.

Helinä Svensson. Gypsy-born actress. Head of the “Gypsy Theatre”.

I. Cingardy Blomérus-Ora. Gypsy-born singer. Chairperson of Finnish Roma Civilisation Society. (KA. Senaatin talousosasto: F3 174/3, Eb 3439).

However, this request was unanimously rejected, with no justification for that rejection being published, as was the custom. Despite the absence of an official reason for the rejection, a few speculations can be made about the political and social reasons that led to it. First, Finland was still a part of Russia as a Grand Duchy of Finland in the spring before its independence in December 1917 and, during the Russian revolution occurring in 1917, there may have been no reason to support any kind of achievements interpreted as left-wing and radical. Second, the activities of the Gypsy Mission, which was prominent in the public eye, were seen as both socially and culturally constructive, and therefore supportable. Attention is also drawn to the fact that the emphasis on the application is strongly on Roma’s own activities and both signatories that appear state their Gypsy

background (although, in Helinä Svensson's case this status would be left without confirmation). Finally, from the point of view of the authorities, the pleading of a group of 'Gypsies' operating through an apparently unregistered association and the support of the project perhaps seemed simply dubious, based on old prejudices.

Whether that was the case or not, the public bickering ended with the decision of the editorial of the *Työmies*, but it undoubtedly continued with other occasions for a long time. That said, ribbings such as that of Blomérus-Ora in the last paragraph, were also familiar in the pages of *Kiertolainen*: she refers here to Oskari Jalkio's pursuit of natural medicine, which he actively introduced in *Kiertolainen*'s newspaper writings (Viita, 1967, pp. 66–67).

The Finnish Roma Civilisation Society moved into the twilight of history after 1917. Likewise, the Finnish Gypsy Theatre suspended its activities in 1918, when there was a sizeable civil war in Finland, and the revolutionary labour movement experienced a bitter defeat. Moreover, the name Ida Blomerus disappeared from the sources and archives after the Finnish Gypsy Theatre ceased its operations. Blomerus married doctor Eino Heikel in 1920 and acted as an entrepreneur under the name of Irda Heikkeli. She continued her career as an artist, at least to some extent, performing with the Helsinki based opera troupe in 1922 in Vyborg, together with renowned opera singers Wäinö Sola and Eino Rautavaara. The family's memory records state that she later kept a restaurant in Lappeenranta and moved to Sweden where she died in Gothenburg, in February 1953 (Wiborgs Nyheter, 1922, p. 3; Harri Blomerus, personal communication, December 19, 2020).

However, if other traces of Blomerus have disappeared, the poems written by her have remained: Ida Blomerus' song text *Sun ristisi juurelle, Jeesus* (By Your Cross, Jesus) can even be found in editions of the songbook *Hengellinen laulukirja* (Spiritual Songbook) favoured by the Baptist, Methodist and Pentecostal congregations as well as the Free Church in Finland (*Hengellinen laulukirja*, 1976, 469–470). It is also unclear which of the poems, if any, published with pseudonym in *Kiertolainen*, are written by Blomerus. Perhaps behind the name "Gypsy girl" (*Mustalaistyttö*) is Ida Blomerus – a Roma woman who defended the Roma civil rights alongside her impassioned but brief public career in the 1910s.

Ida Blomerus' activity and contribution to the 1917 Finnish cultural, social and economic life was exceptional. As a representative of that cultural life, she sought to develop herself through education as a 'Gypsy Singer'. However, in her social activities, she did not settle for being a line member of associations but was a founder and chairwoman, setting up that which is supposedly the first Roma-driven association in Finland. Furthermore, in economic life, she sought to act in her Romani-language artist name of Ida Cingardy Blomérus-Ora. Ida Blomerus will remain in the history of Finnish Roma as well as the history of Finland as a progressive and ground-breaking personality.

Sofia Schwartz

Risto Blomster and Raluca Bianca Roman

Anna Sofia Schwartz (May 20, 1887 – November 3, 1932), later the surname changed to Säilä and, after her marriage, to Santamo, was born in Kuivaniemi in 1887, Northern Ostrobothnia (north of the city of Oulu). Alongside other women, such as Mandi Isberg, Ida Blomerus, Ina Palmroth and, in the 1930s, Maria Hakaranta (Viita, 1967, p. 109), she was one of the key female Kaale workers within the Gypsy Mission, and a protegee of Oskari Jalkio (Tervonen, 2012, p. 128). She worked as a teacher for the first Roma School of the Mission (1905–1907) and continued her collaboration with the Gypsy Mission through the years, graduating from the Sortavala seminary in 1911. While she could never find a permanent job as an educator, she continued to work as a substitute teacher throughout her life. Schwartz's work within the Gypsy Mission, as well as her particular positions concerning issues of sedentarisation and social integration, position her as a key figure in the history of Roma civic emancipation in Finland, as well as a prime example of the role of women in the Roma movement for mobilisation in the country.

Little is known about Schwartz's family background apart from what has been written in the journal *Kiertolainen* and her own descriptions of her early life, and a short biographical entry written by Tuula Rekola (2010b). However, she presented herself as being a Roma woman who had graduated from primary school in 1905. In 1905, at 18 years old, and in the same year of her graduation, she also happened to meet Oskari Jalkio (at the time known as Anders Oskar Johansson), while he visited Paltamo (the place of Schwartz's studies) as part of his missionary work. The Gypsy Mission had not yet been officially founded (this would occur the following year) but Jalkio's work among Roma/Gypsies in the country had already begun. The Mission had already set up small posts in Tampere (its future headquarters) and travels for the purpose of evangelisation and missionary work among so-called Gypsies (*mustalaiset*) were a key part of the future organisation's work.

According to her testimonies and Jalkio's descriptions of their encounter throughout the years, Sofia Schwartz was the one who contacted Jalkio asking him to help her in her pursuit of further education. As some of the key foci of the Mission's activities were also those of education of Roma in the country, Jalkio took a keen interest in Sofia Schwartz's goals and interests. When a Sunday school for Roma children was set up in Vyborg (an area with a large Roma population at the time), in 1905, Schwartz also became involved and, when the school expanded into a day time school, she also became a school teacher within it (Viita, 1967, pp. 63, 65).

The school, which had 18 pupils, among whom also 3 adult students (*Kiertolainen*, 1907b, p. 5; Blomster, 2012, p. 359), was focused on teachings primarily related to religion. However, a key part within it was also the teaching of reading, writing, mathematics

and singing. Sofia Schwartz took great interest in teaching children, mainly by means of Bible stories, and often emphasised the children's interest in learning, underlining that Roma children too wished and were keenly interested in their education. The greatest reticence, she found, came not from the children, but from the parents (Kiertolainen, 1907b, p. 5). Due to lack of resources, the school closed its doors on February 28, 1907 (see Rekola, 2010b).

It was after the Vyborg school was closed that Sofia Schwartz undertook a trip to Ingria, where she encountered Ingrian Roma. Schwartz, according to her own narration, had met in Vyborg, in the autumn of 1906, a teaching couple from Ingria who had urged her to go on this trip. There are no further details of this travel program or the duration of the trip, only that she arrived in the village of Annamaise in Ingria, on March 9, 1907. However, in connection with her visit, she wrote two articles, one before the trip, in the newspaper *Uusi Inkeri* (New Ingria) (1906b, p. 3) and another, after the trip, in *Kiertolainen* (1907d, pp. 6–7).

One point should be made concerning Schwartz's Ingrian trip: Sofia Schwartz, a Finnish Roma woman, who represented the Evangelical Gypsy Mission, wrote her revival salute to the Gypsies of Ingria in the pro-Finnish newspaper *Uusi Inkeri*, whose predecessor was *Inkeri – The Finnish Proponent of St Petersburg and Ingria* (*Inkeri – Pietarin ja Inkerin suomalainen äänenkannattaja*). The newspaper itself (edited for the same reasons in Vyborg, and no longer in St Petersburg) was disbanded in 1906 by the Russian censorship authorities, on the grounds that its content was interpreted as being too radical. This, whether intentional or not, raises the question of the importance of Ingrians for the Fennoman's nation-building project in the Finnish Grand Duchy. Since the 1840s, when Elias Lönnrot (1802–1884), the author of the Finnish national epic *Kalevala*, visited the region to collect folklore among the ancestors of the Finns, Ingria had a special importance within the Fennoman's project: namely, Ingria was seen as a region where Finnish folklore remained more 'authentic' than elsewhere, and Finno-Ugric people living in this area were seen as an integral part of the Finnish nation, and a thriving force in the nation-building process. While the ties of the Finnish intelligentsia with Ingria, both concrete and ideological, were strong, there were also firm connections at the grass-roots level, also with local Roma. Without going further into the Ingrian Roma issue, it can only be mentioned that, according to the sources available, in 1906, approximately twenty Ingrian Roma families were estimated to live in the area (*Uusi Inkeri*, 1906a, p. 1), and the networks of familiar houses offering accommodation to Finnish Roma extended even to the Western localities of Ingria (Schoultz, 1955, pp. 130–136). It is, however, difficult to gauge what impact the question of Finnishness and the Ingrian issue had on Schwartz's activities. Nevertheless, Schwartz's trip to Ingria arguably received at least some of its justification from this direction as well.

Following her trip, Schwartz wrote a lengthy article in the journal *Kiertolainen*, about the encounter, comparing Finnish Roma to Ingrian Roma (Kiertolainen, 1907d, pp. 6–7). As a summary of her account, it is interesting to note her position concerning the key

issues revolving around the issue of Finnish Roma social emancipation in the country, as well as the ways in which her views seem to converge with those of the Gypsy Mission at the time. According to Schwartz, unlike Finnish Roma, Ingrian Roma were seen to be much more inclined in believing in God, attending school and going to Church, while also being much less suspicious of missionary work. Also according to Schwartz, this situation may have been due to the fact that the Russian state seemed to have been treating Roma there much more favourably than in Finland and it was far less common to attribute the crimes of one individual Roma to the entire Roma population. At the same time, Schwartz sought to partially justify the suspicion on behalf of the Finnish majority: stating that because Finnish people were hard-working people they were perhaps less likely to accept those who did not work (Ibid.).

Sofia Schwartz's 1907 article thus illustrates a few key points, which also underline her subsequent work with the Mission:

- 1) The use of the term Roma instead of Gypsies can be seen throughout, converging with Jalkio's plea in an article in the first issue of *Kiertolainen* to abandon the use of the latter for the former (Kiertolainen, 1907a, p. 5);
- 2) Schwartz's justification for the suspicion on behalf of the Finnish majority of the Roma in the country underlined the importance of hard-work which also lay at the core of the Gypsy Mission's activities among Roma, while also emphasising Finnish Kaale's connection to Finland and her own desire for the Kaale community to become more fully connected with (or even assimilated within) majority mentality, aspirations and worldviews;
- 3) Connected to the latter, the article contains subtle hints of Schwartz's advocacy of sedentarisation and schooling, also key elements of the Gypsy Mission's projects.

Furthermore, prior to her trip to Ingria, Schwartz had written a short article in *Uusi Inkeri*, in September 1906, addressing the 'Gypsies' (whom there she stated were called Roma in their own language) in that region. Below is a translation of that article. It is worth noting that the Finnish translation of the poem was written in a typical poem structure, while the Romani language version of the poem was written as a sentence structure. The translation below maintains the format of the original source:

Greetings.

We have received the following from Gypsy lady Sofia Schwartz, an employee of the Finnish Gypsy Mission sending her greetings to her Ingrian tribe:

Dear Gypsy sisters and brothers in Ingria!

My heartfelt greetings to you, the unknown Roma*, and at the same time I am very pleased to announce that the morning is already beginning to loom for us too.

Now the God of love has begun to call especially those of us who are despised in the world and hated by it. I am one of your brethren too, and I have decided to sacrifice my life for raising our people. May the God of love help me in this work.

I believe that soon we can say that every Gypsy:

Oika somma kaalat çenna, / kaali de som çesta panna. / Bi menat rahhaa kaalipa; / soralo hin maan naa va fina. / Doi suksuvaanne kaalibosta. / Parni deske parno jiu.

(I am black on the surface, / My heart is blacker. / But I do not mourn my blackness: / My supporter is strong. / That is my black heart / Transformed into snow white.)

Sister: Sofia Schwartz

* Gypsies call themselves Roma in their own language. (Uusi Inkeri, 1906b, p. 3).

The above piece is an interesting example of Schwartz's engagement within the Gypsy Mission (wherein the editors of the newspaper presented her as an employee), as well as Schwartz's emphasis on the pathway to raising her people, through an emphasis on the theme of spiritual uplifting. Furthermore, it is important to note that, in 1906, while Schwartz addressed the community in Ingria as *mustalaiset* (Gypsies), she also emphasised that the latter are called Roma in their own language. It is unclear whether her views were influenced by Oskari Jalkio or the two connected based on similarities of their approaches. In her 1907 article published in *Kiertolainen*, mentioned above (1907d, pp. 6–7), she used exclusively the term Roma to refer to both the community living in Finland and that living in Ingria. This somewhat denotes the ways in which her writing was connected also to the audience she was addressing (readers of *Kiertolainen* or general Finnish readership, for whom the Kaale were known primarily as *mustalaiset*). This could be noted also in another short piece of writing she did for the newspaper *Koitto*, published by the Teachers' Health and Sobriety Association, where she introduces herself as a Gypsy girl (*Koitto*, 1906, p. 8).

Finally, the short piece of poetry at the end, written in Romani language and providing a translation in Finnish (in brackets), underlines both the thematic approach to the issue of emancipation within the Mission (and Schwartz's own views within it) and the dual audience of her message: the Finnish speakers/readers and the potential Ingrian Roma recipients. The authorship of the poem is unclear but versions of the poem were also published in *Kiertolainen*, in 1907, with an article signed by Helmi Johnsson's (Oskari Jalkio's wife) (*Kiertolainen*, 1907c, p. 8), as well as in *Kiertolainen*, in 1914 (*Kiertolainen*, 1914a, p. 7), with no signature, and in Oskari Jalkio's book of Roma Songs, in 1939 (Jalkio, 1939, pp. 6–7).

Following her trip to Ingria, Schwartz again came in contact with Oskari Jalkio, who, at the time, was based at the Central Office of the Gypsy Mission, in Tampere. Jalkio supported her continuing studies and, in June 1907, she attended seminary preparation courses in Kuortane, where she also participated in, and organised, missionary evenings and events. Following that training, Sofia Schwartz was admitted to the Sortavala seminary where she studied to become an elementary school teacher (*Kiertolainen*, 1907e, p. 7; Viita, 1967, pp. 70–71; Rekola, 2010b; Lindberg, 2012, p. 146).

During her time at the seminary, Schwartz changed her surname to Sofia Säilä, in 1910 (Suomalainen Wirallinen Lehti, 1910, p. 4) and she graduated in 1911, after which she worked as a substitute teacher in various locations. She also continued, throughout this time, her work with the Gypsy Mission, as an evangelist, speaker, and writer for

Kiertolainen, until her death. Sofia Säilä later married the Finn Väinö Juhani Santamo (Rekola, 2010b). The details of her marriage date and circumstances remain unknown.

A key aspect in Sofia Schwartz's life was, as mentioned above, her unique position. In her role as a schoolteacher, Schwartz became one of the few female teachers at the start of the 20th century. The fact that her background was Roma made this role even more unique, especially in the context in which not many Kaale children at the time graduated from primary school.

Furthermore, her pursuit of education, her contact with Jalkio and the Mission, and her diligence to continue her schooling, show a key element in her life course, which could also be observed in her writings for *Kiertolainen*: namely, the emphasis placed on education as a pathway to social integration within the country. Alongside that, Schwartz also seemed to have fully internalised the views and goals of the Gypsy Mission; or, at the very least, her views seemed to have fully converged with the latter.

One of the key aspects in this respect was her approach to housing and sedentarisation. According to Schwartz (as well as according to other Roma writers on the pages of *Kiertolainen*, see Nikkinen for example), the seizing of a wandering life was the pathway to a better life, and education as key within it (see also Kiertolainen, 1913c, p. 15). Her career pursuit of becoming a schoolteacher clearly illustrates this position.

At the same time, Sofia Schwartz represents an illustrative example of the agency, voice and determination that Roma women had as part of the movement for civic emancipation among Roma in Finland as well as an example of the role that Roma women had as part of the Gypsy Mission itself. While her Kaale background (and her typical Roma surname) may have hindered some of her chances of gaining permanent employment (during her Sortavala years she had, in fact, changed her family name to Säilä, very likely in order to increase her chances of future employment), she nevertheless continued to work as either a substitute or probationary teacher throughout her short life. Sofia Santamo died of poor health, at the age of 45, on November 3, 1932. Her place of death remains unknown.

Antti Palm

Risto Blomster and Raluca Bianca Roman

Antti Palm (June 11, 1874–May 13, 1939) was a Finnish Kaale pastor and evangelist as well as a key figure within the Gypsy Mission during the early 20th century. He began by working within the midst of the organisation and contributed to expanding its influence among the Karelian Roma/Gypsies in Vyborg and the Finnish Kaale community in Finland, acting as a mediator and a preacher at the various events organised by the mission in the country. He was one of the key members of the Vyborg charter of the Gypsy Mission and, in 1907, part of the group of Roma members that constituted most

of the local branch's board of directors. Alongside this, Antti Palm was involved in what was perhaps the very first Roma-led organisation in the country, the *Suomen Romanien Sivistysseura* (The Finnish Roma Civilisation Society), established in 1917, led by Kaale woman Ida Blomerus (also known as Cingardy-Ora) which was also connected to the first Gypsy Theatre (*Mustalaisteatteri*) in the country (led by Helinä Svensson-Timari, active in 1917 and 1919) (Työmies, 1917a, p. 9). While presently little information has been gathered on Antti Palm concerning his life story or work with the latter two organisations, his influence both within the Gypsy Mission and in the overall work for Roma civic emancipation and Roma mobilisation in the country cannot be understated.

Antti Palm was born on June 11, 1874, in Vyborg, Karelia, a town which has historically been a boundary zone between the Russian and Finnish worlds, having been part of different empires and duchies throughout its history. This is relevant here especially in connection to Karelian Roma/Gypsies, some of whom were Finnish Kaale, some who had mixed connection with Gypsy communities in Russia. As discussed in the introduction, before Finland's independence, in 1917, Vyborg was part of the Grand Duchy of Finland, also part of the Russian Empire. During the interwar period, Viipuri gained the status of the fourth largest town in Finland, and the seat of the Viipuri province. After the end of the Winter War (1939–1940), Vyborg was once again part of Soviet Union and the status of the Karelian refugees from that area to Finland would become a political issue in the conflict between the two countries.

Vyborg was home to a large Finnish Kaale community, among whom were also Antti Palm and his family. The Palm family lived in Vyborg and other the rural provinces of Karelia. The family included father, Malakias (born 1820), mother, Margareta (born 1832), as well as five boys and two girls (born between 1855 and 1874) (Karjala Database, 2019). Anders – or Antti as he was known during his professional life – and his sister Ida, were born as twins in 1874. According to what is preserved of the family's memory records, at least some the children had attended school, at least to some extent, and had achieved fluent reading and writing skills. Also, at least some of them had adopted a Christian-orientated world view. This is all referenced also the boys' nicknames, such as 'Koulu-Hermannin' (School-Hermannin), 'Herran-Janne' (Lord's Janne) and 'Pappi-Antti' (Antti the Priest) (Päivi Majaniemi, personal communication, November 9, 2020; Richard Palm, personal communication, December 9, 2020). Little else, however, is known of the wider family's, and Antti Palm's specifically, earlier history and life.

While the Gypsy Mission seemed to be run primarily by non-Roma and has often been presented as a non-Roma led organisation targeting Roma, in reality, many Kaale were affiliated or members of the Gypsy Mission, from its very inception. This included Otto and Ina (Albertina) Palmroth, Sofia Schwartz, Piini (Albiini) Mäntyniemi, Adolf and Miina Långström, Karl Fredrikki Lindström, Ida Blomerus, Tilda and Yrjö Lindeman, Ferdinand Nikkinen, Alex (Aulo) Åkerlund as well as the most famous Roma preachers among them, Herman Korpp and Antti Palm. It was in his role as a preacher and

evangelist that Antti Palm became most influential within the Mission, from its beginnings in the 1900s.

His work with the Mission seems to have started from the very beginning of the Gypsy Mission itself, in 1907. Furthermore, Antti Palm was also connected to a development which occurred in Vyborg: namely, the organisation of a charter of the Gypsy Mission at a meeting in Vyborg, as early as 1907. There, the Vyborg charter seemed to have, unlike the central seat of the organisation, which was, at that time, based in the city of Tampere (Southern Finland), a majority of its board members Roma: more specifically, 16 Finnish Kaale members and 7 non-Roma members (Tervonen, 2012, p. 128). The Roma members included several of the Palm family, at least based on the family name: Herman Palm, Amalia Palm, Antti Palm, Aleksander Palm, Matilda Palm, Rosa Palm, Iida Maria Palm, Anna Lowisa Palm, alongside Gustaawa Enroth, Wilhelmiina Hagert, Katriina Hagert, Juhana Hörman, Amanda Bollström, Johan Herman Hedman, Wilhelmiina Korppi, Lowiisa Isberg (Kiertolainen, 1907e, p. 7). This situation did not last for very long and the Roma membership gradually decreased over the next few years, as the subsequent issues of *Kiertolainen* note in their detailed memberships.

Furthermore, as early as the 1910s, Palm published regularly in the pages of *Kiertolainen* (1912c, p. 8), alongside other Kaale authors, such as Sofia Schwartz and Karl Fr. Lindström (Tervonen, 2012, p. 128). His publications often concerned his work as a Roma evangelist and his descriptive profession was often simply as 'Romani'. He also featured as a key missionary of the organisation, both on the pages of *Kiertolainen*, as well as in the mentions of mainstream regional newspapers of the time (Wiipuri, 1912, p. 4; Suomalainen, 1912, p. 2; Uusimaa, 1915, p. 2).

One particular article, titled "Helping Gypsies (open letter to the Finnish people)" appeared both in the journal *Kiertolainen* (1912b, pp. 4–5), and elsewhere in large popular newspapers across the country, such as *Helsingin Sanomat* (1912, p. 13). The article presented the main work of the organisation, in an address to the "Finnish people" and included the names of the main board members, among which Antti Palm and Karl Fr. Lindström appeared. The article also invited readers (of the majority) to become acquainted and to assist in the work of the Mission, in whatever way possible.

As mentioned above, his role as a Roma writer in *Kiertolainen* was not unique. In fact, many other Roma writers (men and women) also seemed to publish short pieces of their life stories or work on the pages of the Mission's journal. Nevertheless, his work as an evangeliser among the Kaale in the country and the Roma/Gypsy community in Karelia, became influential in the overall success of the Mission among the Kaale. It is worth noting that Antti Palm seems to have temporarily left the Gypsy Mission in 1914, without giving a precise reason for his decision, but writing a short piece in *Kiertolainen* about his leave (1914b, p. 12) only to return again later on.

These dynamics have not yet been accounted for but resemble to some extent the moves of Åkerlund, Blomerus and Nikkinen. Unlike the other three, Antti Palm nevertheless continued the work with the Mission, including during the interwar period and,

alongside other Roma members of the Gypsy Mission (such as Karl Fredrikki Lindström), his evangelising activities on behalf of the Mission were recorded regularly, including in the 1920s (Viita, 1967, p. 107). His activities and work as a “Roma evangelist” were, once again, regularly recorded in many mainstream newspapers of the time, such as *Suomalainen* (Finn), *Mikkelin Sanomat* (Mikkeli News), *Uusi Suomi* (New Finland), *Uusimaa* (literally meaning “new country” but also the name of a southern region in Finland; thus a newspaper published in the Uusimaa region), etc. (Wiipuri, 1912, p. 4; *Suomalainen*, 1912, p. 2; *Uusimaa*, 1915, p. 2; *Mikkelin Sanomat*, 1922, p. 4; *Maaseudun Sanomat*, 1922, p. 2; *Uusi Suomi*, 1923, p. 14; *Keskisuomalainen*, 1923, p. 1; *Aamulehti*, 1923, p. 7). This shows the key role that Kaale members of the organisation had in the dissemination of the Mission’s views and intentions, as well as the ways in which the Mission could not have succeeded without the influence of key Kaale members within it.

Finally, alongside his work with the Gypsy Mission, Antti Palm seems to have been, at least partially, affiliated with what could perhaps be the very first Roma-led organisation in the country (founded in 1917), the Finnish Roma Civilisation Society (*Suomen Romanien Sivistysseura*). As discussed in Ida Blomerus’ portrait, this organisation seems to have had at the very least, a part Roma leadership, with Kaale women Ida Blomerus (also known as Cingardy-Ora) as a spokesperson (Työmies, 1917e, p. 6), and Antti Palm mentioned as a secretary (Työmies, 1917d, p. 9). It also seems that Palm was somehow connected to the Finnish Gypsy Theatre, but in the end, he did not actually attend theatre performances (Työmies, 1917e, p. 6). Antti Palm died on March 13, 1939, in Mikkeli, at the age of 64, where he is also buried. The circumstances and cause of his death remain unknown.

Conclusion

Risto Blomster and Raluca Bianca Roman

The portraits presented throughout this chapter each illustrate the ways in which Roma individuals at the start of the 20th century have played key roles as active agents in the shaping of the Roma mobilisation movement in Finland, positioning them as central players in the Roma emancipation process in the country. They were all, in one form or another, intrinsically connected to the influence of a central evangelical organisation in the country, the Gypsy Mission, which would become a defining feature in the history of the Roma movement more broadly: be it through shaping its future allies; or its future critics.

At the same time, while not directly, their history and lives were not enacted out of context and were each connected to the shaping of Roma emancipation movements occurring elsewhere in Central, South-Eastern and Eastern Europe at the early 20th century and during the interwar period of time. Namely, much like in all the other countries

discussed throughout this book, the process of Roma emancipation in Finland at the start of the 20th century was undoubtedly connected to the development and formation of a new nation-state: in this case, the gaining of Finland's independence from Russia in 1917, the transition from it being a Grand Duchy of Finland, its continuing connection to Russia through subsequent conflicts and its striving for the construction of its own Finnish national identity. In other words, the forms and pathways of Roma emancipation in Finland all depended on the national context in which it unfolded. The common lines between Finland's case and those of other nations in the region can most clearly be articulated in the framework of Miroslav Hroch's discussion of the formation of nations and national revivalism (Hroch, 1985, pp. 25–30; Hobsbawm, 1990, pp. 11–12). According to Hroch, the early twentieth century, the timeframe within which the Roma civic emancipation in Finland (and elsewhere) most clearly emerged, was also the timeframe of the construction of new nation-states and nation-building. Finnish Kaale, as members of their nation, were also an intrinsic part of this process. In other words, the emergence, shape and development of the Roma movement in Finland needs to be understood in conjunction with the nation-building process occurring in Finland during the same period of time and they were connected to the broader process of national revival, as members of their own Roma community and as members of the society in which they had lived, for centuries (Marushiakova & Popov, 2016e, p. 15).

As a manifestation of this, the individuals whose portraits were presented in this chapter articulated their visions for the future of the Kaale population, both in line with, or detached from, the aims and goals of the Mission they each began their particular work in. These visions connected the emphasis placed on maintaining elements of the Kaale cultural identity in the country (such as writings in Romani language, addressing 'Roma brothers' and 'Roma youth', emphasising the concept of the 'nation') with an emphasis placed on being more clearly fully embedded members of the Finnish nation, which was in the process of its own becoming (with the emphasis placed on the issue of sedentarisation and education, for instance). These two elements are not contradictory and, once again, reflect the multi-dimensional belonging of Roma individuals more broadly: not just as members of their own community but as members of the societies they inhabit.

This can be seen in all the portraits presented here. In addition to this, some interesting aspects can be noted in the life stories of Nikkinen, Åkerlund and Blomerus, and particularly in the different public images they were presenting. On the one hand, all three began working within the midst of the Gypsy Mission, partially aligning with the latter's views on the sedentarisation and education of Kaale in the country and emphasising the need to use the term 'Roma' as a replacement for that of *mustalainen*, or 'Gypsy'. On the other hand, as artists, all three became performers of 'Gypsy music' and used Romani-language inspired nicknames as their stage names: "Gaaloo" for Nikkinen (meaning Ferdinand the Dark), 'Chaaroo' for Åkerlund (exact meaning unknown), and 'Cingardy' for Blomerus (meaning 'Quarrel-Maker'). While these stage names could be seen as mere means of utilising their Roma background in their work as 'Gypsy artists',

they also denote the ways in which the particular choices of their ‘artist ‘names’ may have evoked the actual position they were taking (i.e., Blomerus, as the “quarrel-maker”) in a shifting relationship with other key institutions or organisations (including the Mission itself). Furthermore, given that the Romani meaning of the term would most likely only be understandable to other Romani language speakers, the audience of their nicknames was not only the majority public (who may have found a ‘Gypsy’ name ‘interesting’) but other Kaale, who would understand the the humorous and tongue-in-cheek meaning of the terms. These nicknames also subtly illustrate the complexity of their own affiliations, ideals and goals. At the same time, all three worked, simultaneously on (at least) two dimensions: as ‘Gypsy’ artists, in their performances, and as Roma activists, wherein they also seemed to have promoted key lines that aligned with the Gypsy Mission’s goals (for instance, sedentarisation and education of the Kaale community in the country), while nevertheless having a more or less shifting relationship with the latter. This denotes the ways in which the very meaning of emancipation, even when seemingly emerging within the midst of the Mission, shifted throughout the life of individuals.

At the same time, as mentioned in the introduction, the individuals presented throughout this chapter are not the only ones exemplifying this. Rather, they are manifestations of the forms that Roma emancipation, showing how Kaale, men and women alike, played an active part in shaping the work of the Gypsy Mission in Finland, an aspect often left aside when presenting the latter as a non-Roma organisation. But there are also others, whose names are rarely mentioned in connection to the Roma movement in Finland, but whose role in showcasing the different manifestations of Roma civic emancipation should not be understated. One such name is that of Kalle Tähtelä.

Kalle Tähtelä (1891–1919; full name Kaarlo “Kalle” Aleksander Tähtelä, also known as Franzén, from 1906, and Junno, later on) was a writer, fighter pilot, socialist revolutionary and translator, born into a mixed Kaale-Finnish family (his father Roma, his mother majority Finn). A more detailed account of his life and work is presented in the Finland chapter of the book *Romani Writings* (Blomster & Roman, 2021). However, a summary of his work and life is necessary here, as it shows the diversity of shapes that key Roma emancipatory and mobilising figures took throughout the 20th century in Finland.

Briefly put, Kalle Tähtelä was a prolific writer, who published extensively (in Finnish) on social themes, connected to his socialist visions for his country. He was born on May 26, 1891, in Leppävirta, in the Northern Savonia region of Finland, to Aleksanteri Franzen (formerly Hagert) and Retriikka Jaakontytär Junno. Like Ferdinand Nikkinen, his family was rather unique compared to other Roma families of that time. For instance, the children were all educated and his family-owned their own homestead (i.e., they were not travelling). Kalle also attended primary school. His upper secondary school education (*lyseo*), however, was cut short once he began working in the newspaper industry: for the dailies *Etelä-Suomen Sanomat* (Eastern Finland News) and *Aamulehti* (Morning Paper). He then continued working as a journalist across Finland. Most notably, in 1909, at just 18 years old, he wrote what is perhaps the only piece of his work directly referencing

“Gypsies” – a play made up of 3 acts, titled *The Gypsy Revenge* (Tähtelä, 1909). A story of romantic revenge about a young Gypsy, named Aslak, whose father was killed by a man called Gunnar Haugen. Aslak seeks revenge for his father’s death by seducing Gunnar’s daughter, but instead of exacting his revenge as planned, Aslak falls in love with her, extinguishing his desire for revenge.

After the publication of his play, Tähtelä briefly studied in Germany (in 1910) and then travelled to the US (in 1911). While in America, he worked and published in several Finnish-language labour American magazines (Tervonen, 2012, pp. 130–131). His time in the United States of America also inspired several of his novellas and short stories, all of which focused on the struggles of the immigrant, refugee and impoverished communities (Tähtelä, 1913, 1915, 1916a, 1916b). Once back in Finland, from 1917 onwards, he continued his work as a writer, collaborating with several socialist newspapers at the time, such as *Länsisuomen Työmies* (Western Finland Working Man), of which he was an editor. He would then join the ‘Reds’, during the Finnish Civil War and, after the latter’s failed revolt, he would flee to Russia, where he became a fighter pilot in the Red Naval Forces of the Baltic Sea. Tähtelä died at only 28 years old, on the October 24, 1919, two days after his plane was shot down near Petrograd, by the troops of General Nikolay Yudenich (at the time, the leader of the anti-communist White movement in North-Western Russia during the Civil War) and is buried in the Common Tomb of the Revolutionary Heroes of Oranienbaum, present-day Lomonosov, part of St Petersburg (Geus, 2004, p. 189; Tervonen, 2012, p. 131).

While Kalle Tähtelä’s life and work are rarely connected to the Roma movement in Finland in the broader historical canon, he is undoubtedly an important figure, one who showcases the myriad shapes that the very notion of ‘emancipation’ can take: from ideas of ‘inclusion’ within majority society, to pursuing socialist ideals in their work to, at times, even disconnecting fully from his Roma background. His life and work add new shades of colour to the manifestations of mobilisation embodied in the portraits of Nikkinen, Åkerlund, Blomerus, Schwartz and Palm presented throughout this chapter. He was, for instance, completely outside the work of the Gypsy Mission, the most influential and important organisation working on Roma issues at the time, and his life goals and pursuits followed a clearly socialist agenda. Nevertheless, these distinctive elements are also crucially important in emphasising that there was never only one dimension, or one pathway, to the process of Roma emancipation in Finland and that, perhaps, many others can also be included in the future. The portraits presented in this chapter, therefore, are key illustrations of the myriad pathways of Roma civic emancipation in Finland and, in time, we hope, they may open up the door for further work to be conducted on the topic.

USSR

Introduction

Elena Marushiakova and Vesselin Popov

To properly understand the overall dimensions of the processes of Roma civic emancipation in the early USSR (the 1920s and 1930s), and in particular to assess the place and importance of leading Gypsy activists in this regard, the analysis of these processes must be placed in the general socio-political context of the era. The October Revolution and the creation of the USSR (formally in 1922, and the first Constitution of the new state was adopted in 1924) marked the beginning of a new historical era in which the ultimate goal of the communist policy was to lead to the creation of a whole new type of society where all previous problems of humanity (social, cultural, national, etc.) will be finally and forever solved (Slezkine, 2017).

The national policy of the new Soviet state was subordinated to the fulfilment of this grand task. One of the first state acts of the new government, issued on November 2 (15th in the old style), 1917, was the Declaration of the Rights of the Peoples of Russia, signed by Vladimir Ulyanov (Lenin) as chairman of the Council of People's Commissars (SNK) and Joseph Jughashvili (Stalin) as the People's Commissar for Nationalities, which proclaimed the equality of the peoples of Russia and their right to free self-determination ("up to the separation and formation of an independent state") and to free development (RGASPI, f. 2, op. 1, d. 24219. pp. 1–2). On this basis, the new national policy of the Soviet state began to be built, an integral part of which was the state policy towards the Gypsies, which was inextricably linked to the general basic principles and leading tendencies.

When talking about the Soviet national policy towards the Roma (known at that time as Gypsies), the following important circumstance must be considered, which is usually not taken into account by 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 old passports for foreign citizenship), 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 (2001), can be collectively called the policy of affirmative action. We prefer to use precisely this term,

‘affirmative action policy’, because to us it is more general and more relevant to the substance of the process than the term ‘korenisatsiya’ used in recent years. The term ‘korenisatsiya’ 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, the notion ‘affirmative action policy’ most accurately expresses the attitude of the Soviet state towards them, while the terms ‘korenisatsiya’ and ‘nativization’ if used regarding Gypsies (e.g. Dunajeva, 2021a,b), are meaningless because they did not have an administrative apparatus to be ‘korenised’. The use of this term concerning the Gypsies is ridiculous, as they can in no way be defined as ‘indigenous’ or ‘native people’ because they are historically relative new migrants in the Russian Empire.

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 initially accepted as equal and were given (at least in theory) the opportunity to create their own national structures at different territorial and/or administrative levels (soviet and autonomous republics, oblasts, okrugs, rayons, village councils), and also public organisations, schools, etc., even individual labour production units. There were no specific criteria for which nationalities are entitled to which national structures.

Each case was 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 ethnicities/nationalities (Martin, 2001; Hirsch, 2005), including Gypsies.

It is extremely important here to emphasise explicitly that Roma (or Gypsies, as was their common public name in the USSR) throughout the existence of the USSR were in no way differentiated into a separate category that distinguished them from all other nationalities in the huge multinational state. In this regard, 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 there 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, 2000, p. 132–133; 2001, p. 228). Analysing this text, we can tolerate such a ‘minor’ mistake, as the one that disregards the fact that, 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 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 the Department of Nationalities of VTsIK (ON VTsIK) and the Council of Nationalities at the TsIK SSSR (SN TsIK SSSR), and not by Narkompros.

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 Enlightenment of the Peoples of the Non-Russian Language. With the liquidation of the People's Commissariat of Nationalities of the RSFSR, 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 National Minorities of the RSFSR, which was often abbreviated as Sovnatsmen (from 1929 to 1934 – the Committee for the Education of National Minorities of the RSFSR). Thus, the term 'national minority' began to be used in education (and often also in the public sphere), but the official term that continued to exist (including in the numerous forms and questionnaires that Soviet citizens were required to complete) remained 'nationality'. The claim that in Narkompros there was a special department responsible for Gypsy issues is also not correct (Ibid.). And, moreover, in 1926 the Central Council for the Education of National Minorities of the RSFSR 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 also concerns 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, 1992; 2002). The fact that the term (but not the legal category) 'national minority' 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 repealing 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 had 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. What is astonishing in this case is that this obvious absurdity continues to be repeated in academic publications to this day (e.g. Dunajeva, 2019, p. 107; 2021b, pp. 66–68).

In this context, the used definition of ‘backward’ concerning the Gypsies deserves special attention, which is also the subject of many modern interpretations. A ‘backward’ (or ‘culturally backward’) was a widely used stencil expression in the national politics of the early USSR, and it is a key concept in national policy towards Gypsies too (O’Keeffe, 2010; 2013). 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. This term 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 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 this way, as curious as it may sound, the modern conception of anti-Gypsyism is de facto also justified through soviet ideological lenses. Therefore, this definition (‘backward’ or ‘culturally backward’) was used when referring to all peoples who were an object of special care of the Soviet state and for whom the nationalities policy was designed. 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, pp. 42–43, 179–180). Moreover, among all ‘backward nationalities’ a race ensued concerning which of them is more backward, which leads to correspondingly more special care (which in practice means much more additional privileges). 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 January 04–05, 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).

In the general historical context of national policy in the early USSR, the specific dimensions of Soviet policy towards the Gypsies during this period became clear. 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. Of course, these priorities reflected the specifics of the particular community but, in general, they were included in the framework of the common national policy (and, more generally, in the overall strategy for social restructuring of the Soviet state).

Taking into account the dependence of Gypsy policy from general guidelines and particular steps in the overall Soviet national policy makes it possible to understand that the changes in the Gypsy policy of the Soviet state in the second half of the 1930s (e.g. the closure of Gypsy schools) were not a manifestation of some special policy of anti-Gypsyism of the Soviet state, but were an integral part (and, as will be seen below, far from the most important) of the overall turn in Soviet national policy at the time. Especially in the system of national schools, first steps had been taken by the Decision of Orgburo of the TsK VKP(b) of December 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 to Stalin (see below) 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 has been misrepresented as being *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 original historical sources, that are reproduced and move from book to book.

In this Decree, Gypsy schools are nowhere mentioned. It is noted that:

The practice [...] of 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).

Term National school referred to the “German, Finnish, Polish, Latvian, English, Greek, Estonian, Ingrian, Veps, Chinese, etc.” schools. For the first time, a mention of Gypsy schools appears only in the tables of the Report of the Narkompros of July 08, 1938 (Ibid., l. 108), which shows that the place of the Gypsies in the context of Soviet national policy was quite insignificant.

One of the most important goals of the Soviet national affirmative action policy was the creation of new, Soviet national elites, and this was especially true of those nationalities that were considered ‘backward’ (including the Gypsies). The successful results in the case of the Gypsies are unquestionable, the new Soviet Gypsy elite was established relatively quickly in the 1920s and 1930s.

This chapter is dedicated to the most prominent representatives of this new Gypsy elite, which was the leading force in the movement for Roma civic emancipation in the

early USSR. At the same time, it should be explicitly emphasised that, as will be seen from the portraits of its leading figures, this Gypsy elite was by no means just an instrument of Soviet Gypsy policy, whose main task was to acquaint the Gypsies with the decisions of the Soviet party and state institutions and ensure their implementation. There is no reason to think that there was a forced imposition from 'outside' of concepts foreign and unacceptable to Gypsies. On the contrary, it is obvious, that all of such 'outside' ideas were 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. Therefore, it should come as no surprise that in most cases the leading ideas in the field of Roma civic emancipation during this period came from the Soviet Gypsy elite, and the authorities were those who took decision whether to accept them or not (and, which is perhaps more importantly, how these ideas will be implemented in practice).

When we are talking about the Gypsy elite in the early USSR, it should be borne in mind that this practically means the Roma elite. In the USSR, the general label Gypsies (*цыгане*) included not only Roma but also many other communities with different self-appellations and other identities (and some of them even with a different historical origin). These are the Lom (referred to as *Bosha*) and the Dom (referred to as *Garachi*) living in South Caucasus, as well as the diverse communities living in Central Asia, referred to collectively as *Lyuli* or *Jugi* (Marushiakova & Popov, 2016a). In the Soviet republics of the South Caucasus, there was de facto no Gypsy movement and no Gypsy elite at all, but in Central Asia, the situation was quite different, and Gypsy kolkhozes and Gypsy *artels* also started to be created there (Назаров, 1969; Marushiakova & Popov, 2016a). 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 as Mizrab Mahmudov from the Kokand region, a member of the TsIK UzSSR 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 Roma activists in Moscow and representatives of Gypsies in Central Asia, and therefore Gypsy activists from Central Asia cannot be included in the field of Roma civic emancipation.

When presenting the biographical sketches of the leading Gypsy activists from the time of the early USSR, some specifics of the available source base must be taken into account. In most cases, this base, for various reasons, is more or less limited, and therefore in these biographies, respectively, there are quite a few missing pieces or even white margins. In some cases, there is not enough data even for a very fragmentary biography of individuals who undoubtedly arouse interest. Such is e.g. the case of A. I. Vishnevskiy (even his first name is not known). According to available information, in April 1926, preparatory work began in Kazak ASSR (the official name at the time, later Kazakh SSR) for the establishment of the Gypsy kolkhoz *Stalin's Way* (GARF, f. P 1235, op. 123, d. 27, l. 63). In 1927, 27 nomadic groups united into the National kolkhoz in the Alma-Ata rayon (Ibid., l. 150; Платунов, 1976, pp. 265–266). This was, in fact, one of the first Gypsy kolkhozes in

the USSR; it was established on the initiative of A. I. Vishnevskiy, who 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 additional information about him 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.).

Lack of sufficient data also meant the necessary exclusion from this chapter of other activists, about whom we failed to discover information. The presented portraits, however, even when incomplete, give a clear idea about this generation of activists. Especially important is the fact that about them, along with the classical historical sources (archival documents, materials in the press, published author’s texts of the respective personalities, etc.) we received access to a unique type of source material – the memoirs of almost all Gypsy activists presented in this chapter. In the 1960s, Nikolay Satkevich collected their memoirs (most of them in the form of an Autobiography), and they are now preserved in the unprocessed personal archive of the late Nikolay Bessonov (LANB), and Ivan Rom-Lebedev published a whole book with his recollections (Ром-Лебедев, 1990). In this way, we have not only first-hand facts, but also something much more important – the overall assessment of the movement for civic emancipation of the Roma, made by the visionaries of this movement, which were at the same time its main moving power. Of course, these memories are not the ultimate truth; they are, more or less, subject to the author’s later editing of the past, but, nevertheless, they provide us with an opportunity to present much more fully the portraits of the pioneers of the Roma civic emancipation and to understand much better the character of the described historical processes.

Ivan Rom-Lebedev

Elena Marushiakova and Vesselin Popov

Ivan Ivanovich Lebedev (1903–1991) is publicly known by the surname Rom-Lebedev, which he adopted as his creative pseudonym. He first used this surname in the late 1920s (Ром-Лебедев, 1930), and, through it, he wanted to emphasise his ethnicity. The description of the long life of Rom-Lebedev is a fascinating story, through which one can trace (and understand) the history of the Gypsies, and in particular, the development of the processes of their civic emancipation over several historical epochs, starting with tsarist Russia, passing through the October Revolution, the Civil War, the early USSR, etc., until its collapse in 1991.

Compared to other Gypsy activists during this period, there is much more information about the biography of Ivan Rom-Lebedev thanks to his autobiographical book *From the Gypsy Choir to the Theatre Roman: Notes of a Moscow Gypsy* (Ром-Лебедев, 1990). Of course, as any memoir that creates a personal historical narrative, it is influenced by a

variety of factors from the time these memoirs were written. That is why in the review of this book Nikolay Bessonov defines Rom-Lebedev as “one of the most mysterious figures”, “a talented mystifier” and “a born myth-maker” (Бессонов, 2007). However, his autobiographical book can and should be used, but the data extracted from it must be subjected to critical analysis and comparison with other historical sources.

Ivan Rom-Lebedev's life is a vivid illustration of the historical destiny of the former Gypsy elite (the so-called Gypsy choirs' musician elite), which originated in the conditions of the Russian Empire (see Introduction). He was born on January 18, 1903, according to the so-called old style (i.e. according to the Julian calendar), or on January 31, 1903, according to the new style (i.e. according to the Gregorian calendar) in Riga, where his parents were on a music tour and had own program in a local restaurant. His father, Ivan Grigoryevich Lebedev, was a guitarist, conductor and leader of a famous Moscow Gypsy choir (the Lebedev's choirs), and his mother, Maria Nikolaevna Lebedeva, was a singer in the same choir (Ром-Лебедев, 1990, p. 7). Rom-Lebedev himself reveals suspiciously little information about his family. He unambiguously identifies his father as a Gypsy, but no longer gives any information about him, nor does he mention his parents or any of his relatives (which is strange, after all, and atypical for a Gypsy family). It is not clear how he, a Moscow's Gypsy, came to own two large houses in Vilnius, which he rented out and where the first few Rom-Lebedev's years passed, raised by his Russian grandmother. He also says almost nothing about his mother, except that he is a “Russian woman by birth” (Ibid., p. 91); even her maiden name is not clear, we know only that her mother, who raised him, was called Ekaterina Yegorovna Stulova (Ibid., p. 7). The scant information that Rom-Lebedev gives about his pedigree leaves the impression that he is deliberately concealing it.

Sometime around 1908–1909, Ivan Rom-Lebedev moved to live with his family in Moscow, where he found himself for the first time in a Gypsy environment. Later, his grandmother joined him. His family at the time rented a house in the vicinity of Petrovskiy Park, where also lived most of the Gypsy music elite of Moscow, working mainly in the nearby restaurants *Yar* and *Strelna*, which were extremely popular among Moscow's high society (aristocracy, wealthy merchants, people of art, etc.) precisely because of the Gypsy music. A few years later, Rom-Lebedev's family built a large two-storey house of their own, richly furnished (with prestigious and modern “leather furniture” at the time) and their servants, including a cook, a maid, a governess for the children and a janitor lived in a separate wing (Ibid., pp. 87–88). In the large yard of the house were located the small homes of young Gypsy women, participants in the choir recruited from the countryside. Rom-Lebedev himself defined his father as the “master” of the Gypsy choir (Ibid., p. 15), i.e. according to the class-party terminology adopted in the USSR in the 1930s, Ivan Rom-Lebedev came more from a family of Gypsy exploiters – kulaks, whom he so fiercely flogged in the plays he wrote at the time.

Maria Lebedeva (Ivan Rom-Lebedev's mother) was an extremely popular singer at the time, her songs were released on gramophone records, and she had many admirers in the

highest public circles. The home of the Lebedev family was often visited by many celebrities and were entertained with Gypsy songs and dances. Rom-Lebedev's description of such one of such visit (at the end of 1915 or the beginning of 1916) of the famous Grigoriy Rasputin, who was accompanied by a whole retinue and police guard, and who listened to Gypsy songs, danced Russian folk dances with Ivan's grandmother, and from their home phone spoke directly to Empress Alexandra. After the assassination of Rasputin in late 1916, it turns out that the leading conspirators in this assassination, Prince Felix Yusupov and Grand Duke Dmitriy Pavlovich, were also repeatedly guests in Lebedev's home (*Ibid.*, pp. 94–96).

At that time, Moscow Gypsy musicians were striving for their children to get a good education. Ivan Rom-Lebedev's parents enrolled him in a high school in the village of Vsekhsvyatskoye (now part of Moscow) near their home, but as he admitted, he was not attracted to the studies and his grades at school were unsatisfactory. In 1914, after the outbreak of the First World War, the then eleven-year-old Ivan escaped from home, and with the military echelons reached almost the very front in East Prussia, from where he was returned home by the authorities (*Ibid.*, pp. 89–90). Such an escape was not uncommon, this type of attempt to reach the front at the beginning of the war was very popular among students in the Russian Empire in the face of a general patriotic upsurge. Then Ivan continued his education until 1917, when he left high school without any regrets (*Ibid.*, p. 103), on the eve of the ongoing radical social changes, after the so-called February and October Revolutions and the collapse of the Russian Empire, which was replaced by the new Soviet state (formally the USSR was formed in 1922), ruled by the All-Russian Communist Party (Bolsheviks).

The establishment of the new Soviet government in Moscow quickly destroyed the usual way of life of the Gypsy musical elite and forced them to look for other ways to provide their living in the new situation. The old restaurants with Gypsy music (and in general the whole old social elite) ceased to exist, and in the conditions of the so-called military communism, a sharp economic and food crisis ensued, leading to the imposition of a coupon system for food distribution, Gypsy musicians were literally faced with the question of their physical survival in the new realities. Thus, for example, the leader of the most popular Gypsy choir at the time, Yegor Polyakov, was forced to chop wood in a bakery for a piece of bread or a handful of flour (*Ibid.*, p. 100). Relatively quickly, many Gypsy musicians managed, through the protection of Anatoliy Lunacharskiy (head of Narkompros), to receive orders to give concerts to the newly formed Red Army, for which they received army rations (usually a minimum amount of dried fish). In this situation, fifteen-year-old Ivan Lebedev felt useless for his family, and he decided to make a radical change in his life by, again, running away from home (*Ibid.*, pp. 103–104).

Ivan Lebedev's escaped from his home in 1918 and his travels in Southern Russia during the Civil War left many questions open, to which no clear answers have thus far been given. The explanations he gives in his autobiographical book, in most cases, sound unconvincing and seems more like attempts to cover up facts that are inconvenient for him. In this

regard, we tend to accept to a large extent the critical reading of Rom-Lebedev's book by Nikolay Bessonov (Бессонов, 2007), according to whom Rom-Lebedev tried to conceal the true goals of his escape from Moscow and all his wanderings, namely his participation in the so-called White Armies fighting against the central communist Soviet government. Moreover, at that time, tens and even hundreds of thousands of people (officers and civilians, as well as their families) carried out this mass migration to the south, mainly from the two metropolises (St Petersburg and Moscow), to Southern Russia and Crimea.

Ivan Rom-Lebedev explained his departure from Moscow to the south on August 15, 1918, with stereotypical phrases about the Gypsies' aspirations for a free life and distant lands, as well as with his childhood dream of seeing the sea (Ром-Лебедев, 1990, pp. 103–104). From Moscow, he travelled by train to the last possible point in the south (Belgorod), after which he crossed the border with Ukraine, which was independent at the time under the terms of the Brest Treaty (which Rom-Lebedev presents in his book as a territory occupied by Germans). Making a living by temporary work in different places, he reached Sevastopol. After a short stay there, in his words, "he wanted new adventures, surprises" (Ibid., p. 124), and through Yalta and Novorossiysk, he reached Ekaterinodar (now Krasnodar), where he fell ill with louse-borne typhus and he was "accidentally" admitted to a military hospital of the White Volunteer Army, where he remained to serve as a paramedic after his recovery (Ibid., pp. 127–130). From Ekaterinodar, together with the White Army, he retreated to Novorossiysk, and from there he reached Kerch (on the Crimean peninsula), where he was again "accidentally" mobilised in the White Army and sent to training in a sapper unit, where he contracted typhoid fever (Ibid., pp. 134–140). In the autumn of 1920, after the breakthrough of the Red Army through the Isthmus of Perekop, Ivan Lebedev did not evacuate with the army of Baron Wrangel but remained in the Crimea, where he put a "red bandage" (symbol of belonging to the Red Army) on his sleeve and enlisted as a volunteer in the Red Army (Ibid., p. 140).

The military unit (267th Chongar Rifle Regiment of the 30th Division of the Red Army), in which Ivan Lebedev served as a cavalry scout, was located in Melitopol and its task was to "cleanse" the region of the remnants of the rebel army of a famous anarchist Nestor Makhno. After completing this task, he was transferred to the regimental music orchestra and was demobilised after three years of service in the Red Army in 1923 (Ibid., pp. 143–148).

Returning to Moscow after almost five years of wandering, Ivan Lebedev finds himself in a completely new situation. The civil war was over, and 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, so also the Gypsy music ensembles (called Gypsy choirs, according to an established tradition) were revived. Gypsy music restaurants reopened and many of the old Gypsy choirs were restored. Ivan Lebedev's father did not restore his choir, so he joined the Gypsy choir, led by Yegor Polyakov, as a guitarist. This is the most famous Gypsy choir at that time, which, however, not only played in restaurants but with the assistance of the authorities gave many public concerts in Moscow

and around the country (Ibid., pp. 150–158). 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. Ivan Lebedev as part of this choir was an active participant in the events, and quickly became one of the leading figures in the field of Roma civic emancipation.

Although with some delay, the new opportunities for national development, which were guaranteed and supported (and at the same time accordingly controlled) by the Soviet state, reflected on the Gypsies. The organised movement for civic emancipation emerged amid the Gypsy music elite, which was concentrated in Moscow. The October Revolution and the creation of the Soviet state radically changed the life and social position of this Gypsy elite. One part left the country along with the White emigration (for example part of the famous Gypsy musical dynasty of the Polyakovs permanently established in France), and those who remained were looking for new ways of reaching achievements in the context of the Soviet realities.

In his book, Ivan Rom-Lebedev offers his own version of the beginning of Gypsy civic emancipation in the early USSR, which, however, in many cases differs (more or less) from the real situation reflected in historical sources. According to his book in 1923, amidst the Gypsy choir of Yegor Polyakov, at the suggestion of Dmitriy (Mitya) Mikhailov, a Komsomol cell of five young people was created, namely Dmitriy Mikhailov, Georgiy (Genya) Lebedev, Sergey Polyakov (son of Yegor Polyakov), Konstantin Leontiev and Ivan Lebedev himself (Ром-Лебедев, 1990, p. 160). A report from September 1926, signed by Andrey Taranov and Ivan Lebedev, states that the establishment of this cell of the RLKSM took place in mid-January 1923, but among the names of its members is omitted that of Georgiy Lebedev, and instead of the name of Konstantin Leontiev is entered that of Karpetskiy (GARF, f. A 259, op. 9 Б, 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!' (Ibid.), which is a paraphrase of the famous slogan 'Proletarians of the world, unite!' from *The Communist Manifesto* by Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels (1848). The young Komsomol members set up their own Gypsy club and began agitation among the Gypsies, as a result of which the *All-Russian Union* was created, whose Statute, with the help of Soviet institutions, was approved in 1925. Andrey Taranov was elected Chair of Union, and Union Secretary was elected Ivan Lebedev, who also became a representative of the Moscow Gypsies in the ON VTsIK (Ром-Лебедев, 1990, p. 163).

However, the preserved historical documents again present a more or less different picture of the course of events. On January 10, 1924, a Constituent Assembly was held, attended by 11 people, the majority of whom were members of Yegor Polyakov's choir and members of his family; among them, there is only one woman (Elisaveta Yurovskaya). Among the names of the founders, the name of Ivan Lebedev does not appear at all (but his brother Valentin is present); the names of most of the members of the Komsomol

cell are also missing (only Sergey Polyakov is present). The chairman of the meeting was Yegor Polyakov, and the secretary, who took the minutes was Alexander Polyakov (his son). The Assembly decided to establish the *Society for the Organisation of Backward Proletarian Gypsy Masses of the City of Moscow and Moscow Governorate*. The terminology used shows that the founders fit into the spirit of the era and the prevailing ideological norms of the time and used its phraseology. The Statute of the organisation was approved (drafted by Stepan Osipov), and the comrades Stepan Osipov and Sergey Polyakov were assigned to petition before the respective authorities for approval of the Statute and the legalisation of the new organisation (GARF, f. P 1235, op. 119, d. 9, l. 3).

Two weeks after this meeting, on January 25, 1924, the Initiative Proletarian Group, comprising the founding members of the previous meeting, together with 75 members of the All-Union Trade Union of Arts Workers (members of Gypsy choirs were members of this union), held a general meeting on which they unanimously decreed that they will respond to the death of Vladimir Ilyich Lenin (January 21, 1924) with the establishment of a Society that will be called *The Lenin Society*, and adopted a Statute, which was sent for approval to the Administrative Department of Mossovet, noting that “the Society will agree that if any amendments, changes, additions and others are introduced in the Charter by the Department” (Ibid.). Both documents quoted above were prepared together (they are typewritten on one piece of paper) and submitted for approval to Mossovet, with almost the same version of the Statute attached, which clearly shows that in this case, it was the same Initiative Group and the same organisation, set up twice, trying to obtain official registration from the Soviet authorities, and at this stage, Ivan Lebedev (as well as the Komsomol cell) was not involved in this process.

Ivan Lebedev became involved in the activities of the emerging Gypsy organisation during the Meeting of the Initiative Group of the Founding Members of the Gypsy Proletarian Society, held on April 3, 1924. Alexander Polyakov is signed as Chair of this Initiative Group, and Ivan Lebedev as its Secretary. The meeting listened to a report from Stepan Osipov, who submitted the draft Statute of the organisation to the TsIK USSR, where it was amended by its co-chairman Nariman Narimanov (1875–1925). The Assembly unanimously adopted the amendments and took the following decision: “All activities of the Society are conducted under the leadership of the TsIK USSR” (Ibid., l. 8).

The next meeting of the Initiative Group was on August 24, 1924, and was held in a very limited composition. Present were Stepan Osipov, Yegor, Sergey and Alexander Polyakovs, Andrey Taranov and Ivan Lebedev. The meeting heard a report from Stepan Osipov on the results of his meeting with Gustav Klinger (1876–1937/1943), head of the ON VTsIK, who recommended reducing the membership of the Initiative Group and stated that the Statute of the organisation could not be approved as “it does not meet the spirit of the time”. It was decided to reduce the Initiative Group to those present at the meeting plus Ivan Bolashev and three candidate members, as well as to ask the “the Mossovet to change those details of the charter that do not meet the spirit of the times”. In the

Minutes from the meeting Andrey Taranov is signed as Chair of the Initiative Group, and Alexander Polyakov as Secretary, who took the minutes (*Ibid.*, l. 9-906).

A list of the Initiative Group (the old and new members) which is attached to these Minutes (*Ibid.*, 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 Gypsy musical elite, 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 documents regarding the establishment of the organisation. The last mention of his name was in a statement of the Initiative Group to the Presidium of the ON VTsIK of September 23, 1924, which was signed by Stepan Osipov (born in 1888), 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, Stepan 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 a background would stay away from the Gypsy movement, so it seems more likely that he was a non-Gypsy, attracted by the Union's founders, to demonstrate a leading party presence in the organisation until a Gypsy Party member was found. Probably the situation with Ivan Balashev (born in 1869) was similar. He was also a member of VKP(b) from 1918, and for him, it was explicitly underlined in a note that he was "introduced as a public initiative worker" (*Ibid.*, p. 11).

From the other members of the Initiative Group, members of VKP(b) were Stepan Osipov, Andrey Taranov and Ivan Balashev, the latter being the only one whose profession was that of a 'worker' (i.e. a true proletarian). The other two from the Initiative Group were Komsomol members, namely Ivan Lebedev and Sergey Polyakov, as well as candidate member Dmitriy Mikhailov (GARF, f. P 1235, op. 119, d. 9, l. 11). The emergence of Andrey Taranov (participant in the Civil War, member of the Party since 1922 and student at the Communist University of the Toilers of the East) and Ivan Lebedev into leading positions in the new organisation can be explained by the desire for its ideological-political strengthening by increasing the presence of members of the Party and the Komsomol in it, which was a requirement imposed by the Soviet institutions.

As stated above, one of the first things that the newly formed organisation decided on January 25, 1924 was to ask the Party and Soviet institutions for approval and support for its legal registration, and this was constantly repeated at all subsequent organisational events. There is a need to clarify here the administrative procedures regarding this registration. According to the legal norms of that time it must be carried out by the NKVD of the 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 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 new Gypsy organisation. In a letter to the NKVD of May 30, 1925, ON VTsIK defined 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 from the sub-section National Minorities, APO at TsK VKP(b) of June 12, 1925, which says the following:

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 (1886–1938), 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 the new organisation is beyond any doubt. A letter from the Moscow Committee of the VKP(b) dated July 10, 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 (GARF, f. P 393, op. 43 A, d. 1763, l. 20–21). Despite this agreement, after a long process of coordination between the soviet institutions, only after receiving the approval of the central and Moscow party bodies, the NKVD quickly registered on July 23, 1925 the new Gypsy organisation (GARF, f. P 1235, op. 120, d. 27, l. 89–94; f. P 393, op. 43 A, d. 1763, l. 89–94). According to the official registration, its full name is Union of Gypsies living on the territory of the RSFSR, but in the administrative documentation it is usually called the *All-Russian Gypsy Union* (VSTs), and under this name, it is publicly known.

There are some significant differences between the first Gypsy Society’s Draft-Statute from January 1924, and the Gypsy Union’s Registered Statute from July 1925, which reflect

the differences between the founders of the Gypsy Union and the Soviet State in their views on the objectives and tasks of the organisation. In the Society's Draft-Statute 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" (GARF, f. P 1235, op. 119, d. 9, l. 4). In the Union's Statute from 1925, however, its primary purpose is "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" (GARF, f. P 1235, op. 120, d. 27, l. 89; f. P 393, op. 43 A, d. 1763, l. 89).

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 stated that there is 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" (Ibid.).

Immediately after the official registration of VSTs the logical consequence is the results of the Plenum of the Moscow Gypsies, held on August 6, 1925, where Andrey Taranov was elected Chair of the Union, Sergey Polyakov became Vice-Chair, and Ivan Lebedev – Secretary (GARF, f. P 1235, op. 120, d. 27, l. 182). After the election of the Union Presidium by the end of the year, its composition had already changed and consisted of five members – in addition to the three leaders of the Union, this Presidium also includes Mikhail Bezlyudskiy and Nikolay Pankov – and three candidate-members – Alexander Polyakov, Georgiy Lebedev, and a woman, Leontyeva (GARF, f. P 1235, op. 120, d. 27, l. 83 The latter, however, does not occupy a leading position in the Union, i.e. probably she is presented there in order to demonstrate the equal position of a Gypsy woman.). 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 Andrey Taranov, Ivan Lebedev, Dmitriy Polyakov, and Nina Dudarova (Романы зоря, 1927a, p. 3), thus it is obvious that the principle of women equality was preserved also later in case of changes in the leadership of the organisation.

The Soviet state quickly provided VSTs official premises in the centre of Moscow and a salary for his leaders. An organisational department, a cultural department, an ethnographic academic section for the study of the language of the Gypsies, as well as management for training and production 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 Uyezd in the Bryansk oblast (GARF, f. P 393, op. 43 A, d. 1763, l. 173). Soon after, another Commissioner appeared – Ilya Gerasimov for 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, and action has been taken to establish Union branches there (for more details see Marushiakova & Popov, 2021b: 718–727).

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 Byelorussian SSR, and the Ukrainian SSR 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).

The membership of the VSTs had grown rapidly since its registration, 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 questionnaires, 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 свѣтостыр скэндэнтупэ кхэтане” (Gypsies of All World, Unite!).

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 would not be an exaggeration to say that the main elements of this policy were proposed by the Gypsy leaders themselves and implemented by the Soviet institutions with the active participation of Gypsy activists.

It would also not be an exaggeration to say that at that time Ivan Lebedev held leading positions in the ranks of Gypsy activism. Moreover, the first visionary text in the field of Roma civic emancipation, explaining the entire history of the Gypsies and outlining their future in the USSR, with the indicative title *The Gypsies Are Awakening* was written

by him (together with Andrey Taranov), and published as an article in the official TsIK USSR (*Известия*, 1925, p. 6). It is not difficult to understand that in fact, the main author in this authorial tandem is Ivan Lebedev. A manuscript entitled *On Work among Gypsies* and signed only by Ivan Lebedev is preserved in the archives of VSTs (GARF, f. P 1235, op. 120, d. 27, l. 183–184), and between the two texts, the differences are minimal. The leading role of Ivan Lebedev is easy to explain – despite not finishing high school he still had a much better education than Andrey Taranov (about him see below), who was attracted as a co-author because of his public position (Chair of the VSTs).

These two texts from 1925 briefly outline the main ideological line that defines all the activities of the Gypsy Union. According to their postulates, Gypsies for centuries were subjected to brutal persecution and class exploitation, but the October Revolution and the building of the Soviet state gave them the opportunity for free and equal development (ie, in modern language, for their civic emancipation). Written in the language of the time:

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. [...] Based on the point of view of the [soviet] 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 [VSTs] in its aspirations. (*Ibid.*, l. 184).

The presentation of the history of the Gypsies in these texts is fragmentary (with an emphasis on the persecutions to which they were subjected in the Middle Ages), in some places inaccurate (e.g. their arrival in Europe dates back to 1645) and even manipulative (e.g. it is claimed that the Orthodox Christian church in tsarist Russia burned Gypsies at the stake as heretics and sorcerers, for which there is no historical evidence). However, the main conclusion of this historical review (that nomadism among Gypsies is a direct result of their non-acceptance by society) is not only true but continues to be relevant today, when one can still find the questionable view in academia that the nomadic way of life of Gypsies is their most important and essential feature, a key pillar of their community identity (Marushiakova & Popov, 2020a, p. 265). In the historical context of the creation of the Soviet state as a new type of state, designed to solve the problems of oppressed classes and peoples, the message of the Gypsy visionaries about the expected attitude of the Soviet state towards the Gypsies and solving their problems is quite simple and straightforward, formulated by Ivan Lebedev and Andrey Taranov as leaders of the VSTs: “Gypsies must be helped to become a people equal in all respects with other nationalities inhabiting the USSR” (*Известия*, 1925, p. 6).

At that time, Ivan Lebedev was focusing on a public (and probably political) career. This is evidenced by his attempt to become a student at the most prestigious Soviet university – Moscow State University (MGU). In the summer of 1926, he received a letter of support from ON VtsIK, backing the VSTs’s petition to the Narkompros for providing

a position at the Faculty of Law of the Moscow State University for the Secretary of the VSTs Ivan Lebedev. Narkompros answered that the “allocated” places (i.e. for the needs of the Soviet institutions) have already been exhausted, but such a place is provided for Ivan Lebedev in the Faculty of Law of Leningrad State University (GARF, f. P 1235, op. 121, d. 46, l. 1–2). However, he refused this opportunity and remained in Moscow to work at the VSTs. The reasons for his decision are not clear, he may simply not have wanted to leave Moscow and move to Leningrad (now St Petersburg), but from a distance, it turned out to be a correct and far-sighted choice.

In 1926, the VSTs fell into a severe crisis, and the long procedure for its liquidation began (for more details, see the following sections). Rom-Lebedev was actively involved in the struggle to uphold the right of the Gypsy Union to exist and to save it. Along with the numerous inspections and discussions in various Soviet institutions of the Union's work, the internal struggles in its leadership also intensified. In the course of this struggle, Ivan Lebedev was subjected to numerous accusations (especially active in this regard were Mikhail Bezlyudsky and Trofim Yakovlev), who focused on his patronising the development of production activities (establishment of training workshops and production cooperatives and artels), which, according to them, instead of to financially support the activities of the Union, were a basis for several commercial and financial speculations to personally benefit their leaders (GARF, f. P 393, op. 43 A, d. 1763; f. P 1235, op. 120, d. 27; f. P 1235, op. 140, d. 498). According to his contemporaries, “since [Ivan] Lebedev did not know commercial matters, he invited his close friend Yakov G. Dombrovskiy” as an “expert”, “who has unlimited rights” and de facto directs and controls all economic activity (GARF, f. P 393, op. 43 A, d. 1763). However, Yakov Dombrovskiy (non-Roma) turned out to be a swindler with a criminal past, and it was he who was identified as the main initiator and executor of many speculative activities of Gypsy production cooperatives, training workshops and artels, which were revealed in numerous inspections and financial audits of the Union (GARF, f. P 1235, op. 140, d. 498). Due to his connection with Dombrovskiy, Ivan Lebedev was accused of numerous charges (including about the production of forged letterheads and stamps, on which the VSTs was designated as a subdivision of the VTsIK), and the question of his “wrong” social origin was raised (f. P 1235, op. 140, d. 498; f. P 393, op. 43 A, d. 1763). As a result of all these accusations, Ivan Lebedev was excluded from the VLKSM (Ibid.), and he was even sentenced (together with VSTs chairman Andrey Taranov) to six months of correctional labour (Вечерняя Москва, 1927, p. 4). Luckily for him, this sentence was overturned by a higher court instance and he not only did not serve this penalty but remained in the leadership of the VSTs until its official liquidation in February 1928 (of course, about all these events, as well as about the orders imposed on him) not a word is mentioned in his book of memoirs.

Ivan Lebedev did not give up without a fight in his struggle for the preservation of the VSTs. Together with Andrey Taranov, he is the co-author (most likely, in fact, the main author) of two detailed Memoranda, sent to the highest Soviet institutions. The first of these Memoranda (in two versions), addressed to the Secretary of the TsIK of the USSR

Avel Enukidze (sent to other instances as well, e.g. the Council of Nationalities at the Central Executive Committee), is dated December 21, 1927, i.e. from the time when the debates in the Soviet institutions were ongoing and the fate of the VSTs and its future have not yet been finally decided. Therefore, its general tone is rather restrained, and the content moves according to a certain pattern – it describes the difficult situation of the Gypsies in the past, emphasises the successes of the VSTs with the decisive help of the Soviet state, notes the impact of Soviet policy on Gypsies on their co-brothers in other countries, etc. The only carefully formulated reproach addressed to the authorities was that the Union “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”, and concludes with a call not to allow the liquidation of the Gypsy Union (GARF, f. P 3316, op. 19, d. 588, l. 72–74; f. P 393, op. 43 A, d. 1763).

However, much different is the text of the second Memorandum, addressed to SNK RSFSR, with copies to: Secretariat of the VKP(b) – comrade Stalin; All-Union Central Council of Trade Unions – Comrade Tomsy; Central Executive Committee of the USSR – Comrade Kalinin, comrade Yenukidze, Council of Nationalities; People’s Commissariat for Education – Comrade Lunacharskiy; The editorial offices of the newspapers *Pravda* (Truth) and *Izvestia* (News) of the VTsIK. This document is dated February 18, 1928, i.e. immediately after the publication of the NKVD Decree of February 13, 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 fulfilling 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). This explains both the addressing of the Memorandum to all the highest Soviet institutions (including Stalin himself) and the extremely sharp tone of the Memorandum – its authors have nothing more to lose in their struggle to save the Gypsy Union and therefore decided to play *Va banque*. That is why, along with the already known arguments in defence of the Union, the leading place is occupied by the extremely (even shockingly) sharp accusations made against the so-called liquidators (representatives of the Soviet institutions who carried out inspections and decided on the liquidation of the Union, in particular, the NKVD), “who have not reached in their understandings of the Gypsy question and of the Gypsies farther from Elizabeth, the daughter of Peter the Great”, and which are called “walking anachronism”. Moreover, the Memorandum concludes emphatically:

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. (GARF, f. P 393, op. 43 A, d. 1763, l. 102–108).

The courage shown in the struggle for Gypsy civic emancipation of the signatories of this Memorandum (Andrey Taranov, Ivan Lebedev and an illegible signature) cannot be doubted. It is no exaggeration to say that only a few years after these events, such a public act would be tantamount to signing one's own death sentence. However, the Soviet authorities did not pay any attention to the Memorandum, and these actions of the Gypsy activists did not lead to any changes in the decision made and no new Gypsy organisation was actually created. This may seem surprising, but none of the VSTs leaders was 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*.

It is significant, however, that Ivan Rom-Lebedev does not put his signature on the latest attempt to preserve the existence of the Gypsy civic organisation. On April 3, 1928, the new third Memorandum was sent to the Council of Nationalities at the TsIK USSR (GARF, f. P 1235, op. 120, d. 27, l. 4–14), repeating the main messages of the two previous Memoranda and justifying the need for a Gypsy organisation, but the tone was now much humbler. The memorandum was signed by 8 people, led by Andrey Taranov, all members of the VKP(b) and the Komsomol, and most of them non-Roma. In this case, apparently, Rom-Lebedev correctly assessed that there is no chance for the restoration of the Gypsy Union and decided to focus on life and public realisation in other areas. This decision is based on an extremely accurate assessment of the political situation. The Soviet government had no intention of stopping the development of the processes of Gypsy civic emancipation or even restricting them, but on the contrary, it wanted to make them more effective and to achieve faster results. It, therefore, decided to look for other forms of directing them in certain areas and spheres, as well as to secure their guidance and constant control, and this was the main reason for the liquidation of the Union.

In the late 1920s, Ivan Rom-Lebedev joined the common movement to create Gypsy national literature, which was an important public expression of the process of Gypsy civic emancipation. In fact, the first two creative works that marked the beginning of Romani literature in the early USSR were the two short stories published in the first issue of the Gypsy journal *Романы зоря – Романо бенг* (Gypsy Devil) by Ivan Lebedev (Романы зоря, 1927d, pp. 23–29) and *Руворо* (The Little Wolf) by Alexander German (Романы зоря, 1927b, pp. 30–32). Rom-Lebedev's appearances in the field of Gypsy national literature continued later, and he published three collections of short stories, theatrical sketches and plays (one of them together with Mikhail Ilyinskiy) (Ром-Лебедев, 1930;

1931; Ильинско & Ром-Лебедев, 1938), but his greatest love, to which he remained faithful until the end of his life, and which determined his life and creative path, turned out to be the Gypsy Theatre *Romen*.

It should be borne in mind here that Gypsy Theatre *Romen*, where Ivan Rom-Lebedev worked from its inception to the end of his life, is far from being just an artistic and cultural phenomenon, but had a much broader social dimension. This theatre is an emblematic (we can even say symbolic) manifestation and at the same time an extremely important factor in the development of the processes of Roma civic emancipation and Roma identity, and not only in the USSR but in much wider time and spatial dimensions.

This choice of Ivan Rom-Lebedev is not accidental at all, but rather natural. He comes from a family that was part of the Gypsy pre-revolutionary musical elite, and his parents, brothers and sisters, as well as himself, were members of Gypsy choirs. One must note that Gypsy Theatre *Romen* did not arise out of thin air, and it was based on the theatrical traditions of Gypsy choirs in the Russian Empire (Bessonov, 2016, pp. 143–144). Nikolay Shishkin can be considered the true ancestor of Gypsy music and dance performances on the stage. The Gypsy Choir, of which he was the leader, was the basis of the production of the operetta *Цыганские песни в лицах* (Gypsy Songs in Characters) by Nikolay Kulikov, presented in 1886 in St Petersburg. After the success of the operetta, Nikolay Shishkin prepared his musical play *Чавэ адро вэша* (Children in the Forest), translated into Russian as *Children of Forests and Fields*, which was played in St Petersburg from 1888 to 1906. In 1892 he prepared a new play, *Цыганская жизнь* (Gypsy Life), which also enjoyed great success (Бауров, 1996, pp. 22–23; Бессонов, 2002b, 806–808; Bessonov, 2016, pp. 143–144).

Moreover, the Theatre *Romen* was not the first Gypsy theatre established in the USSR (Bessonov, 2016, pp. 144). At least two years before the creation of the Theatre *Romen* in Moscow, there was a musical-theatrical ensemble led by the Gypsy singer and composer Evdokia Orlova. It worked at the club named after Nadezhda Krupskaya (Lenin's wife), called also the Theatre of Small Forms or simply Orlova's Theatre (Ibid.). However, the Gypsy musical elite felt insecure about the new realities, and the creation of a state-supported national Gypsy theatre would ensure their stable existence. These aspirations met the understanding and support of the Soviet state, as evidenced from the quote:

The most urgent task is to create a Gypsy written language and [...] a Gypsy theatre. The Gypsies are tired; they are tired of wandering from one stage to another – they strive for a solid and constant basis for their creativity. (Блюменау, 1927, p. 29).

In this situation, the Gypsy activists, grouped around the Gypsy journal *Romany zorya*, formed an initiative group and appealed to the Soviet authorities to establish their national theatre. In the Narkompros RSFSR, in the sector of National arts, an *Organising Committee for the Establishment of Indo-Romen Theatre* (for the term 'Indo-Rom' see the section about Georgiy Lebedev) was set up, which included representatives of this initiative group and various Soviet institutions, and which at its meeting held on October 4,

1930, decided to the establishment of *A Studio of the Indo-Romen (Gypsy) Theatre* (RGALI, f. 2928, op. 1, d. 1, l. 2–3; Ром-Лебедев, 1990, p. 165).

This is not the first attempt by Gypsy activists to create a national Gypsy theatre. As early as in the Statute of the *Union of Gypsies, living on the territory of the RSFSR*, which was approved by the NKVD on July 23, 1925, one of the goals of the union stated: “Organise clubs, libraries and national theatres and studios” (GARF, f. A 259, op. 10 B, d. 2253, l. 20). The leadership of the VSTs was trying to do something in this direction, but its activities in this direction were limited to a request from 1926 to the Soviet institutions, which sought permission to hold a special theatrical lottery for 15,000 rubles, through which to obtain funds for the activities of the Union, including the establishment of their national theatre (GARF, f. A 259, op. 10 B, d. 1924). However, the answer to this request was negative, as the NKVD argued that the Gypsy Union is a cultural and educational organisation that should not profit from its activities and that if such a lottery is allowed, a precedent will be set from which would benefit many other organisations with similar legal status (GARF, f. 393, op. 43 A, d. 1763, l. 30).

After this attempt, the idea of a Gypsy theatre was left for better times. In all likelihood, the decisive influence here was the fact that VSTs was subject to numerous financial checks and the leadership of the union was under constant suspicion of financial machinations, so the authorities chose to refrain from allocating funds without the possibility of direct financial control. However, the situation changed after the liquidation of the VSTs, and the second proposal to create a national theatre, already on behalf of the initiative group of Gypsy activists, was accepted in a completely different way by the Soviet authorities. The proposed new form of such a theatre, already under the direct tutelage and control of Soviet institutions (in particular the Glaviskusstvo at Narkompros RSFSR), proved acceptable to the authorities, and they actively engaged in the theatre’s creation.

In his memoirs, Rom-Lebedev describes the process of creating the Theatre *Romen* in a way that raises some doubts. According to him, all the work on the creation of the theatre was assigned to him and Georgiy Lebedev, noting that Georgiy Lebedev was engaged in numerous other activities (Ром-Лебедев, 1990, p. 165), and thus, the main burden of the preparatory work fell on him. Together with Andrey Taranov, they visited Anatoliy Lunacharskiy, head of the People’s Commissariat, at his home, who welcomed them warmly, exclaiming “Gypsies?! So Lenin’s word reached you too?”, and provided them with full support in their endeavour. From this description, however, two serious questions arise that call into question its veracity. First, as early as September 12, 1929, the Narkompros was headed by Andrey Bubnov (1884–1938), and his predecessor Anatoliy Lunacharskiy was reassigned to another job. Secondly, it seems quite incredible that Lunacharskiy learned during this visit for the first time that an organised movement had emerged among the Gypsies in the USSR since he was not only involved at the beginning of this movement and actively contributed to the creation of the ‘Gypsy Alphabet’ and

his signature is under the letter, which officially confirms this alphabet in 1927 (LANB, f. Nikolay Pankov; a copy of this letter is also stored in OGMLT, f. 29, op. 1, d. 49, l. 33).

In any case, the Soviet institutions apparently gave their blessing for the establishment of the theatre, and on November 16, 1930, at a meeting of the Theatre Department of the People's Commissariat, the composition of the Organising Group, that had to create the new theatre, was approved. This group includes professional theatre specialists Moisey Goldblatt, Semyon Bugachevskiy and Isay Feil, representatives of Gypsy activists were Georgiy Lebedev, Ivan Rom-Lebedev (then already under this name) and Alexander German, and the famous theatre director Vsevolod Meyerhold was elected an honorary member. Among the members of this group were distributed the leading positions in the theatre – Chair (Georgiy Lebedev), Deputy-Chair (Isay Feil), Art Director (Moisey Goldblatt), Musical Director (Semyon Bugachevskiy), Dramaturg (Ivan Rom-Lebedev), and Alexander Germano was commissioned to write a play on a Gypsy theme (Ром-Лебедев, 1990, p. 165). According to Ivan Rom-Lebedev, after a public discussion, the concept proposed by him was adopted, according to which the future theatre should be musical-dramatic, Gypsy in form and international in content (Ibid., p. 166).

The very creation of the Theatre *Romen* was interpreted by the Soviet authorities in a class discourse as part of the struggle against *tsyganshchina*, which was declared an art of the petite urban bourgeoisie, created in the past to serve the upper aristocracy and the haute bourgeoisie. That is why *tsyganshchina* was seen as a class-laden bourgeois art that has become obsolete and must be opposed by a new type, proletarian Gypsy music, which is “folk” and “traditional” and which originates in midst of the “genuine” Gypsies (only those who lead a nomadic way of life were accepted as such).

The description of the creation of Theatre *Romen* in Ivan Rom-Lebedev's book (Ром-Лебедев, 1990, pp. 164–165), including the selection of the artists by a commission in which he participated, is subordinated to this scheme. In this description, the candidates (men and women) are presented as nomadic Gypsies coming straight “from the tabors” (‘tabor’ is a separate unit of nomadic Gypsies in the Russian Empire and the USSR) and who looked like “savages men” and “savages women”, and the whole competition is defined as follows: “if the Neanderthals had conceived of creating a theatre studio, it would probably be something similar” (Ibid., pp. 167–169). After his review of the preserved protocols from this competition Nicolay Bessonov revealed that 21 people were admitted to the theatre, none of whom came from the ranks of nomadic Gypsies, and only seven of them had lived a nomadic way of life as young children (Bessonov, 2016, pp. 147–148). Moreover, almost as many additional artists have been accepted, all of whom came from the Gypsy musical elite. All artists in the theatre were approved by a commission from the point of view of their social origin, as the representative of the Gypsy activists in this commission was Andrey Taranov. However, this commission was palpable closing its eyes to the social background of the artists in the theatre, and the case of Nadezhda Kiseleva (the future star Lyalya Chernaya, at that time a soloist

in Polyakov's choirs) is particularly striking. Her mother, Maria Polyakova, is of mixed, Gypsy-Russian descent; as a participant in Lebedev's choir, she married Prince Sergei Golitsyn (whose mother was a Gypsy), and after her divorce, she remarried to Sergey Kiselev, also a hereditary nobleman who was the father of Lyalya Chernaya; however, in her personal questionnaire in the column of background, it is indicated that her parents were "employees" (Ibid., p. 146). Thus, in the end, despite the previously declared intentions, in practice the new theatre was formed mainly by representatives of the Gypsy musical elite, and, in 1932, only three artists who indicated nomadic origin worked there and they never reached leading positions (Ibid., p. 147).

The official opening of the theatre was on January 23, 1931 (RGALI, f. 2928, op. 1, d. 3, l. 5); the first public performance took place in May, including two parts – the scene *Атася и ададывец* (Yesterday and Today) by Edward Sholok translated in Romani by Mikhail Bezlyudskiy and *Ethnographic Sketches* by Mikhail Bezlyudskiy (Ром-Лебедев, 1990, p. 173); in December 1931 was the first premiere, the play *Джиибэн прэ роты* (Life on Wheels) by Alexander German, in which Ivan Rom-Lebedev played one of the main roles – the old leader of the tabor (Ibid, p. 176–177). In addition to performances in Moscow, the theatre toured the country every year: in 1932 in Vitebsk, Gomel, Mogilev, Smolensk and Kiev; in 1933 in Orenburg, Saransk, Penza, Baku and Tbilisi; in 1934 in Rostov-on-Don, Kharkov, Dnepropetrovsk, Zaporozhye and the cities of Donbass (RGALI, f. 2928, op. 1, d. 66; f. 2928, op. 1, d. 68; f. 2928, op. 1, d. 69).

Along with his artistic career, Ivan Rom-Lebedev actively worked as a playwright at the theatre. The plays he wrote in the 1930s, staged by the Theatre *Romen*, fully reflect the spirit of the time and the ideological attitudes towards the Gypsies, in particular the class struggle in the Gypsy *tabor* (nomadic camp), where on the one side are the so-called kulaks (the leader of the tabor, the elders), and on the other side – the progressive Gypsy youth, who strive for the new life, for the communist ideas, the realisation of which will lead to a radical change in the life of the Gypsies, i.e. to their civil emancipation. This simple ideological scheme unfolds in different conditions and takes different forms, e.g. the cessation of the nomadic way of life and the entry into the Gypsy collective farms as in the 1933 stage play *Sun in the Swamp*, or the inclusion of the Gypsies in the struggle for the Hungarian Soviet Republic in 1919 in the 1940 play *Song of Ursar*.

In Rom-Lebedev's dramaturgy work, the topic of the emancipation of the Gypsy woman, discriminated against by the traditional norms in the community, in the new Soviet realities deserves special mention. To this topic is devoted his first stage play, *Ganka*, written in 1933 (Ром-Лебедев, 1990, p. 178). The original has not been preserved, but probably its revised version is the play *Daughter of the Steppes* (premiered in 1935), as well as the stage play (defined as a "theatrical tale") *Wedding in the Tabor* (1935). Particularly impressive in this regard is the play *Daughter of the Steppes*, which proclaims 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

famous actor Lyalya Chernaya, soon after the premiere of this play, in which she played the lead role, realised the main message of the play, left her partner Ivan Rom-Lebedev and married the famous actor Mikhail Yanshin (non-Roma), who directed the play, and who soon after became the main art director of the Theatre *Romen*.

In parallel with his work at Theatre *Romen*, Ivan Rom-Lebedev did not end his public engagement in other fields of Gypsy civic emancipation. He was the head of the trade union in the theatre, and as its representative participated in many discussions on more general issues of state policy towards the Gypsies, such as the Meeting of Council of Nationalities at the TsIK USSR *On the Questions of the Employment of Toiling Nomadic Gypsies and Their Cultural and Economic Services*, held on January 4 and 5, 1936, at which the question of establishing a Gypsy autonomous territorial-administrative unit was discussed (GARF, P 3316, op. 28, d. 794, l. 77–125). In the theatre itself, he was also socially active, and his position in discussing the case of the removal of Georgiy Lebedev from the post of chair of the Theatre *Romen*, followed by a court verdict for financial abuses, is particularly impressive. At the Meeting of the *Gypsy Active at the Theatre Romen* held on April 8, 1933, Rom-Lebedev publicly accused his former close friend and colleague Georgiy Lebedev of not justifying his voted political trust as director of the theatre, compromising himself as a candidate member of the VKP(b), for committing multiple violations as an administrator, etc. (GARF, f. P 1235, op. 123, d. 28, l. 98–99). Naturally, in his memoirs, Rom-Lebedev “forgets” to mention these events.

In his autobiographical book, Ivan Rom-Lebedev also omits (perhaps consciously) another important topic in the history of the Theatre *Romen* – the transition from the Romani language to Russian in the theatre’s performances. Archive documents witness that Ivan Rom-Lebedev was present, at numerous discussions and heated debates about the language of performances of stage plays in the Theatre *Romen* (see part about Georgiy Lebedev) but did not make statements, so his attitude on this issue is not very clear. His opinion became visible only in 1948. Then, at a meeting of the All-Russian Theatre Society, the theatre critic Georgiy Kryzhitskiy (a non-Roma), stated that “[the Theatre] *Romen* has lost the main feature of a national theatre – its language that is, from a Gypsy theatre it turned into a kind of theatre about Gypsies”. (В театре “Ромэн”, p. 39). This statement was met with strong opposition from the Roma – Ivan Rom-Lebedev and Vasily Bizev (leading artist in the theatre) (Ibid., p. 40). This was the first case in which Ivan Rom-Lebedev takes a public and categorical view on the issue of language in the theatre, but at the same time, it was more a question of defending the theatre itself. After this meeting, the issue of language at the Theatre *Romen* was completed, and to this day the performances remain bilingual, with a leading position of the Russian language (which greatly contributes to the preservation and development of the theatre itself over the years).

During World War II (called the Great Patriotic War in the USSR), the Theatre *Romen* was formally evacuated to Stalinabad (now Dushanbe in Tajikistan), but virtually all the artists joined various music and dance groups (including two so-called front-line brigades)

and gave numerous concerts – both in different places throughout the USSR and on the fronts and in military hospitals. The funds raised from the concerts were donated to the Defense Fund, and they went to the manufacture of military equipment, including a bomber called ‘Romenovets’ (in the archives of the Theatre *Romen* is stored a telegram signed by Stalin to the theatre staff, with which he as Supreme Commander-in-Chief thanks for this donation). Although the artists from the Theatre *Romen* were released from mobilisation, some of them went as volunteers to the Soviet Army, and some of them died on the fronts of the war (Бессонов, 2010, pp. 214–244). Ivan Rom-Lebedev was also actively involved in all these activities; he was a member of the First Front Brigade, which gave concerts to fighters at the front, and he also wrote a play *On the Banks of the Dniester* (staged in 1942) about the participation of Gypsies from the occupied territories in the war.

After the end of the war, Ivan Rom-Lebedev’s public engagement in the field of Roma civic emancipation found expression in the preparation of a special letter addressed to Stalin. The letter was submitted on May 3, 1946, and in the first place among the signatories is his name (i.e. he is if not the single contributor, then at least one of the authors), with the explanation under the signature – a playwright of the Theatre *Romen* and a candidate member of the VKP(b). The letter was signed by a total of 12 people, among them are missing the leading Gypsy activists of the interwar period, but are included mainly Gypsy intellectuals (members of the SSP, artists from the Theatre *Romen*) and war heroes, most of them party members, and the list ends with a junior lieutenant serving in the NKVD (GULAG camp system). In the letter, written in the spirit of the time, the signatories, identifying themselves as “representatives of the advanced part of the Gypsy population”, addressed the “leader, teacher and friend of large and small peoples of the Soviet Union”, noting that “in our country, the Leninist-Stalinist policy gave the Gypsies the opportunity, along with other backward peoples of the Soviet Union, to join the ranks of working people and raise their national culture and their art”. It then briefly describes what the Gypsies achieved before the war “thanks to the activities of the Party and the Soviet Government”, emphasising that “all these comprehensions are the result of your attention to all fraternal peoples, your daily concern for a toiling person”. The letter continues with a description of the difficult years of the war, the persecution of Gypsies in the occupied territories, their heroism in defence of the Fatherland, noting the names of Gypsies who fought in the army and partisan units and received military orders and awards. It is noted that in the difficult conditions after the war, when the restoration of the Soviet state took place, “on the ground, the approach to the peculiarities of the Roma nationality is not taken into account”, but the publication of literature in the native language, cultural-educational work among the backward Gypsy masses was suspended, not enough attention was paid to the Theatre *Romen* as the only cultural centre of the Soviet Gypsies, and a return to the nomadic way of life was observed. The signatories of the letter, therefore, addressed Stalin personally with a request “to establish a Gypsy Cultural Representation under the Council of Nationalities [of the Supreme Soviet of the

USSR], which will pose to the relevant organisations all pressing issues related to working among the Gypsies and would monitor and ensure that these issues were fully resolved in a timely manner”, that “would give positive results in the introduction of Gypsies to socialist society” (GARF, f. P 7523, op. 17, d. 132, l. 124–127).

With this letter, the new Soviet Gypsy elite (more precisely, a part of it, uniting the artistic and creative intelligentsia, grouped around the Theatre *Romen*) asked the Soviet state to return to the special policy of affirmative action targeting Gypsies as a separate community, which was replaced with mainstream policy towards them as Soviet citizens in the second half of the 1930s as part of a paradigm shift in Soviet national policy (Martin, 2001, pp. 309–461). No response to the letter was found, and no change in state policy towards the Gypsies followed. This should not come as a surprise, nor should it be interpreted as a manifestation of anti-Gypsyism, and this reaction (namely lack of reaction) is easily explained. The Soviet authorities at that time had to solve grandiose and incredibly difficult tasks of eliminating the consequences of the war and rebuilding the Soviet state in the conditions of the starting “Cold War”, and the problems of a “small” (in the context of the multinational Soviet state) nation as Gypsies were too far from the main state priorities.

Ivan Rom-Lebedev’s engagement with this letter to Stalin had no negative consequences for him, just on the contrary. In the following year, 1947, he was accepted as a member of the VKP(b) and the Union of Soviet Writers and received the title of Honoured Artist of the RSFSR, and all these memberships and awards brought him many social (including financial) privileges. From then on, he ceased his public activities and focused on his work at the Theatre *Romen*.

In the 1950s, he did not sign several letters sent by Gypsy activists to top Soviet leaders and institutions (see below); in the 1960s he did not take part in Nikolay Satkevich’s attempts to raise the Gypsy issues again in front of the Soviet institutions (see below). Moreover, when Nikolay Satkevich collected the memories of old Gypsy activists from the interwar period, Ivan Rom-Lebedev was the only one who did not respond to his request. The only exception he made was for the young Roma historian Vladimir Ivashchenko, who in the 1970s collected materials for his dissertation (Иващенко, 2011), to whom he shared his memories of that period (largely repeating what was written later in his autobiographical book).

Ivan Rom-Lebedev’s work after the Second World War at the Theatre *Romen* continued until the end of his life and was extremely successful, which is why in 1981 he received the title of Honoured Artist of the RSFSR. He has been a playwright at the Theatre *Romen* for decades, and has written numerous plays and adapted screenplays by the theatre: *Sun in the Swamp* (1933), *Tabor in the Steppe* (1934), *Daughter of the Steppes* (1935), *Wedding in the Tabor* (1935), *Song of Ursar* (1940), *On the Banks of the Dniester* (1942), *Gayduki* (1944), *Heroic Poem* (1948), *Gypsies* (1949), *Daughter of Tents* (1950), *Esmeralda* (1951), *Woman Dancer* (1954), *Estaminet “Mackerel”* (1957), *Carmen from Triana* (1961), *By the Road* (1965), *I Was Born in a Tabor* (together with the famous Soviet writer Yuriy

Nagibin, 1970), *We – the Gypsies* (together with Nikolay Slichenko, 1976, nowadays it has become a symbolic emblem of the theatre), *Birds Need Sky* (1985) and others. In addition, Ivan Rom-Lebedev is also the author of smaller stage works, e.g. one-act plays in Romani named *Kofapu* (Hawker) about the class struggle in the kolkhoz, and *Goat's leg* (i.e. a roll-up cigarette) about the elimination of illiteracy among the Gypsies, presented at the kolkhoz *Oktyabr* (October) in the Western region with centre Smolensk during the 1935 Theatre *Romen* tour (Германов, 1954, p. 90). In the same year, on the occasion of the 30th anniversary of the First Russian Revolution, was presented a stage interlude with the title *1905*, was written by Ivan Rom-Lebedev “based on factual materials” about the participation of Gypsies in the Moscow Uprising (Ibid., P. 96). It is not clear whether such materials existed at all, no one apart from Rom-Lebedev mentions them, as if they did exist, they would be widely used by Gypsy activists in their propaganda and journalism.

In the last years of his life, Ivan Rom-Lebedev published several more of his books: the collection of plays *The Gypsies Rode* (Ром-Лебедев, 1983) and the already mentioned autobiography *From the Gypsy Choir to the Theatre Romen: Notes of a Moscow Gypsy* (Ром-Лебедев, 1990), and after his death the collection of short stories *Tabor's Gypsy Woman* was published (Ром-Лебедев, 1992).

Ivan Rom-Lebedev's personal life, like his public life, is also full of various vicissitudes and not completely clarified. According to some unconfirmed information from the oral history of the Gypsies in Moscow, in the late 1920s, he had a relationship (the so-called civil marriage at that time without official registration) with the famous Gypsy star Lyalya Chernaya; then she had a short marriage with Augustina Kolomeytseva, daughter of the artist Kolomeytsev and a Gypsy nicknamed *Lesovichka* (the nickname is a designation of a forest Tutelary deity), who studied at the Moscow State Stroganov Academy of Industrial and Applied Arts, worked in painting fabric, including the Bolshoy Theatre, as an illustrator in Gypsy journals. It is certain that from the 1930s he married Nina Georgievna Rafanskaya (1917–2009), known by her Gypsy name Gadya, an artist at the Theatre *Romen*, and spent the rest of his life with her.

During the last years of their lives, they lived in the villa given to Ivan Rom-Lebedev by the SSP in the writer's village of Krasnovidovo, Istra district, Moscow region, where he died on January 5, 1991. He was buried in the Luzhki cemetery, his wife is buried next to him.

There is something symbolic in the fact that the death of Ivan Rom-Lebedev coincides with the end of the USSR, which collapsed in the same year. In fact, he was the “last Mohican” of a bygone era, which, however, is extremely important in the history of Roma civic emancipation. If we need to determine the place of Ivan Rom-Lebedev in this field, we fully agree with the words of Nikolay Bessonov, who after many critical words about his contradictory historical and artistic heritage, evaluates him “without any irony – an outstanding figure in [Gypsy] national culture” (Бессонов, 2007), and we would only add, also in the movement for Roma civic emancipation.

Andrey Taranov

Elena Marushiakova and Vesselin Popov

The tumultuous life of Andrey Semyonovich Taranov (1896 – after 1966) was filled with various vicissitudes, ups and downs, which was a common phenomenon throughout the historical era in which he lived – an era of wars, revolutions and radical social changes.

For the early years of Andrey Taranov's life, we can fully trust the data he presented in his detailed Autobiography (LANB, f. Николай Саткевич, d. Андрей Таранов; published in Marushiakova & Popov, 2021b, pp. 918–922). There, he wrote that he originated from a family of “Gypsies *Servi*”, his mother was a Russian woman, and during the first ten years of his life, his family led a nomadic way of life but settled under the influence of his mother. He was born in 1896 in the former Kursk governorate but did not specify the exact date and specific location (likely, he did not know more details). According to this information, it can be assumed that his father was from the subgroup of the so-called *Voronežskie Servi*, called also *Khandžari*, who wandered in the Southern Russian provinces and, unlike most *Servi* in Ukraine, did not have a permanent residence and their own homes. Some authors wrongly claim that Andrey Taranov was a “graduate of a state school in the Urals” (Lemon, 2000, p. 133), i.e. it goes without saying that he was from this region but, in this case, there is a clear confusion of his biographical data with those of Ivan Tokmakov.

According to a biographical essay about Andrey Taranov, his father was a blacksmith, he played the violin, his mother's name was Nastya (Anastasia), and he had brothers Grigoriy, Vasilii and Andrey (Равдин & Хмельковская, 1968, pp. 96–97). According to another such journalistic essay, Taranov's family came from Bessarabia and his mother was “black-haired” Zemfira (Цона, 1974). These two descriptions are a complete representation of the stereotypical notion of Gypsies formed by Alexander Pushkin's famous poem *Gypsies* (including mentioning Bessarabia and also the name of the main character in the poem attributed by the journalist in the second essay to Taranov's mother) because neither in the past nor even today did *Servi* live in Bessarabia and this was not an area of nomadism for them. Moreover, in the past, the *Servi* lived on the left bank of the Dnepr River, while the *Vlaxi* lived on the right bank, and it was not until the 19th century that the two groups began to resettle and explore new territories. (Баранніков, 1931; 1933).

However, other information from these two essays about Taranov can be trusted – for example, that his father was a village blacksmith, or that he had an older brother, Grigoriy (facts that are also confirmed by other historical sources).

It is not clear in which settlement Andrey Taranov's family lived but, judging from the indirect data from his Autobiography, it was a village near the town of Korocha (today in the Belgorod region of the Russian Federation). It is also not clear what kind of education

he received. When he was about 10 years old, once his family settled, he most probably attended the local village school for at least a few years. At the age of 16, in 1913, together with his older brother, he worked as a blacksmith in the railway workshop at Otrozhka station (now a suburb of Voronezh), from where in 1915 he was mobilised and sent to the front during the First World War (LANB, f. Николай Саткевич, д. Андрей Таранов). According to Tudor Tsopa, Taranov served as a cavalryman on the Riga front and, immediately after the October Revolution, he joined a cavalry detachment and defended the rebel Petrograd (St Petersburg) in the ranks of the Red Army (Цопа, 1974). According to Taranov himself, however, in February 1918 (when the Red Army was created) he returned home and, in April of the same year, he actively participated in the formation of the cavalry division “against the counter-revolution and bands” in Korocha (LANB, f. Николай Саткевич, д. Андрей Таранов).

At the beginning of 1919, the cavalry division, in which Andrey Taranov participated, was included in the 11th Cavalry Division, one of the military units based on the famous First Cavalry Army, led by Semyon Budyonny, that was formed in November 1919. As part of the First Cavalry Army, Taranov took part in the great battle near Kastornoye, in which the cavalry units of the famous white Cossack generals Andrey Shkuro and Konstantin Mamontov were defeated, and during which the attack on Moscow of the Armed Forces of South Russia (uniting the Volunteer Army and the Don Army) led by General Anton Denikin was stopped. The next major battle in which Taranov participated was at Debaltsevo in December 1919, when the Red Army defeated the units of the Armed Forces of South Russia led by General Sergey Ulagay, and opened the way for an offensive in Southern Russia. In January 1920, Taranov took part in the battles during the conquest of Rostov-on-Don by the First Cavalry Army (Ibid.).

In April 1920, the Polish army launched a large-scale military operation against the USSR. The first cavalry, stationed at that time in the Kuban region, was urgently transferred to the West. After several battles with Nestor Makhno's troops in the Zaporozhye region, and then with Polish troops, the liberation of Kiev in June 1920 followed, after which the army headed for Lviv. As a participant in a reconnaissance cavalry squadron, Taranov got into a fight with a detachment of Polish cavalry near the village of Bilyi Kamin (near Brody, in the Lviv region), and received a sword wound in his right hand (Ibid.; Цопа, 1974). After his release from the hospital, he was recognised as an invalid from the Civil War but remained in military service as a *politruk* (political leader) of a squadron in the 11th Cavalry Division. In this position, Taranov took part in the purge of Belarus from Stanisław Bułak-Bałachowicz's troops. In the spring of 1922, the division was transferred to Central Asia, where it participated in the fight against the Basmachi movement in the region of Samarkand (LANB, f. Николай Саткевич, д. Андрей Таранов).

In 1922, a serious change took place in the life of Andrey Taranov. This year he was accepted as a member of the VKP(b), and immediately afterwards sent by the Political Department of the 11th Cavalry Division to Moscow for training at the Communist University of the Toilers of the East, named after I. V. Stalin (KUTV) (Ibid.; GARF,

f. P 1235, op. 119, d. 9, l. 3). This university was established in 1921 (i.e. Taranov was among the second generation of graduates). This University prepared two main cohorts of students: students from the USSR, from which Party and Soviet workers were trained for the National's nomenclature of the Soviet republics; and foreign students who were prepared to fight for the establishment of communism in their countries, the organisation of uprisings and revolutions. In the autumn of 1921, when the university was opened, 713 students studied there; in 1922 (when Taranov inscribed in it) – 930 students; in 1923 – 1,015 students, from 62 nationalities. It should come as no surprise that the Gypsies, as most of the nationalities in the USSR at that time fell into this category, were classified as “toilers of the East”. It should be borne in mind that the “second echelon” of the Soviet national party and administrative nomenclature was being prepared in the KUTV (the highest Soviet cadres were being trained in the Sverdlovsk Communist University).

During his training at KUTV, Andrey Taranov became involved in the activities of establishing the Gypsy Union. His name first appeared at a meeting of the Initiative Group, held on August 24, 1924, in a limited composition, and in a note explicitly stated that he was “introduced as a useful public worker among the Gypsies” (GARF, f. P 1235, op. 119, d. 10, l. 11). At this meeting, on the recommendation of ON VTsIK, its membership was greatly reduced, a new, revised Statute was adopted, and Andrey Taranov was elected chairman of the Initiative Group, as the only Gypsy member of VKP(b) among them (Ibid., l. 14). As chairman of the Initiative Group, Andrey Taranov actively participates in the process of coordination of the Union's programming documents. After he graduated from KUTV, with a letter from the Moscow Committee of the VKP(b) dated July 10, 1925 to the NKVD, “comrade Taranov was commissioned to lead the work in this [Gypsy] Union” (GARF, f. P 393, op. 43 A, d. 1763, l. 20–21). Shortly afterwards, on July 23, 1925, the NKVD officially registered the Union of Gypsies living on the territory of the RSFSR (publicly known as VSTs), with Andrey Taranov as its chairman (Ibid., l. 89–94; see also GARF, f. P 1235, op. 120, d. 27, l. 89–94).

In his position as chairman of the VSTs, Andrey Taranov was a co-author (with the secretary of the Union Ivan Lebedev – the future Rom-Lebedev) of the article *Gypsies are Awakening* published in the official newspaper of the TsIK SSSR (Известия, 1925, p. 6). This program article not only presents to Soviet society the main goals and objectives of the new Union but also offers (of course, through established ideological phraseology, common in the early USSR) a brief and comprehensive concept of the essence of Gypsy civic emancipation.

The leading ideas in the work of the Union were presented in a special poster printed in a circulation of 2,000 copies in 1927. The poster is an appeal To Gypsy Inhabitants of RSFSR on behalf of the *All-Russian Union of the Gypsies living on the territory of RSFSR*. It begins with the political slogan ‘Proletarians of the world, unite!’ which is one of the rallying cries from The Communist Manifesto by Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels (1848). In a synthesised form, the goals of the VSTs are formulated as follows: “[...] By gradually transferring the Gypsies to agriculture, eradicating illiteracy, teaching them the craft,

uniting them into Sections, the Union will raise the self-awareness of our backward people and put it on a par with other peoples who are participating in the construction of our Soviet state” (GARF, f. P 9550, op. 2, d. 2010, l. 1; published in Marushiakova & Popov, 2021a, pp. 712–718). The poster was signed by the Chairman of the VSTs Andrey Taranov, Secretary Ivan Lebedev and Board Members Nikolay Pankov, Nina Dudarova and Dmitriy Polyakov (Ibid.).

As head of the VSTs, Andrey Taranov also undoubtedly played an important role in the preparation and adoption of the Work Plan of the *All-Russian Union of the Gypsies* for 1926 (GARF, f. P 1235, op. 120, d. 27, l. 99–101), which was probably adopted in January 1926, and about which a few more words need to be said. This plan actually concretises as immediate tasks the ideas set in the creation of VSTs by its founders. The very structure of the plan is built on a logic that is not always understandable, and it includes many different intentions, without clearly outlining the priorities in the Union’s activities.

Based on this Plan, three departments have been established at VSTs: a) Cultural and educational; b) Organisational; c) Production. However, these departments are not directly related to the main sections of the Plan, and the task of “organising production cooperatives and training workshops” is listed as part of the cultural and educational activities, and the organisation of agricultural cooperatives and communes (future Gypsy kolkhozes) is defined as part of the Organisational Activity. This unstructuredness of the Plan allows for arbitrary interpretations of its leading priorities, which are not based on real historical research. Such interpretation is visible for example in the title of the article *From “Unsettled Fortune-Tellers” to Socialist Workers: Education Policies and Roma in the Early Soviet Union* (Dunajeva, 2021b). It contains a direct suggestion that allegedly the main task of Gypsy politics (and VSTs as its instrument) at the time was the struggle against the Gypsy fortunetelling. It is true that the fight against “everyday life phenomena (fortunetelling, begging, theft)” is listed as a separate item in the Plan (as in all previous versions of the Statute of the VSTs), but there is no historical evidence of any specific activities conducted in this direction. Moreover, in his memoirs, Ivan Rom-Lebedev writes that when fortune-telling women appeared on the stage of the Theatre *Romen*, they were received with great success by the audience (both Gypsies and non-Gypsies) as especially attractive images (Ром-Лебедев, 1990, p. 175). Here we come again to a serious problem in the field of Romani Studies – whether it is enough to study only the ‘desired’ history (laws, decrees, regulations, statutes, etc.), and whether these historical sources do not need to be verified through ‘real’ history (i.e. how these norms and intentions are realised in practice), and what results they lead to.

We need to use the second, syncretic approach to understand the place and role of Andrey Taranov and his visions about the present and future of the Gypsies in the overall activities of the VSTs. Taranov as VSTs’s chairman had the task to coordinate the overall activities of the organisation, for which he was responsible before the Soviet authorities. The Work Plan of the *All-Russian Union of the Gypsies* for 1926 sets out a whole range of different specific activities that VSTs must perform. These include (in the order in

which they are listed): the opening of Gypsy schools, adult literacy courses (likbez) and Gypsy clubs and “red corners”; holding broad meetings with presentations of lectures, reports and agitation performances and materials on socially important topics; sending active members of the Union for training in Rabfaks and universities; the organisation of Komsomol cells, pioneer detachments and kindergartens; organising a section for work with Gypsy women at the VSTs; holding agitation meetings on these topics; conducting a study of the sanitary condition of the Gypsy families; opening special outpatient clinics for medical care of Gypsies in the divisions of the VSTs; creating various craft circles (sewing and tailoring, basket weaving, etc.); directing the Gypsies through social institutions to socially useful work; sending the Gypsy youth to factory, craft and technical schools; organising production cooperatives and training workshops; creating a Gypsy Alphabet; to publish textbooks and periodicals in the Gypsy language (newspapers, journals, series with general education literature); opening studios for national singing and music, pursuing a course towards the establishment of a national theatre; appointing a representative of the VSTs in Narkompros; applying through the relevant authorities for assistance and implementation of Union decrees; clarifying through the relevant authorities the statistics on the Gypsies in the RSFSR; explaining through the local authorities the cultural and economic situation of the Gypsies in places with the greatest concentration of them; organising VSTs sections at these localities; holding there broad meetings with presentations on the need for the transition to an agricultural way of life; organising, if there was an expressed desire (sic!) in places, agricultural artels, communes, etc. (GARF, f. P 1235, op. 120, d. 27, l. 99–101).

In his position as head of VSTs, Andrey Taranov was directly committed to achieving the goals set in this ambitious Plan. Of course, he would not be able to manage all the activities of the Union operationally, even if he wanted to; thus, he transferred some of the responsibilities in certain areas to other Gypsy activists. In his Autobiography, he described, for example, how, when creating the Gypsy Alphabet (an achievement that VSTs was especially proud of and everywhere highlights), he visited the famous academician Nikolay Marr, who advised him to turn to Prof. Maxim Sergievskiy (LANB, f. Николай Саткевич, d. Андрей Таранов). From then on, the cooperation with the Narkompros and the activities for the creation of the alphabet, as well as of Gypsy schools, were de facto undertaken by Nikolay Pankov and Nina Dudarova. Similarly, he described his contribution to the creation of the Theatre *Romen* (Ibid.), although in practice the actual activity of creating the theatre began only after the dissolution of the VSTs (see above).

Chronologically speaking, one of the first directions in which Taranov himself was actively engaged was set in the Work Plan of the VSTs for 1926, where it is explicitly stated:

To preserve from the degenerating national characteristics of the Gypsy masses and because of their everyday characteristics, the Union proposes a) Allocate a territory in the Southern region for the settlement of Gypsies there and to unite all types of agricultural organisations, as well as Gypsies who want to settle independently. (GARF, f. P 1235, op. 120, d. 27, l. 100).

In fulfilment of this task, on March 2, 1926, a report signed by the leaders of the VSTs (Andrey Taranov and Ivan Lebedev) was sent to the Federal Committee of the VTsIK, from where it was redirected to the Resettlement Committee at the TsIK of the USSR. The report stated:

The All-Russian Union of Gypsies, organised in 1925, aims to organise these backward masses, fight against nomadism, raise their cultural level, and introduce them to the Soviet society and working life. It is possible to raise their economic and cultural level only if they are concentrated in one place, therefore the Presidium of the All-Russian Union of Gypsies asks the Federal committee of the All-Russian Central Executive Committee to allocate one part from the state fund's land for the settlement of Gypsies, mainly in the South, since the Gypsies are the southern people, and provide them state assistance with construction materials, seeds, some agricultural stocks and free them from state taxes for several years until they acquire their own economy. (GARF, f. P 3260, op. 6, d. 44, l. 5–6).

Another report, also signed by Ivan Taranov and Ivan Lebedev, sent to the Federal Committee of TsIK on April 1, 1926, specified:

[...] 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. [...] The Presidium is supposed to settle up to 100 000 (one hundred thousand) people. [...] 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. (Ibid., l. 4).

These proposals of the VSTs marked the beginning of the aspirations to create a Gypsy territorial-administrative unit (Gypsy Autonomous Rayon/Oblast/Republic) – an issue that became particularly relevant in the 1930s. An interesting question to which there is no answer is whether this idea came from the midst of the settled Moscow Gypsies, who had an overwhelming majority in the membership and leadership of the VSTs, or Taranov himself. However, the Soviet authorities did not support this proposal of the VSTs and the idea was left for better times.

Directly related to this proposal of VSTs is the issue of sedentarisation of Gypsy nomads. Surprisingly it appears at first glance that the active side pleading for the sedentarisation of Gypsy nomads in the USSR was initially the Gypsy activists. Already in the Application dated September 23, 1924, of the Initiative Group to establish a Gypsy Union, it is 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). A number of changes had taken place in the process of registration of the Gypsy Union between the Draft-Statute of January 1924 and the Registered Statute of July 10, 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, 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. 10 B, d. 2253, l. 21), which means that the fight against nomadism was the last goal of the Union.

Almost immediately after the registration of VSTs, its leaders began taking active steps to change the Statute of the organisation. The first of such requests addressed to the VTsIK and dated September 05, 1925, was already accompanied by Motives of the 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. 9 B, d. 4233, l. 2). In the prepared new Draft Statute from 1926, proposed for approval by the institutions and 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”. (Ibid., l. 5). In the new edited Statute of the Union, 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 literally repeats the wording from the 1925 Statute: “The Union [...] conducts a moral struggle with the public evil among its members, such as: drunkenness, fortune-telling, begging, gambling, nomadism” (GARF, f. P 393, op. 43 A, d. 1763, l. 112). This sentence in fact repeats the wording of the Statutes approved on 23 July 1925. From this wording, apparently made under the influence of the Soviet institutions with which the Statute was agreed, it is clear that the Soviet authorities, at least at this stage, did not consider the sedentarisation of Gypsy nomads as such an important and topical issue, and therefore did not want to force activities in this direction.

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 Gypsy 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. 6 A, 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.

Despite clearly expressed a reserved attitude towards the idea of sedentarisation of the nomadic Gypsies and creating national Gypsy kolkhozes, the Soviet authorities did not reject the idea in principle and took some incentive measures in this direction. 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 this 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 VTsIK 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 were 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 participated 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 May 08, 1926, were Andrey Taranov and Mikhail Bezlyudskiy who, by a decision of the Presidium of VSTs of February 15, 1927, was replaced by Sergey Polyakov (GARF, f. P 3260, op. 6, d. 44, l. 33–34). It is significant that the first issue of the journal *Romany zorya* published an article by Andrey Taranov *About the Land for Romanyčhavenge* (Романы зоря, 1927h, pp. 4–6). 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, 1927, p. 6) or *Let Us Put aside the Past Nomadism: We Will Include Gypsies in the Construction of Socialism* by Georgiy Lebedev and Daniil Savov (Комсомольская правда, 1930c, p. 3).

The management of VSTs, and Andrey Taranov personally, were directly involved in supporting the nomadic Gypsies who wanted to settle down. A letter was received in the VSTs, sent on December 27, 1926, from the residents (former nomads) of *khutor* (a designation of type of rural settlement, unit composed of several homesteads) Krikunovo. The letter was written two months after the issuing of the Decree of TsIK USSR and SNK USSR (GARF, f. P 3316, op. 20, d. 653, l. 22–24) *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). It also became clear how the connection between VSTs and the inhabitants

of khutor was established – among these inhabitants were Andrey Taranov's brother, Grigoriy, and his cousin Vasiliy.

The khutor Krikunovo was founded in the spring of the same year, around half a year before the Decree came into existence, i.e., among one part of Gypsy nomads 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. The name of the khutor was given by its inhabitants after their leader Alexander Pavlovich Krikunov, and they presented themselves as former “red partisans” who also served in the Red Army during the Civil War, who together decided to move to a sedentary way of life. In the beginning, there were 20 families (87 people), later they were joined by another 25 families. The signatories of the letter ask the VSTs to assist them in their request to the local authorities to obtain new land and to significantly expand the plot received by the khutor at its inception.

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 similar letter was sent to the VSTs and to SN TsIK from the village of Gribani (no longer existing today), near Smolensk (GARF, f. P 1235, op. 120, d. 27, l. 28–29). The letter from khutor Krikunovo, however, entered public circulation within the Soviet propaganda. Articles about it have been published in both Soviet officious – daily of VKP(b) *Pravda* (Правда, 1927, p. 4) and also in the newsletter of the TsIK SSSR *Izvestiya* (Известия, 1928, p. 6). With his articles in Russian and in Romani language, Alexander German has also promoted khutor Krikunovo several times (Молодой Ленинец, 1928, p. 3; Крестьянская газета, 1928, p. 4; Романы зоря, 1929a, pp. 7–10). Khutor Krikunovo thus became, among the public, an iconic symbol of nomadic Gypsies' ambition to settle down and to start moving to collective agriculture. However, this was not enough to survive khutor, in which 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, and its inhabitants left it (O'Keeffe, 2013, pp. 152, 286).

Overall, the VSTs actively involved in the Soviet policy towards Gypsies. In September 1925 the Central Board of the VSTs appointed Ivan [Rom-]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, after adopting the ambitious Union Work Plan, a detailed Work Plan for its Cultural Department was also affirmed (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 Gypsy leaders themselves and implemented by the Soviet institutions with the active participation of Gypsy activists. At first glance, the cooperation between the VSTs and the Soviet state appeared to be successful and the right balance had been found in relations between the two parties. 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 September 05, 1925, which contained a request for an amendment of the just registered Statute. A new Draft Statute has been prepared with amendments that were aimed at “giving the union the opportunity to organise production workshops and other enterprises” (GARF, f. A 259, op. 9 Б, d. 4233, l. 5), i.e., to develop their own economic activity. In fact, this was the original idea of the founders of the Union (the Initiative Proletarian Group of Gypsies), laid down in the first version of the Statute of the organisation from the beginning of 1924 (GARF, f. P 1235, op. 119, d. 9, l. 4); in the later revisions of the Statute, this idea fell away, but immediately after the official registration of the Union, it came to the fore again.

The request of the VSTs for changes in the Statute of the Union, which would enable it to develop its own economic (production and trade) activity, 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. 9 Б, d. 4233; f. P 1235, op. 120, d. 27; f. A 259, op. 10 Б, d. 2253, l. 39; 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 educational production workshops, but continued to make new requests to institutions, for example 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. 10 Б, d. 1924; f. P 393, op. 43 A, d. 1763, l. 136).

The new version of the Statute of the VSTs was approved by the NKVD on July 15, 1926 (GARF, f. P 393, op. 43 A, d. 1763, l. 111–116), and the development of economic (production and commercial) activity by the Union had already been formally resolved (at least partially). The first Gypsy production artels in Moscow were established in 1925 (Порн, 1934, p. 17), but their true heyday began immediately after the change in the Statute of the VSTs in 1926. The same year, in Moscow, production artels were organised: furniture and upholstery, knitting, packaging (chemical), toy, chandlery and others (Герман, 1931,

p. 52). In the majority of cases, however, these are artels in which Gypsies did not work at all (either their number is minimal or they are fictitiously employed), but the artels themselves received the necessary certificates from the VSTs management that they are “Gypsy”. To that end, the Union had two stamps and two forms, one with its actual name and the other one with the name VSTs at ON VTsIK, on which these certificates were issued (GARF, f. P 1235, op. 140, d. 498, l. 1–22). This was done so that these artels could receive from the state at preferential prices and with priority deficit raw materials, which they then sold on the free market. Moreover, in this profiteering activity, they were assisted by the leadership of the VSTs (including Andrey Taranov himself), who lobbied for them before the Soviet institutions. Almost all of these pseudo-Gypsy artels ceased to exist after the liquidation of the VSTs in 1928, and only a few of them (e.g. *Tsygkhimprom*) continued their activities in the 1930s (GARF, f. P 3316, op. 28, d. 794, p. 93).

Despite the rapid development of the activity of the Gypsy (at least formally speaking) production cooperatives and artels, the financial problems of VSTs did not end here but, on the contrary, they widened and deepened further. At the end of the same year (1926), 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 abbreviation. 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 Andrey Taranov and Secretary Ivan Lebedev were sentenced to forced labour for a period of six months (Вечерняя Москва, 1927, p. 4), but the sentence was subsequently suspended (GARF, f. P 1235, op. 140, d. 498, l. 7–8). Andrey Taranov also received a punishment on the Party line – after a series of investigations by the Moscow Workers’ and Peasants’ Inspection at a meeting of the Moscow Control Commission of the VKP(b) it was proposed that he be expelled from the Party, but at the end, he was not but was punished with severe reprimand with the entry into a personal file (GARF, f. P 393, op. 43 A, d. 1763, l. 228).

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). The main target of their allegations was the leadership of the VSTs and, first of all, its secretary Ivan Lebedev, chairman Andrey Taranov, and their supporters (“the Lebedevs and Polyakovs”, the members of “the Polyakovs clan”). His appeal to the authorities was “the union should not be closed, but reorganised, cleared of weeds” (GARF, f. P 1235, op. 120, d. 27). The VSTs, for their part, have made unsuccessful attempts to re-register by replacing

the VSTs Presidium with the Board of Founders, which included Andrey Taranov, Ivan Lebedev, Georgiy Lebedev, Dmitriy Polyakov and Nikolay Pankov as members, and Dmitriy Shishkov, Nina Dudarova and Agva as candidate members (GARF, f. P 393, op. 43 A, d. 1763, l. 160). The idea was for the Board of Founders to form a new Gypsy Union; subsequently, was offered another idea – to 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 (Ibid., l. 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). 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 July 18, 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 course of numerous inspections and discussions of the problems in the VSTs in the various Soviet institutions, it turned out that there were disagreements between these institutions about the future of the Union. ON VTsIK tries to preserve VSTs by looking for different options to solve the existing problems in its activity, e.g. closure of the so-called training and production workshops and a ban on all economic activities (GARF, f. P 393, op. 43 A, d. 1763, 136; f. P 1235, op. 140, d. 498), secondment of a famous party figure Vagarshak Ter-Vaganyan (1893–1938) as his permanent representative in the leadership of the Union (GARF, f. P 3316, op. 17, d. 188), including even attempts to replace whole VSTs leadership. Mikhail Bezlyudskiy (GARF, f. P 1235, op. 140, d. 498, l. 2) was nominated for new Chairman of VSTs from ON VTsIK, the option of attracting a non-Gypsy to be the head of the Union has even been discussed (Ibid., pp. 22). However, the Moscow authorities, which were directly responsible for the activities of the VSTs, were pleading for its liquidation, because in this way they would get rid of the many problems that these activities constantly created for them. It was the differences between the Soviet institutions that caused the process of liquidating the VSTs to take so long. Moreover, there is even a very rare and seemingly unbelievable case of prolonged delay, and in fact boycott, by the Soviet institutions of a decision taken by the highest party bodies. At its extended meeting of the Subdivision of National Minorities of the Department for Agitation and Propaganda at TsK VKP(b), held on May 3, 1927, at which Andrey Taranov and his main opponent Mikhail Bezlyudskiy were invited to attend, the following decision was made:

[1.] Since the All-Russian Union of Gypsies did not fulfil its main work – cultural and educational, [and] despite repeated instructions from the APO at TsK VKP(b), it took up production activities, which entailed a large debt that the Union could not repay, agree on the official liquidation of the Union with the recognition of its insolvency.

2. To organize work among the Gypsies, to convene a consultative meeting of the Gypsy communists for organising an initiative group of 3 people to work among the Gypsies.

3. After thoroughly checking the work of the newly organized troika on a Moscow scale, it will be raised the question of creating a body for work among the Gypsies on the scale of the RSFSR. (GARF, f. P 393, op. 43 A, d. 1763).

Despite this clear and unambiguous decision, the leadership of the VSTs, in cooperation with the various Soviet institutions, managed to delay its implementation by 10 months, until February 1928, when the VSTs was officially liquidated. It is clear from the quoted document that the Soviet state did not set itself the goal of depriving the Gypsies of its national organisation; on the contrary, it wanted to have one and gave a new opportunity to the Gypsy activists to create such an organisation that would meet the requirements of the authorities. In fact, the main problem was that the leadership of the VSTs (and personally Andrey Taranov) had clung to their attempts to preserve the old Gypsy Union at the cost of its transformation, and failed to take advantage of the opportunity offered to them. By the way, as all his further life destiny shows, the nomenclature hardware games were never the strong point of the red cavalryman Andrey Taranov.

This whole epic story concluded with the NKVD Decree of February 13, 1928 (published on 19th of February 1928) to close down the *Union of Gypsies living on the territory of the RSFSR* (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, already mentioned 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 created. Moreover, the third Memorandum to the Council of Nationalities at the TsIK USSR organised by Andrey Taranov (GARF, f. P 1235, op. 120, d. 27, l. 4-11) clearly shows that he (unlike Ivan Rom-Lebedev, who was no longer among the signatories) still hoped that the mission of the VSTs could be saved by creating a new national Gypsy organisation that would express the wishes of the Gypsy masses and would be their representative before the Soviet state. At the same time, this new Gypsy organisation would have a completely new status, closely linked to the Soviet institutions. Attached to the Memorandum was a draft for this new unit, named the Committee for the Promotion of the Economic, Cultural and Land Management of Gypsies Living in the Territory of the USSR (Ibid., l. 12-14), i.e. it no longer encompassed the only RSFSR but the whole Soviet Union. This Committee, on the one hand, was to have its subdivisions in the individual Union's and Autonomous republics and regions and to assume the functions of the former Gypsy Union, with its autonomous status (with its letterhead, seal and other attributes of a civic organisation), and, on the other hand, to be supported by the budget of the TsIK USSR. As a part of the apparatus of the Soviet state, it was expected, it would perform many of the functions of TsIK regarding the Gypsies at the State and local level. Judging by this proposal, Andrey Taranov has understood that the civic organisation will not ensure the real empowerment of the Roma, and that is why he proposed this new form. However, it was too late, the chance had been lost and the right moment had been missed, and therefore his call for "the creation of such an organisation as the only one capable of resolving Gypsy issues in the lane of Soviet [national] policy" (Ibid., l. 11) remained without any consequences, despite the above-cited decision of APO at TsK VKP(b).

In this third Memorandum, an interesting concept can be revealed, which was obviously the work of Taranov himself, and according to which:

The Gypsy tabor 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 to re-organising their agricultural economy. (GARF, f. P 1235, op. 120, d. 27, l. 6.).

This concept of Andrey Taranov has old historical roots and parallels that he hardly knew about. In fact, one of the first serious differences in the nascent communist movement in the 19th century was between Karl Marx and the famous anarchist Mikhail Bakunin, who saw in the Russian rural community 'the embryo of Communism'; during the first two decades of the 20th century, it was this interpretation that formed the basis of the distinction between the Bolsheviks on the one hand, and the so-called *Esers* (socialist-revolutionaries) and anarchists on the other. Nobody paid serious attention to Taranov's wording – fortunately for him, the Gypsy movement later imposed the thesis of the need for a constant struggle against the “class enemy” among the Gypsy community itself (for more details, see below).

An interesting question concerns the reasons for the liquidation of VSTs and whether the allegations of wrongdoing in its economic activities were not, in fact, a mere pretence for its closure. In its Memorandum, the leadership of the VSTs did not deny any of the allegations of wrongdoing but tried to justify it by emphasising 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 production cooperatives and artels operating under the emblem of the VSTs did not, in practice, invest any funds (literally not a single kopek) earned from its dubious economic activities for the activities of the Union as a public organisation.

However, the numerous economic irregularities are the specific reason for the decision to liquidate VSTs, which was also the explanation for the public (Вечерняя Москва, 1927, p. 4). The accusations made during the inspections of the activity of the VSTs regarding the class composition of its administration, which “included 9 people horse dealers, 4 estrade artists, 1 Komsomol member, 1 Party member candidate, and 5 people employees” (GARF, f. P 393, op. 43 A, d. 1763, l. 7), fully correspond to the spirit of the epoch but are also not the leading reason for its liquidation. In fact, the real and main reasons for the liquidation of the Union were set out very clearly in the NKVD Decree *On the Closure of the Union of Gypsies Living on the Territory of the RSFSR*, which stated: “The Union of Gypsies [...] was unable to do anything in organising the Gypsies masses, attracting them to participate in the work of the Union” (GARF, f. A 2306, op. 69, d. 1357, l. 9–10; f. P 393, op. 43 A, d. 1763, l. 145–148; f. P 1235, op. 120, d. 27, l. 236–238). This accusation was very difficult to dispute because the facts are unambiguous – for the entire period of its existence

(from the official registration of the VSTs in July 1925 to its liquidation in February 1928) the Union failed to create any (sic!) operating unit outside Moscow (GARF, f. P 393, op. 43 A, d. 1763; f. P 1235, op. 140, d. 498). Andrey Taranov's allegations made in 1964 in a letter to Vladimir Ivashchenko that the Union had branches in Leningrad, Pskov, Rostov-on-Don, and other cities in the RSFSR, as well as in Ukraine, Belarus, Georgia, and other Soviet republics (Иващенко, 1996, p. 42) lack any documentary evidence.

The liquidation of the VSTs was not the result of a special NKVD operation against Gypsies. It is part of the general process of re-registration (actually cleansing) of public organisations, carried out after the adoption of the Provisions on Societies and Unions on February 6, 1928, and which lasted until 1930, as a result of which their number was significantly reduced (Ильина, 2000, p. 80; Шаповал, 2020b, pp. 198–199). In the same way and at the same time, the Assyrian national organisation was liquidated (Данилова, 2005, p. 107). 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). It is clear that the Soviet state considered that the model of working with common public organisations of diasporic nationalities was not appropriate, and decided to look for other forms and methods to continue working with them (and, accordingly, to control them).

Viewed in the discourse of Anti-Gypsyism, the liquidation of the VSTs was a repressive measure of the Soviet authorities 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 state policy of affirmative action towards the Gypsies, but only a change in the tactics in its implementation. In fact, after the liquidation of the VSTs, the Soviet state took the Gypsy policy entirely into its own hands, and this is when its most impressive results were achieved.

It was the firm intention of the Soviet authorities to continue the affirmative Gypsy policy in the conditions of a shortage of politically trained personnel that explains the seemingly strange circumstance that the leaders of the VSTs, despite their undoubted responsibility for the violations committed in the Union's economic activities, were not subject to any persecution. On the contrary, all of them received positions at the lowest levels of the Soviet nomenclature – in the editorial staff of the Gypsy journals *Romany zorya* (Gypsy Dawn) and *Nevo drom* (New Way), in the Gypsy national sections of various publishing houses, and in the newly created Gypsy Theatre *Romen*.

Moreover, in a sense, VSTs continued to exist, albeit under a new name – *Актив Московских цыган* (Functionaries of the Moscow Gypsies). This was a group that included the same people who were in the leadership of the former Union; It was not officially registered as an organisation but performed largely the same functions as VSTs.

This group (namely the group, not its individual members) was invited by the Soviet authorities to various events as a representative of the Gypsies, e.g. when discussing the problems at the Gypsy State Theatre *Romen* (GARF, f. P 1235, op. 123, d. 28). The group itself addressed official letters to the Soviet institutions on various occasions and even

sent her representatives to these institutions, for example to the Assistance Bureau for the Gypsy Board in *Promkooperatsia* (Workers' Cooperative) at the All-Union Council of Workers Cooperatives (GARF, f. 5449, op. 1, d. 1412, l. 27). It is significant that in the latter case the Minutes of the meeting of the Functionaries of Moscow Gypsies, held on January 25, 1931, were signed, as in the days of the VSTs, by Andrey Taranov (Chairman) and Ivan Lebedev (Secretary), but written on the letterhead of *Tsyppishcheprom* (Gypsy Food Industry) and stamped with its seal. What is even more significant – the management of *Tsyppishcheprom* included Ivan Lebedev, Georgiy Lebedev, Sergey Polyakov, etc. (in fact, the whole group of Moscow Gypsies from the leadership of the VSTs), even Alexander German, but not Taranov himself (Ibid.). Taranov was obviously among signatories because of his public and party position.

In connection with the liquidation of the VSTs, the issue of Andrey Taranov's personal responsibility for the failure of the Union is of particular importance. From a formal point of view it is unquestionable and clearly formulated during the inspections of the activities of VSTs: "Comrade Taranov, as the leader of this Union and as a party member, is most liable for this" (GARF, f. P 1235, op. 140, d. 498, l. 22). It should be borne in mind here that before taking up the post of head of the VSTs, Taranov's entire life path passed into a completely different environment – as a child among wandering Gypsies, later a proletarian and a military serviceman – and he knew little about the life of Moscow Gypsies (mainly from the circles of the Gypsy musical elite) with which he was surrounded. Moreover, the specific economic activity of the VSTs, according to the testimony of his contemporaries was "led by specialist Dombrowski, who has unlimited rights" (Ibid., l. 11–12). When analysing the large amount of available documentation, it becomes clear that in his capacity as Chairman of the VSTs Andrey Taranov was used more as a substitute person, probably because he had no sufficient knowledge and managerial skills. The program and administrative documents were, in fact, prepared mainly by Ivan Lebedev, and the economic activities were led by members of the 'Polyakov clan' and the hired 'experts' who were non-Roma.

In the autumn of 1926, in the time of numerous inspections of the Union's activities, the Presidium of the VSTs decided to create a new organisation under name the *Society for Attracting Gypsies to Labour*, which would take over its previous economic activities and would make regular deductions of a certain percentage of the revenues received and would invest them in the other activities of the Union. Andrey Taranov himself sent a letter with such a proposal to the NKVD. However, he was not listed among the founders of the new organisation. Among the founding members were there following famous names: Ivan Lebedev, Georgiy Lebedev, Sergey Polyakov, Dmitriy Shishkov, Konstantin Leontiev and others (GARF, f. P 393, op. 43 A, d. 1763). Nevertheless, the Soviet authorities did not approve this extraordinary idea, and it remained unrealised.

Of course, all this does not take away from Taranov's the responsibility as the head of the Union, for which he was repeatedly punished. Naturally, he skips these moments

in his memoirs (LANB, f. Николай Саткевич, d. Андрей Таранов), including the fact that due to problems with the VSTs he received a Party sanction – a severe reprimand inscribed in his personal file (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 VSTs, Andrey Taranov took the lead of the Gypsy journal *Romany zorya* (1927–1930) and its continuing journal, *Nevo drom* (1930–1932), in the role of executive editor. These were important and responsible positions, and his appointment at these posts demonstrated the confidence assigned to him by the Party and the Soviet state regarding Gypsy policy.

Moreover, the Soviet authorities even tried to secure Andrey Taranov's official post in the central management nomenclature. In an official letter to the Narkomzem (General Directorate of Land Management), signed by the Deputy Head of the Department of Nationalities of VTsIK Rauf Sabirov (1894–1937) from May 1929, it was recommended that if a post in the Gypsy population's land management service is opened, "Comrade Taranov – former chairman of the VSTs [i.e. his post in VSTs was regarded not as a minus, but as a plus – authors note]" should be appointed there (GARF, f. P 1235, op. 121, d. 31). In all likelihood, no such position was found, and the question of Taranov's appointment to the Narkomzem RSFSR was dropped.

In his position as executive editor of the two Gypsy journals, Andrey Taranov published several important articles, in which he presented the official position of the Gypsy activists and the Soviet state on current issues of Gypsy policy. Three of them – *About the Land for Romanyčhavenge*, *How to Improve the Gypsy Agriculture*, *On the Organisation of Kolkhozes* – were a call for mass sedentarisation of Gypsy nomads, which would be associated with the creation of national Gypsy kolkhozes (Романы зоря, 1927h, pp. 4–6; 1929c, pp. 4–6; 1930i, pp. 1–3). Indicative of Andrey Taranov's political status is his article *The Thirteenth Anniversary of October [Revolution]*, published in 1930 (Нэво дром, 1930h, pp. 1–3) – such type of introductory articles in the press, dedicated to important anniversaries, were the prerogative of party leaders at various levels, i.e. despite the liquidation of the VSTs, Andrey Taranov retained his status as leader of the Gypsy movement. This position is confirmed by the fact that it was he who delivered the introductory political report at the Dzerzhinsky District Gypsies Conference in Moscow, devoted to the USSR's national policy and its dimensions towards the Gypsies, based on which the Conference adopted a special resolution expressing support for the Soviet authorities and making several concrete proposals to the central and local authorities (Нэво дром, 1931n, pp. 4–5, 8–9).

In the quoted article *The Thirteenth Anniversary of October [Revolution]* there is another point which deserves attention: "Tsarist Russia ... called the Uzbeks 'Sarty', the Jews 'Zhidy', the Ukrainians 'Khokhly', the Gypsies [цыгане] – 'Pharaohs' [фараоны], and so on" (Нэво дром, 1930g, p. 1), i.e., the insulting name for Roma according to Andrey Taranov was considered not the word 'Gypsies', but the designation 'Pharaohs'. This wording is an indirect response to the proposal made by Daniil Savvov, supported by Georgiy

Lebedev (see below) to replace the name Gypsies ('цыгане') with 'Indo-Rom' (Романы зоря, 1930g, p. 9; 1930c, p. 46). Apparently, this opinion was also shared by other Gypsy activists, and it is no longer discussed in the pages of the journal *Nevo drom*.

In the journal *Nevo drom*, Andrey Taranov published another important programmatic article, which defines one of the main directions of the movement for Roma civil emancipation in the USSR – *War against anti-Gypsyism* (Нэво дром, 1931s, pp. 1–3). In fact, the concept of Anti-Gypsyism was first formulated by Alexander German (Безбожник, 1928, pp. 11–13; see below), and Taranov's article is a presentation in Romani of the basic postulates of this concept, inscribed in the general framework of Soviet national policy. In doing so, he refers to the case in Tver about the sentencing of two workers to forced labour for the ethnic mockery of a Gypsy colleague (Тверская правда, 1931abc), to make it clear that the Soviet state's struggle against Anti-Gypsyism is not just a propaganda slogan, but a real policy (for more details see below).

In parallel with his work in the two Gypsy journals, in 1930, Andrey Taranov held the important and responsible position of political editor in the Gypsy Section, established at the Central Publishing House of the Peoples of the USSR under TsIK USSR (GARF, f. P 4033, op. 1, d. 68, l197), and from this position exercised political control over the published editions, separately and independently of the censorship carried out through the Glavlit (General Directorate for Literature and Publishing at the Narkompros RSFSR). At that time, in the conditions of the rapid development of the publication of numerous books in the Romani language (Shapoval, 2020; 2021abc), encouraged and supported by the Soviet state, Taranov also (like most of the leading Gypsy activists) published several of his books. As can be seen from their titles, they are all in the field of political education and propaganda – *New Village; Komsomol and Class Struggle among Gypsies; Religion and Class Struggle; Trade Unions under Lenin's Banner* (Таранов, 1930; 1932b; 1932c; 1933), and also a social science textbook for Gypsy schools (Таранов, 1932a). It should be noted that Andrey Taranov (as well as Ivan Tokmakov) were the only leading Gypsy activists who were not tempted to try their hand at fiction, perhaps because of their position as leaders of the Gypsy movement.

In these books, as in all his other publications, Andrey Taranov used the same (or at least similar in content) concepts and idioms, 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 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 his words in the programmatic article by Andrey Taranov and Ivan Lebedev, published at founding of VSTs, which we quoted already above: "Gypsies must be helped to become a people equal in all respects with other nationalities inhabiting the USSR" (Известия, 1925, p. 6).

After 1932, there was a new turn in the public position and the life of Andrey Taranov. A report on the state of work on Gypsy co-operation in Moscow in the autumn of 1932, sent to the Head of the Nationalities Department of the VTsIK Nygmet Nurmakov (1895–1937), shows that at that time Andrey Taranov was an instructor in this department (GARF, f. P 1235, op. 123, d. 29, l. 20), which means that at that time he was already included in the composition of the highest Soviet nomenclature. Very soon, however, this situation changed, and in an official letter to TsK VKP(b) from ON VTsIK, Ivan Tokmakov (about him, see below) was recommended to lead a new task in the new Gypsy newspaper in connection with "the planned reorganisation of the Gypsy journal *Nevo drom* in a newspaper" (GARF, f. P 1235, op. 123, d. 27, l. 266), which was a direct connection with the replacement of Andrey Taranov with Ivan Tokmakov as an instructor in ON VTsIK. Thus, Andrey Taranov was officially replaced by Ivan Tokmakov as the leader of the Gypsy movement.

This change came as a result of transformation in the status of the journal *Nevo Drom* and a series of letters from Gypsy activists about the existence of serious shortcomings in its content and leadership. In 1932, the publication of the journal was transferred from Tsentrizdat to Uchpedgiz, which was a de facto downgrade (the first publishing house was to the TsIK USSR and the second to the Narkompros RSFSR), which created several problems (Ibid., l. 263). At the same time, a letter was sent to ON VTsIK in the form of a feuilleton, signed under the pseudonym 'Sibiryak' (Ibid., l. 144–151), in which the editor-in-chief of the journal *Nevo drom* Andrey Taranov and his fellows Nikolay Pankov and Ivan Lebedev and entire editorial board were accused of "opportunism, separation from the masses, nepotism, quarrels, the clamp of Bolshevik self-criticism, etc.", and call on the authorities to "surgical operation" (Ibid., p. 151), i.e. to change the entire management of the journal. A memorandum also sent to various Soviet institutions and signed by Mikhail Bezlyudskiy and Georgiy Lebedev, provides a thorough critical analysis of all issues published (up to No. 5 of 1932) of the journal *Nevo drom* (Ibid., l. 241–247). The conclusion reached by the authors is that the journal as a whole has not coped with its tasks and needs serious restructuring to eliminate all the mentioned (including political) shortcomings.

In this situation, de facto (i.e. without a special decision) the journal *Nevo drom*, according to one report written by Ivan Tokmakov, "ceased to exist in 1932", and efforts

were made to create a Gypsy newspaper (GARF, f. P 1235, op. 123, d. 28, l. 268–269). Andrey Taranov tried to maintain his position in the Gypsy movement and in an official letter to ON VTsIK from October 1933 shifted the blame for the failure of *Nevo drom* to the National Sector of Uchpedgiz, which had a “disgusting attitude” towards the journal and did not pay the necessary attention to it. Further, Taranov proposed that, as a compromise option, along with the future publication of a Gypsy newspaper, *Nevo drom* should also be preserved as an art and literature magazine (GARF, f. P 1235, op. 123, d. 27, l. 260–263). At the same time, as another option, he also proposes to convert 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 (Ibid., l. 260–265).

In the end, Andrey Taranov turned out to be insufficiently prepared for all these bureaucratic games and his fate as a leader of the Gypsy movement ended in vain. In 1934 he was sent to work in the Kyrgyz ASSR (then part of the RSFSR), where he held lower nomenclature positions – for a short time he worked in the apparatus of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Kyrgyzstan, and then director of the tobacco sovkhos *Kyrgyzstan* (ЛАНВ, ф. Николай Саткевич, д. Андрей Таранов). Such sending of party cadres from the capital Moscow to the distant province was a specific form of punishment at that time, and it was because of this attitude that Taranov was the only prominent Gypsy activist who was not invited to the Meeting at the Council of Nationalities at the TsIK USSR *On the Questions of the Employment of Toiling Nomadic Gypsies and Their Cultural and Economic Services*, organised by the Council of Nationalities at the TsIK USSR and held on January 4 and 5, 1936, in Moscow, attended by Gypsy activists from different regions of the USSR (see below).

Andrey Taranov’s exile in Central Asia lasted a relatively short time and, in 1936, he was sent back to work in the capital, in the central Soviet state apparatus, i.e. it can be said that he was not only rehabilitated but also promoted in the nomenclature hierarchy. Here are some slight mystifications in the memories of Taranov himself, according to whom: “in 1937 [there is an error in the year here – authors note], when the government raised the question of creating a Gypsy rayon, I was recalled from Kyrgyzstan to Moscow and worked in the Resettlement Committee at the Sovnarkhoz of the USSR as a commissioner for employment of Gypsies” (ЛАНВ, ф. Николай Саткевич, д. Андрей Таранов). The Sovnarkhoz system, however, was abolished in 1932, and the All-Union Resettlement Committee at SNK was transformed in 1936 into the Resettlement Department of the NKVD. Andrey Taranov’s new career coincided with this administrative reform. The first two reports of inspections carried out by him in July 1936 in Central Asia were signed by him as ‘Inspector of the VPK SNK Taranov’, while the inspection in Yaroslavl Oblast in August 1936 was already signed as “Inspector of the Resettlement Department of the NKVD of the USSR Taranov” (RGAE, f. 5675, op. 1, d. 160, l. 39; f. 5675, op. 1, d. 179, l. 36). Perhaps it was his work in the NKVD that he did not want to speak about since the

time when he wrote his Autobiography, in the 1960s, was the time when the USSR commanded an anti-Stalinist discourse and when the NKVD became a symbol of Stalin's repressions.

The focus of Andrey Taranov's inspections was primarily on the existing Gypsy kolkhozes. In the Kazakh ASSR he checked the condition of the Gypsy kolkhoz named *Stalin's Way* in the Chelik's rayon, near Alma-Ata (today Almaty); in the Kyrgyz ASSR, the Gypsy kolkhoz *Нацпионал* in the Alarchinsky rayon, the Novo-Troitsky selsoviet, and the Gypsy Artel *Нэво дром* (New Way) for the production of wooden toys in Frunze (now Bishkek) were subject to inspection. Taranov's assessments of his inspections were generally objective, noting not only the many difficulties faced by Gypsy kolkhozes and the lack of support from local authorities but also highlighting the shortcomings of the leadership of these kolkhozes (RGAE, f. 5675, op. 1, d. 160, l. 39–42). This critical line is especially noticeable during the inspection of the Gypsy kolkhoz named *3rd International*, in Yaroslavl region, Kostroma rayon, Minsk selsoviet, Turabyevo village, established in 1936 by the *Kelderari* nomadic group ("There are specialists – coppersmiths, tinkers, plumbers, etc.") and Gypsies who came from other kolkhozes (RGAE, f. 5675, op. 1, d. 179, l. 36–38). The creation of a collective farm by *Kelederari* is quite unusual because they usually created their own artels in the cities (Chernykh, 2020: 358–366). In his report, Taranov noted that Comrade Bello, the chairman of the kolkhoz, "cannot be trusted" because he not only covers up many violations against collective farmers (e.g. theft and resale of horses) but also issues false certificates to people for early release from prisons (Ibid, p. 39).

Andrey Taranov's work in the NKVD system was related (at least in the beginning) to the activities of creating a Gypsy national rayon (for more details, see below), but in his memoirs, on this issue, he limited himself to the note: "the creation of the Gypsy rayon was hindered by the war and ... *vavre renda*" (LANB, f. Николай Саткевич, д. Андрей Таранов). 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 Autobiography.

During the Second World War, Andrey Taranov was not mobilised in the army, most likely due to the consequences of the wounds received in the Civil War. In the autumn of 1944, the Ministry of Food Industry sent him to the city of Rezina, Moldova, to work as the director of a tobacco factory that had been destroyed by the Germans and was to be rebuilt (Ibid.). 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 his memoirs from 1948, he worked in the Rezina Raykom, then worked as the head of the Social Security Department of same rayon. According to other data from oral history, for a short period of time, he was the director of a kolkhoz near Rezina, but the local Moldovians began to write complaints to

various institutions asking why a Gypsy was appointed as a director, and in the end, he was replaced.

In 1950 Andrey Taranov retired for health reasons, in the category of a personal pensioner (Ibid.). The title 'personal pensioner' in the USSR means that its holder received 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 special food bonuses on respective holidays. The name of Andrey Taranov was not present in the lists of pensioners of union and republican significance, i.e., his personal pension was at the lowest, local level.

Andrey Taranov's retirement did not end his public activity, nor did it take him out of the field of Roma civic emancipation. After Stalin's death in 1953, in November of the same year, he wrote a letter to Nikita Khrushchev, First Secretary of the KPSS Central Committee, regarding the employment of Gypsies and their attraction to a sedentary lifestyle (PAVK). He did not receive a reply to this letter, so he wrote a second letter, which is not dated (in all probability it was written in the first months of 1954). In this letter, he again raised the issue of employment of nomadic Gypsies "because the question concerns the only nationality, most of which led a nomadic way of life in the Soviet Union and, thanks to this, found themselves involuntarily aloof from participation in the building of the communist society" (Ibid.). Taranov then tells briefly about what the Soviet government had done for the Gypsies in the 1930s, and about their current problems. According to him, the war destroyed the existing Gypsy kolkhozes, many of the achievements had already been lost, a process of secondary re-nomadisation occurred, and "in the Gypsy tabors (camps), the poor again came under the influence of kulak chief-men in the tabor". Although "young people are trying to escape from the tabor" and move to a sedentary lifestyle, "without help from outside ... it is not possible". However, the local Soviet authorities did not cooperate and hindered this process of job allocations for Gypsies, as they refused to accept them in the existing *sovkhoses* and kolkhozes for technical and administrative reasons (such as lack of permanent address registration). Based on this situation, he came to the conclusion that: "It is needed to hold such events among nomadic Gypsies throughout the Soviet Union, which would make it possible to attract the bulk of nomadic Gypsies to agricultural production – kolkhozes" (Ibid.).

The concluding passages in Andrey Taranov's letter are particularly indicative of the vision of Gypsy activists from the early USSR in the new post-war situation:

It is known that in our country, previously nomadic, backward peoples who did not know letters, with the help of our party and government, became sedentary, mastered literacy and education, [...], and today only Gypsies have remained nomads. [...] Turning to you with this letter, I consider it my duty to ask you to resolve the issue of employment of nomadic Gypsies and with the help of the government, to make the Gypsies full-fledged people of our Motherland, to involve them in agricultural production, as well as in industry. [...].

This question should not be left unresolved. Under the leadership of TsK KPSS and the Soviet government, Gypsies in the USSR, as well as all nationalities in our Motherland, can become active participants in the building of a communist society. (Ibid.).

No answer was received to this letter from Andrey Taranov either, thus it is clear that the Soviet government at this time still did not consider it necessary to engage with the problems of the Gypsies.

In the 1960s, Andrey Taranov actively collaborated with Nikolay Satkevich and Vladimir Ivashchenko in gathering material on the history of the Gypsy movement for civic emancipation and Gypsy policy in the early USSR. It is interesting to note that he, in a letter from 1964 to Nikolay Satkevich, gave a positive assessment of Nikolay Pankov (“who did a lot for the Gypsy literature”), Alexander German, and Mikhail Bezlyudskiy (“very talented and much more”), but did not mention a word about Ivan Rom-Lebedev, together with whom they were at the head of the VSTs in the 1920s. Moreover, in the same letter, he noted that he was in constant correspondence only with Bezlyudskiy (at that time, Pankov and German had already died), although it was Bezlyudskiy who, with his reports against him, had contributed considerably to the problems he had in VSTs and journal *Nevo drom*.

The exact date of Andrey Taranov’s death is unknown; his last letter to Vladimir Ivashchenko was in October 1966 (Иващенко, 2011, p. 7). He lived the rest of his life as a respected pensioner, who often met with pioneers (a communist children’s organisation), with whom he shared stories and recollections of his time. In the 1960s and 1970s, after his death, a large biographical essay was published about him, in which his life was presented as a role model for the younger generations (Культура, 1967, pp. 3–4; Равдин & Хмельковская, 1968, pp. 95–109; Цопа, 1978, pp. 14–22). Based on the difficult and complicated life path of Andrey Taranov presented here, it would not be an exaggeration to say that the same can be fully applied to his role in the processes of Roma civic emancipation.

Mikhail Bezlyudskiy

Elena Marushiakova and Vesselin Popov

Mikhail Timofeevich Bezlyudskiy (1901–1970) is an outstanding figure in the entire cohort of leading Gypsy activists in the early USSR. On the one hand, his biography contains many moments that bring him close to the others and form a common type, typical for the historical epoch, but on the other hand, it also has quite a few clearly expressed personal characteristics.

Bezlyudskiy’s Autobiography, as well as the autobiographical texts of several other members of the Gypsy movement, are kept in Nikolay Satkevich’s personal archive

(ЛАНВ, ф. Николай Саткевич, д. Михаил Безлюдский; Marushiakova & Popov, 2021b, p. 932–949). However, it differs markedly from them. While other veterans of this movement generally adhere to established norms for this type of Soviet-era document, his text is more detailed, contains even fictional elements, and stands on the border with the literature narrative which, however, in no way compromises its value as a historical source.

Mikhail Bezlyudskiy was born on August 8, 1901, in a Gypsy tabor, pitching his tents in the woods near the small town of Sapozhok in the Ryazan province. Bezlyudskiy himself does not explicitly indicate to which Roma group he belongs, but from some indirect data and descriptions in the text (his parents' occupations, his Romani dialect, his surname, etc.), it is clear that he is from the group of *Ruska Roma*.

His father traded in horses and his mother was a fortune-teller. His family led a semi-nomadic way of life, and in the winter the entire tabor stayed in another small town, Mikhaylov, also in the Ryazan Governorate, where each family had a permanent residence. This model of wandering shows that they were already in a transition to permanent settlement – they did not leave the region in which they lived and spent most of the year in rented abode in the city, and in the summer roamed the nearby markets for horses. At the same time, some of the children were left to live alone in their city residence, as in the case of Mikhail Bezlyudskiy – from 10–11 years old (ЛАНВ, ф. Николай Саткевич, д. Михаил Безлюдский). As can be seen from these data, Bezlyudskiy can be considered a former nomad only with a certain amount of conditionality, but this was not an obstacle for him to constantly promote himself as such when joining the Gypsy movement and to emphasise his distinction from other activists, who (with some exceptions) came from settled Gypsies.

It is not entirely clear exactly what type of education Mikhail Bezlyudskiy received. In his autobiography, he claims to have learned to read and write from his house lord's son during the long winter evenings and subsequently had a Russian friend who was a student at the local high school who helped him in many ways, including in his self-education. However, Viktor Shapoval carefully analysed the handwriting in Bezlyudskiy's manuscripts and concluded that in this case he deliberately edited his biography in the spirit of the times (to present himself as a typical proletarian from an early age) and that he graduated from several classes in the so-called 'people school' (former church-parish educational establishment) (Шаповал, 2020a, p. 237).

Mikhail Bezlyudskiy started his working life at the age of 11–12, helping in the small carpentry workshop of his friend's family for food, and on Sundays, he went around the small shops in the city and asked for a "piece of bread". Soon after, he started working in a small bakery – first as a helping hand for everything, then as a qualified assistant baker. His father was opposed to his son being a hired worker (for which the other Gypsies mocked him) instead of wandering around with him and learning "Gypsy deeds" (in this case, horse-trading), but Bezlyudskiy was adamant in his choice, and his parents finally stopped insisting that he quit his job (ЛАНВ, ф. Николай Саткевич, д. Михаил Безлюдский).

The situation changed radically in the summer of 1918, when Soviet power was established in the city, which led to a complete collapse of economic activity in the conditions of the so-called military communism. In these circumstances, due to lack of livelihood, Mikhail Bezlyudskiy joined his parents' nomadic camp, taking with him a bag of books he had bought over the years – mainly editions of mass folk literature at this time, as well as works by authors such as Maxim Gorky, Mikhail Saltikov-Shchedrin, and others (Ibid.).

During his stay in the camp, Mikhail Bezlyudskiy ran all day in the woods to read books, and spent the evenings in a nearby village where, in the company of Russian boys and girls, he played the accordion and sung *stradanīya* (the musical-poetic genre of Russian folklore, a kind of short humorous folk songs with lyrical-comedic content).

Because of this, he was repeatedly punished by his father with a whip but did not change his behaviour. Then his father, hoping to permanently attach him to the Gypsy way of life, decided to marry him off. Mikhail Bezlyudskiy was at that time 17 years old. His father negotiated with the father of a girl from another nearby Gypsy tabor, they agreed on a future marriage and forced Mikhail to officially ask for the girl's hand. When her father asked her if she agreed, she refused because the future groom could not steal horses and trade them, and all the support of the future family would fall on her. Nevertheless, her father forced her to agree with the reason that "he will learn it". During the night, Mikhail, unwilling to accept his arranged future, took advantage of the fact that his parents were drunk, stole his baptismal certificate and fled the camp (Ibid.).

Mikhail Bezlyudskiy, who escaped from the tabor, walked the streets of the town of Sapozhok early in the morning and told the first policeman he met his story. The policeman wanted to help him and took him to his chief, who recommended that he enlists as a volunteer in the Red Army, called the military administration, and Bezlyudskiy went to Ryazan, where he enlisted in the army. His parents learned of his decision, arrived at the military unit and tried to persuade him to return to the camp, but he refused (Ibid.).

After completing his military training, Mikhail Bezlyudskiy left for the Caucasus Front in 1920 in the composition of the 11th Army. There are no more details about his military service in his Autobiography, the only specific information is that in 1921 his military unit in the Red Army entered Georgia and that he participated as a cavalry scout in the battles for the conquest of Batumi (Ibid.), although properly speaking, Batumi was handed over without a fight by the military of the independent Georgian government, which left the country.

Mikhail Bezlyudskiy apparently won the trust of his military commanders and, in the same year (1921), he was sent to study at the Baku Infantry Command Courses of the Red Commanders (training courses for the lower command staff), which he successfully completed in May 1922 and received the rank of Red Commander. After completing the courses, Bezlyudskiy was entitled to one month's leave, during which he looked for his parents who were wandering. He managed to find their tabor in the familiar places of Ryazan province, but stayed only two weeks with them and returned to the army (Ibid.).

Mikhail Bezlyudskiy arrived at his military unit in Tbilisi, from where he received referrals to the headquarters of the Transcaucasian Cheka. The guards of the state borders of the USSR and the border troops, respectively, were part of the Cheka' department, transformed in 1923 into the OGPU, and he was sent to a border outpost on the shores of the Caspian Sea (probably in Azerbaijan). There he served as assistant chief, and then as chief of this border outpost until 1925 when he was sent to study at the Higher Border School of the OGPU in Moscow (Ibid.).

In Moscow, Mikhail Bezlyudskiy studied at a school for 10 months, after which he was demobilised "for health reasons" and began to take an active part in the work of the *All-Russian Union of the Gypsies* (Ibid.). His name appeared for the first time in the Union's documentation in the last months of 1925 (the document is not dated) when the General Work Scheme of the VSTs and the General Objectives for the Work of the Union were adopted. It is clear from this document that the model of governance had been reformed, and the Union had to be then governed by a small Presidium, which included not only Chair Andrey Taranov, Vice-Chair Sergey Polyakov and Secretary Ivan Lebedev, but also Nikolay Pankov and Mikhail Bezlyudskiy, and the larger (including 17 people) Central Board of the Union was allowed to lead the activities of the VSTs within Moscow (GARF, f. P 1235, op. 120, d. 27, l. 83–85).

At first glance, it seems a little strange that Mikhail Bezlyudskiy was elected to the leadership of the VSTs so soon after he arrived in Moscow, without ever having been known to local Gypsy activists. However, this has its explanation. Until his inclusion in the Union, there was only one Party member (Andrey Taranov) and two Komsomol members (Ivan Lebedev and Sergey Polyakov) in the leadership of the VSTs. It turns out that at that time Bezlyudskiy was already a candidate member of the VKP(b), thus his inclusion in the new leadership significantly strengthened the Party's presence in the leadership of the Union. The candidate members were part of the Party nomenclature, and the transfer of Mikhail Bezlyudskiy to his new field naturally took place with the knowledge (and permission) of the Party apparatus. The strange thing here is that he did not explicitly mention such an important event in his life (Party affiliation was a mandatory point in every autobiography at the time), which occurred in 1922 during his service in the army (GARF, f. P 393, op. 43 A, d. 1763).

Initially, the activity of Mikhail Bezlyudskiy in the leadership of VSTs developed successfully. At a meeting of the Presidium of the VSTs on May 8, 1926, he (together with Andrey Taranov) was elected as representative of the Union in the Commission for Employment of Toiling Gypsies at VtsIK, from where subsequently, by decision of the Presidium of VtsIK, Bezlyudskiy was included into the Commission for Land Allocation for Gypsies at Resettlement Department of Narkomzem. On May 14, 1926, Taranov and Bezlyudskiy submitted to the Federal Committee for Land Affairs under the VtsIK Presidium a project for the establishment of a Department for Land Allocation for Gypsies (GARF, f. R 3260, op. 6, d. 44, l. 12). The proposal was not accepted because there

were no national departments in Fedkomzem at VTsIK and there was no reason to do so specifically for Gypsies.

This proposal of Andrey Taranov and Mikhail Bezlyudskiy contains an interesting point that deserves more attention. As the main argument for the need for a department for Gypsies, they point out the following:

Because the most radical means for uniting, organising and raising the cultural level of the working Gypsy people living in the USSR is their transition from a nomadic lifestyle with odd jobs to workers in 'agricultural economy. (Ibid., l. 20).

As can be seen, Gypsy activists were the ones who were pleading with the Soviet state for more active measures to sedentarise the Gypsy nomads, while the authorities preferred to refrain from more active actions in this direction and favour to limit themselves to incentive preferences for those who themselves express a desire to settle and make a living from agriculture (Marushiakova & Popov, 2020a).

This approach of the Soviet authorities is reflected in the first official state document relating to Gypsies – 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); 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 signified that in this way they were given the opportunity to enjoy all these privileges. 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 extended them further by assuming the costs of settling from the state budget. In this way, as already said, Gypsies were given the opportunity to enjoy privileges that were inaccessible to the vast majority of the population of the USSR.

The adoption of these Decrees gave impetus to the development of the processes of sedentarisation of Gypsy nomads and the establishment of Gypsy national kolkhozes. In fact, the umbrella term 'kolkhoz' here (and 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', i.e. 'comradeness'), *artel* and *communa*; in the 1930s in the process of mass collectivisation of the agriculture, all these started to be called kolkhozes. As already mentioned above, the first steps in process of sedentarisation happened before the adoption of the Decree of October 1, 1926, when in April 1926, preparatory work began for the establishment of the Gypsy kolkhoz *Stalin's Way* in the Almaty region (GARF, f. P 1235, op. 123, d. 27, l. 63). Later

in the press, new messages appeared in this direction, e.g. about the creation of an agricultural artel *Новая жизнь* (New Life) in the Vitebsk District, Belarussian SSR (Беднота, 1927, p. 4; Калинин, 2005, p. 89), or about the creation of a Gypsy kolkhoz in the Sofievskiy rayon, Dnepropetrovsk (today Dnipro) oblast, Ukrainian SSR (Экономическая жизнь, 1928, p. 4). In the archives, evidence about these kolkhozes have not yet been discovered, so it is probable that they survived only a short time.

In 1926, there was complete unanimity and concerted action between Mikhail Bezlyudskiy on the one hand, and the leadership of the VSTs (Chairman Andrey Taranov and Secretary Ivan Lebedev), on the other. This unity of the leading strategy and the concrete actions for its implementation was very clearly manifested in the above-mentioned proposal for the establishment of a special Department for Land Allocation for Toiling Gypsies of Fedkomzem at VtsIK, which repeated the request for mass sedentarization of 100,000 Gypsy nomads in Southern Russia, made by VSTs as early as March 1926 (GARF, f. P 3260, op. 6, d. 44, l. 4–6). The purpose of this proposal was to create a compact territory inhabited by Gypsies, “taking into account the experience of land use of the Jewish population” (Ibid., l. 8), which would serve as a basis for the creation of a Gypsy national rayon (in the perspective of a Gypsy national Autonomous Republic).

However, this unanimity and full agreement between Bezlyudskiy and the leadership of the VSTs was abruptly terminated in early 1927, when at a meeting of the Presidium of VtsIK, held on February 15, 1927, it was decided to remove Mikhail Bezlyudskiy from the Commission for Land Management of Gypsy Workers under the Fedkomzem at VtsIK, and to replace him with Dmitriy Polyakov (Ibid., l. 33–34).

The reasons for this turn in Mikhail Bezlyudskiy's relations with the leadership of the VSTs become clear from the preserved historical documents. Beginning in the autumn of 1926, Mikhail Bezlyudskiy sent several official letters to various Soviet institutions informing them of existing weaknesses and irregularities in the work of the VSTs.

One clarification is needed here. This type of document during the Soviet era was welcomed and encouraged by the state because it was considered a manifestation of communist vigilance and high civic responsibility; after the collapse of the USSR, on the contrary, in the already dominant anti-Soviet discourse, they became assessed unambiguously as denunciations (including in the academic literature). There is no point in entering into the debate about which assessment is correct here. We will only note that this issue should not be approached unequivocally, but depending on the specific circumstances. In the case of Mikhail Bezlyudskiy, as will become clear, these were official documents that have been signed by him and thus he assumed his full responsibility for their content and reflected his aspirations for improving the work of VSTs.

In fact, Mikhail Bezlyudskiy initially (the document is not dated, but it is clear from the context that it is from the end of 1926) submitted an Application to leave the Presidium of the VSTs, explaining the reasons for his decision with the isolation in which he was placed in the leadership of the Union, which does not allow him to combat the existing shortcomings in the work of this leadership (GARF, f. P 393, op. 43 A, d. 1763). In early 1927,

he sent a new Application to the Presidium of the VSTs, now with a copy to ON VTsIK (Ibid.), and in this way he notified the Soviet institutions of the case. By the end of the year, Bezlyudsky sent two more Statements, to the Economic Department of the OGPU (Ibid.) and to ON VTsIK (GARF, f. P 1235, op. 140, d. 498), in which he repeated the old accusations and revealed new irregularities in the work of the VSTs and its management.

Mikhail Bezlyudskiy's letters could not be considered a reason for initiating numerous inspections by various Soviet institutions of the activities of the VSTs, although they also had their influence in this direction. At that time, similar letters were sent by other Gypsy activists, e.g. Trofim Gerasimov (GARF, f. P 393, op. 43 A, d. 1763). It is also very likely that irregularities in the economic and financial activities of the VSTs were noticed by other Soviet control institutions, which was also a reason to conduct a check.

From all the documents signed by Mikhail Bezlyudskiy, it is clear that as soon as he joined the leadership of VSTs, he began a struggle against the leading representatives of the Moscow Gypsy musical elite, who were associated with the former choir of Yegor Polyakov ("the Lebedevs and the Polyakovs") and against whom there was discontent among the members of the Union. He accused them of linking the Union's activities with dubious "experts" in the economic field, which led to numerous violations of the law (primarily false stamps) and trade speculation. As a result of this struggle, Ivan Lebedev, Sergey Polyakov and Georgiy Lebedev were expelled from the Komsomol, but they were sided with by VSTs chairman Andrey Taranov, and they retained their leading positions in the Union. Taranov himself not only covered up the violations and even personally contributed to some of them, but also sabotaged the implementation of the recommendations made by the commissions of inquiry and the decisions taken by the Soviet institutions supervising the Union to improve its activities (GARF, f. P 393, op. 43 A, d. 1763; f. P 1235, op. 140, d. 498).

Special attention deserves the explanation that Mikhail Bezlyudsky himself gave about the motives that determine his activity in his struggle against the leadership of the VSTs:

The Party [...] brought me up and tempered me to hate those who used to earn a fortune at the expense of others under the rule of tsarism, [and] who, under Soviet rule, live without working. As proof that I am completely alien to careerism, I voluntarily left the Presidium of the Union and, on an order of the Raykom of the VKP(b), went [to work] as a policeman for 40 rubles a month. [...] To be in the [Gypsy] Union and work [there], I consider it my direct duty to the toiling Gypsies and the Party of workers and peasants. [...] With honour I will carry out everything envisaged by VKP(b) for the implementation of the organisation and self-determination of the Gypsy toiling people and the revival of the Gypsy nationality. (GARF, f. P 393, op. 43 A, d. 1763).

After taking a job as an agent (a lower position in the official hierarchy) in the Moscow Department of Criminal Investigation (MUUR, later famous as MUR), Mikhail Bezlyudskiy (at that time already married) continued his struggle against the leadership of the VSTs. Indicative of the validity of his accusation was the lawsuit against the

3 members of the leadership of VSTs. According to the court decisions Chair Andrey Taranov and Secretary Ivan Lebedev were sentenced to six months of correctional labour (subsequently the sentences were overturned) for economic violations of the Union, and Mikhail Bezlyudskiy was acquitted (Вечерняя Москва, 1927, p. 4).

The leadership of the VSTs, in its Opinion (on behalf of the Founding Members) sent to the Soviet institutions in July 18, 1927 (almost immediately after the court decision), accused “former members of the Board Comrades Bezlyudskiy and Agva” of their “dirty deeds” for which they were removed by the leadership of the Union GARF, f. 393, op. 43 A, d. 17–63. In parentheses, Agva is perhaps the most mysterious figure in the history of the VSTs. His rare surname is from the Caucasus, and nothing more is known about him – neither his first name, nor whether he is a Roma (probably not), nor when and why he was involved in the leadership of the VSTs, and in what quality (perhaps as an “expert”).

Bezlyudskiy himself continued his struggle, and in his Statement to ON VTsIK of October 26, 1927, he again alerted that despite the recommendations made by the Soviet institutions, “[A.] Taranov, [I.] Lebedev, S. Polyakov, D. Polyakov and others sit in the board of VSTs, as it was before”, and the shortcomings in the activity of VSTs were not eliminated, but continued to exist (GARF, f. P 1235, op. 140, d. 498). In an attempt to save the VSTs, ON VTsIK proposed to elect Mikhail Bezlyudskiy (Ibid.) for Chair of the Union in the place of Andrey Taranov, but the proposal did not materialise and the VSTs was eventually liquidated.

One might assume that after the liquidation of the VSTs in 1928, there would be more peace in Mikhail Bezlyudskiy’s life, but the opposite is happening. According to Bezlyudskiy himself in 1928, after completing short-term courses for teachers, MONO sent him to a Gypsy school that had opened in Maryina Roshcha (LANB, f. Николай Саткевич, d. Михаил Безлюдский). However, there is an interesting fact from his biography, about which he is silent, which was brought to our attention by our colleague Viktor Shapoval. As Bezlyudskiy himself wrote in his article *My Literary Way* (Нэво дром, 1932e, 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’s newspapers *To the Labour Dormitory*, he was in Taganka Prison in Moscow and in Corrective Labour Colony in Liazonovo during the period 1928–1929. No information has been found on what grounds he was convicted, probably (given the minimum sentence) it was a minor offence that was clearly not political in nature; but in any case, this did not in any way affect his career as a Gypsy activist. On the contrary, he enjoyed the particular confidence of the Party and the Soviet institutions that sent him, to a leadership position, to the Gypsy selsoviet and kolkhoz of the North Caucasus (see below).

In 1930 Mikhail Bezlyudskiy joined as an actor the emerging Gypsy State Theatre *Romen* (LANB, f. Николай Саткевич, d. Михаил Безлюдский). Moreover, the first public performance of the new theatre in May 1931 included two parts – the scene *Yesterday and Today* by Edward Sholok and *Ethnographic Sketches* written by Mikhail Bezlyudskiy

(Ром-Лебедев, 1990, p. 173). It should be noted here that de facto Mikhail Bezlyudskiy was the only one among the leading Roma activists who know from his own experience the Gypsy realities and cultural traditions that are related to the nomadic way of life (some of the others were nomads only as children, and most were settled urban dwellers for generations).

From 1931 Mikhail Bezlyudskiy worked as an editor in the national departments of the State Publishing House for Fiction Literature (Goslitizdat) and State Publishing House of Agricultural Literature (Selkhozgiz) for publishing fiction and agricultural literature in Romani language (LANB, f. Николай Саткевич, d. Михаил Безлюдский). This was the time when he developed an active literary and journalistic activity.

Mikhail Bezlyudskiy's literary, publicistic and journalistic legacy is impressive. It is not only large in volume, but also very diverse in terms of genre, and almost all of its publications were published in the Romani language. His first publications were in the first issue of the Gypsy journal *Nevo Drom*, where his article *Чюрден фелда* (literally 'to throw away the field', in sense 'to abandon nomadism') was published, calling on Gypsy nomads to settle down and create their own Gypsy kolkhozes (Нэво дром, 1930б, p. 8), as well as his poem *Ракирибэн е вьюгаса* (Story with Winter Storm) (Ibid., 1930а, p. 13). From here until the end of the journal in 1932, in almost all of the 19 issues published, there was at least one text by Mikhail Bezlyudskiy, who turned out to be one of the leading authors with the most publications (if not first in this list). It should be borne in mind that the editor-in-chief of the magazine was the former Chairman of the VSTs Andrey Taranov, with whom Bezlyudskiy was until recently in a sharp and protracted conflict, i.e. the two have forgotten (or at least left in the background) their previous debates in the name of the higher common goal pursued – the civic emancipation of the Gypsies in the USSR.

Mikhail Bezlyudskiy's publications in the journal *Nevo drom* covered a wide range of topics and genres. This included both journalistic coverages of current events with a focus on the achievements and problems of Gypsies in various fields (national Gypsy kolkhozes, artels and production cooperatives, schools, theatre, literature, etc.), as well as journalistic and propaganda materials on key themes of Soviet policy towards the Gypsies, and of the development of the Gypsy movement. Bezlyudskiy's creative literary work includes not only poems and short stories but also a now-forgotten specific genre that stands on the borders between literature, musical theatre, publicistic and the media. This is the so-called 'live newspaper', which was a stage performance (usually performed in front of a Gypsy audience in various clubs), in which the main messages and slogans addressed to the illiterate audience were presented, accompanied by music, songs and artistic recitations (Нэво дром, 1930д, p. 14).

The diversity in the work of Mikhail Bezlyudskiy was also expressed in his published books. He was the author of four collections of short stories – *Broken Whip* (Безлюдско, 1932б), *Horse* (Безлюдско, 1933а), *Shoulder to Shoulder* (1933е), and *Wish for Life* (Безлюдско, 1936) – as well as a children's book (Безлюдско, 1932а) – *Misha, the Little Octobrist* ('Little Octobrists' was a soviet organisation for children between 7 and 9 years).

He also participated in the two almanacks of poetry in the Romani language (Германо, 1931; 1934e) with his poems, and published an author's collection of poetry – *New Life* (Безлюдско, 1933c). Mikhail Bezlyudskiy (together with Alexander German) was a translator of the text of the world proletarian anthem, *Internationale* (Нэво дром, 1932c, p. 1; Пандж массова гиля, 1932, pp. 2–3), which was the national anthem of the USSR (and also of its Union Republics) until 1944.

Mikhail Bezlyudskiy also developed a tumultuous activity in the field of publicistic, the result of which was three books: *What Gave the Soviet Power to the Gypsy Women* (Безлюдско, 1932c), *Combating Gypsy Domestic Crimes in the USSR* (Безлюдско, 1933b), and *For the Kolkhoz against Nomadism* (Безлюдско, 1933d). Together with Alexander German, they prepared the book *Forward to Work: What Gypsies Need to Know Upon Entering a Collective Farm* (Безлюдско, & Германо, 1933), which combines propaganda (the significance of the October Revolution and Soviet rule for Gypsies), agitation (a call for Gypsy nomads to settle down and set up their own national kolkhozes), and numerous specific practical pieces of advice (how to register Gypsy kolkhoz, how to keep records, how to cultivate the land, etc.).

The whole work of Mikhail Bezlyudskiy is characterised by an extremely high degree of political propaganda and agitation, and in this respect, there is almost no difference between publicistic and fiction and, in both cases, through different literary genres, the same leading ideas were proclaimed (or, more precisely, communist postulates and slogans from this historical period) and transmitted by various means of expression. From a comparative point of view, in this respect, he does not differ significantly from the other leading authors of the newly created national Romani literature and differs from them mainly in the directness of the class-party messages in his work. This main characteristic of Romani literature in the early USSR has its explanation – like today, the civic engagement of authors (poets, writers, scholars, etc.) was highly valued and supported by the powerful of the day; this factor proved to be even stronger in the case of the Gypsy literature, which was completely dependent on the favour of the Soviet authorities.

The main and clearly expressed leading theme in the texts of Mikhail Bezlyudskiy (both in journalism and in fiction) was that of the internal class division in the community, and more specifically of the so-called kulaks. In this respect he is not unique, this topic was also a principal one for many of the works of other leading authors (e.g. Alexander German and Ivan Rom-Lebedev). 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. As already said above, in 1928 Andrey Taranov proposed the concept of an existence of the 'embryo of communism' in the Gypsy tabor, which made it easy for Gypsies to move to collective agriculture. Very soon after, this was changed, 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 'class enemy' within the Gypsy community became evident. In this

category, 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, and also the so-called Gypsy courts have also been included there, condemned 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, op. 1, d. 142, l. 15–17; *НЭВО ДРОМ*, 1932a, p. 12). This interpretation reflected 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 his texts, Mikhail Bezlyudskiy finds and exposes class enemies among the Gypsies everywhere – among the nomads, among those living in the cities, in the Gypsy kolkhozes, even among the Gypsy activists themselves. Concerning the enemies among nomadic Gypsies, namely the leaders of the Gypsy camps, he limited himself to condemning them in his literary work. This is understandable – he was in this environment for a short time and left it more than ten years ago, and, obviously, he had no specific information (including names) other than general ideological patterns. However, it was different for the areas he knows well and where he pointed to specific personalities. Such was, for example, the case with the article with the revealing title *There is No Place for Kulaks in the Kolkhoz*, signed with the initials MB, in which the chairman of the kolkhoz *Svoboda* (Freedom) in Kardimovo, in the Smolensk region, namely Efrosiniya (Ruzya) Tumashevich and her father, were declared kulaks (*НЭВО ДРОМ*, 1930a, pp. 9–10). In this key were also two notes signed by the author with the pseudonym 'Feldytko' (Nomad). The first one under the title *To Destroy the Kulaks as a Class* the charges against the Tumashevich family are reiterated (*НЭВО ДРОМ*, 1931h, p. 14). In the second one *Are There Gypsy Kulaks in Moscow* the discovered 'kulaks' in the ranks of Moscow Gypsies were Egor Polyakov (the head of the famous Gypsy choir), Mikhail Masalyskiy, Yakov Vishnyakov and others (*НЭВО ДРОМ*, 1931g, pp. 14–15). Another article against Mikhail Masalyskiy, with the eloquent title *The Class Enemy Does Not Sleep*, is dedicated to exposing the kulaks among the Gypsy choirs too (*НЭВО ДРОМ*, 1932a, p. 13). The class approach is the leading one for Mikhail Bezlyudskiy in the overall assessment of Nikolay Kruchinin's famous music studio, which was self-defined as the "ethnographic studio of old Gypsy singing". In an article entitled *More Class Alertness on the Theatre Front* (*НЭВО ДРОМ*, 1932d, pp. 10–11), he described her repertoire as "kabatskiy" (i.e. belongs to pubs) and associated it with the kulaks, who were to be destroyed as a class shortly (a well-known slogan in Soviet politics at the time). Mikhail Bezlyudskiy criticised even the famous theatre specialist Vsevolod Vsevolodskiy-Gerngross, director of the Ethnographic Theatre in Leningrad, on the stage of which in 1932 two performances were shown – *Gypsy Way* and *Gypsy Songs and Dances*. The main accusation against these performances, made by Bezlyudskiy, was that they did not show the transition from the nomadic way of life to collective agricultural labour (*Ibid.*), and this condemnation put an end to attempts to break the monopoly of the Theatre *Romen* as a national Gypsy Theatre.

Of course, in terms of historical and ethnographic realities, the concept 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. Property and power stratification in the Gypsy tabor (among the nomads) or in the Gypsy choir (among the musical elite), as far as they existed, were within the old, "traditional" forms, and were too far from the key Marxist-Leninist notions of classes and class struggle. It is even less likely that those Gypsies who have moved to a sedentary lifestyle (mainly in northwestern Russia and Ukraine) would become so established within local rural communities that they would become kulaks and 'exploiters' of their countrymen. However, still in the mass collectivisation of agriculture (1928–1932), when one of the leading slogans was "liquidation of the kulaks as a class" (Сталин, 1947а, pp. 178–183), and when were deported from their native lands more than 2 million people (Земсков, 1990, pp. 3–17; 2005), it turns out that among the repressed were also Gypsies.

Such was the case with Anna Kozlovskaya, married into a Russian family, from the village of Koshiorovo, Pesочно-Dubrovskiy village council, Kozhevnikovskiy rayon, West Siberian kray, who were sentenced to exile in 1932 (Жертвы политического террора в СССР). Of course, this case is clearly an exception, but it is indicative of the need to avoid generalising conclusions based on randomly selected cases, without attracting sufficient comparative material and without taking into account the general historical context.

Seen in a historical context, however, the concept of the existence of class struggle in the Gypsy community 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. Gypsy activism in the conditions of the early USSR developed within the framework set and limited by Soviet ideology. Although impressive, the Roma movement did not prove to be able to reach its full potential in these conditions. Despite this limitation, there have been isolated attempts in this direction. In 1931, a large article was published in the journal *Nevo drom* with the indicative title *About Work among Gypsies* (Нэво дром, 1931j, pp. 5–7; Marushiakova & Popov, 2021a, pp. 808–816). The article is signed with the pseudonym Kalysh (Gypsy personal name). Its author, at least so far, cannot be identified, because the style and content of the text differ significantly from the other texts of the leading Gypsy activists at the time. The unknown author naturally conforms to the historical context, spirit and phraseology of the time, but unlike other similar publications by leading Gypsy activists that focused on specific contemporary issues, he placed the problems of Roma civic emancipation strategically and outlines his vision for its future development. The editors of the journal accompanied the publication with an editorial note stating that the article is published in a discussion format and that it

is expected other readers of the magazine to express their opinion on the issues raised (Ibid.). However, the invitation for discussion remained unanswered, and the proposed idea of publicly discussing the strategically important issues facing the Roma movement did not lead to any continuation or development. Instead, the Gypsy activists entered the well-known regime of internal struggles from the time of the VSTs, for which the Soviet institutions supervising the Gypsy movement were again called upon to be arbiters.

In 1932, Mikhail Bezlyudskiy and Georgiy Lebedev sent a memorandum to the Soviet institutions, in which many critical remarks were made about the journal *Nevo drom* (GARF, f. P 1235, op. 123, d. 27, l. 243–247). In this memorandum (sent as a copy to the editor-in-chief Andrey Taranov), an analysis was made of the content of the published materials (up to No. 5 of 1932), based on which the individual specific shortcomings were formulated in 16 points – starting from “Insufficient quality materials on land management from the point of view of the attraction the Gypsies to labour” and ending with the statement that in the article *About the Work among Toiling Gypsies* (which was, in fact, a translation in Romani of the Decree of the Presidium of VTsIK of 01 April 1932 *On the Situation with Work in the Services for Toiler Gypsies*), published in the last issue of the journal, “a gross political mistake was made inadvertently” (Ibid.). Based on these critical remarks, it was concluded:

The existence of the Gypsy journal *Nevo drom* plays an important role in the organisation of the thought and class consciousness of the Gypsy toiling masses.[...] However, the journal, which set itself the goal of helping to attract Gypsies to work, organize them into kolkhozes and raise the general cultural level, largely failed in this task. For our part, we believe that the journal should be rebuilt to eliminate the above shortcomings [...] (Ibid., l. 243–244).

This memorandum was also supported by letters from other Gypsy activists (such as K. E. Matyushenko and an unknown author, signed with the pseudonym ‘Sibiryak’), who noted numerous shortcomings in the work of the journal *Nevo drom* (GARF, f. P 1235, op.123, d. 27), and they played their part in the liquidation of the journal. Ivan Tomakov’s (at that time already an instructor at ON VTsIK) made attempt to replace the journal with a Romani-language newspaper, published three times a month, that lasted for years and ultimately proved unsuccessful (see below).

However, Mikhail Bezlyudskiy remained outside these activities because a new, radical change took place in his life – he left the capital Moscow and moved to another, completely new for him sphere in the field of Roma civic emancipation.

In the autumn of 1932, Mikhail Bezlyudskiy at the initiative of the publishing house *Molodaya Gvardiya* was sent by VTsIK to inspect the Gypsy kolkhozes in Southern Russia. He visited the Gypsy kolkhozes *Nevo drom* (New Way) in the khutor of Novo-Velichkovsky, Novo-Titarovsky rayon, Azov-Black Sea region; *Trud Romen* (Gypsy Labour), located near the town of Mineralnye Vody in the North Caucasus region, for the condition of which he wrote a detailed report, which was sent to ON VTsIK, Kolkhozcenter and the journal *Nevo drom* (RGAE, f. 7446, op. 13, d. 83, l. 2–6). In this

report, he highlighted two main problems facing these collective farms that are halting their successful development – the kulak Gypsies who have taken over their leadership and the lack of support from local authorities. At the same time, Bezlyudskiy not only exposed his findings, such as:

The kolkhoz *Nevo drom* [...] is clogged with a criminal element [...] horse thieves feel like the owners of the collective farm [...] there is not a single Gypsy party member on the collective farm [...]

but something more he immediately acted to solve the issues:

[...] during my visit to the kolkhoz, I had to [...], together with the kolkhoz board, through a general meeting of collective farmers, withdraw from the kolkhoz three merchants (Nikolay Lebedev, Ignat Ivanenko, Pavel Ivanenko), [who] were systematically engaged in horse-trading on the bazaar, which weakened labour discipline among the kolkhoz workers. (Ibid., l. 4).

After getting acquainted with the situation in Southern Russia, in July 1933 Mikhail Bezlyudskiy was sent there by ON VTsIK as chairman of the kolkhoz *Trud Romen* (LANB, f. Николай Саткевич, d. Михаил Безлюдский). This new appointment was part of the general strategy of Ivan Tokmakov, an instructor at ON VTsIK, to create a Gypsy national rayon that would later grow into a Gypsy autonomous oblast or even to a republic, which will be discussed in more detail below. As early as 1932, the kolkhoz *Trud Romen*, which until then had been located on the outskirts of the town of Mineralnye Vody, was moved to the nearby village of Kangly, inhabited mainly by Nogay Tatars; in the same year, the first (and the only one) Gypsy National selsoviet was established there (GARF, f. A 385, op. 17, d. 2037; Бугай, 2015, pp. 48–49). It was the Gypsy village council selsoviet and the Gypsy kolkhoz that had to be strengthened, developed and become the core of the future Gypsy autonomous territorial-administrative unit. Mikhail Bezlyudskiy was entrusted with this responsible task. With his publicistic and journalistic work, he became an authority in the issues of kolkhoz endowment and thus received the opportunity to put his ideas into practice in this direction. Mikhail Bezlyudskiy devoted a lot of space in his autobiography to recall his activities as chairman of the kolkhoz *Trud Romen* and at the same time as chairman of the Gypsy National selsoviet in the village of Kangly (LANB, f. Николай Саткевич, d. Михаил Безлюдский). This was, in fact, the brightest and most memorable period of his entire turbulent and tumultuous life, when he was the main engine and leader of processes that were supposed to lead to a complete and radical turn in the life of the Gypsies in the USSR.

The kolkhoz *Trud Romen* was established in 1928 (RGAE, f. 5675, op. 1, d. 168; Тепек, 1928, p. 4) or in 1929 (GARF, f. P 3316, op. 28, d. 793;) in the village of Suvorovskaya, Mineralvodsky rayon (LANB, f. Николай Саткевич, d. Михаил Безлюдский). The organiser of this kolkhoz was Nikolay Lebedev. The kolkhoz consisted of about 120 Roma

families, with the overwhelming majority of Roma previously living in the cities of Krasnodar, Maykop, Armavir, Kropotkin, Rostov-on-Don (Ibid.), i.e. the kolkhoz was not created by Gypsy nomads, but by Gypsies settled in the cities. The description given by Mikhail Bezlyudsky on the history of the kolkhoz is as follows:

For the organisation of the Gypsy kolkhoz *Trud Roman*, the Soviet State released a huge amount of money loans for the purchase of agricultural machines, implements, productive and working livestock. The kolkhoz was assigned to forever about two thousand hectares of land and land convenient for farming. However, this land area was not cultivated enough. Low yields were taken, and the state grain supply plan was not fulfilled from year to year [Maybe that's why the kolkhoz was moved to another place – authors note].

For about three years, the chairman of the kolkhoz Lebedev N. I., who was surrounded by unscrupulous Gypsies-collective farmers, through all sorts of machinations received large sums of money from the state bank and spent them not for their intended purpose. So, for example, Lebedev N. I. personally gave out money for the organisation of magnificent weddings, christenings, etc. As a result of the lack of proper control on the part of regional organisations, Lebedev N. I. organised a pedigree horse farm at kolkhoz, which later turned into a source of enrichment for Lebedev N. I. and his entourage. This was done in the following way: Lebedev N. I. supplied his confidants with the relevant certificates, giving them large sums to travel to large cities to buy horses, ostensibly for a horse farm. Horses were bought and sent in wagons to other cities, where they were sold at speculative prices. Thus, Lebedev N. I. and his drinking companions amassed huge sums of money. [...]. The poor Gypsies working in the kolkhoz quickly figured out the face of their chairman. Lebedev N. I. and his entourage were exposed in speculation by Gypsies-collective farmers, and the horse farm was liquidated. Gypsies, collective farmers began to leave the kolkhoz. For his anti-state actions, N. I. Lebedev was put on trial but got off with a suspended sentence. (At the trial, he emphasized his illiteracy). Subsequently, it was established that Lebedev N. I. before the revolution was a big kulak, which in the city of Armavir had its own post office, inns and several residential buildings. (Ibid.).

Shortly after the removal of Nikolay Lebedev as chairman of the kolkhoz and his replacement with Mikhail Bezlyudskoy in 1933, in 1934 the latter also became chairman of the Gypsy National selsoviet which thus concentrated all power in his hands. The condition of the kolkhoz was desperate – only 11 Gypsy families remained, and the men in 7 of them were in prison or a corrective camp. Although Bezlyudskiy himself (as he admits) had never been engaged in agriculture before, he, with the help of the local authorities, managed to significantly improve the condition of the kolkhoz and the life of the collective farmers in a relatively short time. Significant loans were granted to the kolkhoz, agricultural machinery and equipment, working and domestic animals were purchased. The arable land with wheat and fodder for the animals had been expanded, a cow farm and a poultry farm were operating. The houses of the collective farmers were repaired and each family received a separate home. A primary school was opened, where Gypsy teachers sent from Moscow thought, as well as a crèche and a kindergarten for the children of the collective farmers. In the autumn of 1933, 17 families of nomadic Gypsies joined the kolkhoz, and in 1934 another 45 families. The same year for the first time, the plan for state

supplies of bread grain from the collective farm was successfully implemented, and each kolkhoz's family received as a premium its one own cow for milk (Ibid).

The improvement of the condition of the kolkhoz *Trud Romen* is undoubted, but this description is made by Bezlyudskiy himself, and therefore it is good to cross-check it also with an assessment "from the outside", i.e. from other, not directly involved persons. Here come the results of the inspection of the kolkhozes *Noviy put* (New Way), *Krasniy Romanes*, *Nevo drom* and *Trud Romen* ordered by VPK at SNK at USSR:

The general conclusion about Gypsy collective farmers is this: they live better than nomads but worse than other kolkhozes (the Russian ones), and therefore they need help with people, organisers and funds. (RGAE, f. 5675, op. 1, d. 141).

Along with his other activities, Mikhail Bezlyudskiy does not forget his journalistic past. He initiated the publication of two newspapers in the Romani language: *Пало большевистско колхозо* (About the Bolshevik's kolkhoz) edition of the MTS Political Department in Mineralnye Vody; and *Сталинцо* (Stalinist) edition on the Raykom of VKP(b) in Mineralnye Vody and Raykom of VTsSPS. During the sudden German offensive in the summer of 1942, Soviet authorities failed to evacuate local archives and libraries, and much of their contents were destroyed during the military occupation of the region, so only three numbers of these newspapers have been found so far. These are the first two issues of the *Пало большевистско колхозо* from May and August 1934 (i.e. it was published once every three months), and issue 3 (137) of *Сталинцо* from October 1935 (i.e. it went out twice a week). From these issues it can be seen that the members of the editorial board of these newspapers were Ivan Tokmakov, Mikhail Bezlyudskiy and Justus (cannot be identified), the main author is Bezlyudskiy himself, and their content was devoted mainly to the activities of the kolkhoz *Trud Romen*.

At the same time, the Soviet press ran a constant propaganda campaign, creating an image of *Trud Romen* as a model of a Gypsy kolkhoz. This propaganda began even earlier when two articles were published in the journal *Nevo drom*, devoted to the success of kolkhoz construction in the USSR on the example of the kolkhoz *Trud Romen*, authored by the French communist writer Paul Vaillant-Couturier (Нэво дром, 1931г, pp. 7–9) and of the Hungarian poet, writer and journalist Emil Madarász (Нэво дром, 1931г, pp. 11–14). This propaganda became especially active after Mikhail Bezlyudskiy took over the leadership of the kolkhoz. Nikolay Pankov's archives contain numerous clippings of publications in the Soviet press from the 1930s about Gypsy kolkhozes, most of which are dedicated to the *Trud Romen* collective farm, most of which focus on the role of Mikhail Bezlyudskiy for the successful development of the kolkhoz (ЛАНВ, ф. Николай Панков).

Mikhail Bezlyudskiy's activity as chairman of the kolkhoz *Trud Romen* was promoted by the Soviet state not only in the press but also with other means. *Trud Romen* turned out to be the only Gypsy kolkhoz invited to participate in the Second All-Union Congress

of Collective Farmers-Shock Workers, hold solemnly in Moscow (February 11–17, 1935), with Bezlyudskiy himself a delegate to the Congress. Along with him, a woman delegate from the kolkhoz *Trud Romen* was the kolkhoz's 'udarnik' (shock-worker, who accomplish super-productive, enthusiastic labour) Evgenia Tsigunenka, who was included in the congressional delegation that met with Lenin's widow, Nadezhda Krupskaya (Второй Всесоюзный съезд, 1935).

Of particular interest is the participation of Mikhail Bezlyudskiy in the work of the Meeting at the Council of Nationalities at the TsIK USSR *On the Questions of the Employment of Toiling Nomadic Gypsies and Their Cultural and Economic Services*, held in Moscow on January 4 and 5, 1936 (for more details see below). This meeting was attended by representatives of the central Soviet institutions working on these issues, as well as representatives of existing Gypsy institutions – the Gypsy Pedagogical College, the Theatre *Romen*, Gypsy artels from Moscow, Gypsy kolkhozes from the country. In his speech at this meeting, Mikhail Bezlyudskiy stated:

[...] About allocation of the rayon 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 the 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. (GARF, f. P 3316, op. 28, d. 794, l. 91).

The public reaction to this statement by the participants in the meeting is indicative:

Comrade Pankov (Gypsy writer): [...] 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. (Ibid., l. 92). [...]

Khatskevich: [...] 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 other 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. (Ibid., l. 117).

Of particular importance here is the assessment of Alexander Khatskevich (1895–1943), at that time Secretary of the Council of Nationalities at the TsIK USSR, who chaired the meeting, which laid the foundation for the work on the establishment of a Gypsy territorial-administrative unit to later come to the basis for the future Gypsy Autonomous Republic (Marushiakova & Popov, 2021b, pp. 910–918). The development of events in this direction is described by Mikhail Bezlyudskiy himself:

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 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. 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 in the kolkhoz *Trud Romen*. The construction of the socialist town was ordered to the Resettlement Department of the Stavropol Krai 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 Krasnodarsky krai and Stavropolsky krai, Rostov and Grozny regions. The Gypsy tabors moved to kolkhozes. (LANB, f. Николай Саткевич, д. Михаил Безлюдский).

This description of Mikhail Bezlyudskiy as a whole is confirmed in archival documents. The only thing that is not clear is the case with the so-called “Exemplary socialist town”. The idea of building ‘socialist towns’ was introduced and discussed from 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. This idea may have been present among the Gypsy activists or, more likely, Bezlyudskiy himself had hoped that would happen.

The implementation of the decisions to establish a Gypsy national territorial-administrative unit was entrusted to the NKVD (see below). 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 (for the deliveries in the region of the North Caucasus see RGAE, f. 5675, op. 1, d. 149). At the same time, the NKVD structures were intensively preparing lists of Gypsies (including more than 200 families) in various places in the Kursk region who have expressed a desire to move to the kolkhoz *Trud Romen* (Ibid.).

All these activities end up in vain, according to Bezlyudskiy:

Unfortunately, the construction of the socialist town was stopped by the People's Commissar of Agriculture of the USSR in 1937. After the order of the Resettlement Department of the Executive Committee of Stavropol krai all wood was removed from the territory of the kolkhoz *Trud Romen* to the kolkhozes of Mineralnye Vody district. (LANB, f. Николай Саткевич, д. Михаил Безлюдский).

No such decision is known to have been issued by the Narkomzem, and it seems unlikely that such a decision would have been made at the level of Resettlement Department of the Executive Committee of Stavropol kray, without coordination with the other higher institutions. In any case, this development had a very severe effect on Mikhail Bezlyudsky himself, who described this period of his life as follows:

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 [...]. Thus, my main dream could not be realised. (Ibid.).

After the resignation of Mikhail Bezlyudskiy from the post of Chairman of the Kolkhoz *Trud Romen*, the kolkhoz itself continued to exist, but its activities ceased to be promoted in the public sphere. The end of the existence of kolkhoz occurred during the Second World War when in 1942 parts of the North Caucasus region were occupied by the German army. In fact, the Second World War put an end to the existence of many of the Gypsy kolkhozes, which were located in territories occupied by the German army. The remaining Gypsy kolkhozes, which were in regions that were not occupied, ceased to exist after the war.

Despite the radical turn in the national policy of the USSR, they were not closed by a special administrative act, and this happened in the course of the complete reorganisation of the kolkhoz's system in the USSR after the war when there was a mass consolidation of existing kolkhozes. 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 (and had not lived there since the war years and German occupation) (GARF, f. A 385, op. 17, d. 2037).

The history of Gypsy kolkhozes in the early USSR continues to be poorly studied, although significant progress has been made in recent years and several new, interesting studies have emerged in this direction (Кишин, 2005; Истягин, 2015; Бугай, 2015; Каменских, 2017; Черных & Каменских, 2020). However, in the generalising research of the Gypsies in the USSR, 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 paragraphs from a text by Nikolay Pankov, devoted to Ivan Tokmakov (LANB, f. Николай Панков; Друц & Гесслер, 1990, p. 285). 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 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 region of Central Asia.

Given the real number of Gypsies in the early USSR, one can also evaluate how effective was the Soviet policy toward them. 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 organized 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 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.

There are some vague moments in the information about the life of Mikhail Bezlyudskiy after he left the post of chairman of the kolkhoz *Trud Roman*. In an interview with Vladimir Ivashchenko (conducted in 1963), he said that he was chairman of the kolkhoz until 1939 (Иващенко, 2011, p. 30), and a year later, in his Autobiography (written for Nikolay Satkevich in 1964), he explained his resignation by the failure of timber supplies in 1937, after which he was assigned to work for the regional newspaper *For Stakhanovit's Labour* [‘Stakhanovit labour’ refers to labour modelled after the example of miner Alexey Stakhanov, who was known for producing more than it was required, by working harder and more efficient] in Mineralnye vody. In the newspaper’s editorial office he worked as the head of the agricultural department and for his successful work was sent as a participant in the All-Union Agriculture Exhibition (later Exhibition of Achievements of National Economy – VDNKh) in Moscow in 1939 (LANB, f. Николай Саткевич, d. Михаил Безлюдский). At the same time, Bezlyudskiy maintained correspondence with Elisaveta Muravyova, who was serving as a secretary at the Gypsy writers’ section at the SSP on publishing issues. In this correspondence, as a place of work and address for correspondence he indicated several places – Rozovskiy selsoviet, kolkhoz *New Way*; the city of Georgievsk, editorial office of the newspaper *Stalinskoe slovo* (Stalin’s Word), head of the agricultural department); and even again (in 1941) chairman of the kolkhoz *Trud*

Romen (Sharoval, 2021c; Махотина & Шаповал, 2022). He was probably reassigned as a nomenclature cadre by the local Party organisation to work in these various places. In any case, it is certain that he had not lost the trust of the Party, on the contrary, in 1941, after 19 (sic!) years as a candidate member of the VKP(b), he was accepted as a member of the Party (LANB, f. Николай Саткевич, d. Михаил Безлюдский).

On April 7, 1941, two weeks before Germany's attack on the USSR, Kraykom of VKP(b) sent Mikhail Bezlyudskiy as responsible editor (i.e., this was a career advancement) of a large newspaper published in one of the biggest grain farms in the Naursky district (Махотина & Шаповал, 2022). Thus, Bezlyudskiy had a chance to be on the territory (now part of the Chechen Republic of the Russian Federation), which was not occupied by the German army during the war. Mikhail Bezlyudskiy worked as the editor of the Naursky's district newspaper *Leninskiy put* (Lenin's Way) until 1947 when a new turn took place in his life. According to him:

In 1947, the TsK VKP(b) commission arrived at Naursky's rayon to check the accomplishment of the TsK VKP(b) decree on the safety of collective farm property. The commission found a gross violation of this Resolution by the leadership of the rayon. All the rayon's leaders, including myself, were dismissed from their jobs and expelled from the party. Some of them were put on trial, and I did not escape this fate. And all my fault was that in the kolkhozes of the rayon I bought food at a cheap price, not at a market price. I was charged for buying 15 kg of flour, 2 litres of vegetable oil and 4 kg of meat. I was sentenced by a people court to 3 years [corrective labour]. (LANB, f. Николай Саткевич, d. Михаил Безлюдский).

Mikhail Bezlyudskiy served the punishment in the agricultural open colony in the former village of Ostashkovo, now part of the city of Omsk. From the very first day there he worked as a trainer of the prisoners and had the right to freely go to the city. In 1950 he returned to his family in the village of Naurskaya, where he started working in the Naursky cotton farm as secretary of the directorate of the sovkhos, which means that despite his conviction, he retained his lower nomenclature positions. In the light of these positions, his further career became clear. In 1952, he moved to the Rostov oblast to work at the Volga-Don cotton state farm which was newly created on the virgin land. He worked there as a personnel inspector until 1956. In 1956, the Rostov sovkhos trust sent him to work in the city of Krasniy Sulin in the Construction and Installation Directorate as a senior inspector of the human resources department. Here he worked in this position until 1961 when he retired because of old age (Ibid.).

Mikhail Bezlyudskiy retired as the lowest nomenclature cadre with a pension of 30 rubles, thus in order to increase his subsistence, he started working at an augmented concrete products plant as a gatekeeper at the checkpoint, with a salary of 40 rubles per month (Ibid.). He died in Krasny Sulin in 1970.

In the last years of his life, Mikhail Bezlyudsky made his life balance, which he reflected in his Autobiography:

Thanks to the Soviet government, which made me, a former nomadic Gypsy, a citizen of the country [...] – I tried to give everything to my Gypsy people. (LANB, f. Николай Саткевич, d. Михаил Безлюдский).

It hardly makes sense to add anything more to his words, because they best characterise his life.

Georgiy Lebedev

Elena Marushiakova, Vesselin Popov and Viktor Shapoval

Georgiy Pavlovich Lebedev (1900–1969), known also diminutively as Genya or Gesha, was one of the interesting figures of Roma activism, whose fate at certain points was unfavourably different from the life of other activists. Nevertheless, or perhaps because of this, it is important to present his portrait, since he had his own vision of Roma activism reflected in his many-sided activities and artistic creativity.

Unfortunately, we have no information about the family, place of birth and education of Georgiy Lebedev. One can only rely on incomplete data from Valdemar Kalinin (Калинин, 2005, p. 205), which gives those years of his life. Ivan Rom-Lebedev indicated that Georgiy Lebedev worked in the choir conducted by Yegor Polyakov (Ром-Лебедев, 1990, p. 165). From this point, we can conclude that he belonged to the extensive and ramified Lebedev family or clan, who worked in the Moscow Gypsy choirs located in Petrovskiy Park.

Georgiy Lebedev was married to Maria Yegorovna Polyakova (1904–1976), the daughter of Yegor Polyakov. The marriage of Georgiy and Maria was also a creative union of two poets and writers. Georgiy's wife Maria Polyakova began to publish her literary works (including even the first Gypsy comics) at the same time as him (Полякова, 1930ab; 1931; Романы зоря, 1929b, p. 49; 1930e, p. 63). It seems that this couple had the lucky opportunity to discuss the problems of strengthening the new written Romani language and mutually support each other in their efforts as writers. This is evidenced by the common distinctive features of the specific dialect they used. For example, they had a unanimous position regarding the Romani term for the genre of the written story *ракирибэн*, later authors use *роспхэньбэн* (Шаповал, 2020c, pp. 232–233).

Georgiy Lebedev's career was initially facilitated by several factors that depended little on him. He belonged to the Moscow Gypsy choir family, educated and intelligent enough to write poems, and familiar on a first-hand basis with the gambling life in the capital city. He was a son-in-law of a most influential leader of one of the Gypsy choirs in Petrovskiy Park, Yegor Alekseevich Polyakov (1871–193?), who was a wise and pragmatic man, who understood in time that a return to the old order was no longer possible, and thus made the decision to look for their place in the new state structure.

However, the personal traits of our hero shouldn't be underestimated either. He was not an ordinary "dancer and guitarist", as Ivan Rom-Lebedev mentioned in his book (Ром-Лебедев, 1990, p. 160), he was not just an energetic, initiative and ambitious youth, but he was also ready to take risks in order to comprehend and achieve new things, and he had a good eye to see them.

Already at the early stages of his social and artistic activities Georgiy Lebedev gained very quickly a reputation of an important Gypsy activist and was involved in multiple activities. The state archives seem to have kept a relatively small amount of exact information about his activities. Unfortunately, Georgiy Lebedev's social and literary activity was very short-lived and ended in 1931.

Despite this, we can document that Georgiy Lebedev was involved in almost all projects related to the social integration and civil emancipation of Gypsies in the USSR from the mid-1920s. As already said, according to Ivan Rom-Lebedev's autobiographical book (Ром-Лебедев, 1990, p. 160) the involvement of Georgiy Lebedev in the organisational life started in 1923 with his participation in the newly created Moscow Communist Youth League (Komsomol) cell. The archival documents, however, show that, for the first time, the name of Georgiy Lebedev appears in materials reflecting the activities of the VSTs only after its official registration, when at the plenum of Central leadership of the Union conducted at the end of 1925, he (already as a member of Komsomol) was elected into the Union's Presidium as candidate-member (GARF, f. P 1235, op. 120, d. 27, l. 83) and was appointed head of the Production Department (with Deputy Yakov Dombrovskiy), to which two sub-departments were created: 1. Production. 2. Fundraising (Ibid., l. 84). In this way, Georgiy Lebedev gained the opportunity to manage all the financial and economic activities of the Union. During these inspections, the Union leadership tried to maintain its economic activities. For this purpose, the Presidium of the VSTs decided to create a new organisation (among the founders of which was also Georgiy Lebedev), the *Society for the Attraction of Gypsies in Labour*, which would develop all these activities and make regular contributions to a certain percentage of revenues for organisational, cultural, and educational, etc. activities of the Union. However, this idea was not approved by the Soviet authorities (GARF, f. P 393, op. 43 A, d. 1763). Georgiy Lebedev's name is hardly mentioned in any of these inspections although, due to his position in the VSTs, he should bear much of the responsibility for the numerous violations committed in the Union's economic activities. In all probability, this is because as a result of the reports to various Soviet institutions by Mikhail Bezlyudskiy, as early as 1926 he (along with Sergey Polyakov) they were removed from the leadership of the VSTs and expelled from the Komsomol (Ibid.), and when by a decree of the NKVD of 13 February 1928 the VSTs was officially closed (GARF, f. A 2306, op. 69, d. 1357, l. 9-906), he did not receive a punishment (unlike the leaders of the VSTs Andrey Taranov and Ivan Rom-Lebedev).

An interesting description of Georgiy Lebedev during this period of his life (the 1920s and 1930s) is given by Ivan Rom-Lebedev from the distance of time, who knew him well

from their joint work in the choir of Yegor Polyakov, and then in the VSTs and Theatre *Romen*:

He is a young, novice poet, undoubtedly gifted. Songs on his words were sung and are sung now in Gypsy ensembles. Possessing enviable energy, organisational skills, overflowing with all sorts of ideas, Genya liked to organise – what? It does not matter! Horse-drawn cargo transport artel, Gypsy bathhouse, theatre – all the same. He was fascinated by the very process of organising, so as soon as something started to work out, he immediately disappeared and organised something else on the fly. (Ром-Лебедев, 1990, p. 165).

In general, the visions of Georgiy Lebedev in the field of Roma civic emancipation did not differ much from one of all other Gypsy activists in the USSR of the time, which were aligned with the common Soviet national policy in the condition of the overall modernisation and socialistic transformation of the USSR. However, he was also the person who raised original ideas or introduced new topics in the debate about how to facilitate the inclusion of Roma in the new socialistic way of life, ideas and topics which are presented in his publicistic works.

One of his original ideas was the one on the creation of a Gypsy centre. This proposal was included in the article, co-authored with Alexander German, entitled *What to Do with the Gypsies?*, published in the newspaper *Komsomolskaya Pravda* (Komsomol Truth) (Комсомольская правда, 1929, p. 4). It envisaged the establishment of an institution of Gypsy plenipotentiaries at kolkhozes, artels and even in nomadic camps and its following centralisation at the highest possible level so that all Gypsy related issues could be solved in a smooth and timely manner, without spraying them across various institutions. In the author's point of view, this would lead to the creation of a Gypsy centre that would coordinate the work with nomadic and sedentary Gypsies and would be of "support of their sovietisation" (for more details see Marushiakova & Popov, 2021b, p. 781). The proposal was presented as a replacement of the liquidated VSTs, but the centre's envisaged role and functions were much wider and the status much higher. It is worth noting that the public impact of this article in the central press too. After its publication, the Editorial Board of the influential newspaper *Komsomolskaya Pravda* convened a special extended Consultation meeting on Gypsy question, which was attended by representatives of various Soviet institutions, leading newspapers, and many Gypsy activists from Moscow and where the ideas and messages of the authors were discussed (GARF, f. P 1235, op. 121, d. 31, l. 334–348).

In what concerned the future of Gypsy nomadism Georgiy Lebedev's vision did not differ from that of other Gypsy activists of the time. Like his colleagues, he was also convinced that the future development of Gypsies, their equal inclusion in the Soviet society and solving the hardship of their life was not possible with the simultaneous continuation of nomadism. He regularly wrote notes on various issues connected to this. For example, his article *How Gypsies Can Move to a New Life* discuss the pathway of settlement and argued for the advantages of collective farming, stating that the best way for

Gypsies who settled in cities to make their living was to create production artels as a transition form on the way to work in factories, which should help to overcome their “national closeness” (*национально замкнутость*) (Нэво дром, 1930f, p. 5).

In his other essay, entitled *About the Political-Educational Work*, published in the Gypsy journal *Romany zorya*, Georgiy Lebedev introduced the idea of the existence of class enemies (kulaks) among Gypsies (Романы зоря, 1930c, pp. 3–5). It is difficult to state whether this idea was first formulated by him, but it looks as if he was among the first ones to articulate it clearly and in written form in Romani language. Under the label ‘kulaks’, uniting the class enemies were summarised and declared as such all the leaders of nomad Gypsy tabors as well as the heads of former Gypsy choirs (for more details see Marushiakova & Popov, 2021b, p. 831). Maybe it was this article that was in the background of the conflicts that Georgiy Lebedev had within the ranks of the Gypsies (see above).

Georgiy Lebedev actively participated in the Gypsy journals *Romany zorya* and *Nevo drom*, claiming to be an expert in public and political matters. He wrote about a number of issues underlining the importance of the printed Romani word characterising newspapers, journals, books as “mirrors of Gypsy life” (*зльндадо саво сыкавэла джиинэ*) (Нэво дром, 1930f, p. 3). He was convinced that the written word could help to solve specific issues, as can be seen in his article about the problems in Gypsy kolkhozes (Романы зоря, 1930c, pp. 3–5). Among them, in 1932, he sent a letter (co-authored with Mikhail Bezlyudskiy) to Soviet institutions indicating specific “gross political mistakes” of the journal *Nevo drom* which had largely failed to meet the task of “organising the thoughts and class consciousness of the Gypsy working masses”, concluding that the “journal needs to be redesigned” (GARF, f. P 1235, op. 123, d. 27, l. 243–247). However, Georgiy Lebedev supported the request made by Andrey Taranov, the editor-in-chief of the journal *Nevo drom*, on October 20, 1933, of converting it into a Romani language newspaper, which would be published three times a month (Ibid., l. 260–265). Several letters from Gypsy activists had been sent to Soviet Institutions in support of this transformation.

Georgiy Lebedev was perhaps the only Rom in the USSR who pondered the question of the naming of his community, which was in line with the spirit of the time. The Soviet authorities paid a lot of attention to a competent and effective national policy designed to attract national minorities to its side. One of the tools for neutralising the consequences of Tzarist discrimination in the past was the renaming of large and small nationalities based on their self-appellations. So, Little Russians began to be officially called Ukrainians, Ostyaks – Khanty, Voguls – Mansi, etc. At the same time, new designations of ethnic units were often administratively allocated according to scholars’ analyses and recommendations. As for the Roma in the USSR, they did not receive a new official designation, and this issue was discussed in the early 1930s only by two persons, Daniil Nikolaevich Savvov (?-1938) and Georgiy Lebedev, on the pages of the two Gypsy journals. The first was a non-Gypsy, an expert in Narkompros, author of textbooks on the Russian language for both Mordovian-Erzya and Mordovian-Moksha schools, as well as

for Karakalpak and Greek children. We assume that Georgiy Lebedev and Daniil Savvov probably met at the Central Mordovian club, since Gypsy cultural initiatives in Moscow often coexisted with Mordovian ones and took place in the same building and, in 1931, even one of the Gypsy schools had a classroom at the Central Mordovian club (Нэво дром, 1931а, p. 26). This club was in Maryina Roshcha, one of the traditional Gypsy settlements near/in Moscow (then: 56, Sheremetevskaya street), and was the real centre of many different activities of and among diverse nationalities.

The proposal for the official use of the name 'Roma' (in form of 'Indo-Rom') instead of 'цыгане' (Gypsies) was made by Daniil Savvov in an article published in journal *Romany zorya*, in 1930, where he wrote: "You have your own 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, 1930f, p. 9). In the same issue of the journal was published a poem *A Call from the Kolkhoz* by Georgiy Lebedev signed with the pseudonym 'Indo-Rom' (Романы зоря, 1930b, p. 46). It is difficult to guess who of the two was the author of the term. In any case, it is clear that both shared the same idea. This proposal, however, found little resonance among other Gypsy activists, who did not perceive the public denomination 'цыгане' (Gypsies), opposed to negative 'фараоны' (Pharaohs), as insulting (Нэво дром, 1930h, p. 1), and apparently did not want to change it in Russian.

The only reverberation to the proposal for a new community name in public ('Indo-Rom') reappears at the time of creation of the Theatre *Romen*, when 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* (i.e. Indian-Romani) Theatre (Бессонов, 2013, p. 454). The term 'Indo-Rom' was also included in the public announcement for recruiting artists in the newly created "Indo-Romen (Gypsy) theatre" (Вечерняя Москва, 1930, p. 4), as well as in the declared aims of the theatre – "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 a kind of Gypsy art degenerated by the bourgeoisie (see Штейнпресс, 1934; Щербакoва, 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 it, 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).

The name of the Theatre *Romen* (grammatically this is a form of belonging, *Romen* means 'belonging to Roma', thus 'Theatre of the Roma') is also associated with the name of Georgiy Lebedev. No one else has proposed or promoted such a naming. As for the name of the new theatre, as said, in January 1931, the name Theatre-Studio *Romen* was

used (RGALI, f. 2928, op. 1, d. 3, l. 5) and, from 1933, it was replaced by the approved name State Gypsy Theatre *Romen* (Ibid., f. 2928, op. 1, d. 6, l. 11). There is no evidence that the Soviet institutions had any influence in this direction, and it can be securely assumed that this was a decision of the artists from the Theatre *Romen* and its leadership. This decision is completely understandable, as for the general public the name 'Indo-Roma Theatre' would be completely unknown and incomprehensible, while the name 'Gypsy Theatre' is not only understandable for everybody but is a direct reference to Gypsy music, which was extremely popular brand since the days of Russian Empire.

It seems that, because of the friendship and cooperation between Georgiy Lebedev and Daniil Savvov, the authors' views on the tasks and prospects of the civic emancipation of the Gypsies were mutually enriched (Комсомольская правда, 1930b, p. 3). It is very characteristic of that time that both considered political education among the necessary vehicles for Gypsy emancipation. The system of political education (*политпросвет*) was the most important concern of the ideological remaking of the masses of the workers. Its aim was to enrich every worker with the ideas of Marx, Engels, Lenin, and later Stalin, in order to make him/her a conscious fighter, a participant in the class battles of the future. For many years, the department of political education in the Narkompros was headed by Lenin's widow, Nadezhda Krupskaya. This indicates the important role of this part of the educational system. It can even be said that this experience of mass education in Soviet Russia was the forerunner of the modern concept of lifelong education for adults. It looks like formerly it had been an instrument of the 'class struggle', and in the period in question it was re-thought as an instrument of the 'class reconciliation'. In the USSR, special teaching handbooks were created for evening political literacy (*политграмота*) classes outside of working hours. During the time of periodical "purges", inactivity or ignorance of political studies could be a reason for dismissal from a leading or responsible position, so people attended these lessons, as they had previously attended Sunday church services.

Such an educational book was also planned for Gypsies. In 1930, the journal *Romany zorya* reported in the book announcement that Georgiy Lebedev and Daniil Savvov are writing a political grammar for Gypsies (Романы зоря, 1930h, p. 62). The beginning of this work is obviously evidenced by the article written by Georgiy Lebedev concerning the goals of political education of Gypsies, where several new Romani terms in the field of political concepts were successfully applied (Романы зоря, 1930c, pp. 3–5). The result of this intention of the two authors is unknown. The planned handbook on political literacy was probably not finished (Шаповал, 2019a, p. 323).

Political education is also associated with the desire of Georgiy Lebedev to include Gypsies in the so-called *всеобуч* (Vseobuch – the common defence education) in Soviet Russia. Vseobuch was a system for teaching the entire population the basics of military skills. Old women workers learned to shoot, schoolchildren knew how to use a gas mask, teenagers dreamed of parachuting, and so on. This institution regularly published brochures on various issues of defence and participation in war actions. A very popular

defence series included a number of 'libraries' (sets of books), namely a series of titles with the same design and often consisting of numbered positions. The library *On the Guard of the USSR* was published since 1925. In this direction, in 1929, Georgiy Lebedev had started his writer's career having translated a book titled *How the Population Will Help the Red Army during the War* (Стерлин, 1929, pp. 1–31). That was the first book, although a small one, a pocket-size brochure of only about 30 pages, entirely translated into the freshly baked Soviet Romani language. It was a very important achievement for strengthening the translator's social and political status as the brochure was one of the above-mentioned popular defence series for the large audience, a very important part of propaganda at that time. In this spirit of political education and propaganda was published also one small book authored by Georgiy Lebedev in Romani language – *Ваи комсомоло* (About the Komsomol) (Лебедев, 1931).

The turbulent life of Georgiy Lebedev was inseparable from the Theatre *Romen*. He was among its founders, was its chair, and was the convenor of significant changes.

In January 1931, Georgiy Lebedev wrote about the objectives of the emerging theatre, emphasising both its function as a promoter of a new working way of life and as a unifier of all diverse groups of Roma. In his article About the Gypsy Theatre he wrote:

In former years, we could not even dream of this which today is being implemented by the Soviet power. A new Gypsy cultural centre is being created. It is the Gypsy national theatre. Not all Gypsies know about this great holiday for Gypsies yet, but this small part of the working Gypsies, who are taking part in the creation of this theatre, well understood what a great bright cultural path the Gypsy theatre opens up. But the joy of this holiday should reach all the Gypsies, because it cannot be considered that this theatre is created only for Moscow Roma, this is created for the entire Roma ethnic group, that is why it is called the Gypsy National Theatre. And in its work [the theatre] will show the whole Gypsy life. Using the theatre, Gypsies will tell other nations about their old and new way of life, on the other hand, the theatre will show the Roma the way to a new life. Therefore, whoever knows or learns about the creation of the theatre must widely spread this message among the Gypsies. Gypsy kolkhozes, artels, clubs, red corners and other Gypsy organisations should organise meetings and declare their wishes. Let Gypsies send letters to their local newspapers, send greetings, demands to our journal. (Нэво дром, 1931b, p. 25).

It was quite typical for that time: a direct appeal to the masses with a request for their *nakazy* (opinions, tips or recommendations) regarding the directions of future work. This form of dialogue with the 'ordinary' people was regarded as an instrument of direct folk democracy. By the beginning of the 1930s, an obvious ritualisation of such collective sincerity had already been achieved, therefore Georgiy Lebedev initiated this "impulse" of the lower classes, asking them to regularly express their opinion on the results of the activities of the Gypsy Theatre.

Georgiy Lebedev, being the first chair of the Theatre-Studio *Romen*, proudly wrote about its first performance, which took place at the end of April 1931, in the journal *Nevo drom*. In this article, which demonstrated the highest rhetorical canon of the Soviet

Romani language for discussing new political issues, we can see his vision about the theatre's mission not only for the sovietisation of Gypsies, but its impact on the Gypsies of the USSR, then on other Soviet peoples, and further on Gypsies throughout the capitalist world, which it was a small, specific contribution to the world revolution, as is underlined by the author. The author's concluding remarks are worth quoting:

For the first time, Gypsies spoke their theatrical language, and this is the peculiarity of the Gypsy theatre. For the first time, people of other languages, together with Roma themselves, heard the Romani language. On April 30 the theatre showed its three-month work to the Soviet public – it [was] a scene play. We still cannot call [it] very good, but nevertheless, after this performance the theatre was able to get from the public the words – Did the theatre choose the right path? – and the public responded – “right”. This is the theatre's great victory. To our great regret, the theatre has not yet been able to show this performance to many working Gypsies even in Moscow, where the theatre is located. Not all Roma have seen it, but the warmth with which the Roma public reacted to the performance, suggests that all Gypsy workers will react to our work positively. The theatre in three months was able to stage though a small, but good, complete, and necessary [to us] piece. This play hits the *kulaks* and other persons who put a spoke in the wheels of the new Gypsies. On the other hand, it shows our new [Gypsy] people who, together with other peoples, are fighting for the cause of socialism.

I will not say that the theatre could be born only in our country, only thanks to the party politics, but I will move on to what the theatre is. First of all, in its work, the theatre, on the one hand, showed that it really teaches how new Gypsies should live their new lives. On the other hand, the theatre tells other peoples how Roma lived in former years and how they live now. The theatre shows the way for Gypsies, how to get out of the darkness in which many more Gypsies still are. The theatre tells the working Gypsies how to deal with the old way of life, its undesirable aspects (fortune-telling, divination, and so on). [...]

The theatre will show its play in all places where Roma live, and above all in Gypsy kolkhozes. The theatre will also serve those field spots where Gypsies used to camp, in order to call them for work, for the working life. Roma from all countries will learn about the theatre born in our Soviet country, and for them, this will be [a source of] faith in liberation from their own capitalists. The Gypsy Theatre sends its warm words to all working Gypsies and promises that together with all working people it will fight for a good and happy life of working Gypsies. (Нэво драм, 1931к, р. 10).

In this article, one can also see an appraisal that Georgiy Lebedev gives to the usage of Romani language in the theatre scene. During his leadership of the theatre, however, the transition from the Romani language to Russian in its performances also began, which predetermined its future. This is a topic around which many biased interpretations and even mystifications have accumulated over the last few decades. In general, this language issue is usually placed entirely in the discourse of the changes in the national policy of the USSR in the 1930s, and the leading (and de facto almost the only) tendency is to present this change (explicitly or indirectly) as a manifestation of anti-Gypsyism of the Soviet policy towards the Gypsies, the suppression of the public manifestations of their identity and even the striving for their assimilation (Друц & Гесслер, 1990; Деметер et al. 2000; Lemon, 2000; O'Keeffe, 2013; 2019). This interpretation of events is completely incorrect.

First, there is no documented ban on the use of the Romani language in the theatre (or at least no one has found such a ban in the archives of the Soviet state administration and the theatre itself). Secondly, in practice, such a ban did not exist, and in the performances of the theatre, Romani language was used in individual words and phrases that were familiar to the public. Furthermore, the numerous songs in the Romani language were an important part of each performance. These facts make the very idea of imposed assimilation meaningless because Gypsy songs and dances were (and are) one of the main markers of Gypsy identity in the USSR, thus the theatre supported maintaining and developing this identity. And, most importantly, the preserved historical sources reveal a completely different picture of the process of replacing the Romani language with Russian in the performances of Theatre *Romen*.

The question about the language of performances in the Theatre *Romen* was raised for the first time at the time of its founding. At one of the meetings of the Organising Committee, held on January 10, 1931, Andrey Andreev (theatre administrator, non-Rom), who was a candidate for chair of the new theatre, proposed that most of the performances be performed in Russian to be understandable to the audience. However, the proposal provoked a stormy reaction from the Gypsy activists present – Andrey Taranov, Georgiy Lebedev, Alexander German, Mikhail Bezlyudskiy – and was categorically and unanimously rejected (RGALI, f. 2928, op. 1, d. 1, l. 4), and subsequently, Georgiy Lebedev became the chair of the theatre. The reasons for this decision are probably rooted in the fact that the Romani language was the only area in which Gypsy activists saw their advantage and thus wanted to maintain their leading positions in the theatre (Бессонов, 2013, p. 454).

Soon, however, life forced Gypsy activists to radically change their positions, and they found the necessary arguments for this. The topic of the use of the Russian language as the only way to save the theatre from its stagnation and isolation from the public through the domination of the Romani language was the subject of many debates in the theatre itself, and especially active in this direction was the art director Moisey Goldblatt (O’Keeffe, 2013, p. 217, 224–234; Ром-Лебедев, 1990, p. 167). Gradually, this important problem was faced by the Gypsy activists. At the meeting of the Creative Art Council of the theatre, held on January 23, 1933, the chair Georgiy Lebedev adopted a compromising position: “Given the immense importance of winning the sympathy of non-Roma workers [...], this helps to eradicate anti-tsiganism” (RGALI, f. 2928, op. 1, d. 6, l. 12). At the next meeting of the Council, held on February 11, 1933, he was even more insistent:

The theatre should not be isolated and work only for the Gypsies. The theatre cannot enclose itself in a narrowly national shell. In any case, the question of language in our theatre is debatable and deeply fundamental. Today this issue cannot be resolved, but the council should work on it. (RGALI, f. 2928, op. 1, d. 7, l. 15–28).

All speakers supported the use of Russian in performances, and a compromise resolution was adopted (Ibid.), which opened the door to a gradual change in the language

of performances. Initially, it remained Romani, accompanied by printing flyers with Russian-language librettos, which were distributed to the audience; later Russian-language prologues and epilogues began to appear in the presented stage plays and, from 1937, with the inauguration of the new art director Mikhail Yanshin, Russian became the main language in the performances of the Theatre *Romen* (Бессонов, 2013, p. 455).

Ivan Rom-Lebedev described Georgiy Lebedev as a very active person full of hardly implemented or completed ideas (Ром-Лебедев, 1990, p. 165; for more details see above). A parcel of envy shines through this statement. At the time, they were two full namesakes, two partners and two competitors, and Georgiy Lebedev was luckier in many aspects. It is worth saying that his poems were the first to be published in Russian translation in popular publications, in the journal *Magazine for Everyone* (Журнал для всех, 1929, pp. 25–26). Soon after, also two of his poems of more serious political content were translated and published (Комсомольская правда, 1930a, p. 3). It seems that in the early 1930s Georgiy Lebedev had a handful of trump cards. His future looked bright and triumphing for a couple of years on.

Georgiy Lebedev did not enjoy the glory of the leader of the Gypsy Theatre and of a leading Gypsy poet for a long time. Being in the position of chair of a Gypsy Theatre-Studio, he became a target of criticism. In 1931, came the first stab in his back. Someone, hidden under the letter 'П' (may be Nikolay Pankov), presented the following sad picture:

Classes for political education were not organised in the Studio, the Russian language was not taught more than two times for the entire time, the Romani language classes were only visited by those actors who did not speak it. Who is guilty of all these defects? Chair Georgiy Lebedev. [...] The students split into conflicting groups; intrigues were growing, [...] Drunkenness and other outrages regularly happened. The students run away. So, Bezlyudsko, Soldatenkova, Dulkevich and others left the Studio. (Нэво дром, 1931r, p. 22).

However, the picture was more complicated and the Chair of a Gypsy Theatre-Studio *Romen* was not always able to deal with difficulties encountered by the theatre's students. The life of non-resident actors in Moscow was not easy, especially at first (until they received a home) as illustrated even by the press: "the actors in this Soviet Gypsy theatre, which keeps pace with all the working community, and which campaigns among the Gypsies for settled life and work – live in tents themselves" (Нэво дром, 1931t, p. 24). These were the first signals of a campaign of personal criticism directed against Georgiy Lebedev and supported by almost all activists. A few months later, a Gypsy girl (probably Voinova-Masalsko), hidden under the pen name *Studyka* (a girl student at the Theatre-Studio *Romen*), also criticised the atmosphere of inner conflicts and lack of elementary discipline at the stage during performances (Нэво дром, 1931o, p. 22).

It seems that Alexander Germano and the editor of his books Nikolay Pankov were sincerely outraged by the unattractive actions and destructive and corrupting style of the theatre management practised by Georgiy Lebedev. However, there is another aspect to this conflict. At that time, in the article *Are There Gypsy Kulaks in Moscow*, under the

pseudonym 'Feldytko' (the Nomad, or the Field Dweller), Yegor Polyakov was indicated as the last and the most dangerous 'kulak' from the ranks of Moscow Gypsies (Нэво дром, 1931g, pp. 14–15). According to Valdemar Kalinin, Yegor Polyakov died in 1931 (Калинин, 2005, p. 214), but according to the memoirs of Ivan Rom-Lebedev, this happened around 1938 (Ром-Лебедев, 1990, p. 158). In any case, it is likely that by 1931 the influence and capabilities of Yegor Polyakov became insufficient to support his not always cautious and reasonable son-in-law.

Thus, soon after that, Georgiy Lebefev was attacked from all sides. His poetical work suddenly began to be criticised for ideological errors, even his poem *Gilori* (Song). The author, hidden under a pseudonym 'New Critic', in the rough manner of that time categorically, wrote the following:

Let's look at the poems that Lebedev has collected in his book *Neve glosya* (New Voices). On the first page stands *Gilori*, in which the poet said: "Years will pass, the Rom will throw away // His old life, // but he will never forget, [the refrain] "Ne-ne-ne-ne", // as he will never forget the meal". One considers, according to Lebedev, songs will be a source of joy for new Gypsies. We know that their joy will be the whole building of socialism, and not only just one song. What did he say in this poem? Nothing! The song is food for Gypsies and nothing else. What is the social demand in this song? (Нэво дром, 1932b, p. 19).

This criticism looks quite exaggerated even in the context of the time. Noteworthy is that a very similar poem *Атася и ададывэс* (Yesterday and Today) by Alexander Germano, where the recognisable Romani refrain "ne-ne-ne" is also repeated but evaluated positively as a sign of the ethnic optimism (Германо, 1935b, p. 23; 1938, p. 30), has never been a target of criticism.

Georgiy Lebedev did try to repel the attack. At the end of 1931, he wrote a letter to Andrey Taranov, the executive editor of the journal *Nevo drom*, in which he tried to weaken the possible damage from criticism and refuses the authorship of another poem by him, *Dead Blood* (Романы зоря, 1930a, pp. 43–44), with following words:

Comrade editor!

I have published the poem *Dead Blood* in the journal *Romany zorya*, No.No. 3–4. This poem belongs to the period when I was just starting to write poetry. This poem expresses a random mood that is not needed – neither for me nor for us, the new Gypsies. Therefore, I ask you not to admit this poem to any new edition, and point out my mistake to our young poets, showing how not to write. I personally believe that this poem has a good form, but its content is worthless, the unhappy former Gypsies' life is changing for a better and new one. When joy comes to Gypsy kolkhozes and raises our children and us, writing about our tearful experiences and looking for some good sides in the former days is great harm, both to the one who writes this and to the one who will read it. I condemn this poem and renounce it. G. Lebedev. (Нэво дром, 1931u, p. 24).

However, this case is significant for a better understanding of the circumstances of the time, as this is a typical example of formal self-criticism expressed in written form. The

genre of self-flagellation was very popular back then and sometimes it helped to save one's life at the expense of dignity. But in this case, such a minimalised volume of self-criticism was assessed as insufficient. The anonymous article by 'New Critic', gave heavy blows on the entire poetic work of Georgiy Lebedev and his prose. The article was not seeking for notably skilful argumentation but adding to the numerous political errors discovered by a very questionable analysis a hypocritical accusation of eroticism and finishing with an expression of formal hope that the young talented poet still had a chance of self-correction (Нэво дром, 1932с, р. 20).

In the poems of Georgiy Lebedev, there are quite a few unpolished pieces. When his work became the target of widespread criticism, these controversial pieces also came under additional attack. Alexander Germano satirically portrayed Genya giving him the nickname Gudgeon (hero of a tale of Mikhail Saltykov-Shchedrin, a symbol of a person who evades public activities for fear of punishment). Germano's hint was based on this literary image, and his main idea was that Genya has been nothing but a person who was pretending to be an activist, only seeking his own comfort and privileges. A. Germano emphasised the fact that all Georgiy's merits were critically reassessed: *И кай бы на бэстя Пускарё / Одой ачякирдя ёв шпэра дошалы* (And wherever Gudgeon served / He left his criminal trial there) (Германо, 1934f, р. 17).

The accusations against Georgiy Lebedev made up a long list, which was presented in poetic form in the verses of Alexander Germano, where he called him a braggart and a deceiver (Ibid., р. 14) who made a career fraudulently: "Here he's stolen four coupons for buying clothes / There he caused a deceptive rumour, / Here he was put on trial / For financial affairs" (Ibid., р. 18). The satire attacks of Alexander Germano were not limited to this poem. In the poem *Something About the Theatre* he directly said that Geshka (Georgiy Lebedev) was frustrating the theatre life (Ibid., р. 33).

To better understand the reasons for the criticism of Georgiy Lebedev by the other Gypsy activists it is needed to have a look at their public perception by the majority. The quotation from the book of Ivan Solonevich could be a good illustration of this:

In the fall of either 1929 or 1930, Gypsies of a somewhat unusual appearance were seen on the Moscow streets. They, as usual, wore some kind of dazzling red trousers, piercing green caftans, blue-black beards – everything as it should be. But, in addition, they were armed with brand new briefcases and automatic pens, and they drove around not on their ragged carts, but on Soviet automobiles. They looked business-like and preoccupied. [...] In this institution, a buffet was founded, as in any other. Then someone more resourceful than me organized an amateur choir at the cultural and educational department of the Central Council. Then in the buffet, or more precisely, from under the buffet vodka began to be sold [illegally]. Then, due to the enormity of the tasks and the shortness of the deadlines, a night shift was established. The new [restaurant] *Yar* began to strangely resemble the old one. Gypsy choirs of the cultural and educational department performed in separate offices of senior officials, and the portraits of Marx-Lenin-Stalin gazed in amazement at the restoration of old social relations. (Солоневич, 1951, pp. 136–138).

This text by Solonevich reflected common prejudices about the ability of Gypsies to organise themselves responsibly and be productive in society. It seems that the other Gypsy activists (and especially Alexander Germano and Nikolay Pankov) were outraged by the fact that Georgiy Lebedev confirmed these fears and the worst expectations of the public opinion based on such prejudices, and their harsh criticism of Georgiy Lebedev was based on attempts to oblige the Gypsy elite to combat the former restaurant image of the Gypsies, and for them, any signs of a return to the past were signals of defeat. The danger of getting the label of a ‘restaurant Gypsy’ had always been perceived by the activists as a risk of failure. This led them to sincerely strive to be an example of revolutionary asceticism. Ivan Rom-Lebedev wrote about a rather harsh and direct ban on the artists of the barely created Theatre *Romen* to earn money in restaurant choirs (Ром-Лебедев, 1990, p. 170). Alexander Germano too connected the permanent banquet criticised by him in the VSTs with the traditions of the past choirs: “We sang up our / Young years in the capital with the richmen” (Германо, 1934f, p. 28). The highest standard of revolutionary behaviour was sometimes like the Christian austerity. Germano criticised in the same way also Andrey Taranov for his good appetite: “And you’re eating all day” (Ibid., p. 24). Thus, the activists were convinced to have reason to consider Georgiy Lebedev’s misdeeds as betrayal and internal sabotage, which led even to the creation of a new term ‘Lebedevshchina’ [created similarly to tsyganishchina which came to signify “booze, moral decay and lack of discipline”] (GARF, f. P 1235, op. 123, d. 28, l. 182).

All these critics to Georgiy Lebedev naturally led him to bitter resentment, both from the Gypsy activists who competed with him and from the Gypsy traditional leaders (there has probably been criticism also from them within the community). A hint towards the fact that he was aware of the danger of not being understood by the community is found expressed in his poetry. So, already in 1930, in the time of his poetical glory and on the eve of the avalanche of criticism, he published twice a poem firstly entitled *For the Luck of Roma* (Романы зоря, 1930d, p. 35–36), and then with a modified first line and entitled *To the Old Roma* (Нэво дром, 1930e, p. 17). This poem reveals the assessment of the conflict situation from the viewpoint of the poet himself:

In the struggle for the luck of the Roma
 The best years I offered.
 And from the great Roma minds,
 Brothers! what did I see?
 Not a warm word, not a brotherly hand
 Those Roma didn’t give me.
 After all, not from me, but from our new way
 They turned away showing their backs. (Ibid.).

Public criticism of Georgiy Lebedev had negative results for his image and literature career, and he succeeded to publish only one book with his poems and stories – *Нэво гласа: Гиля и ракирибэна* (New Voices: Poems and Stories) (Лебедево, 1931). After 1931,

neither he nor his wife published a single book either as author or as translator. However, over time, the attitudes towards his poetry started to change slightly and, for example, in 1940, when he was already in GULAG, he was again mentioned as one of the early career brilliant Gypsy poets (Литературная газета, 1940, p. 6).

The end of Georgiy Lebedev's public career in the field of Roma civic emancipation came in 1933. Before that, young actors from the Theatre *Romen* were arrested for petty crimes, which, however, were interpreted in a political light. Georgiy Lebedev was removed as chair of the theatre but, after a few months, he was reinstated (GARF, f. P 1235, op. 123, d. 28, l. 98). However, a few months later, on April 23, 1933, a meeting of the "functionaries of the Moscow Gypsies" was held. The Minutes of this meeting were summarised by Ivan Rom-Lebedev in his position of Chairman of the Theatre's Trade Union Committee in a letter sent to the Soviet institutions – Department of Council of Nationalities at the TsIK SSSR, Council of Nationalities at the TsIK SSSR, etc. In this summarisation is written:

Rom-Lebedev said that once removed due to unsatisfactory political leadership and returned to the theatre a few months later by the political director, G. P. Lebedev did not justify his return at all, but specifically: 1. He did not carry out any political work, he was also inactive as an administrator. 2. He committed many acts [of several financial violations – authors note] that compromise him as a candidate for membership in the VKP(b) [...] (Ibid., l. 98–99).

On December 3, 1933, at the initiative of the Commission on Nationalities of the Moscow City Executive Committee, a new meeting of the "functionaries of the Moscow Gypsies" (30 people) was convened. All speakers (including Nikolay Pankov) criticised the work of the theatre (especially the staging of the play *Carmen* by Prosper Merimee for its ideologically incorrect interpretation) and denounced Georgiy Lebedev as the main culprit for the many problems of different nature in the work of the Theatre *Romen* (Ibid., l. 183–186). As a result of this meeting, it was found that the "cultural and political and educational work among the artists is very weak ... there is no live connection with the Gypsy activists and the Moscow club" and the following decisions were taken:

1. Asks the Cultural Department at the Moscow City Committee at the VKP(b) to provide the Gypsy theatre with party leadership cadres.
2. To ask the Arts Sector of the People's Commissariat for Education, in connection with the latest incident (arrest of actors for anti-Soviet performance), to cleanse the theatre of alien class and decayed elements). [...]
4. To recognise it as necessary to revise the play "Carmen" as soon as possible [...] with the involvement of the Roma community. (Ibid., l. 180–181).

In fact, the financial situation at the Theatre *Romen* was much more difficult than can be seen from the documents concerning these discussions. According to the recollections of contemporaries of the events preserved in the oral history of Roma from Moscow, the

theatre was in fact in a state of bankruptcy. Gypsy activists sent a letter on this occasion to Vyacheslav Molotov (then Chairman of the SNK), and he replied that on some issues of political importance, financial revenues were not the most important, and in this case, it was precisely such an issue, and as the end-result, the financial crisis was overcome. Although (at least for now) no documentary evidence has been found in support of this narrative, its historical reality is very likely because it fully complied with the guiding principles of Soviet national policy of the time.

It is difficult to judge to what extent Georgiy Lebedev himself was to blame for the financial crisis in Theatre *Romen*, but although he (as in the time of the VSTs) was undoubtedly responsible for a number of financial issues, he is hardly the only one to blame. So, in fact, he turned out to be the scapegoat and was sentenced to 10 years in prison. Some clarifications are needed in connection with this sentence.

It is very strange that despite the serious political accusations against Georgiy Lebedev, he was convicted not of political but of criminal offences (financial violations), and the maximum term of 10 years provided for such crimes was considered relatively light in the context of that time. The case of Georgiy Lebedev was extremely unusual for the USSR in the 1930s, when in the conditions of mass repressions, the widespread practice was exactly the opposite – criminals were supposed to receive much heavier sentences on political charges (e.g. theft of horses from a kolkhoz qualified as theft of socialist property, sabotage, counter-revolution, etc.). In the same way, the already mentioned young Gypsies, artists at the Theatre *Romen*, were also convicted of criminal offences, although they were also charged with political crimes in the theatre.

The assumption that the conviction of Georgiy Lebedev in 1933 may have even been a chance for him is not unfounded, because during the so-called Great Terror (1937–1938) he could have received a much harsher sentence. Of course, this is only a hypothesis, but it should be borne in mind that his friend Daniil Savvov was sentenced to death in 1938 (RGASPI, f. 17, op. 171, d. 415, l. 4).

Data on the last years of Georgiy Lebedev's life are rather poor. However, we have a verbal portrait of him, which was left by the writer, poet and translator Lev Ginzburg (1921–1980). This remarkable sketch allows us to imagine what Lebedev looked like and what impression he made at the end of his life:

Georgiy Pavlovich Lebedev, a small, bearded old Gypsy, also visited me. He always came a little drunk, goggle-eyed, the bulging whites of his eyes were red-streaked. As usual, he brought some papers with him, slipped me old posters, notes, then sat for a long time, smoked, and kept repeating: "Ah, Gypsies, Gypsies! This is such purity; these are such children!". In the Theatre *Romen*, Georgiy Pavlovich was something like a curator of an impromptu museum. (Гинзбург, 1985, p. 351–352).

Georgiy Lebedev died in 1969, being a collector and curator of materials in the unofficial museum at the Theatre *Romen*, that was the theatre that he, among others, had once created in the past and with which he felt deeply emotionally connected.

Georgiy Lebedev's life was very controversial. A pioneering poet and a weak leader who had finally lost almost everything. However, along with his mistakes, he had notable achievements that should not be crossed out. Of course, almost all his pioneering initiatives had certain traits of immaturity and were not, as a rule, completed, but as a first attempt, each of them is still interesting even from the viewpoint of the causes and sources of his failure.

The case of Georgiy Lebedev is important also as an illustration of the fact that the active promoters of the Roma civic emancipation were not totally united in their vision about their aims and the ways of achieving them. Each had their own point of view, which they were ready to defend in all possible ways. In this competition, Georgiy Lebedev lost, but to what extent the other Gypsy activists from the early Soviet era, with whom he had so many conflicts, could ultimately be considered winners, remains an ambiguous question.

Ilya and Trofim Gerasimovs

Elena Marushiakova and Vesselin Popov

In this section, the biographical portraits of two Roma activists will be presented – Ilya Yakovlevich Gerasimov (1898 – after 1965) and Trofim Yakovlevich Gerasimov (? – ?). Their father's and family's names are the same, and both come from the Smolensk region of the Western oblast (now Smolensk Oblast). It can be assumed, although there is no documentary evidence, that the two are brothers. Unfortunately, the available historical sources for the both Gerasimovs are relatively few, but they nevertheless allow us to outline (at least in general terms) the most significant highlights in their biographies and especially their activities in the field of Roma civic emancipation in the early USSR.

Ilya Yakovlevich Gerasimov

From the brief biographical information about Ilya Gerasimov, recorded by Nikolay Satkevich (LANB, f. Николай Саткевич, d. Илья Герасимов), it is clear that he was born in 1898 in a village whose name is not specified, in the Smolensk region. Based on some additional information, it can be assumed that this was the village of Korenevshchina, village council Mikhnevo (Marushiakova & Попов, 2021b, p. 951). Ilya Gerasimov's family had 10 children. The family was in a transitional stage, moving from a nomadic to a sedentary way of life. Such a process was widespread among Roma living throughout the region of Northwest Russia in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries (Marushiakova & Попов, 2003). Ilya Gerasimov himself recollected how during his childhood the whole family slept at night in the forest, how he roamed with his mother, who was a fortune teller, people's houses, and at the same time how for three years in a row he grazed horses in the village, where they lived (LANB, f. Николай Саткевич, d. Илья

Герасимов). In one of his short Autobiographies from 1932, he defined himself as “low literate” (GASO, f. P 2360, op. 1, sv. 181, d. 2068, p. 25), i.e. he probably studied for a few years at the local village school.

According to Ilya Gerasimov himself, in 1925 he was elected chairman of the Rural Poverty in his native village (Ibid.). But there is some ambiguity in this account. The Rural Poverty Committees were a body of Soviet power during the so-called Military Communism (1918–1919), which were replaced by local village councils, so we can only assume that Gerasimov carried the old name to a later time.

At that time, Ilya Gerasimov contacted the *All-Russian Union of the Gypsies* (VSTs) established in Moscow, from where he received a certificate as responsible for the Smolensk and Bryansk governorates (Ibid.). The preserved documents show that on October 20, 1927, a general meeting of the wandering Gypsies from Smolensk uyezd was held, which was attended by 10 families (50 people). At this meeting, as an authorised representative of VSTs for the governorate, Ilya Gerasimov explained to those present the goals, objectives and significance of VSTs, as well as what is a labour artel with collective land cultivation (the prototype of future kolkhozes). After his speech, the assembly unanimously decided to occupy the estates of the former *pomeshchiks* (Landlords) and on their former lands to be organised such Gypsy agricultural labour artels, for which they will apply to the land authorities for permission, as Comrade Gerasimov will be representing them. At the same time, it was decided to send all children from the age of 7 to school (GARF, f. P 1235, op. 123, d. 27, l. 25–26).

Apparently, Ilya Gerasimov’s petitions to the Soviet authorities were successful, because with their support in 1928 the Gypsy kolkhoz *Oktyabr* was established in the Smolensk region, Mikhnevskiy selsoviet (LANB, f. Николай Саткевич, д. Илья Герасимов; RGAЕ, f. 7446, op. 13, d. 83; f. 5675, op. 1, d. 144; Рабочий путь, 1932, p. 3; Бугай, 2015, p. 51). In the same year, two more Gypsy kolkhozes were established, *Svoboda* (Freedom) in the Kardymovskiy rayon, Yartsevskiy selsoviet, and *Krasniy Gorodok* (Red small town) in the Dukhovshchinskiy rayon, Polovitinokskiy selsoviet (Ibid.).

Ilya Gerasimov himself in 1929 was elected chairman of the kolkhoz *Oktyabr*, and at the end of the same year, he was elected chairman of the Mikhnevskiy selsoviet (LANB, f. Николай Саткевич, д. Илья Герасимов). The last post should especially be noted because this village council was not defined as one of the nationalities, which means that Ilya Gerasimov became chairman of a selsoviet, populated mainly by Russians, where only a few Gypsies lived. This marks the beginning of his “meteoric career” in the words of Brigit O’Keeffe (2008, p. 329). In all likelihood, at that time he was accepted as a member of the VKP(b) because such a career in the system of the Soviet nomenklatura without Party membership was practically impossible.

In 1931, Ilya Gerasimov was a student at the Smolensk Rabfak (i.e. Workers Faculty – an educational institution that prepared workers for higher education), and received the following description “a worker activist from national minorities (a Gypsy)”:

Comrade Gerasimov, being a student of the Smolensk Workers' Faculty, was active both on the instructions of the Gorsoviet (City Council) and the Oblispolkom (Regional Executive Committee) and on his own initiative. Comrade Gerasimov is the chairman of the Gypsy section of the Smolensk club on the National minorities [at] the House of Culture from 1929 to 1931. During his summer vacations, Comrade Gerasimov did a great job of involving Gypsies nomads in kolkhozes and, to a large extent, through his efforts, two Gypsy kolkhozes were created. (GASO, f. P 2360, op. 1, d. 14, l. 82)

In February 1932, Ilya Gerasimov wrote a statement to the Oblispolkom in Smolensk, in which as a member of the VKP(b) he reported that at the end of 1931 he was appointed instructor in the Smolensk Rayon Kolkhozsoyuz, where he was authorised to be responsible for milk supplies from the region. This job was new to him and did not satisfy him, and he stated:

I don't want to be an instructor at Rayon Kolkhozsoyuz, but I ask that I will be sent to study [...] in agriculture or industry, and if you don't accept my position, I intend to drop everything and go to the Gypsies, I will work among them to transfer them from the nomadic to a sedentary way of life because no one pays attention to this because this nation is of the Stone Age, but thanks to Soviet power there are impulses in them to move to a sedentary lifestyle, to kolkhozes. As a Gypsy, I have a love for this job. Comrade Shelehes, before sending me to study, take me to work for you at the Oblispolkom national sector. (GASO, f. P 2360, op. 1, sv. 130, d. 1482).

Ilya Gerasimov's wish was granted and in the same year he already actively worked as an instructor at the Smolensk Oblispolkom. In this new position, he inspected the Gypsy kolkhozes in the area and helped solve problems with local authorities or their management (GASO, f. P 2360, op. 1, sv. 130, d. 1479; f. P 2360, op. 1, sv. 181, d. 2067; f. P 2360, op. 1, sv. 181, d. 2068; f. P 2360, op. 1, sv. 181, d. 2069). In the same year, he was sent to study at a one-year party school in Vyazma, Western oblast, and then, in 1933, he was again sent to study, this time in Moscow, in the two-year Higher Courses of Soviet Construction at the Presidium VTsIK and TsIK SSSR (this was one of the institutions where the qualification of the management nomenclature was to be boosted). After graduation, he returned to his previous job (LANB, f. Николай Саткевич, д. Илья Герасимов). Thus, Ilya Gerasimov turned out to be the only Gypsy activist with relevant training and stable positions in the Soviet nomenklatura in the province (apart from Ivan Tokmakov in the VTsIK apparatus).

Throughout this period (the 1920s – 1930s) Ilya Gerasimov devoted much effort to the creation and development of Gypsy kolkhozes in the Western Oblast. In her book, Brigit O'Keeffe (2013, pp. 171–177), based on a rich documentary source, described in detail all his activities in this direction, and therefore it is not necessary to repeat it here. It will be enough to note that the results of his activities became visible in the mid-1930s when the Western Oblast with its centre Smolensk became the undisputed sole leader between the various regions in the USSR in terms of the Gypsy kolkhozes. This state of affairs

in the development of the Gypsy kolkhozes in the Oblast has been noted many times in the various inspections and assessments of the Gypsy kolkhozes by the central Soviet institutions, e.g. in the Memorandum on the results of the inspection of the implementation of the Resolution of the Presidium of the VTsIK *On the State of Work in Servicing Toiling Gypsies*, dated 25 February 1935, signed by the Deputy Head of Department of Nationalities at the VTsIK Presidium Simon Takoiev (1876–1938), which explicitly notes that “the work on the sedentarisation of the Gypsies in the Western region is well organised”, in which at that time there were 6 Gypsy kolkhozes (GARF, f. P 1235, op. 130, d. 5, l. 47). Similar conclusions were reached in another Report of 1936, which explicitly states that “of all oblasts, krais and republics in the employment of Gypsies, the Western Oblast and the North Caucasian Kray are the most successful” (Ibid, pp. 232).

More than once in the historical testimonies the special place of the kolkhoz *Oktyabr* (one of the founders of which is Ilya Gerasimov) was emphasised as the best among the Gypsy kolkhozes in the region (GARF, f. P 1235, op. 123, d. 27; f. P 1235, op. 130, d. 5; f. P 3316, op. 28, d. 794; RGAE, f. 7446, op. 13, d. 83). The collective farm not only stands out among other Gypsy kolkhozes, but even concluded contracts for socialist competitions with other, non-Gypsy kolkhozes and wins them, for which it has been awarded – e.g. in 1932 with a radio loudspeaker and a sum of money of 500 rubles, and in 1933 with potato harvester and a sum of money 350 rubles (GASO, f. P 2360, op. 1, sv. 130, d. 1478; GARF, f. P 3316, op. 64, d. 1637, l. 3). At the same time, as Ilya Gerasimov himself noted in an article in the local press:

The situation is much worse with the work of other Gypsy kolkhozes in Yartsevskiy, Dukhovshchinskiy and Pustoshkinskiy districts. These kolkhozes cannot cope with economic and political campaigns. They do not have proper guidance and assistance from rayon organisations and selsoviets. (Западная область, 1932, p. 3).

Kolkhoz *Oktyabr*'s leading position vis-à-vis other Gypsy kolkhozes in the area was maintained over the years, at least until the late 1930s (Колхозник Стахановец, 1937, p. 3).

Directly related to the development of the kolkhoz *Oktyabr* was the unsuccessful attempt to establish a Gypsy selsoviet in the village of Mikhnevo, on whose territory the kolkhoz was located. In the materials of the Department for National Minorities at the Smolensk Oblispolkom from 1934, it was planned creation of two national selsoviets – Latvian and Gypsy (GASO, f. P 2360, op. 2, sv. 50, d. 432, p. 25). Undoubtedly, this was an initiative of Ilya Gerasimov, who worked in this Department, and the kolkhoz *Oktyabr* was favoured by him. Some real steps had been taken to implement this decision. In a letter from the same Department dated October 16, 1934, to ON VTsIK, it was stated that “we have outlined the organisation of a Gypsy selsoviet on the territory of the Smolensk rayon of the Western Oblast”, and asked to be sent for help in this direction Ivan Tokmakov, the instructor from ON VTsIK (Мозгунова, 1994, No. 213). On November 9, 1934, a special meeting was convened on this issue, which was attended by Ivan Tokmakov. At the

meeting it was decided to start preparatory work – topographic measurement of the village land, then to hand over 500 hectares of land to kolkhoz *Oktyabr*, on which the future Gypsy selsoviet will have to be built (Ibid., pp. 108–110). However, there is no more data for any development in this direction, in all probability, the project for a Gypsy selsoviet was no longer discussed, i.e. it was not rejected, but set aside without further work. This is understandable given the reluctance of individual village councils to set aside land for Gypsy kolkhozes, which was a major problem in the Western Oblast.

The overall development of the Gypsy kolkhozes in the Western Oblast was not without problems, on the contrary. Some of these kolkhozes turned out to be unstable and quickly ceased to exist, so in 1932 there were 9 Gypsy kolkhozes in the area, in 1933 these kolkhozes were 7, in 1935 they were 6 (according to other sources 5), and in 1936 only 4 kolkhozes remained (GARF, f. P 1235, op. 123, d. 27; f. P 1235, op. 123, d. 28; f. P 1235, op. 130, d. 5; f. P 3316, op. 28, d. 793; f. P 3316, op. 28, d. 794). However, these data should not be interpreted as a decline in the development of the kolkhoz movement among Gypsies in the area but, on the contrary, as its strengthening. The data show that the number of families in stable Gypsy kolkhozes was rapidly increasing, as was their economic status (Ibid.), and the campaign-created kolkhozes were disappearing.

Another problem that Gypsy kolkhozes in the area often faced was the internal struggles between the Gypsies themselves in their leadership. These struggles, according to Stalin's famous thesis of intensifying the class struggle in strengthening the socialist state, are described in documents in the spirit of the time as a class struggle against the "kulaks" who entered the leadership of the Gypsy kolkhozes. We have already mentioned above the article in the journal *Nevo drom* about the "kulaks" from the Tumashevich family in the management of the kolkhoz *Svoboda* (Нэво дром, 1930г, pp. 9–10); along with this in many documents from various inspections, "kulaks" and "wreckers" Fedor Zhuchkov, Yakov Zhuchkov, Alexey Kambovich (or Kombovich), Ivan Vasilkov and others have been exposed in various types of misuse of kolkhoz's funds and resources (RGAE, f. 7446, op. 13, d. 83; GASO, f. P 2360, op. 1, sv. 130, d. 1478; f. P 2360, op. 1, sv. 181, d. 2067; f. P 2360, op. 1, sv. 181, d. 2069). As a result of all these purges of the "class enemies", in the leadership of the Gypsy kolkhozes in the Western Oblast more and more people with the family name Gerasimov are present (Ibid.), probably representatives of a large clan to which Ilya Gerasimov himself belonged.

The leading position of the Western Oblast in the field of Roma civic emancipation found its expression not only in the sphere of the Gypsy kolkhozes but also in other fields, e.g. in the establishment of Gypsy national schools. Primary schools were open in the kolkhozes *Oktyabr* and *Svoboda*; in the village of Serebryanka, Smolensk region, a Children home (boarding school) was established with education up to 7th grade, headed by Nikolay Mikholazhin (GARF, f. P 1235, op. 127, d. 8; f. P 1235, op. 130, d. 5; GASO, f. P 2360, op. 1, sv. 181, d. 2068; f. P 2360, op. 1, s. 181, d. 2069).

At the same time, hard work was being done to train qualified personnel, and in many cases, Gypsies enjoyed special preferences, e.g. when in 1930 OblONO referred for

enrollment to Smolensk Rabfak the graduate of Gypsy Children home Murachkovskiy, his documents were not accepted because he was not 18 years old. On this occasion, OblONO wrote a letter stating that the Gypsies were “the only culturally backward nationality in the Western oblast”, and on this basis insisted that an exception to the general rules be made in this case (GASO, f. P 2350, op. 2, d. 46, l. 119). Eventually, thanks to this intervention, 4 places for Gypsies were reserved in the Smolensk Rabfak, and in the Pedagogical College in the town of Vyazma 2 places (*Ibid.*, l. 121). In 1931, the Gypsy branch of the Pedagogical School was opened in Dorogobuzh with two sections – training of educators and teachers at Gypsy schools – where 28 people studied (Безлюдско, 1932c, p. 54; see also GARF, f. P 1235, op. 123, d. 27; GASO, f. P 2360, op. 1, sv. 181, d. 2068). In 1934 a Gypsy group was established at the Smolensk Medical Rabfak with 32 students, 20 men and 12 women; respectively 12 come from the kolkhozes, 12 from the tabors, 8 were alumni of the Children home (GARF, f. P 1235, op. 123, d. 28; f. P 1235, op. 127, d. 8). Ilya Gerasimov himself was actively involved in all these processes, and his contribution to their success is undoubted.

The following statistics are very indicative of the level of educated (or at least literate) Roma in the Western Oblast. In 1932, at the opening of the Gypsy Department at the Pedagogical College of the Krasno Presnenskiy District named after Timiryazev, which in 1935–1936 transformed into an independent Gypsy Pedagogical College, 25 students (13 men and 12 women) were enrolled, of whom 15 (*sic!*) were from the Western region, 4 from Moscow, 1 from the Moscow oblast, 1 from the Tula oblast, 1 from the Stalingrad oblast, 1 from the Bashkir ASSR, and 2 from the Ukrainian SSR (GARF, f. P 1235, op. 127, d. 8). The leading position of the Western oblast (in comparison with other regions of the USSR) in this list is clearly visible and beyond any doubt.

The explanation for the special position of the Western Oblast in the field of Roma civic emancipation can be sought in different ways. On the one hand, as has already been said, the voluntary settlement of Gypsy nomads in this region dates back to the end of the 19th century, and this way of life presupposed the achievement of a higher degree of social integration and thus receiving at least minimal education for most of their children. On the other hand, the affirmative national policy of the Soviet state here, among other things, the inclusion of Gypsy activists in the soviet administrative apparatus (Ilya Gerasimov was not the only case), even at a relatively low level, proved to be a particularly important factor. All this, of course, in no way diminishes the personal merits of Ilya Gerasimov for the successful course of the processes, on the contrary, it allows highlighting his role and significance for the rapid course of the processes in this field. Especially in the discourse of Roma civic emancipation in the early USSR, we are particularly interested in Ilya Gerasimov’s vision of the need to create a national Gypsy territorial-administrative unit (in the future Gypsy Autonomous Soviet Republic), expressed in his letters to various Soviet institutions.

The epistolary legacy of the early-Soviet Gypsy activists includes numerous letters addressed to the Soviet party and state institutions. Many of these letters (as well as many

of the event speeches conducted by Soviet institutions) were on specific topics; they highlighted successes and report on existing problems (this is the established pattern of all such presentations). The specific problems were mainly related to land management, Gypsy kolkhozes, artels, housing problems, etc.

Some of these letters, e.g. that of Nikolay Bizev (Biz-Labza), is a rather specific curiosity. In this letter, the author, a local Gypsy activist from Ukraine with a complicated fate (Marushiakova & Popov, 2021b, p. 732), sent to the Head of the Main Directorate of the Workers and Peasants Red Army at the People's Commissariat for Military and Naval Affairs, proposed the creation of a Gypsy Cavalry Division (sic!) in the Red Army (Ibid., pp. 481–482). 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; 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 letter, 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 *chelobytnaya* (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 was 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 were 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 Children's home with school in Serebryanka, Smolensk rayon (GARF, f. P 3316, op. 28, d. 793, l. 132–133; Marushiakova & Popov, 2021b, pp. 858–859). In all other letters were placed existing problems of Gypsies and on their basis, specific requests and recommendations were made. Most of these letters to the 'Supreme Leader' were 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 – which were leading also in Ilya Gerasimov's letters to the Soviet institutions.

As already mentioned above, the idea to sedentarise a large number of Gypsy nomads in a certain territory in Southern Russia was first proposed in 1926 by the leadership of the VSTs (in particular by Andrey Taranov and Ivan Rom-Lebedev), but it did not meet with support from the Soviet authorities and quickly faded away. However, this idea did not disappear among Gypsy activists, and in the 1930s it gained new life. A strong impetus in this direction was given by the Decree of VTsIK of April 1, 1932, On the State of Work for Servicing the Toiler Gypsies, in which as Point 1 it was written that the Presidium of VTsIK would propose to Narkomzem to “develop and submit to SNK RSFSR a specific land allocation plan for the compact settlement of toiling Gypsies” (GARF, f. P 1235, op. 45, d. 41, l. 24-2506). In his letters to the top Soviet institutions (more precisely to their leaders) Ilya Gerasimov gave new life to the old idea, which originated among the Gypsy activists, and unlike them, he sees the place of such a Gypsy national territorial-administrative unit in his native Western Oblast and actively lobbied in this direction.

For the first time, Ilya Gerasimov developed this proposal in his letter to Mikhail Kalinin, Chairman of the TsIK USSR, in a letter dated November 9, 1934 (at that time he was studying at the VKSS in Moscow). In that letter, he relied on his experience as an instructor in the Oblispolkom of the Western Oblast, based on which he concluded, that “the regional executive committees, selsoviets and the existing Gypsy kolkhozes in the localities are not in a position to satisfy the requirements of the Gypsies who are traveling and working various seasonal work, and who want to move to a sedentary way of life”. From here comes the conclusion:

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. [...]

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 rayon, as well as issuing a Gypsy language newspaper. (GARF, f. P 1235, op. 123, d. 28, l. 368–369; Marushiakova & Popov, 2021b, pp. 842–845).

Already in this first letter, Ilya Gerasimov formulated the main points of reference and arguments for his proposal to create a Gypsy national rayon, to which he constantly adhered. The idea of the kolkhoz *Oktyabr* being the centre of the future rayon is not explicitly expressed, but it follows logically from the text, which reveals in detail the successes achieved by this Gypsy kolkhoz. In this key was the speech of Ilya Gerasimov at 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*, which took place on January 4 and 5, 1936 in Moscow. In his speech at this meeting, he was relatively restrained and spoke mainly about the problems of Gypsy nomads in the Western Oblast, who want to settle, but there are no suitable conditions, as well as about the

successes achieved by Gypsy kolkhozes in the area. However, at the end of his speech, he carefully formulated his most important message in the following proposal:

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. (GARF, f. P 3316, op. 28, d. 794, l. 90).

At the same time, however, Ilya Gerasimov took an unexpected move, for which it is not clear whether (and if so, to what extent) it was consulted with the higher Soviet institutions (the meeting was organised by the Council of Nationalities at the VTsIK and chaired by its Secretary, Alexander Khatskevich). Gerasimov prepared and sent an address entitled “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”, which is dated the same day, January 4, 1936. The address was on behalf of 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 and was signed by Ilya Gerasimov himself, Nikolay P. Mikholazhin (Director of Primary and Semi-Secondary School and Children home) and Roman I. Gorbunov (Chairman of the Kolkhoz *Oktyabr*) (GARF, f. P 3316, op. 28, d. 793, l. 13-1306). This letter repeated the main messages from the previous letter and the speech of Ilya Gerasimov at the Meeting, emphasising the problems and achievements of the kolkhoz movement among the Gypsies in the Western Oblast, and stated:

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 [Soviet] Union in the construction of socialism and are building their happy, joyful and prosperous life in a new way. [...]

We are asking on behalf of the Gypsies to allocate a territory, at least in the form of 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. (Ibid.; Marushiakova & Popov, 2021b, pp. 859–861).

It is not clear whether this Address reached Stalin himself at all (in any case, his answer is unknown). However, Ilya Gerasimov continued his campaign, and on October 12, 1936, he sent a new letter to Stalin, addressing him as head of the Constitutional Commission, which was to draft the new Constitution of the USSR (adopted on December 5, 1936). In this letter, signed by Gerasimov in his capacity as the instructor in Oblispolkom of the Western oblast, he referred to the numerous discussions he held on the draft of the new Constitution with Gypsy kolkhos workers and nomads:

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. (GARF, f. P 1235, op. 123, d. 27, l. 141–14106.; Marushiakova & Popov, 2021b, pp. 861–863).

An abridged version of this letter was also published in the official *Izvestiya TsIK SSSR* under the heading 'Proposals', in which it was also introduced in the framework of the so-called nationwide discussion of the draft of the new Constitution of the USSR, entitled *About the Gypsy National Rayon* (*Известия*, 1936, p. 3; Marushiakova & Popov, 2021b, pp. 909–910). Along with his epistolary activity, Ilya Gerasimov tried to lobby in the Soviet institutions for the determination of the Western Oblast as a region within which the future Gypsy national rayon should be created. In an undated Report to the SN TsIK of the USSR from 1936 he gave many detailed data on the state of the Gypsy kolkhozes in the area, and elaborated his concept in more detail:

I believe that now is the time to think about the choice of territory for compact settlement by Gypsy toiling people who are settling down. Here it will be possible to create national Gypsy soviets as well. For this work, it is necessary to oblige Komzets, with the help of the Gypsy community, to conduct an explanatory campaign on the settling of nomadic Gypsies. Provide the future national rayon with appropriate personnel. Indeed, among us – Gypsies, there are many communists, Komsomol members, and besides this, there are many Gypsy students in secondary and higher educational institutions. All these cadres may well provide leadership in the allotted territory. (GARF, f. P 3316, op. 28, d. 794, l. 123).

Further in the text, Gerasimov gives numerical data on the availability of trained management staff among the Gypsy population of the Western oblast, which is impressive:

All Gypsies working in kolkhozes and their children are enrolled in school; in addition, 60 people study in secondary and higher educational institutions (medical and pedagogical rabfaks, Communist universities and others). About 80 Gypsies work in the Soviet, cooperative, and economic apparatuses, of whom 30 are members and candidates of the VKP(b), and 20 are members of the Komsomol. (*Ibid.*).

Special mention should be made of the Committee on the Land Allocation for the toiling Jews under the Presidium of the TsIK SSSR (Komzet). As a result of the active work of this Soviet institution in 1934 in the Far East, was established the Autonomous Jewish National Oblast (now the Jewish Autonomous Oblast) with the capital Birobidzhan. In

this way, a precedent arose – the creation of a national territorial-administrative unit of a previously scattered diasporic nationality on a new, until then almost uninhabited territory. It is this precedent that Ilya Gerasimov (and other Gypsy activists) wanted to use for the successful realisation of the idea of a Gypsy national rayon.

The Council of Nationalities at the TsIK SSSR used Ilya Gerasimov's letters to the higher Soviet institutions as a justification for promoting the idea of a Gypsy national territorial-administrative unit, e.g. a letter to the NKVD Resettlement Department dated October 19, 1936, signed by Alexander Khatskevich, proposed "to take into account the desire of many toiling Gypsies and outline some area where a more or less compact mass of Gypsies could be settled in the next 2–3 years" (GARF, f. P 3316, op. 28, d. 794; RGAE, f. 5675, op. 1, d. 145). However, when it comes to the specific preparatory work for the creation of such a territorial-administrative unit (for more details, see below), things were very different. The Western Oblast stayed away from this process, and the echelons of timber from the GULAG for the construction of farm outbuildings and houses in the Gypsy kolkhozes did not reach them. The reasons for dropping out of the Western Oblast from the plans of the Soviet institutions involved in these preparatory activities (and in the first place the NKVD) were probably based on the geographical location of the district. At that time, the Western region was in fact a border region, and Soviet national policy preferred not to create unnecessary national formations on the border with the hostile West. Exceptions were made only in cases where these entities (Karelian ASSR, Moldovan ASSR) can be used as a kind of Piedmont for foreign territories (Martin, 2001, pp. 8–9).

The turn in the national policy of the USSR in the second half of the 1930s did not affect Ilya Gerasimov's official career and he remained working as an instructor in the Oblispolkom of the Western Oblast. During the Second World War, he was evacuated due to his official position, but after the end of the occupation of the region by the German army, in 1944 he was transferred to work in Bryansk (the neighbouring regional centre) in the Gorispolkom for the economic and household services for the evacuated population (i.e. he was promoted in the nomenklatura hierarchy). In 1961, Ilya Gerasimov retired receiving a personal republican pension (LANB, f. Николай Саткевич, д. Илья Герасимов), i.e. this means the second, higher type of personal pension in comparison with Andrey Taranov. Despite his retirement, Gerasimov still worked on a freelanced contract as head of the organisational department of the Soviet district of the city of Bryansk (i.e. in a lower administrative position).

The exact year of Ilya Gerasimov's death is unknown. The latest information about him dates back to 1965, when he met with Nikolay Satkevich and at his farewell wished him "whatever happened" not to stop his work on establishing a Gypsy school and Gypsy music and dance amateur ensemble (*Ibid.*), i.e. despite all the historical vicissitudes, Ilya Gerasimov remained faithful to the ideals of his youth until the end of his life.

Trofim Gerasimov

The information available about the life of Trofim Gerasimov is very limited. Neither the year nor the place of his birth is clear, in all probability it was Smolensk uyezd, and nothing is known about the early years of his life either. In his Memorandum to Stalin in 1935 (see below), he wrote about it in general terms, using the mass phraseology that prevailed at the time:

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 ... (GARF, f. P 3316, op. 64, d. 1637, l. 2).

The first historical document in which the name of Trofim Gerasimov appears is from 1926. It was a Letter sent to the Gypsy Union (VSTs) at the TsIK USSR (as written on the letter, although VSTs was not attached to TsIK, but was an independent organisation). The letter was written "On behalf of the 52 souls of the poorest people of the toiling peasantry of Gypsy nationalities, who have been cultivating the land with their own labour for many decades", from the now non-existent village of Gribany (or Gribanovo – in the documents it is written in both ways), Dosugovskoy volost, Smolenskiy uyezd (GARF, f. P 3316, op. 120, d. 27, l. 28). It states:

From the very beginning of 1923 [...] we have been unsuccessfully fussing before our volost, uyezd and provincial land institutions about the land management of our transition to khutors. [...] Our situation is completely hopeless [...] we are completely deprived of the opportunity to conduct [...] peasant households. [...] Given all of the above, on behalf of the population of the Gypsy nationality in our village, we ask for your immediate and energetic intervention [...] and our land management on the khutor. [...] For submitting this application and to apply, we trust the energetic worker among the provincial Gypsy population, a member of the VKP(b), Party card No. 0386456, Comrade Trofim Yakovlevich Gerasimov. We undersigned this, the Gribanovsk Gypsy population, namely, 8 householders in the village of Gribany [...]. July 14, 1926. (Ibid., l. 27–28).

As can be seen from this letter, the Gypsies who signed it were not nomads, but lived sedentarily and earned a living from hired agricultural labour. As said already, 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 for cultivation was a completely logical consequence. It should be noted that the letter is dated July 14, 1926, while the Decree *On Measures to Facilitate the Transition of Nomadic Gypsies to the Working Sedentary Lifestyle* of TsIK SSSR and SNK SSSR was issued on October 1, 1926, i.e. the desire to create their own, Gypsy cooperative agricultural associations already existed due to the general historical context, and was not generated by the policy of the Soviet state towards the Gypsies. Among the signatories of this letter is the name of Yakov Gerasimov. Whether this was Trofim Gerasimov's father or not remains unclear, but in any case, there is reason to believe that Gribany (Gribanovo) was his home village.

It is also noteworthy that at that time Trofim Gerasimov was already a member of the VKP(b). He stated in his Memorandum to Stalin that he had been a member of the VKP(b) since 1927 (GARF, f. P 3316, op. 64, d. 1637, l. 2), but in this case, it was in all probability a question of a typing mistake. In any case, membership in the Party presupposes at least a few years of membership in the Komsomol, as well as active socially engaged activity. Therefore, it is natural that in pursuance of the policy of creating a new Soviet ruling elite of “correct” class origin, soon after the delivery of the letter from the Gypsies from the village of Gribany, and after the completion of Smolensk Rabfak, Trofim Gerasimov was sent to study in Moscow (GARF, f. P 3316, op. 120, d. 27, l. 3).

It is not possible to say with complete certainty where exactly Trofim Gerasimov was sent to study, nor which university he graduated from. In his letters to various Soviet institutions, written in December 1927, he indicated as his address the dormitory of the Mendeleev Institute (GARF, f. P 393, op. 43 A, d. 1763, l. 3; f. P 1235, op. 120, d. 27, l. 101). This should mean that at that time Trofim Gerasimov was a student at the Moscow Mendeleev Institute of Chemical Technology (now D. Mendeleev University of Chemical Technology of Russia), but there is a contradiction with other information. In his Memorandum to Stalin, describing his career, he wrote that he had previously worked at the Car Factory named after Stalin (now Likhachov Plant) in Moscow, from where in 1935 he was sent to work at the Train Carriage Factory Named after Newspaper ‘Pravda’ at the station Zaporozhye-Kamenskoye, Dneprodzerzhinsk (now Kamenskoe), Dnipropetrovsk (now Dnipro) Oblast in Ukraine, where he worked as an engineer in the Blacksmith’s workshop (GARF, f. P 3316, op. 64, d. 1637, l. 2–14). Before that, Trofim Gerasimov wrote a textbook entitled *Blacksmithery in Kolkhozes and Sovkhozes*, published in Romani language (Герасимово, 1933), which also shows exactly what his professional speciality was, so it can be assumed that he graduated from Moscow Higher Technical School, renamed in 1930 to the Moscow Mechanical Engineering School (now the prestigious Bauman Moscow State Technical University). The fact that he lived in a student dormitory at another university can be explained in two ways – either he first studied at one university and then transferred to another, or (which is more likely) that the dormitory was used by students from both universities. In any case, Trofim Gerasimov is in all probability the first Gypsy in the USSR to receive a “real” university education (the Communist University of the Toilers of the East, which Andrey Taranov previously graduated from, is rather a specialized higher party school than a “regular” university).

During his studies in Moscow, Trofim Gerasimov continued to be active in the field of Gypsy activism. On December 30, 1927, he sent a long Report to the NKVD (GARF, f. P 1235, op. 120, d. 27), in which he wrote that he had already sent similar letters to ON VTsIK (GARF, f. P 393, op. 43 A, d. 1763), as well as to TsK VKP(b) and MK VKP(b) (the latter two are not found in the archives yet). In these Reports, he recounts his first impressions of the “great initiators in their own words and the workers in leadership of the Gypsy Union” Ivan [Rom-] Lebedev, Andrey Taranov, Sergey Polyakov and Georgiy Lebedev, and

complains, “despite all my attempts, I could not find any work in the above union.” Along with this, he reports that:

I have big disputes with the board of the Gypsy Union, for which I was recognised as a petty proprietor and for anarchist actions against the intended system; I argued that their system was not suitable for the [illegible] Gypsy masses. (GARF, f. P 393, op. 43 A, d. 1763).

The following is an extensive presentation of the existing irregularities in the work of VSTs, as well as proposals for its expansion in certain priorities, and more effective coordination with local authorities. The recommendation he made to the Soviet institutions deserves special attention:

The [Gypsy] Union should not be closed, but reorganised, clearing it of weeds. To liquidate workshops and artels, which exist at VSTs, and to engage exclusively in [...] organisational work. (GARF, f. P 393, op. 43 A, d. 1763; f. P 1235, op. 120, d. 27).

In fact, in this way, Trofim Gerasimov repeated the basic demands that the Soviet government directed to the Union for more than one year, and which the leadership of the VSTs strived in every way not to fulfil in practice (and which ultimately turns out to be the most important reason, as well as the specific purpose for its liquidation).

It is not clear when exactly Trofim Gerasimov completed his higher education, but the available historical evidence shows that in the early 1930s he was hesitant about which path to take in his life. In March 1932, he was at the disposal of Oblispolkom in Smolensk and participated in a commission that investigated the economic conditions of the Gypsy kolkhoz *Svoboda* in Kardimovsky selsoviet Yartsevskiy rayon and the readiness for the spring sowing campaign, where at a meeting of kolkhoz workers he made a presentation on the importance of the Paris Commune (GASO, f. P 2360, op. 1, sv. 181, d. 2067). According to the results of the kolkhoz *Svoboda* investigation, the kolkhoz was characterised as economically weak, and among the collective farmers there were “15% of idlers who do not want to work at all, visit bazaars, engage in fortune-telling, healings, sometimes pocket unloading (women [...]); they consider themselves to be old collective farmers, they occupy good living premisses in the centre [of the village]” (Мозгунова, 1994, No. 165). The investigation ended with a stormy Kolkhoz General Assembly, at which numerous accusations were made against the kolkhoz leadership, after which the Assembly decided that the chairman of the kolkhoz, Comrade Yakov Zhuchkov, “could not lead the kolkhoz and the state would not entrust such a leader”; the old chairman to be handed over to the judicial authorities for the embezzlement of kolkhoz money of 453 rubles 46 kopecks received from the sale of the kolkhoz bull, which was not reported in the treasury of kolkhoz. Comrade Mudrachenkov was unanimously elected the new chairman of the kolkhoz, and Comrade S. M. Murachkovskaya, seconded for the sowing campaign by the head organisation *Tsygkhiprom* (Gypsy Chemical Industry)

in Moscow, was unanimously elected and attached to the kolkhoz as a new secretary (GASO, f. P 2360, op. 1, sv. 181, d. 2067, l. 10–11; f. P 2360, op. 1, sv. 181, d. 2069, l. 78).

Of particular interest is the introductory speech of Trofim Gerasimov, with which he opened this General Assembly, and in which he presented his authorised and expanded version of the dominant historical narrative of the Gypsies in the early USSR:

Before proceeding directly to the statement of the formulations of the national Gypsy kolkhozes, I would like to say, although indirectly, who the Gypsies are and where the latter came from. Few of us know the history of the origin of our nation. Only historical archives prove that the Gypsies originated from the Indian caste. With the fall of the Mediterranean basin, the Gypsy kingdom fell, which existed at that time as a separate kingdom, as a separate cultural unit. I will not dwell much on historical notices, because I am limited to 20 minutes, and therefore I will resort to separate stages of Gypsy history. In Europe, Gypsies were considered heretics and sorcerers, cutting, beating and burning often at the stake by families and clans and even tribes. Tsarist Russia did not differ in the least from the cruelty of the oppressed nationalities. They, like all capitalist countries, quarrelled among small nationalities to provide life for the nobility and the bourgeoisie. And so the white bones of vampires and spiders grew fat and inactive on the bones of the workers. The Gypsies, as such, were not considered human. In the opinion of the majority of the “civilised” caste, the Gypsies were not people, but animals, resembling the likeness of people. In their opinion, these are people capable only of cheering a fat bourgeois in restaurants, pubs with a guitar in their hands. Great October broke the age-old chains of slavery, oppression and violence. Only in October did all nationalities feel an equal life, with great benefits for the latter. (GASO, f. P 2360, op. 1, sv. 181, d. 2067, l. 10).

Trofim Gerasimov’s stay in Smolensk turned out to be short. In all likelihood, some problems have arisen in his relations with his superiors. In his Memorandum to Stalin, he devoted much space to the successes and achievements of the Western Oblast in pursuing state policy towards the Gypsies, but at the same time, he made some critical remarks in this regard, such as insufficient care for Gypsy nomads who wished to transfer to a sedentary way of life, as well as the failure of local authorities to provide additional land for the expansion of existing Gypsy kolkhozes (GARF, f. P 3316, op. 64, d. 1637, l. 4–5). Eventually, in May 1933, the National Department of Oblispolkom in Smolensk, where he worked as an instructor, decided to grant the request of the Regional Agricultural Administration and to reassign Trofim Gerasimov to work as an instructor with them (GASO, f. P 2360, op. 1, sv. 130, d. 1482, l. 108–111). This change of job was de facto a downgrading in his career. Dissatisfied with this, he left Smolensk and went to work in Moscow.

Trofim Gerasimov started working as an inspector in the Moscow Regional Agricultural Department. Taking up his new post, he actively intervened in the case of the mass deportation of “foreign Gypsies” from the vicinity of Moscow in the period from June 28 to July 9, 1933, for which we have to say a few more words.

The term ‘foreign Gypsies’ was widely used in the 1920s and the first half of the 1930s. It summarised the Roma, subjects of the Austro-Hungarian Empire, Romania, Serbia, Greece, etc., who entered the borders of the Russian Empire for the most part in the

last decades of the nineteenth and especially in the early twentieth century (before the First World War). They led a semi-nomadic way of life, but in modernised forms – they travelled (often using rail transport) to the larger cities of the empire, looking for orders to make or repair copper vessels, or other temporary work. They used their documents of foreign nationals, which were to be certified once a year to be able to use several tax preferences (practically they did not pay any taxes for their work). For the most part, these Roma were *Kelderari* from various family-related communities, and there were also *Lovari*.

After the October Revolution, these so-called foreign Gypsies remained living in the USSR without changing their status of foreign nationals (the ‘foreigners’ category was even included in the 1926 All-Union census). Moreover, in 1917 the system of internal passports was abolished and in practice in the 1920s, personal documents of various kinds were used. The situation changed radically with the adoption of the Resolution of the TsIK and SNK of the USSR of December 27, 1932, on the Establishment of a Unified Passport System for the USSR and the Mandatory Registration of Passports. Passports were issued only to limited categories (residents of working-class settlements, new buildings, state farms, etc.), and large numbers of Gypsies (who were without a residence permit and led a nomadic lifestyle) were deprived of the opportunity to obtain identity documents and remain of indeterminate civil status.

The situation was further complicated by the beginning of mass collectivisation and the shortage of food, which led to the introduction of bread cards in 1929 and the All-Union card system in 1931, which virtually excluded large sections of the population (including the predominant part of the Gypsies) outside the state food supply system. Along with this, in 1932 the division into “open” and “closed” cities was introduced, and the second category includes Moscow, Leningrad, Minsk, Kiev, Odesa, Kharkov, Rostov-on-Don, Vladivostok, etc., which were privileged in terms of food supply.

In this general historical context, it became clear why in the summer of 1933 dozens of Gypsy tabors were concentrated in the vicinity of Moscow in search of food in the big city. Their deportation to Siberia has been repeatedly described in the academic literature, and its detailed description can be found in the Soviet archives (GARF, f. P 9479, op. 1, d. 19, l. 7), and has also been published repeatedly. This deportation was not a special anti-Gypsy action of the Soviet state, but part of the general action of the authorities to cleanse the capital of the so-called “declassified elements” through the system at the OGPU under the Resolution of the SNK of the USSR *On the Organisation of Labour Settlements* of the OGPU of April 20, 1933 (ГАРФ, ф. Р 5446, оп. 57, д. 24, л. 2–12). However, the enlisting of the deported Gypsies to this category was not based on nationality’s reasons, but on other criteria, in particular the presence of a residence permit and personal identity documents. According to these criteria, it turned out that “foreign Gypsies” (mainly *Kelderari*), who had lived in Moscow for a long time, where they established their own artels, were not subject to deportation, but the Gypsies who were nomadic at that time and who were not “foreign nationals” were determined for deportation. According

to the memories preserved in the oral history of the Gypsies, these were Gypsies from different groups – *Kishiniovtsi, Servi, Vlaxi, Krimi*, etc. (Бессонов, 2002a).

For what reasons in the OGPU documents they were defined as “foreign Gypsies” is not clear. 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).

According to the OGPU documentation in the West Siberian Kray (GARF, f. P 3, op. 1, d. 540 A, l. 51–53), from the spring of 1933 to August 7 of the same year, a total of 119,426 people were deported as “*trudposelentsy*” (i.e. Labour settlers – this was the officially used term, which has changed many times over the years). The predominant part of all these deportees were the victims of the mass collectivisation of agriculture (“kulaks”), except for those who were separated as “recidivists and declassed elements” (20,940 people in total) and Gypsies (5,222 people in total, i.e. 248 people – less of those deported from Moscow, apparently, some of them escaped on the way – if the missing have died, this must be confirmed by the relevant documents). In particular, it should be emphasised that the OGPU documentation clearly distinguishes between two separate categories of the *trudposelentsy* – the ‘recidivists and declassified elements’ and ‘Gypsies’ – and they do not overlap, i.e. Gypsies were not treated as ‘recidivists and declassified elements’. This clarification is important because in *The Black Book of Communism* these two categories are not only not clearly separated from each other, and the paragraph beginning with the deportation of the Gypsies from Moscow and ends with the so-called Nazino tragedy (Courtois et al., 1999; for Nazino tragedy see in more detail also Werth, 2007), which leaves the door open for some wrong interpretations.

Even before the beginning of the mass deportations, as well as during their course, the local authorities repeatedly signalled to the central authorities in Moscow that they were not well enough provided (materially, financially, and as human resources) for the reception, resettlement and arrangement of such a large number of settlers. However, the emergency measures taken proved to be insufficient, resulting in many problems of the most varied nature, including the well-known case, publicly defined as the ‘Nazinskaya tragedy’, in which more than 6,000 ‘recidivists and declassified elements’ were settled without any prior preparation on an uninhabited island on the Ob River, where more than a third of them die of starvation and cold within a few months (Красильников, 2002). In this general historical context, the fate of the deported Gypsies also became clear.

The case of the deportation of the Gypsies from Moscow is also interesting from the point of view of the possibility of cross-checking and verifying the data from the archival sources and the oral history, which (at least in this case) does not contradict but also complement each other. In this way, as with the involvement of other historical sources,

a relatively comprehensive, albeit quite contradictory, picture of this deportation can be obtained.

The echelons with the deported Gypsies from Moscow were transported by rail line to the city of Tomsk (the trip lasted between two and three weeks), and from there on local roads and by barge, were moved to their designated settlement. This settlement, which no longer exists today, was located in the Pyshkino-Troitskiy (today Pervomaiskiy) rayon of today's Tomsk oblast, located on the banks of the river Chichka-Yul (in the memories of the Gypsies it is remembered as Chikayul), somewhere around its confluence in the river Chulym, and it was called Yevstigneevka (За советскую науку, 1991, p. 3; Неволин, 2014). Living conditions were very difficult. The local authorities failed to prepare housing for the new settlers, and they lived in dugouts (several barracks were subsequently built). The Gypsies did not show much enthusiasm for their settlement, in clearing the taiga they rather imitated labour activity, and the seeds they were given for sowing were eaten, roasted on the fire, and soon they scattered (despite the bans) in the surrounding villages to beg, tell fortune, etc. (Ibid). The regime imposed by the authorities was not very strict (or more likely for various reasons they closed their eyes to breaches of rules), and in the words of Victor Zemskov:

As early as the autumn of 1933, this contingent of labour settlers virtually ceased to exist, as almost all Gypsies fled. The documents do not contain any instructions on the measures taken to return them to the places of deportation. (Земсков, 2014).

Sneaking through the taiga and leaving the deads on the road (for which memories are preserved in oral history to this day), the fugitives reached the European parts of the USSR. According to other historical evidence, after the mass exodus of Gypsies in the autumn of 1933, the Gypsy settlement of Yevstigneevka continued to exist for at least a few more years, with about 400 people living there, and living conditions continued to be extremely difficult and the escapes continued (За советскую науку, 1991, p. 3; Неволин, 2014). It is unknown when exactly this settlement ceased to exist, but in all probability, it was finally abandoned before the beginning of the Second World War.

Trofim Gerasimov prepared several memoranda on the issue of the deportation of Gypsy nomads from the vicinity of Moscow urging to resolve the issue of the numerous tabors of nomadic Gypsies around Moscow. The memoranda were sent not only to his immediate superiors in MOZO but also to other higher institutions – TsK VKP(b), ON VTsIK, Moscow Committee VKP(b), MOIK, Narkomzem RSFSR and others (GARF, f. P 1235, op. 123, d. 28, pp. 143–146, 158–170, 189–196). It is worth quoting some of these Reports, reflecting the attitude of Trofim Gerasimov to these events:

MOZO until now has not been involved in organising Gypsy kolkhozes, despite the orders of the Narkomzem RSFSR, which were 3, despite the 2 meetings of the Narkomze collegium of the RSFSR, despite the Decree of the Presidium of the All-Russian Central Executive Committee of April 1, 1932, and 2 meetings of the VTsIK Department of Nationalities,

and in the 1933 year, even though 2 Gypsy kolkhozes had already been chosen: *Krasnaya Kuznitsa* and *Krasnaya Zvezda*, the Ministry of Defense of the Republic of Belarus, due to [illigible] underestimation of the national question, did not resettle the Gypsies to the place of the allotted site and the Government was forced to administratively clear the Gypsies from the tabors, within the radius of Moscow 45 km, there were encompassed even two Gypsy kolkhozes (Ibid., l. 194). [...]

Thanks to the absence of a party and a Soviet eye, exploitation, which has reached the point of arbitrariness, is rampant in the Gypsy camps. The Gypsy bourgeoisie and the kulaks, kicked out of kolkhozes and productions, have grouped together in the camps of the Moscow region, and this kulak is trying with all its might to keep the camp and exploit the poor. In some tabors, there are elements of the kulaks of various stripes, even of other nationalities. Exploitation is so rampant in the camps of foreign Gypsies that they even arrange their own courts. The judges of these Gypsies are people with a large property qualification. The poor are being sued for non-payment of debts and interest. Courts go to the point of death, and neither the MOIK National Sector nor the MOZO notices all this. These kulaks obtained documents of authorization from the All-Russian Union of Gypsies, with which they are profiteering in the old fashioned way around the region. Strangely, the All-Russian Union of Gypsies was closed in 1928, but the stamps and seals still appear, giving the right to profiteering on the Gypsies. (Ibid., l. 196).

Trofim Gerasimov also talks about these events in his Memorandum to Stalin. According to his interpretation, in their desire to move to a sedentary lifestyle, "Gypsy camps were forced to come to Moscow with a petition to the central land authorities", they created the two Gypsy kolkhozes mentioned above, but "due to the inertia of the MOZO and underestimation of the national question, the work was not completed", and "the administrative authorities were forced to [...] evict the Gypsies from the Moscow zone" (GARF, f. P 3316, op. 64, d. 1637, l. 5–6). To what extent this interpretation of the events is accurate and correct becomes a debatable question, but the high degree of Gerasimov's involvement in them can be seen.

In his Memoranda to the Supreme Soviet Institutions, Trofim Gerasimov sharply criticised the leadership of his institution and the Moscow party and administrative authorities for their activities (or rather inaction) towards the Gypsies in Moscow:

During the 16 years of Soviet rule, neither MOZO nor Natsmen MIK dealt with the Gypsy issue. [...] During the period 1932–33, a group of Gypsy teachers was formed at the Institute for Advanced Training, and it turned out that 98 per cent of teachers from the Western Oblast and 2% from Ukraine attended these courses, and there were no teachers from the Moscow region. The Moscow region does not have a single communist from the Gypsy nation. [...] If the Gypsy issue in the Moscow region had been raised, according to the Bolsheviks' norms, the leaders of the dead artels before and after the closure would have worked on this issue in all Gypsy artels, focusing on the class enemy and this method would have served to mobilize Gypsy workers' masses. Consequently, 18 Gypsy artels were buried due to the inaction of the MOIK national sector. (GARF, f. P 1235, op. 123, d. 28, l. 189).

Naturally, his direct superiors did not like this harsh criticism, and soon after Trofim Gerasimov found his new field of life, left the Soviet administration (it is not clear

whether this was done voluntarily or he was fired), and began working at Car Factory named after Stalin, from where in 1935 he was sent to work in the Train Carriage Factory in Zaporozhye-Kamenskoye (see above). There, at the beginning of July 1935, he wrote the Memorandum to Stalin, repeatedly mentioned here (GARF, f. P 3316, op. 64, d. 1637, l. 2–14; Marushiakova & Popov, 2021b, pp. 846–858), which deserves more attention.

This Memorandum to Stalin, written by Trofim Gerasimov, differs significantly from other Letter to the Leader-style letters written by Gypsy activists, not only in size (13 type-written pages) but also in content. Trofim Gerasimov was, in fact, the first Gypsy activist to openly discuss the need to create a Gypsy National Autonomous Republic. There can be little doubt that Andrey Taranov and Ivan Rom-Lebedev in the 1920s, as well as Ilya Gerasimov and Ivan Tomakov in the 1930s, also had in mind (as a closer or more distant perspective) the same thing when they proposed the creation of a Gypsy National Rayon, but it was Trofim Gerasimov who not only voiced but also justified this idea (of course, in the spirit and through the phraseology of the dominant state policy):

[...] a very important issue, this is the issue of the allocation of the Gypsy rayon at the beginning, which should expand and turn into the Autonomous Gypsy Republic. In my opinion, this question is so urgent today that I personally do not find another way out that would serve faster than this question, to build the National Socialist Republic. The question for today has matured to the extreme, about the need for a compact settlement of Gypsies. [...] In the area where the Gypsies will be settled, it is possible to educate people in all socialist sections. Here, to condense the whole culture with highly colourful content. [...] The kolkhozes which are already established with a great desire will go to the designated area, and this will make it possible to liquidate the Gypsy tabors. [...]

Based on the elimination of the Gypsy camps, the Gypsy bourgeoisie and kulaks, who exploit the toiling Gypsies in tabors, where there is no Party and Soviet eye, would be eliminated. Today, tens of thousands of people, thanks to their tabor life, are not helpers in the implementation of our five-year plan. This army is not yet working on our common cause, the cause of building socialism. With the organisation of rayon, which will quickly turn into the Autonomous Gypsy Republic, this army of Gypsy toiling people will become a direct conductor of socialist construction – our direct and main task. (GARF, f. P 3316, op. 64, d. 1637, l. 7–8).

To reveal additional arguments for the need to create a Gypsy National Soviet Republic, Trofim Gerasimov also points to the possibility of achieving an international effect through its creation, because “the final settlement of the Gypsy nation is of great importance in the world political context” (Ibid., l. 8). In this regard, he cites the words of an Englishman (who cannot be identified with certainty), who visited the Gypsy Club in Moscow in 1934: “No one in England would believe that the Gypsies had a written language, theatre, technical school, etc.; here in England this wild tribe is considered incapable of showing even initial culture” (Ibid., l. 8–9).

In his Memorandum, Trofim Gerasimov (in the same way as Ilya Gerasimov before him) repeatedly pointed out the successes of the Western Oblast in building Gypsy kolkhozes (of course, the examples are from the *Oktyabr* kolkhoz), Gypsy schools, etc.

Moreover, among the examples he cites, there are those from 1934 and 1935, when he had already left the area, i.e. this is a hint that the two Gerasimovs continued to keep in touch with each other (and this is completely understandable, especially if they are close relatives). This emphasis on the special place of the Western Oblast can be interpreted as indirect lobbying for its choice as the place of the future Gypsy National Republic, although at the same time Trofim Gerasimov notes that “in my opinion, it is expedient to create this rayon in the North Caucasus” (Ibid., l. 7), i.e. he is familiar with both the earlier preferences of the VSTs leadership for the creation of a Gypsy area and the ongoing processes.

The place of Western Oblast and kolkhoz *Oktyabr* is highlighted especially when Trofim Gerasimov raised the issue of staffing of the future Gypsy republic:

Do we have our own national cadres? Yes, there are also a sufficient number of different qualifications, these cadres have a specific weight in the party percentage, so from this point of view, it is possible to go without any risk to organise a Gypsy region. (Ibid.).

In confirmation of the availability of such trained staff, he again gave the example of kolkhoz *Oktyabr*, where illiteracy was completely eliminated, all children and young people studied in the local school (up to 7th grade), and in addition from the kolkhoz were sent to study 18 students in medical Rabfak, 3 in the Pedagogical Institute, 2 in the Higher Communist Agricultural School, and 1 in the Courses of Soviet Construction at VTsIK (Ibid., l. 4).

In his Memorandum to Stalin, Trofim Gerasimov allowed himself to do something that no Gypsy activist in the early USSR had done before (and after) – to assess the work of the highest Soviet institutions concerning the Gypsies, as well as to give recommendations on how to do the work more efficiently and effectively. Here he was a little more careful and avoided direct criticism but his assessment nevertheless become clear enough:

The VTsIK Department of Nationalities has nothing concrete on the Gypsy issue. He has not yet taken up seriously the Gypsy issue, as it should be today [...] except for trips, acquaintance and coordination of some issues. Passing by [...] the Department of Nationalities, there are questions of the dynamic content of the aspirations of the Gypsies to settle down. In this case, [...] the Department of Nationalities not only could not, by influencing local organisations, rather settle for working Gypsies to settle but [...] did not have this area of activity. (Ibid., l. 6).

In the same way, according to Trofim Gerasimov, ON VtsIK was responsible for the lack of a Gypsy newspaper, which was especially important and necessary at the moment:

The newspaper would be a signal, a mouthpiece, a direct channel of communication between all Gypsy kolkhozes, artels, clubs, Gypsy schools, and thanks to which all the best experiences of the best works would be passed on to each other, eliminating all the

shortcomings, not to mention the fact that kolkhozes, clubs, artels would know each other. The issue with the newspaper has been smouldering (not resolved) for two years now, while it is still needed often, every minute. (Ibid., l. 6–7).

According to Trofim Gerasimov, ON VtsIK also did not make enough efforts to train staff to take over the organisation and management of the future Gypsy republic:

This issue is being discussed in the Department of Nationalities of VtsIK, for a long time, in my opinion, it has been glimmering with indecision in raising this issue so important on the agenda and petitioning the relevant organisations. (Ibid., l. 8).

Trofim Gerasimov did not make any specific assessment of Ivan Tokmakov, who worked as an instructor at ON VtsIK, he only briefly mentioned him, noting that he had been a member of VKP(b) since 1925 (Ibid.). However, as will be discussed later, Ivan Tokmakov had been a member of the VKP(b) since 1919. In the existing party hierarchy, the year of admission to the Party was a criterion of particular importance, i.e. writing in this way his prestige was reduced. This is a clear mistake on the part of Trofim Gerasimov, but it is not clear whether it was deliberately made or not.

After pointing out the shortcomings of the work of ON VtsIK, the final chord of the Memorandum of Trofim Gerasimov logically follows: “Dear Joseph Vissarionovich! I wrote you a memo with the intention that you push this matter off the ground.” (Ibid., l. 9).

An interesting point in Trofim Gerasimov’s Memorandum to Stalin is that after concluding with the question of the need for the Gypsy National Republic, he devoted a few more pages to a long passage, which described in detail 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 (Ibid., l. 9–13). Fortunately, the NKVD apparently did not take these accusations seriously, because the names of these “class enemies” were not found in the lists of those repressed in the 1930s in Dneprodzerzhinsk (Слоневский, 2010).

Trofim Gerasimov’s memorandum did not reach Stalin himself, to whom it was addressed. From TsK VKP(b) it was sent for opinion to TsIK SSSR, and from there it was transferred to ON VTsIK (GARF, f. P 3316, op. 64, d. 1637). In his reply of August 29, 1935 the Head of the Department, Nygmet Nurmakov, is unusually sharp for this type of official documentation:

Comrade Khatskevich. I am returning the memorandum of citizen Gerasimov, which you sent to me with the resolution “Please take urgent measures”. A lot of work has been done in the arrangement of the Gypsies in the last 2–3 years; this work was done by the local Soviet and Party bodies under the day-to-day control and management of VTsIK without any involvement of Gerasimov and others like him, who limit their concern for the Gypsies to writing annually such notes. To arrange for the Gypsies is not an easy task, it does not

require urgent measures, but persistent and patient work, in particular, work among the Gypsies themselves, which is what we are doing all the time. Currently, we are preparing a question, [illegible] statements to government bodies, about resettlement and land management of nomadic Gypsies in compact masses in several rayons. This issue also cannot be "urgently" resolved. As for the creation of a Gypsy republic, I consider this issue to be idle at this time, therefore I do not intend to deal with it. (Ibid., l. 15).

As a result of the scandalous reputation before the Soviet authorities, which Trofim Gerasimov had already established, including with his Memorandum, he was not invited to attend the Meeting at the Department of Nationalities at TsIK USSR *On the Questions of Employment of Toiling Nomadic Gypsies and Their Cultural and Economic Services*, which took place on January 4 and 5, 1936 in Moscow, where the issues raised by him were discussed.

This exhausts the available historical evidence for Trofim Gerasimov. From here on, only assumptions and hypotheses can be made about his further fate.

Based on the conflicting nature and maximalism of Trofim Gerasimov, who was not afraid to criticise the top Soviet authorities for the existing shortcomings of their activities towards the Gypsies, the most logical assumption is that he became a victim of mass political repression in the second half of the 1930s. Despite a thorough check in the various existing databases on the victims of political terror in the USSR, however, we were unable to find his name anywhere, i.e. this version must be rejected.

Similarly, the version that Trofim Gerasimov died fighting in the Soviet Army during the Second World War must be rejected because his name does not appear in the various existing databases of the war victims. Moreover, by virtue of his official position (engineer in a strategically important plant), he should have been released from mobilisation and evacuated (along with the plant) far to the East.

The Train Carriage Factory in Zaporozhye-Kamenskoye together with all the working staff was evacuated due to the approach of the front line in the autumn of 1941 to the village of Chesnokovka (now the city of Novoaltaysk in Altai Kray). The plant was active during the war (mainly in military production), and in 1943, after the liberation of Dneprozerzhinsk, it returned to its old place. However, part of the working capacity (and personnel) remains in Novoaltaysk, which lays the foundations of the new Altai Carriage Plant.

There are two options for the fate of Trofim Gerasimov. Firstly, he could have returned to his old job and stayed there for the rest of his life. In this case, however, there is no explanation why he did not maintain contact with his old colleagues, and in the first place with Ilya Gerasimov and Mikhail Bezlyudskiy, with whom (probably due to their maximalism and uncompromising characters) they had close friendly relations (or at least Gerasimov and Bezlyudskiy do not mention anything in their memories about him). Second, he could have stayed at work in Altai Kray and ended his life there, without trying to restore his old family and friendships.

Of course, there is no confirmation for any of these hypotheses, so the fate until the end of his life of Trofim Gerasimov remains unknown. Nevertheless, Trofim Gerasimov has his rightful place in the history of Roma civic emancipation in the early USSR.

Ivan Tokmakov

Elena Marushiakova and Vesselin Popov

The development of the processes of Roma civic emancipation in the USSR in the 1930s is inextricably linked with the personality of Ivan Petrovich Tokmakov (1888–1942 ?). Moreover, it would not be an exaggeration to say that, under his leadership, the Gypsy civic activism moved to a new, higher stage of its development, which, however, was followed by a catastrophic collapse.

We know only very little about the life (and even about the death) of Ivan Tokmakov, except for the period during which he was an instructor in ON VTsIK (1931–1938). Additional information in this regard discloses his personal data form filled in for the All-Union Party Census of VKP(b) in 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, but in all probability it is Yekaterinburg. His close friend Nikolay Pankov, in his biographical essay *In Memory of Ivan Petrovich Tokmakov* (LANB, f. Николай Саткевич, d. Иван Токмаков; Marushiakova & Popov, 2021b, pp. 971–978) emphasised that his parents were Gypsies (“he was Gypsy by father – and mother side”). Ivan Tokmakov himself in his personal data form noted as his nationality ‘Gypsy’ (*цыган*), while as his native language he initially wrote – Russian, but then crossed it out and also corrected it to ‘Gypsy’ (RGASPI, f. 17, op. 9, d. 3642, l. 37–38).

Nikolay Pankov also noted for Ivan Tokmakov’s parents that “they lived in the former Yekaterinburg, where Gypsies at that time hardly got by their own choice” (LANB, f. Николай Саткевич, d. Иван Токмаков). With this Nikolay Pankov made a hint 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 for such an assumption. Of course, there were not a few cases of Gypsies who, together with their families, were sent to exile in Siberia (Shaidurov, 2018). 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).

Ivan Tokmakov was orphaned at an early age. According to Nikolay Pankov, Tokmakov’s parents “perished” (LANB, f. Николай Саткевич, d. Иван Токмаков). However, he did not give more details, so we can suppose it was an accident (if this had happened

through the fault of the Tsarist authorities, Pankov would not have missed this moment). Ivan Tokmakov was raised by his sister Elena, who lived in Kamyshlov, which is located near Yekaterinburg, and where he spent his childhood and his young years (Ibid.). In Kamyshlov, he studied for only 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 a *konopatchik* [a worker who is plugging cracks in the wooden surfaces] (RGASPI, f. 17, op. 9, d. 3642, l. 37). 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 until November 1919, he worked at the Kamyshlov railway station arranging the railway track wood and as a charcoal-burner, and from 1919, as a clerk in the railroad (Ibid.). In November 1919, he became a member of the VKP(b), without having previously been accepted as a candidate member of the Party (Ibid.), which was a relatively rare case in the practice of the time.

From that moment Ivan Tokmakov's nomenclature career started. In 1921 he completed a three-month training course at the local Soviet Party School and was promoted to a Party Secretary of the collective of Kamyshlov railway station, where he had worked until then, on which post he spent two years (Ibid.). 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 the Udmurt Republic of the Russian Federation) (Ibid.).

This career development seems very fast at first glance, but it must be borne in mind that at that time the Soviet state was in dire need of a qualified party governing apparatus composed of people of the "correct" class (i.e. proletarian) origin, and their nationality was irrelevant. A natural stage in this development was the sending, in 1930, of Ivan Tokmakov to study as an aspirant (a designation of persons prepared for academic and teaching positions) at the Institute of Postgraduate Students at Sverdlovsk Communist University, established by the Soviet state to train for senior Party leadership. However, admission to this Institute is not at all simple and easy. Initially, a certain number of seats were allocated for each territorial-administrative unit, and for the Nizhny Novgorod region (at that time, in addition to today's Nizhniy Novgorod oblast, today's Chuvash AO, Mari AO and Udmurt AO, then Votkaya AO) were allocated places for 20 students. (Правила, 1930, p. 5). After the local party leadership had determined the future students who had to study for three years, those among them who wished to enter the Postgraduate Institute needed to take an additional entrance exam. At this exam, candidates had to submit a written text on a topic of their choice and pass an oral exam, then were enrolled in one of the following departments at the Institute – History of the VKP(b), Political Economy, Economic Policy, Leninism, History of the West, History of Russia, Dialectical Materialism, Natural Science (Chemistry, Physics, Biology) and Economic Geography (Ibid., pp. 7–8).

It is not known which of these University departments Ivan Tokmakov chose, but at the beginning of 1931, he already worked as an instructor at the ON VTsIK, where he prepared a proposal for a Gypsy newspaper. This newspaper was to be published in Moscow, in Romani language, on four pages, in a circulation of 2,000 copies, and would perform the following tasks:

At this stage, the newspaper in the Gypsy language can play a dominant role in the cultural uplift of the backward Gypsy masses and promote the transition to a toiling lifestyle of the Gypsies. The newspaper could play the role of organiser of the identification of existing Gypsy cadres to involve them in the work of the Gypsy sedentarisation and would play a positive role in promoting awareness of the decisions of the Party and the government. (GARF, f. P 1235, op. 121, d. 31, l. 266).

However, Ivan Tokmakov's training at Sverdlov Communist University did not last long. In November 1932, in a letter from ON VTsIK to the Department for Agitation and Propaganda at TsK of VKP(b) was announced: "In connection with the planned reorganisation of the Gypsy journal *Nevo drom* into a newspaper, ON VTsIK considers it possible to recommend Comrade Tokmakov, a Gypsy by nationality, a worker by social status and a party member since 1919, for a managerial job in the newspaper" (Ibid., l. 61). This letter also notes that Ivan Tokmakov has so far been a graduate student at Sverdlov Communist University, but "in connection with the reorganisation of this university", he is "at the disposal" of the APO TsK VKP(b). This letter shows that metaphorically speaking, Tokmakov stopped his education and moved from the common one to the Gypsy track (which itself is a nationally separated part of the common). Of course, in the Soviet state, such a career transition was impossible without the consent and blessing of the highest Party bodies, at whose disposal Ivan Tokmakov was.

Ironically, the creation of a Gypsy newspaper, which is the formal reason for this transition, has failed in practice. The journal *Nevo drom* indeed stopped in 1932 (GARF, f. P 1235, op. 123, d. 28, l. 269), despite the considerable efforts Ivan Tokmakov made in his new position, to implement the decision to publish a Gypsy newspaper. In a note to Nygmet Nurmakov, Deputy Secretary of the VTsIK, in 1933, he justified the need to publish a Gypsy newspaper with the following words:

At present, in connection with the VTsIK Decree of April 1, 1932 [On the state of work] on serving Gypsy workers and the growth of Gypsy kolkhoz and handicraft artels, as well as the enormous urge of the Gypsy population to move from nomadic to a settled way of life, a need for Gypsy newspaper similar to the Tatar and Chuvash newspapers under *Izvestia TsIK* and VTsIK [...] has long been ripe. (Ibid.).

Ivan Tokmakov's proposal to publish a Gypsy newspaper had the support of his colleagues from ON VTsIK, and they often included it in the documents they published, e.g. in the Memorandum on the results of the verification of the execution of the decision of the Presidium of the All-Russian Central Executive Committee On the State of

Work in Servicing the Toiling Gypsies of 25 February 1935, signed by the Deputy Head of ON VTsIK Simon Takoiev (GARF, f. P 1235, op. 130, d. 5). Ivan Tokmakov himself submitted two more memoranda in the same year, which again included this proposal (GARF, f. P 3316, op. 28, d. 793, l. 61; f. P 3316, op. 28, d. 794, l. 90–91). This led to the preparation on January 2, 1936, of the project of the Draft Resolution of the Presidium of the Council of Nationalities at the TsIK of the USSR *On the Organisation, Economic and Cultural Services of Gypsy Workers*, which included a proposal for publishing of a Gypsy newspaper by SN TsIK USSR with the regularity of appearance – every five days (GARF, f. P 3316, op. 28, d. 793, l. 50).

This project was discussed at the meeting at the Council of Nationalities at the TsIK USSR devoted to The Questions of the Employment of Toiling Nomadic Gypsies and Their Cultural and Economic Services, held on January 4 and 5, 1936, and the participants in it expressed their support for this idea. (GARF, f. P 3316, op. 28, d. 794, l.l. 77–125). Shortly after this discussion, a new Draft Decree of the Presidium of VTsIK was prepared, beginning with the words “Having heard the report of the instructor of the Council of Nationalities at the VTsIK, comrade Tokmakov”, and which also states “to organise a newspaper in Gypsy language at the Department of Nationalities at TsIK USSR ” (GARF, f. P 3316, op. 28, d. 793, l. 4–5). Ivan Tokmakov arranged a decision in this sense, but it was dropped in the edited final version (GARF, f. P 1235, op. 121, d. 31, l. 47–50), the project was not accepted, and instead of the Decree of the Presidium of VTsIK USSR from April 7, 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 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.

Ivan Tokmakov's admission into the position of instructor at the Central Executive Committee in 1931 has an important symbolic meaning. For the first time, a Gypsy took an official (and not as before, only consultative) position in the highest structures of the Soviet state (albeit in a relatively low administrative position), i.e. becomes part of the higher central nomenclature. Even more important are the practical dimensions of this appointment. As the only representative of the Gypsies in the central Soviet administration, Ivan Tokmakov was receiving a large part of the official correspondence of the Soviet institutions concerning the Gypsies, as well as all letters from Soviet citizens related to this issue. In this way, he found himself not only at the centre of Soviet policy towards the Gypsies but also had the opportunity to intervene and influence decision-making on specific issues, and more generally to offer his ideas and proposals for the formation of the leading directions and dimensions of the Gypsy policy of the Soviet state. Of course, his opportunities to impact the policy were not endless and, in practice, were limited by the Soviet institutional and administrative framework and especially by the leading tendencies in the general political processes, but still, they should not be

underestimated. Moreover (and more importantly), by virtue of his position and capabilities, Ivan Tokmakov de facto became the informal (and undisputed) leader of Gypsy activism, i.e. the leading and defining figure in the process of Roma civic emancipation in the early USSR in the 1930s. At the same time, there is no doubt that his capabilities in this regard, as well as his ability to influence the general Soviet Gypsy policy and its specific manifestations, were much greater than that of the leadership of the former VSTs in the 1920s.

In the early 1930s, many 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. Gypsy activists even after the failure of VSTs did not stay away from the implementation of this state policy towards Gypsies. On the contrary, they continued to be active participants in it. As said, Ivan Tokmakov became the central figure of Roma activism and through him, all Gypsy policies were implemented and controlled, and the other activists continued to be engaged with. In other words, Gypsy activism, and the movement for Roma civic emancipation in general, continued to develop, but in new forms.

Numerous documents related to the various activities of Ivan Tokmakov are preserved in the archives of VTsIK. There is no point in presenting them in detail here, it is enough to note the various areas in the field of Roma civic emancipation in which he was actively engaged and whose successful development he supported. A large part of Ivan Tokmakov's official correspondence was about the establishment and development of the Gypsy collective farms. This issue is generally related to the sedentarisation of the Gypsies because apart from those who lived in the cities, the vast majority in the USSR at that time were nomads. This close connection is clearly visible in the only known (so far) article by Ivan Tokmakov, *Амарэ дорэсэибена* (Our Achievements), in which he revealed the achievements and raised the problems of the transition of nomadic Gypsies to a sedentary lifestyle and the creation of Gypsy national kolkhozes (Сталинцо, 1935, pp. 2–3). Especially indicative is how he justified this transition – “the Communist party and the Soviet government set the task in the second five-year plan to transfer all nomads to settled life” (Ibid., p. 4). However, among the aims of the Second Five-Year Plan for the Development of the National Economy of the USSR (1933–1937), such a task is missing, i.e. Ivan Tomakov expressed here his wish, presented as a requirement of the Soviet state. This once again shows that Gypsy activists in the early USSR were not relentless executors of the Party and State directives but sought to realise their visions of desires for Roma civic emancipation in the general discourse of Soviet national policy, even as shows this case by resorting to light manipulations (how successful they were in these attempts is a separate issue).

As already said, the topic of the need to eradicate the nomadic lifestyle of the Gypsies, and the unavoidability for effective state action in this regard, has been raised more

than once by the Gypsy activists, including through articles published in the national press. Indicative in this regard are some of the titles of these articles, e.g. *From Nomadism to Sedentarisation* (Известия, 1927, p. 6), *Cast Aside the Nomadic Past: We Will Include Gypsies in the Active Construction of Socialism* (Комсомольская правда, 1930с, 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* and *Stalintso*, which were distributed also among Gypsy nomads.

In their letters to the top Soviet institutions (see above), Gypsy activists also raised this issue, e.g. in the letter by Ilya Gerasimov to Mikhail Kalinin, 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”. (GARF, f. P 1235, op. 123, d. 28, l. 368–369). The same problem is elaborated in detail in the Memorandum of Trofim Gerasimov to Stalin. Ivan Tokmakov also used this argument 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 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.

In all their texts (both in official documents and publications), Gypsy activists constantly use the mantra of a strong desire for a sedentary life among nomadic Gypsies. To what extent such a craving existed and to what extent it is about an acceptance of what is desired for reality (hope for a self-fulfilling prophecy) is very difficult to assess from today’s point of view. However, it can be said that there was a desire to settle at least among some Gypsy nomads. There are preserve several primary sources (written by the nomadic Gypsies themselves) evidencing this. However, the desire to settle was not always connected with a desire to build a Gypsy kolkhoz. This is clear for example from the collective Statement addressed to Ivan Tokmakov by a group of Gypsies settled in Moscow (according to the surnames of signatories – from the group of *Krimurya*), from 1933:

There are fifteen of us Gypsy families, who previously roamed the Soviet Union, expressed their full consent to quit nomadic life and join with a new life. Of our 15 families, there are 40 people able to work. Of this number, 18 are blacksmiths with working experience of 5 to 25 years. We worked in kolkhozes and sovkhoses to repair agricultural machinery and stocks, many of us have positive references from kolkhozes about the quality of work. Taking into account the demand for labour and the upcoming spring agricultural campaign (where our work as blacksmiths will be very useful, we ask you to send us 15 families to one from sovkhoses, where, in addition to Gypsy blacksmiths, other able-bodied family members could be used at work. Having no means of transportation, as well as because of the material insecurity of our families, we ask you to provide us with great assistance for travel expenses and food. (GARF, f. P 1235, op. 123, d. 28, l. 69).

Ivan Tokmakov's activities for creating and supporting the development of the Gypsy national collective farms are many and varied. Dozens of letters from various Gypsy kolkhozes were sent to him personally or to ON VTsIK, asking for urgent solutions to specific problems (most often a lack of enough land and loans). Such are, for example, the letters from the Gypsy kolkhozes *Krasniy Oktyabr* (Red October) in the Voronezh oblast and *Trud Romen* in the North Caucasus kray in 1933 (GARF, f. P 1235, op. 123, d. 28, l. 305, 397), from the kolkhoz *Krasniy Vostok* (Red East) in the Sverdlovsk oblast in 1934 (Ibid., l. 367), etc. It is noteworthy that the leaders of the Gypsy collective farms were already well versed in the Soviet administrative-bureaucratic system and played by its rules, e.g. a telegram to Ivan Tokmakov from Ivanov, the chairman of the kolkhoz *Nevi baxt* (New Happiness) in the Sarapul district (now in the Udmurt Autonomous Region) was copied to Stalin himself (Ibid., l. 140), which is a guarantee that there will be a quick reaction to posing problems. In general, Ivan Tokmakov in most cases easily managed to solve the problems due to the authority of the institution in which he worked (the VTsIK).

Moreover, in some cases he visited different regions personally and solved problems on the spot, e.g. during his inspection in the Western Oblast in 1932, he not only inspected the condition of the Gypsy kolkhozes (GASO, f. P 2360, op. 1, sv. 181, d. 2068; f. P 2360, op. 1, sv. 181, d. 2069) but drew attention to other problems with the Gypsies in the area such as the condition of the Gypsy boarding school (GASO, f. P 2360, op. 1, sv. 181, d. 2068), the creation of Gypsy branch with a stable at the artel *Red Transporter* (GASO, f. P 2360, op. 2, sv. 50, d. 432), etc.

Ivan Tokmakov's work on the establishment and strengthening of the Gypsy national kolkhozes was significantly supported by the VTsIK Decree adopted on April 1, 1932, *On the Status of Work on the Service of Gypsy Toilers* (GARF, f. P 1235, op. 130, d. 5, l. 38–39). It is not clear what exactly his contribution was to the preparation of this Decree, but at that time he was already working for VTsIK and no doubt had to express his attitude towards its content. The situation with the Gypsy kolkhozes at that time had already changed. As is clear from the Minutes of the meeting of the Board of the Kolkhoztentre USSR on the collectivisation of toiling Gypsies on January 3, 1931, in the course of mass collectivisation most of the Gypsy kolkhozes established in the 1920s disintegrated and are now being rebuilt (GARF, f. P 1235, op. 121, d. 31). With the active participation of Ivan Tomakov, who prepared several reports on the state and existing problems for the development of the Gypsy kolkhozes (GARF, f. P 1235, op. 130, d. 5; f. P 3316, op. 28, d. 793), this process was rapidly evolving. As he writes in one such Report from 1935, "if 9 kolkhozes were organised in the period 1929–31, 16 kolkhozes were organized in the period 1932–35" (GARF, f. P 3316, op. 28, d. 793), and this period turned out to be the highest stage reached in the development of the Gypsy national kolkhozes.

Another area to which Ivan Tokmakov also pays special attention was the Gypsy production artels. The situation in the 1930s was different from that in the 1920s. Of the old production cooperatives, only *Tsygkhimprom* (Gypsy Chemical Industry) and

Tsygpishcheprom (Gypsy Food Industry) have survived. The important-sounding titles should not mislead the reader; these were in fact small workshops for unskilled labour, in which the workers (mainly women, in majority non-Gypsies), cut up and packed and re-packed basic household products (dyes, laundry detergents, salt, tea, coffee, etc.). These two artels were run by representatives of the *Ruska Roma*; they successfully implemented their plans and had the constant support of central and local authorities (GARF, f. P 1235, op. 130, d. 5).

In 1930, there were 4 Gypsy artels in Moscow, but the following year they numbered 28, with 1,351 Gypsy members (Попова & Бриль, 1932, p. 134). The development of the Gypsy production artels was strongly influenced by the Decree of VTsIK *On the State of Work on Servicing Toiling Gypsies* of April 1, 1932, which provided special preferences for their strengthening, as well as their purification from “class-foreign elements” (GARF, f. P 1235, op. 130, d. 5, l. 38–39). As a result of this, ironically, the new Gypsy artels proved to be unstable, and often self-dissolved or closed for economic and financial violations; consequently, in 1932 there were the following 15 artels in Moscow: *Tsygpishcheprom*, *Tsygkhimprom*, *Military Transport*, *Romanian Foreigner*, *First Serbo-Romanian [Artel]*, *Red Transbaikalian*, *Greco-Romanian [Artel]*, *Serbo-Romanian [Artel] named after Stalin*, *Romanian [Artel] ‘New Life’*, *Black Sea Emigrant*, *Red October*, *International*, *2nd Serbo-Romanian [Artel]*, *Tiflis Thinsmith*, *Ukrainian Thinsmith* (Нэво дром, 1931q, p. 32; Безлюдско & Германо, 1933, pp. 205–206). The predominant part of the Gypsy artels is concentrated in Moscow, but such artels are also created in the countryside, e.g. in Leningrad, Smolensk, Yaroslavl, Kirov, Yoshkar-Ola, Perm, Sverdlovsk, Novosibirsk, Chelyabinsk, Kharkov, Dnepropetrovsk, Berdichev, Kiev, Oryol, etc. (GARF, f. P 3316, op. 28, d. 793; f.1235, op. 123, d. 27; f. P 1235, op. 123, d. 28; f. P 1235, op. 123, d. 29; RGAE, f. 5675, op. 1, d. 142; f. 5675, op. 1, d. 145; GASO, f. P 2360, op. 1, cv. 181, d. 2068; f. P 2360, op. 2, sv. 50, d. 432; DAMK, f. P-1, op. 1, spr. 10715; Рогги, 1934; Друц & Гецслер, 1990, p. 292; Chernykh, 2020, pp. 358–366), including even two *Lingurari* artels in the Vinnytsia region, in the Ukrainian SSR, for the production of wooden spoons (GARF, f. P 3316, op. 28, d. 794; RGAE, f. 5675, op. 1, d. 158).

The new Gypsy artels were mostly created by representatives of the *Kelderari* group. In their books, both Alaina Lemon (2000) and Brigid O’Keeffe (2013) use the term *Vlax Roma* to refer to this group, which is used in the USA and which is not wrong in principle, but in this case, is not precise enough. The term *Vlax Roma* (or *Vlax Rom*) in Europe refers to the entire language community of the so-called North *Vlax* (or *New-Vlax*) dialects of the Romani language; in the former USSR there were several Roma groups who spoke dialects from this dialectal group, and the *Kelderari* were just one of them (Черенков, 1985, pp. 5–15).

Ivan Tokmakov was actively involved in the problems of the Gypsy artels, not only in Moscow but also in the countryside, e.g. in Smolensk (GARF, f. P 1235, op. 123, d. 28). At the same time, he saw the existing problems, which he constantly detailed in his Reports:

Gypsy artels are not created on the periphery, 16 of the 20 artels in Moscow have been liquidated, and by February 1, 1935, only 4 Gypsy artels remained; 4 Gypsy artels remained in the RSFSR in Moscow, 1 in Rostov, and 1 in the Voronezh region; only 3 Gypsy artels remain in Moscow. (GARF, f. P 3316, op. 28, d. 793).

As “all the liquidated artels were engaged in the manufacture and tinning of cauldron” (i.e. they were *Kelderari*), he shifted the responsibility for this to the Moscow institutions, which did not take into account the successful experience of the two artels, *Tsygkhimprom* and *Tsygpishcheprom*, “that grew, strengthened and successfully implemented their annual plans with respectively 3 and 8 million rubles financial turnover” (GARF, f. P 1235, op. 130, d. 5). Moreover, Ivan Tokmakov managed to initiate the establishment of the Interdepartmental Commission with the Resolution of the VTsIK Presidium of July 1, 1935, which was to outline measures for the organisational and economic strengthening of the existing Gypsy production artels (Ibid.).

However, Ivan Tokmakov’s efforts to preserve and develop the Gypsy artels ultimately proved unsuccessful. He was hardly so naive as not to see the real reasons for the liquidation of most of these artels. The official version is clearly expressed in a letter to Ivan Tokmakov from K. E. Matyushenko, written in 1934:

The most intense work is done among the Gypsies. [...] This is especially true among the tinsmith Gypsies, who still have strong family ties and camp habits. Here the class enemy managed to disintegrate 15 out of 18 artels in four years, but even in these three remaining artels, a fierce class struggle continues. [...] To establish work and identify the class enemy, to cleanse the artel from it, me, as a Gypsy and as a member of the VKP(b) Party, I was sent as chairman to the artel of Yugo-Slavia... In this struggle from the side of the class enemy, the Kaminsky brothers are leading, [...] [who] [...] have a systematic connection with class enemies and the world of thieves. (ГАРФ, f. P 1235, op. 123, d. 28).

Ivan Tokmakov surely was aware that the liquidation of the Gypsy artels was carried out by the NKVD, and the main reason for it was different. At that time, the majority of *Kelderari* in the USSR were included in the category of “foreign Gypsies”, and formally speaking, they were citizens of Romania, Yugoslavia, Greece, etc. (this can be seen from the names of their artels), and even of the already non-existent Austro-Hungary. As foreign nationals during the period of mass political repression, the most commonly used accusations against them were espionage for foreign intelligence, as absurd as it may sound from today’s point of view, and these accusations were often combined with accusations of economic crimes. In this way, the vast majority of Gypsy artels were liquidated in the 1930s (Бессонов, 2002a, p. 5), and a large proportion of Gypsies, victims of political repression, were *Kelderari*.

In his work, Ivan Tokmakov paid special attention to the Gypsy schools and especially to his favourite child – the Gypsy Pedagogical College in Moscow – where teachers were trained for these schools. As he wrote in a February 1935 Report, in the RSFSR at that time there were 12 1st level Gypsy schools (i.e. the first four grades) and 18 Gypsy groups

at mainstream schools, as well as one boarding school up to 7th grade near Smolensk (GARF, f. P 3316, op. 28, d. 793). On September 1, 1933, a Gypsy Department was opened in Moscow at the Pedagogical College of the Krasno Presnensky District named after Timiryazev with five years of training, including a preparatory course (GARF, f. P 1235, op. 130, d. 5). Candidates for training in the Gypsy course wrote applications to Ivan Tokmakov, who made great efforts to provide dormitories for them (GARF, f. P 1235, op. 123, d. 28). As soon as the training started, he organised regular meetings with the students, where their current problems, related to their study, and everyday life, were discussed (GARF, f. P 1235, op. 127, d. 8). In 1935 Ivan Tokmakov managed to get Narkompros to separate the Gypsy Department and elevate it into an independent Gypsy Pedagogical College, which existed until 1938 (Ibid.).

Of special interest is the initiative of Ivan Tokmakov for the secondment of the students. In 1934 he sent a proposal to Narkomzem to send for a month during the summer vacation 15 students from the Gypsy Department of the Pedagogical College “for cultural and mass and educational work in Gypsy kolkhozes by sending them to places” (Ibid.). The selected Gypsy kolkhozes were: *Nevo džüben* (New Live) in Shakhun rayon, Gorky kray; *Trud Romen* in Mineralnovodsk rayon, Stavropol kray; *Nevo drom* in Novo-Velichkovsky rayon, Krasnodar kray; *Krasniy Vostok* in Chernushinsky rayon, Perm kray; *Nevi baxt* in Sarapul rayon, then Kirov Oblast. This initiative was implemented, although not in full, and the seconded students present detailed reports on the condition and problems of the visited Gypsy kolkhozes (Ibid.). In fact, Ivan Tokmakov’s strategic idea was for Gypsy Pedagogical College to become a Higher School for the training of Gypsy activists, who would become the main driving force in the processes of Roma civic emancipation. This is confirmed by a letter to him from a group of students (Ermakov, Bogdanova, Andreev, Karpetskaya and others), who declared: “We are the first in the USSR especially [trained] Gypsy cadres to re-educate our backward generation” (Ibid.). However, the plans of Ivan Tokmakov failed to materialize due to the turn in Soviet national policy in the second half of the 1930s.

Ivan Tokmakov’s activities as the sole representative of the Gypsy movement and, in fact, his informal leader, in the 1930s in the top Soviet institutions also included his active support in solving problems of the Central Gypsy Club *Лолы чергэн* (Red Star) in Moscow, in strengthening and development of the Gypsy Theatre *Romen*, to support the publication and distribution of Romani literature, his participation in the Editorial Boards of the newspapers *Пало большевистско колхозо* (About the Bolshevik’s Kolkhoz), and *Сталиниço* (Stalinist) (GARF, f. P 3316, op. 28, d. 793; f. P 1235, op. 123, d. 28; f. P 1235, op. 127, d. 8; f. P 1235, op. 130, d. 5). Moreover, in his Report from February 1935, Ivan Tokmakov summarised the achievements of the Soviet affirmative action towards the Gypsies, revealed the existing problems, and outlined the future goals and tasks for the near future (GARF, f. P 3316, op. 28, pp. 793, pp. 55–61). Titles on separate sections in this Report (General remarks; What the Soviet government gave to the Gypsies; On the allocation of areas for settlement by the Gypsies; On the Gypsy production artels;

On cadres preparation; The provision of general education for school-age children and *likbez* for the adults; The issue of printed publications [in the Romani language]; About the newspaper in the Gypsy language) clearly show what the main priorities of Ivan Tokmakov were in the field of Roma civic emancipation.

The biggest, visionary goal set by Ivan Tokmakov, for the achievement of which he put a lot of effort, was the creation of a Gypsy national territorial-administrative unit, which would serve as a basis for a future Gypsy Soviet Autonomous Republic. To this end, more attention should be paid to this attempt, because this is the pinnacle of the processes of Roma civic emancipation in the early USSR. In fact, the creation of one's own nation-state (or at least autonomy) was the ultimate goal of all nationalisms in the modern era in Central, South-Eastern and Eastern Europe, and the Roma were no exception (Marushiakova & Popov, 2021b). The fact that Gypsy activists in the early USSR preferred not to fully express their aspirations, and to limit themselves to proposals to the authorities to create a Gypsy territorial-administrative unit (usually a region), does not change the essence of their visions for the future of their community. In fact, their logic is quite clear – to start with something smaller and real, which in the long run will develop into its own autonomous republic.

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 fulfilment. 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 (with some exceptions related to political reasons) 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 in the Soviet Union was much smaller than that of the peoples. The reasons for the absence of Gypsies in this national-administrative hierarchy are the existing realities: in the USSR, they lived as a large diaspora in vast territories, with the vast 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 for 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. As already said, the 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. 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. 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 emphasized that this was not the real number of Gypsies and proposed different figures – from 200,000 to a very fantastic 1,000,000. 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. It is interesting to note that “the Racing Reporter” Egon Erwin Kisch, who visited the USSR in 1925–1926 and paid special attention to the place of the Gypsies in the new Soviet state, managed to formulate already then the main issue facing the Gypsy nomads and the Soviet state. In his famous book *Tzars, Pops, Bolsheviks*, he writes that from an economic point of view, the sedentarisation of Gypsy nomads was inevitable, and for this, there were two opposing visions. The first one provided for their sedentarisation in the regions where they lived, but it was difficult to implement because either the Gypsies themselves were unaware of the possibility of obtaining land for free, or because local villagers did not include them in land allocation. The second vision envisages the creation of a legally protected territory (i.e. a national administrative unit) uniting the Gypsies; this vision can be

called *Zionism of the Gypsies*, who would be the majority in the future colonial rule, but it would be even more difficult than with the Jews (Kisch, 1992, pp. 117–118).

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.

Ivan Tokmakov, like other Gypsy activists (Andrey Taranov, Ivan Rom-Lebedev, Ilya and Trofim Gerasimovs), who were making proposals to the authorities to create a Gypsy national rayon, used as the main argument the urgent need for sedentarization of Gypsy nomads and the creation of Gypsy national kolkhozes. In this regard, he used the testimonies from the field – letters from nomadic Gypsies sent to Soviet institutions with requests in this regard, e.g. The petition to ON VTsIK of July 29, 1935 "from the camp of nomadic Gypsies near the city of Ivanovo, that includes 20 families":

We know that our nomadic life does not give us anything good. [...] 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. (GARF, f. P 1235, op. 130, d. 5, l. 85–86).

The letter from 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 [Soviet] Union. And for the Gypsies to preserve their nationality, as such, and to create interest among the rest of the Gypsies, [...], to allocate a piece of land for the territory of the Gypsy republic, oblast, or, at least, an okrug. (GARF, f. P 1235, op. 130, d. 5, l. 80–81).

The appointment of Ivan Tokmakov to the new post was followed by the issuing of the Decree of the Presidium of VTsIK from April 1, 1932, *On Status of Service Work for 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 Narkomzem 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. Although 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*, which very soon became a model example of a successful Gypsy kolkhoz in the public space (see above).

At the beginning of 1935, Ivan Tokmakov prepared the Memorandum, in which he substantiated the need for the establishment of a Gypsy national territorial-administrative unit:

1. The intention of Gypsies to settle on the land 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 land 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. (GARF, f. P 3316, op. 28, d. 793, l. 9).

On the basis of a Report, the SN at TsIK USSR prepared a document dated February 25, 1935, in which Ivan Tokmakov reformulated and enriched (probably by himself) this argument:

1. The Gypsies' craving to settle on the land sticks on the absence of a plan for a compact settlement of Gypsies; in connection with this, there is a spontaneous sedentarisation in small groups on small tracts, where there is no possibility of further additional settling of the Gypsy nomads; therefore, the resolution of the issue of sedentarisation of Gypsies on the land requires the allocation of a special rayon for settlement. 2. The compact sedentarisation of Gypsies will facilitate all the work among them on economic and cultural construction so that it will be possible to concentrate all material resources and cultural forces in one specific rayon. (GARF, f. P 1235, op. 130, d. 5).

This justification, formulated by Ivan 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 he 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.

In fact, the event that had the strongest impact on Gypsy 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 the 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 same logic followed Soviet institutions, engaged with this process, and especially structures of the VTsIK and the TsIK USSR. The main coordinator of this bureaucratic process, requiring coordination between different agencies, was Alexander Khatskevich, at that time Secretary of the SN TsIK USSR, who became a leading figure in the attempts to create a Gypsy territorial-administrative unit on the model of the Autonomous Jewish National Oblast. 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 of whether they were able to provide vacant land for the compact settlement of Gypsy nomads, for the purpose of sedentarisation (GARF, f. P 1235, 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 with the need to receive additional budgetary investments; subsequently, new options were offered, all of them today in the Altay kray (Ibid.). For his part, Ilya Gerasimov 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 Altay kray (the Charyshsky, Soloneshkiy, Altaiskiy rayons), and the Kondomskiy, and Mrasso-Kondomskiy rayons in the Kemerovo oblast (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.). Due to the unclear situation, with the decision of the Presidium of the VTsIK on 10 December 1935, the All-Union Resettlement Committee 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).

An important moment in the course of the preparations for the establishment of a Gypsy national territorial-administrative unit was the Meeting at the Council of Nationalities at the TsIK USSR, held on 4 and 5 January 1936 *On the Issues of Employment of Toiling Nomadic Gypsies and Their Cultural and Economic Services* for which detailed Minutes were elaborated (GARF, f. P 3316, op. 28, d. 794, l. 77–125; Совецание, 1936, pp. 61–72; Marushiakova & Popov, 2021b, pp. 883–906). The Meeting was attended by representatives of the Presidium TsIK USSR, ON VTsIK, Narkomzem, VPK, Knigotsentr, Goslitizdat, Mossover, TASS, Central News (Pravda, Trud and others). The new Gypsy Soviet elite was almost entirely represented at the meeting (except for Andrey Taranov and Trofim Gerasimov, who were not invited). The meeting was attended by representatives of the State Gypsy Theatre *Romen*, the Gypsy Pedagogical College, the Central Gypsy Club, *Tsygkhimprom*, *Tsygpishcheprom*, Gypsy selsoviet of Mineralovodskiy rayon North Caucasus kray, selected Gypsy kolkhozes (*Nevo džüiben*, *Trud Romen*, *Nevi baxt*, and *Oktyabr*), Gypsy school with a dormitory of Serebryansky selsoviet of Smolensk rayon, representatives of local authorities from the province, etc.

The meeting was chaired by Alexander Khatskevich, Secretary of the SN TsIK USSR. In their speeches, the Gypsy activists mainly presented the achieved results and the existing problems in the field of their activities, and most of them in one form or another expressed their support for the idea of creating a Gypsy national rayon. Alexander Khatskevich himself was the most straightforward in his concluding speech:

The decree of the Presidium of the VTsIK about creating a special Gypsy Rayon should be welcomed because it makes it easier to service them in their national language and in the 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 it as soon as possible. [...] (GARF, f. P 3316, op. 28, d. 794, l. 118–119).

The question of the location of the future Gypsy national region remained without a final decision. Khatskevich himself disapproves of the idea of West Siberian Kray (“there is enough space here as well, there is no reason to look for some rayons in Siberia”), and clearly expressed his preference for it to be Stavropol Kray (based on the Gypsy selsoviet and kolkhoz *Trud Romen*), but allows the option to create such an area also in the Western region (Ibid., l. 77–125).

Although the decisions taken at the Meeting of SN 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

gypsies 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.

Immediately after the Meeting, ON VTsIK prepared the Draft of the Decree, which began with the words “Having heard the report of the instructor of the Department of Nationalities VTsIK, comrade Tokmakov”. In the first place, the Draft included the following decision: “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” (GARF, f. P 3316, op. 28, d. 793, l. 4–5). Following the discussion at the SN TsIK Presidium Meeting on February 16, 1936, it was decided after some revision to submit this Draft-Decree for approval (Президиум, 1936, pp. 89–91). During this time, Alexander Khatskevich actively lobbied the Soviet institutions for the urgent adoption of this Decree. In his 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, l. 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* (Постановление, 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”, 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

existing contradictions between the positions of TsIK SSSR and NKVD on the issue of Gypsy autonomy, which find their expression in the policy pursued in this direction.

In the summer of the same year, Gypsy activists managed to publicly present the idea of creating a Gypsy national territorial-administrative unit. In one of the most popular central newspapers, *Komsomolskaya Pravda* a column 'Workers Propose' was established and workers were invited to send their proposal for the so-called nationwide discussion of the draft of the new Constitution of the USSR (adopted on December 05, 1936). There was published a proposal for the creation of a "Gypsy Autonomous Oblast within the RSFSR or the Ukrainian SSR, uniting presently scattered Gypsy kolkhozes" (*Комсомольская правда*, 1936a, p. 2). It is not clear who the authors of this proposal are, their names (Yu. Maslennikov, V. Smirnov, V. Pletnev) are not those of known Gypsy activists, and it is likely that these were ordinary Soviet citizens. A few weeks later, in the same column, a letter was published on behalf of "the group of Moscow Gypsy activists at the Central Gypsy Club and the plenipotentiaries of the once again organized Gypsy kolkhoz in Kharkiv" (27 signatures attached) declaring:

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. (*Комсомольская правда*, 1936b, p. 2).

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 administrative 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 (today Samara), Gorky (today Nizhny Novgorod), Kirov krays, etc., including even the Ukrainian and Byelorussian SSR (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 found 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* 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; f. 5675, op. 1, 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. Today, in the post-Soviet space, among Roma there are many widespread legends about how Stalin promised the famous Gypsy artist Lyalya Chernaya that he would make a Gypsy Republic in the USSR. According to published material from the oral history of the Sikachev family (Калинин, 2005, pp. 45–47), in the winter of 1937, a large group of Gypsy nomads was deported to Siberia, from Moscow and its neighbouring regions. In Siberia, neat to the Taiga Station (today in Kemerovo Oblast), 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 from. We have also heard variants of this story during our past fieldwork research in Russian Federation and Ukraine.

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. The other option – that all documentation of the incident had been destroyed – seems the least likely. In this instance, it is most likely a case of secondary emerged quasi-history, in which the memory of real events is reflected, such as the deportation of Gypsies from Moscow in 1933, already mentioned above. The question remains open until (possible) new evidence is found. What is sure, is that the claim made by non-historians, 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) cannot be taken seriously, as the term ‘Romanestan’ was never used in the documents and publications of the early USSR; this label was created for the first time by Ionel Rotaru and appeared in France during the 1950s.

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 Organising 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, and after the war, in the new historical realities of the USSR, this question was never posed again.

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 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.

In 1936 Ivan Tokmakov was fired from his job at the Central Executive Committee and was appointed director of the Theatre *Romen*. The reasons for this change in his official position are not clear – on the one hand, it seems to be an elevating in the nomenclature hierarchy, but on the other, the new job deprived him of the opportunity to influence directly the Gypsy policy and specifically the work on creating a Gypsy national rayon/rayons. It is quite possible that the Soviet authorities considered that the strengthening of the State Gypsy Theatre *Romen*, which at that time was in a severe and permanent crisis, was a most urgent task at the moment. As director of the theatre, however, he not only failed to improve the situation but got into a new scandal over the premiere of the new play *Gypsies* (based on the poem by Alexander Pushkin) and the critical reviews in the press were accompanied by squabbles in the theatre staff (Германо, 1954, pp. 98–100). Eventually, on December 28, 1936, Ivan Tokmakov was dismissed from his post (Ibid., p. 106).

It is not known where Ivan Tokmakov was reassigned to work after his dismissal from Theatre *Romen*, and there are no data on the place of his work after 1936. What is known is that in June 1941 Ivan Tokmakov was the head of a factory workshop (ЛАНВ, ф. Николай Саткевич, д. Иван Токмаков). Undoubtedly, this meant the collapse of his political career – from the upper echelons of the central Soviet governing institutions (albeit in a low position in them) he found himself at the lowest rungs of the Soviet nomenklatura. However, this should not be interpreted as a manifestation of anti-Gypsyism. On the contrary, in this case, it is needed to be said that he (like other Gypsy activists) were

lucky to avoid the mass political repression in the 1930s. In July 1938, VTsIK, where he worked from 1931 to 1936, was disbanded and most of its functions were taken over by the Supreme Soviet of the RSFSR. In contrast, almost the entire political apparatus of the VTsIK (its former and current employees), including all the names mentioned so far related to the Gypsy policy of the Soviet state, were shot during the so-called Great Purge (1937–1938) or died in the GULAG camps.

Immediately after Nazi Germany attacked the USSR on June 22, 1941, Ivan Tokmakov enlisted as a volunteer in the Red Army, although he owned the so-called *броня* [literally ‘armour’, i.e. release from mobilisation]; in addition, he was already 53 years old and had health problems (Ibid.). The Soviet Army archives contain only the following brief information about him: “Ivan Petrovich Tokmakov; year of birth 1898” (Книга памяти, 2019), although he was born in 1888. If there is no typo, in this case, it means that Ivan Tokmakov managed to persuade the military administration to change his year of birth (or misled them) so that he could be accepted into military service.

The circumstances surrounding Ivan Tokmakov’s death have so far remained unclear. In the Soviet Army archives, he was declared “gone missing” on October 1, 1941 (Книга памяти, 2019). The only source for his fate after this date is the short biographical essay (unpublished) *Памяти Ивана Петровича Токмакова* (In Memory of Ivan Petrovich Tokmakov) by Nikolay Pankov (LANB, f. Nikolay Satkevich, d. Ivan Tokmakov), which is based on information obtained after the war from his comrades at the front and partisan detachment. This essay was supplemented after the death of Nikolay Pankov by his wife Yanina, who passed it on to Nikolay Satkevich.

According to this information, during the battles on the front, the military unit in which Ivan Tokmakov served came under siege. The other members of the VKP(b) buried their Party cards, but he kept his own (Ibid.), although he knew that he risked being shot on the spot if he was captured (which was a common practice). This shows that despite the vicissitudes of his life, Ivan Tokmakov remained true to his communist ideals. Shortly after these events, Ivan Tokmakov was captured, organised an escape from the POW camp and joined a partisan detachment in the German-occupied territories. He was taken captured again, and when he tried to escape from the camp, he was betrayed and died in torture, but did not betray his comrades (Ibid.). According to Nikolay Pankov, Ivan Tokmakov died in the prison of a war camp near Yelnya, Smolensk region (Ibid.), but according to other authors, this happened in a camp near Bobruisk, Mogilev region (Друц & Гесслер, 1990, p. 285; Калинин, 2005, p. 66), and today it is very difficult to determine what the truth was.

Ivan Tokmakov was the undisputed main leader of the Roma civic emancipation movement in the 1930s in the USSR. Unlike the leaders of this movement in the 1920s, he was not only a visionary who offered his ideas to the authorities and assisted in their realisation but, even more, due to his authority through the Soviet Party and state apparatus, he actively initiated and realised (at least when possible) his ideas in this field.

The fact that he failed to complete all his endeavours due to the general changes in the national policy of the USSR in the late 1930s in no way belittles his indisputable merits of the Roma civic emancipation.

Nikolay Pankov

Elena Marushiakova and Vesselin Popov

Nikolay Alexandrovich Pankov (1895–1959) occupies a very special place in the history of the Roma civic emancipation movement in the USSR. The source data, based on which this biographical essay was prepared, is also unique in its own way, so it is worth saying a few additional words about it separately. For more than 30 years, Nikolay Pankov has been creating his own huge personal archive, which could be a worthy subject of special research. This archive includes various documents about the era, newspaper clippings, manuscripts written by Nikolay Pankov himself and by other authors, collections of linguistic and folklore materials, his personal diary from the 1950s, his correspondence with Gypsy activists and researchers in the USSR and beyond, etc., including two versions of memories about him written by his wife Yanina Stefanovna. Unfortunately, perhaps the most interesting manuscript, the memoirs of Nikolay Pankov himself, large passages of which were quoted in the book by Efim Drutz and Alexey Gessler (Друц & Гесслер, 1990), has not yet been discovered.

The fate of this archive is unusual. It has been preserved over the years thanks to his two daughters Natalia and Lyubov (Lyuba). To make this documentary wealth more accessible, Lyuba Pankova had for years distributed parts of the archive (or handwritten copies of materials made by herself) to anyone interested in it. Thus, currently, parts of this archive are kept by at least five or six people, who live in different countries and continents. In the course of our work, we had the opportunity to use most of the documentary heritage of Nikolay Pankov, preserved by the late Nikolay Bessonov and Valdemar Kalinin who kindly provided us access to the original, as well as by Ilona Makhotina (with whom we are in correspondence).

According to his Autobiography, written in 1955, Nikolay Pankov was born in St Petersburg on May 7th (20th according to the new calendar style), 1895. His father's family was sedentary for a long time; already his grand-grand father Mikhail Arkhipovich Pankov (called 'барвало Миша', i.e. the rich Mikhail) settled in Novgorod; his son Petr, Nikolay Pankov's grandfather, moved to St Petersburg with his entire extended family (PAVK; copy of the Autobiography, made by Yanina Stefanovna, preserved in LANB, f. Николай Саткевич, d. Николай Панков).

The connection of Nikolay Pankov's clan with the Gypsy musical elite in the Russian Empire is beyond any doubt, although there are some vague points in this regard. Nikolay

Pankov himself collected and processed a lot of information about the history of his family, but most of the collected materials are not preserved and today we have only their later interpretations.

According to his daughter Lyubov Pankova, the Pankovs family is closely connected with the creation of the first Gypsy choir in the Russian Empire led by Ivan Sokolov (founder of the famous “dynasty” of Gypsy musicians) in 1774 in the estate of Count Alexey Orlov, brother of Grigoriy Orlov (one of the favourites of Catherine II) near Moscow. One of the members of this choir was Ivan Pankov (‘Ванюша Стрямкускиро чаво’, i.e. Ivan, son of Stryamku), who had the civil status of a ‘merchant of the second guild’, i.e. typical middle class (PAVK).

It is interesting to note that in this chronology of the Pankovs family, made by Lyubov Pankova, the first known ancestor of Kryoma (Stryamku’s father) was born and lived in the second half of the 17th century. This information directly corresponds to the famous quote “Цыгане суть люди в Польщи, а поидоша от Немец, на татьбу и всяко зло хитры” (Gypsies are people in Poland, who come from Germany, they are master in cunning and all kinds of evil), from an *Азбуковник* (an Alphabet-book, handwritten encyclopedic dictionary) from 1697. This source is accepted as evidence of the first appearances of Gypsies in Russia which happened following the Russo-Polish War of 1654–1667, as a result of which some eastern Russian lands and Ukraine were annexed to Russia (Баранников, 1929, p. 371), i.e. Pankov’s family in Lyubov Pankova interpretation originated from the first Roma who settled on the territory of Russia.

According to Drutz and Gessler’s version of the origin of the Pankovi family, in the second half of the 19th century Grigoriy Sokolov, a descendant of the famous “dynasty” of Gypsy musicians, the Sokolovs, in search of participants for his new Gypsy choir, visited Novgorod, where he discovered the three Pankovs sisters, who married in the family of Masalskiy, and the two families, practically largely united, moved to the capital St Petersburg (Друц & Гесслер, 1990, pp. 242–243). After the death of Grigoriy Sokolov, the leadership of the new choir was taken over first by Rodion Kalabin, and later by Nikolay Shishkin (Ibid., p. 244). To the two interlinked extended families (the Pankovs and the Masalyskiys) belonged numerous renowned Gypsy musicians and singers. Some of them entered into mixed marriages with members of the highest Russian nobility.

The ties of Nikolay Pankov’s family with the high aristocracy in the Russian Empire are unquestionable. The already mentioned famous reporter Egon Erwin Kisch witnessed that, according to what Nikolay Pankov told to him, he has an aunt who lives as an immigrant in Nice in the 1920s; she was a countess, widow of General Solsky (Kisch, 1992, p. 119). Nikolay Pankov’s “great-grandaunt” (his paternal grandmother’s sister) Anna Masalskaya (not to be confused with the famous singer Anna Vasilyevna Masalskaya, married Nepokoychitskaya) had a long-term relationship with a member of the Romanov’s dynasty, His Royal Highness Prince George Yurovskiy, who was the son of Alexander II and his second, morganatic wife, Princess Yekaterina Dolgorukova (Ibid.);

in 1900 Princess Dolgorukova married her son to end his relationship with the Gypsy woman, with her he had two children. For understandable reasons, in the conditions of the Soviet state, Nikolay Pankov avoided publicising these family ties with the former Tsar dynasty (in his entire archive there is no word about this family history) and made it only in front of a foreigner (in our case Egon Erwin Kisch).

The maiden family name of Nikolay Pankov's mother, Yekaterina Ilyinichna (the father's name is palpably Russified), was Nikkanen. She was of Finnish *Kaale* origin, i.e. from a community that today live mainly in Finland. At that time, Finland was part of the Russian Empire (albeit with a special status), and *Kaale's* settlement in the capital of the Empire, St Petersburg, as well as marriages with Roma, although relatively rare, were not uncommon. The family of Nikolay Pankov's mother led a nomadic lifestyle between what is now Sweden and Finland. His mother's father settled in St Petersburg, had roaming only in the summer months in the rural areas close to the capital in present-day Finland and Estonia (ПАНК; ЛАНВ, ф. Николай Саткевич, д. Николай Панков). As a young girl, Pankov's mother was taken to one of the Gypsy choirs in St Petersburg, where "she became famous not for her talent, but for her exceptional beauty". At the age of 16, she married Nikolay Pankov's father and left the choir to take care of the children and the family (Ibid.).

According to Nikolay Pankov himself, his father was a "man, engaged in buying and selling and exchanging horses". Yanina Stefanovna knew some additional details about her husband's family, which she first wrote down, but then scratched through in her memoirs, probably due to self-censorship according to the spirit of the era: "The son of a rich Petersburg Gypsy, a horse merchant and horse breeder, [...] who supplied horses for state institutions at that time and deserved respect" (Ibid.). From this it becomes clear that Nikolay Pankov's family was relatively wealthy – they had their own home in St Petersburg with a large stable, serviced by employees, they maintained a large household. The family was large, they had 14 children, but most of them died as children or at a younger age. Other relatives lived with them, including his father's sisters, who worked for him in various Gypsy choirs (Ibid.).

Nikolay Pankov wrote the following about his education:

I did not receive a systematic education. After graduating from elementary parish school, where I went on my own, without the help of my parents, [...] in 1910, I started working as a "boy" at the Main Telegraph and was persistently engaged in self-education. [...] I did not go to work in search of a livelihood but in search of a different way of life. By 1912, I had mastered the Russian language so much that I could engage in "intelligent" work and already worked in the office of one of St Petersburg's notaries. By this time, I was a reader in the library [...] and a regular buyer from the small booksellers in the book market and I did not miss a single public lecture. [...]

Soon the ground was created for a conflict between a worried father and his son, who is stepping away from the power of tradition. But in December 1913, my father died, and I continued my way of working life and intellectual development of a single self-taught. (Ibid.).

Nikolay Pankov very precisely defined himself as *самоучка* (a self-taught person) who had only two years of school education, but consciously educated himself and raised his general cultural level by reading books and attending public lectures, libraries, theatre and music performances, museums and art galleries. Moreover, Nikolay Pankov made this choice of way of life from an early age, not only in his adolescence but throughout his life (Ibid.). He was the only child in the family who enrolled in school, and he made it on his initiative without the help of his parents – at the age of 7–8, learning that his friends in children’s games enrol in school, he asked the mother of one of them to enlist also him. His parents did not object, but after two years of schooling, they decided that he is already educated enough for a Gypsy boy from a wealthy family, and they stopped him from school. Because he read a lot, his mother worried that too much reading will be bad for his health and forbade it; then he began to read at night by candlelight, by the light of street lanterns, and by the moonshine (Ibid.).

After the 1917 October Revolution, in the new Soviet state, in 1918 Nikolay Pankov began working as a clerk in various institutions, as a school teacher, as an educator at children home with a dormitory (Ibid.).

In the early 1920s, serious changes took place in the life of the large Pankovs family. Nikolay Pankov’s father died in 1913 (on the eve of the First World War) and, accordingly, the family’s income decreased significantly, as the situation became even worse after the October Revolution and following the economic destruction. According to Lyubov Pankova, the Pankovi family became homeless and “escaping from hunger”, Nikolay Pankov’s mother decided to move the whole family to the new capital Moscow in 1922 (PAVK). However, according to evidence of Olga Pankova (about her see below) preserved in family history, the Pankovs family left Leningrad earlier, and initially (in 1920) settled in Tambov gubernia, where the eldest son, Ivan (Olga’s father), found a job as a horseman in a Red Army sovkhoz. There Nikolay Pankov was mobilised in the Red Army and served for one year in the local military enlistment office, as can be seen from a form he filled out in the 1930s (Ibid.), and after Ivan’s death, the family moved to Moscow in 1922.

In Moscow, Nikolay Pankov subsisted on occasional daily earnings but continued to visit public libraries regularly. In November 1922, he met his future wife, Yanina Stefanovna (in Russified version Stepanovna), her last name is unknown, who was an ethnic Polish woman. According to the family legend (retold to us by Nadezhda Belugina who knew the family), which entered the oral history of the community, one day the library was unexpectedly closed, and at its entrance, Nikolay Pankov and Yanina, who also often visited this library, met. In April 1923, the couple got married, and their marriage turned out to be extremely successful. Yanina Stefanovna quickly learned the Romani language and fully integrated into the community, and over the years she has been a stable supporter in the life and activities of Nikolay Pankov. After his death, she continued his work and not only kept his archive but continued to maintain his numerous contacts and exchange of various materials and information on the Gypsy topic. Moreover, she establishes new

contacts, among preserved documents is her correspondence with Anatoliy Kalinin (Ibid.), author of the famous novel *The Gypsy* (repeatedly supplemented and republished), on which two feature films were made (1967, 1994), an extremely popular TV series (1979), and an equally popular its sequel (1985), and even an opera.

In the autumn of 1923, Nikolay Pankov began work in the so-called Dynamo Plant (full name Moscow Electric Machine-Building Plant named after S. M. Kirov); in 1924 his first daughter Natalia was born and in 1925 his second daughter Lyubov (Lyuba). At that time, Nikolay Pankov became actively involved in the emerging at that time movement for Roma civic emancipation in the USSR (PAVK; LANB, ф. Николай Саткевич, д. Николай Панков).

Nikolay Pankov's name first appeared in the VSTs documentation in the Minutes of the Plenum of Moscow Gypsy Delegates, held on August 6, 1925, which made it clear that he had been elected to the Presidium of the Union, comprising a total of 11 members (GARF, ф. P 1235, оп. 120, д. 27, л. 182; ф. P 393, оп. 43 А, д. 1763, л. 123). At the end of 1925, this Presidium was reformatted and took over the general leadership of the VSTs. It included the President of the Union Andrey Taranov, Vice-President Sergey Polyakov, Secretary Ivan Lebedev, Mikhail Bezlyudskiy and Nikolay Pankov (GARF, ф. P 1235, оп. 120, д. 27, л. 83–85). In this leadership, Nikolay Pankov was the head of the Cultural and Educational Department, and Egon Erwin Kisch, who met and talked to him in this capacity, described him as an "extremely well-lettered factory worker" (Kisch, 1992, p. 119). The results achieved in the Cultural and Educational field are impressive. In October 1925, in the Rogozhsko-Simonovskiy district of Moscow, a Gypsy school was opened, in which, at the personal request of Nikolay Pankov in the People's Commissariat, Nina Dudarova was appointed as a teacher (PAVK; LANB, ф. Николай Панков). Shortly afterwards, there were already three Gypsy schools in Moscow, and one of them published a wall newspaper called *Романи глос* (Gypsy voice) (Kisch, 1992, p. 119). Several adult literacy courses (likbez) began to operate regularly; several songs and music groups were formed, which performed in various workers' clubs; a children's music school was established, in which reading of notes was not taught, so as not to destroy the Gypsy ability of musicians to play by ear; there were even courses for the treatment of horses (GARF, ф. P 1235, оп. 120, д. 27; Kisch, 1992, p. 119).

One of the first tasks that VSTs set itself immediately after its official registration in July 1925 and in the implementation of which Nikolay Pankov took a leading role was the creation of an alphabet for writing in Romani. As early as the end of 1925, in a document entitled VSTs General Working Scheme, it was noted that a meeting of the VSTs Presidium had already been held on the issue of making the Gypsy Alphabet, and a commission had been set up and scientific forces had been involved (GARF, ф. P 1235, оп. 120, д. 27). The Working Plan for 1926 provided: "A) Development of the alphabet; b) Compilation of grammar and vocabulary; c) Publishing a primer, anthology; d) Posters, leaflets; e) Brochures of various kinds, as before developing the alphabet and grammar, use the Russian Alphabet and the Gypsy colloquial speech" (Ibid.).

In the description of the entire process of elaboration and approval by the Narkompros of the alphabet of the Romani language, there are larger or smaller discrepancies in the different sources and their presentation by the individual authors. According to the most widespread version, by order of Anatoliy Lunacharskiy, the head of the Narkompros of the RSFSR, the General Directorate of Scientific, Academic-Artistic and Museum Institutions (Glavnauka) at the Narkompros hold a Scientific-Consultative Meeting, where a *Committee for Creation of the Gypsy Language Alphabet* was established. According to some sources, members of this Committee were Prof. Maxim Sergievskiy from the Moscow State University, his assistant Tatyana Ventzel, and as representatives of the *All-Russian Union of the Gypsies* – Nikolay Pankov, Nina Dudarova and Nikolay Rogozhev (Друц & Гесслер, 1990, p. 295).

According to Andrey Taranov's memoirs, however, he initially turned to the famous linguist Nikolay Marr, who advised him to approach Prof. Maxim Sergievskiy (Иващенко, 2011, p. 7). Then, in his words, "with my direct participation, together with Kolya (Nikolay) Pankov, the issue of creating Gypsy writing was raised before the Ministry of Enlightenment" (LANB, f. Николай Саткевич, d. Андрей Таранов). In 1926, a commission was established, which included as representatives of VSTs Nikolay Pankov and Nina Dudarova, as well as Prof. Maxim Sergievskiy and Tatyana Ventzel (Иващенко, 2011, p. 7). In his autobiography, however, Taranov points as members of the Committee Prof. Maxim Sergievskiy, Tatyana Ventzel, Nikolay Pankov, and another Moscow State University professor whose name he does not remember (LANB, f. Николай Саткевич, d. Андрей Таранов). According to a collective letter from the leadership of the VSTs to the *Commission for Compiling a Primer and Grammars* from 1927, the members of this commission were Prof. Maxim Sergievskiy, Nikolay Rogozhev, Nina Dudarova and Nikolay Pankov (PAVK). In a short article about the creation of the Gypsy Alphabet, however, Prof. Maxim Sergievskiy points a different composition – himself with only Nikolay Pankov and Nina Dudarova as his assistants (Романы зоря, 1927g, pp. 13–14), meaning that the question about Committee members remains open. In any case, the important contribution of Nikolay Panov as one of the initiators and creators of the Gypsy Alphabet in the USSR is unquestionable, for which the best proof is the fact that his name is present in all these versions.

The *Committee for the Creation of the Gypsy Language Alphabet* was attached to the Institute for Teaching Methods and was responsible for coordinating teaching activities and publishing of works in the Romani language, including Romani literature. In pursuance of the decision of this Committee, adopted after lengthy deliberations, on May 10, 1927, the Narkom Anatoliy Lunacharskiy sent a special official letter about creating a Gypsy Alphabet to the leadership of the *All-Russian Union of the Gypsies* (LANB, f. Nikolay Pankov; a copy of this letter is also stored in OGMLT, f. 29, op. 1, d. 49, l. 33), which, according to the practice of the time, had the force of a normative document. The alphabet created in this way was the first in the world (and for many years the only one) official normative alphabet of the Romani language. Gypsy activists in the early USSR

understood very well the extreme importance and even symbolic significance of this fact in the context of Roma civic emancipation, so all of them, in dozens and dozens of cases, in various official documents and publications, invariably emphasised this. However, they did not always follow its norms, e.g. the letter 'ı', provided for in the normative alphabet, was practically not used anywhere in the publications in the Romani language.

The newly created alphabet for the Romani language was based on the variant of the Cyrillic alphabet. Interesting is the note of Egon Erwin Kisch, made even before the alphabet in the Romani language was officially confirmed, that the Narkompros is preparing such an alphabet, which will be based on the Latin alphabet so that it can reach all Gypsies in different countries around the world (Kisch, 1992, p. 117), i.e. publications in the Romani language were meant to be used for propaganda of the Soviet state abroad. However, there is no other confirmation of this information, but perhaps there was such an idea (without practical implementation) among some Soviet officials (and why not also among some Gypsy activists). In any case, when on the initiative of Anatoly Lunacharskiy (the main ideologue of Latinization) in his capacity as head of the Narkompros, a mass action for Latinization of a large part of the alphabets of different nationalities in the USSR began (Martin, 2001, pp. 182–203), which lasted until the second half of the 1930s (Latinized alphabets were created for more than 70 nationalities), Gypsies were not among them. In all likelihood, however, there were people among the Soviet authorities who realised the futility of the idea of using printed propaganda materials among Gypsies abroad, most of whom were illiterate at that time.

At the same time, the Soviet state, as part of its affirmative policy towards the Gypsies, had already begun to attract Gypsy children to school and to organise adult literacy courses, and in this context, the Cyrillic alphabet appeared as much more necessary and useful. In other words, when it comes to choosing between the needs of Gypsies as a cross-border community or as part of Soviet society, the Soviet authorities strongly preferred the latter option (and there is no evidence that some Gypsy activists disagreed with this choice, and to have pleaded for a transition to Latin alphabet).

Nikolay Pankov's participation in the activities of the VSTs management to overcome the crisis that occurred as a result of numerous inspections and attempts at reorganisation is relatively limited. As a member of the Presidium of the Union, he participated in its meetings, e.g. in May 1926, when two representatives of the Union (Andrey Taranov and Mikhail Bezlyudskiy) were elected to the Commission on Land Management of the Gypsies at the Federal Committee for Land Affairs under the VTsIK Presidium (GARF, f. P 3260, op. 6, d. 44, pp. 14). In general, however, he stayed away from the internal struggles in the leadership of the VSTs (or at least did not actively intervene in them), although he was involved in attempts to reformate the Union by replacing the VSTs Presidium with the Board of Founders, which included Andrey Taranov, Ivan Lebedev, Dmitriy Polyakov, Georgiy Lebedev, and Nikolay Pankov (GARF, f. P 393, op. 43 A, d. 1763, l. 160).

As already mentioned above, in 1927 a poster was printed on behalf of the *All-Russian Union of Gypsies Living in the Territory of the RSFSR*, entitled *To Gypsy Inhabitants*

of RSFSR (GARF, f. P 9550, op. 2, d. 2010, l. 1; Marushiakova & Popov, 2021b, pp. 712–718). The poster was bilingual, in Russian and Romani, and was signed by the leadership of VSTs (chairman Andrey Taranov, secretary Ivan Lebedev and board members Nikolay Pankov, Dmitriy Polyakov and Nina Dudarova). It can be assumed that the text in Romani was prepared by Nikolay Pankov, who was the best Romani speaker of the VSTs leadership.

Nikolay Pankov's numerous activities in the field of Roma civic emancipation took him a lot of time and energy, and at the same time, he was forced to continue working to support his family. A letter from the Council for Education of Nationalities of the Non-Russian Language at Narkompros to the Management of Dynamo Plant is preserved, in which it is explained that Nikolay Pankov is authorized by VSTs to take part in the work of the Union, but VSTs is not able to pay him for his work. For this reason, the Union's management requested that he be relieved of his duties during working hours of at least a few hours in a week (PAVK). In 1927, after the publication of the first issue of the Gypsy journal *Romany zorya*, Nikolay Pankov left the factory and devoted himself entirely to various activities in the field of Gypsy activism, which continued also after the liquidation of VSTs. As part of the *Socially and Politically Active Gypsies Living in Moscow* (de facto informal organisation of Gypsy activists in Moscow), he participated in the Conference on the Gypsy Question organised by the newspaper *Komsomolskaya Pravda*, held on October 7, 1929, for discussing of the article by Georgiy Lebedev and Alexander German, entitled *What to Do with the Gypsies?* (Комсомольская правда, 1929, p. 4). In his speech, he focused on the problems that existed in the Central Gypsy Club, where, in his words, "now all the work is run by almost kulak elements" (GARF, f. P 1235, op. 121, d. 31).

After 1927, Nikolay Pankov did not have a permanent full-time job and fed his family with fees received from various places. This was the time when the Gypsy national literature was born and developed rapidly, and Nikolay Pankov was a leading figure in the organisation of this process. He not only participated in the preparation of the publication of the two Gypsy journals, *Романы зоря* (1927–1930) и *Нэво дром* (1930–1932), reviewed and edited the received materials, but also published many of his poems, translated works and journalistic essays.

Already in the first issue of *Romany zorya*, which marked the beginning of the Gypsy periodical press in the USSR, Nikolay Pankov was the author of one of the leading articles, *Лыла ромэндър и ромэнгэ* (Books from Gypsies for Gypsies) (Романы зоря, 1927f, pp. 7–8), in which he justified the need to create own national literature and its importance for the Roma, and in another article, *Амарэ клубы* (Our Clubs) (Романы зоря, 1927e, pp. 10–13) about the Gypsy clubs in Moscow and their significance for the community.

Nikolay Pankov worked also as an editor on editorial boards created by freelancers at various publishing houses – Tsentizdat, Goslitizdat, Uchpedgiz, Selkhozgiz, *Molodaya Gvardiya* (Young Guard), etc. A review of the lists of published literature in Romani (see Кожанов & Шаповал, 2018; Shapoval, 2021bc), including over 260 book titles, shows that

the most common name (as the author, translator or editor) is that of Nikolay Pankov (repeated more than 100 times); just for comparison, the name of arguably the most prolific author, considered by his contemporaries to be a “classic of Gypsy literature,” Alexander Germano, occurs more than 60 times. In this way, a large part of the Gypsy national literature in the USSR passed through the eyes of Nikolay Pankov, and his contribution was enormous for its overall development. No less important was Nikolay Pankov’s contribution to the development of Gypsy national literature, and more generally, to the processes of Roma civic emancipation through the translation into Romani of works from Russian and world literary classics, e.g. *Carmen* by Prosper Merimee (Мериме, 1935). Nikolay Pankov himself evaluates his contribution in this field as follows:

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 people 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. (ПАНКОВ; ЛАНБ, ф. Николай Саткевич, д. Николай Панков).

Probably due to the great editorial and translation commitment of Nikolay Pankov, his authorial artistic literary work is much more modest. Thus, in practice, it is precisely the man who has done so much for the development of Gypsy national literature who has not published his own books of fiction, although he undoubtedly possessed poetic talent. Evidence of this is his poems published in the journals *Romany zorya* and *Nevo drom*, and also in the first *Almanac of the Gypsy Poets* (Германо, 1931, pp. 52–54), and the translations into Romani of the famous poem *Gypsies* by Alexander Pushkin, as well as his tales in verse (Пушкин, 1936; 1937).

In parentheses, Nikolay Pankov is also the author of almost all translations into Romani of works by Lenin and Stalin. He translated at least 3 books by Vladimir Lenin and 6 books by Joseph Stalin, but sometimes political publications did not have their translator’s name listed on the cover (Shapoval, 2021bc), i.e. it is quite possible that he was also a translator of other similar publications. This shows the confidence in the skills he enjoyed and because of which he was commissioned to translate publications that were so important from a political point of view.

Nikolay Pankov also devoted a lot of time and effort to the preparation and publication of textbooks and teaching aids. Together with Nina Dudarova, they jointly prepared the first primer for learning the Romani language, intended for adult literacy (Дударова & Панково, 1928), as well as the first primer for children in Gypsy schools (Панково & Дударова, 1930a). Independently or in co-authorship, Nikolay Pankov prepared another series of textbooks for Gypsy children and adults, including two chrestomathies of teaching literature with translations of works by Russian authors (Панков, 1933; 1934ab; 1935; Панково & Дударова, 1930b; Германо & Панково, 1932; 1934; Германо & Модина &

Панково, 1932). Special mention should also be made of Nikolay Pankov's book *Быты и джибэн* (Work and Life), aimed at for adult education, which includes short essays in which the history of Gypsies and various aspects of their lives in the Soviet state were presented in a popular form (Панков, 1929).

Nikolay Pankov was among the initiators and participants in the process of creating the State Gypsy Theatre *Romen*, was included in its artistic council, participated in the selection of artists in the theatre and took care of the solving of their everyday problems (LANB, ф. Николай Панков). He was actively involved in public discussions of the problems in the theatre, e.g. at the meeting of the "functionaries of the Moscow Gypsies" (GARF, ф. Р 1235, оп. 123, д. 28, л. 183–186) in December 1933, held on the initiative of the Commission on Nationalities of the Moscow City Executive Committee, the participants in which sharply criticized the work of the theatre and its director Georgiy Lebedev, as well as the staging of the play *Carmen*, for which there were many critical reviews in the press at the time (Ibid.). By order of the theatre's director Moses Goldblatt, Nikolay Pankov prepared a theatrical adaptation of Nikolay Leskov's short novel *The Enchanted Wanderer*, which was accepted for staging by the Theatre's Art Council but was later rejected by the new administration (LANB, ф. Николай Панков). At the same time, the play *Grushenka*, written by the famous playwright Isidor Shtock (Ром-Лебедев, 1990, p. 186), based on the same short novel, was staged at the Theatre *Romen*.

During Ivan Tokmakov's brief tenure as director at the Theatre *Romen* in 1936 (see above), Nikolay Pankov stood firmly on his side in the ensuing ferment and scandals in the theatre's staff, which began after the press criticised the new stage play *Gypsies* of the famous poem by Alexander Pushkin, as well as during its discussion by the Art Council of the theatre (PAVK). Moreover, in his unpublished book on the history of Theatre *Romen*, Alexander German accused in the first place Nikolay Pankov, on whose recommendation the new head of the literary part (playwright) of the theatre, Sergey Ignatov, was appointed. Nikolay Pankov was denounced by Alexander German as the bearer of the "left phrase" [i.e. adherer of leftist theatrical ideology] and the main inspirer and perpetrator of the so-called "rotten groupism" [i.e. the culprit for the division of the theatre team into rival groups] (Германо, 1954, pp. 102–104). Eventually, after the dismissal of Ivan Tokmakov from the post of theatre director at the end of 1936, Nikolay Pankov was isolated from the activities of Theatre *Romen* (LANB, ф. Николай Панков).

Shortly after this case, Nikolay Pankov made a last attempt to influence the development of Theatre *Romen*. He wrote a long article entitled *Gypsy Theatre – Not a National Theatre*, the manuscript of which he passed to the editors of the journal *Narodnoe tvorchestvo* (Folk Art) (RGALI, ф. 673, оп. 1, д. 454, л. 104–110). This text is especially appealing because it reveals his views on what the Gypsy National Theatre should be – an issue that had repeatedly stood before Theatre *Romen* in its long history, and which continues to be relevant today (Бессонов, 2013, pp. 453–464), and not only for Theatre *Romen* but also for all Gypsy / Roma theatres, including to this day.

Putting the dilemma to whom the work of Theatre *Romen* should be directed – to the Gypsy community or to society as a whole – Nikolay Pankov gives an unambiguous and definite answer. According to him, “the Gypsy theatre must, first of all, become the cultural factor for its people”, and it “must serve first of all its people, [...] the Gypsy mass of spectators, because Gypsy art in our socialist construction must be used in educating the Gypsy masses” (RGALI, f. 673, op. 1, d. 454, l. 104–110). To fulfil this main task and be truly national, Theatre *Romen* must reorganise all its activities and focus mainly on permanent and long tours, as the “Gypsy masses” live scattered throughout the Soviet country, and the theatre must reach its viewer. It should be noted that throughout his text Nikolay Pankov avoids taking a stand on the already discussed issue in the theatre concerning what language the performances should be in (see above), but from the whole logic of his presentation, it follows that they should instead be in Romani (which contradicts the choice already made for them to be in Russian).

In his article, Nikolay Pankov analysed critically specific productions of Theatre *Romen* – the plays *Life on Wheels* (author Alexander German), *Daughter of the Steppes* and *Wedding in the Tabor* (author of both is Ivan Rom-Lebedev). At the same time, he did not deny their leading, ideologically conditioned messages – exposing class enemies in the Gypsy camp and proclaiming the Gypsy woman’s right to free love (almost in the spirit of the famous Alexandra Kolontay) – but focused mainly on the shortcomings in the artistic presentation of ethnographic characteristics of Gypsies (“anti-national distortions of Gypsy life”), including even used stage costumes. In other words, Nikolay Pankov was trying to discuss 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. However, there are no grounds for such interpretations; because, as Pankov himself writes, “in pursuit of the exotic” in its quest to meet the expectations of the mass audience, expecting to see in the Gypsy theatre “more mainly songs and dances”, the theatre loses its basic characteristics and especially its social functions as a national theatre. In fact, his approach represents a typical and legitimate ethnonational discourse (in this case a Gypsy discourse) to teach national art (in this case the theatre). This is very clear in the author’s calls for the Gypsy Theatre to be, in the first place, an ethnic, national theatre, that would educate the Gypsy masses in this national spirit. Moreover, Nikolay Pankov, unlike all others (Roma and non-Roma), writing or speaking about Theatre *Romen*, did not speculate demagogically with the declared leading goal in the creation of the theatre – the fight against the so-called *tsiganshchina* – and offers something completely different. According to him, non-Roma specialists who know the language and life of the Gypsies should be brought to the deed, and with their help, the research work on the Gypsy folklore should be organised in the theatre, i.e. Theatre *Romen* needed to significantly diversify and enrich its public functions, thus becoming a true national cultural centre of the Gypsies in the USSR.

In the end, in his article, Nikolay Pankov came to the disappointing conclusion:

These cursory remarks of the theatre's main shortcomings are enough to say that the theatre (is far from the path that a modern national theatre should follow) and has many mistakes 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 them – the people do not need it and it cannot be called national. It is permissible to think that a theatre that distorts the truth and does not know how to show its people correctly is not needed for an international audience either. (Ibid., p. 108).

The manuscript of Nikolay Pankov's article has been submitted for review to the famous theatrical critic Isaac Lubinskiy. 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 *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" (RGALI, f. 673, op. 1, d. 454, l. 203). In the end, Nikolay Pankov's article was not published.

In 1933, an important turning point in the life of Nikolay Pankov took place. He began working as a teacher of Romani language in the newly opened Gypsy Department at the Pedagogical College of the Krasno Presnensky District named after Timiryazev (GARF, f. P 1235, op. 130, d. 5), which in 1935 was separated into an independent Gypsy Pedagogical College, which existed until 1938 (GARF, f. P 1235, op. 127, d. 8). In this position, he quickly became a mentor to the trained students – young men and women, detached from their native places and family environment, which he involved in the field of Gypsy activism. The students from the college regularly participate in the public events organised by the Central Gypsy Club and the Theatre *Romen*, cooperate with the leading Gypsy artels, etc. In 1934, Nikolay Pankov was appointed by ON VTsIK from Narkomzem to lead a one-month working trip of students from the Gypsy Department in selected Gypsy kolkhozes, who were sent there to support during their summer vacation on-site cultural and educational work (GARF, f. P 1235, op. 123, d. 28; f. P 1235, op. 127, d. 8). The selected students went to Gypsy kolkhozes *Nevo drom* (Krasnodar kray), *Trud Romen* (Mineralnovodskiy rayon, Stavropol krai), *Nevo dzhiben* (Shahunsky rayon, Gorky kray), and *Nevi baxt* (Sarapul rayon, then Kirov oblast), and after the end of the work, the team prepared detailed reports on the overall condition of these kolkhozes (Ibid.).

On this basis, Nikolay Pankov prepared an extensive Report to ON VTsIK, in which he presented in detail the existing weaknesses and problems, and outlined the reasons that "hinder the movement of Gypsies to sedentary life and work and also the organisational and economic strengthening of established kolkhozes". In conclusion, he made a series of proposals to Narkomzem and Narkompros, the implementation of which would

support the successful development of Gypsy collective farms (GARF, f. P 1235, op. 123, d. 28, l. 403–429).

During his work in the Gypsy Department at the Pedagogical College of the Krasno Presnensky District named after Timiryazev, Nikolay Pankov faced several problems of various kinds that required his active intervention. Some of these problems, which are of a living and domestic nature (e.g. provision of the dormitory, amount of scholarships, obtaining reduced passes for the canteen of the technical school, etc.) were solved, albeit slowly (GARF, f. P 1235, op. 123, d. 28; f. P 1235, op. 127, d. 8). However, other problems were more serious. On March 15, 1935, a meeting of the leadership of the Pedagogical College and the students in the Gypsy Department was held, which was also attended by more than 30 Gypsy activists from the Central Gypsy Club, Theatre *Romen*, and the *Tsygkhiprom* and *Yugoslavia* artels, which mentored the college students and supported them economically (GARF, f. P 1235, op. 127, d. 8). At this meeting, after the address of the director of the college, in their speeches, students sharply raised many of the existing problems in their education, even leading to a conflict situation. In his speech, the student Runenko raised the question of the need for the Gypsy Department to have a Gypsy as the head of the educational part. Ivan Tomakov, an instructor at ON VTsIK, who attended the meeting, replied: “Comrade Runenko, you have deviated into nationalism, I don’t think that all the students are so mischievous, but if even so, then such a mood should be eliminated”, and only the intervention of Nikolay Pankov managed to calm the conflict (Ibid.). It is significant that Pankov was not afraid to publicly object to the official representative of the higher Soviet institutions and to defend his student (it should be borne in mind that he maintains close friendly relations with Ivan Tokmakov).

The separation of Gypsy Pedagogical College as an independent educational institution in the autumn of 1935 did not completely solve the existing problems. It is no coincidence that at the Meeting of the Council of Nationalities at the TsIK USSR *On the Questions of the Employment of Toiling Nomadic Gypsies and Their Cultural and Economic Services*, held on 4 and 5 January 1936 (GARF, f. P 3316, op. 28, d. 794, l. 77–125), Nikolay Pankov was not included in the group of representatives of Gypsy Pedagogical College who participated in the meeting. However he still took part in the meeting (in the Minutes he is presented as a “Gypsy writer”), and in his speech, he pointed out the acute problems with Gypsy Pedagogical College (which were not so much inside the College itself, but outside it):

There are too many abnormalities in the College. Young people in the College are neglected, left to their own. From the first enrollment of 28 people by 1936–37, only 5 people remained, the enrollment of the 1935–36 academic year was almost disrupted. If not for Comrade Tokmakov, we would not have enrollment in the college at all. (Ibid., pp. 92–93).

In his work as a lecturer at Gypsy Pedagogical College, Nikolay Pankov established friendly relations with the students, and after they completed their study and started work in various places in the country, he continued to maintain constant correspondence with many

of them. Their letters, preserved in his archives, are an important historical source for the real results and problems of the Soviet state's Gypsy policy. 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 ASSR. 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 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, seen in post-colonial discourse, Gypsies in the Russian Empire and USSR could be on the other side of the barricade, on the side of the 'invaders'. This is not something unique in the history of the Gypsies in the world: it would be enough to think of the Calon Gypsy slave traders of the eighteenth century in Brazil (Fotta, 2018).

The radical turn in the national policy of the USSR in the second half of the 1930s, which we have discussed many times before, also reflects on the life destiny of Nikolay Pankov. In 1938, the Gypsy Pedagogical College was disbanded and the students were given the opportunity to transfer to other similar educational institutions. However, their education in the Romani language was dropped, and Nikolay Pankov lost his job. In this situation, he again became a factory proletarian and began work at the Moscow Machine Tool Plant named after Sergo Ordzhonikidze (LANB, f. Николай Саткевич, д. Николай Панков).

At the beginning of 1938, it became clear to Nikolay Pankov that the current policy towards the Gypsies in the USSR was coming to an end and some of its most important achievements had been lost – the study of the Romani language was stopped, the Gypsy schools were closed and the publication of educational and fiction literature in the Romani language was stopped, although there is no explicit ban on this, and attempts to resume this publication process continued for several more years (Shapoval, 2021c). According to the memories of Yanina Stefanovna:

for the advanced part of the Gypsy intelligentsia, this was a complete ruin [...]; the liquidation of the Gypsy movement in 1938 deeply wounded Pankov's consciousness, he cannot believe that this is irrevocable [...]; Pankov can't and don't want to believe in this wreckage. (LANB, f. Николай Панков).

Desperate because of this development, he decided on the last possible move – to write directly a personal letter to Stalin himself, with which he tried to reverse the course of events. A draft of his letter to Stalin, dated February 1938, is kept in his personal archive, and it is explicitly stated that a second, edited version of this letter was sent (LANB, f. Николай Панков). According to Yanina Stefanovna, this second version was sent to Stalin on May 25, 1938; about a month later, Nikolay Pankov inquired whether his letter had been received, and understood that there would be no reply (Ibid.). In this case, for us, the initial version of Nikolay Pankov's letter to Stalin is more interesting because it more clearly shows the thoughts and feelings that excited the author in this crisis moment for the Gypsy movement, and reveals his overall vision of the necessary actions along the way of Roma civil emancipation.

At the very beginning of his letter, Nikolay Pankov stressed the importance of the problem which faced the overall Gypsy policy of the Soviet state:

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 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 [...], 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. (Ibid.).

Further in his letter Nikolay Pankov presents the problems facing the realisation of the aims of the Soviet state – "to influence the minds of the Gypsies and to absorb the ideas of the Party and Soviet State [...]; to make the Gypsies conscious builders of socialism". He sees these problems in various areas. Many Gypsies still lead a nomadic lifestyle and only a small number of them are involved in production; the creation of Gypsy collective farms is slow, special funds and land are needed, as well as better interaction with Soviet institutions at the central and local levels. As a way out of solving these problems, Nikolay Pankov proposes the creation of a Gypsy newspaper, which will present the problems to the relevant institutions and will establish their relations with the Gypsies, and he sees this newspaper with much broader public functions:

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. (Ibid.).

Nikolay Pankov saw the state of Theatre *Romen* as another important problem that requires immediate attention:

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. (Ibid.).

The next big problem, according to Nikolay Pankov, is related to the preparation of cadres:

No one institution, 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! No institution 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. (Ibid.).

Here, Nikolay Pankov refers to Stalin's famous slogan "кадры решают все" (cadres are all-important) and makes a connection with the closure of Gypsy schools. According to him, Gypsy children cannot (and should not) study in mainstream schools because they cannot achieve good results in them. However, here he is not so categorical and assumes the possibility in Gypsy schools the general education subjects can be taught in Russian.

In fact, this was a consideration of the existing mass practice in Gypsy schools until then, because despite the textbooks published in Romani language in various disciplines, there were not enough trained teachers to teach them (i.e. the mass publication of textbooks and aids in Romani language has been carried out since they will be used in the future, in the near or distant future). At the same time, however, according to Nikolay Pankov, in Gypsy schools and classes, students must learn their native language. In direct connection with this, he pleaded to continue publishing books in the Romani language, not only teaching materials, but also fiction due to its societal functions:

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. (Ibid.).

In this context, Nikolay Pankov comes to a specific problem that directly concerned him and with which he is strongly involved: "the publishing house for dictionaries a Gypsy-Russian Dictionary was being prepared – it was completed, the layout was done, it went through corrections, and after all this, there came an order that the dictionary is dropped from production" (Ibid.). The reference is to *Gypsy-Russian Dictionary* (Сергиевский & Баранников, 1938), whose editor was Nikolay Pankov himself. 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.

Nikolay Pankov's letter to Stalin ended, at least to some extent, unexpectedly:

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. (LANB, f. Николай Панков).

This section seems, at least at first glance, puzzling. The very idea of the need to empower the Roma by including them in the power structures is not new to the leading Gypsy activists in the early USSR. During the existence of the VSTs, this empowerment was realised in practice through the nomination of representatives of the Union in commissions set up by the individual ministries and local authorities. Subsequently, the appointment of Gypsy activists in the local administration (Mikhail Bezlyudskiy, Ilya and Trofim Gerasimovs) began, albeit slowly and to a limited extent, and finally, also entrance into central state institutions was achieved (inclusion of Ivan Tokmakov in ON VTsIK). In all these cases, however, it is a question of incorporating Gypsy activists into such Soviet institutions and administrations that exercise some power functions in a specific sphere. The ultimate goal in this vision of empowerment, which these Gypsy leaders have repeatedly declared (directly or only as hints), was to create the equivalent of a nation-state in the USSR in the form of a Gypsy autonomous socialist republic, the positions of power and positions in which will be occupied by Gypsies. As a specific (and more realistic) version of this vision was the desire and constant struggle to obtain such jobs and positions in the small “Gypsy kingdom” existing in the capital Moscow – the State Gypsy Theatre *Romen*.

Nikolay Pankov initially also moved in these parameters, which include his attempt to establish himself in Theatre *Romen*, including during the short term of office of his close friend Ivan Tokmakov (see above). In his letter to Stalin, however, he broke the paradigm of empowerment as a community and shifted his vision to the other side of the ‘community-society’ dichotomy, i.e. he was already beginning to think about empowering the Gypsies as an equal part of Soviet society as a whole. However, the choice of the Supreme Soviet as a place for the realisation of this vision is surprising at first glance. This undoubtedly important (at least in theory) Soviet institutions, in practice, in real political life, had a rather symbolic meaning, and it de facto gave legal form to decisions already taken by the real political power in the Soviet state – the highest Party institutions. Even more surprising is the source of this undoubtedly original idea of Nikolay Pankov – the new Soviet Constitution, adopted in 1936 (the so-called Stalin’s Constitution). It explicitly states that “the right to nominate candidates is provided for public organisations and workers’ societies: communist party organisations, trade unions, cooperatives, youth organisations, cultural societies” (Конституция, 1936, Art. 141). In fact, the meaning of the final passage from Nikolay Pankov’s letter to Stalin was his fears that the lack of a public national cultural organisation will effectively deprive Gypsies of the opportunity to nominate their own candidates for the Supreme Soviet.

Put in parentheses, these hopes of Nikolay Pankov were not as utopian as they seem at first glance. There was an idea, expressed publicly by Stalin himself, that the elections for the Supreme Soviet should be put on a competitive basis, and that voters should have the right to choose between several candidates (Правда, 1936, p. 1), even in some places such ballots were prepared in 1937. However, this idea was not realised, and according to some authors, it is in the reluctance of the local party nomenklatura to break its

monopoly in power lies one of the main reasons for the so-called Great terror (Вдовин, 2013, pp. 74–75).

Writing his letter to Stalin in 1938, amid mass political repression, Nikolay Pankov was well aware of the risks he was taking. According to the recollections of family members of Nikolay Pankov, months after the letter was sent, he lived in anxious expectation to be arrested and did not sleep all nights, but nothing happened. Only three years later, on the eve of Nazi Germany's attack on the USSR on June 22, 1941, 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).

In 1942, in the difficult military conditions, tiring work in the factory for the needs of the warring Soviet army and limited food rations, Nikolay Pankov became ill from tuberculosis because of exhaustion and received a disability rent. Soon after, due to the difficult living conditions, he was forced to give up his pension and start working again as a warden in the factory, and only after a few years, he finally stopped working. In 1944 Nikolay Pankov was accepted as a member of the Union of Soviet Writers (SSP) (LANB, f. Николай Саткевич, d. Николай Панков). For this, he received Recommendations from Prof. Maxim Sergievskiy, with whom they worked together on the preparation of the Gypsy Alphabet, and the famous theatre critic Sergey Ignatov, who was a playwright at Theatre *Romen* when the director of the theatre was Ivan Tokmakov (see above). It should be noted that Nikolay Pankov did not take advantage of the many privileges that his membership in the SSP brings him, e.g. he obtained the right to a bigger and better home, and for the rest of his life, he lived with his family in a small room in an old wooden house, far from the centre of Moscow (Черенков, 2017, p. 22).

Nikolay Pankov's life in the conditions of post-war devastation in the USSR was difficult. He made great efforts at that time to search for eyewitness accounts of the fate of his close friend Ivan Tokmakov, who was officially listed as "missing" at the front (see above). Based on the stories of comrades-in-arms of Ivan Tokmakov from the front, the partisan detachment and the prisoner of war camp, Nikolay Pankov prepared the biographical essay *In Memory of Ivan Petrovich Tokmakov* (LANB, f. Николай Саткевич, d. Иван. Токмаков). It is interesting to note that Ivan Tokmakov himself, dying, asked his comrades to find his wife Lena (Elena) and his brother Kolya (Nikolay) in Moscow, and to inform them of his death; since he had no brothers, Yanina Stefanovna Pankova suggested that he meant Nikolay Pankov (LANB, f. Николай Панков).

In the 1950s, in the last years of his life, Nikolay Pankov devoted a lot of time and energy to two important areas in the field of Roma civic emancipation – politics and academia. In the first of these, the political one, he continued his struggle to resume the old, pre-war affirmative policy towards the Gypsies in the USSR. He was not invited to join the signatories of the above-mentioned letter to Stalin, initiated by Ivan Rom-Lebedev in 1946, but nevertheless, he began his own struggle in this direction.

As early as March 1946, Nikolay Pankov prepared a text entitled the *Historical Report on Gypsies* (PAVK), which he later used as a basis for writing the letters he sent to the

higher Soviet institutions. Of particular interest in this text is the explanation he gave for the beginning of the Roma civic emancipation movement in the early USSR. Regardless of the phraseology used in the spirit of the times, Nikolay Pankov is extremely accurate in his explanation of the origin of the ideas of Roma civic emancipation – he expressed in Roma discourse the ideas that dominate the society of which they are an integral part:

The October Revolution awakened consciousness also [i.e. as well as at other nationalities in the USSR – authors note] among this nationality. [...] A group of cultural Gypsies united in the idea of rebuilding the lives of their people on the principles proclaimed by the Great October Revolution". (Ibid.).

In August 1951, Nikolay Pankov sent a letter to the official Communist Party broadsheet newspaper *Pravda*, in which he presented what the Soviet government had done for the Gypsies before the war, the successes achieved, and called for:

Addressing the newspaper *Pravda* with this letter, I hope that the editorial board will gather cultural Gypsies who participated in the work among the Gypsies (list and addresses in case I can supply) and discuss the current situation of Soviet Gypsies, and make one or another decision aligned with Stalin's national policy. (Ibid.).

The lack of any result from this letter does not despair Nikolay Pankov. In July 1953, after Stalin's death, he sent a letter to Petr Pospelov, Secretary of the TsK KPSS, in which he raised the question of the need to resume the affirmative policy of the Soviet state towards the Gypsies, and in particular the resumption of cultural-educational activities (ЛАНВ, ф. Николай Панков; Друц & Гесслер, 1990, pp. 304–305). Shortly after this letter, he was invited to TsK KPSS, where he was interviewed by responsible officials of the Party apparatus (Ibid., P. 305), but no concrete results followed.

However, Nikolay Pankov did not give up his efforts to attract the attention of the highest Soviet institutions and continued his epistolary activity. In March 1956 he sent a letter to the new First Secretary of the TsK KPSS Nikita Khrushchev (two versions of this letter are kept in his personal archive); in August of the same year he passed a third version of the same letter to Marshal Kliment Voroshilov, then Chairman of the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet of the USSR through his assistant Mikhail Morozov (PAVK).

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 sedentarisation of the Gypsy nomads, to re-open Gypsy schools, to resume the mass publication of literature in Romani language, etc. In short, Nikolay Pankov pleaded 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). It is worth quoting selected passages from these letters.

From the letter to Petr Pospelov in 1953:

[In the 1920s and 1930s] the sprouts of socialist consciousness appeared in the working Gypsy masses, and it was possible to foresee in the near future a time when the specific features of the vagrant Gypsy (divination, begging, horse trading) would become an anachronism without applying administrative measures. . [...] After 1938, the situation of the Gypsies in the domestic and social sense again became difficult and in some ways depressing. [...] The people became illiterate again, deprived of the most elementary [...] conditions for their development and cultural growth. The Gypsy people involuntarily found themselves away from the great family of the peoples of the USSR. (Друц & Гесслер, 1990, pp. 304–305).

From the letter to Nikita Khrushchev in 1956:

Based on the experience of 1926–1938 – when, with the direct assistance and assistance of the Party and the Government, there was widespread work to introduce the Gypsies to settled life, work and culture, which went on in a continuous cultural and political, educational work – in my letter I mean to ask for the resumption of work in some form among the Gypsies of the USSR, discontinued in 1938. (PAVK).

From the letter to Kliment Voroshilov in 1956:

The positive experience of recent work on sedentarisation and attracting them to work on the one hand, and the other, the current position of the Gypsies as an unorganized roaming tribe, inconsistent with the principles of the Communist Party and the socialist state, prompts me once again (for the fourth time), I will turn to you, Kliment Yefremovich, with a request to discuss the situation of Gypsies in the USSR and find an opportunity to resume work among Gypsies to attract them to work and settled life, culture. (Ibid.).

In his letters to top Soviet leaders, Nikolay Pankov invariably included a list of names of people to be addressed. In his words:

The necessary cultural and Party forces both from the Gypsies themselves and from the non-Gypsies, who know the Gypsy people well because of their connection with these people and their research work on the study of Gypsies and their language, are available, and it would be possible usefully to discuss the situation of Gypsies and the forms of work with them. An incomplete list of these individuals is attached. (Ibid.).

It is interesting to note that in all his letters at the top of these lists of people who can be useful to the Gypsies, Nikolay Pankov always puts non-Gypsies in the first place – the linguists Yan Loya and Paul Ariste (see below more about them), as well as Tatiana Ventzel, with whom Pankov had worked together since the 1920s (Prof. Mikhail Sergievsky and Academician Alexey Barannikov have already died). Among the old Gypsy activists from the interwar period, Mikhail Bezlyudskiy (with whom Nikolay Pankov maintained constant correspondence), Andrey Taranov and Nina Dudarova were invariably present in these lists, while Ivan Rom-Lebedev was included in them only once, and Alexander German (who died in 1955) not at all.

It is difficult to assess whether and to what extent all the letters to the top Soviet leaders (written by both Nikolay Pankov and the above-mentioned Andrey Taranov) had any influence on Soviet policy towards the Gypsies in general (and to those who continued to lead a nomadic lifestyle, in particular). In any case, if they have had any effect, the result was largely contrary to the expectations of their authors. On August 24, 1956, for the first and last time in the history of the USSR, the Gypsy issue was discussed at a meeting of the highest Party body, namely the Presidium (Politburo) of the Central Committee of Communist Party, and a special commission was established to draft the respective decree (Фурценко, 2003, Vol. 1, p. 161). On October 5, 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 did not lead to any other changes in the Gypsy policy. Thus, with one blow, the Soviet authorities deprived the Gypsy elite in the USSR 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 affirmative policies, in which they themselves expected to be attracted to participate as representatives of their people. However, these hopes were in vain.

As testified by Yanina Stefanovna, the adoption of the Decree of the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet of the USSR *On the Admission to Labor of the Gypsy Vagrants* was “shocking” for Nikolay Pankov (ЛАНВ, ф. Николай Панков). It became clear to him that the leading paradigm in Soviet Gypsy policy had been irreversibly changed, and there could be no going back. That is why he dedicated the last years of his life to his other main priority of the activities in the field of Roma civic emancipation – systematisation, enrichment and development of the overall academic knowledge about his people. This is not an escape from politics into academia, but an attempt to preserve and develop the ideas of Roma civic emancipation in other (non-political) spheres. For him, the development of academic knowledge about Gypsies was an integral part of the overall process of Roma civic emancipation. This is clearly evidenced by the fact that in all his letters to top Soviet leaders presented above, he invariably included large passages devoted to the need to develop academic research on the Gypsies in the USSR (and in particular on their history, language, ethnography and folklore), as well as in his letter from August 1957 to the Art Council at the Ministry of Culture of the USSR and in the Memorandum (the manuscript is undated) sent to the Institute of Oriental Studies at the Academy of Sciences of the USSR (ПВК). It should be noted that Nikolay Pankov believed that in the field of academic research must participate established non-Roma scholars, as well as representatives of the Roma themselves, he never opposed the two categories but considered them as one whole.

Throughout his conscious life, Nikolay Pankov showed a keen interest in the history, language and folklore of the Gypsies (both in the USSR and around the world). In the

1920s, he actively participated in the creation of the Gypsy Alphabet; in 1930 he was the editor of the *Gypsy-Russian Dictionary* (Сергиевский & Баранников, 1938). After the Second World War, these interests were renewed after a letter received in 1951 from the linguist Janis Loja (Yan Loya in Russified form), who was living in Riga at the time, with whom Pankov maintained constant contact until his death (LANB, f. Николай Панков). Influenced by this connection, which gave him new hopes for the development of Gypsy studies in the USSR, a team was gradually formed, in which Tatiana Ventzel and the Estonian linguist Paul Ariste were also involved, and who began to work actively on additions and amendments to the forthcoming joint new edition of *Gypsy-Russian Dictionary* (Кожанов, 2017, p. 286). Nikolay Pankov had to a large extent a leading position in this team, although at his insistence he remained only the editor of the future new, revised and significantly supplemented new edition. He studied new dialects of the Romani language based on various sources and prepared an extensive card index; there was even an idea to reformat the dictionary to include all possible dialects of the Romani language, which was subsequently abandoned (Ibid., pp. 286–287). Nikolay Pankov devoted a lot of time and energy to his work on this new edition, which remained unfinished, and he continued the work until the end of his life.

Along with his work on the *Gypsy-Russian Dictionary* in the last years of his life, Nikolay Pankov also dealt with many other issues in the general direction of the development of academic knowledge about Roma. He began to study English to be able to read the *Journal of the Gypsy Lore Society*, which he received as a member of the Gypsy Lore Society. He became a member of this oldest (founded in 1888, in Edinburgh) and most authoritative international academic organisation as early as the 1930s on the recommendation of Academician Alexey Barannikov, who invited Pankov to join the society through the All-Union Society for Cultural Relations with Foreign Countries (VOKS) and remained its member for the rest of his life. According to the memoirs of the late Lev Cherenkov, the *Journal of the Gypsy Lore Society* (now *Romani Studies*) received by Nikolay Pankov as a member of the organisation was a “window to the world” for those interested in the research of Gypsies in the USSR at the time because it allowed them to learn about the achievements of science behind the so-called Iron curtain in this direction (Черенков, 2017, p. 22); after reading the journal, Pankov donated it on to the Russian State Library. Nikolay Pankov himself was very proud of this membership and has repeatedly emphasised it in his autobiographies (PAVK; LANB, f. Николай Панков). Moreover, Nikolay Pankov even wrote about the Gypsy Lore Society in his letter to Nikita Khrushchev in 1956:

[...] in England for many decades there is a whole Association for the Study of the Gypsies and the Language [the Gypsy Lore Society], a journal with materials on the study of the Gypsy language and folklore is regularly published. Much of our past literature is reflected in their journal and bibliographic index. (PAVK).

After the Second World War and the creation of the so-called socialist camp, and especially after Stalin's death and the subsequent policy of de-Stalinisation, some of the existing restrictions on foreign relations were removed, thus opening up opportunities for establishing and maintaining constant contacts with Gypsy researchers and Roma outside the USSR. Thanks to this, the USSR already received more information about the Gypsy studies abroad, e.g. in the archive of Nikolay Pankov is preserved a handwritten translation of parts of the book by Jerzy Ficowski *The Poland Gypsies*, made by Yanina Stefanovna (Ficowski, 1953). Nikolay Pankov had been in correspondence for several years with Jan Kochanovsky (known as Vanya de Gilya Kochanovsky) from Lithuania, who lived in France, where the two discussed various issues related to the Romani language (LANB, f. Николай Панков). In 1955, he wrote a letter to Milena Hübshmannova, at that time a student at Charles University in Prague, who studied Romani. She sent a letter to Ivan Rom-Lebedev through a famous Soviet journalist and writer Boris Polevoy seeking contact with Roma in the USSR. In his letter, Nikolay Pankov encouraged her in her interest in the Romani language and briefed her on what was being done in the USSR in this direction (what had been published in Romani until then and about the plans for a new edition of the *Gypsy-Russian Dictionary*). It is interesting to note that in the text of the letter, written in Russian, the name 'Roma' is used several times instead of the hitherto generally accepted 'Gypsies', which is one of the first testimonies in this regard (Ibid.). In 1957, Nikolay Pankov wrote a letter in Romani to Nedzhit Mehmedov, a Roma from Bulgaria, in which he asks for information about the dialects of Romani spoken in the country (Ibid.). In the 1950s, Pankov prepared a manuscript of the book *Записки цыгана о цыганских хорах* (Notes of One Gypsy on Gypsy Choirs) (PAVK), which unfortunately remains unpublished to this day, as well as preliminary sketches of a volume with texts from Gypsy folklore (Махотина, 2009, pp. 64–65; 2012, pp. 111–112); some of these Gypsy tales having been published (Друц & Гесслер, 1991). He also translated into Romani the poem by Mikhail Lermontov *Мъѣри* (The Novice) and poems by Alexander Pushkin, and, in 1958 began translating Alexey Barannikov's book on Ukrainian and Southern Russian Gypsy Dialects (Баранников, 1933) from Ukrainian into Russian (PAVK). All these endeavours remain unfinished on account of his death.

The last text on which Nikolay Pankov worked until his last hour, was a draft of the Collective Letter to the USSR Government, signed by him, and was supposed to be joined by famous linguists Vyacheslav Ivanov, Jan Loja and Tatiana Ventzel, as well as a number of Gypsy activists. This letter briefly presented the history of the Gypsies and the policy of the Soviet state towards them, emphasised the successes achieved, as well as the participation and heroism of the Gypsies in the Second World War. The letter endorsed the 1956 Decree of the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet of the USSR, which put an end to the nomadic way of life of the Gypsies, justifying the need to organise the process of sedentarisation, including the designation of special rayons, where the Gypsy nomads should settle (i.e. the old idea from the 1930s, related to the preparation for the creation

of a Gypsy national territorial-administrative unit, was re-launched). The letter ends as follows:

Thanks to the help of the Party and the government, many of the Gypsies have risen to the level of the advanced representatives of the fraternal peoples, and a little more effort and systematic work with the remnants of the nomadic masses and the nomadism will be completely eliminated in the way that was predetermined by the great Lenin and his teachings about oppressed and backward peoples. (PAVK).

Nikolay Pankov passed away in 1959. With his death, his work did not die and most of his activities in the field of Roma civic emancipation were taken over by his wife Yanina Stefanovna and his two daughters, about whom it is worth saying a few more words. According to information received from Nadezhda Belugina, Natalia Pankova (1924–199?) was born on May 26, 1924, graduated from the Department of Chemistry of the Moscow Polytechnic University, worked as a research associate at the Moscow Scientific Institute of Organic Subproducts and Dyes. Lyubov Pankova (1925–2019) was born on November 5, 1925, she graduated from the Faculty of Natural Sciences and conducted Postgraduate Studies at the Department of Human and Animal Physiology at the same university; she became a Candidate of Biological Sciences (PhD), worked as a senior researcher at the Academy of Sciences of the USSR, and as a lecturer at several pedagogical universities (e.g. Udmurd Pedagogical Institute); and was the author of more than 50 scientific papers.

Nikolay Pankov's two daughters, too, not only continued to maintain his extensive correspondence for many years but also established new contacts, e.g. in 1974, they were contacted by Valery Sanarov (about him see Марушиакова & Попов, 2016, pp. 87–91), who wrote to them at the request of Grattan Puxon, who sought a photograph of Nikolay Pankov in order to prepare a publication titled *Gypsies and the October Revolution* (LANB, f. Николай Панков). Moreover, they continued to engage in new initiatives, such as to sent letters to the supreme institutions of the Soviet state on behalf of “toiling Gypsies” with demands to renew the affirmative policy towards the Gypsies in the USSR. Together with Nikolay Satkevich (a graduate of the Gypsy Pedagogical College; see below) and Nikolay Menshikov (a graduate of the Gypsy Schools with Children's Home in Serebryanka, an officer in the Soviet Army during the Second World War, badly wounded in the liberation of Dresden, invalid of the 1st category), they sent one such letter to the Ideological Commission of the Communist Party Central Committee and the Supreme Soviet of the USSR in 1965 (Ibid.); in 1969 another letter of this kind was prepared to the Prime Minister of the USSR, organised again by Nikolay Satkevich and Nikolay Menshikov, joined by Lev Cherenkov (Ibid.).

These letters present several problems that have arisen since the Decree *On the Admission to Labor of the Gypsy Vagrants* of 1956 (indicating cases of non-admission of Gypsies to kolkhozes, refusal of the right to residence, etc.) and address the authorities with the following proposal:

[...] positive experience of working with Gypsies, undertaken in the Soviet Union in 1926–1937. It showed that an absolutely necessary condition for the success of the measures for the transfer of Gypsies sedentary and cultural to new societal rails is a broad and patient explanatory and cultural and educational work, preferably in their native language and with the possibility of involving sedentary and cultural Gypsies in this work. (PAVK).

The authors of the letter see this work among the Gypsies in many dimensions, which include the creation of a special state body to manage the various activities, which should also include academic research, publications in the Romani language, etc., i.e. ultimately the resumption (if not entirely, then at least to some extent) of the affirmative policy towards the Gypsies from the early USSR. Particularly interesting is the proposal to sedentarise the nomadic Gypsies and their concentration in regions where more Gypsies were already living settled way of life (such as the North Caucasus, Smolensk region and the post-World War II Moldavian SSR), i.e. again, goals were set that were relevant in the process of preparing for the establishment of a Gypsy national territorial-administrative unit in the 1930s.

As seen, the Moldavian SSR is mentioned here for the first time. Nowadays in the Republic of Moldova, in the oral history of local Roma (and even non-Roma), there are narratives that the Soviet government intended to create a Gypsy Republic with its capital in the city of Otaci, and therefore many Roma from all over the USSR were resettled there. This once again confirms that at the heart of the narratives of oral history, as incredible as some of them may sound today (and do not correspond to historical reality), there are always some real events (or at least rumours of such events) that are developed, enriched with new details and modified over time according to the rules of folklore (each narrative of oral history sooner or later is transformed into a folklore narrative of different genres – myths, legends, stories, etc.).

The case of the two sisters, Natalia and Lyubov Pankovi, is unique in its own way also for another reason – in fact, the two are perhaps the only case of children of leading Gypsy activists from the early Soviet era who continued their work in the field of Roma civic emancipation. This gives food for thought on the issue of the continuity (or, in many cases, lack thereof) of generations in the field of Roma civic emancipation, and this is a question that continues to be relevant today.

In the memories of his contemporaries and in the oral history of the community, Nikolay Pankov remains a man who stands out from other Gypsy activists of his generation. Put in contemporary discourse, unlike many, his occupation was not that of a ‘Rom by profession’; he did not make a career on this basis and remained “unmercenary” (as he was often called) for the rest of his life. In this respect, his wife’s words about him are perfectly accurate:

[He] never made any deals with his conscience... . Full of extraordinary spiritual uplift, [Nikolay] Pankov gladly gave all his strength without residue for the realisation of the great dream of mankind – equality and brotherhood of all peoples. (Ibid.).

Alexander German

Elena Marushiakova and Vesselin Popov

The Roma civic emancipation movement in the early USSR has many different dimensions. An extremely important aspect of this movement is the creation and development of its national literature, which is one of the main pillars of all the emerging nations of the modern era. It is in this sphere, the creation and development of Romani literature, that the place and significance of Alexander German (1893–1955), or Alexander Germano, as he signs himself in the Romani language, stand out.

The period from the 1920s to the 1930s can be considered a new beginning in the development of Romani literature in the early USSR (Marushiakova & Popov, 2020b) when an impressive number of Roma authors appeared in the public sphere, and more than this, they found their audience within the Roma community itself. This development can be properly understood only if it is regarded in the general historical and social context of the Soviet national policy at that time. This national policy was based on the principles of equal rights for the individual peoples of the USSR and comprehensive support for their national development, including the creation of a written language and literature for those nationalities that had been lacking it until then, as it is the case with Roma.

An important component of the nationalities policy of the Soviet state with regard to the Gypsies was the development of a standardised codified Romani language and, on that basis, the comprehensive education of the Gypsies, which includes setting up Gypsy schools and respective teachers' training, organising likbez, publishing textbooks and teaching materials, publishing of Gypsy journals, newspapers, and of propaganda and agitation materials, etc. This whole process aimed at the creation of Gypsy literature and Gypsy theatre understood as national literature and national theatre, all this was regarded as one of the key elements in the development of any nation, and an important public symbol of its equality in the new Soviet state. To realise all these ambitious plans, the Soviet state and the affiliated Gypsy movement desperately needed well-trained personnel. This was crucial concerning the development of Gypsy literature (which by definition should be in Romani language), and here the figure of Alexander German appears on the historical stage.

Of course, it is naive to suggest that, in the context of the rapid development of Romani literature in the early Soviet Union and among a relatively large number of Roma authors, one could be declared the most significant for creating Romani literature. However, unlike the assessment of literary texts in accordance with artistic criteria, which is always at least subjective, from a historical point of view, it can be considered that the closest in this respect is Alexander German. His extremely important and leading role in the process of the creation and development of Romani literature in the early USSR has been explicitly emphasised repeatedly by all the authors who have touched on this topic so far; there is only one, unexplainable exception – the Digital Archive of the

Roma – where the name of Alexander Germano is completely missing (sic!) in the essay on Romani literature in the USSR (Kozhanov & Makhotina, 2019).

Most of the details of Alexander German's life and work presented below have been prepared on the basis of two consecutive years of working in the personal archive of Alexander German, preserved in his home city of Oryol in the Russian Federation, in the State Literary Museum of Turgenev (OGMLT, f. 29). This archival heritage of several thousand pages is extremely rich and until now has hardly been used by researchers. It includes not only his publications (many books and articles in numerous newspapers and journals) but also a large number of manuscripts, including literary works, as well as historical, folklore and literary studies, that have never been published. In addition, the archive contains numerous personal diaries and files that reveal different aspects of his life. Also of interest is the collection of published and unpublished reviews of his work by literary critics and colleagues, including many letters from readers (Roma and non-Roma) that show the public impact of his work. All the documents preserved in this archive (including several Autobiographies written on various occasions) allow us to clarify all the blurred spots in his biography and to follow his creative path.

Alexander Vyacheslavovich German was born on May 26, 1893, in the village of Startsevo-Lepeshkino in the Orlov region, although his family lived in the nearby town of Orlov, which is listed in the official documents as his birthplace. His parents were economic migrants from the then Austro-Hungarian Empire. His father's name was Václav (Russified version Vyacheslav) German, he was of Czech origin, was born in Hořovice (at that time in the Austro-Hungarian Empire, today in the Czech Republic, near Prague), and worked as a mechanic. His mother, Karolina, with the maiden's name Knotek, was also from Hořovice. These are the testimonies of German himself and there is no other documentary evidence of these data apart of preserved metric book's record of his birth and baptising made by the priest of the St. Nicolay Orthodox Church of the village Startsevo-Lepeshkino, where it is noted that the parents of newborn Alexander are: "Austrian citizen Vyacheslav Vyacheslavovich German and his legal wife Karolina Vasilyeva, both of Lutheran confession" (OGMLT, f. 29, OФ-12358). In any case, the searches in the metric books and the administration documentation in Hořovice in the Czech Republic of his father's names (according to German the original surname of the family was spelt as 'Hermann') and his mother's name (Knotek) gave no results, 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 – loss of documents, inaccurate memories of German, even conscious mystification – but in this case, the birthplace of his parents is not essential.

According to Alexander German, his father was an Evangelist (Lutheran), and his mother was Catholic which contradicts the metric book's record. Nevertheless, as pointed, immediately after his birth, Alexander German was baptised into the Orthodox Christian religion. His father died a few months before his birth, and his mother lived very poorly with five children, although they owned a house in Oryol (no longer preserved).

Alexander German studied at first in a parochial school, then in an urban school in Oryol. He interrupted his studies because of scarlet fever, and for a number of years, he was “a street child” (at least, in the words of German himself, which is obviously a romanticising mystification, following the example of Maxim Gorky’s book *My Universities*, but in reality, he had lived with his relatives, as he simultaneously mentions that his sister took care of him). In any case, with the help of his two older sisters, he managed in 1915 to graduate from a Commerce boarding school in Sviatoshyno (now a suburb of Kiev). He enrolled as a student at the Kiev Institute of Commerce, his student card, his *matrikul* (students registrations document), certificate of grades, etc. are preserved in his personal archive (OGMLT, f. 29, ОФ-1338/48–49, ОФ-1338/52–55). As a student, he made his living off private tutoring, but after a year his study was interrupted yet again due to a lack of funds. He returned to his hometown where he started working as a pharmacy assistant. For medical reasons (due to his previous illnesses) he was discharged from military service during the First World War.

From that time, during the First World War, we can date the first literary publications of Alexander German. In the collection *Орловцы – жертвам войны* (Oryol’s Inhabitants – to the Victims of War), published in Oryol in 1915, he wrote a miniature *Червь грызёт* (The Worm Gnaws) and a short story, titled *Иван Талыго* (Ivan Talygo). After the October Revolution in 1917 Alexander German worked as a minor administrative clerk in Oryol, he was an accountant with the Finance Department of the Oryol City Executive Committee and then an instructor at the local Consumer Union.

In 1919 Alexander German was drafted into the Red Army. In his Autobiographies and public presentations later, he claimed to have fought in the Civil War “on almost all fronts” (this standard phrase was repeated frequently), but in fact, his military service is not at all as heroic as he wants to present it, and he toiled initially in Petrograd (Saint Petersburg) as a clerk and head of the army warehouse, then in Oryol as a clerk at local military establishments.

In 1921 Alexander German was demobilised and from then onwards he was entirely engaged in literary and journalistic activities, while at the same time working at different jobs, e.g. as a permanent contributor to several local newspapers, head of a literary circle and a theatre studio at an army club, instructor and head of the Literary Department at the Provincial Department of Public Education, secretary of the Editorial Board of the Provincial Publishing House, responsible secretary of the section of journalists in the local trade union, etc.

After the October Revolution in 1917, the topics of the literary work of Alexander German radically changed, and he was included in the general new Soviet Literature movement. During this period, he published numerous short stories, publicistic essays, feuilletons, miniatures, etc., including one satirical stage play, entitled *В некоем учреждении* (In One Institution), which was performed at the City Theatre in Oryol, and then in other provincial theatres in the region, and which had over 300 performances, and was published as a separate issue twice. Throughout this period, from 1918 to 1925, five of

his books (authored collections, which included mostly his press articles) were also published by various local publishing houses in Oryol. They were well-received by the local public but did not provoke any other echo in wider literary circles.

In 1925 Alexander German worked in the newspapers *Orlovskaya pravda* (Oryol's Truth) and *Nasha gazeta* (Our Journal). On March 30, 1926, he left this job because of the reorganisation of the newspapers and the sharp reduction of the staff (OGMLT, f. 29, ОФ-6993, l. 30) and moved to Moscow. Let us quote his own words (according to one of his Autobiographies) about this radical turn:

In May 1926, I, a "provincial classic", who did not know 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, something else does not fit the season, and another thing is generally worth nothing. One story was accepted but printed after a year [...]. Countrymen said, "Well, Sasha, prepare 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 [...]. 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 (All-Russian Union of Gypsies – authors' note) for the job of editing and publishing. (OGMLT, f. 29, op. 1, d. 156, l. 4–5).

From June 1926 Alexander German began his service for the *All-Russian Union of Gypsies* and already in July of the same year, he was commissioned to start work on the preparation of a periodical journal in the Romani language. From August 1926 he worked as Secretary of the Editorial Board of the journal *Romany zorya* and right in its first issue, published in 1927, his first publication in the Romani language appeared, namely the short story *Руворо* (The Little Wolf) (Романы зоря, 1927b, pp. 30–32). This is how the glamorous career in the field of Romani literature of Alexander German began. He describes the rationale behind it in the following way:

This period of time was organisational in all respects for the people without an 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. (Ibid.).

In fact, the periodicals in the Romani language played an extremely important role in the development of Romani literature in the early Soviet Union. The journal *Romany*

zorya came out in 1927, with a total of four issues, published at irregular intervals (for the discussion on the date of the first issue of the journal see Шаповал, 2019b). In 1930 this magazine was replaced by the journal *Nevo drom* which had 24 issues by 1932. The journals contained all sorts and all literature genres, including Gypsy folklore. Along with this, publishing books in the Romani language was quite impressive activity (Shapoval, 2020: 346–357). A Gypsy department was set up at the Central Publishing House (Tsentrizdat) in 1930. By 1932 there were already Gypsy departments at four other publishing houses – Selkhozgiz (specialised in publishing books about kolkhoz-related and agricultural issues), *Molodaya Gvardiya* (specialised in publications for students and young people); Goslitizdat (specialised in publications of fiction), and Uchpedgiz (specialised in textbooks and teaching aids for Gypsy schools and for adult training). In 1936 a total of eight publishing houses published books in the Romani language (Калинин, 2005, p. 49).

The late 1920s and especially the 1930s were the time of the birth and development of Romani literature in the USSR, and the scale of publishing activity in this field is truly impressive. The total number of books issued in Romani language between 1928 and 1938 was over 260 (Русаков & Калинин, 2006, pp. 266–287; Shapoval, 2021a, pp. 1058–1066; 2021b, pp. 264–273), and this is not the comprehensive number; many of them (71 titles) are original works by Gypsy authors – fiction (32 titles), journalism (15 titles), textbooks and educational materials (24 titles). This includes not only Romani literature per-se, but also primers for students and adults, textbooks and educational materials, practical manuals for work on kolkhozes and artels. They should also be noted the translations into Romani of Russian and world literature, such as books by Alexander Pushkin (short novels, fairy tales, and the famous poem *Gypsies*), Lev Tolstoy, Prosper Mérimée (the famous novel *Carmen*), Maxim Gorky (his stories devoted to Gypsies), including children's books, etc. (Ibid.); as well political literature (including some works of Lenin and Stalin), propaganda and agitation publications in the spirit of the Soviet era, popular science, technology and industry, agriculture, medicine and hygiene, family life, etc. (Marushiakova & Popov 2017, p. 50).

Among the names of prominent authors in the field of Roma literature should be noted those of Ivan Rom-Lebedev (prose and dramaturgy), Mikhail Bezlyudskiy (political essays and poetry), Mikhail Ilyinskiy (prose), also the poets Georgiy Lebedev, Ivan Khrustalyov, and Alexey Svetlov, and the poetesses Olga Pankova, Evdokiya Orlova and Mariya Polyakova (see the data of all publications in Русаков & Калинин, 2006: 266–287; Shapoval, 2021a, pp. 1058–1066; 2021b, pp. 264–273). The genres of these books included mainly prose and short stories, poetry, theatre plays, and journalism. It even inspired the beginning of a new genre, which nowadays is especially popular in Romani literature – the comics – with the main character *Rom Pupyрка*, published in the Gypsy journal *Romany zorya* (Романы зоря, 1929b, p. 49; Романы зоря, 1930f, p. 63).

It is natural to question the reasons for the huge amount of Gypsy books being published, given the small potential target of these publications for the scale of the Soviet

state; was it a matter of short-sightedness of authorities, or was it a matter of making a political point. The answer here is completely unambiguous – it was a political decision, conditioned by the spirit of the times and the dominant ideology in the USSR, reflected in the leading national policy, including in the sphere of publishing. The Soviet state listed Gypsies among those nationalities ('backward' or 'cultural backward' according to the terminology used at the time), who were entitled to receive education and literacy in their own language with special priority, and who required special care (O'Keeffe, 2010, pp. 283–312; 2013). In the case of Romani literature in the early USSR, it is about the creation of a comprehensive new, holistic social and cultural phenomenon that finds its place in the lives of the Gypsies.

Within this overall process of development of Romani literature, the place of Alexander German is clearly prominent, and to a great extent, his involvement appeared to be decisive and determining its wide scope. His activities were extremely many and varied. In addition to the work in the editorial office of the two Gypsy journals (*Romany zorya* and *Nevo drom*), he also worked actively in a number of Soviet Publishing Houses, wrote huge amounts of journalistic articles and reports for central and provincial newspapers and journals, and took part in various public committees, boards and councils. From 1927 Alexander German participated in the activities of the Central Gypsy Club *Лолы чергэн* (Red Star), held public talks, ran a literary group to train Gypsy authors, etc.

In 1928 Alexander German became a member of the All-Union Society of Proletarian Writers *Kuznitsa* (Forgery), uniting the left-wing proletarian writers, and already in February 1929 within the *Kuznitsa* he created a Gypsy Literary Group *Romengiro lav* (The Gypsy Word) and became its chair. Members of the group were Ivan Rom-Lebedev, Nikolay Pankov, Georgiy Lebedev, and others (OGMLT, f. 29, ОФ-6993, l. 36). In January 1931 he together with his group of Gypsy writers moved to the organisation *Moscow Association of Proletarian Writers*, which was competing *Kuznitsa* and adopted the most radical class positions in the field of literature. In 1934 he was accepted as a member of the official Union of Soviet Writers (a significant Soviet organisation supported by the authorities with important ideological tasks that provided its members with numerous significant social benefits).

In September 1930, Alexander German participated in the Initiative Group on the organisation of the Gypsy Theatre, and he was the author of the first play *Джшибэн прэ роты* (Life on Wheels) to be presented on stage at the newly created (in 1931) Gypsy State Theatre *Romen* (the premiere of his play was on December 16, 1931). Until the end of his life, Alexander German was a member of the Artistic Council of the theatre, where this and the others his plays *Машикур яга* (Between Fires), *Палага нэрво* (Palaga the First), *Ваи кхэллибена* (About Dances) were performed with great success.

The literary heritage of Alexander German is truly impressive. Here we will not be able to present the full bibliography of his work, as his productivity was remarkable, and he worked in almost all literary fields – poetry, prose, dramaturgy, publicistic, journalism, translation, editorial work, he prepared teaching and educational material, made

translations and literary editorial work, etc. Below we will mention only briefly the most significant of them.

In the field of poetry, Alexander German published the collections *Лолэ яга* (Red Fires), *Яв прэ стрэга* (Be on Watch), *Гиля* (Poems), *Роспхэныбэна дрэ гиля* (Stories in Poems), *Нэвэ гиля* (New Songs) (Германо, 1934а; 1934f; 1935b; 1937b; 1938). Some of his poems and songs were translated into Russian and published in individual volume: *Стихи и песни* (Poems and Songs) (Германо, 1937с); another volume with his poetry translated in Russian by famous Russian poets were printed in the printing house of the city of Oryol (Германо, 1941), but the entire print-run was destroyed during the German bombing after the start of the Second World War, and only two draft copies with editorial corrections survived (Shapoval, 2021c, p. 195). He is also the author of a collection of lyrics for the so-called mass songs (songs which are envisaged to be sung by many people together, often devoted to revolution or socialist construction) (Германо, 1934d).

In the field of prose, the following collections of stories by Alexander German were published: *Атасятуно бурмистро* (Yesterday's Leader), *Лэс кхардэ рувэса и ваврэ роспхэныбэна* (He Was Called the Wolf and Other Stories), *Ганка Чямба и ваврэ роспхэныбэна* (Ganka Chyamba and Other Stories) (Германо, 1930; 1933а; 1935а); some of them were translated into Russian and published: *Ярга: Цыганские рассказы* (Yarga: Gypsy Stories) (Герман, 1930b); after his death, two editions of selected stories and short stories were published (Германо, 1960; 1962).

In the field of dramaturgy, Alexander German published his playscripts' volume *Романо театро* (The Gypsy Theatre), which includes *Джишбэн прэ роты*, *Машикр яга*, *Палага нэрво* and *Ваш кхэллибена* (Германо, 1932), and he also co-wrote with Olga Pankova the theatre play for children *Серёга Лагуно* (Seryoga Laguno) (Германо & Панково, 1933).

Alexander German was especially active in the field of politically engaged publicistic, aimed at agitation and propaganda both among the Gypsy population and the general public. His articles and essays were published (and reprinted) both in the two Gypsy journals (*Romany zorya* и *Nevo drom*) and in numerous editions of the Soviet press (mainstream – metropolitan and provincial). Several collections of articles in the Romani language have also been published, some of them previously having appeared in the press, *Нэво джишбэн* (New Life) (Герман, 1929) and *Джняна нэвэ рома* (New Gypsies Are Coming) (Германо, 1933а). At the same time, the propaganda of the 'new life' that Gypsies need to build was combined with practical advice on how to act in this direction, as in his book, *Ангил кэ буты: Со трэби тэ джинэс ломэ кэ вгэи дро колхозо* (Forward To Work: What Gypsies Should Know when Entering a Kolkhoz) which was co-authored with Mikhail Bezlyudskiy (Безлюдско & Германо, 1933).

Publications of Alexander German (mainly publicistic journalistic articles and essays) in the press were extremely numerous. Some of them were translations in different languages printed in publications of other nationalities in the USSR and abroad (with the

support of specialised institutions for the international presentation of Soviet literature). As he wrote:

Since 1930, my poems (also stories, essays, articles, and fairy tales) have been translated into the languages of the peoples of the USSR and foreign languages: Ukrainian, Belarusian, Armenian, Tatar, Jewish, Lithuanian; [abroad in] English, French, German; possibly in other languages, but I have no information. (OGMLT, f. 29, op. 1, d. 156, l. 8–9).

The important role played by Alexander German in the development of Romani literature should also be noted, especially in attracting, encouraging, and assisting new (young and not-so-young) Roma authors to enter the field of literature. In addition to the many training courses and creative workshops in this direction, special mention should also be made of the two almanacks compiled and edited by him, which present the nascent Romani literature in the early USSR through the work of Gypsy authors. The first one, the *Альманахо романэ поэтэн* (Almanac of the Gypsy Poets) (Германо, 1931), includes only poetic works, while the second one, the *Романо альманахо* (Gypsy Almanac) (Германо, 1934e), contains several sections presenting poetry, prose, essays and even literary criticism (including a review of the new Gypsy literature by Prof. Maxim Sergievskiy).

Alexander German edited the vast part of the original (i.e. written by Roma authors) and translated books in Romani language published at that time. It is also interesting to note that Alexandr German himself translated several books into Romani language, including Stalin's official biography (Товстуха, 1933). He was a translator (along with Mikhail Bezlyudskiy) also of the text of the world proletarian anthem, the Internationale (Нэво дром, 1932c, p. 1; Пандж массова гия, 1932, pp. 2–3; Германо, 1934d, pp. 3–4), which was the national anthem of the USSR until 1944.

Alexander German was not only the editor of the two Gypsy journals but also of several dozen books published in Romani language in various publishing houses. The Board of Directors of the two Gypsy journals was headed by Andrey Taranov, which was due to political reasons – he was a member of the VKP(b), was the leader of the VSTs, and has leading positions in the Gypsy movement. In practice, however, the real editorial work on the texts of Roma authors, at least from a linguistic point of view, fell on Alexander German. The situation was the same in the publishing houses where books in the Romani language were published.

On November 4, 1931, Alexander German received his first award as a *ударник* (shock worker) of the 3rd Year of Five-year Plan at Central Publishing House of the Peoples of USSR, together with Andrey Taranov and Nikolay Pankov (OGMLT, f. 29, ОФ-6993, l. 44). Until August 1932, he was the Executive Secretary and part-time Technical Editor of the new Gypsy journal *Nevo drom*, and also in the Tsentrizdat. Since 1932, he was also an external editor and main reviewer in a number of other publishing houses – Goslitizdat, Uchpedgiz, Partizdat, Profizdat, *Molodaya Gvardiya* (Youth Guard), Antireligious Publisher, *Sovetskoe Zakonodatelstvo* (Soviet Legislation), Detgiz, Profizdat, Selkhozgiz, Medgiz, and others.

At the same time, Alexander German took a full-time position of editor in the National Sector of the Goslitizdat Publishing House for the production of literature in the national languages, where he worked from November 1934 to December 1938, and thus actually managed and coordinated all publishing activities in the field of Romani literature during its most flourishing period.

Alexander German's contribution to the development of Romani language education in Gypsy national schools is also significant. He is the author (or rather co-author) of 7 primers and textbooks, as well as of one reader (Германо & Панково, 1932; 1934; Германо et al., 1932; Германо, 1934bc; 1937a; Вентцель & Германо, 1934; 1937).

Considering all the authorial, and especially, the editorial activity of Alexander German, his primary role in the standardisation and codification of the Romani literary language is undoubted, although he was included a little later in this process (after the official affirmation of the Gypsy Alphabet). It is understandable, why it was exactly him who had crucial significance – he was the only Gypsy author at that time who had a comparatively better education and experience in editorial work. In this case, his professional skills (as well as his exceptional ability to work) turned out to be more important than the level of proficiency in the Romani language (which was not his native language after all). Particularly significant in this direction is his account of how he began to write poetry in the Romani language and de facto became not only a leading Gypsy writer but also a Gypsy poet:

By the way, I will briefly inform you about my poetic experiments in the Gypsy language. I have never tried to write poetry in Russian. When I wrote the musical play *Жизнь на колесах* (Life on Wheels), I needed lyrics in Gypsy language. I offered to write them to the Gypsy poets, but their work did not satisfy the stage director. (This also happened with the poetic examples in my *Книге для чтения для 1-го класса* (1st-grade reading book.) Having experienced at first the difficulties of mastering the poetic language of the Gypsies, I began writing poetry in 1931, as well as translating classics and modern poets from Russian. (OGMLT, f. 29, op. 1, d. 156, l. 1–80б).

Alexander German worked hard and constantly to master and improve his Romani language, which he combined also with his field-research trips for collecting Gypsy folklore. This can be seen from the field-research clearances preserved in his archive, e.g. from October 15 to November 15, 1937, the Union of Soviet Writers send him for collection of Gypsy folklore in Gypsy kolkhozes *Svoboda* and *Krasniy Oktyabr* in Western Region (OGML, f. 29, op. 1, d. 142).

Apart from acting in the field of literature, dramaturgy, publicistic and education, Alexander German prepared and published a unique scholarly work, *Библиография о цыганах. Указатель книг и статей с 1780 г. по 1930 г.* (Bibliography on Gypsies: An Index of Books and Articles from 1780 to 1930) (Герман, 1930a), which is still a major source for the history of the Gypsies in the Russian Empire and the USSR, which has not lost its significance to this day.

After moving to Moscow, Alexander German lived first in the outskirts of the city (on Sacco and Vanzetti Streets) and from the early 1930s in the very city centre (Stoleshnikov Lane, house 11). He also owned a dacha in the Podlipki area near Moscow. He spent a lot of his time there. In the 1930s he divorced his first wife (Maria Alekseevna, no more information is known about her) and married Maria Emmanuilovna Vardashko on 22 June 1939 in Moscow. Vardashko's father Emmanuil Kogout (the family name as spelt in Russian, in original Kohout) was of Czech origin, and before the marriage with German, she lived in Kramatorsk (today in Ukraine) (OGML, f. 29, ОФ-7011). After his death, Maria Vardashko took care of his creative legacy, and supported the efforts of Fedor P. Peki-Poloy, a local historian and ethnographer from Oryol, to preserve his huge personal archive.

On November 4, 1938, a new structure at the Soviet Writers' Union was established, the Bureau of National Commissions and it was positioned over the individual National Commission; the latter were not elected but appointed (Shapoval, 2021). On December 15, 1938, Alexander German was relieved of his post in the Editorial Board of National Literature at the SNK RSFSR "in connection with the termination of the publication of literature in national languages" (OGMLT, f. 29, ОФ-6993, p. 61). However, as it became clear from preserved minutes even after 1938 the Section of Gypsy Writers continued to exist and was headed by Alexander German; in 1940 plans were made for the official installation of its status at the Bureau of National Commissions (Махотина & Шаповал). Since February 1941, the Section was ruled by Andrey Taranov as an elected Executive Secretary, without being a member of the Writers Union. After 1940 numerous manuscripts of Roma authors were prepared for publication but the second World War hindered its realisation (Ibid.).

It is important to emphasise that the radical turn in the national policy of the Soviet state at the end of the 1930s does not mark the definitive end in the existence and development of Romani literature in the USSR. Sometimes, preposterous statements can be found, such as "Romani literature and culture were unofficially (sic!) banned" (Kozhanov & Makhotina, 2019), which simply do not fit the historical reality. Publication of works by Gypsy authors became possible again only after World War Two; then Alexander German's collection of stories was published in two editions (Германо, 1960; 1962), as well as collections of Roma authors with poetry and short stories (Романо, 1968; 1975; Саткевич, 1972; 1974; 1977; 1982), and even a collection of plays from the repertoire of the Theatre *Romen* (Ром-Лебедев, 1983). In some cases, Romani literature books were even published in print runs that were huge for their time (and even more so for the present day), for example, the two collections of children's poems by Leksa Manush (Alexander Belugin) were published in 300,000 copies (Мануш, 1980; 1983), and his children's book *Звездочка* (The little star), on the cover of which it is explicitly stated that it is a "retelling from the Gypsy language", was published in 1,500,000 (sic!) print-run (Мануш, 1976). Restrictions in the development of Romani literature in the USSR at that time were in another sphere – firstly, greatly reducing the number of publications by Roma authors (when compared with the period of the 1930s), and secondly, limiting the publications

in the Romani language, the exception to this being the academic editions of Gypsy folklore (Кантя, 1970; Деметер & Деметер, 1981). Much more precise (and correct) is the statement: "Literary texts by Gypsy authors have been kept to a minimum" (Цветков & Махотина, 2018, p. 477), although this wording also needs some clarification. The main question here is what is the criterion according to which this literary production is defined as a minimum. If the basis for comparison is the period of the 1920s and especially the 1930s in USSR, then there is undoubtedly a significant collapse. However, if we compare the situation globally, it does not look so bad. In the period from the end of World War II to the collapse of the USSR, the publications of Gypsy authors outside the socialist camp are much less, and in the Romani language are de facto absent (excluding translations of the New Testament, published by the British and Foreign Bible Society). So, we cannot say that the Romani literature of the early USSR ended in 1938; moreover, the collection of poems by Gypsy poets (Саткевич, 1974) includes works by authors from the 1930s (translated in Russian) as well as contemporary Gypsy poets, i.e. the continuity in the development of Romani literature is undeniable. However, this development is no longer the same as in the early USSR; although new pieces of Romani literature continue to emerge (although not in the same amount), 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.

During the Second World War, Alexander German, who was discharged from military service due to his age and medical reasons, did not go to evacuation (unlike many of the Soviet writers' and arts' elite), although according to a reference from the Union of Soviet Writers he received a direction for evacuation together with his family (OGMLT, f. 29, ОФ-6993, l. 67), and remained in Moscow. Until the end of the war, he was the head of the emergency and recovery unit of the district department for control of the civil defence, gives night shifts in air defence during the bombing of Moscow, actively collaborates with the Soviet Information Bureau, performed poetry and fairy tales in the Red Army units and military hospitals in Moscow region, and wrote a special cycle of poems about the participation of Roma in partisan detachments.

After the war, Alexander German became actively involved in the initiative of Ivan Rom-Lebedev to restore the pre-war policy of affirmative action in regard to the Gypsies.

His name stands second (after that of Ivan Rom-Lebedev) in a letter sent to Stalin in May 1946 (see above). After the failure of this endeavour, he became a freelance writer and collaborated with various publishers and journals in Moscow, as well as in his hometown of Oryol. He was hesitant about the chances of restoring the mass publishing of Gypsy literature, so he stopped creating original literary texts in Romani, but instead in hope that the interest in the Gypsy theme will remain in academia and propaganda he prepared numerous texts on the Gypsy history and culture. However, only a small part of his work has been published in this period, and most of the prepared manuscripts remain in his personal archive. He died in 1955 in Moscow, where he is buried in Vvedenskoye Cemetery.

In all his literary activity, Alexander German constantly adhered to the societal requirements of the time: his first texts were written in the spirit of the patriotic military literature; after the October Revolution, they were already in the mainstream of the so-called proletarian literature; and after starting to work in the field of the Gypsy activism, his publications actually lay the foundations of Roma national literature. However, he did not become a leading Gypsy activist. Despite claims found in the literature that the “Pan-Russian Romani Union” was “under the leadership of Alexander Germanov” (sic! – authors note) (Hancock, 1991a, p. 140; 1991b, p. 257), his and other archives lack any evidence of him 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, Alexander German 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.

Especially impressive (and maybe even shocking) is his diary, which he kept writing for four decades (from 1912 to 1952). This diary looks like a detailed timesheet of his work. In it, he only recorded his literary activity, public presentations and lectures, interviews given, etc. over the years, and documented its impact (noticed also the awards received and reviews of his publication) and there are just very few remarks of a personal nature. 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 most important thing in his life. This diary reveals Alexander German as a person who, from his school years, had a passionate dream of becoming a famous writer, and devoted his entire life to the realisation of this adolescent dream. A strong influence on him was probably the overall spiritual atmosphere of his hometown of Oryol, which was known in the public space as the “city of writers” a great deal of renowned Russian writers was born there, such as Ivan Turgenev, Nikolay Leskov, Leonid Andreev, Ivan Bunin, and many others, as well as the famous literary theorist and philosopher Mikhail Bakhtin.

It should also be borne in mind that, at that time, literature had an important place in public and political life as a whole. Soviet writers, these “engineers of human souls” as defined by Yuri Olesha, which saying was repeatedly used in Stalin’s public statements and disseminated in the public space through the media, were called upon to actively contribute to the formation of the new, Soviet man. That is why the Romani literature for the Gypsies in the early USSR was an extremely important pillar of their new, Soviet civic identity, which did not contradict their Roma/Gypsy ethnic identity. Gypsy culture in the USSR (including Romani literature as part of it) was perceived similarly to any other culture according to Stalin’s famous postulate proclaimed at the Seventeenth Congress of the VKP(b) in 1934, as “Socialist in content, national in form” (Сталин, 1947b, p. 367). In this historical context, it is therefore quite natural that almost all Gypsy activists at the time (both men and women) were also writers (poets, prose writers, translators), who, like many others during this epoch “wrote with a determination and persistence that

justifies our calling them writers” and “they wrote less to create ‘art’ than to speak aloud about the world” (Steinberg, 2002, p. 1). Against this background, the place and position of Alexander German take on particular significance. All that has been said so far turned Alexander German, for his contemporaries (both Roma and non-Roma) into the undisputed “classic and living doyen of Gypsy literature”, and this is the standard definition by which he is presented from the 1930s until his death in the public space, where this definition has acquired wide popularity.

The topics of Alexander German’s interests (apart of creative literature work) are impressive and strongly varied – the history and language of the Gypsies, the place of the Gypsies in the work of Russian writers and poets, Gypsy folklore, the history of Gypsy Theatre *Romen*, bibliographies, translations, etc. In addition to the literature manuscripts, his archive also contains numerous extracts from various sources on these (and other) topics of his interest. In his archive, about two dozen manuscripts (some of them in several draft versions) of varying degrees of completeness have been preserved, which for various reasons have not been published. Among them are the manuscripts: *Цыгане в русской художественной литературе (От Державина до Блока)* (Gypsies in Russian Fiction: From Derzhavin to Blok), *Основы цыганского языка* (The Basics of the Gypsy Language), *Дополнение к библиографии о цыганах* (Supplement to the Bibliography of Gypsies), *Фашизм и цыгане в Отечественную войну* (Fascism and Gypsies in the Great Patriotic War), *Краткая история советских цыган* (A Brief History of Soviet Gypsies) (in co-authorship with Ivan Rom-Lebedev), *Цыгане Советского Союза* (Gypsies of Soviet Union), *Советские цыгане* (Soviet Gypsies), *Литература на цыганском языке* (Literature in Gypsy Language), *Краткие исторические сведения о цыганах вообще* (Brief Historical Data about Gypsies in General), *Цыгане в русской классике* (The Gypsy in Russian Classics), *Цыгане у современных поэтов* (Gypsies in the Works of Contemporary Poets), *Цыганиана: цыганское в изображении художественной литературы* (Tsyganiana: The Gypsy in Fiction), *Сказки русских цыган* (The Tales of the Russian Gypsies), *Репертуар Стешы* (Repertoire of Stiosha) about to the famous Gypsy singer Stepania Soldatova (1784–1822), *Краткая история Государственного Цыганского театра* (A Brief History of the State Gypsy Theatre), *Театр Ромэн во время Великой отечественной войны* (The Theatre *Romen* during the Great Patriotic War), *Материалы о советских цыганах и театре Ромэн* (Materials on Soviet Gypsies and the Theatre *Romen*), *Театр Ромэн: Библиографический указатель* (Theatre *Romen*: Bibliographical Index), translations of the theatre plays of Pushkin, *Mozart and Salieri* and *Stingy Knight* in Romani language, etc. (OGMLT, f. 29).

Alexander German’s exceptional working capacity and dedication are especially worth noting. It should also be noted, that besides Russian and Romani languages, he also spoke fluent German and Czech, and used in his work (at least passively) English and French.

In all his Autobiographies, Alexander German presents himself primarily as a writer and devotes much less space to his public activity (still does not fail to mention it).

However, this does not mean that his place in the movement of Roma civic emancipation in the early USSR was in the back row. On the contrary, it occupied a leading position also there. He undoubtedly played a paramount role in the very origin and development of the Gypsy national literature in the early USSR, and this was one of the main pillars of this movement. Moreover, he was one of the leading authors in a new field, which is located in the border zone of literature and political propaganda and agitation. In the 1920s and 1930s, this 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. 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 *What to Do with Gypsies?* (Комсомольская правда, 1929, p. 4), after whose publication the editorial board of the newspaper *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).

In the field of journalism, Alexander German undoubtedly has a leading position in comparison with other Gypsy activists, if not as a generator of new ideas, then at least as a presence in the public sphere. Dozens of his articles and messages (many of them are variants of the same text), published in various central and provincial editions, are stored in his personal archive. As already mentioned above, two collections of such articles have been published as separate editions (Герман, 1929; Германо, 1933a), and a collection of articles has also been published in Russian under the title *Gypsies Yesterday and Today* (Герман, 1931).

Much of Alexander German's work in the field of publicistic expresses the spirit of his historical era. However, this does not mean that he is just a talented propagandist of foreign ideas, which were proposed by Gypsy activists and approved by the Soviet authorities. He, at least in some cases, was even a visionary in the field of Roma civic emancipation, presenting his ideas to which the authorities may have a more reserved attitude, for example, the above-quoted article, written together with Georgiy Lebedev, is accompanied by editorial comments that some of these ideas are "still controversial in some cases" (Комсомольская правда, 1929, p. 4).

And, something more, some of Alexander German's concepts remain relevant to this day. He is the progenitor of an important trend in contemporary academia, namely the concept of anti-Gypsyism (Holler, 2014, pp. 84–85). This idea was firstly presented in 1928 in his article *The Gypsies* (Безбожник, 1928, pp. 11–13), and was further popularised in the press through the quoted article *What To Do with Gypsies?*, in which a separate section was devoted to the *Roots of anti-Gypsyism* (Комсомольская правда, 1929, p. 4). The idea was also used by other Gypsy activists such as Andrey Taranov (Нэво дром, 1931s, pp. 1–3), and was a leading one in the Roma civic emancipation movement in the early USSR (Holler, 2014, pp. 84–88). After the rediscovery of this theory at the end of the 20th century, in a new, modified shape (Hancock, 1987; 1996; for more details see Holler, 2014, pp. 82–92), anti-Gypsyism is not only one of the leading concepts in the field of Romani studies, but it even defines the European policy towards the Roma, which is expressed in the European Parliament as Resolution on the need for a strengthened post-2020 Strategic EU Framework for National Roma Inclusion Strategies and stepping up the fight against anti-Gypsyism (2019/2509).

In the theory of anti-Gypsyism in the early USSR, the emphasis was 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 the publications devoted to the topic, however, there are carefully worded notes that make it clear that there are still some remnants of anti-Gypsyism in Soviet society. Anti-Gypsyism in this case is explained as an insurmountable legacy of the old social order and against which it is necessary for the Soviet state to constantly fight. These individual manifestations of anti-Gypsyism in the early Soviet Union 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 misconduct against Gypsies by the soviet militia (i.e. police), 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 of soviet power 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 Language of the Class Enemy: Shameful Belching of Great-Power Chauvinism at the Smolensk Pedagogical Institute* (Большевицкий молодняк, 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. the article *This Is Where the Enemy Works: The Ridiculous Gossip of the Chauvinists Must Be Put To an End* (Борьба, 1931a, p. 3) and the article *Provocateurs before the Court: The Myth of*

the Abduction of Children (Борьба, 1931b, p. 3). 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 explains the emergence of the concept of anti-Gypsyism among Gypsy activists.

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, and especially fruitful in this regard was Alexander German, who mastered a number of foreign languages and regularly monitored the Western press. An example of this is the article *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. 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).

Alexander German’s biography has a discussion point that deserves special attention because it directly concerns the overall assessment of his place in the beginning and development of Romani literature in the early USSR (and also globally). Undoubtedly the most intriguing question is the one regarding the ethnic origin and identity of Alexander German. Nowadays it is generally assumed that he was of mixed (Roma and non-Roma) origin, as his mother was a “Moravian Roma Woman”, allowing for various speculative interpretations. According to Milena Hübschmannová “although Germano was not brought up like a Rom and was a Roma only on his mother’s side his Roma identity was revived because of the prestige of the official task” (Hübschmannová, 2002, p. 80).

Nevertheless, for Hübschmannová, Alexander Germano was a Roma writer despite his mixed origin and the fact that he learned the Romani language at adult age (Ibid., 2002, pp. 79–81). She emphasises the fact that Alexander Germano 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, however, why the question of the mixed origins of Alexander Germano (which for Hübschmannová is certain and 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 Romani literature is irrelevant, because if this logic is accepted then the whole Gypsy movement and the Romani 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 on their fathers' sides (ANB, f. Nikolay Satkevich, d. Andrey Taranov; Ром-Лебедев, 1990, p. 7), and the most famous star of Theatre *Romen*, Nadezhda Kiseleva (whose stage name was Lyalya Chyornaya) only had one Gypsy grandmother (Bessonov, 2016, p. 146). The mixed origin of all these personalities, however, was never discussed, and it is not clear why an exception should be made only for Alexander Germano.

According to Brigid O'Keeffe, who also accepts, without any doubt or hesitancy, the Roma origin of Alexander German's mother, it was quite characteristic for him to play a game with his identities (Roma and non-Roma) depending on the social and political situation. She argues that in the early Soviet Union when an active pro-Gypsy policy was being implemented, 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 (and more specifically, – over-interpretation) is quite controversial because documentary evidence does not confirm the existence of such a game of identities. In several Autobiographies, the first one written in 1925, and the last in 1952, he consistently declared himself a 'Gypsy Writer', but never a 'Gypsy', and the second does not follow automatically from the first. Alexander German was perceived also by his contemporaries as a 'Gypsy poet', a 'Gypsy writer', a 'Gypsy dramaturg', a 'Gypsy translator', etc., and also a scholar in Gypsy Studies (see numerous quotations of these notions in many official presentations, articles and reviews of his work in OGMLT, f. 29, ОФ-6993).

As for the evidence written by Alexander German himself, which Brigid O'Keeffe accepts as evidence of his identity game, they are also unconvincing, or to be more precise, they are absent altogether. As already said, in fact, Alexander German never wrote anywhere that he was of Gypsy origin or had a Gypsy identity. In searching for wording that could be interpreted as a hint of such an origin for his mother we found this only one notice, which was written in 1925, in Oryol:

My mother didn't like to be in one place, she loved to travel, and because of her, my father changed jobs, sold all the home junk, and travelled away without knowing what would happen. (OGMLT, f. 29, op. 1, d. 137, l. 2).

First, however, if Alexander German wanted 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. Second, and 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 would leave for Moscow the following 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 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 having ethnic dimensions.

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 Roma background. something more, on 16 May 1928 in a letter to his friend, namely the writer Iosif Kalinnikov, he describes his first impressions of Gypsies:

When I arrived in Moscow, I took up work among Gypsies. Do not think about "stealing horses." The Gypsies are not like that anymore. 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, 2020a, p. 332).

As can be seen from this quotation here, he is speaking as an outsider, a stranger, and not as a member of the community. Let us give the floor to Alexander German himself on the question of his origin and his development into a leading Gypsy author:

I undertook a collection of nomadic folklore and a study of the Gypsy language orally (using voice). Having reincarnated in a kind of Aleko [the name of the main hero in Alexander Pushkin's poem Gypsies, who was a non-Gypsy who lived in a Gypsy camp – authors' note], I spent weeks in the tabor [Gypsy camp – authors' note]. 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 stop 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) 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. (OGMLT, f. 29, op. 1, d. 156, l. 6–7).

There was no need for an identity game in 1952 either when he wrote in the here cited 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 sphere 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 (RGALI, f. 2928 op. 2, d. 246), which in no way disrupted his professional and public career (for several decades he was the permanent artistic director of the Theatre *Romen*). Moreover, he formally added to his family name Lebedev a first part (Rom), with which he wanted 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 – on which his entire career is built. To put it briefly, 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, has repeatedly been reflected in numerous studies on Roma (Marushiakova & Popov 2015; 2016e). 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. There is no (and generally cannot be any) contradiction between the two dimensions of identity (as Gypsies and as Soviet citizens), and therefore their artificial opposition, as well as any other over-interpretations in this direction, are doomed to failure. This is not some unique Soviet phenomenon, but a concrete demonstration of the common model in the modern era, when Roma existence is manifested in two main dimensions: 'community' (as an ethnic formation), and 'society' as ethnically based integral parts of the respective nation-states of which they are citizens); these two dimensions may, in short, be called 'ethnicity' and 'civic nationality' (Marushiakova & Popov, 2016e, p. 15; 2021a, p. XXIII).

In fact, Alexander German's entire literary career is built on this very foundation. The fact that he got 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 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. During this period, 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, some '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; 1928, p. 211; Друц & Гесслер, 1990, 294–295).

The origin of Alexander German was not a secret to any of his contemporaries, including Gypsy activists and writers, but we have never found any evidence of this circumstance ever being publicly problematised. However, this does not apply to personal, informal relations, as particularly interesting in this regard are some materials stored in the personal archive of Nikolay Pankov (LANB, f. Nikolay Pankov), which has not been shared publicly. When Alexander German presented his book *Gypsies Yesterday and Today* (Герман, 1931) to Nikolay Pankov, he wrote a dedication: “To dear Nikolay Alexandrovich Pankov. My first experience concerning Gypsies is at your trial”. Under the dedication, Pankov wrote in pencil: “We need only marvel at our [i.e. of the Gypsies – authors’ note] good will, which allowed such disgrace without any rebuke” (Ibid.). Moreover, in his personal diary, Nikolay Pankov devotes much space to Alexander German and his relationship with him. According to Nikolay Pankov, both he and the Gypsy activists in general “cherished and favoured” Alexander German as “pride for the Gypsies” and promoted him everywhere, despite his “decomposition in everyday life and work (unrestrained drunkenness, women, ..., discerning attitude to work) ... his limitedness, the scarcity of his culture and even his mediocrity” (Ibid.). It should be borne in mind here that these notes were written in 1952, when “now when we are not idols anymore, we can be kicked”, i.e. when the social significance of Gypsy activism had already disappeared and Alexander German no longer needed to comply with Gypsy activists (the specific reason for these words was his jubilee essay on the 30th anniversary of the Gypsy Theatre *Romen*, in which he somehow conceals and belittles the role of Nikolay Pankov for the creation and development of the theatre). Of course, these accusations against Alexander German should not be accepted without reservation and may have been an expression of the personal attitude of Nikolay Pankov toward him. It is difficult to judge whether and to what extent these overall assessments of Alexander German are shared by other Gypsy activists because there is also evidence to the contrary. Especially impressive in this direction is the Petition by the leadership of the Theatre *Romen* to the Union of Soviet Writers with a request to organise a celebration of his 60th birthday of Alexander German (OGMLT, f. 29, ОФ-1545), and as a result of which the Secretariat of the Union of Soviet Writers issued a special Decree on its award (OGMLT, f. 29, ОФ-1338/50). In our case, however, concerning the issue of Alexander German’s ethnic origin and identity, the relationship between him and the Gypsy activists is very clear – as Pankov wrote: “Who is to blame that he reduced himself to the position of a slave to all of us? We never looked for it” (LANB, f. Nikolay Pankov), i.e. neither did they accept Alexander German as a Gypsy, nor (more importantly) did he ever want to present himself as such.

The first time the alleged “Gypsy origin” of Alexander German (in particular the determination of his mother as a “Moravian Gypsy Woman”) appeared was 1960, five years after his death, in the new edition of a collection of his novelettes and stories published by his second wife, Maria Vardashko, in the Afterword written by Boris Turganov (Германю,

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 time the patronymic surname of the mother of Alexander German, Vasiliievna, which is quite strange (it is not clear to what Czech name could be given this Russified form). In 1964, the statement about her “Gypsy origin” was made official in the entry on Alexander Germano, written by Edvard Sholok, in *Concise Literary Encyclopaedia* (Шолок, 1964, 138), and since then, it has become dominant to this day in all publication devoted to Alexander German (see for example: Романи яг, 2003, p. 9; Dunajeva, 2019, pp. 95–109). Given that he professed his origin categorically and unequivocally, as already shown above, there is no need to discuss it any further.

The emergence of allegations of the Gypsy origin of Alexander Germano’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). In 1944, while he was still alive, Maria Vardashko prepared a collection of articles and reviews of Germano’s work, which was not published (OGMLT, f. 29, ОФ-6995). This collection presents another version of the beginning of his work as a Gypsy writer – after his arrival in Moscow, he became known in literary circles, and as a member of the All-Union Society of Proletarian Writers *Kuznitsa* he was sent to help the Central Gypsy Club, and there his interest in the Gypsies was born (as seen above, Alexander German presents in his Autobiography a rather different version of the sequence of these events). In the biographical essay on Alexander Germano, written by Vardashko herself in 1940, there is not a word or even a hint of his Gypsy origin.

Some years following Alexander German’s death, Maria Vardashko attempted to persuade the Soviet institutions and publishing houses to publish his multi-volume 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 made statements in the public sphere that sought to present Alexander German’s image in a favourable light, e.g. he was declared by her to be the creator of the Gypsy Alphabet (though in fact, Alexander German had nothing to do with the activities of creating the Gypsy Alphabet), 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), appears to be the emphasis on Alexander Germano’s Gypsy origin. This has been a widespread practice since the times of the Russian Empire, where re-discovery of “Gypsy origin” (quotes are not accidental as there is usually no real basis for such claims) among the artistic elite was often found because of the Gypsies’ exotic and romanticised public image. Apropos, this phenomenon is also known in contemporary Russia, where many stars of show business, cinema, and literature often publicly claim to have Gypsy roots (most often it turns out to be some mythical Gypsy grandmother about whose ethnicity there is no real evidence).

Summarising what has been said until now about Alexander German’s place in the birth and development of Romani literature, we can say that there is a relatively rare case of divergence between the ethnic origin and identity, on the one hand, and the national

dimensions of someone's literary work, on the other. However, it is not without analogies in the history of world literature. It is enough to recall the case of Sandor Petöfi, the renowned Hungarian national poet, who was of Slavic origin (his father was Serbian, his mother Slovak). The case of Alexander Germano 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 impact. So, there is every reason to accept that the place of Alexander Germano in the history of Romani literature as an important part of the process of Roma civic emancipation during the interwar period in the USSR is indisputable, and he is de facto one of its main progenitors and its most prominent representative.

Roma Activist Women

Elena Marushiakova and Vesselin Popov

With the establishment of Soviet power as a result of the October Revolution of 1917, the fundamental idea was that a completely new type of state should be built, in which all social ills of previous historical epochs would be eliminated. An important aspect of this radical historical change is the complete elimination of the disadvantaged position of women, manifested in various spheres (social, economic, political, cultural, educational, etc.). This ambitious goal finds expression in the overall policy of the Soviet state in all its aspects and, accordingly, has had a strong impact on the Roma civic emancipation movement, which is inextricably woven into the general discourse of Soviet national policy in the early USSR.

In USSR, for the first time, the Roma activists (men and women) brought to the forefront the specific problem of the Gypsy woman and 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. As one Gypsy male activist in the early Soviet Union writes, the Gypsy woman is a "slave" 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 the 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). In this way, the activities towards equality of the Roma woman became one of the important aims in the work of the Union, and the Roma women themselves were included in it as leading figures.

Unfortunately, the available historical evidence of Roma women who have been actively involved in the civic emancipation movement (both in general and in its "female" aspect) is scarce, incomplete and even quite fragmentary. However, these testimonies

provide an opportunity, at least briefly, to present the most important women activists in the early USSR.

Nina Dudarova

Elena Marushiakova and Vesselin Popov

One of the leading figures in the field of Roma civic emancipation in the early USSR was Nina Alexandrovna Dudarova (1903–1992). In her Autobiography, she presents very brief information about herself and her family:

I was born in Leningrad [St Petersburg – authors note] in 1903. My mother was a Gypsy, she sang in a Gypsy choir. I don't remember my father. When I was five years old, my mother remarried a Russian, a very good man, who treated me like a daughter. (LANB, f. Николай Саткевич, д. Нина Дударова).

From this information, neither her mother's surname nor who her father was, nor her real surname is clear. Some authors point to Zakrzhevskaya as her second surname (Цветков & Махотина, 2018, p. 477), but it is not clear whether this is her father's surname, and Dudarova is the surname of her second father or vice versa. According to Valdemar Kalinin (personal communication), Zakrzhevskaya is her second father's surname, and Dudarova (a widespread Ossetian surname) is her husband's family name. However, the issue of her marital status is also unclear. There is no record of when (and whether) she was married or who her husband was; according to Kalinin, he was an officer in the Imperial Russian Army who disappeared without a trace during the Civil War (personal communication). In an index titled *Figures of the Gypsy Language and Culture*, compiled by the linguist Janis Loja (see above) in the 1960s, the name Elena Nikolaevna Dudarova is included. She was a graduate of the Institute of Oriental Languages, worked as an English translator and lived at the same address in Moscow with Nina Dudarova (OGMLT, f. 29, ОФ-12354). However, it is not clear whether she was Nina's daughter or niece.

According to Nina Dudarova's Autobiography, she completed her secondary education in Leningrad in 1919, after which she began working at a school and simultaneously she obtained pedagogical education at the Institute for Raising the Qualification of Teachers (LANB, f. Николай Саткевич, д. Нина Дударова). In 1925, she moved to Moscow (Ibid.). At that time, the *All-Russian Union of Gypsies* had already been established and with the assistance of the Narkompros and local authorities in Moscow, began organising three Gypsy schools. Nina Dudarova was assigned to organise a school in the Rogozhsko-Simonovskiy (Proletarian) rayon (Ibid.). She rounded the Gypsy homes and persuaded the parents to send their children to school; petitioned the authorities for funds to purchase clothes and shoes for the children, as well as teaching aids.

In October 1925, the Gypsy school was opened. Its significance was especially noted by Egon Erwin Kisch, who called it “the first Gypsy school on earth” (Kisch, 1992, p. 119). The school had about 30 children. They were studying according to the general mainstream education program, were divided into two classes according to the age of the students (younger and older children), and the teachers were Nina Dudarova and another non-Roma woman, the latter subsequently left the school (LANB, f. Николай Саткевич, d. Нина Дударова).

At that time, Nina Dudarova was the only Gypsy woman with a relatively good education, and, in the conditions of almost complete lack of trained educated personnel among the Gypsy activists, she was quite naturally involved in the leadership of VSTs. At the same time, her involvement was conditioned by another, very important factor of high symbolic significance, namely the need for a publicly visible female presence in the leadership of the union. Through this female presence in the leadership of the Gypsy organisation, the new, equal position of the Gypsy woman was publicly demonstrated – both in Soviet society as a whole and within the Gypsy community itself. Initially, among the ten founding members of the prototype of the VSTs, *the Society for the Organisation of Proletarian Backward Gypsy Masses of the City of Moscow and the Moscow Governorate*, founded on January 10, 1924, was only one woman – Yelizaveta Yurovskaya (GARF, f. P 1235, op. 119, d. 9, l. 3). In the list of founders her social position is marked as an “artist” (i.e. a participant in Gypsy choirs), without any party affiliation, born in 1887; subsequently, when reducing the composition of the Initiative Group for the creation of a new organisation called the *Gypsy Society*, carried out on the recommendation of ON VtsIK in August 1924, she dropped out of its composition (Ibid., l. 11). In the Draft Statute of the new organisation is explicitly noted: “All Gypsies can be members of the society [...] without distinction of gender” but in practice the number of women involved in the Roma civic emancipation movement is insignificant. However, at the end of 1925, after the official registration of the *All-Russian Union of Gypsies* by the NKVD, a new Presidium of the Union was elected, which included Andrey Taranov (Chairman of the VSTs), Sergey Polyakov (Deputy Chairman), Ivan Lebedev (Secretary), Mikhail Bezlyudskiy and Nikolay Pankov, and three candidate-members, one of them was a woman, Leontyeva (her first name is unknown), who studied at Rabfak (GARF, f. P 1235, op. 120, d. 27, l. 83).

At the end of 1925, at a meeting of the Presidium of the VSTs, a general Working Plan for 1926 was adopted, in which a special place was given to the activities necessary to solve the problems of the Gypsy woman. It was planned to organise a department for work among Gypsy women at VSTs, which would hold agitation meetings on the relevant topics (GARF, f. P 1235, op. 120, d. 27). The problems of the Gypsy women were addressed in more detail in the Working Plan of the Cultural Department of VSTs, adopted in early 1926, which stated: “A woman supports the whole family by fortune-telling [...], she has no right in the family, does not have the right to vote and self-defence”, and that is why the following task was set:

To free a woman from the yoke in the family and the dominance of a man over her, to achieve that she would refuse to earn a living through fortune-telling, and to using her in socially useful branches. (Ibid.).

There is no concrete data on which of these plans were implemented in practice, but in any case, the topic of double discrimination (in society and in her community) of the Gypsy woman was on the agenda.

According to some testimonies, Nina Dudarova had been a member of the VSTs leadership since the summer of 1925, when the NKVD approved its statute (Иващенко, 2011, p. 40). However, Nina Dudarova's preserved membership card shows that she was accepted as a member of the VSTs on April 12, 1926. This card has No. 167, i.e. so the Union had many members at that time. Following her joining the VSTs, she was included in the leadership of the Union, and in this position, she became involved in attempts to reform it to avoid its liquidation. At a meeting of the Presidium of the VSTs, held on February 15, 1927, a decision was made to replace the existing Central Board of the VSTs with the established Board of Founders of VSTs consisting of 5 members and 3 candidates, one of these candidate members was Nina Dudarova (GARF, f. P 393, op. 43 A, d. 1763, l. 160). This idea for the reconstruction of VSTs was not realized, but in the first issue of the journal *Romany zorya* presented a photo of the leadership of the VSTs, namely Andrey Taranov, Ivan Lebedev, Sergey Polyakov, and Nina Dudarova (Романы зоря, 1927а, p. 3), i.e. Dudarova had been brought to the forefront in the management of VSTs. This could be seen also from the poster with the appeal *To Gypsy Inhabitants of RSFSR* issued in the same year on behalf of the *All-Russian Union of the Gypsies Living on the Territory of RSFSR*, which was signed by the Chairman of the VSTs Andrey Taranov, Secretary Ivan Lebedev and Board Members Nikolay Pankov, Nina Dudarova and Dmitriy Polyakov (GARF, f. P 9550, op. 2, d. 2010, l. 1; Marushiakova & Popov, 2021a, pp. 712–718).

The overall impression from the available historical sources is that the position of Nina Dudarova in the VSTs was rather demonstrative – to present her as a public example (to both Gypsies and to the Soviet society) and to point 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 contribution to the creation of the Gypsy Alphabet, as well as her successful work as a teacher in the Gypsy school in Moscow, and especially her published teaching materials, as well as her translations and editing of the Romani language texts.

After the order of the head of the Narkompros of the RSFSR, Anatoliy Lunacharskiy, on the creation of Gypsy Alphabet was established *Committee for Creation of the Gypsy Language Alphabet* at the General Directorate of Scientific, Scholarly-Artistic and Museum Institutions (Glavnauka) of the Narkompros. VSTs sent as its representatives in this Committee Nikolay Pankov and Nina Dudarova (Друц & Гесслер, 1990, p. 295). Despite the different versions about the composition of the Committee (for details see

above), Nina Dudarova's participation in it is unquestionable, and this is quite natural given the fact that she was the only Gypsy woman at that time who was a teacher in the Gypsy school and had pedagogical experience.

Immediately after the adoption of the official alphabet, Nina Dudarova together with Nikolay Pankov began work on the creation of the first textbooks for learning the Romani language. In 1928, the world's first such textbook, *Нэво дром: Букварё ваш барэ манушэнгэ* (The New Road: Primer for Adults), was published, intended for the literacy of illiterate Gypsy adults (Дударова & Панково, 1928). However, this textbook was not just a simple primer for learning the Romani language but contained many additional materials on various topics, e.g. about the social and political structure of the USSR, about the origin and history of the Gypsies in the world, about the changes in their life in the conditions of the Soviet state, about their inclusion in the public life of the Soviet side, for the creation of Gypsy artels, kolkhozes, clubs and schools, etc., including about the disadvantages of women in the traditional Gypsy family, as well as the importance of International Women's Day (8 March).

Together with Nikolay Pankov, Nina Dudarova prepared two more textbooks (Pankovo & Dudarova, 1930ab) for the children who studied in the Gypsy schools – *Джиды буты: Романо букварё ваш I бэри сыкляибэ* (The Live-work: Gypsy Primer for the First Schooling Year) and *Лолы чергэнори: Книга ваш гинэибэн прэ дуйто бэри сыкляибэн* (The Red Little Star: The Reading Book for the Second Schooling Year) – which marked the beginning of the study of the Romani language in the Soviet educational system (and for the first time in world history). These textbooks, like the first primer, were very rich in content and present a complete picture of life in the Soviet state and the Gypsies there (of course, in the spirit of Soviet ideology and mass propaganda). Subsequently, Nina Dudarova prepared another textbook for adult literacy, as well as several textbooks for teaching children in Gypsy schools (Дударова, 1932ab; 1933ab; 1934). In addition, she has published some articles in Gypsy journals on the successes and existing problems in the education of children in the Gypsy national schools (Романы зоря, 1927с, pp. 15–18; Нэво дром, 1931i, pp. 19–20).

Nina Dudarova's activity in the field of Roma civic emancipation was far from limited to the school and educational sphere. She was a member of the board of the Central Gypsy Club *Лолы чергэн* (Red Star), and in this position, she directed many activities within the club. The club published its own wall newspaper, and Nina Dudarova organised many talks on various topics – political, pedagogical, anti-religious, medical, sanitary, etc. An amateur group called the Blue Blouse was created, in which high school students participated, which gave public performances, e.g., the play *Амасы и ададывес* (Yesterday and Today) from the repertoire of the Theatre *Romen*. Nina Dudarova herself wrote music to her poems and adapted them for presentation on stage – in Column Hall of the House of Unions, in the Central House of Pioneers, in various factories, and in other places. She took care of the artistic upbringing of children, organized their visits to the theatre, to the cinema, to art galleries. A pioneer detachment was set up at the club,

and meetings were organised with students from other national schools, which, in her words, “developed Gypsy children, brought them up in the spirit of internationalism [...] and a new Soviet generation of Gypsies grew up” (LANB, f. Николай Саткевич, д. Нина Дударова).

Like many other Gypsy activists at the time, Nina Dudarova also wrote poetry. Her poems were included in the first *Алманах of the Gypsy Poets* (Германо, 1931, pp. 25–33), one of which is a poetic address entitled *Кэ романычяй* (To the Gypsy Girls). She also published her poems in the textbooks she prepared. In addition, she actively collaborated as an editor and translator of many of the books published in Romani by various publishers in the early 1930s (see Shapoval, 2021b, pp. 159–195).

Special attention deserves the book published in 1929 by Nina Dudarova *Пало власть советэн* (About Soviet Power) (Дударова, 1929). This book, together with the book by Alexander German *Нэво джибэн* (New Life) (Герман, 1929), marked the beginning of a new genre in the emerging Roma national literature in the early USSR – political journalism. Nina Dudarova’s book is with encyclopaedic character, with a clear popularising and agitational character, and presents a detailed political picture of the world in which Gypsies live, with special emphasis on their new social position in the USSR and the opportunities offered by the Soviet state. It is worth noting that the book includes the above mentioned poem by Nina Dudarova herself, entitled *To the Gypsy Girls* dedicated to International Women’s Day (8 of March), i.e., the topic of the emancipation of the Roma woman had not been forgotten.

Taken as a whole, it can be said that in Nina Dudarova’s texts and overall activities during this period the issue of the emancipation of the Roma woman was not mentioned separately, but was inscribed in the leading discourse of the Roma civic emancipation in the early USSR. This should in no way be interpreted as an underestimation of the “female topic”, on the contrary, she always included this problem in a more general framework, i.e. for her, the emancipation of the Roma woman in the society inevitably is accompanied with her emancipation in the community too.

In fact, despite Nina Dudarova’s multifaceted activities in the field of Roma civic emancipation, her main activity remained her work as a teacher in the Gypsy National School. It is to this activity that she devoted the most space in her Autobiography, written from the distance of time, in which she noted:

I must admit that I enjoyed great respect and even love from both adults and children, and that meant a lot. Meeting my former students now, I hear from them how important the school was for their future. [...] Rumours about our school spread beyond the Soviet Union. Foreign delegations came to us, took photos of us, wrote about the school in magazines and newspapers. [...] I received a letter from a professor from Sweden. The envelope read: USSR – Moscow. The only Gypsy teacher. And the letter arrived. Later, when Gypsy kolkhozes were organised, teachers of collective farm’s Gypsy schools in the Smolensk region and the North Caucasus wrote to me. They asked for advice and help. In each issue of the journal *Нэво дром* (New Way), I wrote about the school, about our achievements and

shortcomings. [...] We all worked then with great uplift, with joy, because our beaten, backward people grew before our eyes. Gypsies became equal citizens of our great Motherland. (LANB, f. Николай Саткевич, d. Нина Дударова).

After the first Gypsy national school, organised by Nina Dударова, several similar new schools were established – both in Moscow and in the countryside (mainly at the established Gypsy kolkhozes). In 1933–34, there were 7 Gypsy schools and groups of the 1st stage (i.e., primary school) in the Moscow region, in the North Caucasian krai 3 schools, in the Western oblast 2 schools and 2 groups, in the Central Black Earth oblast 2 schools, in the Nizhne-Volzhskiy krai 1 school, and the Sredne-Volzhskiy krai 1 school; one seven-year school with children's home, opened in 1928 in the Western oblast (GARF, f. P 1235, op. 127, d. 8, l. 154-15406). In 1935, a total of 12 Gypsy schools of the first degree and 18 Gypsy groups at mainstream education schools functioned in the RSFSR, as well as one seven-year school with children's home school (GARF, f. P 1235, op. 130, d. 5, l. 66–70). The number of these Gypsy national schools was volatile and changed over the years, and not all of them were sustainable, but they still played an important role in the education of Roma children and the literacy of adults.

Nina Dударова worked as a teacher in a Gypsy national school for 13 years, until 1938, when, as a result of the Decree *On the Reorganisation of National Schools*, many national schools in the USSR were closed (including Gypsy schools), and she began working as a teacher in a mainstream school. On this occasion she wrote:

I also treated my work with love, because I love my job and I love children, but my most joyful memory will always be the difficult years of my work in the Gypsy school. (LANB, f. Николай Саткевич, d. Нина Дударова).

After Nazi Germany attacked the USSR in 1941, some schools in Moscow were closed, including the one where she worked, and she began working at the Moskabel plant (a cable factory). In addition, she worked in a hospital for the wounded and participated in groups that dug anti-tank trenches to protect Moscow, for which she was awarded the Medal for the Defense of Moscow. After the opening of the closed schools, she returned to work as a teacher. For her work in the field of school education in 1949, at a ceremony in the Kremlin, she was awarded the Badge of Honor (Ibid.).

Nina Dударова died in Moscow in 1992. In her Autobiography, written in the 1960s, she made a recapitulation of her work in the field of Roma civic emancipation:

This is the whole story of my life. The work we started is not over yet. There is nothing to hide that the situation of the Gypsies is still like a dark spot against the light and joyful background of our present. You, our shift, remember that the Gypsies are also children of our great Motherland and they should live the same way as all the people of our country, and not be its stepsons. This must be achieved, but for this, it is necessary to work a lot and hard. (Ibid.).

Olga Pankova

Elena Marushiakova, Vesselin Popov and Viktor Shapoval

Another important figure in the field of Roma civic emancipation in the early USSR, and in the aspect of the emancipation of the Roma woman in the community, is Olga Ivanovna Pankova (1911–1991). She was born in St Petersburg and came from the great family of Pankovs. She was the daughter of Ivan, the older brother of Nikolay Pankov (about him see above). Left without parents at the age of 10, in 1921, when her father died. At that time, the entire Pankovs family had left Leningrad and lived in the Tambov gubernia, where her father worked as a horseman in a Red Army sovkhos. She was raised by her uncle Nikolay Pankov, with whom she moved to Moscow in 1922 (PAVK; LANB, f. Николай Саткевич, d. Ольга Панкова).

In the early 1930s, Olga Pankova joined the movement for Roma civic emancipation. In 1931 she started working in the editorial office of the Gypsy journal *Nevo drom*, first as a typist, then as a proofreader, editor and translator into the Romani language. In addition, she was a member of the leadership of the Central Gypsy Club *Лолы черзэн* (Red Star) and the Gypsy Komsomol organisation created at the club, devoting a lot of energy and time to the elimination of illiteracy among Gypsies and their employment, organising various public actions, theatre performances, music, dance and choir circles, kindergartens and camps, etc. (Ibid.). At that time, the club received a new building from the local authorities, with many more rooms, including a large hall and a theatre stage, and quickly became the centre of Gypsy social and cultural life in the capital, Moscow.

In the 1930s Olga Pankova developed a vivid creative activity as an author, editor and translator of many different publications in the Romani language. Her literary heritage provides an opportunity to reveal her views on the need for the emancipation of the Roma woman in the community and society.

If talking about her literary activities, first of all, she was a phenomenally productive translator into the Romani language. This fact is remarkable because her biographical data showed she had got nothing but “primary education” (RGALI, f. 631, op. 1, d. 4777, l. 15). This is not surprising; her childhood fell on the very dramatic years of the large Pankovs family after the loss of their private house in St Petersburg. This should be kept in mind further when looking through the long list of books she translated successfully dealing with the various topics. Her first steps in the field of translations are impressive. In 1931, she published two translations of the highest political status: Lenin’s *The Tasks of the Youth Leagues* (Ленино, 1931) and Stalin’s speeches *About Komsomol* (Сталино, 1931). A less than 20-year-old Komsomol member, the author of the single published poem won this honourable double order and left behind all more experienced Gypsy activists and writers. She translated many books from various fields of knowledge and special professions, e.g. politics, agitation, agriculture, geography, car construction, teaching materials,

etc. (for more details see Shapoval, 2021b). However, there was a clear focus on books for women and children.

In her texts, Olga Pankova herself served as a model for a new liberated Roma woman, a living example of what opportunities the Soviet system created for representatives of all nationalities and, what is especially significant for women. When she wrote about Gypsy kindergartens, schools, clubs, she used her own experience of participating in those activities (Панкова, 1932, pp. 32–35).

The first poem (without a title) by Olga Pankova was published in the magazine *Nevo drom* in 1930 (Нэво дром, 1930с, pp. 10–11). It was a politically literate diptych in which the depiction of the horrors and hardships of the past nomadic life clearly contrasted with the happy life on the Gypsy kolkhoz: *Ёв парудя гаджэнса грэн* (He was swapping horses with peasants) vs. *Ёв дро колхозо дром латхья* (He has found his way to the kolkhoz). This dilemma was without any hesitation resolved in favour of a sedentary working life. Thus, the first appearance of the young poetess on the printed pages demonstrated her civic and political maturity and complete harmony with the state policy toward the Gypsies, and this was her leading principle, reflected in her entire artistic creative work.

Olga Pankova's poetry includes 3 books of poems *Амарэ дывэса* (Our Days), *Ростасадо джибэн* (A Crushed Life) and *Гиля* (Poems) (Панкова, 1933; 1936; 1938), and she also co-wrote with Alexander German the theatre play for children *Серёга Лагуно* (Германо & Панково, 1933). The themes of her poetry are very diverse, and two things should be emphasised: the very good quality of her language, the language that is already a monument of the past today; and the very positive personality of the author that arises behind her poetic lines and images. This author is a young Roma woman of that time. She has expressed the specific feminine point of view of her often silent contemporary women, and this is the additional value of her poetic messages.

In the plan of the Roma (and especially women's) civic emancipation we are interested in, without any doubt, the first published book by Olga Pankova with journalistic essays, entitled in Romani *Комсомоло дрэ марибэ поло нэво джибэ* (Komsomol in the Struggle for New Life) and translated in Russian as *Комсомол в борьбе за оседлость* (Komsomol in the Struggle for Sedentarisation) is of special value (Панкова, 1932). Its content gives a clear idea of this type of publication. The individual sections in this book are entitled: *Социализмо барьёла* (The Socialism Grows up), *Ром акана сы бутярытко* (Gypsies Today are Toiling), *Сыр быяндлэпэ пэрва романэ колхозы* (How the First Roma Kolkhozes Were Born), *Сыр ли кулаки машик ромэнде?* (Are There Kulaks among Gypsies?), *Романпро производство* (Gypsies in Production), *Романэ школы* (Gypsy schools), *Марибэ пало политехнизация* (The Struggle for Polytechnisation), *Ваи романо театро* (About Gypsy Theatre), *Пэрво дро свэто романы редакция* (The First in the World Gypsy Publishing), *Романо клубо* (Gypsy Club), *Ваи джювякэ* (About Woman), *Сыр кэрла буты амаро романо комсомоло* (How to Work in our Gypsy Komsomol), *Со бангэ тэ джигэл и тэ прольджял дро джибэ комсомоло* (What the Komsomol

Should Know and Implement). While the individual parts largely repeat the basic facts and interpretations contained in many other similar publications, the part dedicated to the Roma woman is undoubtedly original and one of the relatively few texts devoted to the problems of emancipation of the Roma woman in the community and society.

Generally speaking, the literary work and public activities of Olga Pankova showed the combination of two aspects of civic emancipation, which both were popular in that historical period. It appears to be very symbolic. On the one hand, she acted as a representative of an entire small Gypsy nationality, which for a long time, for many reasons, did not have the opportunity to enter the public arena to present their position and declare their interests and needs in the public sphere. On the other hand, as a representative of Roma women, she also revealed a specific feminist agenda, acknowledging the problems and demands of this part of the nationality. Roma women found themselves, as one might say, under double oppression, both under the pressure of the surrounding majority society and under the pressure of social restrictions determined by inner norms and customs. The latter rules, in turn, were formed within the community itself, subjected to one or another restriction of its rights and forced from the side of the dominating majority, probably for survival, but those patterns of strict gender-based division of duties and behavioural control in all spheres of everyday life started to be redundant and regressive in the new socialistic conditions, as Roma activists believed.

In the public activities of Olga Pankova, the emancipation of the small nationality and the emancipation of the women were combined quite organically. At that very time, the circle of new opportunities that opened up for the active and competent Roma woman, in comparison with the previous historical period, was incomparably wider and more attractive. The ideas of feminist emancipation offered to the Soviet society were extremely diverse and covered the widest spectrum from the extremely bold and shocking concepts of freedom up to the rigoristic and ascetic behavioural models of selfless service to the revolution and socialism. In this spectrum, there was also a place for the choice of intermediate and rational position, a choice that does not come into sharp conflict with the principles of the parents' generation.

Olga Pankova was a successful and suitable candidate for overcoming both sets of problems of Roma women, perhaps for several important reasons. She was a representative of the clan of trade and choral Roma, lived in St Petersburg, and later in Moscow; therefore, she belonged to those cultural mediators who had the social experience and intellectual resources necessary for orientation in urban life and, what is important, in the public sphere of interaction between citizens. This experience of multiculturalism was extremely important for successful communication with both the authorities and the diverse Roma communities. The position of a woman in them varied, sometimes quite significantly. Comparing the position of women in the families of sedentary choral Gypsies (in general representatives of *Ruska Roma*) with their position, for example, among former nomadic *Kelderari*, that had recently settled in Moscow at that time, observers noted the great archaism and categorical nature of the behavioural restrictions

that existed in the latter groups (O’Keeffe, 2015, pp. 69–71), for example “from the words of Gypsy women, we learn that they still do not dare to sit at the same table with men, should not interfere in the conversation of men, like beings of lower status. Some Roma men try to avoid entering the room which women have entered – they consider it desecrated (polluted)” (Гончарская, 1929, p. 56).

In the background of this complex picture, the work of Olga Pankova, quite naturally, turns out to be closely related to the Soviet concept of ‘liberation of a woman’ as an equal member of a collective, a worker and a mother. As soon as Roma women achieved civic equality, she was, like all other working women, able to use the measures offered by the state for protection and support of motherhood and upbringing the children. Olga Pankova not only shared and supported the Soviet concept on women but expressed them clearly in her publications, in particular, when portraying the tragic fate of a Gypsy woman before the 1917 Revolution, and in descriptions of the new prospects which they received in the Soviet state.

In her texts on the situation with the Roma woman in the conditions of the Soviet state, Olga Pankova adhered to a simple and clear scheme. First, she described how under the capitalist rule, in the conditions of Tsarist Russia, Gypsies were generally discriminated against and persecuted by the state. Secondly, their unequal position in society reflected on the relations in the community, where the Roma woman was deprived of any rights and was treated as the property of her father and after the marriage, she became obedient to her husband, without having any rights. In her words:

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 Gypsy 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 does she endure in her life? In the cold and 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 her knees, sing songs, beats her. She, the poor thing, trembles with fear, and is afraid to utter a word. (Панкова, 1932, pp. 30–31).

In Olga Pankova’s scheme then follows a description of a bright future. The October Revolution of 1917 and the creation of the USSR as a new type of state radically changed the position of Gypsies in society. They became equal citizens of the Soviet state with all civil rights, and that state took comprehensive care of them. Along with this, the Soviet state changed the place of the woman in the society as a whole, she received civil equality for the first time in world history. All this is naturally reflected in the position of the Roma woman in the community, or in words of Pankova herself:

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 small mind. And we say it's not true. [...]

But Gypsy 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. (Ibid., p. 31).

Olga Pankova confessed that the changes did not come so quickly and easily, there were still some unresolved issues and problems with the position of the Roma woman in the community, so much more work was needed. As Olga Pankova underlined, leading positions in this struggle to achieve full equality of the Roma woman not only in society but also within her community must be taken by the young generation, united by the Soviet ideology and within the Komsomol organisation:

But I must say that among our Gypsies there are still such "heroes". Not every Gypsy 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 realise and fulfil this task. Now a Gypsy woman is doing work in the workplace, studying. Literacy opens the eyes of a formerly ignorant woman. She now sees a lot of good things. And everything is new for her. (Ibid., pp. 31–32).

Of course, in real life (and even in the life of Olga Pankova herself), things were not as simple as presented by her, both in the Gypsy community itself and in the Soviet state. In this case, for us, however, her vision for the emancipation of the Roma woman is more important. For Olga Pankova, the emancipation of the Roma woman is inextricably linked to her community and is de facto part of the processes of the overall Roma civic emancipation in Soviet society. In other words, her views, in general, did not differ in essence from the views of Nina Dudarova or even from the modern principles of the emancipation of the Roma woman today.

In the mid-1930s, Olga Pankova married Yevgraf Yefimovich Yankovskiy (1910–1988), called Grafo, who at the time was an artist at the Theatre *Romen* (Калинин, 2005, pp. 230–231). According to the memories preserved in the oral history among the Moscow Roma, he was a talented artist, but with a complicated life destiny. Olga Pankova herself also started working at the Theatre *Romen* but also spent a lot of time with her family, which was the reason her latest book's (Панкова, 1938) publication was delayed by several years (RGALI, f. 613, op. 1, d. 4777, l. 4, 21, 31, 63). Her first son, Ivan Yankovskiy (later worked as a lighting designer at the Theatre *Romen*), was born in 1935; her second son, Yevgraf Yankovskiy (Jr.), called Grafchik (later a famous artist in Theatre *Romen*), was born in 1938 (Калинин, 2005, pp. 230–231).

The radical turn in Soviet national politics in the second half of the 1930s and the ensuing Second World War interrupted Olga Pankova's civic and creative activity. In 1947,

her third daughter was born, Olga (later known with the family name of her husband – Kovtun), who later worked as an administrative assistant in various Soviet institutions (Ibid., p. 202). Olga Pankova raised her children alone at that time. In the late 1940s, she left the Theatre *Romen* and worked for many years as a typist (PAVK; LANB, f. Николай Саткевич, d. Ольга Панкова). In 1971, she was the editor of the book of Gypsy songs collected by a composer Semyon Bugachevskiy (Бугачевский, 1971). Olga Pankova died in Moscow in 1991.

In her Autobiography, written in 1964 (PAVK; LANB, f. Николай Саткевич, d. Ольга Панкова), Olga Pankova gave a comprehensive assessment of her civic and creative activity (as well as of the activity of her entire generation of Gypsy activists) and the problems of Gypsies in the USSR in the post-war realities, part of which deserves to be brought here:

After the hurricane of the war of 1941, no trace remained of the work that was carried out by those who are no longer among us. [...] But we have people, new cultural Gypsies, who are striving to revive what was cast into the dust by the war. They are looking for ways to start working again among the Gypsies. And if this is achieved, the Gypsies will show that they are able to live and work in step with the century. [...] The thought that there should be an opportunity to work for my people does not leave me. And despite my rather advanced age, I will fulfil my duty to [my] people. (Ibid.).

* * *

The participation of Roma women in the processes of Roma civic emancipation in the early USSR is by no means limited to the names of leading activists (Nina Dudarova and Olga Pankova). In various forms, a number of other Roma women were also involved in these processes, about whom it is worth saying at least a few words, no matter how fragmentary the available information about them is.

Yevdokiya Ivanovna Orlova (1890–1964) was a famous Gypsy singer. In her application for membership in the Dramsoyuz (Association of Dramatic and Musical Authors and Composers), completed in 1929, she noted that she is 39 years old (i.e., she was born in 1890), that she received a “home” education (i.e., she did not go to school), and that from 1905 she worked in the restaurant *Strelna* (a famous restaurant with Gypsy music). In this application, she wrote: “I wrote songs and romances since 1910, and started to publish since 1928” (RGALI, f. 675 op. 2, d. 464.l. 2). In the late 1920s, she created her own music and dance group, called the Theatre of Small Forms, which worked at the club named after Nadezhda Krupskaya (Bessonov, 2016, pp. 144), which in the period 1936–1940 continued to exist under the name Moscow State Ethnographic Gypsy Ensemble (RGALI, f. 656, op. 3, d. 4759, l. 36–3606). In 1930, Yevdokiya Orlova published in the journal *Romany zorya* the small theatrical play in three stages *Хасиям палэ гилы* (We perished for the song) (Романы зоря, 1930e, pp. 46–57). In 1933, she published her collection of poems entitled *Прэ фэлды мурдэна яга* (In the Fields the Fires Are Extinguished), in

which civic poetry on current political topics prevailed, including the poem *Джювликано участь* (Women's Fate), dedicated to the problems of the Roma woman (Орлова, 1933, pp. 22–23). Yevdokiya Orlova died in Moscow in 1964 (Kalinin, 2020, p. 67).

Another Roma woman who appeared in the field of Gypsy national literature in the 1930s was Maria Yegorovna Polyakova (1904–1976). She was the daughter of Yegor Polyakov, leader of a famous Gypsy choir, and wife of Georgiy Lebedev (about him, see above). She is the creator of a new genre, namely of (so popular also nowadays) comics, which presents the adventures of the character 'Rom Pupirka' – *How Rom Pupirka Was Going to Gypsy Union in Moscow* (Романы зоря, 1929b, p. 29) and *How Rom Pupirka Was Going to Visit Gypsies in Moscow* (Романы зоря, 1930f, p. 63). It is interesting to note that this comic character continues to be found in the folklore of the Roma in the post-Soviet space. Maria Polyakova also published two books of poems for children, *Сыр Маша гыя тэ сыклёл* (How Masha Went to Study) и *Холямо башно* (The Angry Rooster), as well as a collection of short stories (Полякова, 1930ab; 1931). Her work is generally sustained in the spirit of the era and as expected, presents the participation of Gypsies in socialist construction in the USSR.

In the Gypsy journals (*Романы зоря* и *Нэво дром*), as well as in the published almanacks of poetry (Германо, 1931; 1934e), other Roma women also participated as authors of poems, among whom in our field of interest (the emancipation of the Roma woman) of special significance are the works of P. Voinova-Masalskaya, who presents herself as a student in the theatre studio at the Theatre *Romen*. In the 1931 issue of journal *Nevo drom*, her poem *Women's Day* was published (*Нэво дром*, 1931e, p. 21), as well as a short note entitled *About the Women's Day* (March, the 8th), which repeats in prosaic form the content of the poem:

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, 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 Gypsy 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 will perform all these things not for drunk rich men, but for all people. [...] (*Нэво дром*, 1931d, p. 21).

In this case, it is clear that, due to her age, the author herself cannot have memories of the era of Tsarist Russia, which she describes, i.e. there is an art that very accurately reflects the spirit of the era, and in particular the prevailing pattern for the representation of the civic emancipation of the Roma women in the conditions of the Soviet state.

The participation of Roma women in the general processes of Roma civic emancipation in the early USSR was not limited to the capital, Moscow, where most Gypsy

activists were concentrated. Although to a lesser extent, similar processes took place in the countryside (at least in some places). Such was the case with Roma woman with dramatic fate, Yefrosynya (Ruzya) Tumashevich (1908–1993), from the Smolensk region (actually Smolensk was the second centre of the Roma civic emancipation movement in the early USSR). She was called by her contemporaries the ‘Gypsy Ibarruri’, referring to the legendary Isidora Dolores Ibárruri Gómez known as La Pasionaria, a Spanish communist and hero of the Spanish Civil War. She was the chairman of the kolkhoz *Svoboda* in Kardimovo, in the Smolensk region (Нэво дром, 1930g, pp. 9–10), worked at Gypsy school with children’s home in Serebryanka and during the Second World War was a participant in the partisan movement (for more details see Kalinin, 2021, pp. 174–175).

Some of the examples of Roma women’s participation in Gypsy activism in the early USSR were reflected in the press at that time. Such was, for example, the case of the kolkhoz shock-worker Yevgenia Tsigenenko from the kolkhoz *Trud Romeni*, who took part in the *Second All-Union Congress of Kolkhoz-Shock Workers* in Moscow in 1935, where she met Lenin’s widow, Nadezhda Krupskaya (Второй Всесоюзный съезд, 1935). Similar were the cases of published photographs of V. Yarysheva from the Gypsy kolkhoz *Nevo drom* (Novo-Velichkovsky rayon of the Azov-Black Sea krai), taken in 1936, who drove a tractor (RGAKFD, d. 99274, сн. 4-99274 ч/6), or of the Gypsy teacher N. P. Pedanova, who in 1938 in the Stalingrad oblast conducted classes for a group of Gypsy kolkhoz workers in the field, where she introduced them to the rules for holding elections to the Supreme Soviet of the RSFSR (GTsMSIR), as well as Z. I. Lebedeva, a Gypsy Komsomol member from the kolkhoz *Trud Romeni*, who originated from a Gypsy nomadic community, graduated from law school and worked as a judge in Rostov-on-Don in 1937 (Известия, 1937, p. 4; Иващенко, 2011, p. 66).

It is beyond any doubt that these photographs were taken and published for propaganda reasons, but, nevertheless, it should not be forgotten that they represent real people and they reflect actual processes of civic emancipation of the Roma woman that flowered at that time in Soviet society. Moreover, these processes were not always conditioned by the affirmative policy of the Soviet state towards the Gypsies, because often the general spirit of the era, revealing new opportunities for women (regardless of their nationality), turned out to be more important and effective. The existence of such cases is evidenced, for example, by a letter to Ivan Tokmakov in ON VTsIK from 1935, sent by A. V. Lebedeva from Ardatov (today in the Republic of Mordovia), who wrote that she graduated from an agricultural technical school and works as an agronomist. After realising that there is a search for a mother-tongue teacher, she wanted to pass on to the Gypsies the knowledge she had (GARF, f. P 1235, op. 130, d. 5).

Of course, the processes of emancipation of the Roma woman did not proceed without any problems within the community itself, where the established traditional gender-age patterns and relationships continued to maintain more or less leading positions. It is no coincidence, for example, that of all the preserved photographs of Roma women from

the time of the early USSR, only two of the photographed activists (N. P. Pedanova and Z. I. Lebedeva) are with short haircuts, which was considered a drastic violation of the established traditional norms (by the way, these norms turn out to be extremely stable, and even today, in the post-Soviet space, long hair continues to be an important ethnic marker for the Roma woman).

Perhaps the potentially most dangerous area in which conflict situations related to the emancipation of the Roma woman were possible (and in fact, arose) was the training of young Roma girls in the higher levels of the education system. The Soviet state, true to its principles of supporting the civic emancipation of women in Soviet society, facilitated women's participation in these educational initiatives in various ways. This principle also applied to Gypsies, e.g. in 1934 a total of 32 people were admitted to the Smolensk Medical Faculty, 20 of them men and 12 women (GARF, f. P 1235, op. 123, d. 28); in 1932, at the opening of the Gypsy Department at the Pedagogical College of the Krasno Presnensky District named after Timiryazev, which in 1935–1936 was transformed into the Gypsy Pedagogical College, 25 students aged 17 to 30 were enrolled, of whom 13 were men and 12 women (GARF, f. P 1235, op. 127, d. 8), and this practice continued over time.

The separation of young Roma girls from their families, who traditionally exercised control over their pre-marital behaviour, created the preconditions for the violation of traditional norms in the new social environment. In 1935, ON VTsIK initiated an investigation into the case of a student at Gypsy Pedagogical College N.G. (born in 1918) after a complaint to the prosecutor's office that she had been raped by a fellow student and then insulted by her fellow students and sexually harassed by their fellow students. The investigation lasted a long time, went through many twists and turns (N.G. withdrew her testimony and withdrew her complaints, then obtained a certificate from a doctor that she was still a virgin, etc.), and finally, the investigation was terminated. However, the case shows that the emancipation of the Roma woman in some cases did not pass painlessly for herself and without upheavals in the community.

Finally, a few words should be said about the situation of women's emancipation among the so-called Gypsies in Central Asia, i.e. in the assemblage of non-Roma communities with different origins and identities, collectively referred also as *Lyuli* or *Jugy* (Marushiakova & Popov, 2016a). Public campaigns of Soviet power in Central Asia for the removal of the *paranja*, used by 'Women of the East' to completely cover themselves, did not target Gypsy women (Northrop, 2004, p. 51). This was because the *paranja* was rarely used by them; instead, they wore a 'softer' form of veiling, with an uncovered face. In place of the fight against the *paranja* another movement for the liberation of Gypsy women arose in Samarkand – 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 Dzhililova and Dzhumakikh Norbaeva were especially active in this regard and repeatedly took action to persuade women to burn their begging bags, and to go to work in local factories. Koromat Dzhililova 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). By the way, the stereotype about the begging bag turned out to be extremely strong – the wedding custom is still preserved when the groom hides under the bed, and the bride begs him to go out and swears that she will sustain him and the whole family with her begging bag (for more details see Marushiakova & Popov, 2016e). Of course, in real life, the situation is much different (Ibid.).

Despite all difficulties, the examples above reveal the history of Roma women emancipation which occurred for the first time in the early Soviet Union, thanks to the efforts of the women whose portraits are included in this chapter.

Conclusion

Elena Marushiakova and Vesselin Popov

The portraits of the most prominent and leading Gypsy activists in the early USSR presented here reveal both the existing common characteristics and the personal specifics of each of them. Together, they form the overall appearance of the movement for Roma civic emancipation in the USSR during this historical period.

In order to properly understand and evaluate the characteristics and significance of this movement, it is not enough to present and analyse the relations ‘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 Soviet multinational discourse.

Historical data give immediate, unambiguous answers. 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).

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 some of the Eastern European socialistic countries, but the transfer of data from one historical epoch to another is methodologically unjustified. In the USSR, no one and never in its entire history has expressed even a hint of doubt that Gypsies are not an ethnic community (nationality according to the accepted terminology of the time). 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 in the life of the Gypsies: community and society.

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. This approach does not take into account the fact that Stalin's famous pamphlet *Marxism and the National Question* was first published in 1913 under the title *Как понимает социал-демократия национальный вопрос?* (How Does Social Democracy Understand the National Question?) (Сталин, 1946, pp. 32–55), and in which his well-known definition of 'nation' is derived, is, in fact, a topical political pamphlet against Austro-Marxism and the General Jewish Labour Bund in Lithuania, Poland and Russia. Stalin's so-called definition of the nation in this pamphlet is not original, it is based on the definitions of Karl Kautsky and Otto Bauer (Семёнов, 1966, pp. 106–129), and it is this text that gave Stalin the name of a specialist in the national question, and therefore after the October Revolution, he held the post of Commissioner for Nationalities in the Council of People's Commissars. What is the most important thing, in this case, is the fact that Stalin's so-called famous definition of a nation is by no means the basis and guiding principle in the formation of the national policy of a Soviet state (both in the early USSR and beyond). 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 180 nationalities, according to the 1926 Population Census (Всесоюзная перепись, 2020a), met the criteria to be considered a nation, and how the policy towards Gypsies differs from the policies towards all other nationalities in early USSR, that, similarly, do not fully meet these conditions. In fact, all reflections on which nationalities fit Stalin's definition of a nation and which did not, appeared only after his death. They were in the markedly anti-Stalinist discourse that was a leading party ideology in the USSR after the dismantling of Stalin's cult of personality in 1956.

The main problem here is in the 'Roma-centric' approach, when all the attention of researchers is focused only on Roma, without taking into account the overall historical context. On this basis, the perception of their identity occurs in only one dimension, and both their multidimensional identity (in the parameters of the dichotomy

‘community – society’), despite the alphabetical truth that any identity is always contextual. Hence the constant opposition of Gypsies in the USSR as an ethnicity/nationality on the one hand to their position as a social and civic category on the other naturally leads to the conclusion (directly or implicitly) that the Soviet government tried to assimilate Gypsies to can turn them into ‘Soviet citizens’, ‘Proletariat’, ‘Socialist Workers’, etc. (Lemon, 2000; O’Keeffe, 2013; Dunajeva, 2021b). However, these conclusions are not relevant, because the very opposing of these two leading dimensions (society and community) of Gypsies’ identity in the USSR is completely unjustified. From the point of view of the dominant ideology and the existing political practice in the early USSR (as well as in the whole history of the USSR) there is no problem for the Gypsies as for all Soviet citizens to be ‘Socialist Workers’ and/or ‘Proletariat’ as a social-class category, and at the same time to be also a separate nationality; one does not contradict the other; on the contrary, this two-dimensional position was widely welcomed (and encouraged in various ways) in the early USSR (e.g. the creation of the Gypsy Alphabet, Gypsy Schools, Gypsy Literature, Gypsy Theatre, Gypsy collective farms, Gypsy artels). Therefore, in the end, all this opposition and substitution of the two dimensions of the existence of the Gypsies is incorrect and even manipulative, because it puts them back in the stigma of the eternal outcast, and does not take into account the importance of affirmative action policy in the early USSR for the formation of the new Gypsy civic elite.

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, 1947, Т. 12, р. 369). Despite the dominance of anti-Stalinist discourse imposed by Nikita Khrushchev in the 1950s, this key formulation in the field of culture remained the leading one and was unchanged until the end of the USSR in 1991. Of course, there was not a total correlation between Soviet party slogans and their implementation in life. Just on the contrary, the practice was often more or less opposite to the leading concept. The concept of the development of national cultures was applied (especially after the Second World War) very selectively and did not encompass all nationalities in the USSR equally. However, this does not apply to Gypsies, and this is particularly visible in the case of the Theatre *Romen*.

As mentioned above, the transition from Romani to Russian at the Theatre *Romen* in the 1930s was the result of the internal development of the theatre itself, not because of some repressive policy of the Soviet state or because of the desire to assimilate the Gypsies. 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. The issue here is that the topic of Theatre *Romen* has accumulated many biased interpretations

in recent decades. In general, the development of the theatre is placed almost entirely in the discourse of the changes in the national policy of the USSR in the 1930s, and the leading tendency is to present it (explicitly or indirectly) as another manifestation of the anti-Gypsyism of the Soviet policy towards the Gypsies, as a suppression of the public manifestations of their identity and, ultimately, as a pursuit of their assimilation (Lemon, 2000; O'Keefe, 2019). This interpretation is not only presupposed and biased but also completely incorrect. Firstly, there is no documented ban on the use of the Romani language in the Theatre *Romen* (or at least no one has found traces of such a ban in the archives of the Soviet state administration, as well as in the theatre itself). Secondly, in practice, in the performances of the theatre also after the 1930s, individual words and phrases in the Romani well known to the audience, continued to be used; also, numerous songs in Romani continued to be an important part of every performance. This fact makes the very idea of assimilation meaningless because in fact Gypsy songs and dances were, and are also now, among the main and most important markers of Gypsy identity in the USSR. And, thirdly, this interpretation does not offer an answer to the most logical question – if the Soviet authorities wanted to assimilate the Gypsies, why did they simply not eliminate one of the main pillars of their identity during the Soviet era, the Theatre *Romen* itself (in this respect they had no doubts how to act, it is enough to mention the closure of the Moscow State Jewish Theatre in 1948). Instead, in eyes of supporters of the idea of forcible assimilation, it turns out that the Soviet authorities chose a very strange and ineffective strategy – to support the work of the Gypsy National Theatre effectively, and only controlled its repertoire from an ideological, political and aesthetic point of view.

The Gypsy State Theatre *Romen* not only existed and developed successfully in the conditions of the USSR after the Second World War until its collapse (and continues to exist today), but became one of the most important tourist attractions in Moscow, and tickets for his performances must be purchased in advance (as is also the case with the famous Bolshoy Theatre). Moreover, in the 1960s and 1970s, Gypsy music and dance ensembles began to be created en masse at the regional philharmonic orchestras, the cultural homes of large enterprises, etc.; these dozens and even hundreds of Gypsy music and dance ensembles constantly toured the vast Soviet country with their performances, and assisted these institutions in the implementation of their financial plans. Gramophone records with Gypsy music and songs (most of them performed in Romani) were published in millions of copies and were distributed not only in the USSR but also throughout the socialist camp. Thus 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 ethnic culture developed (even today in the post-Soviet space Gypsy music and dance folklore is entirely built 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). Therefore, it should come as no surprise that, for example, the type of theatrical women's costume developed according to the patterns imposed by the performances of the Theatre *Romen* is now considered 'traditional' and is used even now by many Roma music and dance ensembles throughout the entire region of Central and Southeast Europe, including among Roma Muslims (Marushiakova & Popov, 2016c, p. 53), for whom it was unknown in the past. 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.

In general, the issue of the interdependence of identity with the music-dance and song repertoire presented for the audience has its methodological dimensions. Together with Aspasia Theodosiou, we consider the "dualistic perspective that characterises identity as either essential or performative" dissatisfactory (Theodosiou, 2004, p. 41). Moreover, identity, as mentioned many times above, can have more than one dimension; it can be presented in both contexts – of the community and of the society. These two dimensions may not coincide but enter into different correlations. This multidimensional identity directly reflects on their culture, including their song repertoire, not only on stage but even at home. One is this repertoire in front of the guests in a given family in a mixed (Roma and non-Roma) company, i.e. when Roma are positioned as part of the society in which they live – then the public demonstration as a community comes to the fore, and songs known in the whole society known as 'Gypsy' are performed. This repertoire is completely different in the family circle with its close relatives and friends when the community identity does not need to be demonstrated because it is known and accepted by all present – then, paradoxically, public civic identity comes to the fore. and are performed mainly songs that are popular in the society in which Roma live (Marushiakova & Popov, 2009).

In the specific case of the Theatre *Romen*, it is methodologically unjustified to conclude that state policies concerning the theatre's music, dance and song repertoire influenced the development of Roma identities in the USSR. In general, throughout their history, Gypsy musicians have always conformed their performances, which is in many cases the main (or at least additional) source of their livelihood, with the dominant in this society ideological, political, aesthetical, etc. norms; how this repertoire affects the choice of songs and dances within the community is a different topic. In the case of Theatre *Romen*, there is a clear selectivity. A large part of the theatre's repertoire, which is not ideologised and influenced by Soviet ideologues, is transferred within the community

as a whole and becomes part of its so-called traditional folklore. That is why even today in the whole post-Soviet space it is extremely difficult to find musical-dance and song folklore samples that are not born (or at least strongly influenced) by the norms and patterns presented in the public space by the Theatre *Romen*. However, all these examples are valid only for those cases of songs and dances, built on old, folklore samples, or for newly created ones, which preserve their content and forms. Among this folklore heritage of the Theatre *Romen*, however, there is not a single example in which one can feel any influence of the ideological norms and patterns imposed by the Soviet state in this repertoire, i.e. it turns out that the new forms (mostly songs) created in the spirit of the dominant Soviet ideology were intended only for public presentation, and remained only on the stage, without entering the life of the Roma. Moreover, these new forms are not even present in the hugely released gramophone records, i.e. de facto, they did not reach the majority of Roma in the USSR.

Another very serious problem in the study of Roma in the early USSR is the 'Roma-centrist' interpretation of the history, as a result of which one can reach the following wording: "In 1928, Stalin's ascent to power lead [sic!] to the disbanding of the PRGU [i.e. the *All-Russian Union of Gypsies* (VSTs)– authors note]" (Klímová-Alexander, 2005a, p. 164). The impression 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, and when the next grand historical task (mass collectivisation of agriculture and the accelerated industrialisation of the USSR) was intensively prepared, one of the most important tasks was the closure of the VSTs. It is hardly necessary to argue how absurd all this sounds. In the interest of historical truth, we must note here that throughout the vast written heritage of Joseph Stalin on a wide variety of topics, repeatedly published and reprinted, there is not a single word (sic!) about Gypsies, and 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 Days of the Turbins* of Mikhail Bulgakov).

The place of the Gypsies in the common line of the nationalities policy of the Soviet state during the interwar period was determined by different factors. The most important (but still not the only one) were 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 only in this Census were considered a nationality separate from Gypsies), of whom 12,823 lived in cities and 48,411 in villages (Всесоюзная перепись, 2020a). 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, 2020b). With a total number of the entire population of the USSR 170,557,093, Roma represented about 0.05% of it and placed in 43rd place in the ranking of nationalities in the USSR by their size (i.e. the changes from the 1926 data were insignificant).

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 3260, op. 6, d. 44, l. 5; f. P 393, op. 43 A, d. 1763, l. 80; f. A 259, op. 96, d. 4233, l. 22; f. P 3316, op. 17, d. 188, l. 3). However, the Soviet administration preferred to work with official data on the number of Gypsies for quite understandable bureaucratic reasons, which were revealed in 1935 ON VTsIK Report: if the reasons (and figures) offered by Gypsy activists were accepted, then the share of employed Gypsies in the reports will be no more than 15%; however, if the official census data are accepted, this share will be 30–35% (GARF, f. P 1235, op. 123, d. 27).

The Gypsy activists pointed out two main reasons for indicating higher numbers. The first was that in the Census many Gypsies self-identified as Romanians, Hungarians, Bulgarians, and others because they had foreign passports. This is quite misleading because, in the Census, all foreign nationals were accounted by their citizenship, 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 reason for claiming higher numbers was that Gypsies supposedly could not be covered by the Census because they were not domiciled. This argument also is not convincing enough because Gypsy camps were usually on the outskirts of the settlements and thus were easily reached 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 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%.

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 its 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 (Фурценко, 2003, p. 161).

The case of the sedentarization of the Gypsy nomads is particularly indicative in terms of the importance (more precisely its absence) that the Soviet government attributes to the Gypsies. We mentioned more than once the restrained position of the Soviet state to the calls of Gypsy activists for imposing the sedentarization of nomadic Gypsies through administrative pressure. Even more striking is such an attitude towards the nomadic Gypsies in the conditions of the early USSR, when the policy against nomadism, in general, was considered an extremely important task, which was a necessary condition for the transition to socialism (Зверяков, 1932) and the sedentarisation (or the placing under control, through the creation of permanent summer and winter settlements) of pastoral nomads in Central Asia (Kindler, 2014; Cameron, 2018) and other regions was imposed, along with that of the so-called Small Peoples of the North (Синицин, 2019). All these nomadic communities were seen as crucial 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 this allowed the issue of their sedentarisation to be left in the background and be drawn into an indefinite future (in this case – until 1956). These conclusions are confirmed by the available digital data, which leaves no room for any other interpretations. According to Alexander Khatskevich (Secretary of the Council of Nationalities at the TsIK USSR), in 1917, on the eve of the October Revolution, more than 10 million nomadic people lived in the Russian Empire; in 1933 it was estimated that as a result of the measures taken by the Soviet state, more than 7 million nomads had moved to a sedentary way of life (Правда, 1933, p. 4). In fact, by the beginning of World War II, the issue of nomadism was generally resolved (except for Gypsies), although after the war there was a process of partial renomadisation, involving various communities (mainly in Central Asia) as well as some already settled Gypsies (Marushiakova & Popov, 2003; 2016a). There can be no doubt that if the Soviet state in the 1920s and 1930s had really aimed at forcing Gypsies to move to a sedentary lifestyle, it could have achieved that goal without much effort – after it had forced more out of 7 million nomads to settle in such a short time, tens of thousands of Gypsy nomads could not be a difficult task.

From this point of view, it becomes absolutely clear that any attempts to explain Soviet affirmative policy towards the Gypsies in the 1920s and 1930s as preparation and the first step towards their sedentarisation (and even future assimilation) are completely

ridiculous and should not be taken seriously. The logical question here must be why the Soviet state paid so much attention to Gypsies and made 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 a national one and every eighth to the ninth selsoviet was national too (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 Tabor* starring Lyalya Chernaya in the United States. Nevertheless, though limited, this effect was visible. Of course, despite 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). 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 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, 2020ab*) 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. 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, and also 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 publications of fictional and educational literature in the 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, at least as far as the fate of the Soviet Gypsy elite is concerned, which was generally not affected by these mass persecutions.

The very topic of Stalinist repressions towards the Gypsies deserves a separate study, in which they 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. An important part of the mass political repression in the 1930s in the USSR was the series of so-called national operations directed against individual nationalities and especially against their national elites (party, administrative, cultural, literary, etc.). During the Great Terror in 1937–1938, the NKVD issued a series of decrees and directives against many specific nationalities (*Охотин & Рогинский, 2007*), but the Gypsies were not among them, i.e. they were not repressed as a separate nationality but in the general political context of the era. In this context, it becomes clear why the most common were repressions against the so-called 'foreign Gypsies' who were citizens of other countries; that is why the most common accusations against them are espionage for foreign countries, as absurd as it may seem today.

The statements that the trials against the Gypsies were in fact persecution of the traditional Roma culture (Lemon, 2000, pp. 166–193) is undoubtedly very effective, but it is not only untrue, it is also misleading. Many preserved materials from the lawsuits against members of the artels of the so-called 'foreign Gypsies' in fact have a lot of data about the so-called Gypsy courts and Gypsy kings but no allegations were made against these institutions as such, the accusations were made against the specific criminal activities,

and at the forefront were indictments of their service for foreign intelligence (GARF, f. 10035, op. 1, d. 74091). More generally, the Soviet state never denied, in principle, the Roma traditional culture in general, only certain segments of it that were considered “reactionary”. On the contrary, one of the main goals in the activity of the Theatre *Romen* was the preservation and development of that what was considered (according to the norms of Soviet ideology) to be its “authentic” and “progressive” part. This was the reason for the constant struggle against the so-called *tsiganshchina*, considered a “false” Gypsy art, an illustrative example of which is the reply of Alexander Khatskevich, addressed to Nikolay Pankov during the Meeting at the Council of Nationalities at the TsIK USSR *On the Questions of the Employment of Toiling Nomadic Gypsies and their Cultural and Economic Services*, held on January 4 and 5, 1936: “We are not interested in Gypsy bourgeois romances [a typical symbol for the so-called *tsiganshchina* – authors’ note], but in Gypsy people art – the folklore” (GARF, f. P 3316, op. 28, d. 794, l. 92). That is why the attempts to introduce into the Roma national discourse the mass repressions against the so-called foreign Gypsies in the 1930s are not only unconvincing but also unsuccessful, and they should not be taken seriously.

In this context, the fate of the new Gypsy national elite in the period of mass repression is more important to us. Here we will only briefly state that the Gypsy case is, if not unique to Soviet realities, at least one of the few exceptions. An important part of the mass repression, especially during the Great Purge in 1937–38, was directed against the new Soviet national elites created by the Soviet state; their destruction was one of the main goals of the mass repressions during this period (Martin, 2001, p. 595). Unlike the general practice, when huge sections of these new national elites, 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, for instance, Andrey Taranov, who after two failures (as the 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, after which he began to work in the NKVD system (see above), i.e. he was fully rehabilitated.

In the context of the repression against the new Soviet national elites, and in particular the fate of the Gypsy national elite, we can consider the case of Georgiy Lebedev as one of the few exceptions in this regard. Moreover, he was convicted of criminal charges, although he was appointed director of the Gypsy State Theatre *Romen* to exercise ‘political guidance’. (GARF, f. P 1235, op. 123, d. 28, l. 183). However, his condemnation did not in any way affect the fate of the Theatre *Romen*, which not only continued to exist but also developed successfully over time. A comparison with the fate of the Latvian State Theatre *Skatuve* (Stage) in Moscow shows radically different results in a similar situation: in 1937 the theatre was closed down, the entire staff of the theatre was 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 that of Velya Pashun, who wrote under the 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 about the Civil War, including two books on Gypsy themes, one of which has even been translated into Moldovan (Зорін, 1932ab; 1934; Zorin, 1933). 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 not attracted 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.

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 overall Soviet national politics, which happened in the late 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, p. 595) and became even clearer when the new Constitution of the USSR from 1936 omitted to mention national rayons and selsoviets (Вдовин, 2002). On December 1, 1937, the Organizing Bureau 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 of the TsK VKP(b) on this issue was adopted on December 17, 1937 (RGASPI, f. 17, op. 3, d. 1006, l. 39–40). The endpoint was reached after the decisions on the reorganisation of the national schools in 1938 (see above). Naturally, the shift in the general nationalities policy was reflected also in the policy towards Gypsies and Gypsy activism.

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 civic 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. Of course, from today's point of view, it is very difficult to assess exactly which of the specific results were achieved thanks to the special affirmative policy towards the Gypsies in the early USSR and which thanks to the general mainstream policy towards all Soviet citizens: for example, to what extent the illiteracy of Roma children was finally eliminated through the limited number of Gypsy schools that existed for a relatively short time, and to what extent through the system of compulsory school education of all children in the USSR.

We can offer another example in this regard. In 1941, 265 Gypsy communists were reported, i.e. members and candidate members of the VKP(b) (Edele, 2014, p. 290). In the USSR, membership in the Party was a sign not only of civic emancipation but also of belonging to the Soviet nomenklatura – members of the Communist Party enjoyed many privileges (and therefore greater responsibilities) than ordinary Soviet citizens. There is no exact data on how many of the Gypsy activists were party members at that time, but judging by the available documents, their number hardly exceeded a few dozen: i.e. the communist Gypsies, for the most part, have reached these positions thanks not to a special affirmative action but to a common policy, which should be a cause for reflection.

Among the Roma themselves at the time, some felt this contradiction between the special and the mainstream concerning the Gypsies in the early USSR and wondered which approach is better for the community as a whole. An illustrative example in this regard 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 newspaper *Pravda*, an edition of the TsKVKP(b), from where on April 21, 1937, it was forwarded to ON VTsIK (GARF, f. P 1235, op. 130, d. 5). This letter, point by point, signalled in detail to the many existing shortcomings in the Gypsy kolkhozes, artels, schools, and even at the Theatre *Romen*, and called for all the perpetrators to be “put to rights” by NKVD. 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). Moreover, the author of this letter reaches a fundamental problem that continues to be relevant to this day for Roma activists, namely whether it is necessary to pursue a special policy regarding the Roma or whether their problems can (and should) be solved within the framework of the mainstream policy in the countries in which they live. 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, 2017b, pp. 48–59). G. M. Andreev was adamant in this regard, as he raised the issue of privileges and wrote: “to give less of all kinds of benefits [...] which have just the opposite results as intended” (GARF, f. P 1235, op. 130, d. 5).

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).

A turn in the USSR nationalities policy was, in fact, a predetermined end of Gypsy activism from 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 by sending letters to the top Soviet party and state leaders – the letter of Ivan Rom-Lebedev, Alexander German and other Gypsy activists to Stalin in 1946, Nikolay Pankov's letters to Petr Pospelov in 1953, to Nikita Khrushchev in 1954, the letters of Nikolay Pankov and Andrey Taranov (two letters) to the TsK KPSS, the Council of Ministers of the USSR and the newspaper *Pravda* in 1954, and finally, Nikolay Pankov's letter to the new First Secretary of the TsK KPSS Nikita Khrushchev in March 1956, and to Marshal Kliment Voroshilov, then Chairman of the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet of the USSR in August of the same year. All these letters plead for a return to the active policy of affirmative action towards the Gypsies from the interwar period (and, accordingly, for raising the social position of the Gypsy activists themselves). These letters remained unanswered but ultimately lead to an unexpected and undesirable end result by their authors themselves. On the 5th of 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. At first glance, it seems that Gypsy activists, after more than three decades, were finally able to convince the Soviet state of the need to eradicate the nomadic way of life of the Gypsies. However, the ban on nomadism did not entail any other elements of the old Gypsy policy of the previous period. 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 special affirmative action policies.

The endpoint of all these attempts of the old Gypsy elite from the interwar period came with the activities of Nikolay Satkevich in the 1960s. Nikolay Satkevich was the last representative of the old generation of Gypsy activists from the interwar period. He was born in 1917 in a nomadic Gypsy camp, was raised in an orphanage from the age of 8, graduated from the Gypsy Pedagogical College in Moscow and became a teacher in Bryansk. During World War II, he fought in the Soviet Army and reached Berlin. His two brothers were killed in the war at the front, his mother, sister and niece were burned by German soldiers during the occupation of Bryansk in their house (LANB, f. Nikolay Satkevich, d. Nikolay Satkevich; Друц & Гесслер, 1990, p. 307; Бессонов, 2010, p. 250.)

After the war, he moved to Irkutsk, where in the 1963/1964 school year he was given the opportunity by local authorities to set up a Gypsy class with 17 children of different ages in a boarding school but, at the beginning of the following school year, the parents withdrew their children and moved them to a mainstream school (GARF, f. A 259, op. 45, d. 2943, l. 22–23).

In 1964, Nikolay Satkevich sent a letter to Anastas Mikoyan, President of the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet of the USSR (Ibid., P. 26), in which he described the entire Soviet state's experience of working with Gypsies and proposed the creation of special boarding schools where Gypsy children would be educated. The answer from the Council of Ministers of the RSFSR was quick and unambiguous: "The experience of creating a special class of Gypsy children [...] has not justified itself ... Parents spoke in favour of educating their children in mainstream education schools by place of residence" (Ibid., l. 26–27). After this unsuccessful experiment, Satkevich moved to Tula as a teacher (Друц & Гесслер, 1990, pp. 307–308). According to the oral history of Roma in the region, Satkevich's attempts to establish a special Gypsy boarding school have been met with strong resistance by Roma women in Tula and Kaluga who accused him publicly of wanting to take away their children. This reaction should not surprise us; moreover, it was through the forms and mechanisms of mainstream (and not special) education in individual Gypsy schools, that the illiteracy of Roma in the USSR, as a whole, was eliminated. One can argue a lot about the advantages and disadvantages of general and special education for Roma children, but nowhere in the world did education in segregated schools (or classes) lead to better results compared with general mainstream education. Moreover, the rejection of Nikolay Satkevich's ideas is in full consistency with the contemporary vision of the Roma movement, which categorically rejects segregated education for Roma children (Rostas, 2012; Matache & Barbu, 2019). The paradox, in this case, is that the closure of the special national Gypsy schools in 1938 continues to be interpreted in academic works unequivocally and unconditionally as "evidence" of the Soviet state's repressive policy towards the Gypsies, but this is another matter.

The case of Nikolay Satkevich clearly shows how a situation was reached, 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. This was, in fact, the final end of the Gypsy elite formed in the early Soviet era and also the end of this part of its visions of community development, which contradicted the visions of the community itself. And an elite that does not have the support of its community is doomed and cannot be 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 Roma community itself was a loser or a gainer, in this case, is a question that deserves another, separate study.

USA

*James I. Deutsch***Steve Kaslov**

Steve Kaslov (ca. 1888–1949) is an emblematic figure in the history of Roma elite and Roma civic emancipation in the United States. Some sources identify him more broadly as a leader of *Kalderaš* – “famous for their skill in working copper and gold” (Cotten, 1950, p. 17). Other sources place him more specifically as “a leader of the *Rusuya* ‘Russian’ Rom group” (Kaslov, 1995, p. 15). Although Kaslov was sentenced to federal prison for making false statements to a draft board in New York City, he was generally regarded as a visionary leader of his people, seeking to improve the civic status and rights of Roma individuals and communities in the United States. Recognition of Kaslov extended even to the White House, which reinforces his inclusion in a book of leading representatives of Roma history during the interwar period.

Reliable biographical details of Kaslov’s life are elusive. One of his earliest promoters was Victor Weybright – considered one of “the more informed observers of American Rom” (Sutherland, 1975, p. 1). In a piece written for the influential *New York Times Magazine* on how “Reality Overtakes the Gypsy”, Weybright called attention to Kaslov as “a remarkable though unlettered man, [who] has demonstrated that at least a certain group of nomads can cooperate” to improve “the condition of the nomad gypsies” and “to preserve their native talents yet adapt them to a changing world” (*New York Times Magazine*, 1938, p. 14). Several years later, in the pages of the *Journal of the Gypsy Lore Society*, Weybright romantically – but falsely – claimed that “Kaslov was born fifty years ago [i.e., ca. 1895 – authors note] beside a green lane in Lowndes County, Georgia. He grew up in tent and caravan, always on the move. Married at an early age, he never spent a day of his life in school” (*Survey Graphic*, 1938, p. 142). However, what Sheila Salo determined through research in census and immigration records is that “Kaslov was born in Russia in 1888” and emigrated with his family in 1901 – first to New Brunswick, Canada, and subsequently to the United States (Salo, 1995, p. 38). During his twenties, Kaslov married a woman “of the Gunarešti lineage”, and lived in northeastern Pennsylvania, coastal South Carolina, the Texas-Mexico border, and Baltimore, Maryland, before settling in the area of New Jersey and New York City in 1919 (*Ibid.*, pp. 38–39).

Once he arrived in the New York area, Kaslov’s activities are easier to document. According to Rena Cotten Gropper’s ethnographic work, based on two decades of direct observation, Kaslov “had organized the *Kalderaša* into a Red Hat Association” ca. 1931, and by 1939 he had “managed to convince city and federal authorities that he was ‘King of

all New York Gypsies', and he obtained a W.P.A. project and acted as liaison for allocation of relief funds" (Gropper, 1967, p. 1053). By way of background, the W.P.A. was the Works Progress Association, one of the key agencies of President Roosevelt's New Deal, created in 1935 to provide jobs for millions of Americans put out of work by the 1930s depression.

Gropper's description corresponds to other accounts in contemporaneous newspapers and magazines. For instance, in 1938 Weybright published a glowing account of Kaslov in *Survey Graphic*, a respected "magazine of social interpretation" (as per the magazine's subtitle), which described how Kaslov had "evolved a plan to prevent the degeneration of a group of his people in New Jersey. In 1931 he was instrumental in incorporating them as the Red Dress Association (*Survey Graphic*, 1938, p. 143). The Red Dress Association was "also known as the Red Hat Association" (Lauwagie, 1979, p. 326) – not to be confused with the Red Hat Society founded in 1998 for women over fifty – but even so Weybright's reporting is slightly off. According to Salo's investigation of legal documents, Kaslov had incorporated the Red Dress Gypsy Association in Passaic County, New Jersey, as early as November 22, 1927, establishing himself as president of this not-for-profit organisation (Salo, 1995, p. 39). What Kaslov intended with the association was to establish "a Gypsy colony where the children could go to school, where the fortune tellers could be licensed and responsible, [and] where the men could have a permanent workshop in which to ply their trade" (*Survey Graphic*, 1938, p. 143). Kaslov also envisioned "a village where tourists would learn to know and admire the best qualities of Gypsy life as they do in parts of Europe" (*Ibid.*, pp. 143, 145). According to his nephew George Kaslov, this combination of colony and tourist village would "function similarly to Native American reservations under the American Indian New Deal with some limited autonomy" (Klímová-Alexander, 2005a, p. 186).

No such tourist village ever materialised, but Kaslov had more success in establishing a metal-craft workshop. In June 1939, the *New York Sun*, one of the city's most popular dailies, praised what it called "the first settled gypsy workshop ever to be established in America," known as Romany Coppersmiths. In the shop, members of Kaslov's "Red Dress tribe, will repair all sorts of metal work, often using secret methods that have been handed down for generations" (*New York Sun*, 1939, p. 7). The newspaper lauded Kaslov's goals and quoted him as follows:

We will show people we are good workers in metal – like ten, twenty years ago when we worked on tanks, cans, steam tables for big places. Got to have a place of business for that – telephone, address. Who would send out an expensive thing to repair when gypsies have no address. (*Ibid.*).

An accompanying photo – approvingly labeled "A gypsy smithy settles down" – shows Kaslov working on a copper kettle, wearing a sleeveless t-shirt (*Ibid.*).

Additional images to promote Kaslov's ventures appeared several years later in the July-October 1946 issue of the *Journal of the Gypsy Lore Society*, using six photographs

by Alexander Alland, with accompanying text by Richardson Wright. Alland had photographed "Steve Kaslov and his tribe" as part of an exhibition, "The Children of Romany", which was on display at the Museum of the City of New York from April 7 to May 11, 1941 (Wright, 1946, pp. 116–120). The piece was billed as "a pictorial supplement" to Weybright's article, *A Nomad Gypsy Coppersmith in New York*, which had appeared in the January-April 1945 issue. Weybright's article recycled much of the content that had appeared in the March 1938 issue of *Survey Graphic*, but glowingly praised Kaslov as "one of the very few Gypsies who have ever championed the nomads in this country. He has brought their problems before welfare and educational authorities in terms of shelter, health, and education" (*Survey Graphic*, 1938, p. 7). Weybright concluded the piece with a brief history of the Romany Coppersmiths workshop, noting that it had opened on June 26, 1939, "thanks to money raised for rent, equipment, and running expenses by private philanthropists," but supported by "a special committee on Gypsy problems [that] was organized by the Welfare Council of New York City" (*New York Sun*, 1939, p. 7). The operation continued "under the sponsorship and guidance of the Special Committee until May 15, 1940". At that time, the committee determined that "the experiment was no longer justified, since at no time during the eleven months it operated were sufficient orders received to meet the expenses" (*Ibid.*, p. 8). Kaslov tried to keep the shop running and "assumed entire responsibility for its further operation," but eventually accepted the fact that "demand for the art of coppersmithing as practiced by the Gypsies had largely passed. Old cooking utensils are now more often discarded for new than mended, and cartons are generally used in place of tin cans" (*Ibid.*).

Around this same time, Kaslov was receiving additional kudos for his efforts to promote reading and writing skills among members of his group. Calling him "king of the Russian Gypsies in the United States," the *New York Herald Tribune* in March 1940 applauded Kaslov having "selected thirty of his young men subjects to be the first to study simple English" so that "they can settle down at trade and become useful citizens" (*New York Herald Tribune*, 1940, p. 10). Coverage also appeared in a national news magazine, which called Kaslov a "progressive king" for having accepted "that gypsies must change" and find new "ways of earning a living" (*Newsweek*, 1940, p. 32). "King Steve's urging has at last produced results," the article observed. "A month ago, he and 30 younger gypsy men went to school at New York's University Settlement and began studying English at twice-weekly classes under a WPA teacher" (*Ibid.*).

Perhaps not surprisingly, other New York journalists adopted a mocking tone when reporting on Kaslov and his efforts. Covering the same attempt to teach reading and writing, Meyer Berger observed:

You would not take Steve Kaslov for a king. You would look at his 300 pounds, at his soiled heavy-silk, and his sausage-thick fingers and you would say he was the town butcher on a day off. But Steve is a King. He is King of the Red Dress Gypsies, a tribe out of Russia. (*New York Times*, 1940, p. 22).

Further describing the scene, Berger wrote in a way that seems extremely disrespectful:

The King breathed noisily with his thick lips closed, like a hippo up from a wallow. [...] Under Steve's grim, heavy-lidded stare each gypsy called awkward greeting to the teacher. [...] This seemed to please The King. His eyelids closed down on his embedded eyes in a slow gesture of intense satisfaction. Hoarsely he whispered, 'I get them damgood education, by jee. (Ibid.).

Curiously, Berger's obituary lionised him as "one of the great reporters of our day", someone who described the "queer old codgers he found in his beloved New York, with a gentle raillery that hurt no one and delighted everybody" (New York Times, 1959, p. 29).

Clearly, journalists found Kaslov a compellingly colorful character, who appeared often in the pages of their newspapers. However, what is even more intriguing is that Kaslov received attention – and even encouragement and support – from the highest political positions in the United States at that time: President Franklin D. Roosevelt and First Lady Eleanor Roosevelt. Although there are claims by Kaslov that he met with Roosevelt when the latter was governor of New York – prior to ascending to the presidency in March 1933 – no record of any such meeting could be found in the governor's appointment books. According to Weybright, Kaslov is supposed to have observed after that meeting, "Mr. Roosevelt is deep. He mentioned things no outsider knows about my people" (Weybright, 1945, p. 4).

More reliable documentation begins with an urgent, heartfelt letter from Kaslov to the President and First Lady, dated June 18, 1937. Given its significance, it is reprinted here in its entirety (with capitalisation in the original, but with spelling errors corrected):

ESTEEMED AND HONORED SIR AND LADY

Referring to my letter to you, on April 6, 1937, relative to the subject of the "GYPSY COLONIZATION"; MOST HONORED PRESIDENT if you could only know the suffering that my people are enduring in this terrible crisis and depression, MY PEOPLE ARE BEING RUN FROM TOWN TO TOWN: WE ARE BEING CHAINED FROM MORNING TO NIGHT; By the time that we are in a different state, we usually stop at some farm to get permission to camp, which the farmer gladly rents us a space, and as we are ready to pitch our tents; A DIFFERENT AGENCY AGAIN CHASES US OUT OF THAT COUNTY AND STATE; FROM EVENING TO THREE OR FOUR O'CLOCK IN THE MORNING; OUR CHILDREN ARE SUFFERING IN THE AUTOMOBILES, FROM HEAT, LACK OF FOOD, AND REST; AND ESPECIALLY THE LITTLE BABIES, FROM LACK OF MILK, FOOD, AND CARE; IN FACT THEY ARE NOT ALLOWED TO BUY MILK, or FOOD FOR OUR CHILDREN, BABIES=WOMEN, Nor ourselves. WE DRIVE ONE HUNDRED OR MORE MILES BEFORE WE ARE ABLE TO STOP AT A BIG CITY TO BUY FOOD. FOR THE INFANTS, MOTHERS, OR OURSELVES; SOMETIMES WE HAVE TROUBLE WITH THE AUTOMOBILES; AND NOT BEING MECHANICS, NOR UNDERSTANDING ABOUT CARS; That is the time that we are abused by the police; Who call my people all kind of terrible, and ugly names, and epithets; AND AT TIMES THEY EVEN STRIKE AND BEAT MY WOMEN, AND MEN FOLK=AGE OR INFIRMITIES NOTWITHSTANDING: NOR CAN THEY DO ANYTHING BUT TRY TO OBEY ANY COMMANDS THAT ARE GIVEN TO THEM IRRESPECTIVE OF THE HARDSHIPS TO WHICH WE ARE PUT.

My people have money enough to travel, and are trying to make their livelihood; But they cannot do so anymore. For Telling-Fortunes and Copper-Smith, for they are chased out of town, from; Who refrain from telling fortunes; But they try to do the other work; But the police are more than strict; At times not only harsh, but vicious in their treatment of my peaceable people. FOR THIS REASON THEY ARE NOW WILLING TO BE LOCATED AND ESTABLISHED IN ONE PLACE OR COMMUNITY; AS A GYPSY SETTLEMENT. That then they will be under the supervision of the law, and will do whatever the law, and other agencies require of them to do; THEY WILL NOT DO ANY FORTUNE TELLING.

It appears that the only towns that my people can in anyway abide, or try to reside are in the Cities, of New York, Philadelphia, Chicago, and Los Angeles.

My people "THE GYPSIES ARE IN NEW YORK" at the present time; they are mostly on Home Relief; We are having a most terrible time of it to live from that money; WE are handicapped from earning our own bread; And would be able to forgo home relieve, if we had your most esteemed assistance in this matter; WHICH WOULD MAKE US SELF SUPPORTING, AND WOULD NOT BE COMPELLED TO RECEIVE HOME RELIEF ASSISTANCE; As we are doing at present.

Most of the children of my people are ill now, for we must live in open air, or die; And that is what is taking place with them; They are mostly contracting; If they have not done so by now "TUBERCULOSIS"; Not to speak of the hundreds of cases of RICKETTS of our children, from lack of air, care, and food. THE SUFFERING IS MOST INTENSE ABOUT THEM.

OUR ONLY HOPE, AND PRAYER IS YOUR AID IN THIS TERRIBLE TIME; IS THAT IF IT WAS POSSIBLE TO GIVE THEM LAND, TO BUILD A COLONY FOR THEM, WHICH WOULD MAKE US SELF SUPPORTING.

IT IS MY UNDERSTANDING, AND I KNOW THAT YOU WILL AGREE WITH ME, THAT THEY HAVE NEVER ASKED FOR ANY HELP, OR ASSISTANCE, OR CHARITY, IN THE HISTORY OF PEOPLE UP TO THIS TIME.

BUT WITH YOUR MOST CHARITABLE, AND WORTHY HEARTS, I plead your help, and aid in this terrible time, and hour of my people; So that thru you they may be able to become, and be at all times hereafter, honest, hardworking, AMERICAN CITIZENS.

I shall see that they have work, that they are able to do; WE WILL HAVE COPPERSMITH SHOPS, as well as other MANUAL LABOR SHOPS, in the settlement; Such as SILVER PLATING; GOLD PLATING, NICKEL PLATING; AS WELL AS ALL KINDS OF METAL SPINNING, AND WORK; TO ENABLE THEM TO BE SELF SUPPORTING, AND FOREGO HOME RELIEF, AS WELL AS THIS TERRIBLE CHASING FROM TOWN TO TOWN.

WHEN THE GENERAL PUBLIC, WILL KNOW OF OUR SETTLEMENT, AND ITS WORKINGS EVEN THEY WILL PATRONIZE US; AND MAKE US SELF SUPPORTING; AND NOT SUBJECTS OF CHARITY.

I NEED NOT REMIND YOU THAT GYPSY MUSIC, AND ENTERTAINMENT IS WONDERFUL: AND THEY, MY PEOPLE ARE NATURAL BORN MUSICIANS, AND DANCERS; ENTERTAINERS; THIS EVERYBODY KNOWS; HENCE THESE WILL BE SELF SUPPORTING. THEY SPEAK AND SING, AS WELL AS DANCE, IN EVERY NATIONALITY. THEY CAN EVEN HAVE THEIR OWN PLAY HOUSE IN THE SETTLEMENT; CAN YOU IMAGINE THE REVENUE THAT SUCH WOULD BRING TO MY PEOPLE; IN ADDITION TO WHAT THEY CAN EARN; IN THE OTHER BRANCHES OF LABOR; TO WIT: MANUFACTURING, WEAVE BASKETS, HATS, CHAIRS= etc., Not to speak of many other kinds of labor.

IN THIS GYPSY SETTLEMENT; There can be build Hospitals, for pregnant women; As well as Children Hospitals, and Dispensaries; For expectant mothers; As well for confinement

cases thereat; WHERE MY PEOPLE CAN RECEIVE MEDICAL ATTENTION, CARE, AND TREATMENT; FOR OUR INFANTS=AS WELL AS FEMALE AND MALE MEMBERS OF MY TRIBE, AND PEOPLE (FOR I SPEAK FOR ALL).

At the present the general public think, or class my people, as animals. A strange, wild class of beings; Dishonest, and unworthy of social intercourse. They think we are dirty, unclean morally, as well as body; WHICH IS FAR FROM THE TRUTH; MY PEOPLE ARE THEY THINK ARE OUTCASTS=THIEVES AND UNDESIRABLES WHICH IS FAR FROM THE TRUTH. BUT HUNGER; ILL TREATMENT; ILLNESS CAN DO MUCH TO CAUSE THE VERY CONDITION THAT IS ATTEMPTED TO BE PINNED ON MY PEOPLE; PLEASE DO NOT LET THIS HAPPEN.

I WOULD NOT HAVE THE AUDACITY TO WRITE SO GREAT AS YOUR SELVES; BUT IF YOU WILL RECALL YOU GAVE ME QUITE A HEARING, AND A CHANCE TO VISIT YOU AT THE TIME THAT YOU WERE GOVERNEUR OF THE STATE OF NEW YORK: AT ALBANY, N.Y., and during this extended interview I learned to know you; And the great heart there is within you. THEREFORE PLEASE FORGIVE ME IN THIS HOUR OF TERRIBLE TROUBLE AND NEED OF MY PEOPLE, THAT I TAKE UP YOUR TIME; AND ASK IF YOU WILL PLEASE PERMIT ME TO PLEAD IN PERSON; IN BEHALF OF MY DISTRESSED PEOPLE. EVEN THOUGH THEY ARE ONLY GYPSIES. DO NOT TURN ME AWAY.

Most Humbly, and Gratefully yours.

[Signed] Steve Kaslov, 208 Bowery, Borough of Manhattan, City of New York. (FDRL. Anna Eleanor Roosevelt Papers, Personal Letters, Box 655, 1937, Lewis).

Needless to say, the volume of letters from the general public to President and Mrs. Roosevelt throughout the 1930s was enormous. Ira Smith, the White House's Chief of Mail, recalled that the letters "came in so fast, we couldn't count them, but within a week I had some 450,000 letters stacked all over the office" (Levine, 1992, 1394). Nevertheless, Mrs. Roosevelt responded roughly one month later, dated July 23, 1937, as follows:

My dear Mr. Kaslov

I have read with sympathetic interest your letter of June eighteenth, setting forth the needs of your people and asking assistance in resettling them and enabling them to become self-supporting.

There is, unfortunately, no federal program in operation at the present time through which your people may receive the assistance they need. I regret that at the present time there are no means of assisting you in this undertaking.

However, I believe that a private agency such as the Foreign Language Information Service, whose program includes dealing with immigrants and persons with foreign background, would be better suited to assisting them in working out a plan. Should you wish to take this up with this agency, their address is 222 Fourth Avenue, New York City, and Mr. Read Lewis is the Director.

Very sincerely yours,
Eleanor Roosevelt. (Ibid.).

On July 31, 1937, Mrs. Roosevelt wrote directly to Lewis, referring Kaslov to him:

This problem seems very difficult, but I hope it will be possible to adjust these people somehow. I have canvassed every government agency without finding any solution or any agency that can in any way be helpful. (Ibid.).

Thus began a correspondence among Kaslov, Mrs. Roosevelt, and Lewis that lasted until July 1942, when Kaslov went to federal prison. Because Kaslov himself could neither read nor write, he needed someone to conduct this correspondence. According to Salo, Carlos de Wendler-Funaro (1898–1985) “seems to have served as Kaslov’s amanuensis” (Salo, 1986, p. 1).

De Wendler-Funaro also became one of Kaslov’s primary supporters and worked closely with him in various ventures. For instance, a letter from Lewis to De Wendler-Funaro, dated April 2, 1938, asks for the latter’s help to resolve a delicate issue, which Kaslov had brought to Lewis’s attention regarding Roma laborers working for the W.P.A.: “The whole matter is one that needs a friendly inquiry and interpretation on the part of some one understanding the Gypsy psychology”, Lewis wrote: “I wonder if you would be willing to look into it?” (AC, Carlos de Wendler-Funaro Gypsy Research Collection, Box 2, Folder 2).

Moreover, De Wendler-Funaro encouraged Kaslov to document not only his own life, but also the history of the Rom. According to a master’s thesis that explores the relationship between the two men:

De Wendler-Funaro repeatedly named Kaslov as the individual who provided descriptions of various rituals, customs, and historical events. He considered Steve Kaslov such an important source that he wanted to present the history of the Rom as it was ‘fully recorded in the words of Steve Kaslov’. (Swift, 1997, pp. 3–4).

De Wendler-Funaro observed, “my friendship with the king or chief Steve Kaslov [sic] or Lolya, as he was called, has been my richest contact” (Swift, 1997, p. 58). According to de Wendler-Funaro, Kaslov’s manuscript was “perhaps the only history of the Romanies in America which [is] strictly from the mouth of a G. who had the desire to tell of his people as the G’s knew it” (Swift, 1997, p. 58; brackets are in the original).

Much of what Kaslov presumably dictated to de Wendler-Funaro is now part of the Carlos de Wendler-Funaro Gypsy Research Collection at the Archives Center of the Smithsonian Institution’s National Museum of American History. Salo not only prepared a register of the collection (Salo 1986), but also published an excerpt from Kaslov’s manuscripts as “The Ways of My People” in the *Journal of the Gypsy Lore Society* (Kaslov, 1995). According to Salo, the style of writing is “mostly in a variety of American English common among American Rom. Parts of the biographical section are written in the first person, others in the third. Cultural material includes descriptions of weddings, funerary ritual, business transactions, conflicts and conflict resolution. As factual sources the manuscripts are unreliable: dates, for example, are only very approximate; birthplaces for Steve Kaslov and his family are incorrect” (Salo, 1986, p. 7). When literary agent George Bye received a draft of Kaslov’s biography, he wrote to one of Mrs. Roosevelt’s aides to call it “a terribly disorganized manuscript. He is now working with a doctor who claims to be an author [presumably de Wendler-Funaro], but the results are very unhappy – and I am afraid we are going to have to back out of the picture unless King Steve gets someone who understands the English language and publishers’ requirements” (FDRL, Anna Eleanor Roosevelt Papers, Personal Letters, Box 735, 1941, Bye).

What seems most unusual today is that the First Lady took the time to remain sympathetic to Kaslov and his efforts to promote his people. After she had placed Read Lewis in touch with Kaslov in 1937, the relationship between Kaslov and the First Lady seemed to blossom, thanks in part to Lewis's support. On June 27, 1939, Lewis wrote to Mrs. Roosevelt as follows:

If you could talk to Steve Kaslov, you would realize how much it holds in the way of hope and opportunity for the Gypsy people. They have put a great deal of enthusiasm and patient labor into the task of fashioning tools and setting up the shop [the Romany Coppersmiths]. Now comes the harder job of getting business. Steve and his associates approach it with confidence and high hopes... .

Steve and his associates are determined that the shop shall succeed and that all contributions will ultimately be repaid in full. If you know of anyone who might be interested to have a share in this demonstration of neighborliness and self-help, please send me their names, or better still, tell them yourself about the shop and ask them to send whatever they may wish to contribute. (FDRL, Anna Eleanor Roosevelt Papers, Personal Letters, Box 694, 1939, Lewis).

Mrs. Roosevelt replied on July 5, 1939:

Thank you for your letter about the Gypsy Workshop. I will try to go and see it and then write about it. That may bring in some contributions. (Ibid.).

Sure enough, Mrs. Roosevelt paid a visit to the workshop in August 1939 and wrote about the experience in her popular nationally syndicated column, "My Day". The column begins with a plea from Kaslov:

Mrs. Roosevelt, it is not for the older people that I am talking to you. It is for the little children that they may have a chance to go to school and to church and grow up different. (Atlanta Constitution, 1939, p. 12).

She then sets the scene most sympathetically:

The big man, Steve Kaslov, stood opposite me in his shirt sleeves. There was dignity in his bearing for he was the head of his particular gypsy tribe. With the aid of Mr. Read Lewis, of the Foreign Language Information Service, a committee has been formed to help these gypsies to ply their trade, not along the roadside, but on a floor at 214, the Bowery, New York City. [...] The depression has put many of them on relief, and even the older ones now are willing to settle in one place because they see what it will mean to their children in the future. (Ibid.).

Following that visit, Mrs. Roosevelt sent Kaslov a ginkgo stone, which she felt – as she wrote to Lewis on August 7, 1939 – "might make a rather nice brooch set in old gold with scroll work around it" (FDRL, Anna Eleanor Roosevelt Papers, Personal Letters, Box 694, 1939, Lewis). The following month, on September 18, 1939, she wrote again to Lewis to say that she had:

[...] received the brooch which the Gypsies made for me and deeply appreciate their desire to give it to me as a gift. However, I really do want to pay for the gold which was used as I know it is very expensive, and I have written Steve Kaslov to this effect. Next time I will try to send something for them to copy rather than to design themselves. (Ibid.).

On September 23, 1940, Kaslov wrote a three-page letter to the President and First Lady, asking for help in various matters. The most important was how to obtain birth certificates for “approximately two hundred and fifty (250) young Gypsie [sic] boys between the ages of 21 to 35 years of age, who will be required to register on the 17th day of October, 1940, for the peace-time draft” (NARA, Headquarters Records of the Selective Service System, RG 147.2.2). The letter was forwarded by Mrs. Roosevelt to the director of the Selective Service – who apparently did nothing, spurring Kaslov to write again to President and Mrs. Roosevelt on November 23:

We are greatly worried about the conscription. Our young boys have no way of proving their ages and the Local Draft Board gave us only five days to fill out the questionnaire and return it to them.

I am beseeching you in my great hour of need to help me with your sage advice. I am at a loss and don't know what to do to help my people. Won't you please write me and advise my people? (Ibid.).

This time, the Selective Service followed up – presumably due to pressure from the White House. On November 29, 1940, Captain Richard P. Davidson, wrote to Kaslov with a possible solution: to “contact the Advisory Board for Registrants having jurisdiction over your district”. Davidson concluded:

This department wishes to congratulate you upon the work you are doing in assisting your people, and we rest assured that any problems that may arise will be properly cared for under your leadership. (Ibid.).

Ironically, it was exactly the issue of the draft for World War II that led to Kaslov's arrest in April 1942. As reported in the *New York Herald Tribune*:

The charge against the King was that he falsely told selective service officials that Tom DeMistro [also spelled DeMetro – authors note], twenty-six years old, of 228 East Third Street, was married. [...] The King, the Federal Bureau of Investigation found out, once told officials of Draft Board 6 [...] that he married the DeMistro's, and on another occasion changed his story and said he had 'been present' at the wedding. (*New York Herald Tribune*, 1942a, p. 17).

According to the FBI, “DeMetro's alleged wife was his sister” (Hoover, 1943). Kaslov pled guilty to the charge on April 27. On June 1, District Judge Henry W. Goddard sentenced him to one year and one day for “having aided a member of his tribe in an attempt to evade military service” (*New York Herald Tribune*, 1942b., p. 10).

Correspondence within the White House shows that the President and First Lady were aware of Kaslov's situation. In a memo dated June 20, 1942, “For the President”,

Mrs. Roosevelt wrote simply, "What do I do?" (FDRL, Anna Eleanor Roosevelt Papers, Personal Letters, Box 771, 1942, Roosevelt, F.). A few days later, President Roosevelt wrote a memorandum to his Attorney General Francis Biddle:

This fellow Steve Kaslov I have known for many years. In a good many ways he is one of the best leaders the gypsies have ever had, though of course he is not accepted by all the gypsies, though he is recognized by a very large number. He has encouraged the gypsies to send their children to school and he has not been nearly as unsocial in outlook as many so-called "Kings" of the gypsies who preceded him.

I wish you would have the F.B.I. or somebody else look into the whole situation because though probably many people think that Kaslov has a somewhat shady record, I do believe that his influence has been far more for the good than for the bad. (FDRL, Franklin D. Roosevelt Papers, Official Files 5069, 1942, Biddle).

The Attorney General replied three weeks later:

The violation does not appear to be a very flagrant one, although as a matter of law the conviction was probably warranted. He was sentenced for a year and a day, beginning June 1st, and he will be eligible for parole October 1st. Steps have been taken to have his case promptly considered by the Parole Board. (Ibid.).

The final piece of correspondence to Kaslov from the White House, dated July 30, 1942, is a letter from "Secretary to Mrs. Roosevelt", which enclosed the July 13 letter from the Attorney General, and concludes that Mrs. Roosevelt "is sorry that the information is not more encouraging" (FDRL, Anna Eleanor Roosevelt Papers, Personal Letters, 1942, Ka-Ke).

There is no record indicating exactly how long Kaslov remained in federal prison, or when he returned to his home in New York. That being said, his standing as "King" had changed significantly upon his return. The *New Yorker* magazine published an extensive review of the situation, noting the different families that were vying for Kaslov's leadership position, and how his status had diminished. Although Kaslov "always claimed to be the *o boro*, or supreme ruler, of all the Russian gypsies in the United States", the author noted he was the spokesman for only "approximately fifty families on the lower East Side" (*New Yorker*, 1942, p. 22). According to one much later account, "A number of other traditional Gypsy leaders tried to take over Kaslov's 'kingship' afterwards but none of them followed in his footsteps in terms of his more modern and progressive ideas and activities" (Klímová-Alexander, 2005a, 186–187).

Perhaps due to the rivalries after his release, Kaslov at some point afterwards moved to Philadelphia. He died at age sixty-one of an undisclosed illness at his home on February 16, 1949. In just over 100 words, the report in the *New York Times* of Kaslov's passing effectively summarised the struggles of Roma people in the United States for greater recognition, respect, and equal rights. On the one hand, the newspaper reported that Kaslov, as a "reputed leader of some 10,000 Russian Gypsies in" the United States,

“was hailed by his followers as a progressive in advocating that they learn to read and write” (New York Times, 1949, p. 24) – all of which speaks to Kaslov’s efforts to achieve civic emancipation in a country where the Roma receive no state support. On the other hand, the newspaper could not resist one last detail in its concluding sentence, which perhaps undercuts Kaslov’s efforts by reinforcing the stereotypes about Roma fortune-telling: “The body, clad in a long red robe, is reposing in a first-floor room of the Kaslov home, which, according to a sign out front, is ordinarily given over to palmistry”. (Ibid.).

Acknowledgement

The author received research assistance from Brianna Hatton and Levi Bochantin at the Smithsonian Center for Folklife and Cultural Heritage.

Spain

Carmen Cañete Quesada

Helios Gómez (1905–1956). Activism, Resistance, and Struggles of a Left-Wing Gitano Artist

Introduction

The revindication and inclusion of Spanish Gypsies or Gitanos in civil life has been a constant feature in Spain's history since their settlement in the Iberian Peninsula in the fifteenth century. In the context of the interwar period, which is the focus of this volume, Gitano attempts-at achieving equality have manifested in various ways. One possible path was the initiative of Colegio Gitano, a primary school proposed by the members of the poor Gypsy quarter of Triana (Seville) during Spain's democratic Second Republic (1931–1939) (Chilla, 2018). Another avenue was professing religious faith, like Ceferino Giménez Malla or Emilia Fernández Rodríguez, both victims of the Spanish Civil War, subsequently beatified by the Catholic Church. Other left-wing Gitanos, such as anarcho-syndicalist Mariano Rodríguez Vázquez, or the subject of this essay, Helios Gómez Rodríguez, played an active role in representing the Spanish Gypsies for the rehabilitation of justice. Either from an educational, religious or political approach, these Gitanos sought a path that they believed would best advance the acknowledgement and integration of their ethnic group in Spain's nation-building process.

Capturing in a few pages Helios Gómez's convoluted life vis-à-vis his prolific artistic trajectory, with all the twists, turns, and intrigue that these experiences entailed, is a complex, if not hopeless, endeavor. With this in mind, this portrait approaches some of the struggles of an engaged artist, whose story is shaped in large part by his adherence to progressive affiliations acknowledging the poor, the proletariat, the Gypsy, and other marginal groups in Spain. It is precisely Gómez's manifold marginalities as a working-class artist, as a Gitano, always struggling against the tide as a militant, that makes this figure so relevant to modern discourses of race and national identity. Born and raised in the poor, rural region of Andalusia, he found a space to express his social, ethnic and political claims as a painter, as a writer, and as a revolutionary.

Along with illustrating this riveting case to the English-speaking reader, the following pages look into these aspects of Gómez's life and work. While the revolutionary movements that this artist took part in emerged from an ongoing class-based fight of oppressed groups, he enjoined to this cause his advocacy for the Gitano people, whose degree of marginality was double or triple that of any other underrepresented sectors of society. I am here revisiting several episodes of Gómez's activism, his struggles as an advocate

for underrepresented groups in Spain, and his capacity for resilience, all of which were expressed through his artistic representation of the oppressed.

Considering his extraordinary trajectory, it is enticing to underline the stunning qualities of this charismatic figure while shunning obscure episodes that could put into question the artist's integrity. Some of those ambiguities in his biography have been brought here intentionally. They reveal the most vulnerable side of the artist. They also illustrate his pitfalls and flaws along the way; and they envisage Gómez's iconoclast temperament, his ideological discrepancies and strong political beliefs that took him to live as a permanent fugitive.

The information has been organised in two parts. The first provides a biographical account of the most significant aspects of Gómez's trajectory as a left-wing militant. In an attempt to make this figure more accessible to a broad audience, the portrait offers a revisionist narrative of Gómez's accounts that could be more appealing to an international reader. The second part is less factual and more analytical. It explores Gómez's self-expression as a Gitano artist, which is commonly in dialogue with his revolutionary convictions. It also illustrates avenues of research regarding the artist's representation of a Spanish ethnicity, and his efforts to incorporate the Gypsy in the revolutionary cause.

Helios: The Militant

Gómez's origins are fundamental in understanding the artist's course of political action in advocacy of the marginal subject. Gómez's son, Gabriel Gómez Plana, tracks the artist's life-course in his recent memoirs *Un gitanillo en la Ciudad de los Muchachos* (A Little Gypsy in the Boys Town) (Gómez Plana, 2020). The artist was born on May 22, 1905, in the province of Seville, the capital of Spain's Southern region of Andalusia. He was the oldest son of a large family with seven siblings, four brothers and three sisters. His father, Juan Gómez Sánchez, was from Jerez de los Caballeros, a small rural town located in Badajoz (Extremadura). He and his wife, Justina Rodríguez Naharro, originally from another town in Badajoz, Talavera la Real, migrated to the city of Seville and settled first in the historic center of the town, where their first son Helios was born (Ibid., 2020, p. 136). The family moved soon after to Triana, a Sevillian district located on the other side of the Guadalquivir river, and largely populated with Gitanos at the time.

The artist's son tells of his paternal grandfather working in the cork industry while in Jerez de los Caballeros, his role as secretary of the General Association of the Cork, and his social mobility years after they moved to the Andalusian capital, working as secretary of Camas City Hall (Ibid., 2020, p. 136). Other sources highlight the artist's father's activism. Pedro G. Romero describes him as a 'agitador sindicalista' (syndicalist agitator) and underscores him being one of the first militants in Seville of the Partido Socialista Obrero Español (PSOE) (Spanish Socialist Workers' Party) (Romero, 2010, p. 26). In *El socialismo en Sevilla* (The Socialism in Seville), Ángeles González Fernández points out Gómez's father's association with the masonic lodges 'Tierra y Libertad' (Land and Freedom) and 'Perseverancia' (Perseverance) (González Fernández, 1996, p. 290).

Gómez grew in this trade union environment, raising awareness of the social fight on the side of the proletariat at a very early age. According to Gómez Plana, the young artist used to work crops during his adolescence, collecting cotton and olives as a day laborer (Gómez Plana, 2020, p. 137). He was employed “as an apprentice, first in the Triana pottery workshops and later as an assistant ceramics painter in the Cartuja de Sevilla, an important ceramics factory of the period with a great deal of trade union activity and as a student of Fine Arts on a night course at the Escuela Industrial de Artes y Oficios” (Romero, 1998, p. 241). His influential relationship with Felipe Alaiz, journalist and director of the anarchist newspaper *Solidaridad Obrera* (Workers’ Solidarity) led him to join the labor union, Confederación Nacional del Trabajo – CNT (National Confederation of Labor) (Ibid.).

Thanks to the scholarship of Ursula Tjaden (1996, 1998) and Pedro García Romero (1998, 1999, 2004, 2010, 2016), it is possible to envision the artist’s earlier years as an eager anarcho-syndicalist. We learn about his former works being exhibited (Seville, Madrid, and Barcelona), from his self-directed encounter with avant-garde currents, his run-ins with the authorities, including recurrent absences from his home-town, to his fleeing from Spain and turning up in other parts of Europe (Paris, Brussels, Amsterdam, Vienna, Moscow, Berlin), where he left a significant artistic legacy. Following this intense activity during his formative stage, over the course of the subsequent twenty-five years, from when he started *Días de ira* (Days of Rage) as an exile in 1929, until he completed the *Capilla gitana* (Gypsy Chapel) as an inmate in 1954, Gómez’s intricate episodes in life strain credulity. His most significant sketches were published under extreme circumstances: The collection of graphics and poems *Días de ira* (1930) in Berlin, during Miguel Primo de Rivera’s regime; the second album of graphics, *Revolución española* (Spanish Revolution) (1933) from Stalinist Moscow; and *Viva Octubre: dessins sur la révolution espagnole* (Long Live October: Drawings of the Spanish Revolution) (1934), during his exile in Brussels, under the Black Biennium of Spain’s Second Republic. Throughout these years, and due to his long fight against right-wing totalitarian regimes, he fluctuated between anarchist and communist groups, perhaps in search of an answer for a more effective revolution, but perhaps, also, moved by an urgency for a change in the structures of power.

In July, 1930, after ten dutiful years given to the anarcho-syndicalist movement, Gómez expressed publicly his “rectification in the revolutionary methodology” (Gómez, 1996, p. 207). The title of that manifesto was *Por qué me marcho del anarquismo* (Why I Am Leaving Anarchism). The language there employed could not be more blunt. Anarchism, in the artist’s view, was submerged in the past, fossilised. He denounced the inability of their leaders to bring about broad revolutionary action, their lack of disciplined organisation, and their excess of demagogy. Gómez concluded his assessment proposing a solution to the proletarian fight: “There is no other way out. The ones who do not come with Communism, regardless their ideological language, will end up, sooner or later, in the ranks of Fascism” (Gómez, 1996, p. 212).

With this belief the visionary militant left behind his long-time ties with the anarchist labor union CNT, and his affiliation with the anarcho-syndicalists from the Asociación Internacional de los Trabajadores – AIT (International Workers' Association). The latter had edited *Días de ira* with a prologue by Romain Rolland, Nobel literature laureate and secretary of the AIT. Paradoxically, it was precisely when Gómez renounced on his convictions as an anarchist that *Días de ira* came to light endorsed by his former comrades, as Rolland's quote illustrates: "Our comrade HELIOS GÓMEZ, who has done this work to the memory of his companion in arms, has taken direct part in the battles of the Spanish proletariat" (Tjaden, 1996, p. 96).

Gómez's switches and fluctuations evidence the complexity of relations between left-wing forces whose common and main mission –confronting the spread of Fascism– did not hinder them from challenging each other's ideas and opinions. This explains why Gómez was accused equally of being either a Stalinist or a Trotskyist by liberal groups associated with him, and in conflict with those particular dogmas. Blamed for following the doctrines of Moscow, he was promptly expelled from the Bloc Obrer i Camperol – BOC (Workers and Peasants' Bloc), a group which emerged as an alternative to the more radical Federació Comunista Catalano-Balear (Catalan-Balearic Communist Federation) and the Partido Comunista Español – PCE (Spanish Communist Party). Conversely, after joining the PCE in Madrid, he was accused of being Trotskyist for expressing his misgivings at the IV Congress of the Communist Party in Seville, in 1932 (Romero, 2016, p. 103; Sierra, 2019, p. 36).

The first months of 1932 were a very proactive but also challenging period for the artist. As well as participating in the PCE Congress in Seville, he collaborated with the communist newspaper *Mundo Obrero* ('Workers World') and exhibited his paintings at the Ateneo in Madrid. He also delivered a lecture titled 'Bourgeois Art and Proletarian Art' (Tjadem, 1996, pp. 76–77). At the beginning of May, soon after these pro-soviet activities, he was arrested in the capital and sent to prison in Jaén (Ibid.). The situation becomes even more enthralling when we connect Gómez's Communist fervor with his affair with Irene (Ira) Weber, a German woman of Russian heritage whom the artist met in Brussels through the labor lawyer and treasurer of the Belgian Communist Party, Jean Fonteyne. The daily newspaper *Luz: Diario de la República* (Light: Journal of the Republic) reported Weber being arrested in Madrid and sent to Barcelona on May 31, 1932, for disseminating Communist propaganda (Luz, 1932, p. 1). The newspaper *Ahora* (Now) followed the track of Gómez's partner, who was expelled from the country two days after her arrest in Madrid, opening the possibility of her return only after she was legally married (Ahora, 1932, p. 8; Luz, 1932, p. 8).

The most striking part of these series of unfortunate episodes (the artist's persecution and his partner expulsion) is that they took place in the democratic government right after the proclamation of the Spanish Second Republic in April 1931, which was enthusiastically supported by the anti-fascist groups. In a letter dated June 1932 to Belgium writer

Max Deauville, author of the book *Rien qu'un homme* (Just a Man) that Gómez illustrated, the Gypsy artist described with moral indignation the hostile political climate:

For me, this year of Spanish 'Democracy' has been, perhaps, the most terrible of my life; a year of fighting against enemies without nobility who hide their aggressions treacherously behind the democratic mask, people who, having enjoyed their prior relationship with us, know our paths and thus wait to stab us in our backs in an unavenged trap. (Gómez Plana, 2020, pp. 151–152).

He also denounced Weber's charges for not being legally married, which implied a double standard on the part of the Republic regarding gender equality. Precisely for that reason, perhaps as a rebellious act or as a response to the intransigence of the Spanish authorities, the couple would never change its civil status.

The Soviet experience was a peak moment in Gómez's trajectory as a communist militant. The artist had already exhibited his paintings in USSR for two months, during his first visit in 1928. Years later, between 1932 and 1934, he gained first-hand knowledge of the Soviet model. During his sentence in Jaén, Gómez received a letter from USSR to participate in the International Congress of Proletarian Artists, celebrated in Leningrad by the International Bureau of Revolutionary Artists and the Soviet Artists Union (Gómez Plana, 2020, p. 151). This invitation was possible thanks to his friends Gerd Arntz and Peter Alma, who were working in Moscow, and to his father, who intervened for him to be released on bail (Ibid.). After an interval of a few months in Brussels, between June and October, Gómez and Weber reached the USSR and remained in this country until February, 1934, when he returns to Barcelona. In the Soviet Union Gómez lived in Moscow, travelled to Leningrad (today St Petersburg) and Siberia, exhibited at the Pushkin Museum in 1933, and the State Art Publishing House published the abovementioned *Revolution española* (Associació Cultural Helios Gómez, 2021).

The artist's Bolshevik adherence is, perhaps, the most captivating episode of his winding yet fascinating biography, rich in incongruences and inscrutabilities. Upon his return from USSR, Gómez illustrated a Bolshevik dream land in ten reports that appeared periodically in the Republican newspaper *La Rambla* (The Rambla), between July 23rd and October 1st of 1934. These reports, written in Catalan under the headline of *La vida a la URSS: 2 anys entre els bolxeviks* (USSR Lifestyle: 2 Years Among Bolsheviks), were interrupted by a further detention of the artist during the so-called 'bienio negro' (black biennium). Gómez's idealisation of the Soviet project should be interpreted as a hope for a revolution of the same competence in his hometown. The artist contemplates the Muscovites that he sees in clubs, theaters and factories as optimistic people, with "risas sanas y francas" (healthy and frank laughs), as if their laughs had also been collectivised (Sierra, 2019, p. 38). The report praised the Socialist economic success –with its power plants, and the fabrics, labs, and workshop schools–, the advances in education and culture –with the eradication of illiteracy and the free access to public and secular

education–, and the respect and dignified treatment of women. In sum, the author portrayed a solid, just, and equalitarian nation with all members of society working jointly at the service of the revolution. The pictures included in these reports contribute, as Sierra notes, to instill that sense of order and wellness (Ibid.).

It is, however, difficult to differentiate between what Gómez really experienced and what he imagined in a socialist system with an eye toward propaganda. The propagandistic projection of the Soviet experience might be the case, considering that Gómez's reports were published during the conservative period of the Second Republic's Bienio Radical Cedista (Cedist Radical Biennium) (1933–1935), which was ruled by the Confederación Española de Derechas Autónomas – CEDA (Spanish Confederation of Autonomous Rights). In other words, whether imagined or not, Gómez presented this solid, communist nation as a role model for Spain's own advancement and democratisation during the Second Republic, and as an inspiration for a revolution during the Spanish Civil War. For example, in the artist's mind, Spain was a “politically backward” country, among other reasons, for its inability to integrate the Gypsy community into social life and to recognise its racial virtues (De Lara, 1938, p. 147). According to the Soviet press, from October 7 to October 10, 1933, Gómez and other progressive foreign writers visited the city of Novosibirsk. They came to get acquainted with socialist construction in Western Siberia. Foreign guests toured the city, went to the airfield and made a flight over Novosibirsk. They also visited the *Novaya Zhizn* (New Life) Gypsy collective farm in the Novosibirsk region and the construction site of the Opera and Ballet Theater. The news told how “foreigners unanimously admitted that they had not yet met such a remarkable in its design and grandiose in scope theatrical building. They also held several international meetings, together with the writers of Novosibirsk, and attended a conversation with the secretary of the city party committee, T. Schwartz” (Новосибирский краеведческий портал, 2021).

Stalin's Soviet Union, however, was not always as unspoiled as Gómez proclaimed it to be. Spanish writer Ramón J. Sender, who met the artist during those years in Moscow, recalled that “Helios Gómez, while he was in Russia, missed the freedom of the Montparnasse. Demanding an artist to adapt to a dogmatic vision of life is completely ridiculous. Not even the artists from the Renaissance who dedicated all their lives to paint for the churches or for the reactionary patrons were submitted to any class of dictatorship” (Sender, 1982, p. 151). According to Sender, Gómez was asked to paint social realism for the communist party, but the artist “declared in a loud cry that neither was what they painted realist nor the life that they advocated socialist” (Ibid.).

Sender's depiction of Gómez's USSR sentiment, although not displayed by the painter widely, has its resonance in his long poem *Erika: Canto de amor y lucha* (Erika: Song of Love and Combat) (1946) that the artist wrote from prison, a few years before his death. *Erika's* confessional tone evidences Gómez's complicity with Weber, a relationship as enigmatic as his ambiguous ties with communism. In this narrative poem, the author describes his time in Moscow with Erika/Ira, using a nostalgic tone. The use of

the imperfect tense refers to a remote past when the protagonists followed the directives of Socialism, described as “La Gran Obra Inédita” (The Great Unprecedented Work) (Gómez Plana & Mignot, 2006, p. 333). The candid couple are fervent followers of the party’s dogma: “The line of the Party/was our only goal,/we had our hearts/absent from the body/and yet we love each other, Erika” (Ibid., p. 335). Their priority was to comply obediently with their duties toward the Party, performed by “the body” and softened by the memorable fondness of their love (“the heart”). Gómez’s Soviet experience was remembered 15 years later during his long-term sentence in jail as ‘infantilismo de izquierda’ (childishness of the left) (Ibid., p. 336). The poem also reveals the end of Gómez’s romance with Erika/Ira/Communism, when he flees the country under strange circumstances, separating from his much-loved partner:

A cold day of January
 in the third hour
 our idyll broke down,
 Erika.
 We separated in Moscow
 with unusual and mechanical
 urgency
 because you and I,
 in the rough gears of the soviet wheel,
 we were only
 one piece (Ibid., 2006, p. 350).

In spite of stumbling in pursuit of the Soviet ideal, the artist continued professing his political faith in Communism upon his return to Spain. With the outbreak of the Spanish Civil War in July 1936, he took to the barricades in the defense of Barcelona and joined the Aliança d’Intellectuals Antifeixistes de Catalunya (the Catalan Alliance of Antifascist Intellectuals). Appointed as a political commissar of the Marxist-socialist’s Unión General de Trabajadores – UGT (General Workers Union), he participated in the liberation of Ibiza and Majorca, and joined the fronts of Aragon, Madrid, and Andalusia (Associació Cultural Helios Gómez, 2021). He killed a captain of the same unit, José Arjona Sánchez, in the Bautista Garcés Battalion in December 1936, in El Carpio (Córdoba) (Moreno Jiménez, 1985, p. 394). In *Memòries d’un cartellista català* (Memoirs of a Catalan Cartelist), Carles Fontserè described this episode as an “acte suprem de disciplina militar” (“supreme act of military discipline”), considering that Arjona withdrew some machine guns without permission (Fontserè, 1995, p. 324).

Questions could be raised about the frequency of these disciplinary executions among combatants of the same troop. Was this a common practice on both sides, Franco’s Nationalists and the Republicans, to maintain loyalty and discipline in battle? Historian Francisco Moreno, who referred to Gómez’s incident in *La guerra civil en Córdoba (1936–1939)* (Civil War in Cordoba (1936–1939)), explained in a letter to Tjaden that soldiers received the maximum sentence – death – for backing up in the rearguard without

receiving orders from their superiors (Gómez Plana, 2020, p. 164). How did these drastic measures affect the dynamics in the battlefield, and to what extent were these executions perceived as a routine military action? In other words, was Arjona's execution considered a "murder," in the legal (not moral) sense of the word? A more thorough investigation about the codes of behavior within the context of the war are necessary to understand the repercussions of Gómez's rigid practices.

Gómez's compromising military action on the front of Córdoba was not an isolated case. Other examples of his abuse of authority as a commissar were recalled by Josep Bartolí, also an artist and a friend of Gómez: "Helios behaved [in the front of Madrid] as a dictator, he ordered operations under his own responsibility without being authorised by anyone, he sent people to the prison of Carabanchel for disobeying him" (Tjaden, 1996, p. 46). Bartolí also reported a heated dispute on the front of Madrid with another captain, an "estalinista ultradogmático" (ultradogmatic Stalinist), who ended up being shot to death by his opponent, Gómez, who Bartolí described as an "eterno anarquista" (eternal anarchist) (Tjaden, 1996, p. 47). Added to the political dispute, there was also, according to Gómez's comrade, a rivalry between the adversaries over a woman.

The artist's impasse between communism and anarchism did not wreak less havoc while fighting against Franco's troops. After his struggles as a commissar and his expulsion from the Communist party in July 1937, having been accused of treachery and desertion, Gómez left Madrid seeking refuge in Barcelona, in the building of the *Sindicat de Dibuixants Professionals* (Union of Professional Illustrators) (SDP), which he had cofounded and presided since April 1936. During around two months in isolation, hidden in the basement of the SDP, the artist painted a few drawings of *Horrores de la guerra* (The Horrors of the War). He also created an oil painting, *Evacuación* (Evacuation), which was exhibited with Picasso's *Guernica*, in the Spanish pavilion of the Second Republic, during the Paris World Fair in 1937. Gómez reunited with the anarchists joining in August 1938 in the 26th Infantry Division, the former company of anarchist leader Buenaventura Durruti. As a cultural militiaman he was responsible of the journal *El Frente* ("The Front") and participated in the organisation of a tribute in memory of Durruti, who had been killed in action in the battle of Madrid in November 1936. These changes in positions, ideologies and affiliations as a left-wing militant, either as an anarcho-syndicalist, a Bolshevik, a Stalinist, a Trotskyist, or a *republicano*, illustrate aspects of Gómez's conflicted personality: as an iconoclast detached from any dogma, as a subversive mind with his own beliefs, and as an antagonistic force contrary to the establishment.

Approaching the end of the Spanish Civil War, with the Republican cause lost after the fall of the city of Barcelona, Gómez crossed the border in February 1939 from Puigcerdà to Perpignan with the 26th Division (Tjaden, 1996, p. 82). His odyssey continued with an epic journey whose far-fetched misfortunes make his life a stunning case tilled with yet more mysteries, obscurities, and loose ends. Tracing his father's life story over the past few decades, Gómez Plana embarked on a thorough investigation about the artist's whereabouts in exile. Expatriated in France, his father was interned in several camps where

thousands of other republicans fleeing Franco's imminent victory were relocated. Gómez was sent to Bram and Montolieu (from March 1939 until, at least, September 1940). In the archives of the camp of Argelès-sur-Mer his name shows as disappeared on December 7, 1940 (Gómez Plana, 2020, pp. 171–173).

At some point Gómez attempted to sail out of the port of Marseille on route to America with his partner Mercedes Plana, Gómez Plana's mother. The plan, unfortunately, was failed. In April 1941 Gómez was arrested by the Vichy police in Marseille and sent to Vernet d'Ariège, a repressive camp located in the French Pyrenees and reserved for political prisoners considered "dangereux pur l'ordre public" (dangerous for the public order) (Gómez Plana, 2020, p. 173). Gómez was deported from there to the concentration camp of Djelfa, Algeria (Ibid., p. 174).

This gap in Gómez's biography, of which we know very little, can be partially solved with the accounts of the interns who survived the experience of the exile in North Africa. Those narratives illustrate the situation of abandonment that Spanish refugees experienced in the camps of Morocco, Tunisia, and Algeria (Barrera et al., 1981; Morro Casas, 2012). Spanish writer Max Aub, who like Helios Gómez was transferred from Vernet d'Ariège to Djelfa, wrote while in the camp the most heartrending testimony, *Diario de Djelfa* (Diary of Djelfa) (Aub, 1944). In it Aub depicted in poem form scenes of horror spanning the six months he was retained in that camp, from November 1941 until May 1942.

Acknowledging this life-or-death situation in the camps would explain, in part, Gómez's possible voluntary repatriation during the toughest years of the post-war, and under Franco's sturdiest repression. In fact, as Gómez Plana notes, Barrera included Gómez in the list of the 150 interns who were sent back to Spain, but this source mistakenly reports that the artist was soon executed by Franco's authorities (Gómez Plana, 2020, p. 177). This, although not unlikely, based on the numerous cases of Franco's reprisals of repatriates, never took place in the case of the artist. Nor did it happen that he requested repatriation. The repatriation was an initiative of the authorities of the camp, who tried to avoid bearing the maintenance of the inmates and requested that the Spanish authorities cover the cost of their return (Ibid., p. 178). Being first rejected based on his criminal record, Gómez finally obtained the authorisation of the Spanish consulate and a laissez-passer from the general governor of Algeria. He arrived in Spain via Melilla on May 23, 1942, reuniting with Mercedes, with whom he had his only child, Gabriel, on April 13, 1943.

Gómez continued his militancy upon his return with the same resolve that he had when he fled the country at the end of the war. He resumed his contact with the CNT and collaborated with the union in the print of eight numbers of *Solidaridad Obrera*, from March until June 1944 (Gómez Plana, 2020, p. 183). He had also founded at the beginning of that year the clandestine group Liberación Nacional Republicana LNR (National Republican Liberation). The first issue of *Lid*, the information bulleting of LNR, tackled Francoism as the main enemy of the Spanish people. The unsigned open letter that appears in *Lid* in January 1944, very likely drafted by Gómez, placed Spain's dictatorship

in a European context during WWII. With a populist tone vindicating the *patria* on behalf of the Spanish people, this letter denounced Franco's rapport with the Axis and the concessions offered to the Spanish ex-combatants who fought with the Nazis in the Blue Division. It also condemned the precarious situation of the working-class people and the ecclesiastical campaign against the "reds." Advocating clemency for the prisoners and the persecuted, *Lid's* missive was also full of faith and optimism. It based its hope on the soviet army and antifascist reinforcements coming from the United Nations (*Lid*, 1945, n.p.). Gómez's quixotic campaign, as it was expected, did not go unnoticed. In February 1945, he was incarcerated at police headquarters until 31st March and later moved to Cárcel Modelo (Modelo Prison) in Barcelona, where he spent twenty-one days in solitary confinement (Tjaden, 1998, p. 239).

Relocating frequently as a result of his relentless resistance, Gómez was detained "seventy-one times by the authorities of different countries, and has been faced with forty-two criminal charges" (De Lara, 1938, p. 46). In his final years, he lived behind bars in Cárcel Modelo; first from March 1945 until July 1946, and then from October 1948 until September 1954 (Gómez Plana & Mignot, 2006, p. 9). In 1950 he was granted a conditional order of liberation, but instead of being released, he was illegally detained in prison for four more years. It was during this last imprisonment that he painted the fresco of the *Capilla gitana* (Gypsy Chapel) (1948–1954) at the Cárcel Modelo. After his release in 1954, the artist lived in San Jaime University Hall of Residence. In September 19, 1956, he died in the Hospital Clínico de Barcelona from "hepatic and renal disorders" (Tjaden, 1998, p. 240).

Helios: The Gypsy and the Artist

Standing out among the early scholarship acknowledging the artist is the pioneering work of Ursula Tjaden. This German professor from the University of Dortmund published an autobiographical account of the author in 1986, complete with an appendix of the most representative visual art and writings, all of which had remained forgotten or unknown. A decade later Tjaden's work was available for the Spanish reader, published under the title of *Helios Gómez: Artista de corbata roja* (Helios Gómez: The Artist of the Red Tie). Thus, it was not until forty years after the author's death, in the mid-1990s, that Gómez received some attention in the country of his birth. Two art critics and writers undertook this task: sculptor, painter, and essayist Pedro García Romero, and the director of the Instituto Valenciano de Arte Moderno – IVAM (Valencian Institute of Modern Art), Juan Manuel Bonet (Bonet 1998).

A thorough review of these early sources casts an alarming light on the gap in the study of the Gitano as a significant theme in Gómez's life and work. A few considerations help to explain the critics shunning or neglecting this aspect of the artist's trajectory. First is the fact that his origins have been put into question, if not denied. With rare exceptions like Bonet's recognition of Gómez's "raza gitana" (Gypsy race) (Bonet, 1995, p. 295), this uncertainty led critics to avoid this nomenclature or use it with caution. They either quote the ethnonym 'Gitano' (Romero, 2004, p. 45); identify him as

'self-identified Gypsy' (autoidentificado como gitano) (González Barrios, 2019, p. 366) and 'self-claimed Gitano' (Alonso Carballés, 2009, p. 38); or refer euphemistically to his 'ethnic background' ("trasfondo étnico") (Tjaden, 1996, p. 53).

Other comments by those who met the artist evince the ambiguity of his Gitano roots, suggesting an inclination to the Gypsy-by-choice as opposed to by birth. Sender depicted him as a "típicamente andaluz con alguna calidad gitanoide" (a typical Andalusian with some Gypsy-like quality) (Sender, 1982, p. 150), and Fontserè recalled his friend reciting Federico García Lorca's verses "a la manera gitana" (in the Gypsy manner) (Fontserè, 2004, p. 536), implying simulation rather than an inherent quality of a Spanish Gitano.

This imprecision in Gómez's background has recently been addressed by Gómez Plana, who attests that his paternal grandfather, Juan Gómez Sánchez, was of Gypsy descent (Gómez Plana and Mignot, 2006, p. 31). Gypsy activist and Member of the Spanish Parliament Ismael Cortés, conceives Helios Gómez and Ceferino Giménez Malla as "two symbolic figures of the Civil War who were in fact Gitanos" (Cortés, 2017, p. 31). In *Helios Gómez: Invisibilidad de la revolución gitana* (Helios Gómez: Invisibility of the Gypsy Revolution), María Sierra, Professor in the Department of Contemporary History at the University of Seville, seeks to "deepen in key aspects of the historical process of the formation of Gypsy identity in Spain and its intertwine with other types of political identities" (Sierra, 2019, p. 33).

Regardless of the external perceptions of the artist, whether they address his ethnicity or not, Gómez always proclaimed his Gitano identity with pride and dignity. His Gypsy adherence was also consistent with the artistic representation of the unprivileged that he depicted, as well as the progressive views that he proclaimed. Gómez was, in fact, an emblematic figure for the left-wing Gypsy people in Spain. During the civil war, he was commended by the liberal press as a consummate artist, as an exemplary Gypsy, and as an admirable revolutionary. The depiction of the artist's Gitano side can be observed in an interview titled as "Un gran artista revolucionario: Helios Gómez. Los gitanos en la guerra civil" (A Great Revolutionary Artist: Helios Gómez. Gypsies in the Spanish Civil War). In October 1936, a few months after the outbreak of the Spanish Civil War, Gómez recalled in this interview published in *Crónica* how Gypsies were completely integrated in "la gran República de los Soviets" (the great Soviet Republic), and how they had acquired "la misma categoría social que todos los demás habitantes" (the same social rank as the rest of the population), with an equal level of performance and production (*Crónica*, 1936, p. 4). The artist denounced the stereotypes of Gypsies in Spain and considered the Gitano race "[...] as capable as any other [race] for work, arts, and ideological conceptions" (Ibid.). The interview was translated into English by the students of Hispanic Studies at the University of Liverpool and published in the *Journal of the Gypsy Lore Society* of April-June 1939 (De Lara, 1939, p. 146). This evidences Gómez's early international reputation as a "Gypsy revolutionary" (Ibid.).

Within this skepticism of Gómez's ethnic affinity, another factor that hinders this focus of research is that his most significant Gypsy-related works have remained unpublished until recently, and this literary corpus has not yet been widely proliferated. The

slow pace at which Gómez's work has been recovered is a fitting reminder that the succession of calamities that beset the artist during his life nevertheless continued many years after his death. Tracing his father's tracks, Gómez Plana encountered no less obstacles in recovering his artistic legacy throughout the course of an investigation spanning forty years. Determined in this enterprise, he contacted Wilma Katherina (Ika) Rudolf, a German friend of the artist who took illegal possession of his writings, poems, and drawings located in the residence in San Jaime after his death. Rudolph married a German diplomat and moved to Sintra (Portugal), and Gómez's belongings remained forgotten for years in her hometown in Germany. Gómez Plana was able to retrieve part of his father's possessions after a trip to Portugal in 2004.

The discovery of these files was a revelation and a significant step towards the interpretation of Gómez focusing on the Gypsy. These writings belonged to his last term of imprisonment and his time in the Residencia San Jaime. They contained, among other documents, around a hundred poems; the abovementioned long poem *Erika*; an unfinished novel, *Pacheco*; and a long essay under the title of *Historia de los gitanos* (The History of the Gypsies). In the process of transcribing, ordering, and editing these manuscripts, Gómez Plana raised awareness of an unknown side to his father's thoughts. In the son's words: "For the first time, I was conscious of his Gitano descent, and of mine: I was not only the son of an artist guided by his social commitment, but also of a Gitano" (Gómez Plana, 2020, p. 136).

In 2006 *Helios Gómez: Poemas de lucha y sueño 1942–1956* (Helios Gómez: Poems of Combat and Dreams) came to light with a thorough introduction by Gómez Plana and his wife, historian Caroline Mignot, presented in three languages: Catalan, *Caló* (Spanish Romani), and Castilian. The majority of the collection, mostly romance and sonnets distributed chronologically in different sections, often evokes the author's early times in Seville. They also recreate Spain's civil war episodes – *Sevilla, novia asediada* (Seville, girlfriend besieged) –, and his memories in exile, – *Éxodo a Francia* (Exode to France). Predominant in these and other poems is the use of a neo-popular Lorquian accent, not exempt from a lamented tone and torn between a devious past and his years in captivity. Also visible is a condemnation of Spain's hierarchical and prejudice society, where the figure of the Gypsy plays a fundamental role. This poetic corpus of Gómez's most expressive manifestations of the Gitano people is illustrated with Andalusian and folkloric theme drawings, posters, and paintings of the author. The book concludes with the large surrealist poem *Erika*, where Gómez describes in a confidential tone his convoluted Soviet experience.

Poemas de lucha y sueño is a testament to resilience. It was during Gómez's last years in captivity, deprived of his freedom to sketch, that he reinforced his skills as a poet, evading a hostile environment and recreating remembrances of his youth. Gómez managed to circumvent the censorship and other adversities found in the penitentiary system, including the scarcity of paper, using small handwriting and encrypted language. The bundle of poems gathered in *Poemas de lucha y sueño* needs to be read in this context.

They represent Gómez's struggles as an inmate, but also the ostracism that he experienced as a sidelined subject with multiple degrees of marginalities. In particular, this collection is a wake-up call regarding the existence of this ethnic group in Spain, the Gitano, who has been for centuries displaced by the *payo*, the non-Gypsy Spaniard.

No hables mal de los gitanos (Don't bad-mouth the Gypsies), is one of Gómez's most emblematic poems in this collection (Gómez Plana & Mignot, 2006, pp. 103–106). Like Jesús Alonso Carballés already observed in an essay dedicated to Gómez's writings, these verses denounce the most common prejudices attributed to this collectivity: either as superstitious – “brujos y quiromantes” (sorcerers and fortune-tellers) –; children kidnappers – “que roban a los niños para chuparles las sangre” (who steal the children to suck their blood) –; or unclean and vagrant – “sucios y vagabundos” (dirty and homeless). The narrative voice challenges the *payos* siding with the Republic: the intellectual, the peasant and the proletarian, seeking their sympathy for, and recognition of, the Gitano people.

Gómez gives voice to the Gypsy in some of these poems, collecting and embodying this unspoken group. A wide range of marginal characters in the author's lyrical universe speak for themselves. Likewise, Triana, Seville, and by extension, Andalusia, come to life and represent Spain's fusion of a racial past in conflict with the Occident. In Gómez's romance *A cara o cruz* (Playing Hearts or Tails) (Gómez and Mignot 2006, pp. 210–212), for example, the poetic voice is a sort of Moorish Gypsy who resists conversion as a “neo Cristiano” or “new Christian” (Ibid., p. 212). Metonymically speaking, Spain is, in the narrator's view, a conflation of races. He perceives the nation as the synthesis of the Orient: “La gran síntesis de España / es lo árabe y gitano / y el zumo de la palmera / está en mi sangre mezclado” (The great synthesis of Spain / is in the Arabic and the Gypsy / and the juice of the palm / is mixed in my blood) (Ibid., p. 211).

The depiction of the Gypsy in Gómez's lyrical universe is marked, undoubtedly and inevitably, by the frightful circumstances of the European wars. The poem *Belsen* meets this end (Ibid., pp. 254–258). With a German concentration camp as backdrop, the artist denounces “el dolor de una raza / que sufre desde que nace/ el odio feroz de un mundo, / meridiano de maldades” (“the sorrow of a race / which suffers since its birth / the ferocious hatred of a world, / meridian of meanness”). The poem shows great command of the history of the Gypsy people. It identifies ancient tyrannical dynasties that caused the Gypsies' wandering life, like the pharaoh Horemheb and the conqueror of Central Asia, Timur. To this cruelty of the Orient, the poem revisits the most repressive episodes of ancient Europe against the Gypsies, particularly in Spain, England, France, and in contemporary times, Nazi Germany. Denouncing the Gypsy genocide, Gómez visualises the annihilation of thousands of Gypsies in gas chambers escorted by the SS. The tragic destiny of this ethnic group, slaughtered for centuries by “príncipes y emperadores” (princes and emperors), continues to offend God with their continuous repression (Ibid., p. 254).

The relationship between the Gypsy people and Catholicism is another predominant theme in several poems, which are loaded with biblical imagery – *Romance biblico*

(Biblical Romance) –, and heretical symbolism – *La gitana y el ángel* (The Gypsy Girl and the Angel). Gomez's approach to religion at the end of his life should not be overlooked, considering his strong criticism against the Church; an institution that he represented in his early times as an accomplice to the Nationalists during the war, and as a collaborator of Franco's regime. It is difficult to ignore the satire surrounding the sacred space that prevails in his early drawings, with the predominance of "martyrs, crucifixes, penitents, processions, church towels ..." (Romero, 2004, p. 47). Among other examples which illustrate this are *La religión* (The religion) (Fundación Pública, 2010, p. 68), and *El patíbulo* (The Scaffold) (Ibid., p. 74), from *Días de ira*; or *Au nom du Pere, du Fils, du Saint-Espirit* (In the Name of Father and of Son and of Holy Spirit) (Ibid., p. 74), from *Viva Octubre* (Ibid., p. 118).

Gómez's strong anti-church position is essential in order not to misinterpret the fresco of Capilla Gitana as a possible religious conversion of the artist during his last years in Cárcel Modelo. The fresco was made in response to the demands of the Mercedarian friar Bienvenido Lahoz, chaplain of the prison, to paint the Virgin of Mercy, patron saint of Barcelona and of the prisoners. Between 1948 and 1954 the artist inmate worked on the drawing of this sacred fresco in one of the cells that had been transformed into an oratory, with the particularity of painting the holy characters with Gypsy-like features. The sobriety and calmness of a Gypsy Madonna and her child, enlightened by the celestial world and escorted by two angels, contrast with the convicts (or salves?) on earth, persecuted by a criminal justice system, imploring mercy and piety to the divine. Another turn of the screw against the restoration of Gómez's memory and the recognition of his work took place in 1998, when the Catalan Minister of Justice Nuria de Gispert, ordered the whitening of the walls for hygienic purposes. This "anti-Franco manifesto", as it has been called (El Periódico, 2014, p. 1), is still covered with a layer of plaster, waiting for its redemption in a democratic, but still, fragile system in Spain.

With the attention that the memory of the Gitano people has received in the past two decades, particularly since the promulgation of Spain's Historical Memory Law in 2007, the figure of Gómez has served as an example of the resistance of the Gitano people against common attitudes of bigotry and intolerance in Spanish society. This helps explain the increased attention given to this figure on the part of scholars interested in the field of Romani studies (Martín Sánchez, 2018; Sierra, 2019) and Gypsy activists (Cortés, 2017). The creation of the Associació Cultural Helios Gómez has facilitated the proliferation of this aspect of the artist's life and work. This attention on the painter's ethnicity can easily be perceived in the monographic exhibition of the artist's work sponsored by the city hall of Barcelona in the Palau de la Virreina (the Virreina Palace), which ran from November 5, 2020, until February 7, 2021. The following description of the exhibition breaks new ground in the focus of research on Gómez's multifaceted personality, unacknowledged until very recently: "A first consideration is that by claiming his Romany identity and seeking to give it a meaning that was not just cultural or ethnic, but

specifically political, he was decades ahead of many of the critical reflections that come to us now through the field of postcolonial studies, where he is recognised as a point of reference in the Romany context" (Romero, 2020). The purpose of the exhibition, specified in this quote, is clearly to attract a broad academic audience to Gomez's work, and to further interpret his actions, preoccupations, and manifestations as a part of his Gitano identity.

This research area opens new lines of investigation of which very little is known. It is intriguing that Gómez's Gitano representations accentuate this aspect of his identity during the most challenging episodes of his convoluted life. Stronger association with the Gypsy is particularly noticeable during the darkest years of the Spanish Civil War. Perhaps among the most captivating chapters of his life, frequently mentioned, but of which very little detail is known, is his role in organising the Ramón Casanellas column division with Gypsy militiamen on the Aragón front (Gómez Plana, 2020, p. 162). The artist also self-appropriated the popular Gypsy last name, 'Vargas', at different times during the war. He announced a Gypsy character in a comic strip from the anarchist journal *El Frente* called *Gabrielillo Vargas, gitano rojo* (Little Gabriel Vargas, Red Gypsy) (Gómez Plana & Mignot, 2006, p. 23); and used Vargas as a pseudonym – most likely attributed to himself – as a delegate of the clandestine LNR in Catalonia (Tjaden, 1996, pp. 53–54). Another tenuous moment in his life, his return to Spain from exile in 1942, is full of examples of the author's ethnic vindication. It was then that a considerable part of his paintings, writings, and official documents appeared signed with the distinctive mark of the Egyptian cross, the Ankh (Tjaden, 1996, pp. 53–54), and his most important tribute to the Gypsy people, the Capilla Gitana, belongs also to his final years. These and other aspects of Gómez's life and work are still waiting to be approached in the Gitano context.

Acknowledgement

This study has received the support of the Franklin Grant of the American Philosophical Society. I thank the Associació Cultural Helios Gómez (Helios Gómez Cultural Association) and its president, Gabriel Gómez Plana, for the sources and the information provided. Other archive material has been facilitated by Judith Montserrat Argelague and Lourdes Prades Artigas, from the CRAI Biblioteca Pavelló de la República (Pavelló de la República CRAI Library) of the University of Barcelona; José Luis Hernández Luis from the Centro Documental de la Memoria Histórica (Historical Memory Documentary Centre); and Juan Cruz from Fundación Anselmo Lorenzo (Anselmo Lorenzo Foundation).

Conclusion

Elena Marushiakova and Vesselin Popov

The gallery of portraits of leading activists in the field of Roma civic emancipation in the countries of Central, South-Eastern and Eastern Europe during the interwar period presented in this book allows us to draw some general conclusions about the leading figures in this process, and the visionaries concerned with the future of Roma. Of course, each of the activists presented has his or her own distinct individual characteristics as a person, and at the same time, his or her activities are adapted to the specific historical context, in particular the situation in the countries of their living. Despite at times the shortage of extensive information, the available data allowed us to derive the main characteristics that were at least to some extent common to all these leaders of the Roma civic emancipation movement: namely, the newly formed Roma elite, which, in general (with, perhaps, the exception of Poland), was quite different from the old, “traditional” Gypsy elite that had existed for centuries.

Firstly, almost all the leading Roma activists in this historical period came from settled Roma families; in some cases (e.g. Andrey Taranov, Ilya Gerasimov, Mikhail Bezlyudskiy), they were nomadic only as children, i.e. their families were in transition to a sedentary lifestyle. We place this common characteristic in the first place because in the academic literature concepts and interpretations that need correction still prevail. From the beginning, academic research on the Gypsies/Roma in Western Europe has presented their nomadic way of life as their most essential feature, a key pillar of their community identity, and the measures for their sedentarisation were therefore perceived as a shackle in a chain of persecutions, while the policy of sedentarisation conducted in the 1950s–1970s in Central, South-Eastern, and Eastern Europe has continuously been interpreted (in the spirit of the Cold War, which to a large extent continues to dominate the academy to this day) as an example of the crimes of the communist regimes against the human and cultural rights of Roma.

This interpretation has some reason for Western Europe, and the measures of Maria Theresa and Joseph II in the second half of the 18th century in Central Europe were undoubtedly repressive and led to a crisis of identity. However, the situation in Central, South-Eastern and Eastern Europe between the two world wars is quite different. In most countries in the region at that time, Roma had lived a predominantly sedentary life, for centuries. Moreover, in South-Eastern Europe, in the territories of the former Ottoman Empire, sedentary Roma have prevailed over nomads since at least the 15th century, and in the territories of the former Austro-Hungarian Empire since at least the 18th century; only in the territories of the former Russian Empire (USSR and Poland) did Roma nomads predominate. And, what is most important, in these interpretations the stance

on the issue of nomadism as expressed by the Roma themselves and, more specifically, by the Roma civic elite is completely missing, thus the voice of the leading Roma activists who initiated the Roma civic emancipation and created the first Roma organisations during the interwar period in the countries of the region is ignored.

In summary, none of the Roma activists presented in this book argued that the nomadic lifestyle of the Roma should be preserved or even supported by the state: some of them did not take a stand on this issue at all, for them, it was of no significance because their activity was focused primarily on sedentary Roma. In other cases (Romania, Poland, Latvia, Finland, and especially the USSR), Roma activists pleaded with the state to take measures to lead to the settlement of Roma nomads; in general, these calls remained without result, or as in the USSR, this result came only three decades later (Marushiakova & Popov, 2008b; 2020b).

There are only a few exceptions concerning the issue of nomadism, e.g. Josef Serinek's utopian idea of buying an island to settle nomads from different European countries (Serinek & Tesař, 2016, I, p. 37), or the idea for "the establishment of ambulatory schools for nomadic Gypsies" included in the *Appeal to All Gypsies in Romania* (issued in connection of the establishment of the General Association of the Gypsies in Romania headed by Calinic I. Popp Șerboianu) (Marushiakova & Popov, 2021b, pp. 332–336). However, these exceptions do not change the general conclusion about the attitude of the activists of the Roma civic emancipation movement during the interwar period towards nomadism (moreover, Calinic I. Popp Șerboianu is the only one who was acquainted with the experience of Gypsy policies in Western Europe from the time of his stay there).

The direct dependence of the Roma civic emancipation movement in the countries of the region of Central, South-Eastern and Eastern Europe on the way of life of its leading representatives should not come as a surprise. On the contrary, this dependence is rather a logical consequence of the fact that the opportunities to understand the problems of the Roma in society and to formulate ways to overcome them (in a language understandable to society in the literal sense of the word) were much bigger among those members of the Roma community who live sedentarily and have achieved a higher degree of social integration than those of their peers who lead a nomadic way of life. Moreover, this social integration was directly linked to the receipt of a good education in the existing public educational institutions, which the nomads were deprived of. Hence, the next general characteristic of the leading Roma activists – the higher level of education achieved compared to the other Roma, who, at that time were, generally illiterate or poorly educated.

It is no coincidence that a large part of the Roma elite at that time came from Gypsy musicians. Compared to their other brethren, musicians' professional activities and way of life were much more closely connected with the life of the surrounding population and, accordingly, their interaction with the macro-society and influence of the dominant ideas were much stronger (both in everyday life and politically). As can be seen from the portraits of leading Roma activists book during the interwar period presented in this book, their education is very diverse and uneven. Among them, there are people

with a low level of education, with two or three years of primary school education (subsequently they self-educated), others received different types of vocational education (including music), others graduated different types of higher education and universities (including the so-called political universities in the USSR). Having an education was a necessary condition, but it was not enough for a person to become a Roma leader. For this, many other different qualities were needed.

An interesting question that is almost completely ignored by researchers is the mixed or even non-Roma origin of many Roma activists (both during the historical period under consideration and in subsequent historical epochs, including today). As can be seen from the presented portraits of Roma activists, the mixed origin of some of them does not turn out to be a problem that would hinder their realisation in the field of Roma civic emancipation; on the contrary, in some cases, it may even contribute to their better social integration in their childhood. However, in some cases, mixed origins or doubts about Roma origin can be a serious problem in relations between different Roma organisations, as was the case, for instance, in Romania, where the leaders of these organisations often publicly accuse each other of not being of Roma origin. In most cases, these allegations are unfounded, perhaps the only exception being the case of Calinic I. Popp Șerboianu, for whom there is indeed a lack of convincing evidence to support his Roma origins. Unique is the case of Alexander German, who never claimed in any form to be of Roma origin, but was nevertheless accepted by other campaigners and by the society as a whole as a Gypsy activist. All this shows clearly that Roma origin was not an unconditional factor of inalienable importance in the field of Roma civic emancipation during the interwar period.

All differences in the details of the presented individuals do not cancel out what they had in common and what unite them, namely their common vision of the problems facing the Roma and, accordingly, the need to eliminate them so that they can become equal members of the societies of which they were and are an integral part, while at the same time being preserved and developed as a separate community. A perspective of national autonomy, which in the near or distant future was to grow into the establishment of an own Gypsy nation-state is also present. This was the core of Roma civic emancipation, which at least in the period from the 19th century to the First World War, was an integral and inseparable part of the overall historical development of the processes of creation of modern nations during this period in the Central, South-Eastern and Eastern Europe.

We are well aware that these considerations may sound shocking to many, especially to those who continue to perceive Roma as “part of our world and yet distinct from the rest of us” (Stewart, 1997, p. 12), for whom the Roma continue to be a people radically different from other European nations and therefore segregated (not only in life but also in the field of academia) to a special position, which practically take them out of the main trends in the general historical development. That is why, for example, Roma and Roma authored texts are omitted even from most recent historical books concerning the processes of nation-building in the region of Central and South-Eastern Europe (Trencsényi

& Kopeček 2007ab; Ersoy et al., 2010ab; Mishkova et al., 2014). Despite some noble intentions such as “bringing together and making accessible basic texts of the respective national tradition” and to “challenge to the self-centred and ‘isolationist’ historical narrative” (Ersoy et al., 2010a, p. 1), Roma remained excluded from it. We can only hope that after the publication of this triptych (the three books on the history of Roma civic emancipation), this academic stereotype will finally be broken and the history of the Roma will become an integral part of the modern history of European nations.

A necessary condition for this, however, is for the discipline of Romani Studies too to follow its own path of development and to break the limits of the academic ghetto, in which often this academic field (which is uniting representatives of different sciences) is posed. We can only welcome the attempts in this direction conducted in recent years. However, they should be not concentrated on the quest of finding a magic key in certain basic concepts (e.g. Antigypsyism, Resistance, Post-colonialism, Decolonisation etc.), which should explain the whole history and current state of the Roma. To think in this way means to believe that it is possible to attain the absolute truth and reach the “end of history”. Here it is not a question of whether, and especially how much, when, where, how, etc. these concepts are relevant to all possible specific research problems related to the Roma, but to the general impossibility of one academic field to be defined by a pre-determined theoretical discourse and limited within its framework. (for more details cf. Marushiakova & Popov, 2021b, pp. 1114–1119). 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 facts to a chosen thesis (e.g. attempts to explain the affirmative national policy in the early USSR towards the Gypsies as a policy of Antigypsyism) through misinterpretations, overinterpretations, or pre-selected approaches, 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.

The development of the processes of Roma civic emancipation throughout the historical period from the 19th century to the Second World War must be divided into two main parts (until the First World War and then, until the Second World War). The First World War and the subsequent post-war peace regulation (the so-called Versailles system) were the turning point in the development of Roma civic emancipation, which changed the leading position of the various visions of the Roma civic elite. This development is directly dependent on the specific historical context, and the processes take place in a paradigm that includes the two main dimensions of the dichotomy ‘community – society’, and

within these two separate periods, the priorities in the relationship between these two main dimensions change significantly.

Until the First World War, the Roma in the region of Central, South-Eastern and Eastern Europe lived in three multinational empires – the Austro-Hungarian Empire (formally two-partite monarchy from 1867), the Ottoman Empire (from which in the 19th century several nation-states gradually separated – Serbia, Greece, Romania, Bulgaria), and the Russian Empire. Under these conditions, the movement for civic emancipation of the Roma repeats the models of national development of the other nations living together with them. That is why the visions for the future of the community of the leading Roma activists at that time are in the direction of gaining national autonomy in Austria-Hungary (Nikola Mihailo Mali, the authors of the *Petition for National Equality*, Janos Kaldaras and Sava Mihaly, “King” Raphael), as well as obtaining certain attributes of the nation-state (one’s education, one’s church), in the perspective and of one’s state, in the Ottoman Empire (Iliya Naumchev), i.e. the leading priority in the dichotomy ‘community – society’ is the development as a community in the direction of an ethnonational state.

During this period, however, a tendency to search for the development of the community in another direction also appeared: as an integral part of the surrounding society in the composition of other emerging ethno-nations (in this case Hungarian) of the population living with them (example of János Ipolysági Balogh, József Boldizsár, Ferenc Nagyidai Sztojka) – a trend that will be dominant in the next historical period. Moreover, during this period the first sprouts of two other important directions in the development of the Roma civic emancipation movement emerged, which would be developed and implemented in the coming years. It concerns seeking a solution to the problems of the Roma through participation in the socio-political struggles, and in particular in the communist movement. In other words, achieving an equal position of the community is seen as an integral part of the radical change of the whole society (Ignatij Antonenko, Nikola Kochev, Mustafa Mehmet, Helios Gómez, and others).

The unity of the process of Roma civic emancipation in the countries of Central, South-Eastern and Eastern Europe in this period 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 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 (Marushiakova & Popov, 2021b) it is clear how the first phase of this process was born and realised among the Roma (i.e., the creation of their own Roma national vision) and how it made the first steps during the period before the First World War, while the second phase of this process (dissemination and promotion of visionary ideas among the masses) was very poorly represented at the time, and the ideas of the Roma visionaries remained virtually unknown to the Roma masses.

The situation in the region of Central, South-Eastern and Eastern Europe changed radically after the end of the First World War. In place of multinational empires, new (or

not so new, but significantly expanding their territories) ethno-national states emerged (the cases of USSR and Yugoslavia were different, but they did not cancel out this general trend). However, the Roma did not create their own nation-state; moreover, they were not included anywhere among the national minorities defined by the so-called Versailles system of international relations, the foundations of which were laid at the Paris Peace Conference (1919–1920), which treated only the minorities of the existing nation-states (as well as the Jews). In other words, unlike many other (but not all) peoples inhabiting the three multinational empires, the Roma failed to realise their national project, which turned out to be a key moment in the development of the ideas of Roma civic emancipation.

The reasons for this unrealised historical chance are many. Perhaps in the first place here should be placed the diasporic way of their settlement, due to which the Roma de facto do not have “their territory”, i.e. nowhere did they constitute the majority of the population, but were always a minority (despite the fact that, in general, the total number of Roma at that time exceeded or at least was commensurate with the number of many other nations for example, Estonians, Latvians, Lithuanians, Albanians, etc.). In addition, at that time, the social differentiation of Roma communities was very poorly developed, i.e. they did not have their own economic, political, cultural, intellectual, etc. elite and even their middle class, and occupied (in general, despite some exceptions) the lowest levels of society. The leading visionaries of the Roma civic emancipation were separate individuals, and their ideas had not reached the masses, i.e. among the Roma, the second phase in the development of modern nationalism (according to Miloslav Hroch) had not even begun. Moreover, unlike many other emerging nations in the region, the Roma did not have their “patrons” and no lobby among the Great Powers, who drew the boundaries of the new post-war system, and the question of them had not even been raised. This was not a manifestation of a special Antigypsyism, although the contemptuous (at best) attitude towards Gypsies in the region (as well as globally) was dominant in society, and this attitude also had its impact.

However, all this is not enough to accept the claim that “Roma are among the last groups in Europe to discover the potential and power of ethno-nationalism to fight for a political space of their own” (Gheorghe & Mirga, 1997, p. 5) without reservations and further clarifications. As it is clear from this book, in the second half of the 19th century, Roma were an integral part of the processes of development of modern ethno-nationalism in the region of Central, South-Eastern and Eastern Europe at that time, i.e. in this respect they are by no means “among the last groups in Europe”. The quoted characteristic of Roma directly corresponds to the concept of the Gypsies as one of the “most backward” peoples in the early USSR, who need constant support, with the help of which they must overcome their historical backwardness. In this case, there is another historical paradox in which early communism in the USSR and modern liberalism lend a hand (cf. for example, the case of the concept of Antigypsyism created in the early USSR

and especially relevant today as a basic ideological platform for interpreting the whole history of the Gypsies/Roma).

From a realistic point of view, until the beginning of the First World War, on an ideological (and, in some respects, even practical) level, the movement for Roma civic emancipation was not only an integral part of the development of modern nationalism but, more than that, no matter how unbelievable it may sound at first, in some cases, it was even comparable to similar movements in some other nations in the region. If we compare some of the important markers for the formation of a modern nation, such as creating a dictionary of their language or their national drama, it turns out that the Roma were ahead of some other peoples in the region (e.g. Estonians, Latvians, Albanians, etc.). Among the Roma, the processes of national development went unevenly, and after the end of the First World War, unlike other nations, they did not receive a historical chance to create their own nation-state. Of course, history cannot be written in a subjunctive mood, but it is still worth thinking about this potentiality.

In the new post-war realities, in the period between the two world wars, the movement for Roma civic emancipation was placed in a new, radically different situation, in which multinational empires were replaced by nation-states. In this situation, new Roma leaders appeared, whose new visions of the goals and objectives of this movement radically changed its leading paradigm. During this period, the leading aim of the movement for Roma civic emancipation was no longer the development of the community in the direction of its construction as a separate nation; in frames of nation-states, this goal was already the equality of the community within the civic nation to which the Roma in the individual state belonged (i.e. the development of the Roma as an integral part of society). Of course, the ideas of Roma activists from the previous historical period did not disappear without a trace, but they were significantly transformed in the new social and political realities. Even the very idea of "Gypsy autonomy" was revived in the conditions of the early USSR in the form of a Gypsy Autonomous Soviet Socialist Republic, the creation of which was no longer viewed as laying the foundation for the development of one's own state, but for more successful social integration in the conditions of the Soviet state. The desire to achieve certain attributes of the nation-state can also be found among some Roma activists, e.g. the aspirations for Roma national education and the Roma national church in Romania, expressed by Constantin S. Nicolăescu-Plopșor (*O Rom*, 1934b, p. 1), but they were also limited to the civic nations of which the Roma in these countries were part, and were based on the then prevailing concept of national minorities in Central and South-Eastern Europe (although Roma in no country in the region had the status of a minority in this sense). Against this background, the goal "to create a longing feeling among the Gypsies for the creation of a national heart in their own land" in the Statute of the United Common-Cultural and Educational Organisation of the Gypsy Minorities in Bulgaria 'Ekipe' (Unity) (CSA, f. 1 B, op. 8, a.e. 596, l. 50; Marushiakova & Popov, 2021b, p. 107) seems not so unexpected and indicates

some (albeit indirect) continuity in the development of the movement of Roma civic emancipation with the previous historical period.

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 and equal relationship with the surrounding population were to take place at the individual or 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, who, however, did not really want to accept “Gypsies” as part of them in everyday life (in the best-case scenario, they accepted them only in theory, or in political discourse), so these processes were far from complete and irreversible, as evidenced by the various variants of their modern development (Marushiakova & Popov, 2015a).

It should be borne in mind here that Gypsies in different countries in the region were perceived differently by the authorities than other national minorities. This was not only predetermined by the Versailles system, which separated them from these minorities but was also influenced by the centuries-old contempt for them by the macro-society. Thus, during the interwar period, the Roma were deprived of the opportunity to at least insist on obtaining the rights that were provided for national minorities according to the accepted international norms. It should be noted, however, that the Roma leaders themselves, according to the political situation in individual countries, avoided equating themselves with other national minorities (e.g. Hungarians in Czechoslovakia and Romania, Turks in Bulgaria, etc.), and, on the contrary, instead of confining themselves to assurances of loyalty, preferred to emphasise in different ways their commitment to the respective “indigenous”, dominant ethno-nation (e.g. by emphasising participation in wars).

In their efforts to achieve the main goals of the movement for Roma civic emancipation, the main problem for the new Roma elite became the relations with the authorities in the countries in which they lived. In fact, the main problem in this regard was the desire of Roma activists to apply an effective state policy to the Roma, which would lead to the solution of their problems as citizens and to the elimination of existing inequalities in this regard (i.e. to a large extent, in the practice to achieve the goals of the movement for Roma civic emancipation) and, accordingly, to improve their quality of life, while in

general, the authorities in all countries in the region (except for the early USSR, where the affirmative national policy was the leading one and included also Gypsies) remained indifferent to these desires. The reasons for this attitude coming from the authorities was not due to some special anti-Gypsy policy, but to the fact that Gypsies were not perceived as a serious problem of primary national importance in any of the countries in the entire region of Central, South-Eastern and Eastern Europe. Moreover, in the context of the national policies of all countries concerned, during the interwar period, Gypsies were never perceived as a problem of particular importance, and their place in these policies was put in the background (in best case because they were usually not taken into account at all). The reasons for this attitude towards Gypsies varied from country to country, but each of them had its own priorities in their national politics; in fact, perhaps the only thing that unites all of these countries was the general disregard for Gypsies. Bernard Gilliat-Smith's words can serve as a great illustration of this attitude:

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. (Petulengro, 1915–1916, p. 2).

As described in the quote above, ignorance was omnipresent in the region, even in cases where, as in Hungary, Gypsy musicians gained widespread public support but they received it not as Gypsies but as bearers of Hungarian music expressing a Hungarian national idea, or in Czechoslovakia, where they were addressed in the framework of the civilisation mission and the policies of "colonisation" of the eastern suburbs (Baloun, 2020). The only exception to the general lack of engagement of the authorities with the Gypsies (and thus with the Roma civic emancipation movement) in the countries of the whole region is the case of the early USSR, where Gypsy activism was supported by the Soviet state in the context of its affirmative national policy (terminated in the late 1930s). And, even more importantly, in general (though in some cases insufficiently) in the early Soviet Union the main leading visions of the Gypsy new civic elite for the future of their community were also supported.

This attitude of the Soviet authorities towards the Gypsies during the interwar period is directly related to the development of a new line in the Roma civic emancipation movement, namely its entry and dissolution in the struggles of the communist parties in many countries in the region. However, this new line was not the result of a purposeful "export of revolution" by the USSR because at least in Turkey and Bulgaria these processes originated and developed in the years before the First World War and the creation of the USSR. However, the influence of Soviet Gypsy policy on the Roma in the

region is unquestionable, and information about what was happening to Gypsies in the USSR reached through various channels, not only through the communist press but also through mainstream publications (e.g. Мир, 1934, p. 3).

Another important line in the development of the movement for Roma civic emancipation during the interwar period arose and developed along the lines of religion and religious institutions. This line is expressed both in the struggles of the Roma in Bulgaria to take leading positions in some Islamic religious institutions, and in the emergence of the cult of the “Gypsy Saint” Aunt Bibia in Serbia/Yugoslavia and related organisations, and reached its final phase in the creation of a “national church” (the Gypsy Church in Bulgaria). This line of development is especially important from a contemporary point of view, because after a long period of hidden illegal existence (at least in Bulgaria and Romania) during the communist regimes after the Second World War, after the collapse of the so-called socialist camp in the late 1990s, the Gypsy/Roma (both designations are used) evangelical churches experienced a tumultuous renaissance in their development, accompanied by the mass emergence of new evangelical churches among the Roma in countries throughout the vast region of South-Eastern, Central and Eastern Europe. And what is particularly impressive is that this new evangelical movement, which is de facto an integral (albeit separate) part of the movement for Roma civic emancipation, covers many times more Roma than are engaged in the professional Roma NGOs sector created and sustained through foreign funding, in which foreign donors have invested (and continue to invest) incomparably more funds. This should be a serious reason for reflection on the part of both Roma civil society activists themselves and scholars as well.

However, the fact that during the interwar period the main focus of the work of Roma activists was to attract the commitment of the authorities in the respective countries to start actively working to solve the numerous problems of the Gypsies does not mean that the Roma elite did not work among the community. On the contrary, in the absence of an adequate response from the authorities (which is the general case, except for the USSR), the main field of their activities was the work in the community, often combined with efforts to promote it in public, i.e. among society.

In this activity, the Roma elite faced two rounds of problems. The first of them was related to the relations in the community, and much more often, the relations within it, between the Roma activists themselves. As can be seen from the cases shown in this book, these relations were not always the best; on the contrary, internal conflicts often arose among the Roma elites on various occasions (most often regarding competitions for leadership positions). These internal conflicts did not prove fatal for the development of the Roma civic emancipation movement, because in the end its development was determined by the general trends in social development, but they took a lot of effort, which greatly reduces its effectiveness and results.

The second round of problems of the Roma elite was linked to its relations with “external” to the community factors of various nature, such as state and local authorities and

institutions, political parties, civil society organisations, etc. In the course of these relations, different forms of dependences began to emerge among the Roma elites, and thus here lay the beginning of a problem, which today is perhaps one of the most serious, facing the movement for Roma civic emancipation.

An extremely important feature of the movement for Roma civic emancipation in the countries of Central, South-Eastern and Eastern Europe, which is common to all countries in the region, is its strongly “national character” concerning the countries in which they live and part of which civic nation they are. In the historical period between the two world wars, the processes of Roma civic emancipation had this very important common feature that determined the main leading paradigm in which they developed. All the described processes 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. Sure, 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. There are only a few exceptions in this regard, but they are more in the realm of curiosities, e.g. the above-mentioned idea of Josef Serinek from Czechoslovakia in 1933 to organize a congress of “all the nations living on the road”, at which to be decided to buy an island where they could settle (Serinek & Tesař, 2016, I, p. 37), but they could not be taken seriously. Much more famous is the case of the so-called Gypsy Kings in Poland, which has so far been interpreted one-sidedly, without taking into account its specificity as a media phenomenon in which public messages pursue goals other than proclaimed. In the plans of these “Gypsy Kings”, which were widely covered by the media (not only in Poland but also in many other countries around the world), all of them 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 given also 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 (more exactly, only the 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 desire to secure the support of the main political leaders in Poland, including Jozef 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.

In fact, in sum, the absolute priority of the Roma civic emancipation movement during the interwar period was the situation in the countries where the Roma lived. Attempts from today's point of view to 'discover' some international dimension of this movement (e.g. in the so-called "international Gypsy congress" in Kisfalú in 1879 or in the so-called "international congress" in Bucharest in 1933, as well as in roots of the contemporary Roma flag, about which it is often claimed that it was adopted at this congress) are in fact devoid of any real historical grounds and are speculation and an attempt to falsify the past from a today perspective (Marushiakova & Popov, 2021b, pp. 463–464). Nowadays, the results of these blatant manipulations in attempts to create a new, Roma historical narrative are supported in some circles of contemporary Roma activism, as well as among some academics, mainly those who believe that their public commitment to supporting Roma should be at expense of the historical truth and includes also support in the creation of the Roma national historical mythology. This approach explains why 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 support in the historical sources, they have described supposed international connections with the added stipulation "whether mythical or real" (Klímová-Alexander, 2005a, p. 195). Such verbal equilibristics is not only unfounded but also completely unnecessary.

In fact, the real international dimensions of the Roma civic emancipation movement emerged only in the 1950s in Western Europe (the work of Ionel Rotaru, who called himself Vaida Voevod), and developed 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. The emergence of the Roma movement on the international stage and its real (i.e. not just on the level of ideas) transformation from national into an international movement began *de facto* (notwithstanding all public declarations in this regard before and after the Second World War) barely 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, 2018b). 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.

Of course, neither in the time of the emergence of international Roma activism nor today, is there a clear boundary (nor any contradiction) between the two leading paradigms (national and international dimensions of the Roma civic emancipation movement); just on the contrary, these two paradigms often intersect and complement each other (that is why the same people had participated in both, especially in the past).

Moreover, both in the recent past and today, the international dimension often continued to be used to achieve specific goals at the national level, i.e. in this respect, the models set during the interwar period remain relevant. Moreover, it would be an exaggeration to believe that the whole development of the Roma civic emancipation movement in the years after the Second World War to the present day has created its own new national project (despite the emergence of new ideas – such as transborder community, a nation without a state, European minority, post-modern nation, etc.), even more, it is not possible to state that it successfully passed to the second phase (according to Hroch) of nation-building process and received distribution (and acceptance) of ideas by the ordinary Roma masses (Marushiakova & Popov, 2005). Despite the relatively good start of the Roma civic emancipation movement in the 19th century, in the end, the processes did not progress much and their prospects in the near future remain unclear. The only thing that can be said with certainty is that its development depends to a large extent on the future of Europe itself, where the ideas of pan-European unity meet with growing opposition from nation-states, and the results of this clash will predetermine future trends also in its development, as well as its national and international dimensions.

An immutable part of the process of nation-building of any community in its transformation into a nation involves the creation of their own national heroes, who acquire symbolic meaning and become national symbols that are part of the new national ideology. In this respect, it seems that the Roma international movement is making some progress nowadays and, at least in cyberspace, many Roma organisations, in various forms, impose a set of names of world-famous personalities from the fields of art, science, politics, sports, etc., to whom Roma origin is attributed (here we do not discuss the question of the extent to which in each of the individual cases there is a real basis for this, and the extent to which it is rather a matter of manipulation – both in some of these individuals from past and present). These personalities today are declared to be “famous Roma”, and they are promoted in the public space as an opportunity to show national pride, and are used as a tool to raise Roma ethnic self-confidence and to strengthen Roma national identity. These are processes that are common to all emerging nations, and the Roma are no exception. The problematic issue here is neither in the primordialistic approach to the interpretation of the concept of Roma identity, in which the leading logic for many contemporary Roma activists is that if there were Roma among your distant ancestors, then you are a Roma, nor in the fact that this Roma origin in many of these cases is not based on real grounds and therefore the allegations of such origin are perceived by the surrounding society rather as phenomena of an anecdotal nature. The real problem here is that all these “famous Roma” have de facto no involvement in the Roma civic emancipation movement in any form (many of them have never mentioned that they were of Roma origin, and some even have denied it). For these reasons, it will be very difficult to impose all these personalities as national symbols for the Roma. Well-known is that for instance, Alexander Pushkin’s great-grandfather was of African descent however he has become a national symbol for Russia and not for Ethiopia; a case quite similar is with

Charlie Chaplin, who himself wrote in *My Autobiography*: “Grandma was half gypsy. This fact was the skeleton in our family cupboard” (Chaplin, 1966, p. 8), however this statement seems not enough convincing to perceive him as a national symbol of Roma.

Against the background of all these “famous Roma”, the real historical Roma elite, thanks to which the movement for Roma civic emancipation arose and developed from the middle of the 19th century until the Second World War, remain in the background, texts about its representatives are relatively few, and many of them still are almost unknown. We can only hope that this book, in which we present the leading figures of this historical Roma elite, will contribute to the creation and establishment (both among the Roma themselves and among the macro-society of which they are an integral part) of a true national pantheon of heroes of Roma civil emancipation.

Illustrations



Fig. 1a
Nikola Mihailo Mali (? – 1910). Smederevo,
Serbia, 1860s.



Fig. 1b
Ferenc Nagyidai Sztojka (1855 – 1929).
Austro-Hungarian Empire, 1880s.



Fig. 1c
Atanas Dimitrov (1874 – 1916). Bulgaria,
1890s.



Fig. 1d
Shakir Pashov (1898 – 1981) as a soldier
during WWI. Bulgaria, 1915–1918.



Fig. 2a Gypsy Theatre. Sliven, Bulgaria, 1927. The text on the photo: "Founders of 1st Gypsy theatre group. 24.03.1927. Sliven".



Fig. 2b Gospodin Kolev (1923 – 2011). Sliven, Bulgaria, 1942. Sliven, Bulgaria, 1942. The text on the back-side of the photograph: "June 8–10, 1942. The Court trial. A police photo, made after the sentencing – June 10, 1942. Three of these who knelt and the first on the left [Gospodin Kolev – authors note] are Gypsies, members of REMS".



Fig. 3a Manifestation of Gypsies after the establishment of the new power on 09.09.1944. Sofia, Bulgaria, autumn 1944. The inscriptions on the posters are: "Down with Racial Differences" and "Long Live the Fatherland Front. Death of Fascism. Gypsy Mahala Sofia".



Fig. 3b First Serbian Gypsy Association. Belgrade, Yugoslavia, 1929. The field below the photo has an inscription: "A memory from May 22, 1929. Celebration Day of the 1st Serbian Zadruga".



Fig. 4a Bibija Celebration. Belgrade, Yugoslavia, 1936. The celebration is at the monument commemorating the Gypsies who died during the wars from 1912 to 1918.



Fig. 4b Svetozar Simić (1913 – 1979). Belgrade, Yugoslavia, 1935. Student's index card at Belgrade University.



Fig. 5a
Lazăr Naftanailă (1893 – 1968 ?). Romania, 1934.



Fig. 5b
Calinic I. Popp Șerboianu (1883 – 1941). Romania, 1920s.



Fig. 5c
Gheorghe A. Lăzurică (1892 – ?). Romania, 1930.



Fig. 5d
Gheorghe Niculescu (? – ?). Bucharest,
Romania, 1934.

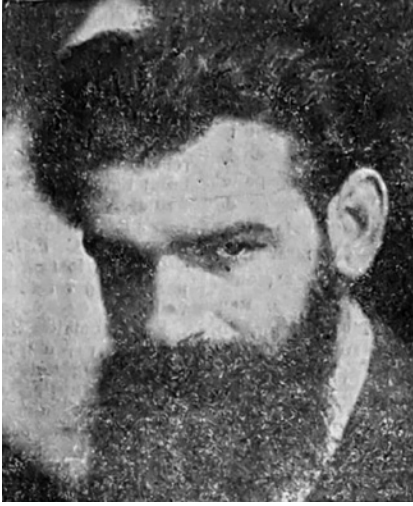


Fig. 6a
Constantin S. Nicolăescu-Plopșor
(1900 – 1968). Craiova, Romania, 1934.



Fig. 6b
Florica Constantinescu (? – ?). Bucharest,
Romania, 1933.



Fig. 6c The First Congress of General Union of Roma in Romania. Bucharest, Romania, 1933.



Fig. 7a The Congress of Association General Union of Roma in Romania. Bucharest, Romania, 1935.



Fig. 7b Gheorghe Niculescu at the Congress of AUGRR, Bucharest, Romania, 1935.



Fig. 7c Béla Radics (1867 – 1930). Budapest, Austro-Hungarian Empire, 1900s. Postcard.



Fig. 8a
Károly Bura (1881 – 1934). Nagyvárád / Oradea,
Austro-Hungarian Empire, 1900s.



Fig. 8b
Károly Bura as a soldier in the WWI. Nagyvárád /
Oradea, Austro-Hungarian Empire, 1914–1918.

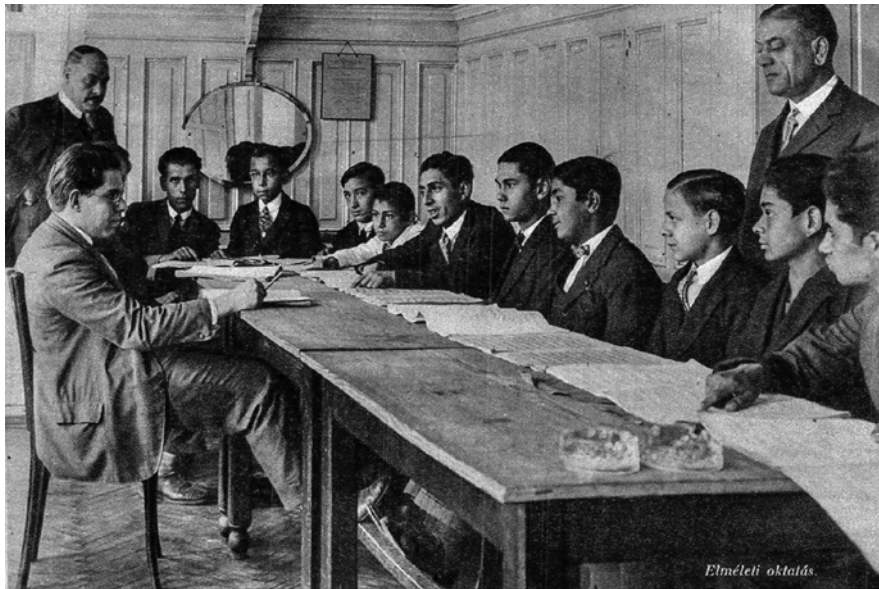


Fig. 8c
Bihari Music School. Budapest, Hungary, 1929. Teaching music theory,
Károly Bura (background left) and Antal Polgár (forefront right).



Fig. 9a František Kýr (1914 – 1985). Strážnice, former Czechoslovakia, 1942. The caption under the photo in the newspaper: “Director Fr. Kýr with two main stars of the *Gypsy Youth Theatre*”.



Fig. 9b Jan Daniel (1895 – 1943) and his orchestra. Strážnice, Czechoslovakia, 1935. The photo of the theatre and musical ensemble from Strážnice. Most probably, one of the violinists is Jan Daniel.



Fig. 10a
Matejasz Kwiek (ca. 1887 – 1937) as a
Gypsy King. Warszawa, Poland, 1930s.



Fig. 10b
Janusz Kwiek (? – ?). Warszawa, Poland, 1937.
Elections and coronation of the new Gypsy King
Janusz Kwiek on April 4, 1937.



Fig. 10c
Jānis Leimanis (1886 – 1950). Riga, Latvia, 1933. Society's *Čigānu draugs* (Friend of
Gypsies) choir in concert at the Latvian Conservatoire on 29 April 1933; Jānis Leimanis
is in the middle of the second row.



Fig. 11a Jānis Leimanis and a “congregation” of Roma holding the newly published *Catechism Excerpts, Prayers, and Spiritual Songs in the Gypsy Language* translated by him. Riga, Latvia, 1936.



Fig. 11b Jānis Leimanis with his family. Riga, Latvia, 1931. Sitting from the left: Jānis Leimanis, mother Liba and wife Elizabete; standing from the left: sons Juris and Kārlis.



Fig. 12a
Antti Palm (1874 – 1939). 1910s.



Fig. 12b
Ferdinand Nikkinen (1894 – 1971). 1910s.



Fig. 12c
Aleksander Åkerlund (1893 – 1944) and
Ida Blomerus (1890 – 1953). 1910s.



Fig. 12d
Kalle Tähtelä (1891 – 1919). 1910s.



Fig. 13a Sofia Schwartz (1887 – 1932), first from left, as a teacher. 1910s.



Fig. 13b The leadership of All-Russian Union of Gypsies (from left to right Nina Dudarova, Andrey Taranov, Dmitriy Polyakov, Ivan Rom-Lebedev). Moscow, USSR, 1927.



Fig. 14a
Ivan Rom-Lebedev (1903 – 1991). Moscow,
USSR, 1920s.



Fig. 14b
Andrey Taranov (1896 – after 1966). Moscow,
USSR, 1920s.



Fig. 14c
Mikhail Bezlyudskiy (1901 – 1970), Moscow,
USSR, 1931.



Fig. 14d
Ilya Gerasimov (1898 – after 1965). Bryansk,
USSR, 1950s.



Fig. 15a
Alexander Krikunov (? - ?). Khutor Krikunovo, USSR,
1920s.



Fig. 15b
Alexander German and Ivan Rom-Lebedev.
Moscow, USSR, 1930s. Photo of a painting by
Abram S. Zadenvark.



Fig. 15c
Commission for the creation of the *Романы азбука* (Romani Alphabet). Moscow, USSR, 1927.
In middle: Prof. Mikhail Segrievskiy; left Nina A. Dudarova; right: Nikolay A. Pankov.



Fig. 16a
Alexander German (1893 – 1955). Kiev, Russian
Empire, 1915.



Fig. 16b
Alexander German (1893 – 1955). Moscow,
USSR, 1950s.

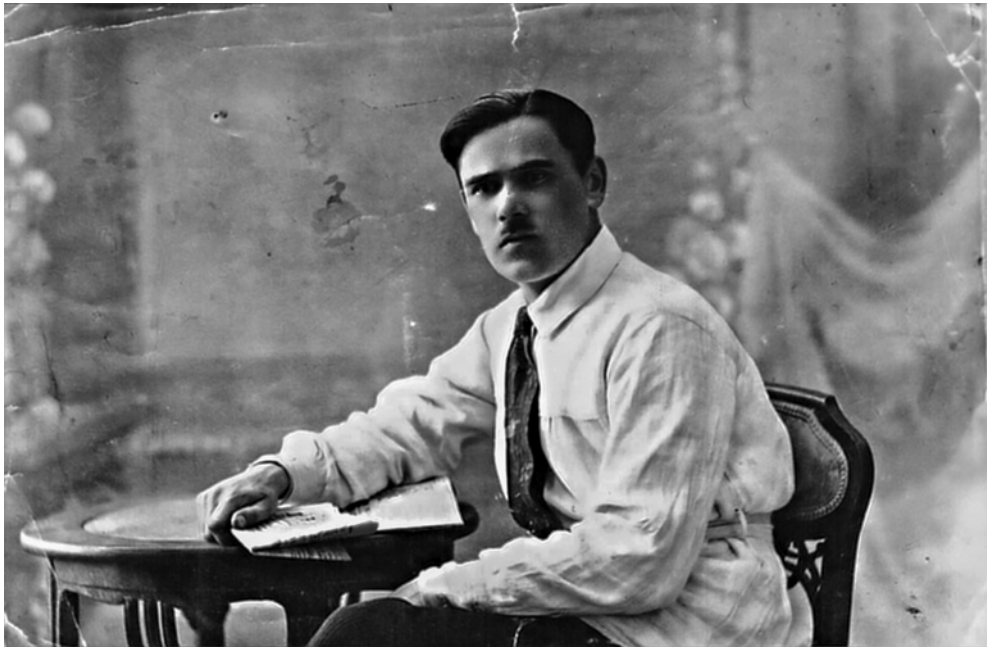


Fig. 16c Alexander German (1893 – 1955). Moscow, USSR, 1932.



Fig. 17a
Nikolay Pankov (1895 – 1959). Moscow, USSR, 1920s.

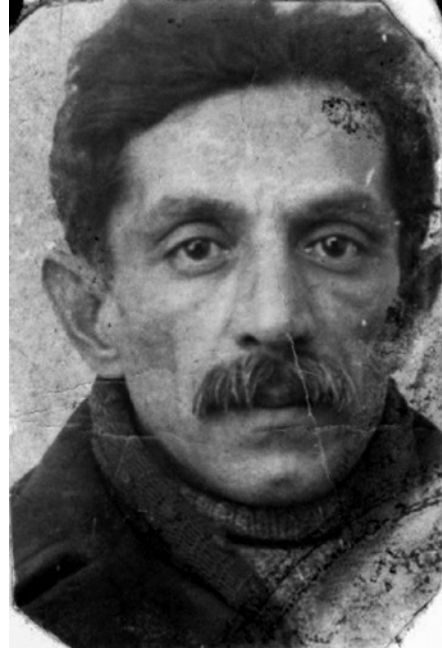


Fig. 17b
Nikolay Pankov (1895 – 1959). Moscow, USSR, 1940s.



Fig. 17c Students at Gypsy Pedagogical College. Moscow, USSR, 1930s.



Fig. 18a
Nina Dudarova (1903 – 1992). Moscow, USSR,
1920s.



Fig. 18b
Olga Pankova (1911 – 1991). Moscow, USSR,
1930s.



Fig. 18c First Gypsy School. Moscow, USSR, 1927.



Fig. 19a Political Training, Stalingrad oblast, USSR, 1938. Photo annotation: Gypsy teacher N. P. Pedanova is engaged with a group of collective farmers to study the Regulation on Elections to the Supreme Soviet of the RSFSR.



Fig. 19b Gypsy Family. Crimea, USSR, 1930. Photo annotation: "Stakhanovite collective farmer of the Gypsy Beshkur Vakuf kolkhoz of the Seytler rayon Dalda Asanov with his family in a new house built for him by the kolkhoz."



Fig. 20a
Steve Kaslov (ca. 1888 – 1949). New York, USA, 1930s.



Fig. 20b
Helios Gómez (1905 – 1956). Berlin, Germany, 1929.



Fig. 20c Helios Gómez (1905 – 1956). Camp Montolieu, France, 1940s.

Dictionary

Abbreviations and Soviet Neologisms

Bulgaria

- BKP = Bulgarian Communist Party.
BSDP = Bulgarian Social-Democratic Party.
BRSDP = Bulgarian Workers' Social-Democratic Party.
BZNS = Bulgarian Agrarian People's Union.
NRPS = Independent Workers' Professional Unions.
OF = Fatherland Front.
RP = Workers' Party.
RMS = Workers' Youth Union.
TsK BKP = Central Committee of Bulgarian Communist Party.

Czechoslovakia

- KSČ = Czechoslovak Communist Party.
DTJ = Workers' Physical Education Club.

Romania

- AGȚR = General Association of Gypsies in Romania.
AUGRR = Association General Union of Roma in Romania.
PNC = National Christian Party.
PNL = National Liberal Party.
PNL Brătianu = National Liberal Party – Ion I. C. Brătianu Fraction.
PNȚ = National Peasant Party.
PNP = National People's Party, or the Popular Party.
UGRR = General Union of Roma in Romania.

USSR

- APO = Department for Agitation and Propaganda at TsK VKP(b).
Artel = Producers' Cooperative.
ChK / CheKa = 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.
GIKhL = State Publishing House for Fiction Literature.
Glaviskusstvo. = Main Department for Fiction and Art of the Narkompros of the RSFSR
(1928–1933).
Glavlit = General Directorate for Literature and Publishing at the Narkompros RSFSR.

Glavnauka = Central Administration for Scientific, Scholarly-Artistic, and Museum Institutions.

Goslitizdat = State Publishing House for Fiction Literature.

Gosplan = The State Planning Committee.

GPU = State Political Directorate at NKVD RSFSR.

GULAG = Main Directorate of Camps at NKVD.

Ispolkom = Executive Committee of Council of People's Deputies.

Krayispolkom = Executive Committee of Kray.

Oblispolkom = Executive Committee of Oblast.

Rayispolkom = Executive Committee of Rayon.

Gorispolkom = City's Executive Committee.

Kogiz = Bookselling Association of State Publishers.

Kolkhoz = Collective Farm.

Kolkhozsoyuz = Union of Agricultural Collectives.

Kolkhozsentr = All-Union Union of Agricultural Collectives of the USSR.

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.

Kulak = Literally 'fist'; this is how wealthy peasants, who put in economic dependence and exploited their fellow peasants, were called in the early USSR.

KPSS = Communist Party of the Soviet Union.

KUTV = Communist University of the Toilers of the East.

Likbez = Campaign of Eradication of Illiteracy in Soviet Union.

Medgiz = State Medical Publishing House.

MOIK = Executive Committee of Moscow.

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).

Narkom = People's Commissar, ръководител на People's Commissariat.

Narkompros = People's Commissariat of Education of the RSFSR.

Narkomzem = People's Commissariat of Agriculture of USSR.

Natsmen = Member of National Minority.

NKVD = People's Commissariat of Internal Affairs of RSFSR.

OblONO = Department for People's Education at Oblastlevel.

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 USSR.

Politburo = Political Bureau of TsK VKP(b).

Profizdat = The Soviet Trade-unions Publishing House.

Rabfak = Workers' Faculty (an educational institution that prepared workers to higher education).

Red corner = literally 'little red corner' (красный уголок); 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.

RSFSR = Russian Soviet Federative Socialist Republic.

Selkhozgiz = State Publishing House of Agricultural Literature.

Selsoviet = Village council, local self-administration, a part of the Soviet system of administration.

SNK / Sovnarkom = Council of People's Commissars of the USSR (from 1922 of the RSFSR).

Little Sovnarkom = Standing Committee to SNK.

Sovkhoz = State Farm.

Sovnarkhoz = Soviet for National Economy.

SSP = Union of Soviet Writers.

Stakhanovets = A title that refers to labour modelled after the example of miner Alexey Stakhanov, who was known for producing more than it was required, by working harder and more efficient.

Tsentrizdat = Central Publishing House of the Peoples of the USSR at TsIK USSR.

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 = Gypsy artel for chemical products.

Tsygpishcheprom = Gypsy artel for food products.

Uchpedgiz = State Pedagogical Publishing House of the Narkompros.

USSR = Union of Soviet Socialist Republics.

VKP(b) = All-Union Communist Party (Bolsheviks).

Kraykom = Kray Committee of VKP(b).

Obkom = Oblast Committee of VKP(b).

Raykom = Rayon Committee of VKP(b).

VKSS = Higher Courses of Soviet Construction at the VTsIK.

VOKS = All-Union Society for Cultural Relations with Foreign Countries.

VPK = All-Union Resettlement Committee.

VTsIK = All-Russian Central Executive Committee.

ON VTsIK = of Nationalities of VTsIK.

VSTs = All-Russian Union of Gypsies.

VTsSPS = All-Union Central Council of Professional Unions.

References

Archives

Belarus

NARB. Нацыянальны архіў Рэспублікі Беларусь (National Archive of Republic of Belarus): f. 6, op. 1, d. 195; f. 34/133c, op. 1, d. 727; f. 701, op. 1, d. 14.

Bulgaria

AK. Архив на Комисия за разкриване на документите и за обявяване на принадлежност на български граждани към Държавна сигурност и разузнавателните служби на Българската народна армия (Archives of the Commission for Disclosure of Documents and for Declaring the Affiliation of Bulgarian Citizens to the State Security and the Intelligence Services of the Bulgarian People's Army): f. 13, op. 1, a.e. 759; 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. Фотографии; f. Шакир Пашов.

CSA. Държавна агенция 'Архиви' – Централен държавен архив (Archives State Agency – Central State Archives): f. 1 Б, op. 8, a.e. 596; f. 1 Б, op. 25, a.e. 71; f. 16, op. 89, a.e. 139; f. 264, op. 2, a.e. 8413; f. 264, op. 2, a.e. 9385; f. 264, op. 5, a.e. 1109; f. 264, op. 6, a.e. 1461; f. 370, op. 6, a.e. 745; f. 1 Б, op. 6, a.e. 235; f. 2124 К, op. 1, a.e. 108107; f. 1 Б, No. 2005.

DA Sliven. Държавен архив – Сливен [State Archive – Sliven]: f. 46 К, op. 1, a.e. 41; f. 157, op. 1, a.e. 11; f. 879, op. 1, a.e. 2; f. 879, op. 1, a.e. 9; f. 879, op. 1, a.e. 27; f. 925, op. 7, a.e. 120; f. 241 Б (Memories); f. 386 К, op. 2, a.e. 108.

DA Sofia. Държавен архив – София (State Archive – Sofia): f. 1 К, op. 2, a.e. 831; f. 1 К, op. 2, a.e. 1848; f. 1 К, op. 4, a.e. 531; f. 1 К, op. 4, a.e. 683.

DA Shumen. Държавен архив – Шумен (State Archive – Shumen): f. 119, op. 1, a.e. 11.

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.

RIM Sliven. Регионален исторически музей – Сливен (Regional Historical Museum – Sliven): No. 1437; No. 1440; No. 3398.

Czechoslovakia

ABS. Archiv bezpečnostních složek (Security Services Archives): složka 2017/14; složka 4342/21; složka 2025/25.

MRK. Muzeum romské kultury (Museum of Romani Culture): A 43/2003, 16.09.2003; MRK 17/91; MRK 18/2004; MRK 430/2001.

MZA. Moravský zemský archiv v Brně (Moravian Land Archives in Brno): f. A18, kart. 21, fol. 27, 28; f. B14, fascikl 7908, fol. 494; f. B125, k. 29/II, i.č. 94, fol. 97, fol. 97; f. B22, k. 618, fol. 268, 270–271; f. E 67, k. 5256, sl.169; k. 5268, sl. 47; k. 5273, sl. 176, 157, 192, 219; k. 5482, p. 33, 033; k. 5552, sl. 195;

- k. 5560, sl. 1, 9; k. 5782, sl. 153; k. 5790, sl. 26; k. 5565, sl. 9, sl. 26; k. 5802, sl. 44; k. 5803, sl. 192; k. 5823, k. 5830, k. 5836, sl. 072, 72.
- NA Praha. Národní archiv, v Praze (National Archives Czech Republic, in Prague): f. 371, kart. 1474, čj. 76241/23; f. ÚV SPB, soutěž 2705.
- PSPČR. Poslanecká sněmovna Parlamentu České republiky (Chamber of Deputies, Parliament of the Czech Republic): 1925–1929, 101 schůze, část 7/20, 14.07.1927.
- SOKa Hodonín. Státní okresní archiv v Hodoníně (State District Archive Hodonín): f. AM Strážnice, St-2, i.č. 82, fol. 2, 277, 317; i.č. 303, fol. 13, 15, 112, 169, 230; f. OÚ Petrov, i.č. 46, fol. 17, 38, 44; f. OkÚ Hodonín, SČOP 1930 (quoted after notice of Ctibor Nečas, MRK – legacy); f. OkÚ Hodonín, SČOP 1900; f. PG-St, i.č. 7959, fol. 6; f. ONV-H-945, fol. 87; f. ONV-H-953, fol. 45.
- VÚA-VHA. Vojenský ústřední archiv – Vojenský historický archiv Praha (Military Central Archive – Military Historical Archive): f. 255/1946.

Finland

- KA. Kansallisarkisto (National Archive): Senaatin talousosasto, F3 174/3, Eb 3439; Sigurd Wettenhovi-Aspan arkisto.
- Karjala Database. 2019. <https://katih.xamk.fi/>.
- RMA. Romano Mission arkisto (Romano Missio Archive): Protocols of the Executive Board Meetings: November 12, 1926; September 3, 1932; September 25, 1940.
- SAA. Sibelius-Akatemian arkisto (Sibelius Academy Archive): List of given lessons during semesters 1918–1920 in the Helsinki Musical College.
- SKSA. Suomalaisen Kirjallisuuden Seuran arkisto (Finnish Literature Society, Archive): Ferdinand Nikkisen arkisto; Karl von Schoultzin kokoelma; Matti Simolan kokoelma; SKSÄ 69.201, Reima Nikkisen haastattelu 22.08.2012.
- SM. Sibelius-museo (Sibelius Museum): Alex Åkerlund's tour poster 1925.
- TA. Tilastoarkisto (Statistics Finland's archives): K 9, 1895, Impilahti.

Latvia

- RVKMA. Rīgas vēstures un kuģniecības muzeja arhīvs (Archives of the Museum of the History of Riga and Navigation): VRVMp 27.246/15.
- LFK. Latviešu folkloras krātuve (Archives of Latvian Folklore): 1389.
- LNA LVVA. Latvijas Nacionālais arhīvs – Latvijas Valsts vēstures arhīvs (Nationals Archives of Latvia – State Historical Archives): 3724. f. 1. apr. 3748, lieta, 1. lp., 10. lp., 11. lp., 15. lp., 28. lp.

Poland

- NAC. Narodowe Archiwum Cyfrowe (National Digital Archives): Sygn. 1-P-2312-10; 1-P-2304-1.

Romania

- DANIC. Direcția Arhivelor Naționale Istorice Centrale (Central Historical Archives Directory): fond DGP, dos. 87/1943.

DJAN Dolj. Direcția Județeană a Arhivelor Naționale – Dolj (County Directory of National Archives – Dolj): fond C. S. N. Ploșșor, dos. 95/21; dos. 146/48.

Russian Federation

ATR. Московский музыкально-драматический театр *Ромэн* (Moscow Music and Drama Theatre *Romen*): f. Фотографии.

GARF. Государственный архив Российской Федерации (State Archive of the Russian Federation): f. 109, op. 3 A. d. 2769; f. 5449, op. 1, d. 1412; f. 5675, op. 1, d. 168; f. 10035, op. 1, d. 7409; f. A 259, op. 9 B, d. 4233; f. A 259, op. 10 B, d. 1924; f. A 259, op. 10 B, d. 2253; f. A 385, op. 17, d. 2037; f. A 259, op. 45, d. 2943; f. A 2306, op. 69, d. 1357; f. P 3, op. 1, d. 540 A; f. P 393, op. 43 A, d. 1763; f. P 393, op. 43 A, d. 1770; f. P 393, op. 71, d. 6 A; 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. 121, d. 46; f. P 1235, op. 123, d. 27; f. P 1235, op. 123, d. 28; f. P 1235, op. 123, d. 29; f. P 1235, op. 140, d. 498; f. P 1235, op. 140, d. 752; f. P 3260, op. 6, d. 44; f. P 1235, op. 45, d. 41; f. P 1235, op. 127, d. 8; f. P 1235, op. 130, d. 5; f. 3316, op. 17, d. 188; f. P 3316, op. 19, d. 588; f. P 3316, op. 20, d. 653; f. P 3316, op. 28, d. 79; f. P 3316, op. 28, d. 793; f. P 3316, op. 28, d. 794; f. P 3316, op. 64, d. 1637; f. P 4033, op. 1, d. 68; f. P 5446, op. 57, d. 24; f. P 7523, op. 17, d. 132; f. P 9479. op. 1, d. 19; f. P 9550, op. 2, d. 2010.

GASO. Государственный архив Смоленской области (State Archive of Smolensk Oblast): f. P 2360, op. 1, d. 14; f. P 2350, op. 2, d. 46; f. P 2360, op. 2, sv. 50, d. 432; f. P 2360, op. 1, sv. 130, d. 1478; f. P 2360, op. 1, sv. 130, d. 1479; f. P 2360, op. 1, sv. 130, d. 1482; f. P 2360, op. 1, sv. 181, d. 2067; f. P 2360, op. 1, sv. 181, d. 2068; f. P 2360, op. 1, sv. 181, d. 2069.

GTsMSIR. Государственный центральный музей современной истории России (State Central Museum of Modern History of Russia).

LANB. Личный Архив Николая Бессонова (Personal Archive of Nikolay Bessonov): f. Николай Панков; f. Николай Саткевич, d. Андрей Таранов; f. Николай Саткевич, d. Илья Герасимов; f. Николай Саткевич, d. Иван Токмаков; f. Николай Саткевич, d. Михаил Безлюдский; f. Николай Саткевич, d. Николай Саткевич; f. Николай Саткевич, d. Нина Дударова; f. Николай Саткевич, d. Ольга Панкова.

OGMLT. Орловский Государственный литературный музей Тургенева (Oryol State Literary Museum of Turgenyev): f. 29, op. 1, d. 13; f. 29, op. 1, d. 49; f. 29, op. 1, d. 137; f. 29, op. 1, d. 156; f. 29, OF-1295; f. 29, OF-1304, ФТ 480; f. 29, OF-1310; f. 29, OF-1314; f. 29, OF-1338/48-49; f. 29, OF-1338/50; f. 29, OF-1338/52-55; f. 29, f. 29, OF-1545; f. 29, OF-6993; f. 29, OF-7011; f. 29, OF-6995; f. 29, OF-12354; f. 29, OF-12358.

RGAЕ. 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. 145; 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. 158; f. 5675, op. 1, d. 160; f. 5675, op. 1, d. 179.

RGAКFD. Российский государственный архив кинофотодокументов (Russian State Archive of Film and Photo Documents): d. 99274, сн. 0-47369 ч/б, сн. 2-99274 ч/б.

- RGALI. Российский государственный архив литературы и искусства (Russian State Archive of Literature and Art): f. 267, op. 2, d. 96; f. 631, op. 1, d. 4777; f. 656, op. 3, d. 4759; f. 673, op. 1, d. 454; f. 675 op. 2, d. 464; f. 2928, op. 1, d. 1; f. 2928, op. 1, d. 3; f. 2928, op. 1, d. 6; f. 2928, op. 1, d. 7; f. 2928, op. 1, d. 66; f. 2928, op. 1, d. 68; f. 2928, op. 1, d. 69; f. 2928 op. 2, d. 246; f. 5675, op. 1, d. 141.
- RGASPI. Российский государственный архив социально-политической истории (The Russian State Archive of Socio-Political History): f. 2, op. 1, d. 24219; f. 17, op. 3, d. 1006; f. 17, op. 9, d. 3642; f. 17, op. 171, d. 415; f. 17, op. 114, d. 633; f. 17, op. 114, d. 837.

Turkey

- DAB. Devlet Arşivleri Başkanlığı, Osmanlı Arşivleri (Directorate of State Archives, Ottoman Archives): Fond NFS d, File 214; Fond NFS d, File 222; Fond DH MKT, File 1486.84.1.1; Fond MVL, File 797.97.1.1.
- TÜSTAV. Türkiye Sosyal Tarih Araştırma Vakfı (Social History Research Foundation of Turkey): Folder 495, List 266, File 198.

Ukraine

- DAMK. Державний архів міста Києва (State Archives of the City of Kyiv): f. P-1, op. 1, spr. 10715.

United Kingdom

- PAVK. Personal Archive of Valdemar Kalinin: f. Nikolay Pankov.
- UL GLSA. University of Liverpool, Special Collections and Archives, Gypsy Lore Society Archive: GLS A1-35; GLS I-XLIII; RYC/2, SMGC 1/2 PX Petrovic.

USA

- AC. Archives Center, National Museum of American History, Smithsonian Institution: Carlos de Wendler-Funaro, Gypsy Research Collection.
- FDRL. Franklin D. Roosevelt Library, National Archives and Records Administration: Anna Eleanor Roosevelt Papers, Personal Letters; Franklin D. Roosevelt Papers.
- NARA. National Archives and Records Administration, Archives II: Headquarters Records of the Selective Service System, Record Group 147.2.2.

Yugoslavia

- AJ. Архив Југославије (Archives of Yugoslavia): f. 66, op. 134, fasc. 638; f. 334, fasc. 277, fasc. 330, fasc. 336; f. 14, fasc. 61.
- AS. Архив Србије (Archive of Serbia): СФ, No. 127/1929.
- LADA. Лични архив Драгољуба Ацковића (Personal Archive of Dragoljub Acković). f. Svetozar Simić.
- LAOB. Лични архив Османа Балића (Personal Archive of Osman Balić).
- NBS. Народна библиотека Србије (National Library of Serbia): Collection of Photographs at the Legacy of Tihomir R. Đorđević.

Media

Austro-Hungarian Empire

Fővárosi Lapok. (1865, July 19). [No Author]. [No Title].

Klagenfurter Zeitung. (1865, August 8). [No Author]. [No Title].

* * *

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 Cigányzenészek Lapja. A magyar cigányzenészek érdekeit felölelő társadalmi folyóirat* (Hungarian Gypsy Musicians' Journal: A Social Periodical Encompassing the Interests of 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

168 часа. (2016, April 10). Бутовски И. Героичните подвизи на първия ромски депутат.

Вечерна поща. (1905a, December 14). Радев, С. Конгрес на циганите в България.

Вечерна поща. (1905b, December 20). [No Author]. Цигански конгрес [– Първо заседание].

Вечерна поща. (1905c, December 21). [No Author]. Цигански конгрес – Второ заседание.

Дром дромндар. (1998, November). Колев, Г. Първият.

Държавен вестник. (1901, June 30). Закон за изменение на избирателния закон.

Държавен вестник. (1919, December 3). Закон за изменение и допълнение на някои членове от избирателния закон.

Държавен вестник. (1942, August 4). Правилник за семейни добавки за издръжка на работнически деца.

Изток. (1939, April 30). [No Author]. Подкрепете читалището ни!

Изток. (1941, February 23). [No Author]. Културна дейност в циганската махала.

Мир. (1934, May 5). Шейтанов, Н. Циганите и циганския въпрос.

Неве ромá (Нови цигани). (1957a, January 14). Селимов, Т. Народното ни читалище и неговите задачи.

Неве ромá (Нови цигани). (1957b, January 14). Шанков, Д. Необходима ли ни е сега организация?

Неве ромá (Нови цигани). (1957c, May 1). Пашов, Ш. М. За произхода на циганите.

Неве ромá (Нови цигани). (1957d, May 1). [No Author]. Хроника.

Неве ромá (Нови цигани). (1957e, July 13). Демчо. По пътя на Димитров.

Неве ромá (Нови цигани). (1957f, July 13). Ш. П. Циганите в България.

Неве ромá (Нови цигани). (1957g, December, 19). [Шанков, Д.] Доклад.

Нево дром. (1950, May 1). [No Author]. Нов председател на Културно-просветната организация на циганското малцинство в България.

- Нов път.* (1974). Вапирев, И. Непokoен човек. Очерк.
Отвътре / Andral / Inside. (2000, No. 7). [No Author]. [No Title].
Отвътре / Andral / Inside. (2001, No. 17–18). [No Author]. [No Title].
Празнични вестни. (1937, January 11). [No Author]. Циганите ще се организират.
Романо еси. (1946a, February 25). [Билялов, Х.] Из живота на софийската мюсюлманска изповедна община – София.
Романо еси. (1946b, February 25). [No Author]. Слово по случай народния празник на циганското малцинство в България Св. Василий.
Романо еси. (1946c, February 25). [No Author]. Хроника.
Романо еси. (1946d, March 28). [No Author]. Из живота на нашите сънародници цигани в България.
Романо еси. (1946e, March 28). Яшко. Циганският театър “Ромен”.
Романо еси. (1946f, May 1). Велчев, З. Из живота на един български циганин в Сливен.
Романо еси. (1946g, May 1). Йолов, М. Г. Циганите от с. Голинци са стояли и стоят здраво на поста си.
Романо еси. (1946h, May 1). Терзобалиев, [Н.] Какво се иска от нас.
Романо еси. (1947a, February 1). [Пашов, Ш.] Слово.
Романо еси. (1947b, May 1). Терзобалиев, [Н.] Необходимо ли е да имаме малцинствена организация на циганите.
Романо еси. (1947c, May 1). [No Author]. [No Title].
Романо еси. (1947d, September 9). Общо културно-просветна организация на циганското малцинство в България. Окръжно No. 1. До всички околийски и градски комитети на Отечествения фронт.
Романо еси. (1948a, January 14). Николов, Вл. Г. Може би чудо!
Романо еси. (1948b, January 14). [Пашов, Ш.] Слово.
Романо еси. (1948c, January 14). Сотиров, Я. Кратки биографически бележки.
Романо еси. (1948d, April 30). Исмаилов, А. Цигани.
Сливенска поща. (1930, January 23). [No Author]. Хроника.
Сливенска поща. (1932, February 11). [No Author]. Хроника.
Циганите. (1992, December). [No Author]. Ромски театър преди 65 години.

* * *

- 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 Gypsies 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 *Тепло̀е* (Upbringing). Newspaper of the Mohammedan National Cultural-Educational Organisation. Edited by Sh. M. Pashev. From No. 6: Newspaper of the Common Mohammedan National Cultural-Educational Union in Bulgaria. Editorial Board: Shakir Mahmudov 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.

Czechoslovakia

České slovo. (1940, December 23). [No Author]. O cikánech civilisovaných na Slovácku.
Lidové noviny. (1942, July 4). ek. Vzorná cikánská obec.
Národní listy. (1940a, February 16). P. Cikáni z lepší stránky.
Národní listy. (1940b, December 19). P. Čtvrť Cikánov. Cikáni mají ochotnické divadlo, školu, cym-bálovou muziku a doktora práv.
Národní střed. (1942, May 24). Cigánek, V. Divadlo cigánského rodu Kýrů.
Slovenská sloboda. (1940, June 6). [No Author]. Talent, ktorý čaká na objavenie.

Finland

Aamulehti (1923, September 23). [No Author]. [No Title].
Aamulehti (1927, February 13). [No Author]. Esitelmän mustalaisyntyperästä sekä heidän alku-peräisistä kansallistavoistaan pitää taiteilija A. Åkerlund.
Etelä-Suomi. (1912, December 5). [No Author]. Mustalaisten esitys.
Finsk Tidskrift. (1922, May 1). Thesleff, A. Zigenarmusiken.
Hämeen Kansa. (1924, October 18). [Ursin, N.R.]. Saska Chaaron konsertin johdosta.
Helsingin Sanomat. (1912, June 2). Palm, A. Miehisä mustalaisia auttamaan (avoin kirje Suomen kansalle).
Helsingin Sanomat. (1925, November 1). [No Author]. Huveja tänään.
Helsingin Sanomat. (1929, August 4). [No Author]. [No Title].
Helsingin Sanomat. (1941, February 16). [No Author]. Karjalan mustalaiset siirtyivät Nyky-Suomeen. Hevonen, kahvipannu ja hokmannintipat edelleen mustalaiselle tärkeimmät.
Helsingin Sanomat. (1944a, December 3). [No Author]. [No Title].
Helsingin Sanomat. (1944b, December 6). [No Author]. Kuolleita.
Kansan Voima. (1925, December 5). [No Author]. Lieksan Työväen Näyttämö.
Karjalan Sanomat. (1912, November, 21). [No Author]. Mustalaislähetyksen hyväksi.
Keskisuomalainen. (1923, October 10). [No Author]. [No Title].
Kiertolainen. (1907a, An. 1, No. 0). O. J. [Oskari Jalkio]. Wälttäkäämme nimeä "mustalainen".
Kiertolainen. (1907b, An. 1, No. 2). Schwartz, S. Työskentelyni Wiipurin romaneitten keskuudesta.
Kiertolainen. (1907c, An. 1, No. 7). Johnsson, H. Kurssit Virroilla.
Kiertolainen. (1907d, An. 1, No. 7). Schwartz, S. Kertomus Inkerin-maan romaneista.
Kiertolainen. (1907e, An. 1, No. 10). [No Author]. [No Title].
Kiertolainen. (1910, An. 3, No. 7). Johnsson, O. Työmaalta.
Kiertolainen. (1912a, An.5, No. 4–6). Setä. Halkotarhaseurue.

- Kiertolainen.* (1912b, An. 5, No. 4–6). [No Author]. Miehiissä mustalaisia auttamaan (avoin kirje Suomen kansalle).
- Kiertolainen.* (1912c, An. 5, No. 7–9). Palm, A. Romanin mietelmiä.
- Kiertolainen.* (1913a, An. 6, No. 4–6). Johnsson, O. Työkodin alkaessa.
- Kiertolainen.* (1913b, An. 6, No. 4–6). Mustalaistyttö. Ćirikli.
- Kiertolainen.* (1913c, An. 6, No. 7–9). Nikkinen, F. Romaninuurisolle.
- Kiertolainen.* (1914a, An. 7, No. 1–3). [No Author]. Vieras mustalainen.
- Kiertolainen.* (1914b, An. 7, No. 1–3). Palm, A. Kaalon Tervehdys.
- Kiertolainen.* (1923, An. 16, No. 1). [No Author]. Mustalaisteatteri.
- Koitto.* (1906, January 1). Schwartz, S. Kirje Koitolle!
- Lahti.* (1917, May 13). [No Author]. Mustalaisteatteri.
- Maakansa.* (1914, July 2). Jalkio, Oskari. Varokaa petosta.
- Maaseudun Sanomat.* (1922, September 23). [No Author]. [No Title].
- Mikkelin Sanomat.* (1922, October 27). [No Author]. [No Title].
- Parikkalan Sanomat.* (1915, October 20). [No Author]. Konsertin antoi viime sunnuntaina Parikkalan yhteiskoululla mustalaistyttönen, laulajatar Ida Blomerus.
- Perä-Pohja.* (1930, February 21). [No Author]. Mielenkiintoisia tilaisuuksia Tornion seudulla.
- Pohjolan Sanomat.* (1938, September 14). [No Author]. Mustalaisvalistustyötä.
- Registeringstidning för varumärken.* (1917, January 1). [No Author]. [No Title].
- Räisälän Sanomat.* (1927, September 23). [Nuorisoseuralainen]. Soittopakinoita – Salolta.
- Savolainen* (1916, August 15). [No Author]. I. Cingardy-Oran konsertti.
- Säkeniä. Sosialistinen kuukausijulkaisu.* (1920, January 1). [No Author]. Kalle Tähtelä.
- Suomen Sosialidemokraatti.* (1923, March 1). Gaalo, Ferdinand. Mustalaisille ja mustalaislähetyksen ystäville.
- Suomalainen.* (1912, August 9). [No Author]. [No Title].
- Suomalainen Wirallinen Lehti.* (1910, January 26). [No Author]. [No Title].
- Suur-Karjala.* (1922, January 3). [No Author]. Loppiaisena ensi-iltä: ”Preciosa”.
- Työmies.* (1914, January 10). [No Author]. Helsingin palvelijatyhdistyksen Nuutti-iltama Työväentalon juhlasalissa.
- Työmies.* (1917a, February 4). [No Author]. Suomen Romanien Sivistysseuran ohjelmallinen iltama.
- Työmies.* (1917b, April 28). [No Author]. Suomen Romanien (Mustalaisten) Sivistysseuran ohjelmallinen tanssi-iltama.
- Työmies.* (1917c, May 13). [No Author]. Mustalaisten valistusharrastuksia.
- Työmies.* (1917d, May 20). [Suomen Romanien Sivistysseuran johtokunta]. Mustalaisten valistusharrastuksia.
- Työmies.* (1917e, May 22). Cingardy-Ora, I. Mustalaisten valistusharrastuksia.
- Uusi Aura.* (1923, January 16). [No Author]. [No Title].
- Uusi Inkeri.* (1906a, January 21). [No Author]. Liiallisia kansanrasituksia ja rasittajoina.
- Uusi Inkeri.* (1906b, September 2). Schwartz, S. Tervehdys.
- Uusi Suomi.* (1923, March 30). [No Author]. [No Title].
- Uusi Suometar.* (1913, April 17). [No Author]. Mustalaislähetyksen iltamassa.

- Uusimaa*. (1915, March 31). [No Author]. [No Title].
- Vapaus*. (1914, November 14). [No Author]. Mustalaisnuorukainen A. Åkerlund.
- Wiborgs Nyheter*. (1922, April 3). [No Author]. Kritik och program, Tosca.
- Wiipuri*. (1912, May 16). [No Author]. [No Title].
- Wuoksi*. (1894, June 16). [No Author]. Mustalainen liikkeenharjoittajana.
- Zirickli: Mustalaisten oma lehti*. (1972, [No Number]). Jalkanen, P. Suomen mustalaisten musiikista.

* * *

- 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: 12 issues; 1908, 1909, 1910, 1911: 9 issues; 1912: 5 issues; 1913: 4 issues; 1914: 5 issues; 1915, 1920, 1923, 1925, 1927, 1929: 1 issue. In Finnish.

France

- Le Journal*. (1934, August 27). Condrus, M. Une mission va rechercher aux Indes les orgines de la race tzigane.

Germany

- Bremer Zeitung*. (1935, October 17). [No Author]. Die Zigeunerzeitung von Belgrad.
- Jeversches Wochenblatt*. (1927, August 20). [No Author]. Letzte Drahnachrichten.

Hungary

- 8 Órai Újság*. (1934, August 17). [No Author]. Bura Károly betörői a tábla előtt.
- Az Est*. (1930, August 6). [No Author]. Nem himnuszt, csak valcert komponált Mária királynénak Bura Károly.
- Az Est*. (1934a, February 28). [No Author]. Cigánylázadás a rádió ellen.
- Az Est*. (1934b, March 7). [No Author]. "A göracs álljon már az egész veszekedésbe!" Beszélgetés Bura Károly cigányprímással, akit beteggé tett a rádióháború.
- Brassói Lapok*. (1927, August 26). [No Author]. Hogy lefoglalták az útlevelet, hagyján, – de miért foglalták le az arany nyakkendőűt?
- Budapesti Hírlap*. (1903, December 12). [No Author]. Cigány-verseny Nagyváradon.
- Budapesti Hírlap*. (1912, June 16). [No Author]. A társaságból.
- Budapesti Hírlap*. (1928, October 16). [No Author]. Leleplezték Bihari szobrát a Margitszigeten.
- Budapesti Hírlap*. (1929, August 6). [No Author]. A Philips-rádióautó matinéja Siófokon.
- Budapesti Hírlap*. (1930a, March 19). [No Author]. Jubilál az öreg Bura.
- Budapesti Hírlap*. (1930b, May 25). [No Author]. Május 25-től kezdve félárújeggyel lehet utazni a Magyar-Nótaünnepre.
- Budapesti Hírlap*. (1931a, May 1). [No Author]. Hoover elnök megköszönte a neki felajánlott indulót Bura Károlynak.

- Budapesti Hírlap.* (1931b, June 25). [No Author]. Bura Károly indulót küldött Mussolininek.
- Budapesti Hírlap.* (1932a, May 5). [No Author]. Mussolini a jubileumi ünnepségeken meghallgatja Bura Károly cigányprímás magyar nótáit.
- Budapesti Hírlap.* (1932b, September 1). [No Author]. Bura Károly magyar fohásza a pápához.
- Budapesti Hírlap.* (1934a, June 2). [No Author]. Meghalt Bura Károly cigányprímás.
- Budapesti Hírlap.* (1934b, June 3). [No Author]. Hétfőn délután temetik Bura Károlyt a Kerepesi temetőben elhunyt felesége, Radics Anna mellé.
- Budapesti Hírlap.* (1935, March 29). [No Author]. Bura Károly emléktárgyai a történeti múzeumban.
- Dunántúl.* (1930, August 14). [No Author]. Tisztújító közgyűlést tartottak a pécsi cigányzenészek.
- Ellenőr.* (1927, September 15). [No Author]. Bura Károly, mint kultúrérték.
- Ellenőr.* (1928, May 31). [No Author]. Jozefine Baker és Bura Károly nagyváradai cigányprímás szerelme. A néger primadonna és a nagyváradai cigányprímás kölcsönösen csodálják egymás művészetét.
- Erdélyi Lapok.* (1934, January 26). [No Author]. Kirabolták Bura Károly cigányprímás lakását.
- Esti Kurír.* (1929, September 7). [No Author]. Szépasszony kocsisa. Móricz Zsigmond új vígjátéka a Magyar Színházban.
- Friss Újság.* (1930, August 6). [No Author]. Botrányba fulladt a cigányzenészek gyűlése. Bura Károly elnök otthagyta a gyűlést, mert nem akarták meghallgatni – Bojkottra készülnek a cigányok.
- Friss Újság.* (1934, June 5). [No Author]. Eltemették Bura Károlyt.
- Keleti Újság.* (1934, February 4). [No Author]. Elfogták Bura Károly cigányprímás lakásának fosztogatóit.
- Kis Újság.* (1928, February 4). [No Author]. A müncheni magyar bálon nagyváradai Bura Károly muzsikájára táncoltak. Budapesten játszott a cigánybanda és a zene a rádió szárnyán szállt Münchenbe.
- Kis Újság.* (1930, August 6). [No Author]. Kitört a háború a pesti cigányok között.
- Kis Újság.* (1934a, March 6). [No Author]. A cigányprímások elkeseredett gyűlése a rádió vezetősége ellen.
- Kis Újság.* (1934b, June 3). [No Author]. Bura Károly halála.
- Magyar Cigányzenészek Lapja.* (1929a, April). [Bura, Károly]. Beköszöntő.
- Magyar Cigányzenészek Lapja.* (1929b, April). [No Author]. Jegyzőkönyv.
- Magyar Cigányzenészek Lapja.* (1929c, April). [No Author]. Megalakult a budapesti zenekarvezetők szindikátusa.
- Magyar Cigányzenészek Lapja.* (1929d, July 1). [No Author]. Zeneiskolánk. Szeptemberben megnyílik a Magyar Cigányzenészek Országos Egyesületének zeneiskolája.
- Magyar Cigányzenészek Lapja.* (1929e, August 1). [No Author]. A Magyar Cigányzenészek Országos Egyesületének "Bihari" zeneiskolája 1929. szept. 15-én Budapest, VIII. Kálvária tér 22. sz. alatt megnyílik.
- Magyar Cigányzenészek Lapja.* (1929f, August 1). [No Author]. Szeptemberben megnyílik zeneiskolánk.
- Magyar Cigányzenészek Lapja.* (1929g, October 1). [No Author]. A Bihari-zeneiskola hírei.

- Magyar Cigányzenészek Lapja.* (1929h, October 1). [No Author]. Megnyílt a “Bihari” zeneiskola. Magyar a világ első cigányzenész iskolája. A “Bihari” zeneiskola tervének és létesítésének története.
- Magyar Cigányzenészek Lapja.* (1930a, March 18). [No Author]. Bura Károly harmincéves ünnepi jubileuma a Zeneakadémián.
- Magyar Cigányzenészek Lapja.* (1930b, April 28). [No Author]. 1000 cigányzenész hangversenyez május 29-én az FTC-pályán. 1
- Magyar Cigányzenészek Lapja.* (1930c, July 21). [No Author]. Aktalopás az egyesületben.
- Magyar Cigányzenészek Lapja.* (1930d, July 21). [No Author]. A nótáünnep a közgyűlés előtt. Leszámoláskor még 6687 pengő volt a tiszta haszon – ma már ráfizetés fenyeget. Felmentvény után lemondás. Mit történt azután. Kinek van igaza?
- Magyar Cigányzenészek Lapja.* (1930e, July 21). [No Author]. Mi az igazság a nóta ünnep elszámolása körül?
- Magyar Cigányzenészek Lapja.* (1930f, July 21). [Bura, Károly]. Nyílt levél a magyar cigányzenészekhez!
- Magyar Cigányzenészek Lapja.* (1930g, August 20). [No Author]. Bura Károly nem mondott le. Az elnök levele Ilovsky János volt tb. elnökhöz.
- Magyar Cigányzenészek Lapja.* (1930h, August 20). [No Author]. Milyen nótát szerzett Bura Károly Mária román királynőnek? Nyilatkozzanak a nagyváradi magyarság képviselői.
- Magyar Cigányzenészek Lapja.* (1930i, September 20). [dr. Járosi, Jenő]. Rend és csend legyen!
- Magyar Cigányzenészek Lapja.* (1930j, October 20). [No Author]. Ismét szédítenek.
- Magyar Cigányzenészek Lapja.* (1930k, December 24). [No Author]. Bura Károly a cigányság ellen. Pitykegombhoz dolmány kerestetik!
- Magyar Czigányzenészek Lapja.* (1908, September 1). [No Author]. A cigányzenészek nyugdíjgyesülete.
- Magyar Híradó.* (1930, June) 328. szám. A magyar nóta ünnepe. Ezer cigány húrján csendült fel egyszerre a magyar nóta – Radics Béla síremléke javára.
- Magyar Hírlap.* (1930a, July 26). [No Author]. Bűnvádi bonyodalom az ezer cigány monstre hangversenye körül. Két pártra szakadtak a cigányzenészek – Feljelentés ismeretlen tettesek ellen a rendőrségen.
- Magyar Hírlap.* (1930b, August 5). [No Author]. Viharos botrányok a cigányzenészek hétfő délutáni küldöttválasztó taggyűlésén. Bura Károly pártja győzött, mert az ellenzék rendőri beavatkozás után kivonult.
- Magyar Hírlap.* (1930c, August 6). [No Author]. Feloszlattással, érdemleges tanácskozás nélkül ért véget a keddi cigánygyűlés. A vidéki cigányok bizalmatlanságot szavaztak Bura Károly Bura Károly elnöknek – Tovább áll a harc a Bura- és az Ilovsky-párt között.
- Magyar Hírlap.* (1930d, August 15). [No Author]. Bura Károly visszavonta lemondását a cigányzenészek elnökségéről.
- Magyar Hírlap.* (1934a, February 28). [No Author]. A cigányzenészek harca a rádióval és egymással. Mit mond Bura Károly és Magyar Imre a “cigánycenzor”-ügyről.

- Magyar Hírlap.* (1934b, June 5). [No Author]. "Nem engedjük a magyar nótát veled együtt sírba tenni ..." Százötven cigány muzsikált Bura Károly temetésén.
- Magyar Hírlap.* (1934c, June 7). [No Author]. Bura Károly cigányprímás váratlanul meghalt.
- Magyar Jövő.* (1929, May 11). [No Author]. A Magyarság seregszemlét tart olvasói felett.
- Magyar Muzsikaszó.* (1934, July 1). [No Author]. Bura Károly.
- Magyar Országos Tudósító.* (1930a, March 29). [No Author]. Ezertagú zenekar hangversenye Budapesten.
- Magyar Országos Tudósító.* (1930b, May 21). [No Author]. A kormányzó tiszteletére Bura Károly indulót szerzett.
- Magyar Országos Tudósító.* (1930c, May 30). [No Author]. Huszonkétezen nézték végig a magyar nótaünnepet.
- Magyar Országos Tudósító.* (1930d, August 4). [No Author]. Botrányba fulladt a budapesti cigányzenészek csoportjának gyűlése.
- Magyar Országos Tudósító.* (1930e, August 5). [No Author]. Két óra hosszan át tartó veszekedés után Bura Károly elnök feloszlatta a cigányzenészek egyesületének mai közgyűlését, amely egyhangú bizalmat szavazott Ilovszky Jánosnak.
- Magyar Országos Tudósító.* (1930f, August 13). [No Author]. Bura Károly lemondott a Magyar Cigányzenészek Egyesületének elnökségéről és teljes elégtételt szolgáltatott Ilovszky Jánosnak.
- Magyar Országos Tudósító.* (1930g, August 22). [No Author]. A cigányzenészek kibuktatták Bura Károlyt az elnöki székből.
- Magyar Országos Tudósító.* (1930h, August 31). [No Author]. Miniszteri biztos vezeti a cigányzenészek pénteki közgyűlését.
- Magyar Országos Tudósító.* (1934a, February 3). [No Author]. Elfogott betörők.
- Magyar Országos Tudósító.* (1934b, December 18). [No Author]. Tánconő a vádlottak padján.
- Magyarország.* (1926, December 15). [No Author]. Gyászrovat.
- Magyarország.* (1930, April 20). [No Author]. Ezer cigány – százegy magyar nóta.
- Magyarország.* (1934a, February 4). [No Author]. Betörővezért fogtak az utcán a detektívek. Bura Károly cigányprímás ellopott ékszerei is megkerültek.
- Magyarország.* (1934b, December 19). [No Author]. "Megmentette a betyárgavalléria a szép táncosnőt." Bura Károly betörői a rendőrségen megvádolták Sándor Vilmát, a bíróság előtt kijelentették, hogy – nem ismerik – Az ügyészség eljettette a vádat.
- Magyarság.* (1927, December 16). [No Author]. Bura Károly nagyváradi cigányprímás kálváriája.
- Magyarság.* (1929a, March 15). [No Author]. A magyar cigányok beiratják tehetséges fiaikat a zenei főiskolákba.
- Magyarság.* (1929b, May 1). [No Author]. Május 6-ig lehet jelentkezni a Magyarság-vacsorára.
- Magyarság.* (1929c, May 14). [No Author]. A magyar cigányok Mussolinéhez.
- Magyarság.* (1929d, September 1). [No Author]. Ünnepezt cigányprímás.
- Magyarság.* (1929e, December 5). [No Author]. Magyar cigányok a TESZ közgyűlésén.
- Magyarság.* (1930a, March 10). [No Author]. Harmincéves cigányprímási jubileum.
- Magyarság.* (1930b, March 23). [No Author]. Bura Károly prímási jubileuma.
- Magyarság.* (1930c, March 25). [No Author]. Bura Károly harmincéves cigányprímási jubileuma.

- Magyarság.* (1930d, April 1). [No Author]. Egy lengyel ezredes levele hajdani kedves cigányprímásához.
- Magyarság.* (1930e, May 15). [No Author]. Május 29-én lesz az ezer cigány monstre hangversenye.
- Magyarság.* (1930f, May 16). [No Author]. A magyar nótáünnep.
- Magyarság.* (1930g, May 31). [No Author]. Ezer cigány hegedűjén zengett a magyar dal csütörtökön délután a magyar nóta nagyünnepén.
- Magyarság.* (1930h, August 6). [No Author]. Hiteles beszámoló a cigányparlament viharos üléséről, amelyet a demokrácia mellőzésével hatóságilag kellett felosztatni.
- Magyarság.* (1934a, March 6). [No Author]. Áll a cigányháború.
- Magyarság.* (1934b, June 5). [No Author]. Eltemették Bura Károlyt.
- Melléklet a Magyarság.* (1929, October 13). [No Author]. [No Title].
- Nemzeti Újság.* (1930, May 31). [No Author]. Majdnem huszonötezer ember hallgatta végig az ezer cigány hangversenyét.
- Nemzeti Újság.* (1934a, January 28). [No Author]. Nem Bura Károly, hanem Bura Sándor muzsikál zenekarával Monte-Carlóban.
- Nemzeti Újság.* (1934b, March 4). [No Author]. Kell a cigányzene, de szükség van a Rádió rendszabályaira is. Már külföldi visszhangja is van a cigányháborúnak, amelybe Bura Károly már belebetegedett.
- Pesti Hírlap.* (1906, March 19). [No Author]. A szabadság ünneplése.
- Pesti Hírlap.* (1911, September 27). [No Author]. Mikor Radics Bélának muzsikálnak.
- Pesti Hírlap.* (1914, December 25). [No Author]. A cigányprímás szíve.
- Pesti Hírlap.* (1915, May 1). [No Author]. Császári és királyi cigánybanda.
- Pesti Hírlap.* (1934, June 5). [No Author]. Eltemették Bura Károlyt.
- Pesti Napló.* (1927a, September 11). [No Author]. Bura Károly cigányprímás viszontagságos útja Nagyváradtól Budapestig.
- Pesti Napló.* (1927b, September 23). [No Author]. A Royal-szálló.
- Pesti Napló.* (1930a, March 30). [No Author]. Bura Károly kitüntetése.
- Pesti Napló.* (1930b, August 5). [No Author]. Nagy vihar a cigányok parlamentjében, ahol hétfőn megbukott a titkos szavazás, közbelépett az ügyeletes rendőrtiszt s az ellenzék végül kivonult az ülésről.
- Pesti Napló.* (1930c, August 14). [No Author]. Bura Károly lemondott a cigányzenészek egyesületének elnöki tisztéről – vége a cigányháborúnak.
- Pesti Napló.* (1930d, December 12). [No Author]. Hoover indulót szerzett és elküldte az amerikai elnöknek a cigányok elnöke.
- Pesti Napló.* (1931, May 10). [No Author]. Amerika elnöke köszönetet mond a cigányok elnökének.
- Pesti Napló.* (1934a, February 27). [No Author]. Sztrájkba lépnek a cigányprímások – ha a rádió nem teljesíti követelésüket.
- Pesti Napló.* (1934b, February 28). [No Author]. A rádió válaszolt a cigányprímások ultimátumára, de a cigányok állják a harcot.
- Pesti Napló.* (1934c, March 2). [No Author]. Kitért a háború a cigányprímások és a rádió között. 6.

- Pesti Napló*. (1934d, June 2). [No Author]. Az éjszaka hirtelen meghalt Bura Károly, a híres cigányprímás.
- Pesti Napló*. (1934e, June 3). [No Author]. Bura Károly végrendelete. Szegényen halt meg a cigányvajda, akiről azt hitték, hogy dúsgazdag.
- Pesti Napló*. (1934f, June 5). [No Author]. Eltemették Bura Károlyt.
- Prágai Magyar Hírlap*. (1930, March 21). [No Author]. Ezer muzsikus cigány hangversenye Radics Béla síremlékére.
- Prágai Magyar Hírlap*. (1934, June 7). [No Author]. Százötven cigány hegedűje kísérte a sírba Bura Károlyt, a népszerű cigányprímást.
- Színházi Élet*. (1928, November 18–24). [No Author]. Nagyváradon Bura Károly cigányprímás.
- Új Nemzedék*. (1929, November 30). [No Author]. Egy pesti cigányprímás perli a Magyar Színházat a “Szépasszony kocsisának” kifizetetlen számlái miatt.
- Új Nemzedék*. (1930a, May 31). [No Author]. Huszonötezer ember előtt játszott a legszebb magyar nótákat ezerszázhatvan cigány.
- Új Nemzedék*. (1930b, August 2). [No Author]. A májusi magyar nótaünnep óta két pártra szakadt a magyar cigányzenészek tábora. Ádáz háborúság közben készülnek a pártok az augusztus ötödiki tisztújító közgyűlésre.
- Új Nemzedék*. (1930c, August 5). [No Author]. Azzal vádolják a Magyar Cigányzenészek Országos Egyesületének elnökét, hogy Nagyváradon román királyhimnuszot szerzett. Viharosnak ígérkezik a budapesti cigányzenészek helyi csoportjának mai közgyűlése.
- Új Nemzedék*. (1930d, August 8). [No Author]. Hatósági biztost kap a cigányzenészek egyesülete. Pörök indulnak meg a még mindig tartó cigányháborúság nyomán.
- Új Nemzedék*. (1934, February 28). [No Author]. Kitért a cigányháború “a rádió-vajda” kinevezése miatt.
- Újság*. (1927, May 24). [No Author]. Hadakozó muzsikus cigányok.
- Újság*. (1928, June 17). [No Author]. Balatoni fürdők és üdülők.
- Újság*. (1929a, January 25). [No Author]. Elnököt választanak a cigányok... .
- Újság*. (1929b, March 6). [No Author]. Zeneiskolában fognak tanulni a fiatal cigányok. Bura Károly, a cigányok elnöke – jazz-ről.
- Újság*. (1930a, March 25). [No Author]. Bura Károly cigányprímás 30 éves jubileuma.
- Újság*. (1930b, May 31). [No Author]. Huszonkétezer néző a magyar nótaünnepén.
- Újság*. (1930c, October 3). [No Author]. Új egyesületet alakítottak a cigányok, ahol betegpénzt és nyugdíjat ígérnek.
- Újság*. (1934, June 5). [No Author]. Ezren kísérték utolsó útjára Bura Károlyt és 150 cigány muzsikált.
- Világ*. (1924, March 11). [No Author]. A prímás.

* * *

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.

Latvia

Aizkulises. (1933a, May 5). [No Author]. Čigānu koris.

Aizkulises. (1933b, August 11). [No Author]. Populārais čigānu Leimanis.

Atpūta. (1931, July 24). [No Author]. [No Title].

Jaunākās Ziņas. (1932, November 17). K. Krūmājs. Čigānu dziesmas pārnāk no krūmiem uz Rīgu.

Jaunākās Ziņas. (1933, May 2). E. Brusubārda. Čigānu koris dzied... .

Jaunākās Ziņas. (1935, April 4). [No Author.] Čigānu garīgais darbinieks.

Jaunākās Ziņas. (1936, February 22). [No Author.] Lielais notikums čigānu draudzē.

Lauku Darbs. (1932, December 21). Dolars. [No Title.]

Malienas Ziņas. (1937, August 5). [No Author]. Aicina čigānus godīgi dzīvot un strādāt.

Pēdējā Brīdī. (1934, February 20). [No Author]. Jelgava sektantu varā.

Pēdējā Brīdī. (1935, February 3). [No Author]. Čigānu koris Pestīšanas templī.

Rīts. (1940a, February 29). [No Author]. Čigāni sāks strādāt lauku darbos.

Rīts. (1940b, March 12). [No Author]. Čigāni ražīgā darbā.

Svētdienas Rīts. (1934, October 21). [No Author]. Čigānu bībele.

Svētdienas Rīts. (1935, July 14). [No Author]. No iekšmisijas.

Talsu Vārds. (1942a, July 23). [No Author]. Čigānu organizēšanās.

Talsu Vārds. (1942b, August 13). [No Author]. Čigānu ziedojums frontes cīnītājiem.

Tukuma Ziņas. (1942a, July 28). [No Author]. Čigāni organizējas.

Tukuma Ziņas. (1942b, September 1). [No Author]. Arī čigāni atbalsta cīņu pret boļševismu.

Ventas Balss. (1937, December 30). [No Author]. Čigāni vēlas apstrādāt zemi.

Ventas Balss. (1939, June 6). [No Author]. J. Leimaņa organizētās darba grupās pieteikušās 15 čigānu ģimenes.

* * *

Сегодня. (1933, May 2). Пастухов, В. Хоръ Друга цыганъ.

Сегодня Вечеромъ. (1932, March 16). Ки-ра. Другъ латвійскихъ цыганъ.

Luxembourg

Escher Tageblatt. (1936, February 8). [No Author]. Ein echter Zigeuner-Roman.

Ottoman Empire

Гайда. (1866, August 15). [Славейков, П. Р.] Циганите.

Македония. (1867, August 8). Един Егюптиянин. [Писмо до редактора].

* * *

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.

Poland

5-ta rano. (1937, April 1). [No Author]. A jednak Kwiek popełnił samobójstwo.

ABC. (1937, March 31). [No Author]. Pogrzeb “króla” cyganów.

Chwila. (1935, February 21). [No Author]. Coś się psuje w państwie cygańskim.

Dobry Wieczór. Kurjer Czerwony. (1935, February 26). [No Author]. Cyganie wybierają króla.

Dobry Wieczór. Kurjer Czerwony. (1937a, March 23). [No Author]. Matejasz Kwiek konający.

Dobry Wieczór. Kurjer Czerwony. (1937b, March 24). [No Author]. Król cyganów o sześciu palcach.

Dobry Wieczór. Kurjer Czerwony. (1937c, March 25). [No Author]. Baron Cyganów zmarł....

Dobry Wieczór. Kurjer Czerwony. (1937d, March 26). [No Author]. Pogrzeb Matejasza Kwieka po sekcji zwłok.

Dobry Wieczór. Kurjer Czerwony. (1937e, March 27). Żałoba i rozpacz w obozie Cyganów.

Dobry Wieczór. Kurjer Czerwony. (1937f, March 31). [No Author]. A jednak Kwiek popełnił samobójstwo.

Dobry Wieczór. Kurjer Czerwony. (1937g, March 31). [No Author]. Fajka, wieczne pióro i palone buty.

Dobry Wieczór. Kurjer Czerwony. (1937h, May 21). [No Author]. Na boisku sportowym w Warszawie. Elekcja nowego króla cygańskiego.

Dobry Wieczór. Kurjer Czerwony. (1937i, July 25). W narodzie cygańskim wre.

Dobry Wieczór. Kurjer Czerwony. (1937j, December 20). [No Author]. Zastępca króla Cyganów Stanisław Kwiek popełnił samobójstwo.

Dzień Dobry. (1931, May 6). [No Author]. Król Cyganów Bazyli złożył koronę!

Dzień Dobry. (1934, May 3). [No Author]. Jego Królewska Mość Matejasz Kwiek u Józefa Gawędy.

Dzień Dobry. (1935, September 8). [No Author]. Wojna w obozie cygańskim na Grochowie.

Dzień Dobry. (1937, March 30). [No Author]. Skromny pogrzeb barona Cyganów.

Dziennik Kujawski. (1934, October 9). [No Author] Co słyhać w kraju? Walka o tron cygański w Polsce.

Dziennik Ustaw. (1927, October 25, No. 92). [No Author]. Rozporządzenie Prezydenta Rzeczypospolitej z dnia 14 października 1927 r. o zwalczaniu żebractwa i włóczęgostwa.

Echo. (1932, January 7). [No Author]. Walka o władzę w królewskim rodzie.

Echo. (1935 a, February 11). [No Author]. Kwiek zrzekł się tytułu króla.

Echo. (1935 b, February 24). [No Author]. Król Michał Kwiek zdemaskuje barona Matejasza.

Express Mazowiecki. (1934, June 9). [No Author]. Król się gniewa.

Express Poranny. (1929, April 26). [No Author]. Jego królewska mość Bazyli I jako detektyw.

Express Poranny. (1930a, July 3). [No Author]. Przyjazd hiszpańskiego króla Cyganów do Warszawy.

Express Poranny. (1930b, July 30). [No Author]. Wielki skandal w królewskiej rodzinie Kwieków.

- Express Poranny*. (1930c, July 31). [No Author]. Pięciuset wójtów radzi nad ostatecznym obiorem króla cygańskiego.
- Express Poranny*. (1930d, August 1). [No Author]. Zjazd 600 wójtów cygańskich w Łodzi.
- Express Poranny*. (1930e, August 8). [No Author]. Zrywamy z włóczęgostwem.
- Express Poranny*. (1931a, May 11). [No Author]. Niezlomny strażnik monarchii.
- Express Poranny*. (1931b, July 6). [No Author]. Degradacja dwulicowego adiutanta.
- Express Poranny*. (1931c, August 14). [No Author]. Zdarcie maski z oblicza cygańskiego barona.
- Express Poranny*. (1931d, August 31). [No Author]. Lwi pazur Matejasza Kwieka.
- Express Poranny*. (1934, December 11). [No Author]. Pertraktacje i wyrok barona.
- Express Poranny*. (1935, March 4). Precz z królem! Niech żyje wódz!
- Express Poranny*. (1936, June 10). [No Author]. Trzy królewne cygańskie złodziejkami i oszustkami.
- Express Poranny*. (1937a, February 11). Nie ma już króla Cyganów.
- Express Poranny*. (1937b, March 21). [No Author]. Baron Cyganów Kwiek ranny śmiertelnie kulą w brzuch.
- Express Poranny*. (1937c, March 22). [No Author]. Romans barona Cyganów przyczyną postrzeżenia Matejasza Kwieka.
- Express Poranny*. (1937d, March 27). [No Author]. Mussolini obiecał Cyganom żyzne ziemie w Abisynii.
- Express Poranny*. (1937e, March 31). [No Author]. Pogrzeb barona Cyganów.
- Express Poranny*. (1937f, April 4). [No Author]. Matejasz Kwiek – terrorysta.
- Express Poranny*. (1937g, July 6). [No Author]. Rodzi się bunt w cygańskim narodzie.
- Express Poranny*. (1937h, September 13). [No Author]. Cygański urząd śledczy założyła królowa Julia Kwiek.
- Express Wieczorny Ilustrowany*. (1935, March 10). [No Author]. Król cyganów sam się zdetronizował.
- Express Wieczorny Ilustrowany*. (1937, March 26). [No Author]. Dramatyczny romans cygańskiego barona.
- Gazeta Nadnotecka*. (1933, August 6). [No Author]. Stowarzyszenie Cyganów w Polsce.
- Gazeta Polska*. (1931, May 28). [No Author]. Rozmowa z Rudolfem Kwikiem, prezesem Wielkiej Rady Cyganów.
- Gazeta Świąteczna*. (1937, July 11). [No Author]. Koronacja króla cygańskiego.
- Gazeta Wileńska*. (1937, March 24). [No Author]. Echa tragedii wodza cyganów.
- Głos Poranny*. (1937, March 23). [No Author]. Wódz polskich Cyganów konający.
- Goniec Warszawski*. (1937a, March 22). [No Author]. Miłość do pięknej Ilony zgubiła Kwieka "króla Cyganów.
- Goniec Warszawski*. (1937b, March 26). [No Author]. Romantyk XX wieku. Matwiejasz Kwiek – baron Cyganów.
- Goniec Warszawski*. (1937c, July 4). [No Author]. Na trupią czaszkę przysięgnie nowoobрани król cygański.
- Goniec Warszawski*. (1937d, July 6). [No Author]. Bunt cyganów przeciw królowi.
- Goniec Warszawski*. (1937e, July 10). [No Author]. Pojednanie wśród Cyganów. Ślub Janusza I z wdową po Matejaszu.

- Ilustrowany Kuryer Codzienny*. (1925, January 25). [No Author] Koronacja króla Michała w Piastowie pod Warszawą.
- Ilustrowany Kuryer Codzienny*. (1930a, January 6). [No Author]. Interwencja "króla cyganów" w policji stanisławowskiej.
- Ilustrowany Kuryer Codzienny*. (1930b, September 25). [No Author]. Jego Królewska Mość Władca Cyganów w Krakowie.
- Ilustrowany Kuryer Codzienny*. (1930c, October 24). [No Author]. Kwiek rejestruje swych poddanych w Czechosłowacji.
- Ilustrowany Kuryer Codzienny*. (1931, May 8). [No Author]. Walka dwóch dynastii cygańskich.
- Ilustrowany Kuryer Codzienny*. (1932a, April 21). [No Author]. Aresztowanie adiutanta króla cyganów.
- Ilustrowany Kuryer Codzienny*. (1932b, June 28). [No Author]. Uwięzienie wicekróla cygańskiego za oszustwo.
- Ilustrowany Kuryer Codzienny*. (1932c, August 19). [No Author]. Prawdziwy baron cygański.
- Ilustrowany Kuryer Codzienny*. (1932d, September 20). [No Author]. Michał Kwiek, podróżny polski.
- Ilustrowany Kuryer Codzienny*. (1933a, January 9). [No Author]. Syn króla cyganów uniewinniony od zarzutu napadu.
- Ilustrowany Kuryer Codzienny*. (1933b, January 14). [No Author]. Kobieta, która zdradza męża, każe się śmiercią.
- Ilustrowany Kuryer Codzienny*. (1933c, January 19). [No Author]. Gdzie zaginęła cyganka z królewskiego rodu.
- Ilustrowany Kuryer Codzienny*. (1933d, April 9). [No Author]. Baron cygański w Krakowie wyławia fałszywe paszporty.
- Ilustrowany Kuryer Codzienny*. (1933e, July 9). [No Author]. Bratanica króla cyganów popełniła zamach samobójczy.
- Ilustrowany Kuryer Codzienny*. (1933f, July 22). [No Author]. Napad bandytów na króla cyganów.
- Ilustrowany Kuryer Codzienny*. (1934a, February 12). [No Author]. Król cygański Kwiek zakłada państwo w Afryce.
- Ilustrowany Kuryer Codzienny*. (1934b, April 23). [No Author]. Walka cyganów w komisariacie policji i szambelan w pyjamie.
- Ilustrowany Kuryer Codzienny*. (1934c, June 4). [No Author]. Zjazd cyganów z całego świata na wesele następcy tronu króla Kwieka.
- Ilustrowany Kuryer Codzienny*. (1934d, October 20). [No Author] Król Cyganów Michał Kwiek z Poznania w Rumunji.
- Ilustrowany Kuryer Codzienny*. (1934e, October 31). [No Author]. Jego Królewska Mość Michał Kwiek.
- Ilustrowany Kuryer Codzienny*. (1934f, November 7). [No Author]. "Król" cyganów Michał Kwiek prosi o ziemię w Afryce.
- Ilustrowany Kuryer Codzienny*. (1935a, January 6). [No Author]. Król cyganów Kwiek ofiarował pomoc policji stanisławowskiej.

- Ilustrowany Kuryer Codzienny*. (1935b, February 8). [No Author]. Sędziowie króla Kwieka, którzy chcą pić za darmo.
- Ilustrowany Kuryer Codzienny* (1935c, February 21). [No Author]. Program wodza narodu cygańskiego.
- Ilustrowany Kuryer Codzienny*, (1935d, March 5). [No Author]. Silna ręka wodza cyganów.
- Ilustrowany Kuryer Codzienny* (1935e, March 30). [No Author]. Walka cyganów o skarb królowej Saby.
- Ilustrowany Kuryer Codzienny*. (1935f, April 13). [No Author]. Komornik i licytacja u zdeponowanego króla.
- Ilustrowany Kuryer Codzienny*. (1935g, May 17). [No Author]. W żałobie narodowej biorą udział cyganie.
- Ilustrowany Kuryer Codzienny*. (1936, November 13). [No Author]. Urowadzenie królowny.
- Kurjer Poranny*. (1933, May 3). [No Author]. Stowarzyszenie Cyganów w Polsce.
- Kurjer Warszawski*. (1935, July 18). [No Author]. Wódz Cyganów.
- Nasz Przegląd*. (1937, March 26). [No Author]. Zgon króla Cyganów.
- Nowiny Codzienne*. (1937, December 28). [No Author]. Tragedia w królewskiej rodzinie Cyganów.
- Polska Zbrojna*. (1937, March 26). [No Author]. Śmierć Matejasza Kwieka.
- Republika*. (1937, March 31). [No Author]. Tajemnica śmierci króla Cyganów.
- Światowid*. (1937, April 3). [No Author]. Pogrzeb króla Cyganów.
- Wola Ludu*. (1928, August 26). [No Author]. Królewska para w Warszawie.
- Zielony Sztandar*. (1936, August 2). [No Author]. Żałoba wśród Cyganów.

* * *

Діло. (1927, August 30). [No Author]. Перша циганська партія.

Romania

- Adevărul*. (1911, June 17). [No Author]. Agravarea conflictului sinodal.
- Adevărul*. (2017, January 31). Pătrașcu-Zamfirache, C. Singurul preot român care a militat pentru incinerare. Arhimandritul Calinic Șerboianu, răzvrătitul care s-a ridicat împotriva neregulilor din Biserică.
- Adevărul literar și artistic*. (1933a, April 9). Lăzurică, G. A. Când păzeau străjerii.
- Adevărul literar și artistic*. (1933b, May 21). Lăzurică, G. A. "Les Tziganes". O carte interesantă despre țigani.
- Adevărul literar și artistic*. (1934, July 1). Un răspuns de mulțumire.
- Biserica Ortodoxă Română*. (1933, September – October, No. 51). [No Author]. [No Title].
- Biserica Ortodoxă Română*. (1934, July – August, No. 52). [No Author]. [No Title].
- Conștiința Națională*. (1937, December 25). [No Author]. Manifestul redactat de "Asoc. Romilor din Craiova" ni-i arată că fac oportunism.
- Cuvântul*. (1933a, May 19). [No Author]. Dela Asociația țiganilor din România.

- Cuvântul*. (1933b, October 8). [No Author]. În jurul congresului țiganilor.
- Cuvântul*. (1933c, October 11). R.A. Primul congres al romilor (țiganilor) din România.
- Cuvântul*. (1933d, October 17). [No Author]. Întrunirea țiganilor din România.
- Cuvântul*. (1938, March 13). [No Author]. Calomniile ce și le aruncă conducătorii țiganilor.
- Cuvântul Făgărașului*. (1936, June 20). [No Author]. [No title].
- Curentul*. (1935, June 26). [No Author]. Congresul țiganilor din jud. Făgăraș.
- Dimineața*. (1933a, October 10). [No Author]. Întrunirea țiganilor.
- Dimineața*. (1933b, October 17). [No Author]. Întrunirea Asociației țiganilor din România.
- Gazeta de Sud*. (2014, January 18). Marinescu, M. Povestea familiei Ploșșor.
- Gazeta Făgărașului*. (1937a, January 31). [No Author]. Fapte și polemici.
- Gazeta Făgărașului*. (1937b, June 20). [No Author]. [No title].
- Glasul Monahilor*. (1941, March 2). [No Author]. Misionare.
- Glasul Romilor*. (1934a, November 1–15). [No Author]. O zi de sărbătoare.
- Glasul Romilor*. (1934b, November 1–15). Red[acția]. Darul orașului Ploești celor 100 de romi.
- Glasul Romilor*. (1934c, November 1–15). Red[acția]. Programul nostrum.
- Glasul Romilor*. (1934d, November 1–15). Red[acția]. Ce trebuie să știe Romii.
- Glasul Romilor*. (1934e, November 1–15). [No Author]. Informațiuni.
- Glasul Romilor*. (1937a, March 15). [No Author]. O punere la punct.
- Glasul Romilor*. (1937b, July 25). Bătrânu, I. Sărman popor rom.
- Glasul Romilor*. (1937c, July 25). Niculescu, G. Scrisoare deschisă D-lui prof. A. C. Cuza.
- Glasul Romilor*. (1937d, July 25). [No Author]. G. A. Lăzărescu zis Lăzurică și ex-popa I. Șerboianu așa cum sunt. Doi excroci care vor să parvină depe urma Romilor.
- Glasul Romilor*. (1938a, April 21). [No Author]. O precizare.
- Glasul Romilor*. (1938b, April 21). Costea, Motti. Încă o realizare.
- Glasul Romilor*. (1939, April 5). Dumitrescu, P. Frontul Renașterii Naționale și romii.
- Glasul Romilor*. (1940, April). [No Author]. Mișcarea Filialelor.
- Glasul Romilor*. (1941, April). Niculescu, G. Rasismul și Romii.
- Ilustrațiunea Română*. (1933a, June 7). [No Author]. Redeușteptarea Țiganilor.
- Ilustrațiunea Română*. (1933b, October 18). [No Author]. După Congresul "Romilor".
- Ilustrațiunea Română*. (1933c, December 6). Luca, D. La grădina de copii Romi.
- Ilustrațiunea Română*. (1935, September 4). [No Author]. Groapa Floreasca, împărăția copiilor, p. 7.
- Jurnalul.ro* (2009, January 24). Surcel, V. 'C. S. Nicolăescu-Ploșșor'.
- Lumea Românească*. (1937a, August 6). [No Author]. D. Gh. Niculescu "Voevodul Romilor" a reclamat parchetului pe G. Lăzurică.
- Lumea Românească*. (1937b, December 20). [No Author]. Romii din Sibiu primesc "ajutoare" pentru a vota listele guvernului.
- Măglăvit. Foae oficială a Comitetului Așezământului Evanghelic de la Măglăvit*. (1935, November 1). Nicolăescu-Ploșșor, C. S. Din Trecutul Măglăvitului.
- Monitorul Oficial*. (1911, August 13). Sesiunea de primăvară a Sf. Sinod.
- Monitorul Oficial*. (1916, February 17), Ministerul Cultelor și Instrucțiunii.

- Neamul țigănesc.* (1934a, February, Year 1, issue 1). Naftanailă, L. 'Către toți țiganii din Ardeal!
- Neamul țigănesc.* (1934b, February, Year 1, Issue 1). Naftanailă, L. Din trecutul activității noastre.
- Neamul țigănesc.* (1934c, September 8, Issue 2). [No Author], Pentruca să se știe!
- Neamul țigănesc.* (1934d, September 8, Issue 2). Naftanailă, L. Din activitatea noastră.
- Neamul țigănesc.* (1934e, September 8, Issue 2). [No Author]. Proces Verbal.
- Neamul țigănesc.* (1935a, April, Year 1, Issue 3). Marinelu, R. Cum se ung președinții noștri?
- Neamul țigănesc.* (1935b, April Issue 3). Naftanailă, L. Organizațiile Romilor din județ.
- Neamul țigănesc.* (1935c, April, Issue 3). Naftanailă L. Preoții și mișcarea noastră.
- Neamul țigănesc.* (1935d, April, Issue 3). Naftanailă, L. Frați Romi!
- Observatorul* (2012, April 23). Vasile, S. 'C. S. Nicolaescu-Ploșor'.
- O Rom.* (1934a, September 23). [No Author]. Ce trebuie să facă un rom.
- O Rom.* (1934b, October 22). Nicolăescu-Ploșor, C. S. Casa, școala și biserica romilor.
- O Rom.* (1934c, October 22). Simion, M. Fapte istorice în organizarea romilor. Înscierea actului constitutiv,
- Realitatea Ilustrată.* (1933, October 19). Mihail, A. F. Poporul enigmatic. Cine sunt țiganii, de unde vin și ce obiceiuri au?
- Realitatea Ilustrată.* (1935a, July 31). Wilhelmy, L. Hoinărind cu aparatul fotografic prin București.
- Realitatea Ilustrată.* (1935b, November 13). [No Author]. Romi din România s'au intrunit.
- Revista Generală Ilustrată.* (1932, May – June). [No Author]. O școală de ... cerșit.
- Tempo!* (1933a, August 27). [No Author]. Congresul țiganilor are loc peste o lună la București,
- Tempo!* (1933b, September 27). [No Author]. Țiganii din România se împart în două tabere.
- Tempo!* (1933c, September 29). [No Author]. Mișcarea țiganilor noștri. O adunare a "Romilor" din Capitală.
- Tempo!* (1933d, October 7). [No Author]. Congresul Romilor (țiganilor).
- Tempo!* (1935, October 2). [No Author]. Pentru prima oară un preot ortodox a oficiat în aula crematoriului din București la incinerarea d-rului Cerchez.
- Timpul.* (1933, September 25). [No Author]. De la A.G.A.Ț. din Craiova.
- Timpul.* (1934a, June 10). [No Author]. De la A.G.A.Ț. din România! – Cercul Craiova.
- Timpul.* (1934b, August 12). [No Author]. O Rom (Țiganul).
- Timpul.* (1935, July 31). [No Author]. Cine e C. S. Nicolăescu-Ploșor? – Secretarul general al org. part. naț-liberal. Un escroc ordinar al vieții politice și un hoț de rând al literaturii ce-o dă la iveală.
- Timpul.* (1937a, August 17). Lăzurică, G. A. Dece ne zicem Romi și nu "țigani!"
- Timpul.* (1937b, October 20). Lăzurică (președinte), G. A. Organizația Cetățenească a Romilor din România.
- Timpul.* (1938a, February 28). Lăzurică, G. A. Ce trebuie să știe Romii.
- Timpul.* (1938b, March 8). [No Author]. Despre noi și idealismul nostru.
- Timpul.* (1938c, March 8). Lăzurică, M. G. Către femeile rome.
- Țara Noastră.* (1937a, July 11). Popp Șerboianu, C. I. Ne-am hotărât.
- Țara Noastră.* (1937b, July 11). [No Author]. Informațiuni.

- Țara Noastră*. (1937c, July 11). Porter, R. Voevodul Gh. Niculescu detronat. Hotărârea luată de organizațiile județene rome din țară și comunicatul dat.
- Țara Noastră*. (1937d, July 11). [No Author]. Păstrăm secretul.
- Țara Noastră*. (1937e, July 18). Popp Șerboianu, C. I. & Lăzurică, G. A. Către Președinții filialelor din țară ale asociației g-rale a țiganilor din România.
- Țara Noastră*. (1937f, July 25). Popp Șerboianu, C. I. Vindecarea unui slăbănog.
- Țara Noastră*. (1937g, July 25). Popp Șerboianu, C. I. & Lăzurică, G. A. Către Romi.
- Țara Noastră*. (1937h, August 1). Popp Șerboianu, C. I. & Lăzurică, G. A. Scrisoare deschisă d-lor A. C. Cuza și Octavian Goga.
- Țara Noastră*. (1937i, August 1). Popp Șerboianu, C. I. & Lăzurică, G. A. Să răspundă în fața Justiției.
- Țara Noastră*. (1937j, August 1). [No Author]. Întrebări și răspunsuri.
- Țara Noastră*. (1937k, August 1). [No Author]. Prietenii noștri.
- Țara Noastră*. (1937l, September 15). Lăzurică, G. A. În loc de pagina religioasă.
- Țara Noastră*. (1937m, September 15). [No Author]. Minciunile Niculeștilor.
- Universul*. (1932, December 22). [No Author]. Informațiuni.
- Universul*. (1933a, April 21). [No Author]. Asociația țiganilor.
- Universul*. (1933b, June 17). Popp Șerboianu, C. I. Copilul țigan.
- Universul*. (1933c, October 10). [No Author]. Congresul Romilor.
- Universul*. (1935a, January 30). [No Author]. Informații.
- Universul*. (1935b, April 28). [No Author]. Informații.
- Viața Basarabiei*. (1935, Nov-Dec). Lutcan, T. Țigancă.

* * *

- 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 *Foiaia 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.

Spain

- Ahora*. (1932, June 2). [No Author]. La alemana comunista expulsada de España pasa la frontera. *Crónica* (1936, October 18). J. F. Un gran artista revolucionario: Helios Gómez. Los gitanos en la guerra civil.
- El Periódico*. (2014, 27 November). H. L. Memoria en las paredes.
- Lid*. (1944, January). [No Author]. Liberación Nacional Republicana. Boletín de Información Interna.
- Luz: Diario de la República*. (1932, May 31st). Furman Reunión sorprendida: En Barcelona son detenidos numerosos comunistas.

Switzerland

- Der Bund*. (1933, June 4). [No Author]. Ein König mit 350 dinar monatsgehalt.

Turkey

- Akşam*. (1948, July 16). Aksam. Komünizm Faaliyeti.
- Cumhuriyet*. (1933a, May 2). [No Author]. 1 Mayıs Eğlenceli Geçti.
- Cumhuriyet*. (1933b, December 24). [No Author]. Komünistler Hakkında Dün Karar Verildi.
- Cumhuriyet Dergi*. (2011, August 26). Günçikan, B. No'lu Üye: Zehra.
- Kurun*. (1938, January 23). [No Author]. Gaip Aranıyor.
- Resmi Gazete*. (1946, June 5). [No Author]. Cemiyetler Kanununun Bazı Maddelerinin Değiştirilmesine Dair Kanun, Kanun No 49190.
- Yeni Gün*. (1931, April 12). Kaygılı, O. C. İstanbul'un Köşe, Bucağı Beyoğlunun İç Açan Bülbülderesi!

Ukraine

- Романі яз*. (2003). Келар, С. Коштовні зернини Германо. Виповнилося 110 років з дня народження класика ромської літератури.

United Kingdom

- Belfast Telegraph*. (1936, May 18). [No Author]. First Romany Newspaper.
- Sunday Express*. (1936, January 12). [No Author]. Gipsy Republic.
- The Observer*. (1937, March 7). [From Our Own Correspondent]. Gypsies to hold a Ball. Carnival in Sofia. National Songs.
- The Telegraph*. (1936, May 18). [No Author]. The First Gypsy Newspaper. Printed in 2 Languages.

USA

- Atlanta Constitution*. (1939, August 5). Roosevelt, E. My Day: Children Cure Gypsies of Roving.
- Der morgen zshurnal / The Jewish Morning Journal*. (1909, June 29). Almuni. Tsigayner ferlangen oykh glaykhberekhtigung. In Yiddish.
- New York Herald Tribune*. (1940, March 21). [No Author]. Gypsies Learn English to Quit Romany Trail.

- New York Herald Tribune*. (1942a, April 22). [No Author]. King of Gypsies Arrested Here in Draft Case.
- New York Herald Tribune*. (1942b, June 2). [No Author]. Gypsy King Sentenced.
- New York Sun*. (1939, June 26). [No Author]. Gypsy Metal Shop Opens Here.
- New York Times*. (1932, May 6). [No Author]. Gypsy "King" Sentenced.
- New York Times*. (1940, March 21). Berger, M. About New York.
- New York Times*. (1942, April 22). [No Author]. Gypsy King Goes to Jail: Accused of False Statement to Save "Subject" from Draft. p. 17.
- New York Times*. (1949, February 18). [No Author]. Gypsy Leader Succumbs.
- New York Times*. (1959, February 9). [No Author]. Meyer Berger, 60, of Times Is Dead.
- New York Times Magazine* (1938, July 31). Weybright, V. Reality Overtakes the Gypsy.
- New Yorker*. (1942, August 15). Mitchell, J. King of the Gypsies.
- Newsweek* (1940, April 8). [No Author]. Gypsy School Days.
- Survey Graphic*. (1938, No. 27). Weybright, V. Who Can Tell the Gypsies' Fortune?

USSR

- Беднота* (1927, December 21). [No Author]. Обо всем.
- Безбожник*. (1928, Ap. 6, No. 1). Герман, А. Цыгане.
- Большевисткий молодняк*. (1931, February 14) Язык шовиниста – язык классового врага. Позорные отрывки великодержавного шовинизма в Смоленском пединституте.
- Борьба*. (1931a, May 24). [No Author]. Здесь орудует враг. Нелепым сплетням шовинистов нужно положить конец.
- Борьба*. (1931b, June 2). [No Author]. Провокаторы перед судом. Миф о хищении детей.
- Вечерняя Москва*. (1927, July 10). [No Author]. Дугые предприятия (Трудсессия).
- Вечерняя Москва*. (1930, December 20). Оргкомитет театра Индо-Ромэн. Объявление.
- Журнал для всех*. (1929, No. 10). Лебедев, Г. Песенка.
- За советскую науку*. (1990, June 7). Барсагаев, П. Драма в тайге.
- Западная область*. (1932, September, No. 317). Герасимов, И. Внимание к цыганским колхозам.
- Звезда*. (1926, August 14). Граховский, А. Работа среди цыган Белоруссии.
- Известия ЦИК СССР и ВЦИК*. (1925, September 11). Таранов, [А.] & Лебедев, [И.] Цыгане просыпаются.
- Известия ЦИК СССР и ВЦИК*. (1927, January 21). Таранов, А. От кочевки к оседлости.
- Известия ЦИК СССР и ВЦИК*. (1928, April 4). Маллори, Д. Цыгане на земле.
- Известия ЦИК СССР и ВЦИК*. (1936, October 16). Герасимов, И. О цыганском национальном районе.
- Известия ЦИК СССР и ВЦИК*. (1937, March 27). [No Author]. [No Title].
- Колхозник Стахановец*. (1937, Septmber 2). Герасимов, Н. И. Мы растем не по дням, а по масам.
- Комсомольская правда*. (1929, September 11). Лебедев, Г. & Герман, А. Что делать с цыганами?
- Комсомольская правда*. (1930a, January 19). Лебедев, Г. На перепутьи.

- Комсомольская правда.* (1930b, January 19). Лебедев, Г. Старикам.
- Комсомольская правда.* (1930c, 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.
- Крестьянская газета.* (1928, October 5). Герман, А. Цыганский хутор.
- Культура.* (1967, December 16). Хмельковская, Е. & Равдин, Р. Стея асупра шатрей.
- Литературная газета.* (1940, March 1). [Германо, А. В.] Цыганские писатели.
- Молодой Ленинец.* (1928, May 24). Герман, А. Цыгане земли хотят. Первый советский цыганский хутор.
- Нэво дром.* (1930a, No. 1). Безлюдский, М. Ракирибэн е вьюгаса.
- Нэво дром.* (1930b, No. 1). Безлюдско, [М.] Чюрдэн фелда.
- Нэво дром.* (1930c, No. 1). Панкова, О. И. 1930. Ёв парудя гаджэнса грэн ...
- Нэво дром.* (1930d, No. 2). Безлюдский, М. Лолы Зоря.
- Нэво дром.* (1930e, No. 3). Г. (Лебедев, Г.). Ко пхурома.
- Нэво дром.* (1930f, No. 3). Лебедев, Г. Савэ дромэса рома могоскирна тэ пириждян прэ нэво джиибэн.
- Нэво дром.* (1930g, No.No. 4–5) М. Б. Дро колхозо нанэ штэто кулакоскэ.
- Нэво дром.* (1930h, No. 4–5). Таранов, А. Дешу-трито Октябрьско бэрш.
- Нэво дром.* (1931a, No. 1). Безлюдско, М. Романы школа.
- Нэво дром.* (1931b, No. 1). Лебедев, Г. Ваш романо театро.
- Нэво дром.* (1931c, No. 3). Антоненко, И. Н. Ракирибэн ваш 1905 бэрш.
- Нэво дром.* (1931d, No. 3). Воинова-Масальско. Ваш джювленигино дывэс (8 марта).
- Нэво дром.* (1931e, No. 3). Воинова-Масальско. Джювлякано дывэс.
- Нэво дром.* (1931f, No. 3). Замэк. Сэндо линчя дрэ Чехословакия.
- Нэво дром.* (1931g, No. 3). Фэлдытко. Исы ли рома кулаки дрэ Москва.
- Нэво дром.* (1931h, No. 3). Фэлдытко. Хаськираса кулакос сыр классо.
- Нэво дром.* (1931i, No. 4–5). Дударова, Н. Адасаво-ли банго тэ авэл шефо?
- Нэво дром.* (1931j, No. 6). Кальш. Ваш буты машкир ромэндэ.
- Нэво дром.* (1931k, No. 6). Лебедево, Г. Дро романо театро.
- Нэво дром.* (1931l, No. 7). Безлюдско, М. Гиля.
- Нэво дром.* (1931m, No. 7). Кутюрье, О. В. Романо колхозо.
- Нэво дром.* (1931n, No. 8). Конференция ромэн дрэ Дзержинско райно дрэ Москва.
- Нэво дром.* (1931o, No. 8). Студийка. Ваш дисциплина.
- Нэво дром.* (1931p, No.No. 9–10). Мадарас, Эмиль. Колхозо “Бутитка рома”.
- Нэво дром.* (1931q, No. 7). [No Author]. Романэ организацыи и производствы.
- Нэво дром.* (1931r, No.No. 9–10). П. Инке ваш романо театро.
- Нэво дром.* (1931s, No.No. 9–10). Таранов, А. Марибэ антицыганизмаса.
- Нэво дром.* (1931t, No.No. 11–12). [No Author]. Актёры романэ театростыр дживэна дрэ шатры.

- Нэво дром.* (1931c, No. No. 11–12). Лебедево, Г. Лыл дрэ редакция.
- Нэво дром,* (1932a, No. No. 2–3. Мих. Б. Класово ворого на совэла.
- Нэво дром.* (1932b, No. 4). Нэво Критико. Поэто Георгие Лебедево.
- Нэво дром.* (1932c, No. 5). [No Author]. Интернационало. Пирильджинэ: М. Безлюдско и А. Германо.
- Нэво дром,* (1932d, No. 5). Мих. Б. Бутыр классово придыкхибе прэ театрально фронто.
- Нэво дром* (1932e, No. 7). Безлюдско, М. Т. Миро литературно дром.
- Правда.* (1927, October 2). Орловец, П. Цыганская коммуна.
- Правда.* (1933, September 23). [No Author]. На оседлость переведено 7 миллиона кочевников.
- Правда.* (1936, March 5). [No Author]. Беседа товарища Сталина с представителем газетного объединения “Скриппс-Говард Ньюспейперс” г-ном Рой Говардом 1 марта 1936 г.
- Рабочий и искусство.* (1930, September 5). Е. К. От ночного кабака к пролетарскому театру. Цыгане объявили борьбу против цыганщины.
- Рабочий путь.* (1932, July 2). Герасимов, [И]. Создать цыганскому населению условия для оседлого труда.
- Романы зоря.* (1927a, No. 1). [No Author]. [No Title].
- Романы зоря.* (1927b, No. 1). Герман, А. Руворо. Рассказо.
- Романы зоря.* (1927c, No. 1). Дударова, Н. А. Амарэ школы.
- Романы зоря.* (1927d, No. 1). Лебедев, И. И. Романо бенг.
- Романы зоря.* (1927e, No. 1). Панков, Н. Амарэ клубы.
- Романы зоря.* (1927f, No. 1). Панков, Н. Лыла ромэндыр и ромэнгэ.
- Романы зоря.* (1927g, No. 1). Сергиевский, М. В. Романы азбука.
- Романы зоря.* (1927h, No. 1). Таранов, А. С. Вашо пхув романычавэнгэ.
- Романы зоря.* (1929a, No. 2). Герман, А. Пэрво советско романо хуторо.
- Романы зоря.* (1929b, No. 2). Полякова, М. Сыр ром Пупырка скэдыяпэ дрэ Романо союзо, дрэ Москва.
- Романы зоря.* (1929c, No. 2). Таранов, А. С. Сыр фэлдыдыр тэ кэрэс ромэскэ гавитко хулайбэн.
- Романы зоря.* (1930a, No. No. 3–4). Г. Л. Мулы рат.
- Романы зоря.* (1930b, No. No. 3–4). Индо-Ром. Кличё колхозостыр.
- Романы зоря.* (1930c, No. No. 3–4). Лебедево, Г. Ваше полит-воспитательно буты.
- Романы зоря.* (1930d, No. No. 3–4) Лебедево, Г. Палэ ромэнгири э-бахт
- Романы зоря.* (1930e, No. No. 3–4). Орлова, Е. Хасиям палэ гилы.
- Романы зоря.* (1930f, No. No. 3–4). Полякова, М. Сыр ром Пупырка скэдыяпэ кэ рома дрэ Москва.
- Романы зоря.* (1930g, No. No. 3–4). Саввов, Д. Рома и коллективизация.
- Романы зоря.* (1930h, No. No. 3–4). [No Author]. Сарэ штэтэндыр по набут.
- Романы зоря.* (1930i, No. No. 3–4). Тараново, А. С. Ваш колхозно строительство.
- Сталинцо.* (1935, October 5). Токмаково, [И.] Амарэ дорэсибена.
- Тверская правда.* (1931a, August 4). [No Author]. Крепко ударить по великодержавным шовинистам. Виновников травли рабочих-цыган привлечь к судебной ответственности.

- 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.
- Терек* (December 12, 1928). [No Author]. Цыгане на земле. Первый цыганский колхоз.
- Экономическая жизнь*. (1928, May 26). [No Author]. Цыганский колхоз.

* * *

- Journal *Романы зоря* (Gypsy Down). Moscow. Editorial Board 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 Taranov (from An. 3, No. 1 – Andrey 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, 1931; No. 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

- BBC Srbija*. (2020, October 29). Živić, P. Romi u Srbiji: Šta će biti sa jedinim spomenikom palim romskim borcima u Beogradu – sećanje i tradicija pod katancem. Retrieved from <https://www.bbc.com/serbian/lat/srbija-54638853>.
- Blic*. (2008, June 1). Pešić, V. Bez muža ni u komšiluk. Retrieved from <https://www.blic.rs/vesti/srbija/bez-muza-ni-u-komsiluk/el4lked>.
- Blic*. (2016, November 20). Ivanović, M. Zaboravljeni heroj Kumanovske bitke. Kako je jedan srpski vojnik nadmudrio tursku vojsku. Retrieved from <https://www.blic.rs/riznica/zaboravljeni-heroj-kumanovske-bitke-kako-je-jedan-srpski-vojn timer-nadmudrio-tursku/ccr4zb5>.
- Espresso*. (2019, September 22). [No Author]. Posle vekova ropstva: Kako je Ahmed Ademović trubom preokrenuo tok bitke i doveo Turke do poraza. Retrieved from <https://www.espresso.co.rs/vesti/drustvo/442587/posle-pet-vekova-ropstva-kako-je-ahmed-ademovic-trubom-preokrenuo-tok-bitke-i-doveo-turke-do-poraza>.

- Glas naroda*. (1936, Issue 158). [No Author]. Cigansko Ljudstvo je iz dobe faraonov.
- Hrvatska straža*. (1940, August 4). [No Author]. Smrt glasovitog ciganina.
- Hrvatski branik*. (1938, November 12). [No Author]. Evandelijske na ciganskom jeziku.
- Hrvatski list*. (1940, September 20). [No Author]. Otrovaio se popularni ciganin.
- Hrvatski novosti*. (1940, April 25). [No Author]. Ciganska proslava u Odri. Župnik Medved održao je ciganima u Odri propovijed na ciganskom jeziku – Sprema cigansku gramatiku i rječnik.
- Istorijski Zabavnik*. (2020, November 10). [No Author]. Ovako je izgledala prava Koštana Bore Stankovića i sudbina joj je bila još tragičnija od one u drami. Retrieved from <https://www.istorijskizabavnik.rs/blog/prava-kostana-bore-stankovica>.
- Jugpress*. (2019, October 24). [No Author]. Amzić: Amet Ametović je pravo ime junaka Kumanovske bitke. Retrieved from <https://jugpress.com/amzic-amet-ametovic-je-pravo-ime-junaka-kumanovske-bitke/>.
- Jutarnji list*. (1938a, April 8). [No Author]. Anketa o kolonizaciji cigana.
- Jutarnji list*. (1938b, June 5). [No Author]. Pokušaj civiliziranja cigana.
- Jutarnji list*. (1938c, August 17). [No Author]. Anketa o rješenju ciganskog pitanja.
- Jutarnji list*. (1939, March 21). [No Author]. Koloniziranje cigana.
- Jutarnji list*. (1940, April 24). [No Author]. Cigani su proslavili svog najvećeg sveca! Župnik Medven održao je ciganima u Odri propovijed na ciganskom jeziku.
- Novosti*. (1940a, April 24). [No Author]. Nekoliko stotina cigana sudjelovalo je u gjurjevskom proštenju u slušalo propovjed cvećenika na ciganskom jeziku.
- Novosti*. (1940b, April 25). [No Author]. S upaljenim svijećama u ruci stotine cigana puzalo je na koljenima oko crkve u Odri.
- Novosti*. (1940c, July 24). Umro popularni srijemski ciganin.
- Obzor*. (1940, April 23). [No Author]. Cigansko "Jurjevo" u Ordii.
- Slovenski narod*. (1934, September 29). [No Author]. Ali dobe cigani svojo Palestino?
- Telegraf*. (2018, September 2). P. L. Dva Roma, dva trubača, dva srpska junaka. Na pomen Ahmeda Ademovića i Rustema Sejdića diže se sa stolice i staje u stav MİRNO. Retrieved from <https://www.telegraf.rs/zanimljivosti/zabavnik/2986155-dva-roma-dva-trubaca-dva-srpska-junaka-napomen-ahmeda-ademovica-i-rustema-sejdica-dize-se-sa-stolice-i-staje-u-stav-mirno?fbclid=IwAR37MiKQtazxgAb3pEcCC5WNVtotLEeIVzonsWABi5fvqqu5yKrij7x0Co>.
- Večer*. (1940a, April 23). [No Author]. Danas je župnik Medven održao ciganima propovijed na ciganskom jeziku.
- Večer*. (1940b, April 24). [No Author]. Prva propovijed na ciganskom jeziku župnika Medven u Ordii. "Maj mi štoro! Maj mais – Mange si zorate drago ...".
- Zagrebački list*. (1940a, March 12). [No Author]. Cigani traže zemlju.
- Zagrebački list*. (1940b, April 24). [No Author]. Propovjed na ciganskom jeziku.
- Zagrebački list*. (1941, February 23–24). Oton Orešković. Ciganski "kapetan" Štefan Nikolić čije pleme potječe od Marije Terezije priča o svom životu i želja da izgradi ciganski grad.

- Београдске обштинске новине.* (1931, September 1). [No Author]. Прослава десетогодишњице владавине Њ. В. Краља Југославије Александра I.
- Време.* (1924, September 10). Винавер, С. Велика циганска забава код "Новог Београда".
- Време.* (1925, January 17). [No Author]. Буран цигански збор код "Три Кључа". Цигани хоће свог представника у Скупштини.
- Време.* (1926а, 12 January). [No Author]. Београдски цигани не воле тип Кармен и изабрали су за своју краљицу једну плавушу, која личи на тихог херувима.
- Време.* (1926b, April 8). [No Author]. Јуче су београдски цигани празновали Свету Бибију.
- Време.* (1926c, 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.* (1926d, September 10). [No Author]. Коштана, она права, Циганка из Врањске Бање, тражи от г. Боре Станковића накнаду, зато што је због ње стекао новац и славу.
- Време.* (1927а, March 26). [No Author]. Цигани су јуче прославили своју Св. Бибију.
- Време.* (1927b, 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.* (1927c, August 21). Михаиловић, Ч. "Циганска листа у ваљевском округу". Изјава г. Чедо Михаиловића.
- Време.* (1929, February 21). [No Author]. Популарна београдска певачица Софка и примаш Паја, са оркестром, путују данас за Париз.
- Време.* (1931а, 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.* (1936а, January 5). Митровић, Д. Подневне слике првог циганског новинара код нас у Карађорђевој парку. Бивши уредник "Циганских новина" написао је роман из живота својих саплеменика.
- Време.* (1936b, February 11). [No Author]. "Ваљевска циганска омладина".
- Време.* (1936c, August 16). [No Author]. Једини Циганин носилац Карађорђевој звезде живи у Лесковцу.
- Време.* (1936d, October 28). [No Author]. Циганин носилац Карађорђевој звезде с мачевима о коме је "Време" недавно писало добио је 500 динара от непознатог пошљаоца из Цариброда.
- Време.* (1936e, November 14). [No Author]. Познати београдски примаш Анта Груић прославља четрдесетогодишњицу.
- Време.* (1936f, November 24). [No Author]. Тајно гласање за већника Трговачко-индустриске и Занатске коморе и Скопљу.
- Време.* (1937, April 3). [No Author]. Цигани у Београду прославили су јуче своју тетку Бибију која је највише волела рибу на зејтину.
- Време.* (1938, July 20). Рајчевић, В. У једном славонском селу први пут је читано Јеванђеље на циганском језику.

- Застава*. (1923, February 21). [No Author]. Демократска циганска кооперација.
- Политика*. (1926, March 3). [No Author]. Тетка Бибијин дан. Јуче су београдски Цигани свечано прославили своју Тетка Бибију.
- Политика*. (1939a, January 4). Н[иколић], Б. Необичан догађај у обојеном народу. Београдски цигански клуб пред великим задатком... Може ли от Цигана нешто да буде?
- Политика*. (1939b, January 31). [No Author]. Цигански клуб у Београду – ступио у акцију.
- Политика*. (1947, February 19). [No Author]. Београдски Цигани желе да све своје сународнике одуче от чергарења и прошње.
- Правда*. (1928, February 6). [No Author]. Забављање на Циганској Забави.
- Правда*. (1933a, March 17). [No Author]. Великобечкеречки Цигани изабрали кнеза.
- Правда*. (1933b, July 13). [No Author]. Ускоро ће на Бањици засвирати 500 Цигана.
- Правда*. (1934, October 16). [No Author]. Хумано, културно и просветно удружење југословенских Цигана у Београду.
- Правда*. (1937a, February 6). [No Author]. Тетка Бибија, највећи цигански празник. Забава оних који су навикли да забављају друге.
- Правда*. (1937b, April 27). [No Author]. Удружење београдских Цигана – свечара Бибије – има 148 члана и 68 динара готовине.
- Правда*. (Belgrade). (1937c, 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.
- Romano lil. Циганске новине*. (1935a, March). Симић, С. Наша прва реч.
- Romano lil. Циганске новине*. (1935b, March). [Симић, С.]. Наша Теткица Бибија.
- Romano lil. Циганске новине*. (1935c, March). [Симић, С.]. Наши људи жале свога Краља.
- Romano lil. Циганске новине*. (1935d, March). [Петровић, А.]. Чувајмо здравље наше и дечице наше.
- Romano lil. Циганске новине*. (1935e, March). [Симић, С.]. Где живимо и колико нас има.
- Romano lil. Циганске новине*. (1935f, March). [No Author]. Романи парамићи.
- Romano lil. Циганске новине*. (1935g, March). [No Author]. Саис која кај авел.
- Romano lil. Циганске новине*. (1935h, March). Симић, С. Злокобна цедуља.
- Romano lil. Циганске новине*. (1935i, April). [Симић, С.]. Нашим читаоцима.
- Romano lil. Циганске новине*. (1935j, April). Петровић, А., Д-р. За нашу децу.
- Romano lil. Циганске новине*. (1935k, April). Милосављевић, Јован-Јованће. Из историје београдских цигана.
- Romano lil. Циганске новине*. (1935l, April). Симић, С. Да си се пре родио и ти би се двапут оженио.
- Romano lil. Циганске новине*. (1935m, May 31). [Симић, С.]. Romano lil.
- Romano lil. Циганске новине*. (1935n, May 31). Симић, С. Наш чика Марко.
- Romano lil. Циганске новине*. (1935o, May 31). Симић, С. Рентијерска свадба на Чубури.
- Romano lil. Циганске новине*. (1935p, May 31). Петровић, А., Д-р. Бурђев-дан.

Romano lil. Циганске новине. (1935q, Мау 31). [No Author]. О просјачењу.

Romano lil. Циганске новине. (1935r, Мау 31). Савић, М. Нашој браћи.

Romano lil. Циганске новине. (1935s, Мау 31). Симић, С. Кано о Гађо астарел дар. Кад се Србин уплаши.

Romano lil. Циганске новине. (1935t, Мау 31). Симић, С. Зира.

* * *

Newspaper *Romano lil. Циганске новине* (Roma/Gypsy Newspaper in Romani and Serbian languages). Editor in cheif Svetozar Simić. Јаtagan mala, Beograd. No. 1, March 1935; No. 2, 30 April 1935; No. 3, 31 Мау 1935. In Serbian with texts in Romani language.

Bibliography

- [No Author]. *12 Ekim 1969 Milletvekili Seçimi Sonuçları*. (1970). Ankara: Devlet İstatistik Enstitüsü Matbaası.
- [No Author]. *1951 TKP (Türkiye Komünist Partisi) Tevkifatı*. (2000). İstanbul: BDS.
- Achim, V. (1998). *Țiganiii in istoria Romaniei*. București: Enciclopedica.
- Achim, V. (2004). *The Roma in Romanian History*. Budapest & New York: CEU Press.
- Achim, V. (2010). Încercarea romilor din România de a obține statutul de naționalitate conlocuitoare (1948–1949), *Revista Istorică*, XXI (5–6): 449–465.
- Acković, D. (1996). *Ašunen Romalen! Slušaajte ljudi!* Beograd: Rominterpress.
- Acković, D. (2001). *Nacija smo, a ne Cigani. Pregled aktivnosti romskih i neromskih društvenih i političkih organizacija i poedinaca o romskoj problematici u nekadašnjoj Jugoslaviji*. Beograd: Rominterpress.
- Acković, D. (2004). *Tetkica Bibija – proslave Bibije u ogledalu dnevnice i periodične štampe u poslednjih 100 godina*. Beograd: Rominterpress.
- Acković, D. (2010). *An Bibiako sastipe. U Bibijakino zdravlje*. Beograd: Muzej Romske Kulture.
- Acković, D. (2012). *Tradicionalna nematerijalna kulturna baština Roma*. Beograd: Rominterpres.
- Acković, D. (2014). *Pisani svetovni i duhovni tekstovi na romskom i o Romima*. Beograd: Rominterpress.
- Acković, D. (2017a). *History and Culture of Roma in Belgrade*. Belgrade: Rominterpress.
- Acković, D. (2017b). *Stradanje Roma u Prvom svetskom ratu*. Beograd: Rominterpress.
- Acković, D. (2019a). *Vek brata Jakala*. Beograd: Kuća romske kulture & Rominterpres.
- Acković, D. (2019b). *Romima s ljubavlju: život i stvaralaštvo Radeta Uhljka*. Beograd: Kuća romske kulture & Rominterpres.
- Acković, D. (2020). *Svetozar Simić. Prvi Romolog romskog porjekla u Srbiji*. Beograd: Kuća romske kulture.
- Acton, T. & Gheorghe, N. (2001). Citizens of the world and nowhere: Minority, ethnic and human rights for Roma during the last hurrah of the nation-state. In W. Guy (Ed.) *Between Past and Future: The Roma of Central and Eastern Europe* (pp. 54–70). Hatfield: University of Hertfordshire Press.
- Adamczyk, A. (2014). Romowie – naród bez ojczyzny. *Przegląd Narodowościowy*, 3: 11–29.
- Agüero, S. & Jiménez, N. (2020). *Resistencias gitanas*. Kindle edition. Libros.
- Ahmad, F. (2004). *İttihat ve Terakki 1908–1914*. İstanbul: Kaynak.
- Akar, A. (1989). *Bir Kuşağın Son Temsilcileri 'Eski Tüfek' Sosyalistler*. İstanbul: İletişim.
- Akbulut, E. (2002). *Komintern Belgelerinde Nazım Hikmet*. İstanbul: TÜSTAV.
- Akbulut, E. (2010). *Dr. Şefik Hüsnü Deymer Yaşam Öyküsü, Vazife Yazıları*. İstanbul: Sosyal Tarih Yayınları.
- Akgül, H. (1996). *Şoför İdris Anılar*. İstanbul: Yar Yayınları.
- Alonso Carballés, J. (2009). Helios Gómez et la révolution: De la peinture à la littérature. *Études Tsiganes*, 36: 38–59.
- Anadol, Z. (1989). *Kırmızı Gül ve Basket*. İstanbul: Belge.

- And, M. (1975). *Karagöz: Turkish Shadow Theatre*. İstanbul: Dost Yayınları.
- Anderson, B. (2006). *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*. London, New York: Verso.
- [No Author]. (2000). *Anuarul Institutului de Cercetări Socio-Umane "C. S. Nicolăescu-Plopșor"*. Craiova: Academia Română.
- Apine, I. (2007). Mazākumtautību loma vēsturē un mūsdienās. Multikulturālas sabiedrības izveidošanās un attīstība. In L. Dribins (Ed.) *Mazākumtautības Latvijā. Vēsture un tagadne* (pp. 9–25). Rīga: Latvijas Universitātes Filozofijas un socioloģijas institūts.
- Ashby, H. (2014). *Third World Activists and the Communist University of the Toilers of the East, 1921–1938*. Ph.D. Thesis. Los Angeles, CA: University of Southern California.
- Asociación Cultural Helios Gómez. (1998). Retrieved from <http://www.heliosgomez.org/en/principal.htm>.
- Atılğan, G. (2020). *Aydınlık İçinde Dr. Şefik Hüsnü*. İstanbul: Sosyal Tarih Yayınları.
- Aub, M. (1998). *Diario de Djelfa*. Ed. by Xelo Candel Vila. Valencia: Edicions De la Guerra & Café Malvarrosa.
- Aulo, A. (1934). *Pürteitâ mustalaisten elämästä*. Hämeenlinna: Arvi A. Kariston kirjapaino.
- Aybar, M. A. (1988). *Türkiye İşçi Partisi (TİP) Tarihi I*. İstanbul: BDS.
- Aydemir, A. (2000). *Herşeye Rağmen "Bir Devrimcinin Öyküsü"*. Ankara: Güldikeni.
- Babalık, N. (2005). *Türkiye Komünist Partisi'nin Sönümlenmesi*. Ankara: İmge.
- Bak, Á. (2020). Public Statues and Second-Class Citizens: The Spatial Politics of Romani Visibility in Interwar Budapest. *Critical Romani Studies*, 3 (1): 102–138.
- Baloun, P. (2020). *"Cikáni, metla venkova!" Tvorba a uplatňování proticikánských opatření v meziválečném Československu, za druhé republiky a v počáteční fázi Protektorátu Čechy a Morava (1918–1941)*. Ph.D. Thesis. Praha: FHK UK.
- Banac, I. (1988). *The National Question in Yugoslavia. Origins, History, Politics*. Revised edition. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press.
- Barany, Z. (2002). *The East European Gypsies: Regime Change, Marginality, and Ethnopolitics*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Barrera, R., Lloris, G. & Santiago, L. (1981). *Internamiento y resistencia de los republicanos españoles en el África del Norte, durante la IIª Guerra Mundial*. San Cugat del Vallés: El Pot.
- Barton, H. A. (2005). Scandinavianism, Fennomania and the Crimean War. *Journal of Baltic Studies*, 36 (2): 131–156.
- Bartosz, A. (2011). Cygański król Michał Kwiek. *Dialog Pheniben*, 2: 126–131.
- Bejan, C. A. (2019). *Intellectuals and Fascism in Interwar Romania: The Criterion Association*. London: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Belli, M. (1975). Bir Tütün İşçisi Öldü. *Emekçi*, (7): 33–36.
- Belli, M. (1999). *Mihri Belli'nin Anıları İnsanlar Tanıdım I*. İstanbul: Doğan.
- Belli, M. (2005). *Hapishaneden Çizgiler*. İstanbul: Leman.
- Belli, S. (2011). Sunu-Zehra Kosova Öldü. In Z. Kosova (Ed.) *Ben İşçiyim* (pp. 11–13). İstanbul: TÜSTAV.

- Berktaş, A. (1999). Cumhuriyet Boyu Bir İşçi Yaşamı. In O. Baydar & G. Dinçel (Eds.) *75 Yılda Çarkları Döndürenler* (pp. 255–262). İstanbul: Tarih Vakfı Yurt Yayınları.
- Bērziņš, V. (Ed.) (2000). *20. gadsimta Latvijas vēsture I: Latvija no gadsimta sākuma līdz neatkarības pasludināšanai*. Rīga: Latvijas vēstures institūta apgāds.
- Bessonov, N. (2016). Theatre Roman: Foundation and Creative Path. In E. Marushiakova & V. Popov (Eds.) *Roma Culture: Myths and Realities* (pp. 143–156) München: Lincom Academic Publishers.
- Beu, L. (2011). Un proces de răsunset la început de secol XX: doi înalți ierarhi ajunși în fața justiției, *Buridava. Studii și materiale*, 9: 259–69.
- Bezviconi, G. (1972), *Necropola Capitalei*. București.
- Białaś, T. (1983). *Liga Morska i Kolonialna 1930–1939*. Gdańsk: Morskie.
- Black, G. F. (1914). *A Gypsy Bibliography*. London: T. & A. Constable.
- Blomster, R. (2010). Roos. Kansallisbiografia-verkkosivustossa. *Studia Biographica*, 4. Helsinki: Suomalaisen Kirjallisuuden Seura. Retrieved from <https://kansallisbiografia.fi/kansallisbiografia/henkilö/9907>.
- Blomster, R. (2012). Romanimusiiikki rajojen vetäjänä ja yhteyksien luojana. In P. Pulma (Ed.) *Suomen romanien historia* (pp. 290–374). Helsinki: Suomalaisen Kirjallisuuden Seura.
- Blomster, R. & Mikkola, K. (2018). Kohtaamisia tien päällä ja arkistossa: Työmies Matti Simolan romaniperinneaineistot. In M. Lamberg, U. Piela & H. Snellman (Eds.) *Satunnaisesti Suomessa* (pp. 37–64). Kalevalaseuran vuosikirja, No. 97. Helsinki: Suomalaisen Kirjallisuuden Seura.
- Blomster, R. & Roman, R. B. (2021). Finland. In R. B. Roman, S. Zahova & A. Marinov (Eds.) *Roma Literature and Press in Central, South-Eastern and Eastern Europe from 19th Century until the Second World War* (pp. 197–221). Leiden: Brill & Ferdinand Schöningh.
- Bonet, J. M. (1995). *Diccionario de las vanguardias en España (1907–1936)*. Madrid: Alianza Editorial.
- Bonet, J. M. (Ed.) (1998). *Helios Gómez: IVAM Centre Julio González, 29 enero-22 marzo 1998*. València: Generalitat Valenciana.
- Borrow, G. H., Darlow, T. H. & British and Foreign Bible Society. (1911). *Letters of George Borrow to the British and Foreign Bible Society*. London: Hodder and Stoughton.
- Bucur, M. (2002). *Eugenics and Modernization in Interwar Romania*. Pittsburgh, PA: University of Pittsburgh Press.
- Bourgeois, H. (1910). Un journal pseudo-tchingiané. *Revue du Monde Musulman*, 11 (6): 326–329.
- Brice, S. (Transl.). (1992) *Laimes puķe*. Rīga: Sprīdītis.
- Butulis, I. (2017). Ideoloģija un propaganda. In I. Feldmanis (Ed.) *15. maija Latvija* (pp. 153–187). Rīga: Latvijas Mediji.
- Cameron, S. (2018) *The Hungry Steppe: Famine, Violence, and the Making of Soviet Kazakhstan*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press.
- Castells, M. (1998). *La era de la información: Economía, sociedad y cultura*. Vol. 2. *El poder de la identidad*. Madrid: Alianza Editorial.
- Cârstea, M. E. (2017). *Contribuții la istoria romilor – Năftănăilă Lazăr*. București: Școala Națională de Studii Politice și Administrative.
- Cegielski T. & Kaździela Ł. (1990). *Rozbiory Polski 1772–1793–1795*. Warszawa: WSIP.

- Cernăianu, C. (1920), *Biserica din Regat. 1908–1918*. București: Tipografia Dim. C. Ionescu.
- Chaplin, Ch. (1966). *My Autobiography*. London: The Bodley Head. (2nd ed.)
- Chelcea, I. (1944), *Țiganii din România. Monografie etnografică*. București: Institutului Central de Statistică.
- Chernykh, A. V. (2020). The Kalderash Gypsies of Russia in Industrial Cooperation of the 1920s–1930s. *Social Inclusion*, 8 (2): 358–366.
- Chilla, S. (2018). El colegio gitano de Triana en el corazón de una “cava” que el franquismo arrasó. *Lavozdelsur.es* November 22, 2018. Retrieved from https://www.lavozdelsur.es/actualidad/sociedad/el-colegio-gitano-de-triana-en-el-corazon-de-una-cava-que-el-franquismo-arraso_92466_102.html.
- Clayer, N. & Bougarel, X. (2017). *Europe's Balkan Muslims: A New History*. London: Hurst & Co.
- Cotten, R. M. (1950). *The Fork in the Road: A Study of Acculturation among the American Kalderas Gypsies*. Ph.D. Thesis. New York: Columbia University.
- Cortés, I. (2017). Antigypsyism as Ambivalence: Fascination and Fear Towards the Spanish Gitanos in the Post-Civil War Period (1939–1959). *Roma Rights Journal of the European Roma Rights Centre*, 1: 23–34.
- Courtois, St., Werth, N., Panne, J.-L., Paczkowski, A., Bartosek, K. & Margolin, J.-L. (1999). *The Black Book of Communism: Crimes, Terror, Repression*. Harvard, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Crowe, D. (1994). *A History of the Gypsies in Eastern Europe and Russia*. New York: St. Martin's Griffin.
- Çakılcı, D. (2019). Osmanlı Devleti'nde “Öteki” Olmak. In B. Koçakoğlu, B. Karşlı, & D. Çakılcı, *Antalya Kitabı Antalya'da Türk-İslâm Medeniyetinin İzleri* (2). Konya: Palet.
- Čalić, M.-Ž. (2013). *Istorija Jugoslavije u 20. veku*. Beograd: Clio.
- Çelebi, E. (1967). *Evlia Çelebi Seyahatnamesi*. İstanbul: Zuhuri Danişman. (2nd ed.)
- Çelik, A. (2010). *Vesayatten Siyasete Türkiye'de Sendikacılık (1946–1967)*. İstanbul: İletişim.
- Dahlström, F. (1982). *Sibelius-Akatemia 1882–1982*. Helsinki: Sibelius-Akatemia.
- Daniel, A. & Kubaník, P. (2018). O Romech z Oslavan. Historická práce Antonína Daniela o Romech z jeho rodné obce. *Romano džaniben*, 25 (1): 167–185.
- Daniłowicz, I. (1824). *O cyganach. Wiadomość historyczna, czytana na posiedzeniu publiczném Cesarskiego Uniwersytetu Wileńskiego, dnia 30 cterwca 1824 roku*. Wilno: A. Marcinkowski.
- De Lara, M. V. (1938). The Gypsies in the Spanish Civil War. *Journal of the Gypsy Lore Society*, Third Series, 18 (2–3): 146–148.
- Děkařová-Bělochová, M. (2012). *Petrov ... příběhy, jak je psal život*. Petrov: Obec Petrov.
- Dimitroff, A. (1898). *Die Psychologischen Grundlagen Der Ethik J. G. Fichte's: Aus ihrem Gesamtcharakter Entwickelt*. Inaugural Dissertation. Jena: Jena Universität.
- Dimov, V. (2012). A Contribution to the Research of the Media Music on the Balkans: A view from the tavern tables to some relations between the musical cultures in the Balkans in the field of media music during the first half of 20th century. In Despić, D., Jovanović, J. & Lajić-Mihajlović, D. (Eds.) *Музичке праксе Балкана: Етномузиколошке перспективе / Musical practices in the Balkans: Ethnomusicological perspectives* (pp. 313–325). Београд: Етномузиколошки институт САНУ.

- Dingeç, E. (2021). Education of the Roma in the late Ottoman period. *Edukacja międzykulturowa* 2021, 14 (1): 95–108.
- Donert, C. (2017). *The Rights of the Roma: The Struggle for Citizenship in Postwar Czechoslovakia*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Dosdoğru, M. H. (1993). *6 / 7 Eylül Olayları*. İstanbul: Bağlam.
- Dribins, L. (2004). *Etniskās un nacionālās minoritātes Eiropā. Vēsture un mūsdienas*. Rīga: Eiropas Padomes Informācijas birojs.
- Dunajeva, J. (2019). Hra o romství: Divadlo Romen a jeho role při konstrukci romské identity v Sovětském svazu ve dvacátých a třicátých letech 20. století. *Romano Džaniben*, 26 (1): 95–109.
- Dunajeva, J. (2021a). *Constructing Identities over Time: “Bad Gypsies” and “Good Roma” in Russia and Hungary*. Budapest & Vienna & New York: Central European University Press.
- Dunajeva, J. (2021b). From “Unsettled Fortune-Tellers” to Socialist Workers: Education Policies and Roma in Early Soviet Union. In M. M. Mendes, O. Magano & S. Toma (Eds.) *Social and Economic Vulnerability of Roma People: Key Factors for the Success and Continuity of Schooling Levels* (pp. 65–78). Lisboa: Springer.
- Dumont, P. (2013). Bir Osmanlı Sosyalist Örgütü: Selanik Sosyalist İşçi Federasyonu. In G. Haupt & P. Dumont (Eds.) *Osmanlı İmparatorluğunda Sosyalist Hareketler* (pp. 25–42). İstanbul: Ayrıntı.
- Dündar, F. (2002). *İttihat ve Terakki'nin Müslümanları İskân Politikası (1913–1918)*. İstanbul: İletişim.
- Durić, R. (1987). *Seobe Roma: krugovi pakla i venac sreće*. Beograd: Beogradski izdavačko-grafički zavod.
- Durić, R. (2006). *Istorija Roma*. Beograd: Politika.
- Durić, R. & Miletić, A. (2008). *Istorija Holokausta Roma*. Beograd: Politika AD.
- Edele, M. (2014). The New Soviet Man as a “Gypsy”: Nomadism, War, and Marginality in Stalin's Time. *Region*, 3 (2): 285–307.
- Ersoy, A., Górný, M. & Kechriotis, V. (Eds.) (2010a). *Discourses of Collective Identity in Central and Southeast Europe 1770–1945. Texts and Commentaries*. Vol. 3, Issue 1. *Modernism: The Creation of Nation-States*. Budapest & New York: CEU Press.
- Ersoy, A., Górný, M. & Kechriotis, V. (Eds.) (2010b). *Discourses of Collective Identity in Central and Southeast Europe 1770–1945. Texts and Commentaries*. Vol. 3, Issue 2. *Modernism: Representations of National Culture*. Budapest & New York: CEU Press.
- Ficowski, J. 1953. *Cyganie polscy. Szkice historyczno-obyczajowe*. Warszawa: PIW.
- Ficowski, J. (1985). *Cyganie na polskich drogach*. Kraków & Wrocław: Literackie. (2nd ed.)
- Ficowski, J. (1989). *Cyganie w Polsce: Dzieje i obyczaje*. Warszawa: Interpress.
- Fontserè, C. (1995). *Memòries d'un cartellista català (1931–1939)*. Barcelona: Editorial PÓRTIC.
- Fontserè, C. (2004). *Un exiliado de tercera: En París durante la Segunda Guerra Mundial*. Barcelona: Acantilado.
- Fotta, M. (2018). *From Itinerant Trade to Moneylending in the Era of Financial Inclusion*. London: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Fraser, A. (1992). *The Gypsies*. Oxford & Cambridge, MA: Blackwell.
- Freudenfelds, K. (1939). *Iekšmisija*. Rīga: Ev.-Lut. Baznīcas virsvalde.

- Frolec, V., Hynek, M., Skácel, J., Unger, J., Zemek, M. & Zimáková, A. (1978). *Slovácko. Kapitoly z dějin Slovácka*. Brno: Muzejní spolek v Brně, Okresní archiv Břeclav se sídlem v Mikulově & Okresní muzeum Hodonínska v Hodoníně.
- Friman-Korpela, S. (2014). *Romanipolitiikasta romanien politiikkaan. Poliittisen asialistan ja toimijakonseption muutos 1900-luvun jälkipuoliskon Suomessa*. Ph.D. Thesis. Jyväskylä: University of Jyväskylä.
- Fundación Pública Andaluza Centro de Estudios Andaluces (2010). *Helios Gómez: Dibujo en acción 1905/1956*. Sevilla: Associació Cultural Helios Gómez.
- Gabbay, M. (2013). *Cumhuriyetle Birlikte Büyüdüm*. İstanbul: Sarı Defter.
- Ganz, M. & McKenna, E. (2019). Bringing Leadership Back In. In D. A. Snow, S. A. Soule, H. Kriesi & H. J. McCammon (Eds.) *The Wiley Blackwell Companion to Social Movements* (pp. 185–202). Hoboken: John Wiley & Sons. (2nd ed.)
- Garda-Rozenberga, I. & Zellis, K. (2015). Atceroties genocīdu: romu iznīcināšana nacistu okupācijas laikā Latvijas romu kolektīvajā atmiņā. *Latvijas Vēstures Institūta Žurnāls*, 95 (2): 64–95.
- Geus, C.-F. (2004). Venäjän sisällissodassa surmansa saaneet suomalaiset punakaartilaiset. In L. Westerlund (Ed.) *Suomalaiset ensimmäisessä maailmansodassa* (pp. 109–190). Helsinki: Valtioneuvoston kanslia. Edita Prima Oy.
- Georghe N. & Mirga, A. (1997). *The Roma in the Twenty-First Century: A Policy paper*. Princeton, NJ: Project on Ethnic Relations.
- Gierliński, Z. (2012). *Profesje romskie*. Wrocław: Fundacja Integracji Społecznej PROM.
- Gilliat-Smith, B. J. (1945). Two Erlides Fairy-Tales. *Journal of the Gypsy Lore Society*, Third Series, 24 (1): 17–26.
- Giomì, F. (2019). Muslim, educated and well-dressed: Gajret's self-civilizing mission in interwar Yugoslavia. *European Review of History. / Revue europeenne d'histoire*, 26 (1): 41–59.
- Gjorgjević, T. R. (1934) Two Bible Stories in the Tradition of Serbian Gypsies. *Journal of the Gypsy Lore Society*, Third Series, 13 (1): 26–37.
- Glacner, F. (1973). *Historie cikánského (romského) divadla na území dnešní ČSSR*. M.A. Thesis. Brno: Univerzita J. E. Purkyně.
- Glavinof, V. (2013 [1910]). Sosalist Enternasyonal Başkanlık Kuruluna Sunulan Rapor: Avrupa Türkiye'sinde Sosalist Hareket 1910. In G. Haupt & P. Dumont (Eds.) *Osmanlı İmparatorluğunda Sosalist Hareketler* (pp. 65–72). İstanbul: Ayrıntı.
- Gligorijević, B. (1986). Jugoslovenstvo izmedju dva rata. *Jugoslovenski istorijski časopis*, 21 (1–4): 71–97.
- Gómez, H. (1996). Por qué me marchó del anarquismo. In U. Tjaden (Ed.) *Helios Gómez: Artista de la corbata roja* (pp. 207–212). Trad. Mikel Arizaleta. Navarra: Editorial Txalaparta, 1996.
- Gómez Plana, G. (2020). *Un gitanyillo en La Ciudad de los Muchachos (Las generaciones perdidas)*. Barcelona: Associació Cultural Helios Gómez.
- Gómez Plana, G. & Mignot, C. (Eds.) (2006). *Helios Gómez: Poemas de lucha y sueño (1942–1946)*. Barcelona: Associació Cultural Helios Gómez.
- Gontarek, A. (2016). Królowie cygańscy w II Rzeczpospolitej: Wokół dorobku Jerzego Ficowskiego na temat sprawy cygańskiej w okresie międzywojennym. *Annales Universitatis Peadagogicae Cracoviensis: Studia Historicolitearaia*, 16: 145–158.

- Gontarek, A. (2017). Klan Kwieków jako przedstawicielstwo cygańskie a obóz sanacyjny w latach 1926–1935 w świetle sanacyjnych i prorrządowych dzienników informacyjnych. *Sprawy Narodowościowe*, 49: 1–21.
- Gontarek, A. (2020). Political Activity of Kwiek 'Dynasty' in the Second Polish Republic in the Years 1935–1939. *Social Inclusion*, 8 (2): 1–10.
- González Barrios, L. (2019). *Días de ira* (1930) de Helios Gómez: La encrucijada del artista revolucionario de entreguerras. *Neophilologus*, 103: 365–379.
- González Fernández, Á. (1996). *Los orígenes del socialismo en Sevilla. 1900–1923*. Sevilla: Área del Cultura del Ayuntamiento de Sevilla.
- Goularas, G. B. (2012). 1923 Türk Yunan Nüfus Mübadelesi ve Günümüzde Mübadil Kimlik ve Kültürlerinin Yaşatılması. *Alternatif Politika*, 4(2): 129–146.
- Greitjāne, R. (2003). Čigāni. In V. Bērziņš (Ed.) 20. *gadsimta Latvijas vesture. II. Neatkarīgā valsts 1918–1940* (pp. 367–369). Rīga: Latvijas Vēstures institūta apgāds.
- Grönfors, J. (2012). Mustalaislähetyksen lastenkotitoiminta. In P. Pulma (Ed.) *Suomen romanien historia* (pp. 241–249). Helsinki: Suomalaisen Kirjallisuuden Seura.
- Grönfors, M. (1977). *Blood Feuding among Finnish Gypsies*. Helsinki: University of Helsinki.
- Grönfors, M. (1986). Social control and law in the Finnish Gypsy community: blood feuding as a system of justice. *Journal of legal pluralism and unofficial law*, 18 (24): 101–126.
- Grönfors, M. (1997). Institutional non-marriage in the Finnish Roma community and its relationship to Rom traditional law. *The American Journal of Comparative Law*, 45 (2): 305–327.
- Gronská, L. (2014). Leopold Nopp. Muzeum Strážnice. Retrieved from <http://m.straznice-mesto.cz/leopold-nopp/d-8u7>.
- Gropper, R. C. (1967). Urban Nomads: The Gypsies of New York City. *Transactions of the New York Academy of Sciences*, 29 (8): 1050–1056.
- Gürboğa, N. (2016). Türk-Yunan Nüfus Mübadelesi ve Devletin Mübadil Romanlara İlişkin Söylem ve Politikaları. *Sosyal Bilimler Dergisi*, IX (1): 109–140.
- Güzel, M. Ş. (1996). *Türkiye'de İşçi Hareketleri 1908–1914*. İstanbul: Kaynak.
- Hadar, G. (2007). Jewish Tobacco Workers in Salonika: Gender and Family in the Context of Social and Ethnic Strife. In A. Buturovic & İ. Schick (Eds.) *Women in the Ottoman Balkans* (pp. 127–153). London & New York, NJ: Tauris Academic Studies.
- Hajnáczky, T. (2019a). Magyar Cigányzenészek Lapja. Cigányzenész önszerveződés, érdekképviselet és közélet a két világháború között. *Pro Minoritate*, 23 (4): 123–136.
- Hajnáczky, T. (Ed.) (2019b). *Magyar Cigányzenészek Országos Egyesülete. Cigányzenészek harca a két világháború közötti Magyarországon*. Budapest: Gondolat Kiadó.
- Hajnáczky, T. (2020a). A revizionista cigányprímás. Bura Károly a cigányzenészek egyesületét beléptette a Magyar Revíziós Ligába. *Mandiner*, 2 (23): 64.
- Hajnáczky, T. (2020b). Hungarian Gypsy Musician's National Association: Battles Faced by Gypsy Musicians in Hungary during the Interwar Years. *Social Inclusion*, 8 (2): 327–335.
- Hajnáczky, T. (Ed.) (2020c). *Magyar Czigányzenészek Egyesülete. Cigányzenészek mozgalma a boldog békeidők Magyarországon*. Budapest: Gondolat Kiadó.
- Hajnáczky, T. (2020d). Trianon and Revisionist Gypsy Musicians. *Central European Political Science Review*, 21 (3): 129–141.

- Halaçoğlu, A. (1995). *Balkan Harbi Sırasında Rumeli'den Türk Göçleri (1912–1913)*. Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu.
- Hancock, I. (1991a). The Eastern European Roots of Romani Nationalism. In D. Crowe & J. Kolsti (Eds.) *Gypsies of Eastern Europe* (pp. 133–150). Armonk, NY & New York, NJ & London: M. E. Sharpe, Inc.
- Hancock, I. (1987). *The Pariah Syndrome: An Account of Gypsy Slavery and Persecution*. Ann Arbor: Karoma.
- Hancock, I. (1991b). The Roots of Romani Nationalism. *Nationalities Papers*, 19 (3): 251–267.
- Hancock, I. (1996). The Roots of Antigypsyism. *Roma*, 44–45: 4–24.
- Hancock, I. (2002). *We are the Romani people. Ame sam e Rromane džene*. Hatfield: University of Hertfordshire Press.
- Hancock, I. (2010). *Danger! Educated Gypsy. Selected Essays*. Hatfield: University of Hertfordshire Press.
- Hanzal, J. (2004). *Cikáni na Moravě v 15. až 18. století. Dějiny etnika na okraji společnosti*. Praha: Nakladatelství Lidové noviny.
- Hegedús, S. 2017. Sztójka Ferenc hazatalált. *Barátság*, 24 (5): 9082–9084.
- Hanioglu, M. Ş. (2008). *A Brief History of the Late Ottoman Empire*. Princeton, NJ & Oxford: Princeton University Press.
- Haupt, G. (2013). Selanik Sosyalist İşçi Federasyonu (SSİF) Tarihine Giriş. In G. Haupt & P. Dumont (Eds.) *Osmanlı İmparatorluğu'nda Sosyalist Hareketler* (pp. 11–24). İstanbul: Ayrıntı.
- Haupt, G. & Dumont, P. (2013). *Osmanlı İmparatorluğunda Sosyalist Hareketler*. İstanbul: Ayrıntı Yayınları.
- Hedman, H. (2012). Mustalaislähetkkestä Romano Missioksi. In P. Pulma (Ed.) *Suomen romanien historia* (pp. 250–258). Helsinki: Suomalaisen Kirjallisuuden Seura.
- [No Author]. (1914). *Helsingin ja ympäristön osote- ja ammattikalenteri*. Helsinki: Aksel Paul.
- [No Author]. (1976). *Hengellinen laulukirja*. Kuopio: Savon Sanomat.
- Hirsch, F. (2005). *Empire of Nations: Ethnographic Knowledge and the Making of the Soviet Union*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press.
- Hirschon, R. (2004a). 'Unmixing People' in the Aegean Region. In R. Hirschon (Ed.) *Crossing the Aegean an Appraisal of the 1923 Compulsory Population Exchange between Greece and Turkey* (pp. 3–12). New York, NJ & Oxford: Berghahn Books.
- Hirschon, R. (2004b). The Consequences of the Lausanne Convention. In R. Hirschon (Ed.) *Crossing the Aegean an Appraisal of the 1923 Compulsory Population Exchange between Greece and Turkey* (pp. 13–22). New York, NJ & Oxford: Berghann Books.
- Hobsbawm, E. J. (1990). *Nations and Nationalism since 1870: Programme, Myth, Reality*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Hobsbawm, E. (1992). Introduction: Inventing Tradition. In E. Hobsbawm & T. Ranger (Eds.) *The Invention of Tradition* (pp. 1–14). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Holler, M. (2014). Historical Predecessors of the Term "Anti-Gypsyism". In J. Selling, H. Kyuchukov, P. Laskar & B. Templer (Eds.) *Antiziganism: What's in a Word?* (pp. 82–99). Newcastle: Cambridge Scholars Publishing.

- Holomek, K. (1999). Moravský Cigán – Tomáš Holomek. *Romano džaniben*, 6 (3): 129–132.
- Holomková, J. (1989). *Integrace a asimilace svatobořických Romů*. M.A. Thesis. Brno: Univerzita J. E. Purkyně.
- Hoover, J. E. (1943). *Federal Bureau of Investigation, U.S. Department of Justice, Washington D.C.* National Archives, RG 65, Box 8, Folder IC 25-94415. Reprinted in W. R. Miller (Ed.) (2012). *The Social History of Crime and Punishment in America: An Encyclopedia* (p. 2283). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage, Vol. 5.
- Horák, M. (2015). "... mint gyémátcsepp a szénben ..." *Cigány származású magyar zeneszerzők, nótaszerzők, előadóművészek és pedagógusok 1600–2010*. Budapest: Oriold és Társai.
- Horváthová-Holomková, J. (1994). Možnosti integrace na příkladu moravských Romů. *Romano džaniben*, 1 (1): 8–19.
- Hroch, M. (1985). *Social Preconditions of National Revival in Europe: A Comparative Analysis of the Social Composition of Patriotic Groups among the Smaller European Nations*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Hroch, M. (2005). *Das Europa der Nationen: Die moderne Nationsbildung im europäischen Vergleich*. Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht.
- Hübschmannová, M. (2002). Aleksandr Vjačeslavovič Germano (1895–1955). *Romano Džaniben*, 9 (2): 79–97.
- Hübschmannová, M. (2005). "Po židoch cigáni": *Svědectví Romů ze Slovenska 1939–1945*. Díl I. Praha: Triáda.
- Hyttinen, E. (2012). *Kovaa työtä ja kohtalon oikkuja. Elvira Willmanin kamppailu työläiskirjallisuuden tekijyydestä vuosisadanvaihteen Suomessa*. Ph.D. Thesis. Turku: Turun yliopisto.
- Ilijić, N. (1999). *Istorija zadruga kod Srba*. Beograd: Službeni list SRJ.
- Iorga, N. (1931). Comptes-rendus. C. I. Popp Șerboianu, Les Tziganes, Paris 1930. *Revue Historique du Sud-Est Européen*, 8 (4–6): 142.
- Iorga, N. (1934). Cronică, *Revista Istorică*, 20 (7–9): 287.
- İleri, R. N. (1976a). *Mihri Belli Olayı I M.D.D-Yön Tartışmaları Sosyalist Aydınlık Davası*. İstanbul: Anadolu Yayınları.
- İleri, R. N. (1976b). *Mihri Belli Olayı III Öz Eleştiri Türkiye Emekçi Partisi (The Case of Mihri Belli III Self Criticism Labourers Pary of Turkey)*. İstanbul: Anadolu Yayınları.
- İleri, R. N. (2003). *Kırklı Yıllar-4 1947 TKP Davası*. İstanbul: TÜSTAV.
- İpek, N. (1999). *Rumeli'den Anadolu'ya Türk Göçleri*. Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu.
- Jacob, G. (1925). *Geschichte des Schattentheaters im Morgen- und Abendland*. 2 völlig umgearbeitete Auflage mit bibliographischem Anhang. Hannover: Lafaire.
- Jalkanen, P. (1989). *Alaska, Bombay ja Billy Boy: jazzkulttuurin murros Helsingissä 1920-luvulla*. Ph.D. Thesis. Helsinki: Suomen etnomusikologinen seura.
- Jalkanen, P. (2006). Venäläinen romanssi. In P. Jalkanen & V. Kurkela (Eds.) *Populaarimusiikki. Suomen musiikin historia* (pp. 87–108). Porvoo: WSOY.
- Jalkio, O. (1939). *Romanenge ğiülja. Romaanilauluja*. Jyväskylä: Nuorten todistus.
- Jāņa Leimaņa čigānu folkloras vākums. (1930's). Retrieved from <http://garamantas.lv/lv/collection/886320/Jana-Leimana-ciganu-folkloras-vakums>.

- Janjetović, Z. (2005). *Deca careva pastorčad kraljeva. Nacionalne manjine u Jugoslaviji 1918–1941*. Beograd: INIS.
- Jašić, N. (2001). *Stari niški Romi*. Niš: KSS.
- Jelínek, J. (1980). *Poslední slova svého otce*. Manuscript. NA, f. ÚV SPB, soutěž 2705.
- Jelínek, J. (1991). *Paměti o utrpení a mučení Československých lidí za II. světové války v koncentračních táborech "Osvětimi – Birkenau" ROMU a ŽIDU" i ostatních politicky stíhaných občanů*. Manuscript. MRK, MRK 17/91.
- Jopson, N. B. (1936). Romano Lil (Tsiganske Novine). *Journal of the Gypsy Lore Society*, Third Series, 15 (2): 86–91.
- Joseph (Archduke of Austria). (1888). *Czigány nyelvtan. Románo csibákero sziklaribe*. Budapest: A Magyar tudományos akadémia.
- Jurová, A. & Zupková, E. (2007). Rómovia v Košiciach v 1. ČSR v kontexte doby i regiónu (1918–1938). *Bulletin Muzea romské kultury*, 16: 105–111.
- Kaboğlu, İ. (2010). Anayasa'da Sosyal Haklar: Alanı ve Sınırları. *Sosyal Haklar Ulusal Sempozyumu II* (pp. 43–60). İstanbul: Petrol-İş.
- Kalinin, V. (2020) About the Gypsy (Romani) Renaissance in the Soviet Union (1925–1938) and its Successors. *Revista de etnologie și culturologie*, 28: 64–73.
- Kalinin, V. (2021). Romani Women in Battles against Fascism in Soviet Union (1941–1945). In H. Kyuchukov, S. Zahova & I. Duminica (Eds.) *Romani History and Culture: Festschrift in Honor of Prof. Dr. Vesselin Popov* (pp. 169–177). München: Lincom Academic Publishers.
- Kállai, E. (2002). A cigányzenészek helye és szerepe a magyar társadalomban és a magyar kultúrában. In N. Kovács & L. Szarka (Eds.) *Tér és terep. Tanulmányok az etnicitás és az identitás kérdésköréből* (pp. 327–345). Budapest: Akadémiai Kiadó.
- Kamusella, T. (2018). Nationalism and National Languages. In J. W. Tollefson & M. Pérez-Milans (Eds.) *The Oxford Handbook of Language Policy and Planning*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Kansu, A. (1997). *The Revolution of 1908 in Turkey*. Köln: Brill.
- Kapralski, S. (2015). Dłaczego Rudolf Kwiek zdradził własny naród? *Dialog Pheniben*, 19: 104–111.
- Karpat, K. (1985). *Ottoman Population 1830–1914: Demographic and Social Characteristics*. Madison, WI: The University of Wisconsin Press.
- Kaslov, S. (1995). Edited by S. Salo. The Ways of My People. *Journal of the Gypsy Lore Society*, Series 5, 5 (1): 15–37.
- Kenez, P. (2006). *A History of Soviet Union from the Beginning to the End*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Kenrick, D. (2007). *The Romani World: A Historical Dictionary of the Gypsies (Romanies)*. Hatfield: The Scarecrow Press. (2nd ed.)
- Kenrick, D. & Puxon, G. (2009). *Gypsies under the Swastika*. Hatfield: University of Hertfordshire Press.
- Keyder, Ç. (2004). The Consequences of the Exchange of Populations for Turkey. In R. Hirschon (Ed.) *Crossing the Aegean an Appraisal of the 1923 Compulsory Population Exchange between Greece and Turkey* (pp. 39–52). New York, Oxford: Berghahn.

- Kisch, E. E. (1992). Zaren, Popen, Bolschewiken. In E. E. Kisch. *Gesammelte Werke in Einzelausgaben*. Vol. III. Berlin & Weimar: Aufbau.
- Kindler, R. (2014). *Stalins Nomaden: Herrschaft und Hunger in Kasachstan*. Hamburg: HIS.
- Kıvılcımlı, H. (1978). *Yol 2 Yakın Tarihten Birkaç Madde*. İstanbul: Köxüs (Online-Reprint).
- Kladivová, V. (1994). *Konečná stanice Auschwitz-Birkenau*. Olomouc: Univerzita Palackého v Olomouci.
- Klímová-Alexander, I. (2002). Romani Political Representation in Central Europe: An Historical Survey. *Romani Studies*, Ser. 5, 12 (2): 103–147.
- Klímová-Alexander, I. (2005a). The Development and Institutionalization of Romani Representation and Administration. Part 2: Beginnings of Modern Institutionalization (Nineteenth Century – World War II). *Nationalities Papers*, 33 (2): 155–210.
- Klímová-Alexander, I. (2005b). *The Romani Voice in World Politics: The United Nations and Non-State Actors*. Hants: Ashgate.
- Kočović, B. (1990). *Žrtve Drugog svetskog rata u Jugoslaviji*. Sarajevo: Svjetlost.
- Kóczé, A. (2020). Racialization, Racial Oppression of Roma. In I. Ness & Z. Cope (Eds.) *The Palgrave Encyclopedia of Imperialism and Anti-Imperialism*. London: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Kóczé, A. & Popa, R. M. (2009). *Missing Intersectionality: Race/Ethnicity, Gender, and Class in Current Research and Policies on Romani Women in Europe*. Budapest: CEU Press.
- Koçak, H. (2014). İşçi Hareketinin Örgütsel Kapasitesi ve Ölçeksel Strateji Bağlamında İstanbul İşçi Sendikaları Birliği Örneği (1948–1962). *Çalışma ve Toplum*, 4: 53–102.
- Kolukıncı, S. (2006). Geçmişin Aynasında Lozan Çingeneleri: Göç, Hatıra, Deneyimler. *Hacettepe Üniversitesi Sosyolojik Araştırmalar Dergisi*, May 20, pp. 1–12.
- Konopczyński, W. (2010). *Pierwszy rozbiór Polski*. Kraków: Arcana.
- Korkut, U. (2006). Nationalism versus Internationalism: The Roles of Political and Cultural Elites in Interwar and Communist Romania. *Nationalities Papers* 34(2), pp. 131–55.
- Kosova, Z. (2011). *Ben İşçiyim*. İstanbul: Sardefter. (First edition: Kosova, Z. (1996). *Ben İşçiyim*. İstanbul: İletişim).
- Kotilainen, T. (2009). *Portaat parnassolle. Nuorisokoulutusta Sibelius-Akatemiassa 125 vuotta*. Helsinki: Classicus.
- Kowalski, M. (2010). *Dyskurs kolonialny w Drugiej Rzeczypospolitej*. Warszawa: DIG.
- Kozhanov, K. & Makhotina, I. (2019). Romani Literature in Russia and the Soviet Union from the Nineteenth Century to the Present. Retrieved from <https://www.romarchive.eu/en/literature/literature-countries-and-regions/literature-russia-and-soviet-union/>.
- Kömürçüyan, E. Ç. (1988). *İstanbul Tarihi XVII: Asırda İstanbul*. İstanbul: Eren.
- Kundakçı, S. Ş. (2005). *Bir Ömür Bir Sohbet*. İstanbul: TÜSTAV.
- Kuyucu, A. T. (2005). Ethno-religious ‘Unmixing’ of ‘Turkey’: 6–7 September Riots as a Case in Turkish Nationalism. *Nations and Nationalism*, 11 (3): 361–380.
- Lacková, E. (1997). *Narodila jsem se pod šťastnou hvězdou*. Praha: Triáda.
- Lacková, E. (2000). *A False Dawn: My Life as a Gypsy Woman in Slovakia*. Hatfield: University of Hertfordshire Press.

- Lahovari, G. I., Brătianu, C. I., & Tocilescu, G. (1902), *Marele Dicționar Geografic al României*. București: Stab. grafic J. V. Socecă.
- Lal, Ch. (1962). *Gypsies: Forgotten Children of India*. Delhi: Publications Division. Ministry of Information and Broadcasting.
- Latviešu konversācijas vārdnīca. (1935). Jānis Leimanis. In *Latviešu konversācijas vārdnīca*. Vol. 12 (pp. 22846–22847). Rīga: A Gulbja apgāde.
- Lauwagie, B. N. (1979). Ethnic Boundaries in Modern States: Romano Lavo-Lil Revisited. *American Journal of Sociology*, 85 (2): 310–337.
- Legie 100. (2021). Výpis informací o legionáři Josefu Pajerovi, *13. 2. 1886. In *Československá obec legionářská*. Retrieved from <http://legie100.com/krev-legionare/635>.
- Leimanis, J. (1939). *Čigāni Latvijas mežos, mājās un tirgos*. Rīga: Ata Freinata izdevniecība.
- Lemon, A. (2000). *Between Two Fires: Gypsy Performance and Romani Memory from Pushkin to Postsocialism*. London: Duke University Press.
- Lemon, A. (2001). Russia: Politics of Performance. In W. Guy (Ed.) *Between Past and Future: The Roma of Central and Eastern Europe* (pp. 227–241). Hatfield: University of Hertfordshire Press.
- Lemon, A. (2013). Roma (Gypsies) in the Soviet Union and the Moscow Teatr “Romen”. In D. Tong (Ed.) *Gypsies: An Interdisciplinary Reader* (pp. 147–166). New York, NJ & London: Routledge.
- Lenderová, M., Macková, M., Bezecný, Z. & Jiránek, T. 2005. *Dějiny každodennosti dlouhého 19. století. II. díl: Život všední i sváteční*. Pardubice: FHS Univerzita Pardubice.
- Leskinen, H. (1995). Inkerin asutus ja väestöryhmät. In M. Jokipii (Ed.) *Itämerensuomalaiset. Heimokansojen historiaa ja kohtaloita*. Jyväskylä: Atena.
- Levine, L. W. (1992). The Folklore of Industrial Society: Popular Culture and Its Audience. *American Historical Review*, 97 (5): 1369–1399.
- Lewy, G. (2000). *The Nazi persecution of the Gypsies*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Lexa, L. (2018). *Vojáci Slovácké brigády očima historické statistiky. Příloha 1: Databáze příslušníků Slovácké brigády*. B. A. Thesis. Brno: Masarykova Univerzita, Filozofická fakulta, Ústav pomocných věd historických archivnictví.
- Lhotka, P. (2009). Svaz Cikánů-Romů 1969–1973. In *Svaz Cikánů-Romů 1969–1973. Doprovodná publikace k výstavě Muzea romské kultury “Svaz Cikánů-Romů (1969–1973). Z historie první romské organizace v českých zemích”* (pp. 5–23). Brno: Muzeum romské kultury.
- Lindberg, V. (2012). Suomen romanien uskonnollinen herääminen. In P. Pulma (Ed.) *Suomen romanien historia* (pp. 143–153). Helsinki: Suomalaisen Kirjallisuuden Seura.
- Livezeanu, I. (1995). *Cultural Politics in Greater Romania. Regionalism, Nation Building & Ethnic Struggle, 1918–1930*. Ithaca & London: Cornell University Press.
- Malnick, B. (1959). The Moscow Gypsy Theatre, 1957–8. *Journal of the Gypsy Lore Society*, Third Series, 38 (3–4): 81–85.
- Mann, A. B. (2018). *Rómski kováči na Slovensku. Roma Blacksmith in Slovakia*. Bratislava: UĽUV.
- Manuilă, S. (1938). *Recensământul general al populației României din 29 Decembrie 1930. Volumul II: Neam, limbă maternă, religie*. București: Monitorul Oficial & Imprimeria Națională.
- Marinić, B. (2019). *I mi smo branili Hrvatsku: Romi u Domovinskom ratu*. Zagreb: Savez Roma u Republici Hrvatskoj “Kali Sara”.

- Marinov, A. (2021). Bulgaria. In R. B. Roman, S. Zahova & A. Marinov (Eds.) *Roma Literature and Press in Central, South-Eastern and Eastern Europe from 19th Century until the Second World War* (pp. 35–57). Leiden: Brill & Ferdinand Schöningh.
- Markkanen, A. (2003). *Luonnollisesti: etnografinen tutkimus romaninaisten elämäntilasta*. Ph.D. Thesis. Joensuu: Joensuun yliopisto.
- Markó, M. (2006). *Czigányzenészek albuma*. [Reprint edition] Budapest: Fekete Sas Kiadó.
- Martin, T. (2001). *The Affirmative Action Empire: Nations and Nationalisms in the Soviet Union, 1923–1939*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press.
- Martín Sánchez, D. (2018). Los gitanos en la guerra civil: Atrapados entre dos bandos. *La aventura de la historia. Gitanos en las trincheras*, 235: 30–33.
- Marušiaková, J. (1988). *Vzťahy medzi skupinami Cigánov. Slovenský národopis*, 36 (1): 58–80.
- Marushiakova, E. & Popov, V. (Eds.) (1994). *Studii Romani. / Студии Романи*. Vol. 1. Sofia: Club '90.
- Marushiakova, E. & Popov, V. (Eds.) (1995). *Studii Romani. / Студии Романи*. Vol. 2. Sofia: Club '90.
- Marushiakova, E. & Popov, V. (1997). *Gypsies (Roma) in Bulgaria*. Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang.
- Marushiakova, E. & Popov, V. (2001). *Gypsies in the Ottoman Empire*. Hatfield: University of Hertfordshire Press.
- Marushiakova, E. & Popov, V. (2003). Ethnic Identities and Economic Strategies of the Gypsies in the Countries of the Former USSR. *Orientalwissenschaftliche Hefte*, 9: 289–310.
- Marushiakova, E. & Popov, V. (2004). Segmentation vs Consolidation: The example of four Gypsy Groups in CIS. *Romani Studies*, Ser. 5, 14 (2): 145–191.
- Marushiakova, E. & Popov, V. (2005). The Roma – a Nation without a State? Historical Background and Contemporary Tendencies. In W. Burszta, T. Kamusella & S. Wojciechowski (Eds.) *Nationalismus Across the Globe: An Overview of the Nationalism of State-endowed and Stateless Nations* (pp. 433–455). Poznan: School of Humanities and Journalism.
- Marushiakova, E. & Popov, V. (2007). The vanished kurban. Modern dimensions of the celebration of *Kakava/Hidrellez* among the Gypsies in Eastern Thrace (Turkey). In B. Sikimić & P. Hristov (Eds.) *Kurban on the Balkans* (pp. 33–50). Belgrade: Institute for Balkan Studies.
- Marushiakova, E. & Popov, V. (2008a). Russian Empire. In *Information Fact Sheets on Roma History*. Strasbourg: Council of Europe. Retrieved from http://www.coe.int/t/dg4/education/roma/histoCulture_en.asp.
- Marushiakova, E. & Popov, V. (2008b). State Policies under Communism. In *Information Fact Sheets on Roma History*. Strasbourg: Council of Europe. Retrieved from http://www.coe.int/t/dg4/education/roma/histoCulture_en.asp.
- Marushiakova, E. & Popov, V. (2009). The Song Repertoire of the *Servi Roma* from Ukraine (pp. 85–93). In Z. Jurkova & L. Bidgood (Eds.) *Voices of the Weak. Music and Minorities*. Praha: Slovo 21.
- Marushiakova, E. & Popov, V. (2015a). Identity and Language of the Roma (Gypsies) in Central and Eastern Europe. In T. Kamusella, N. Motoki & C. Gibson (Eds.) *The Palgrave Handbook of Slavic Languages, Identities and Borders* (pp. 26–54). London: Palgrave.

- Marushiakova, E. & Popov, V. (2015b). The First Gypsy/Roma Organizations, Churches and Newspapers. In M. Kominko (Ed.). *From Dust to Digital: Ten Years of the Endangered Archives Programme* (pp. 189–224). Cambridge: Open Book Publishers.
- Marushiakova, E. & Popov, V. (2016a). *Gypsies in Central Asia and the Caucasus*. London: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Marushiakova, E. & Popov, V. (2016b). Gypsy Guilds (Esnafs) on the Balkans. In H. Kyuchukov, E. Marushiakova & V. Popov (Eds.) *Roma: Past, Present, Future* (pp. 76–89). München: Lincom Academic Publishers.
- Marushiakova, E. & Popov, V. (2016c). Roma Culture: Problems and Challenges. In E. Marushiakova, & V. Popov (Eds.) *Roma Culture: Myths and Realities* (pp. 35–64). München: Lincom Academic Publishers.
- Marushiakova, E. & Popov, V. (2016d). Roma Museums in Eastern Europa. In E. Marushiakova & V. Popov (Eds.) *Roma Culture: Myths and Realities* (pp. 173–184). München: Lincom Academic Publishers.
- Marushiakova, E. & Popov, V. (2016e). Who are Roma? In E. Marushiakova & V. Popov (Eds.) *Roma Culture: Myths and Realities* (pp. 7–34). München: Lincom Academic Publishers.
- Marushiakova, E. & Popov, V. (2017a). Commencement of Roma Civic Emancipation. *Studies in Arts and Humanities*, 3 (2): 32–55.
- Marushiakova, E. & Popov, V. (2017b). Politics of Multilingualism in Roma Education in Early Soviet Union and its Current Projections. *Social Inclusion*, 5 (4): 48–59.
- Marushiakova, E. & Popov, V. (2018a). Migration vs. Inclusion: Roma Mobilities from East to West. *Baltic Worlds*, 11 (2–3): 88–100.
- Marushiakova, E. & Popov, V. (2018b). Roma Labelling: Policy and Academia. *Slovenský národopis*, 66 (4): 385–418.
- Marushiakova, E. & Popov, V. (2019). Migration, Re-emigration and Identities' Change: The Case of One Roma Group from USSR. In H. Kyuchukov, J. Balvin & L. Kwadrans (Eds.) *In Memoriam of Eva Davidova: Life among Roma with Music and Pictures* (pp. 63–76). Munich: Lincom.
- Marushiakova, E. & Popov, V. (2020a). Beginning of Roma Literature: The Case of Alexander Germano. *Romani Studies*, Ser. 5, 30 (2): 135–161.
- Marushiakova, E. & Popov, V. (Eds.) (2020b). Gypsy Policy and Roma Activism: From the Interwar Period to Current Policies and Challenges. *Social Inclusion*. Vol. 8, No. 2.
- Marushiakova, E. & Popov, V. (2020c). 'Letter to Stalin': Roma Activism vs. Gypsy Nomadism in Central, South-Eastern and Eastern Europe before WWII. *Social Inclusion*, 8 (2): 265–276.
- Marushiakova, E. & Popov, V. (2021a). Ottoman Empire. In R. B. Roman, S. Zahova & A. Marinov (Eds.) *Roma Literature and Press in Central, South-Eastern and Eastern Europe from 19th Century until the Second World War* (pp. 23–33). Leiden: Brill & Ferdinand Schöningh.
- Marushiakova, E. & Popov, V. (Eds.) (2021b). *Roma Voices in History: A Source Book. Roma Civic Emancipation in Central, South-Eastern and Eastern Europe from 19th Century until the Second World War*. Leiden: Brill & Ferdinand Schöningh.
- Matache, M. & Barbu, S. (2019). The History of School Desegregation for Roma. Retrieved from <https://www.romarchive.eu/en/roma-civil-rights-movement/history-school-desegregation-roma/>.

- Matei, P. (2010). Raporturile dintre organizațiile țigănești interbelice și Biserica Ortodoxă Română. In: V. Ciobanu, S. Radu (eds.) *Partide politice și minorități naționale din România în secolul XX* (p. 159–173). Vol. V. Sibiu: Techno Media.
- Matei, P. (2012). Romi sau țigani? Etonimele – istoria unei neînțelegeri. In I. Horvath & L. Nastasă (Eds.) *Rom/Rrom sau țigan. Dilemele unui etnonim în spațiul românesc* (pp. 13–72). Cluj: Institutul pentru Studierea Problemelor Minorităților Naționale.
- Matei, P. (2013). Documente de arhivă despre adunările țiganilor din Transilvania din anul 1919, *Anuarul Institutului de Istorie "George Barițiu" din Cluj-Napoca*, 52 (Supliment): 447–470.
- McGarry, A. (2014). Roma as a Political Identity: Exploring Representations of Roma in Europe. *Ethnicities*, 14 (6): 756–774.
- Menzel, T. (1941). *Meddâh. Schattentheater und Orta Oyunu*. Monographien des Archiv Orientální, X. Prag: Orientalisches Institut.
- Meyer, J. H. (2018). Children of Trans-Empire: Nâzım Hikmet and the First Generation of Turkish Students at Moscow's Communist University of the East. *Journal of the Ottoman and Turkish Studies Association*, 5(2): 195–218.
- Mirga-Kruszelnicka A. & Dunajeva, J. (Eds.) (2020). *Re-thinking Roma Resistance throughout History: Recounting Stories of Strength and Bravery*. Berlin: ERIAC.
- Mishkova, D., Turda, M. & Trencsenyi, B. (Ed.) (2014). *Discourses of Collective Identity in Central and Southeast Europe 1770–1945. Texts and Commentaries*. Vol. 4. *Anti-Modernism: Radical Revisions of Collective Identity*. Budapest & New York: CEU Press.
- Mokłowski, K. (1913). *Sztuka ludowa w Polsce*. Lwów: Nakład Księgarski H. Altenberga.
- Mohamed-Salih, M. A. (1985). *The Position of Gypsies in Finnish Society*. Ph.D. Thesis. Manchester: University of Manchester.
- Molnár, I. (Ed.) (1936). *A magyar muzsika könyve*. Budapest: Merkantil Nyomda.
- Moreno Jiménez, F. (1985). *La guerra civil en Córdoba (1936–1939)*. Pról. Manuel Tuñón de Lara. Madrid: Alpuerto.
- Morris, A. D. & Staggborg, S. (2004). Leadership in Social Movements. In D. A. Snow, S. A. Soule & H. Kriesi (Eds.) *The Blackwell Companion to Social Movements* (pp. 171–196). Malden: Blackwell Publishing.
- Morro Casas, J. L. (2012). *Campos africanos: El exilio republicano en el Norte de África*. Spain: Memoria viva.
- Mróz, L. (2001). *Dzieje Cyganów-Romów w Rzeczypospolitej XV–XVIII w.* Warszawa: DiG.
- Mucha, V. (1955). *Dějiny dělnické tělovýchovy v Československu*. Praha: Státní tělovýchovné nakladatelství.
- Mui Shuko [R. A. Scott Macfie]. (1916). *With Gypsies in Bulgaria*. Liverpool: Henry Young & Sons.
- Mumcu, U. (1993). *Aybar ile Söyleşi*. İstanbul: Tekin Yayınevi.
- Mušinka, A. (2020). *Elena Lacková*. I. Prešov: Štátna vedecká knižnica v Prešove.
- Nacar, C. (2011). Tütün İşçileri, Tüccarlar ve Kırık Camlar 1905 Kavalı Grevi. *Toplumsal Tarih*, (213): 38–42.
- Nacar, C. (2014). Labor Activism and the State in the Ottoman Tobacco Industry. *Journal of Middle East Studies*, (46): 553–551.

- Nacar, C. (2019). *Labor and Power in the Late Ottoman Empire Tobacco Workers, Managers, and the State, 1872–1912*. Cham: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Nagyidai Sztojka, F. (1886). *Ó császári és magyar királyi fensége József főherceg magyar és cigány nyelvű gyökszótára. Románé álvá. Iskolai és utazási használatra*. Kalocsa.
- Nastasă, L. & Varga A. (Eds.) (2001). *Minorităţi etnoculturale. Mărturii documentare. Țigani din România (1919–1944)*. Cluj-Napoca: Centrul de Resurse pentru Diversitate Etnoculturală.
- Nečas, C. (1986). Evidence československých cikánů z let 1922–1927. *Český lid*, 73 (2): 66–71.
- Nečas, C. (1992). *Aušvicate hi khér báro. Čeští vězňové cikánského tábora v Osvětimi II – Březince*. Brno: Masarykova Univerzita v Brně.
- Nečas, C. (1994a). *Českoslovenští Romové v letech 1938–1945*. Brno: Masarykova Univerzita v Brně.
- Nečas, C. (1994b). Neznámý podnět. *Romano džaniben*, 1 (3): 16–18.
- Nečas, C. (2002). K profesní orientaci moravských Romů a Sintů (od provozování řemesel a obchodu přes hudební a zábavné produkce až k příležitostné práci a službám, doplňovaným domácí výrobou a nelegálními zdroji obživy). *Český lid*, 89 (4): 343–350.
- Nečas, C. (2005). *Romové na Moravě a ve Slezsku (1740–1945)*. Brno: Matice moravská.
- Nečas, C. (2008). *Špalíček romských miniatur*. Brno: CDK.
- Nečas, V. (2009). Z dějin romského divadla. *Národopisná revue*, 1: 49–51.
- Newman, J. P. (2015). *Yugoslavia in the Shadow of War: Veterans and the Limits of State Building, 1903–1945*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Nicolăescu-Plopșor, C. S. (1923) *Oltenia. Culegeri/cercetări/documente*. Craiova: “Ramuri” – Institutul de arte grafice Craiova.
- Nicolăescu-Plopșor, C. S. (1927). *Suflet Oltenesc. Culegeri și cercetări folkloristice*. 1 (1): 22–24.
- Nicolăescu-Plopșor, C. S. (1934a). *Ghilea Romane (Cântece țigănești)*. Craiova: Victoria.
- Nicolăescu-Plopșor, C. S. (1934b). *Paramisea romane (Povești țigănești)*. Craiova: Victoria.
- Nirenberg, J. (2016). *Johann Trollmann and Romani Resistance to the Nazis*. Kindle edition. WIN BY KO Publications.
- Northrop, D. (2004) *Veiled Empire: Gender and Power in Stalinist Central Asia*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press.
- O’Keeffe, B. (2008). *Becoming Gypsy, Sovietizing the Self, 1917–1939*. Ph.D. Thesis. New York: New York University.
- O’Keeffe, B. (2010). “Backward Gypsies”, Soviet Citizens: The All-Russian Gypsy Union, 1925–28. *Kritika: Explorations in Russian and Eurasian History*, 11 (2): 283–312.
- O’Keeffe, B. (2013). *New Soviet Gypsies: Nationality, Performance, and Selfhood in the Early Soviet Union*. Toronto, Canada: University of Toronto Press.
- O’Keeffe, B. (2019). ‘Life on Wheels’ (1931) at Moscow’s State Gypsy Theatre Romén. Retrieved from <https://www.romarchive.eu/en/theatre-and-drama/institutional-theatre/life-wheels-1931-moscows-state-gypsy-theatre-romen/>.
- Olszak, S. (2004). Ethnic and Nationalist Social Movements. In A. Snow, S. A. Soule & H. Kriesi (Eds.) *The Blackwell Companion to Social Movements* (pp. 666–693). Malden: Blackwell Publishing.

- Orsós, J. (2015). Precedents to Roma Written Culture and Literature in Hungary. Retrieved from <https://romediafoundation.wordpress.com/2015/09/15/precedents-to-roma-written-culture-and-literature-in-hungary/>.
- Özçelik, M. (2003). *1930–1950 Arasında Tütüncülerin Tarihi*. İstanbul: TÜSTAV.
- P. (1934). Dări de samă. *Revista Istorică*, 20 (1–3): 68–69.
- 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.
- Państwowe Muzeum Oświęcim-Brzezinka & Dokumentations- und Kulturzentrum Deutscher Sinti und Roma. (1993). *Memorial Book: The Gypsies at Auschwitz-Birkenau*. München & New York, NJ: K. G. Saur Verlag.
- Pamuk, Ş. (2015). *Türkiye'nin 200 Yıllık İktisadi Tarihi*. İstanbul: Türkiye İş Bankası.
- Pâra, I. (2011). *Calbor, satul călător între Olt și Ardeal*. Făgăraș: Negru Vodă.
- Parfentie, R. (2018). Femeia consumată și femeia care consumă. Două paradoxuri culinare în România interbelică. *Akademios*, 1 (48): 132–138.
- Pașca, Șt. (1934). Popp Șerboianu C. I. Les Tsiganes. *Histoire – Ethnographie – Linguistique – Grammaire – Dictionnaire. Dacoromania*, 7 (1931–1933): 411–413.
- Paspati, A. G. (1870). *Études sur les Tchinghianés ou Bohémiens de L'Empire Ottoman*. Constantinople: Imprimerie Antoine Koroméla.
- Patek, A. (2009). *Żydzi w drodze do Palestyny. Szkice z dziejów aliji bet nielegalnej imigracji do Palestyny*. Kraków: Avalon.
- Pătrașcu, I. (2000). C. S. Nicolăescu-Plopșor, cercetător al folclorului țigănesc. *Anuarul Institutului de Cercetări Socio-Umane “C. S. Nicolăescu-Plopșor”*, 2: 145–147.
- Pavelčík, J. (1999). “Cikáni” na jižní a jihovýchodní Moravě. *Slovácko*, 41: 183–197.
- Pavelčíková, N. (1999). *Romské obyvatelstvo na Ostravsku 1945–1975*. Ostrava: Ostravská univerzita.
- Pavelčíková, N. (2004). *Romové v českých zemích v letech 1945–1989*. Praha: Úřad pro vyšetřování zločinů komunismu.
- Pavlović, L. (1969). *Smederevo u XIX veku*. Vol. 6. Smederevo: Narodni muzej Smederevo.
- [No Author]. (1878). Petőfiana XXV. Josef Boldizsár. *Összehasonlító Irodalomtörténelmi lapok / Zeitschrift für vergleichende Literatur / Journal de Littérature compare*, 4 (1): 20.
- Petrović, A. (1936). Contributions to the Study of the Serbian Gypsies: Marriage. *Journal of the Gypsy Lore Society*, Third Series, 15 (3): 182–192.
- Petrović, A. (1937). Contributions to the Study of the Serbian Gypsies. *Journal of the Gypsy Lore Society*, Third Series, 16 (10): 111–137.
- Petrović, A. (1940). Legends of Phiraun. *Journal of the Gypsy Lore Society*. Third Series, 19 (3): 112.
- Petulengro [B. Gilliat-Smith]. (1915–1916). Report of the Gypsy Tribes on North-East Bulgaria. *Journal of the Gypsy Lore Society*, New Series, 9 (1): 1–54; (2): 65–109.
- Pissari, M. (2014). *The Suffering of the Roma in Serbia during the Holocaust*. Belgrade: Forum for Applied History.
- Pocitan, V. (1940). *Biserica Ortodoxă Româna din Paris cu o introducere asupra relațiilor franco-române*. București: Cărților Bisericești.

- Poláková, J. (2002). Míra integrace strážnických a oslavanských Romů: projekt “my a oni – oni a my”. *Český lid*, 89 (4): 389–391.
- Popescu, N. G. (1940). *Preoțimea română – întregirea neamului – chipuri, fapte, suferinți și pilde pentru viitor*. București: Vremea.
- Popp Șerboianu, C. I. (1930). *Les Tsiganes. Histoire – Ethnographie – Linguistique – Grammaire – Dictionnaire*. Paris: Payot.
- Potra, G. (1939). *Contribuțiuni la istoricul țiganilor din România*. București: Fundația ‘Regele Carol I’.
- Prokosch, E. (2002). Zigeuner und Schattentheater. Ein vorläufiger Überblick. *Grazer linguistische Studies*, 58 (Herbst): 103–129.
- Pulma, P. (2006). *Suljetut ovet. Pohjoismaiden romanipolitiikka 1500-luvulta EU-aikaan*. Helsinki: Suomalaisen Kirjallisuuden Seura.
- Quataert, D. (2002). The Industrial Working Class of Salonica, 1850–1912. In A. Levy (Ed.) *Jews, Turks, Ottomans A Shared History, Fifteenth through the Twentieth Century* (pp. 194–211). New York, NJ: Syracuse University Press.
- Radzinsky, S. (1945). A Stirring Play at the Moscow Gypsy Theatre. *Journal of the Gypsy Lore Society*, Third Series, 24 (3–4): 120–121.
- Ravandi-Fadai, L. (2015). “Red Mecca” – The Communist University for Laborers of the East: Iranian Scholars and Students in Moscow in the 1920s and 1930s. *Iranian Studies*, 48 (5), 713–727.
- Reclus, É. (1876). *The Universal Geography Southern Europe* (Vol. I). London: J. S. Virtue & Co., Limited.
- Rekola, T. (2010a). Nikkinen, Ferdinand. Kansallisbiografia-verkkojulkaisu. *Studia Biographica*, 4. Helsinki: Suomalaisen Kirjallisuuden Seura. Retrieved from <https://kansallisbiografia.fi/kansallisbiografia/henkilo/9372>.
- Rekola, T. (2010b). Santamo, Sofia. Kansallisbiografia-verkkojulkaisu. *Studia Biographica*, 4. Helsinki: Suomalaisen Kirjallisuuden Seura. Retrieved from <https://kansallisbiografia.fi/kansallisbiografia/henkilo/9328>.
- [No Author]. (1877). *Report upon the Commercial Relations of the United States with Foreign Countries for the Year 1876*. Washington: Government Printing Office.
- Rézműves, M. (Ed.) (2003). *Romane lila. Cigány levelek. Romani letters. József főherceg cigány nyelvű levelezése a XIX. századból*. Budapest: Fővárosi Önkormányzat Cigány Ház – Romano Kher.
- Roman, R. B. (2016). *Kaale belongings and Evangelical becomings: faith, commitment and social outreach among the Finnish Kaale (Finnish Roma)*. Ph.D. Thesis. St Andrews: University of St Andrews.
- Roman, R. B. (2020). From Christian Mission to Trans-National Connections: Twentieth-Century Evangelism and Present-Day Religious Mobilisation among the Roma in Finland. *Social Inclusion*, 8 (2): 367–376.
- Roman, R. B. (2021a). Finland. In Marushiakova, E. & V. Popov. *Roma. Roma Voices in History: A sourcebook. Roma Civic Emancipation in Central, South-Eastern and Eastern Europe from the 19th century until World War II* (pp. 674–694). Leiden: Brill.

- Roman, R. B. (2021b). Romania. In R. B. Roman, S. Zahova & A. Marinov (Eds.) *Roma Literature and Press in Central, South-Eastern and Eastern Europe from 19th Century until the Second World War* (pp. 93–128). Leiden: Brill & Ferdinand Schöningh.
- Roman, R. B., Zahova, S. & Marinov, A. (Eds.) (2021c). *Roma Literature and Press in Central, South-Eastern and Eastern Europe from 19th Century until the Second World War*. Leiden: Brill & Ferdinand Schöningh.
- Romero, P. G. (1998). *Five vertebras. Commentary on Ni en la vida, ni en la muerte*, about Helios Gómez's years in Seville. In J. M. Bonet (Ed.) *Helios Gómez: IVAM Centre Julio González, 29 enero-22 marzo 1998* (pp. 241–253). València: Generalitat Valenciana.
- Romero, P. G. (1999). *Los comienzos del espectáculo en Sevilla*. Sevilla: Junta de Andalucía, Consejería de Cultura.
- Romero, P. G. & Archivo F. X. (2004). *SACER. Fugas sobre lo sagrado y la vanguardia en Sevilla*. Sevilla: Universidad Internacional de Andalucía.
- Romero, P. G. (2010). *Dibujo en acción, 1905–1956*. Sevilla: Centro de Estudios Andaluces & Associació Cultural Helios Gómez.
- Romero, P. G. (2016). Helios Gómez, un artista del lumpemproletariado. In *El ojo partido. Flamenco, cultura de masas y vanguardias* (pp. 93–114). Sevilla: Athenaica.
- Romero, P. G. (2020). Days or Ire. Libertarian Communism. Flamenco Romanies and Avant-Garde Realism. Retrieved from <https://ajuntament.barcelona.cat/lavirreina/en/exhibitions/days-ire-libertarian-communism-flamenco-romanies-and-avant-garde-realism/490>.
- Rostas, I. (Ed.) (2012). *Ten Years After: A History of Roma School Desegregation in Central and Eastern Europe*. Budapest & New York: CEU Press.
- Rotar, M. (2014). Crossing the lines: Calinic I. Popp Șerboianu and the issues of cremation in Romania, *Terra Sebus. Acta Musei Sabesiensis*, 6, 513–28.
- Rövid, M. (2011). One-size-fits-all Roma? On the Normative Dilemmas of the Emerging European Roma Policy, *Romani Studies*, Series 5, 21 (1): 1–22.
- Sakwa, R. (2005). *The Rise and Fall of the Soviet Union 1917–1991*. London & New York, NJ: Routledge.
- Sadílková, H. (2019). A Thrown Gauntlet. Josef Serinek and Jan Tesař as a Challenge for Current Research into the History of the Roma in the 20th Century. *Czech Journal of Contemporary History*, 7: 173–186.
- Sadílková, H., Slačka, D. & Závodská, M. (2018). *Aby bylo i s námi počítáno. Společensko-politická angažovanost Romů a snahy o založení romské organizace v poválečném Československu*. Brno: Muzeum romské kultury.
- Sadílková, H. & Závodská, M. (2022). Asserting a Presence in the Public Sphere: Autobiographies by two Romani Holocaust Survivors in Communist Czechoslovakia. In C. Donert & E. Rosenhaft (Eds.) *Tracing the Legacies of the Roma Genocide: Families as Transmitters of Experience and Memory* (pp. 183–213). Abingdon, Oxon; New York, NY: Routledge.
- [No Author]. (1907). *Salname-i Vilayet-i Selanik*. Selanik: Selanik Hamiye Mektebi Matbaası.

- Salo, S. (1986). *Register of the Carlos de Wendler-Funaro Gypsy Research Collection, c. 1920–1975*. Washington, DC: Smithsonian Institution, National Museum of American History, Archives Center.
- Salo, S. (1995). “Lolya’s Story”: Steve Kaslov and His Memoirs. *Journal of the Gypsy Lore Society*, Series 5, 5 (1): 38–45.
- Sancak, J., Demirel, Z., & Ersan, M. Ö. (2010). In E. S. Dergisi (Producer) *Vedat Türkali ile Söyleşi*. Retrieved from <https://mehmetozgurersan.com/?p=646>.
- Sargın, N. (2001). *TİP’li Yıllar (1961–1971) Anılar-Belgeler II*. İstanbul: Felis.
- Sárosi, B. (1971). *Cigányzene... .* Budapest: Gondolat.
- Sárosi, B. (1971). *Gypsy Music*. Budapest: Corvina.
- Sárosi, B. (Ed.) (2004). *A cigányzenekar múltja az egykorú sajtó tükrében 1776–1903*. Budapest: Nap Kiadó.
- Sárosi, B. (Ed.) (2012). *A cigányzenekar múltja az egykorú sajtó tükrében 1904–1944. II. kötet*. Budapest: Nap Kiadó.
- Sayılgan, A. (1969). *Komuna*. İstanbul: Sıralar.
- Sayılgan, A. (2009). *Türkiye’de Sol Hareketler*. İstanbul: Doğu Kütüphanesi.
- Schina, M. (1938). *Pe marginea Unirei. Basarabia. Ianuarie 1918 – Iunie 1919*. București: Institutul de arte grafice Lupta N. Stroila.
- Scholtz, R. G. (2018). “Hegedűvel és puskával” A Nagy Háború elfeledett cigány katonái (1914–1918). Zsáka: Hangadó Egyesület.
- Schoultz, K. von (1955). *Huoleton heimo*. Lahti: Lahden Kirjapaino- ja Sanomalehti-oy.
- Scott, J. C. (2009). *The Art of Not Being Governed. An Anarchist History of Upland Southeast Asia*. New Haven & London: Yale University Press.
- Scurtu, I. (Ed.) (1993). *România. Documentele Unirii. 1918.* București: Fundației Culturale Române.
- Sender, R. J. (1982). *Álbum de radiografías secretas*. Barcelona: Destino.
- Seppälä, M. (2012) Rakkauden orjuus. Kohunäytelmä sadan vuoden takaa löytyi. *Hüdenkivi*, 6: 33–35.
- Serinek, J. & Tesař, J. (2016) *Česká cikánská rapsodie*. Sv. I–III. Praha: Triáda.
- Seton, M. (1935). The Evolution of the Gypsy Theatre in the U.S.S.R. *Journal of the Gypsy Lore Society*, Third Series, XIV (2), 65–72.
- Sezen, T. (2017). *Osmanlı Yer Adları*. Ankara: T. C. Başbakanlık Devlet Arşivleri Genel Müdürlüğü.
- Sierra, M. (2019). Helios Gómez: La invisibilidad de la revolución gitana. *O Tchatchipen*, 108: 33–54.
- Shaidurov, V. (2018). Gypsies in the Russian Empire: Theories and Practices Addressing their Situation During the Eighteenth and First Half of the Nineteenth Century. *Romani Studies*, Ser. 5, 28 (2): 195–217.
- Shapoval, V. 2020. ‘The Books to the Illiterate?’: Romani Publishing Activities in the Soviet Union, 1927–1938. *Social Inclusion*, 8 (2): 346–357.
- Shapoval, V. (2021a). Obscure Years of Soviet Roma Literature (1939–1941). *Romani Studies*, Ser. 5, 31 (1): 5–28.
- Shapoval, V. (2021b). Romani Language Publications: USSR. In E. Marushiakova & V. Popov (Eds.) *Roma Voices in History: A Source Book. Roma Civic Emancipation in Central, South-Eastern and*

- Eastern Europe from 19th Century until the Second World War* (pp. 1058–1066). Leiden: Brill & Ferdinand Schöningh.
- Shapoval, V. (2021c). USSR. In R. B. Roman, S. Zahova & A. Marinov (Eds.) (2021). *Roma Literature and Press in Central, South-Eastern and Eastern Europe from 19th Century until the Second World War* (pp. 159–195). Leiden: Brill & Ferdinand Schöningh.
- Schwicker, J. H. (1883). *Die Zigeuner in Ungarn und Siebenbuergen*. Wien und Teschen: Karl Prochaska.
- Sennur, S. (2004). *Yıktın perdeyi eyledin vîrân: Yapı Kredi Karagöz Koleksiyonu*. İstanbul: Yapı Kredi.
- Silverman, C. (2012). *Romani Routes: Cultural Politics and Balkan Music in Diaspora*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Skuza, Z. (2006). *Ginące zawody w Polsce*. Warszawa: Muza S. A.
- Slačka, D. (2015). "Cikánská otázka" na Hodonínsku v letech 1945–1973. M.A. Thesis. Brno: Masarykova univerzita.
- Slačka, D. (2018). Spolupráce Okresního výboru Svazu Cikánů-Romů v Hodoníně a Okresného výboru Zväzu Cigánov.Rómo v Senici v letech 1969–1973. In S. Lesňák, S. Novák & M. Porubjak (Eds.) *Společný vzdělávací program přeshraničního exkurzního vzdělávání jako podpora výchovy k občanství. Sborník z konference 14. a 15. listopadu 2018, Skalica – Hodonín* (pp. 126–133). Brno: Masarykova univerzita.
- Slezkine, Y. (2017). *The House of Government: A Saga of the Russian Revolution*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- Smith, D. & Greenfields, M. (2013). *Gypsies and Travellers in Housing: The Decline of Nomadism*. Bristol: Policy Press.
- Soulis, G. C. (1961). The Gypsies in the Byzantine Empire and the Balkans in the late Middle Age. *Dumbarton Oaks Papers*, 15: 143–165.
- Stanca, D. (2013). *Amintiri cu tatăl meu. C. S. Nicolăescu-Ploșor*. Craiova: AIUS.
- Starr, J. (1945). The Socialist Federation of Saloniki. *Jewish Social Studies*, (7): 323–336.
- Steinberg, M. D. (2002). *Proletarian Imagination: Self, Modernity, and the Sacred in Russia, 1910–1925*. Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press.
- Stenroos, M. (2019). *The Roma Civil Rights Movement as a Counter-Weight for Religious Assimilation in Finland*. Retrieved from <https://www.romarchive.eu/en/roma-civil-rights-movement/roma-civil-rights-movement-counter-weight-religiou/>.
- Stewart, M. (1991). Un peuple sans patrie. *Terrain: Revue d'ethnologie de l'Europe* 17: 39–52.
- Stewart, M. (1997). *Time of the Gypsies*. Boulder, CO: Westview Press.
- Stewart, M. (2001). Communist Roma policy 1945–1989 as seen through the Hungarian case. In W. Guy (Ed.) *Between Past and Future: The Roma of Central and Eastern Europe* (pp. 71–92). Hatfield: University of Hertfordshire Press.
- Stojanović, S. (2018). *Put za Jerihon*. Beograd: Albatros plus.
- Stranga, A. (2017). Darbaspēka regulēšana. Darba centrāle. Saimnieciskais dienests. In I. Feldmanis (Ed.) *15. maija Latvija* (pp. 289–297). Rīga: Latvijas Mediji.
- Ştrempel, G. (1989). *Bibliografia românească modernă (1831–1918)*. Vol. III (LQ). Bucureşti: Editura Ştiinţifică şi Enciclopedică.

- Subotić, D. (1998). *Istorijsko – bibliografski prilozi za nacionalnu istoriju štampe*. Beograd: Manastir Sveti Otac Prohor Pčinjski & Narodna biblioteka Srbije.
- Suda, O. (2004). *Bir Ömrün Kıyılarında*. İstanbul: Alkim.
- Sugar, P. F. (Ed.) (1995). *Eastern European Nationalism in the Twentieth Century*. Lanham, MD: The American University Press.
- Sutherland, A. (1975). *Gypsies: The Hidden Americans*. New York: Free Press.
- Swift, L. J. (1997). *Carlos de Wendler-Funaro, Steve Kaslov, and the Image of the American Gypsy*. M.A. Thesis. Washington, DC: George Washington University.
- Szakács, A. D. (2009). Munczy Béla cigányprímás első világháborús frontnaplói (1906–1917). In A. Márfi & I. Kosztics (Eds.) *Cigánysors. A cigánység történeti múltja és jelene II*. (pp. 91–95). Pécs: Emberháza Alapítvány, Erdős Kamill Cigány múzeum, Cigány Kulturális és Közművelődési Egyesület & Magyar Történelmi Társulat.
- Szűjjártó, Cs. (2002). *A cigány útra ment ... Magyar cigányzenészek külföldjárása a kiegyezés előtt*. Budapest: Masszi Kiadó.
- Sztojka, F. (2007). *Dictionnaire rromani oublié: le “Gyök-Szótár” de F. Sztojka*. Réédité par Marcel Courthiade en collaboration avec András Kányádi. Paris: Inalco & Rromani Baxt.
- Şanlıer, S. (2018). Sahte Bir Çingene Takvimi. A Fake Gypsy Calendar. Retrieved from https://www.academia.edu/38057980/SAHTE_B%C4%B0R_%C3%87%C4%B0NGENE_TAKV%C4%B0M%C4%B0_A_FAKE_GYPSY_CALENDAR_-_Sinan_%C5%9Eanl%C4%B1er.
- Šarenac, D. (2020). A View of the Disaster and Victory from Below: Serbian Roma Soldiers, 1912–1918. *Social Inclusion*, 8 (2): 277–285.
- Şenocak, K., & Kılıçoğlu, M. (2011). Örgütlenme Özgürlüğü ve Toplu Pazarlık Açısından Anayasa Değişikliği ile Sınırlı Genel Bakış ve Değişikliğin Getirdiği Olası Sorunlar. *Sicil*, 6 (21): 165–173.
- Şimşir, B. N. (1988). *The Turks of Bulgaria (1878–1985)*. London: K. Rustem.
- Tähtelä, K. (1909). *Mustalaisen kosto*. Hämeenlinna: Karisto.
- Tähtelä, K. (1913). *Ihmisiä: siirtolaisnovelleja*. Helsinki: Kirja.
- Tähtelä, K. (1915). *Ihmisturastamo: kuvauksia yleiseuropalaisesta sodasta*. Helsinki: Työmies Kustannusyhtiö.
- Tähtelä, K. (1916a). *Natsaretin kirvesmies*. Wisconsin: Amerikan yhdist. suom. sos. kustannusyhtiöt.
- Tähtelä, K. (1916b). *Siirtolaisia ja ihmisiä*. Helsinki: Kirja.
- Temo, İ. (2000 [1939]). *İbrahim Temo'nun İttihat ve Terakki Anular*. İstanbul: Arba.
- Tervonen, M. (2010). 'Gypsies', 'travellers' and 'peasants'. A study on ethnic boundary drawing in Finland and Sweden, c. 1860–1925. Ph.D. Thesis. Florence: European University Institute.
- Tervonen, M. (2012). Kiertolaisia, silmätikkuja ja rajojen ylittäjiä: 1800-luvun lopulta toiseen maailmansotaan. In P. Pulma (Ed.) *Suomen romanien historia* (pp. 84–143). Helsinki: Suomalaisen Kirjallisuuden Seura.
- [No Author]. (1888). The Home of Turkish Tobacco. *The Cornhill Magazine*, 11 (58): 190–201.
- Theodosiu, A. (2004). 'Be-longing' in a 'doubly occupied place': The Parakalamos Gypsy musicians. *Romani Studies*, Ser. 5, 14 (1): 25–58.
- Thurfjell, D. (2013). *Faith and Revivalism in a Nordic Romani Community. Pentecostalism amongst the Kaale Roma of Sweden and Finland*. London & New York, NJ: I. B. Tauris.

- Tihovska, I. (2013). Kurš rada čigānu mūziku? Nečigāni un biedrības “Čigānu draugs” koris (1932–1933). *Mūzikas akadēmijas raksti*, 10: 17–28.
- Tihovska, I. (2017). *Īsta čigānu mūzika. Autentiskums un etniskums Latvijas čigānu (romu) mūzikā*. Rīga: LU Literatūras, folkloras un mākslas institūts.
- Tjaden, U. (1986). *Die Hülle zerfetzen Helios Gómez 1905–1956. Andalusier Künstler Kämpfer*. Berlin: Elefant Press Verlag GmbH.
- Tjaden, U. (1996). *Helios Gómez: Artista de corbata roja*. Trans. Mikel Arizaleta. Navarra: Editorial Txalaparta.
- Tjaden, U. (1998). Cincuenta años después ... In Juan Manuel Bonet (Ed.) *Helios Gómez: IVAM Centre Julio González, 29 enero-22 marzo 1998* (pp. 9–54). València: Generalitat Valenciana.
- Todorova, M. (2005). The Trap of Backwardness: Modernity, Temporality and the Study of East European Nationalism. *Slavic Review*, 64 (1): 140–164.
- Tönnies, F. (1887). *Gemeinschaft und Gesellschaft*. Leipzig: Fuess.
- Tóth, K. & Tusor, P. (Eds.) (2016). *Inventarium Vaticanum I. A Budapesti Apostoli Nunciatura levéltára (1920–1939)*. Budapest – Róma: MTA-PPKE Lendület Egyháztörténeti Kutatócsoport.
- Tremlett, A. (2014). Making a Difference without Creating a Difference: Superdiversity as a New Direction for Research on Roma Minorities. *Ethnicities*, 14 (6): 830–848.
- Trębacz, Z. (2018). *Nie tylko Palestyna. Polskie plany emigracyjne wobec Żydów 1935–1939*. Warszawa: Żydowski Instytut Historyczny.
- Trencsényi, B. & Kopeček, M. (Ed.) (2007a). *Discourses of Collective Identity in Central and Southeast Europe 1770–1945. Texts and Commentaries*. Vol. 1. *Late Enlightenment-emergence of the Modern 'National Idea'*. Budapest & New York: CEU Press.
- Trencsényi, B. & Kopeček, M. (Ed.) (2007b). *Discourses of Collective Identity in Central and Southeast Europe 1770–1945. Texts and Commentaries*. Vol. 2. *National Romanticism: The Formation of National Movements*. Budapest & New York: CEU Press.
- Troch, P. (2010). Yugoslavism between the World Wars: Indecisive Nation Building. *Nationalities Papers*, 38 (2): 227–244.
- Tuncay, M. (1992). *Türkiye’de Sol Akımlar-II (1925–1936)*. İstanbul: B.D.S. .
- Uhlik, R. (1937). *Romane gijlja. Цыганске несме*. Lil 1. Prijedor: Štamparija Vučen Štrbac.
- Uhlik, R. (1938). *O devlikano ramope e Sumnale Lukahtar nakhadino pe romani chib katar Rade Uhlik sikamno*. Parnoforo: Englezongo thaj avere themengo Biblijako amalipe.
- Uhlik, R. (1940). *Phirasavne paramiča andar o romano durutnipe*. Prijedor: n.p.
- Uhlik, R. (1947). *Srpskohrvatsko-ciganski rečnik (romane alava)*. Sarajevo: Svjetlost.
- Ulusoy, Ö. (2013). Les Etres en Marge. Les Tsiganes de l’Empire Ottoman. *Les Cahiers du Bosphore*. Vol. LXXIII, Istanbul: Les éditions ISIS.
- Ümit, D. (2014) The American Protestant Missionary Network in Ottoman Turkey, 1876–1914. *International Journal of Humanities and Social Science*. Vol. 4, No. 6 (1): 16–51.
- Ünsal, A. (2002). *Umuttan Yalnızlığa Türkiye İşçi Partisi (1961–1971)*. İstanbul: Tarih Vakfı Yurt Yayınları.
- Vainio-Korhonen, K. (2002). *Ruokaa, vaatteita, hoivaa. Naiset ja yrittäjyys paikallisena ja yleisenä ilmiönä 1700-luvulta nykypäivään*. Helsinki: Suomalaisen Kirjallisuuden Seura.

- van Baar, H. (2011). *The European Roma: Minority Representation, Memory, and the Limits of Transnational Governmentality*. Amsterdam: F & N Eigen Beheer.
- van Baar, H. & Kóczé, A. (2020). Introduction. In H. van Baar & A. Kóczé (Eds.) *The Roma and Their Struggle for Identity in Contemporary Europe* (pp. 3–45). New York, NJ & Oxford: Berghahn Books.
- Vardağlı, T. (2009). Birinci Kuşak Mübadillerin Siyasal Katılım Stratejileri Üzerine Bir Deneme. *Toplumsal Tarih*, 190: 84–89.
- Vardağlı, T. (2011). *Tobacco Labor Politics in the Province of Thessaloniki: Cross-communal and Cross-gender Relations*. Ph.D. Thesis. İstanbul: Boğaziçi University.
- Vermeersch, P. (2006). *The Romani Movement: Minority Politics and Ethnic Mobilization in Contemporary Central Europe*. New York, NJ & Oxford: Berghahn Books.
- Viita, A. (1967). *Mustalaisväestön hyväksi. Mustalaislähetystyö Suomessa v. 1904–1966*. Helsinki: Kirjapaino Aa Oy.
- Viková, L. (2018a). Adolf Ištvan – romský legionář z Bohusoudova a jeho dopisy. *Romano džaniben*, 25 (1): 15–54.
- Viková, L. (2018b). "... jako cikán!, bez jakéhokoliv vzdělání pochopil za hranicema vážnost doby pro národ československý a přihlásil se dobrovolně do československé armády": Ze životů romských vojáků zapojených do tzv. Československých legií. *Bulletin Muzea romské kultury*, 27: 10–45.
- Viksna, M. (2005). Ievadam. In J. Leimanis. *Čigāni Latvijas mežos, mājās un tirgos* (pp. 5–23). Rīga: Zinātne.
- Viljanen, A. M. (1974). *Mary Douglasin symboliteorian sovellus Suomen mustalaisilta kerättöyn perinteeseen*. Pro-Gradu Thesis. Helsinki: University of Helsinki.
- Viljanen, A. M. (1979). *Mustalaiskulttuuri ja kulttuurin muutos*. Ph.D. Thesis. Helsinki: University of Helsinki.
- Viljanen, A. M. (2011). Romaninaisen puku-perinne, muoti ja etninen kannanotto. In A. Nieminen, P. Olsson, H. Ruotsala & K. Siivonen (Eds.) *Aineen taikaa. Näkyvän ja näkymättömän kulttuurin jäljillä* (pp. 41–67). Helsinki: Suomalaisen Kirjallisuuden Seura.
- Viljanen, A. M. (2012). Romanikulttuurin muuttuvat muodot ja pysyvät rakenteet. In P. Pulma (Ed.) *Suomen romanien historia* (pp. 375–426). Helsinki: Suomalaisen Kirjallisuuden Seura.
- Vojak, D. (2004). Romi u popisima stanovništva iz 1921. i 1931. na području Hrvatske. *Migracijske i etničke teme* 20 (4): 447–476.
- Vojak, D. (2005). Prvi hrvatski romolozii: Mara Čop, Franjo Fancev, Vladimir Redenšek i Antun Medven. In Macan, T. (Ed.) *Biobibliographica* 3 (pp. 103–128). Zagreb: Leksikografski zavod Miroslav Krleža.
- Vojak, D. (2013). *U predvečerje rata: Romi u Hrvatskoj 1918.-1941*. Zagreb: Romsko nacionalno vijeće.
- Vojak, D. (2015). *Romi u Prvome svjetskom ratu u Hrvatskoj 1914–1918*. Zagreb: Romsko nacionalno vijeće.
- Vojak, D. (2020a). "Good Soldiers and Even Heroes"; or From the History of the Roma in Croatia and Slavonia during the First World War. *Romani Studies*, Series 5, 30 (1): 1–14.

- Vojak, D. (2020b). Roma Resistance in Serbia, Slovenia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro and Macedonia during World War II. In Mirga-Kruszelnicka, A. & Dunajeva, J. (Eds.) *Re-thinking Roma Resistance throughout History: Recounting Stories of Strength and Bravery* (pp. 51–76). Berlin: ERIAC.
- Wachtel, A. B. (1998). *Making a Nation, Breaking a Nation. Literature and Cultural Politics in Yugoslavia*. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press.
- Waic, M. (2018). *Tělesná výchova a sport v politickém životě meziválečného Československa*. Praha: Karolinum.
- Wasoff, J. (1918). *Unter dem Joch*. Übersetzung von Athanas Dimitroff. Teil I-III. Leipzig: Verlag Parlapanoff.
- Werth, N. (2007). *Cannibal Island: Death in a Siberian Gulag*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.
- Weybright, V. (1945). A Nomad Gypsy Coppersmith in New York. *Journal of the Gypsy Lore Society*, Third Series, 24 (1–2): 2–8.
- Williams, S. (2007) The 'Civilized Trap' of Modernity and Romanian Roma, 1918–1934. *Anthropology of Eastern Europe Review*, 25 (2): 12–27.
- Wilson, W. (2006). Herder, Folklore and Romantic Nationalism. In Rudy, J. T. & Call, D. (Eds.). *Marrow of Human Experience. The: Essays on Folklore by William A. Wilson* (pp. 107–123). Boulder: University Press of Colorado.
- Witkowski, P. (2020). *Laboratorium przemocy: Polityczna historia Romów*. Warszawa: Instytut Wydawniczy Książka i Prasa.
- Wright, R. (1946). The Gypsy Coppersmiths in New York: A Pictorial Supplement to Victor Weybright's Article. *Journal of the Gypsy Lore Society*, Third Series, 25 (3–4): 116–120
- Yıldırım, K. (2013). *Osmanlı'da İşçiler (1870–1922) Çalışma Hayatı Örgütler ve Grevler*. İstanbul: İletişim.
- Yıldır, E. (2015). Ethnicity, Class and Politicisation: Immigrant Roma Tobacco Workers in Turkey. *Romani Studies*, Series 5, 25 (2): 167–196.
- Yıldır, E. (2018). Son Dönem Osmanlı İmparatorluğu'nda Devlet ve "Çingeneler": Vergi, Askerlik ve Adlandırma Meseleleri. *Mimar Sinan Güzel Sanatlar Üniversitesi Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsü Dergisi*, 2 (18): 267–302.
- Yıldır, E. (2016). *Roman Tütün İşçileri*. İstanbul: Ayrıntı.
- Yıldır, E. (2020). *Tütünçülerin Tarihi*. İstanbul: Sosyal Tarih Yayınları.
- Yeats, J. (1887). *Manuals of Commerce Technical, Industrial and Commercial*. London: George Philip & Son.
- Zahova, S. (2019). The role of Romani language in Romani authors' works. In Cech, P., Fennesz-Juhász, Ch. & Halwachs, D. W. (Eds.) *Andaj Romengi ljuma. Patjiv le Mozesoske Heinschink* (pp. 347–369). Graz: GLM.
- Zahova, S. (2020). 'Improving Our Way of Life Is Largely in Our Own Hands': Inclusion and the Romani Newspaper of Interwar Yugoslavia. *Social Inclusion*, 8 (2): 286–295.

- Zahova, S. (2021a). Introduction. In R. B. Roman, S. Zahova & A. Marinov (Eds.) *Roma Literature and Press in Central, South-Eastern and Eastern Europe from 19th Century until the Second World War* (pp. 3–22). Leiden: Brill & Ferdinand Schöningh.
- Zahova, S. (2021b). Yugoslavia. In R. B. Roman, S. Zahova & A. Marinov (Eds.) *Roma Literature and Press in Central, South-Eastern and Eastern Europe from 19th Century until the Second World War* (pp. 59–92). Leiden: Brill & Ferdinand Schöningh.
- Zaloaga, M. (2014). Consensus and Disparities in Reception of Archduke Joseph's Involvement with the Gypsy Studies/Question. Voices from Academic Literature and Daily Press. In C. Andras & C. Sigmirean (Eds.) *Discourse and Counter-Discourse in Cultural and Intellectual History* (pp. 95–147). Sibiu: Astra Museum.
- Závodská, M. (2018). Žákovská a studentská léta učitele Antonína Daniela. *Romano džaniben*, 25 (1): 59–92.
- Závodská, M. & Víková, L. (2016). Dokumentace genocidy Romů za 2. světové války v Československu – nálezoá zpráva: diskontinuita a kontinuita odhalování historie Romů po roce 1946. *Romano džaniben*, 23 (2): 107–124.
- Zeidler, M. (1997). A Magyar Revíziós Liga. *Századok*, 131 (2): 303–352.
- Zipernovszky, K. (2017). “Ki fog győzni – a jazz vagy a cigány – nehéz megjósolni.” A cigányzenészek megvédik a magyar nemzeti kultúrát. *Replika*, 26 (1–2): 67–87.
- Zorin, V. 1933. *Rom. Povestire*. Tiraspol & Balta: Editura de stat a Moldovei.
- Žutić, N. (1991). *Sokoli. Ideologija u fizičkoj kulturi Kraljevine Jugoslavije 1929–1941*. Belgrade: Angrotrade.

* * *

- [No Author]. (1940). *Алманах на Софийския Университет Св. Климент Охридски. Животописни и книгописни сведения за преподавателите. За петдесетгодишнината на Университета. 1888–1939*. София: Придворна печатница.
- [No Author]. (2005). Алфавитный список народов, обитающих в Российской Империи. *Демоскоп Weekly*, 187–188. Retrieved from <http://demoscope.ru/weekly/2005/0187/perer04.php>.
- Ацковић, Д. (2000). Самоорганизовање београдских Рома у периоду између два светска рата. In Мацура, М. (Ed.) *Цигани/Роми у прошлости и данас. Зборник радова с научног скупа одржаног 16. и 17. децембра 1996 године* (pp. 97–110). Београд: САНУ, Комисија за проучавање живота и обичаја Рома.
- Ацковић, Д. (2009). *Роми у Београду: историја, култура и традиција Рома у Београду од насељавања до краја 20. века*. Београд: Rrominterpress.
- Баранников, А. П. (1929). Об изучении цыган СССР. Часть I. *Известия Академии Наук СССР. Отделение гуманитарных наук*, 7 (5): 369–398.
- Баранников, О. П. (1931). *Українські цигани*. Київ: Всеукраїнська Академія Наук.
- Баранников О. П. (1933). *Українські та південно-російські циганські діалекти*. Ленінград: Издательство Академии наук СССР.

- Бауров, К. А. (1996). *Репертуары цыганских хоров старого Петербурга*. Санкт Петербург: Мартынов и Ко.
- Безлюдско, М. Т. (1932a). *Мишка Октябрёнка*. Москва: ОГИЗ – Тэрны гвардия.
- Безлюдско М. Т. (1932b). *Пхагирдо дэсто. Романэ роспхэныбэна*. Москва – Ленинград: ГИХЛ.
- Безлюдско, М. Т. (1932c). *Со дья советско власть романэчякэ*. Москва: Сельколхозгиз.
- Безлюдско, М. Т. (1933a). *Грай*. Москва: ОГИЗО – Тэрны гвардия.
- Безлюдско, М. Т. (1933b). *Марибэ дошалэ ромэнца дро СССР*. Москва: Ги Советско законодательство.
- Безлюдско, М. Т. (1933c). *Нэво джишбэн. Гиля*. Москва: ОГИЗ – Тэрны гвардия.
- Безлюдско, М. Т. (1933d). *Пало колхозо чюрдаса лодыпэн*. Москва: Гавитко-хулаибнытко издательство.
- Безлюдско, М. Т. (1933e). *Псико ко псико*. Москва: ОГИЗ – Тэрны гвардия.
- Безлюдско, М. Т. (1936). *Тэ дживэс камэллэ. Роспхэныбэна*. Москва – Ленинград: Гослитиздат.
- Безлюдско, М. & Германо, А. (1933). *Ангил кэ буты. Со трэби тэ джинэс ромэскэ вгэи дро колхозо*. Москва: Сельхозгиз.
- Бенбасат, А. (2016). Писателят в ролята на бизнесмен. In А. Алексиева, Н. Данова & Н. Чернокожев (Eds.) *Култура, идентичности, съмнения. Сборник в чест на проф. д.ф.н. Николай Аретов* (pp. 18–26). София: Проф. Марин Дринов.
- Берберски, С. (1969). Уводна реч Слободана Берберског. In [No Author]. *Оснивачка скупштина Друштва Ром Београд* (pp. 45–52). Шабац: Штампa “Драган Срний”.
- Бессонов, Н. (2002a). Убиты за трудолюбие. *30 октября*, 23: 5.
- Бессонов, Н. (2002b). Цыгане. In И. Шангина (Ed.) *Многонациональный Петербург. История. Религии. Народы* (pp. 805–820). Санкт Петербург: Искусство – СПб.
- Бессонов, Н. (2002c). Цыгане: годы ссылок и побегов. *30 октября*, 26: 2–3.
- Бессонов, Н. (2007). Ром-Лебедев И. От цыганского хора к театру “Ромэн”. Москва, 1990. Retrieved from <http://gypsy-life.net/retzenzii-16.htm>.
- Бессонов, Н. (2010). *Цыганская трагедия. 1941–1945. Факты, документы, воспоминания. Том 2. Вооруженный отпор*. Санкт-Петербург: Анима.
- Бессонов, Н. В. (2013). Четыре развилки на творческом пути театра “Ромэн”. *Култура и искусство* 4 (16): 453–464.
- Блюменау, Р. (1927). *Цыгане на эстраде*. Москва & Ленинград: Кинопечать.
- Бойцов, Л. В. (1934). *Котиковое хозяйство*. Москва: Внешторгиздат.
- Бугай Н. Ф. (2012). *Цыгане России: общество, адаптация, консенсус (1900–2010)*. Москва: Кучково поле & Лавандр.
- Бугай Н. Ф. (2015). Забытые страницы жизни сообщества цыган в Союзе ССР: 1930–1960-е годы. *Приволжский научный вестник*, 47 (7): 46–65.
- Бугачевский С. М. (1971). *Цыганские народные песни и пляски*. Москва: Советский композитор.
- Беліков, О. В. (2002). До проблеми взаємовідносин українських циган і козацтва у XVI–XIX ст. *Наука. Релігія. Суспільство*, 3: 64–72.
- [No Author]. (1948). В театре “Ромэн”. *Научно-творческая работа ВТО* [Всероссийское театральное общество], Вып. III.

- Вдовин, А. И. (1992). Национальная политика 30-х годов. Об исторических корнях кризиса межнациональных отношений в СССР. *Вестник Московского университета, Серия 8: История*, 4: 17–39.
- Вдовин, А. И. (2002). Эволюция национальной политики СССР. 1917–1941 гг. *Вестник Московского университета, Серия 8: История*, 3: 3–54.
- Вдовин, А. И. (2013). *Русские в XX веке. Трагедии и триумфы великого народа*. Москва: Вече.
- Вентцель, Т. В. & Германо, А. В. (1934). *Лылвари пуро романы чиб. Пэрво чьясть. Ваш 1 и 2 классы дрэ начьялно школа*. Москва: Государственно учебно-педагогическо издательство.
- Вентцель, Т. В., & Германо, А. В. (1937). *Лылвари пуро романы чиб. Пэрво чьясть. Ваш 1 и 2 классы дрэ начьялно школа. Второ издыибэн*. Москва: Учпедгизо.
- Весић, И. & Пено, В. 2017. *Између уметности и живота. О делатности удружења музичара у Краљевини СХС/Југославији*. Београд: Музиколошки институт САНУ.
- Влаховић, Т. С. (1989). *Витезови Карађорђеве звезде са мачевима*. Београд: Т. Влаховић.
- [No Author]. (2020a). Всесоюзная перепись населения 1926 года. Национальный состав населения по республикам СССР. *Демоскоп Weekly*, 841–842. Retrieved from http://www.demoscope.ru/weekly/ssp/ussr_nac_26.php.
- [No Author]. (2020b). Всесоюзная перепись населения 1939 года. Национальный состав населения по республикам СССР. *Демоскоп Weekly*, 841–842. Retrieved from http://www.demoscope.ru/weekly/ssp/sng_nac_39.php?reg=0.
- [No Author]. (1927). *Вся Москва. Адресная и справочная книга на 1927 год*. 3-й год издания. Москва: Моссовет.
- [No Author]. (1928). *Вся Москва. Адресная и справочная книга на 1928 год*. 4-й год издания Московского Совета. Москва: М. К. Х.
- [No Author]. (1935). *Второй Всесоюзный съезд колхозников-ударников 11–17 февраля 1935 года: Стенографический отчет*. Москва: Огиз & Сельхозгиз.
- Вујовић, С. (1993). Роми и становање. In М. Маџура (Ed.) *Развитак Рома у Југославији – проблеми и тенденције* (pp. 60–64). Београд: САНУ.
- Вуксановић-Маџура З. & Маџура, В. (2015). *Историја чубурских ромских енклава. Godišnjak Grada Beograda*, 21–22: 178–179.
- Вълков, М. (2020). Вакъфите в България между двете световни войни. In В. Янчев, М. Кипровска & Г. Бойков (Eds.) *Вакъфите в България* (pp. 325–370). София: УИ Св. Климент Охридски.
- [No Author]. (2014). Галерия “Лоранъ”. Социалистическо или Тоталитарно изкуство. Retrieved from <http://www.galleryloran.com/archive/news/socialistichesko-ili-totalitarno-izkustvo>.
- Генов, Д., Таиров, Т. & Маринов, В. (1968). *Циганското население в НР България по пътя на социализма*. София: Национален Съвет на Отечествения Фронт.
- Герасимово, Т. (1933). *Фаурньитко рэндо дрэ колхозэ и совхозэ*. Москва: Издательство Наркомтяжпромо.
- Герман, А. В. (1929). *Нэво джибэн*. Москва: Центриздат.
- Герман, А. В. (1930a). *Библиография о цыганах. Указатель книг и статей с 1780 г. по 1930 г.* Москва: Центриздат.

- Герман, А. (1930b). *Ярга. Цыганские рассказы*. Москва: Недра.
- Герман, А. В. (1931). *Цыгане вчера и сегодня*. Москва: Государственное учебно-педагогическое издательство.
- Германо, А. В. (1930). *Атасятуно бурмистро*. Москва: Центриздат.
- Германо, А. В. (Ed.) (1931). *Альманахо романэ поэтэн*. Москва: Центриздат.
- Германо, А. В. (1932). *Романо театро. Кхэлыбэна. Джишбэн прэ роты. Машкир яга. Палага пэрво*. Москва: ГИХЛ.
- Германо, А. В. (1933a). *Джяна нэвэ рома*. Москва: Профиздат.
- Германо, А. В. (1933b). *Лэс кхардэ рувэса и ваврэ роспхэныбэна*. Москва – Ленинград: ГИХЛ.
- Германо, А. В. (1934a). *Лолэ яга. Гиля*. Москва: ОГИЗ – ГИХЛ.
- Германо, А. В. (1934b). *Лылвари ваш гиньбэ. Чясть второ*. Москва: Учпедгизо.
- Германо, А. В. (1934c). *Лылвари ваш гиньбэн. Чясть пэрво. Пэрво бэрш ськляибэ*. Москва: Учпедгизо.
- Германо, А. В. (Ed.) (1934d). *Массова гиля (без сопровождения). Скэдыя А. Германо*. Москва: Музгизо.
- Германо, А. В. (Ed.) (1934e). *Романо альманахо. Скэдыя А. Германо*. Москва: Гослитиздат.
- Германо, А. В. (1934f). *Яв прэ стрэга. Гиля*. Москва: Тэрны гвардия.
- Германо, А. В. (1935a). *Ганка Чямба и ваврэ роспхэныбэна*. Москва: Гослитиздат.
- Германо, А. В. (1935b). *Гиля*. Москва: Гослитиздат.
- Германо, А. В. (1937a). *Лылвари ваш гиньбэн. Чясть пэрво. Пэрво бэрш ськляибэ*. Москва: Учпедгизо.
- Германо, А. В. (1937b). *Роспхэныбэна дрэ гиля*. Москва: Гослитиздат.
- Германо, А. В. (1937c). *Стихи и песни*. Москва: Художественная литература.
- Германо, А. В. (1938). *Нэвэ гиля*. Москва: ГИХЛ.
- Германо, А. В. (1941). *Цыганские стихи*. Орел: Издательство Областного совета депутатов трудящихся.
- Германо, А. В. (1954). Германо А. В. *Материалы о советских цыганах и театре "Ромэн"*. Москва: Московский государственный цыганский театр "Ромэн". Manuscript. OGMLT.
- Германо, А. В. (1960). *Повести и рассказы*. Перевод с цыганского М. Вардашко. Москва: Советский писатель.
- Германо, А. В. (1962). *Повести и рассказы*. Перевод с цыганского М. Вардашко. Орел: Орловское книжное издательство.
- Германо, А. В., Модина, Е. И. & Панково, Н. А. (1932). *Ськлякирдэ чявэнгэ. Основно бутяритко лылвари ваш гиньбэ*. Москва: Учпедгизо.
- Германо, А. В. & Панково, Н. А. (1932). *Пало ськляибэ. Лылвари ваш пэрво бэрш. I обшественно джиньбэ. II джиньбэ ваш природа. III политехническо буты*. Москва: Учгизо.
- Германо, А. В. & Панково, Н. А. (1934). *Хрестоматия пиро литература ваш трито бэрш ськляибэ*. Москва: Государственно учебно-педагогическо издательство.
- Германо, А. В., & Панкова, О. И. (1933). *Серёга Лагуно. Шов патриня*. Москва: Тэрны гвардия.
- Гончарская, С. С. (1929). *Работа среди национальных меньшинств. (Опыт Московской партийной организации)*. Москва – Ленинград: Московский рабочий.

- Гинзбург, Л. (1985). *Избранное*. Москва: Советский писатель.
- Данилова Е. Н. (2005). Деятельность всероссийского союза ассирийцев в 20-е – 30-е годы XX века. *Этнографическое обозрение*, 2: 107–119.
- Демертер, Н., Бессонов, Н. & Кутенков, В. (2000). *История цыган. Новый взгляд*. Воронеж: Институт этнологии и антропологии РАН.
- Демертер, Р. С. & Демертер, П. С. (1990). *Образцы фольклора цыган кэлдэрарей*. Москва: Наука.
- Демирова, Д. (2017). *Циганско/Ромско движение в Шумен. История и съвременност*. Дисертация. София: ИЕФЕМ – БАН.
- Дечева, Д. (2000). Участие на циганското население в политическия живот и в борбите на сливенския пролетариат до 9.09.1944 г. *Отвътре / Andral / Inside*, 11–12: 43–53.
- Дечева, Т. (1983). Влияние на социалистическата държава върху българските цигани. In Е. Бужашки (Ед.) *България 1300. Институции и държавна традиция* (pp. 571–574). Том III. София: Българско историческо дружество.
- Димийћ, Љ. (1997). *Културна политика у Краљевини Југославији 1918–1941*. Vol. II. Београд: Стубови културе.
- Димитров, А. (1901). Разпределението на науките според проф. Вундт. *Двадесети век*, 1 (2): 81–107; 1 (4): 225–234.
- Димитров, А. (1902a). Системата на естествените науки (по Вундта). *Двадесети век*, 2 (4): 49–54.
- Димитров, А. (1902b). Национализмът. Една бележка. *Мисъл*, 12 (7): 484–487.
- Димитров, А. (1903a). Психология на темпераментите. *Мисъл*, 13 (3–4): 223–237; 13 (5): 303–312.
- Димитров, А. (1903b). Внушение и хипноза. *Мисъл*, 13 (8): 497–507; 13 (9): 550–561; 13 (10): 602–613.
- Димитров, А. (1904a). Защо Максим Горкий ни се харесва. *Мисъл*, 14 (6): 320–327.
- Димитров, А. (1904b). “Философията на Нитше като културна проблема” от П. Нарколов. *Мисъл*, 14 (9–10): 578–583.
- Димитров, А. (1905). Фридрих Шилер. По случай стогодишнината от смъртта му. *Мисъл*, 15 (5): 277–288.
- Димитров, А. (1906). Педагогистите и университетът. *Мисъл*, 16 (3): 199–212; 16 (5): 341–352.
- Димитров, А. (2003–2005). *Психологически основи на етиката на Й. Г. Фихте, развити от нейния общ характер*. Докторска дисертация. Превод от немски Цанко Иванов. *Отвътре / Andral / Inside*, 29–30: 103–126; 35–36: 100–125; 37–38: 99–125; 39–40: 79–93; 41–42: 97–117.
- Димитров, Х. В. (1934). *Село Градец (Котленска околия)*. Бургас: Издание на Градецката културна дружба “Съгласие” в София.
- Димов, В. (2005). Към изследване на записаната музика в България от първата половина на XX век: архиви и колекции. *Българско музикознание*, 1: 144–171.
- [No Author]. (1923). *Дневник (стеннографски) на XIX-то Обикновено народно събрание*. Трета редовна сесия. LIV редовно заседание, сряда, 21 февруари 1923 г. София: Народно събрание.

- Добровольский, В. Н. (1908). *Киселевские цыгане. Выпуск 1. Цыганские тексты*. Санкт-Петербург: Императорская Академия наук.
- Друц, Е. & Гесслер, А. (1990). *Цыгане. Очерки*. Москва: Советский писатель.
- Друц, Е. & Гесслер, А. (1991). *Сказки цыган СССР*. Москва: Наука.
- Дударова Н. А. (1929). *Пало власть советэн*. Москва: Центриздат.
- Дударова, Н. А. (1932a). *Амари Буты (букварё ваш пэрво бэри сыкляибэ)*. Москва: Учпедгизо.
- Дударова, Н. А. (1932b). *Дром ко сыкляибэн. Лылвари ваш набут сыклякирдэнгэ*. Москва: Учпедгиз.
- Дударова, Н. А. (1933a). *Аваса лылварэнса (букварё ваш барэ манушэнгэ)*. Москва: Учпедгизо.
- Дударова, Н. А. (1933b). *Родно чиб. Ваш пэрво бэри сыкляибэн*. Москва: Учпедгизо.
- Дударова, Н. А. (1934). *Букварё ваш начяльно школа*. Москва: Государственно учебно-педагогическо издательство.
- Дударова, Н. А. & Панково, Н. А. (1928). *Нэво дром. Букварё ваш барэ манушэнгэ*. Москва: Центриздат.
- Думнић, М. (2013). Музицирање и музичари у кафанама у Београду од почетка емитовања Радио-Београда до Другог светског рата. *Зборник Матице српске за сценске уметности и музику* 49: 77–90.
- Борђевић, Т. Р. (1924). *Из Србије кнеза Милоша: Становништво – Насеља*. Београд: Геца Кон.
- Борђевић, Т. Р. (1930–1934). *Наш народни живот*. Vol. 1–10. Београд: Геца Кон.
- Земсков, В. Н. (1990). Спецпоселенцы (по документам НКВД-МВД СССР). *Социологические исследования*, 17 (11): 3–17.
- Земсков, В. Н. (2005). *Спецпоселенцы в СССР, 1930–1960*. Москва: Наука.
- Земсков, В. (2014). *Сталин и народ. Почему не было восстания*. Москва: Алгоритм.
- Зверяков, И. А. (1932). *От кочевания – к социализму. Алма-Ата – Москва: ОГИЗ – Казакстан*.
- Златановић, С. (2009). Књижевно дело Боре Станковића и Врање: идентитетске стратегије, дискурси и праксе. *Гласник Етнографског института САНУ / Bulletin of the Institute of Ethnography SASA*, 57 (1): 51–69.
- Зорін, В. П. (1932a). *Ром. Оповідання*. Харків: Література і мистецтво.
- Зорін, В. П. (1932b). *Ром. Оповідання*. Харків – Київ: Література і мистецтво.
- Зорін, В. П. (1934). *Ром. Повість*. Харків: Література і мистецтво.
- Иванова, Е. & Кръстев, В. (2014). *Циганите по пѣтищата на войната*. Стара Загора: Литера Принт.
- Иванчев, Д. (Ed.) (1962–1969). *Български периодичен печат 1844–1944. Анотиран библиографски указател*. Том I–III. София: Наука и изкуство.
- Иващенко, В. И. (1996). Деятельность цыган-активистов в 20-30-е годы. *Рома и славяне*, 1 (2): 42–51.
- Иващенко, В. И. (2011). *Цыганские судьбы. История, труд, этнография*. Ростов-на-Дону: Дониздат.
- Ильина И. Н. (2000). *Общественные организации России в 1920-е годы*. Москва: Институт российской истории РАН.

- Ильинско, М. А. & Ром-Лебедев, И. И. (1938). *Роспхэныбэна тэ патриня*. Москва: ГИХЛ.
- Истягин, В. Р. (2015). Реализация государственной переселенческой политики в Северо-Кавказском крае в начальный период коллективизации: переселение цыган, корейцев, ассирийцев. *Гуманитарные и юридические исследования*, 4: 60–66.
- Калинин, В. (2005). *Загадка балтийских цыган. Очерки истории, культуры и социального развития балтийских цыган*. Минск: Логвинов.
- Каманин, И. (1916). Цыганские короли в Польше в XVII–XVIII вв. In *Сборник статей и материалов по истории Юго-Западной России, издаваемый Киевской Комиссией для разбора древних актов* (pp. 109–128). Выпуск 2. Киев: И. Крижановский.
- Каменских М. С. (2017). Вовлечение цыганского населения в колхозное строительство на Урале в конце 1920-х–1930-е годы. *Вестник Пермского научного центра УрО РАН*, 4: 10–17
- Каназирски-Верин, Г. (1947). *София преди 50 години*. София: Българска книга.
- Кантя, Г. В. (1970). *Фолклорос романо*. Кишинев: Картя Молдовеняскэ.
- Килин, А. П. (2005). Политика перевода цыган на оседлый образ жизни: проблемы реализации (1926–1937). In *Документ. Архив. История. Современность*, 5: 187–223.
- Кирил, Патриарх Български. (1969). *Българската екзархия в Одринско и Македония след Освободителната война 1877–1878*. Том 1: 1878–1885. София: Синодално издателство.
- [No Author]. (2019). *Книга памяти Великой Отечественной войны Калужской области*. Retrieved from <https://geoportal40.ru/memorial/279221>.
- Крестић, В. (1980). *Историја српске штатпе у Угарској 1791–1914*. Нови Сад: Матица српска.
- Кожанов, К. (2017). Неизданный цыганско-русский словарь Н. А. Панкова. In K. Kozhanov & M. Oslon & D. W. Halwachs (Eds.) *Das amen godi pala Lev Čerenkov. Romani historija, čhib taj kultura* (pp. 284–302). Graz: Karl-Franzens-Universität.
- Кожанов, К. А. & Шаповал, В. В. (2018). Проект цыганского литературного языка в СССР в 1920–1930-е годы. In Н. Г. Деметер & А. В. Черных (Eds.) *Цыгане* (pp. 168–169). Серия “Народы и культуры”. Москва: Наука.
- Колев, Г. (2003). *Един циганин в ЦК на БКП. Преживелици, терзания, размисли*. София: Вини-1873.
- Колев, Г. (2010). *Българската комунистическа партия и циганите през периода 1944–1989 г.* София: Център за публични политики.
- [No Author]. (1945). *Конституция на Българското царство*. София: Държавно книгоиздателство.
- [No Author]. (1936). Конституция (Основной закон) Союза Советских Социалистических Республик. Утверждена Чрезвычайным VIII съездом Советов Союза ССР 5 декабря 1936 года. *Известия ЦИК СССР и ВЦИК*, 6 декабря 1936 года.
- Короленко, В. Г. (1907). Сорочинская трагедия. По данным судебного расследования. *Русское богатство*, 32 (4): 172–205.
- Красильников, С. А. (Ed.). (2002). *Из истории земли Томской. 1933 г. Назинская трагедия. Документальное научное издание*. Томск: Институт истории Сибирского отделения РАН & Томское историко-просветительское, правозащитное и благотворительное общество “Мемориал”.

- Кривинская, Л. Л. (1961). В. Г. Короленко в Хатках. *Научные записки Полтавского литературно-мемориального музея В. Г. Короленко*, Выпуск 1, pp. 56–69.
- Кънчов, В. (1900). *Македония. Етнография и статистика*. София: Българско Книжовно Дружество.
- Лазарова, Е. (2008) Общинската политика на БРСДП (1891–1919 г.) In Е. Кандиларов (Ed.) *Изследвания по история на социализма в България 1891–1944* (pp. 244–283). София: Фридрих Еберт.
- Лебедев, Г. П. (1931). *Ваш комсомолю*. Москва: Центриздат.
- Лебедево, Г. П. (1931). *Нэвэ глоса. Гиля и ракирибэна*. Москва: Центриздат.
- Ленино, В. И. (1931). *Задэибэна союзэн тэрнэн*. Москва: Центриздат.
- Мануш, Л. (1976). *Звездочка. Цыганские народные детские песенки*. Москва: Детская литература.
- Мануш, Л. (1980). *Повозочка. Стихи*. Москва: Малыш.
- Мануш, Л. (1983). *Хочу лошадку. Стихи*. Москва: Детская литература.
- Марушиакова, Е. & Попов, В. (2016). Валерий Санаров – жизнь, творчество, легенды. *Revista de etnologie și culturologie / Журнал этнологии и культурологии / The Journal of ethnology and culturology*, 19: 87–91.
- Махотина И. Ю. (2009). Устный репертуар русских цыган по материалам архива семьи Панковых. In М. В. Строганов (Ed.) *Тверское фольклорное поле 2007: Доклады и публикации* (pp. 56–70). Тверь: Издательство М. Батасовой.
- Махотина И. Ю. (2012). Фиксация и изучение фольклора русских цыган в XIX–XXI веках. *Традиционная культура*, 13 (3): 108–119.
- Махотина, И. & Шаповал, В. (2021). О деятельности Е. А. Муравьевой в Цыганской секции при Союзе Советских писателей (до июня 1941 г.). *Revista de etnologie și culturologie*, 30: 69–77.
- Мериме, П. (1935). *Кармэн*. Москва: Гослитиздат.
- Михалчев, Д. (1939). Расизмът под закрила на биологията. Из научните приключения на един български зоолог. *Философски преглед*, 11 (2): 182–218.
- Мозгунова, Г. И. (Ed.) 1994. *Судьбы национальных меньшинств на Смоленщине. 1918–1938 гг. Документы и материалы*. Смоленск: Смоленский государственный педагогический институт.
- Назаров, Х. Х. (1969). *Влияние Октябрьской революции на положение и быт среднеазиатских цыган (на примере цыган, живущих в городе Самарканде и Самаркандской области)*. Диссертация. Самарканд: Самаркандское педагогическое училище физического воспитания им. А. С. Макаренко.
- Неволин, В. (2014). *Человек, лишённый малой родины*. Красноярск: Растр.
- Новосибирский краеведческий портал. (2012). Retrieved from http://kraeved.ngonb.ru/day-in-history?day_in_history=10-07.
- Нунев, Й. (2008). *Първопроходецът в ромската общност. (Социално-педагогически и демографски аспекти)*. София: Фондация С.Е.Г.А.

- Няголова, М. Д. (2012). Принос към историята на психологията в България (от Освобождението до 1912 година). *Psychological Thought*, 5 (1): 2–21.
- [No Author]. (No Data). *О Дел вакаярда*. London: Scripture Gift Mission.
- [No Author]. (No Data). *О дром ухтавдо*. London: Scripture Gift Mission.
- Орлова, Е. И. (1933). *Прэ фэлды мурдѐна яга. Гиля*. Москва – Ленинград: ГИХЛ.
- [No Author]. (1969). *Оснивачка скупштина Друштва Ром Београд*. Шабац: Штампa “Драган Срнић”.
- Охотин, Н. Г. & Рогинский, А. Б. (2007). “Большой террор”: 1937–1938. Краткая хроника. Retrieved from http://old.memo.ru/history/y1937/hronika1936_1939/xronika.html#y1.
- [No Author]. (1932). *Пандж масова гиля*. Пирильджинэ А. Германо, М. Безлюдско, О. Панкова. Москва: Музгизо.
- Панкова, О. И. (Ed.) (1932). *Комсомоло дрэ марибэ поло нэво джибэ*. Москва: ОГИЗ – Тэрны гвардия.
- Панкова, О. И. (1933). *Амарэ дывэса*. Москва – Ленинград: ГИХЛ.
- Панкова, О. И. (1936). *Ростасадо джибэн*. Москва: Гослитиздат.
- Панкова, О. И. (1938). *Гиля*. Москва: ГИХЛ.
- Панково, Н. А. & Дударова, Н. А. (1930a). *Джиды буты. Романо букварѐ ваш I бэрш сыкляибэ*. Москва: Центриздат.
- Панково, Н. А. & Дударова, Н. А. (1930b). *Лолы чергэнори. Книга ваш гинэибэн прэ дуйто бэрш сыкляибэн*. Москва: Центриздат.
- Пашов, Ш. М. (1957). *История на циганите в България и Европа. “Рома”*. София. Manuscript. ASR, f. Шакир Пашов, а.е. Книга, l. 1–216.
- Петков, Р. (2020). Първото немско издание на “Под игото” или как един българин с ромски произход преведе романа. *LiterNet*, 9 (250). Retrieved from <https://litenet.bg/publish33/rosen-petkov/pod-igoto-na-nemski.htm>.
- Петровић, А. (1937). *Гонореја код Цигана (етнохигијенска испитивања)*. Београд: Централни хигијенски завод.
- Петровић, А. & Симић, С. (1934a). *О браку код наших Цигана*. Београд: Штампарија “Графика”.
- Петровић, А. & Симић, С. (1934b). *О вери наших Цигана*. [Београд].
- Петровић, А. & Симић, С. (1934c). *Крађа код Цигана*. Београд.
- Писари, М. (Ed.) (2018). *Џанес ко сем? (Да ли знаш ко сам?) Едукативни материјали о геноциду над Ромима у Другом светском рату и данашњем антициганизму у Србији*. Београд: Dina Dizajn d.o.o.
- Платунов, Н. И. (1976). *Переселенческая политика советского государства и ее осуществление в СССР (1917 – июнь 1941 гг.)*. Томск: Издательство Томского университета.
- Плохинский, М. М. (1890). Цыгане старой Малороссии (по архивным документам). *Этнографическое обозрение*, 7 (4): 95–117.
- Попов, В. (1996). Култът към Биби в балкански културно-исторически контекст. In Р. Попов (Ed.) *Етнографски проблеми на народната духовна култура* (pp. 186–218). Том 4. София: ЕИМ – БАН.
- Попова, Е. & Бриль, М. (1932). Цыгане в Союзе ССР. *Советское строительство*, 7 (2): 120–138.

- Полякова, М. Е. (1930a). *Сыр Маша гыя тэ сыклёл*. Москва: Центриздат.
- Полякова, М. Е. (1930b). *Холямо башно*. Москва: Центриздат.
- Полякова, М. Е. (1931). *Романэ ракирибэ*. Москва: Центриздат.
- [No Author]. (1926). Постановление ЦИК и СНК СССР от 1 октября 1926 г. "О мерах содействия переходу кочующих цыган к трудовому оседлому образу жизни". *Собрание законов СССР*, 67: 507.
- [No Author]. (1928). Постановление ВЦИК и СНК РСФСР от 20 февраля 1928 г. "О наделении земель цыган, переходящих к трудовому оседлому образу жизни". *Собрание узаконений и распоряжений рабочего и крестьянского правительства РСФСР*, Отдел Первый, 28: 352.
- [No Author]. (1936). Постановление Президиума Центрального Исполнительного Комитета Союза ССР от 7/IV 1936 г. О мероприятиях по трудоустройству кочующих и улучшению хозяйственного и культурно-бытового обслуживания трудящихся цыган. *Революция и национальности*, 7 (6): 87.
- [No Author]. (1930). *Правила и условия приема в Комуниверситет им. Я. М. Свердлова и в Институт аспирантов Комуниверситета им. Я. М. Свердлова*. Москва: Коммунистический Университет им. Я. М. Свердлова
- [No Author]. (1936). Президиум Совета Национальностей ЦИК Союза ССР. *Революция и национальности*, 7 (6): 89–91.
- Пушкин, А. С. (1936). *Парамыся ваш пхурэскэ и мачёрэскэ*. Москва & Ленинград: Детиздат.
- Пушкин, А. С. (1937). *Рома*. Москва: ГИХЛ.
- Пыжов, Н. (1929). *Сорочинское крестьянское восстание 1905 г. Воспоминания руководителя восстания*. Москва: Издательство Всесоюзного общества политкаторжан и сс.-поселенцев.
- Пыжов, Н. (1930). *Крестьянская республика. Воспоминания руководителя крестьянского восстания 1905 года в Сорочинцах*. Москва: Издательство Всесоюзного общества политкаторжан и сс.-поселенцев.
- Равдин, Р. & Хмельковская, Е. (1968). Звезда над шатрами. In Равдин, Р. & Хмельковская, Е. *Дети одной матери-земли*. Кишинев: Картя Молдовеняскэ.
- Ралин, Р. (1987). *Кадровикът Теофраст. Сатирични есета*. Пловдив: Христо Г. Данов.
- [No Author]. (1936). *Романе гыля е Девлеске*. София: Циганска евангелска мисия.
- [No Author]. (1933). *Романе Свети гыля*. София: Съюз на българските евангелски баптистки църкви.
- [No Author]. (1929). *Романе Свято гыли*. Лом: Българска евангелска баптистка църква.
- [No Author]. (1936). *Романе Сомнал гыля*. Наредил Йото Ат. Татарев. София: Циганска евангелска мисия.
- Ром-Лебедев, И. И. (1930). *Бахт. Рассказо*. Москва: Центроиздат.
- Ром-Лебедев, И. И. (1931). *Кхам дрэ блата. Пьеса дрэ дуй действиё и пандж патрин*. Москва: Центриздат.
- Ром-Лебедев, И. (1983). *Ехали цыгане... Пьесы*. Москва: Советский писатель.

- Ром-Лебедев, И. (1990). *От цыганского хора к театру "Ромэн". Записки московского цыгана*. Москва: Искусство.
- Ром-Лебедев, И. (1992). *Таборная цыганка*. Москва: Олимп.
- Романо, И. (1968). *Прощай, мой табор*. Горно-Алтайск: Алтайское книжное издательство – Горно-Алтайское отделение.
- Романо, И. (1975). *Подарок Черген. Рассказы*. Барнаул: Алтайское книжное издательство.
- Роги, М. (1934). *Цыгане в промкооперации*. Москва: КОИЗ.
- Русаков, А. & Калинин, В. (2006). Литература на цыганском языке в СССР: 1920–1930-е годы. In О. Абраменко (Ed.) *Очерки языка и культуры цыган Северо-Запада России: русска и лотфитка рома* (pp. 266–287). Санкт Петербург: Анима.
- [No Author]. (No Data). *Саво пересарла Библия*. London: Scripture Gift Mission.
- Савов, Й. (2000). Мистерии около преводите на "Под игото". *Отвътре / Andral / Inside*, 7: 32–36.
- Савов, Й. (2002). Списание "Училищен преглед" и неговият сътрудник д-р Атанас Димитров. *Отвътре / Andral / Inside*, 19–20, 2002: 54–55.
- Саткевич, Н. (1972). *Струны. Стихи и поэмы*. Тула: Приокское книжное издательство.
- Саткевич, Н. (Ed.) (1974). *Костры. Сборник стихов цыганских поэтов*. Москва: Советская Россия.
- Саткевич, Н. (1977). *Цыганские мирикля. Стихотворения. Баллады*. Архангельск: Северо-Западное книжное издательство.
- Саткевич, Н. (1982). *Цыганское солнце*. Москва: Советский писатель.
- Семёнов, Ю. И. (1966). Из истории теоретической разработки В. И. Лениным национального вопроса. *Народы Азии и Африки*, 4: 106–129.
- 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.
- Синицин, Ф. Л. (2019). *Советское государство и кочевники. История, политика, население. 1917–1991 гг.* Москва: Центрполиграф.
- Славкова, М. (2007). *Цыганите евангелисти в България*. София: Парадигма.
- Слоневский, А. (2010). *Судебные процессы и преступность в Каменском-Днепродзержинске: очерки и документы*. Днепрпетровск: Издательство "Пороги".
- [No Author]. (1936). Совещание по трудоустройству и культурно-бытовому обслуживанию цыган. *Революция и национальности*, 7 (2): 61–72.
- Солоневич, И. Л. (1951). *Народная монархия*. [Москва]: РИМИС.
- [No Author]. (1932). *Сомнал евангелие (кетани) (лил) Матеятар*. Накае дасиканестар романе чибате А. Атанасакиев. София: Американско Библейско дружество & Британско и чуждестранно Библейско дружество.
- [No Author]. (1937). *Сомнал евангелие (кетани) катаро Иоан*. Накае дасиканестар романе чибате А. Атанасакиев. София: Американско Библейско дружество & Британско и чуждестранно Библейско дружество.
- [No Author]. (No Data). *Спасител ащал безаханен*. London: Scripture Gift Mission.

- [No Author]. (No Data). *Снаситело светоско*. London: Scripture Gift Mission.
- Сталин, И. В. (1946). Как понимает социал-демократия национальный вопрос? In И. В. Сталин. *Сочинения*. Том 1. Москва: ОГИЗ & Государственное издательство политической литературы.
- Сталин, И. В. (1947a). К вопросу о политике ликвидации кулачества как класса. In И. В. Сталин. *Полное собрание сочинений*. Том 12. Москва: Политиздат.
- Сталин, И. В. (1947b). Политический отчет Центрального комитета XVI съезду ВКП(б). In И. В. Сталин. *Полное собрание сочинений*. Том 12. Москва: Политиздат.
- Сталино, И. В. (1931). *Ваш о комсомоло*. Москва: Центриздат.
- Стојанчевић, В. (1992). Политички и правни положај Цигана (Рома) у Србији Првог и Другог устанка. In М. Мацура (Ed.) *Развитак Рома у Југославији – проблеми и тенденције* (pp. 35–30). Београд: САНУ.
- Стоянов, З. (1966). Социализмът в България. In З. Стоянов. *Съчинения*. Том 3. *Публицистика* (pp. 213–220). София: Български писател.
- [No Author]. (1901). *Стенографски дневници на XI Обикновено Народно събрание, I Извънредна сесия, LVIII заседание, 28 май 1901 година*.
- Стерлин, С. Я. (1929). *Соса населениё помогискирла лолякэ армиякэ*. Москва: Центриздат.
- Стоянова, П. (2017). *Циганите в годините на социализма. Политиката на българската държава към циганското малцинство*. София: Парадigma.
- Таранов, А. С. (1930). *Нэво гав*. Москва: Центроиздат.
- Тараново, А. С. (1932a). *Амари зор. Обишественно джиныбэн. Ваш III бэри*. Москва: Учпедгизо.
- Тараново, А. С. (1932b). *Комсомоло и классово марибэ машкир ромэндэ*. Москва: ОГИЗ – Тэрны Гвардия.
- Тараново, А. С. (1932c). *Религия тэ классово марибэ*. Москва: ОГИЗ – ГАИЗ.
- Таранов, А. С. (1933). *Профсоюзы пало ленинско знамя*. Москва: Профиздат.
- Тахир, О. (2018). Ромските организации в България преди Втората световна война. Retrieved from <https://www.facebook.com/notes/freeroma-politicsculture/ромските-организации-в-българия-преди-втората-световна-война/10013747009140/>.
- Тенев, Д. (1997). *Тристахилядна София и аз между двете войни*. София: Български писател.
- Товстуха, И. П. (1933). *Иосифо Виссарионовичё Сталино*. Москва: Партиздато.
- [No Author]. (1910). *Устав на Египтянската народност в гр. Видин*. Видин: Божинов и Конев.
- Ухлик, Р. & Радичевић, Б. В. (1957). *Циганска поезија*. Сарајево: Свјетлост.
- Фурсенко, А. А. (Ed.). (2003). *Президиум ЦК КПСС 1954–1964. Черновые протоколные записи заседаний. Стенограммы. Постановления*. В 3-х томах. Москва: РОССПЭН.
- Цветков, Г. Н. & Махотина, И. Ю. (2018). Литература. In Н. Г. Деметер & А. В. Черных (Eds.) *Цыгане* (pp. 473–480). Серия “Народы и культуры”. Москва: Наука.
- Цепенков, М. К. (1898). Обичаи от Прилеп. In *Сборник за народни умотворения, наука и книжнина* (pp. 176–181). Книга 15. София: Министерство на народното просвещение.
- [No Author]. (1926). *Циганска Евангелска Баптийска Църква с. Голинци*. Лом: Алфа.

- Цопа, Т. (1974). Прощай, табор. In Цопа, Т. *Непокоренная твердиня*. Кишинев: Карта Молдовеняскэ.
- Чапразов, В. (2014). *Звезден ромол. Портрети на ромски творци*. Сливен.
- Черенков, Л. Н. (1985). Некоторые проблемы этнографического изучения цыган СССР. In И. Крупник (Ed.) *Малые и дисперсные этнические группы в Европейской части СССР* (pp. 5–15). Москва: Наука.
- Черенков, Л. Н. (2017). Времена и люди. In K. Kozhanov & M. Oslon & D. W. Halwachs (Eds.) *Das amen godi pala Lev Čerenkov. Romani historija, čhib taj kultura* (pp. 15–29). Graz: Karl-Franzens-Universität.
- Черных, А.В. & Каменских, М.С. (2020). Цыгане Урала в национальной и экономической политике советского государства 1920–1930-х гг. *Вестник РУДН. Серия: История России*, 19 (4): 851–868.
- Шаповал, В. В. (2019a). Гражданское воспитание в СССР через призму учебников обществоведения для национальных школ 1932 г. In А. А. Сорокин (Ed.) *Актуальные вопросы гуманитарных наук: теория, методика, практика* (pp. 321–339). Москва: Книгодел.
- Шаповал, В. (2019b). Первый советский журнал на ромском языке: К проблеме датировки выпуска. *Revista de etnologie și culturologie*, 26: 72–77.
- Шаповал, В. (2020a). Внутренняя структура этноса в представлениях советских просветителей 1926–1937 гг. Цыгане-Рома. In А. А. Сорокин & Г. В. Калабухова (Eds.) *Актуальные вопросы гуманитарных наук*. Выпуск 3 (pp. 327–362). Москва: Книгодел.
- Шаповал, В. (2020b). Парадоксы советского ромского культурного проекта 1925–1938 гг. In А. А. Сорокин (Ed.) *Актуальные вопросы гуманитарных наук*. Выпуск 8 (pp. 196–209). Москва: Книгодел.
- Шаповал, В. В. (2020c). Становление нормы в советском ромском языке 1927–1938 годов: влияние русских образцов. In *Поливановские чтения* (pp. 229–238). Смоленск: СмолГУ.
- Шолок, Э. М. (1964). Германо. In А. А. Сурков (Ed.) *Краткая литературная энциклопедия*. Том 2 (p. 138). Москва: Советская энциклопедия.
- Штейнпресс, Б. С. (1934). *К истории “цыганского пения” в России*. Москва: Государственное музыкальное издательство.
- Штернберг, Л. Я. (1903). Цыгане. In *Энциклопедический словарь Брокгауза и Ефрона*. 1890–1907. Том 38 (pp. 304–308). Санкт Петербург: Акционерное издательское общество Ф. А. Брокгауз – И. А. Ефрон.
- Штибер, Н. Г. (1895). Русские цыгане. *Ежемесячные литературные приложения к Ниве*, 26 (11): 519–554.
- Щербакова, Т. А. (1984). *Цыганское музыкальное исполнительство и творчество в России*. Москва: Музыка.
- [No Author]. (1937). *Юбилеят на Илия Д. Гудев*. Сливен: Комитет “Илия Гудев”.

List of Illustrations

- Fig. 1a Nikola Mihailo Mali (? – 1910). Smederevo, Serbia, 1860s. Source: NBS, Collection of Photographs at the Legacy of Tihomir R. Đorđević.
- Fig. 1b Ferenc Nagyidai Sztojka (1855 – 1929). Austro-Hungarian Empire, 1880s. Source: Magoria Books Publ.
- Fig. 1c Atanas Dimitrov (1874 – 1916). Bulgaria, 1890s. Source: ДИМИТРОВ, 1934, p. 130.
- Fig. 1d Shakir Pashov (1898 – 1981) as a soldier during WWI. Bulgaria, 1915–1918. Source: ASR, f. Шакир Пашов.
- Fig. 2a Gypsy Theatre. Sliven, Bulgaria, 1927. The text on the photo: “Founders of 1st Gypsy theatre group. 24.03.1927. Sliven”. Source: ASR, f. Господин Колев.
- Fig. 2b Gospodin Kolev (1923 – 2011). Sliven, Bulgaria, 1942. Sliven, Bulgaria, 1942. The text on the back-side of the photograph: “June 8–10, 1942. The Court trial. A police photo, made after the sentencing – June 10, 1942. Three of these who knelt and the first on the left [Gospodin Kolev – authors note] are Gypsies, members of REMS”. Source: ASR, f. Господин Колев.
- Fig. 3a Manifestation of Gypsies after the establishment of the new power on 09.09.1944. Sofia, Bulgaria, autumn 1944. The inscriptions on the posters are: “Down with Racial Differences” and “Long Live the Fatherland Front. Death of Fascism. Gypsy Mahala Sofia”. Source: ASR, f. Фотографии.
- Fig. 3b First Serbian Gypsy Association. Belgrade, Yugoslavia, 1929. The field below the photo has an inscription: A memory from May 22, 1929. Celebration Day of the 1st Serbian Zadruga. Source: AS, СФ, No. 127/1929.
- Fig. 4a Bibija Celebration. Belgrade, Yugoslavia, 1936. The celebration is at the monument commemorating the Gypsies who died during the wars from 1912 to 1918. Source: UL GLSA, RYC/2, SMGC 1/2 PX Petrovic.
- Fig. 4b Svetozar Simić (1913 – 1979). Belgrade, Yugoslavia, 1935. Student’s index card at Belgrade University. Source: LADA, f. Svetozar Simić.
- Fig. 5a Lazăr Naftanailă (1893 – 1968 ?). Romania, 1934. Source: Neamul țigănesc, 1935d, p. 4.
- Fig. 5b Calinic I. Popp Șerboianu (1883 – 1941). Romania, 1920s. Source: Flacăra sacră, 1941, 8 (1): 4.
- Fig. 5c Gheorghe A. Lăzurică (1892 – ?). Romania, 1930. Source: Petre Matei (private collection).
- Fig. 5d Gheorghe Niculescu (? – ?). Bucharest, Romania, 1934. Source: Glasul Romilor, 1934c, p. 1.
- Fig. 6a Constantin S. Nicolăescu-Plopșor (1900 – 1968). Craiova, Romania, 1934. Source: Timpul, 1934a, p. 4.
- Fig. 6b Florica Constantinescu (? – ?). Bucharest, Romania, 1933. Source: Realitatea Ilustrată, 1933, p. 21.
- Fig. 6c The First Congress of General Union of Roma in Romania. Bucharest, Romania, 1933. Source: Realitatea Ilustrată, 1933, p. 22.

- Fig. 7a The Congress of Association General Union of Roma in Romania. Bucharest, Romania, 1935. Source: *Realitatea Ilustrată*, 1935b, p. 11.
- Fig. 7b Gheorghe Niculescu at the Congress of AUGRR, Bucharest, Romania, 1935. Source: *Realitatea Ilustrată*, 1935b, p. 11.
- Fig. 7c Béla Radics (1867 – 1930). Budapest, Austro-Hungarian Empire, 1900s. Postcard. Source: Tamás Hajnáczy (private collection).
- Fig. 8a Károly Bura (1881 – 1934). Nagyvárad / Oradea, Austro-Hungarian Empire, 1900s. Source: Erzsébet Sánta (family collection).
- Fig. 8b Károly Bura as a soldier in the WWI. Nagyvárad / Oradea, Austro-Hungarian Empire, 1914–1918. Source: Erzsébet Sánta (family collection).
- Fig. 8c Bihari Music School. Budapest, Hungary, 1929. Teaching music theory, Károly Bura (background left) and Antal Polgár (forefront right). Source: *Melléklet – Magyarság*, 1929, p. 6.
- Fig. 9a František Kýr (1914 – 1985). Strážnice, former Czechoslovakia, 1942. The caption under the photo in the newspaper: “Director Fr. Kýr with two main stars of the *Gypsy Youth Theatre*”. Source: *Národní střed*, 1942, p. 24.
- Fig. 9b Jan Daniel (1895 – 1943) and his orchestra. Strážnice, Czechoslovakia, 1935. The photo of the theatre and musical ensemble from Strážnice. Most probably, one of the violinists is Jan Daniel. Source: Collection of Josef Pajer.
- Fig. 10a Matejasz Kwiek (ca. 1887 – 1937) as a Gypsy King. Warszawa, Poland, 1930s. Source: NAC, Sygn. 1-P-2304-1.
- Fig. 10b Janusz Kwiek (? – ?). Warszawa, Poland, 1937. Elections and coronation of the new Gypsy King Janusz Kwiek on April 4, 1937. Source: NAC, Sygn. 1-P-2312-10.
- Fig. 10c Jānis Leimanis (1886 – 1950). Riga, Latvia, 1933. Society’s *Čigānu draugs* (Friend of Gypsies) choir in concert at the Latvian Conservatoire on 29 April 1933; Jānis Leimanis is in the middle of the second row. Source: RVKMA, VRVMP 27.246/15.
- Fig. 11a Jānis Leimanis and a “congregation” of Roma holding the newly published *Catechism Excerpts, Prayers, and Spiritual Songs in the Gypsy Language* translated by him. Riga, Latvia, 1936. Source: *Jaunākās Ziņas*, 1936, p. 20.
- Fig. 11b Jānis Leimanis with his family. Riga, Latvia, 1931. Sitting from the left: Jānis Leimanis, mother Lība and wife Elizabete; standing from the left: sons Juris and Kārlis. Source: *Atpūta*, 1931, p. 11.
- Fig. 12a Antti Palm (1874 – 1939). 1910s. Source: Viita, 1967.
- Fig. 12b Ferdinand Nikkinen (1894 – 1971). 1910s. Source: Zirickli, 1972, p. 52.
- Fig. 12c Aleksander Åkerlund (1893 – 1944) and Ida Blomerus (1890 – 1953). 1910s. Source: Kiertolainen, 1913b, p. 18.
- Fig. 12d Kalle Tähtelä (1891 – 1919). 1910s. Source: *Sosialistinen kuukausijulkaisu*, 1920, p. 1.
- Fig. 13a Sofia Schwartz (1887 – 1932), first from left, as a teacher. 1910s. Source: Viita, 1967.
- Fig. 13b The leadership of All-Russian Union of Gypsies (from left to right Nina Dudarova, Andrey Taranov, Dmitriy Polyakov, Ivan Rom-Lebedev). Moscow, USSR, 1927. Source: *Романы зоря*, 1927a, p. 3.

- Fig. 14a Ivan Rom-Lebedev (1903 – 1991). Moscow, USSR, 1920s. Source: ATR, f. Фотографии.
- Fig. 14b Andrey Taranov (1896 – after 1966). Moscow, USSR, 1920s. Source: LANB, f. Николай Саткевич, д. Андрей Таранов.
- Fig. 14c Mikhail Bezlyudskiy (1901 – 1970), Moscow, USSR, 1931. Source: Нэво дром, 1931, p. 10.
- Fig. 14d Ilya Gerasimov (1898 – after 1965). Bryansk, USSR, 1950s. Source: LANB, f. Николай Саткевич, д. Илья Герасимов.
- Fig. 15a Alexander Krikunov (? – ?). Khutor Krikunovo, USSR, 1920s. Source: Герман, 1929, p. 57.
- Fig. 15b Alexander German and Ivan Rom-Lebedev. Moscow, USSR, 1930s. Photo of a painting by Abram S. Zadenvark. Source: OGLMT, f. 29, ОФ-1304, ФТ 480.
- Fig. 15c Commission for the creation of the *Романы азбука* (Romani Alphabet). Moscow, USSR, 1927. In middle: Prof. Mikhail Segrievskiy; left Nina A. Dudarova; right: Nikolay A. Pankov. Source: *Романы зоря*, 1927h, p. 14.
- Fig. 16a Alexander German (1893 – 1955). Kiev, Russian Empire, 1915. Source: OGLMT, ОФ-1295.
- Fig. 16b Alexander German (1893 – 1955). Moscow, USSR, 1950s. Source: OGLMT, f. 29, ОФ-1314.
- Fig. 16c Alexander German (1893 – 1955). Moscow, USSR, 1932. Source: OGLMT, f. 29, ОФ-1310.
- Fig. 17a Nikolay Pankov (1895 – 1959). Moscow, USSR, 1920s. Source: LANB, f. Николай Панков.
- Fig. 17b Nikolay Pankov (1895 – 1959). Moscow, USSR, 1940s. Source: PAVK.
- Fig. 17c Students at Gypsy Pedagogical College. Moscow, USSR, 1930s. Source: LANB, f. Николай Панков.
- Fig. 18a Nina Dudarova (1903 – 1992). Moscow, USSR, 1920s. Source: LANB.
- Fig. 18b Olga Pankova (1911 – 1991). Moscow, USSR, 1930s. Source: PAVK.
- Fig. 18c First Gypsy School. Moscow, USSR, 1927. Source: GTsMSIR.
- Fig. 19a Political Training, Stalingrad oblast, USSR, 1938. Photo annotation: Gypsy teacher N. P. Pedanova is engaged with a group of collective farmers to study the Regulation on Elections to the Supreme Soviet of the RSFSR. Source: GTsMSIR.
- Fig. 19b Gypsy Family. Crimea, USSR, 1930. Photo annotation: “Stakhanovite collective farmer of the Gypsy Beshkur Vakuf kolkhoz of the Seytler rayon Dalda Asanov with his family in a new house built for him by the kolkhoz.” Source: RGAKFD, d. 99274, сн. 0-47369 ч/б.
- Fig. 20a Steve Kaslov (ca. 1888 – 1949). New York, USA, 1930s. Source: Archives Center, National Museum of American History, Smithsonian Institution: Carlos de Wendler-Funaro, Gypsy Research Collection.
- Fig. 20b Helios Gómez (1905 – 1956). Berlin, Germany, 1929. Source: Associació Cultural Helios Gómez.
- Fig. 20c Helios Gómez (1905 – 1956). Camp Montolieu, France, 1940s. Source: Associació Cultural Helios Gómez.

Complete List of the Authors

Acknowledgement

Elena Marushiakova and Vesselin Popov

Foreword

Elena Marushiakova and Vesselin Popov

Introduction: The Roots

Elena Marushiakova and Vesselin Popov

Austro-Hungarian Empire

Ottoman Empire

Russian Empire

Chapter 1. Bulgaria

Introduction

Elena Marushiakova and Vesselin Popov

Atanas Dimitrov

Elena Marushiakova, Vesselin Popov and Plamena Stoyanova

Shakir Pashov

Elena Marushiakova and Vesselin Popov

Sliven's Communists

Plamena Stoyanova

Nikola Kochev

Nikola Terzobaliev

Gospodin Kolev

Conclusion

Elena Marushiakova and Vesselin Popov

Chapter 2. Turkey

Egemen Yülgür

Mustafa Mehmet: One of Those Tobacco Workers

Introduction

What Happened in Salonica?

Family Background and Childhood

Work Experience and Early-Politicisation

Journey to the USSR

Again, in Turkey

Re-exploration of an Extraordinary Life

Chapter 3. Yugoslavia

Activism and Civic Participation

Sofya Zahova

Introduction

From Pre-Modern Leadership to Civic Representation

National Heroes Becoming a Source of Pride and Representation

The New Elite

Roma Contributions to National Establishments

Roma Women

Conclusion

Svetozar Simić

Dragoljub Acković and Sofya Zahova

Introduction

Biography and Life-Path

Groundbreaking Activities in the Field of Writing and Publishing

Organisational Leadership

Conclusion

Chapter 4. Romania

Introduction

Petre Matei, Raluca Bianca Roman and Ion Duminica

Lazăr Naftanailă

Petre Matei

Calinic I. Popp Șerboianu

Petre Matei

Gheorghe A. Lăzurică

Raluca Bianca Roman

Gheorghe Niculescu

Petre Matei

Constantin S. Nicolăescu-Plopșor

Raluca Bianca Roman

Roma Activist Women

Ion Duminica

Florica Constantinescu

Ion Duminica

Marta Lăzurică

Ion Duminica

Conclusion

Petre Matei and Raluca Bianca Roman

Chapter 5. Hungary

Tamás Hajnáczy

Károly Bura – Gypsy First Violinist. From the Coffee Houses to Visions of a Gypsy Museum

Introduction

Czinka Panna's Descendent

Married into the Radics Dynasty

Patron at Home and Hero at the Frontlines

Police Raid at Dawn

The Foundation of the Bihari Music School

“Lord Rothermere Holds Our Banner High”

Hungarian Festival of Song

Embezzlement, Document Theft, Leadership Renewal

Anthem or Waltz

“Baroraj” or the Gypsy Pasha

The Hungarian Regent, the Italian Duce, the Pope in Rome, the American President

A Gaping Hole in the Wall

Strikers and Strike Breakers

He Suddenly Clasped at His Heart

Conclusion

Chapter 6. Czechoslovakia

The Daniel and Kyr Families from the Strážnice Area and their Attempts to Improve the Position of Moravian and Slovak Roma to Benefit Czechoslovakia

Introduction

Dušan Slačka and Lada Viková

Jan Daniel

Lada Viková

František Kyr

Dušan Slačka

Conclusion

Dušan Slačka and Lada Viková

Chapter 7. Poland

Alicja Gontarek

Matejasz Kwiek (ca. 1887–1937). A “Baron” and “Leader of the Gypsy Nation” in Interbellum Poland

Introduction

Profile

Activity

Tragic Death

Funeral
Conclusion

Chapter 8. Latvia

Ieva Tihovska

Jānis Leimanis and the Beginnings of Latvian Roma Activism

Introduction

Jānis Leimanis – a Member of the Community

The Rise and Decline of the Friend of Gypsies Society

Choir and Folklore Collection – Appropriating Cultural Patterns of the Majority

“The Pastor” – the Religious Activism of Leimanis

Land and Work for the Roma

Conclusion

Chapter 9. Finland

Introduction

Risto Blomster and Raluca Bianca Roman

Ferdinand Nikkinen

Risto Blomster and Raluca Bianca Roman

Aleksander Åkerlund

Risto Blomster and Raluca Bianca Roman

Ida Blomerus

Risto Blomster and Raluca Bianca Roman

Sofia Schwartz

Risto Blomster and Raluca Bianca Roman

Antti Palm

Risto Blomster and Raluca Bianca Roman

Conclusion

Risto Blomster and Raluca Bianca Roman

Chapter 10. USSR

Introduction

Elena Marushiakova and Vesselin Popov

Ivan Rom-Lebedev

Elena Marushiakova and Vesselin Popov

Andrey Taranov

Elena Marushiakova and Vesselin Popov

Mikhail Bezlyudskiy

Elena Marushiakova and Vesselin Popov

Georgiy Lebedev

Elena Marushiakova, Vesselin Popov and Viktor Shapoval

Ilya and Trofim Gerasimovs
Elena Marushiakova and Vesselin Popov
 Ilya Yakovlevich Gerasimov
 Trofim Gerasimov
 Ivan Tokmakov
Elena Marushiakova and Vesselin Popov
 Nikolay Pankov
Elena Marushiakova and Vesselin Popov
 Alexander German
Elena Marushiakova and Vesselin Popov
 Roma Activist Women
Elena Marushiakova and Vesselin Popov
 Nina Dudarova
Elena Marushiakova and Vesselin Popov
 Olga Pankova
Elena Marushiakova, Vesselin Popov and Viktor Shapoval
 Conclusion
Elena Marushiakova and Vesselin Popov

Chapter 11. USA

James I. Deutsch
 Steve Kaslov

Chapter 12. Spain

Carmen Cañete Quesada
 Helios Gómez (1905–1956). Activism, Resistance, and Struggles of a Left-Wing
 Gitano Artist
 Introduction
 Helios: The Militant
 Helios: The Gypsy and the Artist

Conclusion

Elena Marushiakova and Vesselin Popov

List of Authors

Elena Marushiakova (School of History, University of St Andrews, UK).

Vesselin Popov (School of History, University of St Andrews, UK).

Alicja Gontarek (Department of Social History and Education at Marie Curie-Skłodowska University, Poland).

Carmen Quesada (Florida Atlantic University, USA).

Dragoljub Acković (MP at National Assembly of Serbia & Roma Museum, Belgrade).

Dušan Slačka (Museum of Romani Culture in Brno, Czech Republic).

Egemen Yılgür (Faculty of Arts and Sciences, Anthropology Department, Yeditepe University, Turkey).

Ieva Tihovska (Institute of Literature, Folklore and Art of the University of Latvia).

Ion Duminica (Centre of Ethnology at Institute of Cultural Heritage, Moldova).

James I. Deutsch (Smithsonian Center for Folklife and Cultural Heritage, Washington D.C., USA).

Lada Viková (Department of Social and Cultural Anthropology, Faculty of Arts and Philosophy, University of Pardubice, Czech Republic).

Petre Matei (Elie Wiesel National Institute for the Study of the Holocaust in Romania).

Plamena Slavova (Institute of Ethnology and Folklore Studies with Ethnographic Museum at Bulgarian Academy of Sciences).

Raluca Bianca Roman (School of History, University of St Andrews, UK).

Risto Blomster (Finnish Literature Society & Finnish Cultural Foundation).

Sofiya Zahova (School of History, University of St Andrews, UK).

Tamás Hajnóczky (Károli Gáspár University of the Reformed Church in Hungary).

Viktor Shapoval (Moscow City University, Russian Federation).